

The Shooting of Pedie Perez

The DA Says “Justifiable Homicide” • Ignores Evidence and Witnesses

On Jan 20, 2015, the Contra Costa County District Attorney’s office released a 3-page report completely exonerating Officer Wallace Jensen of any wrongdoing in the shooting of Pedie Perez:

“We conclude that ... the officer acted in lawful self- defense, Based on our review, we believe the officer’s actions constitute Justifiable Homicide.”

However, **the District Attorney’s report contains too many false and misleading statements to be taken at its face value as a fair and objective report on what really happened during the early morning hours of Sunday, Sept 14, 2014.**

The first glaring misrepresentation is the DA’S assertion that Pedie initiated the violence: **“The evidence indicates that Mr. Perez, who was very intoxicated at the time of the incident, instigated the attack on the officer.” THIS IS FALSE.**

According to Officer Jensen’s own testimony at the Coroner’s inquest (Dec 10, 2014), it was Jensen that attacked Perez while Perez was walking away:

While Jensen tried to contact another officer on police radio, he said Perez got up and walked away, even though the officer said he had told Perez he was not free to go.

“Fuck this. I’m out of here,” Jensen said he recalled Perez saying.

Jensen grabbed Perez from behind and swept out his legs, knocking him to the ground, he said.

Perez got back to his feet. The officer said he radioed for backup and knocked Perez down again, this time from the front with something like a “judo throw.”

Did Pedie Perez grab Officer Jensen’s Gun?

The District Attorney writes that: “Officer Jensen testified that during the fight Mr. Perez grabbed the officer’s holstered firearm and attempted to remove it. The officer said that he believed that he was in a fight for his handgun, and that he shot Mr. Perez before Mr. Perez was able to get the gun from him and use it against the officer. **No information was developed which would refute the officer’s description of the events.”**

Again, this is false. There is information that refutes Officer Jensen’s description of events. The District Attorney just refused to consider it.

Within days of the shooting, the Perez family disputed Officer Jensen’s account:

“The family of a man shot and killed by a Richmond police officer last week believes the officer is lying about what happened.”

“Relatives of Richard “Pedie” Perez say **witnesses dispute the officer’s claim that Perez tried to grab the officer’s gun during a struggle outside a liquor store. They said the officer should be prosecuted for murder.** “ CBS News, 2014-09-17

Clearly, there are two narratives about what happened during the Perez/Jensen shooting.

The first is Officer Jensen’s. Unlike the other witnesses, Officer Jensen was sequestered at a local hotel and met with his attorney from the Legal Defense Fund before giving his statement. This was accepted without question by the District Attorney.

The second narrative is given by civilian eyewitnesses at the scene, which are ignored by the District Attorney.

However, as Chief Magnus notes, “During any critical incident, different people see or perceive things differently.... **The job of a good investigator is to evaluate all the evidence, assess the credibility of the witnesses, and reach the best possible conclusions.”**

Instead of a careful evaluation of ALL the evidence, the District Attorney simply ignored the eyewitness reports and said they didn’t exist.

The Oscar Grant Committee is in process of gathering evidence and interviewing some of the witnesses in this case.

None of the witnesses report Pedie making any efforts to take Officer Jensen’s gun, and none of them believe that the shooting was justified. Our eyewitnesses all agree: **“He never reached for the gun.”**

Clearly, the report of the District Attorney is inadequate, and we do not know if the police report will be any better.

Officer Jensen was returned to full patrol duty just a few weeks after the shooting, before any official investigation was completed. This is a clear indication that officials already knew the outcome of their investigations before they even began.

Officials have selectively released information supportive of Office Jensen and damaging to Pedie Perez, even slanderous.

Some may think that the Richmond Police Department is just doing a good job of public relations.

Police shootings are not just a PR problem. They are a matter of justice, and justice requires truth.

The Way Forward

With a progressive City Council supported by grassroots organizing, even taking on Chevron, one of the world’s largest and nastiest corporations, the City of Richmond has gained national recognition for progressive social change in a number of areas, including policing.

We look to the City Council and people of Richmond to take a leading role in ensuring that the truth comes out and that justice is done in the case of the shooting of Pedie Perez.



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