

Video Shows Patient In Chokehold

No Charges Filed After Teen's Death

ASHLAND CITY, Tenn. -- A videotape that has never been seen by the public shows the events that lead up to the death of a 17-year-old while he was in custody at a treatment center. The tape raises questions about the district attorney's decision not to file any criminal charges.

Omega Leach died in June 2007 at what was at the time known as Chad Youth Center in Montgomery County. The medical examiner concluded Omega died of strangulation in a homicide.

The surveillance video shot by a camera at Chad shows Omega and a staff member, Randall Rae, wrestling in a hallway outside Omega's room. Rae, at one point, has both his hands around the boy's neck as Rae has Omega pinned down on the floor.

The altercation would later move to Omega's room, outside of camera range.

Eyewitnesses said that in that room, another staff member held Omega face-down in a restraining hold. A nurse then checked Omega and found he had no pulse and wasn't breathing. District Attorney John Carney declined to prosecute either of the Chad employees. He told Channel 4 he would not comment about his decision.

Terry McMoore of the Clarksville NAACP looked into the case but had never seen the images from the surveillance camera.

"I don't see how the district attorney could not press charges, on this person, right here," McMoore said after seeing the still shots of Rae's hands around the boy's neck. McMoore said the DA should have at least brought the case to the grand jury.

David Raybin was Rae's defense attorney. "It looked for all the world that my client had done something to the boy," Raybin said. Raybin said what you don't see in the video is crucial. He said during the second part of the altercation, in Omega's room, the staff tried to cushion Omega's neck with a piece of foam called an elbow pad to keep him from banging his head.

"Unfortunately, the elbow pad got underneath his neck, and while he was being restrained by the other employees, it constricted against his neck and cut off his breathing," Raybin said.

As for Rae's hands around the boy's neck, Raybin agrees that wasn't proper procedure.

"Certainly, it was not the thing to have done. But your question here, is, was this criminal? And there's a world of difference between negligent behavior and criminal behavior," said Raybin.

Chad recently settled the case with Omega's family for \$10.5 million. 2.25.2010 WSMV-TV

