KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL of TEXAS

CUSTODIAL DEATH REPORT

Agency Information

CDR Number:	25-368-UF	Version Type:	ORIGINAL VERSION
Report Date:	5/13/2025 4:29 PM	Status:	Submitted

Agency/Facility Information

Agency Name:	Justin Police Dept.	Agency Address:	PO BOX 129
Agency City:	Justin	Agency State:	TX
Agency Zip:	76247		

Director Information

Director Salutation:	Chief	Director First Name:	Brian
Director Middle Name:			
Director Last Name:	Frieda		
Reporter Name:	Brian Frieda	Reporter Email:	bfrieda@cityofjustin.com

Decedent Information

Identity of Deceased

First Name: Eric

Middle Name: Michael

Last Name: Watkins

Suffix:

Date of Birth: 7/29/1970 Sex: Male

Race: Anglo or White

Age At Time Of Death: 54

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

Date/Time of Custody or Incident: 4/27/2025 7:39 PM

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

Death Date and Time: 4/27/2025 8:07 PM

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 pending

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

Manner of Death: Homicide (includes Justifiable Homicide)

Medical Cause of Death:

Medical Cause of Death:

Official report pending to this agency, however, upon reviewing a series of videos, it appears that the cause of death was the introduction of two rounds of 223 caliber rifle rounds to the chest.

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

Medical Treatment: Unknown

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

Who caused the death?: Law enforcement/correctional personnel

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?: Rifle/shotgun

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: Firearm

Location / Custody Information

Where did the event causing the death occur?

Street Address: 102 Daisy Lane
City: Justin
County: Denton
Zip: 76247

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

Location Category: Other, specify

Other Location Category:

Front, side yard at gate entrance to the backyard.

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

Type of Custody: Pre-Custodial Use of Force

Specific type of custody/facility:

Specific Type of Custody/Facility:

Custody of Law Enforcement Personnel during/fleeing arrest

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:

Entry Date Time N/A: ☑

Where did the death occur?

Death Location: Scene of incident

General Information

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

Other Agencies Respond?: Yes

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:

Violation Bond Restrictions

Offense 2:

Evading with Motor Vehicle

Offense 3:

Aggravated Assault with Deadly Weapon

Were the Charges:: Not filed at time of death

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: Yes, mark all that apply

Decedent Display or Use Weapon Details: Displayed other weapon, specify:

Specify Weapon Displayed:

Unknown caliber rifle.

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

Attempt to Injure Others?:	Yes (select all that apply)
Ways Decedent Attempted To Injure Others:	Attempted to injure law enforcement personnel

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

Appear intoxicated (alcohol or drugs):	Unknown	Make suicidal statements?:	No
Exhibit any mental health problems?:	Unknown	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:	Yes	Escape or attempt to escape/flee custody:	Yes
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:

On the date referenced the Justin Police Department observed a subject known to the an officer to have bond restrictions related to domestic issues, and had displayed a knife to threaten and to destroy his common law spouse's car and was found to be wearing ballistic armor when taken into custody in a prior event that had recently taken place. The courts had placed bond restrictions upon Watkins, however, Watkins consistently violated said conditions, keeping former partner in a heightened state of concern. Watkins family members kept others aware of his location as best they could, however, reports were received from them that Watkins was trying to get them to get him a gun, but they refused. It was earlier on the 27th it was learned that a family member of Watkins reported that a firearm turned up missing and wanted law enforcement and Watkins former partner to know that he was on the move again and had a rifle.

It was later in the evening of the 27th of April that Officer M. Wheeler had just completed a close patrol of the neighborhood where Daisy Lane is located, as he sat stationary just east of the entrance of the subdivision and Highway 407 officer Wheeler observed the subject Watkins and still operating his Honda pickup make a left hand turn into the subdivision thereby violating the bond conditions issued by the courts. Officer Wheeler then began following the vehicle and requested dispatch to to confirm the bond conditions, it was during this period of time Watkins committed a traffic violation and conditions were confirmed that officer Wheeler attempted to contact Watkins via a traffic stop away from the primary residence, however, Watkins continued to elude, he then pulled nose first into a driveway of a residence on the left side of the street, at which time officer Wheeler began instructing Watkins to stop moving the vehicle and to put his hands out the window, then to turn the vehicle off. Watkins however refused to comply with the instructions being given, finally fearing that Watkins might attempt to flee yet again officer Wheeler relocated to the passenger side of his unit while continuing to give Watkins instructions, it was at that time that Watkins charged towards the patrol unit narrowly missing the driver side of the unit. Officer Wheeler conveyed to dispatch and other officers what had just taken place and began to pursue Watkins again, officer Wheeler pulled into the driveway of 102 Daisy Lane just behind Watkins and saw him run into the backyard closing the gate behind him, at that time officer Wheeler advised one of the Troopers where Watkins had gone and asked the Trooper to go around to the back. Officer Wheeler then retrieved his patrol rifle and charged it, he then began to check the right side of the front yard and then after not seeing any movement proceeded to cross over the front of the residence located at 102 Daisy Lane and approached a corner wall at the garage, there Wheeler observed Watkins through the windows in the backyard holding a rifle. After a short while officer Wheeler observed Watkins leaving the backyard towards the side yard and gate that he had used to enter the backyard, at that time Wheeler relocated to the passenger rear of his patrol unit and as Watkins emerged from the the backyard Wheeler began providing Watkins with instructions to drop the rifle several times, however, Watkins did not comply with officer Wheelers instructions and instead of dropping the rifle Watkins raised the rifle in a manner placing Officer Wheeler and several residents in their front yards in fear of serious bodily injury or death, it was at that time officer Wheeler was forced to fire three consecutive rounds, two of which struck Watkins in the chest, while one missed Watkins and was later located by Denton County Evidence Technion's.

Officer Wheeler and a Trooper approached cautiously due to the history of Watkins being in possession of ballistic armor once upon Watkins the rifle in his possession was placed away from reach and the officer's began providing life saving measures, however, these and efforts by EMS personnel and Emergency Room staff were unable prevent Watkins passing.

This agency immediately notified the Texas Rangers and the Denton County Crime Scene Unit for assistance in this matter, all media request were re-directed to the Texas Department of Public Safety, officer Wheeler provided a blood specimen per policy and was subsequently placed on paid administrative leave for the time being. Any further information related to this incident really should be sought via the Texas Rangers Office, Ranger J. Wallace. Nothing further.

Brian Frieda, BAAS, LCC# 42
Chief of Police
City of Justin Police Department