

Los Angeles sheriff terrorizes residents and attacks critics following shooting of two deputies

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No arrest has been announced more than a week after a surveillance video captured a gunman shooting two Los Angeles Sheriff Department (LASD) transit deputies sitting in their SUV outside the Compton Metro light rail station. There is no evidence of any motive for the attack.

The reward, which was initially \$100,000, has grown to over \$675,000. According to press reports, over a dozen LASD homicide detectives are assigned to the investigation. There are anecdotal reports from Compton and nearby communities of deputies using warrants and the presence of probationers to ransack homes scouring for leads and terrorizing residents, but so far without results.

The wounded deputies are recovering. One, a 24-year-old male, was released from the hospital Wednesday. The other, a 31-year-old female, remains hospitalized, but her wounds are not life threatening.

Speaking to the press in the hospital parking lot three hours after the shooting on September 12, Sheriff Alex Villanueva had described both deputies as “clinging to life” before his provocative, evidence-free statements that blamed the shooting on recent demonstrations protesting police violence.

The demonstrations began with the police murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, but have been boosted locally by the LASD killings of Andres Guardado, an 18-year-old security guard, and Dijon Kizzee, who was shot 19 times after being detained for riding his bicycle on the wrong side of the street.

Immediately after Villanueva’s press conference, deputies attacked Josie Huang, a reporter for the local National Public Radio station KPCC who was covering the events at the hospital. Video of the arrest by a television news crew immediately exposed an LASD tweet that Huang obstructed deputies, failed to identify

herself as a reporter and did not have press credentials to be demonstrably false.

Despite his department having been exposed as brazen liars, Villanueva continued attacking Huang. Villanueva told the Associated Press last Monday that Huang “crossed the line from journalism to activism.”

“All I can say is, in the heat of the moment when these protesters are calling or chanting for the death of the deputies in the emergency room, she picked the worst time possible to try to get an up-close of the deputies making an arrest,” Villanueva said. “That’s on her.”

At the same time the LASD was caught in more lies about the events leading up to Huang’s arrest. Kevin Wharton Price, a local activist, acknowledged that he and three other members of his “Africa Town Coalition,” carrying Pan-Africa flags, were responsible for the obnoxious but tiny and non-violent demonstration outside the hospital. Price, who denies any affiliation with Black Lives Matter, Antifa, or any of the other whipping boys of the right wing, claimed his group wanted to focus attention on the presence of violent deputy gangs in the LASD, including “The Executioners” at the Compton station.

Despite a plethora of video cameras, the LASD has produced no video evidence to back up their claims that Price and his three companions ever tried to block a hospital entrance or force their way into the emergency room.

Villanueva during a radio interview taunted LeBron James, the Los Angeles Lakers basketball superstar who, like many professional athletes both black and white, has supported demonstrations against police violence. Singling out James, who has made no public comment about the shootings, Villanueva said he should “step up to the plate and double” what was then \$175,000 in reward

money “because I know you care about law enforcement.”

“I’ll be very curious to see what his response is, if any, and we just, we’ve got to get people to start thinking big picture,” Villanueva said. Once again pointing blame at his critics, Villanueva added, “Words have consequences. We need to tone down the rhetoric.”

Villanueva’s appeal to James was slammed by Vanessa Bryant, the widow of former Lakers star Kobe Bryant, who died tragically last January in a helicopter accident with their daughter and seven others. She shared an Instagram message reading, “How can [Villanueva] talk about trusting the system? His sheriff’s dept. couldn’t be trusted to secure Kobe Bryant’s helicopter crash scene, his deputies took and shared graphic photos of crash victims.”

In a stomach-churning display of the racism that thrives within the LASD and other major US law enforcement agencies, Juanita Navarro-Suarez, an LASD public information officer, tweeted a photograph of a black man fanning currency in front of two others with the caption “And here’s the neighborhood homies and enemies ‘bout to come up’ on that \$100,000 #REWARD because \$100,000 dollas is \$100,000 dollas.”

Another Navarro-Suarez tweet, this one over an image of a black woman saying “Make that money, girl,” reads, “My advice to all the ex-girlfriends, side pieces, friends, wifey, ol’ lady, dime, queen, baby momma who know the #ComptonAmbush shooter of 2 LA Sheriff’s about getting that \$100,000 #REWARD.”

While the LASD has dedicated extraordinary resources to identifying the Compton shooter, investigations of most murders in Compton and the surrounding working-class communities are investigated with little zeal. During 2019, there were 21 criminal homicides reported to the Compton Sheriff’s Station. Only seven arrests were made.



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