

Another inmate death raises



Hector Amezcua

More Information

- Was it suicide? Questions abound in death of pepper-sprayed inmate

questions about California prison practices

By Sam Stanton and Denny Walsh
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Published: Sunday, Mar. 9, 2014 - 12:06 am

At 6:10 a.m. on Oct. 15, a medical technician handling the morning "pill pass" at Pleasant Valley State Prison in Fresno County spotted inmate David Scott Gillian hanging inside cell No. 164 from a bedsheet tied to an air vent.

"Gillian is hanging in his cell," the tech called to a nearby guard, then rushed off to grab the "cut down scissors" and begin the process – mandatory under corrections department policy – of trying to revive the inmate through cardiopulmonary resuscitation, according to an internal department review of the incident.

Guards and medical staff converged at the cell door, according to the internal report. A sergeant and the medical technician entered the cell where Gillian was housed alone and found no pulse or signs of breathing.

"We need to cut him down, we need to do CPR," the tech told the sergeant.

CTHE SACRAMENTO BEE

October 23, 2015

California to pay \$1 million to family of inmate who committed suicide

Settlement comes nearly 10 years after Solano inmate killed himself

Most guards at the prison were in staff meetings when he died

Suicides have declined in the past few years

Nearly 10 years after Robert St. Jovite hanged himself in his cell, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation settled a lawsuit filed by his family by agreeing to pay \$1 million.
Hector Amezcua The Sacramento Bee

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California's prison system has been plagued by inmate suicides for years, a problem so persistent that a Sacramento federal judge has required regular reports on the deaths of every inmate who ends their own life and a review of how it happened.

This week, a reminder of the scope of the problem was served up in federal court, when the state agreed to pay \$1 million to settle a lawsuit filed by the family of Robert St. Jovite, a prisoner who hanged himself with a bed sheet nearly a decade ago.

St. Jovite was an inmate at California State Prison-Solano. He was 44 years old when he died on May 10, 2006.

Since his death, St. Jovite's family has waged an unceasing legal battle, claiming the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation was responsible for his wrongful death and a violation of his civil rights.

Inmate killed herself one day before parole hearing. Now California will pay \$1.5 million

[By Sam Stanton](#) -Sac Bee

August 14, 2019 09:54 AM

Erika Rocha was 15 when she was accused of shooting the operator of a Southern California group home in February 1996.

She was charged with attempted murder and set to be tried as an adult when she pleaded guilty and began serving a 19-year sentence – at age 16 – inside a California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation prison, spending the first two years in solitary confinement for her own protection.

On April 14, 2016, one day before she was to appear before a parole board hearing at which she was expected to be granted her freedom, **Rocha hanged herself inside her cell with a bed sheet tied to an air vent.**