Did Durham Police Follow Protocol When Arresting 17-Year-Old Jesus Huerta?

By FRANK STASIO & NICOLE CAMPBELL • JAN 15, 2014

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Jesus Huerta died from a gunshot wound while in police custody last November. Did officers know he was at risk of killing himself? The teen's family says yes.

Durham authorities have said the officer on the scene, Samuel Duncan, had not been told the 17-year-old threatened to kill himself and used drugs before the officer picked him up the morning of Nov. 19.

But the attorney representing Huerta's family questions that and points to this radio communication in which officers talk about Huerta having a history of drug abuse:
A key question that has emerged in the case, which has prompted two marches to police headquarters and intervention from the Durham City Council, is whether the officer followed proper protocol when arresting and transporting Huerta.

On today's The State of Things, host Frank Stasio talks with his guests about the ways law enforcement officers deal with individuals with mental illnesses.

Stasio speaks with:

- WUNC's Jorge Valencia, who is covering the case of Huerta's death.
- Adam Wagner, a reporter at Wilmington Star-News who is covering the case of Keith Vidal, a mentally ill 18-year-old who was fatally shot by police in Boiling Spring Lakes, N.C.
- Capt. Kim Wrenn, coordinator of the Wake County Sheriff’s Department's Crisis Intervention Team Training
- Deby Dihoff, executive director of North Carolina's National Alliance On Mental Illness
- Mark Botts, a mental health law professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Government

The program airs at noon and at 8 p.m.
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