

**Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Adrian Agustin Pilar
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department**

Deputy Andrew Aselin, #651505

Deputy Jose Lopez Morfin, #632934

J.S.I.D. File #24-0090



NATHAN J. HOCHMAN

District Attorney

Justice System Integrity Division

August 13, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: CAPTAIN ARTURO R. SPENCER
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
Homicide Bureau
1 Cupania Circle
Monterey Park, California 91755

FROM: JUSTICE SYSTEM INTEGRITY DIVISION
Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

SUBJECT: Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Adrian Agustin Pilar
J.S.I.D. File #24-0090
L.A.S.D. File #024-04106-0272-013

DATE: August 13, 2026

The Justice System Integrity Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the March 30, 2024, fatal shooting of Adrian Agustin Pilar by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) Deputies Adrian Aselin and Jose Lopez Morfin. We have concluded Deputy Aselin used lawful and reasonable force in self-defense, and there is insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Deputy Lopez Morfin did not act in lawful defense of another when he used deadly force.

The District Attorney's Command Center was notified of the shooting at approximately 1:55 a.m. on March 31, 2024. The District Attorney Response Team responded to the location. They were given a briefing regarding the circumstances surrounding the shooting and a walk-through of the scene.

The following analysis is based on investigative reports, recorded interviews, dispatch audio recordings, firearm analysis reports, a recorded 9-1-1 call, surveillance video, body-worn camera video (BWV), photographs, and the autopsy report submitted to this office by LASD Detectives Michael Lugo and Michael Haggerty on June 27, 2024. Aselin and Lopez Morfin gave voluntary statements, which were considered in this analysis. In February 2026, Aselin and Lopez Morfin were deposed in civil litigation arising from the incident. Those statements were also considered in this analysis.

FACTUAL ANALYSIS

On March 30, 2024, at approximately 11:30 p.m., LASD deputies from East Los Angeles station responded to a call regarding a woman screaming for help and being followed by a van. Upon arrival, Deputies Alvaro Morales and Michael Gonzalez contacted [REDACTED], who said her boyfriend had just assaulted her. She had visible bruising and swelling to her face. [REDACTED]

pointed to a gray Honda Odyssey driving southbound on Herbert Avenue and said her boyfriend, Adrian Agustin Pilar, was driving it.

Morales and Gonzalez observed the car heading toward City Terrace Drive and got into their patrol car to detain it. The driver sped up and drove through a red light in an apparent attempt to evade the deputies. Morales and Gonzalez returned to assist [REDACTED] and informed their assisting unit, Aselin and Lopez Morfin, of an alleged felony spousal assault with the vehicle's last-seen location and direction.

Aselin and Lopez Morfin located the minivan moments later. They followed Agustin Pilar in their patrol vehicle until they arrived at the end of a cul-de-sac on East Snow Drive in East Los Angeles. Aselin, the driver, and Lopez Morfin, the passenger, exited their patrol car and attempted to detain Agustin Pilar at gunpoint.

The deputies ordered Agustin Pilar to stop his vehicle. Agustin Pilar made a three-point turn and drove in the direction of the deputies. They continued to order him to stop, which Agustin Pilar ignored.

Aselin stood in front of a residence with a retaining wall at its base. Snow Drive did not contain a raised curbline, but the residence was separated from the street by an approximately one-foot slab of concrete, which elevated slightly into a sidewalk.



Fig. 1 – Aselin's Approximate Location at the Time of the Incident.

Agustin Pilar continued to drive in Aselin's direction. As he did so, Aselin repeatedly ordered him to stop and backed away from the minivan into a driveway with multiple bins, which limited his mobility. Agustin Pilar drove slowly in Aselin's direction. Aselin lost his footing and fell backward into the retaining wall. Aselin fired 11 rounds at Agustin Pilar.¹ Lopez Morfin fired four rounds.² Agustin Pilar's vehicle collided into a parked car on the south side of the street. Deputies removed Agustin Pilar from the car and rendered first aid until paramedics arrived.

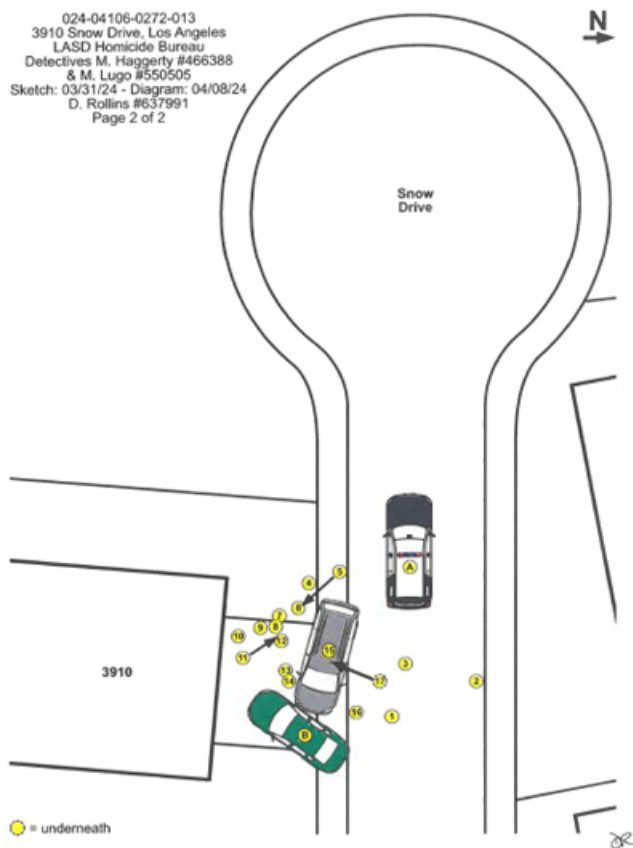


Fig. 2 – Crime Scene Sketch Indicating Final Locations of Patrol Car, Minivan, and Recovered Cartridge Casings.

Deputy Manuel Ovalle arrived shortly after the incident and observed deputies rendering aid to Agustin Pilar. He asked Aselin and Lopez Morfin if they needed medical attention. Aselin complained of pain to his right leg. Ovalle observed redness and swelling to Aselin's right leg.

¹ Aselin's duty weapon was a Smith & Wesson MP 9mm semi-automatic pistol with a Surefire X300 Ultra flashlight attached. The weapon was examined, test fired, and determined to be functional by investigators. It contained a magazine with six cartridges and one cartridge in the chamber. Aselin stated he normally loaded his service weapon with 17 cartridges per magazine plus one cartridge in the chamber. Accordingly, the evidence is consistent with Aselin having fired 11 rounds at Agustin Pilar.

² Lopez Morfin's duty weapon was a Smith & Wesson MP 9mm semi-automatic pistol with a Surefire X300 Ultra flashlight attached. The weapon was examined, test fired, and determined to be functional by investigators. It contained a magazine with 13 cartridges and one cartridge in the chamber. Lopez Morfin stated he normally loaded his service weapon with 17 cartridges per magazine plus one cartridge in the chamber. Accordingly, the evidence is consistent with Lopez Morfin having fired four rounds at Agustin Pilar.

Aselin was transported to Los Angeles USC Hospital by ambulance, where he was admitted and treated for sustained swelling and a contusion in the right knee and lower leg area.

Agustin Pilar was also transported to the hospital, where he was pronounced deceased at 7:04 a.m. on March 31, 2024. Agustin Pilar had sustained seven gunshot wounds in total to his face, chest, right forearm, right hip, left flank, and left shoulder. On April 7, 2024, Los Angeles County Deputy Medical Examiner Dr. Grant Ho performed an autopsy and ascribed the cause of death to multiple gunshot wounds. Toxicology testing revealed the presence of alcohol and ketamine in Agustin Pilar's blood.³

Statement of Deputy Aselin

LASD Interview

Aselin gave a voluntary, recorded interview on April 8, 2024, after reviewing his BWV. On March 30, 2024, Aselin received a call for service regarding a screaming person and responded to the location. He learned from other responding deputies that a spousal assault had occurred, and the suspect was driving a van south on Herbert Avenue toward City Terrace Drive. Aselin then observed a minivan driving southbound on Herbert Avenue and drove toward it. He decided to initiate a traffic stop on Snow Drive, a steep road leading to a dead end.

At the end of Snow Drive, Aselin exited the patrol car to detain the minivan. It was dark and raining. The suspect, Agustin Pilar, did not stop. At the end of Snow Drive, Agustin Pilar executed a three-point turn and began to drive east in the direction of Aselin and Lopez Morfin. Aselin used the flashlight on his firearm to illuminate the scene and could see Agustin Pilar looking at him.

Aselin retreated into a driveway to avoid the vehicle's path and to give it room to drive past him. He also warned his partner to back up out of the path of the vehicle. As Aselin backed up, he did not realize that there was a retaining wall behind him. Aselin lost his footing on wet grass underfoot and fell into the retaining wall. As Aselin observed Agustin Pilar continue to drive toward him, Aselin fired his duty weapon. He said he did so because he was on the ground, could not retreat farther back, and felt he had nowhere else to go. Aselin said the car was still coming at him and he felt that discharging his firearm was necessary to preserve his life. After

³ Pursuant to Assembly Bill 1506, since July 1, 2021, the Attorney General has assumed jurisdiction of officer-involved shootings resulting in the death of unarmed civilians. A civilian is considered "unarmed" if not "in possession of a deadly weapon." Cal. Dep't of Justice, Information Bulletin 2021-DLE-03, *Assembly Bill (AB) 1506 Definitions and Law Enforcement Agency's Notification Responsibility* (Jun. 24, 2021), <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/2021-dle-03.pdf>. Deadly weapons include objects "that have a legitimate non-weapon purpose . . . only when, based on all the circumstances, they are actually being used in a manner likely to produce death or great bodily injury." *Id.* at 2. On March 31, 2024, the Attorney General's Office was notified of the instant matter by the LASD Homicide Bureau. Personnel from the Attorney General's Office reviewed BWV and visited the crime scene. The Attorney General's Office declined to assume jurisdiction in the instant matter.

Aselin fired at the minivan, it continued moving and collided with a parked car in the driveway of a residence.

Civil Deposition

On February 12, 2026, Aselin was deposed in civil litigation arising from the shooting incident. In the deposition, Aselin generally affirmed the accuracy of his 2024 interview with one exception: he stated he misspoke once in 2024 and claimed to have fallen on the ground, when in fact he had meant to say he had fallen into the retaining wall.

Aselin also provided additional details about the incident. Specifically, he stated he fired his service weapon because Agustin Pilar “was trying to kill [him].” Aselin said he had moved himself out of the roadway, but Agustin Pilar “was tracking [his] movements,” and Aselin could see him looking directly at Aselin as he drove the car. According to Aselin, Agustin Pilar appeared to be maneuvering his vehicle in Aselin’s direction in response to Aselin’s movements.

Aselin said he had parked his car so Agustin Pilar could pass on the passenger side of the patrol car, while Aselin retreated to the driver side of the car. Aselin said Agustin Pilar “divert[ed] his path” once he saw Aselin and angled his car toward Aselin in order to try to kill him. Aselin was shown his BWV and asked whether Agustin Pilar could safely pass on the passenger side of the patrol vehicle while Lopez Morfin was standing there. Aselin said the BWV is a two-dimensional image, which “doesn’t capture everything.” When questioned about other perceived discrepancies between the BWV and his testimony, Aselin repeated that videos do not depict the entire incident.



Fig. 3 – Still from Portion of Aselin’s BWV Shown to Him During Questioning Relating to Agustin Pilar’s Ability to Pass on the Passenger Side of the Patrol Car.

Aselin said he could hear Agustin Pilar “accelerate” the car after Aselin fell. Aselin saw Agustin Pilar begin to drive up into the driveway where Aselin had retreated. He said, “That’s why he was in the driveway, because he was coming at me to run me over and kill me.” Aselin said he fired his service weapon to save his life. After he fired his second round, he felt the minivan hit him in the knee.

Statement of Deputy Lopez Morfin

LASD Interview

Lopez Morfin gave a voluntary, recorded interview on April 18, 2024, after reviewing his BWV. On March 30, 2024, he received a call for service regarding a woman screaming for help and being followed by a van. He and his partner, Aselin, arrived at the location and did not find anyone matching the description in the call. The deputies received instructions from Gonzalez and Morales to search the surrounding area for the van.

Shortly after, they received an update from Gonzalez and Morales concerning the van’s last known direction. They were directed to detain the van. Lopez Morfin and Aselin then spotted a

minivan driving eastbound on City Terrace Drive from Herbert Avenue and began to follow it as it turned down multiple streets. As the officers followed the minivan, Gonzalez and Morales informed them over radio that a spousal assault had occurred and the man driving the minivan was the suspect.

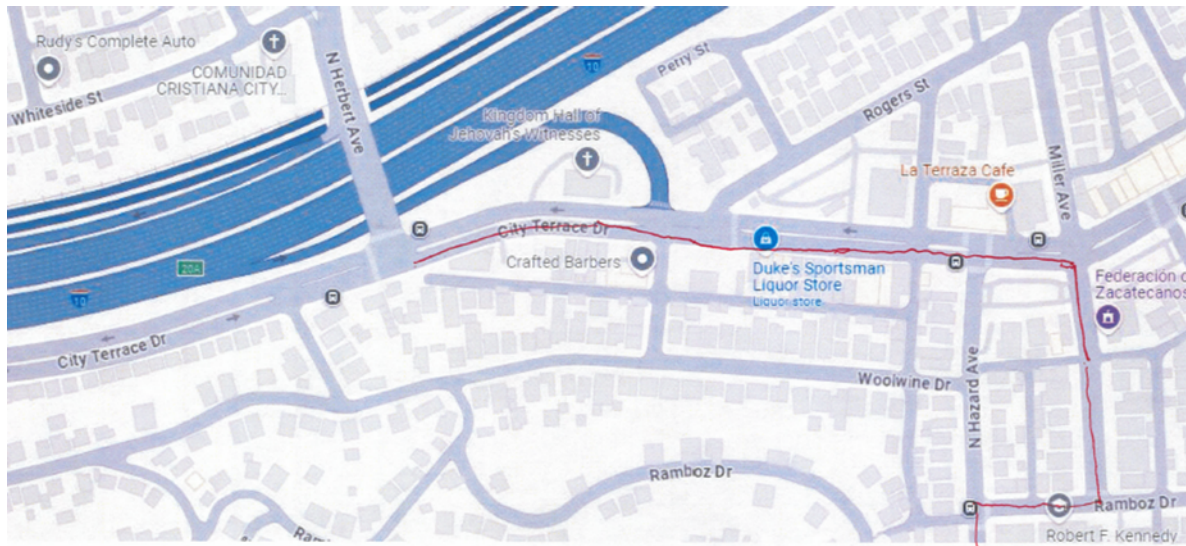


Fig. 4 – Map with Markings Made by Lopez Morfin Indicating Path of Travel During Pursuit of Agustin Pilar.

Lopez Morfin and Aselin decided to initiate a traffic stop on Snow Drive. When the minivan reached the dead end, it stopped. Lopez Morfin and Aselin quickly exited their patrol car to detain Agustin Pilar.

The deputies ordered Agustin Pilar to turn off the ignition, but he did not comply. Lopez Morfin heard the minivan's engine revving. He saw Agustin Pilar conduct a U-turn and drive eastbound toward Aselin. Lopez Morfin thought Agustin Pilar was going to hit him or his partner with the minivan. Lopez Morfin noted Snow Drive is a narrow street with no exit.

Lopez Morfin saw Agustin Pilar begin driving toward Aselin. Lopez Morfin ran to the rear of the patrol vehicle to avoid getting hit by the van. He could no longer see Aselin, and thought he had been hit by the minivan. He again yelled at the driver to stop. Lopez Morfin saw the car continue to drive forward. He fired his weapon at Agustin Pilar three to four times to stop what he perceived to be an ongoing deadly threat to Aselin. The minivan collided with another car and stopped.

Lopez Morfin still not had seen Aselin, so he walked to the front of the patrol vehicle and looked through its window. He saw Aselin standing and holding onto his leg. Lopez Morfin requested emergency assistance before extracting Agustin Pilar from the car and rendering aid.

Civil Deposition

On February 12, 2026, Lopez Morfin was deposed in civil litigation arising from the shooting

incident. In the deposition, Lopez Morfin said he saw Agustin Pilar “driving his vehicle through” Aselin. Lopez Morfin saw Aselin’s head “go down” before he heard gunfire, causing him to believe that Aselin “was shooting from underneath the car.” Lopez Morfin said he did not see his partner “at all” after watching his “head go backwards,” which led Lopez Morfin to believe Agustin Pilar had “run over” Aselin. He described Agustin Pilar as “ram[ming] his vehicle into” Aselin and said he discharged his firearm in order to “stop Mr. Pilar from continuing to run over my partner.”

Lopez Morfin described being unable to see his partner until after he fired at Agustin Pilar. He was shown his own BWV, in which Aselin could be seen in the frame firing at Agustin Pilar’s van both before and during the time Lopez Morfin began discharging his service weapon. Lopez Morfin said the BWV footage captured images he did not perceive at the time, and at the relevant period, Lopez Morfin believed Aselin had been run over and was on the ground.



Fig. 5 – Still Image from Lopez Morfin’s BWV Capturing Aselin Firing at the Minivan.

Statement of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] was interviewed by Morales and Gonzalez, as well as by detectives from the LASD Homicide Bureau. She had a history of reported domestic violence involving Agustin Pilar, including most recently in August 2023. On March 30, 2024, she attended a party with Agustin Pilar. At the party, the host asked [REDACTED] to dance with him. Agustin Pilar, who appeared to be intoxicated, became jealous and aggressive. [REDACTED] attempted to leave with Agustin Pilar to avoid making him angry. Agustin Pilar suddenly stood up and pushed [REDACTED] off her chair, causing her

to fall and hit her head. He was told to leave the party, but Agustin Pilar returned and punched [REDACTED] twice on the left cheek. He then left again and was followed by the host, whom he challenged to a fight. Agustin Pilar refused to leave unless [REDACTED] came with him.

[REDACTED]'s friends warned her not to leave with Agustin Pilar, but she was afraid he would assault her if she did not go with him. She entered Agustin Pilar's minivan. He drove away from the party and began violently pulling [REDACTED] back and forth by her arm as he said, "I'm going to kill you right here!" He then grabbed her hair and began to shake her head from side to side. [REDACTED] exited the minivan and began screaming for help. Agustin Pilar drove away as police cars approached. [REDACTED] believed Agustin Pilar would kill her because he had previously strangled her when angry and had repeatedly threatened to harm her children if she ever reported the abuse.

BWVs

Aselin's BWV

Aselin's BWV depicts him and Lopez Morfin arriving to the end of Snow Drive at approximately 11:55 p.m. Aselin exits the patrol car, and Agustin Pilar's minivan can be seen driving toward the end of Snow Drive and executing a three-point turn to face the deputies. Aselin and Lopez Morfin yell commands to stop as they attempt to detain Agustin Pilar at gunpoint. The minivan continues to turn around on Snow Drive. As the minivan's wheels turn back toward the deputies, Aselin can be heard warning Lopez Morfin to "Watch out!"



Fig. 6 – Still Image from Aselin's BWV Depicting Agustin Pilar Executing a Three-Point Turn.

Aselin and Lopez Morfin both back away from the minivan as it slowly turns and proceeds in the direction of Aselin and the patrol car. The minivan continues toward Aselin, past the open driver door of the patrol car. Aselin backs away and appears to stumble. His knee temporarily comes into view. At that moment, Aselin begins firing. He fires 11 rounds as the car continues to drive by him, appearing to cease firing after the front wheels of the minivan pass him.



Figs. 7 (Top) & 8 (Bottom) – Still Images from Aselin’s BWV at Approximately the Moment He Begins Firing and Two Seconds After He Begins Firing.

The minivan rolls into a parked car and stops. Aselin moves behind the patrol car and yells for his partner to take cover. He continues to detain the minivan at gunpoint until assisting units arrive. As other deputies arrive, Aselin can be heard saying, “Weapon was the vehicle. It tried to run me over! That retaining wall got in my way, and I was sandwiched.”

Lopez Morfin’s BWV

Lopez Morfin’s BWV depicts Agustin Pilar executing a three-point turn to face the deputies. As the minivan drives toward the patrol car, Lopez Morfin retreats while continuing to issue commands for Agustin Pilar to stop. Lopez Morfin runs behind the patrol car. His camera’s view of both Aselin and the minivan is obstructed by the patrol car. As Lopez Morfin runs alongside the passenger side of the patrol car toward the rear, gunshots can first be heard. Lopez Morfin’s BWV captures Aselin firing at Agustin Pilar as the minivan moves toward him. Lopez Morfin begins to fire as the minivan rolls toward and past Aselin.



Fig. 9 – Still Image from Lopez Morfin’s BWV Capturing Lopez Morfin Firing at the Minivan as it Drives by Aselin.

LEGAL ANALYSIS

Legal Standard

A peace officer is justified in using deadly force when the officer reasonably believes, based on the totality of the circumstances, that such force is necessary for either of the following reasons:

(1) to defend against an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or another person; or (2) to apprehend a fleeing person for any felony that threatened or resulted in death or serious bodily injury if the officer reasonably believes that the person will cause death or serious bodily injury to another unless immediately apprehended. Penal Code § 835a(c)(1)(A) &(B).

Deadly force shall be used “only when necessary, in defense of human life,” and officers “shall use other available resources and techniques if reasonably safe and feasible to an objectively reasonable officer.” Penal Code § 835a(a)(2).

“A threat of death or serious bodily injury is ‘imminent’ when, based on the totality of the circumstances, a reasonable officer in the same situation would believe that a person has the present ability, opportunity, and apparent intent to immediately cause death or serious bodily injury to the peace officer or another person. An imminent harm is not merely a fear of future harm, no matter how great the fear and no matter how great the likelihood of the harm, but is one that, from appearances, must be instantly confronted and addressed.” Penal Code § 835a(e)(2). When considering the totality of the circumstances, all facts known to or perceived by the peace officer at the time, including the conduct of the officer and the subject leading up to the use of deadly force, are taken into consideration. Penal Code §§ 835a(a)(4) and (e)(3). The peace officer’s decision to use force is not evaluated with the benefit of hindsight and shall account for occasions when officers may be forced to make quick judgments about using force. Penal Code § 835a(a)(4).

Analysis as to Aselin

In this case, Aselin and Lopez Morfin were assisting in the pursuit of a suspect wanted for felony domestic violence. Agustin Pilar had run a red light when the initial unit, Morales and Gonzalez, attempted to detain him. Likewise, he did not obey commands by Aselin and Lopez Morfin when they exited their patrol vehicle and attempted to detain him at gunpoint.

Agustin Pilar instead executed a three-point turn and began to drive toward Aselin, who was standing on the driver side of the patrol car. Both Aselin and Lopez Morfin attempted to get out of the path of the minivan, with Aselin warning his partner to “watch out!” as he walked backward in an attempt to create space for Agustin Pilar to pass him. Aselin backed down a graded road and into a grassy driveway wet from the night’s rain. There, according to the BWV, crime scene photographs, and Aselin’s statement, Aselin became wedged between a retaining wall, trash bins, and the oncoming minivan.

Aselin said he did not see the retaining wall and lost his footing on the wet grass as he backed up into it. He could not retreat to any other location as Agustin Pilar continued driving past the patrol car in Aselin’s direction. Lopez Morfin’s BWV captures the short distance between Aselin and the minivan at the moment Aselin opened fire. He fired 11 rounds, stopping when the minivan’s front wheels passed him. Aselin said he fired because he could not retreat farther back as Agustin Pilar’s minivan drove toward him. Aselin said he felt that discharging his

firearm was necessary to preserve his life. In his civil deposition, Aselin added details and stated repeatedly that he believed Agustin Pilar was accelerating toward Aselin in order to kill him.

Aselin made statements in his deposition which are either not supported or undermined by extrinsic evidence. For instance, Aselin said he heard Agustin Pilar accelerate toward him after he fell, which Aselin perceived as evidence that Agustin Pilar was planning to kill him. Both Aselin's and Lopez Morfin's BWV, however, capture Agustin Pilar's minivan slowing down as it begins to navigate the narrow space next to the patrol car in what appears to be an attempt to escape, and neither video shows the minivan appear to accelerate afterward in the manner described by Aselin. Such statements may raise doubts as to Aselin's ability to perceive or remember events correctly, or even his credibility. Nonetheless, none rise to a sufficient level to prove Aselin's actions were unreasonable beyond a reasonable doubt in light of the totality of the circumstances.

Although the wheels of Agustin Pilar's minivan are never seen turning directly at Aselin in either Aselin's or Lopez Morfin's BWV, Aselin's belief that deadly force was necessary to defend against an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury was reasonable given the rapidly unfolding events, Agustin Pilar's driving toward Aselin despite commands to stop, and Aselin's inability to retreat to any other location after becoming trapped between the retaining wall and the minivan on uneven and wet terrain. Under these circumstances, Aselin could reasonably conclude deadly force was necessary to defend against an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury.

Analysis as to Lopez Morfin

Like Aselin, Lopez Morfin was aware Agustin Pilar was suspected of felony domestic violence and was not complying with orders to stop his vehicle. Lopez Morfin backed away from Agustin Pilar in an attempt to avoid the path of the vehicle. As he ran around the side of the patrol vehicle, he said he lost sight of Aselin and thought his partner had been hit by the minivan. Lopez Morfin said he continued to yell for Agustin Pilar to stop, but as the car continued to drive forward, he fired at the minivan four times to stop what he perceived to be an ongoing threat. Lopez Morfin said he did not see Aselin again until after he finished firing at the minivan and saw Aselin through the patrol car's windshield.

Lopez Morfin's BWV does not entirely corroborate his statement. Though Lopez Morfin's BWV does not necessarily capture what he personally perceived in the moment, Aselin is visible in Lopez Morfin's BWV when Lopez Morfin began firing. Aselin's gunshots can be heard as Lopez Morfin rounds the back of the patrol vehicle, and Agustin Pilar's minivan can be seen driving just past Aselin as Lopez Morfin opens fire. Like Aselin, Lopez Morfin also made statements in his deposition which call into question his memory, his ability to perceive events, and even his credibility, including his statement that he believed his partner was under Agustin Pilar's vehicle when he fired at the minivan.

Nevertheless, given the chaotic nature of the incident, lighting, rainy conditions, and heightened awareness caused by Aselin firing his service weapon, it would be reasonable for Lopez Morfin to have perceived the situation differently than the angle captured by his BWV. As such, his actions cannot be proven to be unlawful beyond a reasonable doubt. Based upon the circumstances, his belief in the need to defend Aselin against a deadly imminent threat is largely supported by the evidence.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, we find Aselin used lawful and reasonable force in self-defense. We further find there is insufficient evidence to prove Lopez Morfin did not act in lawful defense of others when he used deadly force.