

[Material that is irrelevant to Los Tocayos Carlos and contains sensitive personal information about one or more persons has been removed.]

To: DeLuna Investigation Team
From: Susan Montez
Re: Meeting with Mary Ann Perales Benavides
Date: July 16, 2004

Mary Ann Perales Benavides
[Material removed]

I met with Mary Ann Perales Benavides in her home [material removed] [in] Corpus Christi, TX on July 16, 2004. Mary Ann and Linda, the Perales sisters, were a part of Carlos's alibi for his movements on the night of Wanda Lopez's murder. The following are my impressions.

Mary Ann is about five foot four and full-figured. She has long, blonde-streaked hair and wears dark eye makeup. She was very friendly, forthcoming and did not appear to be at all suspicious. She was mildly curious as to why we were doing this project, because, "He's already dead, isn't he?" I explained what Peso and I were doing in very broad terms – a project involving investigation of the facts and circumstances of a past capital case, under the direction of a law professor at Columbia – and that sufficed.

Mary Ann lives with her husband and four children in an orderly and well-kept middle class neighborhood. The house was a one-story ranch style, furnished with velvet-covered furniture and wood and glass tables and shelves. Garlands of artificial, dark green leaves were strung along the tops of the walls of the living and dining rooms. Photographs of Mary Ann's children were everywhere. She is a photographer and took many of the pictures herself.

Mary Ann stated that she did not see Carlos DeLuna on the night of the Lopez murder. She was not with her sister Linda, they did not go to the skating rink, and they did not give Carlos DeLuna and Carlos Hernandez a ride in a yellow Pinto. Mary Ann said that her mother owned a yellow Pinto back when they were all in junior high. She never understood why Carlos told that story, but she thought he may have used her and her sister for his alibi because he had not seen them for years, and maybe he thought that they had moved away and so could not be located to testify. Mary Ann remembered that, when she entered the courtroom, Carlos DeLuna's eyes widened in surprise. He was asked if Mary Ann was the same person he saw the night of the murder, and did she look exactly the same as that night? He answered yes. Mary Ann said by the time of the trial she'd gotten quite skinny, but at the time of the murder she was "out to here," and gestured a big belly with her arms.

Mary Ann said she never knew Carlos DeLuna, but she did know who he was. She knew Manuel, Carlos's older brother, because he was sweet on her older sister Linda. Mary Ann did not remember ever seeing Carlos in any school she attended, but she did remember Manuel. Mary Ann stated that Manuel often talked about his brother Carlos. He said things such as: Carlos was crazy, Carlos pawned the VCR, Carlos was mean to their parents. Mary Ann said she was never interested in meeting Carlos.

One night when she was about 17, Linda took her to the Casino Club because she didn't want to go there alone. Carlos was there, because at some point during the evening Linda, or maybe it was Manuel, pointed Carlos out to Mary Ann. Mary Ann was nervous because she was under age. She glanced at Carlos, but did not want to talk to or meet him. She thought he was wearing a long coat. She remembered Carlos as being "kind of big, stocky." That and the fact that she'd been told Carlos was crazy made her very nervous. I asked how tall he was and she

answered that Carlos looked as tall as her husband. Her husband is five foot seven.

Mary Ann remembered Rose DeLuna in school. They were not friends. Rose kept to herself and was not an outgoing person. Mary Ann thought that Rose always looked as if she was unhappy. If you saw Rose in the hallway and said hi, she didn't respond.

Mary Ann said that Manuel was very skinny in school. It was later, when he was an adult, that he got heavier. She showed me a picture of her sister Linda with Manuel at the time of their marriage. Mary Ann said that Manuel was a very nice man, but a compulsive liar and financially irresponsible. He wrote bad checks and ran up a lot of credit card debt. Linda wound up in very bad financial circumstances. It took a long time for her to recover from that. Linda and Manuel were married for about one year. Mary Ann told her that she kept picking the wrong kind of man. **[Material removed]**

Mary Ann did not know Carlos Hernandez, but she had received a phone call from someone in prison who called himself Carlos Hernandez. It was around the time of the DeLuna trial, and it frightened her. I asked if it was a collect call. She said she didn't think so, but could not remember. She'd been asleep and the call awakened her. She then said it must have been a collect call, otherwise how would she know it was from the prison? She could not remember if it was collect or not. Mary Ann then asked if I had a picture of Carlos Hernandez. I showed her the color photo obtained from Captain Rivera of the sheriff's department. Mary Ann said that the man in the photo did not look familiar. Mary Ann then asked if I had talked with Priscilla, who is the niece of Carlos Hernandez. I told her that I was planning to. Mary Ann wished me luck, because Priscilla may be very hard to find. Mary Ann said that Priscilla has

about nine children, all with different men. Priscilla also had a baby with her half brother. It was a girl, and Priscilla didn't want her, so she gave her to Mary Ann's sister Linda, who raised her. Mary Ann thought that Priscilla's father was Beto Vela, Linda's first husband. Mary Ann was not familiar with the names Oscar Schilling, Fernando Schilling or Freddie Schilling. She advised that Linda would know much more about Priscilla and her family.

While I was there, Mary Ann telephoned Linda and asked her a few questions about Carlos DeLuna. Linda told her that Carlos's parents were old and very strict. The house had to be kept immaculately clean at all times, or the kids got in trouble. Linda told Mary Ann she would meet with me. I said I would contact her when I returned from Houston. Mary Ann told me that Linda's current husband is "better than the first two."

As I was getting ready to leave, Mary Ann asked if I had a picture of Carlos DeLuna. I showed her a photo of Carlos (not the arrest photos), and she stated, "Oh yes, I remember that chubby face."