

From:

To:

Cc:

Subject: morning media 11.20.19

Date: Wed, 20 Nov 2019 13:37:54 +0000

Importance: Normal

Epstein Guards Charged With Falsifying Records. FYSA

The [AP](#) (11/19, Balsamo) reports that Toval Noel and Michael Thomas, "two jail guards responsible for monitoring Jeffrey Epstein the night he killed himself, were charged Tuesday with falsifying prison records to conceal they were sleeping and browsing the internet during the hours they were supposed to be keeping a close watch on prisoners." Noel and Thomas "were accused in a grand jury indictment of neglecting their duties by failing to check on Epstein for nearly eight hours, and of fabricating log entries to show they had been making checks every 30 minutes, as required. ... During one two-hour period, the indictment said, both appeared to have been asleep."

The [CBS Evening News](#) (11/19, story 5, 1:40, Lenghi, 4.64M) reported "the union representing the two officers...say that the charges sidestep the larger problem of chronic understaffing in federal prisons," while [NBC Nightly News](#) (11/19, story 4, 2:10, Hosk, 6.37M) showed Kathleen Hawk Sawyer, Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, saying, "This incident was a black eye on the entire Bureau of Prisons." NBC added that in a Senate hearing yesterday, Sawyer also "said she couldn't comment on ongoing FBI and Inspector General investigations into Epstein's death." [ABC World News Tonight](#) (11/19, story 4, 2:00, Pilgrim, 7.39M) showed Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) asking Sawyer, "Do you concur with the opinion that it was a suicide?" Sawyer replied, "That was the finding of the coroner, sir." Pressed on whether she has "any evidence to suggest otherwise," Sawyer said, "I do not."

[The Hill](#) (11/19, Johnson, 2.98M) reports that Sawyer "told the Senate Judiciary Committee Tuesday that the FBI is investigating whether or not a 'criminal enterprise' played some role in Jeffrey Epstein's suicide in August." The Hill adds, "At the hearing, Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) commented 'with a case this high profile, there has got to be either a major malfunction of the system or a criminal enterprise afoot to allow this to happen.' 'So are you looking at both? Is the FBI looking at both?'" Sawyer "replied 'the FBI is involved and they are looking at criminal enterprise, yes.'"

The [Daily Beast](#) (11/19, Melendez, 1.39M) reports, "Sawyer, however, made it clear that she has not seen evidence to suggest Epstein's death was not a suicide and indicated she is not allowed to speak openly about the federal investigation because it is ongoing."

The [Baton Rouge \(LA\) Advocate](#) (11/19, Crisp, 399K) reports "Sen. John Kennedy is urging the head of the federal bureau of prisons to seek answers about the death of Jeffrey Epstein, and Kennedy alluded during a hearing Tuesday to a conspiracy theory that the multimillionaire sex offender may not have killed himself. 'Christmas ornaments, drywall and (Jeffrey Epstein) — Name three things that don't hang themselves. That's what the American people think,' Kennedy quipped during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing with FBP director Kathleen Sawyer. 'They deserve some answers.'"

[CQ Roll Call](#) (11/19, Lesniewski, 154K) reports, "Sen. Ben Sasse had particularly strong words for" Sawyer, and "wanted very little of what Sawyer had to say about legal restrictions. 'With all due respect, you still have an obligation to speak to the girls who were raped by this guy, today,' Sasse said. 'You may not speak about the specific of the charges against those two guards this morning that were taken into custody, but more broadly you should be able to unpack: Have we changed any processes about how cases like this are handled? It's been more than 90 days.'"

The [New York Times](#) (11/19, Rashbaum, Ivory, Gold, 18.61M) reports that the indictment "for the first time laid out a detailed, official account of what happened inside the jail the night that Mr. Epstein died inside a high-security protective housing unit. It said that video evidence showed no one entered the wing where Mr. Epstein was being held between 10:30 p.m. and 6:30 a.m. when he was found." According to the Times, Noel and Thomas "only discovered Mr. Epstein had hanged himself in his cell – 15 feet from their desk – when they went to give him breakfast at 6:30 a.m."

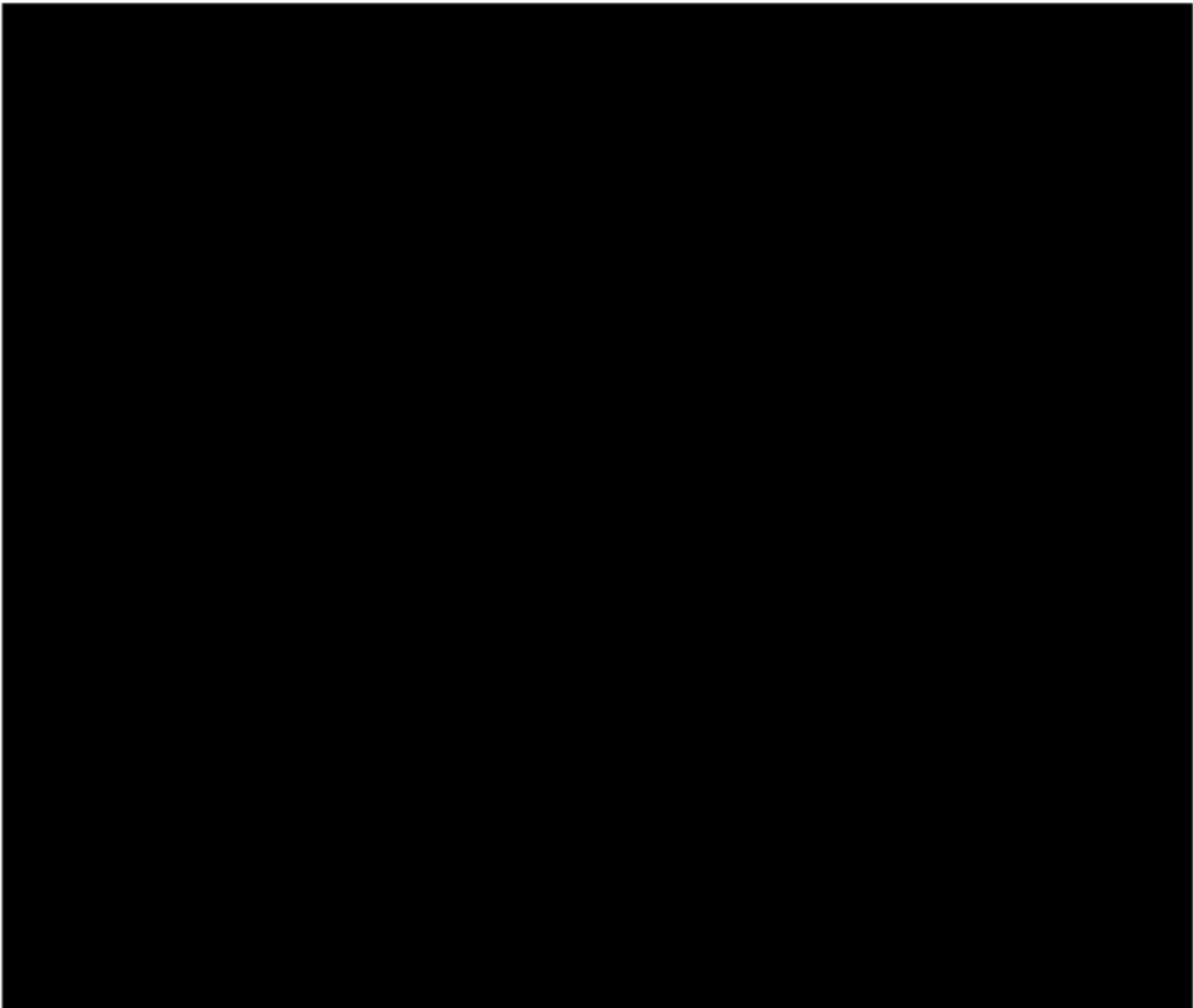
The [Los Angeles Times](#) (11/19, Press, 4.64M) reports, "The cell where he died was in a high-security unit, famous for having held terrorists and drug cartel kingpins. Epstein's death, though, revealed the jail was suffering from problems including chronic

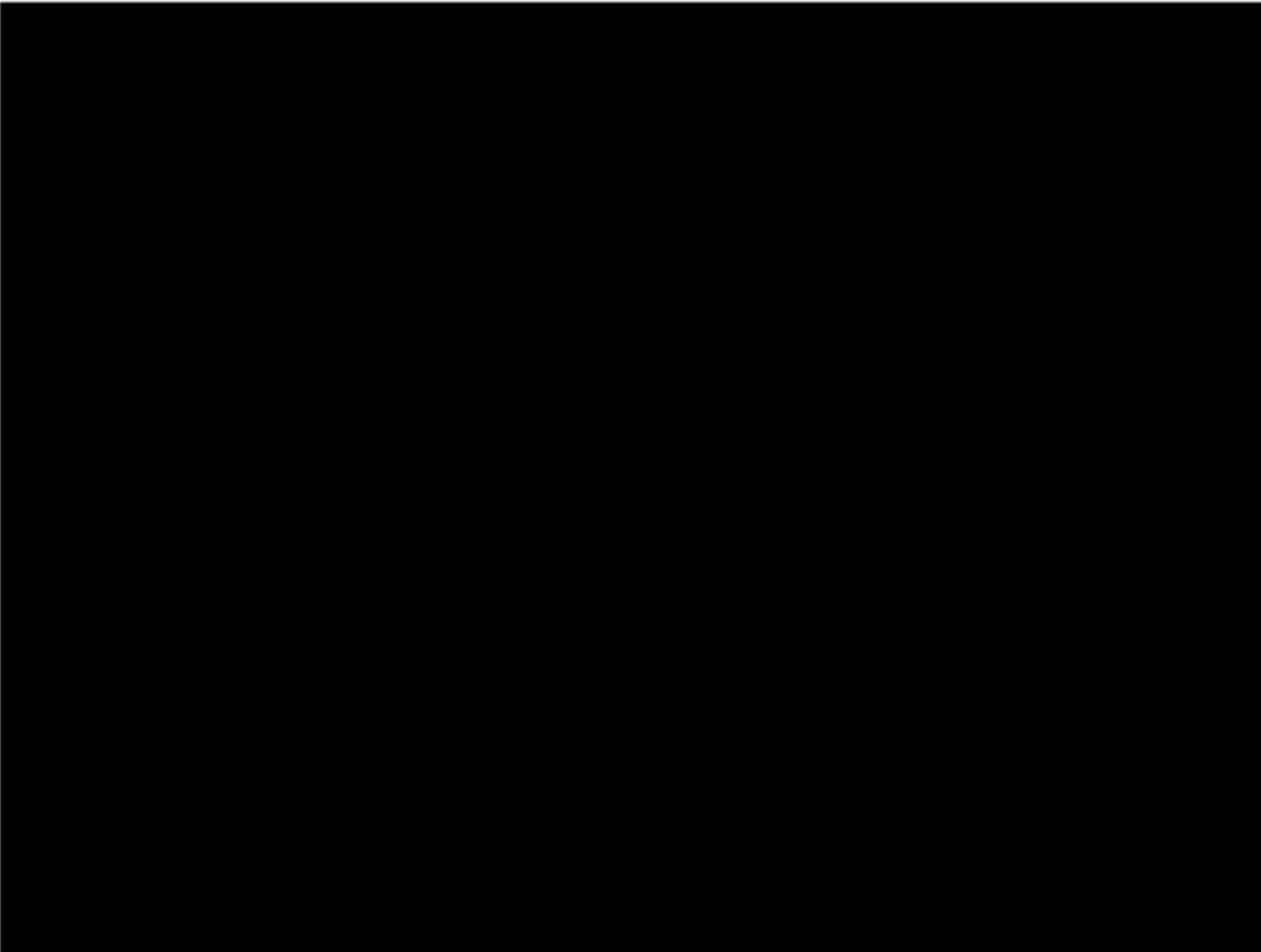
staffing shortages that led to mandatory overtime for guards day after day and other staff being pressed into service as correctional officers."

[BuzzFeed News](#) (11/19, Reinstein) reports, "The indictment alleges that both guards fell asleep at their desks for two hours, that Noel looked at furniture sales online, and Thomas searched motorcycle sales and sports news." BuzzFeed News adds, "According to the indictment, shortly after finding Epstein in his cell, Thomas told a supervisor they 'didn't do any rounds,'" and "they then allegedly 'repeatedly signed false certifications attesting to having conducted multiple counts of inmates that they did not do,' causing prison officials to believe inmates were being regularly checked on. 'As alleged, the defendants had a duty to ensure the safety and security of federal inmates in their care at the Metropolitan Correctional Center [MCC],' US Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman said in a statement. 'Instead, they repeatedly failed to conduct mandated checks on inmates, and lied on official forms to hide their dereliction.'"

[Politico](#) (11/19, Gerstein, 4.29M) reports, "The sudden death of Epstein, 66, a wealthy financier and registered sex offender facing a new round of sex trafficking charges at the time of his demise, prompted widespread suspicion fueled by his long history of association with other prominent men in politics, academia and business. A pathologist hired by Epstein's brother further fanned the flames by declaring that neck fractures seen during the autopsy were more consistent with homicide than suicide." An investigation "carried out by the FBI and the Justice Department's Office of the Inspector General reaffirmed the official stance that Epstein's death at the Metropolitan Correctional Center was self-inflicted, but suggests it was enabled by negligence, misconduct, fraud and perhaps exhaustion on the part of the personnel on duty that night in the high-security, ninth-floor cell block where Epstein was being held after a reported suicide attempt the previous month."

The [Miami Herald](#) (11/19, 1.09M), [Bloomberg](#) (11/19, 4.73M), [CBS News](#) (11/19, 3.68M), the [Washington Post](#) (11/19, Barrett, 14.2M), [USA Today](#) (11/19, Johnson, McCoy, 10.31M), [New York Post](#) (11/19, Saul, Golding, 4.57M) and [Reuters](#) (11/19, Pierson), among other news outlets, also cover the indictment.







December 3, 2011

