

04-0325-01-85

On Tuesday, March 12, 1985, at about 7:00 p.m. Special Agent Richard Deas interviewed Gwendolyn Owens at the Camden County Sheriff's Office. The purpose of the interview was to obtain a description of the suspect in this case and to make an Identi-kit composite of the suspect. Mrs. Owens was one of the people in attendance at the church when Mr. and Mrs. Swain were killed. She saw the suspect when the swinging doors were opened and he looked inside before Mr. Swain went to talk to him. Mrs. Owens described the suspect as being a white male, 5'6" - 5'8" in height, medium built, in his late 20's or early 30's in age, wearing a long sleeve navy blue shirt and navy blue pants. He had sandy blond hair about shoulder length. His hair was split in the middle and combed straight down on both sides. His hair was not fluffed out, but was close to the head. He was wearing dark framed glasses. Mrs. Owens described the suspect as having a smirk on his face. See attached copy of the composite.

I. D. Data: Gwendolyn Owens  
B/F, DOB 11/20/50  
Route 1, Box 212  
Waverly, Georgia 31565  
912-264-6356 Home  
912-264-6960 Work  
Employed/Glynn County Hospital  
Nursing Office

*RJ*  
Special Agent R. K. Deas: 03/14/85 *A*

pbw: 03/15/85

*pbw*

And she got her pocket book and went on to the door. And Thelma was reading during the time and when this man stick his head in and asked for Harold uh, then Thelma looked and said ya'll done got me nervous now, something like that. And she went on and reading. Everybody, all our attention then was to the back, we weren't listening to her read up there. And so I think she just quit reading. And that's when the commotion started. And we knew something was going on.

GO: So we didn't hear anything until we heard the scuffling and we knew something was wrong then. That's when everybody jumped up, and started running, you know towards the front of the church. Cause I really didn't get frightened until he started shootin.

LS: Right, do you think you could recognize him again?

GO: I don't know...

LS: In a controlled situation? Or pick him out of a group of photographs?

GO: I, I, If he doesn't have facial hair or the hair style different, I probably could.

LS: All right, I want you to look at these two composites we have here. Now understanding that these are different peoples perspective at the time uh, just look at them and tell me what you would change about them. What doesn't look right to you.

GO: Okay, uh, this part in here doesn't look right.

BK: Meaning uh, what the forehead, the face...

GO: The face didn't look quite that long, kinda square like face and the hair was parted down the middle. Wasn't any fluff to it, it was just combed straight on each side. -inaudible-

BK: When we come back -inaudible-

LS: Let me ask you this, uh, are you where you could come to the Sheriff's Office in a little while?

GO: If I don't have to drive myself there, I can come.

LS: I think we can get a volunteer.

BK: We can get somebody to uh...

LS: Okay, cause we'd like to get you down in the quiet back there and then let you do a picture too. Okay? And we can put glasses on him, we can put mustaches on him, we can do alot of things with him. Okay, but we want to get a situation where you can relax and we'll take care of all the outside influences and every-thing and do that if you could. What would be a good time for you?

GO: If we gonna do it, as easily as possible.

BK: If you'll ride with us we'll take you right now.

BK: You saw them move from one side scuffling from one side all the way over to the other? .

GO: No, when I peeked they were in the other corner.

LS: By the time you got there they were already over in the other corner. Did ya'll hear any shouting or words or...

GO: We just heard the scuffling, I didn't hear any talking myself. We heard the scuffling and we knew something was wrong and that's when we started gettin up and going to the back.

LS: Okay, and it all happened about the time ya'll was fixing to take up money?

GO: Yea, cause see, we was sittin in the church. One of the ladies say, you know I thought like I heard somebody come in. That was later on but we hadn't payed any attention because nobody came on in the church.

LS: How much before that do you think they thought they'd heard somebody?

GO: About 15 minutes.

LS: A good 15 minutes before.

GO: Uh huh. I believe so, yea.

BK: And how loud did they say they were gonna take up the dues now or are they...

LS: Did somebody say, get your money out?

GO: Somehow or another, yea, the money was mentioned. See this is my first time going, see. I'm not real familiar with the routine.

LS: How did the money thing come about?

LF: Well, mostly the president, you know the lady Ms. Moore, she mostly say well, if nothin else we'll have the minutes of the last meeting. Cause Thelma was reading the minutes when this man stuck his head in the door.

LS: Yes mam.

LF: And she we'll hear the minutes and then we'll pay dues. That's what she usually say.

BK: When did Vanzola get up to leave?

LS: About that time?

GO: Yea.

BK: During the reading of the minutes or what?

LS: Because she layed her money down, didn't she?

LF: Uh huh, right. I think she leave just, she got up to leave just when uh, Thelma started to read, because she had to go and pick up her daughter.

LS: Was Mr. Harold bigger than him?

GO: Yes, Mr. Harold was quite a bit larger than him.

LS: And he had a good hold on him it looked like? Did you see the gun?

GO: I didn't see the gun. I didn't see it.

LS: Did you see the man leave?

GO: No.

LS: Did you hear anything? A car crank up?

GO: No. When we were in the back hiding we heard a little bit of scuffling. But we really don't know what that was. I don't know whether it was some of the others or what, cause like I said, we went in two different directions.

LS: Ya'll went in the Pastors study?

GO: Yea, we were in the Pastors study.

LS: Okay.

GO: I don't know whether that was some of the other ladies, I think we all finally ended up together, but we didn't start out together.

LS: Right, how long from the time that the shots were fired and you went into the kitchen or the Pastors study before somebody.... Who went for help?

GO: Ms. Marjorie, Marjorie Moore.

LS: Okay, how long before she went for help?

GO: I don't know. It was dark, but we probably were back in there atleast 15 or 20 minutes.

LS: Okay, did you try to use the phone back there?

GO: Yea, we did.

LS: And?

GO: It was dead.

LS: Do you know the last time that phone was used?

GO: No, I don't.

BK: This man, you saw the back of him real well, about his hair?

GO: I, the only impact he made on me was when he peeked around the door in the church before Mr. Harold went out. And I remember the hair and the glasses, the clean shaven face and dark clothes. That's the only impact, but as far as uh, actually trying to pay him any attention when he was scuffling at Mr. Harold, I didn't pay that any attention. Cause we knew something was wrong when we heard them scuffling.

GO: Yea, that they went out originally. Right, right, and uh, I was leaning over peeping around and he and Mr. Harold was scuffling. The fellow had his back to me, they were right together scuffling.

LS: All right. Show me.

GO: Okay. About like this, they were real close. They were real close. The man might have had his hand, you know down here. They were close up together.

LS: All right.

GO: And uh, then the gun went off. So then, I guess the gun was coming up the right hand side. By this time they had scuffled and were in the right hand corner, you know behind that door. And as soon as Ms. Thelma parted that door, he just shot. And I saw her going down. Then we just whirled. People were going to the right and some were going to the left and we just went into the back of the church.

LS: All right. Had he, had he, when you were looking, had he already shot Mr. Harold?

GO: He had already fired the gun.

LS: And Mr. Harold was where?

GO: He just slumped. He was leaning on him. He hadn't.... No, he still had Mr. Harold in his arms.

LS: He already had Mr. Harold in his arms when he shot Ms. Thelma?

GO: When Ms. Thelma cracked that door, he just fired.

LS: How many times?

GO: All I can remember hearing is two shots, I really don't know, that's all I can remember.

LO: My daddy say um...

GO: You don't go by heresay. Now. But all I remember hearing is two shots.

LS: And then after you saw that and Ms. Thelma was shot, that's when ya'll went to the kitchen.

GO: We turn, we turn right around. Everybody had heard the scuffling and we were running to see what was going on. And we really didn't get frightened until we heard the shot. Cause I was -inaudible- he had his back to me and they were behind, you know this door on the right hand side? And when Ms. Thelma cracked the door on the right hand side, time she cracked that door he shot her.

LS: Okay. Did Mr. Harold have him armed up good too in the scuffle?

GO: I believe so. I, cause they were scuffling -inaudible- just a few seconds when the gun went off. Cause that man had his back, you know to me. I guess Mr. Harold was faced with him.

LS: Okay.

GO: I want to think they were like this, but square on the end.

LS: Okay, all right. Another words they could be this, but just square em off instead of ...

GO: Right, cause I don't think they were quite like this. Like this and square.

LS: Like this but with the black frame?

GO: Yea, with the black frame on it.

LO: Like this Mama?

GO: No, not like this. It was all, you know look like plastic.

LS: What if you took and made all that black?

GO: It'd still be made kinda like this, but kinda square.

LS: All right. Do they look like glasses you and I have to wear, or -inaudible-

GO: He looked like somebody that wore glasses. He looked like somebody that needed glasses.

LS: You and I having worn glasses for a while we would know more about what, if somebody got them at the store or if they got them at the doctor.

GO: It looked like he wore them all the time.

LS: Okay. He could have had a mustache?

GO: He could have. I don't remember. I...

LS: He didn't have a beard?

GO: No, he was clean shaven.

LS: All right, uh, he got that mustache, hasn't he? All right. Red?

LO: My Mama told me -inaudible-

GO: I didn't tell you about any mustache.

LO: I'm talking, my Mama told me she peeked thru the left side of the door and saw Uncle Harold and the man scuffling.

LS: Okay, tell me about that.

GO: Well, Mr. Harold got up and went out. It was just a few minutes and we could hear some scuffling. And we all jumped up and started running to the back. I was on the left hand side...

LS: The side that they went out, -inaudible-

GO: Okay, she told me on the way out to take Ms. Louise Baker home cause she was going to pick her daughter up and...trying to think now, be careful, uh... I, she come up to the front and touched Mr. Harold on the shoulder. And when I looked back there was the fellow sticking his head around the door. And he had hair almost the color of yours it looked like. It was long and it was split down the middle. He had on black rim glasses. He was either wearing navy blue or black shirt and pants.

LS: Okay, was it a shirt or a jacket?

GO: I, it looked like a shirt, I'm not sure, but it looked like a long sleeved shirt.

LS: In or out?

GO: I believe it was out. I can't say for sure.

LS: Okay, all right. You didn't turn around until after Ms. Vanzola had come back in and, to get Mr. Harold's attention?

GO: Yep, cause I, somehow or another when I looked around and he was peeping around the side of the door. And then Mr. Harold got up and went to the back and went on out. I don't know how, but he was peeping around the side of the church door, cause I turned around and saw him. Mr. Harold got up and went out after this man had looked in the door. He got up and went out.

LS: Okay, now, turn around and look at him again and start with his hair. How long?

GO: From what I could see it probably was right along here.

LS: Okay, was it all the same color?

GO: Looked like it.

LS: Was it nice and combed and clean?

GO: It was neat. It was neat.

LS: It was parted in the center?

GO: Far as I remember, it was parted down the middle.

LS: All right. And he had glasses?

GO: Had uh, glasses almost the size of your, but they were black square frame.

LS: Like the military glasses? Have you seen those?

GO: I don't know whether it was like that or not, but they were black kinda plastic lookin frames. Kinda square like. Weren't real big.

LS: Face hair?

GO: I didn't pay any , well, I know he was clean shave, I can't remember whether he had a mustache or not, but I do remember he was clean shaven.

LO: Ask Mama.

LS: Huh?

LO: I ain't saw -inaudible- you gotta ask Mama.

LS: Okay, no I want to know what you saw, cause you probably saw more and know more about than anybody else there. Uh, did you see his clothes? Did you see if he had on any clothes?

LO: I see a little bit of a collar, it looked gray.

LS: Look gray? Gray like anything you see out here?

LO: A little bit like that sweat shirt.

LS: Like that sweat shirt? Okay, all right. Uh, did you hear him talk? But you saw them glasses?

LO: They look a little bit dark as yours.

LS: Okay, show me where they were dark at.

LO: Right up in here.

LS: Right up in here? How about, how about this part that holds the glass together, what color was it?

LO: White, I guess -inaudible-

LS: Okay, and he had, did he have a mustache like I do? And he had red hair?

LO: And a red mustache.

LS: And a red mustache. Okay, was there alot of mustache or was there a little?

LO: -inaudible-

LS: Okay, more than me?

LO: -inaudible-

LS: You've never seen this fellow before, have you? If you saw him again, do you think you would know him? You think so? What uh, you got at the church about 7:30 p.m.? You sat on the same pew with Ms. Cora Fisher?

GO: Yea.

LS: All right, when, what did you see happen?

GO: I saw uh...

LS: Start with when Ms. Vanzola left.



INTERVIEW WITH LESLIE OWENS AND GWENDOLYN OWENS

LS: Let me talk to both of ya'll together. All right? Uh, have you got your driver's license in your pocket? That's all right, if you know every, I. imagine you know what...

GO: I know the social security number.

LS: Gwen.

GO: Gwen Owens, that's Gwendolyn Owens.

LS: Gwendolyn? And your daughters name is Leslie?

GO: Leslie Owens.

LS: All right, date of birth?

GO: November 20th, 1950.

LS: And this pretty girl?

GO: November 16, 1967.

LS: Almost had the same birthday didn't you?  
Address?

GO: Route 1, Box 212, Waverly.

LS: Do you have a phone?

GO: 254-6356.

LS: Social security number?

GO: 266-84-9901.

LS: 9901?

GO: Uh huh.

LS: And you work at Glenn County Hospital in Brunswick?

GO: In Brunswick.

LS: Last night when you were at the church and the door opened and the man looked in, did you look at him? What did you see?

LO: I see he had on some kind of black glasses and a red mustache and red hair.

LS: Okay, was he big as me?

LO: A little bit.

LS: Okay, -inaudible- or bigger this way?