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w/ O'Dell

**INTERVIEW WITH WINFORD REESE ELLIS
JUNE 7, 2001**

Mr. O'Dell: Today's date is June 7, 2001. It's 10:55 in the morning. This is Bill O'Dell and I am here with Winford Reese Ellis. He is also present with his attorney, Chris Frazier and his para legal Monique Lench. Mr. Ellis, I am here to talk to you about the situation concerning testimony in the case of State v. Joseph Watkins, it's a murder case. It is my understanding that you have had several conversations with Bill Shiflett and Stanley Sutton of the Floyd County Police Department and at least two of these conversations have been recorded. I take it that you have spoken with either or both of them on more than two occasions.

Mr. Ellis: Yes, sir.

Mr. O'Dell: Now, on January 23rd you have a statement to Stanley Sutton and Bill Shiflett concerning the fact that Joey Watkins had told you, (quote) "He said that if they wouldn't had done it, they wouldn't be in this mess." I take it that when he told you that, you were speaking about what occurred in that murder case?

Mr. Ellis: He never told me that, it was lies.

Mr. O'Dell: Are you saying that he never even said the words if they wouldn't had done it, they wouldn't be in this mess?

Mr. Ellis: Never said them.

Mr. O'Dell: On February 6, 2001, you have an additional statement to Bill Shiflett and in that statement you said that Joey was talking to you about the location of the murder weapon and he made a comment, "It's in a lake, but it's not that lake." Did he ever make that statement to you?

Mr. Ellis: All lies.

Mr. O'Dell: He also told you that he and Mark Free chased down Isaac Dawkins and that Mark shot him and gave you some particulars concerning that and admitting his guilt. Did he ever say those things to you?

Mr. Ellis: No, sir.

Mr. O'Dell: How did you know about all these particulars?

Mr. Ellis: I read the transcript from the preliminary hearing.

Mr. O'Dell: So you had access to the preliminary hearing transcript?

Mr. Ellis: Yes, sir.

Mr. O'Dell: Were you asked by Stanley Sutton to find out about the gun?

Mr. Ellis: Basically, yes.

Mr. O'Dell: Is that why you told them "it's in a lake but not that lake.

Mr. Ellis: Yes, sir.

Mr. O'Dell: Even though that's not what Joey Watkins told you? Is that correct?

Mr. Ellis: Yes, sir.

Mr. O'Dell: Now, prior to you being interviewed, were you given any promises or anything?

Mr. Ellis: No, I wasn't promised anything.

Mr. O'Dell: Were you given any type of special treatment?

Mr. Ellis: Just one time when he came to talk to me and he took me, like I was telling you about, for a ride.....

Mr. O'Dell: Took you where?

Mr. Ellis: Took me to Wendy's and a pack of cigarettes waiting in the car.

Mr. O'Dell: Were you cuffed during this visit?

Mr. Ellis: No, sir.

Mr. O'Dell: So you just went on a joy ride to a fast food place?

Mr. Ellis: We just rode around.

Mr. O'Dell: Why did you tell Stanley Sutton and Bill Shiflett these things?

Mr. Ellis: I guess because I wanting to see if I could get a deal and getting out.

Mr. O'Dell: When you talk about a deal, were you in trouble for a particular case or anything?

Mr. Ellis: Yes, sir.

Mr. O'Dell: What kind of case did you have going on?

Mr. Ellis: Rape, aggravated stalking.

Mr. O'Dell: Did you ask them if they would assist you in those cases?

Mr. Ellis: They said they would see what they could do.

Mr. O'Dell: And this was before you gave the information concerning Joseph Watkins?

Mr. Ellis: I believe it all happened the first time I talked to them.

Mr. O'Dell: So this all happened all together?

Mr. Ellis: Yeah.

Mr. O'Dell: Alright. Why did you contact the police in the first place?

Mr. Ellis: Paul Cooley has been trying to get his lawyer to get in touch with the police. From what I understand, what he told me was.....

Mr. O'Dell: Are talking about he... Paul Cooley?

Mr. Ellis: Yeah. From what I understand was his lawyer told Watkins or Free's lawyer that he had been trying to get in touch with the police and they wouldn't come talk to him, so, you know, he come up with this idea that, you know, they kept bugging me about, asking me what I know, I kept telling them I didn't know nothing. Talking about Paul Cooley and a couple of other guys and I kept telling them, you know, that me and Joey were together all the time and we just hung out together, we didn't mess with nobody else really and they kept telling me that I knew something, that I knew something, I kept telling them I didn't.

Mr. O'Dell: They being Paul?

Mr. Ellis: Yeah, Paul.

Mr. O'Dell: Was his attorney with him?

Mr. Ellis: No. We would just talk it when we was in the blocks and he told me.... he come up and ----- they knew I had read the preliminary hearings, but Joey didn't let nobody else read it, just me, and come up with a thing, you know,

come up with a story and the deal was when I told them the story then they would get Paul Cooley to verify it, because he knew exactly what I was gonna tell them and he was going to go to Stanley Sutton then and tell them he had over heard Watkins tell me this stuff.

Mr. O'Dell: Okay. So then he was going to kind of back up what was being said to you.

Mr. Ellis: Yeah.

Mr. O'Dell: And this was Cooley's idea?

Mr. Ellis: Yeah. And from I understand he did that, told them that he had heard me.

Mr. O'Dell: Did he tell you that?

Mr. Ellis: No because I got moved out of C (or T) block not long after that.

Mr. O'Dell: So you don't know it was a fact that he actually talked to the police or not?

Mr. Ellis: That's what Stanley Sutton told me.

Mr. O'Dell: Oh, so Stanley told you that Cooley talked?

Mr. Ellis: Told me that he had talked to somebody else that verified my story.

Mr. O'Dell: Let me ask you, was there ever any talk about perhaps getting reward money?

Mr. Ellis: No.

Mr. O'Dell: So essentially what you all were looking at was trying to get breaks in your cases?

Mr. Ellis: Uh-huh.

Mr. O'Dell: Is that what Cooley was trying to do?

Mr. Ellis: Yes, sir.

Mr. O'Dell: He was trying to obtain a better deal. I think he's in

Mr. Ellis: conspiracy to murder.

Mr. O'Dell: Yeah, a murder case. Okay. So the entire idea wasn't your's, it was Cooley's to begin with?

Mr. Ellis: Yeah. Well, there was another guy that was in there for murder too, and he was trying to kind of get in on it too, but

Mr. O'Dell: Do you remember who that guy is?

Mr. Ellis: Kevin Moyea.

Mr. O'Dell: Kevin Moyea. That's a name I have heard of. Okay. He and Cooley co-conspirators?

Mr. Ellis: I mean, no, no.

Mr. O'Dell: They are on different murder cases?

Mr. Ellis: Yeah but there's a ----- it's really weird because the things I know too about the other case, now they've got somebody else locked up for the one that Moyea did, which is the guy that Paul Cooley conspired to murder.

Mr. O'Dell: Okay. But all of this initial thing was the fabrication of Cooley so that all of you could get perhaps better deals in your sentences if you were convicted.

Mr. Ellis: Yes.

Mr. O'Dell: Thank you, that's all I have.