

**THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT
OF MEDICAL EXAMINER-CORONER**

INQUEST: IN RE FRED WILLIAMS III

Inquest: In re Fred Williams
III.

Inquest Proceeding Date:

January 28, 2021

INTRODUCTION

The Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner appointed me to conduct an Inquest into the circumstances, manner, and cause of death of Fred Williams III. On January 28, 2021, I convened the Inquest and received evidence and testimony from various witnesses. A transcript of the January 28 proceeding will be made part of the public record, and is not summarized here. I adjourned the Inquest to review all the evidence submitted, receive additional evidence, if any, and make the required findings in this matter.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Two Deputy Sheriffs involved in the shooting of Fred Williams were subpoenaed to testify at the Inquest. At the hearing on January 28, 2021, the Declaration of the shooting deputy's partner was submitted in evidence. The unredacted version of that Declaration was received and will remain under seal at the request of the Sheriff's Department based on a current criminal investigation into threats of harm made against the Deputy. A copy of the Declaration, redacting the name and

signature of that deputy, was received and made part of the public record of the Inquest.

After the Inquest adjourned on January 28, the shooting deputy submitted a Declaration signed under penalty of perjury, indicating that if he were to appear for questioning at the Inquest, he would assert his Fifth Amendment right not to testify. Similar to the declaration described above, a redacted version of the Declaration has been received into evidence and is part of the public record. The unredacted version of the declaration was received and will remain under seal at the request of the Sheriff's Department based on the reported current criminal investigation into threats of harm against the Deputy.

Given the totality of the circumstances, the potential criminal investigation into the Deputys' conduct, and their rights under the Constitution, I accept the above Declarations in lieu of the in-person testimony and assertion of the Fifth Amendment by the shooting deputy and his partner.

A list of the live-testimony witnesses and documentary evidence reviewed for purposes of the Inquest is attached to these findings.

FINDINGS

After considering all of the evidence, I find, more likely true than not, that:

- The deceased is Fred Williams III (Mr. Williams).
- Mr. Williams' date of death was October 16, 2020.

- Mr. Williams died in the yard at a private residence at 2268 East 121st Street, Compton, CA 90222 at approximately 18:05 hours (6:05 p.m.).
- The medical cause of death was a single gunshot wound to the back.
- The manner of death was by the hands of another person other than by accident.

A copy of these written findings, an original transcript of the January 28 proceedings, and copies of documents made part of the public record, will be provided to the Medical Examiner-Coroner. Copies of all documents, video recordings, and photographs reviewed by the Hearing Officer will be maintained by the Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner. The findings will be forwarded to the Los Angeles County District Attorney and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in accordance with California Government Code section 27504.1. The sealed, original Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department records provided to me under seal will be returned to the custodian of records at the appropriate time with a request that those records be maintained intact as evidence of the records provided to the hearing officer in this Inquest.

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The Fred Williams III Inquest is now concluded.

DATED: February 17, 2021

By 
Justice Candace Cooper [Ret.]
Hearing Officer

Appointed by the Los Angeles
County Department of Medical
Examiner-Coroner

LIST OF EVIDENCE

LIVE-TESTIMONY WITNESSES

1. Vadims Poukens, M.D. (Deputy Medical Examiner – Los Angeles County Medical Examiner-Coroner)
2. Lianna Darabedian (Coroner Investigator – Los Angeles County Medical Examiner-Coroner)
3. Richard Johnson (Firefighter/Paramedic – Los Angeles County Fire Department)
4. Adrian Villareal (Firefighter/Paramedic – Los Angeles County Fire Department)
5. John O'Brien (Sergeant – Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department)
6. Christopher Dimmitt (Detective – Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department)

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

1. Los Angeles County Medical Examiner-Coroner's Case File
2. Los Angeles County Fire Department Records
3. Los Angeles County Sheriff Department Records
(Records produced under seal and shall remain excluded from the public record pursuant to California Government Code section 27498)
4. Los Angeles County Sheriff Department Press Release Video (Critical Incident Briefing)
5. Declaration of Sergeant John O'Brien from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
6. Redacted declaration of Deputy Sheriff (shooting deputy)
7. Redacted declaration of Deputy Sheriff (shooting deputy's partner)