



Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

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March 29, 2016

Captain Jim Ortega, Commander
Sacramento County Sheriff's Department
Correctional Services Unit
651 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: In-Custody Death – Kenneth Hinkson
SSD Report No. 15-236310
Date of incident: September 15, 2015

Dear Captain Ortega:

The above case was referred to this office for review of the circumstances surrounding the September 15, 2015, death of inmate Kenneth Hinkson while in the Sacramento County Main Jail.

Hinkson was arrested on September 13, 2015, for a warrant. At the time of booking, he was detoxing from alcohol, noted for seizure precautions, and then housed on the medical floor as a medical expedite. The next day, he was cleared for general population housing and eventually assigned to cell 107. Sacramento County Sheriff Deputies Alexander DeMars and Ronald Dodd were assigned to 5 West as floor/control officers at the Main Jail that evening. On September 15, 2015, at approximately 12:02 a.m., inmate Terry Tucker was relocated to cell 107. As he entered the cell, Hinkson was awake and said "Hi" to Tucker. Tucker then went to sleep. Deputies Demars and Dodd conducted a cell check throughout the evening at approximately 12:44 a.m., 1:45 a.m., 2:29 a.m., 3:39 a.m., and 4:36 a.m. They accounted for Hinkson and Tucker and there were no observable signs of distress or trauma.

Hinkson and Tucker did not exit the cell for the morning meal at approximately 5:06 a.m. They also did not exit the cell during the "pan-down" of trays approximately 20 minutes later. Deputy Dodd conducted a cell check at approximately 5:45 a.m. and there were no observable signs of distress or trauma. A few minutes later, Deputy DeMars used the cell intercom and instructed Hinkson to pack up his belongings and report to control for transfer.

Hinkson did not respond and Tucker answered that his cellmate was sleeping. Deputy DeMars immediately responded to the cell and opened the door. Hinkson appeared to be sleeping with a blanket covering his body and his arms under his head. Deputy DeMars attempted to wake Hinkson with verbal commands and a white light. The deputy then entered the cell and determined that Hinkson was cold, not breathing, and had no pulse. Deputy DeMars instructed

another deputy to call for “Code 3 fire” and an automated external defibrillator. He and other deputies immediately performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on Hinkson. Deputies moved Hinkson outside the cell for additional space and then resumed CPR. Fire medics arrived at approximately 6:04 a.m. and continued treatment. Hinkson was declared deceased approximately two minutes later.

Chief Forensic Pathologist Joseph Pestaner, M.D., conducted an autopsy and concluded that the cause of Hinkson’s death was atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease and he suffered from chronic alcoholism. 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: Rick Braziel, Office of the Inspector General