



Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

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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 – Herman Jerome Johnson (DOB 7/20/1979)
SSO Report No. 2020-0256542
Date of Incident – August 11, 2020

The above case was referred to this office for review of the circumstances surrounding the death of inmate Herman Jerome Johnson while in the Sacramento County Main Jail on August 11, 2020. The case was submitted to the District Attorney's Office February 2, 2022.

Johnson had been in custody at the Main Jail since July 10, 2018, after his arrest for attempted murder and a violation of parole. While housed at the main jail he was written up for his behavior in 51 reports. The majority of these incidents were related to psychiatric issues. Of those, on 18 occasions Johnson exhibited suicidal ideations, the last of which occurred May 10, 2020.

On August 11, 2020, Sacramento County Sheriff's Office Deputy Vadim Kononovich, Sergeant Nathan Nguyen, and Deputy Carlos Galvez were working in the Sacramento County Main Jail. They were assigned to Unit 8 West.

At approximately 9:18 a.m., Deputy Kononovich was assisting in the distribution of morning medications. Deputy Kononovich approached cell 114, which was solely occupied by Johnson. Deputy Kononovich noticed Johnson was laying on the top bunk on his side facing the back cell window. Despite multiple knocks on the door and Deputy Kononovich's entry into the cell, Johnson was unresponsive. Deputy Kononovich pressed the emergency button and requested that Deputy Galvez respond. They were unable to detect a pulse or chest rise.

Medical staff and an ambulance were immediately requested. Due to Johnson's size and location on the top bunk, Deputies Galvez and Kononovich were unable to safely move Johnson to the floor in order to administer CPR. After the arrival of medical staff and additional deputies,

Johnson was moved to the floor and CPR was administered for approximately 27 minutes. It was noted by responding medical staff that Johnson's skin was still warm to the touch at the time of their arrival. An automated external defibrillator was used to no avail. An Emergency Medical Technician from the Sacramento Metro Fire Department pronounced Johnson dead at the scene at approximately 9:52 a.m.

Subsequent to Johnson's death, crime scene investigators processed Johnson's cell for any available evidence. The Sacramento County Coroner's Office took custody of Johnson's body.

Deputies contacted over 30 inmates in the surrounding cells. None of the inmates claimed to have witnessed anything significant. Most described Johnson as a relatively happy person with nothing out of the ordinary going on. However, one inmate stated that Johnson had been stressed and was having some family problems.

An autopsy was performed by Dr. Irfan Chaudhry, a forensic pathologist working for the Sacramento County Coroner's Office. No anatomical cause of death was identified. Toxicology samples from the autopsy showed that the drugs in Johnson's system were consistent with those prescribed to him during his incarceration and with those delivered to him during resuscitative attempts by emergency personnel. Dr. Chaudhry found the toxicology results did not contribute to Johnson's death. The only item of note was that Johnson had sustained a neck injury that was consistent with being moved from the top bunk to the floor to perform CPR. No suspicious circumstances or evidence of foul play were found. Dr. Chaudhry designated the cause of death as undetermined.

Main Jail Surveillance video was reviewed. No persons are shown entering or exiting Johnson's cell in the hours preceding his death. The events as shown in the video occur in the same manner as described in the reports.

No evidence of criminal misconduct is presented or suggested in any of the supporting materials. 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