

“I Hit Him, I Hit Him, I Hit Him” - Steel City Murder Trial Anticipates Verdict

Violet Carroll Mar. 14 6:55 p.m. MST

3:18 p.m. marked the conclusion of *Karen Snow vs. the People of the State of Colorado at Pueblo Combined* Court. In February of 2023, Pueblo woman Karen Snow was accused of hitting and killing her boyfriend, John Murphy, with her Lexus SUV out of malice. Her trial disclosed several prominent points regarding these allegations and the ensuing investigation.

Though Snow did not take the stand herself, the prosecuting attorneys were still able to create a convincing and cohesive argument against her. Among the witnesses brought forth on behalf of the People was Kai Morrison, a close friend of the deceased. Morrison was present when Snow engaged in an intense argument with Murphy. Morrison was also present when Snow found Murphy's body and bore witness to a prompt confession from the defendant. “I hit him, I hit him, I hit him,” Morrison recounted. As he spoke, he appeared detached from reality, as if reliving the traumatic moment.

The defending attorneys were largely unable to paint this confession in a different light and instead turned to Detective Jordan Mankiewicz, another witness provided by the Prosecution. Mankiewicz led the investigation into Murphy's death. While prosecuting attorneys attempted to highlight the significance of the evidence collected, Snow's defense team took issue with the detective's flagrant opinion of the defendant. “I wasn't her biggest fan,” Mankiewicz said in response to a question regarding her relation to Snow. The Defense revisited this sentiment in their direct examination of Nevada Morales, a police procedures expert. Morales candidly expressed that “Detective Mankiewicz was biased” and that “...[Mankiewicz] cannot be trusted.”

The detective's perceived bias was not the only part of her testimony that the Defense deemed to be problematic; they also pointed out the timeliness of Snow's arrest by Mankiewicz. Snow was arrested the same day that Murphy was found dead. During the trial, the defense team noted Mankiewicz's lack of consideration for other suspects, an idea that was further accentuated by Morales. "If every suspect is not taken into account, it could lead to wrongful arrests and wrongful conclusions," claimed Morales.

It is important to bear in mind that all witnesses were sequestered for the duration of the trial; they did not see the testimonies of other witnesses. As such, their opinions were unaffected by any previous statements. The stipulated facts of the case were also made accessible to each member of the jury before the trial's commencement, enhancing their understanding of the case and increasing the likelihood of a just decision.

The witnesses representing the People received the majority of objections during the trial, but they were, for the most part, swiftly overruled. It can be argued that this points to the strength of the Prosecution, as the high number of overrulings may hint toward the idea that the Defense was unable to successfully combat the questioning and testimonies of the Prosecution.

As of now, no verdict has been reached in this case and the future of Karen Snow hangs in the balance. Just as John Murphy's fate was determined by Karen Snow on that cold night in February, Karen Snow's fate will be decided upon by an educated and impassioned jury in the hours to come.