

An Abandoned Line of Inquiry

Relevant Transcripts:

Interview #1 - 5:00 p.m., August 1, 2008

Sure, I knew the kid. Well as anyone around here. Well as you could, I suppose, what with him being so new in town. He came in every couple a nights, enough to be friendly with the staff but not be too familiar to the patrons. Heavy drinker? I'll tell ya, he'd have enough to slur up his speech damn near every time he came in - get a little tipsy, laughing more than was funny - but I never did see him lose a game a pool. Not when there was money on it. He got along with everyone well enough. When he wasn't takin' their money, that is. Why'd he do it? Damned if I know. Doesn't make a lick of sense to any of us.

Interview #5 - 6:36 p.m., August 1, 2008

Oh, I knew him alright. How do you say it - *biblically*? Kind of gives me the shivers now though.

He seemed normal enough, at the time, just a guy looking for some fun. Cute, too. You know the type - all cocky smiles and wise cracks. He knew how to show a girl a good time, though.

Why do *I* think? Honey, I'm really not the person to be asking. We weren't exactly up all night talking out our feelings.

I'll tell you something though. When we were . . . well, when we were back in his motel room, I noticed something. He had a bunch of scars, old ones, on his chest and back. Do you think that means something? I figured at the time that he'd probably been in a car accident or something. Not that I spared a lot of thought on it, at the time. But maybe, I dunno, maybe he had a violent past or something? Like, maybe he was in a gang, or mixed up with criminals. I hear the victim was an out-of-towner too. Maybe he was some loan shark or mob-guy coming to collect? Maybe even a hit-man?

I tell you, it gives me the shivers.

Interview #12 - 10:11 p.m., August 1, 2008

Did I know him? Son, you think I keep track of every drifter passes through this place? Hey payed in cash to the end of the month, gave me the name Bill Grimm. Never saw heads or tails of him after that. Yes, he was alone. No, I didn't see him take anyone to his room. Don't you think I got better things to do then go snooping in my client's business? I don't wanna know what they're up to in there, as long as they're not beating the place up any. I suppose this one won't be coming back for his security deposit though, will he?

Yeah, I was the one let the authorities in. It was a mess in there - furniture overturned, crap thrown all over the place. You know I'm gonna hafta pay for most of that, too. The guy was on the floor. Wasn't much blood around. I heard the investigator say it was head trauma. That's all; they kicked me out then. So are you gonna rent a room, or are you gonna leave me to my business?

Interview # 14 - 4:46 p.m., August 2, 2008

The Evergreen Motel? I've never stayed there in my life, sir, you must be mistaken. No, that Friday night I was out of town on business. You're mistaken, sir. I was out of town, you can ask anyone. My wife would say the same thing.

Okay, alright! Don't be like that. Let me buy you a drink, we can talk this out. I'll tell you whatever you want to know, just keep your, uh, *findings* to yourself. Right.

I was outside the door having a smoke when he pulled up. The guy was driving like a maniac, too. I don't know, some old beat up rust-bucket of a Chevy. What's the one with the little deer on the side? Impala, yeah. It was black. No, he wasn't alone; he had a kid with him. Yeah, a kid. I don't know, looked to be about thirteen, I guess. Skinny, with a mop of brown hair. I don't know how tall he was, I never saw him standing up. He was asleep in the front seat, and the guy left him there while he went to pay for the room. Well, I went back inside then, but I assume they went into the room together.

Oh God, don't say things like that, it doesn't bear thinking about. I never heard a thing, that's all I know. We square now? I gave you your story. Just, keep my name out of it.

Interview #15 - 4:59 p.m., August 2, 2008

Psst. Hey, buddy. Over here. Yeah, you wanna here this alright. Oh yeah. Well, I dunno though, my throat's a little dry for talking . . .

Thanks. Okay, get this. The guy wasn't just some run-of-the-mill whack job. He was - okay, wait for it - a *Satanist*. Yeah. Oh yeah, he was working some voodoo blood sacrifice. Trying to raise evil forces of doom, maybe even the devil himself. Hey, why aren't you writing this down? This is some serious shit. The guy at the morgue is an uncle of a friend of mine. He said that - get this - the guy wasn't stabbed by just any old knife. It was a silver knife - you know, silver, like what they use on werewolves and stuff? Oh yeah. Right through the heart. And there was, like, symbols all over him. *Pentagons*. Pentagrams. Whatever. Anyway, he was totally working some black magic mojo. I'm serious. You can put that in your story.

What do you mean he wasn't stabbed? . . . Oh.

Interview #22 - 5:15 p.m., August 3, 2008

You again, huh? You still asking after that killing? Couldn't find anything? I told you already, none of us here knows a thing about it. Couldn't have seen it coming.

A kid? Seemed a little young for that, really. Not the fatherly type. A brother, you think? He never mentioned one. Then again, he wasn't really one for sharing. Oh, he was plenty talkative, could damn near yap your ear off with a few drinks in 'im. But that was just talk. Jokes an' yarns an' colourful stories - nothing real or personal. He played that real close to the vest, far as I could tell. I don't reckon any of us knew the real Billy, or whoever he was. Guess that's how we never saw it comin'.

If he did have a brother, I never saw or heard heads or tails of the kid. Not like anyone could bring a minor to this fine establishment anyway. Of course not. But if there was one, where d'you suppose he's been all the time? You sure he came to town with a kid?

Interview #25 - 10:00 a.m., August 4, 2008

Do you have something to check out? Oh wait, you're that journalist looking into the Evergreen Motel Murder, right? Yeah, right around the corner. Isn't that scary? I might have walked by a crazed killer on the way to work and not even noticed!

Yeah, there was a boy who matched that description. Used to come in a lot this past month, sometimes for hours at a time. No, not anymore. I guess having a murder 'round the corner's a real business killer. Wait, you don't think he had something to do with this? He was a real sweet kid; barely heard a peep out of him. Cute little thing too. Well, not so little, but you know. No, he always came in alone. You think he knew the killer? Like, they were related or something?

What he told me was that his parents sent him to stay with his grandma for the summer, and he didn't know anyone else here. I felt sorry for the little thing, sitting there all alone. He took some books, but I guess he's gone home now and forgot. At least, I thought he was gone home. He's not missing, is he? I'd call his nan, but he never did tell me her name.

Wait, you're saying he came into town *with* the killer? So he probably doesn't have a grandmother in town, huh? Imagine, a nice kid like that being caught up in something like this. I sure hope he's alright.

Interview #29 - 4:17 p.m., August 4, 2008

I sold him gas once, you know. Guess it was when he first got into town. Filled the tank up and got nearly as much junk-food as he could carry. He was a nice guy, too, seemed real happy. Didn't seem like a killer. I guess they never do though, right?

He came in a bunch of times after that, it was always on Joanie's shift though, so you'd have to ask her. But I was the only one working on the night in question. No, I was re-stocking shelves, away from the window. Imagine, something like that going down right across the street and I never heard or saw a thing. Hey, don't go away. You see that camera we got pointed at the pumps? Picks up everything that goes on in that motel parking lot. Hold your horses, buddy, I have the tape to the cops. Just, not before I looked at it myself.

Okay, So at about quarter past ten you can see the truck pull in, the victim's truck. He gets out and starts banging on doors like a madman. On the third one he pushes his way inside and shuts the door behind him. You can't see who answered though, video didn't catch it. And that's the last you see of the guy. Well, I guess that's the last he was seen alive.

So there's nothing for around ten, fifteen minutes, then Grimm starts ambling up the drive. He gets to the edge of the parking lot, stops dead - sees the truck, I guess - then flat-out runs into the room. Not even five minutes later he's rushing out carrying a duffel, kid in tow. Yeah, probably about thirteen. They get in the car and haul ass out of the parking lot, towards the highway I guess. Fleeing the scene. They still haven't found the guy, have they?

What? Oh. Joanie's in at five.

Interview #30 - 5:01 p.m., August 4, 2008

I don't think he did it. No, he wouldn't do that. He was a good guy. I mean, Maurice said there was a teenage kid on the tape, how do we know *he* didn't do it? The

poor guy just probably had to cover up for his screw-up kid brother or something, and now he's got the cops after him. It's a tragedy, really.

He used to come in a lot. Every since he got into town a month ago. He was real sweet. Used to stick around and chat for a bit after he got his gas, or his beer, or whatever he was buying that day. Yeah, junk food a lot of the time. Guy had a sweet tooth, I guess.

He came in last about three days before the murder. No, he didn't seem any different. I guess he didn't know he was about to get framed for homicide. Does it really matter what he bought? I don't see why we need to analyze every detail of the guy's life just because the town's decided he's a killer. Okay, Fine. Quarter of a tank of gas and a strawberry slushy. Are you gonna put that in your story? That he's clearly a murderer because he has a taste for strawberries, or something? You people are sick.

Interview #33 - 11:12 p.m., August 4, 2008

Can I help you? *What?* You're *serious*. I work a station on a busy stretch of highway like this, and you seriously want me to remember a *Chevy Impala*, of all things. Do you know how many of those there are driving around out there? This place is self-serve, anyway. How am I gonna remember a car from five days ago, if I didn't even see it?

Of course I didn't see that guy. I watch the news. If I'd seen that guy, I wouldn't be keeping it to myself waiting for some crappy reporter to ask me about it. I think you're barking up the wrong tree.

A kid, you say? Thirteen? Well you're lucky, fella, we don't get a lot of thirteen-year-olds buying gas around here. I remember a kid like you described. Shifty little thing. Grabbed some food and paid for the gas and got out of here without ever looking me in the eye. *What? Yeah*, like I spend my time memorizing how much gas everyone buys. Sure.

How far could they get? What does this look like to you, physics class? Give me a break.

Phone Interview #17 - 9:23 a.m., August 5, 2008

Hello? No, sir, we haven't had anybody under that name recently. Ran away from home? That's terrible! Okay, you just describe him to me and I'll ask around.

. . . 13, Skinny, long brown hair. Okay, I got it. Just let me put you on hold for a minute.

Hey, I have good news for you! He was here, about five days ago. He left first thing the next morning though, didn't even check out. Oh, he signed with the name Chuck Sheen, if that helps you any. I hope you find him!

Phone Interview #41 - 12:31 p.m., August 5, 2008

Daybreak Inn, how may I help you? I'm sorry sir, there's no Chuck Sheen here on the registry . . . But there is, however, someone under the name Estevez. Okay, I'll transfer the call.

. . . It looks like they're not answering. Can I take a message? No? Alright, goodbye.

Interview #34 - 3:04 p.m., August 5, 2008

Um, Hi. Who are you? Yeah, that's my brother's car. Did he park it wrong or something?

. . . I fell down. *Yes*, on my face. I'm a real klutz, okay? Listen, are you selling something? Because we're not buying. No, my brother isn't home. You can't talk to my father, he's dead. Jeeze, what kind of a question is that? It's none of your business. Do you just go door-to-door asking people about their deceased parents, or something? Get bent.

. . . No, I've never been to that town before. He hasn't either. I'm positive. We're just here on summer break, from, uh, Idaho. Never even been to that county. Yes, I'm sure. Okay, how the hell would I know anything about some hick-town murder the next state over, in a place I've never even been to? You're nuts. I'm not answering any more questions. I think you should leave. Now.

"Who was that?"

"Somebody asking about Dad."

"*What?*"

"We gotta get outta here. I think he was a reporter."

"Jesus! You didn't tell him anything, did you?"

"Of course I didn't tell him anything! But he's seen my face. He knows we're here. Heck, he probably wrote down the new plates."

"Alright. Take everything, we don't wanna be leaving anything behind that'll tip them off. I'll cover the plates, we can probably make it to at least the next town over before we gotta stop and fill up. We gotta hurry."

"Wait. I'm thinking, Don, maybe we shouldn't run. Maybe we shouldn't have run to begin with."

"What, so I can go to jail?"

"No! I mean, we could explain everything to them; how you were only trying to stop him from . . . It was in defense, man, they can't arrest you for that!"

"Yeah, and then what? Assuming they believe us. What happens when they wanna know who we are? When they wanna know how old I am, how much money I make, how I plan to support a fourteen-year-old without a job? You want that?! You want them to take-- What was that?"

"*What?*"

"Jesus, Simon, close the window! There's somebody out there."