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San Diego County Sheriff's Department – Media Relations

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Sheriff Bill Gore Statement Rebecca Zahau Case Review

On July 13, 2011, the Sheriff's Homicide Unit was called to assist Coronado Police Department with a death investigation at 1043 Ocean Boulevard. Thirty-two-year-old Rebecca Zahau was found hanging from a balcony in the courtyard of the residence.

Sheriff's Homicide investigators worked with evidence technicians, criminalists, and Coronado Police Officers. Together, they processed the scene, gathered evidence and conducted a thorough death investigation. The investigation by the Sheriff's Department found no evidence of a crime.

On April 4th, 2018, a civil jury rendered a verdict that Adam Shacknai was liable for Rebecca Zahau's death. The civil trial verdict prompted renewed public speculation that Rebecca Zahau's death was not a suicide.

In response, the Sheriff's Department assembled a team to conduct a thorough review of the case, including a review of each of the theories raised during the civil trial. The team consisted of one Sergeant from the Coronado Police Department and three Sheriff's Homicide Sergeants. It should be noted that no one on the review team was part of the original investigation and they have no prior connections to the case.

After conducting a thorough review of the case, this review panel found no evidence that would lead us to believe that Rebecca Zahau died at the hands of another. In addition, we found no evidence that would dispute or be inconsistent with the Medical Examiner's findings that Rebecca Zahau's manner of death was a suicide.

We understand this has been a difficult process for the families. Our condolences go out to all of those involved in this tragic case.

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