

1 Statement of: Paul Cooley-2 (PC)

2 Ref: Dawkins Murder

3 Officer: Sgt. Stanley Sutton (SS) Sgt. Danny Logan (DL)

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5 SS: 'Kay, this is Sgt. Stanley Sutton, I'm with Sgt. Danny Logan at the Floyd County

6 Jail interviewing a white male by the name of James Paul Cooley - the day's date is February the

7 26th, 2001 - time is 16:04 - for the records uh, James, state your full name.

8 PC: James Paul Cooley.

9 SS: And um, you had got in touch with someone here at the Jail that you wanted talk

10 to investigators concerning the death of Isaac Dawkins, is that correct.

11 PC: Yes I talked to Bill Shiflett.

12 SS: Okay, uh, I identified myself as Sgt. Sutton prior to going on tape and you realize

13 that uh, we're doing a tape interview concerning the - the death of Isaac Dawkins, is that correct.

14 PC: Yes sir.

15 SS: Okay uh, what uh, what information do you have today concerning the - the death

16 of Isaac Dawkins?

17 PC: Uh, just the fact that Joe told me that he was in a blue 4-door Honda at the time of

18 the shooting - that he was driving and Mark was the shooter - uh, he was bragging about his

19 driving skills and how his daddy had taught him to drive race cars and what not - and with Mark's

20 shooting record he knew he couldn't lose far as the uh, the killing of Isaac went -- and now he's

21 accepted the fact now that he's going to prison.

22 SS: 'Kay, what about the pistol, what - did uh, the talk about the pistol to Joey -

23 **Joey who?**

24 **PC: Joey Watkins.**

25 **SS: Are you in the same Cell with him?**

26 **PC: I'm in the same Cell Block, we're side by side in our Cells.**

27 **SS: 'Kay, what um, did he mention anything to you concerning about the pistol -**
28 **whereabouts of the pistol that did the killing?**

29 **PC: He said he threw it or dropped it in Lake Weiss during a fishing tournament the**
30 **day after the shooting.**

31 **SS: 'Kay and who'd he say was with him when --**

32 **PC: Uh, his brother-in-law Tim and a third person - which I don't know who it was.**

33 **SS: Did he ever mention the third person?**

4 **PC: Yeah, he said there was a third person there but he never said the name - of if he**
35 **did I didn't catch it.**

36 **SS: 'Kay uh, but uh, after the shooting the next day they went fishing.**

37 **PC: Went fishing in a tournament - Lake Weiss.**

38 **SS: And that's where he got rid of the gun.**

39 **PC: Yes sir, that's what he told me.**

40 **SS: Did he tell you about what area a Lake Weiss?**

41 **PC: No, I don't know anything about the Lake.**

42 **SS: How did he - uh, did he - you said something else prior to going on tape 'bout he**
43 **was fishing and something happened - what happened?**

44 **PC: Yeah, he was fishing - he said he said he got a call from his mother on his cell**

45 phone and she told him that the police wanted to talk to him regarding the death of Isaac - that's
46 when he got rid of the gun and returned home - didn't finish the tournament.

47 SS: 'Kay -- did um, did he discuss anything - Joey Watkins - discuss anything to you
48 concerning about somebody else going to the police or anything?

49 PC: Yeah, he said uh, Winford Ellis had gone to the police and turned State's evidence
50 against him and him and his attorney, Rex Abernathy, I believe his name is -- wanted me to go to
51 trial on their side and purger myself under oath saying that Winford Ellis got whatever
52 information he gave the police by reading Joe's preliminary transcripts while he was in the shower
53 - went in his room and read his transcripts.

54 SS: So Joey come to you saying his lawyer Rex Abernathy wanted you to come to
55 court to testify that you saw this Ellis guy reading his transcripts.

56 PC: Yeah, sure --

57 SS: 'Kay, um, but in fact, did that happen?

58 PC: No, uh, I heard Winford Ellis and Joe Watkins talking - from my room I can hear
59 'em through the vent - I heard him telling him everything that he went to the police and said.

60 SS: Joey.

61 PC: Joey.

62 SS: 'Kay told - on his own accord.

63 PC: Yeah, he told Winford Ellis.

64 SS: Has he told you about it?

65 PC: Yes he told me afterwards when I confronted him with the fact that I'd heard him
66 through the vent - that's when he came to me and told me about the shooting and how it took

67 place and where it took place and how they swapped cars - moved cars around and what not.

68 SS: Let me ask me uh, James - they call you James or what?

69 PC: Paul.

70 SS: Paul - let me ask you Paul -- did I plant you in the Cell this year to talk with Joey--

71 PC: No sir.

72 SS: -- or did you come to me freely and voluntarily on your own accord?

73 PC: I came to you through Bill Shiflett - on my own accord, yes.

74 SS: Alright, what about Bill, when you talked with Bill, did you talk to him freely and

75 volunteer on your own accord?

76 PC: Yes sir, I let my attorney Steve Lanier know that I had some information and he

77 put me in touch with Mr. Shiflett.

78 SS: Okay, then this blue Honda Accord that who with Joey in this blue Honda Accord?

79 PC: Uh, all I know was uh, Mark Free.

80 SS: 'Kay, - and where did he get this blue Honda Accord?

81 PC: He said he snuck the keys out off his father's South Broad Car Lot --

82 SS: Um-hum.

83 PC: -- one evening and then the next day is when they went and used it to do the

84 shooting.

85 SS: 'Kay, do you know whose gun it was that they used?

86 PC: He didn't say whose it was or where it came from - just to where it went.

87 SS: And he didn't tell you what area in Lake Weiss that he fished at?

88 PC: No he sure didn't.

89 SS: Did he - did you - did - you get the indication that he threw the gun in the lake
90 where he was fishing or while - you know arrived to Alabama?

91 PC: I don't know he - or the way I took it, he was fishing he just threw it outta the
92 boat and went home.

93 SS: And what did he tell you about the police dragging for - in the Lake in Swan Lake.

94 PC: Yeah, he was excited about when he heard the news from his parents that it was in
95 the newspaper that the Swan Lake had been drug because he knew for a fact that the gun wasn't
96 there - and that's when he came forward and said you know it's in a lake but not Swan Lake.

97 SS: Is that -- is that the first time you ever heard about us dragging the lake or -- police
98 dragging the Lake to him?

99 PC: Yeah, that - that's the first time - Joey told me yes sir.

100 SS: Okay - and he told you it was in Lake Weiss.

101 PC: Yes sir.

102 SS: Did he tell you who did the shooting?

103 PC: He said Mark did the shooting - he said he was driving.

104 SS: And uh, did he say anything about when he's got to go to Court or anything to
105 you?

106 PC: He said he's going for an arraignment on a Thur-- on Thursday, March 1st.

107 SS: This Thursday.

108 PC: This coming Thursday, yes.

109 SS: Okay, and did he tell you anything about the trial that they were gone be tried?

110 PC: He said they were gone be - Tami Colston requested that him and Mark both be at

11 the arraignment but they were gone be tried separately and they was gone try Mark first.

112 SS: Gone try Mark first -- how did know that Ellis has went to the - the police?

113 PC: While Ellis was gone talking to the police he called home - or called his lawyer, I

114 don't know which one - but his lawyer told him that someone in the Cell with him was going to

115 turn State's Evidence that day - and he got off the phone and he went and talked to Joe -- went

116 and talked to Winford Ellis and when he got back and told him that you know, somebody in

117 here's going turn State's Evidence on him - and when in fact, it was - it was Ellis himself - but

118 they were real close.

119 SS: Okay, uh, do you know anything else that his lawyer Rex Abernathy uh, told uh,

120 him to do - what - what else would you said Rex Aber-- Joey told you Rex was doing about --

121 PC: He was planting false information - false stories different places -- that way when

122 he went to Court he could prove all of 'em wrong and just make everybody look foolish and try

123 to get him off that way.

124 SS: This is what Rex was planning to do.

125 PC: Yeah, that's his strategy.

126 SS: And all this - all this time Joey's telling you what he's done, him and Mark Free.

127 PC: Yeah.

128 SS: And - and used this blue Honda 4-door --

129 PC: Yeah, that's what he mentioned -- he said he hopes he never sees a blue 4-door

130 Honda again.

131 SS: Has ne mentioned anything about um, any else - anybody else involved in

132 (inaudible)?

133 PC: He never said anything other than those two.

134 SS: Did he indicate that Tim Hughes knew something about it - a guy name Tim?

135 PC: No he didn't uh, he didn't say -- he just said he was fishing with him.

136 SS: Okay. Uh, is anything else that he might a told you that you failed to mention at

137 this stage?

138 PC: No I believe that's pretty much it.

139 SS: Okay, do you have anything Mr. Logan?

140 DL: No, uh-uh.

141 SS: What's time?

142 DL: 16:12.

143 SS: 'Kay I'm on end this interview at 16:12 hours.

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