

Parts of an interview.

A private investigator interviewed a person who did some research work for the documentary "Shadows of Doubt".

QUESTION: Okay Brouillette was the lead attorney in this case?

REPLY: Right.

QUESTION: And you went down and talked to him sometime in '98 when you were doing this?

REPLY: Yes.

QUESTION: And you were telling me about y'all's conversation that you had with him and that you had checked the court records there in Marksville on Vincent Simmons to see if any motions had been filed by the defense?

REPLY: Right.

QUESTION: What did you find there?

REPLY: **There were no motions filed by the defense.**

QUESTION: Okay and you had also told me that it was 58 days from the time Vincent was arrested to the day he was sentenced?

REPLY: Right.

QUESTION: And when you talk to the attorney did you ask him about filing any motions or what you had found that were no motions?

REPLY: I did ask him about that and he did not respond.

QUESTION: Ah did he talk with you that day?

REPLY: He did talk but he was very defensive.

QUESTION: Ah what made-

REPLY: I guess you know I went in there knowing some stuff and for example you know the fact that he didn't file any motions. I also knew that the victims had given 3 statements they gave a statement the day of the report, the day they reported the incident. Based on that law enforcement went out and arrested Vincent Simmons. And then when they testified at trial what they said at trial was different than what they said on either of the first 2 statements. The defense attorney didn't ask about any of that at trial.

QUESTION: Did you ask him if he'd gotten medical reports before trial?

REPLY: Yes I did.

QUESTION: And what was his response?

REPLY: No he didn't.

QUESTION: You are very much aware of filing motions to get this kind of stuff?

REPLY: Right.

QUESTION: Even back in 1977 it was a standard practice for most criminal attorneys to especially in a rape case like this to file motions of discovery wouldn't you think?

REPLY: Yes it was. It was different then than it is now, Brady was in effect then and the way you went about getting things that you needed you had to ask for them now. If I'm right it is the State's responsibility to just give it to you without you having to ask back then you could get it but you had to ask for it in the way of a motion.

QUESTION: And you didn't find any motion asking for any of them when you checked around?

REPLY: **No there was no motions filed.**

QUESTION: Is there anything you can recall that you feel like may be important that

you asked or that he said other than the medical stuff?

REPLY: It was, I got the impression that it was his opinion that Vincent was guilty and so he didn't maybe put forth his best effort if that's a fair characterization I don't know.

QUESTION: You kinda got that opinion from the jest of the conversation?

REPLY: From the jest of the conversation and the at some point in time in the conversation he made the comment meaning Vincent did it and he knew he did it.

QUESTION: Did he elaborate on how he knew Vincent did it?

REPLY: I think I asked that and I think his response was that the girls identified him or something. I don't remember how that went. He had a response but I don't remember off the top of my head what it was.

QUESTION: Did you talk to any of the officers that worked this case?

REPLY: No I did not they wouldn't talk.

QUESTION: Did you try to talk to them?

REPLY: Yes I did.

QUESTION: And none of them would talk to you?

REPLY: None of them would talk.

QUESTION: They just flat told you they wouldn't talk about it?

REPLY: Right.

QUESTION: And that was based on the advice of Eddie Knolls.
So Eddie Knolls was telling them not to talk about the case?

REPLY: Eddie Knolls wouldn't talk to me either.

QUESTION: Ah the cousins of these girls his last name's Laborde?

And I notice that one of the police deputies is Robert J. Laborde, Jr. Are you aware if they're related in some way?

REPLY: There is a relationship there somehow but I don't I don't remember how that worked.

QUESTION: In reading the reports it appears to me that he's the one shot Vincent?

REPLY: I think that's correct.

QUESTION: And who else did you interview?

REPLY: I interviewed 7 of the 12 jurors 3 of the 12 are deceased and 2 I couldn't locate.

QUESTION: What type of questions did you ask them?

REPLY: If they remembered anything about the trial, what they thought about the trial what they convicted Vincent Simmons of. Because that's an extremely important thing in my mind here's why Vincent Simmons was on trial for attempted aggravated rape that was the official charge now there's a reason for that in the Spring of the year that this trial occurred the US Supreme Court ruled that the death penalty for aggravated rape was unconstitutional and in Louisiana at that time the only penalty on the books for aggravated rape was death. They arrested Vincent Simmons for aggravated rape but they didn't try him for aggravated rape they tried him on attempted aggravated rape. Now and I thought that was important because when I asked the jurors what did you convict Vincent Simmons of their answer was aggravated rape. When I asked them if they was aware-that they were aware that he was on trial for attempted aggravated rape they said they thought he was on trial for agg rape that's what they convicted him of so that you know they changed it to attempted aggravated rape because there wasn't any penalty for aggravated rape that's why the State changed but they didn't they didn't change what they tried for if that makes any sense do you understand what I'm saying?

They didn't file the proper bills or paperwork-
They couldn't try him for aggravated rape because there wasn't a penalty for it.

QUESTION: But that's what he was indicted for?

REPLY: That's what he was indicted for but they had to change the-amend the indictment to attempted aggravated rape cause they could-there was a sentence for that but with the Supreme Court ruling the death penalty unconstitutional for agg rape there was no sentence for agg rape.

QUESTION: But all the jurors' thought that's what they convicted him of?

REPLY: But that's what Eddie Knolls tried him as on was agg rape. Does that make any sense?

QUESTION: Umhum (yes) I know what you're talking about.

REPLY: **Now when I talked to the jurors 6 of the 7 that I spoke to said that if they had known that the girls made 2 previous statements that were different than what they testified if they had known about the doctors report that said one of the girls was still a virgin and had they known about the picture of the line up that showed Vincent Simmons was the only one in handcuffs 6 of the 7 jurors would have not convicted him. And they were down right upset that they didn't have all the evidence.**

QUESTION: Ah so the jurors if they said that if they would have known that they wouldn't ah convicted him?

REPLY: **Would not have convicted him.**

QUESTION: Okay we were talking about the jurors and your discussion with them and you said you didn't talk to any of the law enforcement or the District Attomey because they wouldn't talk. Did you attempt to talk to the District Attorney?

REPLY: Yes I did several times.

QUESTION: What did he tell you what'd he tell you?

REPLY: He would never talk to me he just sent word out that he wasn't gonna talk about it.

QUESTION: And did you contact any of the officers?

REPLY: I did but I don't remember which ones.

QUESTION: And they basically just told you the DA had advised them not to talk about the case?

REPLY: Right.

QUESTION: Did you ever try to talk to the cousin the boy that was in the car?

REPLY: Yes I did I called Keith Laborde.

QUESTION: And what did he say?

REPLY: That he wasn't gonna talk about it. As a matter of fact I contacted both the girls.

QUESTION: Did Keith give you any reason why he wouldn't talk with you about it?

Or did he just flat tell you I can't talk?

REPLY: Just flat told me he didn't want to talk about it.

QUESTION: Do you know him?

REPLY: No.

QUESTION: Do,vou know anything about him? I'd heard he had a drinking problem?

REPLY: The onlyest thing I know is what I heard and that he is not in good shape.

I know Jonathan told me that Keith Laborde sent word trough his sister that if he come out there he was gonna shoot him.

QUESTION: Say what now?

REPLY: **Jonathan told me on the phone that Keith Laborde sent word**

through apparently Keith Laborde's sister that if Jonathan came to his house he was gonna shoot him.

QUESTION: Was you aware of that?

REPLY: No I'm not aware of that.

QUESTION: So you just called him on the phone and he just basically told you he wasn't gonna talk to you?

REPLY: Right. And I had talked to the girls and they had agreed to talk to me on audio but they weren't gonna do video and then the mother got involved and put the quietus on that.

QUESTION: And both these girls were grown by the time you contacted em?

REPLY: Right right.

QUESTION: When you talked to the people what would you tell them that you were working for A & E Television or?

REPLY: No that I was working for Gabriel Films.

That they were wanting to do a documentary. That they had done a documentary on Angola called The Farm and because of that documentary there was a large amount of interest in the Parole Board hearing of Vincent Simmons and that they were now doing a film about the Vincent Simmons case. They were wanting to tell the story of the case and I would try to impress upon them that nobody was trying to prove Vincent Simmons innocence or guilt they were just wanting to make a documentary and tell the story you know, because as far as they were concerned the judicial system had run its course, it had done its thing, you know nobody was trying to prove his innocence and that's kinda how I got folks to talk to me.

QUESTION: And even with that you still couldn't get the police and the DA to talk to you?

REPLY: They didn't buy it.

QUESTION: Okay. Anybody else you can recall talking with that we hadn't talked about?

REPLY: One of the jurors that I spoke with I found interesting in the sense that there wasn't a juror that I spoke to that wasn't afraid of Eddie Knolls not I didn't say respected him I said was afraid of him.

QUESTION: Why would they be afraid of him?

REPLY: **The one of the jurors that I spoke to said that he told his wife at some point in time in the trial that he would hate to be an innocent man on trial in Avoyelles Parish.**

QUESTION: We were talking about you talked to the jurors and they were all afraid of Eddie Knolls why do you think **people are afraid of Eddie Knolls down here?**

REPLY: **Well because Eddie Knolls and Bill Belt had a little kingdom they could pretty much do what they want when they want it and to who they wanted.**

QUESTION: Now who was this other guy?

REPLY: Bill Belt he's the sheriff.

QUESTION: Has this been going on for a number of years?

REPLY: For years and years and years.

QUESTION: So they basically be afraid to vote against what he wanted then is that what you're saying?

REPLY: **They were definitely afraid to cross him or any or Bill Belt or any of those folks down there.**