



**Patricia W. Perlow**  
**Lane County District Attorney**

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**To: Lane County Media**

**From: Patricia W. Perlow, Lane County District Attorney**

**Date: November 1, 2019**

**RE: Oakridge PD OIS 10/17/2019**

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After reviewing the complete investigation of the Interagency Deadly Force Investigative Team (IDFIT), including witness statements, medical examiner reports and physical evidence, I have concluded that the use of deadly force by Oakridge Officer Steve Davidson on October 17, 2019, was a lawful use of force. The facts are summarized below.

On 10/17/19, between 1936 and 1941 hours, Central Lane Communications received five separate 911 calls regarding a subject actively harming himself at 76360 Rainbow Street in Oakridge.

Oakridge police officer Steve Davidson was dispatched to this location as a "suicide in progress" call at 1939 hours. Dispatchers told Officer Davidson, "I have a male screaming and saying somebody slit his throat at the location." Officer Davidson responded with his civilian rider, Zach Miller, and arrived on scene at 1942 hours.

Officer Davidson stated people were outside flagging him down when he arrived. He advised people began directing him toward a shop on the property and were yelling, "Hurry! He's in there! He's killing them!" Officer Davidson reported approaching the door of the shop and observing Marcus Hartsfield struggling with three other people. Officer Davidson stated he observed Hartsfield was holding what he believed to be a knife (later determined to be a razor blade with pointed ends) and all involved subjects were covered in blood.

Officer Davidson stated he could tell Hartsfield was injured but could not tell for certain if the other involved subjects were also injured. In describing his initial observations of the scene, Officer Davidson said, "This didn't look like a suicide in progress. This looked like a murder to me." Officer Davidson drew his weapon and stepped in the doorway when he saw what was occurring. He identified himself and began giving Hartsfield verbal commands to drop the knife. At the time Officer Davidson stepped in the doorway, Hartsfield was approximately ten feet inside the residence and was standing on the other side of a large chair from the door.

After Officer Davidson started giving him commands, Hartsfield broke free from the other subjects, stepped around the chair and began quickly moving toward Officer Davidson while holding the razor up in the air in his right hand. Officer Davidson fired three shots, stopping this approach. All three shots entered Hartsfield's body, one in the chin and two in the chest. Officer Davidson advised "Shots fired," over the radio at 1944 hours.

Hartsfield closed the distance between him and Officer Davidson from approximately eight feet to approximately four feet before being stopped. Had Officer Davidson not had his gun drawn, there would not have been time to draw his weapon and respond as Hartsfield closed in.

When asked what he believed would have happened if he had not used force, Officer Davidson responded, "Oh, without a doubt in my mind, he would have killed me and then he would have killed the person he was there to kill."

The shooting was witnessed by a juvenile female, three juvenile males, Rhonda Gilbreath, and Zach Miller (civilian rider with Officer Davidson). All witnesses described Hartsfield as moving toward Officer Davidson with the razor in his hand at the time of the shooting. Multiple witnesses described these movements as "running" or "charging." The autopsy confirmed that Hartsfield was in a forward leaning position at the time he was shot, confirming witness statements that Hartsfield was charging at Officer Davidson "like a football player."

Witnesses advised prior to 911 being called, Hartsfield had barged into the residence and began punching one of the juvenile males. Hartsfield then grabbed the juvenile female and started slamming her head into the wall hard enough to put holes through the sheetrock. Hartsfield pulled out a razor blade and sliced lengthwise down both of his forearms and across his throat. Hartsfield forced the juvenile female's hands into the open wounds on his arms and began asking her "Do you love me?" Family members were still struggling with Hartsfield when Officer Davidson arrived. Hartsfield was still clutching the razor in his right hand when Officers processed the scene.

The juvenile female described being in fear for her safety, as well as the safety of her family members and boyfriend during this incident.

Hartsfield's father, Ronald Hartsfield, arrived on scene moments after the shooting and became physically aggressive with Officer Davidson. According to statements from Officer Davidson and Zach Miller, Ronald Hartsfield ignored Officer Davidson's commands to stay back and repeatedly tried to approach Officer Davidson. Officer Davidson used his Taser while trying to gain control of Ronald Hartsfield and then detained him in handcuffs. Other people on scene, including Hartsfield's mother Rhonda Gilbreath, refused to step away from Hartsfield even after Officer Davidson instructed them he could not render aid until they stepped back.

During the wait for additional officers to arrive, Officer Davidson advised over the radio that medics were free to enter, but he did not have control of the scene. Medics declined to enter

until additional officers arrived and advised the scene was safe. Hartsfield was pronounced deceased at 2006 hours. Officer Davidson was the lone law enforcement officer at that scene for 20 minutes in this dangerous, chaotic scene with a civilian rider on site.

The Interagency Deadly Force Investigative Team was dispatched and took control of the scene and investigation. Detectives from Oregon State Police, Lane County Sheriff's Office, Eugene Police Department, Springfield Police Department, Cottage Grove Police Department and Florence Police Department responded to the scene in Oakridge and conducted the investigation. These Lane County law enforcement agencies dedicate detectives to the team, dropping everything else until the investigation is complete.

Preliminary toxicology confirmed the presence of methamphetamine in Mr. Hartsfield's system.

Senior Officer Steve Davidson started at the Oakridge Police Department in December of 2013. He was a lateral hire from the state of Washington where he had been a reserve officer for the Castle Rock Police Department, a summer foot patrol officer for the Long Beach Police Department and a full-time officer for the Westport Police Department.

CC: Kevin Martin, Chief Oakridge Police Department  
Erik Fisher, Sergeant Oregon State Police  
Cliff Sites, Lead Detective, Eugene Police Department  
DJ Mann, Lieutenant Lane County Sheriff's Office