



**CYRUS R. VANCE JR.,
DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**D.A. VANCE: CORRECTIONS CAPTAIN CHARGED WITH CRIMINALLY
NEGLIGENT HOMICIDE IN DEATH OF RYAN WILSON**

Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance, Jr., today announced the indictment of Department of Correction (“DOC”) Captain REBECCA HILLMAN, 38, for issuing orders that prevented officers from saving the life of Ryan Wilson, a person in custody at Manhattan Detention Complex (“MDC”), and making false statements in her written account of the incident. The defendant is charged in a New York State Supreme Court indictment with Criminally Negligent Homicide and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree.^[1]

“As alleged in the indictment, the death of Ryan Wilson wasn’t just a tragedy — it was a crime,” said District Attorney Vance. “Our investigation shows that Captain Hillman ordered her subordinates not to take potentially life-saving measures to help Mr. Wilson, and failed to call for medical assistance expediently. This callous disregard for Mr. Wilson’s safety resulted in an irreversible loss to his family and friends, and must be held criminally accountable. I thank the Department of Investigation for its close partnership with our Office and collaboration in this matter.”

DOI Commissioner Margaret Garnett said, "The City's policy is clear on what Correction staff must do when an inmate is found in a life-threatening position: Immediate action must be taken to try and save the inmate's life. The charges resulting from this investigation reveal a stunning disregard for life and

^[1] The charges contained in the indictment are merely allegations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. All factual recitations are derived from documents filed in court and statements made on the record in court.

Correction Department regulations, made more egregious by the fact that the defendant is a supervisor with the rank of Captain. Despite Captain Hillman's alleged efforts to cover up the circumstances of inmate Ryan Wilson's death, the investigation by DOI and the Manhattan District Attorney's Office uncovered the truth and held this defendant accountable."

According to court documents and statements made on the record, HILLMAN was a DOC captain at MDC in the unit where Ryan Wilson was assigned housing. On the afternoon of November 22, 2020, HILLMAN decided to have Mr. Wilson moved to another housing unit after an argument with another inmate. Mr. Wilson, who remained locked in his cell pending the move, fashioned a noose out of a bedsheet and attached it to a light fixture. After calling an officer over, Mr. Wilson climbed on a stool, put the noose around his neck, and threatened to hang himself if HILLMAN would not come and let him out of his cell.

The officer attempted to calm Mr. Wilson and called HILLMAN to inform her that she was needed immediately in the housing unit. Instead, HILLMAN went into the control room, where she began filling out paperwork. After waiting for approximately 10 minutes, Mr. Wilson moved onto his bed, his neck in a noose, began a countdown, and jumped off the bed. The officer, who was outside the cell talking to Mr. Wilson, called for the cell to be opened immediately so he could cut him down. A few moments later, HILLMAN emerged from the control room, while the cell door remained shut, and told the other inmates that Mr. Wilson was fine and was "playing."

Then, HILLMAN signaled to the officer in the control room to open the cell. When the door opened one minute later, HILLMAN ordered the officer not to enter and said that Mr. Wilson was faking it because he was still breathing. At this point, HILLMAN called for non-emergency backup and ordered the door closed while Mr. Wilson remained hanging inside of the locked cell. HILLMAN then left the area to go on her usual rounds.

About 15 minutes after Mr. Wilson jumped, HILLMAN finally gave the order to open the cell again and called for a medical team. Officers in the area cut Mr. Wilson down, felt a faint pulse, and began chest compressions. When medical personnel arrived a few minutes later, Mr. Wilson was already dead. After the incident, HILLMAN filed an official report that falsely stated Mr. Wilson had asked to be moved to another unit, that she had the cell door re-opened and had Mr. Wilson cut down "immediately" after the cell door was closed. DOI launched an investigation in accordance with its policy to investigate all deaths in correctional facilities.

Assistant D.A.s Dafna Yoran, Senior Trial Counsel for Trial Bureau 70, and Matthew Sears are handling the prosecution of the case under the supervision of Executive Assistant D.A. Joan Illuzzi-Orbon, Chief of the Trial Division. Trial Preparation Assistant Ethan Swift and Analyst Sasha Hodson also assisted with the case.

District Attorney Vance thanked DOI for its assistance with the investigation, particularly Assistant Inspector General Gladys Cambi.

Defendant Information:

REBECCA HILLMAN
Brooklyn, NY

Charged:

- Criminally Negligent Homicide, a class E felony, one count
- Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony, one count