

CR-17-371-1

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BENTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS

STATE OF ARKANSAS

vs

Grant Hardin

DOB: 12/6/68, W/M

DL# 914408517

FILED
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CLERK
BENTON COUNTY ARKANSAS
RECORDS & CLERK
PLAINTIFF
DEFENDANT

AFFIDAVIT OF PROBABLE CAUSE TO OBTAIN BOND

On February 23, 2017, I, Detective James Chamberlin, responded to a homicide near the address of 15990 Gann Ridge Rd. Upon arrival, I observed a white Chevy truck with ARVL 395UKO sitting on the side of the road facing East. There was crime scene tape placed around the vehicle. As I approached, I made contact with patrol deputies. They escorted me to the truck and explained what they had found.

I spoke to Lt. Wells first. He stated that upon deputies' arrival, they found a white male, later identified as James Appleton, deceased in the driver seat of the truck. They said that it appeared that he had a gunshot wound to the side of the head and face. They told me it appeared to be a large caliber weapon or shotgun. There were no weapons located in the vehicle.

I looked inside and saw Appleton slumped over towards the passenger seat. I asked who had found Appleton and the truck. Deputy Gauert advised that [REDACTED] had seen the truck first. I asked if [REDACTED] was on scene. He said yes and took me to him.

I spoke to [REDACTED] inside a patrol unit. [REDACTED] said that he was driving home from work when he saw the white truck stopped. He said there was a white car behind the truck. He said that the driver of the white car waved him around. When he drove by the white car, he saw the driver. He said he got a few hundred yards down the road and heard a loud bang. He said that he thought it was a gunshot or car door slamming. He said he looked in his rearview mirror and saw the white car driving up behind him very quickly. He said that the car turned North on a dirt road. I asked if he knew the name of the road. He said he thought it was Old Wire but wasn't sure. He said he turned around to check on the truck. He said that he knew the victim but couldn't remember his name. When he got back to the truck, he didn't see the driver. As he drove by, he noticed that the driver was slumped over in the driver seat. He turned his truck around and stopped. He walked up to the driver window and saw that the occupant had been shot in the head. He flagged down the next car that came by which happened to be [REDACTED], and had him call 911.

I asked if he saw the person driving the white car. He said that he did. He said, "He was wearing a white t-shirt." I asked if

he knew what kind of car it was. He said, "I know where the gentleman lives." [REDACTED] told me that he lived in the area all his life. He said the boy in the car had been raised here. I asked if he had physically seen him inside the car. He said yes. I said, "Who was it?" He said, "His name is Grant Hardin." He said that he used to work for the Gateway police department. He said he's known Grant all his life.

I then interviewed Andrew Tillman (W/M, 4/10/56). Tillman stated that Appleton is his brother in law. He said they both work for the Gateway water department. He said that Appleton had filed a report with the Benton County Sheriff's Office a few minutes before he had been shot. He said that someone had vandalized the water tower. He said that after leaving the water tower, Appleton called Tillman at 3:59 pm. He said that the cellphone service on that stretch of road isn't good. Appleton told Tillman that he was going to pull over to finish the conversation so he wouldn't get disconnected. While talking, Appleton said, "These cray idiots." Tillman asked what happened. He said, "A car came flying down the road and stopped. It must think I'm a policeman or something." Appleton told Tillman that the car was going around him. Tillman said the next thing he heard on the phone was what sounded like a loud slammed door and "that was it." I asked him if he knew what time that happened. He looked at his cellphone and said that they talked 4 minutes 49 seconds. But he said that the last few seconds Appleton wasn't talking on the other end.

I asked Tillman if Appleton had problems with anyone. He said, "Not that I know of." Tillman said they worked together at the water department and they were brother in laws but he didn't know of anyone upset with Appleton. Tillman said he is the mayor of Gateway and no one had called to complain about Appleton. Tillman said, "I don't know. It really blows my mind."

Tillman said that [REDACTED] called him and said, "Hey I think your brother in law has been shot." Then told him the location of the truck. Tillman was in disbelief. [REDACTED] told him that he was slumped over the steering wheel. [REDACTED] told Tillman that they had called 911.

When other detectives arrived on scene, they began processing the truck. It appeared that Appleton was shot with a shotgun at close range in the face and head.

Deputis began looking for the white passenger car. Detectives went to Grant Hardin's house at 15617 Gann Ridge Rd and located a White Chevy Monte Carlo with ARVL 518UGT. It should be noted that Hardin's house was approximately .5 miles from the crime scene.

[REDACTED]

There was no one inside the house. They secured the area and waited to obtain a search warrant.

Patrol vehicles stopped all traffic from coming towards the scene on Gann Ridge Rd near Jones Trailer Park Rd. When turning vehicles around, they observed Grant Hardin driving a black Honda Civic. Hardin was detained by patrol deputies. Inside the car with Hardin was his wife, Linda, and [REDACTED]. Later Grant Hardin was transported to Benton County Sheriff's Office. I completed a Gun Shot Residue kit (GSR) on both of his hands. This occurred in Interview Room#1. The collection was recorded.

I spoke to Linda [REDACTED] and asked if they would be willing to talk to me at the Sheriff's Office. Both agreed and they drove in the Civic to the Office. Upon arrival, I met with both in Interview Room #2. The interview was recorded and is available.

I spoke to Linda and asked her what happened during the afternoon. She said that Grant had gone out to put seed down on the front lawn. She said that he was outside from about 3pm until approximately 4pm. She said when he came inside, he seemed rushed. He told the girls that he wanted to go eat. She said a short time later, she heard police sirens but didn't see the cars. I asked Linda if Grant had left the property. She said she didn't think so. I asked Linda which car Grant drove. She told me the Chevy Monte Carlo. She said the Monte Carlo sat under a tree near the pool down the driveway. I asked if she would have heard the car start. She said no. I asked her where she was located in the house during the time that Grant was outside. She said in the living room. Linda admitted that she probably wouldn't have known if Grant left the property.

Linda said that they went to dinner. I asked her how Grant acted at dinner. She said that he didn't eat his salad. She said that he excused himself and he went to the bathroom for a while. I asked her if he said anything unusual. She said yes. He said something like no matter what happens, just know I love you. God will take care of you. I asked if that was normal. She said no. I asked if Grant had any guns. She said yes. She said that he keeps his guns inside the house. She said that he has a shotgun, pistol and maybe a rifle. I asked what he was wearing when he came inside. She said he had on a white t-shirt and blue jeans. She said he changed before they left for dinner. She said his clothes were on the floor in the bedroom.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A night time search warrant was obtained for the outside of Grant Hardin's Chevy Monte Carlo [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The car was later towed to the Benton County Sheriff's Office for a search of the inside of the car. Before transporting, it was sealed with evidence tape and I then followed the tow truck to the Benton County Sheriff's Office. The car is locked inside our evidence warehouse and will be processed at a later date.

A search warrant was obtained for Grant Hardin's house at 15617 Gann Ridge. The search began at 6am. Several firearms including shotguns were located and collected along with the clothes that Hardin was possibly wearing at the time of the murder. The clothes will be sent to the crime lab to check for GSR and blood.

Grant Hardin was placed under arrest for Capital Murder (5-10-101). [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Andrew Tillman was talking to Appleton on the phone when he was murder and stated that Appleton told him there was a white car stopped behind his truck. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Charges:

Capital Murder (5-10-101) Class Y Felony

CRIMINAL HISTORY: None Known

Based upon the foregoing, the nature of the crime, the Defendant's risk of flight, the likelihood of conviction and the possible severity of penalty that could be imposed, the State joins me in requesting that a ____ bond be set on the Defendant, **Hardin, Grant; DOB 12/6/68**

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Detective James Chamberlin
Benton County Sheriff's Office

Prosecutor Approval by:

STATE OF ARKANSAS)

COUNTY OF BENTON)

Subscribed and sworn to before me on this 24th day of February, 2017.


Notary Public

My commission expires May 13, 2025