

"ANYTHING TWO PEOPLE KNOW IS NOT A SECRET."

THE CHEYENNE HERALD

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Murder in broad daylight

Will Jamie Kamai's killer remain at large or will the case be solved?

Six years is a very long time for a murder case to remain unsolved. Time takes its toll on everybody - family, friends, law enforcement and the public.

The unsolved murder of Jamie Kamai is particularly troublesome. The callous and coldblooded act of shooting another human being is brazen enough. To do it after pursuing the vehicle the victim was driving for blocks, even a couple miles, with aggressive driving, on one of Cheyenne's busiest roads (Central Avenue into the southside where it becomes So. Greeley Hwy.) and then turn west onto another heavily traveled street (W. College Drive) before the victim stopped in the traffic lane to go back to say something to the trailing driver ... then for the perpetrator to shoot the victim three times, the final shot in the back as the injured Jamie Kamai tried to get back to his own car and leave the scene ... all of this at about 8 am in the morning, with a construction crew working at the intersection of So. Greeley and W. College, fireworks stands on each side of College at that location and less than two weeks before the 4th of July, and the Mini-Mart convenience store within 100 yards of the scene ... yet not enough evidence has been gathered to make an arrest.

When I wrote the story for the July 2nd issue of the Cheyenne Herald, I relied on information available to me at that time. Since then, I have learned more and have interviewed several people with knowledge of the event and the subsequent investigation. I have read newspaper coverage of the crime and acquired a copy of the autopsy report. With this story, I will correct and clarify the earlier story and offer additional information.

On Thursday, July 12th, I spent nearly an hour with Laramie County Sheriff Danny Glick and his lead investigator on this unsolved murder, Linda Gessell. They were open and candid. They answered the questions I asked and requested only that I not disclose the calibre of the gun used in the shooting. I have spoken with family members on several occasions and others who knew either the victim or an individual I will refer to as "a person of interest."

Nearly 250 tips have come to the Sheriff's Department, Crime Stoppers, etc. and all have been pursued, according to Ms. Gessell. And I believe her.

Suspects have been questioned. A place of business and home of a person of interest has been searched. The pickup driven by the person of interest has been found and searched.

That individual, a person who is certainly a suspect in the minds of those who knew him, has been the focus of my efforts to accumulate information. And any credible information I gather will be shared with Linda Gessell. But I am not Duane Chapman. I wish "Dog" the Bounty Hunter were here to help solve this murder case.

Unsolved murders do not set well with law enforcement. This one is no exception. The Sheriff's Department will do anything they reasonably can to bring the killer to justice. Family members become frustrated when the case does not reach a conclusion with an arrest and conviction.

A Sheriff's Department detective and Laramie County District Attorney's office investigator have traveled out of state to attempt to question the person of interest. Lacking adequate evidence to arrest him, he and his attorney stymied any questioning which might have been helpful to either exonerate him or point the finger at him even more.

Another state's law enforcement was brought into the case to look at a vehicle (and check it for evidence) that the person of interest had driven in Cheyenne until his sudden departure the day after the shooting.

The Kamai family attempted hypnosis with a young witness to see if that effort could bring further information to light.

What it might take to solve this case is one person who will come forward to fill in a piece or two of the puzzle.

One person.

I will share with readers what I can about the case. What I know, or strongly believe, at this point.

The incident seemed to start well before reaching the So. Greeley / W. College intersection. Witnesses reported two vehicles traveling erratically south on So. Greeley before turning west on College at the Mini Mart (now the Loaf n Jug).

Within 100 yards of the intersection,

Mr. Kamai stopped his vehicle, a Chevy Celebrity and went to the vehicle following him (it could have been bumping his vehicle or following too close).

There have been conflicting descriptions of the offending vehicle. The one most reliable is probably that it was a black pickup with gray "primer" spots on the passenger door. It did NOT have a white camper shell. The primary witness, also in the vehicle with Jamie Kamai but who had exited when Kamai was shot, described a red pickup with a white camper shell coming onto the scene after the shooting and parking behind Jamie's vehicle. But it was not the suspect's truck.

The witness said the suspect did not exit the pickup at any time - that he shot with his arm outside the window of the driver's door. Those who choose to ready the autopsy report might consider whether

trajectory angles indicate a left handed shooter.

This murder has earmarks of personal, not random, rage, in my opinion. The killer fired three shots from an identifiable vehicle he was driving, with a construction crew nearby. He did not shoot at Jamie's passenger to prevent a witness.

The person of interest drove a black pickup, described by some who had seen it as one without a camper shell or top. He abandoned his place of business and his home without packing and taking personal and business belongings. The shooter was described as wearing a ball cap and sunglasses so the sketch below may not replicate his appearance. The killer was described as wearing a black t-shirt with a picture of a motorcycle on the front. The person of interest considered himself a "biker." (See page 2 please.)

NOTE: THE JAMIE KAMAI AUTOPSY REPORT WILL BE POSTED ON THE CHEYENNE HERALD WEBSITE. THAT WILL ALLOW THOSE INTERESTED TO READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY BUT WILL NOT IMPOSE IT ON FAMILY MEMBERS WHO MAY NOT WISH TO SEE DETAILS OF THE AUTOPSY HERE.

This sketch is of the suspect. However he was described as wearing a ballcap and a black t-shirt with a motorcycle on the front.



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Year 'round school

Oh, yeah, that's the solution. Make kids who dread going to school now attend school all twelve months of the year.

The lesser read paper in town thinks such a plan should be studied, as though the idea has merit or potential.

Here's the answer to your study: No!

Not only is even the consideration of year round school in Wyoming absurd but it would remove the only attraction there is to becoming a teacher. Well, maybe not the only one, but a major one.

That is the nine month work year.

As standardized test scores continue on their downward spiral, educrats seek an explanation that doesn't reflect on them. To admit that many teachers have no particular skill as a teacher and were marginal to poor student themselves isn't about to happen.

So, if administrators and teachers are taken out of the equation, that leaves students and their parents.

Going to school 365/24/7 is supposed to prevent "learning loss." Right. What it would do is create an increased inability to learn because young students would have no life outside of the school many of them already despise.

It is ironic that new educrats whose own performance in public schools started the death spiral, now have the answers to reverse the trend. They enjoyed the advantage of "dumbing down" standardized tests, the availability of calculators for the math portion of their tests, cash awards for doing well, and starting points on the SAT. Starting points means that the test taker was given a dozen points just for showing up and completing his name on the test. And who can forget homonyms being removed from the tests because they were too difficult?

The declining daily paper in Cheyenne editorialized that having "breaks" throughout the year would replace the traditional summer vacation. That parents could easily "vacation" with their student-children during the cold and snow months of November - March. Anyone with a child in school knows that there are already breaks sprinkled in throughout the school year. Do they forget during Spring Break?

And this "extended break" schedule during the school year wouldn't experience that same "learning loss" as the summer vacation does?

The solution to all of this sounds like "home schooling." That way, the parent could teach 24/7 and even wake the kids up in the middle of the night if they feared the student would not retain the knowledge of how to calculate square roots.

Know how math students now calculate square roots? They find the square root key on their calculator and push it down.

We have physical fitness experts and weight control gurus telling us that exercise is critical to health issues, including learning. Yet, Cheyenne has an elementary school principal who prohibits running on her playground. And the school board silently acquiesced to the goofiness. Bet those kids would love the idea of going to school twelve months a year.

There are more problems in public education these days than can be dealt with here or with those charged with finding solutions to the multitude of failings. But, year round school should not even be on the list of solutions. Year round school is generally instituted due to over-crowding. Wyoming does not have that problem. Too many students? Build another school. "The State" will pay for it.

One suggestion: Teach teachers to teach in college. Not just learn subject matter but be able to convey it to students.

Jamie Kamai unsolved murder (continued from p. 1)

The person of interest operated a tattoo shop in Cheyenne for about eight months. He may have moved here from Casper. As written earlier, he left without taking the tools of his trade. I spoke with his landlord and he told me the person of interest was not in arrears in his rent so that was not a reason for a sudden and unexpected departure. I was also told that the house in which he lived was vacated in a manner that indicated haste.

A couple weeks after this person of interest left Cheyenne, his brother came to Cheyenne to empty the shop and took the pickup with him to a neighboring state. That vehicle has been examined and pictures of it are in the case's investigation file. I have not seen such pictures.

This person of interest has been the subject of investigation from the beginning. Interesting tips have been passed to the investigators about his sudden departure and, according to one close to the case who told me, about an alleged confession by him to another. I am trying to make contact with that person but probably will not be able to before this issue is printed. This article is being written Saturday night and will be finished on Sunday, July 15.

What could have provoked the confrontation? Because it is so highly unusual for one motorist to shoot another, especially multiple times, over a "bumping" incident, it makes sense to consider other reasons for the fatal encounter.

According to the autopsy report, Jamie Kamai had six tattoos including one of his girlfriend's name. I asked someone very close to Jamie if he could have gotten a tattoo from the person of interest and that was the root of the animosity. I was told that all of Jamie's tattoos, some as recent as during the last two years or so, were done by a friend, not this POI.

I explored the possibility that the hostility involved drugs. Not wanting to sully the reputation of Jamie Kamai but also wanting to circulate as much accurate information as possible if it might bring a resolution to this case, I must report that evidence of pot was in Jamie's system at time of death. As everyone knows, that could have been ingested days earlier. There was no evidence of illegal or other drugs. Two very close to Jamie willingly told me that he had smoked pot occasionally. It was apparent he made no secret of that because he had a tattoo of marijuana leaves on his right lower calf.

I cannot conclude that Jamie Kamai knew his killer but he may have. Whether he did or not, I believe that the reason he stopped where he did and confronted the guy behind him was that he was very close to the babysitter's house and he did not want a scene at her place or with his children out of the car. I believe that he got out of his car, which he stopped in the traffic lane, not on the shoulder, to tell the guy to "bug off" and stop tailing him. He may not have wanted the guy to know his destination for one reason or another.

Jamie Kamai, if he knew the guy in the black pickup, must not have been afraid of him. He could not have known the guy was violent or angry enough at Jamie, if they knew each other, to shoot him. Not once. Not twice. But three times.

Where are we now? The Sheriff's Department pledged continued extended efforts toward solving this crime. They have agreed to consider using a psychic if one having experience with law enforcement, a solid reputation and proper credentials can be found. They have been stymied in their efforts to interview (interrogate) the person of interest. That effort will continue. All tips will be pursued and all suspects considered. We will prevail.


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