



# Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

ANNE MARIE SCHUBERT  
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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 – Deyyj Jelaan Watts (DOB 7/1/1980)  
SSO Report No. 2021-58686  
Date of Incident – February 26, 2021

The above case was referred to this office for review of the circumstances surrounding the death of inmate Deyyj Watts while in the custody of the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office on February 26, 2021. The case was submitted to the District Attorney's Office on August 1, 2022.

Watts was arrested and booked into the Sacramento County Main Jail on February 12, 2021, for a violation of Penal Code section 422(a), criminal threats. At his booking, he was medically cleared for admission into the jail. Watts had a pacemaker, gunshot wound, ruptured bypass, and stents. Watts received a prosthesis two weeks earlier and stated that he took medications for cardiovascular disease. However, he was unable to remember the dosage or all the names of the medications. He did remember taking Lasix, Warfarin, Entresto, and Zoloft. Watts' vital signs were taken and a health check was conducted the following morning. Watts was housed in the Sub-Acute Medical Care Unit for inmates with medical conditions that required close monitoring.

On February 26, 2021, Watts was still incarcerated. Records Officer Silena Payne was assigned to the control room of the Sub-Acute Medical Care Unit. At approximately 01:30 a.m., she observed the emergency button in Watts' cell activated. She engaged the intercom and asked him what his emergency was. Watts told her, "Something is wrong with me, something is wrong with me, I can't breathe, help me."

Officer Payne advised him help was coming and immediately called floor officers Deputy Tory Crowder and Deputy Gerardo Santos over the intercom. She instructed them to

respond to Watts' cell. Payne unlocked Watts' cell door by the control panel in the control room.

Deputies Crowder and Santos entered Watts' cell. Watts told the deputies he needed help. He was having difficulty breathing and felt pain in his chest. Deputy Crowder observed Watts slumped forward in his wheelchair with his chest laying over his knees. His breathing was short and fast. His face was wet with what appeared to be perspiration. Watts attempted to take in deep gasping breaths. Deputy Crowder heard a "wet popping sound" during this time.

Deputy Crowder immediately pulled Watts out of the cell in his wheelchair and escorted him to the nurses' station for evaluation. A nurse and certified nurse's assistant evaluated Watts and determined that due to Watts' medical history and the nature of his distress, he needed emergency transport to the nearest hospital for further evaluation and treatment. At approximately 01:38 a.m., Deputy Santos requested Sacramento Fire Department to respond Code 3.<sup>1</sup> Medical staff continued to treat Watts.

At approximately 01:45 a.m., Sacramento Fire Department emergency personnel arrived on scene. They provided preliminary care to Watts until medics arrived approximately two minutes later. The medics assisted Watts onto a gurney for transport to Sutter Medical Center. Watts was conscious and breathing.

Watts arrived at the hospital at approximately 02:09 a.m. Deputy Raffy Barrera rode with Watts in the ambulance. At the hospital, Deputy Barrera observed Watts speak with the treating physician. Deputy Barrera also observed that Watts was treated with a Continuous Positive Airway Pressure instrument to assist his breathing.

Watts' condition changed suddenly at approximately 02:45 a.m. Medical staff believed Watts had a blood clot or was bleeding internally. At approximately 03:02 a.m., Watts lost consciousness and had no pulse. Medical staff immediately began life-saving measures, without success. At approximately 03:57 a.m., hospital medical staff determined they were unable to revive Watts and he was pronounced deceased.

Dr. Irfan Chaudhry, M.D., a Forensic Pathologist with the Sacramento County Coroner's Office, performed an autopsy. Dr. Chaudhry determined Watts' cause of death to be pulmonary thromboembolism due to probable deep vein thrombosis. The manner of death was determined to be natural.

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

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

Sacramento County Sheriff's Office Sergeant Quis Formoli  
Kimberly Gin, Sacramento County Coroner's Office