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*Los Angeles County*

**Sheriff's Department**

**Leroy D. Baca**

**Sheriff**

# split second decision

## *The dynamics of the chase in today's society*

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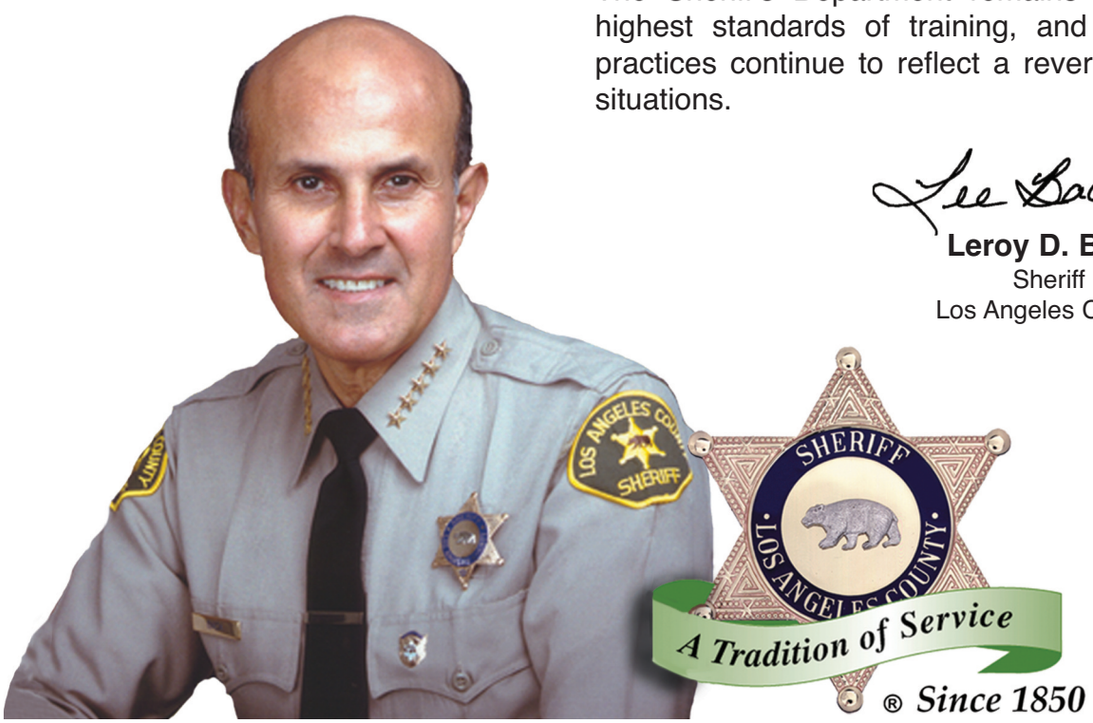
## *Message from the*
# Sheriff

In September 2009, I convened a panel of highly regarded, seasoned deputy sheriffs (Master Field Training Officers) to examine the age-old question facing law enforcement, **"If a person who you believe is armed runs from you, what should you do? What are your options?"**

A deputy sheriff has a positive duty to prevent crime and take appropriate law enforcement action in all warranted situations. He or she is guided by federal and state statutes, case law, and community mandates. In addition, **the policy of the Sheriff's Department is unequivocal - when facing a perceived armed suspect, a deputy shall be cautiously persistent in performing his/her duties.**

**The purpose of this book** is to acquaint the reader with various types of life-threatening scenarios commonly faced by law enforcement officers. The overview and analysis by the panel at the end of each scenario is intentionally brief and not intended to be the final word. Rather, each scenario is designed to provoke thought and discussion, and serve as a training tool to assist deputies in making better overall tactical decisions during high-risk situations in the field.

**The intent of this book** is to increase officer safety and minimize the potential for officer created jeopardy, where officers place themselves unnecessarily in harms way. The discussion, training, and tactics inspired by this book will serve as an effective tool towards reducing and eliminating the potential need for deputies to utilize *deadly force* during encounters with suspects who are later found to be unarmed.




The Sheriff's Department remains committed to the highest standards of training, and our policies and practices continue to reflect a reverence for life in all situations.

**Leroy D. Baca**
Sheriff
Los Angeles County

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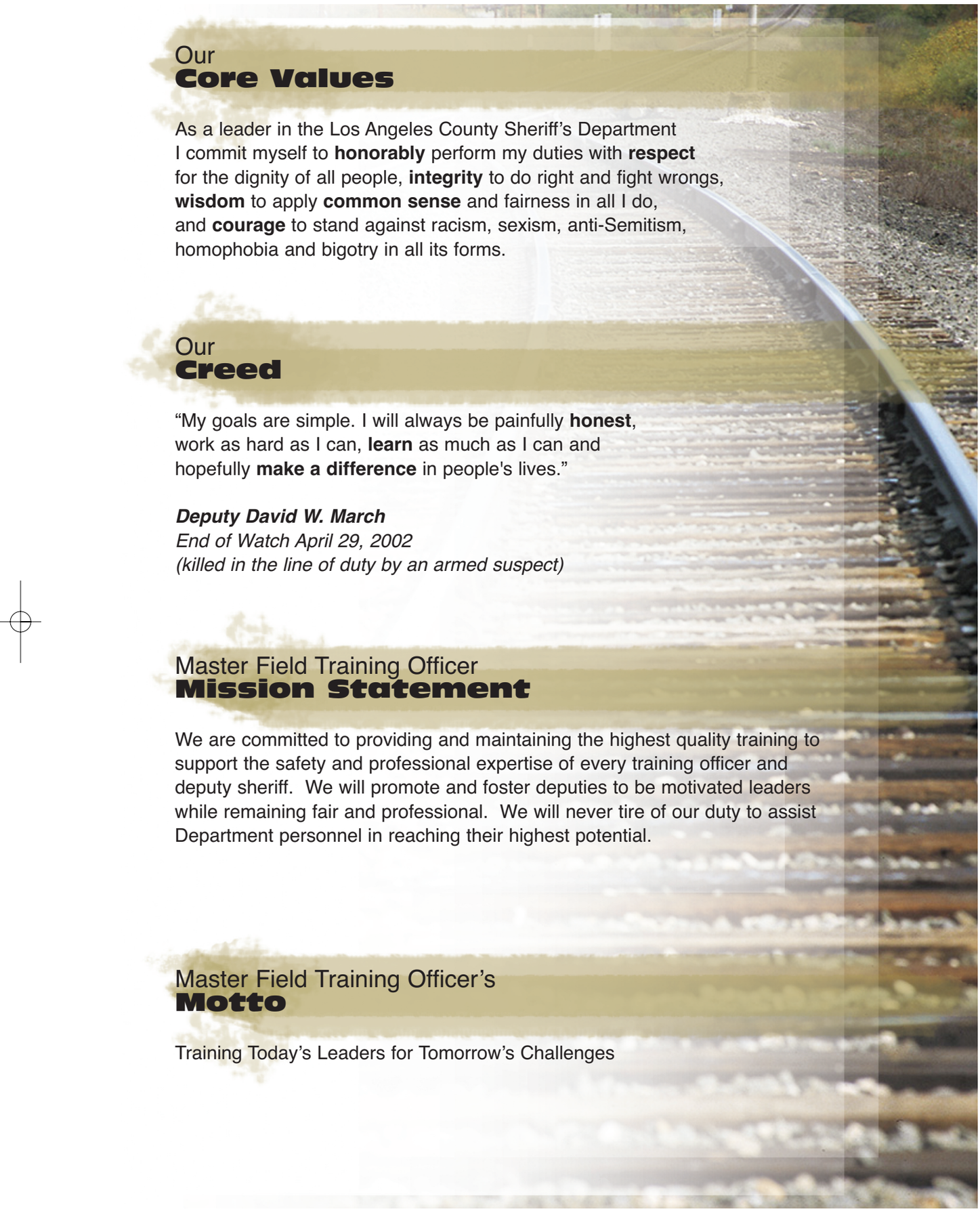

## Our **Core Values**

As a leader in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department I commit myself to **honorably** perform my duties with **respect** for the dignity of all people, **integrity** to do right and fight wrongs, **wisdom** to apply **common sense** and fairness in all I do, and **courage** to stand against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia and bigotry in all its forms.

## Our **Creed**

"My goals are simple. I will always be painfully **honest**, work as hard as I can, **learn** as much as I can and hopefully **make a difference** in people's lives."

***Deputy David W. March***
*End of Watch April 29, 2002*
*(killed in the line of duty by an armed suspect)*

## Master Field Training Officer **Mission Statement**

We are committed to providing and maintaining the highest quality training to support the safety and professional expertise of every training officer and deputy sheriff. We will promote and foster deputies to be motivated leaders while remaining fair and professional. We will never tire of our duty to assist Department personnel in reaching their highest potential.

## Master Field Training Officer's **Motto**

Training Today's Leaders for Tomorrow's Challenges

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# Use of Deadly Force - Applicable Law

## State Law

California law permits the use of deadly force in self-defense or in the defense of others if it reasonably appears to the person claiming the right of self-defense or the defense of others that he actually and reasonably believed that he or others were in imminent danger of great bodily injury or death. (People v. Williams (1977) 75 Cal. App3d 731.)

In protecting himself or another, a person may use all force which he believes reasonably necessary and which would appear to a reasonable person, in the same or similar circumstances, to be necessary to prevent the injury which appears to be imminent. *California Criminal Jury Instructions 3470.*

Actual danger is not necessary to justify the use of deadly force in self-defense. If one is confronted by the appearance of danger which one believes, and a reasonable person in the same position would believe, would result in death or great bodily injury, one may act upon those circumstances. The right of self-defense is the same whether the danger is real or merely apparent. (People v. Minifie (1996) 13 Cal.4th 1055, 1068.)

A homicide is justifiable under Section 196 when the circumstances "reasonably create[d] a fear of death or serious bodily harm to the officer or to another." Martinez v. County of Los Angeles, 47 Cal. App. 4th 334, 349 (1996).

Penal Code § 835a: Any peace officer who has reasonable cause to believe that the person to be arrested has committed a public offense may use reasonable force to effect the arrest, to prevent escape or to overcome resistance. A peace officer who makes or attempts to make an arrest need not retreat or desist from his efforts by reason of the resistance or threatened resistance of the person being arrested; nor shall such officer be deemed an aggressor or lose his right to self-defense by the use of reasonable force to effect the arrest or to prevent escape or to overcome resistance.

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Penal Code § 196: Justifiable Homicide by Public Officers. Homicide is justifiable when committed by public officers and those acting by their command in their aid and assistance, either –

**1.** In obedience to any judgment of a competent Court; or,

**2.** When necessarily committed in overcoming actual resistance to the execution of some legal process, or in the discharge of any other legal duty; or

**3.** When necessarily committed in retaking felons who have been rescued or have escaped, or when necessarily committed in arresting person charged with felon, and who are fleeing from justice or resisting such arrest.

## Federal Law

Excessive force claims under federal law are analyzed under the Fourth Amendment and its "reasonableness" standard. The test of reasonableness is an objective one, viewed from the vantage of a reasonable officer on the scene.

Graham v. Connor, 490 U.S. 386 (1989) - In deciding whether excessive force was used, one must consider the totality of the circumstances facing the officer at the scene. The reasonableness of a particular use of force must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene, and its calculus must embody an allowance for the fact that police officers are often forced to make split-second decisions about the amount of force necessary in circumstances that are tense, uncertain and rapidly-evolving. The reasonableness of a particular use of force cannot be judged with the 20/20 vision of hindsight.

Tennessee v. Garner, 471 U.S. 1, 3 (1985) - A peace officer is authorized to use deadly force if he believes he or another is in danger of death or severe bodily injury, or if he believes that the suspect would pose a threat to the public if he were to escape.

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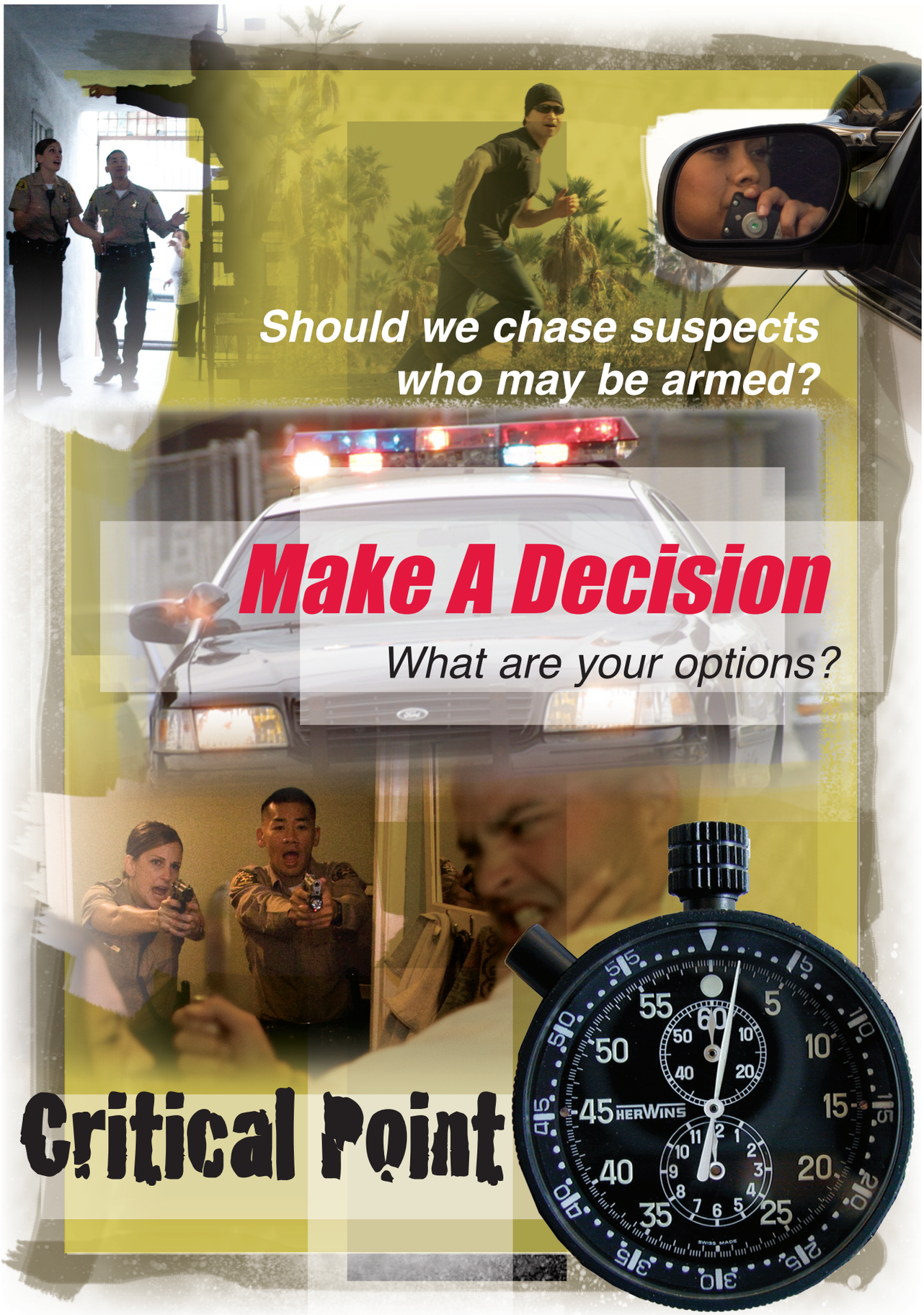

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# Reader's Guide

**1.** **This book contains eight critical scenarios** based on actual events. The format is designed to stimulate your thought process, and requires you to make a decision at critical points by prompting you with the words, ***"Make a Decision."***

**2.** **Ask yourself, what would I do?** Each scenario will end with a deadly force encounter. You will be required to make a ***split second decision at that critical point*** represented by the stopwatch.

**3.** **Your options are listed** on the left side of the page. Read on to see how the deputy handled the situation, including the panel's brief analysis of the incident.

***MAKE A DECISION***
Consider the Options:

***Tactics***

Chase to Apprehend

Chase to Contain

Controlled Search

Cover/ Concealment

***Resources***

Aero Bureau

S.E.B. Canine Unit

Coordinate Resources

Fire Department/ Rescue

***Force Options***

AR-15

Duty Weapon

Flashlight

Handcuff

Pepper Spray

Shotgun

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*scenario one*

# L.A. Heat

***MAKE A DECISION***
Consider the Options:

***Tactics***

Chase to Apprehend

Chase to Contain

Controlled Search

Cover/ Concealment

Detain

Request Backup

Tactical Movement

Tactical Retreat

Use of Radio

Wait for Backup

Warning Shots

***Resources***

Aero Bureau

S.E.B. Canine Unit

Coordinate Resources

Fire Department/ Rescue

***Force Options***

AR-15

ARWEN

Duty Weapon

Flashlight

Handcuff

Pepper Spray

Shotgun

Stun Bag Shotgun

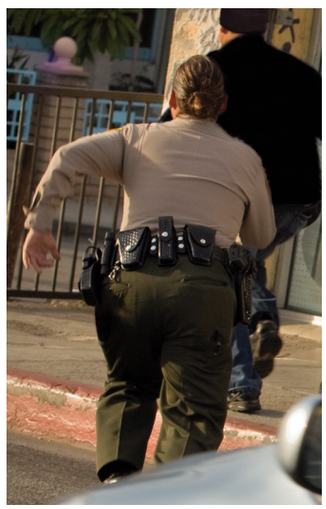
Taser

Verbal Commands

Use of Deadly Force

***While working in a patrol car (unit) by yourself*** on a hot summer afternoon, you see the midday heat radiating off the asphalt. As you patrol your area, you receive a call of a robbery that just occurred at the corner liquor store directly north of you. The call describes the suspect as a White male wearing a black shirt, dark pants, armed with a handgun. ***"Make a Decision."***

You broadcast on your radio that you are seconds away from the location. You request air support and coordinate assisting patrol units to check specific areas for the suspect. You think to yourself, "The suspect is probably long gone by now." As you round the corner, you're surprised to see him 100 feet in front of you, sprinting across a vacant lot. Your heart pounds as you think, "What are my options?" ***"Make a Decision."***



Instinctively, you get out of your car and give chase. You yell, "Stop!" You broadcast your location and ask for assisting units to respond. The suspect sees you and runs into a boarded-up abandoned apartment building. Your closest backup is three minutes away, and air support is not available. ***"Make a Decision."***

You enter the darkened apartment to search for the suspect. The sickening odor tells you it's being used as a hideout for transients and drug addicts. The only source of light is provided by the sunlight shining through the gaps in the wood covering the windows. You reach for your flashlight and realize in your haste to give chase, you left it in your car. ***"Make a Decision."***

The silence from within leads you to wonder if the suspect is lying in wait. Committed to the chase, you continue into the darkness. You turn down the volume on your portable radio and listen for an indication of where the suspect may be hiding. As you search the bedroom, your anxiety builds. You peer into the closet and see the suspect standing in the corner with his arms extended outward, hands together, holding a shiny object pointed toward your chest.

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# Conclusion and Analysis

***How did you handle this scenario?*** Did you chase to apprehend, or contain? Did you consider the threat posed to the community? Would you have used deadly force?

This incident concluded with the use of deadly force by the deputy. Fearing she was about to be shot, the deputy fired once at the suspect striking him in the abdomen. The object the deputy believed was a handgun was later found to be a pair of pliers. The suspect told investigators he did not want to go back to prison for robbery. He simulated a handgun by pointing the pliers at the deputy with the hope of having the deputy shoot and kill him ("suicide by cop"). He had also used the pliers to simulate a handgun during the earlier robbery.

The deputy decided to chase who she believed to be an armed robbery suspect, putting her personal safety in jeopardy, to protect the public and apprehend a violent felon.

In this incident the deputy had many options. Should she have chased to contain? What would have happened if she had coordinated a containment of the area and waited for backup? What if she had requested a Special Enforcement Bureau Canine Unit to respond?

The panel concluded it would have been safer for all involved if the deputy had contained the abandoned apartment building and waited for additional resources, rather than entering alone. If the suspect had been illuminated with a flashlight, the deputy may have seen the pliers, possibly changing the outcome. By utilizing a canine to search the building, the immediate risk of injury to the deputy may have been greatly reduced or even eliminated. In the past, the Department's culture was simply chase to apprehend. This incident occurred many years ago; therefore, the deputy was not working under the Department's current foot pursuit policy which encourages a chase to contain strategy when possible.

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*scenario two*

# Zero to Sixty

***MAKE A DECISION***
Consider the Options:

***Tactics***

Chase to Apprehend

Chase to Contain

Controlled Search

Cover/ Concealment

Detain

Request Backup

Stop Stick

Surveillance Mode

Tactical Movement

Tactical Retreat

Use of Radio

Wait for Backup

***Resources***

Aero Bureau

S.E.B. Canine Unit

Coordinate Resources

Fire Department/ Rescue

***Force Options***

AR-15

Duty Weapon

Flashlight

Handcuff

Pepper Spray

Shotgun

Stun Bag Shotgun

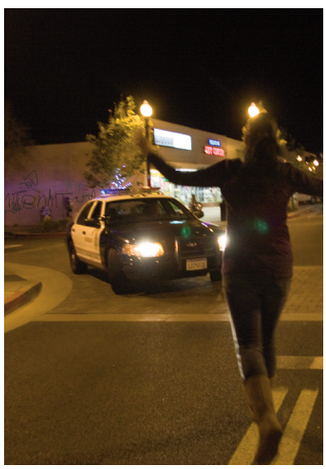
Taser

Verbal Commands

Use of Deadly Force

***The time is 2:00 a.m. as you patrol a high crime neighborhood*** with your training officer. The neighborhood is heavily tagged with gang graffiti, and the streets are unusually active considering the late hour. You see a woman peering from behind the drapes of her apartment window watching three known gang members sitting on a wall in front of the complex.

Over the car radio, you hear a fellow deputy involved in a high speed vehicle pursuit. Your training officer quickly turns the car around and tells you the pursuit is headed your way. You hear the approaching sirens from other patrol cars as your adrenalin starts pumping. The pursuing deputy excitedly asks for an assisting unit to search an intersection for a large bag of cocaine the suspect just threw out the window. Instead of joining in the chase, your training officer responds to the request to search for the discarded narcotics.



As you begin your search, your attention is drawn to a woman yelling and waving her arms. The frantic woman approaches and tells you she overheard her cousin planning a drive-by shooting at a nearby housing project. The woman describes the suspect's vehicle as a blue and white "Chevy Suburban" with a gray primer fender. ***"Make a Decision."***

Your training officer makes the decision to look for the potential drive-by shooting suspect and initiates a radio broadcast alerting other units. Suddenly you see the described vehicle drive past you. The suspect looks in your direction and speeds off. ***"Make a Decision."***

Before your training officer can turn the car around, the suspect loses control, jumps the curb, and hits a tree. Your anxiety continues to rise as you fear the driver is armed. In a cloud of dust, the suspect jumps out and runs away from you with gun in hand. ***"Make a Decision."***

As you and your training officer give chase, you hear your partner broadcast your location to assisting units. You command the suspect to stop and drop the gun. The suspect loses his footing and stumbles to the ground. Closing the distance, you are now 12 feet behind him. The suspect stands up and continues to run while holding the gun. The suspect rounds the corner of an apartment building and out of view. ***"Make a Decision."***

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You round the blind corner, expecting to see the suspect still running. However, your worst nightmare is now a life or death reality, as you see the suspect in a crouched ambush position, aiming his gun at you. You are now face to face with a desperate, armed gang member.

## Conclusion and Analysis

***How would you have reacted in this incident?*** Would you have looked for the suspect or continued your search for the narcotics? Would you have contained the area when the suspect fled on foot? Would you have run past the suspect's vehicle without checking for additional suspects? When the suspect fell, did you consider taking cover (e.g. tree, car, house, light post, walls, rock, etc.)? Would you round the corner after losing sight of the suspect?

This incident concluded when the deputy used deadly force on the armed suspect who posed an immediate threat to his life. Being within arm's reach of the suspect, with no time to raise his weapon and aim, the deputy drew his gun and fired from the hip. Despite being struck several times, the suspect survived. The suspect's loaded handgun was recovered at the scene.

While assisting their fellow deputies in the search of narcotics, their priority quickly changed to checking the area for the armed suspect. Upon locating the suspect, a brief foot pursuit ensued. The suspect's actions at the termination of the foot pursuit escalated the situation to a deadly force encounter. Repetitive firearms training (muscle memory), good physical condition, and a tactical mindset were major factors which helped the deputies to survive. The tactic of shooting from the hip gave the deputy the advantage in this incident. The deputy stated the moment he rounded the corner and saw the threat, he remembered his range instructor's words telling him how to shoot from the hip.

In reviewing this incident, the panel collectively agreed the outcome may have been different if alternative tactics had been considered. Upon seeing the potential drive-by shooting suspect, the deputies should have considered coordinating assisting units and requesting air support. Prior to initiating the foot pursuit, the deputies should have checked the suspect's vehicle for any additional suspects. Once the deputies had committed themselves to the foot pursuit, and the suspect fell, they should have considered taking cover if available. When the deputies lost sight of the suspect, they should have terminated the foot pursuit, contained the area, and requested additional resources including a canine to conduct a controlled safe search. When the suspect rounded the corner out of sight, the tactic of minimizing exposure and using cover would have given the deputies a tactical advantage, preventing the suspect from dictating the confrontation. Knowing the suspect was armed, the tactic of "chase to contain" would have greatly reduced the inherent dangers for everyone involved.

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*scenario three*

# The Butcher Knife

***MAKE A DECISION***
Consider the Options:

***Tactics***

Controlled Search

Cover/ Concealment

Detain

Request Backup

Tactical Movement

Tactical Retreat

Use of Radio

Wait for Backup

Warning Shots

***Resources***

Aero Bureau

S.E.B. Canine Unit

Ballistic Shield

Coordinate Resources

Fire Department/ Rescue

Negotiation Team

***Force Options***

AR-15

ARWEN

Duty Weapon

Flashlight

Handcuff

Pepper Spray

Shotgun

Stun Bag Shotgun

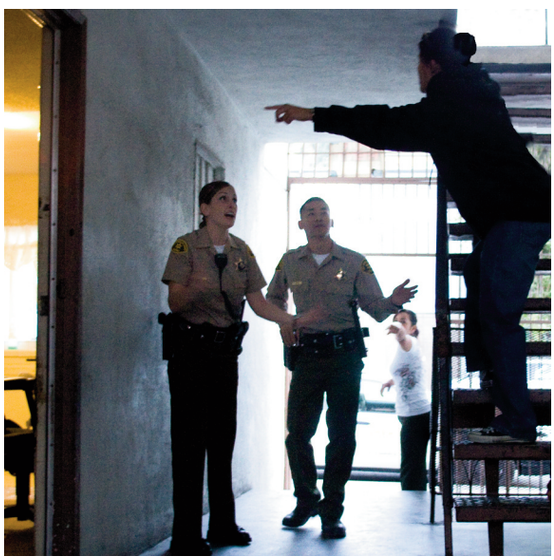
Taser

Verbal Commands

Use of Deadly Force

***You just finished eating dinner on the hood of your patrol car*** with your partner when you are dispatched to a vandalism report call at an upscale apartment complex in a low crime neighborhood. You and your partner have been working together for the past two years and neither of you recall ever getting a call at that location. While interviewing the vandalism victim, you hear two females screaming in front of a nearby apartment in the same building. They are yelling in a foreign language and waving their arms. Both females are now directing you toward the open door of their apartment. ***"Make a Decision."***

You hurry to assist the crying females and attempt to find out what is wrong. Due to the language barrier, you are unable to determine the problem. They continue pointing at the door trembling with fear. Your partner quickly looks inside the open front door of the apartment and sees no activity. Suddenly, you both hear a female screaming from inside. ***"Make a Decision."***



You repeatedly yell, "Sheriff's Department" and order the occupants to step outside. The screaming continues with no response to your commands. Believing there is a life threatening emergency, you both cautiously enter the apartment. The screaming continues as you make your way toward the long, dimly lit hallway leading to the back bedroom. As you look down the hallway, you see a man and woman standing 20 feet

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away. The man, in an obvious fit of rage, has the woman pinned against the wall. Paralyzed with fear, the woman stands motionless as he presses a large butcher knife against her throat. He is so focused on her, he does not respond to your demands to drop the knife.

## Conclusion and Analysis

***Given this situation, what would you have done?*** Would you have waited for backup prior to entering the apartment? Would you have considered less lethal options? Would you have used deadly force? If so, are you confident with the use of your firearm?

While maintaining a safe distance and using the interior wall as cover, the deputies drew their firearms and ordered the suspect to drop the knife. They considered the use of deadly force to protect the woman's life, but within seconds, the suspect surrendered.

The panel concluded, due to the urgency of the situation, the deputies had a duty to quickly enter the apartment in order to check on the welfare of the screaming woman. Although the use of deadly force would have been justified, the risk of shooting the woman weighed heavily in their decision not to shoot. While the incident ended with a favorable outcome, it could have easily ended in serious bodily injury or death to the victim, suspect, and/or deputies had the deputies reacted differently. The suspect's actions, coupled with the deputies' reverence for life, ultimately determined the favorable outcome.

The evolution of technology in law enforcement has provided advancements in less lethal weaponry (e.g. stun-bag shotgun, pepperball gun, Taser, and pepper spray) as options for violent encounters. However, due to the rapidly evolving events, the use of less lethal options might not have been effective and/or practical.

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*scenario four*

# Still Thirsty

***MAKE A DECISION***
Consider the Options:

***Tactics***

Chase to Apprehend

Chase to Contain

Controlled Search

Cover/ Concealment

Detain

Request Backup

Tactical Movement

Tactical Retreat

Use of Radio

Wait for Backup

Warning Shots

***Resources***

Aero Bureau

S.E.B. Canine Unit

Coordinate Resources

Fire Department/ Rescue

***Force Options***

AR-15

Duty Weapon

Flashlight

Handcuff

Pepper Spray

Shotgun

Stun Bag Shotgun

Taser

Verbal Commands

Use of Deadly Force

***You just left the station parking lot at the beginning of your 3:00 p.m. shift***, as the Southern California desert heat peaks at 101 degrees. You drive to the local market for a cold soda. You frequent this business regularly and know the owner well. As you drive into the parking lot, the clerk runs from the market shouting, "I've been robbed! He has a gun!" while pointing to a Hispanic male adult wearing blue jeans and a blue hooded sweatshirt. The suspect is rapidly walking away from the store trying to blend in with a group of high school kids on their way home from school. ***"Make a Decision."***

You stop your patrol car, exit, and use your vehicle as cover. Drawing your firearm, you order the suspect to stop and get down on the ground. The suspect complies as the group of kids scatter. ***"Make a Decision."***

While holding him at gunpoint, you radio for assistance indicating your location and begin to coordinate your responding units. Before assisting units arrive, the suspect springs up, reaches into his waistband with his right hand, and runs toward a nearby alley. ***"Make a Decision."***

Reacting quickly, you update the responding units by hand-held radio that you are now in foot pursuit. Weighted down by 20 pounds of tactical equipment, you're surprised to see that you are gaining ground on him. The suspect stops, quickly turns his upper body to the left, and looks in your direction with his right hand concealed in his waistband.

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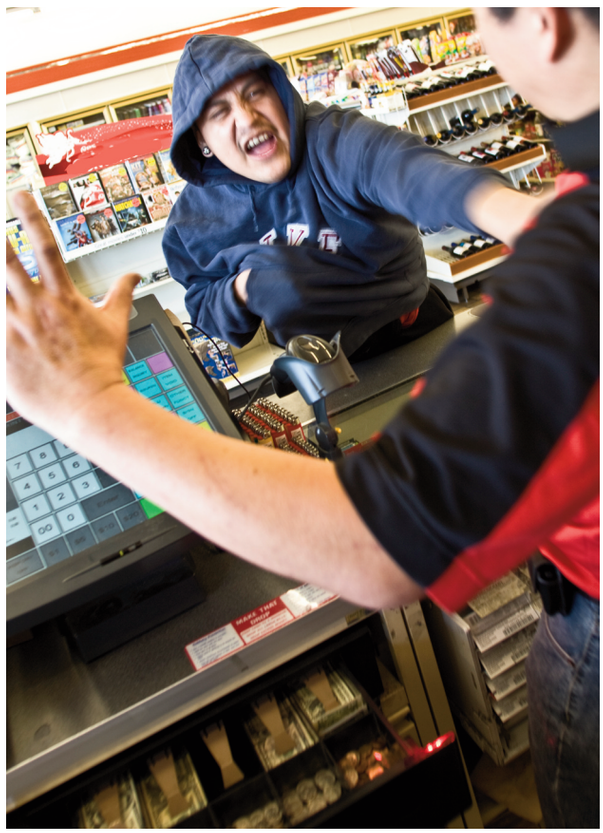
# Conclusion and Analysis

***Would you have chased the suspect after the store clerk told you the suspect had a gun?*** Would you have radioed for assisting units? Would you have continued to chase the suspect after seeing him reach towards the front of his waistband? Would you have set up a containment? Would you have used deadly force?



Based on the information provided by the store clerk and the suspect's actions, the deputy ran after the suspect. During the foot pursuit, the deputy believed the suspect was attempting to retrieve a gun from his waistband. The deputy, fearing he was about to be shot, fired two rounds from his duty weapon, striking the suspect. The suspect fell to the ground and was taken into custody. After searching the suspect and the surrounding area, no weapon was located. However, a baggie of narcotics was found in the suspect's right front pant pocket. During the investigation of the shooting, the store clerk stated he did not actually see a gun. The suspect only simulated a gun by reaching in his waistband and stating, "Give me the money."

After analyzing this incident, the panel discussed and agreed the deputy's decisions were in direct response to the suspect's actions. The deputy's state-of-mind was to utilize cover while holding the suspect at gunpoint until backup arrived. When the suspect jumped up and ran, the deputy was faced with the critical decision of whether or not to chase a suspect he believed to be armed. The deputy had prepared for similar events numerous times by mentally rehearsing "what if" scenarios. Although the foot pursuit ended in a confrontation with the suspect, the deputy's initial plan was only to chase to observe for the purpose of setting up a containment. Given that these situations are tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving, the totality of the circumstances provoked the deputy to use deadly force.

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*scenario five*

# Teacher! Teacher!

***MAKE A DECISION*** Consider the Options:

***Tactics***

Chase to Apprehend

Cover/ Concealment

Detain

Request Backup

Tactical Movement

Use of Radio

Warning Shots

***Resources***

Aero Bureau

S.E.B. Canine Unit

Coordinate Resources

Fire Department/ Rescue

S.E.B. (SWT)

***Force Options***

AR-15

Duty Weapon

Flashlight

Handcuff

Pepper Spray

Shotgun

Taser

Verbal Commands

Use of Deadly Force

***During an afternoon briefing, the shift sergeant provides information*** regarding a domestic violence incident involving a third grade teacher at an elementary school in your patrol area. The teacher's husband is distraught over their pending divorce and having lost custody of their six-year-old son. The crime report written the previous day indicated the suspect threatened to "beat" the victim in front of her coworkers. You write the suspect's description in your notebook and drive to the school to contact the victim for more information. Turning into the parking lot, you notice a man matching the description of the teacher's husband walking toward the main entrance of the school. ***"Make a Decision."***

You see he is hurriedly walking 50 feet in front of you and recklessly bumping into students. Believing you have located the suspect, you request assistance over the radio and exit your car. As you quickly walk toward him, you realize he is wearing a long heavy black trench coat in spite of the warm weather. Your pulse rate increases with anxiety as the hair on the back of your neck stands up. Your instincts tell you the jacket is concealing a weapon. You close the distance to within 30 feet and become gravely concerned when you see the barrel of a rifle protruding from the bottom of his coat. ***"Make a Decision."***

You yell, "Sheriff's Department, stop," while thinking, "This can't be happening, he is here to kill his wife and the students." He looks back in your direction and runs toward the open school entrance.

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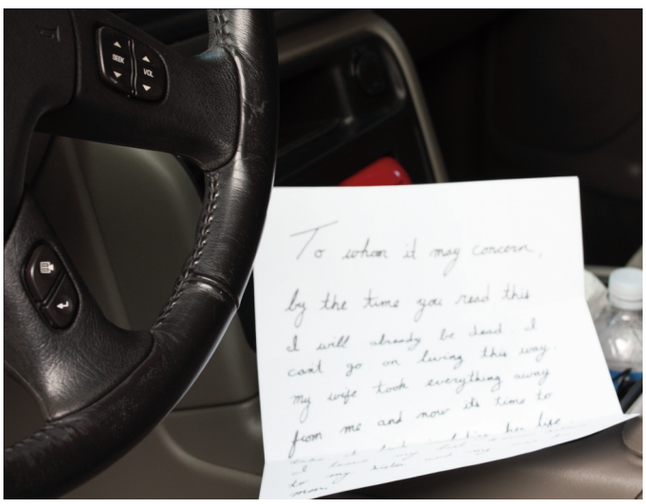
# Conclusion and Analysis

***Given this situation would you have used deadly force?*** Would you have chased the suspect on foot into the school grounds? Would you have requested assistance to contain the school? Would you have considered evacuating students and faculty from the school?

In this case, the deputy quickly assessed the immediate threat and believed if he allowed the suspect to enter the school, the faculty and students may have been seriously injured or killed. The deputy moved to cover behind a concrete retaining wall, then engaged the suspect. With a clear line of fire and nobody in the background, the deputy fired three times at the suspect, striking him in the upper torso. The suspect fell to the ground, ending the threat. A loaded shotgun was found concealed within the suspect's coat. A letter stating his intent to kill his wife was later recovered from his car.




After reviewing this incident the panel concluded the deputy prevented a potential tragedy by reacting quickly and resorting to his "active shooter" training. With the recent spike in the number of tragic school and corporate shootings, the Department developed and implemented an annual "active shooter" training course. The training prepares responders for a quick, immediate and effective response to rapidly evolving, dangerous situations when time is a factor in saving lives.

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*scenario six*

# Motel California

***MAKE A DECISION*** Consider the Options:

***Tactics***

Chase to Apprehend

Chase to Contain

Controlled Search

Cover/ Concealment

Request Backup

Tactical Movement

Use of Radio

Wait for Backup

Warning Shots

***Resources***

Aero Bureau

S.E.B. Canine Unit

Coordinate Resources

Fire Department/ Rescue

***Force Options***

AR-15

Duty Weapon

Flashlight

Handcuff

Pepper Spray

Shotgun

Taser

Verbal Commands

Use of Deadly Force

***While working your station's busiest area with your partner***, he drives past a local motel which has a reputation for drugs and prostitution. You notice trash floating in the pool's green water, and the neon vacancy sign flickering. You see a man exit a parked truck who looks like a gang member with a shaved head, and tattoos on his arms and neck. He is wearing a white oversized T-shirt, tan long shorts, and white socks pulled up to his knees. While walking toward the motel, he is suspiciously looking from side to side and holding the front of his waistband. You can see a large bulge outlined by his shirt at the top of his pants. Due to his suspicious actions, your partner drives toward the man, stops, and you both exit to investigate. The man looks back in your direction, still holding his hands in front of his waistband, and immediately runs away from you. ***"Make a Decision."***

You order the man to stop but he continues running, and while moving his right hand from his waistband. In his hand you see a chrome handgun. ***"Make a Decision."***

You both give chase on foot while your partner immediately requests assisting units and air support over the radio. The suspect continues running, ignoring your commands, and flees into a residential neighborhood. ***"Make a Decision."***

You contain the northwest corner of the block and direct an assisting unit to set up a command post. Your partner contains the southwest corner, keeping you in sight. You now have three of four sides of the block in sight. Your partner sees the suspect turn north and run into the backyard of a residence. ***"Make a Decision."***

You hear sirens in the background and know additional units will soon be arriving. You direct them to the remaining containment spots that need to be covered. The circling air support unit confirms you have a good containment. Canine units are requested and arrive at your command post a short time later to begin their search. While assisting the canine handler with the search, you open the gate and enter the backyard where the suspect was last seen. The dog charges directly toward the dark

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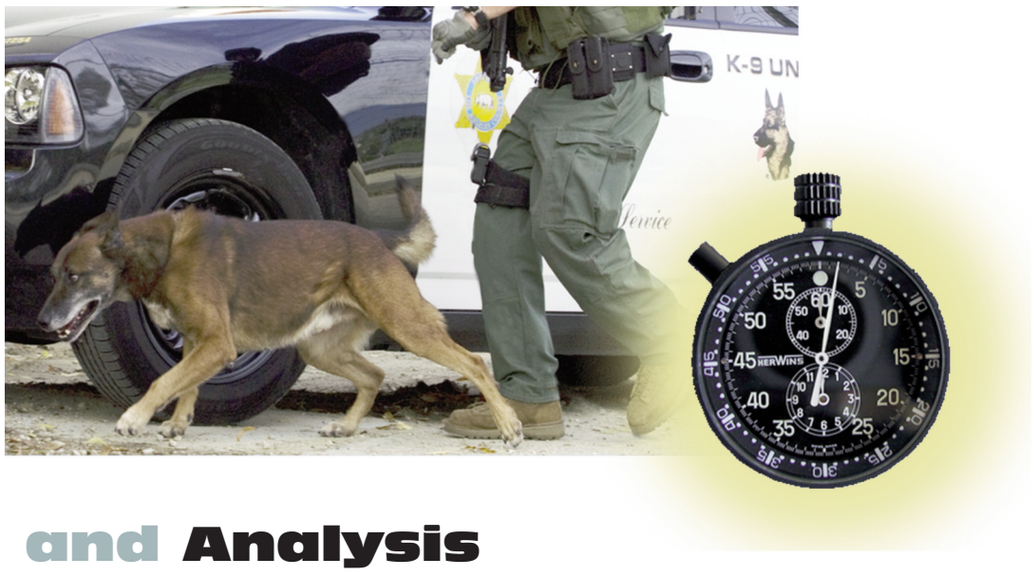
corner of the yard where he encounters and bites the suspect, who is holding a gun in his hand.
***"Make a Decision."***

The canine handler orders the suspect to drop the gun. The suspect steadfastly ignores his command.




# Conclusion and Analysis

***What would you have done in this incident?*** Would you have chased on foot or followed in your vehicle utilizing its cover? Upon seeing the suspect in possession of a handgun, would you have chased to apprehend or contain? Would you have chased the armed suspect into the backyard or chose to contain the block? Would you have used deadly force at any time during this incident?

At the conclusion of this incident, the dog violently shook the suspect's arm, forcing him to drop the firearm. The suspect ultimately fell to the ground and was handcuffed by the arrest team. During the subsequent search, a second handgun was located in the suspect's front waistband.

The handling deputies utilized their training, experience, and resources to bring this dangerous situation to a safe conclusion. The deputies' decision to chase the suspect to contain him, while continually monitoring his actions and direction of travel was an effective tactic. The deputies weighed their options, and determined the safest method of searching for the armed suspect was by using air support, additional units, and canine. In this incident, the quick containment tactic, coupled with the use of canine, aided in the safe capture of the suspect and prevented the need to use deadly force.

The panel agreed the deputies' choice of chasing to contain versus chasing to apprehend proved to be the safe and preferred tactic.

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*scenario seven*

# PSYCHO

***MAKE A DECISION***
Consider the Options:

***Tactics***

Chase to Apprehend

Chase to Contain

Controlled Search

Cover/ Concealment

Request Backup

Stop Stick

Surveillance Mode

Tactical Movement

Use of Radio

Wait for Backup

***Resources***

Aero Bureau

S.E.B. Canine Unit

Coordinate Resources

Fire Department/ Rescue

***Force Options***

AR-15

Duty Weapon

Flashlight

Handcuff

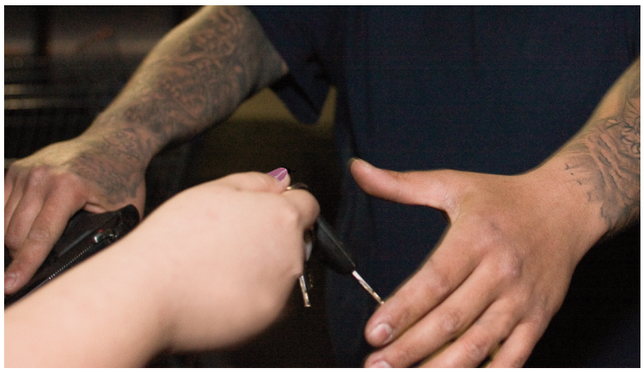
Shotgun

Taser

Verbal Commands

Use of Deadly Force

***At the beginning of your shift,*** you are in the locker room shining your badge and putting on your uniform. Three miles away, two male parolees, both seasoned criminals, are waiting in a vehicle in the mall parking lot hunting for a new victim. Seated in the front passenger seat, "Psycho" is armed with a stolen handgun on his lap. Their mindset is simple: Why work when you can point a gun in someone's face and take what you want?



They see a lone pregnant woman parking a new Chrysler 300 in an unlit area of the parking lot. She is oblivious to her surroundings until the suspects walk up and put the cold steel barrel of the pistol to her stomach. Psycho demands the keys to her car. She surrenders the keys and finds herself alone and trembling as she watches the suspects steal her car.

Early in your shift you hear a radio broadcast of a carjacking that just occurred. Familiar with your beat, you check a few local areas where criminals are known to congregate. Your instincts pay off when you see the victim's car parked at the curb with exhaust coming from the tailpipe. ***"Make a Decision."***

You drive past the car and see both suspects seated in the vehicle, hoping they did not see you. You radio for assistance and begin coordinating units responding to your location. The suspects pull out onto the boulevard before you finish coordinating resources. You maneuver behind the stolen vehicle, update responding units and request air support. The suspects see you and immediately speed away. ***"Make a Decision."***

You chase the suspects into a residential neighborhood as the helicopter overhead takes radio control of the pursuit. The suspect's car abruptly skids to a stop in the middle of the street and Psycho runs from the car. ***"Make a Decision."***

The air unit advises you of Psycho's location and direction of travel, and coordinates the other units who detain the driver. You see Psycho run across a residential yard and you jump out of your car to give chase on foot. As you advise by radio that you are now in foot pursuit, the helicopter pilot advises that the suspect jumped over a fence. Just as you're about to jump over the fence after him, you hear the pilot say,

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"Don't go over the fence! Don't go over the fence! He's got a shotgun!" You are eight feet from Psycho, who is armed with a shotgun, with only a wood fence between you.

## Conclusion and Analysis

When you first observed the vehicle, would you have attempted to contact, detain or call for assistance? As the vehicle first fled, would you have initiated a vehicle pursuit? Would you have chased Psycho when he exited the vehicle? If so, would you have chased to apprehend or contain? When the air unit told you Psycho was armed with a shotgun, would you have continued your foot pursuit, shot through the fence, or contained the yard?

In this incident, the pilot advised the deputy not to jump over the fence because the suspect was armed. In response, the deputy took a tactical position at the corner of the house. Shortly thereafter, the deputy heard a muffled pop followed by an air unit advisement that the suspect had just killed himself. Upon the arrival of canine, the deputy formed an arrest team and made a tactical approach into the back yard, confirming the suspect was dead.

It was the panel's position that air support was instrumental in coordinating the overall incident and ensuring the safety of all deputies involved. The helicopter pilot provided ground units with real-time updates and communicated potential dangers throughout the event. An aerial view of this event, in conjunction with the deputies' disciplined tactics, provided a critical advantage in safely managing this incident.

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*scenario eight*

# G-Ride

***MAKE A DECISION***
Consider the Options:

***Tactics***

Chase to Apprehend

Cover/ Concealment

Request Backup

Stop Stick

Surveillance Mode

Tactical Movement

Use of Radio

Wait for Backup

***Resources***

Aero Bureau

S.E.B. Canine Unit

Coordinate Resources

Fire Department/ Rescue

***Force Options***

AR-15

Duty Weapon

Flashlight

Handcuff

Pepper Spray

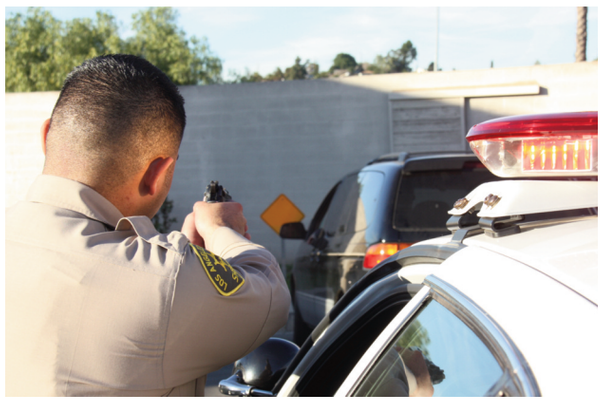
Shotgun

Verbal Commands

Use of Deadly Force

***While on patrol you conduct a random license plate check*** of a Toyota minivan traveling directly in front of you. The dispatcher advises the minivan is a recently stolen vehicle from a neighboring city. ***"Make a Decision."***

You advise over the radio that you are following the stolen vehicle and request additional units, to include air support. You continue to follow the stolen vehicle as you wait for your resources. Within minutes two patrol units and a helicopter arrive, and you proceed to coordinate a high-risk traffic stop. You attempt to stop the vehicle by turning on your overhead red lights, but the driver of the stolen vehicle accelerates in an obvious attempt to elude you. ***"Make a Decision."***



You initiate a vehicle pursuit while the air unit broadcasts your speed and direction of travel. Two blocks into the pursuit, the stolen vehicle drives into a residential cul-de-sac and has nowhere to go. ***"Make a Decision."***

You stop your radio car directly behind the minivan to conduct a high-risk felony stop and exit, using your open door as cover. You verbally direct the driver to exit the minivan, but he refuses. ***"Make a Decision."***

You consider the possibility that the suspect cannot hear you, so you reach for your public address microphone. Suddenly the van's rear backup lights come on. ***"Make a Decision."***

The van accelerates rapidly in reverse toward the front of your radio car.

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# Conclusion and Analysis

***What would you have done once you confirmed the vehicle was stolen?*** What would you have done when the suspect evaded you? What tactics would you have considered and employed as the suspect turned into the cul-de-sac? Would you have coordinated a containment of the residential block? Would you have held your position behind cover? Would you have fired at the suspect as he accelerated in your direction? Would your bullets have stopped the threat? Should you have moved away from the threat and reassessed the situation? What other resources would you have considered?

In this incident, the deputy fired his duty weapon at the suspect's vehicle in an attempt to protect himself from this potential life-threatening encounter. The shooting was ineffective in stopping the suspect's assaultive behavior as he rammed the deputy's vehicle several more times. The suspect maneuvered his vehicle and attempted to drive out of the cul-de-sac, only to crash into a parked vehicle a few feet away. The suspect subsequently surrendered to deputies.

Although the panel believed that the deputy was justified in using deadly force in this incident, the deputy remained in the path of the suspect's vehicle, placing him at a tactical disadvantage. The Department's current policy reads, "The use of firearms against moving vehicles is inherently dangerous and almost always ineffective."

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# Findings and Recommendations

***The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department*** was formed in 1850. On January 23, 1857, Sheriff James Barton and three members of his posse were murdered while pursuing a gang of outlaws. All Sheriff Barton had to work with was his horse, a six shot revolver, and his courage. Limited with only these tools, Sheriff Barton had no other option but to chase to apprehend, as few other choices existed. This practice changed in the late 1980s, when development of hand-held radios allowed communication outside our patrol car and changed the way we conducted business. Throughout our Department's history, we have evolved, and are now a leading law enforcement agency focusing on sound tactics, continuous training, cutting edge technology, and advanced policies and procedures.

***The Department has developed and implemented policies governing a wide array of tactical issues***, including a thorough and comprehensive foot pursuit policy. The current foot pursuit policy is sound, effective, and well thought-out. The policy was developed over the course of several years and designed to provide for the safety of both the deputy and public, while taking into account the Department's affirmative duty to provide for the protection of life and property. After a thorough analysis of the Department's current foot pursuit policy, the panel concluded the policy proficiently addresses and manages foot pursuits while providing for the safety of all concerned.

**However, after careful examination, we found the practice of chasing to apprehend** was a Department culture that needed to be addressed. While every situation is not absolute, in many cases, it may be safer to chase to contain rather than chase to apprehend. In support of this cultural change, it is paramount that the Department provide the necessary training and resources to accomplish this goal.

**Master Field Training Officer Insignia**

**The evolution of law enforcement tactics and technology has afforded us** the opportunity to broaden our options, which includes expanded use of communications, tactics, canine, air support, and advanced less-lethal options. The Department is now working smarter and more efficiently when dealing with the risks involved in apprehending fleeing suspects. The practice of entering a yard, building, or other area without adequate resources has been addressed through improved training and tactical options, thus reducing the likelihood of deadly force encounters. This change has significantly increased the safety of field deputies and the percentage of suspects located within containments. However, the Department still faces the challenge of overcoming the culture of chasing to apprehend, when chasing to contain may be a more appropriate, safer alternative depending on the circumstances.

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***Based on these findings, the panel recommends*** the following be implemented for Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department personnel:

1. All field personnel receive updated training in tactical options for foot pursuits and current related topics in order to change the predominate culture of chasing to apprehend. The Department's foot pursuit policy, which is comprehensive and effective in addressing foot pursuit situations, should be presented through frequent briefings and conspicuously posted throughout the Department's digital briefing boards.

2. When a critical incident occurs (e.g., foot pursuits, deputy involved shootings), the watch commander at that unit will ensure a tactical briefing, similar to an operations log entry, be created to immediately identify significant training points related to public safety, deadly force encounters, and foot pursuits. These topics should be fact-based and encourage open dialog. The prompt dissemination of information throughout the Department will keep field deputies informed of tactical issues encountered by personnel throughout the Department.

3. Canine Detail should develop updated training curriculum for field personnel. The training should be designed to enhance the level of knowledge related to the deployment of canine and tactics surrounding containments, which will assist in changing the culture of how we apprehend fleeing suspects during foot pursuits.

4. Canine Detail should evaluate their staffing needs and deployment configuration to maximize the use of canine resources, while accommodating the needs of all Sheriff's stations. The reduction of canine response and deployment times to containment locations will enable patrol units to return to their patrol duties without excessive delay or impact to station operations.

5. Maximize Aero Bureau's availability in order to provide adequate coverage for all station areas, enhancing officer safety and the apprehension of fleeing suspects.

6. Field personnel should take the initiative to train frequently with their firearms and maintain a physical fitness conditioning regiment. They should mentally rehearse, discuss, and practice situational "what if" scenarios regularly.

7. The threat assessment trailers equipped with the shoot, don't shoot video scenarios should be accessible and utilized for training on a regular basis.

8. The findings of the Executive Force Review Committee Panel should be disseminated to Department personnel, for their educational benefit and professional development.

***In the process of gathering information for this book,*** it became apparent that training and tactics must keep pace with technology, resources, and current crime trends. The findings and recommendations made by this panel will appreciably enhance the safety for all involved in the handling of foot pursuits and other rapidly evolving, dynamic tactical situations.

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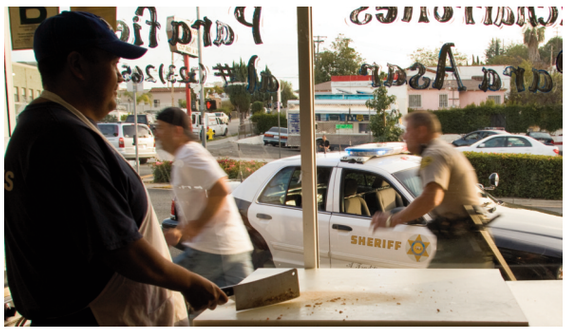
# The Ten FATAL ERRORS

Ten Fatal Errors that contribute to the deaths of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty.

## 1. *Your Attitude*

Maintain a positive will-to-survive attitude. Do not allow outside distractions to affect your performance.




## 2. *Tombstone Courage*

No one doubts that you are brave, but in every situation where time allows, wait for backup.

## 3. *Enough Rest*

To do your job safely, you must remain alert and focused. Be well rested for your shift.

## 4. *Taking a Bad Position*

There is no such thing as a routine call or stop. Always position yourself, or your vehicle, so as to have the tactical advantage.

## 5. *Danger Signs*

Recognize red flags and danger signs and react to them. Trust your instincts.

## 6. *Failure to Watch the Hands*

It is the hands that kill; control them!

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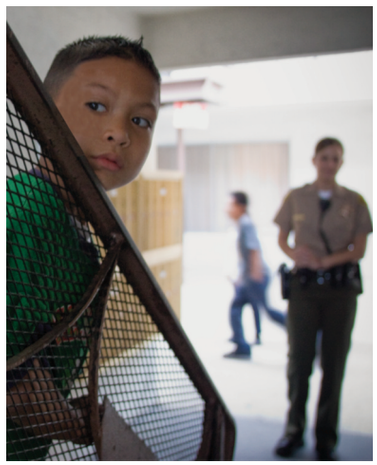
## 7. *Relaxing Too Soon*

Always be alert and observant.
The routine can become life threatening in seconds.



## 8. *Improper Use of Handcuffs*

Once the decision is made to handcuff,
use safe tactics and proper cuffing technique.

## 9. *No Search or Poor Search*

There are so many places a suspect can hide weapons. Your failure to search properly will be used against you and your fellow deputies. Many criminals carry several weapons and are prepared to use them against you.

## 10. *Dirty or Inoperative Weapon*

Maintain your equipment in good working order and be proficient with your weapon skills. What is the sense of carrying your weapon if it does not work or you are not proficient in the use of that weapon?

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# In MEMORIAM

In 1857, the first three Sheriff's deputies were killed. Since then a total of ninety-four deputies have lost their lives *in the line of duty.* This publication is dedicated to the memory of the fifty-two Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputies who lost their lives *in the line of duty as a result of gunfire.*

Sheriff James R. Barton .....End of Watch 01-23-1857
Deputy Charles T. Daly .....End of Watch 01-23-1857
Deputy William H. Little .....End of Watch 01-23-1857
Deputy Charles C. Baker .....End of Watch 01-23-1857
Deputy William C. Getmen .....End of Watch 01-07-1858
Deputy George L. Wilson .....End of Watch 01-08-1897
Deputy Michael Van Vliet .....End of Watch 11-20-1918
Deputy Henry J. Ronsse .....End of Watch 01-02-1922
Deputy William E. Funkhouser .....End of Watch 05-14-1922
Deputy Robery E. Magee .....End of Watch 11-20-1923
Deputy C.A. Vejar .....End of Watch 11-12-1932
Deputy John Hedge .....End of Watch 09-12-1933
Sergeant Fred P. Guiol .....End of Watch 03-10-1946
Deputy Harold S. Blevins .....End of Watch 10-12-1957
Deputy David A. Horr .....End of Watch 02-09-1958
Lieutenant Donald J. Gillis .....End of Watch 09-20-1958
Deputy Ronald E. Ludlow .....End of Watch 08-13-1965
Deputy Michael V. Wigderson .....End of Watch 03-20-1967
Deputy Louis C. Wallace .....End of Watch 12-08-1970
Deputy Gary D. Saunders .....End of Watch 05-22-1971
Deputy Barry J. Hoffman .....End of Watch 08-30-1971
Deputy Donald W. Schneider .....End of Watch 01-04-1973
Deputy Carl E. Wilson .....End of Watch 01-04-1973
Deputy David E. Andrews .....End of Watch 12-12-1973
Deputy Darren Hollis .....End of Watch 01-01-1975
Deputy Didier M. Hurdle .....End of Watch 11-25-1977

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Deputy Arthur E. Pelino .....End of Watch 03-19-1978
Deputy Thomas H. Pohlman .....End of Watch 04-18-1978
Deputy George R. Barthel .....End of Watch 04-19-1979
Deputy Jack D. Williams .....End of Watch 05-29-1979
Deputy Constance E. Worland .....End of Watch 05-02-1981
Deputy Kenneth D. Ell .....End of Watch 01-19-1982
Deputy Lawrence Lavieri .....End of Watch 03-19-1983
Sergeant Larrell K. Smith .....End of Watch 04-16-1983
Deputy David L. Holguin .....End of Watch 09-05-1984
Sergeant George L. Arthur .....End of Watch 06-01-1985
Deputy Charles R. Anderson .....End of Watch 01-24-1987
Deputy Jack B. Miller .....End of Watch 01-09-1988
Deputy Nelson H. Yamamoto .....End of Watch 03-31-1992
Deputy Richard B. Hammack .....End of Watch 05-11-1992
Deputy Stephen W. Blair .....End of Watch 05-12-1995
Deputy Antranik Geuvjehizian .....End of Watch 07-19-1995
Deputy Shayne D. York .....End of Watch 08-16-1997
Deputy Michael L. Hoenig .....End of Watch 10-30-1997
Deputy Hagop “Jake” Kuredjian .....End of Watch 08-31-2001
Deputy David W. March .....End of Watch 04-29-2002
Deputy David A. Powell .....End of Watch 11-30-2002
Deputy Stephen D. Sorensen .....End of Watch 08-02-2003
Deputy Michael R. Arruda .....End of Watch 06-15-2004
Deputy Jerry Ortiz .....End of Watch 06-24-2005
Deputy Maria C. Rosa .....End of Watch 03-28-2006
Deputy Juan A. Escalante .....End of Watch 08-02-2008

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# Thoughts

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# Thoughts

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# Thoughts

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# Acknowledgements

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Master Field Training Officer Deputy James Delgadillo
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Master Field Training Officer Deputy Troy Jackson
Master Field Training Officer Deputy James Jordon
Master Field Training Officer Deputy David Kluth
Master Field Training Officer Deputy Frank Lobato
Master Field Training Officer Deputy Kenneth Mort
Master Field Training Officer Deputy Marc Richardson
Master Field Training Officer Deputy John Savay
Master Field Training Officer Deputy Michael Sellers
Master Field Training Officer Deputy Jack Smith
Master Field Training Officer Deputy Louis Vigil

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**Sheriff's Department**
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