

1 Statement of: James Paul Cooley (JC)

2 Officer: Asst. Chief Bill Shiflett (BS)

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4 BS: 'Day's date is February the ^{8th} 9th uh, 2001 - the time's about 1:33 PM at the Floyd
5 County Police Department - my - my name is Bill Shiflett with the Floyd County Police
6 Department and I'm with - would you state your name for the record please.

7 JC: James Paul Cooley.

8 BS: Could you lean up for me James and -- and your address is what?

9 JC: 405 Chateau Drive.

10 BS: Okay, and I understand you in - right now you're in the Floyd County Jail, is that
11 correct.

12 JC: Yes sir.

13 BS: Okay and what Block are you in?

14 JC: I'm in "P" Block.

15 BS: How long have you been there?

16 JC: I've been there since January 11th.

17 BS: Okay, alright, are you in the same Block with Joey Watkins?

18 JC: He's right next door to me.

19 BS: Alright, and do you know Joey Watkins?

20 JC: Yes.

21 BS: How long have you known him?

22 JC: I've known of him about a year, I've met him two or three times working on his

23 car.

24 BS: You've worked on his personal car before?

25 JC: Yeah, his personal car.

26 BS: When was that?

27 JC: Uh, that was when I worked at Mike Ford's - it was uh, actually a couple a years

28 ago.

29 BS: Mike Ford - where was -- where is this --

30 JC: Mike Ford's Auto Repair -- it's uh, West 12th Street.

31 BS: Oh okay, alright -- uh, just in your own words, if you will, tell me what you know

32 about the death of Isaac Dawkins and what Joey Watkins has related to you and what you've

33 heard.

34 JC: What Joey's told me is that he borrowed a car off of his dad's South Rome car

35 lot --

36 BS: Um-hum.

37 JC: -- over off South Broad -- um, they parked Mark's car or truck, whatever it was,

38 at the Texaco off 411 - right there at the connector --

39 BS: Uh-huh.

40 JC: -- they took Joey's truck, went to the car lot, picked up a car which he'd had the

41 keys to he got earlier that day -- dropped his truck off there and they were going to - out to Floyd

42 College I guess it is -- and gonna follow him home -- they running behind and they saw him at the

43 uh, BP Station right past Floyd College --

44 BS: Um-hum.

45 JC: -- so they pulled in there, followed him outta there - uh, followed him down 27 till
46 uh, there was no cars in sight and said as they were going around passing him they shot at
47 him twice.

48 BS: Alright, uh, let me kinda back this up now, alright um, they borrowed a car from
49 Joey Watkins' dad's car lot on South Broad.

50 JC: Yes.

51 BS: Alright, do you know what kind a car that was?

52 JC: He didn't say.

53 BS: Alright, now you said that Mark - who is Mark?

54 JC: Uh, Mark Free.

55 BS: Uh-huh, do you know Mark Free?

56 JC: No I've never met him.

57 BS: How - you just know the name?

58 JC: Yeah.

59 BS: How do you know the name?

60 JC: From Joe.

61 BS: Okay, alright now I don't understand - did Mark leave his car or truck some
62 where?

63 JC: At the Texaco where - down on 411 there the connector where everybody parks
64 their cars and commutes.

65 BS: Uh-huh, was it just Joey Watkins and Mark Free?

66 JC: That's all he said.

67 BS: Okay, and when they - when Mark parked his vehicle there at Texaco what'd they
68 do then?

69 JC: He got in the truck with Joe.

70 BS: With Joey --

71 JC: Joey Watkins.

72 BS: Alright, and they drove to - towards 27 South Floyd College, is that right?

73 JC: Well they went over to uh, South Broad then and picked up a car and dropped off
74 Joe's truck.

75 BS: Oh okay.

76 JC: He said it was a '93 Dakota.

77 BS: Joey's truck is a '93 Dakota?

78 JC: Yeah that's what he said.

79 BS: Alright so Joey dropped his truck off at the car lot --

80 JC: And picked up a car which he kinda pocketed the keys earlier.

81 BS: Do you know what kinda car it was?

82 JC: He didn't say.

83 BS: Alright, and from the car lot where did they go?

84 JC: They went towards Floyd College --

85 BS: Okay.

86 JC: -- 27 to Floyd College, they was gonna meet up with uh, Isaac -- they were
87 running behind and they saw him at the BP Station, he'd already left school or he left school early
88 whatever.

89 BS: Did they see him in the roadway or was he inside the service station or at - stopped
90 at there, do you know?

91 JC: I think he was stopped at the store from what he's told me but I'm not sure on
92 that.

93 BS: Okay.

94 JC: But they turned around there at the BP and followed him you know, back towards
95 town and uh, as - he's - like I said, as he started around 'em he said Mark shot at him once and it
96 went through the back window and then he shot again from my understanding through the side
97 window.

98 BS: 'Kay.

99 JC: And then they uh, got up somewhere where they turned to the left and went back
100 up Cave Spring Street and then followed it around to South Broad, dropped off the car, got Joe's
101 truck and then Joe carried him - Mark - back to the Texaco to get his car - or truck, I'm not sure,
102 I think he said a truck. And then Joe uh, turned around and started toward Cedartown -- he said
103 he saw the truck, uh, saw Isaac's truck uh, you know crashed and flipped and what not and he
104 said he got on his cell and he called his house and talked to his sister and told her to call Isaac's
105 sister and tell he that he believed Isaac had been in a wreck -- and he said it was you know, like
106 five or ten minutes after the wreck is what he told me.

107 BS: Did he say why he called his sister's house to uh, his house to get his sister to do
108 that - what was his reason behind that?

109 JC: Um, he was uh, he was concerned about Isaac he said, you know, wanted to let his
110 sister know that you know, he believed Isaac had been in a wreck and you know, wanted to let

111 her know --

112 BS: Um-hum -- did he say what his sister, did she call or --

113 JC: His - he said his sister told him that uh, she wouldn't gonna call 'em that you

114 know, they was enough problems there that she wouldn't getting involved.

115 BS: Okay, did Joey tell you who actually fired the weapon?

116 JC: He said Mark did.

117 BS: Mark Free?

118 JC: Yes.

119 BS: And did he say what kind a weapon it was?

120 JC: He didn't te-- didn't say.

121 BS: Did he tell you where the weapon is now?

122 JC: He said it was in uh, Lake Weiss.

123 BS: Lake Weiss.

124 JC: He said that next morning they went fishing and his mother called him on his cell

125 phone and told him that Mark had actually been shot and he was a suspect and that's when he got

126 rid of the gun.

127 BS: Alright, did he say who he went fishing with?

128 JC: Think he said his uncle - he said three people, they was in a fishing tournament.

129 BS: Okay --

130 JC: And said he had to --

131 BS: -- three people is in a boat.

132 JC: Yeah.

133 BS: Okay, and he did tell you that the gun was in Lake Weiss.

134 JC: Yeah, 'cause he thought it was real funny that uh, they were searching uh, Swan
135 Lake for it.

136 BS: Yeah, alright let me ask you Paul - when did he tell you this information that you
137 just gave me?

138 JC: Uh, about a week ago.

139 BS: Do you remember what day - was it night time, day time?

140 JC: It was night time uh, I guess about 8:00 - 9:00 o'clock - it was before lock down.

141 BS: What made him confide in - in you and tell you this?

142 JC: Uh, I really don't know, he had told another person that was in a Cell next to him
143 about it and I heard 'em talking about it.

144 BS: Do you know who that person was?

145 JC: Uh, Winford Ellis.

146 BS: Okay.

147 JC: And uh --

148 BS: Could you hear them talking about it with each other?

149 JC: I could hear them through the vent 'cause my room's right next to Joe's and I
150 could hear 'em through the vent.

151 BS: Uh-huh, okay.

152 JC: And I walked over and talked to 'em about 'em you know, searching the lake and
153 just told him, I said "I know it's in Lake Weiss I heard you saying it was in Lake Weiss" and uh,
154 he just opened up and started telling me.

177 BS: Um-hum.

178 JC: -- that he just finished telling me the story.

179 BS: Is there anybody else in that Cell Block that's ha-- that's - that has heard the same
180 story or the same information?

181 JC: Not that I know of um, you might try uh, Kevin Moye --

182 BS: Um-hum.

183 JC: -- 'cause he was giving Joe a hard time about it, telling him you know, I know you
184 killed the boy you know, you might as well fess up to it -- um, but I don't - I don't know if he -
185 he told him or he heard anything.

186 BS: When he said he ought to fess up to it, what did - what was Joey's reaction to
187 that?

188 JC: He was telling him he didn't do it, that you know, they had no evidence, just hear
189 say and this, that and the other.

190 BS: Okay, is there anything else about the case that he told you that I haven't asked at
191 - at all?

192 JC: Not that I can think of um, but later on that after-- or that night he talked to his uh,
193 parents, he was trying to get in touch with his girlfriend --

194 BS: Um-hum.

195 JC: -- who evidently lives with his parents -- and she was out with somebody else and
196 then he was you know, going up telling everybody that he was gone - when he got out, he was
197 gone be right back in for murder 'cause he's gone kill that guy.

198 BS: Okay I - I understand the - the girl - do - do you know the girlfriend's name now,

199 have you ever heard the name mentioned?

200 JC: Kelly I think.

201 BS: Kelly, alright, and so Kelly was out with somebody else and he said he'd be back in
202 jail for murder --

203 JC: Yeah.

204 BS: -- 'cause he's gone kill that guy.

205 JC: Yeah.

206 BS: Did he ever say that he was gonna harm her?

207 JC: Um, no he sure didn't -- but several people heard him say you know, he was gone
208 be back in for killing the boy - what - whatever his name is - when he got off the phone.

209 BS: Do you happen to know the boy's name?

210 JC: I sure don't.

211 BS: Alright, do you um, uh, - when he found out that - that Kelly, his girlfriend, was
212 out with somebody else - did he do anything in the Cell - did he say anything besides the threat or
213 whatever?

214 JC: He punched the wall and broke his knuckle.

215 BS: Broke his knuckle from hitting the wall.

216 JC: Yeah, it's - it's still swollen up and broke the skin.

217 BS: Did he go to the - to the medical facility at the jail about it?

218 JC: No, sure didn't.

219 BS: But it is swollen now.

220 JC: Yeah.

221 BS: Okay, what day did he punch that wall? Today's the 8th and 'course it's
222 Thursday and the lake was - was drug up at uh, Swan Lake on Saturday - this past Saturday.
223 JC: Okay, it was probably uh, I don't remember - probably Sunday or Monday.
224 BS: Okay, alright -- and he - he -- has ever made any threats that you know of to any
225 police officers that's investigating this case - have you ever heard him say anything about any
226 policeman?
227 JC: He said that uh, he was gone kill Stanley Sutton.
228 BS: When did he say that?
229 JC: He said it several times through the courses - from the 11th to date.
230 BS: Okay, alright um, --
231 JC: He said Stanley Sutton is just out to get him -- and that's what he tells everybody.
232 BS: Alright is anything else - any other detail about this case that - that he's mentioned
233 - anything I've - I've failed to ask?
234 JC: Not that I can think of right off hand.
235 BS: Okay. Alright let - let me - let me state some'em here uh, I received a call today
236 from Steve Lanier --
237 JC: Uh-huh.
238 BS: -- and I believe that's your attorney --
239 JC: Yes sir.
240 BS: -- and Steve told me that he had some information that you'd confided in him
241 about this case and so uh, Steve called me and he gave me permission to - to talk with you - is
242 that - that your understanding.

243 JC: Yes.

244 BS: Okay, alright - I haven't promised you anything, I haven't threatened you or I
245 haven't uh, offered you any type of deal for you to give me this information --

246 JC: None at all.

247 BS: Okay, alright, and - and Steve Lanier is your attorney.

248 JC: Yes sir.

249 BS: Alright, and I re-- I received a call from him just before lunch um, around I'd say
250 11:30 some'em like that.

251 JC: Okay.

252 BS: Okay, alright, uh, Paul I - I appreciate you talking to me um, I'm on turn the tape
253 recorder off now - the time is about 1:45 PM.

254

255 BS: Okay the tape recorder's back on - it's about 1:46 - um, Paul if you will, tell me
256 uh, about uh, a conversation you had with - with uh, Joey Watkins about Isaac and uh, a female
257 friend of his.

258 JC: Yeah, he said that uh, Isaac came over to his house one night because Joe had
259 been calling Brianne - I don't know her last name - had been calling her and giving her a hard time
260 'cause she was seeing Isaac and not Joe -- Joe broke up - she'd broke up with Joe or what not --
261 and Isaac came over and told him to stop calling, you know, stop harassing and threatening 'em --
262 and Joe threatened to you know, beat him up or whatever and Isaac spit in Joe's face and then
263 they got in a fight and Joe lost - and it hurt his pride 'cause he's a Watkins -- and that was the
264 reason uh, he went back after him to shoot him -- and he said he thought it was uh, six months

265 was plenty a time where the finger wouldn't be pointed at him.

266 BS: So he said he waited that long so that it wouldn't be - the finger wouldn't be
267 pointing at him.

268 JC: Yeah.

269 BS: Has he ever made any statement about any dogs?

270 JC: Um, yeah he said that uh, his dog was shot - but he said the dog was shot with a
271 22 and the uh, -- well at first he told me the dog was shot with a shotgun, then he said the dog
272 was shot with a 22 and they shot Isaac with a 9MM.

273 BS: When did he tell you that the dog was shot?

274 JC: Uh, same time he was telling me all the other.

275 BS: Okay. So he's told you that -- did he say who shot the dog?

276 JC: He sure didn't.

277 BS: But he said they shot the dog with a 22 --

278 JC: Yeah.

279 BS: -- and that Mark shot him with a 9MM.

280 JC: Yeah.

281 BS: That come out of Joey Watkins' mouth --

282 JC: Yes --

283 BS: -- 9MM.

284 JC: -- 9MM.

285 BS: And that 9MM now is in Lake Weiss. Is anything else Paul?

286 JC: I believe that's it.

287 BS: Okay, I'm on turn the tape recorder off, it's 1:49.

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