

THE CROSSING
Chapter 19

Arrest affidavit in the murder case
against Bob Brantner

The following Affidavit is submitted to the Court to document the probable cause in support of the arrest of Robert Joseph Brantner, white male, [REDACTED] on the charge of Murder in the Second Degree, CRS 18-3-103, a class 2 felony.

On Monday, 12/14/92 at 6:25 a.m., the Colorado Springs Police Department was notified of a dead body at the address 5640 Red Onion Way in Colorado Springs, El Paso County, Colorado. This address is of a single family residence located in the northeast portion of Colorado Springs. The reporting party was identified as Bill Brantner.

The reporting party advised the 911 emergency response center, who in turn transferred the call to the Colorado Springs Police Department, that the reporting party had been awakened by screams and then saw his father hit his mother. After the father left, the reporting party found his mother lying face down in the bathroom. The father reportedly left to go to work at Sierra High School in Colorado Springs.

Officers from the Falcon substation of the Colorado Springs Police Department responded to the scene, arriving at 6:38 a.m. on Monday, 12/14/92. At that time they found the body of a white female lying face down in the bathtub of the master bedroom of the residence at 5640 Red Onion Way.

Information as to the possible whereabouts of the possible suspect in this case, the reporting party's father, was forwarded to the Sand Creek patrol division. The father, identified as Robert Joseph Brantner, was contacted at his place of employment, Sierra High School, in the Industrial Arts office. He was subsequently transported to the Sand Creek patrol division for investigation of a homicide.

At 6:53 a.m. on Monday, 12/14/92, the Colorado Springs Police Department Major Crimes/Homicide Investigation Unit was called to assist in the investigation. Detective Sgt. Lachapelle responded as the supervisor for the unit. Detective Brian S. Ritz, Your Affiant, along with Detective Tim Hogan and Detective Terry BJORNDahl, also responded to the scene.

The crime scene investigation was conducted by Detective Terry BJORNDahl. In the course of that investigation, Detective BJORNDahl was aware of information provided by Robert Brantner as to the cause of the injuries to his wife's head.

Detective BJORNDahl noted in the crime scene investigation that there was no evidence on any item of furniture found in the bedroom which would be indicative of the victim striking her head at that location. He also noted a distinct lack of blood in the area from where the injury was reported to have occurred to the bathroom.

The victim was found lying face down in the bathtub. The reporting party advised that the water was running when he checked on his mother, adding that the bathtub had started to fill up with water. At this time the water had subsequently drained out once the son turned the water off.

Deputy Coroner Al Correll of the El Paso County Coroner's office responded to the scene. Upon examining the victim's body, he noted a 3" to 4" gash along the left side of the victim's head. Al Correll described the gash as being consistent with that similar to an ax type wound. He noted that it was not consistent with a fall and someone banging their head on a corner or object of furniture.

The wound gave signs of bleeding excessively and still had the appearance of fresh blood in it. Detective BJORNDahl noted that there was a distinct lack of blood at the scene, including blood leading from the bedroom area to the bathroom. Detective BJORNDahl also searched the interior of the residence for any weapon which would be consistent with causing this kind of wound and as of this time, has not found one.

In the course of the investigation, Detective Hogan interviewed the three children of Robert and Cheryl Ann Brantner. The youngest son was identified as Brian Brantner, age 11, DOB 1/6/81. In the course of the interview with Brian Brantner, Detective Hogan was advised that Brian had heard some unintelligible screaming coming from his mother and he went to investigate. When he got to his parents' bedroom door and looked inside, he saw his mother and father on top of the bed in the master bedroom. He described the actions that he saw as his father pushing his mother around on the bed. During this time, his mother called his name, Brian's name, numerous times.

After his father became aware that he was in the room, the father stated that his mother was having a nightmare and he was trying to wake her up to calm her down. Everything was then calm and Brian returned back to the bedroom per the instructions from his father.

Brian was unable to describe what the screaming was coming from his mother at the time that caused him to respond to the bedroom. He did not indicate whether or not he observed any injuries on his mother at this time.

Detective Hogan had also been advised by one of the sons that upon the father preparing to leave for work, he advised that the mother was taking a shower and would be going to work late today and not to disturb her.

At 9:15 a.m. on Monday, 12/14/92, Detective Brian S. Ritz interviewed Robert Brantner at the Sand Creek division of the Colorado Springs Police Department. Mr. Brantner was advised of his rights per Miranda which he stated he understood and waived at that time.

In the course of the interview with Mr. Brantner, Detective Ritz was advised that Mr. Brantner and his wife had an argument which began on Sunday evening, 12/13/92 at approximately 11:00 p.m. The nature of this argument was the fact that Mr. Brantner was going to seek a divorce from his wife, Cheryl Brantner. The two had been married for approximately 21 years. Mr. Brantner stated the reason for the divorce is that he was sick and tired of the way his wife treated the children and did nothing around the house. He noted that he just couldn't live like this any more.

This was the first time that his wife had heard any indication that her husband wanted a divorce. He added that they had not been arguing up to this time about anything, but noted that she had an argument with the two children, that being Michael, age 15 and Brian, age 11. Again, he was tired of the way that she argued and treated the children.

The argument lasted until approximately 11:30 p.m. One point he made during the argument with his wife is that he did want to keep his pickup truck, the truck he was driving when he left the scene, and his motorcycle. Other than that, she could have the rest. There was also a little argument over where the children would stay. The results of that argument was that the children were old enough to make their own decision at this time.

Both parties went to bed at approximately 11:30 p.m. on Sunday, 12/13/92. The two slept in the same bed but did not argue any further.

Mr. Brantner stated he got up around 4:45 a.m. on Monday, 12/14/92. He showered and was getting ready for work. A short time later, after he was already dressed, his wife got up out of bed. At that time she continued fighting where the two of them had left off the night before. During this time, he stated that the only thing he wanted out of the divorce was his motorcycle and his pickup truck. He then stated he also wanted half of the value of everything else the two of them owned. The wife responded back, stating that he was not going to get a thing.

In the course of the argument, he stated that his wife was standing on her side of the bed, talking to him. He was standing in the same immediate area around her. She shoved him back by placing her hands upon his chest and pushing. He returned by shoving her, thus knocking her down onto the water bed. At some point in her fall, she struck her head on some unknown object and caused a laceration on the left side of her head. Mr. Brantner stated he did not know what she hit and did not see her hit anything.

This laceration bled excessively and he assisted by trying to provide first aid for his wife. He noted that the wife, after lying on the bed, was yelling for help. Mr. Brantner grabbed a towel and started putting pressure on the wound to control the bleeding. He asked his wife if she wanted an ambulance or wanted him to call anybody else. She stated that she did not and everything would be all right. The injury was in the hairline on her skull and he did not see the nature of the injury. He stated the bleeding seemed to stop after a short period of time and noted that it bled a lot. His wife advised him that it was a head wound and head wounds routinely bleed a lot. He accepted this information and took no further action at that point.

After the bleeding had been controlled, Mr. Brantner stated that his wife wanted to get up and wash the blood out of her hair. He helped his wife to the bathroom, noting that she was dizzy and disoriented at this time. He started the shower for her and helped her step into the shower.

At some point, his wife advised that she did not want their son, Bill, to see all the blood in the bedroom. Bill is the 18 year old son who was expected to remain home all day long.

As a result, Mr. Brantner removed the bed sheets, pillow cases and pillow from the bed, along with any other bloody articles of clothing which she was wearing at this time and planned to take them downstairs to the laundry room. After removing the bed sheets, he remade the bed with fresh sheets he had gotten out of the closet. He noted the closet is located in the bathroom where his wife was taking a shower. At the time of obtaining the sheets, he heard that his wife was still in the shower and heard her talking.

His wife advised him that she did not want Bill to have any opportunity to see the sheets, and for that reason she did not want them left in the laundry room. Mr. Brantner stated he would then take them with him and take them to a laundromat to get them cleaned.

Just prior to leaving, Mr. Brantner stated he walked back in where his wife was showering and asked if she was all right. She stated she was all right, but noted that she was a little dizzy. When he asked if there was anything that he could do, she told him to get out. He advised that he was then going to go to work. Mr. Brantner stated he then left the residence and proceeded to work. He was subsequently contacted at work and brought to the Sand Creek patrol division.

In the course of the interview with Mr. Brantner, Detective Ritz inquired if Mr. Brantner did anything to cause physical injury to his wife during the argument. He stated he did push his wife down during which she struck her head on some unknown object. Detective Ritz inquired if he ever choked his wife during this incident. Mr. Brantner was advised that his younger son had provided a statement to the police department which had been indicative that he was possibly choking her on the bed when he came into the room. Mr. Brantner stated he did not choke his wife at any time during this incident and did nothing else but push her down on the bed where she struck her head. Mr. Brantner described the bed as being a water bed with wood rail sidings that are padded and a wood headboard.

Mr. Brantner amended that his son came into the room and when his son came in the room, he was applying pressure to the wound while he and ~~his wife~~ laid on the bed. He further advised that he told his oldest son, Bill, that the screams that were heard in the early morning hours was his wife having a nightmare and that everything was calm now. Mr. Brantner stated his wife in fact did not have a nightmare during the evening and the screams were the result of their domestic disturbance.

Near the completion of the interview, Mr. Brantner was again asked if he murdered his wife. Mr. Brantner responded that he did not. He was also asked if he strangled his wife or drowned his wife, to which he again responded that he did not. When asked if he would be willing to take a polygraph examination, Mr. Brantner responded that he would be willing to take a polygraph examination. He then stated that he had better talk to an attorney first and was now asking for an attorney. As a result, the interview was terminated with Mr. Brantner.

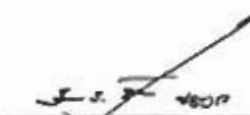
Detective Ritz notes that in the course of the interview, Detective Ritz specifically inquired about the cause of the pending divorce between Robert Brantner and his wife, Cheryl. Detective Ritz specifically inquired as to whether or not either of them were having an affair or could have been accused of having an affair. Mr. Brantner stated they were not having affairs at this time. Detective Ritz was later contacted by Det. Sgt. Lachapelle who was at the crime scene. Sgt. Lachapelle had been advised that neighbors in the immediate neighborhood of the

Brantner residence were aware of an ongoing relationship which Mr. Brantner was to be having outside the home.

Detective Ritz also inquired about the financial status of the two. Detective Ritz was advised that Cheryl Brantner took care of all the finances for the two and for reasons unknown to Robert Brantner, they never had any money. His wife was to deposit a paycheck recently and obtain cash to have money over the Christmas holiday. After depositing the check, the wife was unable to get any cash because of the fact that the account had been overdrawn prior to this time.

Based on the information above, specifically noting the fact that the wound found on the victim's body is not consistent with that of a fall, Detective Ritz requests that Probable Cause be found to support the arrest of Robert Joseph Brantner, white male, DOB 6/18/49, on the charge of one count of Murder in the Second Degree, CRS 18-3-103, a class 2 felony.

X



Brian S. Ritz

Affiant

On this date, the Affiant signed this Affidavit and swore to its truth.

Dec. 14, 1992

Date


Notary Public

My commission expires: September 27, 1993

Address: 1-05 E. Vermijo, #300, C/S