

**Non-Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Bridget Blaney  
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department**

**Deputy Ernesto Valencia, #540343**

**J.S.I.D. File #22-0419**



**GEORGE GASCÓN**

**District Attorney**

**Justice System Integrity Division**

**November 6, 2024**

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: ACTING 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: Non-Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Bridget Blaney  
J.S.I.D. File #22-0419  
L.A.S.D. File #022-05647-0865-057

DATE: November 6, 2024

The Justice System Integrity Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the November 26, 2022, non-fatal shooting of Bridget Blaney by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) Deputy Ernesto Valencia. It is our conclusion that the deputy acted in lawful self-defense at the time his weapon was fired.

The District Attorney's Command Center was notified of this shooting on November 26, 2022, at 11:38 a.m. The District Attorney Response Team was given a briefing and walk-through of the scene by LASD Lieutenant Michael Gomez at approximately 2:30 p.m.

The following analysis is based on reports, interviews, body worn camera video (BWV) footage, and audio recordings submitted to our office by LASD Homicide Bureau on August 31, 2023. Valencia did not provide a voluntary statement and no compelled statements were elicited.

**FACTUAL ANALYSIS**

On November 26, 2022, at approximately 10:03 a.m., Blaney was in the area of North Vincent Avenue and East Edna Place in the City of Covina. She had a large metal wrench and was in the street hitting several vehicles. After multiple 9-1-1 calls, Valencia responded to the location and located Blaney. When Valencia exited the patrol vehicle, Blaney used the wrench to hit the vehicle's rear window. Blaney then advanced toward Valencia with the wrench over her shoulder. Valencia fired his duty handgun two to three times, wounding Blaney. Blaney was transported to a local hospital where she was treated for her injuries and cleared for booking.

**9-1-1 Calls**

On November 26, 2022, at approximately 10:03 a.m., [REDACTED] called 9-1-1 to report that Blaney had hit [REDACTED]'s vehicle with some type of tool. After hitting [REDACTED]'s vehicle, Blaney walked into the middle of the street and started hitting other vehicles. [REDACTED] remained on the phone with the dispatcher until Valencia arrived.

A second, unidentified female called 9-1-1 to report that Blaney had a crowbar. The caller said, "I believe she already hit a car."

### Witness [REDACTED]'s Statements

On November 26, 2022, detectives interviewed [REDACTED] with the aid of a Spanish-speaking translator. The interview was audio recorded.

[REDACTED] was driving on Vincent Avenue in the City of Covina. While driving, [REDACTED] saw Blaney walk out into the middle of the street and then back to the sidewalk. After [REDACTED] passed a set of railroad tracks and got closer to Blaney, Blaney walked back into the street and stood in front of [REDACTED]'s vehicle. Blaney held out an open hand in front of her towards [REDACTED]'s vehicle and told him to stop. [REDACTED] stopped and Blaney walked to the passenger side of his vehicle. Blaney then hit the front windshield with a large wrench.



Figure 1: [REDACTED]'s broken front windshield.

[REDACTED] drove his vehicle away from Blaney but stayed in the vicinity. [REDACTED] saw that Blaney tried to use the wrench to hit a motorcyclist passing by but missed. She then hit several parked vehicles.

[REDACTED] was still at the scene when Valencia arrived. Blaney walked to the rear of the patrol vehicle and Valencia exited. [REDACTED] saw Blaney approach Valencia at the driver's side of the patrol vehicle while holding the wrench. During the interview, [REDACTED] held his hand above his own head and made a downward motion in front of him to demonstrate Blaney's motions. [REDACTED] said that Valencia held his hand in front of him and told Blaney to stop two to three times. [REDACTED] heard Blaney say something but could not understand her words.

Blaney was seven to eight feet away from Valencia, who took several steps back and unholstered his handgun. Blaney ran toward Valencia, who fired his weapon two to three times. Blaney fell to the ground and was yelling. ■■■ saw that Valencia had a black object in his hand that could have been a handheld radio. ■■■ left the location about a minute after the shooting.

■■■ believed that if Blaney would have brought the wrench completely downward, she would have struck Valencia. ■■■ said that the wrench was the type used to release pressure on water valves and was approximately two to two-and-a-half feet long.

### **Witness ■■■s Statements**

On November 26, 2022, detectives interviewed ■■■. The interview was audio recorded.

■■■ was driving on Queenside Drive in the City of Covina. She saw that Blaney was on Vincent Avenue, an intersecting street, and that she was swinging a wrench at vehicles. The wrench was approximately one-and-a-half to two feet long.

Blaney hit a couple of vehicles while walking back and forth on Vincent Avenue. ■■■ saw several vehicles move out of the way to avoid Blaney. ■■■ stopped her vehicle on the side of the road and saw Blaney hitting the fence of an adjacent property. Blaney then crossed the street and “smashed” the driver’s window of a parked vehicle.

When Valencia arrived and stopped his patrol vehicle, ■■■ pointed to Blaney. ■■■ heard Blaney say, “I have more.” Blaney walked around toward the back of the patrol vehicle and “smashed” the rear window with the wrench. As Valencia got out of his vehicle, Blaney held the wrench with her two hands in front of her chest as if she was getting ready to swing it. Valencia appeared to be shouting something as he moved backwards, but Blaney continued to advance towards him. Valencia took approximately three steps backward before ■■■ heard three gunshots.

Blaney fell to the ground and Valencia started rendering aid until assisting units arrived.

### **Witness ■■■s Statements**

On November 26, 2022, detectives interviewed ■■■. The interview was audio recorded.

■■■ said he was in his driveway getting ready for a jog when he saw Blaney walking on the west side of Vincent Avenue. ■■■ initially believed that Blaney was holding a bat. Blaney faced a house, started screaming, and continued walking out of ■■■s view.

■■■ arrived at the corner street where he has last seen Blaney and saw that she was using the object to break the window of a parked vehicle. When the window shattered, ■■■ realized that the object was some type of heavy metal pipe that was two-and-a-half to three feet long. Blaney approached another vehicle and used the object to break another window.

█ saw a patrol vehicle stop and thought of flagging the deputy down. █ heard glass break and believed that Blaney had broken the rear window of the patrol vehicle, but he did not see it. Valencia exited the driver's door of the patrol vehicle, and █ heard Valencia say something, but he could not understand the words.

█ saw Valencia unholster his firearm and Blaney charging towards Valencia. Valencia took three to four steps back away from Blaney, and then █ heard three gunshots. After the shots, █ heard Valencia tell Blaney, "Please stay down."

### **Body Worn Camera Video (BWV)**

The responding deputies were all equipped with body worn video (BWV). However, Valencia arrived at the scene alone and only his BWV captured the incident.

Valencia's BWV began recording a few seconds before he shifted the patrol vehicle gear into park. Valencia exited and started to approach the back of the patrol vehicle. As Valencia got closer, Blaney's shadow became visible, but her exact movements were not discernible. Valencia did not reach the back of the patrol vehicle before he started backing away. As the silhouette of Blaney's shadow approached Valencia, Valencia reached for his waistband.



*Figure 2: Blaney and Valencia's silhouettes.*

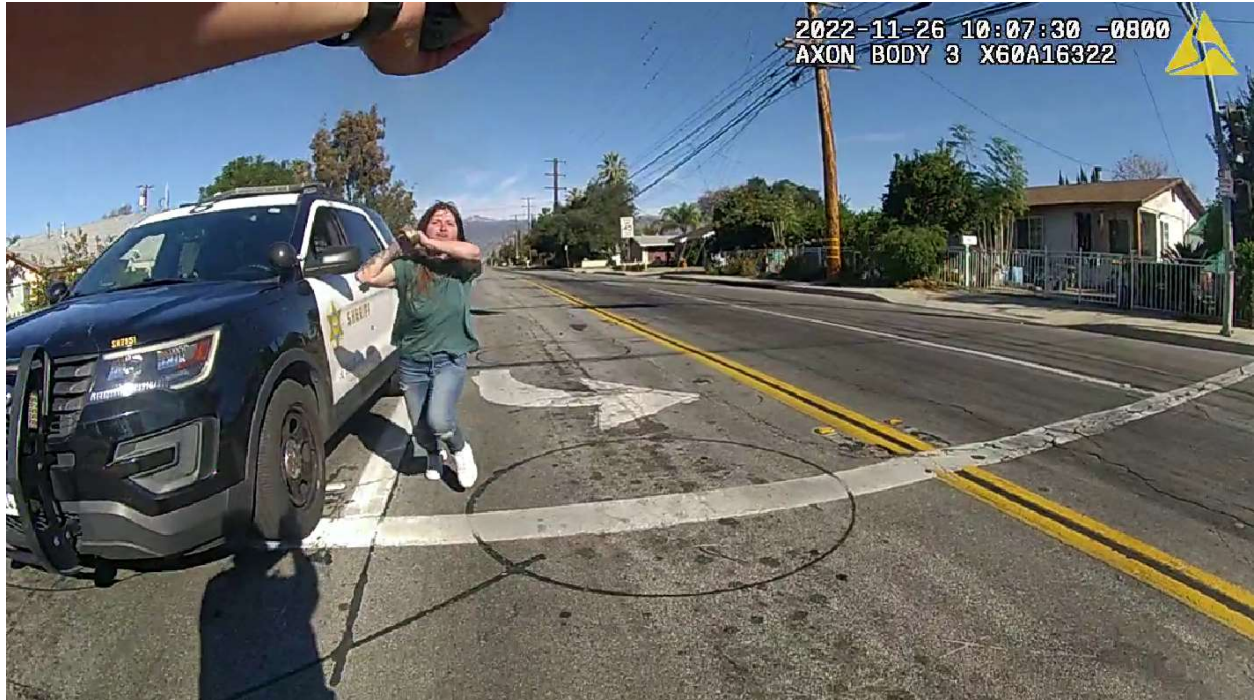
Blaney turned the corner from the patrol vehicle's rear and approached Valencia while holding the wrench parallel to the ground and at shoulder level in front of her. Blaney then placed the wrench over her right shoulder and walked directly toward Valencia. As she got closer, she started running while still holding the wrench. Valencia fired his weapon and Blaney fell to the ground.



*Figure 3: Blaney emerging from behind the patrol vehicle.*



*Figure 4: Blaney advancing toward Valencia.*



*Figure 5: Blaney running toward Valencia.*



*Figure 6: Blaney released the wrench as she fell to the ground.*

Valencia tried to secure Blaney in handcuffs, but Blaney would not place her hands behind her back. Additional deputies arrived, helped handcuff Blaney, and start rendering aid. Blaney was transported to the Pomona Valley Hospital where she was treated for her wounds.

The interaction from the time Valencia parked the patrol vehicle until the shooting was

approximately nine seconds. The BWV functions do not record any audio until one minute after it is activated. Therefore, the only audio captured on the BWV was after Blaney was on the ground.

### **Deputy Ernesto Valencia's Statements**

Valencia did not provide a voluntary statement. However, BWV captured some of Valencia's statements at the scene.

After the paramedics took Blaney, another deputy approached Valencia and started asking him questions. Valencia explained that when he arrived in the area, there were people that pointed at Blaney and said, "That's her." Blaney came out to the street, and he got out to detain her. As Valencia approached Blaney, she "smashed" the patrol vehicle's rear window. Valencia said that she then tried to "rush" him with the wrench and, "Tried to hit me with the wrench." Valencia said that he fired his weapon two to three times. Valencia motioned to the deputy that he shot Blaney in the upper and lower torso area.

### **Round Count**

Detectives conducted a round count of Valencia's department-issued 9-millimeter Smith & Wesson pistol. It contained 14 rounds in the magazine and one round in the chamber. Valencia said that he usually carries 17 rounds in the magazine and one in the chamber.

### **Bridget Blaney's Statements**

On November 29, 2022, detectives interviewed Blaney at the hospital. The interview was audio recorded.

Blaney said that on the day of the shooting, she was not going to stop hurting herself. She said, "I know what I did. I'm gonna go to prison." Blaney made several self-deprecating statements and said she wanted to give up on her own life. Blaney acknowledged that she attacked Valencia and he had to "protect himself." She also said, "He did me a favor. I don't know what I would have kept doing. He stopped me from hurting myself." Blaney appeared to be self-reflecting and said, "[Valencia] probably has a family and life. I don't have that anymore."

Blaney said she was "tweaked out" and that she normally "slams" methamphetamine. She did not know where or how much methamphetamine she ingested the day of the shooting.

### **Blaney's Injuries**

On November 26, 2022, deputies spoke to the treating doctor who identified a wound on Blaney's lower left neck area, her stomach, and her lower right back. She suffered injuries to her stomach, intestines, and kidney.



## **Toxicology**

A toxicology report of Blaney's blood revealed that she had amphetamine and opiates in her system.

## **Charges**

On December 15, 2023, Blaney plead guilty to assault upon a peace officer in violation of Penal Code section 245(c) in case number KA131880. Sentencing was postponed to December 16, 2024.

## **Blaney's Weapon**

Deputies recovered a metal, valve wheel wrench from the scene. It weighed approximately 10 pounds and was approximately 2 feet long.



*Figure 7: The wrench.*

## **LEGAL ANALYSIS**

A peace officer is justified in using deadly force upon another person 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 to 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) and (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).

The evidence presented in this case shows that Blaney appeared to be acting erratically while using a large, metal wrench to vandalize occupied and unoccupied vehicles. Blaney walked in and out of traffic and continuously swung the wrench. When Valencia arrived on scene, Blaney used the wrench to break the back window of the patrol vehicle. She then charged Valencia with the wrench over her shoulder and Valencia believed that she was going to swing it at him. As Blaney charged toward Valencia, he shot Blaney.

Under these circumstances, Valencia reasonably believed that deadly force was necessary to protect himself.

## **CONCLUSION**

We conclude, based on the totality of the evidence provided, that Deputy Valencia reasonably believed that the use of force was necessary to defend against an imminent threat of death or great bodily injury.