



Date: July 27, 2017

To: Commissioner Richard Ross
Philadelphia Police Department

From: Erica D. Atwood, Interim Executive Director
Police Advisory Commission

RE: PAC Investigation of Erica Koschman's Death
PAC #15-002-SI

Pursuant to the Executive Order 2-17 Section 4 C 1(a) the Philadelphia Police Advisory Commission (PAC) has concluded our audit of the investigation into the death of Erica Koschman. PAC has reviewed the Philadelphia Police Department's (PPD) file, the initial PAC report and questions to the PPD, the PPD responses to Mrs. Koschman's (*decedent's mother*) private investigator, Erica Koschman's medical records, social media, as well as interviewed several witnesses.

PAC's recommendations are as follows:

1. Every suicide/homicide investigation, including those where the partner or spouse of the decedent is an officer, should be treated according to protocol and uniformly.
2. In responding to suicide/homicide cases, a basic death investigation should be launched, rather than assuming a suicide or handling the call based on the initial report, especially when the initial report came from the only other person present at the time of the death.¹
3. It is very important that there not be "short-cuts" taken based on the suggestion of suicide, e.g., tests routinely performed should be performed.
4. Victimology should be conducted, e.g. developing a full profile of the victim. Does the victim fit a "suicide profile?" Was there evidence of marked depression or suicide ideation? Victimology should also include the victim's personality, friends, education, hobbies, marital status and dating history, history of alcohol or drugs, family ties, etc.
5. In developing motive or intent, all factors should be developed. Is there a history of domestic violence? Have the relevant prior photographs, social media pages, or medical treatment records been obtained and reviewed? Is one partner having an affair or affairs? Were there warning signs?

¹ According to Practical Homicide Investigation®, "All death inquiries should be conducted as homicide investigations until the facts prove differently. The resolution of the mode of death as suicide is based on a series of factors which eliminate homicide, accident and natural causes of death."

Was there a suicide note? Was the decedent under professional treatment or counseling? Had there been a prior suicide attempt, etc.

6. In developing evidence, interviews of witnesses with material knowledge should be conducted, and once conducted, memorialized in writing.
7. In reaching a conclusion, all material evidence of any kind, (or lack thereof), should be considered.

In accordance with Section 4 C 2 of Executive Order 2-17, the PPD may respond to these recommendations within 15 days. Should you have any questions prior to a formal response please do not hesitation to give me a call in my office at 215-685-0891.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steven Howard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S" and "H".