

POTENTIALLY PREVENTABLE TRAGEDIES IN SAN MATEO

Following is a small sampling of interactions between people with untreated severe mental illness and San Mateo LEOs. It is not clear if Laura's Law would have prevented all of these incidents. The person had a mental illness, prior history, and in most cases was not receiving treatment, either because there was not a law to compel them to do so or because the mental health system failed them. These are the types of individuals Laura's Law helps.

2/2011 San Mateo, San Mateo, CA

Robert Caron, 35, was fatally shot by police in his backyard on 2/28/11 when he opened fire on them. The incident began when police were called to a CVS where employees said a man with a gun was threatening them. Officers found Caron in the front yard of a nearby house. When he opened fire on the officers they returned the fire. **Caron's mother said he was schizophrenic.**

8/18/2010 Burlingame, San Mateo, CA

Edgar Aristondo, 20, of Burlingame was shot by officers outside his home after he threatened them with a "large, serrated steak-type knife". His mother said he suffered from depression and had been **refusing to take his medication.** This was not the first time she had to call authorities about her son.

6/9/2010 Hillsdale Shopping Center, San Mateo

Gregory Alarms shot community leader David Lewis of East Palo Alto as he got out of his parked car. Elarms slept in the trunk of his car and covered the windows in his house "to keep people from getting to him." Police said, **"His concerns appear to be a "delusional product of his mental illness."**

8/2003 Daly City, San Mateo, CA

Jerry Cabonce, a 41-year-old cab driver, attacked two SF police inspectors with a knife on 8/11/03, after they came to his Daly City home to question him about shooting a mother and her 3-year old son. Cabonce was diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1984 and was frequently hospitalized and released 72 hours later. **His mother said Cabonce stopped taking his medication about four months before the incident. She also said she had called his doctor at San Mateo County Mental Health Services and was told that Cabonce had stopped seeing him and that he was powerless to do anything.** His brother said when they called the police in the past, they told him that until he hurts himself or others, authorities could not intervene.

2/2007 Redwood City, San Mateo, CA

Michelle Denise Robinson attacked San Mateo County Sheriff's Deputy Samia Khoury on February 4, 2007 at the Women's Correctional Center, as she was being taken back to her cell. Robinson grabbed Khoury's head and hair, threatened her, and tried to take Khoury's cell keys. During the fray, Robinson stabbed Khoury in the cheek with a pencil. Her defense attorney said she suffered from **bipolar disorder for which she is now receiving medication. "She is no longer hearing voices."**

9/2006 San Mateo, San Mateo, CA

Stanley Wong, 49, was shot by a San Mateo police officer on 9/5/06 in a parking lot near B Street and Fifth Ave. Wong was harassing customers at a store and wielded a pocketknife at the officer, who fired his Taser. The officer attempted to retreat while calling for help. He eventually shot Wong and then called paramedics. **The shooting was the last in a long string of encounters Wong had with police and mental health workers. He was previously identified as one of the San Mateo's top 12 "core homeless"** who could benefit from a Homeless Outreach Team. It's not clear how much help, if any, Wong received through the program, which individuals are allowed to refuse. He was hospitalized and released 3 times prior to the incident.

4/1998 Millbrae, San Mateo, CA

Marvin Patrick Sullivan, 44, **a man suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, murdered Millbrae Police Officer Dave Chetcuti**, during a routine traffic stop on Highway 101 in April, 1998. **Sullivan was not competent to stand trial.** Sullivan had a history of threatening and violent behavior. In 1995, he was hospitalized for five months after sending a threatening letter to Court clerks in Tracy, CA. In 1997, he was again found incompetent to stand trial after it was discovered that he had concealed a bayonet during a shoplifting incident.

7/2002 East Palo Alto, San Mateo, CA

Robert B. Sidicane, 41, led police on a 70-mile chase, setting the scene for a standoff that closed southbound U.S. 101 in East Palo Alto, CA for four hours on 7/5/02. Sidicane poured gasoline over himself after officers surrounded his car. **His family said he suffers from schizophrenia and wasn't taking his medication.** Sidicane's stepsister said she was surprised to hear that her stepbrother was in the Bay Area. He had been in Tennessee last week, she said. **"If he's there, he doesn't have his medications."**

3/2005 Redwood City, San Mateo, CA

Fernando Cazares died while police were attempting to subdue him during a lengthy struggle in Redwood City on 3/15/05. Cazares' mother called police and told the dispatcher that her brother had come home acting strangely and was screaming, "I'm the master. I'm the master." She was afraid of her son, and the locked herself in a bedroom. When two officers arrived, Cazares threatened to kill them and refused to be subdued. Three other officers responded to help the first two. Together, the group continued fighting until Cazares was cuffed. He went limp and was pronounced dead at Kaiser Hospital. Blood and urine showed recent cocaine use as well as **a drug prescribed for schizophrenia.**

10/2003 San Carlos, San Mateo, CA

Vitin Ajani Cruz, 30, a man with a history of mental illness, fatally stabbed Alfonso Ruiz on October 27, 2003 in San Carlos. The two were sitting next to each other at the WorkCenter Vocational Rehab Center when Cruz suddenly stabbed Ruiz several times. **Schizophrenia medication and other signs of psychiatric problems were found at Cruz's home, and police and the DA noted Cruz had a history of serious psychiatric problems.**

9/2004 San Mateo, San Mateo, CA

Matthew Deger, a man with schizophrenia, was taken to jail on 9/14/04 after injuring a nurse in the shoulder with a felt-tipped pen at San Mateo County Medical Center in San Mateo, CA. Deger, 33, had been taken to the hospital two weeks earlier for psych treatment after threatening to detonate a bomb in his apartment. When police arrived, he said he had a nitro-glycerin gun.

6/2002 Daly City, San Mateo, CA

On June 15, 2002, **Daly City, CA, police found an emaciated mentally ill woman living in a parked van** wearing a soiled diaper with cuts and bruises on her face, and bound with packing tape. The woman **was diagnosed with schizophrenia, is now living in a nursing home, where her health has improved significantly.**

7/2001 San Mateo, San Mateo, CA

Lisa Snyder, 41, a woman with schizophrenia, was arrested on 7/4/01 for setting fire to her former psychiatrist's office in San Mateo and threatening to kill the doctor on several occasions, sometimes while committed in a hospital.

8/2000 East Palo Alto, San Mateo, CA

A woman with bipolar disorder who was off her medication was raped by a man who lured her back to his home in East Palo Alto. The victim said she hadn't taken her medication for possibly up to a week before the attack.

7/1999 Redwood City, San Mateo, CA

Juan Escalante, a 44-year-old man with a history of schizophrenia set fire to a condo in Redwood City, CA in a purposeful attempt to kill himself and his family. The July 1999 fire destroyed at least 11 units and killed an 81-year-old woman who lived above. Escalante rigged the condo to cause an intense fire by soaking the unit with gas and lighter fluid and using rope to act as a fuse.

7/1996 Redwood City, San Mateo, CA

Eric Ayran Umali, of Redwood City slashed Bertha Valencia, a nine-year-old-girl. Shel suffered more than 30 cuts and her intestines exposed. **Umali had a history of mental illness** and served time in two state mental hospitals.