



# DETECTIVE BUREAU MAJOR CASE BRIEFING



ORIGINAL REPORT       UPDATE REPORT

DIVISION REPORTING	Commercial Crimes Division (CCD)	SECTION / UNIT	Burglary Special
TYPE OF INCIDENT	Grand Theft	DR NUMBER	2011-06617
DATE OF OCCURRENCE	02/28/2018 – 02/28/2020	DATE OF REPORT	04/21/2020
INCIDENT LOCATION	1880 North Academy Road, Los Angeles	AREA / RD	1186
VICTIM NAME	Los Angeles Police Revolver Athletic Club	VICTIM DOB	
SUSPECT NAME	Unknown	SUSPECT DOB	
SUSPECT INFO <small>(ADDRESS / DESCRIPTION)</small>			
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Detective III M. Vergara, Serial No. 27738/ Detective II M. Pedroza, Serial No.26904		
<b>INSTRUCTIONS:</b> Please include the following headings and information		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CASE SUMMARY / BACKGROUND</li> <li>INVESTIGATIVE STEPS COMPLETED (in bullet points)</li> <li>INVESTIGATIVE STEPS PENDING (in bullet points)</li> </ul>	

## INVESTIGATION:

Commercial Crimes Division was notified on February 28, 2020 that multiple firearms were missing from the LAPRAAC store located at 1880 Academy Drive, Los Angeles. CCD personnel immediately responded to the location, and spoke to LAPRAAC retail manager Debbie Rhoades. Rhoades stated that on Tuesday, February 25, 2020, she had learned that there was a discrepancy in their inventory tracking systems, and ordered a full physical inspection of all firearms on February 26 - 27, 2020. Unfortunately, this physical inspection revealed that there were 39 firearms unaccounted for. CCD detectives, with the assistance of the GND gun detail, were able to verify that these firearms had not been sold, properly disposed of, or returned to the appropriate manufacturers. Physical boxes associated with missing/stolen firearms were photographed, printed, and swabbed for DNA. The video of the interior of the LAPRAAC store was recovered and secured.

A review of LAPRAAC procedures and documents indicated the involvement of Assistant Manager Archie Duenas with multiple missing/stolen firearms; he was subsequently fired. LAPRAAC security measures were determined to be substandard, and this appears to have inadvertently facilitated Duenas' efforts to steal multiple firearms without the immediate detection by other LAPRAAC personnel. During the investigation, Duenas spoke to CCD DIII Mel Vergara via telephone, but all conversations had been evasive and cryptic, and he declined to be formally interviewed.

On March 19, 2020, CCD served a search warrant at Duenas' residence, 3720 Hope Street, in Huntington Park. Duenas was found to be in possession of multiple miscellaneous items stolen from LAPRAAC, a 9mm pistol, an

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SECTION OIC \_\_\_\_\_ DIV C/O \_\_\_\_\_ DB C/O \_\_\_\_\_ DSG C/O \_\_\_\_\_



## DETECTIVE BUREAU MAJOR CASE BRIEFING



illegally modified AR-15 style assault rifle, and a quantity of methamphetamine, and was arrested. The recovered weapons were not on LAPRAAC's list of stolen firearms.

### UPDATED FIREARM INFORMATION:

LAPRAAC initially reported 39 guns unaccounted for. Via records reconciliation and extensive auditing at the behest of investigators, that number was reduced to **32 missing/stolen guns**. Of these, several turned up via DROS hits, while others were located via the forensic examination of LAPRAAC paperwork and other documents.

At this time, 20 firearms have been identified as having been sold by Duenas to the below individuals, and voluntarily surrendered to investigators. One additional firearm was recovered from a rear yard near Duenas' residence.

1. An LASD Sheriff's deputy was identified as a seller of a missing LAPRAAC firearm; he was cooperative and voluntarily gave two substantive statements to investigators. He indicated that he purchased 13 firearms at LAPRAAC with the assistance of Archie Duenas. Duenas asked for cash and Venmo payments, and in exchange offered to discount the price by a relatively small amount (10-15%). Duenas completed some (but not all) documentation at the time of purchase. As Duenas was a store manager, the deputy was confident Duenas would complete the remaining documentation.

The deputy voluntarily surrendered **13 firearms**, from LAPRAAC's list, to investigators.

2. Further firearms were traced back to an LAPD employee. The employee was cooperative and gave a brief statement. The employee stated that he, too, purchased firearms at LAPRAAC from Archie Duenas, and that Duenas asked for cash, in exchange for a small discount, to pay for the firearms. Because Duenas was a manager, the employee was confident Duenas would complete any further documentation appropriately.

He surrendered **3 firearms**, from LAPRAAC's list, to investigators.

3. By examining LAPRAAC records, a second LAPD employee was determined to be in possession of several firearms, but declined to make a statement.

He surrendered **3 firearms**, from LAPRAAC's list, to investigators.

4. A third LAPD employee was identified as a seller of a firearm via a DROS hit. He, through his attorney, declined to give a statement to CCD detectives.

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SECTION OIC \_\_\_\_\_ DIV C/O \_\_\_\_\_ DB C/O \_\_\_\_\_ DSG C/O \_\_\_\_\_



## DETECTIVE BUREAU MAJOR CASE BRIEFING



He voluntarily surrendered **1 firearm**, from LAPRAAC's list, to investigators.

5. On April 21, 2020, an elderly Huntington Park citizen observed an object resembling a firearm wrapped in plastic behind a shed in her back yard, and made contact with CCD detectives.

Detectives recovered **1 firearm**, a Benelli M4 semi-automatic shotgun, from the back yard. They determined that this, too, was from LAPRAAC's list.

**Note:** the residence is immediately adjacent to Duenas' residence at 3720 Hope Street, in Huntington Park. Detectives noted that Duenas would have had immediate access to the area where the Benelli was concealed/recovered.

All told **32 firearms**, were reported missing/stolen from LAPRAAC. At this time; **21 have been recovered**, and **11 remain outstanding**.

### CONFERENCE CALL:

On April 15, 2020, CCD facilitated a conference call with representatives from the ATF and US Attorney's Office, as well as representatives from the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office/JSID, regarding the progress of the investigation. All parties were updated as to recent developments. Both the ATF/US Attorney's Office and the DA's Office agreed as follows:

- Duenas was the primary target of the investigation at this juncture. The potential prosecution of law enforcement personnel purchasing firearms from Duenas will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. ATF and JSID indicated this would depend largely on evidence, if any, that they knowingly purchased stolen firearms, knowingly collaborated with Duenas in some way, or received extreme discounts that would have alerted them to the fact that Duenas' activities were illegal.
- Both ATF and JSID agreed that the best strategy was to wait for the entire investigation to be completed against Duenas before any charges were filed. Duenas, who is out on bail, would be rearrested at that time.
- Any additional firearms recovered during the investigation may add to the charges Duenas ultimately faces; however, the diminishing likelihood of recovering all unaccounted for weapons should not unduly delay the reasonable conclusion of the investigation.
- The strength of the evidence, as well as the potential sentence Duenas was likely to receive, would determine who ultimately prosecutes the case.
- A follow up call with all parties would be initiated by CCD in two weeks.

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## DETECTIVE BUREAU MAJOR CASE BRIEFING



### Investigative steps completed:

- A Grand Theft IR was completed
- All LAPRAAC employees have been documented and identified
- Ruben Crane, the general manager, and Debbie Rhoades, the retail operations manager, have both been interviewed. Interviews of LAPRAAC employees have been completed
- Serology, prints, and photos responded to appropriately gather evidence and document the circumstances of the theft. No significant evidence was obtained via prints or DNA
- All missing firearms have been vetted by the GND gun detail
- A "phone dump" of Assistant Manager Archie Duenas' phone has been completed
- The video footage of the LAPRAAC interior has been reviewed, but the equipment was semi-functional, and the results did not reveal any footage of evidentiary value
- Warrant served at Duenas' residence

### Investigative steps remaining:

- Examination of various paperwork in an attempt to track Duenas' activity while employed at LAPRAAC
- Awaiting warrant returns for financial records
- Ongoing attempts by detective personnel to track down guns that may have been sold or transferred

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