



**Coalición de Derechos Humanos  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Government Officials' Shocking Lack of Respect  
Friday, September 13, 2002**

According to reports received, the body of a 24-year old woman was found yesterday on a border road in Cochise County. Officers from the Cochise County Sheriff responded to the scene. Apparently, the County Mortuary Office did not immediately arrive to transport the body and the deputies, who "tired" of waiting, decided to place her body in a black bag, tie her to the top of the Tahoe they were in, and drive her through town. Upon arrival at the Sheriff's office, they proceeded to dump her body in the back parking lot where they left her, in the open, under the sun, for two to four hours.

This afternoon, the Cochise County Sheriff's department issued an Information Alert, stating that the officers involved simply made a mistake, and that two Sheriff's deputies were suspended without pay. The alert attempts to minimize their actions by stating that because they had waited for over one hour, they thought the medical examiner personnel were lost. It states that because they still had no contact with the transport service, they proceeded to the office with the body on the hood.

Could they not have made phone calls or attempted other forms of contact? Why would they put the body on the hood of a car? Why did they not send someone to find the transport service, rather than travel with her body on their hood?

As people of conscience, we call on the Cochise County attorney to fully investigate this incident. We call on Sheriff Dever to fire the deputies involved for their complete and utter lack of respect and professionalism in their unconscionable actions.

Sheriff Dever states: "They were simply doing what they felt needed to be done to expedite the removal of these remains, so they could get back to work on other issues." What were the important issues they need to "get back to" that allowed them to disrespect her in this fashion? Would you ever even think of treating anyone in your family or circle of friends in this fashion? Would she have been treated the same if she had been a Caucasian victim?

Sheriff Dever's attempt to criticize those of us who are outraged at this callous and inhumane act makes it clear that we will never have real concern, accountability, or justice when it comes to Mexicans. We still have unanswered questions, such as: Why did they leave her body outdoors for an extended period of time? Who were the officers involved? Why is Sheriff Dever attacking us for not criticizing the "smugglers that lie, cheat and steal...or the others in her group that walked over her and left her alone to die" when he has not presented any evidence that smugglers were involved? If there is evidence of such, his office should investigate and prosecute. This, however, does not minimize the actions of our taxpayer-financed government officials who were not only unprofessional but unethical and inhumane.

We must wonder how many times these types of actions take place, as this incident was investigated only because a complaint was made. Would Sheriff Dever have investigated if nobody had complained?

Such a display of disrespect and unprofessionalism must be addressed. Our communities suffer constantly from acts of racism, hatred, and xenophobia—such conditions must not be allowed to exist in our government officials. This incident clearly shows that these deputies had no regard for this woman as a human being. If we are to begin healing our ravaged communities and neighborhoods, we must immediately remove any and all components that foster this cycle of pain and disregard for human life.

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