



Pima County Sheriff's Department

MEDIA RELEASE

Clarence W. Dupnik,
Sheriff of Pima County

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Officer Involved Shooting - Update May 18, 2011

As a result of the need for information surrounding the shooting of Jose Guerena by members of the Pima Regional SWAT Team, the public has received misinformation and emotionally-charged speculation.

The investigation that lead to the service of the search warrants on May 5 is a complicated one involving multiple people suspected of very serious crimes. Sometimes, law enforcement agencies must choose between the desire of the public to quickly know details, and the very real threat to innocent lives if those details are released prematurely. Sheriff Dupnik has made it a departmental policy to be open and forthcoming with information released to the news media. When the decision is made to withhold information, as it has been in this case, there is a legitimate reason for that decision. The day the search warrant was served, we reported to the media that Mr. Guerena fired at SWAT officers. This is what was understood at that time. After a more detailed investigation, we learned that he pointed his assault rifle at SWAT officers, however, the safety was on and he could not fire. This is a clear example of erroneous information being provided without careful investigation. Rather than risking the release of further information, it is imperative that we complete all aspects of this investigation.

Complicating matters is the fact that multiple agencies were involved in this incident. The criminal investigation must be completed, in addition to the investigation by the County Attorney's office, prior to any administrative review of the actions of the officers involved in the shooting. By mutual agreement, that administrative review will include officials from the Pima County Sheriff's Department, the Marana Police Department, the Oro Valley Police Department and the Sahuarita Police Department. Each of these agencies had officers involved in the shooting as members of the Pima Regional SWAT Team.

Since the Sheriff's Department has had such a long-standing practice of open and timely communication with members of the news media, it is understandable that questions are asked about when more information will become available. However, it is unacceptable and irresponsible to couch those questions with implications of secrecy and a cover-up, not to mention questioning the legality of actions that could not have been taken without the approval of an impartial judge. As a law enforcement professional with decades of experience, Sheriff

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Dupnik will make the decision to release the information when the investigation is completed, the danger to innocent lives has been mitigated, and all agencies involved have been given the opportunity to review the actions of their personnel.

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