



January 12, 2023

Our thoughts are with the families and friends of Takar Smith, Keenan Anderson, and Oscar Sanchez. In the first three days of the year, Takar and Oscar were shot to death by LAPD, and Keenan died in the custody of LAPD after being tased. While the immediate pain of their deaths belongs solely to those who knew them, their loss to our community is a tragedy that must be observed and honored.

We watched LAPD videos of what happened to Takar, Keenan, and Oscar. All three incidents reveal police encounters with individuals who were experiencing mental health crises. Chief Michel Moore said he was “deeply concerned” about the killings of the three men and committed to as much transparency “as the law allows” regarding the incidents and their investigation.

The people of Los Angeles deserve a full accounting of the events and causes that led to the deaths of Takar, Keenan, and Oscar. We will do our part to create that and encourage others to do the same. We demand that LAPD release all unedited recordings of these encounters in the name of transparency and accountability. Other police departments, including Sacramento and Chicago, have released full footage after deadly uses of force. LAPD needs to fully live out its oft-repeated commitment to transparency – the law allows for more disclosure following these events than what it has enshrined in policy.

We have serious concerns and questions about the tactics used by the officers in these killings.

The killing of Takar Smith shows that LAPD failed to properly account for his mental health needs. LAPD was told clearly that he had a history of mental health needs, including a schizophrenia diagnosis. Despite this, officers failed to request any of three then-available LAPD teams intended to help de-escalate encounters with people experiencing mental health crises.



Keenan Anderson, who died after LAPD tased him and used physical force, encountered the police after a traffic accident and while also in distress. Chief Moore described his behavior as “erratic,” and the available video shows a panicked person who fears for his safety. When multiple officers are holding him down, he pleads for help: “They’re trying to George Floyd me.” LAPD failed to de-escalate the situation, and now Keenan is dead.

Oscar Sanchez’s shooting death is also marked by indications of a mental health crisis. Throughout the encounter, he was in a confused state. Oscar likely lacked the ability to understand the events unfolding around him. LAPD was clearly ill-equipped to handle the situation and relied on force, simultaneously using lethal and less-lethal gunfire.

It is our job to create transparency and boost accountability. That always starts with the data. LAPD encounters with individuals experiencing a perceived or actual mental health crisis are not rare. According to LAPD, in 2021, such persons accounted for 41% (15 out of 37) of all individuals shot at by LAPD. That was an increase from 2020, when they accounted for 19% (6 out of 31) of all persons shot at by LAPD. This trend deserves careful analysis and understanding to prevent more tragic killings.

In addition, over the last ten years, LA taxpayers spent \$359 million on LAPD settlements and judgments. During that same time period, citywide we spent \$243 million for payouts related to civil rights/excessive use of force violations. Many of these payouts don’t come out of the department’s budget but rather the city’s General Fund, which means less money for essential city resources and services.

Our team, which includes experts with deep experience in public safety oversight at the federal, state, and local levels, is working to provide transparency and accountability on LAPD by measuring the effectiveness of money provided to them in the arena of mental health. Our goal is to determine whether those funds would be better invested in alternatives outside of LAPD. Our team will also be engaging with members of the community to understand their public safety experiences and needs.

We’re determined to prevent tragedies like these three killings from happening in the future. No one should have to experience the pain that those who knew and cared for Takar, Keenan, and Oscar will live with.