
#10 Statement of Vernon JONES

(Adam Walsh)

Investigative Assignment #96-02-0262

September 27, 1996

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT #10

TO: RALPH J. RAY, JR.
Chief Assistant State Attorney

FROM: PHILIP J. MUNDY
Investigator

SUBJ: Statement of Vernon Jones

RE: Homicide Investigation of Adam Walsh

ENCL: Transcript of Statement of Vernon Jones

Mr. Vernon JONES' sworn statement was taken on September 24, 1996 in which he describes being in the Sears department store in Hollywood on the day of Adam Walsh's kidnapping/murder.

Upon reviewing the facts set forth by Mr. Jones, who was age nine at the time of the incident, it does not appear that Mr. Jones was present at the same time Adam Walsh was in the store. Mr. Jones relates that he was playing at the video games and there was only one other child in the area at the time who later left the store with an adult male. Mr. Jones does not identify this child as Adam Walsh. In addition, Mr. Jones cannot recall the time of day he was there but seems to remember that after leaving the store with his grandfather they went to have something to eat. This would indicate that Mr. Jones was in the store after the kidnapping.

Further, Mrs. Kathryn Shaffer BARRACK has related going to the video game area where she found a total of four children, two white and two black males. All of these children, one of whom she has identified as Walsh, were ejected from the premises by Mrs. Barrack.

Mrs. HAGAN has indicated in her statement that there were between three and five children at the video games as she passed thru and she has identified one of the children as Adam Walsh. In addition she identified Ottis TOOLE as standing there talking to Adam Walsh at the time. Mr. Jones only makes mention of a man who was standing off to the side who later left with the other child.

Mr. Jones was also shown the photographic line-up which includes the photo of Ottis TOOLE and he did not identify anyone.

Philip J. Mundy
INV. PHILIP J. MUNDY

cc: Det. Mark Smith, Hollywood P.D. with enclosure

**ENCLOSURE
ONE**

Statement
VERNON JONES

September 24, 1996
Inv. Philip Mundy

THE FOLLOWING IS GOING TO BE A STATEMENT OF MR. VERNON, V-E-R-N-O-N, M. JONES, J-O-N-E-S, JR., A BLACK MALE, DATE OF BIRTH MAY 3, 1972 AS GIVEN TO STATE ATTORNEY INVESTIGATOR PHILIP J. MUNDY OF THE BROWARD COUNTY STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE. THIS STATEMENT IS BEING TAKEN IN REFERENCE TO STATE ATTORNEY INVESTIGATION CASE NUMBER 96-02-262 AND HOLLYWOOD POLICE DEPARTMENT CASE NUMBER 81-56073. THE STATEMENT IS BEING TAKEN AT 9300 SOUTH DADELAND BLVD., SUITE 100, MIAMI, FLORIDA ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1996 BEGINNING AT ABOUT 2:34 PM:

THE FOLLOWING NOTATIONS WILL DISTINGUISH SPEAKERS:

PM: PHILIP MUNDY
VJ: VERNON JONES

PM: Mr. Jones as an Investigator for the State Attorney's Office I have the authority to take your statement under oath so I need you to raise your right hand and do you solemnly swear or affirm the statement you are about to give be the truth, the whole truth so help you god?

VJ: Yes I do.

PM: For the record would you please state your full name and your date of birth?

VJ: Vernon Matthew Jones, Jr. Date of Birth is May 3, 1972, Hollywood, Florida.

PM: Mr. Jones I would like to kind of bring you back if I could to July 27, 1981 and ask if you recall on that particular day if you would remember being in the Sears store in the City of Hollywood, that would be located at Hollywood Blvd. and North Park Road, do you recall that?

VJ: Yes I do.

PM: We have talked and so I know a little bit about what your testimony is but basically tell me what was happening there that day and how old were you when you were in the store that day?

VJ: Approximately I was nine years old, it was a summer which meant that I would stay with my grandfather whose name was Otis Williams. We would go and cut grass for a living and we would go to Sears and go in to the section of Sears which was towards the back I guess they would consider it the northwestern corner of that

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mall and he would leave me there in the section with the toys and video games were and he would go to the tool section and look at tools. At that time the video games that were out were like Atari 2600, Kolekovision and television and they had almost like what they now have play stations set up so the kids could be there playing video games. On that particular day what stands out was that I was there with my grandfather, he dropped me off at that section and he went to look at tools. I was playing video games with another young boy to my right. I had a gentleman to my left, to me he was once again older, white, I should say more white than a black male. 35 plus years of age and he basically motioned to myself and the boy who was next to me. I couldn't tell if he was trying to get me, the boy next to me or both of us to come to him. I basically told him to go away leave me alone, I was taught not to go to strangers and I walked around to the other side. On the other side were some of the other video games. As I walked around to the other side and I started playing and I don't remember if there was somebody else playing against me but I do remember playing and being at the station and I looked over to my right and to my right I saw this same boy who was standing next to me on the other side who I was playing against, he left with this gentleman. Walked out and there was a doorway, a door right there where you could exit and in that area where we were at we were in between the catalog section and the candy section. So they exited out which would be the west the northwestern door.

PM: The man that you saw beside what you already told us is there anything you can add to his physical condition?

VJ: Unfortunately no. It is so many years ago, it is so hard, I just remembered it being a non black older male.

PM: What about his clothing? Do you remember anything at all about that?

VJ: I hate to say it, to answer fully, no.

PM: And you said something about he was motioning toward you or perhaps both of you, what kind of motion was he making?

VJ: I am trying to remember if there was actually words, my remembrance of what happened has no sound to it, like a silent picture. I remember him giving us a like a hand signal, I don't remember if he said something you know just the basic, come here,

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one of these type motions, two handed motions. And I don't remember if there were words that came out because I don't remember myself saying words but I remember myself giving the two handed go away.

PM: The boy that was playing the game next to you, do you recall if he was a white boy or black boy?

VJ: A white male about my same age maybe a little younger. He was a little shorter than I was and because I remember looking over and down at him because he was looking up at the screen. I don't remember what he had on or anything else along those lines. But I do remember looking over and down at him because I got disgusted because I looked back up at the screen and we were I know the video games either had to be television or baseball or Kolekovision donkey Kong. Either I had just fallen with the donkey Kong, got squashed, or I hit a home run, and I am sure it was baseball and hit a home run. I am almost positive it was baseball and he hit a home run. That was my favorite game at that time.

PM: Besides that boy where there any other children nearby that you saw?

VJ: Not that I remember. On that side of us, I remember no one else. It was just he and I. On the other side when I walked around there could have been someone else there but I don't have any memory of that. My memory is of that boy. Cause after when the whole thing hit, my parents drilled me and drilled me about that boy trying to get more of a description.

PM: Now the boy that you saw walk out with this man that you saw, just so I understand you correctly was he the boy that had been playing the game next to you?

VJ: It was the same boy who was playing the game next to me.

PM: And that boy was actually playing the game?

VJ: He was actually playing, playing, playing a game. Or with me.

PM: Do you remember about what time of day this was?

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VJ: I can't say. That I can't honestly say. Um, if it was summer it was either it meant either of two things because of the timing because I knew it was daytime. I don't remember it being dark at night that I don't remember. I am almost positive it was daytime though but I can't remember if it was morning or afternoon but my grandfather who did one of two things on that summer type days, if he had a job that day which generally he did, he would cut the grass, go home shower and change and then go to Sears, go there look at things, play games or whatever it may be and from there move on to Morrison's and go eat. If there was a job or if we were in between jobs or lunch break which happens sometimes, once again I could be there playing. My grandfather could have gone there to buy another tool or repair another tool. Unfortunately I can't tell you the exact time.

PM: Based on what you just told me, what is the earliest time of day you would have arrived at Sears on any given occasion?

VJ: That varied, there were days we were there at opening which would be I guess 9:00 or 10:00 in the morning.

PM: And what would the latest you would go?

VJ: We have been there until closing.

PM: No, that you would have arrived?

VJ: We would arrive ...

PM: I am trying to break the day down.

VJ: Once again it varied. On a weekend I am almost positive it was a weekend because generally on the weekends I would have gone home sometimes to my mother or my dad because it was summer. Sometimes I go home on the weekend ...

PM: You mentioned something about looking at tools and such and then going to eat. What I am getting at is on that day when you arrived there was it close to the dinner hour?

VJ: Once again that is what the question would be

PM: I don't mean on this day I mean generally?

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VJ: See in general we would go eat at basically two different meals, we would go eat lunch, we would go to eat dinner. I don't remember Morrison ever having breakfast, I never remember eating breakfast at Morrison's. That is what I am saying I would never think we would go eat at 9:00, 10:00 or when Morrison's did open it was always the same kind of meal. I probably could even tell you what I ordered because I kept it so standard.

PM: So you could have been there around the noon hour as well?

VJ: Could have been there around noon hour. Or we could have been there close to afternoon or evening.

PM: Your grandfather is deceased now isn't he?

VJ: Yes he passed away years ago.

PM: Going back to that day, what were the circumstances of your leaving the store if you remember?

VJ: Unfortunately I do not remember.

PM: Nothing unusual though?

VJ: Not as if me no the standard thing was because of me going so much and constant it was just grandpa come and tell me it was time to go.

PM: And you would leave with your grandfather?

VJ: I would leave with him, I am almost positive we went and ate afterwards, I am almost positive of that.

PM: Do you recall any kind of incident while you were there in the store where somebody, an adult, came into the area where the video games were and chased some children out?

VJ: The problem with that is we as kids were constantly, constantly being chased or kicked out of the area or they would come and turn the video games off because we were making too much noise, fighting over whose turn it was, someone did something an illegal move you know pushing, shoving, making too much noise. So it variably could have happened that day, it could have happened.

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Unfortunately because of that happening so often I don't remember that particular thing happening then. It may have, it may not have. I'm sorry.

PM: Was that gentleman that you described to me, was he about the only one that caught your attention on that occasion?

VJ: On that occasion the only thing that caught my attention was him and the boy next to me.

PM: I brought with me some photographs of white male people and I would like you to look at them, and I'm not saying anybody's in here who might have been in the store that day, and I'm not saying otherwise, and I know it is a long time if what you told me you took a quick look at the person and just as a chance take a look at these pictures and see if you recognize the man you saw that day or anybody suspicious at Sears that day?

VJ: No, I'm sorry.

PM: You don't recognize anyone?

VJ: I don't recognize anyone. Can I see that again?

PM: Sure.

VJ: The two I'm staring at is the number 2 and number 3 that I am staring at. I couldn't point a finger at anyone.

PM: Sure. That's fine. The exit that the young boy went out, do you remember where that exit would have taken him?

VJ: Yea, there was a parking lot right there. There was like a curb, ok, I can almost tell you the layout. Here is the Hollywood, here is the main strip what is that

PM: Hollywood Blvd.

VJ: Hollywood Blvd., the police department was across the street over here, right here when you first turned off Hollywood Blvd. into that parking lot was the Sears automotive center, and further back over here is where the Morrison's was which was facing South, on this side was actually where Sears was. The entrance, the exit that would have taken him out of would have been the exit on this side here, would have been the northwestern corner ...

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PM: Which is North Park Road.

VJ: Yea North Park I guess that is the side road, there is a movie theater there, the road would lead and curve and take you all the way to the Coca Cola factory.

PM: I think that about does it. Is there anything else you can think of that I haven't asked you about?

VJ: No.

PM: The other thing I guess I should clear up, the boy you saw leave with this gentleman, you don't know who he was right, I mean you can't testify to who he was?

VJ: Unfortunately no.

PM: You have seen pictures of the Adam Walsh boy?

VJ: I have seen pictures of Adam Walsh.

PM: You can't say one way or another?

VJ: When the whole thing blew up my parents questioned me about the entire thing and my mom and dad brought the article to my attention, back then I told my parents that looked like the boy that was next to me. That is when I told them if it wasn't for that and unfortunately the high publicity of it right now I couldn't I remember exactly what he looked like. He was definitely a darker hair young boy.. That I can remember because I happened to look down at him slightly because I was a little tall for my age. At least a very dirty blond at least a very good dirty blond. He was smaller than I was and he was other than being shorter he almost was about the same size, he wasn't chubby that I can tell you for sure. But once again then when my parents questioned me I told them yes that looked like the boy which is why they made me go with my grandfather later on and try to make a report. But that was the extent of it.

PM: Ok I think that about does it. This will conclude the statement at about 2:50 PM.

STATEMENT TERMINATED