



Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

ANNE MARIE SCHUBERT
District Attorney

Stephen J. Grippi
Chief Deputy

Michael A. Neves
Assistant District Attorney

August 29, 2016

Chief of Police Samuel D. Somers, Jr.
Sacramento Police Department
5770 Freeport Blvd., Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95822

Captain Jim Ortega, Commander
Sacramento County Sheriff's Department
Correctional Services Unit
651 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: In-Custody Death – Edward Currie (DOB 4/12/84)
SSD Report No. 16-50761
SPD Report No. 16-50377
Date of incident: February 20, 2016

Dear Chief Somers & Captain Ortega:

The above case was referred to this office for review of the circumstances surrounding the death of arrestee Edward Currie.

On February 20, 2016, at approximately 8:38 p.m., Sacramento Police Officers Matt Hoffman and Mark Scurria were conducting enforcement in the area of Northgate Boulevard and Northfield Drive. They received information that many people were gathering in and out of vehicles in a high narcotics area. The officers arrived at 2251 Northgate Boulevard and parked on the street. They observed Currie standing between two vehicles in the parking lot and enter into the passenger side of a Mercedes. As Officer Scurria approached the vehicle, Currie quickly exited the vehicle and there was a sound of a metal object hitting the pavement, which was later determined to be a scale. The officers eventually detained Currie, who stated that he possessed narcotics. The officers determined Currie was on probation and recovered a large amount of money on his person including a folded dollar bill, which contained a small amount of cocaine. Currie spontaneously stated that he quickly entered the vehicle to get rid of a scale, which later tested positive for cocaine. Officer Hoffman placed Currie in the patrol vehicle. Currie was alone in the vehicle at this time and the officers were outside the car completing their investigation of this incident.

At one point, Officer Hoffman heard Currie rustling in the backseat, opened the rear passenger door, and observed Currie sitting upright. He shined his flashlight on Currie and asked if he was

alright. Currie mumbled in response, stating that he did not want to go to jail. When Officer Hoffman continued to ask Currie questions, including requesting that Currie identify himself, Currie mumbled again, stating that he did not want to talk. Currie then refused to answer Officer Hoffman's additional questions. Officer Hoffman did not observe anything that caused him concern at that time. Officer Hoffman left the patrol vehicle.

A few moments later, Currie called out to the officers that his identification was in his car. Officer Hoffman returned to the patrol vehicle and identified Currie with his driver's license. Currie conversed with the officer without any problems and did not request any assistance. Officer Hoffman left the patrol vehicle again to assist other officers with the scene investigation. Officer Hoffman recovered a total of approximately \$2,600 on Currie's person and in the Mercedes, as well as cocaine inside the folded dollar bill. Officer Scurria asked Currie to exit the patrol vehicle to conduct a more thorough probation search. During that time, Currie stood on his own, did not fall over, and appeared normal.

The officers arrested him for cocaine sales and for violating his probation. They drove Currie to the Sacramento County Main Jail without incident. After Currie exited the patrol vehicle at the jail, Officer Hoffman discovered small particles of cocaine on the backseat. Currie spontaneously stated, "Yeah, I was trying to destroy the cocaine, it was in my jacket pocket." Officers later recovered cocaine residue inside Currie's vest. Officer Scurria took Currie inside the jail and Officer Hoffman later followed. Currie appeared normal sitting in the booking area as the officers completed his medical clearance form. Officer Hoffman asked Currie questions including whether he took any narcotics and Currie responded, "No." Currie eventually stood up, and his handcuffs were removed. Currie took off his vest, and he walked across the intake room into the medical office.

Currie sat down without any problems at the nurse's station to do the medical evaluation. Officer Hoffman observed that Currie had white powder on his hand, so he used a Nartec Drug Detection Kit to sample Currie's hand for cocaine and the results were positive. Currie admitted to the nurse that he had taken cocaine earlier in the day. He was given some water because his blood pressure was a little high. At one point, Currie spontaneously stated to the officer that he "took ecstasy before the officers got on scene." He raised his water cup to his mouth and began shaking and convulsing. Nurses immediately requested additional medical assistance. Currie was placed on the floor and the nurses stabilized his head and performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The Sacramento Fire Department and Medics arrived at the jail and continued medical treatment. They transported him to Sutter General Hospital and Currie was pronounced deceased at approximately 11:09 p.m.

The entire incident at the jail was recorded pursuant to department policy. In addition, the patrol vehicle which the officers used to detain and transport Currie was equipped with an in-car camera recording system. A subsequent review of the in-car camera video showed that after the officers initially placed Currie in the backseat and while they were away from the patrol vehicle, Currie fidgeted in the backseat. He managed to toss or release a small baggie of cocaine onto the backseat while handcuffed. Currie then leaned over, grabbed the baggie with his mouth, and attempted to chew and swallow it. While doing so, Currie gagged, choked, and had difficulty breathing. Officer Hoffman noticed him moving around and contacted him. Currie was

apparently still attempting to swallow the baggie when the officer contacted him, which explained why Currie mumbled and refused to answer further questions. Once Officer Hoffman left him alone, Currie appeared to swallow the baggie. After swallowing the baggie of cocaine, Currie was alert and appeared fine.

Forensic Pathologist Jason Tovar, M.D., conducted an autopsy and concluded that the cause of Currie's death was cocaine intoxication due to ingestion. He also noted that Currie suffered from hypertensive heart disease. During the autopsy, Dr. Tovar discovered a plastic baggie in the stomach that was tied in a knot and had multiple holes. The Sacramento County District Attorney's Crime Lab confirmed the presence of cocaine, benzoylecgonine, delta-9-THC, 11-hydroxy-THC, and 11-nor-9-carboxy-THC in Currie's blood sample.

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: Rick Braziel, Office of Inspector General
Francine Tournour, Office of Public Safety Accountability
SPD Officer Matt Hoffman #412
SPD Officer Mark Scurria #526