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Teenager claims it was God who led her to kill 68-year-old pastor

By Cody Neff REGISTER-HERALD REPORTER

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It's a case where a man of God was allegedly killed by a young woman who says she was following the words of God.

The slaying of 68-year-old Ronald Browning may be surrounded by questions, but a criminal complaint filed in Raleigh County Magistrate Court can answer a few of them.

Why would a 19-year-old woman kill a pastor? She says it was God who guided her.

“I didn’t even know him,” Camille Iman Browne said in the complaint. “I was just following God’s plan.”

After her confession to the grisly murder of the man, Browne was arrested and charged with first-degree murder, obstructing, disorderly conduct and entering without breaking, the complaint said.

On Saturday, around 5 p.m., police got a call to Odessa Avenue in Beckley.

A woman said she had found her husband dead in her home.

Police and EMS showed up and found Ronald Browning lying in a deep pool of blood. The house was a wreck, the complaint said.

At first glance, it was obvious that Browning had been beaten to death, the complaint said.

Detectives showed up and found quite a bit of evidence. Long, black strands of braided hair were everywhere, the complaint said.

Broken glass and change was thrown everywhere. It looked like the attacker had hurt himself or herself in committing the crime.

There was a lot of blood that dripped and ran through the house. This showed police that the killer had moved around the home after taking the life of the victim, the complaint said.

Police interviewed the victim’s wife who said she noticed the strands of black, braided hair everywhere.

The victim’s wife also pointed out that the change jar that the couple kept in the living room was shattered, the complaint said.

While police and detectives were talking with the wife, a call came in about a missing person.

A woman said she had been braiding Camille Browne's hair when she stepped out of the room for a second. When she stepped back in, Browne was gone.

A few minutes later, police got a call that a woman had come into someone's home in Mabscott without asking. The woman was covered in blood, the complaint said.

Police picked up the bloody woman and took her to Raleigh General Hospital to be treated for deep cuts on her hands.

While on the way to Raleigh General, the bloody woman, who would later be identified as Browne, told the officer a secret, the complaint said.

"I killed an old man tonight," Browne said. The officer asked her why she did it.

"Because God told me to," she said, according to the complaint.

The officer looked at Browne and noticed that she had long, black, braided hair, just like the hair found at the crime scene.

When police got to Raleigh General, they had to restrain Browne because she was being aggressive, the complaint said.

After Browne attacked a doctor, police decided they'd had enough and hauled Browne to Southern Regional Jail.

Her clothes were put into evidence, but the staff at SRJ said they couldn't take Browne as long as she was cut up, the complaint said.

Browne was taken to Beckley Appalachian Regional Hospital this time.

While the hospital staff got ready to stitch up Browne's hands, police talked to her to try and calm her down, the complaint said.

That's when Browne blurted out her confession to police, the complaint said.

"I killed that old white man," she said. "I didn't even know him. I was just following God's plan. I killed that old man with a jar."

After she was stitched up and ready to go, Browne was taken back to Southern Regional Jail.

Detectives got search warrants and went through Browne's little brick home on Westwood Drive in Beckley, the complaint said.

The detectives then talked to Browne, who admitted to killing a man near her home. She went through how she killed the man, giving details that only police knew about the murder.

Browne is in Southern Regional jail where she is being held without bond.

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