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January 23, 2026

Sheriff Michael L. Johnson
Shasta County Sheriff's Office
300 Park Marina Circle
Redding, CA 96001

RE: January 1, 2025, Deputy-Involved Shooting
Anderson Police Department Case 25A000003,
Redding Police Department Case 25R000037,
Shasta County Sheriff's Department Case 25S000008,
Shasta County District Attorney Investigation Division Case No. DA25000002
Involved Officers: Shasta County Sheriff's Sergeant Trevor Gusaas
Shasta County Sheriff's Deputy Zachary Jurkiewicz
Involved Person: William Clark Littlefield (DOB 03/23/1972)

Sheriff Johnson:

The Shasta County District Attorney's Office has completed an independent review of the above-referenced deputy-involved shooting incident. For purposes of this review, the District Attorney's responsibility is to review the evidence and decide whether there is sufficient evidence to support the filing of criminal charges. Issues of policy, training, tactics, or civil liability were not considered. For the reasons set forth below, we conclude that the shooting was lawful.

The investigation of this shooting was conducted consistent with the current Officer Involved Critical Incident Review Team (OICIRT) process. This protocol involves several Shasta County law enforcement agencies working collaboratively to investigate the facts and circumstances of the shooting. In this case, participating agencies included the Redding Police Department, the Shasta County Sheriff's Office, the Anderson Police Department, and the Shasta County District Attorney's Office. In conducting the investigation, investigators interviewed witnesses and collected physical evidence to gain a full and complete picture of the events that resulted in the fatal shooting of William Clark Littlefield. The findings of the District Attorney are based upon a review of all the material compiled in the multi-agency investigation.

FACTUAL SUMMARY

On January 1, 2025, in the early afternoon hours, Bob (Bob) Littlefield called SHASCOM because his adult son, William (William) Littlefield, 53, was having a psychotic break. (To avoid confusion due to the three civilians sharing the surname Littlefield, their first names will be used; no disrespect is intended.) William had been throwing food items about the kitchen and was uncontrollable. William had been diagnosed with schizophrenia when he was 19 years old. Despite having volunteered as "Crisis Line" counselors for about 20 years, Bob and his wife Shirley needed help on this day addressing their son's needs. At the suggestion of a SHASCOM dispatcher, Bob called Hill Country Clinic for assistance.

Two members of Hill Country's Mobile Crisis Unit visited William between 1-2:00 that afternoon. William acknowledged the episode he had earlier in the day, telling the Hill Country staff that he was sorry for scaring his parents. William told the Crisis Unit that he had taken some Ativan and that he felt much better. William told the staffers that he would never hurt himself or others. William stated he did not want to go to the hospital. The Mobile Crisis Unit staff did not think William met the criteria for a 5150 WIC commitment at that time. William expressed his gratitude for the Crisis Unit's response and even hugged the staff members upon their departure.

Bob called the Crisis Unit again that evening about two hours after the staffers had left the residence. Bob said that William was "ramped up again" and that he had taken several unknown pills. The clinician told Bob that he should get William to the hospital due to the ingestion of the pills, and that Bob should call for EMTs if he couldn't get William to the hospital himself.

At approximately 6:15 in the evening, Bob called SHASCOM to request assistance. Bob told the SHASCOM dispatcher that William had swallowed some pills and that neither Bob nor Shirley could identify what pills or how many William had taken. Bob and Shirley thought it would have been his prescription medication that William had taken, but they were not sure. When asked, Bob said that William might be attempting suicide since he took so many pills.

SHASCOM issued a pre-alert broadcast regarding William's possible suicide attempt. Sergeant Gusaas and Deputies Jurkiewicz, Young, and Chew were dispatched to the call.

While deputies were enroute, Bob told the SHASCOM dispatcher that William had threatened to cut his own wrists or kill himself with a nail file. On the dispatch recording, William could be heard in the background saying, "I'm going to kill myself if you come any closer." Shirley is heard saying, "He's got a knife." Bob then told SHASCOM that he and Shirley were out on the porch hoping the separation would allow William to calm down.

Moments later Bob told SHASCOM that William was cutting his wrists. William could be heard on the dispatch recording saying, "I'm killing myself right now!" and "I'm going to kill myself!" As the dispatcher suggests Bob and Shirley get away from the residence, William started yelling, "Oh, no! Help me! Just call 911!" Bob and Shirley then got towels to try to stop William's wrists from bleeding.

A short period after that, Bob told dispatch, “He’s doing it again. I can’t get near him....” Dispatch again told Bob to separate from William and that deputies were on their way to the residence. Bob said that he and Shirley were on the porch. Within one minute, Sheriff’s deputies arrived.

Deputy Jurkiewicz stopped his vehicle just to the right of the porch, approximately 20 feet away. (See Figure 1.) The Littlefields were standing on the porch, slightly to his left. Deputies Young and Chew stopped their vehicle to the right and slightly behind Deputy Jurkiewicz’s. Finally, Sgt. Gusaas stopped his vehicle to the right and behind Deputy Young’s.



Figure 1. Deputy Jurkiewicz’s patrol vehicle parked in front of the Littlefield residence. William’s body is obscured on the left.

Jurkiewicz left the cover of his vehicle to assist the Littlefields away from the house. While Deputy Jurkiewicz helped the Littlefields, Sgt. Gusaas and Deputy Young approached the house. Deputy Young could see that William had walked back to a part of the house that was out of view. Sgt. Gusaas then saw William in the living room of the house with a kitchen knife in his hand. (See Figure 2.) Sgt. Gusaas then warned the other deputies that William was walking toward the front door of the house.



Figure 2. The knife brandished by William as documented by Crime Scene personnel.

William flung the front door open. He exited the house with the knife in his right hand. He had his hand raised above his head. He held the knife with the blade pointing forward, as if ready to use a downward stabbing motion.

The Littlefields and Deputy Jurkiewicz were still walking toward the driver's side of Deputy Jurkiewicz's patrol vehicle but had not yet reached the front of the vehicle. Sgt. Gusaas and Deputy Young had moved away from the house. Sgt. Gusaas had walked back to the driver's side of Deputy Jurkiewicz's vehicle while Deputy Young had moved toward the front of his own vehicle.

Based upon the nature of the call, Deputy Young had his Taser drawn in case a use of force was necessary. He and Deputy Chew had discussed on the way to the call that they did not intend to go into the house, but if they were confronted by William, they might need to use less-lethal force.

Once out of the house, William started moving very quickly toward Sgt. Gusaas with the knife still overhead. Deputy Jurkiewicz and the Littlefields were still out in front of the patrol vehicles and had no cover. The deputies identified themselves as Sheriff's deputies. All four deputies yelled at William to stop and drop the knife. William continued to advance toward Sgt. Gusaas.

Deputy Young still had his Taser ready but could not immediately deploy it because Bob and Shirley were between him and William. Once William had moved past Bob and Shirley, Deputy Young deployed the Taser. The Taser was not effective, and William continued to run toward Sgt. Gusaas. Later investigators found one Taser probe on the ground and the other wrapped up in William's jacket.

Sergeant Gusaas had been backpedaling to keep William in view while creating distance. He was trying to get to the patrol vehicles for cover. When Sgt. Gusaas had reached the back door of Deputy Jurkiewicz's patrol vehicle, William started running directly at Sgt. Gusaas. All four deputies heard William yelling something but could not understand him. Shirley remembered William yelling, "I'm going to kill you!" Shirley described William as having a wild look in his eyes as he ran at the deputies.

William ran to within 10-15 feet of Sgt. Gusaas and Deputy Jurkiewicz. Sergeant Gusaas fired three rounds from his duty firearm at William fearing that William would severely injure or kill him, the other deputies, or the Littlefields. Deputy Jurkiewicz also fired his duty firearm fearing the same. When Deputy Jurkiewicz fired, William turned toward him. Sergeant Gusaas and Deputy Jurkiewicz continued to fire until William stopped running toward them.

Because other people were in his line of fire, Deputy Chew could not safely discharge his duty weapon. Deputy Young could not transition from his Taser to firearm in the few seconds between deploying the Taser and the end of this incident.

Sgt. Gusaas and Deputy Jurkiewicz immediately rendered the scene safe, called for medical assistance, and started to render aid to William. Deputies Young and Chew escorted the Littlefields to a patrol vehicle. Medical responders arrived on scene within minutes from a nearby staging area. Unfortunately, William succumbed to his injuries.

LEGAL STANDARD

Penal Code section 835a sets forth the law regarding peace officers' use of deadly force. Peace officers may only use deadly force, when necessary, in defense of human life, taking into consideration the particular circumstances of each situation (Section 835a(a)(2)). "The decision of an officer to use force shall be evaluated from the perspective of a reasonable officer in the same situation, based on the totality of the circumstances known to or perceived by the officer at the time, rather than with the benefit of hindsight" (Section 835a(a)(4) and (e)(3)). An officer may use deadly force "to defend against an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or to another person" (Section 835a(c)(1)(A)).

Deadly force is defined as "any use of force that creates a substantial risk of causing death or serious bodily injury, including, but not limited to, the discharge of a firearm (Section 835a(e)(1)).

An imminent threat is one in which "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" (Section 835a(e)(2)).

LEGAL ANALYSIS

In applying the above legal standard to the facts of this case, it is important to consider several factors including the circumstances leading up to the deadly force event. These factors include the officer's training and experience as it related to the threat he was facing, and the facts known to the officer at the time he used the deadly force.

Sergeant Gusaas is a 15-year veteran of the Shasta County Sheriff's Office. He has worked in the jail, on patrol in the South County, and as a sergeant in the South County and City of Shasta Lake.

Deputy Jurkiewicz is a 10-year veteran of the Sheriff's Office. He has worked in the jail and patrol in South County as well as the City of Shasta Lake.

Deputies responding to the Littlefield call knew that William was possibly suicidal. They knew William had cut himself with a sharp object and that his parents did not want to leave the residence, placing themselves in harm's way.

William flung the door open in an aggressive manner presenting a clear threat of harm because he had the knife overhead in his hand. Sergeant Gusaas and Deputy Young had to retreat quickly from the porch to avoid an immediate confrontation with William. Deputy Jurkiewicz and the Littlefields were also still out in the open. They were walking slowly across the gravel driveway. Shirley needed assistance because she was not wearing shoes.

William continued to hold the knife over his head in a clearly threatening manner as he advanced toward Sgt. Gusaas. William was yelling aggressively at Sgt. Gusaas, but his words were unintelligible. The deputies yelled at William to stop and drop the knife to defuse the situation.

It was apparent to the deputies that William would not stop his advance. The deputies believed that William intended to attack them or his parents with the knife. They knew that if William were to get much closer, he could use the knife to inflict serious bodily injury or death. William had already run approximately 20 feet from the house in a matter of a few seconds.

William started to run toward Sgt. Gusaas, again escalating his threat of harm. Deputy Young tried to stop William with less-lethal force, but the Taser did not affect William.

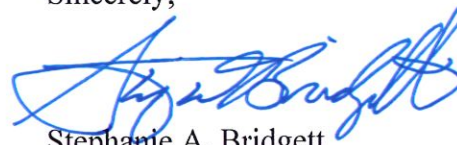
When William was about 10 to 15 feet from him, Sgt. Gusaas fired his firearm at William. Deputy Jurkiewicz also fired his firearm at William. William then turned toward Deputy Jurkiewicz showing an intent to harm him also. Sergeant Gusaas and Deputy Jurkiewicz fired several more rounds at William. Only then was William's attack stopped.

Deputies retreated from William, ordered him to stop and drop the knife, and used a less-lethal Taser. William was seconds away from stabbing the deputies and the Littlefields. Sergeant Gusaas and Deputy Jurkiewicz had no other choice but to use deadly force.

CONCLUSION

Under these circumstances, Sergeant Gusaas and Deputy Jurkiewicz were justified in using deadly force in response to Williams' actions. I find the shooting to be lawful and will take no further action in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephanie A. Bridgett", is written over the typed name.

Stephanie A. Bridgett
District Attorney