

Florida Department of Corrections
 Office of the Inspector General
 Report of Investigation
 Jeffery T. Beasley, Inspector General



Inspector General Case #: 12-3-4261 **Facility:** Tomoka Correctional Institution
Classification of Incident: Inmate Death [REDACTED] (15B) **Field Office/Region:** Region 3-East
Incident Date: 08/16/12 **Time:** 12:36AM **Inspector:** Yolanda Brown
Date of Report: 10/30/12 **Case Type:** C

- Case of Special Interest
- Confidential [REDACTED]
- Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Number (if applicable)
- Department of Corrections presented to State Attorney Declined Accepted
- Use of Force (UOF) Number (if applicable)
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
- Addendum
- Wing Video Camera(s) Present in the Area of Incident

SUMMARY OF ALLEGATIONS:

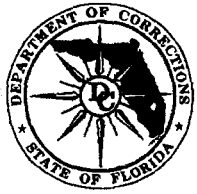
On August 16, 2012, at approximately 12:36am, Inmate Jeffery Williams was discovered [REDACTED] in his cell, hanging by a sheet tied around his neck. Williams was discovered hanging by his roommate, Inmate Donald Ratliff. He was pronounced dead by [REDACTED] on the same date, at 1:46am. This was reported via MINS on August 16, 2012, and assigned as an investigation on August 17, 2012.

SUMMARY OF DISPOSITION/JUSTIFICATION FOR DOWNGRADE/EXONERATION:

Medical Examiner Timothy Gallagher, MD indicated that Inmate Jeffery Williams died of [REDACTED]. This manner of death is classified as a suicide.

No administrative concerns were brought up or observed during this investigation, therefore this investigation is closed and categorized as Exceptionally Cleared.

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 STATE INVESTIGATIONS



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	Name	Title / DC #	D.O.B.	Employee ID # or Non-Employee Contact Information
Complainant:	Pendleton, Michael	CO Captain	12/22/19[REDACTED]	16423
Victim:	Williams, Jeffery	Inmate/ 343456	05/06/1960	
Witness(es):	Richards, Sherman	CO Sergeant	07/11/19[REDACTED]	17767
	Cynova, Shane	Correctional Officer	02/22/19[REDACTED]	49725
	Barker, Caleb	Correctional Officer	12/14/19[REDACTED]	66769
	Glover, Barry	Senior Inspector	01/03/19[REDACTED]	7802
	Ratliff, Donald	Inmate/ 105165	04/20/1964	
	Murray, Jacob	Inmate/ R05273	06/13/1979	
	Crews, Alvin	Inmate/ 301518	09/24/1970	
Subject(s):	N/A			

Arrest: Employee Inmate Other

Addendum Pending

Charges:

Felony Misdemeanor Date of Arrest:

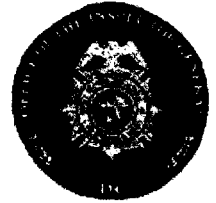
Date Reported:

Final Court Action(s):

Other Agency Case Number:



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FINDINGS:

On August 16, 2012, at 2:30am, I was contacted by On-Call Supervisor, Jeffrey Johnson to report to Tomoka Correctional Institution for a [REDACTED] investigation regarding Inmate Jeffery Williams #343456, housed in Protective Management in E-Dormitory.

In his Incident Report, and subsequent sworn digitally recorded statement, Sergeant Richard Sherman stated:

On August 16, 2012, at approximately [REDACTED], Officer Barker and he conducted a Formal Count of E-dormitory. Upon completing the entire dormitory count and returning back to the Officer's Station, he heard screaming and banging coming from Wing E1-Wing 2. As he was responding to the Wing, he heard an inmate yelling, "He's hanging." He advised the Officer's Station to turn the lights on in the Wing. He looked inside E1211 and observed Inmate Williams hanging by a sheet tied around his neck from the top bunk with what appeared to be a part of a bed sheet. He then immediately radioed for assistance. He placed Ratliff in hand restraints and removed him from the cell. He then entered the cell and cut the sheet (using his keys) from the bunk which was wrapped around Williams' neck. He was able to get Williams onto the floor. Williams was [REDACTED]. Officer Cynova then arrived and assisted with [REDACTED]. Moments later, Captain Pendleton and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] on Williams.

Sherman said both, Williams and Ratliff were lying on their bunks during the [REDACTED] Count. Sherman further indicated that there was nothing unusual about Williams' behavior on that prior evening.
(Exhibit A-1 & B-1)

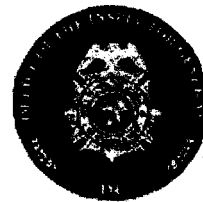
In his sworn digitally recorded statement, Inmate Donald Ratliff stated:

He remembered that before he went to bed, Inmate Williams was sitting on the toilet after Master Roster Count around [REDACTED]. He was on his bunk (top bunk) with his ear buds in his ear with the music playing. At around 1:00am, he woke up and sat up in his bunk and noticed Williams was by the toilet kneeling down as if he was praying. Williams's hands were between his legs and his head tilted down. The lights were off. He then climbed down off the bunk and put his bed slides on. He glanced to the right and noticed Williams' [REDACTED]. His face was not a normal look. He then knew something was wrong. He touched Williams and tried to lift him up but could not and Williams [REDACTED]. That's when he panicked and began yelling and banging on the door for help. Sergeant Sherman responded immediately and handcuffed him and removed him from the cell. He stood in the Wing by the cell. Sergeant Sherman then went into the cell and cut Williams down and placed him on the floor.

Williams was his roommate for approximately 2½ weeks. Williams [REDACTED]. Ratliff indicated that Williams [REDACTED] such as Williams would [REDACTED] Williams had to be [REDACTED].



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He helped Williams write a letter to his mother the past weekend. Williams asked his mother for some money and he expressed he loved and missed her. **(Exhibit B-1)**

In his sworn digitally recorded statement, Correctional Officer Shane Cynova stated:

On August 16, 2012, he was returning to E-Dormitory from assisting with Count in F-Dormitory, when he heard over the radio, Sergeant Sherman's request for assistance because an inmate was hanging in E-Wing 2. He immediately entered the dorm and responded to the cell. Sergeant Sherman already had Inmate Ratliff handcuffed and out of the cell and Williams was lying on the floor in the cell. He removed the sheet from around his neck and they [REDACTED]

Earlier that evening, he escorted Williams to the shower. There was nothing unusual about Williams' behavior that evening. **(Exhibit B-1)**

In his sworn digitally recorded statement, Correctional Officer Caleb Barker stated:

He was familiar with Inmate Williams by normal interaction with him being housed in Protective Confinement. When he assisted Sergeant Sherman with Count, Williams and his roommate, Inmate Donald Ratliff, were lying on their bunk during the [REDACTED] Count.

He did not respond to the call for assistance of an inmate hanging because he was the only officer in the Officer's Station. **(Exhibit B-1)**

At 1:29am, [REDACTED] was pronounced dead by [REDACTED]

Senior Inspector Barry Glover conducted a general inspection of Inmate Williams' body at 3:45am, on August 16, 2012 at [REDACTED] in Daytona Beach, Florida. The [REDACTED] which appeared to be consistent with the sheet that had been tied around his neck.

Also, Williams' cell and property were searched by Inspector Glover. The sheet was affixed (looped) around the top bunk frame which had been cut approximately 5 inches below the knot. There was no correspondence found in Williams' cell [REDACTED]

Photographs were taken of the cell and Inmate Williams' body. **(Exhibit A-2)**

The video coverage of E-Dormitory, Wing 2 was obtained and reviewed. The coverage is consistent with all staff statements of the events that took place. [REDACTED] The coverage is from 12:00am to 2:00am. At [REDACTED], the video coverage shows Sergeant Sherman and Officer Barker



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conducting a Count in Wing 2, both officers had flashlights in their hands and appeared to be looking in each cell with the flashlight. At [REDACTED], Sergeant Sherman and Officer Barker departed Wing 2. At 12:34:44, the lights came on and Sergeant Sherman responded to cell E1211. He looked inside the cell and then grabbed his radio from the radio holder as he stood in front of the cell. At 12:36am, Sherman opened the food flap and then removed the handcuffs from his handcuff case. Seconds later, the door opened and Inmate Ratliff was removed from the cell and stood in the hallway of the Wing with handcuffs on. Sherman immediately entered the cell and at this time, Officer Cynova responded to the cell. At 12:38:16, two other officers responded and escorted Ratliff out of the Wing. At 12:38:18, Sherman and Cynova were kneeling down and appear to have [REDACTED] by the view of their arms and head movements. Williams' body was inside the cell near the doorway with a portion of his body in view. At 12:38am, Captain Pendleton responded to the area. At 12:42:39am, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. At 1:07am, [REDACTED] entered the Wing. Then at 1:18am, Duty Warden Hodgson entered the Wing. At 1:18:45, [REDACTED] departed the Wing with Williams [REDACTED]. At 1:21am, the cell was secured.

(Exhibit B-2)

Inmate Williams had no phone activity on the Securus Phone System.

Inmate Williams' [REDACTED] were obtained and will be made a part of this investigative file.

(Exhibit A-3)

On August 16, 2012, an autopsy was performed on Inmate Williams by Timothy Gallagher, M.D., of Districts 7 & 24 Medical Examiner's Office. Doctor Gallagher indicated that Williams died [REDACTED] and gave a preliminary finding of suicide as the manner of death.

This exhibit represents the sheet (ligature) which was placed in evidence at Tomoka C.I. Inspector General's Office evidence locker.

(Exhibit B-3)

On August 21, 2012, [REDACTED] submitted an Incident Report indicating that Inmate Jacob Murray told her that Inmate Williams' [REDACTED] as reported. Murray heard Williams and his roommate, Inmate Ratliff arguing and fighting and believed Ratliff murdered Williams.

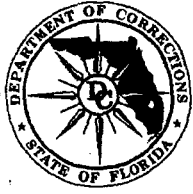
(Exhibit A-4)

In his sworn digitally recorded statement, Inmate Jacob Murray stated:

On August 16, 2012, approximately 30 minutes before Count, he heard Inmate Williams say, "Please don't kill me." Also, he heard arguing and fighting coming from the cell. Approximately 15-20 minutes after Count, he heard Inmate Ratliff yelling for help because his roommate was hanging. Murray indicated that his roommate, Inmate Alvin Crews can support this. Murray's cell was next to Williams' in Protective Confinement.

It was only Murray's opinion that Ratliff killed Williams.

(Exhibit B-2)



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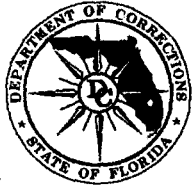
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In his sworn digitally recorded statement, Inmate Alvin Crews stated:

He denied that any of the actions described by Murray took place. He indicated that he was awake and did not hear any argument or sound of fighting coming from the cell. He never heard Williams yell, "Don't kill me." Crews said that 3 days after Williams' death, Murray stated that he was going to lie and say that Ratliff killed Williams, so he could be transferred. He knew that someone would be coming to speak with him about Murray's lie. **(Exhibit B-2)**

On October 24, 2012, I received the Autopsy Report and the manner of death is classified as suicide [REDACTED] **(Exhibit A-5)**

No criminal or administrative concerns were brought up or observed during this investigation.



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Yolande Brown

10/30/12

 Senior Inspector

 Date

W. C. ...

11/06/12

 Regional Supervisor / Lead Inspector

 Date

 Lead Supervisor

 Date

 Deputy Inspector General / Deputy Inspector General
 Chief of Investigations Chief of Special Operations

 Date

 Inspector General

 Date



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EXHIBIT/ATTACHMENTS SECTION

A. EXHIBIT(s) - attached:

1. Incident Report of Sergeant R. Sherman
2. Photographs of the cell and Inmate Williams' body
3. [REDACTED] of Inmate Williams
4. Incident Report of [REDACTED]
5. Autopsy Report of Inmate Williams

B. EXHIBIT(s) - not attached:

1. CD containing digitally recorded statement of the following:
 - Sergeant R. Sherman
 - Officer S. Cynova
 - Officer C. Barker
 - Inmate D. Ratliff
 - Inmate J. Murray
 - Inmate A. Crews
2. Video coverage of E-dormitory
3. Sheet(Ligature)