

**Minutes and Transcript of Proceedings  
Before the May 2009 – April 2010 Grand Jury,  
Thompson County, State of Marshall  
July 29, 2009**

**Present: Assistant State's Attorney Frank Orlando; Phillip Carey, Clerk; George Hanson, Court Reporter, and the witness Donnie Thompson**

**Statement of Donnie Thompson, Thursday, July 30, 2009**

**(Assistant State's Attorney Frank Orlando) Q: You are Donnie Thompson, a staff member of the Lake Kennedy Federation, and you reside here in Marshall City at 5515 N. Volini Drive?**

**A: Right, but I am no longer working at the Federation. I left there almost three weeks ago, and I am now working for Scherer Metal Products, in their environmental compliance office. They hired me last week as an assistant to the Associate Director who is responsible for advising management on conditions in the plant, on whether the plant's air or water emissions are in compliance with state and federal law. I have a lot to learn. Right now, I am just answering the phones.**

**Q: How long have you lived in Marshall City?**

**A: Since September 2008. Last year I finished up at Eastern Marshall University at Bonegap, and moved up here.**

**Q: What did you study at E.M.U.?**

**A: Well, I finished up some undergraduate courses in Social Sciences; I did my first year at Moline Community College, then my second year at Davenport Community College, then I took some time off, then I enrolled in adult education at Loyola in California, then I traveled for a semester – I went to Oregon to check out the beaches - then I took some on-line correspondence courses from Marshall State University, and then I enrolled at E.M.U., and then I came here to get a job at the Federation.**

**Q: What were your duties at the Lake Kennedy Federation?**

**A: I was a sort of generalist, I mean I answered the phone, opened the mail, got coffee for people, and studied up on environments. I was supposed to put together brochures on how to save the lake, how to be a responsible citizen, how not to waste water, and to help with the annual citizen's award dinner. I actually did not get much of a chance to do those things, as Eddie did a lot of that, or sometimes Casey Cutter did that stuff.**

**Q: What was your salary?**

**A: Not really a salary. I was paid by the hour, in cash, by Eddie. \$8.00 an hour, no medical, no vacation time, no deductions. I came in at 8 AM, worked until 5 PM, took an hour for lunch even though I usually had to stay in the office, so they got me a free sandwich or pizza so that I could stay on the phones. At the end of the week, or sometimes on the next Monday, I would get \$320.00 in cash from Eddie. He said it was off the books. I asked Cutter, who said not to worry about it because that was supposed to be between me and Eddie. Cutter said I was subcontracted, which, as explained to me, meant that it was Eddie's job that I was doing and Eddie was subcontracting parts of his job to me. I was working at the Federation, Cutter told me I was working for the Federation, but then told me that I was a temp., subcontracted by Eddie. I took the cash, and figured that Cutter was a lawyer and knew how this was legal.**

**Q: Didn't you pay taxes?**

**A: No, because I did not owe taxes. I earned about \$16,500 last year, and had deductions so that I did not owe any money to the government. Cutter looked at my tax return and said I was right, I did not owe any money and so I did not have to file. I did not have any withholding, so the government did not owe me money, either.**

**Q: So, you answered the phones and did some chores.**

**A: Yes. Like, I opened the mail and I threw out the junk mail, put the bills and incoming checks into a pile, and everything else went into another pile.**

**Q: Let's go June 23rd, this year. You were working at the Federation that day?**

**A: Yes.**

**Q: What do you remember about that day? Just tell the folks here what you told me in my office last week.**

**A:: That Connie Cutter had found out that there was some kind of investigation of what was going on at the Federation, and was worried that the newspapers might get a hold of it, you know, and so my friend Poppy Ott warned me to be very careful about anything I said to anybody and especially to Cutter as I was only a temp, and I could lose my job. I told Poppy that I have a friend who is a police officer who worked with the State's Attorney's office, and I had heard that very morning that there was a grand jury investigation of the Federation. I always come into the office with a bag of donuts from Smitty's Donut shop, and I had a bag of donuts, and that was right after I met with my friend, Officer Hoffman. Hoffman gets a box of donuts almost every morning. One of the things I really don't like about Cutter is that Cutter likes to give people nicknames, and I got this nickname "Donuts." I asked not to be called that, because it is making fun of my name "Donnie" when Cutter laughs like I am in on the joke and thinks it is funny to be called "Donnie Donuts" or "Donnie the Donut" or – worst of all – just plain "Donuts." You know, Cutter comes in the middle of the day, maybe from courts where Cutter practices law, mostly criminal law, and smiles and laughs like I am a big friend and says, "Hey, Donut, you are looking good today!" Cutter calls Poppy Ott "Poppyrot." Not nice.**

**So I hear Cutter come in and say, has anyone seen Pat Siewert, and when Pat is not there yet Cutter gets pretty upset and says that Pat is going to be in a lot of trouble if Pat is making up a lot of lies about the Federation. Cutter looks around and asks, "Where is Pat's laptop?" I say, "Probably with Pat." Cutter gets angry and says that Pat is going to have to leave the laptop in the office from now on, because there is too much private information in the laptops and they should stay in the office. I had never heard anything like that before, because I thought they all took the laptops home most nights so that they could check emails and work from home and like that. The only other times I ever heard Cutter get angry with Pat was over the fact**

that Pat would not sell Cutter some kind of collectible doll, a puppy dog doll that was from a famous concert a few years ago. See, when Connie wants something, Connie will rag and rag and press and press until you give in. I actually saw the doll once. Pat brought it into the office for some reason and showed it to us. Connie happened to come in, and Connie said, "Hey, that's the JAMBLAS concert dog collectible. Did you change your mind about selling it?" Pay said, very nicely, "No way." Connie started being real nice and was saying, "Come on you got it for nothing and you could sell it to me for a couple thousand now, all profit." Connie was really turning on the charm, but Pat was not moving. Then Connie lost patience, and just turned and walked away. You know, like, if I cannot get my way, I'm not talking to you. That was maybe right after I came to work at LKF.

**Q: Did Connie Cutter ever bring up the subject again?**

**A: Once that I can remember. Connie – this was like around Memorial Day – Connie said that Pat would not sell the collectible, and these dolls were not on eBay, though the last one sold for almost \$3,000 in April. I don't know what it is about collectibles. People must be nuts. Nostalgia nuts. I think Connie saw the doll as a good investment, like the ruby slippers Judy Garland wore in "The Wizard of Oz."**

**Q: Let's talk about the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. You were at the block party in the 5400 block of North Lombard that day?**

**A: Yes, all day, and I mean all day. I left my condominium at 9 AM and walked over to Lombard. That is a six block walk, about a half mile walk.**

**Q: Tell the jury about the shoes you wore.**

**A: I wore regular shoes to walk in, but I had a pair of floppy shoes, you know, almost like slippers, very cool on a hot day, because I was going to a picnic. I got to the Cutter house maybe at 9:20, and Connie was busy with things so I said I wanted to wash up after my walk because it was pretty hot out. I put my walking shoes someplace out of the way. So Connie said to put them anywhere I wanted, so I went upstairs to the only bathroom in that house, you know, to rinse off a bit because it was already a hot day and I had worked up a little**

sweat just walking over. That house is not air-conditioned, except for the bedroom. So, I saw a door next to the bathroom door, and I opened it and it is a closet, with a few things hanging in there, and a couple of shoeboxes on the floor, and so I put my sox into the shoes, and I tossed the shoes into the closet and closed the door. I do not go back to the closet until the end of the day when I am going to go home, and I want to put my walking shoes on again. So, I open the closet, and it is dark, so I turn on an overhead light by pulling a string that is attached to the light in the ceiling. I see my shoes, and I took them. I also noticed a stuffed animal on the floor, sort of behind the shoeboxes.

**Q: Describe it.**

**A: It has a red and white t-shirt on, and the word [spells] "JAMBLAS" on the front. There is a tag on it. I really did not pay too much attention because I thought it was, only a dog.**

**Q: Have you ever seen a dog like that before?**

**A: It looked like the collectible that Pat Siewert brought in.**

**Q: [Showing the witness "Exhibit A"]: Does this look like that doll you saw in the Cutter's upstairs closet on July 4<sup>th</sup> at 9 PM?**

**A: Yes.**

**Q: So what happened after that?**

**A: I went home, and relaxed on Sunday. Monday I went in to work at LKF, and got there a little early as there was not much traffic, so the bus went pretty fast, and I bought a cup of coffee and some donuts at Smitty's, talked with a couple of the police officers who had dropped in for their morning donut fix, and went to the office.**

**Q: What happened when you got to the office?**

**A: Well, Leslie Foote was getting there at the same time, and I let Leslie in because I had a key and Leslie did not yet have a key. Leslie had just come in as an intern for college credit a couple of weeks earlier, which is a whole other matter – you know, how Connie Cutter can get free help out of a student**

who is paying for the privilege of trying to get a job. Well, that is Connie. Anyway, I put out the box of donuts and told Leslie to have one. That was maybe at 8:45. So, a few minutes later, Pat Siewert came in. Pat did not take a donut, but seemed busy, so I asked what was going on, and Pat said, "I have to go over to the police station to make a report." So we talked for a couple of minutes, and I found out that Pat was going to report that their JAMBLAS stuffed animal was missing. I said "Like the one you brought in last month? And Pat said, "Yes". So I said that I had seen one just like it at Cutter's house on Saturday. Well, Pat got real excited and asked me a lot of questions. I told what I saw. So Pat asked me to come to the police station, too, which I did. The next thing I know there is a State's Attorney asking me questions. So, maybe an hour later, after waiting around some, the police and the State's Attorney come back, and they have a piece of paper, and they ask me if I saw the JAMBLAS stuffed animal at the Cutter house on Saturday, and where was it, and did it have a red shirt, and like that. Then they said that they would have to find a judge, and they asked me not to say anything to anybody, and I said I would not talk to anyone at all, which I did not.

**Q: Did Connie Cutter say anything about the trashing of the office on June 23?**

**A: I think Connie said something a couple of days before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, like that Monday.**

**Q: What did Connie say?**

**A: Connie was talking to someone on the phone. It must have been Casey, because that was the name I heard.**

**Q: What did you hear?**

**A: I heard Connie say that someone is out to get the Federation in trouble, and not to worry. Connie said, "I will handle it when you go out of town."**

**Q: Did anyone else say anything about the Federation being in trouble?**

**A: No. I don't think so. Maybe Pat Siewert.**

**Q: Pat Siewert?**

**A: Yes. I did not mention this to you. Pat said that it was terrible that Connie Cutter was going to get away with something. That was the day before. That was on July 3, in the office. Pat had found out that Cutter had gone over to the grand jury to talk to them, and said, sort of to me and sort of alone, "Connie is going to get away with everything."**

**Q: Well, did you talk to Pat Siewert on July 4<sup>th</sup>?**

**A: Not much. I went over to the house, and had to carry some food from Pat's house to the Cutter back yard, I remember that the Siewerts' dogs really scared me when I went there. I thought they were going to come through the glass on the front door; they were so excited barking and jumping up at me. When Pat came to the door, they were OK. I first went there at maybe 9:30, and I went there again around noon. I was scared, and those dogs were coming at me again, behind that door, until Pat came along. I did not. I would not go there again. One was this kind of blonde dog, and the other was a black lab with white teeth. That was something.**

**Q: Donnie, thank you for your help. We may or may not call you again.**

**A: Is Connie Cutter in trouble?**

**Q: I can't talk about that.**

**THEREUPON THE INTERVIEW ENDED.**