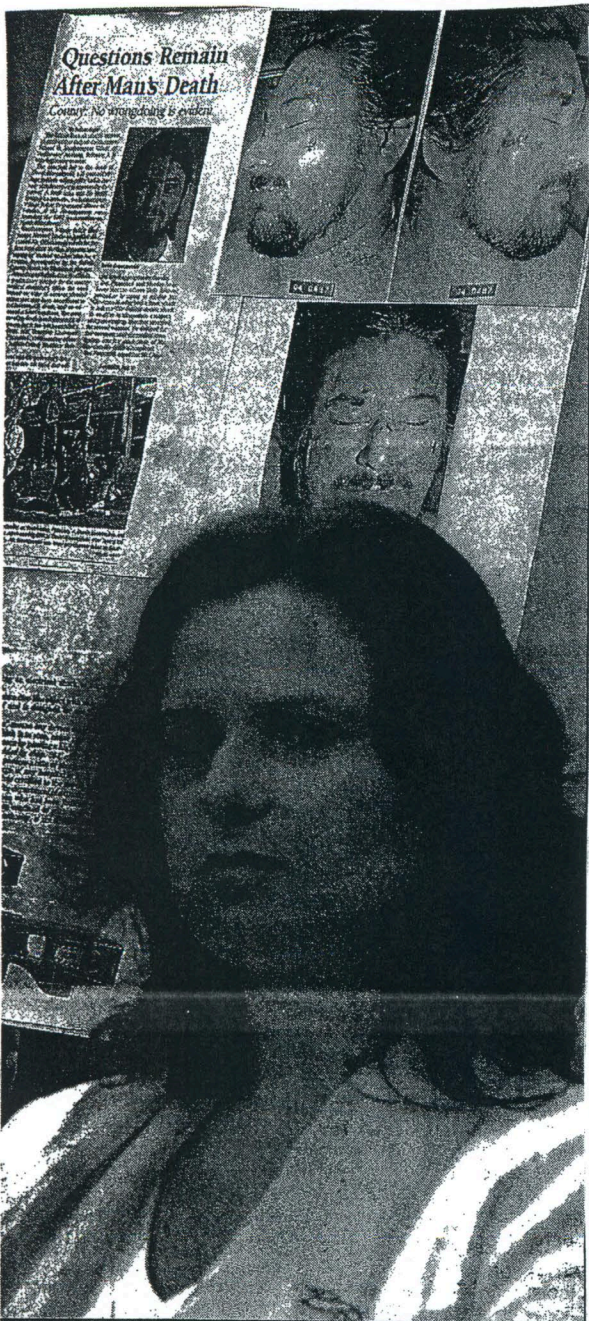


THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2005 | LONG ISLAND EDITION

'Death was not natural'



NEWSDAY PHOTO / DICK YARWOOD
Jean Griffin, David Glowczenski's sister, displays photos of the injuries allegedly sustained by her brother.

'We demand that those who did this to him be held responsible.'

— Jean Griffin, sister of David Glowczenski

■ Citing new autopsy, family, lawyer fault original probe of man who died in custody, ask DA to investigate

BY SAMUEL BRUCHEY
STAFF WRITER

Relatives of a mentally ill Southampton man said yesterday that a new autopsy suggested he may have been killed by police officers after being taken into custody in February 2004, and they accused the Suffolk County medical examiner of concealing a murder.

"This death was not natural," said attorney Frederick K. Brewington of Hempstead, who represents relatives of David Glowczenski. "For the medical examiner to close the door on this and hope that no one looks behind it . . . they've got another thing coming."

Glowczenski, 35, died two blocks from his home on Feb. 4, 2004. His relatives had called 911 saying that Glowczenski, who had psychiatric problems, was acting irrationally. That day, Brewington said, the burly Glowczenski complained of voices in his head and went to visit a nearby church.

Police found him screaming in a North Main Street, where he pushed a female officer who tried to calm him, Suffolk police said. The four officers who responded to the 911 call shocked Glowczenski nine times with stun guns — unleashing 9,000 volts of electricity into his 207-pound body, Brewington said. They also shot him with pepper spray, handcuffed him, threw him down, and knelted on his back, fracturing his ribs. Police beat him so badly they covered Glowczenski with bruises

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ington said. "They shocked him again and again," Brewington said.

Although stun guns are used by many police departments nationwide, critics have challenged the claim that they are not lethal. Amnesty International, for example, recently identified more than 100 cases in the United States and Canada since 2001 — including Glowczenski's — in which individuals died after being hit with a stun gun.

In Glowczenski's case, however, a report signed by Deputy Medical Examiner James Wilson in November concluded that he died of "acute exhaustive mania due to schizophrenia" and called the manner of his death "natural."

Glowczenski's sister, Jean Griffin of Southampton, said that was "preposterous."

"We demand that those who did this to him be held responsible," she said.

Speaking at a news conference on the steps of Nassau County Courthouse in Mineola, where photos of Glowczenski's battered head were on display, Brewington called for a grand jury to consider criminal charges against Southampton Village police officers, and urged the Suffolk district attorney's office to investigate the medical examiner's office.

"We believe that the Suffolk County medical examiner's office is part and parcel of a cover-up," Brewington said.

Suffolk County Attorney Christine Malafi said, "The medical examiner did nothing to cover up anything."

Village of Southampton attorneys representing the police in a \$550 million federal civil rights lawsuit filed by Glowczenski's relatives could not be reached for comment.

Suffolk Medical Examiner Charles Wetli declined to comment. Calls to the Suffolk County Homicide Squad, which investigated the death, and the district attorney's office were not returned.

The family also has filed a \$570 million lawsuit against Taser, the Scottsdale, Ariz., company that makes the stun gun used on Glowczenski.

The second autopsy, completed this month by Dr. Lone Thanning, a forensic pathologist in Piermont, N.Y., found "extensive evidence of excess application of force," but did not identify a cause of death.

Still, Brewington said Wetli's office should be investigated because Wetli has "made a living" testifying across the country involving deaths in police custody. Each time, Brewington said Wetli claimed the people "scared themselves to death."

"Those kind of findings alone," Brewington said, "call for a serious investigation."