



## RIVERSIDE:

# Man shot by police remembered as funny, family-oriented

*Relatives say they don't know why narcotics investigators pulled him over. He fled from officers and pointed a loaded gun at them, police say.*

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Wednesday brought a lot of tears and a lot of questions for the family of a man who was fatally shot the day before by Riverside police.

The man – identified by relatives as 34-year-old Vincent Martinez – led officers on a foot chase before pulling a loaded gun, police said in a news release. Martinez died in a neighbor's backyard in the 10400 block of Keller Avenue.

Police said they were conducting a narcotics investigation in the area with the assistance of the Post-Release Accountability & Compliance Team, a multi-agency task force, when they spotted Martinez's car and tried to stop it shortly before 2:30 p.m. Police have not specified why, and because the suspect has not been officially identified, they could not comment on whether he had a criminal record.

Martinez refused to yield and drove to a driveway that led to his home in the 5400 block of Bushnell Avenue, according to relatives. Then he jumped out of his car, ran past his house and jumped a fence into his neighbor's yard, with officers in pursuit.

In the yard, police say Martinez pointed a gun in the direction of officers, who opened fire, striking Martinez several times. Officers called in medical aid and attempted first aid. Fire personnel and ambulance crews arrived and pronounced Martinez dead.

No officers were injured.

Several of Martinez's aunts and uncles gathered at their home nearby and talked about the man who was a nephew to them, but also a husband, father and cousin.

"He was a family-oriented person," said his cousin, Mark Soliz.

He left behind a wife whom he had only recently married and three children – one a teenager and two in elementary school.

A man outside Martinez's house said his wife was in no condition to speak to a reporter Wednesday.

His family was left with many unanswered questions: Why did the police try to pull him over? Where on his body did the bullets hit? Why, the family wonders, did the officer not identify himself before shooting?

Relatives recalled hearing the man shout at Martinez to stop before firing about seven shots. However, "they didn't say anything" that would have identified the pursuer as a police officer, Soliz said. "They just started shooting."

Riverside police Lt. Mike Cook said he couldn't comment on whether the officers identified themselves. Details of the incident, including how police contacted the suspect, were part of an ongoing investigation, Cook said.

The last time Martinez's family saw him, he was playing horseshoes with his uncle, Robert Martinez, near his own home.