



911 call leads to an unexpected arrest

by Tiffany Preston, Crime Correspondent

Vera Brady, 92, placed a 911 call to the police at 3:15 am Sunday when she heard a loud rustling noise that seemed to be inside her 300 square foot cabin, located at the base of Pinecone Mountain

"It sounded like someone was sawing through my walls," Mrs. Brady said. "Woke me right out of a sound sleep, I tell you!

The police responded to the call within 5 minutes. Police Chief Jacqueline Kline said that when Officer Harry Newman, III, arrived at Mrs. Brady's cabin, "it was locked up tight as a drum." In fact, Mrs. Brady had to "unlock three deadbolts and unfasten a chain to let Officer Newman inside.

"That's why I was so frightened," Mrs. Brady explained. "My children make sure I have locks on everything, but it sounded like the noise was right beside my bed. At first, I thought it might be a Bigfoot—I've seen them around, you know. They've never come this close to the house, but it happens. Then I thought, what if that college outside of town let in some hippy, saw-wielding murderer? If I'd been sure it was a Bigfoot, I would have just shot it. I got out my late husband's shotgun, but I didn't want to put bullets in the wall. I really called 911 to get some advice about what to do. The nice young lady who answered the phone insisted on sending the police.

When Officer Newman arrived, Mrs. Brady heard the noise again as he was taking her statement. She became "extremely agitated," according to him. Officer Newman checked the premises twice at Mrs. Brady's insistence before finding what "appeared to be a mouse nest of chewed and rotten insulation on top of the water heater.

Officer Newman said he suggested to Mrs. Brady that the noises she was hearing were mice chewing on her walls and she should call an exterminator. Mrs. Brady did not believe him and asked him to stay for some cookies until she was sure nobody was sawing through her cabin. Officer Newman, having no other calls at the time, obliged.

A mouse, apparently drawn by the scent of food, made an appearance about a half-hour later.

"It was like a miracle," Mrs. Brady said. "When you have a mouse, you almost never see it when you want to see it. I really think it was the peanut butter cookies that drew it out. I use real peanut butter, you know, none of that artificial garbage. Mice know the difference. They're actually pretty smart.

Acting with the speed and precision that had marked his time as the center for the Hardy Falls High School basketball team, Officer Newman managed to throw the linen serviette Mrs. Brady had given him for his use over the mouse, capturing the creature.

"He told me he was going out to take it out to the car and slap cuffs on it, then drive it to the station,"

Mrs. Brady said after offering this reporter a cookie and cup of hot cocoa. "But I couldn't let that happen. The poor thing was just following its instincts. It didn't deserve to be locked up and maybe end up in a pet store where some child would buy it and make it run around in a plastic ball for the cat to chase. That's not worth the taxpayer dollars. It's not a murderer or a Bigfoot. I told him to take it outside away from the house and let it go. Besides, I never want to hurt anything. Unless it's a centipede.

Officer Newman said he took the mouse "outside behind an old garage on the property" and released the miscreant with a stern warning. "I urged it to run free," he said, "and told it to be careful of snakes. It did not respond.

Officer Newman left Mrs. Brady's house at approximately 5:00 am

Chief Kline said that Mrs. Brady would not be charged for a false 911 call, although she encourages her to check her hearing aid