



## Inter-Office Memorandum

**To: Cynthia G. Clifford**  
**Corrections Director**

**From: Mark Pronovost**  
**Warden / VCCF**

**Date: October 16, 2007**

**Re: Executive Summary of Inmate Comeau, Muriel #685491 Incident**

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On 09/26/07 at 1724 hrs. Muriel Comeau was arrested by Ormond Beach Police Department for Possession of Crack Cocaine with a \$1000.00 bond. She was booked into the Branch Jail at 2014 hrs. and processed through the ID/Receiving area.

At 2101 hrs. Inmate Comeau was screened by medical staff. During that screening, she was asked if she had a history of a mental health disorder. She responded that she did. She also responded to the fact that she had been diagnosed with major depression and had a suicide attempt one month prior. She further stated that she was not taking medications for this. All other questions regarding her mental health were "no". Based on the fact that she stated she was not thinking about self harm, suicide or hopelessness at the time, she was not placed on any watch. At 2120 hrs., following her medical screening, Inmate Comeau was dressed out in an orange jumpsuit and at 2225 hrs. was transported to the Correctional Facility for housing.

Once arriving at the Correctional Facility she was identified by the North Wing staff as being an inmate who had a past history of mental health issues, suicide attempts and one that was assaultive towards staff. Based on this, a VCDC 721 was completed and Inmate Comeau was placed into MHC confinement on a 15 minute watch. She was moved into H08. This cell location was later changed to SM01.

On 09/27/07 at 1211 hrs. Inmate Comeau was transported back to the Branch Jail for First Appearance. While waiting for court and immediately following her court appearance, she was kept in the ID/Receiving area. While in this area she was permitted to make several phone calls from the inmate phone located on the wall near the holding cells.

At 1438 hrs., while Inmate Comeau was at the Branch Jail for First Appearance, the Control Room Officer at the Correctional Facility received a phone call from a

woman identifying herself as a family member of Inmate Comeau. This person gave the name of Amy Miltello. Ms. Miltello stated that Inmate Comeau said that she was going to kill herself by tying a sheet around her neck. A VCDC 721 was completed and Inmate Comeau was placed on a constant watch upon her return from First Appearance at 1513 hrs.

At 1519 hrs. Inmate Comeau was permitted the use of the telephone again. During this time frame Inmate Comeau advised staff that the information we received was not true, and that she did not want to harm herself, and that she had a child and would not do that. At 1530 hrs. Inmate Comeau was secured in her cell, but at 1548 hrs. she was permitted to use the phone again.

At 1550 hrs. Inmate Comeau spoke with the Sgt. Westgate and appeared to have a good attitude and good appearance. This was also the case when she was observed by staff at 1600 hr. headcount, when served her evening meal at 1608 hrs. and when she spoke with staff again at 1628 hrs. At 1648 hrs. she was again permitted use of the phone and appeared in the same condition.

At 1706 hrs. she was secured back into her cell. At 1715 hrs. she was observed by staff standing at her cell door, and at 1730 hrs., 1745 hrs., 1800 hrs. and 1815 hrs. she was observed by staff lying on her bunk breathing.

On 09/27/07 at 1823 hrs. Inmate Comeau was interviewed by Mental Health personnel. According to their report, she appeared calm, coherent, cooperative and pleasant. She strongly denied saying anything about harming herself and made the comment that she was religious and by harming herself she would go to hell. She told the Mental Health personnel that she had accepted the fact she was in jail and that she felt safe. Based on this interview, Inmate Comeau was released from her CWI status. However, because she had been released from custody a week prior to this incarceration, and had been serving a disciplinary sentence when she was released, she was placed back into confinement pending review by Case Management. She was moved from H08 to H11L at 1840 hrs.

At 1905 hrs. she was observed by staff standing at her cell door. At 1920 hrs. she had spoken with Sgt. Westgate and had a good attitude and good appearance. This was also the case at 2000 hr. headcount and at 2046 hrs. when she spoke with Sgt. Painter.

On 09/27/07 at 2218 hrs. Ofc. Bauer was in "H" block escorting the nurse for medication pass and observed Inmate Comeau hanging with a shoe string tied around her neck. She immediately called a Code White. Several staff members responded to this code and immediately started CPR on this inmate. The ICS was activated, EVAC and Fire Rescue arrived and CPR continued on Inmate Comeau.

At 2245 hrs. Inmate Comeau was pronounced dead. VCISO and the Medical Examiner completed their investigation and the body was removed from the building and transported to the Morgue. This occurred at 0046 hrs. on 09/28/07.

On 09/28/07 contact was made with the father of Inmate Comeau. The father stated that he had received a phone call from his daughter on 09/26/07 when she was being booked into the Branch Jail asking him to bond her out. The father stated he had refused this request. The father went on to add that he had received a message on his phone on 09/27/07 from his daughter asking him again to bond her

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out. No indication was given by the father that Inmate Comeau made any threats of self harm suicidal ideations.

In conclusion, after review of the incident and all documentation I found no violation of Division policy. Per PHS procedure an expedited Patient Safety Committee Review was conducted. Their review concluded that the medical and mental health care provided to Ms. Comeau by Volusia County PHS staff was consistent with PHS facility Policy and Procedures. Also, Nurse Ross, Paramedic Weismore, Sgt. Painter and Lt. Sophie should be commended for their efforts to revive Inmate Comeau.