

NEWS RELEASE
GREENE COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
DAN PATTERSON

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02/19/2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HAILEY OWENS' MURDERER CHARGED

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson announces that Craig Michael Wood, 45, of Ash Grove, Missouri, has been charged today with murder in the first degree, armed criminal action, and child kidnapping. These charges are from events that occurred yesterday, February 18, 2014. Murder in the first degree is an A felony and is punishable by death or life imprisonment without the possibility of probation or parole. Armed criminal action is an unclassified felony and is punishable by a minimum of three years imprisonment to life. Child kidnapping is an A felony and is punishable by a minimum of ten years imprisonment to life.

Mr. Patterson expresses his condolences to Hailey's family and is firmly committed to seeking justice for Hailey.

Mr. Patterson cautions that the charges contained in the felony complaint are merely allegations and that the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in court.

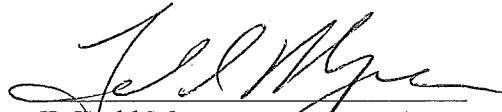
Copies of the felony complaint and probable statement filed in this case are attached to this release. The Missouri Supreme Court ethics rules prohibit comments on the facts or investigation of this case beyond those contained in the felony complaint and probable cause statement that are part of the public record.

This case is being prosecuted by Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney T. Myers. It is being investigated by the Springfield Police Department and Detective Neal McAmis is the lead investigator assigned to the case.

statement concerning this matter, which statement is made a part hereof and is submitted herewith as a basis upon which this court may find the existence of probable cause for the issuance of the warrant.

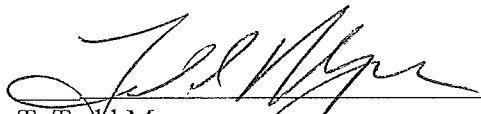
WHEREFORE, the Prosecuting Attorney prays that an arrest warrant be issued as provided by law.

DAN PATTERSON
Prosecuting Attorney of the County of
Greene, State of Missouri, by



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T. Todd Myers, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney of the County of Greene, State of Missouri, being duly sworn, upon oath says that the facts stated in the above information are true, according to his or her best information, knowledge and belief.



T. Todd Myers
Assistant Prosecuting Attorney



SPRINGFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT

FELONY PROBABLE CAUSE STATEMENT



Date: 02/19/14 Case #: 14-6392

I, Neal McAmis, knowing that false statements on this form are punishable by law state as follows:

1. I have probable cause to believe that Craig Michael Wood, W/M, DOB 03/25/68, committed one or more criminal offenses.
2. The following crime(s) happened on 02/18/14 1645 – 02/18/14 1648 at 3247 W. Lombard in Springfield, Greene County, Missouri.
3. The facts supporting this belief are as follows:

On 02/18/14 at 1648, officers were sent to 3247 W. Lombard about an abduction that just occurred. Officer Castaneda arrived on scene and talked to two eye-witnesses, Carlos and Michelle Edwards. Officer Castaneda got preliminary statements from them, and they were transported to police headquarters for further interviews.

I interviewed Michelle. She told me she was in her garage, with the garage door open, talking with Carlos. Michelle said she saw a young girl walk westbound on Lombard on the north side of the road. She said the female had a cell phone in her hands. Michelle said a tan Ford Ranger drove eastbound on Lombard, drove into the westbound lane of travel, and pulled up next to the girl. Michelle told me she heard the male subject ask the girl where Springfield Street was. Michelle said the girl turned to walk away from the vehicle. She said it was at that time when the male opened the driver's door and said to the girl, "Hey, come here a minute." Michelle said the male extended his hand out the door and motioned for the girl to come to him. Michelle told me the girl took one or two steps closer to the truck. She said the male then lunged out of the vehicle, grabbed the girl with his left hand, and threw her into the truck "like a rag doll." Michelle said the suspect then fled the area at a very high rate of speed.

Michelle gave me a suspect description. She said he was a white male that had a baseball style hat on. She said he had grey hair that came out from under the hat. Michelle told me the suspect possibly had facial hair or a beard. She said he appeared to be 45-55 years of age. She said the suspect appeared to be a "taller" individual, and she said he had a thin to medium build.

Michelle told me she was also able to get the license plate number from the suspect vehicle. She was adamant the license plate number was 1YF 454. She told me she was positive that was the license plate number.

Detective Barb interviewed Carlos. Carlos' story matched that of Michelle's. Carlos also gave a detailed description of the suspect. Carlos said the suspect was a white male that appeared to be in his early to mid 40's. He said the subject had grey hair and was wearing a baseball style hat. He described the suspect as being unshaven, with grey in his facial hair.

Preliminary investigation revealed the victim was Hailey Owens. Owens was only 10 years old. Owens lived about a block from where the abduction occurred. It was believed Owens was walking home from a friend's house.

The license plate number that Michelle provided had been researched by department personnel. That license plate checked to a 2008 Ford pickup to Jim and Regina Wood. Their address was listed as being in Ash Grove. I was informed officers responded to that location and contacted Jim. Jim informed the officers that his son, Craig Wood, was the person that drove that vehicle.

Information was researched about Craig. Craig's descriptors matched that of the suspect and Craig is 45 years old. Craig's address was found to be 1538 E. Stanford.

Sgt. Neal and Sgt. Schwind responded to the area of Craig's residence. Shortly after they arrived, they saw a tan Ford Ranger pull into Craig's driveway. The license plate on the vehicle matched the license plate number that Michelle previously provided. Sgt. Neal and Sgt. Schwind approached Craig as he exited his truck. Sgt. Neal and Sgt. Schwind saw that Craig had a roll of duct tape in his hand as he exited the driver's side door. When Craig saw the officers, he threw the duct tape into the bed of the truck.

Craig agreed to respond to police headquarters for an interview. It was at headquarters where I first saw Craig. Craig appeared just as Michelle and Carlos described the suspect. Craig was tall (06'02") and had a medium build. He had on a baseball style hat. I could see his grey hair from under the hat. Craig had an unshaven appearance and there was grey in his facial hair.

Detective Kevin Shipley interviewed him at headquarters. Craig initially told Detective Shipley that he got off work (Pleasant View Middle School) about 1515 and went straight home. He later changed his story and said he went driving around for a while. Craig denied having contact with Owens.

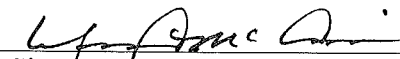
Officers did a safety sweep at Craig's residence to check for Owens. When the officers got to the basement steps, they could smell a strong odor of bleach. The odor continued as they entered the basement. The officers informed me the basement floor was wet. They also said they saw bottles of bleach in the basement.

On 02/19/14 at 0128 Detective Barb obtained a signed search warrant to search Craig's residence. Several crime scene technicians responded to the scene. In the basement, the crime scene technicians located two plastic storage totes. They were stacked one on top of the other. There were papers and documents in the top tote. In the bottom tote was what appeared to be the body of a small child. The body was concealed inside two trash bags. The crime scene technicians removed the trash bags and confirmed it was the body of Owens.

Tom Van De Berg, the chief investigator for the Greene County Medical Examiner's Office responded to the scene. I contacted Van De Berg at that location. He informed me Owens had what appeared to be a gunshot wound to the base of her skull. He said there were also apparent ligature marks on Owens' arms.

The crime scene technicians continued to process the crime scene. They located a spent .22 caliber shell casing in the basement

The facts contained above are true.


Signature

1102
DSN

DETECTIVE
Title