

Interview with George Frese

Jade: I'm just going to ask you some questions that the investigative reporting class have come up with. One big question we have is why we should believe that you're innocent. Twelve people convicted you of the crime during the court, listening to all the evidence, so why should we believe you, what can you tell us?

George: Well with all of our alibis and everything, it's plainly impossible for us to even have been together. It's just impossible. I mean, I was at my house with six other people, Kevin and Eugene are out there at a whole different place with like ten different people, Marvin's at a wedding with a whole bunch of people. Sorry, I was kind of ill prepared for this.

Jade: That's okay, take your time, I know this was a long time ago. The night when everything happened, you hurt your foot from a fight, so what fight did you get in? Who did you fight and who did you kick?

George: It might not even have been a fight, it was just ah, I don't know, I thought it was just kind of a macho thing to say when I went into the hospital. It was just stupid, but I don't really remember how I hurt my foot. My ex-girlfriend Crystal said that I hurt my foot when I was wrestling with Vernon Roberts in the bathroom.

Jade: Vernon Roberts? And you somehow hit it?

George: Yeah.

Jade: Do you remember any fights that happened that night? And what do you remember about them?

George: I don't remember anything after leaving my house. We went from Little Dipper where I was staying at, and right after I left there I blacked out. The only thing I remember was being chased out of the Elbow Room and then I came to and I was in the truck with my cousin Agnes and my uncle Johnny. We were arguing over something and then they dropped me off at mid town and I walked home from there.

Jade: Did you ever see Marvin, Eugene, or Kevin that night?

George: Probably at the Eagles hall, but I don't recall.

Jade: Do you ever remember riding in Marvin's car throughout the night?

George: No.

Jade: What can you tell me about the reception at the Eagles Hall? What was it like?

George: I have no idea. I don't remember anything.

Jade: But you remember being there?

George: No. I don't even know. I just know that I was there from ah, I guess Eugene remembers seeing me there, and I know that I went there cause that was the only thing going on that night.

Jade: Arlo Olsen says that you asked him if he wanted some cocaine that night, do you remember offering him cocaine?

George: No.

Jade: Do you remember seeing Arlo at all that night?

George: No.

Jade: Do you know Arlo?

George: Yes.

Jade: Okay and what was your relationship with him?

George: I've just seen him around downtown and at a couple parties probably, that's about it.

Jade: Just an acquaintance?

George: Yeah.

Jade: Do you have any history or did you know John Hartman?

George: No.

Jade: What about his brothers?

George: No.

Jade: Grimes?

George: Michael Grimes?

Jade: Yes.

George: Yes.

Jade: Okay what was your relationship with him?

George: Oh, before jail? No I never knew him.

Jade: Okay, what about now.

George: Yes, I live in the same pod as him right now.

Jade: Are you guys friends, or?

George: As far as I know we're alright.

Jade: What about Dale Depue?

George: Dale Depue? Never knew him before, I met him when he came to jail.

Jade: What are your feelings towards him?

George: I don't like him. That's about it.

Jade: Do you feel that he possibly killed Hartman?

George: I don't know, I don't know.

Jade: Have you heard anything since being in jail, through other cell mates, about any other possible suspects for the murder?

George: There was a couple. Michael Mulcahe, he was my celli, I believe that was his name, he was my celli during Eugene's trial and he said that his nephew Elijah told him that Chris Stone had seen it. So Chris Stone should know.

Jade: That Chris Stone was there at the time?

George: Yes.

Jade: Do you know Chris Stone, did you know him prior to the night?

George: No.

Jade: Now that you're in jail, have you thought about what happened at all, is there anything you want to talk about now that you couldn't have talked about back then?

George: The only thing that I could see different is what could happen at the next trial.

Jade: Is there anything you'd like to change for your next trial?

George: Oh there's lots. Calling all our alibis, everybody's alibis, whether they remember or not. To have all the experts, I didn't have proper expert testimony, he was ill prepared. I mean all different kinds of experts, all the ones that matter.

Jade: And would you like to get on the stand?

George: I don't know, I'd have to think about that, I mean really, I don't know what would happen with that. I haven't thought about that.

Jade: How does the Arizona jail here differ from the jails in Alaska?

George: The only thing I like about down here is the weather. Been down here too long, got spoiled.

Jade: Are the cells bigger here or do you have more liberties?

George: No. I think as far as the way they run things in Alaska is better. Better food, better rec hours, a little more freedom. Here you have to check in everywhere.

Jade: What was your life like before all of this happened? What kind of things were you interested in, what were your relationships like with your friends and your family?

George: I was kind of alienated. I alienated myself. I was with my girlfriend and my daughter, it was pretty much us three.

Jade: Did you have any plans for your future?

George: Yes, I was just done with carpentry training, I was getting ready to sign up for that, and that about it. I wasn't really headed anywhere.

Jade: What do you miss most about your life free?

George: My daughter.

Jade: How old is she now?

George: Nine.

Jade: Have you spoken with her?

George: Yeah, I talk to her a couple times a month.

Jade: Who were you hanging out with back then, who were your friends, besides your girlfriend?

George: I don't know, the only thing I really did was go to parties and whoever was there was there. I never really kicked it with anybody tough.

Jade: Who were the major drug dealers that were hanging around at the parties?

George: I have no idea.

Jade: How does it feel to be doing time for a crime that you didn't commit?

George: It's the worst that could happen to anybody. Especially for this amount of time.

Jade: Are you bitter about it?

George: Yeah, I'd have to say I do have bitter feelings towards the judicial system and everyone that was involved in doing this, yes.

Jade: Have you tried to accept any of it?

George: Not really. I mean, it's a lot easier now. This place is almost home, it's kind of crazy.

Jade: What do you spend your time doing here, are you working or taking any classes?

George: I'm not taking any classes. I'm just a line server. I've just been lounging, I haven't been doing anything. I read a little bit, I'm starting to draw, and play playstation, that's it.

Jade: I know you're roommates with Eugene, right? And do you guys have a good friendship?

George: Yeah.

Jade: Do you talk about often what's happened to you?

George: Yeah we talk about it every once in a while.

Jade: Do you talk about what you were up to that night; do you try to remember anything?

George: I've tried and tried to remember everything, but I don't recall anything but what I just told you. Gino, ah we just talk about what could happen in the next trial and about how much longer we have to wait.

Jade: Brian was wanting me to ask, now you have a 70 year sentence for the Hartman case, and then another 20 for the robbery.

George: It all adds up to 97 with 20 suspended, I haven't added it all up, I don't know exactly how much longer I have or anything.

Jade: Okay, why are you so focused on the burglary?

George: Bob Downes, my first attorney, he asked one of the juries what was so convincing in the trial, and the juror said that it was Arlo Olsen that convinced them. I don't see how that happened if he told the exact opposite story of the supposed victim. I mean, they tell two different stories.

Jade: Brian also wanted me to tell you that he's working hard on solving the Hartman case, and he wants you to stay focused on that case right now too. Then worry about the burglary later, cause that's a lot shorter sentence.

George: Yeah. It's all in the same trial, and if Arlo Olsen is saying that I did something, it's making me look more guilty for the other accusations. If he says I'm looking guilty in

this one, that I have an ability to go beat someone up and take their money, then I obviously have the ability to go and randomly beat up somebody else. So, it's all the same trial.

Jade: Have you had any encounters with Hartman's brothers in jail?

George: Yes I have.

Jade: And what were those encounters like?

George: They were just encounters.

Jade: What happened, did you speak about...

George: We tried to talk to him at first and he wasn't trying to hear it. Then after that he pretty much kept his distance.

Jade: Did you have any physical problems with him?

George: Yes we did, I have. But it was nothing serious.

Jade: Did he threaten you?

George: He just swung at me, that was about it and after that, we just kept our distance. But I can totally understand where he's coming from, I'd feel the same way.

Jade: The other guys have kind of spoken up a lot during everything and why have you remained silent?

George: Spoken up as far as what?

Jade: Spoken up as, talked about the trial, brought up the issues.

George: Are you talking about the letters? Yeah, I don't know, I'm not into writing letters too much. I call everybody, I was going to call him, but I don't know, I spaced it out.

Jade: Is there anything else that you want to talk about? Anything you want to say?

George: Just, thanks for the help. I don't really see anything different until the next trial, really.

Jade: Do you have any idea when your next trial could be?

George: I'm just starting the federal court appeals. Right now I've got to do a petition to the supreme court, then I have to get into the federal courts and from there, right after I get in there I'm going to try and get a federal review. I guess the FBI would probably be doing the investigations, so hopefully we can get it re-investigated.

Jade: Well good luck with that.

George: Yeah, I need it.

Jade: And how is your life in general now?

George: It's alright. I'm coping with everything.

Jade: What do you miss most?

George: Everything. Everything is taken for granted out there, everything.

Jade: What would be the first thing you'd do once you got let go?

George: I'd like to eat dinner at a lot of my family's houses. I miss a lot of that. The food's horrible over here.

Jade: What kind of food do you eat?

George: It's all processed meat and chicken, everything's processed turkey.

Jade: And you work in the kitchen right?

George: No, I just serve food out in the line.

Jade: Have you made any good friendships while you're here?

George: There's a couple. Nothing besides Gino, Marvin, and Kevin, there ain't nothing better than that.

Jade: Do you guys hang out a lot?

George: Yeah, we all do our own thing basically, but we're all good friends.

Jade: Have you gotten any visitors since you've been here?

George: No I haven't. My family can't afford it.

Jade: Do you talk to them on the phone?

George: Yeah, I talk to them all the time.

Jade: When did you arrive here in Arizona?

George: January 2001

Jade: And before that you were in Seward?

George: Yes.

Jade: Was it a hard transition to make?

George: At first it's always different coming to a new facility

Jade: I really appreciate you speaking with me and I wish you the best of luck. Also, Brian O'Donoghue told me to tell you that he's not going to give up. He's going to keep investigating into this and hopefully...

George: Yeah, there's also an "Innocent Project Northwest", based in Seattle, and maybe they could help you guys on what kind of procedures to take. I've got the address and stuff in the house. Centrum Ministries, also. They say we have to wait a little longer.