

Transcript of Grand Jury Testimony

Bobbie Lee:

August 18, 2003

Appearing: Bobbie Lee

[The witness was duly sworn]

Q [United State's Attorney Wil Langelier]: State your name and unit of assignment.

A: Bobbie Lee. I am a Marshall City police officer, presently assigned to the Narcotics Division, specifically as a part of strike team headed by Officer Jan Bridges.

Q: How long have you served in that capacity?

A: Since March 7, 2002.

Q: What was your assignment before that?

A: I served 3½ years in the Records Division. This was my first street assignment.

Q: Tell the members of the Grand Jury what happened on March 15, 2002.

A: I came in before 8:00 a.m. I got my weapon and cuffs out of my locker, and went to our squad room. I saw my partner, Jan Bridges, who told me that we were going to do a investigate a complaint of a crack house. We went to this building at 1901 West Madison Street, on the west side of Marshall. It looked vacant, abandoned. It was a typical crack house. I don't know why we needed a warrant for an abandoned building. We decided not to knock and announce – too risky. We entered the front door, which was already half open. Bridges told me to go to the room on the left while Bridges would go to the room on the right. I went into the room, which was dark, and heard a voice telling me not to move. I felt something cold on my throat and then I heard the sound of a gun, saw a flash, and felt the person fall away. Bridges came walking over, gun in hand. There was a body on the ground. No way was that person alive. His head was blown open. Brains were all over. Bridges went to the body, came up holding a large knife.

Q: Did you see Bridges pick up the knife?

A: No.

Q: Did you see the knife before Bridges showed it to you?

A: The room was dark. I was trying not to throw up when Bridges went up to the body. Let me tell you, I was shaking from fear. I don't think I ever saw the knife until Bridges showed it to me.

Q: In your incident report did you say that you saw Stokes with the knife?

A: I think so.

Q: Did Bridges ever mention Stokes' name to you before the shooting?

A: Maybe, I don't think so. Bridges may have mentioned the name of Lucky Stokes before that morning – I just don't remember. I don't know if Bridges had any prior dealings with Stokes. I knew the name from Chief Bridges' trial. Everyone knew the name.

Q: You said you were a part of Bridges' strike team. What is a strike team?

A: A strike team is a non-assigned unit, usually made up of three or four officers who freelance and go where the action is. About a week after the shooting, June Johnston, also known as "Fire" Johnston, joined the team. Other times we had some extra backup, but the three of us made up the team.

Q: What was the strike team's mission?

A: Get drugs, guns, and illegal money off the street. We went where Bridges told us to go. Bridges has a pipeline into information about drugs and dealers.

Q: How many on the strike team went to that crack house where Stokes ...

A: Just two of us. Me and Bridges.

Q: Do you know a Dale Davis?

A: Yes. Davis is the leader of the “Red Rovers,” a street gang. They deal in drugs and who knows what else. Davis is a drug dealer - a major drug dealer.

Q: Did you ever see Bridges in the company of Dale Davis or any other drug dealers, other than while placing them under arrest?

A: Oh, yeah, many times, especially Davis. I saw Bridges and Davis together a number of times.

Q: What was your take on that?

A: That it was strange and highly irregular. I asked Bridges about it. All Bridges said was, “Junior, my friend, always remember, keep your friends close but keep your enemies closer”. I thought this sounded phony, contrived, like something out of the “Sopranos” or the “Godfather,” but this is how Bridges sometimes talked - like out of a gangster movie.

Q: “Junior”?

A: Bridges gave me that name. It started because I was the most junior member of the team. Bridges likes nicknames. I did not like it, but the name stuck. I still don’t like it.

Q: Did Bridges ever talk about money in terms of drug dealing?

A: Oh yes. A dealer would drive by in a Benz, or some other expensive car, and Bridges would start complaining that dealers had all the money and the department couldn’t even pay us a living wage or give us proper support. Bridges often said that we would have to make do as best we could. I mean, it was almost irrational. We’re paid pretty well. I think we get support. But Bridges would start snarling about how wrong the system was.

Q: Did you ever see Bridges seize any money or drugs and fail to properly inventory them?

A: Never. Jan Bridges would never do such a thing. Officers around the station say that Bridges was unconventional, but I never heard anyone say Bridges was dishonest.

Q: Were you always in a room when Bridges made a seizure?

A: No. Sometimes I would go in one room while Bridges or Johnston would go into another room. Then we would come together and total up the seizure.

Q: Do you remember a time when your team made a large number of arrests and seizures in about a one-week period?

A: Yes. The day after the Super Bowl, January 2003, the one where the Tampa Bay Bucs won. Bridges told us that we came into some great intelligence and that we had some heavy duty busting to do and we would score better than the Bucs.

Q: How'd you all do?

A: In a one-week period, we made 15 arrests and recovered about 5 ounces of quality powder cocaine, crack, and about \$3000 in cash. Every member of the team received a departmental commendation for our work.

Q: How many convictions?

A: A couple. But we get the drugs off the street.

Q: Bridges made a 4 ounce crack cocaine seizure, February 3, 2003. Where were you when that seizure was made?

A: I was in the building and Bridges had me and Fire, I mean June Johnston, go into one apartment while Bridges went into another. We found nothing, but Bridges came out with a quantity of crack. The crack cocaine was tested and reported to be 98.3 percent pure. This is about as good as it gets and I'm told is extremely rare to find it that pure.

Q: During that week, or at anytime for that matter, did you ever see Bridges plant any evidence?

A: No. Jan Bridges would never do such a thing.

Q: Did you ever see Bridges or Johnston use excessive force when making an arrest?

A: Only the force necessary to effect an arrest.

Q: Let's talk more about Bridges. What kind of clothes did Bridges regularly wear?

A: On the job, jeans, marked jacket, . . .

Q: I mean civilian clothes.

A: Bridges always wore the best, personally tailored. The clothes were all hand made.

Q: How do you know that?

A: One time, Bridges told me we were going to pick up some clothes that were ready. We went to a small, exclusive designer shop, David Michael's, and Bridges picked up three suits and peeled off a stack of hundreds to pay for them.

Q: Did you find that unusual?

A: Really. First, I have never gone to a designer tailor shop for a hand-made anything, and second, I have never paid that much money let alone cash for clothes. I was impressed and asked Bridges about this. Bridges said to me, "Junior, remember this, always dress for success and don't let money get in your way".

Q: Bridges always had a lot of money, at least \$5000 mostly in hundreds, and owned a custom vintage Harley Davidson as well as a new Corvette. Isn't that true?

A: All true. I got to ride the Harley, once. It was about two weeks after the big crack arrest in January. Jan came to the station and showed me this new bike and asked me if I wanted to take a ride. It rode like a dream. I once asked Bridges about the money and Bridges said that it was inherited money from a rich relative, but never said which relative. Bridges also said, and I thought it was funny at the time, "Franklins - never leave home without them."

Q: Some people say that Bridges was shaking down drug dealers, skimming money and dope and giving dope to dealers for re-sale. Do you have any information concerning any of this?

A: I do not believe any of that is true. I believe that Jan Bridges is one of the finest police officers on the Force, and, in fact, one of the finest people I have ever met in my life.

Q: You believe that you owe your life to Jan Bridges. Isn't that true?

A: Believe it? I know it. I owe my life to Jan Bridges. Bridges saved me from having my throat slit by Lucky Stokes. Let me tell you, save my life or not, I would never lie for Jan, if that's what you are implying.

Q: No one said you were. But you are good friends with Bridges, right?

A: Friends? Bridges doesn't have friends. Bridges is a police officer's police officer. They say that most of the great cops don't have any close friends. Bridges is a loner, a leader. But not a person who gets friendly. Look, I admire Bridges, but I don't particularly like Bridges. It's a professional thing. It's not personal. If I had seen Bridges do anything, and I mean anything wrong, I would be the first to raise a stink about it even though I owe Bridges for saving my life..

Q: You are excused.

A: You're wrong about Bridges. Jan would never ...

Q: I said, thank you. You are excused.

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Sandy Wexler  
Court Reporter