
TASER; So Very Pretty in Pink!



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Taser Unveils Consumer Stun Gun, Including a Model in Pink

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,242531,00.html>

Tuesday, January 09, 2007

Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Taser International Inc. (TASR) on Monday rolled out a new version of its stun gun intended for civilian use, calling the devices "the next generation in personal protection."

The new **Taser C2**, unveiled at the **Consumer Electronics Show** in Las Vegas, come in a variety of colors, including metallic pink. Scottsdale-based Taser's primary customers now are police departments and the military.

The new weapon's introduction comes after a weekend that saw two people die after police shocked them with Taser devices.

A 45-year-old man died in Fort Pierce, Fla., on Saturday after police used a Taser to try to subdue him while he struggled with officers in the back of a patrol car. Douglas John Ilten, of Nashville, Tenn., had been stopped after acting erratically and throwing musical instruments out of a truck at a gas station.

On Sunday, police in New York City used a Taser to subdue an emotionally disturbed man at his Queens home. Blondel Lasseque, 38, went into cardiac arrest after being shocked and died.

Following the deaths and Taser's announcement of its new product, **Amnesty International USA** renewed its call for an independent and comprehensive study into their use. The group said more than 220 people have died after being shocked with Tasers by police and placing the stun guns in the hands of average citizens could have "devastating consequences."

Tasers shoot darts attached to wires from the gun and deliver a 50-thousand volt jolt of electricity, incapacitating the person.

"How many deaths related to these devices must occur before we have concrete, impartial information that accurately describes the potential dangers of use?" said Larry Cox, executive director for Amnesty International.

Taser says 30 different wrongful death or injury claims have been dismissed or successfully defended in recent years and claims it has not lost a product liability suit.

Taser hopes the latest version helps broaden its sales. The company introduced a civilian model in 2004, but many states banned them or required background checks.

The new gun is designed to make it easier for consumers to comply with state laws and buy the devices. The C2 can't be activated until the buyer completes a process known as **SureCheck**, an online background check that can be done in about a minute.

"The Taser C2 is the next generation in personal protections," company Chairman Tom Smith said. "Taser International was founded to create safer personal protection alternatives, while utilizing technologies to maximize public safety and minimize the potential for misuse — and the Taser C2 continues in that tradition.

Tenn. Man Dies After Fla. Police Use Taser To Subdue Him

<http://www.wkrn.com/nashville/news/ap-tenn-man-dies-after-fla-police-user-taser-to-subdue-him/69957.htm>

[Associated Press
January 8, 2007, 12:15 pm]

FORT PIERCE, Fla.

A 45-year-old Tennessee man died after police used a Taser to subdue him while trying to apply leg restraints in the back of a patrol car.

Officers noticed Douglas John Ilten, a music supply store owner from Nashville, Tenn., was not breathing after they hit him with two bursts of a Taser while trying to restrain him Saturday, acting Fort Pierce Police Chief Sean Baldwin said. The officers tried CPR, but Ilten was pronounced dead a short time later at a local hospital.

Police said Ilten was acting erratically and hurling musical instruments out of a rental truck at a gas station Saturday. Ilten struggled with Fort Pierce officer Hall Solomon, who handcuffed him and put him in the back of a patrol car.

Solomon and officer Scott Ceckanowicz decided to put on leg restraints to search Ilten before taking him to jail. Ilten's struggles intensified, so Ceckanowicz used two bursts from his Taser to subdue him, Baldwin said. The officers noticed he was not breathing moments later.

Ilten's wife, Ann, said her husband was on his way to Fort Lauderdale to deliver musical equipment to a cruise ship.

"I'm angry," Ann Ilten said. "I don't understand why (police) had any reason to approach him in the first place."

Both officers are on administrative leave while authorities investigate the death.

"This is a tragic incident, and my heart is filled with sorrow for this man and his family," Baldwin said. "Both officers are extremely upset."

Information from: The Palm Beach Post, <http://www.pbpost.com>

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The New York Times

Queens Man Dies After Police Use Taser, Reports Say

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/08/nyregion/08cnd-taser.html?ex=1325912400&en=f398e53c1ced5fe3&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>

[**Correction:** January 10, 2007, Wednesday An article and headline yesterday about the death of a disturbed man who apparently went into cardiac arrest after being shot with a Taser stun gun during a struggle with New York City police officers misidentified his borough of residence in some copies. He was from Brooklyn, not Queens.]

By JOHN HOLUSHA
Published: January 8, 2007

A 38-year-old man went into cardiac arrest at his uncle's home in Queens on Sunday afternoon after a struggle with police officers in which they tried to subdue him with a Taser gun, according to media reports.

It was evidently the second death in two days involving Taser guns, which are supposedly a non-lethal way for the police to deal with uncooperative people. According to The Associated Press, a 45-year-old Tennessee man died Saturday in Fort Pierce, Fla., after being struck twice by shocks from a Taser gun.

In Queens, the police were summoned to a house in the Rosedale section where Blondel Lassegue was said to have stopped taking his medicine for mental disorders and was acting erratically. When the four police officers tried to arrest him, he reportedly became combative and resisted efforts to take him into custody.

After trying a chemical spray, the police used a Taser gun. Mr. Lassegue went into cardiac arrest shortly afterward and was taken to Franklin Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

In the Florida case, Douglas John Ilten of Nashville, Tenn., was reported to have been acting erratically, hurling musical instruments out of a rental truck at a gas station, according to The Associated Press.

The Fort Pierce police said that Mr. Ilten, who was handcuffed, struggled with officers as they tried to put leg restraints on him in the back of a patrol car. When he kept struggling, the police

used two bursts from a Taser, The A.P. said. When the officers noticed a few minutes later that Mr. Ilten was not breathing, they were unable to revive him with cardio-pulmonary resuscitation.

There have been multiple studies of the effect of using the Taser electric stun weapons, which can fire electrified barbs up to 25 feet. An academic study released last year preliminarily concluded that the guns did not cause heart rhythm disturbances if used for short periods on healthy people.

The New York Times

Brooklyn Man, 38, Dies After Jolt From Police Taser

<http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F30D1FF63E540C7A8CDDA80894DF404482>

By ANDY NEWMAN; ANN FARMER, DARYL KHAN AND TRYMAINE LEE CONTRIBUTED REPORTING.

Published: January 9, 2007

The day after a disturbed man died after being shocked with a Taser stun gun in Queens by a police sergeant, a city police official yesterday provided a fuller account of the moments before the man apparently went into cardiac arrest.

The man, Blondel Lassegue, 38, a former schoolteacher, struggled with the police on Sunday afternoon in a kitchen of a house near Kennedy International Airport. Family members at the house said late yesterday that they would issue a statement today about the circumstances of Mr. Lassegue's death.

The Nassau County medical examiner's office, which is investigating the death, said the cause had not been determined.

The sergeant who shot Mr. Lassegue appeared to have been following departmental guidelines, said Chief Michael Collins, a New York Police Department spokesman. The Taser is widely used by police departments to subdue people, although there have been questions about its safety. Amnesty International says more than 220 people have died after being shot by Tasers.

Mr. Lassegue, a deeply religious man who lived in Flatbush, Brooklyn, had a history of mental illness and, according to family members, had recently stopped taking his medication, Chief Collins said. Four times in recent years, the police had been summoned to incidents involving Mr. Lassegue in Brooklyn, he added.

Shirley Donis, Mr. Lassegue's sister, described him as a scholarly man who spoke seven languages, including the Creole of his native Haiti, had a master's degree in psychology, and studied theology. Two weeks ago, she said, he went to Las Vegas to be ordained a Pentecostal minister. She said he was a kind, gentle person.

"He's a giver," she said. "He doesn't go out. He's always preaching. He always says you need to go to church."

On Sunday afternoon, the police said, Mr. Lassegue visited his aunt and uncle at 240-12 141st Avenue in Rosedale, Queens, on a tidy street lined with boxy houses and miniature lawns. He began behaving erratically, refused to leave and at one point grabbed a 1-year-old child, Chief Collins said.

The aunt called other relatives at Mr. Lassegue's home in Brooklyn, who called 911, Chief Collins said.

A caravan of police cars and ambulances drove up around 5 p.m., drawing the attention of neighbors. Sandy Ronquillo crossed the street to the Lassegue house and was met by Mr. Lassegue's uncle, Clausel Lassegue, who told her his nephew was "acting crazy."

Chief Collins offered the following account of the events inside the house:

Four officers approached Mr. Lassegue in the kitchen to try to calm him down. He eventually agreed to be placed in handcuffs and taken to a hospital, but after the police had cuffed his left hand, he lashed out with his right, punching a sergeant in the face repeatedly.

The officers wrestled Mr. Lassegue down. "They have his hands behind his back," Chief Collins said. "They're sitting on his legs as he's kicking in the air."

A second sergeant warned Mr. Lassegue that he would shoot him with the Taser if he continued to resist. When he did, the sergeant fired a Taser dart, which typically delivers a shock of 50,000 volts.

The officers were able to finish handcuffing Mr. Lassegue. Paramedics had arrived, and they "declared him O.K.," Chief Collins said. The paramedics left the room.

The police officers were preparing to carry Mr. Lassegue "from the building when he becomes unresponsive," Chief Collins said. The paramedics were called back, but were unable to revive Mr. Lassegue. He was taken to Franklin Hospital Medical Center, just over the Nassau County line in Valley Stream, where he was pronounced dead at 6:39 p.m.

The sergeant who was struck and the other three officers were treated for minor injuries. The 1-year-old child was unharmed. The names of the officers and sergeants were not released by the police.

The spokeswoman for the Nassau County medical examiner's office, Diane Markunas, said that an autopsy was performed yesterday but that a finding on the cause of death awaited the results of toxicological and other tests.

The Taser gun, which fires barbs attached to fine wires and is used by more than 10,000 police departments around the world, has been the subject of conflicting studies about its safety.

Officials at Taser International, which makes it, say that it has been tested on volunteers about 200,000 times, and that tests financed by the United States Justice Department found that the Taser did not change heart rhythms or damage hearts. But a University of Wisconsin study found last year that the guns' shocks applied directly to the hearts of healthy pigs could cause them to stop beating. Chief Collins said he did not know where the Taser dart struck Mr. Lassegue.