



SHERIFF'S OFFICE

A TRADITION OF SERVICE SINCE 1856

San Mateo County Sheriff's Office
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NEWS RELEASE

Incident Date and Time: Friday, March 1, 2019

Location: 400 County Center Redwood City, CA

Type of Crime/Incident: Response to the District Attorney's Office Press Conference related to the Officer Involved Critical Incident with Mr. Chinedu Okobi

Summary:

The San Mateo County District Attorney's Office has completed its investigation and found that the force used by San Mateo County Office Sheriff's personnel during the encounter with Chinedu Okobi on October 3, 2018, was lawful.

"It is always a tragedy anytime there is a loss of life. It is never something we in law enforcement want to have happen. Our hearts go out to Chinedu Okobi and his family as well as everyone affected by this terrible situation. We appreciate the work conducted by the District Attorney's Office on this lengthy investigation and will continue with our administrative review process." -Sheriff Carlos G. Bolanos

We recognize that some have questioned the content of our initial news release. The initial news release reflected an understanding of what occurred at the very early stages of the incident and prior to an investigation. Due to the severity of the circumstances, we felt it was important to communicate with the public as soon as possible. After reviewing the District Attorney's investigation and the video of the incident, we now know that Mr. Okobi initially resisted the deputies' attempts to detain him and Deputy Wang was struck in the face later in the encounter.

The incident with Mr. Okobi began as a result of a pedestrian traffic violation. Traffic safety is an important component of our duties and El Camino Real is a very busy thoroughfare, especially during the midafternoon. We have had multiple pedestrian related collisions in this area including a fatal pedestrian involved collision. Our personnel were concerned for Mr. Okobi's safety as well as the safety of others around him and it was appropriate to address these safety concerns.

After reviewing the video, our personnel tried to defuse the situation and reassure Mr. Okobi multiple times. Additionally, we now know that paramedics were called to the scene before Mr. Okobi was detained and medics were tending to him before he went into cardiac arrest. Nevertheless, we have

heard suggestions to have automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in each patrol car and we are working to do so. All our staff are trained in first aid/CPR as well as the use of AEDs.

We frequently review our use of force policies and will continue to do so. De-escalation techniques are a big part of our training and routine practice. We are in the process of updating our use of force policy to further emphasize de-escalation.

At this time, the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office has no immediate plans institute a moratorium on Tasers. We will continue to provide our deputies with a number of force options and will evaluate our equipment to ensure we have the best tools and training available for our community.

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