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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON
FOR THE COUNTY OF MALHEUR

STATE OF OREGON,

Plaintiff,

v.

HUNTER CHASE BRUCKER,

Defendant.

Case No. 24CR44933

**DEFENDANT’S MOTION IN LIMINE TO
EXCLUDE BLOOD TEST RESULTS FOR
THC IN THEIR ENTIRETY**

I. INTRODUCTION

Defendant has previously filed Motions in Limine requesting that the Court not allow admission of certain evidence pertaining to tests performed on Defendant’s blood by NMS Labs. Specifically, Defendant requested the Court not allow such evidence to be based on the testimony of a single “surrogate” analyst or remote testimony on the ground that allowing such testimony would violate Defendant’s confrontational rights set out in the Oregon and U.S. Constitutions, and that the Court not allow any reference to sections of the NMS lab report stating that certain levels of substances in the blood correspond to certain levels of impairment.

1 Defendant now moves this Court for a pretrial order excluding in their entirety all
2 the blood test results for THC on the grounds that such evidence should be excluded
3 pursuant to OEC 401, OEC 702, OEC 403, and on the grounds that such evidence lacks
4 relevant scientific validity under *State v. Brown* and *State v. O'Key*.

5 II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

6 The following facts were extracted from the police reports and other discovery
7 provided by the State related to the collision at issue:

8 This case arises from an automobile accident that occurred on Highway 20 near
9 milepost 235. The head-on collision resulted in the death of Wyatt Cannon and serious
10 physical injury to Wyatt's younger sister. Defendant Hunter Brucker ("Defendant") is
11 subject to a multi-count indictment relating to the collision. The indictment alleges
12 Manslaughter II, Criminally Negligent Homicide, Assault III, DUII, Reckless Driving, and
13 Assault IV.

14 Defendant was interviewed by police officers who responded to the collision.
15 Trooper Cody Wood of the Oregon State Police, shortly after arriving at the scene,
16 approached Defendant, who was sitting in a pick-up truck parked away from the crash
17 scene. Trooper Wood noted in his report that Defendant "was slumped over in the front
18 passenger seat, visibly shaking and crying" and that Defendant had some red marks on his
19 arms and face. Trooper Wood's narrative continues:

20 I introduced myself as Trooper Wood with the State Police and advised Mr.
21 Brucker I was recording. Not knowing his involvement at this point, I asked
22 if he needed medical or if he had already been attended to. Mr. Brucker told
23 me he was okay. I asked him to tell me if he was an occupant in one of the
vehicles or where he was at and Mr. Brucker said "I was coming this way,
(gesturing eastbound). I was trying to pass a semi and I didn't see her

1 brown car in the sunlight, and I hit her head-on." Mr. Brucker then covered
2 his face and started to cry. I asked Mr. Brucker which vehicle he was in and
3 he said the red Trail Blazer.

4 After Trooper Wood walked Defendant to his patrol car and patted him down, he
5 made the following observations:

6 While I was speaking with Mr. Brucker my observations of him were
7 that he was having an appropriate reaction to the situation and appeared to
8 be in a state of shock. He was constantly sniffing and wiping his eyes due
9 to crying, causing them to look puffy and swollen. Mr. Brucker also
10 informed me he had a sty in his eye. *I did not detect any odors of alcohol or*
11 *marijuana coming from Mr. Brucker's person while I was in close proximity*
12 *with him. Mr. Brucker was able to answer my questions without delay or*
13 *apparent confusion.* I asked Mr. Brucker if he was aware how serious of a
14 situation this was, and he said he did. I explained to Mr. Brucker that I
15 needed to go figure out some more things regarding the crash. I asked if he
16 wanted to close the door of my patrol vehicle and offered to roll his window
17 down, Mr. Brucker said, "sure." (emphasis added).

18 Trooper Wood then broke contact with Defendant and continued his investigation
19 by, among other things, looking around in Defendant's vehicle "to see if I could see
20 anything inside the Trail Blazer and did not see anything in plain view that I would consider
21 evidentiary value." The trooper also spoke with Christy Heuterman, who was behind
22 Defendant's vehicle for about four or five miles prior to the collision. Mrs. Heuterman
23 described to the trooper what she observed regarding Defendant's driving; and when asked
24 "if there was any other driving behavior she witnessed that might make her think
25 something was going on or that the driver of the Trail Blazer was impaired, *Mrs.*
26 *Heuterman said no.*" (emphasis added).

Trooper Wood returned to Defendant, read him his *Miranda* rights, and then
questioned him further. After asking Defendant if he took any medication or pills—

1 Defendant stated he did not—he then asked Defendant if he used any kind of drugs. The
2 trooper’s narrative reflects the following exchange occurred:

3 I asked Mr. Brucker what his drug of choice was and he said he smokes
4 weed. I asked when the last time he smoked weed was and he said 8am that
5 morning. He then said he left town around 12:30pm. I asked what kind of
6 marijuana product and he said a bowl [sic] of weed. I asked how much or
7 how big and Mr. Brucker gestured with his hand indicating an estimated
8 dime size amount. Mr. Brucker said, "Nothing crazy because he wanted to
9 be "on point" for his drive." This statement by Mr. Brucker indicates to me
10 that Mr. Brucker is aware how the marijuana he consumes can impair his
11 ability to operate a motor vehicle.

12 I informed Mr. Brucker that one of the occupants of the other vehicle was
13 deceased. Mr. Brucker started breathing differently and had a blank look
14 that looked like he was in shock. Mr. Brucker was not aware someone had
15 died until I told him. Mr. Brucker looked at me and said, "They're really
16 dead?" I told him yes. Mr. Brucker began crying again and wiping his eyes.
17 Sergeant Anderson started asking Mr. Brucker questions and Mr. Brucker
18 appeared to stop crying.

19 Trooper Wood asked Defendant if he had made the drive before, then asked again if
20 Defendant took any pain medications or drugs other than marijuana, to which Defendant
21 answered, "No." After the trooper asked Defendant if he had any medical conditions, the
22 following exchange occurred:

23 I asked when the last time he drank any water was and Mr. Brucker said he
24 was drinking Gatorade on the way. I explained he seemed as if he had a dry
25 mouth. Mr. Brucker said he did, but wasn't dehydrated, just overwhelmed.
26 *Sergeant Anderson asked Mr. Brucker if he felt the effects of the marijuana
and Mr. Brucker said no.* He then asked Mr. Brucker how often he uses
marijuana and Mr. Brucker stated daily and primarily for recreational
purposes. Mr. Brucker said he used to smoke a lot more, because he had a
rough childhood and that was how he coped. Mr. Brucker said he has toned
it back, but still uses a little. (emphasis added).

1 Trooper Wood asked Sergeant Peter Anderson, who “once held the certification of
2 Drug Recognition Expert (DRE),” to be present during Defendant’s evaluation. Sergeant
3 Anderson asked a series of questions, including whether Mr. Brucker used alcohol. After
4 Defendant denied having consumed any alcohol, Sgt. Anderson explained drugs and how
5 they are active in the bloodstream versus being excreted through urine, then asked
6 Defendant if he felt like the marijuana he consumed at 8 am would still be psychoactive in
7 his system and Mr. Brucker stated he didn’t think so. Sgt. Anderson then asked Defendant
8 if he thought a blood draw would confirm that and Defendant replied, “Yes.”

9 Sergeant Anderson explained to Mr. Brucker that on crash scenes like this they
10 usually ask for a blood sample and “it could help if they do not detect anything.”
11 Defendant consented to a voluntary blood draw. Inexplicably, despite investigating a fatal
12 collision, the officers did not detain or transport Defendant to the hospital themselves.
13 Instead, they released him from their immediate observation and control, allowing
14 Defendant’s friend to drive him to the hospital for the blood draw.

15 III. ARGUMENT

16 THE BLOOD TEST RESULTS SHOULD BE EXCLUDED IN THEIR ENTIRETY UNDER 17 OEC 401, OEC 702, AND OEC 403.

18 A. Factors To Weigh With Regard To Admissibility

19 In *State v. O’Key*, 321 Or 285, 899 P2d 663 (1995), the Oregon Supreme Court held that
20 the admissibility of scientific evidence is governed by OEC 401, 702, and 403.

- 21 • OEC 401 states: “Relevant evidence’ means evidence having any tendency to make
22 the existence of any fact that is of consequence to the determination of the action

1 more probable or less probable than it would be without the evidence.”

- 2 • OEC 702 states: “If scientific, technical or other specialized knowledge will assist
3 the trier of fact to understand the evidence or to determine a fact in issue, a witness
4 qualified as an expert by knowledge, skill, experience, training or education may
5 testify thereto in the form of an opinion or otherwise.”
- 6 • OEC 403 states: “Although relevant, evidence may be excluded if its probative value
7 is substantially outweighed by the danger of unfair prejudice, confusion of the
8 issues, or misleading the jury, or by considerations of undue delay or needless
9 presentation of cumulative evidence.”

10 The Supreme Court in *O’Key* described the interplay between the above-quoted rules
11 as follows:

12 The requirement in OEC 702 that the evidence or testimony “assist the trier of fact
13 to understand the evidence or to determine a fact in issue” is intended to serve
14 multiple functions... Once the testimony is determined to be relevant under OEC
15 401, helpful under OEC 702, and not barred by OEC 402, it will be excluded only if
16 its probative value is substantially outweighed by one or more of the countervailing
17 factors set forth in OEC 403[.] 321 Or at 298-299.

18 The *O’Key* Court explained that in evaluating the incremental probative value of the
19 proffered evidence, the court “must assume that the evidence will be believed by the trier
20 of fact” and that “[w]hen the incremental probative value of the proffered scientific
21 evidence is relatively slight, and when the jury is likely to overvalue or be misled into giving
22 the evidence undue weight, the likelihood of exclusion under OEC 403 is enhanced.” *Id.* at

1 299. The Court continued:

2 In applying OEC 401, 702, and 403, the court must identify and evaluate the
3 probative value of the proffered scientific evidence, consider how that
4 evidence might impair rather than help the trier of fact, and decide whether
5 truthfinding is better served by admission or exclusion. *Brown*, 297 Or at
6 409. In *Brown*, this court identified a number of factors that could affect a
7 trial court's decision on admissibility of proffered scientific evidence: (1)
8 The technique's general acceptance in the field; (2) The expert's
9 qualifications and stature; (3) The use which has been made of the
10 technique; (4) The potential rate of error; (5) The existence of specialized
11 literature; (6) The novelty of the invention; and (7) The extent to which the
12 technique relies on the subjective interpretation of the expert.

13 *Id.* at 299. The *O'Key* Court further noted that those factors were not intended to be
14 exclusive nor should they be applied as a mechanical checklist: "What is important is not
15 lockstep affirmative findings as to each factor, but analysis of each factor by the court in
16 reaching its decision on the probative value of the [proffered scientific] evidence under
17 OEC 401 and OEC 702." *Id.* at 300. In addition to reaffirming the standards set forth in
18 *Brown*, the *O'Key* Court also incorporated the analysis set out in *Daubert v. Merrell Dow*
19 *Pharmaceuticals*, 509 U.S. 579 (1993), for determining a technique's scientific validity,
20 where the Court suggested four factors for a court to consider in making an initial
21 determination of the reliability of scientific evidence:

- 22 (1) "whether the theory or technique in question "can be (and has been) tested;"
23 (2) "whether the theory or technique has been subject to peer review and
24 publication;"
25 (3) "'known or potential rate of error' and the existence of operational standards
26 controlling the technique's operation;"
27 (4) "degree of acceptance in the relevant scientific community."

1 509 US at 593-504. See also *State v. Romero*, 191 Or App 164, 172-173, 81 P3s 714 (2003),
2 *rev den*, 337 Or 248 (2004) (reiterating that *Brown* factors were guidelines for determining
3 a technique's scientific validity but affirmative findings for each factor not required, with
4 inquiry centering on the probative value of the evidence).

5 **B. The THC Blood Test Results Are Irrelevant to Actual Impairment Under OEC 401.**

6 Regarding Defendant's motion in limine to exclude in its entirety the THC blood
7 evidence in this case, it seems almost a wasted effort to go through every factor set out in
8 *O'Key* given that it is well established that THC pharmacokinetics do not permit a reliable
9 inference of contemporaneous impairment from a blood concentration. The truthfinder in
10 this case would obviously be better served by the exclusion of such evidence given that it
11 would have no bearing on the issue of whether Defendant was under the influence of
12 intoxicants at the time of the collision.

13 Indeed, it is generally accepted in the field that drug concentration—in itself—has no
14 bearing on the degree of impairment. As noted in Defendant's previously filed Motions in
15 Limine, the Guidelines for Opinions and Testimony in Forensic Toxicology contained in the
16 ANSI/ASB BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION 037 (First Ed. 2019) states as follows:

17 5.3 Inappropriate Opinions and Testimony by a Toxicologist

18 The following are considered to generally be inappropriate opinions and /
19 or testimony for a toxicologist to offer, as they currently lack consensus
20 within the scientific community or are generally beyond the scope of the
21 toxicologist's expertise.

22 ***

23 b) A toxicologist should not address behavioral intent based solely on a
24 drug concentration.

1
2 c) A toxicologist should not opine as to a specific individual's degree of
impairment based solely on a quantitative result.

3 The State may attempt to argue otherwise by relying on *State v. Tavares*, 339 Or
4 App 605, 568 P3d 608 (2025), but *Tavares* supports Defendant's position that such
5 evidence should be excluded. The defendant in *Tavares* was convicted of DUUI and argued
6 on appeal that the trial court erred in admitting evidence related to his blood test, analyzed
7 by NMS Labs. In *Tavares*, an officer initiated a traffic stop and smelled an "overwhelming"
8 scent of burning marijuana. The officer "observed that defendant had droopy eyelids,
9 bloodshot eyes, and dilated pupils, and that his speech was slow and mumbled." *Id.* at 609.
10 The officer initiated a DUUI investigation by asking the defendant when he had last used
11 cannabis, and the defendant answered that he had smoked "one or two bowls" a couple
12 hours prior to driving, rating himself "like a three" on a zero-to-ten sobriety scale. *Id.* The
13 defendant agreed to take FSTs, and the officer observed several validated clues of
14 impairment. According to the state's expert, a subsequent blood draw "contained an active
15 component of marijuana (delta-9 THC) as well as one active metabolite (11-hydroxy
16 delta-9 THC) and one inactive metabolite (delta-9 carboxy THC)." *Id.* at 608. Although the
17 state's expert testified that the test results indicated marijuana in his system, the expert
18 made the following concession:

19 When asked whether that particular concentration of THC would have been
20 enough to impair defendant's driving, Anderson responded that there was
21 "just no magic number or blood level" that had been shown to be sufficient
22 to impair a person's driving. Anderson further explained that "as a forensic
23 toxicologist evaluating drugs on a piece of paper * * * I cannot tell how these
drugs would actually affect a particular person." In Anderson's view, to be
able to tell whether a person is actually impaired by marijuana "it has to

1 come from * * * observed behavior, witness behavior, officers interacting
2 with them, field sobriety tests, [or] drug recognition expert tests."

3 *Id.* at 609. The Court of Appeals concluded that any error in admitting the evidence was
4 harmless beyond a reasonable doubt *only because* the central question of impairment was
5 proven by the overwhelming behavioral evidence observed by the officer, noting that
6 "Anderson's testimony and report did not bear on the issue of whether defendant was
7 impaired and, consequently, did not contribute to the jury's guilty verdict." *Id.* at 610-611.
8 No such police observations exist in the instant case despite a thorough investigation by
9 the officers at the collision scene. Trooper Wood concluded that Defendant "was having an
10 appropriate reaction to the situation," answered questions "without delay or apparent
11 confusion," and had no odor of alcohol or marijuana. A witness following Defendant's
12 vehicle for miles observed no impaired driving behavior prior to the crash. Although
13 Defendant admitted to prior marijuana use, it occurred nearly eight-and-a-half hours prior
14 to the collision. Given that drug concentration levels are meaningless insofar as actual
15 impairment is concerned which is the issue or fact of consequence, it is axiomatic that any
16 evidence concerning such concentrations should be excluded purely on relevance grounds
17 pursuant to OEC 401.

18 **C. The THC Blood Test Results Lack Scientific Validity Under OEC 702 Because No**
19 **Scientific Methodology Connects THC Concentration to Contemporaneous**
20 **Impairment.**

21 Under *State v. Brown* and *State v. O'Key*, scientific evidence is only admissible under
22 OEC 702 if it possesses sufficient scientific validity to genuinely assist the trier of fact. An
23 examination of Oregon jurisprudence regarding delayed chemical tests demonstrates

1 exactly why the THC blood test in this case lacks the scientific validity required for
2 admission.

3 In *State v. Eumana-Moranchel*, 352 Or 1, 9-10, 277 P3d 549 (2012), the Oregon
4 Supreme Court established that a delayed chemical test result is rarely sufficient on its
5 own; there must be "something more" to connect the later test result to the defendant's
6 condition at the time of driving. The Supreme Court reaffirmed this principle in *State v.*
7 *Hedgpeth*, 365 Or 724, 735, 452 P3d 948 (2019), explicitly holding that without "something
8 more"—such as valid retrograde extrapolation or contemporaneous behavioral signs of
9 impairment—a delayed blood alcohol test is insufficient to prove the defendant's condition
10 while driving.

11 If a delayed chemical test requires "something more" to be scientifically helpful in
12 an alcohol case, it absolutely demands it in a cannabis case. However, unlike alcohol—
13 where retrograde extrapolation has achieved scientific acceptance—the scientific
14 community universally rejects the practice of extrapolating a specific THC blood
15 concentration to a timeline of ingestion or a degree of impairment.

16 As established by the ANSI/ASB Best Practice Recommendation, there is no
17 accepted scientific methodology or formula to relate Defendant's THC blood
18 concentration back to his physical or mental condition at the time of the crash. Experts in
19 the field of toxicology concede that the "something more" required by *Hedgpeth* and
20 *Eumana-Moranchel* is scientifically impossible to provide when dealing with THC
21 concentrations. Furthermore, the State possesses no behavioral "something more" to
22 bridge this gap, as Defendant displayed no signs of impairment at the scene. Because there
23

1 is no generally accepted scientific technique to correlate a THC blood level to a specific
2 level of impairment, the proffered blood evidence fails the foundational reliability
3 requirements of *Brown* and *O'Key* and must be excluded under OEC 702.

4 **D. The Investigating Officer's Stated Reliance on Blood Evidence Over Behavioral**
5 **Observations Directly Contradicts Accepted Scientific Protocol and Underscores a**
6 **Lack of Probable Cause.**

7
8 The necessity of excluding the blood-THC evidence in this case is further
9 underscored by the investigating officer's fundamentally flawed understanding of how
10 marijuana impairment is scientifically and legally established. In his report, the officer
11 justifies his reliance on a blood draw by stating the following:

12
13 I have received previous training on detecting impaired drivers. I have
14 achieved the qualification of a Drug Recognition Expert through intense
15 training and experience. I know from over a decade of law enforcement
16 experience and numerous DUII investigations, as well as my training as a
17 DRE, marijuana can significantly impact a person's ability to accurately
18 perceive time and distance. Mr. Brucker's admission of using marijuana, as
19 well as the circumstances surrounding the crash, were consistent with
20 someone who may not be able to accurately perceive time and distance and
21 may make an unsafe pass. I also know from law enforcement training and
22 experience, someone who may be experiencing symptoms of shock may
23 have difficulty mentally processing information. The person's ability to
24 quickly and accurately process information may be impacted by the shock
25 or emotional trauma being experienced. I know standardized field sobriety
26 tests require someone to demonstrate psychoactive abilities. This means
they must physically perform tests, while remaining mentally focused. Due
to the circumstances surrounding the investigation, I believed standardized
field sobriety tests may be impacted due to the emotional trauma Mr.
Brucker had just been through. It would have been difficult to use roadside

1 tests at the time to make a sound decision on Mr. Brucker's current level of
2 impairment or lack thereof. *I believed the presence (or lack thereof) of*
3 *impairing substances within Mr. Brucker's blood stream would be more*
4 *indicative of psychoactive inhibitors than results displayed during field*
5 *sobriety tests.* (emphasis added).

6 The officer's assertion that a blood test is "more indicative" of a person's level of
7 impairment than standardized field sobriety tests is a glaring misstatement of scientific
8 fact, established DRE protocol, and caselaw, which has apparently been adopted by the
9 State. As previously established by the ANSI/ASB Best Practice Recommendations and
10 the State's own toxicology experts in *Tavares*, a blood test for THC concentration merely
11 proves *prior exposure*; it is scientifically incapable of indicating impairment. Forensic
12 toxicologists universally agree that impairment evidence *must* come from the very sources
13 the officer chose to forego; observed behavior, field sobriety tests, and clinical evaluations.

14 Ironically, the officer notes his "intense training and experience" as a Drug
15 Recognition Expert (DRE) to justify his conclusions. Yet, the entire foundation of the 12-
16 step DRE protocol relies on the principle that chemical tests merely corroborate the
17 physiological and behavioral impairment *already observed* by the evaluator. A chemical test
18 is never a substitute for behavioral and clinical evaluation to establish impairment.

19 Furthermore, the officer's narrative engages in blatant, circular bootstrapping.
20 Because the officer determined Defendant was in "shock" and could not perform FSTs, he
21 attempts to use the accident itself as the sole behavioral symptom of marijuana
22 impairment and then seeks to use the blood test to validate that assumption. The officer
23

1 admits he could not make a "sound decision" regarding impairment based on roadside
2 observations. He therefore relied on a blood draw, falsely believing the laboratory results
3 would scientifically prove impairment for him.

4 The officer's own actions at the scene further belie his post-hoc justification for
5 relying on a blood test. Despite his written assertions that he suspected Defendant was
6 impaired and incapable of accurately perceiving time and distance, the officer did not
7 detain Defendant, nor did he secure him in a patrol vehicle for transport. Instead, the
8 officers allowed Defendant to leave the scene of a fatal collision in a civilian vehicle driven
9 by a friend to go to the hospital for a voluntary blood draw. Actions speak louder than
10 words: law enforcement officers do not release suspected impaired drivers to the custody
11 of their friends. The officer's decision to relinquish observation and control of Defendant
12 prior to the blood draw strongly corroborates the lack of any observable impairment at the
13 scene. Furthermore, allowing Defendant to be transported unmonitored introduces a
14 massive confounding variable into the State's timeline and evidentiary chain of custody,
15 rendering the subsequent, delayed blood test even more speculative and highly prejudicial
16 under OEC 403.

17 This objective absence of observable impairment is further highlighted by the
18 officer's casual handling of his body-worn camera. Under Oregon law (ORS 133.741), once
19 reasonable suspicion or probable cause is developed, a body-worn camera is statutorily
20 mandated to record continuously and may cease recording *no sooner than the termination*
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1 of the officer's participation in the contact. A roadside investigation is a single, continuous
2 investigative contact; stepping away from a suspect to interview a witness or confer with
3 colleagues does not "terminate" the contact.

4 Tellingly, Trooper Wood's actions reflect a casual disregard for this continuous
5 recording mandate. He repeatedly muted his audio to hold private conversations with
6 other troopers and "forgot" to record a portion of a witness interview, shielding these
7 interactions from the objective record long before his contact with Defendant was actually
8 terminated. This approach to a fatal collision investigation is highly revealing. It is
9 fundamentally incongruous with an officer who believes he has just observed signs of
10 impairment sufficient to establish probable cause of a DUII. Instead, this behavior strongly
11 suggests the officers had not developed probable cause at the scene and did not view
12 Defendant's behavior as indicative of impairment.
13

14 This creates an insurmountable evidentiary hurdle for the State. The roadside
15 investigation yielded no observable signs of impairment—evidenced by the lack of field
16 sobriety tests, lack of a DRE, statement of witness following Defendant, the release of
17 Defendant to a civilian before blood draw, and the casual, often undocumented nature of
18 the police investigation. The State is now attempting to use the delayed blood test as a
19 retroactive substitute for the probable cause they lacked at the scene. However, as
20 established under *Tavares* and accepted toxicology standards, a raw blood-THC level
21 cannot establish contemporaneous impairment. The State cannot use a scientifically
22
23

1 irrelevant blood test to cure a roadside investigation that lacked evidence of impairment in
2 the first place.

3
4 **E. Admission of the Evidence Would Violate OEC 403.**

5 Even if this Court determines that such evidence has some baseline relevancy, it
6 should be excluded pursuant to OEC 403. Although the State seeks to use the blood test
7 results as substantive proof of impairment, the only thing the test demonstrates is prior
8 exposure. Admission of such evidence would invite jurors to engage in backward
9 reasoning, i.e., “there was THC in Defendant’s blood and there was an accident, therefore
10 THC caused an impairment.”
11

12 The State will likely argue that Defendant is free to put on evidence that the
13 presence of THC in the blood has no bearing on impairment. But such evidence would only
14 act to amplify juror confusion, something OEC 403 is designed to prevent. Nor would a
15 limiting instruction clear up the confusion—an instruction that THC presence by itself
16 cannot establish impairment would invite speculation that perhaps Defendant is guilty
17 merely because he admitted cannabis use.
18

19 Oregon appellate courts have consistently cautioned against admitting evidence
20 that invites jurors to speculate, particularly in cases involving motor vehicle accidents and
21 chemical tests. The factual parallels between the instant case and *State v. Jayne*, 173 Or
22 App 533, 24 P3d 920 (2001), are striking and dictate the same result here: exclusion.
23

1 In *Jayne*, the defendant was involved in a fatal motor vehicle accident, and a
2 subsequent urinalysis tested positive for marijuana and methamphetamine. The trial court
3 excluded the test results, and the Court of Appeals affirmed, holding that without expert
4 testimony establishing a scientific correlation between the presence of the drugs and
actual impairment at the time of the crash, the evidence was highly prejudicial. The Court
explained the specific danger of admitting such unanchored chemical evidence:

5 Given the significant weight that a jury is likely to accord this type of
6 evidence, the potential for prejudice here is high. Specifically, the jury might
7 infer, from the very fact that it is being told that defendant tested "positive"
8 for marijuana and methamphetamine after the accident, that there
9 necessarily must be some correlation between the drugs in her urine and
10 her physical or mental condition at the time of the accident. Alternatively,
the jury might assume that because defendant had consumed drugs in the
past, she was a reckless person... In this case, the trial court correctly
concluded that the probative value of this evidence was low and the danger
of unfair prejudice was high.

11 *Id.* at 545.

12
13 Just as in *Jayne*, this case involves a fatal collision and a delayed chemical test
14 showing the mere presence of THC. Just as in *Jayne*, the State cannot offer accepted
15 scientific testimony correlating that specific THC concentration to Mr. Brucker's actual
16 impairment at the time of driving—because, as established by the ANSI/ASB standards, no
17 such scientific methodology exists.

18
19 If the urinalysis in *Jayne* was excluded because it invited the jury to impermissibly
20 assume the defendant was impaired or generally "reckless" based merely on prior drug
21 consumption, the blood test here must suffer the same fate. This is especially true here,
22 where Defendant is charged with Manslaughter II, an offense requiring the State to prove
23

1 reckless. Permitting the jury to hear the THC blood concentration without a
2 scientifically valid link to impairment invites the exact speculative leap and unfair prejudice
3 condemned in *Jayne*.

4
5 **IV. CONCLUSION**

6
7 For the foregoing reasons, Defendant respectfully requests that the Court grant this
8 Motion in Limine and exclude the blood test results in their entirety.

9
10 DATED this 16th day of March 2026.

11 /s/ Evander Mclver
12 Evander Mclver, OSB #064317
13 Attorney for Defendant
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1 **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

2 I hereby certify that I served the foregoing ***Defendant's Motion in Limine to***
3 ***Exclude Blood Test Results for TCH in Their Entirety*** on the following:

4 Michael Heninger
5 Malheur County DA's Office
6 251 B St W Ste 6
7 Vale, OR 97918

8 ***Attorney for Plaintiff***
9 ***Via Email: michael.heninger@malheurco.org***

10 **RE: State of Oregon vs. Hunter Chase Bruker**
11 **Malheur County Case No. 24CR44933**

12 By the following indicated method, or methods:

13 by emailing a full, true and correct copy thereof to the individual(s) at
14 the email address shown above on the date set forth below.

15 DATED this 16th day of March 2026.

16 /s/Evander Mclver
17 Evander Mclver, OSB #064317
18 Baxter Law, LLC
19 400 SW Bond St., Ste. 200
20 Bend, OR 97702
21 P: (541) 306-2060
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