

Suffocation death ruled a homicide - Group home resident died after scuffle with care givers

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CANTON TOWNSHIP -- The Wayne County Medical Examiner's Office has **ruled** the February **death** of a group home resident **a homicide** , and three workers could face criminal charges.

In a report issued Tuesday, the medical examiner said 22-year-old Charles Mancill suffocated because of compression on his chest. Mancill lost consciousness Feb. 13 after an altercation with group home workers at a Super Kmart on Ford Road after he took a toy from the store. He was taken to St. Mary's Hospital in Livonia, where he was pronounced dead.

Canton police on Wednesday turned over the case to the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, which will decide if criminal charges will be brought against the workers, Sgt. Todd Mutchler said.

Mancill was living at a Redford Township facility run by Imani Residential Services, which specializes in care for developmentally disabled people. The three workers who restrained him were suspended, while the staff reviewed the details of the case. They are back on the job and innocent of any wrongdoing, said Gregory Bator, attorney for the group home. Mancill had long been upset over his family's infrequent visits, which could have led to his actions last month, Bator said.

"His behavior outside the Kmart store was not unique," Bator said. "Dealing with an individual with the problems he presented isn't simple."

On Feb. 13, Mancill was a passenger on a group home van when it stopped at the Super Kmart in Canton Township. Mancill asked to use the store restroom. Once inside, he took a toy from the shelf and ran out of the store, police said.

Group home workers took the toy, and Mancill became violent, police said. Group home employees tried to subdue him. According to the Medical Examiner's report, there were three care givers involved -- one lying across Mancill's lower abdomen and upper legs, another on his chest and arms and a third holding onto his lower legs. Mancill became unresponsive and lost consciousness, police said.

In recent years, other cases of shoplifters dying while being restrained put Metro Detroit in the national spotlight.

In 2000, Detroit's Frederick Finley died after a fight with Lord & Taylor department store security guards at the Fairlane Town Center. His **death** sparked outrage from civil rights groups and a protest led by the Rev. Al Sharpton.

Last year, 36-year-old Alwanda Jackson-Person died after she struggled with security guards at a Detroit Rite Aid. That same year, Travis Shelton was killed after a struggle with security guards at a Royal Oak Township Kroger store.

Dealing with the disabled requires workers to be more careful, a caregivers said.

"These types of incidents really catch people's attention," said Chris Lerchen, associate director of The Arc of Northwest Wayne County. "Obviously, something needs to be done. How important is a toy when it's compared to someone's life?"

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Correction: *Three group home workers who assisted in restraining suffocation victim Charles Mancill last month have not returned to work at Imani Residential Services in Redford Township. A story on Page 3D of Wednesday's Metro section incorrectly said the workers had returned.

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