

STATE OF INDIANA)
) ss:
COUNTY OF LAKE)

SUPERIOR COURT OF LAKE COUNTY
CRIMINAL DIVISION
CROWN POINT, INDIANA

STATE OF INDIANA)

V.)

DARREN DEON VANN)

CAUSE: 45603-1410-MR-7

PROBABLE CAUSE AFFIDAVIT

Affiant swears or affirms that he/she believes and has good cause to believe that:

Affiant a detective with the Hammond police department was involved in the investigation of an incident which occurred on October 17, 2014 at the Motel 6, 3840 179th Street, Hammond, Lake County, Indiana.

On the above date at about 9:27 p.m. Detective Clark and I were dispatched to the above location and met with Officer Daniel Drudge of the Hammond police department where we also met with Sgt. Michael Darnell who told us that the body of Afrika Hardy was found in a bath tub in the bathroom at a particular motel room there. We entered the room and saw what appeared to be a broken fingernail on the floor, a light colored button from a shirt and a torn condom wrapper. The beds were moved away from the headboards to suggest that there was possibly a struggle there. We also saw a white purse, clothing and personal contents in the room. We saw the body of Afrika Hardy laying nude in the bathtub and she appeared to have a black piece of clothing covering her arms and around her neck. Red marks could be seen on her neck as if she had been strangled with something thin. Her body had droplets of water on it. Also located in the bathroom was a pillow besides the toilet which appeared to have blood on it. Sgt. Darnell said that EMS personnel from the Hammond Fire Department had responded to this location and pronounced Afrika Hardy dead at that location. The officers then directed us to Shameeka Cunningham and Eduardo Ayon and said that these persons had discovered Ms. Hardy.

I spoke with Shameeka Cunningham who I believe to be truthful and credible because she spoke of facts from within her own personal knowledge who said that Afrika Hardy was her 19 year old friend and that the two of them and another woman friend had decided to start an escort business. She said that they placed ads on backpage.com. She said that the ads were placed for Afrika Hardy using the names of "Octavia" or "Ms. Youngin". Cunningham said that they would use hotels in the Hammond and Lansing Illinois area to conduct their business. She said that she and Afrika had checked into this particular room at the Motel 6 in Hammond between 2 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. on October 17, 2014. Cunningham stayed there for about 15 to 20 minutes and then left while Hardy used the hotel room for clients. She said that prior to arriving at the hotel she and Hardy stopped at a Walgreen's to purchase some condoms. She said that Hardy was contacted by a man using the name of "Big Boy Appetite" on October 16, 2014 for an escort call and the man couldn't get a babysitter. On October 17th Cunningham said that the man called again and wanted to meet. She said that in the first hour Ms. Hardy was at the hotel and that she had a customer but he had left. She said that Hardy texted her saying that the man who contacted her the day before, referring to "Big Boy Appetite" was at the room at 5:13 p.m. Ms. Cunningham tried to call Hardy approximately five to eight times after that man arrived at the hotel. She said that Hardy went passed the normal time for such an appointment and so she texted Hardy and received a response which did not make sense. Cunningham believed that the man was sending the text messages on Hardy's phone. Cunningham then called Hardy's phone and when Hardy did not answer the phone she tried to call Eduardo Ayon. Ms Cunningham then met with Ayon and they went to the room in the Motel 6 where Hardy was at. She and Ayon found hardy's body in the bathtub and the water from the shower was running. Cunningham said that she ran away from the body and she called 911. Ayon checked Hardy for a pulse and shook her body. She said that Hardy's cell phone which had a pink cover on it was missing.

During my investigation I discovered that Detective Tharp took a statement from Eduardo Ayon regarding this incident. Ayon said that on October 17, 2014 he was contacted by Shameeka Cunningham who wanted him to drive her to the Motel 6 in Hammond to check on a friend. Cunningham told him that the friend had met a man on Backpage at Motel 6 and she was no longer answering her phone. He said that Cunningham discovered the woman in the bathtub as described above and motioned for him to come into the bathroom. Ayon saw this woman in the bathtub, later identified as Afrika Hardy, and said that Cunningham called 911. Ayon checked the woman for a pulse and shook her and then waited outside for the police with Ms. Cunningham.

During my investigation Detective Ezequiel Hinojosa obtained a search warrant to obtain the subscriber information for the cellular phone number used which Ms. Cunningham provided to the police regarding the man

who responded to the Backpage advertisement for Hardy, referring to "Big Boy Appetite". Records for this cellular phone led the detectives to a particular address in the 600 block of W. 49th Avenue in Gary.

I viewed video surveillance of the parking lot of the Motel 6 on October 17, 2014 regarding this incident and I observed a dark colored sports utility vehicle parked near the entrance to the above hotel room where the body of Afrika Hardy was found and saw a male black subject, later identified as Darren Deon Vann, exit that vehicle. The man entered the room and was later seen running from that room and then leaving in the same vehicle. Another camera angle showed that this vehicle was a newer model Jeep. Further investigation revealed that Regina Beard was the registered owner of a 2013 blue Jeep and that Beard lives at the address in the 600 block of W. 49th Avenue in Gary. During our investigation Detectives saw this vehicle at that residence and then began surveillance of this residence.

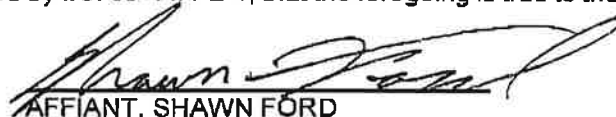
On October 18, 2014 Detectives obtained a search warrant for this residence by Hammond City Court Judge Harkin and then we executed the search warrant at that location. As a result of the execution of the search warrant Darren Deon Vann was placed under arrest and the blue Jeep was also towed and a search warrant was obtained for the vehicle.

This blue Jeep is the same vehicle registered to Regina Beard. Recovered from the Jeep was a white glove. Other items obtained during the execution of the search warrant included a key to this Jeep, an Indiana Sex Offender Registry sheet in the name of Darren Vann listing him as a sex offender through the Lake County Sheriff's Department, a grey puffy jacket and dark colored hooded sweatshirt which looked similar to the clothing worn by the same male black subject in the surveillance video from the Motel 6, a black hooded sweatshirt which contained packages of condoms which were the same brand and style as the condom wrapper found in the Motel 6 motel room described above, HTC cellular phone in a pink case similar to the description of the phone which Shameeka Cunningham said belonged to Afrika Hardy. A shirt was also collected from Darren Vann's person which was missing a button and we observed that the remaining buttons on his shirt appeared to be the same style and color as the one button found on the floor of the motel room at the Motel 6 as described above.

After advising him of his civil and constitutional rights and waiving said rights, Darren Deon Vann admitted that he responded to a Backpage advertisement and he was supposed to meet a female named "Octavia" at the Motel 6 in Hammond at the same motel room where her body was later found. He admitted that he drove to the Motel 6 in his sisters blue Jeep and that he parked it next to a black Chrysler vehicle in the parking lot. When I reviewed the video surveillance from the Motel 6 I saw that the blue Jeep did pull into the parking lot and park next to a black Chrysler vehicle as Vann described. Darren Vann then admitted that he had sex with the woman from the advertisement, referring to Afrika Hardy and that at one point the sex was getting rough and she started to fight with him. Vann said that he strangled the woman first with his hands and then with a cord before placing her body in the bath tub of the motel room. He then left the room, got back into his sisters Jeep and fled the scene.

Detective Hinojosa and I had different conversations with Darren Vann and showed him some photographs of the above items recovered as well as a photograph of Afrika Hardy and Vann confirmed that he killed Afrika Hardy by strangling her with a cord. Vann viewed photographs of a grey puffy jacket and a dark hoodie taken during the search warrant and confirmed that the clothing belonged to him and that he wore this clothing during the murder of Afrika Hardy. He viewed a photograph of the above cellular phone with a pink case and confirmed that he took this phone from the hotel room after murdering Afrika Hardy. He viewed a photograph of condom packages and confirmed that he also took them after the murder of Afrika Hardy. He viewed the photograph of the white glove recovered from inside the Jeep and he confirmed that he used white gloves during the murder of Afrika Hardy. Vann viewed a photograph of Ms. Hardy's cell phone which had a brown extension cord near it and Vann confirmed that his cord was the murder weapon used to kill Afrika Hardy.

I swear, under the penalty for perjury as specified by I.C. 35-44.1-2-1, that the foregoing is true to the best of my information and belief.


AFFIANT, SHAWN FORD

Subscribed and sworn to before me and approved for prosecution on October 20, 2014.


DAVID J. KOWALCZYK
DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

STATE OF INDIANA)
) SS:
COUNTY OF LAKE)

SUPERIOR COURT OF LAKE COUNTY
CRIMINAL DIVISION
CROWN POINT, INDIANA

STATE OF INDIANA)
)
 V.)
)
DARREN DEON VANN)
DOB: 3/21/1971)

CAUSE NUMBER:

INFORMATION

COUNT I
[MURDER]

Shawn Ford, upon oath, says that on or about October 17, 2014, in the County of Lake, State of Indiana, Darren Deon Vann did knowingly or intentionally kill Afrika Hardy , contrary to I.C. 35-42-1-1(1) and against the peace and dignity of the State of Indiana.

COUNT II
[MURDER IN THE PERPETRATION OF A ROBBERY]

Shawn Ford, upon oath, says that on or about October 17, 2014, in the County of Lake, State of Indiana, Darren Deon Vann did kill Afrika Hardy while committing or attempting to commit the crime of robbery, contrary to I.C. 35-42-1-1(2) and against the peace and dignity of the State of Indiana.

COUNT III
[ROBBERY RESULTING IN SERIOUS BODILY INJURY (2)]

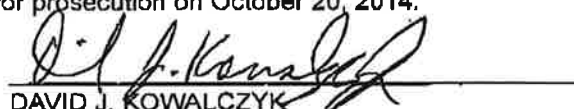
Shawn Ford, upon oath, says that on or about October 17, 2014, in the County of Lake, State of Indiana, Darren Deon Vann did knowingly or intentionally take a cellular phone and condoms from the person or presence of Afrika Hardy by using force or by threatening the use of force on Afrika Hardy which resulted in serious bodily injury to Afrika Hardy, contrary to I.C. 35-42-5-1(1) and against the peace and dignity of the State of Indiana.

I swear, under the penalty for perjury as specified by I.C. 35-44.1-2-1, that the foregoing is true to the best of my information and belief.


SHAWN FORD
AFFIANT

Subscribed and sworn to before me and approved for prosecution on October 20, 2014.

BERNARD A. CARTER
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY


DAVID J. KOWALCZYK
DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

WITNESSES: Shameeka Cunningham, Eduardo Ayon, Det. Sgt. Shawn Ford, Det. Adam Clark, Det. Mark Tharp, Det. Capt. Ezequiel Hinojosa, Sgt. Michael Darnell, Ofc. Daniel Drudge, Det. K. Mickey, Det. T. Sawyer, Ofc. C. Gootee, Sgt. J. Ritter, Custodian of Records, ChicagoBackpage.com

STATE OF INDIANA

COUNTY OF LAKE

STATE OF INDIANA

V.

DARREN DEON VANN

DOB: 8/21/71 SSN: 306-84-6220

FILED IN
CLERK'S OFFICE SUPERIOR COURT OF LAKE COUNTY
CRIMINAL DIVISION
CROWN POINT, INDIANA
11/07 0 50 4 10

CLERK'S OFFICE SUPERIOR COURT
CAUSE: 45G03-0404 FD00050

INFORMATION

COUNT I

[RESIDENTIAL ENTRY (D)]


Larry Dye, upon oath, says that on or about April 6, 2004, in the County of Lake, State of Indiana, DARREN DEON VANN did knowingly or intentionally break and enter the dwelling of David Abram, contrary to I.C. 35-43-2-1.5 and against the peace and dignity of the State of Indiana.

COUNT II

[INTIMIDATION (D)]

Larry Dye, upon oath, says that on or about April 6, 2004, in the County of Lake, State of Indiana, DARREN DEON VANN did knowingly or intentionally communicate a threat to commit the forcible felony of murder to David Abram with the intent that David Abram engage in conduct against his will, to-wit: letting Alexandra Jones, also known as Ceritha Grant, leave Abram's home with DARREN DEON VANN and to give DARREN DEON VANN money, contrary to I.C. 35-45-2-1, and against the peace and dignity of the State of Indiana.

I swear, under the penalty for perjury as specified by I.C. 35-44-2-1, that the foregoing is true to the best of my information and belief.


AFFIANT, Larry Dye

Subscribed and sworn to before me and approved for prosecution on April 8, 2004.

BERNARD A. CARTER
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY


David J. Kowalczyk
DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

WITNESSES: David Abram, Alexandra Jones, a/k/a Ceritha Grant, Det. Sgt. Larry Dye, Det. Cpl. James Bogard, Ofc. Joseph Hamer, Ofc. Jeff Hornyak, Ofc. K. Rice, Cpl. Jay Johnson, Ofc. Don Rosenski, Det. Cpl. Michael Jackson, Ofc. Shane Bolde

STATE OF INDIANA

COUNTY OF LAKE

STATE OF INDIANA

V.

DARREN DEON VANN

FILED IN
CLERK'S OFFICE

JUL 10 2004 4 10

CLERK LAKE
SUPERIOR COURTSUPERIOR COURT OF LAKE COUNTY
CRIMINAL DIVISION
CROWN POINT, INDIANA

CAUSE: 5603 0404 FD 000 5 0

PROBABLE CAUSE AFFIDAVIT

Affiant swears or affirms that he believes and has good cause to believe that:

Affiant a detective with the Gary Police Department was involved in the investigation of an Incident which occurred on April 6, 2004 at 536 VanBuren Street, Gary, Lake County, Indiana.

I spoke with David Abram who I believe to be truthful and credible because he spoke of facts from within his own personal knowledge and he stated that he lives in an apartment at the above location and that on April 2nd or 3rd of 2004 a male black subject identified as Darren Vann came to his apartment in his vehicle, sounded his car horn and then came to Abram's door. Abram is confined to a wheelchair and Vann asked him if his girlfriend "Alexsandra Jones", later identified as Ceritha Grant, was in Abrams house. Abram told him "no" since she wasn't there and Vann got mad, said he knew that she was in there and said he was going to call the FBI and the police if Abram did not let her go. Vann left and returned about 25 minutes later in a purple vehicle and again confronted Abram and stated "I know she's in there" and Abram informed him that she was not there. Mr. Abram stated that the next day Vann returned with police officers claiming that Abram had shot at his cousin Darryl. Abram talked to the police and the police left. He stated that a friend of his named "Lilly" called him later and said that there was a guy she heard talking about setting fire to Abram's house. Mr. Abram stated that on April 6, 2004 he was in his vehicle and saw Vann walking towards Abram's home carrying a red plastic gasoline can. Abram pulled up to him in his car and asked him why he was doing this and Vann replied that he wanted his woman back and stated that she owed him \$7000.00. Abram said "your going to burn my family, innocent people over a woman?" and Vann replied "give me \$7000.00 and you can have her". Vann also stated that he had dynamite when he was next to Abram's car and said that he would blow up Abram and himself if Abram didn't give up Alesandra. Abram then called the police and police officers arrived. He stated that the police officers were trying to talk to Vann but Vann got mad, poured gasoline all over himself in front of the police officers and said that he would kill himself. The officers told Abram to get back because Vann was holding a cigarette lighter and was acting crazy as if he might light himself on fire. Abram drove his vehicle to the front of his home and saw several people in front including "Alesandra Jones" and she saw Abram and told Abram that shew as scared. Abram gave her his house keys and told her to lock herself in his home. "Alesandra Jones" went into Abram's home and locked the door. Abram then saw Vann run to his home and discovered that Vann had kicked in his door without his permission and also spilled gasoline all over the entryway area. He then saw Vann holding on to "Alesandra Jones" while he was holding her in a headlock, also carrying a gas can and holding a cigarette lighter as he was dragging her through the field. He stated that he was in fear for his life and safety and was afraid that Vann would also set fire to his home during this incident.

I reviewed the report of Gary police officer K. Rice which report is kept in the normal and ordinary course of business of said department who reported that on the above date he was on duty and was dispatched to the 500 block of Jackson Street and spoke with "Alesandra Jones" who informed him that she was sitting on a porch at 536 VanBuren Street when Darren Vann approached her and began yelling "bitch are you crazy?" She then ran to the rear of 532 VanBuren Street, entered the home and closed the backdoor. Darren Vann went to that backdoor and kicked it in and had a gas can and lighter with him. The police officers found Vann in this home and Vann told "Alesandra Jones" that if she didn't come out of hiding that he was going to burn down the house. He then began pouring the gasoline on the floor. This woman came out from under the bed

STATE V DARREN DEON VANN

PAGE TWO

where she was hiding and Vann grabbed her and told the police to back up or he would burn himself and "Jones" up. Vann pulled this woman out of the home by force with his left arm around her neck while he was holding a lighter in his right hand along with the gas can. He refused to let the woman go after she asked him several times. "Jones" informed Officer Rice that Vann pulled her down the alley and eventually took her to 456 Madison Street which is where Vann lived. During this time the police officers kept talking to Vann trying to get him to let the woman go. Police officers eventually grabbed Vann and arrested him. "Jones" told Officer Rice that she had been living with Darren Vann for about nine months at 456 Madison Street in an apartment there and that Vann was mad that she had left him.

I swear, under the penalty for perjury as specified by I.C. 35-44-2-1, that the foregoing is true to the best of my information and belief.


AFFIANT, LARRY DYE

Subscribed and sworn to before me and approved for prosecution on April 8, 2004.

BERNARD A. CARTER
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
VWB


DAVID J. KOWALCZYK
DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY