

**Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Anthony Lowe  
Huntington Park Police Department**

**Officer Joshua Volasgis, #5331**

**Officer Paul Munoz, #5315**

**J.S.I.D. File #23-0024**



**NATHAN J. HOCHMAN**

**District Attorney**

**Justice System Integrity Division**

**December 30, 2025**

## MEMORANDUM

TO: CHIEF COSME LOZANO  
Huntington Park Police Department  
6542 Miles Avenue  
Huntington Park, California 90255

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 Anthony Lowe  
J.S.I.D. File #23-0024  
L.A.S.D. File #023-00010-3199-013  
H.P.P.D. File #23-00544

DATE: December 30, 2025

The Justice System Integrity Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the January 26, 2023, fatal shooting of Anthony Lowe by Huntington Park Police Department (HPPD) Officers Joshua Volasgis and Paul Munoz.

We have concluded it cannot be proven beyond a reasonable doubt the officers lacked a reasonable belief, based on the totality of the circumstances, that deadly force was necessary to defend themselves and others against an imminent deadly threat.

The District Attorney's Command Center was notified of the shooting at 10:53 p.m. on January 26, 2023. The District Attorney Response Team responded and was given a briefing and walk-through of the scene by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) Homicide Bureau Lieutenant Hugo Reynada.

The following analysis is based on 9-1-1 recordings, radio calls, surveillance video, investigative reports, audio recordings and transcripts of witness interviews, crime scene diagrams, medical records, and photographs submitted to this office by LASD Homicide Detectives Ramon Munoz (no relation) and Roger Parga on March 1, 2023, and January 4, 2024, as well as voluntary proffers taken from Officers Volasgis and Munoz on October 22, 2025. We also considered material from the court files of civil lawsuits filed in connection with this matter as well as information provided by attorneys representing the plaintiffs.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Five civil lawsuits have been filed related to this incident. Lowe's minor son filed a state court complaint for damages in case number 23STCP00845. That complaint was dismissed after a stipulation for the plaintiff to pay attorney fees. Lawsuits were then filed in state court by Lowe's son, the co-parent of that child, and Lowe's estate,

## FACTUAL ANALYSIS

### The Suicide Attempt

On April 19, 2022, Anthony Lowe was paroled from a California state prison after serving part of an 18-year sentence for a gang-related robbery<sup>2</sup>, three counts of grand theft from a person<sup>3</sup>, and being in possession of drugs and/or alcohol in prison.<sup>4</sup> When paroled, Lowe moved to Harris County, Texas to reside with an aunt.

On July 1, 2022, at approximately 3:00 a.m., Harris County Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to investigate a report of a pedestrian running in traffic lanes on the freeway.

Deputies responded and located the man, who was wearing only underwear, running in traffic, and threatening to jump off a freeway overpass.

The deputies attempted to negotiate the man's surrender and, after a long standoff, ultimately attempted to Tase him. The Taser was ineffective and the man jumped off the bridge, seriously injuring himself and causing him to have both legs amputated below the knee. He was identified as "John Doe" at that point.

Later that day, at 7:12 p.m., Lowe's aunt filed a missing person report with the Harris County Sheriff's Office and reported Lowe was acting "paranoid," had consumed "ecstasy" and "powder," and wanted to kill himself. She stated Lowe did not have mental health issues but was on drugs and had been observed walking on the freeway two days prior by another family member.

Deputies investigated and concluded, through fingerprint identification, the man who attempted suicide earlier in the day, previously identified as John Doe, was Anthony Lowe.

After six weeks in the hospital, Lowe was discharged and returned to Los Angeles to reside with his mother. He was ambulatory despite his amputated legs but also used a wheelchair for mobility.

### The 72-Hour Mental Health Hold

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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in case numbers 23STCV11211 and 24STCV05657. Those cases were consolidated in lead case number 23STCV112 and, on October 10, 2025, a Notice of Settlement of the Entire Case was filed. The case is scheduled for an Order to Show Cause re Dismissal on February 9, 2026. Two federal complaints were filed on behalf of Lowe's daughter, mother, father, and Lowe's successor in interest in case numbers 2:24-cv-00180-RGK-PD (lead case) consolidated with case number 2:24-cv-00488-RGK-PD. Lowe's mother and father, individually, were dismissed from the case on April 16, 2025. The balance of the cases have been settled and/or dismissed.

<sup>2</sup> Lowe pled guilty to one count of robbery and admitted the gang special allegation in San Bernardino Superior Court case number FWV701531 for 12 years in state prison.

<sup>3</sup> Lowe pled guilty to three counts of grand theft person in San Bernardino Superior Court case number FWV701600 for three years state prison consecutive to the robbery charge in case number FWV701531.

<sup>4</sup> Lowe pled guilty in Kern County Superior Court Case Number DF012019 to three years in state prison consecutive to the charges in FWV701531 and FWV701600.



### **The 9-1-1 Call for Mental Health Services**

On January 12, 2023, at 4:10 p.m., Lowe's mother called 9-1-1 reporting Lowe was uncontrollable and having a mental breakdown. LAPD officers responded with lights and siren to the scene given the urgency of the call.

The officers arrived and conversed with Lowe's family and Lowe, who was uncooperative. Lowe's mother reported Lowe was upset about losing his legs and had expressed wanting to kill his girlfriend then kill himself. She was concerned Lowe was suicidal and had been instigating other citizens to provoke them, or the police, into killing him, so she called 9-1-1. She told the officers Lowe is "...Very strong...He can jump out of that chair fast...very strong...he ain't no joke." She said Lowe had recently been released from a 72-hour mental health hold, was having mental health issues after the amputation of his lower legs, needed medication, and was awaiting another appointment for mental health care. She was unable to control Lowe under the circumstances.

While the officers were investigating, Lowe dismounted his wheelchair, wrestled it away from a family member, and left, which is shown in a still photo from body worn camera video below:



*Figure 1-Photo from Body Worn Video of an LAPD Officer Conversing with Lowe's Family During a Family Disturbance Call Made by Lowe's Mother, and Lowe, Circled in Red, Wrestling His Wheelchair Away from His Family.*

Ultimately, the LAPD officers decided Lowe did not meet the criteria at that point for an involuntary mental health commitment.

### **The Stabbing**

On January 26, 2023, at approximately 3:39 p.m., [REDACTED] walked across an intersection and passed by Lowe, who was in his wheelchair loitering on a street corner near a Shell gas station.

When [REDACTED] walked by, Lowe dismounted his wheelchair, approached [REDACTED] from behind, and stabbed him in the chest. Lowe then fled.

The stabbing collapsed [REDACTED]'s left lung and broke two of his ribs, resulting in hospitalization for one week.

A photo from surveillance video of Lowe dismounted from his wheelchair and stabbing [REDACTED] is shown below:



*Figure 2-Photo from a Shell Gas Station Surveillance Video Showing Lowe, Dismounted from His Wheelchair, in the Act of Stabbing [REDACTED] in the Chest.*

A photo of [REDACTED] at the scene with a HPPD officer assisting him while awaiting paramedics is shown below:



*Figure 3-Body Worn Video Photo of a HPPD Officer Assisting [REDACTED] who was Bleeding from the Chest After Lowe Stabbed Him.*

### **The 9-1-1 Call**

After being stabbed, [REDACTED] stumbled into traffic, flagged down a motorist, and begged the person to call 9-1-1 because he had just been “stabbed in the heart.”

The motorist called 9-1-1 and handed the telephone to [REDACTED] who conversed with the 9-1-1 operator.

[REDACTED] reported he had been stabbed by a “black guy with a wheelchair and he doesn’t have no feet.”

### **Radio Traffic and Suspect Identification**

At 3:40 p.m., HPPD broadcast to officers, including Volasgis and Munoz, the report of a man stabbed by a “male black in a wheelchair” near a Shell gas station.

One minute later, the first responding officers arrived, provided medical assistance to [REDACTED] and cleared the fire department to enter and care for [REDACTED]. Other officers, including Munoz and Volasgis, searched the surrounding area for Lowe.

At 3:42 p.m., an officer broadcast Lowe was last seen southbound on Santa Fe Avenue, the street on which the shooting ultimately occurred, and provided a description of Lowe.

At 3:44 p.m., Munoz and Volasgis broadcast they located Lowe on Slauson Avenue, approximately two blocks from where the stabbing occurred. Munoz and Volasgis then exited their patrol car to engage Lowe.

At 3:45 p.m., Lowe’s clothing description was broadcast and it was reported Lowe was armed with a large knife and officers were holding him at gunpoint.

At 3:46 p.m., the officer involved shooting was broadcast.

### **Use of Less Lethal Force**

Munoz and Volasgis located Lowe at approximately 3:44 p.m., exited their patrol car, and confronted Lowe.

At 3:45 p.m., Munoz fired his Taser at Lowe for a five second duration. The Taser dart struck Lowe’s clothing and had no effect.

At 3:46 p.m., Ramirez arrived to assist and fired his Taser at Lowe for a five second duration. That dart also struck Lowe’s clothing and had no effect.

Two fired Taser cartridges and Munoz’s Taser were located at the scene after the shooting. Two Taser darts were recovered from Lowe’s clothing at the time of autopsy.

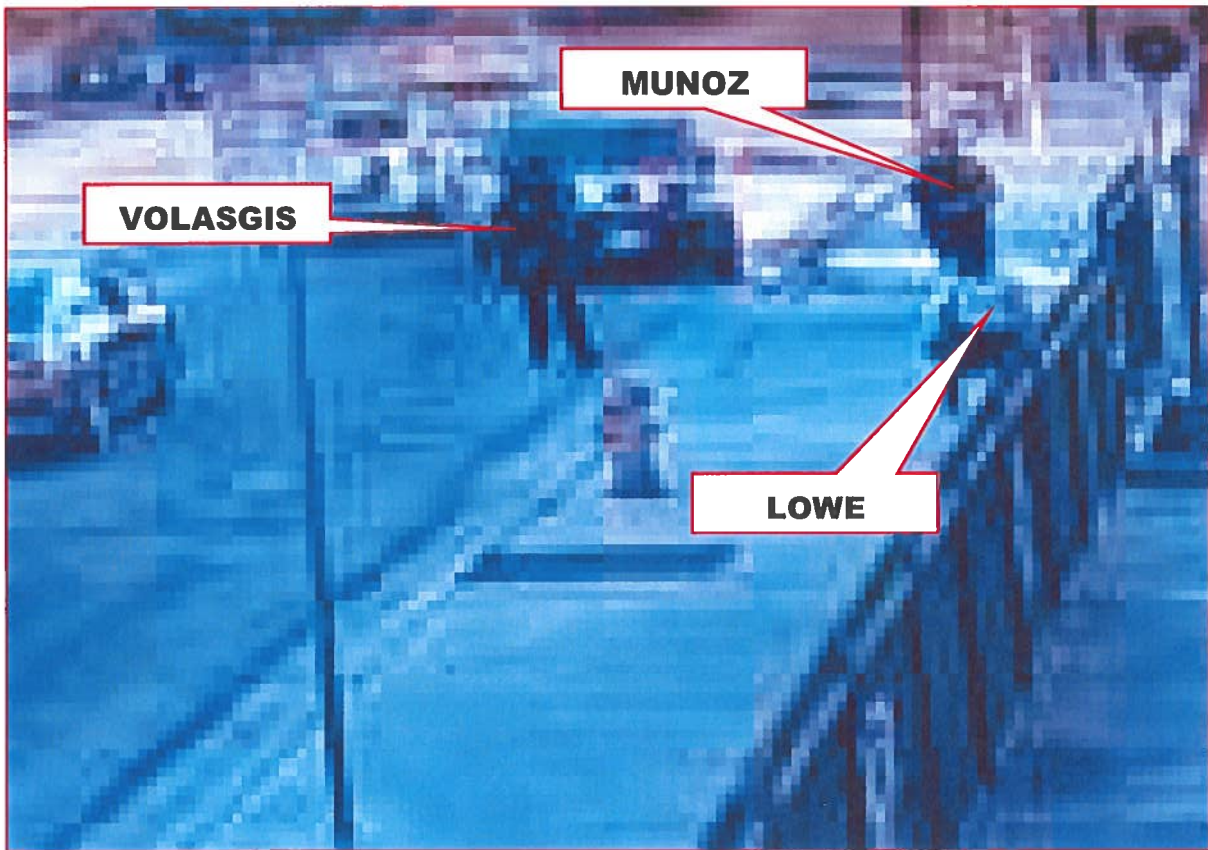
### **Video Evidence**

The officers did not have body worn camera video, and their patrol vehicles were not equipped with dash cameras.

The officers' contact with Lowe, and ultimately the shooting itself, was recorded on surveillance video from an adjacent medical facility, which is detailed below.

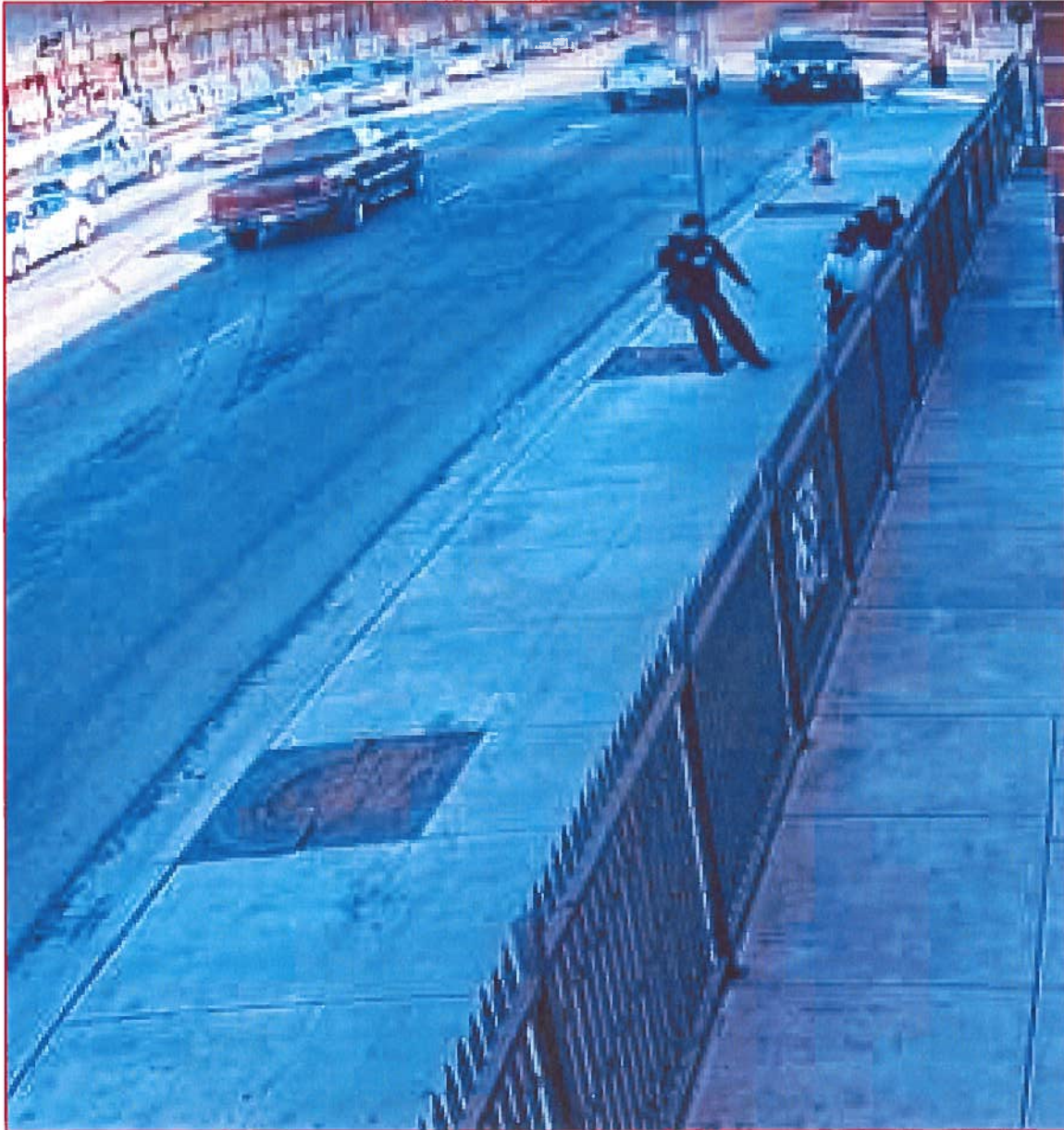
According to the surveillance video and radio traffic, Munoz and Volasgis were the first officers to locate and contact Lowe. They arrived in their patrol car, exited, and contacted Lowe, with their service weapons holstered. Munoz broadcast they had located Lowe and were contacting him.

The first contact with Lowe is shown in photo taken from surveillance video shown below:



*Figure 4-Photo from Surveillance Video Showing Volasgis and Munoz Exiting their Patrol Car and Contacting Lowe, who was in His Wheelchair, and Rolling Away from the Shell Gas Station Where the Stabbing Occurred Five Minutes Prior.*

As Lowe rolled away from the officers, Munoz and Volasgis drew their service weapons. Volasgis then holstered his firearm and overturned Lowe's wheelchair as Munoz recoiled and attempted to put distance between himself and Lowe. When Lowe fell to the ground, a butcher knife appeared near his left hand. That sequence is shown below in photos taken from surveillance video:



*Figure 5-Photo from Surveillance Video Showing Volasgis Overturning Lowe's Wheelchair and Munoz Recoiling and Pointing His Service Weapon at Lowe.*



*Figure 6-Surveillance Video Photo Showing Lowe's Overturned Wheelchair, Munoz Holding Lowe at Gunpoint, Volasgis Reaching for His Service Weapon, and a Knife, Circled in Red, Appearing Near Lowe's Left Hand.*

Volasgis continued to hold Lowe at gunpoint while Munoz transitioned from his service weapon to a Taser.

Lowe picked up the knife, abandoned his wheelchair, and walked away quickly on his knees while swinging the knife, as Volasgis and Munoz repeatedly ordered Lowe to drop it.

Munoz fired his Taser at Lowe, but it had no effect. Lowe dragged the Taser wire behind him as he walked away. Munoz dropped his Taser and transitioned back to his service weapon.

Volasgis then transitioned to his Taser as two backup officers, including Officer Freddy Ramirez, arrived.

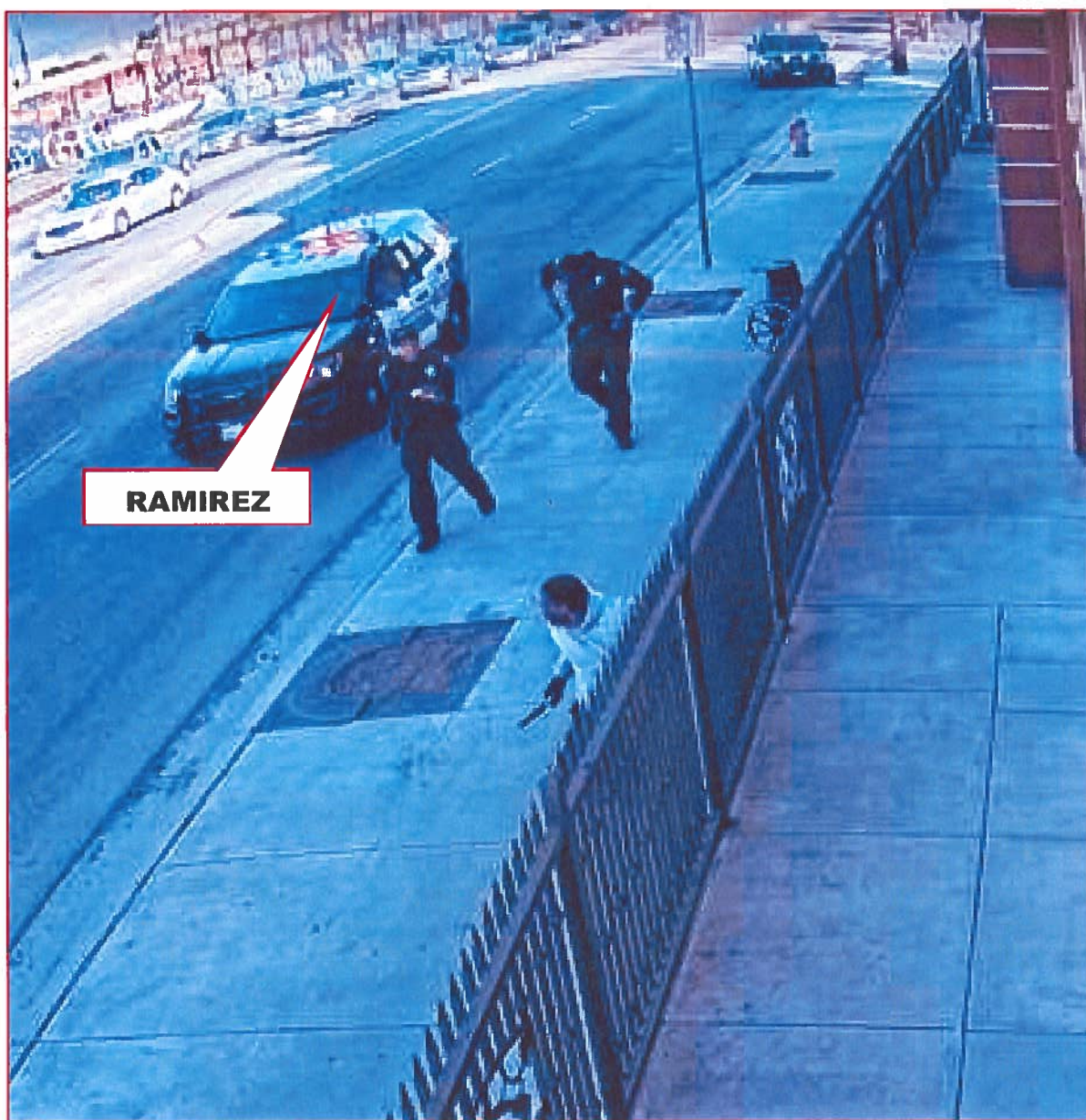
Ramirez exited his patrol car and drew his Taser as Volasgis transitioned back to his service weapon while Lowe continued to walk away, still threatening with the knife.

Lowe stopped, turned, and faced Ramirez. When Lowe raised the knife above his head and appeared to be in the act of throwing it at Ramirez, Ramirez fired his Taser at Lowe. At the same moment, Munoz and Volasgis fired their service weapons at Lowe.

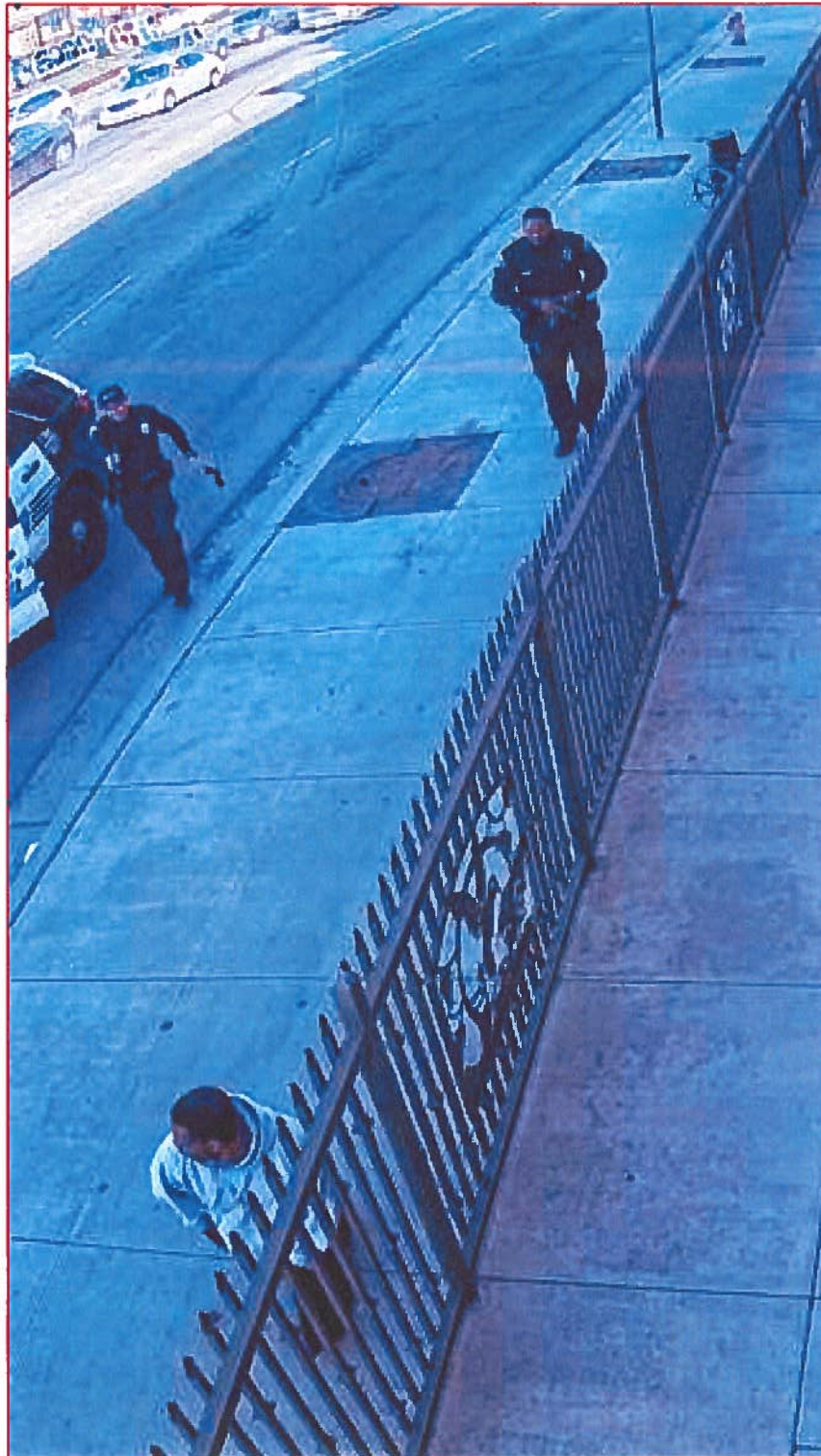
That sequence of events is detailed in the series of photos taken from surveillance video below:



*Figure 7-Photo from Surveillance Video of Lowe Walking Away on His Knees While Wielding a Knife in His Right Hand, Munoz Pointing his Taser at Lowe, and Volasgis Pointing His Service Weapon at Lowe.*



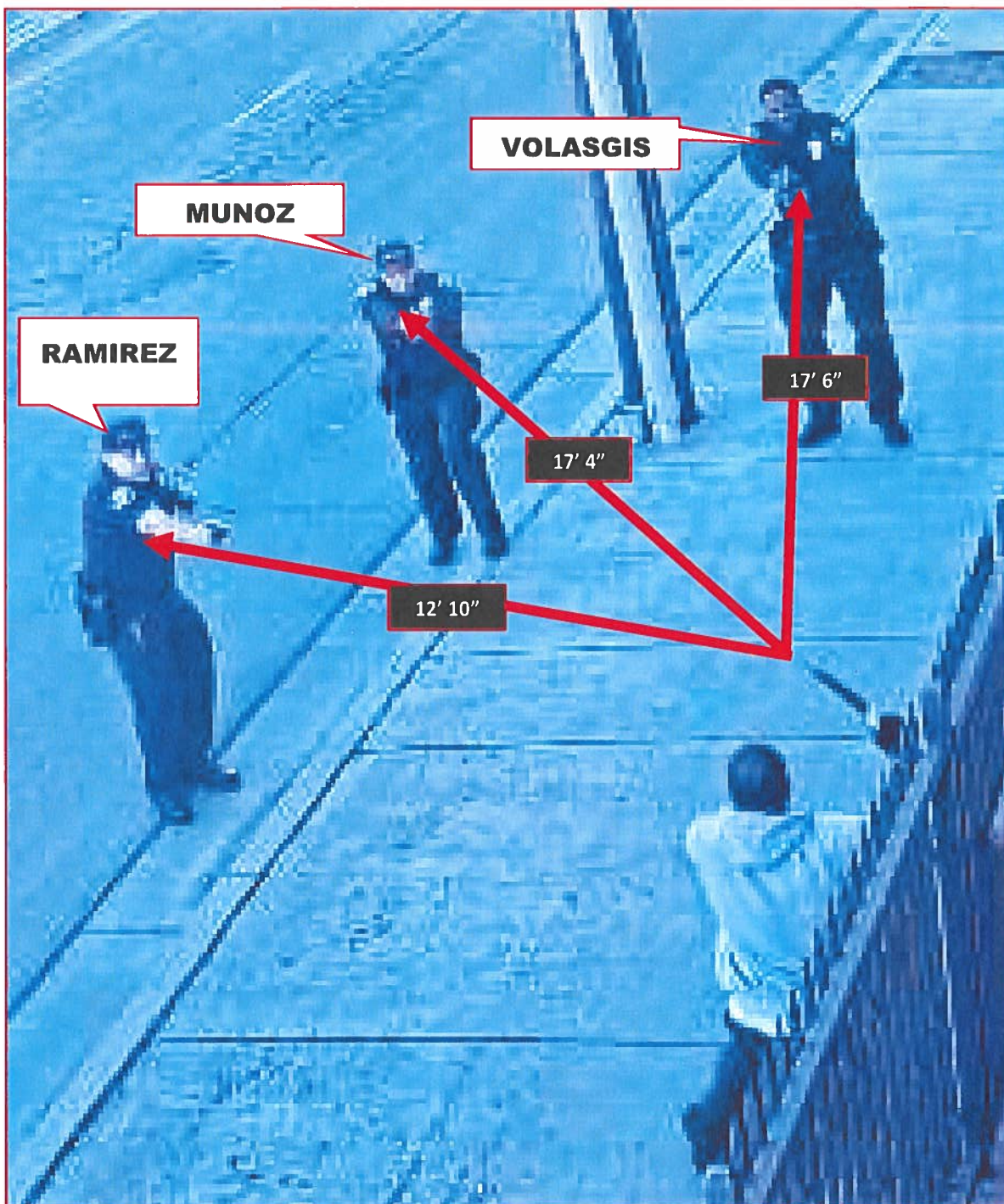
*Figure 8-Photo from Surveillance Video Showing Lowe Walking Away While Wielding a Knife in His Right Hand, Volasgis Transitioning to His Taser, and Munoz Pointing His Taser at Lowe. Officer Freddy Ramirez is also Shown Arriving to Assist.*



*Figure 9-Photo from Surveillance Video Showing Munoz Dropping His Taser and Transitioning to His Service Weapon. Volasgis is Also Shown Transitioning from His Taser to His Service Weapon.*



*Figure 10-Photo from Surveillance Video Showing Ramirez Arming Himself with His Taser, Munoz Armed with His Service Weapon and Making a Radio Broadcast, and Volasgis Armed with His Service Weapon. Munoz's Dropped and Discharged Taser is Circled in Red.*



*Figure 11-Photo from Surveillance Video the Moment Lowe Raised His Knife Above His Head in a Throwing Motion, Ramirez Recoiling and Discharging his Taser, and Munoz and Volasgis Firing Their Service Weapons at Lowe. The Approximate Distances between Lowe and the Officers at the Time of the Shooting are Detailed in Red.*

## **Firearms Evidence**

Eleven discharged 9mm cartridge casings were located at the scene.

Based on a post-shooting round count of Volasgis' and Munoz's service weapons, and comparison with the number of casings located at the scene, Volasgis fired six rounds and Munoz fired five rounds during the officer involved shooting.

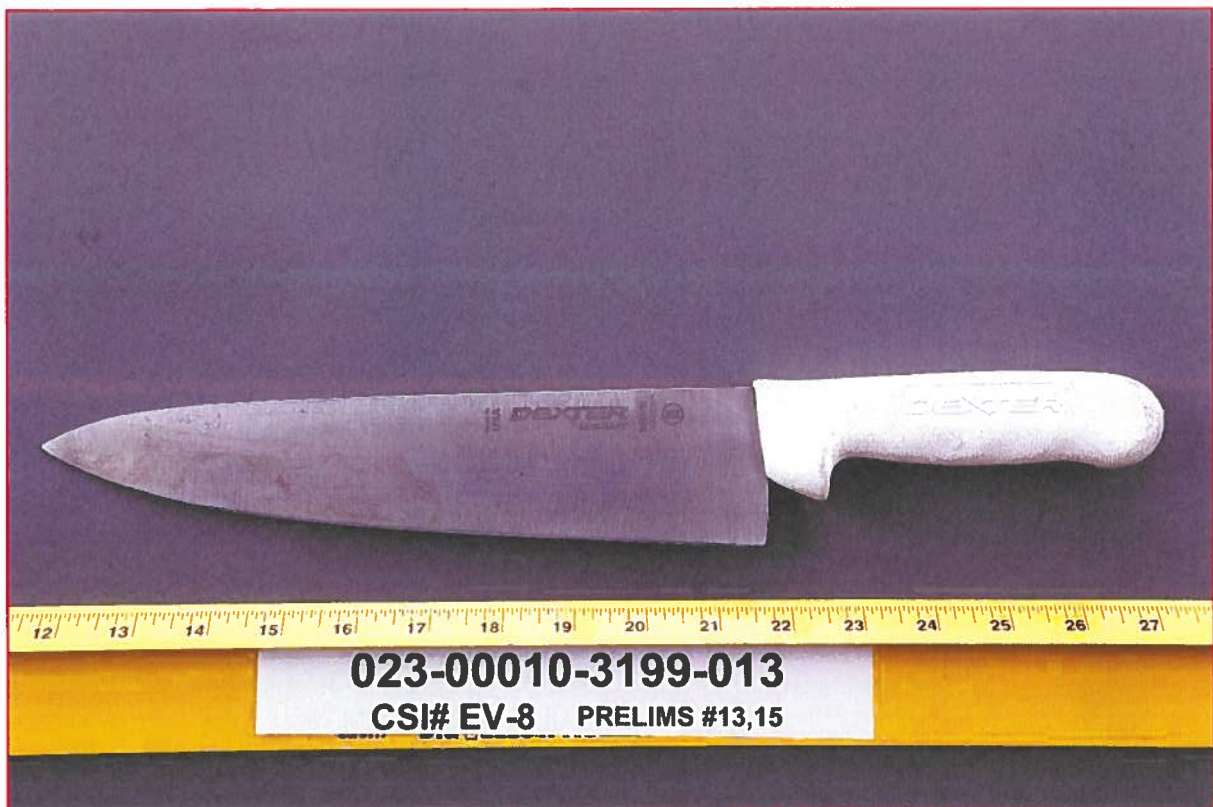
Eight projectiles were recovered from Lowe's body during the autopsy.

## **The Knife**

Lowe was armed with a butcher knife with a ten-inch blade. Photos of the bloody knife are shown below:



*Figure 12 - Photo of Lowe's Ten-Inch Knife at the Scene.*



*Figure 13-Lab Photo of Lowe's Ten-Inch Butcher Knife.*

The knife was submitted for DNA analysis, and it was determined DNA from Lowe and [REDACTED] was present on the knife.

### **Autopsy**

On January 31, 2023, Deputy Medical Examiner Grant Ho, M.D. performed an autopsy of Lowe's remains.

Dr. Ho opined Lowe died from multiple gunshot wounds. He observed gunshots to the upper back, mid-back, the left and right buttocks, the front of the right thigh, the lower back, the right arm, and the left shoulder. Eight projectiles were recovered from Lowe's body, and two Taser darts were recovered from Lowe's clothing.

A toxicology analysis was performed and revealed a low level of methamphetamine in Lowe's bloodstream at the time of the shooting.

### **CIVILIAN WITNESS STATEMENTS**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] was on the ground awaiting paramedics, and having difficulty breathing. He told one of the first responding officers Lowe approached him and said, "What's up, man?" At the same moment, [REDACTED] felt a "forceful blow" to the left side of his chest. [REDACTED] looked at Lowe, who appeared to be on his knees. A wheelchair was nearby. [REDACTED] walked away from Lowe to

distance himself from him. [REDACTED] then realized he had been stabbed. [REDACTED] said he had never seen Lowe before.

The next day, while in the hospital, [REDACTED] provided a second statement. He said he was at a traffic light waiting to cross the street when a "black guy" sitting in a wheelchair approached him. The man had no legs. The man approached him and said, "Are you alright?" [REDACTED] responded, "Yeah," and started to walk across the street. The man suddenly "socked" [REDACTED] on the left side of his chest. [REDACTED] then realized he was bleeding. He did not see a knife at that point and did not know he had been stabbed. He walked away and flagged down motorists, pleading for help. A motorist helped him call 9-1-1. [REDACTED] said he told initial responding officers he saw Lowe rolling away. He said he never threatened or provoked Lowe, and Lowe probably had the knife prison style "tucked in" because he never saw the knife.

[REDACTED] told one of the first responding officers she witnessed the stabbing and photographed Lowe for the purpose of helping officers identify him. She texted the photo to one of the first responders at the scene. [REDACTED] was waiting at a traffic light when she saw Lowe dismount his wheelchair, lunge at [REDACTED] and stab him with a large knife. Lowe then mounted his wheelchair and fled.

On February 7, 2023, [REDACTED] provided a second statement to investigators. She reported being stopped in her vehicle at a traffic light when she saw Lowe in his wheelchair on the corner. [REDACTED] thought Lowe was probably begging for money. She looked away, and when she looked back, she saw Lowe had dismounted his wheelchair and was walking on his knees. [REDACTED] was surprised Lowe was able to walk so quickly despite not having lower legs. She saw Lowe produce a large knife in his right hand and stab a man who was crossing the street.

[REDACTED] told investigators he witnessed the shooting. While seated in his truck, [REDACTED] saw Lowe walking away from the officers. Every time Lowe faced the officers, he waved a large knife at them. When Lowe raised the knife above his head and was approximately 20 feet from the officers, the officers fired at him.

[REDACTED] told investigators he witnessed the shooting. He was in his automobile when he saw Lowe out of his wheelchair, picking up a shiny object which appeared to be a large knife. [REDACTED] was surprised when he saw Lowe walking away from his wheelchair with officers following behind. [REDACTED] saw an officer fire a Taser at Lowe. He saw Lowe raise the knife above his head, and then heard gunshots.

[REDACTED] told investigators he was in his automobile and witnessed the shooting. He said it appeared to him as if the officers were issuing commands to Lowe, but ambient noise prevented him from hearing exactly what was being ordered.

Lowe attempted to roll away from the officers and produced a knife from the left side of his body. Lowe made “slashing” motions with the knife toward the officers.

One of the officers then overturned Lowe’s wheelchair, causing him to fall to the sidewalk.

Lowe stood on his knees and raised the knife pointed upward. [REDACTED] heard one of the officers yell, “Drop the knife!” Then he heard gunshots.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] told investigators she was in her automobile when she saw Lowe, with an object in his hand, running away from officers who were yelling at him. Leilanie L. was unable to hear what was said because her windows were rolled up. Lowe made repeated slashing motions with the knife and then she heard gunshots.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] told investigators she is Lowe’s mother.

[REDACTED] reported Lowe had previously lived with an aunt in Texas and lost his legs in a work-related vehicular accident six months prior to the shooting.<sup>5</sup> Lowe moved back to Los Angeles to reside with her and was having difficulty adjusting to the loss of his legs.

A few days prior to the shooting, [REDACTED] placed a family disturbance 9-1-1 call to LAPD reporting Lowe was angry, upset, and experiencing behavioral problems.

Officers responded, said Lowe was “okay,” and departed.

[REDACTED] said Lowe had ADHD and another undiagnosed mental health disorder. Lowe admitted himself to the psychiatric ward at LAC/USC Medical Center in January 2023, and was subsequently placed on a 72-hour psychiatric hold. No medication was prescribed, and no additional mental health diagnosis was made.

## **NON-SHOOTING OFFICER STATEMENTS**

### **Detective Nicholas Delao**

Delao reported he was dispatched to a stabbing call where the suspect was a man in a wheelchair. He arrived at the scene of the stabbing, assisted victim [REDACTED] and took a spontaneous statement from him. [REDACTED] reported Lowe approached him and said, “What’s Up?” and then stabbed him.

While at the scene, witness [REDACTED] approached Delao and said she saw Lowe dismount his wheelchair, stab [REDACTED] then re-mount his wheelchair and flee. She provided a cell phone photo of Lowe to Delao who then broadcast Lowe’s description to other responding officers. The photo [REDACTED] provided is shown below:

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<sup>5</sup>Video evidence shows Lowe jumped intentionally off a freeway overpass. A work-related vehicle accident was not involved.



*Figure 14-Cellular Telephone Photo Taken by Witness [REDACTED] of Lowe Shortly After Stabbing [REDACTED] Depicting Lowe in His Wheelchair and [REDACTED] Walking in Traffic Seeking Help.*

#### **Officer Tomas Perez**

On January 15, 2025, Perez was deposed in a related civil case.

Perez testified he was on patrol and responded to the stabbing call. He drove to the scene and did not exit his patrol vehicle until after shots were fired. Lowe had a knife and was “running” on “amputated stubs.” Lowe appeared aggressive. Perez observed Tasers had been deployed but were ineffective. Munoz and Volasgis attempted to communicate with Lowe but Perez could not discern the words being spoken. Perez did not see the officers shoot and/or Tase Lowe because at that moment his attention was diverted to his radio to request an officer with a 40mm less-lethal launcher to respond.

At the time of the shooting there were civilians located “not too far” from Lowe. Perez believed if officers had backed away, it would have increased the risk of harm to civilians in the area.

#### **Sergeant Miguel Fuentes**

On January 16, 2025, Fuentes was deposed in a related civil case.

Fuentes testified he heard the radio call of a stabbing by a man in a wheelchair. In his supervisory capacity, and given the nature of the call, he radioed for officers to respond with lights and sirens. Fuentes heard over the radio the man in the wheelchair was refusing to stop

and comply. While he was getting into his patrol car at the police station, he heard an officer requesting a 40mm less-lethal launcher over the radio. He also heard a Taser was deployed and an officer involved shooting occurred over the radio. He drove to the location and obtained officer safety statements from Volasgis and Munoz. Volasgis said he fired five or six rounds. Munoz said he fired four or five rounds.

### **Detective Freddy Ramirez**

On January 14, 2025, Ramirez was deposed in a related civil case.

Ramirez testified he was on patrol and responded to the stabbing call. He arrived at the scene, saw a deployed Taser on the ground, and assumed Lowe had already been Tased. Munoz asked Ramirez to also draw his Taser. Ramirez and the other officers knew Lowe was armed with a knife and had already stabbed someone. Lowe was armed with a ten-inch knife and kept charging at the officers and “got pretty close.”

Ramirez repeatedly told Lowe to drop the knife but Lowe “kept trying to lunge at us.” Volasgis and Munoz also ordered Lowe to drop the knife. Ramirez told Lowe to drop the knife at least ten times. Ramirez deployed his Taser, but it had no effect on Lowe.

Ramirez testified Lowe used the knife in a “threatening manner like he was going to throw that knife at us.” When Lowe was approximately ten feet away, Lowe raised his arm above his head like he was going to throw the knife at Ramirez and the other officers. Ramirez believed if Lowe had thrown the knife, “He probably could have done some damage.” At the time of the shooting, when Lowe raised the knife again as if to throw it, Ramirez flinched.

Ramirez said he was in immediate fear for his life and does not believe the shooting constituted excessive force. Lowe could have been on drugs, robbing people, and could have stabbed additional people. Ramirez believed he could not back away from Lowe because he had a duty to render him safe, the officers safe, and the public safe. He said, “We reacted to what Mr. Lowe was doing.”

## **SHOOTING OFFICER STATEMENTS**

### **Officer Joshua Volasgis**

On January 27, 2023, Volasgis, with his attorney present, provided a voluntary statement to investigators for the limited purpose of allowing investigators to inspect his service weapon, take it into evidence, and conduct a “round count.” Volasgis produced his 9mm Glock-17 semi-automatic service weapon and turned it over to investigators. Volasgis said he loads his service weapon with 21 rounds in the magazine and one in the chamber for a total of 22 rounds. When investigators inspected Volasgis’ service weapon, it had 15 rounds in the magazine and one round in the chamber, which is consistent with Volasgis firing six rounds during the shooting. On the advice of his attorney, Volasgis declined at that time to make a further statement regarding the shooting.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Like any other individual, the officers possess the right under the Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution to be free from being compelled to give testimony against themselves.

On October 22, 2025, Volasgis provided, with his attorney present, a voluntary, recorded statement of the incident.

Volasgis stated he was in the United States Marine Corps from 2009 to 2013. As a Marine, Volasgis was trained in the use of fixed-blade knives and martial arts. He also became highly proficient in knife-throwing. Upon his honorable discharge, he was hired by the Los Angeles Police Department and completed his academy training in 2014. Volasgis left the LAPD and joined the West Covina Police Department (WCPD) in 2016. He left WCPD and joined HPPD in 2020, where he continues to be assigned as a patrol officer.

Volasgis told investigators on January 26, 2023, he was assigned to patrol. He was at the police station ending his shift when he heard an emergency call of a stabbing, reporting a “man down.”

Due to the urgency of the situation, Volasgis went to the parking lot of the police station to locate a patrol car so he could respond. He found Munoz in the parking lot, also looking for a marked patrol car in which to respond. Volasgis and Munoz decided to respond together. They located a marked patrol car, which was not equipped with a 40mm less-lethal launcher, and drove toward the location of the man down call. Munoz drove and Volasgis was the passenger officer.

As they drove toward the location with lights and siren activated, dispatch gave a suspect description matching Lowe with last known direction of travel. Volasgis and Munoz drove past the victim. Volasgis said he saw a lot of blood on the victim, knew he had serious injuries, believed he could be dying, and they might be now pursuing a murder suspect.

Volasgis and Munoz located Lowe near the location of the stabbing. They stopped their patrol car, exited, and engaged Lowe, who was rolling away from them in his wheelchair. Munoz yelled, “Hey! Stop! Come here for a second!” They believed Lowe had just stabbed someone, and he was moving in the direction of a nearby medical clinic. Volasgis gave his name to Lowe and asked to speak with him. Lowe gritted his teeth and grunted, “Fucking bitch! Fuckin’ bitch! Fuckin’ bitch!” He continued to roll away toward the clinic.

Lowe tried to pull something out from under his leg. Volasgis saw the handle of a knife. He said he drew his service weapon and kept it in a “low ready” position. Lowe was cussing and not making sense. Volasgis yelled, “Don’t grab that! Put your hands up! Don’t grab that!”

Volasgis wanted to ensure Lowe could not successfully arm himself, so he took the risk of approaching Lowe to get him out of his wheelchair. Munoz had his Taser drawn, but re-deployed and drew his service weapon. Volasgis decided to tip over Lowe’s wheelchair. His reasoning in doing so was to ensure Lowe would have to use his hands to get back into his chair. He would not be able to arm himself with the knife because his hands would be occupied. When Volasgis tipped Lowe out of his chair, he heard the knife hit the sidewalk. Volasgis ordered Lowe, “Don’t go for that knife!” Munoz transitioned back to his Taser. Lowe picked up the knife. Munoz discharged his Taser at Lowe but it was ineffective.

Volasgis was “shocked” to see that not only was Lowe standing on amputated legs, but he armed himself, was able to turn 180 degrees, and was able to walk away quickly. Volasgis expected Lowe to be immobile after being tipped out of his chair. Instead, Lowe was mobile and coordinated. Volasgis yelled, “Hey! Come on man! Drop it! Put it down!” Lowe held the knife in an “offensive posture” and was trying to escape. The situation was intensifying.

Ramirez arrived to assist. They were not trying to “box” Lowe in at that point, but he was moving toward a very busy intersection near the clinic where there was a lot of pedestrian traffic.

Ramirez tried to draw his Taser. Lowe squared himself with Ramirez. Lowe raised the knife again but his elbow was higher and he shifted his weight backward and put his right leg forward. Volasgis believed Lowe was going to throw the knife, which caused him to flinch.

It appeared to Volasgis that Ramirez was closest to Lowe and the motion Lowe made toward him was more “committed.” Lowe was generating force and “torque” and was arching his back and coming forward toward Ramirez, causing Ramirez to flinch as well. Volasgis was scared. He saw Ramirez still attempting to deploy his Taser and thought the Taser might be malfunctioning.

Lowe raised the knife up again, leaned back with his elbow bent and forearm straight, and planted his front leg in a throwing position. Lowe was focused on Ramirez. Ramirez was focused on his Taser and not on Lowe. Volasgis was concerned Ramirez was not focusing on Lowe and Lowe was going to throw the knife at Ramirez and hurt or kill him. Volasgis was trained that a knife could be thrown from ten or 15 feet away, and it could be life threatening. Ramirez appeared to be defenseless. When Lowe “cocked back” again and appeared to be intending to throw the knife at Ramirez, Volasgis fired his service weapon at Lowe to defend Ramirez.

Volasgis and the other officers provided medical attention to Lowe.

#### **Officer Paul Munoz**

On January 27, 2023, Munoz, with his attorney present, provided a voluntary statement to investigators for the limited purpose of allowing investigators to inspect his service weapon, take it into evidence, and conduct a “round count.” Munoz produced his 9mm Glock-17 semi-automatic service weapon and turned it over to investigators. Munoz said he loads his service weapon with 21 rounds in the magazine and one in the chamber for a total of 22 rounds. When investigators inspected Munoz’s service weapon, it had 17 rounds in the magazine and one round in the chamber, which is consistent with Munoz firing five rounds during the shooting. On the advice of his attorney, Munoz declined at that time to make a further statement at regarding the shooting.

On October 22, 2025, Munoz provided, with his attorney present, a voluntary, recorded statement of the incident.

Munoz stated on January 23, 2023, he was at the police station ending his patrol shift when he heard a radio call of a man stabbed and down. He went to the parking lot to find a patrol car to respond. Volasgis was in the parking lot and they decided to respond together in the same patrol car. Munoz drove and Volasgis was the passenger.

They drove with lights and siren activated to the location of the call and received information that it was a man in a wheelchair matching Lowe’s description who was involved in the stabbing. They drove by the location and saw a man down being helped by other officers and the fire department. He believed the man had serious injuries. He continued to drive and look for Lowe.

They found Lowe near the location of the stabbing. Munoz and Volasgis stopped and exited their patrol car near a medical clinic known to have sick and elderly people, along with medical staff and other members of the community, present. He feared they could be in danger. Munoz told Lowe they wanted to talk to him. Munoz did not see a knife at that point but believed Lowe could have

had it concealed somewhere. Volasgis tipped Lowe out of his wheelchair. Munoz heard a metal object hit the ground. Volasgis yelled, “Hey! Don’t grab the knife! Don’t reach for it!” Munoz saw the knife on the sidewalk.

Munoz drew his service weapon and ordered, “Hey! Just put your hands behind your back!” Lowe grabbed the knife and walked away on his amputated legs, which surprised Munoz.

Munoz radioed for additional units and asked for a unit with a 40mm launcher to respond. Lowe had the knife in his right hand and was brandishing it like a boxer would, with clenched fists. The knife was approximately 12 inches long with a pointed tip. It looked like it could cause “major damage” if thrown at them. Munoz and Volasgis were wearing ballistic vests not rated to prevent stabbing.

Lowe continued to walk away while brandishing the knife. They were hoping backup would arrive because there was heavy traffic, and there were multiple pedestrians in the area. He reholstered his service weapon and drew his Taser.

Lowe kept walking away and Munoz knew they could not let him go because he had just stabbed someone and could be an assault or murder suspect. Munoz yelled, “Taser! Taser!” and deployed his Taser at Lowe, but it was ineffective. Lowe made slashing motions at Munoz with the knife, which caused him to flinch. Munoz threw his Taser down and drew his service weapon. Ramirez arrived to assist.

Munoz did not believe he could simply grab Lowe to stop him because he was armed with a knife and could kill them with it. He could not increase the distance between himself and Lowe because Lowe was moving toward a busy intersection and Munoz needed to be close enough to Lowe to timely react and defend others in the area. They were concerned Lowe was moving toward people down the street.

Lowe separated his legs, bladed his body toward them, and raised the knife so the point was behind his head. His elbow was in the air, and he had the knife “cocked” behind his head, and was within range to throw the knife, which could have caused them serious injury.

Ramirez was closest to Lowe. Munoz told Ramirez to Tase Lowe. When Lowe cocked the knife back in a throwing motion, Munoz believed the officers were in immediate danger, particularly Ramirez who was closest to Lowe and was only armed with a less-lethal weapon. Lowe had the intent, ability, and opportunity to cause the officers serious bodily injury.

At that point, Munoz fired five rounds at Lowe, in rapid succession, to stop the threat, as Ramirez fired his Taser.

Lowe fell, they called in the fire department, and they rendered aid.

## **LEGAL ANALYSIS**

### **The Law**

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. 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).

### **Analysis**

Before analyzing the potential criminality of Munoz’s and Volasgis’ actions, it is important to detail Lowe’s dangerous and violent actions prior to the shooting, of which both officers were aware, because those facts bear on their respective mental states when they fired their service weapons.<sup>7</sup>

Notably, within approximately five minutes of Lowe stabbing [REDACTED] in the chest, Volasgis and Munoz located Lowe nearby. Lowe fit the suspect’s description, was behaving erratically, and was wielding a knife in a menacing and threatening manner. At that moment, it was reasonable for them to believe, despite Lowe being a double amputee with physical limitations, Lowe nonetheless had the present ability to complete a violent assault with a knife. That belief was substantiated when Lowe displayed his strength and agility to the officers by walking away from them quickly on his knees while making violent slashing motions with his knife. Undoubtedly, Lowe’s violent actions toward the officers, the near-fatal stabbing of [REDACTED] minutes prior, and displayed ability to ambulate despite being a double amputee would be the focal point of any potential defense.

It is also notable Lowe had the presence of methamphetamine in his bloodstream, had attempted suicide previously by jumping from a freeway overpass, had recently been involuntarily

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<sup>7</sup> It is well-settled law that every factor contributing to an officer’s state of mind must be considered, including knowledge about the suspect’s actions, concerns about tactical planning, public and personal safety, the collective information the officers received throughout the incident, and any other stimuli present during the shooting.

committed with reports of suicidal ideation, and had expressed specific plans for suicide. According to his family, Lowe had recently instigated others for the purpose of causing them, or the police, to kill him. This suggests Lowe's motive to randomly stab [REDACTED] and engage the officers in an armed and violent confrontation was a plan to intentionally cause the officers to use deadly force against him and thereby commit suicide. Lowe's suicidal history, motive, and irrational and erratic behavior would be another focal point of any potential defense.

The evidence presented in this case, including surveillance video, shows Lowe armed himself with a knife and engaged in an open and obvious lethal assault in broad daylight on a busy street corner, in the presence of numerous witnesses. His conduct led to an urgent police response to a dangerous situation which could foreseeably involve the use of deadly force, which is something Lowe had contemplated previously as reported by his mother. Lowe then repeatedly slashed and waved his knife at the officers who were trying to detain him.

In response, officers attempted to de-escalate the situation by overturning Lowe's wheelchair, ordering him to drop the knife, and ultimately Tasing him twice, all of which were ineffective.

Importantly, at the time the officers were engaging Lowe, they knew Lowe had the present and physical ability to strike with the knife because he had just committed a violent assault on [REDACTED] nearby. Lowe displayed quickness and physical agility despite being a double amputee, walking on his knees and moving rapidly away from the officers. Lowe's physical ability is corroborated by his mother's statement to LAPD officers during the family disturbance call describing Lowe as "very strong" and "no joke." It is also corroborated by an eyewitness to the shooting who was surprised by Lowe's speed despite walking on his knees.

Ultimately, when Lowe faced the officers and raised the knife into a throwing position from approximately 13 feet away from Ramirez, with the present ability to strike from that distance, the officers reasonably believed they needed to fire their service weapons to protect themselves and their fellow officers.

Lowe also presented a deadly threat to others in the area given the speed with which he moved and his prior attack on [REDACTED]. Under these circumstances, given the imminent threat he posed to any civilians in the area, the officers would be reasonable in believing deadly force was necessary to apprehend Lowe, who was a fleeing felon.

Ultimately, the officers fired 11 rounds in rapid succession at Lowe, who had the knife raised and was spinning in a counterclockwise position in a throwing motion as the shots were fired. The officers stopped shooting as soon as Lowe dropped the knife and was incapacitated.

The deadly threat Lowe presented at the time of the shooting is demonstrated by the body language of Officer Ramirez, who was closest to Lowe and within Lowe's strike zone. He can be seen on the surveillance video recoiling onto his heels, grimacing, and bringing his non-shooting hand to a guarded position, as shown below:



*Figure 15-Photo from Surveillance Video Showing Officer Ramirez Pointing His Taser at Lowe and Recoiling as Lowe Raised a Knife in His Direction from Approximately 13 Feet Away.*

Ramirez also testified when Lowe raised the knife over his head as if to throw it he was in immediate fear for his life.

The evidence demonstrates Lowe, despite his physical limitations, presented an imminent deadly threat to the officers and other people in the area. Based on the facts and circumstances presented, it cannot be proven beyond a reasonable doubt that the officers lacked a reasonable belief that the use of deadly force was necessary to defend against an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to the officers or others, and to apprehend a fleeing felon.

## CONCLUSION

What transpired in this incident was a tragic series of events put in motion by Lowe and his dangerous and violent actions.

A reasonable trier of fact is likely to find Lowe put Munoz and Volasgis in a situation which forced them to make a split-second decision regarding the amount of force to use in defending themselves and others from an armed attacker.

The fact the officers' actions were taken against a possibly suicidal person who was experiencing a mental break and suffered physical limitations does little to assuage the emotional response to such a tragedy. Nonetheless, this office is guided by the legal principles discussed in this memorandum.

For the foregoing reasons, we cannot find the use of deadly force by Officers Munoz and Volasgis was unreasonable beyond a reasonable doubt.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Consistent with this conclusion, LASD retained an expert in police tactics, training, procedures, and officer involved shootings to review the evidence in this case and render an opinion regarding the officers' tactics and use of force. That expert issued a 17-page report dated October 9, 2023, and concluded, in sum, that the officers' tactics and use of deadly force were reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances. In a related civil case, the Plaintiffs retained an expert in police tactics and procedures. That expert also issued a report, but reached the opposite conclusion.