

# FW: Request for Investigation by BPD // By: | As to: Lance Goree // Re: 2/4/22 Battery Incident at YMCA (Berkeley) // BPD Report No. 22-5533

**Michael Slater** <mslater@theslaterlawfirmapc.com>
To: < @gmail.com>

Mon, Mar 13, 2023 at 11:25 AM

I'm on this. Touch base this week about this.

# **MICHAEL SLATER**

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From: Wilson, Jennifer < JWilson@berkeleyca.gov>

Sent: Friday, March 10, 2023 3:02 PM

**To:** Michael Slater <mslater@theslaterlawfirmapc.com> **Subject:** RE: Request for Investigation by BPD // By: Incident at YMCA (Berkeley) // BPD Report No. 22-5533

| As to: Lance Goree // Re: 2/4/22 Battery

Mr. Slater.

I can confirm the items you submitted were received.

I apologize if I was not specific in my email dated 02-07-23. Yes, I reviewed the case file. No, the Homicide Division will not be doing any investigation into this incident.

Sergeant Wilson

From: Michael Slater <mslater@theslaterlawfirmapc.com>

Sent: Monday, March 6, 2023 4:54 PM

To: Wilson, Jennifer < JWilson@berkeleyca.gov>

Cc: Maldonado, Carlos < CMaldonado@cityofberkeley.info>; Futch, Kajahna < KFutch@cityofberkeley.info>;

< @gmail.com>

**Subject:** RE: Request for Investigation by BPD // By: | As to: Lance Goree // Re: 2/4/22 Battery

Incident at YMCA (Berkeley) // BPD Report No. 22-5533

Sgt. Wilson,

Good afternoon. I am writing to follow up on my 2-10-23 email below and evidence submission (videos and audio of incident) on or about the same date. Please advise. Thank you.

Michael Slater



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From: Michael Slater

**Sent:** Friday, February 10, 2023 12:26 PM **To:** Wilson, Jennifer < JWilson@berkeleyca.gov>

Cc: Maldonado, Carlos < CMaldonado@cityofberkeley.info>; Futch, Kajahna < KFutch@cityofberkeley.info>;

< @gmail.com>

**Subject:** RE: Request for Investigation by BPD // By: | As to: Lance Goree // Re: 2/4/22 Battery

Incident at YMCA (Berkeley) // BPD Report No. 22-5533

Sgt. Wilson,

It remains unclear to me if your office has reviewed all /complete videos of the subject incident. Though I see that you provided me with a link (via Axon) for upload of video evidence. Thank you for the opportunity to do so. I have uploaded those materials for your office's review.

I believe the evidence and governing law support a charge against Mr. Goree for felony assault / battery, misdemeanor assault / battery, aggravated assault / battery (PC 245), or any other criminal charges the BPD determines are appropriate. While we do not disagree that Mr. was the *first* to make physical contact with Mr. Goree, Mr. Goree does not have a self-defense right to use whatever force he wanted to against Mr. in response. For Mr. Goree to have taken Mr. to the ground and/or restrained his movement would have been one thing. That Mr. Goree took Mr. to the ground and used carotid and airway chokeholds—*force that even the BPD would not have been permitted to employ against Mr.*, and for nearly fifteen minutes—is something else entirely and exceeds permissible self defense.

The right to use force against another has long been limited by the condition that the force be no more than "'that which reasonably appears necessary, in view of all the circumstances of the case, to prevent the impending injury.' " <a href="Vaughn v. Jonas">Vaughn v. Jonas</a> (1948) 31 Cal.2d 586, 600; <a href="Boyer v. Waples">Boyer v. Waples</a> (1962) 206 Cal.App.2d 725, 727. Mr. Goree's use of force was not reasonably necessary to prevent impending injury. Mr. Goree could have employed different means of restraining Mr.

Including arm restraints and other body-control methods, and not including the potentially-lethal neck restraints Mr. Goree employed. Mr. Goree was much larger than Mr.

In Mr.

Is much smaller than Mr. Goree and had not weapons on him. Once on the grounds, Mr.

Was non-violent; his movements were to try to create enough space between his neck and Mr. Goree's stronghold so that he could breathe and stay alive. Mr. Goree was also completely surrounded by other YMCA employees—none of whom were acting with much urgency as the physical nature of the altercation abated just as quickly as it started.

One of the ways a person can commit aggravated assault is by using "force likely to produce great bodily injury." (Pc, § 245, subd. (a)(4).) Great bodily injury is that "which is significant or substantial, not insignificant, trivial or moderate."

People v. Armstrong (1992) 8 Cal. App. 4th 1060, 1066. *The use of hands or fists alone may constitute force likely to produce great bodily injury*. People v. Aguilar (1997) 16 Cal. 4th 1023, 1028.

California law is replete with examples of cases in which people were criminally charges / convicted for employing a carotid chokehold without sufficient justification, including criminal charges for aggravated assault in violation of Penal Code section 245, subdivision (a)(4). See, e.g., People v. Gomes, 2023 WL 1193032, at \*17 (Cal. Ct. 2023), review filed (Jan. 31, 2023); and People v. Becerra, 2020 WL 6110985, at \*2 (Cal. Ct. App. Oct. 16, 2020).

In light of the foregoing, I am writing to request your office conduct an investigation into Mr. Goree's conduct in light of all the facts, evidence and governing law. Thank you very much, and please advise at your earliest opportunity.

Respectfully,

Michael Slater, Esq.

#### **MICHAEL SLATER**

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From: Wilson, Jennifer <JWilson@berkeleyca.gov> Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 12:22 PM

To: Michael Slater <mslater@theslaterlawfirmapc.com>

Cc: Maldonado, Carlos <CMaldonado@cityofberkeley.info>; Futch, Kajahna <KFutch@cityofberkeley.info>

Mr. Slater,	
I understand you are representing Mr. in a civil lawsuit stemming from for misdemeanor battery a year ago.	n an incident in which he was arrested
I also understand your recent request for the Homicide Unit to conduct an invest whether criminal charges should be brought against Mr. Goree for PC 242 felor criminal charges."	
I reviewed your email, the investigation conducted by Officer Futch and the sur the incident. I agree there was sufficient probable cause to arrest your client for assessment, your client was the primary aggressor of this incident and escalate altercation.	or assaulting Mr. Goree. In my
I am also aware there have been several reports of restraining order violations February 2022 incident.	filed against your client since the
Further, I reviewed the body camera footage of your client when he contacted padditional investigation and provide video evidence of the February 2022 incide that he had video of the incident, yet declined to show him the video in entirety, the portion of the video <i>after</i> he assaulted Mr. Goree, despite the officer's requestigation of the video after the assaulted Mr. Goree, despite the officer's requestigation of the video after the assaulted Mr. Goree, despite the officer's requestigation of the video after the assaulted Mr. Goree, despite the officer's requestigation of the video after the assaulted Mr. Goree, despite the officer's requestigation of the video after the assaulted Mr. Goree, despite the officer's requestigation of the video after the assaulted Mr. Goree, despite the officer's requestigation of the video after the assaulted Mr. Goree, despite the officer's requestigation of the video after the assaulted Mr. Goree, despite the officer's requestigation of the video after the assaulted Mr. Goree, despite the officer's requestigation of the video after the assaulted Mr. Goree, despite the officer's requestigation of the video after the assaulted Mr. Goree, despite the officer's requestigation of the video after the assaulted Mr. Goree, despite the officer's requestigation of the video after the assaulted Mr. Goree, despite the officer's requestigation of the video after the assaulted Mr. Goree, despite the officer's requestigation of the video after the assaulted Mr. Goree, despite the officer's requestigation of the video after the video aft	ent. Your client told Officer Maldonado . Your client showed Officer Maldonado ests to see the entire video. Officer
I know this is not the action/result you were looking for on behalf of your client. records and evidence related to these incidents for further detail.	I recommend you obtain copies of all
Regards,	
Sergeant Wilson	

| As to: Lance Goree // Re: 2/4/22 Battery

From: Michael Slater <mslater@theslaterlawfirmapc.com>

**Subject:** RE: Request for Investigation by BPD // By:

Incident at YMCA (Berkeley) // BPD Report No. 22-5533

Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 3:30 PM

**To:** Wilson, Jennifer <JWilson@berkeleyca.gov>

**Cc:** Maldonado, Carlos < CMaldonado@cityofberkeley.info>; Futch, Kajahna < KFutch@cityofberkeley.info>; BPD

Webmail <br/>
bpdwebmail@cityofberkeley.info>; < @gmail.com>

**Subject:** RE: Request for Investigation by BPD // By: | As to: Lance Goree // Re: 2/4/22 Battery

**WARNING:** This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Sgt. Wilson,

I am writing to correct a typographical error below—with the added language in blue bold.

Michael

#### MICHAEL SLATER

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From: Michael Slater

Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 3:28 PM

To: jwilson@cityofberkeley.info

Cc: cmaldonado@cityofberkeley.info; kfutch@cityofberkeley.info; police@cityofberkeley.info;

< @gmail.com>

Subject: RE: Request for Investigation by BPD // By: | As to: Lance Goree // Re: 2/4/22 Battery

Incident at YMCA (Berkeley) // BPD Report No. 22-5533

Importance: High

I am writing to follow up on my 1/25/23 voicemail, my 1/25/23 email (below) and my 1/6/23 voicemail—to which I have received no response. It is my understanding that Mr. called your office today and spoke with you. He informed me of your conversation, and of some the key takeaways, which I address in turn below:

1. **BPD's Investigation into 2/4/22 Incident (BPD Report No. 22-5522).** Mr. reported to me that you told him BPD has already investigated the 2/4/22 incident (described in detail below) and that BPD is not going to conduct any additional investigation. Did BPD investigate the conduct of Lance Goree, or both? What evidence did BPD consider? It is my impression that Mr. was investigated for PC 242 misdemeanor assault—the charges of which were later dropped. However, it is also my impression that Lance Goree was never investigated, including for PC 242 felony assault or for any other criminal charge. Please advise.

And to be sure, we are not asking BPD to investigate Mr. Goree for PC 664 / 187 attempted murder. I merely indicated that our use-of-force expert in Mr. 'civil lawsuit said that Mr. Goree's conduct was so egregious that it might even support such a charge. To the extent there is any confusion, we are requesting that Mr. Goree be investigated for PC 242 felony or misdemeanor assault. If, based on the BPD's investigation, it determines that different criminal charges should be considered, then I assume BPD will do so at its discretion.

- 2. **BPD** is not going to get involved in Mr. 'civil lawsuit. Mr. reported to me that you told him BPD was not going to get involved in his civil lawsuit. Nor are we making such a request. To the extent my email below was unclear, we wrote to request that BPD conduct a criminal investigation into the conduct of Lance Goree. We are not asking the BPD to get involved in any way whatsoever in Mr. 'civil suit.
- 3. The District Attorney determined that Mr. Goree's conduct did not amount to attempted murder. Mr. reported to me that you told him the Alameda County District Attorney's Office determined Mr. Goree's conduct did not amount to attempted murder. I am given pause at how that could be, given the District Attorney's Office has not investigated the criminality of Mr. Goree conduct on 2/4/22 it has only investigated Mr. , and determined not to pursue charges against him. Please advise.
- 4. The agency responsible for investigating the criminality of Mr. Goree's conduct. On 12/9/22, I emailed the Alameda County District Attorney's Office to request that it investigate the criminality of Mr. Goree's conduct during the 2/4/22 Incident. On 1/3/23, Erin Kingsbury of the District Attorney's Office provided the following response: "The District Attorney's Office does not conduct investigations as you have requested. Any statements or evidence concerning this incident should be provided directly to the Berkeley Police Department for follow-up investigation, if appropriate. Upon completion of their investigation, they may present all information to the District Attorney's Office for review and charging consideration. Thank you." To the extent the BPD is not the appropriate agency to be directing our requests, please advise.
- 5. **Evidence of the 2/4/22 Incident.** Whether BPD has conducted an investigation into the potential criminality of Lance Goree's conduct on 2/4/22 or not, any such investigation without considering the video and audio evidence of the 2/4/22 incident would be incomplete. Here is the media evidence again: (1) cell phone video footage captured by Mr. 'girlfriend, Veronica; (2) cell phone audio also captured by Veronica (including the minutes preceding the video footage); and (3) surveillance footage from a YMCA camera inside the cafeteria. All of these links are secure DropBox links to my firm's DropBox account.

## **MICHAEL SLATER**

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From: Michael Slater

Sent: Wednesday, January 25, 2023 1:48 PM

To: jwilson@cityofberkeley.info

Cc: cmaldonado@cityofberkeley.info; kfutch@cityofberkeley.info

**Subject:** Request for Investigation by BPD // By: | As to: Lance Goree // Re: 2/4/22 Battery Incident at YMCA (Berkeley) // BPD Report No. 22-5533

Sgt. Wilson,

My law firm has been retained by (copied) to represent him in connection with a February 4, 2022 battery incident that occurred between Mr. and three YMCA employees, including Lance Goree, at the Downtown Berkeley YMCA Residence ("YMCA Residence")—located at 2001 Allston Way in Berkeley, California 94704—where Mr. lives. I am writing to respectfully request that the Berkeley Police Department conduct an investigation into criminal charges against Mr. Goree, including for PC 242 felony assault / battery. The facts and reasoning for this request are set forth below.

the YMCA Residence to confront Mr. about changes Mr. had allegedly made to the front door lock of his apartment at the YMCA Residence. ("Door Lock Issue.") Mr. indicated dozens of times that he did not want to talk to Mr. Goree about the Door Lock Issue at that time; that Mr. Goree was making him and his girlfriend, Veronica (who was also in the cafeteria filming the incident), feel unsafe; and that he wanted to leave. But Mr. Goree would not allow Mr. to leave, and *for more than fifteen (15) minutes* berated Mr. with questions about the Door Lock Issue and thinly veiled threats of violence. When Mr. Goree threatened Mr. and Veronica's safety directly, Mr. attempted to push through Mr. Goree to escape from the cafeteria with

But Mr. Goree did not fall down; was hardly even knocked off balance; immediately recovered; took a fighting stance; stalked closer to Mr. —crouching and creeping forward much like a boxer or a martial artist (likely because Mr. Goree has martial arts training): taunted Mr. and invited further confrontation as follows: "You want some? You want some? Hu? You want that? Hu? Hu? Hu? Hu? You really want it? You really want it? Hu? You do, hu? You really want this? Hu?" At that point, Mr. retreated back to the corner of the cafeteria where he had previously been confined. Instead of walking away, Mr. Goree continued to close the gap between himself and Mr. . From his posture, tone and demeanor, it was clear Mr. Goree was dead-set on physically attacking Mr. , and with a closed left fist, Mr. Goree threw a . When Mr. Goree got within arms-length of Mr. powerful, devastating jab punch directly into Mr. ' face—causing Mr. to nearly lose consciousness and to nearly fall to the floor.

Next, Mr. Goree grabbed Mr. around his shoulders and mid-section and threw Mr. to the floor of the cafeteria. The force of Mr. Goree's takedown maneuver caused Mr. to land on his back, immediately after which time Mr. Goree landed violently with the full weight of his body directly on top of Mr. . Mr. Goree quickly got Mr. into a chokehold. For no less than fourteen (14) minutes, Mr. Goree employed a carotid **chokehold** (periodically, together with an airway choke) against Mr. , who showed little resistance other than futile efforts to try to breathe. At one point, Mr. managed to free his throat enough to plead "I can't breathe," to which Mr. Goree responded: "I know. That's the point!" At another, Mr. Goree told Mr. : "You are not getting out of this. And if you do get out of this, I will pummel you until you can't move." When Mr. pleaded "I need air!." Mr. Goree responded: "No. Don't tell me what you need. It's too late. Mr. . It's too late." When Mr. questioned why additional YMCA employees were stepping and putting furniture on his feet. Mr. Goree told : "I'd be more worried about this guy around my neck." When Mr. Mr. pleaded "I need help," Mr. Goree agreed, stating: "Yes you do."

Ultimately, Mr. was arrested by officers of the Berkeley Police Department ("BPD") –I believe by BPD Officers Futch and Maldonado (both of whom are copied here). Mr. was cited for PC 242 misdemeanor battery and taken to the Santa Rita Jail where he remained in custody for the better part of the next day. (BPD Report No. 22-5533.)

Mr. has suffered myriad, life-changing injuries as a proximate result of the 2/4/22 incident. Mr. 'physical injuries include, but are not limited to: disfigurement (including deformation of his breastbone), suspected traumatic brain injury, post-concussion syndrome, migraine and fatigue. Mr. 'emotional physical injuries include, but are not limited to: severe emotional distress, humiliation, depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder—as diagnosed by his doctors following the incident.

In light of the foregoing, I am writing to respectfully request that the BPD investigate the Subject Incident, including to determine whether criminal charges should be brought against Mr. Goree for PC 242 felony assault / battery and any other criminal charges. In connection with Mr. 'civil claims against the YMCA, Mr. Goree and others, Mr. has retained a use-of-force expert to evaluate the use-of-force issues in this case. Our expert was not only a law enforcement officer for fifteen years, he now trains law enforcement personnel around the state regarding use of force – including the safe and legal use of chokehold restraints. According to our expert, the force employed by Mr. Goree against Mr. was grossly excessive and, even if it at one point in time amounted to self-defense, exceeding what is permissible self-defense by using deadly force against Mr. off-and-on for fourteen minutes. Indeed, in his experience serving as an expert witness in criminal cases, our expert indicated that Mr. Goree's conduct could even support a PC 664 / 187 attempted murder charge.

To inform the BPD's determination, I am attaching Mr. '(operative) first amended complaint for damages against the YMCA, Lance Goree and the other YMCA employees involved in the 2/4/22 incident—which contains a more detailed description of the subject incident. (Alameda Superior Court, Case No. 22CV01990.) To inform the BPD's investigation and decision, I am also writing to provide the following evidence: (1) cell phone video footage captured by Mr. 'girlfriend, Veronica; (2) cell phone audio also captured by Veronica (including the minutes preceding the video footage); and (3) surveillance footage from a YMCA camera inside the cafeteria. These are secure DropBox links created through my firm's DropBox account. The evidence was too large to send via email.

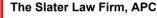
Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss.

Very respectfully,

Michael Slater

### **MICHAEL SLATER**

Founding Partner



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