



Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission



Resolution Expressing Grave Concern Regarding The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

The Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (Commission) hereby resolves as follows:

WHEREAS, on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) served multiple search warrants in its endless investigation into Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Peace Over Violence, and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.¹

WHEREAS, the warrants appear to have been served as a political stunt. LASD searched the homes of Commissioner Patti Giggans and Supervisor Kuehl in an attempt to besmirch their reputation and embarrass them in the press. Shortly after the warrants were served, Sheriff Villanueva posted on his campaign's Instagram account, *alex4sheriff*, a picture of Supervisor Kuehl being escorted from her home by deputies.²

WHEREAS, the deceptive tactics employed by the LASD to obtain the warrants raise concern regarding their purpose. LASD presented documents to Superior Court Judge Craig Richman with a blatant omission: the affidavit failed to mention that Judge Eleanor Hunter decided just two weeks prior to appoint a special master "regarding 'an identical warrant' served last year in the same case",³ leading one to believe that the warrants were obtained to harass LASD's critics, chill others from criticizing the LASD, and/or for political gain.

WHEREAS, Sheriff Alex Villanueva purports to have "recused" himself from the investigations of his "secret police", as it is known within the LASD.⁴ His actions, however, dictate otherwise.⁵ This type of investigation is usually handed over to another investigative agency, such as the FBI or the California Attorney General's office, because of the sheriff's and LASD's obvious conflict of interest. In another unusual move, LASD posted the warrant online and a detailed statement about the case investigators provided to the judge to get the warrant signed. It is ordinarily improper for law enforcement agencies to disclose information about the subject(s) of their investigations, and it was improper to do so in this matter. Sheriff

¹ Tchekmedyan, Alene, "L.A. County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl's home searched by sheriff's investigators". *The Los Angeles Times* 14 Sept. 2022 (<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-09-14/l-a-county-supervisor-sheila-kuehls-house-search-by-sheriffs-investigators>)

² Villanueva, Alex [alex4sheriff]. "NOBODY IS ABOVE THE LAW. This morning, LASD Corruption Unit executed warrants on multiple locations [photograph]" Instagram, 14 Sept. 2022 (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CigJBu7MI0c/>)

³ Tchekmedyan, Alene, "Sheriff ordered to halt search of some computers linked to Supervisor Kuehl investigation", *The Los Angeles Times* 16 Sept. 2022 (<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-09-16/judge-halts-search-metro-investigation>)

⁴ Tchekmedyan, Alene, "L.A. County sheriff's unit accused of targeting political enemies, vocal critics", *The Los Angeles Times* 23 Sept. 2021 (<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-09-23/sheriff-alex-villanueva-secret-police>)

⁵ On the same day the warrants were served, sheriff Villanueva wrote to the California Attorney General asking that his office investigate Max Huntsman and an unknown county counsel employee for interference in a criminal investigation.

Villanueva's actions are not only vindictive and petty, they also indicate that he is directing the investigation and controlling the narrative for political gain.

WHEREAS, LASD's public corruption unit, which carried out the searches, has raised alarms before. Last year, LASD officials asked the Los Angeles County District Attorney to create a joint task force to collaborate on public corruption investigations but the District Attorney wanted nothing to do with LASD's unit. The District Attorney is quoted as saying, "He's [Villanueva] is only targeting political enemies."⁶ Both Commissioner Giggans and Supervisor Kuehl have been vocal critics of the sheriff and LASD's actions. Soon after the District Attorney made those comments, Sheriff Villanueva publicly supported the recall movement to remove the District Attorney from office.

WHEREAS, this is not the first time the Commission has denounced the sheriff and LASD's conduct. In October 2020, the Commission issued a resolution of no confidence in the sheriff for a pattern of problematic actions, including hiring deputies fired for misconduct and domestic violence; denying the existence of deputy gangs; blocking efforts to ensure independent oversight of deputy shooting investigations; violating the First Amendment rights of the public, including journalists; mishandling the investigation and ordering destruction of evidence in the Kobe Bryant helicopter crash where photographs were inappropriately shared; using racist and sexist slurs against elected officials; and flouting numerous Commission subpoenas.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Commission condemns the actions of the LASD and the sheriff in carrying out the warrants before the press. There are means of carrying out warrants on public figures that are not invasive, however, this conduct appears to be designed to harass, embarrass, and/or smear the reputation of Commissioner Giggans and Supervisor Kuehl. This latest stunt by the LASD and the sheriff should be called out for what it is: a brazen abuse of power.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Commission urges the LASD to immediately disband the public corruption unit (aka "the secret police") and return to the traditional practice of allowing outside investigative agencies, without a conflict of interest, conduct such investigations.

September 23, 2022


Dated _____


Sean Kennedy, Chair

Brian K. Williams, Executive Director, Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission, does hereby certify that the above is true and correct copy of the Resolution duly adopted by the Commission at its meeting held on September 23, 2022, and as same appears of record in the official Statement of Proceedings of said Commission.

September 23, 2022

Dated _____


Brian K. Williams, Executive Director

⁶ Tchekmedyan, Alene, "L.A. County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl's home searched by sheriff's investigators". *The Los Angeles Times* 14 Sept. 2022 (<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-09-14/l-a-county-supervisor-sheila-kuehls-house-search-by-sheriffs-investigators>)