

STATE OF WISCONSIN CIRCUIT COURT MILWAUKEE COUNTY

STATE OF WISCONSIN

**DA Case No.: 2011ML008051
Court Case No.:**

Plaintiff,

vs.

WASHINGTON, LARNELL
6036 55TH COURT SE
LACEY, WA 98513
DOB: 09/11/1970

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Defendant.

For Official Use

THE BELOW NAMED COMPLAINANT BEING DULY SWORN, ON INFORMATION AND BELIEF STATES THAT:

Count 1: FIRST DEGREE RECKLESS HOMICIDE - PTAC, AS A PARTY TO A CRIME, USE OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON

The above-named defendant on or about Monday, July 16, 1990, at or near 3426 North 4th Street, in the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, as a party to a crime, did recklessly cause the death of AL, another human being, under circumstances which showed utter disregard for human life, contrary to sec. 940.02(1), 939.50(3)(b), 939.05, 939.63(1)(a)2 and (2) Wis. Stats.

Upon conviction for this offense, a Class B Felony, the defendant may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment not to exceed twenty (20) years.

And further, invoking the provisions of sec. 939.63(1)(a)2 and (2) Wis. Stats., because the defendant committed this offense while using a dangerous weapon, the maximum term of imprisonment for the underlying crime may be increased by not more than five (5) years, and the defendant shall be sentenced to a minimum of three (3) years in prison for a first application of this subsection unless the Court otherwise provides.

PROBABLE CAUSE:

Complainant is a City of Milwaukee Police Detective assigned to the Metropolitan Investigation Bureau, Homicide Division, and specializes in the investigation of "cold cases." Complainant has been a sworn law enforcement officer for 18 years and a Detective for 9 years.

Complainant bases the above charges and this criminal complaint on information and belief upon a reading of written reports generated by the City of Milwaukee Police Department, the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory, Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office and other reliable sources.

Complainant believes all such reports to be reliable as he is aware that reports from said agencies have proved truthful in the past and are used in the ordinary and regular course of business by himself and other members of the City of Milwaukee Police Department.

Complainant further bases this complaint on statements of the above named defendant, Larnell WASHINGTON, and his co-actor Ronald BRELOVE made to members of law enforcement and others, concerning events related to the above referenced charge.

OFFICERS RESPOND TO REPORT OF DECEASED WOMAN WHO APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED AND SHOT

On Monday, July 16, 1990, at around 7:15am, City of Milwaukee Police Officers Howard JOPLIN, Charles HARGROVE and Rob BROWN were dispatched to investigate a report of a deceased woman in the rear of 3426 N. 4th Street, in the city and county of Milwaukee in the state of Wisconsin. Upon arrival, officers spoke to the callers, JM and WT, who were both City of Milwaukee sanitation workers. These callers informed officers that while doing their normal trash pickups at this location, they found the body of a young black female, nude from the waist down with her legs spread apart and blood on the side of her head.

Detective Procopio SANDOVAL responded to the scene to investigate with the assistance of Identification Technician John VITRANO. Detective SANDOVAL confirmed the report of first responding officers further noting that the victim's body was lying on the ground immediately in front of a two car garage located at the above referenced address. He reported that in addition to being nude from the waist down with her legs were spread, the victim also had severe trauma to the left side of her head near her ear consistent with a gunshot wound. Detective SANDOVAL also reports locating two .22 caliber magnum cartridge casings near the victim's body which were placed on police inventory as evidence in the case. The victim was later identified as AL.

AUTOPSY AND EVIDENCE COLLECTION

On July 16, 1990, forensic pathologists, Dr. John TAGGATZ and Dr. Michelle CATELLIER, of the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office, conducted an autopsy on the remain of AL. The doctors concluded that AL died of cerebral lacerations and contusions, secondary to gunshot wounds to her head. They determined the manner of AL's death was homicide.

Detective David SLIWINSKI witnessed the autopsy and collected items of evidence from the forensic pathologists at the conclusion of the autopsy. That evidence included: a sexual assault kit, right and left hand fingernail clippings, bullet fragments and hairs found in each of the victim's hands.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF AUTOPSY REACHES SAME CONCLUSIONS

In 2022, Dr. P. Douglas Kelley, Deputy Chief Medical Examiner in Milwaukee County, reviewed information on file at the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office concerning the autopsy of AL, including photos and other reliable documentation of the procedure performed on July 16, 1990. After reviewing this information, Dr. Kelley independently opined that the cause of AL's death was gunshot wounds to the head. He also concurred with the opinion of the original forensic pathologists and determined the manner of AL's death was homicide.

EARLY INVESTIGATION AND CANVAS

During the early phases of the investigation of the homicide of AL, Detective Michael FREDERICKS reports interviewing another citizen, PM, who lived at the time in the 3300 block of N. 4th Street in Milwaukee. PM stated that she was up late watching television and that between about 1:00am and 2:00am, she heard the voices of who she believed to be two black males, possibly in their 30's. PM described hearing one of them saying, "that bitch." PM stated that before and after hearing the voices, she heard the sound of a scuffle in the alley. She further reported that she heard the sound of someone or something heavy being thrown against the garage behind her residence. PM stated the sound of a struggle lasted for about an hour. She didn't recall hearing a woman's voice or gunshots.

During the early phases of this the investigation of the homicide of AL, Detective Procopio SANDOVAL also interviewed a citizen, HD, who reported hearing gunshots in the 3400 block of N. 2nd St. HD, however, thought the gunshots were fired sometime between 11:30pm and 12:30am on the night in question but was not certain of the time.

STATEMENT OF DK CONCERNING EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE HOMICIDE OF AL

On October 11, 2010, Detective Katherine SPANO interviewed AL's daughter, DK. DK stated that about 2 weeks before her mother was killed, she was walking with her cousin, DL. DK stated that she and DL had an encounter with a "Vice Lord"¹ male named "Smoke," whom she identified in a photo as the above named defendant, Larnell WASHINGTON. DK stated that defendant WASHINGTON made a crude remark to DL about her giving oral sex, which upset DL. DK stated DL talked back to defendant WASHINGTON, who then grabbed DL by her hair and bit her in her face. DK stated that defendant WASHINGTON then said, **"bitch, don't you ever talk to me like that."**

DK further stated that both of them (DK and DL) then ran to her house and told her mother, AL (the victim) and her Uncle, BG, what had happened. DK stated she then got into a van with her mother (AL) and BG to try to find defendant WASHINGTON. DK stated that when they did, in fact, find the defendant, he was standing outside with a group of fellow Vice Lords. DK stated her Uncle, BG, approached the group of Vice Lords and proceeded to punch defendant WASHINGTON in the mouth, knocking him down to the ground. DK stated that before the other Vice Lords could jump in, her Uncle, BG, pulled out a handgun to keep them back. DK stated her mother, AL, also produced a gun and approached the crowd of Vice Lords stating, "this has nothing to do with you." DK stated one of the Vice Lords responded, **"you right, but you can't come here beating on the CVL's and expect nothing to happen."** DK stated Uncle BG and her mother got back into the van and they all drove off.

DK also stated that about two weeks later, the night before her mother's body was found, she recalled being on the front porch of the home she shared with her mother AL. DK stated her mother (AL) was waiting for all of the Vice Lords to go inside so she could leave the house to meet her friend at a nearby tavern. DK stated that when the Vice Lords went in, which included defendant WASHINGTON, her mother finally left the house. This was the last time DK ever saw her mother alive.

STATEMENT OF DL CORROBORATING THE STATEMENT OF DK AND INDICATING THAT WJH DISCLOSED TO HER THAT DEFENDANT WASHINGTON MADE INCUPATORY STATEMENTS ABOUT HIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE HOMICIDE

On October 12, 2010, Detective Katherine SPANO interviewed DL regarding the above statements of DK. DL confirmed she was with DK during the above described incident. DL also confirmed that defendant WASHINGTON did assault her by biting her on the above described occasion.

DL also informed Detective SPANO that she (DL) knew that defendant WASHINGTON was dating a woman named WJH during the time frame when AL was murdered. DL stated that she spoke to WJH, shortly after the homicide. She stated that WJH pulled her aside and said that defendant WASHINGTON was responsible for the homicide of AL. DL stated WJH told her that defendant WASHINGTON had come home the night before AL's body was found covered in blood and told her (WJH) that he (WASHINGTON) had killed AL.

STATEMENT OF WJH INDICATING SHE OBSERVED DEFENDANT WASHINGTON IN BLOODY CLOTHES, CARRYING A FIREARM AND STATING "SHE GOT SHOT" IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS BEFORE AL'S BODY WAS DISCOVERED

On October 18, 2010, Detective Katherine SPANO interviewed WJH. WJH confirmed that she was dating defendant WASHINGTON when AL was killed. WJH stated that during the night before AL's body was found, she was home with defendant WASHINGTON, co-actor Ronald BRELOVE and several other members of the Vice Lords gang before they left that evening.

¹ The "Vice Lords" is a street gang involved in criminal activity who were operating and active in Milwaukee, Wisconsin at the time this incident occurred.

WJH stated later on that night or in the early morning hours, she was inside her apartment when defendant WASHINGTON came running in with blood on his shirt. She stated defendant WASHINGTON was excited and upset and kept saying, "she got shot." WJH stated that when defendant WASHINGTON changed out of his bloody shirt, she saw he had a black, semi-auto gun in his waistband.

STATEMENT OF EJ PLACING DEFENDANT WASHINGTON AND RONALD BRELOVE TOGETHER THE NIGHT AL WAS SEXUALLY ASSAULTED AND KILLED

On October 25, 2010, Detective Katherine SPANO interviewed EJ, who is a self-admitted Vice Lord. EJ stated that the night before AL's body was found, he was in front of an apartment building drinking and partying with other Vice Lords. EJ stated that defendant WASHINGTON and Ronald BRELOVE were part of that group. EJ stated that shortly after midnight, defendant WASHINGTON, BRELOVE and another Vice Lord called "Cigar" left together. EJ stated that the next morning, BRELOVE showed up at his home saying that they found AL's body in a garbage can and that he (BRELOVE), defendant WASHINGTON and "Cigar" had to "kill the bitch and tried to rape her."

DEFENDANT WASHINGTON'S DNA LOCATED ON FINGERNAIL CLIPPINGS TAKEN FROM AL AT AUTOPSY

On November 16, 2009, Milwaukee Police Department received a cold hit report from the Wisconsin State Crime Lab indicating that defendant WASHINGTON was identified as a possible contributor to a mixture profile developed from the left hand finger nail clippings of the victim, AL.

Subsequent to receiving this "cold hit report," on August 16, 2011, Detectives Katherine Spano and Gilbert Hernandez obtained a DNA buccal swab standard from defendant WASHINGTON. This standard was then securely transported to the Wisconsin State Regional Crime Lab in Milwaukee for further analysis. Specifically, detectives asked that defendant WASHINGTON's buccal swab standard be compared to the mixture profile obtained from the left hand fingernail clippings of victim, AL, taken at autopsy.

On November 18, 2011, DNA Analyst Susan NOLL of the Wisconsin State Regional Crime Laboratory authored a report concerning comparison of the buccal from defendant WASHINGTON with the mixture profile obtained from the left hand fingernail clippings. At that time, using existing technology, Analyst NOLL detected an autosomal STR mixture profile from the swab of the left hand fingernail clippings from AL, this was a mixture of DNA from at least two individuals. She concluded that defendant WASHINGTON is included as being a possible contributor to this mixture. She reported that the probability of randomly selecting an unrelated individual who could be a contributor to the DNA mixture profile on the swab of the left hand fingernail clippings from AL is rarer than one in 37 thousand individuals.

In the intervening years DNA technology had improved substantially, so Milwaukee Police Department resubmitted the fingernail clippings, the buccal swab standard for defendant WASHINGTON, among other items of evidence to the Wisconsin State Regional Crime Lab. Analyst NOLL then conducted new testing on these items using current state of the art methods. A mixture profile was again obtained from the left hand fingernail clippings that included AL and a male subject. That was compared to the DNA profile of defendant WASHINGTON using STRMix. On July 14, 2022, Analyst NOLL authored another report. In this report, prepared utilizing STRMix (probabilistic genotyping) likelihood ratios, she concluded that there was **VERY STRONG SUPPORT FOR INCLUSION** of defendant **WASHINGTON** in the **DNA** from **AL's left hand fingernail clippings**. In her findings she went on to state that is **at least 291 million times more likely to observe this DNA profile if it is a mixture resulting from AL and defendant WASHINGTON than if it is a mixture resulting from AL and an unknown person.**

**STATEMENT OF DEFENDANT WASHINGTON DENYING INVOLVEMENT
AND CLAIMING HIS DNA COULD NOT BE ON THE VICTIM, AL**

On August 16, 2011, Detective Katherine SPANO conducted a non-custodial interview of defendant WASHINGTON in the State of WASHINGTON. Defendant WASHINGTON was represented by an attorney during this interview. Detective Spano did not tell defendant WASHINGTON about the DNA cold hit.

During this interview defendant WASHINGTON stated that he did not know about AL being killed until 1992, when another inmate in Portage told him about it. Defendant WASHINGTON denied involvement in the homicide of AL and stated that he did not even see AL for the whole month of July prior to the homicide and possibly 2 months before that. Defendant WASHINGTON stated that his DNA "would not be" on the victim or at the scene because he was never with her.

**STATEMENT OF LLS REGARDING CO-ACTOR RONALD BRELOVE WEARING BLOODY CLOTHES
THE DAY AL'S BODY WAS FOUND AND THAT BRELOVE CONFESSED TO RAPING AND
MURDERING AL**

On January 18, 2011, Detective Katherine SPANO interviewed LLS. LLS stated that on the day that AL's body was found, she was in the area of 1st and Keefe hanging out with friends. She stated that morning she saw Ronald BRELOVE and noticed that he had blood on his clothing. She also stated that co-actor BRELOVE appeared very angry about something. LLS stated that later that day is when she learned about AL's body being found.

LLS stated that later on that night, she was hanging out with her child's father, who is the nephew of Ronald BRELOVE, as well as several other people. She stated that BRELOVE came over and began talking with the group, stating that he beat and raped AL and then "putting her out of her misery."

**STATEMENT OF EMD INDICATING THAT CO-ACTOR BRELOVE WAS KNOWN TO POSSESS A
UNIQUE .22 CALIBER SEMI-AUTOMATIC PISTOL AT THE TIME AL WAS SEXUALLY
ASSAULTED AND KILLED**

On March 23, 2011, Detective Keith KOPCHA interviewed of EMD. EMD also is a self-admitted Vice Lord. EMD stated that he knew Ronald BRELOVE as being a fellow Vice Lord. He stated he knew BRELOVE to possess a unique .22 caliber semi-automatic pistol around the time of the homicide of AL. EMD stated that BRELOVE referred to this pistol as his "baby." AL was killed with a .22 caliber firearm.

**CO-ACTOR RONALD BRELOVE GIVES INCONSISTENT STATEMENTS OVER THE YEARS
REGARDING THE RAPE AND HOMICIDE OF AL**

1990 BRELOVE Interview

On July 24, 1990, Detectives Fred KRENZKE and Brian O'KEEFE interviewed Ronald BRELOVE. BRELOVE stated that on the date of the homicide, July 16, 1990, he was by the laundromat on 4th and Keefe around midnight or 12:30am. He stated he was with two other males, one being MD. BRELOVE stated at that time, he observed two individuals known to him as FW and GA walking the victim, AL, from the A&M tavern into the alley. BRELOVE stated that about 5 minutes later he heard two shots and then observed FW and GA run out of the alley toward him. BRELOVE stated they told him that they had each shot LOVE once in the head over a drug debt. BRELOVE stated that FW was holding a silver .22 Magnum and asked him (BRELOVE) to take it from them. BRELOVE stated he declined to take the gun; however, one of the other males he was with took the gun and hid it.

1990 Interview of MD

Shortly after the July 24, 1990 interview of Ronald BRELOVE, MD was interviewed and denied being with BRELOVE on the night of the homicide. He also denied seeing or having any knowledge that FW and GA walked the victim into an alley.

2010 BRELOVE Interview

On December 8, 2010, Detective Katherine SPANO interviewed Ronald BRELOVE at the prison in which he was incarcerated. During this interview, BRELOVE was adamant that his DNA would not be located on the victim, AL, because he was not involved. He then proceeded to give a totally different account from what he claimed in 1990. This time, he stated that he knew defendant WASHINGTON and another Vice Lord named "Cigar" were in fact responsible for killing AL. Co-actor BRELOVE stated the night that this occurred he was at his girlfriend's house in the 400 block of W. Keefe Ave. He stated that while sitting outside, he saw defendant WASHINGTON and "Cigar" walking into the alley where AL's body would later be discovered. BRELOVE stated defendant WASHINGTON waved to him while walking into the alley. BRELOVE stated that shortly thereafter he heard the sound of 3 gunshots and then observed WASHINGTON and "Cigar" running out of the alley and then east on Keefe. BRELOVE stated he walked into the mouth of the alley and saw the body of a female lying near a white garage.

Ronald BRELOVE stated he later spoke to defendant WASHINGTON at the Vice Lord's clubhouse. He stated WASHINGTON told him that he, "Cigar", and two others believed that AL stole money from them. BRELOVE stated that WASHINGTON described following AL out of a tavern, walking her to where she was killed, making her get out of her clothes, putting her face up next to the garage and shooting her in the head. BRELOVE went on to state that he knew the gun used in this homicide was a .22 magnum. BRELOVE stated he (BRELOVE) took that gun and threw it into a river to get rid of it.

CO-ACTOR RONALD BRELOVE'S DNA LOCATED ON VAGINAL SWABS TAKEN FROM AL AT AUTOPSY

On March 25, 2021, Analyst NOLL authored another report. This report concerned her analysis of a portion of a vaginal swab taken from AL at autopsy as part of the rape kit. Analyst NOLL developed a mixture profile containing a male contributor from this item. She then compared that evidentiary mixture profile to a known buccal swab standard on file for co-actor BRELOVE. After utilizing STRMix to determine likelihood ratios, she reported that there was **VERY STRONG SUPPORT FOR INCLUSION** of co-actor **BRELOVE** in the **DNA from AL's vaginal swab**.

CO-ACTOR RONALD BRELOVE IS A CONVICTED SERIAL RAPIST AND MURDERER

Co-Actor Ronald BRELOVE, the so called "graveyard rapist" was convicted of **36 felony offenses**, including numerous counts of **First Degree Sexual Assault** and **Armed Robbery**, in the case entitled *State of Wisconsin v. Ronald Brelove*, 1990CF902508. Said convictions remain of record and unreversed.

BRELOVE also was convicted of First Degree Reckless Homicide as a Party to a Crime in the case entitled *State of Wisconsin v. Ronald Brelove*, 1990CF90307, for the shooting homicide of GLS on June 17, 1990. In this incident, which occurred about one month prior to the homicide of AL and 0.6 miles from where AL was found murdered, BRELOVE admitted to police that he was serving as a look out for co-actors who shot and killed GLS in retaliation for GLS allegedly shooting a fellow Vice Lord gang member.

BRELOVE was also implicated in the homicide of AF that occurred ONE DAY after the homicide of AL at 140 W. Keefe at a tavern. In this incident defendant WASHINGTON, BRELOVE and the subject known as "Cigar" shot into an occupied tavern because they believed a subject who had shot a fellow Vice Lord gang member was in the tavern. The subjects ended up shooting and killing a female bystander, AF. This homicide occurred 0.2 miles or 1056 feet from where AL's body was found the day prior.

BRELOVE is currently serving a **de facto life sentence** for these crimes. Although substantial evidence, including DNA, supports BRELOVE's involvement in this matter, as a party to a crime, with defendant WASHINGTON, in the interest of judicial economy he is not charged as he will be spending the rest of his life in prison without any possibility of parole in his life time.

DEFENDANT WASHINGTON IS ALSO A CONVICTED MURDERER WHO COMMITTED ANOTHER HOMICIDE WITH RONALD BRELOVE ONE DAY AFTER AL WAS FOUND DEAD

Defendant Larnell WASHINGTON was convicted of First Degree Reckless Homicide as a Party to a Crime and other charges in the case entitled *State of Wisconsin v. Larnell Washington*, 1990CF902439 for his involvement in the above described homicide of AF that occurred one day after AL was found dead. This is relevant here because the exact same co-actors were involved in this incident and it also was motivated by a desire to avenge something that happened to a Vice Lord gang member.

KEY INCULPATORY FACTS AND RELATED REASONABLE INFERENCES IN SUPPORT OF DEFENDANT WASHINGTON'S GUILT

- Defendant WASHINGTON was a self-identified member of the Vice Lords street gang when the homicide occurred.
- Defendant WASHINGTON spent time associating with other Vice Lords, including, specifically, co-actor Ronald BRELOVE, at and around the date of the homicide.
- Defendant WASHINGTON and co-actor BRELOVE and other Vice Lords would congregate at a so called Vice Lord "club house" not far from both AL's residence and the scene of her homicide.
- Defendant WASHINGTON had motive to kill AL because she had confronted him with a firearm in front of fellow Vice Lords over his attack on her niece, DL, within weeks of the homicide.
- Defendant WASHINGTON, having motive to kill AL, supports the reasonable inference that he in fact shot and killed her or was a party to the crime, actively aiding and abetting or directing another to shoot and kill her.
- Defendant WASHINGTON was observed by WJH to have fresh blood on his clothing shortly after it is believed AL was shot to death.
- Defendant WASHINGTON, in addition to having fresh blood on his clothing, was also observed by WJH to have a firearm in his waist band the night of the homicide of AL.
- Defendant WASHINGTON also was reportedly agitated and made comments about a female being shot when he arrived home covered in blood, carrying a firearm in his waistband, the night AL was killed.

- Defendant WASHINGTON lied to police to cover up his involvement in the homicide of AL by stating he had not seen AL in weeks or possibly months before the homicide and hadn't even learned of the homicide until 1992.
- Defendant WASHINGTON'S DNA was found under the fingernails of AL indicating he was recently involved in a physical struggle with AL, contrary to his self-serving statement that he had not had contact with her for weeks or months.
- Defendant WASHINGTON'S DNA under the fingernails of AL supports the reasonable inference that he, *at minimum*, actively aided in restraining the victim during the course of the homicide and sexual assault.
- Defendant WASHINGTON observed in bloody clothes right after the homicide of AL supports the reasonable inference he was in close physical proximity to AL when she was shot and killed supporting the inference that he actually shot and killed her or aided and abetted another who shot and killed her.
- Defendant WASHINGTON and co-actor BRELOVE were Vice Lord members who aided and abetted each other in the commission of another homicide that occurred one day after the homicide of AL also to avenge conduct against a fellow gang member.

This complaint is a summary and does not contain all known information about this incident.

****End of Complaint****

Electronic Filing Notice:

This case was electronically filed with the Milwaukee County Clerk of Circuit Court office. The electronic filing system is designed to allow for fast, reliable exchange of documents in court cases. Parties who register as electronic parties can file, receive and view documents online through the court electronic filing website. A document filed electronically has the same legal effect as a document filed by traditional means. You may also register as an electronic party by following the instructions found at <http://efiling.wicourts.gov/> and may withdraw as an electronic party at any time. There is a \$ 20.00 fee to register as an electronic party. If you are not represented by an attorney and would like to register an electronic party, you will need to contact the Clerk of Circuit Court office at 414-278-4120. Unless you register as an electronic party, you will be served with traditional paper documents by other parties and by the court. You must file and serve traditional paper documents.

Criminal Complaint prepared by Sara Beth Hill.
ADA Assigned Email Address: sara.lewis@da.wi.gov

Subscribed and sworn to before me on 02/09/23

Electronically Signed By:

Sara Beth Hill

Assistant District Attorney

State Bar #: 1027610

Electronically Signed By:

Detective Timothy Keller

Complainant