

LOCAL

Video shows OC deputies Tasing inmate

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By Eileen Frere

SANTA ANA (KABC) -- Graphic jailhouse video shows Orange County deputies shocking a handcuffed prisoner with a Taser, even after he had been strapped into a restraint chair. They accused him of resisting a search.

The jail videotape was shot March 18, 2006, before 3 a.m. in the Orange County Jail.

Matthew Fleuret can be heard screaming at different times during the 20-minute video provided to the media by attorneys who have filed a civil-rights lawsuit on his behalf.

"He's restrained, seated and facing the opposite direction," said attorney Stephen Bernard. "This deputy comes up and hits him in the head with his fist and his elbow. That's the beginning of the beating and the torture."

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The 24-year-old was arrested after allegedly obstructing a deputy after getting into a bar fight on St. Patrick's Day. Fleuret alleges that once he was in jail, he was shocked with a Taser gun.

The video is grainy, and at times difficult to make out the exact number of times he is Tased. Deputies can be heard saying, "Tase him," at least three times.

According to the L.A. Times, the Sheriff's report says deputies had to use force because Fleuret was intoxicated and uncooperative. He resisted when deputies tried to search him.

"There was some resistance on his part, but I think most of that resistance was attributed to him being beaten and Tased," said Bernard.

Bernard alleges a hood hides blood flowing from Fleuret's head on video. Even while restrained, Fleuret is Tased again.

"We believe that he was Tased at least 11 times," said Bernard. "Two times while he was tied, strapped in to a chair."

Bernard says Fleuret, who does not have a criminal record, is still recovering. Fleuret suffered several injuries, including damage to his shoulders and post-traumatic stress disorder. Fleuret, a former construction worker, also has problems holding down a job.

The lawsuit seeks more than \$47 million in damages.

The Orange County Sheriff's Department is referring any questions regarding the case to the attorney representing the County, who says because of the pending litigation, he cannot comment on the case.

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