

IN SOLIDARITY



Name: Dante Parker

Dates: August 14, 1977 – August 12, 2014

Place of Death: Victorville, CA.

Dante Parker was the married father of five children, four daughters and a son. On the afternoon of Tuesday, August 12, he was riding a bike down neighborhood streets. Someone reported that there was an attempted break-in and identified a Black man riding a bike as the perpetrator. Deputy Kristy Irwin arrived on the scene and attempted to detain the 5'10", nearly 300-pound man, who, according to the official report, was displaying signs of drug intoxication. Backup was called for.

Mr. Parker did not comply with requests and was tasered between 25 – 27 times. He was placed in the squad car of the San Bernardino Sheriff Police, face down. Dante Parker said he could not breathe, paramedics were called and arrived on the scene 20 – 30 minutes later. At a local hospital, Parker was found to be “wholly unresponsive and in cardiac arrest.” Advanced life support measures were then used, but he died.

Who was Dante Parker? Was he the teddy-bear of a man who manned the presses at a local newspaper, loved music and was constantly trying to shed a few pounds by bike riding and jogging? Were members of his family and friends shocked to learn the official autopsy revealed the main reason for his death as acute PCP poisoning with traces of cannabis found in his system? The tasing was listed as a contributing factor.

There is a paucity of information on the consequences of the taser-related death of Dante Parker. Officer action was determined to be “justified”. However, this unfortunate incident, coupled with other deaths resulting from taser use in the department, caused the tasing policy of the San Bernardino Sheriff’s Department to be reviewed and rewritten.

June 11, 2020