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*The  
Abduction and Murder  
Of  
Adam Walsh*

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*Compiled by: Detective Mark Smith*

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*Because the report is upside down on the Hollywood Police Department case files, I rescanned them and put the report in this separate PDF file.*

Full report can be located on the HPD CD-ROM #2 (DOC001pp\_\_7)

## MONDAY JULY 27, 1981

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Shortly after 12:00pm Adam Walsh, 6, of 2801 McKinley Street in Hollywood, was abducted from the Sears & Roebuck department store at the Hollywood Mall at 3251 Hollywood Boulevard in Hollywood, Florida. Reve Walsh, Adam's mother, had taken him to the mall and allowed him to stay in the toy department of Sears while she shopped in the lighting department. It was during this separation that Adam was apparently abducted. Despite Hollywood Police response and thorough searches of the toy department, entire Sears store, all of Hollywood Mall and adjacent areas, Adam was not located.

On Monday August 10th at approximately 6:45pm, after two weeks of intensive searching by police, canvassing of south Florida and mass distribution of photographs, the severed head of Adam Walsh was discovered by fishermen Robert Hughs and Vernon Bailey floating in a canal near mile marker 130 of Florida's Turnpike in Indian River County. Extensive searches

of this area did not produce any other remains or any physical evidence--leading investigators to conclude this location was not where the homicide occurred.

At Indian River County Hospital on the morning of August 11th, John Monahan, a close friend of the Walsh family, positively identified the severed head as that of Adam Walsh's, an identification corroborated the same day by use of dental records. That afternoon Dr. Ronald Wright of the Broward County Medical Examiner's Office conducted an examination of the remains at the Broward County Medical Examiner's facility in Fort Lauderdale. Dr. Wright's examination concluded that, due to the presence of liquified brain matter, the time of death was likely 10 or more days prior to discovery of the remains on August 10th. Additionally, Dr Wright's examination revealed five distinct blows from a sharp bladed instrument at least 5 1/4 inches long to the back of the neck and lower rear portion of the skull.

From July 27th through August 10th, 1981 neither the Hollywood Police Department nor any law enforcement agency known to the Hollywood Police Department received communication from anyone in reference to ransom in exchange for Adam's return. On August 11th, abandoning a search for an abduction victim, the Hollywood Police Department Detective Division began the murder investigation of Adam Walsh which is still ongoing.

Investigators first interviewed Adam Walsh's immediate family and close friends of the family. These people included; John Walsh, Adam's father; Reve Walsh; Jean Walsh, Adam's

grandmother; Joseph Walsh, Adam's uncle; James Campbell, a friend of the family; and John Monahan. Police conducted extensive background checks of these individuals--none of which revealed significant information to implicate anyone in this case.

## TRACING ADAM'S FOOTSTEPS

At 6:30pm August 18th Reve Walsh met with detectives at the Hollywood Police Department to provide an in-depth interview regarding the activities of her and her son the day of his abduction. She stated she awoke at 8:00am, Adam awoke at 8:30, John Walsh left for work at 9:00, between 9:00 and 9:30 James Campbell arrived at the Walsh residence and had breakfast with Reve and left at 10:00. She then left with Adam at 11:00 and went to Saint Mark's Lutheran School at 502 North 28th Avenue in Hollywood to pay for Adam's tuition. She said, after parking the car, she took Adam into the church office, dropped off a check and left for the Hollywood Mall--arriving at approximately 12:30pm. In a subsequent statement on September 10th she stated she arrived at the church at approximately 12:20 before continuing to the mall where she arrived at 12:35.

Earlier, recalling some of the events that followed, while under hypnosis on July 31st, Reve Walsh said she parked her gray Checker vehicle on the north side of Sears. She and Adam entered the store, Adam stayed in the toy department and she went to the

lamp department informing Adam she would return in 10 minutes. In the course of detectives' in-depth interview, Mrs. Walsh said she had left Adam in the toy department on previous occasions, he would never leave the store to look for her and he was familiar with the store having been there in excess of 100 times. Also in the hypnosis session on July 31st, Mrs. Walsh said, after making an inquiry about a lamp with a Sears' employee, she returned to the toy department approximately 10 minutes after she had left it and could not locate her son. She searched the entire department and adjacent department's before using a house phone to request Adam be paged to return to the toy department.

Shortly after, Reve Walsh came across her mother-in-law Jean Walsh who was coincidentally shopping in Sears. Initially, Reve thought Adam might have been with her, however, after learning he was not, she called the Hollywood Police Department at 1:55pm to report Adam missing. During this hypnosis session Mrs. Walsh did not recall any suspicious people or activities surrounding her or her son and said her husband and James Campbell were the only ones who knew she was going to Sears that day.

August 28th police met with Jackie Wing, 54, of Hollywood, who was employed as a secretary at Saint Mark's on July 27th when Reve Walsh hand delivered a \$90.00 tuition check signed by John Walsh. In this meeting more than a month after the abduction, detectives asked Ms. Wing for her best recollection and she recalled Mrs. Walsh delivering the check by herself at approximately 10:00 or 10:30. JoAnne Braun, a Sears' employee working on the day of Adam's disappearance, recalled seeing a

gray Checker parked near the north entrance of the store between 11:00am and noon. Mrs. Braun also recalled seeing Reve Walsh entering Sears' catalog department entrance with a child--presumably Adam. According to Angelique Ganas, 17, a part-time Sears' lamp department employee also working that day, at approximately 12:10 Mrs. Walsh inquired about a lamp that was on sale. Ganas recalled relieving co-worker Betty Gutberlet at noon, waiting on Mrs. Walsh five or 10 minutes later and Mrs. Walsh returning to the lamp department looking for her son at approximately 12:25.

Jenny Rayner, 24, was also working at Sears on July 27th. She was operating the telephone switchboard and the public address system over which Adam Walsh was paged several times. She said at approximately 12:25 she received a call from an in-house phone on which a woman requested her son Adam be paged to return to the toy department. After instructing the woman to remain in the toy department, Ms. Rayner issued two pages without response. Rayner said she paged Adam again at 12:40, received another call from the same woman requesting another page and paged him again at 1:00--all without response. Sears' employee Martha Grube said she relieved Rayner at 1:15 and continued to page Adam until 1:30.

Both Arlene Salaba, 48, and Aurora Delgada, 41, were working at Sears the day of the abduction and were approached by Mrs. Walsh on separate occasions asking if they had seen her son. Salaba said between 12:00 and 12:30 Mrs. Walsh approached her, showed her a photograph of Adam and Salaba told Walsh she had not

seen him. Delgado said it was the same time frame in which Mrs. Walsh described Adam to her, Delgado said she had not seen him and then handed the house phone to Walsh to request to have Adam paged.

Upon being informed of some inconsistencies in stated times, Mrs. Walsh said she may have been inaccurate in her estimates because she was not wearing her watch that day. On September 14th Reve agreed to take a polygraph test which she passed without signs of deception.

## *FAMILY AND FRIENDS*

Previous to Reve Walsh's in-depth interview, on August 7th, 11 days after the abduction of his son, John Walsh voluntarily submitted to a polygraph examination in which he did not show signs of deception.

James Campbell, 25, had lived with the Walsh's for approximately four years and moved out in mid-July 1981. He did odd jobs around the Walshes' house and, when asked, watched Adam in addition to working as a boat concession stand operator at the Golden Strand Hotel in North Miami Beach. The night before Adam's abduction Campbell had taken him to Fort Lauderdale to a movie and out to eat. Campbell said Reve Walsh wanted him to take Adam to work with him on the day of Adam's disappearance as

he had several times before, but Campbell refused due to his busy schedule. He further stated, after driving to the Walshes at 9:00am on July 27th and having breakfast with Reve, he left at approximately 10:00 and went to work where he remained until Joseph Walsh arrived around 3:30pm to inform him of Adam's disappearance. Campbell voluntarily agreed to undergo a polygraph examination and, after an initial inconclusive test on August 7th, was retested August 10th revealing no signs of deception. Campbell said emphatically he was not involved in Adam's abduction and did not have an idea as to who might have been. Campbell reiterated his statements under hypnosis which he voluntarily complied to undergo.

An odd, but apparently insignificant, twist in this case revolved around Ada Wolff, 49, of Fort Lauderdale, who claimed to have been in Sears at approximately 3:00 the afternoon of the abduction. She said she felt sorry for Reve Walsh that day and, in the following weeks, faked befriending the Walshes. This effort went to the extreme of her claiming to have raised \$21,000.00 and various prizes for a fund-raiser to benefit the search for Adam Walsh. Additionally, she claimed to have been actively involved with two Jewish organizations in her attempts to raise funds. October 17th, 1981, the scheduled day for the Adam Walsh benefit at Hollywood Mall, Wolff finally admitted she had lied all along and had tried to make friends with John and Reve Walsh in hopes of comforting them.

These background checks of the family and friends of the Walshes did not reveal information of any significance in



reference to Adam's disappearance. Additionally, neither John nor Reve Walsh were able to furnish detectives with information which indicated motive for anyone to kidnap or kill their son.

## SEARS THE DAY OF THE ABDUCTION

Further investigation of the events which took place in the toy department of Sears in the Hollywood Mall that day began with Greg Irizarry, 14, of Hollywood. He and his friend Angelo Accetturo, 11, of Hollywood, went to the Mall's Sidewalk Cafe for lunch at approximately 11:30 before proceeding to Sears' toy department at 12:15 and playing the Atari video game on display for about 30 minutes. After being shown a photograph of Adam Walsh, neither Irizarry nor Accetturo recalled seeing him that day.

Apparently, shortly after Irizarry and Accetturo left the video game, there was an incident there involving four children. Kathy Shaffer, 17, of Miramar, Florida, was on duty as a security guard in the Sears store and recalled an altercation between two white males and two black males. After seeing one of the boys slap another, Shaffer approached the boys and told all four to leave the store. When detectives spoke to Ms. Shaffer September 2nd and showed her a picture of Adam Walsh, she felt he was not one of the boys involved in that incident. However, when

reinterviewed in follow-up investigation October 21st, 1995, Shaffer said she was 85 percent sure the younger of the two white males was Adam Walsh.

Shaffer's contention that it was Adam is consistent with the September 29, 1995 statement provided by Sears catalog department employee John King who began his work shift at noon the day of the abduction. King accurately recalled the clothing description of Reve Walsh as she passed the catalog department entering the store with a small boy. He also recalled the boy coaxing Mrs. Walsh into permitting him to stay at the video games adjacent to the catalog department while she walked in the direction of the lamp department.

One of the other boys Shaffer instructed to leave the store may have been James Martin, 12, of Hollywood. He said he went to the mall at approximately 12:30 to meet his mother at Walden Books where she worked. He then went to the Sidewalk Cafe for lunch, went to Woolworth to look at model cars, went to Sears around 12:45 or 12:50 and began playing the Atari video game with a white male approximately eight years old wearing a collared shirt and shorts. James said two boys approached and tried to take the video game controls from the boy, the security guard intervened and they left Sears shortly after 1:00. It should be noted the times provided by James are estimates based upon his best recollection, he was not certain of their accuracy. After seeing photographs of Adam Walsh, James was not sure if he was the one with whom he was playing Atari.

## ENLISTING MEDIA ASSISTANCE

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In addition to questioning potential witnesses, detectives utilized news media to aid the investigation by requesting anyone with any information regarding activity at the Hollywood Mall on July 27th to contact Hollywood Police. As a result of this request, on Thursday July 30th, 1981 police received a call from Marilyn Pottenberg of Hollywood, who reported a suspicious incident witnessed by her 10-year-old son Timothy.

Under hypnosis Timothy recalled seeing a six feet tall white male with dark brown curly hair loitering in the toy department of Sears where Timothy was shopping with his grandmother Carolyn Hudson of Hollywood. He saw a boy leave the store followed by this man. The man then ran into a shiny navy blue Ford van with tinted windows, sport wheels, black bumper and a chrome ladder on the back. As Timothy and his grandmother were walking to their car, Timothy noticed two white males wearing stocking masks in the van which pulled near the boy. At this time Timothy said the sliding side door of the van opened, a hand motioned the boy toward the vehicle and the boy was pulled into the van. Timothy recalled the boy wearing a red hat which is inconsistent with the beige captain's hat Reve Walsh said Adam was wearing. Hudson was able to corroborate only one portion of Timothy's story--a navy blue van that almost struck her and Timothy as they walked to their car. Additionally, neither

Hudson nor Timothy Pottenberg were able to recall the time of these incidents initially. However, upon reinterviewing Hudson and Marilyn Pottenberg who accompanied her son and mother to the mall, both Pottenberg and Hudson placed the time of the blue van incident at approximately 1:25pm--if correct, inconsistent with the time of the abduction of Adam Walsh.

On the same date Timothy was hypnotized, detectives received a phone call from Eugene Menacho of Fort Lauderdale, who was hypnotized on Saturday August 15th. Menacho advised on July 27th between approximately 12:30pm and 1:00pm, he was nearly involved in a traffic accident with a van identical to the one described by Timothy Pottenberg. The van, being driven by a mid-twenties white male with black hair and a thin moustache, was speeding west at the intersection of Hollywood Boulevard and Park Road adjacent to the Hollywood Mall. Following the hypnosis session, Menacho and Timothy Pottenberg met with police artist John Valor who produced two composite drawings which were released to media along with a description of the Ford van.

Also as a result of disseminating information through news gathering organizations, Jane Houvouras, 34, of Lake Park, Florida, called Hollywood Police on August 10th in reference to an incident she witnessed on July 13th at the Sears located in the Twin City Mall in Lake Park. She and her son Matthew witnessed a young boy claiming he was being chased by a white mid-twenties male who was following him. After interviewing Houvouras, creating a composite sketch and interviewing Sears' employees, it was determined the man was Mark Langhill, 19, who

was employed by Sears as a plain clothes security guard and followed the boy having suspected him of shoplifting. Detectives photographed Langhill, showed the picture to Houvouras and her son and both agreed Langhill was the man they thought may have been chasing the boy.

### **POLICE DEPARTMENTS PROVIDE LEADS**

At 8:00pm Wednesday August 19, 1981 homicide detectives received a telephone call unrelated to media generated tips. Madison County Sheriff's Deputy Fred Respress called to inform detectives of a Florida Highway Patrol driving under the influence arrest of Michael Kelly, 25, of Merritt Island, Florida. After searching Kelly's vehicle and finding a machete, state troopers questioned Kelly who said he knew information pertinent to the Adam Walsh case. As Hollywood detectives interviewed Kelly they observed him to appear somewhat mentally unstable. Kelly informed detectives he had a history of mental illness and psychiatric care--a claim later corroborated by his parents and brother.

In an interview with detectives, Michael Kelly said Kim Moran, a 25-year-old man from Titusville, Florida, told him six years previous that Moran was going to kill children and Kelly would read about it. Kelly had not seen Moran for the previous

year, but Kelly said, approximately two weeks prior to Adam Walsh's abduction, his machete disappeared from his closet in his parents home where he lived. Charles Kelly Sr., Michael's father, said he put the machete in the closet himself some time before that and it had been there until Michael took it with him when he visited his brother Allen in Fort Walton, Florida on August 18th. Both Charles Kelly Sr. and Alice Kelly, Michael's mother, stated their son had been acting strange over the last month. Charles Kelly Jr., Michael's brother, said Michael had been acting strange for a year and had been hallucinating about being pursued by drug dealers.

According to Michael and his brother Charles, they were home together in Merritt Island on July 27th. Detectives searched Michael's red Ford Pinto and his bedroom at his parents' house and did not find anything linking him to the abduction or murder of Adam Walsh. The machete discovered by state troopers in Kelly's Pinto was examined by the Broward County Sheriff's Office laboratory and Dr. Ronald Wright. Lab tests proved negative and Dr. Wright concluded this was not the instrument used to sever the head of Adam Walsh.

Yet another tip came from Florida police as Detective Reese Parish of the Saint Lucie County Sheriff's Department phoned Hollywood detectives September 22nd, 1981 in regard to Jerry Childress, 44, of Fort Pierce, Florida, claiming to have information regarding the Walsh case. Childress said Mary Green-Northcutt, 28, of Fort Pierce, had told him she and several others took a boy from Sears in Hollywood to an unknown location

in Fort Pierce and killed him. Green-Northcutt, when confronted with this information, said it was not true, she did not have sexual relations with Childress as he claimed and she thought he was weird and an alcoholic. After agreeing to take a polygraph test, Green-Northcutt passed and detectives determined Childress' story appeared to have been created out of jealousy.

Recently detectives were still attempting to follow a lead which originated from Boardman, Ohio Police Department Captain Steve Balag on August 31, 1995. Balag said Kenneth Leclair, 57, a prime suspect in a 1972 Ohio murder of a 10-year-old boy, had been tracked as being in Florida. Leclair was known to have lured boys into his vehicle and ultimately had been charged in an unrelated sex offense. Hollywood detectives conducted a criminal background check and learned Leclair was arrested in Indian River County, Florida in 1982 for firearm and narcotics possession, arrested in 1983 for armed robbery and arrested again in 1985 for auto theft. December 7th, 1995 detectives travelled to Fruitland Park, Florida where they believe Leclair now resides. Attempts to contact him and his neighbors were unsuccessful and local police did not have record of any contact with him. Detectives are still trying to locate Leclair for routine questioning as a part of their ongoing investigation.

## **STRANGE TIPS**

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On the afternoon of October 12th, 1981 Hollywood detectives received a phone call from Hank Blum, of Vero Beach, Florida, in reference to an individual whom Blum suspected to be involved in the abduction and murder of Adam Walsh. According to Blum, John Davis, 46, of Fort Pierce, was paid by the Central Intelligence Agency to kill certain people in order to send Blum a message. Blum claimed to have knowledge of the Watergate break-in and was being intimidated to keep quiet by the murders of actor Gig Young, Young's wife, actor Bob Crane, Linda Feldhous and Adam Walsh. Linda Feldhous was murdered in Fort Pierce, however, according to Fort Pierce Police, the murder was not politically motivated as Blum said.

Even with the help of the Saint Lucie County Sheriff's Department on October 26th, detectives were unsuccessful in locating John Davis, but left a business card with his daughter at 7:30pm. At 8:30 the following morning Davis called Hollywood Police and, when confronted with Blum's allegations, stated he did not know Blum, never met him and was willing to fully cooperate to aid the investigation. This information, combined with detectives' opinions that Blum was bolstering his ego by claiming self-importance and his inability to explain why those sending him a message would not have killed him alone instead of



five others, led detectives to conclude his story was false.

Another false tip came from Ronnie Carroll, 17, of Hollywood, who claimed to have had contact with the murderer. Additionally, Carroll claimed to have seen photographs depicting the murderer committing sex acts against children, and even photographs depicting the decapitation of Adam Walsh. After misleading detectives for several days, providing erroneous sworn statements, participating in surveillance, taking polygraph examinations and finally being characterized a psychopathic liar, Carroll admitted he told a lie to a Hollywood Police Officer he thought was going to tow his vehicle. Thinking if he provided information regarding the Walsh murder the officer would be lenient, he told a lie which snowballed into a comprehensive, gruesome story.

Throughout the investigation of this case strange tips have been offered to police by individuals of varying credibility. One such tip was called into the Hollywood Police Detective Division on January 11, 1995 by Terry Green of Melbourne, Florida. Green believed to have seen Adam Walsh in a blue Ford van at a Mister Donut shop in Melbourne after the abduction. However, detectives questioned Green's legitimacy after weighing his level of sincerity and considering the information he provided--all of which dealt with issues which had been released through news media. Still, in an effort to consider all possibilities in the investigation, the lead was not eliminated, but rather followed at a later date. On November 9th detectives met with Green after talking to him several times by phone. This

meeting would serve to support detectives' suspicions that Green's information was perhaps lacking legitimacy.

Green said during the first week of August 1981 he saw Adam Walsh acting strangely in the company of a man he believed to be known Walsh murder suspect Ottis Toole. He also said he discovered blood in the area of a garbage dumpster adjacent to Mister Donut several days later. Detectives did not gain corroboration to Green's story even from people Green named as knowledgeable about it--one of whom was a police officer. Instead they gained statements that the blood was likely from an animal's carcass and the incident probably occurred later in the year since the police officer recalled wearing a jacket when Green showed him the blood. In an attempt to learn what Green may have actually observed as opposed to what he may have learned through news media, a polygraph examination was arranged to be conducted at Melbourne Police Department by Melbourne Detective John Lawson on December 8th. Following a 45-minute interview, Lawson concurred with Hollywood detectives that Green was not likely to provide a conclusive polygraph result.

## POMPANO BEACH ARRESTEE

Edward James, 50, of Pompano Beach, Florida, was arrested by Pompano Beach Police on November 17, 1981 for abducting a boy and was investigated by Hollywood detectives in regard to the Walsh case. On November 22nd and 23rd John Terry, 55, of Johnson City, Tennessee, was a cellmate of James' in Broward County, Florida Jail. Terry, incarcerated by Deerfield Beach Police, said James not only talked about abducting a boy from the Pompano Beach area, but also talked of having enticed a five- or six-year-old boy away from a Hollywood department store in the summer that same year. As the conversation became detailed, Terry said James spoke of taking the boy from a Hollywood shopping center to Jaxon's Ice Cream Parlor in nearby Dania and buying him ice cream. He then drove on Florida's Turnpike, for some reason became angry with the boy, stopped the car, removed the boy, took him to the edge of a canal, severed his head and disposed of it in the canal. While James did not inform Terry of all the specifics, he did relay that James may have disposed of the other remains in Stuart, Florida. Additionally, James felt confident detectives would never find blood in his car, a 1973 brown Plymouth Fury, and he had kept an article of the victim's clothing under the seat in his car, but removed it when the investigation's intensity began to worry him.

In talking with James' Pompano Beach neighbors, detectives learned that, not only had James been gone from his apartment complex for two consecutive weeks in the summer of 1981, but he also had a seat cover installed in his car by Pompano Trim Upholstery Shop on August 27th. Having already conducted an initial search of the vehicle, this new information prompted detectives to secure a second search warrant and retrieve the car from Driscoll's Towing Service where it was being held as evidence in the Pompano Beach Police case against James. After towing the car to the Broward County Medical Examiner's Office, identification technicians processed the vehicle--paying particular attention to the seat cover which had been installed.

Detectives had questioned James in regard to his whereabouts on July 27th and he stated he had been at work at the Ted Crantz Construction Company in Plantation, Florida. He further informed detectives that the only knowledge he had of the Adam Walsh abduction and murder was that which he learned through news media. However, according to John Terry, after detectives spoke with James on October 18th, James told Terry he had lied to the investigators.

Additional investigative efforts were made by Hollywood detectives regarding James as recent as 1995. November 11, 1995, despite the absence of physical evidence to implicate him, James was reinterviewed in the course of follow-up investigation. James voluntarily provided a taped statement which, when subjected to computer voice stress analysis, showed no signs of deception in his responses to relevant questions. When

confronted with the allegations of former cellmate John Terry, James not only denied telling anyone he killed Adam Walsh, but also characterized Terry as a "drunk." Fourteen years after initially interviewing Terry, attempts to recontact him were unsuccessful. When combining the absence of any evidence or credible statement against Edward James, detectives concluded investigation into his potential involvement in this case be discontinued unless new information surfaces.

### OTTIS ELLWOOD TOOLE

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October 11, 1983 began a long and odd relationship between the Walsh case and Ottis Ellwood Toole, 36, of Jacksonville, Florida, who was incarcerated in the Duval County, Florida jail pending charges in relation to an arson homicide. At approximately 9:00am the previous day Detective Steve Kindrick of the Brevard County Sheriff's Department Homicide Unit called Hollywood detectives to inform them that Toole had said he killed someone in Broward county and wanted to discuss it with police.

To qualify this information, Hollywood detectives contacted Detective Jessie W. Terry of the Jacksonville Police Department who was investigating a homicide in which Toole and Henry Lee Lucas were suspects. Lucas was incarcerated for the 1982 murder of Toole's niece Frieda Powell in Denton, Texas. Detective Terry related that Toole had told him that he and Lucas abducted a

six- to 10-year-old boy from a Sears mall in the Fort Lauderdale area several years prior then killed him. Upon learning of this information, Hollywood detectives flew to Jacksonville to question Toole.

October 19, 1983, after telling detectives he wanted to confess to the murder and forget about it, Toole issued a detailed statement of the incident--which contained some inconsistencies. He recalled the child being seven to 10 years old with blonde curly hair and wearing blue jeans, a blue shirt and sneakers. According to Reve Walsh, Adam, who was six years old with sandy brown hair, was last wearing green shorts, a red and white striped Izod pullover shirt and yellow rubber thongs. In the course of his statement, Toole implicated Lucas as an accomplice stating Lucas pulled the child into the car, cut off the child's head with a bayonet and performed sex acts with the severed head. However, it was later learned that Lucas was in a Maryland state jail on July 27, 1981. He was arrested by Maryland State Police on July 22nd in Pikesville, Maryland and finally released from their custody on October 7th.

These significant inconsistencies in Toole's statement led detectives to seriously question the legitimacy of his story--a story which he would change repeatedly over the following years. Upon being told Lucas was in police custody on the day of Adam Walsh's abduction, Toole, in a subsequent statement the same day, claimed he was alone and lied about Lucas' involvement for purposes of revenge.

## TOOLE'S CELLMATES

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Detectives sought other sources to confirm or refute Toole's varying stories. They started by questioning his Duval County Jail cellmates from October 1983. Ronald Collins of Jacksonville said, while he and Toole were cellmates, Toole spoke of killings in which he was involved, but none involved children. Another man incarcerated with Toole was Lee Hodges of Jacksonville. He recalled Toole discussing murders in which he was involved, but none concerning Adam Walsh.

Bobby Jones and Toole served jail time together after having worked together for Southeast Color Coat roofing company in Jacksonville in early 1982. Jones said on one occasion Toole blurted that he killed two children and one of them he dismembered with a large knife after beating the child. Apparently Jones did not pay significant regard to Toole's statements as he told him to shut up and lay down. James Collins was another coworker at Southeast Color Coat as well as a cellmate. He remembered Toole being inquisitive about the repercussions a child murderer might face from fellow inmates. According to Collins, Toole also vaguely referred to an ambiguous "they" having found the head, while hoping "they" would not find the body. Thomas Law was employed by the same roofing company and was also an inmate at Duval County Jail with Toole. He was

not helpful, however, as he was hostile and completed his statement in 11 minutes.

At the Baker Correctional Institution in Olustee, Florida, detectives questioned James Poole who met Toole at the Butler Transient Unit in Starke, Florida in July 1983. Poole reported Toole as having said he was in the child repossession business. This statement seemed to be isolated as detectives have not acquired a similar statement from anyone. However, an equally bizarre recollection came from Boyd Gilbert who also had contact with Toole at the Butler Transient Unit. He said Toole claimed to have earned a living in arson, visited south Florida several times and killed a policeman's son there.

Even as recent as July 1995 detectives were still questioning people who had contact with Toole. A brief and intriguing statement came from a man who said Toole told him he killed Adam Walsh. According to the man, he and Toole became friendly and Toole spoke to him in detail about the murder. He became emotional while relating this to detectives and refused to convey all the details, but through tears he admitted he knew enough about the case to put Toole in the electric chair. Though he refrained from telling detectives everything he claimed to know, he was reinterviewed on September 19, 1995 at which point he again let on he had more knowledge than he was willing to divulge. Detectives are uncertain if his accounts are accurate, but will continue in their attempts to gain truthful statements from those affiliated with Toole.

Also On September 19th, 1995 detectives interviewed a man



who had previously written a letter to Hollywood detectives referencing his knowledge of the Walsh case. According to this man, Toole said he and Henry Lucas abducted, sexually assaulted and dismembered the victim before depositing the severed head and body in a waterway. He further stated that Toole committed a drug-related murder in the area of 56th Street and Northwest 17th Avenue in Miami around the same time. Follow-up detectives confirmed there was not a murder at that location at that time nor were there any unsolved drug-related murders in that area.

Another tip regarding Ottis Toole originated when the now defunct Hollywood Sun Tattler newspaper ran an article on the Walsh case along with a photograph of him in its Saturday October 22, 1983 edition. After seeing the picture, Arlene Mayer, 47, of Hollywood, called police to inform them of an incident her and her daughter Heide had with Toole at the Hollywood K-Mart department store in July 1981. They recall it was a Friday or Saturday evening when Mayer drove her daughter to K-Mart at 651 south 60th Avenue, parked the car and they noticed a suspicious man they believe to be Ottis Toole as they walked into the store. Once in the store, when Mayer left her daughter alone briefly, the suspicious man tried to coax Heide into letting him push her in the shopping cart. Heide began crying and yelling for her mother and the man left. Interestingly, both Heide and Mrs. Mayer separately picked Toole's picture from photograph lineups consisting of six photos of men with similar characteristics.

Another tip had been generated from the Sun Tattler in

August 1991. The newspaper ran an article on the 10th anniversary of the abduction and murder of Adam Walsh which was read by William Mistler of Hollywood. At the time of the abduction Mistler was 33 years old and had gone to the Hollywood Mall July 27th, 1981. In a statement to follow-up detectives, he said he saw Ottis Toole lure a boy he believed to be Adam Walsh into a 1971 black over white Cadillac with faded black interior near the garden shop entrance of Sears the day of the abduction. Pointing out that he thought Toole had been arrested for the murder in 1983, Mistler called Hollywood detectives when he learned that was not true. This statement is significant because, if accurate, it represents the only known eyewitness account of the abduction.

Mistler was then subjected to hypnosis, under which he provided accurate and specific details of the car including color, make and a small dent on the rear bumper. This information, to detectives' best knowledge, was never reported by news media and likely could not have been known by anyone unless they had actually seen the car. Additionally, Mistler's description of the Cadillac was an exact match to the vehicle Toole himself said he used when he abducted and murdered Adam Walsh 10 years earlier.

## **DETECTIVES FLY TOOLE TO HOLLYWOOD TO VISIT THE SCENE OF THE ABDUCTION**

October 21st, 1983 detectives flew Toole to Hollywood in an attempt to have him identify the location of the abduction and the area of Florida's Turnpike at which he claimed to have severed the victim's head. Toole claimed he would be able to identify the mall from which the abduction occurred and, to be certain, detectives first took him to a different mall giving him the opportunity to identify the wrong location. Detectives drove Toole to Broward Mall in Plantation which Toole said was not the right mall. When arriving at the Hollywood Mall, he advised the mall looked familiar, but he could not be sure it was the correct one.

Later the same day, after claiming it was the correct mall, Toole led detectives to the turnpike entrance in the 6100 block of Hollywood Boulevard from where they headed north on Florida's Turnpike. Eventually they arrived on a dirt road adjacent to mile marker 126 where Toole claimed to have dismembered the victim and buried the remains. His having led detectives to this dirt road is particularly significant when one considers it had never been known to detectives or anyone else inside or outside of the investigation. Additionally, not only did Toole lead detectives to this unknown location, he mentioned its existence when previously interviewed in Jacksonville--before ever being

taken to south Florida by detectives. An extensive search of the area proved negative and Toole explained his inability to recall the exact location as his having been extremely intoxicated during the abduction, murder and burial. Ottis Toole was then taken back to Jacksonville as Hollywood detectives continued their investigation. October 26th Hollywood detectives returned to Jacksonville where they took yet another statement from Toole. It was in this statement that Toole said he was providing statements because he was uncertain if he had actually murdered Adam Walsh. At that point of the interview Jacksonville Detective Terry and Hollywood detectives began a question and answer exchange with Toole. As he was crying, Toole said he was sure he did not abduct or murder Adam Walsh and in fact created the whole story. Twelve minutes later, however, he offered another account of how he abducted and murdered Adam Walsh including going to a flea market in Jacksonville to sell the machete he used to sever the child's head. This time Toole claimed he lied about making up the story because he could not get his head together. Clearly, verifying Toole's conflicting statements would require substantial effort.

Detectives confirmed Toole to have received emergency room medical treatment at Riverside Hospital in Newport News, Virginia on July 22nd, 1981, was admitted to Riverside Hospital for depression on July 23rd and released on July 24th. Additionally, also on the 24th, he obtained money from the Salvation Army and purchased a one-way Greyhound Bus ticket from Newport News to Jacksonville where he arrived on July 25th--two days before the

abduction of Adam Walsh. The next documentation of Toole's whereabouts is a police report of an assault committed against Toole in Jacksonville on August 1st. Therefore, in the absence of Toole's statements, utilizing only documentation of his whereabouts, if he committed the abduction and murder of Adam Walsh he arrived in Jacksonville on July 25th, travelled to Hollywood to commit the crimes and returned to Jacksonville by July 31st when he rented a room in a boarding house and filed a report of an assault against him the next day.

At one point after Toole had explained how he buried the remains of the victim in south Florida, he recanted and said he actually took the body of the victim to Jacksonville, placed it in a gutted refrigerator in the back yard of his mother's house at 708 Day Avenue, doused it with gasoline and burned it. He further described shovelling the ashes out of the refrigerator into a blanket, wrapping them and dumping them at the City of Jacksonville's north dump.

In the course of this story Toole conveyed, not only did he use a shovel in disposing of the ashes, but it was a machete he used to sever the child's head. When detectives questioned him regarding the whereabouts of these instruments, Toole, unaware detectives had already recovered a machete from Spencer Bennett owner of Spencer Motor Cars in Jacksonville where Toole often parked his vehicle, accurately described the same machete. Just two weeks previous Bennett gave the machete to detectives saying he did not remember in which of the cars on his lot he found it. The machete had a tar-like substance on the blade which might be

expected if it had been used for removing or cutting shingles or tar paper in the course of roofing work. Additionally, the machete had a wooden handle wrapped with electricians tape and a green webbed sheath just as Toole described. While a suspect accurately describing a possible murder weapon represents an interesting development, detectives are not certain this machete was ever accessible to Toole much less used by him in any way. Additionally, if an individual intentionally concocting a false story of murdering someone is aware of the nature of the victim's wounds, it would aid the person's twisted interests to describe a weapon capable of inflicting those wounds--irrespective of having ever used it or not.

While tests conducted on the machete in 1983 when it was discovered detected traces of blood, those tests were prior to the advent of DNA technology and did not specify blood-type to enable comparison with the victims. Attempts to utilize DNA technology in the course of follow-up investigation were futile as blood was not lifted from the machete or its sheath. These results may be due to having consumed all trace evidence with the initial testing in 1983 or the passage of time having deteriorated any remaining trace evidence.

A 1971 black and white Cadillac which is known to have been bought and driven by Toole, and the car he claimed to have used in committing the crimes in this case, was also tested. When recovered in 1983 it tested positive for the presence of blood on the left front and rear floor boards--locations where Toole, in one of his statements, said he placed the severed head of Adam

Walsh. In 1995 during follow-up investigation DNA testing was again impossible as samples from this vehicle were not located.

Toole has been the subject of significant effort put forth by detectives in this case. Despite repeatedly retracting his confessions, some accounts he has provided are curiously accurate. Although an abundance of information regarding the Walsh case could have been learned through media, at times Toole has provided specifics which have led detectives to question if he was involved in the abduction and murder or knowledgeable of someone who was. Regardless, detectives do not yet have sufficient information to eliminate him as a suspect so Ottis Ellwood Toole remains a part of this continuing investigation.

### **JEFFREY DAHMER** **LIVING IN SOUTH FLORIDA IN JULY 1981**

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July 30, 1991, 10 years after the abduction and murder of Adam Walsh, Hollywood detectives learned of a possible link with their unsolved case and a well-known serial killer. William Bowen, 33, of Birmingham, Alabama, remembered witnessing an altercation at the Hollywood Mall on the day of Adam's abduction in which he felt convicted serial murderer Jeffrey Dahmer was involved. Bowen, who lived in Hollywood in 1981, saw a profile photograph of Dahmer in a Birmingham newspaper and claimed it jogged his memory.

The afternoon of July 27, 1981 Bowen had driven to the Hollywood Mall, parked his car in the west parking lot of Sears and started walking into the store. As he approached the store entrance he saw a white male who he described as being approximately 20 years old wearing a blue baseball cap and a camouflage jacket. The man was involved in a physical struggle with a boy, the boy was physically and verbally resisting, then the man forced the boy into a plain white cargo van before speeding to Hollywood Boulevard. Bowen said he only saw the man's profile and, after seeing the profile photo in the newspaper, recognized the man as Dahmer.

Interestingly, after seeing a picture of Dahmer in a Miami Herald article in July of 1991, Willis Morgan, 44, of Hallandale, Florida claimed to have seen Dahmer at the Radio Shack store in the Hollywood Mall on the day of Adam's disappearance. According to Morgan, after the man he believed to be Dahmer conversed with him in Radio Shack, Morgan went into Sears and did not see him again. As a result of these developments, Hollywood investigators called Detective Joseph Nowicki of the Homicide Unit of the Milwaukee, Wisconsin Police Department. After discussing the statements of Bowens and Morgan, Hollywood detectives requested Milwaukee police question Dahmer in reference to the Walsh case. Though Dahmer denied any involvement to Milwaukee police, Hollywood detectives flew to the Columbia Correction Facility in Milwaukee on August 12th to interview him in-depth.

Detectives learned Dahmer was discharged from the Army



March 26th, 1981 and flew from South Carolina to Miami on that date. He rented a room for a week at a Miami Beach hotel before running out of money and resorting to sleeping on the beach and in various public places. He landed a job at Sunshine Subs in Miami Beach in April, rented a room at nearby Bimini Motel and left Florida in September 1981. Apparently this entire time Dahmer relied exclusively on public transportation. In the course of the Dahmer interview he stated he was not involved in the abduction or murder of Adam Walsh, he was not a pedophile and if he had committed the murder he would admit it because he would welcome the death penalty as an alternative to rotting in prison.

## THE MURDER OF STACY WYTRVA

March 11, 1995 Peter Genovese called the television program America's Most Wanted in Washington D.C. and requested to talk to the show's host, John Walsh, in regard to the abduction and murder of his son Adam. Genovese's name and phone number were forwarded to Hollywood Police Department detectives for contact. When detectives talked to Genovese they learned of his suspicions that a suspect in the 1980 Hollywood murder of 12-year-old Stacy Wytrva may be involved in the Walsh murder. Wytrva's body was found strangled on the Hillcrest Country Club golf course in Hollywood on June 17, 1980 and Alzemore Thibault, who worked at

the Hess gas station on Griffin Road in Hollywood, was focused in the investigation as the main suspect. Genovese recalled being 15 years old in 1980 playing with his friends regularly in the wooded area adjacent to the Hess station and observing Thibault's somewhat bizarre behavior during that time. After seeing a television report regarding victim Stacy Wytrva having incurred ant bites or fingernail scratches, Genovese recalled seeing Thibault clipping his fingernails at the gas station. Genovese also saw a machete with a black handle wrapped in a T-shirt in the possession of Thibault. Additionally, knowing a blue van was a possible suspect vehicle in the Walsh case, Genovese thought it strange that Thibault drove a light blue van during that time period.

Detectives, despite the absence of reasoning for connecting the Wytrva and Walsh murders, investigated Thibault's background and found a criminal history including burglary and narcotics offenses in both Fort Lauderdale and Fort Pierce. In the course of their continuing investigation, detectives are still considering whether or not this information is pertinent in relation to the Walsh case.

## FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATION

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An interesting tip to follow-up detectives was the one Terry Wilber of Fort Pierce, originally phoned to Hollywood Police on August 5th, 1981, nine days after the abduction. Wilber felt confident the child he saw reluctantly entering a brown van at a Fort Pierce rest stop with an older male was Adam Walsh. He reached this opinion having seen Adam's picture on television and noticed it being strange that a young boy was with a man who appeared to be too old to be his father. It is particularly interesting because this potential sighting was in a location close to where the severed head of the victim would be found just five days later. However, this information is contradictory to the findings of Medical Examiner Dr. Ronald Wright who concluded the time of death was likely 10 or more days before discovery of the severed head. If accurate, Adam Walsh was killed several days prior to Wilber's sighting. Detectives recontacted Wilber for a brief review of his statement in September 1995 as it was never clear the exact day on which he made this observation. Detectives will maintain communication with him as the investigation dictates.

Also in September 1995, Detective Greg Harrop of the Cooper City, Florida Police Department provided Walsh case detectives two names of psychics who might have information

related to the murder of Adam Walsh. In the course of Cooper City detectives investigating a case in which Jeannette Garret attempted to murder her 10-year-old daughter then committed suicide, they discovered an audio cassette recording of a conversation between Garrett and a psychic. The conversation contains statements by Garrett that her ex-husband Donald Garrett killed Adam Walsh and a young girl named Stacy. While detectives continue to investigate this information, it is unknown if it is related to the Walsh case or the Stacy Wytrva murder.

### **F.B.I. ASSISTANCE**

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October 23, 1995, with the assistance of Special Agents Wayne Russell and Stan Smith of the Miami office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.), Hollywood detectives travelled to Quantico, Virginia where they presented the Adam Walsh case to the Child Abduction Serial Killer Unit of the Behavioral Sciences Department of the F.B.I. This is yet another effort illustrating the attempt on the part of the Hollywood Police Department Detective Division to utilize all resources available to it in attempts to solve this case. Additionally, it is the intent of the Hollywood Police to continue comprehensively investigating in hope of successful prosecution of the person or persons involved. This effort may include, but not necessarily be limited to,

revisiting the aforementioned issues, statements, witnesses, suspects and others as the investigation continues strongly forward. Much of this is currently being done by detectives who continue in their exhaustive search for information which may ultimately solve the mystery of the abduction and murder of Adam Walsh.