



Chief  
Donald E. Stephens III

# ROSEMONT PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT

## OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

9501 W. Devon  
Rosemont, IL 60018  
847-823-1134



10/20/2017

## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Statement from Chief Donald E. Stephens III

Today we are closing the tragic case of 19 year old Kenneka Jenkins, from Chicago, who passed away at the Crowne Plaza Chicago-O'Hare hotel, 5440 River Road, Rosemont, Illinois.

This statement is a compilation of evidence and includes a vast amount of facts surrounding this case. This statement also includes a timeline of the major events involved in this case, along with additional pertinent information.

The death of any child is tragic; but the death and circumstances surrounding Ms. Jenkins are especially sad.

Before I share with you a timeline of the events that occurred in this case, I want to give you a little background on the Village of Rosemont. Although we have a population of just over 4,200 residents, we welcome an average of 100,000 visitors a day.

With that many guests consistently traveling through Rosemont and/or staying with us, there is a high demand for superior public safety services; the Rosemont Public Safety Department provides outstanding public safety services to include police, fire, and EMS.

Turning to the Kenneka Jenkins case, we have created a timetable of events from the time she left her home through the autopsy. Please refer to the attached timetable.

The search for Ms. Jenkins was an ongoing and unified effort from the start. As officers were able to view more of the hotel's CCTV depicting Ms. Jenkins, the search was able to be narrowed down and additional resources were brought in to assist in the process. This search is what ultimately led to the discovery of Ms. Jenkins' body.

At approximately 12:25 AM on September 10<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Jenkins' body was discovered by a hotel worker who was also searching the property. Ms. Jenkins was pronounced dead on scene by a Resurrection Hospital doctor via Medical Control.

Ms. Jenkins' body was located inside a walk-in freezer which was inside a walk-in cooler. The area in which the body was discovered was on the first floor of the hotel, inside an unused and vacant kitchen. There is one motion-censored still camera inside the kitchen that points in the area of the freezer but does not show the door of the freezer. Additionally, there was only one accessible entrance into the kitchen. Anyone who would have walked toward the freezer would have activated this camera and been observed on hotel CCTV. From the time Ms. Jenkins entered the kitchen to the time her body was discovered, only one member of hotel security entered the kitchen while conducting his normal rounds. However, he did not get close to the freezer and was never out of sight of the camera.

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RPS-030



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The freezer where Ms. Jenkins was discovered was on and working properly at the time of discovery. The safety release device inside was operational and the light inside the freezer was off at the time of discovery, but was working properly. The freezer was turned off a short time after the body was discovered. Ms. Jenkins body was left in the state in which she was found to allow Rosemont Public Safety Evidence Technicians to preserve and document the scene.

As you see in the timeline, the Cook County Medical Examiner Investigator arrived on scene at approximately 3:08 A.M. Once the scene was documented and evidence was collected, the body of Ms. Jenkins was removed and transported to the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office.

Prior to Ms. Jenkins body being removed, the kitchen area in which she was discovered was still an active crime scene. After all evidence was properly secured and inventoried, Ms. Jenkins' mother and sister were allowed to see the body of Kenneka Jenkins as well as the location in which the body was discovered.

Because there was only one entrance into the kitchen, the scene was secured outside the kitchen entrance door and is not shown on the CCTV. All persons who had entered the kitchen after the body was discovered have been entered into the crime scene log.

Rosemont detectives began investigating this incident immediately following the discovery of Ms. Jenkins' body. It was soon learned that the hotel party that Ms. Jenkins attended was booked and paid for with a fraudulent credit card. We believe we have identified the two (2) perpetrators (1 m/b and 1 f/b) who used the fraudulent credit card to book the hotel room. These perpetrators are affiliated with a gang on the west side of Chicago whose operations heavily rely on the use of fraudulent credit cards. At this time, we have not yet located these perpetrators. However, the case into the identity theft and fraudulent credit card use is still ongoing.

Throughout this investigation, our department to date has:

- Generated 135 reports and 44 interviews.
  - Of the 44 subjects' interviewed, 30 have been verified as having been in the hotel room at some point during the night of the hotel party.
  - Through interviews of those subjects, it is believed that a total of 36 individuals were inside the hotel room that evening.
  - The remaining 6 individuals have been identified through street names only and still remain to be interviewed. There has been little to no cooperation from friends or associates in locating these remaining persons.
- Conducted a total of 5 photo line-ups.
- Forensically examined 4 cell phones. These phones are all from individuals who attended the party, including the cell phone of Ms. Jenkins.
- Submitted 3 search warrants and 4 preservations of evidence orders, some of which was related to obtaining information located on social media.

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In an effort to obtain a detailed layout of the kitchen in which Ms. Jenkins was discovered, a high-tech FARO machine was utilized. This machine is able to take extremely accurate measurements of a room, indicating the layout. In the event this kitchen is ever remodeled or changed, the location of items and the layout will be documented.

Additionally, based on the CCTV footage obtained through the hotel, along with witness statements, Rosemont detectives were able to trace the steps of Ms. Jenkins from the hotel room to the kitchen. This documentation shows that Ms. Jenkins exited the lower lever elevator, roamed through the lower level, walked up a set of stairs to the first floor, and then ultimately walked through the kitchen and towards the area of the freezer.

Some exact steps were not observed on the CCTV due to the fact cameras are not located in certain areas; but based on other camera angles and interviews, her path was determined.

The initial CCTV footage showing Kenneka Jenkins on camera was immediately turned over to the Rosemont Public Safety Department. Additional footage, to include all 47 cameras in the hotel throughout the time period of the weekend, was also given to the Rosemont Public Safety Department upon request. CCTV footage exists in many areas of the hotel, but not all. The footage from the hotel that exists has been released and made available to the public through Freedom of Information Act requests. This footage was initially reviewed by our department and sent out to a private lab to determine if any portions could be enhanced in an effort to clarify the video. That process has been completed and no new evidence or details have been discovered.

Our detectives reported no signs of foul play throughout the whole investigation. There is no evidence that Ms. Jenkins was forced to drink alcohol or consume any narcotics while at the hotel. The majority of people at the party included close friends and even relatives of Ms. Jenkins.

While there were many theories, rumors and much speculation floating around social media regarding the death of Ms. Jenkins, none were supported with facts. While all leads and theories were investigated by our department, what we have reported throughout the investigation and again, today, are the facts.

At this time, the Rosemont Public Safety Department has closed the death investigation of Kenneka Jenkins and has classified this incident as an accidental death. There is no evidence that indicates any other conclusion.

I hope I have explained in detail the process of the investigation and the vigorous work that went into this case by Rosemont detectives and the entire Rosemont Public Safety Department. We have spent countless hours to ensure that we completed the most thorough and complete investigation possible.

Now that the investigation has closed, public records pertaining to the death investigation will be made publicly available on the Village of Rosemont website. Please go to the home page ([www.rosemont.com](http://www.rosemont.com)) and it will be located under the section *Government - Village Hall - Freedom of Information*.

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### Timetable - Death Investigation into Kenneka Jenkins

***\*All times are approximate***

#### **Friday, September 8<sup>th</sup>**

11:30 P.M. Ms. Jenkins leaves her home on the west side of Chicago.

#### **Saturday September 9<sup>th</sup>**

1:13 A.M. Ms. Jenkins arrives at the Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare Hotel, 5440 N. River Road, Rosemont, IL to attend a private party in a hotel room.

3:25 A.M. Ms. Jenkins is seen on CCTV exiting a lower level elevator.

3:32 A.M. Ms. Jenkins is last seen on CCTV as she moves through a 1<sup>st</sup> floor kitchen.

7:14 A.M. Rosemont Public Safety receives a call from Teresa Martin (Ms. Jenkins' mother) saying that she can't find her daughter.

12:46 P.M. Ms. Jenkins' sister arrives at the Rosemont police station to file a Missing Persons report. Ms. Jenkins is then entered into a Law Enforcement database for missing persons.

At this time, officers respond to the Crowne Plaza Hotel to investigate the missing person. Initial information obtained and searches conducted within the Crowne Plaza hotel did not indicate whether or not Ms. Jenkins left the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

8:29 P.M. Officers respond back to the Crowne Plaza Hotel. Further searches are conducted as more CCTV is reviewed. Searches of the Crowne Plaza Hotel continued throughout the night. More resources were deployed to search the hotel as additional information was obtained through the CCTV.

#### **Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup>**

12:25 A.M. Ms. Jenkins' body is discovered by a Crowne Plaza Hotel employee. Ms. Jenkins was pronounced dead at the scene by a Resurrection Hospital doctor via Medical Control.

3:08 A.M. The Cook County Medical Examiner Investigator arrives.

5:10 A.M. Ms. Jenkins' body is removed from the Crowne Plaza Hotel and transported to the Medical Examiner's Office. Ms. Jenkins mother and sister are able to view the body of Kenneka Jenkins prior to being removed.

#### **Friday, October 6<sup>th</sup>**

The Cook County Medical Examiner's Office releases the Autopsy Report which lists the cause of death as hypothermia and the manner of death as accidental. Alcohol and a prescription drug are listed as contributing factors to her death.

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