

Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department

Office of Public Information

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Joseph Lombardo, Sheriff

May 17, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Undersheriff Kevin McMahill Discusses May 14, 2017 In-Custody Death

Undersheriff Kevin McMahill met with the media today to discuss additional details of a May 14, 2017 in-custody death. At approximately 12:50 a.m. a male adult, later identified as 40-year-old Tashi Farmer, approached LVMPD Officer Kenneth Lopera and his partner inside of the Venetian Hotel located at 3355 South Las Vegas Boulevard. Farmer was sweating heavily, looked panicked, and stated that people were chasing him. Officer Lopera attempted to speak with Farmer to help him, and Farmer immediately ran away and went through a set of doors into the “employee only” area of the hotel.

Officer Lopera initiated a foot pursuit down the corridor but lost sight of Farmer. The officer caught up with Farmer outside of the hotel in a roadway on the hotel property. Farmer was attempting to open the tailgate of an occupied pickup, but he was unsuccessful. He then ran around to the driver’s side of the truck.

Believing that Farmer was attempting to carjack the citizen, Officer Lopera deployed his Taser, warned Farmer he would tase him, and then discharged the Taser in an attempt to incapacitate him. Though the Taser had immediate effect on Farmer, he was able to overcome the neuromuscular incapacitation and fight with Officer Lopera despite the attempts made to take him into custody. During the struggle, Venetian security officers converged and also attempted to assist with gaining control of Farmer.

As the altercation escalated, Officer Lopera struck the suspect with a closed fist multiple times. Initial information indicated Officer Lopera then used the Lateral Vascular Neck Restraint (LVNR) technique. The LVNR is a specific LVMPD approved method of applying pressure to the side of a subject’s neck to overcome resistance and allow safe

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control. The investigation indicated Officer Lopera may have applied a “rear naked choke” to Farmer. The technique was applied for over a minute, and when additional officers arrived on scene, Farmer was released and handcuffed. It should be noted, the “rear naked choke” is **not** an LVMPD approved technique.

Medical personnel were immediately summoned, and officers on scene rendered aid to Farmer when it was realized he wasn’t breathing. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation chest compressions were also administered by an LVMPD officer until paramedics arrived. Farmer was transported to the Sunrise Trauma Center where he was later pronounced deceased.

A video of today’s press conference can be viewed by clicking on the following link:
<https://youtu.be/I4dDrQVkJYA>.

The LVMPD Force Investigation Team is currently investigating the officer’s use of force in this incident. Their findings will be forwarded to the Clark County District Attorney for review.

An examination of this incident is being conducted by the LVMPD Critical Incident Review Team. This review will focus on policy, tactics and training as it relates to this use of force.

This is an ongoing investigation. Anyone with any information about this incident is urged to contact the LVMPD Force Investigation Section at 702-828-8452. To remain anonymous contact Crime Stoppers by phone at 702-385-5555, on the internet at www.crimestoppersofnv.com, or text CRIMENV plus tip information to 274637 (CRIMES). Message and data rates may apply. Tips leading directly to an arrest or indictment processed through Crime Stoppers may be eligible for a cash reward.

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