



**Commission of
Correction**

**Final Report of the
New York State Commission of Correction:**

In the Matter of the Death of

**Kaazim Freeman (19B1825),
an incarcerated individual of the
Wende Correctional Facility**

March 29, 2022

**To: Honorable Anthony Annucci
Acting Commissioner
NYS Department of Corrections
And Community Supervision
The Harriman State Campus
1220 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12226**

Allen Riley
Chairman

Thomas J. Loughren
Commissioner

Yolanda Canty
Commissioner

GREETINGS:

WHEREAS, the Medical Review Board has reported to the NYS Commission of Correction pursuant to Correction Law, section 47(1)(d), regarding the death of Kaazim Freeman who died on September 6, 2019, while an incarcerated individual in the custody of the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision at the Wende Correctional Facility, the Commission has determined that the following final report be issued.

FINDINGS:

1. Kaazim Freeman was a 33-year-old male who died on 9/6/19 due to a suicidal hanging while in the custody of the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (NYS DOCCS) at the Wende Correctional Facility (CF).

2. Freeman was born in Rochester, NY. Freeman was survived by one child, his mother, five brothers, and two sisters. There was no information available to the Commission regarding Freeman's education or employment history.

3. [REDACTED]

4. [REDACTED]

5. [REDACTED] In the instant offense, on 12/14/18 in Rochester, NY, Freeman was found in unlawful possession of a loaded .38 caliber handgun with four live rounds, and one spent round. Freeman spent five months in the Monroe County Jail (CJ) before being sentenced to seven years in NYS DOCCS.

6. [REDACTED]

7. Freeman was admitted into NYS DOCCS at Wende Correctional Facility (CF) on 7/26/19. Freeman was transferred from Wende CF to Elmira CF on 7/29/19 for program purposes. NYS DOCCS documentation indicated that Freeman was transferred from Elmira CF to Wende CF on 8/12/19 in order to be assessed. This is where Freeman remained until the terminal event.

8. Freeman did not acquire any disciplinary infractions during this NYS DOCCS incarceration.

9. [REDACTED]

10. On 9/5/19 at 7:30 p.m., CO J.C. filled out a Mental Health Referral for Freeman. Documentation indicated that Freeman engaged in strange or unusual behavior which was not specified. Freeman appeared nervous and fearful for no apparent reason, and appeared sad and did not speak. Freeman's hair and body appeared dirty with an offensive odor. Freeman's non-verbal and appearance variations fell into the category for a regular referral to mental health per the Central New York Psychiatric Center Policy (CNYPC) # 1.3, Mental Health Referral that suggested that the referred incarcerated individual that was experiencing serious emotional or behavioral problems and requires that the incarcerated individual be assessed by mental health within 48 hours.

Per a response to the Commission's preliminary report from the Office of Mental Health dated 1/10/22, the referral form used in this instance was found to be outdated (from 2014) and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Corrective action regarding the forms use was taken in response to this incident.

11. On 9/6/19, CO B.C-F. documented that at the 5:47 a.m. count, Freeman was sitting upright on the bed with both feet on the floor. During the 6:45 a.m. final rounds, Freeman was alive and breathing laying on his bed.

12. On 9/6/19 at 7:15 a.m., CO D.L. was conducting rounds on 3 company and observed Freeman sitting on the floor of A-3-22 cell, Freeman's back was against the cell bars and a garrote was secured around Freeman's neck fashioned from a state sheet that was secured to the top of the cell bars. CO D.L. immediately called a medical emergency. Staff responded with the automated external defibrillator (AED) and the cutdown tool. CO S.L. used the cutdown tool to remove the sheet from around Freeman's neck. COs S.L. and D.S. removed Freeman from the cell and laid Freeman on the floor of the gallery. CO S.L. initiated cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and CO D.S. applied the AED on Freeman's chest with no shock advised. Medical responded to the scene immediately and requested 911 to be notified. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Lancaster Volunteer Ambulance staff arrived at the scene at 7:34 a.m. and assumed the care of Freeman. [REDACTED]

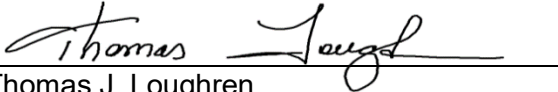
13. Freeman wrote a suicide note to his ex-girlfriend that was retrieved by security staff after the terminal event from Freeman's body. In summary, the note indicated that Freeman

was distraught over the girlfriend lying and hurting Freeman.

ACTIONS REQUIRED:

This case be closed as a suicide.

WITNESS, HONORABLE THOMAS J. LOUGHREN, Commissioner, NYS Commission of Correction, Alfred E. Smith State Office Building, 80 South Swan Street, 12th Floor, in the City of Albany, New York 12210 on this 29th day of March, 2022.



Thomas J. Loughren
Commissioner & Chair
Medical Review Board

TJL:BB:jdb
2019-M-0098
March 2022

cc: Dr. Carol Moores, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Chief Medical Officer
Bryan Hilton, Assistant Commissioner for Mental Health
Superintendent Christopher Yehl, Wende CF
Dr. Li-Wen Lee, Associate Commissioner
Division of Forensic Services, NYS Office of Mental Health
Danielle Dill, Executive Director, CNYPC
William Vertoske, Deputy Director of CBO, CNYPC
Meaghan Bernstein, Director of CBO Risk Management, CNYPC