

Local Woman Survives Terrifying Home Invasion, Suspect Arrested; Terror Continues...

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A woman was brutally attacked in her own home Friday morning. The encounter began around 8:30am, when the suspect, identified as Heather McDaniel, allegedly broke through the victim's fence, entered the backyard, and climbed through a bedroom window, launching a violent assault on the victim, identified as, A. Trinity Blackcloud.

Blackcloud described the nightmare scenario during the attack which involved multiple weapons and multiple injuries including stab wounds, cuts, and blunt force trauma from a coffee pot. "It was like a scene from a horror movie," she recounted, "I thought I was going to die." In a desperate struggle for survival, Blackcloud fought back against McDaniel, who exhibited alarming shifts in personality throughout the attack. The victim reported hearing the suspect switch from an aggressive, growling voice -identified as "Samson", demanding Blackcloud's death- to a carefree surfer tone, attempting to diffuse the situation, to a child-like voice that cried out about the pain of sexual abuse, claiming her Father had assaulted her. "It was haunting, it was as if I was hearing her entire past through different people, right in front of me," Blackcloud recalled. The nightmare escalated until Blackcloud's roommate, Danyelle Campos, who heard the commotion, intervened, and assisted in getting the attacker neutralized, saving Blackcloud's life. "I couldn't believe what was happening. I just reacted," said the roommate. "The screams coming from that basement have haunted me ever since. I keep replaying it."

After being neutralized and disarmed, McDaniel was restrained by the two residents of the home until police arrived. It was later reported by the victim, that McDaniel entered the home in search of Danyelle Campos, claiming that the woman was responsible for her homelessness, but encountered Blackcloud before reaching Campos, and attacked her. "If (Trinity) wasn't home, I would have been killed in my sleep," Campos tearfully stated. Both the suspect and victim were transported to the hospital by ambulance for their injuries. McDaniel was transported to the El Paso County Criminal Justice Center and booked for 1st Degree Attempted Murder, and Felony Burglary.

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It was later learned that Heather McDaniel is the eldest daughter of the homeowner and landlord of the residence, Michael McDaniel, Jr., and the victims had just leased the home 20 days prior to the attack. Reports indicate that the suspect was possibly evicted in a forceful or illegal manner, just days prior to Blackcloud and Campos moving into the home, fueling a volatile vendetta.

In a disturbing continuation of their nightmare, Blackcloud reported that the following days after the attack, Michael McDaniel Jr. entered her home unannounced, and visibly intoxicated, accompanied by at least three family members. They allegedly demanded that the victims vacate the home within 30 days, stating the desire to sell the home after the recent events. "It felt like I was being victimized all over again," Blackcloud expressed, also questioning why the landlord had not done more to secure the safety of the home. "I'm just learning that this person who attacked me, has also attacked multiple members of her family recently, and I would have appreciated a warning she was violent, and may try to harm us," she said. Police were called to the residence the same night as the encounter with the landlord, for reports of an unidentified "peeping tom" spotted lurking in the backyard. Police were able to locate evidence suggesting somebody was in the backyard that night, but were unsuccessful in locating the suspect.

This series of unsettling events has heightened concern among neighbors, one nearby neighbor who wished to remain anonymous said, "In 20 years of living here, I was never scared for my life, now I can't leave my house without worrying." Local authorities continue to investigate the circumstances surrounding the landlord's actions, the psychological state of the assailant, and the possibility of other suspects being involved due to the newest incidents at the home. The community remains vigilant hoping to find solace and security in the aftermath of this traumatic event, but remaining concerned due to continued police activity.

As Blackcloud continues to recover, she remains vocal about the importance of understanding and addressing mental health issues. "We need to ensure that people like Heather get the help they need before the worst happens," she said, expressing the need for discussions about mental illness and its role in situations such as this. Reports indicate the suspect has a history of mental illness, and violence. "There's an unprecedented mental health crisis plaguing our city, and we have been calling for greater attention to this crisis, more resources for these people, and an actual facility to help them..... we are failing these sick people. The county uses the jail as a mental health hospital, because there is no other options, and in turn these people are neglected, misdiagnosed, improperly medicated, and further traumatized, accelerating their illness. People are dying in there from mental illnesses not being treated, Zacaria Spriggs just died as a result of negligence. He committed suicide after crying out for help for months, and being ignored. We must find better solutions for our people," said Blackcloud. "The jail is not a mental health facility, or a homeless shelter, and we must demand it stop being used for those purposes. I forgive Heather, and I want her to get better," Blackcloud sentimentally expressed. "There's people inside of the jail that have been asking for mental health support for over a year, like Phoenix Ugrilla. Something's got to change, we need to unite to end this crisis," Blackcloud stated, while suggesting local advocates unite to facilitate and plan for solutions.