

This Vince Carraher and I am with Mr. Harry Ballard, in St. Paul, MN. Today is August 25, 1998.

VC: Mr. Ballard you have consented to meet with me and give me a recorded affidavit, is that correct?

HB: That's correct.

VC: Okay. Would you give me your full name, age, and address, sir?

HB: Harry Martin Ballard Jr. Age 64, birthdate [REDACTED].

VC: And you live...

HB: [REDACTED], Maplewood, MN; 55117.

VC: And you phone is [REDACTED]-[REDACTED], is that correct?

HB: That's correct.

VC: Let me make sure this is picking up properly.....

VC: Alright, the machine is working. Mr. Ballard, have I made any promises, threats or inducements to meet with you today?

HB: None whatsoever.

VC: Has anyone else made any promises, threats or inducements to you.

HB: No, none.

VC: So your giving this statement on your own free will?

HB: Absolutely.

VC: Sir, my understanding is that you are a Deputy Sheriff, Ramsey County?

HB: That's correct.

VC: And how long have you been Deputy Sheriff, sir.

HB: Thirty years.

VC: Are you currently retired?

HB: No, I'm still working.

VC: Still working. So you have worked with the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department thirty years, in different capacities?

HB: Yes.

VC: Do you also know a Mr. Ralph Duke?

HB: Yes, I do.

VC: Is he in anyway related?

HB: He's my ex-brother-in-law.

VC: He's your ex-brother-in-law?

HB: Yes.

VC: Okay. How long have you known Ralph Duke.

HB: All my life, all about forty years, I've known him.

VC: You grew up in the same community?

HB: Same community, yes.

VC: Sir, you have children, isn't' that correct?

HB: Yes, I do.

VC: Could you give me the names of your children?

HB: Three sons, Johnny, Jeffrey and Joseph; daughter Jacqueline.

VC: And Jacqueline resides where?

HB: Jackie lives here. She use to live in California, she's been here now for three years.

VC: Okay. So what, they would be cousins to Ralph?

HB: Yes.

VC: Yeah. Alright, now Mr. Duke, I believe, was arrested in 1989. I don't know the exact date off hand. Prior to that, were your son's or son, one of your son's, stopped in the town of Faribault before the arrest to Ralph Duke?

HB: Yes, yes.

VC: Okay. Can you tell me who was stopped, and why they were stopped?

HB: Two of my son's were stopped in Faribault coming back from California. They had ran out of gas and they called Pluky, told him they needed gas money, shortly before they got to Faribault, and when they got to Faribault they were stopped by the DEA and arrested for suspicion of narcotics.

VC: Now, Pluky, of course that's Ralph Duke, also known as Pluky Duke?

HB: Right, yes.

VC: Were these young men transporting a car on behalf of Mr. Duke.

HB: Yes.

VC: Okay. So your telling me they were stopped, arrested for transporting narcotics?

HB: Yes.

VC: Would you know, whether or not, any narcotics were found?

HB: None whatsoever.

VC: None whatsoever. Okay, were they held in jail over night?

HB: Yes, they were.

VC: Did one of your son's also call you?

HB: Yes.

VC: Okay. And ultimately they were released or what?

HB: Ultimately they were released in a couple of days or so. Because Pluky had got in touch with Ron Meshbesh and they were released.

VC: Okay. What about the vehicle they were driving?

HB: The vehicle, they kept the vehicle as far as I can remember.

VC: Even though there was no illegal substance found in the vehicle, they kept the vehicle?

HB: There was none.

VC: There was none. Okay, so were your son's Jeffrey and Joseph driving in one car or did they have two different cars...

HB: I think they had two different cars.

VC: Okay. Did they take both the cars?

HB: They took both of the cars.

VC: And that was the DEA?

HB: Yes.

VC: Do you know, were you told who the agents were?

HB: No, I didn't. I think one of them was a Minneapolis cop.

VC: Would that be a Minneapolis cop assigned to the DEA by the...

HB: Yes.

VC: Would that be a guy by the name of Carey?

HB: Yes. Carey was one of them. I remember that name.

VC: Okay. So this happened before Ralph Duke was arrested, would it of been a couple of weeks?

HB: About a couple of weeks or so.

VC: Yeah. Now, did your son come back here, did they stay with you?

HB: Yes. They stayed here with me.

VC: Okay. Then did Jeffrey return to California?

HB: Jeffrey returned to California, yes.

VC: Okay. And what about Joseph?

HB: Joseph, then moved up to his wife's house, his future wife's house, up there on Carroll or Igelhart...

VC: Okay. Joseph, had he been staying with Ralph Duke?

HB: Yes, he had.

VC: Why was he staying there?

HB: Because he was helping Pluky with his cars, transporting his cars back and forth from California.

VC: Okay. Was Ralph, Pluky, was he helping Joseph, too?

HB: Yes, he was.

VC: Did Joseph have some hard times out there in California? Is that why he came back here?

HB: Yeah, he had some hard times. Trying to find job and what not.

VC: Okay.

HB: Pluky helped him out by bringing the cars back.

VC: Right.

HB: It wasn't narcotics.

VC: Wasn't doing narcotics.

HB: No.

VC: Okay. So anyway, Jeffrey goes back to California and then a few weeks after they had been stopped in Faribault, then Ralph "Pluky" Duke is arrested, correct?

HB: Correct.

VC: Okay. Now, sometime in there was your house broken into?

HB: Yes, it was.

VC: Can you remember approximately when that was?

HB:

VC: Was it after the arrest of Ralph Duke?

HB: It was after the arrest of Ralph Duke. I got the date upstairs.

VC: Could we hold, do you have a police report by any chance?

HB: I gave the, I called Maplewood Police Department, they came out and I gave them a report. They took fingerprints off the window there and on the box upstairs that they stole my money out of. But I never heard anything back from them again.

VC: You did.

HB: And I gave them this Carey's name because he was identified by my neighbor at 143.

VC: You had a neighbor at 143 that...

HB: He had seen the guy, seen the guy, he asked does Harry live here. (inaudible) said no Harry, he lives next door.

VC: Okay.

HB: (INAUDIBLE) Didn't think nothing about it.

VC: Right, so this person came to Mr. Martin's door....

HB: Yes, knocking on the door...

VC: Looking for you?

HB: Looking for Harry. He ask for Harry specifically.

VC: Okay. Did Mr. Martinas see the person break in?

HB: He didn't see the person break in.

VC: Did he hear noises or anything?

HB: He heard a little bit of noise, but he didn't pay any attention.

VC: This was in the daytime?

HB: In the daytime. It was before 12:00.

VC: Were you at work?

HB: I was at work.

VC: Okay. When did you find out there was a break-in to your home?

HB: Well, Joseph came over, the door was unlocked, the front door, looked around and seen the stuff array. So he called me at work and said my house was just broken into.

VC: You normally lock your door?

HB: Oh, yeah definitely. It was definitely locked.

VC: So did you come back from work?

HB: I came back from work. I got off work, told my boss/supervisor, what had happened and I came, I was here in about five minutes or less because I was at Regions Hospital, not Regions, it was St. Ramsey's Hospital. I drove up here, parked my car. Pulled my pistol out because I thought they might of been still here.

VC: Yes.

HB: Joseph was waiting for me outside there, and we came in and looked around and looked around, went to the basement and nothing down there, but I seen the door, the kitchen window, they came through that kitchen window right there. I had left it unlocked and opened. They took the screen off and came through that window.

VC: Okay.

HB: Went upstairs and everything was, drawers were all open and everything and my gun was laying on top of the dresser, that wasn't touched, they did even touch that gun.

VC: What kind of a gun?

HB: It's 38, I got a 38 Snipnose.

VC: And that was right out in the opening?

HB: That was right out in the opening, laying right there on the dresser in the bedroom.

VC: Then, were there other items, though, that were missing?

HB: They took my wedding ring, my wedding band. I was formally married, they took that. Underneath the bed they took is a straw basket, they ripped that open, they didn't touch no pictures, I got some pictures and other things in there, they took all the money.

VC: You had cash?

HB: Yes, all cash. About \$600 or so.

VC: Okay.

HB: They took that. They took my mom's, my mom passed away, she gave me her silverware. Beautiful silverware, they took that.

VC: Okay.

HB: Out of the closet. They ripped everything apart looking for anything, you know. And the suspicion, why didn't they take my gun?

VC: Now, your a police officer, based on your life experience, if a burglar comes in, would they normally still a gun?

HB: Oh yeah, definitely. Of course.

VC: Because that's....

HB: No question about it.

VC: It's easy to sell a gun on the street?

HB: Very easy.

VC: Easier than anything else?

HB: Very easy. A gun is one of the most easiest things to sell on the street. Back then and today now.

VC: So you found it strange they didn't take the gun?

HB: Absolutely, yes.

VC: Okay. Then anything else missing? Cash, silverware...

HB: Cash and the silverware was missing.

VC: Okay.

HB: And my wedding band. It was about \$400 for that.

VC: And your wedding band. Did you then notify the local police?

HB: I called Maplewood Police Department. They came out, it was about 10 minutes, they were out here. I told them what had happened, they took fingerprints off the straw box and the window..

VC: Yeah.

HB: Look like they were going through the motions. I told them I had a suspicion who came in here and broke in here.

VC: Had you talked to Mr. Martinas?

HB: Martinas.

VC: And he mentioned someone coming to the door?

HB: Yeah, asking for Harry.

VC: And he described that individual?

HB: Yeah. I haven't seen Carey personally, but Joseph and them told me what he looked like and Mr. Martinas got right on the..

VC: It all fit, then?

HB: Yeah, it all fit. I told them, in fact I called the Sergeant, I can't remember who the Sergeant was of Maplewood, they say I have a report.

VC: Would that report be preserved?

HB: It should be.

VC: I will get the date from you when were done here. Okay. Did anything come of that break-in?

HB: Not a thing.

VC: Not a thing.

HB: I gave them his name.

VC: You gave the name to the Maplewood police?

HB: Yes.

VC: Okay. Did you also file an insurance report?

HB: No, I didn't.

VC: You didn't, okay. Now subsequently, were you ever interviewed by federal prosecutor, DEA agents, FBI anybody like that?

HB: I was summoned to the Grand Jury in St. Paul.

VC: Alright, okay.

HB: I went down there and they asked me questions about what I know about Pluky and so on and so on. As far as I've known Pluky all these years, I never seen no drugs. And I've visited his place out in California for years and years, never seen no drugs. I told them that in the Grand Jury.

VC: And did you tell them, was there every any discussion of drugs?

HB: None whatsoever.

VC: None whatsoever.

HB: I told them he was in the car business and that's all I know.

VC: That's all you know.

HB: Yeah. That's all I ever seen.

VC: Okay. You had visit Pluky out in California?

HB: Oh yes. I stayed at his places.

VC: Yeah. And sometimes...

HB: Every year.

VC: Every year, sometimes you would see him here in Minnesota?

HB: Yeah.

VC: Okay. Your son Jeffrey and Joseph, they drove, transported cars back and forth?

HB: Right.

VC: And they were never arrested for transporting drugs?

HB: None. Absolutely, they were never arrested for any drugs.

VC: And they were stopped before?

HB: They were stopped. Because there was a tap on the phone. When they called Pluky. I called Pluky, they called me, I called Pluky. When they were arrested.

VC: Okay. Do you know if they suspected you of any wrong doing?

HB: Oh, yes. They had suspected me of wrong doing because they would be parked out there and they would be watching me, I knew that. I have no proof, but I think my phone was tapped too.

VC: Possibly.

HB: It's possible. There was a female always out there, I should of go the license number, but I've seen her several times.

VC: You believe that's because you were a friend of Ralph Duke?

HB: Oh yes. There's no question about that.

VC: No question about that.

HB: No.

VC: Okay. They must of known, your a Deputy Sheriff.

HB: Of course, yes.

VC: But never the less they continued to have you under suspicion?

HB: They had me under suspicion, under surveillance. I know that. It's funny to me. I knew what was going on.

VC: Did you tell your supervisor about this?

HB: My supervisor was Chuck Zacharias, he was the Sheriff, then, he's a U.S. Marshall now.

VC: Yeah, was he aware that

HB: He know what was going on because there was a piece in the paper, the Sheriff knows me and there's no possible way that I could be involved in, it was in the paper.

VC: It was in the paper?

HB: It was in the paper.

VC: Now, let me pause for a minute.

VC: Okay now, reflecting back to Mr. Duke's arrest, his trial and his conviction, did you ever attend the trial?

HB: Yes, I was down there.

VC: You heard some testimony?

HB: Yes.

VC: Did you hear some testimony that you believed was not true?

HB: Oh yes, definitely. It was the testimony from all of them, that were supposedly involved in it because the were trying to, in my mind and what I seen, the way I seen it they were trying to get less time.

VC: So they were trying to lighten their load there..

HB: Yes, they were. So they were ratting on each other.

VC: Were they blaming this all on Ralph Duke?

HB: They was blaming it on Ralph Duke.

VC: Now the allegations, one of the allegations was that Ralph Duke provided money so Monty and Lauren and a guy name Hutchinson and others, could purchase a substantial amount of cocaine. You know that?

HB: I know that.

VC: Okay. Now, what was the word on the street concerning where that money came from and what do you know about that?

HB: Well I heard that, I heard that Monty up all the money to make the purchase or whatever.

VC: Yeah.

HB: That's what I heard, Monty. When was Monty was arrested, (inaudible) he tried to commit suicide (inaudible).

VC: Yeah.

HB: Monty, that's where it came from.

VC: But in talking to people in the community and on the street, did you hear at all where that money came from?

HB: Everybody just said Monty had got the money.

VC: Yeah, okay. Did you hear it was not Ralph's money?

HB: Yes, that's what I heard. That was in the Trial too, that wasn't his money.

VC: Alright. Joseph had to testify, did you listen to his testimony?

HB: Yes.

VC: Okay. Well your son Joseph testified, now this may be painful..

HB: Oh yeah.

VC: for you what I'm going to ask, but do you believe that Joseph lied on the witness stand?

HB: He told some fabrications.

VC: He did. Do you know why he would of done that?

HB: Because he wouldn't get the time that they threatened him with.

VC: Do you remember what he lied about?

HB: The money.

VC: Money?

HB: Money.

VC: What did he say about money?

HB: He said he was coming back, one time he brought about \$200,000, he was never stopped for it or anything, it was always about money that he would bring back from California.

VC: That wasn't true?

HB: That wasn't true. Joseph was always broke, he never had a lot of money.

VC: Did Joseph tell you that wasn't true, that he said that to lighten his sentence?

HB: Yes. I could see why too.

VC: Okay. He told you that?

HB: Yeah.

VC: He was represented by, who?

HB: Michael Colich.

VC: Michael Colich, attorney. Yeah, okay. So in order to lighten his responsibility or potential sentence he fabricated some things on the witness stand?

HB: Fabricated some things. Hopeman, with Hopeman..

VC: The prosecutor?

HB: Yeah.

VC: He met with him?

HB: Yes, they met with him.

VC: Okay. Is there anything else you know about some of the testimony that was given? Lauren Duke testified, LaMont, Ralph's son did not testify, did you listen to Lauren Duke's testimony or anybody else?

HB: No I didn't. I was down there mostly for Joseph.

VC: Okay. Now Jeffrey didn't have to testify.

HB: No he never, he stayed out it. After he was released from Faribault, he came here and stayed with me for a couple of days and then went back out to California. Nothing else about it.

VC: Alright.

HB: Hopeman told me that Jeff is not involved with anybody.

VC: You spoke with Hopeman, then?

HB: Yeah, yeah. Down at the federal building.

VC: Before the Grand Jury?

HB: Before I went to the Grand Jury.

VC: Yeah. What did he want from you?

HB: Wanted to know did I ever see anything.

VC: Yeah.

HB: No, I never seen anything, but expensive cars and what not.

VC: Yeah.

HB: Never, you know, in all these years. I have known Pluky, stayed with him and go out to eat, he would treat us for dinner and stuff, I would take my ex-wife out there, every year for about the last 15-20 years.

VC: No discussion or evidence or narcotics.

HB: There was never no discussion about narcotics. I would have notice if narcotic, especially being in my position.

VC: Right.

HB: But there was never no narcotics. I've never seen, not even and inkling of any narcotics.

VC: No one called you as a witness on behalf of Mr. Duke or..

HB: No.

VC: Would you have testified had you been asked to?

HB: Oh yes. I would have testified. I told them I was going to testify at the same thing what I told the Grand Jury.

VC: Okay. And also what you told Mr. Hopeman?

HB: Yeah.

VC: Okay. There was reference to the "Duke Gang" by agent Carey, who testified in the Long Cadillac case, and agent Carey testified that he had been investigating Ralph Duke for a lengthy period of time and also that wiretaps were used, and pen register. Had you ever heard of the "Duke Gang"?

HB: I've never heard of the the "Duke Gang" in all my life. There was no gang.

VC: There was no "Duke Gang".

HB: No, there was no "Duke Gang".

VC: Would you have known if there was a "Duke Gang"?

HB: I would have known.

VC: Okay.

HB: Because they have been after Pluky to nail him for a long time.

VC: Had he ever been charged with a crime over here in Ramsey County to the best of your knowledge?

HB: Not to my knowledge, no.

VC: Or Hennepin County?

HB: To my knowledge, no.

VC: Never charged with anything?

HB: No.

VC: Okay.

HB: California, when he lived out there. I think he lived in Vegas for a while, there was nothing.

VC: Okay. Alright. Anything else you can think of?

HB: Nothing else I can remember.

VC: Okay. Well I tell you what, I will, once again, have this transcribed and I will have a copy made for your records and I will put it in an affidavit form and would ask you to sign it. Do you agree to that?

HB: I agree to it.

VC: I'll notarize it, I'll swear you in. And again, you have given this statement of your free will?

HB: Yes.

VC: And no one has offered promises, inducements or threats?

HB: None whatsoever.

VC: Would you state your name again?

HB: Harry Martin Ballard, Jr.

VC: Alright sir, I want to thank you very much.

Harry M. Ballard Jr.

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 12 day of SEPTEMBER 1998.

Vincent B. Carraher

Notary Public

