



Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

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DATE: May 28, 2021

TO: Chief Daniel Hahn
Sacramento Police Department
5770 Freeport Boulevard
Sacramento, CA 95822

FROM: Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

SUBJECT: In-Custody Death: George Knox (DOB 7-22-76)
SPD Report No. 2018-238329
Date of Incident: July 31, 2018

The above case was referred to this office for review of the circumstances surrounding the July 31, 2018, death of George Knox while in the custody of the Sacramento Police Department.

On July 31, 2018, Sacramento Police Department (SPD) Officer Brian Hoh was on routine patrol near Stockton Boulevard in Sacramento. Officer Hoh was in full uniform and driving a marked patrol vehicle.

At approximately 2:04 a.m., Officer Hoh entered the parking lot of Planet Fitness. A green dumpster was located on the south side of the business. Officer Hoh observed five subjects behind the dumpster and decided to contact them for loitering in the private parking lot when all the businesses were closed.

Officer Hoh parked his patrol vehicle facing the subjects. He activated his body worn camera and approached them. He saw that several of the subjects were shuffling through their pockets or their bags and believed they were attempting to hide something. Officer Hoh further noticed that two of the subjects had open containers of alcohol on the ground beside them.

Officer Hoh asked the five subjects for identification. All of them denied having identification documents.

Officer Hoh asked all the subjects to sit down. One of them, later identified as George Knox, initially refused but complied after a second request, and Officer Hoh began collecting their names.

SPD Officer Brock O'Shaughnessy arrived approximately two minutes after Officer Hoh. Officer O'Shaughnessy acted as a cover officer, watching the five subjects as Officer Hoh

returned to his patrol vehicle to check if any of the subjects had outstanding warrants. Officer Hoh learned that Knox was a parolee-at-large wanted for a parole violation, a no-bail warrant was outstanding for his arrest, and he was on informal probation with a search and seizure condition.

Officer Hoh re-approached Knox to place him in handcuffs for the no-bail warrant. Knox submitted to the handcuffs but was verbally resistant. Officer Hoh performed a quick pat-down search of Knox's upper body to ensure Knox did not possess any weapons.

Officer Hoh placed Knox in a rear wristlock, walked him to the patrol vehicle, and searched Knox pursuant to the search condition and Knox's parole status. Officer Hoh recovered a used glass narcotics pipe and a bottle of unidentified pills in Knox's left front pants pocket.

Officer Hoh placed Knox in the backseat of his patrol vehicle at approximately 2:10 a.m. Officer Hoh then placed a call to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to confirm the existence of Knox's parole warrant and was placed on hold for several minutes.

While on hold, Officer Hoh noticed that Knox was shaking uncontrollably in the backseat of the patrol car. At approximately 2:23 a.m., Officer Hoh asked Knox why he was shaking so much. Knox replied unintelligibly and was visibly shaking and sweating profusely.

At approximately 2:26 a.m., Officer Hoh received confirmation from CDCR that the parole warrant was valid. At approximately 2:28 a.m., Officer Hoh directed the remaining subjects to dispose of the open containers of alcohol into the nearby dumpster. The remaining subjects were then released.

At approximately 2:30 a.m., Officer Hoh returned to his patrol vehicle and again asked Knox why he was shaking so much. Knox replied that it was due to his blood pressure. Officer Hoh asked Knox if he needed a medic but Knox declined. Officer Hoh then again asked Knox if he needed a medic as he was shaking uncontrollably. Knox again declined. Officer Hoh then advised Knox he was arresting Knox for his no-bail CDCR warrant.

As Officer Hoh read Knox his Miranda rights, Officer Hoh noticed Knox appeared to have something in his mouth. He asked, "What do you have in your mouth?" Knox mumbled in response. After completing the Miranda warnings, Officer Hoh asked Knox, "What's up with the drugs?" Knox replied, "I don't got no drugs."

Officer Hoh believed that Knox's speech was becoming harder to understand. He contacted dispatch and requested the Fire Department to respond Code 2 to provide medical assistance to Knox. At approximately 2:34 a.m., Officer Hoh asked Knox if he swallowed drugs before officers arrived. Knox replied that he had not.

Officer Hoh noticed that Knox's condition continued to deteriorate. Officer O'Shaughnessy observed Knox and noticed that Knox appeared to be foaming at the mouth. At approximately 2:35 a.m., Officer Hoh requested that the Fire Department medical response be upgraded to Code 3.

At approximately 2:36 a.m., Knox laid over onto his side in the backseat of the patrol car and Officer Hoh asked Knox how much he swallowed. Knox replied that he did not swallow anything. Officer Hoh asked Knox what drugs he used so he could tell the medics. Knox did not reply.

Additional officers arrived at approximately 2:39 p.m. At approximately 2:40 a.m., Officer Hoh told Knox, "If you want to live, you have to tell them exactly what you took." Knox did not reply.

Fire Department medical personnel arrived at approximately 2:40 a.m. Fire Department personnel saw that Knox was handcuffed in the backseat of the patrol car when they arrived. They observed that Knox's pupils were dilated, and he was sweating profusely. Knox was able to get out of the patrol car primarily under his own power, but needed assistance getting on the gurney. Fire personnel asked Knox if he had ingested anything, but Knox did not respond.

Knox's condition deteriorated on the way to the hospital. Knox became non-responsive. An SPD officer riding with them in the ambulance removed Knox's handcuffs, and fire personnel began performing CPR. They transported Knox directly to the emergency room at the University of California at Davis Medical Center (UCDMC). They arrived at the emergency room at approximately 2:53 a.m., where hospital staff assumed care of Knox.

The attending physician at the emergency room at UCDMC was later interviewed by investigators. He stated that hospital staff was told that CPR was being performed on Knox in the ambulance. The doctor stated that Knox did not have a pulse when he arrived in the emergency room and that CPR was continued and other life support and medications were administered.

The doctor said it was determined that a breathing tube needed to be inserted. While inserting the breathing tube, hospital staff located a white package in Knox's throat. They removed the obstruction and continued their life saving efforts but Knox never regained a pulse. He was pronounced deceased at approximately 3:15 a.m. The white package was given to personnel from SPD. It was determined to be a sandwich-size Ziploc baggie.

The Ziploc baggie was delivered to the Sacramento County District Attorney's Laboratory of Forensic Sciences for testing. The laboratory was unable to test the bag as it was determined to be a biohazard.

One of the other four subjects initially detained by Officer Hoh was interviewed. He stated that he observed Knox chewing on something during the time when Officer Hoh was placing handcuffs on Knox but was unable to see what Knox was chewing.

The Sacramento County District Attorney's Laboratory of Forensic Sciences examined a sample of femoral blood from Knox. The laboratory determined that Knox's blood contained methamphetamine in a concentration of 26,445 ng/ml. The examination also noted the presence of amphetamine, THC, and alcohol.

An autopsy was performed on Knox on August 1, 2018, by Dr. Keng-Chih Su of the Sacramento County Coroner's Office. Dr. Su concluded that Knox's cause of death was methamphetamine intoxication. Dr. Su noted there was no evidence of trauma to Knox's body. He further noted that the toxicology results showed a very high level of methamphetamine in Knox's femoral blood sample, indicating that Knox died of methamphetamine intoxication.

No evidence of criminal misconduct is presented or suggested in any of the supporting reports. The District Attorney's Office will not take any further action in this matter.

cc: Detective Larry Trimpey, Sacramento Police Department
Kimberly Gin, Sacramento County Coroner's Office
Office of Public Safety Accountability