

Statement from Todd Frazier, FPOA president, on OIR report

Concerning the OIR report regarding the London Wallace conclusion, I was made aware of Mr. Gliatta's decision during a recent meeting I had with him. I respect Mr. Gliatta and his right to conclude whatever he wants, but I strenuously disagreed with his conclusion. I reminded him that he has had the opportunity to review all facets of this incident over several months, such as reading reports from the other involved officers, statements from persons and witnesses involved, including those who were contacted by gang officers that night, and a meticulous review and analysis, frame by frame, of the body camera video that captured the incident. Unfortunately, the accused officer did not have this luxury. Let me remind people of the facts: These officers showed up at a gang meeting, not knowing how many persons they would ultimately contact there. They were positioned on a narrow portion of a second-floor landing outside of an apartment. The officers were lawfully there to conduct their investigation. They practiced good officer safety by bringing out one person at a time from within that apartment, making sure they were not armed before asking them to take a seat. However, as more and more occupants of this apartment were brought out, the officers found themselves quickly outnumbered. Let me stress, the officers were contacting gang members, some of whom could have been armed.

Once Mr. Wallace exited the apartment; the situation was tense on the landing with officers outnumbered and potential gang members mixed in and around them. The gang members could have easily turned on the officers and the situation could have gone very badly. In situations like this, officers have to remain vigilant for their safety. At the same time they still had potentially more persons who needed to be removed from inside the apartment.

In situations such as this, officers must maintain proper safety and control. If they don't, one problem could create a situation where there is an uprising by those being detained, thus creating a situation where greater force is required to contain the situation. The involved officer felt there was non-compliance by Mr. Wallace and he felt he had to immediately act to avoid this already problematic situation from getting out of control. This was a decision and reaction that took only seconds to unfold. Officers are human beings. They have to react based on training, experience and their instincts. Their lives depend on it. The video of this incident was made public by an attorney hoping to capitalize on the way it looked, and what was occurring with public sentiment at the moment. Unfortunately, this officer was not given the benefit of doubt for what he and the other officers had to deal with that night, out on that landing, with potentially armed gang members. There were even calls to arrest the officer and prosecute him without due process in a continuing effort to demonize the fine work under hazardous circumstances officers have to contend with on a daily basis. This demonization must stop, especially now when Fresno is experiencing a surge in violent crime we haven't seen since the late eighties and early nineties.

The FPOA fully supports the involved officer and the actions he felt he had to take that night.