

INTERVIEW WITH LOREN DUKE BY VINCE CARRAHER, INVESTIGATOR

RE: RALPH DUKE APPEAL

File No.: 9345/35393

VC: This is Vince Carraher, today is June 18, 1998 and I am with Mr. Loren Duke at his residence. What is the address here, sir?

LD: [REDACTED] Avenue.

VC: And your home phone is?

LD: [REDACTED] - [REDACTED]

VC: Where are you employed?

LD: Ford Motor Plant, St. Paul.

VC: Okay. Now, you know why I am here, correct?

LD: Yep.

VC: Okay. Now, do you remember meeting with Mr. Otis Smith and your father and Andre Duke, about a year ago, and Mr. Otis Smith recorded the conversation and you talked about the sting operation, that you got caught up in. Do you remember that?

LD: Yes.

VC: Okay, and I transcribed that and I have a copy here. Now, was what you discussed on that date, was true and accurate. Is that correct?

LD: Yep. What happened about that sting is all on that tape.

VC: Okay, so you were telling the truth, then, when you were discussing things?

LD: Yep.

VC: Okay. Now, right now, I would just like to briefly ask you a few questions -- on that other tape there were about four people talking, so it gets a little confusing.

LD: Okay.

VC: All right, let me make sure this is picking up. ... All right, this is working all right. Now, number 1, back in 1989, were you involved in what's called a sting operation?

LD: Yep.

VC: And, this sting happened at some hotel?

LD: The Sher - uh the Sheratin Hotel up at 280. I forgot the boulevard.

VC: Okay. Now, this was a situation where you and some others were going to purchase some drugs from an individual called Randy?

LD: Yep.

VC: Okay and ...

LD: I didn't ... I didn't know the guy.

VC: You had never met the guy?

LD: I never met the guy.

VC: Okay. This individual knew Monty Nunn, though, is that correct?

LD: Correct.

VC: That's correct, okay. So, the day of this incident, or the day of this arrest, did you leave from your home and go to that hotel?

LD: Yes.

VC: Okay, can you remember who you were with?

LD: Um, it was a me, Tony ...

VC: Tony Turner, right?

LD: Tony Turner. Ramone.

VC: Hutchinson?

LD: No, no, Larry Hutchinson.

VC: Larry Hutchinson.

LD: And Lamont -- Nunn.

VC: And Lamont Nunn. Okay. Now, you were going to make a purchase, is that correct?

LD: Yes.

VC: And you had a sum of money?

LD: Yes.

VC: Do you know how much you had or do you remember how much you had?

LD: \$117 -- \$117,000 I think it was.

VC: Okay, and that money came from where?

LD: From individuals.

VC: From individuals, pooling their money?

LD: Yep.

VC: Okay. Now, at any time, did Mr. Ralph Duke contribute any money to this purchase?

LD: No, he didn't know nothing about the deal.

VC: He knew nothing about the deal?

LD: Naw, he knew nothing about the deal.

VC: Okay, Mr. Ralph Duke is related to you?

LD: Yes.

VC: He is ...?

LD: My uncle.

VC: Your uncle. That's your brother -- excuse me, that's your father's brother, correct?

LD: Yes.

VC: Okay. Now, had you talked to Mr. Duke oh, shortly before this matter the sting, or the plans to make a buy?

LD: No.

VC: You hadn't seen him?

LD: Nope.

VC: Okay. Was there any such thing as the Duke Gang?

LD: No.

VC: Okay. So there's no Duke Gange?

LD: No, no Duke Gang.

VC: So are you associating with your uncle on a regular basis or are you seeing him in family situations -- that type of thing?

LD: Now?

VC: No, back then. Back in 89.

LD: Uh, yeah, just family gatherings.

VC: Okay.

LD: Family picnics, that's about it.

VC: Okay, would you know if Ramone Hutchinson and his brother Larry knew Ralph Plukey Duke?

LD: They just knew of him as uh, Lamont's dad. That's it.

VC: They didn't know him personally?

LD: They didn't know him personally, no.

VC: They didn't associate with him?

LD: Nope.

VC: They didn't do any kind of business with him?

LD: Nope.

VC: Okay. Did you know a fellow by the name of Joe Ballard, that lived with Ralph Duke? Or he stayed with him for a while?

LD: Joe? Joe?

VC: Joe Ballard is the name.

LD: No. You mean Joseph Ballard?

VC: Joseph, yeah.

LD: Joseph is our nephew.

VC: Nephew?

LD: Yeah.

VC: Okay, he's stayed with him for a while?

LD: Yes.

VC: Was he trying to rehabilitate himself coming out of California. He had some kind of an addiction? Do you know anything about?

LD: No.

VC: All right, you don't know anything about that. Okay. Now, the night of the arrest, was that late at night?

LD: About 10:00 o'clock.

VC: About 10 p.m. You drove to this hotel. Did the individual you were supposed to deal with appear from the hotel? Did he come out or?

LD: No, Lamont went and met him and then they came back to where I was sittin at and looked at the money and then walked back, went about 50 feet, and the next thing you know, cops were there and helicopters are shooting, they're shooting at people and -- it just went crazy.

VC: Okay. So, no narcotics were displayed?

LD: No narcotics exchanged and no money exchanged.

VC: And no money exchanged.

LD: Nope.

VC: But you were arrested at the ...

LD: The hotel.

VC: Yeah. Okay, ultimately, were you taken to a jail out of state?

LD: Uh, not that night, no. We went to the holding tank in Minneapolis, downtown Minneapolis, then went from the holding tank at 6 - 6 or 7 o'clock in the morning to the federal building - to where um, where everybody was in that room.

VC: Okay. Now, when you were in the holding tank, did you see, by any chance, Mr. Duke?

LD: Yes. Saw Plukey across the isle-way, wearing a orange county suit.

VC: He was there when you arrived.

LD: He was already there.

VC: Do you know how long he'd been there?

LD: Uh, oh I think a day, overnight - overnight.

VC: So he was arrested before this ...

LD: I think he was arrested earlier that day. They got him early - earlier that day, before the - the bust even came about.

VC: Okay. Did he talk to you?

LD: No, we couldn't talk. Cops won't let us talk.

VC: Where were you first interviewed? Or interrogated by the police authorities?

LD: Uh, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

VC: Okay, do you remember who - who it was?

LD: Jon Hopeman and Selinski.

VC: Okay, what about Agent Carey, was he ...

LD: Nope .. uh, no, Agent Carey wasn't there the first -- No, it was -- it was John Hopeman and Agent Carey.

VC: Okay. So, during the course of the interview, did you tell them where the money had come from?

LD: No.

VC: Did they ever ask about Ralph Duke?

LD: Yes.

VC: Did you tell them that Ralph Duke was not involved in this?

LD: Yes, I think at that time I did, or ... later on, but they didn't want to hear that.

VC: They didn't want to hear that?

LD: They didn't want to hear that.

VC: Okay, what - was there a point in time where you were interviewed, where you did tell them where the money came from -- from individuals?

LD: Um, I never told them where the money came from.

VC: Okay, but you told ...

LD: They thought the money came from Kim Willis - cause Kim Willis' name was on the bag.

VC: Kim Willis' name was on the bag that the money was ...

LD: The gym bag.

VC: The gym bag, okay. Was he involved?

LD: Nope.

VC: Okay.

LD: He got 15 years for not being involved.

VC: Because his name was on the bag?

LD: Yeap.

VC: Well, did you tell them at some point in time, that the money did not come from Ralph Duke?

LD: No, I didn't - I don't think I said anything. They were - they actually did the questioning and - and half-way answered the questions for me.

VC: Okay, but you did tell them that Mr. Duke was not ...

LD: Yeah, I told em that he didn't have nothing to do with it.

VC: Had nothing to do with it. But, ...

LD: That had nothing to do with it, I don't know, cause they said that uh, uh, someone called him and he okayed the go ahead.

VC: Ah huh.

LD: And no one never talked to him. He didn't know about this deal.

VC: No one talked to him?

LD: No.

VC: They didn't want to accept that?

LD: No.

VC: How did they -- what did they say, did they say, we don't want to hear that or? What? What did they want you to say?

LD: They all wanted me to say what they wanted to hear. Uh, what, uh, Plukey Duke was - he orchestrated the whole thing. It was his deal. Uh, it was his money, his drugs, it was for him, for the Duke Gang.

VC: Uh, huh.

LD: And if I (unclear). If I didn't cooperate like that, they were going to indict my mom and do other things too.

VC: Where they going to indict your father too?

LD: Yep.

VC: But, you had told them that Ralph Duke had nothing to do with it, but they didn't want to accept that, correct?

LD: Correct.

VC: Did they keep badgering that this was all for Ralph Duke and the Duke Gang?

LD: Yep, yep, they kept us making it as the Duke Gang. Plukey Duke was the leader and the Duke Gang - the Duke Gang, that's what it was for the whole - on all the interviews.

VC: So, you told me earlier there is no Duke Gang?

LD: There is no Duke Gang. Duke Family, but no Duke Gang.

VC: Okay. Now, at a point in time, did you decide to agree with the feds and ...

LD: Yes.

VC: And you told them what they wanted to hear?

LD: Yes.

VC: Can you tell me why that came about?

LD: They were going to give me 30 years in prison and give my mom time and my dad time.

VC: Okay. Had you talked that over with your dad?

LD: I talked to my parents, yes.

VC: Okay, so they supported you on your decision?

LD: Yes.



VC: Now, had your mother and father's home been searched?

LD: Yes, yes.

VC: And uh ...

LD: Searched, raided, tore up, and they didn't have no involvement nor nothing.

VC: Okay, was anything found in your ...

LD: No. Nope, nothing was found.

VC: Nothing illegal found in your parents' home. Okay. Did they have a warrant?

LD: Yep.

VC: Any - any other member of your family searched?

LD: Uh, my sister's storage locker, they searched her storage locker and tore up all her stuff and she didn't even know what was going on and then they uh, that's about it.

VC: What's your sister's name?

LD: Beatrice.

VC: Beatrice Duke?

LD: Yeah.

VC: Okay, is she still in town or?

LD: Um, mmm.

VC: Okay. Do you know of any federal agents ever physically abused any of the people involved in this case?

LD: Yeah.

VC: Can you tell me who was abused?

LD: Uh, Lamont, Larry, Ramone, and uh, myself - I had my balls grabbed by Mike Carey.

VC: You had your testicles grabbed by Mr. Carey?

LD: Yep.

VC: Uh, was that painful?

LD: Yeah.

VC: Okay, how about the other men, were they beaten with an object or fist?

LD: Kicked, kicked -- uh, Larry was kicked in the face. His head was stomped against the curb, messed up his ear. Uh, Ramone, they sicked the dog on him, the dog bit him all up and Lamont, he was just hit and knocked down.

VC: Was that at the hotel?

LD: Yes.

VC: Had there been any effort to resist arrest or ?

LD: No.

VC: No?

LD: No resisting, no nothing.

VC: No threats against the officers?

LD: No, no threats to the officers. We just stood there with our mouths closed.

VC: Okay. So, the prosecutor, Mr. Hopeman, did he ever admit to you that he really had no case against Plukey Duke?

LD: Yep.

VC: He did?

LD: Oh, see, I can't remember what court date it was ... but, he said that he was crawling on his belly coming up the back stairs case, but he really didn't have a case, but ... till he threatened the new law, where he threatened everybody with the time, everybody got scarred and just blamed everything on Plukey.

VC: Okay, so the fact of the matter is, that Ralph Plukey Duke had nothing to do with this transaction, this sting transaction, and the prosecutor and agents knew this all the time?

LD: Nope.

VC: Okay fine. Is there anything else that you would care to add?

LD: Uh, that it was - wasn't a bust, the only thing I can add, there was - there was no money exchanged, there was no drugs exchanged, there wasn't even no drugs on the premises, cause

Jon Hopeman told me the drugs weren't there. I said we don't bring drugs to a bust and I asked him, I said well how can you have a bust if you don't have no drugs there and he said, well, that's just the way it is.

VC: So this Randy, whose name is actually Chambers, never transported any drugs to that hotel?

LD: Not, not at that night, nope.

VC: And you had never met the guy. Uh, Lamont had met him, anybody else you know had met him?

LD: Nope, nope, no one that I know.

VC: Okay. Did you know a Virgil Tollfree?

LD: Virgil Tollfree?

VC: Tollfree - t-o-l-f-r-e-e -- did you know him by any chance?

LD: No.

VC: Okay. Would you feel comfortable telling me who contributed money to make this purchase?

LD: I don't remember.

VC: You don't remember. Okay. That's all right. You mentioned something about the feds taking your house. Can you tell me about that?

LD: The feds took my house. The reason why they took my house is they said that Dave Yellman bought drugs from Plukey in the alley. He received drugs from Plukey in the alley, so that gave them the reason to take my house.

VC: What was the address of that house?

LD: 1351 Sherburne.

VC: Now, do you know if David Yoeman even knew Plukey Duke?

LD: They knew of each other. He bought a car from Plukey. That's all I know. That he just bought a car from him.

VC: Well, is there any evidence that there was a transaction in your alley?

LD: Nope.

VC: I mean, why would someone do a drug transaction in your alley?

LD: At that time, everybody just had something to say to get their freedom.

VC: Okay, Did Yoeman testify that he did that?

LD: Yeah.

VC: Was that a lie?

LD: Yep.

VC: Uh, how can I establish that that's a lie?

LD: Cause uh, it was my house. There was nobody in my alley at my house or in my garage. He said it was in my garage in the alley.

VC: Okay. So that's not - that's not true?

LD: Yeah. Only time anybody was in my garage was if they wanted their cars worked on.

VC: Okay. So the reason a lot of people told these untruths about Ralph Plukey Duke is to uh ...

LD: Get their time reduced.

VC: To get their own time reduced?

LD: Okay. We'll give you uh - we'll cut your time in half if you say this Plukey, basically that's what they would say. Cut your time in half. Charge me with 30 years, they cut it down to 18 years and they cut it down to 6 years and on and on and then they cut it down to a year.

VC: Okay. Were you at the trial - you testified?

LD: Yes.

VC: Did some people from Iowa testify?

LD: Yes.

VC: Did anybody involved in this trial, know the people from Iowa?

LD: No.

VC: But yet these people from Iowa said that they purchased drugs from who?

LD: From uh, Plukey and my mom and that was a lie.

VC: That was a lie?

LD: Yeap. They got it off a wire-tap conversation of Lamonty, talking about those people - them getting busted and then all of a sudden, uh, Jon Hopeman and Mike Carey and all them just put it and just said it was their drugs.

VC: Well, would Lamont have known those Iowa people?

LD: Nope.

VC: How did he talk about those Iowa people then?

LD: Uh, news travel in the streets.

VC: Okay. You know what city they were from?

LD: No.

VC: Okay, just people from Iowa?

LD: Yeah, people coming through Iowa, we didn't even know.

VC: Okay, good. Any other thing you can think of?

LD: Nope.

VC: Okay. Now, I have your permission to record this, is that correct?

LD: Correct.

VC: And everything you're telling me here is the truth?

LD: Yes.

VC: Have I made any promises to you or any inducements or has anybody else made promises or inducements for you to speak with me?

LD: No.

VC: Okay and what I will do is have this transcribed and I'll have a copy made for your records and then I'll come back to you and it will be in affidavit form and I'll ask you to sign it. Is that satisfactory to you?

LD: Yes.

VC: Okay and today is June 18, 1998 and would you repeat your name again sir.

LD: Loren Duke

VC: All right sir, that ends this interview.