



County of Santa Cruz

Sheriff-Coroner

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Steve Robbins
Sheriff-Coroner

PRESS RELEASE May 21, 2008

Incident Type: Bringing controlled substance into jail (Penal Code 4573),
related to In-Custody Death

Location: County Jail, 259 Water Street, Santa Cruz
Date of arrest: 05/21/08

Suspect: Debra Sanchez, age 42
Decedent: Rita Kraft, age 22

Sheriff's Detectives, working closely with Correctional Officers, arrested Debra Sanchez for bringing controlled substances into the jail. While investigating Rita Kraft's May 6th in-custody death, investigators determined Sanchez obtained a significant quantity of methadone pills while out on a court-ordered pass from custody and smuggled the pills back into the facility when she returned. Kraft used methadone the evening before her death. Although the Coroner has not released the cause of death pending the return of toxicology reports, all available information indicates Kraft died of an accidental overdose. Correctional Officers conducting routine safety checks on May 6 at approximately 3:20 am found Kraft unresponsive in her cell and called for medical assistance. Unfortunately, Kraft did not respond to life-saving efforts and was pronounced dead at 3:55 am that morning. Several of the women in the unit later tested positive for methadone, although none of them had a prescription.

Sanchez had been in custody since April 2008 pending forgery charges. Kraft had been in custody since October 2007 pending attempted homicide charges.

Prepared by: Lieutenant Craig Wilson
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