

Doctor: Officer 'Very Justified' In Fatal Shooting

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Defense Psychologist Claims Romley's Office Made Decision Too Early

Elias Johnson
Reporter, KPHO.com

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PHOENIX -- An expert psychologist said a Phoenix police officer accused of second-degree murder was justified in shooting a man believed to be unarmed during a domestic dispute.

Dr. Bill Lewinski, psychologist and executive director of Force Science Institute, was asked by defense attorney Craig Mehrens to interview Richard Chrisman two days after Chrisman shot and killed 29-year-old Danielle Rodriquez during a domestic call Oct. 5.

After almost three hours of interviewing Chrisman about what happened at the scene, Lewinski said the officer did the right thing.

"It certainly appears to me this shooting, on his part, was very justified," Lewinski said.



Lewinski would not go into specifics of why he felt Chrisman's decision to shoot was justified, but said he specializes in human performance in high stress incidents.

Lewinski said he has interviewed more than 1,200 police officers involved in deadly force confrontations.

He also feels the Maricopa county attorney's office made the decision to charge Chrisman with murder too early.

"I have never seen anybody jump to a conclusion and hold a grand jury so early in an investigation," Lewinski said. "It could be they're right on target or could be they were a little preemptive."

Count attorney Rick Romley said in a press briefing earlier this month, investigators believed there was enough evidence to charge the officer with murder.

Fellow officer Sergio Virgillo responded with Chrisman during the call and stated Rodriquez did not pose a threat to Chrisman.

Chrisman is due back in court Dec. 6.