

# Former Oklahoma County detention officer charged with felony suicide in prison

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The Oklahoma County Jail in Oklahoma City is shown May 11.

A fired Oklahoma County detention officer was charged Tuesday with falsifying logbooks after an inmate committed suicide in an attempt to cover up his inability to complete welfare checks.

Jesse Paul Kight, 28, of Yukon, has been charged with one count of tampering with a record and one count of failing to perform a duty.

Kight was fired on December 27, a day after he discovered inmate Gabriel Yalartai hanging from an air duct in a cell. He had worked at the prison for less than six months.

“Our special investigation unit has determined that the detention officer failed to do his duty,” prison administrator Greg Williams said on Tuesday. “We are responsible for the care and welfare of detainees in our custody. When that trust is broken, we will work with law enforcement to hold people accountable. »

Kight could not be reached Tuesday for comment.

## **What happened the night Gabriel Yalartai died?**

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Kight was supposed to check on all inmates on the 12th floor every 30 minutes during a 12-hour shift that began at 6 p.m. on Christmas Day.

An investigator determined after reviewing surveillance tapes that Kight did not perform any vision checks, according to a court affidavit.

Kight discovered the suicide at 4:21 a.m. on Dec. 26 while serving breakfast to inmates, the investigator wrote in the affidavit.

“Officer Kight, after inmate Yalartai was discovered, falsified logbooks by hand writing in sight check entries that did not occur,” the investigator wrote.

“He admitted that he was not present at his duty station and instead went to the prison reception and other floors for several hours instead of carrying out his duties” , wrote the investigator. “Officer Kight was not assigned by a supervisor to assist at reception and did not arrange for another detention officer to cover his sight checks when he abandoned his post.”

Kight was charged in Oklahoma County District Court. District Attorney David Prater personally approved the charge.

Yalartai, 40, had been charged with first-degree robbery. He had to be checked every 30 minutes because he was in a mental health unit.

He was described in the affidavit as an inmate with known declining mental health issues. He had been waiting for months to be transported to the public mental institution in Vinita for treatment, according to court records.

*This article originally appeared on Oklahoman: Former Oklahoma County Detention Officer Charged with Suicide in Jail*