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STATEMENT OF GLORIA ALLRED

Today we have filed a lawsuit against the City of Los Angeles as the result of outrageous and tortious wrongs committed by a police officer employed by the City of Los Angeles against a deceased woman, Elizabeth Baggett.

Our lawsuit alleges that on October 20, 2019, Los Angeles Police Officers (LAPD) visited the home of Elizabeth Baggett and found that she was deceased. It is alleged in a criminal case that is being prosecuted in L.A. County now that after finding Elizabeth to be deceased, Defendant David Rojas sexually molested her.

We allege in our lawsuit that after Elizabeth's death, LAPD officer, David Rojas, fondled Elizabeth's breasts and felt her nipples. This sexual contact with Elizabeth was allegedly recorded on the defendant's body cam and the video also reportedly shows her naked form. To make matters worse, this video has also been viewed by others.

California Law (Health and Safety code, section 7052) prohibits sexual contact with any remains known to be human, and such contact with an intimate part of a dead human body for the purpose of sexual arousal is a felony.

Defendant Rojas has been criminally charged with that felony and his case is awaiting a date to be set for a preliminary hearing in Los Angeles County Criminal court. It has been delayed a number of times.

Elizabeth Baggett is the daughter of Janet Baggett, who is here with me today. We are representing her in this lawsuit, and we are also representing Elizabeth's minor son, Preston Sertich, and his father, Michael Sertich, in this lawsuit.

We are alleging invasion of privacy, intentional infliction of emotional distress, negligence, mishandling of human remains, violation of Civil Code 1708.85 (which prohibits distribution of such a video), intrusion into private affairs and violation of statutory duties. We are seeking compensatory and punitive damages according to proof at trial.

The unexpected loss of Elizabeth has been devastating for this family, and learning that she and her remains have been so disrespected and violated has compounded the loss and inflicted horrific pain and suffering on her loved ones. Learning, too, that the video of her alleged sexual molestation has been viewed by others sickens them and is deeply disturbing.

So many woman are sexually abused during their lifetime, and now we learn that some are even sexually victimized after their deaths. To add insult to injury, the knowledge that a police officer, during the course of his investigation of the death of a young woman, would take advantage of his position of power and trust to allegedly sexually abuse the body of a deceased person is very upsetting. It is not only against the law, but it is also against all sense of human decency.

This victim, Elizabeth Baggett, was Janet Baggett's daughter, and this victim was Preston Sertich's mother. This victim, Elizabeth Baggett, was also the mother of Michael Sertich's son.

There must be accountability to this family for this shameful course of conduct. What an officer from the LAPD did to Elizabeth must never happen again.

We look forward to vindicating the rights of this family in a court of law.

Gloria Allred
Attorney at Law
Representing Janet Baggett, Preston Sertich and Michael Sertich
August 11, 2020

Note: Ms. Allred is co-counseling on this case with Robert Ounjain of Carpenter, Zuckerman & Rowley