

# Police fatally shoot eleven-year old boy in California drug raid

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Police fatally shot an eleven-year old boy on September 13 in Modesto, California, during a narcotics raid on the boy's home. Alberto Sepulveda, a seventh grader, died from a single gunshot wound through the back.

A SWAT team stormed the boy's house in the early morning hours in order to arrest Alberto's father, Moises Sepulveda, on methamphetamine trafficking charges. Sepulveda has subsequently been arrested, along with 14 other people involved in similar drug sweeps on September 13, the result of a nine-month investigation by the Drug Enforcement Agency. At the time of the raid, Alberto's mother and siblings, ages 8 and 14, were also home.

The Modesto police department maintains that the shooting death of Alberto Sepulveda was accidental. According to Police Chief Roy Wasden, the gun of officer David Hawn accidentally discharged during the raid. While several investigations into the shooting have been initiated, law enforcement officials will not release any details surrounding the incident. Further information will not be made available to the public until after investigations into the killing are completed. There has been nothing reported as to when the completion of investigations is expected.

Residents in the neighborhood of Modesto where the Sepulveda's live, known as Highway Village, complained that this sort of violence was well known in the area. Charles Ney, who lives nearby the home where Alberto was killed, described the area as "a war zone." However, the death of a child has caused particular disquiet. A playmate of Alberto's, Sam Climber, stated, "We would play hide-and-go-seek, ride our bikes, and have water balloon fights. I sort of could not believe it. I didn't think kids could get shot."

Both the local newspaper and the police department

continue to portray the event as a tragic, but unpreventable accident. Articles in the Modesto press in the days immediately following Alberto's death have lavished attention on the suffering of Officer Hawn and the supposed grief experienced by police officers in such accidental deaths. Reporting about the shooting in major newspapers has been scarce.



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