

**Statement of Facts, State of Ohio v. Deborah Frazier, CR2023-0589**

After days of planning, on the evening of August 9, 2023, Deborah Frazier stood behind Thomas Waddell as he sat in his recliner. She raised his .22 caliber pistol, aimed it at the back of his head, and executed him in his living room.

She then set about covering up her crime in dramatic, but unsuccessful fashion.

For months prior to the murder, Debbie and Tom lived at the murder location, 3231 Sandhurst Drive, Zanesville, Muskingum County, Ohio. They had been in an on-again, off-again relationship for years. Tom was significantly older than Debbie, but was known for reaching out and helping those who were in need.

He met Debbie at Kroger, where they both worked, and where he had recently retired.

In their home were found Valentines Day cards, shared cookbooks, and evidence of a life spent together.

The day after the murder at 1:26 pm, the Zanesville Police Department received a 911 call from Debbie Frazier. On the phone she claimed that she had just arrived at her boyfriend's home, found the house ransacked, and the door ajar.

While on the line with 911 Deborah screamed that there were men in the house and the sound of a quiet gunshot was heard, followed by her cries that she had been shot. All officers on shift with the Zanesville Police Department responded. First on the scene was Chief Scott Comstock, followed by Ptlm. Bryan Wolfe and Ptlm. Logan Miller.

The officers found Deborah in the entryway to the apartment, bleeding from a gunshot wound to her leg and crying out in pain. She stated that masked white men had come out of the apartment and shot her as they left. The entire encounter, she claimed, had occurred while she was on the phone with the police.

Ptlm. Byron Bollinger provided a tourniquet for Deborah's leg and she was transported to the hospital. Lying on the ground next to her was a .22 caliber revolver.

Det. Bryan Ruff was the first on the scene and assigned to lead the investigation.

Officers cleared the house to ensure there were no additional assailants inside, where Ptlm. Logan Miller discovered the body of Thomas Waddell in the bedroom, wrapped in trash bags, duct tape and a comforter.

At the scene, parts of the story immediately brought questions. Waddell's apartment was well-kept and orderly. There were no indicators of drug use or drug sales, which accompany home-invasions in almost all circumstances. The ransacking described by Frazier was closer to superficial mess-making. Officers found photographs of Frazier and Waddell on the floor, torn up.

Nothing of value appeared to be missing, including numerous firearms, all items likely to be stolen in a home invasion.

According to Assistant Coroner Greg Jadwin, Waddell had been deceased for some time. The Licking County Forensic Pathologist, Dr. Jeff Lee, wanted Waddell's body transported to his office immediately and in the same condition – still wrapped in the comforter and bags – as it was found so that he could more accurately determine a time of death.

At the scene, Det. Ruff faced several difficulties. A home invasion was reported and must be investigated. A murder has occurred. It appeared that there were inconsistencies surrounding the entire situation.

Because Waddell's body was being removed from the scene prior to determining the cause of death, Ruff had Det. Gary Moore, who was in charge of processing the scene, collect any item which might be able to cause death. Hammers, knives, and firearms were recovered for testing.

After processing the scene, Ruff organized his investigation so that some detectives followed up on witness interviews and video collection to try to obtain evidence of any home invasion. He dispatched Det. Jimmy Devoll to interview Frazier again, and specifically sent a Detective to test her for gunshot residue (GSR).

When Frazier heard that she would be tested for the residue she changed her story and began to claim that she had reached out and touched the gun that shot her. That statement was the purpose of the test, as GSR would be present on any person who was shot, but a guilty person might change their story if they thought forensic evidence was going to expose them.

Finally, Ruff and Det. Sgt. Phil Michel began drafting warrants to search items of evidence at the scene. The first item of evidence Michel searched was her iPhone, located at the scene. Within one day of the 911 call, Michel discovered deleted searches on Frazier's phone.

"How long goes[sic] GSR stay on skin," was searched in google at 8:16 a.m. on August 10. Five hours before the 911 call.

Detectives then traveled back to the hospital to interview Frazier again. She indicated that she had been with her other boyfriend John Anderson the entire night before returning to Waddell's apartment.

Upon learning that Frazier had another boyfriend, Detectives Michel and Devoll located Anderson, who was shocked to discover that his on-again, off-again girlfriend of ten years was living with another man. Anderson had been told by Frazier that she was a live-in nurse and that she was caring for Waddell, whom she had falsely told Anderson was a dementia patient.

Anderson gave permission to search his phone, and described an odd interaction with Frazier where she had recently requested that he leave a voicemail for Waddell pretending to be an agent from PNC Bank. In the text messages Anderson provided, Frazier explained that Waddell was having an Alzheimer's problem and his granddaughter was trying to explain something to him.

Anderson described the evening of August 9 through the morning of August 10, where Frazier contacted him, upset, and wanting to go for a ride. He indicated that he drove her around Muskingum County and that she seemed upset but did not want to talk. They got pop at the BP on Northpoint, drove to Blackhand Gorge for a walk, during which time Frazier asked to be left alone. Later they drove to the Dresden area, where she walked off and claimed to be talking to a counselor.

Detectives Ruff and Michel then began the process of issuing search warrants for phone records, email records, apple records and financial records. In total, more than 20 warrants and court orders were issued for data and records.

In the meantime, Licking County Forensic Pathologist Dr. Jeff Lee forwarded his conclusions that Waddell had been murdered within around 4 hours of 9:00 pm on August 9, 2023, the day before the home invasion call.

Zanesville Police Patrolmen had canvassed the neighborhood interviewing neighbors to determine if anyone had seen assailants fleeing the apartment complex, and if security videos existed. Ultimately multiple Ring camera videos and security videos were obtained from residents and local businesses. Officers went so far as to recover all of the security video from all SEAT buses running in the city. No witness or video could describe anyone fleeing the apartment complex.

At the ZPD Evidence Facility, Det. Gary Moore lifted latent prints off of a television which had been put on the floor of Waddell's bedroom. BCI Analyst Jerry Lanfear found a match returning to a David Eugene Grantham of Tavares, Florida. Grantham met the home invader description of being a white male, and had a record of theft and receiving stolen property.

Detectives followed up with Tavares Florida and discovered that Grantham could not possibly have been the perpetrator. In February of 2021, Grantham had been found dead in his apartment by his roommate Deborah Frazier. His death was ruled an accidental overdose.

Detectives continued their investigation as to the financial and phone records.

When the records were returned, Det. Sgt. Michel and FBI Special Agent Brian Lacy began processing the phone data. Lacy mapped out Anderson and Frazier's movements and corroborated Anderson's account of picking up Frazier at the Sandhurst apartments. He was able to map Frazier, Anderson, and Waddell's phones as they traveled north into the county and to Blackhand Gorge. Waddell's phone then disappeared and never reactivated.

Anderson and Frazier's phones were then tracked back to the Sandhurst area, and then to Dresden, and back and forth throughout the county until ultimately dropping Frazier off at Sandhurst between 11:00 a.m. and noon on August 10.

Financial records indicated that Waddell and Frazier shared a PNC bank account and that its balance had been drawn down to \$2,000.

Michel also found evidence that Frazier had created a fake email account: pncfraudulentclaims@gmail.com which she had used to send herself messages in a format that resembled a fraud claims representative discussing a situation of fraud in which Waddell was the alleged victim. Deleted google searches included searches for a PNC logo and information on bank fraud.

The bank information led the detectives towards a motive for Frazier's actions: the question was, had she misused funds from her shared account with Waddell and was she trying to cover it up with the fake fraud information?

Det. Sgt. Michel used forensic software to search deeper in Frazier's phone. He found deleted searches:

August 5 – "How to load a gun."

August 6 – “How to load a revolver pistol”

August 6 – “will a gun for[sic] the wrong ammo”

August 6 – “how to know what ammo your gun uses”

August 9 – “How to uncock the hammer on a revolver”

August 9 – “what does 22 ammo look like”

August 9 – “worst place to get hit in the head”

At this point, the questions related to the homicide of Thomas Waddell narrowed from whether or not Frazier had committed the crime, to whether or not she had committed the crime alone.

The results of forensic testing in the case helped greatly to demonstrate that Frazier acted alone.

Detective Ruff submitted the trash bags and duct tape that wrapped Mr. Waddell’s body for DNA testing. The results showed that only the DNA of Frazier and Waddell was present on the items. Also submitted for testing were two Velcro straps that had been attached to Waddell’s body and used to drag his body across the apartment. The DNA returned only to Frazier.

Frazier’s hair was located in the duct tape used to secure trash bags to Thomas Waddell’s feet.

When Frazier called 911, a zipped-up bookbag was found near the front door of the apartment, and inside the bag was located only one glove. Because the glove was inside the bag, and the second glove was missing, detectives thought that it might be valuable evidence. It was tested for DNA, which came back to Frazier. Then it was found positive for gunshot residue – residue from the murder, not the shooting on the 10<sup>th</sup>, when the glove was sealed up inside the bookbag.

As to the firearm, ATF trace information showed that Thomas Waddell had purchased the firearm in 1990. BCI Analysts concluded that there were two fired cartridges from the revolver, and that they were consistent with both the injury suffered by Waddell and the injury suffered by Frazier.

Additional information corroborates the fact that Frazier acted alone and that many other persons were duped by her manipulation and lies. Frazier has a history of elaborate deceptions calculated to provide her with attention or to present her to her victims as a person needing help.

In June of 2023, Frazier concocted a story wherein she was attacked by a man in a hoodie at Dillon State Park. Frazier reported the crime to Waddell and the police. She made up the existence of a counselor that she was supposed to have been at the park to meet. Investigators were able to establish that she had created a fake telephone number with which she would text herself as “Vivian” a supposed counselor from BetterHelp.

The false report had extensive planning and falsified information.

Nor was that the first time that Frazier had manufactured an allegation of being attacked. She did the same thing in 2014.

The totality of the circumstances and the results of the search warrants, court orders, subpoenas, collateral investigations, forensic and cell phone data analysis all point to the fact that Frazier acted alone in this murder.

Her pleas reflect her purposeful killing of Thomas Waddell, by the use of a firearm, her attempt to corrupt the outcome of the investigation by creating false evidence by shooting herself, and her treatment of Thomas Waddell's body in a way that would outrage reasonable community sensibilities.