

# MIKE BUMCROT CONSULTING

## REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

**DATE:** April 25, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Officer Involved Shooting Death of Jehlani Jay Black, which occurred on March 9, 2021 at 1639 hours

**CASE:** Riverside Police Department File #P21-0006980  
Riverside Sheriff's Department File #MB201680002

**LOCATION:** Number 1: 3767 Iowa Avenue, Riverside  
Number 2: 1510 University Avenue, Riverside

On March 10, 2021, I was advised by Frank Hauptmann, Consultant to the Community Police Review Commission, of the officer involved shooting death of Jehlani Jay Black, by a member of the Riverside Police Department, which had occurred the previous day. I was asked to conduct a neighborhood canvass to search for potential witnesses who had not been located by investigative personnel immediately after the incident.

On March 25, 2021, I responded to the Zacatecas Café, located at 3767 Iowa Avenue, Riverside. I had been advised that the circumstances surrounding the officer involved shooting had begun to the rear of the café. The incident continued to the Courtyard By Marriott, located at 1510 University Avenue, Riverside. The reasons for my response were an attempt to find any possible witnesses, which met with negative results. Also, I wanted to view the locations to better understand the police reports that I will eventually review when I am given access to Riverside Sheriff and Police files on the case.



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On April 23, 2021, I attended a briefing of the incident, conducted by Riverside Police Department Robbery/Homicide detectives. I listened to 911 calls from a male at the Zacatecas Café as well as police radio transmissions. I also viewed video of the entire incident taken from the body worn cameras worn by multiple Riverside Police patrol officers, as well as video from police dashboard cameras.

I learned that a man from the Zacatecas Café called 911 and reported that 3 males, in their early 20's, were spray painting gang graffiti on a wall behind the restaurant. The male caller described the suspects as 2 White males and 1 Black male. The caller said that when he confronted the suspects and ordered them to stop painting, the lone Black suspect raised his shirt, revealing a handgun partially concealed in his front waistband. The suspects then ran from the location. Responding officers were advised, over their police radio, of the suspect's descriptions, as well as being told that the Black suspect was armed.

I viewed police dashboard video that showed the gang graffiti painted on the wall behind the restaurant, some of which was crossed out. This is the ultimate disrespect to a gang member, having his gang, or monikers of his gang members, being crossed out.

I viewed video from the body worn camera of a female officer, who was checking the vicinity, looking for the suspects. She observed Mr. Black, walking on the sidewalk, and he immediately ran west to Cranford Avenue, to an alley near 7<sup>th</sup> Street. The officer jumped from her police vehicle and began pursuing Mr. Black on foot, screaming for him to stop. She was able to communicate on her police radio, that she was in foot pursuit of the suspect, who was holding a firearm in his hand. The foot pursuit continued to University Avenue and the video from the body worn camera of the pursuing officer revealed several Riverside police cars speed by. The female officer advised these assisting units that the suspect was crossing University Avenue.

I next viewed video from the body worn camera of Officer Sergio Mercado. The video revealed Mr. Black, crossing University Avenue, dodging in and out of moderate to heavy vehicle traffic. It should be noted that the incident occurred during evening rush hour on a weekday. Officer Mercado leapt from his marked police vehicle and shouted several times at Mr. Black to "Get on the ground" and "Drop it." This video clearly



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shows Mr. Black duck under the metal railing of the handicap ramp, leading to the lobby of the Courtyard By Marriott. Mr. Black turned towards Officer Mercado and a small handgun can be seen in his right hand. Shortly after Officer Mercado shouted, "Drop it", two gunshots are heard. Mr. Black collapsed to the ground and a small handgun is observed falling from his hand. A loaded .22 pistol was recovered next to him. Police officers and medical personnel attempted life saving procedures but Mr. Black was pronounced dead at the scene. I viewed crime scene photographs that revealed Mr. Black had been struck in the middle of his chest and upper right shoulder.

I was advised that immediately after the incident, rumors began to circulate that Mr. Black had been unarmed and had been shot in the back, after raising his hands. Riverside Police Department's Command Staff made the decision to address these false rumors by posting Officer Mercado's body worn camera video on social media. This effort to diffuse the concerns of citizens appears to have been successful.

During his interview, Officer Mercado stated that at the time of the shooting, he feared for his life, as well as the lives of persons in the lobby of the Marriott Hotel, if Mr. Black was able to enter.

After the briefing from Riverside Police detectives, I returned to the Zacatecas Café and walked the entire route of the incident, including the foot pursuit, ending up at the Courtyard By Marriott. Although no additional witnesses were found, this second, more complete canvass, will assist me in my final review of the incident.

I will review the entire incident when Riverside Sheriff and Riverside Police provide me with complete access to their files.



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