

IN THE IOWA DISTRICT COURT FOR WEBSTER COUNTY

STATE OF IOWA,
Plaintiff,

: Case No. FECR 364 909

: Agency Case No: FD22-3454

vs.

:

BRANDON DAVID THOMA,
927 Central Avenue, Apt. 221
Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501
(DOB 02/05/1991)
Defendant.

: **CRIMINAL COMPLAINT**

:

The above-named Defendant is accused of the following criminal acts occurring in Webster County, Iowa, on or about November 16, 2022:

Count I: Murder in the First Degree in violation of Iowa Code Sections 707.1 and 707.2 (**Class A Felony**), in that the Defendant did willfully, deliberately, and with premeditation, kill another person, specifically a newborn baby, while malice aforethought.

Count II: Abuse of a Corpse, in violation of Iowa Code Section 708.14, 708.14(1)(b) (**Class C Felony**), in that the Defendant did hide or bury a human corpse with the intent to conceal a crime.

In support thereof, the State of Iowa provides as follows:

AFFIDAVIT

I, the undersigned, being duly sworn, state that all facts contained within the Complaint and Affidavit, known by me or told to me by other reliable persons, form the basis of my belief that the defendant committed the acts alleged.

State all facts and persons relied upon supporting elements of the alleged crime:

On November 22, 2022, at approximately 2:47 p.m. the Webster County Law Enforcement Center received a call from Shannon Hefley with the Iowa Department of Human Services who had met with Taylor Blaha at Unity Point Trinity Regional Medical Center. Blaha advised Hefley that she gave birth to a baby at her residence and that it had been buried at an undisclosed location. Detective Amy Stringer with the Webster County Sheriff's Office

responded to the hospital and met with Hefley before conducting a recorded interview with Blaha.

During Detective Stringer's interview with Taylor Kay Blaha (DOB 04/21/1998), it was learned that Blaha first became aware she was pregnant in approximately April, 2022. Blaha advised Stringer that Brandon Thoma was the father of the child and that she and Thoma have a two-year-old son together. Blaha informed Stringer that they resided at 927 Central Avenue, Apt. 221, Fort Dodge, Webster County, Iowa, and that a baby was born at this location on November 16, 2022. Blaha advised that she gave birth to a baby girl inside the bathroom of their apartment. She stated that Thoma was in the bedroom of the apartment when she gave birth but that once the baby was born, he came into the bathroom and helped her get from where she was sitting on the toilet to a position sitting inside the bathtub with the baby. She advises the two named the baby Kayleen Lee Blaha and that she was born alive, crying, moving its arms and legs, and opening her eyes allowing Blaha to see that Kayleen had brown eyes. Blaha informed Stringer that during she asked for and Thoma gave her methamphetamine to help her ease the pains associated with the birth.

Blaha advised Deputy Stringer that she and Thoma had no intentions of keeping the baby and planned to allow Blaha's sister to adopt the baby. Stringer was further informed that once the baby was born Blaha and Thoma became nervous that the baby's crying would alert neighbors to the situation and that law enforcement would be contacted. Blaha went on to explain that in order to stop the crying the two placed Kayleen in the bathtub, which was about half full of water, and placed both of their hands on the baby's chest, forcing her underwater, ultimately killing her. Blaha also explained that Thoma demonstrated to her how to do this. Blaha advised that once the baby was held under water, Thoma removed the baby from the bathtub and sat her outside of the tub before ultimately placing her in a plastic storage container, wrapping her in multiple layers of trash bags, and then placing her inside of a black backpack that he carried her out of the apartment in. Thoma advised during a statement on December 7, 2022, that the two were concerned if law enforcement became involved that authorities would learn the baby had methamphetamine in her system and that their two-year-old child would be removed from their care as a result. Blaha informed Detective Stringer that Thoma left the apartment during the early morning hours of November 17, 2022, with the backpack containing Kayleen and returned later, with an empty backpack.

Blaha advised, and text messages between Blaha and Thoma confirm that Thoma initially discarded Kayleen's body in a wooded area near the Kenyon Road Bridge; however, multiple searches of that location were unsuccessful. Then, on December 5, 2022, Thoma indicated to law enforcement that he would take them to the location where he discarded Kayleen's body, a

rural area north of the North Central Iowa Regional Landfill. On December 5, 2022, through December 6, 2022, a full excavation of that area was completed, unsuccessfully.

The downtown Fort Dodge area has multiple surveillance video systems, owned by the city and/or private individuals or businesses, that were utilized in locating, tracking, and identifying Brandon Thoma and Taylor Blaha. Utilizing this technology, Thoma is observed leaving the Wahkonsa Apartments at 927 Central Avenue, Fort Dodge, Webster County, Iowa during the early morning hours of November 17, 2022, and returning approximately 20 minutes later. As Thoma is first seen leaving the area of the apartments, he is carrying a backpack that contains a rectangular shaped object within. When he returns approximately 20 minutes later, the backpack is very clearly empty, or nearly empty, not containing the same rectangular shaped object. During his statements of law enforcement officers, Thoma admitted to leaving the apartment during the early morning hours of November 17, 2022, with Kayleen, deceased, inside of a rectangular shaped basket, wrapped in garbage bags and at least one towel, inside of a black backpack. Specifically, when showed photographs of himself leaving the area of the apartment and returning to the area of the apartment, Thoma admits that the deceased baby is inside of the backpack, that she is removed from the backpack, and that when he returns approximately 20 minutes later, her body has been removed from the backpack and discarded.

Through the course of this investigation multiple cellular devices were seized from Taylor Blaha and Brandon Thoma. The initial devices seized from Blaha and Thoma would have been in their possession at the time of the baby's birth on November 16 and through at least November 22, 2022. In addition to other information, each of their devices contain searches for information how to force a miscarriage. During her interview, Blaha confirmed with Detective Stringer that she and Thoma took actions towards an attempt to cause a miscarriage; however, did so unsuccessfully. Communication between Blaha and Thoma, as viewed through their cellular devices, confirms conversations about where Thoma claims to have discarded Kayleen's body.

Thoma and Blaha have both confirmed, Thoma on December 7, 2022, and Blaha on or about November 23, 2022, that once Kayleen was born Thoma cut the umbilical cord with a pair of scissors that was present within their apartment and shortly thereafter cut additional sections of the cord to be kept to remember the baby. During the execution of a search warrant on or about November 23, 2022, an object consistent with an umbilical cord or remains of a human placenta were recovered from the top drawer of the dresser located inside apartment 221 of 927 Central Avenue, Fort Dodge, Webster County, Iowa, the location where Blaha indicated the object would be located.

Information obtained through this investigation indicates that Taylor Blaha and Brandon Thoma were each present when a female baby was born alive in the bathroom of their apartment located at 927 Central Avenue, Apartment 221, Fort Dodge, Webster County, Iowa, and that each were involved in causing its death. The investigation further indicates that Thoma was responsible for removing the body of the child, once it was killed, from the apartment and discarding it so that it could not be located to be utilized as evidence of a crime against Thoma and/or Blaha.

Amy Stringer

Detective Amy Stringer
Webster County Sheriff's Office
Webster County Law Enforcement Center
702 1st Avenue South
Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501
Phone: (515) 573-1410

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 7th day of December, 2022.

Ryan D. Baldrige

NOTARY PUBLIC



Name of Investigating or Arresting Officer(s): Detective Amy Stringer, Special Agent Evan Thompson, Investigator Larry Hedlund, Sgt. Steve Hanson, Lt. Matt Lundberg, Detective Allie Thompson, Detective Mollie Anderson, Detective Joelyn