



## Memorandum of Interview

**Date:** August 10, 2015

**Time:** 16:05 - 16:45 hours

**Person Interviewed:** Andrew Choate

**Interviewer:** Jack L. Barnhart

### **Details:**

On the above date and at approximately 12:15 hours, Reporting Investigator visited Andrew Choate's residence in Gratis, Ohio. Attempts to interview Choate as his residence were met with negative results. Reporting Investigator called Choate, at telephone number (937) 361-4962, and left a voice mail. At 16:05 hours, Choate returned the voice mail and agreed to be interviewed.

Choate said that he was good friends with Mike Rowell, David Rowell's (victim) brother. Choate described that the Rowells as being Pentecostal. Choate said that he would spend the night at the Rowell's from time to time. Choate described David Rowell as being "a good kid". Choate said that a couple days after David Rowell's body was discovered, Mike Rowell came to Choate's residence to give him a winter coat. According to Choate, Mike Rowell told him that he (Rowell) would not be needing the coat anymore. Choate said that was the last time he saw Mike Rowell until Wampler's trial.

Choate said that David's father, Bobby Jack Rowell, took the murder very hard. According to Choate, rumors were that David Rowell was Bobby Jack's biological son and Mike Rowell was not. Choate said that the rumors were that Mike Rowell and David Rowell shared the same biological mother, Myrtle.

Choate described Charles Keith Wampler as being "an evil Son of a Bitch." Choate said that Wampler was new to the neighborhood and lived in the Gem City Estates Trailer Park. Choate said that he first met Wampler sometime in the fall of 1981 and knew him for a few months. Choate stated that he met Wampler through Mike Johnson, a mutual friend. Choate said that he visited Wampler's residence on a couple occasions, but never went inside. Choate stated that the last time was sometime in either November or December 1981. Choate said on that day he was at Wampler's residence with Mike Johnson. Choate claimed they were smoking cigarettes on the patio when Wampler tried to grab Choate's crotch area. Choate said that he believed Wampler was trying to molest him and he immediately left to go home.

Choate said that incident was not the last time he saw Wampler. Choate claimed that approximate two weeks prior to David Rowell's murder, Wampler, Johnson, and Choate got into a fist fight on Holman Street near the Moraine Meadows Elementary School and Reverend Hollis Hammond's residence. Choate said that Wampler and Johnson were talking trash to him when Choate took a swing at Johnson. According to Choate, Wampler and Johnson proceeded to punch him. Choate said that he was not injured in the fight and that it was over "kid's stuff".

Choate stated that Wampler constantly talked "big" around everyone. Choate said that when he saw Wampler, Wampler had a hunting knife in a sheath on his hip. Choate could not recall if he ever saw Wampler pull the knife, but he remembers Wampler carrying one. Reporting Investigator asked Choate about a sword that Choate told the Moraine Police about. Reporting Investigator read Choate's statement to Moraine Police. Choate stated that he never told the Moraine Police that Wampler had a sword. Choate said that part of his statement is false.

Choate said that he was good friends with Mike Johnson before Wampler moved to the neighborhood. Choate stated that Johnson began

to hang out with Wampler more and his friendship with Johnson became strained because of it. Choate said that Johnson began re-established friendship with Choate several days after David Rowell's murder. Choate said that he knew Johnson was arrested, charged and convicted of David Rowell's murder. Choate stated that Johnson was convicted in juvenile court.

Choate said that last time he spoke with Mike Johnson was in 2014. Choate stated that he speaks to Johnson approximately once a year. According to Choate, Johnson still claims his innocence. Choate said that he is not sure if Johnson was capable of committing this crime. However, Choate did state that he believes Wampler is.

Choate said that on 02/05/1982 he was home watching television with his mother. Choate stated that he was not allowed out after dark and that his mother was strict. Choate said that he did not see Mike Johnson during the evening of 02/05/1982. Choate claimed that he did not know anyone by the name of Ted Ritchie.

*(Note: Ted Ritchie testified that Johnson and he went to Choate's residence after they left Wampler's residence around 23:00 hours on 02/05/1982. This testimony was supported by Choate's trial testimony and Sharon Choate's, Choate's mother, testimony, where they state that Mike Johnson and Ted Ritchie came to their residence at 23:15 hours and stayed until midnight.)*

Choate said that the Moraine Police did not have a good reputation in 1982. Choate described Detective Mullins and Sergeant Wynne as being "assholes". Choate said that the Moraine Police always tried to charge people living in this neighborhood with crimes because they were poor people.

The interview ended under favorable conditions.

Investigator's Note: Choate's recall of the neighborhood and the events of 02/05/1982 was clear. Reporting Investigator believes Choate holds a grudge against Wampler. The allegation of Wampler trying to grab him is interesting, but Choate never indicated that he told his parents. Reporting Investigator believes Choate showed signs of deception and clearly had animosity towards Wampler. Choate's statement leads one to question whether he committed perjury in 1982 or lied in this interview?

It should also be noted that Choate may have had a role in the theft of a pit bull from a member of the Dayton Outlaws motorcycle gang. This should be noted because Choate was the subject of a conversation that Wampler and Johnson had at Wampler's residence on the evening of 02/05/1982. Ted Ritchie testified that he overheard the conversation.