KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL of TEXAS

CUSTODIAL DEATH REPORT

Agency Information

CDR Number:	17-574-CJ	Version Type:	AMENDED
Report Date:	10/29/2020 9:04 AM	Status:	Submitted

Agency/Facility Information

Agency Name:	El Paso County Sheriff's Dept.	Agency Address:	3850 Justice Road
Agency City:	El Paso	Agency State:	TX
Agency Zip:	79938		

Director Information

Director Salutation:	Sheriff	Director First Name:	Richard
Director Middle Name:			
Director Last Name:	Wiles		
Reporter Name:	Daniel Rodriguez	Reporter Email:	drodriguez@epcounty.com

Decedent Information

Identity of Deceased

First Name: Joshua

Middle Name:

Last Name: Lopez

Suffix:

Date of Birth: 2/9/1991 Sex: Male

Race: Hispanic or Latino

Age At Time Of Death: 26

Date/Time of Custody (arrest, incarceration) (mm/dd/yyyy hh:mm AM/PM):

Date/Time of Custody or Incident: 5/31/2017 10:07 PM

Date/Time of Death (mm/dd/yyyy hh:mm AM/PM):

Death Date and Time: 6/4/2017 11:24 AM

Manner / Cause of Death

Has a medical examiner or coroner conducted an evaluation to determine a cause of death?

Medical Examiner/Coroner Evaluation?: Yes, results are available

What was the manner of death? (select only one)

Manner of Death: Suicide

Medical Cause of Death:

Medical Cause of Death:

Hanging

Had the decedent been receiving treatment for the medical condition that caused the death after admission to your jail's jurisdiction?

Medical Treatment: No

If death was an accident, homicide or suicide, who caused the death?

Who caused the death?: Decedent

If a weapon caused the death, what type of weapon caused the death? (Hold CTRL to select all that apply)

Type of weapon that caused death?: Not Applicable

Was the cause of death the result of a pre-existing medical condition or did the decedent develop the condition after admission?

Pre existing medical condition?: Not Applicable; cause of death was accidental injury, intoxication, suicide or homicide

If death was an accident, homicide or suicide, what was the means of death?

Means of Death: Hanging, strangulation

Location / Custody Information

Where did the event causing the death occur?

Street Address:	601 East Overland Avenue	City:	El Paso
County:	El Paso	Zip:	79901

What location category best describes where the event causing the death occurred?

Location Category:	Law Enforcement Facility

What type of custody/facility was the Decedent in at the time of death:

Type of Custody:	County Jail

Specific type of custody/facility:

Specific Type of Custody/Facility:
Jail - single cell

What was the time and date of the deceased's entry into the law enforcement facility where the death occurred (mm/dd/yyyy hh:mm AM/PM):

Entry Date Time:	7/4/2016 11:22 AM

Where did the death occur?

Death Location:	Law enforcement facility/booking center

General Information

Did any other law enforcement agencies respond to calls for service related to this incident?

Other Agencies Respond?: No

What were the most serious offense(s) with which the deceased was (or would have been) charged with at the time of death?

Offense 1:

Robbery

Offense 2:

Assault/Impeding Breath Family Member

Offense 3:

Evading Arrest W/Vehicle

Were the Charges:: Convicted

What were the types of charges or reason for contact? (Hold CTRL to select all that apply)

Type of Offense: Violent Crime Against Persons

At any time during the incident and/or entry into the law enforcement facility, did the decedent display or use a weapon?

Decedent display/use of weapons: No

At any time during the incident and/or entry into the law enforcement facility, did the decedent:

Attempt to Injure Others?: No

At any time during the incident and/or entry into the law enforcement facility, did the decedent:

Appear intoxicated (alcohol or drugs): No

Make suicidal statements?: Yes

Exhibit any mental health problems?: Yes

Exhibit any medical problems?: No

At any time during the incident and/or entry into the law enforcement facility, did the decedent:

Barricade self or initiate standoff?:	No	Resist being handcuffed or arrested?:	No
Physically attempt/assault officer(s):	No	Gain possession of officer's weapon:	No
Verbally threaten other(s) including law:	No	Escape or attempt to escape/flee custody:	No
Attempt gain possession officer's weapon:	No		

Was the deceased under restraint in the time leading up to the death or the events causing the death?

Under Restraint:	No

Summary of Incident

Summary of How the Death Occurred: (max. 30,000 characters)

Summary:

05/31/2017
Approximately 2207 Hours
El Paso County Sheriff's Office Detention Officers were conducting a physical check of all inmates at the El Paso County Downtown Detention Facility. Officers arrived to cellblock 670 (separated single cells) and checked on all inmates. Officers arrived to cell #4 inside cellblock 670. Officers noticed an inmate issued towel held in place inside the cell room, covering the cell room door window. The top of the towel hung slightly low, allowing for approximately three inches of the window to be uncovered. This prevented anyone from looking directly into the cell room. Officers knocked on the cell room window and asked the inmate if he was okay. There was no response. Officers then stood up on their toes to be able to look into the small area at the top of the cell room window that was uncovered. As Officers looked through the cell room window into the cell room, they observed what appeared to be an inmate issued mattress cover tied to the air vent in a single strand.

Officers immediately opened the cell room door and initiated a facility back-up call for further officer assistance. As the door completely opened, Officers observed that the Decedent had the mattress cover tied around his neck with his body hanging and facing the back cell room wall. The mattress cover was tied to the air vent in a letter Y fashion with one end of the cover tied to each corner of the air vent and tied to the decedent's neck down the middle, directly below the air vent. Officers quickly entered the cell room and wrapped their arms around the decedent, lifting the decedent up to release the tension on the mattress cover tied around his neck. Officers then attempted to release the tied mattress cover from the air vent. The knots that were tied into the mattress cover onto the air vent were tied very tightly, making it very difficult to untie. As Officers continued to attempt to untie the mattress cover, an assisting Officer entered the cell room and handed them a razor blade scraper. Officers took the scraper and cut the right side of the cover, close to the air vent. Officers then placed the decedent on the cell room floor, alongside the mattress bunk with his head close to the foot of the bunk. Officers placed the decedent on the floor and requested for the Ambu-Breathing Assistance Bag. Officers began CPR with chest compressions. Officers observed that the decedent's complexion was slightly pale although his lips appeared normal color, but were noticeably dry. The decedent had both his eyes open as CPR was being conducted. Officers later arrived with the Ambu-Breathing Assistance Bag and began to give rescue breaths as chest compressions continued. The mattress cover

noose remained tied around the decedent's neck, as Officers were not confident with removing it without cutting the decedent with the razor blade scraper. After approximately three sets of chest compressions, Officers cut the noose just below the decedent's left ear. Officers did not observe a ligature mark, only redness on the area of skin on his neck. Officers attempted to locate a pulse on the decedent's neck and his left wrist. Officers were not able to locate a pulse. Chest compressions were continued. Officers then used a flashlight to check the response of the decedent's pupils and the pupils did not react, and were unresponsive. CPR continued to be conducted with the clinic staff arriving a short time later.

At approximately 2215 hours, the nursing staff entered the cell room with an AED and proceeded to attach it to the decedent, while Officers continued chest compressions. After the AED was placed on the decedent, the AED advised to continue with the chest compressions and rescue breaths.

At approximately 2219 hours, Emergency Medical Services personnel arrived in the cell room and continued CPR, while placing their AED device on the decedent. Emergency Medical Services personnel attempted to stabilize the decedent before placing the him onto the gurney. Emergency Medical Services personnel continued to perform CPR after the decedent was placed on the gurney.

At approximately 2227 hours, Emergency Medical Services personnel transported the decedent to University Medical Center.

06/04/2017
2219 Hours
The El Paso County Sheriff's Office was advised by University Medical Center Personnel that the decedent was pronounced brain dead on 06/04/2017 at 1124 hours.

An autopsy was later conducted by the Medical Examiner's Office of El Paso County and results are pending.