



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

November 10, 2022

Sheriff Jeff Schrader  
Jefferson County Sheriff's Office  
200 Jefferson County Parkway  
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Sheriff Schrader,

The First Judicial District Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) has completed its investigation into the death of Sierra Sandoval on June 19, 2022. 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 Ms. Sandoval experienced an unknown medical episode during transport on June 17, 2022.

At the time of Ms. Sandoval's unknown medical episode, she was a 22-year-old white female. Ms. Sandoval was in custody and being transported by Jefferson County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) deputies from the Denver County Jail to the Jefferson County Detention Facility on warrants from the Edgewater Police Department for possession of drug paraphernalia, criminal mischief, resisting arrest, and obstructing a peace officer. The CIRT response and investigation was led by Commander McNitt of the Lakewood Police Department. Based on interviews of prisoners and staff, as well as surveillance video and other physical evidence, there is no evidence that law enforcement was criminally responsible for her death.

Commander McNitt presented his investigation to my office on October 18, 2022. CIRT determined that on June 17, 2022, at approximately 8:12 a.m., JCSO deputies arrived at the Denver County Jail, on Smith Road, with a prisoner to pick up additional prisoners, including Ms. Sandoval. Deputies were not informed of any medical concerns pertaining to Ms. Sandoval and she appeared normal to them. The deputies were driving a transport van with three separate prisoner compartments that were monitored by video.



At approximately 8:27 am, the Deputies drove away from the Denver County Jail with Ms. Sandoval secured by herself in one of the transport van's compartments. They stopped at the adjacent Denver Reception and Diagnostic Center (DRDC) to exchange a prisoner with another county. While there, Ms. Sandoval requested her handcuffs be loosened and they were. At approximately 9:04 am, they left DRDC to drive to the Jefferson County Detention Facility via I-70 westbound.

On the way, deputies heard conversation between Ms. Sandoval and another prisoner through the small perforations in the barrier that divided the van passengers. Between Wadsworth Boulevard and Kipling Street, deputies saw Ms. Sandoval leaned over against the compartment divider, a common posture for those riding in the van. However, at approximately 9:31 a.m., as the van exited I-70 at West Colfax Avenue, deputies saw Ms. Sandoval fall over onto the floor of the van. Deputies called the Jefferson County Detention Facility requesting medical personnel meet them upon arrival. They arrived at the Jefferson County Detention Facility at approximately 9:33 a.m.

In the secure garage area of the Jefferson County Detention Facility, a deputy and EMT pulled Ms. Sandoval, who was unresponsive, from the van. Additional deputies and JCSO medical staff then began emergency medical aid to Ms. Sandoval, including the administration of two doses of Narcan. Ms. Sandoval remained unresponsive and at approximately 9:51 a.m., she was transported by ambulance to St. Anthony's Hospital, where she subsequently died on June 19, 2022.

Through interviews, the other prisoners in the van did not see or hear any indications of concern from Ms. Sandoval. Further, they did not hear Ms. Sandoval call for help or requests for medical attention.

On June 20, 2022, forensic pathologist Dr. John Carver conducted an autopsy and determined Ms. Sandoval's cause of death was anoxic brain injury, complicating cardiorespiratory arrest, due to fentanyl intoxication and the manner of death was an accident. Laboratory testing of Ms. Sandoval's blood, drawn prior to the administration of fentanyl at the hospital, was positive for fentanyl.

Given the facts set forth by CIRT, and upon review by my office, there is no evidence that law enforcement was criminally responsible for Ms. Sandoval's death. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alexis D. King". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alexis D. King  
District Attorney