



# OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

ALEX VILLANUEVA, SHERIFF



March 4, 2020

Brian K. Williams, Executive Director  
County of Los Angeles  
Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission  
World Trade Center  
350 South Figueroa Street, Suite 288  
Los Angeles, California 90071

Max Huntsman, Inspector General  
Office of the Inspector General  
312 South Hill Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Mr. Williams and Mr. Huntsman:

## INVESTIGATION AND POLICY

On January 26, 2020, tragedy struck our community when a helicopter crashed in Calabasas killing all passengers and crew. The event was particularly noteworthy because one of the passengers killed was basketball legend Kobe Bryant. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) personnel worked diligently to secure the crash scene and assist the National Transportation Safety Board to investigate the matter. I personally responded to the scene and met with grieving family members who were concerned about their privacy, dignity, and exploitation of the horrible tragedy.

Not long after the incident, information received suggested that LASD personnel may have taken photographs of the crash scene. In an attempt to stop any distribution of explicit photos and with the intention of protecting the grieving families, immediate administrative action was taken and a formal investigation was launched.

Due to the incredible sensitive nature of this internal investigation, coupled with public and media interest, I am requesting that the Office of the Inspector

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General immediately assign an investigator to our case for oversight and transparency purposes. I believe early monitoring of the LASD investigation will ensure a high quality and comprehensive investigation that will enhance public trust and confidence in both organizations.

In a letter responding to the Civilian Oversight Commission's (COC) request for draft policies dated February 28, 2020, I expressed my value and support for oversight. I committed to you that the COC would be notified during the creation of new policy and input would be solicited.

It is evident our photograph policy is deficient and this incident has identified a need for me to direct the creation of new policy regarding the taking, possession, distribution of photographs and recordings, etc., by on-duty LASD personnel. Please accept this letter as notice of my intention to solicit input from the COC with regard to this matter of great public interest as we formulate a draft policy.

If you require additional information, please feel free to contact Assistant Sheriff Steven E. Gross, Patrol Operations, at (213) 229-3067.

Sincerely,



ALEX VILLANUEVA  
SHERIFF

Mr. Williams and Mr. Huntsman

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March 4, 2020

c: Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors