

AO 91 (Rev. 11/11) Criminal Complaint

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
for the
District of Nebraska

FILED
US DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEBRASKA
MAY 08 2017
OFFICE OF THE CLERK

United States of America)
v.)
JEREMIAH MITCHELL WOLFE, and)
LAWRENCIA LOWELLA MERRICK)
_____)

Case No. 8:17MJ128

Defendant(s)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of April 23, 2017 in the county of Thurston in the
_____ District of Nebraska, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section
18 U.S.C. § 1112 & 1153

Offense Description
Manslaughter

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See Attached Affidavit.

Continued on the attached sheet.



Complainant's signature

Bradley J. Purscell, Special Agent, FBI
Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: 05/08/2017


Judge's signature

City and state: Omaha, Nebraska

F.A. GOSSETT, III, U.S. Magistrate Judge
Printed name and title

DISTRICT OF NEBRASKA

OMAHA, NEBRASKA

AFFIDAVIT

The undersigned, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

1. Your affiant, Bradley J. Purscell is a Special Agent (SA) with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) currently assigned to the Sioux City, Iowa, Resident Agency, Omaha, Nebraska, FBI Division. In the course of his official duties, your affiant is charged with the investigation of crimes occurring on the Winnebago Indian Reservation, within the District of Nebraska, to include Murder, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1111, 1112, and 1153.

This affidavit is in support of a criminal complaint requesting arrest warrants for Jeremiah Mitchell Wolfe, Indian male, date of birth (DOB) October 18, 1997; Lawrencia Lowella Merrick, Indian female, DOB February 9, 1996; and Natasha Marie Wolfe, Indian female, DOB January 16, 1979.

The following information was developed by personal investigation and/or related to your affiant by Winnebago Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Police Department Chief of Police (COP) Jason Lawrence, Sr., and others, in connection with the homicide investigation of William Ivan Redhorn, Jr., Indian male, DOB November 30, 1984, committed by Jeremiah Mitchell Wolfe (Wolfe), Lawrencia Lowella Merrick (Merrick), Natasha Marie Wolfe (Natasha); and a 14 year old juvenile male identified as John Doe.

2. On the morning of April 23, 2017, your affiant responded to the Winnebago Indian Reservation after receiving a report of a dead body. The Winnebago BIA Police Department had been notified that an unidentified male body had been discovered on the grounds of the Ho-Chunk, Inc. (HCI) Building in Winnebago, Nebraska (NE). The HCI Building is located at 1 Mission Road, Winnebago, NE, and this address is located within the exterior boundaries of the Winnebago Indian Reservation. The decedent was subsequently identified as William Ivan Redhorn, Jr. (Redhorn).

3. On April 23, 2017, at approximately 9:00 a.m., Winnebago COP Lawrence responded to the scene and located Redhorn's body. Chief of Police Lawrence found Redhorn lying face down in the grass along the southwest side of the HCI Building's front (south) parking lot. Chief of Police Lawrence rolled Redhorn onto his back to check for signs of life, and observed blood and other fluids coming out of Redhorn's nose and mouth. Signs of rigor were present on the body. Redhorn was wearing jeans and one shoe. A sweatshirt was located next to the body and Redhorn's other shoe was located in the grass near his body. The FBI Omaha Division's Evidence Response Team (ERT) was deployed and processed the crime scene.

4. Video surveillance footage was recovered from HCI surveillance cameras and reviewed by investigators. A dark-colored Chevrolet Tahoe sport utility vehicle (SUV) enters and parks in the HCI Building's back (north) parking lot on April 22, 2017, at 11:06 p.m. The Tahoe exits the parking lot at 11:28 p.m.

The Tahoe returns and parks in the same parking space on April 23, 2017, at 4:10 a.m. At 4:45 a.m., the Tahoe flashes its headlights twice. The driver and driver's side rear passenger then exit the Tahoe from their respective doors.

The driver's side rear passenger returns and gets back into the driver's side rear seat at 4:48 a.m. The driver returns and gets into the driver's side front seat at 4:49 a.m., and the Tahoe exits the parking lot.

5. A Nebraska DMV vehicle search indicated that Jeremiah Wolfe is the registered owner of a blue 2000 Chevrolet Tahoe, bearing Nebraska license plate 55-A646.

6. On April 23, 2017, at approximately 9:00 p.m., Winnebago COP Lawrence took a telephone call from off-duty Winnebago Police Sergeant (SGT) Rave. Chief of Police Lawrence and your affiant were present at the Winnebago BIA Police Department when SGT Rave called. Chief of Police Lawrence informed your affiant that SGT Rave had been approached by two people who wanted to make statements about the homicide. Chief of Police Lawrence handed the telephone to your affiant, and your affiant spoke directly to SGT Rave.

Sergeant Rave advised your affiant that he was off-duty when he was approached by two individuals who wished to make statements about the homicide. Sergeant Rave stated he was en route to the police department in his personally owned vehicle, and the two individuals were following him to the police department in a separate vehicle.

Sergeant Rave did not know the nature of the statements the individuals wished to make, and stated he was approximately five minutes from the police department. Sergeant Rave and the two individuals arrived at the police department approximately five minutes later. Sergeant Rave introduced your affiant to the two individuals, who identified themselves as Lawrencina Merrick and Jeremiah Wolfe. Merrick and Wolfe told your affiant that they wished to make statements about the homicide.

7. Lawrencina Merrick was interviewed by your affiant on April 23, 2017, at the Winnebago BIA Police Department. Merrick relayed the following: Merrick was with her boyfriend Jeremiah Wolfe in his Chevrolet Tahoe during the evening hours of April 22, 2017, and the early morning hours of April 23, 2017. Merrick and Wolfe parked in the Ho-Chunk Building's parking lot so Merrick could utilize the free Wi-Fi signal on her cellular telephone. Merrick was seated in the front passenger seat and Wolfe was seated in the driver's seat.

Merrick looked up while she was seated in the Tahoe, and observed a male individual "bothering things." It appeared to Merrick that this individual (subsequently identified as William Ivan Redhorn, Jr.) was trying to break into the Ho-Chunk Building. Wolfe flashed the Tahoe's headlights, but Redhorn did not seem to notice.

Merrick stated Redhorn appeared to be intoxicated because he was "noticeably staggering and he was fumble-lee (sic)." Redhorn was picking up random things and throwing them around, and Merrick thought it looked like Redhorn was trying to break into the building.

Merrick and Wolfe had seen a Winnebago police officer shining his vehicle spotlight in the vicinity of the Dollar General Store a short time prior to their

contact with Redhorn, so Merrick and Wolfe assumed Redhorn was trying to “rob places.”

Merrick opened the front passenger door and she told Redhorn to “get out of there.” Redhorn said something back to Merrick and he made a hand gesture towards her with his middle finger. Merrick could not understand what Redhorn was saying because his words were slurred. Redhorn began walking up the sidewalk. It is unclear from Merrick’s interview if Redhorn walked toward or away from her on the sidewalk.

Merrick and Wolfe exited the Tahoe. Merrick was going to ask Redhorn what he was doing, and she began walking towards Redhorn. Merrick stated Redhorn became aggressive and threw a punch at the left side of Merrick’s head. Redhorn was approximately three feet away from Merrick when he threw the punch, and she was able to avoid the punch because Redhorn was intoxicated. Merrick stated she was scared because she did not know what Redhorn was going to do, and she thought she was going to get hurt.

Wolfe saw Redhorn throw the punch at Merrick, and Wolfe charged Redhorn. Redhorn turned and began running away. Wolfe and Merrick chased Redhorn, and Redhorn appeared to slip on the wet grass as Wolfe grabbed the back of Redhorn’s shirt. Wolfe and Redhorn fell and they rolled down a small grassy hill. They began wrestling and Redhorn wound up on top of Wolfe.

Merrick was trying to pull Redhorn off of Wolfe, and she was hitting Redhorn on the top of his head with her fist. Wolfe placed his arm around Redhorn’s neck, and Merrick looked away. Merrick looked back and stated to SA Purscell, “It was done.” Redhorn had stopped moving and Merrick thought Redhorn had only been knocked out. Merrick thought the incident was “like a drunk fight,” and that Redhorn would get up and “walk it off” after he regained consciousness.

Wolfe told Merrick that Redhorn had bit him on his forearm. During the incident, Wolfe stated, “He’s biting me...he’s biting me,” and Merrick began kicking Redhorn. Merrick stated she kicked Redhorn before he went limp. Wolfe

was lying on his back and Redhorn was on top of Wolfe while they were struggling. Merrick stated she punched Redhorn three times and kicked him three times. Redhorn then went limp, and Wolfe pushed Redhorn off. Redhorn was lying face down on the grass. Merrick stated Wolfe punched Redhorn three times with his left arm while Wolfe had his right arm around Redhorn's neck.

Merrick and Wolfe walked back to the Tahoe and they took off. Merrick stated this occurred sometime around 4:00 a.m. on the morning of April 23, 2017. Merrick and Wolfe drove to the WinnaVegas Casino right after the incident, and they arrived at WinnaVegas around 5:00 a.m. Merrick and Wolfe stayed at WinnaVegas until 9:00 a.m. They returned to Winnebago around 11:00 a.m. and went mushroom hunting.

Merrick and Wolfe returned to their residence around 1:00 p.m., and they went to sleep. Merrick and Wolfe woke up between 3:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Some of Wolfe's relatives came over to their house and told them a dead guy had been found in a parked car at the Ho-Chunk Building. Merrick thought Wolfe's relatives were joking. Merrick did not think she would wake up and somebody would be dead.

Merrick had seen blood on Redhorn's face and she stated "the blood went all the way down." Wolfe also had blood all over his right forearm and clothing. Merrick was scared by how much blood there was after the incident, but she knew "head wounds gush and bleed a lot." Merrick and Wolfe did not discuss calling the police or an ambulance after the incident.

Merrick then stated that they did not drive straight to WinnaVegas after the incident. Rather, sometime between 4:45 a.m. and 5:00 a.m., Merrick and Wolfe went to Natasha Wolfe's house to wash their clothes. Natasha Wolfe is Wolfe's mother. Merrick and Wolfe went to WinnaVegas after they had finished washing their clothes.

Merrick was scared and she wanted to flee after she realized that Redhorn died. Merrick and Wolfe went to her parent's house in Walthill, NE. Merrick was drying their clothes at her parent's house, and she talked with her father. Merrick

asked her father what she should do, and he told her to turn herself in. Merrick's father got mad at her when he found out they had washed their clothes, and he told her the police might need the clothes for their investigation.

Merrick was wearing a pink shirt, blue jeans, a "Jordan" sweatshirt with the number "23" on the hood, and tennis shoes at the time of the incident. Merrick had blood all over her jeans and tennis shoes after the homicide, and she washed her pants and sweatshirt. Merrick did not wash her tennis shoes, and they still have blood on them. Merrick's clothes are at her residence.

Merrick stated she never meant for this to happen, and it was not her intention to kill Redhorn. Merrick and Wolfe drove to the Winnebago Police Department around 8:00 p.m. on April 23, 2017. They parked on the fire department side of the building and thought about reporting the incident. They saw an officer mowing the grass and decided to go to Walthill instead.

Merrick then stated a third and fourth person were present when the homicide occurred. John Doe and Natasha Wolfe were also with them in the Tahoe. At some point, both Doe and Natasha got out of the car. Doe struck Redhorn on the back with Doe's bag while Redhorn was on top of Wolfe, and Doe also kicked Redhorn in the ribs. Doe was carrying a messenger-style bag with a flap that opens. Natasha stated, "Break it off," and she was trying to grab Wolfe's arms during the incident.

Merrick and Wolfe had announced to family members that they were going to take off, but they changed their minds and decided to turn themselves in.

8. Jeremiah Wolfe was interviewed by your affiant on April 23, 2017, at the Winnebago BIA Police Department. Wolfe relayed the following: Wolfe and Merrick were parked in his dark blue 2000 Chevrolet Tahoe at the HCI Building parking lot during the late evening hours of April 22, 2017, and the early morning hours of April 23, 2017, and they were using the free Wi-Fi.

On April 23, 2017, at approximately 4:00 a.m., Wolfe saw Winnebago Police Officer Benson driving around the vicinity of the Dollar General Store in his

Winnebago Police Chevrolet Tahoe patrol vehicle. Officer Benson was using the lights on the side of his patrol vehicle like he was looking for somebody.

Approximately five minutes later, Wolfe saw someone near the HCI Building. This individual (subsequently identified as Redhorn) was dressed in black, and it appeared that he was messing with the HCI doors "like he was trying to get into the building." Wolfe flashed his headlights at Redhorn, but Redhorn did not leave or move on.

Wolfe thought Redhorn was trying to get into the HCI Building, and Merrick told Redhorn to "get out of there." Redhorn was flipping them off and he was saying something, but Wolfe could not tell what he was saying. According to Wolfe, Redhorn began to approach the Tahoe, and Wolfe and Merrick got out of the Tahoe. Merrick and Redhorn were walking towards each other when Redhorn swung on Merrick. The punch missed Merrick, and Wolfe began running towards Redhorn.

Redhorn began to run away from Wolfe and Merrick. Redhorn ran down the street when he stopped and swung on Wolfe twice. Redhorn may have hit Wolfe in the face, but Wolfe was not sure if he had been struck or not. Redhorn began running away again, and Wolfe saw Redhorn slip on the grass.

Wolfe landed on top of Redhorn and they were wrestling around. Redhorn bit Wolfe on his right forearm, and Wolfe hit Redhorn a couple of times. At one point, Redhorn was on top of Wolfe. Wolfe then used his legs to flip Redhorn off of him.

Wolfe stated that he placed Redhorn in a headlock and he "locked it up" by clasping his right hand and left hand fingers together. Wolfe held Redhorn in the headlock until Redhorn went limp. Wolfe released the headlock after Redhorn was unconscious. Wolfe then got up and started walking away from Redhorn. Wolfe stated to your affiant, "That's pretty much it."

Wolfe physically demonstrated the headlock technique he had used on Redhorn. Wolfe made motions with his arms and hands as to how he had placed the front of Redhorn's neck and throat in the "V" portion on the inside of his

(Wolfe's) right elbow between the forearm and biceps. Wolfe then demonstrated how he "locked it (the headlock) up" by pulling his right forearm back towards his own body to the point where he could lock his left and right fingers together. Wolfe then held Redhorn in the headlock until he went limp.

Wolfe was wearing a dark gray short-sleeved shirt, black jeans, and ankle high black Nike basketball shoes at the time of the incident. These clothes are at his residence.

Wolfe stated he was so mad that his hands were shaking after the incident was over. Wolfe and Merrick left the scene and went to WinnaVegas. Wolfe thought the incident occurred between 4:00 a.m. and 4:30 a.m.

Wolfe and Merrick arrived at WinnaVegas around 6:00 a.m., and they left around 9:00 a.m. They drove to Sioux City to get some gas, met a relative, and got some money for gas. They returned to their residence in Winnebago and went mushroom hunting. Wolfe and Merrick went home and went to sleep between 1:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m., and woke up around 3:00 p.m.

A relative came by the house and told Wolfe a man's body had been found in a car. Wolfe later heard the body had been found on the ground. Wolfe stated he thought, "Oh man. I didn't want that to happen. I didn't think that was going to happen. I was shocked."

Wolfe stated he punched Redhorn two or three times on the left side, or possibly on the back, of his head. Wolfe stated he "never met to kill him or anything." Wolfe felt Redhorn go limp, and Wolfe let him go. Redhorn was lying on his stomach when Wolfe walked away.

Merrick participated in the fight, but Wolfe really did not know what she did because he was focused on Redhorn. Wolfe does not know how Redhorn got blood on him. Wolfe and Redhorn struggled on the ground for a little while, but he does not know how long. Wolfe did not want Redhorn to hurt him or anybody else. Wolfe stated he was angry when they left the HCI parking lot.

Wolfe and Merrick did not discuss calling the police or an ambulance after the incident. Wolfe thought it was just a "basic fight," and that Redhorn would get up and walk away after he regained consciousness. Wolfe and Merrick washed their clothes at his mother Natasha Wolfe's house. Wolfe stated it was an accident and he didn't mean for it to happen. Wolfe and Merrick did not think about running.

Wolfe stated Redhorn was a big guy, and he knew Redhorn was drunk because he could smell the alcohol and he was acting drunk. Wolfe and Merrick had been drinking Southern Comfort earlier that evening (April 22, 2017). Wolfe drank a little bit more than Merrick, but he was not intoxicated. Wolfe stated he was "buzzed up," but he was not drunk.

Natasha Wolfe and John Doe were also present when the incident occurred.

9. Natasha Wolfe was interviewed by your affiant on April 26, 2017, at the Omaha Nation Law Enforcement Services Jail in Macy, NE. Natasha was informed that she was currently in tribal custody. Natasha voluntarily waived her Miranda rights and relayed the following: Natasha was driving around with Wolfe and Merrick on the evening of April 22, 2017, and into the early morning hours of April 23, 2017. Natasha did not think Wolfe or Merrick had consumed any alcohol. They did stop by Natasha's house so Natasha could smoke some crystal methamphetamine.

Wolfe said they should go for another ride after Natasha smoked her crystal methamphetamine. They decided to take some cigarettes out to a friend who lives near the Winnebago powwow grounds, and Natasha saw Redhorn out by this residence. Redhorn asked them for a ride, but they did not give him one. Natasha stated this occurred before 12:00 a.m. on April 23, 2017.

Natasha was seated in the rear passenger seat of the Tahoe. They drove to the HCI Building and parked in the parking lot on the north side so they could use the free Wi-Fi. Wolfe said he saw Officer Benson using his spotlight around the Dollar General Store, and Jeremiah said Officer Benson must be looking for

someone. A short time later, Wolfe said, "I think we just found who Officer Benson was looking for."

Natasha saw Redhorn dumping dirt or something on himself, and he threw a metal thing, possibly a gutter down spout, at the HCl door. Wolfe flashed his headlights twice at Redhorn, and Redhorn started walking toward the Tahoe. Natasha recognized the individual as William Ivan Redhorn, Jr. when he began walking towards the Tahoe. Natasha opened her car door and she told Redhorn "get out of here." Merrick opened her car door and she began to holler, then Merrick got out of the Tahoe.

Redhorn was yelling back at them and he was taunting Merrick. Wolfe got out of the driver's seat and everybody began walking towards each other. Wolfe swung on Redhorn, and Redhorn took off running down the road. Natasha got out of the Tahoe to see what was going on, but she couldn't see Wolfe, Merrick, or Redhorn.

Natasha went to see what was going on, and she saw Wolfe and Redhorn on the ground. Wolfe and Redhorn were each on their knees, and Wolfe was trying to put Redhorn in a headlock. Natasha told Wolfe, "No." Natasha stated Merrick was of no help while she was trying to break up Wolfe and Redhorn because Merrick was kicking Redhorn in the face.

Natasha tried to pull Wolfe up onto his feet. Natasha began walking away when she heard Merrick yell, "Who lands like that?" Natasha thought Redhorn would get up and walk away after the incident. Redhorn was lying on his side when she pulled Jeremiah to his feet. They began walking back to the Tahoe; Wolfe was ahead of Natasha and Merrick was behind her. They got back into the Tahoe and left. They stopped by Natasha's house to pick up her purse, and then went to WinnaVegas. John Doe was also with them, but she does not remember if Doe was with them when the incident occurred.

10. Douglas County (NE) Coroner's Office Pathologist Dr. Michelle Elieff conducted an autopsy on Redhorn's body on April 24, 2017. Doctor Elieff stated the manner of death was homicide, and the cause of death was strangulation of

Redhorn's neck. Doctor Elieff stated the specific type of strangulation used during the commission of Redhorn's homicide was "external compression of the neck structures."

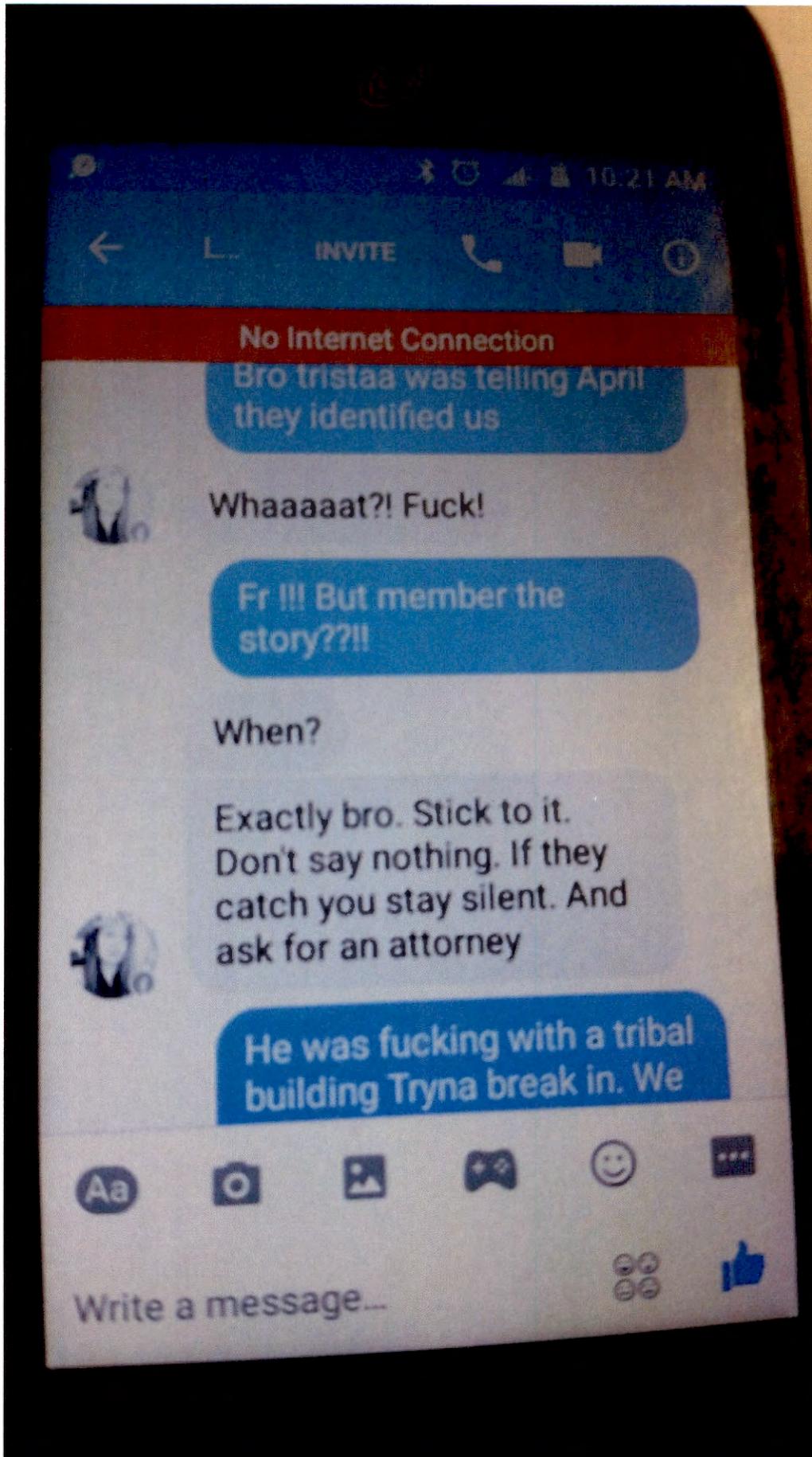
The strangulation suffered by Redhorn is consistent with the application of a headlock or carotid-type restraint, and this action resulted in deep tissue bruising to the left and right sides of Redhorn's neck. Doctor Elieff stated these injuries are consistent with external compression of the neck structures-type of strangulation.

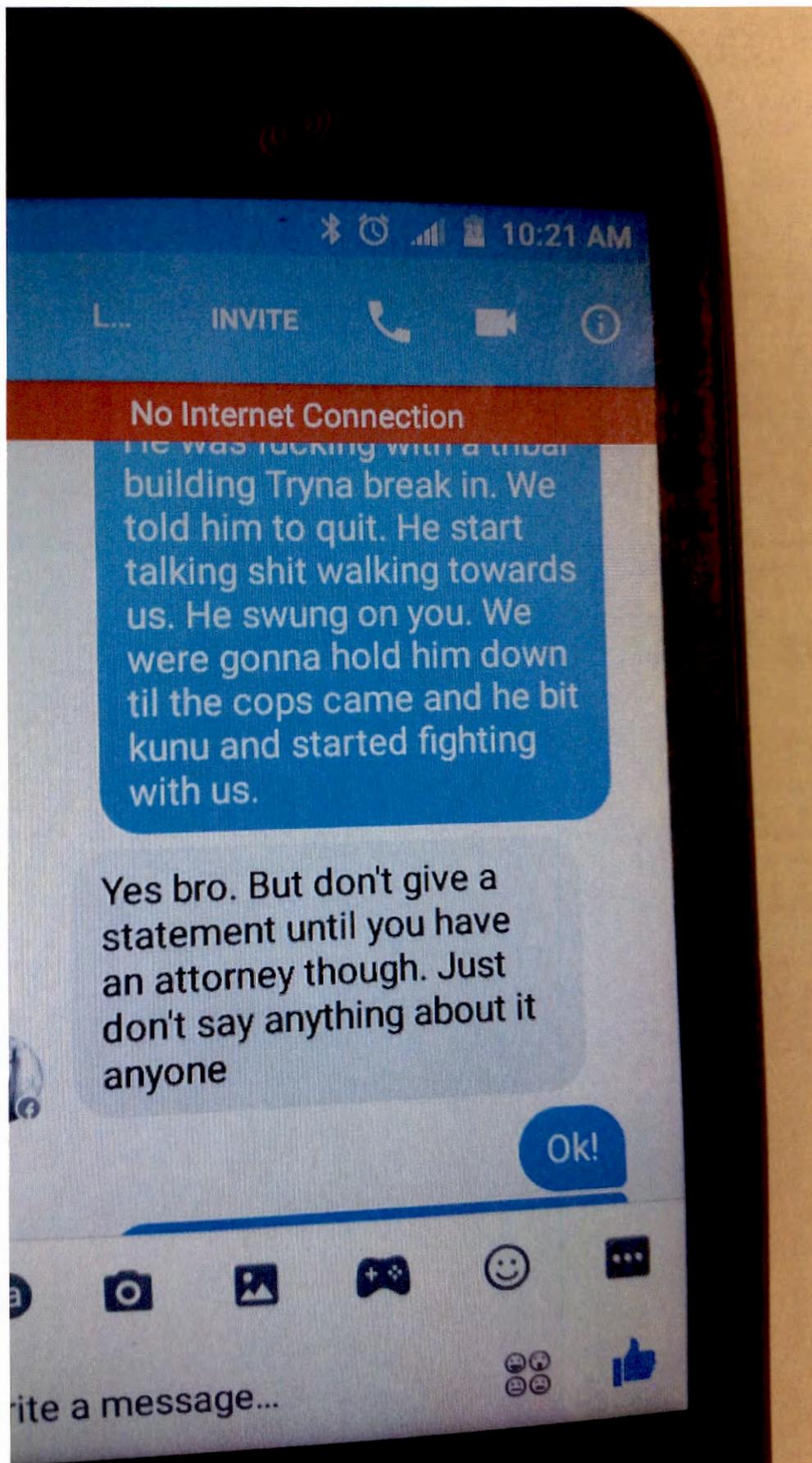
Redhorn also sustained head trauma that was consistent with receiving a physical beating, and this head trauma could have been a contributing factor to his death in conjunction with the strangulation. Doctor Elieff also observed three semi-circular markings on the top of Redhorn's forehead that were approximately one-half to one inch in length.

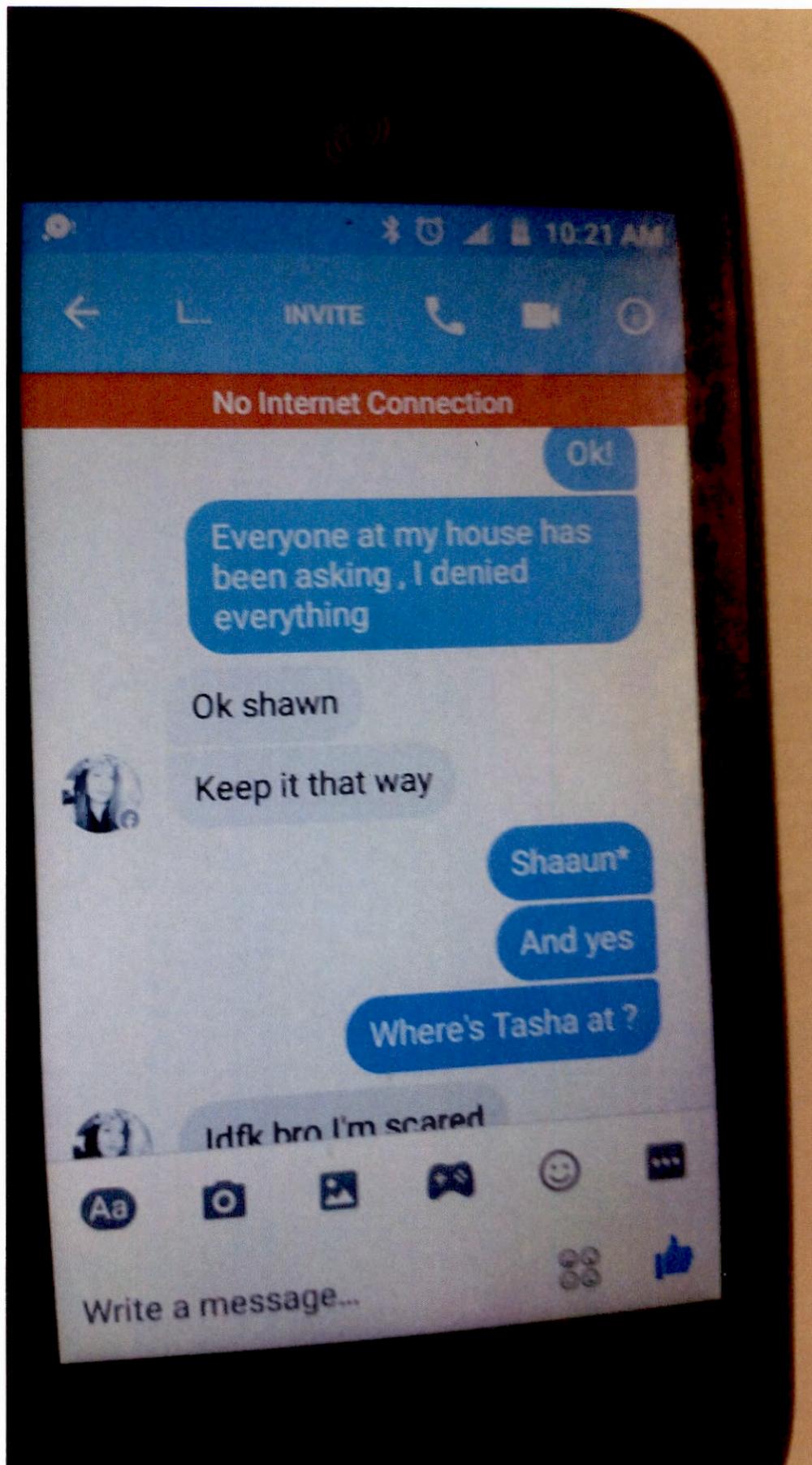
11. Winnebago COP Lawrence obtained voluntary consent to collect and search John Doe's cellular telephone on April 25, 2017, via a BIA Voluntary Consent to Search form. COP Lawrence reviewed the cellular telephone and observed a video recording of the homicide and a string of text messages between an unidentified party and Doe.

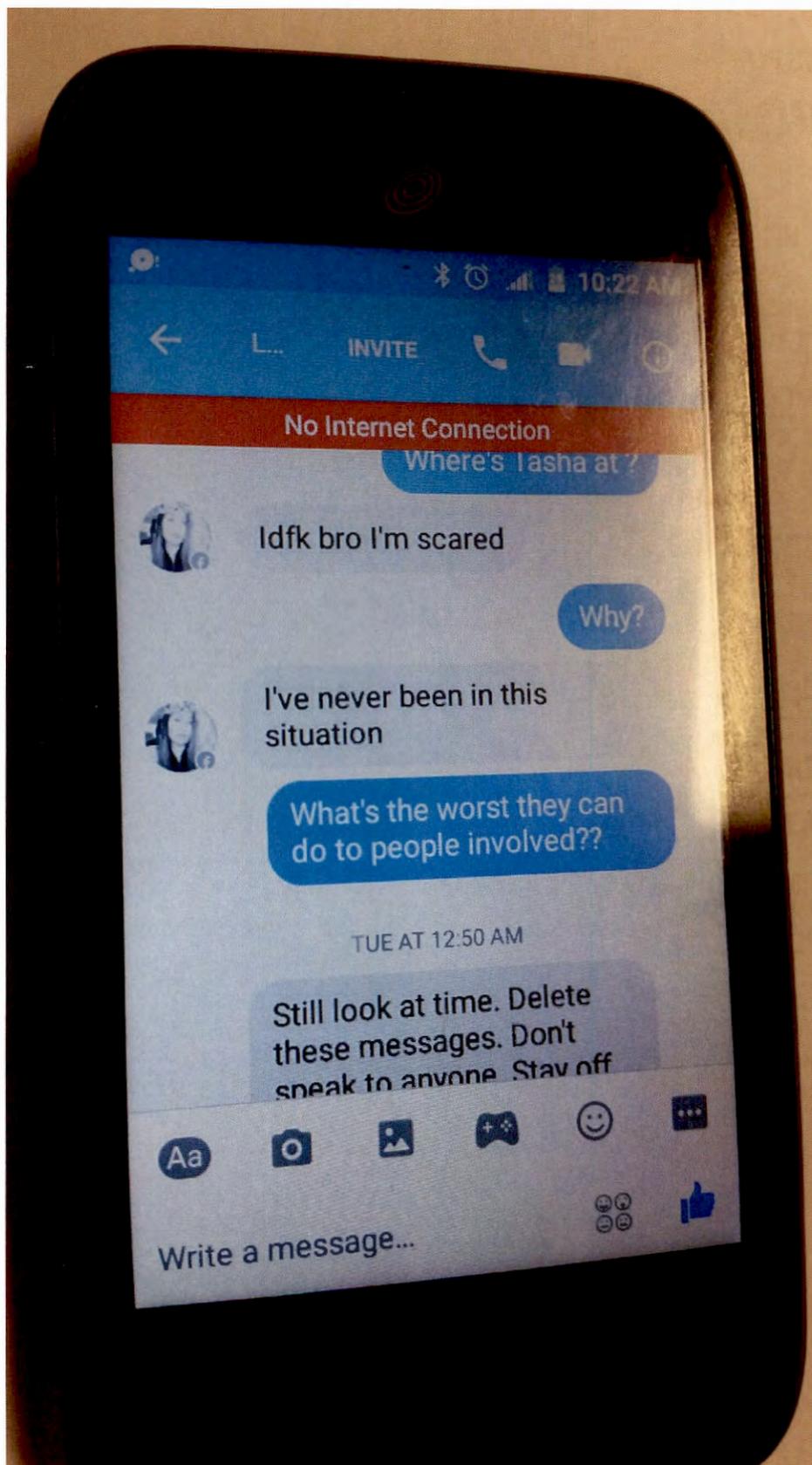
The recorded video on Doe's cellular telephone shows the incident from the point of view of the individual who was holding the cell phone and recording. The video begins in a lighted portion of the north parking lot where the Tahoe is parked. Natasha identifies the individual near the HCI Building as Redhorn. The individual recording the incident appears to begin running while they are still recording. The recorded video appears to become dark due to diminished lighting, and the individual continues to record. The video clearly records the audio of the homicide as it is being committed.

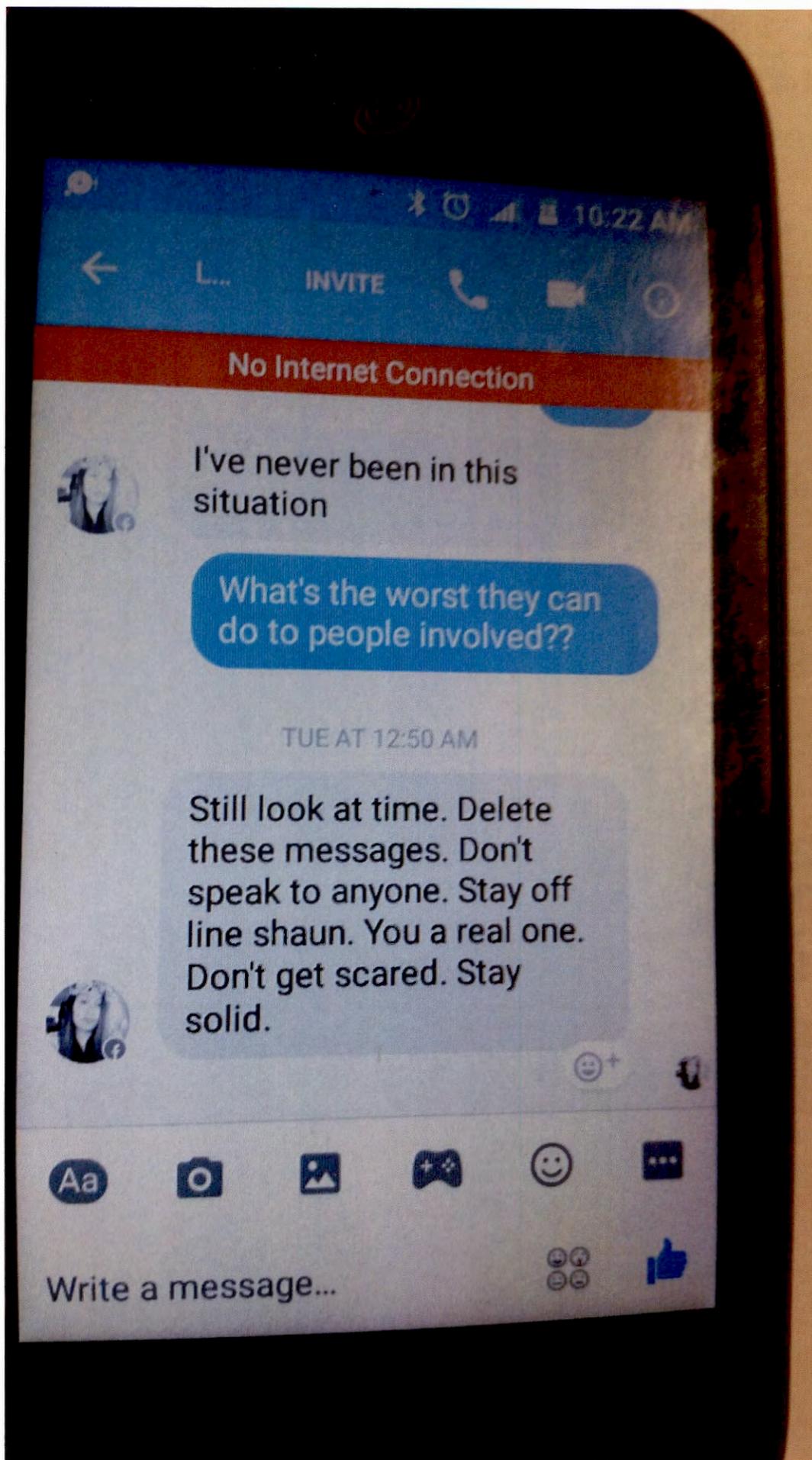
Doe participates in the following text message conversation beginning at 10:19 p.m. on April 24, 2017:











10:22 AM

L... INVITE

No Internet Connection



I've never been in this situation

What's the worst they can do to people involved??

TUE AT 12:50 AM



Still look at time. Delete these messages. Don't speak to anyone. Stay off line shaun. You a real one. Don't get scared. Stay solid.

Aa



Write a message...



12. The events described in paragraphs one through 11 occurred on the Winnebago Indian Reservation, in Indian Country, in the District of Nebraska.

William Ivan Redhorn, Jr. was an enrolled member of the Winnebago Indian Tribe at the time of his death.

Jeremiah Mitchell Wolfe and Natasha Marie Wolfe are enrolled members of the Winnebago Indian Tribe, and Lawrencia Lowella Merrick is an enrolled member of the Omaha Tribe.

Based upon the aforementioned information, your affiant believes a violation of federal law has occurred, to wit; Crime on an Indian Reservation, Murder, in violation of title 18, USC Sections 1111, 1112 and 1153. Your affiant is requesting arrest warrants be issued for Jeremiah Mitchell Wolfe, Natasha Marie Wolfe, and Lawrencia Lowella Merrick.



Bradley J. Purscell
Special Agent
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Subscribed and sworn to me before this 2 day of MAY



F.A. GOSSETT, III
U.S. Magistrate