El Paso County Sheriff's Office

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: 3/7/23

TITLE: Metro Narcotics Makes Arrest for Drug Distribution Resulting in Death in the EPC Jail

On January 20, 2023, at 5:02 p.m., a female in the El Paso County Jail died while in custody. A deputy sheriff found her unresponsive in her assigned cell. The deputy began lifesaving measures while requesting medical assistance over her issued radio.

Life-saving measures were initiated by Sheriff's Office personnel and medical staff until responders from the American Medical Response (AMR) and the Colorado Springs Fire Department took over medical care. Despite these efforts, the woman passed away.

The woman has been identified by the El Paso County Coroner's Office as 44-year-old Renee Lowrance. Ms. Lowrance's death was later ruled a result of Fentanyl intoxication. Our sincere condolences to Renee Lowrance's family and friends.

At the request of Sheriff Joseph Roybal, Metro Narcotics, in collaboration with EPSO CIU, Criminal Intelligence Unit, initiated an investigation into the death of Ms. Lowrance in attempts to identify the Fentanyl supplier directly associated with Ms. Lowrance's death. The investigation was assigned to an El Paso County Sheriff's Office Detective within Metro Narcotics.

Metro Narcotics is a multi-jurisdictional drug task-force designated to investigate, control, and prevent the illegal sale, possession, and/or manufacturing of illegal narcotics, and/or controlled substances. Metro Narcotics also deploys effective strategies and allocation of resources to investigate and apprehend opioid drug dealers who furnish illicit substances to overdose victims. Metro Narcotics is comprised of members with the Colorado Springs Police Department, El Paso County Sheriff's Office, Fountain Police Department, and Monument Police Department.

The latest reorganization by Sheriff Roybal, merged the Detentions Investigations Team (DIT) into the Investigations Division - Criminal Intelligence Unit (CIU). This allows more streamlined investigations and communication between investigative branches and outside partners.

On March 3, 2023, for the first time in El Paso County Jail history, a previous incarcerated person at the El Paso County Jail, Katariina Gibson (Date of birth: 1/16/1996), was arrested and booked into the El Paso County Jail on the following charges:

18-18-405 Proximate Cause of Death by Unlawful Distribution (Drug Felony 1)
18-8-204 Introducing Contraband in the 2nd Degree (Felony 6).

Her current bond is $100,000.00

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These efforts are one example of how effective law enforcement can be when working in unison to combat illegal drugs. Sheriff Roybal has a zero-tolerance policy for illicit drugs in his jail and will continue to enforce this policy strongly. In addition, he takes the responsibility of incarcerated citizens' care seriously.

"As your Sheriff, it is my duty to protect the citizens of El Paso County, and I will use every means possible to do so within the scope of the law. I thank our community and law enforcement members for supporting my Office in our fight against illegal drugs in our county. This is a warning to those who dare bring illegal contraband into my Jail. Those who bring drugs into the Jail will be investigated and held accountable for their actions to the extent the law allows. This represents just one area of prioritized focus for reducing Jail deaths."

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