

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

**FILED**

IN CIRCUIT COURT

COUNTY OF DAVISON

:SS MAR 14 2024

FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

*Debra K. McQueen*  
DAVISON COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS  
FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT OF SD

17CRI24-000160

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA  
Plaintiff

v.

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF  
APPLICATION FOR ARREST WARRANT

HARRIS SR, ANTHONY MELVIN  
DOB: [REDACTED]  
Defendant

I, Casey Tegethoff, being first duly sworn on oath, depose and state that I am a Detective with the Mitchell Police Department. I am conducting the investigation of the above-styled matter. That I make this affidavit in support of the State's Attorney's request for a warrant for the arrest of the above-named Defendant, and in compliance with SDCL 23A-2-2, and states as follows:

1. On 03/11/2024 at approximately 2254hrs the Mitchell Police Department received a 9-1-1 call of a deceased person under a pile of pallets located in the I-90 Travel Center parking lot, located at [REDACTED] S Burr St. The reporting party, [REDACTED] stated he just pulled into the parking lot to park for the night. [REDACTED] stated he went to far west end of the parking lot and seen a pile of pallets just on the edge of the lot. He did not want to run the pallets over, so he started to back into the open space next to the pallets. He backed up a ways into the spot then got out to look to see how far away from the pallets he was.
2. [REDACTED] stated he exited his truck to see how much further he needed to back up and how far away he was from the pile of pallets. He walked around the passenger side of his truck and trailer and noticed what appeared to be a gut pile lying in the middle of the parking lot. He assumed it was from an animal and thought it to be strange. As he got closer to the pallets, he noticed a human foot underneath the pallets and then a human hand. He then realized there was a deceased female underneath the pallets. He called 9-1-1 at this time.
3. Det. Pete Arnold of the Mitchell Police Department was called to the scene to investigate. Det. Arnold noted that it appeared the deceased person was struck by a vehicle in the parking lot where the human entrails were located. Around the human entrails was blood spatter consistent with a person being struck by a vehicle and then dragged away from the initial impact point. The decedent was approximately 11 to 13ft away from where it appeared to be the initial impact of the vehicle. The victim appeared to be an African American female wearing a yellow shirt, black underwear and blue jeans. The victim's blue jeans were removed from her body and discarded near the body. The victim's socks were near the initial point of impact and there were no shoes located near the victim.
4. The victim had no identification, no cell phone and no other personal belongings near her body. The victim's body appeared as if it had been tangled in the axle of a semi or ran over multiple times, due to the twisting and distortion of the body. The Davison County Coroner came and collected the victim's body and transported her to the Minnehaha County Coroner for autopsy.

5. On 03/12/2024 Det. Arnold attended the autopsy of the victim. The victim was identified through running her fingerprints through the AFIS system. The victim was identified as Melody Faye Gooch DOB: [REDACTED] Det. Arnold advised that the Forensic Pathologist stated Gooch's entire skull was missing from her body. Gooch's skin was still attached to her body allowing the Pathologist to reconstruct her body and show that her skull and a portion of her spinal cord was missing. Det. Arnold stated Gooch had dentures as the lower part of her jaw was still attached to the body. The Forensic Pathologist also determined the time of death to be within 24 to 36 hours.

6. Division of Criminal Investigation Special Agent Brian Larson, Lt. Dean Knippling of the Mitchell Police Department and I went to the death scene to search for more clues in the daylight and canvass for video surveillance footage. Det. Dan Fechner of the Mitchell Police Department began reviewing video surveillance footage from a City of Mitchell camera that was located on top of the city water tower. Gooch's body was recovered approximately 30 yards from the base of the water tower. The city camera faces the area of where Gooch's body was recovered but is not visible on camera due to the water tower blocking the view. In the area of where Gooch was initially struck by a vehicle, we located parts of her dentures in the gravel of the parking lot.

7. I began to canvass the area for evidence items and located a dumpster on the property approximately 200yds to the east from where the body was recovered. The dumpster is still on the property of the truck stop and is located near the entrance and exit point of the property. I looked in the dumpster and noticed a white garbage sack with a women's sneaker in it and a large mass of what appeared to be a bloody object, similar to a person's head.

8. I removed the garbage sack from the dumpster and opened the sack. Inside the sack was a size 10 women's right foot sneaker. The sneaker was white, yellow and orange and covered in blood. Also in the sack was a skinned severed human head. The skull appeared to be completely intact with a portion of the spine still attached. The rest of the dumpster contents were gone through at the Mitchell Police Department and the other matching left sneaker was located in the dumpster. There were no other personal belongings located in the dumpster that would appear to belong to Gooch.

9. Det. Fechner was able to watch video surveillance from the city water tower and located a white semi pulling a white enclosed trailer exit Interstate 90 westbound at approximately 0525hrs on 03/11/2024 and enter the I-90 Travel Center parking lot. Det. Fechner could see the headlights of the semi making suspicious movements in the lot, but the view was still blocked by the water tower. The truck was in the lot for only approximately 30-35 minutes as it is seen leaving the lot at approximately 0606hrs and heading westbound on Interstate 90. Det. Fechner noticed this same semi stopping at the dumpster where I located the skinned severed human skull and sneakers, for a period of time before exiting the lot.

10. More video surveillance was recovered from surrounding businesses that show the area where Gooch's body was located and this same semi from the city water tower camera angle is seen pulling to the same spot where Gooch's body was recovered. At approximately 0527hrs this white semi can be seen pulling into the spot where Gooch's body was recovered facing westbound. The semi parks facing westbound for approximately five to nine minutes before backing out of the spot, turning around and then backing back into the same parking spot. The semi pulls forward and backs up into the same spot approximately five times. Each time the semi appears to be trying to precisely park in a spot, even though there are no other trucks or trailers directly beside it.

11. During these five back up attempts, the trailer backs further into the spot until the sixth attempt, the semi only backs about halfway into the parking spot. The driver is seen exiting the semi and going to the back of the semi and trailer. The camera angle is too far away to find any descriptors of the driver or the semi. At one point in the video when the driver is near the rear of the trailer, it appears he picks something up with a bag. This camera angle is from A&G Diesel located in the same parking lot as the I-90 Travel Center. This camera angle that captures the semi's movements is a rotating camera that only shows that area for approximately 15 seconds before moving around to a different area. There is approximately one minute and 30 seconds between views of this area of the parking lot.

12. At approximately 0605hrs on the video surveillance footage from A&G Diesel, the semi is seen pulling up to the dumpster. The driver exits and goes around to the passenger side of the cab. The driver's side door remains open during this time, and it appears the passenger side door is opened and shut. The driver then enters the driver's seat and exits the parking lot. The semi does not stop for gas or make any other stops before getting back onto the interstate.

13. On 03/13/2024 the skinned severed head was sent to the Forensic Pathologist for examination. Based on the preliminary results of the autopsy of Gooch's body and skinned severed head, the Forensic Pathologist did not find any evidence to suggest Gooch died from any other trauma other than being hit, struck or run over by a vehicle.

14. Next of kin for Gooch was contacted in the Detroit, MI area in the afternoon/evening of 03/13/2024. They identified Anthony Melvin Harris Sr., DOB: [REDACTED] as the person she was last known with. Harris Sr. is an over the road truck driver. Harris Sr. told Gooch's family members that Gooch went into a store for food and never came back out. Gooch also told family members that he found her cell phone in the door pocket of his cab and the phone was broken. Harris Sr claimed to not know where she was.

15. Division of Criminal Investigations Agents have been in contact with Harris Sr.'s trucking company, Transfinity Logistics Inc, and have been providing Harris Sr.'s Daily Logbook to law enforcement. According to these electronic records, Harris Sr.'s truck overnighted approximately 22 miles east/northeast of Mitchell beginning at approximately 1850hrs on 03/10/2024. The log shows he is "Off Duty" beginning at 1850hrs and "Shut Down" at 1905hrs at this same location. The logbook then shows he is "On Duty" at 0451hrs and "Driving" at 0504hrs. They then have him going "Off Duty" at approximately 0529hrs approximately one mile southeast of Mitchell and then back "Driving" at approximately 0602hrs at the same location. Based on where the cell phone tower is in Mitchell, that would put Harris Sr's semi and trailer near the Holiday Travel Center parking lot. This timeframe of him "Off Duty" and back "Driving" matches the video surveillance of the suspect vehicle pulling into the Holiday Travel Center parking lot and exiting the Holiday Travel Center parking lot. The logs continue to show Harris Sr.'s route as westbound through South Dakota.

16. Harris Sr. was contacted by Washington State Troopers in Yakima, Washington on 03/14/2024 at approximately 1230hrs CST in the same semi and trailer we have on video surveillance footage.

Your Affiant now believes there is probable cause for issuance of an arrest warrant charging the defendant for SDCL 34-25-57 subsection 1, Violation of requirements as misdemeanor: No person may Inter, cremate, or otherwise finally dispose of a dead body of a human being or permit the same to be done and for SDCL 22-16-7 Homicide as murder in the second degree.

Dated this 14<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2024, at Mitchell, Davison County, South Dakota

Casey Tegethoff  
Signature of Affiant  
Det. Casey Tegethoff

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 14<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2024, at 1318 Mitchell SD  
South Dakota.

K. Magaraj NOTARY PUBLIC  
12/9/27