

TAPED INTERVIEW BETWEEN WILBUR GRATTON AND JUSTIN
C. RAVITZ, CONDUCTED ON MARCH 18, 1970, at 2761 E.
JEFFERSON, at 8:15 P.M.

JCR: Mr. Gratton, I'm going to make a few preliminary comments which I will ask you to affirm, is that okay?

WG: Yes.

JCR: You came to Detroit by airplane this morning, is that correct, sir?

WG: That is correct.

JCR: You returned to this country from Africa on what date? When did you arrive in Cleveland?

WG: Ahh, let me get that date correct, 13th, on ahh 15th of March.

JCR: And upon arriving home was there a message awaiting you requesting that you call me?

WG: Yes there was.

JCR: And you did so, is that correct?

WG: That's correct.

JCR: And we arranged for you to come to Detroit this morning for purposes of this interview, is that correct, sir?

WG: That's correct.

JCR: Did I forward money to you by special delivery so as to help ahh cover the expenses of your flight to Detroit this morning?

WG: Yes, on Tuesday, ahh, the 17th of March, I received a check for \$40.00 in the mail.

JCR: And that was understood to cover expenses inasmuch as you've been out of the country a long while and your finances are such that this was helpful and somewhat necessary, is that correct?

WG: That's correct.

JCR: I'm not going to make a summary statement of some of your biographical background so that it can appear hereon and let me first say that you arrived in Detroit at about 9:50 or 10:00 o'clock this morning, is that correct?

WG: About 9:50 a.m.

JCR: And a gentleman was waiting for you and brought you to my office is that right.

*440 a
to Gratton
& Ravitz
to come to
Detroit in
March*

WG: That's true.

JCR: And we spent about an hour or an hour and a half speaking about your background principally and somewhat about the facts of the case when I was simply taking written notes this morning, is that true sir?

WG: That's true.

JCR: And we arranged to meet further tonight so that we could tape this interview and go into greater detail about your knowledge of the facts of the case, is that correct?

WG: That's correct.

JCR: Alright biographically, Mr. Gratton has told me that he lives at 12719 Speedway Overlook in Cleveland. His telephone number is 851-2480. He lives with his wife, Iona, and his 23 year old daughter Iris, who is a senior at Case Western Reserve. In addition to that he has four sons, the youngest of whom, Jeffery, is 14 and is a student in Darsalam, Tanzania, is that correct?

WG: That's correct.

JCR: Mr. Gratton is self-employed as a landscape artist and conducts his business under the name Bill's Garden Service. He employs on the average of three men a day. Mr. Gratton was born on February 12, 1909 in Jefferson County (Johns), Alabama, about 24 miles from Birmingham. Is that correct, sir?

WG: That's correct.

JCR: Mr. Gratton attended school through the 6th grade in Birmingham, Alabama. We have discussed at length his background both in terms of employment and in terms of political activity. Among other things, related to his employment, we have discussed his work in Cleveland and employment in the life insurance business. Is that correct sir?

WG: That's correct.

JCR: In addition to that we have discussed his employment with the Ford Motor Company in his union activity during the 1950's while so employed, is that correct sir?

WG: That's correct.

JCR: Further, we have discussed his background in Alabama and his family situation there as well as his prior criminal record, including the conviction in about 1932 in the State of Alabama on burglary and larceny. On this conviction he spent three years in the state prison in Montgomery. We have discussed his background related to that offense as well as his association in prison

*3 yrs in
Alabama
prison*

Scotsboro
boys - Alabama
Jail

1940's
conviction
for running
whiskey
Political
Background

Travel
abroad

Persons
with whom
Fox & Co. went
to Detroit
in March
1969

with the Scotsborough boys. Is that correct, Mr. Gratton.

WG That's correct.

JCR We have further discussed two other convictions during the 1940's for running whiskey. Is that correct?

WG That's correct.

JCR: We have discussed his affiliation and activity with the RNA; the Trade Union movement; the July 23 Defense Committee for Ahmed Evans; and his activity with the Monroe Defense Committee in the early 1960's. Is that correct sir?

WG That's correct.

JCR In addition to this we've discussed his two trips abroad, one in August of '69 for 30 days and then again on December 28, 1969 for 75 days. Is that correct sir?

WG That's correct.

JCR Directing your attention to the date of March 29, 1969, did you come to Detroit on that date to attend an RNA meeting?

WG Yes.

JCR With whom did you travel sir?

WG I traveled with a friend of mine by the name Baxter Hill who was the owner and driver of the car with another friend of mine Miss Kelly Zanders and with a friend of Baxter Hill's, a man friend whose name I don't recall at this moment.

JCR What time did you leave Cleveland approximately?

WG If I remember correctly, about 7:00 o'clock in the morning.

JCR And when did you arrive in Detroit?

WG I think about 10:30 a.m.

JCR And where did you proceed upon arriving in Detroit?

WG We proceeded to a meeting that was being held by the RNA at Dexter at the building over the market on Dexter Avenue.

JCR Did you participate in that meeting in any capacity other than as a spectator?

WG Yes I did participate in that meeting.

JCR And what was the extent or content of your participation sir?

Grattan - Minister of State and Foreign Affairs

WG

I gave reports on the activities of the Minister of State and Foreign Affairs, certain things that members thought should be done and in terms of disagreement I explained why they had not been done because I didn't think they should have been done. There was a question, there was a question of electing a speaker of the legislation of the RNA and I think that I was nominated for that and declined.

JCR

If you were called upon to just give some short summary as to what the content of your message to the body was regarding your ministry what would that answer be?

WG

I'm not sure I recall the issue but I think it had to do with asking the Government of the National Liberation Front of Vietnam and whom I think was considered in Paris at the time to release prisoners of war that had been taken by them, United States prisoners of war, if the United States would in turn release black men being held in prisons here.

Prisoners Exchange
P.A.A.
N.I.A.

JCR

Programatically, what efforts if any were made in terms of projecting such a plan into reality?

WG

Programatically, this was only in the discussion stage and several discussions had been conducted as to whether or not we could get this done. Now in terms of money someone traveled in terms of whether or not we could get an audience with a representatives of the Liberation Front and that sort of thing but in reality nothing had been done about it. It was a thing that had been in dialogue only.

JCR

Did it ever go beyond the stage of dialogue?

WG

No, not to my knowledge.

JCR

Do you recall approximately the hour or time when you left the meeting above the market on Dexter sir?

WG

I, if I remember correctly, approximately 2:30.

JCR

And where did you proceed from there if you know?

WG

I think that Baxter Hill and myself went to lunch along with Miss Zanders and Baxter's friend, Mr. Hill's friend.

JCR

Do you remember where you ate or what you ate or how far distance it was from the first meeting place or anything of that nature?

WG

I don't remember where it was or how far it was. I can't say I recall what we ate either.

JCR

And where did you proceed after eating?

WG

This is not clear to me, I don't recall details or actions that I was involved in. If I remember correctly, we came back to the car and found some had stolen a suit

of clothes that belong to Mr. Hill's friend and ahh I don't think I don't remember what else was done during the day.

JCR Do you recall where you were at that evening or night?

WG Sometime about I would guess about 8:00 o'clock we came back, we came to the ahh Bethel Avenue Church.

JCR Would that be New Bethel Church?

WG The New Bethel Church on Linwood Drive, Linwood.

JCR And did you attend a meeting held at that location that night?

WG Yes I did.

JCR And who if anyone entered that meeting with you if you recall?

WG If I recall, I'm sure Miss Zanders was with me and myself and Brother Gaidi and perhaps one or two members who were assigned to him as his security.

JCR Do you recall meeting Brother Gaidi before you went to the New Bethel Church? And going to the Church with him?

WG I don't recall how I met him or where I met him but I do think if I remember correctly he was one of the persons in the party when we came to the church so I must have met him someplace.

JCR Alright and this is the assumption you draw based upon the best of your recollect of ability going back a year or so?

WG Yes, that's the best I can remember.

JCR Could these answers be in correct.

WG Very conceivably they could be incorrect because I don't remember in detail what took place. I do know of course that we went to the church and if I remember correctly Brother Gaidi was with us now he might have been at the church when we got there because I don't remember what party, who was in the party I was with.

JCR Do you recall being searched upon entering the church?

WG Yes I do.

JCR Did you stay for the duration of the meeting at the church?

WG Yes I did.

*Entry
Mtg @
New Bethel
Church*

*as
arched
door
at
church.*

to do so. He agreed. He went out and I went out and he was out, he went out and sat behind me.

JCR Did you see Chocka with a weapon at any time during the meeting or after the meeting at the New Bethel Church.

WG At no time did I see him with a weapon.

JCR Had you ever seen this person Choka prior to March 29, 1969.

WG Yes, I had seen him before.

JCR Where had you seen him before sir?

WG In meetings in the Republic.

JCR Had you ever to your recollection spoken to him before?

WG Yes I had spoken to him before.

JCR Did you know him by name?

WG I knew him by name of Choka.

JCR Had you ever seen him at any place other than at a formal meeting of the RNA.

WG Perhaps in some homes you know because from time to time we would sleep in some members home and we would go out for food and that sort of thing and I'm sure I've seen him at meetings other than the RNA.

JCR Apart from the political association did you know anything about the gentleman in a personal way or a social way or anything else?

WG Nothing at all.

JCR What were you plans upon the termination of the meeting.

WG Were to go to Pontiac Michigan and stay in the home of Brother Gaidi.

JCR And who else if you know was planning to leave with Gaidi?

WG I don't recall anyone else except myself and Kelly.

JCR Did you see him leave the church?

WG Yes I did see him leave the church.

JCR By what door did he leave.

WG He left by the, I would say the rear most side door.

Went over a Diagram of the physical scene with Choka

JCR And have we been over previously sir a diagram of that physical scene?

WG Yes we have.

JCR And did he leave with anyone?

WG He left with the security that had been assigned to him.

JCR Do you recollect how many persons were assigned to him?

WG Two or three persons, I think; it was about four persons going out of the door, three security and Brother Gaidi, himself.

JCR Do you recall sir, who is security was?

WG No I don't.

JCR Were their legionares in uniform?

WG They were legionares in uniform.

JCR Did you leave the church at the same time he did or not?

WG We were about to leave the church directly behind them in fact all of us together when Kelly remembered she had some personal effects she had to pick up at the front entrance of the church.

JCR And did she go and get them?

WG She went to get them and I waited for her.

JCR Was anyone with you?

WG My security, the one man that was assigned to me.

JCR And who was that man.

WG Brother Choka.

JCR And how long -- Mr. Gratton we just reversed the reels and after listening to the last words on the other side of the tape it was a man lying, could you continue from there.

WG Lying prone on the sidewalk.

JCR Could you describe this man in any way?

WG Not in any way except that I knew it was a dark figure I recognized it was a man lying prone on the sidewalk

JCR Could you tell how the person was dressed?

WG No I couldn't.

Choka was fratton's security saw a dark figure lying on sidewalk

JCR Where was the person lying?

WG The person was lying somewhere in the vicinity of the front side door, that door facing Linwood at the front part of the church.

JCR You described this in terms of a door, do you recollect actually seeing the door or are you using the door as a reference point based upon the diagram that we have in front of us?

WG I am aware that there was a door at the front, the side door at the front end of the church and my impression is that this person lying prone on the sidewalk was lying somewhere in the vicinity of that door.

JCR Can you remember anything about that door or do you recollect using it at any time yourself?

WG Not that door, I came out to get some cigarettes and I went out of the front door because they are big double glass doors.

JCR Do you know the race of the person who was lying outside that door.

WG No I didn't know the race, just from reports I read in the newspaper.

JCR Did you see any persons or could you describe all persons who you see on the sidewalk besides that male form lying by the door.

WG I saw no additional person on the sidewalk except the man who was shooting with a rifle and of course the other two persons who were with me when we came out of the side door.

JCR Could you describe the man who was shooting please?

WG I would describe him as a person about 5'8", 5'9"; he was dark, and dark complexioned and ahh he ahh I would say he's a 170 pounder and that's I didn't get a really clear, I didn't get anything in the way of a clear picture of his features on anything like that.

JCR How was he dressed in the uniform of the legionare. The black legion. He had on olive drab type uniform with boots and if I recall his trousers were stuck down in his boots. He had on those leopard, those tabs on his shoulders and he had on a cap that I always describe as a russian style cap, or persian lamb fur, black.

*Saw the
man and
the shooter
Describe
the shooter*

JCR What type of weapon was he firing?

WG A rifle. That's as near as I could come to describe it. Just a rifle.

JCR How many shots did you see or hear fired in total, ahh coming from that weapon, as far as you know?

WG My impression is that it was four because one was fired just as we were opening the door to come out and then I recall seeing three fired at the figure on the sidewalk.

JCR By one you mean you heard a shot as you exited and then you saw three subsequent shots directed at the figure on the sidewalk, is that correct?

WG That's correct. Then, of course, then there was a shot fired at the car that was parked in the street.

JCR Where sir was this car parked?

WG This car was parked in the drive lane on the right side of the street, that is the next lane over from the parking lane.

JCR Was there anything distinctive about this car and how would you describe it?

WG Well I have an impression it was a blue or a black car, now this is just an impression, this is something I'm trying to recall and that's all I recall about it.

JCR Did you recognize it to be a police vehicle or not.

WG I did not.

JCR Did you see that car, that shot strike the car or not?

WG I saw it shatter the back windshield.

JCR Did you see the car move at any time?

WG I saw the car move immediately when it was fired upon.

JCR Did you see the car come to a stop at any time?

WG I saw it come to a stop some distance away from the point where it started and perhaps a little beyond the church. I got the impression it rolled out into the street and crossed in front a lot or jumped the curb or something, that's the impression I got.

JCR Do you know what brought it to a stop actually?

WG No I didn't know what brought it to a stop.

JCR Did you see anyone in the car?

WG No I didn't.

4 shots
parked
car
lane

Page 11

JCR How far was the car from the location you were at when you exited the church?

WG 15 feet. 15 feet I'd say.

JCR Which meant how far was it from the person who you saw fire and shoot out the back windshield?

WG Roughly 15 feet. We were standing very close to this person when we came out.

JCR Did you hear or see any further shots?

WG I heard more gunfire.

JCR Can you recollect about how many shots?

WG No, I hear firing around and I really can't say how, I'm sure there was more gunfire that's all I know and I don't recall how many shots there were.

JCR Can you recall whether or not the gun shots that you heard thereafter sounded comparable to the gun shots you had seen previously?

WG No I can't.

JCR Are you saying that the shots sounded like they were from different weapons? Or like they from the same weapons or you simply don't know?

WG I just simply don't know.

JCR In other words the shot could have been all from the same weapons, they could have been from different type weapons or from multiple weapons is that correct?

WG That's correct.

JCR Between the time that you saw what would have been the second shot I take it and the time that you saw the car stop were you in movement during portions of this time or what were you doing sir?

WG Momentarily stopped because we were puzzled about what was going on then we got down low and I think its correct to say that all of this happened in a very brief period of time and I motioned to Kelly and we scrambled away in a half crouch, we scrambled away and over towards the service station.

*standing
close to
shoot*

JCR Who do you mean you, you and Kelly?

WG Myself and Kelly and Brother Choka.

JCR And is it your testimony that Choka at this time was not armed?

WG He was not armed.

JCR And is there any question whatsoever in your mind that (1) he was not armed and (2) it was a totally different person who was doing that firing?

WG There's absolutely no question about that, Brother Choka at no time fired a shot while he was with me.

JCR Did you see, pardon me, when the man began firing or fired the shot that you saw at the police car, did he alter his stance or position in any way?

WG He was firing directly at the figure on the sidewalk when we came out of the door, ahh, I do recall I had reasons to wonder why the figure on the sidewalk was being shot at and I recall him shifting his position and firing at the police car and I recall just about the time he shifted positions I motioned Kelly to crouch down and we began to move away.

JCR Did you see any of the shots fired at the form on the ground take affect?

WG I saw them hit, I saw them strike the sidewalk around the body because there was sparks coming from where the bullets were striking.

JCR How close to the body?

WG Well I remember one being about a foot and a half away from the body or perhaps being about a foot and a half away from the body, that is to the side and I remember one striking maybe two feet forward from the body, that is to say it struck the sidewalk perhaps bounced over the head of the man.

JCR Do you have any idea how long the man had been already down on the ground?

WG None at all.

JCR Do you have any idea as to how much firing might have occurred before you exited?

WG Not a great deal because I think we were in position to hear the, this firing and I think that while I recall one shot affecting my attention, it might have been one or two shots fired ahh two or three shots fired before we got there, I know there was gun fire and I know as we opened the door that was another shot fired.

JCR Did you see any weapons on or near the form that was lying prone on the sidewalk?

WG No, no I didn't see any weapons.

JCR When you exited the church, did you see any other persons or vehicles in the street.

WG I Brother Gaidi getting into his car and I didn't see any other vehicles in motion when we first came out.

JCR Did you see any persons with Brother Gaidi?

WG There were three, approximately three persons if I recall recorrectly. I know there was one holding the door while he was getting in. I think there was another one standing waiting and this is all a little bit hazey this is just what I think I saw. I do know he got into the car and the car took off.

JCR When did the car take off in relationship to let us say the second, third and fourth shots which you, all which you witnessed directed at the form on the ground?

WG I'd say it took off around about the second shot because I realized that we were supposed to go with him and we got left. And I would say that perhaps the second, second or third shot his car pulled away and this is how in fact I believe I had enough time to get a brief picture of what was going on and when I motioned to Kelly to crouch and we should move away from that spot because we couldn't go with him.

JCR Where was the succession of shots in terms of time, directing your attention particularly to what I have labelled shots two, three and four?

WG I can give you in terms of time to set an example ahh pow, pow, pow, just about like that.

JCR Is it your testimony that in that brief interlude Bro. Gaidi and other persons perhaps standing outside of the car got into the car and actually drove away?

WG No I'm saying that in the first place they got a pretty good start on us because I waited on Kelly to go and get her personal affects, I'm saying that when I walked out of the door he was getting into the car if I recall and I'm saying that by the time two of three of these shots were fired they had time for their car to move off.

JCR Did his car move off before you saw that other car move and ultimately stop?

WG Yeah, my recollection is that his car, Bro. Gaidi's car moved off first because our intention was to follow him out and get into his car and his car took off and of course we couldn't.

Page 14

JCR And that would mean that his car took off and went past the Philadelphia corner before the second vehicle took off after having been fired upon?

WG Yes.

JCR Is there any doubt about that in your mind?

WG There's no doubt about that, there's absolutely no doubt about that because almost as we came out of the door we knew that we got left and couldn't go with him.

JCR And where did you then proceed?

WG As I said we proceeded, I suppose we stood momentarily confused and then I suggested that Kelly crouch and we did crouch and moved away from that scene towards the service station lot and in between two cars.

JCR And were the two cars?

WG The cars were parked along the driveway, that part of the driveway nearest the church.

JCR Were they parallel to the back wall of the church?

WG They were parallel to the back wall of the church.

JCR And were the three of you still together?

WG The three of us were still together when we moved in between the cars.

JCR And could you estimate sir the amount of time that you were on Linwood Street before you actually got around the corner and between the two cars?

WG By the time that three or four shots were fired, I suppose that was not more than a half a minute or a minute.

JCR And how were you dressed on that night? If you recall.

WG I really don't recall.

JCR How was Miss Zanders dressed?

WG I don't particularly recall, I don't think I recall how she was dressed.

JCR How was Brother Choka dressed?

WG Brother Choka was dressed in a olive drab uniform of the Black Legion.

JCR Was he wearing a hat?

WG He was wearing a hat.

JCR Was it similar to the hat of the shooter?

WG It was I would say exactly like the hat of the shooter.

JCR Were there other legionares dressed in similar fashion?

WG Yes there was.

JCR How long did you remain crouched between those two cars?

WG This was a very short period of time, I suppose 30 seconds because by the time we got between the cars and came to realize it was unsafe, there were police cars screaming in from everywhere and I suggested to Choka because these guys were coming in and start firing on us.

JCR Any particular reason why anticipated that?

WG Something had happened, I really didn't know what it was and with all the police cars coming in you knew they had been called and they had been called because there was something pretty crucial happening, ahh, we always feel apprehensive when these cars start screaming in because we are accustomed to them kind of you know moving in on our meetings and things.

JCR Also, of course, I guess the obvious was his dress?

WG Yes, of course, I mean in terms of asking him to leave I knew that ahh his dress would invite their suspicion.

JCR Did he leave?

WG Yes he did leave.

JCR What route did he take?

WG He went towards the back of the service station, directly up parallel, directly up the church, beside the back of the church and towards the back of the service station.

JCR At what point did you lose sight of him?

WG I lost sight of him I suppose three or four feet after he left me because we were intending on getting from between the cars and getting into the open so we didn't observe him any longer.

JCR Did you see him thereafter?

Handwritten notes:
Choka
The
He
left
the
area

Page 16

WG I didn't see him at any time after that?

JCR Did you see him arrested?

WG No I didn't.

JCR How long did you and Miss Zanders remain stooped there?

WG Very momentarily, you know, I would say, not more than 30 seconds and then we went on into the service station.

JCR Were there people inside there?

WG There were people inside the service station, men, men in attendants.

JCR How long did you remain in the gas station?

WG I think 35-40 minutes. 30 minutes maybe 40 minutes.

JCR How did you leave the station and where did you go?

WG We left the station in a taxi cab and we went to the 20 Grand Motel.

JCR And where did you go upon arriving at the Motel?

WG We went to Baxter Hill's room.

JCR What did you do while you were waiting in the station house?

WG We were apprehensive about the policemen coming in and ahh asking questions and we discarded certain material we had and for example I think that we picked up, you know a couple pieces of literature and ahh Malcolm X madalian and some necklace that goes around a woman's neck and we took all of those things and put them behind the oil cans on the shelf of the service station.

JCR Can you describe or remember any of the persons or any of the occurrences while you were there for some 30 minutes or so in the station?

WG I recall a plain clothes policeman coming in and talking and making a telephone call and I recall the guy as being pretty well disturbed and one guy, for the lights to be put out and other guy arguing against it. And I recall, that's about all. That's about all.

WG Could you describe or identify any of the people who worked there or who were inside?

JCR Not now I couldn't. I could describe them but it would be very vague.

*West
with
Sally*

WG

Yes we went back several months later because we were looking for witnesses and I thought that the people who were there then were the people who were there the night of this incident but they said they were not the same people. They said they were newly hired people.

JCR

Who did you go back with some months later?

WG

I remember I think going back with Brother Imari or Brother Gaidi and a couple of brothers in Detroit here, I don't recall exactly who they were.

JCR

Had you returned to that station at any other time?

WG

I returned to that station several hours after we had gone the night of the incident to retrieve some of the objects that we left here.

JCR

Why did you go back to retrieve them?

WG

Because we wanted them, that's all I can say.

JCR

Did any of them have your names or identifications in any way?

WG

No.

JCR

Where did you go when you left there, did you say the 20 Grand?

WG

Went to the 20 Grand Motel.

JCR

And did you stay there for a couple of hours until you returned to retrieve these items?

WG

That's what we did in fact. We stayed there because Baxter Hill went out and went to the police department to see about the people we had heard of being arrested and this came over the radio.

JCR

Did you see or hear shooting while you were in the station house?

WG

There was shooting that we wondered about and I at one time mentioned going out to see what all the shooting was about.

JCR

Did you do so?

WG

I didn't do so, I was restrained by Kelly and by another man who had come in the service station and said the firing was being directed into the church.

JCR .

By whom were you told it was being directed?

WG

By policemen.

JCR Where did you spend the night of March 29th.
WG In the 20 Grand Hotel, and in fact in Baxter Hill's suite.

JCR Did all four of you spend the night in his suite?
WG Yes we did.

JCR Did you try to make efforts to get another suite?
WG No not that night because what we actually did was Baxter and this friend of his left to check out what was going on and see if he could be of some assistance to those people who were being arrested.

JCR We waited up until he came back which was approximately two hours, I would guess, two or three hours and then we all took a nap. We all went to sleep.

JCR When did you leave Detroit?

WG I think we left Detroit the next evening I'm sure it was afternoon.

JCR Did you go down to court the next day?

WG Yes we did, we went to court, that is in fact what we did. We went down to court and we _____ around and tried to see what was going to be the outcome of all the people who had been arrested and I think we did in fact stay until the last person was out of jail or until all of them were out and who was going to get out except I believe one of the two brothers who were being held and then we left and if, and since I remembered it was late in the evening.

JCR Who have you discussed this case with since that date.

WG I gave brother Gaidi a statement of what my recollections and version of the case was; I talked to some person in Cleveland whom I don't recall or perhaps two or three persons and at this moment that's all I remember.

JCR Did you ever discuss it with Choka?

WG Brother Choka came to Cleveland at some time I believe after made, came back from Africa on the first trip which I think was between September and October, the middle of September or end of October seeking witnesses to what took place and of course he contacted me. And asked me to help find some of the people who did know what took place and then I discussed it with him at that time.

Handwritten notes:
I gave brother Gaidi a statement of what my recollections and version of the case was; I talked to some person in Cleveland whom I don't recall or perhaps two or three persons and at this moment that's all I remember.

Handwritten notes:
Talked to Choka in Cleveland in Sept. or Oct. of '69

ch
at
ty
n.
re

JCR And that's the best that you can say?
WG That's the best I can say.
JCR Did you ever get a clear view of his facial features?
WG No I didn't get a clear view of his facial features.
JCR Do you recollect his giving any indication of even an awareness of your presence?
WG No he was intent on what he was doing.
JCR Would you say that I have conducted my conversations with you in a fair and honest way?
WG I'm sure it could not have been anymore honest than its been conducted.
JCR Have I told you what to say at any time?
WG At no time, except when you told me to tell the truth.
JCR And do you understand that probably some law enforcement officers are going to be questioning you about this?
WG Well I think that it can be expected
JCR And what will your position be with them sir?
WG I'll give them as near as I can what actually, you know, what I can recall actually took place.
JCR Have you had occasion to speak to them or to have been questioned in any way by them previously?
WG Some men who represented themselves as FBI came to my home some time ago.
JCR When approximately was this?
WG I think it was some time between September and October, about some time in October I believe.
JCR And did you discuss the case with them?
WG I told them I didn't want to talk to them.
JCR And why did you take that position Mr. Gratton.
WG Actually because as I said to them I don't trust them.
JCR Mr. Gratton do you trust the law enforcement officers now?
WG No, not any more so than I ever did.
JCR Why are you willing to talk to them now?

Handwritten notes:
to FBI
to FBI

ch
it
y
n.
re

WG

Because you advised me to do so.

JCR

In all candor, Mr. Gratton, would you say that inasmuch as you don't trust them and inasmuch as you state that you follow my advise that you have a certain partiality to the Defendant in this case.

WG

Well of course I do. The defense is put in a position where they have to prove the innocence of a person who is already innocent. And naturally I'll side with them.

JCR

Mr. Gratton at this time I'd like to indicate that we're concluding this interview, is that correct?

WG

That's correct.

JCR

And there's a gentleman whose going to take you and you're leaving for Cleveland tomorrow as I understand or possibly tonight, is that correct sir?

WG

That's correct.

JCR

And I have advised and in fact requested that you not discuss this with other persons other than myself really and that would include most particularly Choka, Kelly Zanders or anyone else who might be a witness in this case including Brother Gaidi, is that agreeable with you.

WG

That's agreeable with me.

JCR

Thank you very much sir.

WG

Thank you