

Inquiry into the Death of Police Officer II Houston Ryan Tipping

This report is anonymized for public release

Introduction

On May 26, 2022, at approximately 1415 hours, Police Officer II Houston Ryan Tipping, Serial No. 43382, was involved in a training accident. Officer Tipping passed away days later as a result of his injuries. In the immediate aftermath of this event, and at the direction of the Chief of Police, the Office of Constitutional Policing and Policy (OCP) conducted the inquiry summarized below.

Officer Tipping was a five-year veteran of the Department. He had a passion for doing police work and supporting his peers. He attended the Bicycle Patrol School in 2021 and excelled. In 2022, the instructors invited him back to help teach other officers bicycle patrol skills.

The goals of the inquiry team were to create as accurate a narrative as possible of the events that led to Officer Tipping's death and recommend best practices for Department training moving forward. The overarching hope is that the Department can apply the knowledge gained during this inquiry to enhance future training and avoid such an accident in the future.

The inquiry team used the following in writing this report:¹

1. The incident scene
2. Physical evidence
3. Applicable Department documents
4. California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) documents
5. Interviews with involved Department personnel
6. Interviews with non-Department witnesses
7. The report from the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner (Coroner's Office)²

Los Angeles Police Department Bicycle Patrol School

The Los Angeles Police Department Bicycle Patrol School (the Course) consists of five days of instruction and is designed to provide officers with the basic skills needed to perform their law enforcement duties while deployed on a bicycle. The Course takes place over five consecutive days, and May 26, 2022, was the fourth and next to last day of the Course. The Course first covers riding techniques, bicycle maintenance, officer safety, and tactics while patrolling on a bicycle (*e.g.*, mobile field force tactics on bicycle, use of the bicycle during stops, and other police tactics). The Course also includes several practical exercises wherein the students (police officers who wish to become bicycle patrol officers) assume the role of police officers on bicycle patrol and the Course instructors play the role of a "suspect."

¹ The inquiry did not reveal the existence of any video recording of the incident. There was no fixed video equipment in the classroom. Additionally, each Department employee interviewed was specifically asked whether they were aware of any video recordings of the incident and all responded in the negative.

² Investigators were not able to obtain Officer Tipping's other medical records from the hospital, as he had not authorized their release prior to his death.

The purpose of the practical exercises is to provide officers with tools for dealing with real world situations they may encounter while on bicycle patrol. The scenarios are approximately half of one day and occur toward the end of the Course with the intent of bringing all the students' newly acquired skills into realistic law enforcement simulations. The instructors use their experience to provide the students with an idea of what they will encounter in the field.

An Expanded Course Outline (ECO) is maintained for the Course (as required for POST approved schools). The ECO acts as an instructor's guidebook for a given course. It offers a daily schedule, detailed descriptions of each block of instruction, and goals for the course, among other guidance.

Course instructors are either full-time Training Division (TD) instructors or "adjunct" instructors. The only two full-time instructors for the Course are Sergeant A, and Officer A.³ Both were present during the Course on May 26, 2022. Sergeant A and Officer A are also responsible for selecting adjunct instructors. Adjunct instructors are initially identified during previous iterations of the Course for their outstanding performance in scenarios and for their understanding of the tactical concepts that are used throughout the Course.

Once selected, new adjunct instructors observe more senior adjunct instructors roleplay as suspects in scenarios until the new adjunct instructor believes he or she is ready to participate in the scenarios themselves. Adjunct instructors also periodically attend a one-day Bicycle Update Course. There is no formally delineated description of the training process for Course adjunct instructors. According to Officer A and Sergeant A, the ECO for the Course is posted in Room No. 105 at the Elysian Park Academy (Academy), which serves as the office for the Bicycle Coordination Unit (BCU), among other purposes as discussed below.

Note: Officer Tipping's Training Evaluation and Management System II Report revealed he completed the Course as a student between October 18 and October 22, 2021 and attended the Bicycle Update Course on January 11, 2022.

In addition to Sergeant A, Officer A, and Officer Tipping, the below listed Department employees attended the Course as students or adjunct instructors.⁴

Students

Officer B
Officer C
Officer D
Officer E
Officer F
Officer G
Officer H

³ Sergeant A has been assigned to TD since June 2008. Officer A has been an instructor at TD since February 2000, and has completed a California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 11, §1070 instructor certification course as discussed below.

⁴ Two additional students, Officer S and Officer T, attended the first day of the Course but requested to withdraw after that day so they could improve their conditioning and return for another course session.

Officer I
Officer J
Officer K
Officer L
Officer M
Officer N
Officer O
Officer P

Adjunct Instructors

Officer Q
Officer R

The “415 Man” Scenario - Background

The information below is described in detail in the Course’s ECO.⁵ This section describes the intended implementation of this scenario-based training. The subsequent section details the events surrounding the May 26, 2022, accident.

Several portions of the Course replicate real-world scenarios, allowing students to use skills gained from the Course and general police knowledge in mock public encounters. One such exercise is the 415 Man scenario, based on real-world situations officers face when a suspect is violating Section 415 of the California Penal Code.⁶ The instructor assumes the role of the suspect. The student is expected to address the suspect using skills learned during the course, and any other law enforcement skills they possess, while remaining compliant with Department policies and directives. During the scenario, the student is equipped with an imitation firearm and foam baton.

According to the ECO, the instructor is supposed to initially be holding an imitation knife, which he drops upon the officer’s command.⁷ The instructor eventually faces the student and engages the student in a verbally threatening manner. The unarmed instructor then advances on the student in a manner that the student could perceive as an attack. The goal of the scenario is to induce a defensive reaction from the student and to make sure that the student’s reaction is consistent with Department policy and expectations. According to the ECO, the student is expected to:

1. Create distance between the student and the suspect to control timing
2. Use kicks, knees, or a push to slow any perceived or threatened attack
3. Holster or bring firearm to the Department-approved close contact position (the firearm would have been unholstered while the suspect held the knife)

⁵ Bicycle Patrol School ECO, pages 17 – 19.

⁶ California Penal Code Section 415 states, in pertinent part, “Any person who unlawfully fights in a public place or challenges another person in a public place.”

⁷ There was, however, no evidence Officer Tipping had the imitation knife during the scenario.

4. Use footwork to move off the line of the attack
5. Draw and use the foam baton to stop the attacker

According to the ECO, the instructors are expected to pressure the students by using punches to the student's torso to ensure the student can effectively move around the bicycle and defend themselves. Students are not supposed to attempt to take the roleplaying instructors into custody, but rather use their preexisting arrest and control skills as well as the training and skills learned in the earlier part of the Course to defend themselves. The student's use of force should be limited to strikes, kicks, and use of the foam baton to simulate baton strikes. The ECO states, "The role player will comply or take a knee when the student has transitioned to an appropriate non-lethal force option and successfully holstered their firearm." The ECO is silent on whether the roleplaying instructors are allowed to lift the student off the ground or otherwise wrestle with the student. The ECO is a guide as to what is supposed to take place in the Course, not all the things that are prohibited, and thus this silence is evidence that such tactics were not part of the Course. Moreover, the inquiry established that Officer A told the adjunct instructors as a group that the roleplaying instructors should not take the student to the ground. Finally, the inquiry revealed that both Officer A and Officer R individually advised Tipping of this limitation.

Other Scenario Based Training During the Course

One example of the scenario-based training that was provided to the students in the Course prior to the 415 Man scenario took place earlier in the day on May 26, 2022, at the "Picnic Area" located on the Academy grounds at the southern end of the athletic field. The Picnic Area is separated from a slope leading to the lower parking lot by a low concrete wall that is approximately two feet in height. During this scenario-based training, Officer Tipping and Officer R were portraying individuals drinking in the park when approached by two student officers on their bicycles. Both Officer R and Tipping were holding striking pads for the students to strike during the scenario.⁸ In one of the drinking in the park scenarios, Officer J was a student who was paired with Officer Tipping as the roleplaying suspect. During that scenario, Tipping pushed Officer J with the pad, which caused Officer J's leg to strike the low concrete block wall. It also caused Officer J to fall partially over the wall until Officer Tipping stopped Officer J's fall and prevented Officer J from tumbling further. Officer J was able to continue with the training, including the 415 Man scenario. Later, on May 28, 2022, Officer J sought private medical treatment for a leg injury.

California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 1070

California Code of Regulations, Title 11, §1070 (Minimum Training Standards for Instructors of Commission on Police Officer Standards and Training - Certified Specialized Training) requires that instructors who teach Arrest and Control (ARCON) Techniques, Batons and Impact Weapons, or Defensive Tactics to have taken a required instructor training course.⁹ The same

⁸ A striking or blocking pad is a shield like pad with handles on the back which is designed to allow a student to practice strikes, kicks, or simulated baton strikes without injuring the person holding the pad.

⁹ARCON is a term used by the Department to describe its training program to teach officers to defend themselves and take subjects into custody. It includes instruction on stances and movement, searches and handcuffing, control holds, takedowns, ground fighting and defense, the use of batons, and weapon retention. Defensive Tactics is an analogous term used by POST and other agencies to describe training courses covering the same topics.

rule applies when ARCON or Defensive Tactics are taught within another course.¹⁰ This inquiry established that Officer A is a CCR §1070 certified instructor. Neither Sergeant A nor any of the Course's adjunct instructors were CCR §1070 certified at the time of the accident.

During their interviews, Officer A and Sergeant A each stated they did not believe the Course fell within CCR §1070, as ARCON techniques are not taught to students in the course. Rather, students are expected to use ARCON techniques they have already been taught in previous Department training in the scenarios reflecting situations they might encounter while working as a bicycle officer. Officer A and Sergeant A were, however, both aware that Officer A was CCR §1070 certified and Officer A was present during all the scenario-based training.

During the inquiry, Department investigators spoke with POST Law Enforcement Consultant Christine Ford, the POST liaison for the Department. Investigators contacted Ford to determine whether the Course and how it was taught in May 2022 was consistent with POST requirements and CCR §1070. According to Ford, POST published a document titled "POST Guidelines for Student Safety in Certified Courses," which includes general information about safety matters in scenario-based training.¹¹ This document does not contain specific content concerning required qualifications of instructors. Ford advised that this document was currently being revised, and the updated version may contain more information on this subject. Revisions have not yet been published. Ford further advised that there are no other known POST documents that provide specific direction on this subject. Ford believed the plain language of CCR §1070 articulated the requirements for instructors for courses involving instruction in Defensive Tactics and ARCON.

Additionally, Ford and the investigators discussed a hypothetical wherein the primary instructor for a course that included scenarios involving Defensive Tactics or ARCON techniques was CCR §1070 certified but where instructors participating in the scenarios were not CCR §1070 certified. In this hypothetical, Ford opined that the scenario-based training would be consistent with CCR §1070 if non-CCR §1070 certified roleplaying instructors did not provide any instruction concerning Defensive Tactics or ARCON. If such instructors provided any such instruction, Ford believed that instruction would be inconsistent with CCR §1070. Lastly, Ford's own recommendation was that all instructors involved in a course that includes scenarios involving Defensive Tactics or ARCON techniques should be CCR §1070 certified instructors.¹² Ford noted, however, that her views on this subject may not be universally held by all POST consultants.

During their interviews, Sergeant A and Officer A described their roles and the roles of the adjunct instructors in providing direction and instruction related to the scenario-based training and other

¹⁰ There is also an equivalency process to obtain POST approval to teach the specialized subjects without taking the required training course; however, that process is not relevant to the instructors discussed in this inquiry.

¹¹ According to Ford, the word "certified" in "POST Guidelines for Student Safety in Certified Courses," refers to the course being approved by POST, and not the qualifications of the instructor.

¹² A summary of Ford's discussion with the investigators was sent to her via email on July 5, 2022, with a request that she advise the investigators if she had any questions, edits, clarifications, or additions. Ford did not respond, and when contacted on July 14, 2022, she advised that she had provided the email to her chain of command for direction but had not yet received a response.

practice drills during the Course involving hand strikes, kicks, or baton strikes. Sergeant A and Officer A stated that the debriefing that is typically done after students complete a scenario or drill is an important part of the training. Sergeant A and Officer A stated that during the debriefs, all students and instructors, including adjunct instructors, are encouraged to provide commentary and feedback to the tactics used by the student officers and the effectiveness of their strikes. Sergeant A and Officer A both stated that they do not provide any specific direction to the adjunct instructors concerning what they can or cannot say to student officers during the scenario-based training or practice drills. They noted, however, that Officer A is present during all scenario-based training debriefs and other practice drills involving hand strikes, kicks, or baton strikes, and Sergeant A is present for approximately seventy-five percent of the debriefs. Additionally, both stated they would immediately correct any statement made by an adjunct instructor that was inconsistent with the law or Department policy.

During his interview, Officer Q stated that he and the other adjunct instructors were free to provide feedback and commentary as to the tactics the student officers used and the effectiveness of their strikes during debriefs. Officer Q stated, however, that Sergeant A and Officer A had told him on several occasions over the years he has been an adjunct instructor that he was not to instruct students on how to perform strikes, kicks, or baton strikes.

The Incident¹³

On May 26, 2022, at approximately 1345 hours, the students and instructors gathered in Room No. 105 to participate in the 415 Man scenario. This is a room used as office space for personnel assigned to the BCU, storage for BCU and student bicycles and equipment, as well as locker space.

According to several students in the class, Officer A briefed the group, including all the adjunct instructors, prior to the start of the scenarios. Officer A told students they could use the foam baton to defend themselves, but they were not to strike the instructor in the face. Several students also stated Officer A had told them they could also use strikes and kicks to defend themselves. The students were to use tactical redeployment if possible.¹⁴ Many of the student witnesses heard Officer A state that the goal for the students was to create distance from the roleplaying suspect and not to take the roleplaying suspect into custody. The students who were not participating in the scenario were positioned around the perimeter of the room at the direction of Officer A. Officer A stated he positioned the students in this manner to provide them with a view of the scenarios so they could learn from their peers' experiences as well as to form a physical barrier to protect the student and roleplaying instructors from contacting the bicycles and other items that were located on or along the walls of Room No. 105.

Prior to the scenario between Officer M and Officer Tipping, ten or more students had completed the 415 Man scenario, including Officer I. Officer I stated that during his turn as the student in the scenario, Officer R was the roleplaying instructor and had lifted Officer I off the ground. Officer I

¹³ As is expected when a group of individuals witness the same occurrence, there were differences in officers' accounts of the time before, during, and after the accident. The basic facts surrounding the accident, however, were consistent.

¹⁴ According to Department Use of Force – Tactics Directive No. 16: Redeployment and/or containment can afford officers the added benefit of time and distance while continuing to maintain control of the situation.

further stated that another instructor told Officer R and Officer I to break once Officer R had picked him up from the ground.¹⁵

At approximately 1415 hours, Officer M was assigned as the student and Officer Tipping was assigned as the roleplaying instructor. This was Tipping's first time performing this role in this scenario, as he had recently become an adjunct instructor and had not participated in the 415 Man scenario. It should be noted, however, that when Tipping attended the Course as a student in 2021, the scenarios were the same as during this iteration of the Course. Additionally, Officer Tipping had just observed the ten or more scenarios that had taken place with Officer R as the roleplaying instructor. According to Officer R, Tipping approached him, a more experienced adjunct instructor, and told Officer R that he felt he was ready to assume the role of the suspect. Tipping then asked to take over as the roleplaying instructor. Officer R then gave Tipping the protective gear he had been wearing so Tipping could assume the role of the suspect for the remaining scenarios. Officer Tipping wore a ballistic vest, pads on his legs, boxing gloves, and a mouthguard, and Officer M wore his ballistic vest and an empty utility belt with an imitation firearm and foam baton.

Prior to the scenario beginning, Officer R told Officer Tipping that the scenario was not to go to the ground. Officer G overheard Officer R tell Officer Tipping that the instructors were not supposed to take the students to the ground. Officer Q stated Officer A had instructed adjunct instructors not to take students to the ground during scenarios. Lastly, Officer A stated he too advised Tipping he was not to take the students to the ground during the scenarios.

As the scenario began, Tipping walked quickly toward Officer M. Officer M remained behind his bicycle, which he used for cover. Tipping then placed his left leg onto the bicycle, and Officer M struck Tipping's left leg with the foam baton. The foam baton strike caused no known injury, but Tipping "reacted" by going down on one knee to simulate a successful baton strike. Officer M then redeployed backwards in an apparent attempt to follow established Department training, which encourages an increase in distance from a potentially dangerous suspect. At this moment, Tipping rose and re-engaged Officer M. By this point, the scenario had moved toward the perimeter of the room, and according to Officer A and Officer P, Officer A stopped the scenario and repositioned Officers M and Tipping in the center of the room.¹⁶ Officer A stated he stopped the scenario shortly after it began because Officer M had not performed the beginning of the scenario correctly by either not drawing his baton quickly enough or stepping too far away from his bicycle but Officer A did not specifically recall what the issues were. Officer A believed he discussed the reason why he stopped the scenario with Officer M and the class, but he did not recall exactly what he said. Officer A then restarted the scenario, and Officer Tipping moved toward Officer M. Officer Tipping then tucked his head against Officer M's left torso as he wrapped his arms around Officer M's upper legs. Officer Tipping then applied the upward force and lifted Officer M off the ground.

¹⁵ Officer I did not recall Officer R's name, however, the inquiry established Officer R was the instructor who participated in Officer I's scenario. Officer R did not recall having picked a student up from the ground or having one of his scenarios stopped by Officer A or another instructor. Officer A stated he recalled one scenario where Officer R had wrapped his arms around a student and that he had stopped the scenario because he believed Officer R had taken hold of the student to slow the scenario down and because the student was "out of position."

¹⁶ Officer M did not recall Officer A stopping the scenario and repositioning he and Officer Tipping.

Based on the totality of the interviews of witnessing students and instructors, which included their perceptions based on their vantage points, the investigators determined Officer Tipping had attempted to perform a “double leg takedown.”¹⁷ Three of the witnesses described this interaction between Officer M and Tipping as a “bear hug” that resulted in them falling to the ground. Other witnesses, including Officer A, characterized the interaction as Officer Tipping taking hold of Officer M because Tipping appeared to have lost his balance, and others could not characterize it or did not have a clear vantage point.

As Officer Tipping lifted Officer M from the ground, Officer M’s left arm went around Tipping’s neck, wrapping toward the front of Tipping’s chest and throat, effectively placing Tipping in a headlock. Officer Tipping then either drove his body forward or fell forward, and Officer M fell backward. As the two fell to the floor, Officer Tipping’s neck remained in Officer M’s grasp. Officer M stated the takedown occurred very quickly and he wrapped his left arm around Officer Tipping’s head to brace himself as they fell. Officer M said he had his bicep clutching Tipping’s head. Officer M later stated, however, that he was not certain whether his arm was wrapped around Officer Tipping’s head or resting on top of it when they fell. Additionally, four of the witnessing students stated that they believed Officer M had taken hold of Officer Tipping’s head as a reactionary move in response to being lifted from the ground. Based on the totality of the statements of the witnessing officers and instructors, the period of time between the restarting of the scenario and the time Officers M and Tipping fell to the floor was very brief.

Officer A stated he was standing seven to ten feet in front of Tipping and Officer M when the incident occurred, and he believed he called or had begun to call “break” prior to Officer Tipping and Officer M falling to the ground. Sergeant A also recalled hearing Officer A yell “break” immediately after he heard Officers M and Tipping contacting the ground. Although he heard Officer A’s command and the fall, Sergeant A did not see the scenario because he was seated at his desk, where he could not observe the area where the scenarios were being conducted. Officer Q stated he yelled “break,” after the two contacted the floor, and that he heard Officer A also yell “break” immediately after he did. None of the students recalled hearing any of the instructors yell “break” or a similar statement prior to the time the officers contacted the floor. Many of the student witnesses recalled that the incident happened very quickly, and several witnesses stated there would not have been time for an instructor to stop the scenario between the time Officer Tipping initiated the takedown and the time he and Officer M fell to the floor.

When the two officers landed on the ground, witnessing officers immediately noticed that Officer Tipping’s body movements seemed unusual, and he appeared to be struggling to speak. Officer P instantaneously came to Officer Tipping’s side, and Officer Tipping mouthed the words, “I can’t breathe,” however no sound was audible.

¹⁷ The double leg takedown is a grappling maneuver where the aggressor lowers their center of gravity to wrap their arms around the opponent’s legs, while tucking their head against the opponent’s torso. Once there, the aggressor applies forward and upward force to de-stabilize the opponent and take them to the ground. Performed correctly, this lands the aggressor in a “top control” position.

Medical Treatment Efforts

At this time, Officer A began leading efforts to assist Officer Tipping. Several officers began to assess Officer Tipping's condition.¹⁸ Officer P noted that Tipping's chest was not rising and falling, and upon palpation, he felt only a very weak pulse. Officer R came to assist Officer P and the two began cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), with Officer R providing rescue breathing without a CPR mask.¹⁹ Someone present asked for a CPR mask, and Officer L retrieved one from his vehicle. Several other students indicated they also searched the Academy grounds for a CPR mask. Officer L stated he held the mask for Officer R after he retrieved it. Officer G stated he assisted with treating Tipping by checking his pulse throughout the CPR process.

Officer A directed that the room be cleared of any officers not directly assisting Tipping. Officer A then assigned two officers to retrieve an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), and while there appeared to have been some initial confusion as to where an AED could be located, one was ultimately retrieved from the Guard Gate and provided to the officers who were performing CPR on Officer Tipping. Officer H stated he turned on the AED after it had been attached to Tipping. Officer P stated the AED was connected to Officer Tipping and turned on; however, it did not deliver a shock.²⁰

Officer A also directed other officers to summon a rescue ambulance (RA) and other officers to meet the RA at the lower driveway and guide them to Officer Tipping's side. An RA was requested at 1424 hours, and arrived six minutes later, at 1430 hours.

Officer P and Officer R continued CPR until approximately 1431 hours. At that time, they were relieved by Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) Firefighter Paramedics A and B. Paramedics A and B began advanced life saving techniques. They initiated cervical spine precautions, attached a cardiac monitor, inserted a ventilation tube, gave medications, and restored Officer Tipping's pulse.²¹ They then transported Officer Tipping to Los Angeles County, USC Medical Center. The RA left the Academy at 1446 hours and arrived at the hospital at 1456 hours.

On May 29, 2022, at 0940 hours, Officer Houston Tipping succumbed to his injuries.

Medical Information

On July 27, 2022, the Coroner's Office released the redacted public version of the Tipping Autopsy Report to the media. On July 28, 2022, the Coroner's Office provided the Department

¹⁸ Officer I indicated that he also assisted with providing medical treatment to Tipping.

¹⁹ During his interview, Officer P stated he and Officer R initiated CPR immediately; however, Officer R stated that he only performed rescue breathing for approximately the first nine minutes after the incident because Tipping had a pulse during that time.

²⁰ Investigators obtained a printed copy of the electronic data for the AED used during the incident from LAFD Senior Management Analyst A who advised that LAFD will retain the electronic data, and as noted in the Death Investigation Report, the AED was booked at Evidence and Property Management Division. On July 21, 2022, Doctor A, City of Los Angeles, Medical Services Division, reviewed the data and advised that the AED did not deliver a shock because the data indicated Tipping had a pulse while the AED was connected to him.

²¹ In their interviews, Paramedics A and B indicated they "restored" Officer Tipping's pulse; however, as noted above, Doctor A advised that the AED data indicated Tipping had a pulse while the AED was attached.

with the public, as well as the unredacted law enforcement use only version of the Autopsy Report. The Autopsy Report was completed by Deputy Medical Examiner Doctor Lawrence Nguyen. The Autopsy Report indicated that Doctor Nguyen conducted a post-mortem examination on June 4, 2022. As a result of the post-mortem examination, Doctor Nguyen determined the manner of death as “Accident,” and the cause of death as “sequelae of cervical spinal cord injury.” The Autopsy Report also indicated that Tipping had sustained a laceration to the left side of his scalp that was the result of “Mayfield C – clamp placement during spinal surgery,” and fractures to his ribs that were the result of “cardiopulmonary resuscitation with Lucas device.”

No additional injuries to Tipping’s body were noted in the Autopsy Report.²²

Recommendations

Officer Houston Ryan Tipping’s death was a tragic accident. This inquiry did not identify any single step that had the Department implemented prior to May 26, 2022, would have conclusively prevented Officer Tipping’s death. The inquiry has found that perhaps even more could have been done to prevent Officer Tipping from using maneuvers which allowed the two roleplaying officers to end up on the ground. The position in which they landed appears to have caused the break of Officer Tipping’s C-4 vertebrae and ultimately his death. While the ECO, the verbal explanation of the scenario, and the 415 Man scenarios that took place prior to Tipping’s injury demonstrated that grappling and takedowns were not the intent of the scenario, in the spirit of the Department’s Core Value of Quality Through Continuous Improvement, the following may assist in clarifying the 415 Man scenario and improve overall safety for Department training.

1. Clarify the Bicycle Patrol School ECO and all ECOs for other Courses that Contain ARCON Elements to Ensure the ECOs Clearly Articulate Instructor and Student Expectations

While the Bicycle Patrol School ECO explained that the instructor will take a knee once the student has used proper force and holstered their weapon, it did not explicitly describe all the limitations or boundaries for the physical interaction between students and roleplaying instructors (*e.g.*, role playing instructors should not perform takedowns). As such, with the benefit of hindsight, the Bicycle Patrol School ECO should be made clearer as to whether and to what degree, ARCON techniques may be used. Additionally, Training Bureau (TB) should evaluate all ECOs for other Department courses that contain or could be misinterpreted to contain an ARCON element and make adjustments as necessary.

2. The Adjunct Instructor Program for Bicycle Patrol School should be Formalized

The inquiry established there were no set standards for Bicycle Patrol School adjunct instructor training. On the job and informal training has become the default system for developing adjunct instructor skills. The inquiry further established that Sergeant A is limited to one or two training days per year with the adjunct instructors to work with them, evaluate their skills, and ensure that

²² The Autopsy Report contained a section titled “Case Report” that was completed by Coroner’s Investigator Adrian Munoz. That section contained statements regarding the circumstances surrounding Tipping’s injury that were attributed to OCPP Investigator Sergeant B. Sergeant B advised that she provided background information to Munoz at his request to assist Doctor Nguyen with the post-mortem on June 2, 2022, and the information she provided reflected the knowledge she had at that time.

they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Training Bureau should consider formalizing the adjunct instructor training program. This would provide more thorough, frequent, and consistent instructor development and training and would allow for a more precise understanding of the purpose and limitations of each scenario. Additionally, the ECO should be sent via email to adjunct instructors prior to any course in which they will teach, with a requirement that the instructor read the ECO before the course begins.

3. Safety Briefings Should Be Held at the Beginning of Any Class Involving Physical Activity So That All Participants Are Familiar with the Area and the Safety Equipment's Location

From all accounts, it appears Officer Tipping's Course colleagues immediately came to his aid. Specifically, Officer P, Officer R, Officer G, and Officer L immediately began performing life-saving CPR and Officer A led the relief efforts ensuring that medical assistance was on its way at the earliest possible time. It did not appear, however, that responsibilities in the case of an emergency, such as pathfinder (sent to the Academy entrance to guide the ambulance to the injured party), first aid officer (tasked with locating and retrieving an AED, CPR facemask, or other first aid supplies), radio communications officer (to contact Communications Division) had been previously assigned until the emergency occurred. Moreover, it was not clear that each officer knew where the equipment they were dispatched to obtain was kept at the site.

Training Bureau should ensure that all ECOs include a requirement that specific roles be delineated during a safety briefing, prior to the start of each day of the class. These should include specific officers being assigned responsibilities as pathfinders for emergency medical personnel, radio communications, AED operators, and any other roles that are appropriate based on the specific blocks of instruction. Additionally, TB should ensure appropriate information and instructions regarding safety briefing topics, including the location of AED devices, CPR facemasks, and first aid kits are posted in training areas in the form of a clearly visible poster sized graphic.

4. Training Bureau Should Evaluate All Areas Utilized for Scenario-Based Training to Ensure the Area Can Safely Accommodate All Potential Interactions

The two locations selected for the scenario-based training on May 26, 2022, the Bicycle Room and the Picnic Area, presented hazards that could have been substantially mitigated by or eliminated by choosing better locations. Specifically, the ground in the Picnic Area has a concrete block wall above a hilly drop-off which is part of the natural topography of the Department's Academy grounds. Had Officer J fallen further over the wall Officer J could have tumbled down the hill which could have caused further injury. The scenario-based exercise that took place at the Picnic Area should have been at a different location without this issue. Similarly, the inquiry established that Officer A and Sergeant A used students as physical barriers to prevent the scenario participants from contacting the bicycles and other items stored in the Bicycle Room. Moreover, while the inquiry established the 415 Man scenario was not intended to involve grappling or takedowns, the matting on the floor of the Bicycle Room was not specifically designed to provide protection in the event the 415 Man scenario participants fell to the floor based on tripping or another minor movement contemplated by the scenario. Training Bureau should evaluate all locations used for scenario-based training to reduce the likelihood of injury to scenario participants.

5. Non-CCR §1070 Certified Roleplaying Instructors Should Not Provide Instruction During Scenarios Pending Department Clarification of the Mandates of CCR §1070

This incident highlights the need for the Department to work with POST to define the scope of CCR §1070 more clearly, especially when it comes to Department personnel who act as role players. Specifically, the inquiry revealed a lack of written guidance from POST respecting whether roleplaying instructors in scenarios containing ARCON elements must be CCR §1070 certified. Additionally, POST is silent on the parameters of how students may properly act as role players in similar scenarios. This lack of written guidance, combined with POST's approval of the Bicycle Patrol School ECO which included descriptions of the ARCON elements in scenarios where instructors act as role players, creates ambiguity as to which Bicycle Patrol School instructors must be CCR §1070 certified.

Moreover, Ms. Ford's statement that those who provide any "instruction" need to be CCR §1070 certified does not consider that full-time instructors, adjunct instructors, and students regularly provide feedback or commentary regarding a student's performance, thereby allowing the student to gain a more robust understanding of the scenario and how it appeared from multiple perspectives. Using the word "instruction" as a method for distinguishing whether instructors need to be CCR §1070 certified is not meaningful for an entity that values debriefing and discussion at every level. In the Course, everyone was allowed to express points of view, but Officer A, a CCR §1070 certified instructor, was always present to further explain, instruct, or correct any tactic or training that was inconsistent with Department or POST policy. Because of the ambiguities in both POST's written guidance and verbal statements obtained from Ford regarding her opinion of best practices, TB should conduct a review of Department training to identify all training involving ARCON elements. Once identified, TB should consider working with POST to determine whether course instructors and the use of role players for courses meet the requirements of CCR §1070, making appropriate adjustments as necessary. Training Bureau should also consider working with its counterparts at other agencies as well as POST to evaluate and possibly clarify the wording of CCR §1070 to provide well-defined and effective direction to agencies.

As stated above, Officer Tipping's injury and ultimately death were the result of actions, not whether or not he gave "instruction" during the Course. Thus, the relevance of CCR §1070 certification to this case is unclear. There is no indication that any of the commentary or feedback the adjunct instructors provided to students during the role play or scenario-based training played a role in Officer Tipping's injury. Indeed, the only pertinent instruction given, by both CCR §1070 certified and non-CCR §1070 certified instructors, appears to have been that during role playing, the scenario should not involve taking the student to the ground, which was the natural conclusion of the move that Tipping used. Nonetheless, while TB works with POST to obtain clarification of the interpretation of CCR §1070 and the rationale for any rule about it, this Report recommends that TB should ensure that non-CCR §1070 instructors acting as role players do not provide any instruction to students. This will remove the perspective of the roleplaying instructors as a source of commentary and feedback for the students, but until clarification of the rule is obtained, it is the most diligent course of action available to the Department.

Conclusion

Officer Houston Ryan Tipping was a dedicated public servant, committed to the betterment of this City and the Department. Focused on helping his fellow peace officers, he volunteered to be an

adjunct instructor and a role player. Likewise, his fellow officers were focused on helping him after the accident. They sprang to action to save his life when he was injured. Tragically, despite their efforts, the accident caused a catastrophic injury that would ultimately claim Officer Tipping's life.

The inquiry team had access to all applicable materials that were available at the time of this report. The team had access to the scene of the accident, the professionals who treated Officer Tipping following the injury, and the Department employees involved in the Course. The team interviewed 21 people and reviewed hundreds of pages of documents.

As previously mentioned, the OCPP conducted this inquiry and any questions should be directed to their office at (213) 486-8730.