Three caretakers at Vernal care home arrested for beating resident

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VERNAL, Utah — Three caretakers at a Vernal care home for adults with mental disabilities were arrested Friday after police found they were physically abusing a resident.

Kayla Jeanine Evans, 33, and Ashia Wyasket, 23, were arrested for Intentional Aggravated Abuse of a Vulnerable Adult. Evans has additional charges for Intentional Abuse or Neglect, as well as Obstruction of Justice.

Booking documents filed by police mention a third person arrested for abuse, criminal negligence, and obstruction of justice, but at time of writing, FOX 13 News has not been able to verify their identity.

According to the probable cause statement filed by the Uintah County Sheriff's office, the investigation began just after 7:00 p.m. Friday night in a residential area near 900 North 1500 East. A neighbor had called police after a young man ran from a home that was later discovered to be a residence for adults with mental disabilities managed by North Eastern Services.

At time of reporting, the company has not yet responded to FOX 13 News' request for comment.

The neighbor told officers that the young man, who is non-verbal, was sobbing. His face was also covered in blood. When the neighbor asked the man who hit him, he pointed Evans, who had run across the street after him. The man was taken to a local hospital for treatment.

As police questioned the neighbor and employees working at the care home, officers learned that Evans and Wyasket had both walked into the bedroom where the man had been staying and took turns beating him with a wooden dowel normally used to keep the back door of the home shut.

Employees also told officers that Evans was not supposed to be at the home due to a hand injury, but was brought there by the third suspect, who is also an employee. One of the employees they questioned provided them with an audio recording of the incident they recorded on their phone right after they saw Wyasket grab the dowel and take it to the room.

According to the officer's description, the audio starts with sounds of the man making noise and kicking the door. It was later revealed that this was prompted by Evans and Wyasket locking him inside. Wyasket is then heard yelling at the man shortly before striking his head with the dowel. Multiple strikes were heard, and the two suspects are heard laughing. Officers later found remnants of blood on the walls and floor of the bedroom.

The employees then told police that Evans and Wyasket collaborated on a story they would submit in an incident report. They also explained that both of them had a history of beating the man, with Evans breaking her hand on the back of the man's head in an August 11 incident. Since Evans and Wyasket were both managers at the home, the employees were afraid to report the beatings out of fear of losing their jobs.

When officers took Wyasket into custody, she initially denied the allegations, claiming the man hurt himself in his bedroom. When confronted with evidence of the audio recording, she later admitted to hitting the man due to him spitting on her. She then stated that Evans was the main instigator.

When Evans was taken into custody, she also initially denied the allegations, also stating the the man had hit himself during a tantrum. She, too, admitted to hitting the man after being confronted with evidence of the audio recording.

Later on, as officers were working to verify details provided by Evans and Wyasket, they learned of inconsistencies with information that was provided by the third suspect.

They initially told police that they weren't near the bedroom where it happened, but the employee who provided the audio recording said they were standing in the doorway of the bedroom during the entire incident. Officers later took the third suspect into custody.

Both Evans and Wyasket have since been released from jail pending trial.