



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF KERN

CIVIC CENTER JUSTICE BUILDING
1215 TRUXTUN AVENUE
BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA 93301
(661) 868-2340, FAX: (661) 868-2700

JOSEPH A. KINZEL
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

CYNTHIA J. ZIMMER
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

KENNETH M. RUSSELL
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

April 30, 2025

Sheriff Donny Youngblood
1350 Norris Road
Bakersfield, CA 93308

**Re: KCSO Officer-Involved Shooting of Juan Jose Campos on April 8, 2023
Kern County Sheriff's Deputy Jeffrey Ott
314 Casa Loma Drive, Bakersfield, CA.
Documented in KCSO Report 2023-00038530**

Dear Sheriff Youngblood,

The Kern County District Attorney's Officer-Involved Shooting (OIS) Review Committee has reviewed reports, body worn camera footage, audio recordings and other materials submitted by your agency regarding the shooting noted above. The OIS Review Committee reviews cases for criminal liability under state law. The OIS Review Committee has completed its review. The findings are noted below.

Summary

On April 8, 2023, at approximately 21:49 hours, Kern County Sheriff's Deputies responded to 314 Casa Loma Drive regarding a report of a PC 246. The reporting party, Sanjuana Lopez reported that her uncle, Juan Campos discharged a firearm at the residence which was occupied by Lopez and her family. She further stated Campos was trying to enter the occupied residence where Lopez and her family were located. Deputies determined Campos was located at the rear of the property and announced their presence, to which Campos did not respond. Deputies formed an arrest team and located Campos in a room in the northwest corner of the residence. Campos was found crouching behind a bed while pointing a handgun in the direction of the doorway where deputies were positioned. Deputy Ott engaged Campos in the room and an officer involved shooting occurred with Deputy Ott firing his rifle at Campos multiple times, striking Campos on the left side of the torso. Deputy Ott then issued commands to Campos, stating "let me see your hands." Campos was taken into custody and medical treatment was provided. Deputy Ott seized the handgun Campos had been holding and had it booked into evidence.

The reporting party, Ms. Lopez stated she had heard gunshots and glass breaking in front of her house prior to her calling 911. She believed Campos had shot her father. She further indicated Campos had discharged a firearm earlier that day at the woodshed located on the property. Deputies arrested and booked Campos with several charges including attempted murder, assault with a gun, negligent

discharge, firing at an occupied dwelling, felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition.

Legal Principles and Analysis

Campos' actions demonstrated a clear threat to the lives of KCSO deputies and members of Campos' family who were present at the residence. Thus, it was reasonable for the deputies to believe that Campos was a deadly threat to them.

Under California Penal Code section 835a(a)(2), peace officers may use deadly force only when necessary in defense of human life. When determining whether deadly force is necessary, officers shall evaluate each situation in light of the particular circumstances of each case and shall use other available resources and techniques if reasonably safe and feasible to an objectively reasonable officer. The California Legislature has mandated in PC § 835a(a)(2) that deputies shall use de-escalation tactics if objectively reasonable based on the particular circumstances of each case.

California law permits the use of deadly force by any person in self-defense or defense of a third person, if [1] the individual reasonably believed that he or someone else was in imminent danger of being killed or suffering great bodily injury; [2] the individual reasonably believed that the immediate use of deadly force was necessary to defend against that danger; and [3] the individual used no more force than was reasonably necessary to defend against that danger. (Judicial Council of California, Criminal Jury Instructions (CALCRIM) 505.)

In this case, deputies responded to a report of an armed subject who had already discharged his firearm into a residence where his family members were present. When deputies arrived, a search was conducted of the property, callouts were made, and Campos was eventually located inside a bedroom of the residence. When deputies opened the door to the bedroom, which was partially barricaded, they encountered Campos pointing a handgun at deputies while crouching down in a shooting position from the other side of a bed. There was no time for de-escalation tactics at this point, as Campos posed an immediate threat to the lives of the deputies who were contacting him.

Campos pointed his handgun directly at Deputy Ott, posing a direct threat to Deputy Ott and the other deputies who were standing in and around the doorway of that bedroom. When Campos pointed his handgun at Deputy Ott, Deputy Ott had no choice but to begin firing his rifle at Campos in an effort to defend his life, the lives of other deputies, and the lives of residents who were present on the property.

Conclusion

Based upon a review of the evidence submitted by the Kern County Sheriff's Office, Deputy Ott responded reasonably to a lethal threat in self-defense and defense of others. There is no state criminal liability for his use of deadly force under the circumstances of this case because the shooting is legally justified.

Sincerely,

Cynthia J. Zimmer
Kern County District Attorney