



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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Colorado's 4th Judicial District - Serving El Paso & Teller Counties

Man Found Incompetent, Murder Charges Dismissed in Monument Case

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COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. – On June 27, 2025, the case against Joel Lang was dismissed after the court previously found him incompetent to proceed and that his competency could not be restored. Lang was charged with the November 2024 murder of Kristy Kerst. Kerst was killed in the parking lot of a fast-food restaurant after exiting her car to inspect it for damage when Lang's van bumped into it. While driving away, Lang hit Kerst. She was trapped and dragged hundreds of feet. Kerst's daughter was also injured.

Two days later, Lang was arrested. He was charged with Murder in the 2nd Degree, CRS 18-3-103(1)(a), a Class 2 Felony; Leaving the Scene of an Accident Involving Death, CRS 42-4-1601(1),(2)(c), a Class 3 Felony; and Vehicular Homicide, CRS 18-3-106(1)(a), a Class 4 Felony.

"The Colorado legislature continues to value dangerous offenders over victims by creating safe harbors designed to protect defendants, and their statutory schemes have been signed into law by Governor Polis. Coloradans will continue to suffer until our legislature and governor put a real priority on public safety," said 4th Judicial District Attorney Michael J. Allen.

"At issue today is a dangerously tangled statutory web that requires courts to dismiss cases after finding a defendant to be incompetent to proceed, and that their competency could not be restored. That requirement applies regardless of the level of offense. People charged with murder, no matter how depraved and evil the crime, can walk free while victims and their family members are left unprotected by the laws enacted in this state. That is justice denied. Coloradans deserve much more from the legislature and governor."



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“The competency statutes that created the result in Lang’s case have been amended 11 times since 2019. That is excessive meddling by a legislature intent on weakening our public safety statutes. It means this defendant, and any others who fall into the same category, will walk free with no accountability. Free to hurt, maim, or kill again.”

“Kristy Kerst, a 47-year-old mother and grandmother, was violently killed while visiting her family in Monument - run over and dragged to death by Joel Lang in a McDonald’s parking lot. She deserves for her killer to be held accountable. Kristy was not alone on the day of her death. Her daughter and two young grandchildren witnessed the horror in that parking lot, too.”

That family will live with the unseen scars of that day, and they will know the government chose to protect their loved one’s killer over their safety and well-being – and that of our community as a whole,” DA Allen said.

Lang will remain in custody pending a review setting on August 1, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. to allow for the arrangement of mental health services that will assist with Lang’s transition from CJC.

Note to Media: All updates will only come from Communications when available.

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