



San Diego County Sheriff's Department

Homicide Unit

Media Information

SUBJECT: Death Investigation

LOCATION: 325 S. Melrose Drive, Vista

DATE/TIME: August 17, 2020 / 6:00 p.m.

DECEASED: Joseph Earl Morton, 33-years-old

On May 17, 2020, at about 9:45 p.m., deputies at the Vista Detention Facility were conducting a security check in one of the housing areas when they discovered an inmate, thirty-three-year-old Joseph Morton, hanging and unresponsive in his cell. Deputies immediately made entry into the cell to render aid. Deputies and medical staff performed lifesaving measures until relieved by paramedics. Despite their efforts, Morton was pronounced deceased at the scene.

Morton was booked into custody on May 11, 2020, by San Diego Sheriff's deputies assigned to the North Coastal Station for:

- 211 PC – Robbery
- 273A(A) – Felony Child Cruelty
- 530.5(A) PC – Identity Theft
- 148(a)(1) PC – Resist Arrest
- 496(a) PC – Receiving Stolen Property

The Sheriff's Homicide Unit responded to investigate the death. Morton was alone in his secure cell and no evidence of foul play was discovered.

The Medical Examiner completed their autopsy report and determined the cause of death to be from hanging, and the manner of death to be suicide.

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