



Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

ANNE MARIE SCHUBERT
District Attorney

Stephen J. Grippi
Chief Deputy

Michael A. Neves
Assistant District Attorney

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 9, 2018

TO: Captain Eric Buehler, 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 – Robert Syas
SSD Report No. 16-346805
Date of Incident: November 16, 2016

The above case was referred to this office for review of the circumstances surrounding the incident that occurred on November 16, 2016, in the Sacramento County Main Jail resulting in the death of inmate Robert Syas.

On November 16, 2016, at approximately 4:37 p.m., Sacramento Sheriff Deputy Bradley Whiting was working at the Main Jail and serving dinner to the inmates. He approached Syas' cell door and provided him a dinner tray. Syas grabbed the tray and set it on his bed next to him. At approximately 4:58 p.m., jail nurses heard a loud noise coming from Syas' cell. They went to the cell and observed Syas unresponsive, not moving, and lying on his bed. Syas' right arm and right leg were hanging off the side of the bed. A nurse requested immediate assistance. Deputy Melanie Edwards arrived and opened the cell door. The nurses entered the cell and determined Syas was not responding to their verbal commands. One of the nurses began chest compressions on Syas. Deputy Edwards and the nurses lowered Syas to the floor. Deputies continued chest compressions. Syas' medical condition was monitored by an automated external defibrillator machine. A nurse cleared Syas' airway by pulling out food from his mouth and throat areas. At approximately 5:08 p.m., Sacramento Fire Department personnel and medic arrived and moved Syas to the hallway to continue medical treatment. Fire personnel intubated Syas, provided him with two doses of Epinephrine, and continued chest compressions with negative results. They transported Syas to Sutter General Hospital.

On November 17, 2016, Syas was in the ICU at Sutter General Hospital. He was intubated and fully dependent on medications and machines to sustain his life. Medical personnel performed x-rays and a bag breathing exercise on Syas which improved his vital stats. Other medical

assessments were performed on Syas, but he was not expected to regain consciousness or recover from the medical event.

On November 18, 2016, the ventilator was disconnected from Syas to see if he would breathe on his own. He could not and the ventilator was reconnected.

On November 19, 2016, Syas was pronounced deceased at approximately 6:10 a.m.

Forensic Pathologist Katherine Raven, M.D., conducted an autopsy and concluded that the cause of Syas' death was anoxic encephalopathy. He also suffered from severe cerebral edema, multifocal bronchopneumonia, left ventricular hypertrophy, and hypertensive heart disease. Because the medics did not see or remove a food bolus, there was no evidence to support airway obstruction. The anoxic event was most likely due to a cardiac event. 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
Sacramento Sheriff Lieutenant Dan Donelli
Kimberly Gin, Sacramento County Coroner's Office