

Close-out Memorandum of the
Investigation Regarding

Leandro Francisco Ledea Chong

March 30, 2024



State Attorney's Office
Eleventh Judicial Circuit

Miami-Dade County

July 10, 2025



INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM





TO: KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE DATE: July 9, 2025
State Attorney

FROM: STAFFING/REVIEW TEAM RE: SAO Case #: 62/24/03/30/004
Deceased: Leandro Francisco Ledea Chong

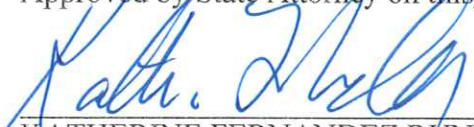
Based on the information obtained and reviewed during the course of the investigation, the conclusion of the staffing/review team is the following:

On March 30, 2024, at about 2:29 A.M. Homestead Police Department officers were dispatched via ShotSpotter to 462 Sunrise Blvd reference gunfire in the area. Moments later, at 2:30 and 2:32 A.M. two additional ShotSpotter alerts were triggered. Upon arrival, officers located Leandro Francisco Ledea Chong, who started throwing rocks at the officers. Chong also brandished what appeared to be a firearm. Officers gave multiple loud commands to Chong asking him to drop his weapon, and to stop throwing rocks. Chong next threw a large object at one of the officers and started to raise the weapon. The officers discharged their firearms, striking Chong who retreated into his home where the shooting continued. Chong was shot multiple times and was pronounced deceased on the scene. Officer Meece retrieved a weapon from Chong, which was later examined and determined to be a "BB" gun. Pursuant to Florida Statute 776.012 and 776.05, after reviewing the facts and evidence, including witness statements and body worn camera footage, the use of deadly force by Homestead Officers Rodriguez, Aguirre, Escalante, and Schnebly is determined to be legally justified.

The members of the staffing/review team for this case are:

 _____ Howard Rosen	<i>/s/ Deisy Hernandez</i> _____ Deisy Hernandez	<i>Stephen K. Talpins</i> _____ Stephen K. Talpins
 _____ Kathleen Hoague	 _____ Nilo Cuervo	 _____ Jose Arrojo
<i>/s/ Marie Jo Toussaint</i> _____ Marie Jo Toussaint		

Approved by State Attorney on this 10 day of July, 2025.



KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE
State Attorney



INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: STAFFING/REVIEW TEAM

DATE: July 8, 2025

FROM: JUSTIN FUNCK
Assistant State Attorney

RE: POLICE SHOOTING CLOSEOUT MEMO
SAO Case # 62/24/03/30/004

OFFICERS INVOLVED:	Sgt. Yadiel Rodriguez ID #10-924 - HPD Officer Ricardo Aguirre ID # 10-837- HPD Officer Bryant Escalante ID #10-923 - HPD Officer Crystal Schnebly ID # 10-984 - HPD
DECEASED:	Leandro Francisco Ledea Chong
DATE & TIME:	March 30, 2024 at 2:29 A.M.
LOCATION:	462 Sunrise Blvd., Homestead, Florida 33030
WEAPONS:	Glock Model 17, 9MM, SN: GEH996 (Sgt. Rodriguez) Glock Model 21, .45 caliber, SN: LAM388 (Officer Aguirre) Glock Model 17, Gen5, 9MM, SN: BVGG999 (Officer Escalante) Glock Model 19, Gen5, 9MM, SN: BTPC306 (Officer Schnebly) Black & Silver "XCP" 4.5mm, SN: 16M05990 (Ledea Chong)
LEAD/REPORTS:	FDLE Agent Michael McBride / February 25, 2025
POLICE CASE #s:	MI-27-0252 (F.D.L.E.); 24-017-625 (Homestead Police Case Number); PD240330102207 (Crime Scene); 4078019 (MDFR Arson Investigation)
SAO CASE #:	62/24/03/30/004

SUMMARY OF FACTS

On Saturday, March 30, 2024, at approximately 2:29 am Homestead Police Department officers were dispatched via ShotSpotter to 462 Sunrise Blvd reference gunfire in the area. Approximately a minute later, a second alert was dispatched for the same location. At 2:32 am a third ShotSpotter alert indicated gunfire.

Upon arrival, officers located Leandro Francisco Ledea Chong standing outside the residence who began throwing rocks at the officers. Officers were already aware of Chong from several prior police service calls; including a standoff that had occurred with Chong hours earlier during the prior shift, in the evening hours of Friday, March 29.

A standoff ensued between the officers and Chong. During the course of the standoff, Chong brandished what appeared to be a firearm. Officers gave multiple loud commands to Chong to drop his gun, to calm down and to stop throwing rocks. After Chong threw a large object at one of the officers, he began to lift his gun up at which point officers discharged their firearms. Chong retreated into his house and officers followed. Inside the house, the shooting continued and ultimately Chong was shot multiple times and was pronounced deceased on the scene.

Officer Justin Meece retrieved a pistol from Chong and secured it in his trunk. While securing the pistol, Officer Meece reported hearing gunfire just south of his location and believed he was being shot at. Moments later a second gun shot was heard. Officers believed they were taking gunfire and took cover. A perimeter was set up and Miami Dade Police Department Special Response Team (SRT) was called in to evacuate the Homestead Police Officers. It was later determined that no one was shooting at the officers, but that multiple rounds of ammunition were placed in a vehicle that was sealed and lit on fire within proximity of the incident location.

Witness Officer Statements

Officer Meece gave a sworn statement to FDLE investigators. Officer Meece stated that he responded to the incident location reference the Shot Spotter dispatch. Upon his arrival, Chong was outside the residence and the four Homestead officers were holding him at gunpoint. Officer Meece stated that he heard the officers giving Chong loud verbal commands to “drop the gun”. Officer Meece stated to investigators that Chong was yelling back at officers and throwing rocks and other objects at the officers. Officer Meece stated that officers continued to give Chong loud verbal commands, shortly

after which shots were fired. Officer Meece could not recall which officer shot first. Officer Meece also stated that he entered the residence and recovered the firearm from Chong.

Sergeant Kevin Carvajal gave a sworn statement to FDLE investigators. Sgt. Carvajal stated that he responded reference a “shots fired” call and that upon his arrival officers were already engaged with Chong. Sgt. Carvajal stated that Chong threw something and then shots rang out; he was not sure who shot. Once inside the residence, Sgt. Carvajal had Officer Meece secure the weapon and had the other officers attempt to render aid to Chong. While conducting a security search of the residence for officer safety, Sgt. Carvajal heard a shot fired from outside the residence. Sgt. Carvajal heard a second shot and ordered the officers to take cover. Sgt. Carvajal stated that he could see a haze coming from where the shots where the source of the shots were coming from. SRT officers arrived and secured the scene.

Civilian Witness Statements

Civilian Yusmary Navarro Paz, who is a neighbor to Chong, gave a sworn statement to FDLE investigators. Paz stated that she heard gunshots and her and her husband approached the window and saw Chong standing by his front door. Paz and her husband went back to bed and heard more gunshots. Paz went back to the window and saw Chong holding a bag and a gun. Paz described hearing voices and yelling. She saw police negotiating with Chong, ordering him to drop his gun down, lower his gun and to calm down. Paz stated that Chong began to throw things at the police and pull out his gun, at which point police shot at Chong. Chong ran into his house and police followed in behind him. Paz stated that she heard more gunshots from inside the home and then the gunshots ended She described Chong’s gun as silver and black.

Additionally, Paz’s husband, Jorge Verges Rodriguez gave a sworn statement to FDLE investigators. Rodriguez’ statement was consistent with Paz’ statement and consistent with the events as they were depicted on the officers BWC videos.

Crime Scene Investigation

The crime scene revealed that Chong was struck by at least one bullet outside the residence as evidenced by the large area of blood spatter located on the front door frame and right side of the front door. Additionally, there were numerous bullet holes located on the exterior wall, front door and window. Twenty-five spent 9mm casings were also recovered from the exterior scene.

The interior scene showed that a blood trail led through a hallway to a back room where the body of Chung was located. Inside the residence, twenty-three spent 9mm casings were recovered.

Each involved officer involved underwent routine processing following the shooting incident by crime scene and a round count was conducted. Based on the round count, it is believed that Sgt. Rodriguez could have discharged his weapon fifteen times. Officer Escalante is believed to have discharged his firearm twenty-eight times. Officer Schnebly is believed to have discharged her firearm seven times. And Officer Aguirre is believed to have discharged his firearm three times.

Medical Examiner Toxicology Report

A toxicology report showed that Chong had methamphetamine and other substances in blood and ocular fluid. It was determined that cause of death was multiple gunshot wounds.

CONCLUSION

The role of the State Attorney in this investigation and in conducting this review is limited to determining whether a criminal violation of Florida law has occurred, whether any person may be held criminally responsible, and whether such criminal responsibility can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. The State Attorney does not establish agency policy, procedures, and training requirements. Nor does the State Attorney have any responsibility for determining disciplinary action or pursuing civil litigation in these matters. In other words, given the applicable law, the State Attorney's role is to determine whether the actions of Sgt. Yadiel Rodriguez, Officer Ricardo Aguirre, Officer Bryant Excalante, and Officer Crystal Schnebly constitute a criminal act that can be proven beyond and to the exclusion of every reasonable doubt.

The undersigned Assistant State Attorney responded to the scene of the police involved shooting on the night of the incident. I have reviewed the entire Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) file regarding the Police Use of Force in this incident including all reports and witness statements. The undersigned finds that the FDLE Investigative Summary to be complete and thorough and consistent with the witness statements. I adopt and attach the FDLE Investigative Summary report to this memorandum and offer my conclusion based upon my own review of the evidence.

The subject officers responded to the incident location reference shots fired. Upon arrival they were met by Chong, a man whom they had prior engagements with, and were aware just had a prior call out, hours earlier. The officers ordered Chong to "calm down," "put his hands up" and to "drop his gun"

multiple times. Chong continued to yell at the officers and throw large heavy objects at the officers, ignoring their commands. Ultimately, when Chong refused the commands of the officers, and pulled out what appeared to be a firearm, the officers discharged their firearms.

The FDLE investigation did not reveal which officer fired first during the exchange of gunfire. The subject officers declined to provide statements about the shooting and the other non-shooting officers did not see who shot first, but heard the officers commands and saw the subject throwing objects at the officers and pulling out a firearm. Independent civilian witnesses saw the outside interaction between the officers and Chong.

Florida Statute section 776.012 provides that every person has the right to use deadly force to protect themselves or others from a reasonable threat of imminent death or great bodily harm. This statute applies with equal force to police officers. Additionally, Florida Statute section 776.05 provides that a police officer may use any degree of force reasonably necessary to defend themselves from bodily harm in making an arrest. Given the history the officers have had with Chong, and Chong's refusal to follow their repeated commands, especially when they ordered him to drop his firearm, the officers were justified in their use of deadly force.

Prepared by:

/s/ Justin Funck

Justin Funck
Assistant State Attorney