

Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Benjamin Chin
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Detective Hector Vasquez, #526304
Deputy Marisol Barajas, #609672

J.S.I.D. File #23-0207



NATHAN J. HOCHMAN

District Attorney

Justice System Integrity Division

November 24, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: 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: Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Benjamin Chin
J.S.I.D. File #23-0207
L.A.S.D. File #023-04539-2927-013

DATE: November 24, 2025

The Justice System Integrity Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the June 19, 2023, fatal shooting of Benjamin Chin by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) Detective Hector Vasquez and Deputy Marisol Barajas. We have determined the evidence supports a reasonable belief by the deputies that the use of deadly force was necessary in self-defense and/or the defense of others when they fired their service weapons.

The District Attorney's Command Center was notified of the shooting at approximately 1:44 p.m. on June 19, 2023. The District Attorney Response Team responded to the scene and was given a briefing and walk-through by Lieutenant Hugo Reynaga.

The following analysis is based on investigative reports and other materials, including 9-1-1 calls, recorded interviews, photographs, and body worn camera video (BWV) submitted to this office by the LASD Homicide Bureau on May 2, 2024. No compelled statements were considered in this analysis.

FACTUAL ANALYSIS

On the morning of June 19, 2023, Chin armed himself with a loaded rifle and wore a ballistic vest, also known as a bulletproof vest or body armor. Chin stabbed his mother one time in the back during a confrontation outside their house on Crooked Creek Drive in Diamond Bar. A physical examination of his mother's car parked outside the house determined Chin fired a round at its left rear tire. Chin then walked away from the house in the residential neighborhood while firing several rounds into the air before he approached Diamond Bar Boulevard. Investigators retrieved nine expended rifle cartridge cases from the scene.

At approximately 11:33 a.m., several neighbors on Crooked Creek Drive called 9-1-1 to report the incident. The first caller reported hearing a gunshot and described Chin as wearing a “tactical vest” while armed with an assault rifle. The caller reported Chin’s mother had unsuccessfully tried to “wrestle” the rifle from Chin, who was last seen walking toward Rising Star Drive. Another caller also described Chin as armed with an assault rifle and wearing a “bullet proof vest” walking past Rising Star Drive. A third caller reported that Chin pointed the rifle at him but did not shoot. The caller also confirmed the same to investigators in a subsequent interview. Callers reported Chin fired several rounds as he continued walking toward Diamond Bar Boulevard, the main street just outside the residential neighborhood.

Information from the calls was relayed to LASD deputies, including Vasquez and Barajas, who responded to the area in search of a man wearing body armor, armed with a rifle, firing rounds into the air. BWV from Vasquez, Barajas, and other responding deputies recorded their response and the ensuing officer involved shooting.

Vasquez arrived at Crooked Creek Drive and exited his police car near where Crooked Creek Drive bends toward Diamond Bar Boulevard. Vasquez was armed with his service shotgun. Chin’s mother approached Vasquez and another deputy with blood on her hands and stated, “Don’t shoot him.” Vasquez and two other deputies advanced toward Chin, who they observed walking toward the intersection of Diamond Bar Boulevard. Vasquez entered the passenger seat of another deputy’s patrol car. As the driver deputy slowly advanced, he repeatedly stated on the patrol car’s public address system, “Drop the gun!” Chin walked into the intersection against southbound traffic. Vasquez exited the police car and followed Chin on foot. As Vasquez approached the corner, Chin was walking directly in the direction of Barajas’ patrol car and a white Tesla stopped next to her patrol car. Chin’s rifle was slung over his shoulder with the barrel pointed in a downward direction.

Investigators interviewed the driver and sole occupant of the Tesla. He stated he saw Chin walking towards him carrying a “shotgun.” He stated he was in fear of being shot and reclined his seat all the way back prior to hearing gunshots.

Barajas provided a voluntary statement to investigators. She stated prior to her arrival, she received radio communications of a man armed with an assault rifle who had stabbed someone and was firing rounds. She believed she was responding to an “active shooter” incident when she saw Chin on Diamond Bar Boulevard walking in her direction. She stopped her police car and was cognizant of the Tesla stopped next to her patrol car. She exited her police car, pointed her service weapon at Chin, and repeatedly yelled, “Put the gun down!” Chin did not comply. Barajas stated she feared Chin was going to shoot the Tesla driver and/or her with the assault rifle as Chin continued to advance. She did not recollect how Chin had the rifle slung on his body but feared how quickly Chin would be able to manipulate it to shoot her and/or the Tesla driver. She fired one round from her service weapon at Chin from “seven to ten feet,” but Chin did not react. Chin continued walking toward Barajas and the Tesla and ignored continuing commands to put the gun down. In response, Barajas fired additional rounds at Chin, who “went to the ground” with his arm extended to the rifle near his body.

Vasquez also provided a voluntary statement to investigators. He stated as Chin walked toward Barajas with the rifle slung over his shoulder, Vasquez heard one gunshot and saw Chin slump slightly. He believed Chin's tactical vest protected him from the bullet. He saw Chin reaching for the receiver of his rifle and believed Chin was going to shoot Barajas and/or civilians. Vasquez fired one slug from his service shotgun at Chin, which appeared to hit him in the vest but was not effective. Vasquez fired another slug in fear that Chin was going to shoot him. Chin fell and released his grasp of the rifle.

BWV corroborates Barajas' and Vasquez' accounts. Barajas orders Chin to put the gun down for more than 20 seconds before she fires her first round. After Barajas fires the first round, Chin appears in view of her BWV walking toward the Tesla with his rifle slung over his right shoulder with the barrel pointing in a downward direction. Vasquez quickly moves along the sidewalk, flanking Chin, and fires the first shotgun slug. Barajas fires two more rounds, and Vasquez fires the second and final slug before Chin falls on the roadway.

Chin's rifle was secured at the scene and identified as a Blackhawk brand black stock and barrel rifle with an un-serialized white plastic lower and Amend2 brand magazine seated in the well. Investigators did not document the number of cartridge cases loaded in the magazine.



Chin's rifle was photographed at the scene.

At approximately 11:45 a.m., deputies radioed that a deputy involved shooting had occurred. Chin was provided first aid at the scene before being transported to the hospital, where despite medical and surgical intervention he succumbed to his injuries later that evening.



Vasquez' BWV recorded Chin walking toward Barajas' patrol car and the white Tesla when Barajas fires her first round at Chin.



Vasquez' BWV recorded the moment he fires the first slug from his service shotgun.



Barajas' BWV recorded Chin slump over immediately before Vasquez fires another slug at Chin before Chin falls to the ground and releases his rifle.

Autopsy

On June 28, 2023, an autopsy was conducted. The medical examiner attributed the cause of Chin's death to gunshot wounds to his abdomen and lower back.

LEGAL ANALYSIS

Any peace officer who has reasonable cause to believe that the person to be arrested has committed a public offense may use objectively reasonable force to effect the arrest, to prevent escape, or to overcome resistance. A peace officer is justified in using deadly force upon another person only when the officer reasonably believes, based on the totality of the circumstances, that such force is necessary to defend against an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or to another person, or 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 § 835a(b), (c)(1)(A), and (c)(1)(B).

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 § 835a(e)(2).

“Totality of circumstances” means 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. 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 § 835a(a)(4) and (e)(3).

Several deputies responded to reports of an active and mobile shooter armed with an assault rifle and wearing body armor. The deputies were informed that Chin had stabbed a person and fired several rounds into the air with an assault rifle. Vasquez and Barajas personally observed Chin armed with a rifle and wearing body armor. Specific and articulable facts indicated Chin was prepared for an imminent gunfight. Barajas followed Chin, both in a patrol car and on foot, for a considerable distance and time, while Chin was given several commands to drop his weapon. Chin ignored all the deputies’ lawful orders.

Chin walked into and against oncoming traffic on the main boulevard. Vasquez followed Chin as Chin walked directly toward Barajas’s patrol car and the Tesla, both stopped on Diamond Bar Boulevard. Barajas exited her car, pointed her service weapon at Chin, and gave Chin several more commands to drop his rifle which was slung over his right shoulder. Chin continued walking toward Barajas and the Tesla, whose driver was in stated fear of being shot. Both Barajas and Vasquez fired their service weapons in stated fear of the same outcome, that Chin had the present ability and intent to shoot any one of them. BWV from the shooting deputies corroborate their statements accounting for the rounds they fired and confirm there was no indication Chin was prepared to stop his forward movement toward Barajas and the driver of the Tesla.

Based on the foregoing, the officers reasonably believed the use of deadly force was necessary under the circumstances. Chin posed an imminent and deadly threat to deputies and civilians. The deputies’ use of deadly force to stop this threat was therefore reasonable.

CONCLUSION

We conclude that the deputies’ use of deadly force was legally justified in self-defense and the defense of others.