

NORTHWEST HERALD

Doctor testifies injuries were not accidental

Huntley murder trial continues Thursday

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WOODSTOCK – A forensic pathologist testified in McHenry County Court Wednesday that the injuries Michelle Mathieu sustained before she died were inflicted, not accidental.

Mathieu died March 24, 2012.

An autopsy revealed that her death was the result of a head injury caused by blunt force trauma. Her boyfriend, Robert Signorile, 44, is on trial this week for her alleged murder.

Police were called to the couple's Huntley home on March 18, 2012, where they found the 52-year-old Mathieu naked but covered in a robe, face down in vomit.

She was unconscious but breathing. She later died at Sherman Hospital in Elgin.

Dr. Larry Blum performed the autopsy on Mathieu. She had fractured ribs and a fractured spine, and had bruises to her head, chest, arms and back, he said.

“Are these bruises consistent with being punched?” Assistant State's Attorney Patrick Kenneally asked the doctor. “Are these bruises consistent with being kicked? Are these bruises consistent with being thrown into something?”

The doctor answered “yes” to all three questions.

In Blum's expert opinion, Mathieu's injuries were not caused by a fall, but instead were the result of a physical assault.

When cross-examined by Assistant Public Defender Rick Behof, Blum said that Mathieu was an alcoholic and had fatty liver disease likely caused by alcohol consumption.

Fatty liver disease can affect reaction time, balance and coordination, according to Blum.

The defense has said that Mathieu's injuries were the result of a fall.

Earlier Wednesday, several witnesses testified that Signorile and Mathieu's relationship was growing increasingly violent before she died.

Her friend, Jeffrey Nickerson, said that in August 2011, Mathieu called him, saying she had locked herself in her bedroom for three days.

They talked for two hours as Nickerson pleaded with her to call police.

Nickerson never called police, he said, because he didn't know where Mathieu lived.

"You were on the phone with her for two hours and you never asked where she lived?" Signorile's attorney, Assistant Public Defender Angelo Mourelatos, asked.

Police eventually respond to a domestic dispute at the couple's Sun City Huntley home. Signorile was charged on Aug. 21, 2011, with domestic battery. He later pleaded guilty and was sentenced to supervision and ordered to undergo anger counseling.

The jury trial will continue at 9 a.m. Thursday before McHenry County Judge Sharon Prather.