Transcript

Vanessa A. Smith

Jörg Weiß

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*-file 1-*

J: I’ve started the recording now

V: OK

J: … and so…we are on tape now. You can go for it.

V: OK.

J: If you want to you can basically disable the camera, so we don’t have the issues with the internet connection.

V: That would be great

J: I’ll do the same. I’ll be on audio only.

V: (inaudible), if the sound goes out, or if I start to become garbled, you just tell me.

J: Yeah, at the moment, it’s fine.

V: My name is Vanessa Smith Brown. Uhm … Vanessa Smith in ’99 and 2003. And, uhm, I just wanted to say that (inaudible).

J: Now we have an audio issue. Now it went like woawoawoa … Just restart the sentence.

V: OK. Let me try on the phone instead of the speaker. Maybe that will work.

J: Now I hear you clearly again.

V: OK. Uhm … so I just want to say first that nobody is forcing me to talk to you. Nobody has influenced me to talk to you. Nobody has told me what to say to you. I’m doing this of my own free will.

J: OK, great.

V: Uhm …I have tried to reach out to Scott’s lawyers. I feel very scared … uhm … about going on the record with any of this, because the district’s attorney’s office made it clear to me that they could come back at any time and charge me with accessory or recharge me with, you know, (?this kind of thing?) … and that makes me really nervous. Uhm. I’ve tried to reach out to his lawyers about getting some kind of representation for myself, so I’ll be protected. I just want someone looking out for my interest.

J: Yeah.

V: So that I can tell my side of things. Uhm … His lawyers send a private investigator to speak with me and I spoke with the private investigator a couple of times and basically he just said: “Well, the lawyers said they can’t help you to get an attorney, so maybe you can hire one. I don’t have the money to hire an attorney, so that’s not gonna happen. Uhm … I started wanting to do this … I was actually gonna do this and not even talk to Scott at all … uhm … His daughter, Jordan, I knew her when she was a baby and I used to baby sit her and …uhm … I just got out of prison in July and the place I was living, Jordan lived in the same neighborhood … and … we started up our friendship again …and I can’t sit there anymore and not tell what happened. … and not tell … and what … the law enforcement did to me. Uhm … I had to try to do something.

J: Yeah.

V: For her sake. And … and then … you know … I don’t want them to kill Scott. That’s … like … I never wanted that. This is just horrible. It’s like a nightmare. And more so for him … But basically, law enforcement made it where I had to either chose Scott or my son who at the time was three years old. Uhm .. and so I chose my son.

J: Yeah.

V: They made it, you know, they made it a choice for e that I could have one or the other, I couldn’t have both … and uhm … without going into too much detail, you know, I’m not sure what happened, that night. I know that they wanted Scott. They wanted him bad. They wanted to put him away for the rest of his life … and Montgomery county also wanted a death penalty case, cause they had never had one. Uhm … And I feel like they used me … they used a lot of people … and they just wanted him, they didn’t look at anybody else … for the murder … uh … Also, I am legally blind and back then … my eyesight was a little better, but I wouldn’t wear glasses. And it’s funny, because Scott made me go and get glasses, cause I couldn’t seem but I wouldn’t wear them, because I thought they were ugly. … And so … you know, that’s an issue, like, I don’t know what I saw … that night. It was dark too and I blind. So .. you know. Uhm … that’s another issue. Also, I wanna say that … uhm … the statement … I’ve been on your website, called a new trial.

J: Yeah.

V: I didn’t know that that website existed until about a week ago. And I also didn’t know that some of the statements that were written about me existed. Uhm .. specifically, I want to talk about the statement of Troy Spencer

J: Yeah.

V: This was the man that I was in a relationship with … uhm … I broke up with him and he began stalking me. He threatened my child. And I ended up having to take a restraining order out on him. To get him to leave me alone. And I had to move away from the town where we lived.

J: Yeah.

V: Uhm … and he was very angry that I broke up with him. Uhm … the things that he says in his statement are just absolutely not true. And … when I read that stuff, it made me so mad that I cried. That’s … to think that … there was even a chance that Scott would think I said that stuff about him. I never said any of that. And somebody … obviously fed Mr. Spencer some information about the case, because I never discussed the case with him like that.

J: Mhm.

V: That’s … That’s a lie. That statement is a lie. The only thing that’s true in there is the … about my son’s name and … you know, my god, he gives us a three- or four-page essay on the origins of my son’s name. Uhm … but the rest of this stuff is absolutely not true.

J: Yeah.

V: That’s crazy. I just wanted to get that, get that out.

J: Yeah.

V: But, you know, I don’t know what to do, I reached out to Scott’s lawyers, I reached out to … anybody I can think of, up here in the states … Uhm … the Innocence Project, the ACLU, different search engines, where you can, you know, get a free consultation or whatever. I reached out to … uhm … Cheri Beasley … who is the … uhm … North Carolina Supreme Court Judge that’s over appeals.

J: Yeah.

And … nobody will call me back or .. return my emails or anything. Uhm … you now because of Covid you can’t just go to the office or whatever.

J: Yeah.

V: And … uhm .. .and I have really tried. You’re the first person that has wrote back or tried to even do anything.

J: Yeah.

V: So … I don’t know what to do, basically. But … I would like to go on the record and tell my side of things. … And tell what I remember what really happened, but I got to have representation to do that. I’m terrified they are gonna … you know … put me away. They … everybody that they have for a witness, they threatened everybody “You are going to go to prison for the rest of your life.” And they would bring my son in there and let me see my son and be like “Do you wanna … “ …you know … just use him against me.

J: Yeah.

V: You know … My son is a grown man now … and so … I just … I want to do the right thing here.

J: Yeah. That sounds quite harsh. They brought the kid in?

V: Yes.

J: That’s … as pressure tactics go … that’s … that’s quite harsh?

V: Yeah. I mean … you know, like I said earlier … They made it into … I had to either choose either my son or Scott. What mother wouldn’t choose her child? Or anybody? Of course I chose my son. You know, I’m sorry if that sounds harsh, but that’s the truth of it. … I had to choose my son. … You know … I regret everything … I regret getting up there on the stand saying those things that they wanted me to say.

J: Yeah.

V: And …

*-end file 1-*

*-file 2-*

J: OK; I had to, I had to restart the recording. The software I’m using can only record 10 minutes at a time, uhm … cause it is a free test-trial thing, but the recording is running again. Uhm …

V: What was the last thing you recorded. You remember?

J: Uhm … basically all of your sentences where in there …. And then it made pling and it … like … we have everything on tape. Uhm …

V: OK.

J: It just gave a signal and I said “Ah, wait.” ..and now it is working again… and we were with pol … you experience with law enforcement basically.

V: Mhm.

J: Uhm … I do understand that, like, legal representation is ..uhm … a thing you want to have. It’s also that we will need .. like … this thing needs lawyers. Uhm …

V: Yeah.

J: This thing needs lawyers who … uhm …help to bring new documents to the attention of the court, who now what the deadlines are, that can tell you the risks you enter and do not enter and maybe how to protect against them. This does need …uhm ..representation for everyone involved. Uhm …

V: right.

J: That’s pretty understandable .. especially given the, uh, like, if, if, like … you’re experience with law enforcement apparently wasn’t the best …to put it mildly.

V: Yeah.

J: Uh …I don’t…

V: They, uh … I’m sorry go ahead.

J: No, you go ahead.

V: Just, they were, uhm, very persuasive, uhm, on me. You know. They used my son. They … pretty much I was kept in solitary confinement for two years (inaudible). Give or take. Sometimes there might be another woman in there, but … uhm … it was really hard. And … when I would get in trouble …uhm ..like the lady I was in jail … I don’t even know if she is still alive. Her name was Mrs. Ritter. Uhm … she would tell me: “If you don’t behave, I’ma bring Scott here and put you in a cell with him and let him beat your ass.” And stuff like that. You know, to mess with me.

J: Yeah.

V: Uhm ..yeah … it was pretty bad.

J: You were in jail and they threatened you to bring you in the same cell as Scott?

V: Mhm.

J: Who … that was a guard or who was that person?

V: Yeah, it was the lady who ran the jail. She was the sheriff’s deputy and she was in charge of the jail. Her name was Mrs. Ritter.

J: River like river, or?

V: No, Ritter … R - I - T - T - E - R.

J: OK.

V: I’m bot even sure she is still alive. She was old back then. You know?

J: Yeah.

V: Uhm … I had an officer come in one night and assault me. And when I wrote a grievance on him, the sheriff himself, uhm Sheriff Jordan(?) himself, came in there and told me … he ain’t give a shit about the case, he didn’t care about any of it, that if I didn’t shut up he would let Scott go and charge me with the murder. … Just things like that, they did to me all the time.

J: That’s … that sounds like … not … I don’t know … I don’t even know what to say to that. It’s …uh ..

V: Yeah.

J: The whole thing. There are a lot of absurdities in the whole thing. It’s … uhm … If you approach the whole thing from the perspective of how murder trials …investigations and trials and the follow ups should happen and how this goes it’s … uhm … yeah … not pretty … uhm ….

V: Yeah.

J: Is there, like, is there anything else you like to say at this point? Uhm, experiences that you want to share at this point? Or, uhm … things you want to clarify at this point?

V: Uhm … I think … that pretty much does it. I’m totally willing to give my account of everything on the record. But I just need … I need representation to do that. Uhm… They made no ? about the fact that, you know, if I ever … that they could come at any time and arrest me … uh … for accessory and … so basically, you know, I was just do to what they wanted and then go away and keep my mouth shut. Which is what I’ve done.

J: Yeah.

V: And ..uhm .. I regret it. I really do.

J: Do you know of anyone else we might want to contact who knows … who was also pressured and might be willing to talk .. or who could be of any help to this.

V: Well, he thing is that a lot of the people who were, you know, around at the time, they are dead now. Uhm … And … I don’t know, maybe some of the people that were living at that trailer. Let’s see, what was that dude’s name? Robbie Johnson or something like that?

J: Yeah.

V: Uh … him. And the girl Tanzy. I know that they are still alive ad still live in that area. I’m sure they were pressured as well.

J: But you don’t … you aren’t in touch with anyone who .. you could talk to and … and bring around.

V: I could probably find Tanzy.

J: OK. Yeah, let’s … I … hm … I might want to also …

V: Anyone else is deceased.

J: Yeah.

V: Uh … Jeff Brantley is diseased. Jeffrey Page is deceased. Lilly Efird is deceased. Lois Lawson is deceased. Uhm … so that’s, you know. That’s an issue, because … everybody is gone.

J: Yeah. It was just an idea …uhm … for now I think it’s probably best not to start something. I should probably be a bit careful not to … uhm … yeah …

V: The sound is a little bit ? right now.

J: Yeah …I realized …I think something cut out now.

V: It’s fine now.

J: Now the question is shall we finish this or are we forgetting anything you wanted to say. I think I’d like to come back to that for a second.

V: I’m sure that I’m probably forgetting something, but … I don’t know what it is, if I am.

J: Yeah.

V: You can ask me any question that you like and if I fell like I can answer them, I will.

J: Yeah. OK. If .. if we write back and forth …at the moment I think … I don’t want to ask you now to give me names of police officers or anything … because that is clearly what you want representation for.

V: Right.

J: So I don’t want to go into that right now. And if you write back … I guess that we are going to be in touch .. on ..on some level … and if you realize there is something we should have recorded or you, or more precisely, you realize there is something you want to have recorded, cause I think you should be the person deciding and driving this. I don’t want to have a role that is to active. Uhm … then just contact me…

V: Right.

J … and let me know. And … we can set up another call and record it.

V: OK. .. Yeah, I think that’s wise, cause I don’t … like I said …I planned on doing this and not having any interaction with Scott at all. But because I have been talking to him … I don’t want anybody to say that he made me do anything or influenced me in any way, because he didn’t.

J: Yeah.

V: I came to him. He didn’t seek me out.

J: that’s the same reason I’m not asking, like, uhm … too many questions. I don’t want to …to put things … like .. I want to sit here and give you the opportunity to talk, …

V: Yeah.

J: …but I don’t want to be too active in pursuing certain lines of questioning, cause that’s …I’d feel better with a lawyer present as well. I don’t want to influence things too much.

V: Right. … oh … there is one more thing I want to say.

J: Just …

*-end of file 2-*

*-file 3-*

V: ..kay

J: And I restarted the recording. The recording was at the ten minute point again. Okay?

V: Okay. The ..the statement by Dolly Ponds. I wasn’t able to find that. I don’t know where that is on the side, but it was referred to a lot. And, seeing we were in the jail together at different times … and we absolutely hated each other. Absolutely. I mean, we were getting in fights every time they were put us together. They had to separate us. She hated my guts. And so … there is no telling what that statement says (laughs), but I’m sure it’s not flattering to me either … just as Mr. Spencer’s wasn’t.

J: Yeah, I think …

V: But I never ever laughed or thought that any of this funny. I never said I was gonna make Scott pay for anything. That’s ridiculous. I loved him.

J: Yeah. I think we decided for some reason not to put it online. Uhm …

V: Mhm.

J: …because we felt like this one wasn’t that important … uhm .. considering the way she talked about people … and that is not a thing we wanted to have online. Uhm …

V: Right.

J: Yeah. But I’m not entirely sure about that one ….. We didn’t put everything online, because we tried to have, like, some restraint in what we actually put on the site and what not. And I think that one was a thing were we decided not to.

V: Yeah … but uhm … you know … that (?) this statement, (?) not seen her/hers(?), but I’m pretty sure there was a situation that happened in the jail, and I won’t go into that right now, uhm, don’t feel comfortable going into that without an attorney … but there was a situation in a jail … uhm … and she and I were part of it … but they kinda just … it … just kinda made it go away … uhm…. on my part and then…I was let out on house arrest shorty after that .. so …

J: Yeah.

V: Uh … the statement by Troy Spencer I cannot stress enough … that is a fabrication … and just made to try and hurt me.

J: Yeah. … Okay…. Uhm … Maybe I let you know, what I’m going to do next. I’m going to tell Scot roughly what we discussed, so he is in the loop. And …uhm … I’m also going to try to, like, I’m trying to shake everyone I know with international contacts for contacts to a lawyer in North Carolina. I think chances are … relatively low that this will work. So anything you can do to push for … finding a pro bono lawyer still needs to be done I think. But we’ll try to help with this a bit …uh … I have one contact, actually, to North Carolina by now. Uhm … not to a lawyer yet, but to a person living in North Carolina who might be willing to think about, if she knows a lawyer … uhm so … that … that’s going on on our end. Uhm …

V: OK.

J: And otherwise I think we should probably just … uhm … yeah … try to see that we stay in touch when anything moves.

V: Yeah.

V: I’ma keep trying, but …nobody wants to listen to me … and I … basically I see one now … being made to look like some crazy horrible person … and ..uhm … I feel like any attorney or his attorneys are saying “Why are you coming forward now?” … you know … uhm .. so I don’t … I’m not very hopeful to get anybody to listen to me.

J: yeah.

V: But I’ll keep trying.

J: Yeah … OK … uhm … I’d say we leave it at that for the moment and I stop the recording.

V: OK.

J: OK … ah … can we do one thing, because I have multiple files. Can we switch on the camera once more, so we, like, the face thing.

V: Sure.

J: And. …uhm … so …Here I am. Hi. … Uhm … So I just stop the recording and we see how things progress from here. Uhm … I have to do this …

*- end of file 3 -*