



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

November 20, 2019

### **Preliminary Findings on Officer-Involved Shooting of Murder Suspect Dashcam Shows What Appears To Be “Suicide by Cop”**

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey today released a portion of a **dashcam video** which captured the November 15, 2018 shooting of a double-homicide suspect by officers following a high-speed chase down Highway 70 which was closed due to the Camp Fire.

Ramsey said the video corroborated the involved officers' statements which were taken by the Butte County Officer Involved Shooting/Critical Incident Protocol Team. The team was activated immediately following the shooting. Ramsey said the team's current findings are preliminary and a final report will be released after all the evidence being gathered is examined. However Ramsey said it did appear that **GD Hendrix**, 48, of Berry Creek, may have committed what is referred colloquially to as “suicide by cop” by imitating an armed attack on officers.

Ramsey said Hendrix was a prime suspect in a December 2014 double-homicide of a Plumas County couple who were visiting their son in the Berry Creek area. A search warrant served by the Butte County Sheriff's Office SWAT team shortly after the homicides revealed firearms and a pipe bomb at Hendrix's home in Berry Creek. Hendrix was later found on January 6, 2015 later standing outside a local store and was found to have several weapons concealed under his heavy coat, including an AK-47 rifle, a .223 caliber pistol and a .22 caliber pistol. He was arrested and later convicted of weapon and drug charges while the investigation of the homicides continued. He was sent to state prison and was paroled in May of this year. In June, he cut his ankle monitor and was being sought by local authorities and U.S. Marshalls for being a parolee at large and a murder suspect.

Ramsey said at approximately 11:00 a.m. on November 15, a Butte County Sheriff's deputy was contacted by a local citizen as the deputy was patrolling the closed Pines Yankee Hill Hardware Store in the evacuated Concow area. The citizen expressed a concern about a vehicle in the parking lot that had been occupied by a “suspicious character” for the past few days. The deputy approached a silver Chevy sedan parked between other cars in the parking lot and found a male sleeping in the driver's seat. The sedan's license plate came back to Hendrix's mother. The deputy, knowing Hendrix was considered an armed and dangerous subject, left the parking lot and gathered a group of other officers nearby.

Ramsey said the deputy briefed a group of approximately eight officers from various law enforcement agencies who were in the area supplying mutual aid during the Camp Fire

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evacuation. The deputy informed the other officers of Hendrix's history of being armed and wanted. The officers quickly formulated a plan to surround and contain the suspicious subject in his car. They then returned to the parking lot. However as the officers were executing their plan, Hendrix woke up in his driver's seat and refused officers' commands to show them his hands, instead shoving his right hand out of sight to his lower right side as if he had a gun hidden there. Several officers reported hearing a metallic click. Hendrix shouted out to officers: "You guys should have left me alone" and "I'm not going back." Hendrix then started his car and attempted to back out toward the officers at the rear of his car. Officers blocked his path with a truck, but Hendrix put the car in forward gear and rammed through two other parked cars to escape the parking lot onto Highway 70.

Officers rushed to their vehicles and began an eight-mile pursuit at speeds over 100 mph south and west down Highway 70. Other officers in the general area were alerted and attempted to spike strip Hendrix's car at Highway 70's intersection with Cherokee Road and later at Pentz Road. The spike strip deployment worked at the Pentz Road intersection causing all of his tires to blow and disintegrate – eventually slowing and bringing the car to a halt in the middle of the highway. Approximately two dozen officers from various agencies stopped behind Hendrix's car. Hendrix threw a black five gallon bucket lid from his window to the side of the road as he stopped. Officers ordered him to show his hands out the window. He refused and a standoff ensued. Officers noted during the standoff his driver's door opened slightly.

Ramsey said Sutter County Sheriff's K-9 "Bandit" was brought up to be deployed if Hendrix continued to refuse to show his hands or exit his vehicle. Hendrix eventually opened the door of his car fully and could be seen still seated in the driver's seat looking back at officers, but still refusing to show his hands despite officers' shouted commands.

Ramsey said Hendrix then stood up in his car's doorway shielding his right side away from officers. Hendrix was seen rocking back and forth twice on his feet as if getting ready to spring into action or run. Bandit was then released to take the uncooperative Hendrix down.

At the same time, Hendrix dropped his body weight slightly in the car's doorway and suddenly sprung out from the door position with his right hand rapidly coming from his right hip area. Hendrix moved very rapidly out from the door and squared his body position toward the officers with his right hand coming up to his front. An object was seen in Hendrix's right hand which looked like the barrel of a gun, and was held in the manner one would hold a gun – and aimed toward the officers. Hendrix's left hand then joined with his right to hold the object in a classic two-handed shooter position. Multiple officers then shot multiple times believing Hendrix was about to shoot them.

Ramsey said as the multiple shots were impacting Hendrix, Bandit could be seen racing into the scene and making his approach as Hendrix began to fall from the shots. The shots continued as Hendrix kept the gun-like object pointed toward officers as he fell. Ramsey said this fall brought Hendrix down toward the ground level with Bandit. Bandit was hit and mortally wounded by officers' shots. A cease fire order was shouted by several officers and the shooting stopped. Despite his serious wounds, Bandit got up and attempted to continue his apprehension of Hendrix but fell back to the ground. A pit bull dog came from inside Hendrix's car at that time and attacked the now prone and dying Bandit. Officers shot and killed the pit bull dog.

Officers then proceeded to perform life saving measures on Hendrix, including CPR and applying pressure bandages to his wounds. He was however declared dead at the scene shortly afterward.

Ramsey said a forensic frame-by-frame analysis of one of the officer's vehicle's dashcam video revealed the gun-like barrel clasped in Hendrix's hands was dislodged after he hit the pavement. It could be seen bouncing and sliding to the south edge of the road where it was found during the initial search of the area. Ramsey said the object was a six-inch long piece of one-inch diameter steel pipe with a bolt inserted vertically through the pipe towards its rear.

Although several folding and fixed blade knives were found on Hendrix after he was shot, Ramsey said no firearms were found either on his body or in his car.

Ramsey said the manner in which Hendrix jumped from his car door and held the pipe as if he was holding a gun pointed toward officers was significant. Hendrix certainly could see the multitude of armed and shouting officers behind his car. His statement that he "was not going back" referenced that he would not go back to prison. Given the certain knowledge that his actions in attacking the officers with his "pipe gun" would cause him to be shot led investigators to conclude Hendrix's actions were consistent with him committing suicide at the hands of the police.

Ramsey said there were two deputies from the Butte County Sheriff's Office, two deputies from the Shasta County Sheriff's Office and a game warden with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife that shot at Hendrix. A Butte deputy and a Shasta deputy each shot at the pit bull dog. A total of 26 fired cartridge casings of various calibers were recovered at the scene.

Ramsey said the investigation is continuing and a full report detailing the evidence would be forthcoming at a later date.

A copy of the dash cam video showing the moments leading up to the shooting can be found at the District Attorney's website at [www.buttecounty.net/da](http://www.buttecounty.net/da) under the title of **GD Hendrix OIS Preliminary Report**. The video stops just as Bandit came into the fatal scene. A photo of the "pipe gun" found alongside the road is also on the website.