

## **JEFFERSON COUNTY CORRECTIONS DEPUTIES ACQUITTED OF CRIMINALLY NEGLIGENT HOMICIDE**

***State of Oregon v. Cory Skidgel 18CR23021***

***State of Oregon v. Michael Durkan 18CR23022***

***State of Oregon v. Anthony Hansen 18CR23023***

At the request of Jefferson County District Attorney Steven Leriche, the Clackamas County District Attorney's Office reviewed a case submitted by the Central Oregon Major Crimes Team involving three Jefferson County Corrections Deputies. A Jefferson County grand jury considered the evidence, and on April 4, 2018 returned indictments charging each deputy with criminally negligent homicide for their respective roles in the death of inmate James Wippel. Mr. Wippel had been arrested on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018 by Warm Springs Police on drug charges. While in custody, Mr. Wippel repeatedly complained of feeling ill. Over an 8 hour period on multiple occasions, Mr. Wippel vomited and defecated blood, and although the corrections deputies were aware of his condition, they failed to provide any medical treatment to or for Mr. Wippel, seek any medical advice, or inquire any further about his deteriorating condition. When the next shift of deputies arrived, seeing Mr. Wippel's condition, they summoned an ambulance. However, Mr. Wippel died at the jail before he could receive meaningful medical treatment. The cause of death was determined to be a bleeding ulcer.

Clackamas County Chief Deputy District Attorney John Wentworth and Senior Deputy District Attorney Bill Golden represented the prosecution during the 7 day trial before Judge Daina Vitols, which concluded on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018. In rendering her verdict, Judge Vitols stated that the failure to provide medical care was criminally negligent as it was a "gross deviation from the standard of care a reasonable person would have done in this situation." However, Judge Vitols acquitted the defendants as she stated she could not determine when it was "too late for medical treatment to save Mr. Wippel."

Following the verdict, Clackamas County District Attorney John Foote issued the following statement:

*Our office was asked to handle this case which we knew would be challenging. The victim, James Wippel, was an acknowledged drug addict. However he was also a human being. His life mattered, just like all of ours. The Jefferson County Grand Jury (made up of private citizens from the county) believed strongly that crimes were committed in Mr. Wippel's death by corrections officers. When the sheriff took Mr. Wippel into custody in his jail, his office assumed responsible for his safety. Instead over 8 hours Mr. Wippel bled to death in his cell. A large amount of his blood was on the wall, his bed and the floor of his cell, visible to all. He was never taken to a hospital. Mr. Wippel's life mattered, just like all of ours. What happened to him in the Jefferson County jail was a crime.*

<https://www.oregonlive.com/pacific-northwest-news/2018/12/oregon-corrections-officers-acquitted-of-charges-after-jail-inmate-bled-to-death-in-2017.html>