

Florida Department of Corrections



Office of the Inspector General

**CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION
INVESTIGATIVE ASSIST
CASE # 17-19470**



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
INVESTIGATIVE ASSIST SUMMARY REPORT



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Case Number: 17-19470

OIG Inspector: Inspector John Borders

Outside Agency: Florida Department of Law Enforcement

Outside Agency Investigator: Special Agent Barbara Smith

Date Assigned or Initiated: 10-27-2017

Complaint Against: N/A

Location of Incident – Institution/Facility/Office: Hernando Correctional Institution

Complainant: Lieutenant Kevin Rought

Outside Agency Case #: TM-370024

Use of Force Number: N/A

PREA Number: N/A

Classification of Incident: Natural Death

Confidential Medical Information Included: Yes No

Whistle-Blower Investigation: Yes No

Chief Inspector General Case Number: N/A



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I. AUTHORITY

The Florida Department of Corrections, Office of the Inspector General, by designation of the Secretary and § 944.31, Florida Statutes, is authorized to conduct any criminal investigation that occurs on property owned or leased by the department or involves matters over which the department has jurisdiction.

The testimony references included in this report are summations of oral or written statements provided to inspectors. Statements contained herein do not necessarily represent complete or certified transcribed testimony, except as noted. Unless specifically indicated otherwise, all interviews with witnesses, complainants, and subjects were audio or video recorded.

II. METHODOLOGY

The investigation reviewed the derivations of the allegation advanced by the complainant. The scope of this investigation does not seek to specifically address tort(s), but violations of criminal statutes. The criterion used to evaluate each contention or allegation was limited to the following standard of analysis:

1. Did the subject's action or behavior violate Florida criminal statutes?

III. ANALYSIS

The standard and analysis in this investigation is predicated with the burden of proving any violation of law, established by probable cause. The evidence considered for analysis is confined to the facts and allegations stated or reasonably implied. The actions or behavior of the subject are presumed to be lawful and in compliance with the applicable Florida law, unless probable cause indicates the contrary.



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IV. DEFINITIONS

Unfounded:

Refers to a disposition of a criminal case for which probable cause does not exist to suggest the suspect's behavior or action occurred nor is an arrest or formal charge being initiated.

Closed by Arrest:

Refers to a disposition of a criminal case for which probable cause exists that an identified subject committed the offense and one for which an arrest or formal prosecution has been initiated.

Exceptionally Cleared:

Refers to a disposition of a criminal case for which probable cause exists that an identified suspect committed the offense, but one for which an arrest or formal charge is not initiated, or in the case of a death investigation, one for which no evidence exists that the death was the result of a crime or neglect.

Open-Inactive:

Refers to a disposition of a criminal case for which a criminal investigation commenced, but where evidence is insufficient to close as unfounded, closed by arrest, or exceptionally cleared.

Investigative Assist Closed

Refers to a disposition of an investigative assist, where the conduct being investigated by the outside agency did not concern allegations against a Department employee, contractor, inmate, offender, or other person either employed or under the supervision of the Department.



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V. PREDICATE

On October 27, 2017, at approximately 6:00 am, I received a telephone call from on-call Supervisor Maurice Radford who informed me of the death of deceased Inmate Elizabeth Sykes DC #365234, at Hernando Correctional Institution. I was informed to act as a liaison for the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), as specified in the MOU with FDLE. Inmate Sykes was discovered [REDACTED] in her bunk at approximately 5:15 am. Inmate Sykes [REDACTED] located in Brooksville, Florida. On October 27, 2017, at approximately 6:21 am, Inmate Sykes was pronounced deceased. This death investigation was assigned to Inspector John Borders, as an Investigative Assist.

VI. SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS

Based on the exhibits, witnesses' testimony, officer's statements, and the record as a whole, presented or available to the primary inspector, the following findings of facts were determined:

In his incident report dated October 27, 2017, Officer Geovanny Rodriguez documented the following:

On October 27, 2017, at approximately 5:11 am, while assigned to D-Dormitory Inmate Catherine Freeze DC #160851 yell into the officer's station "*we have a real emergency Inmate Sykes is not waking up*". He immediately responded to Inmate Sykes bunk and attempted to awaken her, but had no success. At approximately 5:12 am, he initiated ICS and requested [REDACTED] to respond to D-Dormitory. [REDACTED] arrived at the incident scene. [REDACTED] Lieutenant Kevin Rought [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Inmate Sykes. [REDACTED] mate Sykes to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] ated in Brooksville Fl.

On October 27, 2017, I was contacted via cell phone by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), Supervisor Edith Neal. I was informed that two FDLE, special agents would meet me at Hernando Correctional Institution.

On October 27, 2017, at approximately 9:00 am, I made contact with Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Special Agents Barbara Smith, and James Gau. SA, Gau informed me that additional FDLE agents [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] conducting interviews and collecting evidence. At approximately 9:15 am, we were briefed by the security staff at Hernando Correctional Institution. FDLE, SA, Smith, and Gau, were provided access to the security staff and inmates for questioning. I was later advised by SA, Smith that all interviews were completed and Inmate Sykes bunk area (118L) was processed and photograph. At approximately 12:05 pm, SA Smith and Gau departed Hernando Correctional Institution.

On January 31, 2018, I received an email from Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), Special Agent (SA), Barbara Smith. SA, Smith informed me that the death investigation of deceased Inmate Elizabeth Sykes was closed. The investigation revealed the following:

On January 24, 2018, Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), Special Agent (SA) Nathan Dix received the Finalized Cause and Manner of Death Report from the Hernando County Medical



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Examiner's Office, pertaining to Elizabeth Sykes (DOB 12/14/1972). This report was documented under Hernando County ME Case #2017-1474. The manner of death for deceased Inmate Elizabeth Sykes was determined to be "Natural", which was contributed to [REDACTED]

VII. CHARGES

List alleged violations of Florida Law:

1. N/A

VIII. CONCLUSION

Based on the information gathered during their investigation, it is the recommendation of FDLE Special Agent Barbara Smith that due to no Criminal or Administrative concerns, be termed as follows:

1. N/A

Inspector John Borders reviewed the investigation completed by FDLE, and administrative issues were not identified.