

Mother of Barstow man killed by sheriff's deputy files wrongful death lawsuit

By [Joe Nelson](#), The Sun

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The mother of a Barstow man fatally shot by a rookie San Bernardino County sheriff's deputy during a confrontation at a motel last fall have filed a wrongful death lawsuit in federal court.

The complaint names the county of San Bernardino and Deputy Kyle Hayden Woods, who had been on the force less than two years when he shot 29-year-old Nathanael Harris Pickett Jr. following a foot pursuit at the El Rancho Motel shortly after 9 p.m. Nov. 19.

As Pickett sat on the sidewalk and began scooting back, away from Woods, Woods shot Pickett in the chest, according to the lawsuit filed Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Riverside.

After shooting Pickett, Woods reholstered his gun, then he and a civilian who had been riding along with Woods that night and who is identified in the lawsuit as "Doe" began punching and kicking Pickett as he lay on the ground, the lawsuit alleges.

Pickett died shortly thereafter.

Sheriff's spokeswoman Cindy Bachman said in an email Wednesday the department has not been served with a lawsuit and therefore declined comment. She said Woods was still on patrol in Barstow, and that citizen volunteers regularly ride with patrol deputies and are advised to follow the lawful commands of the deputies.

The Sheriff's Department said in a news release following the shooting that Woods tried arresting Pickett after Pickett gave the deputy a false name and "became uncooperative." A struggle ensued, and Pickett "struck the deputy numerous times in the face and refused to comply with repeated verbal commands to stop hitting him and move away. The deputy fired his weapon, striking the subject, at which time the assault ceased."

Woods, according to the sheriff's news release, suffered multiple injuries including broken bones.

According to court records, Pickett has a history of resisting arrest,

The lawsuit alleges Pickett was developmentally disabled.

During a May 17 [news conference](#) in Victorville, Pickett's mother, Dominic Archibald, said her son was developmentally disabled, but in the same breath said he had never officially been diagnosed by a doctor with a disability.

Archibald, the plaintiff in the lawsuit, did say during the news conference that her son began manifesting symptoms of mental illness in his early 20s and had seen a psychologist.

Video surveillance footage from the motel where Pickett had been living, provided by attorneys at the May news conference, shows Woods talking to Pickett, then Pickett running from the deputy. Both Pickett and Woods remain off camera for several minutes, then Pickett is seen running down the motel corridor, then tripping and falling, with Woods chasing after him.

Woods, back to the camera, appears to be pointing his gun at Pickett as Pickett scoots back, away from the approaching deputy. A flash is seen on the ceiling above Woods, and Pickett then appears to be lying flat on the ground.

As Woods stands behind Pickett and attempts to detain him, Pickett begins resisting, and Woods begins punching Pickett repeatedly. The civilian then joins in assisting Woods, but it is unclear in the video if the civilian is kicking or punching Pickett, as alleged in the lawsuit.

Victorville attorneys Jim Terrall and **Sharon Brunner**, who are representing Archibald in the lawsuit, did not respond to requests for comment.