

# **Brown County Sheriff's Office**

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

December 11, 2014

### **SHERIFF'S STATEMENT CONCERNING THE DEATH OF INMATE ZACHARY GOLDSON**

First of all, I would like to extend my condolences to Zachary Goldson's family for their loss. I have been unable to comment on this case until now, because of the ongoing death investigation which was conducted by the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) and the Brown County Coroner.

Zachary Goldson was incarcerated at the Brown County Adult Detention Center on September 26, 2013 and was being held on a \$50,000 bond concerning two felony warrants on indictment for the possession of weapons under disability and a charge for discharging a firearm across the roadway.

On October 4, 2013, Zachary Goldson was transported by Life Squad and Sheriff's Office personnel to the Southwest Regional Medical Center in Georgetown and the Clermont Mercy Hospital in Batavia for swallowing objects reportedly showing off for other inmates (toothbrush & ink pen). A third trip to the hospital occurred around 11PM on October 4, 2013 where a Deputy/Corrections Officer transported Goldson to Southwest Regional Medical Center for treatment. Upon leaving the hospital, the Deputy was opening the car door for the inmate and the Deputy was hit upside the head. A fight took place with Goldson over the Deputy's gun. A hospital employee saw the fight and called 911. Hospital personnel assisted the Deputy with Goldson until the Georgetown Police Department and Brown County Sheriff's Office personnel arrived at the scene. Goldson was taken back to the Brown County Detention Center by Sheriff's Office personnel and placed in one of our holding cells at 2:30AM.

Approximately 30 minutes later at 3:01AM on October 5, 2013, a Corrections Officer found Goldson hanging in his cell from a cast iron pipe where a sprinkler head was screwed on. The Life Squad was dispatched to respond and lifesaving measures were initiated by Detention Center personnel. At 3:11AM, after lifesaving attempts were unsuccessful, the Detention Center immediately notified the Communications Center to contact the Bureau of Criminal Investigation and the Brown County Coroner to respond to the scene. Both agencies were notified at 3:12AM and this is documented with the

Brown County Communication Center. There was no delay in contacting these authorities as was falsely reported.

The Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation and the Brown County Coroner had full access to the scene and at no time did anyone from our office do any investigation of any kind. The Coroner gave the impression to the Media that the "video" was erased and the sprinkler head was removed and destroyed. The facts are that BCI obtained both as part of their investigation. The Coroner waited until November 8, 2013 to request the video, at which time she was told that the original video had previously been requested by and released to the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation.

What I am upset with is the fact that it has taken a year to bring this case to a close and the undue stress that it has placed upon our staff and the family of the deceased. Who released the death investigation photos to the news media on an ongoing investigation? I find it very disturbing that anyone would release such information on an ongoing investigation! The only two people that had this information was the Brown County Coroner and the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation. The Coroner even went as far as to name Sheriff's Office personnel and made those names available to the media by allowing them to review her records. The Coroner's job is to determine the cause and manner of death not to determine what crime was committed or who is a suspect. The sprinkler head was given to the investigating agency, BCI, after it had been replaced upon routine maintenance. It was not "destroyed" as was falsely reported to the media by the Coroner. In my opinion, the Coroner released false information to the media to create the perception of wrongdoing by Sheriff's Office personnel. The Deputy's comments that were made at the time of the incident at the hospital were unprofessional and uncalled for and they do regret making those comments. However, it is understandable that sometimes comments are made at emotional times, especially after seeing their co-worker almost lose his life.

The release of case information to the public on an ongoing investigation is a violation of the law and it is not the first time this has been done by the Brown County Coroner. I have therefore asked the Brown County Prosecutor to look into this matter, which is a clear violation of Ohio law.

The Ohio Bureau of Investigation and the Grand Jury investigated in an unbiased manner and reached their conclusions based on ALL the facts and evidence.