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NORTH CAROLINA
GUILFORD COUNTY

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE
SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION
FILE NO. 97 CrS 23654
FILE NO. 97 CrS 39580
FILE NO. 98 CrS 23485

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA)
)
 v.)
)
RONNIE LEE KIMBLE)

T R A N S C R I P T

Transcript of proceedings taken in the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division, Guilford County, North Carolina, August 3, 1998 Regular Criminal Session, before the Honorable Preston Cornelius, Judge Presiding.

A P P E A R A N C E S

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Official Superior Court Reporter
Eighteenth Judicial District
Greensboro, North Carolina 27402

1 May the 17th of 1998; is that correct?

2 A Yes, sir, it is.

3 Q Prior to occupying your position, reverend, where --

4 MR. HATFIELD: Object to him calling him a
5 reverend.

6 THE COURT: Well, he's an ordained minister. Is
7 that --

8 Do you have the title of reverend, sir?

9 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir, I do.

10 THE COURT: Overruled.

11 Q Where did you -- where were you, sir? Let me restate
12 that. Prior to working where you are now a minister, where
13 were you living?

14 A In Lynchburg, Virginia.

15 Q And what period of time were you living in Lynchburg,
16 Virginia?

17 A I was living in Lynchburg from the 19th of August, in
18 '96, I believe. Then I left, went down to Florida for a
19 period of about six months.

20 Q Okay.

21 A And then came back to Lynchburg, Virginia, until about
22 four months ago.

23 Q And you were going through a training in Lynchburg,
24 Virginia; is that right?

25 A Yes, sir.

1 Q And what facility or institution was that?

2 A Liberty Bible Institute.

3 Q And your specific area of study was?

4 A Pastoral studies.

5 Q Now, going back before August of '96, when you moved to
6 Lynchburg, where were you living?

7 A I was living in Jacksonville, North Carolina.

8 Q And what were your -- were you employed there?

9 A Yes, sir.

10 Q And where were you employed?

11 A I was employed at the U.S. Marines, Camp Lejeune.

12 Q Now, what was your specialty in the Marine Corps?

13 A I was in the infantry.

14 Q And you had a four-year commitment; is that correct?

15 A Yes, sir.

16 Q Did there come a time near the end of your four-year
17 commitment when you changed your specialty or you were
18 transferred to another unit?

19 A Yes, sir. I was transferred to another unit, at my
20 request, to learn more about the chaplain program, as a
21 chaplain's assistant.

22 Q And I believe you stated the last six months in the
23 Marine Corps, you were a chaplain's assistant?

24 A Yes, sir.

25 Q Were you assigned to a specific facility as a

1 chaplain's assistant?

2 A Yes, sir, I was. I was assigned to Courthouse Bay.

3 Q Courthouse Bay? What is Courthouse Bay?

4 A It is a section on Camp Lejeune devoted to the training
5 of young Marines at a chapel.

6 Q And you were actually assigned to work in the chapel?

7 A Yes, sir.

8 Q And what were your duties there at the chapel?

9 A Mostly clerical.

10 Q Now, during the period of time that you were in the --
11 acting as an assistant in the chaplain's corps, did you meet
12 Ronnie Kimble?

13 A Yes, sir, I did, shortly after I was there.

14 Q Would you explain how you came in contact with Mr.
15 Kimble.

16 A He would deliver supplies to Courthouse Bay, because he
17 was the supply clerk.

18 Q Was he also an enlisted Marine?

19 A Yes, sir.

20 Q And how frequently did you see Mr. Ronnie Kimble?

21 A On the average, once to twice a week.

22 Q And that would have been for the full four or five
23 months that you knew him?

24 A Yes, sir.

25 Q Did you and Mr. Ronnie Kimble develop a friendship?

1 A Yes, sir.

2 Q Could you explain the nature of your friendship.

3 A He would come out to Courthouse Bay, and we had extra
4 time, because it was a long drive out there for him, so we
5 would sit down and talk. And occasionally, we would shoot
6 pool in the back room, while we were waiting, because it was
7 about lunchtime when he would normally come out.

8 Q So there was a pool table in the chapel facilities?

9 A Yes, sir. In the back room, there was a recreational
10 facility in the back of the chapel.

11 Q During the period of time that you knew him as a friend
12 in the Marine Corps, did he ever discuss with you the fact
13 that his sister-in-law, Patricia Kimble, had been killed?

14 A Yes, sir, he did.

15 Q And what did he tell you?

16 A Told me that his sister-in-law had been brutally
17 murdered.

18 Q Did he give you any further facts?

19 A Yes, sir. He told me that his brother was under
20 investigation, that his brother did not do it, and that the
21 police were pressuring him, to get to his brother.

22 Q Did he give you specific facts about the crime itself?

23 A Yes, sir, he did. He told me that there was some sort
24 of tool chest moved during the crime. He told me this, to
25 -- he expressed that he was trying to figure out who did it,

1 and that he was going over the facts in his mind, that there
2 was some large tool chest that was moved, and that his --
3 that his car was seen near the crime scene, but that he had
4 a gas receipt for getting gas at a gas station across town.

5 Q And on how many occasions approximately did you and he
6 discuss this?

7 A Estimated three to four.

8 Q You then left the Marine Corps in, I believe you said,
9 August of 1996?

10 A Yes, sir.

11 Q And you moved to Lynchburg?

12 A Yes, sir.

13 Q After you left the Marine Corps and moved to Lynchburg,
14 did you have any further contact with Ronnie Kimble?

15 A Yes, sir, I did. He called me sometime later and
16 expressed interest in going into the ministry, and interest
17 in the school that I was attending at that time.

18 Q And did you speak to him on the telephone?

19 A Yes, sir, I did.

20 Q What did you speak to him about on the telephone?

21 A His coming up to visit the facilities at Liberty
22 University and to visit us, to see if he wanted to attend
23 that school.

24 Q When you say "visit us," who are you referring to?

25 A My wife and I.

1 Q Did your wife know Ronnie Kimble?

2 A No.

3 Q Did your wife know who Ronnie Kimble was?

4 A Yes, sir.

5 Q Did you know Ronnie Kimble's wife?

6 A Not at that time.

7 Q What, if any, plans were made on the telephone for him
8 to come and visit you?

9 A He planned to come up and visit at a later date, when
10 he would have time of leave from the Marine Corps.

11 Q And on January the 24th, did he -- of 1997, did he in
12 fact come to visit you?

13 A Yes, he did.

14 Q Had you supplied him with your address and directions
15 to get to your home on the telephone?

16 A Yes, sir, I had. Actually, I met him at the campus,
17 because it was easier to find.

18 Q And was that meeting arranged on the telephone?

19 A Yes, sir, it was.

20 Q And do you remember where you met him at the campus?

21 A Yes, sir. I met him in the parking lot entering the
22 campus.

23 Q And after you met him, did you then -- or where did you
24 take him?

25 A He followed us to our house.

1 MR. LLOYD: Excuse me. I didn't hear the last
2 part of that answer.

3 THE WITNESS: He followed us to our house.

4 Q And when you say "us," again, you're referring to you
5 and your wife?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And who was with him?

8 A His wife.

9 Q And what was the purpose of their visit there in
10 Lynchburg?

11 A To investigate the school, to see if he would want to
12 attend it.

13 Q Now, on January the 24th, and going into the 25th of
14 1997, did he stay at your home?

15 A Yes, sir, he did.

16 Q And did you have dinner there at home?

17 A No, sir. We went out to eat.

18 Q And when you went out to dinner, what was the -- Well,
19 let me ask you this. When you went to dinner, did the
20 conversation turn to Ronnie coming to Liberty University?

21 A Yes, it did.

22 Q Would you tell the Court about that conversation.

23 A He had expressed interest in coming to Liberty
24 University and expressed interest in being in the ministry.
25 I then told him that he should come and sit through a class

1 with me, to see how he liked the school. And then he said
2 he wanted to, but his past was haunting him, and he had some
3 things in his past that may prevent him from being in the
4 ministry.

5 Q Where were you, when he said these things about his
6 past haunting him?

7 A Sitting at the dinner table.

8 Q Who else was present?

9 A My wife and his wife.

10 Q After dinner, did you have a further conversation with
11 him?

12 A Yes, I did.

13 Q Where did that take place?

14 A In the car on the way home.

15 Q Would you tell the Court about that, please.

16 A In the car on the way home, he told me that he needed
17 to talk to me when we got home, he had some things he needed
18 to discuss with me, and that he had had some struggles in
19 the past.

20 Q When he said "struggles," did he elaborate on what that
21 meant?

22 A Yes. He said that he had struggled with pornography in
23 the past, and that he also had other things he wanted to
24 talk to me about.

25 Q And all this was in the context of whether or not he

1 should come to train as a minister?

2 A Yes, sir.

3 Q Did the conversation continue?

4 A Yes, sir, it did.

5 Q And where did it continue?

6 A At my house.

7 Q And who was present at that continued conversation?

8 A Ronnie Kimble and I.

9 Q And what, if anything, did Ronnie tell you?

10 A Ronnie then told me that he had killed his sister-in-
11 law.

12 Q Do you remember what he told you about that?

13 A He told me that he had killed his sister-in-law. I
14 then asked him why he did it. He expressed to me that he
15 did it purely out of greed, and that his brother was going
16 to pay him to do it.

17 Q Did he say anything else to you?

18 A It's hard to recollect the entire conversation. That
19 was the basic thought of it.

20 Q After he told you this, what, if anything, did you say
21 to him?

22 A He told me that he was -- he told me that he was
23 thinking of killing his self, and he asked me if a person
24 would go to hell for killing their selves. I told him that
25 I did not think a person would go to hell for killing their

1 self, but that he should not have thoughts like that and he
2 should not think of that.

3 He then told me that he wanted -- he wanted to know
4 what to do with the money, and he asked me if I would do
5 something with it, if I would put it to use in God's work.
6 I told him that it was blood money and that he should not
7 tell me anything any further, but that he should turn his
8 self in.

9 Q When he mentioned the money, did he indicate where the
10 money was coming from?

11 A His brother.

12 Q And did he indicate where his brother was getting the
13 money from?

14 A No, he didn't.

15 Q Did he indicate whether or not he had received the
16 money?

17 A Yes, sir. He said he hadn't received it yet.

18 Q Did you have any discussion about whether or not he
19 would remain in your home?

20 A Yes, sir, we did. He asked me if I thought any less of
21 him. I told him I did not know what to think. And then he
22 asked me if he -- if I wanted him to leave. I told him that
23 I thought it would be best if he left. We then agreed -- I
24 did not want to upset him any further, so we agreed that he
25 could stay the night, as long as he left first thing in the

1 morning.

2 Q You said you didn't want to upset who, please?

3 A Ronnie Kimble.

4 Q And why was that?

5 A I didn't feel he was upset with me at that time, but in
6 light of the fact that he was a murderer, I was afraid for
7 my life and the life of my family. That's why I didn't want
8 to upset him.

9 Q Did you have a discussion about whether he should leave
10 and when he should leave?

11 A Yes, sir, we did.

12 Q Do you remember what was said?

13 A Yes, sir. We discussed him leaving that night, but
14 that he would need a good excuse, so that his wife would not
15 get suspicious as to why they were leaving. So we then
16 looked at the weather, and the weather did not look like
17 there was any reason where he would have to leave that
18 night, so we decided that he could stay till the morning,
19 provided he left in the morning.

20 Q And the reason that he didn't want to leave at that
21 time was, he didn't want to explain the leaving to his wife?

22 A Yes, sir.

23 Q The next day -- Or excuse me. What happened after
24 that?

25 A After that, we all went to bed. And I laid awake all

1 night. The next morning, Ronnie Kimble left, and my wife
2 knew something was wrong with me, because of the way I was
3 acting. It made me literally sick. She then asked me if he
4 killed his sister-in-law, and I told her yes, and that I
5 would have to turn him in.

6 Q After you -- Excuse me. After Ronnie Kimble left your
7 house, what did you do?

8 A I called a relative that I knew had a handgun, and
9 asked them if they would bring that to me, if I had to
10 defend myself, because I was very shook up. I then went and
11 talked with a close confidant, that was my pastor at the
12 time, and he advised me to speak with a lawyer, in regards
13 to my legal obligations when someone tells you something of
14 that nature.

15 Q And did you in fact speak to a lawyer or lawyers in
16 Lynchburg, Virginia?

17 A Yes, sir, I did.

18 Q And based upon their advice, did you at a later time
19 contact the Greensboro Police Department?

20 A Yes, sir, I did.

21 Q I'm sorry. The Guilford County Sheriff's Department?

22 A Yes, sir, I did.

23 Q And did there come a time when you were interviewed by
24 Special Agent Pendergrass of the State Bureau of
25 Investigation, and by Detective Church of the Guilford

1 County Sheriff's Department?

2 A Yes, sir.

3 Q And where did that take place?

4 A That took place in the lawyer's office.

5 Q Now, before actually being interviewed by Pendergrass
6 and Church, did you have further contact with the defendant,
7 Ronnie Kimble?

8 A No, I did not, before the first interview.

9 Q Okay. Did there come a time when you went to Camp
10 Lejeune?

11 A Yes, sir, I did.

12 Q Would you explain how and when you went to Camp
13 Lejeune.

14 A After I spoke with the lawyers, I went down to Camp
15 Lejeune to try to convince Ronnie Kimble to turn his self in
16 one more time.

17 Q And did you meet him in Camp Lejeune?

18 A Yes, sir, I did.

19 Q And I believe that you have saved a parking sticker
20 from your trip there; is that correct?

21 A Yes, sir.

22 Q And that would have been dated on the 28th of January;
23 is that correct?

24 A Yes, sir.

25 Q When you spoke to Ronnie Kimble on or about the 28th of

1 January, what did he say to you?

2 A He told me that he's not sure if he even did it, and
3 that maybe it was just a bad dream.

4 Q Did he say anything else?

5 A He told me that he believed that it was his sister-in-
6 law's time to go, because he believed that no one could die
7 before their time, no matter who did it.

8 Q And did you say anything to him?

9 A I let him know that I had talked with lawyers about my
10 legal obligation.

11 Q Did you say that to him before or after he said it
12 might have just been a bad dream?

13 A After.

14 Q Did you say anything else to him?

15 A Yes. I tried to convince him to turn his self in one
16 more time, and tried to convince him not to consider killing
17 his self anymore.

18 Q Do you remember what he told you?

19 A He told me that he would die before he went to jail,
20 because he didn't want to get the electric chair.

21 Q Did there come a time when you offered to have further
22 conversations with him?

23 A He expressed interest that he might want to call me. I
24 suggested that he not.

25 Q And what did you say to him and what did he respond?

1 A I don't recall.

2 MR. HATFIELD: I couldn't hear what you said.

3 THE COURT: He doesn't recall.

4 Repeat your answer again, please.

5 THE WITNESS: I do not recall.

6 (Mr. Panosh showed an exhibit to Mr. Lloyd. Mr. Panosh and
7 Mr. Lloyd conferred.)

8 MR. PANOSH: May I approach?

9 (Mr. Panosh showed an exhibit to the Court.)

10 Q I'm going to show you now what's been marked as Voir
11 Dire Number 1. Do you recall giving that statement to
12 Agents Pendergrass and Church while you were in your
13 attorney's office in Lynchburg, Virginia?

14 A Yes, sir, I do.

15 Q And have you had a chance to read that and review it?

16 A Yes, sir, I have.

17 Q And is that accurate?

18 A Yes, sir, it is.

19 Q Drawing your attention to Page 2, at the bottom
20 paragraph there, I believe you said that Ronnie asked you if
21 you would take the money, and asked if it could be used for
22 God's work; is that correct?

23 A Yes, sir.

24 Q And do you remember what you told him?

25 A Yes, sir. I told him that it was blood money, and that

1 that idea was crazy, and that he needed to turn his self in.

2 Q And then drawing your attention to Page 4, when he
3 told you that he thought it might have been a bad dream,
4 there in the first paragraph, do you remember what you told
5 him?

6 A Yes, sir. I told him that if his brother gave him some
7 money, that he would know that he did it and that it was not
8 a bad dream.

9 Q And going back to the very first page there -- or
10 excuse me, the second page, in the third paragraph, you
11 indicated that once upstairs, Mr. Kimble made certain
12 statements to you, and about his demeanor. What was his
13 demeanor at that time?

14 A He was crying.

15 Q After your conversation with Ronnie Kimble at Camp
16 Lejeune, did you then return to Lynchburg and give the
17 statement which has been marked as Voir Dire Number 1?

18 A Yes, sir, I did.

19 Q Have you had any further contact with Ronnie Kimble?

20 A No, I haven't.

21 Q Did you maintain your residence there in Lynchburg
22 after January the 25th of 1997?

23 A No, sir, I did not.

24 Q Where did you go that night, after he told you these
25 things and he left your house?

1 A To a hotel.

2 Q And why did you go to a hotel?

3 A Because I was concerned for the life of my family and
4 I.

5 Q And after that, you went to Camp Lejeune; is that
6 correct?

7 A After that, if I'm not mistaken, the sequence of events
8 was that I went and stayed at a relative's house for a
9 couple of days out of this city, and then to Camp Lejeune.

10 Q And after that, where did you go?

11 A Back to my residence, to pack up my belongings and go
12 to another state.

13 Q And why did you leave the state?

14 A For fear for my family's life.

15 MR. PANOSH: No further questions.

16 Thank you.

17 MR. LLOYD: May we approach, Your Honor?

18 THE COURT: Yes, you may.

19 (Counsel conferred with the Court at the bench.)

20 (Mr. Lloyd left the courtroom at 2:36 p.m.)

21 MR. PANOSH: Your Honor, in counsel's absence, I
22 believe you need to clarify --

23 THE COURT: Mark the record there was a personal
24 request from the attorney to step out for a moment.

25 MR. PANOSH: -- whether there has been a motion

1 for complete recordation and your ruling.

2 THE COURT: The motion -- I'm sure you make that
3 motion, Mr. Hatfield; is that correct?

4 The Court's going to grant it anyway, complete
5 recordation of all the testimony.

6 Which is easier for you, Marsha, to come up here,
7 or what?

8 THE COURT REPORTER: As opposed to what, going
9 back in the back room, maybe, or --

10 THE COURT: Well, most of them --

11 THE COURT REPORTER: Excuse me?

12 THE COURT: Most of them would be here at the
13 bench.

14 MR. HATFIELD: Your Honor, I did not make that
15 motion. I think it's too time consuming, and I'm sure the
16 Court would make sure that any serious matters would be --

17 THE COURT: In the past, we've kind of summarily
18 -- one attorney summarily would give the court reporter a
19 list of what the conference is about, discussed at the
20 bench.

21 (Mr. Lloyd returned to the courtroom at 2:41 p.m.)

22 MR. PANOSH: Your Honor, with your permission, I
23 have one further question.

24 THE COURT: All right, sir.

25 MR. PANOSH: May I approach?

1 (Mr. Panosh handed a cassette tape to the witness.)

2 FURTHER VOIR DIRE DIRECT EXAMINATION by MR. PANOSH:

3 Q Do you recognize that item, sir?

4 A Yes, sir, I do.

5 Q What is that?

6 A That is a tape that I gave to Ronnie Kimble, with my
7 name and phone number on it.

8 MR. HATFIELD: I object to its being marked. It's
9 our property. We're not offering it. We gave it to Panosh
10 for a limited purpose, and that was, for him to verify it.
11 It's our property. He now seeks to mark it for
12 identification, and that's highly improper.

13 THE COURT: He's just having him identify it.

14 MR. HATFIELD: Well, Your Honor, if it's
15 identified, it may be admitted as an exhibit, and it belongs
16 to the defense.

17 THE COURT: He has not admitted it. He's simply
18 asked him to identify it.

19 MR. PANOSH: Your Honor, to address Mr. Hatfield's
20 concerns, I'm going to label the copy that he provided me as
21 Voir Dire Number 2. And if the record could reflect that
22 he's identifying a cassette tape, which has been labeled as
23 Voir Dire Number 2.

24 Q I'm sorry, sir. I didn't hear your response. That's a
25 tape that what?

1 A That's a tape that I gave to Ronnie Kimble, with my
2 name and address on it and phone number.

3 Q And when did you give him that?

4 A Before I got out of the service.

5 MR. PANOSH: No further questions.

6 Thank you.

7 THE COURT: Cross-examination?

8 MR. LLOYD: Thank you, Your Honor.

9 VOIR DIRE CROSS-EXAMINATION by MR. LLOYD:

10 Q Reverend Whidden, you indicated that you are an
11 ordained Baptist minister now; is that correct?

12 A Yes, sir, it is.

13 Q And when did that take place?

14 A May 17th.

15 Q And let me ask you this, Reverend Whidden. Do you --
16 you were -- before that time, you were active in the church,
17 were you not?

18 A Yes, sir.

19 Q Okay. Have you always been of the Baptist faith?

20 A Yes, sir.

21 Q All right. And before you ever went into the Marine
22 Corps, you were active in the Baptist church, were you not?

23 A Yes, sir.

24 Q All right. And while you were in the Marine Corps,
25 were you active in the church at that time?

1 A Yes, sir.

2 Q And there came a time in the Marine Corps when you
3 decided to pursue a calling as a minister; is that right?

4 A Yes, sir, it is.

5 Q Now, was that early in your Marine Corps career, or was
6 that towards the latter part, or when?

7 A About a quarter into it, about a year, approximately,
8 after I'd entered the Marine Corps.

9 Q Okay. So you signed up for a four-year tour of duty;
10 is that right?

11 A Yes, sir.

12 Q But by the end of your first year, you pretty much
13 decided that you were not going to make the Marine Corps a
14 career, and instead, you were going to go into the ministry;
15 is that right?

16 A No, sir, not exactly.

17 Q All right. Well, tell me, what did you decide,
18 Reverend Whidden?

19 A I decided that I would go into the ministry, whether it
20 be ministry in the service or ministry outside of the
21 service.

22 Q All right. So, in your mind, there was some
23 possibility, as far as you were concerned, that you might
24 have remained in the service, but it would be in the
25 chaplain's service; is that right?

1 A Yes, sir.

2 Q All right. Now, Reverend Whidden, was that decision
3 influenced by your past activity in your church?

4 A Yes, sir, it was.

5 Q All right. And were there other members in your family
6 that are in the ministry?

7 A No, sir.

8 Q All right. What about your wife's family? Does she
9 have family members that are in the ministry?

10 A Yes, sir. Her father is.

11 Q Okay. Is her father an ordained Baptist minister?

12 A No, sir.

13 Q Okay. But is he --

14 MR. PANOSH: We object, please.

15 MR. LLOYD: All right.

16 THE COURT: Overruled.

17 Q But he is active in the Baptist ministry, or is he
18 active in some other faith?

19 A He's active in the Methodist ministry.

20 Q Okay. And is an ordained Methodist minister?

21 A Yes, sir.

22 Q All right. And did he play a part in your decision to
23 go into the ministry?

24 A No, sir.

25 Q You had indicated that there was a pastor that you had

1 talked to, after Ronnie made these alleged statements to
2 you?

3 A Yes, sir.

4 Q Who was that, Reverend Whidden?

5 A That was Pastor Jerry Falwell.

6 Q All right. And he was the -- he is the -- let me get
7 his title correct. He is the head of Liberty Bible College;
8 is that right?

9 A Yes, sir, he is.

10 Q Now, when you were active in the church, did you hold
11 any positions in the church at that time?

12 A No, sir, I did not.

13 Q Okay. But you nevertheless were active, you went to
14 services and participated in all the church activities?

15 A Yes.

16 Q All right. And that was during your -- even during the
17 time that you were in the Marine Corps?

18 A Yes, sir.

19 Q All right. So, you actually went to a church in
20 Jacksonville or somewhere in the vicinity of Camp Lejeune?

21 A Yes, sir, I did.

22 Q All right. Now, you indicated to Mr. Panosh that when
23 you decided to pursue a career in the ministry, you did two
24 things, as far as your military service was concerned;
25 first, you put in for a tour of duty in the chaplain's

1 service; is that right?

2 A Yes, sir, I did.

3 Q All right. And Reverend Whidden, did you also ask for
4 a -- at some point, did you ask the Marine Corps for an
5 early discharge, so you could pursue your career in the
6 ministry?

7 A Yes, sir, I did.

8 Q All right. And were you granted that?

9 A Yes, sir, I was.

10 Q All right. So, by that time, you had become very
11 serious about becoming a minister?

12 A Yes, sir.

13 Q And you were going to do that?

14 A Yes, sir.

15 Q All right. And you felt like that was your calling?

16 A Yes, sir.

17 Q All right. Now, when -- as far as your duties were
18 concerned with the Marine Corps, you indicated that you were
19 assigned to a chaplain's office, and I did not catch the
20 name, Reverend Whidden. What was the name of that?

21 A Courthouse Bay Chapel.

22 Q Courthouse Bay Chapel?

23 A Yes, sir.

24 Q All right. And as far as your duties were concerned,
25 you were an assistant --

1 A Yes, sir.

2 Q -- chaplain; is that right?

3 A Yes, sir, it is.

4 Q All right. And was there -- the individual over you,
5 would that have been the actual chaplain --

6 A Yes, sir.

7 Q -- for that Courthouse Bay?

8 A Yes, sir.

9 Q Now, was he an ordained minister?

10 A Yes, sir.

11 Q All right. And you indicated that -- well, you had a
12 lot of clerical duties in connection with that; is that
13 right?

14 A Yes, sir.

15 Q But you helped with the services?

16 A Can you elaborate some.

17 Q Well, I'm assuming -- of course, I wasn't there,
18 Reverend Whidden, so I have to ask you the questions, but
19 I'm assuming that there was a service put on on Sundays?

20 A Yes, sir, there was.

21 Q All right. And you helped with that service?

22 A I set up for it.

23 Q All right. Okay. And you did everything else an
24 assistant chaplain would -- excuse me, an assistant chaplain
25 would normally do in that position; is that right?

1 A Yes, sir, I did.

2 Q All right. And when you met Ronnie Kimble, he was in
3 the chaplain corps in the Marine Corps, but his position was
4 a delivery driver; is that right?

5 A Yes, sir.

6 Q All right. So, as far as his duties were concerned, as
7 far as you knew, he drove a truck around to the various
8 chaplain bases and delivered whatever materials were
9 necessary; is that right?

10 A Yes, sir.

11 Q All right. And that's how you came to know him?

12 A Yes, sir.

13 Q All right. Now, you at some point got a call from
14 Ronnie Kimble, discussing the possibility of a visit with
15 you up at Liberty Bible College; is that right?

16 A Yes, sir.

17 Q Now, how long had you been at Liberty at that time?

18 A Approximately three months.

19 Q All right. And the nature of the call was such that
20 Ronnie expressed an interest in seeing you at some future
21 time, when he could get leave, and looking over the school;
22 is that right?

23 A Yes, sir.

24 Q All right. And then there came a time, January 24th;
25 is that correct --

1 A Yes, sir.

2 Q -- of 1997, when you actually got a call from Ronnie
3 Kimble?

4 A Yes, sir.

5 Q And he indicated to you that he was in the general
6 area; is that correct, Mr. -- Reverend Whidden?

7 A I'm sorry. I don't recollect exactly how those events
8 took place.

9 Q Okay. But at any rate, the crux of this phone
10 conversation was that he wanted to come and take a look at
11 Liberty Bible College, and the subject of staying with you
12 and your wife came up; is that right?

13 A Yes, sir.

14 Q All right. And based on that, you invited Ronnie and
15 his wife to come stay with you all, while he looked at the
16 school?

17 A Yes, sir.

18 Q All right. Now, you -- when Ronnie and his wife got
19 there the first night, they got there rather late, didn't
20 they?

21 A I remember it was after dark.

22 Q Okay. And you've indicated on direct examination that
23 at some point, you went out to eat. Was that that first
24 night, or was that the second night, or do you recall which,
25 Reverend Whidden?

1 A I don't recall.

2 Q All right. Okay. But at some point, you went out to
3 eat. And I believe you said on direct examination that at
4 the dinner table, Ronnie expressed a desire that he wanted
5 to talk to you; is that right?

6 A Yes, sir.

7 Q And of course, at this time, part of the conversation
8 at the dinner table was that Ronnie had expressed a desire
9 about attending Liberty and maybe going to classes; is that
10 right?

11 A Not exactly, sir. It was more about the ministry and
12 about entering into the ministry --

13 Q Okay.

14 A -- regardless of the school.

15 Q And present at dinner at that time were you and Ronnie,
16 and his wife, Kim, and your wife, Debra; is that right?

17 A Yes, sir, it is.

18 Q And your children, were they present at that time?

19 A Yes, sir.

20 Q All right. And that it was at this time that Ronnie
21 said to you that he had things -- he had a past that was
22 haunting him, I believe was how you expressed it on --

23 A Yes.

24 Q -- direct examination; is that right? And he indicated
25 to you at some point, Reverend Whidden, that he wanted to

1 have a conversation with you in private, without his wife or
2 your wife being present; is that right?

3 A Yes, sir.

4 Q All right. And he said that to you, as well as to his
5 wife and your wife; I mean, they were all present and heard
6 the statement; is that right?

7 A I assume they heard it.

8 Q Okay. And then, when you got home, he indicated to you
9 at that time that he wanted to go upstairs and talk with you
10 alone?

11 A Yes.

12 Q All right. And when you went upstairs and spoke to
13 Ronnie, did you talk about any biblical matters or any
14 biblical passages that you recall, Reverend Whidden?

15 A Yes, we did.

16 Q All right. And do you recall Ronnie asking you
17 something about the Apocrypha?

18 A No, I do not.

19 Q All right. But you recall him asking you questions
20 about biblical passages?

21 A Not specific biblical passages.

22 Q Okay. But it -- Well, let me ask you this, Reverend
23 Whidden. Do you recall his seeking your advice on biblical
24 passages or anything of that nature?

25 A He seeked my advice on whether or not he would go to

1 hell if he was to kill his self.

2 Q Okay. So that was -- you -- and that's what you've
3 already indicated on direct examination?

4 A Yes, sir.

5 Q So he asked you specifically if, in your opinion, as
6 basically a man of the cloth -- if I may use the phrase --
7 whether or not he would go to hell for committing suicide;
8 is that right?

9 MR. PANOSH: Object to the form of the question.

10 THE COURT: Rephrase it, sir.

11 MR. LLOYD: All right.

12 Q Did he ask you, Reverend Whidden, while you were
13 upstairs alone, if in fact, in your opinion, based on the
14 Bible and your knowledge of the ministry and religion, if he
15 would go to hell, if he committed suicide?

16 A He did ask me that.

17 Q All right. And you answered him that you didn't -- you
18 did not think that he would go to hell for that, though you
19 encouraged him not to do it?

20 A Yes, sir.

21 Q All right. Now, did there come a time, Reverend
22 Whidden, when you were alone with Ronnie Kimble, that you
23 prayed together?

24 A Yes, sir.

25 Q And were -- was this before these things that you

1 maintained that Ronnie said to you, concerning Patricia
2 Kimble's death, or was this after?

3 A Before.

4 Q All right. And did you both get down on your knees
5 together and pray at that time?

6 A Yes, sir, we did.

7 Q All right. Now, Reverend Whidden, you did not
8 ultimately graduate from Liberty Bible College, did you?

9 A No, sir, I didn't.

10 Q All right. And you had indicated to Mr. Panosh on
11 direct examination that your focus at Liberty was pastoral
12 studies or something of that nature; is that right?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And what does that entail?

15 A Entails the study of the scriptures, the study of
16 theology and the study of church growth.

17 Q And is that what most students who attend Liberty take,
18 who are planning on becoming ministers?

19 A Not exactly.

20 Q All right. Is that -- but is that sort of like a
21 major, Reverend Whidden?

22 A No, sir, it's not.

23 Q Okay.

24 A It's a -- it's a Bible institute course. It's not a
25 degree. And it's directed towards general ministry, rather

1 than very specific ministry.

2 Q Okay. And you lacked -- before completing this
3 program, how much did you lack, Reverend Whidden?

4 A One semester.

5 Q One semester. And is it true that you could probably
6 finish that up on correspondence level, if you wanted to?

7 A No, sir, it's not.

8 Q All right. You'd have to go back to the school to do
9 that at this point; is that right?

10 A Yes, sir.

11 Q All right. Now, after you left Liberty, you went to
12 wherever it was that you now have your church, and you
13 became an ordained minister; is that right?

14 A Yes, sir.

15 Q All right. Reverend Whidden, how did you become an
16 ordained minister at that time? What was the process?

17 A The process of becoming an ordained minister in the
18 Baptist church is that a church, a given church that would
19 like you as their minister, has to call for your ordination
20 to your home church, or the church that you're from. They
21 then decide whether to ordain you. And then you stand
22 before a group of ministers that ask you questions and lay
23 hands on you, pray over you. And if you're -- and if you're
24 found worthy of the calling, then they will ordain you as a
25 minister in the Baptist church.

1 Q And that's what happened in your case; is that correct,
2 Reverend Whidden?

3 A Yes, sir, it is.

4 Q All right. So you didn't need a degree from Liberty
5 Bible College, in order to become an ordained minister, did
6 you?

7 A No, sir.

8 Q All right. And in fact, that was no impediment to your
9 becoming an ordained minister?

10 A No, sir.

11 Q All right. And Reverend Whidden, as -- insofar as you
12 were able to tell, these statements that Ronnie allegedly
13 made to you concerning the death of his sister-in-law, the
14 focus of his questioning of you was, would that fact hinder
15 him from pursuing a career in the ministry; is that right?

16 A I don't really know why, to be honest with you, sir.

17 MR. LLOYD: If I could have just a moment, Your
18 Honor.

19 THE COURT: All right, sir.

20 (Time was allowed for Mr. Lloyd.)

21 MR. LLOYD: I think that's all I have, Your Honor.

22 MR. PANOSH: One question.

23 VOIR DIRE REDIRECT EXAMINATION by MR. PANOSH:

24 Q Before becoming an ordained minister, was it uncommon
25 for you to get together with your friends at your home and

1 pray?

2 A No, sir, it wasn't uncommon.

3 MR. PANOSH: No further questions.

4 THE COURT: Step down, sir.

5 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

6 (The witness left the witness stand.)

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I N D E X

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