

Oct. 19, 2023

**CITY OF COLLEGE STATION STATEMENT REGARDING PETITION
FILED BY DOYLE LAW FIRM ON BEHALF OF HOPKINS FAMILY**

The City of College Station's sympathies remain with Mark Hopkins' family and everyone involved. The Doyle Law Firm press release on Oct. 9 alleges the city's warrant service was based on a "glaringly false" warrant and "false" affidavit. Those allegations are entirely unfounded.

The affidavit and warrant were presented correctly based on a lengthy narcotics investigation regarding Abraham Escobar, a known drug dealer later arrested on substantial criminal charges. Escobar and Mr. Hopkins' roommate, Lauren Decoux, were in a dating relationship, giving Escobar unfettered access to the home at 925 Spring Loop. Escobar was frequently observed at the residence during the investigation.

Mr. Hopkins was never a criminal suspect in the investigation. He was a resident at 925 Spring Loop, where Escobar frequently visited Ms. Decoux while dealing and transporting narcotics. Probable cause affidavits and warrants identify all occupants of a suspected location.

The College Station Police Department conducted a legal warrant service under its established policies and procedures. A judge approved and signed the knock-and-announce warrant based on valid probable cause. During the warrant service, the officers repeatedly and loudly stated, "Police search warrant," before breaching the door and upon entering the residence. In addition, marked patrol units outside had red and blue emergency flashing lights, and an officer in a marked patrol unit announced several times on a loudspeaker that the police department was serving a warrant.

The Texas Rangers responded to the scene immediately at the request of the chief of police to begin their investigation. The Texas Rangers, the Brazos County district attorney, and the Brazos County grand jury found no wrongdoing by the city after conducting thorough, independent, and unbiased investigations.

The affidavit and warrant do not contain false information or statements. The city believes the unspecified "false information" referenced in the Doyle Law Firm press release refers to a sentence in the affidavit that mislabeled a Suspected Party.

Selected text from the affidavit is below. For reference, Suspected Party #1 is Escobar, #2 is Mr. Hopkins, and #3 is Ms. Decoux:

*"Affiant reviewed the data provided by Venmo for Said Suspected Party #3's account. I learned there were numerous **transactions between Said Suspected Party #1 and Said Suspected Party #3. Primarily, Said Suspected Party #1 sending Said Suspected Party #2 money. Said Suspected Party #3 would later transfer money to her bank account, which according to Venmo is Bank of America. Said Suspected Party #1 has sent approximately \$1,829 through Venmo.**"*

However, the affidavit's context makes it evident that the intended reference was Suspected Party #3, not Suspected Party #2. That does not constitute false or misleading information.

The Doyle Law Firm press release alleges the city's "continuing cover-up in the case," but city representatives have repeatedly offered to speak with the family. Early on, the chief of police communicated with Mr. Hopkins' father. The chief provided his cell phone number and asked the father to call if he needed anything related to the matter. Through their family attorney, the chief of police has invited the Hopkins family to face-to-face meetings, but they have not accepted what remains an open invitation. The city had no contact with the Doyle Law Firm until the law firm's hired public relations team distributed the Oct. 9 press release to the media.

The chief of police and city attorney met twice with Mr. Arron Perry, a Hopkins family attorney. The first meeting on March 3 reviewed the case regarding the warrant and warrant service. In the second meeting on April 13, Mr. Perry reviewed relevant footage of the warrant service from the officer's body-worn camera. The footage was not edited or altered.

As allowed by law, the body-worn camera video started when the officer exited his vehicle and ended after Mr. Hopkins fired his shotgun, and the officer returned fire. The city exchanged many emails and phone calls with Mr. Perry regarding the matter before and after meeting with him.

The city's policy is not to release body-worn camera footage publicly unless required by law. The policy protects the involved parties and their privacy.

The Rule 202 petition filed by the Doyle Law Firm on behalf of the Hopkins family seeks permission to investigate a claim before a suit is filed and is not an allegation of wrongdoing or liability. The city will continue to work with the family and their attorney to address issues raised in the petition. The city has cooperated with the family's attorneys in a transparent, forthright, and ethical manner, and the invitation to meet with the family and answer their questions remains open.

Oct. 9 City of College Station Statement

"The Texas Rangers conducted an independent, thorough, fair, and transparent investigation, and the city is confident in their findings. The Brazos County grand jury also reviewed the matter and returned a No Bill, finding no criminal conduct by the officer involved. The loss of life is always tragic, and the city sympathizes with everyone involved. However, the City of College Station disagrees strongly with the statements made by the family's attorney. The city has met and worked with the family's attorney while complying with the law, has cooperated with the family, and has offered to meet directly with them. The city will respond accordingly to the petition to investigate the claim before a suit is filed, as the matter is related to a pending criminal case involving Abraham Escobar and others."