

**Affidavit in Support of an Application
for a Criminal Complaint**

I, Jill Paxton, being duly sworn under oath, do hereby depose and state:

1. I have been a Federal Law Enforcement Officer with the National Park Service since June 2014. I graduated from Southwestern Community College's SLETP, a Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) approved Seasonal Law Enforcement Training Program in Franklin, North Carolina, in November 2013. I graduated from FLETC's Land Management Police Training (LMPT) program in February 2020. Since 2013, I have worked as a patrol officer for the National Park Service in New Mexico, Wyoming/Montana/Idaho (Yellowstone National Park), and North Carolina. I am currently assigned as a patrol officer on the Blue Ridge Parkway. During my time as a patrol officer, I have worked various types of criminal investigations ranging from minor traffic offenses to violent felonies, including homicides.

2. The facts and statements in this Affidavit are based in part on information provided by other law enforcement officers and on my personal observations, training, and experience. This Affidavit is intended to show that there is probable cause for the requested arrest warrant and does not set forth all my knowledge about this matter.

3. Based on my investigation, training, and experience, and the facts as set forth in this Affidavit, it is my belief that on February 28, 2026, in Transylvania County on the Blue Ridge Parkway within the Western District of North Carolina,

BRANDON KEITH MATHEWS violated Title 18, United States Code, Section 113(a)(3) (assault with a dangerous weapon with intent to do bodily harm). In support of that belief, I state the following:

4. On February 28, 2026, shortly after 4:00 p.m., I responded to a 911 call of a man attacking someone with a hatchet near mile post 411, in Transylvania County, on the Blue Ridge Parkway within the Western District of North Carolina. The caller, B.T.W., stated that the assailant had fled the scene in a silver Honda CR-V.

5. Upon arriving on scene, I met B.T.W. and learned that he was driving behind a silver Honda CR-V that was driving slowly. B.T.W. honked his car horn at the driver, which prompted the driver to stop the Honda in the roadway and get out. The driver, who was unknown to B.T.W. at the time but has now been identified as BRANDON KEITH MATHEWS, approached him and started yelling. B.T.W. got out of his car and yelled at MATHEWS that he was not afraid of him. A female riding in the passenger seat of MATHEWS' Honda also got out and tried to intervene between the two men.

6. Once both men were outside of their respective cars, MATHEWS went back to his Honda and grabbed a hatchet. He went back toward B.T.W. and swung that hatchet at his head, narrowly missing him only when B.T.W. was able to duck out of the way. MATHEWS then went back to his Honda and left the scene. B.T.W. described the hatchet as an "axe" having a wooden handle, about the length of a tire iron, and either feather or leather tied around the top of the handle. B.T.W. told officers that he believed the man swung the "axe" with the intent to kill him.

7. Two other witnesses remained on scene for me to speak with. Neither witness had any connection to B.T.W. or MATHEWS. Each witness substantially corroborated B.T.W.'s version of events, saying the two men were yelling at each other when MATHEWS pulled the weapon and swung it at the victim. One of the witnesses described it as a "hatchet type tool." The witnesses believed MATHEWS tried to kill B.T.W. and thought he had been hit with the weapon based on how close MATHEWS swung to his head.

8. Based on his license plate and registered information, MATHEWS was located a short time later at his residence in Haywood County. Both MATHEWS and his female passenger told me they cooked dinner at a picnic area in the nearby forest before driving toward the Parkway. MATHEWS described B.T.W. driving behind him, revving his engine and honking. He felt that B.T.W. was following him so he stopped his car to confront him. When MATHEWS got out, B.T.W. initially remained in his car and was yelling at him before also getting out. MATHEWS said he went back to his Honda and grabbed a walking stick which he held over his head in a striking manner, but never swung toward B.T.W.

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9. MATHEWS gave officers permission to search his Honda CR-V. Inside we located a walking stick that was approximately five feet in length. Behind the driver's seat, we found and seized the hatchet pictured below that matched B.T.W.'s description of the weapon used to attack him:



/s/ Jill Paxton

U.S. Park Ranger Jill Paxton, NPS

This Affidavit was reviewed by Assistant United States Attorney Alex M. Scott.

In accordance with Rule 4.1(b)(2)(A), the Affiant attested under oath to the contents of this Affidavit, which was submitted to me by reliable electronic means, on this 2nd day of March 2026, at 1:33 PM.

W. Carleton Metcalf
United States Magistrate Judge



Hon. W. Carleton Metcalf
United States Magistrate Judge