

WITNESS STATEMENT

Criminal Procedure Rules, r 27. 2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s. 9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5B

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Statement of Sean Joseph VINE

Age if under 18 Over 18 (if over insert 'over 18') Occupation Police Constable

This statement (consisting of 4 page(s), each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it, anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature Sean Vine

Date 15.05.2018

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded (supply witness details on rear).

I am PC 2718 VINE of the AVON AND SOMERSET CONSTABULARY currently stationed at BATH POLICE STATION.

On Monday 14th May 2018 I was on duty in uniform deployed as QPR 212 solo crewed.

At about 1755hrs; whilst in company with PC 4242 MERRYWEATHER; we were tasked to attend 21 CALTON WALK in BATH regarding a concern for welfare for the occupant, Scott LAFFERTTY bn 25.04.1957.

At about 1800hrs on arriving at the property which is an end of terrace 3 story house I observed that the property appeared to be secure at the front which accessed the ground level.

The door was locked/secure and windows closed. I knocked the door several times loudly and shouted through the letter box but got no response other than from the dogs that were barking.

I could see a large quantity of post on the floor but also a large pile on the stairs.

We then proceeded to the rear of the property that accesses the 2nd floor of property. This also appeared all secure with the rear 6ft gate locked. PC MERRYWEATHER climbed the 6ft wall and confirmed the rear patio door was also secure along with the windows.

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PC MERRYWEATHER reported excessive amounts of what appeared to be dog excrement located on the 2nd floor having looked in via the rear patio doors as well as noting the property appeared to be under renovation.

There were open windows on the 3rd floor at the rear and to the side of the house (as if on the midway latch) however these would be very difficult to access from outside the property without a ladder.

I then spoke with two female occupants of the adjoining property, no.22 CALTON WALK. They advised that they did not know the occupant of no.21 but do see him come and go however they hadn't in a week or so.

One of the females stated she had been away this last week but the other said she hadn't seen him either. She stated how her room is his side of the property and she normally hears him but again hadn't of late. Both females confirmed though having heard the dogs barking.

Having then liaised with comms regarding the original concerns it was agreed that entry would need to be gained, applying section 17 PACE.

During this complete period of time, the dogs could be heard barking from within the property.

I checked my marked Police vehicle for suitable equipment but unfortunately had none.

Whilst trying to arrange for equipment to be brought to us I assessed the door further and noted it was only secured by the main lock (composite type door that cant be opened from the outside unless with a key) and on a good shove the door opened causing no damage.

A golden Labrador came down as we entered and looked quite malnourished before disappearing back upstairs. We later found a second dog, medium, black and long haired but I do not know the breed that also appeared malnourished.

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Calling out Police and checking floor by floor the ground floor was clear and appeared all in order. The ground floor comprising of one main room to the left of the front door on walking in, with a WC straight ahead that run underneath the stairs that were located on the right hand side of the property.

On walking up the stairs to the 2nd floor an unpleasant smell become more prominent as did the quantity of dog excrement.

Both the ground floor and 2nd floor were under renovation.

Having then cleared the 2nd floor which comprised of predominantly one large open plan area, we moved to the 3rd floor again with the stairs on the right hand side.

The 3rd floor comprised of a front room being used as a living room with a WC and main bedroom on the left side of the property and a small room located at the rear.

On the very small landing area appeared to be human remains that I believed to be that of the bottom part of the jaw, with teeth.

We then located a body, that appeared to be male and who I suspect to be LAFFERTY in the main bedroom.

The bedroom door was open and LAFFERTY was face down, head near the threshold of the doorway (bedroom/landing) with his arms/hands close into the body, on the right hand side. The haed was facing to its left and it was clear that they were deceased due to the level of decomposition.

The deceased was wearing what appeared to be pyjama trousers and no top. There was heavy yellow/orange discolouration to the skin on the back, fluid pooling and heavy discolouration to the extremities especially the hands that were almost black.

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Most notably was the lack of any flesh on the head/face that exposed most of the skull. There was a small amount of hair at the base of the skull but the top and face was completely skinless and hairless. There was dark coloured hair over the floor on the landing/front living room area but unsure if this was the deceased's or the black dog.

There were no obvious signs of any disturbance nor any suspicious fluids/blood in the property.

In the main bedroom near the deceased and in line with the open bedroom door was what I would describe as a small silver flat edged kitchen knife that appeared clean (of any blood or obvious substances).

Having located who I believed to be LAFFERTY I contacted comms and provided them with an update. We also requested a supervisor to attend.

Arrangements were then made for the dogs to be taken to ROSEMARY VETINARY LODGE on WELLSAWAY in BATH that at about 1900hrs PC MERRYWEATHER and I completed. It was about this time PS 2250 PHILLIPS and PC 4497 PETERS passed on us on THE HOLLOWAY on route to the property.

During my time at the property additional windows were opened, as well as the rear 2nd floor door. Also those windows already open on the latch were opened further, all to assist with the smell etc.

I observed various items of value in the property such as laptops and power tools awithnd nothing else, other than the knife as mentioned, appearing out of place or disturbed.

Sean Vine

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