



# METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

## MEDIA RELEASE

*Chief Ronal W. Serpas*

M.P.D. FORM 004  
(CALEA 54.1.2)

Don Aaron  
Public Affairs Manager  
Kristin Mumford  
Public Affairs Officer

July 8, 2009

(615) 862-7306 – office  
(615) 880-2090 – fax  
<http://www.police.nashville.org>

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

After nearly four days of intensive investigation, which now includes the results of laboratory testing by TBI scientists, and a review of all information and evidence presently known and available, the Metropolitan Police Department has concluded that Steve McNair was murdered by Sahel Kazemi, who then committed suicide by shooting herself in the head. There is presently no evidence whatsoever of involvement by any other persons.

While it will never be known exactly what was on Kazemi's mind early Saturday morning, the totality of the evidence allows for conclusions as to her actions.

It is important for all to understand that media diagrams of the crime scene, in particular the exact positioning of Kazemi's body, were not accurate.

Based on the appearance of the crime scene, evidence collected, autopsy findings, and laboratory testing, veteran police department homicide investigators believe that McNair was seated on a sofa and was likely asleep when he was shot by Kazemi in the left side of his head from a distance of a few feet. She is then believed to have shot him twice in the chest from a distance of a few feet, before shooting him a final time in the right side of his head in what was a contact wound. The totality of the evidence shows that Kazemi sat down on the sofa to McNair's right, put her pistol to the right side of her head and fired. Kazemi then collapsed into McNair's lap before eventually falling into the floor on top of the pistol.

The TBI today reported that:

- All five recovered bullets came from the nine millimeter semi-automatic pistol recovered at the scene and purchased by Kazemi for \$100 last Thursday evening;
- All five shell casings recovered from the condominium were fired from the same nine millimeter pistol purchased by Kazemi;
- Gunshot residue testing was inconclusive due to blood contamination; however, trace elements indicative of gunshot residue were found on Kazemi's left hand, suggesting that she likely fired the gun using both hands.
- No gunshot residue was found on the hands of McNair.

Due to the lack of evidence of any struggle or defensive wounds, McNair's physical position on the sofa, and the trajectory of the bullet wounds, detectives believe it likely that McNair was unaware Kazemi was about to shoot him.

## **Sahel Kazemi**

Interviews with associates of Sahel Kazemi lead detectives to conclude that she was becoming increasingly distraught over personal events in her life, including financial difficulties.

Detectives learned that Kazemi's recent attempted sale of her Kia automobile had fallen through, making her liable for payments on both the Kia and a 2007 Cadillac Escalade. Although the Escalade was co-titled in the names of Kazemi and McNair, it appears Kazemi was responsible for the payments. Her female apartment roommate had decided to move to Pittsburgh, which would have left Kazemi with an effective doubling of her monthly rent payment to the neighborhood of \$1,000.

Detectives learned that On Monday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, Kazemi remarked to an associate that her "personal life was all screwed up."

Detectives have been informed that Kazemi recently learned of another young woman she apparently believed to be romantically involved with McNair, and had even followed that second woman to her place of residence, although there was no confrontation between the two.

In the early morning hours of Thursday, July 2, Kazemi was stopped for speeding on Broadway and was arrested for DUI.

At 5 p.m. on Thursday, she consummated the purchase of the fully loaded nine millimeter pistol from a private individual who, at Kazemi's request, had come to the parking lot of Opry Mills Mall, where she worked as a server at Dave & Buster's. Kazemi was absent from work for about two hours, until 7 p.m. When Kazemi returned to work, she was dismissed for the night.

Detectives learned that on Friday, July 3, Kazemi remarked to an associate, "my life is a ball of s... and I should just end it." Kazemi was scheduled to work until 1 a.m. on Saturday, but requested to leave early. She clocked out at Dave & Buster's at 10:07 p.m. She is believed to have gone to her Hermitage apartment, where her home computer showed activity until about 11 p.m. At some point she went to the condominium at 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South & Lea Avenue. McNair arrived between 1:30 a.m. and 2 a.m. According to the person who dropped McNair off at the condominium, Kazemi's Escalade was already parked outside.

## **Discovery of the Bodies**

Based on preliminary cell phone information and a reinterview of Wayne Neeley, detectives believe that Neeley was truthful when he said he arrived at the condominium shortly before 1 p.m. and did not instantly realize that the two persons in the living room were dead. Neeley, shocked and overcome by what he saw, telephoned Robert Gaddy at 12:51 p.m. Neeley acknowledged that he did pick up and look at one shell casing in the living room before putting it down. Gaddy arrived at the condominium at

approximately 1:35 p.m. and placed a call to 911. That call disconnected. The operator immediately returned the call, during which Gaddy gave details of the discovery. There was no evidence of the bodies, or the immediate area of the bodies, being disturbed. The apparent 44 minute delay in calling 911, while it may appear unusual, is not unheard of, and does not impact the conclusion of murder-suicide.

### **Video Review**

As part of the investigation, the police department is reviewing available video surveillance from businesses in the area. While there was no surveillance camera trained on the front door of the condominium, the general area is visible. No visible suspicious activity on Saturday morning has been detected thus far.

The murder of Steve McNair is a tragedy for his family, the Tennessee Titans and the city of Nashville. Detectives still have certain persons to interview before the investigation is officially completed. However, the classification of murder-suicide is clear given all of the evidence and information presently available. Should new and credible information and/or evidence come to the police department's attention in the future, that, too, will be thoroughly investigated.

Today's conclusions are based on all information presently available to the Metropolitan Police Department. Anyone with credible information or evidence he or she feels should come to the police department's attention may contact Detective Charles Robinson or Norris Tarkington at 862-7329.

###