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STATE OF ALASKA



Department of  
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PRESS RELEASE

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## DPS Highlights the Severity of Strangulation

### *Man found Guilty of Murder by Strangulation*

May 7, 2019 (ANCHORAGE, Alaska) – On Friday, May 3, 2019, a Sitka jury found Albert Macasaet guilty of Murder in the First Degree in relation to the murder of 27-year-old JudyLee Guthrie, of Hydaburg. The Jury found that Macasaet strangled Guthrie, which caused her death. What makes this case stand out is that prior to her murder, Ms. Guthrie was strangled non-fatally on multiple occasions by Macasaet.

“Research indicates that if a woman survives a strangulation assault, she is associated to a great risk of being murdered. That happened here,” said Katie TePas, Domestic Violence and Sex Assault Program Coordinator for DPS. “We must always remember that research represents the experiences of actual people. Strangulation is one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence and should never be trivialized.”

Strangulation can cause unconsciousness in a matter of ten seconds or less. It can lead to death in a matter of minutes. This tragedy is a reminder to all Alaskans the dangers of strangulation. Victims of non-fatal strangulation should always seek medical attention if they experience any of the following: difficulty breathing, speaking, swallowing, or experiencing nausea, vomiting, light-headedness, headache, involuntary urination, and/or defecation, especially pregnant victims. A medical evaluation may be crucial in detecting certain injuries and ultimately saving a life.

“To date, there is no scientific study that correlates the presence of physical signs with the seriousness of the strangulation,” said John Novak, Anchorage District Attorney. “Strangulation is a very dangerous and life-threatening event even when there are no visible injuries.”

Victims or witnesses are encouraged to report an incident to law enforcement as soon as possible. In addition to law enforcement, victim service providers (shelters) are available 24/7

to assist victims and survivors of domestic violence. DPS will strive to provide education and resources to victims statewide in hopes of preventing other incidents of interpersonal violence.

DPS currently is providing training related to strangulation response and investigation to law enforcement officers, prosecutors, medical personnel and victim advocates across the state. The training focuses on how to appropriately identify and document incidents and related injuries in order to prepare cases for a successful prosecution and to save lives.

“We need to do better by victims,” said TePas. “Ms. Guthrie’s death should be a call to action to all professionals in the criminal justice system. No other family should have to experience the loss that Ms. Guthrie’s family is grieving.”

If you or someone you know is experiencing any form of domestic violence, a list of available resources is posted at <https://dps.alaska.gov/CDVSA/Services/VictimServices>.

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