



OFFICE OF THE  
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COUNTY OF SHASTA

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DA Makes Findings in Death of Steven Motley

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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The Shasta County District Attorney will not be filing charges against Redding Police officers who were involved in the arrest of Steven Motley. Mr. Motley lost his life after a physical struggle with officers on October 5, 2013.

At approximately 2:32 p.m. on October 5, 2013, Officer Hebert from the Redding Police Department was in pursuit of a stolen 2011 GMC pickup that was being driven by Steven Motley. This pursuit led to a solo traffic collision involving Mr. Motley and the stolen pickup he was driving.

Mr. Motley attempted to negotiate a right turn onto northbound Alta Camino Drive, but was traveling too fast, which caused the GMC to mount a curb, strike a raised brick planter box, a tree, and a decorative cinder block wall and brick column. The GMC came to rest on its wheels in the front yard of a residence.

Mr. Motley then immediately fled from the GMC, still being chased by a police officer, but now on foot. Mr. Motley was able to find an unattended Redding Police cruiser, which he then stole by driving it away as a police officer attempted, unsuccessfully, to stop him with a taser.

Mr. Motley abandoned the stolen police cruiser less than a mile away in the same residential neighborhood, running from the cruiser on foot. By this time, additional Redding police officers were arriving and entering the chase to apprehend Mr. Motley.

Redding Police Officer Townsley caught up to Mr. Motley, a physically fit 6' 4", 242 pound man with a 14-year criminal history involving primarily drugs and theft, in the backyard of a residence on Alta Saga Drive. A struggle ensued at this time. According to witnesses, it appears that Mr. Motley was tased by Officer

Townsley at the very rear portion of the backyard on Alta Saga. Mr. Motley then went to the ground where Officer Townsley took a position on top of Mr. Motley.

According to an eyewitness, Officer Townsley was ordering Mr. Motley to stop resisting. The same eyewitness said Officer Townsley removed something from Mr. Motley and tossed it beyond Mr. Motley's reach. This was later determined to be a large hunting knife. Officer Townsley, while still on top of Mr. Motley, was able to control Mr. Motley with one hand while using the other to make a radio call that broadcasted the address of their location after an eyewitness called out the address to Officer Townsley.

By this time, additional Redding Police officers were in the neighborhood and approaching Officer Townsley's location. A second eyewitness heard one of the officers say "get him", as he ran by. The first eyewitness said officers had their batons drawn while approaching Officer Townsley and Mr. Motley. Both eyewitnesses, however, described Officer Townsley's actions as being appropriate.

Another witness, on the other side of a wood fence, but within earshot, heard officers yell stop fighting or stop resisting, and heard at least one officer tell Mr. Motley to place his hands behind his back.

Both eyewitnesses saw multiple officers delivering simultaneous baton strikes on Mr. Motley. Mr. Motley sustained, among other injuries, fractures to his left ribs, fractures to his right radius and ulna, a fracture to his left fibula and face, contusions to his thighs, a contusion to his left calf, lacerations to his scalp, hemorrhaging of his back muscles, and bruising on his forehead.

Initial reports attributed these injuries at least in part to the solo motor vehicle accident that Mr. Motley was involved in while fleeing officers. However, the California Highway Patrol's Multidisciplinary Accident Investigation Team concluded that these injuries were not caused by the motor vehicle accident based on the minimal velocity change that occurred during the collision, along with the fact Mr. Motley had been using the occupant restraint system in the pickup.

The forensic medical examiner who conducted the autopsy found the cause of death to be, "Cardiopulmonary arrest during violent struggle with police in an individual under the influence of methamphetamine." This autopsy was conducted in Yolo County after Mr. Motley passed away at Mercy's San Juan Hospital in Sacramento County. Mr. Motley was transferred from Redding to this hospital based on the resources available there for rehabilitation of Mr. Motley's wrist injury had he survived.

The Shasta County District Attorney retained a second physician to review the case. Dr. Stephany Fiore, a forensic pathologist and forensic neuropathologist, opined the following: The methamphetamine and its metabolite amphetamine that were detected in Mr. Motley's blood were on the low end of the potentially toxic levels. These amounts for a chronic user may demonstrate the individual was

accustomed to using the drug on a regular basis, and thus are mainly insignificant. Moreover, Mr. Motley's body temperature was sub normal (97.88 degrees Fahrenheit) when checked at the emergency room. Usually, excited delirium is associated with a body temperature over 100 degrees. Accordingly, Mr. Motley's death should not be defined as excited delirium; and, methamphetamine had little to do with his cardiac arrest and ultimate death.

Dr. Fiore found the linear nature of the scalp lacerations to be potentially consistent with baton strikes. However, the blows appear to be glancing or tangential, and not direct blows, meaning the baton blows to the head did not kill Mr. Motley. Furthermore, the bruising on Mr. Motley's forehead does not appear to be consistent with baton blows, largely due to the lack of deeper hemorrhaging and fracturing, according to Dr. Fiore. The search for a source of the forehead bruising was inconclusive.

Dr. Fiore's overall conclusion was Mr. Motley suffered a cardiopulmonary arrest during a violent struggle with police officers that resulted in blunt force injuries to his head, chest, and extremities with methamphetamine use as a potentially contributing factor. And Asphyxia may not be ruled out as a factor in the cause of death.

The nature of the threat presented by Mr. Motley, taken in its totality, did not support the use of lethal force against Mr. Motley. Certainly, baton blows to the head would be categorized as lethal force. Yet, inadvertent or accidental strikes on a subject who was actively resisting are possible, and cannot be ruled out. Therefore, the mere presence of an injury to Mr. Motley's head that was inflicted by a baton does not mean the action was intentional or criminal.

The Shasta County District Attorney retained Edward Obayashi, a regularly consulted use of force expert by California district attorneys and a U.S. government and international use of force expert. Mr. Obayashi reviewed all of the evidence in this case, including eyewitness statements. Mr. Obayashi agreed that deadly force was not a reasonable option for police officers in their attempt to arrest Mr. Motley. This means baton strikes to the head would have violated the law. Yet, Mr. Obayashi acknowledged the potential for inadvertent or accidental blows to the head. Furthermore, he was unable to conclude categorically that the use of a baton as a method to control Mr. Motley was unreasonable.

However, Mr. Obayashi thought the use of batons by officers simultaneously, and especially in the upper quadrant of Mr. Motley's body, which included the head, was an action that deserves greater review by the City of Redding. This review should include a second look at the total number of baton strikes delivered by officers as well. In addition, it was noted that the officers were not wearing body cameras. The use of body cameras by officers in this case would have been beneficial in the search for the truth. Four officers, all with cameras

active, including an audio recording, would have offered perhaps uncontroverted evidence to what occurred in the death of Steven Motley.

In conclusion, Mr. Motley was involved in a solo motor vehicle collision that involved minimal forces and did not cause the injuries he suffered, which ultimately claimed his life. Officer Townsley had for the most part gained control of Mr. Motley once he was on top of him in the backyard of a residence on Alta Saga Drive. The officers rushing in deployed their batons and began delivering blows simultaneously without any attempt to control Mr. Motley's arms and handcuff him, according to an eyewitness. The potential baton blows to the head, tangential in nature, may have been inadvertent or accidental and not intentional. However, the overall number of baton blows, as described by the eyewitnesses, and the injuries they caused posed great concern for reviewers.

Yet, Mr. Motley was a 6' 4", 242 pound fleeing felon who had resisted Officer Townsley even as Officer Townsley gained the upper hand. Mr. Motley had stolen a police car, which surely demonstrated a propensity to act on impulse. Officer Townsley had to disarm Mr. Motley by removing a knife from a sheath on Mr. Motley's waist. The knife was in plain view as other officers approached the scene. In addition, Officer Townsley had broadcasted "148" over the radio, alerting all approaching officers that he was being resisted by the suspect. These facts would have affected the officers as they approached and arrived on the scene causing them to believe Officer Townsley was in a dire situation. Therefore, there is no real way to second guess the officers's actions based on the state of the evidence. And there is no real way to conclude that a jury of citizens would see this case any differently, meaning the case for excessive force is not one that can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

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