
#19 · Interview of Andres O. SOTILLO
(Adam Walsh)

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Investigative Assignment #96-02-262

December 10, 1996

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT #19

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

FROM: PHILIP J. MUNDY
Investigator

SUBJ: Statement of Andres Omar Sotillo

RE: Homicide Investigation of Adam Walsh

ENCL: Transcript of Statement of Andres Omar Sotillo

On September 1, 1981 Det. HOFFMAN reported that he had interviewed a Joyce SOTILLO who informed him that her son, Andrew SOTILLO and her nephew John SOTILLO had been in the Sears store on Monday, July 27, 1981 and had stopped to play the video games. While doing so she advised that the boys had witnessed an "incident" involving two black youths. Mrs. SOTILLO explained that the two boys had returned to Venezuela and were not readily available for questioning. The incident could have been the ejection of four youths by Sears employee Kathy Shaffer-BARRACK. A police interview of the SOTILLO boys was never accomplished.

Mrs. Joyce SOTILLO was found to be currently residing at 600 Greensward Lane, Delray Beach and she was able to forward a message to her son Andres (Andrew) Omar SOTILLO to contact me. Mr. Andres SOTILLO is now living at 909 Cypress Grove Dr., Pompano Beach, phone 979-3148 and was interviewed on December 9, 1996.

The interview revealed that while he and his cousin were in the Sears store on July 27, 1981 and did walk by the video game area they did not stop to play the games, nor did they witness any incident involving any black youths. Mr. SOTILLO reports that later that day they saw a commotion around Sears and he and his cousin went there out of curiosity and he recalls being asked questions by someone from the news media. He also remembers being shown a photograph of the boy he now knows to be Adam Walsh, but he did not recognize the boy in the photo.

Upon returning home Mr. SOTILLO and his cousin Joseph told Mrs. SOTILLO about what was happening at Sears. It was pointed out to Mr. SOTILLO that Det. HOFFMAN's report indicates that the boys claimed to have played video games and witnessed an incident concerning two black youths. Mr. SOTILLO responded that those things never happened but did admit that he and his cousin might have embellished their account to Mrs. SOTILLO.

Mr. SOTILLO advised that he and his cousin were never questioned by anyone from law enforcement but that four attorneys representing Sears did come to Caracas, Venezuela to interview he and his cousin and that they told the attorneys basically what he reports today.

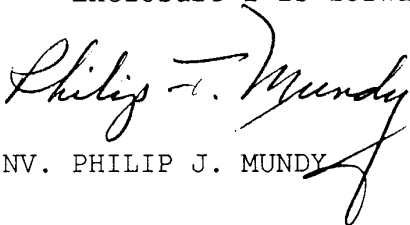
For the record the correct name of Mr. SOTILLO's cousin is John Recado GOMEZ.

According to Andres SOTILLO his cousin resides in Caracas and rarely travels to the United States. He did agree to notify me should his cousin visit this area. An interview with Joseph SOTILLO is not considered essential in view of Andres' statement.

Andres SOTILLO was questioned about the existence of a wig shop in the mall and a playground at David Park. He did not recall a wig shop but did remember that there was a small playground in David Park.

Finally Mr. SOTILLO was asked to view the photo array which contains a photo of suspect Ottis TOOLE. Upon viewing the array Mr. SOTILLO pointed out TOOLE's photo as someone who looks familiar to him as someone he has seen if not in person then perhaps thru the media. Based on Mr. SOTILLO's reaction on viewing the array and his comments it seems more likely that he has seen TOOLE's photo on television at some time.

Enclosure 1 is forwarded for your review and records.


INV. PHILIP J. MUNDY

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

Statement
ANDRES OMAR SOTILLO

December 9, 1996
Inv. Philip Mundy

AS: No because he only has a Visa, you know a student Visa and I think he is going to finish his career in December something like that.

PM: To the best of your knowledge, John normally lives in Venezuela?

AS: Yea, he lives in Venezuela.

PM: Going back to July of 1981, you were at least in the City of Hollywood back then weren't you?

AS: Yes I was.

PM: And do you remember that there was a little boy named Adam Walsh that was kidnapped from the Hollywood Mall?

AS: Yea I remember the case.

PM: When the boy was kidnapped do you remember how you found out about it?

AS: Yea because normally we went to the mall to take lunch and we

PM: Now when you say we you mean your cousin John?

AS: Yea. Normally it was me, my cousin spend two day with me in the camp and we went to the mall to eat lunch and then we go to the camp again to play tennis and we see police, and tv and something like that, and we went with my mother to the mall to make some shopping and then we saw a lot of people, we really don't know what was happening. The next day we went to the mall to take lunch and then we see the police and you know asking questions, the tv asking questions. They stopped us the tv and asked us if we you know normally go to the mall, you know if we know you know Adam Walsh at that time. Well we answered the question and then we go back to our normal life.

PM: Do you remember what you told the TV people?

THIS IS GOING TO BE A WITNESS STATEMENT IN CONNECTION WITH STATE ATTORNEY INVESTIGATION ASSIGNMENT #96-02-262 AND ALSO HOLLYWOOD POLICE DEPARTMENT CASE NUMBER 81-56073. THE FOLLOWING IS GOING TO BE THE STATEMENT OF MR. ANDRES, A-N-D-R-E-S, OMAR SOTILLO, S-O-T-I-L-L-O. A WHITE MALE, DATE OF BIRTH, MARCH 3, 1968 AS GIVEN TO STATE ATTORNEY INVESTIGATOR PHILIP J. MUNDY OF THE STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT. THIS STATEMENT IS BEING TAKEN AT 909 CYPRESS GROVE DRIVE, IN THE CITY OF POMPANO BEACH, BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1996 STARTING AT ABOUT 7:30 PM.

THE FOLLOWING NOTATIONS WILL DISTINGUISH SPEAKERS:

PM: PHILIP MUNDY
AS: ANDRES SOTILLO

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PM: Mr. Sotillo as an investigator with 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 and affirm the statement you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth so help you god?

AS: Yes.

PM: I am going to ask you to really speak up. For the record please state your full name and your date of birth?

AS: My name is Andres Omar Sotillo and I was born in Caracas, Venezuela, 3/3/68, 3 of March, 68.

PM: Do you have a cousin named John?

AS: Yes.

PM: Same last name?

AS: No it is John Recado Gomaz.

PM: And is John living in the United States as far as you know.

AS: Yes he was taken his Bachelor in Daytona. I don't know which University in Daytona.

PM: But he is not currently living in the United States?

AS: No, I really don't remember, I think they show us a photo was from the TV. It was Adam Walsh with a baseball bat and red hat and stripe shirt and they told us if we had seen Adam you know the person that they were showing in the photo. You know it was a very normally if you see a photo like that, you know most of the kids dress like that, so maybe me and my cousin say "well probably". We really didn't saw him.

PM: You really didn't?

AS: No. We didn't saw him.

PM: So you really learned about it the day after he was taken?

AS: Well I you know can't be 100 percent it was the same day they asked. I think it was the same day but late

...

PM: In the evening?

AS: Yea, in the evening.

PM: If it was the same day, when you and your cousin went to the Hollywood Mall on your lunch break, did you happen to have occasion to go through Sears and pass where the video games were?

AS: Yea, normally.

PM: Do you remember seeing anybody at all there?

AS: Well it is very hard. Normally maybe we would see a lot of kids, boys like us, but at that time we wouldn't have stopped to play machine and nothing we have to go back to the camp.

PM: I wanted to ask you specifically, the day that Adam Walsh disappeared and you and your cousin walked through Sears, did you stop and play the video games that day?

AS: No.

PM: Are you sure?

AS: I really don't think so. But I am very sure about it.

PM: Another thing I wanted to ask you about specifically, on that day when you walked through Sears, pass the video games do you remember seeing any black children at the video games?

AS: Well it is very hard. Maybe there was a black children, I don't I really don't remember.

PM: Now you mentioned you talked to the TV people, do you, did you ever have occasion to be interviewed by someone from the Hollywood Police Department?

AS: No never.

PM: Did you ever find out some way that your mother Joyce Sotillo had talked to the Hollywood Police?

AS: Yea, possible. Maybe when we went back to the house, maybe she asked us about it and we told her "well what is the problem Adam Walsh, and maybe she called the police to say that we had been over there and we always being over there. But you know I don't know 100 percent sure that that happened.

PM: Now Hollywood Police didn't interview you? Some people from the TV interviewed you?

AS: Yea.

PM: Did anybody else ever questioned you about the disappearance of Adam Walsh?

AS: No. Well yea. When I was in Caracas about 6 years ago, I don't remember it was a lawyer from Sears that apparently John Walsh, the father of Adam Walsh was trying to sue Sears and they had appeared about 4 lawyers you know. They take a landscape from Sears and ...

PM: They had four lawyers?

AS: Yea there were about 4 lawyers.

PM: You don't remember any of their names do you?

AS: No I don't know any names.

PM: Did they tell you who they were representing?

AS: Yea they were representing Sears because Walsh family were suing them. That is what they told us. And they want us to come here to the State to sue or something like that and we told

PM: You didn't know anything?

AS: No. We don't know Adam Walsh and we didn't saw Adam Walsh that day and we know that the case happened and we were very close to the mall, that is what we told them and well we told them we were not going to come here to testify to something we don't know.

PM: Now when you say we, you are speaking about John?

AS: Yea because John was with me and are parents in the meeting.

PM: And that took place where?

AS: In Venezuela, *The Hilton*, a hotel.

PM: A hotel?

AS: Yea in Caracas.

PM: These men did they call you on the phone and pre-arrange the meeting?

AS: Yea, yea they call our fathers and they told they were going to Venezuela and they want to see us at 9:00.

PM: Do you remember at that meeting if what you and John and the attorneys said was taken down in anyway?

AS: Yea they write it out. And they recorded it.

PM: They had a recorder?

AS: Yea they had a recorder and they have a question you know they asked question and write it out.

PM: They were taking notes?

AS: Yea taking notes.

PM: Was there any stenographer there? You know like a court reporter type?

AS: Yea I think it was.

PM: So there was a record made of what you boys told them?

AS: Yea.

PM: And there was nothing else but a tape recording?

AS: I think it was a tape recording, you know they had a lot of equipment.

PM: They did?

AS: They had it was like a TV projector.

PM: A video?

AS: Yea a video. What I can remember I think they had a lot of

PM: Do you remember about how long you talked to these lawyers?

AS: Yea about 1 hour and a half.

PM: Did you ever hear anymore after that?

AS: No. We never hear of it.

PM: Just a couple more questions, it may not seem important to you but they are to us. You seem you were pretty familiar with the Hollywood Mall, do you remember if there was a wig shop in the Hollywood Mall back then in 1981?

AS: A what?

PM: A wig shop, ladies wigs?

AS: Yea, but I know it was for a man, the left side you know where you go out of Sears, you take a left and on your

left there you know I remember that one but not for a woman's but for a man.

PM: What do you remember about that store?

AS: It has a two chair you know to cut their hair.

PM: Oh a barber shop?

AS: Yea. The barber shop that was what I remember.

PM: But as far as any store that sold wigs?

AS: No.

PM: You don't remember?

AS: No.

PM: The other question I have for you is David Park where you fellows were playing tennis, back in 1981 do you remember if there was a children's playground in David Park?

AS: I really don't remember because we always go into the tennis courts, I think on the right side if you go in there was a little playground for children but I really can't be 100% sure there was like that because we always been in the tennis court but I think it was.

PM: Do you remember if near David Park whether or not there was a small school or church or something like that?

AS: I think it was. Like a school on the right side. Yea I think on the right side of David Park, I'm don't sure.

PM: Not positive?

AS: No.

PM: I understand, it has been 15 years.

AS: And I haven't been over there again.

PM: The other thing I am going ask you Andre, I want to show you what we call a photo array, it is photographs of several, in this case white males, and all I want you to do is take a look at them and tell me if any of these men look familiar to you.

AS: This one looks I don't know familiar, but I know it is from TV or something.

PM: You are pointing to which picture?

AS: Number 5. And I have never seen the other ones.

PM: Do you have any recollection at all where you may have seen that person before?

AS: I really don't know, but the face looks familiar.

PM: Is it a face you remember from the past or from you know recently?

AS: You know I see that face and it look like it is familiar to me I don't know maybe I saw it on TV or I saw it years ago.

PM: OK I am not going to push you on it, but number 5 does look like a face you have seen in the past but you are not sure where?

AS: Yea. I'm not sure.

PM: It could have been on TV?

AS: It could have been a person too, it looks like a familiar face, I don't know where.

PM: Is there anything else about this case that I haven't asked you that you think you should tell me?

AS: Well not really because I told you maybe that the part of Sears that they went to Caracas.

PM: How long did you attend the David Park tennis camp?

AS: We went about 1 month for the summer and we went last 1 year before that and 1 year after that. I think it was one year before that.

PM: Do you remember during and you were a young boy then, while you were at the David Park Tennis Camp did any adults ever approach you and try to get you to go with them or anything of that nature?

AS: No.

PM: Did you ever notice anybody that hung around the park or the Sears area that you felt you know like suspicious?

AS: No.

PM: And you never heard of any of the other boys ever complaining about anybody like that did you?

AS: No.

PM: This will conclude the statement at approximately 7:45 PM.

STATEMENT TERMINATED