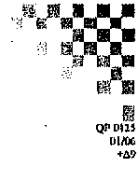




QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE  
STATEMENT OF WITNESS



Occurrence #: \_\_\_\_\_

Statement no.: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 23/4/2007

**Statement of**

Name of witness: CLECKLER, Douglas Craig

Date of birth: 12/08/1958 Age: 48 Occupation: Attorney

**Police officer taking statement**

Name of police officer: CAMPBELL, Gary Colin

Rank: Detective Sergeant Reg. no.: 6690

Region/Command/Division: Northern Station: Townsville Criminal Investigation Branch

**Statement:**

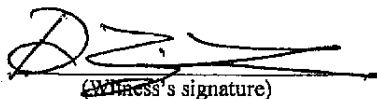
Douglas Craig CLECKLER states:

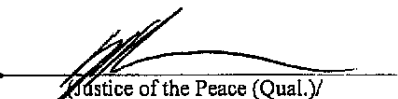
I am an Attorney At Law and a Police officer with the Jemison Police Department, Chilton County, Alabama.

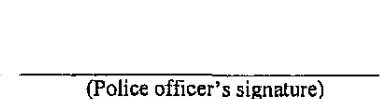
I knew Christina Mae THOMAS. To my knowledge she later married and became Christina Mae WATSON. Christina was learning to scuba dive at the Alabama Blue Water Adventure. She was part of a class of somewhere around eight to ten students.

I do not believe I met David Gabriel WATSON.

My diving background is the following. I have been scuba diving for approximately five years. I have completed approximately 600 dives in both still and open water. My diving certifications include Open Water, Advanced Open Water, Nitrox, Search and Rescue, Master Diver, Boat Diving, Night Diving, Dive Con (Dive Co-ordinator). Those are my recreational certifications and I obtained these through SSI (Scuba Schools International). My Technical certifications are Advanced Nitrox, Decompression Procedures and I obtained these through TDI (Technical Divers International)

  
(Witness's signature)

  
Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/  
Commissioner for Declarations's signature)

  
(Police officer's signature)

**CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: CLECKLER, Douglas Craig**

At the Alabama Blue Water Adventure my role in Christina's was Dive Con. That role was to assist the instructor in the teaching of basic dive skills. Specifically my job was to identify any student that exhibited signs of anxiety prior to entering the water. My attention was caught by Christina during our 'buddy equipment check' in the four foot section of the Alabama Blue Water Adventure. I noticed Christina holding onto the side of the dock and would not move toward the middle of the pool.

I also noticed Christina exhibiting equipment fixation during this period. These are signs of a student that is uncomfortable and indicates the need for extra attention from the dive con. A diver exhibiting these signs is more likely to panic than other divers. I discussed my observations with the dive instructor who was Tom JACKSON. I told Tom I would be keeping a close eye on Christina during our descent to the 20 foot platform and during her performance of the basic dive skills.

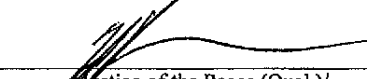
We descended to the 20 foot platform without any difficulties. The students lined up in a circle. Tom JACKSON then dropped to the middle of the circle and started having the students, one by one, go through the basic dive skills. These skills included regulator removal, partial mask flood, full mask flood and mask removal and replacement.

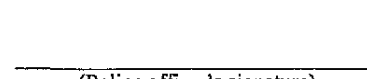
I had taken a position directly behind Christina as I had identified her as the student most likely to have problems. During one of the above listed skills Christina panicked and shot towards the surface. My job at that point was to insure that her ascent was done at a controlled speed and to make sure that she had a functioning regulator in her mouth. I held on to Christina and slowed her ascent down and escorted her to the surface.

Tom JACKSON also assisted in the ascent. Upon arrival at the surface when we determined that Christina was not in any danger, Tom instructed me to work with Christina and calm her down. Tom also asked me to see what Christina wanted to do next. This conversation between Tom and I occurred on the surface. The conversation lasted about 10 seconds and Tom went back down underwater to the other students.

Christina would have been underwater between five and ten minutes and she rose to the surface during one of her skill procedures.

  
(Witness's signature)

  
Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/  
Commissioner for Declarations's signature)

  
(Police officer's signature)

**CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: CLECKLER, Douglas Craig**

I stayed on the surface with Christina trying to calm her down. Christina was hysterical, she was shaking, I also fully inflated her BC, this reassures a panicked diver in this situation. I also started pulling Christina toward the dock. This reassures a panicked diver when they can hang onto a fixed subject. It was during this pull towards the dock that a conversation began. I do not remember who spoke first. But I clearly remember questioning Christina as to why she was doing this.

Christina made the statement to me, "I have no choice, my boyfriend would kill me if I did not get certified."

I told Christina, "You should only be here if you want to dive, not for someone else."

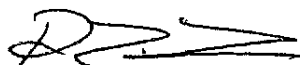
I also said, "If you do not want to be out here, don't be out here."

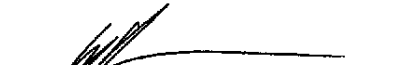
These comments were not made in a joking manner, Christina was still panicked, her eyes were big and round and she was wanting to get out of the water. I am 99 % sure that this was Christina's first dive. In my opinion it was clear that Christina panicked but she also displayed the ability to self rescue. Christina would have easily made it to the surface without my assistance. I just ensured that she did make it to the surface. Christina did not spit the regulator out of her mouth. Once she made it to the surface I ensured that her BC was fully inflated.

Christina did not do any more dives that day. She told me that she wanted out of the water and she was insistent about the matter. By this time we were back on the outside edge of the dock. I told Christina that I needed her to go back underwater a couple of feet so she could come back up in the pool where the steps were. After about five minutes she went back under water and swam un-aided into the pool. I went with her to make sure she got there fine.

Christina exited the pool, and when she started going up the steps, towards the parking area I dropped back down to continue with the class. I never saw Christina again after that.

In general terms her equipment was fine and did not play a role in the issue that she had that day.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Witness's signature)

  
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(Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/  
Commissioner for Declarations's signature)

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(Police officer's signature)

CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: CLECKLER, Douglas Craig

I had possibly met Christina during the early classes or at the Dive Site but do not recall anything memorable during that time.


Within one to three days of the death of Christina I became aware that she had died. I was later contacted by Detective FLYNN and attended to the Helena Police station on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of January 2005. I was interviewed by Detective FLYNN on video tape.

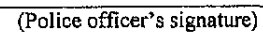
On Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of April 2007 I went to the Helena Police Department and provided this statement to Detective Sergeant Gary CAMPBELL.



I was also shown a photograph of the diver training area and platform at the Alabama Blue Water Adventure. The photograph is dated the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2007.

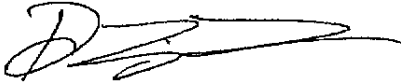
  
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(Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/  
Commissioner for Declarations's signature)

  
(Police officer's signature)

CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: CLECKLER, Douglas Craig

I can confirm that it is just beyond the red buoy that Christina surfaced in her panicked state. I do not recall the exact date of this incident where Christina surfaced in a panicked state.



Douglas Craig CLECKLER

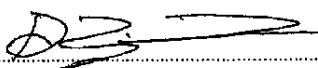
**Oaths Act Declaration**

**OATHS ACT 1867 (DECLARATION)**

I, Douglas Craig CLECKLER, do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

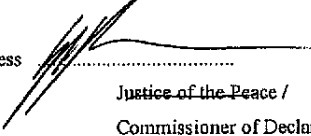
- (1) This written statement by me dated 23/4/2007 and contained in pages numbered 1 to 6 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and
- (2) I make this statement knowing that if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it anything I know to be false.

and I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and virtue of the provisions of the Oaths Act 1867

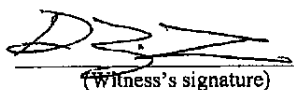
 Signature

Taken and declared before me at Helena Police Department

this 23rd day of April, 2007

Witness 

Justice of the Peace /  
Commissioner of Declarations 66651  
Other (Please State)

  
(Witness's signature)

(Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/  
Commissioner for Declarations's signature)

(Police officer's signature)