



SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Critical Incident Review Board

In-Custody Death Information Release

DATE OF INCIDENT: April 27, 2022

TIME: 7:54 a.m.

LOCATION: George Bailey Detention Facility

The Sheriff's Homicide Unit conducts a thorough investigation of every in-custody death. In addition to the investigation conducted by the Sheriff's Homicide Unit, the Sheriff's Critical Incident Review Board (CIRB) conducts a review of in-custody deaths. The CIRB is comprised of department leadership and the Sheriff's Legal Advisor and performs a critical review of each incident. The focus of the CIRB is to assess the department's civil exposure because of a given incident. The review may identify potential misconduct, criminal negligence or behavior, policy violations, training deficiencies, or other areas where we can improve and make our facilities safer for staff and those in our custody. This release synthesizes the reviewed incident and any resultant actions taken to improve our operations.

On April 27, 2022, at 7:54 a.m., while conducting a safety check in Module 6B at the George Bailey Detention Facility (GBDF), a deputy saw that one of the occupants of cell #231 was squatting next to the stool in the cell, and that the second occupant, incarcerated person Omar Ornelas, was lying on his bunk. The deputies attempted, unsuccessfully, to rouse both individuals. Additionally, one of the deputies observed that Ornelas had white foam and blood around his nose. One deputy administered a dose of Naloxone to Ornelas while another immediately requested that medical staff respond to the module, and for paramedics to be summoned to the facility. At 7:58 a.m., Sheriff's medical staff arrived on scene and took over lifesaving measures. Multiple doses of Naloxone were administered to both Ornelas and his cellmate. Sheriff's medical staff also performed chest compressions and applied an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) to Ornelas. Ornelas' cellmate regained consciousness after eight (8) doses of Naloxone and stated the two had taken fentanyl powder. A total of eleven (11) doses of Naloxone were administered to Ornelas. At 8:10 a.m., paramedics arrived on scene and assisted with the continuing lifesaving measures. Despite their efforts, Ornelas was pronounced deceased by a doctor at 8:36 a.m.

As is our protocol for all in-custody deaths, the San Diego Sheriff's Homicide Unit investigated this incident and documented the scene. Investigators recovered a white powdery substance from cell #231. A review of jail records for Ornelas and his cellmate indicated both had a history of substance abuse and drug-related rule violations while in custody.

The San Diego County Medical Examiner's Office conducted an independent investigation and post-mortem. The Medical Examiner's Office determined the cause of death to be the toxic effect of fentanyl and fluorofentanyl, and the manner of death to be undetermined. (ME Case #2022-01460)

The CIRB conducted a preliminary review of this incident on June 15, 2022, with no action items or policy recommendations at that time.