

ROBERT SNELSON INTERVIEW

Q: Just tell me a little bit about the testimony that you gave and how you came up with these facts. Let me first ask you, did you ever hear of David Spence or Melendez or anybody take credit for these murders?

A: No, they, as a matter of fact, the first thing I told him was don't talk to nobody on this wing or anybody about your case. See, he came to me, he wanted me, I'd done some legal work and got my case reversed and couple other peoples. He wanted me to help him with his case.

Q: Was this the aggravated sexual case or was it the lake murder case?

A: Yeah, this was and see I heard about it through Charles Blacksheer cause he told me there's gonna be a guy come here probably this unit that he says. . . .

Q: Who is Charles Blacksheer.

A: He's one of the guys that was working for Truman Simons.

Q: An informant.

A: Yeah and nobody knew that. As a matter of fact that's how I ended up back in that county jail on a bench warrant. He told Truman that I was a writ writer and that Spence had talked to me and one thing led to another and that's why the brought me back there. I got off the chain bus and they run us all in this little room and Truman Simons in there. I said I don't know nothing about that dude. So you can send me back where I come from. To make a long story short they stuck us all in this tank, all up in this tank together and these dudes sitting in there talking about what happened here, what happened there, what they were gonna say, what they were gonna do. Anybody can see there just, not to mention the fact that I know Jessie Ivey. I've known him for years and I know that he's a rat. He's been working for the man for years and he still is and he's a rat and he's no good. I know what kind of dude he is.

Q: So what inticed you to testify against Spence and how did you come up with some information to testify on?

A: Well, everything that I learned about that I heard right there in that tank.

Q: Did Simons ever show you any crime scene photos?

A: Oh they showed us some pictures of them kids. You know how that goes.

Q: So once again how did you learn specifically about these details and why did you testify? What were you promised and who promised it?

A: I was discharged of my sentence anyway, but they told me they'll help me out and all this.

Q: Who is they?

A: Truman Simons and Ned Butler.

Q: Did they ever let you go over to the D.A.'s office and let you see your girlfriend?

A: Everybody went over there all the time. No, I never do that.

Q: You didn't?

A: No. But they would take us over there and feed us hamburgers. All they wanted to do is talk to us and show us some pictures, ask us questions, something like that and try to get you to sign a statement. I don't know if anybody else did but they asked me to sign one and I told them I ain't gonna sign one. But they, like I said we was all living in the tank, one little ol' tank together just me, Jessie Ivey, Frank Armarillo, Charles Siffold. We was all in that one tank.

Q: And Spence was in there with you?

A: No. Spence was the only man locked up by himself. He was on the same side of the jail we was on. Okay. But I'm hearing, but I didn't know anything about Spence other than the fact that he was charged with them murders. So I'm listening to what they're talking about and all this and but what the, this is, this is, the deal is, no Ivey, let me go back to when we left. We get to the Wall's unit. This is after we leave the East Wing. We get to the Wall unit. I don't even know where I'm going. I don't know what for and Ivey comes up to my cell and says this is what's up. And he said your going to McKlinnon County to testify against Spence. And I said I don't even know what your talking about. And he says yeah. And he says we're going back on the bench warrant, which I knew about that. He goes we're gonna testify against Spence in that capital murder case and I said well, maybe you are but I'm not. And he said well, I'm gonna put it like this. He says I know your a member of one of those gangs. Its just a matter of time before you got me cause we, I had some problems with one of his buddies in there and he got stabbed a bunch of times. Everybody said I put a contract on him. Jessie Ivey doesn't know nothing about that. Anyway, and Ivey says I know your a member of one of them gangs and he says I don't know which one but he says its just a matter of time before you got me and he says you people ain't gonna kill me. He says these people are gonna do something to me. He says I'm gonna make them do something to me. And I said well, I'm not involved in any of that. So anyway, we go on back, like I said, we didn't have any choice and they put us in this tank and I'm and he's and I know Armarillo. He's on the same wing. We all live on the same wing there in (inaudible). And Armarillo's kind of weak. Like I said he's weak and Jessie's, there talking about things they can testify say against Spence. Testify against and this and this and this. He's kind of leading him on. He says well, I've got aggravated 35 years and he said I'm gonna give it back to him.

Q: What about you personally? When did you decide to testify and why?

A: Well, I decided, in that tank about 3 days before the trial I would testify because I felt well, I know Armarillo's gonna testify and if I didn't and I knew if he testified that nobody ain't never gonna get ahold of anybody and tell them the truth and that's why I did what I did.

Q: And so, did Truman Simons promise you anything?

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A: Well, you know, like I said, he, they brought us cigarettes and stuff like that. But they never really gave me anything like, he said if you ever get in any trouble or anything like that, just call me.

Q: What about the letter you wrote to Spence's mother?

A: The one they never found?

Q: Right.

A: Well, there was supposed to been, that was supposed to been like an affidavit. Spence has got one too. Or he's supposed to have one.

Q: Russ has one.

A: I sent one to her, I mean I sent 2 to David and 1 to Russell Hunt.

Q: Okay.

A: But I was under the understanding that when she got killed that that was come up and gone.

Q: It was. So what did you say in the letter?

A: I told them the whole deal. I told them just what I'm telling you.

Q: That you lied?

A: Yeah. That I deliberately purgered myself because I didn't feel like he was getting, I felt like he was getting a bad deal because hell, everybody in the jail was up there testifying against him. There's no way he could have told everybody all of that. There just ain't no way. Charles Blacksheer, he's working for Truman Simons and he's over there trying to get information from Gilbert and I, as a matter of fact I, Charles Blacksheer got me to look at his statement of facts and I said well, I might be able to do something. Help you get some of this time off you. So I told Truman and them that back there and they said don't mess with this case. We're gonna do something for him. Just leave it alone. I wasn't gonna mess with it anyway when I found out what kind of rat he was. Blacksheer, he's the main cause of all of this. Just be out right frank with you, he's the one that started it all.

Q: Did anybody contact you after you wrote the letter?

A: I'll tell you what. When I got busted on those case right here Ned Butler called me in jail. he said I understand you've been in touch with David Spence's lawyer and I said yeah I have. He said did you tell him something you didn't tell me. And I said well, I'm gonna tell you what. I said I'm gonna tell them people the truth. I said I've been trying to get in touch with them ever since I've been out of jail and even when I got out I come back to Waco and try to get in touch with them, what happened was I got stopped by the police and I had a pistol in my car so I went on back down (inaudible) before they shut me down and I just figured I'd wait til that other trial

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cause they were supposed to subpoena me on that other trial and tell them what they want on them. But anyway. . . .

Q: Was Ned Butler upset with you?

A: Yeah, he was pretty upset. Cause everything didn't go the way he wanted it. And he said I hope your doing the right thing. I hope you think your doing the right thing. I said I'm doing what I want to do.

Q: Did you ever meet with Vic Fazell?

A: Oh, I talked with Vic.

Q: Before you testified?

A: Sure.

Q: And what kind of promises did he make?

A: What he said, I'll tell you exactly what he said. He says he never, he says you might be surprised, he probably could if he wanted to.



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