The State argued that the defendant went to the victim’s house with the purpose of stealing title to the house-trailer for which he owed the victim money. The county medical examiner established that the cause of death was strangulation, and he estimated the time of death at about 2:30 a.m. on January 17. He also noted two blunt force injuries to the head, which could have produced severe pain and unconsciousness. He found multiple stab wounds, abrasions, and lacerations made on her body. He thought these were inflicted after death and could have been inflicted several hours later. The stab wounds he attributed to one weapon: a three and one-half-inch, single-edge knife. The abrasions, he thought, were caused by a screwdriver. A pattern of multiple laceration wounds were found on the victim’s left forearm and left calf. One laceration wound was found slicing between her buttocks and through her anus.

Defendant testified in his own behalf, asserting that on the night of the murder he had been drinking heavily and using drugs. He claimed to have had no realization of what he had done. According to defendant, that night he bad drank several beers and shots, taken two Quaaludes, and injected himself with methamphetamine, a stimulant commonly called "speed" or "crank." He acknowledged the murder as being senseless. “It was like something weird. It was like it was somebody else" was doing it. He denied any sexual motivation for the crime or any revenge based on the trailer-payment arrangements.