



Marin County Sheriff's Office
Bureau of Administration and Support Services
Professional Standards Unit

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sheriff Responds to Criticism of Actions of Deputies

San Rafael, CA – Yesterday, as well as this morning, stories were reported in local media questioning the response of two Marin County Sheriff's deputies who were near the scene of a homicide on the Richmond Bridge last week. The reports indicated that East Bay law enforcement officials have called into question the actions / inactions of the deputies. Marin County Sheriff Robert Doyle responded to these media reports and indicated his support for the actions of the deputies, citing the chaotic environment and split-second decision-making that was required of them for an incident that took less than one minute from the time the deputies heard the shots being fired until the suspect fled the area.

On August 11, 2009, two Marin sheriff's detectives were returning to Marin from an investigation that had led them to San Pablo. As the detectives each approached the bridge in their unmarked cars, they saw a man running through the toll plaza in heavy commute traffic. From their distance of about 75-100 yards away, they heard several gunshots. As one detective immediately called the Sheriff's dispatch center to report the shots fired, she saw a vehicle speed away from the scene eastbound on Interstate 580. The detective, who was in the westbound lane at the toll plaza stuck in the heavy traffic, provided a detailed description of the fleeing vehicle. Another detective moved her unmarked car to block traffic in an effort to prevent additional citizens from entering the scene or potentially putting themselves in harm's way, as there was still concern about the possibility of additional shooters in the area. While one detective was trying to provide for the safety of other people on the bridge, the other detective rushed to the toll plaza to attempt to render medical aid to the victim.

The vehicle description initially provided by the Marin sheriff's detective was crucial in assisting the Richmond Police Department investigators with identifying the suspect and eventually assisted in leading to the arrest of the suspect in this case.

Sheriff Doyle commended his detectives and their actions. Sheriff Doyle expressed outrage at critics who were not present at the scene, and yet are second-guessing the actions of the deputies who were at the scene. Some news reports have suggested that a rift has developed between the Richmond Police Department and the Marin County Sheriff's Office as a result of this unfortunate incident. The Marin County Sheriff's Office disagrees with that characterization and continues to work cooperatively with the Richmond Police Department on this active homicide investigation. Sheriff Doyle said, "The controversy in this case has been driven by the media, not by either the Sheriff's Office or the Richmond Police Department."