

## CHAS' INTRO to the First Posting Re: THE TASER-RELATED DEATH OF ROBERT LEE WELCH

**Robert Lee Welch**, 40, died on February 28th, 2009, after Montgomery County (Texas) Sheriffs Office deputies TASERED him at least SIX times. However, at this writing (**March 23, 2009**), it is not yet clear precisely how Mr. Welch was **RESTRAINED** by MCSO deputies during this incident.

Did MCSO deputies restrain him *before* or *after* they Tasered him at least SIX times?

Did MCSO deputies employ forceful-prone-restraint when they restrained him?

Did the Paramedics who responded to Mr. Welch's emergency keep him forcefully-prone-restrained until they finally noticed that he "wasn't breathing and didn't have a pulse"?

[“Welch's mother says a deputy put his foot on the back of his neck and then her son's body relaxed. He was loaded into an ambulance. A statement from the sheriff's office says paramedics discovered he wasn't breathing and didn't have a pulse.”]

Since Mr. Welch's death is so “new,” not all information is yet available.  
As more information becomes available, I'll post it.

What follows is a collection of TWO articles.

The first is from March 02, 2009.

The second is from March 17, 2009.

**YOURS, CHAS**  
(Ms. Charly D. Miller)

<http://abclocal.go.com/ktrk/story?section=news/local&id=6684374>

# Naked man dies after being shocked by Taser

Monday, March 02, 2009 | 8:56 AM

**[A TV NEWS REPORT VIDEO is available at the Internet address above – likely for only 1 year.]**



By Deborah Wrigley

**CONROE, TX (KTRK)** -- A man died after he was shocked by a Taser. Deputies in Montgomery County say they were just trying to get him under control.

The man's family is trying to comprehend everything that's happened. Relatives say they just wanted to calm him down and they didn't think things would turn out like this.

Family members called for help Saturday morning from their home near Conroe in Montgomery County, and deputies showed up. The major crimes unit of the Montgomery County Sheriff's office, the District Attorney's office, and notably the Texas Rangers are investigating the death of the 40-year-old man, who was dead just minutes after he was subdued by a Taser and deputies. His family is now wondering how different things might have been if they had never called for help.

The home on Golden Oaks Drive is peaceful. That's what a 40-year-old Houston man was seeking when he packed his car full of all that he owned and moved to his parents' home. Robert Lee Welch was diabetic and said to be depressed over a recent breakup. Saturday morning his family says Welch lost himself.

Welch's brother David Nichols recalled, "I saw my brother in the bathroom -- very incoherent and without any clothes on -- walking around in circles."

His family says he couldn't be calmed down and couldn't communicate, so an ambulance was called. Montgomery County deputies arrived first. According to a press release, Welch resisted their attempts to restrain him. They deployed a Taser -- six times, the family says.

"He never felt any of it," Nichole said. "He did not react to it."

Welch's mother says a deputy put his foot on the back of his neck and then her son's body relaxed. He was loaded into an ambulance. A statement from the sheriff's office says paramedics discovered he wasn't breathing and didn't have a pulse. A few minutes later at a Conroe hospital, Robert Lee Welch was pronounced dead.

His family for now is reserving judgment on what caused his death. The challenge is trying to comprehend that he's gone.

"It hurts the family, but it's not my time to do this. My time will be when I put my brother in the ground," Nichols said.

We made repeated calls to the sheriff's department for an interview but a spokesperson has yet to call us back. An autopsy will be conducted next week on Welch's body. The family is now trying to find money for a funeral.

It's been a couple months since anyone in our area has died after being shocked with a Taser. Back in December, sheriff's deputies used one on a man in northern Harris County. They'd tried to subdue him. They say he died from other health problems right after his arrest.

A recent report from Amnesty International shows more than 330 people have died in Taser incidents in the US since 2001.

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[http://www.hconline.com/articles/2009/03/17//woodlands\\_villager/news//wv-n\\_taser\\_death\\_cc.txt](http://www.hconline.com/articles/2009/03/17//woodlands_villager/news//wv-n_taser_death_cc.txt)



***Woodlands Villager - News***

## **Authorities await toxicology, Taser results in death**

By [NANCY FLAKE](#)

Published: 03.17.09

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office views Tasers as safe and effective weapons. But Joe Welch Jr., a South County resident, has a very different view.

Welch's son, Robert Lee Welch, 40, died Feb. 28 after MCSO deputies Tasered him several times when they were called to Joe Welch's home in the 6500 block of Golden Oaks Drive, south of Texas 242.

Preliminary autopsy results did not determine the cause of death for Robert Welch, whose heart stopped after he was Tasered, Joe Welch said. Toxicology results have not been finalized, MCSO Lt. Bill Bucks said, but results of tests on the data from the Taser used should be in early next week.

Robert Welch, according to a 9-1-1 recording the MCSO released to The Courier Wednesday, was staggering around his home naked and in a daze, his stepmother told a dispatcher on the recording. He also was pushing his father, who has a pacemaker and defibrillator.

Deputies used a Taser on Robert Welch because he was "standoffish and pushing," Bucks said.

"He was acting pretty much the way he was when the mother made the call," he said.

But Joe Welch said his son presented no danger.

“No one in this house was in any danger at any time,” he said. “We were trying to get help for Robert, not for us. Their main concern was that Robert was pushing on me.

“We didn’t want the deputies; we called for an ambulance.”

Four deputies arrived at the home, Bucks said, and all four were put on paid administrative leave for three days, which is standard policy. The four deputies are back on regular patrol duty, he said.

Janell Welch, Joe Welch’s wife, made the 9-1-1 call around 7 a.m. She first spoke with an EMS call taker.

“I don’t know what happened,” she said. “Our son came in around 11 last night. ... He’s been staggering around since 5 this morning. He’s buck naked. I don’t know what he’s on. He won’t talk, and he doesn’t make any sense.”

The call taker asked whether Robert Welch was violent or had a weapon, and Janell said “No” to both questions.

“Is this a suicide attempt?” the call taker asked.

“I have no idea. I wouldn’t doubt it,” Janell said.

The EMS call taker then got an MCSO call taker on the line, who asked Janell what drugs Robert Welch had taken.

“I have no idea,” she said. “None at all.”

A few seconds later, Janell yelled at Robert.

“Robert, stop! You’re going to hurt your daddy!” she said.

“No, he’s going to hurt me,” Robert said. “Get out of the way!”

Seconds later, Janell Welch called out to her daughter.

“Make sure he doesn’t hurt your dad,” she said. “He’s pushing really hard on him.”

The MCSO call taker then asked Janell Welch why she said it might be a suicide attempt.

“His girlfriend kicked him out last night,” she said. “He’s always threatening to do that.”

Janell Welch then said Robert Welch is diabetic, and also that Joe Welch has Type II diabetes and serious heart trouble.

“With that (unintelligible) going off, no one can touch him,” she said.

When Janell asked why the ambulance hadn’t arrived, the MCSO call taker said EMS would not go to the scene until the MCSO officers arrived.

“With him being violent ...” the call taker began to say.

“He’s not violent,” Janell said. “He’s walking around in a daze.”

Deputies arrived 15 minutes and 45 seconds after Janell called 9-1-1, and the call ended five seconds later.

### **MCSO Taser Use**

MCSO deputies were involved in 694 use-of-force incidents from the beginning of 2006 through June 30, 2008, according to MCSO statistics provided to The Villager newspaper for a previous story. For the 122 incidents involving Tasers, the devices were considered effective 105 times, an 86 percent success ratio. By comparison, pepper spray was found effective in 76 percent of the incidents, and batons were effective 25 percent of the time.

Tasers were discharged 168 times in the 122 incidents. At least eight incidents involved multiple five-second shock cycles, including one in which a person received nine cycles. **More than half of the 92 discharges did not include documentation on how many times a person was shocked.**

MCSO also documented nine instances in which a person was reported injured by a Taser. Over the same time period, deputies were injured 43 times during use-of-force incidents, and 29 deputies were taken to the hospital.

About 90 percent of all MCSO deputies carry Tasers, and the department is aiming for 100 percent, said Lt. Ralph Smith, MCSO training coordinator.

### **Taser Training and Effects**

Everyone who carries a Taser is trained to standards from Taser International, the stun-gun manufacturer, he said. All deputies get an initial eight-hour training, which includes being Tasered. Deputies must be re-certified every year but aren’t required to be Tasered during re certification.

“We don’t use Taser cartridges; we use training cartridges that shoot alligator clips,” he said. “If we discharged the actual Taser charge, it would cost too much.

“It’s 100 percent the same effect.”

Each five-second Taser charge carries 50,000 volts, which cannot be turned down, Smith said. The charge cannot be reduced to less than five seconds.

“It doesn’t affect you the same way electricity does,” he said.

The advantages of a Taser is that it gives deputies an option other than a lethal weapon, or duty guns, Smith said.

“It’s one of the best weapons you can arm yourself with,” he said. “It’s a very, very good tool, but it does not take the place of the duty weapon. Our thought here is safety first for the deputies and for citizens. “If you can use a Taser in place of a weapon, you haven’t killed someone.”

## Joe Welch's take on Tasers

Joe insists his son wasn't forcefully pushing anyone when he was Tasered.

"He didn't hurt anybody. He's 180 pounds, and these guys looked like linebackers from Green Bay," he said. "They Tasered him six times, and he (a deputy) stood his foot on Robert's neck."

When paramedics arrived, Robert had no pulse, and the paramedics were unable to revive him, Joe said. He was taken to St. Luke's The Woodlands Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Joe, who won't say whether he plans to take legal action against MCSO, believes Tasers should be "taken away" from law enforcement.

"It's a bad idea to give Tasers to everyone in the force," he said. "They screwed up and they knew it.

"They Tasered my son to death. When they hear from me, God's going to come with me."

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Those are hyphens (dashes) between the "c" and "d" and "miller"