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Investigation into heroin overdose at UMass reopened

By Eric Bosco and Matt Rocheleau

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AMHERST — Prosecutors have reopened the investigation into the fatal heroin overdose of a University of Massachusetts Amherst student after his mother gave them the name of the student she believes provided him with the drug, according to two people with direct knowledge of the investigation.

Details of the [October 2013 death](#), reported by the Globe this week, prompted UMass officials to [suspend the confidential informant program](#) that he had signed up for after he was allegedly caught selling drugs.

Some critics questioned whether police should have provided more help to the student — who is being identified only by his middle name, Logan — for his drug problem.

On Friday, investigators for Northwestern District Attorney David E. Sullivan interviewed Logan's mother, who this week forwarded them the name of the alleged dealer based on text

messages she found on her son's cellphone. She said she told them they should have discovered the alleged dealer's identity already, since they had Logan's phone for weeks after his death.

"How could they not have a name? It was right on the phone," said Logan's mother, who said she had no idea that her son, a scholarship student and a former high school hockey star, was using heroin. "It just says to me somebody didn't do their job."



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Logan's mother said the investigators asked to meet with her in person, but she was skeptical.

“Interviewing me isn't going to tell you anything, unless you want to know about my son and what a great kid he was,” she said.

Sullivan's office declined to comment on Logan's case specifically, but the top aide to Sullivan stressed that investigations into unattended deaths can always be renewed based on new information.

“It is not uncommon for death investigations to extend weeks, months, and, in some cases, years after an unattended or suspicious death,” Steven E. Gagne, first assistant district attorney, said in a prepared statement. “Whenever new or previously undisclosed information comes to our attention, we take all appropriate measures to investigate that information and, if necessary, reassess the case.”

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An aide to District Attorney David Sullivan stressed that investigations into unattended deaths can always be renewed based on new information.

UMass Amherst officials declined to comment on what administrative actions, if any, they are taking regarding the alleged heroin dealer. Normally, alleged drug dealers could face immediate administrative suspension.

“UMass Amherst is cooperating in all matters with the Northwestern district attorney's office in the death investigation.” UMass spokesman Ed Blaguszewski said in a prepared statement. “The district attorney should be contacted for any comment.”

Logan faced the threat of suspension, parental notification, and criminal prosecution in December 2012 when he allegedly sold LSD to an undercover campus police officer. But police offered to let Logan keep his drug involvement secret if he agreed to become a confidential informant, according to documents and interviews. He immediately led police to two other students who were arrested and suspended for selling or possessing drugs.

Police say they never knew that Logan was using heroin, and he denied he had a drug problem. But police found a syringe, an item that is banned at UMass, in his dormitory room, a possible indicator that he was injecting drugs.

“If somebody had told me at 3 a.m.” that Logan was using heroin, “I would have driven there,” said Logan's mother. “I would have called the cops just to make sure he was safe. I would have done whatever it takes. But nobody gave me that opportunity.”

Ten months after he became a confidential informant — and after months of confiding in friends about guilt over being a “snitch” and his frustration at being an addict — Logan was dead.

The district attorney has downplayed the connection between Logan's work as a confidential informant and his

death, even questioning whether he was an informant despite extensive documentation at UMass, including an agreement to be an informant signed by Logan. His office released a statement this week saying that any attempt to link the program to Logan's death was "misplaced."

But UMass officials reacted swiftly after the Globe published a story Sunday about Logan's death, first announcing plans to change the confidential informant program to require informants to undergo drug treatment and then suspending the program altogether.

The Globe is not fully identifying Logan or his family to protect their privacy, but the people interviewed for this article know his name and the names of his parents.

The investigation into Logan's death began Oct. 4, 2013, when Logan's father and stepmother, visiting UMass for family weekend, discovered Logan on the bathroom floor of his off-campus apartment, dead from an apparent heroin overdose.

Amherst police came to the scene, but Chief Scott P. Livingstone said the investigation was "turned over to the DA's office immediately" and Sullivan's investigators took it from there. It's unclear what progress, if any, they made in identifying Logan's dealer.

When Logan's mother got her son's phone from investigators in late October 2013, she immediately discovered a long string of text messages between Logan and someone who was driving in heavy traffic from Hartford to deliver heroin to her son on the night he died.

"I know you're hurtin', but you will very soon be in the loving comforting arms of Miss H," the alleged dealer wrote to Logan late on the evening of Oct. 3, 2013, as he drove toward Logan's apartment to sell him what he referred to as "tropicana."

Shortly after the sale, Logan apparently overdosed and never responded to the student's last text at 12:18 a.m. Oct. 4, 2013: "How much tropicana did u drink"

In late October 2013, Logan's mother dashed off a bitter note to the alleged dealer using her son's phone: "You killed my son. . . . You will rot in hell." She got no answer.

The Globe has tried repeatedly to interview the student whose phone number matches the one who was texting Logan the night he died. A reporter contacted the student, but he ended the text exchange when the reporter identified himself as a journalist, promising to get in touch later.

Logan's mother said that over the last year, she assumed that investigators were continuing to look into her son's death. She could not get detailed information when she called Amherst police, who told her the case had been referred to a drug task force.

However, after the Globe story disclosed that the alleged dealer is still on campus, she learned that UMass officials did not know his name and they were unable to get it from investigators.

Now, Logan's mother is hoping the district attorney's renewed investigation will finally bring some accountability for her son's death. "I just can't let it go," she said. "One hundred percent I want them to pursue the dealer."

Massachusetts law calls for up to two years in prison for a first offense of selling heroin and five years or more for subsequent offenses.

Sullivan's office declined to speculate on what, if anything, Logan's dealer could be charged with in connection with his death.

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