
#16 Florida Turnpike Crime Scene

(Adam Walsh)

Investigative Assignment #96-02-0262

October 15, 1996

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT #16

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

FROM: PHILIP J. MUNDY
Investigator

SUBJ: Florida Turnpike Crime Scene

RE: Homicide Investigation of Adam Walsh

Prompted by the statements made by Ottis TOOLE to Travis County Texas District Attorney Investigator Paul Ruiz, which were the subject of investigative memo #4, the possibility of discovering serological evidence at the Florida Turnpike crime scene was explored.

It was first determined that the canal and the footbridge at mile marker 174 is under the control of the St. Johns River Water Management District and Mr. Maurice Sterling of that office was contacted. It was Mr. Sterling's understanding that the footbridge at that location was used to provide access to a water measuring device but has not been used in quite some time. Mr. Sterling agreed to allowing our office to inspect the bridge and take whatever action we felt necessary.

Crime scene specialist Ted Yeshion of the F.D.L.E. is a serology specialist and was consulted as to the feasibility of examining the wooden footbridge for possible evidence taking into consideration that it has been fifteen years since the murder of

Adam Walsh. Mr. Yeshion advised that an examination of the scene should be done and that recovery of evidence at this point in time was slim, but possible.

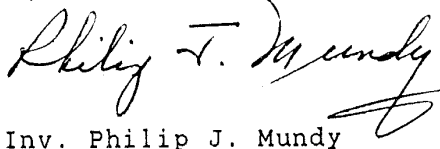
On October 3, 1996 this investigator met with Ted Yeshion and Det. Sgt. Don Coleman, Indian River County Sheriff's Office, at the crime scene. A close examination of the footbridge revealed that it is structurally unsafe and it was not in it's original condition. Several of the planks had obviously been replaced over the years as different phases of aging could be discerned. Two of the planks still had paper inventory labels stapled to them indicating very recent installation. Mr. Yeshion did do some testing to several suspect spots on some planks but there was no reaction to indicate any blood evidence was present.

Det. Sgt. Coleman was the lead detective at the site when the victim's partial remains were recovered from the canal. Det. Coleman recalled that the head was removed from the water as it lay against the concrete conduit and then placed on the footbridge. It was then placed into a plastic body bag. Mr. Yeshion indicated that by placing the head on the bridge plank serological evidence could have been transferred thus making any evidence recovered at this point questionable.

Det. Sgt. Coleman could not recall if the head had been found further into the canal and moved to the conduit and then recovered, or if it was originally next to the conduit. At the time of recovery the canal water did not have as much vegetation as it now does and the water was comparatively clear. No divers were sent into the canal because it was populated by alligators. Det. Coleman recalled that officers in a boat went thru the canal looking into the water with flashlights and were able to see fairly clearly. Det. Coleman advises that the depth of water in the canal sometimes gets as low as a couple of inches and has a sandy bottom.

Consideration was given to dismantling the footbridge for further examination at the F.D.L.E. lab. In considering the condition of the bridge, the replacement of planks, and the natural erosion of older planks thus eroding evidence, it was decided removal of the bridge would not be necessary. Mr. Sterling was later advised that our examination of the bridge had been completed and it's destruction was recommended for safety of the public.

Photographs of the bridge and immediate area were taken for documentation and have been placed in the investigative case file.



Inv. Philip J. Mundy

cc: Det. Mark Smith
Hollywood Police Department

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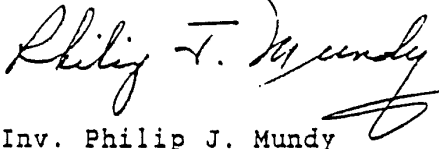
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