

Policing experts weigh in on San Bernardino County deputies video

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San Bernardino County Sheriff's deputies shown on [video](#) kicking and beating a surrendering suspect went far beyond what training calls for in such a scenario, and should face stiff penalties, a use-of-force expert said Friday, adding that their colleagues had an ethical obligation to stop the violence.

The video, recorded from a KNBC news helicopter Thursday, showed the end of a pursuit in the High Desert. The suspect, Francis Pusok, 30, of Apple Valley, fell off a horse he allegedly stole and went to the ground, on his stomach, with his arms and legs outstretched.

A deputy appeared to use a Taser on Pusok, and the suspect puts his hands behind his back, as if ready to be cuffed. A second deputy ran up and kicked Pusok in his upper body. The deputy who deployed his Taser kicked Pusok in his groin and then beat him with the device.

More deputies then converged on Pusok and some took part in the apparent beating.

Sheriff John McMahon [placed 10 deputies on paid leave](#) and immediately ordered an [internal and criminal investigation](#).

"I assure you that I'm disturbed by this video," McMahon said [at a news conference](#) Friday.

Gregory Gilbertson, a police use-of-force expert in Washington state and former police officer, said he found the video "reprehensible" and thinks the first two deputies should be fired.

"And quite honestly, not only should they be fired, they should be charged for criminal assault — the initial two deputies," he said in a phone interview.

Instead of kicking, punching and hammering Pusok with a Taser, the deputies, according to Gilbertson, should have done the following: "An officer should have kneeled down, put his hand behind the suspect's neck to subdue him and handcuff him."

He said the deputies in the San Bernardino County video who stood around watching should be retrained.

"They had a legal, moral and ethical obligation to stop the assault, to intervene," Gilbertson said. "(Pusok) was helpless at that point, and he's getting his (butt) kicked. So what they're witnessing is they're witnessing their brother officers commit a crime."

Gilbertson said apparent excessive use-of-force incidents occur much more often than publicized. In fact, he said, when working as an Atlanta police officer, Gilbertson had to fight off other officers who were assaulting his suspect.