

**Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Deyaa Halaibeh
Santa Monica Police Department**

Officer Joey Rodriguez, #4086

J.S.I.D. File #24-0309



NATHAN J. HOCHMAN

District Attorney

Justice System Integrity Division

August 17, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: CHIEF DARRICK JACOB
Santa Monica Police Department
333 Olympic Drive
Santa Monica, California 904101

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

SUBJECT: Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Deyaa Halaibeh
J.S.I.D. File #24-0309
S.M.P.D. File #24-101830

DATE: August 17, 2026

The Justice System Integrity Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the October 5, 2024, fatal shooting of Deyaa Halaibeh by Santa Monica Police Department (SMPD) Officer Joey Rodriguez.

We have concluded Rodriguez acted in self defense, reasonably believing based on the totality of the circumstances that deadly force was necessary to defend himself against an imminent deadly threat.

The District Attorney's Command Center was notified of the shooting at 10:14 p.m. on October 5, 2024. The District Attorney Response Team responded and was given a briefing and walk-through of the scene by SMPD Sergeant David Haro.

The following analysis is based on radio calls, surveillance video, investigative reports, body-worn camera (BWC) video, audio recordings and transcripts of witness interviews, medical records, and photographs submitted to this office by SMPD Detectives Hilda Lucero and Peter Zamfirov on April 10, 2025. Officer Rodriguez's voluntary statement was also considered as part of this analysis.

FACTUAL ANALYSIS

Officer Joey Rodriguez Statement

Santa Monica Police Department (SMPD) Officer Joey Rodriguez, Serial # 4086, gave a voluntary, recorded statement in this matter.

Rodriguez stated on October 5, 2024, at approximately 5:10 p.m., he was working on reports at the SMPD station when dispatch requested he respond to a call for service in front of the station related to an incident Rodriguez had responded to earlier in the day.

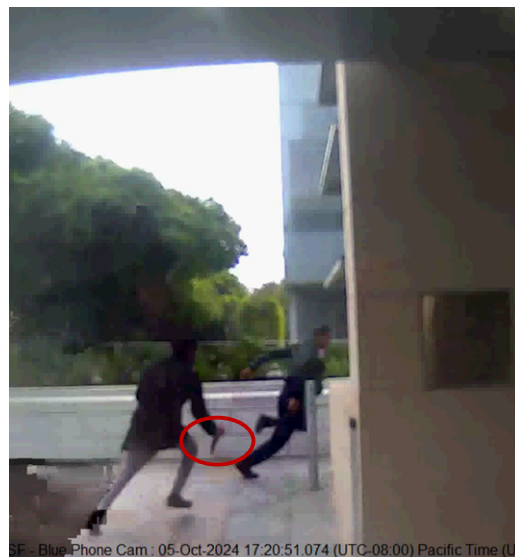
Rodriguez responded and saw the reporting parties, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], standing in the courtyard of the station outside the front entrance doors. Deyaa Halaibeh was standing directly next to the front doors wearing a dark coat. Rodriguez exited the

station to speak to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], and noticed Halaibeh seemed anxious and was repeatedly asking for help. Rodriguez advised Halaibeh he would assist him after helping the reporting parties. Halaibeh then placed his right hand inside his jacket as if holding something, and Rodriguez requested he remove his hand. Halaibeh simultaneously pulled an object from under his jacket and lunged at Rodriguez while screaming unintelligibly.



*Figure 1: Still From Rodriguez's Bodyworn Camera (BWC).
Halaibeh Shown Withdrawing a Knife from his Jacket (Circled)*

Rodriguez immediately felt a sharp pain in his left shoulder and was pushed backwards against a wall. Rodriguez, recognizing he was being attacked, fled west along the outside of the station and turned north around a corner while unholstering his service weapon.



*Figure 2: Still from SMPD Surveillance Camera.
Halaibeh in Pursuit of Rodriguez Holding Knife (Circled)*

Rodriguez looked back and saw Halaibeh was directly behind him, holding a large purple butcher knife.¹



Figure 3: Still from SMPD Surveillance Camera

Rodriguez stated Halaibeh was able to close the distance between them and a physical struggle ensued, during which Halaibeh put both of his hands on top of Rodriguez's service weapon. Rodriguez feared for his life as Halaibeh repeatedly attempted to strike Rodriguez with the knife while also attempting to take Rodriguez's pistol.



Figure 4: Still From Rodriguez's BWC

Rodriguez believed if Halaibeh was able to gain control of his service weapon he would use it to kill him, so he fired his service weapon twice. The physical struggle continued until both parties lost

¹ Later investigation revealed approximately ten minutes before this incident, Halaibeh had entered a Target store, asked to see a set of kitchen knives, forcibly took them, and pushed a Target employee to the ground before fleeing and walking directly to the SMPD station. The knife used in this incident was confirmed to be from the stolen knife set.

their footing and fell by a stairwell on [REDACTED]. Halaibeh dropped the knife. Rodriguez stood up and backed away while keeping his service weapon aimed at Halaibeh and unsuccessfully attempting to radio for backup. He was unable to reach anyone at the station.



Figure 5: Still From Rodriguez's BWC

When Rodriguez was approximately six to eight feet away from him, Halaibeh stood and took several steps towards Rodriguez. Rodriguez attempted to de-escalate the situation by ordering Halaibeh to, "Get on the ground!" Halaibeh continued walking towards him. Halaibeh turned and walked back to where the parties had fallen and retrieved the knife he had dropped. He then advanced towards Rodriguez again. Rodriguez issued several more commands for Halaibeh to "Get on the ground!"

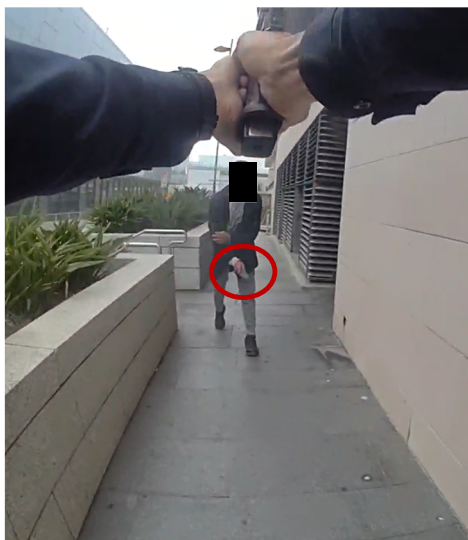


Figure 6: Still From Rodriguez's BWC. Halaibeh Holding Knife (Circled and Zoomed)

Halaibeh continued to advance toward Rodriguez, who fired what he believed were three to four rounds from his service weapon, striking Halaibeh, who fell to the ground.²

Rodriguez was then able to successfully radio for backup. SMPD officers arrived and proceeded to render first aid to both Rodriguez and Halaibeh.

Officers packed Halaibeh's chest wounds with gauze and performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Life saving measures were continued until Santa Monica Fire Department personnel arrived and took over. Halaibeh became non-responsive and was pronounced dead at 5:34 p.m.

Rodriguez sustained a stab wound to his left shoulder, a stab wound to his right shoulder, a six-inch laceration behind his right shoulder, and a fractured foot as a result of the encounter.



Figure 7: Stab/Puncture Wound to Rodriguez's Left Shoulder

² Later investigation determined that Rodriguez had expended a total of 7 rounds during the incident.



Figure 8: Puncture Wound and Slash Wound to Officer Rodriguez's Right Shoulder



Figure 9: 12 Inch Knife (6 Inches of Blade) Used by Halaibeh

CIVILIAN WITNESS STATEMENTS

██████████

██████████ stated she and ██████████ were at the police station in order to report an incident from earlier in the day. When Rodriguez exited the police station she saw a male (Halaibeh) approach him. She heard Rodriguez tell Halaibeh he could help him after speaking to herself and ██████████. Halaibeh put his hand inside his coat and she heard Rodriguez tell him he did not like his hand inside his jacket. Halaibeh asked if he was “making Rodriguez nervous,” removed a knife from underneath his jacket, and attempted to stab Rodriguez in the shoulder area. A physical altercation occurred between Rodriguez and Halaibeh, which continued onto the west sidewalk of the station. ██████████ heard several gunshots and ██████████ pulled her away from the scene to safety.

██████████ stated he and ██████████ were waiting outside the police station in order to file a report. He saw Halaibeh approach the blue call box and press the button repeatedly. Halaibeh asked he and ██████████ numerous times if this was the police station. He saw Rodriguez exit the station and stand in front of the doors. Rodriguez politely told Halaibeh he “had to speak to these people first (██████████ and ██████████) and then I will get to you.” Halaibeh put his hand inside his jacket and Rodriguez said, “Please don’t do that, it’s making me nervous.” Halaibeh responded, “Oh, you’re nervous?” and pulled out a large kitchen knife, raised it over his head, and thrust it in a downwards motion towards Rodriguez’s left collarbone area.

Rodriguez crouched down in an attempt to avoid being stabbed and ran around the southwest corner of the building, with Halaibeh following him and attempting to stab Rodriguez again. ██████████ heard approximately three shots, and hid behind a column. ██████████ looked around the corner and saw Rodriguez standing with his back towards him, and Halaibeh running straight towards Rodriguez. Rodriguez backed up as Halaibeh continued towards him, and discharged his firearm four or five times in Halaibeh’s direction. Halaibeh then fell to the ground.

CORONER

Deputy Medical Examiner Dr. Martina Kennedy performed an examination on Halaibeh’s remains on November 3, 2024. She determined the cause of death was three gunshot wounds; two to the right upper chest and one to the abdomen. Each gunshot would be immediately life-threatening. Halaibeh also suffered a stab wound to his left thigh. Toxicology studies revealed no evidence of alcohol or common drugs of abuse.

LEGAL ANALYSIS

The Law

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 section 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 section 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 section 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 section 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 section 835a(a)(4).

Analysis

The evidence presented in this case shows Halaibeh presented an immediate threat of death or great bodily injury to Rodriguez. He attacked the officer with a 12-inch knife concealed on his person without any warning or justification. Rodriguez was unaware he had been stabbed at first, stating he felt only a “sharp pain” in his left shoulder before he attempted to turn from Halaibeh and gain separation. Halaibeh pursued Rodriguez while holding the knife in a downward direction, ready to continue his violent attack, then grappled with Rodriguez and attempted to gain control of Rodriguez’s firearm. After Halaibeh fell to the ground and Rodriguez was able to position himself with his firearm trained on Halaibeh, Rodriguez ordered Halaibeh to drop his weapon and get on the ground several times. When Halaibeh ignored those commands and attempted to close the distance between himself and Rodriguez, Rodriguez fired his service weapon. Halaibeh placed Rodriguez in a situation which forced him to make a split-second decision regarding the amount of force required to stop the imminent threat posed by Halaibeh. Accordingly, Rodriguez’s use of deadly force under these circumstances was reasonable in self-defense.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, we believe Officer Rodriguez acted in lawful self-defense, reasonably believing under the circumstances deadly force was necessary to defend himself against an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury.