

Wisconsin DOJ Division of Criminal Investigation

ACISS Investigative Report

Report Number: DCIR13280/34

Report Date:

Primary Information

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Narrative

CASE ACTIVITY REPORT Wisconsin Department of Justice
DJ-DCI-2 (Rev. 8/91) DIVISION OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

1. Case Number

GC-13280

2. Date

10/10/2003

3. Case Title

STEVEN AVERY PROSECUTION

1. Activity

Interview/Don Belz

5. Date of Activity

10/06/2003

5. On 10/06/2003, Special Agents Amy A. Lehmann and Debra K. Strauss interviewed DON BELZ, residing at 1605 23rd Street, Two Rivers, WI 920-793-3352. BELZ is currently a gunsmith, having retired from the Manitowoc County Sheriff's Department in 1998. BELZ was questioned regarding his involvement in the 1985 case and conviction of STEVEN AVERY, where the victim was PENNY BEERNTSEN. In 1985, BELZ was the Captain of Detectives for the Sheriff's Department and relayed the following information:

BELZ said that when BEERNTSEN was attacked in 1985, the Sheriff then, TOM KOCOUREK, was a new sheriff and BEERNTSEN was a personal friend of the KOCOUREK family. This was also KOCOUREK'S first big crime, since taking the position of sheriff. KOCOUREK took charge of the investigation from the beginning and BELZ stated that no one had any control over what was occurring. On any other case, BELZ stated that it was normally his job to run an investigation.

BELZ stated that he remembered that BEERNTSEN was so positive that her assailant was AVERY. BELZ could remember thinking that it was all happening so fast, with the identification of AVERY and his immediate arrest. BELZ stated that AVERY was an instant suspect because of the composite drawing. BELZ could remember someone looking at the composite drawing and saying, "I know him, it's Steve Avery". BELZ again said that the whole thing moved way too fast and thought people should have taken a step back and reviewed the situation a little more closely. BELZ did not believe that he expressed his concerns to anyone other than possibly Detective FRED NICHOLSON.

BELZ said that he was the person who drove from AVERY's father's house, to the crime scene and back to AVERY's father's house, to see how long the drive would take would take. Other than assisting with that aspect, BELZ stated that he did not have a direct role in the investigation.

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Narrative - Continued

BELZ stated that he knew the AVERY family very well and was friends with ALLAN AVERY. BELZ believed that STEVEN AVERY was capable of committing the types of crimes he was convicted of.

BELZ said that he observed BEERNTSEN do the physical line-up of possible suspects. BEERNTSEN appeared very sure of herself and pointed AVERY out without a problem.

BELZ stated that he never heard about any other possible suspects for the case or any other names even mentioned.

BELZ relayed that typically reports from the detectives go through BELZ first. However for this investigation, all reports were directed to go to Sheriff KOCOUREK first and then to BELZ. This was unusual, but not uncommon according to BELZ.

BELZ stated that he was a little doubtful about AVERY being the correct suspect, but BEERNTSEN was an excellent witness and the jury did a good job. BELZ said that the only thing that made BELZ feel like AVERY probably did it was that BEERNTSEN was such a good witness.

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★ BELZ said that his doubts came from the photo line-up coming so fast and having someone in law enforcement saying it was AVERY.

BELZ stated that he did not know who GREGORY ALLEN was until AVERY was released from prison.

BELZ was unable to provide any additional information and the contact was terminated.

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