

RIVERSIDE: Police wrong to shoot man, claim says



2013/STAFF

Riverside police and Highway Patrol officers close down the intersection of Indiana Avenue and Van Buren Boulevard early Wednesday, June 12, 2013 after officers shot a man who they said pointed a gun at them.

BY BRIAN ROKOS
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The family of a man shot to death by Riverside police in June 2013 has filed a claim for damages against the city.

“At no time during the course of these events did Rashad J. Hopes pose any reasonable threat of violence to the respondent officers, nor did he justify the force used against him,” said the wrongful-death claim written by Beverly Hills-based attorney Jamon R. Hicks.

The claim, received by the city March 31, seeks at least \$10,000 in compensation.

In a June 2013 briefing to the Community Police Review Commission, Assistant Police Chief Chris Vicino said Hopes, 26, pointed a gun at officers before he was shot to death. Police photos from the scene showed a revolver lying among small pools of blood. Vicino said the revolver belonged to Hopes.

“The city offers its condolences to the family for their loss. The claim, however, is wholly without merit and we look forward to proving that the officers' actions were reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances,” City Attorney Greg Priamos wrote in an email Thursday, April 24.

Such claims are routinely rejected by the City Council and become the precursors for lawsuits. About 11:20 p.m. on June 11, 2013, police were told that a vehicle had crashed onto the center median on Van Buren Boulevard near Highway 91. Dispatchers then received several calls that

a passenger who had been in the car had walked toward the nearby Chevron gas station carrying a gun, Vicino told commissioners.

When officers looked behind the station's store for the man, Hopes emerged out front of the store. He turned toward officers and pointed his gun at them, Vicino said. As Hopes ran, one officer fired his rifle from 45-50 feet away five times, hitting Hopes once, in the back of the head. A second officer, while holding a K-9 on a leash, fired his handgun 10 times, missing Hopes on each shot.

Vicino said police found a revolver with six empty shell casings inside. None of the officers said that Hopes had fired the gun while at the gas station.

The claim said that police fired on Hopes without warning and that officers did not give him timely medical care. Hopes died at the scene.

Contact Brian Rokos at 951-368-9569 or brokos@pe.com