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**CITY OF PORTLAND
INDEPENDENT POLICE REVIEW
Confidential Taped Statement
Investigator Eric Berry**

14 **Interview Date:** 05/31/2016
15 **IPR #:** 14-B-0014
16 **IPR File Name:** 14b-0014-wells
17 **Complainant:** Portland Police Bureau

18 **Interviewed:** Perilynn Wells

19 **BERRY:** This is IPR Investigator ERIC BERRY. Today's date is Tuesday, 05/31/16, and the time is
20 approximately 1:50. I am present at a conference room at Harney County EMS for an interview with
21 Perilynn Wells. Ms. Wells, are you aware that I am recording our conversation?

22 **WELLS:** Yes, I am.

23 **BERRY:** Outstanding. Thank you very much. And what do you do for Harney County EMS?

24 **WELLS:** Actually, it's Harney County Health District.

25 **BERRY:** Thank you. Okay. Harney County Health District, okay.

26 **WELLS:** Or – yeah. In common terminology, it's Harney District Hospital EMS.

27 **BERRY:** Okay. Harney District Hospital EMS. So when I type it up I'll call it that. Thank you.

28 **WELLS:** Yeah. And I work for the district as the safety officer for the district.

29 **BERRY:** Okay.

30 **WELLS:** And then I'm also a casual EMT, and I also am a first responder. I go out from home because I
31 live out in the county.

32 **BERRY:** Okay. Excellent. And did you respond to a negligent or an accidental discharge incident, I think
33 on April 21st?

34 **WELLS:** I don't remember the exact day, but there was an accidental discharge or possible ricochet in
35 Fields?

36 **BERRY:** Yeah. That's the one. Will you kind of describe how it is you came to respond to that call?

37 **WELLS:** I was on duty –

38 **BERRY:** On duty.

39 **WELLS:** – and got called out.

40 **BERRY:** Got toned out?

41 **WELLS:** We were toned out to somebody who had been shot, possibly by a ricochet. I don't remember the
42 exact words, and they were in the Fields area and would be meeting us at Fields Station.

43 **BERRY:** Okay.

44 **WELLS:** It's a restaurant, gas station, a little motel down there.

45 **BERRY:** I've been down – I don't think I've been that far south in the Catlow before.

46 **WELLS:** It takes a while to get there.

47 **BERRY:** Yeah, it looks like – I was looking at a map. It's a ways from here.

48 **WELLS:** It is, yeah. It's at the edge of our service area.

49 **BERRY:** So do you get toned out directly from here? From in Burns?

WELLS: Yeah. The dispatch is over at the sheriff's office.

BERRY: Okay, and how long –

WELLS: So the 911 call goes into there, and then we're dispatched by radio.

BERRY: Okay. And how long did it take you to make it to Fields Station?

WELLS: Oh man.

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50 **BERRY:** A while?
51 **WELLS:** I'd have to look at the run sheet. Driving – just regular driving – it can be almost 2 hours.
52 **BERRY:** Wow.
53 **WELLS:** I think it's like 100 miles down there. But, you know, we travel at a little higher speed, so hour
54 20, hour – somewhere around there.
55 **BERRY:** Still takes a while to get down there.
56 **WELLS:** Yeah, it takes a while.
57 **BERRY:** Well and will you describe what you saw when you arrived there at Fields Station?
58 **WELLS:** When we arrived, the person was already on scene – the person who had been shot – and was in
59 the backseat of a pickup. So the door was opened, and he was sitting behind the passenger seat on the right.
60 And there were – there was a sheriff's deputy there, and there was a refuge officer. So Fish and Wildlife, I
61 suppose.
62 **BERRY:** Yeah.
63 **WELLS:** And then I think that the guys – the group that was together, they had either two or three pickups.
64 I remember seeing the one that he was in – the patient was in – was pointed at Fields Station, and then
65 there was another one pulled up beside, and there was some guy sitting on the tailgate. They were part of
66 the group. And so we – and the first responder. Our first responder, DEBBY, was there.
67 **BERRY:** Okay, yeah. Her too.
68 **WELLS:** Yeah. She had been on scene and we had been in contact with her on the way down.
69 **BERRY:** She was the first medical person to arrive wasn't she?
70 **WELLS:** Yes. She is an emergency medical responder, so she's an EMR.
71 **BERRY:** Okay. And then what actions did you take at the scene?
72 **WELLS:** Assessment.
73 **BERRY:** Assessment.
74 **WELLS:** We jump out. It was a three-person crew, so it was TRAVIS is the paramedic, and then CHRISTI
75 BANTON was the other EMT, and she was the driver, and then I was the third person, EMT.
76 **BERRY:** Okay, and did you have any contact with the victim?
77 **WELLS:** Yes. Yeah. We jump out, we grab our bags, we go over and start doing an assessment on a
78 patient. We take vital signs. The paramedic talks to him about what's happened, medications that he might
79 have been taking, when did he eat last, how is he feeling, where is the pain. You know, starting to do that
80 assessment. It's a physical assessment or trauma assessment.
81 **BERRY:** Mm-hm.
82 **WELLS:** To find out what's going on and what effects there might be pain-wise and neurologically any
83 damage. That kind of thing. Just start the assessment.
84 **BERRY:** Excellent. And do you recall any statements he made as you assessed him?
85 **WELLS:** That it sucked that it happened. He was – our assessment is us asking a lot of questions about
86 how he's feeling. Is he having any nausea? Where's his pain? How bad's the pain? That kind of thing.
87 **BERRY:** Yeah.
88 **WELLS:** And when – when there are three of us, one of us may – kind of splits off and talks to other
89 people that are there who may have seen it. How's he been doing? Is he progressing? Has it gotten worse?
90 You know, what's going on? And also talking to the EMR that was there about what was happening and
91 did the vitals change and that kind of thing. I helped with the vitals a little bit –
92 **BERRY:** Mm-hm.

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93 **WELLS:** – and I started talking to our first responder that was there and hearing what she had to say and
94 getting the paperwork that she had for us where she listed her vital signs that she was taking and that kind
95 of thing. And I, you know, I briefly talked to some of the guys that were with him. His friends.
96 **BERRY:** Yeah.
97 **WELLS:** And, you know, I don't remember exactly what was said. I was not aware that the gentleman that
98 you're investigating was the Chief of Police of Portland. You know, that isn't something that he would
99 probably shout to the world right then.
100 **BERRY:** Yeah.
101 **WELLS:** But he was as – you know, they were all very visibly distraught. They were upset that this
102 happened. We asked questions about what type of bullets were used so we would know size. So a 22-
103 caliber and that everybody was shooting 22-caliber. And, you know, just pieces and parts of it. You know,
104 they thought it was a ricochet, you know. Well how does that happen – were you shooting by rocks? You
105 know, what was going on? You know, we're trying to get an idea of the impact. Was it – because there's a
106 difference between a little tiny piece of a bullet entering somebody's body or the whole thing going straight
107 in. If it was ricochet, there's less velocity I'm assuming and would do less damage.
108 **BERRY:** Makes sense.
109 **WELLS:** But if they were shot directly, I mean the bullet went straight into his back, then we're looking at
110 more damage because of that, and how close was it and that kind of thing. So we were trying to kind of get
111 an idea what was happening, and I'm not clear on that.
112 **BERRY:** Well that's what I was going to ask. Did anybody make any statements about what happened?
113 How he got shot?
114 **WELLS:** They were all firing. They were shooting squirrels.
115 **BERRY:** All right.
116 **WELLS:** And they were sharing the bullets. You know, I don't know if they were passing each other's
117 rifles around. I know that's common. I go out and shoot squirrels every year. I know what goes on, you
118 know? And so the ammo was shared. Like I said, I don't know about the weapons.
119 **BERRY:** Um-hm. Did you have any impression that these guys had been drinking alcohol?
120 **WELLS:** If I had to – at that moment, if I looked at them and the way that they were walking around,
121 talking, how clear they were on what was going on, how clear the patient was on what was going on –
122 **BERRY:** Mm-hm.
123 **WELLS:** – I would not say that they were impaired. To me, they weren't impaired. And there wasn't a
124 strong smell of alcohol, beer, or something like that.
125 **BERRY:** Yeah.
126 **WELLS:** And that is something that you do kind of pick up on.
127 **BERRY:** I imagine.
128 **WELLS:** You know, if you're going out on a scene that's a trauma of some kind or a wreck, you usually
129 can smell the alcohol. If they're impaired, they've had enough, they smell like alcohol.
130 **BERRY:** You can really smell it.
131 **WELLS:** You know, I didn't – I didn't get that impression.
132 **BERRY:** Yeah.
133 **WELLS:** But I wasn't inside the cab with the patient, and I wasn't, you know, this far away from the other
134 guys that I was talking to, but I did talk to them. You know, and I shook hands with them, and, you know,
135 close enough to pat on the shoulder and say hey, I'm really sorry that this happened. You know, kind of
136 ruined your vacation and that kind of thing.

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137 **BERRY:** Well, yeah.
138 **WELLS:** But, I don't think they were – I didn't see that they were impaired.
139 **BERRY:** Now I know that this incident has received some media coverage since the –
140 **WELLS:** Mm-hm.
141 **BERRY:** – story broke. I didn't think to bring a picture of the Portland Chief with me. Have you read any
142 news stories about it? Do you know what he looks like?
143 **WELLS:** I do know what he looks like now, yeah.
144 **BERRY:** So now that you know what he looks like, did you have any special contact with Chief O'DEA?
145 **WELLS:** I talked to him, yeah.
146 **BERRY:** Yeah?
147 **WELLS:** And he had – there was – one of the guys – there were a few guys sitting on the tailgate, and then
148 he was with one of the other guys, and they were both – they seemed like they were closer friends.
149 **BERRY:** Um-hm.
150 **WELLS:** But, you know, they were all just as distraught as the others.
151 **BERRY:** Yeah.
152 **WELLS:** They were all upset. He was – he was with that other guy and was standing and was walking
153 around more. They were – the two that I did go and shake hands with and say I'm really sorry, I mean they
154 were just about in tears, you know. All of them were upset, but –
155 **BERRY:** Yeah.
156 **WELLS:** – yeah. He seemed – those two guys seemed especially upset. And I don't know if – and I can't
157 remember. One of them had a really close relationship with the patient. They had known each other since
158 kindergarten, and I can't remember which one of them it was. I don't know.
159 **BERRY:** Okay.
160 **WELLS:** I don't know. Nobody – nobody ever said, you know, hey, we know that this is the rifle that –
161 that was fired and shot our friend.
162 **BERRY:** Yeah.
163 **WELLS:** Nobody ever – you know, what I was hearing is that we don't know. We don't know who shot
164 and whose bullet it was because we were all shooting.
165 **BERRY:** Okay. Well and just to stick with the chief for just a moment, do you recall anything in particular
166 – anything stand out in your head about what he said about the incident or anything?
167 **WELLS:** No.
168 **BERRY:** No.
169 **WELLS:** No. You know, and I [REDACTED]
170 [REDACTED]
171 **BERRY:** Mm-hm.
172 **WELLS:** – I would remember more because I would think, oh my God, the poor guy.
173 **BERRY:** Right, right.
174 **WELLS:** And I would remember, oh gosh, this poor Chief of Police from Portland. This happened to him.
175 This is terrible. And I would remember more of it, and I probably would've talked to him more. But there
176 was no indication that any one of them was saying, hey, it was my fault. This is my fault.
177 **BERRY:** Yeah.
178 **WELLS:** Or it's his fault or his fault. There was – there was none of that going on while we were there or
179 what I saw.

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180 **BERRY:** Okay. Well, and I've asked you kind of generally, but just specifically what the chief – did you
181 have any impression that he'd been drinking alcohol?
182 **WELLS:** There's a difference between drinking alcohol and being impaired –
183 **BERRY:** Being impaired, yeah.
184 **WELLS:** – to me.
185 **BERRY:** I agree.
186 **WELLS:** He did not give any indication at all that he was impaired.
187 **BERRY:** Okay.
188 **WELLS:** And he was up walking around, so, you know, impaired to me he would have been showing
189 signs of that, and –
190 **BERRY:** Stumbling, slurring his words, something like that.
191 **WELLS:** Nope. None of that.
192 **BERRY:** Could you smell alcohol on his breath?
193 **WELLS:** It didn't make an impression.
194 **BERRY:** Yeah.
195 **WELLS:** So probably not enough – not enough that I would say, whoa, you know, these guys were
196 drinking a little heavy today and that's why somebody got shot, you know. That's –
197 **BERRY:** Yeah.
198 **WELLS:** I didn't get that indication.
199 **BERRY:** Well, and can you describe how your involvement in the incident ended?
200 **WELLS:** Well, we waited for the – the helicopter, actually, was really close behind us.
201 **BERRY:** Mm-hm.
202 **WELLS:** So we had launched them on our way down. Because it is so far out and it was a gunshot wound,
203 we decided that would be the best course for the patient. So they landed shortly after us just a little ways
204 away on one of the side roads.
205 **BERRY:** Yeah.
206 **WELLS:** And they came over, we decided to leave the patient in the back of that pick-up instead of getting
207 him out, putting him in the ambulance and taking him over, so we let the guy drive him over to the
208 helicopter, and we started saying goodbye. He was with the helicopter crew, so we turned him over and we
209 started saying goodbye to the guys that were there. You know, that's when we said, hey, you know, we're
210 really sorry that this happened. And the deputy was taking them one at a time to go and talk to them about
211 what had happened.
212 **BERRY:** Okay.
213 **WELLS:** So he was interviewing them there, but he was taking them separately to talk to them about –
214 **BERRY:** To speak to them separately.
215 **WELLS:** Yes. So we said goodbye and climbed back in our ambulance, and –
216 **BERRY:** Now you've got to go another hour-and-a-half, two hours back north.
217 **WELLS:** Yeah. Yeah.
218 **BERRY:** So Ms. Wells, you put up with me asking a bunch of nosey questions. Is there anything you want
219 to add to our conversation you think I should know about or stands out in your memory?
220 **WELLS:** No. I just, you know, the whole time it was more – it was never, you know, gee – it never entered
221 my mind, geez, you idiots. You know, what the hell were you thinking, you know?
222 **BERRY:** Yeah.

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223 **WELLS:** How could you possibly have let this happen? You were drinking too much or, you know, you're
224 all stumbling drunk. Why were you firing weapons? There was – that never entered my head. It was
225 always, man, this sucks.

226 **BERRY:** Terrible, yeah.

227 **WELLS:** You know, they were over here trying to have some fun. Whether they had a few beers or not, so
228 what? They're on vacation. They're not at work, they're just having some fun, and this happened and it
229 ruined their break. So I felt bad for them. That was – I never – I never had anything from anybody that
230 made me think, oh, you jerk. Nothing, you know, that was bad. Why you'd do that kind of thing?

231 **BERRY:** You know, I may have forgotten to ask you earlier, and I want to make sure. I think you told me
232 earlier no one ever identified themselves as a Portland Police officer?

233 **WELLS:** No.

234 **BERRY:** No? All right.

235 **WELLS:** No, no, no. And I – you know, later I wondered about that, but then, you know, my dad was a
236 cop growing up, you know, and my brother was a cop, and it wasn't something when they were – when
237 they were off duty, if they were just out doing – I mean it wasn't, hey, I'm a cop, you know, kind of thing.
238 And in that situation, I can understand why he didn't.

239 **BERRY:** Yeah.

240 **WELLS:** Yeah. But if I had known, it would've changed my memory. What I kept.

241 **BERRY:** Oh, sure.

242 **WELLS:** Yeah. If I had known, –

243 **BERRY:** I know what you mean.

244 **WELLS:** – I probably would've felt even worse for the guy, but yeah.

245 **BERRY:** Yeah. Well thank you so much for talking to me.

246 **WELLS:** Sure.

247 **BERRY:** It's a big help.

248 **WELLS:** Yeah.

249 **BERRY:** I'm going to go ahead and quit recording. Time is approximately 2:05 hours.

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252 Transcribed 06/13/15 @ 12:27 a.m. Marcelle Ehrhart