



San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott

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## **Police Officer Cleared in Shooting; Jury Finds Actions Were Reasonable**

A federal jury today found that a San Diego Police Department SWAT Team officer acted reasonably in the January 2013 shooting of Angel Lopez, a gang member sought by police for violating his parole.

Lopez fled from SWAT officers responding to a tip of a potential hostage involving Lopez and other gang members. Officers had information that Lopez, a parolee at large, was a member of the gang, was involved in a drug cartel, and was armed and dangerous.

While being pursued into an apartment stairwell and hallway, Lopez did not follow orders to surrender, but instead reached into his pocket while turning toward the officers. He was shot and later died. Drug bindles, a box cutter, handcuff keys and a syringe were found in his pockets. Toxicology reports found methamphetamine and opiates in his blood.

Lopez's family sued the City and the police officer who fired, alleging excessive force, wrongful death and violation of the decedent's constitutional right to association, among other claims. Most of the claims were dismissed prior to trial.

**“The jury heard all of the evidence and agreed that the officer acted in defense of himself and his fellow officers,”** City Attorney Mara W. Elliott said. **“Our police officers have a tough job to do. Not many of us would run toward danger the way these officers did. They put their lives on the line each day they put on their uniforms.”**

The City was defended by Chief Deputy City Attorney Rayna A. Stephan and Deputy City Attorney Kathy J. Steinman.

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