

**San Francisco Police Commander Paul Yep  
Talking Points and Briefing Material**

**Jan 31, 2022 OIS Town Hall Presentation**



*Safety with Respect*

**SFPD Headquarters  
Conference Room 1025  
Jan. 31, 2021 — Time: 1500 hours**

## Introduction

The officer-involved shooting, or OIS, incident discussed in this presentation, involves four uniformed patrol members, of the San Francisco Police Department from the Airport Bureau, Field Operation Bureau and Special Operations Bureau — including members of the Specialist Team, which I will be explaining later.

In addition, members of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office, responded to the scene to assist with the incident. The OIS occurred on Thursday, January 20th, 2022, at the San Francisco International Airport, or SFO. The San Francisco International Airport is located in unincorporated San Mateo County, but is owned and operated by the City and County of San Francisco.

SFPD Airport Bureau officers, responded to a call for service, of a suspicious person in the International Terminal of SFO. The precise chronology of this incident is currently under investigation, by four different agencies. The times presented here are approximate. The following is a summary of the events, as they are understood as of today, Monday, January 31st, 2022.

## Incident Narrative

1. At approximately 7:26 a.m., SFPD Airport Bureau officers were dispatched to a call, of a suspicious person, in the International Terminal at Security Checkpoint G. The person was in a public area by an information booth, across from the BART station entrance.
2. The Airport's communications center, broadcast to the responding officers, that several individuals had reported a male subject, with no luggage, who was holding his midsection area, as if trying to hide something. The subject was described as an Asian male adult, in his 20s, approximately 5 feet 7 inches tall, and 150 pounds. The individual — who was later identified as Mr. Nelson Szeto — was wearing a gray jacket and black pants.
3. Officers responded to the International Terminal, on foot and on bicycles. The officers met with one of the reporting parties, a Covenant Aviation Security supervisor, who directed officers to Mr. Szeto. Mr. Szeto was standing alone, between an Information Booth, and an ATM.
4. As officers approached, Mr. Szeto removed what officers described as a handgun, from inside his jacket and held it with the muzzle pointed at the floor. The officers drew their department-issued firearms, and ordered Mr. Szeto to drop the weapon.
5. One officer broadcast over the radio, "221," and requested a "Code 33." SFPD radio code 221, refers to a person with a gun, and Code 33, means, "Emergency – Clear Channel."

6. Mr. Szeto, did not drop the weapon as officers ordered, and he began walking away from the officers, towards an area, staged with construction equipment. Officers saw that Mr. Szeto was also holding onto a knife, in his other hand. An officer broadcast “222” over the radio to alert other responding officers. SFPD radio code “222” refers to a person with a knife.
7. Mr. Szeto was in a publicly accessible area, which includes: SFO International Terminal Security Checkpoint G, a BART station entrance, a TSA PreCheck Office, escalators to the AirTrain, public restrooms, elevators and a Reflection Room. Additionally, there were restricted areas, accessible only to authorized SFO employees.
8. Officers took cover behind various pillars, and partition walls, and continued speaking with Mr. Szeto, who identified himself by his first name, Nelson. He stated that he lived on Market Street in San Francisco.
9. Officers continued to speak with Mr. Szeto to establish rapport utilizing de-escalation techniques. Mr. Szeto slowly walked behind a commercial lift, and placed his knife down on top of a tire.
10. Mr. Szeto reached inside his jacket and said, “I have another gun and this one is loaded.” Mr. Szeto removed what officers described to be a second handgun, from inside his jacket. He was now holding onto two handguns, one in each of his hands.

11. Additional Airport Bureau officers responded to the scene with extended-range impact weapons — also referred to as ERIWs, or less-lethal weapons. Officers also responded with tactical shields. All Airport Bureau officers on-scene, were trained members of SFPD’s Crisis Intervention Team, or CIT.
12. At approximately 7:42 a.m., Airport Bureau sergeants established a command post, and formulated a plan to contain Mr. Szeto in the area, to ensure public safety. The event commander declared this to be a critical incident.
13. Officers assisted in evacuating SFO employees, members of the public and travelers in the immediate area, and shut down elevators and escalators. Officers coordinated with Airport communications, to lockdown the entrance to BART, and advised TSA Precheck employees and other SFO employees nearby, to take shelter. BART service to SFO was temporarily suspended during this incident.
14. Additional resources summoned to the scene, of this critical incident, included: a Hostage Negotiation Team, Specialists Team Members, and a Tactical Unit. Medics were also requested to stage in the area.

15. Airport Bureau officers and a hostage negotiator from the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office, or SMCSO, maintained a dialogue with Mr. Szeto, who still held onto the two handguns. Officers pleaded with Mr. Szeto to put the weapons down, and that they were there to help him. Mr. Szeto walked back and forth slowly, pausing for short intervals, with both handguns pointed towards the floor.
16. At one point, Mr. Szeto told officers to shoot him "center mass," adding "make sure you aim." Officers reiterated to Mr. Szeto, that they did not want to shoot him, and only wanted to get him help. Mr. Szeto stated, "Thank you for your service. I respect you guys." He then apologized and stated several times, "I'm sorry."
17. Members from the Specialist Team responded, from various district police stations in San Francisco. Specialists Team members are patrol officers who have received specialized tactical training for high-risk operations, like those involving critical incidents, such as barricaded suspects or hostage situations, and those involving search warrants and arrest warrants. While on-duty, specialists carry additional tactical and medical equipment.
18. As the Specialist Team members arrived at SFO, at approximately 7:57 a.m., they were briefed about the incident by a specialist officer assigned to the Airport Bureau. They subsequently relieved most of the Airport Bureau officers in the inner perimeter.

19. As the specialists positioned themselves in the inner perimeter, they were armed with department-issued rifles. Several specialists were also equipped with 40 millimeter, Penn Arms, ERIW's, that deploy a less-lethal foam baton.
20. During the negotiations, Mr. Szeto told officers he had "something stuck in his throat." Officers offered him medical attention, but Mr. Szeto stated that it was "too late," and the hospital couldn't help him.
21. At one point, Mr. Szeto complied with the SMCSO hostage negotiator's request, and placed one of the handguns, on the floor. Mr. Szeto, still held onto the other handgun.
22. Mr. Szeto slowly walked behind construction equipment, and started walking to his left. Officers gave him verbal commands to set the other gun down, but Mr. Szeto continued to slowly walk to his left, away from yellow stanchions, towards the TSA Precheck office and Security Checkpoint G.
23. One of the specialists, announced a "red light, red light" warning — which is a term used to alert other officers that an ERIW projectile would be deployed. The specialist then deployed the less-lethal projectile at Mr. Szeto.

24. Mr. Szeto faced the officers, but continued to side-step, slowly to his left, away from an area with staged construction equipment, towards a hallway and office spaces. Mr. Szeto still had a handgun, in his left hand, at his side. Officers on scene continued to give verbal commands to Mr. Szeto, but he did not comply. The specialists, once again gave the “red light, red light, less-lethal” warning, and deployed additional 40 millimeter, less lethal projectiles, at Mr. Szeto.
25. Mr. Szeto had the handgun in his left hand, and he began to elevate the handgun, towards the front of his body. At least one of the four officers involved in this incident discharged their firearm at this time. Two shots can be heard on Body Worn Camera video footage. Mr. Szeto, fell to the ground.
26. Mr. Szeto was in a semi-reclined position on the floor. Specialists and officers, repeatedly yelled for Mr. Szeto to “put the gun down!” Mr. Szeto reached across his body, with his right hand towards the handgun, located on his left side. Mr. Szeto then raised his right arm towards the officers. Some, or all, of the four officers involved in this OIS discharged their firearms, which can be heard on the Body Worn Camera videos.
27. Mr. Szeto slumped to the floor, with the handgun nearby him. The specialists used tactical shields, and approached Mr. Szeto. A Specialist Sergeant moved the handgun away from Mr. Szeto’s body, and several specialists began administering emergency medical aid to Mr. Szeto.

28. Medics arrived on scene, and continued to render aid to Mr. Szeto.
29. Mr. Szeto was later pronounced deceased at the scene.
30. Specialists checked the surrounding area, and located an injured male in the adjacent hallway where the OIS occurred. Specialists rendered medical aid to the male, who had a wound to his leg.
31. Medical personnel arrived on scene and transported the injured male, who had non-life-threatening injuries, to Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital.

## **Additional Information**

### ***Evidence***

- The San Mateo County Forensics Lab, responded to SFO and processed physical evidence from the scene.

### ***Video Footage***

- SFPD Specialist officers, were wearing department issued body-worn cameras, which were activated at the time of the incident.
- Surveillance video (or CCTV) from SFO International Terminal also captured the incident.
- Involved SFPD Airport Bureau officers did not have body-worn cameras, as they do not currently deploy with body worn cameras. The issuance of Body Worn Cameras, have been discussed and proposed with SFO authorities prior to this incident.
- There may be outstanding surveillance video from BART, and other unknown sources at this time.

### ***Subject***

- The decedent's name is Nelson Szeto. His date of birth is November 6th, 1984.

## ***Involved Members***

- The San Francisco Police Department officers involved in this officer-involved shooting are:
  - Officer Erik Whitney, Star #4045, assigned to Airport Bureau;
  - Officer Oliver Lim, Star #2001, assigned to Field Operations Bureau;
  - Officer Steven Uang, Star #1299, assigned to Field Operations Bureau;
  - Officer David Wakayama, Star #2046, assigned to Field Operations Bureau.

## ***Current Investigations***

- The State Attorney General's Office is conducting a criminal investigation into the incident, per Assembly Bill 1506.
- The San Mateo Corner's Office is conducting an investigation into the cause of death.
- The San Francisco Department of Police Accountability is conducting an independent administrative investigation.
- The SFPD, Internal Affairs Division, is conducting an administrative investigation.