

**Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Jessica Beedles
United States Drug Enforcement Administration**

Special Agent Jeffrey Winkler

J.S.I.D. File #19-0476



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District Attorney

Justice System Integrity Division

October 14, 2021

MEMORANDUM

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

SUBJECT: Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Jessica Beedles
J.S.I.D. File #19-0476
L.A.P.D. File #19-2118828

DATE: October 14, 2021

The Justice System Integrity Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the November 20, 2019, fatal shooting of Jessica Beedles by United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Agent Jeffrey Winkler. We have determined that Agent Winkler acted in lawful self-defense and the defense of another when he fired his weapon.

The District Attorney's Command Center was notified of this shooting on November 20, 2019, at approximately 9:30 a.m. The District Attorney Response Team responded to the scene and was given a briefing and walk-through by Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Detective Louis Romero.

The following analysis is based on reports and other materials, including recorded interviews of witnesses, surveillance videos, and photographs submitted by LAPD Robbery-Homicide Division. The voluntary statement of Special Agent Winkler was considered in this analysis.

FACTUAL ANALYSIS

On November 20, 2019, DEA Special Agents served a narcotics-related federal search warrant at a single-family residence on Nora Lynn Drive in Woodland Hills. The residence is a large two-story house with seven bedrooms and five bathrooms. Several surveillance cameras were affixed

to the exterior and interior of the house. None of the law enforcement agents were equipped with body-worn cameras.

At approximately 3:44 a.m., DEA agents, including Winkler, wearing full tactical uniforms with “Police” patches on the front and back approached the front door. A motion-activated video recording from a surveillance camera pointed at the front door captured an agent opening the unlocked door. The DEA agents yelled, “Police with a search warrant! Make yourself known!” As agents entered, they yelled again, “Police with a search warrant! Make yourself known!” Agents walked up a staircase to the second floor and continued to announce their presence prior to the sound of them forcing the master bedroom door open. A DEA agent is heard yelling, “Let me see your hands! Get back out here! Let me see your hands! Let me see your hands!” One of the agents yelled, “He is in the room! He switched to the left! He went in there!” The recorded segment that captured the above audio is 59 seconds in length. Another video recording from a camera pointing toward the street in front of the house also captured audio from agents entering the master bedroom. Approximately 15 seconds after the agent yelled, “He went in there!” the sound of what appeared to be a diversionary device is heard and the recording ends shortly thereafter. Video or audio of the officer involved shooting that followed was not captured on any of the surveillance cameras.

On December 3, 2019, LAPD RHD investigators interviewed Winkler. Winkler had been employed with the DEA for 27 years and was the Senior Team Leader of the Special Response Team (SRT) that executed the search warrant. Prior to executing the search warrant, Winkler and the other DEA agents had information that Jessica Beedles and Corey, residents of the house, were known to be “armed.” Winkler stated that when his team approached the master bedroom door on the second floor of the house, they discovered it was locked. One of the agents knocked on the door and stated, “Police with a search warrant!” The agents forced entry and Winkler saw Corey run from one side of the room to another and stand in the doorway of the bathroom. Initially, Corey did not follow commands to show his hands. Once he complied, Winkler pulled him into the bedroom where other agents took custody of him. Winkler returned to clear the large bathroom with Special Agent VonCannon. Before making entry into the bathroom, VonCannon yelled, “Gun! Gun! Gun!” Winkler saw Beedles in the back of the bathroom pointing a silver handgun at him and VonCannon. Beedles was holding the handgun with both her hands and extending the handgun in their direction with her elbows locked. Winkler saw her lean forward and appear to look through the sights of her handgun. Winkler believed Beedles was going to shoot him or VonCannon. In fear for his life and VonCannon’s life, Winkler fired two rounds from his service rifle at Beedles causing her to fall to the ground in the middle of the bathroom with the gun still in her hand. While other agents removed the gun from Beedles’ hand, Winkler continued to clear the bathroom and the rest of the house.¹

LAPD RHD investigators interviewed VonCannon, who confirmed that he saw Beedles pointing a handgun in their direction. VonCannon yelled, “Gun! Gun! Gun!” He then heard Winkler say, “Drop the gun!” or “Drop it!” before Winkler fired his service rifle. VonCannon stated that he did not see Beedles inside the bathroom initially when they took Corey into custody. There were two closets inside the master bathroom.

¹ In addition to Beedles and Corey, seven other people, including two children, resided inside the house when agents executed the search warrant.

DEA agents, including a paramedic, rendered first aid to Beedles, but she succumbed to her injuries and was pronounced dead at the scene. On November 21, 2019, an autopsy was performed and determined Beedles' death was caused by multiple gunshot wounds. One bullet entered and exited through her right arm, entered her chest, and lodged inside her back. A second bullet entered through her chest and exited her back. Toxicology analysis confirmed that Beedles blood tested positive for several drugs, including fentanyl, amphetamine, and methamphetamine.

The 9mm semiautomatic handgun Beedles possessed was retrieved by investigators at the scene.² The handgun was operable and loaded with nine rounds in the magazine and one in the chamber. DNA analysis determined that a swab of the firearm contained a mixture of four individuals. Beedles was the major contributor of the mixture.



Beedles' 9mm semiautomatic handgun.

After LAPD personnel processed the scene and collected evidence related to the officer involved shooting investigation, DEA agents searched the residence pursuant to their federal search warrant. DEA agents retrieved electronic devices, a rifle, firearm ammunition, and multiple pounds of narcotics, including fentanyl, heroin, and methamphetamine.

² The handgun was not registered to Beedles.

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.*

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.

Here, Winkler and other DEA agents were lawfully executing a federal search warrant at the house located at Nora Lynn Drive. Video recordings obtained from surveillance cameras affixed to the house corroborate several agents' accounts of entry into the house and entry into the master bedroom on the second floor. Agents clearly and repeatedly announced their presence as police officers. Beedles was hiding in the same bathroom where Corey was reluctantly removed from by agents. Aware of the police presence, Beedles continued to conceal herself within the large master bathroom while Corey was taken into custody.

The available evidence shows Beedles emerged from the closet within the bathroom and pointed a semiautomatic handgun at Winkler and his partner as they prepared to clear the bathroom. In response, Winkler fired two rounds from his service rifle to stop the imminent threat Beedles posed to the agents' lives. Winkler's use of deadly force was reasonable under the circumstances.

CONCLUSION

We conclude that Special Agent Jeffrey Winkler's use of deadly force was legally justified in self-defense and the defense of another.