

[The Curious Case of the Black Male Escort Found Dead Inside a Wealthy Democratic Donor's Home](#)



[Michael Harriot](#)



Gemmel Moore was found dead inside the home of wealthy Democratic donor Ed Buck (Gemmel Moore via Facebook; Ed Buck via Facebook)

On July 27, 2017, 26-year-old Gemmel Moore was found in the bathroom of a West Hollywood, Calif., apartment belonging to Ed Buck, 62. Moore was young, black and poor. Buck was white, wealthy and powerful.

That's all we know.

Moore's family is searching for answers. Buck has not spoken publicly about the incident. Police have not charged anyone with a crime, even though [multiple reports have surfaced](#) that Buck had a predilection for young, black men. Even after a number of young, black male sex workers [have stepped forward with apparent photographic evidence](#) that Buck was one of their clients. Even after each one of those men separately tells the same story: Not only did Buck have a fetish for black men, but he was known in West Hollywood's gay community as someone paying top dollar for the company of 20-something black escorts ...

But only after injecting them with drugs.

West Hollywood is known as the "symbolic heart" of LGBTQ Los Angeles. During the 1930s, gay men and women gathered in bars in the then-unincorporated part of the city to skirt federal and state Prohibition laws. In 1967, two years before New York City's Greenwich Village Stonewall riots put the fight for gay and lesbian rights on the map, a protest organized by the Personal Rights in Defense and Education organization kick-started the West Coast movement in West Hollywood.

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Since then, the West Hollywood area has been incorporated as a city and is known nationwide as a home for a thriving, affluent gay population. The city is a liberal enclave and has recently rebranded itself as WeHo.

Buck was born in 1954 and came out to his parents at the age of 16, according to WeHoville. In the 1980s, after living and traveling as a male model and actor, Buck began working in Arizona for a company that provided information for driver's licenses. According to WeHoville, in a 1987 interview with the Arizona Republic, Buck said that he saw so much potential in the struggling company that he bought it out of bankruptcy for \$250,000. Five years later, he sold the company for more than \$1 million profit.

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In 1987 Buck, described by the Arizona Republic in the same article as a “millionaire, self-acknowledged homosexual and registered Republican,” launched himself into politics by leading an effort to impeach Arizona Gov. Evan Mecham.

Even though Buck's campaign led to the successful impeachment of the governor, Buck left the Republican Party because of its intolerant stance on LGBTQ issues. According to the profile in WeHoville, after arrests on narcotics and public indecency charges, Buck eventually left Arizona and moved to West Hollywood.

It was in West Hollywood that Buck became a major political backer. He helped Democrat John D'Amico win a seat on the West Hollywood City Council and pushed for the nation's first ban on the sale of fur products.

Hillary Clinton and Ed Buck (Ed Buck via Facebook) Although donations to political action committees don't have to be disclosed, Buck gave \$2,700—the maximum amount possible—to the Hillary Clinton campaign, and online sources show he has donated more [than \\$250 million to Democratic candidates](#). A quick Google Images search turns up pictures of Buck with some of the most powerful Democratic politicians in the country, including Clinton and California Gov. Jerry Brown.

“If there was ever anybody in West Hollywood whose bed you expected a dead body to turn up in, it was Ed Buck.” —former West Hollywood Mayor Steve Martin

In 2017, Gemmel Moore relocated from Texas and moved to West Hollywood. Numerous friends of Moore confirmed his struggles with drugs, which, many say, [was fueled by the fetishes of one of his most frequent clients](#)—Ed Buck.

Moore’s roommate and best friend, Samuel Lloyd, alleges that Buck had an unhealthy obsession with Moore. “He went out there searching for other men that were struggling and on the streets and had no money ... men who had never experienced drugs before,” said Lloyd at a vigil held for Moore on Oct. 21 by Justice 4 Gemmel, an organization launched by Moore’s mother, LaTisha Nixon. “This is the kind of guys Ed Buck searched for.”



Lloyd added that Moore had grown afraid of Buck in the days before his death, saying that “Gemmel was scared of this man. He came and he laid in my arms and he was scared. Scared that this man was going to hurt him.”

Lloyd said that Moore went to West Hollywood police a number of times to warn them about Buck, but to no avail.

Lloyd’s allegations seem to be backed up by other men who provided photographic evidence of Buck’s drug use with male prostitutes. Damar Love provided the WeHo Times with photographs of himself inside Buck’s home. According to the Times, the pictures appeared to have been taken at the same apartment where Moore’s body was found and show Love sitting next to a glass pipe often used to smoke crystal meth.

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Love told the WeHo Times that he serviced Buck at least three times. He stated that Buck insisted that Love turn off his cellphone and demanded that he do drugs before their encounter. In an interview with the WeHo Times, Love stated:

When I get there, I always want my money up front, and that's how it always started. Initially, when I got there I understood that he was already well under the influence because he told me he had already been up for two days and was still doing drugs as far as liquid GHB, shooting meth—crystal meth, and smoking it. When he insisted that I get high and continue to get high, that's when I started to do my research on him ... I was like, "Why are you insisting that I be high?"

Writer Jasmyne Cannick says she met with Love along with journalists from ABC 7 and the Los Angeles Times and provided a partial transcript of the interview, in which Love says he went to the police with this information:

So I go there [West Hollywood Sheriff's Station] and I basically let them know I'm coming from an older friend's house—at the time I didn't want to speak his name. But I did initially say that I feel like I was drugged. And because I was talking rapidly and constantly looking around tryin' to watch my back to see if someone was approaching me the only thing they would say is, "You're tweaking. You're under the influence and if you don't get away from here I'm going to take you to jail for being under the influence." They didn't care to ask who it was or where did it happen, and I said, "Well just let me write a statement down; you guys can give me a number for that I can use if I need to come back it'd be available." He said, "OK." He gave me a paper. I wrote it down. Sat there for about 10 minutes and because I was still rambling about the situation they did not want me standing in the front lobby of the department; they told me to leave.

Another alleged client who only goes by the name of "Brian" provided screenshots from the website Adam4Adam of [conversations with Buck arranging an encounter](#). Yet another man named "Blake" has [provided screenshots to Jasmyne Cannick](#) from a man using the name "Bucked," purported to be Ed Buck. Blake provided screenshots and photos from inside an apartment that appears to resemble Buck's home.

Buck's neighbors and associates have allegedly fallen prey to the bullying and erratic behavior of the wealthy donor. In a 2002 petition for a restraining order, therapist James E. d'Jarnette told a court that Buck harassed him for days after [d'Jarnette informed the wealthy donor that he wouldn't prescribe amphetamines](#), the WeHo Times reports.

Former Councilman [Steve Martin said](#) that people in the West Hollywood community often complained about Buck's temperament. "If there was ever anybody in West Hollywood whose bed you expected a dead body to turn up in, it was Ed Buck," Martin told the WeHo Times.

Perhaps the most damning evidence comes from a journal that Moore's mother says belonged to Gemmel Moore discussing his fear of Buck.

"I honestly don't know what to do," reads the journal excerpt. "I've become addicted to drugs and the worst one at that. Ed Buck is the one to thank he gave me my first injection of crystal meth it was very painful but after all the troubles I became addicted to the pain and fetish/fantasy."

In the entry, Moore goes on to say, "If it didn't hurt so bad I'd kill myself, but for now I'll just let Ed Buck do it."

Journal entry from Gemmell Moore (via Justice 4 Gemmell)

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When police arrived at Buck's home to investigate the death, they found drug paraphernalia, according to the [Los Angeles coroner's office](#). Video also shows another young black man showing up at Buck's home while the police were taping off the home, looking for Buck, only to be turned away by the cops on the scene.

Despite this abundance of evidence and more, including cellphone records, West Hollywood authorities have not charged Buck with a crime and have indicated that Buck is not a suspect.

"If it didn't hurt so bad I'd kill myself, but for now I'll just let Ed Buck do it." —Gemmell Moore

Moore's family have asked the investigators to grant immunity to witnesses who come forward, but the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department said that it cannot grant immunity—only prosecutors can.

In addition to the launch of Justice 4 Gemmell, Moore's mother has enlisted the help of human rights advocate and attorney Nana Gyamfi.

Through all of this, Ed Buck has remained silent. And free. He dispatched his attorney to a West Hollywood City Council meeting to urge citizens to stop the ongoing "character assassination."

Meanwhile, 26-year-old Gemmel Moore is still dead.

Editor's Note: *A previous version of this article misspelled the name of LaTisha Nixon and listed the wrong year of death for Gemmel Moore and an incorrect date for his vigil. The Root regrets these errors.*

About the author

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