

IN THE UNITED STATE DISTRICT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI
AT KANSAS CITY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA -- PLAINTIFF

VS.

96-00085-04-CR-W-9-8GEROGE

FRANK SHEPARD

DEFENDANT

EARL SHEPARD

DEFENDANT

DARLENE EDWARDS

DEFENDANT

BRYAN SHEPARD

DEFENDANT

RICHARD BROWN

DEFENDANT

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF MISSOURI)

)

ss.

COUNTY OF CEDAR)

Comes now affiant Becky Edwards being duly sworn on my oath and state. I am not a party to the above action and I am over the age of 18 years. I currently reside in El Dorado Springs, (Cedar County) Missouri. The following affidavit is offered freely and voluntarily by me and done so without the threat of coercion or promises made to me in return for attesting to the facts stated herein, as I represent those facts to be truth and nothing but the truth with this writing.

1.) At the time of the explosion that killed six Kansas City firefighters on Nov. 29, 1988, I was 11 years old and living on 83rd Street just off of Brooklyn Ave. in the Marlborough section of Kansas City, Missouri. I lived there with my mother, Darlene Edwards, and her boyfriend, Frank Sheppard, both of whom, along with Bryan Sheppard, Skip Sheppard, and Richard Brown would be indicted eight years later, in 1995, for causing the explosion that killed the firefighters.

2. At the time my mother Darlene Edwards was arrested on a federal drug charge in February of 1995, I was living at 2020 Maddi in the Marlborough neighborhood of Kansas City, Mo., with Michelle Carter, who was acting as my guardian, and her young daughter. After Michelle Carter and I had a falling out, I moved in with my father, Steven Edwards, in Kansas City, Mo. Due to the argument, Mrs. Carter refused to allow me to

take my belongings with me such as my stereo, CDs, clothes, and various personal effects.

3.) While I was living at Mrs. Carter's house, ATF Agent David True and one or two other agents came by to see me. I did not agree to talk to them and they left. Agent True and the agents, one I remember by the name of Ludwig, began coming by my father's house to see me. They wanted to question me about the explosion that killed six Kansas City firefighters in late 1988. The first two times the three ATF agents came to question me I did not let them in and told them that I knew nothing about the involvement of anyone in the Firefighters Case. I told them that the explosion had happened over six years ago when I was only 11 years old and that I couldn't remember anything worth mentioning to them.

4.) A few weeks later when the ATF agents again returned to my father's house to see me I decided I would let them into the living room in an attempt to get rid of them once and for all. As a minor, I wanted my father to be present during the questioning but the agents said that he if stayed in the living room that he too would become involved in the Firefighters Case. My father did not want to get involved and went down to the basement.

When the agents first came into the living room, they noticed that I had a couple of marijuana roaches stuck inside the cellophane of my cigarette pack. They asked me what they were. Agent True said the ATF knew what kind of life I lived, that I smoked marijuana and took Meth. He said the ATF could make my drug use "hard or easy" on me depending on whether I cooperated with them. Agent True said that if I cooperated with him he also would intervene to help me get my belongings back from Mrs. Carter. I talked with the agents for about 10 minutes. I told them the truth again: I did not know anything about the explosion or who may have been involved in it.

The agents then changed the subject to my mother and Frank Sheppard's drug use and petty thievery. They said it was important that I told them something about them. Agent True told me to consider that my mother had not been a very good mother to me and had allowed me to suffer abuse from Frank Sheppard all those years. Agent True said he wanted me admit that my mom and Frank Sheppard were drug users. He said my admitting that they were drug dependent might actually help them gain sympathy with a jury. Agent True told me he knew I did not want my mother in jail and that my admitting she was a drug user would make it easier on her.

Because the ATF agents had made me aware that my drug use could be a legal problem for me and because of Agent True's assurance that he could help me get my belongings back, I agreed to admit that my mother and Frank Sheppard were drug users and petty thieves. I did not feel as though I was admitting anything that was not common knowledge in our neighborhood and with the police and ATF.

At the conclusion of this interview, I now assumed that I had given them what they wanted from me and that they would leave me alone.

5.) During one of my many interviews with Agent True, I informed him of a suspect I had heard had been involved in the explosions. I do not believe that any investigator ever interviewed that suspect.

6.) On another occasion, Agent True informed me that a friend of mine from school had told ATF agents that I had admitted my mother was responsible for the blast that killed the six firefighters. This I knew was a bald-faced lie because I had never mentioned anything about this case to anyone at my school.

7.) Before the Grand Jury was convened to consider indictments in the Firefighters Case, I was ordered downtown for a meeting with Agent True and other ATF agents. At this meeting, Agent True encouraged me to say that I had overheard the above named defendants having a meeting at my mother's house where they conspired to rob the Highway 71 construction site.

Agent True was intent on me saying that they had this meeting the night before or in the days immediately preceding the explosions at the construction site. I told Agent True that the above named defendants or any other of my mother's friends and associates never had what could be called "meetings." When people did come over and sit around the house on the kitchen table, it was to drink and to get high on drugs, in other words, to party. I told Agent True that the cast of characters appearing at my mother's house was ever changing. I told Agent True that it was not unusual for some of the named defendants as well as various others, including two I named (stepbrother Ronnie Edwards and Tommie Lee King) to on occasion discuss possible future thefts at a variety of locations, including construction sites, although not the Highway 71 construction site.

Agent True pressed me to say that I had overheard discussions of planned thefts at the Highway 71 construction site. I told Agent True again that I never heard any of the named defendants or any of the others who gathered from time to time at my mother's house specifically discuss the Highway 71 construction site where the explosions occurred.

I also told Agent True that I had not heard any discussions about stealing any items on the night before or in the days leading up to the explosions at the Highway 71 site. What I did tell Agent True was that there was a steady stream of people in and out of my mother's house who were drug users and petty thieves. They did from time to time discuss potential thefts, but that I never heard any discussion of a theft at the Highway 71 site.

I also kept reminding Agent True that he was asking me about events that occurred over six years ago when I had been only 11 years old and that I really couldn't remember any but vague generalities about what was actually going on at my mother's house. I insisted to Agent True that I remembered nothing specific about any of the named defendants' involvement in the Firefighters Case. No matter what I told Agent True, it was never enough to satisfy him. He always wanted me to say more than I actually knew about this case.

- 8.) Prior to my Grand Jury appearance, as a way to try to get me to say more than I knew about this case, Agent True told me that it would be good for the above named defendants to be convicted and spend some time in prison so that they could get off drugs and straighten their lives out. Agent True also told me that if the above named defendants were acquitted by a jury that there would be people out to get them, wanting to shoot them, and that they would be safer in prison.
- 9.) Agent True had made me very aware that he wanted to solve this case because he said he was about to retire and wanted it over before he retired. He told me he very badly wanted to be able to say that he solved the case. Agent True always left me the impression that he wanted a notch on his gun no matter what the truth was.
- 10.) Although I told Agent True that certain of the named defendants were prone to bragging about a variety of things, including theft, I specifically told him that I never heard any of the name defendants speak or brag about their involvement in the explosions or brag that they knew who was involved.
- 11.) As the downtown interview continued, Agent True, without informing me beforehand, brought my stepbrother Ronnie Edwards into the room with me. It became clear that Agent True was pressuring Ronnie, as he had been pressuring me, to make damaging statements about my mother and the other named defendants. Agent True using pressure on Ronnie made me furious. Agent True made it clear that Ronnie's past drug use could be used against him and that he risked never being able to see his son Derrick again.
- Agent True said he was bringing Ronnie and me together so that we could get our stories straight. They wanted us to talk about a meeting at a gas station that I did not know anything about and about the theft of some walkie-talkies from the Highway 71 construction site. I told them I had heard talk of stolen walkie-talkies, but I did not know where they had come from or when they were stolen.
- 12.) I was terrified to testify before the Grand Jury. I do not know how Prosecutor Becker got me to say what I testified to there. I was just too scared to disagree with anything he said I had told the ATF agents in all those interviews. I was completely intimidated by the entire situation, particularly by the fear that if I did not say what Agent True wanted me to say that I would be subject to drug charges or other charges involved in my not cooperating in the investigation.
- 13.) After the indictments against the five named defendants, ATF Agents David True and Ludwig, accompanied by camera crews from local TV stations, came by the QuikTrip where I worked. They told me they were going to "keep an eye on me." The negative attention this visit generated at my work place caused me to quit my job.
- 14.) To try to get away from ATF agents who kept contacting me over and over, including the contact that caused me to quit my job, I moved to Adrian, Missouri in the

period leading up to trial. While in Adrian, I suspect that ATF agents spied on me there. One morning I saw footprints in the snow outside all of the ground floor windows of the house. When I asked neighbors about who had been around, they described what sounded like ATF agents to me.

15.) At the Federal Courthouse on the day I was to testify at the trial of my mother and the other named defendants, Agent True put me and about five or six other witnesses in a room and showed each of us a separate stack of documents he said had been compiled from our previous interviews with ATF agents and the police. Prior to that time, I had not seen any of these documents nor had I ever signed any statements.

Agent True did not ask me to sign any of those statements that day. Instead he told me and the others to go over the documents before us and to line out or highlight any statements that we did not actually make or which any of us thought misrepresented what we had said. I asked that my guardian, Michelle Carter, be present while I reviewed these documents, but after a while Agent True made her leave the room. I remember it was a large stack of documents and that I highlighted quite a large number of sentences that I designated as either I had not said or that I thought were untrue. I remember seeing other witnesses also highlighting their statements.

16.) The day I took the stand at the trial I did not know what I was doing. I was so frightened and intimidated by this experience that I do not remember anything I said.

Further, affiant saith naught.

The facts stated herein are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Signed on this day of October, 2005, in El Dorado Springs, (Cedar County) Missouri, and done so under the penalty of perjury.


Becky Edwards


Witness

11-06-05
(Date)