OXNARD POLICE DEPARTMENT
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NEWS RELEASE

DATE: **September 1, 2026**

SUBJECT: **California Department of Justice Releases its Report on 2023 Officer-Involved Shooting**

LOCATION: **235 East Seventh Street, Oxnard, CA.**

OFFICER INVOLVED: Officer Manuel Garcia

SUSPECT: **Michael Owens, 24-year-old Oxnard resident**

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On September 1, 2026, the California Department of Justice (DOJ) released its findings related to the April 28, 2023, officer-involved shooting which resulted in the death of Michael Owens. The DOJ determined that Officer Manuel Garcia's use of lethal force to protect himself was objectively reasonable.

On April 28, 2023, at approximately 12:15 A.M., Oxnard police officers responded to 235 East Seventh Street to assist the Oxnard Fire Department with an uncooperative individual requiring medical attention. Fire personnel reported that the subject, later identified as Michael Owens, was in possession of a knife and was harming himself.

Officer Manuel Garcia arrived first and positioned himself at the top of the apartment complex stairs. Mr. Owens emerged from a communal restroom holding a knife and advanced directly toward the officer. Despite receiving commands, Mr. Owens continued to advance. An officer-involved shooting occurred, causing Mr. Owens to drop the knife. He then stood up and attempted to disarm the officer, leading to a second officer-involved shooting. Mr. Owens was transported to a local hospital, where he was pronounced deceased.

Upon initial review of this incident by the Department of Justice, this officer-involved shooting met the criteria set forth by California Assembly Bill 1506, which requires the DOJ to investigate all incidents of officer-involved shootings resulting in the death of an unarmed civilian in the state.

In accordance with California Assembly Bill 1506, the California DOJ independently investigated and evaluated the incident. After a three-year long investigation, the DOJ found that, "Based upon the investigation and review of evidence along with the applicable statutes,

legal principles, and subsequent analysis, there is insufficient evidence to support a criminal prosecution of Officer Manuel Garcia. Therefore, no further action will be taken in this case".

As part of its review, the Attorney General is required to provide recommendations for modifying agency policies and practices. The Police Practices Section's accompanying report issued three recommendations:

1) Continue mental health crisis training.

2) Continue disengagement training to enhance officer and first responder safety and public safety.

3) Provide additional training on muting body-worn cameras.

Following the 2023 incident, the Oxnard Police Department engaged the *OIR Group*, an independent consulting firm specializing in law enforcement evaluations, to review the department's response to individuals in crisis. In April of 2024, the OIR Group released its public findings. Oxnard PD has implemented several of the group's recommendations.

In recent years, the department has increased both the amount and frequency of training officers receive in de-escalation techniques and responding to individuals in crisis. This ongoing training is intended to provide officers with additional tools to safely manage these complex and often rapidly evolving situations.

The Oxnard PD revised its body-worn camera policy to limit the use of the muting feature and requires supervisory approval and oversight when used.

The DOJ Police Practices Section commended "Oxnard PD for the affirmative improvements it made following this incident and recommends that Oxnard PD continue to develop and train officers on responding to individuals in a mental health crisis."

The Oxnard Police Department acknowledges the California Department of Justice's thorough investigation and concurs with the findings and recommendations provided by the Police Practices Section.

The full report is available for public review on the Oxnard Police Department website. Links below:

California Department of Justice Report

Critical Incident Community Briefing Video

California Department of Justice Press Release