

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**City of Clovis Settles Wrongful Death Case for \$1.9 Million**

The City of Clovis has agreed to pay the family of Isabel De la Torre \$1,900,000 to settle a civil rights wrongful death case that had been pending in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California, Case No.: 1:22-CV-00738-ADA-HBK.

The De la Torre case arose from a March 26, 2022 incident in the City of Clovis, during which Isabel was experiencing a medical emergency. Officers were told when they arrived on scene that Isabel was not armed, and that she just had a seizure. Isabel needed emergency medical help, not excessive force. She had committed no crime. Isabel also was a small individual, who was outnumbered eight to one by trained, armed police officers.

Despite the non-criminal nature of the incident, Isabel's being unarmed, and greatly outnumbered, the involved Clovis officers devised a paramilitary response that made the use of force their first option. Isabel was forcefully kept in a bathroom by officers, who held the door shut until a K-9 was in place to attack her. Then, without any advance warning to Isabel, the K-9 immediately attacked Isabel as the officers allowed the bathroom door to open, even though video proof shows that Isabel emerged from the bathroom unarmed and did not attack any officers.

The K-9 continued to bite Isabel even after she was prone, face-down on the ground. The justification for the continued use of force on Isabel was that she was holding an officer's foot, but the video evidence shows that was nothing more than an instinctive act of desperation of a woman who was being attacked by multiple officers and felt her life slipping away.

The officers then replaced the K-9 with continued force, even after an officer's foot was no longer an issue. Specifically, multiple officers needlessly put their full body weight on Isabel's back while others held her arms and legs. The video footage shows that this was totally unnecessary and contrary to accepted police procedures. More important, using force on a prone, compliant subject is well known to be highly dangerous to human life.

Officers continued using this dangerous force on Isabel until she was motionless, having literally suffocated under the needless pressure of law enforcement. Ms. De La Torre's last breath was used to utter, "No," in response to an officer's common sense defying question of whether she was okay. And even then it was minutes before the officers attacking Ms. De La Torre relented, allowing her to lie motionless and suffocated on the floor of her apartment for what seemed like an eternity before they decided how to respond.

A pathologist concluded that the officers' use of force was the sole reason for Isabel's death. She was only 35 years old at the time of her death. She is loved and missed by many.

The City of Clovis has shown by the needless use of canines and excessive force in this and other incidents that it has a de facto policy, custom and practice of condoning such misconduct, and the

City has also confirmed that policy by ratifying the misconduct that occurred in this case. Isabel's family was also offended by the release of a carefully curated and misleading "critical incident video" that did not show how unnecessary the force used on her was.

Because much of the video of the incident has been labeled confidential in the federal court proceedings, only a short video is released in connection with the release, but the parts omitted are detailed to place poor Isabel's death in its appropriate context.

Link to video:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/iymrtscseg33z1bjcqv8/De-la-Torre-Press-Release-Video.mp4?rlkey=cgcl3lr3ri3qdpt185bxoblho&dl=0>

In May of 2020, people worldwide watched in horror as law enforcement officers needlessly and callously brought their full weight down on poor George Floyd until he begged for his mother with his last dying breath. However, the George Floyd tragedy resonated with so many people because it was not seen as an isolated outlier, but rather just one example of America's policing problem.

This case confirms that belief. Isabel De La Torre's situation bears many parallels to Mr. Floyd's - there was no need for anything near the force used by the numerous responding officers, and nothing justified their continuous use of force until her life was squeezed out of her. Officers were responding to a medical distress call for service, not even the passing of an alleged counterfeit bill.

Isabel's family and estate were represented by Kevin Little and Michelle Tostenrude, Law Office of Kevin G. Little, of Fresno, CA and also by Rodolfo Gonzalez of the Gonzalez Law Firm, of Las Vegas, NV.

RIP Isabel De la Torre. March 12, 1987 - March 26, 2022.