

ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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Theodore F. L. Housel

Prosecutor

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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MAYS LANDING– Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel announced today that an Ocean County man who had an altercation with hospital security guards, died as a result of a heart attack that was triggered by the physical exertion associated with that altercation, and no criminal charges will be filed in the matter.

On April 27 at 11 p.m., Darnell Myres, 43, of Manchester, was transported to the emergency room of the Community Medical Center in Toms River for treatment of injuries sustained in a domestic dispute. Shortly after midnight on April 28, Myres was deemed by a physician to be a security risk due to his level of intoxication and consistent with hospital protocol, was asked to surrender his clothing and wear a hospital gown to discourage him from leaving the hospital in an intoxicated state. Myres refused to comply with the request by hospital personnel, a physical struggle ensued and two of four security guards and a nurse claimed to have suffered injuries. During the struggle the patient was given an injection of a sedative to further assist in subduing him and he was placed in a hospital bed with restraints. He then went into cardiac arrest and medical staff administered CPR. Myres pulse returned, though he remained unconscious. On April 29 he was transferred to Monmouth Medical Center in Long Branch where he remained in a coma until his death on May 2, according to First Assistant Prosecutor Murray Talasnik, who was in charge of the investigation.

On May 3 the State Division of Criminal Justice asked that the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office take over the investigation due to a familial relationship Ocean County Prosecutor Marlene Ford had with the Community Medical Center. On May 4 Atlantic County Medical Examiner Dr. Hydow Park performed an autopsy on Myres at Shore Memorial Hospital in Somers Point. Dr. Park concluded the cause of death was complications of cardiac arrest associated with physical exertion, acute alcohol intoxication, an enlarged heart and obesity. He further concluded that the manner of death was accident.

Prosecutor's Office Detectives began their investigation into Myres' death on May 4. Detectives interviewed hospital staff who worked on April 28 and emergency room patients who witnessed the altercation between Myres and hospital security personnel. They also obtained video surveillance footage from the emergency room, copies of relevant police reports from the Manchester Police Department and the Toms River

Police Department, and copies of the patient's medical records from both Community Medical Center and Monmouth Medical Center. Additionally, an expert in the field of emergency medicine was retained to offer an opinion on certain conduct of the emergency room physician and nurse, including the classification of Myres as a security risk, that he surrender his clothing and the administration of the sedative, all of which was found to be reasonable, Talasnik said.

"The absence of traumatic injury to Mr. Myres demonstrates that the death was not the result of force used against him; rather, the stress of physical resistance triggered a heart attack due to pre-existing conditions including an enlarged heart, intoxication and obesity. As a result there is no evidence to support a criminal prosecution against any of the security officers for any form of criminal homicide in connection with the death of Darnell Myres," Talasnik said.

Anyone with information involving serious crimes is asked to call the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office at 609-909-7800 or go to the Prosecutor's Office Web site at <http://www.acpo.org/tips.html> and provide information by filling out the form anonymously on the Submit a Tip page. People can also call Crime Stoppers at 609-652-1234 or 1-800-658-8477 (TIPS) or visit the Crime Stoppers Website at <http://www.crimestoppersatlantic.com/>. Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards for information leading to the arrest and indictment of those who commit crimes in Atlantic County.