# EL PASO COUNTY CORONER 2741 EAST LAS VEGAS STREET COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO 80906

NAME: MORPHEW, Suzanne COUNTY: CHAFFEE

Date of Birth: 04/30/1971 Age: 52 yrs AUTOPSY NO: **23-1011** 

AUTOPSY DATE: 09/27/2023

Sex: F BEGAN: 10:30 AM

MD: Emily Russell-Kinsley, M.D. DATE OF PRONOUNCEMENT: 09/22/2023

TIME OF PRONOUNCEMENT: 3 PM

Identified by: Dental records, DNA

#### **FINAL DIAGNOSIS:**

I. Homicide by unspecified means in the setting of butorphanol, azaperone, and medetomidine intoxication:

- A. Reported history of recovery of a partial skeleton, medical port, and clothing scattered in and around a shallow grave in Saguache County
- B. Positive dental identification at time of autopsy examination
- C. Reported history decedent was reported missing in Chaffee County 05/10/2020 and her bicycle and helmet were discovered without significant damage in separate locations within the county
- D. No indication of perimortem trauma (see forensic anthropology report)
- E. Postmortem toxicology of femoral trabecular bone identified butorphanol, butorphanol metabolites, azaperone, and medetomidine (see toxicology reports)
- F. Positive DNA identification, right and left femurs
- G. Clinical history decedent was receiving maintenance rituxan chemotherapy after complete remission of recurrent follicular lymphoma

**OPINION:** Based upon the information provided to me at the time of this report, it is my opinion that Suzanne Morphew, a 52-year-old adult White female, died as a result of homicide by unspecified means in the setting of butorphanol, azaperone, and medetomidine intoxication. These drugs are marketed as a compounded injectable chemical immobilizer for wildlife providing pharmacologically reversible analgesia, sedation, and immobilization. If more information becomes available, this report may be amended.

MANNER OF DEATH: Homicide

EMILY RUSSELL-KINSLEY, M.D.

LEON KELLY, M.D.

ALISON COOPER, M.D.

MEGAN KLIESNER, M.D.

JAROD MURDOCH, D.O.

ERK 04/15/2024

#### PERSONS PRESENT AT AUTOPSY

Robin Burgess and Alex Walker of the Chaffee County Sheriff's Office, Daniel Garcia, Tanya Atkinson, and Jodi Wright of the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, Ken Harris of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Karla Barrios of the Saguache County Sheriff's Office, Sam Coffman of the 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Attorney's Office, and Chaffee County Coroner Jeff Graf are present during the postmortem examination.

Forensic odontologist, Kim Look, DDS, D-ABFO, is present during autopsy examination to perform dental identification.

### **GENERAL EXAMINATION**

The decedent is initially identified as "Jane Doe".

Submitted for examination are 3 large paper bags containing bones, 7 brown paper bags containing clothing, and 7 envelopes containing items to be described.

The submitted items are radiographed.

## **EXTERNAL EXAMINATION**

The skeletal remains are submitted in 3 bags labeled:

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"Jane Doe R&17 Saguache County Day 1"
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The 3 bags contain multiple human and nonhuman bones and fragments, dirt, and a wood fragment. The submitted human bones include the skull with mandible, sacrum, multiple ribs, bilateral radii and ulnae, manubrium and sternum, right scapula, clavicle, right and left femora, right and left tibiae and fibulae, and multiple vertebrae. None of the bones bear any residual soft tissue. The right femoral head (femur fragment and femur head) is retained for toxicology testing prior to release for forensic anthropology examination.

Submitted is an envelope labeled:

"9-24-23 HLS-11 2023-404 Purple medical device Grave"

The envelope contains a dirt covered purple medical port labeled "6328".

Seven brown paper bags remain in the custody of CBI and contain a pale patterned balaclava, a pink and light color leather work glove, a light color partial padded bra, a ripped dark blue/gray hooded sweatshirt labeled "Crested Butte", a torn green Nike tank top, Yeti shorts, and a fabric fragment. The clothing and fabric fragment are all weathered and covered in dirt. All paper

<sup>&</sup>quot;Jane Doe R&17 Saguache County Day 1 Skull"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Jane Doe R&17 Saguache County Day 2 & 3"

bags were labeled respective to their contents.

Six envelopes remain in the custody of CBI, contain 5 fabric fragments and 1 weathered bullet, and are labeled as such.

## **EVIDENCE**

The medical device is released to Chaffee County Sheriff's Office on 09/27/2023.

A disk of 2 x-rays is released to Dr. Kim Look on 09/28/2023.

"TA-11 Possible Bones" and "TA-12 Bones" are received on 09/29/2023 from CBI to be included with the collection of skeletal remains subsequently released to Dr. Diane France. After receipt of the remains back to El Paso County Coroner's Office these packages appear to have contained probable rocks.

Three teeth are released to CBI on 10/03/2023 for DNA testing.

The skeletal remains are released to Dr. Diane France for forensic anthropology examination on 10/03/2023 and returned to El Paso County Coroner's Office on 12/27/2023.

One paper bag containing "4 packets botany/'bug'" and "2 packets from hoody" are received on 01/16/2024 from Dr. Diane France.

On 01/17/2024 the femurs are sectioned at the proximal and distal metaphyses for toxicology and DNA samples (right femur proximal, right femur distal).

Distal femurs (right femur distal and left femur distal) are released to CBI on 01/22/2024 for DNA testing, returned to El Paso County Coroner's Office on 04/03/2024, and re-released to CBI on 04/05/2024.