

ABRIDGED SUMMARY OF CATEGORICAL USE OF FORCE INCIDENT AND FINDINGS BY THE LOS ANGELES BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

OFFICER-INVOLVED ANIMAL SHOOTING – 031-16

Division **Date** **Duty-On (X) Off ()** **Uniform-Yes (X) No ()**

Hollenbeck 5/27/2016

Officer(s) Involved in Use of Force **Length of Service**

Officer A 14 years

Reason for Police Contact

Officers responded to a call regarding a domestic assault. At the conclusion of the incident as they were exiting the residence, a Pit Bull dog charged at officers, at which point and an Officer-Involved Animal Shooting (AOIS) occurred.

Animal(s) **Deceased (X)** **Wounded ()** **Non-Hit ()**

Pit Bull dog

Board of Police Commissioners' Review

This is a brief summary designed only to enumerate salient points regarding this Categorical Use of Force incident and does not reflect the entirety of the extensive investigation by the Los Angeles Police Department (Department) or the deliberations by the Board of Police Commissioners (BOPC). In evaluating this matter, the BOPC considered the following: the complete Force Investigation Division investigation (including all of the transcribed statements of witnesses, pertinent subject criminal history, and addenda items); the relevant Training Evaluation and Management System materials of the involved officers; the Use of Force Review Board recommendations; the report and recommendations of the Chief of Police; and the report and recommendations of the Inspector General. The Department Command staff presented the matter to the BOPC and made itself available for any inquiries by the BOPC.

Because state law prohibits divulging the identity of police officers in public reports, for ease of reference, the masculine pronouns (he, his, and him) will be used in this report to refer to male or female employees.

The following incident was adjudicated by the BOPC on April 18, 2016.

Incident Summary

Officers A, B, and C, who were working in partnership with the Hollenbeck Area Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) responded to a backup request.

At the conclusion of the call the officers left the residence through the gated courtyard. Officer A stated that as he approached the gate, he observed the Pit Bull dog approaching him, while it stared, growled and bared its teeth. Officer A feared he was going to be bitten and backed up while he unholstered his firearm. As the Pit Bull dog lunged toward him Officer A fired one round at the dog from an approximate distance of 4 feet. Officer A was unsure if the round struck the animal.

After the first shot, Officer A observed the Pit Bull had changed direction toward Officer C. To protect Officer C, Officer B fired a second round at the dog from an approximate distance of 9 feet. Officer A believed his second round hit the Pit Bull because it yelped and ran to the rear of the house.

Animal Control arrived at the scene and transported the Pit Bull dog to a veterinarian clinic for medical treatment where it was determined that the dog suffered from severe hemorrhaging and was euthanized.

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 of a firearm 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 unanimously made the following findings.

A. Tactics

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

B. Drawing and Exhibiting

The BOPC found Officer A's drawing and exhibiting of a firearm to be in policy.

C. Lethal Use of Force

The BOPC found Officer A's lethal use of force to be in policy.

Basis for Findings

A. Tactics

- Animal Encounters
- The evaluation of tactics requires that consideration be given to the fact that officers are forced to make split-second decisions under very stressful and dynamic circumstances. Tactics are conceptual and intended to be flexible and incident specific, which requires that each incident be looked at objectively and the tactics be evaluated based on the totality of the circumstances.

Each tactical incident merits a comprehensive debriefing and a Tactical Debrief is the appropriate forum for the involved officer to review and discuss the incident and individual actions that took place during this incident.

In conclusion, the BOPC found Officers A's tactics to warrant a Tactical Debrief.

B. Drawing/Exhibiting

- According to Officer A, as he approached the front gate, he observed a Pit Bull dog off to his left staring at him. The dog showed its teeth and began to growl, as it simultaneously lunged at him. Fearing that the dog was about to bite him, he backed away and drew his service pistol.

In conclusion, the BOPC found Officer A's drawing and exhibiting of a firearm to be in policy.

C. Lethal Use of Force

- **Officer A** – (pistol, two rounds)

According to Officer A, the dog showed its teeth and began to growl, as it simultaneously lunged at him. Fearing that the dog was about bite him, he fired one round at the dog to stop the attack. The dog then changed its direction and began running toward Officer C who was standing to the left of him. Believing that the dog was about to attack Officer C, Officer A fired a second round at the dog to stop the attack.

In conclusion, the BOPC found Officer A's lethal use of force to be in policy.