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# Police Detail Chilling Events Leading to 9-Year-Old's Death

## Investigation uncovers disturbing details in the lead-up to tragic drowning

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**The Charlotte Amalie waterfront in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands just after sunset.**

*Editor's Note: This story contains descriptions of a child's death that some may find disturbing. It is a sensitive and tragic event, and we urge readers to exercise discretion when deciding to proceed. Our thoughts are with all affected by this heartbreaking incident.*

Before Anyah Smith made her first court appearance on Tuesday, charged in the death of her daughter, prosecutors submitted documents to the court which described the disturbing sequence of events which led to the nine-year-old's apparent drowning, as police understand it.

According to police, Ms. Smith's mother called 911 on Saturday morning around 2:10 a.m. to ask that a welfare check be conducted on her daughter, who she said might be having a psychotic breakdown. When officers arrived at the Agnes Fancy address they were given, they found several household items strewn on the ground outside.

The responding officers spoke to a witness who said that Ms. Smith and her daughter had left the house about two minutes before her mother called 911. The witness told police that Ms. Smith was wearing a blue dress and a white hat, with a funeral ribbon pinned to her shoulder. She was carrying a concrete block on her head, the witness said. Her daughter was reportedly dressed in a two-piece beige outfit. After speaking to the witness, the patrol officers searched for Ms. Smith and her daughter, but were unable to locate them.

Apart from police, Ms. Smith's friends were also looking for her. Around 5:22 a.m. one of them called 911 to say that they found her near Vitraco mall. Two friends reportedly got out of the vehicle and approached Ms. Smith, who was pacing back and forth with her daughter on her back. She told them the girl was dead, but rebuffed their attempts to take her daughter from her.

Police, when they arrived at the mall, found Ms. Smith as her friend had described. After several attempts, the girl was taken from her mother. Friends and family members attempted to resuscitate her before emergency medical technicians arrived to take over, however attempts to render aid ultimately proved unsuccessful. Those present on the scene reportedly observed water coming out of the girl's mouth.

Ms. Smith was first taken to the Richard Callwood Command police station, still clad in a blue dress, which officers noticed was wet. She was not wearing any shoes, and reportedly asked the officers if they had them. Police countered with a question about where the shoes were, and she reportedly directed them to the Waterfront. She was then taken to the Schneider Regional Medical Center to first receive treatment for a cut on her foot before being committed to the psychiatric ward pending evaluation. A detective subsequently found a pair of green and black bedroom slippers "placed neatly near the Memorial Plaque for Emil E. White," according to court documents.

Surveillance footage of the area showed Ms. Smith and her daughter walking southward on Irvin "Brownie" Brown Sr. Street at about 2:14 a.m. – four minutes or so after her mother made the initial 911 call. In the footage, the 32-year-old woman was seen carrying a concrete block on her head, with her daughter holding what looked like a white appliance cord in one hand, and a hammer in the other. Around 2:20 a.m., Ms. Smith and her daughter crossed Veteran's Drive and walked onto the Waterfront near the Emile E. White memorial. The cameras captured them seeming to sit by the water's edge at 2:21 a.m. before disappearing under the surface shortly thereafter.

On Sunday, a dive team was tasked with searching the area where Ms. Smith and her daughter were last seen sitting. Police say that within three minutes of entering the water, the dive team found a concrete block with a white electric cord tied to it. The other end of the cord was looped around itself. Authorities now believe that Ms. Smith may have tied her daughter to the concrete block using the cord, before both of them went into the water. Shortly after that grim discovery, divers also found the girl's school identification card with her name and photo on it.

Police spoke to Ms. Smith's sister, who said that her sibling sent several unsettling text messages before the incident. In one, Ms. Smith wrote that she was going to miss her sister; in another, she said that "they" were coming to kill her when the sun went down. She also made [posts on social](#)

[media](#) expressing a similar belief, the Consortium has confirmed.

Ms. Smith's sister told police that her niece had also texted her, saying that her mother was breaking the devices, including the phone. The sister told police that when she was at the scene on Saturday morning, she asked Ms. Smith what was going on. Her sibling told her that people were chasing her, but that she and her daughter had swum away. When asked why she did not let her daughter go, Ms. Smith reportedly told her sister that she did not know who to trust.

Ms. Smith was released from hospital on Monday, and charged with first- and second-degree murder, first-degree reckless endangerment, child abuse and aggravated child abuse, child neglect, and third-degree assault as an act of domestic violence.

Although court records indicate that she did appear before Magistrate Simone VanHoltenturnbull on Tuesday morning, it is unclear whether the judge's pre-trial release order modified the initial \$1 million bail set at the time of her arrest. No other details of the magistrate's order have been made available to the public as of press time. The next court appearance for Ms. Smith has been scheduled for April 5.