

LEGEND:

Q: Tpr. J. W. Fleming

A: Inmate Aaron Jefferson

Q: Today's date is June 23, 1994. It is 3:56 in the afternoon. I'm Trooper J. W. Fleming of the Ohio State Highway Patrol. We're at the Mansfield Correctional Facility Segregation Area. In the room with me is AARON JEFFERSON, inmate #230-397. Is that right Aaron?

A: Yes.

Q: You go by Aaron?

A: I go by A.J.

Q: A.J.?

A: A.J. but my Muslim name is Najeem.

Q: Your what name?

A: Muslim name. It's Najeem.

Q: Can you spell that?

A: N-a-j-e-e-m.

Q: Okay. I received a kite which is an institutional informational letter. Correct?

A: Yes.

Q: From you, dated June 22nd, 1994. I got that this morning. And you sent it to me and in that you're saying, "I would like to speak with you about the riot at S.O.C.F.".

A: Yes.

Q: You wrote this yourself?

A: Yes.

Q: Was -- did anybody coerce you into writing this?

A: No.

Q: "What I'm saying, there were a few murders done that I done and I would like to speak with you about them. Thanks." And then you signed it, Mr. Aaron Jefferson.

A: Yes.

Q: That's you that wrote that?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. Now before we get started, I asked you just a couple questions earlier before I turned the tape on as far as prior convictions and you're spending 4-15 for robbery from Cuyahoga County.

A: Yes.

Q: And you've been in the prison system on that particular charge since 1990.

A: Yes.

Q: And prior to that you had an auto theft where you spent a year and a half at the Old O.S.R.

A: Yes.

Q: You had mentioned something about your attorney earlier when I asked you about coming down here and talking to me. Would you like to explain why you do not wish your attorney present or you do wish to have your attorney present -- the appointed attorney?

A: Well, at this time I would like him to be here, right? But I feel this has to be resolved and truthfully I don't have the time to be waiting on him to come down here or get down here when he wants to get down here. I need him like right now, you know A.S.A.P. Since that can't be done, then I'll deal with it right now as go on and you know sometime in the near future, you know, we get him...

Q: Well, before we go any farther, we are bound by certain rules also. And for you to use the excuse, and I say "excuse", that may not be an excuse -- but for you to use the excuse that yes you would like to have your attorney here before questions, especially since you're going to admit to some murders and you say you can't get him down here A.S.A.P., I don't know how good -- or how well that's going to be taken by people later on. Because, yeah, we could probably get an attorney here. And if you want to talk with an attorney present, you state that now and we'll not go any farther. We will get an attorney here for you.

Q: When's the last you've talked to him?

A: (Long pause).

Q: Probably, correspondence wise or in person?

A: I spoke to him one time in person. That was the last time I seen him. And correspondence was...

Q: When was that in person?

A: Maybe uh, in person was -- I'd give or take 7-8 months ago.

Q: You haven't talked to him for 7-8 months?

A: Yes.

Q: In person?

A: In person or by correspondence.

Q: Okay. Now once we've started into this interview, if you want to stop all you need to do is say, "That's it. I'm done until I talk to my attorney". And that will be the end of the interview.

A: Uh, huh.

Q: Do you understand all the rights?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay, so you do want to talk to me?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. You indicated also that you were a, uh, B.G.D. member.

A: Yes.

Q: And your rank, if there was such, or your position in the B.G.D. was more of an enforcer...we have an interview...

Another Voice: Tpr. Fleming, (inaudible) on the phone. What's that number there?

Q: Okay, I'm going to shut this off for a second. (TAPE TURNED OFF). Okay, we're back on tape. We were off for about 2-3 minutes for an interruption, phone call. Now you asked me a question while we were off tape and what was that again?

- A: I was asking that once this is -- once we've done with discussions and statements and whatever, what do you do with it -- where do you go with it?
- Q: Where I go with it is to the prosecutor, uh, Mark Piepmeier who is handling the case at S.O.C.F. or one of his assistants, Bill Breyer -- one of those particular people down there. This is presented to him. He gets the whole thing. He makes the decisions if there's any decisions to be made. So, are you asking for anything? Do you want anything?
- A: As I said before, before the tape was played that all I'm asking is that on these particular cases that I'm going to talk about that the guys that's being charged with them, you know what I'm saying, be left alone because they didn't do it. See what I'm saying?
- Q: What you're trying to tell me is there are certain people that are charged with incidents, crimes, that occurred at S.O.C.F. that you know for a fact were not involved in it...
- A: Yes. Yes.
- Q: And your reason for coming forward to us now is to clear their name?
- A: Yes. I mean, I -- I could have just sat on back and just let it go, right? I could have went on sat back and let it go and whoever was charged would be charged and whatever happened would have happened and that would have been it. I could have did it that way. But, no, that's not the type of individual I am, right? You know what I'm saying? I did it and I don't have no problem admitting that I did it, right? I guess if I didn't like the person or you know what I'm saying, didn't care, yeah, I could have said "Okay, yeah, well you know, oh man I'm so sorry for you" and just walked on about my business.
- Q: How much education have you had?
- A: All the way through the 12th.
- Q: You graduated high school?
- A: Nope.
- Q: You did not graduate but you went through high school?
- A: Yeah, I went through high school.
- Q: Okay, you under any medication now?

A: No.

Q: So you're doing this of your own free will and understand what you're telling us?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay, as I mentioned before you're saying "a few murders" and there were a few down there, and you're going to admit from what your kite says, you're going to admit to being involved in, participating, ordering, whatever the case might be and what I'd like you to do is to just start -- wherever you want to start -- you can make it as brief, you can make it as detailed but you continue and whichever one you start with, tell me everything you want to tell me about that one before you go on to the next one, okay?

A: Okay, well one I'm going to start with a guy I didn't know personally, like I say I'd just come out to population a week before the riot situation at S.O.C.F. occurred so me knowing him personally, no. But it was a guy named Darrell Depina. Darrell Depina. Uh, the best way I can describe this guy is 1) I knew he worked in C corridor where the Captain's office was and around where the commissary. He was a porter, he was sweeping and mopping in that corridor. Every now and then sometimes you see him with a -- a like a wild looking beard, scraggly looking beard.

Q: Okay, we know who Darrell Depina is. Do you want to admit to that particular murder? And how it happened?

A: I'm going to --

Q: Or do you want to lead up to it with something else?

A: I'm -- Darrell Depina. It occurred, it took place in L-6, cell 60.

Q: L-6, 60?

A: Yes. Uh, I heard -- like I said, I heard through the grape vine that he was a snitch, institution police or whatever you like to call it. And, uh, they said that, uh, he had to go. We was told that he had to go.

Q: Now who said that?

A: I just heard. I ain't going to say who said it. I heard that he had to go.

Q: Let me ask you one question before we go any further. Have you been charged with anything out of the Lucasville riot as yet?

A: Well, not yet.

Q: Okay, you've not yet been served with any indictments?

A: No, not yet.

Q: You say, "not yet".

A: Not yet.

Q: Okay. Tell us about Darrell Depina.

A: Okay, he was doing, like I say in L-6, cell 60, you know what I'm saying? I was told that he was a snitch, you know what I'm saying? A tattle-tailer, he liked to talk to much to the wrong people. So I went in there...

Q: Were you alone?

A: Yeah. By myself. Went in there and I just took care of my business, you know what I'm saying? I ain't going to go too far into detail as how I did it.

Q: I want you to go into detail.

A: I went in there, I had a (inaudible) - institution knife, a shank. An institutional knife.

Q: What was it made of?

A: Metal.

Q: Okay, what did it look like?

A: It was -- I got these handcuffs on so I can't really tell you.

Q: Approximately how big?

A: I'd say, I'd say about that big.

Q: And you're measuring out at least 12 inches.

A: I'm saying that's about 12 inches -- I'd give or take -- it was a pretty long piece of steel. I didn't make it.

Q: Was it flat?

A: It was, it was like maybe about that thick?

Q: And you're showing me about a quarter of an inch thick.

A: Yeah, about that thick.

Q: Was it flat?

A: Yeah, it was flat.

Q: Did it have a point on it?

A: Yeah, it had a point on it. It was given to me, I didn't make it myself though...

Q: Okay, it was given to you.

A: It was given to me. And, uh, I picked up me a baseball bat, a metal -- I say aluminum baseball bat. Okay? I went in there, I went in there just -- the first thing I did was I hit him with a baseball bat.

Q: Where did you hit him?

A: I tried to hit him in the head but I believe that I hit him in the shoulder, I believe I missed the head.

Q: Go ahead.

A: So I tried to take his head off but I couldn't do it, so I must have hit him in the shoulder.

Q: Was he fighting back in any way?

A: Yeah, he tried to fight back and I just missed -- went to stabbing him.

Q: Did you knock him down when you hit him with the ball bat?

A: No, I didn't knock him down, he jumped up under the bed.

Q: He went under the bed?

A: He run up under the bed.

Q: Was he in there by himself?

A: He was in there by himself.

Q: Okay, so you hit him once with a ball bat...

A: Hit him once with a ball bat.

Q: ...and you was aiming for his head...

A: Aiming for the head and I missed him, got his shoulder, he ducked up under the bed.

Q: Which shoulder did you get?

A: It would be the left because it was coming -- L 60, cell 60 standing, it would be left.

Q: Now where was Darrell Depina when you went in his cell?

A: It was about -- about four feet from standing from the window.

Q: Was he facing you?

A: No, not -- he wasn't facing me, he was facing the bed. He was in the process of doing some packing or doing something. He had a lot of stuff on the bed that I know...

Q: He was standing there?

A: Yeah, he was standing -- taking care of whatever he was doing.

Q: Okay, so you went in with the ball bat...

A: Yeah, went in with the ball bat cause the door was already open.

Q: Okay, hit him -- he went down...

A: Hit him, swung at his head, he duckted [sic] -- I missed the head, I did miss the head. I got the shoulder somewhat and he went down under the bed.

Q: Okay, then what happened?

A: Then what I did I grabbed the bed, tilted the bed straight up, tilted the bed straight up from the end straight up and pushed it towards the wall.

Q: So you put it on it's end?

A: Yeah, put it on it's end -- standing it up straight up. I went at him and started stabbing him.

Q: Now where did you stab him?

A: I stabbed him in the mid-section.

Q: In the back, or in the front?

A: Mid-section right here.

Q: In the front.



A: I believe I got him a couple times in the chest, if I ain't mistaken I believe I did get him in the chest. Once that was done...

Q: How many times did you stab him?

A: I'll say I got him at least -- he got a -- he got a good hit -- I'd say I got a good 15 in on him. At the most. I left cause he at that time to me he wasn't breathing. I left him (inaudible), I left.

Q: You were the only one in there?

A: Yeah I was the only one. I left.

Q: Okay.

A: Then later on that evening though I seen him in the hallway and they was sending bodies out, I seen him in the hallway.

Q: Was he in any different shape than when you saw him when you left L-6, 60?

A: No, not -- not really. I ain't going to say that cause I really didn't pay too much attention. I just hadn't seen -- the reason I notice him because he had on a certain kind of tennis shoes.

Q: What kind of tennis shoes?

A: They was -- they was black. What kind they was I can't recall but they was black tennis shoes. Kind of new so first ones I'd seen in a institution so that's how I could see who he was.

Q: So he had the same tennis shoes on when you saw him being carried out down at the end of the hallway or at least...

A: He was in the hallway he had the tennis shoes on. Now if they wasn't on his feet when he got out there then I don't what happened to them, you know what I'm saying?

Q: Did you hit him in the head at any time?

A: No, I didn't hit him -- I tried to hit him but I missed.

Q: Okay but as far as you know he was not hit in the head?

A: Not by me.

Q: Not by you.

A: That's all I can say.

Q: All you did is you hit him, knocked him down and you stabbed him about 15 times in the torso area.

A: Yeah and I left.

Q: And you used this uh piece of steel that was flat, about 12 inches long -- how wide was it?

A: About that wide?

Q: Okay, you're giving me about an inch wide?

A: Yeah, bout that wide.

Q: And about an eighth of an inch thick or a quarter of an inch thick? Okay, do you know where it came from?

A: No. I knew it was a pretty (inaudible), it was a piece of weapon and there was a riot going on so I took it.

Q: You found it somewhere or somebody give...

A: It was given to me.

Q: Okay, did someone tell you to go in there and get Depina?

A: No, I just heard. Heard it. Heard about it.

Q: You heard he was a snitch...

A: Heard he was a snitch and I heard some guys already -- somebody was already planning on getting him anyway, right?

Q: Okay. How soon into the riot did this happen?

A: Between 3:15 and 4:00.

Q: You remembered the time?

A: About that time because when I come in the building cause I was on the rec yard. I come in the building, I come in the building -- when I seen it jumping off, I come in the building and at that time it was about no later than about going on -- about 3:00 at the time. Things happened so fast, like I say I give or take about an hour. I give or take about an hour. I'd say it was between 3:15 to 4:00.

Q: Somewhere between 3:15 and 4:00 is when you went in and killed Darrell Depina?

A: Yeah, that's when -- that's when a lot, or most of the killings happened -- happened around between that time.

Q: Okay, do you want to tell me anything more about Darrell?

A: That's about all I can tell. I didn't really know the guy. I knew, like I said, he was about 5'8" -- 5'8" to 5'11"; he weighed maybe 150 to 160 pounds, you know what I'm saying?

Q: Okay, did he live in L-6, 60?

A: I live in L-6 and I never -- I had never seen the dude in there. I seen him -- I remember seeing him in the hallway a couple of times before the riot. I lived in L-6, cell 24 matter of fact.

Q: How did you know he was in L-6, 60 then?

A: Like I said I heard the rumor that some guys was -- other peoples was going to hit him. And they was talking about what cell he was in so I sent straight to the cell. All I heard he was a snitch and he was in L-6, cell 60 and that's all I needed to know and that's where I went.

Q: And you done this on your own?

A: Done this on my own accord.

Q: Nobody told you to do it?

A: Nope.

Q: Okay, that's Darrell Depina. Now what might happen here is you may be questioned by one of the investigators that's handling this particular case. Are you willing to do that?

A: Uh, huh.

Q: That's more familiar with the case than what I am?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Uh, some other one. I'm going to tell you like this -- there's really three. There's one that I'm not going to speak about at this time, now that's the one I ain't going to speak about until my lawyer is present.

Q: Why's that? If you're going to tell me about all these other murders, why are you going to save one?