

Incident Summary

On April 7, 2010, LAPD personnel were involved in a briefing of a multiple location search warrant. Police Officer A was on-duty and assigned to the entry team for one of the residences.

The entry team approached the front door of the residence with their weapons at the low-ready position, discovered it to be unlocked and announced, "LAPD, we have a search warrant." Detective A, assigned to the front (point) of the entry team and armed with a shotgun, entered the residence, followed by Officer A and Officer B.

Upon entering the residence, Detective A moved left, toward the middle of the first room of the residence, and Officer A moved to the right of Detective A. Officer A heard Detective A yell, "Dog," and observed a large grey Pit Bull dog, snarling with its teeth and tongue clearly visible, charging at him and Detective A. According to Officer A, he estimated the dog to weigh approximately 100 pounds, and believed it to be "excessively aggressive."

Officer A, whose service pistol was already drawn due to service of the warrant, believed that the dog was going to attack Detective A or himself and fired three rounds at the dog at a downward angle. Officer A believed his rounds struck the dog due to the dog's irregular movement. The dog then retreated to the rear of the residence. Due to the ongoing tactical situation, the entry team proceeded into the residence and cleared the location. Two suspects were taken into custody during the incident. The entry team later observed the deceased dog lying on the floor in the residence.

Meanwhile, Detective B, who had remained outside of the residence in the driveway, broadcast that shots had been fired. He was immediately notified that it was a dog shooting only and broadcast a Code Four. Lieutenant A arrived at the residence and directed Sergeant A to separate the officers and obtain a Public Safety Statement (PSS) from Officer A, which he did.

Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners' Findings

The BOPC reviews each Categorical Use of Force incident based upon the totality of the circumstances, namely all of the facts, evidence, statements and all other pertinent material relating to the particular incident. In every case, the BOPC makes specific findings in three areas: Tactics of the involved officer(s); Drawing/Exhibiting/Holstering of a weapon by any involved officer(s); and the Use of Force by any involved officer(s). All incidents are evaluated to identify areas where involved officers can benefit from a tactical debriefing to improve their response to future tactical situations. This is an effort to ensure that all officers benefit from the critical analysis that is applied to each incident as it is reviewed by various levels within the Department and by the BOPC. Based on the BOPC's review of the instant case, the BOPC made the following findings.

A. Tactics

The BOPC found Officer A's tactics to warrant a Tactical Debrief.

B. Drawing/Exhibiting/Holstering

The BOPC found Officers A's drawing and exhibiting to be in policy.

C. Use of Force

The BOPC found Officer A's Use of Force to be in policy.

Basis for Findings

A. Tactics

In adjudicating this incident, the BOPC identified no tactical considerations.

B. Drawing/Exhibiting

The BOPC evaluated the circumstances relevant to Officers A's drawing and determined that, in this instance, Officer A was involved in serving a search warrant for weapons and narcotics violations at a residence occupied by a known criminal gang member. As the officers deployed around the residence and prepared to enter the location, they drew and exhibited their respective weapons. Tactical practices dictate that search warrant operations are inherently dangerous.

In conclusion, the BOPC found that Officer A's Drawing/Exhibiting to be in policy, requiring no further action.

Note: In addition to Officer A, there were additional personnel that drew or exhibited their firearm during this incident. The BOPC found their Drawing/Exhibiting to be appropriate, requiring no specific findings or action.

C. Lethal Use of Force

During this incident, Officer A was attacked by a Pit Bull, which presented a significant risk of serious bodily injury or death. As such, the BOPC found Officer A's use of lethal force to be objectively reasonable, and, thus, in policy, requiring no further action.