
Monthly News and Commentary from ICJE

1 message

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Thu, Jun 9, 2022 at 8:56 PM

June 2022



Why Am I Being Led Down This Rabbit Hole?

I was sound asleep, when for some reason I woke up, and the clock showed 3:34 AM. It was Memorial Day weekend, and I was looking forward to a restful night to start the holiday. It wasn't to be. I couldn't get back to sleep so I did what they tell you not to do, I picked up my phone and started reading the news sites.

One article had thumbnail photos of the front pages from the last 20, 30, 40, and 50 year increments. I scrolled right past most of them, until the "50 years ago front page caught my eye. In bold print it read "Woman Doctor Found Dead in Her Home/Office". The story was replete with details about who was found dead and comments from neighbors, but nothing about any suspects.

So I couldn't go back to sleep without knowing if the case had been solved all those years before. I began looking down the rabbit hole.

I found that the adopted daughter had been arrested for the murder, and she had graduated from the same high school and college as my wife and I. Although she graduated 13 or 14 years before, I was curious why I had never heard of the story.

I kept digging, the daughter was convicted, sentenced to life but was paroled after 15 years in the state penitentiary. She went to work for Nationwide Insurance, where she was respected and well liked by all her coworkers, who most likely didn't know her earlier life story.

She retired in 2012. She moved into a retirement community, and not long after, took her life.

I read the obituary and something just didn't seem right. I kept digging. One of the comments on the tribute page was from a man from California who said the deceased was a close friend and he would miss her.

Turns out he also used to live in Cincinnati, and had lived a block from my wife when she was a child. She and I went sled riding on his family's 2 acre hillside, an open invitation from the owners we did not know then, and whom I just connected to through a 4 AM Google search.

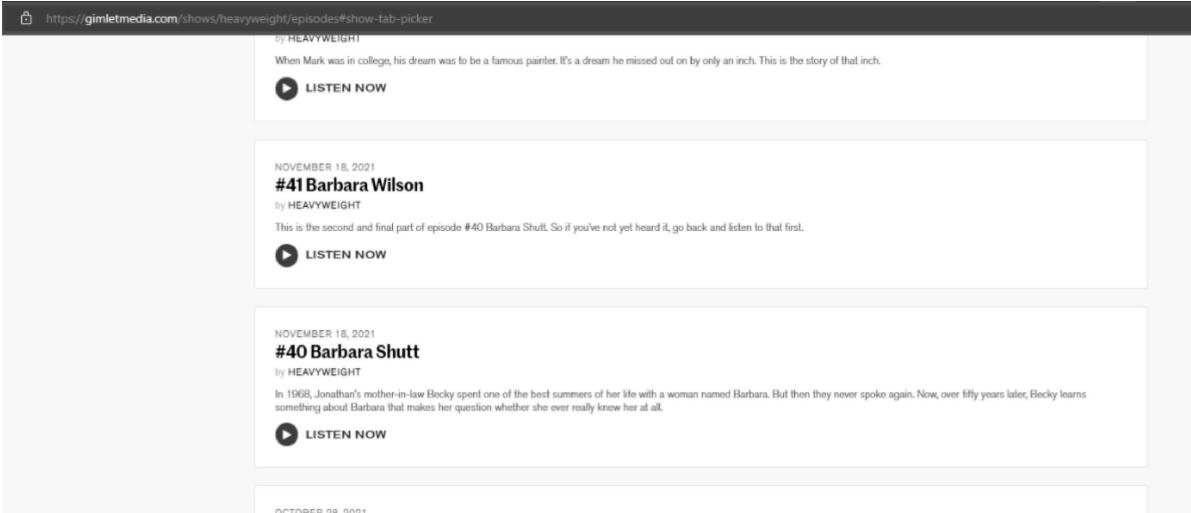
It turns out he had been a defense witness at her trial in 1969. He was also a former fiancé. In an interview in October 2021 he was contacted by a podcast journalist, He confessed that his testimony was solicited by the defense attorney who suggested he testify that he "may have" killed the adopted mother of his friend by just taking the stand and saying he had been in the area (not perjury because he didn't live that far from the crime scene) and then take the Fifth when asked if he killed the deceased.

It didn't work and his friend and former fiancé was convicted. He said there was a lot more to the story than anyone knows. I started the process to find his contact information this week, when I found that he died in December 2021. He had lived a full life as a respected professor, and researcher in California. But he died with a lingering secret!

I had to get back to sleep, but the hunt for the secret is on. I don't know exactly why!

PS: If you are interested in the podcast it is Heavyweight on Spotify, episodes 40 and 41 entitled Barbara Shutt and Barbara Wilson. I think you'll find them interesting even if you didn't sled ride on the family hillside.

Episodes | Heavyweight (gimletmedia.com)



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://gimletmedia.com/shows/heavyweight/episodes#show-tab-picker>. The page displays three episode cards for the podcast 'HEAVYWEIGHT'. Each card includes a 'LISTEN NOW' button with a play icon. The first card is for episode #41, 'Barbara Wilson', dated November 18, 2021, with a short description: 'When Mark was in college, his dream was to be a famous painter. It's a dream he missed out on by only an inch. This is the story of that inch.' The second card is for episode #40, 'Barbara Shutt', also dated November 18, 2021, with a description: 'In 1968, Jonathan's mother-in-law Becky spent one of the best summers of her life with a woman named Barbara. But then they never spoke again. Now, over fifty years later, Becky learns something about Barbara that makes her question whether she ever really knew her at all.' The third card is partially visible, dated October 28, 2021.

Best regards,

Jim Rechel, Newsletter Editor
ICJE, Inc.
jimrechel@icje.org

Please feel free to email comments or suggestions. Thanks, Jim

Media Bias is a Cancer to an Orderly Society

On Memorial Day one North Carolina Trooper found himself in a no-win after making a traffic stop for a seat belt violation. As the Trooper asked the driver for his license and registration, the driver pulled a gun, and the passenger opened his door.

The officer took cover behind the pickup truck as the driver continued to exit with his weapon in hand. The Trooper shot once, ultimately mortally wounding the armed driver. The passenger fled on foot.

My issue is that more often than not, reporters "slip in" descriptions that are not accurate even though elsewhere in the reporting they include more details

The line highlighted in yellow illustrates the point.

Excerpt from article on the incident by Raleigh News and Observer:

On May 30, about 4:35 p.m., Trooper Rodney N. Cook, 41, shot Diaz once, but fatally, after stopping him for a seatbelt violation.

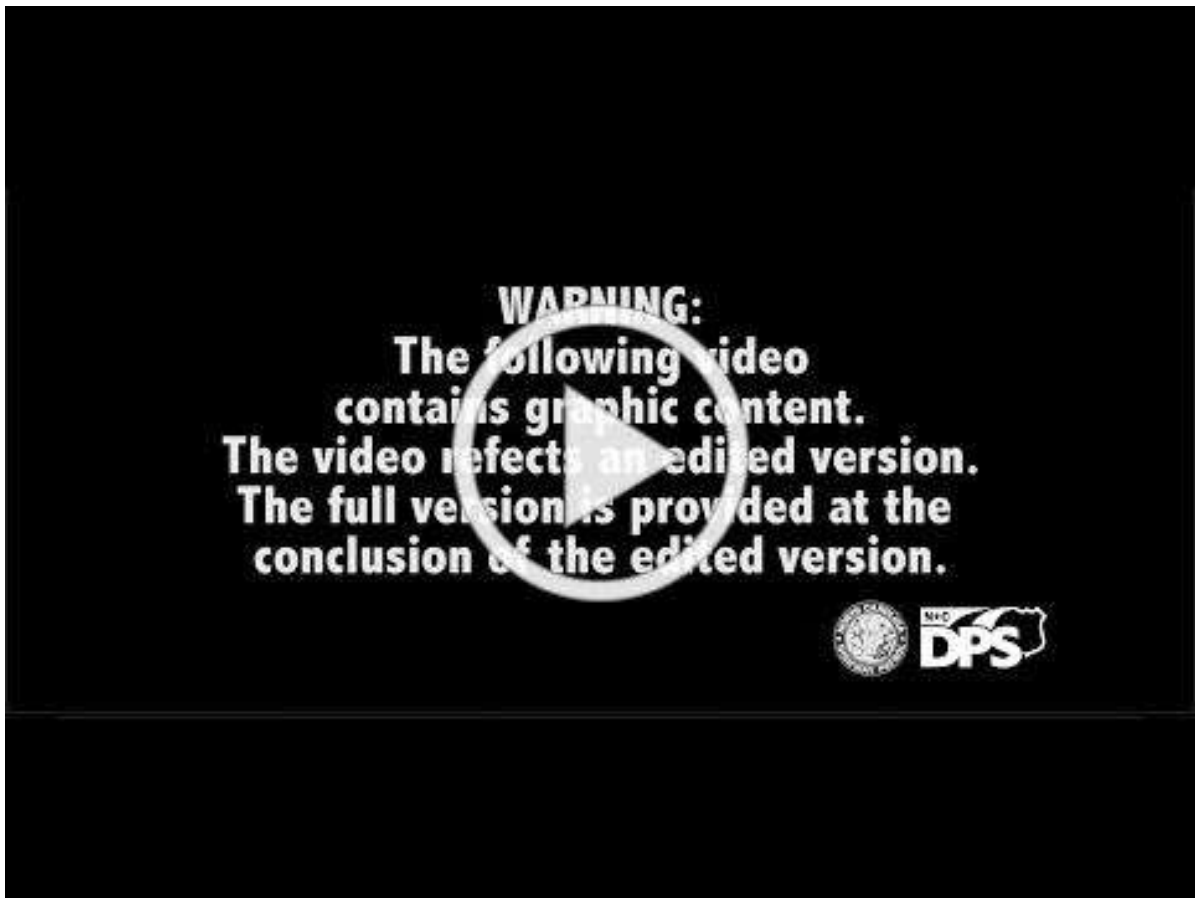
(MY COMMENTARY: he was not shot "after stopping him for a seatbelt violation"! He was shot because he pulled a gun on the trooper after being stopped for a seatbelt violation!) The article continues below:

The shooting occurred in a neighborhood off of U.S. 64 moments after Diaz pulled out a pistol when Cook asked him to step out of the vehicle.

Dashboard camera footage of the Chatham County shooting released Tuesday shows the brief interactions between Cook and Diaz that preceded Cook retreating to his vehicle. Diaz is then seen stepping out of the truck with a gun in his left hand. Cook quickly unholstered his gun and fired.

The car, which remained in drive when Diaz stepped out, rolled forward and crashed into a parked car, according to the video, prompting a passenger to sprint out of the car and away from the scene. The video showed Cook approaching Diaz with his weapon drawn, instructing him to let go of the gun. He manually disarmed Diaz while he was still on the ground and began providing CPR.

Read more at: <https://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/crime/article262203607.html#storylink=cpy>



Follow up stories continued to "shade" the facts, for example a later article led with **"So Troubling"** leading the reader to wonder if the Troopers actions or the armed driver were troubling. The headline could have read: **"So Troubling: Brother Pulled Gun on Trooper. 21-year old fatally shot by trooper is mourned by brother, teacher"**

The News & Observer

Local News Business Triangle Now Sports Living Jobs/Recruiting Personal Finance

CRIME

'So troubling.' 21-year-old fatally shot by trooper is mourned by brother, teacher

BY AARON SÁNCHEZ-GUERRA

UPDATED JUNE 07, 2022 7:18 PM



Leadership

From the Leadership Group (theleadershipgroup.com)

Demonstrating leadership courage can be scary. It can be uncomfortable to admit you don't have all the answers, initiate crucial conversations or make unpopular decisions. In order to model courage and inspire courage in others, leaders must demonstrate what Susan Tardanico (Forbes.com, 2013) calls "10 Traits of Courageous Leaders":

1. **Confront reality head-on.**
2. Seek feedback and listen.
3. **Say what needs to be said.**
4. Encourage push-back.
5. Take action on performance issues.
6. Communicate openly and frequently.
7. Lead change from the front.
8. Make decisions and move forward.
9. Give credit to others.
10. Hold people (and yourself) accountable.

Sgt. John Young (Mobile PD) Demonstrates True Meaning of Leadership



“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at moments of challenge and controversy.” — Martin Luther King Jr

Discipline, Humility, Courage

From Impact USA (www.impactthepace.com)

There are many attributes that define a leader, but three of the most important are:

Discipline – We do what we say.

Humility – We take ownership & we are never too big to do the small things that need to be done.

Courage – We are comfortable being uncomfortable.

Editor's Commentary

Do we as a society, and as individuals have the courage Sgt. Young demonstrated to address the sub-culture of violence that is impacting many cities in Alabama and elsewhere across the United States?

He has laid down a marker that identifies the problem, now what can be done to solve the problem. It has less to do with guns, and everything to do with the mindset developed in young black men that "picking up a gun" is the answer to disputes.

We are spitting in the wind until we can honestly speak about the issues as Sgt. Young did. May God lead us all to solutions that save lives and instill in all that every life has value.

Additions to ICJE Board



Andre Mitchell - Board Member

Serves as the BCJ Director for Faulkner University's Criminal Justice/Legal Studies Department

Serves as an Assistant Professor for Faulkner University's Criminal Justice/Legal Studies Department

Former Director of Operations for Central Alabama Crime Stoppers

Commander of the Major Crimes Bureau for the

Montgomery Police Department (Retired)

Holds a Bachelor of Administration from the American Military University

Holds a Master of Justice Administration from Faulkner University

Currently pursuing a Doctoral Degree in Criminal Justice with a concentration in Leadership from Liberty University

Avery Morris - Board Member

Serves as Operations Commander for the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency's SBI - CJIS Division

Former Chief of Police for Alexander City, Alabama



U.S. Army CID Special Agent (Retired)
Holds a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice from the
University of Alabama
Former Alabama Representative & Proxy to the Board
of Directors for ROCIC



Staying Safe in an Unsafe World - Dr. R. Thetford

Over the past 4 months we featured articles written by Dr. Robert Thetford on various topics related to personal safety matters.

He has graciously compiled them into one pdf and is available at the following link:

[StayingSafe.pdf \(icje.org\)](#)

Training Information from ICJE Website

[Visit the ICJE Website](#)

June 23, 2022 - U.S Attorney MDofA Trial Preparation and Testimony - Andalusia

August 1-5, 2022 - FBI LEEDA Supervisor Leadership Institute - Fultondale

August 22-26, 2022 - FBI LEEDA Managing & Conducting Internal Affairs Investigations - Huntsville, Alabama

August 31-September 2, 2022 - 2022 LECC Conference - Orange Beach, Alabama

September 26-30, 2022 - FBI LEEDA Media and Public Relations - Decatur,

October 27, 2022 - 2022 Alabama Attorney General's Law Enforcement Summit - Montgomery, Alabama

November 14-18, 2022 - FBI LEEDA Command Leadership Institute-Fultondale

January 9-13, 2023 - FBI LEEDA Supervisor Leadership Institute - Columbiana,
February 27-March 3, 2023 - FBI LEEDA Executive Leadership Institute Fultondale,
March 13-17, 2023 - FBI LEEDA Command Leadership Institute - Columbiana
May 15-19, 2023 - FBI LEEDA Executive Leadership Institute - Columbiana,

Other Training Opportunities:

AUM Continuing Education and Community Engagement

FEMA Emergency Management Institute

APOST Law Enforcement Training Academy - Tuscaloosa

Jefferson County Sheriff's Department Training Center

Northeast Alabama Law Enforcement Academy

Ozark Police Department Training Division

University of North Alabama Public Safety Institute

[Link to Visit the ICJE Website for Registration and More Dates](#)

Thought of the Month

“People are not really expressing enough love anymore. It’s at the center of what we do.” - Gees Bend Quilter -Essie Pettway, Gees Bend, Alabama

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