

**DURRS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC.**

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**OPEN LETTER**

Twelve-years ago, one of most horrendous violations of civil liberties in recent U. S. history occurred in the Swap Shop parking lot. That is where, after Mr. Brown's SUV landed there after a rollover accident, that Mr. Oral Brown died arguably at the hands of BSO deputies and the County's firefighters, and paramedics.



Mr. Brown was 37-years old when he died. He had emigrated with his family from Jamaica when he was a child, graduated Coral Springs High School and then vocational school, and owned his own business repairing X-Ray equipment for hospitals and doctor's offices. Mr. Brown was married and had an 18-month old son. Mr. Brown's son had cerebral palsy from birth and has been handicapped ever since. His son's mother quit work after he was born and has continuously been his caretaker. Mr. Brown's son is now 13.

On a sunny afternoon on October 15, 2001, Mr. Brown had a one-car accident on Sunrise Boulevard. After Mr. Brown lost control of his SUV, it hit the curb and landed upside down in the Swap Shop parking lot. Only he was hurt. After the SUV landed, Mr. Brown was unconscious and he hung upside down supported by his seatbelt for over ten minutes. Finally, a firefighter sliced open his SUV with the "Jaws of Life".

A doctor, who was one of the first people on the scene, saw that Mr. Brown was suffering a seizure and told a paramedic about it when he arrived. The doctor then left Mr. Brown in the paramedics' care.

After being freed from his seatbelt, Mr. Brown partially regained consciousness, crawled out of the wreck, and walked away in a daze. Deputies, firefighters, and paramedics ["the Responders"] surrounded him and screamed at him to get on the ground. However, Mr. Brown was oblivious and unable to understand their commands. According to eyewitness, including a nurse and a BellSouth technician, that is when the Responders gave up shouting and kicked his legs out from him.

After Mr. Brown was on the ground face down, witnesses testified that the Responders beat Mr. Brown while twisting his arms and legs back. A deputy testified that five men, including deputies, firefighters, and paramedics, were knelling on Mr. Brown's back as they hogtied him. According to sworn testimony, one Responder held Mr. Brown (who had just been in a rollover accident) in a chokehold for an extended time until he was strapped facedown and hogtied to the gurney.

The BellSouth technician testified that during the melee, Mr. Brown's tongue was twisted and bent backward - thrusting towards the back of his throat as though he was trying to swallow it. This is a sign that Mr. Brown suffered another seizure while the Responders violated him.

Some of the Responders claim that Mr. Brown acted hostilely towards them. Independent eyewitnesses though swore under oath that Mr. Brown never threatened anyone nor resisted the Responders. In addition, it is undisputed that the Responder did not suspect Mr. Brown of having committed a crime.

Before leaving for Broward General, the paramedics classified Mr. Brown at the highest trauma level. Yet, according to their own records during the trip, they never - besides allegedly taking one 20-second EKG before leaving the scene - monitored him or gave him any basic life support including oxygen or CPR. The paramedics claim that Mr. Brown's aggressive behavior prevented them from caring for him, although he was hogtied facedown, double-strapped to the gurney, and had his handcuffed hands flex-cuffed to the gurney's sides.

According to trauma room records and a trauma nurse's sworn testimony, Mr. Brown was in complete cardiac and respiratory arrest the second he entered the trauma room. However, the paramedics' testified that he was alive when they brought him in the trauma room and that he died minutes after he arrived there. One might conclude from this discrepancy that Mr. Brown was dead even before the emergency vehicle left for Broward General and that the paramedics tried to cover this up.

Despite repeated efforts, the trauma team could not revive Mr. Brown. The trauma unit's Director was so outraged over the paramedics bringing Mr. Brown in dead, with his face flush against the gurney in a pool of his bodily fluids, not administering CPR, and with no monitors or oxygen, that she called the police. BSO homicide and the Medical Examiner's Office's investigators responded along with CSI. They declared the entire trauma room a crime scene.

The Assistant Medical Examiner, who it turns out was married to the lead BSO homicide investigator, later classified Mr. Brown's death as an accident - suffocation due to his being hogtied. Her autopsy report noted though that Mr. Brown had hemorrhages on the sides of his neck and in his eyes. However, the report fails to mention that these hemorrhages could indicate that Mr. Brown might have died either from strangulation or from suffocation directly resulting from having five men kneeling on his chest while they hogtied him.

BSO's homicide report, signed by the Assistant Medical Examiner's husband, referred to his wife by her maiden name. The report also indicated that the first paramedic in Mr. Brown's vehicle had placed a "stiff neck" collar on Mr. Brown and that the Assistant Medical Examiner had told him that the hemorrhages around Mr. Brown's neck were consistent with the collar. However, the paramedic referred to in the homicide report testified that he did even not know if Mr. Brown was wearing a collar.

This injustice has gone on long enough. Although a grand jury considered the case, a South Florida Times investigation has revealed that critical evidence, such as a damning Broward County Fire & Rescue report enumerating 10 failures by its paramedics, was not presented to the grand jury and independent eyewitnesses, such as the previously mentioned doctor, nurse, and Bellsouth technician, were not called to testify before it.

Other than the two paramedics that rode with Mr. Brown being placed on desk duty until they wrote a paper on the use of pharmaceuticals to subdue hostile patients, none of the Responders were punished. In addition, no one has been charged criminally. Although repeated requests to the Sheriff and the Governor have been made to reopen the investigation, nothing has been done.

Please email or call the following public servants to voice your concern. By clicking on their names below, you can open your computer's email program to an email with their addresses. After 12-years, it appears that your voice is critical to prevent Mr. Brown's death from being further swept under the rug. In addition, please also ask your family, friends, clergy, and co-workers to email or call them.

Walter "Mickey" Hinton, President

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