SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

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THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA,	)
Plaintiff,	)
vs.	) CRIMINAL
CHARLES RAY MERRITT,	) CASE NO.: FVI1404194
Defendant.	)

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED

INTERVIEW OF:

CHARLES RAY MERRITT

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2014

(FILE ID - Chase Merritt Interview (10-22-2014))

TRANSCRIBED BY:
AMY P. SMITH
CSR #12154

Job No. CRM10222014

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2014

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(BEGINNING OF RECORDING)

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: October 22nd, 2014, at 0924 hours. Detective Bachman and Detective Hanke.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Want to offer to give him a ride or . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

Hey, Chase. Detective Bachman. Nice to meet you.

MR. MERRITT: Nice to meet you.

DETECTIVE HANKE: I'm Dan Hanke. Nice to meet you.

MR. MERRITT: Nice to meet you.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do you -- do you want some directions on what --

MR. MERRITT: No. They're -- we drove by the mall.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Cool. That will work.

Traffic was pretty bad?

MR. MERRITT: Oh, it was ridiculous.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Are they going shopping, or what?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. They're going to go to the

movies or shopping all day.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Whatever girls do.

MR. MERRITT: Exactly. She brought her girlfriend with her.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: This way. How old is she?

MR. MERRITT: (Inaudible.)

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I've got to grab some of my -- my other notes real quick.

If you'd do me a favor, what we have people do is, sit down and basically -- we're -- we're investigating, obviously you know, the McStays.

What I'd like you to do is, in as much detail as possible, from the time that you woke up to the -- the time you went to bed like the 4th, if you could put as much of that on paper as possible.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Just to try and help jog your memory as much.

MR. MERRITT: All right.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Is that cool?

I'm going to go grab all -- go grab all my stuff, and then I'll be back here in just a minute.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: One thing that I'll ask is, because I know you said that you wrote a book and --

and different -- or started to write a book --

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- is, if we could, in order to keep it, I guess, as sanitary as possible, if you could put your phone on just the chair outside, or whatever, so that way it's not -- you know, nobody says, oh, well, he referred back to this.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Cool.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You've got something to drink. You need water, or anything else?

MR. MERRITT: No.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: All right. Good deal.

I'll be back in just a minute then.

How did it go?

MR. MERRITT: That's about what I can remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Cup of coffee.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, like I said, I'm the one that spoke with you on the phone, Eddie Bachman.

You know, obviously, we -- we inherited that case. So that's why we asked you to come down here.

I -- I don't know much about you aside from, you know, what I read during the interviews and different stuff like that.

And tell me -- tell me a little about

yourself.
MR. MERRITT: I'm, well, a father of three. We're -- I'm -- I'm separated from their mother.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's Cathy; right?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
We're still very, very good friends.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: Can't live with each other.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.
MR. MERRITT: I work at Keene Engineering. I manufacture or design gold prospecting equipment.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Oh, cool.
MR. MERRITT: It's one of the first really good things that's happened since Joseph's disappearance.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: His -- when he disappeared, my life went -- was just pretty much turned upsidedown. And we lost everything.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.
MR. MERRITT: Cathy probably told you. We -- we lost everything.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.
MR. MERRITT: We lost where we were living, just everything. So I struggled. I've struggled over the last five and a half years, or so, trying to figure out

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what I was going to do. How I was going to, you know, make a living.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.
DETECTIVE HANKE: The waterfall industry was -- was very much -- I was planning on retiring, you know, doing that.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Gotcha.
MR. MERRITT: Joseph and I were just kicking butt with it. We were -- we were doing really well. I mean, we -- we had a lot of different projects in the works. We were -- I mean, I'm sure you -- you -- through his family, you know there was probably six or seven really big projects coming up.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.
MR. MERRITT: And we were -- I mean, we were excited about it. There was a lot of money going to be coming in. And then Joseph disappeared. It's just nothing, you know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: (Inaudible) so to speak?
MR. MERRITT: Well, yeah. Because I depended on him. I mean, we didn't own -- he owned his business, and I owned mine.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.
MR. MERRITT: But I depended on him for sales.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Of course.

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MR. MERRITT: He didn't -- he depended on me for manufacturing of the custom waterfalls. And when -- when he disappeared, that stopped.
And we tried -- we tried like hell to get Dan Kavanaugh --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.
MR. MERRITT: -- to answer the phone, to do anything. (Inaudible) wasn't in his best interest to -- to make the sales. He didn't get up till noon, you know.
When nothing happened with it, I just -- I was done. You know, we lost everything. So over the last five and a half years, we've been -- I've just been trying to make ends meet. Trying to figure out, you know, where I was going to.
And my sister, about a year ago, took me out dry washing.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.
MR. MERRITT: And it was like, well, this is cool. But why can't they make a better, you know, mousetrap. This is -- the things that they were manufacturing were just ridiculous, you know. And they'd been using them for a hundred years.
So I designed a dry washer for the gold prospecting industry.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: And I took it to the three manufacturers -- the three major manufactures. And Keene Engineering said, how much? And let's go.
So I've been designing equipment for them for the last nine or ten months now.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. I looked up Keene Engineering, and I saw there was a -- like a You Tube video. So I -- I'm assuming it's a dry washer, what you're talking about. Like --
MR. MERRITT: The "190"?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I think so, yeah. And it's got like a little video of -- is that you out there that's -- that's running the --
MR. MERRITT: It's possible.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- dry washer?
MR. MERRITT: It's possible.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: There's -- there's dozens of videos out there with the "190" and the "1-" --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That one, I think -- I don't remember if it had your name on there, or something. But it showed -- it was like someone loading dirt into the -- into the machine and then sifting it all out.
MR. MERRITT: Well, there's -- you know, like I

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said, there's probably two or -- I -- there is -- there's videos out there with me.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: But there's probably two or three dozen videos of the "190," the "160," the "151-S." All of -- all of those I designed.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So all those numbers, like that just upscales the model of it. Is that how it works?

MR. MERRITT: Keene was building what they called the "151."

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: The "151" is a dry washer that's been -- they've been manufacturing for 38 years. But it was mediocre, at best estimate.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: But the industry had been complacent. You know, if it ain't broken, don't fix it. That type of attitude.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: A bunch of gold prospectors that were fairly low educated. You know, they just --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Didn't have input in manufacturing and design ideas?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

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So when I saw it, I was -- I -- I changed the designs. And I built the "190." It wasn't called the "190" then. But I -- I built a dry washer that was dustless, that was -- would catch more gold. It was just better.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Huh.

MR. MERRITT: And I took it to Keene. And they started manufacturing it. They liked it, started manufacturing. And then they had me design a smaller unit exactly like it so that it would be more portable.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Oh, okay.

MR. MERRITT: So the "190" is a step up above the "151" by a lot. And then the "160" is a step down from the "190" because it's just smaller. It's exactly the same unit, except miniaturized.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Gotcha.

MR. MERRITT: The "151" then -- they had -- they had me redesign the "151." And put all of the technology in the "1-" -- that's in the "190" and the "160" in the "151" except for the fact that it's enclosed.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Huh.

MR. MERRITT: So it improved the "151" by a -- a considerable amount.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

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MR. MERRITT: Basically, the "151" has about 80 percent gold recovery. So for every shovel full of dirt you put in, it will pull 80 percent of the gold out of that dirt.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Huh.

MR. MERRITT: The "190" has 98 percent recovery rate. The "160" has a "98."

Now, we did -- we redone -- redid the "151," and it's now called the "151-S." And it has upwards of just above 90 percent.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Huh.

MR. MERRITT: So we -- we just -- just basically built a better mousetrap.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Kind of like iPhones; right? You've got -- you know, you start out with the "3" or the "4." You go to the "4-S," the "5."

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. It -- we just -- I just improved all of the dry-washing equipment so that it would work the way it's supposed to work.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Gotcha.

MR. MERRITT: And that's all.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Is there that much gold out there to find?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Really?

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MR. MERRITT: There's -- there's a lot of gold.

In the State of California, they estimate that 2 percent of the available gold has been found.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Huh.

MR. MERRITT: Which is -- you know, it leaves a lot.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's why all the prospectors.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

The -- the problem with -- the problem with it now is though, the 2 percent that -- that they found is most of the bigger stuff.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: It's -- it's the -- the easiest stuff to find. Now it's a little more difficult. You have to really search. Because gold -- they -- you know, they say, gold is where you find it. It's -- it's hard to find.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: So you have to be really good at reading topography. You -- you just have to really know --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So it's like you're just going to go out to --

MR. MERRITT: No. No. There's -- there's very

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specific places gold is going to be. And you have to understand how the -- all the way back to where the Earth was originally -- originally made --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Huh.

MR. MERRITT: -- hundreds of thousands of years back where the surge -- the surges of the volcanos and things brought the gold to the surface. And then after it was brought to the surface, where did -- where did it go through the water systems and, you know.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Oh, okay.

MR. MERRITT: I mean, there's just a ton about -- I don't know even -- I -- I know how to build a dry washer. I know how to make a dry washer now. Finding gold is -- you know, that's . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So like the show -- like you were saying, going to the show this weekend. You went out and presented the dry washer to all these folks to try and get them to -- to purchase it?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Well, this show was for the -- I'm trying to think of the name of it.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You told me an acronym the other day.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. And I can't remember the three letters. I always forget the damn thing.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: "G" something.

MR. MERRITT: GPAA.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Well, it was a GPAA-sanctioned show, which is, basically we're trying to raise funds to help miners keep mining land.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Because the State of California, as you probably just heard, they took away a third of the Los Angeles Forest.

And the -- when the President came into -- he declared it a national monument. No more dry washing. No more wet. No more nothing there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: (Inaudible) shut down.

MR. MERRITT: They're telling you, they can't do any prospecting there. That's -- that's going to close two or three of the gold-mining stores in the vicinity. They're -- they're going to bankrupt because they depended on them.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: Well, we're -- we're trying to just raise awareness and raise funds to help fight things like that, keep things like that from not happening because they're public lands. We should be able to use them.

You know, we should be able to do what we

want with them as long as we're not destroying the habitat. As long as we're, you know -- we take -- you know, you pack in, pack out. Just like anyone else --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: -- you make sure that everything is clean. If you dig a hole, you fill it back in. You know, it's just --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Common sense stuff; right?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. And -- but, you know, they're -- the people that -- you know, these green people --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: -- you know, they bring in stupid-ass things like the turtle, you know. And that's one of the reasons the -- the forest was closed.

They brought -- they were saying that the -- that the tortoise was endangered. There's no tortoises there. They're in the desert.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: But yet, they used that argument. They're digging holes, and the tortoises can crawl in and not get out. And they die. But there's no tortoises there.

And so, you know, we're trying -- we're just trying to help.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And these people buy-off on that?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Oh, yeah. They buy-off on it. Like -- it's like -- so that's what we've been trying to do.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: That's -- that's what this show was all about, on top of the fact that we took a crap-load of equipment out and let people use it. And, of course, trying to make sales and trying to promote Keene Engineering.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: Because Keene Engineering is the largest gold prospecting equipment in the world. They -- they're probably -- 90 percent of the gold prospecting equipment that is manufactured and -- in the entire world is manufactured by them. And the other 10 percent is five or six others.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: A few other companies?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. There's three -- there's three major ones -- Jobe, Keene, and Royal. Jobe is just an import company. They bring in stuff from China, more than anything. Royal is a local manufacturer that builds exceptionable -- except- -- their -- their equipment is really well built. But

they use the same technology as they used a hundred years ago.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Oh, okay.
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. So they're just -- they're floundering.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.
MR. MERRITT: But Keene is really interested in improving their technology and so . . .
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Makes since.
MR. MERRITT: Anyway, that's . . .
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So -- so you've got that. And then you said you have three kids also?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Now, that's -- I haven't talked to the kids. But it's Taylor, Jay and Ray; right?
MR. MERRITT: Exactly.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. You visit with the kids a lot or . . .
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I see them usually at least once a week, and sometimes more. It depends on -- sometimes a little less. It depends on --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Your work schedule, I'm sure.
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Because I'm -- I -- right now I'm stuck in Chatsworth at least three or four days a

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week.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.
MR. MERRITT: I'm -- I'm just stuck there because I -- I can't drive. It's 130 miles one way.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: (Inaudible.)
MR. MERRITT: Well, yeah. And I don't have a driver's license right now.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh.
MR. MERRITT: I'm working on trying to get it back. But, you know. So I get dropped off there, and I'm there for three days.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.
And then back --
MR. MERRITT: Then my girlfriend gets tired of me not being home. She comes and picks me up.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Time to come mow the lawn and do all that stuff.
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Well, yeah. We don't have a lawn. But, yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do your housework and that?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Any other hobbies aside from the -- the mining stuff.
MR. MERRITT: Not anymore. I used to bike. I mountain biked. But after I had a heart attack, that's

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kind of gone by the wayside.
But -- I've had two -- two heart attacks now. And -- well, three. But two major ones. And then one not quite so bad.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Is everything all right now or --
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I'm -- I'm feeling decent. I -- I keep really active so it's -- you know, I -- I get winded fairly easy. But it's -- I think I'm going to have to go in and get angioplasty fairly soon.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Really?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I'm starting to feel it. It's starting to -- like if I walk up a flight of stairs, about 15 seconds after I walk up the flight of stairs, I'll get lightheaded.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So now with that, did they put stents in that? Or how does that work?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I have three stents.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: "Three stents."
Buddy of mine had a couple of heart transplants. So, I mean, I've heard a little bit about that. Yeah.
MR. MERRITT: Heart transplant?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah. Bad stuff.
MR. MERRITT: That's major.

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Stents are --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Just to help keep the valve flowing; right?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. And, you know, it's a two-day -- two-day thing in the hospital. One day you're there, they do it. The next day, they release you, so . . .
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So they've got to go in through like a main artery, though, right? Like a leg or the neck?
MR. MERRITT: Through the -- through the -- yeah. Through the groin right here. It's --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: He said it's pretty painful. He's had those, too.
MR. MERRITT: You know, it's -- it's not -- it's nothing for, you know, up here, but --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: To heal up down there.
MR. MERRITT: Well, they put a -- but now -- a friend of mine just had two stents put in. They say -- he said that he puts -- now they put a little thing on with a suction cup, and it does -- it's not painful at all.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Huh.
MR. MERRITT: But with me, they put a damn clamp under my ass and -- and clamped down on that artery.

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And it was misery for like two hours. And they wouldn't take it off because they said, oh, you'll bleed to death.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: So, yeah.

But I'll probably have to have it done probably in the next few months.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Huh.

MR. MERRITT: It's -- yeah. I can start -- I can feel it --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: -- you know. Usually, I always take -- I always have Nitroglycerin at least close by --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Gotcha.

MR. MERRITT: -- so . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And that's always -- that's another thing. He -- he would -- he said, obviously, with his diet and everything like that, that he could start feeling when things weren't going right or when stuff was off. Like same -- same --

MR. MERRITT: Oh, yeah. You can feel it. You -- yeah. Your eyesight goes in and out. Like if your heart isn't keeping up, your eyesight -- it's like -- yeah. It's been going on for six, seven years, eight

years.

So my -- I think the last surgery I had was seven years ago, or so. Something --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Like a problem with your family history or --

MR. MERRITT: No. I'm -- well, my dad died of massive heart failure. But he was an alcoholic and -- you know, my mom, same, kidney failure and massive heart failure. But they were both alcoholics. And they both smoked all -- their entire life. And so, you know, they caused that actually, so . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Gotcha.

MR. MERRITT: My grandmother lived to a ripe old age. So I think it's just -- I felt -- back years ago, I was working on a -- at a Warner Brother's store.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: And I was up like 24 feet in the air on a ladder. And I fell and hit my sternum. And it bruised my heart and both arteries.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Really?

MR. MERRITT: And from what the doctor said, besides there being a little bit of cholesterol, a little bit of plaque, what was happening, when my heart was beating, my arteries were trying to close because they -- the -- the walls were very thin because of that

injury. And this is like 20 years later, so . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Crazy.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I mean, I'm healthy. Just -- you know.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Still -- still able to go prospecting and stuff like that, though?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I mean, is that like strenuous? I've never done it, so . . .

MR. MERRITT: It's -- it can be.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

And that's what I'm trying to do is design equipment to make it not so strenuous, you know. I just designed a bucket lift for -- for the dry washers so that people could bring the buckets over and set them down. Because normally they pick them up and have to hold them like chest high --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: For shifting it, or something?

MR. MERRITT: Seventy-, eighty-pound buckets as you pour it into the dry washer. That's a lot of work, especially when the average age of a dry -- of a prospector is over 50 --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: -- so . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You've got to be in decent shape to do all that.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

So I designed a lift. They just walk up and set it on the lift and hit a button. And the bucket goes up and dumps in --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Huh.

MR. MERRITT: -- and comes back down. That's --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Is that already in production or --

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Yeah. We're -- we took it out to the --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Oh, that's cool.

MR. MERRITT: -- to the outing. Yeah.

I've got pictures on my phone. I'll show you --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Good.

MR. MERRITT: -- if you want to see the equipment.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So like I said, obviously, you know that -- that we're following up on the McStay case. We've been working this. You know, we -- we, obviously, inherited the case last November. We picked it up from -- from then. We were -- we were recovered because that's when -- when they were found, is last November.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: From then on, we've been working this case nonstop. You know, trying to follow up on everything.
And I know -- like that was a question that you asked on the phone was, you know, how come it's been so long, and you guys haven't talked to anyone?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah, of course.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, I mean, we're out following up on everything. I mean, there's evidence we processed. There's, you know, different stuff that we had to go do. We had to go, you know, to houses to do -- to do different stuff. You know --
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- look -- examine vehicles, follow up on what stuff that San Diego did during that.
And that was a -- a large part of it, is that we had to follow up on everything that they did, you know, and review their case and --
MR. MERRITT: Right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- go through all that.
MR. MERRITT: Did they -- did they kind of flounder it?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You know, I don't know if -- if they floundered it. At that point --

MR. MERRITT: Because that's what Joseph's dad is --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You know, and --
MR. MERRITT: -- claiming forever.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And I'm not going to speak down on -- on their department. At that point, they had a missing persons case, you know. And -- and I don't know. You know, I can't speak on -- on his behalf, on -- on Dugal's behalf, because, you know, he -- he did do a lot of work on there.
MR. MERRITT: I liked Detective Dugal. He was --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You know, I -- I've never personally met him. So, I mean, I've met a handful of the other folks from there. But I've never -- I've never personally met him.
But they did do a lot of work on the case. And that's a lot of -- when we got the case, we had to -- we had to get up to speed on everything.
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You know, so, obviously, we're at the point now where we're starting to talk to folks that are -- are real close to Joseph and Summer and all the -- all them.
And along with that is his -- you know, his business partner here. So what I'd like to do is, if

you could kind of, I guess, just outline how -- you know, your guys' business partnership or, you know, friendship. Just kind of go over that for me.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You know, don't -- don't leave any part out, you know. And then the big thing we stress to folks is that they, you know, number one be completely honest, you know. Some people, obviously, you know, they don't want to speak ill of folks and stuff like that.
MR. MERRITT: I -- I have no problem.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You know, be -- be completely honest about that. Don't leave any little details out because a little detail could mean -- you know, it could be something. Not -- not mean a whole lot to whoever we're talking to. But it could mean a lot to -- to us --
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- you know. And just let us know what -- what you have.
MR. MERRITT: All right. So you want to know about Joseph's and my business relationship? friendship?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Both, yeah. You know, if you can kind of go in there. Because I -- I know, from

what I've talked -- from the folks that we've talked to in the interviews and stuff like that, it sounds like they kind of went hand in hand.
MR. MERRITT: Yeah, they did.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So, I mean, if you could kind of just take us -- take us through that.
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Well, as I'm sure you're aware, Joseph and I were fairly close. I mean, we talked every day. Sometimes many, many times a day --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.
MR. MERRITT: -- on the phone. We -- he -- I met him originally -- I was already manufacturing waterfalls. And he heard about me somewhere. I can't even -- I don't even remember where. Somebody recommended me.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: Because he had a water feature that he had taken on. He had actually already taken the deposit on it. But then he couldn't find his -- the guy that was doing some of his custom waterfalls couldn't get it done. It was something that he couldn't figure out. And I ended up somehow getting recommended for it.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: So I came in, fixed the problem,

made it work. And -- and then once that feature was done, he started using me more and more and more and more until I was pretty much the only one that he used for custom features.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: The production features, he was using probably a dozen other companies or quite a few other companies. He would buy them -- well, from places all over the country.

But I was doing most of his custom stuff because I -- I kind of -- well, I could -- I could build waterfalls that the other companies couldn't do.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: I was just good at building custom features.

It just continued. He -- he kept bringing me waterfalls and new waterfalls. And him and I got to get -- got to know each other pretty well.

We had dinner every couple of weeks together with -- generally -- generally, he came down because he had a favorite place to eat down where we lived.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And he came down. Generally -- generally, either I bought or he bought dinner. And my whole family generally went with him.

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Summer almost -- Summer never came. Joseph didn't do a whole lot with his business acquaintances and Summer combined. We didn't -- we never got to know Summer all that well.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I mean, I -- I knew Summer because I was at Joseph's house all the time. I helped him move. I helped him move out of San Clemente.

I -- I believe with -- along with Summer's mother, I think Summer's sister, if I remember right, Summer, Joseph. I helped them pack their containers.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: They had two or three big containers.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: I helped him pack them. I -- I helped move all of the potted plants and stuff over to Joseph's mom's house because they couldn't move them over to his -- their new house yet. But they had to move out of their apartment.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: So their mom said bring them over there. So -- so that's -- that's actually when I met Joseph's mom. We went over there and dropped off all the pots and stuff.

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And, I mean, we were just -- we just -- we talked all the time. I mean, him and I were very close. Had -- we had -- most -- most of the time, we -- we -- it was extremely smooth sailing. We did really well together.

I would build the waterfalls. He would -- he would sell them. Sometimes there were -- you know, him and I, we -- we always got along. We sometimes had disagreements with how water features were -- or should be made --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: -- you know. But, you know, it was -- you know, it was pretty much -- you know, we got along really well.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Joseph was generous to a fault, you know. Him and I -- I mean, if -- if I needed -- if I needed money for a feature or if I needed personal money, it didn't make any difference. We were -- we were moving so quickly with the -- you know, the water features from one to another.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: The finances weren't generally a big issue. Him and I -- we did -- I don't know. I think we were -- we had figured out that the year that he

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disappeared we were probably going to be doing close to a million dollars in sales.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's good.

MR. MERRITT: I mean, retail --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: -- on his end. Which is exceptional --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: -- from where we started.

He was doing pretty well with the production -- the production stuff.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: But the custom stuff, he had -- before he met me, he was kind of floundering with because he couldn't find anybody consistent to get the -- the big custom features out.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And so that was growing exponentially. We were -- we were doing better and better and better as the -- as the months went on.

And, I mean, I don't know what else to say. I mean, we -- we were just -- we were doing really well.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: We -- we talked all the time. We --

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you know, I went -- I helped him move. I helped him take his counters out when he moved into his new house. I went with him to pick up his flooring. The flooring was all the -- the wood floor --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: -- the -- was in his living room. We opened all the boxes to air them out because they had to be aired out. And I was -- him and I were going to actually lay the floors.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I -- for weeks before he left, I was there, you know, just helping him with the stor- -- little storage unit to the left of his house.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: If you look at -- facing his house, to the left, that new storage unit there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: I'm -- he bought it. And he was a little inept at mechanical --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Gotcha.

MR. MERRITT: -- and so he opened the box and was like lost. So I went up and helped him put that in.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: You know, things like that. I mean, we -- we were just back and forth. We helped each

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other back and forth all the time.

Spent a -- I spent a lot of time with him, either him at my house or me at his house. We -- we went on a few outings together. We -- you know, I -- I went up and hiked the hills behind his house quite a bit.

Matter of fact, one of the videos on the internet is him taking a video of me climbing the --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I think I saw that one; right? There's -- is that -- that's a big huge mountain thing that's behind the house over there?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Did you make it all the way up?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I mean -- I mean -- God, that was a flipping nightmare. That was tough. And that was -- that was not long after I had the heart attack.

So you probably -- I think on the video you heard him saying some -- you probably heard him saying something about, you know, my -- my chest and --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I don't remember him saying nothing about "chest."

MR. MERRITT: Anyway, I mean, we all got along great.

I -- to be honest, I didn't particularly

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like Summer.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I don't know very many people that did, actually. But Joseph and her were -- from what Joseph told me, he was having some major problems with -- with Summer.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: He loved her to death. He loved her. I know that. But she was pretty persnickety, you know. Things like, I went to their house one day for pizza. And we sat down -- I mean, we were -- I was there helping him with the tile, or something. I can't remember exactly what I was there for. But she ended up serving the pizza, gave me a plate with pizza on it -- a couple of slices on it. And the kids, set them down at their table. Because they had a table of their own.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: And she had forks on the table -- forks and knives on the table. Well, I just picked up my pizza and started eating it. She went off on me --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Really?

MR. MERRITT: -- because I didn't use a knife and fork in front of her kids. I was just like, it's pizza. You know, it's pizza. It's not -- you know,

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and that's what I told her. I said, it's pizza. You know, you pick it up and eat it --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: -- you know. And I was -- I was really a bad influence and -- I mean, just . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So how did that pan out?

MR. MERRITT: She -- she stormed out and said, I'm not eating with a pig and da-da-da-da-da. And I was like -- well, I looked at Joseph, and I said, really? He goes, you know.

And that's -- but that's the type of personality. I was getting at an example.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: That's the type of personality that -- that she had. I mean, sometimes she was the nicest person on the planet. She would run up and give you a hug. And then sometimes she would be like -- you know, it's like, I think she's bipolar -- bipolar maybe.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I mean, she was -- she was a handful for Joseph. And Joseph was having a lot of problems with her being really -- well, he thought she was very self-centered.

But -- but she -- she had -- had this group

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of people, not even her sister was included in it. Joseph, her three kids, I think one or two of her friends, and that was it. No one else was allowed in the circle, you know. And she was very adamant about it. You know, this is our family and -- you know.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Three kids? Is that including Jonah in that also or --

MR. MERRITT: Jonah was not in the circle.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So who were the three kids?

MR. MERRITT: Two kids.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Two kids.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. No. Jonah was -- she had a big problem with Jonah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: You -- you're probably aware of the accusations --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: -- sexual acquisitions and stuff. I knew all about all of that.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What -- what did they tell you about that?

MR. MERRITT: Apparently, from what Joseph said, Jonah was looking at porn on the computer in Joseph's

office.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And I -- from what I gather, I don't think he was caught looking at it. But the history was looked at.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Oh.

MR. MERRITT: And -- by -- wow, my mind is blank -- Joseph's wife. And she decided that it was -- he was a bad influence on her kids.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And that he was, obviously, influencing them and that -- probably touched them, and, you know. I mean, it was -- she just went off.

And so I think chargers were filed or, at least, it was taken to Child Services.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Anyway, they were -- it was a big, big, big thing. And then, eventually, it was dropped by the Child Services, from what Joseph said. And -- and, you know, not -- not much came of it. But it was a big contention between them, the whole family.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Gotcha.

MR. MERRITT: It was -- it was bad. Joseph was pretty stressed about it. He was -- he wasn't real happy.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So as this is all going -- your guys' business is going good at that -- at the point, you know, all the way up until when they go missing?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Any issues at all with the business?

MR. MERRITT: No. I mean, you know, just same -- same old issues that any other business would have. You know, sometimes you'd have a customer wants something faster than you can produce it or -- or, you know, something was the wrong color or, you know, a rock -- a rock fell off, you know. I mean, nothing -- nothing that I can think of that was real big issues. I mean, it was just standard business.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Nothing that stands out, like you've got angry customers, or anything like that, at you guys?

MR. MERRITT: No. Joseph -- I didn't talk to the customers really. I -- I associated with Joseph. So the only -- only thing I knew about the customers is what Joseph said.

When he was coming over on the 4th, we were going to be talking about a table that was -- a sofa table that was supposed to be delivered. That was -- I

think that table was a little late, a week or two. I don't remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: But it was done. And we were going to be talking about Saudi Arabia. Because the Saudi -- the Saudi Arabia project was -- we were already in the middle of it. I mean, it was -- it was already a done deal. And I had already gotten the sheet metal place to start producing the -- the pieces and -- I mean, we were already in the middle of it.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I mean, it was -- it was -- and we were in the middle of two or three different projects that were pretty hot that needed -- that needed talked about and, you know, we needed to kind of zero in on when we were going to be creating them and when we were going to be shipping them and --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- the finances about each one of them and things like that. That's -- that's what -- basically what we were --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: With that, who else did you guys deal with, like business-wise, like all the way down? Like who would help you guys with the fountains, or -- or anything like that?

MR. MERRITT: The sheet metal place. And I'm trying to think -- sitting here trying to think of the name of the sheet metal place. It was in Irwindale. I worked there. I can't remember the name of the sheet metal place.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Who worked there with you?

MR. MERRITT: Mostly just me.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, I mean, is it -- was it your business?

MR. MERRITT: No. No. No. No. I was -- I was building water features. I -- they were doing most of my sheet metal stuff. And then I used -- I used their facility. They had a fairly large building.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And we -- I finished the assembly there and crated the waterfalls up and shipped them out.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: But they did all of the sheet metal, the bending and welding. Unless I -- a lot of the welding, I did. But they would -- mostly the breaking and shearing of the sheet metal, things like that.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do you remember their name?

MR. MERRITT: I can't remember. You know, this has been five and a half years ago. And I -- I never

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liked them very much. You know, the old guy was kind of a prick and -- but, you know, it was -- it was what it was.

And at the end after Joseph had disappeared -- well, before Joseph disappeared, he was demanding money because we were in the middle of the Saudi project and we were in the middle of a couple of other things. And he wanted the money upfront. And Joseph was saying, well, do the work first. We already --

Because Joseph supplied all the material. And he said, well, do the work first. And then -- and he said, no. And so Joseph and him were going back and forth a little bit about that. And that's one of the things we talked about on the 4th, just trying to appease him --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- making -- to make sure that we got the Saudi project done.

Joseph gave me checks for -- to get some things done for -- for those things. And it was just -- he was just a pain in the butt. I mean, he was old -- old school.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Is this Metro Sheet Metal? Is that --

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MR. MERRITT: Metro, yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Metro Sheet Metal.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Well, you -- you started mentioning about the 4th. Do me a favor, from the 4th, describe for me -- I know we had you -- had you write it out also. But describe for me, from the time that you wake up on the 4th and -- I mean, I know that -- I mean, you said that it's been -- it's been a long time, this and that.

But this -- this is a pretty significant deal that happened in your life.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I mean, your -- your friend goes missing. His family goes missing. So, I mean, we --

MR. MERRITT: I --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We all have significant stuff that happens in our lives. We can remember, you know, good portions of it, so . . .

MR. MERRITT: And I -- and I do. I remember, I mean, most of the day.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Try -- try to remember as much as possible of that and just go ahead and -- and start, like I said, from the time you woke up

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and -- and just go through your day.

MR. MERRITT: I think I woke up somewhere around 7:00-ish. But, you know, I -- I don't remember exactly what time I woke up. I usually woke up 6:00, 7:00 --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- depending on the day and what was going on that day.

I'm pretty sure I would have -- and I don't remember exactly. But I'm pretty sure I would have waited till at least 9:00-ish --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: -- to call Joseph to -- because I knew -- we had already made arrangements. He was going to be coming down. But he doesn't get up and around until --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: A little later?

MR. MERRITT: -- later.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And you definitely don't call his phone before 9:00-ish because she'll go off.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Gotcha.

MR. MERRITT: So I'm pretty sure that I waited until after 9:00 sometime. And probably not too far after nine o'clock because I'm sure I had quite a few things that I needed to focus on that day.

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And I got a hold of Joseph. We made arrangements. He was running late doing something. Because we were supposed to meet a little earlier than we actually did. But I can't remember why. He had -- I don't know -- phone calls, or something.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I don't know exactly what it was. But he -- he was running a little late. I think he had a stop to make on the way down, but -- either to pick up something or -- I don't -- I don't remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: But, anyway, sometime around noon-ish, I think. And I'm -- again, it's -- it's vague. But sometime midday, I met him at Chick-fil-A, and we ate and talked about all of the stuff.

We were there for a while. I don't -- I don't know exactly how long. But it was quite a while. And we went over everything.

After the meeting, he went his way. I went mine. I went -- well, I went home first. I had to -- I don't remember what I went home first for. But I went home first. Then I went to Ontario to Ramcast.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What's that?

MR. MERRITT: It's an ornamental iron supply company.

MR. MERRITT: It's like somewhere near --

DETECTIVE HANKE: -- Airport Circle.

MR. MERRITT: Anyway, Mission and -- near Archibald.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: There's a -- there's a plumbing supply there. And there's also a glass company there that we were getting some tinted glass from.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And I'm pretty sure I went by there to see if that was available. As a matter of fact, I think that's where we were getting the glass from for the Saudi project.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And we bought quite a bit of glass from them -- from that company. And it's right there on Mission. It's near Archibald. But I can't remember -- I mean, I -- I just drove there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: And we usually came from (inaudible) supplier down in that area and went that direction. So it was just there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: After that, I know I got -- I got something to eat somewhere, probably fast food, Jack in

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember what I was getting there. But it -- more than likely it was some hinges that we -- we use on -- between two -- between the waterfalls when we -- if we do any pivoting waterfalls.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: And more than likely that's mostly what I ended up getting there. But I know I went to Ramcast. And then plumbing. I went to a plumbing supply. And I don't remember what I needed there either.

And I can't remember whether it was the plumbing supply -- there's -- there's a couple of them that I dealt with. One on Mission.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And -- Mission and -- I can't remember the street.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What city?

MR. MERRITT: What street is the airport on?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: In Ontario?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Archibald.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE HANKE: You can get off any of those, Archibald, Haven. But it's south of, and it's like --

the Box, or someplace. And I think I went home after that. If I'm -- if I'm not mistaken, I'm almost positive I went directly home after that, which would have been probably -- well, I would have hit the last place that I had to do business with before 5:00, because any of them would have been closed before -- or after 5:00. So it would have probably been sometime -- by the time I got back to Rancho, sometime before 6:00 probably.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And I don't recall much else. I mean, I -- I -- I remember being home. I remember -- now, the -- Joseph called at -- what? -- I think 8:47, or whatever time that was. His last phone call was that he called me. I do not remember getting that phone call. Cathy does.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Okay. Cathy told me that he called, and I looked at the phone. And -- and I didn't answer it. And she got on my butt for not answering the phone. And I told her, you know, I talked to him enough. I'll talk to him in the morning, or whatever.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: But I don't remember getting the phone call.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.
MR. MERRITT: I just don't remember.
But I don't remember like -- you know, there's a lot of things about that day I don't remember. I -- I -- the -- at 8:40, whatever it was when he called, I had -- I -- I'm sure I had to have been home because I was -- I don't think I left anywhere after I went home that night.
I think I went to bed somewhere close to 11:00-ish probably because I know the kids and I were watching TV. And that's about it. I mean, that's --
Most of the day is kind of a -- is a haze now. But it's -- I mean, I'm pretty sure that was pretty much the basic sequence of events. But, you know, I -- it's a haze.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So you mentioned that while you guys are at -- are at Chick-fil-A, you guys are talking about business. Tell me about that.
MR. MERRITT: Well, we were just going over all the different waterfalls, the -- the table waterfall, the Saudi Arabia waterfall. There was a -- we were talking about the -- we had just finished a prototype for Mr. Clean, the car wash.
They were planning on doing a chain of Mr. Clean waterfalls -- or Mr. Clean car washes. They

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were starting Back East. And they were going to do like -- I don't know. I think it was 500 of them across the nation over the next ten years.
And they were planning on giving Joseph the contract for every single one of them --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.
MR. MERRITT: -- to do this bad-ass waterfall. And we had -- I had built the first prototype. It was all blue tile. It was -- it was a gorgeous waterfall.
And it was -- I think it was upwards of 18,000, $20,000 a piece for these waterfalls. They were pretty extensive.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.
MR. MERRITT: And Joseph and I -- we were talking about what we could do them for if we did them in production. You know, instead of just doing one when they called for it, to go ahead and do two or three. And see if we could get the price down so that -- because he was going to be presenting a final price to them. And he wanted to make sure that he came in at a price that they wouldn't bock at because it was a multi-million-dollar deal, you know, 500 waterfalls at close to $20,000 a piece. It was -- that was a big deal. It was a really big deal.
So we were talking about that. I remember

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that because that was -- we were pretty excited about that. They had already gotten the other water feature. And they were happy with it. And it was -- it came out gorgeous.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I don't know whether you ever saw it.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: No. I haven't seen that.
MR. MERRITT: Have you seen what many of the waterfalls --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Some of them. I haven't -- that one is not one that I've seen.
MR. MERRITT: It was beautiful. It went into the Mr. Clean car wash Back East somewhere. I can't remember the state. But we shipped it out. And I -- actually, it's one of the ones I actually fly in to install. And I can't even remember where the hell it was.
I flew out of state quite a few -- you know, quite often.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.
MR. MERRITT: Every two or three months I would be at some other -- some other state installing waterfalls.
I can't remember what state that one was in.

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But I think -- Missouri. Anyway --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- but we talked about that. That was up and coming really soon. They were going to give him the go-ahead to do another one or two or three of them. So we were -- we were kind of gearing up for that.
And we talked about whether it would be cost effective to do more than one at a time. And going at -- you know, having two or three in front. So that we could ship out when they finished each one --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.
MR. MERRITT: -- of the car washes.
We talked about his house. We were going to be doing some more stuff. I don't remember what it was. The stainless steel, he -- he had ordered or was ordering his stainless steel appliances. He was getting all the stainless steel and stuff. And he wanted me to help him put them in.
The wood floor, we talked about when the wood floor was going to be ready to -- and we were talking about the different ways of installing it and stuff, trying to figure out (inaudible). And he was going --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

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MR. MERRITT: -- somebody come in, because neither one of us -- I had -- I had done wood floors before, but --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It's not easy.

MR. MERRITT: No. And it -- and it was nothing like what he wanted. Because he wanted -- from what he was talking about -- or she wanted it to go in patterns and stuff. And I was telling him, I was like, dude, you know, yeah. We could probably get it done. But, you know, I mean --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: (Inaudible.)

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I was like -- so he was going to see what it would cost for a professional to do it. But we were -- we had talked about a lot of different things, you know.

He was paying me for some of the projects we had already done, some we were working on, giving me checks for Metro, which I gave them.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: May have -- may have given me money for -- no. I don't -- I don't think he did. He was -- he generally ordered the pumps and the -- when he -- when we start a project, he would order the pumps and the hoses and the -- the basic plumbing stuff --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: -- and had it drop-shipped to me. But sometimes I would go up to -- and pick up at Little Giant pumps and stuff. We -- I -- we may have been talking about pumps too because there was quite a few projects coming up, and I know we didn't have all the pumps and stuff for them. So we may have been talking about that. That's about it.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The checks that you talked about that he gave, what were the -- what were the checks?

MR. MERRITT: Well, they were just -- just checks for -- for Metro, for me, for just stuff that we were -- we were planning.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I mean, we -- every time we met, he would -- we would figure out what the next week or two or three or four would be. And he would give me checks for -- for those things.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And no different that day. I mean, he picked -- I know that he gave me one or two checks for Metro. I don't remember how many exact.

I know that one of them was for the Saudi project.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: I think Metro was doing some -- some other project, too, with us at that -- at that particular time. And I can't remember what waterfall. It may have been the hair salon, Paul Mitchell. It may have been a Paul Mitchell.

Because we had a contract -- Joseph and I, we had had -- Joseph had the contract for Paul Mitchell. And any salon -- any Paul Mitchell salon that was built or established anywhere in the continental United States, we built waterfalls for. And so we were -- that was another one of the projects.

And I think there was a Paul Mitchell waterfall in process then. But I can't remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: But I finished at the -- at the end, after Joseph was -- had disappeared, I finished the -- I -- I made sure that Metro got paid. I finished the Saudi project. I made sure all of the shipping was taken care of. I actually flew to Saudi Arabia and installed it --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- myself. That was a -- that was a nightmare project. Working with Saudi Arabians, can --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I can only imagine.

MR. MERRITT: Saudi Arabian people are -- they're

characters. I like the Afghani people and the Pakistani people. All of the laborers and stuff there, they were great. They were incredible. Saudi people are a whole different animal. They think everybody else is dirt. I mean, it's -- it's pretty bad. But I flew in, did that.

We shipped out another couple of waterfalls. And I can't -- I don't remember which ones. It may have been Paul Mitchell. I don't remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: But through -- through Metro --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- we finished projects and -- and got them out after Joseph -- Joseph disappeared. And then I was done. I mean, I had no money.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: You know, I couldn't do anything else. And we lost our house. I'm sure Cathy told you. We -- we pretty much lost everything.

Without Joseph selling, I had no sales.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: I had -- I had no income. And so it was -- it was over --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- you know. And then we -- then I

started floundering, trying to figure out what I was going to do.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So he gives you, you said, one or two checks for Metro. And then you said checks also for -- for you?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Like check or checks plural or --

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: At least one. I know -- I know -- I'm sure that he gave me at least one, maybe two. I don't remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I just know that there was stuff that was coming up that had to get paid. And, you know, I had -- I had Metro that I had to pay cash to for some of their labor.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: Some material that they had to purchase, things like that. I had labor -- a laborer that I paid myself that, you know, had to get paid. And then I had bills. You know, my -- my home bills,

and stuff like that, so . . .

But I don't remember whether it was one or two checks. I don't remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Who were the laborers that he had?

MR. MERRITT: Who?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That Joe had. Did you say he had laborers also or --

MR. MERRITT: Oh, no. No.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- just you had laborers?

MR. MERRITT: Just me.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Who's the laborer you had?

MR. MERRITT: I, generally, just hired -- hired guys like at Home Depot.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Like day workers and stuff?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Yeah. I rarely -- I mean, it was -- wasn't too often. But if I was -- especially if I was doing local installations and stuff, I always -- because these waterfalls -- some of these waterfalls are, you know, thousand pounds --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: -- so . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So then when -- when he would pay you -- I mean, would you take it to the bank and deposit it or --

MR. MERRITT: No. Generally cashed it.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Cashed it?

MR. MERRITT: I -- yeah. I almost always just cashed his checks.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Who did he bank with?

MR. MERRITT: Just a second. I can -- I see the picture in my head. And I can't think. Union Bank.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Union Bank?

MR. MERRITT: Union Bank.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So like did you have an account with Union Bank also?

MR. MERRITT: I did for a bit. And it -- and it ended up getting closed.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: How -- how does that work as far as -- because, I mean, I don't typically cash checks. But when you take it to the bank, do they give you the cash right there, or -- or do they put a hold on it? How does that work?

MR. MERRITT: No. They usually just -- especially with -- with Joseph's check -- Joseph had a really good rapport with the bank.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: So it was -- and I had a good rapport with the bank. I mean, it was -- it was -- generally, they don't -- they didn't even hesitate.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So you would take the check to Union Bank to cash it there instead of like --

MR. MERRITT: Usually.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- an outside bank?

MR. MERRITT: Oh, yeah. I wouldn't take it to a -- yeah. I took it to Union.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So then after you leave lunch, then you said you went -- and went to a plumbing place and to a -- to the place where you got hinges?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: How do -- how would you pay for that stuff there?

MR. MERRITT: With cash.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do you have like an account there or --

MR. MERRITT: No. It was just -- we're -- we're only talking about, you know, 10, 12 bucks, 15 bucks. I mean, it wasn't anything significant, so . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So you hit both of those places and then -- actually, I'm sorry. You went home first, and then you went and hit both those places. I mean, what time do you think that you're going to these places at? I know you said it was sometime before 5:00.

MR. MERRITT: Sometime -- I would guess sometime

between 2:00 and five o'clock. But I'm not sure exactly which ones I hit first or -- or -- I just -- I remember -- I know that I went to Ramcast.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I just -- I just don't know what time exactly.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So Ramcast, the plumbing place, and then you think you grabbed a bite to eat?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I'm almost positive I got something to eat. Because I eat a lot. I mean (inaudible) I eat a lot --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- so . . .

I eat several times a day, because I eat a little bit often.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Because I -- I try to keep my metabolism -- because I have no blood sugar problems, nothing. I'm 57. So I'm trying to keep it that way.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: And one of the biggest problems that I heard years ago is that people will eat like heavy meals.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

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MR. MERRITT: And then wait for five, six, seven hours before they eat again, and that causes major problems with -- you end up -- your body starts changing and causing major problems with blood sugar and --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So you eat smaller meals more often?

MR. MERRITT: So I always eat -- I always eat smaller meals more often.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: It's what you're supposed to do.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So then after you -- you think you may grab a bite to eat, you go back to the house -- back to your house?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. And it could be a bite to eat and then one of the other places in there, but --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Somehow you --

MR. MERRITT: I get back to my house. Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do you remember what time of day that is or what time of evening that is?

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember. Cathy would know better than I would. Because I -- I -- her and I talked about it the other day. And I told her the same thing I'm telling you. Because she told me that Joseph called --

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- years ago. She said -- she told me -- she had told me Joseph called. And I was like, I don't remember Joseph calling. She said, he called. And you looked at the phone. And I'm like -- she said, you should remember. We argued about it.

I told you, why didn't you -- why don't you answer the phone? And she said that I said, that I'll talk to him tomorrow. It's -- you know, I talked to him enough, or whatever.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: But I don't -- I don't -- to be honest, I actually don't even remember receiving a phone call. She -- she does. She -- and she has a much better memory than me. So she -- you know, I'm kind of just going by her memory.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So after lunch that day, when -- I mean, you talked to Joseph again?

MR. MERRITT: I talked to Joseph several times that day --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- on his way back. Mostly on his way back -- or at least a few times. He called me. I think he called me probably two or three times on the way back to his house.

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I can't remember. I don't remember what we talked about. But it was probably something he forgot or I forgot --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- in the -- in the conversation we had or something he remembered or -- I don't remember. I know that he had called me when he was on the road. Because he wasn't feeling very good.

He said that he -- one of the -- one of the -- I remember one of the times he called me, he said he wasn't feeling all that great, and he was going to pull over for a minute.

But as you probably well know, Joseph was going through some pretty serious stomach and serious issues.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And we weren't -- I mean, you know -- and I know quite a bit about nutrition. And I -- we could not figure out what the hell was going on with him. He was -- he was -- he was pretty bad.

I mean he was bedridden for a few weeks. He couldn't even get out of bed without getting really dizzy and -- or -- and feeling like he was going to throw up.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Huh.

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MR. MERRITT: It was pretty bad.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So when -- when you get back, you talked to him a few times during the day --
And I didn't tell you, Chase. But if you've got to use the rest room, or anything like that --
MR. MERRITT: No. No. I'm good.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- just let us know --
MR. MERRITT: No. I'm good.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And we can take you over.
MR. MERRITT: I might pretty soon.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. And I didn't tell you this at first, but like if -- if you're good with this from -- from the get-go -- if you want to take off, or whatever, just let us know. We have to escort you out because it's a secured facility.
MR. MERRITT: I see no --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm just making sure that you -- you're aware. And then we have a rest room right outside, so if you do got to use it.
MR. MERRITT: I'm good.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So you talked to him a few times during the day. And then you said that Cathy tells you at some point that night he calls you. And where are you guys at when that -- when that call --
MR. MERRITT: Well, she said we were -- and I'm

going by what she said. Because I don't remember the phone call.
I think, if I remember right, she said we were at the dining room table or at the kitchen. We had a big kitchen thing. I'm not sure exactly. But I think she said that we were at the dining room table --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- or -- or in the kitchen or in the dining room. I don't think we were in the living room. But that's -- that's all I remember.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But you don't remember getting that call?
MR. MERRITT: I don't remember getting that call.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I remember everybody saying that the call was made. I remember Cathy saying, you answered it, you know. And so -- but, you know, so . . .
And I pretty much trust Cathy's memory. I'm pretty sure. I mean, she has a pretty good memory. And I -- I just don't remember answering it.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I have no recollection whatsoever of it.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So then that -- that evening while you're there, at any point do you take

off for any reason?
MR. MERRITT: No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So you're home for the -- the whole night that night?
MR. MERRITT: I'm home.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. At any point during the day on -- on February 4th or any time -- well, during the day at all on February 4th or evening or anything, do you go down to Joe and them's house?
MR. MERRITT: No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So then you said you went to bed that night at like 11:00, around -- roundabout?
MR. MERRITT: I would guess so. Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Then next day, February -- Friday, February 5th, kind of go through that for me.
MR. MERRITT: Friday. Friday. I -- February 5th, I don't really know -- remember much about it. But I know that I was trying to get a hold of Joseph. I probably called him at least once, twice, three times. I don't remember.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I, obviously, couldn't get a hold of him.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: I went on about my business. I can't remember what it was. I think I went to Metro, if I'm not mistaken. But I don't remember.
I mean, I know I had quite a few things to do. I mean, I -- it was just kind of business as usual, and, you know, just trying to get things done.
But I -- I don't remember February 5th nearly as much as -- actually, I remember the 4th -- the 4th a little more than I do the 5th.
But at the time I didn't know I was going to be needing to remember all these things, you know. I would have -- a lot of -- and I've found -- because over the -- over the last few years, I've talked to family members and stuff. And it seems like I'm remembering things that didn't really happen because I've heard them here or heard them there. And it's like --
Well, I was talking to Joseph's dad a while back. And he said, and I was like, wait a minute. I thought -- and he goes, no. This is what happened. And I'm like, well, I'm sure that is. And he goes, no. That -- this is what happened. And I was like -- because I had heard it somewhere.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: And not because I actually

remembered it, so . . .

But Friday, I don't remember much. I -- I know that I probably called him, you know, at least two or three times --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- I would guess. Because generally we talked every day. If you look at his -- his phone bills, I'm sure you will see we talked many, many times probably almost seven days a week.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: We -- we were constantly -- if he didn't call me for business, he was calling me to just chat. You know, just to talk, just shoot the shit, talk about surfing or -- or something.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But February 5th, do you -- do you remember talking to him at all?

MR. MERRITT: No.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Onto the next day because you said you don't -- you don't remember much about the 5th. How about February 6th? This is Saturday now. Do you remember -- tell me about that day.

MR. MERRITT: 6th? I don't remember that -- I'm almost positive it was a Saturday that I went. I don't know whether it was the -- it couldn't have been the

next Saturday. The 6th was Saturday?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah. Thursday the 4th. Friday the 5th. Saturday the 6th.

MR. MERRITT: So 6th, Saturday, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th. It wasn't the 12th.

So that Saturday has to have been the day that -- I think that I went out to Joseph's --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- because I couldn't get a hold of him. I think it was on a Saturday. I'm also positive. But, again, it's been -- it's a little vague.

But if it was that day, then I went to -- I -- sometime in the middle of the day -- I don't remember exactly when -- I drove out. And I stopped at Joseph's mom's house said, have you heard -- heard from Joseph? Haven't seen him -- or haven't been able to get a hold of him, and we've got some -- some projects that we're in the middle of. And I need to talk to him about this and that, you know. And she said that she hadn't heard from him in a couple of weeks.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Hadn't talked to him in two or three weeks. And I said, well, I'm -- I'm -- I need to get a hold of him. So I'm heading out there. I'll have him call you --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- if -- if he's home.

Went out there, and it was -- if it was that Saturday -- and I'm trying to remember whether it was a Saturday or some other day. But I thought that it was on a Saturday. And -- and maybe it was the Saturday -- it was Saturday that I met his brother out there. I think the -- Saturday the 12th may have been the day that I met his brother.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The following Saturday? Because you've got Saturday the 6th. The following Saturday would have been the 13th.

MR. MERRITT: Right.

Was -- was that when Joseph's brother went out to the house?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I believe that -- according to the prior stuff, yeah. That was the day that you guys met there.

MR. MERRITT: We met there.

Okay. So it may not have been a Saturday -- it may not have been a Saturday that I went out there then. Because I -- I just remember Saturday --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: -- and I'm also positive that it was only Saturday that I actually went to Joseph's house.

So it may have been Saturday, Sunday, Monday or Tuesday. You know, somewhere. I -- I got concerned. And I couldn't get a hold of Joseph.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: And I drove out. And I stopped at his mother's and talked to his mom. His mom said, I haven't heard -- I haven't talked to him in two or three weeks.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And she called his brother. He said, I haven't talked to him in over a week. And so I said, well, I'm heading out there. I'll -- I'll have him give you a call or I'll -- I'll give you a call back.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Went out there. They weren't there. But the dogs were in the backyard. So I fed the dogs. There was no water out for the dogs. So I put a pot underneath the faucet.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And turned the faucet on just a little bit to have it continually drip. I filled it and then just let it drip in.

And then I came back and called his mom and said, you know, the dogs were out with no food and no

water. You know, that's not Summer. Because the -- the big dog was Summer's baby.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Gotcha.

MR. MERRITT: I mean, serious baby.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's what I gathered.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. And she wouldn't let anybody play with him. Wouldn't let anybody pet him. I mean, she would -- nobody, not even Joseph, was generally allowed to even touch that dog.

It was like she wanted him to be acclimated to her and her alone. You know, that was her.

So, anyway, I came back. I called his mom and said, you know, this is -- it's unusual for Joseph not to get a hold of me and not to talk to me for more than a day, you know. Can you see if you can find out where he's at and let me know.

And another day or two went by. And I called her, I think, again. Called Joseph's brother. Called Joseph's house. Joseph's cell phone. I couldn't -- just haven't . . .

And so I started hounding his mom and his brother and said, dude, you need to call the sheriff department because this is not like Joseph. Oh, he -- he sometimes takes off for a week, and, you know, goes to Mexico or -- and I said, he hasn't been to Mexico in

forever. Are you kidding me? You know, they stopped going.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: And because Susan -- wow, Susan. Where did I get "Susan"? Joseph -- why do I keep remember- -- forgetting her name?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Which? His mom?

MR. MERRITT: No. Joseph's wife's name. It's like "ssssh."

Anyway, she hated Mexico. I mean, she -- and she was not going to take the kids down there. So they stopped going. They -- because they went all the time. And I think Joseph owned a piece of property in -- is it Belize?

Is Belize in Mexico?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I've heard --

MR. MERRITT: Belize?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm not real familiar.

MR. MERRITT: I -- I don't remember. But he owned a piece of property down there somewhere.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And he had some friends down there that he always went and saw. But they stopped probably either right after I met Joseph or -- or just before. He hadn't been to Mexico since.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: So I said, no. It's not like him to be -- just disappear. He would have called me.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: If he didn't call anybody else, he would have called me because we had major -- especially with the Saudi Arabia project. That was an $82,000 project. It was -- it was our biggest single sale ever --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: -- you know. And we still had (inaudible) to get it done (inaudible).

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: There's no way he would have just, you know, stopped talking to me. Because this was a major project for us.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Both of us were going to make some fairly serious money on it. And -- and then we had some other stuff that was -- like the Mr. Clean waterfalls --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: -- that was pending that was really important to us. I mean, we're talking 500 waterfalls at, you know, somewhere in the $18,000 range each.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: That's a major project.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: It's like -- I mean, it was going to pretty much make the next ten years for us.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Because they were going to do them over a ten-year period. That's what their -- from what I gather now, from what I heard, Mr. Clean car washes went bankrupt. They ended up -- it -- it didn't happen.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: But we didn't know that that was going to happen back then. We were all excited about it. I mean, it was a huge thing.

Gave -- actually even talked to his dad about coming out and, I think, helping him with some of that because it was going to be a major thing.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So all this stuff you conveyed to -- to his family as far as why he wouldn't -- would have gotten in touch with you?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah, of course. I mean, I -- I told them from the first time I went out and checked to see where he was at.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: And I don't remember exactly what day that was. Somewhere the -- in my head, somewhere like the 8th or 9th or some- -- I think the 8th, if I'm not mistaken --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- is probably the day. Because I had -- that's -- that date is just kind of sticking in my head. I think it was the 8th, maybe 9th.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And I went out there. Stopped at her house. And I told her, I said, Joseph -- Joseph would have called me.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: And I told his brother, Joseph would have called me. Well, he sometimes just takes off. I'm like, no. He would have called me.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And you can see on the phone records, he always called me.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: I mean, we talked about everything under the sun. I mean, there wasn't -- wasn't anything about Joseph's life that I didn't know, anything about my life that Joseph didn't know. I mean, we were -- we were pretty much inseparable that way. I mean, we --

nothing looked array. But the -- you know, the kitchen was kind of a mess. But other than -- I mean, nothing really. We didn't notice anything spectacular, unusual.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Back up to the beginning of the 13th. Let's go -- let's go from the 13th. You talked to Mike on the phone and go -- go from there. How that -- how that plays out.

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember whether I talked to Mike. I think I may have talked to his mother.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: But I said, I'm -- I told him that I was going out there. And, finally, one way or another, whether his mother talked to him or I did -- I can't remember. But finally Mike decided it was a good idea to go out there, too.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I had been trying to get him to go out there or, you know, find out where Joseph was the whole time.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Of course.

MR. MERRITT: And he just kept -- it's no big deal. And, you know, I'm like, dude. I kept telling him, dude, it's a big deal. He -- he would have called me --

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we knew everything. And he never went more than a day or two without calling me --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- bitching about something or excited about something, or whatever it was, didn't make any difference. He never went very -- very long, and I never went very long without talking to him.

So I talked to his brother several times. And I said, dude, call the sheriff's department. And then, finally, the last time I said, dude, call the sheriff's department or I'm going to, you know. And that was on Saturday --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- the 13th or 14th.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: 13th? Is that when you're telling him?

MR. MERRITT: Was it the 13th?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, that would have been the following Saturday after.

MR. MERRITT: Okay. The 13th.

On that day, him and I were there at -- at the house. And he went through the window of Joseph's office and opened the house.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And we went in. And, you know,

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: -- you know.

And later on, months later even, he would tell the press and stuff, you know, I talked to my brother almost every day. And -- and I'm like, no. The only time you -- the only time you talked to your brother was when you needed money, in the first place.

And it had been well over a week before -- that you had talked to him when -- on the day that I went out there and talked to his mother. I'm like, you're telling everybody that you talked to him every day and you're really close.

Joseph -- Joseph and his brother had kind of -- Joseph loved his brother. But Mikey was kind of needy. You know, he constantly -- the only time he would ever call is if he needed a loan.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And it was never a loan because he never paid him back.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: But, you know, he needed a thousand dollars or $500, or whatever. That's the only reason he would ever call, so . . .

Anyway, so he finally met me out there on the 13th. And I don't remember whether -- I don't

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think Cathy went with. But I know him, his wife, and kids were there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I was there. I thought somebody else was there. But I don't remember. I don't remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Where do you guys meet?

MR. MERRITT: At the house.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And we walked around the house. And the only place that we could see to actually get into the house was, there was a window part way open in Joseph's office. And Mikey opened it, removed -- removed the screen, opened it and went in that window --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- and then opened the front door, and then all of us went in.

We went around to all the neighbors asking if they had seen them.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And nobody had seen them. And there was a couple of the neighbors that weren't there. But, for the most part, nobody had seen them.

And that Saturday is when I told Mikey, I

said, just call the sheriff's department now.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

Describe the house for me while you guys were there.

MR. MERRITT: Standard Joseph house. I mean, they had kids. So there was stuff kind of strewn a little bit. Popcorn spilled on the floor, I think, if I'm not mistaken or on the couch there in the living room.

Kitchen was kind of awry. I don't remember looking at the kitchen that closely. It was -- it was her -- her kind of standard kitchen. She was never really super clean.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Joseph's office -- Joseph's office looked pretty much like -- I mean, it just really didn't -- there wasn't anything really out of -- out of -- usual. So we closed the doors and -- and left.

But I told Michael then. I said, dude, just call the sheriff's department.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: And he said, well, I'll wait until after -- they'll probably be back by the end of the weekend.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: How did upstairs and the garage --

MR. MERRITT: I didn't -- I don't remember going upstairs, I don't think.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I -- I don't remember. I might have. But I don't remember going upstairs. I know Mike did. I went through the garage. And it was -- it's -- it's a mess because they had just moved in not that long ago. They had all kinds of different baskets and boxes and stuff just everywhere, so . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So then you try to convince Mike to -- to call?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What -- what happens from there?

MR. MERRITT: He said he's going to wait until after the weekend. And that they're -- if he doesn't hear from them by Sunday night, he'll call.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And I think that following Monday is when he finally called the sheriff's department on the -- maybe Sunday. I don't remember.

Was it the 14th? 15th?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: 15th.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I don't remember exactly what day he called. But he finally called the sheriff's

department. And they came out. And he said that they did a welfare check first, if I'm not mistaken, I think.

And my -- my timing -- it's hard to remember in perfect sequence. (Inaudible) that's when they just did a welfare check.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Did you go back down there that day?

MR. MERRITT: I don't think so. No. I was there with Mike, and then we all left. No. I -- I went home, I'm sure.

Yeah. I don't remember what day exactly that Mike called. But then when they finally came out, I guess they -- from what I heard later, they didn't have a warrant so they couldn't actually go in the house. They just did kind of a welfare check and left.

And then came back later with a -- something so they could enter the house.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I -- that's -- that's just kind of what I heard. So I -- I'm not sure exactly how it all transpired because I wasn't there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: But that's pretty much all I can remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And then after that is when the sheriff's department contacts you, and they set up an interview with you?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. It was a while after that.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: But, yeah. Yeah. They asked. They wanted to talk to me, and I talked to them. And basically just told them what I remembered then. I probably remembered a lot more then than I do now.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: So then they asked me if I wanted to take a -- if I minded taking a lie detector test. And I said, I have no problem with it.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And I met them in -- in Adelanto. I think it was Adelanto or -- anyway, I met them. And they did the lie detector test.

And I really didn't -- after that, never really heard from them at all. I -- and I talked to the family. I tried -- me and Joseph's mother -- I tried to reason with Dan Kavanaugh.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: His -- me and his mother drove down to San Diego to talk to him to see if he -- he would relinquish the phone calls to her so that she could

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start answering the phone so that the sales could continue so we can try to save the business -- not only Joseph's business, but, you know, I was dying on the vine.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: And so we were desperate. She was desperate to try to keep his business going. But Dan was just letting it -- you know, he had control of the phones and stuff. So there was nothing she could do. And --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So after the 4th -- you said that he gave you a check or a couple checks on the 4th to pay.

Did you have any other source of income or -- or, I mean, were you receiving any profits from the business that could be able to keep yourself afloat?

MR. MERRITT: No. No. Pretty much that was it. I mean, I was pretty much dependent on getting -- when Joseph -- you know, when we finished projects -- I mean, Joseph was --

My problem was -- with my business, it was -- it was pretty stupid in hindsight. I pretty much put all of my eggs in one basket. I mean, but Joseph and I were, you know, best friends. We had

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great -- a great relationship. I had no reason not to.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: But my entire business depended on my -- my -- the waterfalls that I built were all waterfalls that he sold --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- so . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So after -- after the 4th, you have no -- no other checks from EIP that -- you have no other way to get paid?

MR. MERRITT: I had no other way to get paid.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Go back to the -- to the 8th. You said you think it was like the 8th or something like that, the day you talked to Susan. That's when you go down to -- the first time you go down to the house.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Somewhere in there. I'm -- but, yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: When was the last time you had been in -- at their house prior to that day?

MR. MERRITT: Wow. I don't -- I don't exactly recall. But I'm sure that I was there off and on once or twice a week in the weeks before that. But, you know, it's --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: How about this, like --

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because you said the 4th you didn't go down to their house. What about like the 3rd? 2nd? 1st? Like within those few days?

MR. MERRITT: It's very possible. But I don't remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I mean, it's extremely possible because he was still working on his house. And I was helping him. And we were -- we were doing a crap-load of stuff together.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I know not long before he disappeared, I built the shed --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: -- for him. And we were going to be taking out the tile and stuff out of his -- out of the house -- or out of the kitchen.

I remember going down there one day -- but I don't remember what day it was. It was probably a week or two before they disappeared -- to check on the wood. Because we needed to get the -- the -- figure out how dry it was.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: And a friend of mine gave me a gauge to -- to check the -- how dry the wood was.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: (Inaudible.)
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Because you can't install it if it's too -- it has to air out. And it has to be a specific level of humidity in the wood; otherwise, when you install it --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It will warp?
MR. MERRITT: It does all kinds of crap. But, yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So then -- so sometime -- sometime before the 4th, you're not exactly sure when the last time you were there was. But then after the 4th, the first time that you go there is, you think, the day that you talked to Susan?
MR. MERRITT: I think so, yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Any -- any time between then and when -- that meeting that you had with Joseph that you would have been down there at the house at all?
MR. MERRITT: On the --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Meeting Joseph on the 4th --
MR. MERRITT: Right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- and then the day that you talked to Susan, were you down at the house at all between those days?
MR. MERRITT: I don't recall going down there at all. No.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So the day that you -- you talk to Susan, you go down to the house after that. What time of day is it?
MR. MERRITT: I -- I don't remember. I know it was daylight. But I don't remember. Because she -- I remember talking to her there in the front yard. And it was probably right about midday because it was pretty -- it was pretty warm --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- very sunny. And I -- it wasn't early in the morning or late in the afternoon. So it was probably like midday.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So describe -- when you -- when you show up at Joe's house, describe for me what you see.
MR. MERRITT: Front door was locked. Dog -- when I pulled up, the dogs were barking --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.
MR. MERRITT: -- or the dog. The puppy wasn't barking. The dog was barking. And the door was locked.
So I went around to the backyard -- backyard to look in the window. And the dogs were back there. Looked in the window. Couldn't see Joseph, or anything. So I just -- I fed the dogs. I ripped open

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the dog food bag and -- because it was raining --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- or I think it was raining right then. But if it wasn't raining then, it had been or was going to. But I knew that, I mean, it was going to be wet --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- or whatever. And -- so I put the dog food inside the shed because he had it outside in a barrel. And I put the dog food inside in the shed and ripped open the bag, kind of made it so that they could eat.
And then I put the -- then I put the pot under the faucet and turned it on and let it -- let it drip. And I left.
So that's pretty much all I saw. I mean, it was -- wasn't very much to see other than . . .
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: How about their vehicles?
MR. MERRITT: His green truck was in the driveway.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Where is it positioned in the driveway?
MR. MERRITT: I want to say like dead center. But I think it was maybe -- I think it was to the left a little bit of center driveway.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Is that where they

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typically park it?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I think so. I -- he parks it in his driveway. I don't know where exact. But I think it was a little to the left, if I'm not mistaken.
He usually parked his -- the white car on the street because it had an oil leak --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- if I'm not mistaken. He was real particular about his driveway. He wouldn't -- he wouldn't even let me park in his driveway.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Where at on the street would they park?
MR. MERRITT: Right next to -- as you're coming up the street --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.
MR. MERRITT: -- just before the driveway right dead -- dead center in front.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So right in front of their lawn?
MR. MERRITT: Right in front of their lawn.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. The Dodge, is it parked nose-in? facing the street?
MR. MERRITT: Nose-in.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: "Nose-in."
All right. So you go up. What do you do?

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Do you -- how do you -- do you check the door? Do you knock on the door? What -- what --

MR. MERRITT: I knocked on the door, and I -- and when he didn't answer, I checked to see if it was locked. It was locked.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I went around the back to the sliding door. The door was locked. Had they not been locked, I would have gone in, yelled for them, or whatever. But they were locked. And just looked through the windows and didn't see anybody. So I fed the dogs and left.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: When you look inside, are there lights on? Or can you see in the inside?

MR. MERRITT: It was daytime, so -- but I didn't -- you know, I just saw their regular living room. I mean, it wasn't anything in particular.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So then at that point do you look at the windows? Like I know you had said before you had noticed that there was a window open.

MR. MERRITT: I didn't. I didn't.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Who noticed the window open on the day when you and Mike went down?

MR. MERRITT: I think Mike did. Because he went to the backyard first. But I'm not sure. I -- I might

have --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- or his wife might have. I don't remember. I just remember him deciding to go through the window. That's all I remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What -- what window was that?

MR. MERRITT: The -- on Joseph's office window.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: It's the -- if you go through the gate on the left, go back to the back of the house and make a right, I think it's the very first window --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- on your -- in the backyard.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So how does Mike get in the window?

MR. MERRITT: Well, he took -- I don't even remember whether I was in the backyard. But he took the screen off and opened the window and climbed in.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: He's not a very tall fella. That's why I asked.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. He's -- he's kind of stubby. But, yeah. I don't remember. He -- he climbed in somehow. I remember I -- actually, I was -- we were waiting for him at the front door when he opened the front door. So I don't think I was back there when he

climbed in. I think I was back there when he decided to go climb in. And then we went around because his wife and everything was in the front.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And I came back up front. If I'm not mistaken, I said, Mike's -- Mike's coming around to open the door.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Because Mike had said that he was going to open the door. I'm pretty sure that was kind of the sequence of events. And he climbed in. And he came to the front door and opened it for me --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- for us.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So you -- so you don't remember if you gave him a boost, or anything like that, to help get in?

MR. MERRITT: I don't think so. I don't remember. But I don't -- I think I would have remembered giving Mikey a boost.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So he comes to the front door. Lets you guys in. And you guys checked downstairs?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. We just -- I just kind of walked around a little bit downstairs. I don't

remember going upstairs at all. But, I mean, I could have. I mean, I've been upstairs many times. But I don't remember being up there that -- that day.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So then after you guys aren't able to find anything like crazy inside the house, you can't find them at all, that's when you try to get a hold of -- or tell Mike that he needs to call and report them?

MR. MERRITT: Uh-huh.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And then you guys -- you guys leave?

MR. MERRITT: No. We went around to the neighbors.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: A neighborhood canvass. Right.

MR. MERRITT: We went around to the neighbors and asked neighbors if they had seen them or seen anything suspicious or --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And a couple of neighbors weren't there. Three or four of them, if I'm not mistaken, said, we haven't noticed anything. We haven't -- I think one of them said, we haven't seen his car in a day or two or three, or whatever.

But it wasn't anything of significance that

we could get out of any of the neighbors, so . . .
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So how long do you think, in total, you guys are there at the house?
MR. MERRITT: I wouldn't guess it would be -- it would have been more than 45 minutes.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I wouldn't think. I don't think it was any more than that.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: All right. And then so how do you guys -- how do you guys leave the house?
MR. MERRITT: I think I left first. Because he was gathering up all of his kids and stuff. I think I drove away first and then . . .
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: How do you guys secure it? That's what I'm asking.
MR. MERRITT: Oh, he did. I didn't. I -- I don't know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I'm sure he locked the doors and -- I just assume he did.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The -- you said that they had a white car. What kind of car was the white car?
MR. MERRITT: Trooper.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. And then they had the green pickup also?

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MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Did they have any other -- any other work cars, or anything like that?
MR. MERRITT: Not -- not Joseph. No. He had a green truck and a white Trooper.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Well, and the reason I ask is, like, did he have -- no vehicles like that he let you use while you were working for him or -- or let anybody else that's working for him use? Like did he have like any other company cars that he would use?
MR. MERRITT: No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. At the time what were you driving?
MR. MERRITT: A white truck.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What kind?
MR. MERRITT: I think it was a Ford. It was a big utility truck.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. And what year? Any idea? Do you remember?
MR. MERRITT: I don't remember.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Can you describe it for me?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. It was a big utility truck with big tool boxes, and, I mean, it was just a big work truck, like an old utility truck, telephone truck.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Where did you -- where

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did you get that from?
MR. MERRITT: I bought it from a used car dealership in Ontario, right down the street from -- from (inaudible).
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: And I ended up losing it mostly because of --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Financing.
MR. MERRITT: -- my lack of finances.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So while you're -- while you're going back to -- to check on the house, is that what you're driving back -- back and forth?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Between the day that you talked to Susan and let her know about all this and you go down and check the house to when you meet Mike back out there, do you go back down to the house at all during then?
MR. MERRITT: Susan? Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Joe's mom.
MR. MERRITT: Okay. When I met -- when I stopped at her house?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: When you stopped and talked to her --
MR. MERRITT: Right.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- go to the house.
MR. MERRITT: Uh-huh.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You leave there, and you call her and let her know, hey, they're not there -- or you talked to her and Mike and let them know; between that day and when you go back and meet Mike and his wife and kids there --- -
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- do you go back to the house at all between those days?
MR. MERRITT: I don't think so. I don't remember.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And then the 15th, they get reported. And then that's -- you -- you said you weren't back down in that area. You don't believe you were back down there that day?
MR. MERRITT: Well, I know that (inaudible) the sheriff came out. I -- I only saw it on the news. So I know that I wasn't there. Because I saw them (inaudible) flipping through the -- on the news.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: So -- and I would have remembered being there.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. While you're there -- while you're there at the house, I mean, do you guys -- did you all -- you said you went all over the house.

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So you've been all over inside the house before. Not -- not when you were there with Mike or -- or whatever, but when you're there before, like when you'd go to visit Joe and --

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. We were, of course, all over the house. Yeah. We did. Yeah. I'd play with the kids. And, I mean -- yeah. We were everywhere. And we were working on the house. I mean, I helped him move his stuff in and -- yeah, of course.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So while you were there -- I mean, describe what were -- what were Joe's working quarters? You talked about he had an office. Like, I mean, what did that --

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What did that consist of?

MR. MERRITT: You'd go straight through the kitchen. And there's a bedroom straight through the kitchen. You go -- let's see. There's -- there's a living room, kitchen, and then a hallway --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: -- that goes straight out of the kitchen, right past the refrigerator. Refrigerator is on the right. Straight through the door is his office. To the left is the garage door. And there's a bathroom right there next to it.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Describe his office for me. How is it set up?

MR. MERRITT: The window that he came in --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: -- is at the far right. If -- if you go into the door, turn right, there's a -- there's a window right there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: His desk is sitting right next -- right in front of that with his chair facing away from the window and his desk facing away from the window.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: And a closet on the left-hand side as you walk through the door. Kids' computer and a little stand that the kids -- or some kind of little table. I don't remember -- that the kids' computer was on -- on the floor.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And kind of scattered, you know. It was never super neat, or anything, because the kids always played in there when he was working.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Now, the -- the kids' computer, what kind of computer is that?

MR. MERRITT: I don't know.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I mean, was that a laptop?

desktop?

MR. MERRITT: I think it was a laptop.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I think.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And then he (sic) said he had a computer also? Joe had a computer also?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What -- what kind of computer was that?

MR. MERRITT: He always used a laptop.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Always.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: While you're there at the house or any other time, did you use Joe's computer, at all?

MR. MERRITT: No. I don't -- I don't have any -- he -- he has access to his computer. I never -- I always had my computer with me.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: You know, if I was going to go on the computer, I would use my own or use my phone.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Did he have like a -- like -- because I don't know if -- when you guys meet, do you guys discuss business while you guys are on the computer or --

MR. MERRITT: Sometimes.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Did he have like inter- -- like internet or wifi, or something like that?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: How would you --

MR. MERRITT: I'm sure. Yeah. He had -- he had internet.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Like if -- say, like if I go -- if I go to your house and you have internet, I can connect to your -- to your wifi there at the house so that way I can get internet on my -- my iPad or my laptop and --

MR. MERRITT: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I mean, was that -- was that something that was typical that you would do there or --

MR. MERRITT: No.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: No?

MR. MERRITT: No. If we were -- if we were looking online or something, it would be on -- he would -- he would pull it up, or whatever.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: You know, I -- I never -- never needed to.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So you never -- don't recall ever using his computer?
MR. MERRITT: No. Never.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The -- you go -- you go out and you contact Susan and then you go to the house after that. And, I mean, what's her demeanor about this all?
MR. MERRITT: When I first contacted her, not really concerned. I haven't heard from him, haven't talked to him in two or three weeks. It had been a while.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: And it was just a month or two -- well, no. It was more than that. It was probably close to three months before that the first time I met Susan --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- when we dropped off the pots there at her house.
But she wasn't too concerned because -- but -- and, again, she -- she talks -- she was talking to the press and saying, you know, she talked to her son all the time. It was once a month, or so, you know.
But she didn't -- she didn't act too

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concerned. But, you know, she hadn't talked to him.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.
MR. MERRITT: So she probably just assumed that he was -- took a vacation or, you know, whatever, just like his brother did.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So then throughout this, I mean, are -- you're -- are you helping out for a while trying to help locate these folks?
MR. MERRITT: Locate?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah. Like putting out fliers or doing whatever. I mean, these people -- this is a three-year time span where they're trying to find something. Where did the McStays go? I mean, are you --
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I mean, I contacted Susan. And I said -- I told her, anything that I can do, let me know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: And, no. I did not hand out any fliers. I took a big stack of fliers and put them all over Rancho Cucamonga. We went down to -- I don't remember whether it was with Susan or not. I can't remember. But I had like 2,000 fliers or so --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.
MR. MERRITT: -- that I handed out or put on car

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windows --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.
MR. MERRITT: -- and stuff.
But other than that -- we stopped doing that, or I did anyway, within a month.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: All right.
MR. MERRITT: It -- it didn't last much -- much longer than that.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So where are you at when -- when you find out that they found them?
MR. MERRITT: I actually didn't know until, I think, a couple of days later. It was either -- somebody called me. I think Cathy called me.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I'm almost positive Cathy called me and -- and said, they found bodies in the desert. And they think it's Joseph. And I was like -- and I don't remember. I just remember watching the news, you know, pretty extensively trying to see what happened.
I called Joseph's mother, I believe, or brother -- I can't remember -- to see if I could get any information on, you know, what they were -- what they had found and, you know, what was going on.
But I was -- I was also busy in the middle of kind of a traumatic era in my life, too.

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I was still trying to survive. So when it all transpired, I asked Mikey if I -- I asked him when a memorial or anything would be happening. And he informed me that his mother -- I think it was his mother -- preferred that I not be there. I was like, why? Why not? You know.
So I ended up not going. So I went out there later.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. You went out to the -- to the grave site?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Tell me about that.
MR. MERRITT: I just -- me and -- I can't remember who it was. It may have been Cathy. Oh, I think my sister Juanita.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.
MR. MERRITT: I don't remember. Anyway, we -- I just -- we drove out. We got the directions from Mike -- Mikey. And we drove out there and found the crosses and just kind of -- I mean, I took some pictures of the crosses. And that was about it.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: How did you get out there? Like what -- what route did you take to get out there?
MR. MERRITT: The freeway to -- I can't remember the name of the street. Not Roy Rogers, Dale Evans.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I think it's Dale Evans.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Dale Evans is one of the roads out there.
MR. MERRITT: I think it was Dale Evans. And I just remember I got lost. There was a dirt road -- a big long dirt -- fairly wide dirt road where there were trucks going up and down, big trucks. And I went too far up that road, and then I came back.
And there was a couple of side roads on both directions.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.
MR. MERRITT: And I took a couple of those. Finally found -- you know, and then finally found it.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. What did you drive out there?
MR. MERRITT: What was I driving? I don't remember what car I had. I've gone -- I've gone through a lot of cars.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: Mostly because I haven't been able to afford much, and they don't last long.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.
MR. MERRITT: I think it was a Plymouth. I -- it's a little Plymouth convertible that I still have.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: It's -- I'm almost positive it was a Plymouth.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So was that the first time you had been out to the grave site?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Have you been out -- have you been out there since then?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Describe those for me.
MR. MERRITT: I had decided that I was going to write a book.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: And I was going to do the cover of the book with me standing next to Joseph's cross. And so Michelle's daughter, the one that just dropped me off --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.
MR. MERRITT: -- she went out with me. And took a couple, 11 pictures. And that's the only reason we went out there, just to take some pictures.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. What did you guys drive out that time?
MR. MERRITT: Probably Michelle's car. Because she would do the driving. Because I'm doing my best to

try not to drive ever --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.
MR. MERRITT: -- until I get this shit taken care of. Which was a Volvo -- no. No. Wait. Did she have the Volvo yet? It may have been a Toyota -- a little Toyota car.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: How long ago was that that you guys went out?
MR. MERRITT: It was probably within a month. About a month after the crosses were put up.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: So I'm not sure exactly. It was probably within about three or four weeks, though.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So in the week after -- so February 4th is the last time you see Joseph. In the week after that, is there any reason that anyone would have seen you or your vehicle up in the High Desert area?
MR. MERRITT: Victorville?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Victorville, yeah.
MR. MERRITT: No, not that I know of. Unless I went to my sister's.
What time span again?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Like February 4th, the day that they -- the last day that they're seen --

MR. MERRITT: Right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- and say for a week after that or even -- I mean, you can draw it out for a few days or a week, whatever.
MR. MERRITT: No. No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So you weren't up in the desert at all in -- in that time frame?
MR. MERRITT: Not that I recall. Huh-uh.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. How about out in like Santa Clarita area?
MR. MERRITT: Santa Clarita? Santa Clarita?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Out off -- what's that?
DETECTIVE HANKE: "14."
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The "14" and --
DETECTIVE HANKE: The forest.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I know there's the "134" and different areas out there.
MR. MERRITT: Santa Clarita?
DETECTIVE HANKE: North of L.A.
MR. MERRITT: Oh, Santa Clarita, up like Magic Mountain?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Yeah.
MR. MERRITT: Oh, not that I know. Not that I know of.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: Unless I went up there to -- because that's where the Little Giant is.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Little Giant? What's that?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. They're -- I think Santa Clarita is the city Little Giant is in, where we buy all the pumps.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Oh, okay.
MR. MERRITT: It's possible that I went up there to get a pump for one of the waterfalls we were finishing up. But I don't recall going up there.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So the McStays had the two vehicles. Didn't have any other -- any other business vehicles, or anything like that. Did you ever drive either one of those vehicles?
MR. MERRITT: Both.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Both of them? Well, when -- when did you drive them?
MR. MERRITT: Well, off and on all the time. I mean, it just depended on if I was -- if I was there, we would -- I would -- because Joseph -- the one thing Joseph didn't like to do is drive.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: So if we went out and got some pizza or we went out to look at something or do something, I

would generally drive.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: Because he -- he -- it was -- if you remember, he was having a pretty serious equilibrium problem.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.
MR. MERRITT: He didn't even want to drive down on the 4th. I think actually that's one of the reasons he really didn't -- he was late --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- because he wasn't feeling good, and he was waiting until he felt better.
And he stopped. He had to stop on the way back home because he was getting nauseous. And he said the world was spinning on him.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Where did he stop?
MR. MERRITT: I don't know. It was somewhere -- and he had called me. So it was somewhere halfway. I don't know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: Somewhere. I don't remember exactly. He didn't tell me actually. He said he had to pull over.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: But, yeah. No. Not Santa Clarita.

Not that I know of.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What did he typically drive? What did Joseph typically drive?
MR. MERRITT: His truck.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. And then how -- who drove -- who typically drove the Trooper?
MR. MERRITT: She did.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. How about if they would go like on outings?
MR. MERRITT: Just -- they were kind of half and half. Sometimes they'd take the truck. Sometimes they'd take the Trooper. It just depended on, I guess, where they were going. I don't know.
But I think -- I think mostly it depended on which car the car seats -- which one the car seats were in.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: You know, if she had -- if she was -- you know, if it's just, we're going to run down to the store, or something, and the car seats were in the truck, I'm sure they would take the truck since the car seats were in the car. It was half dozen, six on the other.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So February 4th, what is he driving?

MR. MERRITT: His -- the Trooper.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: "The Trooper."
So when was the last time you drove the Dodge?
MR. MERRITT: Me?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.
MR. MERRITT: Oh, God. Probably when -- let's see. Probably when -- when we went and got the wood. I drove it weeks before.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: A while before. I'm not sure.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. How about the last time you drove the Trooper?
MR. MERRITT: I don't remember. It was probably at least -- had to have been at least a couple months. I don't recall driving it any time recently, you know, before he disappeared. I don't recall driving it.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I mean, I only drove it two or three times and only short distances, so . . .
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Do you know, did Joe own any -- any firearms at all?
MR. MERRITT: I don't think so. I'm 90 percent sure he didn't.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Did you ever have any

injuries in the house that would have caused you like to bleed inside there or . . .

MR. MERRITT: Oh, I'm not going to recall. I worked around there a lot. But I don't remember ever bleeding there. No.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. The 4th, what do you remember Joe wearing that day?

MR. MERRITT: It's hard to recall. But it would have been the same thing he wears every day, either sweats or shorts. He -- he was a surfer, you know. He kind of looked the same every day.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: He always wore his cap and usually a Hawaiian or a loose-fitting shirt, you know, and long shorts with sandals.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And, I mean, that's usually what he was wearing. But I don't remember exactly what he was wearing that day. He kind of always looked the same.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Yeah. I've got a few questions. And I've been -- I've been taking notes the whole time that he's been talking, so . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's your job.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Yeah.

So if I'm asking you questions, I might be

jumping around a little bit. I know we've been kind of going in chronological. But, yeah. Just a few questions.

You talked about on the 4th at Chick-fil-A that you guys were talking about a couple jobs. You talked about Saudi Arabia. You told San Diego you were also talking about a Paul Mitchell job. I don't know if you mentioned Paul Mitchell.

MR. MERRITT: I just did.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. Yeah. So Saudi Arabia, Paul Mitchell. I don't recall the Mr. Clean being talked about. But you had talked about those jobs. And there was some checks written on the 4th that you were talking about.

And we have all -- obviously, we have all of Joseph's records. I just want to show you some of these checks and just verify that these are the checks that Joseph gave you that you guys were talking about at Chick-fil-A. Okay?

You said specifically there was a couple checks. You said there was one or two checks to Metro Sheet Metal. And so there's a check here dated on the 4th.

Okay. Is this typically what Joseph's checks looked like with Earth Inspired Products and the

Union Bank stamp? Is that typically what they would look like, like Joseph's checks would?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I think so.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. So this one is dated on the 4th. It's paid to Metro Sheet Metal, $250 for copper. Does that look like one of the ones that Joseph gave you?

MR. MERRITT: Probably. Probably. I don't know, but probably.

DETECTIVE HANKE: And then the other one for Metro Sheet Metal also dated the 4th for "1650." This one says "miscellaneous manufacturing." Do you remember Joe giving you that check also?

MR. MERRITT: I -- I just remember that there was checks for Metro. I don't, you know --

DETECTIVE HANKE: You said one -- you said one or two.

MR. MERRITT: One or two, yeah.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. And this is -- this is dated on the 4th. And there was no other checks to Metro.

MR. MERRITT: And this is dated the 4th.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. And then you said also there was a couple of checks written to you --

MR. MERRITT: Right.

DETECTIVE HANKE: -- for, you know, your expenses and that type of thing.

MR. MERRITT: (Inaudible.)

DETECTIVE HANKE: Uh-huh.

So one of them dated the 4th for $6,500 made out to you. And it's for Saudi Arabia final. And you guys were talking about the Saudi Arabia; right?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Does that look familiar?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Yeah. I think so. Yeah. Yeah. I think so.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. And then also another on the 4th made out to you. It says "For lighting installed SAI" -- I assume that's Saudi Arabia -- for $2,350.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. This is for the -- I'm pretty sure this is for the lights because we had a very, very specialized lighting system --

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- in the Saudi Arabia project. It was -- it was crazy. And the -- the -- it had remote controls on the lights. It would change -- change the color of the water and dance. It was different.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. So -- but Joseph would pay you to install the lights; right?

you don't believe you wrote these ones. You would have handwritten a check to Metro?
MR. MERRITT: I would have either handwritten it or I would -- because I -- I could computer generate them. But I don't think it would have been on the 4th.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. You're saying you would -- you could computer generate --
MR. MERRITT: Well, of course. Yeah. I can -- I can -- I could have done the checks. But I don't think I would have done them on the 4th. I don't -- I think I would have -- and I don't think Joseph gave me -- I don't remember Joseph giving me checks on the 4th for Metro. I don't remember him doing that.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. I just wrote -- I just wrote notes that earlier you said that Joseph gave you checks for Metro. So I'm just --
MR. MERRITT: For Metro, yeah. But I don't -- I don't remember them being written --
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- is what I said. I don't recall them being written. I -- because I don't think that Metro -- I'm also positive that Metro hadn't given us a total yet. Because they were still in the middle of doing the breaking and shearing.
And -- and this guy was seriously anal about

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the stuff that -- the stuff we were doing with him. And I'm almost positive we had talked about it. And he gave me checks to -- to pay Metro. But I don't think they were actually written to Metro yet.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So -- okay. So what specifically were the checks to Metro? What were they for; do you remember?
MR. MERRITT: Breaking, shearing, stainless steel finishing, probably some welding. Because their -- his son did some of the welding for me. I did most of my own welding, but he did some sometimes, depending on how busy I was.
And I think they helped me crate up -- if I'm not mistaken, they helped me crate up the -- the Saudi project --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- which is what the checks were for that I cashed, a lot of that was for, you know, God; probably $2,000 worth of crating because we're talking massive.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So these two checks that -- that say "copper" and "miscellaneous manufacturing," that wouldn't be the two checks that you're talking about or the checks that you have for --
MR. MERRITT: "Miscellaneous manufacturing," no.

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I don't think so.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So we could be talking about different checks?
MR. MERRITT: I think so.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I mean, it's possible. Because I don't recall. He may have given me these to give to them for something else.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: And because -- because I'm also positive I wrote them the Saudi Arabia project check, I -- I'm thinking, at least a week maybe a little less. I don't remember exactly. But at least a week after the 4th.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: Because I don't think that they had finished it yet. Because when Joseph -- Joseph and I were talking, Joseph was -- I remember Joseph being a little peeved at -- at Metro because they hadn't gotten to it yet. And they were like -- they were dragging their feet. And I said, well, I'm pushing them, but, you know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And that was specifically related to the Saudi project?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So for "miscellaneous manufacturing," "copper," these checks could have been written for a job prior?
MR. MERRITT: The copper has to be prior.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: Because Saudi didn't have any copper.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: No copper on Saudi.
MR. MERRITT: No copper at all on Saudi. The cooper had to have been a table waterfall. No, not -- they didn't do anything with a table. $250, that would have been one sheet of copper --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- so I -- I don't remember having copper --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So you believe that -- you believe that you could have had a handwritten check to Metro?
MR. MERRITT: Because -- either handwritten or I generated it myself, yes. Because I know that there was -- I'm almost positive. And, again, my -- my memory on this is really vague because, I mean, it's been five and a half years.
But I'm also positive that I paid Metro at least a week for Saudi Arabia -- at least a week after.

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MR. MERRITT: Of course. Of course. Yeah. He -- anything done on the waterfalls, Joseph never did anything. The only thing Joseph did was sell them.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: He never --
DETECTIVE HANKE: And then this is the last one dated for the 4th for $4,500 to you. And then it says, "Paul Mitchell." So those are the jobs that we're talking about -- right? -- the Paul Mitchell, the Saudi Arabia?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Probably. You know, I don't remember getting this many checks on the 4th. But, I mean, it's possible. I don't know. There was -- there was three or four that I know, so . . .
DETECTIVE HANKE: For sure you knew there was three or four. But you didn't receive any other checks from Joseph after the 4th?
MR. MERRITT: I received these checks here, two, three -- I can't remember. I know that I had -- I wrote probably -- I'm almost positive the Metro Sheet Metal check I wrote. I'm almost positive I did that one. Maybe the $250 one too.
Because Metro Sheet Metal -- the check wasn't given to them until at least a few days after the 4th. I'm almost positive.

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price yet on the 4th. I'm almost positive Metro hadn't given us a total yet.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. So let's -- let's just talk about those -- specifically those.
MR. MERRITT: I see those ones.
DETECTIVE HANKE: So -- but -- so you're saying --
MR. MERRITT: I wish I could see.
DETECTIVE HANKE: So these are the two Metro checks. They're dated for the 4th. So you're saying that you wrote these checks on the 4th for Metro Sheet Metal?
MR. MERRITT: It was not on the 4th. I know that I didn't give Metro Sheet Metal checks on -- I'm almost -- I'm like 99 percent sure I didn't give Metro Sheet Metal checks on the 4th. I don't think that I saw Metro Sheet Metal on the 4th.
DETECTIVE HANKE: And that's not my questions. I'm saying -- we're talking about -- you're saying when you gave them the checks.
But maybe I'm just confused because it's dated for the -- the 4th. You're saying that you wrote those checks to Metro Sheet Metal. So did you write the checks on the 4th that day after the meeting with Joseph?
MR. MERRITT: No. I don't recall writing the

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DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. I --
MR. MERRITT: I'm almost positive.
DETECTIVE HANKE: I just want to clarify. Because earlier you told Detective Bachman that you guys talked about Metro Sheet Metal --
MR. MERRITT: Right.
DETECTIVE HANKE: -- and he gave you checks. Joseph actually paid for those materials and gave you checks to Metro Sheet Metal.
These are the only two checks from the 4th. So I'm just trying to confirm that these checks are the ones that Joseph gave you for Metro Sheet Metal.
MR. MERRITT: You know, more than likely. I don't remember. I know that there was checks given to me. I know that -- at least a couple of them. I recall -- if I -- if my memory is right -- because if -- and it could be a little -- a little askewed because probably every other time Joseph gave me checks, he would just -- like if I met him at his house or I met him at -- or he met me, or whatever, he would just hand me two, three, four checks.
And -- and, generally, I would disburse it wherever it was necessary to get disbursed. I -- I was almost positive that the Metro Sheet Metal checks were ones that he left to me because we weren't sure of the

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checks on the 4th, is what I'm trying to get at. I would have written them on the day -- you know what? Actually -- because these -- these were computer generated.
I am almost positive the checks that I wrote were not computer generated. The ones that I wrote to Metro.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I'm also positive.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Handwritten checks?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. But I'm -- I'm like -- you know, it's kind of vague. But I -- I wrote -- there was -- if you go back over Joseph's records for the years that him and I were together, he would just give me checks, two, three, four checks sometimes. Sometimes half a dozen. And I would take care of the different things that he needed to be taken care of.
And I'm almost positive that I didn't give Metro the checks until several days after.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. But just to be -- but just to be clear -- and sorry to cut you off. I just --
MR. MERRITT: Please.
DETECTIVE HANKE: I just want to make -- be clear in my mind. Because these ones are computer generated,

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. And you said you were able to generate those checks. How did you generate --

MR. MERRITT: I can -- on my computer, I could access his pay or -- what the hell is it called? -- Quick Books --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- and generate a check -- I could generate the check myself on my printer, if I wanted to.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You said you had a laptop you carried around. And you brought that laptop down to Joseph's. Is the laptop where you created the checks?

MR. MERRITT: It would have had to been.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Did you have a desktop computer also?

MR. MERRITT: No. I've never had a desktop.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So then you said you had a printer. So where was the printer located? Was it a mobile printer, or was it --

MR. MERRITT: No. It was at my house.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So you had a --

MR. MERRITT: It was an HP printer.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: "HP printer"?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So --

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MR. MERRITT: I'm pretty sure it was HP.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- with the laptop, obviously, you're -- you're pulling the laptop, you're taking it around.

You know, obviously, this isn't a laptop. It's an iPad.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But you're taking the -- it's not connected to any cords or connected to any printer. Was it connected wirelessly, or did you actually have to plug it in?

MR. MERRITT: Probably -- probably wirelessly because I had -- my printer had a wireless connection. I could connect to it wirelessly.

But I don't remember whether I was connected or how I was connected to it. I don't remember. I just know it had to have been my -- on my laptop because that's the only thing I used back then. And --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So you're at -- you're at home. You have a laptop. You have a printer at home also.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: They're not connected by cords. But they're connected wirelessly?

MR. MERRITT: Probably.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And you're talking about Quick Books. Are we talking about an online Quick Books account?

MR. MERRITT: His Quick Books -- his regular Quick Books account, yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And we're talking about online?

MR. MERRITT: I think so. I'm almost positive it was. He had online because later on -- as a matter of fact, two or maybe a week -- a week or two before he had me switch his Quick Books and send him a new thing because his wife was big time using -- she would constantly go on his computer to see how much money he was making.

And -- and his finances were -- he -- he tried to keep them away from his wife. And it was -- it was a big thing. And so he . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You said a week or two before what?

MR: MERRITT: Yeah. I think it was a week or two before Joseph disappeared. He asked me to -- to switch his Quick Books.

And I don't remember whether it was upgrade and then change it so that she couldn't get on it or just change it. I don't remember.

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But I did. And it was set -- and it was sent -- I had it sent to their house via -- I don't remember whether it was UPS or whatever it was. It was sent to their house.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: If it's a week or two prior to Joseph going missing, why doesn't he order the Quick Books?

MR. MERRITT: Because it would show on his computer. And she did -- and she was all over his computer. And she got all bent out of shape if she (sic) didn't let him (sic) have access, you know, the code.

And she would constantly go on and look at his history because she -- she thought Joseph was constantly looking at porn and constantly -- she was -- she was a number.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, let's get back to that Quick Books part. So -- so if he -- if you order it a week or two before, you send it to his house. He's going to install it in his computer. And then she's not going to have access?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. She -- he -- I think -- as a matter of fact, I think if -- matter of fact, if you look on his records, his -- probably his bank records, I'm almost positive he had just bought a new laptop,

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a -- because he was doing a bunch of research on buying -- getting a new laptop. And he was planning on moving most of his business stuff onto that laptop and leaving the other laptop just to -- for her to piddle with, you know, to -- because she was starting to become a -- kind of a nuisance with him.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So he had one laptop. He also had a desktop -- desktop computer. So what did he use for his business?

MR. MERRITT: Mostly the laptop.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So he was purchasing another laptop --

MR. MERRITT: A brand-new one.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: A new one. And he wasn't going to tell Summer about it?

MR. MERRITT: No. He wasn't.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So he's going to hide this computer from Summer?

MR. MERRITT: I don't -- yeah. I don't know whether he was going to hide it. I don't know whether he was just going to say -- tell her it was his personal one. I have no idea.

I just -- I just remember him ordering a new one. He -- he bought a new one just --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: If he's going to hide this

laptop computer and she didn't know about the new one, why would he have to hide the Quick Books from her also? Why wouldn't he just -- why wouldn't he just order the Quick Books, install it on the new computer --

MR. MERRITT: I have no idea.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What did he tell you? How -- how did the conversation go about the Quick Books? What did he tell you about it?

MR. MERRITT: Oh, God, I don't remember exactly. I just remember I was looking at Quick Books for me. I was looking at Quick Books for me because we had a -- we had a problem with the fact that I didn't have Quick Books. We couldn't do stuff together. You know, he couldn't send me stuff. And I -- you know, we couldn't communicate that well without both of us having Quick Books.

And I was going to be ordering it for me. And he said, well, why don't you either upgrade or -- or -- or do this -- do this on mine, too, while you're -- while you're doing it. And then I ended up not -- I don't remember why I didn't. I think probably money because I was -- I was paying a huge rent at that time, so I was, you know . . .

But I'm almost positive I just -- he just

wanted me to order it for him and have it sent to his house. And it was sent.

After that, though, I didn't have access to his Quick Books because it was new. I'm almost positive when we -- when he upgraded it or when I upgraded it for him, I didn't have access anymore.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: When -- and when did you up- --

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember. It was within two or three weeks of him asking me to do it. And I don't recall.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So you said he asked you to upgrade Quick Books about two weeks prior to him going missing?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I think it was --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: How long did it take for you to actually call and upgrade Quick Books?

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Before or after he went missing?

MR. MERRITT: Don't remember. I'm assuming it was probably before. But it could have been directly after. I didn't have a whole lot to do the week or two after he disappeared because I couldn't get a hold of him, you know.

So I was probably looking for stuff to do and -- I don't know. It could have been a week before. It could have been a week after. I'm not sure.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. But you had no access to Quick Books after you ordered it --

MR. MERRITT: I don't think so.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- for Joseph?

MR. MERRITT: I don't rem- -- I don't think so. I think there needed to be a -- a new code or a new something put in. I don't think that -- I don't think I had access to it after that.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So prior to -- so let's talk -- so let's call that "new Quick Books." And then "Old Quick Books" you had access to?

MR. MERRITT: Yes, definitely.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So what was the user name on the old Quick Books?

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: He used his -- he used his kids' names --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- for virtually all of his -- his passwords.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So password was one of

his kids' names?
MR. MERRITT: I think so.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: Like -- like "Gianni1" or -- I don't remember the pass code. But I had it written down. It was in my wallet. But --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- I don't remember.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So you had the user name and the pass code --
MR. MERRITT: I had everything.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- written down on a --
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So -- so before new Quick Books, with old Quick Books you had access. You said you wrote checks. How many checks did you write?
MR. MERRITT: Over the years?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yes.
MR. MERRITT: Dozens. Dozens.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And who did you write checks to?
MR. MERRITT: Either Metro or suppliers or myself or -- I mean, it just depended on what was going on that day or that week. You know, I mean, we had -- we had checks going out almost on a daily basis. You

know, it was -- it was -- we were pretty busy.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So he would -- you said you would write checks. But Joseph would always write checks?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, how -- how were the -- how were the books taken care of, if you guys are both writing checks?
MR. MERRITT: He pretty much kept track -- kept track as -- you know, I would let him know what the checks were written for. And I -- I don't know how he kept his books. I know it was done on Quick Books mostly.
But he would keep track of his -- his records. I -- I didn't keep track that much. So I don't know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But you said the Metro checks you believe you wrote after the 4th. How did you keep track of that -- those checks?
MR. MERRITT: Well, I kept -- I'm sure I kept copies of them. And I was going to be letting Joseph know.
As a matter of fact, I'm almost positive I called him, left a couple of messages probably just after -- not long after he disappeared when I was still

trying to get a hold of him, letting him know that -- you know, that I needed to get a hold of him and that I had written this check to Metro and this check to me and this check to, you know, different -- whatever it was.
And I'm 99 percent sure I left messages for him. And that's pretty much the way I would tell him, just let him know what the checks were written for, how much -- and how much and who to. And then he'd take care of it from there.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So -- but prior to yourself and Metro, who did you write checks to?
MR. MERRITT: I don't remember. Probably Little Giant, probably Industrial Pipe & Supply or "I" -- I'm sorry -- "IMS," Industrial Metal Supply, for stainless steel, copper. Where else?
It's possible -- I mean, just plumbing supplies and stuff like that. But I don't remember.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: How long prior to Joseph going missing were you writing those checks?
MR. MERRITT: Almost within a few months of Joseph and I being -- doing business together. He -- he just started -- we were -- we were pretty much open books from almost day one. We were good friends. And we did -- we did all of our business together and --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So he gave you checks. And then did you sign it "Earth Inspired Products" or did you sign it "Chase Merritt"?
MR. MERRITT: No. I -- I -- either he signed it or I signed his name. He would just hand me, you know, three or four checks. And then I would either sign his name or he would have already signed it and just handed them to me or -- you know, it just depended on the day what --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. How many checks -- so how many checks did you sign that were actually Joseph's name?
MR. MERRITT: Oh, probably -- oh, you mean over the years?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah, total. How many times have you signed Joseph's name?
MR. MERRITT: God, probably more than 30 or 40, I would guess.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. And did it look similar to Joseph's, or was it just --
MR. MERRITT: I don't know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- scribble and --
MR. MERRITT: I don't know.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. Okay. And like I said, I'm -- we're just, you know, trying to make sure

that -- that some of this stuff -- because, you know, there's one thing --

You know, you told San Diego -- and like Detective Bachman said, you know, the first thing we have to do is review everything.

MR. MERRITT: Of course.

DETECTIVE HANKE: So we, you know, review interview. You know, so there's one thing you tell San Diego. And then, you know -- and we -- we're going to believe most -- you know, you even said, it's been four or five years. You know, when you're interviewed by San Diego, it's -- it's two weeks later.

MR. MERRITT: Much fresher.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Yeah. So some of the stuff we're going to refer back, hey, this is what you told San Diego.

MR. MERRITT: Understandable.

I also still -- and I couldn't -- couldn't -- I told you that I would get the copy of the -- the book that I started. I couldn't get a hold of my -- well, he's in Hawaii.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And so I couldn't get a hold of him for him to e-mail it to me. I was going to this morning. But then I came to the realization that it's

six o'clock in Hawaii and nine o'clock here.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: And I really didn't want to wake him up.

So in a little bit, if you want, I'll call him --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- and have him e-mail it. I can actually have him e-mail it directly to you --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Cool.

MR. MERRITT: -- if you want.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Cool.

MR. MERRITT: It's a -- it's got a lot of the information that I remembered back then. It's just a lot -- a lot clearer back then.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. And we'll get to that. I just have a few more notes that I -- like I said, I was taking some -- some of the notes.

And -- and like I said, we -- you know, we've reviewed San Diego. We review all the books and all the interviews. We've listened to everything.

And you didn't tell San Diego that you were writing checks and signing Joseph's name. So that's why I'm -- I'm asking.

MR. MERRITT: Actually I did. I told Detective --

the guy you just mentioned earlier.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Dugal?

MR. MERRITT: Dugal.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: I told Detective Dugal that.

DETECTIVE HANKE: When did you tell him that?

MR. MERRITT: Early on. In -- matter of fact, at the interview when we were in -- I think it was Lancaster, if I remember the name of the city right.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: When they did the lie detector test, I did tell him that.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. So you're talking about when you did the polygraph test, you told him about those checks?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. But not in the polygraph test.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: But when -- when we were talking before and after. Because he did -- he did an interview, not extremely extensive then. But he -- he did talk to me then.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: But, yeah. I definitely talked -- told Dugal that.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. Perfect.

And like I said, we just want to make sure that --

MR. MERRITT: Of course.

DETECTIVE HANKE: -- that everything lines up.

MR. MERRITT: Understandable.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Perfect.

Okay. And let's -- so you were doing work with Metro. What -- what happened with Metro? Were you guys still -- do you still -- do you still do business?

MR. MERRITT: Oil and water.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: When that -- when Joseph disappeared, the old guy at Metro just got weird. I mean, he was just like, he wouldn't do any of the work.

You know, before he would -- he would do the work and then get it -- and then get paid for it. No big deal.

But because I couldn't get a hold of Joseph -- you know, I went in, and I said, I can't get a hold of Joseph. You know, I'll make sure you -- you know, you're going to get paid. I've got checks. But I can't get a hold of Joseph and let him know that I'm going to be paying you this. And I want to make sure

that he has the money in the account and, you know, and I -- that was kind of the way I approached him.

And he just got really anal and just -- he started becoming a prick. And so I just -- I finished. I paid him the -- the money for Saudi Arabia and for whatever projects he was already trying to complete. And I completed them and got them crated and shipped them. And -- and I just never spoke to him again.

I'm just -- because I didn't have any other waterfalls to build anyway. You know, Joseph wasn't selling them. So -- and I just never talked to him again.

Him and I, we were like oil and vinegar. I didn't -- I did not like him very much. And I don't know whether he liked me or not. But I did not like him very much.

And him and his -- him and his son -- or me and his son -- you know, because I told his son that his dad was a prick.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: And he didn't like that very much and --

DETECTIVE HANKE: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: -- he went off on me.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.

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MR. MERRITT: I'm like, I'm sorry. But I -- I said something, you know, like why -- why is your dad being a prick about this? You know, I -- it's not my fault I can't get a hold of Joseph because, you know . . .

He just wants to make sure he has his money, and I don't appreciate you calling him prick and --

DETECTIVE HANKE: Sure.

MR. MERRITT: -- him and I -- and -- and --

Have you -- have you met him? His -- the son?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We've talked to a lot of people, yeah. So, big guy.

MR. MERRITT: Flipping mountain.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: So it's not someone you really want to get into --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Sure.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Well, going back to some of these notes, Chase. You told San Diego during the first interview -- so this was the 17th. I'm talking about when they -- it was the lady detective, Fisk, Detective Fisk and Dugal that came to your house in Rancho.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

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DETECTIVE HANKE: So this was a couple days after they were reported missing. They were reported missing on the 15th. They talked to you on the 17th.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE HANKE: You guys talked on the phone a little bit.

MR. MERRITT: Right. Right.

DETECTIVE HANKE: And they drove up to Rancho. So, you know, this is two weeks or -- you know, after they are missing. They go missing on the 4th, and it's close.

So at that time Detective Fisk asked you if you had ever drove the -- the Trooper.

MR. MERRITT: Uh-huh.

DETECTIVE HANKE: And you said, no. You had only been a passenger in the Trooper when you went paint-balling.

I just want to clarify that with you.

MR. MERRITT: Actually, that isn't -- that isn't what I said because I remember the conversation. The last time I had driven the Trooper was when we went paint-balling, now that you just -- you just refreshed my memory actually.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And it was not long before Joseph

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went missing. And I didn't drive the Trooper. What I told him was -- well, because Joseph was driving.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: Because I didn't have a driver's license. And we were going onto a military base. So there's no way I'm going to drive onto a military base with no driver's license. They're not going to let me.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And when we got down into the paint-ball area, we set up -- we set up a table. But the -- the table we were set up at was like maybe 150 feet away from where we parked. You know, we carried everything down. We found the table.

And then I went back and brought the truck down to the table, you know. But that was it. That was -- that would probably be the last time I had driven the Trooper.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. So you drove the Trooper at paint ball. Just --

MR. MERRITT: Yeah, but it was 150 feet, you know. But I told -- I told --

DETECTIVE HANKE: Well, I -- I listened to it. I listened to the tape and --

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE HANKE: -- and I listened to the

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interview, and I read the interviews and --
MR. MERRITT: I'm pretty sure I told him that.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I'm 99 percent sure I told him that we moved it.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. So you said you moved it at that time. But you didn't drive it down to -- to the paint-ball place?
MR. MERRITT: No, because we were going on to a military base.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: We went and played paint ball.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. Okay. Okay. And you also talked about during that interview -- so a lot -- some of the stuff that I took notes on is some of the stuff that -- with Detective Bachman that you guys were talking about or some of the notes that we --
MR. MERRITT: Right.
DETECTIVE HANKE: -- you know, in reviewing interviews and that type of thing.
On the 17th, that first interview, Detective Fisk asked you what was wrong with your hand. And you had something wrong with your hand.
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE HANKE: You had an injury to your left

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hand. Do you remember that?
MR. MERRITT: No. I don't remember.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. You told the detective that you had sliced it on a piece of sheet metal at the shop.
MR. MERRITT: Oh, God, my hands are always sliced on sheet metal. So I'm sure that that's a good possibility.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I mean, I constantly am cutting my -- cutting myself at work because -- well, when I did the waterfalls, because sheet metal is sharp. And I was constantly -- I had Band-Aids always.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. So --
MR. MERRITT: I was -- you know, I mean, you can see my hands now. Even the work I do now is kind of rough on them. Yeah. It's possible. I don't remember.
DETECTIVE HANKE: You don't remember a significant injury at that time?
MR. MERRITT: No. I don't remember.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. And you said -- going back, you said Joseph normally drove the green truck. The Dodge; correct?
MR. MERRITT: Uh-huh.

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DETECTIVE HANKE: But then on the 4th when you met at Chick-fil-A he drove the Trooper?
MR. MERRITT: He did.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Why did he say that he was driving the Trooper?
MR. MERRITT: He didn't.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. Was -- so that was out of character for him?
MR. MERRITT: Not really out of character. I mean, he drove the Trooper sometimes. It was just -- he was usually in the truck.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I mean, it's just -- I didn't ever expect him in either one or the other. But most of the time he was in his truck. It -- he may have -- it was a long drive, so it may have been for gas.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I don't know. Although, I wouldn't think the Trooper was much better on gas than his truck. I think that's a V-8, too, isn't it?
DETECTIVE HANKE: Yeah. I don't know how big the engine was. Yeah.
Okay. Let's see. You talked about some of your medical issues. And, obviously, you know, your heart, you've had -- you said you had a couple heart

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attacks. Do you have any other medical problems or issues?
MR. MERRITT: Left shoulder.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. What's going on with that?
MR. MERRITT: I -- it's very difficult to use. I can -- if you -- okay. Right there is as far as I can raise my arm unless I pick it up. If I pick it up, I'm fine. If I let it go right here, it will fall and go out of socket. Because I have a torn -- torn rotator cuff. It --
I mean, I can do anything down here. You know, I can lift heavy -- I can lift heavy things. I can do anything low. But as soon as I get my -- get above my head -- or, you know, like above here, I can't use it.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. When did you tear the rotator cuff?
MR. MERRITT: When's the last time I did, you mean?
DETECTIVE HANKE: When was the first time you did it?
MR. MERRITT: Oh, 20 years ago.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Doing what?
MR. MERRITT: Well, actually, longer than that

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probably. Probably closer to 30 years ago. It was an industrial accident. I was backing up to a spiral stairway and my truck hit the piece of wood that was holding the stairway. And I reached out and grabbed the stairway. But -- and tried to shove my truck into park. It didn't go in. It went into reverse.

And it backed up and crushed me between a big eight-by-eight post and the door. And it rotated my arm around. Because I wouldn't -- I wasn't going to let the spiral stairway go because 20 feet down the hill was an all-glass wall of this house. And I would have been paying for that if it -- so -- and it just ripped my shoulder apart. That was the first time.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Did you ever have surgery on it?

MR. MERRITT: No. I mean, it healed. It got better. I could use it okay. You know, it still hurts sometimes.

And back then I could get it above my head a little better. You know, it almost healed. But then I started racing mountain bikes. And -- and over a three- or four-year period, from 2006 maybe to 2009, I had many accidents. And like three of which landed on my shoulder or did something to my shoulder and just --

DETECTIVE HANKE: When was the last time you had an injury to that shoulder?

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MR. MERRITT: I was doing an installation somewhere. But I can't remember exactly where. I can't remember, but --

DETECTIVE HANKE: How many years ago?

MR. MERRITT: A few. At least, I would say, seven maybe, give or take a half year, I would say. And I think it -- it was either an installation I was doing or it may have been the last bike crash. I don't remember. But after the last one, it's been history.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Did you go to the doctor on the last one?

MR. MERRITT: I think so.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Who did you go see?

MR. MERRITT: It would have been -- probably would have been Dr. Mike's in Victorville or Hesperia.

DETECTIVE HANKE: "Dr. Mike's"?

MR. MERRITT: That's what they call their offices.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: A walk-in clinic up there?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah, you know, the --

DETECTIVE HANKE: Oh, it's just a walk -- okay.

MR. MERRITT: I think that it -- I think that that's -- because that's where I sent all of my -- my -- the guys that work for me. So if I was going to go, that's probably -- I don't remember.

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DETECTIVE HANKE: Did they rehab the shoulder, or anything like --

MR. MERRITT: No.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Did they ever do surgery?

MR. MERRITT: Never have -- no. I don't have any insurance. Never have.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I never got it fixed.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Put it in a sling, or anything like that?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah, of course.

DETECTIVE HANKE: It was put in a sling?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I had it in a sling for a week or so. But I'm -- I'm an idiot. I -- I work it anyway. And, you know, it -- had I probably -- had I done what the doctor had told me or what I was supposed to do -- I don't remember which -- but had I done it, it wouldn't be as bad as it is. It's pretty bad.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. You said when you and Joseph -- and I, again, apologize for jumping around. But just from taking notes.

You said you guys didn't have any issues with any of the jobs just other than minor stuff.

What -- what happened with the restaurant -- the Mexican restaurant in L.A., Provincial Restaurant?

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MR. MERRITT: Oh, the big one.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Yes.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. They -- they ended up having another company build the waterfall.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And that was a project that we never -- we never built it. We never -- we never ended up building the -- the feature at all. They -- I don't -- you know, I can't remember everything about it because it was mostly between Joseph and them.

I was going to be doing it. But I never got -- we -- we never actually got started on it. We went out -- oh, I remember.

We went out there -- or I went out there and talked to a lady and the owner of the building, if I'm not mistaken. I went onto the construction site. And they were supposed to make a payment, or something. And they -- they were hem and hawing. They were doing -- I don't remember exactly what it was.

But, basically, they refused to -- refused to do it. And this lady was being flippant. And I have a problem. I generally will just say what's on my mind. And I told her what I thought of what she was doing. Well, that pissed her off.

And she wasn't going to give us -- she

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wasn't -- they were done working with Joseph for some reason. And I can't even -- I don't even remember the reason. I -- I can't remember. But they were done -- done with it anyway.

And I felt -- I think I felt the need to let her know what I thought about how she was doing it, and I did and -- but it -- it really wasn't any serious problem between Joseph and I.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: It wasn't nothing. Joseph and I never had anything real serious.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Did Joseph lose any money on that job?

MR. MERRITT: Oh, probably. More than likely.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Do you know how much he lost?

MR. MERRITT: No idea.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. Just going back to some of these other notes --

MR. MERRITT: I've got to go pee.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do you want to take a break for a second?

DETECTIVE HANKE: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: Just to pee.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah. Absolutely.

MR. MERRITT: It will only take a second.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Need any water or anything?

We'll be right back. All right. Rest room break.

All of us, I think, we need a little break.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. Just going back to some of these notes that I just wanted to clarify some of this stuff.

Going back to the beginning, you talked about Joe coming up to eat dinner with you. You said there was a favorite place of his to eat. Where did you guys eat?

MR. MERRITT: Charlie's.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Charlie's, that was in Rancho?

MR. MERRITT: No. It was on Foothill in La Verne.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. When you were describing Joseph and describing your relationship, you said Joseph was generous to a fault. Tell me what you mean by that.

MR. MERRITT: Everybody -- I mean, he -- for instance, with his brother. If his brother called -- as much as he bitched and moaned about the only time his brother calls is when he needs something, he would still give him a thousand dollars here and $500 there,

you know. I mean, he would -- he would still give it to him.

His dad -- his dad borrowed, from what I gathered, tens of thousands from him. Because his dad was -- had a problem in the stockmarket and lost everything, from what I gathered, and depended on Joseph for a while for money here and there.

And if I needed anything, and it almost didn't matter what it was. I could -- you know, I could give Joseph a call and say, hey, dude. I need -- you know, I need a thousand dollars. I need a couple of thousand dollars.

And even if it was in advance of a water feature that we were doing, it didn't matter. You know, if he had it, he would do it. That's what I meant by "generous to a fault."

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. Talk about after the 4th when you come back home. You're watching the TV. What cable provider did you guys have at the time?

MR. MERRITT: I have no clue. I -- I think -- I think we had Dish. But I don't remember. You'd have to -- Cathy would probably remember.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Because she was good with little -- trivial . . .

DETECTIVE HANKE: So you don't -- do you remember what specific channel you were watching or --

MR. MERRITT: No. I have no clue.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. Now --

MR. MERRITT: To go back, I don't remember. The -- the only thing we ever did at home late in the evening with the kids is either help them do their homework or watch TV and then go to bed.

So I'm kind of assuming that's pretty much how the evening went. But I don't remember most of that evening. I don't even remember Joseph calling. So I -- you'll probably have to refer to Cathy and her memory for that.

She said she remembers vividly Joseph calling. I don't.

DETECTIVE HANKE: And that brings me up to my next question. You said you don't remember calling. In your CNN interview that you did --

MR. MERRITT: I said that -- that he called.

DETECTIVE HANKE: That he called and that you were too tired to answer.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. That was coming from Cathy's recollection really. It wasn't -- it wasn't my memories. You know, I trust Cathy's memory.

And so when they asked me about it, I

said -- that's what I told them that's --
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- what happened because I don't really recall.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. But you didn't tell CNN that you don't remember?
MR. MERRITT: No. I think -- I think CNN was to -- was pretty just straight up with the questions. Did you answer or what- -- you know, whatever it was.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: And I said, I didn't answer because I was tired, or something like that. Because that was -- that's what Cathy had told me. That's what -- the sequence -- the sequence of events that happened.
So I was just kind of going by what she said because I didn't remember. I never did remember personally.
DETECTIVE HANKE: So you said that you guys talked a few times, two or three times on the way back from Chick-fil-A when he was driving back.
When was the last time you actually spoke to Joseph?
MR. MERRITT: I don't remember.
DETECTIVE HANKE: And, Chase, this -- this is your best friend.

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MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE HANKE: So, you know, I have grandparents. I have close friends. I have best friends that, you know, whether they were killed or there was some tragic accident, I remember vividly word for word the last person that -- you know, the last thing that somebody said to me. It's very, very important to me because it's the last thing I remember, whether they were upset, whether they were happy, whether they said, hey, I'm going to -- I miss you, I love you, whatever it is. I remember exactly what that person said.
MR. MERRITT: I can't -- I don't remember exactly.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I do remember Joseph was in a good mood.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: We were both in great moods because we were having a lot of really cool stuff happen with Saudi Arabia, with, you know, all the different projects that were going on. We were both in great moods.
I don't remember the last things we talked about exactly. It was -- I'm quite sure it was something having to do with the meeting that we just

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had. You know, something like, did you -- did you remember to do this or did you forget or did you -- are you going to be doing this, whatever it was. But I don't recall the exact conversation.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Do you know how long the conversation was?
MR. MERRITT: None of them were very long.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Less than five minutes? Less than ten minutes?
MR. MERRITT: Probably less than two minutes.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Less than two minutes?
MR. MERRITT: More than likely, yeah.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: We didn't -- on his way back, I don't remember talking to him for very long.
DETECTIVE HANKE: What about when he was at the house? Did you ever talk to him when -- did he make it back down to Fallbrook? Did you talk to him when he was at his house?
MR. MERRITT: I don't recall talking to him after he made it home. I don't remember.
DETECTIVE HANKE: You told San Diego that he was sitting in his office when you were talking to him, was the last phone call.
MR. MERRITT: Okay. Well, maybe that -- maybe

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that was the case. I don't remember whether he was at home. I mean, right now I don't remember. You know, like I said, San Diego was two weeks after. So it was a little -- little better memory.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Yeah. But, I mean, you've had almost five years -- you know, you've had, you know, four and a half years to think about, you know, your best friend disappearing and what happened to him.
So, I mean, has it ever gone through your mind whether he left Chick-fil-A and actually made it back home?
How do we know that Joseph made it back home?
MR. MERRITT: No. I -- I always assumed that he made it back home. And that's -- I didn't -- I don't think I took it that much further than that.
I assumed that he made it back home. And then sometime during the night or the next day or, you know, something happened, you know.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: That's -- you know, that's all speculation. I never -- you know, I -- all I remember is kind of vague conversations with him. But the conversation we had wasn't about him disappearing, you know. It was about business. You know, it was

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business as usual. And, you know, nothing really super out of the ordinary to, you know, pin point to remember.

You know, otherwise, you know, if it -- I mean, if it had been like, you know, it's my son's birthday or it's -- you know, or -- or, you know, I'm getting a divorce or, you know, whatever it was, then I would remember something like that.

But I remember just simply -- we were excited about the -- what was going on with the waterfalls, the sales that we were doing, you know. I don't remember much else.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. And you said you don't know if Joseph pulled over anywhere and stopped. You said he wasn't feeling good on the way back.

MR. MERRITT: I do know that he -- he -- as a matter of fact, there's -- there's no question that -- I know that he pulled over. He stopped somewhere because he wasn't feeling good. That was one of the calls he made. He said, I'm not -- I'm a little dizzy. I'm going to wait for a minute.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. Had Cathy ever been down to Joseph's house either before or after Joseph went missing?

MR. MERRITT: I don't think so. I don't remember.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Did you ever tell San Diego that she went to the house?

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember. I don't recall ever saying Cathy went.

And earlier when we were talking about Mikey -- me meeting Mikey there, I don't think Cathy was there. I don't ever remember -- I don't ever remember her -- Cathy being there.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. So after they go missing, you go down and talk to Susan. You think it's the 8th or the 9th. You drive down to their house. And where do you park at?

MR. MERRITT: In the driveway.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. Head in or backed in?

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember. I just remember I was in the driveway. I don't remember.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. Were you -- was your -- and you're driving the truck at this time?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE HANKE: So was Joseph's truck there also?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I was parked to the right of it.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Joseph's truck to the left. Your truck is to the right. And where is the Trooper

at?

MR. MERRITT: Not there.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. So nobody parked on the street?

MR. MERRITT: Not that I -- yeah. I don't think any -- I don't remember whether there was any cars parked on the street. I don't think so. I don't --

DETECTIVE HANKE: Is this the first time that you've pulled into the driveway?

MR. MERRITT: No. No. I'd pull in their driveway all the time.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. Okay. You talked about the dogs. And you talked about it was raining at that time. So is that kind of how the weather was when -- on the -- when Joseph went missing?

MR. MERRITT: It was -- yeah. It was kind of murky.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Raining?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Well, it was days after. I don't know whether it was the day he went missing. I don't remember. But when I was -- when I was out with the dogs, it was kind of nasty weather.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. Storm? I mean, February; right? So it's storming?

MR. MERRITT: It was --

DETECTIVE HANKE: Cloudy? Raining?

MR. MERRITT: It was cloudy. Yeah.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. You said you were driving that big utility truck that you got from the used car lot. How long did you have that truck for?

MR. MERRITT: Months. But I don't remember exactly how long.

DETECTIVE HANKE: When did you buy truck?

MR. MERRITT: I think it had to have been at least probably six months before that. But I'm not -- I can't remember exactly how long I had that truck.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Six months before Joseph went missing?

MR. MERRITT: Yes.

DETECTIVE HANKE: And then how long did you have it after Joseph went missing?

MR. MERRITT: Weeks, I think is all.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Just a couple weeks?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah, a few weeks. I -- I don't remember exactly. But it wasn't very long. Because I lost it back to the car dealership.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. Were you not paying?

MR. MERRITT: I couldn't pay. Yeah. I couldn't pay for it.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. They go missing at the

beginning of the month; right? They go missing on February 4th. Had you paid for your truck in February?

MR. MERRITT: I don't recall.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Do you remember when the payment was due?

MR. MERRITT: I don't recall any of -- any of that. February?

DETECTIVE HANKE: Well, I guess what I'm asking is, if you're paid up on February, and you've said --

MR. MERRITT: I probably --

DETECTIVE HANKE: -- you had probably a couple more weeks, did you pay March's payment?

MR. MERRITT: No. I'm sure I didn't pay March's payment.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. So you didn't pay March. And then the car gets repossessed?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. And I don't remember whether it was March, April, or even -- maybe end of February. I don't remember -- recall when it got -- but it was taken.

DETECTIVE HANKE: And then when it was taken, where was it parked at?

MR. MERRITT: I don't know. Cathy made the arrangements with them to -- she talked to them.

DETECTIVE HANKE: So it didn't actually get

MR. MERRITT: With them, yeah. Cars -- it was a company called "Cars." We had bought half -- oh, probably a half a dozen cars from them, quite a few of them.

DETECTIVE HANKE: And this is in Ontario?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. They don't charge any interest. You can -- like on a $3,000 car, you can put a thousand dollars down, a couple hundred dollars a month, and they don't charge interest because of their religion. So we always -- it was nice.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Because -- so we always bought our cars there. And they were reputable -- reputable to us. They would sell anything. But if I went there and said, you know, is there anything wrong with the car? He would tell me and --

DETECTIVE HANKE: How much did you pay for that truck?

MR. MERRITT: I think it was only a couple thousand of dollars, but I can't -- I can't remember exactly.

DETECTIVE HANKE: What was your monthly payment on it?

MR. MERRITT: Probably a couple hundred, 250.

DETECTIVE HANKE: But you had to pay at least

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repossessed where someone comes in the middle of the night --

MR. MERRITT: No.

DETECTIVE HANKE: -- 2:00 in the morning, you know?

MR. MERRITT: Oh, no. No. Arrangements were made for them to get it --

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. So you tell --

MR. MERRITT: -- by Cathy.

DETECTIVE HANKE: This is the used car people?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. So when you brought the -- did Cathy buy the truck, or did you buy the truck?

MR. MERRITT: I did.

DETECTIVE HANKE: You bought the truck. It was in your credit?

MR. MERRITT: It really wasn't credit. It was with -- it was a pay-here type thing.

DETECTIVE HANKE: What do you mean "pay here"?

MR. MERRITT: Put a down payment at the car dealership, and you make the payments to the car dealership.

DETECTIVE HANKE: But there's some type of financing?

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seven -- seven months, or something like that.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Yeah.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Maybe a year. I don't remember.

DETECTIVE HANKE: So you were getting pretty close to paying it off?

MR. MERRITT: Probably. Again, I've gone through so many damn cars, I -- I can't remember exactly how many payments --

DETECTIVE HANKE: So -- so six months to a year. You only owe a couple thousand dollars. But getting close to paying it off. And there was no way -- they weren't working with you to -- I mean, it seems like --

MR. MERRITT: They wouldn't -- he's really nice.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Yes.

MR. MERRITT: And had I -- had I probably asked, he probably would have worked with me. But there was just no way I was going to be able to make the payments anyway. So it wasn't -- I didn't see -- I didn't foresee any income in the foreseeable future. So I was -- I was hurting.

DETECTIVE HANKE: When you lost that truck, what did you have for transportation?

MR. MERRITT: Cathy's car, if I remember right. What did she have? I don't remember what -- I don't

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remember what her car was. A Plymouth, I think.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: Got an itch, and it won't go away.
DETECTIVE HANKE: What -- is it your -- I mean, what's your habit like with your -- your phones at night? Like when you go to bed, do you shut them off? Do you leave them on? What do you do?
MR. MERRITT: Usually shut them off.
DETECTIVE HANKE: "Shut them off"?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Because most of the time -- I don't know whether you know how iPhones work. But they're a pain in the ass. If you leave them on -- and I have a bad habit of -- I always forget to shut down the apps.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Uh-huh.
MR. MERRITT: You know, you're supposed to double click it, I think, and then shut down --
DETECTIVE HANKE: Close them down, yeah.
MR. MERRITT: And if you don't, it runs the battery down. Well, my phone always runs down. So I just shut it off, but -- most of the time.
DETECTIVE HANKE: While this is -- while you're dealing with Joseph, what kind of phone did you have then?
MR. MERRITT: Probably an iPhone. Usually I did.

happened that I had just -- like three weeks ago, he asked me about it. And I -- I had mentioned it to him a few weeks before that. And he had asked me about it. And I said, well, I can e-mail it to you. And I e-mailed it to him. And I don't think he's read it yet. He doesn't (inaudible).
DETECTIVE HANKE: How come Mark is interested in it?
MR. MERRITT: He -- because of me, you know, and he -- he -- I don't remember what we were talking about. But I said, well, I -- we were talking about Joseph. And I said, well, I wrote part of a book. I said, do you want to know a little more about it?
DETECTIVE HANKE: Right.
MR. MERRITT: I'll -- I'll send you an e-mail of it. And he said, yeah. Do that. So I sent it to him. And I don't think he's read it yet. But I know he's got the e-mail. So I was going to him -- and I -- I thought that it -- on your phones if you e-mailed something from your regular e-mail, like, gmail or whatever, that -- like if you e-mail it from a laptop, can't you retrieve it on your phone?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Not always.
MR. MERRITT: Because I e-mailed it from the laptop. But it was gmail, I'm sure I e-mailed it from.

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DETECTIVE HANKE: And the reason I ask, I -- I leave my phone on. I use it for an alarm. I mean, is that -- so you would shut your phone off every night?
MR. MERRITT: I never use it for an alarm. Yeah.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Would you shut your phone off every night?
MR. MERRITT: Often. Most of the time, yeah.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: Yeah, plug it in, charge it up and turn it off.
DETECTIVE HANKE: How about during the day?
MR. MERRITT: Always on, as far as I know.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I usually turn it on and leave it on.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay. The guy that you were telling us about in Hawaii, what's his name?
MR. MERRITT: Dan Kavanaugh -- oh, oh, my boss. You're talking my boss now?
DETECTIVE HANKE: The one that you said that -- that had the book.
MR. MERRITT: Oh, Mark Keene.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Oh, so it's your boss right now that has it?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. He -- he -- it just so

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And just before I got here, I'm like, oh, well, I e-mailed it. So I looked on my phone on my gmail, and it doesn't show any sent.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I thought you could find it because I thought gmail was online, not on your phone -- or on your computer. I thought it was actually online.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Sometimes it's weird, yeah, sometimes with the computer and the phone.
MR. MERRITT: Because I was going to e-mail it to you. And I actually can call Mark now. More than likely he'll answer.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
THE INTERPRETER: And I can have him e-mail it directly to your e-mail --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- if you want.
DETECTIVE HANKE: After all this happens and you talk to the family, what did the family tell you happened?
MR. MERRITT: Well --
DETECTIVE HANKE: Once -- once Joseph and them were found, what did the family tell you happened?
MR. MERRITT: They didn't. They -- I haven't really talked to them.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, you told me you called and talked to Mike afterwards.

MR. MERRITT: He -- they only thing Mike -- Mike was very vague, very -- he was just -- you know, he wasn't forthcoming in anything. I mean, he -- you know, I was asking him questions. You know, like, are you guys okay? Yeah, we're okay. I mean, it really wasn't -- you know.

But Mikey is kind of a strange guy. I tried to call his mother. She didn't answer. And then I found out that she didn't want me at the -- at the thing.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: And so I thought, well, I guess I won't keep trying to call and talk to them because me and his mother, we were trying to get Dan Kavanaugh to try to make this business continue working because it was -- Joseph's business was going to die. My business was, you know, pretty much history if -- if we couldn't -- keep continue making sales.

And she had what -- in my opinion, she had the power to make Dan change his mind and -- but she just kept putting it off and putting it off and putting it off and not doing anything. And I got really pissed at her. And I told -- I said -- I kind of told her

what I thought about it.

I'm like, you know, you're -- you're ruining a lot of peoples' lives here. You know, you're letting Joseph's business . . . You know, and I -- I said, you don't -- do you not care about your son's business, you know?

And I think that's actually what really set her off with me because I was pretty straightforward with, you know, this is your son.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So did -- did they tell you like anything about what -- what the cops had told them?

MR. MERRITT: No, never. No.

DETECTIVE HANKE: How were the family killed?

MR. MERRITT: I don't know. I have no clue.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Well, that's what I'm asking. I didn't know if you -- well, you said you had followed it and stuff like that. If you -- if you heard through the --

MR. MERRITT: No. I -- I haven't heard anything. I have no clue.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. At the time what -- what kind of phone did Joe have?

MR. MERRITT: Was a -- I think it was a Samsung. One of the -- it wasn't -- I'm pretty sure it wasn't an

iPhone. What's the other -- not iPhone, but the other smart phone?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: There's a bunch of them. There's Samsung.

MR. MERRITT: No. No. I'm not talking about -- no. I'm not talking about the brand. I'm talking about --

DETECTIVE HANKE: Android phone?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Like an android?

MR. MERRITT: Android, yeah.

I'm pretty sure he had an android.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Did you ever use Joe's phone at all?

MR. MERRITT: Not that I can recall.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The truck we're talking about, does that look like the truck?

MR. MERRITT: Looks pretty similar.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah. I mean, does -- does stuff stand out like the truck that you had?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I'm almost positive that it was -- it had this on -- well, it had the rack.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The light? I mean you've got a little electrical outlet deal there.

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember the electrical outlet. I don't remember the lights. But that's it

because (inaudible) probably there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Had a utility bed?

MR. MERRITT: Uh-huh.

I don't remember it looking that new. I don't remember it being that new. But, you know. But it looks like it.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I thought it was a little older.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What year? That's what I was asking you.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I don't remember. If I were to guess, I thought it was like an '85 or so -- '85 or '88, you know, '87. But I'm not sure.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

DETECTIVE HANKE: Want to grab the computer stuff that we wanted him to look at?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah. Yeah. Give us a second. We're going to grab some more stuff for you to take a look at.

Do you want something to drink, Chase?

Okay. We've been talking for a little bit. This right here, these two stacks of paper, is from

Quick Books alone.
MR. MERRITT: Wow.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The online Quick Books account that's online, nothing goes away from there.
MR. MERRITT: Oh, I know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Nothing can be deleted --
MR. MERRITT: Right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- modified or changed. And there's a record of everything that happened in Quick Books. Okay?
The problem I have here is, what this tells me from Quick Books is not the same story you're giving me.
MR. MERRITT: I don't know what to say. I don't know what to say.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So there's 4,000 pages from the company itself from the records --
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay? They showed me that you're -- that you're lying to me.
MR. MERRITT: I sat down in this room today and every single thing that I've told you today is, as far as my recollection goes, the absolute truth.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I came in this room to tell you exactly what I remember, exactly everything. Unequiv- -- un- -- whatever that word is. I haven't lied to you. I haven't lied to --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So here's -- you know, we gave you the opportunity to explain yourself and talk about it, talk about the stuff. Like I said, this is -- this is from Quick Books.
MR. MERRITT: All right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: This is the search warrant that was written to Quick Books for Joseph McStay's account.
MR. MERRITT: Right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You tell me that the reason that you order Quick Books is because that you didn't have access to Quick Books, which is a lie. You had access to Quick Books under I-Design. And I have your records for your access to Quick Books under I-Design. Okay. So that's the first lie.
MR. MERRITT: Okay. Wait a minute.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So -- no. Hold on.
MR. MERRITT: (Inaudible) after they were --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Hold on a second.
So you -- no. You said you had no access to Quick Books at all. But I have record of you ordering

Quick Books for I-Design.
MR. MERRITT: I didn't say I didn't have --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So that's the first point where I have an issue.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The next point that I have an issue is, you tell me that Joseph called. I'm going to tell Chase, who's not a part of my business -- you have I-Design. You're Chase.
You told San Diego that you have your own business; right?
MR. MERRITT: Uh-huh.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Is that correct? I'm I-Design. I'm Chase. Joseph has his own business, Earth Inspired Products. And Chase is a worker. He's a welder for me. Joseph takes all this business. He gets all this stuff. And he's going to give the guy who fabricates or welds access to his Quick Books account to delete it? You're going to tell me that, and you think that's believable?
MR. MERRITT: What do you mean to "delete it"? Nothing was ever deleted.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It wasn't deleted?
MR. MERRITT: Or even attempted to delete.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Of course not.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. It wasn't deleted. Okay. So you say it was ordered. And you're telling me that Joseph ordered a new account.
MR. MERRITT: Well --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Joseph wanted to order a new account?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. These are the things that came up with deleted is -- I'm giving you the opportunity to explain why you called Quick Books and said that you needed Joseph's account to be deleted.
Tell me a reason -- a good reason why you would call Quick Books and there would be a record of you calling Quick Books on the 8th, four days after Joseph disappeared, and that you need to cancel Quick Books?
MR. MERRITT: Cancel or change?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Deleted -- delete.
MR. MERRITT: Never. Never asked to have anything deleted. I asked to -- if it was on the 8th -- you said it says on the 8th, then that's the day it was.
But I never said -- I never asked them to delete anything. I asked them to change it or -- or send them -- send him a new thing. And it was sent to

him. It was sent to his house. I know for a fact it was.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It wasn't sent to his house. It was sent to San Clemente.
MR. MERRITT: It ended up being sent to San Clemente.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why would it be sent to San Clemente?
MR. MERRITT: Apparently, that was the -- the last address he had. I assumed that the last address that he had was --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So when you called Quick Books on the 8th, did you say, this is Chase Merritt, and I -- I need to order Quick Books? Or did you represent yourself to be Joseph McStay?
MR. MERRITT: I don't think I represented myself to be Joseph. No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So what -- so there is e-mails back and forth in Quick Books from Joseph's account saying, Joseph, thank you for calling. If you want your account cancelled, you need to have the administrative password. So why would they send an e-mail to Joseph's account?
MR. MERRITT: Well, I -- I don't know. Because I'm sure that's the e-mail that they had. I mean, I

don't know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So -- so that's the first thing. Okay?
You talked about you have access to writing checks. You say you created checks from Quick Books. Yet, we have every record from Joseph. We have every check written. We have every account cashed -- every check that's been cashed. And there's no record of you ever writing checks on his account until the day leading up to and the days after he goes missing.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We have every check, Chase. So --
MR. MERRITT: All right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- we have every check. Okay? You weren't authorized to sign on this account. Okay? We have every single account. We have every single check. Okay?
You were not authorized to sign on the account. There's no record of these checks that you're supposedly saying that you wrote. There's no record of them. And you said you wrote up to 40 checks. We don't have them. So there's --
MR. MERRITT: They're there. You -- you --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You have to understand --

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MR. MERRITT: -- at the very least missed them.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. You have to understand --
MR. MERRITT: I wrote checks.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So they were found in November of 2013. Okay? We're October of 2014. We've been working on this case every single day for the past year. Okay? I know this case inside and out. And this is a fraction -- a hundredth -- one and one hundredth of -- of what we've been looking through.
MR. MERRITT: Right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So you have to understand.
MR. MERRITT: Oh, I understand.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So -- so we didn't miss it.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We didn't miss it. There's no checks missing. Okay? We -- we don't have that stuff missing. Okay?
So I understand you're saying it. But it looks bad, Chase. It looks very bad for you right now that you're lying about this stuff. Okay?
And that's what we need to give -- we gave you the opportunity. We gave you a chance. Okay? So that's why we need you to be honest with us here

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because this is a murder investigation --
MR. MERRITT: Oh, trust me, I --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- involving Joseph, involving Summer, involving a four-year-old boy, and a two-year-old boy.
MR. MERRITT: I know that.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay? So you're lying in a murder investigation about something as small as -- as writing checks. There's something else that -- that you're lying about.
MR. MERRITT: But I'm not lying about the -- the checks. I wrote a lot of checks.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So when you wrote these checks and you kept them, did you ever delete the checks from Quick Books?
MR. MERRITT: I don't remember.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I don't -- it's possible. I don't --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why would you delete the checks from Quick Books?
MR. MERRITT: I -- I don't know. I don't remember.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So let's take a look at -- on February 5th, the day after Joseph goes

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missing. Okay. 12:06 p.m., and I'll -- I'll read it. Yeah. You can look at it.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So at 12:06 p.m. there's a check added to Charles Merritt for $4,500. Memo line states "Paul Mitchell." The check was dated originally 2-5-2010.

So the date that it was created was the same day -- so it was written February 5th. Okay? Checks printed. Okay. That one was printed.

There's another one. Metro Sheet Metal. Okay? So this is written Metro Sheet Metal on the 5th.

The problem I have, though, if you can see here -- this is the Quick Books record. Okay? On 12:21, on the 5th, February 5th, at 12:21, there's something really weird about the date. Okay? The date is 2-4. So it's actually backdated a day.

Why in the world on the 5th when you -- when you created this check on the 5th, why would you backdate it to the 4th? Explain that to me.

MR. MERRITT: I have no clue.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Joseph is missing on the 4th. He's gone. He was murdered on the 4th.

MR. MERRITT: Right.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So he's murdered on the

4th. The next day, Chase, you go into Quick Books online, create a check to yourself and backdate it to the last --

MR. MERRITT: I thought it was Metro.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Oh, that one is Metro. Yeah. Oh, absolutely. That one is Metro.

Okay. We'll talk about that one.

Okay. Sorry about that. That's only a couple checks prior to the one you wrote to yourself.

So at 12:29, just a couple minutes later, you actually write a check to yourself for $6,500 and backdate it to the 4th.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So the day Joseph goes -- goes missing -- we know he's not missing at this point. He didn't just take off. He didn't just go to Mexico. Okay? He goes missing. The next day -- okay. So he's murdered on the 4th. On the 5th, Charles Merritt goes into Quick Books and creates a check.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So this is hours later. Hours later. The cops haven't been called yet. Susan hasn't been called yet.

And then all of a sudden, you go into Quick

Books, create checks for Metro Sheet Metal and create checks for yourself.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. The problem I have is, if you were authorized to do that, on the day of the 5th, you're going to write the 5th and not backdate it to the date that Joseph was last alive.

Why in the world does that make any sense, Chase?

MR. MERRITT: I have no clue. I mean, I may have thought it was the 4th. I have no idea.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I don't know.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, okay. That's the thing -- you're absolutely right. Right? It's the next day. Maybe you thought it was the 4th. So you backdate it.

MR. MERRITT: I don't know.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So we're going to keep going then. We're going to keep going.

Okay. There's multiple checks written after Joseph is murdered --

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- with your name on it.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: This check. Cashed on February 5th, 2010, by Charles Merritt at Union Bank. Okay. The check was written on February 5th at 12:38. It was cashed that same day. Okay?

So -- and it says "Paul Mitchell." So you're telling me that you created this check.

MR. MERRITT: Uh-huh.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You called Joseph and left a message. Hey, buddy, I just -- I just wrote a check to myself for the Paul Mitchell job. You're not answering the phone, so I'm just going to go cash it.

MR. MERRITT: Right.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right?

MR. MERRITT: I -- I guess. I don't -- again --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Is that what you're telling me?

MR. MERRITT: It's a good possibility.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's a good possibility?

MR. MERRITT: I -- yeah. I'm sure it's a good possibility. I mean --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So these Metro checks -- okay. The day that the Metro checks are written on February 5th -- okay -- 2010, they're also backdated to the 4th. It actually wasn't cashed for a month.

Why in the world would Metro hang onto these checks for a month?

MR. MERRITT: Okay. That's what I was -- as a matter of fact, I said that earlier. We had an issue with Metro not coming up with the right amount -- or I -- I can't remember. I think I just -- we just talked about it a little while ago.

And I don't know whether -- why they -- I'm sure that they got it before then.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So you're -- now you're -- now you're blaming Metro.

MR. MERRITT: I'm not blaming.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But you told San Diego -- you told San Diego a different story.

Okay. So remember, two weeks after they go missing, you tell San Diego that Metro Sheet Metal has a problem with their account, and that's why they can't cash these checks.

MR. MERRITT: Well, that may have been. That may very well have been. But we had a problem with Metro also.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So what you told San Diego is something -- you know, two weeks after they -- they were murdered what you told them is now a completely different story than what you told me.

MR. MERRITT: It's apples and oranges.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: No. It's not. It's really - not, Chase. So --

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So I can understand the 5th. And I'm -- you know, I understand the 5th. Maybe it's a mess-up.

The problem I have is, there was a check that was actually printed for the 5th, and then edited. You went back in and edited it and changed the date. Okay?

So -- okay. So you actually wrote the check for the 5th --

MR. MERRITT: Uh-huh.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- thinking, you know, okay. It's the 5th. That's the day maybe it automatically populates, or whatever it is. It actually printed. You go back in a few minutes later and actually edit it at 12:06. The only thing you did on it, Chase -- the only thing you did was change it back to the 4th.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay? You printed it. And you backdated it back to the 4th. Okay?

Another curious thing. Why, when you create the check, you print it; the next minute you delete it?

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So -- so there's a deleted check.

MR. MERRITT: Can I -- can I look at --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Sure. Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: -- because I can't -- it's hard to see it.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's no problem. I can read it to you.

So this one is at 12:38. And you wrote a check. This is the Paul Mitchell job. Okay?

MR. MERRITT: Is this the same Paul Mitchell check that you showed me earlier?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah. That was dated for the 4th.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So that one was dated for the 4th. And that's the same Paul Mitchell check that you told me Joseph gave to you at Chick-fil-A.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So do you see where -- do you see where I have an issue?

You told me that Joseph gave you a Paul Mitchell check at Chick-fil-A.

MR. MERRITT: No. No. No. It's apparent that

you weren't quite listening.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: No. I was listening, Chase. Okay. I gave you -- I gave you plenty opportunity. And I'm going to keep going.

MR. MERRITT: Okay. Let me -- let me -- no. Let's stay there, please.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We'll go back to it, Chase. We'll go back to it.

MR. MERRITT: No.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We'll go back to it.

So, like I said, we already -- I tried -- I gave you every opportunity to explain it --

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- when we were talking about it. That's why I was asking you so much about those checks. You weren't able to explain it. You weren't able to explain what checks you received on the 4th because you know there were some issues with Quick Books. And you knew we were going to find these issues with the checks.

And that's why you were trying to avoid the subject. You wouldn't tell me exactly what checks were given on the 4th.

MR. MERRITT: I didn't remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And you didn't tell me what --

exactly.
MR. MERRITT: Okay. It's five and a half years ago.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: No. I -- okay. I mean, yeah. I mean, it's definitely an issue, and it's definitely an issue that -- that you thought was important because you actually wrote down Quick Books and Saudi Arabia and Paul Mitchell on your notes for San Diego.
Do you remember having notes that you brought to the interview? You -- you wrote notes down. Okay? And this was what you were concerned about, that you wanted to talk about with San Diego. This was two weeks later.
So I understand this is five years later. But two weeks later the most important thing to you were Quick Books and those checks. Okay?
You talked about Quick Books and you talked about getting those checks on the 4th. So you actually told San Diego that you received those checks on the 4th.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Now, the records show -- they didn't have those records at the time because they didn't write the search warrant at the time.
But when we get the search warrant back, we

know that there's no possible way that you received those checks on the 4th. You created them after the fact.
MR. MERRITT: No. I received them on the 4th. So you've got to realize, I got -- I had -- and I told -- I told you both this just a little while ago. Joseph gave me checks.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: Whether they were -- I mean, half of the time he gave me checks, there were blank.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: Okay?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: No. And -- and that's fine.
We'll -- we'll talk about the 8th now. So, again, we talked about the 5th, 6th -- the issues with the 5th and possibly, you know, thinking that it's the 4th, or whatever it was for backdating. Okay?
So on the 8th now, 2:20 p.m. Okay? There's a check added to Charles Merritt was $6,500. The memo line states "Saudi Arabia final."
MR. MERRITT: Uh-huh.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Any reason why that check was backdated to the 4th, Chase?
MR. MERRITT: I don't know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, you did it.

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember. I -- I don't remember. No idea.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So --
MR. MERRITT: I have -- I have no clue.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, I have a clue. Because the last day Joseph is alive is on the 4th. So if you're cashing a check that's written for the 5th or the 6th, or the 7th or the 8th -- okay? Because this is the day that it's written. So if the -- if it's the 8th, we know that Joseph is not alive on the 8th.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So -- so checks written, backdated to the 4th. Okay? You printed the check at 2:20. Same minute you deleted it. You know why you deleted it?
MR. MERRITT: Nope.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Because you were afraid someone else was going to have access to this account. And the other person who had access to the account would be Dan Kavanaugh.
And that's why you called Dan Kavanaugh asking him if he had access to the Quick Books account. And you also told Dan Kavanaugh that you had to delete the account because you didn't -- that Joseph didn't want Summer to know how much money was in there.

So you kind of gave us a little bit of that variation. Okay? Because that's why you're concerned because you know that you wrote in there --
MR. MERRITT: I know I wrote checks.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You know that someone else had access to those things.
MR. MERRITT: No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Dan Kavanaugh had access to those things.
MR. MERRITT: I didn't -- in the first place, when I called -- Dan Kavanaugh and I never got along.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah. I understand.
MR. MERRITT: The only time I ever called Dan Kavanaugh is to find out if he was writing checks or he was -- had access to Quick Books, because his mother was telling me that he's getting money somehow --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- so . . .
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So -- but you're telling me -- again, we go back to this. Joseph has his own company. You have your own company.
You want me to believe that you have carte blanche. I have access to his account. He can write on my account?
Because the thing is, you have your own

account; he never wrote a check from your account. He never wrote a check from your Bank of America account. He never wrote a check claiming to be Chase Merritt. He never wrote a check claiming to be I-Design.

Okay. So -- but you're saying that it's carte blanche business; that I had access to his stuff. He had access to my stuff. He wrote checks on my account. And I wrote checks on his account.

MR. MERRITT: I didn't say he wrote checks on my account. I said I wrote checks on his account.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So --

MR. MERRITT: That's different.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So you wrote checks on his account.

MR. MERRITT: Of course.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: "Of course." Which is okay. But Joseph didn't have access to your stuff.

MR. MERRITT: I didn't have -- the finances originated with Joseph throughout -- throughout our business arrangement, through our entire business life.

The finances originated from him. He was paid for the -- for the waterfalls first. And then he paid me. So when I had access to his account, it was only to get stuff paid for or to pay me or to -- whatever it was.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. But here's the problem --

MR. MERRITT: He had no reason to have -- write checks on --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Here's the problem -- here's the problem, Chase.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE HANKE: He did write checks to you. Okay?

MR. MERRITT: He wrote checks to me, a lot of them.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Multiple checks to you.

The problem is, the way the checks are written is not the way you wrote the checks.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So we know what checks you wrote. And we know what checks Joseph wrote. And I can prove that. Okay?

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do you understand what I'm saying?

MR. MERRITT: Sure.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So you see this check? "Charles Merritt"?

MR. MERRITT: Uh-huh.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: All lower case letters.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You wrote that check.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. You wrote that check. Same checks as the other one, deposit Saudi Arabia. Okay?

MR. MERRITT: All right.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It's a forged signature. That's not Joseph's signature.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So you wrote that check. What date is that? Can you see it?

MR. MERRITT: No.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. It says "2-2."

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Two days prior to him going missing.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The problem is, is you wrote the check "Charles Merritt, deposit Saudi Arabia 1001," for $2,495. You wrote this check to yourself; right?

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Why would Joseph have a handwritten check for a hundred dollars given to you

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that same day? Why wouldn't Joseph just tack on an extra hundred dollars to this check?

So we know that you wrote this check. Why would Joseph (inaudible) hundred --

MR. MERRITT: This was on the 2nd?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: This was two days before?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So if Joseph is alive, why are you writing checks to yourself?

MR. MERRITT: Okay. This is on the 2nd. Joseph disappeared on the 4th.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yep.

MR. MERRITT: Okay. So this is when Joseph was --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. But Joseph didn't sign this check. You wrote this check.

MR. MERRITT: Oh, I might have signed it. I'm sure. But this was when Joseph was still around.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. But you're not listening. He wrote you a separate check for a hundred dollars and it's handwritten. So why would he type this? So, obviously, you wrote this check.

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember. I mean, it's a good possibility.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You did.
MR. MERRITT: He may --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But this check is handwritten by Joseph for a hundred dollars --
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- on the 2nd. Okay.
You see these numbers, "1117."
MR. MERRITT: Right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's a series --
MR. MERRITT: Right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- of checks.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So he wrote you a check on the 2nd from Earth Inspired Products -- okay? -- "1117."
MR. MERRITT: Uh-huh.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do you see that number?
MR. MERRITT: (Inaudible) 424.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So (inaudible) numbers off.
MR. MERRITT: All right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So why would he give you two separate checks that same day -- well, you're -- you're admitting that you wrote this check.
MR. MERRITT: I'm assuming that I did because you -- you just said that he didn't, so if it was to me and he didn't write it, I'm sure I wrote it.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. But you -- you wrote it and you -- so you're saying that you called Joseph on the 2nd and said, hey, I'm going to write myself a check for almost $2,500. And he was good with it?
MR. MERRITT: Well, I'm sure he was, if that's the case. I don't -- I never wrote checks without him being okay with it.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. What about after the 4th, after he was murdered and you wrote a check?
MR. MERRITT: We had -- any checks that I wrote after the 4th were already discussed. And we had already -- it was -- that's the reason I had the checks. And we were already -- I mean, it was already moving forward with these projects. So it -- it was already discussed.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So you -- you asked him specifically if -- if you were able to write a check on his account, even though he had been missing for four days?
MR. MERRITT: It was -- I said it was already discussed --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- like on the 4th or prior.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So on the 4th -- okay. So now the story is changing a little bit.

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MR. MERRITT: The story is not changing.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So on the 4th you discussed writing checks, but you actually didn't get checks on the 4th?
MR. MERRITT: No. I got checks.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. What checks did you get?
MR. MERRITT: I don't remember. If I remembered, I would have told you. And I told -- I told -- when he was asking the question, I -- I don't remember.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But here's --
MR. MERRITT: But I did get checks --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Here's the thing, Chase --
MR. MERRITT: -- three or four of them.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- the Metro Sheet Metal checks you talked about specifically. We showed you those two checks. Those are the only two checks. And you wrote those checks after the 4th. There were no Metro Sheet Metal checks given to you on the 4th.
And you told --
MR. MERRITT: There were --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- my partner that --
MR. MERRITT: -- checks for Metro Sheet Metal. They probably weren't written to Metro Sheet Metal -- Sheet Metal, probably not anyway. There were -- he

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gave me checks for Metro Sheet Metal.
Why else would I pay Metro Sheet Metal?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Because you owed them money. You owed them money. Because we have e-mails back and forth that Joseph was not going to pay the debt that you owed.
Here's -- and that's another problem. So here's -- here's the thing. The -- the issues that you had with Metro Sheet Metal was not Metro Sheet Metal not telling you a price, because Metro Sheet billed Joseph an invoice. Okay? They billed him an invoice.
The funny thing is, it's right around the same amount of money that you wrote them checks for.
You know what that e-mail correspondence said back and forth?
MR. MERRITT: I don't remember.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Metro Sheet Metal billed Joseph. Okay? Billed Joseph for about $1,800, a little -- right around there. Okay? Bills it, invoices it to Joseph or Earth Inspired Products.
Do you know what Joseph's response was?
MR. MERRITT: I don't know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm not responsible for this bill. You need to take that up with Chase, because he's responsible for material, the creating --

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MR. MERRITT: Okay. I don't --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: And I sort of remember that -- that transpiring.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So Joseph says, I refuse to pay. I'm not going to pay. Chase is responsible for paying. It's not coming out of Earth's Inspired Products because -- because Chase is not my business partner. He doesn't have checks. He's not authorized to write checks on my account. I -- if Chase refuses to pay, you know, that's on him. That's -- that's Chase's issue.
And we actually have the e-mails and the correspondence.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So you're telling me -- you're telling me on the 4th that you talked about Metro. And you said, yeah, here. Joseph is going to give -- give me a couple checks to pay off Metro.
The problem is, Chase, we have e-mail correspondence two weeks prior to Joseph getting murdered refusing to pay that bill. And then all of a sudden the next day after Joseph is murdered, you write a check for Metro Sheet Metal for the debt that you owe, not Joseph owes.

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MR. MERRITT: Okay. Very -- very possible.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It is -- it's not possible. It happened.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So here we are now, again, you're lying. You're saying that Joseph is responsibile because he's paying in checks. If Joseph is paying with an Earth Inspired Product check, it's coming out of his account. We have e-mails saying he --
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- refused to pay these.
MR. MERRITT: I'm going to -- I'm going to repeat myself. When I sat down in the chair, not a -- from the -- from the time my butt hit this chair, I have not lied to you about a single thing.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well -- and that's fine. That's fine.
So we -- we -- you have to -- you're not lying to me -- or you're saying you're not lying to me. But explain to me specifically about Metro Sheet Metal, specifically about that, where two weeks prior he was not going to pay -- pay this bill. Okay? And then you -- you --
MR. MERRITT: I could try to explain it off. I --

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I have no clue as to -- I can't remember what transpired in that two weeks.
But I am absolutely sure that one of the things that transpired is, we had either more waterfalls coming in or we had -- Joseph and I -- Joseph and I had come to an agreement about something that he would end up going ahead and paying Metro Sheet Metal.
I don't recall. I -- I don't recall. But that -- that doesn't make me a liar. It just -- I just simply -- I -- I told you exactly what happened.
I'm not -- I -- whether you want to believe it or not, I'm not stupid enough to think that, number one, Quick Books to -- to you guys isn't readily available, isn't going to be -- or always has been readily available.
I -- I -- I know that you guys have access to the -- to all of this information. Why would I lie about it? It's just simply, you know, obviously, some things don't quite fit in the box. But it -- there was a lot of things going on with Joseph and I with -- with Metro and I, with -- with my whole life, with Joseph's whole life. I mean, there was just a crap-load of things going on.
So can I explain everything, all of this?

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I -- I -- I don't even remember two-thirds of it or three-quarters of it. So, of course, I can't. But it's -- I'll do the best I can.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Chase, that -- that truck that I was asking you about -- did you own any other utility trucks at all?
MR. MERRITT: I don't recall. No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Because that one I showed you the picture of, it was prior -- it was previously registered to you. So I'm making sure. And it was -- the legal owner was Cars. That's the same place on Mission Boulevard where you bought it from; right? So that's the same truck that we're talking about.
MR. MERRITT: All right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The night -- the night of the 4th, you said you -- you went back home; right? Is that -- that's what you told us earlier.
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: After -- after you go have lunch, you go back to the house. You go to a couple -- a couple suppliers.
MR. MERRITT: Right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And you grab something to eat somewhere in there and then you end up back at the house. But you tell me you don't -- you don't remember

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what -- what happened the rest of that night.
MR. MERRITT: I don't remember all of it. No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Think back. Think back hard as you can and -- and try to remember what -- what happened that night.
MR. MERRITT: I have tried to think back for -- for -- for years. And the only recollection I really have is Cathy's memory of it. I mean --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Well, discount -- discount Cathy's memory of it. Okay? I -- I want to know -- I want to know Chase's memory of it.
MR. MERRITT: I don't remember. I -- I really don't remember. It's just -- it's -- it's just a blur.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I -- I really don't remember. If I -- if I did, I would let you know. I really don't.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, part of -- part of the previous investigation -- like I said, we're leaving no stone unturned; right? So we're going back. Part of what -- what we have is your phone records for that night.
MR. MERRITT: Right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Your phone records show that you and Joe talked, like you said, throughout the day, this and that.

get a hold of you, and you're MIA, nowhere to be found.
Think back, Chase. Where did you go?
MR. MERRITT: Three and a half hours?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Three and a half hours.
MR. MERRITT: I have no clue. I have no clue. My best recollection is -- is -- like I said, is Cathy's recollection.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Well --
MR. MERRITT: All I remember is --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- Cathy's recollection isn't correct. We've -- we've already -- we've already talked to Cathy. Her recollection is not correct. Okay?
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That recollection did not happen or that happened some other time or -- or something like that. But it -- it definitely didn't happen February 4th.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So what I need you to do is figure out what happened on February 4th. Okay?
This is -- this is -- this isn't some little -- little BS case, or anything like that.
MR. MERRITT: Trust me. I know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It's a homicide of four

Well, at some point in time -- on the night of -- or the evening of February 4th, your phone goes off.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay? And you're nowhere to be found. Where -- where did you go during that time?
MR. MERRITT: I have no idea what -- I'm not -- I don't know what --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, you're not at home.
MR. MERRITT: I don't know what time you're talking about.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. February 4th from six o'clock till late -- late -- later in the evening or later in the night you're MIA. Where did you go?
MR. MERRITT: No. I think I was home.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You weren't home. I know that based on your cell phone records.
MR. MERRITT: As far as I know, I -- I was home.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, your -- your cell phone records don't show you're at home. Your cell phone records show Cathy is at home. And then it shows Cathy consistently trying to get a hold of you --
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- for an extended period of time. For over three and a half hours she's trying to

people.
MR. MERRITT: I know that.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Four people. Okay?
MR. MERRITT: I -- trust me. I --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: People that were very close to you, your self-proclaimed best friend and his family. Okay? Two little boys. All right?
MR. MERRITT: I know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: This has gone on for years. Okay? I need to know what happened that night, Chase. Something happened. Okay?
MR. MERRITT: Well, I have no -- honestly -- and I -- I said it before, the best recollection I have is what Cathy -- is what Cathy --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Did you kill the McStay family?
MR. MERRITT: Of course not. Of course not. I wouldn't -- I would never -- not even for a second, number one, do Joseph any harm. And two little boys? No way in hell. There's -- it's just not -- there's just no way in hell. I would never -- never hurt them.
Joseph was my best friend. He was my entire livelihood, on top of that. He was -- I mean, him and I did everything together. We -- we played paint-ball. We went to the movies. And we -- I mean, we talked

every day. He was my best friend, you know. And I don't have very many friends. So of course not. I would never hurt him.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. February 4th, what happened that night? Where did you go? I -- I can -- I already know the answer. What I'm asking is for you to fill in the blank and explain to me what happened.

MR. MERRITT: I don't -- I don't recall being anywhere except for probably home.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You weren't at home, Chase. Because it -- I know you weren't at home, like I said, by your phone records. Okay?

Your phone records we got, San Diego didn't have. We have them.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Your phone records show that you weren't at home.

MR. MERRITT: All right.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm asking you for honesty. Where were you at that night?

MR. MERRITT: The only place I recall going that day or night is the places that I already told you where I went.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. At some point that night on February 4th, you end up down in Fallbrook.

MR. MERRITT: I ended up in Fallbrook?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You ended up in Fallbrook.

MR. MERRITT: I wasn't in Fallbrook, not on February 4th.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You're down there in -- in Fallbrook on February 4th.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Explain it, Chase. Okay? Because there's got to be a reason. Okay? There -- there's got to be a reason. And I'm asking for it. All right?

I'm asking you man to man. And I'm asking you to help explain what happened. Okay?

MR. MERRITT: I understand. I wasn't in -- I have no recollection of ever being in Fallbrook on the 4th.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You were down there. Now, whether or not you were down there before the -- this family was murdered or -- something -- I mean, something -- I'm not -- I'm not saying, if you go down there, that you're the one that did it.

MR. MERRITT: I --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But you were down there at some point. Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I understand.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I need to know what you were

down there for. Did he forget to give you checks? Did he forget to do something?

There's -- there's a reason you went to Fallbrook. And I -- and we're -- we're spinning our heads trying to figure out why you're down there.

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember being -- going -- going to Fallbrook. I don't -- I don't -- as a matter of fact, on February 4th, I don't --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I know you were in Fallbrook, Chase.

MR. MERRITT: There's no chance that I was in Fallbrook.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm telling you. I'm telling you straight up. And -- and we're not lying to you. I know you were in Fallbrook on February 4th. Okay?

All -- all I want to know is -- is what -- what was the reason for it? I mean, if you went down there and you picked something up quickly, and you came back up, then it needs to be explained. Okay?

Because it doesn't look good. I mean, help us -- help us understand what the reason for going down there was.

I -- I know you guys talked all the time. I know that you -- you said yourself, you went down there a handful of times. So what -- what would you go down

there for?

MR. MERRITT: Well, the only thing I ever went to Fallbrook for is to -- is to socialize with Joseph or do business with him. I mean, those are the only two things.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: On February 4th, I don't think I was down there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: February 4th I know you were down there.

MR. MERRITT: In fact, I'm quite sure I wasn't down there. I -- I think I would have remembered that day going to Fallbrook.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I -- I think -- and part of it, I think, is that you don't want to be lumped into -- into this. Okay? And you're concerned --

MR. MERRITT: I don't want to be lumped into it.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But you're -- but you're already in it. That's what we're doing. You have to explain what you were doing down there because you were down there. All right?

There's no -- there's no contesting that whatsoever. You were down there. Okay? What I -- what I need you to do is help me understand what you were down there for? Okay?

If you're telling me that you didn't kill them, then why --
MR. MERRITT: Of course not.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- were -- why were you down there? Because you went to that house that night.
MR. MERRITT: I don't remember going to the house that night. As a matter of fact, I would --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Think.
MR. MERRITT: -- just about bet my -- in fact, I am betting my life. I would bet my life that I was not --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Think about it, Chase.
MR. MERRITT: I did not go to Fallbrook on the 4th.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Think about it. What was the reason for going down there? All right?
I don't want to hear that you weren't down there, because I know you were down there. Okay?
MR. MERRITT: I had no reason to go to Fallbrook. I had none.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Was there a check that you had to pick up? Was there something you had to do?
MR. MERRITT: We did that when he was -- when he was --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We know you didn't do that

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know you were in Fallbrook that night, Chase.
MR. MERRITT: Okay. Well, I -- I don't recall being there. I have no clue as to any reason that I would be going there. I just talked to him at lunchtime. There was no reason for me to go to Fallbrook.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. February 5th, you said you don't really remember. You think it was just a normal mundane day. You went about your work and all this and that. Normal -- normal day. Try to get a hold of Joseph. Can't get a hold of him. No big deal; right?
MR. MERRITT: Uh-huh.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. February 6th, jump forward two days now. Where did you go February 6th?
MR. MERRITT: I don't remember.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why would people put you up in the High Desert on February 6th?
MR. MERRITT: No idea. No -- the only reason I'd ever go to the High Desert is for my brother or my sister.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Where -- where would you have gone that -- that day? February 6th, that's a pretty good -- I mean, this -- this is two days after your friend is missing.

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when you were there. I mean, unless he -- unless he --
MR. MERRITT: He got -- we did that when he was there. He gave me checks when he was there.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. You went down there for something else. Did you have to go drop something back off to him? Did you have to -- I mean --
MR. MERRITT: I have no reason --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: There's got to be something.
Were you not able to get a hold of Joseph and decided to go check on him to make sure he was okay? I mean --
MR. MERRITT: No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- for some reason you went down there that night.
I mean, this -- we're trying to give you the opportunity to help us understand why you went down there.
MR. MERRITT: I -- I understand. I understand you fully think that I was in Fallbrook that night, but I --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I know for a fact you were in Fallbrook that night.
MR. MERRITT: I don't recall being there.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: There's a difference between thinking and there's a difference between knowing. I

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MR. MERRITT: Well, where would I go if I went to the desert?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.
MR. MERRITT: I would either go to my older brother's or my older sister's.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Where is that?
MR. MERRITT: One's in Hesperia. One's in Oro Grande.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Where at -- where at in Hesperia?
MR. MERRITT: On -- just off of Hesperia Road and Third.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. And then where is the other one in Oro Grande?
MR. MERRITT: Off of the old Highway 66.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. February 6th, go back to what did I just tell you we -- we got of yours? What was I just asking about?
MR. MERRITT: Phone records.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Where do your phone records show you're at on February 6th?
MR. MERRITT: I have no clue.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: High Desert.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Where at in the High Desert,

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do you think?
MR. MERRITT: Either Hesperia and Third or in Oro Grande. Those would be the only two places.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: No.
MR. MERRITT: That would be the only two places.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Chase, you know where you're at on February 6th. What -- what do you think would be just a shot in the dark where -- where your phone would show you at?
MR. MERRITT: Well, if -- if I went to the desert -- and I don't -- I don't recall going to the desert on February 6th. But if I went there, it would be Oro Grande or Hesperia.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It wasn't either one of those places.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: If you had to take a shot in the dark, where else would you be, Chase?
MR. MERRITT: That would be it. That would be the only two places I --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What are the key -- where is a key area in the High Desert that we've discussed?
MR. MERRITT: What do you mean?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What's a key area that this whole case involves in the High Desert?

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MR. MERRITT: Where Joseph was buried, you mean?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Where is that at?
MR. MERRITT: Off of Dale Evans.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It's actually Stoddard Wells Road.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Why would your phone show you at the grave site on February 6th?
MR. MERRITT: Not possible. I wasn't there.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why would your phone records show you were there?
MR. MERRITT: Couldn't have.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Oh, they do.
MR. MERRITT: They couldn't have.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Your phone records show you there. That's why I'm asking.
MR. MERRITT: I wasn't there. Only time I ever went to that place was several weeks later when -- or a few weeks later where I went out -- first by myself and then went out with my girlfriend's daughter.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: A few weeks after they went missing?
MR. MERRITT: No. No. After they were -- after the grave sites were found.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. I don't -- I don't

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understand why they would show that. Why -- why they would show you up in that area.
MR. MERRITT: I don't see how they could. Because the only two places I would have been out in the desert -- in the entire desert is at my sister's --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It shows you out there, Chase. That's why I'm asking. I'm trying to help -- help us figure this all out.
MR. MERRITT: It's impossible.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, per the phone records -- and there are engineers that do all this whiz-bang stuff, that are way more educated than you and I are.
MR. MERRITT: If that's the case, then, okay. You will find that it's impossible that I was there. Because there's no way I was there.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We have one of those whiz-bang engineers that's telling us that you're out there at the graves on February 6th.
MR. MERRITT: Then he needs to look again because I wasn't there.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Chase --
MR. MERRITT: I was -- if I went to the desert -- I don't remember going to the desert that week. I don't remember going to the desert at all.
But if I went there, it would be in

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Oro Grande with my sister, because her and I -- I was semi taking care of her off and on, or at my older brother's in Hesperia off Third.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It doesn't show either one of those houses.
MR. MERRITT: That would be the only two places I would go up there.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So I'm trying to figure out now on February 4th why you would be down in Fallbrook. And that's what I'm saying. Maybe it's just a shot in the dark that you went down there to grab something, or whatever. Now, on February 6th this guy is telling me that your phone shows that you're up there in that area.
Now, these -- these are either some pretty good coincidences, or you just have terrible luck, one of the two.
MR. MERRITT: Well, I don't -- I don't think that I was in Fallbrook. And I know that I wasn't at the grave site.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: There's no way.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Why do you think --
MR. MERRITT: I wasn't in Fallbrook.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Because I know for a fact you

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were in Fallbrook.
MR. MERRITT: Why do I think I was in Fallbrook --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.
MR. MERRITT: -- or wasn't in Fallbrook?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Start with that.
MR. MERRITT: Because I would remember going to Fallbrook on the 4th after Joseph left me. I would have remembered that.
Did I remember -- was the rest of the day vague because it was just kind of a day? Yeah. But I would have remembered getting in my car, driving all the way to Fallbrook -- excuse me -- Fallbrook and back. That's a long drive.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You're in Fallbrook. There's no -- there's no -- there's no discrediting that. All right?
MR. MERRITT: Well, I was also at the grave site, but -- and you said there's no discrediting that.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's completely -- completely different.
MR. MERRITT: But that's -- it's -- it's one in the same. I wasn't at either one. So, you know, you're saying --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Fallbrook -- Fallbrook, I know you were there. And that's completely phone records

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aside. Okay? That's why I'm trying to help -- ask you to help me explain this.
MR. MERRITT: No idea.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It doesn't -- it doesn't make sense to me, Chase.
I mean, this whole time for a -- for a year -- a year we've been sitting here. And we've been investigating this case and trying to figure something for this family. All right? For these two little boys that have family members. You know, that -- their grandparents will never get to see them grow up.
MR. MERRITT: I know that.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You know, this is your best friend, Chase.
MR. MERRITT: I know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Your best friend. Granted, you may not have -- have cared for her much. But these two little boys?
MR. MERRITT: I -- they were adorable.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Help us understand it. Who would have done it if it's not you?
MR. MERRITT: Why would I do something like this to my best friend?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do I think that you meant to do this?

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MR. MERRITT: How do you -- how do you kill four people by accident?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do I think that you went there with some intention to do it? No. I'm not saying that.
But do I think that things -- do I -- we handle this every day. We deal with murders every day. Okay?
Do I think that stuff gets out of hand on a -- on a regular occurrence and stuff happens? Yeah. I do. Otherwise, I -- you know, that's -- that's just the way stuff goes.
I mean, do I think that everything is some complete premeditated, you know, planned, orchestrated act? Yeah. I don't -- that would be not plausible to think that. Okay?
But to think that stuff can go awry, like you said earlier, and have, you know, stuff go not as planned? Yeah, I do.
MR. MERRITT: Well, of course.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So what I need to know is, what happened with these folks. All right?
MR. MERRITT: I would like to know also.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Because -- because right now people -- people try to -- through everything

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(inaudible) this huge monster. Right?
They try to paint you up as being a monster. And, oh, it's got to be Chase. You know, Chase. Chase. Chase. Chase. You know, he's -- he's just this complete monster. And, you know, and he can do all this stuff.
Well, in talking with you, you're either a monster or maybe it's something that happened that wasn't planned, that wasn't expected, and stuff happens. And you get scared and --
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Personally, I have a -- I probably have a few people in this world that don't like me very much. But I rather doubt that very many people paint me as a monster.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: This man liked you.
MR. MERRITT: I know that.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: He liked you. He, like you said, was your livelihood; right?
But these right here were his livelihood. They kept him going. They kept him -- kept him all along.
Now, if something happened with him -- and I -- I don't know. What we're asking is -- is for you to try to help us explain what's going on here. Okay?
MR. MERRITT: I would love to.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: February 4th, you're down in Fallbrook, Chase.
MR. MERRITT: I --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You're -- you're presumably the last person that sees them at their residence.
MR. MERRITT: At their residence?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.
MR. MERRITT: I don't -- I wasn't in Fallbrook, not on -- not on February 4th.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You were in Fallbrook on February 4th.
MR. MERRITT: Well, I don't remember being in Fallbrook on February 4.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You may have chose to block that out.
MR. MERRITT: Later on -- later on, days later, yeah. I went there. But --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I think that you may have chose to block portions of it out. I -- and -- and I don't know if it's because it's -- it's terrible memories, or what it is, but --
MR. MERRITT: I don't block things out. I -- I don't have the best of memories, but I would remember going to Fallbrook.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So if we hooked you up to a

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polygraph right now and asked you if you killed the McStay family, what's it going to say?
MR. MERRITT: No. Same thing as it did last time.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Did they ask you that last time?
MR. MERRITT: They asked me -- what they asked me was, did I have anything to do with it, I think, or do I know -- or did I help them leave or did I have anything to do with their disappearance, or whatever.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And at that time they were working a missing persons investigation, not a homicide; right?
MR. MERRITT: No. I thought it was homicide because from what I thought it was -- Dugal was a homicide investigator. And it went directly to a homicide -- homicide investigation. I thought it was a homicide investigation.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It wasn't a homicide investigation back then. No. It was a missing persons investigation.
MR. MERRITT: I thought it was a homicide investigation the whole time.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We've -- we've watched every interview. We've watched -- or listened to every interview. We've watched the polygraph. We've seen

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all that. And you ask him countless times. He tells you, no. We're just conducting a missing persons investigation, because they didn't have bodies at that time.
MR. MERRITT: Right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Now there's bodies. There's four people that are murdered.
MR. MERRITT: Right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Four people are murdered. Okay? How does that happen?
MR. MERRITT: You know, if you knew that or if I knew that, we wouldn't be sitting here right now. I don't know. I don't know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, I -- I have a pretty decent idea.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I mean, I know that you're down there on the 4th. There's no doubt that you're down there on the 4th.
So now either, like I said, you had something to do with it or you were there just prior to. And maybe people waited for you to leave and then they went in and did this. But you're there on the 4th.
Why were you there on the 4th, Chase?

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MR. MERRITT: I don't remember being there on the 4th. I don't think I was there on the 4th. I am 98 percent positive that if I drove all the way down to Fallbrook on the 4th, I would remember.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I know you drove down to Fallbrook on the 4th.
MR. MERRITT: Well, I sure as hell don't remember being in Fallbrook on the 4th. I remember being there --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: There's --
MR. MERRITT: -- days before and days after, but not on --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: There's plenty of different things that catch people that travel all over the road. License plate readers, there's different stuff. You pass through all kinds of different stuff on the way down there.
And like I say, there is no shortage of stuff that we've done on this case. We've looked into every outlet possible.
MR. MERRITT: I understand.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm telling you, you were in Fallbrook on February 4th, 2010.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm asking you why.

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MR. MERRITT: I don't remember being there, so -- I -- I don't recall driving there. I don't think I was there.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do you have memory problems?
MR. MERRITT: No, none.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And then you -- there's other stuff that we've talked about and you remember --
MR. MERRITT: That's five and a half -- we're talking five and a half years ago.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We've sat here and talked to you the entire time. And there's plenty of stuff that you can remember way past then that you could remember with -- I mean, you could remember minimal -- minimal details.
MR. MERRITT: Some things -- some things you remember. Some things you don't. You know, I --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But he was your best friend.
MR. MERRITT: I remember most of the --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Your best friend --
MR. MERRITT: -- day on February 4th.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- goes missing and is murdered on February 4th, 2010. And you're telling me you cannot remember that night?
MR. MERRITT: No. I said, to the best of my recollection -- I know that I would have known that I

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put this all together.
MR. MERRITT: I understand. And that's why I'm here and cooperating and --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So why were you down in Fallbrook on February 4th?
MR. MERRITT: I don't think I was there on February 4th.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I know you were there.
MR. MERRITT: As a matter of fact --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The surveillance video -- this entire time, the surveillance video that they -- Dugal seems to -- everyone seems to think is a Trooper. That's not the Trooper. That's your vehicle leaving the McStays' house.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That is your vehicle, no -- no ifs, ands, or buts.
MR. MERRITT: All right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Why is your vehicle leaving the McStays' house on February 4th, 2010?
MR. MERRITT: I don't think it was.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It was. Oh, it was. There's no doubt about that whatsoever.
MR. MERRITT: Okay. I don't know what to say. I -- well, I don't remember driving down there on the

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was in Fallbrook.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You were in Fallbrook.
MR. MERRITT: I --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why? Why?
MR. MERRITT: -- don't remember being in Fallbrook. I did not -- I'm -- I'm pretty -- as a matter of fact, I am positive.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm positive that you were in Fallbrook.
MR. MERRITT: I did not drive to Fallbrook.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Who drove you to Fallbrook then? Because you've already said yourself you don't drive all the time. So somebody took you down to Fallbrook.
MR. MERRITT: Nobody drove me to Fallbrook. Back then I was driving most of the time.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. You were in Fallbrook on February 4th.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm asking you why, Chase. This is one of the most important days of your life right now. We're trying to help figure this all out.
That's why I -- we've asked you to come here. We've asked you to help us figure this all out, because you are a key piece of this puzzle that helps

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4th.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's your car.
MR. MERRITT: I would not -- I have no reason to be there on the 4th. I have no reason whatsoever.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why? I mean, why?
See, now is the time, Chase. Help us understand.
MR. MERRITT: I don't know why. I have no clue.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Your -- your truck is on video. There's -- it's on video leaving the McStays' house. This key video that everyone says is the Trooper. That's not the Trooper.
I -- we've -- we've studied your -- your stuff in and out. Okay? In and out. That is your vehicle leaving that house that night.
MR. MERRITT: I don't know what to say. I -- I can't -- I don't see -- I don't see how it could be, not on February 4th.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The -- the video there shows your vehicle backed in the driveway, shows your vehicle leaving there.
I mean, dude, like I said, we've -- we have done everything with this case -- enhanced videos, done all kinds of stuff, recontacted neighbors, pulled all kinds of surveillance, pulled plates, pulled everything

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out. We have pulled -- there is no stops that have not been pulled for this. Okay?

Your vehicle is leaving that house that night. I need you to tell me why.

MR. MERRITT: I don't -- if -- if I remembered being there, I would say this is the reason. But I -- I don't --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You were there. And your wife or your girlfriend Cathy is trying to get a hold of you the entire time while you're there. Trying to get a hold of you the complete entire time.

MR. MERRITT: I don't recall being there. So I don't know.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So I know you're not at home because she's at home. Her phone records show her at home. Your phone records don't show you at home.

MR. MERRITT: So where do my phone records show me?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Fallbrook.

MR. MERRITT: No.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Your -- your vehicle is on video surveillance leaving the -- leaving the residence. So why? What -- what -- what was your purpose for going down there? I mean --

MR. MERRITT: I had no purpose to go down there.

I had none. I had no reason to be there. I had no reason to -- to -- I had no reason.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Did you plan to go down and kill these folks?

MR. MERRITT: Of course not. Of course not.

Why -- there's no reason for me to hurt them. None. Number one, they were -- Joseph was my livelihood. And he was my best friend. And these are two kids. I mean, come on. Really? Two kids.

You know, I've -- I've been around them -- I was around them for -- forever. I mean, I played with them every time I went. I mean, it was -- there was -- there was no reason. I would never hurt them, ever.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Something happened that night there.

MR. MERRITT: Well, obviously.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And you were there at the house.

MR. MERRITT: I -- I don't think I was there at the house.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm telling you, you were there.

MR. MERRITT: (Inaudible.)

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm telling you, you were there at the house. Okay? Help me understand what

happened that night, Chase. That's all I'm asking. Okay? Help me understand what the reason is. Okay?

I'm looking at you right now, and you've carried four years of this around on your chest. Okay? Four years. I've watched your videos that -- on the media. I've watched -- I've seen the newspaper articles. I've seen all that stuff. I know you wrote a book on it. I know that -- that, you know, you -- you are --

You can tell by looking at you that you're either remorseful about this, this stuff is weighing on you, that something is going on with you right now where you're -- you're upset. Okay?

MR. MERRITT: Of course I'm upset. You're -- you're as much as accusing me of killing my best friend and his family. I have kind of a reason to be upset.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It's a different type of upset, Chase. You're upset. You can tell. Like there's -- there's something weighing on you right now. Help me understand what happened. Okay?

MR. MERRITT: I'll tell what's weighing on me right now. What's weighing on me right now is my life. What I'm thinking of -- Joseph and his family have been -- they've been gone for five and a half years. Do I still miss them? Of course, a lot. They were --

I was very close with Joseph. I wasn't that close with -- with Summer. But I was close with him and the kids. We played. I wasn't super close with them. But Joseph and I were very close.

But it's been five and a half years. Over that five and a half years, I have tried desperately to figure out what I'm going to do with the rest of my life. Trying to figure out something to take care of my -- my kids.

I think you've seen my kids.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: Okay. Take care of my kids, take care of Cathy because I have to send -- give her money quite often for the kids.

That's what's weighing on my mind right now.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It's been four and a half years, Chase. It hasn't been five and a half years. 2010. Okay. We've been working on this case nonstop.

Now, God forbid, anything were to happen to that family right there, we'd be working just as hard. And if we had the opportunity to sit across from someone who their vehicle was on video leaving this family's house, and there's a bunch of other different stuff that didn't make sense, we'd be asking them the same thing.

MR. MERRITT: I completely understand. And I -- I -- if I didn't completely understand and didn't -- wasn't -- I know you're -- you're doing your best to do your job properly. I'm sure you -- you guys are being extremely thorough.

And whether you know it or not, whether you believe it or not, I appreciate it. But this -- I can't add anything. If I --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I -- I don't want you to add anything. I want you to tell me what happened that night on February 4th. I want to know what happened. I want to know why you went to Fallbrook.

Something prompted you. You get a phone call at 5:48. And then you leave your house. And for that time period, Cathy is trying to get a hold of you nonstop. She's trying to get a hold of you nonstop.

MR. MERRITT: At 5:48?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: Almost six o'clock.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: She's trying to get a hold of you nonstop.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You're not answering. Your vehicle is down in Fallbrook. You're not in Fallbrook.

MR. MERRITT: When am I -- when am I in --

supposedly in Fallbrook?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: This entire -- the entire time after that.

MR. MERRITT: After 5:48?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: But I got a phone call at home in -- at 5:48.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You get a phone call at home at 5:48. I've already told you that that -- that's already been disproven.

MR. MERRITT: I'm -- I'm totally confused.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That phone call that -- that everyone says is the phone call that came through while you guys are at the house, that's not -- that phone call didn't happen.

We have his record. Yeah. He dialed your phone number. But you weren't at home when you got that phone call.

MR. MERRITT: Okay. Where was I?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Where do you think you were, Chase?

MR. MERRITT: I --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We just talked about it for the last 30, 40 minutes.

MR. MERRITT: I wasn't in Fallbrook.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You were in Fallbrook.

MR. MERRITT: Not possible.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It is possible. It's very possible. It happened. That's why I'm asking you to explain.

MR. MERRITT: If I could explain it, I would. It's not possible.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I don't think -- I don't think you want to, so . . .

MR. MERRITT: Of course I do. I mean, I would -- I would -- if I could -- if I could add anything to help you find who took -- who did this to Joseph and the kids and Summer . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Unless it further damaged your livelihood; right?

MR. MERRITT: No.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So if (inaudible). So listen. Hear me out. So if you had done this, would you tell me you had done this?

MR. MERRITT: Let's back up. Let's back up.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Answer my question. If you had done this, would you tell me you had done this?

MR. MERRITT: I don't know. I didn't do it, so --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm asking. Okay. So if you killed this family right here, would you admit to --

MR. MERRITT: If I was a murderer and I was -- probably not, but . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why not?

MR. MERRITT: Because --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do you know what the entire -- through all these folks that we've talked to around this case -- do you know what -- what the one thing in common that they say about you is that Chase is out for number one.

Right now I'm asking you to do the right thing for these folks, for these beautiful little kids that you have, for these two little kids that don't have anybody else to speak out for them, for those two folks that don't have anybody else to speak out for them --

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- tell us what happened that night.

Chase, I don't want to hear you weren't down there anymore. I don't want to hear you don't remember you were down there anymore.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I don't. I know you were down there that night. Okay? I want to know why. All right? Everybody has a right to know why. Okay?

Now, they can come up with all their own stories, or we can hear what the truth is.

MR. MERRITT: The truth is, whether you want to hear it or not, I did not drive to Fallbrook on the 4th.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You did drive to Fallbrook on the 4th. You were down there in Fallbrook on the 4th.

MR. MERRITT: What you're saying, obviously, is not going to change. What I'm saying definitely is not going to change because I would remember driving to Fallbrook on the 4th --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- so . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Answer me this, this -- put where the graves are at -- you've been to the graves; right?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What kind of terrain is out there?

MR. MERRITT: A little rough, dirt.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What kind of vehicle do you have to have to drive around in that area?

MR. MERRITT: Probably any -- almost any kind of vehicle.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So it doesn't take

any -- any crazy type of, you know, four-by-four, or anything like that to get out there?

MR. MERRITT: From the pictures of it, there was dozens of cars out there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Did you see the tire tracks that lead up to where the graves were at?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. The ones that --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The impressions out there.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Mike and I were talking about it.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Do you know what else is an odd coincidence against about the impressions?

MR. MERRITT: Huh?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Those impressions are the same width as this truck right here.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: This is your truck. You owned this truck at this time. This truck is leaving the McStay house on February 4th. Back out there at the grave site.

MR. MERRITT: I wasn't at grave site. I wasn't out there, so . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So explain to me why I should believe you then? Because you say if you had done this, you wouldn't tell me anyway.

MR. MERRITT: So you -- you come to me and say -- and you insist on an answer --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: No. I'm asking.

MR. MERRITT: -- if I was a murderer, and then you bring it back in my face and say --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But I'm asking. Help me understand why -- why I should believe you.

MR. MERRITT: I'm not necessarily sure you should believe me. You're trying to find the person that did this. You shouldn't believe anybody at face value, in my opinion. So, you know . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What do you think should happen to the person that killed the McStay family?

MR. MERRITT: I think they should get killed, just exactly the same way they got killed.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What do you mean?

MR. MERRITT: I think they should get killed. I think -- I think they should be -- I think they -- they should be executed somehow. You know, electrocuted, however. They want -- they should get killed.

Because nobody that kills two little kids should be alive. That's my opinion.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Does that trouble you?

MR. MERRITT: Of course it does.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I mean, anyone with a heart,

that would tear on their heart; right?

MR. MERRITT: Of course. It's crazy. They were little boys.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Were you emotional after this?

MR. MERRITT: Well, of course. I mean, everybody was emotional after this.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: People show emotion in different ways. That's why I'm asking you. Were you emotional after all this?

MR. MERRITT: I'm sure I was. Yeah. I'm emotional now about it.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You look like it's weighing on you. So that's why I'm asking.

MR. MERRITT: Well, it is weighing on me. It's -- this is something that doesn't happen in everybody's everyday life, you know. Of course it's weighing on me. It's weighed on me for four and a half years.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why were you down there that night, Chase? Why?

MR. MERRITT: The answer is not going to change as many times as you ask me, so . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So if I asked you -- if -- if I hooked you up to a polygraph and asked you were you there on February 4th, what's it going to say?

MR. MERRITT: No.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why would -- why would all the evidence show otherwise?
MR. MERRITT: I have no idea. But hook me up to a polygraph. I have no problem with taking a polygraph test.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So when --
MR. MERRITT: I didn't -- I didn't before. And I don't now.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So if we set you up and take you over to a polygraph --
MR. MERRITT: I have no problem with it whatsoever. None. I didn't -- I didn't have a problem -- I was the very first one to --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: How did you do on that polygraph?
MR. MERRITT: I don't know. They never told me.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Sure they did. I watched the video.
MR. MERRITT: The only thing they said is, there's inconsistencies, or something to that effect. But --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- from what I heard later on, that's what they always say, so . . .
But I'm -- I'm assuming it was fine because I was telling them the truth. So I wasn't really

worried about it. And I'm not worried now.
I'll be -- I'll be happy to take the lie detector test. I'll be happy to do anything you want. I have no problem with it whatsoever.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Hey, Chase, the reason I'm asking about the checks so much --
MR. MERRITT: Uh-huh.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- you know, and I'm asking you very specific questions about those checks, is because why were we told that Joseph had a problem with you writing checks?
MR. MERRITT: I don't know. By whom? It depends on who would -- who would have said it, you know. If it's Dan Kavanaugh, Dan Kavanaugh is -- as you said, people said about me, simply out for himself, and he'll say just about anything.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So we also have (inaudible). Okay. One of the -- one of the persons that Joseph called on the way to meet you -- do you know who he called?
MR. MERRITT: No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Union Bank. Why do you think he would call Union Bank?
MR. MERRITT: I have no idea.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Here's -- here's why he called

Union Bank -- okay. See those sequences with the checks?
MR. MERRITT: Uh-huh.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You had checks you weren't supposed to have. You were writing checks you weren't supposed to have. He never gave you access to those things.
And Joseph was upset about it. And Summer was upset about it also. Because Summer wanted to keep her own tight group. You weren't part of the business. You never had part of the business, Chase. And that's the problem.
MR. MERRITT: Well, of course I didn't have part of the business.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So -- so you were not able to write checks on his account. So when that check was written on the 2nd -- when you wrote that check on the 2nd, Joseph found out about it. Okay?
So Joseph found out about this check. He -- that you wrote for almost $2,500. Okay? He had just given you a handwritten check. But you wrote your own check. He found out about that.
He checked his bank statement. He saw that there was a $2500 . . . cashed by Charles Merritt on the 2nd. Okay?

You did that. Joseph -- Joseph did not authorize that. Okay? So Joseph was upset about it. And that was the last straw. Because you had been doing things all the time, Chase.
He was bailing you out. He was writing checks for SOS. SOS. Help Chase. Bailing him -- bailing you out of jail, or whatever it was. He was doing all these things. He's trying to help you out.
Summer didn't like you. And it's obvious you didn't like her. Okay? Joseph was a very nice guy. He tried to take care of you.
Okay. He was -- like you said, to a fault. That was exactly, exactly right. He had trust in you to a fault until his death. Okay?
And this is why I'm saying that. He had trust in you, Chase. He trusted you. He -- he bailed you out of all kinds of situations. And the final straw was you writing that check on the 2nd, two days before he was murdered.
He found out about that check on the 2nd. He saw that you cashed a $2,500 check without his authorization, without his permission. He had just been dealing with Metro Sheet Metal. He's frustrated with you not paying your bills.
Not only are you not paying your bills,

you're out gambling. This is your best friend that -- that's murdered. Within the same week you're at a -- at a casino for eight hours -- okay? -- spending that money that you just cashed. Okay?

That doesn't look like to me that, you know, I'm his best friend and I'm -- I'm worried about my friend. I'm spending his money that I just got, $6,500. Okay?

And let me finish. He just found out about this check on the 2nd. He was upset about it. And that's why he called and said, we need to have a meeting at Chick-fil-A, or wherever it was in Rancho Cucamonga.

He drives up there. He calls on the bank. He wants to make sure. Hey, I need to call my bank to make sure, to just verify that I'm not just going off on Chase. Summer says, this is it. Final straw. He told Summer about it.

It's the final straw. He's done. I don't want him around. Now he's stealing from you, Joseph. You need to get rid of him. He needs to be fired. You can find another welder. Okay?

That's what -- he's called other welding companies -- right? -- Dugal told you. He knows -- he knows that he's getting rid of you. Okay? He knows

that he has -- he has all these problems.

Just like you said, there were fountains in -- in production. And he knows he needs to finish them. But he needs somebody else to do it because Dan Kavanaugh (sic) can't do it. He needs another welder.

So he calls his bank --

MR. MERRITT: Dan Kavanaugh is not a welder.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Exactly. He's a web guy.

So he needs another welder. Okay?

So on the 2nd, he finds out about this check that you write. Okay? It's unauthorized. We know that. We know you were not supposed to write checks on his account.

Somehow you had access to it, whether you knew there was a password -- and you wrote that check from your house. That's true. That is true that you wrote that check from your house.

Joseph didn't give you access or didn't -- did not authorize that check. He didn't know about that check. That's why it was out of sequence because you took those checks without him knowing about it.

You took those checks. You wrote a check. We have no other checks prior to that 2nd of you writing a check. That is the very first time that you write a check and forged Joseph's name.

So, Chase, hear me out. He finds out about this on the 2nd. He asks to have a meeting. It clears, whether it clears on the 3rd or whether it clears on the 4th, he calls his bank just to verify.

And he verifies on his way to Rancho Cucamonga to meet you that that cash -- that check was cleared. Who cashed that check? Yes. It was made out to Chase Merritt -- to Charles Merritt for $2,495 and cashed on the 2nd. I didn't give him authorization. And that's what you guys talked about. That's what the meeting was about.

MR. MERRITT: We did not talk about that at all.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: He also took the key back from you.

MR. MERRITT: What key?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah, the key, the storage key. Okay?

MR. MERRITT: What storage?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: A storage (inaudible). You guys had a (inaudible); right? There was a key. Did you guys have a storage unit together?

MR. MERRITT: No.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You guys never had a storage unit together?

MR. MERRITT: No. We never had a storage unit

together.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Outside of Crystal (inaudible), you guys didn't have a storage unit?

MR. MERRITT: Oh, hell, no.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So you guys go to Chick-fil-A. And that's what this meeting is about. He's upset. You've been stealing from him. Okay?

Not only is he bailing you out of other situations, he's got to bail you out of Metro Sheet Metal. He's got to bail you out of jail.

You're a gambler, and you spent all your money gambling, and you're not getting the work done that you need to get done.

You take the money that he's using, you're using pumps that Joseph is not authorizing you to for your own business, for your own -- for your own good.

And Joseph's been writing this thing off. He said, you know what? Yeah. Even though I'm losing money -- you tell him -- you tell Joseph, hey, I'm going to buy a set of screws, and you spend, you know, a thousand -- whatever, get a thousand screws when you only needed ten screws.

You were -- you were stealing money from Joseph for a long time. And he let -- he let it go.

MR. MERRITT: No.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: When he realized that you actually wrote a check --

MR. MERRITT: Your information is wrong.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: When he realized that you actually wrote a check, that was the final straw. He was done, Chase.

So here's the deal. We know that it wasn't hunky-dory. We know that this meeting was not a -- a good meeting. We know that. Okay?

Listen, we know that this wasn't a great meeting. And there was some kind of an argument. Okay?

MR. MERRITT: The information --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The reason you don't want to tell us -- the reason you don't want to tell us about this argument that you had with Joseph is because you're afraid that we're going to think that you had something to do with his murder.

MR. MERRITT: That's not true. I didn't have an argument with Joseph.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And you guys never discussed these checks?

MR. MERRITT: Never discussed it.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. And I -- I'm thinking that you're afraid if you say, you know what? Yes.

You're right. We had an argument. I had to figure it out. Okay? I had to talk to him.

I knew that this was my livelihood. I knew that if I lost this -- if I lost this -- this account which Joseph, if I lost this business with Joseph, then I would have nothing.

I wouldn't have any food to feed for my family. I wouldn't be able to give my -- my kids money. I wouldn't be able to put them in school, whatever it is.

You had to work this out with Joseph. So you had this meeting. Joseph is done with you. He fires you. And I think what happens is, you have to go down and try to talk to Joseph. You have to try to fight for this back. You're fighting for your kids. You're fighting for your wife.

Now you go down to Fallbrook --

MR. MERRITT: In -- in one breath, you're saying that everybody, including yourself, say that Chase is out for himself. But, yet, now I'm fighting for my kids.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, you talk about your kids. You talk about your wife. I think --

Again, I don't think you're a complete monster. That's why I'm giving you the benefit of the

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doubt that you do care about your kids and your wife and --

MR. MERRITT: Of course I do.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- there are good people, other than Chase Merritt, that you actually care about.

MR. MERRITT: Of course.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. People are saying a lot of things about you, Chase. They are saying that you're out for yourself.

But I think what happened is, you realized, you've been working with Chase -- or you've been working with Joseph for many years. You guys have been very profitable. You talk about almost making a million dollars that year. You guys had lots of big fountains in the works. You know, $80,000 fountains, $60,000 fountains.

And now Joseph just said, hey, we're done, Chase. I'm going to get another welder. We're no longer doing this. I'm -- I'm going to basically --

MR. MERRITT: He never said that.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You admitted -- you admitted (sic) the job itself out yourself.

So what Joseph was doing, he was trying to get -- listen to me.

MR. MERRITT: What do you mean -- what do you mean

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I vetted the job --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: When you talked about Metro Sheet Metal, you talked about being the middleman.

So hear me out. Joseph was trying to get Dan Kavanaugh out of the business; right?

MR. MERRITT: Well, yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Because he wanted to make more money for himself and for his family. He just bought a house in Fallbrook.

He wanted to do the same thing with you, Chase. He wanted to get you out of the business because now he has Metro Sheet Metal making his fountains for him. He didn't really have the need for you.

And then now the next -- now you -- now you steal a check from him. And there's an issue there.

MR. MERRITT: Okay. Here's -- here's -- you're missing an incredible amount of information.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Explain it to me.

MR. MERRITT: I will.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Thank you.

MR. MERRITT: In the first place, Joseph and I -- Joseph was smart enough -- I know for a fact that Joseph was smart enough to know Metro Sheet Metal was not capable -- not even close to capable of making

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waterfalls for Joseph.
They were -- they were capable of breaking and shearing and some welding. But they weren't capable of making waterfalls. There is probably a half a dozen companies in -- on the West Coast that are actually capable. And they're ones that already are doing it. And they wouldn't be building waterfalls for Joseph because they're their competition -- his competition directly. There's very few people that --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We're getting off subject here.
MR. MERRITT: No. No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We are. Because we -- you're talking -- you're saying Metro Sheet Metal.
MR. MERRITT: I'm talking about, Joseph was not looking for somebody else.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So he needs a welder. I understand that.
MR. MERRITT: He's not a welder. It had nothing to do with welding.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It had nothing to do with welding. Okay. I understand that. Okay. Okay?
But you're telling me that you took 65 percent of the profit, and Joseph only had 35 percent of the profit. You didn't tell us that.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But whether you're getting a dollar, a hundred dollars, a thousand dollars or $10,000, that money that you're making, Joseph was trying to figure out a way to cut you out of the business.
MR. MERRITT: I don't think so.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: He was -- he was trying to get rid of you.
MR. MERRITT: I don't believe it.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. You were upset about it. And something happened. Whether you went down to fight for your job -- okay?
Whether you went back down to Fallbrook -- because, Chase, that's the thing you're not understanding. You're saying, I don't recall being in Fallbrook. We have you on video at the house. Okay? And you have to explain that.
I'm trying to -- to give -- you need to give me something that makes sense that I can say, this is why Chase was at the house. Because whether you guys argued at Chick-fil-A, whether you guys did get checks, whether you had -- still had some other issues --
MR. MERRITT: We didn't argue at Chick-fil-A.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You went down to Fallbrook, and we know that. Okay? You're at Fallbrook. And

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You told San Diego that.
So you're telling us that 65 percent of the money that Joseph has goes to you. So you don't think that Joseph wants -- he just bought a big house in Fallbrook, a nice house in Fallbrook. Okay?
He has money. Summer doesn't like the fact that you're getting money. You even said yourself, Summer doesn't like me. She doesn't know how much Joseph is making.
MR. MERRITT: Right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Because she's upset about how much that's going to you. That's what the argument is about. That money, 65 percent of a million dollars? So you would do $650,000 that year.
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's what you're telling me.
MR. MERRITT: But here -- here, you've got to realize, out of $650,000, about, at least, $400,000 of that, at least, was production costs.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And I understand that.
MR. MERRITT: Okay. So Joseph was making more money than I was. Joseph was making more money than I was. Just because I was getting 65 percent of it and he was getting 35 percent didn't make any difference. He was still making more money than I was.

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your truck is at Fallbrook pulling out of the driveway, Chase.
It's backed into the driveway, and it pulls out. Okay? So you have to explain that to me. There has to be some -- some explanation of why --
MR. MERRITT: If I had an explanation as to why you're saying my truck is there, I have no clue. Because I -- if I remembered or if I could remember being there on the 4th, I would tell you. I wasn't there on the 4th.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We're not dealing with -- here's -- here's the thing. We don't have to deal with recollection. We don't have to deal with recollection. We don't have to deal with memory. Okay? We have videotape --
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- okay? -- with time stamps.
So we don't have to worry about memory. We're not talking about that. We have video of your truck leaving the McStay house on February 4th, 2010, in the evening.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You're telling us that you weren't there. So how do I explain your vehicle leaving the McStay house? You have to think about

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this.
You're smack dab in the middle of a murder investigation involving this family. And you're going to have to explain why your vehicle was there.
MR. MERRITT: I can't. Because I don't think it was there, so I --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But it was. It was there. And we're -- you're -- you're not getting the point I'm trying to make. There's a murder investigation.
MR. MERRITT: I understand.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And you're not giving us the total truth. You're not giving us the truthful -- the full truth.
And what you're doing is, you're digging a hole for yourself. Okay? And you're digging straight down. You keep digging that hole. You can use that shovel to keep digging and get farther and farther down, or you can use that shovel, prop it up on the side and help yourself climb out.
There has to be some explanation why your truck was there.
MR. MERRITT: Joseph and I did not argue that day, not about $2,500, not about anything.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why is your truck --
MR. MERRITT: We did not argue.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why is your truck at the house?
MR. MERRITT: Don't know. Okay. If -- there's no possible way that I can think of that my truck was there on the 4th.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Did you let somebody borrow your truck, Chase?
MR. MERRITT: No. No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Did anybody else have access to your vehicle?
MR. MERRITT: No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Anybody else drive your truck down there?
MR. MERRITT: No. My truck was parked at my house --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But it wasn't. It wasn't.
MR. MERRITT: -- to the best of my recollection.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You're saying to the best of your recollection. Okay? And we're not talking about recollection. We're not talking about memory. Okay?
Your truck was at Fallbrook. And we have video to show that. So you have to be able to explain that.
Your phone is off during the time that your truck is in Fallbrook, and it's showing not -- you're

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not at your house.
When your phone comes back on, you're driving northbound going back to your house way later -- way later in the evening.
MR. MERRITT: Okay. He just got through saying -- check me if I'm wrong, but I'm pretty sure you just got done saying there was a phonebook -- there was a phone record of my phone being in Fallbrook.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I just said --
MR. MERRITT: He just said there -- that there wasn't.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Chase, you're -- you're not getting it. We have you in Fallbrook. We have your vehicle in Fallbrook. You're not getting it. You're not understanding. So you have --
MR. MERRITT: Apparently not.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You're not.
And you have to -- you have to show some reason why your truck was there for it to make sense, because it doesn't. Okay?
We -- you are saying -- you are saying, oh, there's no issue with checks. There's no issues with Quick Books. But Joseph can't talk about it. Joseph can't tell us his side of the story.
MR. MERRITT: Of course.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. You have to tell us what happened that it makes sense. And it doesn't make sense now, Chase.
There are things -- there are too many things that -- that are inconsistent with your story for us to put together and say, this is what happened. This is why it happened. Okay?
The main thing right here is, you need to explain to us -- you have to understand -- we have to understand why your vehicle was seen leaving the McStay house on the night they were murdered.
MR. MERRITT: I don't know. I --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Did something just happen, Chase? I mean, were you just --
MR. MERRITT: Of course not.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- upset --
MR. MERRITT: No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- and something happened?
MR. MERRITT: Joseph and I were not arguing. Okay? And you -- you -- you talk about my gambling, for instance, like it was, you know, something that was detrimental to my life, or whatever.
Do I play poker? Yeah. Of course I do. I've been playing poker for years.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: If my best friend is

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missing -- if my best friend is missing, I'm not going to go to a casino and spend eight hours playing poker at a casino, or however long you spent that same week.

I would be -- I would be looking -- I would be looking for my friend. Okay? I would be going and doing whatever I can do and pass out more than 2,000. I'd pass out 20,000 fliers, and I'd talk to everybody I can. Okay?

I -- I understand, you know, what you're saying, but --

MR. MERRITT: Do you understand that I was also busy trying to keep my life from falling apart because Dan Kavanaugh, Joseph's mother, all these people are -- were simply letting Joseph's business deteriorate.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. And we talked about that. We're getting off track.

But here's what I need to understand --

MR. MERRITT: No. This is on track.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Here's what I need to understand, Chase.

MR. MERRITT: I was doing my best to stay solvent, trying to survive.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But here's -- here's what we have to look at. So there's four years of investigation. Okay? Four years of investigation, and

Okay? We deal with -- we're San Bernardino County. You understand we're in San Bernardino County. We're homicide detectives for San Bernardino County. We deal with gang-bangers. Okay? We deal with gangsters. We deal with Crips. We deal with Bloods that will drive by and shoot a three-year-old kid, a four-year-old kid in their apartment and have zero remorse because it's a gang thing. It's a drug thing. Okay? And they have zero remorse.

They will sit in the chair and do the exact same thing that you're doing and lie about it. Okay? They lie about their involvement. They lie about what they did.

Are you in the same category of these gangsters, of these cold-blooded killers? Or did something just happen?

MR. MERRITT: Apparently, in your mind, I am. And there's -- it's becoming apparent that there's not a whole lot I can do to change that.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I -- I want you to help -- help me understand.

MR. MERRITT: I've done what I can -- I've done what I can do. I've told you to the best of my recollection, I don't think that it's at all possible.

I -- I understand you're saying that my

the bodies were found four and a half years . . . Okay?

We have to paint a big picture. Okay? The picture that we're painting for you right now is not a very pretty picture. It's not a good picture.

MR. MERRITT: I get that.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. It's not a good picture at all.

What you're saying and what we have don't line up. Okay? So when we look at this big picture, we have to say either Chase is a pathological liar. He lies about everything. And that's just -- you know, who knows what to believe because he lies about everything? He's a pathological liar. He doesn't -- he can't keep his lies straight.

And when we review, again, the interviews of the past, like what we've talked about today, with the evidence that we have -- we're -- you're either a pathological liar, you're a cold-blooded killer that is -- that is holding onto everything because he knows what happened.

And you're just going to lie about it. You have no remorse. You feel no sadness. You have nothing with this. If you can look at this photo and feel no feelings and have no remorse . . .

truck was there. I don't think it's at all possible that that's the case.

I'm not -- I'm not going to argue back and forth with it. That is -- I don't see where it's possible. I don't see where it's possible.

Matter of fact, I know -- I know for a fact that it's not possible that I was at the grave site on --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Remember, we talked about your phone -- okay? -- vehicle track, it matches exactly.

MR. MERRITT: I -- I get that.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And you understand forensics. You understand CSI and forensics. Obviously, you watch --

MR. MERRITT: Somewhat.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- TV, and it's not -- you know, it's not exactly like TV. But there's a lot of things that we can prove.

Okay? And there's a lot of things we can prove without -- you know, whatever we have. We have forensics. We have vehicle tracks. We have that type of thing that we have. Okay?

So, again, if it's just a coincidence, Chase -- if it's just a coincidence that the same person -- you know, that a person who murdered the

McStay family -- because we know that the -- the McStays were murdered on the 4th. Okay? We know that they were buried in the desert in Victorville off Stoddard Wells Road.

Is it just a coincidence that somebody else has the exact same truck leaving the McStay house, driving up to the desert? I mean, is this a coincidence that we have all this stuff, that we have all this evidence?

MR. MERRITT: I don't even remember driving up to the desert, so . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, you were in the desert. And you're also at -- at Fallbrook. And we -- we talked about it.

Is that just some coincidence? I mean, it's -- it sounds like a crazy coincidence. I mean, you know. And it doesn't make sense to me how this family is murdered on the 4th, your vehicle is seen on the 4th. You're the last person to talk to Joseph.

There's vehicle tracks matching exactly your truck at the grave site. Two days after they're murdered --

MR. MERRITT: I'm quite sure they match exactly a lot of trucks.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well --

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MR. MERRITT: But --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- okay. But a lot of truck drivers don't also have their phone showing in that same area.

Okay. So --

MR. MERRITT: My phone did not show in that area because I wasn't there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. And you said that. You said that. That's fine.

But -- but we have a lot of things we can show you on some of these records. We could show you -- again, we have a lot of things. And we're trying to give you the opportunity to explain it.

And you're not doing a good job doing that. You're not explaining any of these things.

And that picture -- that puzzle that we've been building for four and a half years shows one puzzle. You're the only person not fitting in that puzzle.

Whether you're lying intentionally or whether you're trying to say you forgot, whether you're trying to block it out, whatever the issue is -- okay. Whatever the issues are, there's something.

We asked about the polygraph stuff. They said -- you said, hey, you know, they didn't really

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tell you what you -- how you did. You -- you failed it miserably, miserably.

MR. MERRITT: I don't think so.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. I watched it. And I have the report. The only thing that you told the truth about is that you hadn't talked to the family after the 4th. Because they were murdered, you're absolutely right you didn't talk to the family after the 4th.

Every other question that he asked, you were deceptive, so . . .

MR. MERRITT: That's bullshit.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You say that, but they're -- they're professionals --

MR. MERRITT: Show me that.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We can show you some of that stuff. Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: It's not the case.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But -- but, again --

MR. MERRITT: There's no way.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Again, it's --

MR. MERRITT: I was telling them the --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- it's another piece of this puzzle. And we're trying to -- we're trying to figure out who did this thing. It's just another piece of

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that puzzle, where, Chase, you need to be able to explain some of these things. And you're not able to explain.

You haven't given us --

MR. MERRITT: Well, I don't know what -- I -- you know, you're -- you're throwing these things at me like they're facts --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: They are facts, Chase.

MR. MERRITT: -- and -- and I don't recollect being there. Matter of fact, I wasn't there. And I definitely wasn't at the desert. And I don't know what to say other than that. I mean, what do you want me to tell you?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What was your phone number at the time, Chase?

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: 909-374-0102, does that sound familiar?

MR. MERRITT: Probably.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. These highlighted portions right here, those are all -- these all come back with your coordinates, GPS coordinates of where you're at. That's where the grave site is at.

Okay. There's a series of phone calls that are made right there that are out -- out at the grave

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site. I'm not bullshitting you, Chase.
You get a series of phone calls from different people while you're out there at the grave site.
What we want to know is what you're doing out there, Chase? I mean, are you out there burying four bodies?
MR. MERRITT: I don't know what to tell you. I wasn't there. That -- I have no idea what those coordinates are. But it's not --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Were you out there burying four bodies, Chase?
MR. MERRITT: Of course not. No. Of course not.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why is your phone showing you in that area?
MR. MERRITT: I wasn't in that area.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why does your phone show you're out in that area?
MR. MERRITT: I have no clue. But that's wrong. I wasn't there. There is no way possible.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We're not -- I'm not -- I'm not bullshitting you. Okay?
MR. MERRITT: The first time I was ever anywhere near that area, ever in my entire life, was the first time I went and saw the cross -- or the crosses, the

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very first time I ever went there.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm trying to figure out why these would show out there in the graves -- out there at the graves, why we have other stuff down there on the 4th.
I mean, help us understand, Chase.
MR. MERRITT: I don't -- I can't help you understand something that I don't understand myself, because that's not possible.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, this is possible.
MR. MERRITT: It's not. It's impossible.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And here's why -- and here's --
Do you remember what Cathy's phone number was back at that time?
MR. MERRITT: No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Does 909-226-1197 sound familiar?
MR. MERRITT: Sounds familiar.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Well, there's a series of phone calls from your phone to her phone and back and forth.
909-374-8951, I think that's Taylor's phone at the time.
MR. MERRITT: Maybe.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. There's a phone call to her -- or between you and her while you're out there. So, I mean, it's not somebody else's phone. It's your phone.
MR. MERRITT: Oh, I -- I -- I'm not arguing the fact that it's my phone. But I'm telling you, my phone and I was not at -- is not where you're saying --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What were you doing -- what were you doing in the desert then? If you're not -- if that's not you at the grave sites, what were you doing in the desert?
MR. MERRITT: If I was in the desert, there was two places I would have been. Either my older sister's in Oro Grande or my brother's.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We've talked to both of them. And they said at no point in time around the -- around the McStay family disappearance -- as a matter of fact, for like a year before, were you up in the desert.
MR. MERRITT: Bullshit. I lived with my sister.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Not at the time that they went -- that they went missing.
MR. MERRITT: No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You lived in Rancho?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. But --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We -- we pulled the transcript

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of your phone records. And you didn't show up there at all.
MR. MERRITT: What do you mean?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You didn't show up -- it's not like --
MR. MERRITT: Up in the High Desert.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It's not like you went to -- yeah. That you went to the desert regularly. You weren't a regular visitor of the High Desert.
MR. MERRITT: Yeah, I was actually.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well -- well, not per your phone records, so . . .
MR. MERRITT: I -- I went up there all the time.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And -- and not for talking with -- with some of your family members.
Now, whether or not -- now, whether or not they're trying to give you some alibi and say, oh, no. Chase wasn't up here at all. I --
MR. MERRITT: More than likely.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why would they do that, though?
MR. MERRITT: They're my family. They're -- whatever. They're my family, you know.
You've got to realize, my older brother Bennett -- I'm sure you --

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I've heard the whole -- the whole mix about that. I heard you tell Dugal that he was wrapped up in the Hillside Strangler stuff and all that.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

So, you know, my family, this -- you know, something like this is not new to my family. They're going to be as protective as possible.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, what are they going to say if they see this stuff? If they see the fact that your truck is leaving the McStays' residence on February 4th; that they see the records that show that your phone is up there --

MR. MERRITT: They would say, ask Chase. And if Chase says he wasn't, he wasn't there. That's what my family will say. I know what my family will say.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do you think that they would want to know like why this happened?

MR. MERRITT: Of course. Of course. Of course they would. Everybody wants to know.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Everybody wants to know. You're damn right everybody wants to know. And everybody deserves to -- especially their family members, man.

Like I -- we've told you, nonstop. And

these kids -- we stare at these kids' pictures every day. Every day. And want to know --

MR. MERRITT: I've looked at them --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- what happened.

MR. MERRITT: I looked at these pictures, these same pictures that you've got and a lot more. They're all --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We have -- we have countless pictures.

MR. MERRITT: They were --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We've had to spend weeks looking through all this stuff.

MR. MERRITT: I have gone through -- over the -- over the last four and a half years, I've looked at all the blogs. I've -- I've looked at all the news things and -- because, you know, it's been -- I want somebody to be found.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So take yourself out of the scenario; right? Switch you and Dan's roles. Okay?

You're -- you're the web designer. Dan's the -- Dan's the artist guy or the -- the manufacturing guy. Okay?

MR. MERRITT: Right.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You're on the outside and now -- now this comes out that Dan's truck is seen

leaving the McStay house on February 4th. And that Dan's phone shows him in -- in a key area where the family's house is. The family's --

MR. MERRITT: Honestly, I don't believe it was Dan. Sorry. But -- but I don't particularly like Dan and --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Somebody else. Who cares? Mike. Okay? Switch you -- switch you over with Mike. What -- what would you think about all this?

MR. MERRITT: Mikey?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm not asking Mike. I'm putting another example. Like you're -- you're an outsider. Okay? And now you're watching --

MR. MERRITT: Oh, just anybody?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yes, any random person. And you see that their vehicle is seen leaving the house that night.

MR. MERRITT: I would say if -- if that's the information that you've got, if that's the -- all -- and you -- you're showing that their phone is at the grave site, I would say, look deeper into them. Make sure that -- I mean --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Help us look deeper into you, Chase.

MR. MERRITT: Nothing I can do. Because --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You could -- you could -- sure. There's plenty you can do. You can explain what you were doing down there on the 4th. Okay? There's -- there is a reason -- a reason why. And I know we've gone over it time and time again.

But there is a reason -- there is a reason why you were down there on the 4th. Okay? If it wasn't to kill these kids --

MR. MERRITT: Of course not.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- then there's another reason why you're down there on the 4th. Okay. And now is -- now is the time to -- to explain what you were doing down there. Okay?

If it was down there to fight for your job or to talk to Joe or to help Joe out or to do something, you are down there on the 4th. There's no doubt about that.

I -- I'm asking you to tell me why.

MR. MERRITT: I don't recall being there. So I can't tell you why.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Close your eyes and think about it. Just think about it for a minute.

MR. MERRITT: I've been thinking about it ever since we started this conversation.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I know. But you haven't had

time to actually digest it --
MR. MERRITT: Yes, I have.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- or think about it.
MR. MERRITT: I'm --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You've been -- you've been asked constant questions since it's been brought up. Okay? Take a moment and think about it. Okay?
I'm telling you, you were there, Chase. Think about it. That was -- that is a -- I mean, your kids' birth -- your -- the birth of your children are probably the most important days of your life. Okay?
Aside from that and maybe the -- you know, a wedding day or something like that, this is a very key day in your life. Okay?
Your best friend, your business partner, somebody -- you know, somebody you've been spending -- you spent three or four years with out of your life, him and his family go missing, and they're murdered.
You -- you should be able to hone back into that day and go, all right. Yeah. You know what? I remember now. Okay?
Take the time. Don't just come up with some random answer and say, nope. I wasn't there. Okay? Take the time and think about it. Humor me. Okay? Humor me. And think about it.

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All right? That's all I'm asking. Because you were there. All right? Think about it. There's got to be some sort of plausible explanation for why you were down there. If it wasn't to kill these people, there is a reason why you were down there.
MR. MERRITT: There would be no reason for me to be down there.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So the reason you were down there was to kill these people.
MR. MERRITT: There would be no reason for me to be down there.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But I'm saying, if you're down there, the reason you're down there was to kill these people.
MR. MERRITT: No. I wasn't down there.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I beg to differ, Chase. I really do. Like -- and I --
MR. MERRITT: I -- you know, if I could -- you know, I -- I don't remember half of the day. I -- I pretty much -- and I told you early on, I kind of banked on Cathy's memory for that day because I don't remember.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You know what you remember, Chase? You remember all the mundane bullshit up till when the -- when the important shit happens. You

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remember -- you can remember Chick-fil-A. You can remember you went to Starbucks before. You could remember that Joe bought dinner, and I think he paid with a credit card. You can remember all this stuff.
You know, I can remember I -- I went and I bought a hinge for a fountain. And I bought, you know, some plumbing stuff. And I went and had some dinner -- or had some food, and then I went back to the house.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And you know what? As soon as I get back to the house (inaudible).
MR. MERRITT: All right. In the first place, I remember going to the -- the ornamental iron store. I didn't remember buying a hinge. And this -- and that's when you guys take this just a little too far.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm not -- and I'm not saying that (inaudible). But you remember going to these places.
MR. MERRITT: It's the only -- yeah. I remember going to those places. And I don't remember going to Joseph's house, so that should tell you something. I would have remembered --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You know what it tells me?
MR. MERRITT: -- driving for two hours.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Two hours? You told San Diego

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it takes you exactly an hour to get from your house to Joseph's house, exactly an -- that was your quote to Fisk on the phone.
She goes, well, how far is it up to -- to Rancho Cucamonga? And he goes -- she goes -- you ask her, well, how long does it take from Joseph's house to your station? She said, oh, like 45 minutes. And you said, it takes exactly an hour to get from Joseph's house to my house, exactly an hour.
MR. MERRITT: I don't remember that. Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I have a verbatim typed interview where you tell --
MR. MERRITT: Well, how far is it? How far is it from --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I don't -- I don't have the calculated milage, but --
MR. MERRITT: What the distance is, I would remember -- whether two hours or one hour, I would remember.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: If you've done it a hundred times, you may not. You know what? I can drive the same route. When I jump off the freeway, I drive down Third. I drive down Waterman. You know, I go all the same route. And you know what? If I do it every day, then I'm not going to remember the gangster that's

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standing on the corner. You know why? Because I block it out because I'm just cruising along.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But, now, if I'm cruising through, you know, a nice area of Glendale or a nice area of Rancho, or something like that, and I see something that stands out, then I'm probably going to remember it because I may not drive that area every day. Okay?

So you may not -- you may have blocked out the drive to -- to Joseph's because it only takes you an hour. You know, you're either listening to the radio or doing whatever you're doing. But at some point you get down there.

At 7:47 -- or 7:49 you are leaving the McStay house in your truck. Okay? I'm telling you that. Why were you down at the McStay house?

MR. MERRITT: I don't recall being there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: "I" -- "I don't recall" isn't a good answer.

MR. MERRITT: Well, I don't know what to tell you. I -- if I remembered being there, then I would tell you, this is what I was there for. But I don't remember driving down there. I don't -- I don't recall going down there.

There was no reason for me to go down there. Joseph and I had already met. We -- we had already taken care of business. There was no reason for me to be there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: There was -- there was some reason why you went down there. And if you're telling me it wasn't to kill this family --

MR. MERRITT: Of course not.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- then there was another reason why you went down there. All right?

If you went down and Summer flips her lid or -- or something happens -- we're trying to help explain it. If you didn't kill them, then you were down there for something else. But to say, oh, I wasn't down there. I don't remember.

MR. MERRITT: We took care of everything we wanted to while he was here.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Apparently not.

MR. MERRITT: We did.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Apparently not, because he still calls you throughout the day afterwards.

MR. MERRITT: Well, yeah. We had a couple of little things here and there, of course. I mean, we were talking about a lot of different waterfalls and different things and little -- little loose ends and

stuff.

But we took care of the stuff that needed to be done in person. And it was just -- it was just all about all phone calls then. It was -- it was just a typical day. And that's why, obviously, I don't remember about it because it was a typical day with Joseph and I.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The night of February 4th wasn't a typical night. It was not a typical night.

I can -- I can analyze your phone records nonstop. Go through every page. And it was not a typical night.

Because there is a -- yeah. There -- there may be a call where you don't answer Cathy. But you call her right back, you know, shortly thereafter. She constantly called you, nonstop calls you. And you don't answer the phone.

And then all of a sudden, boop. There you go. You call her back, and you're northbound coming back towards your residence.

MR. MERRITT: I -- I don't think -- pardon me. But I don't think Cathy would have remembered it the way she did --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We've already talked to Cathy, Chase.

MR. MERRITT: -- (inaudible).

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's why we're at this point right now. Okay. We've already talked with Cathy.

MR. MERRITT: All right.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Cathy's alibi, if you will, or -- or her recollection of everything did not happen the way that it did. All right?

MR. MERRITT: I -- I don't even -- I haven't even discussed it that much with Cathy as to the specifics. All she -- all they said is, you got -- you got the phone call. You looked at it, and that's all Cathy and I have talked about.

She -- she said that -- about your interview, all she told me was, it was a day from hell. And that was about it. She didn't really talk -- we didn't --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So what's going to happen if, through all this, Cathy gets lumped into this, and Cathy falls victim of the circumstances, if you will, and ends up getting implicated in this case? What would happen then?

MR. MERRITT: I don't see how she could be implicated.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Oh, she could be implicated -- plenty implicated. For four years, that's been her

story. Okay? Yep, Chase was at home with me that night. Got a phone call.

So now it's -- now it's definitely not the case. So, oh, yeah. She -- she could definitely be caught smack dab in the middle of this.

MR. MERRITT: How do you --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm asking you, Chase, to explain why you were there on the 4th. All right?

If it was not to kill these people, explain to me why you were there. All right? You're not just the only one that's involved in this.

MR. MERRITT: I --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: She is involved in it. Which, if she gets involved in it, too, it's -- I mean, it just -- stuff crumbles from there.

I can tell by talking with Cathy she is the glue that holds your family together.

MR. MERRITT: Pretty much.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That lady would saw her leg off to do anything for those kids. I mean, she has -- there's no doubt in my mind about it.

MR. MERRITT: Of course.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. I'm asking you to explain to me what happened, Chase, to try and help weed other stuff out, to keep everything clean, to not

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involve people that -- that don't need to be involved. All right?

MR. MERRITT: If I could tell you any more than I've already told you, I would have. That's the -- that's God's truth. I would have told you already.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I beg to differ. I really do.

MR. MERRITT: I understand that. But, obviously, we're going to be at an impasse here because there's -- there's nothing more that I can add. If I could add more, I promise you, I would add more. I could tell you, you know.

And I told you -- I told the detective back then and I'm telling you now, I have no problem taking a lie detector test. I didn't have a problem taking a lie detector test then.

I highly doubt that what you told me about me not -- or he told me about not passing is true. Because I told them exactly the truth, absolutely.

I had no problem with telling them the truth then. I have no problem with telling you the truth now.

I'm not -- you know, I'm -- I'm doing my best to not get really upset or -- you know, because I'm quite sure most people in my situation here would be getting pretty irate about the accusations that

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you're throwing at me.

I'm doing my best because you guys need -- I -- I understand you need to do your job. I want you to do your job. If you weren't thorough at your job, you will never find the person that did this.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We're going to find the person that did it.

MR. MERRITT: I want you to.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. We're -- we're going to prove that -- that that person killed this family.

MR. MERRITT: And I hope that you do. I -- I honestly hope that you do. And because of that, if -- I'll do anything that I can. But I can't tell you things that aren't true. And I can't tell you things if I don't remember them, or whatever it is.

But I'll --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Just omit them; right?

MR. MERRITT: Huh?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Just omit them. Leave them out?

MR. MERRITT: Of course not. I would never -- I'm not going to admit anything.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: "Admit" or "omit"?

MR. MERRITT: Omit.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You said "admit" a minute ago.

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MR. MERRITT: Yeah. I -- "omit."

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Freudian slip?

MR. MERRITT: No. Of course not. I'm not going to omit anything.

With the things that I remember, I've already told you. I -- I -- you know, do I have the best of memories? Maybe not. But, you know, there was -- there was a lot of things going on in my life back then. You know, there was a lot of things going on in all of our lives back then. And there still is.

I mean, I'm -- I'm still struggling trying to get a foothold from when Joseph disappeared. I mean, it -- it destroyed my whole possible financial future when --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. You know what -- you know what the key thing in that is? You still had a life. This man, this woman, and these two children did not have a life.

MR. MERRITT: I know this. I -- I know.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And not only did they not have a life, like they died naturally, or something like that, they were murdered. And then they were buried in the desert.

MR. MERRITT: I know. I know.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So pardon me for -- for all

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your financial losses and everything like that --
MR. MERRITT: No. No. I'm not --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: These folks --
MR. MERRITT: I'm not trying -- I'm just letting you know where I'm at. I'm not -- I'm trying to -- I'm not trying to take anything from the fact that my best friend, his -- his wife and kids were murdered.
I would never try to take anything from that. That's crazy. These people -- I didn't -- I didn't particularly like Summer. She was -- you know, Joseph loved her to death. And he'd -- he'd step in front of a bullet for her. He loved her.
You know, I didn't -- I didn't need to really particularly like her. He worshipped the kids. I mean, they were everything to him. Including Jonah.
And, you know, I, honestly, hope that you find the people that did this. I hope that it -- it gets taken care of soon.
But I can't help you with any more than I've already helped you with. If -- you know, if I could, I definitely would.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: One last time, did you kill this family, Chase?
MR. MERRITT: No. I did not. I would never hurt them.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: (Inaudible) Chase, when you were interviewed on the 17th with San Diego, you refer to Joseph as "he was my best friend" --
MR. MERRITT: I know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- multiple times.
MR. MERRITT: I know. And they -- they --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: She caught you on it. The detective caught you on it.
MR. MERRITT: I remember her saying that. I remember her saying that. And I was like, you know, well, Joseph is not around right now. You know, it's not -- it has nothing to do with -- I mean, I remember --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Thirteen days later?
MR. MERRITT: I remember her saying that.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Thirteen days later?
MR. MERRITT: I remember.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah. It's two weeks later you were -- you were saying that Joseph was my best friend, multiple times. People don't say that.
MR. MERRITT: It's --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Subconsciously, he was your best friend. Something happened. That's what I'm saying. Something happened where they're -- now he's no longer your best friend. And he's no longer there.

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You said "were." You said "were."
And, see -- and the thing that I have a problem with, when we put this here, you pushed it away. You can't push this away, Chase.
These -- these kids deserve -- their family deserves to know what happened. Okay? These -- this four-year-old and this two-year-old deserve for their family to understand. Okay?
MR. MERRITT: I -- I --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And -- and you refer to the kids -- you refer to the kids as "were." And you refer to Joseph as "were." People don't say that.
Okay. This is two weeks after. And we don't know if they disappeared or if --
MR. MERRITT: I don't know whether they say that or not. You know, you're -- you're the detective. I understand that. And you're looking --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: This is what we do. We didn't just start this thing --
MR. MERRITT: Trust me. I know. I know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. This is -- you know, this is what we do. Like I told you, we've been working this case every single day for a year. Okay?
MR. MERRITT: I understand.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: San Diego worked this for

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three and a half years prior to that. There is a lot of stuff done.
MR. MERRITT: Yeah, I know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. There is a lot of investigation. And this is what we've been doing. And we're trying to -- we're trying to help you -- we're -- we're trying to have you explain to us the things that aren't making sense. It doesn't make sense.
MR. MERRITT: I -- I would love to make more sense of all of this, and -- but it's -- it's absolutely --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why would -- why would you refer to Joseph as "he was my best friend"?
MR. MERRITT: I don't -- I don't know. You know -- and I don't think I did it multiple times. Because I think it was her -- it was a her or him. I don't remember.
One of -- one or the other almost immediately after I said it, said -- came back at me and said, why did you -- the same question you just asked and said almost close to the thing you just said. People don't say that.
Well, I did. I don't know why. But it had nothing to do with the fact that I thought that they were already murdered or knew that they were already murdered.

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I -- they were just -- they were missing. Nothing more. Nothing less. It had nothing to do with anything else.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why didn't you call 9-1-1?

DETECTIVE HANKE: Huh?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Why didn't you call 9-1-1?

MR. MERRITT: Because -- mostly because the family asked me not to -- Mikey.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's not true.

MR. MERRITT: It is true. It's absolutely true.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What about when Cathy --

MR. MERRITT: As a matter of fact --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What about when Cathy asked you to call 9-1-1?

MR. MERRITT: When Cathy asked me to call 9-1-1, it wasn't until the Saturday that I met Mikey out there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.

MR. MERRITT: And I came back, and I talked to her about it. And I said, you know, I would attest that he -- he had made the decision to wait until Monday. And she was pretty insistent. She said, call them. Call them. Call them.

And I said, you know what? I don't want -- you know, Mikey and his mother had talked. It's --

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after -- you know, after the 4th -- from the 5th, when you can't get a hold of Joseph -- from the 5th, the 6th, the 7th, the 8th, the 9th, the 10th, the 11th, the 12th, the 13th, the 14th. And then, finally, someone calls 9-1-1 and calls the cops on the 15th, and they're reported missing.

MR. MERRITT: Right.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: All those days go by, this is your best friend --

MR. MERRITT: Did -- did you ask this --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- you never called 9-1-1?

MR. MERRITT: Did you ask this of his mother and his brother, the people that -- you know, his immediate family?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: When was his mother notified that they were missing?

MR. MERRITT: On my way out to Joseph's house.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So you were the first person to -- to ring the bell and notify somebody that Joseph was missing?

MR. MERRITT: As far as I know, I was the first one to -- I -- I couldn't get a hold of Joseph when I went -- and so I drove out there. And on my way out there, I stopped at Joseph's mom's house.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. You were the first

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it's their family. Let's let them handle it.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It's your best friend, though.

MR. MERRITT: I understand.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Because -- because you said that Mikey -- that, you know, he came out to the media and said, oh, yeah. He talked to him every day. And Susan said they talked every week.

But -- but they weren't as close as you were.

MR. MERRITT: No.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You talked to him every day.

MR. MERRITT: I didn't --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So they -- they wouldn't know, you know, of course if they only -- only talk every month or --

MR. MERRITT: It was still his family.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You knew -- you knew that he was missing because you talked to him multiple times a day.

MR. MERRITT: And I -- and I --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: From the 5th --

MR. MERRITT: -- I relayed -- I relayed that information --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: From the 5th -- from the 5th when they -- you -- you don't know where they're at,

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person to let -- to let the family know that they --

MR. MERRITT: That I couldn't find -- couldn't reach him. I -- I stopped there to ask if she had heard from him. Because I don't know whether you know -- do you -- do you know where she lives?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yes. And this is five days after.

MR. MERRITT: On the way down.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You haven't -- you haven't been able to get a hold of Joseph for five days.

MR. MERRITT: I don't think it was five days after.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It was.

MR. MERRITT: Wasn't that the 8th? So four days. Maybe it was the 9th. I don't remember now. Whatever it was, I couldn't get a hold of Joseph, you know, and --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But you didn't call -- you didn't bother to call 9-1-1 for those four or five days?

MR. MERRITT: Well, no. I mean, four or five days --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You said it was out of character for him.

MR. MERRITT: It was out of character, of course.

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But, you know, Joseph is kind of -- you know, he -- he does things on the whim sometimes. But, you know -- yeah. Of course it was out of character.

That's why I finally ended up telling Cathy, I'm just going to drive out there. And that's why I stopped at his mother's. And that's why I asked her. And then had him -- her call his brother. His brother hadn't heard from him.

And so I said, well, why don't you have Mikey meet me out there. And Mikey said, I'm too busy. And then I went out there and came back. Talked to his mother --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: When -- when you guys met out there, where did you guys meet at?

MR. MERRITT: At the house. Like I -- best recollection, I think we all just ended up at the house.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Met at the house.

Had Mikey been to the house before?

MR. MERRITT: Not that I know of.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. How did he find the house?

MR. MERRITT: I don't know.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I don't know.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Who got to the house first? You or Mikey?

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember. I -- I think Mikey did. I'm not sure. I don't remember. We -- we ended up there together. I don't remember.

But Mikey, for the entire time, you know, he just kept saying, you know, just wait another day. Wait another day, you know.

And after I met -- or after I went out there to check -- to check Joseph's house, let his mother know Joseph is not around, there's -- something's amiss. You need to -- you know, you need to find out where he's at. You know, call people he knows, whatever.

And I said, let Mikey know he needs to get out there and, you know -- and check -- check things. And Mikey just kept putting it off and putting it off. And I called -- or I talked to his mother, I think, a couple of times in -- in the interim. And kept asking, has Mikey -- has Mikey gone out? Not yet. I'm like . . .

So, finally, I think it was on Friday, I insisted. I said, I'm going out there. Mikey -- if -- Mikey lives half an hour away. Have him there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

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MR. MERRITT: And --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: When we've been talking to everybody, Chase, every single interview, pretty much, we ask them the same question.

MR. MERRITT: Of course.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Well, listen to the question first.

So at the end of the interview, we ask every single person, what do you think happened to this family? What do you think?

MR. MERRITT: God, I don't know. Honestly, I think -- how elaborate do you want me to be?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, San Diego asked you the same question --

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- during the interviews and also during the polygraph, and you said that you didn't have -- you didn't have an idea.

MR. MERRITT: Right.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And you didn't have a theory. But now you're saying you have a theory?

MR. MERRITT: Well, not -- I don't really have a theory. I have -- I have more theories that -- of things that I don't think happened.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. We're not talking about

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that. So what do you think happened to this family?

MR. MERRITT: I really -- honestly, I really don't really -- I have no clue.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I really don't have any clue.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. The only thing about that is, every single other person that we've talked to has some type of theory because they've been thinking about it for four and a half years.

MR. MERRITT: I've been thinking about it, too. But there's --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So you have to understand --

MR. MERRITT: -- a lot of scenarios that can happen. But I -- every one of them are just simply guesses. And, yeah. I don't have -- I don't have a theory as to what could have happened. I have no idea.

I know that -- you know, I think Dan Kavanaugh is too stupid. I think Mikey is his brother. I don't think -- none of his family would have ever hurt Joseph. They loved him. You know, they may not have been the closest family. But they loved him, you know, and they --

Online there was theories jumping all over the place about Mikey and Dan and all of this. Do I

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like Dan? Of course not. I don't think anybody does.
You know, was Mike close to -- close to Joseph? No. But --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And you've got to remember, those are all blogs. Those are all computer stuff.
Okay? We've talked to lots of people, Chase. And you said that there's nobody in this world that would paint a bad picture towards you --
MR. MERRITT: I --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- towards you.
MR. MERRITT: Oh, no. I didn't say "nobody."
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You said maybe there was a few people.
MR. MERRITT: Yeah.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: How many people would you estimate painted that picture towards you?
MR. MERRITT: I don't know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Take a guess.
MR. MERRITT: Half a dozen.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Six?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah, maybe.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Is that all?
MR. MERRITT: Probably.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Well, I've talked to more than six people that paint a bad picture of -- for

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you. Okay? And -- and that's -- that's a problem.
There's a lot of people painting a bad picture about Chase -- okay -- about Chase Merritt. That he's a liar. He's a fraud. And he says he does things, and he doesn't follow through.
MR. MERRITT: Oh, there's lots of -- there's lots of things -- there's no --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So we're not talking about -- we're not -- we're not going to get into that, Chase.
But -- but to say that you're -- you know, you're sitting back and --
MR. MERRITT: I'm not --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- you're saying that nobody has anything bad to say about you.
MR. MERRITT: No. No. No. I don't -- I don't think nobody has anything bad to say about me. There's people in my life that I've -- I've screwed. And I've -- I have remorse about that. But, you know -- you know -- and -- and have I been the perfect person? Of course not. No. I -- I would never admit that.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So the -- so the business partners that we've talked to about the money that you fraud and stole, this -- this case what we're talking about is checks. And we're talking about stealing

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checks and stealing money.
And the -- and the people that we've talked to about you stealing money from them or taking checks or -- or not specifically taking checks, but taking money, not following through on investments, or whatever it is, a fraud, that portion, it -- it is important. Because this is, again --
MR. MERRITT: No. I understand that. But --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: This is what we believe.
MR. MERRITT: The reality is, there are -- there are people that I went into business with. And I'm not even sure which ones you're talking about.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: There's lots.
MR. MERRITT: It doesn't matter who you're talking about it.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Lots of them.
MR. MERRITT: I haven't gone into business with lots of people.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. That's fine.
MR. MERRITT: Okay. Some of which I had no choice. But, you know, it -- sometimes businesses just don't work. And -- and in cases -- over the last couple of years, I've floundered trying to make things happen. And sometimes it didn't work.
But in other cases, it was the other people

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that we're --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Can you tell me one of your businesses that -- that was successful, you had a great partnership and nothing happened?
MR. MERRITT: A great partnership?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah, a great partnership with a business and had no issues.
MR. MERRITT: I didn't have very --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The reason I ask is, because these people that we've talked to and the interviews that we've had, they said there's always something with Chase. There's always some issue with Chase and somebody else. Whether it's the other person's fault or whether it's Chase's fault, but there's always something. There's always accusations. There's always something.
And there's always a falling out between everyone Chase comes in contact with. So that's painting a -- a very different picture than what you're trying to paint.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You know, they --
MR. MERRITT: I'm not --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: There's no issues.
MR. MERRITT: I wasn't trying to paint any --

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: There's no issues. It's a great -- great business. You're not telling me anything specifically or issues or problems that you had with Joseph.

And -- and I find that very hard to believe. There's a four-year-period, or however many years that you work with Joseph, and there's no issues.

MR. MERRITT: I was talking to him earlier, when you were -- when you were discussing it, my -- I -- I think I stated exactly that over the last years that I was in -- doing business with Joseph, we've had issues. We've had little, you know, things where I didn't get a waterfall finished in time or -- or a customer wasn't happy or -- you know, there was -- of course there's things. But Joseph and I ironed them all out.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. I'm not talking about little things, Chase. I'm talking about falling-outs as far as, you know, business partners, you're leaving business places either not paying rent, fraud. You know, whatever the issue is, when you have to call Azusa PD because there's issues at Metro Sheet Metal, that shows that there's not a good partnership there. Okay. That's just one example.

MR. MERRITT: I didn't call Azusa PD.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You did. We have record of

you calling Azusa PD and going and getting some tools --

MR. MERRITT: Oh. Oh, okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- about a civil issue.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So that's just one example.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Well, they weren't my business partner. They were just --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, I'm saying that you're doing business with people. Okay? That there's many, many examples such as that one.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay? So -- so out of all these issues, you're telling me that there's no problems. There's only minor issues with Joseph, and then all of a sudden, they just go missing and there's -- there's no problem. And it's all -- you guys are great. This business is going well, and there's no issues. I find that hard to believe.

MR. MERRITT: Well, I've never tried to paint myself as a saint. Whether you -- now you're trying to tell me that's what I was trying to do.

I'm -- I'm -- I've been far from a saint in my life. But Joseph and I, we got along pretty damn

well. We got along extremely well. We played paint ball together. We --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So what happened, Chase? What -- this is what I'm trying to -- I've seen the videos. I've seen the videos of you at the house. I've seen the videos of you climbing the mountain. I've seen the video, you know, everyone laughing and joking. And I know that. I know you played paint ball with Joseph. I know you were friends. I know you were there the day before he was murdered. I know you were there two days before he was murdered. I know you were there a lot. I understand that, Chase.

So something happened. And that's what we're trying to figure out. You say you had a great relationship.

MR. MERRITT: We were best friends.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So what happened? What happened between you and Summer?

MR. MERRITT: Nothing happened between Summer and I.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, you're saying, there was nothing between me and Joseph. Something happened with this family. And that's what we're trying to figure out.

MR. MERRITT: And I would love to figure it out.

But it's -- whatever happened to this family had nothing to do with me. I did not do anything to this family. I would never do anything to this family.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: What happened when you were down there on the 4th? We keep going back to this. But what happened?

MR. MERRITT: I know you keep going back to it. And if I could give you a different answer, I would. But I can't. I can't give you a different answer than what I already gave you. It's -- it's just -- I -- I can't. I can't -- I can't give you a different answer. I'm sorry.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm just trying to figure out how you have a relationship with Joseph for three or four years and you guys are doing business together. You talk every single day, five or six times a day. I don't talk to my wife that much, eight times a day. Okay? You guys are close.

MR. MERRITT: We were.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You guys were very extremely close.

MR. MERRITT: Very close.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Something happened between you two. There was some type of falling out. There was some type of argument. And that's what

you're afraid to talk about. Because you're afraid --
MR. MERRITT: We didn't have nothing -- we had no falling out. Joseph and I consistently and continuously had a decent relationship. We -- I -- I don't know what you -- I have no idea what you're talking about, about the $2,500 check. I -- I think that's bullshit. Because I didn't write any checks that Joseph, you know, didn't know about.
I am -- I -- there was no falling out between Joseph and I. None. We did not have any arguments.
Every once in a while we'd have little disagreements here and there. And sometimes money. Sometimes quality of waterfalls. You know, I may -- I may -- it may -- a waterfall may splash a little more than the customer wanted, or something, and -- you know, but nothing -- nothing that was significant. And definitely nothing that would be significant enough to hurt them.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Humor me. Take five minutes. Think about -- think about the 4th. Okay? Think about the 4th, that day, the portion of the evening that you're blocking out that you don't remember. Think about that. All right? Give us five minutes. You think about it.

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MR. MERRITT: All right. During that five minutes, can I go pee?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You sure can.
MR. MERRITT: Oh (inaudible).
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Give us --
MR. MERRITT: If you wouldn't mind.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Who's that?
MR. MERRITT: Katie.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We're almost done. Yeah. We're -- we're still getting there. Like I said, let's take that five minutes real quick. We'll be back. Take the time. Think about it.
That's why we wanted you to write. Because a lot of times it jars that memory.
MR. MERRITT: Right. I understand that.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Think about it. Think about if there's any explanation while you were down there on the 4th. That's the thing that we're going to talk about. Give us about five minutes. Okay?
MR. MERRITT: All right.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: All right. Did you humor me?
MR. MERRITT: I did.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I know you've been here all day, Chase. And, obviously, you're still here on your own free will. Are you good with that still?

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MR. MERRITT: Of course.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. The 4th. I asked you to think about that before we left.
MR. MERRITT: I can't think of any explanation, because I don't recall ever driving down there. And I think that if I drove down there, especially on the 4th, I would remember it.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Is it possible -- because I'm telling you we have video. Is it possible that you went down there and you don't remember?
MR. MERRITT: I don't think so. I don't think it's at all possible.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So nobody borrowed your truck?
MR. MERRITT: No. Nobody would have borrowed my truck.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Nobody borrowed your phone?
MR. MERRITT: No, definitely not.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Your -- your records don't show you're still there at the house, so --
MR. MERRITT: Excuse me.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I mean, is there any -- that's why I'm saying, if -- if there's something -- some reason that you went down there that you don't remember --

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MR. MERRITT: Not at all. I apologize. But not at all.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. One of the big things that -- amongst this whole deal that -- that we talked to, the big person we talked to was Cathy; right?
MR. MERRITT: Of course.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And in talking with Cathy, we explained to her -- and -- and I kind of touched on it earlier. It's like, what's going to happen if Cathy gets all lumped up in this, you know?
And when we talked to Cathy, we explained to her, like, Cathy, this -- this entire time you've been telling a lie about the fact that Chase was there that night when the phone rang, and you remember all this, you remember that.
And we can prove that you -- that you were lying based off of that. It does lump her into it. And we asked her. You know, if Chase had involvement with this, do you think that Chase would let you go down for this? What do you think she said?
MR. MERRITT: No.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: She said, no. She said, I think that as much as this would hurt, that Chase would not let me down for this and --
MR. MERRITT: Of course not.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- Chase would explain what happened. That me being the mother of his children, would not let me get caught up in this.
MR. MERRITT: Of course not. That's absolute.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Because she is, Chase. Like I explained to you, like this entire time she's been telling us, she's been telling San Diego, she's been telling everybody that you were at home that night; that the phone rings, this and that. Well, that's all discounted.
MR. MERRITT: From -- from what I understand, to the best of Cathy's recollection, that's what happened.
There's one thing you can be absolutely certain of, other than probably one time in our entire relationship, Cathy doesn't lie. Cathy is just about beyond lying. She just -- she just can't.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: She -- she seems like an absolute sweetheart of a lady.
MR. MERRITT: She's incredible. She's -- she's the best mother I could ever possibly think of having.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And that's -- and that's what I told you earlier. I think that she is the glue that holds all that together.
MR. MERRITT: She's incredible.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And she talks about the stuff

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that she does for your kids; that there's a load of mothers would never do for them. I mean, to be up in Apple Valley and commute down to, you know --
MR. MERRITT: Claremont.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- Claremont, yeah, to take your kid to school every day, and then turn around and drive back up there to, you know, live out of a trailer in order to be able to, you know, get her daughter to go to private school or, you know, to -- to struggle and do everything that she's got to do along the way.
MR. MERRITT: Trust me. I know. She's -- she's an incredible mom.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I just don't want her to get lumped into this, Chase.
MR. MERRITT: Well, of course. I don't either. And -- and that's why I'm telling you. Cathy wouldn't lie.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well --
MR. MERRITT: Cathy just simply wouldn't lie.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- that's why I'm trying to have you explain what happened the night of the 4th. Okay? Because --
MR. MERRITT: If -- if I -- if I could explain any more than I already did, I would.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But that's why I'm saying,

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I'm -- I'm not -- if you didn't kill this family, which you're telling me you didn't. Okay?
MR. MERRITT: Of course.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But the night of the 4th, you were down at this family's house. All right? I'm trying to help along the way to figure out how Cathy's story somehow got jumbled or misconstrued. And you're saying that she doesn't lie. Okay?
But I'm trying to figure out how she could have had that story misconstrued or something. And -- and she's been saying that because that's what she believed happened or it was a different night, or something.
But I'm telling you, that night, Chase, you were down at Fallbrook. You weren't there at the house, as she's -- as she's saying. We've already explained that to her. And went over all that.
MR. MERRITT: She -- she didn't -- she didn't tell me any of that. Maybe because you asked her not to. I don't know.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, and -- and it's a matter of keeping the interview sanitary, obviously, you know. And I -- I know that you guys talk. I -- there's no -- there's no doubt on that. You know, everybody --
MR. MERRITT: Believe it -- believe it or not, the

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only thing that she really told me about her interview, it was an interview from hell. That you were the nice guy, and he was the asshole.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: He wasn't even there.
MR. MERRITT: Okay. I apologize.
DETECTIVE HANKE: Yeah. I wasn't there.
MR. MERRITT: She said the bald guy was the mean guy.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: And -- whoever that was.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Wasn't him.
MR. MERRITT: Okay. Sorry. I didn't mean to call you an asshole.
But, you know, whoever it was -- were you the nice guy?
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I -- I assume so. I was the other one. I was there both times when she was talked to.
MR. MERRITT: Okay. She said that you did the bad cop, good cop thing. And that it was an interview from hell. And they -- they kind of pushed her with our kids. And that was all she would really go into.
She -- she really didn't tell me anything about the interview.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm not -- I'm not in any way

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trying to push anybody with their kids. The thing I'm trying to say is, if something happened to -- to your children or my children, anything like that, I would hope that the investigators would push forward as hard as they could to figure out what happened.

MR. MERRITT: Okay. I --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And that's why I say, God forbid anything ever -- ever were to happen like that because I'd never wish that on anyone.

MR. MERRITT: Of course not.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You know, I never wish that to happen to this family.

But I'm trying to help figure out how her story gets misconstrued in that way, like I -- like I just said. She is smack dab in the middle of this because that last phone call she's saying she remembers. All right?

She's saying she remembers. And you guys are there at the house, this and that. Well, that didn't happen, Chase. And I've explained that to Cathy. That did not happen, Cathy.

And we -- we explained that away. But I'm trying to have you explain what happened that night to -- to clarify your -- your half of it.

MR. MERRITT: If I could -- if I could tell you

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explanation I can come -- I could figure out, possibly -- and I have -- because I have no idea how videos work. I have no clue.

But the only possibility that I could think of, possibly the time stamp could be wrong.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The time stamp is not wrong.

MR. MERRITT: Okay. I don't -- you -- you understand videos better than I do. Because I -- I -- I have no idea.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: I -- I just . . .

But other than that, I have no clue.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, I can assure you -- and I know that that's a lot of times a tactic that -- that people believe that -- that cops use. And that is a tactic I'm sure that's used to lie and --

MR. MERRITT: Of course. Yeah. And I don't -- trust me. I would never hold it against you or any --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: These --

MR. MERRITT: You're trying to get to the truth. I understand.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: These deals that we're talking about, about the phone records and about the -- the video surveillance and stuff like that, I can assure you, Chase, that I am not lying about that. I -- you

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that I went down there for any specific reason, I would. But on the 4th, I don't see how I could have been there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, I do. That's --

MR. MERRITT: Okay. I understand. Believe me. I understand. I understand. And I was -- I was sitting here thinking, how would -- if -- if you're telling me the truth, because, I mean, obviously -- and not to -- not to say you're a liar, or anything. But you're trying to get to the truth.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: And I understand. It doesn't make any difference what means is necessary. You -- you need to use them to get to -- to find the truth. I understand that.

But with that said, if you are telling me the truth and there is a video of my truck being there -- okay -- I was -- when you were gone, you asked me to think about it.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: And I was thinking about it. I was thinking, you know, how -- how the fuck could that be? And it doesn't make any sense.

And I was just thinking, you know, I was like, well, you know, possibly the -- the -- the only

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have my word that I -- that that is not a lie. It is not a lie whatsoever. Okay?

That's why I'm trying to get you to explain to me what your truck's doing down there. Okay?

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And --

MR. MERRITT: No clue. I don't -- I don't remember being there. I don't believe I was there. And as far as being anywhere near where Joseph was buried before the time that I went out there and went to the cross, it's impossible. Because that was the very first time I had ever been anywhere remotely in that area.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do you go out there and -- and -- is it a dry --

MR. MERRITT: Dry wash?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Dry wash?

MR. MERRITT: No. No.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's not an area that you would go dry wash.

MR. MERRITT: Oh, hell, no. There's -- I'm quite sure there's no gold in that area.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do you go to the Victorville dump out there?

MR. MERRITT: No. No. I have no reason to go to

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the dump. I don't live there. I've -- I've never even been to the Victorville dump.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And -- and I -- that's another thing that I'm -- I'm telling you, that that's not another -- another thing that I'm giving you that's bullshit. Okay? That's not bullshit. That's -- it's a fact.

MR. MERRITT: It's impossible. If -- if you're saying it was my phone, it's absolutely impossible from my phone to be there. It's impossible because --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I can only go off of the --

MR. MERRITT: My phone only went where I went --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- information that AT&T gives me. Okay. I can only go off of that. And I give it to somebody, like I said, who's much more educated than I am, as far as plotting and doing all that stuff.

MR. MERRITT: Right. Well, keep in mind --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I mean, his coordinates are out there.

MR. MERRITT: You -- you know where my sister lives; right?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I do.

MR. MERRITT: Okay. You know that it's directly over the mountain.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, are you talking

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about -- okay -- where -- where she lives now, or where she lived --

MR. MERRITT: In Oro Grande.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. I think she lives somewhere else now; right?

MR. MERRITT: Out in Apple Valley.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So you're talking about the other house?

MR. MERRITT: The other house in Oro Grande.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: Do you know where that is?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: Okay. That's directly over the mountain from the grave site.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I don't know how many miles. It's quite a few miles, I'm sure. I mean, it's -- by -- by the way crows fly, I wouldn't guess more than five miles, maybe. I don't know.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: I -- it couldn't be too far. It's completely different directions to get there. You can't really get there from my sister's house unless

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you go all the way to the freeway, I believe, and then around the mountain.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Could you get there -- like is there -- are there back roads that you would be able to get --

MR. MERRITT: Oh, there's a lot of -- I'm -- I'm assuming there's got to be back roads to Oro Grande. There's a -- there's a lot of gold prospecting and stuff in Oro Grande.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: But it's on this side of the mountain. And that's a very large mountain.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So --

MR. MERRITT: (Inaudible.)

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So on the 6th is -- is there a chance that you went to your sister's house and you don't remember it?

MR. MERRITT: Well, I may have been at my sister's house. I don't know. I told you. I said --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well --

MR. MERRITT: -- the only two places I would have been is my sister's or --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's what I'm saying.

MR. MERRITT: -- my brother's.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: When we -- when we first

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started this out, and I asked you, on February 5th -- or I asked you for the week of -- after that they went missing, were you in the High Desert at all? And you said, oh, absolutely not.

MR. MERRITT: I don't think so.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: But if there's any chance that I was on the desert, it was either at my sister's or my brother's.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. And at that time your sister lived on National -- out on National Trails?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah, of course.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And then whose house is that?

MR. MERRITT: Jim. Jim. Well, she lives there. She -- she had half of the property, and she lived on -- in a motor home -- or a -- a double-wide trailer there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So there is a chance that you could have been up in -- up in Oro Grande on the 6th.

MR. MERRITT: Oh, there's a chance that I was in Oro Grande. But there's no chance I was anywhere near that grave site --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And the reason I ask is if --

MR. MERRITT: -- whatsoever.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- if there's a chance that you're up in the desert, the way that the -- I mean, they're -- cell phone towers work funny. Like you can tell when -- when you look at this engineer guy, he can look at it and he can go, oh, no. That's -- this phone was over in this area. It wasn't over off this area.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah, of course.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's what I'm asking, like if you -- if there's a chance you were up in the area and say that -- I'll go back to him and see what he says, but . . .

MR. MERRITT: You should go back to him, because in Oro Grande -- I mean, Oro Grande is probably -- I -- I don't know how many miles it would be. But it's not that far from -- I would say --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I know how far it is.

MR. MERRITT: -- as a crow flies -- okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: Okay. It's -- as crows -- by the crows -- by the way the crow flies -- what? -- five, six miles?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right around.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah, somewhere around there. I don't -- but you really can't get there from my sister's unless you go down the freeway.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: No. You can get there.

MR. MERRITT: Oh, can you?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: Okay. Well, anyway, the -- there's no -- simply no chance I was anywhere near. If I was in Oro Grande, possibly. But I don't remember even being in Oro Grande.

I don't remember being on the High Desert, so -- I just don't remember being up there.

But the only reason I would go to the High Desert is to see my sister Anita or my brother Bennett.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, you're not in Hesperia. So I don't think you were going to see Bennett at all.

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Yeah. I think that was about the time that --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I heard you had that falling out with Bennett back in that time.

MR. MERRITT: Bennett and I have had falling outs back and forth.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

But at that time you're still with Cathy. So I know that --

MR. MERRITT: Oh, yeah. There was definitely a falling-out there --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

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MR. MERRITT: -- because Bennett stole some stuff from Cathy, and --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: -- when I had Bennett working for me, and he -- we let him sleep in our guest room. And he stole some stuff.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah. I know.

MR. MERRITT: I happened to be out of town at the time. I think I was installing a waterfall or -- I don't remember what I was doing. But I was out of town. And she ended up confronting him. I was on the phone with --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So we'll see if we can explain the 6th. All right? We'll see if we can figure it out. There may have been a chance you were in the desert. You're saying you weren't over there.

MR. MERRITT: It's impossible. I -- there's no way I was anywhere over there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Juanita and Ben both said you weren't out there, so -- and that's -- when I went and interviewed them, that's -- that's what they said. But --

MR. MERRITT: Then I probably wasn't there. I mean, yeah. On the 6th, I don't -- like I told you before, I don't recall being out in the desert at all

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on the 6th.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.

MR. MERRITT: So not a -- not a likely, because it's not real likely.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Your phone hits up in the desert. That's why I'm asking. And it's -- it's a pretty particular area, so . . .

MR. MERRITT: Well, if it -- if -- if my phone hit up there, it would have been because I was at my sister's Juanita's. That would be the only reason I'd be there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Got that figured out. Now, let's go back to the 4th. All right? We've got to figure this 4th thing out. All right?

Because, ultimately, when this all unfolds, and everything like that, they're -- they're going to look at your statements. They're going to look at Cathy's statements. They're going to look at the totality of everything.

And they're going to try to figure out, you know, why -- why would they lie? Why would they lie and say that he was at home or he wasn't down there? And -- and, Chase, I get it. If you -- if you didn't have any involvement with this and you went down there for some reason, as stupid as it may be, like to go get

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a check or to go -- to drop something off or to do, whatever, if you had to pick up paperwork, if you had to pick something up, I get it. Okay?

And I get the fact that -- you know what? -- it's his business partner. He's got a criminal record. You know, people are going to look at that. So you had to come up with something like, hey, okay. I was at home that night.

But the problem is, is the evidence doesn't show you were at home, Chase. All right? And if -- if there was no involvement on your part --

MR. MERRITT: I (inaudible).

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Then help me understand, why -- why come up with all this? Okay? You were down there. You were not at home. The alibi -- the alibi or the story and all that is -- is not true. Okay?

MR. MERRITT: Well, I don't know what to say. I have no recollection of driving to Fallbrook on the 4th. I have no recollection of even having any reason to be there. And to the best of my -- the best of my knowledge, I was at home.

So there's -- I mean, I -- do I remember getting Joseph's phone call? No. I told you that. If I did, I wouldn't -- I would tell you. I said, yeah. I got the phone call, you know. I mean, I -- I

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more, was not a significant time. So there was -- it -- it wasn't a significant event until later. And then I had to re- -- recall it.

So you're -- you keep saying, well, this is a key -- the key time. But reality is --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, it was.

MR. MERRITT: -- it -- the key time is that I was -- I'm -- I'm remembering is the time that we're -- that we're -- something that was important --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But it was. Because at some point, whether you have that sit-down lunch with him, or whatever -- now, that's not the last time that -- that you had any contact with him.

MR. MERRITT: No. No. Of course not.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So afterwards you have contact with him. But then you go back down to the house.

I mean, was he not there when you got to the house?

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember going to the house. So I don't know why you -- I don't understand why you keep asking me the same question.

I don't recall being at the house. I don't think that -- as a matter of fact, I know for a fact I had no reason to drive there. There was no reason to be there. None whatsoever.

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actually -- in going over the conversations with Dugal -- I think it was with Dugal, maybe his female partner that he had.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Fisk?

MR. MERRITT: Fisk? Is that her name?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: I mentioned to her. I said, you know, I'm kind of going on Cathy's memory because -- and I don't remember, even back then. I don't -- I don't remember the majority of that evening.

I remember part of the day. I remember meeting with Joseph. I remember eating. I remember, you know --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: That's what I'm saying, a key portion of that evening, you don't remember.

MR. MERRITT: But the key portion of that day, for me -- the exciting part of that day -- you've got to -- you have to realize, if you look back at that day --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I did. And you guys had big things going.

MR. MERRITT: Huge things going.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You talked about all this stuff.

MR. MERRITT: Okay. But that day, after Joseph left, in my life at that time, until a week later or

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Then why -- why is the truck and everything there?

MR. MERRITT: I don't know. I don't get it. I don't know. Maybe -- maybe you should -- maybe you should go back and possibly look at the time stamps.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We've looked at the time stamps. Everything --

MR. MERRITT: Maybe you should do it again.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Everything --

MR. MERRITT: Because there's -- there was no reason for me to be there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The time stamps are fine. (Inaudible) February 4th. You're there on February 4th. Your -- your vehicle pulls out of their driveway on February 4th. Okay?

MR. MERRITT: I wasn't down there -- or I wasn't up there -- down there. I wasn't down there. I was -- Joseph came to me on February 4th.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The earlier in the day he did. But in that evening, you're down in Fallbrook.

MR. MERRITT: I -- I had no reason to be.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I -- I -- I -- I mean, that's (inaudible) decide. But you were down there, so . . .

MR. MERRITT: I had no reason to be there. I -- I -- I'm -- I wish I could give you an explanation.

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But I don't remember going. I don't remember having a reason to go.

I remember the day differently. I -- there's just simply -- I -- I don't see any possibility or possible way that I was in Fallbrook. I -- I'm -- I'm sorry. But that's -- I just don't see any possible way.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You were there. And that's why -- that's the whole point of this, is trying to come up with an explanation of why you were there.

MR. MERRITT: I understand. I -- I completely understand. But there's got to be another -- more plausible explanation than -- I mean --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, that's what I'm hoping for.

MR. MERRITT: There's got to be. But I -- I -- it doesn't seem like I can give you one. Because I just -- I have no clue. I, honestly, don't have any clue.

And, you know, if there's anything, you know -- and, again, you know, Cathy -- as matter of fact, Cathy told you. If there was any -- if -- if there was something that I was hiding that would bring her into this, I would never do it intentionally.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But I think --

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MR. MERRITT: She knows it, as well as I do.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I think that -- what the main concern of you is, is that if you didn't do this --

MR. MERRITT: Of course I didn't do this.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- if you -- if you put yourself down there at the time that it happened, we're automatically going to assume that you did it. Okay?

MR. MERRITT: Well, you've already automatically kind of assumed that I did it.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well --

MR. MERRITT: I -- I get that.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm -- I'm giving you the benefit of the doubt that you didn't do it. I'm trying to help you explain why your car was down there that night.

MR. MERRITT: I --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm -- I'm giving you the benefit of the doubt. I'm not --

MR. MERRITT: I -- I know.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm not saying --

MR. MERRITT: I have -- I can't --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm not directly saying, Chase --

MR. MERRITT: I can't give you an answer.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- you killed this family.

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Okay?

MR. MERRITT: I can't give you an answer.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But I'm trying to explain why your car was down there.

MR. MERRITT: I would love to. Honestly, I would love to. I can't explain it. I have no idea. If -- if I could, I would.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I just -- I don't get it, man. I mean, everything that we talked -- everybody that we've talked to around the whole way, man, this -- this dude would have done anything for anyone, like you said.

MR. MERRITT: He was -- he was probably one of the best people I know or have ever known in my entire life.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And I -- and I saw these four people in a state that nobody should ever have to see them.

MR. MERRITT: I can imagine. I -- I mean, Joseph was a flipping incredible person. He loved everybody. And everybody loved him. He had no enemies. He had no -- nobody that in any way would hurt him. Nobody, including myself.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Then why?

MR. MERRITT: I don't know.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Who does that?

MR. MERRITT: Who does it? Exactly. I don't know. I have no clue.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I know there is -- there is a lot of signs that are pointing to you in all this.

MR. MERRITT: I get that. I understand.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I mean, like -- like Dan said, you know, there may be a hundred vehicles down there in that area --

MR. MERRITT: I thought he was Don.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: No. He's Dan.

MR. MERRITT: Oh, Dan.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: There may be a hundred vehicles down in that area, you know, on the 4th. But there's only one vehicle that's pulling out of the driveway at that time.

And, ironically enough, the vehicle is the business partner or associate's vehicle. And it's a distinct vehicle. It's not --

MR. MERRITT: (Inaudible.)

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- a little Honda rice-rocket, or something like that. You know, it's -- it's a distinct vehicle.

You know, you have the -- the (inaudible) going on with the -- with the account and all that

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stuff that just seems all weird. I mean, you've got phone records that are showing you places that you're saying that you're not. But they're showing that you're in that area. I mean, Chase, it just doesn't -- it doesn't all add up.

MR. MERRITT: Well, I, honestly -- I think that -- I mean -- and I'm -- I'm sure you're thorough. I -- I mean, you guys -- it's your job to be thorough.

But I think that you should go back and look at where -- you know, the possibility of me -- if I was in -- in the High Desert, it was definitely not in that area. It's not even possible.

The first time I had ever been there was the first time I went there with -- to see the cross. And I don't even remember being in the High Desert. But that's neither here nor there. I mean, if I was, I was.

But I wasn't anywhere near that grave site. It's impossible. I've -- I've never been there before the time that I went to see the cross.

As far as my truck, I can't explain it. I have no clue. I don't recall being there. I don't recall any reason for me to drive there. And I, honestly, don't -- there's -- I don't see there would be any possible way that I was in Fallbrook on the

4th --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It happened.

MR. MERRITT: -- at -- at any time on the 4th.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It happened.

MR. MERRITT: Well, I -- I don't know what to say. I -- I don't recall ever being there on the 4th. Not even -- no. I -- I don't see how it's possible, so . . .

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I mean, I'm telling you it's possible, because it happened.

MR. MERRITT: Okay. I -- I am -- you know, we can go back and forth, but I don't -- I don't see how it could be, so . . . Just -- just --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. This may be the last time that you're able to give your side of the story. You understand that?

MR. MERRITT: Of course.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Regardless of what happens, this could be the -- the last time that you're giving your side of the story and explaining. Okay?

So you're going to have to live with the decision that you're making right now to say, I don't remember and I don't recall.

MR. MERRITT: Right.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Even though we have evidence.

Okay? So you're going to have to live with that. And we have evidence. Okay? We talked about your cell phone, and we talked about the vehicle.

We have evidence that you were at the house. And we have evidence that you were at the grave site. Okay?

So you're going to have to live the rest of your life saying that, okay. I had an opportunity to explain it. But you are going to be -- we talked about the most important times and days of your life. The 4th -- February 4th was definitely an important one. Okay? This is the next important one. Okay?

Because what decision you make right now, you're going to have to live with.

MR. MERRITT: Right.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It's done. The book's closed and written. And -- and you're going to have to live with it.

MR. MERRITT: I understand.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do you understand what I'm saying?

MR. MERRITT: Of course I do.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So I just want to confirm with you -- and I just want to make sure that we're all on the same page, that you are just going

to -- you are going to say that you don't remember. You're going to rely on Cathy's memory, which we've shown that Cathy's memory is not correct.

Whether Cathy's memory is on purpose, she's not telling us the truth --

MR. MERRITT: Cathy would never --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- or she's mistaking her days. So you are going to bet -- you're going to throw all your chips in -- you're a poker player -- you're going to go all the way in on the fact that whatever Cathy remembers is what happened, which we just proved that it wasn't. Okay?

So you're going all in on the fact that now you're banking to say, you know what? I'll just say I don't remember and just roll the dice and let's see what happens.

I -- I know you're a gambler, but --

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- but you have to understand --

MR. MERRITT: In the first place, I'm not that big of a gambler.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Regardless, but you understand the reference?

MR. MERRITT: I do understand. And I wasn't

meaning -- I wasn't defending my gambling because I'm -- by me saying I'm not that big a gambler, I fully understand the weight of this situation.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: It's huge.

MR. MERRITT: I fully understand it.

I didn't say I -- as far as being at Joseph's house on the 4th, I didn't say "I don't remember." I pretty much said there's really no possibility that I was there.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. But you're betting --

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You're betting on the fact that we're lying about it?

MR. MERRITT: No. No. No. I'm not. I'm not. No. No. No.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And I don't want to argue with you, Chase. I just --

MR. MERRITT: I -- I agree.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I want to make sure we're on the same page.

MR. MERRITT: No. I'm not betting on anything. Trust me.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well --

MR. MERRITT: He just told me that he's not lying about any of it. What I would like you to do, go back

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to the drawing board and look a little closer. Because I -- I don't see that there's any possible way that I could have been there.

And there's no possible way that I was ever at the grave -- grave sites before the day that I went to that cross. It's just not possible.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Let me ask you this, Chase: After we interviewed Cathy -- we interviewed her the first time. Okay?

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And then she came back for a polygraph.

MR. MERRITT: Right.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Did you talk to her from the first interview to the polygraph?

MR. MERRITT: I don't remember. What --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So why --

MR. MERRITT: How long of a period was it? I mean --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: A couple days.

MR. MERRITT: Two days? Was it the -- was it the second interview that you kind of were really pushing her?

DETECTIVE HANKE: I wasn't here.

MR. MERRITT: Oh, okay.

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DETECTIVE BACHMAN: The second interview -- it was the second interview.

MR. MERRITT: It was after that one that she said I talked to her. So it wasn't after the first one. No. I don't think I talked to her between. I -- it's possible I talked to her, but probably not about that.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Why did she tell us that you were asking her questions about what we asked?

MR. MERRITT: I don't know.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: You were quizzing her on the questions so you could be prepared or whatever it was so you're not (inaudible).

Why were you quizzing her about my questions?

MR. MERRITT: Well, I -- and if I -- if I talked to her, I, you know -- and I don't recall talking to her. But if I talked to her, I probably would have just said, you know -- because when she did finally talk to me, I thought it was after -- on the -- the first interview that you did with her, were you really pushing her then quite a bit, too?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: No, not when I interviewed her the first time.

MR. MERRITT: How long was that interview?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: A couple hours.

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MR. MERRITT: A couple hours. Yeah. It was that one. That was the interview. That was definitely the interview.

So right after that interview, I was asking -- I said -- why wouldn't I ask her, well, you know -- because she said it was a day from hell. Why wouldn't I ask her, why? You know, what were they asking you? Why, you know -- I'm -- of course, I'm going to ask her things.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: That's crazy. I mean, that's obvious.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: But, again, I just want to be clear. I want to be crystal clear here --

MR. MERRITT: Of course.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- that you're saying you don't -- you weren't down there or that you don't remember. You're saying, you know, you don't remember about the grave site. I could have been at Juanita's. I could have at Bennett's. I don't know if I was in the desert.

You're kind of giving those kind of answers. But I just want to make sure that there's no explanation. Because when we walk out this door, Chase, I don't know if there's going to be another

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time. Can you see what I'm saying?
MR. MERRITT: I understand. I understand.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. So I'm just -- I'm just asking you. I want to make sure that we're on the same page here that you're going to bank on what -- what Cathy's remembered as being that's the fact and then the case -- you know, not what the detectives have been, you know, working on for four years. But -- but the fact that Cathy maybe remembers a day that you were home, and then we can prove that you weren't.
MR. MERRITT: Well, I'm not -- I'm not banking on anything. I'm just telling what I remember --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: -- and the reasons I remember it. There's -- there's really no banking on anything.
What Cathy -- what Cathy remembered is pretty much what I was saying simply because I didn't remember it. And so, you know, was that exactly what happened? If -- if you was to ask me to be absolutely sure that the phone call came in at 8:47, and I picked it up and looked at it and put it back in my pocket and she yelled at me for not answering it, you know, no. I can't --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Well, we know that didn't happen.

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MR. MERRITT: I can't be sure. I would not -- because I never did recall -- really recall that. But --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. But that's what I'm saying --
MR. MERRITT: -- she did.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: -- so you're talking about I don't recall and this -- this kind of stuff. I -- once again, you're going to have to live with that decision that you don't recall or you weren't there, even though we can show otherwise.
MR. MERRITT: Okay.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Do you understand that?
MR. MERRITT: I do, I understand that. Yes.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: If you at some point go home and you think about it and you go, you know what? Yeah. I remember something, or whatever, you've got my contact info.
MR. MERRITT: I don't have your -- I lost your card.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And you've got my cell already, Chase?
MR. MERRITT: Well, I had it on your card. So, no.
So you're the -- so you're not the bad cop

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that Cathy --
DETECTIVE HANKE: No. I don't have a bald -- I'm not the bald head. I didn't interview her.
MR. MERRITT: She -- she didn't like -- she liked you.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah?
MR. MERRITT: Yeah. She didn't like him -- or not him.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Think about these folks, Chase. All right?
MR. MERRITT: I will. I -- I do almost every day, so . . .
Joseph was important to me.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Right.
MR. MERRITT: He --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: He was important to a lot of people.
MR. MERRITT: Yeah, I know. He was the best thing that happened to most of the people in his life. He was -- he was a good person.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: All right.
MR. MERRITT: And if there's -- if there's anything -- anything --
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: And one of the things I know San Diego did, but -- and Cathy may have asked you, or

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whatever. Are you good with giving up another DNA sample?
MR. MERRITT: I don't care.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Let me grab a kit real quick. It's just a couple forms.
Do you got one?
Okay. I'll be right back.
What's your date of birth?
MR. MERRITT: 5-2-57.
I'm working a great deal out in Chatsworth.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Uh-huh.
MR. MERRITT: But my boss is very aware. I mean, he -- he doesn't know the total extent. But he's very aware that this is going on.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: And he has no problem if I need to take a day, you know, or whatever. So anything that you need.
DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.
MR. MERRITT: I'll -- I'll make myself available as much as possible, just like -- just like today.
And like I said before, if you want me to take a lie detector test, I don't have any problem with that either. We can do that any time. I'm -- I'm good with any of it.

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I'm not happy about having to sit through days like this. But who would be?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Very true.

MR. MERRITT: Somebody got mad at you, huh?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah, not me.

MR. MERRITT: Probably the bald guy.

DETECTIVE HANKE: It's a likely possibility.

MR. MERRITT: Obviously you know him?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I was in the interview with him that day.

MR. MERRITT: Oh, okay. Was he as aggressive as she was making him out to be?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I don't know about all that. I think she's -- she's probably not used to (inaudible).

MR. MERRITT: Right. Yeah, you are.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah, I don't know. I guess it depends on what your -- what your term of "aggressive" is, but . . .

MR. MERRITT: She said -- she said he made her cry.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I -- and I think a lot of the stuff that was talked about was an emotionally -- was emotional stuff.

MR. MERRITT: Of course.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: People -- people handle stuff differently, so . . .

All right.

MR. MERRITT: Is it different over here than over here?

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: No.

MR. MERRITT: Okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Sometimes, I think, that if you don't get a good -- a good collection of it either.

MR. MERRITT: Uh-huh.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Would there be any reason that would -- I mean, would you still have any of Joseph's checks or any of Joe's belongings, or anything like that?

MR. MERRITT: No.

So I can reach you on your cell phone any time. Is that --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: For the most part, yeah. Unless I've got something -- something pressing, and I'm not able to answer. But leave me a message, and I'll get back to you.

MR. MERRITT: Well, I won't call you at night or early in the morning.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: I'm usually here early in the morning, so . . .

Okay. Give me one minute, Chase. I want to make sure that -- that everybody is good. They don't have any other questions. And then we'll get you out of here. Okay?

MR. MERRITT: Can I get my phone and --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Yeah.

MR. MERRITT: It's going to take her a while to get here probably from the mall, if it's okay.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. (Inaudible) Chase.

MR. MERRITT: Hey, are you still around here?

No. They haven't told me anything.

So you went home? Well, hang on. Just -- when is your mom getting off work? Huh? Because she would be closer to pick me up. Well, they never told me that. No, not yet. Just hang on. I'll call you back. Go ahead and go home. All right. Bye.

Hey, are you off yet? What time are you getting off? I'm sorry. What? I just finished, so . . . Yeah.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: We're going to figure it out right now.

Are we -- yeah. Are you getting picked up?

MR. MERRITT: Yeah. Michelle is going to pick me up.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: She's getting off of work in about 15, 20 minutes.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay. Is she local, or do you need a ride somewhere or --

MR. MERRITT: No. She's in Ontario, just this side of the 15 and the 10.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: So it's pretty close.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: So you don't need a lift anywhere?

MR. MERRITT: I think she'll come and get me.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: And then -- you guys are busy.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: All right. Well, I appreciate it. All right.

MR. MERRITT: I appreciate your time. And, again, if there's anything I can do, you know -- if you want me to take -- anything --

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Okay.

MR. MERRITT: -- just call me.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: All right.

MR. MERRITT: This is her.

DETECTIVE BACHMAN: Thanks, Chase.

--oOo--

(END OF RECORDING)

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REPORTER

The undersigned Certified Shorthand Reporter of the State of California does hereby certify:

That said audio-recorded material was transcribed into typewriting under my direction and supervision, and I hereby certify that said material is a full, true, and correct transcript of the audio-recorded material to the best of my ability.

I further certify that I am neither counsel for nor related to any party to said action, nor in any way interested in the outcome thereof.

Executed this 2nd day of November, 2015, at Victorville, California.

_____

Amy P. Smith
Certificate No. 12154

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