

STATE OF WISCONSIN	CIRCUIT COURT	BUFFALO COUNTY
STATE OF WISCONSIN	DA Case No.: 2024BF000485	
Plaintiff,	Court Case No.:	
vs.	CRIMINAL COMPLAINT	
ARTHUR E. MCMULLIN		
26 Court Lane		
Fountain City, WI 54629		
DOB: 11/25/1954		
Defendant.		For Official Use

The undersigned, being first duly sworn, states that:

Count 1: HIDING A CORPSE

The above-named defendant on or about Wednesday, October 23, 2024, in the City of Fountain City, Buffalo County, Wisconsin, did hide a corpse with the intent to conceal a crime, contrary to sec. 940.11(2), 939.50(3)(f), 973.047(1f), 973.046(1r) Wis. Stats., a Class F Felony, and upon conviction may be fined not more than Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000), or imprisoned not more than twelve (12) years and six (6) months, or both.

And furthermore, invoking the provisions of Wisconsin Statute 973.047(1f), if the court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation, the court shall require the person to provide a biological specimen to the state crime laboratories for deoxyribonucleic acid analysis. The court shall inform the person that he may request expungement under s. 165.77 (4).

And furthermore, invoking the provisions of Wisconsin Statute 973.046(1r), if the court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation, the court shall impose a deoxyribonucleic acid analysis surcharge, calculated as follows: (a) For each conviction for a felony, \$250 (b) For each conviction for a misdemeanor, \$200.

Count 2: MISTREATMENT OF ANIMALS

The above-named defendant on or about Wednesday, October 23, 2024, in the City of Fountain City, Buffalo County, Wisconsin, did intentionally treat an animal, Cat #1, in a cruel manner, resulting in the animal's death, contrary to sec. 951.02, 939.50(3)(i), 973.047(1f), 973.046(1r) Wis. Stats., a Class I Felony, and upon conviction may be fined not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), or imprisoned not more than three (3) years and six (6) months, or both.

And furthermore, invoking the provisions of Wisconsin Statute 973.047(1f), if the court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation, the court shall require the person to provide a biological specimen to the state crime laboratories for deoxyribonucleic acid analysis. The court shall inform the person that he may request expungement under s. 165.77 (4).

And furthermore, invoking the provisions of Wisconsin Statute 973.046(1r), if the court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation, the court shall impose a deoxyribonucleic acid analysis surcharge, calculated as follows: (a) For each conviction for a felony, \$250 (b) For each conviction for a misdemeanor, \$200.

Count 3: MISTREATMENT OF ANIMALS

The above-named defendant on or about Wednesday, October 23, 2024, in the City of Fountain City, Buffalo County, Wisconsin, did intentionally treat an animal, Cat #2, in a cruel manner, resulting in the animal's death, contrary to sec. 951.02, 939.50(3)(i), 973.047(1f), 973.046(1r) Wis. Stats., a Class I Felony, and upon conviction may be fined not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), or imprisoned not more than three (3) years and six (6) months, or both.

And furthermore, invoking the provisions of Wisconsin Statute 973.047(1f), if the court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation, the court shall require the person to provide a biological specimen to the state crime laboratories for deoxyribonucleic acid analysis. The court shall inform the person that he may request expungement under s. 165.77 (4).

And furthermore, invoking the provisions of Wisconsin Statute 973.046(1r), if the court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation, the court shall impose a deoxyribonucleic acid analysis surcharge, calculated as follows: (a) For each conviction for a felony, \$250 (b) For each conviction for a misdemeanor, \$200.

Count 4: OBSTRUCTING AN OFFICER

The above-named defendant on or about Wednesday, October 23, 2024, in the City of Fountain City, Buffalo County, Wisconsin, did knowingly obstruct an officer, while such officer was doing an act in an official capacity and with lawful authority, failed to tell law enforcement that Victim 1 was in the residence and dead, contrary to sec. 946.41(1), 939.51(3)(a), 973.047(1f), 973.046(1r) Wis. Stats., a Class A Misdemeanor, and upon conviction may be fined not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), or imprisoned not more than nine (9) months, or both.

And furthermore, invoking the provisions of Wisconsin Statute 973.047(1f), if the court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation, the court shall require the person to provide a biological specimen to the state crime laboratories for deoxyribonucleic acid analysis. The court shall inform the person that he may request expungement under s. 165.77 (4).

And furthermore, invoking the provisions of Wisconsin Statute 973.046(1r), if the court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation, the court shall impose a deoxyribonucleic acid analysis surcharge, calculated as follows: (a) For each conviction for a felony, \$250 (b) For each conviction for a misdemeanor, \$200.

Count 5: FAIL TO PROVIDE PROPER FOOD AND DRINK TO CONFINED ANIMALS

The above-named defendant on or about Wednesday, October 23, 2024, in the City of Fountain City, Buffalo County, Wisconsin, being the owner of an animal, Cat #3, did negligently fail to supply a sufficient supply of food to maintain all animals in good health, contrary to sec. 951.13(1)&(2)&18(1), 939.51(3)(a), 973.047(1f), 973.046(1r) Wis. Stats., a Class A Misdemeanor, and upon conviction may be fined not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), or imprisoned not more than nine (9) months, or both.

And furthermore, invoking the provisions of Wisconsin Statute 973.047(1f), if the court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation, the court shall require the person to provide a biological specimen to the state crime laboratories for deoxyribonucleic acid analysis. The court shall inform the person that he may request expungement under s. 165.77 (4).

And furthermore, invoking the provisions of Wisconsin Statute 973.046(1r), if the court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation, the court shall impose a deoxyribonucleic acid analysis surcharge, calculated as follows: (a) For each conviction for a felony, \$250 (b) For each conviction for a misdemeanor, \$200.

Count 6: FAIL TO PROVIDE PROPER FOOD AND DRINK TO CONFINED ANIMALS

The above-named defendant on or about Wednesday, October 23, 2024, in the City of Fountain City, Buffalo County, Wisconsin, being the owner of an animal, Cat #4, did negligently fail to supply a sufficient supply of food to maintain all animals in good health, contrary to sec. 951.13(1)&(2)&18(1), 939.51(3)(a), 973.047(1f), 973.046(1r) Wis. Stats., a Class A Misdemeanor, and upon conviction may be fined not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), or imprisoned not more than nine (9) months, or both.

And furthermore, invoking the provisions of Wisconsin Statute 973.047(1f), if the court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation, the court shall require the person to provide a biological specimen to the state crime laboratories for deoxyribonucleic acid analysis. The court shall inform the person that he may request expungement under s. 165.77 (4).

And furthermore, invoking the provisions of Wisconsin Statute 973.046(1r), if the court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation, the court shall impose a deoxyribonucleic acid analysis surcharge, calculated as follows: (a) For each conviction for a felony, \$250 (b) For each conviction for a misdemeanor, \$200.

Count 7: FAIL TO PROVIDE PROPER FOOD AND DRINK TO CONFINED ANIMALS

The above-named defendant on or about Wednesday, October 23, 2024, in the City of Fountain City, Buffalo County, Wisconsin, being the owner of an animal, Cat #5, did negligently fail to supply a sufficient supply of food to maintain all animals in good health, contrary to sec. 951.13(1)&(2)&18(1), 939.51(3)(a), 973.047(1f), 973.046(1r) Wis. Stats., a Class A Misdemeanor, and upon conviction may be fined not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), or imprisoned not more than nine (9) months, or both.

And furthermore, invoking the provisions of Wisconsin Statute 973.047(1f), if the court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation, the court shall require the person to provide a biological specimen to the state crime laboratories for deoxyribonucleic acid analysis. The court shall inform the person that he may request expungement under s. 165.77 (4).

And furthermore, invoking the provisions of Wisconsin Statute 973.046(1r), if the court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation, the court shall impose a deoxyribonucleic acid analysis surcharge, calculated as follows: (a) For each conviction for a felony, \$250 (b) For each conviction for a misdemeanor, \$200.

Count 8: FAIL TO PROVIDE PROPER FOOD AND DRINK TO CONFINED ANIMALS

The above-named defendant on or about Wednesday, October 23, 2024, in the City of Fountain City, Buffalo County, Wisconsin, being the owner of an animal, Cat #6, did negligently fail to supply a sufficient supply of food to maintain all animals in good health, contrary to sec. 951.13(1)&(2)&18(1), 939.51(3)(a), 973.047(1f), 973.046(1r) Wis. Stats., a Class A Misdemeanor, and upon conviction may be fined not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), or imprisoned not more than nine (9) months, or both.

And furthermore, invoking the provisions of Wisconsin Statute 973.047(1f), if the court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation, the court shall require the person to provide a biological specimen to the state crime laboratories for deoxyribonucleic acid analysis. The court shall inform the person that he may request expungement under s. 165.77 (4).

And furthermore, invoking the provisions of Wisconsin Statute 973.046(1r), if the court imposes a sentence or places a person on probation, the court shall impose a deoxyribonucleic acid analysis surcharge, calculated as follows: (a) For each conviction for a felony, \$250 (b) For each conviction for a misdemeanor, \$200.

Mandatory Fingerprinting

Pursuant to sec.970.02(7), Wis. Stats., at the Initial Appearance the Judge is required by law to determine at your first appearance in Court if your (the defendant's) fingerprints, photographs and other identifying data have been taken and if not, the Judge shall direct that this information be obtained;

- ☒ Identifying information has been obtained at the time of arrest
☐ Identifying information has not been obtained.

PROBABLE CAUSE Buffalo County Sheriff's Office, 2024-

Deputy Emily Rybarczyk, of the Buffalo County Sheriff's Office states as follows:

On October 23, 2024, I was in full uniform and in a fully marked squad, for the Buffalo County Sheriff's Office. I was attempting to serve a paper service on Victim 1, at the address of 26 Court Lane, in Fountain City, which is located in Buffalo County, and in the state of Wisconsin.

Let it be known, **I served a paper service on Arthur E. McMullin on October 15, 2024. Arthur said Victim 1 was not home and she should be home around 5:00 PM on weekdays. There were an additional four more attempts to serve Victim 1 with no contact.**

Around 1:23 PM, I rang the doorbell to the residence of 26 Court Lane and I heard a male party yelling at his dogs. The male party answered the door. I recognized the male party to be Arthur from previous contacts. **I asked Arthur if Victim 1 was home. Arthur looked down at the ground and paused momentarily. Arthur looked at me and replied, "You might as well call the coroner." I asked Arthur why would I call the coroner. Arthur said Victim 1 has been deceased for roughly six weeks. Arthur said she may have died from a heart attack and he did not want to deal with the situation yet.** Arthur said he was using a bucket and the outside to use the restroom. Arthur said Victim 1 did not have any medical issues, including to be cancer free. Arthur said there was no medication for Victim 1.

Arthur said he knew he screwed up, and he should have told me the first time I was at the residence with the paper service. Arthur said he has about 12 dogs and 30 cats in the house. Arthur said the house has not been taken care of like it is supposed to be.

I asked Arthur to sit down on the step of the porch until I give him further instructions. Arthur said he did not have any weapons on him, nor should there be weapons in the home. I requested additional units, and for Sheriff Osmond to be notified. Once Trooper Kent arrived on scene, I escorted Arthur and detained him in the back of my squad. The house was secured and no one left or entered the house. Detective Scholl, Chief Deputy Severson, and Sheriff Osmond arrived on scene.

During the ongoing investigation at the residence of 26 Court Lane, **Arthur believed there were 12 dogs and 30 cats inside of the residence. Arthur had told investigators that he knew the house was not kept properly and he risked losing all his animals. Arthur had told investigators that he ran out of food to provide for the animals, but he was feeding them scraps of handouts.** Buffalo County Humane Association. Trempealeau County Humane Association and Tails of Hope, were called to the scene to help remove the animals from the house safely. Arthur was given permission with guidance from myself and Chief Deputy Severson, to assist the humane associations and Tails of Hope with removing all the animals.

Also, investigators found two animal carcasses or skeletal remains inside the home, which are believed to be two cats.

The conditions of the house were horrendous and neglected. The house had a putrid odor of animal urine and feces. To enter the house, investigators and animal control had to use some sort of protective wear, especially a mask.

I assisted Tails of Hope with organizing the animal crates as Arthur carried the 14 dogs out of the house. **Arthur was able to easily access 12 of the dogs, but two were hard to find in the house. The first animal out of the house was Curly, a medium sized dog that had matted and shaggy hair. Some of the hair clumps were as big as my hand. The dog had a dirtied muzzle on, which appeared to have been on the dog for a while.** The rest of the dogs were smaller breeds. There were multiple yearling dogs that were offspring of two older dogs. None of the males appeared to be neutered and Arthur said there were a couple female dogs that were in heat.

There was at least one pregnant dog, that appeared to have red rings around her eyes, she had untrimmed nails, and her paws were discolored from feces and urine. Most of the dogs had untrimmed nails and were soaked with feces and urine.

The Buffalo County Humane Association sent over volunteers, which three entered the home with gloves, masks, boots, and several animal carriers to catch the cats. The volunteers had placed three or four cats at a time in a carrier and would bring them outside to be transferred to a bigger carrier.

I examined a hand full of the cats and photographed approximately the first half that were taken out of the residence. **A volunteer told me that majority of the cats were all underweight. The cats were soaked and discolored by feces and urine. Majority of the cats had puss filled eyes or a discolored substance leaking out of them. Some of the cats could not open their eyes fully. A volunteer showed me a cat that appeared to have mange or parasitic mites, which cause rashes and hair loss. The cat had a black substance around its eyes, and it was underweight.** I photographed this animal, and it was placed in a cage in the Tails of Hope van.

There were visible signs of feces and urine spots all over the house. The kitchen was full of garbage and dirty dishes. The white cupboards were stained with a brown substance. The bedroom or sleeping quarters was what appeared to be a bed that had bedding that was stained or discolored by filth. When I investigated by the archway in the kitchen, my eyes began to burn and water. I had a hard time breathing with my mask on. There was a strong odor of urine, feces and decomposition. I asked Arthur to exit the kitchen onto the porch, so animal control could remove the cats I exited the home and did not make any more contact with the volunteers or with any of the animals.

On October 24, 2024, Chief Deputy Severson explained to Arthur the process of surrendering ownership of the animals. Arthur signed over ownership for all the animals he had. Documentation was sent to the Buffalo County Humane Association.

Deputy Sheriff Rybarczyk #87

Buffalo County Sheriff's Office

Detective Nic Scholl, of the Buffalo County Sheriff's Office states as follows:

On October 23, 2024, at approximately 13:32, Detective Scholl responded to 26 Court Lane in the City of Fountain City, County of Buffalo, and State of Wisconsin, to assist with a death investigation. While on scene Scholl had conducted an interview with Arthur McMullin while arrangements were made to remove the 60 plus dogs and cats from the residence. See Scholl's separate report regarding the interview for more information.

Once the majority of the animals had been removed from the residence. Scholl and two members from the Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation Agents, and the on call coroner entered the residence.

Scholl left a signed search warrant on the kitchen Island. Scholl took photos of the inside of the residence. Scholl located four cell phones in the top drawer of the night stand next to the bed in the living room. Scholl took said phones into evidence.

Scholl located the decedent, Victim 1, in the bathroom. The decedent was on the floor of the bathroom. The decedent appeared to be lying on its right side with the head near the door frame of the room. The decedent's hair was covering most of its face. The right arm of the decedent was angled away from the body towards the opening of the door. All that was left of the arm was

the bone. From what Scholl could see, it appeared the elbow down was missing from the body. The body had decayed so much making it impossible to identify who it was just by looking. Through Scholl's training and experience he believes the body had been there for several weeks.

The decedents remains were placed into a body bag and removed by Talbot's Funeral home. A Deputy assisted with the transport of the decedents remains until it was secured for autopsy at Mayo.

While in the residence, Scholl observed two deceased animals which appeared to be that of cats in a bedroom. All that was left of one of the animals was bones, the other was in full decomposition. Scholl observed that the entire residence floor and partial walls were covered in feces. There was trash all over in the living room. The floors were wet and moldy due to the amount of feces. Scholl could feel the floor sink as he walked through the residence. The odor feces, ammonia, and the decaying decedent was overwhelming. The residence was not safe for humans or animals to be living in.

On October 23, 2024, at approximately 13:32, Detective Scholl was requested to assist Deputy Rybarczyk at 26 Court Lane in the City of Fountain City, County of Buffalo, and State of Wisconsin. **Rybarczyk was at the residence attempting to serve legal paperwork to Victim 1, when met at the door she was informed by Arthur E McMullin, that Victim 1 had been deceased in the residence for approximately six weeks.** While in route, Scholl was informed that there were at least 13 dogs and 30 cats inside the residence.

Upon arrival, Scholl made contact with Arthur who was sitting in the back seat of Rybarczyk's squad car. Scholl opened the door to have a conversation with Arthur. Arthur was not in hand cuffs nor was he ever told he was under arrest. Scholl reassured Arthur that he was not under arrest. Scholl informed Arthur that law enforcement was making arrangements to get his animals out of the residence safely so we could work on removing his deceased wife. Arthur understood what was going on and gave law enforcement permission to go into the residence to check on Victim 1.

The inside of the residence was covered in animal feces and there was an overwhelming odor emitting from the residence. Fountain City Fire was requested to respond with their self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). Two members of the Fire department entered the residence with their turnout gear and SCBA's on to confirm there was indeed a deceased subject in the residence. Arthur went into the residence with them to make sure the dogs remained cooperative. Scholl provided one of the firemen a camera to use to take a few photos of the deceased. Scholl also provided the firemen a body camera to record what occurred while they were inside the residence due to it being an active crime scene. **A few minutes later, the firemen exited the residence and confirmed with Scholl that there was a deceased person in the residence that, in their opinion, appeared to have been deceased for several weeks. Firemen also advised Scholl that there were several dogs, and closer to 50 plus cats in the residence.**

Sheriff Osmond began making calls to figure out how to safely remove all the animals from the residence. During this time Scholl began talking to Arthur some more.

Scholl and Chief Deputy Severson spoke to [REDACTED] who resides south of McMullins. [REDACTED] advised the last time she had seen Victim 1 was August 11, 2024. [REDACTED] knew this due to having messages on her phone. On August 11, 2024, Victim 1 and Arthur had dogs get loose in the neighborhood and they were trying to catch them.

Scholl asked Arthur if he was more comfortable sitting in the squad car or if he wanted to stand outside. Arthur asked to remain sitting in the vehicle but removed his legs from the car to give himself more room. Arthur informed Scholl of the following. **Arthur advised one morning 6 weeks ago to date; Victim 1 woke Arthur up complaining of not feeling well. Victim 1 spent most of the day on the toilet in the bathroom. Arthur did not think much of it as she has had part of her stomach removed years ago when she had cancer. Arthur had to go into the bathroom at least once to help Victim 1 after she had fallen off the toilet. Arthur helped Victim 1 get back onto the toilet. Arthur advised at one point, Victim 1 was shaking uncontrollably, and her eyes went to the back of her head while she was on the toilet. Victim 1 then laid down on the bathroom floor and Arthur left the room. Arthur went back to check on Victim 1 sometime later and found that she was deceased.**

Scholl asked Arthur how he knew Victim 1 was deceased. Arthur advised Victim 1 had blood coming out of her mouth. Scholl asked Arthur why he did not call for medical assistance during any of that time. Arthur advised Victim 1 did not like hospitals due to the cost. **Arthur stated after he noticed Victim 1 passed, he knew if he called for medical that they would take his kids away. Scholl asked Arthur if he had kids in the house. Arthur advised he was referring to his four-legged kids. Scholl asked Arthur what his plan was after Victim 1 had passed. Arthur stated he was trying to spend as much time with his animals as he could before they got taken away from him.** Scholl asked Arthur if he had ever moved Victim 1. Arthur advised Victim 1 died on the bathroom floor and he has left her there. Arthur stated he has been using a bucket in the house as his toilet now as he cannot get into the bathroom. Arthur advised Victim 1 is blocking the bathroom door from being able to shut so he has not been able to prevent the animals from getting in there.

Scholl asked Arthur about Victim 1 medical history. Arthur advised he met and married Victim 1 in 2015 or 2016. Arthur advised prior to knowing Victim 1 she had some form of cancer in her stomach. Arthur advised Victim 1 informed him that some of her stomach was removed due to the cancer. Arthur stated due to that Victim 1 has always spent more time using the restroom than most people. Arthur stated that he believed Victim 1 had a stroke prior to them meeting as well.

Arthur advised he thought that Victim 1 had two kids in the Eau Claire area but was not sure their names or how to get a hold of them. Arthur also believed that Victim 1 may have two brothers but could not confirm. Arthur advised ever since he has known Victim 1 she has never talked to anyone in her family.

Scholl asked Arthur if they had any cell phones in the residence that he would possibly be able to get information for family members from. Arthur advised Victim 1 and he both had cell phones in the residence. Arthur advised the phones had not been turned on in almost a month. Arthur advised the cell phones are in a night stand next to his bed in the living room.

Detective Nicholas Scholl # 98 Buffalo County Sheriff's Office

Deputy Jake Laehn, of the Buffalo County Sheriff's Office states as follows:

On October 23rd, 2024, at approximately 01:22 pm, Buffalo County Sheriff's Deputy Emily Rybarczyk conducted a civil process attempt at 26 Court Lane, in the City of Fountain City, in the County of Buffalo, in the State of Wisconsin. The process for a summons and complaint for small claims. The civil process was for a female party who was identified as Victim 1. It should be noted that Emily Rybarczyk knows this residence from a prior civil process attempt on Victim 1 and a male party who was identified as Arthur E. McMullin M/W 11/25/1954 on October 15th, 2024. **During that contact Rybarczyk served Arthur. Arthur advised Rybarczyk on that date that Victim 1 was not home at that time. During the attempt on October 23rd, 2024, Rybarczyk again made contact with Arthur. When Rybarczyk asked if Victim 1 was home, Arthur looked down at the ground and paused momentarily. Arthur then looked at Rybarczyk and told her, "You might as well call the coroner". When Rybarczyk asked why she should do that Arthur stated that Victim 1 had been deceased for approximately six weeks. Arthur said that she may have died of a heart attack, and he did not want to deal with that situation yet.** At that point in time Deputy Rybarczyk requested further units for assistance. Rybarczyk further advised by Arthur that there were approximately 12 dogs and 30 cats within the residence and that that residence had not been taken care of well.

Buffalo County Detective Nic Scholl, Buffalo County Sheriff Michael Osmond arrived on scene. Sheriff Osmond had requested the Fountain City Fire Department for assistance in securing the scene due to the **biohazards within the residence**. Consent was granted to the Fire Department by Arthur to enter to verify there was a deceased party within. At approximately 02:59 pm, Sheriff Michael Osmond contacted Deputy Jake Laehn and advised that the **Fountain City Fire Department had located and confirmed a deceased human within the bathroom area of the mobile home. Due to decomposition the Fire Department was not able to identify if the subject was male or female.**

Detective Nic Scholl conducted a consensual interview with Arthur McMullin at the scene. **Arthur advised Scholl that 6 weeks to today's date of October 23rd, 2023, Victim 1 had passed away in**

the bathroom. Arthur stated that on the morning of that date, Victim 1 had told him she was not feeling well and had spent a longer than normal time on the toilet. Arthur advised Victim 1 had fallen off the toilet once and he helped her get back on the toilet. He described that it looked like Victim 1 was having a seizure. Arthur said Victim 1 then fell off the toilet again and went to sleep on the bathroom floor. Arthur said sometime later he went to check on her while she was sleeping on the floor and noticed she was bleeding from her mouth. **Arthur advised he did not want to call for help because due to the state of his residence and he was fearful that his animals would all be taken away, which was why he had waited this long to make his disclosure.**

Deputy Jake Laehn was requested to draft a search warrant for the residence located at 26 Court Lane. In drafting the warrant, Deputy Laehn conducted an in house records check from the Buffalo County Sheriff's Office CAD Reporting System, specifically in regards to contact at that residence in the prior 6 weeks. Deputy Laehn noted the following:

- a. September 17th, 2024, 10:54 am, a welfare check was requested by property manager who was identified as Colette Danay Scherer F/W 09/19/1975. Scherer advised she wanted a welfare check as no rent had been paid for the Month of September. Scherer also reported the lawn not being maintained. Deputy Emily Rybarczyk conducted a check and made contact with Arthur. Arthur advised everything was ok. No contact was made with Victim 1.
- b. **October 15th, 2024, 12:54 pm, Deputy Emily Rybarczyk attempted the first civil process attempt. Arthur was served, Arthur advised Victim 1 would be home after 5pm.**
- c. **October 15th, 2024, 5:57 pm, Sgt. Ryan Howell conducted the second civil process attempt on Victim 1. Howell advised Victim 1 was still not home.**
- d. October 20th, 2024, 09:48 am, Deputy Brock Olson attempted a third civil process on Victim 1. No contact was made at the residence.
- e. **October 22nd, 2024, 07:28 pm, Deputy Raymond Barricelli attempted a fourth civil process attempt on Victim 1. Arthur advised Barricelli female would be home between 10a and 11 pm that night.**
- f. October 22nd, 2024, 11:12 pm, Deputy Raymond Barricelli attempted a fifth civil process attempt. No contact was made at that time.

Deputy Laehn noted that Arthur had several Law Enforcement contacts throughout the prior month and would tell Law Enforcement that Victim 1 would be back at a later time, all the while knowing based on his statement to Detective Nic Scholl that she deceased within his residence.

Upon receiving approval for the search warrant, Deputy Laehn provided a copy of the Warrant to Detective Nic Scholl at the scene. At approximately 06:49 pm, on October 23rd, 2024 Deputy Laehn along with Department of Justice Special Agent Lance Maske conducted an interview with Arthur at the Fountain City Fire Department located at 680 S Main St. in the City of Fountain City. Arthur was transported to the Department by Deputy Emily Rybarczyk.

Maske and Laehn introduced themselves to Arthur. Laehn read to Arthur his Miranda Rights. Laehn asked Arthur if he understood his rights to which he responded yes. He advised that he was a slow learner person. Laehn asked him if he was comfortable speaking with us, he stated right at the moment he was. He was asked if he needed us to re-read him his rights he stated no. Laehn asked him again if he understood his rights. He stated yes.

Arthur advised that Victim 1 was his wife and they had been married since 2015 or 2016. He stated that he and Victim 1 lived in Eau Claire County prior to Fountain City from 2015 through October of 2021. Arthur advised that was when they moved to Fountain City. Laehn inquired what Arthur and Victim 1 did for work. Arthur advised that he lives on social security and that when the pandemic hit Victim 1 had quit her job and everything had been put on him. He advised Victim 1 used to work for the news paper or drove taxi. He said Victim 1 quit in 2021 when they moved down to Fountain City. Arthur indicated that he worked in the janitorial field prior to going on social security. Arthur advised that the reason for the move when Victim 1 quit her job was they needed a place to live.

Arthur advised that when they moved to Fountain City, he and Victim 1 were the only two who residing in their mobile home along with 44 "four legged" "children" which were his cats and dogs. He stated there were 14 dogs and about 30 cats. Arthur advised that having all of the animals was Victim 1's doing. Arthur was asked if Victim 1 had any jobs when they moved to Fountain City. He stated no. He said when she quit her job in Eau Claire she never sought out further employment. Arthur advised that when Victim 1 quit it was her own choice and that she was a hard person to live with.

Arthur described Victim 1 was the type of person who it was “her way, or no way”, he advised she did not like being told what to do. Arthur was asked what the two would do on a day to day basis. He stated they would watch TV. **He said when they first started out down in Fountain City he used to clean but then it went backwards. Arthur specified he meant cleaning the house. Arthur said the cleaning of the house was left up to him.** He advised that Victim 1 on a day to day basis would play on her phone or watch television. Arthur was asked if they left the residence often. He advised they did not have any gas for that. He said they obtained food by having Walmart deliver groceries to them. Laehn asked Arthur what the last month and a half was like. Arthur advised that things started out good but six weeks prior Victim 1 must have been sick or something and passed away. He stated before she passed away Victim 1 was going to the bathroom frequently. He was unsure if that was part of her passing. He said that was abnormal for Victim 1. Laehn asked what Victim 1’s medical history was prior to her passing. Arthur advised Victim 1 was not on any medications and refused to go to doctors. Arthur stated that was by her choice. Laehn asked Arthur if Victim 1 had been sick prior to the past six weeks. He advised that Victim 1 must have had headaches as he knew that she took 1,200 mg of Aspirin daily. Laehn inquired about Victim 1’s eating habits. Arthur stated that she started out when they moved in eating well and then gradually, she started eating less. He advised towards the end Victim 1 would eat one or no meals daily. Laehn inquired why Arthur thought Victim 1 had a loss of appetite. Arthur said he thought maybe it was her way of getting out of their relationship. Laehn asked if Arthur and Victim 1 struggled getting food. Arthur indicated that other than the Walmart deliveries, Victim 1 would go to the food banks. Laehn asked if Victim 1 ever told Arthur why her appetite diminished. He advised she did not but thought maybe she was trying to lose weight. Arthur described Victim 1 as being a medium size, heavy set woman with dark hair. Arthur advised that he would always stay home and that Victim 1 would run all the errands. He stated that Victim 1 took care of everything.

Laehn asked Arthur specifically about the day of Victim 1’s passing. Laehn asked Arthur what he saw or heard that day from Victim 1. Arthur said Victim 1 slowly went downhill. He stated that when he saw Victim 1 on the toilet that day, she was rocking back and forth. He stated that Victim 1 started rolling her eyes and fell off the toilet. He said he picked her up and put her back on the toilet and she sat there for a while. **He stated she then fell off the toilet and landed where she landed on the floor. He stated when she was on the floor she fell asleep and the last time he checked on her she was gone.** Laehn asked how he knew she had passed. Arthur stated Victim 1 was no longer snoring and she had blood coming from her mouth. Arthur advised Victim 1 wasn’t doing anything at that time. Laehn asked if Arthur knew how to check for a pulse, he advised he did not. Laehn asked if Victim 1 said anything when he had put her back up onto the toilet the first time. He advised she did not. Arthur stated that he kept asking her what she wanted him to do for her however she wouldn’t answer him.

Laehn asked where Arthur was physically within the residence when Victim 1 fell the first time. He advised he was standing in front of her. He stated after he put her back up onto the toilet he stepped away from her at that point in time. He stated Victim 1 sat on the toilet for a little bit and then that was when she fell onto the floor. He stated that when she fell onto the floor he knew he wasn’t able to pick her back up from off the floor. He stated that Victim 1 weighed 320 pounds. Arthur was asked how he picked her up the first time. Arthur described that the first time she fell, she had her bottom half still on the toilet and her top half was leaning off to the right. Arthur positioned Victim 1 back up right so she wasn’t leaning off to the side. Laehn inquired if he watched her fall onto the floor. Arthur advised he had stepped away and believed he had his back to her when she fell. Arthur described that when she was on the floor she was positioned on her side. He recalled her eyes being open but she was sleeping and snoring. Arthur advised he went back to check on her around 6 pm and then when he went back at 9 pm she had passed. Laehn inquired what time Victim 1 had initially went to use the bathroom. Arthur advised Victim 1 had went to use the restroom initially around 07:45 to 08:00 am. Arthur said that at that time Victim 1 woke him up as he was sleeping. He recalled her saying something to him, but he did not recall what she said and then she went into the bathroom. Arthur said he continued checking on her throughout the day. He did not recall what time she had fallen to the her right side, and did not know what time she fell on the floor. He advised at 6pm when he checked on her, she was still snoring, but by 9pm she had passed away.

Laehn asked what Arthur was thinking when he found she had passed away. Arthur advised he should have done something but he didn’t. He then stated that he wanted to spend more time

with his kids. Laehn asked if he was referring to his cats and dogs. Arthur advised yes. Laehn asked Arthur if he talked to anyone the night Victim 1 passed away. He stated he did not. Laehn asked if Arthur recalled the specific date Victim 1 had passed away. Arthur advised he knew it was on a Wednesday exactly six weeks prior. Laehn asked what Arthur did during that six weeks. Arthur advised he spent time with his kids and watched television. Arthur advised at one point in time the Sheriff's office came to check on him, and Arthur stated he told the Deputy everything was alright instead of telling the Deputy the truth. Laehn noted from his prior records check that date was September 17th, 2024. Arthur recalled the check being the following Monday or Tuesday after Victim 1 had passed away.

Laehn asked Arthur what he lived off of during that six week period. Arthur stated he lived off of the food he had at the residence. Laehn asked if Arthur had a cell phone, to which Arthur stated he did. Arthur was asked if he talked to anyone during that six week period. Arthur stated he did not. Arthur was asked if Victim 1 had family. He stated she family in the Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls area. Arthur did not know their names, however. Arthur said he never met Victim 1's side of the family. Arthur was asked if anyone other than Law Enforcement came to his residence during those six weeks. He said the only other people who came to his residence were the people from the Aging and Disability Resource Program. He advised they would come to drop off food. He advised they did not ask about Victim 1 when they dropped off food. Arthur advised Victim 1 had set them up for that program through the County.

Laehn asked Arthur about his finances. Arthur advised he paid for all the groceries. Arthur advised he and Victim 1 utilized food stamps. He stated that he did not know if his name was on the food stamp card or not but knew Victim 1's name was. Arthur stated that food stamps did not cover food for their animals. He stated he would pay for the food for the animals out of his social security income. **Laehn asked if Arthur had purchased groceries during those six weeks. Arthur stated he had not**, as all the orders they placed, were through Victim 1s cell phone and her phone was dead. Laehn asked if Victim 1 had any other source of income. Arthur stated not that he knew of. Arthur stated he was the only one with a bank account, but he gave Victim 1 access to it. He stated Victim 1 however was not named on the account; he just provided her access.

Laehn asked Arthur about the civil processes that had been occurring in the last two weeks. Arthur stated that those were eviction notices. **Arthur stated Victim 1 was already gone when the eviction notices started coming. Arthur stated when the Deputies kept coming back to serve Victim 1, he would tell them that she was not home, because he did not want to deal with it. Laehn asked what Arthur didn't want to deal with. Arthur acknowledged he didn't want to deal with what has currently happening that day.** Laehn asked Arthur what changed that day, for him choosing to disclose Victim 1's passing. Arthur said he decided to do it that day, because he knew Law Enforcement would keep coming back and he decided to end it. Laehn asked if Arthur was running out of food that day. Arthur stated not yet, but would have shortly. Arthur said his social security check would be coming shortly as he receives his check two days before the third of every month. Laehn asked if Arthur had ever moved Victim 1 during that six week period. Arthur advised he had not. Laehn asked Arthur about his day to day hygiene with Victim 1 being deceased in the only restroom in the residence. Arthur stated he had not showered since Victim 1's passing and would go to the bathroom in a bucket in the residence or out in his carport area.

Prior to the interview with Arthur, Laehn had been advised by Deputy Rybarczyk that Arthur disclosed to her during her initial contacts that he had put a leg bone of Victim 1's in a trash can within the residence. Laehn asked Arthur about the leg. Arthur stated it was from Victim 1. Arthur advised that the cats must have been in the bathroom chewing on her leg when he was sleeping. Arthur advised that the animals had brought the leg bone out into the living room when he found it. Laehn asked Arthur if he put the leg bone in the trash can. Arthur stated he put it in the trash can because he knew we would need it. He advised the trash can with the leg in it was just inside the bathroom where Victim 1 was.

Arthur was asked a follow up question in regards to his comment that he should have done something. He was asked what that something was. **Arthur stated that he should have called Law Enforcement. Arthur stated he didn't want to deal with it at the time however. Arthur was asked why he didn't want to deal with it at the time of her passing. He stated it was because of the way the house looked. He acknowledged it was an embarrassment.** Arthur was asked if there was any

financial reasons he didn't want to call Law Enforcement, to which he stated no. **Laehn asked Arthur if he was concerned of the living conditions in regards to his animals. Arthur stated he knew we would be taken them and that was why he wanted to spend more time with them.**

Arthur was asked during that six-week period if he had enough dog and cat food. He stated he did not. Laehn asked what the animals were eating. Arthur advised the animals ate what he ate. Arthur advised that the animals ran out of their food at the end of the prior month or beginning of this month. Arthur said that the conditions in house were not cleaned the way the should be. He said there was dog crap and cat crap on the floors. He said the dogs and cats would urinate on the floors sometimes when he couldn't get them out in time.

Arthur was explained that an autopsy was going to be conducted on Victim 1's body. Arthur was asked if when the autopsy was performed if anything was going to be found that Arthur feels he should tell us about. Arthur stated no. Laehn asked Arthur what his and Victim 1's relationship was like. He stated it was mostly one sided. He said it was always her way. Arthur stated he didn't like that it was that way but he did whatever she asked him to do. Arthur said that sometimes the arguments would be over house chores or things he would say. He said sometimes she would yell. Arthur said he usually never confronted her back when she would yell at him. He was asked if there was any history of physical abuse between them. He stated no. Arthur said Victim 1 may have verbally abused him when she was mad but he would just let it go.

At that time the interview was completed. Arthur was then escorted out to Deputy Rybarczyk's patrol vehicle. Arthur was advised that he would be going to jail at that point in time. He was not placed in restraints due to his cooperation and seated in the rear of the vehicle. He was then transported to the Buffalo County Jail without incident.

Deputy Sheriff: Jake Laehn #96 Buffalo County Sheriff's Office

Subscribed and sworn to before me on 10/25/24

Electronically Signed By:

Electronically Signed By:

Mike Osmond

Thomas J. Bilski

Complainant

District Attorney

State Bar #: 1017113