

## Supplement #24 INVESTIGATION SUMMARY FINDINGS

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### SCENE PROCESSING:

NONE

### NARRATIVE:

### SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

The investigation of the death of Ta'Neasha Chappell began the day she died, July 16, 2021. The Jackson County Sheriff's Department initiated the investigation. Sheriff Rick Meyer and reached out to the Indiana State Police Investigations Division and asked us to assume the investigation. My involvement as the lead investigator started at Ta'Neasha Chappell's forensic autopsy on July 18, 2021. During the course of the investigation, interviews were conducted with female inmates from the Jackson & Johnson County Jails by, JCSD Detectives JL McElfresh, Mark Holt, Stan Darlage and ISP Detective Sgt. Joe Loyd and me which provided much information about Ta'Neasha Chappell's incarceration from May 26, 2021 to July 16, 2021. ISP Detective Sgt. Joe Loyd and I interviewed JCSD employees and I interviewed several male Jackson County Jail inmates. I also had numerous conversations with individuals from different agencies and companies as necessary. I gathered evidence and information for review as it became available. All evidence and pertinent information is discussed in other narratives within the case file. I reviewed all forms of communication to and from inmate Ta'Neasha Chappell while she was incarcerated at the Jackson County Jail. During my review of communications, I never heard inmate Chappell express her concern to her family about her health or safety. Her conversations with family and others was generally focused on whether or not someone could come up with enough money to bond her out of jail.

During the inmate interviews, I learned that most inmates were familiar with inmate Ta'Neasha Chappell. Some knew her by the nickname of "BJ"(Big Joint). Inmate Chappell made her way through the jail starting at book-in on May 26, 2021. From there, inmate Chappell stayed in quarantine for a period of time before being transferred to H pod. From H pod, she was transferred to J pod where she was housed until she was taken to Schneck Medical Center on July 16, 2021, where she later died.

Inmate Chappell had numerous cell mates at different times during her incarceration and was housed in different cells within the pods. The last cell she was housed in was cell #3 in J pod. Her last cell mate, inmate Kimberly Rosales-Lemus, moved out of the cell she shared with inmate Chappell on the evening of July 15<sup>th</sup>, after final evening lockdown, which occurred around 11:00PM.

Some inmates stated that during conversations with inmate Chappell that she told them that she had several health issues. She mentioned having bleeding ulcers, Sickle Cell Disease and bullet fragments in her body from previous gunshot wounds. It should be noted that when Ta'Neasha Chappell was arrested on May 26, 2021 she was transported to Schneck Medical Center to be examined prior to being taken to the Jackson County Jail. Schneck Medical Records from May 26, 2021 document that inmate Chappell had the following health issues:

- \*Gastrointestinal Disorder: Ulcers,
- \*Musculoskeletal Disorder:, Back injury from a previous gunshot wound
- \*Blood Disorder: Sickle Cell Anemia

- \*Psychological Disorder: Anxiety**
- \*Previous Surgeries**
- \*Substance use: Marijuana**
- \*History of Vaping**

The Schneck medical records corroborate what inmate Chappell told other inmates during her incarceration. Schneck Medical Center treated Ta'Neasha Chappell and approved her release to the Jackson County Jail for incarceration on May 26, 2021. Later in her incarceration, in a bond revocation hearing dated July 9, 2021, inmate Chappell tells the court that she had:

- \*Seven bullet wounds - for which she receives treatment for, 3 times per week.**
- \*Sickle Cell Disease - for which she receives treatments 3 times per month. She also stated that when she has flare-ups, she gets blood transfusions to treat the symptoms. Both her treatment and doctors are in Louisville.**
- \*Ulcers**

The Schneck medical records corroborate what inmate Chappell told the court on July 9, 2021. Inmate Chappell's public defender representation at the hearing told me in a later interview that after being made aware of her claims, he started working on the process to get her medical treatment.

When Ta'Neasha Chappell was booked into the Jackson County Jail on May 26, 2021, she was not asked the standard book-in/medical questions to obtain a medical history. She was not asked by the jail staff, nor was she asked by the jail nurse. Neither the staff, nor the jail nurse followed up with inmate Chappell to obtain a medical history. According to jail staff and the jail nurse, inmate Chappell never made any formal medical requests for treatment of the health/medical issues she had mentioned to Schneck Medical Center doctors or other inmates at JCJ during her incarceration and the court at her July 9<sup>th</sup> bond revocation hearing.

In describing inmate Chappell, inmates said she had a strong personality and generally kept to herself. Some inmates described inmate Chappell as a bully with an attitude and an instigator of verbal disputes while others described her as funny. The female inmates that were housed with inmate Chappell in J pod spoke about a few issues in which inmate Chappell was involved.

On one occasion, it is reported that there was a physical altercation between inmate Chappell and inmate Mia DeGonia. This altercation was not told to me by any of the jail staff. It is reported that inmate DeGonia supposedly shoved inmate Chappell and inmate Chappell retaliated. Inmate DeGonia confirmed the physical altercation during her interview. Neither inmate reported any injuries as a result of this altercation. This altercation appeared to be unknown by the jail staff.

Inmate Terry recalls when she was placed in J pod after having surgery, other inmates supposedly asked her to do something about inmate Chappell beating up inmate DeGonia. Inmate Terry said that when she learned that inmate DeGonia was the instigator of the physical altercation, she didn't do anything about it because she thought inmate DeGonia got what she deserved.

On another occasion, on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, inmate Chappell reportedly took a breakfast tray that belonged to inmate Sylvia Terry. At the time, inmate Terry and inmate Chappell were cellmates. Inmate Chappell supposedly told two other female inmates that inmate Terry told her she could have her tray. Inmate Chappell supposedly took the food off of the two inmates' trays and ate it herself. When inmate Terry found out about this, she got angry and moved out of the cell she shared with inmate Chappell.

I was also told by numerous inmates about a verbal dispute on July 15<sup>th</sup> over the television remote control. The dispute was not physical. The dispute over the remote started when female inmates did not like that inmate Chappell, whose day it was to control the remote, muted the television and went into her cell. The unwritten agreement

between inmates in J pod was that when it was your day to control the remote, you got to watch what you wanted. If you were not there or were asleep, other inmates could control the remote. When inmate Chappell muted the television and went to take a nap, another inmate took the remote and unmuted the television. When inmate Chappell came out to retake control of the remote, inmate Barker did not want to give it back. Other inmates kept the dispute from getting physical by keeping inmate Chappell and inmate Barker away from one another. This can be seen on video.

Once inmate Chappell regained the remote control, she turned the volume up on some Gospel music, took the batteries out of the remote and threw them out of the pod. Guards came in and addressed the issue. Inmate Terry and others said that racial slurs were directed at inmate Chappell surrounding the television remote control incident.

Inmates reported that inmate Chappell appeared to be well and sounded well until after the television remote dispute on the afternoon of July 15<sup>th</sup>. They reported that inmate Chappell was the only inmate who did not go to "rec" on July 15<sup>th</sup>. I was told that inmate Chappell usually did attend "rec" time. Throughout the evening of July 15<sup>th</sup> and into the morning of July 16<sup>th</sup>, inmates described hearing inmate Chappell repeatedly vomiting from her cell. Inmates said they heard her repeatedly call for help throughout the night. Some of the inmates did alert the guards at different times about inmate Chappell being sick on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Inmates said the jail staff checked on inmate Chappell throughout the night. All this is observed and documented from jail video and the timeline summary.

During the morning of July 16<sup>th</sup>, prior to inmate Chappell being removed from J pod and taken to book-in, inmates described inmate Chappell as moaning and asking for help from her cell. They said she wandered around naked in the day room and in her cell. They said she had defecated in her underwear, describing it as a green color that covered her butt and back. They said she was acting odd and stumbling around. Some inmates even heard her asking her father for help because she had been raped.

In recent additional interviews with the female inmates on November 17, 2021, some of which were housed with inmate Chappell in J pod prior to her death and some not, I asked about the rumors going through the jail that inmate Chappell could have been poisoned in light of recent unrelated supposed attempted poisoning rumors. Those interviews were summarized in another narrative. None of the female inmates saw any other female inmate poison inmate Chappell. Of the inmates interviewed, inmate Jill Pike claims to have overheard other inmates talking about inmate Chappell's death and how the "cleaner should not have killed her." These interviews were prompted after a couple of female inmates alleged that other female inmates supposedly tried to poison two female inmates. This was not related to the investigation of the death of inmate Chappell. From those recent interviews, it was determined there was no evidence supporting the possibility that inmate Chappell was poisoned.

Inmate Chappell was taken to Schneck Medical Center for treatment on July 16<sup>th</sup>. At the hospital, Dr. Pangallo and team tried to determine what was happening with inmate Chappell. During their treatment of her, they ran labs and provided care. At one point, Dr. Pangallo and team discussed the possibility that inmate Chappell may have ingested antifreeze. The reason he had that concern was that he said in his past experience, inmate Chappell's lab results were similar to someone who may have ingested antifreeze. They also discussed the possibility that inmate Chappell had Sickle Cell Disease. He said one of the team members said yes, she did, after looking through their records of her treatment on May 26, 2021.

Dr. Pangallo said that he believes that inmate Chappell died as a result of her underlying health/medical issues, specifically due to an untreated Sickle Cell Crisis. Dr. Pangallo has not seen the autopsy report. He is basing his medical opinion based on inmate Chappell's documented medical history from May 26, 2021, the symptoms she presented with at Schneck Medical Center ER on July 16, 2021 and her lab results from July 16, 2021.

The autopsy report from CIFA LLC, stated that the cause of death was probable toxicity due to unknow substance and listed the manner of death as unknown. At the time of the autopsy on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the forensic pathologist was made aware of the statement made by Dr. Pangallo about possible antifreeze ingestion. This was relayed to them by investigators from the JCSD after Detective Stan Darlage obtained the information during his interviews at

Schneck Medical Center on the evening of July 16<sup>th</sup>. The blood and urine samples taken at the autopsy by CIFA were tested against a known panel for illegal narcotics, Ethanol, Methanol, Isopropanol, Acetone and Propylene Glycol. No illegal narcotics were detected and no Ethanol, Methanol, Isopropanol, Acetone or Propylene Glycol was detected. This ruled out the possibility that inmate Chappell ingested anti-freeze with propylene glycol.

I followed up with CIFA Forensic Pathologist, Dr., Latajna Watkins in email and telephone calls to discuss the manner of death and cause of death listed in the report with the absence of any toxic substances detected. Dr. Watkins was the forensic pathologist who performed the autopsy on July 18, 2021. Dr. Watkins explained in a voicemail to me that she believed that due to locating a green liquid in her abdomen, how inmate Chappell presented to the ER on July 16<sup>th</sup>, the Ronchi in her lungs, her increased Anion Gap level and her increased AST levels from her Schneck lab results, indicated to her that she may have ingested some type of unknown toxic substance. She explained that the Toxicology results did not detect any toxic substances. Dr. Watkins said this could be explained by saying if there was an unknown, undetected toxic substance ingested, it may not be detectable by toxicology. She further explained that this was the reason for the listed cause of death. She also said the manner of death was undetermined because if there was any unknown, undetected possible toxic substance in her system, she could not explain how it could have gotten there.

I asked for a meeting with Dr. Watkins and Dr. Pangallo to discuss Ta'Neasha Chappell's two appearances at Schneck Medical Center, the related medical documents, the autopsy report and the toxicology report. Dr. Pangallo agreed to the meeting through his attorney. Dr. Watkins did not respond to my request for a meeting. Due to the lack of a response from Dr. Watkins, there will be no meeting.

In an attempt to determine if Ta'Neasha Chappell had any toxic substances in her system at the time of her death, further testing was done at the Miami Valley Regional Crime Lab in Ohio. I had previously contacted:

**Indiana State Police Labs**

**NMS Labs**

**Axis Labs**

**Indiana State Department of Toxicology**

**Indiana Poison Control Center**

to ascertain whether or not they could test Ta'Neasha Chappell's stomach contents, blood and urine samples and the orange cleaning chemical obtained from the JCJ.

I wanted to test the samples for propylene glycol and ethylene glycol. I also wanted to test the blood and urine samples and the stomach content sample(dark green liquid) to determine if any of the orange cleaning product could be detected. None of the places I contacted had the capability of conducting the testing. In my conversation with the Miami Valley Regional Crime Lab Director, I told him what we were trying to accomplish and asked them if they had the capability to conduct the testing we wanted to have done. He told that they could and I made arrangements to relay them the evidence for testing. I hand delivered the evidence to the MVRCL for testing.

When testing was complete, I was notified. I retrieved the evidence and entered it back into storage at the Versailles State Police Post. See attached testing and results. There was no propylene glycol or ethylene glycol detected in the blood samples or the stomach content sample. This ruled out the possibility that inmate Chappell ingested anti-freeze with ethylene glycol. There were products of decomposition, Ethanol and marijuana metabolite detected in the stomach contents. The marijuana metabolite was not a surprising result as Schneck Medical Center lab results from May 26, 2021 revealed that inmate Chappell had THC in her system. The Ethanol detected was detected at a level of 0.020% +/- 0.002% which is considerably lower than the average level of naturally produced Ethanol in the body of 3 grams/per day. The MVRCL was ultimately not able to test the autopsy samples and stomach content sample for the orange cleaning product. They did however, test the orange cleaning product to determine its composition.

I recently researched to determine if it was possible to get the autopsy samples tested to determine if inmate Chappell could have had Sick Cell Disease as she told numerous inmates, Schneck Medical Center health officials and court officials she did. I contacted Schneck Medical Center, Columbus Regional Health, IU Health, ISDT, Lab Corp and

the Jackson County Deputy Coroner, Mike Bobb. Deputy Coroner Bobb gave me the name of Dr. Wess Wittler, a contracted pathologist with Schneck Medical Center. In a conversation with Dr. Wittler, he told me that he and his team do not have the capability to conduct that testing. In a conversation with Lab Corp, I was told that the July 18<sup>th</sup> samples were beyond Lab Corp's stability date for testing. In a conversation with Columbus Regional Health, they directed me to IU Health. In my conversation with IU Health, I was told that the samples had to meet the criteria of being whole blood, not been frozen, not clotted and having been taken within 24 hours. In an email from the ISDT Director, I was told they do not have the capability of testing for Sickel Cell Disease.

There is no further known testing to be done on the autopsy samples. There is no evidence from the autopsy results, toxicology results or the MVRCL results that there were any toxic substances in any of the autopsy samples that were able to be tested. Ta'Neasha Chappell's documented medical history from Schneck Medical Center, her lab results from Schneck Medical Center from July 16<sup>th</sup>, observations by Dr. Pangallo and medical team of symptoms she showed at the Schneck Medical Center ER on July 16<sup>th</sup> support Dr. Pangallo's medical opinion that Ta'Neasha Chappell had severe underlying, untreated health issues that contributed to her death.

This investigation is complete and will be forwarded to the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office for review.

**ADDITIONAL LEADS TO INVESTIGATE:**

NONE

**NCIC/IDACS ENTRIES:**

NONE

**ATTACHMENTS:**

NONE

Signed: DETECTIVE J. DUNCAN #ISP6335

Reviewed: FIRST SERGEANT R. DREW #ISP5376