

STATE OF WISCONSIN

CIRCUIT COURT

MILWAUKEE COUNTY

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Plaintiff,

DA Case No.: 2023ML025900

Court Case No.:

vs.

**CRIMINAL COMPLAINT**

MENDOZA, ERIK J  
2411 NORTH 54TH STREET  
MILWAUKEE, WI 53210  
DOB: 01/05/2008

**Defendant(s).**

*For Official Use*

THE BELOW NAMED COMPLAINANT BEING DULY SWORN, ON INFORMATION AND BELIEF STATES THAT:

**COUNT ONE: FIRST DEGREE INTENTIONAL HOMICIDE - AS A PARTY TO A CRIME**

The above-named defendant on or about Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at 2411 North 54th Street, in the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, as a party to a crime, did cause the death of PRM 12/23/2017 DOB, another human being, with intent to kill that person, contrary to sec. 940.01(1)(a), 939.50(3)(a), 939.05 Wis. Stats.

Upon conviction for this offense, a Class A Felony, the defendant shall be sentenced to imprisonment for life.

**COUNT TWO: PHYSICAL ABUSE OF A CHILD, REPEATED ACTS CAUSING DEATH - AS A PARTY TO A CRIME**

The above-named defendant on or about Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at 2411 North 54th Street, in the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, as a party to a crime, did commit repeated acts of physical abuse involving the same child, PRM, DOB 12/23/2017, where at least three of the acts were violations of sec. 948.03(2), sec. 948.03(3), or sec. 948.03(4) of Wis. Stats. and at least one violation caused the death of the child, contrary to sec. 948.03(5)(a)1, 939.50(3)(a), 939.05 Wis. Stats.

Upon conviction for this offense, a Class A Felony, the defendant shall be sentenced to imprisonment for life.

**COUNT THREE: HIDING A CORPSE - AS A PARTY TO A CRIME**

The above-named defendant on or about Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at between 2411 N. 54th Street and 5518 W. Vliet Street, in the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, as a party to a crime, did hide a corpse with the intent to avoid apprehension for a crime, contrary to sec. 940.11(2), 939.50(3)(f), 939.05 Wis. Stats.

Upon conviction for this offense, a Class F Felony, the defendant may be fined not more than Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000), or imprisoned not more than twelve (12) years and six (6) months, or both.

**COUNT FOUR: FIRST DEGREE RECKLESSLY ENDANGERING SAFETY, USE OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON**

The above-named defendant on or about Monday, October 23, 2023, at or near 2665 North 35th Street (intersection of N. 35<sup>th</sup> Street and W. Center Street), in the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, did recklessly endanger the safety of JJP, under circumstances which show utter disregard for human life, contrary to sec. 941.30(1), 939.50(3)(f), 939.63(1)(b) Wis. Stats.

Upon conviction for this offense, a Class F Felony, the defendant may be fined not more than Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000), or imprisoned not more than twelve (12) years and six (6) months, or both.

And further, invoking the provisions of sec. 939.63(1)(b) Wis. Stats., because the defendant committed this offense while using a dangerous weapon, the maximum term of imprisonment for the felony may be increased by not more than 5 years.

**COUNT FIVE: FIRST DEGREE RECKLESSLY ENDANGERING SAFETY, USE OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON**

The above-named defendant on or about Monday, October 23, 2023, at or near 4211 West North Avenue, in the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, did recklessly endanger the safety of JHS, under circumstances which show utter disregard for human life, contrary to sec. 941.30(1), 939.50(3)(f), 939.63(1)(b) Wis. Stats.

Upon conviction for this offense, a Class F Felony, the defendant may be fined not more than Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000), or imprisoned not more than twelve (12) years and six (6) months, or both.

And further, invoking the provisions of sec. 939.63(1)(b) Wis. Stats., because the defendant committed this offense while using a dangerous weapon, the maximum term of imprisonment for the felony may be increased by not more than 5 years.

**COUNT SIX: FIRST DEGREE RECKLESSLY ENDANGERING SAFETY, USE OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON**

The above-named defendant on or about Monday, October 23, 2023, at or near 2665 North Sherman Boulevard (the intersection of N. Sherman Boulevard and W. Center Street), in the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, did recklessly endanger the safety of EH, under circumstances which show utter disregard for human life, contrary to sec. 941.30(1), 939.50(3)(f), 939.63(1)(b) Wis. Stats.

Upon conviction for this offense, a Class F Felony, the defendant may be fined not more than Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000), or imprisoned not more than twelve (12) years and six (6) months, or both.

And further, invoking the provisions of sec. 939.63(1)(b) Wis. Stats., because the defendant committed this offense while using a dangerous weapon, the maximum term of imprisonment for the felony may be increased by not more than 5 years.

**Probable Cause:**

This complaint is supported by the written reports of City of Milwaukee law enforcement officers and detectives whose reports were prepared through the normal course of police business and which your complaining witness has relied on in the past and found to be truthful and accurate. Based on a review of the reports pertaining to the investigation of this matter, your complaining witness believes that:

#### **FIVE-YEAR-OLD PRM IS REPORTED MISSING**

At 6:03 PM on October 25, 2023, City of Milwaukee Police Officers Omar Contreras and Miladin Stojanovic responded to the residence of 2411 N. 54<sup>th</sup> Street, in the City of Milwaukee, County of Milwaukee, in response to a critical missing child complaint. Upon arriving on scene, Officer Contreras made contact with the 911 caller, citizen witness JB 2/18/1996 DOB. JB reported that her five-year-old son, PRM 12/23/2017 DOB, was missing from the residence. JB last saw PRM inside the residence around 9:00 AM on October 25, 2023. PRM wanted to go into the basement of the residence to play videogames.

City of Milwaukee Police officers conducted a complete search of the residence, twice, and were unable to locate PRM inside the residence. When PRM could not be located inside the residence, Officer Contreras broadcast a description of PRM as a critical missing child.

#### **THE MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT PERFORMS A GRID SEARCH AND CANVASS OF THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD**

Once detectives arrived on scene, Officers Contreras and Stojanovic assisted multiple members of the City of Milwaukee Police Department in conducting a broad canvass of the neighborhood surrounding 2411 N. 54<sup>th</sup> Street. Originally, the Milwaukee Police Department conducted a grid search with borders of: N. 51<sup>st</sup> Street to N. 55<sup>th</sup> Street, and W. Lisbon Avenue to W. Garfield Avenue. PRM was not located during the initial grid search. As a result the City of Milwaukee Police Department expanded the borders of the grid search to: N. 50<sup>th</sup> Street to N. 58<sup>th</sup> Street, and W. Lloyd Street to W. Hadley Street. Still, PRM was not located during the second, expanded grid search.

During the canvass, City of Milwaukee Police attempted to make contact with well over 200 residences and businesses within the grid in an effort to locate any potential citizen witness with information about the whereabouts of PRM. The officers were also tasked with locating any residences or businesses with surveillance video that may have captured PRM's whereabouts.

#### **THE LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AT 2411 N. 54<sup>th</sup> STREET**

City of Milwaukee Police Detective Matthew Bughman arrived on scene and conducted a detailed interview of JB, who provided the following information to Detective Bughman.

Michelle M., a family friend of JB, is the owner of the residence located at 2411 N. 54<sup>th</sup> Street. Michelle M. lives on the main floor of the residence, along with her daughter, VM 1/28/2011 DOB. Michelle M. uses the first floor dining room as her bedroom. VM's bedroom is the northwest bedroom located on the first floor. Michelle M. has two sons who also live in the residence, BM 8/2/2006 DOB, and Defendant Erik Mendoza 1/5/2008 DOB. BM and Defendant Erik Mendoza each have make-shift bedrooms on the eastern portion of the second floor/attic of the residence.

JB lives in the western portion of the second floor/attic of the residence, along with her boyfriend, DM 12/29/1995 DOB, and their three children-in-common, PAM 11/4/2021 DOB, ZRM 8/25/2019 DOB, and PRM 12/23/2017 DOB. An associate of Michelle M., Defendant David Pietura Jr. 9/6/1996 DOB, lives in the basement of the residence.

### **THE LAST TIME PRM'S MOTHER SAW PRM ALIVE**

At 7:30 AM on October 25, 2023, JB woke up. PRM was awake, coughing, and complaining of a sore throat. As a result, JB decided to keep PRM home from school. A short time later, PRM asked to use JB's cell phone. JB allowed PRM to use her cell phone and JB went back to sleep. At approximately 9:00 AM, PRM returned JB's cell phone to JB, as the cell phone battery was dead. JB believed that PRM went into the basement to play video games with Defendant Pietura. JB went back to sleep.

At 1:00 PM, JB woke up and went to the main level of the residence. JB spoke with Michelle M., who allowed JB to use Michelle M.'s vehicle to purchase food. JB took Defendant Mendoza with her and went to the Clark Station located at 55<sup>th</sup> Street and Lisbon Avenue to purchase food. Upon returning home, JB went upstairs and woke DM up.

Sometime later, JB went into the basement to look for PRM. Upon entering the basement, all of the lights were off. JB turned on the lights and looked for PRM. JB could not locate PRM in the basement. There was nobody in the basement. JB returned to the second floor of the residence and asked her boyfriend DM if he knew where PRM was. DM did not know where PRM was. JB went into BM's bedroom in the eastern portion of the second floor/attic, where BM was playing video games with Defendant Pietura. Defendant Pietura claimed to not have seen PRM all day. JB began to panic, and searched the entire residence for PRM. When JB could not locate PRM inside the residence, JB, Michelle M., and DM, drove around the neighborhood looking for PRM. Upon returning home without locating PRM, JB called police.

### **DETECTIVE BUGHMAN OBSERVES SUSPECTED BLOOD IN THE BASEMENT OF 2411 N. 54<sup>th</sup> STREET**

JB escorted Detective Bughman through entire residence, including the basement portion of the residence. Once in the basement, Detective Bughman observed blood on the cement floor near carpet runners. Defendant Pietura, who was in the basement at the time, immediately attempted to adjust the carpet runners in an attempt to cover the blood on the cement floor. Defendant Pietura claimed that he and Defendant Mendoza were roughhousing earlier resulting in Defendant Pietura suffering a bloody nose.

Detective Bughman walked further into the portion of the basement Defendant Pietura used as a bedroom. Detective Bughman observed more suspected blood on a white comforter covering a chair, as well as on a blanket that was used as a divider between Defendant Pietura's room and the rest of the basement. Detective Bughman immediately had all occupants of the residence moved into the living room until additional detectives could arrive on scene.

### **DEFENDANT PIETURA'S ON SCENE STATEMENT TO DETECTIVE BUGHMAN**

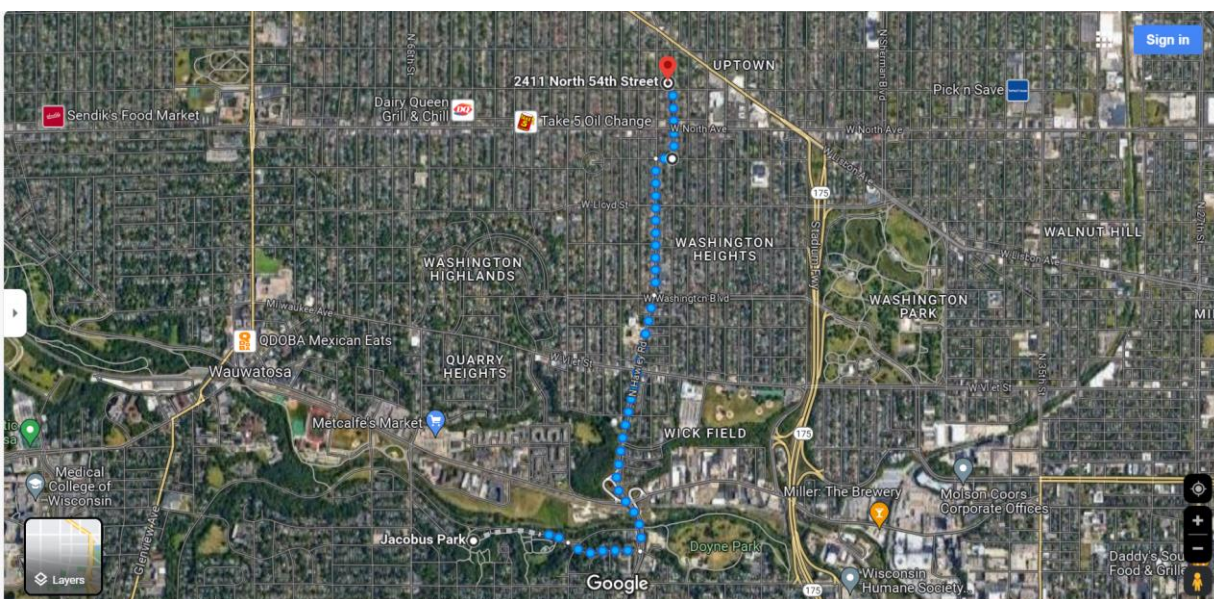
Once additional detectives arrived on scene, Detective Bughman conducted a detailed interview of Defendant David Pietura Jr. Defendant Pietura confirmed that he lived in the basement portion of 2411 N. 54<sup>th</sup> Street. Most days, Defendant Pietura plays videogames in the basement portion of the residence.

As to the events of October 25, 2023, Defendant Pietura claimed that his memory regarding the events of that day was "blurry." Defendant Pietura woke up some time between 6:00 AM and 7:00 AM. After

waking up, Defendant Pietura played video games in the basement until 11:00 AM. At 11:00 AM, Defendant Pietura and Defendant Mendoza went for a walk. Defendant Pietura could not recall where the Defendants walked to. At 2:00 PM the Defendants returned home. Defendant Pietura went back into the basement to play video games. Defendant Pietura denied seeing PRM at any point during the day of October 25, 2023.

When asked about any issues in the house, Defendant Pietura claimed that PRM's parents "always sleep", resulting in Defendant Pietura feeling obligated to watch and entertain PRM.

After Detective Bughman interviewed Defendant Pietura, City of Milwaukee Police Detectives Andrew Marx and Keith Miller asked Defendant Pietura to verify the path he walked with Defendant Mendoza on October 25, 2023. Defendant Pietura claimed that he and Defendant Mendoza walked to Jacobus Park, 6501 W. Hillside Lane, at 11:00 AM on October 25, 2023. Jacobus Park is approximately 2 miles from 2411 N. 54<sup>th</sup> Street (see below). The Defendant claimed that he and Defendant Mendoza were gone from approximately 11:00 AM to 2:00 - 2:30 PM.

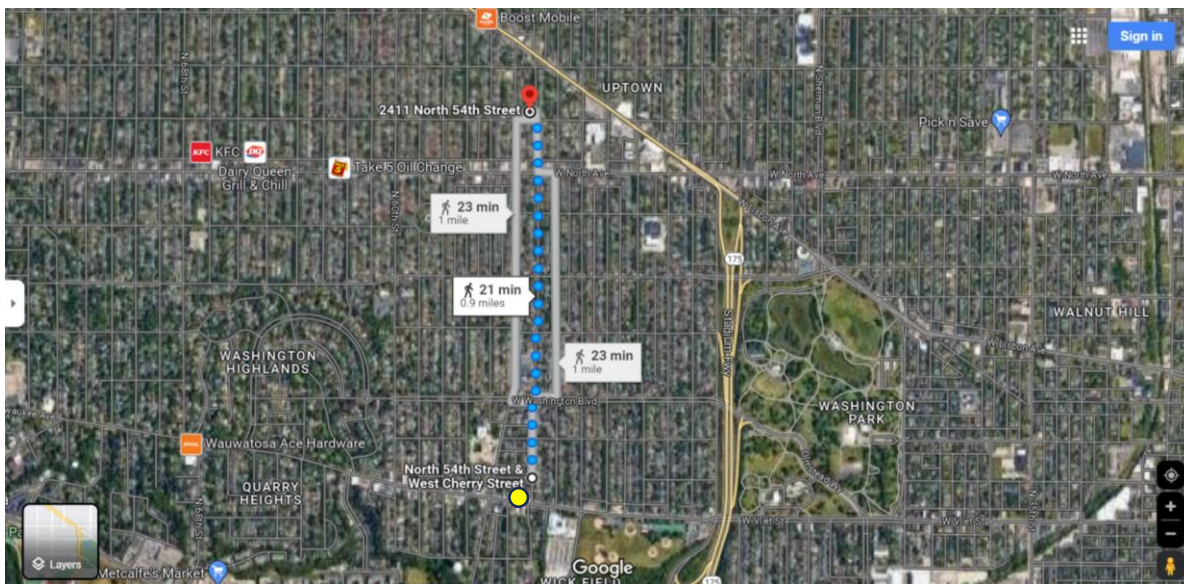


### **A SEARCH OF DEFENDANT PIETURA'S CELL PHONE CONTRADICTS DEFENDANT PIETURA'S ON SCENE STATEMENTS TO POLICE**

Detective Miller obtained consent from Defendant Pietura to examine Defendant Pietura's cell phone. City of Milwaukee Police Detective Michael Braunreiter Jr. examined GPS coordinates from Defendant Pietura's phone from October 25, 2023. That examination revealed that Defendant Pietura's phone left 2411 N. 54<sup>th</sup> Street at 1:43 PM. From 2:09 PM through 2:14 PM, Defendant Pietura's phone travels to the area of N 54<sup>th</sup> and Cherry. At 2:29 PM, Defendant Pietura's phone is on Hawley Road returning to the area of 2411 N. 54<sup>th</sup> Street.

The GPS coordinates demonstrated that Defendant Pietura was never near Jacobus Park on October 25, 2023, and Defendant Pietura's claim of being away from the residence from 11:00 AM through 2:30 PM was false. (However, the GPS coordinates place Defendant Pietura within one block of where PRM's body was ultimately recovered from – 5518 W. Vliet Street, see yellow dot below).





As Defendant Pietura was being interviewed by Detectives Marx and Miller, Detective Marx noted a large amount of blood on Defendant Pietura's right leg. Defendant Pietura was subsequently placed under arrest for obstruction.

### **THE SEARCH FOR PRM CONTINUES INTO OCTOBER 26, 2023**

At 12:00 AM on October 26, 2023, City of Milwaukee Police Officers Nicholas Wilckens and Daniel Finn were assigned to assist with the grid search and neighborhood canvass. Officers Wilckens and Finn first participated in the grid search, which included searching garbage cans, underneath cars, and backyards of the residences surrounding 2411 N. 54<sup>th</sup> Street. After assisting with the grid search, Officers Wilckens and Finn remained on scene to block traffic as the investigation into PRM's disappearance continued.

### **THE SEARCH OF 2411 N. 54<sup>th</sup> STREET PRODUCES SIGNIFICANT EVIDENCE RELATED TO PRM'S DEATH**

At 3:45 AM on October 26, 2023, the City of Milwaukee Police Department executed a search warrant on the residence of 2411 N. 54<sup>th</sup> Street. Prior to the residence being searched, City of Milwaukee Police Detective Shaun Lesniewski met with a K9 handler from Wisconsin K9 SOS, a search and rescue K9 unit. The dogs with Wisconsin K9 SOS are trained to track scent and served two purposes relative to the search for PRM: (1) locating which direction PRM may have left the residence; or (2) identifying the odor of decomposition, if present.

Dog handler Chris Boyd entered the residence with "Jake", a Bavarian Mountain Dog. Eihlbein Glennor assisted the search by documenting the reactions of "Jake". While in the basement of 2411 N. 54<sup>th</sup> Street, "Jake" alerted to the odor of decomposition at the base of the basement stairs where three sweatshirts were hanging from the back of a door. Of note, one of the sweatshirts is consistent with the sweatshirt worn by Defendant Pietura while carrying the garbage bag containing PRM's body on October 25, 2023.

While in Defendant Pietura's make-shift bedroom in the basement of 2411 N. 54<sup>th</sup> Street, Detective Lesniewski observed suspected blood on a tan blanket covering a chair in the room. A hanging blue and white blanket that was used as a room divider also appeared to have blood on it.

Forensic Investigators Sara Rakowski and Clayton Amborn processed the basement of the residence with Bluestar, a reagent used to reveal blood stains that have been washed out, wiped away, or are invisible to the naked eye. Detective Lesniewski personally observed numerous areas of Defendant Pietura's bedroom luminesce with the application of Bluestar, including:

- The black area rug leading into Defendant Pietura's bedroom;
- Large area rug directly next to Defendant Pietura's bed;
- A blue blanket on Defendant Pietura's bed;
- Two standard sized pillows on Defendant Pietura's bed;
- A grey pillow on Defendant Pietura's bed;
- Multiple areas of the concrete floor and brick basement wall;

As Detective Lesniewski was conducting the search of the basement, Detective Lesniewski received word that Detectives Jose Flores and Dan O'Connell were conducting an in custody interview of Defendant Pietura. During the interview, Defendant Pietura disclosed that Defendant Mendoza used a golf club to strike PRM multiple times. Defendant Pietura indicated that the golf club would be located next to the furnace just outside of Defendant Pietura's bedroom. Detective Lesniewski located an iron wedge golf club and sent a photo of the club to Detectives Flores and O'Connell. The photo was shown to Defendant Pietura, who confirmed that the golf club in the picture was the club used to beat PRM.

As a result, the head of the golf club was processed with Bluestar and illuminated for the presence of blood.

Detective Lesniewski located an empty roll of black Gorilla Brand duct tape inside of a garbage can in Defendant Pietura's bedroom. Detective Lesniewski later confirmed that PRM's body was bound using black duct tape, consistent with the tape roll Detective Lesniewski recovered from the scene. There was also a roll of clear packing tape on a shelf next to the garbage. Upon comparing the clear packaging tape to photos taken after the recovery of PRM's body, the packaging tape was consistent with the tape used to hold the gag rags in place in PRM's mouth.

Detective Lesniewski located a plastic measuring bowl that contained a white towel inside of a wash basin in the basement. The white towel was still wet. The towel was processed using Bluestar and had a positive reaction for the presence of blood. Detective Lesniewski would later learn that Defendant Pietura confirmed that the bowl and white rag were used by the Defendants to clean up the blood in the basement.

As the search was being conducted, Detective Lesniewski was informed that Defendant Mendoza committed multiple stabbings in the past. A black handled butterfly knife was recovered during the investigation which Defendant Mendoza confirmed was the knife he used in each stabbing (see below):



### **THE IN CUSTODY INTERVIEW DEFENDANT PIETURA LEADS TO THE RECOVERY OF PRM'S BODY**

At 7:45 AM on October 26, 2023, City of Milwaukee Police Detectives Jose Flores and Dan O'Connell conducted an in custody interview of Defendant Pietura. During the interview, Defendant Pietura was advised of the *Miranda* warnings, waived his rights and agreed to speak with Detectives Flores and O'Connell. Initially, Defendant Pietura denied knowing where PRM was or what happened to PRM. Forty-four minutes into the interview (8:30 AM), Detective Flores asked Defendant Pietura to be honest, to which Defendant Pietura responded, "it wasn't me", followed by "I didn't want any of this" and "I loved that kid". Defendant Pietura said his first instinct was to cover for Defendant Mendoza.

Defendant Pietura followed those comments with "he's not alive". Defendant Pietura outlined that PRM's body was inside a dumpster behind a bar. According to Defendant Pietura, Defendant Mendoza was choking PRM in the basement of 2411 N. 54<sup>th</sup> Street on October 25, 2023. Defendant Pietura walked in and observed Defendant Mendoza choking and beating PRM.

Defendant Pietura detailed that he was in the basement with PRM during the late morning hours of October 25, 2023, when Defendant Mendoza came into the basement. Defendant Pietura went upstairs for a moment, and upon returning to the basement Defendant Pietura observed Defendant Mendoza choking PRM. After choking PRM, Defendant Mendoza took a golf club and began striking PRM's head and body with the golf club. PRM's blood was all over the carpet in Defendant Pietura's room. Defendant Mendoza attempted to move PRM's body into the hallway. Defendant Pietura instructed Defendant Mendoza to get garbage bags. The Defendants jointly bound PRM's arms and legs with tape "so it would be easy to put him in" the garbage bags. Defendant Pietura admitted it was his idea to bind PRM's body with duct tape and gag PRM's mouth with rags before wrapping the body in garbage bags.

The Defendants took PRM's body, bound inside multiple garbage bags, and walked to a dumpster where they discarded PRM's body. The Defendants made sure the garbage bags containing PRM's body were covered by other garbage inside the dumpster. Upon returning to the residence, Defendant Mendoza cleaned the scene by using soap water and a rag to clean the blood off the basement floor.

During the interview, Defendant Pietura disclosed that Defendant Mendoza confided in Defendant Pietura about other crimes Defendant Mendoza committed recently. Specifically, Defendant Mendoza admitted to going out at night and stabbing multiple strangers in the back or neck.

Based on the information provided by Defendant Pietura, at 8:40 AM on October 26, 2023, Officer Wilckens and Finn were reassigned to search dumpsters in the area identified by Defendant Pietura. Officer Wilckens located two dumpsters in the parking lot of 5518 W. Vliet Street, in the City of



Milwaukee, County of Milwaukee. As Officer Finn was searching one of the dumpsters, he located a white garbage bag in the front right corner of dumpster. Officer Wilckens jumped into the dumpster and cut open the bag. Upon cutting open the bag, Officer Wilckens observed that multiple garbage bags were used to conceal the contents of the bag. Once Officer Wilckens cut open all of the bags, Officer Wilckens discovered the suspected body of PRM. PRM's body was blood soaked, bound, and gagged in the fetal position.

Once the body of PRM was located, City of Milwaukee Police Detective Michael Fedel responded to the scene and documented the condition of the body. PRM was officially declared deceased at 9:40 AM on October 26, 2023, though it was clear based on the temperature and condition of PRM's body that PRM had been dead for some time.

PRM's body was wrapped inside of multiple white garbage bags. PRM's face and body was covered in blood. There were multiple large gashes to PRM's head and scalp. A green rag was stuffed inside of PRM's mouth and held in place by clear packaging tape that was wrapped around PRM's neck. PRM's wrists were taped together with black duct tape, as were PRM's ankles. PRM's body was curled in the fetal position. PRM's body had a significant number of bruises and lacerations.

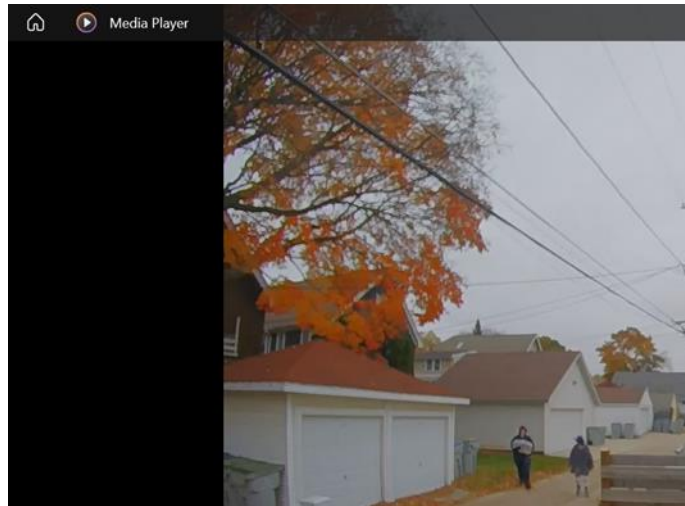
The Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office responded to the scene and took custody of the body of PRM.

#### **CITY OF MILWAUKEE POLICE DETECTIVES RECOVER SURVEILLANCE VIDEO DEPICTING DEFENDANTS PIETURA AND MENDOZA DISPOSING OF PRM'S BODY**

On October 26, 2023, after the body of PM was recovered from the bottom of a dumpster in the area of the 5500 block of W. Vliet Street, City of Milwaukee Police Detectives Tammy Tramel-McClain and Michael Fedel went to a residence on the 5400 block of W. Vliet Street that had exterior surveillance cameras. Detectives Tramel-McClain and Fedel made contact with citizen witness CD 3/15/1968 DOB, a resident of the home equipped with external surveillance cameras. CD provided the detectives with access to his surveillance video from October 25, 2023. Upon reviewing the surveillance video, Detective Tramel-McClain made the following observations:

At 2:02 PM on October 25, 2023, Defendants Mendoza and Pietura appear on surveillance video captured from the front doorbell camera. The Defendants walk between the residences of 5421 and 5423 on W. Cherry Street and into the alley. As the Defendants walk west through the alley, Defendant Pietura is carrying a large white garbage bag with both arms cradled underneath the garbage bag and its contents. Defendant Mendoza is walking next to Defendant Pietura. Both Defendants continue westbound through the alley.

At 2:02 PM on October 25, 2023, Defendants Mendoza and Pietura appear on the surveillance video recovered from the exterior alley camera of the residence. The Defendants walk westbound through the alley. Defendant Pietura can be observed carrying a large white garbage bag with both of his arms cradling the contents of the garbage bag (see below). Twenty-six seconds into the video, Defendant Pietura hands the white garbage bag to Defendant Mendoza, who cradles the contents of the bag with both arms. The Defendants approach a dumpster off of the alley behind 5518 W. Vliet Street, the dumpster where the body of PM was later recovered from.



At 2:04 PM the Defendants appear a second time on the surveillance video from the alley. Neither Defendant is carrying the white garbage bag.

**DEFENDANT ERIK MENDOZA IS ARRESTED AND INTERVIEWED BY CITY OF MILWAUKEE POLICE DETECTIVES MARK HARMS AND KENT GORDON**

Based on the statements against interest made by Defendant Pietura, as well as observations from recovered surveillance video and the recovery of PRM's body, Defendant Erik Mendoza was placed under arrest.

At 1:16 PM on October 26, 2023, City of Milwaukee Police Detectives Mark Harms and Kent Gordon conducted a *Mirandized* interview of Defendant Erik Mendoza, who acknowledged understanding his rights, waived his rights, and agreed to make a statement to police. Detective Harms began the interview by telling Defendant Mendoza that Defendant Pietura made a statement telling police what happened, though Detective Harms took care to not share any of the details of Defendant Pietura's statement. Next, Detective Harms spelled out that police recovered detailed surveillance video of both Defendants corroborated by GPS location data from Defendant Pietura's cell phone. Again, Detective Harms did not share any specifics of what the surveillance video or GPS information revealed. Detective Harms told Defendant Mendoza to keep in mind what the police already know and asked Defendant Mendoza to tell the truth about what happened to PRM.

Defendant Mendoza claimed that he woke up around 2:00 PM on October 25, 2023. After waking up, Defendant Mendoza went into the basement to play videogames. Defendant Pietura asked Defendant Mendoza if he wanted to go outside. Both Defendants went outside and chilled at a church before walking to a bridge. As Defendant Mendoza is pausing and appears to be thinking about recreating the false history of the walk he and Defendant Pietura took, Detective Harms asked Defendant Mendoza a more pointed question – tell us what happened when you, PRM, and Defendant Pietura were in the basement. Again, Defendant Mendoza claimed that he woke up around 2:00 PM, went into the basement with Defendant Pietura, and then the two went for a walk. Defendant Mendoza denied hurting PRM in any way.

Detective Harms stopped Defendant Mendoza and informed Defendant Mendoza of an additional detail, PRM's body was located and recovered by police. Detective Harms did not provide Defendant

Mendoza with any details about where PRM's body was recovered from or the severe injuries on the body of PRM. Defendant Mendoza continued to deny doing anything to PRM. Defendant Mendoza asked what Defendant Pietura disclosed, which Detective Harms refused to answer, telling Defendant Mendoza that he wanted the truth from Defendant Mendoza.

Detective Harms informed Defendant Mendoza that police recovered surveillance video of the Defendants walking to the dumpster carrying a white garbage bag. In response, Defendant Mendoza said, "show me". Detective Harms showed Defendant Mendoza a screenshot of the surveillance video. Defendant Mendoza confirmed that it was him in the surveillance video along with Defendant Pietura. Despite being confronted with surveillance video evidence, Defendant Mendoza claimed that inside the garbage bag was "garbage" and nothing more. Defendant Mendoza continued to claim, "I don't know where he (PRM) went".

Detective Harms informed Defendant Mendoza that police located PRM's body inside the garbage bags in a dumpster and told Defendant Mendoza to tell the truth. Defendant Mendoza responded, "I strangled him." Initially, Defendant Mendoza claimed that he was playing with PRM, but Defendant Mendoza got rough. As PRM was lying down on his back, Defendant Mendoza straddled PRM's body and wrapped his hands around PRM's neck. After choking PRM, Defendant Mendoza used a golf club and struck PRM twice in the head with the golf club. PRM was still alive prior to being struck with the golf club because he was foaming from the mouth and crying. After being struck multiple times in the head with the golf club, PRM was whimpering so the Defendants took PRM outside. Once PRM's body was outside, Defendant Mendoza stomped on PRM's head repeatedly, approximately ten times, with Defendant Mendoza's foot. Defendant Mendoza also repeatedly punched and kicked PRM. Once PRM's body became lifeless, the Defendants brought PRM's body back downstairs. The Defendants bound PRM's arms and legs with tape. The Defendants took PRM's body, bound and bagged in multiple garbage bags, and placed it inside a dumpster.

#### **DEFENDANT MENDOZA ADMITS TO STABBING THREE SEPARATE VICTIMS WITHIN MINUTES DURING THE EVENING OF OCTOBER 23, 2023**

Detective Harms switched topics and asked Defendant Mendoza about multiple stabbings that occurred on October 23, 2023, in the City of Milwaukee. Each of the stabbings involved the eerily similar circumstances where the victims were stabbed from behind by a complete stranger.

The first stabbing occurred in the area of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and North Avenue around 6:00 PM on October 23, 2023. Detective Harms asked the Defendant to simply tell what happened during the stabbing, to which Defendant Mendoza responded, "are they gone". Detective Harms informed Defendant Mendoza that the victim was still alive. Defendant Mendoza admitted to being bored, going outside and stabbing the first victim in the back. The Defendant wanted to stab someone badly, but felt bad after committing the stabbing. Defendant Mendoza described the first victim he stabbed as a light skinned black male who was "just sitting there on his phone". After stabbing the first victim, Defendant Mendoza took off running.

Shortly after the first stabbing, Defendant Mendoza admitted to committing a second stabbing in the area of 35<sup>th</sup> and Center. Defendant Mendoza waited for his second victim to walk past. Once the second victim walked past, Defendant Mendoza stabbed the second victim in the spine. The second stabbing victim, a young black male, yelled "fuck" as Defendant Mendoza took off running.

Defendant Mendoza admitted to committing a third stabbing during the evening of October 23, 2023, just minutes after the second stabbing. The third stabbing took place in the area of N. Sherman Boulevard and W. Center Street. The third stabbing victim was a black female who was sitting at the

bus stop. Defendant Mendoza stabbed the third victim in the neck. When asked, “what did you say when you stabbed her”, Defendant Mendoza responded, “I don’t want to talk about it.”

During each stabbing, Defendant Mendoza used the same knife, a butterfly knife with black handles that was recovered during the scene investigation. Defendant Mendoza admitted feeling a rush from stabbing each victim but feeling bad after committing the stabbings. When asked what he would say to the stabbing victims, Defendant Mendoza responded, “I’m sorry, but you are alive.”

### **DEFENDANT PIETURA ADMITS TO BEING AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN THE BEATING DEATH OF PRM**

On October 27, 2023, City of Milwaukee Police Detectives Jose Flores and Dan O’Connell conducted a second *Mirandized* interview of Defendant David Pietura, during which Defendant Pietura acknowledged an understanding of his rights and agreed to make a statement.

Detective Flores asked Defendant Pietura what details Defendant Pietura left out of the first interview and implored Defendant Pietura to be completely truthful regarding his role in the death of PRM.

Defendant Pietura outlined witnessing Defendant Mendoza choking PRM in Defendant Pietura’s bedroom. Defendant Pietura left the room briefly and then came back into the room. Defendant Mendoza continued to choke PRM until PRM was motionless. Defendant Pietura did not intervene to stop Defendant Mendoza at any point. Once PRM’s body was motionless, Defendant Pietura said, “we got to clean it up”. Using thick black duct tape, the Defendants bound PRM’s hands and feet. The Defendants stuffed old rags into PRM’s mouth and taped the rags to quiet PRM’s screams if PRM were still alive. As the Defendants were binding PRM, PRM started to regain consciousness. In response to PRM regaining consciousness, Defendant Mendoza said “we need to shut him up”. Defendant Pietura struck PRM repeatedly with a fist in an effort to quiet PRM. When that didn’t work, Defendant Mendoza stomped on PRM’s head multiple times. PRM continued to whimper, so Defendant Pietura grabbed a barbell from his bedroom and dropped the 30 pound weight on PRM’s head. PRM went quiet. Believing that PRM is dead, the Defendants bagged PRM’s body into multiple garbage bags. Once PRM’s body is in the garbage bag, PRM started to whimper again. In response, the Defendants grabbed a golf club and repeatedly struck PRM with the golf club while PRM is bound and gagged inside the garbage bags. Each Defendant took turns striking PRM with the golf club to PRM’s head.

The garbage bags holding PRM’s body ripped from being struck multiple times by the golf clubs and there was a significant amount of blood leaking from the garbage bags, so the Defendants bagged PRM’s body a second time using more garbage bags. Believing that PRM was dead, the Defendants carried PRM’s bound and gagged body secreted in multiple garbage bags outside.

Once the Defendants took PRM’s body outside, PRM started to whimper again. In response, Defendant Pietura grabbed a concrete pedestal for a bird bath and dropped it on PRM’s head twice. Thereafter, PRM made no noise.

Once PRM was quiet, the Defendants carried PRM’s body to the dumpster located behind 5518 W. Vliet Street. Defendant Pietura’s original plan was to walk towards the trail that leads to the sewage line and place PRM’s body in the sewage line but PRM’s body was “too heavy”.

During the interview, Defendant Pietura disclosed that Defendant Mendoza has talked for some time about wanting to kill someone. Defendant Mendoza never liked PRM and discussed wanting to kill PRM.

Defendant Mendoza also admitted to stabbing multiple strangers.

## **THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE PERFORMS AN AUTOPSY ON THE BODY OF PRM**

On October 30, 2023, Dr. Joseph Calderaro MD, a forensic pathologist and Assistant Medical Examiner with the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office, performed an autopsy on the body of PRM 12/23/2017 DOB. Dr. Calderaro noted substantial evidence of multiple blunt force injuries to the body of PRM from head to toe, including a "hinge" fracture to the base of PRM's skull. Dr. Calderaro provided a preliminary cause of death ruling for PRM as the result of multiple blunt force injuries and provided a preliminary manner of death ruling as homicide.

## **THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE MULTIPLE STABBINGS COMMITTED BY DEFENDANT MENDOZA ON OCTOBER 23, 2023**

At 7:01 PM on October 23, 2023, City of Milwaukee Police Officers Benjamin Wright and Richard Tolento were dispatched to 4211 W. North Avenue, in the City of Milwaukee, County of Milwaukee, to investigate a stabbing complaint. By the time Officers Wright and Tolento arrived on scene, the stabbing victim, JHS 9/11/2005 DOB, was being transported to Froedtert Hospital.

Officer Tolento was able to review security surveillance footage from October 23, 2023, which depicted JHS being stabbed at 6:52 PM. JHS was standing across the street from 4211 W. North Avenue looking at his cell phone when a suspect runs towards JHS with the suspect's arm raised and stabs JHS in the back. The suspect then flees the scene on foot. JHS was admitted to Froedtert Hospital at 7:27 PM on October 23, 2023, and treated by Dr. Anna Culhane for a stab wound to the back.

At 7:27 PM on October 23, 2023, City of Milwaukee Police Officers Craig Ziarnik and LaCarlin Davis responded to Aurora Sinai Hospital to investigate a stabbing. Upon arriving at Aurora Sinai, Officer Ziarnik interviewed JJP 11/28/2008 DOB, who provided the following statements to police.

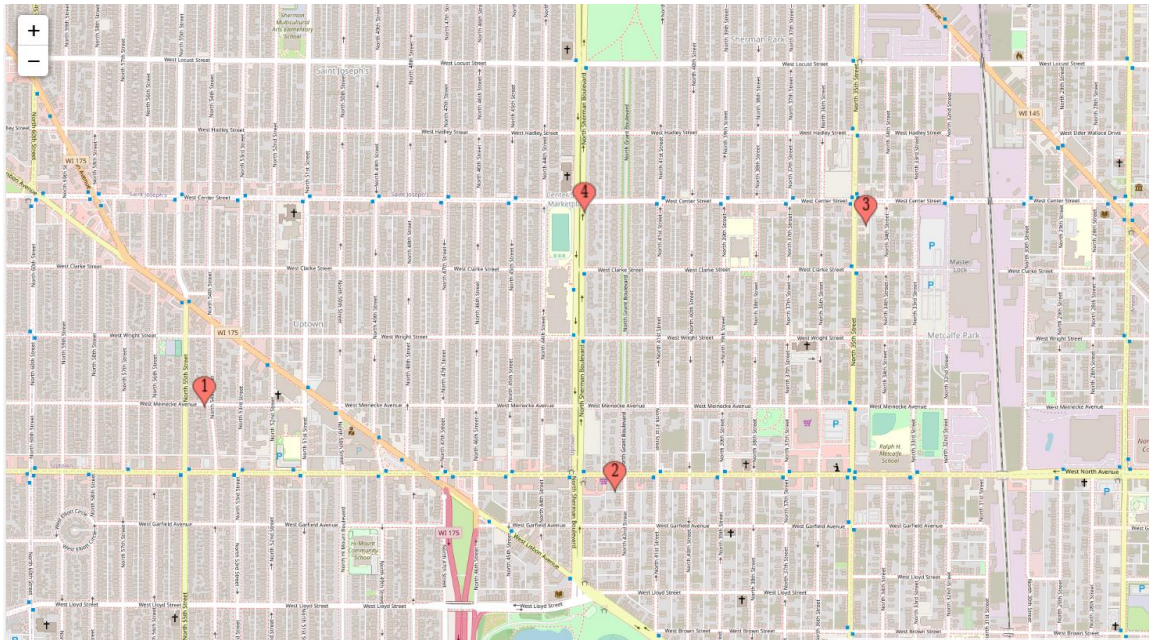
On October 23, 2023, JJP was walking from his grandmother's home to his home. JJP was walking eastbound on W. Center Street until JJP reached 35<sup>th</sup> Street. JJP turned right to go southbound on 35<sup>th</sup> Street, when a person walked past JJP and JJP immediately felt pain to his shoulder. JJP realized that the person who just walked past JJP stabbed JJP in the shoulder. JJP suffered a one-half inch laceration to the left shoulder.

At 7:22 PM on October 23, 2023, City of Milwaukee Police Officer Michael Marx responded to 2676 N. Sherman Boulevard to investigate a stabbing complaint. Upon arriving on scene, Officer Marx made contact with EH 6/1/1985 DOB, who provided the following statement to Officer Marx.

At 7:15 PM on October 23, 2023, EH was seated at the bus stop at the intersection of N. Sherman Boulevard and W. Center Street. EH turned around inside the bus stop when she was suddenly stabbed in the back of her neck. EH attempted to chase after the suspect, who immediately fled after stabbing EH in the neck.

EH was treated on scene by the Milwaukee Fire Department before being transported to Froedtert Hospital, where EH was treated by Dr. William Schaeffer. EH sustained a 3 inch laceration to the back of her neck that was 1-2 inches deep and required stitches to close.





The above map details the locations of each stabbing from October 23, 2023, all of which occurred in the City of Milwaukee, County of Milwaukee. Point 1 on the map is Defendant Mendoza's residence, 2411 N. 54<sup>th</sup> Street. Point 2 is the first stabbing at 4211 W. North Avenue. The distance between each location is .9 miles. Point 3 on the map is the second stabbing on October 23, 2023, near the intersection of N. 35<sup>th</sup> Street and W. Center Street, in the City of Milwaukee, County of Milwaukee. The distance between Point 2 and Point 3 is also .9 miles. Point 4 on the map is the third stabbing from October 23, 2023, located at the intersection of N. Sherman Boulevard and W. Center Street, in the City of Milwaukee, County of Milwaukee. The distance between Point 3 and Point 4 is .5 miles.

\*\*\*\*End of Complaint\*\*\*\*

**Electronic Filing Notice:**

This case was electronically filed with the Milwaukee County Clerk of Circuit Court office. The electronic filing system is designed to allow for fast, reliable exchange of documents in court cases. Parties who register as electronic parties can file, receive and view documents online through the court electronic filing website. A document filed electronically has the same legal effect as a document filed by traditional means. You may also register as an electronic party by following the instructions found at <http://efiling.wicourts.gov> and may withdraw as an electronic party at any time. There is a \$ 20.00 fee to register as an electronic party. If you are not represented by an attorney and would like to register an electronic party, you will need to contact the Clerk of Circuit Court office at 414-278-4120. Unless you register as an electronic party, you will be served with traditional paper documents by other parties and by the court. You must file and serve traditional paper documents.

Criminal Complaint prepared by Matthew J. Torbenson.

Subscribed and sworn to before me on 10/30/23  
Electronically Signed By:  
Matthew J. Torbenson  
Deputy District Attorney  
State Bar #: 1049925

Electronically Signed By:  
Detective Daniel O'Connell  
Complainant

