

MICHAEL TYREE MURDER VERDICT TALKING POINTS

Today, a jury convicted three correctional officers of murdering Michael Tyree, a mentally ill man who was housed in the jail right behind me.

The jail has three purposes: First, to hold individuals accountable for the crimes they have committed. Second, to protect our society from criminals who have harmed others. Third, to give inmates an opportunity to rehabilitate themselves and become productive, law-abiding members of our society.

In order to accomplish its important purposes, a jail must be a place where inmates and correctional staff are treated with respect and dignity, where everyone, including a slight mentally ill inmate named Michael Tyree are treated with respect and afforded human dignity.

I thank the men and women of the jury for their public service. With their careful consideration and just verdict, they treated Michael Tyree as a man of value, a person with strengths and problems, rights and dignity, and a family who loved him.

We stand here because three men whose very job it was to protect him, treated Michael Tyree as something nameless and they beat and killed him as though he were worthless and invisible. The jury's verdict treated this jail not just as the grim setting for a murder but as an important societal institution, whose employees share a mission of protection, of those outside of it, and those housed within it. Without that protection, there is no law and order, there is no justice, and in the end – for Michael Tyree – there was no chance.

I want to thank Sheriff's Deputies Mark Carrasco, Jason Brown and Julian Quionez for their excellent work on this case. I also want to thank District Attorney Investigator Mike Gaynor and Deputy District Attorney Lindsey Walsh for their hard work and dedication to getting justice in this case.

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Trapped behind bars and in his mental illness, Michael Tyree could not stand up to the men whose job it was to protect him. But we cannot – and did not - turn away from the tragedy of Michael Tyree.

Prosecutor Matt Braker stood up to them - for Michael. The jury stood up to them - for Michael and for all of us. He is gone now, but Michael Tyree's tragedy was worthy of our outrage, his death will never be invisible. We will think of him as we work toward making the justice system a better, more fair and safe place for the vulnerable men and women suffering from mental illness. I am committed to doing that. We will never forget Michael Tyree in our fight against those who see vulnerabilities as a chance to harm, instead of an opportunity to help.