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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Approved by 

Kern County District Attorney Lisa Green announced that no criminal charges will be filed in connection with the May 24, 2017 shooting of Richard William Kollin by Officers Jared McCombs and Bruce Medina of the Tehachapi Police Department. After a thorough investigation of the facts and review of the applicable law, District Attorney Green determined that there is no reasonable likelihood of a jury finding that the officers violated the law beyond a reasonable doubt.

Shortly after 10:00 pm on the night of May 24, 2017, an employee of the Holiday Inn Express in Tehachapi called the Tehachapi Police Department to report a man, later identified as Kollin, engaging in suspicious activity in the hotel parking lot. Police received the call, and Officers McCombs and Medina were dispatched to the hotel to investigate. Video surveillance obtained from the hotel shows the officers arriving in separate cars and approaching Kollin. Officer Medina conducted a pat-down search of Kollin in an apparent attempt to determine whether he was armed. Officer McCombs watched most of the pat-down, but then began to search Kollin's car before Officer Medina completed it.

Kollin, who was on felony probation arising from an LA County case, gave the officers a false name. During his search of Kollin's car, Officer McCombs immediately smelled the odor of marijuana, and did in fact locate a bag of marijuana inside. Officer Medina stated that after dispatch informed him that there was no record of a person by the name Kollin gave, he told Kollin he would have to take him to the station if they were unable to verify his identity. Kollin then began to run away from officers, leaving the hotel parking lot and proceeding across the street into an open field. The two officers pursued him on foot. It was dark outside, and there was no source of lighting within the field, so the officers used their flashlights to attempt to illuminate their surroundings during the pursuit.

Both officers commanded Kollin to stop, but Kollin continued to attempt to escape. Officer Medina

performed a leg sweep on Kollin, causing both men to fall to the ground, but Kollin got up and continued to run. Officer Medina then deployed his taser, but was unable to bring Kollin to a stop. Both officers told investigators that they heard Kollin say, "I'm going to kill you, I have a gun" during the pursuit. Officer McCombs said that he saw Kollin holding up his loose shorts with one hand while making a digging motion near his waistband with the other. This caused Officer McCombs to believe that Kollin was reaching for a gun. Officer McCombs said that Kollin then turned towards him with his right hand raised and extended, causing him to believe that Kollin was holding a gun. Officer McCombs broadcast to dispatch that Kollin had a gun, and that he was reaching for his waistband, then fired at Kollin with his gun. Officer Medina heard the gunshot from Officer McCombs's gun and fired his weapon as well. Kollin was hit twice and fell to the ground, but continued to ignore commands from officers to move his hands out from underneath his body and allow officers to determine whether he was a threat. Kollin was eventually taken into custody and transported to receive medical treatment. No gun was found on Kollin's person, although one was later discovered in his car.

Kollin later told investigators that he fled in response to the officers acting aggressively towards him. He said that, while he was running from them, he yelled, "I don't have a gun" repeatedly. He also made statements regarding his conduct and that of the officers that appear to be contradicted by the surveillance video, such as indicating that no pat-down search was conducted in the parking lot. Kollin's ex-girlfriend told investigators that Kollin's previous experience in jail had led him to state that he had no intention of going back, and that if police officers attempted to arrest him again he would force the officers to kill him. Kollin denied making that statement. Kollin had a seven year suspended sentence attached to his probation from LA County, meaning that he would be sentenced to a seven year prison term if he violated the law.

District Attorney investigators obtained an expert medical opinion, which indicated that Kollin's gunshot wounds were consistent with him being shot while turning back towards his pursuers with his arm raised and extended, as Officer McCombs indicated in his statement. An independent expert in the field of police use of force also conducted a review of the case. The expert found, after reviewing the results of the investigation, that the shooting was justified.