

**Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Timothy John Beckwith  
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department**

**Deputy Jonathan Blue, #606066  
Deputy Ronald Barrientos, #625464  
Deputy Raul Magadan, #482956**

**J.S.I.D. File #19-0125**



**GEORGE GASCÓN**

**District Attorney**

**Justice System Integrity Division**

**September 30, 2021**

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: CAPTAIN JOE MENDOZA  
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 Timothy John Beckwith  
J.S.I.D. File #19-0125  
L.A.S.D. File #019-03705-2607-055

DATE: September 30, 2021

The Justice System Integrity Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the March 17, 2019, fatal shooting of Timothy John Beckwith by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) Deputies Jonathan Blue, Ronald Barrientos, and Raul Magadan. We have determined that Deputy Blue, Deputy Barrientos, and Deputy Magadan acted in lawful self-defense and defense of others when they fired their duty weapons.

The District Attorney's Command Center was notified of this shooting on March 17, 2019, at approximately 6:00 a.m. The District Attorney Response Team responded to the scene and was given a briefing and walk-through by Lieutenant Scott Hoglund.

The following analysis is based on reports and other materials, including recorded interviews, photographs, telephone calls to LASD's Palmdale Station, video surveillance recordings, and radio communications submitted to this office by LASD Homicide Bureau. No compelled statements were considered in this analysis.

**FACTUAL ANALYSIS**

On March 16, 2019, at approximately 4:00 p.m., an anonymous person called the Palmdale LASD Station to report a "fugitive" by the name of "Tim Beckwith." Beckwith had an outstanding "no-bail" warrant and was located inside a trailer parked in the driveway of a residence on Karling Place in the City of Palmdale. Blue and Barrientos responded to the location but did not see the person matching the description of the man and the deputies drove off.

At approximately 9:00 p.m., Blue and Barrientos responded to a second call regarding Beckwith's location at the same address. The deputies obtained and viewed Beckwith's California identification photograph using department resources and confirmed the existence of

Beckwith's outstanding warrant. When the deputies arrived, they could hear movement inside the trailer and saw some light emitting through its windows, which were mostly obstructed by various items. Blue knocked on the door of the trailer. After more shuffling Beckwith said, "Who is it?" or "Who's there?" Blue identified themselves as deputies. Beckwith responded, "This better not be a joke. I have a gun." Suddenly the trailer door swung open toward Blue.

Blue told investigators that Beckwith opened the door and Blue held the door open with his left hand. Blue illuminated Beckwith with his flashlight and recognized him from the photograph he had viewed earlier as the person named in the warrant. Beckwith was "crouched down" in a "suspicious" manner and looked in Blue's direction. Beckwith stood up and took a few steps back and pointed a "black pistol" at Blue. The lighting inside the trailer was dim and Beckwith held the object close to his torso, but Blue believed it was a revolver based on its "silhouette." Blue turned, stepped down from the step by the trailer door, and heard a "muffled gunshot" inside the trailer. Blue then heard louder gunshots that he believed to be fired by Barrientos. In fear for his life and that of his partner, Blue fired four rounds from his service weapon at the trailer door.

A surveillance camera from a house neighboring the driveway with the trailer recorded several segments, all approximately 20 seconds in length. The video recordings appeared to be motion activated. One segment captured the officer involved shooting as described by Blue and Barrientos. The video captured Blue at the door of the trailer. The trailer door was opened momentarily, and Blue immediately retreated as he described to investigators. No gunshots are heard as the recordings did not include sound.



Surveillance video depicting Blue at the open trailer door immediately before he turned and stepped away.

Barrientos told investigators that when the trailer door swung open, he saw Blue's eyes "light up" as he looked inside the trailer. Barrientos heard a gunshot from what he believed to be a small caliber gun and saw Blue jump backward and hunch over. Barrientos believed Blue had been shot in the abdomen or legs. Barrientos pointed his service weapon near the doorjamb of the trailer where he saw light and a shadow moving in the trailer. Barrientos fired two rounds from his service weapon at the area of the trailer he believed Beckwith was located. He heard Blue fire approximately two rounds, and then Barrientos fired four more rounds at the trailer in the direction where he believed Beckwith was positioned so that they could safely move back toward their patrol car for cover.<sup>1</sup>

Blue and Barrientos took cover behind their patrol car and radioed for help. Responding deputies communicated with Beckwith utilizing their public address (PA) system. Beckwith stated that he was injured due to gunfire, but he refused to come out to obtain medical attention and was heard moving around inside the trailer. LASD's Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) was notified of an armed barricaded person and responded to the location.

Magadan was assigned to SEB's Special Weapons Team. SEB deputies implemented various protocols to encourage Beckwith to surrender peacefully. Deputies attempted to negotiate with Beckwith through PA announcements. Over the course of several hours, Beckwith repeatedly opened the trailer door, yelled at the deputies, and shut the door. Officer Salinas, an officer with the Inglewood Police Department temporarily assigned to SEB, told investigators that Beckwith responded to the deputies' commands to come out with remarks like, "Fuck you! We're going to have to shoot it out at this point!" SEB Deputy Hilgendorf heard Beckwith state that he was armed with a gun and that he would not be taken alive. At approximately 1:00 a.m., Beckwith opened a roof hatch two times and threatened to come out of the trailer shooting. Beckwith threatened to kill deputies and their police dog.

Magadan was assigned to cover the team designated to arrest Beckwith. Magadan was armed with a 9mm submachine gun and positioned approximately 35 to 40 feet away from the trailer. In addition to hearing Beckwith's threats, Magadan was told that Beckwith had fired at deputies earlier in the evening. Magadan also witnessed Beckwith open the door of the trailer, quickly display what he believed to be a handgun, and shut the trailer door. At approximately 3:00 a.m., deputies deployed flash bang canisters with tear gas at the trailer.<sup>2</sup> Magadan stated that several seconds later, Beckwith slammed the trailer door open, stepped outside, and pointed a handgun in the direction of SEB deputies. Magadan believed he saw a "small caliber blue-steel dark handgun."<sup>3</sup> Magadan stated that he was concerned for the safety of deputies at the scene and fired six to seven rounds at Beckwith's upper torso area. Beckwith fell to the ground and returned inside the trailer.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The physical evidence indicated that Barrientos fired a total of six to seven rounds from his service weapon.

<sup>2</sup> SEB Deputy Clarke stated he heard two gunshots from within the trailer after tear gas was inserted into the trailer before Beckwith exited the trailer holding "something" in his hand.

<sup>3</sup> SEB Deputy Solano stated that he saw Beckwith run out of the trailer door and appeared to have a small caliber, blue-steel firearm in his right hand.

<sup>4</sup> The surveillance camera from the neighboring house did not record this officer involved shooting.

Beckwith was heard yelling. Shortly thereafter Beckwith did not respond to further communications. Deputies utilized an armored vehicle with a metal claw, various cameras, and a dog to search for Beckwith inside the trailer. Approximately two hours later, the arrest team entered the trailer and discovered Beckwith had succumbed to his injuries and was deceased.

Investigators conducted a thorough search of the trailer and did not locate any firearms. Investigators located a black metal bicycle gooseneck to a handlebar on the floor of the trailer beneath the refrigerator and an additional metal bicycle piece, cylindrical in shape, within the considerable amount of debris inside the trailer.<sup>5</sup>



Bicycle gooseneck photographed inside the trailer.



Photograph of crime scene investigator holding bicycle gooseneck.

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<sup>5</sup> These items were not submitted for scientific analysis.



Photograph of the cylindrical hardware.

On March 19, 2019, an autopsy was conducted, and the medical examiner determined that the cause of Beckwith's death was multiple gunshot wounds. Laboratory analysis detected the presence of methamphetamine, amphetamine, and THC<sup>6</sup> in Beckwith's blood system.

## LEGAL ANALYSIS

California law permits any person to use deadly force in self-defense or in the defense of others if he actually and reasonably believed that he or others were in imminent danger of great bodily injury or death. CALCRIM No. 505. In protecting himself or another, a person may use that amount of force which he believes reasonably necessary and which would appear to a reasonable person, in the same or similar circumstances, to be necessary to prevent imminent injury. *Id.* If the person's beliefs were reasonable, the danger does not need to have actually existed. *Id.*

In California, the evaluation of the reasonableness of a police officer's use of deadly force employs a reasonable person acting as a police officer standard, which enables the jury to evaluate the conduct of a reasonable person functioning as a police officer in a stressful situation. *People v. Mehserle* (2012) 206 Cal.App.4th 1125, 1146.

In evaluating whether a police officer's use of deadly force was reasonable in a specific situation, it is helpful to draw guidance from the objective standard of reasonableness adopted in civil actions alleging Fourth Amendment violations. "The 'reasonableness' of a particular use of force must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene, rather than with the 20/20 vision of hindsight... The calculus of reasonableness must embody allowance for the fact that police officers are often forced to make split-second judgments—in circumstances that are tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving—about the amount of force that is necessary in a particular situation." *Graham v. Connor* (1989) 490 U.S. 386, 396-397.

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<sup>6</sup> THC is the main psychoactive compound in cannabis.

Blue and Barrientos attempted to contact Beckwith, who had an outstanding warrant for his arrest. Blue knocked on the door of the trailer, and immediately identified him and his partner as Sheriff's deputies. In response, Beckwith told the deputies he was armed with a "gun." Beckwith forcefully swung the door open and held an unknown object, likely a bicycle part, in a manner consistent with how a person would hold a handgun. Beckwith's words and actions caused Blue to reasonably believe Beckwith was preparing to shoot him. Blue immediately retreated and both deputies heard what they believed to be a muffled "gunshot." In response, Blue and Barrientos fired their service weapons.

Since there was no firearm located inside the trailer, it only became apparent after the officer involved shootings that the sound heard by Blue and Barrientos was not a gunshot. The physical evidence retrieved from inside the trailer after the officer involved shootings indicates that Beckwith used an item or items resembling a handgun to threaten deputies. The totality of the circumstances indicate that Beckwith intended, through his words and actions, to cause the deputies to believe he was armed with a "gun" and that he posed a deadly threat. Although a deadly danger did not actually exist because Beckwith was not armed with a firearm, the deputies' beliefs and fear of imminent threat of great bodily injury or death were reasonable at the time they used deadly force.

After the initial shooting, the deputies retreated and called for backup. Beckwith claimed he was injured and refused to surrender. Beckwith continued to communicate that he possessed a firearm to the deputies at the scene. His actions and words directly indicated that he was a danger to deputies at the scene. He brandished an object that resembled a pistol and threatened to shoot and kill deputies and their dog. He told deputies at the scene that he would not surrender.

After several hours, Beckwith charged outside the trailer and pointed an object resembling a pistol toward the deputies. Beckwith's intentionally acted in a manner he knew would likely result in the deputies shooting him. Magadan, tasked with protecting other deputies who had attempted for several hours to persuade Beckwith to surrender peacefully, reasonably believed that Beckwith was armed with a handgun and posed an imminent threat to the safety of all the deputies at the scene. In response, Magadan fired his service weapon resulting in Beckwith's death. Under the circumstances known at the time, Magadan's use of deadly force was reasonable to defend against what Magadan reasonably believed to be a deadly threat to his partner deputies.

## **CONCLUSION**

We conclude that the deadly force utilized by Deputy Jonathan Blue, Deputy Ronald Barrientos, and Deputy Raul Magadan was legally justified in self-defense and the defense of others.