

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
IN THE COURT OF APPEALS

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SC Court of Appeals

Appeal from Greenville County

Honorable G.D. Morgan, Jr., Circuit Court Judge

THE STATE,

RESPONDENT,

V.

JOHN TUFTON BLAUVELT,

APPELLANT

APPELLATE CASE NO. 2025-000315

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[THE FOLLOWING EXHIBITS ARE ON FILE WITH THIS COURT:

COURT’S EXHIBIT 3 (U.S. MARSHAL RECORDING), STATE’S EXHIBIT 2 (ITEMS COLLECTED FROM OREGON), STATE’S EXHIBIT 31 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 16 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 17 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 18 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 19 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 21 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 22 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 27 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 28 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 29 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 32 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 33 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 34 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 35 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 36 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 37 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 38 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 39 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 40 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 41 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 42 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 43 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S EXHIBIT 46 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE’S

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EXHIBIT 50 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE'S EXHIBIT 51 (PHOTOGRAPH), STATE'S
EXHIBIT 56 (PHOTOGRAPH)]**

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA	)	COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS
	)	2023GS2304013
COUNTY OF GREENVILLE	)	
	)	
	)	
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA	)	
	)	PLAINTIFF)
vs.	)	TRANSCRIPT OF RECORD
	)	
JOHN TUFTON BLAUVELT	)	
	)	DEFENDANT)

September 12, 2024
Greenville, South Carolina

B E F O R E:

THE HONORABLE G.D. MORGAN, JR., Judge.

A P P E A R A N C E S:

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Attorneys for The Defendant

APRIL HERRON
Official Court Reporter

1 MR. NEELY: I do have additional motions. If I
2 may for The Court, Your Honor, listed under motions
3 in limine, Letter E, at the bottom of Page 102.
4 There's a motion to suppress evidence pursuant to the
5 United States Constitution Fourth Amendment under
6 exclusionary rules set forth in [indiscernible].
7 That is not a motion we can take up today, Your
8 Honor. Ms. Abel and I spoke about that on Wednesday?
9 Earlier this week we spoke about it. And that's
10 going to require testimony from the United States
11 Marshall Service. And due to travel restrictions and
12 getting the federal government to appear in state
13 court, we're not going to be able to take that motion
14 up today.

15 THE COURT: But it is going to be taken up?

16 MR. NEELY: It does need to be taken up, Your
17 Honor. It's a motion to suppress a journal that was
18 found at the time of Mr. Blauvelt's arrest. We're
19 arguing that the journal should be suppressed. I
20 don't know what The State intends to go into in their
21 opening. But again, we're moving to have the journal
22 excluded in its entirety. So I don't know if a
23 limited instruction should be given at this point or
24 what. Because I do believe that there's a
25 Constitutional issue.

1 THE COURT: Well, obviously, I don't know what
2 it is, so.

3 Mr. Meadors.

4 MR. MEADORS: Yes, Your Honor, may it please
5 Your Honor. It's a journal that, allegedly, The
6 Defendant and a young lady named Hannah Thompson, who
7 was on the run with him, initially, wrote in the
8 journal. He actually confessed in the journal to
9 killing Ms. Blauvelt, in our opinion. There's a U.S.
10 Marshal Tamay [ph], I'll give the court reporter the
11 spelling of that when we get through. We're flying
12 him in next week, Judge. We do need him for the
13 hearing, I don't think it will be long. I will not
14 bring that up in my opening, will not refer to it, I
15 promise you that. We're mentioning to Your Honor
16 only.

17 THE COURT: And the journal is by him or the--

18 MR. MEADORS: When he was arrested this journal
19 was found on him. And that's something the U.S.
20 Marshal will let us all know when he comes here next
21 week. Where it was found, how it was found. And I
22 think that's the issue.

23 THE COURT: All right, we'll take it up at that
24 time.

25 My statement here a few minutes ago is really --

1 and I appreciate y'all letting me know on that one.
2 That's what I'm talking about. If you know there's
3 going to be a motion so let me know. And it doesn't
4 need to be heard at this time, we can hear it on
5 Monday or whenever that testimony comes up. But what
6 I do want to hear is anything that the parties are
7 certain they're going to argue. And I don't want any
8 motion just to come up if you already knew what
9 you're doing. You planned to argue that motion but
10 not doing anything today. I don't want to have any
11 sandbagging on that.

12 So all right, next motion.

13 MR. NEELY: One moment, Your Honor.

14 Your Honor, Letter D under number two motion in
15 limine is a motion to suppress evidence of The
16 Defendant's detention center phone calls pursuant to
17 Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution in
18 South Carolina State Supreme Court case called State
19 v. Ellison. Ellison. I don't believe that motion is
20 necessary, at this time, after speaking with
21 Ms. Abel. It's my understanding that during their
22 case in chief, The State is not intending to
23 introduce these phone calls. And seeing as this is
24 the case, then we don't need to take up the
25 suppression hearing.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA	)	
	)	COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS
COUNTY OF GREENVILLE	)	2023-GS-23-4013
	)	2023-GS-23-2014
	)	
	)	
	)	
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA,	)	
PLAINTIFF,	)	
	)	
vs.	)	TRANSCRIPT OF RECORD
	)	
JOHN TUFTON BLAUVELT,	)	
DEFENDANT.	)	
_____	)	

September 16-20, 2024
Greenville, South Carolina

B E F O R E:

THE HONORABLE G. D. MORGAN, JUDGE.

A P P E A R A N C E S:

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HOLLIE JENKINS
Court Reporter II

1 urinalysis. He then is no longer recruiting in the high
2 schools. He's down working in an office where he says he
3 does nothing but, essentially, play on his phone all day
4 long. He's not doing the military Army things that he is
5 trained to do that he wants to do, the things that he said
6 are so important to him. And then the separation
7 paperwork comes out four days before Cati is murdered.
8 When we're looking at establishing malice, Your Honor,
9 that state of mind is extremely relevant. And motive
10 helps establish that state of mind for the Defendant, Your
11 Honor.

12 So although I hear the argument, I do respectfully
13 disagree and think that the probative value is
14 substantially outweighed by the danger of unfair
15 prejudice. That is just what was going on in the
16 Defendant's life at that point in time, Your Honor. All
17 of that is res gestae in this case for the jury to
18 properly understand what was going on at the point in time
19 that Cati was killed.

20 THE COURT: All right. Anything else, Mr. Neely?

21 MR. NEELY: No, Your Honor.

22 THE COURT: On the other issue, is this anything on
23 the life insurance issue that needs to be addressed again?

24 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, we did submit to your chambers
25 as well on Friday, there is a pay stub that references a

1 five dollars being taken out of the Defendant's account.
2 However, that is from 2015, so we cannot tie that to a
3 life insurance policy for Cati Blauvelt. That comes from
4 a July 2015 pay stub and that's the only one we have in
5 the record. So we did present that to Your Honor,
6 however, I do want to note the date on that.

7 However, that does, at least, somewhat corroborate
8 the Defendant's statement to law enforcement that he pays
9 five dollars a month for family and spouse life insurance
10 policy. It's clear that he did at one point for someone
11 in his family. However, we cannot tie that to Cati
12 Blauvelt.

13 THE COURT: Mr. Neely.

14 MR. NEELY: Right. And again, Your Honor, what was
15 testified to on Thursday was that the issue of life
16 insurance was unclear when asked those questions by
17 Investigator Morecraft during the interrogation. And the
18 pay stub that was submitted to the Court is for five
19 dollars being drawn out of his pay, out of his salary.

20 THE COURT: For life insurance.

21 MR. NEELY: For life insurance. It's from July of
22 2015. Cati Blauvelt and John Blauvelt were not married
23 until December of 2015. He had a \$500,000 policy that he
24 was the covered person and that his ex-wife was the
25 beneficiary of. There was a -- there's a life policy he

1 was paying five dollars for that his ex-wife was the
2 covered and he was the beneficiary.

3 The question whether Cati Blauvelt was ever covered I
4 think was demonstrated on Thursday that, no. Officer
5 Morecraft testified that the Army had no records of a
6 policy with Cati Blauvelt ever existing.

7 So I think with that new information before the Court
8 that there was five dollars at one point six months before
9 these two were married, I think we have to go back to the
10 Cole case where they have prove the existence of a policy
11 and no policy for Cati Blauvelt ever existed.

12 MS. ABEE: And again, Your Honor, I believe that the
13 Cole case says the Defendant's knowledge of the existence.
14 And, again, multiple witnesses have told Investigator
15 Morecraft that the Defendant had offered them -- that he
16 had a life insurance on Cati and had offered them money in
17 attempts to help kill her.

18 THE COURT: So that's -- testimony will be brought
19 out that the Defendant did tell people that he had a life
20 insurance policy on her?

21 MS. ABEE: Yes, Your Honor. And that has been in
22 recorded statements that have been turned over kind of
23 from the beginning.

24 THE COURT: Anything, Mr. Neely?

25 MR. NEELY: That's the basis for the motion to

1 suppress, Your Honor. Because I think case law stands for
2 the State before that evidence is properly admitted to the
3 jury and the validity of that loss becomes a question for
4 them, the Court has to find that a policy did, in fact,
5 exist. And one did not exist.

6 THE COURT: All right. Anything as far as the other
7 argument or the other issue we argued, DNA, anything since
8 Friday -- or Thursday?

9 MS. ABEE: No, Your Honor.

10 THE COURT: So the next issue is --

11 MR. NEELY: If I can on the DNA just very briefly,
12 Your Honor. It was a 403 argument. 403 isn't just
13 unfairly prejudicial versus probative, it, also, stands
14 for issue confusion with the jury. And where the evidence
15 is so broad and so expansive and inconclusive as to the
16 identity of Mr. Blauvelt, I think under 403 and confusion
17 analysis, also, that it should be prohibited. Thank you.

18 THE COURT: So no additional argument on that issue,
19 right?

20 MS. ABEE: No, Your Honor.

21 THE COURT: So the next thing I understand is the
22 Defense has raised potential suppression of evidence; is
23 that correct, Mr. Neely?

24 MR. NEELY: That's correct, Your Honor.

25 THE COURT: And I'll hear from you.

1 MR. NEELY: Thank you, Your Honor.

2 Your Honor, a journal was seized from the property of
3 John Blauvelt on July 20th of 2022 when he was arrested in
4 Medford, Oregon. He was arrested by the United States
5 Marshal Service at the residence where he had been living
6 for the prior five years. Subsequent to that arrest, his
7 house was searched without a search warrant. The journal
8 was found in a bag that belonged to John Blauvelt. The
9 bag was zipped --

10 THE COURT: And where was the house again?

11 MR. NEELY: In Medford, Oregon.

12 THE COURT: Medford?

13 MR. NEELY: Yes, sir. .

14 THE COURT: All right.

15 MR. NEELY: The bag was stored in the rafters in a
16 garage. The bag was zipped and it had all of Mr.
17 Blauvelt's personal belongings inside of the bag. The
18 Marshals did not seek a search warrant to go inside of
19 that bag. They, instead, obtained consent from John's
20 girlfriend, who had no interest in the bag.

21 THE COURT: Was she living at the house?

22 MR. NEELY: She was living at the house, Your Honor.
23 They had been living together for about five years at that
24 point.

25 And so based on the Fourth Amendment violation, we'd

1 move to suppress the journal at this time.

2 THE COURT: I believe the burden is on the State, so
3 I'll hear from you, Mr. Meadors.

4 MR. MEADORS: May it please the Court.

5 We have a witness, Senior Investigator Chris Tamayo,
6 with the U.S. Marshal, if we could call him.

7 THE COURT: All right. Let's bring him up.

8 MR. NEELY: Your Honor, may we approach real briefly?

9 THE COURT: Yeah.

10 (WHEREUPON, a bench conference was held.)

11 THE COURT: All right. I'm going to stand down for
12 just a minute. We're going to bring the jury in and
13 excuse them for the night.

14 THE CLERK: May he be seated then?

15 THE COURT: Oh, yeah.

16 (WHEREUPON, the jury came into open court at
17 approximately 4:11 p.m.)

18 THE COURT: All right, ladies and gentlemen, I
19 believe you have selected a foreperson, Juror #150; is
20 that correct?

21 JUROR #150, FREDERICK LYDA: Yes, sir.

22 THE COURT: All right. You will sit in that seat
23 during the trial this week.

24 And the rest of you can sit wherever you want to. My
25 two alternates will be in those two, but you're free to

1 sit wherever.

2 We still have some issues and pre-trial matters that
3 we're handling right now. So instead of staying late and
4 keeping you, what we're going to do is I'm going to excuse
5 you for the day. We still have a lot of work to do this
6 afternoon on these motions. So I'm going to excuse y'all
7 for the day. And report back here, we're going to try to
8 get started at nine o'clock in the morning, 9:00 a.m.

9 So I want to raise the issue I did right before
10 lunch, please, do not discuss the case with anyone. Do
11 not mention it, do not talk about it. As I said earlier,
12 don't talk about the lawyers, don't talk about the
13 witnesses, what they're wearing, anything about this case
14 at all.

15 Important, when you go home tonight, your family
16 members or your friends may ask you -- they know you're on
17 a jury. They may ask you about the case. Do not say
18 anything about the case. Tell them that the Judge has
19 ordered me not to do it and I'll get in big trouble if I
20 do. So I can't talk to you about it until this case is
21 over. So you can talk to them all you want to after it is
22 over. But until then, please, don't do that. And when I
23 say that you will get in trouble, I am serious about that.
24 If I do find out, it's not going to be real good. So I
25 urge you not to do that.

1 The other thing importantly is social media. Do not
2 try to Google anything about this case. Do not Google
3 anything about the lawyers or anybody involved in this
4 case whatsoever. Do not watch the news. There is going
5 to be some coverage in this case. Do not watch the news.
6 If you just happen to be walking through the room in your
7 house and your family has it on, I need you to either turn
8 that TV off or leave the room. Please do not look at
9 anything that you see on TV. Do not read anything in the
10 paper. Do not look on your phone or Google anything until
11 this case is over.

12 I can't stress enough of how important that is and
13 the seriousness of that instruction by me. I know you
14 won't. I feel confident that you won't and you'll abide
15 by the instructions. But it can happen and people will
16 find out and it's not going to be good.

17 So, please, don't do that. I hope all of you have a
18 good night. We'll see you at nine o'clock in the morning.
19 We'll have all the pre-trial motions done. We'll start
20 opening statements and start the case first thing in the
21 morning.

22 I hope all of you have a good night.

23 (WHEREUPON, the jury was excused from open court at
24 approximately 4:14 p.m.)

25 THE COURT: All right. State call its witness.

1 MR. MEADORS: May it please the Court.

2 The State calls Senior Inspector Chris Tamayo.

3 THE CLERK: Sir, if you'll, please, pause at the end
4 of the bench, place your left hand on the Bible and raise
5 your right hand.

6 WHEREUPON,

7 CHRIS TAMAYO,

8 after first having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

9 THE CLERK: Thank you.

10 Please be seated.

11 THE COURT: Your witness.

12 MR. MEADORS: May it please the Court.

13 THE CLERK: Please state your name for the record.

14 THE WITNESS: Chris Tamayo.

15 THE CLERK: Thank you, sir.

16 DIRECT EXAMINATION

17 BY MR. MEADORS:

18 Q My investigator, Matt Ellis, said I said investigator
19 a minute ago. Senior inspector?

20 A Correct.

21 Q I apologize. We're not going to go into your
22 background like we would normally in front of the jury
23 right now. But very generally, could you tell His Honor
24 how long you've been in law enforcement and, specifically,
25 with U.S. Marshals?

1 A Yes, I've been with the U.S. Marshals for almost 12
2 years, 11 and a half years.

3 Q How many years in law enforcement?

4 A Total years in law enforcement would be 12.

5 Q And tell the Judge, too, are you assigned to a
6 special unit or type case that you go -- or searching as a
7 U.S. Marshal?

8 A Yes. Currently, I'm assigned to the regional
9 fugitive task force in the bay area of California. Our
10 assignment is to locate and apprehend violent offenders.
11 At the time of this case, though, I was assigned as a
12 Deputy U.S. Marshal for the District of Oregon, working
13 the same thing, though, fugitives and, specifically, cold
14 cases.

15 Q Specifically what?

16 A Cold cases.

17 Q Cold cases. Okay, that's what I was looking for. Is
18 there a time that those cases -- where you take over?
19 What becomes cold? When they go from warm to cold?

20 A Typically, around three years, three to five years,
21 we call it a cold case. It kind of depends on the
22 violence of the crime or if there's any other stipulations
23 behind it. But anywhere from three to five years is kind
24 of where we start.

25 Q And when did you get involved, you, yourself?

1 A I was initially involved and aware of the case in
2 mid-2021, but heavily working it December 2021 through the
3 time of the arrest.

4 Q And prior to that, the marshals had been working it,
5 just not the cold unit?

6 A Correct.

7 Q And that's what we want to focus on today is just the
8 time you had, quite frankly, when Mr. Blauvelt was
9 arrested and what happened after that. You understand
10 that, don't you?

11 A I do.

12 Q Kind of what led up to his arrest?

13 A Well, the cold case unit got together when this case
14 was brought to us. So there was collective minds across
15 the nation that when the case was brought from the
16 District of South Carolina, we started working the case as
17 a group. The deputies out here and task force officers
18 were doing a bunch of investigative techniques that most
19 of them are law enforcement sensitive. But we ended up
20 developing an address for a Stephanie Green as a possible
21 associate.

22 Q And where was Ms. Green's address?

23 A I know it was on Lincoln Street in Medford, Oregon.
24 I can't remember the exact number. Possibly, ■.

25 Q Stephanie Green, Medford, Oregon?

1 A Correct.

2 Q And what did y'all do in an attempt to apprehend the
3 Defendant, John Blauvelt?

4 A Initially, I asked for support from our office down
5 there. Medford is about four hours away from my main
6 office in Portland, Oregon. They conducted surveillance
7 themselves. During that time, they said we have a
8 possible. Can you come down here as soon as possible?

9 I traveled down the next day. We set up surveillance
10 around the house. During that time, we watched an
11 individual come out that looked like John Blauvelt. He
12 matched him hair, height, weight was just a little bit
13 heavier. But we saw someone that looked very much like
14 our target. We waited some time just to make sure that it
15 was -- you know, we had a good identification. I had
16 photos from the cold case unit that deputies sent to me of
17 his identifying marks and tattoos.

18 When we were notified that the target came out from
19 the front door to the side of the house, he was washing,
20 like, a kiddie pool with a hose, we did another drive-by.
21 I used binoculars and from my point on the street, I could
22 see a very distinct tattoo on his right arm that matched
23 the photos we had.

24 Q When you say the word target, is that what you use to
25 define the person you're looking for?

1 A The fugitive.

2 Q The fugitive. And had you studied not only the facts
3 of the case, but had you looked at his tattoos?

4 A Multiple times, yes.

5 Q So with your binoculars, did you observe a tattoo?

6 A I did.

7 Q On the body of John Blauvelt?

8 A I did.

9 Q Did you recognize that?

10 A I did.

11 Q You had seen it before in your investigation and
12 research of Mr. Blauvelt?

13 A I did, yes.

14 Q And based on the information you had already
15 developed, plus developed this day with the same stature
16 and -- what did y'all do?

17 A So once he was outside that last time and I had a
18 good identification, I was acting as the team leader in
19 this position. I was riding shotgun with a -- the
20 supervisor of that office. We called initiate, which is
21 our command to move in. We had some guys dismount from
22 foot around the corner. He was still standing with the
23 pool and hose washing it out.

24 Q What did he have on?

25 A He was wearing black basketball shorts about knee

1 length, like, beyond the knee, and that's it. So he was
2 shirtless. And as they rounded the corner of the
3 neighboring house, me and the supervisor turned up the
4 driveway. Essentially, drove straight at him with
5 deputies in front of us. They ordered him to the ground,
6 gave commands, identified who we were. He went down to
7 ground and about three or four of them put him in cuffs.
8 I got out -- I exited the vehicle. We asked, Are you John
9 Blauvelt? We didn't get any answer --

10 Q When you say you didn't get any answer, did you get
11 anything when you said, Are you John Blauvelt? Was there
12 body language? Was there anything?

13 A The look of him was pure shock, pure shock of why
14 we're there, pure shock, you know, eyes were wide, a blank
15 stare, essentially. And the responses were pretty much
16 nothing.

17 Q Did he shake his head?

18 A It was just a blank stare. And there was a lot -- it
19 was not a lot of talking initially when we were trying to
20 engage, like, hey, who are you. It wasn't until a little
21 bit later.

22 Q You were attempting to identify him through him and
23 he doesn't respond to you?

24 A Correct.

25 Q Is that fair?

1 A Fair.

2 Q Okay. Then what happened?

3 A Once he was in cuffs, I mean, I did take a photo. We
4 walked him to my vehicle -- or not my vehicle, but the one
5 I was riding in. We walked him to the hood of it. Again,
6 we tried to talk to him a little bit. I know I was trying
7 to speak to him and identify him. Okay, we know who you
8 are. The most we got out of him is my name is Ben.

9 Q Say that again.

10 A My name is Ben.

11 Q So he said his name was Ben?

12 A Ben. At that point, we were -- because the house is
13 -- at that point, we're standing out in front of it. It
14 was a little unsafe for us, too. He was asking for a
15 T-shirt, so we were trying to get him dressed. I kept
16 some officers on him so that a couple of us could go
17 inside to, essentially, make sure the scene was safe and
18 he requested a T-shirt. So we wanted to get him a
19 T-shirt.

20 Q Did he tell you where his T-shirt was?

21 A In the bedroom.

22 Q Did he say it's in my bedroom?

23 A I don't remember exactly.

24 Q Okay. Did you go get him some clothes, or did
25 somebody?

1 A We did. I went inside with a couple other officers.

2 Q Then what happened?

3 A We went inside the house looking for his clothes. We
4 saw a firearm on the stand. At that point, we kind of had
5 to take secure precautions.

6 Q And that's standard operating procedure, correct?

7 A Yes. We got him a T-shirt. We talked to him a
8 little bit more. Again, no true identification, but we
9 were trying to get ahold of Stephanie as well, trying to
10 get her to come out so we can talk to her.

11 So during all this course, we're grabbing him a
12 T-shirt, we're getting him clothes. We see a firearm and
13 we have to secure it. We got him some clothes.

14 At some point, I went back outside. He was sitting
15 on the porch. He doesn't have his T-shirt on yet, but one
16 of the officers was holding it. And I went and grabbed my
17 mobile fingerprint identifier and I rolled his prints on
18 that.

19 Q And so up to this point, had he admitted he was John
20 Blauvelt or said I'm John Blauvelt?

21 A He had not.

22 Q So what happened after you used the mobile -- you've
23 got that mobile fingerprint machine?

24 A We do.

25 Q So you can check somebody's fingerprint right on the

1 spot?

2 A Correct.

3 Q And what happened as a result of that?

4 A It came back with a NCIC warrant hit saying that John
5 Blauvelt was wanted out of South Carolina.

6 Q Did you make him aware of that?

7 A I did. I showed it to him. I showed it from my
8 phone because that's where the results come from. I
9 showed it directly in front of his face. I said, This is
10 your name. Your prints have shown that it's you. And
11 again, it was kind of a blank stare. There was no
12 response necessarily verbally. But it was just -- I guess
13 from the verbal cues, it was shock.

14 Q Sill no admitting that that's me?

15 A Correct.

16 Q Then what did you do?

17 A We ended up having to wait for Stephanie for about an
18 hour for her to show up. But we weren't going to wait
19 with him on scene. We wanted to get him taken into
20 custody, booked into the jail. So a couple of the
21 deputies, they transported him to the Jackson County jail
22 and we waited for Stephanie to show up.

23 Q So at any time before he left, did he say my name is
24 John Blauvelt?

25 A Not before he left.

1 Q Now, you said Stephanie. Again, tell me her last
2 name again, please. Green?

3 A Green.

4 Q Did she show up?

5 A She did show up.

6 Q And if you can tell Your Honor kind of what happened
7 and then we're going to play the tape with his permission.
8 Tell him what happened when Ms. Green showed up.

9 A When she came up, obviously, she's in a little bit of
10 shock wondering why there's several officers there. We
11 informed her that we just arrested her boyfriend and that
12 I would like to speak with her if she didn't mind. She,
13 of course, had a bunch of questions. She wanted to know
14 why he was arrested. I said, We'll definitely get to
15 that. I would just like to go inside and talk to you if
16 you don't mind. She agreed.

17 We walked inside, we were in the kitchen. We did
18 tell her, like, hey, we know there's a firearm. She said,
19 Yeah, it's my registered firearm. We said, Okay, we're
20 going to keep it secured. I started a recording, told her
21 I was going to record, and we had an interview.

22 Q Did she seem surprised?

23 A She was absolutely shocked.

24 Q Okay. And did she know the Defendant, John Blauvelt,
25 as John Blauvelt?

1 A No, she knew him as Ben.

2 Q As Ben. Okay. So he had identified himself to her
3 as Ben according to your conversation with her?

4 A Correct.

5 Q Can you summarize the tape and then we'll play it
6 just for background before we get there, if that makes
7 sense?

8 A Sure. So the interview started. Again, I was trying
9 to be sensitive about it. I know this is a big deal for
10 her.

11 MR. MEADORS: Well, I tell you what, maybe for
12 time-wise, maybe we should go ahead and play it, Judge.
13 That might be more efficient.

14 BY MR. MEADORS:

15 Q And this is you on here?

16 A It is.

17 Q And Ms. Green?

18 A That's correct.

19 Q And there's another officer on here, too, also,
20 correct?

21 A Correct. You'll hear two other voices, actually.

22 MR. NEELY: And, Your Honor, before we play that, may
23 we approach?

24 (WHEREUPON, a bench conference was held.)

25 MR. MEADORS: For these purposes, without objection

1 from the Defense, so this is Court's Exhibit No. 3.

2 MR. NEELY: That's correct, Your Honor, no objection.

3 THE COURT: All right. Admitted into evidence.

4 (WHEREUPON, Court's Exhibit No. 3 was marked and
5 admitted into evidence.)

6 (WHEREUPON, Court's Exhibit No. 3 was played in open
7 court.)

8 MR. MEADORS: Thank you, Your Honor, for your
9 patience listening to that.

10 BY MR. MEADORS:

11 Q How far was the garage from the house, if you
12 remember?

13 A It was detached, but it just outside the door. There
14 wasn't much gap.

15 Q Was the door to the garage open when you went in?

16 A I don't recall --

17 Q It was unlocked, I'm saying?

18 A Unlocked, yes.

19 Q All right. Excuse me. That was a bad question.
20 You've just heard it, we've all heard it, did Ms.
21 Stephanie give y'all permission to get the bag.

22 A Yes.

23 Q Did she give you permission to search the bag?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And y'all searched it?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And I think we -- some of the items in there, you put
3 them in a bag --

4 (WHEREUPON, Court's Exhibit No. 5 was marked for
5 identification.)

6 Q This is marked Court's Exhibit No. 5. Do you
7 recognize this?

8 A I do.

9 Q And what is that?

10 A The property seized and collected.

11 Q Will you open it up, please?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Is there anything identifying Chris Tamayo in there?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Okay. What is it?

16 A It's my business card.

17 Q And read the front of the card?

18 A The front says U.S. Department of Justice, United
19 States Marshal Service, Deputy U.S. Marshal, the address
20 and phone number.

21 Q And on the back, what does it have?

22 A The back is the date that we collected this,
23 7/20/2022 at 5:00 p.m. I wrote my name and signed it.
24 And then there's another date here where I turned it back
25 over to Jackson County Sheriff to be collected by

1 Simpsonville.

2 Q And what's the date on that when you turned it back
3 over?

4 A 7/26/2022 at 9:50 p.m.

5 Q So there's six days in between there?

6 A There is.

7 Q Please tell the Judge about those six days. Where
8 were those items -- first, going back, were these items
9 collected from the house we just heard from when you were
10 inside?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And did you put them in the bag?

13 A Either I or my partner.

14 Q And you were present when they were put in the bag?

15 A Yes.

16 Q You sealed it?

17 A I did.

18 Q Did you take custody of that bag?

19 A I did take custody of the bag.

20 Q And what did you do with it on July 20th of 2022?

21 A The bag stayed in custody with me. Actually, at the
22 time, I was transferring offices to my current location.
23 So I kept it in my lock box in my vehicle where I keep
24 my -- all my secured -- my firearms, bullet proof vest.
25 It stayed locked there or in my personal possession until

1 I got it down to the deputies.

2 Q So that was the quickest you could get it back there?

3 A Correct.

4 Q And you had it locked and secured during that time
5 period?

6 A Correct.

7 Q And then on the 26th, you left it where, July 26th?

8 A July 26th, I met with the deputies from Jackson
9 County to turn it over to them so that Simpsonville PD
10 could come get it.

11 Q And there's some -- is there anything else in
12 there -- and before you left this residence, did the
13 Defendant ever identify himself as John Blauvelt?

14 A Before I left the --

15 Q Before he left?

16 A Before he left, no.

17 Q Okay. Was there anything else in these items that
18 you were -- well, why were you looking through these
19 items?

20 A So part of the cold case investigation is just
21 finding -- one, we needed to identify him completely.
22 Although I did do prints, I still wanted to find some kind
23 of identification, his ID card, something that was with
24 him that we could book with him to prove to the jail, as
25 well as we were trying to do a -- and gather his life and

1 see if there was any other means that he was -- you know,
2 other identifications that he was taking on that he could
3 be on the run for six years. So it was really just some
4 background for the cold case unit.

5 Q And we've already put one name, I don't want to put
6 these names out on the -- but is this a check that's not
7 his check -- that's not in his name?

8 A Correct.

9 Q Was it in his belongings?

10 A Yes.

11 Q I'm handing up a California driver's license. Can
12 you tell the Judge what that is?

13 A Yeah, it's a California driver's license. It looks
14 like a Hispanic male, not John. I don't know if you want
15 me to say the name.

16 Q No, that's okay. Don't say the name. But is that
17 John Blauvelt?

18 A It is not.

19 Q And do you have anything else identifying here? What
20 is this?

21 A We collected a wallet. It had some other
22 identification in it. There was Mexico pesos. The
23 Michael Kusik (ph), which is what we believed was either
24 an uncle or some kind of associate. So there was a
25 business card here. So I'm just opening some of it up.

1 Some store cards, but there's no identifying name on them,
2 Starbucks cards.

3 Q Now, in your investigation and in preparing for the
4 pursuit and in pursuit of the Defendant, did you become
5 aware of his family and his children or names?

6 A We did.

7 Q And were you aware he had a daughter named Madison?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And in the diary, is there a letter to Madison?

10 A Ask that one more time.

11 Q On the audio, we hear you or your partner saying, Is
12 this something we want to take? Did you find something in
13 the diary that related back to the Defendant?

14 A Nothing specifically, but there was journal notes
15 that we believed was -- may have some good information in
16 it. So we decided we would take it for further seizure.

17 Q And were you aware there was a note in here to his
18 daughter, Madison?

19 A I didn't really go through that myself.

20 Q That's fine.

21 And this stayed in your custody and control until you
22 turned it back over to the locals that then turned it over
23 to the Simpsonville Police Department, correct?

24 A Correct.

25 Q Now, who owned the residence?

1 A Stephanie.

2 Q Okay. And did the Defendant, John Blauvelt, have any
3 ownership rights whatsoever that you were able to
4 determine in that residence?

5 A He did not.

6 Q And did Ms. Stephanie give you consent to search the
7 garage?

8 A She did.

9 Q Did she give you consent to get this package?

10 A She did.

11 Q Did she give you consent to search inside the
12 package?

13 A She did.

14 Q And did Ms. Stephanie know the name John Blauvelt?

15 A She did not.

16 Q When John Blauvelt left the house that day, he didn't
17 tell you I'm John Blauvelt, did he?

18 A He did not.

19 Q Did he ever tell you that's not me?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Okay. When was that?

22 A All of us were asking for his identification. And I
23 personally did it when we were at the front of the truck
24 that I rolled in on. I had a chance to ask him and I
25 again asked him, Are you John Blauvelt? And he said, No.

1 Q He said no.

2 And is the individual you arrested in Medford, Oregon
3 and that you did determine was John Blauvelt, is he in
4 this courtroom?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Would you please point him out for His Honor?

7 A He's sitting in the corner over there with the dark
8 jacket, dark tie, maybe a white shirt.

9 MR. MEADORS: That's all we have at this time. Thank
10 you.

11 THE COURT: Cross?

12 MR. NEELY: Yes, sir, Your Honor. Thank you.

13 May it please the Court.

14 CROSS-EXAMINATION

15 BY MR. MEADORS:

16 Q I don't believe I caught all of what you -- one of
17 the last things you said. I believe you told Mr. Meadors
18 the journal notes may have some good info, so we decided
19 we would take it. Is that what you testified to?

20 A Yeah, I said there were notes in there that appeared
21 to be written by an individual. So we thought we would
22 take it.

23 Q As evidence?

24 A Yeah.

25 Q Now, you've been with the Marshal service 12 years?

1 A Yes.

2 Q All right. How many arrests have you made over the
3 12 years?

4 A Quite a few. I would say in the last two years, I've
5 made -- been a part of 500 arrests.

6 Q In the last two years, you've been a part of 500
7 different arrests?

8 A Correct.

9 Q 500 different individuals that you and your unit have
10 personally investigated, tracked, followed and,
11 ultimately, arrested?

12 A Yes.

13 Q All right. They all start running together?

14 A Some do. Some do.

15 Q When you get back to the office or when you get back
16 in the car where your computer is, do you take notes?

17 A Not always, no.

18 Q So if two years later, you're going to testify, what
19 are you relying on to refresh your memory about an arrest
20 you made 24 months ago, 26 months ago?

21 A We write arrest reports. In this incident, I did not
22 write the arrest report. It was a collateral lead that
23 was written by Jordan Burry. So that was the response
24 back to report the arrest.

25 Q So all of the details that you're testifying about,

1 those are just details that you remembered from 26 months
2 ago?

3 A That and the audio recording. So the only thing that
4 I was -- I probably should have wrote was the details of
5 the recording, of the interview. But because I had the
6 recording, it -- once I relistened to it, it reminded me
7 of -- just as good as notes, instead, it was audio.

8 Q When you arrested John, he was outside washing a
9 kiddie pool?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And you took a picture of him once he was down on the
12 ground?

13 A Down on the ground and up.

14 Q Down on the ground and up?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Did you turn those pictures over to anybody?

17 A They were sent to South Carolina, the deputies out
18 here.

19 Q Do you remember who you sent them to?

20 A Deputy William Cook had them and anyone else in the
21 cold case team.

22 Q At any point in time when you're having this
23 hour-long conversation with Mr. Blauvelt, did you cut on
24 your audio recording to record that conversation?

25 A No.

1 Q No. All right. So when he's asking for you to go
2 inside and get a T-shirt, that is not audio recorded?

3 A No.

4 Q When you tell the Court that he refused to tell you
5 his name or when he kept using a different name, that's
6 not audio recorded for the Court?

7 A No.

8 Q When he asked you to go inside and get his bag,
9 that's not audio recorded, correct?

10 A No.

11 Q But what we heard on the tape is that he told another
12 marshal, not you, correct?

13 A Correct.

14 Q Who was that?

15 A Pat Migara (ph).

16 Q And he told Marshal Migara that he had a bag inside?

17 A Correct.

18 Q And then when you went inside -- let me back up for a
19 second. When you arrested him, when you had him cuffed
20 and on the ground and then back up, your office -- or your
21 officers out there reached out to Stephanie Green?

22 A I personally called her.

23 Q You personally called her. Because she was not at
24 the residence at that time?

25 A Correct.

1 Q But John was at the residence at that time?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And in between the time you first called Stephanie
4 Green and she got back to the residence, it was about an
5 hour?

6 A About an hour.

7 Q Over an hour?

8 A I don't know exactly.

9 Q But, at least, an hour went by?

10 A At least.

11 Q Okay. And in that hour, John asked you to go get him
12 a T-shirt, correct?

13 A I just don't know if I called her before he asked for
14 it, but at some point, he asked for us to get a shirt,
15 yes.

16 Q And when you went in the house to get the shirt, you
17 went into a bedroom?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And you opened a dresser drawer?

20 A I didn't personally grab the T-shirt, my partner did.
21 So I don't know where he grabbed the shirt from. But I'm
22 sure it was out of a closet or a dresser, yes.

23 Q Was it the only T-shirt that was there to grab?

24 A I don't know.

25 Q Did he have other personal effects in the house?

1 A Not that I saw, no.

2 Q Did you look around the house?

3 A Just from the view where we went in through the
4 living room to the bedroom. I didn't see anything else
5 that was his.

6 Q From that tape we heard about the relationship that
7 Stephanie and John had or the name that he was using at
8 the time. How long were they in a relationship together?

9 A She said six years, which matched up with what we
10 found out during the investigation.

11 Q And they had been moving together, living together
12 for most of that duration?

13 A Yes.

14 Q So when Stephanie got a mortgage on this house, John
15 moved in there with her, correct?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And he was living there with her?

18 A Yes.

19 Q He didn't have another residence that he was living
20 at?

21 A He did not.

22 Q All right. And again, at about the 12:40 mark of
23 that video that we just listened to, the other marshal
24 comes in and states that John mentioned that he had a bag
25 of his personal belongings, correct?

1 A Yes.

2 Q All right. And Stephanie told you that he kept
3 everything in that bag?

4 A Yes.

5 Q She told you that she had never seen that journal
6 before, correct?

7 A Correct.

8 Q That she had never seen him draw in it?

9 A Correct.

10 Q Or write in it?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Everything that was of evidentiary value, you put in
13 that Ziplock bag, correct?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And everything else, you left on the floor of
16 Stephanie Green's and John Blauvelt's house, correct?

17 A Yes, everything else was left.

18 Q You didn't take anything else with you?

19 A No.

20 MR. NEELY: Your Honor, I have nothing further.

21 THE COURT: Any redirect?

22 MR. MEADORS: No, sir.

23 Thank you very much.

24 THE COURT: You can step down.

25 Thank you.

1 THE WITNESS: Thank you, Your Honor.

2 THE COURT: All right. Any additional witnesses on
3 this issue?

4 MR. MEADORS: No, sir.

5 Thank you, Judge.

6 THE COURT: All right.

7 MR. NEELY: Your Honor, if I may, I'd like to call
8 Investigator Schofield to the stand.

9 THE CLERK: Ma'am, please, pause at the end of the
10 bench, place your left hand on the Bible and raise your
11 right hand.

12 WHEREUPON,

13 CHERYL SCHOFIELD,

14 after being duly sworn, testified as follows: "

15 THE CLERK: Thank you. Please be seated.

16 And, please, state your name for the record.

17 THE WITNESS: Cheryl Schofield.

18 DIRECT EXAMINATION

19 BY MR. NEELY:

20 Q Investigator Schofield, you wrote a supplemental
21 report on August 4th of '22, in regards to going out to
22 Medford and collecting John Blauvelt and possessions
23 handed to you by the marshal, correct?

24 A Yes.

25 Q All right. In your supplemental report, you detailed

1 meeting with Officer Jared Conroy who's assigned to the
2 U.S. Marshals task force, correct?

3 A That's correct.

4 Q All right. And he detailed -- you detailed getting
5 this bag from the Marshals, correct?

6 A Correct.

7 Q And you note that there's no official chain of
8 custody form included, correct?

9 A Correct.

10 Q So you have no idea where this bag had come from or
11 where it had been, do you?

12 A I received it from Jared Conroy, yes.

13 Q Right, but there's no official chain of custody form.
14 So other than the business card that's in the bag and
15 receiving it from Officer Conroy, you can't track back
16 where the bag has come from, correct?

17 A Other than what Officer Conroy told me about what was
18 detailed on the back of that business card.

19 Q Which is what you wrote down. But short of that,
20 there's no official paperwork to track that bag, correct?

21 A That's correct.

22 Q All right. And then in your August 5th supplement,
23 you detailed actually going through the journal, correct?

24 A Correct.

25 Q And in your supplemental report, you wrote a lot of

1 the pages and some partial pages have been previously
2 ripped out. Do you remember writing that?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Do you have any idea who ripped those pages out?

5 A No.

6 Q When did you first hear that audio recording?

7 A When did I first hear that audio recording?

8 Q Yes, ma'am.

9 A Friday.

10 Q Friday?

11 A Uh-huh.

12 Q At any point in the last 26 months, did you ask the
13 Marshals to turn over any other additional evidence that
14 they might have?

15 A I didn't receive anything. I don't recall if I asked
16 for anything or not. If I did, I have not received
17 anything.

18 MR. NEELY: Nothing further, Your Honor.

19 THE COURT: All right. Cross?

20 MS. ABEE: No, Your Honor.

21 THE COURT: All right. You may step down.

22 Thank you.

23 Any additional witnesses from the Defendant?

24 MR. NEELY: None, Your Honor.

25 THE COURT: All right. Let me hear from you.

1 MR. NEELY: One moment.

2 (Pause.)

3 THE COURT: It's your motion to suppress. It's the
4 State's burden.

5 MR. MEADORS: I was waiting, I didn't know if you
6 wanted him to go first.

7 Judge, this is a third party consent case, we alleged
8 initially. He didn't have standing, the Defendant. He
9 had no ownership rights there to the residence in Oregon.
10 No evidence -- I mean, he wasn't paying bills there. He
11 was living there. He was going by a fake name. The young
12 lady, Ms. Stephanie, and I won't give her last name
13 anymore, knew him as Ben, didn't even know him as John
14 Blauvelt. He had no ownership rights in the property --
15 in the property itself.

16 And the officer, I think had the best notes you could
17 have. He had an audio of what happened. We played it.
18 Thank goodness, he kept it with him. We all just got it
19 this past weekend. I don't think that's an issue with
20 anybody. And, clearly, in there, she consents to law
21 enforcement searching the garage. She says going back
22 there -- it's my understanding the door is not locked.
23 The door may have been shut, but it was not locked. And
24 it was mentioned it's in the rafters, it's been there.
25 Gave her consent to search it. It was brought back inside

1 the residence and she gave consent to search inside.

2 I believe the evidence was officers were, also,
3 looking for still some identification. They had already
4 identified him. They knew who he was. I don't think
5 that's an issue. But they were still looking for further
6 identification within the bag.

7 So, I guess, our first argument, Your Honor, is that
8 she could consent to that bag. She owned it. There's
9 case law, which I'm sure Your Honor knows much better than
10 I do, Fernandez vs. California, which I have and I think
11 the Defense has. And I'll hand it up. It deals with
12 third party consent. And there's some state cases, also,
13 that amplify that if Your Honor would like, State V. Laux,
14 L-A-U-X, State V. Flowers.

15 So, Judge, I guess that's our first argument. He
16 doesn't have standing. It's third party consent. And it
17 was legally gotten by law enforcement through the consent
18 of Ms. Stephanie Green.

19 Judge, our second, also, we believe it was in the
20 rafters of the garage -- let me just stop there with third
21 party consent at this point.

22 THE COURT: Let me hear from you, Mr. Neely, on third
23 party consent.

24 MR. NEELY: I'm going to respectfully disagree with
25 Mr. Meadors here, Your Honor. He handed up State vs.

1 Laux, which I do think is the controlling case on this.
2 It cites to Illinois V. Rodrigues and United States V.
3 Matlock, which are cases where we get to third party
4 consent.

5 And when we're talking about third party consent,
6 we're talking about people. And what the courts have said
7 is that the test of whether third party has sufficient
8 status to consent to a search is whether the third party
9 possesses common authority over or has some other
10 sufficient relationship to the premises or effects
11 searched.

12 And when we were talking about the Fourth Amendment
13 in the South Carolina State Constitution, Article 10,
14 we're talking about effects here. We're not talking about
15 real property. We're talking about personal property.
16 We're talking about effects. State v. Laux says the
17 common authority is defined as mutual use of the property
18 by persons generally having joint access or control for
19 most purposes so that it is reasonable for officers to
20 believe the person granting consent to search has the
21 authority to do so.

22 What we heard on that video is that despite whatever
23 name he was giving, they knew he was John Blauvelt because
24 of the fingerprints that they took from him with the
25 mobile fingerprint device. I don't believe that there's

1 anything in this case law that by going by a fake name,
2 using a different name with the person that you're living
3 with or even lying to law enforcement about who you are
4 that says that just because you're lying about your
5 identity, you give up your Fourth Amendment rights to be
6 free of unreasonable and unwarranted searches and
7 seizures.

8 Your Honor, what's clear from that tape is that John
9 Blauvelt was in a relationship with Stephanie for the
10 better part of six years. That they lived together in a
11 relationship and that they moved residences from place to
12 place until they wound up in that house in Medford living
13 there for about a year. His name wasn't on the mortgage.
14 He wasn't -- rent was not being deducted from his bank
15 account, but he was living there. He was domicile there.
16 He had personal effects there. When he asked the Marshals
17 to get his shirt, they went into the house where his
18 clothes were and he got a shirt. He lived there. His
19 property was there.

20 More importantly for this particular argument, when
21 the other Marshal came into the house to speak with
22 Marshal Tamayo, he said, John asked us to get his bag.
23 The operative word there is his bag. And then they asked
24 Stephanie if he has any other personal effects, things
25 that only belong to him, not belong to them, not belong to

1 them in a relationship, not belong to her, but things that
2 belong to John. Things that belong to John. Things that
3 are his property.

4 The case law is clear, for third party consent to be
5 valid, there has to be common authority. There has to be
6 joint access or control for most purposes. That officer
7 just testified that that woman had never seen that bag
8 before, had never seen the contents of that bag before.
9 She had never seen that journal before. She had never
10 seen him writing in that journal. And that bag was his.

11 The Fourth Amendment is very clear, law enforcement
12 has to have a warrant before they go in and search.
13 Consent is one of the warrant requirements, but it has to
14 be valid consent. Consent here is absolutely not valid.

15 John was in custody for an hour before that woman
16 came home. He was in custody for an hour. That is ample
17 time for law enforcement to get a search warrant for the
18 entire premises of that house based on the fact that they
19 have now apprehended a suspect who has been at large for
20 six years.

21 That officer, also, testified that once they got
22 their lead that he was living at this house in Medford,
23 Oregon that they went and they did recognizance and they
24 staked out this house for several days. At any point in
25 time, they could have applied to a magistrate for a search

1 warrant to go and search those premises. The effect of
2 their search was just to gather evidence. He testified,
3 The journal notes may have some good info, so we decided
4 to take it. They only collected items that were of
5 evidentiary value and they left everything else behind.

6 Stephanie did not have the authority to consent to
7 that search. The Fourth Amendment absolutely requires
8 that -- that law enforcement have a warrant when they do a
9 search.

10 So Your Honor, based on the fact that they did not
11 have a warrant, that it is per se unconstitutional to not
12 have a warrant before you search, the fact that the party
13 that they asked consent for did not have the authority to
14 give consent, Your Honor, I would ask that the journal be
15 suppressed.

16 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Meadors, let me hear your
17 response.

18 MR. MEADORS: Very briefly. Your Honor, I think in
19 Fernandez v. California, the other individual there had
20 actually objected before he left. Once he left, the
21 remaining party did consent. And they did say that was
22 sufficient in that case. They both had access to this
23 garage. She actually knew where it was. The door was
24 open and knew where it was in the rafters.

25 And I don't know, but I think it is significant that

1 he's not even saying I'm John Blauvelt. He's not even
2 saying that's me. And I think somehow that's got -- not
3 got to, but respectfully go into the equation.

4 But she did consent. She knew where it was. She had
5 access to it, just like he did. And in California vs.
6 Fernandez -- I think the case Fernandez v. California,
7 again, the other party had objected. They left and then
8 the third party consented in that case.

9 That's all I have. Thank you.

10 THE COURT: What about that, Mr. Neely? Fernandez
11 does say that. That person did leave and the remaining
12 person in the house -- I don't know if it was an apartment
13 or house -- gave them consent and they were allowed to.

14 MR. NEELY: Right. And I think we can distinguish
15 our facts here from Fernandez because what -- where you're
16 reading from Georgia vs. Randolph and Fernandez v.
17 California where the Court is moving is where a person who
18 is being detained, but is still on the premises or is a
19 suspect of an investigation and is standing on the
20 premises and objects to consent. Another person with
21 common authority cannot override the objection to consent
22 by giving consent.

23 THE COURT: But there's no objection to consent here,
24 you agree with that?

25 MR. NEELY: I do agree with that. Where Fernandez

1 differs is that it is a person who has been lawfully
2 detained by law enforcement and have been removed from the
3 premises and then consent is given by a third party to
4 search. The difference in that case is that the area
5 searched in Fernandez were common areas. They're areas
6 that both parties had access to.

7 THE COURT: How do they not have common areas in this
8 house? The door is open. It's in the garage. They're
9 all -- how long have they been living there, a year?

10 MR. NEELY: A year. And I hear what Mr. Meadors is
11 saying, the garage is open. The garage is unlocked. They
12 went into the garage. They went into the rafters. The
13 difference is we're not searching the rafters. We're not
14 searching the garage. We're not searching the property.
15 We are taking a bag out of the property. A bag that has
16 been identified by everybody involved as his bag. It is a
17 bag that is zipped, that is closed. It is not see
18 through. It is not something that you can see the
19 articles -- the items inside. You cannot see them.

20 You heard on the video several times the bag
21 unzipping and then items being opened. And then to see if
22 the journal had anything of evidentiary value, you have to
23 open the journal and start reading the pages. That's when
24 you find something of evidentiary value. You are
25 encroaching on his personal property at that point.

1 Your Honor, at this point in society, cell phones
2 have become such a big deal. If it were a cell phone that
3 he had asked to go for, law enforcement would have had to
4 get a search warrant to go inside and search the contents
5 of that cell phone. This is the same issue. It's a bag
6 that unmistakably belongs to John Blauvelt, unmistakably
7 belongs to him. The woman on the tape says, That's his
8 bag. John says, That's my bag. The Marshals say it.
9 John says, That's my bag. It's not just a common area
10 that's being searched. It is personal property that's
11 zipped and it's closed. And there's no reason for them
12 not to have gone and gotten a warrant in this case. She
13 doesn't have permission --

14 THE COURT: It's not common property if they're
15 living in the house? It's right there in the garage? I
16 mean, they're in and out of the garage. Why is that not
17 common property?

18 MR. NEELY: She said it's not common property. She
19 says it's his personal property that he brought with him
20 before they met. And it's not something she's ever gone
21 into. It's not something she's ever seen open. It's not
22 something she's ever seen before. The contents, she's
23 never seen them before. She identifies it as his personal
24 property. And I think that's why it's not common
25 property. She identifies it as his property.

1 So because she's identifying it as his property, not
2 our property, as his property, she says that's his bag,
3 she doesn't have the authority to give consent to search
4 that bag.

5 THE COURT: Mr. Meadors, what about that? What's the
6 testimony that she's -- it's common property between the
7 two of them. She's saying it's his bag. She's never
8 looked at it. Doesn't know anything about it. Doesn't
9 know what's in there.

10 MR. MEADORS: I guess my argument would be she has
11 access to it. It's not in a lock box. We would argue
12 there's no reasonable expectation of privacy, number one,
13 potentially in a rafters in a garage. But she knows about
14 it. She does have access to it. She can get to it. He's
15 now gone.

16 THE COURT: But the fact that she's got access to it,
17 does that make a difference? Is the issue -- does -- it
18 that bag her bag? Does she have anything --

19 MR. MEADORS: I think that is the issue, you nailed
20 it. I think it's as much her bag as his bag at that
21 point. It's her house.

22 THE COURT: She says it's not her bag.

23 MR. MEADORS: Well, I think she's got access to it.
24 She says it's Ben's bag. She actually says it's Ben, who
25 is not real. But she does have access to it. She knows

1 about it. She specifically knows where it is.

2 I think the issue is the bag. You know, I think,
3 clearly, they had the right to get the bag. I think then
4 the separate issue may go to unzipping it if we get down
5 to it and looking into after that. Maybe that's where the
6 rubber hit the road there.

7 But the Fernandez -- and all I can argue is what the
8 law we think applies, respectfully. At that point, she
9 could consent to that property in the bag. She has access
10 to it. She could if she wanted to. I don't know if
11 that's the deciding factor, but she could. And it was
12 there and she told them about it. And, Your Honor, I
13 think Fernandez says a third party can consent even if the
14 other party hadn't consented. What's his reasonable
15 expectation in that bag? He's not identified himself to
16 her as John Blauvelt.

17 THE COURT: Does it matter that he hasn't identified
18 himself? Because, I mean, he is who he is. And it's his
19 property whether he's Ben or whatever his name is or John
20 Blauvelt.

21 MR. MEADORS: I don't know. Actually, I talked to
22 some folks this weekend about it. They said, you know,
23 that's an interesting idea. Just being as candid as I can
24 be, it seems like it ought to. If you're not going to
25 even claim who you are, but then you get the privacy

1 rights to it. I understand the overall picture --

2 THE COURT: Whatever his name is, he still owns the
3 bag.

4 MR. MEADORS: And that's the issue and it's sitting
5 out there. And then there's an argument of abandonment
6 and inevitable discovery if we went down that far. But
7 I'd ask Your Honor to think about it. Whatever Your Honor
8 rules, at some point, we need Tamayo here because if not
9 now and if the Defendant did take the stand, I, certainly,
10 think we would be able to ask him about the diary he's
11 claiming is his, you know, if that came about. But
12 there's several reasons we want to go ahead and establish
13 this in full, where the diary was, how it got here and how
14 it got back to South Carolina.

15 THE COURT: All right.

16 MR. NEELY: Just briefly, Your Honor. They don't
17 know that she had access to that bag, that she's got
18 authority over that bag. That's a question that that
19 officer could have asked her. That's a question the
20 officer could have established.

21 THE COURT: If you look at the totality of the
22 circumstances, though, they live there together. It's in
23 the garage. The door is open. She has access. I mean,
24 doesn't that cut against that argument?

25 MR. NEELY: I don't think so. Again, it's a bag that

1 she establishes when asked that he brought to the
2 relationship prior. And then it's moved around with them
3 and it's gone wherever and it's filled to the brim and
4 it's something that she's never been in. It's something
5 that she's never been in. They've never asked do you have
6 his permission to go in there. They could have asked her
7 that question. They didn't ask her that. The burden is
8 on them.

9 A warrantless search is per se unreasonable. There's
10 nothing that says when you bring something to a
11 relationship that the other person just because you're in
12 a relationship automatically assumes some sort of
13 authority over that property.

14 MR. MEADORS: I think the fact that it's in the
15 rafters, respectfully, should go to our side a little bit
16 for Your Honor to consider. It's not in his room. It's
17 not in a lock box. It's not in his closet. It's out
18 there. She could walk out there any time she wanted to
19 and zip it up. Whether she did or not --

20 THE COURT: It cuts the other way, too. The fact
21 that it is in the rafters, it could be argued that it's
22 not like where his stuff normally is, that -- it could cut
23 both ways and say well, it's in the rafters and that even
24 makes it stronger that it's his.

25 MR. MEADORS: I'm not disagreeing with that thought

1 process either, Judge.

2 THE COURT: What's the other issues? Was there
3 another issue?

4 MR. NEELY: Well, there was, Your Honor. There's the
5 fact that we've got a chain of custody issue with this bag
6 where we don't know the condition of the bag -- or the
7 journal when we get it. When it's with Office Tamayo, it
8 rides around in his car, either in his personal possession
9 or lock box for six days before it's turned over to law
10 enforcement.

11 And then Investigator Schofield testified that when
12 she finally looks at it three weeks later, there's pages
13 torn out, there's pages ripped, there's pages missing. So
14 we have a chain of custody issue and we don't know the
15 condition of the journal.

16 Your Honor, I think when you pair that chain of
17 custody issue with the Fourth Amendment issue, I think
18 the -- I think with the totality of the circumstances, the
19 journal should be suppressed.

20 THE COURT: Okay.

21 MR. MEADORS: Judge, the reason this journal was --
22 just quite frankly, there's a letter to his daughter in
23 that where he admits to killing the victim. We argue that
24 it's pretty clear and that he did it because she was
25 turning his life upside down. He did it to be with --

1 and, also, did it to -- and the reason I'm doing this, for
2 not this ruling, but later on -- I thought we needed to
3 establish the chain, too. If something happens later on
4 in the trial, I just want to be clear.

5 The officer testified he got it. He had his business
6 card in there. It wasn't an official chain, but he kept
7 it in a lock box in his car and brought it back to law
8 enforcement. It stayed there until the captain came in.
9 So we do think -- forget this issue for a minute. There
10 may be another one coming down the road that -- it's not
11 fungible either.

12 If we can have somebody else identify it, which we
13 believe we're going to have a witness, who had actually
14 written in the journal and maybe even read some of these,
15 quite frankly, who's going to come in and authenticate it.
16 We just want to -- at this point, Tamayo may be having to
17 travel back tomorrow. I didn't want to lose him if
18 there's another issue on the chain, I guess is why I stood
19 up. We think we've proved the chain as practical as you
20 can as far as these nonfungible items if they're
21 identified later.

22 THE COURT: Are you missing, though, a little bit
23 after he gets it, puts it in his -- he keeps it and then
24 he gives it -- does he give it to Investigator Schofield?
25 She went out there, right?

1 MR. MEADORS: Yes, sir.

2 THE COURT: And Tamayo -- is it Agent, Marshal?

3 MR. MEADORS: Senior Inspector.

4 THE COURT: Senior Inspector Tamayo, did he have it
5 in his possession until he gave it to Investigator
6 Schofield?

7 MR. MEADORS: No, sir, he had it in his possession
8 until he brought back to the Medford --

9 THE COURT: To Jackson --

10 MR. MEADORS: Jackson, I'm sorry.

11 THE COURT: So where did it go from there?

12 MR. MEADORS: Schofield testified that she came there
13 and got it from those folks there that had had it in their
14 possession since it had been dropped off by the Marshal.

15 THE COURT: Is there anybody in Jackson that ties up
16 the chain there?

17 MR. MEADORS: Judge, I don't know. Since it's
18 nonfungible, if it's been there and locked in their
19 evidence and Schofield can say -- Captain Schofield, I
20 apologize, can say she got it from there to tie up that
21 link. If we need to tighten it up more, we will, but that
22 was our plan.

23 THE COURT: All right. Anything else, Mr. Neely, on
24 that?

25 MR. NEELY: Again, going to the totality of the

1 circumstances here, Your Honor, and the journal is
2 cumulative of what they're going to get testimony-wise
3 from Hannah Thompson, who I believe it's their intention
4 to have her testify that John confessed to the murder to
5 her at various times --

6 THE COURT: Going back to the chain, though, it's not
7 fungible and Inspector Tamayo puts it in with him and then
8 he takes it over to Jackson and Investigator -- Captain
9 Schofield then picks it up in Jackson.

10 MR. NEELY: I'm going -- I agree that it's not
11 fungible, but now we've had testimony from Captain
12 Schofield that pages are ripped out, pages are missing.
13 We've got an officer who's testifying he's arrested 500
14 people in the last two years and he doesn't write incident
15 reports and the thing that refreshed his memory is
16 listening to this audio recording. And there's nothing in
17 the audio recording about the condition of the journal or
18 what it was other than that he recalled there were
19 interesting things in it of evidentiary value.

20 What's in Captain Schofield's incident report is that
21 she was advised by Officer Conroy that the journal was
22 turned over to central police on 7/26. There's no mention
23 of who it was dropped off to or what they did with the
24 journal in between 7/26 and August 2nd when the journal
25 was handed over. Again, we're missing five days.

1 Again, it's not fungible. You're not going to
2 contaminate it. You're going to add DNA to it or
3 whatever. But we are talking about something that's
4 damaged at this point. So I think establishing the chain
5 is very important.

6 MR. MEADORS: Judge, if I could briefly respectfully
7 reply.

8 I think Senior Inspector's testimony was he took that
9 and put it in that bag. So it is like it was when he got
10 it and put it in the bag is the way I took his testimony.

11 THE COURT: I did hear him say that's what he did.
12 He got it and put it in a bag and then it gave it to
13 Jackson. And then they kept it until Captain Schofield
14 came up and got it.

15 MR. NEELY: I believe that is what he testified to.
16 But nobody can testify about what happened to the journal
17 while it was there waiting for Simpsonville to pick it up,
18 Your Honor.

19 THE COURT: Would you agree, though, that it's not
20 fungible, so does -- and anyone on this side, does it have
21 to be -- does the chain have to be perfect or is it
22 reasonable?

23 MR. NEELY: Reasonable. I would agree with that. It
24 does have to be reasonable. I think the issue that we're
25 having with the chain here is on the front end of the

1 chain, we're not testifying about the condition of the
2 journal. On the back end of the chain, we're testifying
3 about a journal that's been damaged and we don't know the
4 condition of it. So I think there are issues there.

5 THE COURT: All right. Anything else?

6 MR. MEADORS: No, sir. Thank you.

7 MR. NEELY: Thank you, Your Honor.

8 THE COURT: Any other issues to address? I'm going
9 to take a look at all this tonight and let you know.

10 Is there anything we need to address?

11 MR. MEADORS: Just so I'll be clear, I don't want to
12 violate anything right off the bat.

13 In my opening, Your Honor, would I still be allowed
14 to argue -- I'll stay away from the issues Your Honor
15 completely -- is contemplating tonight. But if I have a
16 witness and I believe the evidence will show that the
17 Defendant told her he would give her some insurance
18 proceeds if she --

19 THE COURT: I will tell you on the insurance, I'll go
20 ahead and tell you that now that you've addressed it. I'm
21 considering -- I've considered all your arguments and I've
22 read the case law. And I understand the Defense's
23 argument that there is no policy allegedly. There was no
24 policy and, therefore, Beckham and Cole applies.

25 However, if you look -- and as I raised the issue on

1 Thursday, I think to some degree in a situation where a --
2 and I gave you this example where a defendant is a hundred
3 percent sure, absolutely sure there's an insurance policy
4 and he or she is the beneficiary and he commits murder and
5 takes somebody out to collect on that insurance that he or
6 she thought they had. He thought -- he or she thinks
7 there is a valid insurance policy.

8 And then, come to find out, after he or she has
9 killed that person to collect on those proceeds, that lo
10 and behold, as it turned out, there wasn't a policy. And
11 then, therefore, that particular individual is benefiting
12 from the fact that the reason he or she killed that person
13 was to collect insurance and yet, as it turned out, there
14 wasn't an insurance policy. He didn't know that. He
15 thought there was. And, therefore, that doesn't get to be
16 put into evidence and he or she gets that benefit.

17 I recognize that Beckham is not right on point. Cole
18 is not right on point. Because in those cases, there were
19 -- in Beckham, there was a policy. Mr. Beckham just
20 thought it had lapsed, but there was a policy. And the
21 language in Beckham and the language in Cole, which
22 Beckham got pretty much word for word out of Cole, is the
23 same.

24 And, you know, if you look at the sentence, evidence
25 of a life insurance policy is properly admitted when there

1 is evidence of the defendant's knowledge of the policy's
2 existence, its validity or believed validity and that the
3 defendant will benefit from it.

4 . There is nothing in South Carolina that's on point
5 where there is a situation where the policy did not exist
6 at all, although the defendant thought it did. But I do
7 find that the policy can be admitted. I do believe that
8 Beckham allows, at least, the language in there that its
9 believed validity. And if there is testimony -- now,
10 assuming there is testimony -- we're at the motion in
11 limine stage, of course, but assuming there is testimony
12 that the Defendant in this case did tell somebody that
13 there was an insurance policy and he thought that he was
14 going to collect -- and I don't know what the testimony is
15 going to be, but that's what I've been led to believe,
16 there will be testimony from some witnesses in this case
17 that Mr. Blauvelt did believe that he had an insurance
18 policy in this case.

19 And so he believed its validity, as Beckham says and
20 Cole, so, therefore, I believe that is enough evidence to
21 allow the evidence about the testimony about a policy
22 which he thought he had. So I will allow that.

23 So that should answer your question on the other
24 thing.

25 MR. MEADORS: Yes, sir.

1 THE COURT: I'm going to review everything else on
2 the other -- oh, on the DNA matters, I am going to allow
3 that.

4 I have taken your argument in consideration,
5 Mr. Neely, on the 403 analysis, whether it's unfairly
6 prejudicial and does it substantially outweigh the
7 probative value. And I certainly understand the argument
8 that it's only seven out of 23, it's 30 percent, and it
9 goes only to a paternal lineage of Mr. Blauvelt. However,
10 I think that really goes to the weight.

11 That is certainly an argument that you can make, that
12 you have successfully made and persuasively in front of
13 me. Although, I am allowing it in, your argument does
14 have merit. Your argument can be persuasive to a jury.
15 However, I think it is that, a jury -- or a weight,
16 cross-examination and argument to the jury. And you
17 certainly have arguments that can go forward in that
18 regard. So I will allow the DNA testimony.

19 I am going to take a look at the domestic violence
20 charge. I do, as you can tell from my questions, have --
21 I want to look at it again. The clear and convincing
22 evidence that the issue -- that the incident did take
23 place is -- is what the law says. And so I want to take a
24 look at it.

25 I certainly understand the State's position, too,

1 that it is a res gestae issue where the story has to be
2 told and the story can't be told without the domestic
3 violence issue and his demotions and issues he was having
4 with the Army. However, there is law on clear and
5 convincing evidence. I have to reanalyze -- I want to
6 look at these documents I've got here that y'all have
7 provided me here today. And I'll let you know on that as
8 well as the journal. I may e-mail you tonight or just let
9 you know first thing in the morning. But I'm going to
10 take a look at it again and I will let you know.

11 MR. MEADORS: Thank you, Your Honor.

12 THE COURT: Anything else from the State?

13 MS. ABEE: No, Your Honor.

14 THE COURT: Anything from the Defendant?

15 MR. NEELY: No, Your Honor.

16 THE COURT: Nine o'clock in the morning.

17 (WHEREUPON, Court was adjourned for the day to be
18 reconvened on Tuesday, September 17th, 2024.)

19 Tuesday, September 17, 2024

20 THE COURT: All right. As I -- this is my rulings on
21 the life insurance policy and the DNA yesterday, just as a
22 matter for the record. I analyzed both of them in terms
23 of the probative value and 403 analysis to both of them.

24 As to the life insurance policy, as I said yesterday,
25 I understood and respect the Defense's argument on that,

1 the fact that there is no policy, the argument that
2 Beckham applies. I looked at those and analyzed each of
3 those issues. And the fact that there will be
4 testimony -- assuming there is testimony that Mr. Blauvelt
5 believed that there was an insurance policy, that is
6 probative, even though as it turns out, there may not have
7 been a policy. But in his mind -- state of mind, there
8 was a policy. So the evidence there was probative -- or
9 is probative.

10 I then took an analysis under 403 and determined,
11 okay, if it's probative, does it -- or is it unfairly
12 prejudicial and does it substantially outweigh the
13 probative value? And I did analyze it under those
14 guidelines and I do not believe that it is unfairly
15 prejudicial. I do not believe that it substantially
16 outweighs the probative value.

17 The probative value is that there is testimony that
18 apparently will occur, that he believed he had a life
19 insurance policy and that is a potential motive in the
20 case and, therefore, would be probative value and that
21 testimony is not unfairly prejudicial nor does it
22 substantially outweigh the probative value.

23 As to the DNA, I took the same analysis. The
24 Defense's argument was, basically, a 403 argument as well.
25 So as I said yesterday, I recognize that seven out of 23

1 markers were undertaken and the evidence will show that
2 those seven markers point to a paternal lineage of
3 Mr. Blauvelt in the DNA analysis.

4 I, again, took a 403 analysis on that issue and
5 determined whether or not it was unfairly prejudicial and
6 substantially outweighed the probative value. I do find
7 that it is probative on the issue. I recognize the
8 Defense's argument that it's only seven out of 23 and that
9 certainly is an argument the Defense can make in this case
10 and I'm sure they will in their cross-examination and
11 arguments to the jury.

12 However, I do not find that it is unfairly
13 prejudicial nor do I find that it substantially outweighs
14 the probative value in this case. So the DNA evidence
15 will be admitted. So life insurance policy will be
16 admitted and DNA evidence will be admitted.

17 Turning to the domestic violence issue that we have
18 extensively argued on both sides. My analysis, as all of
19 you have probably determined, is -- my focus has been on
20 the clear and convincing evidence standard.

21 In this case, the testimony that's been proffered by
22 Mr. Blauvelt himself said that he was not guilty of it and
23 did not do it. There is no corroborating evidence that he
24 did. In fact, the testimony that was proffered involving
25 the tattoo, that's, again, strong, from Ms. Blauvelt in

1 this case, the lack of any corroboration by any other
2 witness in the case that he did commit some form of
3 domestic violence, and the testimony from her friend, her
4 best friend as she described herself that her tendency to
5 lie and she did not believe it.

6 And so with that, looking at clear and convincing
7 evidence standard, quite frankly, there's really no
8 evidence of that other than the charge that Mr. Blauvelt
9 had been arrested. That, of course, is a probable cause
10 standard, not a clear and convincing standard.

11 And so in analyzing whether it's probative and
12 relevant, certainly, a prior domestic violence charge with
13 a resulting arrest is certainly arguably some motive in
14 the case. And that's the State's position in this case.
15 So it is potentially probative there and relevant.
16 However, there's no evidence other than the charge that
17 Mr. Blauvelt has been -- or was arrested. It's now
18 dismissed. And so it's not from an evidentiary standpoint
19 probative nor relevant because the evidence just doesn't
20 support it because it needs to be clear and convincing
21 evidence.

22 I, also, looked at it from the res gestae that the
23 State has artfully argued and I respect and understand
24 that argument as well. And, certainly, the res gestae, as
25 we all know, is to tell the story. That's what the res

1 gestae is for. If you look at the law on that and the
2 cases that discuss the res gestae issue, there's testimony
3 in those cases about the prior bad acts. The issues in
4 those cases really turn on whether or not it's -- it
5 should be admitted under the res gestae theory.

6 And when we look here, if we had testimony, if there
7 was some other testimony that the domestic violence issue
8 had occurred, I think the res gestae issue comes to the
9 forefront and it's a different -- it's a different
10 argument. But that's not the case here. At least, what I
11 see so far that there is no testimony other than
12 Mr. Blauvelt was arrested and that was part of the issues
13 with the arrest. He denies it and there's no testimony to
14 corroborate it. So there's no clear and convincing
15 evidence that it occurred.

16 Even if it's probative, of course, I've got to go
17 through a 403 analysis there. I've determined there's no
18 clear and convincing evidence there. And so looking at a
19 403 analysis, even if it was probative, to me, it would be
20 unfairly prejudicial and substantially outweigh any
21 probative value. As I've said, the probative value is --
22 is not there as well because there's just no testimony
23 supporting that.

24 And so from an analysis, even if I did find it was
25 probative and relevant, I would find that it does -- or is

1 unfairly prejudicial and does substantially outweigh the
2 probative value. So I will not allow the domestic
3 violence issue.

4 Turning to the journal, the issues raised by the
5 parties in this case, I do find -- and I think the
6 Fernandez vs. California case is -- it's an interesting
7 case and fairly -- it's close to being on point. If you
8 look at that case, one of the issues raised that I believe
9 Justice Alito deals with is that the defense in that case
10 argued that you still receive -- from his opinion that
11 they seem to argue that you still need to get a warrant in
12 that situation. Well, Justice Alito in the opinion,
13 basically, says if you've got consent, if it's a
14 legitimate argument and you have a legitimate search with
15 consent, that argument doesn't matter really.

16 And if you look at that case, if you look at the
17 facts of the case, it's somewhat similar because Mr. Neely
18 has artfully argued that it was one hour, they had one
19 hour. They had plenty of time. They came and got
20 Mr. Blauvelt. They arrested him, took him away and had
21 plenty of time to go get one.

22 Well, that's exactly what happened in Fernandez. And
23 not only in Fernandez did the investigating officer, who
24 was part of the search and consent, he left. He actually
25 left the scene and didn't stay on the scene. He came back

1 to the scene one hour later. And the Court there found
2 that the -- Ms. Rojas (ph), the mother of the defendant's
3 child, gave them permission to search the apartment. The
4 defendant in that case had been taken away just as the
5 Defendant had been taken away here. So he had been sent
6 to jail there as Mr. Blauvelt had been sent to jail here.

7 Interesting, there was one part in that case that I
8 thought was interesting, that really stood out was
9 Mr. Neely's argument that -- that it's -- it was his bag,
10 it was up in the rafters and so in a different sort of
11 part of the house. What was interesting in that Fernandez
12 case, one of the little boys in there actually showed the
13 detective a hidden place where the defendant kept
14 something, which was a sawed-off shotgun. So it was a
15 hidden place. It wasn't as if it was in the outside in
16 the regular room and existing where the detective could
17 have found it just on plain sight.

18 So if you look at that, it somewhat parallels with
19 this case. And so based on that decision and others, I
20 read a bunch of other cases, too, I find that the consent
21 was given by Ms. Green. The bag in the rafters was in the
22 garage. Although, in a detached garage, it was in the
23 curtilage, would be considered the curtilage of the house.
24 She had -- it was common authority over this house. Ms.
25 Green had that authority and had that consent -- or gave

1 that consent and had the authority to give that consent
2 based on her residence there at the house.

3 Again, Fernandez is fairly close to the facts that we
4 have here. So I find that there is -- or was consent
5 given by Ms. Green to conduct the search on the bag.

6 As for the chain of custody, as we all know, it does
7 not have to be a perfect custody. It's what is practical
8 under the circumstances. We, also, know even in fungible
9 items where the Court says that every person in the chain
10 doesn't have to be here.

11 In this particular case, the U.S. Marshal obtained
12 the items in the bag, gave those over to the Jackson
13 Sheriff's Department or city police. Once they gave that
14 to the Jackson police, then Captain Schofield from
15 Simpsonville eventually got it. I believe it was
16 somewhere around eight or nine days later, and then
17 transported it back.

18 So I find the chain of custody is met as well under
19 our law and Constitutional law. So with that, I will
20 allow the journal to be admitted into evidence.

21 I believe that takes care of our pre-trial motions.

22 And before we bring the jury in, is there anything
23 from the State?

24 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, just to give you a heads up,
25 the interviews of the Defendant discuss the domestic

1 violence. I've already spoken with Defense counsel about
2 us redacting that information out and submitting it as a
3 Court's Exhibit, a redaction log. I just wanted to give
4 you a heads up that we will be asking for some sort of
5 instruction to the jury or some acknowledgment that it's
6 been an agreed-upon redaction so it doesn't look like law
7 enforcement --

8 THE COURT: I'll do some kind of redaction. In a
9 video where something is obviously taken out, I always
10 tell the jury to make sure that it's nothing nefarious --

11 MS. ABEE: Right. Thank you, Your Honor.

12 In addition --

13 THE COURT: I pretty much blame it on me, so take it
14 away from y'all.

15 MS. ABEE: In addition, Your Honor, I know that
16 witnesses are sequestered, but we will need to relay that
17 pre-trial ruling to them to make sure none of their
18 testimony runs afoul of Your Honor's ruling --

19 THE COURT: If there are any potential witnesses in
20 the courtroom now, they need to leave. Does the State or
21 Defense know of any?

22 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, the only witness we have in
23 the courtroom would be the mother of the victim. But I do
24 want to make sure she understands that she can't talk
25 about the domestic violence. If that's okay if I have one

1 second just to make sure she understands that when she
2 testifies.

3 THE COURT: Please discuss with your witnesses that
4 the domestic violence is not to be discussed.

5 MS. ABEE: Right. And, Your Honor, just to ensure,
6 she will talk about moving Cati out of the house, but just
7 not the reason why or any charges or anything like that.
8 I want to make sure that's not in contrary to Your Honor's
9 ruling. But, obviously, she moves her out of the home and
10 she moves back home with her. And that's when she files
11 the missing persons report, so.

12 THE COURT: That's fine.

13 MS. ABEE: Other than that, Your Honor, the State is
14 ready to proceed.

15 THE COURT: Anything?

16 MR. NEELY: Your Honor, if I could have about ten
17 minutes before we open in light of Your Honor's rulings?

18 THE COURT: Yes.

19 MR. NEELY: And may Mr. Meadors and I approach
20 briefly?

21 THE COURT: Yes.

22 (WHEREUPON, a bench conference was held.)

23 THE COURT: You need ten minutes, Mr. Neely?

24 MR. NEELY: Yes, sir.

25 THE COURT: All right. We'll be in recess ten

1 minutes.

2 (WHEREUPON, a break was taken.)

3 THE COURT: All right. We're ready to go.

4 Is the State ready?

5 MS. ABEE: Yes, Your Honor.

6 THE COURT: Is the Defense ready?

7 MR. NEELY: Yes, Your Honor.

8 THE COURT: All right. Bring in the jury.

9 MR. NEELY: And, Your Honor, before they come in,
10 there was plenty of news coverage last night. If we could
11 inquire if anybody violated the rules.

12 (WHEREUPON, the jury came into open court at
13 approximately 9:38 a.m.)

14 THE COURT: All right good morning, ladies and
15 gentlemen. I hope all of you had a good night. We are
16 ready to start the trial of this case.

17 Now, I want to inquire of you, as I gave you those
18 hard instructions yesterday about any kind of
19 investigation or looking at the news or anything like
20 that.

21 Did anybody violate my order and look at the news or
22 hear anything? Anybody on the jury do that?

23 (WHEREUPON, the jury indicated in the negative.)

24 THE COURT: Okay. And I do appreciate that. As I
25 told you yesterday, I've got confidence in all of you, I

1 know you won't. Just during this trial, please, abide by
2 those instructions.

3 All right.

4 THE CLERK: If you will, please, stand for the oath
5 in this case. And the proper response is "I will".

6 (WHEREUPON, the jury was sworn at approximately 9:40
7 a.m.)

8 THE CLERK: Thank you.

9 Please be seated.

10 THE COURT: All right. Ladies and gentlemen, as I
11 told you yesterday, this case is brought to you by way of
12 indictment. And I read to you the indictment yesterday
13 what the Defendant is charged with here in this case, it's
14 murder and possession of a weapon during a violent crime.
15 As I told you yesterday, this is not evidence. The
16 indictment is simply the way that this case gets brought
17 to Court and before you. So it does not have anything to
18 do with proving the Defendant's guilt. It is not evidence
19 in that sense. The State has the burden of proof, which
20 I'll talk to you about in a minute. And that's the only
21 thing that you need to consider is the evidence. And I'll
22 tell you a little bit about that.

23 Now, this is going to be -- I don't know if any of
24 you have ever sat on a jury in a jury trial. It is
25 different than TV. I know we all watch TV and everything

1 happens -- something happens, the case goes to trial, a
2 verdict is rendered all in about an hour and the show is
3 over. It's different in the real world. And I ask -- I
4 say that because I ask for your patience, that it's not
5 going to be over in an hour. There may be some times when
6 you may think it drags along, but it is not. This case
7 will be tried very well by the attorneys in this case.
8 There are very good attorneys involved in this case. And
9 so, it will be tried well. But do have some patience as
10 the process goes on because, again, it is not like TV.

11 Now, this is a criminal case. And, therefore, the
12 burden of proof is different from a civil case. If any of
13 you have ever sat on a civil case, it's a preponderance or
14 greater weight of the evidence. But in criminal court,
15 it's a different standard.

16 Now, the Defendant has been indicted in this case,
17 but he has pled not guilty. And as a result of that, the
18 State has the burden of proof. They have to prove the
19 Defendant guilty. And that standard is beyond a
20 reasonable doubt, beyond a reasonable doubt.

21 The Defendant does not have to put up any evidence
22 whatsoever because the burden is on the State to prove,
23 again, his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

24 The Defendant does not have to testify in this case.
25 He is -- under our Constitution, he is not -- cannot be

1 forced to testify. And you cannot use that in your
2 decision if he decides not to testify in this case. So do
3 not even think about that as this case progresses.

4 Now, this case will start here in a minute. Because
5 the State has the burden of proof, they will start out and
6 give what we call an opening statement. It will be their
7 version of the facts in this case. They will tell you
8 what they believe the facts are and why they think those
9 facts prove the Defendant is guilty beyond a reasonable
10 doubt. If the Defendant so chooses, then he will give an
11 opening statement in this case.

12 Once the opening statements are given, then the State
13 will go first and put up their evidence. If the Defendant
14 then wants to put up any evidence after the State, they
15 are entitled to do so. But as I said, they are not
16 required to do so.

17 Once all of the evidence is in, the lawyers will then
18 get back up in front of you and give what we call a
19 closing argument. And they will argue and tell you why
20 you should decide the case in their favor. Once the
21 closing arguments are completed, then I will instruct you
22 on the law that applies in this case and then I will send
23 you out to deliberate for you to reach a verdict. And if
24 you are able to reach a verdict, that verdict must be
25 unanimous.

1 Now, you and I have different roles in this case.
2 You, as the jury, are the finders of the facts. You alone
3 are the finders of the facts. I have nothing to do with
4 finding the facts. That is not my role, not my
5 responsibility. And, in fact, I'm not allowed to
6 determine what the facts are in this case. That is your
7 job and your job alone.

8 When determining what the facts are, you will see the
9 evidence that's brought before you, whether it's here from
10 the witness stand or any exhibits that may be admitted
11 into evidence. And that's what you consider as you
12 determine what the facts are in this case. And that is
13 all you consider. Nothing outside this case is to be
14 considered by you. It is only what comes from that
15 witness stand and what exhibits may be entered into
16 evidence.

17 Now, as part of determining what the facts are in
18 this case, you, also, have the responsibility to determine
19 the credibility of the witnesses in this case.
20 Credibility just simply means believability. And so
21 you -- you and you alone, again, have that role in
22 determining the credibility of the witnesses in the case.

23 Now, my role will be related to the legal issues in
24 the case. I will rule on objections and then I will
25 instruct you on the law at the end of this case. Do not

1 at all think that I have any opinion about the facts in
2 this case, because I don't. And do not base any decision
3 on how I rule on evidence. I am ruling on evidence based
4 on the legal issues. And that is my concern and my
5 concern only. You are the judges of the facts. Do not
6 put anything into the way I may rule on a particular
7 issue.

8 Now, there may be some times when I've got to send
9 you out to talk to the lawyers about some legal issues.
10 It just cannot be discussed in your presence. So I may at
11 times have to send you out. And I apologize ahead of
12 time, but that's just how we have to handle it because
13 there may be some things that need to be discussed.

14 Now, there may be some times when I can just bring
15 the lawyers up at the bench and we can discuss it in your
16 presence. We are not trying to hide anything on purpose
17 from you. But there may be, again, some issues that you
18 just don't need to be a part of. So I can sometimes just
19 handle it up here and then you don't have to go out. So
20 there may be some times I can do that.

21 Questions often get asked well, can we take notes in
22 the case? My rule is that I just don't allow that. And
23 I've got a couple reasons why. I've always felt both as a
24 lawyer for many years and now as a judge that I think just
25 people are able to comprehend and absorb things better if

1 they're paying attention as opposed to trying to write
2 down what a witness may be saying. And while they're
3 trying to write down and remember what they're saying and
4 trying to put pen to paper, the witness is still
5 testifying. So they're not listening to what the witness
6 may be testifying to because they're writing something
7 down. It's kind of like back in high school, you know,
8 you write notes and the teacher was teaching and you
9 didn't hear what the teacher was saying while you were
10 trying to write the notes down. So that's one of the
11 reasons.

12 Another reason is that sometimes when you write
13 something down, you may write it wrong, but you think
14 well, because I wrote it down, that's it. And you tell
15 your fellow jurors well, I wrote it down, so here it is.

16 So those are just a couple reasons why I just don't
17 like it. But I think you're able to perceive everything
18 and comprehend everything better if you're listening to
19 what the testimony is being put forth at that time.

20 As I said yesterday, and I'm going to tell you,
21 you're going to get tired of me telling you this this week
22 any time I send you out, please don't discuss the case.
23 Don't Google anything, don't look at anything on social
24 media. Once this case is over, y'all can talk about it
25 all you want to. But, please, don't do so while we are in

1 this trial. And, again, that includes your family members
2 and any friends. Because they're going to be asking you
3 what kind of case you got? What are you talking about?
4 What's the facts? Who are the lawyers? Tell me about it.
5 They're going to want to know. But you are obligated to
6 not do that. And I know you won't. You've already gone
7 one night not doing it and I know you'll do it each time
8 and each day through the case. And I appreciate that and
9 the lawyers appreciate that.

10 Please give your attention at all times in this case.
11 This is an important case for everybody. This is their
12 day in court, both the State and the Defendant. And they
13 deserve your utmost attention, which I know you will give.
14 So I urge you to do that. I know you will. I'm confident
15 you will. And just give -- wait until all the evidence is
16 in before -- and I charge you the law and I give you the
17 instruction to go ahead and start deliberating. At that
18 point, you can then start deliberating.

19 With that, I will recognize the State.

20 OPENING STATEMENT BY THE STATE:

21 MR. MEADORS: May it please the Court.

22 Ms. Abee, Mr. Neely, Ms. Johnston, Ms. Walker.

23 Six inches, 2,724 miles, 2,086 days. Six inches,
24 2,724 miles and 2,086 days. That's what this case is
25 about. Six inches is the depth that John Blauvelt put a

1 knife into Cati Blauvelt's throat that went through her
2 ribs that killed her. 2,724 miles is how far he traveled
3 to Medford, Oregon from Fountain Inn, South Carolina when
4 he fled after he killed Cati Blauvelt. And 2,086 days is
5 the number of days John Blauvelt was on the run from law
6 enforcement before he was arrested by United States
7 Marshals in Medford, Oregon. That's what this case is
8 about.

9 And our job today is to fill in that picture. How
10 did we get to the six-inch depth in Cati's body? The
11 investigation that followed by Cheryl Schofield with the
12 Fountain Inn Police Department that, ultimately, led to
13 the arrest of the U.S. Marshals. That's what this case is
14 about.

15 Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Foreman, ladies and
16 gentlemen, good morning.

17 My name is John Meadors. I'm honored to be here with
18 Kinli Abee. We work for the South Carolina Attorney
19 General. We're sitting here with Erica Preston, our
20 paralegal, Brad Ellis, and our victim advocate, Christina
21 Collard. We're here today representing the people of the
22 State of South Carolina, the people of Greenville, Cati
23 Blauvelt's family, Ms. Patricia Piver against the
24 Defendant, John Blauvelt.

25 His Honor summed it up yesterday and he just summed

1 up most eloquently the process here. But he said, and I
2 wrote it down when we were up there qualifying in this
3 room. Y'all remember yesterday?

4 This system could not function without you. I've
5 never heard a better summary of it than that. We all
6 have -- as Your Honor said, we all have our different
7 roles. He's the law. Judge Morgan is the law in this
8 courtroom. He decides the law that governs us and that
9 y'all will decide the case on. Mr. Neely and his staff,
10 deputy public defender, they have their role. We have our
11 role, we're advocates. With all due respect to Judge
12 Morgan and the other parties, the most important role here
13 is y'all.

14 I heard a judge from the low country one time say
15 it's like a ballgame. And believe me, there's nothing
16 about this that's a game, it doesn't get any more serious.
17 But it's like a ballgame, a basketball game, if you will,
18 and an MVP comes in to decide the game every time.

19 And I like that analogy because we're here. I've
20 been in this -- I call this my office. I've been doing
21 this for 36 years. I love it. We all love our role. And
22 we're a part of the criminal justice process, which is the
23 best in the world in this country.

24 But we're here week in and week out. Y'all come in
25 and you listen to the facts. You listen to the law the

1 Judge gives you. And you determine what the outcome is,
2 you determine what the truth is and you determine whether
3 the State has met their burden. Isn't that beautiful?

4 And the system couldn't function without y'all. So
5 thank you for being here. Thank you for paying attention.
6 And that's all we can ask you is to pay attention and to
7 listen, listen as the testimony comes in.

8 What's he charged with? As His Honor told you, the
9 Defendant has been charged with murder. Murder is the
10 intentional unlawful killing of another living breathing
11 human being with malice aforethought. Now, what is
12 malice? You all know what malice is. You've heard it.
13 You've seen it on TV. What is it? Malice is an evilness,
14 a wickedness, a spitefulness one person shows to the
15 other.

16 Malice, it can be expressed. I'm going to kill you.
17 It doesn't always happen, but that's one way of showing
18 malice. I think we're going to have some of that in this
19 case. I think you're going to hear from some witnesses
20 that John Blauvelt said, I want to kill Cati. Even asked
21 some folks, will you help me kill her? Will you kill her?
22 I think you're going to see and hear some expressed malice
23 in this case.

24 Malice can, also, be inferred under the
25 circumstances. Putting a knife six inches into her body.

1 It can be inferred by his actions. You're going to see
2 inferred and expressed malice in this case.

3 Now, the word behind that is aforethought. Malice
4 aforethought. We must prove the Defendant, John Blauvelt,
5 killed Cati Blauvelt with malice aforethought.

6 What does aforethought mean? I really -- it's a
7 terrible word. We don't have premeditation in this state.
8 You don't have to plan something in advance when you kill
9 somebody. I think we've got some of it, though. I think
10 we're going to show you some, that he thought about it and
11 wanted to do it. But it's not required. We don't have
12 premeditation.

13 Malice aforethought is a term of art. It just means
14 that the moment of the fatal blow, the moment the knife is
15 going into her neck, that's when the malice has got to
16 exist, the evilness, the wickedness. I think we're going
17 to be able to show some before, but it only has to exist
18 the moment the fatal blow goes. Malice aforethought.

19 We, also, have to prove the cause of death. We'll do
20 that through the pathologist, Dr. Ward. He'll testify
21 maybe later this afternoon. We're not sure of the
22 schedule. But we'll have to prove that that knife that
23 went into Cati Blauvelt's body is what caused her death to
24 a reasonable degree of medical certainty. That's what the
25 State has to prove.

1 As Your Honor said, what's our burden? The burden on
2 the State is the same in this courtroom in Greenville,
3 South Carolina as it is across the state, beyond a
4 reasonable doubt.

5 And I want to tell you something, this is the most
6 important case that's going to be tried in this state, in
7 this county, in this country this week. It's important to
8 John Blauvelt. It's important to Cati Blauvelt's family.
9 As Your Honor said, this is everybody's day in court.
10 We'll get through this week, I do believe, but the
11 shortness of this trial does not take away from the
12 importance of it to the Defendant or to the State. So
13 thank you for being here.

14 Beyond a reasonable doubt is not all doubt. As His
15 Honor will charge you, we can't prove anything beyond all
16 reasonable doubt. You can't do it. It can't be done. If
17 that was the burden, we wouldn't be in this lovely
18 courtroom. There wouldn't need to be courtrooms. We have
19 to prove beyond a reasonable doubt. Beyond a doubt that
20 makes reasonable people to hesitate to act.

21 How will we do that? Well, we do it through
22 testimony. We do it through documents. We do it through
23 videos. Witnesses will be sworn in right here. You can
24 only consider evidence that comes from the stand or
25 evidence that's admitted that His Honor finds is relevant.

1 That's what you can consider. So we're going to present
2 witnesses to you that show -- that will tell what they
3 saw, what they heard. Y'all will determine is it relevant
4 and what impact it has on this case.

5 So what types of evidence are there? There's direct
6 evidence. Y'all know what that is. Direct evidence is
7 something you see with your eyes. You touch it, feel it,
8 smell it, you hear it. That's direct. You directly get
9 all of those with one of your senses. You come in here
10 and take the stand and say this is what I heard, this is
11 what I felt, this is what I smelled. That's called direct
12 evidence.

13 There's, also -- and there's equally evidence called
14 circumstantial evidence. Both of them are equal, the
15 Judge will tell you. Circumstantial evidence is proof of
16 a chain of -- proof of a fact of another fact that leads
17 to a fact in question. I started doing this a few years
18 ago. I don't know if there is a stain on here. But I put
19 a lot of ink stains on my pocket when I leave the pen
20 open. If one is there, you didn't see me put it in, but
21 common sense, if I had a pen and an ink stain there, that
22 would be circumstantial evidence that I did that with my
23 pen.

24 We'll have some circumstantial evidence in this case
25 that we will show you and ask you to consider. We're

1 going to have some documents. We're going to have some
2 videos. We're going to have a journal the Defendant wrote
3 in.

4 MR. NEELY: Objection, Your Honor, pursuant to our
5 pre-trial motion.

6 THE COURT: Overruled.

7 MR. MEADORS: We're going to have a journal that the
8 Defendant wrote in, which I'm going to talk about in a
9 minute. You're going to have videos. You're going to
10 hear some experts on cell phones. All of that, you'll
11 have in your consideration when you decide whether the
12 State has met its burden of proving John Blauvelt guilty
13 beyond a reasonable doubt of killing Cati Blauvelt.

14 I want y'all to remember some addresses. ■ South
15 Kings Drive. ■ South Kings Drive in Fountain Inn, South
16 Carolina. ■ Southeast Main Street in Simpsonville,
17 South Carolina. ■ White Horse Road in Greenville, South
18 Carolina. And ■ West Faris Road in Greenville, South
19 Carolina. That's where we're going to end up, on Faris.
20 Remember those. There's a sum of the important locations
21 in this case.

22 So what happened? What do we believe the evidence
23 will show. We're allowed to tell you that in our opening.
24 We've got to prove it to you and y'all have got to believe
25 we proved it beyond a reasonable doubt to find him guilty.

1 But what do we think the evidence is going to show?

2 Cati Blauvelt met John Blauvelt in 2014. They
3 started dating. They get married December of 2015, I
4 believe the evidence will show. They took a honeymoon
5 trip somewhere. They came back and by February of 2016,
6 the honeymoon was over. Things just didn't work out.
7 Evidence will show John Blauvelt moves out to start with
8 and they were staying at ■ South Kings Drive in Fountain
9 Inn. He moves out. He moves back in, she moves out.

10 The scene there at ■ South Kings in Fountain Inn,
11 John Blauvelt was there. And one of Cati Blauvelt's
12 nieces started hanging out there and staying there. And
13 then some of her friends started staying there. And it
14 became kind of a hang out, party place, if you will, for
15 some. And you're going to hear about all this through the
16 witnesses. But it became a gathering place.

17 And as Cati Blauvelt kind of moved out, there were
18 some folks that were already there, but then some other
19 folks moved in. Specifically, when Cati Blauvelt moved
20 out, a couple named Brandon Tucker and Crystal Gorto moved
21 into the house. And you're going to hear how that
22 happened. They moved in and rented a room.

23 Cati is now out staying with her mother. The person
24 that was in there at the time is a lady named Hannah
25 Thompson. Hannah Thompson then moved in the room with

1 John Blauvelt. She was 17, he was 27. They started a
2 relationship sometime in the spring of 2016, going into
3 the summer of 2016.

4 So you've got Brandon Tucker and Crystal Gorto, who
5 are now married, it's Brandon and Crystal Tucker, you'll
6 hear, Hannah Thompson staying at the residence with John
7 Blauvelt. Some other folks going in and out. A lady
8 named Ally Somerville was there, Janissa Waterfall.
9 They're staying in and out, partying, drinking there. It
10 was a place for them to go. He oversaw the house. It was
11 his house. But all these folks were there.

12 And between the spring of 2016, going into the summer
13 of '16, up to the fall, we believe the evidence will show
14 John Blauvelt wanted Cati Blauvelt gone. And when I say
15 gone, I think the evidence will show he wanted her gone.
16 He wanted her killed. And we believe the evidence will
17 show a lady named Ally Somerville, who was in and out of
18 the house, will take the stand and testify the Defendant
19 asked me to go to Charleston, go to Charleston with his
20 credit card, go down there and spend the money and act
21 like I'm down there so I can kill Cati. Expressed malice.
22 That's going to be presented.

23 We believe there's going to be evidence from Janissa
24 Waterfall that John Blauvelt said look, I've got a life
25 insurance policy --

1 MR. NEELY: Objection, Your Honor, pursuant to our
2 pre-trial motion.

3 THE COURT: All right. Overruled.

4 MR. MEADORS: Do you know somebody that can kill her?
5 Or will you kill her and I'll give you part of that life
6 insurance? I don't know if these folks believed he was
7 serious, but he talked about it, talked to them about it.
8 And then he started talking to Hannah Thompson about it.

9 And Hannah Thompson was in love with John Blauvelt.
10 Ten years her senior, she fell in love with him. We
11 expect the evidence will show he took advantage of that
12 and controlled her. And this evidence is about control.
13 That's what this case is about. And he controlled her.
14 And he started talking to her about how much would his
15 life be better if Cati was out of it. It would be better
16 for them.

17 So the spring moves into summer. The summer is
18 moving toward October 24th of 2016. John Blauvelt is
19 working at the Army on East Washington, the office there,
20 near a restaurant, I think. The evidence will show Hannah
21 Thompson took him to work sometimes. She wasn't working.
22 And she'd just kind of sit in the car waiting for him to
23 come out at lunch.

24 A couple weeks before October 24th, you're going to
25 hear that Hannah Thompson said he said, you know, I'm

1 going to kill her. She didn't know if he was serious. A
2 couple weeks before that, she took him to see if Cati was
3 dating somebody new. He actually dropped her over at her
4 mother's house so he could get to see her new boyfriend.

5 About a week or so before this happened, on October
6 19th, we believe there will be a text that shows that John
7 Blauvelt texted Hannah Thompson, I'm going to go through
8 with that thing in four or five days. Expressed malice.
9 Thinking about it. We don't have to have premeditation.

10 And then we get to October 24th, October 24th of
11 2016. Hannah Thompson takes John Blauvelt to work, waits
12 for him to come out for lunch. And then he says take
13 me -- take me to Woodruff Road near PetSmart where Cati
14 Blauvelt worked. And she did. And she dropped him there.
15 She waited a little bit and then she came back to 10 South
16 Kings Road in Fountain Inn.

17 And when she got back, ladies and gentlemen, Brandon
18 Tucker and Crystal Gorto had gotten home from work --
19 you're going to hear this testimony, we believe. Hannah
20 is there. They're there. He's with Cati Blauvelt.

21 Sometime that afternoon, 5:00ish, a little after,
22 we'll present times, Cati Blauvelt's car comes in the
23 driveway of ■ South Kings Drive in Fountain Inn. We
24 believe the evidence will show that Brandon Tucker and
25 Crystal Gorto went hey, that's her car, that's Cati's car.

1 Said it to Hannah. The car came in the driveway and then
2 came out real quick and left.

3 Hannah, was there with John Blauvelt's phone. The
4 evidence will show he had given her his phone when he went
5 to meet with Cati. And we'll argue in our closing what
6 that means, we respectfully submit. She comes back,
7 Hannah does, with his phone and once she hears them say
8 well, that car was here, she leaves to go back to see if
9 she can find him.

10 Fifteen minutes later, John Blauvelt comes from the
11 back of this house sweating. He told Brandon and Crystal,
12 I've been out running. He calls Hannah. Hannah comes
13 back and gets him. He leaves with some trash in a trash
14 bag. He then tells Hannah to get with me, come on, get in
15 my Prius, we're going somewhere. They leave his driveway
16 at 10 South Kings, go to the end, take a left and go back
17 behind their house. It's not a real road. And back
18 there, Hannah Thompson will tell you was Cati Blauvelt's
19 car. And then they drove it to [REDACTED] White Horse Road.

20 We're going to present a video of that. John
21 Blauvelt driving Cati's car in, Hannah coming in behind
22 him in the Prius. The evidence will show and say that
23 John Blauvelt got out, took the license tag off of Cati's
24 car, put it in the back of his Prius that Hannah then
25 drove to a dumpster behind Big Lots, got rid of the bag,

1 which we will submit we'll prove to you had the clothes
2 that had the blood on it is why he threw it away. And
3 then went to another dumpster and threw away the keys to
4 Cati's car and the license tag. They then come back.
5 That's that address.

6 What address did I leave out? ████ Southeast Main
7 Street in Simpsonville. Because that's where John
8 Blauvelt and Cati Blauvelt ended up going to after Hannah
9 dropped him off. And you're going to see pictures and
10 hear that that's an abandoned house. And all the parties
11 I've mentioned, or most of them, had been there partying
12 and drinking and smoking weed over the years. It had been
13 a hangout. They had all been there before.

14 And the evidence will show when they were there, they
15 started talking and maybe smoked some marijuana. And at
16 some point on that trail to that house, John Blauvelt cut
17 Cati Blauvelt twice and thrust six inches deep into the
18 body and broke the handle off. He then took her car, came
19 back to 10 South Kings and that's when the rest of the
20 story went.

21 Now, that's not because I say that. We believe the
22 evidence is going to say that. And you're going to
23 decide. And that's not only me saying the evidence,
24 that's John Blauvelt saying that and telling people that,
25 that that's what happened. And that he dragged Cati from

1 the trail into the abandoned house and put her in the
2 bottom -- you'll see a picture of it -- a hole and left
3 her there.

4 What happens next? Cati goes missing October 24th.
5 Her mother reports it the next day. You have to wait a
6 certain period. That's the 25th. Early morning hours of
7 the 26th, a fellow named Wayne, he's been involved in all
8 this, Wayne Roper, went out looking for somebody else and
9 knew that's one of the places they went. Wayne goes and
10 they find the body of Cati Blauvelt and call 911. You're
11 going to hear from Wayne. And at that point, Simpsonville
12 gets involved. The captain gets involved. Fountain Inn
13 get involved. SLED gets involved. And the U.S. Marshals
14 get involved.

15 They go first on the 25th, the evidence will show,
16 and talk to John Blauvelt and give him a notification that
17 she's missing. You'll hear about that. Then a few days
18 later, they talk to him again after they find the body.
19 You're going to hear that.

20 And then on or about November 8th or November 9th,
21 you're going to hear that John Blauvelt and Hannah
22 Thompson left Columbia and went to Spartanburg, perhaps,
23 went down to Walterboro. Came back to Columbia, went to
24 Fort Jackson commissary, started getting some stuff to
25 travel to get away. You're going to hear about that. And

1 then they went west, to Texas, Arizona, California, San
2 Francisco, California and, ultimately, to Oregon. And
3 you're going to hear that the Yukon he was driving,
4 wrecked in Walla Walla, Washington. We're going to show
5 you a picture of that wrecked Yukon. And then they
6 started walking.

7 And we're now into December of 2016. And Hannah
8 Thompson was ready to come home. She wanted to come home.
9 Told him that. You'll hear her talk about that. Wanted
10 to come back. They were in Eugene, Oregon and one day, he
11 just left. Hannah called her folks, arranged that she
12 came back mid-December of '16. He kept going. He ended
13 up going to Medford where the U.S. Marshals ended up
14 arresting him. And you're going to hear from the marshal
15 in just a minute. Ended up arresting him six years later.

16 Hannah Thompson comes back. Hannah Thompson is going
17 to tell it all. The first statement she gave on
18 November 2nd. She gave a statement, she came back on
19 December 20th. She made another statement in June of
20 2022. She was still in love with John Blauvelt and,
21 perhaps, had helped him some during that time sending him
22 money. But she came back and told it all and she's going
23 to take the stand and tell y'all what happened, what he
24 told her, where she went and how she got there.

25 Watch her. Evaluate her. She's been charged with

1 accessory after the fact. We're bringing all that out.
2 But go back and listen to what she says and look for
3 corroborating facts.

4 I'm about through. I'm sorry this took so long.
5 Some of this took so long. Some of these things are hard
6 to summarize. I hope I didn't bore you, but I wanted to
7 give you what we believe we will show.

8 When Chris Tamayo, he's a senior inspector with the
9 United States Marshal, got on the case -- evidence will
10 show he's a member of the cold case files. When he got on
11 the case and they located the Defendant in Medford, you're
12 going to hear him talk as much as he can about that.
13 They're limited to what they can say. But he's going to
14 talk about taking him down, arresting him.

15 And when he was arrested, you know what the evidence
16 will show? Are you John Blauvelt? No, I'm Ben. I'm not
17 John Blauvelt. And he'll show you how they identified him
18 on the scene. He'll tell you about that. They did have
19 John Blauvelt. They finally got him back here to South
20 Carolina.

21 One thing they got when they were out there is a
22 journal.

23 MR. NEELY: Objection, Your Honor, pursuant to our
24 pre-trial motion.

25 THE COURT: Overruled.

1 MR. MEADORS: And you're going to hear about that.
2 The evidence will show he had a daughter, Madison. And in
3 the journal, he had written a letter to Dear Madison on
4 December 2016. Some day, I hope you'll understand why I
5 did it. The girl was evil to me. She treated me like
6 dirt and took everything from me, including you. I'm
7 sorry that I had to do it -- to do that, but there was no
8 other way for me -- there was no other way for me. Sorry,
9 babe, I love you.

10 Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for being here.
11 Thank you for listening to me now and listening to the
12 evidence. When we get through this, the AG will give the
13 closing argument for the State after all the evidence has
14 come in. And she'll be up here asking you based on the
15 evidence to respectfully find the Defendant, John
16 Blauvelt, put that knife six inches deep into Cati that
17 killed her. That he fled for six years. And we're going
18 to ask you for a six-letter word that speaks justice of
19 guilty for the murder of Cati Blauvelt.

20 Thank you.

21 THE COURT: Mr. Neely.

22 OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DEFENSE:

23 MR. NEELY: Tunnel vision. Tunnel vision causes you
24 to screw up because you can't see things that are obvious.
25 Tunnel vision causes you to make mistakes because you

1 can't see things that are obvious. Investigator Morecraft
2 that you're going to hear from at some point during this
3 trial, that's something he said. When you get tunnel
4 vision, you make mistakes because you can't see things
5 that are obvious.

6 We all know what tunnel vision is. It's making an
7 assumption, focusing in and locking in on that assumption
8 to the exclusion of everything else. And once you've made
9 that assumption, you're only looking for evidence that
10 points to that assumption, that thing that you believe, to
11 that bias that you put in your brain and you're only
12 looking for evidence that confirms that thought. That's
13 what tunnel vision is. When you have tunnel vision, you
14 screw up because you can't see things that are obvious.

15 And during the investigation, if you have tunnel
16 vision, that leads to suspects that are not confronted,
17 suspects that are never interviewed. It leads to forensic
18 evidence that's ignored. That's tunnel vision.

19 An investigation is supposed to start with an open
20 mind. You're not supposed to make an assumption. You're
21 not supposed to have a bias. You're supposed to keep an
22 open mind, look at all the evidence and see where it leads
23 you. That's what an investigation is. Tunnel vision
24 causes you to focus in on one thing to the exclusion of
25 all others.

1 Tunnel vision is how you wind up with an
2 investigation where you have fingerprints on Cati
3 Blauvelt's car, a car that you say -- that they say was at
4 the crime scene at [REDACTED] Southeast Main Street.
5 Fingerprints that come back and you don't know who they
6 belong to and you never bothered to figure it out. That's
7 tunnel vision.

8 Tunnel vision is how you put a witness on the witness
9 stand, Hannah Thompson, who for eight years has lied
10 indiscriminantly. When you hear from her on the stand, it
11 will be her seventh version of events, all of them
12 different from the previous one. Tunnel vision is how you
13 put her on the stand and ask you to take her word and to
14 believe her even though she lies with impunity.

15 Tunnel vision is how you ignore the fact that there
16 is evidence at a crime scene of somebody else being
17 18 feet from the spot where Cati Blauvelt died, not John,
18 somebody else and you don't ask the first question about
19 that piece of evidence. That is tunnel vision.

20 Tunnel vision is how you look at a DNA report, a
21 report from an expert on DNA and see the fact that there
22 is a DNA profile for two different males, two, and you
23 never try to figure out who they are. Tunnel vision,
24 also, is how you look at that same DNA report and you look
25 at the conclusion of your DNA analyst, their DNA analyst

1 and that DNA analyst is going to say that it's a partial
2 match for John when the reality is, it could be one of 43
3 million people.

4 Tunnel vision is how every single interview that you
5 conduct during your investigation, every single one,
6 starting from the night that you find Cati's body, before
7 you have gathered the first piece of evidence, tunnel
8 vision is how you ask every single person about John
9 Blauvelt.

10 Tunnel vision is how you wind up with a John-centered
11 investigation, an investigation that only focuses on John
12 to the exclusion of everybody else.

13 When you have tunnel vision, you make mistakes
14 because you miss things that are obvious. Their job when
15 they do their investigation, when law enforcement does
16 their investigation, their job is to keep an open mind.
17 It is to look at all of the evidence and see where it
18 leads them.

19 Your job as the jury is to have tunnel vision. John
20 is presumed innocent. He walks into this courtroom with
21 the presumption of innocence. Your job for the entirety
22 of this trial is to be locked in on the fact that he is
23 presumed innocent. And the State has to prove to you
24 beyond a reasonable doubt what they've accused him of.

25 What you're going to hear is they didn't keep an open

1 mind, that their investigation was John centered. That
2 they had tunnel vision. They did not do their jobs. Your
3 job is to have tunnel vision. For the last eight years,
4 John's felt like he's been trapped in a tunnel because
5 they didn't do their job. If you do your job this week,
6 you can be the light at the end of the tunnel for John.

7 Thank you.

8 THE COURT: All right. State call the first witness.

9 MS. WALKER: Your Honor, may we approach briefly?

10 (WHEREUPON, a bench conference was held.)

11 MR. MEADORS: The State of South Carolina would call
12 Chris Tamayo.

13 THE CLERK: Sir, if you'll, please, come forward.

14 If you'll, please, pause at the end of the bench,
15 place your left hand on the Bible and raise your right
16 hand.

17 WHEREUPON,

18 CHRIS TAMAYO,

19 after first having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

20 THE CLERK: Thank you.

21 Please be seated.

22 And, please, state your name for the record.

23 THE WITNESS: Chris Tamayo.

24 THE CLERK: Thank you, sir.

25 DIRECT EXAMINATION

1 BY MR. MEADORS:

2 Q Good morning.

3 A Good morning.

4 Q You've already restated your name.

5 A I did.

6 Q Spell -- how do you spell your last name?

7 A T-A-M-A-Y-O.

8 Q Please tell the ladies and gentlemen of this jury
9 about Chris Tamayo, your background, where you're from, if
10 you don't mind. And your background, where you went to
11 school and then your training in law enforcement, please,
12 sir.

13 A I'm from the bay area of California, specifically,
14 Napa, but I work out of the Oakland, California area.
15 I've been with the Marshal Service for about 11 and a half
16 years. I'm currently assigned as a team leader for the
17 regional fugitive task force out of the bay area, so I
18 have several teams out there where we go after violent
19 offenders, fugitives that are on the run.

20 Q Let me go back a little bit. Where are you from?
21 Where did you go to school?

22 A Oh, sorry. So I went to school in Napa, Vintage High
23 School, and then I went to a city not too far, Sacramento,
24 where I went to college. I got my criminal justice degree
25 there. After college, I ended up joining the military. I

1 went into the Marines through the officer program. I've
2 been in 17 years total now, still in the Reserves.

3 Q What's your rank in the Reserves?

4 A Lieutenant Colonel.

5 Q And prior to the marshals, were you working somewhere
6 else in law enforcement?

7 A Very briefly, I was with the sheriff's department
8 until I got my California post-certificate with Contra
9 Costa County Sheriff's Department in the bay area.

10 Q And you may need to slow down and spell that for the
11 court reporter. The what sheriff's department?

12 A Contra Costa, C-O-N-T-R-A C-O-S-T-A.

13 Q And how long were you with them?

14 A I was only with them through the academy, which was
15 six months, and then I had about a month with them where I
16 was doing jail operations.

17 Q And was that the process there, you kind of built
18 your way up?

19 A Correct.

20 Q And then you went to the U.S. Marshals?

21 A I did.

22 Q And went was that?

23 A 2013.

24 Q And what did you do at the Marshals when you went in
25 2013? What was your job?

1 A In 2013, I initially got out and I went to San Diego,
2 California, that was my first station. And I worked there
3 doing a little bit of what the Marshal's Service does as a
4 whole. So we do jail operations, prisoner transports,
5 court security. We're kind of like the sheriff's
6 department of the federal government. So we'll be
7 bailiffs in a court. So I've seen multiple proceedings.
8 And then I did fugitive apprehension there for about three
9 of my six years in San Diego.

10 Q Did there come a time when your job changed at
11 Marshals?

12 A Yeah, after six years, I ended up going to Oregon.
13 There, I was assigned to the fugitive task force and,
14 also, assigned to cold case investigations team, which is
15 a national team that was started about three years ago.

16 Q And -- and what does cold case mean for the U.S.
17 Marshals?

18 A Cold case is anywhere from three -- I mean, we go,
19 say, three to five, but everybody says three is what it
20 is. Anyone who's been on the run for three years. It,
21 also, depends on the type of crime. It's not just someone
22 that hasn't shown up for court, like an FTA. Usually,
23 it's going to be a violent offender who's been on the run
24 for three plus years.

25 Q And were you with that unit when you got involved in

1 this case?

2 A I was.

3 Q That particular unit?

4 A Yes, I was.

5 Q And I apologize, I didn't give you your due, you are
6 a what? What is your title, if you will?

7 A Senior inspector is what I've been promoted to.

8 Q So when did you get involved in this case?

9 A I initially started looking into the case in
10 mid-2021, but heavily involved with the cold case team as
11 a whole in late 2021, early 2022.

12 Q And can you tell us as much as you can what type of
13 information that you like to have as you're trying to find
14 somebody?

15 A Say that again.

16 Q I mean, you can't tell us all your procedures you
17 use, right? I'm trying to be delicate about that. How
18 did you go about finding him, how's that?

19 A Fair enough.

20 Q Okay.

21 A So yeah, the cold case team, we come together with
22 minds from across the nation. Everyone has different
23 ideas. A lot of what we do is law enforcement sensitive.
24 But during this, we ended up developing an address we were
25 looking for the subject on this. And after that, we

1 conducted surveillance at a house that we developed.

2 Q And I guess you have sources, too, correct?

3 A And we have sources. Sources, surveillance,
4 interviews of all those different sources.

5 Q And as part of that, do you know what the person
6 looks like, whether they have tattoos? Do you familiarize
7 yourself with the background of the person you're looking
8 for?

9 A We do. It's almost like an intelligence package in
10 the military. We do everything from their background,
11 their history, photographs, tattoos, markings, anything
12 that we can identify and build a pattern of life for an
13 individual who's on the run.

14 Q And did you have that information regarding John
15 Blauvelt?

16 A I did.

17 Q So your search led you to where?

18 A Medford, Oregon.

19 Q Okay. And can you take us kind of as we go down --
20 where was your office then?

21 A So I was actually in Portland, Oregon. And we have
22 sub offices, so one in Eugene and one in Medford.

23 Q So what did you do? You said you had got him close
24 to that area. What did y'all do?

25 A So once we had information -- because Portland is

1 about a four-and-a-half-hour drive from Medford. I,
2 actually, initially sent information down to our office
3 down there. They have a small office with about four
4 people, but they do have two people that focus on
5 investigations as well for fugitives.

6 So two of them went out and conducted surveillance at
7 the house. During their time out there, they, actually,
8 saw an individual that matched the description of our
9 fugitive. They relayed that to me and said hey, when can
10 you get down here? So this being such an important case
11 that we had been working for so long, we made a schedule
12 and planned to go down the next day. Then I drove down
13 and picked up the surveillance.

14 Q Were you in charge of the scene?

15 A I was. There was a supervisor there for that office,
16 but I was the team leader for that case.

17 Q And whose residence was this, did y'all determine
18 that?

19 A We did. Her --

20 Q I don't know if we want to put her name out, but is
21 her first name Stephanie?

22 A Yeah, Stephanie was who we believed was the
23 girlfriend and it was her house.

24 Q And did y'all verify that that was her house?

25 A We did.

1 Q And what did you do after that?

2 A So once I got down there and conducted our
3 surveillance, we set up around the house. I don't
4 remember exactly how many, I think about eight of us were
5 there in several vehicles. I was riding with the
6 supervisor of that office. We were in different
7 positions. It was a difficult house to watch, small
8 street, kind of just one off the corner. But we were able
9 to get enough that we could see the front door and part of
10 driveway that went to a garage.

11 While we were sitting out there, we saw an individual
12 come from the front door to the garage and he was -- we
13 made a couple passes so we could see what was actually
14 happening in that blind spot. And there was -- the one
15 matching our subject, who we believed was John Blauvelt,
16 he was holding a little kiddie pool and washing it out
17 with the hose, cleaning it up like he was going to maybe
18 cool off. It was a hot summer day. He was wearing long
19 basketball shorts and nothing else.

20 Q So did he have a shirt on or shoes on?

21 A He had nothing on but the basketball shorts.

22 Q Were you able to make any other observations about
23 him besides his clothing at that point.

24 A We did. So he matched the height. He was a little
25 bit heavier than the pictures we had, but that's kind of

1 normal for people to change weight over time. His hair
2 was long, kind of pulled back in a ponytail, bigger beard,
3 but, you know, just the facial hair, you could tell from
4 some of the photos that that's about what it would develop
5 into. And there was multiple tattoos that we could see on
6 the body. So we were kind of believing it was our guy.

7 Q And did you yourself observe one of those tattoos on
8 his body?

9 A I did. So as I said, it was pretty hard to watch and
10 just sit right in front of it. He was moving in and out
11 of the door, so he was going to a blind spot. Where I was
12 sitting with the supervisor, I finally decided hey, he's
13 outside, now is a good time to make a pass. We drove by.
14 I used binoculars as we were rolling past him. But even
15 without the binoculars, I was able to identify a
16 significant tattoo that was on his right arm as he was
17 holding the hose.

18 Q Did you feel comfortable that was the fugitive that
19 you had been looking for?

20 A Yes. At that point, we were making a plan to make
21 the arrest.

22 Q Then what happened?

23 A So once we set up back where I was sitting
24 previously, we had a plan to have part of the team get on
25 foot around the corner. Like I said, the house was one

1 off from the corner house. They were able to kind of
2 sneak up on foot.

3 And once we said initiate, which was our moment to
4 go, we drove around the corner. The supervisor drove
5 straight down the driveway directly at John while the rest
6 of the team went on foot, turned the corner, maybe 20,
7 25 yards. And they went on foot right in front of us and
8 gave him commands, U.S. Marshals, police, get down on the
9 ground, you're under arrest. And we took him into
10 custody.

11 Q And was he handcuffed?

12 A He was handcuffed.

13 Q And at that point, did you ask him if he was John
14 Blauvelt?

15 A I did. You know, we said, We have an arrest warrant
16 for John Blauvelt. Are you John Blauvelt? And we -- we
17 -- actually, when we took him down was a massive surprise.
18 You could see it in his eyes. They were wide, kind of
19 that shocked, almost pale look. He almost couldn't say
20 anything to us. There was no real response to, like, why
21 are you here, which is pretty common. It was just kind of
22 a head shake of no.

23 Q Did he ever admit to being John Blauvelt when you
24 were there?

25 A No. There was some times when myself and the other

1 officers were, like, we know you're John and he denied it.
2 In fact, he gave us a name of Ben.

3 Q Ben?

4 A Ben.

5 Q Okay. Is there any technique or procedure -- and I
6 recently found out there is -- that y'all use to determine
7 identity on the scene, if you will?

8 A There is. So, again, with him being denying who he
9 was, we do have a mobile fingerprint scanner. It's,
10 essentially, the same you would use at a jail. I pulled
11 that out of my vehicle, brought it up to him. We printed
12 him as he was sitting on the porch at this time. We got
13 his prints -- or excuse me, got his prints when he was
14 standing, then he went and sat down on the porch. It
15 takes a minute to get the results.

16 When I was able to get the results, they actually
17 come up on my cell phone, I walked up and showed him
18 the -- my cell phone and said, it says John Blauvelt.
19 Your prints came back. You have a warrant out of South
20 Carolina.

21 Q And did he agree it was him at that point?

22 A No, there was still -- I wouldn't say a denial, but
23 he didn't say anything. It was another look of kind of
24 shock, but silence.

25 Q What happened after that?

1 A So after that, we -- well, we ended up getting him
2 some clothing. We had to go inside and get him a T-shirt.

3 Q Did he request that?

4 A He requested a T-shirt.

5 Q Okay.

6 A So we went inside to clothe him before he went to
7 jail. It's pretty common for us to make sure people are
8 decent and have something before they go to jail. So we
9 went inside just to get him some clothing. We actually
10 did see a firearm on the nightstand. But once we got the
11 clothing, we left. We did secure that weapon just for
12 safety. We gave him his clothes and he went off to jail.
13 But I, also, made a phone call to Stephanie because I
14 wanted her to come down there so I could have a
15 conversation with her.

16 Q And that was the owner of the home?

17 A That was the owner of the home.

18 Q And without going into what she said, were you able
19 to determine did John Blauvelt have any ownership or
20 interest in that home at all?

21 A No.

22 Q And Ms. Stephanie, was that her home?

23 A That was her home.

24 Q Was she surprised by the arrest?

25 A Very surprised, shocked.

1 Q Did she know he was John Blauvelt?

2 A She did not.

3 Q Did she know that person by another name?

4 A She did, Ben.

5 Q Ben?

6 A Ben.

7 Q So was that his house?

8 A No.

9 Q And did you end up finding -- was that Ms.
10 Stephanie's gun?

11 A It was. So once we ran it out, it was hers.

12 Q And did Ms. Stephanie give you consent to search for
13 some items that were on the premises?

14 A She did. I was -- during the interview, one of my
15 partners came in and she said, you know, we can look
16 around. We were looking for a bag.

17 MR. NEELY: Objection, Your Honor, pursuant to
18 pre-trial motion.

19 THE COURT: Overruled.

20 BY MR. MEADORS:

21 Q Did she tell you where that bag was?

22 A She did. It was in the rafters of her garage.

23 Q Did she give you permission to go get that?

24 A She did.

25 Q And did y'all go to that garage?

1 A We did.

2 Q And was the door open?

3 A It was.

4 Q Okay. Unlocked?

5 A Unlocked.

6 Q Okay. And was the bag picked up by y'all at that
7 point?

8 A It was.

9 Q And what happened to that bag?

10 A So my partner grabbed it, brought it inside. I was
11 still talking, conducting an interview. He asked again
12 was this the bag? Stephanie said, Yes. And we decided to
13 have him go through the bag at that point right in front
14 of us.

15 Q Now, you say him, who are you talking about?

16 A Sorry, my partner.

17 Q Okay.

18 A So my partner, basically, started to go through the
19 bag at that point.

20 Q And she had identified this as John Blauvelt's,
21 correct?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And -- and did she give you permission to get the bag
24 and look in the bag?

25 A She did.

1 Q And did y'all do that?

2 A We did.

3 Q And I'm going to show you what's marked --

4 MR. MEADORS: Beg the Court's indulgence.

5 (WHEREUPON, Court's Exhibit No. 2 was remarked as
6 State's Exhibit No. 2 for identification.)

7 BY MR. MEADORS:

8 Q And were you there when this bag was opened?

9 A I was.

10 Q I'm going to show you what's marked now as State's
11 Exhibit No. 2. Could you look through there and tell me
12 if you recognize this?

13 A Yes, I recognize this.

14 Q And are these the items y'all collected -- and,
15 again, are we on July 20th of 2022?

16 A We are.

17 Q And where were you?

18 A At the house in Medford.

19 Q Medford?

20 A Medford.

21 Q For the record, Medford what?

22 A Medford, Oregon.

23 Q Okay. And when you got through with these -- I want
24 to go through them in a minute -- did you package them
25 back up?

1 A Yes, I put them in this bag.

2 Q And what did you do with it after you put it in the
3 bag, the items you collected on July 20th, 2022 from Ms.
4 Stephanie's house in Medford, Oregon?

5 A So when we collected this, we were in communication
6 with Simpsonville PD. We knew that they were going to
7 want some items. So I collected this, put it in the bag,
8 kept it in my possession until I could get it back to them
9 via Jackson County Sheriff's Department.

10 Q And I'm showing you a card in here that's got your
11 name on it, Chris Tamayo?

12 A Yes, this is my business card.

13 Q Please tell the ladies and gentlemen of the jury why
14 that's in there.

15 A So I didn't have our formal form for an evidence log.
16 So I figured the best way to document my time with it was
17 to put it on my business card. It had all my information
18 on there anyways, which is the same that goes on there. I
19 decided to date and time stamp it when I took possession
20 of it.

21 Q This will kind of be your chain, I guess?

22 A Yeah, our chain of custody of the evidence.

23 Q So it says 7/20/22 at 5:00 p.m. and it's got Chris
24 Tamayo. What's that under there, CT?

25 A I signed it. My name and signature.

1 Q Okay. That right there, CT 7?

2 A Yeah, I have a very hard signature to read.

3 Q So that's your signature, I apologize. Okay.

4 So on 7/20/22 at 5:00, what does that indicate? What
5 does that mean on this card?

6 A That's when I physically took custody of that.

7 Q Okay. And then the next day we have on here is 7/26
8 of 2022 at 9:50 p.m.

9 A Correct.

10 Q Why is that on the card? Please tell the ladies and
11 gentlemen.

12 A 7/26/2022 is when I finally turned it over to Jackson
13 County Sheriff's Department for them to give to
14 Simpsonville PD.

15 Q And where were these items between 7/20 and 7/26?

16 A They were in my possession the whole time, whether it
17 was in my government vehicle lock box where I keep all my
18 firearms and ballistics vest, so it's a very secure spot
19 for me. Or it was physically with me, next to me.

20 Q And again, I apologize, on the 26th, you took these
21 items to where? State's Exhibit No. 2, where did you take
22 them?

23 A To Jackson County Sheriff's Department.

24 Q Did you give them to their custody?

25 A I did.

1 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, at this time, we'd over
2 State's Exhibit No. 2.

3 THE COURT: Any objection?

4 MR. NEELY: Yes, Your Honor, pursuant to our
5 pre-trial motion.

6 THE COURT: Objection is overruled.

7 State's Exhibit No. 2 is admitted into evidence over
8 objection.

9 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit No. 2 was admitted into
10 evidence.)

11 BY MR. MEADORS:

12 Q As we go through these, there's a -- and, again, with
13 the cameras here, I don't want to read the last name out.
14 But what is this? Describe it without saying their name.

15 A It's a blank check and it has a name that was unknown
16 to us out of Medford, Oregon.

17 Q So a name, not John Blauvelt's name on it?

18 A Correct.

19 Q And, also, in here is an identification. What is
20 that?

21 A California identification card, but, again, it was a
22 name that -- one of my partners said it sounded familiar
23 through our investigation, but it was not our fugitive.

24 Q But it was within the items associated with him?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And what is this?

2 A There was some other stuff in here, this was a
3 Starbucks card, but no identification name.

4 Q And, also, is there another Starbucks card?

5 A Correct, another Starbucks card.

6 Q Can you read what's on there? And, quite frankly,
7 I've never seen that -- I've never read it, excuse me.

8 A It looks like it says -- it's very faint, but
9 Madison, something illegible, and then I love you. I
10 hope, it looks like Crystal is okay.

11 Q And in your -- as you're preparing to find a
12 fugitive, do you learn about their family?

13 A We do.

14 Q And did he have a daughter named Madison?

15 A He did have a daughter named Madison.

16 Q What is this?

17 A It's like a Mexican peso, 20 pesos.

18 Q And can you tell us what this is?

19 A Yeah, it's, actually, a military writing Lorraine
20 book that looks like a journal. It has a lot of writing
21 in it, some scribbles.

22 Q And -- and is there a reference in here to Madison or
23 a letter to Madison? I'll just show you the page right
24 here. What does it say on here? Without reading the
25 letter, who is it addressed to?

1 A It says, Dear Madison.

2 Q And what name did you say the Defendant told you he
3 was when you got there? Who did he identify himself as?
4 I apologize.

5 A I'm sorry, it's a lot of stuff in there. He said his
6 name was Ben.

7 Q Ben. Was this item placed along with the rest of
8 them into the bag, State's Exhibit No. 2, and kept in your
9 possession until it was turned over to the local
10 authorities?

11 A It was.

12 Q Thank you.

13 MR. MEADORS: Beg the Court's indulgence.

14 (Pause.)

15 BY MR. MEADORS:

16 Q At any time before you left Medford, Oregon on July
17 20th of 2022, did John Blauvelt ever admit that he was
18 John Blauvelt to you?

19 A Not to me.

20 Q And how long had Ms. Stephanie been with John
21 Blauvelt? Did you determine that?

22 A Yeah, we determined based on the interview with her
23 about six years.

24 Q And she had no idea he was John Blauvelt?

25 A No idea.

1 Q Now, is the individual in this courtroom that you
2 apprehended on July 20th, 2022, and did determine was John
3 Blauvelt that you were searching for, is he in the
4 courtroom?

5 A He is.

6 Q Would you please point him out to the ladies and
7 gentlemen of the jury?

8 A Yeah, he's sitting at the corner of the Defense table
9 wearing a dark blue jacket, light shirt and blue tie.

10 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, we would respectfully ask
11 the record so reflect.

12 Thank you.

13 That's all we have.

14 THE COURT: Before we get into cross, let's take our
15 morning break here.

16 Ladies and gentlemen, let's take our morning break
17 here. Please don't discuss the case.

18 (WHEREUPON, the jury was excused from open court at
19 approximately 10:55 a.m.)

20 THE COURT: All right. A little while ago, we had a
21 bench conference and it was brought to the Court's
22 attention from the Defense that there is a juror, I
23 believe it is Juror #265. It was brought to my attention
24 that she was observed to have been nodding off. And so
25 after that, I started watching her and that is correct.

1 She's yawning about every three or four minutes. She's
2 not paying attention. She's -- has her eyes half closed.
3 A couple of times, she's nodded. She is clearly not
4 paying attention.

5 So I can do one thing -- a couple things I can do. I
6 can bring her out and give her a warning or I can go ahead
7 and -- let me to this. Let me hear from the parties
8 before I go any further.

9 Let me hear from the State or the Defense, either
10 one.

11 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, Mr. Neely and I have just
12 talked and we've got no issue with you replacing her with
13 an alternate juror. I agree, I was able to observe her
14 during this time as well and there's just -- I fear for
15 the potential length of this trial being all the way until
16 Friday that we're just going to be constantly doing this
17 back and forth if we only give her a warning. So I'm fine
18 with whatever method Your Honor wants in replacing her as
19 a juror.

20 THE COURT: Mr. Neely.

21 MR. NEELY: Your Honor, I'm in agreement. This is
22 far too important. I would ask that we swap her out.

23 THE COURT: Does the clerk -- do either one of you
24 have any preference as to how I do that. I can either
25 bring her out or I can just tell the bailiffs to let her

1 know or I can go speak to herself myself.

2 MR. NEELY: To not embarrass her, Your Honor, I would
3 ask that she --

4 THE COURT: That's what I wanted to do, but I wanted
5 to, obviously, give y'all a chance to put on the record if
6 there was any other way to handle it.

7 So I will have her brought out. I will speak to her
8 and let her know that she is excused from the jury.

9 MS. ABEE: Yes, Your Honor.

10 THE COURT: Okay. We'll be in recess for our break.

11 (WHEREUPON, a break was taken.)

12 THE COURT: All right. I have spoken with Juror
13 #265. I spoke with her out in the hall. And she actually
14 was -- she came out there in the hall when the bailiff got
15 her. She knew what -- what she was being called out there
16 for. And she had a good attitude about it. She just said
17 she had just gotten off working a ten-hour shift and
18 that -- so she had not had any sleep. And she was not --
19 was not mad, not angry. She was very -- she knew why.
20 And she -- she was excused and she understood. So she is
21 excused.

22 All right. Mary, if you would, let's get two pieces
23 of paper -- Mary is thinking ahead of time, all right.
24 Our new member of the jury is Andrew Georgia. And that is
25 juror number?

1 THE CLERK: 88.

2 THE COURT: 88. So Juror #88 will be moved to the 12
3 member jury panel.

4 All right.

5 (WHEREUPON, the jury came into open court at
6 approximately 11:23 a.m.)

7 THE COURT: All right, ladies and gentlemen, we have
8 excused a member of the panel from the 12 of you. So we
9 have now -- or we are now going to move one of our
10 alternates, Mr. Georgia.

11 Mr. Georgia, you are now a member of the 12-member
12 jury. So you're on the jury at this stage.

13 One thing I meant to do as we got started, the
14 gentleman here, you may be wondering who he is and why he
15 is up here. This is Adam Compton. He is my law clerk.
16 He just graduated from law school. He has taken the bar,
17 so he's waiting on the bar results to become an attorney.
18 He will be with me for a year. He is my right-hand guy
19 and he assists me. So that's who he is. I apologize, I
20 meant to introduce him to you earlier.

21 All right, cross-examination.

22 MR. NEELY: Thank you, Your Honor.

23 CROSS-EXAMINATION

24 BY MR. NEELY:

25 Q Investigator Tamayo or Inspector Tamayo?

1 A Senior Inspector.

2 Q Senior Inspector, you spent a lot of time talking to
3 Mr. Meadors about your investigation and your involvement
4 in this case?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Now, when you say investigation, I believe you said
7 that developed an address for the suspect?

8 A We did.

9 Q And you did -- you and your unit, you did
10 surveillance on the suspect?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And you interviewed some of those sources, correct?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Now, the purpose of that investigation was to locate
15 John Blauvelt, correct?

16 A Yes.

17 Q All right. When you use the word investigation, you
18 are not specifically talking about investigating the thing
19 that John was arrested for, correct?

20 A Correct.

21 Q All right. So you had -- you took no part in the
22 2016 investigation?

23 A That's correct.

24 Q All right. So as far as the underlying facts that
25 led to the arrest warrant, you have no knowledge about

1 that, correct?

2 A That's correct.

3 MR. NEELY: Okay. Thank you.

4 THE COURT: All right. Any redirect?

5 (WHEREUPON, there was no response.)

6 THE COURT: Any redirect?

7 MR. MEADORS: I'm so sorry. No, sir.

8 THE COURT: All right. You may step down.

9 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

10 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, I don't know your practice
11 and I won't do it again, but can he be excused.

12 THE COURT: Can he be excused?

13 MR. NEELY: Absolutely.

14 THE COURT: All right. You are excused from your
15 subpoena.

16 Thank you, sir.

17 The State can call the next witness.

18 MS. ABEE: Thank you, Your Honor. The State calls
19 Patricia Piver.

20 THE CLERK: Ms. Piver, if you'll, please, pause at
21 the end of the bench, place your left hand on the Bible
22 and raise your right hand.

23 MS. ABEE: Madam Clerk, she's a little hard of
24 hearing, so maybe move a little closer.

25 WHEREUPON,

1

PATRICIA PIVER,

2

after first having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

3

THE CLERK: Please be seated.

4

And, please, state your name for the record.

5

THE WITNESS: Patricia Piver.

6

THE CLERK: Thank you. Speak louder.

7

THE WITNESS: I'm sorry, Patricia Piver.

8

THE CLERK: Thank you.

9

DIRECT EXAMINATION

10

BY MS. ABEE:

11

Q Ms. Piver, I'm going to have you go ahead and spell
your last name for the record.

12

13

A P-I-V-E-R.

14

Q I want to make sure you speak nice and loud in the
microphone, okay?

15

16

A Okay.

17

Q And Ms. Piver, I know you have some issues hearing
sometimes --

18

19

A Yes.

20

Q -- so if you can't hear me or anyone over there, just
let us know before you answer, okay?

21

22

A Okay.

23

Q Ms. Piver, how old are you?

24

A 62.

25

Q Are you married?

1 A Yes.

2 Q For how long?

3 A 19 years.

4 Q Do you any kids?

5 A I have three daughters, two stepdaughters and one
6 stepson.

7 Q Who are your three daughters?

8 A Brandi, Cati and Taylor.

9 Q And is that the order that they were born in?

10 A Yeah.

11 Q Did you remember when Cati was born?

12 A Yeah, [REDACTED].

13 Q And tell us just a little bit about Cati.

14 A She was sunshine. I mean, everybody loved her. She
15 made friends with anybody and any dog. She loved animals.
16 She was one-third of my world.

17 Q And where was she born?

18 A In Greenville.

19 Q Okay. Did she live here the majority of her life?

20 A Simpsonville, around about.

21 Q Now, at any point in time, did you become familiar
22 with somebody named John Blauvelt?

23 A Yeah, Cati started dating him in, I think, 2014.

24 Q And do you see John Blauvelt in the courtroom today?

25 A Yes, he's sitting right over there.

1 Q And can you tell us something that he's wearing,
2 please?

3 A Blue suit, blue tie, white shirt, got his hair pulled
4 back in a bun.

5 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, let the record so reflect.

6 BY MS. ABEE:

7 Q And you said Cati started dating him about 2014. Is
8 that about the time that you met him for the first time?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And did their relationship ever escalate into more
11 than dating?

12 A Well, they got married in 2015, so, yeah.

13 Q Do you remember when they got married in 2015?

14 A Yeah, December 7th, 2015.

15 Q Were you there when they got married?

16 A No. I got a text from her.

17 Q And to your knowledge, how long had they been dating
18 by the time they got married?

19 A Well over a year.

20 Q And about how old was Cati in December of 2015?

21 A Oh, 21, maybe.

22 Q So about 21 years old, she marries the Defendant?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Okay. Do you know how she met the Defendant?

25 A She worked at Firehouse Subs and it was in like a

1 strip mall and his recruiting office was right next door
2 to it. So he would go to lunch over at Firehouse and I
3 believe that's how they met.

4 Q Do you know what type of recruiter he was?

5 A He recruited from the high schools, like, mostly like
6 seniors, you know, join the Army when you get out of high
7 school, stuff like that as far as I know.

8 Q So to your knowledge, he was an Army recruiter in the
9 high schools?

10 A Yeah, Army.

11 Q Did Cati ever join the Army?

12 A She did in 2015.

13 Q Okay. Was this after she had already started dating
14 the Defendant?

15 A Yes.

16 Q So she meets the Defendant, starts dating him and
17 then joins the military?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Joins the Army, okay. Did she make it through boot
20 camp?

21 A No.

22 Q Why not?

23 A She had a medical problem with her spine that caused
24 her a lot of pain and suffering in the Army and they gave
25 her a medical discharge.

1 Q And after Cati received that medical discharge, did
2 she and John continue to date and, ultimately, get married
3 in December like you told us?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Now, was there a point in time -- without telling us
6 why, but a point in time when they separated?

7 A Yeah, it was either late February or early March. I
8 don't remember the date exactly.

9 Q Is that in 2016?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Okay. So they get married December 2015, and then
12 late February, early March 2016, they separate?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Okay. Prior to that, was she living with the
15 Defendant?

16 A She was living in the house. They -- they -- when
17 they separated, they weren't living together.

18 Q Okay, but prior to their separation, they were living
19 together in the home?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Do you recall where that house was located?

22 A Yeah, it was in Fountain Inn, Kings Street. I don't
23 know the exact address.

24 Q And you said once they separated, Cati moved out?

25 A Not as soon as they separated. She stayed there

1 because of the dogs. He --

2 Q Sorry, I'm just going to help you out just a little
3 bit, Ms. Piver. Eventually, did Cati move out?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Okay. Did you help move her out?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And once Cati moved out of the house that she and
8 John were living in, where did she move to?

9 A She moved back home with me.

10 Q And where was that located?

11 A Simpsonville.

12 Q And so around this time, talking, you know, end of
13 spring, beginning of summer, early fall of 2016, was Cati
14 working?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Okay. Where was she working at?

17 A The last place she worked was PetSmart.

18 Q Do you recall where that PetSmart was located, which
19 location it was?

20 A It was Greenridge in Greenville.

21 Q Do you recall what road that's located on? If not,
22 it's okay.

23 A It's Woodruff Road.

24 Q Woodruff Road?

25 A Yeah.

1 Q Okay. Did you see Cati start to date anyone else
2 during this time when she and John were separated?

3 A Near the end, just the last couple of months before
4 she died, she was seeing somebody. I don't know if they
5 were really dating, but they were hanging out, seeing each
6 other.

7 Q And you said towards the end, are we talking about
8 October of 2016?

9 A Yeah, September or October, something like that.

10 Q So she had moved on from the Defendant and was dating
11 someone else or, at least, seeing someone else at that
12 time?

13 A Yeah.

14 Q Now, I want to talk to you a little bit about October
15 of 2016. Do you know what type of car Cati was driving at
16 that point in time?

17 A Yeah, a 2011 Ford Fiesta.

18 Q Do you recall what color?

19 A Black.

20 Q And is that a car she had when she lived with John or
21 something she got after?

22 A After. I had to cosign for it, so.

23 Q So you helped her get a separate car?

24 A Uh-huh.

25 Q Do you know what car she drove with John before that

1 when she lived with him?

2 A I think it was a Prius.

3 Q Okay. Was that Cati's car?

4 A I believe it was John's. He let her use it.

5 Q When she's out of the house, though, she's driving
6 this 2011 black Ford Fiesta?

7 A When what?

8 Q Once she's out of the house and back with you, she's
9 driving --

10 A Yes.

11 Q -- the Ford Fiesta?

12 A Well, she got it in September, I believe.

13 Q I want to fast-forward to October the 24th of 2016,
14 Ms. Piver. Do you remember that?

15 A Yeah, I remember that.

16 Q To your knowledge, was Cati supposed to work that
17 day?

18 A Yeah, she worked until -- I think she got off at
19 2:30.

20 Q So do you recall around what time she would have gone
21 into work?

22 A What time what?

23 Q She would have gone into work?

24 A I think she went in 6:00 or 6:30, I believe.

25 Q So she went in early morning, was supposed to get off

1 maybe mid-afternoon?

2 A Uh-huh.

3 Q Did you work at this time?

4 A I had to be at work at 8:00, but I usually got to
5 work at 7:00. And I worked till about 4:15 or 20.

6 Q And after you get off work on October the 24th, did
7 you go home?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And when you were at home, was Cati there?

10 A No.

11 Q And at some point in time, did you receive some phone
12 calls and as a result of those begin to question where
13 Cati was?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Okay. And what did you do to try to find where Cati
16 was located?

17 A I called friends, drove to places we knew she would
18 be. We knew she liked to go to restaurants. We drove
19 around looking trying to figure out where she was. And
20 she never returned any phone calls to me or texts.

21 Q Okay. So were you calling her?

22 A Calling her, texting her.

23 Q Was she answering any of those?

24 A No.

25 Q Were you driving to various different places?

1 A I'm sorry.

2 Q Were you driving to different places to look for her?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Were you able to find her?

5 A No.

6 Q So then did you find her at all or talk to her at all
7 once you got home from work on October the 24th of 2016?

8 A No.

9 Q Okay. So tell us about October the 25th of 2016,
10 what you did.

11 A I got up that morning, realized she still hadn't come
12 home. So me and my husband and I think my stepdaughter
13 went to the police station in Simpsonville and filed
14 missing persons report.

15 Q Throughout this time, did you continue to try to call
16 Cati?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Did she ever answer?

19 A No.

20 Q Did you continue to try to text Cati?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Did she ever answer?

23 A No.

24 Q Did you continue to try to drive around and find
25 Cati?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Did you ever find her?

3 A No.

4 Q When did you find out that Cati's body had been
5 located?

6 A It was the 26th, I believe, a little after lunch when
7 Detective Morecraft called me and told me they were on the
8 way to come see me and let me know that they found her
9 body.

10 Q At any point in time leading up to that, had the
11 Defendant called you to tell you anything about the
12 whereabouts of Cati?

13 A No. .

14 Q Ms. Piver, I'm going to approach you with what's been
15 pre-marked as State's Exhibit No. 1 for identification
16 purposes. Do you recognize this?

17 A That's Cati.

18 Q And is this a picture that you're familiar with?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Is this a fair and accurate depiction of Cati in a
21 picture you, ultimately, provided to law enforcement?

22 A I -- yes, I gave a copy of that to Morecraft.

23 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, the State moves State's
24 Exhibit No. 1 into evidence.

25 THE COURT: Any objection from the Defendant?

1 MS. WALKER: May I see the picture?

2 MS. ABEE: Oh, sorry.

3 MS. WALKER: No objection, Judge.

4 THE COURT: All right, State's Exhibit No. 1 is
5 admitted into evidence without objection.

6 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit No. 1 was admitted into
7 evidence.)

8 BY MS. ABEE:

9 Q And this is the picture that you provided to law
10 enforcement of Cati?

11 A Yes.

12 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, permission to publish to the
13 jury?

14 THE COURT: Permission granted.

15 Ma'am, do you need any tissues?

16 THE WITNESS: No, thank you.

17 BY MS. ABEE:

18 Q Ms. Piver, in this picture, can you see what shirt
19 Cati is wearing?

20 A Yes, her work shirt.

21 Q And is that a work shirt you had seen her wear
22 before?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And do you see what it says on the label on it?

25 A It's kind of moved, but it's a PetSmart shirt.

1 Q And this is the picture you provided to law
2 enforcement?

3 A Yes.

4 MS. ABEE: . Your Honor, I have no further questions
5 for this witness at this time.

6 THE COURT: All right, cross?

7 MS. WALKER: Thank you, Your Honor.

8 CROSS-EXAMINATION

9 BY MS. WALKER:

10 Q Good morning, Ms. Piver. Can you hear me okay?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Just to organize my thoughts. So Cati was working at
13 PetSmart?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And you said it was at the Shops at Greenridge?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And that's an area where there's a Lowe's, I think,
18 or a Home Depot? There's one of those home improvement
19 stores?

20 A Lowe's is on the opposite side of Greenridge from
21 where PetSmart is at.

22 Q There's a lot of shops there?

23 A Yes.

24 Q It's like a shopping center area?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Super busy area. And they separated, Cati and John,
2 in late February, early March?

3 A Yes.

4 Q She -- when they separated, she stayed at the house a
5 little while. So she didn't move her things?

6 A Not that day, no. Later.

7 Q But later on, you helped her move her items?

8 A Yes.

9 Q Would that roughly have been around May?

10 A No, it was in March.

11 Q You're saying that she moved her belongings --

12 A I believe so.

13 Q To your memory, you're saying --

14 A Yes.

15 Q But she had stayed at the house a couple of weeks.

16 And then when she moved out of the house, she continued to
17 drive the Prius?

18 A Yes, John let her borrow it.

19 Q And she kept the Prius until she bought the Fiesta or
20 that you all helped her buy the Fiesta in around September
21 of 2016?

22 A She had given the Prius back earlier because John
23 said he wanted it back. So then, we helped her get to
24 places until we could get out and get her a car.

25 Q But she had the Prius for a period of time?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And on October 25th is when you filed a report
3 indicating you couldn't find Cati?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And you filed that report, I know this is an obvious
6 question, but because you wanted assistance with finding
7 her?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And wanted that done as soon as possible?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And you would have done whatever you could to assist
12 with that?

13 A Yes.

14 Q So you would give them any information you knew about
15 how you had tried to call her and she didn't answer?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And if they needed to look at anything, you would
18 have been okay with that?

19 A Yes.

20 Q So if they wanted to check her bedroom or check a
21 computer she had, you would have been absolutely fine with
22 that because you wanted her found?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And then on the 26th when you -- after you spoke with
25 Investigator Morecraft, Ms. Abee asked if you had received

1 a call or anything from John regarding Cati?

2 A Correct, she asked me that.

3 Q And that was October of 2016?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And they had separated about eight months prior?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Okay. And Cati was seeing someone, not very
8 seriously, but around October; is that correct?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And she had been casually dating other folks prior to
11 that, right?

12 A Not to my knowledge.

13 Q Not to your knowledge? No dating websites or
14 anything like that?

15 A No.

16 MS. WALKER: I beg the Court's indulgence.

17 (Pause.)

18 MS. WALKER: I have no further questions.

19 Thank you, Ms. Piver.

20 THE COURT: Any redirect?

21 MS. ABEE: No further questions, Your Honor.

22 THE COURT: Thank you, ma'am.

23 You may step down.

24 MR. MEADORS: Judge, may we approach?

25 (WHEREUPON, a bench conference was held.)

1 THE COURT: All right, ladies and gentlemen, it's a
2 quarter till 12:00. We're going to go ahead and take our
3 lunch break now. And so report back -- we'll start back
4 at 1:00. We'll start back at 1:00. So take your lunch,
5 enjoy your lunch. And, again, please, do not discuss the
6 case during lunch or any time until I give you the case.

7 All right. Enjoy your lunch. I'll see you back here
8 at 1:00.

9 (WHEREUPON, the jury was excused from open court at
10 approximately 11:44 a.m.)

11 THE COURT: All right. Anything we need to take up
12 before we take lunch?

13 Anything from the State?

14 MR. MEADORS: No, Your Honor.

15 THE COURT: Anything from the Defense?

16 MR. NEELY: No, Your Honor.

17 THE COURT: All right. Lunch recess until 1:00.

18 (WHEREUPON, a lunch break was taken.)

19 THE COURT: Anything we need to take up before we
20 bring the jury in?

21 Anything from the State?

22 MS. ABEE: No, Your Honor.

23 THE COURT: Anything from the Defense?

24 MR. NEELY: No, Your Honor.

25 THE COURT: Let's bring the jury in.

1 (WHEREUPON, the jury came into open court at 1:02
2 p.m.)

3 THE COURT: All right, good afternoon. I hope all of
4 you had a good lunch.

5 The State call its next witness.

6 MR. MEADORS: May it please Your Honor.

7 The State of South Carolina will now call Hannah
8 Thompson.

9 THE CLERK: Ms. Thompson, please, come forward.

10 If you would, please, pause at the end of the bench,
11 place your left hand on the Bible and raise your right
12 hand.

13 WHEREUPON,

14 HANNAH THOMPSON,

15 after first having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

16 THE CLERK: Thank you.

17 Please be seated.

18 And would you, please, state your name for the
19 record.

20 THE WITNESS: Hannah Thompson.

21 THE CLERK: Thank you.

22 DIRECT EXAMINATION

23 BY MR. MEADORS:

24 Q Good afternoon.

25 A Good afternoon.

1 Q Tell me your full name, please, ma'am.

2 A Hannah Elizabeth Thompson.

3 Q Miss Thompson, I know you're soft-spoken, but you're
4 going to have to speak up -- .

5 A Sorry.

6 Q -- so the court reporter, His Honor, all the jurors
7 and everybody can hear, okay? So will you, please, speak
8 into...

9 What's your date of birth?

10 A [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

11 Q So on today, how old are you?

12 A 25.

13 Q In March of 2016, how old were you? .

14 A 17.

15 Q I want you to tell the jury about yourself, okay.
16 Where were you born?

17 A In Camp Legume, North Carolina.

18 Q And how long did you stay there?

19 A I would say until I was one.

20 Q Where did you go after that?

21 A To Greenville, South Carolina.

22 Q And do you know why you were in Camp Legume?

23 A My dad was a Marine and he was stationed there.

24 Q When you moved to Greenville, did you -- were you
25 still with your dad?

1 A Yes, I believe so.

2 Q Okay. And do you remember where you moved to
3 Greenville?

4 A No, sir.

5 Q All right. Do you remember when you went to
6 elementary school?

7 A Yes. So I went to a primary school in Powdersville.
8 And then after that, I went to East End Elementary in
9 Easley. And then after that, I went to Fountain Inn
10 Elementary.

11 Q And you said East End Elementary. What's the other
12 school you said? I'm sorry, I just did not hear that.

13 A It was a concrete primary school in Powdersville.

14 Q And then you went to what high school?

15 A Hillcrest High School.

16 Q And did you say something about Bryson Middle or did
17 I just miss it?

18 A I went to Bryson Middle.

19 Q Fountain Inn Elementary?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Bryson?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Fountain Inn High School?

24 A Hillcrest High School.

25 Q Hillcrest High School, I knew that.

1 How far did you go in Hillcrest High School.

2 A I was in my senior year.

3 Q Not to pry, but I ain't got any choice. Did at some
4 point your -- did you separate from your father? What
5 happened with your father?

6 A My father and my mom separated when I was really
7 little. So I don't have any memories of that.

8 Q And did you get -- did your mom remarry?

9 A Yes.

10 Q So when you moved to Greenville, did you have a
11 stepdad?

12 A Not when I was a baby, no.

13 Q Okay. At some point, did you have a stepdad?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And do you remember when that was?

16 A I believe I was about five or six years old.

17 Q Okay. I think I want to do this. After this
18 event -- okay. We're going to fill in the middle. But
19 since his arrest, since you came back, what have you been
20 doing?

21 A Working.

22 Q Tell the folks where you're working. Where did you
23 start working after you got back and after --

24 A I worked at Chipotle. And after that -- I worked
25 there for about two years. After that, I worked at

1 Sprouts grocery store for a few months. And then, I
2 worked at Biscuit Head in downtown Greenville for three
3 years until I got arrested.

4 Q Okay. And what's Maverick Biscuit?

5 A Maverick Biscuit was the previous job that I had.

6 Q And what were you doing at all these places?

7 A Cooking.

8 Q Where are you working now?

9 A I work at Chipotle again.

10 Q And you cook?

11 A Yes.

12 Q How long have you been at this Chipotle?

13 A I would say a few months.

14 Q I want you to look at the ladies and gentlemen of the
15 jury or tell me, how did you get involved in this
16 situation, specifically? How did you get to know the
17 Defendant, John Blauvelt?

18 A I met him through Chyanne.

19 Q Who is Chyanne?

20 A Chyanne is Cati's niece.

21 Q Cati Blauvelt's niece was Chyanne?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And you knew Chyanne?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And as a result of that, did you meet John Blauvelt?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Let me take you back to summer school. Did something
3 happen to lead you to going to ■ South Kings Drive where
4 John Blauvelt was living?

5 A I was -- Chyanne and Kimone (ph) were my friends.

6 Q Now, we know who Kimone is, but they don't. Who is
7 Kimone?

8 A Kimone was someone that I grew up with in my
9 neighborhood. And we had a class together in my senior
10 year with Chyanne as well.

11 Q And you said your senior year. You went through the
12 11th grade. What time of year was this?

13 A I would say probably right back when school started,
14 maybe like September, October.

15 Q So you took classes with Kimone and Chyanne?

16 A We were in, like, first period together.

17 Q Was this in the summer or the fall?

18 A The fall.

19 Q So is that -- after that, is that when you went to --
20 got to know John Blauvelt?

21 A Yes.

22 Q What kind of classes were you taking?

23 A Just normal, like, my senior classes.

24 Q Did you ever take any in the summer, like, trade
25 classes or anything?

1 A I did. So my senior year was, actually, supposed to
2 be my junior year, but I had skipped a grade that summer
3 by doing online classes.

4 Q So that's what confused me. It should have been your
5 senior, but it was your junior?

6 A It should have been my junior year, but it was my
7 senior.

8 Q And you took summer classes?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Who did you take those with?

11 A I don't recall.

12 Q Okay. And the result of Chyanne, you met John
13 Blauvelt?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Okay. And when was that?

16 A I would say September or October.

17 Q 2015?

18 A Of 2015, yes.

19 Q Okay. And how -- how -- how did that come about the
20 first time? Where was this residence you went?

21 A In Fountain Inn.

22 Q Okay. Do you remember the address?

23 A It was ■ South Kings Drive.

24 Q And the first time you went over there, who did you
25 go with?

1 A Kimone.

2 Q If you said it, I'm sorry. Does Kimone have a last
3 name?

4 A I believe it's Davenport.

5 Q Okay. Had Kimone been over there before?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Had Chyanne been over there before?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And again, Chyanne was Cati Blauvelt's what?

10 A Niece.

11 Q Okay. So her -- Chyanne's momma would have been
12 Cati's sister?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Had you known Cati prior to this?

15 A No, sir.

16 Q So when you started going over there in the fall of
17 2015, why were you going over there?

18 A We would hang out over there and smoke and drink and
19 have parties over there.

20 Q You kind of trailed off there. We'd go to smoke and
21 what?

22 A And drink and have parties.

23 Q And what were you smoking?

24 A Weed.

25 Q Marijuana?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And what were you drinking?

3 A Alcohol.

4 Q And how old were you?

5 A I was 17 -- or I was 16 at that time, actually.

6 Q Okay. Who all was there at the house smoking and
7 drinking?

8 A Kimone and Chyanne, John, Ally and sometimes, like,
9 other people would come over that got invited by Ally or
10 Chyanne.

11 Q Okay. You mentioned some names. Who is Ally?

12 A Ally was one of Chyanne's friends.

13 Q Had you known Ally prior to the fall of 2015?

14 A I went to elementary school with Ally.

15 Q Do you know her last name?

16 A Somerville.

17 Q So you, Ally, Chyanne, Kimone?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Anybody else would be over at this house at 10 South
20 Kings in Fountain Inn?

21 A One of our friends, Lucille, would come over, not as
22 much as we were all there, but she would come over. And
23 there was just some other people that we knew would come
24 every now and then.

25 Q Were you spending the night there then or just

1 visiting?

2 A Occasionally, I'd spend the night.

3 Q And did your folks like that?

4 A They didn't know.

5 Q Okay. Do you think they would have liked that?

6 A No.

7 Q How often were you going over to -- and was this John
8 Blauvelt's house?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Okay. Now, at this point, was Cati Blauvelt living
11 there?

12 A Yes.

13 Q So you got to know Cati?

14 A Sort of, yes.

15 Q What do mean by that, sort of?

16 A I didn't really know her that well.

17 Q Okay. How much were you going to this house?

18 A I would go sometimes after school with Chyanne and on
19 the weekends sometimes, not every weekend.

20 Q Was there usually partying and drinking and smoking
21 when you went over there?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Do you know a fellow named Wayne?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Do you know Wayne's last name?

1 A I do not.

2 Q Okay. Would Wayne be over there at this house --
3 John Blauvelt's house some when y'all were there?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And do you remember when you would see Wayne there?

6 A He would be there sometimes during the day.

7 Q When you would spend the night there -- I think you
8 said you stayed sometimes. Where would you stay when you
9 would spend the night?

10 A On the couch.

11 Q And can you tell the folks how big was this house?

12 A There was four bedrooms, I believe, and it was pretty
13 small, though.

14 Q Did there come a time where John Blauvelt and Cati
15 Blauvelt got married?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Okay. And do you remember when that is?

18 A I do not.

19 Q After they got married, do you remember a honeymoon
20 trip?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Okay. What do you remember about that?

23 A I know that they went to Universal Studios and they
24 left Chyanne and Ally to watch the house and their dogs.

25 Q And how many dogs did they have?

1 A Two.

2 Q Do you know their names?

3 A Marly and Jupiter.

4 Q Marly and Jupiter. Prior to that honeymoon, had Cati
5 been staying at this house on a regular basis?

6 A I believe so, yes.

7 Q And, please, listen to my question closely here. Did
8 there come a time after that when Cati moved out?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Okay. And do you remember when that is?

11 A I do not.

12 Q Okay. Had John moved out, also, there for a while?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Okay. And do you know where he moved when he was
15 out?

16 A He would sleep in his car and he, also, would stay at
17 the abandoned house.

18 Q Okay. Now, you say the abandoned house. What is the
19 abandoned house?

20 A The abandoned house is a place that we would go to
21 party occasionally.

22 Q Okay. Who is we?

23 A The regular people that would be at John's house. So
24 me, John, Chyanne, Kimone, Ally, Wayne, just everybody.

25 Q And when you say you'd go party, drink, smoke?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Why did y'all go there?

3 A I believe it was because Cati didn't want us at the
4 house anymore.

5 Q Could you see this house from the road?

6 A I think barely. I don't remember.

7 Q And you don't know the address of it, do you?

8 A No, sir.

9 Q How far was it from John Blauvelt's house?

10 A Five to ten minutes maybe.

11 Q Okay. So he left for a while. Did he come back to
12 his house?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Okay. And I think you said Cati left, correct?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And do you know where she went and stayed?

17 A I believe she moved into her parents' house.

18 Q Okay. At this point in time when John moved out,
19 came back, Cati moved out, where were you staying?

20 A With John at John's house.

21 Q Okay. And that was a terrible question. Where in
22 the house were you staying?

23 A I would sleep on the couch.

24 Q Okay. Did there come a time that you got a more
25 permanent place to stay in the house?

1 A Yes.

2 Q When was that?

3 A When Chyanne moved out.

4 Q So Chyanne had her own room?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And that was Cati's niece?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Who got Chyanne's room?

9 A Me.

10 Q Okay. And who else was staying there then?

11 A I believe Wayne was living there at that time as
12 well, and John.

13 Q And are we in 2016 now?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Did there come a time when somebody else moved in
16 your room?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Okay. Please tell them about that, the ladies and
19 gentlemen. Who moved into your room?

20 A One of Cati's friends, Crystal, moved into the room
21 that I was staying.

22 Q And do you know Crystal's last name at that time?

23 A Gorto.

24 Q Gorto?

25 A I believe, yes.

1 Q Did anybody move in with her?

2 A Her boyfriend, Brandon.

3 Q Do you know Brandon's last name?

4 A I do not.

5 Q When Brandon and Crystal moved in, what happened to
6 Hannah? What did you do?

7 A I moved into John's room.

8 Q John Blauvelt's room?

9 A Yes.

10 Q How old was he?

11 A 27.

12 Q Okay. And how old were you at this point?

13 A 17.

14 Q Since you moved into his room, had y'all already
15 become friendly?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Okay. You liked him?

18 A Yes.

19 Q He liked you?

20 A I believed so.

21 Q Okay. But you moved in his room with him?

22 A Yes.

23 Q You spent the night there?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Now, did your mom and dad at this point know where

1 you were?

2 A No.

3 Q Okay. And if I asked this, I apologize to everybody.
4 Brandon and Crystal were in your room?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Who else was there then?

7 A I don't remember if Wayne was still living there or
8 not at that time.

9 Q Did there come a point where Wayne left, also?

10 A Yes.

11 Q You said earlier that you believed Cati moved in with
12 her mom. Did you ever find out that for sure?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Okay. And how did you find that out?

15 A Through John.

16 Q Okay. So Cati moved in with her mom?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Did you know her mom?

19 A No.

20 Q After Cati was gone, did she ever -- and I say gone
21 on a regular basis. Did she ever come back?

22 A Sometimes, yes.

23 Q Just for short visits. I couldn't think of the
24 thing. What would that be about?

25 A She would come back, I believe, if she had left

1 something there or -- I don't really -- I don't really
2 know.

3 Q Okay. Were the dogs ever an issue or did they
4 ever -- were they both of them's dogs?

5 A I believe Marly was John's and Jupiter was Cati's
6 dog.

7 Q Would Cati ever come to see Jupiter? Would she ever
8 come to see Jupiter?

9 A Yes.

10 Q But did she ever come back there to sleep again after
11 you moved in with John?

12 A No.

13 Q Did there come a point where John Blauvelt ever
14 expressed to you that he would like to get Cati out of his
15 life?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Okay. When is that? When can you remember that
18 happening for the first time or as best you can remember?

19 A I think it was something that was talked about pretty
20 early on from when I met him.

21 Q And explain what you mean by that, talked about early
22 on?

23 A He would mention it while we were all around smoking
24 and drinking.

25 Q And you say we're all, the same cast of characters?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Allison Somerville?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Do you know somebody name Janissa?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Waterfall?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Would she be there?

9 A No, not at the beginning.

10 Q And you said he would talk about it when y'all were
11 there. What would he say, John Blauvelt?

12 A He would ask if he did it, if any of us would help.
13 He would mention the money from her life insurance.

14 MS. WALKER: Objection, Your Honor.

15 THE COURT: What's the basis?

16 MS. WALKER: Subject to our pre-trial motion.

17 THE COURT: Overruled.

18 BY MR. MEADORS:

19 Q Specifically, what would he say about the money from
20 the life insurance?

21 A That he would share it.

22 Q If somebody helped him?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And you heard those conversations?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And there were other folks around?

2 A Yes.

3 Q What did you think of that? Did you think he was
4 serious?

5 A No.

6 Q Did those type conversations continue?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Okay. And -- and how so? Explain that to them.

9 A I remember him mentioning it to Charles when he came
10 to live with John. And I had heard him again mention it
11 while we were all around smoking and drinking.

12 Q And when these other folks were around, he'd mention
13 it?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Did he start as the spring became summer talking to
16 you more about wanting to get rid of Cati Blauvelt?

17 A No.

18 Q When is the next time he did talk about wanting to
19 kill her with you?

20 A A few weeks before the incident, he drove me away
21 from the house and mentioned to me that he -- he was going
22 to ask me to do things for him and that I needed to do
23 them.

24 Q And did you know what he was talking about then?

25 A No.

1 Q Did there come a time where Cati got a new boyfriend?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Okay. What, if anything, about that did he ask you
4 to help him do?

5 A He wanted me to drive him and drop him off in the
6 area of Cati's mom's house where she was living so that he
7 could hide out there and wait for them to come home.

8 Q Wait for who to come home?

9 A Cati and her boyfriend.

10 Q Did he know who her boyfriend was?

11 A I'm sorry, can you --

12 Q Did he know if she had a boyfriend that you know that
13 he told you?

14 A I believe she had told him that she had a boyfriend.

15 Q Did you drop him off?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Did you wait on him?

18 A No. I drove back home.

19 Q When's the next time you heard of him -- heard from
20 him regarding this incident being dropped off at Cati's
21 mom's house?

22 A I got a call a few hours later from the hospital of
23 him telling me to come pick him up from there.

24 Q Okay. And did you do that?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And you said this is -- how long is this before
2 the -- when she was killed?

3 A I'm not sure.

4 Q Okay. What happened when you picked him up, him
5 being John Blauvelt, from the hospital?

6 A He was upset with me because at this point, like, a
7 few hours had passed from when I had dropped him off. And
8 I guess I had misheard him and was supposed to come back
9 for him sooner and I didn't.

10 Q You guess you had what, missed what?

11 A I guess I had misheard him.

12 Q Okay. So he was angry with you?

13 A Yes.

14 Q You should have been there sooner?

15 A Yes.

16 Q When you picked him up, did he have anything in his
17 possession?

18 A He told me that he had found a knife on the side of
19 the road.

20 Q Did he say anything else about it?

21 A No.

22 Q And what did you do after you picked him up?

23 A We went back to John's house.

24 Q Did at some point -- do you ever remember him
25 mentioning anything about Cati getting a new car?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Was he happy about that?

3 A No.

4 Q Why not? .

5 A Because he said he paid for that car.

6 Q Did he ask you or did you ever go see it or try to
7 find out what kind of car it was?

8 A He asked me to drive to her mom's house to see what
9 car -- kind of car it was.

10 Q And did you do that?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And you found out what kind of car it was?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Did you tell him?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Did he talk to Hannah Thompson again after that, you,
17 about wanting specifically to kill Cati Blauvelt?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Okay. Tell them about that, please.

20 A On the day of the incident, I went to work with
21 John --

22 Q Prior to that, had he mentioned to killing her?
23 Prior to the day of the incident?

24 A No.

25 Q But he had told you before he wanted to kill her?

1 A Yes.

2 Q But you didn't believe him?

3 A No.

4 Q Okay. Had y'all ever driven anywhere before that
5 when he just started talking prior to the day of the
6 incident?

7 A It was that day he had driven me away from the house
8 and told me that he was going to need my help with
9 something.

10 Q So that's the day?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Let me ask you about you right now because we're in
13 this part. What -- what were you doing -- and let me get
14 back. Your momma and daddy still didn't know where you
15 were?

16 A No.

17 Q And I don't know if -- was your stepdad a little
18 frustrated? Y'all had tense -- I'm not trying to -- did
19 y'all have a tense relationship?

20 A We did at the time, yes.

21 Q Were you working in October of 2016?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Okay. 2016?

24 A Was I working?

25 Q Yes.

1 A Yes.

2 Q What were you doing?

3 A I was working at J.C. Penney at the mall.

4 Q At times, would you take John Blauvelt to work?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Tell the folks about that. How often would you do
7 that?

8 A Every day.

9 Q And so what time did he have to be at work?

10 A I would say between 8:00 or 9:00 a.m.

11 Q And -- and you'd take him -- where did he work?

12 A He worked downtown Greenville at an office building.

13 Q Do you remember anything around it?

14 A It was near the Sullivan Center downtown.

15 Q Any restaurants near there?

16 A I don't know.

17 Q So you'd drop him off?

18 A Yes.

19 Q What was he doing, do you know? What was his job?

20 A I don't know.

21 Q All right. What would you do after you dropped him
22 off in the morning?

23 A Sometimes I would wait in the car. Sometime I would
24 get out and go for a walk downtown. And sometimes I would
25 leave and go to the mall, go to a friend's house. But

1 that was kind of like a rare thing.

2 Q And the Sullivan Center you mentioned, did you ever
3 go there?

4 A I have been there before, yes.

5 Q To try to get some help or talk or therapy?

6 A It's where you can go -- it's like an adult education
7 place.

8 Q And did you go there?

9 A I went there once to get some information.

10 Q But did you ever go there permanently?

11 A No.

12 Q But you wanted to?

13 A Yes.

14 Q When -- were you -- when did you work at J.C. Penney?

15 A I was working there in October, but I hadn't been
16 there very long. So I would say probably, like, a month.

17 Q What did you do?

18 A I was a cashier.

19 Q So moving up into October, you're taking John to work
20 on a regular basis?

21 A Yes.

22 Q What kind of car were you driving -- excuse me, what
23 kind of car did he have?

24 A He had two cars. He had a Yukon and a Prius.

25 Q Say it one more time, a Yukon and a what?

1 A A Prius.

2 Q And when you would drive him to work, would you
3 drive? Would he drive?

4 A He would drive to work. Yeah, he would drive to
5 work.

6 Q I'm going to show you what been marked State's
7 Exhibit No. 6 and State's Exhibit No. 7. I just want you
8 to tell me, do you recognize these and do they relate to
9 what you're talking about right now?

10 A Yes.

11 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, we now offer State's
12 Exhibit No. 6 and State's Exhibit No. 7.

13 THE COURT: Any objection?

14 MS. WALKER: No objection, Your Honor.

15 THE COURT: State's Exhibit No. 6 and State's Exhibit
16 No. 7 are admitted into evidence without objection.

17 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit Nos. 6 and 7 were admitted
18 into evidence.)

19 BY MR. MEADORS:

20 Q What is State's Exhibit No. 6 and 7?

21 A That's John's car.

22 Q Fair to say it's a Toyota Prius?

23 A Yes.

24 Q What time would he get off work?

25 A I don't remember. Sometimes he would get off

1 earlier.

2 Q You'd be there waiting to take him home?

3 A Yes.

4 Q I'm old, okay. But do you text -- y'all texted each
5 other?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Do you remember receiving a text from John Blauvelt
8 before this incident date?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Okay. What -- what was that text about?

11 A He had told me that he's going to go through with
12 something in, like, a few days.

13 Q And you got that text from him, correct?

14 A Yes.

15 Q But you received that text and read it?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Now, did you know what he was talking about?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Okay. What was he talking about?

20 A I believe he was talking about killing Cati.

21 Q And you say believe, why do you believe that?

22 A Because he didn't say that.

23 Q That's actually a great answer. But he didn't say it
24 in the message, but you thought that's what he was talking
25 about?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Was that based on previous discussions you had had
3 with him?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Okay. Let's go to October 24th of 2016. Do you
6 remember that day?

7 A Yes.

8 Q How did John Blauvelt get to work that day?

9 A I drove him.

10 Q Okay. Do you remember what time he left -- or y'all
11 left?

12 A To go to work?

13 Q I'm sorry, to go to work. I'm sorry, yes, ma'am.

14 A I don't remember what time.

15 Q Was it in the morning hours?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Was it roughly the same time he had always gone?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Who else was in the house living there then on
20 October --

21 A Crystal and Brandon.

22 Q For the record, is that Brandon Tucker and Crystal
23 Gorto, as far as you know?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Was anybody else living there?

1 A No.

2 Q Cati still not living there?

3 A No.

4 Q Was Wayne gone?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Okay. Was there still the partying going on that had
7 been going on before there?

8 A Not really.

9 Q And I don't mean to be difficult. But when you say
10 not really, does that mean no or occasionally or you don't
11 know?

12 A It wasn't the same people. I would have, like, a
13 friend over every now and then.

14 Q Okaying. Not the same crowd?

15 A Correct.

16 Q The Defendant, John Blauvelt, was at work. Where
17 were you?

18 A In the car.

19 Q Just sitting in the parked car?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Would he ever come out at breaks or lunch and eat
22 with you when you would take him to work during this time
23 period?

24 A Yes.

25 Q When he got off work that day, what, if anything, did

1 he ask you to do?

2 A He asked me to drive him and drop him off near Cati's
3 job.

4 Q And do you know any landmark or where that was? Did
5 you know where you were going?

6 A Yes. I knew where she worked, yes.

7 Q Where did she work?

8 A At PetSmart.

9 Q So you took him to where?

10 A I dropped him off at the Wing Stop on Woodruff Road.

11 Q And what did you do after you dropped him off?

12 A I waited there for a period of time and then drove
13 back home.

14 Q And when you say home, do you mean ■ South Kings
15 Drive?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Fountain Inn, South Carolina?

18 A Yes.

19 Q What, if anything, had John Blauvelt told you before
20 he -- if anything, before he said he was going to go see
21 Cati?

22 A I'm sorry. Can you repeat --

23 Q Did he tell you why he was going to go see Cati?

24 A Yes.

25 Q What did he say?

1 A He said that he was going to kill her.

2 Q Now, did you believe that?

3 A No.

4 Q Okay. But he said that?

5 A I believed that he wanted to. But I didn't believe
6 that he would actually do it.

7 Q So you waited a while. Where did you go?

8 A Back to John's house.

9 Q And it's your house now, too, isn't it?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And when you got there, who was already there?

12 A Crystal and Brandon.

13 Q And again, is that Brandon Tucker and Crystal Gorto?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And were they living there at the time?

16 A Yes.

17 Q What car were you in when you came back to your
18 residence -- John's residence?

19 A The Toyota Prius.

20 Q John Blauvelt was not with you, correct?

21 A Correct.

22 Q So at the house at that time, it's you, Brandon and
23 Crystal?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Do you remember something happening after that,

1 either Brandon or Crystal or any observations somebody
2 made?

3 A Crystal had said that she saw Cati's car pull into
4 the driveway.

5 Q Did it stay there?

6 A Well, when I turned around to look out the window, it
7 was pulling way.

8 Q Okay. And Crystal had said that. Where were they in
9 the house?

10 A We were in the kitchen.

11 Q Is there a window from the kitchen you can see out to
12 the driveway?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Okay. When you dropped John Blauvelt off, what, if
15 anything, did he do with his phone?

16 A He left it in the car.

17 Q He left it in the car?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Did -- was it on?

20 A I don't know.

21 Q Okay. After Crystal made her observation about the
22 car coming in and you turned around and it was gone, what
23 did you do?

24 A I went out and got into the Prius and started driving
25 back to where I had dropped him off at.

1 Q Why?

2 A Because I couldn't remember if he had told me to go
3 back there or if he had told me to stay home. And I
4 didn't want to do the wrong thing.

5 Q What do you mean by that, I didn't want to do the
6 wrong thing?

7 A I didn't want to disappoint him.

8 Q You didn't want to disappoint him?

9 A Yes.

10 MR. MEADORS: Beg the Court's indulgence.

11 (Pause.)

12 BY MR. MEADORS:

13 Q So you were headed to where when you left?

14 A Back to the Wing Stop that I dropped him off at.

15 Q Did you get there?

16 A No.

17 Q Why -- and so what happened to change -- to cause you
18 not to get there?

19 A I got a phone call from John telling me to come back
20 home.

21 Q What did you do?

22 A I went back home.

23 Q And when you got back home, what were your
24 observations or what happened then?

25 A I pulled into the driveway and John came outside with

1 trash bags. And he told me that he needed me to take him
2 somewhere.

3 Q Okay. What was he wearing, do you remember?

4 A He was wearing different clothes from when I had
5 dropped him off.

6 Q And when you picked him up from his work, did he have
7 work clothes on?

8 A Yes.

9 Q Okay. Had he changed from when you picked him up
10 until when you dropped him off at Cati's place of
11 business?

12 A Yes.

13 Q What had he changed into?

14 A I believe he changed into a hoodie.

15 Q I'm sorry?

16 A A hoodie.

17 Q When you saw him again when you pulled back in the
18 driveway and he came out, was he wearing something
19 different?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Than when he had changed in the car?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And you said he came out with some -- how many bags?

24 A I don't remember.

25 Q Can you describe the bag?

1 A It was just like white trash bags. It was more than
2 one.

3 Q I'm sorry, what?

4 A More than one.

5 Q Because you said bags and that -- so is it more than
6 one?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And did you get out of the car?

9 A No.

10 Q So he came to the car you're driving?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And what did he say?

13 A He said he needed me to take him somewhere.

14 Q All right. What did you do?

15 A I took him.

16 Q Can you tell the folks, leaving out of -- and you're
17 at ■ South Kings Drive, right?

18 A Yes.

19 Q When you left, can you tell us where you went?

20 A We went left out of the -- the street and we took
21 another left maybe, like, half a mile to a mile down the
22 road. I can't remember how far exactly, but it wasn't too
23 far.

24 Q In relation to the house, y'all's house, was it
25 behind it, kind of?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And was that a regular street, like, a paved street
3 or?

4 A No. I believe it was like a dirt path.

5 Q And what, if anything -- why did y'all go down there?
6 Whatever, if anything, was there?

7 A I'm sorry, can you repeat that?

8 Q You went down this path, this nonpaved road?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Why? Was there anything down there?

11 A Cati's car was parked there.

12 Q And you're sure that was Cati's car?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Same car you'd seen before?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Fairly new car?

17 A Yes.

18 Q He's paying for it?

19 A Yes.

20 Q You see it?

21 A Yes.

22 Q What were you told to do then, if anything?

23 A To follow him while he drove Cati's car. And I was
24 driving the Prius.

25 Q Did you know where you were going?

1 A No.

2 Q Okay. Did you follow him?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And do you remember the road you went on?

5 A No.

6 Q Would you describe them as main intersections, back
7 roads or what?

8 A Back roads.

9 Q Okay. Had you ever been that way before as far as
10 you know?

11 A No.

12 Q Do you remember where you ended up?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Okay. Tell us about that, please.

15 A We pulled into a parking lot on White Horse Road.

16 Q Who pulled in first?

17 A John.

18 Q Who's car was he driving?

19 A Cati's car.

20 Q Who pulled in second?

21 A Me.

22 Q And whose car were you driving?

23 A John's car.

24 Q You weren't driving both cars, were you?

25 A No, sir.

1 Q We're now in this parking lot. What happens?

2 A John gets out of Cati's car and he gets into the car
3 that I'm driving with her car keys -- Cati's car keys and
4 the license plate from her car.

5 Q Cati's car keys?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And the license plate from her car?

8 A Yes.

9 Q Had he gotten right out of Cati's car and gotten into
10 your car or was there a time period?

11 A I think he took a few minutes between -- just to grab
12 anything he needed to grab.

13 Q I guess what I'm -- you were following that car,
14 correct?

15 A Yes.

16 Q There was a license tag on her car that you were
17 following when you were following to the place on Cati's
18 car?

19 A Yes.

20 Q When he got in the car, did he have the license tag
21 with him from her car?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Okay. Where did you go then?

24 A He told me to just drive and that he would tell me
25 where to go.

1 MR. MEADORS: Beg the Court's indulgence.

2 (Pause.)

3 BY MR. MEADORS:

4 Q Do you remember earlier you testified you left the
5 house and you came back?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Okay. Did John Blauvelt send you a Snap to come
8 back?

9 A I -- I believe he had called me.

10 Q What is a Snap?

11 A I'm sorry?

12 Q What's a Snap?

13 A Like a Snapchat.

14 Q Okay. But he communicated with you in some fashion
15 to come back and get him?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Could it have been a Snap?

18 A It could have been.

19 Q Okay. Now, have you looked at the video -- you've
20 just described an incident dropping a car off, correct, on
21 White Horse Road?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Have you reviewed a video?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Does that accurately reflect when you followed John

1 Blauvelt to this parking lot?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Does it depict the Prius and does it depict Cati's
4 car?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Does it depict you leaving the parking lot after
7 that?

8 A Yes.

9 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, this is State's Exhibit --
10 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit No. 13 was marked for
11 identification.)

12 MR. MEADORS: And I did not tell my folks to do this.
13 It's my fault. It's taking a few seconds, I apologize.

14 THE COURT: Are you moving that in?

15 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, we are offering State's
16 Exhibit No. 13.

17 THE COURT: Any objection from the Defendant?

18 MS. WALKER: Yes, Your Honor, we would object to this
19 video being entered at this time. It's a video that she's
20 only said that she's seen. But additionally, there's an
21 additional matter, if we could approach?

22 (WHEREUPON, a bench conference was held.)

23 THE COURT: All right, ladies and gentlemen, I'm
24 going to need to excuse you for just a minute to take
25 something up with the lawyers.

1 Please don't discuss the case.

2 (WHEREUPON, the jury was excused from open court at
3 approximately 1:59 p.m.)

4 THE COURT: We had a sidebar. Defense has an issue
5 or objection raised to the video?

6 MS. WALKER: Yes, Your Honor. There -- well, number
7 one, there are two videos that were turned over by the
8 Attorney General. One is a fairly grainy surveillance
9 video, so it's very hard to see much of anything. It was
10 turned over by a place called Joe's Auto Sales.

11 And then the video is actually sent to, if I remember
12 correctly, the Secret Service to be enhanced. Not to
13 mention, Your Honor, there is -- there are a number of
14 errors on the video. I believe it says May of 2017, which
15 would be in the future. And there is a time error on it.
16 So it is very misleading.

17 And then to be identified -- I'm not sure how it
18 could be identified and lay the proper foundation to come
19 in without someone to testify as to the correction for
20 time and, additionally, where the video was received from.
21 And that it may have been altered or -- well, we know it
22 was altered, even though there's two versions.

23 THE COURT: Let me hear from Defendant -- excuse me,
24 the State.

25 MR. MEADORS: Respectfully, I have no idea what she's

1 talking about altered. I really don't. My understanding,
2 this is the original tape from Joe's Auto. I think they
3 did enhance one, but that's not what we were offering. I
4 did not know there was an issue, so I apologize to the
5 Court. She's seen it before, recognized it, can identify
6 the two cars. We have Joe coming. He's on the list, so
7 that's not a problem. An officer went and got the video
8 from Joe.

9 I was just trying to get her to show yeah, this is
10 it. Actually, even for ID. But I think I can get the
11 testimony out, we can lay it with Joe. It doesn't matter
12 to the State. But I just wanted to get in the fact that
13 was her, it was a Prius. And we might be able to do it
14 with still photos.

15 MS. WALKER: Beg the Court's indulgence.

16 (Pause.)

17 MS. WALKER: And, Your Honor, just to put into
18 perspective, Ms. Thompson has testified that she and the
19 Defendant took two separate cars, one being Cati's and one
20 being the gold Prius that she was driving and dropped them
21 off at a location. This video is a place across the
22 street that had a video camera and you can see the two
23 cars coming in and being dropped off.

24 So this is a video of her actions that she has
25 watched and has said yes, that is me driving that car.

1 And this is the car, yes, and this is what we dropped off.

2 THE COURT: It sounds like there is an objection to
3 authenticating the video itself. Is that what I'm hearing
4 from the Defendant? What's your objection?

5 MS. WALKER: Well, I do believe, Your Honor, there's
6 a -- I don't believe she would be able to authenticate the
7 video. As I said before, if this is the video that we
8 have seen, it has a time stamp on it of 2017 and a time of
9 noon or something that does not correspond to -- it
10 corresponds to the future. I know there's, also, an
11 enhanced version that the Secret Service, I believe --

12 THE COURT: I believe they said they're not
13 introducing that version.

14 MS. WALKER: Well, I think we would have to -- either
15 way, we would have to view it to make sure it is not the
16 enhanced version and if it's got the original time stamp.
17 I don't know anything about it to know if this is the
18 video that was turned over to us or not.

19 But I, also, don't believe this witness would be the
20 proper witness to lay the foundation. I don't believe
21 that she has ever talked about this surveillance video in
22 the past, but, also, it was so grainy and difficult to see
23 at the time that they sent it off to be enhanced. So I
24 think that we would have to have those people that had the
25 video and that could explain exactly where it came from.

1 All we know is that it allegedly came from this business
2 across the street.

3 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Meadors, let me --
4 there's an issue there with the date on the video as well.
5 I think you need somebody to testify to that.

6 MR. MEADORS: We have him coming. And, Judge, my
7 original thought was just to have her look at it for ID,
8 but she can say on the 24th, this is us going in there.

9 Now, it's got a date from a year down the road, which
10 is impossible. And law enforcement, obviously, got it the
11 next day, I think, in that time period. So, clearly, it's
12 going to be testimony it's in this time period. It's not
13 a year away.

14 THE COURT: I recognize that might be your statement,
15 sort of understand that, and maybe what the evidence
16 shows, but I think you need some evidence to show that.

17 MR. MEADORS: I understand. And, Judge, we have some
18 stills --

19 Beg the Court's indulgence.

20 (Pause.)

21 MR. MEADORS: I'm sorry, Judge, do you mind if we
22 confer? I apologize.

23 THE COURT: No, I don't mind if y'all can get it
24 resolved.

25 (Pause.)

1 MR. MEADORS: We're ready.

2 Thank you.

3 THE COURT: Is it resolved as far as --

4 MR. MEADORS: Judge, I'm just going to have her
5 testify again that they came in, they came out, what car
6 she was in, her car was there and we'll bring Joe in.

7 THE COURT: As far as the objection, then, for the
8 record, it's sustained.

9 MS. WALKER: Thank you, Your Honor.

10 MR. MEADORS: This is what they wanted to do to start
11 with, I was just trying to...

12 THE COURT: Bring the jury in.

13 (WHEREUPON, the jury came into open court at
14 approximately 2:09 p.m.)

15 THE COURT: You may proceed.

16 MR. MEADORS: Thank you, Your Honor.

17 BY MR. MEADORS:

18 Q Refocus myself. You've looked at a tape and have you
19 seen your car you were driving and Cati Blauvelt's go into
20 a parking lot?

21 A Yes.

22 Q And then, I believe you testified John Blauvelt, the
23 Defendant, got in the Prius you were driving?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Okay. And after that, he told you to drive?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Okay. And you viewed that video and you recognized
3 those are the cars, correct?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And we're going to bring somebody in for the video
6 later, but that was you on that video?

7 A Yes.

8 Q In those cars?

9 A In the Prius, yes.

10 Q Where did you go?

11 A We drove to a dumpster behind Big Lots in
12 Simpsonville.

13 Q Did you know where you were going?

14 A No.

15 Q Okay. Why did you go to Big Lots in Simpsonville?

16 A I don't know.

17 Q Did he tell you to go there?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And when you got to Big Lots in Simpsonville, what
20 happened?

21 A John got out of the car and threw away the trash
22 bags.

23 Q Did he tell you what was in the trash bags?

24 A No.

25 Q Did he ever tell you what was in the trash bags?

1 A No.

2 Q You have no knowledge?

3 A No.

4 Q How many trash bag cans did he go to?

5 A Two.

6 Q Where was the second?

7 A It was at a place across the street.

8 Q Any landmarks there?

9 A I believe it was a pet supply store.

10 Q And what did you go there for?

11 A John threw away Cati's car keys and the license

12 plate.

13 Q And you saw him do that?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And again, this was on October 24th of 2016?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And this would have been -- strike that.

18 What did you do after that?

19 A I believe we drove to Zaxby's on Fairview Road.

20 Q Okay. And then what happened?

21 A John met with Charles Scott there. And we ate there.

22 Q Had Charles Scott wrecked his car?

23 A I -- I think so, yes.

24 Q Did Charles Scott owe John Blauvelt some money?

25 A I don't know.

1 Q Okay. What happened after Zaxby's?

2 A I had gone back to the Prius. Sorry, I had gone back
3 to the Prius in the parking lot. And then John and
4 Charles Scott had gone to Charles Scott's car to, I guess,
5 talk or do something. I'm not sure. And then John and I
6 went home after that.

7 Q Okay. Did y'all go in Zaxby's and eat?

8 A Yes.

9 Q At this point, John -- had John Blauvelt -- well, you
10 said he had already told you he was going to kill her when
11 he left, right?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Had he said anything after that from the time y'all
14 dropped the car off on White Horse to the dumpsters to
15 when you went to Zaxby's?

16 A No.

17 Q Did you ask him anything?

18 A No.

19 Q Did you ask him why he was dropping Cati's car off?

20 A No.

21 Q Or taking the tag off?

22 A No.

23 Q Were you curious?

24 A No.

25 Q You didn't question him?

1 A No.

2 Q What did you do when you got home?

3 A I believe we just went to bed.

4 Q Did you hear after that or on the streets or on the
5 news that Cati was missing?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And did you -- did you hear that Cati had been found?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And did you know where he had been found -- where she
10 had been found?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Okay. How did you know that?

13 A From the news.

14 Q Okay. And did John Blauvelt tell you what happened
15 at the abandoned house between he and Cati?

16 A Not at that time.

17 Q Did he at some other time tell you what happened?

18 A Yes.

19 Q After Ms. Cati Blauvelt's body was found, did you
20 talk to the police?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Okay. And do you remember when that was in relation
23 to her body being found?

24 A I do not.

25 Q What, if anything, had John Blauvelt told you prior

1 to you talking to the police the first time?

2 A He had told me that he didn't do it. And then on the
3 way to speak to the police the first time is when he told
4 me that he did do it.

5 Q What, if anything, did he tell you about what you
6 should say to the police?

7 A He said not to say anything.

8 Q Did he want you to even talk to them?

9 A No.

10 Q Did you, in fact, talk to them?

11 A I did.

12 Q Did you tell them everything you knew?

13 A No.

14 Q Why?

15 A I was scared.

16 Q Okay. At that point, you knew he had killed her
17 based on what he had told you?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Had you heard from your momma and daddy during this
20 time period?

21 A What time period?

22 Q Well, I guess, strike that. I'll get back to that.

23 After you talked to the police, what did you do?

24 A We had to get picked up to go back to John's house by
25 Crystal and Brandon.

1 Q Say that one more time, I apologize.

2 A We had to get picked up from the police station.

3 Q Okay. They had confiscated his car?

4 A Yes.

5 Q At some point during this time period, did John
6 Blauvelt, the Defendant, tell you we've got to leave,
7 we've got to flee?

8 A Yes.

9 Q When was that?

10 A It was -- I would say maybe like a week after we
11 spoke with the police, but I'm not completely sure.

12 Q Had you gone -- listen to me carefully, please. Had
13 you gone anywhere in the State of South Carolina before
14 you left heading west?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Please tell them where you had gone.

17 A We had gone to Spartanburg. And we had gone to
18 Edisto, I believe.

19 Q That's down near Walterboro, past Walterboro?

20 A Yes. And then we had gone back to Spartanburg after
21 that and we, also, went to Columbia.

22 Q Why did you go to Spartanburg?

23 A John had a friend that lived there.

24 Q Was he going to visit?

25 A No. He said that his friend gave us permission to

1 park the car in his front yard and sit and sleep there.

2 Q So he left Fountain Inn?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Okay. And -- and had he talked to the police again
5 the second time prior to that?

6 A I'm not sure.

7 Q Okay. After Spartanburg, where did you go? I think
8 you said you went to Edisto is what you said?

9 A We went to Edisto after.

10 Q Why?

11 A I wanted to go there.

12 Q Okay. And where did you go after that?

13 A We went back to Spartanburg.

14 Q I thought at some point you said you went to
15 Columbia?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Okay. What did you do in Columbia?

18 A We stayed at the military base there.

19 Q Where did you stay at the base?

20 A In the parking lot.

21 Q So you stayed in your car?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Did he go and buy anything from the commissary?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Okay. What did he buy?

1 A He bought a bunch of, like, camping stuff and winter
2 clothes and stuff.

3 Q Why was he buying that, did he say?

4 A No.

5 Q Did he ever buy something to make you a ring?

6 A No.

7 Q Okay. After you left Columbia, where did you go?

8 A I believe after Columbia is when we left the state.

9 Q What happened to your phone?

10 A He told me to leave it with my parents.

11 Q Do you know why he told you that?

12 A No.

13 Q Who was paying for your phone?

14 A My parents.

15 Q Okay. Did he know that?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Did he like the fact that your parents were paying
18 for your phone?

19 A No.

20 Q Did he tell you to get rid of your phone?

21 A Yes.

22 Q So your momma and daddy wouldn't know how to get in
23 touch with you?

24 A Yes.

25 Q What did you do with your phone?

1 A John and I drove by my parents' home and he put it in
2 the mailbox.

3 Q Did you clean it before you did that?

4 A Yes, I reset it.

5 Q What does that mean?

6 A To reset it?

7 Q Yeah. Why did you do that?

8 A Because John told me to.

9 Q That kind of takes stuff off of there?

10 A Yeah.

11 Q Erases it?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And whose idea was it to leave it in your folks'
14 mailbox?

15 A John's.

16 Q Tell these folks what happened then, Hannah Elizabeth
17 Thompson.

18 A We left the State and we drove -- John drove out of
19 the state all night. He had stopped at a Wal-Mart to buy
20 a phone from there, like a prepaid phone from there.

21 Q What had he done with his phone?

22 A I don't know.

23 Q Okay. Where else did you go?

24 A We drove all the way to Texas.

25 Q Did you ask him why you were going or did you know

1 why you were going?

2 A He -- he said that it wasn't safe to be -- he said it
3 wasn't safe to sleep at the house anymore. That's why we
4 started sleeping at his friend's house in Columbia. And
5 then he said that we had to leave the state.

6 Q Had you gone back to his house, y'all's house at some
7 point during this period to get anything prior to leaving?

8 A Yes.

9 Q When was that?

10 A I'm not sure.

11 Q What did you get?

12 A Clothes, toothbrush, things like that.

13 Q So you knew you were going on a trip?

14 A Yes.

15 Q So you get to Texas, where do you go from there?

16 A In Texas, we stayed at one of John's old work
17 friend's house for a night.

18 Q Okay. What vehicle were you in?

19 A The Yukon.

20 Q What color was it?

21 A Red.

22 Q Okay. Because you didn't have access to the Prius
23 anymore, correct?

24 A Correct.

25 Q And that was John's Yukon?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Tell these folks kind of where you went. Take us
3 west, Hannah.

4 A So we went to Texas and from there, Arizona and New
5 Mexico. Then we drove up through southern California, all
6 the way to Washington.

7 Q Had you been there before?

8 A No.

9 Q Had he gotten any money -- did y'all get any money
10 before you left?

11 A He had, also, bought some Visa gift cards from the
12 commissary at the military base.

13 Q So you're in California. You went to Washington?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Were you getting homesick?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Had you talked to your momma or your stepfather from
18 the time you left until wherever we are in this trip?

19 A I don't remember.

20 Q Okay. Did something happen to the red Yukon?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Tell the folks about that.

23 A One day, John was driving. I didn't know where he
24 was going. He drove to a dead end and drove over the
25 fence at that dead end and into the woods and wrecked the

1 car while doing so.

2 Q And where were y'all?

3 A In Washington.

4 MR. MEADORS: Beg the Court's indulgence.

5 (Pause.)

6 BY MR. MEADORS:

7 Q Ms. Thompson, I'm showing you what's been marked
8 State's Exhibit Nos. 8, 9 and 14. Please look at these
9 and tell me if you recognize them and do they relate to
10 what you're talking about right now in your testimony?

11 A Yes.

12 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, we'd offer State's Exhibit
13 Nos. 8, 9 and 14.

14 THE COURT: Any objection from the Defendant?

15 MS. WALKER: No objection.

16 THE COURT: State's Exhibit Nos. 8, 9 and 14 are
17 admitted into evidence without objection.

18 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit Nos. 8, 9 and 14 were
19 admitted into evidence.)

20 BY MR. MEADORS:

21 Q Looking at State's -- well, let's start with State's
22 Exhibit No. 14. What is that?

23 A That's the Yukon. That is John's car.

24 Q And your testimony was it got in a wreck?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Looking at State's Exhibit Nos. 8 and 9, what do they
2 show?

3 A (There was no response.)

4 Q Take your time.

5 A Sorry.

6 Q It's okay.

7 A The wrecked car.

8 Q Tell these folks, do you remember about when that
9 was?

10 A I think it was right before Thanksgiving.

11 Q Of 2016?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Could y'all drive the car after it was in this
14 condition?

15 A No.

16 Q Did you spend the night in the car?

17 A Yes.

18 Q How many nights did you stay there?

19 A I think, like, one or two.

20 Q Do you remember Thanksgiving coming?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Okay. Thanksgiving of 2016, where were you?

23 A In Washington.

24 Q Okay. And was that Walla Walla, Washington?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And is that where you wrecked?

2 A I believe so.

3 Q How did you get from here to civilization, I guess?

4 How did y'all get from this wrecked car to --

5 A We walked.

6 Q How far did you walk?

7 A I don't know. Far.

8 Q And that is -- where would you, ultimately, go?

9 Where did you end up?

10 A I remember we had walked to a Wal-Mart and -- because
11 it was Black Friday. And we wanted to go there because it
12 was going to be warm inside the Wal-Mart and it was going
13 to be open all night.

14 Q So you remember that as Black Friday?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Is that after Thanksgiving?

17 A It's the night of Thanksgiving, I think.

18 Q Of 2016?

19 A Yes.

20 Q How long did you stay in the Wal-Mart?

21 A For a few hours.

22 Q You got warm?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Do you remember where you went after that?

25 A I believe we took a bus to somewhere in Washington.

1 And then from there, we had taken a Greyhound to Portland,
2 I believe.

3 Q Was -- did y'all have money at this point?

4 A I -- I believe John may have had a couple of gift
5 cards still, but I'm not sure.

6 Q I don't mean this in any bad way to anybody, but did
7 you start -- I don't want to use the word begging, asking
8 for money?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Okay. Tell us about that.

11 A John would ask me to pan handle and stand in front
12 of, like, busy stores or busy intersections with signs
13 asking for money or food.

14 Q Would he be there when you were doing that?

15 A No.

16 Q Were you successful in doing that?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And I'm going to get to this journal in a minute.

19 Did you write in the journal about asking for help?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And would you hold that up?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And you actually wrote that in the journal, right?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Would people give you money?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Food?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Are you getting homesick still?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Did you ever express that to the Defendant, John
7 Blauvelt, that you wanted to go home?

8 A Yes.

9 Q How did he take that?

10 A He told me that if I thought things were bad out
11 there that jail was going to be worse.

12 Q Okay.

13 A And I would be going to jail as soon as I got back
14 home if I went back home.

15 Q And -- and did he tell you had been involved in this
16 for helping him?

17 A Yes.

18 Q At what point did he tell you that he killed and how
19 he killed Cati?

20 A He had told me that he killed her, I believe, on the
21 way to the police station the very first time when they
22 confiscated the Prius. And then he told me, like,
23 details, I guess, after we left the state.

24 Q And I should have been clearer. When did he tell you
25 about the details of how he killed her?

1 A After we left the state.

2 Q And do you remember when that was in the process of
3 this journey?

4 A I -- I think it was like spread out. But I had -- I
5 want to say I had known everything before we got to Texas.

6 Q Okay. Tell these folks what John Blauvelt told you
7 he did to Cati Blauvelt.

8 A He told me that he stabbed her in the neck. Then he
9 told me that he had to drag her body back to the abandoned
10 house, which is where he said he did it at. He said that
11 he threw her phone into water that was on the ground in
12 the abandoned house. And he said that he had to cover up
13 her blood with dirt.

14 Q Did he say or tell you that Cati said anything when
15 this was going on?

16 A He said that she told him that if he let her go, she
17 wouldn't say anything.

18 Q Now, Hannah Thompson, what did you say when he told
19 you that?

20 A I don't think I said anything.

21 Q You knew he had already killed her, he told you that?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Was this the first time he told you how he killed
24 her?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Did he ever tell you what was in the trash bags?

2 A No.

3 Q Now, you said you had told him you wanted to go home.
4 Did he ever get angry out there on the run?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Tell us about that.

7 A He told me that, you know, I would be arrested as
8 soon as I got back here if I were to leave. And one
9 night, I -- he got really upset and paranoid that I was
10 going to leave him and he was just screaming at me and
11 shouting at me and calling me names.

12 Q Did you ever think -- or did you ever flinch?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Tell us about that.

15 A He had pulled his arm back like he was going to hit
16 me and I flinched way and he got mad at me for reacting
17 that way.

18 Q At what point did you tell him you wanted to leave
19 and when, in fact, did you leave? The best you can
20 remember.

21 A I --

22 Q Or tell them how that came about, please, the ladies
23 and gentlemen.

24 A So I didn't separate from John until December of
25 2016. I had mentioned to him before that I wanted to go

1 home, that I was homesick and missed my family, sleeping
2 in a bed, things like that.

3 Q Was all that true?

4 A Yes. And then John had told me -- or we had both
5 agreed that it would be safe for him for me to go home.

6 Q How did y'all part ways, I guess?

7 A He had taken a bus. And after he left on that bus, I
8 reached out to my family for help getting back home.

9 Q And did you subsequently -- was there somebody you
10 knew in Oregon?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Who -- just generally, who was that? You don't have
13 to say their name.

14 A She's a family friend.

15 Q Okay. And where did she live?

16 A In Eugene.

17 Q And is that approximately where you were when he left
18 on the bus?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Now, was the plan when you came back that you'd still
21 talk to him or help him or send him information?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Tell us about that.

24 A He told me that he would only let me go home if I
25 promised to come get him and help him.

1 Q Were you planning on coming back and getting him?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Do you remember a book that you'd write in and he'd
4 write in?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And this has been entered as State's Exhibit No. 2.
7 Do you recognize this book?

8 MS. WALKER: Your Honor, just renewing our previous
9 objection.

10 THE COURT: Overruled. It's already in evidence.

11 THE WITNESS: Yes.

12 BY MR. MEADORS:

13 Q You do recognize it?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And did you write in this book?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And did John Blauvelt write in this book?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Let me ask you this. Would you actually see him
20 write in the book?

21 A Yes.

22 Q And you recognize his handwriting?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And is this John Blauvelt's handwriting?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And you were, also, in here writing?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And what is this?

4 A It's just a journal that John kept.

5 Q I want to go back here when you said you were asking
6 for money. Food, cash or a smile?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Did you write that?

9 A I don't know.

10 Q Okay. Would you use this to get money?

11 A Yes.

12 Q I'm going to show you the other side of it. Going
13 south, hi, with the love, with a heart?

14 A I did write that.

15 Q Okay. Why did you write that?

16 A Because we were hitchhiking at one point.

17 Q Did you -- I never asked you this, but did you get
18 picked up?

19 A Yes.

20 Q So part of the trip, you hitchhiked. Was that after
21 the Yukon wrecked?

22 A Yes.

23 Q I'm just going to ask you about a couple of things.

24 I'm going to show you what's marked December 22nd of
25 16. Is that his handwriting?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Have you read this before?

3 A Yes.

4 MR. MEADORS: May I publish, Your Honor?

5 THE COURT: Yes.

6 MR. MEADORS: December 22nd, 2016 --

7 MS. WALKER: Your Honor, if I may review it before
8 publishing.

9 THE COURT: Overruled -- you're objecting?

10 MS. WALKER: I asked to review it.

11 THE COURT: Oh, absolutely.

12 (Pause.)

13 MS. WALKER: Your Honor, subject to our previous
14 objection.

15 THE COURT: So noted. Overruled.

16 MR. MEADORS: December 22nd, 2016, going to keep
17 going. Wish I could talk to you again.

18 BY MR. MEADORS:

19 Q Had you left at this point?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Okay.

22 MR. MEADORS: Excuse my language, I fucking miss you.

23 I love you so much, Hannah, no matter what they say. I'm

24 sorry I got you involved. I was being selfish. I know if

25 I told you the truth, you wouldn't have done shit.

1 Hopefully, I kept you safe. That wasn't Scott's car,
2 baby, I'm so sorry. I love you. That was really selfish.
3 Hopefully, your life goes back to normal really soon. I
4 just saw myself on the news at the hotel and I guess I'm
5 not welcome here anymore. I should probably leave, but
6 it's warm here and my plan, looks like charging, but I
7 think changing -- I apologize, my phone is charging. I
8 don't know anymore. I still don't think I did anything
9 wrong. I'm going to have to get out of here. I'm not
10 going to jail. Merry Christmas. December 25th, 2016.
11 Didn't, something, to death.

12 BY MR. MEADORS:

13 Q Hannah, I want to ask you something. This was your
14 book, too, wasn't it?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Now, you wrote a letter in here to John, didn't you?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And it's in evidence right here. When did you write
19 this?

20 A Before we separated and I came back home.

21 Q Do you want to read this or do you want me to?

22 A You can read it.

23 MR. MEADORS: With the Court's permission.

24 Dear John, I will be forever grateful to you for the
25 rest of my life. Even if our paths never cross again, I

1 will never forget you. You'll never be a distant memory.
2 I've never met a more compassionate, selfless individual
3 and I don't think I ever will. From here on out, no one I
4 meet or know will ever compare to you and all you've done
5 for me. My life will be forever impacted because you
6 touched it. If I had it in my way, I would never let you
7 go. I know you will continue to make the most out of your
8 life. I don't regret a single decision I ever made with
9 you. I promise to do everything I can to build a perfect
10 life for you again where we can be together comfortably
11 until we turn into dust. I will never stop loving you. I
12 will always be yours. Heart. Signed Hannah.

13 BY MR. MEADORS:

14 Q You loved him, right?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Did he have a daughter named, Madison? I think I
17 asked you that.

18 A Yes.

19 Q And again, on Page 39, is that John Blauvelt's
20 writing?

21 A Yes.

22 MR. MEADORS: December of 2016. Dear Madison, just
23 turned seven. Your mother has chosen to not give you the
24 letters I send and for good reason. You're too young to
25 really understand. I hope by now you're old enough to

1 feel a certain way about me. You probably forget me by
2 now. I will never forget you. I've cried for you every
3 night since I left. Being on the run is easy, missing you
4 is not. We had just started to rebuild our relationship,
5 too. I'm sorry for ruining that for you. Somehow I hope
6 you understand why I did it. That girl was evil to me.
7 She treated me like dirt and took everything from me,
8 including you. I'm sorry that I had to do that, but there
9 was no other way for me. Sorry, bud, I love you.

10 BY MR. MEADORS:

11 Q And is the rest of this book filled with things John
12 Blauvelt wrote and, perhaps, you wrote?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And in one part of it, it looks like there's a
15 day-to-day. I'm not going to go over every bit of it.
16 List of what happened when you were first on the run. Do
17 you remember looking at that with me?

18 A Yes.

19 Q I can't find it right now. I guess my question is,
20 did he ever go by another name? Are you familiar with the
21 name Ben?

22 A Yes.

23 Q What did Ben mean to John Blauvelt that you know?

24 A He told me that if he ever had a son, he wanted to
25 name him Benjamin.

1 Q And did he tell people he was Benjamin?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And in the back of this book, do you see where he
4 practiced writing Benjamin?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Couple of things I've got to clean up here. You
7 testified that -- you said that John Blauvelt had a knife
8 when he came back from Cati's house trying to see who her
9 boyfriend was?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Do you remember seeing that knife?

12 A I believe so, yes.

13 Q Okay. Can you describe it?

14 A I believe it was like a steak knife."

15 Q Now, when you finally came home -- it's what it says
16 on here, finally came home. When you finally came home,
17 did you go talk to the police?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Was that on December 20th of 2016?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And did you at some point in that conversation tell
22 them John Blauvelt had told you he killed Cati?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Did you tell them everything in that statement?

25 A No.

1 Q Okay. How long after was -- but you told him he
2 killed her?

3 A Yes.

4 Q How long after you wrote this note to John was it
5 that you talked to the police?

6 A Like a week.

7 Q Okay. And after that conversation with the police in
8 December of 2016, did you still have interaction with him?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Okay. Tell them how.

11 A He messaged me from a Snapchat account on my Snapchat
12 account. And we would talk using Snapchat every day.

13 Q So y'all would communicate again how?

14 A Through Snapchat.

15 Q What -- did you have a name? Did he have a name?

16 A He did. I forget what it is -- what it was -- oh,
17 he -- I -- he did have a name at one point. It was
18 Charlie Chay.

19 Q Okay. Who had Bubble something?

20 A What was it?

21 Q Never mind. If you don't remember, I'm not putting
22 it out.

23 A Okay.

24 Q But you were still communicating with him?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Did you send him my money after December 20th of
2 2016?

3 A Yes.

4 Q How?

5 A I loaded a digital gift card to Starbucks with \$10
6 for him.

7 Q Do you remember when that was?

8 A No.

9 Q Okay. And so when you do that, you don't have to go
10 get a new card or anything, you just put it on an account?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And how many times did you do that?

13 A Once.

14 Q When did you quit communicating with John Blauvelt
15 totally?

16 A I would say end of 2019, beginning of 2020.

17 Q You're back home?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Where are you living?

20 A With my parents.

21 Q Did the U.S. Marshals talk to you about where he
22 might be?

23 A Yes.

24 Q When was that?

25 A In January of 2022.

1 Q Did you help give them more information?

2 A Yes.

3 Q What did you give them?

4 A I told them places that I knew that he had been. And
5 I, basically, just told them everything that I had
6 observed about with pictures that he would send me and
7 things like that.

8 Q Did you tell them where he had been working on any
9 type farms?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Where was that? What did you tell them?

12 A He had been working on, like, marijuana farms and
13 doing, I think, landscaping at one point.

14 Q Did you tell them an area he had been doing that or a
15 region of the country?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Okay. What did you tell them?

18 A I told them that I believed he was still in the
19 northwest because marijuana is legal there and they have
20 farms there and things like that.

21 Q And did you know at that time where he was
22 specifically?

23 A No.

24 Q So you had quit all conversation with him by then?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Okay. And they went through one of your family
2 members to find you again to talk, correct?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And at some point again, did you talk to law
5 enforcement in June of 2022?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Okay. Did you again tell them John Blauvelt told you
8 he killed Cati?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And did you add in some more details that you hadn't
11 added before?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And why had you held out to start with?

14 A Because John was telling me not to say anything and
15 not to talk to the police.

16 Q And after June 20th, I think, of 2022 -- we've heard
17 testimony John was arrested in July of 2022. Did you know
18 that?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Since that time, have you talked to him?

21 A No.

22 Q Have you gotten any indirect communication from him?

23 A No.

24 Q And then you were charged, correct?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Okay. With accessory after the fact?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Misprison of a felon?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And obstruction of justice?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And is it your understanding that's for still
8 communicating with him?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Sending a Starbucks card?

11 A Yes.

12 Q When you would talk to him on these phones or Snap,
13 whatever, were you giving him information about what was
14 going on back at home?

15 A I told him what I had said to the police.

16 Q Okay. And then you quit doing that?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Why did you quit helping him -- or quit talking to
19 him?

20 A I realized that he made me feel really bad every time
21 we talked. He was putting a lot of pressure on me to
22 hurry up and come get him. He would say come save him.
23 And it kind of just felt like anything I did to -- that
24 kind of solidified my life here would make him angry or
25 upset.

1 Q You loved John Blauvelt, didn't you?

2 A Yes.

3 Q You helped him hide Cati's car after he killed her,
4 didn't you?

5 A Yes.

6 Q You didn't know he had killed her at that point?

7 A No.

8 Q But you did help him?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And when you were on the run, at some point, he told
11 you he had killed her?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And you didn't call law enforcement, did you?

14 A No.

15 Q And after you talked to law enforcement in December
16 of -- strike that, I apologize.

17 Yes, December of 2016, you told them he killed Cati,
18 correct?

19 A Yes.

20 Q You still had communications with him after that and
21 sent him \$10, correct?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And you didn't tell law enforcement about that?

24 A No.

25 Q And that's why you're charged, is that what you

1 understand?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Your attorney, outstanding attorney here is Brian
4 Johnson.

5 MR. MEADORS: Mr. Johnson, would you stand up?

6 BY MR. MEADORS:

7 Q Is this your attorney?

8 A Yes.

9 MR. MEADORS: Thank you, sir.

10 BY MR. MEADORS:

11 Q You've talked with law enforcement. I think you may
12 have met with Ms. Abee, Ms. Kinli Abee a year or so ago.
13 Did I meet with you a couple weeks ago in Simpsonville?

14 A Yes.

15 Q First time we met?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Was Mr. Johnson there?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Ms. Abee there?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Captain Schofield there?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And then did we briefly talk again out here just this
24 morning?

25 A We did.

1 Q Do you know you're looking at approximately -- if you
2 added up each of these charges, you're looking at 55
3 years?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Have I, Ms. Abee, Captain, anybody ever promised you
6 anything in exchange for your testimony?

7 A No.

8 Q When you first talked with the police and told them
9 he did it, you weren't even charged, were you?

10 A No.

11 Q And since that time, what have I asked you to do?
12 What has John Meadors asked you to do, if anything?

13 A Just tell the truth.

14 Q Now, you're hoping for a good outcome, aren't you?

15 A Yes.

16 Q But you haven't been promised anything, have you?

17 A No.

18 Q And you don't know what your outcome is, do you?

19 A No.

20 Q But you admitted you helped him, didn't you?

21 A Yes.

22 Q And that will be up to a Judge, won't it?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Are you glad you're here today?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Are you under his control anymore?

2 A No.

3 Q Is the individual that told you he put a knife in
4 Cati Blauvelt and then dragged her into the abandoned
5 house, into the -- wherever he put her, is that individual
6 who told you to follow him in the car, to hide her car and
7 the individual that you left and went out west with and,
8 again, told you the details of killing Cati Blauvelt, is
9 that individual in the courtroom today?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Could you please tell the ladies and gentlemen of the
12 jury where he is?

13 A He's sitting over there.

14 Q Sitting next to Defense Counsel, Ms. Walker?

15 A Yes.

16 MR. MEADORS: We'd like the record to so reflect,
17 Judge.

18 I beg the Court's indulgence. I just want to check
19 with cocounsel just for a second.

20 (Pause.)

21 MR. MEADORS: Thank you, Judge.

22 THE COURT: All right, ladies and gentlemen, before
23 cross-examination, we're going to take our afternoon
24 break. So, please, don't discuss the case. And we'll
25 call you back in here in a little bit.

1 Thank you.

2 (WHEREUPON, the jury was excused from open court at
3 approximately 2:58 p.m.)

4 THE COURT: We'll be in recess about 15 minutes.

5 MS. WALKER: Your Honor, would you advise the witness
6 she's still under oath and not to discuss the case?

7 THE COURT: Ma'am, you are still under oath and you
8 can't talk with anybody about the testimony.

9 THE WITNESS: Okay.

10 THE COURT: Thank you.

11 MS. WALKER: Thank you, Judge.

12 (WHEREUPON, a break was taken.)

13 THE COURT: Bring them in.

14 (WHEREUPON, the jury came into open court at
15 approximately 3:17 p.m.)

16 THE COURT: Cross?

17 MS. WALKER: Thank you, Your Honor.

18 CROSS-EXAMINATION

19 BY MS. WALKER:

20 Q Ms. Thompson, how old did you say you were today?

21 A 25.

22 Q You're 25. And so when you were 17 was about 2016?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And the way you got into this group of friends was
25 because of Chyanne?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And Chyanne is Cati's niece?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And -- but they're more like sisters because they're
5 very close in age?

6 A Correct.

7 Q About five years apart. And then you became friends
8 with Ally?

9 A Yes.

10 Q You all became pretty close; is that right?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And then you started going over to John and Cati's
13 house?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And eventually, John and Cati get married. And
16 Chyanne moves in?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And when Chyanne moves in, y'all go over there even
19 more frequently?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Nobody's parents are home?

22 A No.

23 Q These are all friends?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And that was at a house in Fountain Inn?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And you were one of the people that were invited?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And you were dating someone named Tristan Vaughn at
5 the time?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And as a teenager, you want to be somewhere where you
8 don't have to get permission to do things?

9 A Yes.

10 Q You can smoke weed, as you said?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Drink alcohol?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Be with your boyfriend?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Be with your friends?

17 A Yes.

18 Q When you were at your parents' house, you'd have to
19 babysit a lot?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And you had to tell them where you were going and
22 what you were doing?

23 A Yes.

24 Q But if your parents weren't there, you could do
25 whatever you wanted; is that right?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And the more you started hanging out over there, you
3 were kind of interested in this John guy; is that right?

4 A No.

5 Q The more you hang over there, the more you start
6 wondering about John?

7 A No.

8 Q You're with your boyfriend Tristan, but, eventually,
9 you break up?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And in the process of hanging out over there, John
12 and Kate get married in December; is that right?

13 A Yes.

14 Q They go on a honeymoon?

15 A Yes.

16 Q But they split up at the end of February?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And at the end of February or a couple weeks after,
19 Cati starts moving out?

20 A Okay.

21 Q Is that correct?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And you are spending more and more time over there?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And so the entire time that John and Cati were

1 married, you hung out at that house?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And so you did know Cati, correct?

4 A I knew of her, yes.

5 Q You just knew of her?

6 A I did not know her.

7 Q Even though you went to her house?

8 A Yes.

9 Q October, November, December?

10 A Yes.

11 Q January --

12 A It was always when she was at work.

13 Q That's the only time you went over there is when Cati
14 was at work?

15 A Those mainly were the times, yes.

16 Q And when she's moving out, you're spending more and
17 more time with John?

18 A Yes.

19 Q You break up with Tristan?

20 A Yes.

21 Q John's an older guy?

22 A Yes.

23 Q He's in the military?

24 A Yes.

25 Q He doesn't live with his parents?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And y'all get closer and closer?

3 A Yes.

4 Q I think Mr. Meadors said it was a friendlier way or
5 romantic way, something of that nature; is that right?

6 A Yes.

7 Q But John still lives in the same house he shared with
8 Cati?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And, in fact, he's still married to Cati?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And even though they live apart, she's still his
13 wife?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And her niece still comes over there, Chyanne?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And she was the first one that lived in that house?
18 She was the first one that knew John?

19 A Yes.

20 Q She's a -- closer to John's age?

21 A Yes.

22 Q She has a dog with him?

23 A Yes.

24 Q In fact, they have two dogs, Marly and Jupiter?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And Cati even keeps driving John's car when they
2 separate?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And she doesn't move her belongings out for a while.
5 So her house is still full of her things?

6 A Yes.

7 Q But you're staying over there?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And sometimes Cati drops by, sees the dog, picks up
10 her things?

11 A Yes.

12 Q So not only are you surrounded by Cati's house,
13 you're, also, dating her husband?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And she stops over at the house all the time?

16 A I wouldn't say all the time.

17 Q But she stops by?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And she's driving John's car?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And her dog is over there?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And you're always just a little worried about Cati?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Because they're still married?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And, eventually, while you are staying at John's
3 house, Crystal Gorto moves in?

4 A Yeah.

5 Q And Crystal moves in around June. So in the
6 summertime of 2016; is that right?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And Crystal is Cati's childhood best friend?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And Cati still comes by the house to see her best
11 friend?

12 A No.

13 Q Your answer is no that she does not come by to see
14 Crystal Gorto?

15 A I don't remember her coming by to see Crystal, no.

16 Q Okay. And you're still worried that John's going to
17 cheat on you with Cati?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Cheat on you with his wife is what you're concerned
20 about?

21 A Yes.

22 Q And so, eventually, in dating John, you and your
23 friends become more and more distant?

24 A Yes.

25 Q So you and Chyanne don't go out by yourselves?

1 A No.

2 Q And you and Ally don't hang out by yourselves?

3 A No.

4 Q Because now you're spending more and more time with
5 John?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And you're distancing yourself from your family?

8 A Yes.

9 Q So you're not spending as much time with your
10 parents?

11 A No.

12 Q You're not spending as much time with your little
13 sister?

14 A No.

15 Q Because all your time is spent with John?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Because you go to work with him?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And you sit at home with him?

20 A Yes.

21 Q You're with him all the time?

22 A Yes.

23 Q But Cati is still around?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And so in October of 2016, Cati goes missing; is that

1 right?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And then her body is found on the 26th of October?

4 A Yes.

5 Q The officers in this case notify John first?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Because he's her husband and they are still married?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And everybody is talking about what happened to Cati?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Including your mom?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Your mom is asking you about Cati?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And all your friends are talking about Cati?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And Crystal is talking about Cati?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And so in November, November 2nd, John is called to
20 the police station?

21 A Yes.

22 Q To pick up some of Cati's things?

23 A Okay.

24 Q And you go with him?

25 A Yes.

1 Q But you just stay in the car?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And while sitting in the car, the police come out?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Because they're seizing the car?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And they ask you to talk to them?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And that's the first time you talk to the police?

10 A Yes.

11 Q So Cati has been missing on October 24th. They find
12 her on October 26th. And you talk to the police on
13 November 2nd?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And you are aware that that interview with law
16 enforcement was video and audio recorded?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And they even read you your Miranda rights?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And you filled out a form saying you understood
21 everything?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And you still wanted to talk to them?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And they even told you that no matter what you say,

1 you're going to walk out of here today?

2 A I don't remember that.

3 Q You don't recall that?

4 A No. .

5 Q Okay. And so they ask you some background
6 information, age, date of birth, how far you went in
7 school?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And you tell them you're working at J.C. Penney's?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And that you don't have a boyfriend?

12 A Yes.

13 Q But you do live with John?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And you have your own bedroom there?

16 A Yes.

17 Q But none of that was true?

18 A No.

19 Q And you are interviewing with three different
20 officers, Investigator Morecraft; do you recall that?

21 A Yes.

22 Q I believe Investigator Donnelly?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And Investigator Schofield?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And they ask what you did on the 24th. And you tell
2 them the usual, you went to work with John?

3 A Yes.

4 Q You met Mr. Scott, Charles Sidney Scott, or Phil
5 Scott, I think is what folks call him, at Zaxby's?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Ate dinner?

8 A Yes.

9 Q Watched TV?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And the last time you saw Cati was a few months ago?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And they ask you about life insurance?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And you tell them John's never talked to me about
16 anything like that?

17 A I'm not sure.

18 Q You do recall giving an interview on November 2nd?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And, again, you're aware it was recorded?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Okay. And so, if I showed you a clip of that, you'd
23 recognize it?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Okay. And so, your testimony is you don't recall

1 saying that John's never talked to you about any life
2 insurance?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Okay. I'm going to show you an excerpt from your
5 recorded interview on November 2nd, 2016.

6 MS. WALKER: Beg the Court's indulgence.

7 (Pause.)

8 MS. WALKER: I can move on from there. I can return
9 to it later on.

10 MR. NEELY: We've almost got it.

11 MS. WALKER: Okay.

12 (Pause.)

13 MS. WALKER: Sorry about that.

14 (WHEREUPON, an unmarked video was shown to witness in
15 open court.)

16 BY MS. WALKER:

17 Q And you recognize this video?

18 A Yes.

19 Q This is from your interview on November 2nd?

20 (WHEREUPON, an unmarked video was played in open
21 court.)

22 BY MS. WALKER:

23 Q So you told the investigators that you didn't know
24 anything about life insurance?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And they even ask you if John ever joked about
2 killing Cati and you say no?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And they ask how you feel about Cati?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And you say I always liked her as a friend?

7 A Yes.

8 Q I even lived with her a little bit?

9 A Yes.

10 Q So you lived at the house while Cati was there?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And then the interview changes a little because they
13 feel like you're not telling them the truth?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And they actually accuse you of lying?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And they ask you, Are you and John dating? And you
18 say, No, I don't have a boyfriend?

19 A Yes.

20 Q But then they confront you with the social media
21 posts about the most amazing relationship you've been in?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And you tell them, well, we don't like labels?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And then the officers show you a picture of Cati's

1 injury?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And you get upset?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And you say, I don't want to look at her?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And they keep asking you to tell the truth?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And you say, I don't want to talk?

10 A Yes.

11 Q But they do tell you that you'll talk to them again
12 at some point?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And that things might not be the same?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And you leave?

17 A Yes.

18 Q You say, I don't want to do this anymore?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And then after that interview, you're in a panic?

21 A Yes.

22 Q You just saw this injury that took Cati's life?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And you're very upset?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And so you and John leave town around South Carolina?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And once you leave town around South Carolina, you
4 decide to go back home to get toothbrush and clothes?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And you leave Columbia where the commissary is?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And since John serves in the military, there's a
9 discount at the commissary?

10 A Yes.

11 Q But you need to go back home before you go anywhere
12 so that you can get clothes and a toothbrush?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And so you and John talk about taking a trip out
15 west?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And you circle back home and then you leave town
18 around the 7th or 8th of November?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And at this time, you have only talked to law
21 enforcement that one time?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And John's talked to them twice. Are you aware of
24 that?

25 A No.

1 Q He had the death notification?

2 A Okay, yes.

3 Q And then he spoke to them the second time?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And you and John go out west on the 8th and you end
6 up staying a lot longer?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Eventually, you come back home because you say that
9 John abandoned you?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And you are able to make contact with a family
12 friend?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And then you're able to call back home?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And by this point, the U.S. Marshals are, also,
17 looking for John?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And so while you are in Oregon, while you're in
20 Portland, you are interviewed for a second time by the
21 U.S. Marshals?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And then you have to wait a few days to get a flight
24 home. And the U.S. Marshals talk to you again when you
25 get back to South Carolina about John?

1 A Yes.

2 Q So that's three times you've talk to law enforcement
3 at that point?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And each of those times, you told them you'd tell
6 them the truth?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Just like you did today?

9 A Yes.

10 Q You swore that you would tell the truth?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And then when you get back, you are interviewed with
13 Investigator Schofield. I believe she was Investigator
14 Manley at the time?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And she asked you about your trip?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And you say, At first, it was fun and then not so
19 much?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And she continues to ask about the travels, where you
22 went. And you never tell her about staying with any
23 friends in Texas; is that right?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And about 45 minutes in, after you talk about your

1 trip is the first time you say that John told you that he
2 killed Cati?

3 A Yes.

4 Q You said that he just spontaneously came out and told
5 you I killed Cati?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And the reason he killed Cati was so he wouldn't
8 cheat on you?

9 A No.

10 Q You do not recall telling the investigators that the
11 whole reason that John told you that he was going to kill
12 Cati -- or that he killed Cati was so he would not cheat
13 on you?

14 A No.

15 Q You do recall giving an interview to Investigator
16 Schofield?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And that was when you returned from Oregon?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And that was on December 20th?

21 A Yes.

22 Q And you would recognize yourself in that video
23 because you know it was video and audio recorded?

24 A Yes.

25 Q I'm going to play for you an excerpt from that. And,

1 hopefully, it will be faster this time.

2 A Okay.

3 (WHEREUPON, an unmarked video was shown to witness in
4 open court.)

5 BY MS. WALKER:

6 Q And you recognize this video?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And it has the date stamp on it, but you were
9 questioned by Investigator Schofield on November 20th?

10 A Yes.

11 (WHEREUPON, an unmarked video was played in open
12 court.)

13 MS. WALKER: Stop the video.

14 (Pause.)

15 MS. WALKER: I apologize there are two parts to this
16 video and they look very similar.

17 (Pause.)

18 (WHEREUPON, an unmarked video was played in open
19 court.)

20 BY MS. WALKER:

21 Q So you told the officers that the reason he told you
22 he killed Cati was so he wouldn't cheat on you?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And after he told you that, you just keep going with
25 your trip?

1 A Yes.

2 Q That's what you tell Investigator Schofield?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And you go into different states, you stay in a
5 hotel, take a nap, he goes and does laundry?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Or, at least, that's what you told Investigator
8 Schofield?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And you tell this super detailed story about how John
11 up and left you one day in December?

12 A Yes.

13 Q About how he said he had to go to the bathroom and
14 that he never came back?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And you were eventually, after wandering around town
17 and waiting for the library to open and waiting to get to
18 a computer able to contact your family friend?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And so Investigator Schofield begins to wonder why
21 you didn't leave before that?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And you said that he told you you'd go to jail? He'd
24 make you feel like this was your fault?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And you didn't have a bank card?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And your phone fell in the toilet?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And so then you're able to come back home and you
6 reach out to Investigator Schofield; is that right?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And so that is your fourth interview with law
9 enforcement at that point. And you said that you didn't
10 know that Cati worked off Woodruff Road in that interview?

11 A Yes.

12 Q But Crystal told you that?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And that's how you connected the dots?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And you told them that John almost didn't do it, but
17 he got a rush of adrenaline and was able to go through and
18 kill her?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And that he threw her phone in the water?

21 A Yes.

22 Q But then you change your story a little and say that
23 you did know that he was going to Cati's work?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And that you did know that she worked at PetSmart?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And that you were worried that they were going to do
3 something other than talk?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And if they did something other than just talk, you
6 were going to be mad?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And then you told Investigator Schofield before the
9 end of your interview you haven't heard anything from
10 John?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And so some more time passes and then we get to March
13 2nd of 2017. And you talk to law enforcement a fifth
14 time?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And you talk to Investigator Morecraft?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And that statement isn't audio or video recorded. We
19 don't have a report. We don't have a written statement.
20 But you know that you talked to Investigator Morecraft on
21 that date?

22 A Yes.

23 Q That was yes, correct?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And then for a sixth time, you're interviewed again

1 on November 30th, 2018?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And at this point, you tell them another story, that
4 Charles Sidney Scott was going to pick John up from
5 Woodruff Road?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And you still don't mention that you're still in
8 contact with John in November of 2018?

9 A No.

10 Q But everything else you said was true?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And you told them you'd tell them the truth that
13 time, too?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And then on February 26th, 2020, you talk to
16 Investigator Donnelly?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And you give a seventh interview with law
19 enforcement?

20 A Yes.

21 Q A little more time passes and the U.S. Marshals
22 contact you?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And you testified earlier that that was in January of
25 2022?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And so in January of 2022, the U.S. Marshals are
3 talking to you about what you could do to help find John?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And that is your eighth interview with law
6 enforcement?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And then June of that year rolls around and you,
9 actually, reach out to Investigator Schofield?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And you tell her I've been wanting to reach out?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And I finally did?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And in this interview, in your ninth interview, you
16 tell her that John told you that he wanted to kill Cati
17 and wanted you to help?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And you tell Investigator Schofield that you heard
20 John talk multiple times about life insurance and
21 splitting it with whoever would volunteer to help him?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And those conversations happened a week or two before
24 Cati was killed?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And when you went to the shops at Greenridge, he told
2 you to wait until you saw Cati's car?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Not just wait around an hour, wait until you see
5 Cati's car leave when you dropped him off at the shops?

6 A Are you asking me?

7 Q I am.

8 A Can you repeat the question, please?

9 Q Yes. When you dropped John off at the shops, he told
10 you to wait until you saw Cati's car, that's what you told
11 Investigator Schofield?

12 A Yes, that's what I told her.

13 Q And you said after you were at the house over on
14 South Kings and after you saw the car pull in the
15 driveway, you don't remember leaving, but you think you
16 might have gone outside?

17 A I'm sorry, could you repeat that?

18 Q You tell Investigator -- I think she was Investigator
19 Manley at the time. And I'm sorry if I mixed that up.
20 That once you saw the black car pull in the driveway at
21 the house, you know you went outside, but you don't
22 remember leaving?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And all this time, you never -- he never told you a
25 plan. He just told you to help him?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And you tell Investigator Schofield that y'all don't
3 talk about it at all. You just drive him around?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And you don't say anything?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And you drop him off at Cati's work?

8 A Yes.

9 Q The same Cati that you're so worried he's going to
10 cheat on you with?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And you tell them that you had no idea what was in
13 those trash bags?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And that was in June of 2022. But today, you said
16 that one of the bags had the tag to her car and the keys
17 in it?

18 A No, I didn't.

19 Q You're saying that it wasn't in a bag, he was just
20 holding her keys and the tag?

21 A Yes.

22 Q And y'all just drove it without putting it in a bag?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And you said that you know that the phone was thrown
25 in water, but wasn't sure where the water was?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And then you explain the story, I believe, about this
3 knife that was found?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And so in June of 2022, you tell her that John found
6 a steak knife walking back from the hospital?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And that was weeks before Cati was killed?

9 A Yes.

10 Q A random steak knife?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And he keeps it?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And he says hey, I found this knife on the side of
15 the road?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And he keeps it until he kills Cati with it weeks
18 later?

19 A Yes.

20 Q That's the story that you told Investigator
21 Schofield?

22 A Yes.

23 Q You, actually, say that John is wearing someone
24 else's clothes?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And at some point -- so this is in June of 2022, you
2 had rented an apartment in Colorado?

3 A In what year did you say?

4 Q You told -- so the interview is in 2022?

5 A Oh, okay.

6 Q But about two -- I believe in 2019, you had rented an
7 apartment?

8 A Yes.

9 Q In Colorado?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And you had paid a deposit?

12 A Yes.

13 Q You were on your way?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And this entire time, you're talking to the police?

16 A Yes.

17 Q About how you are not talking to John anymore?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And that you're going to help them?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And after June, you're arrested in October?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And you're arrested for obstruction of justice?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And for two -- I believe two counts of obstruction;

1 is that correct?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And that's for lying?

4 A Yes.

5 Q On multiple dates?

6 A Yes.

7 Q To multiple police officers?

8 A Yes.

9 Q Over years?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And then you're charged with something called
12 misprison of a felony?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And that's for not telling the truth about what you
15 knew?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Or what you say you knew?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And then you're charged with accessory after the
20 fact?

21 A Yes.

22 Q For helping dispose of the car?

23 A Yes.

24 Q But we're not quite done. Because in September of
25 2024, the month we're in now, you give a tenth interview?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And in this interview, you attend with your attorney?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And they give you an agreement called a proffer
5 agreement?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And in that agreement, you tell them that you're
8 going to tell the truth?

9 A Yes.

10 Q This time. You're going to tell the truth or
11 anything you say can be used against you?

12 A Yes.

13 Q It could be used for future charges, new charges if
14 you do not tell the truth?

15 A Yes.

16 Q But if you tell the truth, they won't do that; is
17 that right?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And that was your conversation in September?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And you testified that John told you -- he texted
22 you, I'm going to go take care of that thing on Saturday?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And that you knew what he meant?

25 A Yes.

1 Q You knew he meant he was going to kill Cati?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And you did nothing?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And then the morning that you went to work with John,
6 the morning of October 24th, you say that he told you on
7 the way to the work, I'm going to kill Cati today?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And you didn't do anything about that either?

10 A No.

11 Q And this was on September 9th that you told them
12 that?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And then you tell them that you didn't know that he
15 had killed Cati until November 2nd?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Despite telling you the morning of and a few days
18 prior and a couple weeks prior to that that you knew he
19 was going to go kill Cati?

20 A That's what he said.

21 Q But you didn't find out about it until November 2nd
22 on your way to the police station?

23 A He didn't tell me he did it until that day.

24 Q He didn't tell you when you were in Texas about
25 killing Cati?

1 A He did.

2 Q He told you that time, too?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And he didn't tell you while you were on the road
5 spontaneously?

6 A He did.

7 Q He did. He told you all of these times. You just
8 revealed them one by one. That's what your testimony is
9 today?

10 A He revealed the details a little bit at a time. It
11 wasn't all at the same time. Yes, that's my testimony.

12 Q And, originally, you said, I didn't know whose car
13 that was?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And now you've changed and said yes, I did know?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And you even told the police that Crystal Gorto hid
18 you in the attic when the police showed up?

19 A Yes.

20 Q That Crystal Gorto, when the police showed up, told
21 you to get in the attic and hide from law enforcement?

22 A John told her to help me hide in the attic.

23 Q And you have never ever, ever mentioned that until
24 September 9th?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And you, also, told them that after having dinner at
2 Zaxby's that you went back to the abandoned house?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Because John wanted to look for something?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And you had never mentioned that --

7 A It wasn't the same day. I just wanted to clear that
8 up.

9 Q Okay. But you had never mentioned going back to this
10 abandoned house?

11 A No.

12 Q This abandoned house where you and your friends used
13 to party?

14 A Yes.

15 Q The one that's off the street, that's hard to see?

16 A Yes.

17 Q But you all go there and drink?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And smoke?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And get intoxicated?

22 A Yes.

23 Q But you remember these conversations about John
24 asking anyone that wants some life insurance, help me kill
25 Cati?

1 A Yes.

2 MS. WALKER: Beg the Court's indulgence.

3 (Pause.)

4 BY MS. WALKER: .

5 Q And so we just talked about you telling Investigator
6 Schofield on September 9th that you went back to the
7 abandoned house after Zaxby's?

8 A Yes.

9 Q You went back to the abandoned house that night?

10 A I don't recall.

11 Q But you just testified that it wasn't that night?

12 A I don't remember it to be that night.

13 Q You don't remember it that night?

14 A No.

15 Q But on September 9th, you did remember it to be that
16 night?

17 A Yes.

18 Q But not today?

19 A No.

20 Q And so it's been eight years since 2016?

21 A Yes.

22 Q And in those eight years, you've had now 11
23 opportunities to come before this Court and tell the
24 truth?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And today's that day?

2 A Yes.

3 Q You've lied to your friends and your family?

4 A Yes.

5 Q You quit school?

6 A Yes.

7 Q You've never gone back to school?

8 A No.

9 Q And you kept lying?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And you just continue to throw people under the bus.

12 Crystal hiding you in the attic now?

13 A I'm not throwing her under the bus by saying that.

14 Q You're saying that she was told to hide you from law
15 enforcement and did that?

16 A By John, yes.

17 Q That's what your testimony is?

18 A I'm testifying that I'm not the only person that was
19 affiliated and told what to do by John, yes.

20 Q And this is all because of a relationship with a
21 married man who was married to Cati?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Eight years ago?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Because of Cati Blauvelt?

1 A Yes.

2 MS. WALKER: Nothing further, Your Honor.

3 THE COURT: Redirect?

4 MR. MEADORS: Just one question, Your Honor.

5 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

6 BY MR. MEADORS:

7 Q Who's handwriting is that? I'm sorry I had to do
8 that, but there was no other way for me.

9 A That's John's handwriting.

10 MR. MEADORS: Thank you. That's all.

11 THE COURT: Any recross?

12 MS. WALKER: Briefly.

13 RECROSS-EXAMINATION

14 BY MS. WALKER:

15 Q You don't know what it is?

16 A I'm sorry?

17 Q In the excerpt that Mr. Meadors just asked you about,
18 "why I did it", you don't know what that is?

19 A I assume that it's the murder.

20 Q You assume that?

21 A Yes.

22 Q And then he references an evil girl that took
23 everything from him?

24 A Yes.

25 MS. WALKER: Thank you, Your Honor.

1 THE COURT: Anything else, Mr. Meadors.

2 MR. MEADORS: No, sir.

3 THE COURT: You may step down.

4 Thank you.

5 The State call next witness.

6 MS. ABEE: Thank you, Your Honor the State calls
7 Chelsie Wills.

8 MR. NEELY: Your Honor, may we approach?

9 (WHEREUPON, a bench conference was held.)

10 THE COURT: All right, ladies and gentlemen, I need
11 to take up a brief matter with the lawyers. So I'm going
12 to excuse you for a few minutes.

13 (WHEREUPON, the jury was excused from open court at
14 approximately 4:09 p.m.)"

15 THE COURT: Mr. Neely, you have a matter?

16 MR. NEELY: Yes, sir, Your Honor. There is a video
17 that the State intends to offer to the jury. It's going
18 to be introduced into evidence. For the most part, I
19 don't have an objection to that video, however, at the
20 end, there is about a minute's worth of footage of Ms.
21 Blauvelt's body being found on the night of October 26th.

22 I would argue that this evidence is unduly
23 prejudicial as in it will inflame the passions of the jury
24 and could potentially lead to a decision based on feeling
25 rather than on the facts of the case. And it is

1 cumulative based on the forensic pathologist that's going
2 to testify later in the week about the nature of the
3 injuries. What's not an issue is the fact that she was,
4 in fact, murdered by someone that night and how she was
5 found is not relevant to deciding whether or not John
6 Blauvelt killed her. I would ask the Court to exclude
7 that evidence.

8 THE COURT: All right.

9 MS. ABEE: Thank you, Your Honor. The State -- even
10 though Mr. Neely says that the idea of murder, the fact
11 that she was murdered is not in question, the State still
12 has elements to prove, Your Honor. One of those elements
13 is malice aforethought. And, Your Honor, we have to prove
14 the condition of her body and that she was, in fact,
15 killed.

16 So what we see in this video is where her body was
17 located, Your Honor. That's corroborative of the
18 witnesses that either have testified or are going to
19 testify showing that her body was found in the basement of
20 this abandoned house, the location of the body, Your
21 Honor, and the condition of the body. You just heard
22 testimony that she was dragged. What we can see on her
23 face are some drag marks. There's some markings on her
24 face. And, Your Honor, we can see the condition in which
25 her body was found.

1 I do think that is relevant. While it may inflame
2 the passions of the jury or may be difficult to see, that
3 is just the facts of this case, that her body was found
4 half naked in the basement of an abandoned house. The
5 video is approximately eight minutes long and it's about
6 one minute of it.

7 THE COURT: So what's the purpose of showing that?

8 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, to establish the crime scene
9 and how her body was found. There's a window that you can
10 see. The idea with some other forensic evidence of some
11 blood of the victim found outside that this witness will,
12 also, testify to is that her body was drug and then pulled
13 through this window. So we can see the proximity of where
14 her body is located in -- I hate to say the word box, but
15 it was, essentially, a concrete box. So the proximity of
16 where her body is located versus the window. And, again,
17 Your Honor, the condition in which her body was found.
18 It's covered in boards. It's covered in blankets.

19 Your Honor, the scene is relevant. Again, it's not
20 being used to inflame the passions of the jury. It's
21 mainly going to show the jury this is the basement of the
22 abandoned house. Here's the layout of it and here's how
23 her body was found and located.

24 THE COURT: Let me ask you this, is it -- isn't the
25 issue in the case not whether she was killed, but who

1 killed her? Isn't that really what the evidence is? So
2 what's the probative value of showing that?

3 MS. ABEE: Right, Your Honor. I think it's
4 corroborative of some statements that have been stated,
5 right? We just heard that she -- from Hannah Thompson
6 that the Defendant told her that he killed her and then
7 drug her body. So I think the fact that you can see drag
8 marks. And then, again, just the realistic view of could
9 this body be drug into this hole I think is probative in
10 this case, Your Honor.

11 Again, I think in order to show malice, showing how
12 her body was left and how -- kind of the nature of the
13 scene, I do think is important.

14 And if Your Honor is not inclined to let the video
15 in, I do think a picture, even not as graphic would be
16 appropriate to show to be able to, again, show the jury.

17 THE COURT: What -- obviously, I haven't seen the
18 video. So what exactly is the video going to show as far
19 as the issue Mr. Neely has?

20 MS. ABEE: Right, Your Honor. It's kind of a
21 concrete box. And so the camera goes up and over and
22 shows where her body is found. So there's some boards
23 covering her face. You can see her face down. You can
24 see her shirt up, the lower part of her breasts. Her legs
25 are almost in like a frog-type position and there's a

1 blanket covering her genital area. So it shows that. It
2 shows the leads that EMS had on there to show proof of
3 life or to see whether or not she was living.

4 So it shows the position of her body as it was found
5 by the eyewitness that's going to testify that says that
6 he located her body at the abandoned house as well as EMS.

7 THE COURT: Mr. Neely, what about the fact that -- I
8 mean, the witness has testified as to how Mr. Blauvelt
9 described how the murder -- Ms. Thompson. He told her how
10 it happened and what happened. Wouldn't this be
11 corroborating testimony and not necessarily unfairly
12 prejudicial and substantially outweighed probative value?

13 MR. NEELY: Three things, Your Honor. Number one,
14 prior to getting to the concrete box in this video, there
15 is a clear shot that the forensic technician took of the
16 window. You can see the window clearly. You can see the
17 top of the box before you see Ms. Blauvelt laying in
18 there. So I think you can get to the corroboration
19 without, actually, showing Ms. Blauvelt's body.

20 Number two, to further corroborate that witness's
21 statements, Dr. Ward is going to testify later in the
22 week. We've had an opportunity to speak with him
23 pre-trial. And he is going to testify about the fact that
24 there are marks on Ms. Blauvelt's body that are
25 postmortem, that there are scratches on her body that are

1 postmortem that would be the result of what he believes to
2 be dragging. So that evidence can come from a different
3 witness later in the week.

4 Number three, Your Honor, this video does not show
5 the body of Ms. Blauvelt in the condition that it was
6 originally found in on that night. At this point, it's
7 already been manipulated and uncovered by EMS as they have
8 put life saving supporting modules on her to see if there
9 was, in fact, proof of life. So it doesn't even show the
10 condition that she was found in that night. She's been
11 uncovered. She's been exposed. So it does just go to
12 inflame the jury, Your Honor.

13 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, we are happy to pivot and use
14 pictures if that's going to be most appropriate. Again,
15 we don't want to cause any sort of issue for any potential
16 future appellate courts or anything like that. However, I
17 do think using one picture of where the body is located
18 and how it was found, especially when an eyewitness is
19 somebody who found it, I think is important.

20 There is a picture of the body that we have that
21 doesn't have any of the medical leads on or anything like
22 that. And I do think using one isolated picture that
23 shows that is important, Judge.

24 THE COURT: What do you say to that, Mr. Neely?

25 MR. NEELY: Same argument. Your Honor, we're still

1 seeing the body --

2 THE COURT: It's not necessarily the same argument.
3 It's a little bit different there.

4 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, I can approach with the photo
5 if you'd like to --

6 THE COURT: Yeah, let me see the photo.

7 All right, Mr. Neely, what about it?

8 MR. NEELY: One moment, Your Honor.

9 (Pause.)

10 MR. NEELY: Again, that -- I believe that picture is
11 after she's been uncovered, after -- that's not exactly
12 how -- I think Wayne Roper will testify that's not exactly
13 how she's found. She's covered in boards. She's covered
14 in a blanket. Stuff has been manipulated.

15 The crime scene technician that's about to testify
16 drew a diagram. So if the State wants to get into the
17 position of her body and how she was found, there's a
18 diagram that the crime scene technician drew detailing all
19 of the evidence that was found on that night. So they can
20 still get into that without showing a picture of the
21 victim.

22 THE COURT: Ms. Abee, again, what is the issue and
23 the probative value of it? What are you trying to show
24 with that photograph?

25 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, it is establishing the facts

1 of the case, that this is how her body was found. This is
2 corroborative --

3 THE COURT: Mr. Neely just said that's not how the
4 body was found.

5 MS. ABEE: The location of the body, Judge. Again,
6 I'm not trying to create any issues. If Your Honor
7 doesn't think that the picture of the body found in the
8 box itself is probative to this case in trying to prove
9 murder, we've got high level pictures, Judge, that just
10 show the box and then we can use pictures of her injuries
11 through the pathologist.

12 But, again, I do think it is probative. People are
13 going to testify that this body was in there and this is
14 the way the body was found. And we're trying to prove
15 malice in the case. The place that the body is found when
16 stating that one individual person drug her through a
17 window and put her in there, I do think the positioning of
18 her body, the fact that the shirt is up, I do think that's
19 probative to show that she was drug and she was just kind
20 of crumpled into this area.

21 This isn't a nice -- I mean, it's not a laid out
22 grave, Judge. You just saw the photo. I do think that's
23 probative to show the nature and the circumstances
24 surrounding the murder itself.

25 THE COURT: Anything else, Mr. Neely?

1 MR. NEELY: Your Honor, she's -- he's accused of
2 killing her outside on some trail and then dragging her.

3 THE COURT: Dragging her into the house and putting
4 her in a box, right?

5 MR. NEELY: Right. But as Dr. Ward is going to
6 testify to later this week, that's not where she died. If
7 that's where she died, there would have been significantly
8 more blood than what's in the box.

9 So malice aforethought as Mr. Meadors explained to
10 the jury earlier is the instant before the murder takes
11 place. It's not probative of malice. It's probative of a
12 coverup maybe, but it's not probative of malice. And it
13 doesn't go to establish one of elements of murder.

14 And again, they've got --

15 THE COURT: I don't know about that. Doesn't that
16 show some malice if you kill somebody and you drag them in
17 a house and put them in a box?

18 MR. NEELY: I wouldn't agree to that, Your Honor.

19 THE COURT: I know you wouldn't. I'm sure you
20 wouldn't.

21 MR. NEELY: But, again, they've got pictures of the
22 box that they can show. They can show the box without
23 showing the victim's body.

24 THE COURT: Are there any other photographs or stuff
25 y'all are going to try to introduce?

1 MS. ABEE: Not through this individual, Judge.
2 Obviously, there's going to be pictures of the injuries
3 through the pathologist that will be coming in and will be
4 probative of malice with regards to the injuries. But the
5 rest of the crime scene is just the crime scene itself,
6 the blood and stuff like that.

7 THE COURT: For the record, the photograph that
8 you're about to show -- or would show shows the deceased
9 in a box?

10 MS. ABEE: I'm sorry, yes, Judge.

11 THE COURT: I'm just trying to get on the record what
12 that photograph shows.

13 MS. ABEE: Yes.

14 THE COURT: Mr. Neely, I note your objection. I do
15 think it to some degree corroborates some testimony. And
16 I think it does have some relevance and probative value to
17 malice. It does show, as I just mentioned a little while
18 ago, the allegations are he killed her outside, drug her
19 in the house, put her in a box. I think that is some
20 evidence of malice. I'm not allowing -- or won't allow as
21 it goes through more inflammatory photographs that may
22 show some other issues. But as far as this particular
23 photo, I'm going to allow that photo in.

24 I, also, from an analysis of 403, whether it's
25 unfairly prejudicial and substantially outweighs probative

1 value. I think it does have probative value on the issues
2 that I just mentioned. And I don't think it's unfairly
3 prejudicial where it substantially outweighs the probative
4 value.

5 As y'all know from the case law and there's many
6 cases out there and language, courts and parties and
7 lawyers often have to deal with difficult situations and
8 sometimes gruesome photographs that are part of a case.
9 Unfortunately, it's -- it's the issues that we have to
10 deal with.

11 So this particular -- and for the record, I have
12 reviewed the photograph and I base my ruling on that. So
13 I'll allow that photograph.

14 MS. ABEE: Thank you, Your Honor.

15 MR. NEELY: I'm sorry, Your Honor. For the appellate
16 court, can you, also, address the -- or rule on my
17 objection based on the fact that I did argue that it's
18 cumulative to what Dr. Ward is going to testify to?

19 THE COURT: Well, we don't know what he's going to
20 testify to yet.

21 MR. NEELY: Thank you.

22 THE COURT: That's kind of hard. I can't rule
23 something that's going to be cumulative if he hasn't
24 testified yet. So I don't know what Dr. Ward is going to
25 say, but I'll note your objection.

1 MR. NEELY: All right. Thank you, Your Honor.

2 THE COURT: Overruled on that, so I'll allow it.

3 Anything else before we bring them back in?

4 MS. ABEE: No, Judge. I'm just going to put these up
5 here.

6 (WHEREUPON, the jury came into open court at
7 approximately 4:24 p.m.)

8 THE COURT: Call your next witness.

9 MS. ABEE: The State calls Chelsie Wills.

10 THE CLERK: Ms. Wills, if you'll come forward.

11 Please pause at the end of the bench, place your left
12 hand on the Bible and raise your right hand.

13 WHEREUPON,

14 CHELSIE WILLS,

15 after first having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

16 THE CLERK: Thank you.

17 Please be seated.

18 And would you, please, state your name for the
19 record.

20 THE WITNESS: Chelsie Wills.

21 THE CLERK: Thank you.

22 DIRECT EXAMINATION

23 BY MS. ABEE:

24 Q Thank you. And Ms. Wills, go ahead and tell us a
25 little bit about yourself, a little bit about your

1 background and what you're doing now.

2 A I'm currently a manager at Chick-Fil-A, but previous
3 to that, I was employed by Asheville Police Department as
4 the head of property and evidence. And prior to that, for
5 Greenville County Department of Public Safety as a
6 forensic technician.

7 Q And how long had you been involved in law enforcement
8 like that?

9 A My career spanned ten years.

10 Q And how long were you with Greenville County?

11 A Five years.

12 Q And if you could, tell us what your role was with
13 Greenville County?

14 A I was a forensic technician that responded to crime
15 scenes anywhere within Greenville County for any of the
16 agencies, whether it was for Greenville County or the
17 smaller cities and municipalities within it. We responded
18 and processed the crime scenes and worked with detectives
19 whenever there were larger caliber cases from everything
20 from property crimes to things of this nature.

21 Q And tell us all a little about your training or
22 background in order to learn how to do that.

23 A I have a Bachelor of Science in applied forensic
24 sciences and I have had many on-the-job training with the
25 multiple agencies I've worked with in things such as

1 fingerprinting techniques, ballistics, blood stain pattern
2 analysis, photography and laser scanning of crime scenes
3 and video capturing.

4 Q And is it fair to say that as a forensic technician
5 in a case, you're not the investigator as far as
6 determining what happened, making arrests, stuff like
7 that?

8 A No, ma'am. We just adequately document everything
9 that we come across.

10 Q And tell us your process in doing that.

11 A We arrive on scene and meet with the First Responders
12 who have already arrived and gather any information from
13 them. We -- we look at how they have already established
14 a perimeter and see if we feel that more of it needs to be
15 added to preserve the integrity of everything going on.
16 We make sure that there's, you know, a crime scene log
17 going on of everybody coming in and out of the scene. And
18 we act as a guardian of the area and make sure as few
19 people can access different areas as possible.

20 And as the scene progresses, we work with everybody
21 from the coroner's office and those investigators you
22 spoke of as more and more information becomes available
23 because we spend a lengthy amount of time on scene and we
24 work within those perimeters and with each other to
25 determine the best way to document the scene and

1 everything that may need to be collected.

2 Q And what are some of the kind of protocols that you
3 follow in doing so or being on a scene as far as
4 contaminating the scene? What do you do to make sure you
5 don't do that?

6 A We're very cognizant of, you know, things like
7 wearing gloves, and for me personally, I wear my hair back
8 to not contaminate with DNA or fingerprints. We enter
9 into the crime scene as few times as possible and through
10 the same routes each time to not further contaminate any
11 outlying areas. And we were further cordon off very
12 important areas and limit everybody's access to them until
13 the time comes to actually collect the items there or
14 transport them.

15 Q And so, you just said collect the items there. Walk
16 us through the process of collecting items at the scene,
17 what you do.

18 A So we do preliminary documentation, which may be
19 sketches, video. It definitely includes pictures. So
20 prior to deciding what we're going to label or collect, we
21 document the entire scene just as we find it without any
22 markers or anything of any kind. And then we do secondary
23 documentation after labeling the items with placards or
24 stickers or things that show measurements and denote what
25 the items will be called in our report. We do more

1 documentation after that. And depending on how -- we'll
2 document different steps of processing along the way if
3 anything is performed on scene prior to collecting that
4 item.

5 Q Now, did you respond to a crime scene in regards to
6 this case?

7 A Yes, ma'am, I did.

8 Q Do you recall when you responded?

9 A I don't have the exact time, but I know it was after
10 dark. I believe it was sometime around midnight or
11 thereafter.

12 Q And if you could, just kind of describe this property
13 to us and what it looked like when you responded?

14 A When I responded on scene, officers were -- all the
15 people that responded, officers and otherwise, were all
16 set up in the roadway and they had cordoned off the area.
17 The area was quite expansive. It was on the edges of the
18 Town of Simpsonville. The roadway was relatively well
19 lit, as you would expect it to be, but the areas back off
20 the roadway were not very well lit. It wasn't near very
21 many residences and the property itself seemed to have
22 some acreage with it and abutted other industrial areas
23 and an open field, but the property itself was a wooded
24 area.

25 There were some extra cars associated with the scene

1 that were parked in an area outside where the house was
2 immediately and that was abutting a field and it was kind
3 of like a turn-around area for things. There was an
4 overgrown driveway that went quite a ways up into the
5 woods. And most of the way up, there was a large
6 overturned tree across the driveway and it didn't appear
7 that anybody with vehicles had been up that preexisting
8 driveway prior to our arrival.

9 Q Now, were photos taken of the scene itself?

10 A Yes, ma'am.

11 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, I'm showing opposing counsel
12 what's been premarked as State's Exhibit No. 15 through
13 22.

14 BY MS. ABEE:

15 Q Ms. Wills, I'm approaching you with what's been
16 pre-marked as State's Exhibit Nos. 15 through 22. If you
17 could just look through that and tell us whether or not
18 they fairly and accurately depict the scene that you
19 arrived to that night?

20 A Yes, ma'am. Those are the photos I took and they
21 accurately depict the scene.

22 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, the State moves State's
23 Exhibit Nos. 15 through 22 into evidence.

24 MR. NEELY: No objection.

25 THE COURT: All right. State's Exhibit Nos. 15

1 through 22 are admitted into evidence without objection.

2 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit Nos. 15 through 22 were
3 admitted into evidence.)

4 MS. ABEE: Permission to publish, Your Honor?

5 THE COURT: You may.

6 BY MS. ABEE:

7 Q Ms. Wills, we're looking at State's Exhibit No. 15.
8 If you could, kind of tell us what this picture shows or
9 depicts.

10 A The bright lights you see are provided by the cars
11 sitting with their blue lights on. And that's the
12 entryway to the pre-existing driveway that leads to the
13 residence.

14 Q So if you're standing on the road in front of this
15 house, this is kind of what you see?

16 A Uh-huh.

17 Q Could you see the house from the road itself?

18 A Not at all, ma'am.

19 Q I'm going to show you State's Exhibit No. 16. And
20 you previously talked about a fallen down tree that you
21 had to walk over. Is that what we're seeing here in the
22 bottom left corner of State's Exhibit No. 16?

23 A Yes, ma'am, it blocked the roadway.

24 Q And as we're referring to this abandoned house
25 throughout the trial, is that what we can start to see up

1 here in the upper right-hand corner of State's Exhibit No.
2 16?

3 A Yes, ma'am.

4 Q I'm going to show you State's Exhibit No. 17. What
5 is that?

6 A In my report, we refer to this after looking at the
7 house as the rear porch.

8 Q So this is part of that abandoned house?

9 A Yes, ma'am.

10 Q Now, once you kind of look at the outside of the
11 scene, do you end up going inside?

12 A Yes, ma'am.

13 Q Was this house inhabitable? Did it look like people
14 were living there?

15 A Not living in a normal manner, no.

16 Q Did it appear to have running water or anything like
17 that?

18 A In the video that's taken, it shows the utilities
19 appear to have been removed. And the only water that was
20 present appeared to be standing water.

21 Q Now, was it your understanding that there was a body
22 located in this house?

23 A Yes, ma'am.

24 Q Did you go and look at that body?

25 A Yes, ma'am.

1 Q And if you could, tell us where in the house that
2 body was located?

3 A I entered the house off the rear porch and went
4 directly through some rooms that existed. To the left,
5 there was a stairway that led down to the basement. I
6 first went along -- it was on the same side of the house
7 as the entrance to the rear porch and there was an open
8 hole that led into the basement. And you could see a hole
9 with boards in it and weren't able to see the body. But
10 when you went down the stairway to the basement, you could
11 see down in the hole and see the body.

12 Q So, at first, there's kind of an open window that you
13 can see from the outside; is that right?

14 A Yes, ma'am.

15 Q I'm going to show you what's been entered as State's
16 Exhibit No. 18. Is this what you're talking about?

17 A Yes. If you're standing there looking at the house,
18 that's to the left of the entrance and the porch.

19 Q So the person taking this photo is on the outside or
20 the inside of the house?

21 A I was on the exterior of the residence.

22 Q So outside, kind of looking in through this window?

23 A Yes, ma'am.

24 Q And you're telling us that through this window,
25 somewhere down in this basement is where that body was

1 located?

2 A Yes, ma'am.

3 Q I'm going to show you what's been entered as State's
4 Exhibit No. 19. Is this looking through that window?

5 A Yes, ma'am.

6 Q We can see kind of on the left-hand side of State's
7 Exhibit No. 19 kind of some ivy, right?

8 A Uh-huh.

9 Q Is that the ivy that we saw on the outside of the
10 window on State's Exhibit No. 18?

11 A Yes, ma'am.

12 Q So are you still on the exterior of the house at this
13 point looking in?

14 A To my knowledge, yes.

15 Q And this kind of area right here in the bottom
16 right-hand side of State's Exhibit No. 19, that's where
17 you were able to locate the body?

18 A Yes. As you can see, I couldn't see it from the
19 outside, but when you move to the inside, you can.

20 Q Now, how do you access the basement from the inside?

21 A So there's a door -- you face -- you look at the
22 house and saw where I said the entry to the rear porch
23 was. Those are those stairs and you walk up them. And as
24 you walk forward, to your left, there's a door. And you
25 went in that door and you went straight back through, I

1 believe -- there was rooms on both sides of it and you
2 went straight and then there was a place to go left. So
3 there was a doorway that went left and down a stairway.
4 And it was the first left and the only stairway that I
5 encountered when I entered that house and that led down to
6 the basement.

7 Q And I'm going to show you what's been entered as
8 State's Exhibit No. 20. Is this that stairway that you're
9 talking about?

10 A Yes, ma'am.

11 Q And then once you're down in the basement from the
12 inside -- I'm going to show you State's Exhibit No. 21.
13 Now, up here where we see this yellow and pink flag, is
14 that that window that we previously looked at?

15 A Yes, ma'am.

16 Q And so then this area over here to the right-hand
17 side, is this where the body was located?

18 A Yes, that is the hole.

19 Q So we're, basically, just looking at the inside of
20 what we previously looked at the outside?

21 A Absolutely.

22 Q And then finally, State's Exhibit No. 22. Is that
23 the picture as well?

24 A Yes, ma'am.

25 Q So that's the window right here in the center of

1 State's Exhibit No. 22?

2 A Uh-huh.

3 Q And then the body was here in this area; is that
4 right?

5 A Yes, ma'am.

6 Q If you could, kind of describe the condition -- was
7 the body still there when you were there?

8 A Yes, ma'am.

9 Q And if you could, kind of describe the condition of
10 the body as you saw it?

11 A She was lying what appeared to be face-up with her
12 head bent down. She appeared to be partially clothed and
13 there was a blanket and items of refuse or trash in there
14 with her and some boards laying over the top. Potential
15 injuries and suspected blood were seen on her person. And
16 a lot of her was covered with the boards and the blankets,
17 so it wasn't revealed until later until we documented it
18 thoroughly.

19 Q And I'm going to approach you with what's been
20 pre-marked as State's Exhibit No. 29, 27 and 31. I'm
21 showing you State's Exhibit 29, 27 and 31. Are these fair
22 and accurate depictions of the scene and the body as you
23 found it?

24 A Yes, ma'am.

25 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, the State moves State's

1 Exhibit Nos. 29, 27 and 31 into evidence.

2 THE COURT: Any objection from the Defendant?

3 MR. NEELY: None to 27 and 29 and No. 31, my prior
4 objection we talked about earlier.

5 THE COURT: All right. Objection to that photograph
6 is overruled. The others are admitted into evidence
7 without objection.

8 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit Nos. 27, 29 and 31 were
9 admitted into evidence.)

10 MS. ABEE: Permission to publish State's Exhibit Nos.
11 27 and 29, Your Honor?

12 THE COURT: You may.

13 BY MS. ABEE:

14 Q So we start to see some wooden boards here in State's
15 Exhibit No. 27. Is that the wooden boards you were
16 telling us about?

17 A Yes, ma'am.

18 Q And then finally, State's Exhibit No. 29, is that the
19 board that you saw?

20 A Yes, ma'am.

21 Q And we kind of see another board down here in the
22 bottom right-hand side; is that, also, contained in there?

23 A Yes, ma'am.

24 Q Now, when you arrive on scene as crime scene, do you
25 move around or manipulate the scene in any way?

1 A Not prior to documenting it.

2 Q And so as your -- by documenting it, does that
3 include taking photos?

4 A Yes, ma'am.

5 Q So the photos that we see that you took are
6 completely fair and accurate as far as the scene once you
7 arrived?

8 A Yes, ma'am.

9 Q And I'm going to ask you to look at State's Exhibit
10 No. 31. I'm not going to put it up on the screen. But is
11 this how you saw Cati Blauvelt's body when you arrived?

12 A Yes, ma'am.

13 Q And the items that are on top of her body, is that
14 how they were when you arrived?

15 A Yes, ma'am.

16 Q And the position of her body and the clothing she is
17 and is not wearing, is that the way that it looked when
18 you arrived?

19 A Yes, ma'am.

20 Q And you can see kind of some of this ivy and stuff
21 from the window as well being kind of by and around her
22 body. Is that how that ivy looked once you arrived?

23 A Yes, ma'am.

24 Q So you hadn't moved any of this?

25 A No, ma'am.

1 Q So once you kind of document the scene in terms of
2 the way that it looks, do you start collecting evidence?

3 A Yes, from the outside to the inside and kind of like
4 the least important items, saving the most important items
5 for last.

6 Q Why do you do it in that order?

7 A Because things that have the potential to be damaged
8 or contaminated, you want to save for the last. And,
9 also, sometimes other parties, whether it's the coroner's
10 office or the detectives may not be there yet, so you want
11 to collaborate with them and that's important to maintain
12 the integrity until everyone arrives.

13 Q Is it fair to say that there were a lot of items in
14 and around this house?

15 A Yes, ma'am.

16 Q Did it appear as if people had been there previously?

17 A Yes, ma'am.

18 Q Okay. Now, when you're looking at items to collect,
19 do you really know the facts of the case or the history of
20 the case?

21 A Anything that's available, they share with us. I
22 mean, as much as available to anybody at that point in
23 time, I would hope that I would know.

24 Q Do you know the importance of, say, item one versus
25 item 15 at the time that you're collecting it?

1 A No, ma'am. In a scene like this that, you know, the
2 house doesn't really belong to anybody and doesn't appear
3 to be routinely used, but has been used maybe a lot not so
4 recently and recently, you're trying to determine which
5 items by looking at them, seeing, you know, after dark,
6 kind of is there condensation on the item, is the item
7 dirty and look well used like it's been there for a long
8 time or something that maybe could be set down more
9 recently.

10 Q So when you're looking at items that have been stored
11 outside -- or found outside, you're kind of looking at the
12 condition of the item; is that fair to say?

13 A Yes, ma'am.

14 Q Things that look like they've been hit by rain and
15 other items, kind of the elements?

16 A Yes, ma'am.

17 Q Appear as if they've been there longer, right?

18 A Yes.

19 Q However, you can't tell us as a crime scene -- or
20 forensic technician when items got where they got; is that
21 fair?

22 A Yes, ma'am.

23 Q And then when you do this, do you document or create
24 a crime scene diagram about things that you collect?

25 A Yes, ma'am.

1 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, I'm approaching opposing
2 counsel with what's been pre-marked as State's Exhibit
3 Nos. 23 -- sorry, approaching the witness with what's been
4 pre-marked as State's Exhibit Nos. 23 through 26.

5 BY MS. ABEE:

6 Q Ms. Wills, if you could, just take a look at those,
7 please.

8 A (Witness complies.)

9 Q And do you recognize that?

10 A Yes, those are crime scene sketches of the scene.

11 Q Is this something you created?

12 A Technician Forrester Ellison created them, but I
13 documented all the items and I collected them.

14 Q And we some initials CWE on these diagrams, are those
15 your initials at that point in time?

16 A Yes, ma'am.

17 Q And is it a fair and accurate depiction of what you
18 collected that day?

19 A Yes, it is.

20 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, the State moves State's
21 Exhibit Nos. 23, 24, 25 and 26 into evidence.

22 THE COURT: Any objection?

23 MR. NEELY: No objection.

24 THE COURT: All right. State's Exhibit Nos. 23
25 through 26 are admitted into evidence without objection.

1 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit Nos. 23 through 26 were
2 admitted into evidence.)

3 BY MS. ABEE:

4 Q And kind of just generally tell us some of the items
5 that you collected or what you remember collecting at the
6 scene?

7 A There were a lot of cans and bottles which have the
8 potential to hold DNA, possible fingerprint evidence.
9 There were a lot of those things. There was some camping
10 gear that I collected, some random articles of clothing
11 that we were unsure were pertinent or not. Some swabs of
12 what appeared to be suspected blood that we collected and
13 then, obviously, the items around and closest to the body
14 were collected as well.

15 Q So you pretty much just kind of collect everything,
16 right?

17 A Yes, ma'am.

18 Q You talked about some suspected blood. Do you recall
19 the areas in relation to the house that those were?

20 A If I may refer to my report.

21 A tree root on the path on the way to the porch,
22 leaves on the path to the porch. And then another type of
23 vegetation on the path to the porch.

24 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, I'm approaching the witness
25 with what's been pre-marked as State's Exhibit Nos. 32

1 through 43.

2 BY MS. ABEE:

3 Q Can you look through those for us, please, and let us
4 know if they fairly and accurately depict the scene?

5 A Yes, ma'am.

6 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, the State moves State's
7 Exhibit Nos. 32 through 43 into evidence.

8 THE COURT: Any objection?

9 MR. NEELY: No objection.

10 THE COURT: State's Exhibit Nos. 32 through 43 are
11 admitted into evidence without objection.

12 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit Nos. 32 through 43 were
13 admitted into evidence.)

14 BY MS. ABEE:

15 Q Ms. Wills, what I want to do is kind of talk a little
16 bit about the suspected blood that you saw in some of the
17 vegetation. I want to show you some of those photos we
18 just looked at and then, also, show you the crime scene
19 diagrams so we can kind of get a perspective of where
20 those suspected blood spots were in relation to the house?

21 A Yes, ma'am.

22 Q So showing you State's Exhibit No. 32, tell us what
23 these yellow placards are?

24 A They denote something that is in an area that's going
25 to be collected.

1 Q And so is it fair to say that wherever three is that
2 you collect something and that's bagged as item three?

3 A Yes, ma'am. In this situation, the pink flags,
4 because it's kind of spread out throughout the area, it's
5 used to denote, like, that whole area is encompassed in
6 those items.

7 Q And these specific items over here, this is where you
8 saw suspected blood on some of this vegetation; is that
9 fair?

10 A Yes, ma'am.

11 Q I'm going to show you State's Exhibit No. 23, which
12 is this crime scene diagram. And I don't know if you can
13 see it that close.

14 A I have one, too.

15 Q Okay. Pointing down at CWE-3, 4 and 5 right here on
16 the bottom left-hand side of State's Exhibit No. 23?

17 A Yes, ma'am.

18 Q Would that depict what we see in 3, 4 and 5 in the
19 picture we just looked at?

20 A Yes, ma'am.

21 Q So that's where that suspected blood on the
22 vegetation was?

23 A Yes, ma'am.

24 Q Okay. And I'm going to show you State's Exhibit
25 No. 33. Up here, is that what we're talking about when

1 we're talking about suspected blood over here by this
2 number three marker?

3 A Yes, ma'am.

4 Q And so in order to collect that or to figure out if
5 it's blood or what it is, what do you do?

6 A First, we perform a presumptive blood test using a
7 chemical called phenolphthalein. Regardless of the
8 results of that test, we'll collect something we believe
9 could be suspected blood. But I did perform that test and
10 it came back positive. So what we do is use a sterile
11 swab and sterile water and we dampen the swab with the
12 sterile water. Because in this case, the sample was dry.
13 And then we, you know, swab the leaf and get some of the
14 residue off there.

15 Q And then you take that sterile swab and you put it
16 where?

17 A We put it -- they come individually packaged in a
18 plastic sleeve. And then that plastic sleeve goes in an
19 envelope that's labeled with the evidence item number.

20 Q And then do you seal it at all?

21 A You seal both the tube and the envelope the tube goes
22 in.

23 Q And then how down you're the person that put that in
24 there?

25 A My initials would be on it.

1 Q Would that be CWE that we see on here?

2 A Yes, ma'am.

3 Q When you're doing that, do you wear gloves?

4 A Yes, ma'am, you change gloves in between samples.

5 Q So in between each sample that you collect, you
6 change out gloves?

7 A Yes, ma'am.

8 Q And did you do that with collecting all of these?

9 A I did, ma'am.

10 Q And why do you change out gloves?

11 A To prevent contamination.

12 Q Now, I'm going to show you what's now been entered as
13 State's Exhibit No. 35. So this suspected blood, is that
14 what we're looking at down here, the blood on the
15 vegetation?

16 A Yes, ma'am.

17 Q Did you follow the same procedure for number four?

18 A Yes, ma'am.

19 Q And I'm going to show you State's Exhibit No. 36. We
20 see a stick here. And is this what we're talking about,
21 the suspected blood on here?

22 A Yes, ma'am.

23 Q And I'm going to show you State's Exhibit No. 37,
24 which is little bit more of a close-up on that. Is that
25 how it looked when you collected the swabs from this?

1 A Yes, ma'am.

2 Q Okay. And, again, the same process on all of these
3 using sterile swabs, changing gloves in between, packaging
4 . and sealing with your initials on them?

5 A Yes, ma'am.

6 Q Now, I'm going to show you State's Exhibit No. 38
7 because what we get here is kind of a different
8 perspective. So we see the evidence marker placard number
9 five down here at the bottom. But then we can see where
10 that is relation to the house; is that fair?

11 A Yes, ma'am.

12 Q And kind of describe this walking path to us. Where
13 did this lead?

14 A The bricks there at the edge of the staircase is
15 crumbling, so up and to your right would be the porch.
16 And over to the left would be the window that we looked
17 through with the ivy on it.

18 Q So the suspected blood down here at five follows this
19 path. And then that window we looked -- that you looked
20 through when Cati's body was there is over here to the
21 left; is that fair?

22 A Yes, ma'am.

23 Q Okay. And I'm going to show you now -- or, I guess,
24 talk to you -- or show you State's Exhibit No. 39, which
25 shows us marker number 16. Do you recognize that?

1 A Yes, ma'am.

2 Q And is that another kind of suspected blood area?

3 A Yes, ma'am.

4 Q Give me one second to find -- and so, then we're
5 looking at -- I guess that would be CWE-16; is that fair?

6 A Yes, ma'am.

7 Q And I'm going to show you back again State's Exhibit
8 No. 23, right, so we've already followed 3, 4 and 5 about
9 the front. And then you told us over here to the left is
10 the window; is that right?

11 A Yes, ma'am.

12 Q CWE-16 is right here in the middle. Is that what we
13 were just looking at with that tree?

14 A Yes, ma'am.

15 Q Okay. Where was that tree in relation to the window
16 in the basement?

17 A You can kind of see on the steps the little extra
18 line there and that denotes the window.

19 Q Would that be right here where my pen is pointing?

20 A Yes, ma'am.

21 Q So this tree, CWE-16, that has suspected blood on it
22 is right across from that window that led to the basement?

23 A Yes, ma'am.

24 Q I'm going to show you some closer-ups of that area.
25 Is this some of the suspected blood that we saw here on

1 State's Exhibit No. 40?

2 A Yes, ma'am.

3 Q And, again, did you use the same procedure collecting
4 this suspected blood as you did throughout the rest of the
5 scene?

6 A Yes, I did.

7 Q I'm going to show you State's Exhibit No. 41. And in
8 here, we see evidence placard 17, 18 and 19. Is this the
9 window right here that we see on the right-hand side of
10 State's Exhibit No. 41?

11 A I believe -- yes, it's just -- yes, ma'am.

12 Q Okay. And so then these were areas that you swabbed
13 leading into that window; is that fair?

14 A Yes, ma'am.

15 Q And then once you're done collecting everything at
16 the scene and all of these swabs, where do you take them?

17 A Back to the crime scene office. And I have my own
18 person locked cabinet that only I have the key to that I
19 put in until we've completed processing. Then I would
20 hand them over to property and evidence.

21 Q And at any point in time, do you go in and manipulate
22 that evidence or reopen those packages or anything like
23 that prior to them going to the next spot?

24 A Only if it's documented in my report.

25 Q And was that documented in your report anywhere here?

1 A Some of the items, not the swabs specifically, but
2 other items were processed for fingerprints and had DNA
3 swabs collected from them. So that's in my report.

4 Q But none of the blood swabs, your suspected blood
5 were collected?

6 A No, ma'am. No, ma'am.

7 Q Okay. And then you don't do any of the testing for
8 fingerprints or DNA or anything like that? That's someone
9 else; is that fair?

10 A I process for fingerprints, but DNA or anything else,
11 no.

12 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, may I have one second?

13 THE COURT: Uh-huh.

14 (Pause.)

15 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, I have no further questions
16 for this witness.

17 THE COURT: All right. Cross.

18 MR. NEELY: Yes, sir.

19 CROSS-EXAMINATION

20 BY MR. NEELY:

21 Q All right. So if I heard you correctly, the first
22 thing you do when you get out there is make sure that
23 there is a secure perimeter?

24 A Yes, sir.

25 Q And that secure perimeter is usually denoted by crime

1 scene tape, correct?

2 A Yes, sir.

3 Q All right. And you're not usually the first person
4 out there, so, typically, some member of law enforcement
5 has already set up that barrier?

6 A Yes, sir.

7 Q All right. When you get out there and you see that
8 barrier, you want to make sure that that barrier is wide
9 enough, correct?

10 A Yes, sir.

11 Q So if it doesn't encompass a big enough space, you
12 can move that barrier back or have somebody move that
13 barrier back?

14 A Yes, sir.

15 Q All right. So on the night that you got out there on
16 October 26th of 2016, there was police tape that was
17 there?

18 A Yes, sir.

19 Q A barrier was already established?

20 A Yes, sir.

21 Q Was it wide enough?

22 A I believe at that time, yes, it was.

23 Q Okay. And then somebody else had already started a
24 crime scene log?

25 A Yes, sir.

1 Q And a crime scene log, you put who comes into the
2 crime scene?

3 A Yes, sir.

4 Q Who leaves the crime scene?

5 A Yes, sir.

6 Q Because you want to know who's coming in and out of
7 the crime scene, correct?

8 A Yes, sir.

9 Q Part of the evidence that you're collecting is
10 potential DNA samples?

11 A Yes, sir.

12 Q Potential fingerprints?

13 A Yes, sir.

14 Q So you want to make sure that the evidence that
15 you're collecting is not contaminated?

16 A Yes, sir.

17 Q So a crime scene log was started on October 26th of
18 2016?

19 A That would have been the responsibility of the first
20 responding officers, yes, sir.

21 Q Okay. And then one of the first things you did was
22 walk the crime scene, correct?

23 A Yes, sir.

24 Q And as Ms. Abee showed you, we saw the picture and
25 you started at the top of the driveway out by the main

1 road?

2 A Yes, sir.

3 Q And walked that driveway down?

4 A Yes, sir.

5 Q All the way up over that log and kept following the
6 driveway?

7 A Yes, sir.

8 Q All the way up until the abandoned house?

9 A Yes, sir.

10 Q All right. And we saw the pictures from the outside,
11 the exterior of the building. You walked around to that
12 little small window?

13 A Yes, sir.

14 Q That led to the root cellar, correct?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And then you, actually, walked back inside of the
17 house and documented the inside of the house?

18 A I believe I documented the outside and then the
19 inside of the house.

20 Q The outside and then the inside?

21 A Yes, sir.

22 Q And then you went back outside and started placing
23 evidence markers?

24 A Yes, sir.

25 Q And you followed the same path looking for pieces of

1 evidence?

2 A Yes, sir.

3 Q You started at the back near the driveway?

4 A Yes, sir.

5 Q Moved forward?

6 A Yes, sir.

7 Q To the exterior of the house?

8 A Yes, sir.

9 Q Ultimately, to the interior of the house?

10 A Yes, sir.

11 Q Top of the house and then down to the basement?

12 A Yes, sir.

13 Q When you got out there, it was dark, correct?

14 A Yes, sir.

15 Q Hard to see?

16 A It is very hard to see.

17 Q In those dense woods?

18 A Yes.

19 Q So y'all have bright lights so you can see?

20 A We have flashlights.

21 Q Okay. All of you had flashlights?

22 A I was working generally independently. Everybody
23 else secures the perimeter.

24 Q There was enough light for you to see evidence and
25 collect evidence?

1 A Yes, sir.

2 Q Is there any time limit on the amount of time you can
3 spend out at a crime scene?

4 A No, sir.

5 Q You can take as long as you need to?

6 A Yes, sir.

7 Q Because you want to make sure that you gather
8 everything that is of evidentiary value?

9 A Yes, sir.

10 Q And at that point, you don't know what's of
11 evidentiary value, correct?

12 A Correct.

13 Q So you, typically, gather anything that possibly
14 could be of evidentiary value?

15 A Yes, sir.

16 Q So on October 26th of 2016, you got together with
17 Forensic Tech Ellison?

18 A Yes, sir.

19 Q And with Detective Donnelly?

20 A Yes, sir.

21 Q All right. And y'all decided which items would be
22 gathered and not gathered, correct?

23 A Yes, sir.

24 Q All right. And in making that determination, you
25 determined to collect the items that appeared most

1 recently deposited?

2 A Yes, sir.

3 Q Or most recently left behind?

4 A Absolutely.

5 Q Ultimately, you ended up collecting 32 individual
6 pieces of evidence that night, correct?

7 A Yes, sir.

8 Q Several of those were these blood swabs, correct?

9 A Yes, sir.

10 Q All right. You, also, collected several cans and
11 bottles?

12 A Yes.

13 Q If you had seen something that was of evidentiary
14 value, you would have collected it, correct?

15 A Yes, sir.

16 Q When you walked that crime scene moving from the
17 driveway to the house, you never saw Cati Blauvelt's
18 shoes, did you?

19 A Nothing that I specifically knew were her shoes, no.

20 Q And you never saw a sock that looked like it could
21 belong to her, did you?

22 A I collected some socks.

23 Q A pink and orange sock, do you see that listed in
24 your report?

25 A No, sir.

1 Q And a pair of pink panties, did you collect those?

2 A I don't believe so, sir.

3 Q Okay. What you did collect besides the blood swabs
4 was several bottles that looked like they had been
5 recently put there?

6 A Yes, sir.

7 Q Specifically, I want to point you to what you have
8 marked on your report as CWE-20?

9 A Yes, sir.

10 Q And that is a Powerade bottle?

11 A Yes, sir.

12 Q And it met the criteria to be collected that night?

13 A Yes, sir.

14 Q And, again, that criteria was recently deposited?

15 A Or in proximity to other important parts of the crime
16 scene?

17 Q Now, Ms. Abee walked you through what's marked as
18 CWE-3, 4 and 5, correct?

19 A Yes, sir.

20 Q All right. And that is blood swabs?

21 A Yes, sir.

22 Q All right. CWE-20, that's that bottle we just looked
23 at, correct?

24 A Yes, sir.

25 Q All right. Now, that's about 18 feet from marker

1 number three, correct?

2 A Yes, sir.

3 Q All right. Now, that Powerade bottle, you wrote down
4 in your report there's some handwriting on it, correct?

5 A There was a label with -- a handwritten label, yes.

6 Q A handwritten label. And that handwritten label was
7 Kameron V?

8 A Yes, sir.

9 Q Kameron spelled K-A-M-E-R-O-N?

10 A Yes, sir.

11 Q Last initial V?

12 A That's what it appeared to be, yes.

13 Q And you collected that for evidence?

14 A Yes, I did.

15 MR. NEELY: One moment, Your Honor.

16 (Pause.)

17 MR. NEELY: Nothing further, Your Honor.

18 THE COURT: Any redirect?

19 MS. ABEE: No, Your Honor.

20 THE COURT: You may step down.

21 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, we ask that this witness be
22 excused from her subpoena.

23 THE COURT: Any objection?

24 MR. NEELY: No objection.

25 THE COURT: Let me see the lawyers.

1 (WHEREUPON, a bench conference was held.)

2 THE COURT: Ladies and gentlemen, we have a witness
3 from a logistical standpoint that it would help getting
4 that witness up today. And I don't anticipate it being
5 very long. Is everybody okay with that, if we get this
6 witness up? Again, I don't believe it's going to be too
7 long. And plus, it kind of keeps us going toward getting
8 finished this week.

9 So does anybody have any objection to getting that
10 witness up?

11 (WHEREUPON, there was no response.)

12 THE COURT: Okay.

13 State, call your next witness.

14 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, beg the Court's indulgence.

15 (Pause.)

16 THE COURT: All right. State, call your next
17 witness.

18 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, at this time, the State
19 would call Dr. Michael Ward.

20 THE CLERK: Dr. Ward, please, come forward. Please
21 pause at the end of the bench, place your left hand on the
22 Bible and raise your right.

23 MICHAEL WARD, M.D.,

24 after being duly sworn, testified as follows:

25 THE CLERK: Thank you. Please be seated.

1 Please state your name for the record.

2 THE WITNESS: Michael Eugene Ward.

3 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, we have discussed these
4 pictures and agreed to them.

5 THE COURT: Okay.

6 WHEREUPON,

7 DIRECT EXAMINATION

8 BY MR. MEADORS:

9 Q Good afternoon, Doctor.

10 A Good afternoon.

11 Q Would you, please, tell the ladies and gentlemen of
12 this jury about yourself, your background, your training?
13 In particular, your training and education in the field of
14 expertise I've asked you to testify about today, please.

15 A I received my Bachelor's Degree in biology from the
16 University of Alabama. I have a Master's Degree in
17 forensic science from the University of Alabama in
18 Birmingham. I received my medical degree from the
19 University of South Alabama, which is in Mobile. I
20 attended a four-year anatomic pathology residency at the
21 Medical University of South Carolina. I had a one-year
22 fellowship in forensic pathology at the University of New
23 Mexico in Albuquerque. I'm board certified by the
24 American Board of Pathology in both anatomic and forensic
25 pathology.

1 Q What's the difference between pathology and forensic
2 pathology?

3 A Pathology is a discipline of medicine, which is the
4 study of disease and disease processes and how they affect
5 man. Forensic pathology takes that one step further
6 investigating primarily trauma, but natural disease and
7 trauma to determine how and why people die.

8 Q And in -- have you done both?

9 A Yes, I have.

10 Q And how many years have you been in the business?

11 A 31 years.

12 Q Okay. And the different places you have worked?

13 A I worked at the office of medical investigator in
14 Albuquerque, New Mexico following my fellowship for two
15 years. And I came here in October of 1995. So, roughly,
16 29 years.

17 Q And what do you do?

18 A I investigate deaths that occur in Greenville County
19 to determine cause and manner of death.

20 Q And are you board certified in forensic pathology?

21 A Yes, I am.

22 Q And have you testified in courts of record in this
23 state before as an expert in the field of forensic
24 pathology?

25 A Yes, I have.

1 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, at this time, we'd offer
2 Michael Ward as an expert in forensic pathology.

3 THE COURT: Any voir dire? Any objection?

4 MS. WALKER: No objection, Your Honor.

5 THE COURT: I find the witness is qualified as an
6 expert in the field of forensic pathology.

7 Ladies and gentlemen, normally, witnesses can only
8 testify as to what they saw, heard, smelled, observed and
9 they're not allowed to give an opinion. They're only
10 allowed to testify as to facts. However, there's an
11 exception under our rules where a witness by reason of
12 education, skill, training, learning, experience can be
13 qualified as an expert. And that particular witness is
14 allowed to give an opinion.

15 Now, just because a witness is qualified as an
16 expert, you are to judge that just like you do any other
17 witness in this case. Just because the witness is an
18 expert doesn't mean that their testimony means any more or
19 is more credible. You are certainly the ones that decide
20 that. And so it is up to you to determine credibility of
21 all of witnesses.

22 Mr. Meadors.

23 MR. MEADORS: Thank you, Your Honor.

24 May it please the Court.

25 BY MR. MEADORS:

1 Q Doctor, I usually save you to the end, but are y'all
2 short-staffed this week and was today better for you to
3 come in and testify?

4 A Much better today.

5 Thank you.

6 Q Thank you for accommodating us, also.

7 Just, in general, when a body comes in -- and do you
8 recognize -- 1190 West Faris Road, that address here in
9 Greenville, is that the address of the hospital?

10 A That's the address of our office at the time of this
11 autopsy.

12 Q So is that where you performed the autopsy of Ms.
13 Blauvelt?

14 A The autopsy was performed at the autopsy facility at
15 Greenville Memorial Hospital.

16 Q And Doctor, just very generally, what's your
17 procedure when you get a body?

18 A The initial procedure is to do an external
19 examination to document any trauma that may be present,
20 any evidence of natural disease, identifying
21 characteristics. Then to do an internal examination to
22 seek any continuation of any trauma that may have been
23 present on the outside on the inside, look at all of the
24 organs of the body, chest, abdomen, brain to determine
25 cause and manner of death.

1 Q And did you have occasion to perform an autopsy on
2 the body of one Catherine Ann Blauvelt?

3 A Yes, I did.

4 Q And did you do so at the request of the coroner?

5 A I did.

6 Q What did you do with Ms. Blauvelt when you first saw
7 her? What did you do with her body?

8 A We performed an external examination, photographed
9 the outer portion of the body, documented these findings
10 on a body diagram and allowed the forensic evidence team
11 to collect any evidence that they deemed necessary.

12 Q And -- and you provide a report, which we both have,
13 correct?

14 A Yes, I do.

15 Q And I'll just refer to that and we'll use that. As
16 far as your external examination, do you weigh the
17 deceased?

18 A Yes, we do.

19 Q And in this case, all due respect to ask a lady's
20 weight, but how much did she weigh?

21 A She weighed 131 pounds.

22 Q And how tall was she?

23 A She was five feet, one inch.

24 Q And you, actually, measured the body, in this case,
25 Ms. Blauvelt, correct?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Do you, also, look -- of course, you do, it's an
3 external exam. Did you notice any tattoos on her?

4 A Yes, I did.

5 Q Can you tell us what those were?

6 A Ms. Blauvelt had several tattoos, to include a
7 flower-like design on the right shoulder. It was kind of
8 red in color. On the left side of her neck, she had a
9 tattoo that said, "I go to seek a greater, perhaps". She
10 had the tattoo of a sea turtle near that same tattoo. She
11 had -- on the left upper back, she had the tattoo with the
12 phrase "not all those who wander are lost". In the mid
13 portion of her back, she had the tattoo of sort of a
14 modern-shaped heart with wings. On the right lower back,
15 she had the tattoo of the word "hope". And on her left
16 lower leg was a tattoo of multiple colored flowers. And
17 those were all she had.

18 Q Did she have a seashell or have you already said
19 that?

20 A I believe there was a seashell adjacent to the
21 flowers, yes.

22 Q And I apologize.

23 Tell the jury what other external examination did you
24 perform on Ms. Blauvelt and what did you find, if
25 anything?

1 A Ms. Blauvelt had both anti-mortem and post-mortem
2 injuries.

3 Q And I'm going to stop you, what's anti-mortem?

4 A Anti-mortem are injuries that occurred prior to her
5 death and post-mortem are injuries that occurred after she
6 had died.

7 Q Let's start with anti.

8 A There are multiple bruises, to include she had
9 bruising on her left knee, three separate small bruises.
10 She had a bruise on the back of her right upper arm and on
11 her left elbow. She had an abrasion or a scratch on the
12 right elbow. And she had an abrasion, which it had a
13 pattern to it, on the back of her left hand at the base of
14 her thumb.

15 Q Doctor, you've just described some external injuries.
16 Do you use a body diagram, if you will, to help you?

17 A Yes, sir.

18 Q I'm showing you what's been marked State's Exhibit
19 No. 52 and State's Exhibit No. 53. Do you recognize these
20 and did you use these in your autopsy of Ms. Blauvelt?

21 A These are what we call clean copies of the body
22 diagram that I created on Ms. Blauvelt.

23 Q Looking at State's Exhibit No. 52, Doctor, the
24 injuries you just told these ladies and gentlemen about,
25 can you point them out here on State's Exhibit No. 52?

1 A I can. On the front surface of the body diagram,
2 which is the diagram on the left, I believe, you see on
3 her left knee are three darkened circles. Those are the
4 three contusions of her left knee. On the back of the
5 left arm -- so the backside is on the right diagram -- is
6 another blackened circle, which is a bruise of the left
7 elbow. There's a similar bruise on the back of the right
8 upper arm near her armpit. And there's an abrasion or a
9 scratch, circular scratch on the back of her right elbow.

10 On the back of the left hand, you can see at the base
11 of the thumb is a rectangular-shaped pattern abrasion
12 consisting of a rectangle of multiple parallel lines that
13 are moving from -- well, they're moving kind of from left
14 to right or right to left, it's hard to tell, but a
15 scratch made in a patterned abrasion.

16 Q And, Doctor, you said these are anti-mortem, correct?

17 A Correct.

18 Q So the contusions you've talked about on the elbow,
19 on the arm, what would that be consistent with, if
20 anything, and based on your experience and training in
21 looking at Ms. Blauvelt?

22 A Contusions or bruises are the result of blunt trauma
23 with disruption of blood vessels underneath with a pulse
24 or blood pressure to push blood out of those broken
25 capillaries into the skin. So these are blunt force

1 injuries, we've all had bruising, as a result of trauma
2 prior to death.

3 Q And the abrasion that appears here on the back side?

4 A On the back of her left hand?

5 Q I'm sorry. My eyesight is going bad. Are you
6 familiar with what's called defensive-type wounds?

7 A Defense injuries, yes.

8 Q Is that on the back of her hand consistent with a
9 defensive-type injury?

10 A Well, given the other injuries that she has, yes, it
11 would be considered a defensive-type injury.

12 Q Explain what you mean by that to this jury.

13 A She, also, has sharp force injuries to her neck
14 consisting of two incised wounds to the left side of the
15 neck and a stab wound to the right side of neck. Given
16 the fact that she has sharp force injuries to her head and
17 neck and that she has a patterned abrasion to the back of
18 her hand consistent with the portion of the knife that we
19 recovered, I considered these to be defensive injuries or
20 where she was trying to ward off or defend herself against
21 a sharp force attack.

22 Q Like this if a knife is going in you?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And that's consistent with that injury on her left
25 hand?

1 A Yes, sir.

2 Q Okay. Were there any external -- well, on her
3 backside -- and I'll go ahead --

4 Doctor, State's Exhibit Nos. 44 through 49, 44, 45,
5 46, 47, 48, 49, 50 and 51, do you recognize these and do
6 they relate to your testimony?

7 A Yes, I do and yes, they do.

8 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, we'd offer State's Exhibit
9 Nos. 44 through 53.

10 THE COURT: No objection, right?

11 MS. WALKER: No objection, Your Honor.

12 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit Nos. 44 through 53 were
13 admitted into evidence.)

14 BY MR. MEADORS:

15 Q Staying on Ms. Blauvelt's backside and looking at
16 State's Exhibit No. 51 -- I just want to make sure before
17 I let the whole courtroom see them. Let's start with
18 State's Exhibit No. 50 first.

19 Doctor, what is this?

20 A This is a photograph of the posterior or the back
21 surface of Ms. Blauvelt's head, neck and back prior to
22 being cleaned. So when she came in, she had dirt and
23 other debris stuck to her back.

24 Q And State's Exhibit No. 51?

25 A Is a similar photograph, slightly different after we

1 have cleaned the dirt and debris off of Ms. Blauvelt's
2 back.

3 Q You take a picture of the body when it comes in and
4 then you give it a bath and clean it, correct?

5 A That's correct.

6 Q Now, sticking with State's Exhibit No. 51, Doctor,
7 these -- how would you describe these injuries on the back
8 of her and what could have caused these type of injuries?

9 A So these are linear or line-shaped, orange-based
10 abrasions of the skin. So the coloration and lack of any
11 bruising around these injuries, the lack of any apparent
12 hemorrhage and skin associated with these injuries
13 indicates these are post-mortem injuries. There's no
14 vital response. There's no blood pressure associated with
15 them. And these are consistent with Ms. Blauvelt having
16 been moved and dragged across a friction, rough surface.

17 Q So these happened after she was dead?

18 A Yes, sir.

19 Q And -- and I'm trying to go through -- did you
20 observe what she was wearing and the condition of the
21 garments on her when she came in?

22 A Yes, sir, I did.

23 MR. MEADORS: Beg the Court's indulgence.

24 (Pause.)

25 BY MR. MEADORS:

1 Q State's Exhibit Nos. 54 and 55, the knife and the
2 shirt, do these relate to your testimony?

3 A Yes, they are articles that we recovered at the time
4 of autopsy.

5 MR. MEADORS: Without objection, Your Honor, State's
6 Exhibit Nos. 54 and 55, I believe.

7 MR. NEELY: No objection.

8 THE COURT: All right. State's Exhibit Nos. 54 and
9 55 admitted without objection.

10 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit Nos. 54 and 55 were
11 admitted into evidence.)

12 BY MR. MEADORS:

13 Q Doctor, was that shirt on Ms. Blauvelt when you began
14 your examination?

15 A Yes, it was.

16 Q And did you take it off?

17 A Yes, I did.

18 Q And was the shirt on Ms. Blauvelt's body consistent
19 with the injuries or her being dragged that you've
20 described?

21 A Yes, they were.

22 Q Okay. In what way?

23 A There's similar dirt pattern on the back and the
24 shirt was pulled up as was her underlying bra. At the
25 time we first observed her, it had been pulled up above

1 the level of her breast consistent with having been
2 dragged by her feet so that the movement is -- is pulling
3 the garments upward.

4 Q Thank you.

5 Doctor, please, moving to the external exam.

6 A Yes.

7 Q And you're the expert. Did you, also -- and you did,
8 I know, State's Exhibit No. 53 in evidence. Did you do
9 a -- tell us what this is.

10 A This is what we call a four-view body diagram of the
11 head showing front, back, left and right sides. On the
12 left neck are the two incised wound of the skin that I
13 described. They're each roughly three inches in length.
14 They are -- they extend through the epidermis into the
15 underlying dermis, but they do not go through the skin.
16 They do not go into the underlying muscle. These would be
17 classified as superficial in that they would not have
18 contributed to her death.

19 Q Would they have caused pain?

20 A They certainly would have been painful.

21 Q Would they have bled?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Would a person be able to speak after sustaining
24 those injuries?

25 A Yes, sir.

1 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, with the agreement with the
2 defense and the court reporter, this picture just wasn't
3 printed. They've agreed to this picture and we'll make a
4 copy of it and make it the next exhibit on the record
5 tomorrow morning if that's okay?

6 THE COURT: All right.

7 MR. MEADORS: It will be 56.

8 BY MR. MEADORS:

9 Q Now, Doctor, is this the injury you've just
10 described?

11 A Yes, they are.

12 Q So what side of the neck is this?

13 A This is the left side of the neck extending onto the
14 left front portion of the neck.

15 Q Did you observe any other injuries exterior to the
16 head or neck area of Ms. Blauvelt?

17 A Yes, I did.

18 Q Okay. Referring back to State's Exhibit No. 53.

19 A On the right side of the neck, roughly, in this area
20 here just below the mandible, this area here, was a stab
21 wound of the neck. It was, basically, a Y-shaped defect
22 in the skin, which penetrated through the skin, the
23 musculature of the right side of the neck. It incised or
24 cut the right carotid artery, which takes blood from the
25 heart to the brain. It passed between the trachea, which

1 is in the front, and the esophagus, which is in the back.
2 So it passed between those two structures. It incised the
3 left internal jugular vein, which is a vessel that carries
4 blood from the head back to the heart. It went between
5 the first and second ribs on the left side just below the
6 collarbone and it penetrated into the left chest cavity
7 and made a puncture into the upper part of the left lung.

8 Q Can you tell based on your training and experience
9 and the injury what type of force it would have taken to
10 produce that injury?

11 A With a sharp knife, it's moderate force. I mean, it
12 doesn't take much to penetrate through the skin. It did
13 go between those two ribs and wedge itself there, so there
14 was some significant force behind that.

15 MR. MEADORS: And with the Judge's permission, I want
16 -- can he step down very briefly?

17 THE COURT: Yeah.

18 BY MR. MEADORS:

19 Q Will you show on me where that injury is to the
20 ladies and gentlemen of the jury?

21 A The wound is, roughly, in this position. Here's the
22 jawbone, which is, roughly, this line here. And so the
23 stab wound is, roughly, in this region here, passing to
24 Ms. Blauvelt from her right to her left and from below
25 downward. So the tip is, roughly, in this region here.

1 Q Thank you, Doctor.

2 And let me ask you -- can I ask you, please, would
3 you be able to speak after that injury based on your
4 training and experience.

5 A Yes, I think you would.

6 Q And -- and can you tell whether that was a straight
7 in and out wound by examining Ms. Blauvelt?

8 A So the -- the wound -- the knife goes, essentially,
9 straight in. It becomes wedged between the first and
10 second ribs and then is broken. So that the knife blade
11 is recovered by us at the time of autopsy wedged between
12 the first and second rib extending through her neck. The
13 stab wound, instead of being a single slit-like stab
14 wound, which is what we often see, where it goes straight
15 in and straight out, when the knife was pulled out, even
16 though it was broken off, there had to be a portion of a
17 sharp surface left. Because as it twisted coming out, it
18 created what looks like a V or a Y shape to the wound
19 indicating that it had changed angle a little bit and cut
20 again as it was pulled out.

21 Q State's Exhibit No. 49, which has been entered, does
22 this depict what you just said?

23 A Yes, it does.

24 Q So that is not a straight in and out wound?

25 A It is not.

1 Q Is that consistent with being twisted?

2 A It is.

3 Q Now, Doctor, we're almost through. And I appreciate
4 everybody's patience.

5 State's Exhibit Nos. 44 and 45 and 46 and 47, can you
6 just tell us what those are pictures of?

7 A State's Exhibit No. 44 is a photograph taken by me of
8 the knife blade that we recovered. This is the broken end
9 of the knife blade.

10 State's Exhibit No. 45 is a photograph of the
11 noncutting surface or the back side or the rib of the
12 knife showing how it is slightly twisted. It's no longer
13 straight. It's slightly curved at the back.

14 Q So this is State's Exhibit No. 44?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And what you just testified to, State's Exhibit No.
17 45, correct?

18 A Yes, sir.

19 Q And what is State's Exhibit No. 46?

20 A State's Exhibit No. 46 is a photograph of the blade
21 from one side showing the serrations on one edge.

22 Q And State's Exhibit No. 47?

23 A It's a photograph of the opposite side, again,
24 showing where there are no serrations on this side, just a
25 cutting surface.

1 Q How long would Ms. Blauvelt -- or could a person that
2 sustained these injuries live after receiving this injury?

3 A So Ms. Blauvelt would have bled to death as a result
4 of these injuries. So it would take multiple seconds to,
5 possibly, minutes to lose enough blood for her to become
6 initially unconscious where she's not supplying oxygen to
7 her brain and, subsequently, lose a heartbeat because the
8 pump is no longer primed with blood.

9 Q And you said she could have spoken. Would she have
10 been able to -- would she have been ambulatory? Could she
11 have walked?

12 A It's certainly possible. There's no trauma to any
13 portion of her spinal cord, so she should have had
14 muscular capabilities.

15 Q And the death from this injury with the knife inside
16 of her, how far was it?

17 A So from the skin surface to the tip of the knife --
18 and in this case, we know exactly where the tip of the
19 knife was, was approximately six inches.

20 Q Six inches. Where was the knife?

21 A I'm sorry?

22 Q Where was the knife?

23 A It was within the wound, within her neck and left
24 upper chest.

25 Q I'm showing you State's Exhibit No. 48, Doctor. Do

1 you take x-rays, also, before you open the body of the
2 person you're doing an autopsy on?

3 A Yes, sir.

4 Q And what does State's Exhibit No. 48 depict?

5 A State's Exhibit No. 48 is a post-mortem radiograph of
6 Ms. Blauvelt taken prior to the start of the autopsy. So
7 you can see this is the zipper from the body bag. These
8 are the clasps of her bra and the underwire of the bra,
9 which has been pulled up above the level of the breasts.
10 And this is the knife that we recovered.

11 Q Would you mind opening State's -- State's Exhibit No.
12 54. And would you -- is this the knife you pulled out of
13 the body of Catherine Blauvelt?

14 A Yes, it is.

15 Q Doctor, do you have a reasonable degree -- can you
16 tell the jury to a reasonable degree of medical certainty
17 the cause of death of Ms. Catherine Blauvelt?

18 A Ms. Blauvelt died as a result of a stab wound of the
19 neck.

20 MR. MEADORS: Beg the Court's indulgence.

21 (Pause.)

22 MR. MEADORS: Thank you.

23 THE COURT: Cross.

24 MS. WALKER: Thank you, Your Honor.

25 CROSS-EXAMINATION

1 BY MS. WALKER:

2 Q Good afternoon, Dr. Ward.

3 A Good afternoon.

4 Q So in your report regarding this examination, you
5 noted -- and forgive me if I mispronounce this, but fly
6 eggs and first instar larvae were present; is that
7 correct?

8 A Yes, it is.

9 Q And one of the ways that you can give a window for
10 the time of death is by looking at larva and bugs that
11 have been attracted to a body?

12 A Yes, that's correct.

13 Q And the warmer the weather, the more quickly the bugs
14 will be attracted?

15 A That's correct.

16 Q And this first instar larvae, generally -- and you
17 and I talked. This isn't general knowledge of mine. We
18 talked a week or so ago. And within about one to two
19 hours of the body no longer moving, whether being
20 manipulated or otherwise, that is when these eggs would be
21 laid?

22 A So shortly after -- after death, assuming that, as
23 she said, the flies have an opportunity to approach, as
24 long as they're not being disturbed. If there is a wound
25 or skin or a moist area available to these certain types

1 of flies, then they will lay their eggs. Usually, within
2 an hour or so, we start to give off this chemical smell
3 that attracts these insects. They lay their eggs and then
4 over a period of time, these eggs hatch into larvae and
5 the larvae matured through what are called instars. And
6 what were present at the time of autopsy were what would
7 be considered the first larval stage of these insects.

8 Q And once these eggs are laid, they're generally
9 hatched between about 12 to 24 hours; is that correct?

10 A Roughly, yes.

11 Q And despite your amazing training and whatnot, you
12 are not here to determine who committed any sort of act
13 against Ms. Blauvelt or caused the knife to go and cause
14 her death?

15 A That's correct.

16 Q And nor are you here to determine motive?

17 A That's correct.

18 MS. WALKER: Beg the Court's indulgence.

19 (Pause.)

20 BY MS. WALKER:

21 Q I apologize. And based on your report, you were
22 aware that time of death was pronounced around 1:00 in the
23 morning on the 26th?

24 A That's correct, 12:53 a.m.

25 Q And then you conducted your examination that same

1 day, but about 12 hours later?

2 A Correct.

3 Q And so between the body being moved -- or being
4 removed from the scene and then your postmortem
5 examination would have been 12 hours?

6 A Yes, ma'am.

7 MS. WALKER: Okay. Nothing further.

8 Thank you, Judge.

9 THE COURT: Any redirect?

10 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

11 BY MR. MEADORS:

12 Q If a body -- or a person was last seen on October
13 24th of 2016, at approximately two o'clock and their body
14 was found at 12:30 a.m. on the 26th, would the larvae and
15 the condition of her body be consistent with that time
16 period?

17 A Somewhere between after that 2:00 p.m. on the 24th
18 and being found, yes.

19 MR. MEADORS: Thank you very much. That's all.

20 THE COURT: Anything else, Ms. Walker.

21 MS. WALKER: Nothing further, Judge.

22 THE COURT: All right, Doctor, thank you very much.
23 You may step down.

24 MR. MEADORS: Thank everyone for letting the doctor
25 in.

2 THE COURT: All right. Ladies and gentlemen, that
3 will conclude our testimony for the day. My continuing
4 instruction, please, do not discuss the case. Do not
5 watch any news, do not listen to any news tonight. Don't
6 look at anything. And if anybody asks you any questions
7 about it, just continue to tell them I'll talk to you all
8 about it after the case.

12	Thank you.

14 (WHEREUPON, the jury was excused from open court at
15 5:37 p.m.)

18 MS. ABEE: No, Your Honor.

20 MR. NEELY: No, Your Honor.

23 (WHEREUPON, Court was adjourned to be reconvened on
24 Wednesday, September 18, 2024.)

25 Wednesday, September 18, 2024

1 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, just very briefly, in speaking
2 with the court reporter yesterday, it was unclear whether
3 or not State's Exhibits 52 and 53 and 56 were accepted by
4 Your Honor and entered into the record. These were
5 exhibits without objection from the Defense. We just
6 wanted to make sure it was clear on the record that 52 and
7 53, which were the diagrams utilized by Dr. Ward, and
8 State's Exhibit No. 56, which is the digital image that we
9 then provided the paper copy of, are, in fact, in
10 evidence.

11 THE COURT: Mr. Neely?

12 MR. NEELY: She's correct, Your Honor. There's no
13 objection from the Defense.

14 THE COURT: The ones I had were admitted without
15 objection, 52, 53, 56, 44 to 51, 54, 55. I can't read my
16 writing, I don't know if that's a zero or a six.

17 MS. ABEE: We just wanted to make sure that's clear
18 before we get the jury in.

19 Nothing further from the State.

20 MR. NEELY: And nothing from the Defense.

21 THE COURT: All right. Let's bring them in.

22 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit No. 56 was admitted into
23 evidence.)

24 THE COURT: All right. Let's bring them in.

25 (WHEREUPON, the jury comes into open court at 9:10

1 a.m.)

2 THE COURT: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I
3 hope all of you had a good night.

4 The State call its next witness.

5 MR. MEADORS: May it please the Court.

6 The State of South Carolina calls Wayne Roper.

7 THE CLERK: Mr. Roper, if you'll, please, come
8 forward.

9 Please pause at the end of the bench over here.
10 Place your left hand on the Bible and raise your right
11 hand.

12 WHEREUPON,

13 WAYNE ROPER,

14 after first having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

15 Clerk thank you

16 Please be seated.

17 Please state your name for the record.

18 THE WITNESS: Wayne Roper.

19 DIRECT EXAMINATION

20 BY MR. MEADORS:

21 Q Good morning.

22 A Good morning.

23 Q Would you state your name again?

24 A Michael Wayne Roper.

25 Q What do you go by?

1 A Wayne.

2 Q Is it all right I call you Wayne?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Will you tell the ladies and gentlemen of this jury
5 about Wayne Roper? Where are you from?

6 A I was born in Anderson, grew up in Liberty pretty
7 much. I went to Texas, stayed there for a little while.
8 Came back and have been living here since.

9 Q And Wayne, you're kind of soft-spoken. If you don't
10 mind me approaching. If you'll make sure to speak into
11 that mic.

12 A Sorry.

13 Q So you're from Anderson?

14 A Yes.

15 Q You went to Texas. When did you come back here?

16 A I believe it was right after Katrina in 2005, 2006.

17 Q Why did you go to Texas?

18 A To live with my mama.

19 Q When you get back after Katrina, where did you live?

20 A I lived in Anderson with my aunt.

21 Q With who?

22 A My aunt.

23 Q And did there come a time when you came over to
24 Greenville County?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Sir?

2 A Yes.

3 Q When was that?

4 A I was in middle school. I'm not really sure.

5 Q Okay. Did you end up going to school over here in
6 Greenville County?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And can -- where did you go to school, Wayne?

9 A I went to Hillcrest High School.

10 Q Hillcrest High School. And how far did you go in
11 high school, Wayne?

12 A I was in ninth grade three years in a row and dropped
13 out, so I got my GED.

14 Q What did you do after that?

15 A I went to work in Texas doing construction.

16 Q Okay. What type of construction?

17 A Additions on houses.

18 Q And what are you doing now, Wayne?

19 A I'm doing HVAC.

20 Q Say it again?

21 A HVAC.

22 Q And you like doing that work?

23 A Yes.

24 Q You're pretty good at it, aren't you?

25 A Yeah.

1 Q You work everyday?

2 A Yes.

3 Q I want to ask you how you got to know some of the
4 . folks involved in this, okay?

5 A Okay.

6 Q You went to Hillcrest, you said. Did you know some
7 of these folks because of that?

8 A Yes.

9 Q How did you meet Cati Blauvelt -- did you know Cati
10 Blauvelt?

11 A Yes, I went to school with her.

12 Q And did you know Chyanne?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Okay. And was Chyanne related to Cati?

15 A Yes, she was.

16 Q Do you know what the relationship were?

17 A Niece and aunt.

18 Q That was her -- niece and aunt?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Okay. And Ally Somerville?

21 A That was Chyanne's friend.

22 Q Janissa Waterfall?

23 A That is Hannah Thompson's friend.

24 Q And I was going to ask you about Hannah Thompson. Do
25 you know Hannah Thompson?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And how do you know her?

3 A I met her through the friend group.

4 Q Through the what?

5 A Friend group.

6 Q Friend group, okay. Crystal and Brandon? Crystal
7 Gorto and Brandon Tucker, I apologize.

8 A Went to school with Crystal as well. She was friends
9 with Cati.

10 Q So did all of these folks pretty much go to
11 Hillcrest?

12 A Pretty much, yes, sir.

13 Q And the Defendant, John Blauvelt, do you remember
14 when you met him?

15 A I met him at a New Year's party we were having back
16 behind the trailer park where I used to live at.

17 Q A New Year's party?

18 A Uh-huh.

19 Q A New Year's Eve party?

20 A Yeah, something like that.

21 Q All right. And that was the first time you met him?

22 A Yeah.

23 Q Do you remember what New Year's Eve it was?

24 A It was the one in 2016.

25 Q And as a result of that, did you start spending more

1 time with -- or did you see the Defendant more?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And did you know where he lived?

4 A Yes. .

5 Q And do you remember that address?

6 A Kings Street.

7 Q Okay. Was that in Fountain Inn?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And -- and did you initially go there and party? Not
10 to lead, but just to get to the point, if that's okay.

11 A Yes.

12 Q And how often would you go there after you met him,
13 the Defendant, John Blauvelt?

14 A I'd say once a week maybe.

15 Q And who else would be there when you were there?

16 A Chyanne, Victor and Kameron.

17 Q Okay. You just said a name Victor I'm not familiar
18 with.

19 A What was his last name? Victor Rose, I think it is.

20 Q And the next name was what?

21 A Kameron Vaughn.

22 Q And you'd go there to party?

23 A Pretty much, yeah.

24 Q And did there come a point where you started staying
25 there?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Can you tell these folks when that was?

3 A It was -- I was living at my mom's and I didn't want
4 to live there anymore, basically, and moved to a funner
5 [sic] place.

6 Q The what?

7 A Funner place.

8 Q How old were you then, Wayne?

9 A 20 -- yeah, 20.

10 Q And so at sometime in 2016, did you start staying
11 there?

12 A Yes.

13 Q At 10 South Kings?

14 " And where did you stay in the house?

15 A In the back bedroom.

16 Q How long were you there?

17 A (No response.)

18 Q I know I'm asking you to go a long way back, Wayne.
19 I apologize. Do you remember approximately how long you
20 stayed at that house?

21 A I would say between four and five months, maybe six.

22 Q Did there come a reason that you quit staying there,
23 something happen to you?

24 A Yes, it was after my wreck.

25 Q Well, tell them about that. What kind of wreck did

1 you get in?

2 A I had a DUI. I wrecked my truck and hit I five trees
3 and I messed up my arm. So I decided not to really do
4 much after that. .

5 Q And you're going to get mad at me for doing this, but
6 show them your arm. .

7 A (Witness complied.)

8 Q And that's as a result of the DUI?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Did that change your life?

11 A Yes, it did.

12 Q In what way?

13 A Starting to see things clearer, not drinking as much.

14 Q And you look clean today. Are you clean?

15 A Yes, sir.

16 Q Did you quit drinking?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Did you quit going over to that house?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Well, congratulations.

21 A Thank you.

22 Q I want to get back just briefly. So when was the
23 last time you had been to that house that you can
24 remember?

25 A It was to get the rest of my belongings.

1 Q Was that around the same time period?

2 A It might have been a month or so after my wreck.

3 Q When you left, do you remember who was living there?

4 A It was -- it was John, I believe Chyanne was still
5 there and Hannah. And I think that should be it.

6 Q Had Cati already moved out?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Were you there at the time when Cati was there
9 living?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Okay. And tell the ladies and gentlemen of the jury,
12 you knew Cati and you cared about Cati?

13 A Yes, I did.

14 Q And at some point, did y'all have an intimate
15 relationship?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Is it fair to say at that house y'all partied, smoked
18 weed, drank?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Are you familiar with something that we've referred
21 to as an abandoned house?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Can you tell them where that is?

24 A It's right next to Discover Church in Simpsonville.

25 Q I'm sorry, right next to what?

1 A Discover Church in Simpsonville.

2 Q Could you see it from the road back then?

3 A No.

4 Q And do you remember when you started going there?

5 A Not exactly, no, but I know it was during spring, I
6 think so.

7 Q And would the folks that you've mentioned or some of
8 them, would they go to the abandoned house, too?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Why?

11 A We'd go there and smoke weed.

12 Q Party?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Did John Blauvelt go?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Did Cati go?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Did you go?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Ally?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Janissa?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Hannah?

25 A Yeah.

1 Q How often would y'all go to the abandoned house?

2 A Once a week, I believe.

3 Q So would a lot of people go to the abandoned house?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Did it appear to you when you were there that -- it
6 wasn't a private club, I mean, had -- were other people
7 using it or do you know?

8 A Yes, there was spray paint on the walls and stuff
9 like that, people defacing the place.

10 Q People what?

11 A Defacing the place.

12 Q I don't know if this is a straightforward question,
13 was that house known in the community to be a place you
14 could go to just get away and party?

15 A To us, yes. I'm not sure --

16 Q And that wasn't a fair question, but okay.

17 I'm going to show you what's marked as State's
18 Exhibit -- Wayne, I'm going to show you what's marked
19 State's Exhibit Nos. 60 and 61. Do you recognize it and
20 does it relate to your testimony?

21 A Yes.

22 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, we'd offer State's Exhibit
23 Nos. 60 and 61.

24 THE COURT: Any objection?

25 MR. NEELY: No objection, Your Honor.

1 THE COURT: All right. State's Exhibit Nos. 60 and
2 61 admitted into evidence without objection.

3 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit Nos. 60 and 61 were
4 admitted into evidence.).

5 BY MR. MEADORS:

6 Q And just for time purposes, what's State's Exhibit
7 No. 60, Wayne?

8 A It is the abandoned house.

9 Q That's the abandoned house? You don't know the
10 address, do you?

11 A No.

12 Q And we'll get to this in a minute, but what's State's
13 Exhibit No. 61?

14 A That's my friend, Ricky's vehicle.

15 Q Say it again?

16 A My friend, Ricky's vehicle.

17 Q You're friend, Ricky's vehicle. State's Exhibit
18 No. 61.

19 Wayne, when you moved out of South Kings, Defendant
20 Blauvelt's house, where did you go? You got in your
21 wreck. Where did you say you were living?

22 A I went to my mom's house.

23 Q Did you start working or were you working somewhere
24 then?

25 A Yes, I started working at Wal-Mart once I recovered.

1 Q And what were your hours?

2 A From 2:00 to 11:00 p.m.

3 Q And what were you doing?

4 A I was unloading trucks.

5 Q Do you remember when you got word that Cati was
6 missing?

7 A Yes.

8 Q How long prior to that had you seen her? Do you
9 remember?

10 A Maybe a week.

11 Q And were you working when you got word that she was
12 missing?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And what were your hours when you heard she was
15 missing?

16 A It was from 2:00 to 11:00.

17 Q Did you have a vehicle then?

18 A No.

19 Q Why not?

20 A I couldn't afford one and couldn't drive, so.

21 Q After you heard the news that Cati Blauvelt was
22 missing, did you do anything?

23 A Not immediately, no.

24 Q That's a great answer and a terrible question?

25 At some point, did you do something to do -- or what

1 did you do?

2 A Once I -- her sister messaged me wanting me to go
3 check the abandoned house. And that's what I did after I
4 got off work.

5 Q And her sister's name?

6 A I honestly can't remember honestly.

7 Q That's fine. But her sister asked if you'd go check
8 the abandoned house?

9 A Uh-huh.

10 Q How did you get to the abandoned house?

11 A I went in Ricky's vehicle.

12 Q And is that State's Exhibit No. 61?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And is that the car at the abandoned house when y'all
15 went to look at it?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Now, is Ricky somebody you just worked with?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Tell the ladies and gentlemen of the jury when you
20 get to State's Exhibit No. 60 with Ricky, what do you do?

21 A I go inside, look around everywhere and it looked
22 like someone had been there. And I went through and
23 checked the whole place and went downstairs and found her.

24 Q Can you tell us where you found her, in what part of
25 the house?

1 A I guess you would call it the basement.

2 Q Wayne, how many times had you been in this house
3 before?

4 A A dozen times.

5 Q I'm sorry?

6 A A dozen times.

7 Q Are you familiar with the layout?

8 A Yes.

9 Q You said you had been to that basement before?

10 A Yes.

11 Q I don't know if I've shown you these or not. I'm
12 going to show you what's marked State's Exhibit No. 29 and
13 State's Exhibit No. 31. Do you recognize State's Exhibit
14 No. 29?

15 A Yes.

16 Q What is State's Exhibit 29?

17 A It's in the basement.

18 Q In the basement?

19 Do you recognize State's Exhibit No. 31?

20 A Yeah.

21 Q State's Exhibit No. 31, you thought that was Cati?

22 A (Witness nodded.)

23 Q You need to say yes, please.

24 A Yes.

25 Q And you cared about Cati?

1 A Yes, I did.

2 Q What did you do?

3 A I ran out of there and called the cops.

4 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, at this time, we'd offer
5 State's Exhibit No. 59, the 911 call.

6 MR. NEELY: No objection, Your Honor.

7 THE COURT: All right. State's Exhibit No. 59
8 entered into evidence without objection.

9 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit No. 59 was admitted into
10 evidence.)

11 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit No. 59 was played in open
12 court.)

13 BY MR. MEADORS:

14 Q Was that your voice?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Now, Wayne, I want to ask you, did you touch Cati, do
17 anything to disturb the scene?

18 A No. The only thing I might have done was touched the
19 handrail.

20 Q I'm sorry?

21 A Touch the handrail going down to the basement.

22 Q Other than that, you didn't touch her or disturb her?

23 A No.

24 Q And how long after seeing her body did you make that
25 911 call?

1 A Maybe a minute. I'm not sure.

2 Q And did you wait at the scene until the police came?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And tell them what you found?

5 A Yes.

6 MR. MEADORS: Beg the Court's indulgence.

7 (Pause.)

8 BY MR. MEADORS:

9 Q And did the police interview you?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Several times?

12 A Yes, they did.

13 Q And you talked to them every time?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And they read you your rights every time, correct?

16 A Yes.

17 MR. MEADORS: Franklin Wayne Roper, thank you.

18 That's all we have.

19 THE COURT: Cross?

20 MR. NEELY: Thank you, Your Honor.

21 CROSS-EXAMINATION

22 BY MR. NEELY:

23 Q Good morning, Mr. Roper.

24 A Good morning.

25 Q I want to ask you first about the abandoned house,

1 okay?

2 A Okay.

3 Q Now, Mr. Meadors just asked you and you testified
4 that this was a house you had been to about a dozen times?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Prior to the night of October 24th, right?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And this was a place that was kind of another hangout
9 for y'all?

10 A Yes.

11 Q So y'all would hang out at John's?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And then y'all would, also, hang out at the abandoned
14 house?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And there was a large group of y'all that would go
17 out there, correct?

18 A Yes.

19 Q You would go out there?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Your friend, Monty Franks, would go out there?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Kameron Vaughn would go out there?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And Kameron's name, he spelled that with a K,

1 correct?

2 A I believe so.

3 Q And John would go out there?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Chyanne?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Ally?

8 A Yes.

9 Q Hannah?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Cati?

12 A Yes.

13 Q So there was a place well known to all of you?

14 A Yes.

15 Q That y'all went often?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Now, Mr. Meadors asked you at one point when you were
18 staying in the house, you began an intimate relationship
19 with Cati?

20 A Yes. It was a one-time thing.

21 Q But she was somebody that you cared about?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Later on, you introduced her to your friend, Zach
24 Lewis, correct?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And they began having an intimate relationship?

2 A Yes.

3 Q They were probably in a relationship for two to three
4 months prior to that night in October?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Now, that abandoned house, that's not somewhere you
7 would always go with a large group of people, correct?

8 A Yeah, a handful of people.

9 Q But there was a time about a month before the night
10 in October that just you and Cati went out to the
11 abandoned house, correct?

12 A No.

13 Q Y'all went out there about a month before and smoked
14 a bowl just the two of you?

15 A Yeah, during the day.

16 Q During the day?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Just the two of you?

19 A Yes.

20 Q So you do remember telling law enforcement about
21 that?

22 A Yes.

23 Q About a month before you found her, the two of y'all
24 had gone out there?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Now, Mr. Meadors asked you about all the different
2 interviews that you gave the law enforcement?

3 A Yes.

4 Q I believe you spoke to law enforcement twice,
5 correct?

6 A It was more than that.

7 Q You think it was more than that?

8 A Three or four times.

9 Q Three or four times. All right. You spoke to
10 them -- I believe it was three times. You spoke to them
11 on the night of the 26th?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Out there at the abandoned house?

14 A Uh-huh.

15 Q And in those moments, it's hard to piece your
16 thoughts together, correct?

17 A Yes.

18 Q I'm sorry, you have to --

19 A I'm sorry.

20 Q You're fine. I know this is a lot, but you do have
21 to answer out loud.

22 And so later on the 26, around eight o'clock that
23 night, they brought you over to the Simpsonville police
24 station or had you meet them at the Simpsonville police
25 station, correct?

1 A They took me over there.

2 Q They took you over there?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And you sat down with Investigator Morecraft and
5 maybe another investigator?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And y'all were in the room and they tried their best
8 to calm you down?

9 A (Witness nodded.)

10 Q And to make sure that you were as comfortable as you
11 could be in that situation, correct?

12 A I believe so, yes.

13 Q And they told you to tell them everything that you
14 knew?

15 A Yes.

16 Q All right. Now, this was at eight o'clock on the 26,
17 correct?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And you had found Cati's body around midnight,
20 correct?

21 A Yes.

22 Q So we're about 20 hours removed from that?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And Officer Morecraft asked you about finding her
25 body, right?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And how she had been missing for 30 hours?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And how nobody else could find her, correct?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And this was the first place that you looked?

7 A The first place that I was told to look, yes.

8 Q Had you looked anywhere else prior?

9 A No.

10 Q So this was the first place that you looked?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And so the first place that you look, you're the
13 person to find Cati's body?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And so 20 hours after that, he's asking you
16 questions?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And Mr. Meadors just asked you that they read you
19 your Miranda rights, correct?

20 A Yes.

21 Q But the truth is when you were there for that
22 interview, they didn't read you your Miranda rights, did
23 they?

24 A I don't really recall honesty.

25 Q In fact, they told you that we haven't read you your

1 rights. They told you they hadn't read you your rights
2 because 20 hours after being the person to find the body,
3 they didn't consider you a suspect, right?

4 A I'm not sure.

5 Q Would it help if you heard your statement from that
6 night?

7 A I've watched it.

8 Q Right. So you remember listening to that statement.
9 And they told you that they didn't consider you a suspect,
10 right?

11 A Yes.

12 Q But they did spend a large part of that interview
13 asking you about John Blauvelt, didn't they?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And what you knew about his involvement with this,
16 correct?

17 A Yes.

18 MR. NEELY: One moment, Your Honor.

19 (Pause.)

20 MR. NEELY: Thank you, Mr. Roper.

21 THE COURT: All right. Any redirect?

22 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

23 BY MR. MEADORS:

24 Q Did they check your phone records?

25 A Yes.

1 Q So they did not read you your rights? Do you
2 remember?

3 A I don't think they did. I'm not sure.

4 Q My apologies. But did they check your phone?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Got your record?

7 A Yes.

8 MR. MEADORS: Thank you. That's all.

9 THE COURT: Recross?

10 MR. NEELY: None, Your Honor.

11 THE COURT: All right. You may step down. Thank
12 you, sir.

13 All right. The State call its next witness.

14 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, the State calls Cierra Leone.

15 THE CLERK: Ms. Leone, if you'll, please, come
16 forward.

17 And if you'll, please, pause at the end of the bench,
18 place your left hand on the Bible and raise your right
19 hand.

20 WHEREUPON,

21 CIERRA LEONE,

22 after first having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

23 THE CLERK: Clerk Thank you.

24 Please be seated.

25 And would you, please, state your name for the

1 record?

2 THE WITNESS: Cierra Leone.

3 THE CLERK: Thank you.

4 THE COURT: And speak into that microphone.

5 DIRECT EXAMINATION

6 BY MS. ABEE:

7 Q Ms. Leone, go ahead and spell that last name for us.

8 A L-E-O-N-E.

9 Q And tell us a little bit about yourself. What do you
10 do for a living?

11 A Right now, I am currently a purchasing agent for the
12 military. So I, basically, work in sales all day.

13 Q Is that here in Greenville County?

14 A It's, actually, in liberty, South Carolina.

15 Q Prior to working there, where did you work?

16 A I worked at PetSmart on Woodruff Road at the pets
17 hotel.

18 Q And tell us a little bit about your job at the
19 PetSmart.

20 A I was -- or at the time, was the manager there. So I
21 did a lot of hiring, coaching, interviewing, scheduling as
22 well as training new staff members. And then, of course,
23 doing what the staff members did, which was working with
24 the pets, dogs and cats in the facility.

25 Q And how long did you work at PetSmart?

1 A I was there for ten years. I started summer of 2009
2 and left in March of 2019.

3 Q So would you have been working there in October of
4 2016?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And what location was this PetSmart that you worked
7 at?

8 A It was Shops of Greenridge on Woodruff Road. I
9 believe it was 1125 Woodruff Road.

10 Q And you stated that part of your job responsibilities
11 were hiring. Did you ever hire somebody named Catherine
12 Blauvelt?

13 A I did.

14 Q And what did she go by? What name did she go by?

15 A She went by Cati.

16 Q So did you interview Cati?

17 A I did.

18 Q Ultimately, hired her?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And what area of PetSmart did Cati work in in October
21 of 2016?

22 A Cati was a PetSmart pets hotel associate. So she
23 worked mainly what we called backup house, which was,
24 actually, hands on with all of the animals in our
25 facility.

1 Q And tell us a little bit about what is the pet hotel
2 area of PetSmart?

3 A It's an indoor boarding facility for dogs and cats.
4 So we would do playtime for dogs, which we called doggy
5 day camp. We, also, did baths and nails trims on the way
6 out. We had kitty cottages where the cats were allowed to
7 board. We fed them, medicated them, if needed. Just
8 general socialization and care for boarding or same day
9 drop off.

10 Q Are those all types of things that Cati would have
11 done as an associate in the pets hotel?

12 A Yes, she would have done everything, but administer
13 medications.

14 Q So she would have helped feed the dogs?

15 A Correct.

16 Q Did you say cleaning?

17 A Yes, we had to clean rooms, clean play yards, which
18 is where the animals would play during the day.

19 Q Would she play with the animals?

20 A Yes.

21 Q So these are all kind of standard duties and things
22 that she would have done as an associate there; is that
23 fair?

24 A Correct.

25 Q Now, as the manager, were you, also, responsible for

1 making the schedule for the associates of the pet hotel?

2 A Correct.

3 Q And I'm going to approach you with what's been
4 pre-marked as State's Exhibit No. 57. And Ms. Leone, do
5 you recognize this?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And just generally tell us what this is.

8 A This was the weekly schedule for that week. It just
9 breaks down each day with a date and time that the
10 associate was scheduled to work.

11 Q And is this a fair and accurate representation of the
12 schedule as you had made it?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And other than being a copy, it doesn't look like
15 it's been altered in any way?

16 A No.

17 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, the State moves State's
18 Exhibit No. 57 into evidence.

19 THE COURT: Any objection?

20 MR. NEELY: No objection.

21 THE COURT: State's Exhibit No. 57 is moved into
22 evidence without objection.

23 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit No. 57 was admitted into
24 evidence.)

25 MS. ABEE: Permission to publish, Your Honor.

1 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

2 BY MS. ABEE:

3 Q Ms. Leone, I'm going to have you show this to us here
4 in just a second. I'm just trying to get it focused.

5 So this is the schedule, State's Exhibit No. 57, that
6 you just saw; is that fair?

7 A Correct.

8 Q And up here in the upper left-hand corner, it says
9 10/30/2016. Is that the week that we're talking about?

10 A Yes, correct.

11 Q Okay. And then each of these different kind of days
12 at the top, we see 24th, 25th, 26th and so on, would those
13 be the days of the week and kind of what the schedule was
14 for the employees?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And so we see October the 24th of 2016, what day of
17 the week was that?

18 A Monday.

19 Q And manager where it says here, is that you?

20 A Yes, ma'am.

21 Q And so what time were you working on October the 24th
22 of 2016?

23 A 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

24 Q And I'm going to slide down here a little bit to
25 where it says Cati. Is that who you know to be Cati

1 Blauvelt?

2 A Yes, ma'am.

3 Q And as a person who made these schedules, was that
4 Cati's time that she was supposed to work that day?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And on Monday, the 24th, if you could tell us, what
7 time was Cati supposed to work at PetSmart that day?

8 A 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

9 Q And to the best of your recollection, did she show up
10 and work that day?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And tell us how somebody kind of logs their hours at
13 PetSmart? How are they going to clock in and clock out?

14 A In -- right inside the store before you get into the
15 hotel, there's a time clock room, so she would have swiped
16 her time clock card and then entered the hotel, got her
17 walkie-talkie for the day, maybe stopped at her locker if
18 she had anything. And then looked at our board in the
19 back to see where she was supposed to be or what she
20 should have been doing.

21 Q And as the manager, do you have access to see kind of
22 someone's time card when they checked in and checked out?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And did you look to see if Kati worked on the day of
25 October the 24th of 2016?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And did you provide that information to law
3 enforcement?

4 A I did.

5 Q Okay. And I'm going to approach you with what's been
6 pre-marked as State's Exhibit No. 58. And other than it
7 being written extremely small, is this a fair and accurate
8 representation of what you saw when you tried to see if
9 Cati worked that day?

10 A It is.

11 Q And is that what you provided to law enforcement?

12 A It is.

13 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, the State moves State's
14 Exhibit No. 58 into evidence.

15 THE COURT: Any objection?

16 MR. NEELY: None, Your Honor.

17 THE COURT: State's Exhibit No. 58 admitted into
18 evidence without objection.

19 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit No. 58 was admitted into
20 evidence.)

21 MS. ABEE: Permission to publish, Your Honor.

22 THE COURT: You may.

23 BY MS. ABEE:

24 Q All right, Ms. Leone. This is extremely small, so
25 I'm going to try to zoom in and see if we can't help each

1 other out here, okay?

2 A Okay.

3 Q So up top here on State's Exhibit No. 58, we see
4 person ID; is that right?

5 A Correct.

6 Q And who does that say?

7 A Catherine Boyter.

8 Q Is Catherine Boyter the same as Catherine Blauvelt?

9 A Yes.

10 Q The same as Cati Blauvelt?

11 A Yes.

12 Q So her name that she was going by for PetSmart
13 purposes was Catherine Boyter; is that right?

14 A Yes, that is what she applied under.

15 Q And then we see Monday, the 24th, over here on the
16 left-hand side and we see kind of an hour here. What is
17 the hours that it states right there, the a.m. that she
18 clocked in?

19 A 8:55 a.m.

20 Q I'm going to slide this over some. And then we see
21 an out time. So in time we have is 8:55 a.m. and then
22 what was her out time?

23 A 2:05 p.m.

24 Q So Cati would have clocked in at 8:55 and clocked out
25 at 2:05 on the 24th; is that fair?

1 A Correct.

2 Q And to your knowledge, was she there the entire time?

3 A Yes.

4 Q If she would have been missing for several hours or
5 left early or something like that, as the manager, is that
6 something you would have noticed?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And do you recall any of that on that day?

9 A No.

10 Q I'm want to talk to you now just a little bit about
11 the standard uniform of a PetSmart employee down in the
12 pet hotel area.

13 A Okay.

14 Q Can you tell us, what would somebody typically wear?

15 A Slip resistant shoes since there is slippery watery
16 floors back there, khaki pants and a blue polo shirt.

17 Q And does the blue polo shirt have any sort of
18 embroidery on it?

19 A Yes, it will have a PetSmart embroidery on it.

20 Q Now, I'm going to show you what's already been
21 entered into evidence as State's Exhibit No. 1. And this
22 has been identified as a picture of Cati. Do you see the
23 shirt in here?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And is that the PetSmart shirt?

1 A That is.

2 Q And I'm, also, going to show you what's already been
3 entered into evidence as State's Exhibit No. 55. And is
4 this a PetSmart shirt?

5 A It is, yes.

6 Q And I know this is in a different condition, but if
7 Cati would have shown up to work with this shirt in this
8 condition, is that something you would have noticed?

9 A Correct.

10 Q So if Cati was wearing this shirt on that day, is
11 this the condition it would have been in while she worked
12 with you?

13 A No.

14 MS. ABEE: Beg the Court's indulgence, Your Honor.

15 (Pause.)

16 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, I have no further questions
17 for this witness.

18 THE COURT: All right. Cross?

19 MR. NEELY: Yes, Your Honor.

20 CROSS-EXAMINATION

21 BY MR. NEELY:

22 Q Good morning.

23 A Good morning.

24 Q When Cati left work that day, she clocked out at
25 2:05?

1 A Correct.

2 Q And then she walked out the front door of the store?

3 A I do not have a direct eye line of the front door of
4 the store from the pets hotel.

5 Q So you did not see her walk out the door that day?

6 A Correct.

7 Q And you didn't walk out with her into the parking
8 lot?

9 A I did not.

10 Q You didn't see her get in her car?

11 A I did not.

12 Q You didn't see who, if anybody, was at her car?

13 A No, I did not.

14 Q You didn't see who, if anybody, got into the car with
15 her?

16 A No, I did not.

17 MR. NEELY: All right. Thank you.

18 THE COURT: Any redirect?

19 MS. ABEE: No, Your Honor. Just permission for this
20 witness to be excused from her subpoena.

21 THE COURT: Any objection?

22 MR. NEELY: None, Your Honor.

23 THE COURT: All right. You may be excused.

24 Thank you, ma'am.

25 State call next witness.

1 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, the State calls Daniel
2 Frankel.

3 THE CLERK: Mr. Frankel, please, come forward.

4 Sir, if you'd pause at the end of the bench, place
5 your left hand on the Bible and raise your right hand.

6 WHEREUPON,

7 DANIEL FRANKEL,

8 after first having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

9 THE CLERK: Thank you.

10 Please be seated.

11 And, please, state your name for the record.

12 THE WITNESS: Daniel Allen Frankel.

13 THE CLERK: Thank you, sir.

14 DIRECT EXAMINATION

15 BY MS. ABEE:

16 Q Mr. Frankel, go ahead and spell that last name for
17 us, please.

18 A Sure. F-R-A-N-K-E-L.

19 Q And if you could, tell us all what you do for a
20 living?

21 A I work for Progressive Insurance. I'm an in an IT
22 applications program consultant. I've been with
23 Progressive for 27 years. My current role, I work in the
24 snapshot area and I've been in that area for 14 and a half
25 years. For program stuff, I'm considered one of the

1 subject matter experts.

2 Q All right. I'm going to break that down just a
3 little bit for us. You're familiar with all of those
4 words, but we're not, okay?

5 A Sure.

6 Q So an IT applications program consultant. What does
7 that mean? What do you do?

8 A So from a day-to-day basis, I work with our vendor
9 that produces our snapshot device. I work with the
10 business team. I create designs for our infrastructure to
11 handle the data that comes from the snapshot device.

12 Q And, generally, just kind of tell all of us what is
13 the Progressive snapshot device?

14 A So we consider the snapshot device a passive
15 listening device. It has an OBD 2 plug connected to it --
16 or part of it. And that interfaces or gets plugged into
17 the OBD2 cord on your vehicle. OBD 2 is the onboard
18 diagnostic. And that port is the same port like a
19 mechanic would use to scan for codes when there is a check
20 engine light or something like that.

21 So for our purposes, we can have the device plugged
22 into an insured or customer's car. And then that device
23 can determine when the ignition has been turned on and
24 then read the speed of the vehicle. We, typically, do
25 that second by second. And then when the ignition is

1 turned off, we can recognize that and then we formalize
2 that as what we call a trip.

3 Q All right. So talk to us a little bit. We've got
4 the device and kind of what it does. Why would somebody,
5 a customer have a Progressive snapshot device in their
6 vehicle?

7 A For a discount.

8 Q Explain that to us.

9 A We use the driving data and it's kind of -- our
10 former CEO kind of called it autograph. His idea was to
11 autograph your rate, which means your actual driving
12 behavior can merit you a discount. Unlike a lot of the
13 other classic rating factors, like, age, where you live,
14 things like that, this one is about how you drive relative
15 to your peers.

16 Q So the idea is that, you know, a customer would put
17 this in their car. They show that they're a safe driver
18 and their rate goes down; is that fair?

19 A Correct.

20 Q So as an IT applications programming consultant, do
21 you have access to this data that is kind of coming back
22 that you talked about?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And, specifically, in this case, do you have access
25 or have you been able to review the data provided for a

1 2011 Ford Fiesta belonging to Cati Blauvelt?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And, previously, did we show you -- I'm going to
4 approach you with what's been pre-marked as State's
5 Exhibit No. 62. And have you been able to previously look
6 at the information that's contained on this disk?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Okay. And is this the result of the Progressive
9 snapshot device for Cati Blauvelt?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And are the contents on this disk fair and accurate?

12 A Yes.

13 Q From what you've been able to --

14 A To the best of my knowledge, yes.

15 Q How do you know that's what's on this disk?

16 A So I did an independent -- well, prior to coming in
17 here, I did view what is on that disk.

18 Q Okay. How do we know that you viewed it? Did you
19 write anything on it?

20 A I put my initials.

21 Q Okay. So this DF, that's you verifying what's on
22 this disk?

23 A Yes.

24 MS. ABEE: And Your Honor, the State moves State's
25 Exhibit No. 62 into evidence.

1 THE COURT: Any objection?

2 MS. WALKER: No objection.

3 THE COURT: All right. State's Exhibit No. 62 is
4 admitted into evidence without objection.

5 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit No. 62 was admitted into
6 evidence.)

7 MR. ABEE: Permission to publish, Your Honor?

8 THE COURT: You may.

9 BY MR. ABEE:

10 Q So Mr. Frankel, the information of Cati's driving is
11 on this kind of spreadsheet form; is that right?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And we're going to walk through the spreadsheet here
14 in just one second. But I want to talk about the types of
15 information that's on this device. Okay -- or that's on
16 this spreadsheet. You stated it tells us when a car is
17 turned on?

18 A Correct.

19 Q What about when a car is turned off?

20 A Yes, it does that as well.

21 Q And what about where the car goes or how fast it
22 goes? Is any of that type of information recorded in
23 there?

24 A I cannot say where the car goes. We don't collect
25 location data, at least, we didn't on this particular

1 device version. But we can say how far did it drive, how
2 fast was it going, those things.

3 Q So we have kind of start of trip and end of trip; is
4 that fair?

5 A Yes, and then the mileage.

6 Q The mileage of the trip itself?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And when a trip ends, what kind of triggers the
9 ending of a trip? Is it a brake? Is it the car turning
10 off?

11 A It's the car turning off.

12 Q And what about the beginning of the trip, what starts
13 that?

14 A It's a spike in the alternator voltage. So the
15 voltage on the bus will increase once the alternator
16 starts going and then we look for RPM.

17 Q Okay. So RPM means what?

18 A Revolutions per minute, yeah, that the engine is
19 running?

20 Q So the engine is going to where the car is turned
21 off; is that fair?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Okay. Now, I'm going to take you down. This is kind
24 of all of the data, it looks like over here in column I,
25 dating back to September the 1st of 2016; is that right?

1 A Correct.

2 Q Okay. And so we're going to kind of scroll down here
3 at the bottom and talk about the trips and what Cati was
4 doing or what Cati's car was doing on the 24th, okay?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Of October. So I'm going to zoom in just a little
7 bit. All right. So first kind of this code SC, would
8 that indicate South Carolina?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And then you see Ford Fiesta, that's in C and D; is
11 that right?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And the vehicle here is 2011; is that right?

14 A That is correct.

15 Q Now, over here in F, that's the VIN number associated
16 with that car?

17 A That is the VIN number associated with that car.

18 Q Okay. And I'm going to scroll over just a little
19 bit. All right, so starting here on October the 24th of
20 2016, we see how many, one, two, three, four, five, six,
21 seven kind of total trips; is that fair?

22 A Yep.

23 Q So the first one would have taken place at what time?

24 A At 8:06 a.m.

25 Q And when would that trip have ended?

1 A 8:16 a.m.

2 Q And then over here in K where it says trip mileage
3 quantity, is that the length of that trip?

4 A Correct, 3.11 miles.

5 Q Tell us a little bit, how is that -- how do you know
6 that? If you're not tracking GPS data, how do you know
7 that that's the length of that trip?

8 A So we use the individual speed readings that we get
9 once per second and then extrapolate from there
10 calculating the distance traveled.

11 Q So it's like math?

12 A Yes.

13 Q So we saw that trip ended at 8:16. Then it looks
14 like we've got an 8:21 to 8:28; is that right?

15 A Correct.

16 Q And that's in the a.m.?

17 A Yes.

18 Q How long is that trip?

19 A Two miles -- 2.85 miles.

20 Q Then I see over here on line 472 at 8:32 in the
21 morning to 8:54 in the morning. How far is that?

22 A 4.8 miles.

23 Q Okay. Now, we start to see in line 473 through 476 a
24 change to military time; is that fair -- or computing in
25 military time?

1 A Yes, this is in military time.

2 Q So in line 473, when did the start of that trip
3 happen?

4 A 2:08 or 1408.

5 Q So that would be 2:08 p.m.; is that fair?

6 A Correct.

7 Q And how long was that trip?

8 A That trip went to two -- or 1413.

9 Q But how far did she drive on that trip -- or did the
10 car go on that trip?

11 A Very short, so point 05 miles.

12 Q So that trip in and of itself very kind of brief; is
13 that fair to say?

14 A Yes.

15 Q And now I want to look at line 474. What time did
16 this trip begin?

17 A 1510, so 3:10 in the afternoon.

18 Q 3:10 till when did it end?

19 A 3:30.

20 Q How far was this?

21 A 10.44 miles.

22 Q And, again, you can't tell us where the car went --

23 A Right.

24 Q -- again, just how far it went?

25 A Just how far.

1 Q So that trip ended, I believe you said, what, 3:30?

2 A Yes.

3 Q So then from 3:30 to what's this next time?

4 A 1649, so 4:49 p.m.

5 Q So from 3:30 to 4:49 p.m., was her car turned on and
6 the engine going and moving at all?

7 A According to the data here, no.

8 Q So according to this data, her car is in one location
9 from 3:30 to approximately 4:49; is that fair?

10 A Correct.

11 Q So then at 4:49, once that is turned on, what -- how
12 long does that trip take?

13 A That goes to 4:58.

14 Q And how far is that?

15 A 3.4 miles -- 3.45.

16 Q At 4:58. And then when is the next time the engine
17 goes?

18 A 1729 or 5:29.

19 Q So, again, kind of using the same similar logic, from
20 four -- let me see that again. What time did we say? So
21 from 4:58 until 5:29, that car is not moving?

22 A According to the data.

23 Q According to the date. So approximately 30 minutes,
24 it's in one area; is that right?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And then in this last trip on 476, from 5:29 until
2 what time?

3 A 6:05 p.m.

4 Q To the 6:05 p.m., it travels approximately how far?

5 A 23.88 miles.

6 Q So from 6:05 p.m. was the end of that?

7 A Correct.

8 Q So from 6:05 p.m. on October the 24th of 2016, did
9 this car move at all?

10 A From which time?

11 Q From this very last trip. From October the 24th of
12 2016 at 6:05, were there any other entries or logs that we
13 cut out or anything like that?

14 A From a trip perspective, no.

15 Q So this would have been the last trip that happened?

16 A It was the last trip according to our records.

17 Q And so throughout this, is there other information
18 that is received by the snapshot device? Not just start
19 and stop and distance, but do we have -- and we're kind of
20 seeing some max speed, hard accelerations, we're seeing
21 these in columns L, M, N, O. Explain to us what all it
22 kind of interprets.

23 A So those are summary data points. So in here, we
24 have the duration in seconds. We have the trip mileage,
25 which we spoke about. We capture what the max speed is,

1 the hard acceleration, the hard brakes, extreme
2 accelerations, and extreme braking. As far as the hard
3 brake count, that is a deceleration of more than seven
4 miles per hour. The extreme brake count is a deceleration
5 of more than ten miles per hour. The accelerations are
6 the same, just in the opposite. So an acceleration of
7 seven miles per hour would be a hard -- or an acceleration
8 event. And then extreme acceleration is more than ten
9 miles per hour.

10 Q And the purpose of this device is to kind of figure
11 out the driving pattern of an individual so they can get a
12 discount, right, or what they believe to be a discount?

13 A Correct.

14 Q So what we see up here on the screen -- and, again,
15 we've got 400 some odd entries for Cati; is that fair?

16 A Yep.

17 Q Just kind of looking what we can see here on the
18 screen, starting at that top row at 4:55 under hard
19 acceleration count, we see zeros all the way to those last
20 two trips; is that right?

21 A That is correct.

22 Q Where we finally see a four and a seven on hard
23 accelerations, right?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And then kind of looking at the hard brakes, again,

1 we see zeros all the way down until that last trip; is
2 that right?

3 A The last two trips for hard acceleration, yeah.

4 Q And, again, the last two trips, we see -- so hard
5 acceleration, four, hard acceleration, seven. Then going
6 to column N, hard brakes, four, hard brakes, 21; is that
7 right?

8 A That is correct.

9 Q But before that, all the driving didn't have hard
10 accelerations, right? Or, at least, what we're seeing
11 right here?

12 A What we're seeing right here, correct.

13 Q And they didn't have any hard brakes from what we're
14 seeing?

15 A Correct.

16 Q And then I'm going to go over here into the extreme
17 brake count, which is in column P, that last trip had how
18 many extreme brake counts?

19 A Four.

20 Q So in terms of kind of the data that we're seeing,
21 these last two trips aren't necessarily consistent with
22 the previous way of driving that car, right?

23 A That is what the data shows, correct.

24 MS. ABEE: Beg the Court's indulgence, Judge.

25 (Pause.)

1 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, I have no further questions
2 for this witness at this time.

3 THE COURT: Cross?

4 CROSS-EXAMINATION

5 BY MS. WALKER:

6 Q Good morning.

7 A Good morning.

8 Q Mr. Frankel, you work for Progressive, correct?

9 A That is correct.

10 Q And we heard you earlier describing the monitoring
11 system. Has this Progressive snapshot data been
12 independently tested for accuracy?

13 A We've tested it for security purposes. I'm not -- I
14 can't recall whether or not we have independently studied
15 it for accuracy outside of our millions of insured.

16 Q Sure. And this is the department you work in?

17 A Correct.

18 Q So was the Progressive snapshot, was that designed
19 for law enforcement?

20 A No.

21 Q Okay. And was it designed for law enforcement
22 investigations?

23 A No.

24 Q The Progressive snapshot, does it -- does it use what
25 you would say a lot of algorithms?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And those algorithms, have those been independently
3 tested for accuracy to your knowledge?

4 A Not to my knowledge.

5 Q And I believe this was, also, touched earlier, but I
6 kind of wanted to go a little bit more. Do -- does
7 Progressive snapshot, does that connect to any cell
8 towers?

9 A The snapshot device, yes.

10 Q It does. Do you record that cell tower data?

11 A No, we do not.

12 Q So even if you wanted to, you couldn't pull that up
13 or provide that because you don't record it?

14 A Correct.

15 Q So we have no way of telling if those cell phone
16 towers and that Progressive snapshot machine, if that
17 actually connected?

18 A Actually connected --

19 Q Or excuse me, that was a poor --

20 A We receive the data. I just don't know which cell
21 towers, correct.

22 Q Sure. Because you don't save or record that?

23 A Correct.

24 Q If -- let's talk about the actual device itself?

25 A Yes.

1 Q So this is sent to the individual who is with
2 Progressive requesting this?

3 A Yes, they sign up for it either when they initiate
4 their policy with us or they can endorse it.

5 Q So it's not required?

6 A No.

7 Q So, basically, how it works is -- it's not installed
8 by a mechanic, correct?

9 A Correct.

10 Q So you send it to the individual?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And that individual installs it themselves?

13 A Correct.

14 Q So you -- when you became involved with this, you did
15 not install it yourself?

16 A Correct, I did not.

17 Q And you don't know if anyone from Progressive
18 installed it themselves?

19 A I do not.

20 Q So most people install it themselves, the user?

21 A The user, that's typical.

22 Q And when this was installed, the odometer, that
23 wasn't checked or calibrated for accuracy?

24 A No.

25 Q And these devices, are they personal stabilized for

1 each car?

2 A They are not personalized for each car.

3 Q So a kind of one size fits all type thing?

4 A Correct.

5 Q Can that device tell who is driving?

6 A No.

7 Q And, again, you didn't install the device? You
8 doesn't remove the device?

9 A Correct.

10 Q So you don't know if that device was properly working
11 whenever it was removed?

12 A Based on the data that we received, I have no reason
13 to believe it wasn't working.

14 Q Now, this data and your records, that's all you have
15 to go by?

16 A We do have some data that we collected. The device
17 called in two more times after that last trip. One, the
18 device will go to sleep after 24 hours to protect the
19 battery. So it made that call in just before it went to
20 sleep and then it did one more check in. We have a
21 five-day check in so we know the devices are installed.
22 So if someone doesn't drive -- like, the perfect insured
23 for us, they get the snapshot device, they never drive
24 their car. They're a perfect risk. But we need to know
25 that the device is installed, so we get a five-day check

1 in.

2 Q And this is coming from the data transmitted from the
3 device?

4 A Correct. .

5 Q No one is physically going out there to check --

6 A The device, yeah.

7 Q And that's the data assuming the device is in working
8 condition -- or acceptable condition?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And, again, sorry to reiterate this, you don't have
11 personal knowledge because you did not install or take it
12 out?

13 A Correct. .

14 Q And these are not personalized to each car. They're
15 just sent out to each user?

16 A Correct.

17 Q And it's designed for Progressive Insurance purposes,
18 that's where you're from?

19 A Yep.

20 Q And, ultimately, it's designed to help with -- find
21 safe drivers, identify safe drivers; is that fair?

22 A Yeah, identify safe drivers, give them the most
23 accurate rate we can.

24 Q Most accurate rate?

25 A Yeah, for the insurance. So based on their drive

1 patterns, it's supposed to, as I said earlier, kind of
2 arbitrary, things like age, zip code, et cetera.

3 Q So there are a lot of many different factors --

4 A Yes.

5 Q -- that went into developing this --

6 A Yes.

7 Q -- device?

8 A Correct.

9 Q And, again, the purpose of this device was for your
10 insurance company?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And it was not for purposes of law enforcement?

13 A That is correct.

14 Q So accuracy has not been independently verified?

15 A To my knowledge, we haven't had a third party verify
16 it.

17 Q Sure. And you work in this unit with Progressive
18 snapshot?

19 A Sure.

20 Q So if that did happen, you would have heard of it by
21 now?

22 A I believe given the 14 and a half years I've been
23 doing it, whether we had anything before I was in that
24 area, we were doing this prior to, you know, my 14 and a
25 half year tenure.

1 Q Can this device tell you where the car is going?

2 A No, not this version of the device.

3 Q Can this device tell you what direction the car is
4 going?

5 A No, we don't have that data.

6 MS. WALKER: I have no further questions for this
7 witness.

8 THE COURT: Any redirect?

9 MS. ABEE: Very briefly, Your Honor.

10 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

11 BY MS. ABEE:

12 Q Mr. Frankel, opposing counsel kind of drew out that
13 this wasn't created for law enforcement; is that fair?

14 A That is fair.

15 Q Okay. Is it fair to say that the results of the
16 Progressive Snapshot, essentially, kind of cost
17 Progressive money, right? They give lower rates to
18 drivers; is that fair?

19 A Correct.

20 Q So does Progressive have a vested interest in the
21 accuracy of the Progressive Snapshot device?

22 A Definitely.

23 Q How long has the Progressive Snapshot device been
24 around?

25 A The Snapshot device, this version of it has -- the

1 cellar version has been around since 2008.

2 MS. ABEE: Thank you.

3 No further questions.

4 THE COURT: Any recross?

5 MR. MEADORS: No recross, Judge.

6 THE COURT: All right. You may step down.

7 Thank you, sir.

8 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

9 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, we would ask permission for
10 this witness to be excused from his subpoena.

11 THE COURT: Any objection?

12 MR. NEELY: No objection.

13 THE COURT: All right. You're excused.

14 MR. MEADORS: Judge, we've been moving along very
15 rapidly. Can we take a short break just to make sure our
16 next few witnesses are here?

17 THE COURT: Yes.

18 Ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to excuse you for a
19 few minutes for a short little break.

20 Please don't discuss the case.

21 (WHEREUPON, the jury was excused from open court at
22 approximately 10:16 a.m.)

23 THE COURT: All right. We'll be in recess. How long
24 do you need?

25 MS. ABEE: Just ten or so minutes, Judge.

1 THE COURT: All right. We'll be in recess.

2 (WHEREUPON, a break was taken.)

3 MS. ABEE: Judge, just for planning purposes, the
4 State has four, potentially, five witnesses, all that
5 won't be terribly long this morning. But then before the
6 State can call its next witness, in speaking with Defense
7 counsel, I believe there's some matters of law that we
8 want to put on the record. So just for planning purposes
9 before lunch break, I do think we're going to get the rest
10 of these four or five this morning in before break. But
11 then we do have some matters of law, so I just wanted to
12 let Your Honor know that.

13 THE COURT: Okay. Are y'all ready for the jury?

14 MR. MEADORS: Yes, sir.

15 MR. NEELY: Yes, sir.

16 MS. ABEE: Yes, sir.

17 (WHEREUPON, the jury came into open court at
18 approximately 10:32 a.m.)

19 THE COURT: All right. State call its next witness.

20 MR. MEADORS: May it please the Court.

21 The State calls Crystal Gorto Tucker.

22 THE CLERK: Mrs. Tucker, if you'll, please, come
23 forward.

24 Come down to the end of the bench, please. Place
25 your left hand on the Bible and raise your right hand.

1 WHEREUPON,

2 CRYSTAL TUCKER,

3 after first having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

4 THE CLERK: Thank you.

5 Please be seated.

6 Please state your name for the record.

7 THE WITNESS: Crystal Tucker.

8 THE CLERK: Thank you.

9 DIRECT EXAMINATION

10 BY MR. MEADORS:

11 Q What did your name used to be?

12 A Crystal Gorto.

13 Q Spell that Gorto.

14 A G-O-R-T-O.

15 Q You're now Crystal Tucker?

16 A Yes, sir.

17 Q Who did you marry?

18 A Brandon Tucker.

19 Q When did y'all get married?

20 A August 6th, 2021.

21 Q Congratulations.

22 A Thank you.

23 Q Please tell the ladies and gentlemen of the jury
24 about Crystal Gorto Tucker, your background, where you're
25 from, where you went to school, that kind of thing.

1 A I went to --

2 Q And Crystal, if you'd speak up and make sure you talk
3 in here so everybody can hear you.

4 A I graduated high school from Hillcrest and then I've
5 been a CNA for about 12 years. I worked at BMW and I
6 worked at another --

7 Q Ma'am, I'm sorry, but can you speak up just a little
8 bit?

9 A I'm sorry.

10 Q Are you a little nervous?

11 A Yes.

12 Q That's fine.

13 A I graduated high school from Hillcrest. I've been a
14 CNA for 12 years. I've worked at BMW and another forklift
15 operating job as well.

16 Q Do you do some work with hospice now?

17 A Yes, I do.

18 Q Tell us about that.

19 A I've been doing it for about four months. It's
20 something I've wanted to do for a few years. It's just
21 something you've got to find in your heart to do.

22 Q Do you stay with the family until the end?

23 A Yes, sort of.

24 Q And you're employed where?

25 A With Pruitt Health Hospice.

1 Q Now, Crystal, I want to take you back in time to --
2 you know why we're here. Can you tell the ladies and
3 gentlemen, let them know -- I guess, start out how you got
4 to know the parties involved here. Let's start with Cati
5 Blauvelt. When did you get to know her?

6 A We met in 2004 in the fifth grade. We had the same
7 fifth grade teacher. And we just stayed close. We would
8 try to sit next to each other in class or lunch or go to
9 the library together, all through middle and high school.

10 Q Y'all were tight?

11 A Yeah.

12 Q Were you the same age?

13 A I think she was a few months younger than me.

14 Q And you got out of high school when?

15 A 2012.

16 Q Okay. Did she graduate then?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Let me just ask you about some other folks. Ally
19 Somerville?

20 A I don't recall that name.

21 Q Chyanne?

22 A That was Cati's niece.

23 Q And how old was Chyanne?

24 A I don't remember.

25 Q Okay.

1 A I didn't meet her until I moved in with John.

2 Q Okay. And we're going to get to that. Franklin
3 Wayne Roper?

4 A He was a friend that we had in high school. We all
5 rode the same bus.

6 Q And did I ask you about Janissa Waterfall?

7 A I don't know that name.

8 Q Okay. And you know Hannah Thompson?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Had you met her -- when did you meet Hannah Thompson?

11 A When I moved in.

12 Q Okay. So that now leads us to the next. When did
13 you meet the Defendant, John Blauvelt?

14 A It was the beginning of June, the day I went to his
15 house.

16 Q And you and I both know, but what year was that, June
17 what?

18 A 2016.

19 Q And so that's the first time you met him?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Tell these folks how that came about, you meeting him
22 and why -- well, who were you dating then?

23 A Brandon.

24 Q Who's now your husband?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And where were y'all living?

2 A I was living in a difficult situation with a
3 different friend. And I wanted to get away from that, the
4 kind of style that she was living. And I messaged Cati
5 because I thought at the time that she was living in the
6 house with John. And she told me that she no longer lived
7 there, but she knew that he could use some help with some
8 of the bills.

9 Q Okay. So Cati had already moved out in June of 2016?

10 A Yes.

11 Q How did the connection happen between you and the
12 Defendant, specifically, you and Defendant, John Blauvelt?

13 A I knew that Wayne had lived there as well. So I
14 called Wayne when I was headed over there. And he told me
15 to give him a call back once I got there and go knock on
16 the door and then hand the phone to John.

17 Q So when you got -- actually, got to the residence,
18 you called Wayne?

19 A Uh-huh.

20 Q And you handed the phone to John Blauvelt, the
21 Defendant?

22 A Yes.

23 Q I'm assuming Wayne talked to John?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And as a result of that, did you start renting a room

1 there?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Did Brandon move in with you?

4 A A few days after, yes.

5 Q Had you ever been there before?

6 A No.

7 Q And he gave you a reasonable rent?

8 A Yeah.

9 Q And did you and Brandon Tucker -- where did y'all
10 stay within the house?

11 A In the back right bedroom.

12 Q So you had your own room?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Who had been in that room?

15 A Hannah was moving out of that room when I moved in?

16 Q Hannah Thompson?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And do you know where Hannah moved after y'all moved
19 into her room?

20 A She moved in the room with John.

21 Q And, again, when you say June 26th, that's the month
22 y'all moved in?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Okay. So prior to that, fall of '15, early part of
25 2016, you weren't over there at all?

1 A No.

2 Q So you never saw Wayne over there before that?

3 A No.

4 Q You said you weren't sure who Ally was?

5 A No.

6 Q Or Janissa Waterfall?

7 A No.

8 Q So you didn't know any of those folks?

9 A No.

10 Q So in June of 2016, what were you doing in your life?
11 Where were you working?

12 A I was working at Magnolia Place in Greenville, which
13 is a long-term rehab facility.

14 Q And was Brandon working?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And going from June into October, were you working
17 this whole time?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And during that time, would -- did Cati Blauvelt ever
20 live there after you moved in?

21 A No.

22 Q Okay. Would she ever come by and visit or come by
23 the house or see the dogs or anything?

24 A She asked if I could bring Jupiter to the park so she
25 could spend some time with him and I did.

1 Q You did?

2 A Uh-huh.

3 Q When was that?

4 A I don't remember. It wasn't long after I moved in,
5 though.

6 Q And -- and prior to her death, did you see or talk to
7 Cati? I'm not asking what you talked about or anything,
8 but during the summer of 2016, did you see Cati Blauvelt
9 during that summer?

10 A Not before June, no.

11 Q Okay. That was a bad question. After June and
12 before her death, did you see or talk to her?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And one incident was the dog?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And would you, also, talk to her on the phone?

17 A A few times, yeah.

18 Q I'd like to take you, if you don't mind, to October
19 24th, what we're all here about, of 2016. Can you tell
20 these folks where were you working?

21 A Magnolia Place of Greenville.

22 Q Did you have set hours?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Tell us what they were.

25 A It was 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

1 Q And that's when you went to work?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And you're not late, are you?

4 A No.

5 Q And when you would get off work, what was your
6 practice or your custom when you got off work?

7 A It could vary, but most of the time, we just came
8 back to the house and then we'd go watch TV.

9 Q And you say we, you and Brandon?

10 A Yes.

11 Q How far was -- and I apologize, I don't know this.
12 How far is Magnolia to 10 South Kings where you were
13 living?

14 A It could vary. It was right off of Woodruff Road, so
15 I had to go on Woodruff Road to get home. So it could be
16 anywhere from 20 to 25 minutes.

17 Q Depending on the traffic?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Where was Brandon working?

20 A At BKI.

21 Q Excuse me?

22 A BKI.

23 Q And what were his hours?

24 A I don't remember.

25 Q You didn't know his hours?

1 A I don't remember.

2 Q Did he go to work in the morning?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Okay. Earlier?

5 A Yes.

6 Q But if you don't remember, you don't remember. Who
7 would usually get home first?

8 A Him.

9 Q June 24th, 2016, what time did you go to work?

10 A 7:00.

11 Q How did you get to work?

12 A I drove.

13 Q What time did you get home approximately?

14 A Probably about 3:30ish.

15 Q When you got home, who was there?

16 A Hannah.

17 Q Hannah Thompson?

18 A Uh-huh.

19 Q So at 3:30 on October 24th of 2016, when you got home
20 at 3:30, Hannah Thompson was there?

21 A Right.

22 Q Was Brandon there?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And had -- he was there when you got there?

25 A He probably got there a few minutes after I did.

1 Q So it's you, Brandon, Hannah. Do you remember what
2 happened after that? Did y'all hang around? Did you
3 talk?

4 A We talked with her for a few minutes.

5 Q And where were you and Brandon in the house?

6 A In the kitchen.

7 Q Tell us about the -- and I'm sorry, I don't have a
8 picture right now to show you. That's my fault. But the
9 kitchen, can you -- the house, is the kitchen facing the
10 road?

11 A It is.

12 Q Is it facing the driveway?

13 A It is.

14 Q Sitting in the kitchen, can you see outside and can
15 you see the driveway?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Nothing blocking your view?

18 A No.

19 Q And were you in the kitchen this -- that afternoon on
20 October 24th?

21 A Yes.

22 Q What, if anything, did you observe when y'all were in
23 the kitchen in the afternoon, you and Brandon and/or
24 Hannah Thompson?

25 A So Hannah was sitting in the seat that was facing

1 away from the window.

2 Q Yes, ma'am.

3 A And I came in the door and I told her that I had
4 tried to call John, but it kept going straight to
5 voicemail. And she said, Oh, I have his phone, it's
6 turned off. And I asked her why she had his phone. And
7 she said, I don't know. He just gave it to me. So then,
8 I said, Well, I tried to call you and you didn't answer
9 either. And she said, Well, my phone's right here.

10 Q And did you see John Blauvelt's phone with her?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Do you know whether it was on or off?

13 A She told me it was turned off.

14 Q Okay. Was that unusual for him not to have his phone
15 with him as far as you know?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Okay. And what happened after that?

18 A She had told me and Brandon that she was -- that she
19 had dropped John off to go hang out with some friends.

20 Q And what -- let me ask you this, without saying what
21 she said, what, if anything, did you observe when you were
22 sitting in the kitchen on the afternoon of October 24th,
23 2016?

24 A A car came from the back of the neighborhood, pulled
25 in the driveway, backed out and then sped off towards the

1 front of the neighborhood.

2 Q Came into the driveway?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And then pulled right off?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Did you see that?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Obviously, stupid question. That's what you're
9 testifying to.

10 Do you know what time that was?

11 A It was about 4:56 in the afternoon.

12 Q And you've said that from the beginning, haven't you?

13 A Yes, sir.

14 Q Tell these folks how do you remember 4:56.

15 A Because when I saw it pull in the driveway and drive
16 off, I pulled my phone out to see what time it was.

17 Q And is that just something you do?

18 A Yes.

19 Q So at 4:56, you saw this car pull in and out of the
20 driveway?

21 A Yes.

22 Q And did you recognize the car?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And whose car was it?

25 A Cati's.

1 Q Did you see Cati in the car?

2 A No.

3 Q Was Cati in the car?

4 A I only saw one person in the car and that was the
5 driver.

6 Q Could you see what they were wearing?

7 A It was a black hooded jacket.

8 Q So how long did they stay in the driveway?

9 A Not even a second. Just enough to pull in and pull
10 back out.

11 Q And you expressed that to Brandon and Hannah?

12 A Yes.

13 Q What, if anything -- what did Hannah do after that?

14 A She looked at us and said, Was that Cati's car.

15 Q And did you answer?

16 A Yes, we told her it was.

17 Q And then what happened?

18 A She left.

19 Q Right after that?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And what car did she leave in?

22 A The Prius.

23 Q And whose car was that?

24 A John's.

25 Q I'm going to show you what's been entered as State's

1 Exhibit No. 7. Do you recognize this?

2 A Yes.

3 Q What is that?

4 A That's John's car.

5 Q So is State's Exhibit No. 7 what Cati -- the vehicle
6 Cati left in after y'all said that was Cati's car that
7 pulled in and out?

8 A Yes.

9 Q So it's just you and Brandon there now?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Was John Blauvelt out of the house then when y'all
12 got there? Was he at the house when y'all had gotten
13 there that afternoon?

14 A No.

15 Q And Cati's car wasn't there that afternoon when you
16 got there that afternoon, when you saw it pulling in and
17 out, correct?

18 A No.

19 Q What happened next? Did you see John Blauvelt, the
20 Defendant, after that?

21 A Yes.

22 Q About how long?

23 A About 15 minutes.

24 Q Okay. Please tell the ladies and gentlemen of the
25 jury where you saw him.

1 A We saw him coming walking up from the backyard, past
2 the windows that you can see in the kitchen.

3 Q From the back?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Did he come inside?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Can you describe his physical condition?

8 A He was wearing a black hooded jacket and some sweat
9 pants and a pair of his combat boots.

10 Q And this is what time of year, October 24th? Was
11 his -- was he sweating?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Did you notice that?

14 A Yes.

15 Q So he came from the side of the house 15 minutes
16 after this car sped out?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And what happened then? Did y'all have a
19 conversation with him?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Tell us about that.

22 A He asked how we were doing and how our work day was
23 and stuff like that. And then he told us that he was
24 going to take a shower.

25 Q Did Cati -- strike that. I apologize.

1 Did Hannah come back after that, Hannah Thompson?

2 A I don't recall.

3 Q Okay. And do you know whether or not he, John --

4 Defendant John Blauvelt made contact with Hannah after he
5 got home?

6 A I don't know.

7 Q Okay. After he took a shower, do you know where he
8 went?

9 A No.

10 Q And what -- and your -- after he said he was going to
11 take a shower, what did you do?

12 A We went to our room to watch TV for the rest of the
13 night.

14 Q You and Brandon?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And I'm not trying to get in your personal business,
17 but when y'all get home -- and I really don't mean this in
18 any improper way -- y'all go to your room a lot, right?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Just to watch TV?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Y'all just hung out in your room?

23 A Yes, we had it set up half bedroom, half living room
24 in there.

25 Q So you had your own entertainment area and whatever?

1 A We had two recliners and a big screen TV.

2 Q And that's where y'all liked to hang out?

3 A Yes.

4 Q . And so you don't know when Defendant John Blauvelt
5 left after that?

6 A No.

7 Q Did you see them anymore, he or Hannah anymore that
8 night?

9 A I remember opening -- when it got dark outside, I
10 remember opening our bedroom door and just seeing John and
11 Hannah standing in the living room.

12 Q Later on that evening?

13 A Yes.

14 Q If I asked you this before, I'm sorry. You described
15 what the driver was wearing. But did it appear to be Cati
16 driving that car?

17 A No.

18 Q Can you say, in fact, it wasn't Cati?

19 A Yes.

20 Q How?

21 A Cati was short.

22 Q So from before John Blauvelt came from the side of
23 the house and after y'all went to bed late that evening,
24 you have no idea where he was?

25 A No.

1 Q Have you ever been to the abandoned house?

2 A No.

3 Q You don't even know where it is?

4 A I do after the fact.

5 Q Beforehand, you didn't?

6 A I had no idea it was in there.

7 Q Now, do you know when Hannah and -- Hannah Thompson
8 and John Blauvelt left the State?

9 A The day that they brought him up to Simpsonville.

10 Q Okay. And I'm not asking you -- don't go into
11 details of anything.

12 A Okay.

13 Q But do you know when they left?

14 A (No response.)

15 Q Approximately the date? Let me ask this, did they
16 leave some time in November, early part?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And when you got back to your residence, had you
19 noticed anything in y'all's bedroom?

20 A Not then, no.

21 Q And when you say not then -- there's something about
22 an attic which I don't understand. Do you have an attic
23 in your room?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Tell us about that.

1 A It was the only point of access to the attic was to
2 come into our room. The attic door was just into the
3 doorway.

4 Q Do you have lights up there?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Did people go up there?

7 A No.

8 Q Nobody hangs out in the attic?

9 A No.

10 Q Did y'all have lights hanging down from the attic?

11 A Yes.

12 MR. MEADORS: Beg the Court's indulgence.

13 (Pause.)

14 BY MR. MEADORS:

15 Q Did Defendant John Blauvelt ever ask you to tell the
16 police or anybody that he wasn't here if they came here?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Was that a yes?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Okay. When was that?

21 A After they found Cati's body.

22 Q He told you what?

23 A He told us not to let anybody in the house or to let
24 the cops know anybody was there.

25 Q At the house?

1 A Yes.

2 Q You didn't know Defendant John Blauvelt before you
3 moved in?

4 A No.

5 Q And then the last time you saw him was when they
6 left?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Again, not prying, but I really don't know, how long
9 did y'all stay there?

10 A We stayed there for quite a long time after that.

11 Q And when did you move?

12 A When the house was repossessed. I believe it was
13 Thanksgiving of the next year.

14 Q So is the individual you saw come up from the side of
15 the house 15 minutes after your testimony Cati's car left,
16 is that individual in the courtroom?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Is that the Defendant, John Blauvelt?

19 A Yes.

20 MR. MEADORS: Beg the Court's indulgence.

21 (Pause.)

22 BY MR. MEADORS:

23 Q I've just been advised that I had questioned you that
24 when you saw this car was this the car you saw Cati leave
25 in. Was this the car you saw Hannah leave in?

1 A Yes.

2 Q If I misspoke, I apologize. But that's what you saw
3 Hannah --

4 A Yes.

5 MR. MEADORS: Thank you, Your Honor.

6 That's all.

7 THE COURT: Cross?

8 MR. NEELY: Yes, sir. Thank you, Your Honor.

9 CROSS-EXAMINATION

10 BY MR. NEELY:

11 Q Good morning.

12 A Good morning.

13 Q How are you doing?

14 A Good, how are you?

15 Q Good. I'm going to start with when you moved into
16 John's house. Prior to moving in with John, you had been
17 living in a bad situation?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Living with a roommate that was not an ideal mother?

20 A Right.

21 Q She would often leave you with her children?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Y'all were coworkers at the nursing home?

24 A Yes.

25 Q But she would often come in real late in the morning?

1 A Yes.

2 Q She would often be late for work?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And you're a real punctual person?

5 A Yes.

6 Q You needed to get out of that place, correct?

7 A Yes.

8 Q All right. So that's why you reached out to Cati?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And she connected you with John -- or she told you
11 that John --

12 A Yes.

13 Q All right. And so you reached out to Wayne because
14 Wayne had, also, previously lived there?

15 A Yes.

16 Q John had let Wayne live in his house?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And so on the day that you moved in, you went over
19 there with Wayne, correct?

20 A I called him on the phone.

21 Q You called Wayne on the phone?

22 A Yes.

23 Q So you showed up at John's house and you had Wayne on
24 the phone?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And then Wayne talked to John?

2 A Yes.

3 Q They talked about the situation?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And then right then and there, John agreed to let you
6 just move in?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And then after he helped you move in, you had your
9 stuff living in that other apartment -- or you had your
10 stuff in that other apartment, correct?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And John right then and there dropped what he was
13 doing and he helped you move your stuff, didn't he?

14 A Yes.

15 Q He took the Yukon?

16 A Yes.

17 Q You had a SUV --

18 A Nissan Rogue.

19 Q Nissan Rogue at the time?

20 A Yes.

21 Q So y'all took those two cars and John helped you,
22 right?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And he opened up his home and let you move in?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And then he opened up his home and he let your
2 husband, your boyfriend at the time, Brandon move in?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And he let you pay \$200 a month in rent?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And it was a good living situation?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Y'all might not have been the best of friends, but
9 you and John were friends, weren't you?

10 A We had a lot of conversations.

11 Q Had a lot of conversations. Cati was one of your
12 best friends?

13 A Yes.

14 Q You had known Cati for a very long time?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Since 2004?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Y'all grew up together?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Y'all were really close going through elementary
21 school?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Middle school, right?

24 A Yes.

25 Q You kind of went your separate ways in high school a

1 little bit?

2 A Just a little bit, yeah.

3 Q Just a little bit. That kind of happens when you get
4 older. But you would still consider yourself close?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Close enough that when you need a place in an
7 emergency, you can reach out to her?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And you know that she's going to help you?

10 A Yes.

11 Q So after her body was found, you met with the
12 investigators on several occasions, correct?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And you told them everything that you knew?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Because you wanted them to find the person who had
17 done this to your friend?

18 A Yes.

19 Q One of the things that you told Investigator
20 Morecraft -- do you remember speaking with Investigator
21 Morecraft?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And y'all had a conversation about Cati's dating
24 life; do you recall that?

25 A I don't recall.

1 Q Okay. Well, during that conversation, you told him
2 that Cati had been dating a lot, that she had been on
3 dating apps, several dating apps in the couple months
4 prior. Do you remember that?

5 A I'm sure it's true.

6 Q You're sure that Cati had been on several dating apps
7 in the months prior. And that she had been on several
8 dates, right?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Let's talk about the car that you just saw. All
11 right. Let's start first by talking about the way the
12 kitchen was laid out. All right. There's a table that's
13 in the kitchen. It's a square table?

14 A Rectangular.

15 Q Rectangular table. And there's a window that you can
16 look out into the driveway?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Now, in the driveway, there was a car that John
19 owned, right?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Not the Prius?

22 A No.

23 Q A different car that he owned?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Different from the Yukon, also, correct?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And that car just kind of sat in the driveway?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Because it didn't run?

5 A Right.

6 Q And then parked behind that car was the Prius?

7 A No.

8 Q No. Where was the Prius?

9 A The Prius always stayed closer to the edge of the
10 road.

11 Q Closer to the edge of the road?

12 A Yes.

13 Q So we've got the car that doesn't run?

14 A Uh-huh.

15 Q Some space, right?

16 A Just a little bit.

17 Q Just a little bit. And then the Prius closer to the
18 edge of the road?

19 A Right.

20 Q Now, as you're looking out as this car pulls in the
21 driveway, you've got to look through some drapes, correct?

22 A The drapes were always open.

23 Q All right. Do you remember going to the Simpsonville
24 Police Department to meet with the investigators, correct?

25 A Yes.

1 Q All right. And then you sat down in the room with
2 them and they asked you several questions?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And one of the things you talked about was seeing
5 this car, correct?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And you remember that that interview with them was
8 audiotaped -- it was recorded?

9 A Yes.

10 Q So your testimony today is that the drapes were
11 always open and didn't obstruct your view, correct?

12 A Yeah.

13 Q All right.

14 (WHEREUPON, an unmarked video was played in open
15 court.)

16 BY MR. NEELY:

17 Q All right. So the drapes kind of hid it, right?
18 They weren't open. What you just said is they were down
19 and hid what you could see, right?

20 A Okay.

21 Q All right. Now, you, also, told Mr. Meadors -- I
22 want to talk about what the driver was wearing. Okay.
23 You told us today that it's a black -- let me make sure I
24 get this right. That the driver was wearing a black
25 hooded jacket?

1 A Yes.

2 Q All right. Now, you're adamant today that it was a
3 black hooded jacket, correct?

4 A Yes.

5 Q All right. And he asked you about John coming in
6 from the woods and that he was wearing a black hooded
7 jacket?

8 A Yes.

9 Q Now, again, during this same interview, they asked
10 you about what the driver was wearing. Do you remember
11 talking about that with them?

12 A I'm sure I did.

13 Q All right. And do you remember telling them that it
14 was either a black jacket or a black hoodie?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Right. So two days after her body was found, you
17 said it was either a black jacket or a black hoodie,
18 right?

19 A One has a zipper, one doesn't.

20 Q But there is a difference between the two, correct?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Now, when the car pulled into the driveway, you
23 noticed it as it was going in reverse?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And the reality is, you were only able to see it for

1 about five seconds?

2 A Right.

3 Q Maybe five seconds. It could have been a little bit
4 shorter, four seconds, right?

5 A Right.

6 Q It could have been only three seconds?

7 A Right.

8 Q Now, after this interview, you thought -- you and
9 Brandon thought maybe this car would have been hidden back
10 in the woods?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And, again, you want to be as helpful as possible?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And so you and Brandon went back looking in the
15 woods?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Did y'all go walking or driving?

18 A I think we went driving. I don't recall.

19 Q Did you say weren't driving?

20 A If I -- if we went in a vehicle, I wasn't driving.
21 But I don't remember.

22 Q So y'all went back through the woods to see if that
23 car was parked?

24 A Right.

25 Q To see if that car had been there?

1 A Right.

2 Q And what you told law enforcement eight years ago was
3 that there's no way anybody has been back there, right?

4 A Right.

5 Q Because the -- the tree branches, all the little ones
6 were over the pathway?

7 A Right.

8 Q And you told them that if anybody had been back
9 there, the trees would have been knocked down?

10 A Right.

11 Q So no car had been back there?

12 A Right.

13 Q Now, on the night of the 24th, Hannah left in John's
14 car?

15 A Yes.

16 Q John didn't leave with Hannah?

17 A No.

18 Q Hannah left by herself?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And you told investigators that there were oftentimes
21 that she would just go off by herself?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And y'all never knew what it was that she was doing?

24 A No.

25 Q And sometimes, she would often leave in John's car by

1 herself, correct?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Now, after John took a shower, y'all didn't hear him
4 leave, did you?

5 A No.

6 Q No. So for all you knew, he was in his room playing
7 video games the whole time, correct?

8 A Correct.

9 Q And then you told investigators that Hannah got home
10 after she left about an hour and a half later, right?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And you told investigators that you heard Hannah come
13 in about an hour and a half later?

14 A I don't remember.

15 Q All right. Do you remember going to the Fountain Inn
16 Police Department at the beginning of November and talking
17 to them?

18 A I probably did.

19 Q November of 2016?

20 A We went to the police station a lot.

21 Q Right. And you sat down with investigators there and
22 you gave them another interview. Because, again, you're
23 trying to be as helpful as possible?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And so they asked you and you told them that after

1 she left, you heard Hannah come back an hour and a half to
2 two hours later. Do you recall saying that? Would it
3 help to see it?

4 A Yeah.

5 Q Okay.

6 (WHEREUPON, an unmarked video was played in open
7 court.)

8 BY MR. NEELY:

9 Q She came back an hour and a half to two hours later,
10 not her and John came back an hour and a half to two hours
11 later, right? Hannah came back two hours later, right?
12 That's what you said, right?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Now, you were asked a lot of questions about John
15 coming up out of the woods. You and Mr. Meadors just
16 talked about that, correct?

17 A Yes.

18 Q John was in the Army?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And part of being in the Army is staying in shape,
21 correct?

22 A Yes.

23 Q John was under orders to be in shape, correct?

24 A I don't know.

25 Q But oftentimes, what he would do is he would go back

1 in the woods and he would go running, right?

2 A He had a gym in one of the extra bedrooms.

3 Q But oftentimes, he would go back in the woods and he
4 would go running, wouldn't he?

5 A Sometimes.

6 Q Sometimes. All right. Now, again, that second
7 interview you did on October 28th of 2016, law enforcement
8 asked you about John going running. Do you remember that?

9 A I don't remember.

10 Q Okay. And so today, you don't remember talking to
11 law enforcement about John going running in the woods?

12 A No, that was eight years ago.

13 Q It was. That's fair.

14 (WHEREUPON, an unmarked video was played in open
15 court.)

16 BY MR. NEELY:

17 Q All right. So that's what you told law enforcement
18 eight years ago, right?

19 A Yes.

20 Q That he goes out there running a lot?

21 A Yes.

22 Q So for him to go out running in the woods, that's not
23 unusual for John?

24 A No.

25 Q And he would go for hours at a time, wouldn't he,

1 when he would go?

2 A I didn't pay attention.

3 Q Okay. When he came up out of the woods on the 24th
4 of October, he was sweaty?

5 A Yes.

6 Q He was out of breath?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Take your time. You can get some water if you need
9 it?

10 A I'm all right.

11 Q Okay. Were his clothes bloody?

12 A Not that I saw.

13 Q Outside of being sweaty and out of breath, nothing
14 else was unusual about his clothes, were they? Not that
15 you saw?

16 A He didn't have a T-shirt on underneath.

17 Q Right, but nothing he was wearing was covered in
18 blood?

19 A Not that I could tell.

20 Q Okay. The day that Cati's body was found, you were
21 at work?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And John was at work?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And John sent you a text message, right?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And he said, I need to talk to you?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And you were busy at the moment, right?

5 A Yes.

6 Q But, eventually, y'all spoke on the phone, correct?

7 A Yes, on my lunch break.

8 Q On your lunch break, you were able to talk on the
9 phone?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And that's when John told you that it was Cati's body
12 that had been found?

13 A Yes.

14 Q So John's the one that told you that Cati's body had
15 been found?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And then for 15 minutes, y'all comforted each other?

18 A Probably less than that.

19 Q Less than that?

20 A Probably five to ten minutes on the phone.

21 Q But it was an emotional conversation?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Both of you were emotional?

24 A Yes.

25 Q John was crying?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Later on, before you left, he told you that he was
3 afraid of being --

4 MR. MEADORS: Objection.

5 THE COURT: What's the basis?

6 MR. MEADORS: Self-serving hearsay.

7 THE COURT: Sustained.

8 BY MR. NEELY:

9 Q John never asked you to hide Hannah in the attic, did
10 he?

11 A No.

12 Q Did you ever hide Hannah in the attic?

13 A No.

14 MR. NEELY: One moment, Your Honor.

15 (Pause.)

16 BY MR. NEELY:

17 Q Again, you would have done anything to help law
18 enforcement, wouldn't you?

19 A Yes.

20 Q As a matter of fact, you offered to let them come and
21 search your house, correct?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And they never took you up on that, did they?

24 A No.

25 MR. NEELY: All right. Nothing further, Your Honor.

1 THE COURT: Any redirect?

2 MR. MEADORS: Very briefly.

3 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

4 BY MR. MEADORS:

5 Q You told law enforcement at 4:56, Cati's car came in,
6 correct?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And he stopped it right there. But the last word you
9 said looking out the window, that was definitely Cati's
10 car?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Was there any question if your mind that was Cati's
13 car?

14 A No.

15 Q And did you tell law enforcement after that,
16 15 minutes after that, he comes running through the back?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And his dog wasn't with him, was he?

19 A No.

20 Q He usually ran with his dog, right?

21 A Yes.

22 Q His dog was not with him?

23 A No.

24 Q And he asked you about what he was wearing and you
25 said he didn't have a T-shirt. He didn't have a T-shirt

1 on?

2 A No.

3 Q So it was just the sweating and the hoodie?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And he might have said both previously, one or the
6 other?

7 A Right.

8 Q And did you tell law enforcement that Cati had his
9 phone -- I'm sorry, I apologize.

10 Did you tell them that Hannah Thompson had John
11 Blauvelt's phone?

12 A Yes.

13 Q He had his phone [sic] and you told them that,
14 correct?

15 A I'm sorry.

16 Q Did you tell law enforcement -- he's asking about
17 your statement that Hannah had his phone when she was
18 there?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And it's after that you saw the car come in?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Did the car leave?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Him come running on the side?

25 A Yes.

1 Q And after that, you and Brandon went to your room?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Do you know when and where John Blauvelt -- if and
4 when John Blauvelt left?

5 A No.

6 Q You don't when he came back?

7 A No.

8 Q You saw him later on that night, correct?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And you saw them together?

11 A Yes.

12 MR. MEADORS: Thank you. That's all.

13 THE COURT: Any recross?

14 MR. NEELY: Briefly, Your Honor.

15 RECROSS-EXAMINATION

16 BY MR. NEELY:

17 Q Oftentimes, John would go running in the woods with
18 Marly, right?

19 A Yes.

20 Q On the day of the 24th, Marly was sick, wasn't she?

21 A I suppose. I remember something about that, but I
22 don't remember what day it was.

23 Q Well, you -- again, in this interview that you did on
24 the 28th of October, do you remember telling the officer
25 that Marly was really, really sick and had had a big

1 accident all over the house?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And that's why John wasn't running in the woods that
4 day with Marly?

5 A I don't know.

6 Q Again, we can go back to your interview, but does
7 that sound like what you had told law enforcement?

8 A Yes.

9 Q Okay. Now, again, Mr. Meadors asked you about John
10 not wearing a T-shirt underneath the black jacket that
11 day. Law enforcement asked you that same question, right?
12 Do you remember talking to law enforcement about this?

13 A I'm sure I did.

14 Q Right. And you told them, oftentimes, when he would
15 go running in the woods, he would not wear a T-shirt under
16 his jacket. He would often wear just the jacket?

17 A I don't know.

18 Q Well, eight years ago, they asked you this question
19 and that's what you said. Would it help to see the video?

20 A I believe you.

21 MR. NEELY: Okay. Nothing further.

22 THE COURT: Anything else, Mr. Meadors?

23 MR. MEADORS: No, sir.

24 THE COURT: All right. You may step down.

25 Thank you.

1 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

2 THE COURT: Next witness.

3 MR. MEADORS: I'd like to spell this, please.

4 M-I-L-A-D, last name, Y-O-U-S-S-E-F. Milad Youssef.

5 THE CLERK: Mr. Youssef, please, come forward.

6 If you'll, please, pause at the end of the bench,
7 place your left hand on the Bible and raise your right
8 hand.

9 WHEREUPON,

10 MILAD YOUSSEF,

11 after first having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

12 THE CLERK: Thank you.

13 Please be seated.

14 And, please, state your name for the record.

15 THE WITNESS: My name is Milad Youssef.

16 THE COURT: Get up as close as you can.

17 Thank you.

18 DIRECT EXAMINATION

19 BY MR. MEADORS:

20 Q Good afternoon.

21 A Yes, sir.

22 Q Mr. Youssef.

23 A Yes, sir.

24 Q John Meadors.

25 A Nice to see you.

1 Q I think Mr. Ellis and I came and saw you a few weeks
2 back at the store. Do you remember?

3 A Yes, sir.

4 Q Okay. How long have you been in Greenville?

5 A About ten years.

6 Q And what kind of business are you in?

7 A Dealership, buying cars, selling cars.

8 Q And what's the name of your dealership?

9 A Joe's Auto.

10 Q Where is that located?

11 A 350 White Horse Road, Greenville --

12 Q I'm sorry, sir, say it one more time.

13 A 350 White Horse Road, Greenville, 29605.

14 Q Okay. Thank you.

15 And you've been in business there for how long?

16 A About ten years.

17 Q At some point, did you install security cameras?

18 A Yes, sir.

19 Q And how many cameras do you have on your business?

20 A About four or six.

21 Q And this is Joe's Auto?

22 A Yes, sir.

23 Q Okay. And back on November 4th of 2016, do you
24 remember when the police came to see you?

25 A Yes, sir.

1 Q Nothing bad, was it?

2 A No.

3 Q And do you remember signing a consent to search?

4 A Yes, sir.

5 Q When we came to see you, you still -- you've still
6 got it with you?

7 A Yes, sir.

8 Q You had it up on your board?

9 A Yes, sir.

10 Q Did you have any problem cooperating with law
11 enforcement?

12 A No.

13 Q And on November 4th, 2016, did they ask to take your
14 security films?

15 A Yes, sir, and I agreed.

16 Q And tell the ladies and gentlemen, actually, how did
17 you do that? What did you do?

18 A Well, when I came down there, he tried to copy and
19 asked me was there another one. I give him permission to
20 take it and he buy me a new one.

21 Q So instead of just taking the system or video itself,
22 they took your whole system?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And you agreed to do that?

25 A Yes, sir.

1 Q In exchange, they got you another system?

2 A Yes, sir, a new one.

3 Q So on November 4th, 2016 --

4 MR. MEADORS: This is State's Exhibit No. 65 we'd
5 offer without objection, Your Honor.

6 THE COURT: No objection?

7 MR. NEELY: No objection.

8 THE COURT: All right. State's Exhibit No. 65
9 admitted into evidence without objection.

10 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit No. 65 was admitted into
11 evidence.)

12 BY MR. MEADORS:

13 Q Is that when you signed that you didn't have a
14 problem with them consenting?

15 A Yes, sir.

16 Q And at some point, did you give them that system?

17 A I did.

18 Q And do you remember when you gave it to them?

19 A 11/4/2016.

20 Q So November 4th of 2016, you gave them your video
21 system?

22 A Yes, sir.

23 Q Voluntarily?

24 A Yes, sir.

25 Q And they gave you another one?

1 A Yes, sir, brand new.

2 Q Brand new?

3 A Yes, sir.

4 Q Mr. Youssef, I've just got a couple more questions.

5 A Yes, sir.

6 Q I'm showing you what's marked as State's Exhibit No.
7 64 just for identification at this point. Do you
8 recognize anything in State's Exhibit No. 64?

9 A This is my building at the front.

10 Q Yes, sir, is that your building?

11 A Yes, sir.

12 Q Is this White Horse Road?

13 A Yes, sir.

14 Q And the cameras were on this building?

15 A Yes, sir.

16 Q And were they shooting across the street?

17 A Yes, sir.

18 Q But that's your building in the top of State's
19 Exhibit No. 64?

20 A Yes, sir.

21 Q And just so -- we can't show it to the jury yet, but
22 are there cars kind of behind the fence there?

23 A Yes, across the street.

24 Q Across the street?

25 A Yes, sir.

1 Q And since you've got cameras, are you locked up at
2 night?

3 A Yes, sir.

4 MR. MEADORS: Mr. Youssef, thank you for being here.

5 THE COURT: All right. Any cross?

6 MR. NEELY: No cross, Your Honor.

7 THE COURT: All right. You may step down. Thank
8 you, sir.

9 Next witness.

10 MS. ABEE: Thank you, Your Honor.

11 The State calls Blake Wolfe.

12 THE CLERK: Mr. Wolfe, if you'll, please, come
13 forward.

14 Please pause at the end of the bench, place your left
15 hand on the Bible and raise your right hand.

16 WHEREUPON,

17 BLAKE WOLFE,

18 after first having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

19 THE CLERK: Thank you.

20 Please be seated.

21 And would you, please, state your name for the
22 record?

23 THE WITNESS: Blake Wolfe.

24 THE CLERK: Thank you, sir.

25 DIRECT EXAMINATION

1 BY MS. ABEE:

2 Q Thank you, Mr. Wolfe.

3 Go ahead and introduce yourself to the jury and let
4 them know what you do for a living.

5 A My name is Blake Wolfe. I'm a homicide investigator
6 with the Greenville County Sheriff's Office.

7 Q And if you could, tell us a little bit about your law
8 enforcement history or background, how long you've been
9 involved.

10 A I began my career at the Greenville County Detention
11 Center and then I moved to the Greenville County
12 Department of Public Safety. I worked in forensics for a
13 few years before I came to the sheriff's office.

14 Q And how many years total have you been involved in
15 law enforcement?

16 A A little over 11.

17 Q And do you recall what years you were involved in
18 forensics?

19 A Yes, ma'am.

20 Q Okay. And what was that year range?

21 A I want to say '13 to '19.

22 Q So in October of 2016, were you involved with
23 Greenville County forensics?

24 A Yes, ma'am.

25 Q And at any point in time, were you asked to process

1 some vehicles in regards to this case?

2 A Yes, ma'am.

3 Q Okay. How many cars were you asked to process?

4 A Two.

5 Q And what were those cars?

6 A One was a white Ford Fiesta and the other was a
7 Chrysler 200, I believe.

8 Q And I'm going to ask you, do you have your report
9 with you?

10 A I do.

11 Q I just want you to check the color of that Ford
12 Fiesta for us.

13 A The Ford Fiesta was black.

14 Q So black Ford Fiesta. And then I'm going to show you
15 what's been already entered into evidence as State's
16 Exhibit No. 61. Is that the Chrysler that you're talking
17 about?

18 A Yes, ma'am, that's the Chrysler.

19 Q And what color is the Chrysler?

20 A White.

21 Q So black Ford Fiesta and white Chrysler. Talk to us
22 a little bit about processing vehicles. What all do you
23 do?

24 A So it begins with -- well, it all begins with the
25 circumstance. And both these vehicles were already

1 secured at a police storage facility. So I'm going to
2 start with obtaining photographs of the vehicle and just
3 documenting the vehicle as it is. We have a process of
4 always sealing vehicles with red evidence tape before we
5 tow them. So I'm going to make sure the tape is still on
6 the vehicle. We do that just like we would do any package
7 of evidence to make sure it hasn't been opened or
8 disturbed in any way.

9 After I photographed the vehicle -- what happens next
10 depends on a case-by-case basis. And you speak with the
11 investigators working the case because every crime is
12 different. Sometimes we process the victim's vehicle,
13 sometimes we process the suspect vehicle. So how we treat
14 each vehicle after that depends. But we're always going
15 to start with photographs, DNA, search and then you'll do
16 latent prints.

17 Q Okay. And is this all stuff that you had ample
18 training in at the point in time you processed vehicles in
19 this case?

20 A Yes, ma'am.

21 Q And I'm going to approach and show you what has been
22 pre-marked as State's Exhibit No. 63 and 64. And do
23 recognize the vehicle in State's Exhibit No. 63 and 64?

24 A Yes, ma'am, that's the Ford Fiesta.

25 Q And is this a fair and accurate representation of the

1 Ford Fiesta that you processed?

2 A Yes, ma'am.

3 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, the State moves State's
4 Exhibit Nos. 63 and 64 into evidence.

5 THE COURT: Any objection?

6 MR. NEELY: None, Your Honor.

7 THE COURT: All right. State's Exhibit Nos. 63 and
8 64 are moved into evidence without objection.

9 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit Nos. 63 and 64 were
10 admitted into evidence.)

11 MS. ABEE: Permission to publish?

12 THE COURT: Yes.

13 BY MS. ABEE:

14 Q Looking here at State's Exhibit No. 63, is this the
15 black Ford Fiesta that you processed?

16 A Yes, ma'am.

17 Q But you didn't process it here, right? You were back
18 in a security facility, I think is what you had told us?

19 A Yes, ma'am, at the Simpsonville Police Department.

20 Q And you said that the car is, typically, taped off
21 prior to you processing it to make sure nothing had been
22 opened or changed or anything like that. If that tape was
23 broken, if that seal was broken, would you have processed
24 the vehicle?

25 A I would have still processed the vehicle, but we

1 would document it.

2 Q So you would have documented that that seal was
3 broken. Was the seal broken in this case?

4 A No, ma'am.

5 Q And talk to us a little bit about kind of a physical
6 description of the outside of this car, what you noticed.

7 A The vehicle was pretty dirty and dusty as far as the
8 exterior of the vehicle.

9 Q And I'm going to show you what's been entered as
10 State's Exhibit No. 64. Was there a back license plate on
11 this car when you saw it?

12 A No, ma'am, there was no license plate.

13 Q So if there was a license plate, it had been removed?

14 A Yes, ma'am.

15 Q So talk to us a little bit about your processing of
16 this black Ford Fiesta.

17 A Yes, ma'am. So with this vehicle, I began with, like
18 I said, photographs. I did DNA swabs on the interior and
19 exterior doors, the gear shifter, steering wheel, the turn
20 signal. I found a few areas that I thought could possibly
21 be suspected blood. I tested them with Phenolphthalein
22 kit and they were all negative.

23 Let's see. I did tape lifts on the vehicle. And
24 then I collected some other items out of the vehicle, like
25 a water bottle, pocket knife, the victim's purse that

1 contained various items, some Victoria Secret underwear.

2 Q All right. Let's walk through that just a little
3 bit. First, you say DNA swabs. Walk us through the
4 process of you collecting those DNA swabs. What do you
5 do?

6 A Yes, ma'am. So a DNA swab, basically, looks like a
7 Q-tip. We put sterile water on the end of the DNA swab
8 and then you rub it pretty forcefully over the area you're
9 trying to collect DNA from. That can pick up skin cells
10 as well as oil from your hands when you touch it.

11 Q And once you take that swab, what do you do with it?

12 A So it's then sealed in a container that it comes in.
13 We seal it with evidence tape and mark it, initial it.
14 And, ultimately, it would go to our property and evidence.

15 Q And what are the initials that you would have put on
16 those swabs?

17 A BW.

18 Q And so you did that at several different areas on
19 this particular car?

20 A Yes, ma'am.

21 Q And then I think you said there's some areas that you
22 kind of tested to see if they were blood, but they
23 weren't, right?

24 A Yes, ma'am.

25 Q And the next thing you said that you did is do some

1 tape lifts. Walk us through the process of doing tape
2 lifts and what you're looking for there.

3 A Yes, ma'am. So tape lifts can be used to recover any
4 type of trace evidence, whether it's hairs, fiber, any
5 type of debris. We use a piece of tape that dissolves in
6 water. So you just take the tape and you stick the sticky
7 into the item -- to the area where you're trying to obtain
8 the trace evidence. And then if the tape -- the items
9 that are tested, you just put it in water and the tape
10 dissolves.

11 Q And what's the process of obtaining latent prints off
12 an item?

13 A So that's usually the last thing we do. We use a
14 latent print kit. Depending on the item we process,
15 depends on the brushes and powders that are used.
16 Sometimes we lift prints with tape, other times we
17 photograph it. If it's lifted with tape, we put it on the
18 back of a latent print card and we fill out the card and
19 document where that latent print came from.

20 Q So did you take tape lifts in this particular case?

21 A Yes, ma'am.

22 Q And I'm sorry, I mean latent print lifts in this
23 case?

24 A Yes, ma'am.

25 Q Can you tell us the items or the areas of the car

1 which you lifted latent prints?

2 A Yes, ma'am. I recovered latent prints from the gas
3 tank, the rear passenger side quarter panel, interior of
4 the rear driver's door, exterior of the rear driver's door
5 handle, exterior of the driver's door, exterior of the
6 front driver's door, passenger side mirror and the
7 exterior of the front passenger door.

8 Q Okay. So we're looking at places that people would
9 typically touch; is that fair to say?

10 A Yes, ma'am.

11 Q So you're looking at door handles, gas tanks, things
12 like that?

13 A Yes, ma'am.

14 Q And once you get those latent print lifts, you send
15 them off to be examined; is that fair?

16 A Yes, ma'am.

17 Q All right. And then you, also, stated that you
18 collected items from inside of this vehicle. I'm going to
19 approach you with what's been pre-marked as State's
20 Exhibit No. 66. Do you recognize that?

21 A Yes, ma'am.

22 Q And does that fairly and accurately depict an item
23 you seized from the car?

24 A Yes, ma'am.

25 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, the State moves State's

1 Exhibit No. 66 into evidence.

2 THE COURT: Any objection?

3 MR. NEELY: No, Your Honor.

4 THE COURT: State's Exhibit is admitted into evidence
5 without objection.

6 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit No. 66 was admitted into
7 evidence.)

8 MS. ABEE: Permission to publish, Your Honor?

9 THE COURT: You may.

10 BY MS. ABEE:

11 Q Let me show you State's Exhibit No. 66. This is a
12 wallet found in the car?

13 A Yes, ma'am.

14 Q Can you see the name of the driver's license in this
15 wallet?

16 A Yes, ma'am.

17 Q Who is that?

18 A That's the victim in this case, Catherine Blauvelt,
19 if I'm pronouncing her name correctly.

20 Q So that was collected in that black Ford Fiesta?

21 A Yes, ma'am.

22 Q You talked about the outside of the car being pretty
23 dirty. Do you mean mud, dust? What kind of dirty do you
24 mean?

25 A It looked like it hadn't been washed in a while.

1 There was a lot of dust on the black paint and then the
2 tires were really dirty as well.

3 Q What about the inside of the car?

4 A There was items thrown throughout the vehicle, just
5 very disorganized.

6 Q And then aside from processing Ms. Blauvelt's car,
7 you, also, processed this white Chrysler car; is that
8 right?

9 A Yes, ma'am.

10 Q And do you do kind of the same process you just
11 walked us through, swabbing for DNA, lifting prints,
12 collecting items; is that fair?

13 A Yes, ma'am.

14 Q So you did the full processing of another vehicle as
15 well, right?

16 A Yes, ma'am.

17 Q And when you come in from forensics, is it fair to
18 say that you're not there to solve the case or make
19 investigative decisions or do anything like that?

20 A That's correct.

21 Q You're there merely to collect forensic evidence?

22 A That's correct.

23 Q And even though we can collect forensic evidence, the
24 forensic evidence you collect, you can't put a time stamp
25 on it, right?

1 A That's right.

2 Q Not from the collection itself; is that fair?

3 A Yes, ma'am.

4 Q So any of the latent prints that were lifted from
5 there could have been left there that day or several days
6 prior; is that fair?

7 A That's correct.

8 Q Same with any of the other DNA or anything like that
9 in the car?

10 A Yes, ma'am.

11 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, may I have one minute?

12 THE COURT: Uh-huh.

13 (Pause.)

14 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, I have no further questions.

15 THE COURT: Cross?

16 MR. NEELY: Yes, sir, Your Honor.

17 CROSS-EXAMINATION

18 BY MR. NEELY:

19 Q Good morning, Investigator Wolfe.

20 A Good morning.

21 Q How are you doing?

22 A Good. Thank you.

23 Q Just a couple questions about the processing of Ms.
24 Blauvelt's car?

25 A Yes, sir.

1 Q You said -- I believe you just testified that when
2 you went through, you noticed spots that were suspected
3 blood, correct?

4 A Yes, sir.

5 Q And then you tested them with?

6 A A Phenolphthalein presumptive test kit.

7 Q Same as luminol? Is it luminol?

8 A Basically, the same.

9 Q You tested them and they all came back negative?

10 A Yes, sir.

11 Q And there were no other spots that looked remotely
12 like blood that interested you?

13 A No, sir.

14 Q Okay. And then you lifted several latent prints from
15 several areas of this car, correct?

16 A Yes, sir.

17 Q Do you remember how many you collected?

18 A I don't know the exact number, but they were from
19 different areas.

20 Q That's okay. You don't remember the number, right?

21 A Right.

22 Q Do you make the decision about who to compare those
23 fingerprints to?

24 A No, sir.

25 Q That's done at a lab somewhere else?

1 A Yes, sir.

2 Q That's outside of your control. All right. And you
3 said you, also, collected a pair of Victoria Secret
4 panties from the front of the car?

5 A Yes, sir.

6 Q And you don't make the decision to test that evidence
7 either, do you?

8 A No, sir.

9 Q And the last thing Ms. Abee asked you was as far as
10 fingerprints and DNA and this other forensic evidence, the
11 time that it gets there, you don't know that, do you?

12 A No, sir.

13 MR. NEELY: Nothing further, Your Honor.

14 THE COURT: Any redirect?

15 MS. ABEE: No, Your Honor.

16 THE COURT: All right. You may step down.

17 Anybody on the jury need a short break or anybody
18 need a little short break?

19 (WHEREUPON, there was no response.)

20 THE COURT: Next witness.

21 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, the State calls Tyler Bucholtz
22 to the stand.

23 THE CLERK: Sir, if you'll, please, come forward.

24 Please pause at the end of the bench, place your left
25 hand on the Bible and raise your right hand.

1 WHEREUPON,

2 TYLER BUCHOLTZ,

3 after first having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

4 THE CLERK: Thank you.

5 Please be seated.

6 And, please, state your name for the record.

7 THE WITNESS: Tyler Bucholtz.

8 THE CLERK: Thank you.

9 DIRECT EXAMINATION

10 BY MS. ABEE:

11 Q Go ahead and spell that last name for us.

12 A It's B-U-C-H-O-L-T-Z.

13 Q And go ahead and tell us a little bit about what you
14 do for a living and your background in doing that.

15 A I currently work for Greenville County forensics.
16 I'm the lieutenant of the crime scene unit. Prior to
17 that, I was in the latent prints section for 11 years and
18 I was doing crime scene work for two years prior to that.
19 And I began my law enforcement career in 2005 with
20 probation and parole.

21 Q And you talked a little bit about being in the latent
22 print division for a while. What years were you in latent
23 prints?

24 A From 2011 to 2022.

25 Q So would you have been there in 2016?

1 A Yes.

2 Q All right. Go ahead and tell us about your
3 educational background and your training in regards to
4 latent print examination?

5 A I have a Bachelor's Degree in criminal justice. And
6 I was hired into the forensic division in 2009. And --
7 and from there in the crime scene unit for those two years
8 is kind of where I learned the process for latent prints
9 using various chemicals and powders and recognize what a
10 latent print was.

11 In 2011 is when I transferred to the latent prints
12 section. And for the first year over there, it was kind
13 of apprentice-style training where everything I did was
14 looked at by another latent examiner. We went over
15 everything from the history of latent prints and how the
16 ridges are developed on fingers to examination,
17 distortion, all types of things dealing with latent print
18 examination.

19 So that first year was apprentice-style training.
20 And then I, also, got over 580 hours of formal classroom
21 training, which is related to latent print analysis
22 examination and processing.

23 Q How many latent print examinations would you say
24 you've conducted throughout your career?

25 A I've conducted over 880,000 comparisons.

1 Q And these comparisons that you do, are they peer
2 reviewed at all?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And explain that proces to us.

5 A Any time we make an identification, another examiner
6 or senior examiner will look at those. And they would
7 look at the entire case and see number one, did we miss
8 anything. Because it's -- sometimes, it can be like doing
9 a puzzle and you might not have seen that piece that fit
10 in there. So they look to see if we missed anything. But
11 they, also, look to see what was identified and if our
12 conclusions were accurate based on the data.

13 Q So somebody kind of checks your work; is that fair to
14 say?

15 A Correct.

16 Q And throughout your career, Lieutenant Bucholtz, have
17 you ever testified in court?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Have you ever been qualified as an expert?

20 A Yes, 14 times with the State and once with federal.

21 Q And is that in the area of latent print examinations?

22 A Yes.

23 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, at this time, the State moves
24 Lieutenant Tyler Bucholtz as an expert in the area of
25 latent print examination.

1 THE COURT: All right. Any objection from the
2 Defendant?

3 MR. NEELY: None, Your Honor.

4 THE COURT: All right. The witness will be qualified
5 in the area of latent print examinations.

6 Ladies and gentlemen, as I mentioned the other day,
7 any witness who is qualified as an expert is allowed to
8 give an opinion. Witnesses only can give facts, what they
9 see, smell or observe. So the rules allow an expert
10 witness to give an opinion. He has been qualified as an
11 expert, but as I mentioned the other day, you are to judge
12 the credibility of all the witnesses.

13 MS. ABEE: Thank you, Judge.

14 BY MS. ABEE:

15 Q And Lieutenant, if you could, kind of walk us through
16 the process of examining a latent print lift?

17 A Well, the first thing we do when we get latent prints
18 is we check to see if everything was filled out on the
19 envelope and on the fingerprint card. And then turn it
20 over and look at the actual impression that was lifted.
21 And I look for the quality and quantity. So is there
22 enough there to actually compare to anything and is it
23 good enough quality or is it smudged? Because you could
24 have a very good quality print as far as no smudges, it's
25 very clear, but it's just very tiny. Or you could have a

1 very large area, like a palm print, but it slid across the
2 surface and it's smudged and there's not enough detail for
3 us to look at. So we first check the quality and if there
4 is someone to compare, we'll make the comparison.

5 Q So is it fair to say that not all latent print lifts
6 are created equal?

7 A Yes.

8 Q So even though a lift is taken, does that mean you
9 have sufficient detail for interpretation?

10 A No, not always.

11 Q And when I say that phrase, sufficient detail for
12 interpretation, that means is there enough detail, can you
13 see enough things to try to make a match or comparison?

14 A Right. And those things are either ridge endings or
15 bifurcations. Because if you look at your hands, you can
16 see the ridges on your fingers. And they're not just
17 straight lines. They stop, they end, they divide. So
18 they are very unique in the way the ridge flows.

19 Q So, hypothetically, if somebody, a forensic
20 technician took 50 latent print lifts from a vehicle, not
21 all 50 of those could be suitable for interpretation or to
22 be compared, right?

23 A Correct.

24 Q And so then once you kind of divide the ones that can
25 be looked at and the ones that can't, what's the next

1 step?

2 A So if there is someone to compare, at that point, I
3 would -- I normally sort them out with fingers and palms.
4 And then I will compare the fingers to the person that was
5 given to us, which, normally, if a name is provided and we
6 have a fingerprint card to compare, we look at that and
7 see if the features present in the latent prints are
8 present in the known prints that were recorded from the
9 person that was submitted. And I'll usually
10 systematically do that with fingers first and then check
11 the palms just because usually palms take longer because
12 there's more surface area. It's sometimes harder to
13 determine where it's from with a palm.

14 Q And does everybody have the same types of ridge
15 detailing in their fingertips or are there different
16 classifications that you're looking at?

17 A Well, everybody has ridge detail, but it is unique to
18 each person. And all ten of your fingers are different
19 from each other. So there are similar pattern types,
20 like, loops, arches and whirls, which everyone shares, but
21 the discriminating features are where those ridges end and
22 divide. And that's what makes it unique. So multiple
23 people could have loops or arches, but just not any
24 ridges, in that sequence.

25 Q So is it fair to say that when you first get a lift

1 and you have a comparison, you're first kind of looking to
2 see if the pattern types are the same, right, these loops,
3 arches, whirls? And if they're not the same, you exclude
4 them? .

5 A That is one way, yeah. As long as there's not a lot
6 of distortion, you can exclude based on a pattern type in
7 some situations.

8 Q And then you told us that you started looking for, I
9 believe you said bifurcations?

10 A Bifurcations and ridge endings.

11 Q Explain to us what that is.

12 A So, like I said, if you look at your hand, you can
13 see those ridges on there. Those ridges are kind of -- if
14 we talk about a loop, it will come in -- the ridges will
15 come in from one side, they loop around and then go back
16 out the same side that they came in. A lot of times on
17 the right hand, those will go to the right. If you roll
18 your fingerprint, the loop goes to the right.

19 I look at that and first look at the pattern type to
20 narrow down what fingers I'm looking at. And then along
21 those lines that loop around -- like I said earlier, those
22 ridges can end. So a ridge might come up and stop and
23 then the other two ridges fill in around it. So -- and if
24 I showed you a picture, it probably would make more sense,
25 but they're not just straight lines.

1 But once we see those, I look for what we call a
2 focal point, so maybe four or five areas where I see those
3 ridge endings and bifurcations and sequence. I'm kind of
4 looking for that same pattern in the known fingerprints.
5 If I find that in one, then I kind of branch out from
6 those four or five and go out further until I've looked at
7 the entire impression that I've got against the entire
8 known print. And if all that is in sequence, then I can
9 make a conclusion.

10 Q All right. I'm going to talk a little bit about some
11 of the comparisons that you were able to make in this
12 case, then I'm going to go back to a little bit more about
13 fingerprints in general. But let's talk a little bit
14 about this case.

15 Now, were you asked to review some latent lifts that
16 were taken from a 2015 Chrysler in this case?

17 A I believe so. Can I pull this file out?

18 Q Go ahead.

19 A Yes, I believe there was a Chrysler 200. Yes.

20 Q Okay. And tell us about the identifying -- the
21 matches you were able to make in regards to that car?

22 A Do you want to hear each one of them individually?

23 Q If you can tell us whose fingerprints were connected
24 to that car.

25 A Okay. Do you want the areas?

1 Q That's fine.

2 A Okay. There were ten known prints that were
3 identified as being made by Franklin Roper. One was from
4 the exterior front driver's door. And that was his number
5 one or his right thumb.

6 Let me get these in order and this will go a little
7 quicker. All right. And then latent lift number seven
8 was from the exterior front passenger door. And that was
9 Franklin Roper's number eight finger, which is the left
10 middle finger. Latent lift number 13 was the left palm of
11 Franklin Roper. And that's from the exterior rear
12 passenger door. Latent lift 25 was the exterior rear
13 passenger door, was the right palm of Franklin Roper.
14 Latent lift 16 was from the exterior rear passenger door.
15 That was the right palm of Franklin Roper.

16 The exterior front passenger door was latent lift
17 number nine. And that was identified as the number seven,
18 the left index finger of Franklin Roper. Latent lift
19 number eight from the exterior front passenger door was
20 the number two and three. So the right index and right
21 middle finger of Franklin Roper.

22 The exterior rear passenger door was latent lift
23 number 11. That was the right palm of Franklin Roper.
24 And latent lift number 12 from the exterior rear passenger
25 door was identified as the left palm of Franklin Roper.

1 And I believe I said 23 already.

2 Q I believe so.

3 A All right. And latent lift number 14 was the number
4 eight and nine fingers, the left middle and left ring
5 fingers of Franklin Roper.

6 Q So in regards to the Chrysler, we've got Franklin
7 Roper's fingerprints all over the 2015 Chrysler?

8 A Right, ten identifications.

9 Q Go ahead.

10 A And then there are 11 to Richard Hargrove. So latent
11 lift number one was from the hood. And that's the number
12 six finger, the left thumb of Franklin -- or Richard
13 Hargrove. Number six was, also, from the hood. It's the
14 right thumb of Richard Hargrove. Number 22 was from the
15 exterior rear driver's door. And that's the number nine
16 of the left ring finger of Richard Hargrove.

17 Latent lift 26 was from the interior front driver
18 door frame. That's the number two right index finger of
19 Richard Hargrove. Latent lift 28 is from the exterior
20 front driver door. That's the number five, the right ring
21 finger of Richard Hargrove. Latent lift 27 is from the
22 exterior front driver's door. And that's identified as
23 number two, the right index finger of Richard Hargrove.

24 Latent lift three is, also, from the hood. And that
25 was identified as the left palm of Richard Hargrove.

1 Latent lift 18 is from the gas tank lid. And that was the
2 right palm of Richard Hargrove. Lift 17 is, also, from
3 the gas tank lid and the right palm of Richard Hargrove.
4 Latent lift five is from the hood and is the right palm of
5 Richard Hargrove. And latent lift four is from the hood
6 and it's the right palm of Richard Hargrove.

7 So there's 11 to Richard Hargrove.

8 Q And on any of those latent lifts that you examined
9 from the Chrysler, did you match any of those to Cati
10 Blauvelt from that Chrysler?

11 A No.

12 Q Okay. So we've got Richard Hargrove, Franklin
13 Roper's prints all over kind of that Chrysler, but none of
14 Cati Blauvelt?

15 A Correct.

16 Q All right. Now, I want to switch and talk a little
17 bit about the 2011 Ford Fiesta prints that you examined.
18 And kind of walk us through what prints you were able --
19 were sufficient for interpretation and comparison, kind of
20 what you found.

21 A There were 16 latents submitted from the Ford Fiesta
22 and they were compared to Chyanne Paxton and Catherine
23 Boyter Blauvelt. And latent number one was from the gas
24 tank lid. It was identified as being made by the number
25 seven and eight, so the left index and left middle fingers

1 of Catherine Blauvelt. And then latent number two is not
2 identified or matched to anybody. Neither were four or
3 five.

4 Latent number six -- I'm sorry, neither was three or
5 four. Latent number five was from the rear driver's door
6 interior. It was identified as being made by number three
7 and four fingers, the right middle and the right index
8 fingers -- or ring fingers of Catherine Boyter Blauvelt.

9 Latent six is from the exterior rear driver door
10 handle. And that was identified as being made by the
11 number one, the right thumb finger of Catherine Boyter
12 Blauvelt. Latent number seven was not identified. Eight
13 was not identified. Nine was not identified.

14 Latent lift number ten was from the exterior front
15 driver's door and was identified as number four, the right
16 ring finger of Catherine Boyter Blauvelt. 11 and 12 were
17 not identified. 13 was from the exterior front passenger
18 door, was identified as the number three, the right ring
19 finger of Chyanne Paxton.

20 Latent lift 14 is from the exterior passenger door,
21 was identified as the number three, right middle finger of
22 Chyanne Paxton. Latent lift 15 is from the exterior front
23 passenger door. And it is the number two, right index
24 finger of Chyanne Paxton. Latent lift number 16 is from
25 the exterior front passenger door. And it was the right

1 index finger, the number two finger of Chyanne Paxton.

2 Q All right. So the prints you were able to match, you
3 matched to Cati Blauvelt and a Chyanne Paxton; is that
4 right?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Now, lift numbers two, three, four, seven, eight,
7 nine, 11 and 12, you said were unable to be matched?

8 A Correct.

9 Q All right. Were you only comparing those
10 fingerprints to Chyanne Paxton and Cati Blauvelt?

11 A No.

12 Q Okay. Who else were you comparing those to?

13 A I, also, compared John Blauvelt, Richard Hargrove,
14 Franklin Roper and Charles Scott.

15 Q And so two, three, four, seven, eight, nine, 11 and
16 12 didn't match any of those people?

17 A Correct.

18 Q Okay. Talk to us a little bit now about how somebody
19 leaves or doesn't leave a fingerprint on a surface.

20 Explain to us how that's affected?

21 A Okay. So we already talked about the lines on the
22 fingers. We call them friction ridges. And that's kind
23 of like a rubber stamp and it's unique to each individual.
24 But the ink for that stamp can be the oils or grease from
25 touching your hair or any part of your face or

1 perspiration that comes from the hands. So when you touch
2 a smooth, nonporous surface, you're placing that stamp on
3 that surface.

4 It does very much matter what the surface is. If
5 it's textured, there might not be anything we can find
6 there because the higher peaks of that textured surface
7 where you receive the contact and the lower parts aren't
8 going to be touched. So there can be distortions, may not
9 leave a print on a textured surface.

10 It, also, depends on if your hands are really dry.
11 Some people don't leave prints very easily because their
12 hands are very dry. In the summertime, we get more when
13 people's hand are sweating. So it really depends on kind
14 of the biology of the person as well as the surface
15 they're touching and what might be on their hands,
16 including gloves or any other kind of contaminants.

17 Q So in your expert opinion, is it completely possible
18 that somebody opens up a car door and doesn't leave a
19 print?

20 A It is possible.

21 Q Okay. And is it, also, possible in your expert
22 opinion for somebody to maybe move a gear shifter and not
23 leave a print?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And, obviously, you talked about the skin oils and

1 the dryness of somebody's skin, but if somebody was
2 holding onto something or wearing something that was in
3 between their hand and the item, obviously, they wouldn't
4 leave a print there as well, right?

5 A That's correct. Our technicians wear gloves so we
6 don't leave our own prints on scenes.

7 Q Just like we were talking about, so that creates a
8 barrier so you don't leave any prints?

9 A Correct.

10 Q And when you're comparing these prints, again, you're
11 not the investigating officer, right?

12 A Correct.

13 Q And you don't decide kind of who to compare them to
14 or anything like that, do you?

15 A No.

16 Q Okay. And then even if a print is located, do you
17 have the ability to time frame out when that print was
18 left?

19 A No. There's no scientific way to place a timeline on
20 when a fingerprint was placed.

21 Q Okay. So these lifts, two, three, four, seven,
22 eight, nine, 11 and 12, the ones that we don't have
23 matches on, you can't really tell us when those were
24 placed on the car, right?

25 A No, not based on the fingerprints themselves.

1 Q So a lot of times, what we do is we look at outside
2 circumstances, where has that car been for the possibility
3 of people to touch it; is that fair?

4 A Yes.

5 Q So, for instance, if somebody works in a busy
6 shopping center and a vehicle is left there, then there's
7 the ability for those fingerprints from various shoppers
8 to be left on that car; wouldn't you agree?

9 A It's possible, yes.

10 Q If somebody touched it?

11 A Yes.

12 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, may I have one second?

13 THE COURT: Uh-huh.

14 (Pause.)

15 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, I have no further questions.

16 THE COURT: Cross?

17 MR. NEELY: Thank you, Your Honor.

18 CROSS-EXAMINATION

19 BY MR. NEELY:

20 Q Good afternoon.

21 A Hello.

22 Q How are you doing today?

23 A Pretty good.

24 How are you?

25 Q Good. I want to start with the Chrysler 200 that you

1 tested?

2 A Okay.

3 Q And we don't need to go all the way back through all
4 of the prints. But after you test fingerprints and you
5 get results, you write a report, correct?

6 A Correct.

7 Q And you summarize the results of what you've just
8 done?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And so, you did that in this case, correct?

11 A Yes.

12 Q All right. And so the report that you generated for
13 the prints on the Chrysler 200, you wrote that report
14 around Halloween of 2016?

15 A Yes.

16 Q All right. Now, sometimes a piece of evidence will
17 get overlooked in the evidence locker, right?
18 Occasionally, that might happen?

19 A I mean, I'm sure it's happened somewhere at some
20 point, I'm sure.

21 Q Okay. Well, let's go back to -- you wrote a second
22 report regarding the Chrysler 200 around November 30th of
23 2018.

24 A Uh-huh.

25 Q And that was a print that was overlooked, correct?

1 A So those were two more -- two additional matches on
2 that case during review of the case. It wasn't like it
3 was left out or --

4 Q So you tested everything --

5 A It was. So upon review -- it's like I said earlier,
6 when you're doing a puzzle, sometimes you don't see that
7 particular piece that fits in the puzzle. You come back
8 to it later with fresh eyes, you look and go, oh, it goes
9 right there.

10 So in this case, when I was reviewing it in November
11 of 2018 for trial, I'm assuming, or pre-trial at that
12 point, additional -- two additional identifications were
13 made.

14 Q Okay. So you reviewed your work from previously?

15 A Correct.

16 Q All right. And so there's no amount of times that
17 you can review your work, correct?

18 A Correct.

19 Q And there's not a limit on the number of exemplars
20 that can be submitted to you for comparison, is there?

21 A No, there's not.

22 Q So if somebody wanted to go back at any point in time
23 in the last eight years and send you a new exemplar, they
24 have that option, don't they?

25 A Yes, I could compare it again at any time. And in

1 this case, I was originally supplied with inked
2 fingerprints that were submitted by an investigator, I
3 believe. And then upon review, there was another
4 fingerprint card that was, also, considered. So it's --
5 I'd have to look, but it's possible that the part that I
6 matched the second time was not even present on the
7 original inked prints. So when I looked at the other
8 exemplars, that piece was there.

9 Q Okay. Now, as far as exemplars go, for Franklin
10 Wayne Roper and Richard Hargrove, those were sent over to
11 you as elimination cards, correct?

12 A Yes, rolled -- like, manually inked rolled prints.

13 Q But they labeled for elimination?

14 A Well, they've just got their identifying information
15 on them from -- I believe it has a date. No, it doesn't
16 on the back. But it has their handwritten identification
17 on it.

18 Q Okay. Now, again, two, three, four, seven, eight,
19 nine, 11 and 12 on the black Fiesta, those prints were
20 suitable for comparison, correct?

21 A Are those the ones that were not?

22 Q Matched to anybody, yes, sir.

23 A One second. Let me pull that envelope back out.

24 Two of them are not suitable for comparison, but the
25 other six are.

1 Q Okay. So we've got six prints that are suitable for
2 comparison, but you can only compare to the exemplars that
3 are sent to you, correct?

4 A Manually, yes.

5 Q So if you don't have that information in front of
6 you, you don't have anything to compare them to?

7 A Correct.

8 MR. NEELY: Nothing further.

9 THE COURT: Any redirect?

10 MS. ABEE: No, Your Honor.

11 THE COURT: All right. You may step down.

12 All right. Ladies and gentlemen, I think it's a good
13 time to break for our lunch. So let's be back here at
14 1:30 and then we will resume at that time.

15 Please enjoy your lunch and, please, don't discuss
16 the case.

17 See you then.

18 (WHEREUPON, the jury was excused from open court at
19 approximately 12:08 p.m.)

20 THE COURT: All right. Is there anything we need to
21 take up?

22 MS. ABEE: Judge, the State's next witness in this
23 case will be Investigator Keith Morecraft, former
24 Investigator Keith Morecraft. In speaking with defense
25 counsel, I do believe we have two matters that we need to

1 put on the record. I believe there's going to be some --
2 let me give you way of background, Judge, so you can put
3 this in context a little bit.

4 THE COURT: All right.

5 MS. ABEE: Throughout this investigation, somebody
6 within the jail came forward and said that somebody by the
7 name of Charles Scott, which is a name you've heard once
8 or twice mentioned in here. Somebody by the name of
9 Charles Scott told them that he -- that John Blauvelt
10 killed Cati and that he helped him, that he was there when
11 it happened.

12 THE COURT: Charles Scott told somebody in the jail
13 that the Defendant killed her?

14 MS. ABEE: Yes. And that he, Charles Scott, was
15 there. Okay, so he told -- there's two individuals that
16 were told that throughout this time frame.

17 So once that happened, Investigator Morecraft started
18 looking at the phone logs and the cell phone of the
19 Defendant. There are some calls back and forth with
20 Charles Scott later that night. I think you've heard
21 about a trip to Zaxby's later that night where Charles
22 Scott showed up. I believe Ms. Thompson testified to
23 that.

24 Ultimately, Judge, Charles Scott was brought in, was
25 questioned. He denied -- he denied killing Cati Blauvelt,

1 denied that he was there, said he had never seen or met
2 Cati Blauvelt. Ultimately, Judge, warrants were
3 brought -- were sought by Simpsonville Police Department
4 against Charles Scott for murder for his participation
5 with John Blauvelt per what the inmates said.

6 In 2020, Judge, those warrants were dismissed. The
7 Defendant [sic] pled to obstruction of justice for
8 providing false information to law enforcement about where
9 he was that day. I believe he said that he had a VA
10 meeting and maybe admission thing at Furman and something
11 like that. However, in looking at cell phone data, we
12 were able to show that he was in downtown Greenville as he
13 was making these phone calls to the Defendant. Downtown
14 not being the location of Cati Blauvelt's murder. So he
15 pled guilty to obstruction of justice, Your Honor, and the
16 murder warrants were dismissed.

17 It's my understanding and we can kind of kick it over
18 to Mr. Neely now that since the State made a motion to
19 keep out any reference to third party guilt, we wanted to
20 go ahead and bring this in front of Your Honor because
21 it's my understanding that Mr. Neely intends to
22 cross-examine Investigator Morecraft regarding Charles
23 Scott.

24 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Neely.

25 MR. NEELY: And that's correct, Your Honor. And I've

1 spoken to Ms. Abee about this issue. In speaking with
2 her, I don't think she has any objection to me crossing
3 the investigator on his investigation because it did lead
4 to Charles Scott being arrest and indicted and,
5 ultimately, brought to trial for murder before the charges
6 were dismissed.

7 So I think, again, not going into actually accusing
8 him, so it doesn't rise to the level of third party guilt
9 under our case law, but it goes to the investigation by
10 the lead investigator at the time. So I don't think she's
11 going to object to it.

12 I do think in speaking with her that it opens the
13 door to some other questions that she can ask pertaining
14 to that investigation, specifically, about the jailhouse
15 snitches coming forward. But we just want to put it out
16 there on the record that that is an area that I am going
17 to go into --

18 THE COURT: So you are arguing third party guilt?

19 MR. NEELY: I am not arguing third party guilt. I'm
20 asking him about his investigation.

21 MS. ABEE: So -- and, Judge, again, Mr. Neely is
22 correct that we've talked about this. He's going into the
23 veracity and the integrity of Mr. Morecraft's
24 investigation.

25 THE COURT: He's entitled to do that.

1 MS. ABEE: Correct, Your Honor. Which I did tell Mr.
2 Neely that I thought that that opened the door for me to
3 step in to talk about the fact that those warrants were
4 based on jailhouse informants, that they were, ultimately,
5 dismissed and that he pled to obstruction of justice for
6 lying, not for the murder. And that those statements were
7 based on his involvement of being at the scene with the
8 Defendant, not that it was him independently.

9 I think to not get that in is misleading and it makes
10 it look like somebody else completely separately was
11 arrested for murder, but it is not. The underlying
12 statements were for his involvement with the Defendant in
13 the murder. So I do think if he goes to attack the
14 veracity of the investigation that full picture does, in
15 fact, get to come in through Investigator Morecraft.

16 THE COURT: All right.

17 MR. NEELY: I agree with that.

18 THE COURT: I do, too.

19 MS. ABEE: Okay. Thank you.

20 We wanted to put that up there. Judge, we are going
21 to make one small decision during lunchtime. Once we
22 started redacting out the Defendant's statement yesterday
23 because of the domestic violence because of Your Honor's
24 ruling, it, essentially, guts a lot of the statement. So
25 there may be a -- and I've spoken with Mr. Neely about

1 this. We may move to keep out any reference to the
2 Defendant's statement to law enforcement as it being a
3 self-serving statement, Your Honor. And I have spoken to
4 Mr. Neely.

5 We just want to listen one more time over lunch to
6 make sure we want to make that decision, but wanted to go
7 ahead and bring it to Your Honor. But the Defendant does
8 speak to law enforcement twice on recordings. One is when
9 they notify him of the victim's death. He provides
10 information to law enforcement. Secondly, he comes in on
11 November the second, is Mirandized and provides an
12 additional statement to law enforcement.

13 Your Honor, we would contend, at least, for these
14 purposes right now that those statements are self-serving
15 and would move to keep them out. Obviously, if the
16 Defendant wants to testify, he has the ability to do so.
17 But elicit that through Investigator Morecraft, we believe
18 would be a self-serving statement and should be kept out.

19 MR. NEELY: It's not before the Court now, so I -- I
20 mean, I know she's raising it, but I don't know if this is
21 the proper time.

22 THE COURT: Well, if you're going to try to bring out
23 any testimony from him from any statement, that would be
24 self-serving.

25 MR. NEELY: Right, and it would probably rise to a

1 hearsay objection.

2 THE COURT: It would.

3 MR. NEELY: But, again, we're not at that point yet.

4 MS. ABEE: And again, Judge, we're pretty much there
5 to make the decision, but we just wanted to talk one more
6 time over lunch. But we wanted to go ahead and, at least,
7 alert Your Honor so it wasn't dropped on you after lunch.

8 THE COURT: I appreciate that.

9 MR. MEADORS: And Your Honor, when we get to that
10 point, if we get to that, we just want to keep the
11 question from maybe coming out.

12 THE COURT: Well, I appreciate all of you giving me a
13 heads up on all these issues. I like to get these things
14 done. Instead of having to keep sending the jury in and
15 out, we can handle these things before they're out here in
16 front of us. They helps them and they like it a lot
17 better and we don't have to keep going back and forth.

18 All right. Anything else we need to take up?

19 MS. ABEE: Not from the State, Your Honor.

20 MR. NEELY: Not from the Defense, Your Honor.

21 THE COURT: All right. See you at 1:30.

22 (WHEREUPON, a lunch break was taken.)

23 THE COURT: Anything we need to take up before we
24 bring in the jury?

25 MS. ABEE: Yes, Your Honor. Prior to taking a break,

1 we -- I ask Your Honor for just a minute to be able to
2 consider whether or not to enter the Defendant's
3 statements.

4 THE COURT: Yeah.

5 MS. ABEE: At this time, the State would move to
6 exclude all of the Defendant's statements made to
7 Investigator Morecraft as being self-serving. Your Honor,
8 we do not intend to elicit that he provided statements,
9 simply that he was notified of the death and,
10 subsequently, search warrants were executed on his person
11 for his DNA and stuff like that, but not including any
12 conversation. And we would ask that Defense counsel be
13 ordered to do the same.

14 THE COURT: Mr. Neely.

15 MR. NEELY: As long as I'm allowed to cross on the
16 fact that he did talk to investigators. Not the substance
17 of it, but that he did talk to investigators.

18 MS. ABEE: And, Your Honor, I'm not sure -- again,
19 we're going to defer to Your Honor, but --

20 THE COURT: I don't know the evidence, so y'all have
21 got to clue me in.

22 MS. ABEE: And, Your Honor, he did talk to law
23 enforcement, but I think anything along the lines of he
24 talked to law enforcement, he was cooperative or anything
25 like that I think is self-serving in and of itself, that

1 he was cooperative with law enforcement. That's why we're
2 not even eliciting that he was communicating with them at
3 all. We're not going to say the opposite.

4 THE COURT: What about that, Mr. Neely? I mean, any
5 testimony about him being cooperative?

6 MR. NEELY: Yeah, it probably does cross the line.

7 THE COURT: It does.

8 MR. NEELY: But, again, as long as I'm allowed to say
9 that he did talk to law enforcement. I think I'm allowed
10 to cross on that because it was a part of their
11 investigation. Not the substance of what -- again, saying
12 that he was cooperative goes to the substance of it, I
13 don't want to do that, but saying that he did talk to
14 them.

15 THE COURT: What does the State say on that?

16 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, part of the problem is --
17 certainly respect Your Honor's ruling, but when the DV
18 couldn't come in, that was a lot of the conversation.
19 When we redacted it, we really didn't think it was fair to
20 the State to offer it. So if he implies that, the reason
21 we're not using is because the ruling that we had to
22 redact -- and so -- is he going to be able to argue that,
23 hey, where is the statement? I don't know how far he can
24 take it. That's my only concern.

25 MR. NEELY: I don't want to argue that and I've got

1 no interest in that. It's -- we've heard a lot of
2 testimony so far about the fact that he went to Oregon and
3 that he fled to Oregon and that he lived in Oregon for six
4 years. But the reality is, he talked to law enforcement
5 on the 24th, he talked to law enforcement in November
6 before he left and went to Oregon. And I think evidence
7 has been introduced that he's fled to Oregon. I think the
8 jury is allowed to hear that he did talk to law
9 enforcement prior to --

10 THE COURT: How about that, Ms. Abee? If he -- the
11 testimony is that he went out there and he just fled and
12 nobody knew where he was, he didn't talk to anybody. At
13 least, if there's some testimony that he, at least, talked
14 to someone.

15 MS. ABEE: Right, Judge. And I think Mr. Neely's
16 explanation just showed that they're trying to use it for
17 a self-serving purpose. That they're trying to say, like,
18 he did flee for six years, but, look, he cooperated with
19 law enforcement to begin with and gave a statement. That
20 whole explanation as to why they want it in is for a
21 self-serving purpose.

22 So I do think -- again, they can put up that
23 testimony. They can call on their witnesses. They have
24 an opportunity to present a case if they went to, but to
25 say that I think that is for a self-serving purpose to

1 show look at me, I'm John Blauvelt, I cooperated with law
2 enforcement.

3 MR. NEELY: Again, I think he's entitled to present a
4 full defense. And the officer who investigated the case
5 asked him to come to the police department. I don't want
6 to get into the substance. I don't want to say he fully
7 cooperated with you or told you that he was at home and
8 running on that day. But the fact that he did talk to law
9 enforcement is relevant when they put in evidence that he
10 fled the State subsequent to this investigation.

11 THE COURT: And that's all you're talking about
12 asking him?

13 MR. NEELY: Yes, sir. He showed up -- when you asked
14 him, he showed up.

15 MS. ABEE: And, Judge, we'll elicit that much because
16 they executed search warrants at that time. So they asked
17 him -- on November the 1st of 2016, they asked him to come
18 in, he showed up on November 2nd of 2016 where they
19 executed search warrants on his car, for his DNA and for
20 his cell phone. So I'm not trying to hide the fact that
21 they asked him to come in and he came in. Simply that he
22 -- just subsequently that he then provided a statement to
23 law enforcement is the part that I think gets to be
24 self-serving.

25 But I think if that's what they're trying to

1 establish that he cooperated when he was asked to come in,
2 I'm going to elicit that part.

3 THE COURT: Yes, sir.

4 MR. NEELY: And I mean, on that interview on the
5 second of November, I would stop there. I don't think I
6 can go further past that. Again, they did a death
7 notification on the 24th. He talked to them then. And,
8 again, I think --

9 THE COURT: I'll let you go there and stop there and
10 no further.

11 MR. NEELY: Thank you, Judge.

12 MR. MEADORS: Your Honor, just for -- I don't mean to
13 be difficult, but when he's closing, if they don't put up
14 anything, he wouldn't be able to argue why didn't they
15 present that statement.

16 MR. NEELY: And I wouldn't do that.

17 THE COURT: I'm not going to let you do that.

18 MR. MEADORS: I just wanted to be sure.

19 THE COURT: I don't think Mr. Neely would do that.

20 MR. MEADORS: And I wasn't implying, I just want to
21 make sure.

22 MS. ABEE: Thank you, Judge.

23 THE COURT: All right. Bring them in.

24 (WHEREUPON, the jury came into open court at
25 approximately 1:36 p.m.)

1 THE COURT: All right. Good afternoon. I hope y'all
2 had a good lunch.

3 All right. The State call the next witness.

4 MS. ABEE: Thank you, Your Honor. The State calls
5 Keith Morecraft.

6 THE CLERK: Mr. Morecraft, please, come forward.

7 If you'd, please, pause at the end of bench, place
8 your left hand on the Bible and raise your right hand.
9 WHEREUPON,

10 KEITH MORECRAFT,
11 after first having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

12 THE CLERK: Thank you.

13 Please be seated.

14 And, please, state your name for the record.

15 THE WITNESS: Keith Morecraft.

16 THE CLERK: Thank you, sir.

17 DIRECT EXAMINATION

18 BY MS. ABEE:

19 Q Go ahead and spell that last name for us.

20 A Sure. M-O-R-E-C-R-A-F-T.

21 Q Mr. Morecraft, go ahead and introduce yourself to the
22 jury and let them know what you do for a living.

23 A My name is Keith Morecraft. I'm a private
24 investigator for Geico Insurance.

25 Q And prior to working for Geico Insurance, who did you

1 work for?

2 A My last employer was the Simpsonville Police
3 Department.

4 Q And what was your position at the Simpsonville Police
5 Department?

6 A I was violent crimes investigator for the department.

7 Q And tell us all just a little bit about your history
8 in law enforcement, where all you've worked and how many
9 years you've spent in?

10 A I spent a total of just over 25 years in law
11 enforcement. My first three and a half years were with
12 the Anderson County Sheriff's Office. The next portion of
13 my career, from 1997 to 2011 was with Greenville County.
14 And then from 2011 to 2019 was with Simpsonville.

15 Q Okay. So 2011 to 2019 was with Simpsonville. And I
16 believe you said you were a violent crimes investigator?

17 A That's correct.

18 Q And tell us all what that means. What does a violent
19 crimes investigator do?

20 A We investigate serious assaults, felony offenses that
21 include crimes against persons, which could be sex
22 offenses, robberies, kidnappings, homicides, missing
23 persons cases, cold cases.

24 Q I believe you said one of that -- one of your duties
25 was missing persons cases; is that right?

1 A Yes, ma'am.

2 Q And were you involved in the investigation of a
3 missing person named Cati Blauvelt?

4 A Yes, I was.

5 Q And if you would, tell us all how you became involved
6 in that investigation?

7 A I was contacted by the uniform patrol officer who
8 took the original walk-in report of the missing persons
9 case. He felt that an investigator needed to be notified
10 due to the gravity of the situation. So he contacted me
11 by phone and kind of gave me the basic facts of the case
12 and the pertinent information that we needed since the
13 case was more than likely going to be assigned to an
14 investigator.

15 Q And we heard earlier from Ms. Patricia Piver. Did
16 you speak at all with Ms. Patricia Piver?

17 A I did.

18 Q And what was your understanding of what her
19 relationship was to the missing person?

20 A She was the mother.

21 Q Okay. And we heard that that took place, the missing
22 persons report took place on October 25th of 2016. Is
23 that your recollection as to when you received that as
24 well?

25 A Yes, ma'am.

1 Q And is that when you became involved in the case?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And kind of tell us, from a missing persons
4 perspective, what are your first steps to do?

5 A Basically, we're looking to get background
6 information about the person who's missing, see if there's
7 anything going on in their life that kind of put them in a
8 high risk situation. We want to establish a timeline,
9 last place they were known to be and then kind of work
10 backwards. Also, identify friends, family members, any
11 enemies they may have, talk to those individuals, see what
12 information they may have.

13 Q And was it your understanding in this particular case
14 that Cati Blauvelt had a car?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And at the point in time that the missing persons
17 report had been filed, did anybody know where that car
18 was?

19 A Not to my knowledge.

20 Q So is that something else you're, also, trying to
21 track down, locate kind of these missing items?

22 A Yes.

23 Q What type of car was it that Cati Blauvelt was known
24 to drive?

25 A She had a 2011, I believe, Ford Festiva.

1 Q Okay. And do you know the color of that car?

2 A It was black.

3 Q So when Cati was listed as a missing person, were you
4 doing all of these things you just told us you typically
5 try to do in a missing persons report --

6 A Yes.

7 Q -- gather information? Put out -- what's a BOLO?

8 A It's a be on the lookout. It's a bulletin we send
9 out to other law enforcement agencies with pertinent
10 information of the missing person, any vehicles they may
11 have or any other identifiers.

12 Q Did you do that in this case?

13 A I did.

14 Q And then how long were you involved in this missing
15 persons case before you became notified of a body being
16 located?

17 A It was late the following night, around one o'clock
18 in the morning I was contacted and advised.

19 Q And do you know the place that you responded to -- or
20 did you respond to the scene?

21 A I did. I responded to [REDACTED] Southeast Main Street in
22 Simpsonville.

23 Q Okay. And what county is that located in?

24 A Greenville County.

25 Q And what county -- or what state is that county in?

1 A South Carolina.

2 Q I'm going to approach you with what's been pre-marked
3 as State's Exhibit No. 69. And do you recognize this?

4 A Yes, I do.

5 Q Okay. Is this a fair and accurate depiction of a
6 photo of the house?

7 A It is.

8 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, the State moves State's
9 Exhibit No. 69 into evidence.

10 THE COURT: All right. Any objection?

11 MR. NEELY: No, Your Honor.

12 THE COURT: State's Exhibit No. 69 is admitted into
13 evidence without objection.

14 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit No. 69 was admitted into
15 evidence.)

16 MS. ABEE: Permission to publish, Your Honor?

17 THE COURT: You may.

18 BY MS. ABEE:

19 Q So what we see here is 817. Is this the house that
20 you responded to?

21 A Yes, it is.

22 Q And this is the house that is located in Greenville
23 County?

24 A Yes, ma'am.

25 Q So talk to us a little bit about this property, what

1 it looked like when you arrived?

2 A The property, it looks like an abandoned property.
3 It's overgrown, a lot of foliage, trees, bushes around it.
4 It's hard to see from the street. The house was in a very
5 dilapidated condition. A lot of the flooring was missing.
6 You could see down through the rafters in the floor. It
7 was a single-story house with a basement to it and I
8 believe it had an attic, also. It was in very poor
9 condition. Had some miscellaneous trash and things like
10 that throughout the house.

11 Q And did you walk around the inside of the house?

12 A I did.

13 Q Did you walk around the outside of the house?

14 A I did.

15 Q And was Cati Blauvelt located within that house when
16 you were there?

17 A She was.

18 Q And were you able to see where her body was located?

19 A I did.

20 Q And describe that area to us?

21 A This was in the basement of the home. It's a dirt
22 floor basement. There was a concrete box, rectangular
23 shaped, and her body was located within that concrete box.

24 Q And was it clear whether or not Cati was living at
25 the point in time that you arrived?

1 A It was clear she was deceased.

2 Q I want to show you kind of some additional photos
3 that have already been put into evidence.

4 MS. ABEE: Permission to publish, Your Honor?

5 THE COURT: Uh-huh.

6 BY MS. ABEE:

7 Q State's Exhibit No. 60, is this that house?

8 A Yes, it is.

9 Q And State's Exhibit No. 18, do you recognize this?

10 A I do.

11 Q What is this we're looking at here in State's Exhibit
12 No. 18?

13 A That's a crawl space to the basement. It's located
14 on the left-hand side of the house if you're facing the
15 front of the house.

16 Q Were you able to see this area?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Okay. Now, from standing on the outside looking in,
19 what could you see inside that video -- I'm sorry, not
20 that video, inside that window?

21 A You could see the concrete box where Cati's body was
22 located.

23 Q Was that accessible from the outside?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And when you were able to look at Cati's body, did

1 you see some leaves and foliage in State's Exhibit No. 18
2 around that window, could you see any of that in and
3 around her body as well?

4 A Yes, ma'am.

5 Q So once you determined Cati was deceased, were there
6 any individuals that were on scene that weren't law
7 enforcement or EMS?

8 A Not when I arrived.

9 Q What about we've heard earlier from a Franklin Wayne
10 Roper. He says that him and a friend, Richard Hargrove,
11 were there. Do you remember them?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Okay. Were they present at the scene when you
14 arrived?

15 A No, ma'am.

16 Q Okay. Did you, ultimately, interview them that
17 morning?

18 A I did later on at the police department.

19 Q Okay. And I'm going to approach you with what's been
20 pre-marked as State's Exhibit No. 67. And do you
21 recognize this?

22 A I do.

23 Q Okay. Is this your signature done at the bottom?

24 A Yes, it is.

25 Q And generally tell us what this is?

1 A It's a waiver of rights form. It's a form that we
2 use to advise people that we're questioning regarding a
3 crime as to the rights that they have. We read it to
4 them, have them read a line off of the form so we can make
5 sure they can read and write the English language. Then
6 we sign the form, they sign the form and it's dated and
7 time stamped.

8 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, the State moves State's
9 Exhibit No. 67 into evidence.

10 THE COURT: All right. Any objection?

11 MR. NEELY: None, Your Honor.

12 THE COURT: State's Exhibit No. 67 is admitted into
13 evidence without objection.

14 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit No. 67 was admitted into
15 evidence.)

16 MS. ABEE: Permission to publish, Your Honor?

17 THE COURT: You may.

18 BY MS. ABEE:

19 Q I'm putting State's Exhibit No. 67 up here. We had
20 some conversation about this earlier when you weren't in
21 the courtroom. But this is an advice of rights form for
22 who?

23 A Franklin Wayne Roper.

24 Q And was it your understanding that Mr. Roper,
25 actually, located or discovered Cati's body?

1 A Yes.

2 Q So did you have any interest in interviewing him?

3 A Absolutely.

4 Q Now, at this point, had the case changed from a
5 missing persons report to, potentially, a homicide?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Are you investigating it as such at that time?

8 A Yes.

9 Q So since Mr. Roper discovered her body, it appears as
10 if you advised him of his rights; is that fair?

11 A That's correct.

12 Q And I'm going to look and point over here for you at
13 the date and time section right here. What's the date and
14 time, if you can read that, that you advised him of his
15 rights?

16 A October the 26th of 2016 at 3:52 a.m.

17 Q So we've heard from Mr. Roper that it was sometime
18 after midnight that he found the body and then you're here
19 advising him of his rights about three hours later; is
20 that fair?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Okay. And you advise someone of their rights so they
23 know they have the right or ability to talk to an attorney
24 or something like that because they could be a suspect; is
25 that fair?

1 A That's correct.

2 Q And your questioning them while they're kind of in
3 your custody at the Simpsonville Police Department; is
4 that right?

5 A Yes, ma'am.

6 Q Okay. And so you then interview Mr. Roper after
7 advising him of his rights; is that fair?

8 A I did.

9 Q And what's the kind of general purpose of
10 interviewing Mr. Roper?

11 A To number one, establish what his relationship is to
12 Cati, to determine why and how he became to be at that
13 location, what made him search that location and what his
14 motivation was to be assisting in the search for her.

15 Q And is it fair to say that you advised him of his
16 rights because you didn't really know where this case was
17 going to go at that point in time?

18 A That's correct.

19 Q And so after you find the body and are able to
20 confirm that it's Cati, what's kind of the next process?
21 I think you work maybe with the coroner's office; is that
22 fair?

23 A That's correct.

24 Q In conjunction with them, okay. Do you notify next
25 of kin about the death?

1 A Generally, that's the duty of the coroner's office,
2 but due to the fact that this was an active homicide
3 investigation, I accompanied the deputy coroner.

4 Q Okay. And I want to talk about kind of two different
5 sets of people that you notified. I'm assuming one was
6 Ms. Piver, right?

7 A That's correct.

8 Q And you had kind of talked with Ms. Piver and had
9 been working with her previously?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And then, what about John Blauvelt, did you notify
12 him of Cati's death?

13 A We did, we did that in person.

14 Q And what was your understanding of the relationship
15 as far as the titles between Mr. Blauvelt and Cati
16 Blauvelt?

17 A They were legally married, but living separately.

18 Q And so still being legally married, would you have
19 notified him?

20 A He was next of kin, yes.

21 Q Do you remember who you notified first, Mr. Blauvelt
22 or Ms. Piver?

23 A In person, it was Mr. Blauvelt.

24 Q So first, you notify Mr. Blauvelt and then went to
25 see Ms. Piver?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And do you recall the date? I know we're kind of in
3 the early morning hours of October 26th, was it that day
4 you notified Mr. Blauvelt?

5 A It was in the late afternoon around 4:00 p.m.

6 Q Okay. So about 4:00 p.m. on the 26th is when you
7 informed Mr. Blauvelt that Cati Blauvelt's body has been
8 located?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Now, at this point, again, you still don't know
11 what's going on; is that fair?

12 A Right. We're still in the information gathering
13 phase, looking at any potential suspects.

14 Q And tell us what are some of the things that you do
15 during the information gathering stage?

16 A Like I said earlier, you're looking at identify any
17 acquaintances, friends, foes, employers, established
18 timelines as to the missing or deceased person's
19 activities prior to that time, look for anything that can
20 be tracked or traced, such as cell phones, vehicles,
21 things of that nature.

22 Q And so were there people, family members, friends
23 like that of Cati Blauvelt that you interviewed?

24 A Several, yes.

25 Q Okay. And if they provided you information about

1 somebody else that may know something, what would you do
2 with that lead?

3 A Then we would do some background investigation on
4 that person and go speak with them.

5 Q And if you had to estimate approximately how many
6 interviews you did or how many people you talked to in
7 this case, what would you say? I know it's been a while.

8 A I would estimate 25.

9 Q Now, we know that Cati's car was missing, was that,
10 ultimately, located?

11 A It was.

12 Q Do you recall where it was located?

13 A The address, I believe, was [REDACTED] White Horse Road.

14 Q And did you actually respond to this area to help get
15 the car towed?

16 A I did.

17 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, I'm approaching the witness
18 with what's been pre-marked as State's Exhibit Nos. 68 and
19 70.

20 BY MS. ABEE:

21 Q Investigator Morecraft, do you see these?

22 A I do.

23 Q And do you recognize what this is?

24 A I do. I want to say Simpsonville Police Department
25 vehicle impound and inventory report. The other is a

1 photograph of the parking lot where the vehicle was
2 recovered.

3 Q And is this a fair and accurate representation of the
4 place and area where Cati's car was located in regards to
5 State's Exhibit No. 70?

6 A Yes, it is.

7 Q And is this a fair and accurate representation of the
8 tow sheet you filled out in State's Exhibit No. 68?

9 A Yes, it is.

10 MS. ABEE: Your Honor, the State moves State's
11 Exhibit Nos. 68 and 70 into evidence.

12 THE COURT: Any objection?

13 MR. NEELY: None, Your Honor.

14 THE COURT: State's Exhibit Nos. 68 and 70 admitted
15 into evidence without objection.

16 (WHEREUPON, State's Exhibit Nos. 68 and 70 were
17 admitted into evidence.)

18 MS. ABEE: Thank you, Your Honor. Permission to
19 publish?

20 THE COURT: You may.

21 BY MS. ABEE:

22 Q Investigator Morecraft, I first want to pop up this
23 one here on State's Exhibit No. 68. So first, it looks
24 like we have a date here. Is that the date that you
25 responded and the car was located?

1 A Yes, ma'am.

2 Q Okay. What is the date and time that that was found
3 and located?

4 A October 26th, 2016 at 1748 hours, which is 5:48 p.m.

5 Q So 5:48 p.m. on the 26th is when that car is located.
6 And then, again, what's the location?

7 A [REDACTED] White Horse Road in Greenville, South Carolina.

8 Q And were you able to match the VIN numbers and ensure
9 that that was, in fact, Cati Blauvelt's car?

10 A Yes, ma'am.

11 Q I'm going to show you State's Exhibit No. 70. What
12 are we looking at here?

13 A That's a photograph of the parking lot and the
14 vehicle as it was found.

15 Q Over here on the right-hand side, is this where
16 Cati's vehicle -- is that what we're looking at?

17 A Yes, ma'am.

18 Q And State's Exhibit No. 64, when you got there, was
19 there no license plate on Cati's vehicle?

20 A That's correct. There was no license plate on it.

21 Q That's not something you removed or anything like
22 that; is that fair?

23 A No.

24 Q Now, we heard earlier from a gentleman named Milad
25 Youssef, who owns what is called Joe's Auto on White Horse

1 Road. And he looked at this picture earlier and
2 identified his business through it. Were you able to go
3 to Joe's Auto?

4 A I didn't go myself, but other investigators did.

5 Q And is it your understanding that this is Joe's Auto
6 right here?

7 A That's correct.

8 Q I'm going to show you now what's been entered into
9 evidence as State's Exhibit No. 65. Do you recognize
10 that?

11 A Yes, I do.

12 Q Okay. And Mr. Youssef told us this was a consent to
13 search he had signed in order to give over a recording
14 device. Are you familiar with that recording device at
15 all?

16 A Yes, ma'am, it was a Bunker Hill surveillance system.
17 It came with a hard drive and camera system.

18 Q Okay. Now, was that device checked into evidence at
19 Simpsonville County?

20 A Simpsonville Police Department, yes, ma'am.

21 Q Sorry, Simpsonville Police Department. And then did
22 you have the opportunity to look through the recording?

23 A I did.

24 Q Okay. Now, when you're looking through the
25 recording, what were you looking for?