

Abuse charged: Oregon man dies in Mexican jail.

Last Update: 9/02/2008 7:29 am

Yoncalla (KMTR) – A Yoncalla couple's first trip ever to Mexico ended tragically with his death. For now, there are a lot of questions for Mexican authorities on how it happened.

While the couple was vacationing in San Jose del Cabo, Mexico, Samuel Botner was arrested after a confrontation with a local man.

That was the last time Kim Botner saw her husband alive.

Sam Botner, who was 38, died the night of August 27th. The cause is unclear and the death is under investigation.



(Family photo)

But, according to Kim Botner, several Mexican police officers have been arrested and charged with beating him to death.

Now she's waiting for more information.

Kim and Sam Botner arrived in San Jose del Cabo on August 23rd. Kim says her husband got into an argument with a local man at the resort where they were staying. The argument escalated quickly and the local police were called.

Mexican documents report Botner was trying to rob the other man but his wife says that is not true. Kim Botner says the whole situation was a misunderstanding. And it didn't help that there was a language barrier. Sam Botner was arrested.

The next morning his wife was told he had died.

Kim Botner says the death is now considered a homicide investigation.

Instead of flying home together Sunday, Kim identified her husband's remains and flew home alone.

"It was hard," she said. "The images in my brain will always be there. They beat him up bad. They beat him to death. First I was in shock. And now, the anger part—yeah, I'm outraged! It was so unnecessary."

Sam Botner grew up in Yoncalla. He was a commercial fisherman and a timber cutter. Kim says he loved the outdoors. The couple has three daughters between them.

A funeral is set for Saturday at 2:00 p.m. at the Assembly of God Church in Yoncalla. The public is invited.

Kim Botner has pressed charges in Mexico against the police officers involved. She says she is now trying to decide what to do next.

CABO SAN LUCAS, Mexico (AP) - Six Mexican officers have been placed under house arrest on suspicion of homicide after an Oregon man died while in police custody in the resort city of San Jose del Cabo.

Baja California Sur state deputy prosecutor Omar Barajas said the officers were placed under house arrest while authorities investigate whether they played a role in the death.

News outlets in Oregon and Mexico have identified the victim as 38-year-old Sam Botner of Yoncalla.

A medical examiner recorded minor bruises on the man's face at the time of his arrest, but more were found on his body after his death.

Barajas says the police officers gave contradictory statements about the man's incarceration.

One confessed to kicking him in the face. Others said the victim hit his face on the ground when they pushed him to the floor to subdue him.

Barajas says surveillance video and witness statements indicate that officers struck the victim.

©2008 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.