

DELAND — Volusia County Sheriff Mike Chitwood - Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL) - August 5, 2018 - page A8

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DELAND — Volusia County Sheriff Mike Chitwood said his deputy was justified in the shooting death of a Seville man, after the man wrestled away the deputy's Taser and attempted to fire it at him.

The Sheriff's Office released a 12-minute body camera video early Saturday evening that shows the volatile moments that led to the fatal shooting of 29-year-old **Emmanuel Alquisiras**.

The video begins with Deputy Brandon Watson arriving at 1600 N. U.S. 17 in response to a domestic violence call made by a woman, believed to be Alquisiras' wife. Sitting on worn wooden steps leading to the second floor of a house, Alquisiras and a friend refuse to let the deputy pass or speak to the woman behind them.

When she screams, "He has hit me," in Spanish, Alquisiras lunges at the woman. Watson fires a Taser shot into Alquisiras' back, and he falls to the ground, but he continues to fight, grabbing at the Taser even as Watson fires more shots of electricity.

Watson pulls out his gun, warning that he is going to have to shoot. Several intense minutes follow, with Alquisiras threatening that the deputy is going to have to kill him in front of his kids.

"You ain't going to take me out of here, amigo," he says. "I don't care if you shoot me."

Shortly after, Alquisiras grabs at the Taser again. The video becomes shaky, and the sound of Watson firing off five rounds is heard. The woman and her children scream and begin to cry.

Chitwood said a targeting light in the video shows that Alquisiras had wrested away Watson's Taser, and was aiming to fire it. He said the stun gun can be shot twice.

"If he loses his firearm, he is dead and everyone else is dead," Chitwood said. "We are trained that if you lose your Taser, you have to transition to your firearm."

Chitwood said his deputy did everything possible to avoid the shooting, including calling on Alquisiras to stop resisting several times.

"The deputy gave half a dozen warnings and explained what was going to happen," Chitwood said. "If he lets the woman leave the house, the situation is over. If he lets the deputy cuff him, the situation is over."

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement is investigating the shooting, which is standard, and

Watson, who was hired in 2015, has been placed on administrative leave.

Friday's incident was the seventh deputy-related shooting in Volusia since Chitwood became sheriff in January 2017. Chitwood, who has mandated training for his deputies on how to avoid the use of deadly force, said the shooting was the first of 2018, with the last one occurring more than a year ago.

Chitwood said Alquisiras had been previously arrested for domestic violence in 2008 and driving under the influence in 2004. There was also a recent incident where he was intoxicated and refused to leave his children's daycare.

"It's sad, and it's heartbreaking that this happened," Chitwood said. "But on the same token, we have to defend ourselves. And officers and deputies around the country lose their lives in domestic violence calls."

When asked why the deputy was alone, Chitwood said it was because he has only one unit assigned to Seville.

In Northwest Volusia County, Seville and neighboring Pierson are remote and rural towns. There, the fences of horse ranches and the dark canopies of fern farms run alongside U.S. 17, a two-lane road that slices through the greenery. Pancho's Grocery sits at an intersection, just a short walk from the stained cinder-block house where the shooting occurred.

Inside the store Saturday morning, there was much talk about the man's children, now left without a father. He and his wife had four daughters, ages 7, 5, 4 and 1, said Andres Carbajal. Alquisiras worked as a roofer and was the family's sole provider, he said.

"Why did they need to kill him?" Carbajal asked in Spanish. "How did the police help this family?"

Carbajal knew the family because they attended the same nearby church. He questioned if shooting Alquisiras was the only option. He was interested in seeing the deputy's body camera video, which hadn't been released to media yet.

"There needs to be justice," he said.

Carbajal and others said they worried what the shooting could mean for the community, largely made up of Mexicans and other Latinos, many of whom are already fearful of authorities. When Chitwood took office, he reached out to the migrant farmworkers in these towns, in an effort to gain their trust.

"Now, when there is a domestic violence, there is going to be a worry that the police are going to come," Carbajal said. "They are not going to call."