

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

COUNTY OF OKTIBBEHA

**AFFIDAVIT OF PAULA RENEE HATHORN**

I, Paula Hathorn, having been duly sworn, depose and state as follows:

1. I am over the age of twenty-one and am competent to make the statements contained in this affidavit. All statements are within my personal knowledge.
2. My name is Paula Renee Hathorn. I first met Willie Jerome Manning around 1991 when I was in the county jail. I was raped by an officer while in jail at that time, and the officer that raped me is still employed by the police department. I reported the rape, and I was transferred to Rankin County.
3. In 1992, after I was released from county jail, I lived off and on with Willie Manning and his mother in the Bethel Community in Starkville, Mississippi. After Willie Manning was arrested, I was a prosecution witness in Willie's 1995 trial concerning the deaths of two Mississippi State University students.
4. Before Willie Manning's 1995 trial, former Sheriff Dolph Bryan pressured me to try to get Willie to confess to the student murders. When I was first approached by Dolph, I had over twenty bad check charges in different counties. Dolph told me not to worry about going to jail for these charges. He raised his eyebrows and said, "you ain't going to have to worry about that."
5. Dolph would take me to a house and have Willie call me. The calls were recorded. Willie said he didn't have anything to do with the MSU students.
6. Dolph also would have me come to the jail where Willie was at night. I would get to the jail around 9:00 p.m. I would visit with Willie in person and stay about an hour. Dolph would make me wear a wire during our visits. I remember Dolph telling an officer named George Carrithers to put a wire on me one time and send me into Willie's jail cell around 9:00 p.m. I do not know if Willie ever knew that I was wearing a wire.
7. Before Willie's 1995 trial, Dolph met with me alone several times to rehearse my trial testimony. Dolph told me I could "answer a question with a question" and could always just say, "I don't know" or "I don't recall."
8. Dolph told me several times that the MSU student murders were "a drug deal gone bad." Dolph drove me out to the gravel road where he said the bodies were found. He said, "you know Fly done this." "It was a drug deal gone bad."

9. I received \$17,500 for being a prosecution witness in Willie's 1995 trial. Dolph drove me to the bank to get the money. Before I testified, Dolph also gave me other money. George Carrithers more than once got cash for me out of a box in the Sheriff's Department. Dolph paid my bills sometimes and paid for some furniture. He also would pick me up and buy me food from Church's Chicken.
10. In 2000 or 2001, I spoke with an investigator named James Green, who was helping Willie's lawyers work on his appeal. I signed an affidavit in 2001. Everything in that affidavit is true, and it is attached to this affidavit.
11. Until January 2023, I had never read my trial testimony. When individuals with the Mississippi Office of Capital Post-Conviction Counsel recently asked to speak to me and told me they represent Willie Manning, I asked them if I could read my trial testimony and my statements to the police. They provided me my testimony and statements.
12. I've now read my trial testimony and my statements to the police.
13. Willie Manning did provide me with a brown jacket sometime in 1992 or 1993. Willie also had other similar brown jackets, a black leather jacket, and a blue jean jacket around this time.
14. I cannot remember exact dates from December 1992 when the student murders happened. But I do remember when Steve Moore (Willie Manning's friend) shot himself at Arby's. I saw Willie Manning at his mother's house soon after Steve Moore's death. It was at least during the same week. I think it was the next day or that evening after Steve's death that I saw Willie because that is when news of Steve's death and the MSU student murders were on the television. Willie mentioned to me how shocked he was by Steve's death.
15. Willie Manning's mother's house did not have running hot water or a shower. You would have to boil water on the stove and wash off in the sink. I never saw Willie Manning with any clothes that had blood on them, and I never saw him trying to clean blood off him or off any clothes.
16. I am making these statements of my own free will, and all statements are true and correct. As I said in my other affidavit, I have always feared reprisals from law enforcement for telling the truth. But because Dolph Bryan is no longer sheriff, I hope there won't be any threats and reprisals from law enforcement.

Further affiant sayeth not.



Paula Renee Hathorn

SWORN AND SUBSCRIBED before me, this the 7 day of February 2023.

Curlene Bell

Notary Public

My Commission Expires:

June 22, 2026





STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

COUNTY OF LOWNDES

## AFFIDAVIT OF PAULA RENEE HATHORN

1. My name is Paula Renee Hathorn. My address is 527 Baremore St., Louisville, MS 39701. I am presently incarcerated in the Lowndes County Detention Center. I was a prosecution witness in the 1993 trial of Willie Jerome Manning, which was held in Oktibbeha County.
2. I was first approached by the sheriff soon after Willie was arrested on other charges, and before he was actually charged with capital murder.
3. Sheriff Dolph Bryan approached me on the street facing the jail. He told me Willie was a suspect in the student murders and he wanted to see if I could help them identify some stolen items. This was also the first time that he told me I was going to get a reward.
4. Several times Sheriff Bryan pressured me to try to get Willie to confess or talk about the case. At least twice, he took me to a house on Mill Street to have Willie call me there. Sheriff Bryan gave me the phone number to give to Willie. Willie called and I tried to get him to talk to me and confess. Willie did not tell me he did anything at all to the students. He said he had nothing to do with that.
5. Sheriff Bryan also arranged to have me talk to Willie while I was living with Dennis Jones, my then boyfriend in Brooksville. The phone was in Terry Priester's name. I talked to Willie about fifteen times over a period of several weeks.
6. Sheriff Bryan kept asking me to talk to Willie right up to the time he was charged with capital murder. After that, I was not allowed to talk to him on the phone.
7. After the trial was over, I was told to call Sheriff Bryan each week until the reward money was collected. I received \$17,500 about the end of November.
8. When I was approached to help Sheriff Bryan, I had about thirteen bad check charges in Oktibbeha County. I also had about twenty bad check charges in Lowndes County. There were also bad check charges in Macon, Clay, and Jackson Counties. Altogether, I owed more than \$10,000 in fraudulent checks and court fees.
9. My attorney, Mark Williamson, had told me that I was facing 8-10 years plus some years probation. However, after I testified against Willie, my charges were passed to the file, and I have not served any time. I was worried about this before I was approached by Sheriff Bryan, but

he told me not to worry about going to jail.

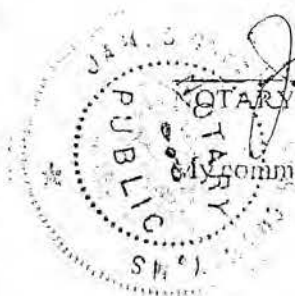
10. Because the sheriff indicated that I would not have to serve any prison time, I agreed to plead guilty to some of the charges in Justice Court in Oktibbeha County. Because the sheriff assured me that I had nothing to worry about, I waived my right to an attorney for that guilty plea. I think that was in the fall of 1993 or maybe early in the winter of 1994. I was also not prosecuted on the other charges.

11. I am making these statements of my own free will. No threats, coercion, or promises have been made to obtain this information, which is true and correct.

12. However, I am giving this statement with the expectation of reprisals from law enforcement. I am afraid of what might happen on my present charges because I made these statements. Regardless of the consequences, the foregoing statements are truthful and correct.

  
PAULA RENEE HATHORN

Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 4th day of October, 2001.

  
NOTARY PUBLIC  
My commission expires: 6-13-05