

## Justice Demands Truth or Does it? Vehicular Homicide Trial Foresees Verdict

Savannah Figueroa Mar. 14 4:19pm MST

Within the Pueblo Combined Courts, the case of Colorado v. Karen Snow went to trial and concluded at 3:25 pm. The defendant, Karen Snow, is being accused of first-degree murder after her boyfriend, John Murphy, was found lifeless the morning of February 11, 2023. As of now, no official verdict has been released despite both sides' compelling arguments.

The morning of February 11, 2023, John Murphy's body was found buried in the snow after a house party thrown by Pueblo Police Sergeant Phillip Stone. The two individuals who reported the deceased were Murphy's girlfriend, Karen Snow, and Kai Morrison, a close friend who observed the abnormal behavior from the defendant. Hours later, the lead investigator, Detective Jordan Mankiewicz, arrested a distraught Karen Snow after saying, "I hit him. I hit him. I hit him". This supposed cut-and-dry investigation drastically pivoted as Detective Mankiewicz's investigation and evidence tactics proved questionable after unsettling text messages revealed Mankiewicz's statement, "the whole thing would be easier if she just killed herself" referring to the defendant.

As the trial commenced, the judge granted pre-trial motions to constructively sequester witnesses and the ability to stray into the well during opening and closing statements, as well as line of questioning. The question of redirect and recross was raised, in which redirect would be allowed while recross wouldn't.

The trial filled with overwhelming amounts of evidence proved tense as the differing discourse from both parties. The prosecution centers around the multiple confessions heard by the defendant, "I hit him, I hit him, I hit him," which she stated to both Kai Morrison and

Detective Mankiewicz. Defense countering that with witness Adrian Canning testifying, “Karen was distraught and asking ‘I hit him?’ in the form of a question”.

The investigation itself showed to be controversial as Detective Mankiewicz's evidence collection methods did not follow proper procedures despite the multiple years of experience under her belt. She used red solo cups and Ziploc bags to collect blood samples, broken taillight shards, and hair samples. When asked about these methods, she replied, “It is not traditional but did the job just fine,” which defense witness Nevada Morales would corroborate during cross examination. Expert, Nevada Morales, was retained to investigate the suspicious case involving Mankiewicz but agreed to no evidence being lost, contaminated, or tampered with.

Two esteemed experts testified in this trial about a multitude of topics like metadata or forensic analysis. Chase Melvin, experienced in biological and technological data, interacted with enlarged exhibits to guide the jury through the victims' injuries that are allegedly consistent with vehicular-pedestrian collisions. Dr London Holt, experienced in biomedical and forensics, claims that this was, “a one-sided altercation not vehicular collision” when discussing alternative scenarios where John Murphy died due to a physical altercation with ATF Agent Jay.

After back-and-forth objection battles, primarily resulting in an overruled ruling, the jury prepared for closing arguments. The prosecution highlighted the eight seconds it took the defendant to deliberate before reversing into her boyfriend, by filling the courtroom with a countdown from eight seconds. The defense compared the trial to a jigsaw puzzle, unable to get the full picture if there are missing pieces. They reiterate, justice demands truth. The prosecution argued during rebuttal, saying truth demands justice. Which is true? A verdict has yet to answer that captivating question.