



**OFFICE OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL
DISTRICT ATTORNEY OF COLORADO**
District Attorney Alexis King

April 29, 2022

Sheriff Jeff Shrader
Jefferson County Sheriff's Office
200 Jefferson County Parkway
Golden, Colorado 80401

Dear Sheriff Shrader,

The First Judicial District Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) has completed its investigation into the death of Richard Leroy Stichter on October 15, 2021. As you know, the multi-jurisdictional CIRT team conducts independent and thorough investigations in any incident in which a law enforcement officer within the First Judicial District uses deadly force, or attempts to use deadly force, against a person while acting under the color of official law enforcement duties. That is not the case here, but CIRT protocols also allow a law enforcement executive to request CIRT's response in other circumstances. You requested an independent investigation by CIRT when Mr. Stichter's body was discovered.

At the time of his death, Mr. Stichter was a thirty-seven-year-old white man in the Jefferson County Detention Facility. Mr. Stichter was in custody on a \$20,000 bond for a felony domestic violence offense and a no-bond hold for a parole violation. Mr. Stichter was housed at 200 Jefferson County Parkway in Golden. The CIRT response and investigation was led by Commander Reeves of the Lakewood Police Department. Based on interviews of inmates, staff, and relations, as well as surveillance video and other physical evidence, there is no evidence that law enforcement engaged with Mr. Stichter at or about the time of his death and thus, not criminally responsible for his death.

Commander Reeves presented his investigation to my office on February 11, 2022. CIRT determined that on the day of his death, Mr. Stichter had his own cell in 6B, Unit 3. That morning, deputies changed shift at 6:00 a.m. and started the daily routine. At 6:25 a.m., Mr. Stichter came out of his cell, acknowledged the deputy, and returned to his cell. At 6:38 a.m. Stichter covered his window with paper, a



common practice by inmates to have privacy. At 7:00 a.m. the breakfast routine began but when Mr. Stichter's row of doors opened, Mr. Stichter did not come out of his cell.

In the jail, a deputy can trigger an audible latching/unlatching sound of any inmate's cell door by clicking a button from the workstation located in that module. The sound can be a reminder to the inmate to close his or her door. At 7:04 a.m., the module deputy noticed Mr. Stichter's door was not closed and clicked Mr. Stichter's door from inside the 6B workstation, but there was no response. The module deputy clicked Mr. Stichter's cell door two more times with no response.

At 7:08 a.m. the module deputy went to check on Mr. Stichter. The module deputy opened Mr. Stichter's cell door slightly and called out to him with no response. The module deputy looked inside, without going into the cell alone, and found Mr. Stichter face down on the floor with his head partially under his desk. At first, the module deputy did not notice the bedsheet around Stichter's neck but immediately radioed for escorts and medical support at 7:09 a.m.

The first deputy to respond was asked by the module deputy for the lights to be turned on in Mr. Stichter's cell. The module deputy proceeded into the cell and noticed the bedsheet around both Mr. Stichter's neck and the desk support pole. The module deputy immediately radioed for a 911 tool to cut the sheet safely away from Mr. Stichter's neck. While others retrieved the tool, the module deputy and another deputy tried to undo the knots in the soaking wet bedsheet. The knots were so tight and wet that the first 911 tool broke.

The module deputy called for another 911 tool and continued to work on the knots until the second 911 tool arrived. At 7:11 a.m., while working to cut the wet bedsheet with the second 911 tool, jail medical staff arrived. Medical staff used medical sheers to cut the bedsheet free from Mr. Stichter's neck and start their assessments. Based on his lividity and other indicia, jail medical staff believed Mr. Stichter was dead. West Metro Fire arrived at 7:23 a.m. and came to the same conclusion as the jail medical staff.

Through her autopsy on October 15, 2021, forensic pathologist Dr. Dawn Holmes determined that Mr. Stichter's cause of death was due to hanging and the manner of death was suicide. Laboratory testing of Mr. Stichter's blood showed he was positive for caffeine, norfluoxetine, fluoxetine, amphetamine, and methamphetamine at the time of his death.

Given the facts set forth by Commander Reeves, and upon review by my office, there is no evidence that law enforcement was engaged with Mr. Stichter in the time leading up to his suicide and are not criminally responsible for his death. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexis D. King". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Alexis D. King
District Attorney