

STATE OF INDIANA)
) SS:
COUNTY OF TIPPECANOE)

IN THE TIPPECANOE COURT

STATE OF INDIANA

VS.

CAUSE NO: 79

DEONTA JERMAINE JOHNSON
504 Westchester Ln
Lafayette, IN 47909
DOB: 1/15/1996
OLN: 6550-11-5000 IN

SHATIA TIARA WELCH
504 Westchester Ln
Lafayette, IN 47909
DOB: 2/7/1999
OLN: 6550-15-1723 IN

AFFIDAVIT OF PROBABLE CAUSE

Comes now Affiant, and being duly sworn upon oath, deposes and states that Affiant is a law enforcement officer in Tippecanoe County, State of Indiana, and in said capacity is familiar with the records of said defendants. Further, Affiant was involved in an investigation which began with a call around 3:02pm on March 28, 2023, regarding a one-year-old not breathing at 504 Westchester Lane, Lafayette, Indiana. Upon arrival, officers located Deonta Johnson holding the one-year-old, Victim 1. Officers observed Victim 1 was deceased from an apparent gunshot wound to the head. Officers observed a second child in the residence who was identified as Victim 2, a five-year-old. Officers observed Victim 2 had a small laceration and blood on Victim 2's face under Victim 2's eye.

Officers spoke with Johnson who initially advised he was asleep on the couch when he was woken up by a loud boom. Johnson advised he ran upstairs and found Victim 1 in Victim 1's bedroom. Johnson claimed Victim 1 had to have been injured by falling or an injury caused by Victim 2. Officers asked Johnson where the handgun was located and Johnson denied owning a firearm. Johnson repeatedly denied having a gun in the apartment and further denied that Victim 1 had been shot. Johnson eventually advised officers Victim 1 and Victim 2's mother, Shatia Welch, owns a handgun. Johnson advised Welch usually keeps the handgun on the shelving unit near the front door into the apartment. Johnson claimed he last saw the gun a few days prior to this incident and it was locked in a safe under the bed. Johnson was asked again about what occurred and Johnson advised he heard a noise which woke him up and Johnson observed Victim 2 downstairs. Johnson advised Victim 2 asked for cereal, so Johnson prepared a bowl of cereal for Victim 2 and then went to check on Victim 1. Johnson located Victim 1 in Victim 1's bedroom and found Victim 1 deceased. Johnson advised he called Welch after locating Victim 1. Affiant is aware Johnson, Victim 1, and Victim 2 were the only occupants of the apartment at the time of the shooting. Affiant is further aware Welch is the sole leaseholder of the apartment.

While officers were investigating this incident, Welch arrived at the apartment. Officers spoke to Welch who advised she left the apartment hours before the incident. Welch advised she missed a call from Johnson and then received a message which stated Victim 1 was dead. Welch advised she called 911 and rushed to the apartment. Welch advised she keeps her firearm under her bed in a lockbox. Welch further advised she has two sets of keys for her gun safe, one was on her person and one she claimed she lost a few days ago. Welch advised Victim 2 would not know what the keys belong to. Further, Welch advised Victim 2 knows guns from watching television, but does not know where Welch's gun is stored and is not allowed to play with or build toy guns. Welch claimed Victim 2 plays under her bed.

While still on scene, officers reviewed surveillance footage from the apartment complex where this

incident occurred. Affiant is aware said footage shows Johnson leaving the apartment on foot and walking to a parked Nissan approximately two minutes prior to police officers arriving on scene in response to the 911 call. The surveillance footage shows Johnson place an item in the rear passenger side of a Nissan. Officers obtained a search warrant for the Nissan and the apartment. Officers searched the Nissan and located a bag with a green leafy substance which officers recognized to be marijuana through their training and experience. The suspected marijuana subsequently field-tested positive as marijuana and had an approximate weight of four hundred and one grams.

Officers searched the residence and located one bullet in a hamper in the room where Johnson located Victim 1. Officers also located two pieces of the metal jacket from the bullet near the shelving unit by the hamper. Officers searched Welch and Johnson's bedroom and located a gun box, a holster, and a gun safe underneath the bed. Affiant is aware the gun safe was locked at the time officers searched the residence. Officers located a handgun and the keys to a Nissan vehicle in the top dresser drawer in Welch and Johnson's bedroom. Officers observed the handgun had a cartridge case in the chamber. Officers also located multiple boxes of ammunition in the dresser drawer. Officers located a black and silver key on the tv stand in the bedroom which unlocked the gun safe located underneath the bed. Officers also located a bag with approximately ninety-three blue pills on a shelf in the living room near the entrance into the apartment. Affiant is aware the pills subsequently field-tested positive as fentanyl and had an approximate weight of twelve grams. Affiant is further aware the pills were located within Victim 2's reach. Officers located a metal grinder with marijuana residue in the dining room.

Affiant is aware Johnson gave a subsequent statement to Detective Dempster that same evening. Johnson advised he, Victim1, and Victim 2 were all asleep when Welch left the apartment that morning. Further, Johnson advised he woke up and observed Victim 2 sitting on the couch next to him. Victim 2 advised he was hungry, so Johnson made Victim 2 a bowl of cereal and then checked on Victim 1 and found Victim 1 dead in the bedroom. Johnson advised the handgun belonged to Welch and was usually kept on top of the shelf in the living room near the entrance of the apartment. Johnson claimed neither he or Welch have touched the handgun in days and that the handgun was likely still in Victim 1 and Victim 2's bedroom since the shooting. Johnson denied ever moving the handgun after the shooting and initially denied exiting the apartment prior to police arriving. Johnson ultimately admitted he went to the vehicle, but claimed he found the marijuana the night prior and did not look in the bag. Johnson then claimed he woke up on the couch, saw Victim 2 on the couch, heard a boom, took the marijuana to the car, went to Victim 1's bedroom and found Victim 1 dead and called Welch.

Affiant is aware Sergeant Rector interviewed Welch and Welch advised she is in a coparenting relationship with Johnson, who is the father of Victim 1. Welch advised Johnson does not live at the apartment but is there almost daily. Welch advised she left the apartment between ten and eleven in the morning and put Victim 1 and Victim 2 in the bedroom upstairs as Johnson was sleeping on the couch. While Welch was still away from the apartment, she received a call and message from Johnson's social media account advising her Victim 1 was dead. Welch rushed home and encountered law enforcement officers at her apartment. Welch advised she typically stores her handgun with a loaded magazine inside of the handgun but without a round in the chamber. Welch advised the last time she had her handgun out of her safe was the previous weekend and she could not remember if she locked the safe after returning the handgun to the safe. Welch further advised Victim 2 would not know a handgun is stored under her bed and if Victim 2 has knowledge about guns, it would be from watching videos on the internet. Welch advised she uses marijuana in Illinois where it is legal, but would not have any illegal substances in her apartment. When asked about Johnson's involvement in drug activity, Welch claimed she stays out of Johnson's business.

On March 28, 2023, a forensic interview of Victim 2 was conducted. Affiant observed Victim 2 build a gun out of Legos during his forensic interview. Affiant observed Victim 2 hold the toy gun up to his face in the same area as the laceration which was observed on Victim 2's face.

An autopsy was conducted and the cause of death for Victim 1 was determined to be a gunshot wound to the head. Affiant is further aware toxicology results showed Victim 1 died with marijuana in his blood. Affiant is aware there was no medical explanation for the marijuana in Victim 1's system.

Affiant is aware on May 1, 2023, employees with the Indiana Department of Child Services collected a

hair follicle sample from Victim 2. Affiant is aware toxicology results showed Victim 2 tested positive for cocaine and other metabolites in substantial excess of reporting limits.

Affiant is aware forensic investigators reviewed records extracted from several devices as well as social media records. Affiant is aware said records contained several conversations between Johnson and other individuals in March of 2023 regarding the sale of drugs. Affiant observed messages regarding the sale of marijuana and fentanyl laced pills between Johnson and other individuals. Affiant is further aware investigators obtained records from a tablet belonging to Welch. Said records identified previous internet history on the tablet including violent child cartoons containing gun violence.

Affiant believes Captain Mellady, Lieutenant Gard, Sergeants Rector and Zambon, Detectives Dempster, Schutter, Sinks, Ransom, Officers Cain, Chapman, French, Gawaluck, Maxwell, Nuckols, Snider, Stockdale, Sturgeon, Tharp, and Investigator Hitchings to be reliable and credible as they were acting in their capacity as law enforcement officers in Tippecanoe County, State of Indiana.

Affiant believes Forensic Investigators Huff, Feterick, and Storm-Justice to be reliable and credible as they have no known reason to lie and were acting in their course of employment with the Lafayette Police Department.

Affiant believes records obtained from social media companies, the Tippecanoe County Coroner's Office, and Indiana Department of Child Services to be reliable and credible as they are regularly relied upon by law enforcement officers and are maintained and stored in the ordinary course of business.

Further Affiant saith not.

Affiant does swear or affirm, under penalties of perjury as specified under Indiana Code 35-44.1-2-1, that the foregoing representations are true to the best of Affiant's knowledge and belief.

Dated: ___ July 20_____, 2023
Sinks _____

Signed: ____/s/Kurt

Affiant