

APD: Man killed by police was armed - Lapel camera - Albuquerque Journal (NM) - January 17, 2018 - page A1

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The man whom officers shot and killed in a vacant apartment off East Central a week and a half ago had jumped out at them from a closet, armed with a 3-inch knife and a metal pipe, officials from the Albuquerque Police Department said Tuesday.

In an afternoon news conference with interim Police Chief Michael Geier, Lt. Ray Del Greco of the Force Investigation Team, laid out the circumstances that led to the shooting.

Del Greco said eight seconds elapsed between the time when 24-year-old **Daniel Saavedra-Arreola** leapt out of the closet in an "ambush style attack" and when he was shot dead on the scene. The lieutenant said four officers fired a total of 17 times, although he did not know yet how many times Saavedra-Arreola had been struck. Saavedra-Arreola was identified as Daniel Arreola-Saavedra last week by his father, and has used many variations of his name in court records.

Although the shooting unfolded in eight seconds, the call started nearly an hour and 40 minutes earlier, Del Greco said. He said all four officers — Amy O'Dell, Elisa Valdez, Emmett Fritz and Bryce Willsey — had their lapel video cameras running the entire time, and he played snippets of those videos. The full videos will be released to the public today.

Del Greco said shortly before midnight on Jan. 6, an apartment manager of the Luna Lodge complex on Central, east of Wyoming, called police to say he had seen and heard a man break into a vacant unit in the back northwest corner. When the officers arrived, they made announcements for more than an hour to try to get the suspect to exit but were unsuccessful.

He said the officers eventually decided to enter the apartment and cleared each room and closet before entering the back bedroom.

"They weren't fully sure there was even someone in the room," Del Greco said. "They took their time in clearing the place. The fact that someone was actually in that room was not priority in their mind. At that time this was just another house they were clearing."

But shortly after they entered the bedroom, the video shows Saavedra-Arreola jumping out of the closet into the room, erratically swinging a knife and a metal pipe at an officer and backing him into a corner. One of the officers deployed a Taser but it did not immediately appear to have an effect.

Del Greco said all four officers in the room fired. A sergeant, Andrew Quillmann, was also on the scene but not in the room and did not shoot.

An APD spokesman, Gilbert Gallegos, said all of the officers were put on paid administrative leave,

which is standard, and two have since returned to work.

O'Dell is a 9-year veteran of the department. Valdez has been with the department four and a half years, Willsey more than two years and Fritz for a year and a half. Only Willsey has been involved in a prior shooting. He shot at an attacking dog about six months ago.

Saavedra-Arreola's history with police includes a conviction for conspiracy to commit second degree murder in the Downtown shooting of a 16-year-old in 2011. He was released from prison in July.

More recently he had been charged with armed robbery of a Church's Chicken restaurant in early October. A judge denied a request by the District Attorney's Office to hold him until trial and he was released from jail with an ankle monitor in late October.

In mid-December, police say Saavedra-Arreola cut off the ankle monitor and he was wanted on a warrant at the time of the shooting.

However, Del Greco said officers on the scene did not know any of that.

Attorneys representing Saavedra-Arreola's father, Jesse Arreola, filed a tort claims notice to the city Tuesday morning indicating an intention to file a lawsuit. Chief Geier said he had not heard about it yet, but it is not uncommon for families to do so.

Attorney Greg Payne said Saavedra-Arreola was homeless and had not been a threat to anyone before the officers entered the apartment. He questioned the fact that the officers only gave the Taser two or three seconds to take effect before they opened fire.

"It appears once they had that encounter and confrontation everyone freaked out," Payne said.

However, Geier stood by the officers, saying the videos showed that they were in danger in the tight quarters of the apartment.

"We think they acted appropriately and heroically defending not only themselves, but that one officer especially who was backed into a corner, facing possible injury from a stabbing type assault," Geier said. Videos to be released sooner

Interim police chief promises videos will be released quickly, regardless of their implications A2