

PALISADES NEWS



Guns were checked to see if they were loaded and then taken out of a residence in the Palisades Highlands on Sunday. By 5 p.m., hundreds of guns and boxes of ammunition had been removed from the residence. A .50-caliber rifle, which can no longer be purchased in California, was one of the guns found.

By SUE PASCOE, *Editor*

Highlands residents were thrown into turmoil Friday and Saturday as police first investigated the discovery of a dead body on Palisades Drive, and subsequently hundreds of weapons and ammunition in a nearby condominium. The situation started Friday, when a man was discovered dead and covered in his car in the 1700 block of Palisades Dr. He supposedly had been dead almost two weeks and the police had been tipped off to his death by his girlfriend's lawyer. The death is under investigation and LAPD had not released a name by press time. During the death investigation, they were led to the man's residence, which is supposedly owned by his girlfriend, and was thought to be possibly booby-trapped.

Residents were evacuated from nearby townhouses shortly after 1 p.m. on Saturday. Lilly Shafighi, who lives in a nearby dwelling, had gone down the hill on errands but drove back up after her 13-year-old son Aaron called to tell her the police wanted him to leave and she was supposed to come get him. She was stopped by police at the corner of Verada de la Montura and told, "There's a hazardous situation in one of the condos and no one is allowed up the hill." "But my son's up there and the police told him to have me pick him up," she said. A second parent drove up and said her daughter was also told to leave. The police told parents to call the kids and have them walk down. As she waited for her son, Shafighi said that police had been in the area for two days and had even put up yellow tape. She said she asked her security company what was going on and they told her, "There's no threat to the community; the police are conducting an investigation."

Visibly upset, she told the *News*: "My son said, 'there's explosives in one of the units.'" Shortly after her son came down the hill with their dog, Lucy, three bomb squad trucks, a K-9 bomb squad truck, three cars identified with the bomb unit and a large truck with bomb squad on it, flew up the hill. LAPD confirmed that there were homicide/robbery, bomb, and hazardous material police units on the site. A neighbor said the garage and home suggested the couple were hoarders and the police confirmed it was a possible hoarding situation. Additionally, "There were hundreds of guns," a police officer told the *News*.

Initially, there was worry that perhaps the place had been booby-trapped, which was why all residents were cleared from the area and the bomb squad brought in. Fire Station 23 went to the site around 4 p.m. as a precautionary measure. After the bomb squad gave the all clear, residents were allowed back in their homes around 11 p.m. On Sunday morning, police started pulling the guns out of the garage. By noon, hunting and sniper rifles, handguns, both semi auto and revolvers—single-bolt action and semi-auto rifles of various calibers had been catalogued. LAPD estimated that only about 30 percent of the cache has been taken out of the residence and that they had been found not only in the garage, but throughout the home. Further developments will be posted on Facebook.