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TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

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Grand jury will review Taser's link to death

Karl Ritters
Tallahassee Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

A Leon County grand jury will review the death of a man on whom a police officer used a Taser after Eddie Morris broke into a home the night of May 26.

Morris, 46, died after Tallahassee Police arrived at a home where he was a burglary suspect and used a Taser on him. At about 11 p.m., Morris reportedly banged on the door of a Laverdale Road home screaming he was being chased by a bear.

He broke into the home, where he was held at gunpoint by the homeowner.

When TPD officers arrived, Morris threatened to hit them with a lamp after which the officer tried to subdue him with the stun gun, according to police reports. The officer then administered a second electrical charge when Morris continued to struggle. He was transported to the hospital in critical condition. Two days later, Morris died.

Grand jurors will have to wait until the Leon County Medical Examiner completes a toxicology report on Morris before it can review the use-of-force case, said State Attorney Jack Campbell.

See TASER, Page 4A



Brian Winchester leaves a Leon County courtroom after entering into a plea agreement on charges of armed burglary and kidnapping of his estranged wife. **U.S. PHOTO**

Winchester immunity cracked Mike Williams case

Jennifer Portman
Tallahassee Democrat
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Brian Winchester shot his best friend in cold blood, but he likely won't be punished by the criminal justice system for killing Mike Williams.

State Attorney Jack Campbell gave Winchester a pass for murder in exchange for the truth about what happened while purportedly duck hunting alone the morning of Dec. 16, 2000.

Under the terms of an agreement signed Oct. 4, 2017, none of the statements made by Winchester to investigators and prosecutors about the case can be used against him.

See WILLIAMS CASE, Page 2A

More on the story: Cops grilled Denise Williams on the disappearance of her husband, Mike Williams. **2A**

NEGLECTED FLORIDA'S WORST NURSING HOMES



CONSULATE HEALTH CARE FACILITIES EXPOSED

Complaints accumulate at company with dozens of Florida locations

Ryan Mills and Melanie Payne USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

They told Billy Seigler he'd never walk again. Not because of his broken pelvis or busted right leg, but because his nursing home refused to provide the therapy he so desperately needed. Seigler relied on Governors Creek Health and Rehabilitation in Green Cove Springs to help him return to the independent life he lived before a 2010 attack and attempted robbery. Each time Seigler pleaded for physical therapy, the nursing home's rehabilitation director told the 45-year-old his government benefits didn't pay for it.

But that was a lie.

The state paid the Jacksonville-area nursing home a flat rate to provide Seigler care, including his needed therapy. But Governors Creek routinely denied treatment and services to patients like Seigler, according to a 2016 federal whistleblower lawsuit filed by a former nurse.

"I think it's all about money," Seigler's older brother Philip said. "I think profit and money and benefits come before patients." Seigler's case is among a dozen cited in the lawsuit against Consulate Health Care, the state's largest network of nursing homes and the nation's sixth largest. Consulate denied the lawsuit's claims.

While last year's trial didn't focus on mistreatment and neglect, a jury found Consulate homes, including Governors Creek, systematically hid government programs by misrepresenting care provided to patients and overcharging for medically unnecessary treatments.

The jury issued a stunning \$347.6 million judgment against Consulate, which executives argued could have forced closure of the company's 77 nursing homes in Florida.

The Consulate case shows how a jury took action when the state wouldn't. It also shows how the state's failure to act has prevented the jury from holding Consulate accountable.

A federal judge in Tampa overturned the jury's verdict in January, in part because he noted that nothing Consulate was accused of doing ever triggered action by state and federal regulators.



Dick Austin, who had dementia, ended up at Largo Health and Rehabilitation Center in Pinellas County in 2015. His wife says he was treated poorly there. **WOLFE PHOTO/STOCKPHOTO/DAILY NEWS**

"The evidence and history of this action establish that the federal and state governments regret the disputed practices with leniency or tolerance or indifference, or perhaps with resignation," U.S. District Court Chief Judge Steven Merryday wrote in his order, which is under appeal.

Consulate noted in its defense that state inspections of its nursing homes often resulted in no fines. But recent years have shown that doesn't mean the company's homes are free of problems.

See NEGLECTED, Page 4A

USA TODAY

Backlash in state legislatures threatens LGBT gains assured by Supreme Court in 2015. **1B**

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