

MEMORANDUM TO: Professor Armstrong

FROM: Aliscia Burkett

DATE: November 26, 2019

RE: Avoyelles Marksville Detention Center Memo -----

I. Introduction

The Avoyelles Parish Marksville Detention Center is located in the city and county of Marksville, Louisiana is a medium to maximum-security facility that houses a daily average of 300 inmates and employs 75 staff. Inmates who are housed in the Avoyelles Parish Marksville ¹ Detention Center are either awaiting trial or have been sentenced in the Avoyelles Parish County Court System and been sentenced to one year or less. The Avoyelles Parish Marksville ² Detention Center also houses inmates arrested by this county's municipal police departments. ³ The Avoyelles Parish Marksville Detention Center is run by the Avoyelles Parish County Sheriff's Office. ⁴

These are people who have received sentences from a State District Court and are serving time there in lieu of going to a state correctional facility (i.e. Angola, Hunt Correctional). Many in the general public do not know this. DC-1, as it is referred to, is primarily made up of large dorms. Two of these dorms (C and D) house between 100-130 offenders at a time. The smaller ⁵ E-dorm, which is a converted library, holds around 50. There is another larger dorm (A-dorm) that holds between 60-80 people. The smallest dorm is B-dorm, which holds about 30 trustees. ⁶ there are a series of smaller lock down cells where offenders are put as punishment for infractions which violate facility rules. **II. Jail Characteristics**

Avoyelles Markville's Detention Center is located at 675 Government Street Marksville, LA 71351. You can find their website at <https://apso.website> The Sheriff of Avoyelles Parish is Doug Anderson. Anderson has been the sheriff since July 1, 2018. The website includes Mr. Anderson's email danderson@avoyellesso.org. David Brown is the Warden of the Marksville Detention Center. There is no biography included on the website indicating when Mr. Brown became Warden of the detention center. Mr. Brown contact information is included on the site. Major Steven Martel is the Chief Deputy of the Avoyelles Sheriff's Office.

¹ <https://nodeathpenalty.org/louisiana/county-jail/avoyelles-parish-marksville->

[detention-center/](#) ² *Id.* ³ *Id.* ⁴ *Id.* ⁵ Testimony of Rene Whitmore, Executive Assistant to the Mayor of

Simmesport ⁶ *Id.*

The website has a Budget Information section located under the About tab on the homepage of the website. The Budget tab of the has a pdf attachment of a certificate notice. The notice states that the Avoyelles Parish Sheriff's Office has complied with the Louisiana Revised Statute 39:1307 that is relative to public participation in the budget process for the fiscal year ending in June 2020. The budget and financial audit is located on the Legislative Audit website. The total operations and maintenance for the 2017 fiscal year was \$3,439, 228. The operations ⁷ and maintenance includes jail expenses, supplies, telephone expenses, utilities, repairs, criminal investigations, prisoner feeding, office supplies, and bank charges and fees. The total expenditures \$10,811, 652. **III. The Number of Deaths since 2014 and Trends**

A total of six people have died between 2014 through 2019 while in Avoyelles Marksville Detention Center's Custody. The facility has their own internal forms that they complete when an inmate dies. The form includes the cause of death, age, date of birth, and if the individual received medical detention. Brian Myles who was a 44 year old African American male died in 2014. Myles was booked into the detention center on August 11, 2006 for ⁹ possessing SCD III and CDS. Myles died from natural hypertensive atherosclerosis. His ^{10 11} records indicated that it was unknown if the evaluation by medical staff had been performed. It is unknown whether a diagnostics test was run. He was given no other treatments other than medications. Deputy Justin Voinche who was assigned to Dorm A on March 8, 2014 reported that Brian Myles was complaining of shortness of breath. Myles was escorted to the nurses office where he collapsed. Deputy Michael Laborde attempted to administer oxygen and check for a pulse which he could not find. As Labarde continued C.P.R and advanced resuscitation for 10 minutes until the Acadian ambulance emergency medical personnel arrived. Myles body was examined by Lt. Josh Spillman for any visible signs of bruising. The contact information that had on him was outdated, his emergency contact he had at the time was his girlfriend. The girlfriend had no contacts to give. Marksville's staff had to pull his file from another facility un attempt to find his mother Deborah miles who had six numbers. George Montrell was 57 years old when he died on April 15, 2014. Montrell was admitted into the facility on January 1, 2014 for simple ¹² burglary and possession of a firearm without a ccw. He died from a natural seizure disorder ¹³ hypertensive atheroscearotic. ¹⁴

Joseph Redmond was an African-American male who died on September 26, 2015 at the age of 25. He was booked into the facility on August 26, 2015 for a probation violation. His ^{15 16}

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[https://lla.la.gov/PublicReports.nsf/5F9D0050C094859E8625835A005CCCC7/\\$FILE/0001ADE5](https://lla.la.gov/PublicReports.nsf/5F9D0050C094859E8625835A005CCCC7/$FILE/0001ADE5).

pdf. ⁸ *Id.* ⁹ Avoyelles Sheriff's Office Public Record Documents Page 16-18 ¹⁰ *Id.* ¹¹ *Id.* ¹² Avoyelles Sheriff's Office Public Record Documents Page 62-63 ¹³ *Id.* ¹⁴ *Id.* ¹⁵ Avoyelles Public Record

Documents Page 100-105 ¹⁶ *Id.*

cause of death was choking on food. However, the Sergeant on duty suspected Joseph used a ¹⁷ synthetic drug that was smuggled into the facility. Willie Williams died on October 25, 2016. ¹⁸ He was admitted into the facility on August 19, 2016 for possessing a firearm as a felon. ¹⁹ Williams died from complications due to sickle cell. Kelly Abshire was a 56 year old white ²⁰ male who was booked into the facility on November 1, 2016. He died from a heart attack on ²¹ July 29, 2018. James Dixon was booked into the facility for contempt failure and failure to ²² register as a sex offender. His cause of death was a brain aneurysm and severe bleeding of the ²³ brain. ²⁴ One trend that I noticed was that many of the inmates who died in the facility were not there longer than a year. Also, all but one of the inmates were African American. I also noticed that these individuals had pre-existing medical conditions before entering the facility. There was also no indication of medical attention, diagnosis, or tests ran before these individuals died to address any medical complaints they made.

IV. Evidence of oversight

The Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Criminal Justice reported that the Avoyelles Marksville Detention center provides several programs that inmates can be involved in. Some of the programs include Standardized Pre-Release Curriculum, The ²⁵ Office Systems Technology, and the Prairie Program. Some other programs that Marksville Detention Center provide include Domestic Abuse Program, Living in Balance, Louisiana Risk Management, Partners in Parenting, and Thinking for Change. Avoyelles Marksville Detention ²⁶ center is not listed in the ACA or NCCHC directory for being accredited. Avoyelles Marksville Detention Center is not included in the Prison Rape Elimination Act Audit (PREA). There ²⁷ have been no consent decrees in effect within the past five years.

V. Evidence of transparency (i.e. is info available if we wanted?)

The Avoyelles Sheriff's Office has a website that contains a jail roster of people who are in custody. You can type the individual's name into the search bar to see if the individual is in custody. The site also has a feature where you can sign up to receive an inmate's custody ²⁸

¹⁷ *Id.* ¹⁸ Avoyelles Public Record Documents Page 162-164 ¹⁹ *Id.* ²⁰ *Id.* ²¹ Avoyelles Public Record Documents

Page 405-407 ²² *Id.* ²³ Avoyelles Public Record Documents Page 415-417 ²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ [http://lcle.la.gov/programs/uploads/2017_Status_of_State_and_Local_Corrections_Facilities_and_Program_Report .pd](http://lcle.la.gov/programs/uploads/2017_Status_of_State_and_Local_Corrections_Facilities_and_Program_Report.pdf)

²⁶ http://lcle.la.gov/programs/uploads/2017_Status_of_State_and_Local_Corrections_Facilities_and_Program_

<http://www.avoyelles.lavns.org>

status. The Avoyelles Parish Marksville Detention Center inmates are allowed to get visitors using the Securus video visitation system, which is a non-contact visitation. The screen allows ²⁹ the inmate and the family member or friend to see each other without physical contact. Inmates are only permitted to use collect phone calls. As far as accessing the inmate's public records, ³⁰ there is no contact information for the records clerk or records office on the website. When I sent my public records request in late August, I received no response from the facility. After a week passed, I called to check the status of the PRA and I was told that the letter was never received. I was informed by the Sheriff's secretary that faxing the PRA would be more efficient. After faxing the letter, I still received no contact after a week. I called a week later to receive an update on the fax and was told to send it again by the Crime Investigations Unit's Deputy, Rebecca Mayeux. The Crime Investigation Unit's direct line is (318) 619-3980. When I sent my second fax, I finally received confirmation that they were working on my request. I was sent an invoice of \$1230 about five days later. The records took over a month to receive after contacting their office multiple times as well as having to resend the public record requests. The staff seemed reluctant to share the information. I was asked why I needed the records and what organization I worked with.

Human Rights Watch research revealed in 1997 many telephone calls and letters received from INS (immigrant) detainees in Avoyelles Parish Prison in rural Louisiana alleging poor physical conditions and mistreatment by jail officials. Human Rights Watch tried to interview detainees ³¹ at the jail in March 1997 and were denied both a tour of the facility and direct, private with detainees.

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VI. Notable Cases Or Complaints On Prison/Jail Conditions In The Last 5 Years

There have been no notable cases or complaints on the jail conditions in the last five years.

²⁹ <https://monroecountyjail.net/prisons/louisiana/county-jail/avoyelles-parish-marksville-detention-center/> ³⁰ *Id.* ³¹ <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports98/us-immig/Ins989-05.htm> ³² *Id.*