

Stabbing Death in Church Restroom Has City 'Shaken to the Core'

The fatal stabbing of a 69-year-old church caretaker in East Baltimore in the restroom of Southern Baptist Church has community residents and leaders "shaken to the core" and has left the victim's daughter asking the haunting question, "who would want to hurt my mother?"

The death of 69-year-old Evelyn Player has roused not only the community but the state into action to find the assailant. Player had been a member of Southern Baptist Church for more than 50 years and four generations of family are church members, WBAL-TV reported. Her body was found Tuesday morning by a maintenance worker.

Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan on Wednesday announced a \$100,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the perpetrator. Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott called the at-large killer a "coward and scum" at a press conference and pleaded with the community to come forward with information.

Player's distraught daughter, Althea Finch, told the Baltimore Sun that she cannot fathom why anyone would want to do this to her mother.

"How come someone hurt someone in such a sacred place?" she asked as she sat on the front porch of the home she shared with Player. "My heart is broken into a million pieces. I don't understand why this happened. It's upsetting. It's disturbing that you are not even safe in church."

Player wasn't even supposed to be working that day, Finch said. Player picked up a working shift for a friend that day. "Her friend needed help, and that's what she did," Finch said.

“She offered her hand and went to help her friend.”

Southern Baptist Church Bishop Donte Hickman said Player didn’t normally come in to work early, but that she happened to that morning.

“We have other male [care-takers] that come to the church, she just beat everybody here,” Hickman told WBAL-TV. “She had been praying all week, paying and crying, and she may have come to the church early to have some time to pray by herself. She helped to feed this community. She helped to vaccinate the community, test them when they were sick, to provide flu shots, helping others who came to the church. She was a willing worker. It’s been unsettling in my spirit and a violation to our home—our home and this community.”

Gov. Hogan vowed to catch the killer so the community can be more at ease. In a statement, Hogan said there had been other “senseless violence” recently in the area including a barbershop killing and the assault of a priest in broad daylight in the Little Italy portion of Baltimore.

“People are hurting, they’re scared and they’re searching for answers,” Hogan said. “They want to know why this bloodshed keeps happening and what it is going to take for something to change.”

Baltimore police do not yet have a suspect in the case or a possible motive for the killing, or whether Player was targeted.

Please keep the family and church congregation in prayer during this difficult time.

{eoa}

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.