

State of Minnesota
County of Hennepin

District Court
4th Judicial District

Prosecutor File No.
Court File No.

21A00842
27-CR-21-1721

State of Minnesota,

Plaintiff,

vs.

ALMANZO OUSLEY COTTON DOB: 02/04/1981

3335 Sheridan Ave N
Minneapolis, MN 55412

Defendant.

COMPLAINT

Warrant

The Complainant submits this complaint to the Court and states that there is probable cause to believe Defendant committed the following offense(s):

COUNT I

Charge: Murder - 2nd Degree - With Intent-Not Premeditated

Minnesota Statute: 609.19.1(1), with reference to: 609.19.1, 609.11.9

Maximum Sentence: 40 YEARS

Offense Level: Felony

Offense Date (on or about): 11/17/2020

Control #(ICR#): 20290985

Charge Description: That on or about 11/17/2020, in Hennepin County, Minnesota, ALMANZO OUSLEY COTTON, caused the death of Victim, a human being, with intent to effect the death of that person or another, but without premeditation.

STATEMENT OF PROBABLE CAUSE

Complainant has investigated the facts and circumstances of this offense and believes the following establishes probable cause:

On November 17, 2020 at approximately 9:21 AM, Minneapolis police responded to a residence on Sheridan Avenue North in Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota for a reported burglary. The 911 caller was a male, later identified as ALMANZO OUSLEY COTTON, Defendant herein. After disconnecting the first 911 call, Defendant called back three minutes later, now reporting that he "came home and seen her lying down on the floor" and then "got the fuck out of there."

Officers arrived at the residence and found a 55-year-old woman, hereafter "Victim," lying partially-clothed on the floor. Victim had visible traumatic injuries to her body and was unresponsive. Emergency medical personnel attempted life-saving measures and transported Victim to the hospital, where she was pronounced deceased.

The Hennepin County Medical Examiner later determined that Victim died as a result of blunt force head trauma. The autopsy also revealed numerous traumatic injuries to Victim's head, arms, hands, torso, and lower body. The manner of death was homicide. The medical examiner also observed a healing fracture to the thyroid cartilage that was consistent with a previous injury to the neck.

Investigators eventually made contact with Defendant again on November 17. Defendant acknowledged that Victim was his girlfriend and that they lived together at the residence on Sheridan. Defendant told police that he and Victim had a fight on Friday, November 13, after which Victim left the home. Defendant claimed he did not see Victim again until the morning of November 17, when he came home to find her on the floor and called 911.

Investigators spoke with Victim's employer, who described Victim as a reliable employee who worked 4:30 – midnight on weekdays. Victim worked on Friday, November 13 but was uncharacteristically absent from work without explanation on Monday, November 16.

A member of Victim's family told police that Victim had contacted the family member on Friday, November 13 and said that Victim and Defendant had been in a fight on that day. Victim told the family member that she planned to stay at a motel. The family member reported that they had witnessed years of physical abuse by Defendant against Victim, including at least one incident of strangulation earlier in 2020.

Investigators forensically analyzed Victim's cell phone and obtained location data for Victim's and Defendant's cell phones. On the afternoon of November 13, Victim texted the family member regarding the fight with Defendant and said she planned to stay in a motel. Between November 13 and 14, Victim received multiple instant messages from Defendant. Beginning just after midnight on November 15 and continuing into the next afternoon, Defendant called or attempted to call Victim 33 times, with many of the calls made in rapid succession.

During the late afternoon and early evening of November 15, 2020, cell phone location data is consistent with both Victim and Defendant returning to the residence on Sheridan by approximately 6:00 PM. Victim's phone remained at the home until her body was discovered by police on November 17. Aside from a brief trip to downtown St. Paul on November 16, Defendant's phone remained at the Sheridan address until approximately 8:00 AM on November 17, when it appeared to travel to and from Theodore Wirth Park. Defendant called 911 for the first time shortly after 9:21 AM.

Defendant spoke to an investigator by phone on January 19, 2021, this time claiming he saw Victim when she returned to the home on the evening of Sunday, November 15. Defendant said they talked "a little bit" then Defendant left the residence. Defendant claimed he was "all over the place" "out in the streets getting high" until the morning of Tuesday, November 17, when he came home to find Victim lying on the floor. Defendant agreed to meet with investigators on January 20, 2021 but did not show up.

Phone location data and tollway surveillance indicate that Defendant travelled to the area of Chicago, Illinois between January 20 and 21, 2021.

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SIGNATURES AND APPROVALS

Complainant requests that Defendant, subject to bail or conditions of release, be:
(1) arrested or that other lawful steps be taken to obtain Defendant's appearance in court; or
(2) detained, if already in custody, pending further proceedings; and that said Defendant otherwise be dealt with according to law.

Complainant declares under penalty of perjury that everything stated in this document is true and correct. Minn. Stat. § 358.116; Minn. R. Crim. P. 2.01, subds. 1, 2.

Complainant

Chris Thomsen
Sergeant
350 S 5th St
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1389
Badge: 7201

Electronically Signed:
01/26/2021 11:45 AM
Hennepin County, Minnesota

Being authorized to prosecute the offenses charged, I approve this complaint.

Prosecuting Attorney

Paige L Starkey
300 S 6th St
Minneapolis, MN 55487
(612) 348-5550

Electronically Signed:
01/26/2021 11:29 AM

FINDING OF PROBABLE CAUSE

From the above sworn facts, and any supporting affidavits or supplemental sworn testimony, I, the Issuing Officer, have determined that probable cause exists to support, subject to bail or conditions of release where applicable, Defendant's arrest or other lawful steps be taken to obtain Defendant's appearance in court, or Defendant's detention, if already in custody, pending further proceedings. Defendant is therefore charged with the above-stated offense(s).

SUMMONS

THEREFORE YOU, THE DEFENDANT, ARE SUMMONED to appear as directed in the Notice of Hearing before the above-named court to answer this complaint.

IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR in response to this SUMMONS, a WARRANT FOR YOUR ARREST shall be issued.

WARRANT

To the Sheriff of the above-named county; or other person authorized to execute this warrant: I order, in the name of the State of Minnesota, that the Defendant be apprehended and arrested without delay and brought promptly before the court (if in session), and if not, before a Judge or Judicial Officer of such court without unnecessary delay, and in any event not later than 36 hours after the arrest or as soon as such Judge or Judicial Officer is available to be dealt with according to law.

Execute in MN Only

Execute Nationwide

Execute in Border States

ORDER OF DETENTION

Since the Defendant is already in custody, I order, subject to bail or conditions of release, that the Defendant continue to be detained pending further proceedings.

Bail: \$1,500,000.00

Conditions of Release:

This complaint, duly subscribed and sworn to or signed under penalty of perjury, is issued by the undersigned Judicial Officer as of the following date: January 26, 2021.

Judicial Officer

Luis Bartolomei
District Court Judge

Electronically Signed: 01/26/2021 12:10 PM

Sworn testimony has been given before the Judicial Officer by the following witnesses:

**COUNTY OF HENNEPIN
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

State of Minnesota

Plaintiff

vs.

ALMANZO OUSLEY COTTON

Defendant

*LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER RETURN OF SERVICE
I hereby Certify and Return that I have served a copy of this Warrant
upon the Defendant herein named.*

Signature of Authorized Service Agent:

DEFENDANT FACT SHEET

Name: ALMANZO OUSLEY COTTON
DOB: 02/04/1981
Address: 3335 Sheridan Ave N
Minneapolis, MN 55412

Alias Names/DOB:

SID:

Height:

Weight:

Eye Color:

Hair Color:

Gender: MALE

Race: Black

Fingerprints Required per Statute: Yes

Fingerprint match to Criminal History Record: No

Driver's License #:

SILS Person ID #: 476185

SILS Tracking No. 3212063

Alcohol Concentration:

STATUTE AND OFFENSE GRID

Cnt Nbr	Statute Type	Offense Date(s)	Statute Nbrs and Descriptions	Offense Level	MOC	GOC	Controlling Agencies	Case Numbers
1	Charge	11/17/2020	609.19.1(1) Murder - 2nd Degree - With Intent-Not Premeditated	Felony	H2051		MN0271100	20290985
	Modifier	11/17/2020	609.11.9 Minimum Sentences of Imprisonment - Applicable Offenses	No-Level	H2051		MN0271100	20290985
	Penalty	11/17/2020	609.19.1 Murder - 2nd Degree	Felony	H2051		MN0271100	20290985