

Written by Kathy
Tuesday, 12 April 2022 23:42



Pictured is Shondo Moffitt, who collapsed and died Mon, April 11, 2022 in the Cuyahoga County jail in Cleveland, Ohio Clevelandurbannews.com and Kathywraycolemanonline newsblog.com
By
Kathy Wray Coleman, associate publisher, editor-in-chief, investigative reporter

CLEVELAND, Ohio-Another inmate has died in the troubled Cuyahoga County Jail in Cleveland where an astonishing nine inmates died between 2018-2019 and several more thereafter, including in 2020, U.S. Marshals issuing a stinging report in November of 2018 that deemed the gross mistreatment of the majority Black inmates inhumane and unconstitutional.

According to a county spokesperson, Shondo Moffitt , who was Black, collapsed at the jail at around 12:30 p.m. on Monday afternoon. He had been in the facility since Feb 15 for failure to appear for a Feb 25 hearing. He was taken to MetroHealth Medical Center where he was later declared dead.

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The attorney for the 39-year-old man had filed a motion with a judge requesting that his client be released to continue his medical treatment. While the dead inmate was Black, both the sheriff and the county jail warden are White. The county is roughly 29 percent Black and a disproportionate number of the inmates are Black, mainly Black men.

Sheriff Christopher Paul Viland was confirmed as sheriff in March of 2021 and the current jail warden is Michelle Henry, who has held the post since August of 2020

"On behalf of my department, I want the family and friends of Mr. Moffitt to know that our condolences on their loss are sincere and we will treat the investigation into this matter with all due care and concern," County Sheriff Viland said in a statement.

A cause of death has not yet been determined by the county examiner following an autopsy.

Moffitt had two open felony cases in Cuyahoga County, one from a year ago for illegal possession of a firearm where he skipped his sentencing in that trial, and another, a

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felony theft case.

In early January the family of a man who authorities say was beaten to death by his cellmate in 2020 received \$1.1 million to settle a negligence and wrongful lawsuit against the county, and others. The man, Shone Trawick, a 48-year-old father of six, was serving a six months sentence for assault

Twenty-eight-year-old Devauntae Rayshon Daye, who was a Black transgender woman, is also among the fallen, and died in the jail in August of 2020. She was found unresponsive in her jail cell, authorities said, and was later pronounced dead. She was facing charges of felonious assault and aggravated robbery for allegedly robbing a man and hitting him with a brick.

This latest county jail inmate death comes as county officials embark upon plans to build a 1904-inmate capacity jail that has an inmate expansion unit to house more Black people, sources said, a multi million dollar project funded primarily by taxpayers. Cuyahoga County is the second largest of 88 counties statewide, and it is a Democratic stronghold.

The damning report released in November of 2018 by U.S. Marshals on county jail conditions generated local and national news, a dreadful look at how inmates are mistreated such as withholding food for punishment, jailing juveniles with adults, rat and roach infested jail facilities, and a paramilitary jail corrections officers unit dubbed "The Men in Black" who intimidate and harass inmates. The report also found profound mistreatment of female inmates, and that pregnant women were being jailed on floor mats and denied adequate healthcare.

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Several lawsuits remain pending regarding the county's now infamous jail and Cuyahoga County Executive Armond Budish, who is not seeking reelection this year and whose offices in downtown Cleveland have been raided twice since the series of jail deaths. There have been indictments and convictions of at least nine jail guards, the former jail director, and former jail warden Eric Ivey, who is Black. .

Ivey took a misdemeanor plea deal with no jail time before Common Pleas Judge Nancy Fuerst with an agreement that he'll act as a snitch.

In the midst of it all then sheriff Cliff Pinkney, the county's first Black sheriff appointed by Budish, resigned. Until recently, the Cuyahoga County Jail was the state's second most populated jail behind Franklin County, which includes Columbus and is the largest of Ohio's counties.

The FBI and other authorities have been swarming the jail since 2018 after inmates began popping up dead. The Cleveland jail merged with the county's jail per a regionalism plan adopted by county and city officials in 2017, which created nothing but more problems.

Activists say the jail remains a problem and that they are also concerned with an array of other issues, including excessive bail, malicious prosecutions, racism, grand jury tampering, indictment fixing, denial of indigent counsel and speedy trial rights to Black defendants, and excessive sentences. Data also show that White inmates were getting favorable treatment and that Black inmates were more harshly disciplined.

Cleveland community activists [picketed in front of the Cuyahoga County Justice Center](#) in 2018 over judicial and prosecutorial malfeasance, police misconduct, and the overcrowding of the county jail, a continuation of activist rallies that began in 2016.

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Hastened by the coronavirus outbreak, community activists had been picketing regularly at the Justice Center in downtown Cleveland over jail conditions, in front of Budish' gated home in affluent Beachwood, where they called for his resignation, and at county administrative headquarters before county council meetings.

By Kathy Wray Coleman, associate publisher, editor. Coleman is a seasoned Black Cleveland journalist who trained at the Call and Post Newspaper for 17 years and an experienced investigative and political reporter. She is the most read independent journalist in Ohio per Alexa.com Clevelandurbannews.com and Kathywraycolemanonlineblog.com, the

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