

Dear Supervisor Carson, Supervisor Haubert, Supervisor Miley,
Supervisor Tam, and Supervisor Marquez

The Stop Deaths and Harm working group was appalled to read about the murder of Mr. Yuri Brand by his cellmate in Santa Rita Jail in September 2023. [News reports](#) indicate that the Sheriff's Office placed Mr. Brand in the general population even though he had a lengthy psychiatric history. Not only was his condition inadequately assessed, but the Sheriff's Office placed a detainee with a history of violence and sexual assault in Mr. Brand's cell. The suit that Mr. Brand's family has filed, states that "his tongue was cut in half lengthwise to its base," according to the legal complaint filed by Mr. Brand's family. This was not documented in the autopsy report. Other details of his violent murder are too horrific to repeat.

What is clear to anyone reading the KTVU report and the attached lawsuit, is that Alameda County Jail is not adequately protecting our citizens, and it is not the proper placement for anyone with serious mental illness. The Board ratified the federal Babu settlement intended to improve the treatment of mentally ill persons in Santa Rita, but it seems that the County has not taken crucial steps that would have prevented this death.

Alameda County Sheriff's Office has had more legal suits than any other in northern California. The [2021-2022 Grand Jury report](#) reported scores of conditions in the jail that were inadequate, and the Babu class action settlement pointed to inadequacy in the following areas: mental health treatment, suicide prevention, the use of safety cells, overuse of isolation, and inadequate discharge planning for people with mental health disabilities.

Given all of the interventions by county, state, and federal agencies, how could someone with a history of violence and sexual assault have been placed in a cell with a seriously mentally ill detainee? How could it be that there was no increased monitoring of this cell? These are not rhetorical questions. We want the Sheriff's Office to respond to these questions, in a public setting. It should be abundantly clear that a Sheriff Oversight body that includes an independent counsel is long overdue.

Ultimately, the residents and taxpayers of Alameda County are accountable for the conditions in our jail that lead to these horrific outcomes. We pay the high ethical cost of the unnecessary loss of human life and the financial costs of legal settlements. The Board of Supervisors serves as our representatives and must take responsibility in our names.

We urgently request the following:

1. An independent investigation of the murder of Yuri Brand conducted by an independent entity
2. Implementation of Sheriff Oversight with an Independent Counsel
3. Discussion in the Public Protection and Health Committees of the separation of the Coroner's Office from the Sheriff's Office

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