



# MEMORANDUM

SACRAMENTO COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

ANNE MARIE SCHUBERT  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**DATE:** November 6, 2020

**TO:** Deputy District Attorney Charles Gonzalez

**FROM:** Criminal Investigators Laura Chase #21 and Annette Fucles #24

**SUBJECT:** Officer involved shooting (SPD 20-327203), Officer J. Tippets #259  
Michael Wright, DOB: 03-12-68 (Xref: 1494470) Deceased  
[REDACTED]

**Criminal Investigator L. Chase:**

## NOTIFICATION

On 11-4-20 (Wednesday) at 10:17 PM, I received a text from DA Ast. Chief Investigator Sullivan notifying me and Criminal Investigator Fucles of an officer involved shooting that occurred in the City of Sacramento at [REDACTED] Parkcity Ct [REDACTED]. He requested that we respond to [REDACTED] Parkcity Dr. for the briefing. We responded to the command post and arrived at the location at approx. 11:03 PM.

## BRIEFING

At 11:12 PM, a briefing was conducted by SPD Sgt. Brad Robison. I learned the following:

On 11-04-20 at 1949 Hrs, The Sacramento Police Department Communications center received an incomplete call for service at [REDACTED] Parkcity Ct [REDACTED]. They heard a loud argument and scuffle in the background. Officer Joe Tippets #259 (1A45), Officer Richard Kawasaki #465 and CSO trainee (1A49) and Officer Stephen Sanguinetti #463 (1A48) responded to the scene.

While officers were responding to the residence dispatch was giving them updates. Dispatch could hear someone saying, "I'm bleeding and help me." The dispatcher heard screaming in the background.

Dispatchers were able to speak with someone on the phone. The Victim got onto the phone and told the dispatcher that he was being stabbed and that he had a knife in his chest. The dispatcher heard the suspect in the background threatening to kill the victim. The victim told the dispatcher that the suspect had a gun. The victim said that the suspect had a knife to his throat and that he already had 5 stab wounds. There were multiple other callers reporting a loud disturbance and yelling, someone saying "no and stop".

Officer Tippets arrived on scene at 8:04PM and deployed his rifle. Officer Kawasaki arrived at 8:07 PM and then Officer Sanguinetti arrived at 8:08PM.

Officer Tippets voiced on the radio that he could see a male down inside of the apartment with lots of blood. He said that he could see a black male standing above the person with a large kitchen knife.

At 8:11PM – reported 3 rifle shots fired by Officer Tippets.

Officers had the victim (identified as [REDACTED]) exit the apartment through the patio and he was treated by Medics once. [REDACTED] was hysterical but walking and alert. [REDACTED] was transported to UCD Medical Center for treatment by Medic . He was awaiting surgery.

Officers could see inside and saw the suspect (identified as Michael Wright) leaning against the front door of the apartment. He was non-responsive. Officers formed a contact team and fired 1 non-lethal bean bag round at the Wright. They did not receive any stimulus from him, so they entered the apartment through the patio door. Officers handcuffed Wright and cleared the apartment. They requested fire enter for medical treatment. Wright was pronounced deceased at 2036 Hrs.

Officer Tippets gave a public safety statement and advised that he fired three rounds from his rifle through the sliding glass door toward the suspect at the front of the apartment.

Sgt. Robison advised that the deceased's mother ([REDACTED]) lived in the complex at [REDACTED] and there was a call for service (20-325094) involving the deceased a few days prior. Sgt. Robison advised that the call stated that the subject was mentally unstable and using drugs.

### ROUND COUNT

Sgt. Lange conducted a round count of Officer Tippets rifle at Hall of Justice. We were not present for the round count. Tippets' magazine had a capacity of 30 rounds. Tippets had 27 rounds in his magazine, therefore, he was down 3 rounds if the magazine was fully loaded.

### WALKTHROUGH

11-5-20, 1:16 AM, DA Inv. Fucles and I, DA Inv. Chase conducted a walkthrough of the crime scene. The scene (apartment) was in the Broadleaf Apartment complex. The apartment buildings were both two and three stories. Apartment [REDACTED] was a downstairs unit near the front of the complex in a two-story building. The front door faced in a northerly direction and there was a patio on the east side of the building . There was a walk way leading to the front door of the apartments and detached garages in front of the apartments.

Just inside of the front door I observed the deceased lying prone with handcuffs to the rear. The door did not open fully. His feet were at the door entrance. The apartment appeared to be cluttered with items and debris.

I observed on the east side of the building, 3 spent rifle cartridges on the walkway near the patio wall. There were plastic markers near evidence and marking the locations where Officers had been standing.

The patio was enclosed with an approx. 4' stucco wall. I could easily look over the wall to the inside of the apartment. The inside of the apartment was well lit with inside lights. The patio door appeared to be shattered. There were vertical blinds in the open position. One of the blinds had what appeared to be several holes in them. There was apparent blood on the frame of the sliding door.

Inside in the parking lot behind the garage there was a bloody shirt on the ground and medical supplies or wrapper. I was told that the shirt belonged to the victim. There were lights within the parking lot.

#### VICTIM [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] told detectives that he had known Wright for about a month. He said that he had met Wright through his mother. [REDACTED] said that Wright lived on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. He said that Wright never stayed the night with him at the apartment. [REDACTED] said that he went to Mercy Hospital and was admitted for two days. He said that he gave Wright his house keys and his vehicle keys and allowed him to stay at the apartment and drive his car. [REDACTED] said that Wright was supposed to pick him up at Mercy, but he did not. [REDACTED] said that Wright came over to his apartment that night and drank a bottle of wine and a beer. He said that Wright was having a psychotic episode and started hitting him on the head with objects inside of the apartment. [REDACTED] said that Wright started to stab him.

Injuries – 6 or more stab wounds on his left side and back. One wound through and punctured his spleen. [REDACTED] had wounds on his hands and cheek.

#### INTERVIEWS

On 11/05/20, DA Investigators A. Fucles and L. Chase responded to the Sacramento Police Department to monitor the interviews of Officers Richard KAWASAKI and Stephen SANGUINETTI. The interviews were conducted simultaneously, so L. Chase monitored KAWASAKI'S interview and A. Fucles monitored SANGUINETTI'S interview. Due to Covid-19 protocol, only one DA Investigator (A. Fucles) was allowed to monitor Officer Joseph Tippets interview.

#### **Criminal Investigator L. Chase**

#### **OFFICER RICHARD KAWASAKI, #465 (Police Officer -20 years with SPD)**

At 1:53 AM, I monitored Witness Officer KAWASAKI'S interview and he stated the following:

Officer Kawasaki has been employed with the Sacramento Police Department since June of 2000 and has no prior police employment. Kawasaki was working the graveyard shift in District 4C – Pocket / Greenhaven area with Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays off work. This week Kawasaki's shift was modified to 12 ½ hours shifts due to potential special events. He started his shift at 6PM. Kawasaki said that he had workout time at the beginning of shift and started patrol at approx. 7:55PM. Officer Kawasaki stated that he has been working patrol his entire SPD career with only a one-time temporary assignment to Vice. Kawasaki has most recently been working the last 6-7

years assigned to District 4. Officer Kawasaki stated that he was a field training officer since 2002 and was recently recertified. On 11/04/20, Officer Kawasaki was wearing a full police uniform with an exterior vest carrier with police patches attached. Kawasaki was wearing a body worn camera on his right chest pocket and wearing a police badge on his left chest. He was not wearing any type of glasses or contacts. Kawasaki said he was driving a marked black and white police vehicle.

Kawasaki said that this was the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of his work week. He said that he slept approx. 5 ½ - 6 hours the night before and awoke at approx. 2:45PM. He said that he had a CSO trainee with him during the shift.

This was his first call of the night. Kawasaki had left the south station (Jerpf) and headed out to his district. Kawasaki said that he was dispatched to a 952 which was an incomplete call for service along with Officer Tippets. He said that it was a possible fight with furniture being thrown around. Kawasaki said that he saw that there were extensive prior calls for service at the location but did not have time to research the calls because he was continually receiving updates from dispatch. He said that he did not recognize the address of the location he was responding to as being there before. Kawasaki said that dispatch said that there was a knife and that the complainant was being stabbed. He said that dispatch advised that there was a gun involved. Kawasaki then responded Code 3 to the location when he was on Freeport Blvd, near HOJ. He said that Sanguinetti was added to the call and responded.

Kawasaki arrived after Officer Tippets had arrived. Kawasaki said that he opened the front gate for other officers to get into the complex. Kawasaki said that he had seen the dot on his map for the apartment being to the right of the gate. Kawasaki found Officer Tippets to his left and asked if he found the apartment yet. He said that he could hear intermittent yelling and screaming. He said that he told Tippets to set up on the patio and he would go to the front. He saw Tippets set up with his rifle on the railing of the patio apartment. Sanguinetti arrived and was near Kawasaki off to his left. Kawasaki said that the complainant was telling the call taker that he was being stabbed. Officer Kawasaki had his handgun drawn and in the low ready position. Tippets had a view inside the apartment and was saying that he saw someone down who was bleeding and someone standing over him. Kawasaki said that they were preparing a plan to force entry when he heard the 3 shots. Sanguinetti went to Officer Tippets and Kawasaki stayed to watch the front door. Tippets and Sanguinetti called out the victim from the sliding patio door.

Officers formed a contact team. Kawasaki was still directly west of the front door and not part of the team. He was covering K9 Officer Wagstaff. The contact team shot a bean bag round and received no stimulus, so they entered and cleared the residence.

Officer Kawasaki never made it to the patio and never saw a view inside of the apartment.

**Criminal Investigator A. Fucles:**

**OFFICER STEPHEN SANGUINETTI, #463 (Police Officer 23 with SPD)**

On 11/5/20, at 0154 hours, Detective Krutz along with Sergeant Michael Lange began conducting the interview of Officer Stephen Sanguinetti, #463. Also present was a police union representative and Sanguinetti's legal representative. Sanguinetti is a 23-year veteran of the Sacramento Police

Department and he has been assigned to patrol since that time. He is also a field training officer (FTO). Sanguinetti works graveyard shift from 2100 hours to 0700 hours; however, schedules have been modified for department needs, so he works 1800 hours to 0630 hours, with Friday, Saturday, and Sundays off.

On 11/4/20, Sanguinetti, dressed in his uniform, a Covid mask; armed with his department issued Sig Sauer .40 caliber P226, responded to assist on a call for service at ■■■ Park City Court in Sacramento because he heard air traffic that a mental health subject was armed with a knife on an incomplete call for service. Sanguinetti does not carry any back-up weapon. Sanguinetti stated that he was aware that officers, Joseph Tippets, #259 and Richard Kawaskaki, #465 were en route; however, it is department practice to have three officers respond when a subject has a knife. Sanguinetti responded code-3 from JERPF station because a subject had a knife and he wanted to protect life. He stated his body worn camera (BWC) was not sync to his in-car camera, so some of the event is not on his BWC. However, Sanguinetti noted that his BWC was activated when it came into contact with other activated body cameras as it is designed to do. Sanguinetti explained that prior to responding to ■■■ Park City Court, he was on an injury accident call on Florin Road, when he noticed something was wrong with his vehicle. He went to JERPF to exchange his police vehicle when he heard the ■■■ Park City call.

Sanguinetti marked on a Google map, placed in front of him by Detective Krutz, the place where Sanguinetti parked his police vehicle within the apartment complex. When Sanguinetti arrived, he saw Officer Kawaskaki was in a grassy area next to the apartment. Tippets remained at the north side of the apartment, where he had a view into the apartment through a sliding glass door. Sanguinetti, via radio, heard Tippets say the subject is on the ground and another subject is behind him. Sanguinetti and Kawaskaki realized they needed to make entry and began looking for points of entry into the apartment. Sanguinetti explained there were no windows near the apartment door. Sanguinetti said the sergeant, via radio, advised them to set-up a perimeter and hold; however, Sanguinetti broadcast they needed to make entry now. After being on scene for about two (2) minutes, Sanguinetti heard three shots fired, then he moved to Tippets position. Through the sliding glass door, Sanguinetti could see into the apartment, so he began calling out to the victim to go to the door and Tippets was calling out for the victim to come toward the sliding glass door. Eventually, the victim came to the sliding glass door and exited the apartment by jumping over the railing and falling over a bush. Sanguinetti assisted the victim, who walked slowly and seemed confused, out of the area to get medical attention. Sanguinetti sat the victim next to Tippets police vehicle and fire arrived on scene about the same time and began treating the victim, then medical #1 transported the victim to the hospital. Sanguinetti went with the victim to the trauma center at UC Davis. There, the victim was able to talk with a social worker. Sanguinetti explained that he, Tippets and Kawaskaki did not make a plan before shots were fired because of the situation. The sergeant, who was not on scene told them to hold and freeze the scene but that was not possible.

Sanguinetti said he does not remember if the lights were on in the apartment, but he said the slider was open after being shattered by the rifle shots. The side window blinds were closed, but he could see into the apartment through the sliding glass door, where he saw the victim covered in blood from his head to his waist, but he couldn't see any wounds. Later, Sanguinetti learned the victim had two puncture stab wounds to his kidneys, one in his chest, one in his leg, and two in his neck. Later, Sanguinetti learned that the victim had a stab wound to his spleen and a slice in his left hand. The victim was able to talk and tell Sanguinetti his name. The victim said the person who stabbed him was Michael Wright (deceased suspect) who he has been friends with for a month after meeting at the apartment complex. The victim said he didn't know Michael had mental health

issues. The victim knew he had mental health issues, because he had on a psych wristband from Kaiser dated two days prior. The victim said Wright kept saying he “wanted his woman”. The victim had met Wright’s girlfriend, [REDACTED] one time. Armed with a 10-inch kitchen knife, the victim said Wright stabbed him. The victim believed Wright was having a psychotic episode. The victim said Wright had his car because he (the victim) was having a medical procedure at Mercy Hospital and Wright was supposed to pick him up, but he did not. Sanguinetti did not see Wright move or any wounds on him. Following the shooting, Tippetts did not tell Sanguinetti or Kawaskaki what he saw before he fired his weapon.

Sanguinetti stated he does not recognize the victim or suspect from any prior meetings. Sanguinetti became aware that Kawaskaki responded to a call at [REDACTED] Park City Court, the week prior where a female said a male Black was holding her hostage, but when Kawaskaki checked there was nothing going on.

Interview ended at 0236 hours on 11/5/20.

#### **OFFICER JOSEPH TIPPETS, #0259 (Police Officer 22 years with SPD)**

On 11/6/20, at 1611 hours, Detective Amanda Worm along with Sergeant Scott MacLafferty began conducting the interview of Officer Tippetts. Also present were Tippetts two legal representatives. Tippetts is a 22-year veteran of the Sacramento Police Department (SPD) and he has been assigned to patrol since that time. He has been a field training officer (FTO) since January 2020. Tippetts works graveyard shift from 2100 hours to 0700 hours; however, schedules have been modified for department needs, so he works 1800 hours to 0630 hours, with Friday, Saturday, and Sundays off.

Wearing his class B uniform with short sleeves and a tactical vest, Tippetts responded to [REDACTED] Park City Court, [REDACTED] on 11/4/20 at 1749 hours, after a 911 hang-up call with male voices screaming in pain. Tippetts said prior to the call, he was parked at St. Anthony’s Church on Florin Road after being called off a prior service call. Tippetts noted he was about a mile away from [REDACTED] Park City Court. Officer Kawaskaki was also dispatched to the [REDACTED] Park City Court service call. Tippetts said he initially delayed his arrival because he was waiting on his back-up, Officer Kawaskaki who was several miles away. As Tippetts was waiting for his back-up, he heard air traffic that other 911 callers were reporting they heard arguing, screams, and things being thrown in the apartment. As Tippetts continued to hear updates, he heard someone from the apartment said, “I’m gonna kill the person”. Tippetts also heard, on air, that the person had a gun and the apartment was on the third floor. Tippetts stated he decided to take his Stag model 2T 556 personal rifle, which was locked between his seats in his patrol car, to the scene. Tippetts keeps a 30-round magazine in his rifle and a 20-round magazine on his tactical vest. Tippetts said his rifle has a holographic light, a forward vertical grip, and a light post. He last qualified on his rifle this year and recently completed the 10-hour P.O.S.T. (Peace Officer Standards and Training) rifle course.

As Tippetts responded code-3 to [REDACTED] Park City Court, his body worn camera (BWC) and in-car camera were activated. He began responding code-3 when he heard on air the victim said he had a knife in his chest, and he was being stabbed. Tippetts stated he elected to go in without cover because the victim was actively being stabbed, but Kawaskaki arrived, and they began walking around the apartment complex looking for the unit. As they were looking for the apartment, they heard an update over the radio that the victim was being held hostage in the unit and the victim was screaming in pain.

Kawaskaki found the apartment and walked toward the front door while Tippets went to the rear near the outside patio. Tippets noted that when they arrived at the apartment it was very quiet outside and they could not hear anything inside the apartment. From Tippets view into the apartment through the sliding glass door, he could see through the partially open blinds into the kitchen area. He saw the victim on the ground covered in blood and he saw blood on the wall directly behind the victim. The victim was seated in front of the front door and he was slightly slumped over on his side. Tippets observed the suspect (later identified as Michael Wright) holding a large knife in his right hand. Although, Tippets could see the victim and Wright talking, he could not hear them; however, the victim remained on the phone with dispatch. The victim was bleeding badly and at some point, Wright stood up, walked behind the victim, and sat down with his chest on the victim's back, in a way that led Tippets to believe Wright was using the victim as a human shield. At that point, Wright put the knife into the right side of the victim's neck and began stabbing him. Tippets stated at that point, he did not have a clear shot at Wright because he was shielded by the victim. Tippets feared that the victim would die if they didn't act. Tippets could hear the sergeant on the radio advising them to stage and hold the scene but there was no time for that because a person was going to die.

For some reason, Wright stood up behind the victim, as the victim remained in a seated position on the floor. While holding the knife in his right hand, Wright brought the knife up by his head and started to bring the knife down in a stabbing motion, which Tippets believed would have been fatal, so Tippets took the opportunity to fire three shots from his rifle, aiming center mass at Wright. He did not use his handgun. Tippets said he's owned the rifle for about five years since he's been on the SPD rifle team. Tippets said after he fired his rifle the victim remained on the ground. Tippets stated that Kawaskaki and Sanguinetti remained at the front door and he was alone when he fired his rifle. Tippets began yelling at the victim to come out of the apartment by walking toward him through the sliding glass door. At first the victim did not move because he appeared to think he was still being held hostage, but when he realized he wasn't being held, he began moving toward Tippets. The victim came out of the apartment and jumped over the patio railing and Sanguinetti took him to get medical attention.

Tippets continued to cover Wright with the rifle because he thought he saw Wright move. A less lethal round was fired at Wright, but he did not move. Shortly thereafter, a contact team, which did not include him, went into the apartment and contacted Wright. Tippets stated he never went into the apartment.

Tippets clarified that the reason he had 11 rounds in his magazine for his department issued Sig Sauer .40 caliber P226 was because he did not fill the magazine to its 12-round capacity. He did not fire his department issued firearm.

Tippets described Wright as a Black male adult in his late 40's, about 5'10, average build and 170 pounds. Wright was wearing a black short sleeve t-shirt, and black shorts or pants. Tippets said he does not believe he's seen Wright before. Tippets described the victim as light complexion, dark hair, White or Hispanic, in his 40's. Tippets said he does not believe he's seen the victim before. Tippets stated he has been to that apartment complex before but not to apartment [REDACTED]. Tippets said he was concerned when he heard the call because a knife and a gun were involved. Tippets said he had to do something when he arrived on scene because he could see Wright actively stabbing the victim and at no time were they able to create a game plan. Tippets knew when he saw Wright stab the victim in his neck and the victim was bleeding badly, he could not wait because the victim was going to die. Tippets said he believes he fired the rounds about one minute

after arriving on scene. Tippets said he could not hear the other officers on scene, except through his radio.

Tippets explained that he did not give Wright any commands because he didn't want to give up the advantage of being able to see into the apartment. He didn't want Wright to close the window blinds.

Tippets stated he was removed from the scene soon after he fired his rifle, so he does not know what medical aid was rendered to Wright or the victim. Tippets said it was necessary to shoot Wright to save the life of the victim because he believed Wright intended to kill the victim.

Tippets was shown a Google map of the apartment complex by Detective Worm to mark and initial where he parked his police vehicle when he arrived on scene.

**END REPORT**