

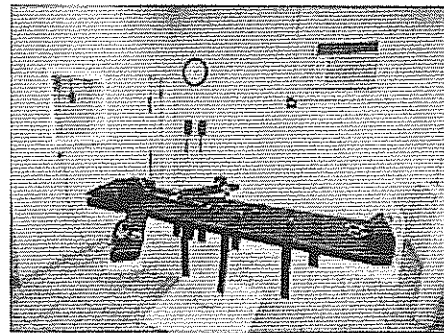
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Lethal deal

Monday, 24 January 2011

**BBC News has learned that a drug provided by a tiny pharmaceutical company in West London is to be used this week in the execution by lethal injection of a convicted murderer by the state of Georgia, writes the Today programme's Andrew Hosken.**

Newly-released documents show that Dream Pharma Ltd, based in Acton in west London, recently supplied the US state of Georgia with a quantity of sodium thiopental, an anaesthetic used in executions.



The drug is set to be used tomorrow at 7am local time (noon GMT), in the execution of Emmanuel Hammond, who has been on Death Row for 23 years after being convicted for the killing of a 27-year-old woman.

Other documents obtained by Reprieve UK - which campaigns on behalf of Death Row prisoners - demonstrate how Dream Pharma has supplied at least five states with the drugs needed in lethal injections.

Clive Stafford-Smith, the director of Reprieve, said the company had supplied the State of California with enough thiopental to execute at least 85 people.

He added: "The new documentation proves that at least 90 people can be killed now with the drugs that were exported from Britain by Dream Pharma and unfortunately the vast majority of those would not be executed if the Business Secretary Vince Cable had enacted a ban at the time we had asked him because Dream Pharma had sold them later after we had asked for a ban."

**"I am sure you... will want to do everything you can to prevent Dream Pharma drugs from killing scores of prisoners."**

Clive Stafford-Smith writes to Mehdi Alavi

Mr Mehdi ("Matt") Alavi, a 50-year-old wholesaler, is listed at Companies House as the sole shareholder of Dream Pharma.

When he was first approached earlier this month by the BBC with details of a shipment to Arizona, Mr Alavi claimed he had "no idea" why the drugs were needed.

But in one note obtained by Reprieve, the Georgia Department of Corrections stated to Mr Alavi that it used Thiopental injection "...in its death sentence cases".

The note added: "All persons who have been convicted of a capital offence and have had imposed upon them a sentence of death shall suffer punishment by lethal injection."

Mr Alavi responded, "I am more than happy to assist."

Mr Stafford-Smith said "I'm afraid it's clear beyond any doubt that Mr Alavi and Dream Pharma knew what was going on."

This week, Reprive has written to Mr Alavi demanding documentation, including copies of all invoices and documentation relating to the "sale or supply of sodium thiopental, pancuronium bromide and potassium chloride to any US state of Department of Correction by your company."

Clive Stafford-Smith told Mr Alavi, "I am sure you are as keen as we are to mitigate the damage that has been done and will want to do everything you can to prevent Dream Pharma drugs from killing scores of prisoners." Mr Alavi has yet to respond to Reprive or to BBC requests for an interview.

Reprive has now asked the government to intervene to prevent the execution of Emmanuel Hammond.

A spokesman for the Business Secretary reiterated Vince Cable's personal opposition to the death penalty and that he had already placed export restrictions to the US of Sodium Thiopental.

He is considering similar action in relation to other drugs used in the lethal injection protocol.

Order Details
<b>Name/Description</b> Thiopental Injection, powder for reconstitution, thiopental 50 mg vial packs of 25's Batch No: AW5022 EXP: 05/14
<b>POTASSIUM CHLORIDE 1.5G/10ML INJ, PACKS OF 10</b> Batch No: 622567 EXP: 01/13
<b>Pancuronium Injection, pancuronium bromide 2 mg/ml, 2-ml packs of 10's</b> Batch No: 845654 EXP: 11/11
Special delivery charges

Dream Pharma is said to have also supplied drugs to Arizona State Prison