

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

James J. Vanecek – Summary

[material removed]

by Kate Wagner McCoy

Firefighter. Drove ambulance.

[Since this interview was longer [material removed], I've reorganized and summarized my notes but included the full notes at the bottom in case you want them.]

When they arrived the police had already arrived, but probably less than a minute ahead of them. He thinks they had checked inside the store, determined the attacker had fled, and secured the scene. He thinks it was two patrol cars with one officer each. He remembers seeing a police car there parked. He then arrived on the fire truck. About a minute later the ambulance arrived from his same fire house, but he imagines they were returning from a call since they didn't get there as fast (normally the ambulance arrives before fire b/c the truck is smaller). He thinks they all got there very fast. The fire department is about 1 ½ miles from the Shamrock and he remembers them really hustling b/c the call came in as critical. **Initial call said there was a stabbing, a woman alone at the store was stabbed severely with much blood loss.**

When he arrived at the scene, Lopez was outside on the sidewalk in front of the store just to the left of the door (left as you face the entrance from outside the building). She was lying in the fetal position on her right side holding the side of her chest where she was stabbed with her head facing the inside of the store. (He later said her arms were to her side.) There was a trail of blood from inside the store. She was already gasping for air, clearly dying. She couldn't talk.

He said they started CPR and gave her an IV very soon after arriving. He describe what sounds like a pneumothorax – her lung was punctured and being compressed by air that was entering through the wound. But he doesn't remember seeing the wound himself. He thinks other crew members might have. But he thinks it was only one wound, and believes it was on her left side. **He thought it was still bleeding though when they were there and remembers seeing quite a bit of blood.**

He thinks there were no civilians there. He does not remember there being anyone inside the store or standing around. He did not get a real look inside the store, just remembers the trail of blood. He didn't remember anyone talking about the knife or anyone asking for it or seeing it around the store. He thinks a PO stated **a Hispanic male probably by himself committed offense. Middle twenties. Fled the scene.**

He had a more detailed impression of the stabbing, but is not sure where he got the ideas from, maybe from the media. He believed that the suspect was trying to rob some money from the clerk and the clerk was able to slip away and go to the phone and she turned her back away from the attacker and the attacker saw that she was on the phone and that was when he came up behind her with the knife and stabbed her in the side. She had to be standing up when she was stabbed and then he came from behind and stabbed her with the knife. He did not remember anything relating to her brother showing up. He doesn't have any sense of the subsequent investigation. In those days the FD radios did not pick up PD radio traffic so he couldn't hear their progress. He followed the investigation and trial through the newspapers for the next few months but

didn't know anything more direct. *[It was interesting though to see this was obviously a big event for him. I had to explain why I was calling to his wife who was screening, and she knew immediately which incident I was talking about.]*

Possible follow up: I can call back in a few days to see if he remembers anything else or if he's thought of some other crew members who might remember more. If I want to find other crew members, each house keeps a daily log and they should have old ones stored in the house. Someone could ask the Station Capt for Station 8 for the 1983 log (better in person) if we wanted to figure out who else was on Engine 8 or Medic 8.

FULL CALL NOTES for James J. Vanecek

(Background: He was hired twice by CC FD. First hired Nov '72, worked 9 years then quit. 14 months later he started again in Sept '82. He remembered the stabbing occurring around this time of year in '84 or '83. Getting certified as an EMT was condition of his appt to the fire department. He can't remember his rank then, not sure if he was a junior captain, prob not. Probably the driver capt on Engine 8 which meant he drove the fire truck.)

He remembered the stabbing as being mid-morning. He said the shift starts at 8:00. Thinks dispatched around 9 / 9:30. *[I didn't tell him otherwise, just let him tell it as he remembered, but I could bring it up when I call back.]* He remembers it b/c it was one of his first fatal forensic calls.

When they arrived on scene, Lopez was outside in front of the store, on the sidewalk in front of the store. Not in front of the door but laying prone position on her side in the fetal position. Legs up to her chest, holding the side of her chest where she was stabbed. Not thrashing around, a little bit. Grasping for air. When we arrived, when first firefighter put hands on for first aid she was already gasping for air, dying. Did immediate emergency lifesaving measures for her. **She did lose quite a bit of blood. Blood inside the store, trail where she came from inside the store out to where she apparently got too weak from blood and shock.** She fell right on the sidewalk next to the entrance door. When you're facing the entrance door she was right to the left of the door. Her head was facing towards the inside of the store. She was laying on her right side, legs were up and arms were to her side. Opening and closing her mouth, an indication to us that she was dying.

We administered first aid, put a bandaid over her, sticky one side like tape, put it over the stab wound. Inside was compromised and lungs don't function good. Proper metabolism of lung function is compromised where it punctures through chest wall into the lungs there's a compromise right there. Immediately they applied like a big bandaid. *[Sounds like occlusive dressing.]* Immediately started CPR on her b/c couldn't find no pulse. Immediately started IV on her. When lose too much blood volume body goes into shock. Need to replace that with solution (Sodium CL or other.) Start a drip to try to replace lost volume of blood she had. Loaded her up on the ambulance. Matter of 5 minutes.

He might have even been the one to drive the ambulance to the hospital. Believe they went to Mem Hosp. Yes, he did drive. Chief supervisor arrived on the scene just as they were loading her up. Told him to drive, he drove to hospital and fire truck followed.

Doesn't remember what the wound looked like. Fire truck got there before

ambulance did. Doesn't remember seeing the wound. Some of the other crew members walked a little bit faster than him, probably got to her first. They applied pressure. **Still some blood coming out. As long as heart is still pumping, still pushing blood out.** Ambulance arrived about a minute later.

PD were there already, had the area secured already. Saw a CC car there, parked, with lights on.

He tried to remember if he heard anything about the crime. Typically there was some talking going on among crew members about the crime, especially when lead medic on ambulance arrives and tries to get scenario. PO stated Hispanic male probably by himself committed offense. **Middle twenties. Fled the scene.**

The fire radios at that time couldn't pick up police officer communications so he didn't hear any subsequent radio exchanges.

He thinks she crawled out and then lost so much blood and got so shocky that when they got there she was laying outside the store.

Heard over the radio that it was a stabbing call, a woman alone at the store was stabbed severely with much blood loss. When we heard that that was indication that we pushed the fire truck a little faster to get over there. It's just about a mile and a half.

Blood on clothes? She had quite a bit of blood.

On scene he thinks there were 2 police cars with 1 patrolman each.

No civilians around. She was there by herself in the front. He didn't see anybody in the store, nobody was around her, nobody was assisting her. PD was not doing any kind of emergency first aid. We shortly arrived after they arrived. They arrived just shortly before we arrived. PD back then were only taught very basic first aid.

He worked the C shift. They have three shifts, all 24 hours long. Fire station is manned 24 hours a day with a crew. Doesn't remember other crew members. But he'll see if he can remember. I can call back in a few days.

He believes it was Medic 8 that came from station 8 (same station). When they got the call Medic 8 was not in the station. More likely they were returning back from another call. If they were there they would have gotten out faster.

Was the lady's name Mrs. Luna? He remembered either the victim or the attacker had the name Luna. Name doesn't mean anything to him, just remembered it.

PD had checked inside the store, suspect was not inside the store, fled the store. Thinks it was that only one stab wound that she got. I think the suspect was trying to either rob some money from the clerk and the clerk was able to slip away and go to the phone and she turned her back away from the attacker and the attacker saw that she was on the phone and that was when **he came up behind her with the knife and stabbed her in the side. She had to be standing up when she was stabbed and then he came from behind and stabbed her with the knife. He thinks she got stabbed on the left side.** He didn't remember anyone talking about the knife or anyone asking for it or seeing it around the store. If you puncture either aorta or arterial vein there will be massive bleeding on the inside. Anything like a stab wound, person has better chance of survival if the weapon that was used is left in the body. That tool is applying pressure inside the body.

No memory of brother showing up.

Station Capt for all the stations, they keep a daily log. On the daily log if you

can find it, have to call Station 8 talk to a captain, (maybe go in person) maybe will look in the library, storage area, look for the daily log for that year. It would have a record of all the crew members on Engine 8 and Medic 8.