

The initial fraudulent act occurred in 2008-2015 when Shirley Sears obtained forged a power of attorney over Alona Naylor's great-grandmother Nancy Heath Young who had dementia, and Alzheimer's. Shirley used this to take out a reverse mortgage on the family home at 3335 Northwest 13th Avenue for \$382,000, falsely claiming it was to pay off \$25,000 in debts. Alona's aunt Willie Jean and grandmother Freeda were unaware of the full amount, which led to a foreclosure and major family conflict.

In an effort to save the house, Alona's uncle, Willie Jim Warren, intended to sell a second property he owned to help fund the negotiated short sale. However, Harvette Smith duped Willie Jim and his wife into deeding their property to her, claiming that she would pay the capital gains tax when it sold the address to the second property is 3011 NW 65th Street . Harvette then deeded the property back to the Warrens' after being confronted of her wrongdoing by Alona, and Willie Jean after delaying the short sale and impeding efforts to save the family home.

Eventually, Willie Jim Warren sold his property and Alona took out personal loans, managing to purchase the family home in a short sale for \$60,000 in cash. In July 2019, Willie Jean executed a quitclaim deed transferring ownership of the house to Alona, as she was the only family member providing financial support and caregiving. The deed was properly notarized by Caridad Blanco but not immediately recorded to avoid further family discord.

Two weeks before Willie Jean's passing in May 2020, Harvette Smith attempted to coerce her into signing a power of attorney over finances, and property. Late one evening, Harvette visited Willie Jean, who was in poor health, and presented her with a power of attorney document without a notary present. Harvette put the document on the kitchen table directing Willie Jean to sign while Harvette went to the bathroom telling Willie Jean to sign it and that she would "take care of it at work." Feeling pressured and confused, Willie Jean told Harvette to call Alona for advice. Alona was called by Harvette on that night, and Alona immediately started questioning the need for a power of attorney and expressing concern about the timing and circumstances of the request. Harvette claimed it was to protect the family's interests, but Alona remained skeptical and advising Harvette to leave being that Willie Jean was upset about the bogus request. Willie Jean ultimately refused to sign the document, telling Harvette that if any names were to be added, it should only be Alona's, not Harvette's or Shirley's. Alona later took possession of the unsigned power of attorney document.

After Willie Jean passed away on May 17, 2020, Shirley and Harvette immediately began pressuring Alona for the deed to the house. On the day after Willie Jean's passing, they physically cornered Alona at Shirley's house, demanding to see the original deed Alona had in possession. Harvette threatened Alona, saying, "You're kind of smart. I have to make sure it's not something you conjured up." Alona felt Harvette was ready to physically harm her, as she had her hand on her gun while in police uniform during this confrontation.

When Alona refused to hand over the deed, and recorded it in June 2020, Shirley and Harvette took steps to fraudulently challenge its validity. They persuaded Willie Jean's former informal caregiver, Lenita Gibbs, to sign a false affidavit claiming the deed was signed under duress after Willie Jean's death. In October of 2021 Alona was contacted by Sonya Wright who is Shirley's neighbor. According to Sonya Wright, Shirley and Harvette offered Lenita \$5,000 and to let her move back into the house if she cooperated with their plan. They also coached Lenita on what to say in the affidavit.

In December 2021, Shirley filed a lawsuit against Alona for fraud, seeking to void the deed and gain sole possession of the house. The case relied heavily on Lenita's first false affidavit, which was notarized by Frank Thomas. Shirley and Harvette believed that the notary who had actually

notarized the quitclaim deed, Caridad Blanco, was deceased. They thought this would prevent anyone from challenging the validity of Lenita's affidavit. However, during the litigation, it came to light that the Caridad Blanco who notarized the deed was a different person with the same name as a deceased individual.

Faced with this setback, Shirley and Harvette apparently resorted to fabricating a second affidavit in Lenita's name. Evidence suggests that Harvette likely forged Lenita's signature on this document, which contained new false claims, and then coerced her subordinate, notary Sabrina Joseph, to notarize it without Lenita being present.

The fraudulent nature of this second affidavit came to light during Lenita's deposition on September 1, 2023. Before going on record for the deposition at Alona's attorney's office, Andrew Cummings, the probate attorney for Alona's aunt Shirley, announced to everyone present that his client is the mother of Harvette Smith, the chief of the North Miami Beach Police Department, and that Harvette was downstairs in the building. Alona felt intimidated by this announcement and believed it was an attempt to influence the proceedings. Later, as Alona went to retrieve a folder from her car, she noticed a black truck circling the office building and suspected it was Harvette.

During the deposition, Lenita contradicted the contents of the second affidavit under oath and testified that she had not signed it. She claimed that Alona had given her the second affidavit, despite Alona having no access to Shirley's plaintiffs exhibits, or knowledge of Sabrina Joseph who is Harvette's subordinate at work. Alona noted that Shirley was present at the deposition, nodding her head, and kicking Lenita under the table and trying to coach her responses.

After this damaging deposition, Shirley and Harvette appeared to have pressured Lenita into signing a third affidavit to minimize the inconsistencies. This affidavit, notarized by their attorney Keith Diamond, claimed that Lenita had signed the second affidavit at Shirley's house rather than in the presence of the notary Sabrina Joseph at the police station, contradicting her deposition testimony. Attorney Diamond later admitted to Alona's counsel that Harvette had provided him with the pre-signed third affidavit for notarization.

The series of events surrounding the affidavits and the attempted coercion of Willie Jean demonstrates the lengths to which Shirley Sears and Harvette Smith were willing to go in their fraudulent attempt to secure the house:

- Harvette tried to exploit Willie Jean's declining health to obtain a power of attorney under dubious circumstances, which would have given her control over Willie Jean's affairs and assets.
- They first relied on Lenita's false affidavit, believing the notary for the actual quitclaim deed was dead and unable to refute their claims.
- When it was revealed that the deed notary was alive, they pivoted to fabricating a second affidavit with new false claims, likely forged by Harvette and improperly notarized by her subordinate.
- After Lenita's deposition exposed the fraudulent nature of the second affidavit, they seemingly coerced her into signing a third affidavit, in an attempt to paper over the inconsistencies, which contradicted her sworn testimony.

Throughout the legal proceedings, Harvette engaged in a pattern of intimidation and harassment against Alona and witnesses:

- Harvette's presence in the building during Lenita Gibbs' deposition on September 1, 2023, was announced by Shirley's attorney, likely in an attempt to intimidate witnesses and influence the proceedings. Alona also spotted Harvette circling the building in her vehicle.
- On September 2, 2023, the day after Lenita's damaging deposition, Harvette followed Alona in her vehicle after a relative's funeral, blocking her in a parking space. Harvette approached Alona, saying, "Do you know who I am? Do you know where I work? I know all there is to know about you I don't need to take a picture of your tag." Alona reported the incident to the police.
- On April 24, 2024, the morning of a court hearing in the civil case, Harvette was observed by Alona's cousin, Dobie, sitting in her parked car outside Alona's house for approximately three hours, from around 3:00 AM onwards. This incident caused Alona to feel threatened and fearful for her safety.
- On May 13, 2024, Harvette confronted Alona in a courthouse elevator following a hearing, physically charging at her and verbally threatening, "If I don't get my job back, I will kill you." Alona's mother witnessed this incident, and courthouse security had to intervene. Alona reported the threat and sought an injunction against Harvette.
- Throughout the legal proceedings, Alona received anonymous, threatening text messages and phone calls from family members pressuring her to drop the case. In one instance, she overheard Harvette in the background of a call, crying and making threats. Another relative texted Alona's mother, warning that someone would get hurt if Alona didn't stop pursuing the case.

Alona also alleges that Harvette and Shirley hastened the death of her grandmother Freeda in March 2021 to strengthen Shirley's claim to the house as the sole surviving sibling. They used a fraudulent power of attorney and healthcare surrogate form, both bearing forged signatures, to place Freeda in hospice care and implement a "do not feed" order. These documents were notarized by Harvette's husband Terrell Smith also a law enforcement officer, and a clear conflict of interest. Medical records show Freeda was intubated on the date she purportedly signed the forms, casting further doubt on their legitimacy.

Moreover, Alona believes Harvette and Shirley orchestrated her firing from her job as a bank vice president in retaliation for refusing to relinquish the house. In late 2022, copies of the fraud lawsuit were anonymously mailed to her workplace, and her boss constantly questioned her about the allegations. In early 2023, two clients associated with Shirley and Harvette's attorney visited Alona's bank branch, one demanding that Alona notarize trust documents and the other insisting that Alona sign off on her signature card, which was not standard practice. The second client filed a complaint when Alona refused. Subsequently, Alona's employer received several complaints, including a false allegation that she slapped a customer. Despite her previously clean record, Alona was fired two to three weeks after receiving a verbal warning related to these questionable complaints.

Throughout this ordeal, Harvette has leveraged her position as police chief to intimidate Alona and lend credence to the fraudulent legal claims. The misconduct has been brazen and wide-ranging, including:

- Attempting to coerce Willie Jean into signing a power of attorney under suspicious circumstances.

- Deceiving family members to gain control of a property meant to help save the family home.
- Forgery and fraudulent notarizations by Harvette's associates and subordinates.
- Perjured affidavits and witness tampering.
- Using her position and family connection to intimidate witnesses during depositions.
- Stalking, physical and verbal harassment, and threats of violence.
- Abuse of authority and misuse of her position as police chief.
- Attempts to manipulate the legal process and deceive the court.
- Alleged involvement in accelerating the death of Alona's grandmother.
- Suspected orchestration of Alona's wrongful termination from her job.

The repeated and egregious nature of Shirley Sears and Harvette Smith's conduct demonstrates a clear pattern of fraud, intimidation, and disregard for the law. They have shown a willingness to exploit vulnerable family members, deceive others, commit perjury, tamper with witnesses, forge legal documents, and abuse positions of authority to achieve their goals. The extent and severity of their misconduct underscores the need for a thorough investigation and serious legal consequences.

Despite the severe emotional distress, financial hardship, and threats to her safety caused by her aunts' actions, Alona remains resolute in her fight for justice. She has sought court intervention, filed police reports, and reported the fraud and forgeries to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, resulting in Harvette's suspension as police chief in December 2023. Alona is determined to hold her aunt, and cousin accountable for their misconduct, protect her property rights, and honor the true wishes of her beloved aunt Willie Jean, even in the face of ongoing intimidation and retaliation.