

Two Teens Charged with July 4th Murder

Written by Steve Frank
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The 4th of July holiday was marred with the discovery of a Roan Mountain man, dead on the porch of his home, and the arrests of two teens for his murder. Carter County Sheriff Chris Mathes said two teenagers are accused of murdering a 56-year-old Danny R. Vance after robbing the man at his Heaton Creek Road home earlier Friday. Mathes said both teens confessed to their roles in the death of Vance during a news conference held Sunday afternoon in the Carter County Criminal Courtroom. Mathes identified the teens as Anthony Lacy, 18, and 19-year old Demetrice Cordell, who he said admitted to robbing and killing Vance.

The Sheriff told the press, "Both men, in their own right, gave confessions (and) accountability of what happened to their role of the murder of Mr. Vance," and he said. "This was strictly two men that decided to go rob an older man who lived alone, and they ended up killing him."

Mathes said the two teens committed several crimes before committing the homicide, according to Sheriff Mathes, who said that before Vance's death, Lacy and Cordell had begun a sort of "crime spree" that spread throughout Roan Mountain the day before, July 3rd, starting along U.S. Highway 19E in the area of Victory Baptist Church, where he said a truck was stolen.

Mathes said the pair ditched the truck and then stole a four-wheeler. They also trespassed on numerous properties, stealing what they could steal in the Roan Mountain area. Carter Cpt. Jeff Markand said the crime spree peaked between the hours of 11 p.m. July 3 and 1:30 a.m. July 4, when the two men went to Vance's residence, knowing the man had guns and some cash.

Markland said evidence tends to show Vance died as a result of blunt force trauma to the back of his head, and that a large rock was found at the scene. The cause of death had not been determined by an autopsy. Markland said the two men were each being charged with first-degree murder, theft counts, evading arrest and especially aggravated robbery, and are being held at the jail on \$210,000 bonds.