



Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

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Date: June 27, 2022

To: Captain Anthony Paonessa, Commander
Sacramento County Sheriff's Office
Correctional Services Unit
651 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

Re: In-Custody Death – Antonio Thomas (DOB 2/25/1980)
SSO Report No. 2019-0436655
Date of Incident – December 9, 2019

The above case was referred to this office for review of the circumstances surrounding the death of inmate Antonio Thomas on January 21, 2020, due to an incident that occurred while Thomas was confined in the Sacramento County Main Jail on December 9, 2019. The case was submitted to the District Attorney's Office August 4, 2021.

Thomas had been in custody at the Main Jail since December 7, 2019, after his arrest for a warrant that was issued for a violation of his Post Release Community Supervision conditions.

Thomas was placed in Cell 315 with inmate Joshua Thomas Vaden. Vaden had been in custody since May 16, 2019, awaiting his trial for murder.

At approximately 10:42 a.m. on December 9, 2019, the emergency button in Cell 315 was activated. Sacramento County Sheriff's Office Deputy Guil Mongalo, who was stationed in the control room, received the call. However, Mongalo found there was no one on the other end of the call.

At approximately the same time, inmate Christopher Dodd approached Deputy James Grout on the floor and stated that there was a "man down" in Cell 315. Deputy Grout advised Deputy Mongalo of inmate Dodd's information.

Deputy Mongalo left the control room and approached Cell 315. He opened the cell door and observed Vaden standing near the inside of the cell door. Deputy Mongalo looked past Vaden's shoulder and saw Thomas lying on the floor next to the toilet. There were no other inmates in the cell.

Deputy Mongalo believed Thomas was unconscious. He asked Vaden what happened. Vaden did not respond. As Deputy Mongalo escorted Vaden out of the cell, he noticed cuts on Vaden's knuckles and hands. Deputy Mongalo asked Vaden if he had been in a fight with Thomas. Vaden again did not respond.

Deputy Mongalo handcuffed Vaden and turned him over to Deputy Ming Her. He then went to render aid to Thomas. Deputy Mongalo checked Thomas' wrist and felt a light pulse. Deputy Mongalo then heard a light moan coming from Thomas' mouth.

Deputy Mongalo observed Thomas' left eye appeared to be black and blue and was swollen shut. He also saw fresh blood on Thomas' nose and mouth.

Deputy Mongalo further observed food debris thrown about the entirety of the cell. He also saw droplets of fresh blood on the floor and the south wall.

At approximately 10:43 a.m., Deputy Mongalo called for medical staff to respond to Cell 315.

At approximately 10:44 a.m., Deputy Mongalo called for an ambulance. He continued to assist Thomas and felt a light pulse after checking Thomas' carotid artery and wrist. He also felt air coming from Thomas' nose.

At approximately 10:45 a.m., jail medical staff arrived and began to administer care to Thomas.

At approximately 10:51 a.m., Deputy Mongalo started to perform CPR on Thomas as it appeared Thomas was no longer breathing. Jail medical personnel deployed an Automated External Defibrillator device. Shortly thereafter, Sacramento Fire Department Emergency Medical Technicians arrived and took over the life-saving measures.

At approximately 11:04 a.m., EMT personnel detected a heartbeat and transported Thomas to the UC Davis Medical Center.

At approximately 11:21 a.m., Thomas arrived at UC Davis Medical Center and was immediately seen by hospital staff. The medical staff were able to stabilize Thomas' vitals. Thomas was then intubated and moved to the Intensive Care Unit at approximately 11:42 a.m.

Thomas was seen by a team of neurologists. The team believed that Thomas had signs of a hypoxic brain injury caused by lack of oxygen to the brain. Thomas continued to be monitored and cared for by UC Davis Medical staff.

Deputy Christopher Picanco of the CSI Unit processed Cell 315 for evidence. He observed apparent blood on the floors and walls of the cell. He also found a pool of blood near the sink in the cell. He further found blood on the mattress on the lower bunk.

Deputy Picanco took pictures of Vaden and found blood on Vaden's hands and clothing.

The Sacramento Sheriff's Office conducted an extensive investigation into the circumstances of

Thomas' death. Detectives interviewed over 40 witnesses who were present on the floor in the jail at the time. None of the witnesses claimed to have seen or heard anything that would help determine what had occurred in Thomas' cell.

There are no cameras positioned inside Cell 315. Multiple surveillance cameras were pointed at the front door of Cell 315. The video from those cameras was reviewed.

The video shows Deputy Mongalo opening the door of Cell 315 then escorting Vaden out. The video shows jail medical staff immediately arriving to tend to Thomas, Fire Department EMTs arriving, placing Thomas on a gurney, and taking him to the hospital. There is no footage showing what happened inside Cell 315.

On December 10, 2019, the UC Davis Hospital Neurology Staff requested a compassionate release for Thomas because of his poor prognosis and the need for Thomas' family to visit him. The request was approved.

On January 19, 2020, UC Davis Medical Staff, along with Thomas' family, made the decision to remove Thomas' breathing tube.

On January 21, 2020, at approximately 5:12 a.m. Thomas was pronounced deceased.

On February 7, 2020, Dr. Katherine Raven from the Sacramento County Coroner's Office conducted an autopsy of Thomas' body. Dr. Raven observed a purple and red hemorrhage on the right side of Thomas' head. She also observed a red and brown hemorrhage on Thomas' left front scalp. Dr. Raven concluded that the cause of death was complications of anoxic encephalopathy associated with assault.

The Sacramento County District Attorney's Office reviewed all the evidence surrounding the death of Antonio Thomas. On March 9, 2021, the District Attorney's Office declined to file charges against Joshua Vaden relating to the death of Antonio Thomas, finding insufficient evidence to sustain a conviction.

No evidence of criminal misconduct by any member of the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office is presented or suggested in any of the supporting reports. Accordingly, the District Attorney's Office will take no further action in this matter.

Cc: Sacramento County Sheriff's Office Lieutenant Janae Galovich
Sacramento County Sheriff's Office Sergeant Quis Formoli
Kimberly Gin, Sacramento County Coroner's Office
Sacramento County Office of Inspector General