Use of heavy sedative by Minneapolis police under investigation

Anthony Bertolt
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The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* published information from a leaked copy of a draft report from the Office of Police Conduct Review last month which details the routine use of ketamine, a heavy sedative, on detained individuals by the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD).

The report reviews statistics and details specific cases where police directed Emergency Medical Service (EMS) paramedics to inject ketamine into individuals who were already restrained and/or handcuffed. The cases leading to officers directing EMS to use ketamine ranged from jaywalking to obstruction of justice. In one case police used multiple doses of ketamine on the same person, and in another the drug was used on a woman having an asthma attack.

Despite claims of transparency by the police and city officials, the report itself and the bodycam footage have not been released to the public out of a deep fear by the political establishment that its release will spark mass protests in the city.

While claiming that the release of the report will hurt the "public trust" of the police, the reality is that the there is no trust between the working class and the police, who are encouraged to terrorize workers and kill with impunity.

Over the past five years, the entire span of time the report details, only one person who received ketamine was arrested. The report also showed a rise in police use of ketamine over the years, from two incidents in 2012 to 67 in 2017, with possibly many more that went unreported.

Ketamine, which is documented as a date-rape drug by the MPD, is a powerful sedative that can induce heart or breathing failure, requiring individuals on the drug to be revived or intubated. The drug results in memory loss with possible side effects include hallucinations, confusion and agitation. Recent research has shown its potential for treating patients with severe depression.

The Office of Police Conduct Review investigators could trace details about specific cases to footage obtained from officers' bodycams. According to the report, "Multiple videos showed individuals requiring intubation after being injected with ketamine, and [police] reports indicate that multiple individuals stopped breathing and/or their hearts stopped beating after being injected with ketamine."

Ketamine was originally used only for research until Hennepin Healthcare cleared the tranquilizer for use on individuals who are "profoundly agitated." The Minneapolis police, however, are not doctors or even medical professionals and have instructed paramedics to administer ketamine even when individuals were did not fit the description of "profoundly agitated."

Former US Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates has been hired to investigate further after Hennepin Healthcare called for an external investigator following publication of details of the report in the local media.

Yates has been tasked with determining if police overstepped their roles, despite clear evidence that the drugging of individuals rarely resulted in arrests and criminal charges. Whatever comes out of her review is guaranteed to be a whitewash and will cover up the full extent of the criminality of the Minneapolis Police Department.

The official response to the routine police druggings follows the same pattern of cover-up as with every Justice Department investigation. Systematic police violence and torture, much like that in the Chicago Police Department's Homan Square blacksite, sparks outrage and protests from the working class while the political establishment, Democrats and Republicans, do

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everything they can to suppress social opposition and maintain the status quo.

Responding to the report of Yates' hiring, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey cited her "long history of commitment to unearthing the truth and delivering justice, and that's exactly what we need now," and said that the investigation will "get to the bottom of what happened and we need to do it in a transparent and accountable way completely free from any interference from officials in the city."

As deputy attorney general, Yates oversaw the defense and expansion of NSA and CIA spying programs, demanding that tech companies cooperate. In mid-2015, Yates and then-FBI Director James Comey issued a joint statement to the Senate Judiciary Committee urging the establishment of a backdoor to all encrypted data. Yates' contribution to the joint statement centered on finding a mandate for industry support. She stated that if technology companies and the US government fail to find an agreeable deal, the government may find it necessary to force companies to comply with government access to encrypted content.

The official response of the Minneapolis Police to the revelations and investigation has been to implement a policy preventing police from instructing EMS to inject ketamine into suspects, declaring that it is up to EMS, yet no one has been arrested or even criminally charged for the abuse meted out on working-class residents of Minneapolis.

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