

COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

FOLLOWUP REPORT  
2001-014705/254

NARRATIVE TYPED BY: ASBURY, ALMA

ON: 03/12/2004

ATTACHMENTS:

RELATED REPORT NUMBERS:

NARRATIVE

#353246

On 03/10/04 while investigating leads pertaining to the murder of Kent HEITHOLT, an individual by the name of Nichols GILPIN was interviewed. GILPIN advised me that a friend of his by the name of Charles ERICKSON, better known as Chuck, had told GILPIN directly that ERICKSON and another individual by the name of Ryan FERGUSON were responsible for the murder of Kent HEITHOLT in the morning after Halloween 2001.

With the information we had obtained from GILPIN and other witnesses, we then decided to locate ERICKSON and bring him to the Columbia Police Dept. Officer Ted Anderson arrived with ERICKSON at approximately 09:10 hours and ERICKSON was escorted into a private interview room of the investigative unit.

I entered into the room shortly before 09:22 hours and introduced myself. I asked ERICKSON if he needed anything to drink, or needed to use the restroom, and he stated he did not. At 09:22 hours I removed a Miranda rights card from my pocket, read ERICKSON his Miranda rights directly off of this card and asked him if he understood his rights. ERICKSON stated he did. I asked if he would answer questions, and ERICKSON stated, "Yes." I then obtained personal information, i.e., residence, employment, etc.

After a short conversation about his personal life, I told ERICKSON that GILPIN had told me that ERICKSON and FERGUSON had committed the murder at the Tribune on the morning after Halloween 2001. ERICKSON'S immediate response was "I don't even remember it." ERICKSON stated he had talked to FERGUSON a few days later about the night they were at By George night club. ERICKSON stated they had run out of cash, and had been continually borrowing money from FERGUSON'S sister. He stated he could not remember FERGUSON'S sister's name. ERICKSON stated at one time during the night, FERGUSON'S sister stated she was no longer going to provide them with money, and ERICKSON stated he left to "rouse someone up for some money." ERICKSON stated he had seen the news release about the murder in the paper the next day. ERICKSON told me he did not know if he was drunk, or if he just refused to remember it, but he stated on Halloween night earlier in the evening before the incident occurred, FERGUSON had told him he wanted to kill someone before he had turned 60. ERICKSON then stated, "I got sick after I hit him. I think Ryan strangled him after that, I think I saw it."

I then asked ERICKSON if he had seen it or not, and I asked him if he had seen FERGUSON strangle the victim. ERICKSON then stated he had seen FERGUSON strangle him out of the corner of his eye. ERICKSON stated he thought

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at that point that he was saying something to a cleaning lady who was at the back door of the business (the Tribune). ERICKSON stated after he saw the cleaning lady, he sat down beside a vehicle, and said he became physically sick. He stated he saw FERGUSON standing over the guy and "strangling him." ERICKSON stated the victim was laying on his back when FERGUSON was strangling him. FERGUSON was straddling the victim as he strangled him according to ERICKSON.

ERICKSON continued by saying as they were walking up to the parking lot of the Tribune, FERGUSON had asked him to hit the guy with something. ERICKSON claims he does not remember how many times he hit the victim because he had gotten sick. I then told ERICKSON that he was being vague with his answers, and that GILPIN had told us the truth because he had a conscience. I felt that ERICKSON was not being totally forthcoming, but I did feel like he wanted to tell us more. I then asked him to just tell us the truth.

ERICKSON told me they left the club because they had ran out of money to buy drinks. He stated they went to the Tribune and "we attacked a guy, I don't know if Ryan held him or hit him." I then asked ERICKSON if he had hit the victim, and what he hit him with. ERICKSON stated he hit him with a wrench or something from FERGUSON'S car. ERICKSON stated they obtained the wrench which he described as a tire tool from the trunk of the car, and stated he does not remember if FERGUSON retrieved the wrench or if he had gotten it out of the vehicle himself. I asked ERICKSON if he had seen this wrench, and ERICKSON stated he did not remember whether or not he or FERGUSON hit the victim, but he stated he did get sick, and he did see the victim fall to the ground. I then asked directly if he was the individual who hit the victim, or was it FERGUSON. ERICKSON stated that he hit HEITHOLT in the head with the tire tool.

I then asked how the victim died, and ERICKSON stated, "Don't know if he was dead then, but Ryan made sure of it." I asked how FERGUSON made sure that HEITHOLT was dead, and ERICKSON stated, "Strangled him."

I then asked ERICKSON if he had said something to the cleaning lady before or after FERGUSON had strangled the victim. ERICKSON stated he did not know, he thought he said something to the lady at that time, but was not sure. I told ERICKSON that the cleaning lady told the police that someone asked for help. ERICKSON stated that was him. I then asked ERICKSON how they had left the area, and he said they returned to the By George night club, because that's where they had gone earlier that night. ERICKSON stated they had parked on the restaurant parking lot next to By George. He stated as they were leaving the Tribune, ERICKSON stated he ran into a friend of his by the name of Dallas MALLORY. ERICKSON states that MALLORY saw "us leaving the Tribune." ERICKSON told MALLORY what occurred, and told him what FERGUSON had done. He also

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tated he told MALLORY that they had just left the parking lot and they had eat down a guy back there. MALLORY was also in the company of two females at that time according to ERICKSON.

ERICKSON then asked me if there was vomit at the scene, and I told him was not going to discuss the evidence of the case with him. I told ERICKSON we would be talking to FERGUSON also, and I felt like it was possible he would tell the truth, and I wanted to know who caused the death of HEITHOLT. At that point ERICKSON stated, "I may have hit him." I asked if he hit him with a wrench, and ERICKSON stated, "Yeah, I think I may have hit him." He paused and continued saying, "Yes, I did." ERICKSON then stated, "I'm sure I hit him, because that's what made me sick." I then asked ERICKSON if he actually vomited, and he stated he did not remember.

I asked ERICKSON where the wrench was that he had used to assault the victim, and he stated he did not know. ERICKSON did not know if FERGUSON removed it from the scene. I asked ERICKSON whose idea it was to commit this robbery, and ERICKSON stated it was FERGUSON'S idea, that he wanted to rob somebody. ERICKSON stated FERGUSON was the one who retrieved the wrench out of the car and started walking toward the Tribune. ERICKSON stated, "We then saw a big bald guy on the lot." I asked ERICKSON who made the first contact with the victim, and he stated he did not know who said or did what first, but he remembers saying something to the victim. ERICKSON stated he did not recall what it was. ERICKSON stated the only thing he could remember was that after he himself struck HEITHOLT, HEITHOLT screamed. ERICKSON stated it sounded horrible. ERICKSON stated HEITHOLT then went down. ERICKSON stated that at that time is when he believes he got sick. He stated he saw a female standing between the two doors near the loading dock or on the loading dock of the back of the business. He stated he yelled at her, and he got mad at her because she just stood there. He stated it was at that time FERGUSON was over the victim. I asked why he was mad at the female, and ERICKSON stated she just wasn't moving, and she was standing there just looking at them. I then asked if HEITHOLT had hit either he or FERGUSON, and ERICKSON stated HEITHOLT had kicked him in his testicles. I asked if that is when he hit HEITHOLT, after he had been struck in his testicles, and ERICKSON stated that is when he first struck HEITHOLT. I asked how many times he hit HEITHOLT and ERICKSON stated just once.

I then explained to ERICKSON that I knew HEITHOLT had been struck more than once due to the massive amount of injuries around his head. I told him the autopsy revealed there had been more than one strike, and more than one hit to Mr. HEITHOLT'S head, and ERICKSON stated, "Yeah, probably." I asked ERICKSON if he had hit the victim more than once, and he stated yes. I then asked ERICKSON if the victim HEITHOLT was fighting ERICKSON and FERGUSON. I asked him it was possible HEITHOLT had got one or both of them down, and that

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they were trying to get away from him due to the fact he was such a large man. ERICKSON stated to me, "This was an innocent guy who didn't deserve to die."

I asked ERICKSON what they had obtained from HEITHOLT after beating him and strangling him. He stated they may have taken a wallet but he was unsure, he stated he thought that FERGUSON had taken something from the victim's car. I asked if he knew what it was, and he stated it might have been a shirt. He said he wasn't sure, but he thought he used the shirt to strangle HEITHOLT speaking of FERGUSON doing this. ERICKSON told me FERGUSON contacted him a couple of days later after this incident, and stated FERGUSON'S father had found a wallet in his residence, and FERGUSON stated he had gotten in trouble for this. ERICKSON could not say the wallet was HEITHOLT'S.

I then asked ERICKSON again who had hit HEITHOLT, and he stated again that he had. I then asked ERICKSON again how many times he had hit HEITHOLT, and he stated he did not know. I asked ERICKSON if it was multiple times that he struck HEITHOLT, and he stated, "Yes."

I then asked ERICKSON if Dallas MALLORY had seen the assault and ERICKSON replied no. ERICKSON did state someone had chased him, but he did not know who that was. ERICKSON stated he had ran into MALLORY somewhere near the area of the Break Time on Providence Road. I asked ERICKSON what he and FERGUSON were wearing that night, and he stated they were wearing big, puffy coats. I asked if he still had them, and he stated he did not have his coat, because after they killed HEITHOLT, they went back to By George's and someone had stolen his coat.

I then directed his attention to the lady who had been standing on the back dock. I asked ERICKSON if she had gotten scared and ran off, and he said she had ran back into the building. I then asked ERICKSON if he had ever talked to FERGUSON about this, and he stated the first time he had ever talked to FERGUSON about this after it happened was on New Years Eve at a party at John WHITWORTH'S house. He stated this was the New Years Eve party that John WHITWORTH had this past New Years Eve (2003/2004). ERICKSON stated they were outside and he said something to FERGUSON about killing the victim on the parking lot and FERGUSON told ERICKSON if he told anybody, he would kill him. ERICKSON stated they went outside because they were talking about it inside, but FERGUSON told him he did not want to talk about it.

I asked ERICKSON what exactly was discussed outside the party, and he stated he and FERGUSON had talked about being inside By George. ERICKSON stated when they left By George the night of the murder, they were waiting for everybody to leave the parking lot. ERICKSON stated they waited to leave By George because there was a police officer outside the bar, and they

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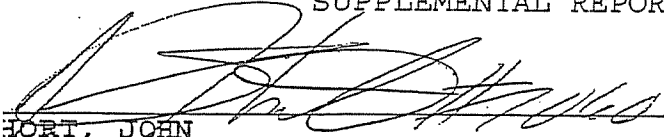
were only 17 at the time.


I asked what ERICKSON'S path of travel was after they had murdered WEITHOLT, and he could not provide me with a good answer. He stated he almost could not remember. ERICKSON did state that he remembered climbing up a wooded area". ERICKSON said that he and FERGUSON then returned to FERGUSON'S car. FERGUSON took ERICKSON home and ERICKSON believes FERGUSON then went home.

At that time I decided to leave the interview room to obtain a video statement from ERICKSON. For information pertaining to the video statement, please see another supplement under this case number.

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SUPPLEMENTAL REPORTS FOR THIS OFFENSE

  
FORT, JOHN  
REPORTING OFFICER

  
MONTICELLI, STEPHEN P  
SUPERVISOR

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