



# **KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE** **STATE ATTORNEY**



## **ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT** **IN AND FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Two “Caregivers” Charged in Exploitation & Neglect** **of 87-Year-Old Woman**

(Miami – July 7, 2024) - State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle and Hialeah Police Chief George Fuente announce the arrests of 49-year-old Anntoinette Deloris Woods and her 32-year-old daughter, Sharanda Patrice Coach by members of the State Attorney’s Office Elder and Vulnerable Adult Unit (EVA) for the alleged exploitation and neglect of an 87-year-old Hialeah woman.

Woods and Coach are both being charged with:

- 1 count - Exploitation of an Elderly Person or Disabled Adult – 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Felony
- 1 count - Organized Scheme to Defraud – 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Felony
- 1 count - Neglect of an Elderly Person or Disabled Adult – 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Felony
- 1 count - Abuse of an Elderly Person – 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Felony

“The potential of neglect and exploitation are nightmare scenarios for our fragile elder residents,” commented State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle. “Instances of exploitation and neglect like these in our community should be alarming for all of us who are concerned for the well-being of our elder population. The superb investigative work and follow-up activity done by the Hialeah Police Department and the investigators and staff of the State Attorney’s Office Elder and Vulnerable Adult Unit quickly disrupted a situation that may have been headed for tragedy. I applaud their excellent work.”

These arrests are the result of an investigation, initiated by the Hialeah Police Department and further reviewed and acted upon by prosecutors, investigators, and State Attorney’s Office EVA Unit staff. On April 30, 2024, police conducted a welfare check at the Victim's long-time home. Woods allegedly told police that she was the victim’s caregiver and produced a Power of Attorney document and a Medical Proxy document for the elderly woman. Woods allegedly told police that the Victim was presently living with Woods in Woods’ Miami apartment and had been since August 2023. Before that, they all had lived at the Victim’s home in Hialeah along with Woods’ mother and father.

The Victim had resided at her long-time Hialeah home since 1959, when she moved to South Florida from Tennessee with her then-husband and her disabled son, now deceased. Neighbors, who had grown up knowing the Victim well and who had assisted her with numerous home-related chores as she aged, grew concerned after not having seen the Victim for some time and observing “strange activities” at the house. Additional concerns were raised when they saw the Victim’s furniture and possessions put out onto the street

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for disposal. As a result of these observations, a report was made to the Hialeah Police Department for a wellness check on the Victim. Woods allegedly explained to the police that she met the elderly Victim at the medical office where she worked. She further stated that the Victim had asked her to assist in caring for her disabled adult son, who passed away on February 2, 2022. After the son’s death, Woods stated that she assumed the role of the Victim's caregiver and moved into the Victim's residence. The investigation later revealed that several of Woods’ family members had also moved into the Victim’s home around the same time, February 2022.

Upon arriving at the Miami apartment, allegedly the residence of Woods and our Victim, police encountered Woods’ daughter, Sharanda Patrice Coach, who granted them access. The Victim later explained that, for the most part, Coach took care of her at the apartment. In the apartment, police observed a bedroom lacking a bed, forcing the non-ambulatory victim to sleep in a recliner chair. The small, cluttered bedroom contained a disassembled bed frame and no mattress, a TV on a dresser, large black garbage bags filled with unknown items strewn about, and a folded walker and wheelchair out of the Victim’s reach. The hallway leading from the Victim’s room to the bathroom was obstructed by clothing, shoes, and plastic bags, which would have prevented her from safely accessing the bathroom had she been able to use her wheelchair.

Police also observed a contusion on the right side of the Victim’s forehead and a pronounced bruise on the right side of her face, displaying green, purple, and yellow colors. When asked how she sustained the injury to her head, the Victim thinks she probably fell but did not go to the hospital to have the injury examined. Then Coach allegedly told police that the visible injuries to the Victim’s head, face, and arm were the result of two recent separate falls on April 12, 2024, and April 28, 2024, while trying to go to the bathroom on her own. The Victim appeared to have limited mobility in her right arm and was unable to lift it. She also had a large cut on her left forearm, and her right wrist seemed contracted. Due to the Victim’s appearance and mental state, Fire Rescue was requested, and the Victim was transported to the hospital for examination and treatment. Although Woods claimed to be the Victim’s caregiver, she stayed silent when asked by fire rescue for the Victim’s medical history. She turned to the Victim seemingly to elicit a response.

At the hospital, it was found that the Victim had fractures in her right arm which Woods said came from a fall in the bathroom. The Victim had bruising on her right hand, chest, right arm, the right side of her face and eye, and her neck. Both lower legs had multiple small scrapes, with the skin on both legs appearing red and warm, indicating an infection. There was a skin breakdown on her lower back. Medical staff opined that the nature and extent of these injuries suggested that they were not solely the result of a recent fall. Subsequent treatment by medical personnel at the hospital would reveal that the Victim was suffering from malnutrition and her pacemaker needed new batteries. It should be noted that evaluating a pacemaker for battery replacement is a routine check done when a person receives regular and proper medical care, indicating that the victim has not seen a cardiologist for a significant amount of time. This is notable because Woods indicated she knew about the Victim’s pacemaker yet had not taken steps to ensure the Victim had received this necessary care.

The Victim described experiencing pain, hardness, and swelling in her legs and indicated that she had expressed to Woods and Coach the urgent need to see a doctor, but they dismissed her. She described her legs as being so swollen that she feared they would explode. They repeatedly insisted she did not require medical attention and that nothing was wrong with her. The Victim further recounted feeling disbelieved and called a liar whenever she expressed being in pain to Woods and Coach. The Victim further disclosed that she often was left alone at home during the daytime. When asked who prepared her meals, she revealed that she typically received Wendy’s burgers and other fast food and that she usually had just one meal a day, sometimes two.

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“This case, just like all cases involving elderly abuse has affected me very much. Our elderly population deserves to live with dignity, respect, and unwavering safety,” commented Hialeah Chief of Police George Fuente. “They have spent a lifetime enriching our community, and they should be embraced with love and compassion. I promise you that elder abuse will not be tolerated in our community. We will be vigilant in protecting them from harm. Anyone who attempts to exploit or endanger our elderly residents will face swift and serious consequences. My department will investigate all reports of abuse and take all necessary legal action to guarantee their safety. We owe them a secure and safe environment where their well-being and care is paramount.”

If you are interested in seeking commentary from State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle, you may call 305-547-0535 to see if it is possible to make the necessary arrangements.

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