



## King County

Department of Executive Services

### **Inquest Program**

401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 135  
Seattle, WA 98104

**206-477-6191**

TTY Relay 711

Webpage: [kingcounty.gov/inquests](http://kingcounty.gov/inquests)

Email: [Inquests@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Inquests@kingcounty.gov)

### **ORDER**

#### **INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF ISAIAH OBET**

**# 417IQ7199**

#### **PARTIES:**

Family of the decedent:	Represented by Amy Parker
Involved officer:	Auburn Police Department Officer Jeff Nelson, represented by Emma Scanlan and Kristen Murray
Employing government department:	Auburn Police Department (APD), represented by Andrew Cooley, and Kendra Comeau
Administrator:	Michael Spearman assisted by Matt Anderson

The Involved Officer in this inquest is Auburn Police Department Officer, Jeff Nelson. Officer Nelson is currently charged with murder resulting from an incident that occurred subsequent to the death of Mr. Obet. The trial of the murder case is currently scheduled to begin on November 28, 2022 and conclude in late January 2023. It does not appear to be in dispute that evidence of some of the events surrounding Mr. Obet's death may be presented as evidence in support of the charge against Officer Nelson. There is also an issue as to whether evidence of facts related to the incident that resulted in the charge of murder against Officer Nelson will be presented at the inquest. I am also cognizant that, given the pending charge against Officer Nelson, the public interest in this inquest will likely be high and coverage of the proceedings by local media may be significant. In light of these factors, I conclude that it is appropriate exercise the authority provided in the Executive Order, (PHL-7-1-5EO, Appendix 1, Section 8.15), to "stay an inquest where charges are pending against an accused person and the stay is necessary to avoid compromising the criminal case."

I am mindful, however, that the family of Mr. Obet has waited a long time for this inquest. There have been various reasons for the delay, including a hold placed on inquests by the King County Executive while new procedures for inquests were developed and a judicial stay entered while the new procedures were reviewed by proceedings in King County Superior Court and the Washington State Supreme Court. For that reason, in the event the trial date in the murder case is continued again, I would not be inclined to continue the stay. In addition, I would not be inclined to continue the stay if, for whatever reason, the trial results in a mistrial. In that event, the concern about compromising the criminal trial is lessened considerably because the evidence in the case will have already been disclosed to the public including any evidence related to the death of Mr. Obet, if such evidence is allowed.

Accordingly,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that proceedings in this inquest are stayed pending the conclusion of the trial of Officer Nelson, now scheduled to begin on November 28, 2022.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that at the conclusion of the trial, by entry of verdict or of an order of mistrial, the stay shall be lifted and a date for the inquest hearing in this matter shall be promptly scheduled.

DATED: August 19, 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Spearman', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

---

Michael Spearman  
Inquest Administrator