



Florida Department Of Corrections  
 Office of the Inspector General  
 Report of Investigation  
 Gene Hatcher, Inspector General

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 DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



DEC 22 2009

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL  
 REGION 1

Inspector General Case #: 09-17107

Facility: Santa Rosa Correctional Institution

Classification of Incident: [REDACTED]

Field Office/Region: Tallahassee/Region 1

Incident Date: 9/7/09 Time: 7:00pm

Inspector: Randy Anglin

Date of Report: 12/14/09

Case Type: A

Check all that apply:

- [REDACTED]
- Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Number (if applicable)
- Principal(s) Exhibits Attached
- Department of Corrections presented to State Attorney  Declined  Accepted
- Use of Force (UOF) Number (if applicable)
- Complaint of Discrimination
- Addendum
- Wing Video Camera(s) Present in the Area of Incident  YES  NO

**SUMMARY OF ALLEGATIONS:**

On September 7, 2009, at approximately 7:03pm, Inmate John Coley was discovered hanging from the sprinkler head in Q-dormitory cell 4208 with a torn sheet. Inmate Coley's hands were loosely tied behind his back and a makeshift noose from a torn sheet was around his neck. Inmate Coley was [REDACTED]  
 At approximately 8:04pm, Inmate Coley was pronounced deceased [REDACTED]

**SUMMARY OF DISPOSITION/JUSTIFICATION FOR DOWNGRADE/EXONERATION:**

As a result of this investigation, it is determined that:

- According to the Medical Examiners report of September 24, 2009, Inmate John Coley [REDACTED]

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	Name	Title / DC #	D.O.B.	Employee ID #
<b>Complainant:</b>	Randall Tift	Warden	[REDACTED]	21451
<b>Victim:</b>	John Coley	DC # 105054	8-12-64	
<b>Witness(es):</b>	Jack Hammontree	Captain	[REDACTED]	8673
	Shawn Norris	Sergeant	[REDACTED]	37139
	Daniel Kelly	Correctional Officer	[REDACTED]	45767
	James Barnes	Correctional Officer	[REDACTED]	43957
	Ronald Cash	Correctional Officer	[REDACTED]	26628
	John Chessher	Correctional Officer	[REDACTED]	34220
	Joshua Chandler	Correctional Officer	[REDACTED]	44710
	Ivory Minor	Inmate/DC#107612	6-23-70	
	Ian Manuel	Inmate/DC#518907	3-2-77	
<b>Subject(s):</b>				

Arrest:  Employee  Inmate  Other  
Charges:

Guilty  Addendum Pending  
 Not Guilty  
 Nolo Contendere  
 P.T.I.  
 Other (explanation):

Felony  Misdemeanor

Date of Arrest: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Reported: \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence of Court / Agreement: \_\_\_\_\_

Administrative Violation(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence:  Weapon  Drugs  Other Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Agency Case Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**FINDINGS:**

In his incident report dated September 7, 2009, and his affidavit dated November 24, 2009, Captain Jack Hammontree indicated the following:

He was assigned as Third Shift Supervisor and he was notified at approximately [REDACTED] that Inmate Coley, housed in Q-dormitory cell 4208 had covered his cell window preventing a security check to be conducted by housing officers. At approximately [REDACTED] the cell door was breached by order of Sergeant Norris. Sergeant Norris, Officer Chessher, Officer Cash and Officer Barnes entered cell Q-



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4208 and observed Inmate Coley hanging from the sprinkler head in his cell with a "makeshift" noose. Inmate Coley was [REDACTED] Inmate Coley was lifted and placed on the cell floor [REDACTED]

At approximately [REDACTED] Captain Hammontree entered Q-dormitory and he advised the control room to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Inmate Coley was taken to the base of the center tower where he was [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] At approximately 8:07pm, he was notified that Inmate Coley was declared deceased [REDACTED] (EXHIBIT A-1 & A-2)

In his incident reports dated September 7, 2009, and September 8, 2009, and his affidavit dated November 23, 2009, Officer John Chessher indicated the following:

He was assigned as a Q-dormitory housing officer and while making a security check in Quad 4, he approached cell 4208 where Inmate John Coley was housed alone. He observed that the window was covered and a visual check could not be conducted. He gave Inmate Coley several orders to uncover his cell window [REDACTED] He then reported this information to

Sergeant Norris who retrieved a concave Plexiglas shield and returned to Inmate Coley's cell. Sergeant Norris gave Inmate Coley several orders to uncover his cell window, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Upon opening the handcuff portal to the cell, Inmate Coley was observed hanging by the neck from the fire suppression sprinkler, with his hands loosely tied behind his back with a piece of torn sheet. Once the cell door was breached he assisted in lifting Inmate Coley to relieve tension from the torn sheet tied to the sprinkler head. He then assisted in removing the sheet around Inmate Coley's neck. [REDACTED] (EXHIBITS A-3, A-4 & A-5)

In his incident report dated September 7, 2009, and his affidavit dated November 23, 2009, Sergeant Shawn Norris indicated the following:

He was assigned as Q-dormitory housing supervisor and Officer John Chessher advised him that Inmate Coley had his cell window covered and was [REDACTED] Sergeant Norris and Officer Chessher approached cell Q-4208 with a Plexiglas shield and used it to cover the handcuffing portal to check on Inmate Coley's condition. Sergeant Norris observed Inmate Coley hanging with torn bed sheets from the sprinkler head. Sergeant Norris, Officer Chessher, Officer Cash and Officer Barnes entered the cell and the sheet was removed from Inmate Coley's neck and he was laid on the floor. Officer Cash [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Inmate Coley was then escorted to the annex tower [REDACTED] (EXHIBITS A-6 & A-7)



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In his incident report dated September 7, 2009, Officer James Barnes indicated the following:

He was assigned as Q-dormitory housing officer and along with Officers Cash and Chessher, they were supervising the dayroom in quad four (4). Sergeant Norris, Officer Cash, Officer Chessher and Officer Barnes entered cell Q4208 and observed Inmate Coley hanging by the neck from a "makeshift" noose that was tied to the sprinkler head. He and Officer Chessher lifted Inmate Coley so Sergeant Norris and Officer Cash could remove the noose from the sprinkler head. Officers Barnes and Chessher placed Inmate Coley on the cell floor where Officer Cash

[REDACTED] At approximately [REDACTED] in the sally port of Q-dormitory until Inmate Coley was escorted to the base of the tower where he was relieved [REDACTED] (EXHIBIT A-8)

In his incident report dated September 7, 2009, and his affidavit dated November 23, 2009, Officer Ronald Cash indicated the following:

He was assigned as Q-dormitory housing officer when he was notified by Sergeant Norris to assist him in breaching cell Q-4208 where Inmate Coley was housed. Upon entering cell 4208, he observed that Inmate Coley had one end of a torn state issued sheet tied to the cell sprinkler head and the other end tied around his neck. He then assisted in removing the torn sheet from around Inmate Coley's neck and assisted in placing Inmate Coley on the cell floor. Upon laying Inmate Coley on the floor, he observed that Inmate Coley

[REDACTED] (EXHIBITS A-9 & A-10)

In his incident report dated September 7, 2009, and his affidavit dated November 23, 2009, Officer Daniel Kelley indicated the following:

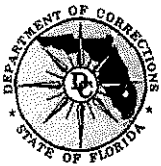
He was assigned to Q-dormitory and he was instructed to break the seal on the [REDACTED]. He was then instructed to [REDACTED] proceed to cell 4208. Upon arriving at cell 4208, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (EXHIBITS A-11 & A-12)

In his incident report dated September 7, 2009, and his affidavit dated November 24, 2009, Officer Joshua Chandler indicated the following:

He was assigned to Q-dormitory and he was instructed by Sergeant Norris to retrieve the ligature cutters from the emergency key box and take them to Q-4208. He took the cutters to the cell and exited to observe the inmates in the dayroom area. Officer Chandler was told that he would be assigned to

[REDACTED] At approximately [REDACTED] (EXHIBITS A-13 & A-14)



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In her [REDACTED] for Inmate John Coley dated September 7, 2009, and her affidavit dated November 24, 2009, [REDACTED] indicated the following:

At approximately 6:00pm, while [REDACTED] in Q-dormitory Inmate John Coley was observed lying on the cell floor talking on the phone. Inmate Coley [REDACTED] At approximately [REDACTED] there was an inmate hanging in his cell. Upon returning to wing four (4), she observed Inmate Coley lying on the floor [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Inmate Coley was

[REDACTED] (EXHIBITS A-15 & A-16)

In his affidavit dated November 24, 2009, Sergeant Reuben Bence indicated the following:

He was at center tower when Inmate Coley was escorted to meet [REDACTED] Once Inmate Coley was [REDACTED] at approximately 8:04 pm, Inmate Coley was pronounced deceased. He remained with the body until it was picked up by the coroner service.

(EXHIBIT A-17)

A [REDACTED] form of Inmate John Coley dated September 7, 2009, indicated the following:

[REDACTED] pronounced Inmate Coley deceased at approximately 8:04pm, on September 7, 2009, at [REDACTED] The body was released to the medical examiner's office. (EXHIBIT A-18)

The Florida Department of Corrections inmate telephone call detail report dated September 7, 2009, of Inmate John Coley indicated the following:

According to the report, he attempted thirteen (13) telephone calls between the hours of 3:34pm, and 5:00pm. He attempted to call a friend (*Betty Seruggs 727-896-5768*), seven (7) times and attempted to call 941-924-8844, which was listed as no information. None of the calls were completed.

(EXHIBIT A-19)

Photos were taken of the torn bed sheet used by Inmate John Coley and the sprinkler head in cell Q4208 on September 7, 2009. The sheet was placed into evidence. (EXHIBITS A-20 & A-21)



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The "Pelco" fixed wing video of Q-dormitory quad four (4) was reviewed on September 7, 2009, and reflected the following:

Some of the officers were sitting at the dayroom table talking and some appeared to be doing paper work. An officer conducted security checks approximately [REDACTED] Officer Chessher was conducting a security check and he stopped at cell 4208 for a short time and then completed his security check. He proceeded downstairs and then staff responds to cell 4208. It appears that policy and procedure was followed by staff. (EXHIBIT B-1)

*Note: The video camera does not have audio or direct footage inside of the cells.*

In a review of the inmate telephone system Inmate Coley completed a telephone call on September 2, 2009, to his sister (*Sharon Hayden #727-867-1019*) and he indicated the following:

Approximately 5:25 minutes into the telephone call, Inmate Coley indicated that he did not have any stamps or anything else and said he might go into [REDACTED] [REDACTED] laughs as he makes these statements). Inmate Coley indicated that other inmates were cutting their wrist, throats and all kinds of things everyday. (EXHIBIT B-2)

*Inmate Ivory Minor called the "TIPS" line three times and indicated that Inmate John Coley was murdered, he did not hang himself and he was neglected.*

In his sworn recorded statement of November 10, 2009, Inmate Ivory Minor indicated the following:

He indicated that he was sitting in the last interview room in wing four eating his "Ramadan" meal with Inmate Manuel and the officers were sitting at a table in the dayroom playing games. He heard Inmate Coley kicking on the cell door and yelling [REDACTED] and the officers ignored him. Inmate Coley's cell window was covered. When the officers opened the cell door, Inmate Coley was lying on the cell floor with his feet towards the door. Officer Barnes [REDACTED] Inmate Minor indicated that Inmate Coley did not hang himself. Inmate Minor also indicated that he called the "TIPS" line. (EXHIBIT B-3)

In his sworn recorded statement of November 10, 2009, Inmate Ian Manuel indicated the following:

He was in the center room in wing four with Inmate Minor eating their "Ramadan" meal, where the television is located. He heard an inmate yelling [REDACTED] but did not know who it was. Inmate Manuel walked to the door and saw that the window was covered in cell Q4208 (*Inmate Coley's cell*). Approximately six officers were sitting at a table in the dayroom. The officers assembled and went upstairs to Inmate Coley's cell and when they went into the cell he heard some banging noises, but he could not see in the cell. [REDACTED]



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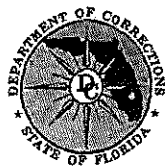


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[REDACTED] Inmate Manuel indicated that Inmate Coley hung himself, but thought if staff would have checked on him, it may have been prevented. (EXHIBIT B-4)

In the autopsy report of Inmate John Coley dated September 24, 2009, Chief Medical Examiner Andrea Minyard indicated the following:

She performed the autopsy in the District One Medical Examiner's Office located in Sacred Heart Hospital on September 8, 2009, at approximately 12:05pm. Inmate Coley had an [REDACTED] and the cause of death was [REDACTED] and the manner of death was suicide. (EXHIBIT A-22)



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	Senior Prison Inspector	<u>12/14/09</u>	Date
<u>Kelley C. Maud</u>	<i>FOR</i> Prison Inspector Supervisor	<u>1/5/10</u>	Date
<u>NA [unclear]</u>	Lead Inspector Supervisor	<u>1/8/10</u>	Date
_____	Chief Prison Inspector	_____	Date
_____	Deputy/Inspector General	_____	Date





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**EXHIBIT/ATTACHMENTS SECTION**

**A. EXHIBIT(s) - attached:**

1. Incident report by Captain Jack Hammontree dated September 7, 2009
2. Affidavit by Captain Jack Hammontree dated November 24, 2009
3. Incident report by Officer John Chessher dated September 7, 2009
4. Incident report by Officer John Chessher dated September 8, 2009
5. Affidavit by Officer John Chessher dated November 23, 2009
6. Incident report by Sergeant Shawn Norris dated September 7, 2009
7. Affidavit by Sergeant Shawn Norris dated November 23, 2009
8. Incident report by Officer James Barnes dated September 7, 2009
9. Incident report by Officer Ronald Cash dated September 7, 2009
10. Affidavit by Officer Ronald Cash dated November 23, 2009
11. Incident report by Officer Daniel Kelley dated September 7, 2009
12. Affidavit by Officer Daniel Kelley dated November 23, 2009
13. Incident report by Officer Joshua Chandler dated September 7, 2009
14. Affidavit by Officer Joshua Chandler dated November 24, 2009
15. [REDACTED] dated November 7, 2009
16. Affidavit by [REDACTED] dated November 24, 2009
17. Affidavit by Sergeant Reuben Bence dated November 24, 2009
18. [REDACTED] of Inmate John Coley dated September 7, 2009
19. Call Detail report of Inmate Coley dated September 7, 2009
20. Photo of torn bed sheets
21. Photo of sprinkler head in cell Q-4208
22. Autopsy report by Doctor Andrea Minyard of Inmate John Coley dated September 24, 2009

**B. EXHIBIT(s) - not attached:**

1. Fixed wing video of Q-dormitory, Quad four dated September 7, 2009
2. Telephone call of Inmate John Coley dated September 2, 2009
3. Sworn recorded statement of Inmate Ivory Minor dated November 10, 2009
4. Sworn recorded statement of Inmate Ian Manuel dated November 10, 2009