

Call for DA transparency

Recent articles by local investigative journalist Dave Waddell published on the Chico Sol website (chicosol.org) reveal disturbing new details about the law-enforcement-involved killing of 34-year-old Tyler Rushing in Chico the night of July 23, 2017.



by
Ann Polivka

The author is a retired family nurse practitioner and a member of Concerned Citizens for Justice.

The articles say that Chico Police Department and Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey refused to release videos of officer interviews in the wake of Tyler's shooting—evidence that was ultimately made available to Waddell only after he threatened legal action.

The new interviews reveal that Chico Police Sgt. Scott Ruppel knew he "wasn't seriously hurt by" a pen strike from Rushing

before shooting him. Why then, according to Ramsey's report, did Ruppel maintain that "the subject was out-of-control of the officers, and was an imminent mortal danger?"

Waddell's article also asserts that K-9 Deputy Sheriff Ian Dickerson called the shots that night. The highest ranking law-enforcement official present, Chico Police Lt. (now Commander) Billy Aldridge, stood on the sidelines, leaving the "command and control" to Dickerson, an underling.

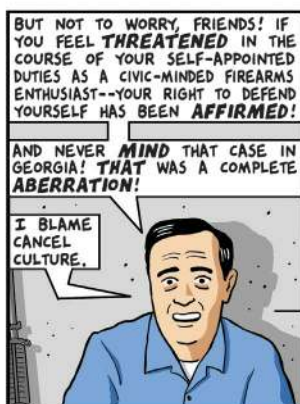
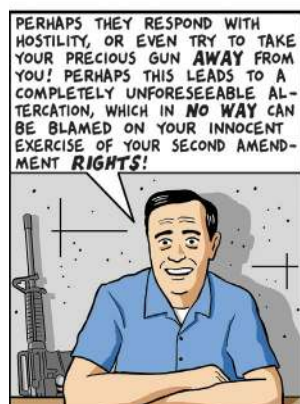
Additionally, Waddell says that the interviews reveal Rushing was in Dickerson's grasp as Ruppel shot him twice—first in the neck, then the back. The second shot, Ruppel maintained, was because [Tyler] "wasn't really going all the way down." But was that because Dickerson was holding him upright?

The lack of transparency in a high-profile case involving deadly force by local law enforcement is troubling, especially considering that, of the dozens of such shooting deaths under his watch, Ramsey has exonerated the involved officers in all but one of the cases.

The Rushing family's appeal for a jury trial awaits the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals' opinion (the Oct. 5 hearing can be viewed on the Ninth District's YouTube page—case No. 20-16428). Concerned citizens are urged to contact California Attorney General Rob Bonta to call for an investigation of local law enforcement practices. □

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BY TOM TOMORROW



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