

Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Jerman Magana
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Deputy Omar Covarrubias #525095
Deputy Emmanuel Mercado #659092

J.S.I.D. File #24-0197



NATHAN J. HOCHMAN

District Attorney

Justice System Integrity Division

October 30, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: CAPTAIN AUTURO 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 Jerman Magana
J.S.I.D. File #24-0197
L.A.S.D. File #024-06927-2872-013

DATE: August 26, 2025

The Justice System Integrity Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the June 13, 2024, fatal shooting of Jerman Magana by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) Deputies Omar Covarrubias and Emmanuel Mercado. We conclude Covarrubias and Mercado acted in lawful self-defense at the time they fired their service weapons, reasonably believing based on the totality of the circumstances deadly force was necessary to defend against an imminent deadly threat.

The District Attorney's Command Center was notified of this fatal officer involved shooting on June 13, 2024, at approximately 11:35 p.m. The District Attorney Response Team responded to the location and was provided a briefing and walk-through of the scene by LASD Homicide Bureau Detective Steve De Jong.

The following analysis is based on reports, radio transmissions, 9-1-1 calls, recorded interviews, photographs, body worn camera video (BWC), media footage and surveillance video submitted to this office by LASD Homicide Bureau Detectives on March 13, 2025. Voluntary statements provided by the deputies were considered as part of this analysis.

INTRODUCTION

On June 13, 2024, a 9-1-1 caller reported a family member was shooting a gun and scaring her children. Compton Station LASD deputies responded to the call and observed Jerman Magana climb onto the roof of his residence.¹ While on the rooftop, Magana was observed inhaling gas from a cannister while armed with a pistol-grip shotgun.

¹ Deputies were dressed in uniforms and tactical equipment with LASD patches on the shoulders and badges. All deputies other than Covarrubias were equipped with BWV.

Magana fired the shotgun several times into the air. He reloaded the gun and aimed it at an LASD helicopter, prompting an officer involved shooting.² Magana was treated on the rooftop by a deputy/tactical paramedic until the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD) arrived and pronounced Magana deceased.

FACTUAL ANALYSIS

On June 13, 2024, [REDACTED] saw her [REDACTED], Magana, walk toward the back of the property where they lived. She heard a loud “boom” and heard Magana yell, “I thought you said you wouldn’t be scared!”

[REDACTED] called Magana’s stepfather and told him Magana was in the backyard acting “crazy” and “shooting.” [REDACTED] called her son, [REDACTED] and asked if Magana had a shotgun. [REDACTED] confirmed Magana owned a shotgun. At 7:46 p.m., [REDACTED] called 9-1-1 and reported her [REDACTED] was under the influence of drugs and “shooting bullets.”

Deputies Christian Juarez and Emmanuel Mercado responded to the location of the “illegal shooting call.” Juarez said they were informed by dispatch the shooter was possibly under the influence of drugs. As they approached the location, the call was updated to reflect Magana had climbed onto the roof of the residence with a shotgun. A LASD helicopter, Airship 21, was called to the location to monitor Magana while he was on the roof. (*Figure 1*)



Figure 1: Still photo from a video of Magana on the roof with a short-barreled shotgun (yellow circle) and an ammo container (red circle)³.

Juarez heard deputies use a P.A. system to order Magana to get down from the roof. Magana refused. Juarez and Mercado went to a neighbor’s home next door to Magana’s residence.

² The LASD helicopter is distinctively colored and marked with LASD lettering. The helicopter was not equipped with video recording equipment.

³ The video recordings of the incident were recorded by media outlets.

Juarez said he heard several gunshots coming from the roof but could not see where Magana was firing. Juarez said he felt the gunshots were “flying over our heads.”

The neighbor told the deputies he could see Magana on the rooftop through a window in his den. Sergeant Jason Parolini and Mercado entered the neighbor’s home and went to the den.⁴ Juarez requested additional back up units and a Mental Health Evaluation Team (MET) to respond to the location. (Figure 2)



Figure 2: Magana’s position on the rooftop (red circle). Covarrubias and Mercado located inside the neighbor’s home fired at Magana through the neighbor’s window (yellow circle).

While Mercado was inside the neighbor’s home, he saw Magana on the roof and heard ground units ordering Magana to surrender and come down. Mercado saw Magana inhale vapors from an aerosol can and point the shotgun at his chest and then his head. Mercado observed Magana sit up and fire the shotgun. Magana reloaded the shotgun and pointed it at his chest.

Mercado saw Magana remove the shotgun from his chest and aim it at the helicopter. Mercado watched as Magana tracked the helicopter and fired approximately three rounds at the helicopter. Fearing Magana would strike the deputies inside the helicopter, disabling the aircraft, and causing injury to the residents below, Mercado immediately fired his service weapon five times at Magana.

Covarrubias was assigned to LASD’s Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) on patrol when he heard “deputies were taking rounds” from a male on a rooftop armed with a shotgun.⁵ Covarrubias received updates from the deputies in the helicopter, and heard over the radio Magana was reloading the shotgun. Covarrubias went to the location and entered the neighbor’s home.

⁴ The neighbor was evacuated from his home for his safety before the officer involved shooting occurred.

⁵ According to the LASD, SEB is a full-time tactical unit handling high risk situations including hostages, barricaded suspects, and high-risk warrants.

While inside the neighbor's home, Covarrubias saw Magana on the rooftop holding a shotgun. Covarrubias said Magana pointed the shotgun at his own face and then "tracked" the helicopter before firing a round at it. (Figure 3)



Figure 3: Mercado's BWV showing Magana sat up and fired the shotgun at the helicopter. Deputies saw muzzle flash and gun smoke (yellow circle) emitting from the weapon.⁶

Covarrubias said he did not fire his weapon while Magana was pointing the shotgun at himself, however, when Magana aimed and fired the shotgun at the helicopter, he feared for the safety of the deputies in the helicopter and potential injuries to others if the helicopter went down. Covarrubias fired his service weapon twice at Magana, and saw Magana slump over.

Deputies climbed onto the roof and began rendering aid to Magana until the LACFD arrived and began treating Magana.

Deputy Jason Colon was piloting Airship 21 with his partner, Deputy Tyler Wilson, who was the observer. While flying overhead, the deputies used a spotlight to monitor Magana. Colon observed Magana inhaling vapors from an aerosol can and placing the barrel of the shotgun in his mouth. Colon lowered the helicopter to 300 feet.

At approximately 8:42 p.m., Colon observed Magana reload the shotgun. While flying approximately 400 feet over Magana's residence, Colon saw Magana raise the shotgun toward them. Magana fired the shotgun multiple times at the helicopter. After seeing the muzzle flash,

⁶ Mercado was standing inside the neighbor's residence looking through mini blinds when his BWV captured Magana firing the shotgun at the LASD helicopter.

Colon raised the altitude of the helicopter and notified the ground units Magana had fired at them.⁷

Concerned Magana would strike Wilson, Colon turned the helicopter south. Colon heard a deputy involved shooting occurred and landed the helicopter at the Long Beach Airport. Colon conducted a post-flight inspection of the helicopter, and observed one of the helicopter rotors had been struck by gunfire.⁸ (Figure 4)



Figure 4: Images of the shotshell strike on the rotor of the LASD helicopter.

■■■■ saw the deputies and the police helicopter arrive. ■■■■ heard an announcement from the police helicopter advising everyone to leave the location. Deputies evacuated her children and the rest of the family members from the home.

■■■■ said prior to the incident she saw Magana inhaling the contents of an aerosol spray can, starting in the early morning and continuing throughout the day. She observed Magana acting bizarrely, making incoherent statements, and swinging his body from side to side. ■■■■ said Magana is violent when he uses drugs. ■■■■ said in addition to using inhalants, Magana also uses “crystal.”⁹

Magana’s ■■■■, ■■■■, told investigators Magana was addicted to “crystal” and inhalants. On the day of the incident, she saw Magana sitting on an outside couch while consuming drugs. As ■■■■ prepared to go to the store, she saw Magana “cutting” a rifle with a power tool.¹⁰ She

⁷ Colon checked for signs of damage based on the helicopter’s gauges, and when he did not see any changes to the instrumentation, continued flying and monitoring the incident.

⁸ Colon conducted a pre-flight inspection of the helicopter and did not see any visible marks on the helicopter. Colon told investigators the damage from the gunfire was “fresh.” Colon said the helicopter produces loud noise during flight, and it would be difficult for him to hear if any rounds impacted the aircraft.

⁹ The Drug Enforcement Administration identifies inhalants as common household products that produce volatile chemical vapors which are inhaled to induce psychoactive or mind-altering effects. “Crystal” is the vernacular term for methamphetamine.

¹⁰ Deputies observed Magana’s rifle had a shortened wooden stock wrapped in black tape.

confronted Magana about the rifle, but left when he told her to drop the conversation. While on the roof, Magana called [REDACTED] three times. She pleaded with him to give up the rifle and the aerosol spray. During the call, Magana told [REDACTED] to take care of his daughter.

[REDACTED] told investigators he is related to Magana and lives in the front part of the residence. On the day of the incident, he saw Magana inhaling aerosol spray from a computer cleaning canister. [REDACTED] described Magana as a person who was “going crazy and high at the same time.” [REDACTED] avoided confronting Magana that day about a borrowed sound system speaker because [REDACTED] was afraid Magana would become violent. [REDACTED] went inside his home and told his brother to call the police. A few minutes later [REDACTED] heard a single shotgun blast. When the deputies arrived, [REDACTED] heard additional shotgun blasts and several gunshots from a pistol. [REDACTED] heard the deputies say, “Put the gun down!” and “Get down from the roof!” [REDACTED] heard Magana reply, “Go ahead shoot me.”

[REDACTED] said deputies were called to the residence on two other occasions. Once when Magana was “out of control and fighting with [his mother,]” and the second time was in either 2015 or 2019 when Magana attempted suicide by running into a busy street.

[REDACTED] said she dated Magana for ten years and they have a child in common. She told investigators Magana had suicidal thoughts and was [REDACTED] last year. [REDACTED] believes Magana’s mental health issues stem from his long-term use of aerosol inhalants and methamphetamine.

[REDACTED] told investigators Magana was suffering from depression after breaking up with his girlfriend and losing his family. [REDACTED] said Magana made recent statements about committing suicide because he was “tired of the world.”

FORENSIC EVIDENCE

Autopsy Report

On June 17, 2024, Los Angeles County Deputy Medical Examiner (LACDME) Dr. Scott Luzi conducted the post-mortem examination of Magana’s remains. Dr. Luzi attributed the cause of Magana’s death to “a gunshot wound to the chest.”

Toxicology testing conducted as part of the autopsy showed the presence of alcohol, methamphetamine, and difluoroethane in Magana’s system.¹¹

Magana’s Weapon

LASD Senior Criminalist Amanda Davis identified and documented the weapon and ballistics recovered from the scene. Magana was armed with a Mossberg Western Field 12 Gauge pump action shotgun, model M550AB, with some illegible markings. (Figure 5)

¹¹ Difluoroethane is a colorless gas primarily used as a propellant in aerosol sprays including gas duster products.



Figure 5: Magana's Mossberg Western Field 12 Gauge pump action shotgun recovered from the roof.

Magana reloaded from an ammunition box which was recovered from the roof with the rifle.
(Figure 6)



Figure 6: Expended 12-gauge shotgun shells and Magana's ammunition box recovered from the roof.

LASD Forensic Identification Specialist Desiree Rollins identified and documented 12 fired 12-gauge shotshells from the roof and the backyard of the residence.

Firearm Analysis

Davis identified five fired 9mm Luger caliber cartridge cases and three expended 223 Remington caliber cartridge cases from the floor of the neighboring residence.

Mercado fired five rounds from his service weapon, a Smith & Wesson M&P 2.0. 9mm semi-automatic firearm. Covarrubias fired three rounds from his service weapon, a Colt M4.0 rifle.

LEGAL ANALYSIS

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. 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).

According to family members, Magana had a long-standing history of addiction to methamphetamine and aerosol inhalants. Family members believed his long-term drug use led to his mental health issues, history of acting violent while under the influence of drugs, and attempting suicide.

While on the roof, Magana was observed inhaling vapors from an aerosol can and engaging in behavior which appeared suicidal. Magana told deputies, “Go ahead, shoot me!” before he

pointed the loaded shotgun at his chest his face, and put it in his mouth. He also called his mother and told her to take care of his child.

Covarrubias and Mercado observed Magana's erratic behavior on the roof while they were inside the neighbor's home. They saw Magana put the rifle in his mouth and point it at his chest while they waited for Magana to follow orders to drop the gun and come down from the roof, however, Magana refused to follow the orders of the ground unit. Instead, Magana reloaded the shotgun, aimed it at the helicopter and fired. Covarrubias and Mercado both believed Magana would hit and kill the deputies inside the helicopter and/or disable the aircraft, causing it to crash on the homes below the airspace.

Under these circumstances, Deputies Covarrubias and Mercado reasonably believed the use of deadly force was necessary to defend against an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to others.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, we find Deputies Covarrubias and Mercado's use of deadly force was reasonable under the circumstances, and they acted lawfully in defense of another.