

**INTERVIEW WITH OFC. AARON HERNANDEZ**

**Q=Det. Karla Beler**

**Q1=Det. Adrian Tillett**

**A=Ofc. Aaron Hernandez**

**A1= Samah Shouka**

**A2=James Campos**

**A3=Saku Ethir**

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16 Q: Uh, Detective Karla Beler. We're at Magnolia Police Station in the  
17 conference room. I'm here with...

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19 Q1: Uh, Detective Adrian Tillett.

20  
21 A3: Uh, Saku Ethir, uh, representing Officer Hernandez.

22  
23 A1: Samah Shouka, Deputy DA.

24  
25 A2: James Campos, Riverside District Attorney Investigator.

26  
27 A: Officer Hernandez, Riverside Police Department.

28  
29 Q: What's your ID number?

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31 A: Uh, ID 1777.

32  
33 Q: Okay. And what is your current assignment?

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35 A: Uh, current assignment is the West County PACT Team, Probation and  
36 Compliance.

37  
38 Q: Okay. And how long have you been a police officer?

39  
40 A: Uh, I've been a police officer for 3-1/2 years.

41  
42 Q: Okay. And were you working on the 20<sup>th</sup>?

43  
44 A: Yes.  
45

46 Q: And what were you doing that day?  
47  
48 A: Uh, I was fulfilling my duties as, um, an assigned member of the West Valley  
49 – or West County PACT Team.  
50  
51 Q: And how did you get involved in this call?  
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53 A: Um, I was monitoring from my radio from the Magnolia Police Station, and I  
54 heard the, uh, radio traffic reference the, uh, Hemet pursuit.  
55  
56 Q: Okay. And what did you hear?  
57  
58 A: Um, I heard a dispatcher notify us that Hemet was in pursuit of a possible  
59 shooting suspect who is actively shooting at officers while he was, um,  
60 evading in his vehicle.  
61  
62 Q: And did you hear, um, a description of the vehicle?  
63  
64 A: Uh, yes. It was a silver Chrysler.  
65  
66 Q: Okay. And were you in uniform that day?  
67  
68 A: Yes.  
69  
70 Q: Okay. And what's your uniform like?  
71  
72 A: Uh, my uniform is black, uh, BDU tactical pants. Um, a black T-shirt. And a  
73 black loadbearing vest with police insignias on the back and the front. And a  
74 police badge on the front left, uh, lapel.  
75  
76 Q: Okay. And are you driving a police car?  
77  
78 A: Yes.  
79  
80 Q: Is it a marked unit?  
81  
82 A: It is not.  
83  
84 Q: Okay. Does it have takedown lights?  
85  
86 A: Yes.  
87  
88 Q: Okay. And – so you're monitoring the traffic and then how do you get  
89 involved?  
90

- 91 A: Uh, we heard the pursuit travel northbound 215, approaching the Van Buren  
92 Exit. Um, at that point, the vehicle exited onto Van Buren, um, heading  
93 towards our city. Um, I was with my supervision and my partner Officer  
94 (Reimer). Um, at that point, uh – excuse me. There you go. Uh, at that point,  
95 um, we heard it going into the city and we decided to, um, get into our police  
96 vehicle and start to head towards the area.  
97
- 98 Q: And what area did you go to?  
99
- 100 A: Uh, I headed w- east on Magnolia and then, um, south on Van Buren heading  
101 towards – or I'm sorry. East – yeah. East on Van Buren heading towards,  
102 like, the area of Van Buren and, uh, Cleveland.  
103
- 104 Q: Okay. And are you driving or are you the passenger?  
105
- 106 A: I'm driving.  
107
- 108 Q: Okay. And did you have – come into contact with the suspect's vehicle?  
109
- 110 A: Uh, yes. So, uh, Officer (Reimer) and I were driving, um – that would be east  
111 on Victoria. Uh, we heard, um, the radio traffic that the suspect was now  
112 driving west on Harrison from Cleveland. Um, so I elected to turn, um, onto –  
113 I'm sorry. That was North – North Harrison. Um, I elected to turn west onto  
114 Victoria, uh, to intercept the vehicle at the intersection of Victoria and  
115 Harrison. Um, once I got to that intersection of Victoria and Harrison, um, I  
116 parked my vehicle on the right shoulder, exited my police vehicle, uh, and I  
117 saw the suspect vehicle driving westbound on Harrison at a very high rate of  
118 speed, um, through the intersection and continue towards Indiana.  
119
- 120 Q: Okay. And then what did you do?  
121
- 122 A: Uh, I re-entered my police vehicle. Um, turned around. Um, headed  
123 eastbound on Victoria and then northbound on, um, Van Buren to try to, um,  
124 intercept the pursuit again.  
125
- 126 Q: Okay.  
127
- 128 A: Um, so heading towards, like, Magnolia.  
129
- 130 Q: And so you're hearing and observing the high rate of speed. You know that  
131 he shot at officers.  
132
- 133 A3; Yes.  
134
- 135 Q: What does that all mean to you?

136  
137 A: Uh, it means that that suspect is, um, willing to, um – he's not going back –  
138 back to wherever he's going – or you know back to jail. Uh, he's not going to  
139 comply with things that we're saying. Um, he's gonna be potentially violent  
140 to us, um – the public safety. Um, he's driving erratically. He has no regard  
141 for anybody else driving on the road whether it be an officer or a civilian.  
142 Um, he's actively shooting out of a moving vehicle, um, with no identified  
143 target. So he could hit officers or he could hit suspects. He could hit people  
144 walking down the side of the road. So at that point he's the highest of – of  
145 risks as far as pursuits and, um, interaction goes.  
146  
147 Q: And then you said you were -you were trying to intercept him. What wa- did  
148 you have a plan if you did intercept him?  
149  
150 A: Uh, yes. I was, uh – if I had the time permitted, I was maybe potentially  
151 gonna throw out spike strips. Um, if the pursuit terminated in a certain area –  
152 based on his erratic driving, um, in the event that he did crash, um, my – my  
153 goal was to be in that area to intercept the suspect whether it be in the car or  
154 on foot. Um, be a part of the arrest team. Take this person into custody. Um,  
155 so I was trying to get to an area where I thought maybe he would either crash  
156 or the pursuit would terminate.  
157  
158 Q: Okay. And at some point you end up at, um, the Streeter and Arlington area?  
159  
160 A: Yes.  
161  
162 Q: And what happens there?  
163  
164 A: Um, so I'm driving – I – I hear, um, Air One's radio traffic because they were  
165 now calling the pursuit from the air that the suspect was driving westbound  
166 Arlington in the eastbound lanes of travel. Um, I was driving northbound  
167 California passing Jefferson. Um, I noticed Officer (O'Farrell)'s Crown  
168 Victoria in front of me. Um, I followed him continuing north towards that  
169 intersection. Um, as we got to the right turn pocket from northbound  
170 California to eastbound Arlington, I saw Officer (O'Farrell)'s vehicle park in  
171 that turn pocket. At that time, um, I looked up and I saw the suspect vehicle  
172 driving westbound in eastbound lanes of travel at a high rate of speed, uh,  
173 directly towards mine and Officer (O'Farrell)'s vehicles. Um, as he was  
174 driving towards us, I saw the vehicle attempt to brake, um, but still traveling  
175 at a high rate of speed directly at Officer (O'Farrell)'s car. Um, at that point I  
176 heard and saw one round – a s- a gunshot come from Officer (O'Farrell)'s  
177 vehicle. Uh, I saw some smoke come from the windshield and heard the shot.  
178 Um, at that point, I heard – I saw the vehicle veer to the right and continue  
179 westbound in eastbound lanes of travel. Um, that vehicle then came to a, um,  
180 came to an e- a stop. And a large group of cars that were trying to pass

181 through the intersection, um, they were just – they were just east of the  
182 intersection, um, but still eastbound Arlington. Um, at that point I saw Officer  
183 (O'Farrell) exit his vehicle. Um, and then take a second shot, um, on that car.  
184 Um, at that time, I had exited my vehicle. I had drawn my duty weapon out of  
185 the holster. Um, I was running towards Officer (O'Farrell) to meet up with  
186 him to create a small hasty team to advance on this, um, suspect in case of  
187 anything else further happened. Um, Officer (O'Farrell) and I took a position  
188 of advantage, um, in between, uh, an uninvolved car and the suspect vehicle,  
189 um, just behind the, uh, rear passenger door of that vehicle. Um, as we were  
190 setting up on the vehicle, um, I saw Officer (O'Farrell) have his gun – have  
191 his rifle up and towards the target. I had my pistol up and also towards the  
192 target. Um, at that point I saw the suspect vehicle s- um, parked – well it was  
193 not parked, but it – it was stopped westbound facing west, um, in the  
194 eastbound lanes of traffic kind of wedged in between a black Suburban and  
195 some other oncoming cars. Um, I saw – I saw numerous people out. Uh,  
196 people were in the – there was a guy in the SUV. There were girls in the car  
197 that we were barricaded up against, and there's people exiting their vehicles  
198 trying to get out of the way. Um, at that point, uh, I saw the suspect open his  
199 driver side door. The driver side door opened. He stuck both hands, um, right  
200 and left out of the vehicle. Um, I saw him look back at us. He looked at us  
201 for a second and then he immediately turned to his right and put his hands  
202 back in the vehicle and turned his – began to turn his head towards the  
203 passenger seat. Um, at that point, um, I was attempting to gather a site picture  
204 with my pistol, um, but I heard Officer (O'Farrell)'s rifle, um, fire another  
205 shot. Um, I felt – uh, I heard it. Uh, felt the percussion and I actually felt the  
206 casing hit me in the side of the head as it – as it ejected from the rifle. Um, at  
207 that point, I saw the suspect, uh – I saw the bullet pretty much make contact  
208 with the suspect's left side of his head. Um, I saw blood spatter, uh, come  
209 from the left side of the head up and out towards the left side of the vehicle.  
210 At that point, the suspect immediately slumped over, um, and I didn't see any  
211 additional movement from him. Um, during that time, I was giving  
212 commands, um, quote, "Show me your fuckin' hands." Um, I said that  
213 several times, uh, as well as I heard Officer (O'Farrell) and (Reimer) say the  
214 same thing. Um, at that point, um, suspect – we had deemed the suspect  
215 down. I put out radio traffic that we had shots fired. Officers were code 4.  
216 Um, Sergeant (Elliott) had arrived on scene and we started making, um – um,  
217 an attempt to push our – our arrest team backwards into a position of cover  
218 and advantage. And at that point, they moved Officer (O'Farrell) and I off of  
219 the arrest team and, uh, Metro showed up and assumed the investigation at  
220 that point.

221  
222 Q: Okay. So you u- when you said position of advantage, were you using that  
223 car for – for what purpose?

224  
225 A: Uh, cover and concealment.

226  
227 Q: Okay. And did you see civilians around? I think there – were they are –  
228 around that – in that area?  
229  
230 A: There were civilians in the area. Yes.  
231  
232 Q: And what was their demeanor?  
233  
234 A: Uh, frightened. I heard two girls crying. Um, this, uh – there was a male  
235 subject, a single occupant in the black SUV that was parked directly to the left  
236 of the suspect vehicle. That guy was, uh, crying, yelling, “Oh my god.” And  
237 he was getting out of his car trying to crawl though the, um, from the driver to  
238 the passenger side. And then he was trying to seek cover behind the vehicle.  
239 Um, people in all the other cars I noticed were exiting their vehicles and  
240 trying to run to the Sears parking lot just north of, um, the, uh, OIS incident.  
241  
242 Q: Okay. And then you said you saw the suspect. What – can you describe him?  
243  
244 A: Yeah. He looked, uh, light skinned Hispanic male. Um, I noticed he had  
245 facial hair, uh, mustache. Uh, shaved head. Uh, possibly wearing a grey shirt.  
246 Um, I didn’t – and that’s it.  
247  
248 Q: Okay. And then you said you saw both of his hands?  
249  
250 A: Yes.  
251  
252 Q: And then he – he turned. What was your thinking at that point?  
253  
254 A: Um, at that point, initially I thought, uh, maybe this guy was – was done with  
255 the fight. He was gonna give up. Um, he looked at us. He gave us a very  
256 distinct look, almost as if he had no regard for – almost as if he was trying’ to  
257 bait us in. It was kind of a, uh, smirky look if you will. Um, and he  
258 immediately turned back into the vehicle. So, um, at that point I thought that  
259 he could possibly give up, but as soon as he gave that look in accordance to  
260 his body language, which was immediately, swiftly turning back into the car, I  
261 knew that – I felt that, um, he was either A trying’ to bait us in or B checking  
262 to see where our position was so that he could return fire.  
263  
264 Q: Okay. And did you see a gun?  
265  
266 A: I did not see a gun.  
267  
268 Q: Okay. And – go ahead with yours.  
269

269 Q1: Um, do you know – I think you already named some names. Do you know all  
270 the officers that were with you at that point? When you guys were dealing  
271 with the car. Everybody that was there at the Camry.

272  
273 A: I believe I do f-

274  
275 Q1: Just whatever you remember.

276  
277 A: To the best of my recollection.

278  
279 Q1: Don't – yeah.

280  
281 A: Um, Officer (Reimer) – Officer (Brittany Reimer), Officer (Jar)- (Jared  
282 O'Farrell). Um, and at one point I saw Sergeant (Pete Elliott).

283  
284 Q1: Okay. And then you were charted that night, correct?

285  
286 A: Yes.

287  
288 Q1: Uh, you did not fire that night?

289  
290 A: I did not fire.

291  
292 Q: Anything?

293  
294 A1: No questions.

295  
296 A2: Nope.

297  
298 Q: That's it. Thank you.

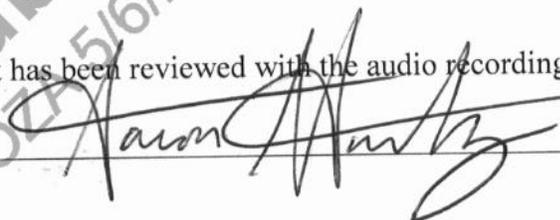
299  
300 A: Sounds good.

301

302

303 The transcript has been reviewed with the audio recording submitted and it is an accurate  
304 transcription.

305 Signed

 9/13/18

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