

**In-Custody Death of  
Andrew Cline**

Seattle Police Department  
Force Investigation Team, 2017FIT-0001



King County Prosecuting Attorney  
Public Integrity Team

March 24, 2024



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## **DECLINE MEMORANDUM**

### IN-CUSTODY DEATH OF ANDREW CLINE

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#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The King County Prosecuting Attorney's role is to ensure that the in-custody death investigation is thorough and complete, determine whether sufficient admissible evidence exists to support filing criminal charges, and inform the King County Executive whether an inquest should be initiated. (Executive Order PHL 7-1-5 EO). An inquest is required when any "action, decision or possible failure to offer the appropriate care by a member of any law enforcement agency might have contributed to an individual's death." (King County Charter Section 895).

The Public Integrity Team has determined that the investigation of the March 26, 2017 in-custody death of Andrew Cline is complete at this time. Based on a thorough review, the Team has concluded that the evidence is insufficient to support criminal charges are inappropriate. Accordingly, the KCPAO is declining to file criminal charges in this matter based on the evidence presently available.

Because the role of law enforcement was *de minimis* and did not contribute in any discernable way to Mr. Cline's death, an inquest is not recommended. Executive Order PHL 7-1-5 EO, §6.1.

#### **II. EVIDENCE REVIEWED**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Major Investigation Summary</li><li>• Investigators' Report</li><li>• Transcripts of Interviews with Corrections Officers Witnesses</li><li>• Transcripts of Interviews with Jail Health Services Staff</li><li>• Transcripts of Interviews with AMR Staff</li><li>• Transcripts of Interviews with Firefighters</li><li>• Written Statements from SPD Officers</li><li>• Written Statements by Corrections Officers</li><li>• Jail Health Record</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hospital Records</li><li>• AMR Records</li><li>• SFD Records</li><li>• Jail Booking Records</li><li>• KCJ Records Check</li><li>• Jail Health Records</li><li>• KCME External Examination Report</li><li>• KCME Photographs</li><li>• CADs</li><li>• KCJ Surveillance Video</li></ul> |
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### **III. FACTS**

On February 25, 2017 at approximately 9:26 PM, Andrew Cline (DOB 04/17/1989) was arrested by Seattle Police Department (SPD) West Precinct bicycle officers on several misdemeanor warrants. Officers were able to arrest him without incident.

Subsequent to being taken into custody, Cline complained of chest pain. Seattle Fire Department (SFD) responded to the scene and evaluated Cline. SFD gave SPD medical clearance to book Mr. Cline into jail and cleared the scene. At 10:29 PM Cline was booked into King County Jail (KCJ). According to his booking records, he told jail health staff that he had congestive heart failure, was a substance abuser having previously overdosed and stated, "I was in HMC for 3 months last year and they said I may only have 6 months to live." His vitals were taken, and he was medically cleared after being educated on how to use the jail's medical kiting and triage systems if he experienced any medical difficulties.

On February 27, 2017, at approximately 9:30 PM, a corrections officer was notified by other inmates that Mr. Cline had a heart condition. The officer saw that Mr. Cline was having difficulty breathing and notified jail health services, who responded to give Mr. Cline medical aid. Jail health staff thought he may be experiencing congestive heart failure, so they notified SFD to respond. SFD personnel arrived, which is captured on jail surveillance video. SFD determined that Cline should be evaluated at Harborview Medical Center (HMC). At approximately 11:00 PM, an American Medical Response ambulance transported Cline to HMC for treatment.

On February 28, 2017, Cline was admitted to HMC for continuation of care for congestive heart failure due to substance abuse. Cline remained hospitalized for roughly one month while receiving treatment.

At 4:27 AM on March 26, 2017, Cline was pronounced deceased at HMC. Cline's official cause of death was listed as non-ischemic cardiomyopathy due to chronic methamphetamine use. Non-ischemic cardiomyopathy is any cause of abnormal heart function other than those caused by blocked arteries or heart attack. No autopsy was performed (KCME #17-607).

**IV. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION**

Based on the evidence admissible in a criminal case and the applicable legal standards, we have determined that there is insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that any police officers, corrections officers, or JHS staff played a role in Mr. Cline's death, let alone committed a criminal act that caused his death. As a result, KCPAO will not file any criminal charges.

**V. RECOMMENDATION FOR INQUEST**

Because the role of law enforcement was *de minimis* and did not contribute in any discernable way to Mr. Cline's death, an inquest is not recommended. Executive Order PHL 7-1-5 EO, §6.1.