

I am Laura Steele. I am Robert Simpson's aunt.

Robert is the 25-year-old man who died from a gunshot wound to the head on December 27, 2006 here in St. Clair County. On July 10th of this year each one of you were mailed a package containing a copy of this file. Our family would like to thank Commissioner Steve Simasko for reading this report and contacting us. Our family is asking each one of you to please take the time to read the file. Tonight I would like to talk to you about our families involvement with the St. Clair County Sheriff Department and Prosecutor Mike Wendling. My niece and Robbie's sister, Marie Sontag, will be talking to you about our contact with the Medical Examiner's Office and the person who conducted the autopsy on Robbie, Dr. Daniel Spitz.

The Oakland County Medical Examiner, Dr. Kanu Virani, has reviewed this case and has issued a written opinion that Robert Simpson's death should be ruled a homicide until positively proven otherwise. **BY THE WAY, WE DID NOT PAY HIM FOR THIS OPINION!**

- ? Robbie died as a result of a gunshot wound to the head.
- ? This death occurred in a home other than Robbie's.
- ? The homeowner was present at the time and had been drinking.
- ? The homeowner told the dispatcher and deputies at the scene conflicting information in his statement as to how this occurred.
- ? The homeowner has a violent, unstable past, which includes assaults, drunk driving arrests and carrying a loaded unregistered firearm in a motor vehicle. None of this background information on this subject is in the police report but is in the report from the private investigator.
- ? As to the carrying a concealed weapons charge, the homeowners own attorney filed a petition with the court for referral to the forensic center to determine if he was competent to stand trial. His attorney noted that this man was "suicidal and perhaps homicidal, organization of thinking process, paranoia."
- ? Our private investigator, Mr. Welser, has found out that this man who was with my brother when he died, has told several people that he has killed several people and even demonstrated how he puts a handgun up to the side of a person's head and shoots them.
- ? This man lied to the deputies as to where the handgun came from that was found at the scene. The investigating deputy indicates in his report that he believed the gun belonged to this man, not Robbie. This deputy sent a warrant request to the prosecutor's office for this man having an unregistered handgun, the same gun used to kill my brother.

The investigating deputy told witnesses and family members that he had a gut feeling that this man had shot Robbie. This deputy told us that his supervisor had told him he had spent enough time on this investigation and

to move on to others. This deputy later told us that his supervisor advised him that he shouldn't even talk to us anymore.

The night this occurred the sheriff department's supervisor called an off duty deputy, not a detective, out to the scene to investigate Robbie's death. I believe you will see from the report that either this deputy has not had the proper training to be a death investigator or if he does he did not do his job. This investigation was closed out by the sheriff department as a suicide the night it occurred, even before the autopsy was conducted.

In an effort to find out what actually happened to Robbie that night, our family sought the services of Private Investigator Herb Welser. Mr. Welser retired from the Port Huron Police Department in 2005 after being with the department for 31 years. The last position Mr. Welser held at the police department was that of supervising the detectives as Detective Lieutenant.

Mr. Welser has reviewed the sheriff department report and conducted his own investigation. Noted in his report is:

- ✍ “Blood stains play a major part in reconstruction of the scene. The interpretation of the bloodstain patterns may establish whether or not a crime occurred (Murder versus Suicide). What can be seen in the photos at the scene appears to be blood in various locations all around the body. There are questionable patterns on the desk and other locations. The location, size and appearance (direction and angle) of blood spatter should be carefully measured, sketched and photographed with a measuring scale in the photographs.”
NOT DONE!
- ✍ “No photos were taken after Robbie's body was removed to show if there was any blood on the carpet under him.”
- ✍ “Regarding the room of occurrence in particular, photos should be taken showing all views.” **NOT DONE!**
- ✍ “Measurements should be taken in the room of occurrence of the dimensions of the room, furniture and any evidence so that a finished sketch can later be drawn to scale.” **NOT DONE!**

It is now almost one year since Robbie died. Over these past months our family has made numerous attempts to have this case reopened by the sheriff department but up to this point they have refused. We have met and spoken to Prosecutor Wendling. Even he has had to wait at time for weeks to receive copies of reports he has requested for us from the sheriff department. One example is our family asked if the gun recovered at the scene could be submitted to the crime lab for

fingerprint examination. On January 29th Mr. Wendling told us he had spoken to the sheriff department and they agreed to do this. On February 20th Mr. Wendling told us the sheriff department had advised him the gun was at the crime lab. Our family waited to hear the results of this examination for months and never heard anything other than the results were not back yet. We recently requested a copy of all supplements to this case we did not have. Included was a report from the crime lab stating no fingerprints were found on the gun. We weren't surprised when we saw the date the gun was taken to the crime lab, **JUNE 11th**

? You could mention Laura about the unreturned phone calls and the attempts by family members to meet with Sheriff Lane.

We have sent a copy of this file to the Michigan Attorney General's Office. They reviewed the case and sent us a letter advising us that we needed to continue to work with our local prosecutor. Mr. Wendling has told us that he can only make suggestions to the sheriff department but cannot tell them what to do. If the chief law enforcement officer of the county does not have any authority over the sheriff department **then who does?**

Our family has spoken to a sergeant with the Michigan State Police who told us that their department would take over this investigation if asked to do so by Mike Wendling. At this point our family has little faith in the St. Clair County Sheriff Department. As our county commissioners we ask for your help in having this case transferred to the Michigan State Police. Thank you.