



# Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

ANNE MARIE SCHUBERT  
District Attorney

Rod Norgaard  
Chief Deputy

Michael M. Blazina  
Assistant District Attorney

Date: October 3, 2022

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

From: Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

Re: In-Custody Death – William Francis Stevens (DOB 3/7/1967)  
SSO Report No. 2021-47490  
Date of Incident – February 16, 2021

The above case was referred to this office for review of the circumstances surrounding the death of inmate William Francis Stevens while in the custody of the Sacramento County Main Jail on February 16, 2021. The case was submitted to the District Attorney's Office on August 1, 2022.

Stevens was arrested by the United States Marshals for federal criminal charges and booked into the Sacramento County Main Jail on January 9, 2020. At his booking, Stevens was medically cleared for admission into the jail. Stevens indicated he was nearsighted, wore upper dentures, and suffered from a "frozen shoulder" and right-hand contracture. He did express feeling suicidal and was therefore placed in a safety cell. On January 11, 2020, Jail Psychiatric Services staff visited Stevens and approved him for less restrictive housing. During Stevens' incarceration, he was prescribed amitriptyline, aripiprazole, buspirone, hydrocortisone cream, mirtazapine, sertraline, trazodone, and selenium shampoo.

On February 16, 2021, Stevens' cellmate tried to wake up Stevens for breakfast. When the cellmate noticed that Stevens did not wake up and exit the cell, the cellmate told an inmate worker that he thought Stevens had died. Both returned to the cell and tried to awaken Stevens. When this was unsuccessful, the inmate worker pressed the cell's emergency button at approximately 5:18 a.m. and spoke with Deputy Ryan Jackson by intercom, informing him that Stevens was unresponsive. Deputy Matthew Gutierrez immediately responded to the cell while Deputy Jackson called for jail medical staff to assist.

Deputy Gutierrez observed Stevens lying on the bottom bunk in the cell. Stevens was on his back, his eyes were closed, and his face was pale. After Stevens failed to respond to verbal commands, Deputy Gutierrez checked for a pulse and was unable to find one. Deputy Gutierrez

used his radio to contact the jail's Central Control Division requesting the Sacramento Fire Department to respond Code 3.<sup>1</sup> Deputy Gutierrez rubbed Stevens' sternum to try and revive him. When this failed, Deputy Gutierrez began chest compressions.

At approximately 5:20 a.m., medical staff arrived and employed an automated external defibrillator device and oxygen, and they continued chest compressions.

At approximately 5:28 a.m., Sacramento Fire Department personnel arrived on scene. They transferred Stevens onto a gurney for transport to Sutter Medical Center. They departed at approximately 5:37 a.m., and Stevens arrived at the hospital at approximately 5:50 a.m. with Deputy Erik Fuerstenberger. Medical staff continued life-saving measures. At approximately 6:01 a.m., Stevens was pronounced deceased.

Video surveillance from Stevens' pod within the Sacramento County Main Jail was consistent with the events summarized above.

An autopsy was performed by Dr. Jason Tovar, Chief Forensic Pathologist with the Sacramento County Coroner's Office. He determined the cause of death to be atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease. The manner of death was determined to be natural. Toxicology reports indicated Stevens' femoral blood sample was positive for caffeine, amitriptyline, trazadone, and aripiprazole in the nontoxic range.

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

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<sup>1</sup> Code 3 indicates to consider the call an emergency and proceed immediately, including utilizing emergency lights and siren as reasonably necessary.