

**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF VENTURA**

**REDACTED
MEMORANDUM**

January 28, 2026

TO: COMMANDER DEAN WORTHY
 VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

FROM: PUBLIC INTEGRITY UNIT
 VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

SUBJECT: IN-CUSTODY DEATH OF MAURICIO MATEO CUEVAS

The Public Integrity Unit of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the July 24, 2025, in-custody death of Mauricio Mateo Cuevas. We have determined that Ventura County Sheriff's Office (VCSO) Deputy Raul Troncoso and assisting professionals used legal force and are not criminally responsible for Cuevas' death. For the reasons set forth below, this office declines to initiate criminal proceedings.

The District Attorney's Office reviewed this homicide at the request of VCSO Commander Dean Worthy pursuant to the 2020 Memorandum of Understanding for In-Custody Deaths. Deputy Chief Investigator Cloyce Conway was briefed on the incident and coordinated the collection of relevant items for this review.

The following analysis is based on the Medical Examiner report, body-worn camera footage, investigative reports, photographs, the decedent's criminal history, and the decedent's medical records. No compelled statements were considered in this analysis.

FACTUAL ANALYSIS

On July 24, 2025, at 5:00 a.m., VCSO dispatch sent deputies to Los Robles Hospital in response to an assault with a deadly weapon in progress. The dispatcher stated a patient named Mauricio Mateo Cuevas was threatening hospital staff with a pair of scissors in one hand and an injectable needle in the other.

VCSO Deputy Troncoso arrived at the hospital and was directed to Cuevas' room where hospital staff were holding the glass sliding door to his room closed. Deputies' body-worn cameras captured the unfolding events. Cuevas stood naked, holding a pair of scissors and a syringe filled with an unknown liquid. Cuevas moved unpredictably and appeared agitated evidenced by his wandering focus and repeatedly cursed in Spanish. Cuevas had [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He did not respond to pleas to disarm himself.

Hospital staff could be heard on the body-worn camera stating that Cuevas [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Cuevas became extremely aggressive and defiant when nursing staff attempted to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] off his [REDACTED] Cuevas threatened staff and a security officer with a pair of scissors he obtained in the room and a syringe. Hospital staff left the room, closed the door and called 9-1-1 for law enforcement assistance.

Body-worn camera footage captured video of Cuevas as he slammed his metal IV stand against the glass sliding door to his room. Cuevas remained uncooperative and refused Deputy Troncoso's repeated requests to put down the weapons, stop his behavior, and let

the nurses help him. Cuevas continued to bang the IV stand against the window with enough force that caused the deputies and hospital staff to fear the window would shatter.

Despite his defiant behavior, Deputy Troncoso spoke to Cuevas in a calm tone and repeatedly offered to help Cuevas end the standoff without injury or harm. Cuevas responded by insulting Deputy Troncoso and ignoring his pleas. Cuevas used the scissors to slash his throat despite pleas from deputies and staff to not harm himself. His action did not cause a significant wound to his neck. He continued to hold the scissors and syringe while he grabbed a computer monitor and ripped it from its mount. Cuevas hurled the monitor at the glass door. The door shattered but it did not break

In addition to the threatening behavior, Cuevas continued to commit considerable vandalism and destroyed Los Robles Hospital equipment. Deputies responded to these actions and prepared less lethal means of subduing Cuevas. Deputy Troncoso announced he was prepared to use a taser if necessary. Cuevas did not respond to repeated requests to stop his aggressive behavior and appeared to search for other objects to throw at the glass door. Cuevas unsuccessfully attempted to pull another monitor from its mount and instead picked up a two-foot-long oxygen cylinder.¹ Cuevas ripped the cords from the tank and opened the valve. He picked up the tank from the valve and prepared to swing the cylinder into the glass sliding door or to possibly hurl it into the door as he had done with the computer monitor.

Deputies feared the cylinder was substantially heavier than any of the other items Cuevas had used to attempt to break the door. Deputy Troncoso stated out loud that when Cuevas was distracted as he prepared to swing the cylinder, he would have a chance to administer the taser on Cuevas. Cuevas looked away and Deputy Troncoso entered and administered

¹ Oxygen cylinders of this size could weigh between 5 and 30 pounds depending on a variety of factors. This cylinder was not analyzed.

the taser four to five times which caused Cuevas to fall to the floor and release the weapons and the oxygen cylinder. Deputy Troncoso along with assisting deputies placed handcuffs on both of Cuevas' wrists behind his back as he laid on his side on the floor. Deputies had no intention of removing Cuevas from the hospital and taking him to a jail or another facility. Despite committing felony vandalism and assault with a deadly weapon in their presence, deputies planned to leave Cuevas in the care of medical staff and intended to make sure that he would not do further harm to himself or to others.²

Several minutes passed with Cuevas on his side as deputies stood next to him to make sure he did not attempt to stand up. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Deputy Troncoso removed the handcuffs so that hospital staff could care for Cuevas.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Palliative care was instituted with his mother's permission. On August 7, 2025, Cuevas was declared deceased.

Hospital staff and the responding deputies had their observations memorialized in a series of reports on the incident. The statements were consistent in stating hospital staff and deputies attempted to help Cuevas, who was physically uncooperative and aggressively resisted their efforts.

² According to Commander Worthy [REDACTED]

The Medical Examiner's Office completed an autopsy report that was signed by Dr. Othon Mena on December 10, 2025. Dr. Mena examined Cuevas' remains on August 8, 2025. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Dr. Mena stated in his report that, "Because of a component in his death being related to a direct action by other persons, the manner of death is best certified as homicide."

LEGAL ANALYSIS

A police officer may use reasonable force to effect the arrest, to prevent escape, or to overcome resistance of a person the officer has reasonable cause to believe has committed a crime. Penal Code Section 835a. The officer may use no more force than would appear necessary to him as a reasonable person. (*People v. Mehserle* (2012) 206 Cal. App. 4th 1125, 1147.)

The evaluation of reasonableness should look to the "facts and circumstances of each case, including the severity of the crime, the threat posed by the suspect, and whether the suspect is resisting or attempting to evade arrest." (*Graham v. Connor* (1989) 490 U.S. 386, 396.)

"The question is whether a peace officer's action were objectively reasonable based on the facts and circumstances confronting the peace officer." (*Munoz v. City of Union City*

(2004) 120 Cal. App.4th 1077, 1102.) “The test is highly deferential to the peace officer’s need to protect himself and others.” (*Id.*)

Deputy Troncoso was confronted with an erratic unpredictable [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Cuevas was harming himself and threatening others while committing significant damage to the hospital room. Cuevas threatened the safety and lives of others when he attempted to shatter the glass doors that separated him from deputies and hospital staff. The filled oxygen tank that he grabbed after throwing or banging other objects into the glass doors was presumably several tens of pounds and could have done considerable damage to the doors, putting the safety of others in jeopardy. Deputy Troncoso used his taser, a less-lethal means that stopped Cuevas from committing additional harm to himself and stopped him from endangering the lives of Deputy Troncoso and the other professionals that were attempting to deescalate the situation. Deputy Troncoso’s use of the taser was objectively reasonable considering the threat Cuevas posed.

Regarding the actions after the taser application, Deputy Troncoso, hospital personnel, and fellow deputies were lawfully performing their duties when they attempted to subdue Cuevas who could be expected to remain uncooperative and continued to pose a danger to himself and others. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] these actions were taken to further assist Cuevas in receiving the care he needed. Their actions were objectively reasonable under the circumstances and therefore lawful.

CONCLUSION

The evidence examined in this investigation demonstrated that Deputy Troncoso was justified in his use of force in subduing Cuevas and Deputy Troncoso is not criminally

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responsible for his death. Furthermore, the investigation demonstrated that the additional responding deputies and medical staff [REDACTED] [REDACTED] bear no criminal responsibility as well. We are closing our file and will take no further action in this matter.

This is an unredacted report. A public version of this report can be published subject to necessary redactions.