

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
COUNTY OF MC LEAN

THE PEOPLE OF THE )  
STATE OF ILLINOIS, )  
 )  
Plaintiff, )  
 )  
vs. ) No. 99 CF 1016  
 )  
James Snow )  
 )  
Defendant. )

BPD Interview with Officer Pelo

OP: Officer Pelo  
UO: Unknown officer 1  
OF: Unknown officer 2

UO: This is a tape recorded interview with Officer Jeff Pelo. Also present during this interview is Detective Rick Barcus and Detective Dan Cats. The interview is taking place at the Criminal Investigation Division at the Bloomington Police Department on March 2, 19-99. The time is 8-25 a.m. in the morning. Officer Pelo you were informed that we wanted to talk to you about a case that took place back in 19991 is that not correct?

OP: Yes.

UO: Specifically, a homicide case involving William Little who was shot at a gas station back uh, in 19-91. Case number 91-0-0-2-1-5-0. Is that correct?

OP: Yes.

UO: Are you aware this interview's being tape recorded?

OP: Yes.

UO: And do we have your permission to tape record this interview?

OP: Yes.

UO: Jeff, what I'd like to do is, we have, we've discussed before this uh, tape recorded interview started and basically you were one to respond, one of the first responding

officers to that scene and what I would like you to do is just give us a narrative on how you approached, and what you did on March thirty-first, 19-91 at the uh, gas station where William Little was killed.

OP: Call came out of the 10-90 at Clark station. I believe the address was 8-0-1 East Empire Street. Responded from uh, center, Chestnut Street. Took Center Street south to Locust; went east to Linden went north uh, approached on, north on Linden Street. I turned my headlights off and parked in either on Linden Street on the drive just to the south of the credit union on the south side of the road. I got out. There were several parked cars in the parking lot. I walked around to the front of the credit union: walked toward the east side of the credit union's parkin lot. Standing there watching the Clark station. In the Clark station parking lot was a older car, blue, with a male putting air in the tires as I was watching it I was watchin the front of the station. There was no, couldn't see and movement or anything inside. Ran the license plate number of the blue vehicle that was in the lot. One of the dispatchers was givin me a hard time about runnin the plate cuz leads was down, and the male walks from his car towards the station stops looks back towards his car; turns walks towards the station some more; stops and turns around and goes back to his vehicle got in it, can't remember if he was backin out of the lot or did a little u-turn and drove out of the lot. He drove west bound on Empire street after he did that I started walking across Empire Street on the East side of the lot. I was walkin toward the east side of the lot. I was watchin the gas station. As that was goin on a pickup truck with 2 white males pulled up started getting out of the truck. I told 'em to get in the truck and go across the street; got a little argumentative wanted to know why. At that time I realized you know there's a tennis shoe stickin out from behind the counter. I ordered the 2 to get in the truck and go across the street and wait. Get my weapon; started lookin through the windows from the east side of the building goin towards the west to see if there was visibly anybody in there. No one was in there. I entered the front of the station went down cleared the bathroom no one was in the bathroom came back towards the counter there was a little storeroom behind the counter area where the tenant was at. See the tenant lyin there. Step past him and cleared the storage room area. There's no one in it so I came back up. Opened the front door. Warned dispatch that it was, don't know exactly what I said, but basically it was real; had a man down appeared as if you know, we needed a coroner for him.

(Inaudible)

UO: Then what'd you do?

OP: I stepped back towards the attendant around the counter; leaned down I checked for his pulse. First place I checked for his pulse was his wrist; couldn't get one. Reached up checked for a pulse on his neck; couldn't find one there then he, I thought his eye, one of his eyes blinked and uh, when that happened I stepped back officer Paul Williams was at the door now I told him what I was gonna go, I was gonna go to my car uh, my CPR mask. I took a few, can't really remember what I did after that, but I stopped uh, you know I was like wait a minute maybe I shouldn't worry about my CPR

mask. I turned to go back to the station that's when Paul Williams informed me that you know, the young man was dead there was nothin we could do for him.

UO: Then what did you do?

OP: By that time I stepped back. Other officers had begun to arrive. Sergeant Williams came back out. No it wasn't Sergeant Williams, no he wasn't a Sergeant yet, Officer Williams came out and uh we started directing people to block off the entrance around the uh, uh, the gas station itself that's about the point where I noticed that the person in the blue car who had left, I know his name now. His name is, his last name is Martinez I believe. I noticed that he had parked on the south side of the uh, Empire street he was walking up the house next to the Clark station at that point I, it was, I can't remember who I told, but I informed them that that man, that man had just been in the lot they went over to talk to him by that time Sergeant Cox had arrived started puttin up crime scene tape and I really can't remember what we did right after that.

UO: Now, speaking of uh, Mr. Martinez and that vehicle that you said, that vehicle was by the air pumps?

OP: Yes.

UO: And you said when you first observed him it looked like he was squatting down by the front passenger side?

OP: Yes, the, the front, passenger tire. There was a point where he was crouched down there with the air hose comin through as if he was puttin air in the tire.

UO: Then you said he got up from that position, walked towards the Clark station office; stopped, turned, looked at his vehicle then turned around and started to proceed back to the Clark station stopped a second time, looked at his vehicle, walked back to his vehicle and left the parking lot.

OP: Yes I can't remember if he walked around his car and then got in it or if he just went to the driver's door. That part I just don't remember.

UO: But at any time did you order off the lot?

OP: No. I never, I never spoke to him at all. The closest I come to speaking with him that night was, was when I pointed at him and informed the officers that he had just been on the lot.

UO: Now when he left his vehicle and walked the first time towards the Clark station, how far, and I know it's difficult, but how far do you think he was away from his vehicle before he stopped and turned around?

OP: Wadn't that far. 20 feet maybe. 25, I, I don't know the exact distance.

UO: Would it help if you did it in relationship to, what, he was half way to the Clark door or he was closer to his car or?

OP: He was closer to his vehicle than he was to the front of the business.

UO: Ok. Now the second time after he stopped he turned around looked at his car and then looked back around to look at the store, how much further do you think he walked?

OP: I wanna say he got like within like 15 feet of the front. He was at, he was at an angle I wanna say like 15 feet in front of the door.

UO: So he's fairly close?

OP: Yeah.

UO: To the, to the front of the store.

OP: Yes.

UO: Ok. Now, he leaves. Another truck pulls up when you're walkin up?

OP: Umhmm.

UO: And you order them to leave?

OP: Yep.

UO: Do you know where they went?

OP: They went, initially they went to the credit union lot on the south side. They actually went where I told 'em to and, and stopped. I remember seein 'em stopped over there.

UO: Now that vehicle wasn't there prior to you getting there?

OP: No.

UO: And you actually observed the people in the vehicle?

OP: Yes.

UO: And uh, I know it's hard, but those people in the vehicle, the second vehicle now, which I think you said earlier was a truck?

OP: Pickup truck, yes.

UO: None of those people you observed goin into the building?

OP: They never entered the building, no. They got out of the vehicle, but they never went into the building.

UO: Now I'm gonna show you a picture that I marked...as soon as I find it...it's gonna be marked with the letter C and I hope then what we have here is a picture of what?

OP: The Clark station. You're on the south side. I believe you're on the south side of Empire Street looking north towards the Clark station.

UO: Yes and from this picture can you tell me where the air pump is?

OP: It's on, it's on the east side of the lot or the right side of the picture as you're lookin at it.

UO: So basically is, it's to the far east side of the business, the far east side?

OP: Yes.

UO: And then this picture also shows some gas pumps.

OP: Yes.

UO: Now these gas pumps are on the east side, far east side of the business also. Is this where the truck pulled up?

OP: Yeah, they pulled up, there's actually 2 sets of pumps. They pulled up towards the middle of the pumps. They, they pulled up at an, they didn't pull up like they were gonna get gas. They pulled up basically towards the middle of the lot.

UO: Ok. So you're sayin, I, I also showed ya another picture marked with a letter B. It shows 2 punch, 2 gas pump islands uh, in front of Clark Oil on the north side and you're sayin that this truck pulled in between 'em like it wasn't getting gas like it was just possibly goin in there to get somethin else?

OP: Yeah.

UO: Ok. Alright. Now, you went into the gas station you, well first off before you went into the gas station you saw a, a tennis shoe?

OP: Yes.

UO: Ok and that was uh, sticking out from the counter correct?

OP: Yes.

UO: On the floor?

OP: Yes.

UO: And you assumed at that point what?

OP: Two things; one somebody was dead or they were laying down a hype.

UO: Ok. And then um you went in?

OP: Yes.

UO: And you observed?

OP: I didn't go right in at that point.

UO: Ok. What did you do right then?

OP: I, do you have one of those pictures with you?

UO: Umhmm. Which one would you like? The one...

OP: The one that shows the vehicle. I mean not the vehicle the store.

UO: Ok.

OP: I, when I came up, I started here on the east side of the building looking through the windows and walked down the front of the building so I could see what was inside the building.

UO: Ok.

OP: Then, I went back and went inside the building.

UO: So you saw the shoe and you stepped back out and took what, some cover to look and see if you saw anything else? Or I don't understand.

OP: I was approaching up from an angle here.

UO: Ok.

OP: Once I realized the shoe was there I told 'em, the 2 guys get in that truck and the same time I drew my revolver they got in the truck and drove away and I approached at

angle to the south, what would be the southeast corner of the building. I started looking through the windows to see if I could see anybody.

UO: How close were you to the building when you saw the shoe?

OP: I can't give you the, the exact distance it was it a southeast angle to the building.

UO: Ok. Would you have been at about the same location or further or closer?

OP: It woulda been a very similar approach.

UO: Did you (Inaudible)

OP: I don't know if I was at the exact angle, but I was at a very similar angle.

(Inaudible)

OP: Yeah cuz I had walked up by the where the air pumps was at, as I was walkin up lookin and I started my angle approach. I can't remember if I was slightly north of it or...

UO: Then after you, after saw the tennis shoe (Inaudible) your revolver (Inaudible) and (Inaudible) witness (Inaudible) business (Inaudible).

OP: Yes. I went down to look to see if there was anybody in the building.

UO: Then you're at the front door and (Inaudible)

OP: Yes.

UO: How many officers did you know were inside the building besides you and officer Williams?

OP: No. I don't know of anyone else other than the crime scene people I don't know of anyone else that went in the building.

UO: Ok. I'm gonna show you another picture. This was a shot, taken by a crime scene tech. Is that the way the body was when you first observed it?

OP: No.

UO: What's different about it?

OP: He was laying at a different angle. A big different angle. About a 90 degree different angle than what he was layin, layin originally. And his shirt's open. When I first saw him, his shirt was not open. It was intact.

UO: Ok and when you first saw him, was he layin on his back?

OP: No he wasn't. He was layin on his chest.

UO: Who turned him over?

OP: I never saw anyone turn him over, but my assumption is that Paul Williams turned him over.

UO: And why'd he do that?

OP: Because, I don't know why he did that, but I looked back in after I went to get my CPR mask, when I came back he had the body rolled over.

UO: Now did he move the body like that?

OP: He must of cuz there's no one else in...

UO: The rest of the people (Inaudible)

OP: This was, yeah, but...

UO: And they checked (Inaudible)

OP: Puh, yeah lifeline and rescue both showed up, but he'd been moved prior to they, them getting there.

UO: He'd been moved by Paul Williams?

OP: Yes.

UO: And he could have been moved by rescue...either one or both could have moved him.

OP: Yes.

UO: Did you, were you in there when rescue was there?

OP: Yes, but he'd been moved before rescue got there.

UO: Ok. So, where he, the picture I was showing you and I know you said a 90 degree angle...

OP: It was basically a 90 degree angle.

UO: Could, coulda been more of a 180 degree? And the reason why I'm askin is in this picture, this is, this is the front of the counter, we got some blood dropping here.

OF: Why don't, why don't we show also the (Inaudible) report, page 6. In yellow I've marked the description of how the body was layin.

OP: Yes where it says he was, he was a white male lying on chest; legs were slightly bent left; arm was; I'm sorry slightly bent; left arm was under his body; right arm was bent around at the elbow towards his chest. His head was turned facing the restroom.

UO: So, would you say his body was turned more than 90 degrees?

OP: To make things easy, when I first went in, his head was to the south. His feet were towards the middle. His face was facin towards the west inside the building behind the counter. He was layin, he had one arm underneath...

UO: And now how, now according to this picture...

OP: His head is now facing the east and I can't see...

UO: If his head was, if his head was at the west at one point now...

OP: No. His face was going west. His head was going south.

OF: He's gone, he gone 180 degrees.

UO: Right.

OF: Instead of going to the south he's now going to the west.

UO: It says northeast here.

OF: Northeast

OP: Northeast ,he woulda yeah; he was facing, he was stopped like this and now when you turn him around...

UO: Sure.

OP: He's now facing this way.

UO: Exactly. That's exactly 180 degrees.

UO: 360.

OF: 360 would be all the way around.

OP: Yeah. 1-80 a 1-80 is a reversal

UO: Right. So maybe, maybe a little...

OP: Maybe a little more than 180, but yeah, roughly you're correct.

UO: Ok. Well great. We're just tryin to figure out how the body got to where it was. Um...

OP: To make it easier, his head was initially down towards in here.

UO: Right.

OP: Up towards in here; on the floor. I can't remember. Parts of him were touchin up in the counter or not.

UO: Now, when you went there, the call was possible armed robbery correct?

OP: I'm not gonna...

UO: The alarm, the alarm came up...

OP: 10-90 yea, hold up, hold up alarm at a gas station.

UO: Ok. Was there anything that you observed when you were in there that led you to believe that maybe there was a robbery.

OP: Yeah, the cash draw was open and the, the money tray itself, the black money tray was gone.

UO: Now how do you know it was black?

OP: I've been in that gas station repeatedly. That's where I bought cigarettes at.

UO: So you're...

OP: I've seen it many times.

UO: So you're familiar with that kind of money tray?

OP: Yes.

UO: Now that money tray, does it slide in and out?

OP: I don't know exactly how they operate, but most of 'em I, that one, most of mine counted, they just, they just pop out. Some have a thing a button you have to push to release it to come out. Some are activated by alarms. I don't know this, I think this one is act, activated actually activated by an alarm (Inaudible).

UO: Now, and you, you said the black money tray was gone?

OP: Yes.

UO: Now, did you touch the cash register at all?

OP: No.

UO: You said it was open. Was it all the way extended or? Or it was just partially open or? Can you kinda give me an idea on...

OP: I don't know if it was fully out or not. It was at, at least like 3 quarters, a half to 3 quarters open.

UO: That's fine. Uh, did you secure the scene?

OP: I assisted in securing the perimeter, but yes.

UO: And you really had no conversation with anybody else?

OP: At the scene of the gas station?

UO: Other, other than police personnel I mean you didn't interview anybody out there? You didn't talk to anybody out there? Any bystanders or anything?

OP: During the (Inaudible) search we talked to some people, yeah.

UO: Who'd you talk to?

OP: A bunch of people. Most of 'em I don't, most of 'em I don't remember. There's a report.

UO: One of the people and again, reflect your memory back to your report, this, is marked 0-0-7, about the (Inaudible) you talked to Jim Osborne.

OP: Yes.

UO: And what did he tell ya?

OP: Stated he'd gone to the Clark station around 19-45, bought a pack of cigarettes; (Inaudible).

UO: Did he ever tell you what kind of cigarettes he bought?

OP: I don't remember if he told me what type of cigarettes he bought.

UO: Did he, did he buy anything else other than a pack of cigarettes; 2 packs of cigarettes?

OP: I recall him telling me he bought some cigarettes.

OF: Did he tell ya 19-45 or did you just translate it into 19-45?

OP: He would have said 7-45 around 7-45 P-M and I translated it into military time in the report yeah.

UO: You also talked to uh, according to report on 0-0-8, you also talked to another individual did you not? It starts I'm sorry, it starts at the bottom (Inaudible) 0-0-8.

OP: In reference to Robert Coleman, Coldman, however you want to pronounce his name.

UO: Yes. What, what did you, what did he tell you?

OP: He was, he was very concerned about the attendant. He wanted to know if there had been a, if he had been killed.

UO: Specifically, did he say that he saw anything out of the ordinary?

OP; No he doesn't I, I mean his daughter saw something.

UO: What did he mean (Inaudible)

OP: Uh, she saw I'm sorry...

UO: It was brown wasn't it?

OP: Yes. 11-0-3 Home. Brown saw 2 people walking up the alley behind the Clark station.

UO: Did you see this alley behind the Clark station?

OP: Yes.

UO: Now, this alley, which way does it go? Does it go east and west? North south?

OP: It's a east west alley.

UO: Is there another alley perp, perpendicular to that alley?

OP: there one the run uh north off there's the east west alley and then there's a, an alley that'll run to the north off of that alley there, yes.

UO: Is that close to being by the Clark station?

OP: It's not directly behind it if you go into the alley, you have to go over, I don't know the exact distance, but several feet.

UO: Ok, but it's close though?

OP: It's close yes.

UO: Alright, did you happen to get brown's first name?

OP: It's marked in here somewhere. The sec, the second one I had doesn't indicate it, I, I thought I'd written the overall witness, that I had indicated everybody's name, but...

UO: Who do you have? I don't see it?

OP: I don't, I don't remember his first name though.

UO: Well, when you first started this interview you made reference that you responded to 8-0-1 East Empire Street which is the address of the Clark Oil. However the actual address of Clark Oil's 8-0-2 East Empire, is that correct?

OP: Yeah. Yeah it would be, I'm sorry. It's on the north side of the road my fault.

UO: You also, when I, when you talked to us before this tape had started you said you were goin down Empire street you passed Clark and you hesitated for a minute because uh you were thinking possibly purchasing some cigarettes yourself and um, you were goin go there is that correct?

OP: Yes.

UO: But you didn't do that?

OP: No I didn't.

UO: Now when you went by there, did you see anything you didn't like?

OP: There was at least one, maybe 2 cars in the lot. I do remember people inside the station. I can't describe them for ya, I can't, I don't remember what color the vehicle was.

UO: So why wouldn't, why do you remember thinking you might of bought, you were thinking about buying cigarettes there? Why would you do that?

OP: Cuz I always bought cigarettes there.

UO: Ok. Did you recognized the guy who was deceased?

OP: The attendant?

UO: Yes.

OP: I don't, didn't know his last name until after he was identified, but...

UO: Have you ever purchased anything from him?

OP: Yes. He went by the name Phil.

(Inaudible)

OF: The only, the only question that wasn't asked and I'm sure you were told us, but you never saw anybody comin out of the gas station from the time you first observed the gas station?

OP: No I did not.

That's all I got.

OF: Jeff do you have anything for us? This interview is concluded on March second, 19-99 at 8-49 A-M.

End of Tape