



MICHAEL J. SATZ
STATE ATTORNEY
SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA
BROWARD COUNTY COURTHOUSE

201 SE SIXTH STREET, WEST WING SUITE 7130, FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301-3360

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST

Contact Ms Williams at (954) 831-7228 / PRrequests@sao17.state.fl.us

email
phone call/letter
closed
N/S

Requestor: ALEX ARREAZA
Company: THE ARREAZA LAW FIRM, LLC
Address: 320 W. OAKLAND PARK BLVD.
City, State, Zip: WILTON MANORS, FL - 33311
Email: ALEX@ALEXMYLAWYER.COM

Request Reference #: 14960
Phone: (954) 565-7713
Fax:
Date: 6/12/2020

Pursuant to Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, request is made for:

Request Type: COPIES Record Type: Public Records Request
Defendant: Watson, Jerrod CtNum: 16008459CF10A
Description: Copy of the Closeout Memo

YOU ARE ADVISED that the State Attorney's Office is not the custodian of the official court records. The records you have requested are only those in the custody of the State Attorney, subject to all legal exceptions and/or redactions. For a copy of the complete and official record and/certified copies, contact the office of Brenda Forman, Clerk of the Court, 17th Judicial Circuit of Florida, at (954) 831-6565

(For SAO use only)

Letter acknowledging request sent by RD Date 06/12/2020
Active Discovery provided by Date
Reviewed/Redacted by Date
Approved/Disapproved by ASA Date 6/17/2020
File unable to be located by Unit Date

See Notes/Exemptions/Redactions indicated below

Request Withdrawn--Date SAO has no record as requested
SAO record was destroyed per §119.021(2)(d), no fee - no redactions
Notes/Exemptions from Public Record Disclosure (For Reviewing ASA use only) under 33 pages

- Active internal affairs investigation => exempt, §112.533, FS; §655.057(1)(a), FS
Attorney notes are not Public Record and are never subject to disclosure confidential and exempt, Lopez v. State 696 So. 2d 725 (Fla. 1997); Valle v. State, 705 So.2d 1331(Fla. 1997); Arbelaez v. State, 775 So. 2d 909 (Fla.2000)
Confession by Defendant on active cases=> exempt, §119.071(2)(e), FS
Bank account numbers, debit, charge and credit account numbers and social security numbers=> exempt, §215.322(6)1, FS; §119.071(5)(a)(b), FS; §655.057, FS; §655.059, FS
Biometric ID Information=>exempt, §119.071(5)(g), FS
information revealing id of Confidential Informant or confidential source> exempt, §119.071(2)(f), FS
Defendant not entitled to free copy of file.> Roesch v. State, 633 So. 2d 1 (Fla. 1993)
Criminal History Data=> exempt, §943.0525, FS
Department of Corrections Records & Investigations=> exempt, §945.10, FS
Autopsy Photographs=> exempt, §406.135(1), FS
E.M.S. Reports=> exempt, §395.51, FS
Home Addresses, etc., of current or former prosecutors, law enforcement personnel, firefighters, judges and code inspectors=> exempt, §119.071(4)(d)2, FS
Traffic Crash Report exempt for 60 days after report is filed=>exempt, §316.066(5)(a), FS
Videotaped statement of minor victim of sexual battery=>exempt, §119.071(j)2.a., FS
DL and DMV records=>exempt, §119.071(2), FS
Photo/video/audio recording that depicts or records the killing of a human being>exempt, F.S. 406.136
Pharmacy Records=>exempt, §465.017(2)
Security video/surveillance=>exempt 281.301, F.S and/or F.S. 119.071(3)(a)
Mental Health records => exempt, §394.4615(1), FS; §456.057, FS
On active, pending cases, information not disclosed to defense in discovery> exempt, Satz v. Blankenship, 407 So. 2d 396 (Fla. 4DCA 1981); Tribune Co. v. Public Records, 493 So. 2d 480 (Fla. 2nd DCA\_1986)
Personal assets of crime victim=> exempt, §119.071(2)(i), FS
Personal victim information in cases of sexual offense, child abuse, lewd & lascivious offense=> exempt, §119.071(2)(h), FS; §794.024
Medical Records=> exempt, §395.3025(4), FS; §395.3025(8), FS; §456.057, FS
PSI, PTI, pre-plea, post-sentence investigative records=> exempt, §945.10(1)(b), FS
Reports of abuse of vulnerable adult=> exempt, §415.107, FS
Department of Children & Families Reports of child abuse> exempt, §39.0132(4)(a), FS; §39.202, FS
School records=> exempt, §1002.221, FS
Photograph of victim of sexual offense=> exempt, §119.071(2)(h)
Active criminal intelligence and investigative information=> exempt, §119.071(2)(e), FS
Identity of caller requesting or reporting "911" emergency=>exempt, §365.171(15), FS
Juvenile Records=>exempt, §985.04, FS
Drivers License digital imaging=> exempt, §322.142(4), FS
Telecommunications records=>exempt, §119.071(5)(d)
Other exemptions=>
Federal Tax Information=>exempt- 26 USC 6103
Witness to a murder- personal information ==>exempt §119. 071(2)(m), FS



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FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301-3360

PHONE (954) 831-6960

BELOW GUIDELINES PLEA MEMORANDUM

TO: FILE  
FROM: MARIA M. SCHNEIDER  
RE: STATE OF FLORIDA v JERROD WATSON  
CASE NO. 16-8459CF10A  
DATE: JUNE 9, 2020

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The above referenced case was resolved by way of negotiated disposition between ASA Amy Bloom and the defendant and his counsel Alex Arreaza, Esq. to an adjudication, 1 year and 1 day FSP to be followed by 10 years of probation on count 1, an 8 week anger management course, 500 hours of community service and the requirement that the defendant obtain employment within 90 days of release from custody.

Due to the recent dismissal of ASA Amy Bloom all cases assigned to Ms. Bloom while in the Ten-Twenty-Life Unit are currently being reviewed and this case was brought to my attention.

I have an independent recollection of this case as this case was filed in adult court as a result of qualifying as a "mandatory" direct file. The case was reviewed and the charging document prepared by then ASA David Jaroslav but I had final review and signed the Information. Thereafter the case was handled by the TTL Unit of which I was not then in charge.

Sometime in 2018 ASA Amy Bloom discussed the case with me. ASA Bloom was seeking approval to make a below guidelines offer due to the recantation of the victim in this case. I discussed the relative strengths and weaknesses of the case and authorized a plea below guidelines as a result of the case being made weaker due to what we believed to be a false recantation by the victim brought on by undue pressure.

ASA Bloom advised that the defense attorney had requested a non-prison sentence which the defendant was willing to accept. I authorized a plea involving a relatively long term of probation in the hope that with proper supervision and support he would refrain from further involvement in criminal activity so our community would be protected from harm and he would have an opportunity to mature and be reintegrated into the community successfully.

Some time after the plea was entered I received a close out memo from ASA Bloom which did not coincide with the facts and circumstances she and I discussed when evaluating the case and reaching the decision to make a below guidelines offer. As a result, I did not sign the memorandum. The memorandum was initialed on the first page as is required so that the CCU supervisor, whose duties include closing out TTL cases, could close it out in our system. The case needed to be closed out despite the close out memo not expressing the reasons for the departure accurately. It was my intent to have ASA Bloom amend her close out memo to accurately reflect the reasons we discussed for making such an offer. I must, however, take responsibility for neglecting to follow up with ASA Bloom and discussing her amending the close out memo to accurately characterize the strengths and weaknesses of the case and the reasons why the interests of justice required us to continue this prosecution as well as the rationale for exercising discretion in offering a reduced sentence. Once I initialed the memo the file was not returned to me and I did not follow up in retrieving it.

The abbreviated facts of this case are that on June 18, 2016 5 individuals were riding a white Jeep in the area of 1403 NW 27<sup>th</sup> Ave, in the city of Fort Lauderdale. A convenience store named Marshall Food Store is located there. A second group of individuals including Trayvon Newsome was standing in the area outside the store. As seen on

the store's video surveillance recording the while Jeep drove by more than once and it appears that words were exchanged between the occupants of the vehicle and the group standing in front of the store. At one point one of the people standing in front of the store throws what appears to be a stick at the vehicle. Some time later, the vehicle drives by again and people scatter and Trayvon Newsome is seen to fall to the ground. There is no sound on the store's video surveillance recordings but the actions appear consistent with shots being fired and Newsome being hit.

The police are called and begin to investigate. They are able to locate witnesses to the incident. The sworn statements contained in the file reveal as follows:

Mark Collins indicated he was hanging outside the store when a white Jeep drove by with a front seat passenger wearing a mask. He explained he knew 4 of the occupants of the vehicle and identified them Jerome Watson, "Nelson," "Johnny," someone named Rod or Rodrickson, and the shooter who had a white shirt covering his face. Collins advised the first time he saw the Jeep Rod was sitting in the front seat but when the vehicle came back around and shots were fired Nelson was driving, Johnny, Rod, and Jerome Watson were in the back seat and the shooter was in the front seat with the white shirt covering his face. He explained the groups had been talking "junk" to each other before the person in the front seat begin shooting and shot Treyvon Newsome. Collins was familiar with all the individuals from the neighborhood and had played football with Johnny.

The police took a statement from Ronald Boatwright who said he was standing outside the store with about 5 friends when 4 black males and a black female drove by in a white jeep. He recognized all the individuals in the Jeep and identified Jerome Watson, the defendant's cousin, as being in the left rear passenger seat, Nelson as being the driver, Johnny as being the right rear passenger and a black female named Tashii in the center of the back seat. He said the shooter was a black male possibly named Bruce. The vehicle drove by a couple of times before the shooting and words were exchanged and throwing of objects took place. Boatwright told the people in the car they wouldn't do anything because there were cameras at the store. Later, the vehicle returned and Boatwright observed the front seat passenger to be "masked up," with a white shirt wrapped around his face. The front seat passenger then fired multiple rounds at the people in front of the store. Boatwright says he tried to get the vehicle's tag when he saw the gun and heard shots fired but was unable to. Treyvon Newsome was shot and the Jeep sped off.

The police spoke to Johnny Johnson who said he too was standing out in front of the store when a white Jeep with five people in it drove by and had an altercation with them. He identified the car's occupants as Nelson who was the driver, the front passenger as the shooter who he could not identify because he had his face covered, Johnny in the back seat, a girl named Tashii in the middle and Jerome Watson, the defendant's cousin, behind the driver in the back seat. He saw the shooter extend his hand out of the car window and fire 4 rounds and then the vehicle drove away.

The victim, Trayvon Newsome was interviewed at the hospital. He was reportedly alert and able to speak coherently. He reported that around 6:00 p.m. on 6/18/16 he and friends were standing around in front of the food store when a white Jeep first drove by. Words were exchanged and someone threw a rock at the car and then the car came back and started shooting and he got shot. He indicated he knew the individuals in the car and identified Nelson as the driver, the front seat passenger and shooter as being Jerrod Watson, Jerome Watson as being behind Nelson and Johnny Mickwell as the other individual in the back seat. He also identified a black female named Tashii as being in the back seat in the middle. He advised he knew the shooter was Jerrod Watson because he recognized him when looked him in the eyes and he had seen him in the car before they drove back around to do the shooting. Newsome stated the occupants of the vehicle all remained in the same seats when they came back with Jerrod covering his face. Newsome indicated knew who Jerrod was and positively identified him. He and Jerrod and Jerome went to school together. Newsome identified the gun a silver and black semi automatic handgun. He said Jerrod never got out but just shot from the front passenger seat. He said Jerrod fired in the air 3 times and then pointed at him and fired. He was 100% sure that it was Jerrod Watson who shot him. He advised he wanted to press charges. Later, Mr. Newsome provided the detectives with photos he found on FaceBook of Jerrod Watson, of Tashii and of Johnny Mickwell. A doubleblind photo line up was also shown to him later and he identified Jerrod Watson as the individual in the front seat who shot at him.

Jerome Watson, the defendant's cousin, was interviewed and he advised he was in the white Jeep on the date of the incident with Jerrod, Johnny and Nelson but they later picked up someone named Bruce who was dropped off at the WinnDixie on 17<sup>th</sup> Street and then they picked up Johnny. He explained they all went by the food store and words

were exchanged with the people standing outside but he and Jerrod were thereafter dropped off at his grandmother's house and were not in the car at the time of the shooting.

Johnny Mickel was identified and interviewed. He denied ever being in the white Jeep or being present when anyone was shot.

Bruce was identified as Bruce Francis and interviewed. He denied being dropped off at work on the date of the incident and his employer confirmed he was at work from 5:00 p.m. until 12:01 a.m. that night.

The defendant was arrested and initially refused to speak to the police. Both the defendant's parents spoke to the police. The defendant's mother told the police the defendant had told his grandmother he was in the car at the time of the shooting but it was a guy named Quincy Sapp who did the shooting. The defendant's father told the police that the defendant had come to his house after the shooting and told him that he was in the car when the shooting occurred but a guy named Quincy had done the shooting.

After speaking to his parents, the defendant re-initiated the interview with the police and told the police he had been in a white 4 door Chevy SUV with J5 (Johnny) driving, Nelson sitting in the front passenger seat, and Jerome, himself and Tashii in the back seat. He said they drove by the store and saw the "Dillard Boys" there and they stopped and got into it. He said they left to pick up Q-dog whose real name he said was Quincy Sapp and drove back with a brick. He heard fire and the next thing he knows Q-dog who was in the front passenger seat must have fired. He did not see Q-dog with a gun, and he himself never had anything covering his face, but he (Jerrod) did have his head out the window talking trash when someone tried to hit him with a stick and so Q-dog "popped off." He saw the gun out the window and saw the victim go down. He denied going to his father's house after the incident. He also added that Quincy did wear a mask or shirt over his face.

Detectives identified and interviewed Quincy Sapp. He denied being in the white Jeep at all, denied being part of the shooting and said he was in Orlando on the day the incident occurred. Quincy was on probation and his probation officer confirmed that his mother had requested permission for Quincy to travel with her from 6/17 to 6/20. The permission, however, was given for him to travel to Georgia with his mother not to Orlando. The detectives took a statement from Octavia Wright, Quincy Sapp's mother. She explained she had requested permission for Quincy to travel to Georgia with her but she ended up going alone and leaving him in Broward County with his aunt. She did not know where he was while she was gone. Quincy adamantly denied being in Broward or having anything to do with the shooting and voluntarily provided a DNA sample.

Detectives spoke to the victim, Trayvon Newsome about whether it could have been Quincy who shot him and he said he knew Quincy and he was positive it was not Quincy who shot him and he never saw Quincy in the car.

As the case progressed, Trayvon Newsome changed his mind about prosecuting. Newsome contacted the lead detective in this case and advised him he was no longer sure it was the defendant who shot him and did not want to prosecute him. The detective included this in a supplemental police report which was provided to the defense along with a Notice Pursuant to Rule 3.220(b)(4) which also summarized Newsome's recantation of his original positive identifications. This notice was filed on May 8, 2017.

Some time in early 2018 ASA Bloom met with me and explained the facts and circumstances of the case and the unfolding prosecution. Trayvon Newsome's original statements were unequivocal and clearly not influenced by anyone else or what anyone else would have had to say as he was isolated in the hospital while the initial investigation was taking place. His statements and information provided was detailed and consistent with the testimony of the other eyewitnesses. It appeared to us that Newsome's change of heart was not based on the facts.

The defendant's cousin's version of events was inconsistent with everyone else's version of events including the defendant's. The defendant had admitted he was in the car at the time of the shooting. He said he was in the back seat, passenger side which is contradicted by all the other witnesses. The defendant said that at the time of the shooting he was sticking his head out the rear passenger side window yelling when the shots were fired from the front passenger widow but he surveillance video shows that no one had their head sticking out any window before or during the shooting. Everyone else in the vehicle can be identified by the other witnesses to the offense as someone other than the defendant. The only person in the vehicle not identified by the bystanders is the shooter who had his

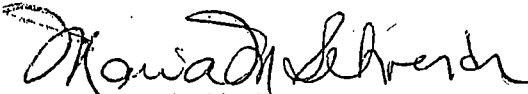
face partially covered. Circumstantially then, since the defendant admits he was in the vehicle, he had to have been the person whose face was covered.

The circumstantial evidence, the defendant's admission, the contradictions in the defendant's cousin's testimony and even between the defendant and his father's testimony (the father said the defendant came to his home after the shooting and told him about it, the defendant denies going to his father's home after the shooting) and the fact that the recantation was less than believable provided us with a good faith basis for continuing with the prosecution. But, realistically, the case was weakened by the victim's equivocation.

ASA Bloom advised the defense was aware of the weaknesses in the State's case and would therefore not engage in negotiating any resolution that included prison time. I therefore agreed to have ASA Bloom tender a below guidelines offer.

Just prior to the case being resolved ASA Bloom prepared a detailed affidavit describing all the information Newsome had provided, that he no longer wished to prosecute because he was unsure who shot him and advising he was not in fear of the defendant and requested that Mr. Newsome sign it. Mr. Newsome did.

Given the fact that it is always difficult to proceed without a victim's full support, the youth of the defendant and the possibility that this experience would cause him to change his path we opted for making an offer of minimal prison time and placed him on a long period of probation. Ms. Bloom's close out memorandum was not signed by me because it did not accurately reflect the facts nor the reasons for offering the extremely lenient plea.



Maria M. Schneider, Esq.  
Assistant State Attorney in Charge  
Felony Trial Unit



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**STATE ATTORNEY**  
 SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA  
 BROWARD COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
 201 S.E. SIXTH STREET  
 FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301-3360



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** FILE

**DATE:** MAY 17, 2018

**RE:** STATE OF FLORIDA V. JERROD WATSON  
 CASE NO.: 16-8459CF10A  
 JUDGE: BAILEY  
 CHARGE: ATTEMPT MURDER.  
 DISCHARGE FIREARM FROM VEHICLE

11/30/18

Jerrod Watson was arrested for two counts of burglary of a dwelling and Grand theft. He was arrested, posted bond and released. Months later he was arrested again for attempted murder and discharging a firearm from a vehicle. Both cases went to the 10-20-life unit to be resolved. The undersigned intended to go to trial on the burglary charge since it was a solid case with DNA and great evidence as opposed to the attempted murder where the evidence was severely lacking, there was an abundance of reasonable doubt, and the victim was not cooperative.

The defense was aware of the quality of the states attempted murder case and asked the judge if he would enter into an open plea with the defendant on the burglary. The burglary case was the states leverage. The judge entertained the idea of an open plea and ultimately sentenced the defendant on the burglary case as a youthful offender to two years community control followed by four years of probation. The attempted of murder case remained and the judge wanted to set it for trial. There was no reasonable likelihood of conviction if this case went to trial. The only person who identified the defendant, who was concealing his face with a shirt was the victim. The defendant give a statement that he wasn't even in the vehicle at the time and not present and therefore not the correct suspect. He put the blame on his cousin instead and nobody else said otherwise.

When the undersigned spoke with the victim, the victim adamantly said he did not know who shot him. He said the only reason he named the defendant was because he heard his name and believed it was him. Despite giving a statement, producing a Facebook photo of the defendant, and picking him out of a photo lineup, the victim says at this point in time he is sure that he doesn't know who shot him and he will not testify in court that it was the defendant. The undersigned drafted an affidavit detailing all the information of the case and the fact that the victim was now re-canting and completely changing his story and no longer cooperative. The victim came into the undersigned office and stated that he wanted the charges dropped, he would not testify and he signed the affidavit.

Without the victim, the state could not proceed. There is no physical evidence, no firearm, no surveillance showing the suspect and no admissions or statements from other witnesses. The state asked the defense attorney if they would consider a below guidelines offer in the attempted murder case and they stated they would take anything other than prison. Rather than losing the entire case, the undersigned, with the approval of Maria Schneider, made an offer to the defendant whereby he would still be adjudicated guilty on the charges as originally brought. The sentence was an adjudication as charged, one year and one day in prison although he had credit for all his time but he would still get assigned a prison number, in the event he picks up another violent felony, 10 years of probation, 500

but there is circumstantial evidence & his admission

not necessary

hours of community service, no contact or weapons, he must be gainfully employed within 90 days of his release and complete an eight week anger management course. The defendant at the time was a juvenile and had no priors other than the two cases pending in court. Given the facts and circumstances of the case, it would have been a greater loss of a not guilty at trial, therefore, the state felt it was better to secure a conviction and have the defendant supervised for 10 years with the crime on his record since the undersigned did believe that he was the correct suspect and did in fact commit this crime although we would have a tough time proving it.



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AMY L. BLOOM, ESQ.  
Assistant State Attorney

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Supervising Assistant State Attorney