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## Cop Suit 'Sickens' Lawyer Civil Action Alleges Officer Involved in His Wife's Death

**By Hailey Heinz Journal Staff Writer**

The lawyer for an Albuquerque police officer snarled in a wrongful death lawsuit involving the officer's wife says he is "sickened" by the allegations against his client.

The lawsuit, filed Monday, alleges that the October death of Tera Chavez may have been murder and that APD officers destroyed evidence that could point to her husband. The suit was filed on behalf of Chavez's estate by attorney Brad Hall.

Tera Chavez's death was initially considered a suicide, but Valencia County sheriff's deputies, who are investigating the case, later investigated it as a homicide and named her husband, Levi Chavez, as a person of interest.

David Serna, who represents Levi Chavez, said Tuesday that the lawsuit is "without merit" and he expects it to be thrown out in court. He also pointed to what he called inconsistencies in the suit.

"For example, they say Tera was really upbeat and happy and therefore couldn't have committed suicide, and later they say she's really depressed and somehow Levi contributed to her depression and her suicidal mood," Serna said.

Serna specifically rebuffed the claim that Levi Chavez took out a life insurance policy on his wife a few days before her death that included a suicide provision.

Although Chavez had changed policies, Serna said it was a routine change because Chavez had switched from the Air National Guard to the Army National Guard. Serna also said Chavez had not specifically requested suicide coverage or extra coverage on his wife.