



Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

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DATE: November 19, 2020

TO: Captain Charles Meeks, Commander
Sacramento County Sheriff's Office
Correctional Services Unit
651 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

FROM: Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

SUBJECT: In-Custody Death – Irma Jean McLaughlin (DOB 7-25-52)
SSD Report No. MJD 2018-0311741
Date of Incident: September 1, 2018
Date of Death: September 3, 2018

The above case was referred to this office on August 1, 2019, for review of the circumstances surrounding the September 3, 2018, death of Sacramento County Main Jail inmate Irma Jean McLaughlin.

McLaughlin was arrested on August 30, 2018, by the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office for possession of methamphetamine for purposes of sale.

McLaughlin was booked into the Main Jail and screened by medical intake staff at 4:30 p.m. She was identified as a medical expedite due to heart problems, detoxing from heroin, and her frail condition.

McLaughlin was moved to the medical floor at approximately 7:00 p.m. and was evaluated by a registered nurse. Her cardiac condition and heroin use were discussed. An EKG was administered, and she was given a dose of Coumadin, a blood-thinning medication, to aid in the heroin detoxification.

At approximately 9:24 p.m., McLaughlin was cleared to leave the medical floor and was moved to cell 304 on the female intake floor. She was advised by Sheriff's Deputy Diane Jordan-Tucker that if she could not sleep on the lower bunk, she should place her mattress on the floor to avoid the risk of falling from the upper bunk. McLaughlin told Deputy Jordan-Tucker that she understood.

At approximately 6:53 p.m. on August 31, McLaughlin complained of chest pain and shortness of breath. She was sent to the medical floor where she was evaluated by a nurse and cleared to return to her floor.

At approximately 1:41 a.m. on September 1, McLaughlin pressed the emergency call button in cell 304. Sheriff's Deputy George Vue responded to her cell and McLaughlin told him that she fell from the top bunk and needed medical attention. She complained of pain to her head and to her hip. Deputy Vue noticed that McLaughlin was limping and had swelling on the upper side of her left eye.

Medical unit staff responded to cell 304, as McLaughlin stated she could not walk. She again said she hit her head after falling from the top bunk. Deputy Jordan-Tucker noted that McLaughlin had a large discolored lump on the left side of her forehead. McLaughlin was taken in a wheelchair to the medical floor.

At approximately 2:40 a.m., McLaughlin was placed in a cell in the medical unit for observation. McLaughlin was able to walk into the cell with minimal assistance.

At approximately 4:50 a.m., McLaughlin advised Deputy Jordan-Tucker that she believed her hip was fractured. Deputy Jordan-Tucker noted that McLaughlin's left eye was swollen nearly shut and was discolored. Further, McLaughlin's left hip had a large purple "lump." A registered nurse asked McLaughlin if she had fallen a second time and McLaughlin stated she had not.

Medical staff arranged for McLaughlin's transport to UC Davis Medical Center (UCDMC) by a Sacramento Fire Department ambulance at 5:28 a.m. During the transport, McLaughlin told Sheriff's Deputy Brian Russell that she was detoxing off heroin and had been using approximately a gram per day prior to her arrest.

The ambulance arrived at UCDMC at approximately 5:44 a.m. While in the emergency room, McLaughlin experienced internal bleeding believed to have been caused by a combination of her fall and the blood-thinning medication she was taking. She was taken into surgery, but it was unsuccessful. She died at 10:01 p.m. on September 3, 2018.

McLaughlin's cellmate in cell 304 was interviewed. She stated that she was sleeping and did not see McLaughlin fall. She said that McLaughlin had her mattress on the ground. She denied having any conflict with McLaughlin.

Inmates from the surrounding cells were interviewed. None of these witnesses stated they observed anything unusual.

An autopsy was performed by Pathologist Brian Nagao, M.D., of the Sacramento County Coroner's Office. Dr. Nagao concluded that the cause of McLaughlin's death was "complications of blunt force injuries," and the Coroner's Office determined the manner of the death to be accidental.

No evidence of criminal misconduct is presented or suggested in any of the supporting reports. The District Attorney's Office will not take any further action in this matter.

cc: Mark Evenson, Office of the Inspector General
Lieutenant Gail Vasquez, Sacramento County Sheriff's Office
Kimberly Gin, Sacramento County Coroner's Office