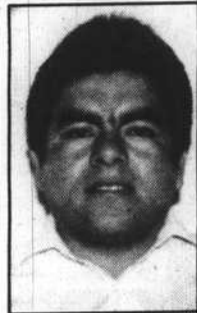


# Renteria family wants justice

## Four indictments not enough, says Renteria family

By Matthew Walte  
Senior Reporter

Renteria family members said Friday that they were thankful, hopeful but still unsatisfied with the indictments of four men, including the police chief, in the death of Francisco Renteria.



Renteria

Jose Renteria, Francisco's brother, said through an interpreter that the family hoped justice would prevail.

"This is a new era for justice, not only for the Renteria family and the Hispanic community, but for the community in general," Renteria said.

He said a police officer, let alone the police chief, had never been indicted by a grand jury in Nebraska history.

"As a community, we must look at the grand jury's verdict as a beginning, a new beginning for justice," Renteria said. "After all, we under-

stand and believe that there are a lot of good people working behind the badges of the Lincoln Police department."

When asked, Renteria said the family did not want an apology.

"An apology is not justice," he said. "What we desire is for justice to be done."

"We pray that the death of Francisco will not have been in vain and will be given the dignity he deserves. He was an innocent man. And until proven guilty, so are the persons indicted by the grand jury."

Renteria said the indictments did not establish a complete trust and

confidence in the police department, but they were a step in that direction. He said the family, like the community, valued life.

"Life is so valued by communities that we pay our hard, honestly earned monies so that they may protect us," he said. "We place a high degree of trust and hope in those whose duty is to protect us."

"When an incident such as the death of our brother, Francisco, takes place, there is doubt cast upon those whose it is to protect us. Our level of confidence in the system is diminished and our trust is violated."

Carlos Monzon, the family's lawyer, said the family did not wish ill will on anyone, only justice.

Monzon said the family had con-

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### JOSE RENTERIA

Francisco Renteria's brother

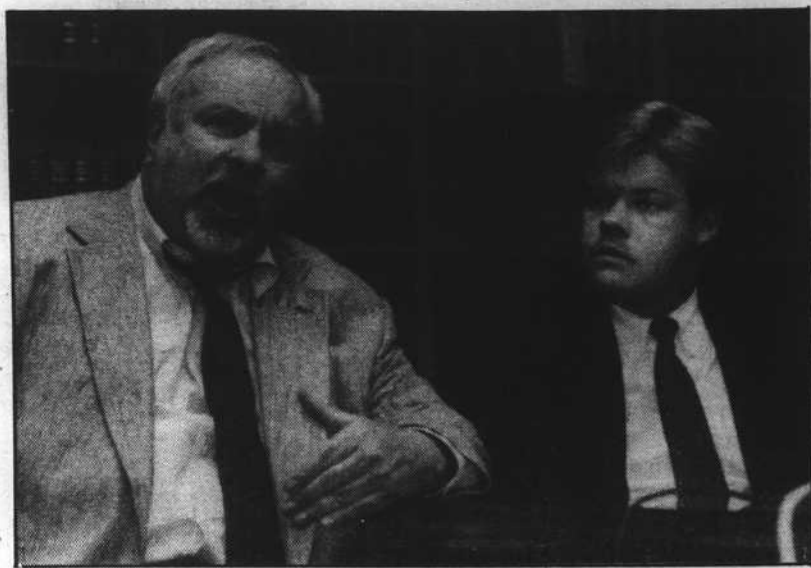
sidered filing a civil suit but wouldn't say whether they had decided to do so. The family would wait for the trials to finish, he said.

Monzon said the misdemeanor indictments didn't go far enough. If he were to spit in someone's eye, Monzon said he would have been brought up on the same charges as were the police officers indicted in Renteria's death.

That should offend everyone, he said.

But when asked whether the family was angry, Monzon said no.

"They are not angry people," he said. "They are just hurt. And the hurt overcomes the anger sometimes."



Damon Lee/DN

Lawyer John Stevens Berry responds to the indictments brought against Lincoln Police officers Luke Wilke, right, and Stephen Schellpeper in a press conference Friday. Berry and co-counsel Jane Burke said the indictments were vague, making it unclear what laws the officers had broken.

## Reaction

Continued from Page 1

grand-jury system," Berry said. "A grand jury would indict a ham sandwich. Who the hell knows how they get where they go?"

Jon Enevoldson, Lincoln Firefighter's Union president, said the indictments were shocking but expected.

"This (indictment) was probably motivated primarily by the public atmosphere," he said. "Although the grand jury is independent, they are obviously swayed by the public and political atmosphere."

Department morale has been hurt, he said, "because the way we do business has been called into question."

Wright was indicted for official misconduct for not rendering aid and also for making a false entry into public record.

Rick Wade, Wright's lawyer, could not be reached for comment on how Wright would plead.

Joel Gajardo, director of the Hispanic Community Center, said such reactions by lawyers and public officials sent a mixed message.

Gajardo said Friday after Special Prosecutor Robert Bartle announced the indictments, that Casady had been defensive from the start.

"I know he has to be defensive of his (officers) but I think he has to be respectful of the facts," he said.

The community is disappointed that the charges were misdemeanors, minor charges considering a man died, Gajardo said.

However, Gajardo said, the fact that officers were indicted was a positive step.

Marty Ramirez, a member of the mayor's multicultural commission, said Friday that some in the community were concerned that young Hispanics couldn't trust police. He said some were learning to call police

*"A grand jury would indict a ham sandwich. Who the hell knows how they get where they go?"*

### JOHN STEVENS BERRY

Wilke's lawyer

"pigs," and community leaders needed to prevent that.

Informing the community on issues of justice and the legal proceedings, while keeping mistrust low, would take a lot of work, Ramirez said.

As for Casady, Ramirez said people needed to remember his constitutional rights before they judge whether he should retain his job.

"Regardless of the information and the indictments he is innocent until proven guilty," he said.

Asking for a resignation would be an emotional response, Ramirez said, and he would not comment on that now.

"Chief Casady didn't create this situation; it is more complex," he said.

Casady has requested administrative leave. Wright and the two police officers were all reassigned to administrative duty.

Soto would not say whether he believed more action should have been taken.

"We would expect our top law enforcement official ... to conduct his affairs in a manner that is beyond reproach," Soto said. "But I have to trust that is what's appropriate. I will trust that our leadership knows what it's doing."

## Indictments

Continued from Page 1

University Police Chief Ken Cauble told the Daily Nebraskan Friday that he and Veskrna both were relieved she was not indicted.

"From what I knew about the situation, I didn't feel she would be," Cauble said.

Veskrna will not talk to the media because she could be a witness in the trial of the four indicted men, Cauble said.

According to police reports, Wilke was the next officer to appear on the scene. Four other Lincoln Police officers later aided him.

Bartle said one officer was primarily involved in the struggle and two others were involved in a smaller capacity.

A struggle ensued and Renteria, who does not speak English, was "placed in the police car in a restraint position face down," as Bartle described. He then went into convulsions and vomited.

From the indictment, Wright, who was the captain of the emergency team that arrived on the scene, did not order medical attention for Renteria.

When Renteria was put into an

ambulance, Bartle said, paramedics began cardiopulmonary resuscitation. They tried to resuscitate Renteria en route to Lincoln General Hospital.

Bartle said Renteria had two broken ribs that were connected to the CPR. However, he said, the broken bones did not puncture the lungs and were not a cause of death.

When Renteria arrived at the hospital he was beyond the point of saving, Bartle said.

Alluding to the yet-to-be released autopsy, Bartle said bruises relevant to a potential cause of death were found around Renteria's neck and on the back of his head. Bartle said he characterized the bruises as blunt force trauma.

Other bruises were found on the lower torso but would not be considered in a cause of death, he said.

Bartle said a cause of death would be released this week.

"It certainly wasn't natural causes," he said. "Alcohol had nothing to do with the incident, nor did drugs."

*"Alcohol had nothing to do with the incident, nor did drugs."*

### ROBERT BARTLE

Special prosecutor

Bartle previewed some of the issues that would be raised in the trial. Issues Bartle discussed were as follows:

- At what time life-saving medical techniques would not have saved Renteria.
- Whether certain restraints, specifically the lateral vascular neck restraint and the six-and-one restraint, were used appropriately.
- Whether Renteria was prejudged by the officers, who reported him to be drunk.
- Whether Renteria's inability to speak English and the officers' inability to communicate was a factor in the death.

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## Crew receives \$3,000 check from Optimists

From Staff Reports

A check for \$3,000 will be given to the Nebraska Rowing Team this week by the Lincoln West Optimists Club.

Phil Hood of the Optimists said the money was an early Christmas gift to thank the crew for its help with Optimist Club activities.

Team president Brad Crawford, a senior English major, said the \$3,000 would pay off the team's purchase of three new boats totaling \$12,000. One boat will be named "The Optimist" in recognition of the gift, he said.

"But we won't be smashing any wine bottles against it because (the boat) will break," Crawford said.

Hood said the team had been working with the Optimists for three years. Members approached the Optimists looking for a lake for their practices. The club offered the lake by its cabin in Branched Oak.

"They needed a place to go to row," he said. "We had the water, and they had the boat."