

7 LEIGHANN SKILES, being duly sworn by the clerk,
8 testified as follows:

9 DIRECT EXAMINATION by Mr. Rupp:

10 Q. Ma'am, would you please introduce yourself to the
11 ladies and gentlemen of this jury.

12 A. Leighann Skiles.

13 Q. Okay. And, Leighann, how old are you?

14 A. Twenty-eight.

15 Q. And, Leighann, where do you live?

16 A. In Hopewell.

17 Q. Leighann, are you related to the defendant in this
18 case?

19 A. Yes.

20 THE COURT: Ms. Skiles, you may be a little
21 nervous. Your voice is really low. You need to speak up a
22 little louder so the ladies and gentlemen can hear you,
23 please.

24 THE WITNESS: Okay.

25 THE COURT: Try to speak up louder.

1 Q. (By Mr. Rupp): Ma'am, are you related to the
2 defendant in this case?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And can you tell us how you are related to the
5 defendant?

6 A. He's my husband's cousin.

7 Q. And how long have you known the defendant?

8 A. About nine years.

9 Q. Now, Ms. Skiles, what is your address?

10 A. Excuse me?

11 Q. What is your address?

12 A. Route 1, Box 467, Mineral Point, Missouri.

13 Q. You don't need the zip.

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. And can you describe for the jury about where this
16 is?

17 A. Excuse me. I can't hear you.

18 Q. Can you describe for the jury approximately where
19 your house is? How do you get to it?

20 A. You go down 8 highway and then it has a sign on
21 Hopewell Road. Go down Hopewell Road about a mile. And
22 you'll see a great big metal garage on the right-hand side.
23 And it's five driveways down on the right-hand side.

24 Q. Now, Ms. Skiles, do you live reasonably close to
25 Rita Politte, where she used to live?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And how close would that be?

3 A. I don't know.

4 Q. Can you see that from there?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. First of all, this is a hand-made drawing, correct?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And it's not to scale, is it?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Okay. But, ma'am, do you kind of recognize what
11 that shows?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And, ma'am, where would your house be in here?

14 A. Right here.

15 Q. And this is where you live, correct?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And is that where you were living on December 5th,
18 of the year 1998?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And are you familiar where Rita Politte lived?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And would you show us where Rita Politte lived?

23 A. Right here.

24 Q. So her front yard adjoins your backyard?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And would it be fair to say her front porch to the
2 back of your house is about a hundred yards or about a
3 football field?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. So it's a very short distance?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And from your house you can clearly see Rita's
8 house?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Now, how would you get to Rita's house from
11 Hopewell Road?

12 A. Go down Hopewell Road maybe about a mile. You'll
13 see a great big metal garage on the right-hand side. And
14 it's the sixth driveway down on the right.

15 Q. Would this be a fair representation of where that
16 driveway would be?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And your driveway would be somewhere over here?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And this is not a public road, is it?

21 A. No.

22 Q. It's a private road?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. It goes through the corner of your property?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And there's no other roadway in Rita's house; is
2 that correct?

3 A. No.

4 Q. So the only way in and out is by your front of your
5 house?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And this is a gravel road, is it not?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And it's only a few feet from your house?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And vehicles come and go? You can hear them travel
12 past your window, correct?

13 A. Yes.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Judge, we would object just for the
15 leading nature of the questions.

16 THE COURT: Sustained as to the form of the last
17 question.

18 Q. (By Mr. Rupp): Now, in addition to your home which
19 you indicated is right here, correct?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And Ms. Politte's home, correct?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. All right. Is there anybody else that lives close
24 by you that you know?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And who would that be?

2 A. Patsy and Chuck Skiles.

3 Q. And are they related to you?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And how are they related to you?

6 A. They're my mother-in-law and father-in-law.

7 Q. And would you show the jury approximately where

8 that house would be?

9 A. (Pointing.)

10 Q. And is that your father-in-law; is that correct?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And mother-in-law. Does he have a garage as well?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And would you show us approximately where that

15 garage is?

16 A. (Pointing.)

17 Q. Okay. And would that be just a few feet from where

18 Rita's house is?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And are you familiar with what is behind Rita's

21 house?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Have you ever looked out in that direction?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. What's out there if you recall?

1 A. Woods.

2 Q. Okay. So a wooded area about here? Would that be

3 correct?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And there is a swimming pool by Rita's house; is

6 that correct?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And from that pool was there a path?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And where did that path lead to?

11 A. To the trailer.

12 Q. From there were there any other paths going further

13 down?

14 A. No.

15 Q. In addition to Chuck Skiles, were there any other

16 related people that lived close by?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And can you tell us who that is?

19 A. Michael Politte. (Referring to our Uncle Mick)

20 Q. How about Johnny? Would that would be Michael

21 Politte?

22 A. No. Well, it's Michael Politte.

23 Q. Okay. Does he go by Johnny?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Is that Mick?

This is
Prosecutor
John Rupp
Not knowing
the facts of
names of
people
involved
key &

Rupp
Clearly
Doesn't
know
the
Difference
194
Between
Mick (who
lived next
door) &
Johnny who
lived miles
away

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. So this would be Mick? (House)

3 A. Right.

4 Q. Thank you very much. If I could take you to
5 December 4th, say after midnight or a little before midnight,
6 going into midnight, into December the 5th. Do you recall
7 where you were at?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And where were you at?

10 A. At my house.

11 Q. And is that where you've just indicated?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And do you recall what time you went to bed that
14 evening?

15 A. I don't remember.

16 Q. And did you wake up sometime on December 5th?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Did something wake you up on December 5th?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Do you remember about what time something woke you
21 up?

22 A. About 6:30.

23 Q. In the morning?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Prior to that time nothing had wakened you?

1 A. No.

2 Q. You heard nothing, saw nothing, nothing out of the
3 ordinary?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Would you describe to the ladies and gentlemen of
6 the jury exactly what awakened you that morning?

7 A. Josh, I don't know his last name, banged on my
8 sliding glass doors.

9 Q. If I could stop you there and ask you to step down
10 real quickly. Would you point to approximately where this
11 sliding glass door's at?

12 A. (Pointing.)

13 Q. Okay, thank you. When you heard a knocking at the
14 sliding glass doors, what did you do?

15 A. I woke up.

16 Q. Did you respond to the knocking at the sliding
17 glass doors?

18 A. Not at first.

19 Q. And what happened then?

20 A. And then he came around to the front door.

21 Q. And how do you know that?

22 A. Because he banged on the front door.

23 Q. So there was a knocking on the sliding glass doors
24 and then in a short period of time on the front door?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And when you heard the knocking on the front door,
2 what happened?

3 A. I woke up and got up and went and answered the
4 door.

5 Q. Okay. And you indicated, I need to ask you again,
6 who was there? Who was knocking?

7 A. Josh.

8 Q. And what happened when you opened the door and
9 there's Josh?

10 A. He said, I'm Josh. I'm Bernie's friend. I need
11 you to call the fire department. Rita's trailer was on
12 fire.

13 Q. Did you let him in the house?

14 A. Yes, I did.

15 Q. And what did you do then?

16 A. I called my mother-in-law and father-in-law.

17 Q. So you didn't call the fire department?

18 A. No.

19 Q. And when you say your mother-in-law and father-in-
20 law, who are you referring to?

21 A. My mother-in-law.

22 Q. Pardon?

23 A. My mother-in-law.

24 Q. What's her name?

25 A. Oh, Patsy. I'm sorry.

He clearly just
thinks the
House is on
Fire & is
Someone to
Call Fire Dept.

1 Q. And where does she live?

2 A. Beside me.

3 Q. That would be at the Chuck Skiles residence?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And then what happened?

6 A. And then he went back outside.

7 Q. Well, did you talk to Patsy?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. And what did you tell her?

10 A. I told her to call the fire department, that Rita's

11 trailer was on fire.

12 Q. And after that did you hang up?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And what did you do?

15 A. Then he walked back out the door, and I went to the

16 door, also.

17 Q. You went to the door, also?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And this would be your front door?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. And when you went to your front door, did you see

22 somebody else?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And who did you see?

25 A. Bernie.

1 Q. Can you describe to the ladies and gentlemen where
2 you first saw him and what he was doing?

3 A. He was coming around the side of the house onto the
4 porch.

5 Q. And how was he coming around the house? Was he
6 running?

7 A. I don't remember.

8 Q. And when he came onto your front porch what
9 happened?

10 A. Then he talked to Josh, and he said, "Dude, that's
11 my mom on the floor."

12 Q. Did he say anything else?

13 A. And then he said, "Did you have a cigarette?"

14 Q. And what did Josh do, say?

15 A. I don't remember.

16 Q. After that conversation occurred, what happened?

17 A. They left.

18 Q. How did they leave?

19 A. They walked.

20 Q. They walked?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Back around your house?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And over to Rita's house?

25 A. I didn't watch them all the way down to the

Mike
Seems to
be caught
off guard by
this E.
Probably in shock.

See
Chuck
Skiles
Testimony
page
214
E. 220

1 trailer.

2 Q. But towards Rita's house?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. At that particular point were you curious about
5 what was going on?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Did you go to any windows?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And what window did you go to?

10 A. My back window.

11 Q. And would it be correct to say that this is the
12 front of your house?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. That's the back of your house?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. You went to the couple windows back there?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Did you notice anything about Rita's trailer?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Look normal?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Did you find that kind of strange?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And then you lost sight of the two boys; is that
25 correct?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Ma'am, just real quickly, can you show me who
3 Bernie Politte is?

4 A. (Pointing.)

5 Q. Can you describe what he's wearing?

6 A. A plaid shirt.

7 MR. RUPP: Again, Your Honor, I would like the
8 record to reflect this witness has identified the defendant.

9 THE COURT: The record will so reflect.

10 MR. RUPP: And she did so by pointing as well as
11 describing.

12 THE COURT: That's correct.

13 Q. (By Mr. Rupp): Ma'am, after this incident occurred,
14 did somebody talk to you from the police department?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And do you remember who that was?

17 A. I don't know his name.

18 Q. If I told you the name Curt Davis, does that sound
19 correct to you?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And you made a one-page statement; is that correct?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And that was three years ago you made that; is that
24 correct?

25 A. Yes.

Rita & Michael's House

Josh & Michael's Path



Leighann's House

Porch

This small part is All Mike & Josh saw Turning a corner To porch & stop on the Front Door

1 Q. Things were a little fresher in your memory back
2 then?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. If you wrote in your report when Bernie came to
5 your house, he came up walking, would that have been
6 accurate?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. You also indicated something about Bernie's
9 appearance. Do you recall that?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Do you recall if he was excited, upset, calm?

12 A. He was calm.

13 MR. RUPP: I don't think I have any other
14 questions, Your Honor.

15 CROSS-EXAMINATION by Mr. Williams:

16 Q. Ms. Skiles, you said that you -- you wrote in that
17 report that he was walking. That would be something that
18 you would remember, right?

19 A. I think so.

20 Q. And if you would have put things in that report, if
21 you would have written those things, you would have
22 remembered those things, right?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. But you didn't write your report, did you?

25 A. No.

From her
Front Porch,
She can only
see him take
3 steps...

Shock
maybe??

1 Q. Your statement? Curt Davis wrote that statement
2 for you, didn't he?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Now, you're Leighann Skiles, right?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And you're not a Skiles. You're a Skiles by
7 marriage; is that correct?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Is your husband related to Sheriff Skiles, the
10 sheriff then of Washington County?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And Curt Davis was employed by the Washington
13 County Sheriff's Department at that time, wasn't he?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And he wrote your statement out for you, didn't he?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Now, you've testified a little bit about the
18 appearance, what you observed about Bernie Politte, right?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. That you observed him walking not running; is that
21 correct?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. So you got a chance to look at him, didn't you?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. You got a chance to look at Josh Sansoucie when he

1 knocked on the door, didn't you?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And isn't it true that you did not observe any
4 blood stains on either one of these boys?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Isn't it true that they weren't cut or scratched in
7 any way or bleeding themselves?

8 A. No.

9 Q. That's not true?

10 A. They weren't. They weren't.

11 Q. They weren't okay. And isn't it true that there
12 was no evidence from what you observed that they had
13 recently been in a struggle with anyone; isn't that correct?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Would it be a fair statement to say that Bernie was
16 in shock at that point?

17 MR. RUPP: I'm going to object. That calls for
18 speculation on this witness.

19 THE COURT: I think it does call for speculation.
20 Sustained.

21 Q. (By Mr. Williams): You said you had lived in this
22 neighborhood for quite a while; is that correct?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And you knew Bernie for about nine years?

25 A. Yes.

*It's speculation
if she says he
is in shock
but not
speculation
to say he
was calm...
Interesting!!!*

1 Q. So you had seen him before on many occasions,
2 right?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. You had seen him when he was happy, right?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. You had seen him when he was sad?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Would it be fair to say that he was in shock on
9 this particular day?

10 MR. RUPP: Again, I'm going to object to
11 speculation.

12 THE COURT: I still think it calls for a conclusion
13 on the part of the witness. Sustained.

14 Q. (By Mr. Williams): Did he look like he was depressed
15 to you?

16 A. I don't know.

17 MR. RUPP: Again, I will object.

18 THE COURT: I'm going to still have to sustain it,
19 Mr. Williams.

20 Q. (By Mr. Williams): You got a chance to look at him
21 though, right?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And if he would have had blood on him or fresh
24 scratches or cuts or marks, would that be something you
25 would notice?

*Again
speculation when
defuse
wants to discuss
it
wants to state
when state
discuss it
interesting*

1 A. (No response.)

2 Q. Wouldn't it?

3 A. Probably.

4 Q. In other words, if he or Josh walked up there and
5 they were dripping with blood or something of that nature,
6 that would be something that you would have remembered,
7 right?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. That's not anywhere in your statement back when
10 that was fresh in your mind, right?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. When Curt Davis wrote it for you; is that correct?

13 A. Yes.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Nothing further, Judge.

15 REDIRECT EXAMINATION by Mr. Rupp:

16 Q. At the time the two boys came up, or first Josh, he
17 gave you some pretty exciting news, correct?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Were you looking for evidence of blood?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Then the defendant, he never came up to your house
22 or in your house, did he?

23 A. He came to my house.

24 Q. But he didn't come into your house, did he?

25 A. No.

*She
Testified he
came to her
house... Already*

1 Q. He came around the corner; is that correct?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And up towards your porch?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Do you remember what he was wearing?

6 A. No.

7 Q. So you don't even recall?

8 A. No.

9 Q. You weren't paying that close attention, were you?

10 A. Right.

11 Q. As a matter of fact, you were more interested in
12 seeing what was going on?

13 A. Right.

14 Q. Now, he asked you some questions. And it is
15 accurate that Mr. Davis wrote this report, I assume; is that
16 correct?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Did he do that at your request?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And you've had an opportunity to read that; is that
21 correct?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And you signed it?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And is everything that you wrote down what you told

1 him?

2 A. Yes.

3 MR. RUPP: I don't have any other questions.

4 RE-CROSS-EXAMINATION by Mr. Williams:

5 Q. Ms. Skiles, isn't it true that nowhere in your
6 report do you describe Bernie Politte as being bloody?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Or Josh Sansoucie for that matter as being bloody?

9 A. No.

10 Q. And this is something that Detective Davis was
11 writing for you at your request?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. That Detective Davis that had been to the scene of
14 the murder earlier?

15 A. Yeah.

16 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

17 THE COURT: Anything else of this witness?

18 MR. RUPP: Not on behalf of the State, Your Honor.

19 THE COURT: May the witness be excused?

20 MR. RUPP: As far as the State is concerned, she
21 may be permanently excused.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: Well, Judge, she can be excused for
23 purposes of today, but we have her under subpoena as well,
24 and I would like her subject to recall for tomorrow.

25 THE COURT: You may step down. You're subject to

1 possible recall as a witness.

2 (Witness steps down subject to possible

3 recall.)
