



SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION

CRAIG N. MEIDL
CHIEF OF POLICE

Closed Case Summary

Complaint Number: C17-018 OPO Number: 17-8
Date of Complaint: 3/3/2017
Allegation: Inadequate Response
Chain of Command Finding: Administratively Suspended
Final Discipline: Not Applicable

INCIDENT SYNOPSIS

In 2016, Spokane Police Department investigated the death of the complainant's husband. The complainant disagreed with the primary investigator's determination. The Medical Examiner's report indicated the cause of death to be asphyxiation by drowning, and the manner of death to be an accident. SPD classified the incident as "Death-Unknown" with the caveat that it can be reopened if new information or evidence appears that would warrant the reopening of the case.

COMPLAINT

The complainant believed she had shown that the incident was not an accident and was unhappy with the department's refusal to reopen the case. In her complaint, she articulated that she wanted investigators to see a Crime Watch Daily segment and to review autopsy photos of her husband's injuries.

INVESTIGATION

The Internal Affairs lieutenant reviewed all available documentation about the case. He noted that SPD investigators had honored the complainant's requests in their investigation. Specifically, investigators had considered the Crime Watch Daily report and the autopsy photos in their investigation. Investigators had viewed the injuries sustained by the deceased in person; they discussed those findings with the Medical Examiner. The injuries and findings were discussed a second time with no change in the Medical Examiner's opinion.

Several members of the Major Crimes Unit reviewed the case. The investigative team, including SPD leadership, met with the complainant in 2016 to discuss the case. In early 2017, SPD requested that the FBI review the case. The FBI declined.

The Internal Affairs Lieutenant consulted with the Major Crimes Lieutenant, who stated that investigators looked at every aspect of the case, and have not been able to determine with certainty how the complainant's husband died. The case was suspended rather than closed, leaving the possibility of

reopening the case. As of this time, there has not been any additional information that would warrant the reopening of the case.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The Internal Affairs Lieutenant asked for the case to be Administratively Suspended, as all reasonable investigative leads were exhausted, finding no evidence of wrongdoing. The Police Ombudsman concurred.