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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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In response to multiple media requests for comment, District Attorney Stefanie Salavantis issued the following statement pertaining to the Shaheen Mackey case.

Neither the county's decision to settle the civil action, nor the video's release affect the investigation or decision with respect to criminal charges against the corrections officers in this case.

It should be noted that not only did our office expend a substantial amount of time and resources doing a full investigation into the incident; the matter was also reviewed by Federal authorities.

This incident began with one inmate witness, who said he feared for his life, screaming for help because Mr. Mackey was violently attempting to chew and rip his fingernails off, ripping out his own hair and spitting, which was confirmed by another inmate. A C.O. responded with two medical assistants, but could not calm Mr. Mackey down or restrain him and in fact lost his radio in the process resulting in the cellmate running to the command center screaming that the C.O. needed help.

According to the witnesses, seven C.O.s responded and continued to have difficulty restraining Mr. Mackey remarking that it was "unreal the amount of strength [Mackey] seemed to have," that Mr. Mackey "had incredible strength" and one had never seen the type of strength that Mr. Mackey had. At no time was Mr. Mackey choked or struck in any way by anyone.

As the video then shows, the guards are attempting unsuccessfully to restrain Mr. Mackey for their safety, his safety and the safety of the medical team trying to assist. Eventually, after approximately twenty minutes, the officers are able to restrain Mr. Mackey and he appears to go unresponsive. Medical staff is present and they attempt to resuscitate him. He was successfully resuscitated in the ambulance, but passed away two days later.

Forensic pathologist Dr. Gary Ross ruled that Mr. Mackey suffered from severe coronary artery disease. Dr. Ross stated that, as a result of Mr. Mackey's "hyperexcitable physically combative state", he developed an irregular heartbeat leading to a situation where his heart suddenly cannot pump a sufficient amount of blood needed by his body which is most often caused by a severe heart attack.

The investigation also uncovered a social media video of Mr. Mackey discussing and displaying a diagnosis he received indicating that he has "violent tendencies," "homicidal outbursts," which have required "police or ER evaluation/intervention."

Unquestionably, the loss of Mr. Mackey is tragic for everyone involved. Whether the episode was caused by the effects of a controlled substance – as initially, but incorrectly, believed by the officers, or by seizure as was later believed, the officers had a responsibility to attempt to restrain Mr. Mackey before he hurt himself or anyone else or before he could be given medical attention in his agitated state. As a result, we stand by our investigation which revealed no evidence of criminal intent to harm Mr. Mackey or commit any other crime during this episode.

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