

RIVERSIDE: Officer narrowly avoided death in shootout, official says

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Riverside Assistant Police Chief Chris Vicino on Wednesday, Dec. 11, briefs the Community Police Review Commission on the Nov. 22 officer-involved shooting that killed Alfredo Ramirez, 37, who had convictions for illegal gun possession and assault on a police officer, among other crimes. The monitor shows the police car that was hit by two bullets fired by Ramirez. BRIAN ROKOS/STAFF PHOTO

The moment a Riverside police officer left his patrol car to question a man who had just run from a house where drugs are known to be sold, that man began firing from eight feet away.

One bullet missed, and then another, both striking the patrol car as the officer ran to the passenger side of his vehicle to take cover. A third bullet hit a nearby pickup.

“He’s tracking him and missing him, three times in a row,” Assistant Police Chief Chris Vicino said Wednesday, Dec. 11, in a briefing on the [late-night, Nov. 22 shooting](#) to the Community Police Review Commission.

The shooter, police say, was Alfredo Ramirez, 37, who [had convictions](#) for assaulting a peace officer and concealed weapons.

As Ramirez pointed his weapon over the roof of his vehicle, the officer, an Iraq war veteran, returned fire over his hood, aiming through the windows of the gunman’s car.

The first shot struck the car’s hood. The second shot pierced Ramirez’s heart, and the gunfight was over.

“We were very lucky not to lose another officer,” said Vicino, who has attended funerals for Ryan Bonaminio and Michael Crain in the past three years.

The Community Police Review Commission investigates officer-involved deaths and offers opinions on whether the officers’ actions were within department policy. Commissioners also make recommendations on police policy. None of their rulings are binding on the department.

On Wednesday, Vicino showed commissioners the rap sheet of Ramirez, which dates to 1995. It included numerous drug convictions. Vicino showed a photo of Ramirez’s pocket that contained a syringe, and said officers — including the one who was fired upon Nov. 22 — had made many arrests for drug violations at the house in the 3000 block of La Cadena Drive.

Ramirez was on supervised probation after being released from county jail because he was considered a non-violent offender, Vicino said.

“Mr. Ramirez is a poster child for why realignment isn’t working for us,” Vicino said, referring to the state law that has moved control of non-violent criminals from state prisons to county jails.

Vicino declined to reveal the name of the officer involved in the shooting.

“We believe there could be a threat,” he said.