

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

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For Immediate Release

Vista Man Charged With Obstructing Murder Investigation

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY – June 27, 2013

Brian Karl Brimager, former boyfriend of United States Citizen Yvonne Baldelli, was indicted by a federal grand jury in San Diego yesterday on charges that he obstructed justice and made false statements to law enforcement in connection with the investigation into Baldelli's suspected murder in Panama in 2011. Agents with the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested Brimager without incident this morning at his house in Vista.

The indictment, unsealed today, alleges that Brimager killed Baldelli in late November 2011 and then engaged in an elaborate scheme to cover up his crime. This scheme included destroying evidence, giving false information to law enforcement, and sending a series of emails purportedly from Baldelli making it appear to her friends and family that she was still alive and traveling with another man in Costa Rica.

According to the indictment, in September 2011 the couple moved together from Los Angeles to the archipelago of Bocas del Toro, Panama. They rented a room in a five-unit hostel on Isla Carenero, a small

island near Bocas reachable only by boat. The indictment alleges that while in Panama, Baldelli suffered physical abuse at the hands of Brimager resulting in bruising around her eyes and on her arms.

Baldelli was last seen on the evening of November 26, 2011, when she left Carlos' Steakhouse, a bar and restaurant in Bocas del Toro, with Brimager.

The indictment alleges that after Baldelli's disappearance, Brimager created a cover story to explain her whereabouts and in the days and months that followed engaged in a series of obstructive acts designed to make that version appear credible. For example, using Baldelli's laptop, Brimager sent emails to Baldelli's friends and family from her personal email account, purporting to be from Baldelli, falsely stating that she was in Costa Rica with another man. To "corroborate" this story, Brimager traveled to Bocas Del Toro on November 27, 2011 and withdrew money from Baldelli's bank account at an ATM to make it appear that she was on her way to Costa Rica. Later, on his way back to the United States, Brimager took a two-day layover in Costa Rica. According to the indictment, while in Costa Rica, Brimager made another withdrawal from Baldelli's bank account at an ATM in order to make it appear that Baldelli was alive and in San Jose.

"Brimager impersonated Baldelli over email in an attempt to trick her friends and family into believing she was still alive, thereby obstructing, influencing and impeding investigation into her disappearance and suspected death," the indictment said.

In addition to sending fake emails from Baldelli, the indictment charges that Brimager obstructed justice by disposing of physical evidence, including a bloody mattress. The indictment alleges that prior to dumping the mattress in the ocean, Brimager conducted two internet searches on Baldelli's computer – one for "washing mattress" and a second for "washing mattress blood stain." The indictment also alleges that Brimager got rid of Baldelli's personal belongings – including clothing, cosmetics and jewelry – by packing the items into approximately 10 large garbage bags and leaving them on the dock outside the hostel for disposal.

The indictment also charges Brimager with making materially false statements to the FBI during an interview on March 21, 2012. The indictment alleges that Brimager falsely stated to the FBI that Baldelli left Panama for Costa Rica on November 27, 2011. Brimager also claimed that Baldelli took her white Sony VAIO laptop with her when she left Panama, when in fact, the laptop was found in Brimager's possession on March 21, 2012 – months after Baldelli's disappearance. The indictment alleges that Brimager also made materially false statements to the FBI regarding the laptop ever being in Panama, Brimager's plans to return to the United States, and his striking of Baldelli. Brimager also falsely stated, according to the indictment, that he had never accessed Baldelli's personal email account or sent emails purporting to be from Baldelli.

DEFENDANT

Case Number: 13CR2381-JM

Brian Karl Brimager

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Obstruction of Justice, 10 counts - Title 18, United States Code, Section 1512(c)(2)

Maximum Penalties: 20 years imprisonment for each count, a \$250,000 fine, 3 years supervised release

False Statement to a Federal Officer, 1 count - Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001

Maximum Penalties: 5 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, 3 years supervised release

AGENCIES

Federal Bureau of Investigation

***An indictment itself is not evidence that the defendant committed the crimes charged. The defendant is presumed innocent until the United States meets its burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.**