



Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Inspector General

News Release

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(202) 461-4264

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATEMENT FROM VA INSPECTOR GENERAL MICHAEL J. MISSAL

VA Inspector General Michael Missal, US Attorney for the Northern District of West Virginia Bill Powell, and other law enforcement partners announced today that Reta Mays, of Harrison County, West Virginia, pleaded guilty to seven counts of second-degree murder in the deaths of seven veterans at the Louis A. Johnson Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Clarksburg, West Virginia. Mays, a nursing assistant, also pleaded guilty to one count of assault with intent to commit murder involving the death of an eighth veteran. Mays admitted to administering insulin to several patients with the intent to cause their deaths.

What occurred at the Louis A. Johnson VA Medical Center is tragic and heartbreaking. This case is particularly shocking because these deaths were at the hands of a nursing assistant who was entrusted with providing compassionate and supportive care to veterans. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the victims.

Within a matter of days of learning of the suspicious deaths at the facility, VA OIG agents identified the defendant as a person of interest. Working with medical facility leaders, the defendant was immediately removed from patient care. Without critical investigative actions being taken so expeditiously, additional lives could have been lost.

This was a complex investigation that involved a close partnership between the VA Office of Inspector General, US Attorney Bill Powell's Office and the FBI, with the invaluable assistance of the West Virginia State Police and the Greater Harrison County Drug and Violent Crimes Task Force. These collaborations resulted in solving this series of heinous crimes against veterans and providing some measure of closure for the victims and their families. The result today was due to the tireless and dedicated efforts of the VA OIG law enforcement team, particularly lead Special Agent Keith Vereb, under the leadership of Resident Agent in Charge Colin Davis and Special Agent in Charge Kim Lampkins.

Our investigators painstakingly sought, tested, and pieced together an overwhelming amount of evidence to create the foundation for this case. For example, the investigation included

- extensive forensic audits and analyses, data modeling, and exhaustive medical record reviews;
- approximately 350 interviews;
- more than 60 subpoenas and search warrants on electronic media;
- approximately 1,200 current and former employee timecard reviews;

- reviews of about 670,000 VA employee emails and multiple years of swipe card access logs for multiple personnel;
- forensic analyses for various insulin and tissue samples by multiple experts; and
- coordinated disinterments and reinternments, with family agreement (including full military honors per family request), and witnessed associated autopsies.

The fact that the defendant pleaded guilty today to seven counts of second-degree murder is a testament to the strength of the case developed by our criminal team through their diligence, tenacity, and skill.

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See the related Department of Justice press release: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndwv/pr/former-va-hospital-nursing-assistant-admits-murdering-seven-veterans-and-assault-intent>