

MEMORANDUM

To:	DeLuna Team
From:	Sita Sovin, Lauren Eskenazi Capital Case Project
Date:	November 7, 2004
Re:	Joe Hinajosa Interview October 25, 2004 <i>Carlos DeLuna</i>

Joe Hinajosa

Joe Hinajosa was listed in the Vargas civil suit filed against the Diamond Shamrock gas station as an employee of the Shamrock during the early 1980s.

Joe's Termination

Wanda took Joe's place after he left. Joe was an assistant manager.

The Night of the Wanda Lopez Killing

Joe heard that one of the gas station customers told Wanda about a guy outside the store. "Everyone around there was a drunk." This guy was wandering outside.

There was another customer, a lady, who bought a gallon of milk. This customer told Wanda that the guy outside was no good.

The guy who killed Wanda took a screwdriver from the shelf and held

up and killed Wanda with it.

The store policy was to give a robber money.

Joe heard that Wanda was stabbed with the screwdriver.

Joe can't recall exactly who told him about the murder. It must have been "friends, workers of Sigmore."

Joe did not know Wanda personally.

His supervisor was Pete Gonzales.

Joe still knows Art Lopez. Art still works for Sigmore. He is an Area Manager. Art currently lives in Robstown. Art's family members also work for Sigmore including his brother in law Frank and his father Arturo. Art may have been the one who told Joe about Wanda's murder.

Sigmore Station

People did not drink behind or on the side of the Sigmore station. If that happened, you were supposed to call the police and get rid of them.

If you had more than \$100 in the cash register, you put it into a drop on the floor. Only the manager had a key to the drop.

The cash register was constantly short. This was either because of gas drive offs; employees who took cokes etc.; employees who took cash (or credit cards).

There was no machine which kept count of credit. Therefore, the purchases paid for with a credit card were tallied with an adding machine - not the cash register.

Sometimes there were mistakes related to counting the money. For example, you might just "miss a bundle of 20s."

Employees did not keep a drop sheet to record the amount of cash in the drop box on the floor.

If the cash register was off more than \$100 - employees had to take a polygraph test.

Joe does not know who else used to work with Wanda.

There was no surveillance camera at the Sigmores. "They just didn't have them back then."

Joe heard that the 911 operator heard Wanda say "he's in the store."

When Joe worked at the Sigmores gas station, he called 911 twice. The cops came immediately - no delays.

Photographs

We showed Joe all the crime scene photos. In reference to the photo reflecting a key in a small safe, Joe said that safe was put in after he left the store. It was not there when he worked at the Sigmores.

He also showed us where the screwdrivers were kept in the store - where the perpetrator must have gotten the screwdriver.

Joe verified that there was grass behind the store and the ice machine was in front of the store.

Joe recalled that there was a public phone inside the gas station store.

Joe never went to the Casino Club.

He not recognize the photos of Manuel; Wanda; Frankie/CH/Margie; CH/CDL.

Other Store Policies/Events

You could not have a weapon on you when you worked your shift.

Joe never heard that the Sigmore had been robbed days after Wanda's murder.

Joe heard that the perpetrator was found under a car 20-30 minutes after the crime.

The gas station was located in a high crime area. There were drugs floating around that area. Wolfy's was not high crime although people said that it was a Bikers Club. The Bikers owned the club and were making money - they were not doing anything criminal.

In Joe's opinion, the guy at Wolfy's ran out of money and was "too drunk." He went to the gas station to get free beer and held up Wanda.

The Shamrock "worked you to death." The station was under-staffed; you worked at minimum wage and never got a raise unless there was an increase in minimum wage.

Joe does not know where Abigail Lopez is. She is the same age as Art Lopez.

There were local customers from the neighborhood that patroned the gas station on a regular basis. They were older and are probably dead now.

The Sigmores station did an inventory of their stock weekly.

Joe worked from 3pm to midnight - the same shift Wanda worked.

About one week after Joe left the Shamrock, he was told a girl named Wanda Lopez replaced him. He thinks Art Lopez told him this information.