

STATEMENT

Place : Haditha Dam, IZ

Date : 21Mar06

RPB I, LCPL Roel Ryan BRIONES, USMC, [REDACTED], make the following free and voluntary statement to Robert A McDaniel whom I know to be a Representative of the United States Naval Criminal Investigative Service. I make this statement of my own free will and without any threats made to me or promises extended. I fully understand that this statement is given concerning my knowledge of dead Iraqis that I saw in Haditha IZ on 19Nov05. *RPB*

RPB For background purpose, I am an Hispanic male who was born on 17Dec84 at [REDACTED]. My social security number is [REDACTED] and I am currently a LCPL USMC, assigned to 3rd squad, 3rd Platoon, Kilo Company, 3/1, 1st MARDIV. I have black hair brown eyes. I am 5'6" tall and weigh 140 lbs. I am infantryman for the Marine Corps. *RPB*

RPB On 19Nov05, I was asleep at Firm Base Sparta, Haditha, IZ when I was awoken to fallen in for a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) to assist and Marine Convoy that had been ambushed. It was about 0710 when the QRF team that I was member of left Sparta. My team consisted of four HMVEs and I rode in the last one. I remember LPCL ZELEDA, LCPL PRENTICE, CPL BITSKIE, LCPL TRAN, PFC ZUNIGGA, LCPL WRIGHT, HN HATCH, LCPL NARY and Squad Leader CPL SANCHEZ were with me. *RPB*

RPB As we were leaving Sparta, I heard on the radio that there was one KIA to the convoy we were going to assist. The convoy was on RTE Chestnut and we approached it from the west off Leopard. We arrived at the ambush site at around 0715/0720. *RPB*

RPB I recall seeing a smoking HMVE whose cab and engine area had been destroyed. I did not notice any gunfire or any parked white vehicles along the road. I disbursed LCPL NAREY, ZUNIGGA and WRIGHT for security to watch a group of buildings that were right along the road south of Chestnut. Those building were between the intersection of Zebra and Viper. *RPB*

RPB After positioning them, I ran over to the IED site where the HMVE was destroyed and discovered that my best friend LCPL TERRAZES had been killed in that explosion and LCPL CROSSAN was stuck underneath the vehicle. I was there when HN WHITT when he pulled CROSSAN out from underneath the vehicle and then we placed him into a HMVE with GUZMAN who was also injured. GUZMAN got into a HMVE with the help of other marines. I was at the IED site for about 20 minutes before we departed to take the two casualties to LZ Bull for them to be medivac. *RPB*

RPB During those twenty minutes I do not recall any gun fire going on, but I am not saying there wasn't gunfire because I was in shock that my friend had died. I was so tied up in getting casualties loaded into vehicles and out of there I did not notice what the members of the ambush convoy were doing. After arriving at LZ Bull we waited another five minutes and then a helo arrived and took away the casualties. After that my convoy went back to Sparta and remained the rest of the day until about 1700. *RPB*

ON 21 MAR 06.

Then at 1700, the my QRF force, Spartan 3/3, which was made up in the same convoy formation as earlier that day, went back to the ambush sited on Chestnut in order to pickup bodies from the firefight. I remember we did not have enough gloves to protect us from BIO Hazards of the bodies, so I was designated as a photographer and WRIGHT was designated to place a number over the body as I photographed it so we could tell which house we got it from. *RRB*

RRB We took the pictures before moving the bodies. We wanted to photograph them just as they were discovered. Thus, some of the bodies had robes and long dresses on and I could not tell their sex or their age. We did not expose their faces and photograph each face. Just the body themselves, however, some of the faces were depicted when photographing the whole body because the face was exposed was naturally exposed anyways. *RRB*

RRB Attached to this statement is an overlay of the general area with the four houses that I went into. Each house is number 1 through 4. Then there are sketches of Houses 1, 2, and 4 in which I saw bodies. These are the houses that I am referring to in this statement. *RRB*

RRB The first house I went to was house number 1. It was dark and we needed flashlights in order to see. I could not see much detail in this house, but I recall my eyes hurting because there had been a fire in this house. I remember the first body I photographed and WRIGHT numbered was an adult female laying in the hallway near the stairwell. I can not recall where she had been injured at or any detail about her. I just took one photo of her. *RRB*

RRB was using my Olympus digital camera and the second body I photographed was badly burned and laying in a scorched room. I could not tell the sex or the age of that individual. But it was in a room across the hallway from the dead female near the stair well. It should have been listed as number 2 on my photographs. *RRB*

RRB The next two bodies I photographed, 3, and 4, were laying in about the middle of the room which was to the left of the bottom of the stairwell. They had robes on and I could not tell their sex or age by the size of there outline. *RRB*

RRB I only took one photo each of the bodies in houses 1 and 2. I never moved the bodies around to try and get a better look at them in order to determine their age or sex, so most of the bodies I saw were in robes and it was hard to distinguish age and sex. *RRB*

RRB After house 1, WRIGHT and I went to house 2. I photographed # 3 who was lying on the floor inside the building near the entrance way into the kitchen. That individual was an adult male, but I could not tell where he had been wounded. Then I moved back into the house near a corner room where there were five more bodies. I remember one of these bodies looked like a teenage female and one of them was about the size of an eight to ten year old. I did not move the bodies so I do not know where their injuries were, however, you could see blood on their clothing. Again it was dark and my visibility was limited. *RRB*

RRB can not recall any of the individuals that I photographed in house 1 and 2 having portions of their body missing or other notable wounds, except for the individual who burned in house 1. That body was damaged so much by the fire that it was hard to tell what it was. *RRB*

RRB So after photographing the bodies in houses 1 and 2, WRIGHT borrowed my camera and photographed an individual on the ridge line behind house 1. I think someone might have told me that individual was a male, but I never saw the victim so I am not certain. I viewed my camera that night, but I do not recall who the person was on the ridgeline. *RRB*

RRB *RRB*

ON 21 MAR 06.

After WRIGHT took that photo we went to house 3 on the diagram and walked along the wall which is in front of the houses to house 4. When I got to house 4 some of the bodies had already been removed so I did not photograph any of the bodies still inside. I walked into the building and in a back bedroom I saw one dead male Iraqi inside the bedroom's doorway and two others inside the bedroom. I remember they were well built adult males wearing gym clothing which was similar to what the Iraqi insurgents wore (loose pants and loose long sleeve shirt)

I was given a pair of leather gloves and I helped carry out two of the males. I remember one was hit in the chest and another hit somewhere in the head, I can not recall exactly where in the head. I do not recall which body had which wound so I am not able to include that information on my diagram depicting where the bodies were in house 4. After loading those bodies onto the HMV we drove back to Firm Base Sparta.

We had a total of about 23 or 24 bodies in the three HMVs that were used to carry them. I think the other bodies came from a vehicle that had been shot at near the ambush site and other locations that I did not observe.

Once we got Firm Base Sparta I turned my camera over to the Command Operation Center on Sparta so they could down load the photographs. I do not recall who I spoke to there, but when I returned about two hours later the personnel in the COC said they had completed the down load and I could take my camera.

I picked up my camera from the map table in the COC and checked to see if they deleted the images. They had not deleted the images, so I did. I did the deletion about 15 to 20 minutes after picking it up and I did not down load the images anywhere nor did I allow anyone else to do so. So as far as I know only I and COC had the images from my camera, and I have deleted my images.

Since that time I have re-formatted my camera at least on two occasions. It was 1st Squad, 3rd Platoon that had gotten ambushed on 19Nov05 and I have not spoken to any of those members about what happened inside the above homes. The only conversations I had dealt with the death of LCPL TERRAZES and how LCPL CROSSAN survived the blast.

This statement, consisting of this page and two others was typed for me by Robert A McDaniel as we discussed its contents. I have read and understand the above statement. I have been given the opportunity to make any changes or corrections I desire to make and have placed my initials over the changes or corrections. This statement is truth to best of best of my knowledge and belief.

[Signature]
Roel Ryan Briones

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 21st day March 2006 at Haditha, IZ.

[Signature]
Representative, Naval Criminal Investigative Service
Auth: Derived from Article 136, UCMJ (10 U.S.C. 936)
And 5 U.S.C. 303

[Handwritten initials]

Page 3 of 3 pages

SUBJ: S/WUTERICH, FRANK D/SSGT USMC

U.S. NAVAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE

INVESTIGATIVE ACTION

22MAR06

CONTROL: 13MARC6-MEBJ-C164-7HMA

S/WUTERICH, FRANK D/SSGT USMC
M/W/MEE6/N/[REDACTED]/24FEB84/CONNECTICUT

SEIZURE OF BRIONES' CAMERA

At approximately 1600, 21Mar06, Reporting Agent requested LCPL Roel Ryan BRIONES, USMC, to turn over his Olympus Camedia digital camera D-560 for examination in order to determine if the camera still had images of Iraqis who were killed on 19Nov05.

Earlier that day, BRIONES had provided a statement in which he stated Command had directed him to utilize his camera to document the bodies who were killed during a engagement with insurgents in the vicinity of the intersections of military route Chestnut, Zebra, and Viper on 19Nov05.

BRIONES stated that he still had the camera; however, it had malfunctioned and that he had formatted the memory chip twice since 19Nov05. The camera BRIONES provided was the above model with serial number 269269122. The camera was obtained and no images could be seen on the camera; however, the camera also indicated the memory card was full.

Later on in the evening of 20Mar06, Special Agent Matthew MARSHALL had obtained from LCPL James L. PRENTICE, USMC, images reportedly from the death scenes on 19Nov05. PRENTICE had claimed that he obtained the images from LCPL WRIGHT, USMC who BRIONES had claimed assisted him in photographing the images on 19Nov05.

BRIONES was allowed to view the images and he verified that they were taken from the death scenes; however, he said they were taken at a different angle than what he recalled, suggesting another camera was used.

On 22Mar06, it was determined the camera had to be examined by a laboratory to try and obtain images from the camera memory and memory chip it contained. Subsequently, BRIONES was approached and asked to execute a permissive authorization to seize the camera that was already at NCIS temporary office space at Haditha, Dam, IZ.

BRIONES stated it was his only camera and he did not want to be without it. He further stated he would voluntarily surrender it if he was given money to pay for another one. Reporting Agent replied he would have to seek other avenues to obtain the camera and left.

Reporting Agent immediately went to Command and obtained a Command Authorized search and the camera was subsequently placed into NCIS Bahrain evidence system. BRIONES was provided a copy of the Search Authorization and receipt the following day.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Page 1

WARNING

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF THE NAVAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE
CONTENTS MAY BE DISCLOSED ONLY TO PERSONS WHOSE OFFICIAL DUTIES REQUIRE ACCESS
HEREIN. CONTENTS MAY NOT BE DISCLOSED TO THE PARTY(S) CONCERNED WITHOUT SPECIFIC
AUTHORIZATION FROM THE NAVAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE

SUBJ: S/WUTERICH, FRANK D/SSGT USMC

U.S. NAVAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE

A copy of the Search Authorization and Affidavit was attached as Enclosures (A) and (B). A copy of BRIONES statement, which was attached with the original Affidavit, is not provided as enclosure in this document because it was provided elsewhere in this investigation.

ENCLOSURE

- (A) Affidavit for Search Authorization/22Mar06
- (B) Command Authorization for Search and Seizure/22Mar06

REPORTED BY: ROBERT A. MCDANIEL
OFFICE: NCIS AL ASAD IZ

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Page 2 LAST KWG V2 LNY

WARNING

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF THE NAVAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE
CONTENTS MAY BE DISCLOSED ONLY TO PERSONS WHOSE OFFICIAL DUTIES REQUIRE ACCESS
HERETO. CONTENTS MAY NOT BE DISCLOSED TO THE PARTY(ES) CONCERNED WITHOUT SPECIFIC
AUTHORIZATION FROM THE NAVAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE