

**FILED**  
**12-11-2024**  
**Green Lake County**  
**Clerk of Circuit Court**  
**2024CM000176**

**STATE OF WISCONSIN**

**CIRCUIT COURT**

**GREEN LAKE COUNTY**

STATE OF WISCONSIN,  
Plaintiff,

DA Case No.: 2024GL000937  
Assigned DA: GERISE M LASPISA  
Agency Case No.: 241913  
ATN: 24000000405565

vs.

RYAN A BORGWARDT  
W5056 CTH CW  
WATERTOWN, WI 53098  
DOB: 09/09/1979

**CRIMINAL COMPLAINT**

Defendant.

The undersigned being first duly sworn, deposes and says:

Your complainant, a sworn law enforcement officer with the Green Lake County Sheriff's Office, states that this complaint is based on official law enforcement agency reports prepared by one or more investigating officers, whom your complainant believes to be truthful and reliable. Said reports have been prepared, filed, and maintained in the normal and ordinary course of business of said law enforcement agency. Your complainant states that relevant portions of said law enforcement reports are included or summarized in the probable cause section of this complaint.

**Count 1: OBSTRUCTING AN OFFICER**

The above-named defendant on or about 8/11/24 - 8/12/24, in the Town of Princeton, Green Lake County, Wisconsin, did knowingly obstruct an officer, while such officer was doing an act in an official capacity and with lawful authority, to wit: knowingly placing physical evidence with the intent to mislead officers in the performance of their duties, contrary to sec. 946.41(1) Wis. Stats., a Class A Misdemeanor, and upon conviction may be fined not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), or imprisoned not more than nine (9) months, or both.

**PROBABLE CAUSE:**

On 8/12/2024, the Green Lake County Sheriff's Office was notified that on August 11, 2024, at 10:39 p.m., Ryan Borgwardt was believed to have been on Green Lake just off of Dodge Memorial Park, Town of Green lake, Green Lake, WI. Thereafter, the Green Lake Sheriff's Department deputies, acting in their official capacity began an official investigation in to the disappearance of Ryan. Investigating missing persons is within the official duties of sworn law enforcement.

According to the investigation performed by multiple deputies, command staff and detectives of the Green Lake County Sheriff's Department, in the late evening of 8/11/24, Ryan went out on the lake with a Kayak. On 8/12/24, deputies recovered this overturned kayak with the life jacket still in place. Ryan inflated a raft that he had taken with him and headed back to shore. While out on the lake, Ryan threw his cell phone in to the lake. Ryan had a fishing pole and tackle box that contained his identifying documents with him and left that in to the lake as well. The fishing pole, was discovered in the lake and the tackle box still containing his identifiers was found washed up on shore. Once on shore, Ryan got on an e-bike that he had brought with him and stashed on shore, rode it to a Greyhound bus stop and took that bus to the Toronto Airport in Canada. From there, Ryan flew to Europe and went on to Eastern Europe/Western Asia where he took up residency.

The Sheriff's Department investigated Ryan's disappearance at first as a missing person believing that he may have drowned in the lake based in part upon the physical evidence Ryan intentionally placed on and around Green Lake.

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Law Enforcement eventually spoke with Ryan who confirmed that he had intentionally placed physical evidence in an attempt to fake his death.

FROM THE REPORT OF DETECTIVE HANSON:

Specifically, Ryan told law enforcement the following:

[E]verything began on the Thursday or Friday prior to August 11. RYAN stated that he was looking at weather and was going to do this on Sunday or Monday. RYAN stated he knew he had a long bike ride and wanted to have good weather for this. RYAN stated on August 11, 2024, he woke up in the morning and went to church with his family. After church he came home and went to his shop to prepare. RYAN stated that at some point he did go home for a little while and load up a few more things. After that, he went back to his shop and loaded up the eBike that he had purchased a few weeks prior. RYAN stated that he had been keeping the eBike at the shop. RYAN stated that he was worried about cameras at the shop so he backed the trailer all the way up to the building so that way no one can see him loading the bike into the trailer. RYAN mentioned after he left the shop he went to Walmart in Oshkosh, his intent was to get a life jacket, however Walmart did not have any life jackets. RYAN did state that he did buy UW Oshkosh hat as well as a backpack.

RYAN stated after he left Walmart in Oshkosh he went to his friends, [ ] house. RYAN stated that he knew [his friend] was away and that he'd be able to load up [stove] pellets. RYAN stated that he was surprised when [his friend] ended up showing up earlier than he thought; however, RYAN'S stated he quickly closed up the trailer so that [his friend] didn't see the bike inside of the trailer.

RYAN advised after speaking with [his friend] for a little bit he then left for Green Lake. RYAN thinks he got to Green Lake around 10:00 PM on August 11, 2024. RYAN did state that he was a little freaked out when he turned onto CTH K from STH 73, as he saw a squad on CTH K turning on to STH 73. RYAN knew the park he was going to was a county park and figured that the squad had to do periodic checkouts at the park. RYAN figured since the squad had just gone past that he was in the clear for a while. RYAN stated that he then parked his van and trailer just south of Dodge Memorial Park. This is when RYAN began getting the kayak out, and the other items. RYAN stated that he stashed the eBike and a helmet and a backpack in the tree line just north of where his van was parked. RYAN stated that he took his, tacklebox, fishing pole, net, duffel bag with the inflatable raft and he put in on the southside of County Road K.

Ryan stated that he attempted to go under the Bridge on County Road K however, didn't realize he could not get through. He then had to bring everything up on shore near the bridge on County Road K and cross over to the north side. He then put the Kayak in and got back on the water.

RYAN stated he had to come up with a plausible story how he got out into the middle of the lake. RYAN made comments that he was concerned of what law enforcement would think. During the interview RYAN made multiple comments that he had to make this believable so that everyone, including law enforcement would think he drowned in the lake. RYAN stated that once she [sic] got out to where he thought the deepest part was, he tossed the phone in the lake. RYAN began inflating the raft and hopped in the raft. RYAN then flipped over the kayak.

RYAN advised it was at this time that the tackle box and the fishing pole went into the lake. RYAN also made comments that he wanted to leave his life preserver on the kayak, again to make it more believable that he drowned in the lake. We did ask RYAN why he tried to purchase a life preserver from Walmart. He didn't want to die in the lake, and he couldn't use life preserver he brought with him because that one needed to stay on the kayak to make it more believable.

RYAN stated that once he got to shore, he ended up in a lot of muck and cattails. RYAN stated it was difficult to get out of the water. RYAN mentioned that he ended up to almost his hip area with muck. RYAN stated that as he went across CTH K that he was leaving some muddy footprints. RYAN was worried about the footprint as he thought it would be easy for law enforcement to figure out that the footprints came out of the lake and went towards the van. RYAN washed his pants/ shoes off in the water on the south side of County Road K. RYAN then attempted to wash the footprints off of the road and only washed about two footprints off of the roadway. RYAN stated that he needed to get going so he got his eBike and started peddling, westbound on CTH K. RYAN mentioned that it was dark, and it took a bit but eventually figured out how to turn the power switch on the eBike. RYAN is not exactly sure of his route, but he thinks he might've

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taken CTH K to STH 73 and then over CTH B. RYAN stated that he did not want to stay on STH 73 too long as he did not want to get hit by a vehicle. Most of his route was back county roads.

RYAN told us that he had bought a spare battery with the eBike, and he did need to switch out batteries at some point. RYAN told me during riding the eBike he got very cold, so he ended up changing his shoes and pants. RYAN remembered when it was around 5 AM because that's usually when [his wife] would wake up. RYAN made comments that he was worried because now things were in motion and there was no going back. RYAN stated that he went to a park approximately 45-minute walk north of Dutch Mill Park and Ride. RYAN told us that he ditched the eBike at the park. RYAN also mentioned that he also threw away some of his clothing and the inflatable raft.

RYAN stated from the park he walked to the greyhound bus he believes he got to Dutch Mill Park around 9:15 AM, from there he got on the greyhound bus onto Milwaukee then Chicago and Detroit. RYAN made comments that after Detroit, the bus went through the border crossing to get to the Toronto airport. RYAN stated from here he had to go through customs and knew things might get interesting.

RYAN stated that he was asked for a driver's license and didn't have one. RYAN told me he didn't have one because he left it in his tackle box. RYAN stated that he showed Customs and Border Patrol his passport, as he thought that would be good enough; however, they still wanted to see his driver's license. RYAN stated that Canadian Boarder Parol separated him from the rest of the group and were asking him questions. RYAN stated that it seemed like they were suspicious of him. RYAN also did not have a working phone, and he stated that his phone died sometime around Madison right after he sent a message to [the adult female he was going to meet with]. RYAN stated that the phone would turn on but seemed to be lock out of it and it would not function properly.

RYAN stated that the Canadian Border Patrol was asking him a lot of questions about why he was coming to Canada. When RYAN made comments that he was going to get on a flight. They wanted to see his flight itinerary. RYAN told them he was unable to get his phone to work and that they were even more suspicious about that now. RYAN did tell them which flight she was considering, and ultimately, they allowed him to continue.

RYAN advised that once he got to the airport, he bought his plane ticket. RYAN stated that he had to use the Western Union card to get the plane ticket. RYAN advised that the Air Canada gift cards never went through and that he was unable to use the commerce card to purchase the Air Canada cards. RYAN stated that once he purchased the Air France tickets he hung around the airport for a while, had some food then boarded the Air France flight for Paris. RYAN did remember, pulling out his computer at one point during the flight to check on news over in Green Lake. He did remember seeing something about the missing kayaker and believes that his plan had worked.

RYAN told us after landing in Paris, he boarded a flight to an a country in Asia. RYAN stated that he went through customs in [in that country] and that was fairly easy. RYAN stated that at the airport in [that country], he sent an email to [an adult female] that he had arrived. He waited about an hour for her to come and pick him up. Once [the adult female] picked him up, they went to a hotel. RYAN mentioned by this time it was Wednesday evening. RYAN told us that they stayed at the hotel for a couple of days. RYAN went on to say that he took approximately \$5,500 in cash with him into Canada and this was all he took with him.

RYAN made comments that he had spent a great deal of time researching how to disappear. I asked RYAN what he all researched. RYAN stated that he researched other individuals that had successfully disappeared recently. RYAN stated there was an individual that disappeared for approximately six years. He researched lake deaths and researched how deep a body has to be without resurfacing. RYAN researched a lot of other things in regard to his disappearance as well, such as travel, how to take money over to another Country, and different ways he could leave the country with leaving as minimum number of clues as possible. RYAN stated, "everything hinged on me dying in the lake". RYAN also stated, "whole idea was to sell the death".

[...]

RYAN did make comments that he knew at some point that we [...] discovered that he was not deceased; however, wanted to make that as long of a time as possible. RYAN stated even if we found out that he was not deceased, he wanted to add as many layers as he possibly could so that he could not be found or tracked. RYAN stated that even when he

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would check the news, which he did every couple of days that he would only read headlines and that he rarely clicked on a news article. RYAN stated that when he clicked on news articles, he would use a VPN and sometimes make it look like he was in Russia or somewhere else other than Georgia. RYAN stated that he knew that Georgia would have extradite him and he wanted to be informed and prepared.

RYAN stated as he monitored the news that he did not know something such as Bruce Legacy existed. RYAN thought that law enforcement would only search for a few weeks and maybe check in once in a while. [...]

We did ask RYAN about the November 8, 2024, date when he got the email from Chief Deputy Vande Kolk. RYAN stated that is heart hit the floor. RYAN also stated he saw the picture of [the adult female that he went to meet] and knew that he made a mistake, the one mistake that he couldn't make. RYAN stated that he had attempted to back up the laptop that he left back at home for EMILY. He stated that he apparently backed up too many things and that too much data came over. I did ask RYAN about the laptop, RYAN stated that he had to sell the death and that he couldn't take his laptop with him it needed to be believable that he died in the lake.

[...]

We did confirm with RYAN that he intentionally placed his kayak, tacklebox, fishing pole, and left his cell phone in the lake to make law enforcement and everyone else believe that he had drowned in Green Lake. RYAN knew that law enforcement from Green Lake County would respond and begin a search for him. RYAN also knew that [ ]placing these items in Green Lake along with leaving his vehicle here and his method of leaving Green Lake County would again leave us to believe that he drowned in the lake and that we would be searching for him in the lake. RYAN'S intent was to mislead the Green Lake County Sheriff's Office.

Based on the foregoing, the complainant believes this complaint to be true and correct.

Subscribed and sworn to before me on 12/11/24

Electronically Signed By:

Electronically Signed By:

Deputy Patterson

GERISE M LASPISA

Complainant

District Attorney

State Bar #: 1025212