

Statement from Marcus Deon Smith's family regarding his passing while in police custody.

11/6/2018

We, the family of Marcus Deon Smith, after having reviewed the police bodycam footage where we watched our loved family member die, want to speak about our concerns regarding his death. Marcus died during the early morning hours of September 8th while being restrained by the Greensboro Police Department. The public deserves to see and know what they did to our family.

We want to start by saying that Marcus is the father of 3 children; one son, 16, two daughters, 2 and 1 years of age. Marcus was 38 years old. He was a long-term barber, a skilled poet, and what we called a great encourager.

Marcus was also a beloved member of the community at the Interactive Resource Center - many people viewed him as a supportive friend and a very generous person who helped others, despite not always having his own life in order. He cut people's hair and he volunteered often, and he made lots of people happy.

38 is a very young age to pass away, but it is even worse to pass away at the hands of police who were sworn to protect, help, and serve the community. There was NO SERVING done on this day. As a matter of fact, these men's actions appear to have caused him to pass away. By 'hogtying' Marcus, these officers made it impossible for him to continue breathing.

Marcus' friends have said that he was not a combative or violent person - that he would never mean to hurt someone intentionally. The police bodycam footage, which was viewed by Marcus's Father, George Smith, makes this obvious. Marcus was not attacking the officers. He may have been acting erratically, but he wasn't trying to hurt anyone.

Marcus asked the officers for help, but instead of being offered help, four white officers used as much force as possible without directly hitting or shooting him. There were 9 officers on the scene, and four that came in direct contact with him. They could have used other methods to restrain him. 'Hog tying' him was completely unnecessary.

Imagine your son, or your brother, your uncle, your cousin, or even imagine your DAD being handcuffed by their wrist and ankles AND NOT BEING UNDER ARREST! He was tied up like an animal.

Have you ever seen a bull riding show where the bull is tied up by his hands and feet?

Imagine your loved one taking his last breath this way with hands and feet tied together behind his back - AND HE WASN'T UNDER ARREST.

Or picture this - Marcus's parents having to go to the Greensboro Police Department to view the body cam footage in order to find out what happened to their child.

MARCUS'S FATHER GEORGE **SAW** HIS ONLY SON PASS AWAY. ALL BECAUSE THESE 4 OFFICERS FELT IT NECESSARY TO BIND AND HOG TIE MARCUS, WHILE HE WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS.

IMAGINE your loved one having to drive for several hours knowing that they are going to watch their son pass away. Imagine that this is the only way that the truth is going to come out, because the police who SWORE they were going to serve and protect, refused to give us any of the details of the case.

There was AND has been no communication on behalf of the Greensboro Police Department to our family.

Furthermore, when the police approached Marcus, they called for EMS assistance because they knew he was having some sort of medical issue, but instead of getting him into the ambulance to receive help, they first put him on the ground and hogtied him. Again, the 4 officers who restrained him (let alone the 9 that were at the scene) have no excuse for needing to hogtie a single individual. There are much more humane ways to restrain an individual who is having a mental health crisis.

Marcus posed NO threat to these police officials. He submitted himself willingly and BEGGED for help, and instead he was hogtied, and died as a result. He wasn't deserving of this. In fact, no human being should be treated this way, especially if all he asked was to be helped in his last moments of his life. In the time that he encountered these police officials, every moment counted, and they did nothing.

Luckily our family doesn't live there in Greensboro, because we would be terrified to know that there are such people serving on our police force - people that would watch a man need help, and do absolutely NOTHING, BUT HOGTIE HIM. The city of Greensboro ought to release the body cam footage from this incident so that they know exactly what the police have done.

We've heard nothing from the SBI (autopsy). His parents have no clue and his children have no clue why this happened to him.

We know that there is no justifiable reason why this should happen. They hogtied a person who was in crisis, rather than giving him the help he asked for. And so, we want to know what the city of Greensboro is going to do about this tragedy. How are these officers going to be held accountable? We deserve answers. The people of Greensboro deserve to see the bodycam footage so that they know exactly what did happen, and the city of Greensboro ought to take whatever necessary steps to make sure this will never happen again.

Sincerely,

George Smith- Father
Mary Smith- Mother
Leo Butler- Brother
Jay Martin- Brother
Kay Suber- Sister
Marquis Smith- Son
Aubrey Davis- Daughter
Kristen Smith- Daughter