Ethical Speculation Checklist for Web Sleuths

This checklist is designed to help web sleuths, authors, and true crime enthusiasts ensure their theories, posts, and comments are grounded in ethics. Use it before sharing speculative content to avoid harm, bias, or misinformation.

## Accuracy & Verification

☐ Have I verified all claims with at least two credible sources?

☐ Are direct quotes attributed properly, with clear sourcing?

☐ Have I clearly marked speculation vs. confirmed fact?

## Respect for Victims and Families

☐ Have I anonymized non-public figures or used pseudonyms?

☐ Have I considered the emotional impact on family or friends of the subject?

☐ Have I avoided speculation that assigns guilt without evidence?

## Privacy & Consent

☐ Am I using photos, messages, or videos that are publicly available or shared with consent?

☐ Have I blurred or redacted sensitive personal information?

## Ethical Reflection

☐ Would I be comfortable saying this directly to the victim’s family?

☐ Is this theory based on evidence or emotion?

☐ Am I contributing to truth, or just adding noise or harm?

Optional:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_