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Department of Law

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Murder Trial Begins for Joplin in Ketchikan Doctor's Death

May 08, 2023 (Anchorage, AK) –In opening arguments in Anchorage Superior Court today District Attorney Mark Clark described the details that ultimately resulted in the death of Dr. Eric Garcia who received a fatal dose of liquid morphine. Jordan Joplin, 38, is accused of murder in the first degree, murder in the second degree, and theft in the first degree for the March 2017 death of 58-year-old Garcia.

“We will prove that Jordan Joplin killed Eric Garcia, and that he did it for material possessions,” **said DA Clark.**



Assistant Attorney General Erin McCarthy begins questioning the State's first witness in a trial expected to last 4-5 weeks. From left to right as pictured are District Attorney Mark Clark, Assistant Attorney General Erin McCarthy, Defense Counsel Lars Johnson, and Defendant Jordan Joplin. Photo taken by Sam Curtis.

The State called their first witness, Garcia's friend and assistant, after the defense made their opening comments. Assistant Attorney General Erin McCarthy highlighted the

witness' relationship to Garcia, and her extensive knowledge of his habits and behaviors.

On March 15, 2017, Joplin traveled from Washington State to Ketchikan to visit Dr. Garcia, his friend and romantic partner. Joplin returned to his home in Washington on March 17. The following day, March 18, Joplin called the Ketchikan Police Department and reported that he was expecting Dr. Garcia to come to Washington to visit him and was worried about Dr. Garcia because he had not arrived, and Joplin had not heard from him.

On March 27, 2017, Joplin returned to Ketchikan and asked police to conduct a welfare check on Dr. Garcia. Joplin let the police into Dr. Garcia's home using keys he had. He was also driving Dr. Garcia's truck. Joplin told police he had last seen Dr. Garcia on March 16, 2017. When police entered Dr. Garcia's home they found him deceased. An autopsy found that Dr. Garcia's death was caused by the combined toxic effects of morphine, methadone, diazepam and lorazepam. Detectives discovered that many items were missing from Dr. Garcia's home, to include electronics, a valuable collection of gold coins and watches, and a collection of liquor valued at over \$300,000. The detectives also learned that the alarm system in the home had been disabled.

During the investigation, detectives discovered that prior to his arrival in Ketchikan on March 15, Joplin arranged for three shipping containers to be delivered to Dr. Garcia's residence on March 17. Detectives discovered that when those containers arrived on March 17, Joplin loaded them with more than 4,000 pounds of Dr. Garcia's belongings, including the missing valuables and many of Dr. Garcia's personal items, and shipped them to Joplin's residence in Washington.

Detectives later found Dr. Garcia's cell phone and wallet in Joplin's residence in Washington. They found multiple transfers totaling over \$20,000 that had been made from Dr. Garcia's bank accounts to an account of Joplin's between March 17 and March 30. On Joplin's cell phone, detectives found a video taken on March 17, 2017, of Dr. Garcia, who appeared to be unconscious. "Ten days later Ketchikan Police Officers found Dr. Garcia dead in the same position and wearing the same clothes as in the video," said DA Clark.

The investigation determined that after that video was taken, later on the night of March 17, Joplin used Dr. Garcia's truck to drive to the airport to return to his Washington home.

The charges in the indictment are only allegations and are not evidence of guilt. Joplin is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the prosecution must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The trial is expected to span four to five weeks. The trial was moved from Ketchikan to Anchorage due to the amount of publicity the case received in Ketchikan.

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