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TAPED TRANSCRIPT OF JESSE AARON GRUND

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY CORPORAL EDWARDS

CASE NUMBER – 08-074777

JULY 31, 2008

EE – CORPORAL WILLIAM “ERIC” EDWARDS

YM – CORPORAL YURI MELICH

JG – MR. JESSE AARON GRUND

JG: (Unintelligible) did you hear about the triple, triple homicide (unintelligible)?

EE: Yes, I did.

JG: Shocker it was at The Palms of all places (laughs).

EE: Uh, what time you got?

JG: Uh...

EE: It's uh, 7/31/2008, 11:22 a.m. Corporal Eric Edwards, Orange County Sheriff's Office. And uh, a voluntary interview with?

JG: Jesse Aaron Grund, G-R-U-N-D.

EE: Jesse, this is the second interview that I've conducted and we recorded...

JG: Right.

EE: ...with you. Uhm, you, I, you and I were just speaking and Yuri was in the room from time to time regarding some follow up stuff that we needed. Uhm, the one big topic that I want to touch upon with you, and one of the problems that we were having in the timeline was the 24th of...

JG: Uh-hum (affirmative).

EE: ...June.

JG: Uh-hum (affirmative).

EE: Uhm, you recall speaking to Casey on that date. Now there is some, now you're kind of, your recollection now is you may have heard the child, but you couldn't say it a hundred percent?

JG: Correct. Because again, uhm, see, hearing Caylee in the background was a very common place for me when I talk to Casey. So that's why at this point I can't, I think I did, but I can't say for a hundred percent sure that I did.

EE: Okay.

YM: (Inaudible) grandma's statement (inaudible).

EE: Alright, Yuri, got it.

YM: (Inaudible).

EE: Leaving, leaving the room now is Yuri.

(Corporal Melich leaves the room).

EE: Alright. Uhm, in the conversation with Yuri prior, and then I came in, we're a little bit short. Uh, apparently you were discussing possible scenarios with what may have happened. Uhm, can you go over those again?

JG: (Yawns.)

EE: I think...

JG: Excuse me. That was me. That...

EE: With the pool issues and...

JG: That was Jesse yawning. Uhm...

EE: (Laughs.)

JG: Is, there was two, there's two different types of what if scenarios that have gone through my head in regards to what could have happened to uhm, Caylee uhm, because I'll, I'll say this for the record. Uhm, I don't believe Caylee at any point in time would have ever hurt, or I don't believe Casey would have ever hurt Caylee on purpose and I, I, there's no way that I, I personally could ever foresee her doing that. Uhm, I do believe that there are times where Casey would leave Caylee unattended to do things. Get on the computer, talk on the phone. And at that point...

EE: And where would she be unattended? Where, in...

JG: Caylee, Caylee would usually, she would hang out in the living room while Casey was in the computer room, or sometimes Casey would go outside to use the telephone and leave Caylee in the living room. Uhm, she also went outside and played with Caylee a lot and then she'd also be playing with the dogs. Uhm, she let Caylee play in her playpen while she'd go do something. So, it, there, there were plenty of times where I could have foreseen, because we both know with children something quick can happen. I mean Caylee was somebody who you know like picking up rocks and putting them in her

mouth, or, or you know, dog food was another thing that she used to use. And Caylee at any point could have picked one of those things up, asphyxiated and died. It wouldn't take that long for a child that small to asphyxiate and die.

EE: So you're talking the timeframes that Casey would leave her alone from time are lengthy?

JG: I mean yeah (affirmative). I mean again, uhm....

EE: How about the pool?

JG: I, I never, I didn't know enough about Caylee and the pool. I knew that they like to, and I knew that Caylee loved the pool. But I never ever actually seen Caylee in the pool. Now I was under the understanding they had actually had to move the ladder because Caylee kept trying to get into the pool and things of that nature. Uhm, I believe at any point in time something possibly could have accidentally happened to Caylee. And if something accidentally happened to Caylee I literally believe that Casey would have an emotional breakdown; a mental breakdown to the point where I almost believe that she would take Caylee and put her somewhere and then uh, tell herself a new story, a new reality of what happened to her.

EE: Because she's been living in a false reality for years?

JG: Correct. So I don't think it's that far out of the spectrum. I think, I think if something happened to Caylee, her one toe that she's had in reality for the last couple of years, her one foot would be gone and she would be completely in her own separate world. And I think uh, that's because Casey directly has some issues that mentally she's never gotten taken, taken care of. So I, I do believe something accidentally happen to Caylee, which I believe is a what if scenario that could have happened. Uhm, choke on a piece of dog food, eat a rock. Slip coming out of the pool together. Uhm, you know, just fall off of something that she's climbing too high. She's, Caylee was a rambunctious little kid. She liked to climb. She liked to run around. She liked to do things. You know what three year old doesn't.

EE: Now Casey actually kind of lives under mom's thumb. It seems like mom's very judgmental of her as far as her m...uh, parental uhm, capabilities. You think Casey would be more than afraid to say Mom, now look what happened? I, look at what I've done?

JG: I, I believe if there's a, there's the distinct possibility that Caylee, Casey, if she wouldn't tell mom if something like this happened. There, I don't, I don't think there's any way. I, I don't even think that she would have told anyone except herself. I don't even think, the only way I think if somebody would have known is if she reached out to somebody to help her. But I don't, Casey's been an independent, self-sufficient person, who thrives off the attention of others.

EE: Uh-hum (affirmative).

JG: But she likes to do things on her own.

EE: Do you think she would, do you think she would have the strength, the inner strength at that point in time to take the child and put the child somewhere without help?

JG: I think that she'd be able to take Caylee (inaudible).

EE: Because it seems like she has to fall on men or boyfriends to have that crutch for confidence. Faced with that situation, would she have to call upon one of those guys?

JG: I believe that she would reach out to somebody for help.

EE: Who would that be?

JG: It would not be me. Because if it was anything in regards....

EE: Well at that time in her life though. I mean...

JG: Uhm, the only person that it would have been with would be her current boyfriend, which would be Tony Lazaro. That's the only person I could think of that she would have personally reached out to. Because again, they weren't together for very long and she was already falling in love with him in her mind, well was falling in love with him. So, I believe Tony Lazaro would be the only one that she'd reach out to for help. She wouldn't reach out to me in regards to anything Caylee related, especially if Caylee got hurt or anything, because he knew what my, she would know what my reaction would be. She also knows that I, I tend to be an honest and righteous individual. I'm, I'm going to come right out and tell the correct people if something happened.

Yuri said that there was some discussion about uh, hypotheticals with the playhouse out back. What was that?

JG: Uhm, well what, what we were talking specifically about in regards to the playhouse was as soon as I heard Caylee was missing and found out the extended length of time, I believe if something specifically would have happened to Caylee the first place she would have put her is uh, next to the playhouse. That was the first place I thought of. Well I....

EE: Why would that be?

JG; That, Caylee loved that playhouse. That was like her own little house. Uhm, she loved everything about it. She had her own little phone in there. She had her own kitchen set. I mean she, she absolutely and totally loved the playhouse. Every time I'd go outside and play with Caylee anytime I got the chance (making clapping sound), right to the playhouse every time. Uhm, she spent a lot of time out there with her grandparents and with Casey. I believe that Casey, if something would have happened to her that would have been the first place that she would have put Caylee if she wanted to place Caylee's body somewhere if something actually did happen to her. That's the, the first place that I can think of that she would have put her.

EE: How about if she had to remove her from mom and dad's house where do you think she would have found comfort to put her next?

JG: (Sighs.) You know honestly I, I, I can't, I can't think of anywhere else. Uh, my experience with Caylee was the first eleven months she was alive and then that, that you know, two months October and November when I really got to see her. Uhm, other than that I, I, it, it was always home related. Caylee was at home all the uhm, unless she was with her nanny. Uhm, because she was always at home. She was a, a home child I guess would be the best choice of words. So I don't ever remember there being anywhere else that Casey would go with Caylee. The playhouse, the pool, inside, that's about all I can remember.

EE: This nanny thing is just the big question. There's, we can't find the nanny, or any true beat down pathway of communication to the nanny.

JG: Right.

EE: Letters, Christmas cards, photographs, telephone calls from a phone to a nanny. If you were doing my job where would you look for the nanny?

JG: Well the first place I'd start with is, is the gentleman that she said that she got the nanny's name from.

EE: And we've done that.

JG: Jeff Hopkins.

EE: (Unintelligible) both.

JG: And Hopkins doesn't exist?

EE: No. There's...

JG: Yeah (affirmative).

EE: ...we've been able to find at least the, the very first one. No, the second one, let me tell you there's, these things are all being followed up on.

JG: Right.

EE: There's just no, you can't say like there's been friends that call and say, hey this guy went to work for Disney; worked in a water park this time frame here, and then not expect to be able to find Disney's records of this same guy.

JG: Right.

EE: You know...

JG: Right.

EE: ...be it Jacksonville or wherever. Now uh, all I'm saying is the avenues that she's given us...

JG: Uh-hum (affirmative).

EE: The clues, if you want to call them that, are, are yielding no results in those efforts.

JG: Here is my thought in regards to finding whoever this nanny is. Because before Caylee went missing on the 15th I believe that there were days where Caylee was supposedly with the nanny, or let's, let's backtrack. Caylee was supposedly with mom and wasn't with mom. I don't know specific dates, but let's just play that out for example. Casey tells her friends that Caylee is with her mother. Caylee's, and you ta...you'd speak with Cindy and Caylee's not with mom. Well then Caylee has to be somewhere because up until the 15th she was around.

EE: And that's what I've communicated with Lee.

JG: So...

EE: Lee. We've talked to friends. We've talked to boyfriends. And we afforded Casey an opportunity to talk with us and she went down the path that none of us understand. Now your mother needs to come in and say on the calendar books, I know I had the baby this day, this day, this day and this day. Now through our investigative efforts, which take us all over the place for surveillance videos everywhere, the days that mom says I didn't have her this day, but I can show a surveillance video at a target or whatever, with Casey alone, or not Casey, (making tapping sound), where was the baby that day? Now I can isolate that day's phone records and try to see if there was communication between a nanny. But the difficult part is we're not getting that level of cooperation.

JG: What about days before the 15th? My only, my only thought is, my only thought is...

EE: Uh-hum (affirmative).

JG: ...and, and feel free to...

EE: No, I'm opening...

JG: ...have a...

EE: ...up the calendar book from whenever back when.

JG: Right.

EE: But I'll, well I'll go back to the fist of the year. But I need mom to come in and say these are the days I had her.

JG: Right, exactly (inaudible).

EE: Without that information there's no baseline to start at.

JG: Because then you could start out, you can do phone records to figure it out. You can do spending patterns. Where was she spending? Where was she going...

EE: Exactly.

JG: ...all the time.

EE: Exactly.

JG: You know, things of that nature. Because otherwise you know, because that was my first thing. That's why I put that calendar book together because I figured okay, if the days that we can find out that she was supposedly with her nanny, or supposedly with mom, and she wasn't with mom, and Casey was alone, where was she? She had to have been with someone...

EE: Uh-hum (affirmative).

JG: ...somewhere.

EE: Uh-hum (affirmative).

JG: And whoever this someone is, if, if she was with someone, has a lot more information and is obviously not coming forward about it.

EE: Uh-hum (affirmative).

JG: Uhm, do I believe it's possible that someone, that Caylee did have a nanny and Casey lied to her enough about her family that she think that she's protecting them right now? That she thinks she's protecting Caylee? I don't see why not. We, we can all tell that from the last couple years Casey is a very effective liar. I think I'd use the word diabolical to describe the way she lies. So, is that a possibility? Absolutely that there is somebody else out there that could have had Caylee. There's the....

EE: Did Casey traffic in cocaine, or any other narcotic?

JG: No.

EE: She just was a not, an occasional user, not a, not a trafficker?

JG: I never saw her use a single drug in my entire life.

EE: Did she have a multi-million dollar corporation that maybe she was embezzling funds from and someone wanted to, you know, what I'm getting at here is can you think of any reason that someone would abduct that child and hold it for ransom or threaten that family?

JG: The only reason I can think of is the, uh, it all started according to my calendar once she seriously started seeing Tony Lazaro and hanging out at Fusion Night Club all the time. Fusion Night Club, from what I understand, there's a lot of drugs moved at, m...moved through that place. It's a very drug friendly enviro...environment atmosphere. Is it a possibility that she could have ripped off the wrong person, the wrong drug dealer, the wrong relation to somebody else's family who's, who's high up and has got some money and has got some power? Absolutely. Because in, in my timeframe none of this stuff really started happening until she started doing that. Until she started hanging out all the time.

Because you look at the 15th, she had just started hanging out at Fusion, and hanging out with Tony all the time on the 13th, 11th, or the 11th is when she said that he's my boyfriend. So you, if you, if you look at that timeframe right there, it, it completely lines up. And there's nothing that, that he can say to discredit that. It completely starts lining up with when he, when she's starting hanging out there all the time. Totally lines up with that. Could she have ripped off the wrong person there or pissed off the wrong person? Absolutely. Could she have, to become a drug user, user to appease Tony? She became a Yankee fan to appease me...

EE: Uh-hum (affirmative).

JG: ...and she hates the Yankees. She does things to chameleon, uh, she's like a chameleon when she's with a guy. You know, Ricardo smokes pot, she started smoking pot when she's with Ricardo, you know. Uhm, I am, my family's Christian. She started doing things in regards to religious practices with us to, to fit in with our family. To fit in with me. Do I believe that she really wanted to do all of that? Absolutely not, hmm.

EE: What about mom? We talked about mom and Casey's relationship and you brought something up a while back. She, you guys were laying on the couch together back when you were engaged.

JG: Uh-hum (affirmative).

EE: And mom blurts out something that kind of puts you in an embarrassing way. Can you tell me about that again?

JG: Uhm, we were laying on the couch. Her and Casey started having an argument about something and I, I stuck up for Casey. And I said, "Do, please don't do this while I'm here. Don't talk to her like that. You know I love your daughter." And then she immediately just throws Casey under the bus. A proverbial turn, just lays her out there. "How do you want to be with somebody who's got no future? She didn't even go back to get her high school education. You know she's got a, she's got a job and place where she doesn't really even make enough money to support Caylee. I'm doing, I'm the one supporting Caylee." And just basically just threw her out there. Totally....

EE: Make....

JG: ...just threw her out there.

EE: Makes her feel like a failure in your eyes?

JG: Absolutely.

EE: (Sighs.) And that was a pretty common theme, and that was just one that sticks out in your mind or....

JG: Well, what...

EE: ...more of an isolated incident?

JG: What ended up happening with Casey and her mother was for the first, I would say for the first five to six months that we were together the second time, she constantly would tell me she doesn't want to end up like her mother. She wants to be a different person. Uhm, uh, she wants to change. And then they'd still be (unintelligible) and then she, I started seeing things like on her My Space, "I can't wait to be just like my mother when I grow up. I want to be just like her. I love her so much." She'd confide things in her. And that's when our relationship, her and I's relationship started going downhill at that point.

EE: Maybe if you can't beat them join them.

JG: Well, right.

EE: Hmm. Alright, well the 24th then is the big thing.

JG: Right.

EE: You can't say with a hundred percent certainty? Kind of like the 16th where you say you may have heard the child in the background?

JG: Correct.

EE: You don't know for sure?

JG: No.

EE: But you know you spoke with Casey?

JG: I know I spoke with Casey, yes.

EE: So she could have just as easily staged, "Get down off the table?"

JG: Very much, very much so.

EE: For you to hear?

JG: Very much so, yeah (affirmative).

EE: Raise your right hand for me? Do you swear the information you gave today is true?

JG: I swear.

EE: Freely given?

JG: Yes sir.

EE: Okay. 11:39 a.m., concludes this interview.

SIGNED BY CORPORAL WILLIAM EDWARDS, OCSO DEPUTY SHERIFF ON 8/19/08