



# Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

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December 21, 2015

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

Re: In-Custody Death – Choi Saeteurn (DOB 12/5/46)  
SSD Report No. 15-12687  
Date of incident: January 16, 2015

Dear Captain Andris:

The above case was referred to this office for review of the circumstances surrounding the death of inmate Choi Saeteurn on January 16, 2015.

Choi Saeteurn and Khot Panyanouvong were cellmates in cell 17 of the 300 Pod on 7 East in the Sacramento County Main Jail. At approximately 5:30 a.m. on January 16, 2015, Panyanouvong came out of their assigned cell for breakfast. He appeared jittery and out of breath. Panyanouvong took his food tray and sat down at a table. He then returned to his cell with his food tray and closed the door.

Deputy Tarren O'Laughlin was assigned to 7 East as a floor officer. He was conducting a final count of the cells at approximately 5:38 a.m. Deputy O'Laughlin looked inside cell 17 and observed Panyanouvong holding a folded blanket with both hands over the face of Saeteurn, who was lying on the lower bunk. Panyanouvong also had one knee pushed down on the blanket and the other foot planted on the floor beside the bunk. Most of his weight was placed on Saeteurn's face. Saeteurn was unresponsive and not moving. Deputy O'Laughlin rattled the door handle and Panyanouvong got up. He approached the cell door and stated, "My cellie tried to rape me." Panyanouvong turned away from the door, shifted his weight from side to side, and clinched his hands. Deputy O'Laughlin immediately called for additional deputies to assist.

Deputy Nicholas Russell arrived at the cell and secured the cell door. As he waited for more deputies to arrive before entering the cell, Deputy Russell observed Panyanouvong standing and moving around while sporadically waving his arms. Saeteurn was laying on the lower bunk. There was blood on the floor, wall, lower bunk and Saeteurn's clothing. Deputy Russell ordered Panyanouvong to lie on the floor and face away from the deputy. As other deputies arrived, Deputy William Hertoghe entered the cell and dragged Panyanouvong by his legs outside the cell. Deputies then secured his arms and legs. Panyanouvong's hands were swollen with

numerous lacerations, while his shoes, socks, and pant legs had fresh blood on them. He was also breathing heavily and sweating profusely.

Deputy Russell immediately entered the cell and contacted Saeteurn, who was lying motionless on the lower bunk. He noticed that Saeteurn did not have a pulse and was not breathing. He also observed that Saeteurn's eyes were swollen shut, his mouth was also swollen and open, and his face and clothing were covered in blood. After Deputy Hertoghe confirmed these findings, they grabbed Saeteurn's feet and lowered him to the ground. Both deputies began cardiopulmonary resuscitation and chest compressions on Saeteurn. The main jail medical staff arrived at approximately 5:52 a.m. and continued treatment with an automated external defibrillator. The Sacramento Fire Department personnel arrived and continued medical treatment on Saeteurn. He was pronounced deceased at 5:59 a.m.

The Coroner's Report indicated that Saeteurn died from blunt force injuries and asphyxia. He had contusions and lacerations throughout his head and body, and fractures to his clavicle and ribs. There is no evidence of criminal misconduct by the Sheriff's Department personnel presented in any of the supporting reports. The District Attorney's Office will not take any further action regarding the Sheriff's Department's role in this matter.