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AUG 19 2025

SHONDI K. LOTT
ELMORE COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
190 South 4th East
Post Office Box 607
Mountain Home, Idaho 83647
TELEPHONE: (208) 587-2144 ext. 503
FACSIMILE: (208) 587-2147
ISB No. 9763

CANYON COUNTY CLERK
K. BATEMAN, DEPUTY

CR14-25-17081

**IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF THE
STATE OF IDAHO, IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF ELMORE
MAGISTRATE DIVISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE ARREST
OF Delbert Lee Cornish
(Defendant)**

**AFFIDAVIT OF PROBABLE
CAUSE FOR ARREST**

STATE OF IDAHO)
COUNTY OF ELMORE)

I, Detective T. O'Neil #198, certify, declare and state:

That I am an authorized peace officer, and on the 18th day of August 2025, at 1612 hours, I had probable cause to believe that the defendant herein, committed the following crime:

I18-4003(a) – First Degree Homicide
I18-4003{AT} – Attempted Homicide

The probable cause for the defendant's arrest was as follows:

On August 18th, 2025, at approximately 1613 hours, Officers of the Caldwell Police Department received a call for a subject with a gun located at 1612 Blaine Street, Caldwell, Canyon County, Idaho.

Call comments indicated when the reporting party arrived to the residence, their father had a gun and said he shot their sister. Additional comments said the father did point the gun at the reporting party, who fled from the scene on foot.

The reporting party, later identified as L.C. (DOB: [REDACTED]/2010), met with Officer T. Fechter #185 and advised when he got home from school, his father, Delbert L. Cornish (DOB: 04/03/1974), asked him how his day was, as well as told him that he killed L.C.'s sister. L.C. told Officer Fechter that Delbert tried to convince him to check on his sister, but L.C. refused. L.C. stated Delbert retrieved a firearm from the couch and he told Delbert he wanted to leave. L.C. reported that Delbert then shot the floor with the firearm and told L.C. he wasn't leaving. Delbert pointed the firearm at L.C., as well as positioned himself in front of the door to block L.C.'s exit.

L.C. stated that he fought with Delbert over the firearm and was able to get it from him. L.C. advised he told Delbert he was leaving before dropping the gun in the doorway and running from the residence.

Officers established a perimeter around the residence and began making announcements, but no persons exited. Officers were later able to identify a vehicle associated with Delbert, a 2020 Orange Dodge Challenger bearing Idaho plate, RD2XTKN. This vehicle was later found to belong to Delbert's brother, Steven E. Anderson (DOB: [REDACTED]/1969).

A search for the vehicle was conducted through Caldwell Police Department's License Plate Reader (LPR) system, which showed the Dodge traveling northbound on North 21st Avenue at approximately 1623 hours, away from the area. Additionally, officers later made contact with Steven who checked the GPS location of the Dodge and found it was located in Mountain Home, Elmore County, Idaho.

Due to this information, officers surrounding the residence transitioned to clearing the residence to ensure no one was in need of medical assistance.

Upon entering the residence, just inside the front door, I observed a handgun magazine on the ground. I additionally observed a black handgun, which I identified as a Hi-Point, sitting on the couch in the living room. From the Hi-Point's orientation, I could see that it was missing its magazine.

While clearing the back bedrooms on the first story of the residence, other officers and I made entry into one of the bedrooms. This bedroom was on the southwest side of the house and had a large hatchet sticking into the exterior of the door. Upon opening the bedroom door, I observed a deceased female lying on the floor, just within the doorway. The female's facial skin appeared pale and I observed, what appeared to be, a gunshot wound on the right side of her head. The female was obviously deceased and had a multi-colored Pride flag draped over the majority of her body. This female was later identified as Delbert's daughter, and L.C.'s sister, Hope S. Cornish (DOB: [REDACTED]/2007).

A few feet away from Hope, I noticed a dead cat in front of the closet doors. I did not observe any obvious wounds, but could see a spot of blood on the floor above its head and back area.

While clearing the remainder of the home, officers observed a large note written on the wall between the living room and kitchen. The note appeared in nature, as a possible murder/suicide note. In summary, the note contained statements such as, "I'm a man of my word my kids died by my hand. I'm tired of them being made fun of", and, "I'm going! My kids are going with me."

Another similar note was later seen on a magnet white board affixed to a fridge in the kitchen. This contents of this note appeared similar, but was directed at someone specifically. The note mentioned how the recipient was a pedophile who had sexual

relations with their cousin. The note concluded with the statement, "Go fuck yourself you faggot fuck. You are not better than Tyrell."

After leaving the residence at approximately 1830 hours, I was informed that Mountain Home Police Department had located the Dodge Challenger outside of 985 East 17th Street, Mountain Home, Idaho. Shortly after, at approximately 1856 hours, I was told that Delbert was taken into custody at the residence with a female, later identified as Delbert's ex-girlfriend, Ronda S. Willhite (DOB: [REDACTED]/1970).

At approximately 1900 hours, other detectives and I responded to Mountain Home Police Department to interview Delbert.

Upon arrival to the police department, I met with Mountain Home Police Corporal T. Hansen, who advised Delbert was currently waiting in an interview room. Corporal Hansen stated when he took Delbert into custody, he advised him of his Miranda warning. Corporal Hansen told me that Delbert verbally acknowledged his understanding of his rights.

Corporal Hansen said while en route to the police department, Delbert began making utterances regarding the incident. When Corporal Hansen sat Delbert down in an interview room at the department, Delbert admitted to murdering his daughter and provided Corporal Hansen with the address at which it occurred.

Corporal Hansen later directed me to the interview room where I met with Delbert. I introduced myself to Delbert and advised I was the detective assigned of the case. During our initial contact, Delbert expressed that he needed to use the restroom, but first consented to me collecting a Gun Shot Residue (GSR) sample.

While preparing the GSR kit, and without asking any questions, Delbert told me, "I'm not gonna lie, I did it dude." Delbert also began asking questions about the scene and whether or not I'd been to the house. After asking me if I found his daughter, and agreeing, Delbert began to cry. Delbert asked further questions about the gun and told me he should've shot himself, as well as said he didn't want to shoot his son. I later collected the GSR sample from each of his hands. While collecting the sample from his left hand, Delbert informed me that he shot the gun with his right hand.

Upon returning from the restroom. I sat down with Delbert and advised that I wished to ask him questions about what happened today, but prior to, clarified that he understood his Miranda warning he was given. Delbert agreed that he understood his rights. I conducted an interview with Delbert about the homicide, and the following is a synopsis of his statement:

Delbert admitted to me that he is an alcoholic who struggles with depression. Delbert said he is tired of living and is tired of being "belittled" by his brother Steven, whom he his children live with. Delbert advised he is tired of his children being bullied by Steven and referenced names he calls them such as, "pedophile, typhoid, loser, or Sally." Delbert

said he's tired of being a failure and stated he is not a good man, nor father. Delbert said today was the day he was going to kill himself.

Delbert said approximately one year ago, in either October or September of 2024, he bought a black 9 mm Hi-Point handgun from Sportsman Warehouse in Nampa, Idaho that he intended on shooting himself with. Around the same time, Delbert said he began thinking about how he was going to do it and decided he would kill his children, Hope, L.C., and his oldest, Ian R. Cornish (DOB: [REDACTED] 2000), as well.

Delbert went on to explain his plan to kill Ian was thwarted when he violated his parole a few months ago and was sent back to prison. Delbert explained he wanted to kill his children along with himself because he believed nobody, especially Steven, would take care of them once he was dead, and that they would not be able to carry on in life without him. Because of this, he believed they would all be better off dead.

When asked what made him follow through with his plan today, Delbert advised he lost his job approximately two weeks ago and had been keeping it a secret from Steven. Delbert advised his lie was coming to an end and he wasn't going to be able to hide it from Steven much longer. Delbert explained that although he and Steven had problems, Steven had helped him a lot in life. Without his help, Delbert did not know where he and his kids would be today.

When asked what would today have looked like if his plan went flawlessly, Delbert told me, "Both of my kids would be dead and I'd be dead."

When asked to recount the events of the day, from the time he woke up to now, Delbert advised the following:

Delbert stated he woke up this morning and told his brother that, "today was the day". Steven asked what this meant and Delbert made up a lie saying today he was going to find out whether or not he got hired at a new job. Delbert advised this really meant he was going to action his plan.

Delbert said soon after Steven left for work, L.C. left for school at around 0730 hours. Delbert mentioned that he was hesitant about letting L.C. leave, because he intended on killing him.

Once Steven and L.C. had both left the house, Delbert took a couple shots of Evan Williams bourbon and sat on the couch for around an hour, contemplating his decision. Delbert said he had the Hi-Point hidden between two pillows in the pillowcase on the couch, where he slept in the living room. Delbert said the handgun had been there for several weeks, hidden, and nobody knew about it.

Delbert advised at approximately 0900 hours, he grabbed the handgun, walked down the hallway to Hope's bedroom, and stood in front of her door, near the bathroom. Delbert explained that he was thinking about what he should do and because Hope works nights,

was thinking about shooting her in her sleep. Delbert described that doing it this way, “would be easier, right?” Delbert advised he was only outside Hope’s room for a few seconds when she coincidentally opened the door. Delbert said this startled him as he was not expecting it, but brought the handgun up, pointed it at Hope, and shot her in the head one time. Delbert wasn’t positive about where he shot Hope, but pointed to an area of his head between his right temple and above his right eyebrow.

Delbert then said, “For the next 20 minutes I watched her gasp for breath.” Delbert began to cry out loud and told me, “I’m a piece of shit man. I’m not going to lie, I did it.”

Delbert said he felt remorseful for what he did and told Holly he was sorry, as well as kissed her on the cheek. After Holly died, Delbert decided to shoot her cat as well. Delbert advised he shot the cat in the head and did so for the same reasons, because no one would take care of it after they were all dead. Delbert advised he covered Hope with a large Pride flag as a way to honor her, because it was something that meant a lot to her.

When asked if he thought about calling for help for Hope, Delbert admitted that he did, but then thought back to his plan. When asked what would have happened if Hope didn’t open her door, Delbert told me he didn’t know if he would’ve followed through with shooting her.

Following the shooting, Delbert said he went into a, “fit of rage”, over what he had done and punched several holes in the drywall throughout the house, as well as swung a hatchet two times into the exterior of Hope’s bedroom door. Delbert said from there, he went into the living room where he wrote a suicide note on the wall that separated the living room from the kitchen. Delbert said he wrote an additional note on a magnet whiteboard fixed to a fridge in the dining room area. Delbert told me he wrote these notes as a way to tell Steven to, “Go fuck himself.”

Delbert mentioned that he also had a handwritten note hidden in the living room, which was written weeks prior. Delbert advised the note was placed underneath a hat, next to the TV. In summary, Delbert advised the note outlined how he was sorry for killing his kids and himself. Detectives later located this note within the residence in Caldwell during a search warrant service and confirmed its contents. The note started with the following statements: “I am Delbert Cornish. I have done the abomination you find her. My daughter Hope and my son L.C. have gone with me by my own accord. No one will help them if I’m gone”. The note ended with Delbert’s signature, along with, “I hereby check out of this life.”, and, “Depression is a bitch.”

Delbert continued with the timeline and said after his fit of rage, he began to drink more of his Evan Williams bourbon to help forget about what he had just done. Delbert estimated throughout the day, he drank a third of a half-gallon bottle. As previously mentioned, Delbert said he is an alcoholic and when I asked his intoxication level was at the time I was interviewing him, on a scale of 1 to 10, Delbert advised a 1 or 2.

Double advised he then watched TV until L.C. returned home from school. Delbert said when L.C. walked in the door, he was sitting on the couch with the Hi-Point in his hand. Delbert advised he got up, told L.C. that he shot his sister and blocked the path to the door to prevent him from leaving while L.C. was requesting to leave the house. Delbert stated during this encounter, he never pointed the handgun at L.C. and was holding it down at his side.

Delbert told me L.C. came after the handgun and a brief struggle ensued, causing the handgun to be taken away from Delbert. Delbert explained that in that moment he could not bring himself to hit L.C., in an attempt to get it back, because of his love for him. Delbert stated he felt a stronger connection with L.C. out of all of his children because L.C. was his only biological child. Delbert advised he told L.C. he would let him leave if he left the handgun. L.C. then put the handgun on the ground and exited out the front door.

Delbert initially told me he did not make any attempts to kill himself after L.C. left, but later stated he picked up the handgun from the ground and put his to his right temple. Delbert said he attempted to pull the trigger, but nothing happened. Delbert checked the Hi-Point and found that the magazine had been removed and there was no round in the chamber. Delbert explained that without the magazine, the handgun will not fire.

Delbert advised he could not find the magazine so he threw the Hi-Point onto the couch, grabbed Steven's keys to his Dodge Challenger, and fled to Mountain Home to be with Ronda. Delbert explained Ronda's house is a safe space for him because of their close relationship. Delbert said when he got to her residence, he told her everything that happened and she was very upset with him. Delbert requested that Ronda call the police on him so he could face his consequences and was arrested shortly after.

After providing me with his timeline, Delbert agreed to write an apology letter. Delbert later wrote an apology to L.C. In summary of the contents, Delbert apologized for what he did and told L.C. he is proud of him for standing up to him in that moment. Delbert concluded the letter by telling LC that he loved him and to never be like him.

Throughout the interview, Delbert told me several times that he was guilty, he did the crime, and was a "Piece of shit".

Following the interview, Delbert was transported to the Elmore County Jail by Corporal Hansen where he was booked in the aforementioned charges.

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury pursuant to the law of the State of Idaho that the foregoing is true and correct. *See* I.C. § 9-1406.

Dated this 19th day of August 2025.



Peace Officer