

State of Connecticut
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



Report Concerning
the Death of Marcell Lance Felix on August 28, 2023
While in the Custody of the New Britain Police Department

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Department of Emergency and Public Protection, Division of Scientific Services

New Britain Police Department

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

INTRODUCTION

On August 28, 2023, at approximately 11:09 a.m., at the Hospital of Central Connecticut, New Britain, Doctor Lazaros Yiannos pronounced Marcell Lance Felix¹ deceased. At the time of his death, Felix was in the custody of the New Britain Police Department. As required by statute², the Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigated this in-custody death. The results of that investigation are set forth in this report.

The investigation establishes that, on August 28, 2023, at approximately 9:33 a.m., New Britain police officers were dispatched to 120 Columbia Street, New Britain on a report of a male possibly having mental difficulties. At the scene, officers observed Marcell Felix who was on the front porch of the residence mumbling loudly and acting erratically. When Felix fell off the front porch, officers took him into custody and summoned medical aid. The University of Connecticut EMS arrived on scene and transported Felix to the Hospital of Central Connecticut, New Britain. During the trip to the hospital, Felix stopped breathing. At the hospital, he lost his pulse and Emergency Department staff started CPR. He was pronounced dead at 11:09 a.m.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) performed an autopsy and determined the cause of Felix's death to be acute phencyclidine intoxication. The OCME ruled the death accidental. There was no use of force or criminality associated with his death.

INVESTIGATION

Police Reports

Officer Richard Mantiglia

On August 28, 2023, at approximately 9:33 a.m., Officer Mantiglia responded to 120 Columbia Street, New Britain on a report of a male possibly having a mental health crisis, yelling and running around the porch, and that a two-year-old was with him.

As Officer Mantiglia walked toward the residence, he could hear a male yelling but could not make out any clear words. A young child was on the first-floor porch with the male, later

¹ On August 28, 2023, Marcell Lance Felix was a 45-year-old African American male.

²General Statutes §51-277(a)(2)(A), in relevant part, provides: "...[W]henever a person dies in the custody of a peace officer or law enforcement agency, the Inspector General shall investigate and determine whether physical force was used by a peace officer upon the deceased person, and if so, whether the use of force was justifiable under section 53a-22. If the Inspector General determines that the deceased person may have died as a result of possible criminal action not involving the use of force by a peace officer, the Inspector General shall refer such case to the Chief State's Attorney or a state's attorney for potential prosecution."

identified as Marcell Lance Felix. Felix appeared to be under the influence of some type of drug. Officer Mantiglia saw Felix fall off the porch and land in the bushes in the front of the residence. Felix then attempted to climb back onto the porch and Officer Mantiglia took hold of his arm and moved him back to ground level. Felix again attempted to jump back onto the porch. During this time, Felix was speaking unintelligible words.

With the assistance of Officer Maxwell Lagasse, Officer Mantiglia was able to restrain Felix and place him into handcuffs. They then pulled Felix from behind the bushes and onto the front lawn. Felix began to eat grass in the front yard and officers turned his head away from the ground, but Felix turned back. Officers picked Felix up into an upright seated position. He remained in that position until the New Britain Fire Department personnel arrived. Eventually, UConn EMS arrived and transported Felix to the hospital.

To view a relevant portion of Officer Mantiglia's body-worn camera recording, click [here](#).

Sergeant Michael Slavin

Sergeant Slavin arrived on scene and observed Felix yelling unintelligibly on the front porch of 120 Columbia Street, New Britain. There was a small child on the porch crying. Sergeant Slavin and Officer Mantiglia attempted to speak to Felix, but he was unable to formulate a sentence and continued yelling unintelligibly while sitting on the edge of the front porch. He then jumped off the front porch into the shrubs below. Felix was clearly not in a right state of mind. Sergeant Slavin stayed with the child so that she was not unintentionally hurt.

Once officers had Felix under control, Sergeant Slavin entered the house to see if other adults were on scene to take custody of the child. While walking through the house, Sergeant Slavin observed two loose cigarettes that appeared wrinkled as if they had been wet. Next to one cigarette was a zip lock baggie containing black flaky powder residue. This powder had the appearance and consistency of PCP. Sergeant Slavin knew from his training and experience that people who use PCP will sometimes lace cigarettes with formaldehyde for a similar high. The process is to dip the cigarette into liquid and let it dry before smoking it. Sergeant Slavin felt that this might explain the appearance of the wet cigarettes. The cigarettes and zip lock bag with residue were seized. Subsequently, the New Britain Police Department submitted these items to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Scientific Services for analysis.

EMS Report

The University of Connecticut EMS in Farmington responded to 120 Columbia Street, New Britain to provide life support to Felix.³ UConn EMS was notified at 9:52 a.m. and arrived on scene at 10:08 a.m. The call was for an intoxicated male potentially under the influence of PCP.

Upon their arrival, the EMTs found Felix sitting on the ground in the custody of New Britain officers. He appeared to be unresponsive but breathing. The EMS report continues:

“During the short duration transport, pt became apneic⁴ and was ventilated via BVM⁵. Pt had good compliance and chest rise with BVM. No IV or IO was attempted due to close proximity to ER. Pt 3-lead EKG showed sinus bradycardia with a wide QRS range. Pt was transported to New Britain ER. Care was turned over to staff with full report given. Upon moving pt to hospital bed, he lost his pulse and CPR was started by ER staff.”

Hospital Report

UConn EMS transported Felix to the Hospital of Central Connecticut, New Britain. He was admitted into the hospital at 10:26 a.m. He was experiencing both cardiac arrest and respiratory arrest. The hospital staff commenced CPR and continued for forty-five minutes. No pulse was obtained at any time in the emergency department and no cardiac activity was noted on the bedside ultrasound.

Doctor Lazaros Yiannos declared time of death at 11:09 a.m.

Autopsy

On August 29, 2023, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) performed an autopsy on Marcell Lance Felix. The autopsy report states:

CAUSE OF DEATH: HYPERACTIVE DELIRIUM DUE TO ACUTE PHENCYCLIDINE INTOXICATION

CONTRIBUTING CAUSE OF DEATH: HYPERTENSIVE ATHEROSCLEROTIC CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

MANNER OF DEATH: ACCIDENT (USED DRUGS)

³ All New Britain EMS units were unavailable.

⁴ Apneic refers to a condition where a person stops breathing.

⁵ BVM is an abbreviation for a bag valve mask.

The report details several abrasions on the head, neck, shoulders, and legs. The report further notes atherosclerotic stenosis of 60% in the left descending coronary artery and 10% in the right coronary artery.

Blood, urine, and other bodily specimens were submitted for toxicological examination. The report from NMS Labs in Horsham, Pennsylvania indicates that phencyclidine (PCP) was found in Felix's femoral blood sample at a concentration of 330 ng/mL.

State Forensic Science Laboratory

Among the items that the New Britain Police Department sent to the laboratory was a plastic zip lock bag containing visible residue. The laboratory analyzed the residue and determined that it tested positive for phencyclidine (PCP).

FINDINGS

1. On August 28, 2023, at approximately 9:33 a.m., New Britain police officers responded to 120 Columbia Street, New Britain on a report of a male possibly having a mental health crisis.
2. At the scene, officers observed Marcell Lance Felix on the front porch of the residence. He was speaking unintelligibly. There was also a young child present.
3. In the presence of the officers, Felix fell off the porch into some bushes and then tried to climb back onto the porch. He was in a frantic state and in an abnormal mental condition.
4. Officers took Felix into custody for his own safety.
5. UConn EMS responded to 120 Columbia Street and found Felix sitting on the ground in police custody. He was unresponsive but breathing. During the trip to The Hospital of Central Connecticut, New Britain he stopped breathing.
6. Felix was admitted to the hospital at 10:26 a.m. He was experiencing both cardiac arrest and respiratory arrest. The hospital's efforts at CPR were unsuccessful and he was pronounced dead at 11:09 a.m.
7. New Britain police located a zip lock bag with suspected PCP residue in the house at 120 Columbia Street. The bag and residue were submitted to the state laboratory for testing.
8. The state laboratory test of the residue in the zip lock bag was positive for phencyclidine (PCP).

9. The OCME performed an autopsy and determined the cause of Felix’s death to be hyperactive delirium due to acute phencyclidine intoxication, and the manner of death to be accidental.

LAW

General Statutes §51-277a(a)(2)(A) provides in part:

“... whenever a person dies in the custody of a peace officer or law enforcement agency, the Inspector General shall investigate and determine whether physical force was used by a peace officer upon the deceased person, and if so, whether the use of physical force by the peace officer was justifiable under section 53a-22. If the Inspector General determines that the person died as a result of possible criminal action not involving the use of force by a peace officer, the Inspector General shall refer such case to the Division of Criminal Justice for potential prosecution.”

Neither General Statutes Chapter 886, nor the penal code define the terms “physical force” or “criminal action.” For the purposes of this report, I apply such terms in accord with their ordinary meanings.

ANALYSIS

New Britain officers used minimal force on Felix for the purpose of taking him into custody for his own safety and the safety of others. This use of force had nothing to do with Felix’s death. The investigation has determined that Felix’s death was accidental and not the result of criminal action.

CONCLUSION

The death of Marcell Lance Felix was accidental and not the result of force or criminal action. The Office of Inspector General will take no further action in this matter.

Submitted this 29th day of May 2024.



ROBERT J. DEVLIN, JR.
INSPECTOR GENERAL