

CORONER'S INQUEST

STATE OF ILLINOIS, COUNTY OF CARROLL

IN THE MATTER OF)
INQUISITION ON THE BODY OF)
JACKSON KRADLE, Deceased.)

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS at the Inquest into
the manner and cause of death of JACKSON KRADLE,
Deceased, held at the Carroll County Courthouse,
Mount Carroll, Illinois, on the 16th day of January,
2025, at 10:00 a.m.

APPEARANCES:

Matthew Jones, Coroner for Carroll County

REPORTER:

Callie S. Bodmer,
Certified Shorthand Reporter,
Dixon, Illinois.

INDEX

Witness: JEFF THEW

Examination Page

Matthew Jones 5

Witness: REBECCA FREDERICK

Examination Page

Matthew Jones 59

Witness: DAVID MERCADO

Examination Page

Matthew Jones 83

Witness: RYAN KLOEPPING

Examination Page

Matthew Jones 117

Witness: JOSHUA SISLER

Examination Page

Matthew Jones 146

Witness: DIANA KRADLE

Examination Page

Matthew Jones 151

1	INDEX (continued)													
2	EXHIBITS													
3	Exhibit												Marked	
4	Exhibit	Number	18	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	12
	Exhibit	Number	19	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	13
5	Exhibit	Number	20	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	26
	Exhibit	Number	21	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	27
6	Exhibit	Number	22	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	27
	Exhibit	Number	23	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	28
7	Exhibit	Number	24	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	32
	Exhibit	Number	25	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	34
8	Exhibit	Number	26	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	35
	Exhibit	Number	27	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	36
9	Exhibit	Number	28	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	37
	Exhibit	Number	29	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	37
10	Exhibit	Number	30	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	37
	Exhibit	Number	31	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	39
11	Exhibit	Number	32	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	40
	Exhibit	Number	33	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	40
12	Exhibit	Number	34	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	41
	Exhibit	Number	35	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	41
13	Exhibit	Number	36	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	52
	Exhibit	Number	37	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	155
14	Exhibit	Number	38	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	155
	Exhibit	Number	39	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	156
15	Exhibit	Number	40	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	156
	Exhibit	Number	41	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	156
16	Exhibit	Number	42	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	156
	Exhibit	Number	43	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	156
17	Exhibit	Number	44	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	156
	Exhibit	Number	45	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	156
18														
19														
20														
21														
22														
23	Certificate of Shorthand Reporter												165	
24														

1 MR. JONES: We'd like to open up our case
2 today and our Inquest.

3 I welcome the jurors back and thank you
4 for your service. We had a long day on Tuesday,
5 and I'm hoping today will be a little bit
6 shorter than that.

7 As we prepare to do this today, we'll be
8 going to the scene to view the scene. We'll go
9 there and we'll stop there for a moment, and
10 you'll be able to look around and see the lay of
11 the land. We will then place markers where
12 Jackson's body was found, and you'll also know
13 the position of the debris field where the
14 biological material was found on the roadway.

15 We will then go back and we will drive up
16 onto the scene, and you'll also be able to see
17 what that feels like and looks like as you're
18 coming up on the road.

19 We do not have -- with the daylight, it's
20 going to be a bit of a difference than at
21 nighttime. I do have dark sunglasses that will
22 allow us to visually have a bit of an experience
23 of nighttime with headlights on. So we will use
24 those at that time also.

1 And then we'll return here to the jury box
2 and we'll begin the rest of the Inquest.

3 Also, welcome the public. I know this has
4 been a long process for you and the family, and
5 today we hope to conclude.

6 We'll now take our leave.

7 (A recess was taken at
8 10:08 a.m., and proceedings
9 resumed at 11:00 a.m.)

10 MR. JONES: I'd like to call Jeff Thew.
11 Please raise your right hand.

12 JEFF THEW,
13 being first duly sworn, was examined and
14 testified as follows:

15 EXAMINATION

16 BY MR. JONES:

17 Q. Could you give your name and spell it.

18 A. Jeff Thew. Jeff is J-E-F-F. Last name is T-,
19 as in Tom, H-E-W.

20 Q. Jeff, you and I know each other. We work
21 together a bit on situations like this and see
22 each other.

23 I appreciate you being here today.

24 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. Can you explain for the jurors your occupation
2 and the job that you do?

3 A. Sure. So I work for the Illinois State Police,
4 part of Division of Forensic Services, our Crime
5 Scene Services branch of that.

6 Our state is split up into various
7 regions. My region, we cover 19 counties. So
8 there's six of us in this region responding to
9 crime scenes for those 19 counties. Those crime
10 scenes can be anything from property crimes, you
11 know, a soda machine gets broken into, to
12 anything you can imagine.

13 So our job is to ultimately go in, do
14 scene documentation. We're going to search a
15 scene. Ultimately our goal is to try to link,
16 like, a victim, suspect and a scene. So if we
17 can find evidence that does that, like, that is
18 our -- that is our mission.

19 Q. Great. Thank you.

20 And were you called to work on July 28th
21 of this -- of 2024 in the early morning hours?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. And can you tell us how you entered into this
24 case and just maybe bring us up to the point of

1 where you arrived?

2 A. So I was the CSI that's on call for that
3 weekend.

4 So as a small work unit, we work normal
5 business hours, and then there's always somebody
6 on call after hours. So if a call comes in
7 after hours, that's the person that's going to
8 respond to it. So that's how I ended up
9 receiving this call, was it just happened to be
10 my weekend.

11 So I received the phone call from my
12 Springfield dispatch at, I believe, 3:53 in the
13 morning. From there, I'm provided limited
14 information from them; basically contact, we
15 have got, you know, a death investigation,
16 here's a phone number, and they'll put me on the
17 call.

18 From there, I'll call the agency and get a
19 little bit more information. At that point, I
20 need to get ready and leave the house and
21 respond to the scene. So doing all of that, I
22 ended up arriving down here to the Mount Carroll
23 area at 5:00 a.m.

24 Q. Thank you for letting us know how you arrived.

1 Did you have a first impression when you
2 arrived on the scene? Can you tell us what you
3 saw and who you spoke with?

4 A. I would say, first of all, I had no initial
5 impressions.

6 And then we had, to my recollection, three
7 individuals on scene. And there may have been
8 more than that, but the three that I recall were
9 sheriff, we had the detective, and then we had
10 the first deputy, who I had not yet met at that
11 point.

12 Q. Okay. So when you're called to a scene, it
13 sounds like you're there to evaluate what the
14 evidence is.

15 Would you consider that to be on target;
16 you're there to document the evidence, you're
17 there to assist with the other law enforcement
18 officials that are there at the scene and work
19 with them in a way so -- and preserve the
20 evidence? Would that be your responsibility
21 also?

22 A. Yes, I think in a broad generalization, if
23 there is evidence, that that would be part of my
24 job. And having the training in terms of, like,

1 locating it, what would be proper packing for
2 it, et cetera, those are things that I would do.

3 You know, because there's other aspects of
4 crime scene processing that most of the
5 departments that we're -- so, again, I work for
6 the State Police. The majority of the cases
7 that I work are not for the State Police;
8 they're for sheriff's offices, local municipal
9 police departments. They are for these agencies
10 that don't have, like, the training and
11 wherewithal to process, you know, a death
12 investigation.

13 Q. Very good. I think that's very clear.

14 When you arrived, did you receive any
15 information that led you to believe who was
16 involved, what might have happened or who
17 reported the incident?

18 A. So, yes. So, I mean, we arrive -- throughout
19 the course of that initial phone call, arriving
20 on scene, ultimately, you know, I put together a
21 small, like, briefing. So there was no
22 information in terms of, like, involvement.
23 This was a complete unknown when I arrived on
24 scene. It remained that when we left the scene.

1 Q. Were you told who reported the incident?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Who the complainant is, I think is maybe the
4 terminology that the dispatchers would use?

5 A. Sure. And, yes, sir. So I was told the
6 deputy, Matt Herpstreith, was the complainant,
7 and that there was a dispatcher/EMT who had been
8 a passenger, who had come upon this victim in
9 the roadway and had contacted 911, and that's
10 how the sheriff's office, I'll just say, became
11 aware of it, as an agency, and then responded.

12 Q. When you received that information, did you put
13 any weight on the fact that you were receiving
14 information from someone who was a sheriff's
15 department deputy?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Okay. Very good.

18 So the next -- can you tell us the next
19 steps that you took in your work that you did?

20 A. So, I mean, ultimately -- so, again, so
21 we're --

22 Q. Maybe let me ask -- let me rephrase the
23 question.

24 Could you hit the high points of the

1 responsibilities through the time you were on
2 the scene, the major responsibilities that you
3 have? And that may include collecting evidence,
4 marking with placards, it may include
5 photographing and the type of photographing that
6 you might take.

7 Just give us an overview picture of the
8 time you were on scene and the responsibilities
9 that you fulfilled on that scene.

10 A. So for this particular scene, by all means,
11 photography and wanting to take the best
12 photographs I can. So various techniques:
13 handheld camera, handheld camera on a tripod,
14 using a drone.

15 There's, you know, searching for and
16 trying to, you know, ensure any biological
17 matter that was on the roadway was, like,
18 located. And then in locating it, or there was
19 a couple instances where I thought I might have
20 seen something which ended up not being
21 anything, I was putting down tent markers.

22 So I had put those tent markers down. So
23 more photographs, scene measuring, which allows
24 me to do a diagram and then allows, you know,

1 for things like I believe what happened today.
2 I can go back out and mark things so it can be
3 observed after the fact or observed again.

4 Q. Could I have you pause one moment?

5 A. Sure.

6 Q. I'd like to present this picture to you and
7 just authenticate that this would have been a
8 photo that you would have taken?

9 A. Yes.

10 MR. JONES: Okay. And I'll present this
11 as Exhibit Number 18. It's a photograph taken
12 by CSI, Illinois State Police Crime Scene
13 Investigator Jeff Thew.

14 (Exhibit Number 18 marked for
15 identification and tendered to
16 the jury.)

17 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) At a scene after you take the
18 photographs that you take, which are, I would
19 assume, many photographs at the scene -- and
20 this happens to be a drone photograph; is that
21 correct?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. You also write a report?

24 A. Correct.

1 Q. And it's very detailed about the possible
2 photographs you take and gives some other
3 specifics about it.

4 Can you explain, is this your report?

5 A. Yes, so this is my report for Scene Number 1,
6 which was the roadway.

7 Q. Okay. Great.

8 And this would include all the photographs
9 you took at the roadway and thumbnails of those
10 photographs?

11 A. Yes. They are a thumbnail version, yes.

12 MR. JONES: I just want to submit this to
13 the jurors as Exhibit Number 19.

14 (Exhibit Number 19 marked for
15 identification and tendered to
16 the jury.)

17 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) Can you look at the photo,
18 Jeff, and can you explain what you see there
19 that would be important just for the jury to
20 identify in that photograph?

21 What I see might be important would
22 include the yellow markers and what those depict
23 and then the position of Jackson's body.
24 There's also a red box that I see there that

1 gives us a point of view.

2 Would you be able to describe that in a
3 better fashion than myself?

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 So I'll start with the red box. I'm using
6 that to hold my tape measure. It's located on a
7 road stamp. Which is, whenever we are doing
8 scene measuring, ideally you're wanting a
9 permanent reference point. So a road stamp in
10 the roadway should theoretically always exist.
11 They repave the road, they're going to put the
12 road stamp exactly back where it was,
13 theoretically. So that was my reference point
14 for the scene.

15 So I have got a tape measure running along
16 the fog line there along the bottom, the white
17 line. As we move to the right, you will
18 eventually start seeing some, what may appear to
19 be, like, yellow squares, but they are little
20 tent markers that would all be numbered; and
21 then we see Jackson laying there; and then we
22 see some more of those, you know, potentially
23 what look like squares on the right side of him
24 as well.

1 Q. Can you give us an idea of how long that area
2 is where the tent markers are?

3 A. It was only 24 feet and, I believe, 7 inches.

4 Q. Okay. And would you say that Jackson's body is
5 in about the middle of that, I would call it,
6 debris field, is that -- is that accurate?
7 Would you call it that, or what would you say it
8 is?

9 A. Yeah, I mean, I think a debris field could be
10 probably a fair term for it. And yes,
11 relatively speaking, I feel like he's near the
12 middle of it.

13 Q. Okay. Would it be uncommon for a body to be
14 found in the middle of -- well, let me back up.
15 Let me back up.

16 The tent markers are marking things. They
17 are marking things that you find important; is
18 that correct? Is that a fair statement?

19 A. Yes. I mean, they are helping draw attention
20 to things in photographs. You know, if I didn't
21 have the tent markers down and I were just to
22 have gone about all my scene photographs, I
23 wouldn't be able to, in essence, like, tell a
24 story through my photographs and lead you

1 through the scene without having something to
2 guide you and reference you.

3 So, I mean, that's the importance of tent
4 markers. I can work plenty of scenes and never
5 put a tent marker down because it's not needed,
6 for whatever reason. So it -- a tent marker is
7 not critical for crime scene work. There's a
8 time and a place to use them.

9 Q. Very good.

10 In this particular case, were you marking
11 things that looked -- that you wouldn't normally
12 see on the roadway? And as I was there, and I
13 was there with you, I saw bits of what we found
14 to be biological material. Would those be the
15 items that you were marking?

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. Okay. And were all of those items identified
18 as biological material?

19 A. So I would have no means of answering that.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I would say -- well, because, like, no items
22 were collected from this. Yeah, I would say a
23 common practice is, you know, if we have a
24 victim with a trauma, that it's very probable

1 parts of the victim are going to stay with the
2 victim and would go with you.

3 Q. That is correct. Thanks for explaining that.

4 So is it okay if I identify those as
5 biological pieces of Jackson, tissue, pieces of
6 tissue of Jackson?

7 A. I feel like that would be a reasonable
8 assertion.

9 Q. Okay. Were all of those tissue that you found
10 or were some of those -- could some of those
11 have been just something that looked like tissue
12 but didn't end up being tissue?

13 A. There was -- again, there were two tent markers
14 that I had placed down. The roadway was wet and
15 the -- so I did not -- I did not get there and
16 immediately start taking photographs. I arrived
17 at 5:00 a.m. Sunrise was going to be at 5:50.

18 So prioritizing work, I went ahead and
19 we're doing a search. You know, we're searching
20 for all the biological material we can locate,
21 we're making sure that there's nothing apparent,
22 like, along the edge of the roadway or in the
23 other lane. So the delay in -- so there was a
24 delay in photographs.

1 But part of what I wanted to say, too,
2 though, was, again, it was darker when I
3 initially arrived, it was also wet, and I'm
4 searching, like using a flashlight, and just the
5 way the water was hitting off some of the bits
6 of the roadway, I thought it could be maybe,
7 like, suspected bone fragments.

8 You don't initially -- we work least
9 intrusive to most intrusive. The most intrusive
10 thing I can do is touch something, pick
11 something up. That's the very last thing I'm
12 going to do. So that's why there's a couple
13 tent markers that I noted were not items,
14 because it ended up being, when I could finally,
15 like, try to put a hand -- a gloved hand to
16 something, it was the road, and it just happened
17 to be a little bit of the road that had, like, a
18 white rock in it that kind of gave an appearance
19 of maybe that was a bone, and it wasn't.

20 Q. Do you know how many markers were laid down?

21 A. 17 in total, but what we have by Jackson is 2
22 through 17. Because I put Tent Marker 1 down by
23 the road stamp just for a reference in my
24 pictures.

1 Q. And two of those were not tissue?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Okay. Can you carry us through kind of how you
4 finished -- how long were you at the scene,
5 Jeff? And is there anything else that you think
6 the jury should know about your time at the
7 scene?

8 And then I know you stayed with the
9 deceased at the morgue and made certain that
10 photographs are taken there and made certain
11 that the body is secured, the body is going to
12 stay in the morgue overnight and then the next
13 day is going for autopsy. So there's a security
14 process in place and you're part of that.

15 Could you explain those items, but start
16 at the scene?

17 A. So just reference the scene, I think one of the
18 things that stood out the most throughout even
19 the final -- you know, you taking Jackson away
20 and, in essence, like, oh, when we're processing
21 a scene, it's, like, our scene. I have command
22 of it. And then we'll do, like, a final
23 walkthrough with whomever the requesting agency
24 is, and then we will release the scene to them.

1 So throughout the entirety of that whole
2 process, it was total speculation between myself
3 and you and members of the sheriff's office as
4 to how could he have arrived there, sustained
5 the injuries that we observed. And, you know,
6 you're throwing out speculations, trying to form
7 a hypothesis.

8 So that's where, you know, earlier I said,
9 you know, upon leaving the scene there was no
10 indication or no initial direction as to, you
11 know, what happened to Jackson.

12 Q. Very good.

13 And then how long were you on the scene,
14 do you recall?

15 A. I would have to -- do you have my report that I
16 could look at? If not, I can get it.

17 I want to say I was there for
18 approximately two hours, but I don't have that
19 specific exit time memorized.

20 Q. This would be Exhibit Number 19.

21 A. It appears, just off the cover sheet, my exit
22 was at -- it says at 6:55 I left the scene. So
23 I was there for about an hour and 55 minutes.

24 Q. Great. Thank you.

1 And then where did you go from there? And
2 can you tell us the next part of the process,
3 what your responsibilities are in that?

4 A. So at this point, you know, now in hindsight of
5 everything, like, when we were also at Scene
6 Number 1, we didn't know who we had. So we had
7 an unknown individual that was deceased in the
8 roadway in the condition and nature he was.

9 So now it's, What can we do, as Crime
10 Scene and Division of Forensic Services, in an
11 effort to identify that person, to allow
12 notification, et cetera?

13 So ultimately you have Jackson, and myself
14 and then I also requested my supervisor, Master
15 Sergeant Angela Mathews, who has a fingerprint
16 scanner, to respond to Mr. Jones's facility in
17 Savanna.

18 Q. Where did she come from, do you recall?

19 A. It would generally be the Rockford area.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. So basically at that point, you know, we're
22 trying to do what we can to quickly, you know,
23 hopefully identify him. And there's been
24 instances in the -- I'll just say, with the

1 fingerprint scanner, if somebody has
2 fingerprints on file, we would know who they are
3 within two minutes. But if they don't, then
4 that's where we're going to fall back on wanting
5 to do, like, rolled ink prints, which then gets
6 submitted to the lab, and that would be
7 ultimately, like, searched and submitted, like,
8 out to a much broader network of possible
9 databases, if you will. As opposed to just a
10 smaller state of Illinois one, it's going to be
11 reaching out beyond Illinois.

12 Q. So it sounds like your first priority, I know
13 my first priority, is identification of the
14 deceased?

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. And why do your -- can you just tell why it was
17 difficult to identify? Is there anything there
18 that sticks in your mind that -- I know at the
19 scene there was some discussion about who we
20 have. And we have several agencies -- we have
21 your agency, my agency, and also the Carroll
22 County Sheriff's agency -- and there seemed to
23 be an absence of any identification.

24 Although, from my recollection, there was

1 a possibility that was brought up, and the
2 Carroll County Sheriff's Office went to search
3 out that possibility and found out that that was
4 not the correct identification.

5 Do you recall that at all taking place?

6 A. I will say, I vaguely recall them pursuing what
7 they thought might be a possible lead.

8 And, you know, in terms of, I guess,
9 addressing the notion of, you know, like, trying
10 to identify the person, I mean, at that point
11 your fingerprint scanner doesn't give us results
12 in two minutes. So amongst other things, I have
13 collected hard inked prints which are going to
14 be submitted to the lab in a very timely manner
15 to further those efforts. But then beyond that,
16 I mean, that's all we can do. There's no other
17 databases -- there's no other information we can
18 get from somebody that's going to yield a
19 quicker result.

20 Q. When you arrived at the morgue in Savanna where
21 the -- where Jackson's body was brought to, did
22 you take photographs there?

23 A. Yes, there were some additional photographs
24 taken.

1 Q. And besides identification, what was your other
2 main responsibility there? Can you -- maybe
3 there's multiple. Can you talk a little bit
4 about that?

5 A. Well, I mean, ultimately I just want to
6 maintain, like, the integrity of the decedent to
7 them getting to autopsy. So, I mean, part of
8 that would be -- and ultimately, I think I
9 collected some other standards maybe ahead of
10 what would be collected at autopsy, just given
11 some special circumstances here.

12 But ultimately, I mean, I'm sealing the
13 body bag in order to show that integrity of it,
14 because I will then -- I'm photographing that
15 seal number and I'm going to photograph that
16 seal number again at the next scene.

17 Q. So at the morgue you're doing your job, and
18 there are certain things that you're explaining
19 about integrity of the scene, integrity of
20 Jackson, integrity of the -- really the
21 investigation as it moves forward and using your
22 best professionalism and tools to do that and
23 really the power that the Illinois State Police
24 brings to Carroll County and the tools that

1 Illinois brings to Carroll County, and that one
2 of those tools would be you. I'm appreciative
3 of that.

4 But as we go through this and you
5 hypothesize a bit -- I know I'm involved in that
6 and I know the sheriff's department is involved
7 in that -- at the morgue did you have any
8 indication, did it become clear that -- of what
9 kind of situation we were in the midst of or did
10 you have any clarity, information that was
11 brought to you at that point, or was that
12 further down the road yet?

13 A. That was further -- further down.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So I will just speak on my own behalf, that
16 upon leaving your facility it was still a
17 complete unknown in terms of who do we have and
18 what possibly happened.

19 Q. And this is about 7:00 in the morning to 8:00
20 in the morning, in that kind of time frame;
21 would I be correct in saying that?

22 A. That, I mean, would be accurate, leaving there
23 at 6:55, travel time and whatnot.

24 MR. JONES: Okay. I would like to confirm

1 that our last exhibit was Number 19.

2 COURT REPORTER: Yes.

3 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) I would like to present a
4 photo to you, and there's been testimony that
5 Jackson was wearing swim trunks. And would
6 you -- is this the picture that you took of his
7 clothing?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 MR. JONES: Okay. I'd like to present
10 this to the jury, and this will be Exhibit
11 Number 20.

12 (Exhibit Number 20 marked for
13 identification and tendered to
14 the jury.)

15 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) There's another picture that
16 depicts what I would -- well, can you tell us,
17 it looks like what's on the screen is the front
18 of his swim trunks?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. And would you consider this to be the back of
21 his swim trunks? And did you take that photo?
22 Can you substantiate that?

23 A. Yes, I took that photograph. And yes, that was
24 the back of the swim trunks.

1 MR. JONES: Okay. This will be Exhibit
2 Number 21.

3 (Exhibit Number 21 marked for
4 identification and tendered to
5 the jury.)

6 MR. JONES: I want to show you one more
7 photo, Jeff.

8 And I think, John, you're going to place
9 Number 21 on the screen.

10 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) What you see on the screen, is
11 that the same photo, the back of his swim
12 trunks?

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. The next photo I have would be his undershorts?

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. Okay. And you took that photo also?

17 A. Correct.

18 MR. JONES: Okay. And that would be
19 Exhibit Number 22.

20 (Exhibit Number 22 marked for
21 identification and tendered to
22 the jury.)

23 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) Jeff, would this be the report
24 you wrote that includes the information about

1 the clothing?

2 A. This report reflects -- ultimately those
3 clothing items were transported and placed in a
4 drying cabinet in Sterling, one of our office
5 locations. So this report reflects the day that
6 I went down there, removed the clothing items --
7 so I'm doing work on the case again -- removed
8 the clothing items from that drying cabinet and
9 took the photographs that we see.

10 Q. Okay. Very good.

11 A. So when we are either, you know, generating
12 evidence, doing some sort of work or taking
13 photographs, we're generating a report.

14 Q. Very good. Very good. I appreciate that.
15 Thank you.

16 MR. JONES: I'd like to present that to
17 the jury as Exhibit Number 23.

18 (Exhibit Number 23 marked for
19 identification and tendered to
20 the jury.)

21 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) Jeff, this is -- these things
22 were done after identification had been made?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And so we know who we're working with at that

1 time?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. And so we know who the clothing belongs to, and
4 then the next step in the process for you
5 came -- what was the next -- the next part of
6 the process in this investigation which you
7 needed to show up on scene and work, would that
8 have been when you were notified that a vehicle
9 might have been involved and that vehicle needed
10 to be processed?

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. Okay. Can you tell us about that notification
13 to you and then showing up at the vehicle and
14 beginning to process that?

15 A. So --

16 Q. And I would like to step through the timing on
17 it. You can -- I have submitted a very detailed
18 timeline, and you're welcome to speak of it
19 in -- you don't have to be exact in the minutes,
20 certainly.

21 A. I can tell you that I would have to either look
22 at a document from you or a document on my own
23 to provide times.

24 General speaking, I would say, you know,

1 it was evening hours. I don't have the times in
2 my mind, to that extent.

3 Q. I have got a timeline here. It's one of our
4 exhibits. And we do not have the time that you
5 were on scene to investigate, but I do have your
6 report.

7 A. If you have the Scene Number 3 report, I could
8 quickly tell you.

9 Q. Very good.

10 Would this be -- can you identify this
11 report for me and --

12 A. So it is the report for Scene Number 3 for this
13 case, which is what we're talking about.

14 Q. Okay. So this would be a report about
15 processing the vehicle or gathering photographs
16 of the vehicle?

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. Okay. And I imagine the timing is there on the
19 report?

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. You're welcome to reflect on it. I think the
22 jury would like to just understand the timing a
23 bit, and I'd like to present that information to
24 them, and then we can walk through a couple

1 of -- a few photos that we have, and I'd like
2 you to look at those and substantiate those
3 photos.

4 A. Okay. So keeping things in sequential order,
5 again, this is Scene Number 3. So Scene Number
6 1 was the roadway; Scene Number 2 is Mr. Jones's
7 office. For both of those, sheriff's office is
8 the requesting investigating agency for me at
9 that point. They are the ones that got me
10 called out. And then, again, do not know who we
11 have.

12 By the time I'm now -- so I get a phone
13 call, ultimately a request to come look at this
14 vehicle, process it, and I have now learned that
15 we do know who the victim is, identification has
16 been made as Jackson, and that the Illinois
17 State Police Investigations is going to be the
18 primary investigating agency, given the
19 circumstances.

20 So again, leaving Scene 2, the last scene
21 in more of the early morning hours. Here I'm
22 now being requested to respond and look at this
23 vehicle. We are now at approximately 5:45 at
24 night. And I have been requested to respond

1 down to Savanna to do so.

2 Q. So I did find a timeline slot for you on the
3 timeline, and I have 6:47 is when you arrived on
4 scene to process that.

5 A. Yeah. So again, I mean, I was at that point --
6 so there was nothing else for me to do after
7 Scene 2. So unfortunately, my participation in
8 this investigation is over until there's more
9 possible physical evidence or something to help,
10 like, link, like I mentioned earlier.

11 So now it's -- I'm back home, 5:43 in the
12 evening, and the request comes in, Respond down
13 to Savanna. Arriving down in Savanna at 6:47,
14 to which there I'm ultimately working for
15 approximately an hour, when I leave at 7:50.

16 Q. Thank you for explaining the timing.

17 MR. JONES: Can I confirm the last
18 exhibit?

19 COURT REPORTER: 23 was the last exhibit.

20 MR. JONES: So this will be Number 24.

21 (Exhibit Number 24 marked for
22 identification and tendered to
23 the jury.)

24 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) So you arrived on scene, and

1 would this be one of the photos that you took on
2 scene?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. We're going to go through quite a few photos of
5 the truck.

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. As we show them on the screen, we'd like you to
8 maybe just speak to what your intent was to
9 photograph there.

10 These would be Tent Markers 1, 2 and 3.
11 How many total tent markers were here at the
12 truck?

13 A. I believe I had only used four.

14 Q. Four tent markers?

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. Okay. And this would be what I understood to
17 be the front section of the truck. Those would
18 be the front wheels of the truck. Would that be
19 correct?

20 A. Correct. So, I mean, there would be a
21 progression of photos, but for purposes of this,
22 that's the left front tire. And, you know,
23 processing the vehicle in a parking lot, I don't
24 have the luxury of, you know, a shop and putting

1 it on a lift and doing things that would allow
2 for a more -- better overall photographs and
3 whatnot.

4 So, I mean, simply doing the best that I
5 can, which is basically those tent markers are
6 underneath items of evidence. So at least the
7 intent with this one photograph is just so you
8 know that above Tent Marker 1 there's something,
9 2 there's something, and 3 there's something.

10 Q. Would this be a photograph that you took of
11 Tent Marker Number 4?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 MR. JONES: Okay. This would be Exhibit
14 Number 25.

15 (Exhibit Number 25 marked for
16 identification and tendered to
17 the jury.)

18 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) Would this be the fourth tent
19 marker?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. And the next photo I would like to show
22 you is a close-up of Tent Marker Number 1.

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. This would be your photo you took? I would

1 like to just confirm that you took the photo.

2 A. I am taking all these photographs.

3 Q. Great, great.

4 MR. JONES: And this would be Exhibit
5 Number 26.

6 (Exhibit Number 26 marked for
7 identification and tendered to
8 the jury.)

9 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) What were you identifying with
10 Tent Marker Number 1, Jeff? Can you tell us?

11 A. So ultimately, depending which photographs are
12 shown, you know, it leads into a piece of
13 suspected blue fabric or a blue fabric with a
14 bit of a gradient to it. But, you know, we had
15 that last photograph where we could see kind of
16 where 1 was. Now I'm drawing you into where
17 that's at, and in particular, it's on that cross
18 member there that I believe a control arm is
19 connected to it.

20 Q. Thank you, Jeff.

21 We're going to bring up the next
22 photograph. Would this be a depiction -- would
23 this be that fabric as it sits on that crossarm?

24 A. Yes.

1 MR. JONES: This would be Exhibit Number
2 27.

3 I would like to present that to the jury.
4 (Exhibit Number 27 marked for
5 identification and tendered to
6 the jury.)

7 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) Would that be the fabric
8 that's on the cross member, Jeff?

9 A. Yes, I mean --

10 Q. Okay. That you just spoke of?

11 A. Correct.

12 Did everybody see where it's at or --

13 Q. Yeah, I'll -- why don't I point it out.

14 Right here is the fabric; is that correct?

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. That's the correct location?

17 A. Yup.

18 Q. And is 7984, would that be the -- a close-up of
19 the piece of fabric?

20 A. Yes. So that would be after I had removed it,
21 put it on an envelope, scale by it and took that
22 photograph.

23 MR. JONES: This would be Exhibit Number
24 28.

1 And I would like to present that to the
2 jury.

3 (Exhibit Number 28 marked for
4 identification and tendered to
5 the jury.)

6 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) Next I have Picture Number
7 7986, which is up, and this would be Exhibit
8 Number 29. Tent Marker 2 is the one that it's
9 focused on?

10 A. Yup.

11 (Exhibit Number 29 marked for
12 identification and tendered to
13 the jury.)

14 Q. Okay. And that would be the -- a crossbeam
15 that you see there with the -- looks like
16 there's holes in the bottom of that crossbeam --

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. -- to identify it?

19 A. That was the intent of where I was trying to
20 draw focus, yeah.

21 (Exhibit Number 30 marked for
22 identification and tendered to
23 the jury.)

24 Q. And then the -- so the next photo I think would

1 be good to look at would be 7987. Would that be
2 that crossbeam? And can you tell us what you
3 see in that photo, Jeff?

4 A. So yes, the crossbeam, and it -- in my opinion,
5 you know, there's some matter there.

6 Q. You would call this biological material or
7 suspected biological material?

8 A. I would most certainly, like for that, say
9 suspected. I mean, I'm seeing more stuff, but
10 to just simply answer your question, I mean,
11 suspected. It's more gelatinous. It's not as
12 apparent as others that we will see.

13 Q. Okay. And I believe this is probably maybe a
14 better picture of the same crossbeam.

15 MR. JONES: And that's Number 7988, John.

16 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) Would you just substantiate
17 that photo for us?

18 A. And yes, just trying different lighting. We're
19 trying to enhance the lighting.

20 So, again, a bit more gelatinous.

21 Q. Great. I appreciate that.

22 MR. JONES: That would be Exhibit Number
23 31 we're up to.

24 I would like to present those to the jury.

1 (Exhibit Number 31 marked for
2 identification and tendered to
3 the jury.)

4 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) This is the third placard or
5 tent marker.

6 A. Tent marker.

7 Q. And you took that photo. And can you tell us
8 what you see in that photo that you were trying
9 to get a picture of?

10 A. So it is -- it's underneath that -- whatever
11 that transfer case is. And then I'm doing that
12 because there's a piece of what I would feel
13 pretty confident in saying, you know, biological
14 material on the front side of that transfer
15 case, which is -- you know, I'm taking that
16 photograph in a more front-to-back orientation,
17 like, while laying on the, like, driver's side
18 of the vehicle.

19 Q. And the next photo I have is 7997, and would
20 that be a closer depiction or a closer picture
21 of that particular material you were trying to
22 get a picture of?

23 A. Yes.

24 MR. JONES: Okay. And so I'm up to 32 and

1 33.

2 (Exhibit Numbers 32 and 33 marked
3 for identification and tendered
4 to the jury.)

5 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) And can you tell the jury what
6 we're seeing on the screen there, Jeff?

7 A. So that transfer case or supposed transfer
8 case, and you have got biologic material, to
9 which it's this area right here.

10 MR. JONES: It looks like we have skipped
11 ahead in a photo and showed a -- just a picture
12 of that piece of tissue, just to let the jury
13 know what they saw.

14 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) But this is the transfer case
15 with a piece of tissue on it, Jeff?

16 A. Yes. That's simply the term that I'm using.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Whether or not that's what that component is, I
19 could not definitively tell you.

20 Q. So we have been through placard -- or Tent
21 Marker 1 and 2 and 3. And I would like to go to
22 Tent Marker Number 4, which is 7999.

23 MR. JONES: And this will be Exhibit
24 Number 34.

1 (Exhibit Number 34 marked for
2 identification and tendered to
3 the jury.)

4 A. So yes, I took that photograph, showing where
5 Tent Marker 4 is at, and it's underneath.
6 Again, I believe it's where maybe, like, the
7 four-wheel transfer case is behind the rear set
8 of wheels.

9 (Exhibit Number 35 marked for
10 identification.)

11 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) Okay. And the next photo is
12 what John has up there, Exhibit Number 35.

13 A. Would be the zoomed-in photo.

14 Q. The zoomed-in photo of what Tent Marker 4
15 shows?

16 A. Yes.

17 MR. JONES: I would like to present that
18 to the jury.

19 (Exhibit Number 35 tendered to
20 the jury.)

21 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) Jeff, once you were aware that
22 this could be tissue that was involved in this
23 case, can you tell us what the considerations
24 were that you had with that and then maybe some

1 testing that was done in the -- when that
2 testing took place?

3 A. So, I mean, where everything out at the scene
4 would have went with you, you know, now this
5 biologic material is, you know, evidence. It's
6 helping us link, you know, potentially victim,
7 suspect, scene, or in this case, you know,
8 linking it to a vehicle, which would then, you
9 know, go back to, you know, that we have at
10 least some sort of incident involving a vehicle.

11 Q. And can -- I would like to refresh the jury's
12 timeframe. We're still in the first day of the
13 investigation; is this correct?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. Okay. And were you asked to test this tissue
16 further in the evening by your investigative
17 team with the Illinois State Police or the other
18 arm of the Illinois State Police which is
19 working on this case also?

20 A. Yes. So conclude scene processing, and I don't
21 have any cell service for my computer in
22 Savanna. So I transport this evidence back to
23 my office, where I can't enter the evidence and,
24 you know, do finalized packaging and get it

1 ready. Because ultimately what I'm going to do
2 with any evidence that I collect is, I will give
3 it to our zone investigations because they are
4 now the primary investigating entity.

5 So ultimately, as I am in my office
6 entering items and packaging them, I was asked,
7 Is there any way that, you know, we could tell
8 or not, like, if it was, you know, human tissue?

9 So a presumptive test came to mind for me.
10 We have -- so we'll have, like, we call blood,
11 like red, blood-like stains. So we have got --
12 you know, you could have a red stain, maybe it
13 looks like blood but you're not sure.

14 There's a presumptive kit -- or a test kit
15 called an OBTI, and basically you can test to
16 see if something's human blood or not, with this
17 caveat that there's a handful of animals that
18 could test for it; animals not common in this
19 area.

20 Q. So you ran the OBTI test on the tissue that you
21 had -- or the blood part that was part of that
22 tissue; would that be correct?

23 A. So basically I took a, like, swab sample from
24 the bloodiest part of the tissue that I

1 collected, and then I did get a positive
2 presumptive result that, yes, it is human.

3 Q. Okay. And I believe I show that to be about
4 9:11 p.m. on the 28th of July, 2024?

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. Okay. So at that time does that -- is that
7 test immediate?

8 A. I wouldn't say immediate. I mean, it's -- I
9 mean, in trying to explain it in lay terms, I
10 mean, it would be, you know, a similar wait time
11 to doing, like, a pregnancy test. And it even
12 looks similar to, like, what a pregnancy test
13 would.

14 You know, you've basically got a -- in
15 essence, a stick that you're putting a few
16 droplets of the solution in, and you're waiting
17 to see if you're getting the two positive lines
18 that are needed.

19 Q. And the result of that test, what would you
20 classify the result to be?

21 A. The test was positive.

22 Q. Okay. So a positive test that this was likely
23 human tissue -- or likely human blood within
24 that tissue?

1 A. Yes, if my understanding is -- or memory is
2 correct, it's testing for human hemoglobin. So
3 that's what it's testing for.

4 Q. Very good. Very good. Thanks for that
5 explanation. I appreciate it.

6 So on July 27th, it was known that Matt
7 Herpstreich's truck was involved, with an
8 instance of having likely human tissue on the
9 bottom of his truck; is that correct?

10 A. Yeah, I just want to make sure I understood the
11 date correct.

12 Q. Would be July 28th.

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. Thanks for clarifying that. I appreciate it.

15 A. Okay. So yes, in answering it, on July 28th,
16 yes, for all intents and purposes, there was
17 human tissue on the bottom of the truck that did
18 have a presumptive test as human in origin.

19 Q. And we had come from a scene earlier that day
20 with -- and have identified Jackson Kradle as
21 being the deceased with the injuries, and was it
22 clear to assume that this would have been
23 Jackson Kradle's tissue? Was it a good
24 hypothesis that this was Jackson Kradle's

1 tissue?

2 A. Yeah, I feel like that would be a fair, strong
3 hypothesis.

4 Q. What would be the next steps to confirm that
5 that's Jackson Kradle's tissue, and what was --
6 what was the next testing that was done to
7 confirm that?

8 A. So to that question, I can't answer, because
9 ultimately I'm packaging and getting this
10 evidence ready that goes back to our
11 investigations, our zone side of investigations,
12 and they are the ones that submit it to the lab
13 -- or I'm sorry, even make the decision as to
14 what gets submitted to the lab, and I have no
15 knowledge as to what the lab results were.
16 Those reports, even though I could view them,
17 they don't get routed to me.

18 Q. I appreciate that explanation.

19 I think it's important to show that when
20 you come to a scene, particularly for Carroll
21 County, even though the Illinois State Police
22 Investigative Unit took over this case, Jeff is
23 really, in a quasi way, working for Carroll
24 County, in my understanding, and you also have

1 responsibilities to the Investigative Team.

2 So you'll work with me, as coroner, and
3 you're also working with the request of the
4 Illinois State Police Investigative Team, but at
5 this point the case really resides with the
6 Investigative Team; is that correct?

7 A. Yes, at this point, I mean, this is the
8 Illinois State Police Zone 2's case. They are
9 the lead agency on it. But, like, as CSI's, I
10 mean, we have to maintain working relationships
11 with not only the requesting agency, even though
12 that transferred during the course of this
13 investigation, we need to maintain good
14 relationships with the coroner's office, with
15 the pathologist, who would play a role in it
16 later on. All in an effort to, you know,
17 document and collect everything we can to try
18 to, you know, figure out exactly what happened.

19 Q. In this case we learned, as a community, that
20 the investigation had been turned over from the
21 Carroll County Sheriff's Department to the
22 Illinois State Police. The Carroll County
23 Sheriff's Department would normally take
24 direction from the Carroll County State's

1 Attorney in progressing through this case and
2 what some next steps might be legally.

3 In this case, the Carroll County State's
4 Attorney also had recused himself and a special
5 prosecutor was appointed from the Appellate --
6 Illinois Appellate Office to take upon this
7 case.

8 So would it be fair to say, Jeff, and
9 maybe -- I'm assuming the answer will be
10 questionable here, but would it be fair to
11 assume that the Illinois Appellate Special
12 Prosecutor is really giving direction in this
13 case to the Investigative Team at the Illinois
14 State Police?

15 A. Yes, I would -- they are going to be the ones
16 ultimately handling the prosecution. So that's
17 going to be the one dictating, we'll just say,
18 the path, multiple aspects of it.

19 Q. Okay. So I just want to make it clear so that
20 people, the jury, that you and representatives
21 of our community, understand where the
22 management of this case is sitting on the first
23 day of the investigation, and I think it's clear
24 that it's sitting with the Special Prosecutor's

1 Office at the Appellate -- Illinois Appellate
2 level and had been turned over to them?

3 A. I would just say, in fairness, I would have no
4 knowledge at what point --

5 Q. Would it be fair --

6 A. -- it is --

7 Q. Would it be fair to say, it takes some time to
8 turn over a case, that they have got to come up
9 to speed, that maybe they have got to get
10 someone that's got the wherewithal and the time
11 and the ability to engage in this case? Would
12 that be fair to say, by your knowledge of the
13 process?

14 A. I just don't -- so I would answer that, yes,
15 it's a time-consuming process.

16 Q. And it could take some weeks to get somebody up
17 to speed, or that's something that --

18 A. I could provide an estimate.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. It would just -- the notion that on day one of
21 the investigation that was now the driving force
22 dictating it, I couldn't answer.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. You know, I would have a hard time believing

1 that on day one that was the case.

2 Q. Okay. So on day one it would have been hard to
3 believe that someone is automatically managing
4 the Illinois State Police Investigative Team,
5 but as that goes along, the Investigative Team
6 doesn't wait, they are investigating?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. And we have testimony, we have shared
9 interviews that the Illinois State Police had
10 done with the parties in this case, the
11 different parties, and that took a couple of
12 days, and then they have more work to do,
13 follow-up investigations. So it does take -- I
14 think it's fair to assume it does take days,
15 takes some time, significant time, to get your
16 arms wrapped around a case like this.

17 In your mind, would that be fair to say?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. So the next testing that was done on the
20 tissue that was found on the truck, really the
21 Illinois State Police Investigative Unit,
22 Matthew Kipping, in charge of the investigation,
23 would have been in charge of directing that
24 test.

1 I have a report here that shows a DNA
2 test.

3 A. Okay.

4 MR. JONES: I would like to present this
5 to the jury. This is a DNA test. Matthew
6 Kipping's name is on it. He's the head of
7 investigations on this case at the Illinois
8 State Police.

9 And the DNA test -- actually, the report
10 was done on September 5th, 2024. As you can
11 expect, it takes a bit of time for tissue to be
12 processed and readied for testing and sent for
13 testing to a lab, the lab to do their work and
14 then come back with that. I'm not an expert at
15 that, but it takes some time. The report was
16 written on September 5th, 2024.

17 So on September 5th, 2024, there was a
18 hundred percent -- well, I'm not going to say a
19 hundred percent because that's wrong. I'm going
20 to correct myself. There was overwhelming
21 evidence, overwhelming evidence -- and it goes
22 to the one in one billionth, billionth,
23 billionth chance that it's not Jackson Kradle --
24 that this is Jackson Kradle.

1 And this is the DNA report. I would like
2 to submit this to the jury for your review.

3 What exhibit is this?

4 COURT REPORTER: 36.

5 (Exhibit Number 36 marked for
6 identification and tendered to
7 the jury.)

8 MR. JONES: I would like to at this time
9 open it up to the jury. Do you have any
10 questions for Jeff at this time?

11 A JUROR: Yeah.

12 MR. JONES: Go ahead.

13 A JUROR: I don't remember the Mount
14 Carroll's officer's name, but the first one that
15 arrived at the scene, did he have a dash cam?
16 Because I noticed when we went out there,
17 there's so many cameras on your car. Did he
18 have a camera on his car?

19 MR. JONES: I can answer that question, if
20 it's okay.

21 THE WITNESS: I would not know, sir.

22 MR. JONES: Okay. I can answer that
23 question, Alan.

24 Josi Anderson --

1 A JUROR: Not Josi. The Mount Carroll
2 one. Okay. Go ahead, I'm sorry.

3 MR. JONES: No dash cam footage from Scott
4 Marth.

5 A JUROR: He didn't have one then?

6 MR. JONES: Dash cams are something that
7 came into Carroll County right about that time.
8 They were getting the equipment and working with
9 it.

10 I believe January 1 was actually the
11 deadline to have all dash cams operating and
12 working within their vehicles and on their body.

13 And at that time they were new. And I
14 have investigated this part of it, so that's why
15 I'm sharing it with you. And I have spoken with
16 Scott. I have also spoken with Josi Anderson.
17 She was the first on the scene.

18 Josi had hers working and didn't really --
19 so there's a little bit -- when she first
20 arrives on the scene, she does speak to Scott
21 Marth, but that's not on video because she had
22 not hit the proper button to activate her dash
23 cam -- or her body cam.

24 And then when she gets out of the vehicle

1 and is there, she does hit the button and then
2 it's recording. So I have seen that video. I
3 didn't see anything of any value in that video.

4 A JUROR: I was more interested in the
5 Mount Carroll one.

6 MR. JONES: Yeah, no body cam or dash cam.
7 But great question.

8 Any other questions for Jeff?

9 A JUROR: Do you have any idea what the
10 visibility was at the time?

11 THE WITNESS: So I would go back to, you
12 know, I was given that the time of call was 3:33
13 in the morning. I know that I encountered rain
14 on the way down and the roadway was wet.

15 So just in terms of, you know, like,
16 lighting, I would suspect it to have been, you
17 know, as dim as probably possible, because
18 you're going to have cloud cover due to the wet
19 conditions, and personally encountering the
20 rain.

21 I'm sorry, is there something else I can
22 elaborate on?

23 A JUROR: No. Just wondering what the
24 approximate visibility was.

1 THE WITNESS: Like a distance, like
2 visibility-wise? I don't.

3 MR. JONES: Let me ask you this question,
4 Jeff: Did you have any difficulty seeing, as
5 you drove down to the scene, your headlights?
6 Was there fog? Do you recall that?

7 THE WITNESS: I will say, I do not recall
8 fog. Like, what is distinct in my mind is rain,
9 just because it impacts, you know, potentially
10 how I'm working, needing to protect equipment,
11 the ability to use a drone or not, timing of
12 things.

13 So, you know, that's where that particular
14 one stuck in my mind.

15 MR. JONES: Okay.

16 THE WITNESS: But that does not answer
17 what -- you know, what it was at the time of
18 call. That would be what it was at 5 o'clock.

19 A JUROR: You were there two hours later,
20 three hours?

21 THE WITNESS: Approximately, we'll call
22 it, roughly an hour after my time of call -- no,
23 I'm sorry. 3:53, and I arrived at 5:00.

24 MR. JONES: That is correct, yup.

1 A JUROR: The only one was, I asked Matt
2 this yesterday, was any geofencing done?

3 MR. JONES: I talked with the Illinois
4 State Police Investigative Team. Geofencing,
5 they could not pinpoint anything. We're in an
6 area where there's not enough cell towers to
7 pinpoint specifically. They can get general
8 ideas, and everything matched up for them, but
9 they couldn't pinpoint with the information we
10 were -- you know, we were looking at.

11 A JUROR: On your investigation of the
12 vehicle, we seen, I think, a picture from you
13 yesterday of the front of the truck and it did
14 not have a license plate on it.

15 THE WITNESS: Correct. There was no front
16 license plate on that vehicle. I can't say that
17 that's, you know, necessarily maybe an uncommon
18 thing. It just, you know, in our documenting --
19 in my documentation of things, I just noted, you
20 know, everything I could, which was limited, and
21 it was not there.

22 MR. JONES: We entered that picture into
23 evidence yesterday.

24 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) Is it fair to say that having

1 a plate on the front of the truck is a law in
2 the state of Illinois?

3 A. It's been a long time since I have been a
4 patrol trooper, but I believe it's still, you
5 know, a front and rear license plate state.

6 Q. Okay. I believe you're correct, that's my
7 understanding also.

8 Would it be abnormal, in your estimation,
9 that a law enforcement officer would not have a
10 plate on the front of his truck?

11 A. That would be a tough one to speculate on.

12 Q. Okay. Would it -- if one of your law
13 enforcement colleagues showed up to the office
14 and didn't have a plate on the front of his
15 truck, would he get a ribbing by the other law
16 enforcement officers?

17 A. Well, that would be difficult for us, because
18 we have take-home vehicles.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I can tell you that, you know, if you were to
21 have arrived at the Illinois State Police
22 Academy for training and you did not have a
23 properly-equipped vehicle -- meaning, if you
24 were an Illinois registered vehicle and you

1 didn't have a front license plate -- you did not
2 want to be that person.

3 MR. JONES: Thank you for that.

4 Any other questions from the jury?

5 (No verbal response.)

6 MR. JONES: All right. At this time we'd
7 like to dismiss you, Jeff, and thank you for
8 your attendance here.

9 We would like to break for lunch. I just
10 want to announce there will be 45 minutes for
11 lunch today. In 45 minutes, we will begin at
12 1 o'clock. Thank you.

13 (A recess was taken at 12:20 p.m.
14 and proceedings resumed at
15 1:07 p.m.)

16 MR. JONES: As we kick off our afternoon,
17 jurors, I would like to clarify one thing with
18 the DNA testing. The tip markers you saw, TM 2,
19 that was one that was tested, the tissue above
20 that, and also TM 4, that was tested, and those
21 were compared to Jackson's blood for comparison
22 on that DNA. So I just wanted to report that.

23 We'd like to call Kayla -- or, excuse me.
24 We would like to call Rebecca Frederick to the

1 stand.

2 I would like you to raise your right hand.

3 REBECCA FREDERICK,

4 being first duly sworn, was examined and

5 testified as follows:

6 EXAMINATION

7 BY MR. JONES:

8 Q. Thank you for being here today.

9 Can you tell the jurors where you worked
10 on July 27th, 2024 -- well, let me back up. Let
11 me back up.

12 Can you tell the jurors your name and
13 spell your name for them.

14 A. Rebecca Frederick, R-E-B-E-C-C-A,
15 F-R-E-D-E-R-I-C-K.

16 Q. Great.

17 And where do you reside?

18 A. Where do I reside?

19 Q. Where do you live?

20 A. Mount Carroll, Illinois.

21 Q. Okay. And on July 27th, 2024, were you working
22 with the Carroll County Sheriff's Department as
23 a dispatcher?

24 A. Yes.

1 Q. Great.

2 And how long had you worked with the
3 Carroll County Sheriff's Department?

4 A. They hired me part-time in April and then
5 full-time in the beginning of June.

6 Q. Okay. So April, May, June. Full-time in June?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. And this is July?

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. And you received training from the Carroll
11 County Sheriff's Department?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And other -- do you receive other dispatch
14 training when you become a dispatcher?

15 A. As far as, like, outside the agency?

16 Q. Yes.

17 A. No.

18 Q. Okay. Was July 27th the first time you were a
19 solo dispatcher?

20 A. July 28th would have been the first time that I
21 was a solo dispatcher.

22 Q. Very good. July 28th.

23 So can you tell me, when did you start
24 your shift?

1 A. I started my shift at 5:30 on July 27th, and
2 then the second dispatcher I was with left at
3 3:00 a.m. on July 28th.

4 Q. Okay. So 3:00 a.m. your shift would have been
5 over?

6 A. 3:00 a.m. She was on an overtime shift, so her
7 shift only went from 6:00 to 3:00, essentially,
8 and then she left at 3:00 a.m.

9 Q. Okay. So the other person that was with you,
10 the other dispatcher, left at 3:00 a.m.?

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. And so you were on your own from 3:00 a.m.?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. Okay. And then -- very good. Thank you for
15 explaining that.

16 As a dispatcher and as a new dispatcher,
17 was that stressful for you the first time?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. And this is a big scene that took place
20 and I imagine a lot of pressure. Can you walk
21 us through -- is it okay if I play a call --

22 A. Sure.

23 Q. -- the first call, and then we'll talk a little
24 bit about it and what took place?

1 MR. JONES: This is Exhibit Number 5.

2 It's already been presented.

3 (Exhibit Number 5 audio played.)

4 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) Do you recognize your voice?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. This is your first solo and it's a half
7 hour into your first solo work?

8 A. (Nods head.)

9 Q. Can you tell me a little bit about what was
10 going through your mind on that phone call? I
11 notice there's hesitations, and maybe it's part
12 of the process that you're working through in
13 the background. Can you talk about that with
14 us, Rebecca?

15 A. So the pauses in the phone call, I'm still
16 talking, you just can't hear me because I'm
17 dispatching it out over the radio. So in those
18 awkward pauses, I'm not, like, just sitting
19 there. I'm talking over the radio. Like, I was
20 dispatching it.

21 Q. So when -- if I am understanding correctly,
22 when Matt is hearing you on the phone and he's
23 not hearing you, in that space he's not hearing
24 you, you're actually talking to your officers?

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. But your system works in a way so that he can't
3 hear you talking to your officers --

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. -- is that correct?

6 Okay. And I think that clearly explains a
7 little bit about the hesitation that it feels
8 like we hear, but you're actually working in the
9 background?

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. Can you tell us what you were doing in the
12 background, who you were contacting, and I know
13 Matt asked if you could send a Mount Carroll
14 officer, if Mount Carroll was on, you know, what
15 that -- what was going on there? Can you talk
16 about that?

17 A. Yeah, I -- when I dispatched it out, I
18 dispatched 623 and S810 at the same time. So I
19 didn't just do, like, one or the other; I did
20 them both at the same time.

21 Q. And those numbers would mean?

22 A. 623 was Scott Marth, and S810 is Josi Anderson,
23 the deputy.

24 Q. And you're contacting Scott Marth and Josi

1 Anderson at the same time?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. And was Josi the only deputy that was on duty
4 at that time?

5 A. Yes, she was the only one.

6 Q. Okay. And do you know where Josi was located
7 at that time?

8 A. I don't recall her exact location.

9 Q. Okay. I think in her testimony she mentioned
10 she was down at Argo Fay, somewhere in that
11 territory.

12 Would it have been natural for Matt to
13 request a Mount Carroll officer, maybe knowing
14 that your deputy is not in the area or assuming
15 the deputy might not be sitting in Mount
16 Carroll?

17 A. Yeah, I guess. I mean, it was right outside of
18 Mount Carroll, so I mean --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- that doesn't seem odd.

21 Q. Would there be any reason he would ask for a
22 Mount Carroll officer?

23 A. It doesn't seem odd. It wasn't an odd request,
24 if that's what you're asking.

1 Q. Because --

2 A. Mount Carroll is close, and the deputy could be
3 anywhere in the county.

4 Q. And the deputy is in the county normally
5 somewhere?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. Okay. As you're working through the case, this
8 is just the beginning of it, and it sounds, from
9 your voice, that you were a bit confused by the
10 information or the way the information was
11 coming to you.

12 Can you talk to us about that? Can you
13 tell us, what was bringing -- what were you
14 thinking behind the scenes in your mind?

15 A. I thought it was a prank. I didn't think --

16 Q. You thought it was a prank?

17 A. Correct, yes.

18 Q. And what would lead you to believe that could
19 be a prank?

20 A. Just people have called in prank phone calls
21 before. I mean, they knew that I was nervous
22 and that it was my first night by myself. It
23 was 30 minutes into my first time being by
24 myself. I thought, you know, Let's call in a

1 prank on the new girl. That's why I asked if it
 2 was a deer because I thought --
 3 Q. So you were maybe thinking, Well, someone on
 4 the -- someone that you worked with --
 5 A. Correct.
 6 Q. -- might be testing you or giving you --
 7 A. Right.
 8 Q. -- a call because it's your first night alone?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Okay. Have you worked with Matt Herpstreith
 11 before as a deputy out in the field and you're
 12 in the dispatch?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. Okay. Can you talk to us about that? Is that
 15 common? You know, you only worked three months
 16 at this period; is that about right?
 17 A. Around there, yeah.
 18 Q. And you were part-time and then became
 19 full-time in April?
 20 A. Full-time in June, the beginning of June.
 21 Q. Full-time in June?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. And were you -- you were working night shifts?
 24 A. Yes.

1 Q. And so Matt was also working night shifts?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And can you tell me about the work relationship
4 that you had with him?

5 A. It was -- I mean, there's not much to tell. I
6 didn't -- we didn't have a personal
7 relationship. Like, we weren't friends, if
8 that's what you're asking.

9 Q. Sure.

10 It was strictly work, like -- would you
11 count on him in the field to -- did you
12 communicate well with him normally?

13 A. I think we communicated fine. I don't -- I
14 mean, he was knowledgeable at his job and, you
15 know, taught me a few things, but he wasn't an
16 extremely proactive deputy, I guess you would
17 say.

18 Q. What led you to think this could be not a true
19 call?

20 A. Just with how new I was and how people that
21 work at the Carroll County Sheriff's Office joke
22 around.

23 Q. Was there anything in his voice or the
24 information he was sharing with you that --

1 A. His voice, in my head, seemed more nonchalant
2 than what I would expect somebody to sound like
3 when they come across a body in the road, so.

4 Q. So his voice did not sound like he had just
5 come across a body, in your mind?

6 A. No.

7 Q. And you were expecting -- there's something
8 else here he probably --

9 A. I was expecting more detailed information if he
10 had actually come across a body. I wasn't
11 expecting --

12 Q. So you were expecting more information from
13 him?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Why would you expect that?

16 A. Because --

17 Q. You have worked with him in the past?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Is it something -- was that indicative of how
20 he worked with you in the past? Would he
21 normally give you more information? Were there
22 times when he would just give you --

23 A. I would say, you know, when I worked with him,
24 if he had come across that, he would have given

1 me a lot more information.

2 Q. Okay. And what kind of information do you
3 think he would have been giving you if it felt
4 like a normal call with him and he was on the
5 scene of an accident or a scene of a crash or
6 scene of -- any kind of scene that you might be
7 working with him as a dispatcher on?

8 A. I think he would have given me more information
9 about how he came across the body, how it was
10 positioned in the roadway, you know, giving me
11 details like that, just more details of the
12 scene, essentially.

13 Q. Did -- how did you feel when you weren't
14 getting that information?

15 A. Just confused.

16 Q. Confused, okay.

17 Okay. And so what are the next steps that
18 you took?

19 A. The next step that I took I believe was to call
20 the on-call phone.

21 Q. So the on-call phone is -- so you call Josi,
22 you call Scott Marth?

23 A. I dispatched them out over the radio.

24 Q. Radio, and also they receive a -- is it a

1 computer or text kind of -- also information
 2 from you?

3 A. Yeah. It will pop up on their squad computer.

4 Q. So in the background you're typing, you're
 5 speaking?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. And the next thing you're going to do is call
 8 the on-command staff?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And can you tell us what that means?

11 A. It's a phone shared by Sheriff Kloepping and
 12 Lambert that they share in case a special
 13 circumstance happens and we need to contact
 14 them, someone will always have that phone 24/7.

15 Q. So if you call the on-command staff, it's a
 16 special number or special --

17 A. Phone.

18 Q. A special phone?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And it rings to both Ryan Lambert and --

21 A. It's just one phone that they share.

22 Q. They share one phone?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. And so only one of them can pick it up?

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. Okay. So it goes to both Ryan Lambert and
3 Sheriff Ryan Kloepping. And who picks up the
4 phone?

5 A. Lambert, the chief.

6 Q. Ryan Lambert, who would be second in command?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. Okay. Very good.

9 Then what do you -- where does your focus
10 turn at that point?

11 A. I tell him the information that I have. I
12 mean, it should be recorded. And then I tell
13 him that I'm going to contact Crime Scene.

14 Q. So you're talking to Ryan Lambert?

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. And does he give you any direction? Does he
17 ask you to call Crime Scene?

18 A. I do not recall if he gave me any direction or
19 not.

20 Q. Okay. Are you also -- because Josi Anderson
21 mentioned that when she arrives on scene, it's
22 really her scene.

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Because she's the first on the scene.

1 Do you also take direction from her in
2 that instance?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. So are you having conversations with her
5 also during these moments?

6 A. I -- somewhat, yes.

7 Q. Okay. Can you tell us about that?

8 A. She contacted me by radio, telling me, when I
9 first dispatched her out, to contact Crime Scene
10 and the bosses, and I did that.

11 Q. Okay. So she also asked you to contact Crime
12 Scene, contact bosses. Ryan Lambert asked you
13 to contact Crime Scene. So that's being --
14 you're doing that in the background?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Very good.

17 And is there any discussion about alerting
18 EMS?

19 A. I messaged her on the MDT after I talked to
20 State District 1 and asked her if she wanted me
21 to dispatch EMS, and she said no.

22 Q. So in all of this, you also talked to the State
23 Police?

24 A. Correct.

1 Q. And did they call you with some concern or
2 question about what the situation was?

3 A. Yes. I believe Myra with Troop 1 called me and
4 discussed about sending the two troopers to do
5 traffic control, and then she asked me why EMS
6 had not been sent.

7 Q. Okay. And that was all in the time frame
8 you're working with Josi on keyboard, on the --
9 what would you call that again?

10 A. MDT.

11 Q. MDT?

12 A. MDT. Mary, David, Thomas.

13 Q. MDC?

14 A. T.

15 Q. MDT. Thank you for clarifying that.

16 You're working with Josi and communicating
17 about EMS. You also communicate with the
18 Illinois State Police and they inquire about
19 EMS.

20 Who do you take direction from -- did you
21 hear about -- from anyone else about EMS?

22 A. I do not recall hearing it from anybody else.

23 Q. Okay. Just those two parties?

24 A. Correct.

1 Q. Who did you finally take direction from about
2 notifying or not notifying EMS?

3 A. When Josi said no, I left it at that.

4 Q. Josi said, No, don't call EMS. Was she on the
5 scene at that time?

6 A. I don't recall if she was or not.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. If she wasn't on scene, she was -- it was right
9 before she got there somewhere.

10 Q. Okay. I believe in her testimony she stated
11 that when she got on scene, she notified not to
12 call EMS until -- I would line that up in that
13 way.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Okay. Very good.

16 So lots going on in these moments, these
17 short moments. How much time do you think had
18 transpired between the time the call came in and
19 the time when the decision was made not to call
20 EMS?

21 A. Maybe 10, 15 minutes, but I can't give an
22 extremely accurate timeline.

23 Q. We have an accurate timeline that shows Josi
24 was on scene in 10 minutes.

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. So I think you're real close there, and I
3 appreciate that.

4 So the next step you take, what does that
5 look like? What's going on there? When do you
6 have communication with the command staff again?

7 A. With Josi, the command staff, or with Lambert
8 and Kloepping?

9 Q. So at this time you've got Josi as command
10 staff, because she's on scene; you have got Ryan
11 Lambert, who you spoke with, second in command;
12 and you also know in the background somehow that
13 Sheriff Kloepping has been notified or being
14 notified.

15 Who do you speak to next out of those
16 three people, do you know?

17 A. I --

18 Q. Do you recall that?

19 A. -- don't recall. I know that Lambert -- I
20 didn't talk to Lambert again on the phone after
21 the initial phone call, I believe. And then one
22 of the Savanna officers called me, and we were
23 discussing -- I think in the phone call he had
24 asked me if I contacted Kloepping, and I said

1 no, because I thought that Lambert would have
2 contacted Kloepping if he needed contacted.

3 Q. Is it okay if I play that call?

4 A. Sure, go for it.

5 Q. Okay.

6 (Audio was played.)

7 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) You recognize that as a call
8 that you talked about with the Savanna police
9 officer?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. I think it clearly showed that you were
12 confused about what was taking place, that the
13 information provided to you was partial
14 information that you wouldn't normally expect to
15 get from a deputy that you worked with for a
16 month or two; would that be fair to say?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. And you -- so you have had a little bit of
19 experience with him, and it seemed abnormal;
20 would that be fair to say?

21 A. Yes.

22 MR. JONES: Okay. Certainly you were
23 christened by fire that night and on your own,
24 and so I appreciate your input in all of this.

1 I do want to ask the jury if you have any
2 questions about anything for Rebecca at this
3 point?

4 (No verbal response.)

5 MR. JONES: Okay.

6 MR. LeCOMTE: Since this is a real call
7 and the information is coming so slowly from
8 Matt, is he impaired? Does she have an opinion?
9 Since this is not a prank.

10 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) Would you -- do you think --
11 okay. Let me start by, did you know there was a
12 retirement party earlier in the evening for
13 Cindy Sisler?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Did you have an idea of who was attending that
16 party and that Matt Herpstreith might be
17 attending?

18 A. Yes, I knew that Matt would probably be
19 attending.

20 Q. Can you say that again, please?

21 A. Yes, I assumed he would be attending.

22 Q. You assumed Matt was there at the retirement
23 party?

24 A. Yes.

1 Q. Did you know anything about Matt's travel
2 throughout the evening and the places he may
3 have visited?

4 A. I saw him in a FaceTime at Sippi-Side in
5 Savanna around in between 1:00 and 2:00 a.m.,
6 but that was it as far as --

7 Q. In the FaceTime that you saw, was that directly
8 between you and Matt?

9 A. No. That was between me and Amy Hubble.

10 Q. Between you and Amy Hubble?

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. What was going on in that FaceTime?

13 A. It was her, Matt, Shea Joswick, Kayla Russell
14 and Tori Schoenharr at Sippi-Side.

15 Q. What were they -- what did you see in the
16 FaceTime?

17 A. Just them -- I think they were playing bags or
18 something like that. They were just all kind of
19 standing around, joking around.

20 Q. Okay. Did you see them drinking at all in the
21 FaceTime?

22 A. I think -- they weren't, like, taking the
23 bottles and drinking them while they were -- but
24 I think they had drinks, like, in their hands or

1 by them. I couldn't accurately say, like, how
2 much they had or stuff like that. I mean, I saw
3 alcohol around them, but I. . .

4 Q. So you saw alcohol around them?

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. And you're FaceTiming with them. You're at the
7 dispatch office?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. They're at a bar?

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. And were you having any other calls coming in
12 at the dispatch office during that time or did
13 you have to leave from them?

14 A. No, I don't think we received any calls.

15 Q. It was a quiet period?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. Earlier in the evening, did you receive
18 a call from Amy Hubble?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. At about what time was that?

21 A. I think around 11 o'clock, but I can't
22 accurately say what time exactly.

23 Q. Okay. Can you tell me about that call?

24 A. What little I remember of it, she called and

1 stated she was drinking and that she was driving
2 to the Sandburr in Thomson and wanted to know
3 where the Savanna officer was.

4 Q. So she was drinking -- that call has been
5 entered as an exhibit and our jurors have heard
6 that call.

7 But she was drinking and driving to
8 Savanna and wanted to know where the police
9 were?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. Why would she want to know where the
12 police were, did you have any idea?

13 A. I'm assuming it's because she was drinking and
14 driving.

15 Q. Because she was drinking and driving?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. Is that something that you think was
18 common for her to do?

19 A. I couldn't -- it was the first time that she's
20 done it with me, but normally I work with her,
21 so.

22 Q. Normally you work --

23 A. Like, common for her to call in and ask or
24 common for her to drink and drive?

1 Q. Common for her to -- we heard testimony that
2 she likes to go road popping and that that's the
3 thing she likes. Would that be something that
4 she would share with you in the office?

5 A. I -- no. Like, I know she likes to go out and
6 drink with her friends, but that's the extent.

7 Q. Okay. That's fair.

8 But on this night, you -- did you consider
9 her to be intoxicated when she called you at
10 about 11:20 to 11:30 in the evening before she
11 was headed to Savanna?

12 A. I assumed so. I mean, I knew -- I wouldn't say
13 I thought she was, you know, blackout, unsafe
14 intoxicated, but I knew that she had been
15 drinking.

16 Q. Okay. She wasn't blackout intoxicated, but she
17 was drinking?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Did she ask you to wake her up in the morning?

20 A. I believe so, yes.

21 Q. Okay. Is that something she would normally do?

22 A. No, not typically, because we work together,
23 so.

24 Q. Okay.

1 A. Normally she worked the same shift that I
2 would.

3 Q. Okay. And were you surprised that she asked
4 you where the police were?

5 A. I was a little -- I wasn't shocked, but it kind
6 of irritated me I guess.

7 Q. Has she ever asked you that before? Has she
8 ever called you up to find out where the police
9 were before?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Okay. Who were you trained by in the Carroll
12 County Sheriff's Department?

13 A. Multiple people. I didn't exactly have one
14 trainer?

15 Q. Okay. Did you work with Amy often?

16 A. Yes. I would say the majority of the time
17 since I was hired in full-time in June, I was
18 mainly with Amy.

19 Q. So was she in charge of your training much of
20 the time that you were working with her?

21 A. Yeah, I would say.

22 Q. So you were her subordinate?

23 A. Correct.

24 MR. JONES: Okay. Any questions from the

1 jury on this?

2 A JUROR: Did Matt's voice sound impaired
3 or slurred words or anything when he called?

4 THE WITNESS: No.

5 MR. JONES: Okay. All right. I think we
6 would dismiss you, and we appreciate you being
7 here today, Rebecca.

8 I would like to call Dave Mercado.

9 (David Mercado was duly sworn.)

10 MR. JONES: I apologize, I couldn't find
11 my full-fledged oath. So I hope you take the
12 abbreviated version.

13 THE WITNESS: That's fine.

14 DAVID MERCADO,
15 having been duly sworn, was examined and
16 testified as follows:

17 EXAMINATION

18 BY MR. JONES:

19 Q. Can you please say your name and spell it for
20 us.

21 A. David Mercado, M-E-R-C-A-D-O.

22 Q. And what's your position with the Carroll
23 County Sheriff's Office?

24 A. I'm a detective.

1 Q. And are you the main detective with the
2 sheriff's office?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. And what does that mean for your
5 responsibilities?

6 A. I pretty much handle felonies, major crimes.

7 Q. Okay. So any kind of crime, you're called to
8 the scene to look into it and pursue the
9 direction of where that might take you?

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. And try to solve that crime?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. On the -- what shift were you working on
14 July 27th?

15 A. I usually work day shift. I believe July 27th
16 was a weekend, if I am not wrong.

17 Q. So a weekend, you're normally off --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. -- on a weekend?

20 And were you called into work then --

21 A. Yes, I was.

22 Q. -- in the early morning hours of July 28th?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Can you talk to us, tell us how you received

1 that call and how you came to the scene?

2 A. The call came in from the sheriff, and it was
3 around 3:30 in the morning, and he told me that
4 there was a dead body north of Mount Carroll on
5 Route 78 and he needed me to respond.

6 Q. Okay. So sometime -- how exact is your time on
7 being called at approximately 3:30?

8 A. It was between 3:30 and 3:45. I can't
9 remember, but it was -- I remember I was
10 sleeping and he woke me up.

11 Q. Okay. So you get a call directly from Sheriff
12 Ryan Kloepping and find out there's a body north
13 of Mount Carroll in the roadway?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. And how far away do you live?

16 A. Around 15, 20 minutes.

17 Q. 15, 20 minutes. So what time did you arrive on
18 scene, do you recall?

19 A. I want to say it was around 4:00, 4 o'clock.
20 Because I wasn't -- I wasn't at my house. I
21 was -- I happened to be closer to Mount Carroll,
22 so.

23 Q. Okay. And so you get to the scene about
24 4:00 a.m. And can you tell us the next steps

1 that you took at the scene, who you saw and your
2 interaction with the people that were there?

3 A. I got a briefing from the sheriff and the chief
4 deputy that were there. I briefly talked to the
5 deputy that was there too. They pretty much
6 said that there was a deceased person in the
7 middle of the road, severely injured, and that
8 two of our -- two of our police were the ones
9 that called it in.

10 Q. Okay. So you understand that there were two
11 employees that were off duty at the time that
12 called it in; is that correct?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. And let me ask, the evening of the 27th,
15 did you attend the Cindy Sisler retirement
16 party?

17 A. I did not.

18 Q. You did not, okay.

19 And did you know that -- did you -- were
20 the two off-duty employees, were they identified
21 to you when you arrived?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And did you know that they were at the party?

24 A. I did not know. I didn't know who was at the

1 party and who wasn't.

2 Q. Okay. Very good.

3 Did you have any communication with
4 anybody on the way to the scene?

5 A. Well, the sheriff picked me up. So on the way
6 over there, we had a short conversation.

7 Q. Okay. What was your discussion about with the
8 sheriff on the way to the scene?

9 A. He was pretty much telling me about the scene.

10 Q. Was he at the scene at that time?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Okay. So he's heading to the scene also,
13 you're heading to the scene, you're getting your
14 things ready and you arrive on scene about 4:00.

15 Was the sheriff there when you arrived?

16 A. He picked me up. We drove over there together.

17 Q. Okay. Sorry, I didn't hear that.

18 So he picked you up?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And both of you drove together?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. So on your way to the scene that final bit, any
23 conversation about hypothesis, what was going
24 on?

1 A. No, because at that time we really didn't know
2 what we had.

3 Q. You're going to show up and just see what it
4 is?

5 A. Right.

6 Q. And what we have here?

7 A. Usually the way I handle things is, just tell
8 me where to go and a brief description of the
9 problem. Everything else, I'll figure out.

10 Q. Very good.

11 A. That's how I do it.

12 Q. Did you know that Josi Anderson was the first
13 Carroll County deputy on the scene?

14 A. I did not know that at the time.

15 Q. You did not know that at that time?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Okay. So you arrive on the scene, and Sheriff
18 Kloepping arrives on the scene at the same time,
19 about 4 o'clock, in that territory. What are
20 the next steps that you took during that next
21 period of time?

22 A. I usually talk to the first officer at the
23 scene, and the chief deputy was there. I pretty
24 much gathered whatever facts they have, and I

1 went around -- I went about my business of
2 looking at the crime scene and so on.

3 Q. Did you happen to see -- talk with Scott Marth?

4 A. I didn't see him that morning.

5 Q. You did not see him, okay.

6 A. No.

7 Q. Did -- do you think you talked to Josi Anderson
8 when you arrived?

9 A. Briefly, yes.

10 Q. Briefly, okay.

11 And then you were interested in what was
12 going on, you wanted to see it with your own
13 eyes?

14 A. Right.

15 Q. Okay. And then what was your first impression
16 when you saw the scene?

17 A. Well, it was challenging, because the person
18 that later turned out to be Jackson Kradle, he
19 was in the middle of the road, wearing nothing
20 but a pair of short pants, blue I believe it
21 was, and he didn't have any identification, he
22 didn't have his cell phone, nothing. So that --
23 to me, that was the first challenge, trying to
24 find out who he was.

1 Q. So highest priority is identification?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. And it's the same with my office.

4 And then so you and Sheriff Kloepping are
5 there, maybe hypothesizing about what took
6 place, but were you coming up with any solutions
7 at that time?

8 A. I usually look at the evidence and I just
9 follow the evidence. Where the evidence takes
10 me, that's where I go.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. The priority was identifying the young man.

13 Q. Was there any discussion about the
14 complainants, that they may have been at a party
15 earlier? Any kind of discussion about that?

16 A. I don't remember having -- having a discussion
17 about that. Because even though I was -- we
18 were invited to the party, you know, I had
19 things to do that day, and I didn't go to the
20 party. So I didn't know who went to the party,
21 who didn't go. And at that point I didn't
22 associate any of this with that party.

23 Q. When you and Sheriff Kloepping arrived, was
24 there traffic control at that point?

1 A. Yes, I -- even though I didn't see Scott Marth
2 that morning, somebody told me that he was
3 blocking the road, I believe, on Lowden and
4 Route 78, while Josi was blocking the other side
5 of the road.

6 Q. Okay. So the roads are blocked already, the
7 scene is secured --

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. -- when you and Sheriff Kloepping arrive?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And did -- was it strange to you that the
12 complainant was not still at the scene?

13 A. At that time it didn't really -- I didn't
14 really think about that. Because to me, you
15 know, he was -- I was going to get to him later
16 on. So it really didn't -- didn't really strike
17 me as odd or nothing.

18 Q. You knew you could talk to him later?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. So you work with Matt Herpstreith; is
21 that correct? You worked with him --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- before that time?

24 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. How often would you work with him?

2 A. I see him, you know, in a professional way.
3 Once in a while he comes downstairs to my office
4 and asks me about something that is going on
5 that he's working on. Usually it's a
6 professional way.

7 Q. Okay. Had he ever lied to you before? Had he
8 ever misled you before? Had he ever told you a
9 story that wasn't true before?

10 A. Not that I can recall.

11 Q. When you received the information that Matt
12 Herpstreich was the complainant reporting the
13 body in the roadway, did that give you a level
14 of confidence that that information is true and
15 correct?

16 A. At that point the only thing that I found
17 strange was the time, that he would be --
18 because he wasn't scheduled to be working. So,
19 you know, at that time I usually would be
20 sleeping; a normal person would be sleeping.

21 Q. So he wasn't scheduled to work during that
22 night hour?

23 A. I can't remember. I usually don't follow these
24 people's schedules.

1 Q. And that seemed to be something that was, like,
2 a red flag for you, the timing of him being out
3 there?

4 A. Yeah. I wasn't comfortable with that, you
5 know, unless he would have been working, but I
6 didn't think much of it.

7 Q. That's fair. That's fair.

8 What are your next steps on the scene?

9 A. Next step is waiting for the crime scene
10 technician to get there and start processing the
11 scene and try to identify the individual.

12 Q. Was there any discussion about contacting the
13 coroner's office at that time?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay. Can you tell me about that discussion?

16 A. Well, the coroner's office was going to be
17 contacted regardless, and I can't remember who
18 made that notification. I don't know, might
19 have been the sheriff.

20 Q. Sheriff Kloepping did, yeah.

21 A. Okay.

22 So the coroner's office, somebody from the
23 coroner's office is going to show up at the
24 scene. In the meantime, we're going to be

1 working on our end of the investigation. I was
2 helping the CSI State trooper with whatever he
3 needed.

4 Q. So on our timeline, we show that Crime Scene
5 Investigator Jeff Thew, who's given testimony,
6 arrived about 5:00 a.m. And so you're working
7 with him a bit at that time, it sounds like?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. You're discussing that the coroner will be
10 notified sometime. Was there any urgency in
11 notifying the coroner, in your mind?

12 A. Well, I knew that it was going to take a while
13 for Jeff Thew to process the scene, so.

14 Q. Once you have a scene that is secure and your
15 Crime Scene investigator involved, and he takes
16 a couple hours to process the scene, would that
17 be a normal thing, that you maybe notify the
18 coroner a little bit later when the Crime Scene
19 guy is ready?

20 A. Probably, because I wasn't wanting to make
21 anybody from the coroner's office wait two or
22 three hours if they don't have to, you know.

23 Q. Okay. That's fair.

24 So we have had testimony from Jeff Thew

1 about the things that he did, and I'm
2 assuming -- and I know when I arrive that you're
3 there, Jeff is there, Sheriff Kloepping is
4 there, and we all have a discussion a little bit
5 and we're trying to figure things out, and
6 identification was top priority.

7 I know that you were with us as we went
8 down to the Savanna morgue and transferred down
9 there, and still the highest priority was
10 identification. And I do know in the process
11 that you had attempted to identify -- there was
12 an attempt, you thought maybe it was somebody,
13 and you went to a home and it wasn't that
14 person; is that correct?

15 A. Yes. I believe Officer Scott Marth told the
16 sheriff that he believed that the victim looked
17 like somebody that he was familiar with, and he
18 gave us an address. But we went to that address
19 and we talked to the mother that was supposed to
20 be the one, and she said, No, my son is not the
21 one.

22 Q. So Scott was giving some ideas about who the
23 deceased might be, from his perspective?

24 A. Yes.

1 Q. And you were following up on it?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And the visit was made and it was negative,
4 that wasn't the individual?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. Great.

7 And so our timeline does show a couple
8 calls from Scott Marth to Sheriff Kloepping, and
9 I also found in my investigation that that's
10 what those calls were for, for that
11 identification.

12 A. That's possible, yes.

13 Q. So you stay with the case, you're at the morgue
14 in Savanna, and what are the -- what happens
15 next?

16 A. Well, since we didn't know who the young man
17 was, we requested a fingerprint identification
18 kit from the State Police, and we had to wait
19 over there for a sergeant from the State Police
20 to bring that equipment there. It's a piece of
21 equipment that we have used in the past and it
22 worked good.

23 But it happened that Jackson had never
24 been fingerprinted by the State Police and the

1 fingerprints were not on file. So we came up
2 empty with that.

3 Q. So identification was still top priority. But
4 in the back of your mind and in the background,
5 are you working out scenarios of -- as an
6 investigator, are you communicating with Sheriff
7 Kloepping and trying to figure out what's going
8 on in the background? Was there any meeting
9 back at the crash site?

10 A. Well, I went back over there a couple of times
11 just to see if I missed anything. Maybe his
12 wallet would have been there, maybe something
13 that would help me identify him. But there was
14 nothing, absolutely nothing.

15 Q. Okay. And did you have any hypothesis about
16 what had taken place at this point?

17 A. Well, I knew that a vehicle was involved.

18 Q. You knew that a vehicle was involved?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. What led you to believe that a vehicle
21 was involved?

22 A. Those scenes, I have seen them before. I was
23 an investigator for Waukegan, Waukegan Police,
24 for 25 years and the last 18 years of my life

1 over there.

2 Q. So your experience as an investigator told you
3 that there had to be a vehicle involved here?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And were you putting two and two together yet
6 to get that Matthew Herpstreich was involved
7 yet?

8 A. Not at that point. At that point I want to
9 identify the young man, find out how he ended up
10 there, and then work my way back and just go
11 where the evidence takes me.

12 Q. So methodically you're trying to work through
13 this?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And trying to come up with a solution, but when
16 did it -- when did you become aware that Matthew
17 Herpstreich might be involved?

18 A. Well, that happened much later. Because while
19 we're at the morgue in Savanna, there was a call
20 that was dispatched of a one-car crash, and the
21 deputy that was handling the call said that the
22 person involved in that crash was acting nervous
23 for some reason.

24 And looking at the map, I saw the

1 proximity from where the car crash occurred and
2 where the body was found, and it wasn't too far.
3 So I decided to go over and talk to that person.

4 Q. So a crash took place, you think maybe there's
5 some connection here to the body that was found.
6 This guy crashed, I believe, was that into a
7 tree?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And if he crashed into a tree, maybe earlier he
10 could have crashed into Jackson?

11 A. Yes, the proximity and the time.

12 Q. The proximity and the time?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. So you went to follow up on that?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And what did you find there? How do you know
17 that that couldn't fit that scenario?

18 A. Well, when I got there, I started talking to
19 the young man that was involved in the crash,
20 his name was Thomas Jackson, and he started
21 telling me about the accident. And I told him
22 that I wasn't there -- I wasn't interested in
23 the crash, I was interested in where he was
24 before. And he told me that he was at a party

1 north of Mount Carroll, at a Sisler farm party.
2 And I asked him, Who else was there? And he
3 said there were many people there, he said
4 between 12 and 15 people there. And I said,
5 Well, give me some names. And the first name he
6 mentioned was Kradle, Jackson. He said that was
7 his good friend. He didn't know many other
8 people at the party.

9 So I asked him for a description of
10 Kradle, Jackson, and the description he gave me
11 was close to what we have at the morgue. And
12 before I left the morgue, I had taken a picture
13 of Jackson's face. And I showed it to him, and
14 he said, That looks like my friend.

15 Q. I remember at the morgue you had asked if you
16 could take a picture as you were departing?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And we allowed that to happen?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And then you showed that kid his face?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And he gave you an affirmative that that looked
23 like Jackson?

24 A. Yeah, he wasn't a hundred percent sure, but he

1 said, That looks like my friend.

2 Q. And this kid came from the party that was at
3 the Sisler --

4 A. Yes, he told me he was at the party, and he
5 said he left the party sometime between 1:00 and
6 2:00.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And once he gave me the name of Kradle,
9 Jackson, I called the sheriff and I said, See if
10 you can find an address for Kradle, Jackson, and
11 he did.

12 Q. So then what was the next move that you -- that
13 you were involved with?

14 A. So I went to the address that he gave me. I
15 was with the chief deputy at the time. And
16 after talking to the grandmother, she said that
17 Jackson lived in the house behind. It's some
18 kind of a -- I don't know, kind of strange,
19 because the address he gave me wasn't a house in
20 front of the street, but the house actually
21 where Jackson lived was kind of, like, behind,
22 by the alley. And that's where I made contact
23 with his father, Joshua.

24 Q. And that would be Josh, here?

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. And that was when the notification took place?

3 A. Well --

4 Q. Or you were still trying to figure out --

5 A. I was trying to figure out if the person at the
6 morgue was Jackson.

7 Q. And you still had the picture on your phone?

8 A. Yes. I asked him if Jackson was there, and he
9 said that he thought he was sleeping. And I
10 said, Can you make sure he's sleeping?

11 So he went in there. He came back a
12 moment later and he said, Jackson is not there.
13 And at that time, I decided to show him the
14 picture.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And that's when I confirmed a hundred percent
17 that that was Jackson.

18 Q. So the next steps in the investigation, what
19 was going through your mind?

20 A. The next step, they said, How did Jackson end
21 up at a scene where he died? So I talked to a
22 young lady over there, her name was Madelyn
23 Stephens, and she told me that she was Jackson's
24 girlfriend. Madelyn said that she was at the

1 party also and there were many people at the
2 party.

3 She said that around 1:45 in the morning,
4 she was dropped off at the Jackson house by a
5 guy named David Young. David Young dropped them
6 off -- dropped Madelyn and Jackson off at his
7 house, at the father's house. And after that,
8 David Young went back to the party.

9 And after she was dropped off over there
10 with Jackson, she said that he wanted to walk
11 back to pick up his truck, because he had left
12 it over there at the farm, and they got into an
13 argument because Madelyn didn't want him to
14 leave at that time of the morning and the fact
15 that they had been drinking, even though she
16 didn't -- she told me she wasn't drinking, she
17 had maybe one or two beers, I don't know.

18 So she said that Jackson decided to leave,
19 and she said that he's so stubborn that once he
20 gets something in his head, you know, you're not
21 going to change his mind. So she just let him
22 go.

23 And before I went to that house, I had
24 told the deputy at the crash scene with the guy

1 that reported the car crash, I told them to take
2 him to the police station -- to the sheriff's
3 station, because I was going to interview him
4 more about this.

5 Q. So the fellow that had hit the tree, he was
6 going to be taken to the sheriff's station?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Because there still might be a connection
9 there, in your mind?

10 A. Exactly. You know, at that time I didn't know
11 what was going on. Now the picture's starting
12 to show. I figured I was going to take him --
13 that he was going to be taken up to the
14 sheriff's office, and I was going to switch
15 modes between an interview to an interrogation.

16 Q. So you did interview him; is that correct?

17 A. At the scene briefly. Not at the sheriff's
18 station.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Because now I had to confirm what Madelyn told
21 me, that they were dropped off around 1:45 in
22 the morning by a guy named David Young.

23 So I found an address for Young and I went
24 to his house. I believe he was there with his

1 father. David Young confirmed what Madelyn told
2 me, exactly the same thing, that he -- he knows
3 that Jackson was drunk, and so he decided to
4 take him home -- drive him home with his
5 girlfriend. He said he left him over there at
6 his house between 1:45 and 2 o'clock in the
7 morning. After he dropped him off, he went back
8 to the party and in the morning he went home.

9 Q. Did you -- what were the next steps in your
10 mind that -- what was going to be the next part
11 of the investigation?

12 A. Well, at that time, I already know how Jackson
13 got there because they figure around 2 o'clock
14 in the morning, walking to the scene is probably
15 going to take him a while. And I don't know how
16 he ended up barefoot, but he wasn't wearing any
17 shoes.

18 So from there, I say, Well, it's time to
19 talk to our employees. And at that time I
20 thought it best to tell the sheriff that because
21 of the conflict of interest, we need to leave
22 this to the State Police, and he agreed.

23 Q. So about what time was this that you came upon
24 that realization that maybe one of our own

1 employees was involved in this?

2 A. That was after I have talked -- after I have
3 confirmed the story from Madelyn with David
4 Young, and I believe I talked to Mr. -- Joshua
5 the second time, just to confirm some other
6 details, and we went to our office. I never
7 talked to Thomas Jackson again, because at that
8 time he was getting pretty much ruled out as a
9 suspect.

10 And I had the meeting with the sheriff and
11 I told him, You know what, this is a conflict of
12 interest now. I told him what I was going to
13 do, which is interview our employees.

14 Q. It was your opinion in those moments that
15 Matthew Herpstreith, the complainant, was the
16 driver of a vehicle that was involved with
17 Jackson Kradle at that scene?

18 A. Well, I considered that a possibility, and
19 because of that I -- if I were to interview him,
20 I would have to put some kind of pressure and
21 also look at his truck. And I told the sheriff
22 that it's time to let the State Police handle
23 this.

24 Q. We put together a timeline, to the best of our

1 ability, of course. There's a -- at 5:56 I
2 arrived on the scene, and I think at 7:05 we
3 arrived in Savanna at the morgue. At 6:41 that
4 morning, Matthew Herpstreith writes out a
5 voluntary statement at the sheriff's department
6 with his recollection of the -- of what took
7 place and he leaves it for Sheriff Kloepping, as
8 I understand. That's at 6:41.

9 I think sometime previous to that, I think
10 I show in the phone records at 6:11, Sheriff
11 Kloepping talked to Matthew. Do you know
12 anything about that?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. What I remember is that somebody handed me the
16 written statement that he had, and I put it in
17 the file. At that time, I had made up my mind
18 that I wasn't going to touch this anymore.

19 Q. So at that time, were you handed the written
20 statement while Matthew Herpstreith was there in
21 the office?

22 A. I never saw him there.

23 Q. You never saw him?

24 A. No.

1 Q. So you're coming in after the fact, after he
2 has already left the statement. Somebody hands
3 it to you, and you see his statement that has
4 been recorded here as an exhibit, but you see
5 the story that he went around what he thought
6 was a deer and then came back and it was a body,
7 but you felt that this is not right and
8 something else has taken place here. And you
9 had a conference with Sheriff Ryan Kloepping at
10 that time?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. And then you decided at that time to
13 turn it over to the Illinois State Police?

14 A. Well, he made that decision. I suggested it.

15 Q. Okay. So with your input, then he made that
16 decision at some point soon after that?

17 A. He agreed immediately, and he made the phone
18 call.

19 Q. So was it pretty immediate to make that phone
20 call for him?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. I have 11:25 a.m. that the Illinois
23 State Police contacted to take over
24 investigation?

1 A. That's probably about right.

2 MR. JONES: Okay. Jury, do you have any
3 questions for Investigator Dave Mercado?

4 A JUROR: When did you guys actually
5 discover the car wash video or whatever? How
6 did that come about?

7 THE WITNESS: Once I briefed the State
8 Police about what we had so far, I did not have
9 anything else to do with the case.

10 A JUROR: You didn't know anything about
11 the car wash?

12 THE WITNESS: I have not had a
13 conversation with the State troopers that I
14 briefed that morning, which there were about
15 four or five of them, and I have not talked
16 about the case with any of them.

17 A JUROR: I just wondered, when did the
18 car wash video --

19 MR. JONES: That's a great question, Alan,
20 and a little later I'll be covering all the
21 evidence and where it originated. But the
22 Illinois State Police did uncover that car wash
23 video.

24 A JUROR: Question, sir. In your

1 experience working in Waukegan and everywhere
2 else that you've worked, I think some reports
3 show this, but in your opinion Jackson's body
4 was struck by a vehicle, correct?

5 THE WITNESS: Well, I knew that he was
6 crushed by a vehicle.

7 A JUROR: Okay. With that being said, do
8 you think it could have been more than one
9 vehicle?

10 THE WITNESS: Well, there's two
11 possibilities, and I have seen a lot of crime
12 scenes in my life. Where the body was, there
13 was flesh from his body north and also south.
14 That means that he either was hit one time and
15 then a second time, or he was hit twice by the
16 same car. But there was body flesh north and
17 south, and there's only one way -- there's only
18 two ways that can happen.

19 MR. JONES: Can we clarify those two
20 options again?

21 A JUROR: Yeah, can you say that one more
22 time?

23 THE WITNESS: Where the body was, there
24 was flesh and blood north of it, and the same

1 thing south of it.

2 If a person gets hit, you're only going to
3 see flesh and blood on one side if the person is
4 hit once. But the way he was, the only -- the
5 only two options that can happen is that if he
6 gets hit by two cars one time and then the
7 second time comes and hits him a second time in
8 a different direction; or one car hits him in
9 one direction and backs up and crush him again.

10 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) So the second option you gave
11 was that a car would hit him -- a vehicle would
12 hit him and then the vehicle would back up?

13 A. Run him over and back up, or he was run over
14 once and then run over a second time.

15 Q. Okay. And that's your opinion?

16 A. That's what the evidence suggests.

17 Q. That's what the evidence was telling you?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. Let me ask you another question, and
20 this is tapping into your experience as a --
21 well, I think we better -- let me ask you a
22 couple questions about your experience. Have
23 you been -- have you received special training
24 in accident reconstruction?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Have you received any training in crime scene
3 investigation?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And how many years have you spent as a crime
6 scene investigator and accident -- or accident
7 reconstructionist?

8 A. 18 in Waukegan, 18 years, and here, every time
9 there's a death like this they call me.

10 Q. Okay. And so you're using your experience and
11 your expertise to share your opinion with us.

12 You saw the injury on Jackson?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And it looked like he was impacted -- where
15 would you say he was impacted? Do you have an
16 opinion about that?

17 A. Most of the injuries that I saw at the scene
18 and at the morgue happened in the upper body;
19 the head, the torso.

20 Q. So on the head and the torso. And did you see
21 the injury on his buttocks?

22 A. Yeah, that was -- I believe there was a big
23 laceration there.

24 Q. And almost like an explosive injury possibly,

1 like an impact injury? As a coroner, I would
2 consider it certainly took impact in that area.

3 A. Yes, something heavy definitely crushed the
4 man.

5 Q. Is there any consideration of -- would you have
6 any idea of the speed it would take to have that
7 impact, to have that kind of injury, from your
8 experience?

9 A. Well, the speed doesn't -- in my opinion, I
10 didn't see any indications that speed would have
11 been a problem there, just the fact that the
12 object that crushed him was heavy.

13 And in the beginning, I thought he was run
14 over by a semi because of the extent of the
15 injuries. So I figure it was a truck or
16 something big.

17 Q. So have you been aware that Jackson's
18 biological tissue was found underneath Matthew
19 Herpstreith's truck?

20 A. I did not know until I had a meeting with, I
21 believe it was you and the sheriff.

22 Q. Okay. So you became aware of that at some
23 point?

24 A. Right, because I -- like I said, once I turned

1 over this investigation, I didn't want to have
2 nothing to do with it.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. To me, it's toxic.

5 Q. Fair enough.

6 Has your opinion changed with the
7 information you have learned --

8 A. No.

9 Q. -- in this case?

10 A. Actually, from what I learned after that, it
11 makes sense to me from what I saw at the scene.

12 Q. So it makes sense to you that there are two
13 options; one is multiple vehicles, and the
14 second option is that somebody pulled forward
15 and then backed up?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yeah. As a matter of fact, when I was briefing
19 the State troopers, I told them that, Whoever
20 you send to an interview with Herpstreith needs
21 to check under the truck.

22 MR. JONES: Okay. Any other questions
23 from the jury?

24 A JUROR: One question I would have is, if

1 he's traveling on the road and he gets hit by
2 the front cross member, gets struck by, then
3 rolls over and gets hit by the second part of
4 the truck, wouldn't that be almost like he was
5 hit by two?

6 THE WITNESS: That would be a possibility.

7 A JUROR: If you're going like that,
8 somehow you have got to fit underneath that,
9 you're going to roll over, drag a ways and go to
10 the next part of the truck?

11 THE WITNESS: Yes.

12 A JUROR: Were there any brake marks? skid
13 marks? Any indication of that? I know the
14 pavement was wet.

15 MR. JONES: In my experience in this case,
16 there have been no tire marks at all on the
17 roadway.

18 THE WITNESS: There were none.

19 MR. LeCOMTE: Were there any tire marks
20 through any of the biological matter on the
21 road?

22 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) Did you witness the biological
23 matter on the road? You talk about the -- maybe
24 the tissue being on one side and the other side.

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Do you remember actually visually, like, seeing
3 that in your mind's eye that, Oh, that's a piece
4 of flesh or a piece of tissue?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. Did you see any of that flattened by a
7 tire or maybe see any track of tire going
8 through it?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So I'm pretty sure that that young man was run
12 over by a vehicle, could have been twice, and
13 whatever vehicle run that man over definitely is
14 going to have some evidence underneath, and
15 that's what I told the State troopers.

16 Q. Okay. So you passed this information on also
17 to the Illinois State Police?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. Very good. Very good.

20 MR. JONES: Any other questions?

21 (No verbal response.)

22 MR. JONES: All right. I think that's all
23 we have for you, Detective. Thank you.

24 Sheriff Ryan Kloepping.

1 Thanks for being here with us, Sheriff
2 Kloepping. Will you please raise your right
3 hand?

4 RYAN KLOEPPING,
5 being first duly sworn, was examined and
6 testified as follows:

7 EXAMINATION

8 BY MR. JONES:

9 Q. You're our last law enforcement witness today.
10 Can you tell the jurors your name, maybe
11 spell your name, and then we'll talk a little
12 bit about you and your experience?

13 A. Sure. My name is Ryan Kloepping. Last name is
14 K-L-O-E-P-P-I-N-G.

15 Q. Great.

16 And how long have you been sheriff here in
17 Carroll County?

18 A. Been sheriff for the last five years.

19 Q. Okay. Before that, what was your position
20 before that?

21 A. I have been many positions within the sheriff's
22 department. I have worked for the County for 21
23 years.

24 Q. Okay. So 21 years with Carroll County, sheriff

1 for five years?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. What were the other responsibilities you had?

4 A. So I worked for about a year and a half in the
5 dispatch center, a year and a half in the jail,
6 several years as a patrol deputy, and I worked
7 as -- it was a short time as detective and a
8 short time as chief deputy.

9 Q. Okay. Before that, what was your experience?
10 Was it education before that?

11 A. No. Prior to working here, I worked at an
12 automotive repair shop.

13 Q. Okay. And then -- so, very good.

14 As sheriff, what are your -- can you kind
15 of give us a sky view of what your
16 responsibilities are?

17 A. Yes. So the sheriff is the chief law
18 enforcement officer of the county, but my main
19 responsibility -- there's several dual purposes.
20 Maintaining the courthouse, care and control of
21 the courthouse, is one, which is a big
22 responsibility in an old building.

23 But then being in charge of the sheriff's
24 office. So we patrol the entire county. If the

1 cities don't have police officers on duty, we
2 will cover their communities. We also have the
3 911 Dispatch Center that dispatches for seven
4 different communities and Lake Carroll in
5 Carroll County, and then we have the county
6 jail, which is downstairs in this building.

7 Q. So your responsibilities are amass?

8 A. They are.

9 Q. Out of those responsibilities, which there are
10 like four or five major things there, what would
11 you consider to be the biggest area of
12 responsibility?

13 A. I mean, our biggest liability is the County
14 jail, but obviously serving and protecting the
15 community. We have got about 15,000 residents
16 in the county that we serve. So that is a large
17 responsibility.

18 Q. Okay. And you mentioned your largest liability
19 is the jail?

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. Okay. Is that where your, like -- when you say
22 largest liability, does that mean that's where
23 your -- you have to spend more time?

24 A. No, I don't. I mean, we have a jail

1 administrator who is in charge of the operations
2 of the jail.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. So I kind of roam between all of the different
5 responsibilities.

6 Q. Okay. Very good.

7 How about with the courthouse, how much --
8 if you had to gauge the time you spent with the
9 different things, where would you put it?

10 A. Honestly, out of those, probably the courthouse
11 takes up most of my time.

12 Q. Okay. So you're on scene here quite often?

13 A. I'm here every day.

14 Q. Every day, okay.

15 Are you on the road also? Do you get out
16 and -- on a regular basis are you out in the
17 field?

18 A. So since we have been full staffed, I am not
19 out regularly. When we have had staffing issues
20 in the past, then I would work patrol shifts.
21 Now I work patrol if there is a need. If we
22 have needs for extra patrol cars for a certain
23 reason, if there's storms, if there's big
24 events, those kind of things, then I am out,

1 yes.

2 Q. Okay. And is part of your responsibility
3 training?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Does that -- do you have other people
6 responsible for training also?

7 A. Yes. So we have got the jail administrator who
8 oversees the training, and then we have got a
9 director of 911 who oversees the training for
10 our dispatchers.

11 The training anymore these days is a very
12 large list of requirements, so it takes several
13 people. A lot of larger agencies have someone
14 who is just in charge of training; they have a
15 training officer. We don't have that, being a
16 small agency. So it's a shared responsibility.

17 Q. So who is your jail trainer?

18 A. So our chief deputy, Ryan Lambert, is also our
19 jail administrator.

20 Q. Okay. And who is your 911 trainer?

21 A. Our 911 Director, Matt Magill.

22 Q. Okay. So Matt is taking care of the 911 area;
23 Ryan Lambert is taking care of the jail; you're
24 taking care of the courthouse?

1 A. Right. Training as far as the patrol, there's
2 a large list of requirements that they do. The
3 patrol deputies can sign into a portal online to
4 know what training they have to do, but we
5 oversee that to ensure that they are getting
6 them all completed.

7 Q. So the training for a deputy that's out on the
8 road, would that involve education all the time?
9 Like, is it required to be a certain amount of
10 hours?

11 A. Yeah, there's different mandates. Some are
12 annually, some are biannually. I mean, there's
13 some that are five years. Then they have online
14 trainings that they do every month.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So it's a large variety.

17 Q. Can you talk to us about the technology that
18 you use? Who's in charge of your technology?

19 A. So again, our 911 director, just because he's
20 good with IT, he is the guy that generally goes
21 through our technology. But as far as upgrades,
22 again, it's a shared responsibility, being a
23 small agency.

24 Q. So I think all police departments are required

1 in the state of Illinois to have body cams as of
2 January 1, 2025; is that correct?

3 A. That is correct.

4 Q. And when did you begin to prepare for that?

5 A. So I think it was in March, around March, that
6 we received notice that we were awarded --
7 excuse me. Not the grant at that point.

8 In March, I got approval from our County
9 Board to purchase the cameras. We knew it was
10 required. There is a grant that hopefully will
11 reimburse us. But in March is when the County
12 Board approved making that purchase.

13 Q. Okay. And when did that -- when did the
14 cameras go into use?

15 A. So because we ordered from a large agency, it's
16 probably the most popular one there is, and with
17 this grant, all the agencies are applying for
18 this grant and going for cameras at the same
19 time, so there's a very large back order. I
20 believe the body cameras went into, actually in
21 use in July. The squad car cameras were
22 installed by the company in October.

23 Q. Squad cars got it in October; body cameras in
24 July?

1 A. Yeah. So they get shipped differently and
2 there's different trainings for the camera.
3 Axon is the company that actual deploys a team
4 to install the cameras in the cars. With their
5 long wait list, we decided to wait until they
6 could get to us.

7 Q. Is everybody up and running at this time?

8 A. They are.

9 Q. Okay. So let's go to the time frame around
10 Jackson Kradle's death.

11 A. Okay.

12 Q. And were you aware of the Cindy Sisler
13 retirement party?

14 A. I was aware there was a party, yes.

15 Q. And were you aware of attendees that were going
16 to be at the party?

17 A. I mean, I didn't know beforehand who was going
18 and who was not going.

19 Q. Did you go?

20 A. I did not.

21 Q. Okay. And so that evening there's a
22 dispatcher, Rebecca Frederick, and she's on duty
23 and it's her first solo time?

24 A. Correct.

1 Q. Is that something that the training -- trainers
2 were comfortable with and ready to go with and
3 she -- is this a normal progression for her?

4 A. So Rebecca was one that was catching on quick.
5 But her supervisor must have felt that she was
6 ready to work on her own if she was scheduled to
7 work on her own.

8 Q. So the supervisor must have been comfortable --
9 Matt must have been comfortable -- Matt Magill
10 must have been comfortable with her doing that?

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. Very good.

13 So are you on duty that night or off duty?

14 A. I was not on duty.

15 Q. Okay. What does that mean for you? Are you at
16 your home? Are you somewhere else?

17 A. So there's on duty, which is what I would
18 consider me being here or, you know, in my squad
19 car, and then there's on call after hours.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I was not either that night.

22 Q. Okay. And so when the call comes in at, I
23 believe 3:33 into the dispatcher, we have heard
24 testimony that Rebecca Frederick -- she must

1 have about eight arms, because she's doing about
2 eight different things.

3 A. You have to, to be a dispatcher.

4 Q. And one of those things is calling the command
5 staff.

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. And that would include yourself and Ryan
8 Lambert, as I understand?

9 A. So what she would do is, we have an on-call
10 number that they call. That night Ryan Lambert
11 would have been on call, so he would have been
12 the one to answer that.

13 Q. How did you get notified?

14 A. I got called by Ryan Lambert.

15 Q. And what's your next steps? Can you tell us
16 how you traveled to, how you entered into the
17 scene? Can you tell me a little bit about what
18 your thought process was heading there?

19 A. Sure. So I got the call from Lambert at 3:40
20 that morning. I was not home. We were -- I was
21 camping with my family. I always have what I
22 need if I get called for work. So I was out the
23 door relatively quick.

24 I had been told by Lambert that a body was

1 found on Route 78 near Lowden Road, and I had
2 been informed that Matt Herpstreith and Amy
3 Hubble were the complainants that reported it.

4 Q. What did that mean, when you heard Matt
5 Herpstreith and Amy Hubble were the
6 complainants?

7 A. Well, it's not a good feeling, because you
8 don't know what's going on. But they were the
9 ones that found the body, is all I knew at that
10 point.

11 Q. Okay. So did you have any idea that they may
12 have been at the Cindy Sisler retirement party?

13 A. I didn't know who was at the party, but I
14 assumed those two would have been, yes.

15 Q. Okay. And did you have any idea of their
16 travel throughout the evening of the 27th and
17 early morning hours of the 28th?

18 A. I had no idea.

19 Q. Okay. And so at 3:30 in the morning, it did
20 flash through your mind that, Hey, Matt and Amy
21 were there, and you had a feeling that may not
22 be good about that. But when you arrived on the
23 scene -- well, let me ask you this question
24 right off the bat: When was your first

1 communication with Matt Herpstreith?

2 A. I have the time. I believe it was 6:11 a.m.

3 Q. Okay. And that's what I have on my timeline
4 also, 6:11.

5 You showed me phone records --

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. -- with your cell phone, and I was able to
8 track when your first communication was. That
9 partially helped me put together that timeline.

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. I appreciate that.

12 So there's a bit of a flash of, Okay,
13 there might be something off here.

14 When you arrived at the scene, can you
15 tell me the next steps and kind of what your
16 responsibilities were there? Josi Anderson
17 mentioned that this is her scene when she
18 arrives. How does that transfer to anyone
19 else's scene and whose scene does it become?
20 A. So the scene is based on where the location is.
21 This location is within the County jurisdiction,
22 so the sheriff's department would have the
23 jurisdiction of that scene.

24 Again, we're small. At that time of day,

1 we, several nights, only have one deputy on duty
2 at that time of day. So our one deputy would
3 respond. But for any emergency scene or scene
4 that we know we're going to need assistance, it
5 is very common for the city police departments
6 to respond to assist, just like we respond to
7 assist them, because they also have one.

8 So when I responded, I arrived on scene,
9 and Josi was on scene, as well as Ryan Lambert.
10 I had been informed on the way that I knew Matt
11 and Amy had reported the incident, and I was
12 informed that Scott Marth was the first officer
13 on scene who made contact with Matt and Amy. He
14 indicated that he did not have any reason to
15 believe they were impaired. He also indicated
16 that he had observed the front of the vehicle,
17 which was a Ram truck, being driven by Matt and
18 he observed no damage to the truck.

19 As I said --

20 Q. So did that relax you at that time? Did it
21 give you any confidence that -- did you feel any
22 better than the feeling of a little off before?

23 A. Well, it's a good feeling to hear that the
24 first officer on the scene thought they were not

1 intoxicated and that their vehicle may not be
2 involved.

3 Q. Okay. That's fair.

4 A. So then at the scene, I observed the body.
5 There was a deceased individual laying on the
6 northbound lane of Route 78 with a puddle of
7 blood next to him. I observed that there were
8 no vehicle parts at the scene.

9 And I am familiar with Matt's truck, I
10 used to have the exact same truck, and I know
11 the front end is almost all plastic. So I
12 assumed if he had struck an individual that was
13 walking on the road, there would be debris on
14 the roadway and there would be damage to the
15 vehicle.

16 I also observed that the victim in the
17 roadway was barefoot, only wearing swim trunks,
18 which was not common for someone who would be
19 walking down a highway. So at that point, we --
20 our opinion was that the subject possibly would
21 have been dumped at the scene, possibly fell out
22 of the bed of a truck or possibly fell off of a
23 motorcycle.

24 Q. Okay. So you're hypothesizing a bit, trying to

1 figure out what's going on?

2 A. Right.

3 Q. When you first arrived on the scene, did you
4 speak directly with Scott Marth?

5 A. I did not.

6 Q. Okay. Where was Scott at that time?

7 A. Scott was around the corner, past Lowden Road,
8 directing traffic. So that is not even in view.

9 Q. So he was north of the crash site?

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. Was it Josi who was south of the crash site?

12 A. No. Josi was at the scene with the victim, and
13 Savanna Police Department was south.

14 Q. Okay. Very good. Very good.

15 Can you tell us how -- so now is this your
16 scene?

17 A. Yeah. As soon as somebody from the sheriff's
18 department shows up on scene, it would become
19 our scene.

20 Q. Okay. And so you're -- as sheriff, you're in
21 charge of the scene?

22 A. Correct.

23 Q. And can you tell us, the management of the
24 scene, anything that you thought -- did you have

1 any consideration about when to notify people?

2 A. So I knew while I was en route that Crime Scene
3 had been contacted and the coroner's office had
4 been contacted, which are the two most important
5 agencies we want to respond to a scene like
6 that.

7 Crime Scene obviously processes evidence
8 for any of our scenes, such at burglaries or
9 deaths. So getting them called is one of our
10 first steps.

11 Q. We know that Crime Scene arrived at 5:00 a.m.,
12 and they were notified at 3- -- I would have to
13 bring up that timeline, but it was soon -- maybe
14 within 15 minutes of the initial report.

15 The coroner's office was notified at 5:18,
16 which would have been, you know, an hour and --
17 I can't do the math right off my head, but, you
18 know, let's call it an hour and 40 minutes.

19 A. Okay.

20 Q. Can you talk about the timing of that?

21 A. So I had been told that when Marth showed up on
22 scene, he reported the subject was deceased,
23 which generally the coroner is called.

24 The 5:18 I know is when I called you on my

1 cell phone to inform you of the situation.

2 Q. Okay. And were you waiting for any specific
3 timing to make that phone call?

4 A. So we know, with Crime Scene on a scene like
5 this, it's going to take a long time. We had
6 one of the best Crime Scene techs responding, he
7 is very thorough, but that also takes a very
8 long time for him to process the scene.
9 Generally, the coroner's office doesn't like to
10 remain on scene for several hours if not
11 necessary, so we don't always call them the
12 first minute.

13 Q. So the scene is secure. The complainant is not
14 there though. Is that strange, that the
15 complainant is not there?

16 A. I definitely wish they would have been there.

17 Q. Was it strange that Matt Herpstreith -- was
18 that out of the norm, that he would leave in an
19 expedited way of within minutes of reporting
20 this?

21 A. Yeah, I mean, a situation like this is not
22 common, but I would say the best-case scenario
23 would be for them to remain on scene.
24 Especially when they're in their own

1 jurisdiction, knowing who is responding, best
2 case would be for them to stay on scene.

3 Q. So when Matt Herpstreith leaves, Scott Marth is
4 alone on the scene?

5 A. He would be, yes.

6 Q. And so the city officer is alone on the scene.
7 Is that a vulnerable situation?

8 A. Well, my understanding was that Officer Marth
9 instructed them that they were allowed to leave.
10 So I'm assuming he was comfortable with the
11 situation and remaining on scene. I don't think
12 Josi was far out at that point.

13 Q. Would that make the scene vulnerable, in terms
14 of traffic control?

15 A. As long as Officer Marth is able to protect
16 that lane of traffic, which he should be able to
17 with his car and the scene.

18 Q. So he's parked in one lane so he can protect
19 one lane, and then with his body he can protect
20 the other lane?

21 A. And I don't know how or why he was parked.

22 Q. Okay. How many -- how much manpower do you
23 like to have on a scene like that? How much
24 would be something that you're going to get

1 those people there as quick as you can?

2 A. I mean, ideally our biggest role is to wait
3 until Crime Scene arrives on scene, because
4 they're going to process the evidence. So we
5 just need to preserve the evidence until they
6 arrive.

7 So ideally, for a scene like that, a
8 minimum of three officers would be good. You
9 need two officers to close the road and one
10 officer to remain with the victim, in this case.

11 Q. Do you know that because of your experience and
12 training? Is it part of your training?

13 A. Sure, it is, and experience.

14 Q. And it's talked about in training of officers,
15 how to do these things and what's appropriate?

16 A. Yeah, everybody gets trained on handling
17 evidence.

18 Q. In your experience working with Matt
19 Herpstreith, has he ever stayed on a scene after
20 hours when he's off duty? Maybe his shift
21 ended, other people have been there but he
22 wanted to assist?

23 A. Matt definitely was dedicated and would spend
24 many hours working cases, yes.

1 Q. Okay. And so the first time you talked to Matt
2 Herpstreith was 6:11?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. What was that conversation?

5 A. So Matt called me to basically give me his
6 version of what had taken place.

7 Q. And can you tell us what his words were?

8 A. Yeah. He told me that they were driving north
9 on 78, when they saw what they thought was a
10 deer in the roadway. They swerved around the
11 deer, and for some reason they came back and
12 realized it was not a deer.

13 Q. Did you have any feeling about that at that
14 time when he told you that?

15 A. It definitely seemed a little strange, but it's
16 a weird spot in the roadway that's very dark and
17 it's hard to see what is out there. We couldn't
18 see much. That's why we waited on scene for the
19 sun to come up to do some of our scene
20 processing.

21 Q. Have you heard any report of agonal breathing
22 prior to that?

23 A. I have not.

24 Q. So Matt calls you to say he's -- to give you

1 the story that -- or the story that we submitted
2 as evidence of his written voluntary statement,
3 that he went around what he thought was a deer
4 and then came back.

5 And then what's your next steps in --
6 sounds like you had kind of an off feeling about
7 it. Did you -- can you talk to us about that?

8 A. Well, as far as my next steps, we remained on
9 scene. Again, we had no evidence or anything to
10 point us in the direction that said the victim
11 had even been hit by a car. So we did not
12 believe that was the case at the time.

13 While waiting for Crime Scene, I had
14 conversations with the Illinois Conservation
15 Police. They were searching for a missing
16 subject from a state park, and they thought that
17 could be our subject out here. So we were going
18 back and forth with descriptions, trying to
19 decide if this was the same person. They ended
20 up finding a photograph that they sent to me,
21 and we were able to determine that was not the
22 correct person.

23 I had also been given a name from Scott
24 Marth of someone that he thought this

1 potentially could be. So we were doing some
2 work in our computers to determine where that
3 person lived. We found an address very close to
4 the scene at this point. Doing some work in the
5 computer, we saw some known associates with that
6 name that we know has been involved with some
7 violent crimes. So that also led us to believe
8 that there may have been an option that the
9 subject was dumped at the scene.

10 Q. So you're hypothesizing about what took place.
11 You did have that off feeling when you heard
12 Matt Herpstreith's name as the complainant, but
13 there are other options here too, where there's
14 somebody that lives close that might have been
15 involved, connected to someone who has had
16 violent crime before; you're working with
17 Conservation Police; I believe, did you go to a
18 residence with Investigator Dave Mercado to
19 check on an identification?

20 A. Yeah, after we cleared the scene and opened the
21 roadway, we went to a residence in Mount
22 Carroll, yes.

23 Q. Okay. So these things are all transpiring from
24 the time you arrived on scene until the time

1 that the roadway is opened up again?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Okay. And what time was that roadway opened
4 up?

5 A. It was right at 7:00 a.m., within a couple
6 minutes of 7:00 a.m.

7 Q. Okay. So this is happening between 4:00 a.m.
8 and 7:00 a.m.?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. And you're still -- in your mind at
11 7:00 a.m., still unknowing of what took place?

12 A. And as far as a weird feeling about Matt and
13 Amy, again, there was no evidence for us to say
14 that they were involved in an accident at this
15 point. Obviously I thought it was strange that
16 they're reporting something at 3:40 in the
17 morning.

18 Q. How much stock do you put in someone that you
19 work with who's in law enforcement when they
20 tell you something? How much stock do you put
21 in the truth of that?

22 A. Well, again, being a small agency, I think
23 everybody works very closely together. So I
24 think it's a large amount.

1 Q. Okay. And I know, as a coroner, when I show up
2 on a scene and the scene is secure and everybody
3 is working and doing their jobs and I'm being
4 told information, that I put a lot of trust in
5 that and don't expect to be lied to or misled.
6 You know, that's my perspective, as a coroner,
7 when I show up, Oh, these guys are telling me
8 straight. So I certainly believe that.

9 And I know when I showed up, I was told by
10 you the name of the complainant and that he was
11 off duty, and that -- you know, we started to
12 look over the scene. I think the -- I don't
13 believe it was until later that there was any
14 kind of idea about a story that he had given.
15 But we started to look over the scene and
16 hypothesize about what took place.

17 And we had talked about maybe coming off a
18 motorcycle. Because there was a party just up
19 the road at the concert venue, and maybe he was
20 a camper and the possibility of coming out of
21 the back of a pickup truck or hanging on, you
22 know.

23 Just the idea that there is tissue debris
24 in different places and he's in the middle of

1 it, what's that mean? Maybe he came down this
2 way, or maybe he hit and then, you know,
3 something else happened to him. You know, I
4 know we were trying to think of many different
5 options in those moments. And I'm there with
6 you --

7 A. Right.

8 Q. -- at that time. So I just want to share that,
9 the thought process that's taking place. I
10 think Dave Mercado, the investigator, also
11 shared many of his thoughts as he went through
12 this too.

13 When did you become aware that Matthew
14 Herpstreith, it is better than a 50 percent
15 chance that he's involved?

16 A. Well, basically what happened was, after we
17 made notification to family members, Detective
18 Mercado, Chief Lambert and myself met back at
19 the scene to discuss everything we had learned
20 throughout this process and to decide what our
21 next steps were.

22 We agreed the next steps would be to --
23 someone would need to interview Matt and Amy,
24 since they were the first on the scene.

1 Q. You set that interview up immediately? How did
2 you reach out to them and what was the timing on
3 that?

4 A. We did not reach out to them. Once we made
5 that agreement that they needed to be
6 interviewed, we made a phone call to the State
7 Police.

8 Q. Okay. And I think I have that the State Police
9 took over the investigation about 11:25?

10 A. And I'm not aware, without looking at times.

11 Q. Okay. So can you tell us, is there anything
12 else you think that this jury should know about
13 this situation?

14 A. You know, I know we have talked about the
15 amount of time that it took in order for us to
16 make a notification or to identify the victim.

17 We had no idea who he was at the time. We
18 had to wait for Crime Scene. He obviously took
19 a couple hours to process the scene. We then
20 spent, I believe, a couple hours at the
21 coroner's office. Waited for another Crime
22 Scene tech from Rockford with a fingerprint
23 scanner to assist with identifying. That did
24 not work.

1 There was a vehicle accident that came in
2 which some of our staff responded to. That is
3 where they were finally able to make the
4 identification of who we thought the victim was.

5 It was just a long process, with a lot of
6 things going on, and it took several hours.

7 MR. JONES: Jurors, do you have any
8 questions for Sheriff Kloepping?

9 A JUROR: Yes, sir.

10 Is it state law in Illinois to have a
11 front license plate on your vehicle?

12 THE WITNESS: It is.

13 A JUROR: If you seen any of your
14 employees pull into this parking lot in their
15 personal vehicle without a front license plate,
16 would you address that?

17 THE WITNESS: It would be mentioned, yes.

18 Q. (By Mr, Jones:) Do you remember seeing a front
19 license plate on Matthew Herpstreith's truck?

20 A. So I never saw Matt's truck the night of this
21 incident. I know when I have seen his vehicle
22 at the sheriff's office, it had two license
23 plates.

24 Q. It had two license plates when you have seen it

1 before, and you've noticed that?

2 A. Yes.

3 MR. JONES: Any other questions?

4 (No verbal response.)

5 MR. JONES: All right. Thank you, Sheriff
6 Kloepping.

7 (Ryan Kloepping exited the
8 courtroom.)

9 MR. JONES: I would like to re-call
10 Sheriff Kloepping.

11 Thanks for coming back in, Ryan. We have
12 one other question that's come up.

13 I don't know if I need to do this again,
14 but I'm going to do it. Can you raise your
15 right hand?

16 (Ryan Kloepping was duly sworn.)

17 Q. (By Mr. Jones:) It's a question about the
18 license plate.

19 A. Okay.

20 Q. Was there a license plate found out in the area
21 of this incident?

22 A. There was not.

23 Q. Okay. Has there ever been a license plate
24 turned in to the sheriff's department in that

1 time frame around that incident?

2 A. Not to my knowledge.

3 MR. JONES: Okay. Very good. That's --
4 any questions?

5 A JUROR: I know this case was turned over
6 to State Police that following morning, or
7 around noon.

8 Have you had a lot of involvement with
9 this case or just at the direction of the State
10 Police?

11 THE WITNESS: I have had very little
12 involvement. I have learned more from the
13 testimony given in this Inquest the last couple
14 days than I have known throughout the case. I
15 don't know many of the facts of what the State
16 Police have discovered.

17 A JUROR: So they have been in charge of
18 this case completely?

19 THE WITNESS: They have. They have
20 reached out to me if they have had questions or
21 any, you know, materials that they need, and we
22 have given them whatever they have asked for.

23 A JUROR: Thank you.

24 MR. JONES: Thank you very much.

1 Appreciate it.

2 I would like to call Josh Sisler.

3 Josh, can you raise your right hand?

4 JOSHUA SISLER,

5 being first duly sworn, was examined and

6 testified as follows:

7 EXAMINATION

8 BY MR. JONES:

9 Q. Josh, this is not easy, and I -- for the -- to
10 get started, can you say your name and spell it
11 to the jurors.

12 A. Joshua Sisler, J-O-S-H-U-A, S-I-S-L-E-R.

13 Q. This is a difficult process. And you're
14 Jackson's dad, and so I want to ask you a few
15 questions that I think are important to ask so
16 that our jury can consider all the facts in this
17 case, and they may have some questions too.

18 Can you tell us, everything that you have
19 heard so far in this Inquest, does it seem to
20 line up in timing? Does it seem to line up in
21 understanding of this is how things unfolded?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. You don't see any red flags in the story
24 that's been presented and the information and

1 evidence that's been presented?

2 A. Not that I can think of.

3 Q. Okay. That's good to know, because we want you
4 to have peace with this, in a way.

5 As we talk about Jackson, can you give us,
6 from your perspective, a little bit about what
7 took place that night when he came home and then
8 went out again?

9 A. I remember him coming in the door and we had a
10 short conversation. He said, "Good night, Dad.
11 Love you." I said, "Good night," and I went to
12 bed and that's about it. Thought he went down
13 and went to bed too.

14 Q. Did it surprise you when you found out he had
15 left the house?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. And did you have any concern at that time that
18 it was a dangerous situation or that it could be
19 a dangerous situation for him?

20 A. No. In fact, I felt relieved he was at home.
21 I didn't have to worry about him. I always
22 liked it when my kids came home.

23 Q. Has he ever walked out to the farm from your
24 house before?

1 A. No.

2 Q. He has not?

3 A. Not that I know of.

4 Q. Okay. I think I asked Madelyn the same
5 question and I think she also said no.

6 One consideration we have when we talk
7 about the manner of death, we have many
8 considerations, but we talk about accidental
9 death and we talk about homicide and we even
10 talk about suicide.

11 And in Jackson's past, have you ever been
12 fearful of him being in the situation that he
13 might take his own life?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Okay. Has there ever been any indication in
16 his past history that would raise you any kind
17 of concern in that area?

18 A. Not really.

19 Q. Okay. And he certainly -- from the testimony
20 that's been given and I think the facts that are
21 known, he drank alcohol and -- out at the farm,
22 of course, and had THC.

23 Can you tell us a little bit about your
24 knowledge of that kind of behavior with him?

1 A. I didn't know they were going to be out at the
2 farm drinking that night, so.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I mean, he was 18, so I didn't really ask too
5 many questions anymore, so.

6 Q. So, I mean, and I guess that isn't the question
7 I'm asking, but was that a regular -- like, did
8 he use THC often?

9 A. I'm not sure. I would imagine.

10 Q. Okay. And then alcohol, was that something he
11 did use often or not?

12 A. I don't know. If he did, he didn't tell me
13 about it.

14 Q. Okay. So he's 18 years old. He's young. I
15 know when I spoke to the pathologist about the
16 toxicology, as we went back and forth, he
17 thought that his level of intoxication would be
18 significant because of his age and he wouldn't
19 be experienced at drinking. So I -- and you're
20 telling me you don't have a lot of evidence that
21 he was experienced at it either?

22 A. Right. I'm sure he's drank before, but I don't
23 think he was a raging alcoholic.

24 Q. Not a common thing?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Okay. And also you're saying he did not
3 have -- you didn't feel that he had any kind of
4 issues of wanting to take his own life in any
5 way?

6 A. Nope.

7 Q. Okay. I know those are hard questions.

8 A. I know.

9 Q. But I really think the jury needs to understand
10 the best information they can --

11 A. Okay.

12 Q. -- as they make decisions here before too long.
13 What do you think that the jury should
14 know from that evening? What do you think the
15 next -- you know, that evening into the next
16 morning, is there anything you think they should
17 know, from your perspective?

18 A. From my perspective, I can't think of anything.

19 MR. JONES: Okay. Jury, do you have any
20 questions at all for Josh?

21 (No verbal response.)

22 MR. JONES: Okay. Once again, it's a
23 difficult process, and in order to make
24 decisions, we need to look at all evidence.

1 THE WITNESS: Okay.

2 MR. JONES: And so I appreciate you being
3 here, I appreciate you coming up here, and our
4 hearts go out to you, as the father of Jackson.

5 THE WITNESS: I appreciate that very much.

6 MR. JONES: We certainly think about you,
7 you know. So I just want to say that publicly
8 too.

9 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

10 MR. JONES: You're welcome.

11 At this time you're excused.

12 THE WITNESS: All right.

13 MR. JONES: Diana, could I ask you to
14 raise your right hand?

15 DIANA KRADLE,
16 being first duly sworn, was examined and
17 testified as follows:

18 EXAMINATION

19 BY MR. JONES:

20 Q. Can you say your name and spell it.

21 A. Diana, D-I-A-N-A, Kradle, K-R-A-D-L-E.

22 Q. Okay. You have said goodbye to your son some
23 time ago physically, and I hope you feel his
24 spirit's with you. Once again, this is a

1 difficult place to be and difficult details to
2 take in and hear.

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And so we think about you, too, in those ways.

5 Is there anything that you feel is
6 important for this jury to know about Jackson
7 Kradle? Can you tell me a little bit about the
8 kind of kid he was in your heart, in your
9 perspective?

10 A. He was, you know, like -- he loved to play
11 baseball and he loved to, you know, just have
12 fun, you know, with his brothers and dad and
13 family, myself.

14 Q. And do you think he had any issues in his life
15 that he was struggling with?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Okay. He was an 18-year-old, and at that age
18 we all go through things; that's normal. Does
19 anything in your mind come to you, like, Hey, he
20 was -- he might have been struggling or having
21 difficulty or maybe a fight with his girlfriend
22 or anything in those -- in that way?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. I think that's important for the jury to

1 hear that.

2 That evening and through that evening and
3 early morning hours, did you have any knowledge
4 where he was?

5 A. I knew he was going to his aunt's retirement
6 party, and I knew he was going to go to the farm
7 later.

8 Q. Okay. So when he goes to the farm, what --
9 when you knew he was going later, it was to get
10 together with friends?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Okay. And kind of an idea that they were going
13 to be together and be out at the farm?

14 A. Have a bonfire, just hang out.

15 Q. How often would the kids get together out
16 there?

17 A. I'm not sure.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. I mean, they went out there fishing. They did
20 a lot of things out there, so.

21 Q. Okay. Is there any indication in your mind
22 that anything that you have heard through the
23 details that have unfolded here, anything -- is
24 there anything that raises a red flag to you

1 that is out of the ordinary or something you
2 didn't expect in terms of, Hey, that's not
3 right?

4 A. Not that I can think of, no.

5 Q. Okay. So from your mind, everything has become
6 clear to you?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Okay. That's important.

9 Anything that you have that you wish this
10 jury knows?

11 A. No.

12 Q. I know our hearts go out to you, and I hope you
13 can feel that they also wrap around you, as a
14 community.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. You know, we think about you too.

17 MR. JONES: Jurors, any questions at all
18 for Diana?

19 (No verbal response.)

20 MR. JONES: Thank you, Diana.

21 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

22 MR. JONES: I'd like to include to the
23 Foreman the call with the Savanna Police
24 Department. You don't have a sheet of paper on

1 that that denotes that exhibit number. I have
2 got Exhibit Number 37 for that phone call and
3 just want to include that to go to the evidence.

4 (Exhibit Number 37 marked for
5 identification and tendered to
6 the jury.)

7 MR. JONES: I have one other bit of
8 evidence that I would like to submit to you. I
9 think it will become important in your
10 deliberation.

11 (Exhibit Number 38 marked for
12 identification and tendered to
13 the jury.)

14 MR. JONES: Exhibit Number 38 would be our
15 final bit of evidence, and this is the
16 transcript of the testimony of Kayla Russell.
17 So I think that will be important to you.

18 If we could, let's take a five-minute
19 break, and then we'll be right back and we'll be
20 finishing up with jury instructions, some final
21 comments, and then we'll be going into
22 deliberation.

23 (A recess was taken at 3:06 p.m.,
24 and proceedings resumed at

1 3:26 p.m.)

2 MR. JONES: Jurors, I have some
3 housekeeping to do with you. I'd like to submit
4 some more evidence, Pictures 39 through 45.
5 Those are for your consideration.

6 (Exhibit Numbers 39 through 45
7 marked for identification and
8 tendered to the jury.)

9 MR. JONES: And I'll have just one more
10 bit of information for you, but I would like to
11 talk a little bit about the origination of the
12 evidence. I think that's important. I think
13 it's important that you have a high certainty
14 level of the evidence in this case.

15 Certainly if you have any questions about
16 the evidence, that's important, and I ask you to
17 bring those forth. As the evidence was produced
18 in the beginning, I produced some evidence which
19 included the coroner's report and the toxicology
20 report and the autopsy report, along with
21 addendum answers to my coroner's questions; and
22 those were all -- those things came through me
23 from the lab for toxicology, from Dr. Peters
24 with the autopsy, and the addendum.

1 The timeline of things came through me,
2 okay, working with the Illinois State Police,
3 working with the sheriff's department, in trying
4 to get the beginning of everything with the
5 timeline for you together.

6 The drone picture that you saw, the scene
7 in the beginning, came from the Illinois State
8 Police. And that's the Crime Scene tech, Jeff
9 Thew, who had given you testimony here.

10 The Matthew Herpstreith's statement that
11 was a written voluntary statement came from the
12 Carroll County Sheriff's Department.

13 The call to the office by Matt Herpstreith
14 came from the Carroll County Sheriff's
15 Department directly.

16 The video leaving Sippi-Side came directly
17 from Sippi-Side, okay, to me.

18 The video of the car wash came through the
19 Illinois State Police to me.

20 The pictures of the truck, I think there
21 would have been three pictures of the truck,
22 those came from the Illinois State Police Crime
23 Scene Investigator.

24 Amy Hubble's call to the dispatcher came

1 through the Illinois State Police to me, and it
2 would have originated with the Carroll County's
3 Sheriff Department, they got it, and then I
4 received it from them.

5 Matt Herpstreith's first audio transcript
6 came directly from the Illinois State Police
7 Investigative Team.

8 Amy Hubble's first audio interview came
9 from the Illinois State Police Investigative
10 Team.

11 Matthew Herpstreith's second audio
12 transcript came directly from the State Police
13 Investigative Team.

14 And Amy Hubble's second audio transcript,
15 audio that you heard, came from the Illinois
16 State Police.

17 The Scott Marth interview that you heard
18 came directly from the Illinois State Police.

19 Josi Anderson's statement, that you have a
20 copy of, came from the Carroll County Sheriff's
21 Department.

22 Other pictures on the roadway that you
23 will see came from the Illinois State Police.

24 The pictures of the clothing, from the

1 Illinois State Police. Actually, all the photos
2 that you have, whether they are photos of
3 Jackson, whether they are photos of the
4 clothing, the truck, all of those have come
5 directly from the Illinois State Police Crime
6 Scene Investigator.

7 The DNA report that you have came from the
8 Illinois State Police Laboratory, through the
9 Illinois State Police Investigative Team.

10 The radio call that we heard with Rebecca
11 Frederick and the Savanna police officer,
12 Rebecca Frederick and the first call with the
13 complainant, Matthew Herpstreith, those all came
14 from the Carroll County Sheriff's Department
15 directly.

16 The transcript of Kayla Russell came
17 through the court reporter from our session on
18 Tuesday.

19 And then the final pictures I have given
20 you have come from the Illinois State Police
21 Crime Scene Investigator.

22 I have one last exhibit for you, and this
23 is, as we begin to think about jury deliberation
24 and being definitive in a decision in this case

1 and determining the manner of death, this is a
2 reference material for you to look at.

3 THE FOREPERSON: Do you feel that all the
4 evidence -- you had access to all the evidence
5 by the State Police and the Carroll County
6 Sheriff's Department that you needed that was
7 pertinent to this case?

8 MR. JONES: I do feel like I have received
9 everything that I have asked for. Everything
10 that may be out there of any value, I believe I
11 have received it. I don't believe there's any
12 evidence that I haven't seen that is valuable
13 evidence that would be considered something that
14 you should consider in this case.

15 THE FOREPERSON: Okay.

16 MR. JONES: So this is going to be
17 something for you to look at as you determine
18 what the manner of death is, to reference. And
19 it talks about whether something can be an
20 accident, whether it can be a homicide, and it
21 gives you some legal background on that.

22 A JUROR: Where did that come from?

23 MR. JONES: This is from doing research
24 online with the state of Illinois specific,

1 looking for state of Illinois information. I
2 can find quite a bit of information nationwide,
3 and I can find certain information from medical
4 examiner's associations, and that's a different
5 process than a coroner's system.

6 Whereas, a medical examiner's association
7 is a medical person who's very much associated
8 with the medical aspect of death, he is -- that
9 system is not associated with investigation. So
10 that medical person has a different manual,
11 actually, that he will look at, different
12 procedures he'll look at, different
13 recommendations that he might give, because he's
14 not doing a full investigation.

15 As a coroner, his responsibility is to do
16 a full investigation. So there you're looking
17 at all the circumstances and gathering all the
18 evidence. And quite often in the medical
19 examiner's end of it, it's just a different
20 system. So there's some differences there as
21 you research those items.

22 What I have tried to pull together are
23 things that -- for you in the state of Illinois
24 that would pertain to this case, and so that's

1 what these are. I pulled that together for you.

2 I do have one thing to read to you, and
3 I'll read to the public also, because I think
4 it's a good -- also a good guideline for you.

5 Okay. Members of the Jury, this
6 constitutes the evidence available in this
7 Inquest. It will now be your duty to deliberate
8 your findings and, if possible, arrive at a
9 verdict as to the manner of death, whether you
10 deem it to be accidental, suicide, homicide, or
11 from natural causes; whether or not any
12 recommendations should be made.

13 When you have reached your verdict, you
14 will report it back to me, and I ask that you
15 all are in agreement on this verdict.

16 In summary, and specific to this case, I
17 believe it's important to consider whether this
18 is an accident, a homicide or a suicide.

19 And I think a natural death is probably
20 way over on the side here; we're not looking
21 into that area. We certainly haven't shown any
22 evidence of that.

23 And in summary, I think we haven't shown
24 evidence that Jackson would be looking at

1 suicide in this case, but that's for you to
2 weigh and consider.

3 You have heard the testimony. So this is
4 something I have also provided to give you the
5 best opportunity to come up with a verdict.

6 Proving a homicide would require evidence
7 of reckless or negligent actions by the driver
8 that go beyond an unavoidable accident,
9 especially if impairment by alcohol is suspected
10 but not documented.

11 Conversely, lacking proof of recklessness
12 or impairment and with no signs the driver could
13 have reasonably avoided Jackson, the death might
14 lean toward accidental classification.

15 So I'll give this to you to take back with
16 you and to consider.

17 And I just ask you to report back to me
18 and bring to me the verdict, as the coroner of
19 Carroll County, in the state of Illinois.

20 And I give this verdict sheet to the
21 Foreman. There's a place to place the verdict
22 on that sheet. There's also a place for every
23 juror to sign the sheet. Okay?

24 THE FOREMAN: Okay.

1 MR. JONES: At this time I dismiss you to
2 deliberation.

3 (At 3:39 p.m., the Jury retired
4 to deliberate.)
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1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
)ss
2 COUNTY OF CARROLL)

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4
5 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER
6

7 I, Callie S. Bodmer, a Notary Public duly
8 commissioned and qualified in the State of Illinois,
9 do hereby certify that the foregoing transcript
10 constitutes a true and accurate transcript of the
11 original shorthand notes of the proceeding had on
12 said Inquisition at the time and place aforesaid.
13
14
15

16 -----
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