Stun gun freed of blame for homeless man's death

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Cocaine killed a homeless man who died in Hollywood police custody, not a Taser gun that police used to subdue him, said the Broward Medical Examiner pathologist who performed the man's autopsy.

Vincent Armani Del' Ostia, 31, died Jan. 27 after officers used the nonlethal weapon to subdue him when he broke a door and thrashed around in the lobby of the Entrada Resort Motel.

"It was not the Taser," Dr. Linda O'Neil, associate medical examiner, said Tuesday.

She said Del' Ostia died from a toxic level of cocaine in his system — .91 milligrams per liter of blood.

The precise cause and manner of his death are still being investigated, O'Neil said.

Hollywood police spokesman Lt. Tony Rode said the result speaks for itself.

"The police department's position from day one was that the Taser was not the cause of death."

The weapons, increasingly used by police across the country, are supposed to immobilize a subject for five to 10 seconds, just long enough for the police to handcuff the person.

Cocaine killed Vincent Del' Ostia, not a police stun gun, says medical examiner.

Once subdued and in handcuffs, Del' Ostia began to have trouble breathing. He was taken to nearby Memorial Regional Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead.

But Vincent Del' Ostia, the grandfather who raised Del' Ostia with his wife in Hollywood, said cocaine or no, his grandson died because of the Taser.

He said an independent pathology

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