

# Fairchild found unfit for trial

**Corryn Brock**, Editor-in-Chief

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*Editor's Note: This story contains graphic details from a police investigation of a death and police interviews with a man charged in connection with the death.*

Joshua Fairchild, a man charged in connection with the death of a Charleston woman, has been deemed unfit to stand trial following a psychological evaluation with the possibility of being found fit within the next year, according to court documents.

Currently, Fairchild has been remanded to the Department of Human Services for treatment and a status hearing will be held Nov. 22 regarding the charges of murder and concealing a homicidal death he is facing.

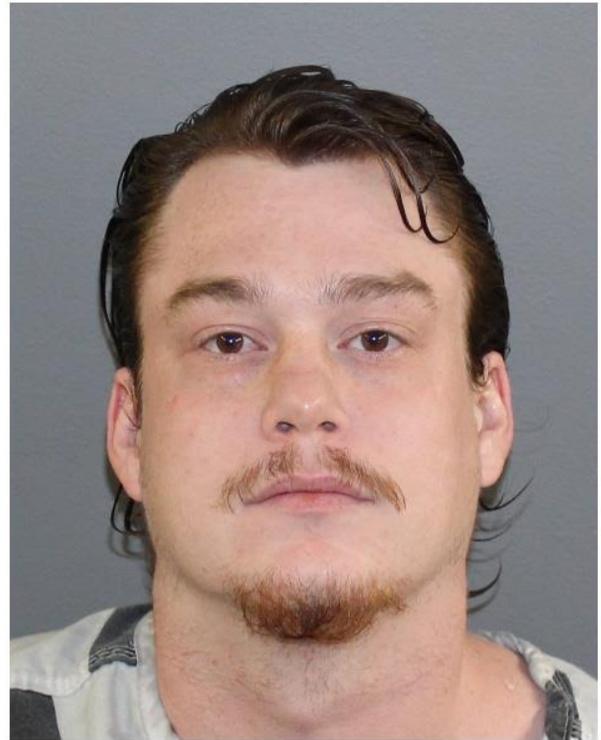
Fairchild was arrested in June after police were requested to do a wellness check on Cheleta S. Branch at 802 Jackson Ave. When performing the check, police noticed an odor similar to decomposition, according to a police affidavit.

Police attempted to enter the residence and were met by Fairchild whose “hands were extremely shaking and (whose) face was also twitching uncontrollably.”

When asked about the smell, Fairchild said the smell could be from dirty dishes in the residence.

Police say Fairchild was then prompted to allow officers into the residence for the wellbeing check. He then denied request and told the police to get a warrant.

After obtaining a warrant, police entered the residence to find what appeared to be a large pile of clothing in the doorway between the living room and bedroom, as well as several insects in the immediate area.



Submitted photo

According to the affidavit, they began peeling back layers of clothing, sleeping bags, towels, sheets and a tarp until they were able to see human feet faced as though there was a body laying on its stomach. Police then stopped and waited for members of the Coles County Coroner's Office to arrive.

Once all layers were removed, police saw a deceased female laying on the floor.

Coles County Coroner Ed Schniers informed the police that the body had been there for "some time," possibly weeks, but they were unable to say with certainty due to the extreme heat in the residence from not having air conditioning and because the body and several of the coverings were wet.

It was noted that the toenails on the deceased were painted a pink or red color.

When police began to interview Fairchild, he stated that Branch attacked him around May or April.

According to the affidavit, Fairchild said he went for a walk and when he returned home, he and Branch got into a verbal argument which led to a physical argument in which Branch grabbed a knife and came at him.

He said while attempting to defend himself, his hand was sliced open by Branch. He said he then grabbed another knife and stabbed Branch in the neck.

Police say Fairchild then said it was clear to him that Branch wanted him to kill her because "she had a look in her eyes like he has seen in the movies of someone that wanted to die."

He said he stabbed Branch at least one more time in the neck and possibly other places on her head, adding that part of the knife may have been broken off in Branch's neck. Fairchild also stated that he had to bleed Branch out to ensure she was dead and also put her in a chokehold.

He said he then put coverings over the deceased and later painted her toenails and braided her hair.

Police say they asked why he did not call the police, to which they say Fairchild replied with "in L.A., a dead body on the side of the street isn't a big deal."

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