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New Release for Immediate Release

July 20, 2022

Attorney Robert Mullen, the attorney for Sherry Searcy, the widow of slain Wayne County Sheriff's Officer Bryant Searcy announced today that his office has filed a lawsuit alleging wrongful death on the part of Wayne County, Warren Evans, the Wayne County Executive, the Estate of Sheriff Benny Napoleon, the former Undersheriff of Wayne County, Daniel Pfannes, current Sheriff Raphael Washington and Director of Jails, Robert Dunlap.

The Complaint alleges that based upon the incompetence of the leadership of the Wayne County Sheriff's Department and the deliberate indifference of the Undersheriff Daniel Phannes, now Sheriff Raphael Washington, who at the time of Officer Searcy's murder was the Director of Jails and Courts, and Robert Dunlap the Director of Inmate Classification, led directly to Officer Bryant Searcy being murdered by a jail inmate on September 2, 2020.

The Complaint alleges that the Command Officers of the Sheriff's Department set out on a course of conduct to deliberately disregard officer safety and directly contributed to the death of Officer Searcy. On September 2, 2020, Officer Searcy was working 15 straight hours on a forced overtime shift at Wayne County Jail Division II. A jail division which on that night was purposefully understaffed and did not have properly functioning locks on the cells or cameras to monitor both officer and inmate safety, despite housing some of the most dangerous criminals in the United States. Tragically Officer Searcy was murdered by an inmate that predictably took advantage of the Defendants wholesale failures to protect officer safety.

The Second Count alleges a violation of Officer Searcy's constitutional right to bodily integrity, as set forth in the Michigan Constitution under Article I, § 17.

The Complaint alleges that Warren Evans, the County Executive, made a calculated decision to purposefully create a starting wage for officers assigned to the Wayne County Jail, which was so low, that over 100 vacant positions could not be filled. The State Treasurer, in a report dated July 15, 2015, found that Evans' actions of not filling the vacant positions caused the Sheriff to have the officers assigned to the three jail divisions to work over 1,000 hours per day in overtime, thereby putting officer safety in jeopardy by causing exhaustion and fatigue in an extremely dangerous environment where officers are greatly outnumbered.



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After Officer Searcy was murdered on September 2, 2020, the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) conducted an investigation and found that the Defendants contributed to Officer Searcy's death by not following their own rules and regulations; this finding by MIOSHA caused the maximum penalty to be levied against Wayne County.

An internal investigation by the Wayne County Sheriff's Internal Affairs Unit found that the closed-circuit television system, which was installed in 2018 to provide monitoring for the safety of officers working in the Wayne County Jails, in all probability never worked and further, was not being monitored on September 2, 2020.

The Complaint further alleges that Raphael Washington and Robert Dunlap held their appointed positions in violation of 2(c), 11, 12 & 13 of Michigan PA 125 of 2003, which required Washington and Dunlap to be certified by the Michigan Sheriff's Coordinating and Training Council, under sections 11, 12 & 13 of the Training Council Act.

The Complaint further alleges that the officers assigned to the Wayne County Jail were required to be given 20 hours of statutorily required in-service training each year and that officers were not provided with said training. The training records were either not submitted or submitted by Defendant Pfannes, to the Sheriff's Coordinating and Training Council, stating that the officers in fact, did, have 20 hours of in-service training, when they did not have the required training.

A press conference will be held regarding this lawsuit on Wednesday, July 20, 2022, at 11 a.m. directly across the street from 525 Clinton St. Detroit, MI, 48226.

For additional information please contact attorney Robert Mullen at 734-451-0011 or by email at dan@lplaws.com. 710 N Mill Street, Plymouth, Michigan 48170. Robert Mullen's Co-counsel is Jamil Ahktar.

710 North Mill Street Plymouth, MI 48170
phone: (734) 451-0011 | fax: (248) 626-9701
www.lplaws.com