



20BA-CR00698

STATE OF MISSOURI )
vs. )
JOSEPH DUANE ELLEDGE )
DOB: )
SSN: )

PROBABLE CAUSE STATEMENT

I, ALAN R MITCHELL II

knowing that false statements on this form are punishable by law, state that the facts contained herein are true.

- 1. I have probable cause to believe that on 10/08/2019, at 2607 EASTWOOD DR - 58, COLUMBIA, MO 65202, JOSEPH DUANE ELLEDGE W/M [REDACTED] committed one or more criminal offense(s): 565.020-001Y198409 MURDER 1ST DEGREE F/M: F COUNTS: 1 CHARGE TYPE: S

- 2. The facts supporting this belief are as follows: On 10/10/2019 at 1535 hours police dispatch was contacted by Joseph Elledge regarding his wife missing from 2607 Eastwood Drive Apartment 58. When officers arrived they made contact with Joseph who was the husband of the missing person/victim Mengqi Elledge.

Joseph stated Mengqi was in bed on the evening of 10/08/2019 prior to 2130 hours. Joseph stated he gave Mengqi a back rub while she was lying in bed. Joseph stated he had recently given Mengqi a backrub which had led to them having sex. Joseph stated Mengqi would not have sex with him on 10/08/2019 during or after the backrub.

Joseph described the massage position as Mengqi being on her stomach with him being on top of her back. Mengqi was approximately five feet tall and weighed approximately 100 pounds. Joseph is approximately six feet tall and weighs approximately 170 pounds. Joseph being on Mengqi's back would have put Mengqi in a compromising position that would not have allowed her options for defending herself. Joseph was photographed on 10/15/2019 and no defensive injuries were located on his person.

I know from training and experience that intentional strangulation or intentional suffocation as a method of killing a person is not an instantaneous or quick method of murder. Either act requires the perpetrator to continue the act through a period of time until the person dies from lack of blood flow to the brain or lack of oxygen for the body. Most strangulations or suffocations do not end in death as the perpetrator of the act has time to reflect on their actions and stop before causing death. I also know from training and experience that a strangulation or suffocation is a relatively bloodless, relatively silent, but violent act.

During a search of Joseph's apartment, Joseph's vehicle, and Mengqi's vehicle, no blood or latent blood was located in any of these locations.

CAD records show that there were no calls in the area of 2607 Eastwood Drive Apartment 58 on 10/08/2019 or 10/09/2019 for loud noises, screaming, or disturbances. )

Joseph stated he left Mengqi in bed at 2130 hours and went to the living room of the apartment and watched Youtube.com videos and played video games. Joseph stated he went to bed at 2330 hours and Mengqi was in the bed and did not move. Joseph stated he was woken up by their child crying at 0500 hours on 10/09/2019 and Mengqi was gone. Joseph stated he checked the apartment and did not find Mengqi, but noticed Mengqi's phone and keys were still in the residence. Joseph stated he did not check outside the apartment. Joseph stated this had never occurred before. Instead of looking for Mengqi, Joseph stated he went back to bed because he was tired. Joseph stated he woke up at 0800 hours when their child was crying again and Mengqi was still gone. Joseph stated he got up and fed their child the same way he had seen Mengqi do it, since he had never done it before. Joseph stated that Mengqi had still been breast feeding and stated on multiple occasions that Mengqi was a good mother. Joseph stated he did not attempt to contact anyone about Mengqi being gone and did not attempt to locate Mengqi. Joseph stated the pajamas Mengqi had been wearing were still in the residence and Mengqi's vehicle was still at the residence.

Joseph stated at 1030 hours he took their child and decided to go for a drive to Jefferson City to relax. Joseph stated he had never really been to Jefferson City before. Joseph stated when he drove to Jefferson City he turned around and went back to his home in Columbia.

Joseph stated later in the day at approximately 1830 hours he decided to go for a second drive again to relax. Joseph stated he had still not contacted anyone about Mengqi being gone and still had not attempted to locate her. Joseph stated he looked up Google Maps and located what he thought was a large forest with walking trails in what he described as the triangle between Columbia, Kingdom City, and Jefferson City. Joseph stated he wanted to take his one year old daughter for a walk. Joseph stated he drove to Ashland and then back and forth to Guthrie, a small farming town, and discovered it was not a large forest but was a bunch of farmland. Joseph stated he had never been to this area either. Joseph stated he then drove back towards Columbia but decided to pass Columbia and go to Rocheport, a place he had never been except on the MKT Trail as a kid on bikes. Joseph stated he drove to multiple entrances to the MKT Trail. Joseph stated he was in Rocheport at approximately 2130 hours. Joseph stated he then went back to his residence and was home at approximately 2200 hours.

On both trips that Joseph made, he stated he locked the door to the residence and did not leave a note for Mengqi saying where he and their child had gone or

when they would return. Joseph stated he took Mengqi's car key ring which had Mengqi's apartment key on it, leaving her no way to unlock her apartment door. Joseph did not have any plans for if Mengqi returned while he was gone.

On 10/09/2019 at 0905 hours Joseph texted his mother to wish her a happy birthday but mentioned nothing about Mengqi disappearing. Joseph did not have any further contact with his mother until 10/10/2019 when he texted her that Mengqi was gone. On 10/09/2019 at 1106 hours Joseph texted a schoolmate identified in his phone as "Enyard Robert" and told Robert that he could not make it in to work on a project at school but did not give a reason. Joseph did not make any phone calls on 10/09/2019. On 10/10/2019 at 0906 hours Joseph again texted Robert and told him "I'm kind of stuck at home and busy with my daughter." Again, Joseph did not tell Robert that his wife had gone missing.

Joseph stated at 0900 hours on 10/10/2019 a friend of Mengqi's came to the residence to check on her at the behest of her parents. Joseph stated the friend put Mengqi's mother on a video call and Joseph told her that Mengqi was missing. Joseph stated it was then that he started trying to find Mengqi by contacting her friends. Joseph stated none of Mengqi's friends knew where she was.

Joseph stated he and Mengqi had been having trouble in their relationship for several months, and that Mengqi had not been willing to have sex with him very often for several months and that this was frustrating for him. Joseph stated he had been trying to get closer to Mengqi, but she had not been responsive. Joseph stated he now believed that Mengqi had been speaking to another male online in a flirtatious manner. During his interview with police on 10/15/2019 (six days after Mengqi went missing) Joseph was asked where he believed Mengqi was. Joseph stated he did not want to think about it because he had class; he was in his last semester of school before graduation, and just wanted to focus on school and his child.

CAD notes showed that Joseph called 911 at 1535 hours on 10/10/2019. An officer made phone contact with Joseph on 10/10/2019 at 1734 hours. That same officer later made in-person contact with Joseph at his apartment on 10/10/2019 at 1807 hours to continue investigating Mengqi disappearance.

Daniel Culp, a former boyfriend of Mengqi, stated Mengqi had contacted in late August 2019 to get information on divorce attorneys. Culp stated he asked Mengqi if the divorce attorney was for her and she told him it was.

Ke Ren, Mengqi's mother, stated Mengqi contacted her around the same time every day on video chat. Ke Ren stated Mengqi contacted her on 10/08/2019 at 1500 hours and everything had been fine. Ke Ren stated Mengqi did not contact her on 10/09/2019 at the usual time and she became worried. Ke Ren stated she attempted to contact Joseph and he did not respond to any of her messages. Ke Ren stated she got a hold of a friend of Mengqi's and requested he go over to the apartment and check on her. Ke Ren stated a short time later they were notified that

Mengqi was missing.

Ke Ren stated Joseph was a controlling husband who did not allow Mengqi to have a social life. Ke Ren stated prior to their relationship Mengqi had been a social person. Ke Ren stated Joseph did not like Mengqi going out with friends and would get upset if she took trips out of the residence that he felt were too long.

Jasmin Sekscinski, stated she had contact with Mengqi on 10/08/2019 at 2114 hours over Facebook.com Messenger. Jasmin stated Mengqi was going to buy babyfood from her at 1530 on 10/09/2019 at the Grindstone Walmart. Sekscinski did not hear from Mengqi after the 2114 hours message and Mengqi did not show up to purchase the baby food. Based on this information, Mengqi was planning for the future and this future centered on her child.

Based on Joseph's statement and electronic records, Joseph did not contact anyone about Mengqi's disappearance from 10/09/2019 at 0500 hours to 10/10/2019 at 0900 hours despite the fact that this incident was outside any behavior displayed by Mengqi previously. The contact on 10/10/2019 at 0900 was made when forced by the family friend who came to the residence looking for Mengqi. It was only then that Joseph began contacting and notifying his family and Mengqi's friends.

Records downloaded from Joseph's phone show the extent of the inquiry into his wife's disappearance. On 10/10/2019 at 2022 hours Joseph contacted Richard Elledge, via text message, to ask if he had seen Mengqi. At 2027 hours Richard responded to Joseph by saying he was aware she was missing but had not seen her. A subject identified as "Dawei" in Joseph's phone contacted him on 10/10/2019 at 2030 hours offering suggestions on things that could be done to find Mengqi. At 2047, Joseph texted Richard and said he wanted to play "Borderlands" or "League of Legends", which are online games, and there is no further mention of Mengqi to Richard that evening. At 2049 hours Joseph responded to Dawei and said he called the police and he was exhausted, ignoring the suggestions Dawei made. At 2052 hours Richard responded to Joseph and said that he did want to play an online video game with him. Also at 2052 hours Dawei responded to Joseph offering to help contact people to locate Mengqi, and Joseph does not respond. At 2102 hours Joseph texted Richard and let him know he was updating his video game system so they could play. By the evening of 10/10/2019 Joseph was playing video games with a relative and was not focused on finding his wife.

Officers examined additional data from Joseph's cell phone and were able to locate recordings of conversations between Joseph and Mengqi. In those conversations Joseph is openly hostile and at times threatening to Mengqi. During a recording in June 2019 Joseph stated to Mengqi, "I'm ready to be done talking to you forever." During a recording in August 2019 Joseph stated to Mengqi that he wanted a divorce but he was concerned about spending a lot of money to get the divorce. [Joseph made the statement "I would like to discuss our

relationship and I am kind of ready to discuss the end of it as well." Joseph made statements about being eager to break their ties and be done. Joseph stated "I'm open to joint custody if you're staying in America." Joseph further stated, "Anna's not leaving America, I can tell you that." This statement took on a threatening tone. When Joseph talked about his desire to make the divorce agreeable and inexpensive, Mengqi indicated that she was not going to make the divorce easy. Joseph also threatened to stop sponsoring Mengqi for citizenship and to have her deported back to China. Joseph stated that Anna would stay with him in America while Mengqi was deported. Joseph's statements show his desire to have Anna for himself while eliminating Mengqi from his life. The situation that resulted from Mengqi's disappearance is what Joseph desired. ]

[ Officers examined data from Mengqi's cell phone and located a recording from October of 2018. In that recording Joseph and Mengqi are having an argument and Joseph stated "Do you want me to fucking break shit? Do you want me to hurt somebody? ...You know how I conquer nature I fucking kill it, I grab its head, break its fucking neck, that's how you conquer fucking nature. Yeah I'm trying to be sophisticated, trying to help you guys, yeah I'm not going to live with you very well...you're being very unsophisticated, you're being like the natural evil bitches seriously you think you're so empowered because of this society well don't forget that nature exists. You're still just a woman and there's nature in that. There's nature in your brain...You're poking the bull. Don't poke the bull"

Data on Mengqi's phone shows her last contact outside of Joseph is on 10/08/2019 at approximately 2114 hours. This is approximately the same time that Joseph stated he gave Mengqi her massage. Police have been unable to locate any proof of life after that time. ]

Officers obtained a search warrant for Joseph's cell phone records and were able to map locations of Joseph's cell phone on 10/09/2019. Both trips described by Joseph match the location of his cell phone until the end of his second trip. Joseph told officers he drove home after leaving Rocheport, however records prove that Joseph's cell phone instead went west. Location data showed that Joseph's phone traveled to Boonville and then later the area of Highway 41 and the Lamine River. The cell phone was in the area of Highway 41 and the Lamine River for approximately 45 minutes. Joseph's cell phone then returned eastbound on I70 and back to the area of 2607 Eastwood Drive Apartment 58.

Joseph's actions on the day Mengqi went missing took him to places he had never frequented and in some cases had never been. Joseph went to two locations in direct contact with the Missouri river and another location that he initially believed was a wooded and secluded uninhabited area. The trip to Rocheport, Joseph specifically said he went to entrances of the MKT trail. These entrances lead to river access points. These locations are places where a body could be disposed of and not located for some time. Joseph's second trip driving was a route that would under typical driving conditions take approximately two hours

and fifteen minutes. Joseph's times indicate he was gone for four hours and twenty minutes. Cell phone location data proved that Joseph concealed the truth about the end of the second trip which took him to an area that included a secluded river access point after dark.

Police used two cadaver K-9 units on the Lamine River in the area of Highway 41. Both dogs alerted to the presence of human decomposition in the river. The area indicated by the K9's has been searched with several different methods, however due to the complicated nature of the area; a comprehensive search has not yet been possible.

Police obtained subpoenas for Mengqi's financial records. The financial records showed no activity on Mengqi's accounts after 10/08/2019.

On 10/25/2019 police obtained a search warrant for Joseph's residence. During the search, documents were located in a bag belonging to Joseph, and were seized. Included in the documents seized were written statements that closely matched the statement provided during his interview with police. The handwritten document located in Joseph's bag showed that Joseph was dissatisfied with Mengqi's behavior and with their relationship on 10/08/2019 during the time of the massage. Joseph wrote about all the problems being with Mengqi and all the ways he believed he was trying to fix them with Mengqi not reciprocating. The document also outlined tips for interviews that included a reminder to refer to Mengqi in the present tense when speaking about her.

During an interview on 10/15/2019 with a local television station Joseph referred to Mengqi in the past tense when describing her and her behavior.

Mengqi's family and police have contacted numerous friends of Mengqi and none of them have had contact with Mengqi since 10/08/2019. As of 02/17/2020 Mengqi's parents still had no contact with her. Police have not been able to locate any signs of life for Mengqi since 10/08/2019 as determined by her lack of contact with her husband, abandonment of her one year old child, lack of online activity, lack of contact with her friends, lack of contact with her parents, and lack of financial activity. Mengqi's daily contact with her mother was so consistent that in less than 24 hours of missed contact, Ke Ren became concerned about her daughter's welfare.

[02/19/2020 16:14, CPAMITCH, 291, CPD]

3. For the issuance of a warrant in a misdemeanor case, complete the following
  - (a) I believe that the defendant will not appear in court in response to a criminal summons because:  
On 10/25/2019 a search warrant was served on Joseph's apartment in reference to this murder charge and the charges related to his child. When police served the warrant they located Joseph loading his vehicle with clothing and other property as he was preparing to leave town. [02/19/2020 16:15, CPAMITCH, 291, CPD]

(b) I believe that the defendant poses

(1) a danger to a crime victim because  
n/a

(2) a danger to the community or to any other person because  
Joseph Elledge is suspected of murdering his wife, Mengqi Elledge. Joseph is also currently charged with two counts of endangering the welfare of a child and one count of Abuse or Neglect of a Child. Joseph admitted to detectives that he caused injury to the child victim. The child victim in those charges is the child he had in common with Mengqi. [02/19/2020 16:15, CPAMITCH, 291, CPD]

ALAN R MITCHELL II  
Date: 02/19/2020



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Signature  
(re: CPD Case #2019-010707)