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November 19, 2020

Suspect charged with the alleged murder of Matthew Choi

PORTLAND, Ore. – Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Mike Schmidt announced that 30-year-old Allen Coe is charged with the alleged murder of Matthew Choi.

Coe is charged with one count of murder in the first degree, one count of attempted murder in the first degree, two counts of burglary in the first degree and two counts of identity theft.

It is alleged that Coe unlawfully entered Matthew Choi's apartment unit on October 25, 2020 shortly before 2 a.m. and murdered Mr. Choi and attempted to murder Mr. Choi's girlfriend.

According to court documents, in the hours prior to the alleged murder, Mr. Choi, his girlfriend and friends gathered at his apartment to celebrate his birthday.

When the party ended, Mr. Choi fell asleep on the couch and his girlfriend went to the bedroom. She reported hearing the front door to the apartment close. When she left the bedroom area to check on the sound, she saw a figure dart from the front door entry toward the bathroom.

Mr. Choi's girlfriend woke him up and he then went to the bathroom area to investigate.

Mr. Choi's girlfriend heard thudding noises coming from the bathroom area and announced she would be calling police.

While on the bed, a person, later identified as Coe, entered the bedroom and attempted to stab Mr. Choi's girlfriend, according to court documents.

Before he could do so, Mr. Choi came in, grabbed Coe and pulled him away. The two fell to the ground.

Coe left the apartment. Mr. Choi's girlfriend went to him and then saw that he had been stabbed multiple times.

Mr. Choi died at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center.

When the Portland Police Bureau's Homicide Detail responded to the scene, a green backpack was located in the communal trash room next to Mr. Choi's apartment unit.

Investigators located two separate social security cards inside the green backpack and a yellow sticky note with the names and dates of birth for the two card holders written on it.

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Law enforcement checked the names printed on the social security cards and written on the sticky note and determined both individuals lived in the same apartment complex as Mr. Choi. Both people reported their social security cards were stolen in a burglary that occurred around October 15, 2020.

Detectives learned Coe is also a resident of the same apartment complex where Mr. Choi lived.

During the investigation, law enforcement spoke with Coe about the homicide. While speaking with detectives Coe spit saliva and phlegm on the ground, which was then collected by detectives for DNA analysis.

The Oregon State Police Crime Lab concluded the swabs taken from each of Mr. Choi's hands during the autopsy contained a DNA mixture. Mr. Choi is assumed to be the major contributor to the mixture and the DNA profile developed from the swabs of Coe's saliva and phlegm cannot be excluded as the minor contributor to the DNA mixture.

Law enforcement reviewed apartment complex surveillance video from the night of the homicide and learned in the hours before the homicide Coe was wearing the green backpack, which contained the stolen social security cards, found in the trash room next door to Mr. Choi's apartment unit.

When interviewed by police, Coe admitted the video reviewed by investigators showed him wearing the green backpack. He said the backpack was lost at some point and could not explain why it was found hours after Mr. Choi's murder and in the room next to Mr. Choi's apartment.

The Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office determined Mr. Choi's cause of death to be stab wounds to the chest.

The United States Marshals Service arrested Coe on November 18, 2020.

Coe appeared in Multnomah County Circuit Court for his first appearance. A plea of not guilty was entered on his behalf by a court appointed defense attorney.

The next court date in this matter is set for November 30, 2020.

No additional information can be released by the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office at this time.

A charging document is only an accusation of a crime. Coe is innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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