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Letter contradicts Shane Lamb's recantation in Johnsburg teen's murder

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By CHELSEA McDOUGALL - cmcdougall@shawmedia.com

WOODSTOCK – In a handwritten letter from inside the McHenry County Jail, Shane Lamb admitted to his role in the disappearance of 17-year-old Brian Carrick.

The letter was sent to the Northwest Herald on Aug. 8.

“I am truly sorry for what happened to Brian,” Lamb wrote. “If I could go back and change things I would but I can’t. I was an 18-year-old kid who punched someone. I never in a million years thought it would turn out like it did, or I would never have been part of something like that. I am not a cold-blooded killer or a monster. I think about Brian every day and it will be like that until I die.”

About a month later, Lamb signed a sworn affidavit saying that was all a lie. A fabrication concocted by the prosecution to implicate Mario Casciaro for Carrick’s murder.

Over the years Lamb has told at least two versions of what went down on Dec. 20, 2002, the night Carrick vanished.

For years, Lamb said he had nothing to do with Carrick’s disappearance. Lamb told that to police. He told that to FBI agents. He told that to a grand jury.

Then in 2010, Lamb was faced with drug charges, and prosecutors offered him a deal: A reduced sentence on the drug case and complete immunity from murder charges.

It was then that Lamb’s account changed.

This time, Lamb said Mario Casciaro sent him to “talk to” Carrick about a drug debt. Lamb said he lost his temper and punched Carrick, who went down.

Lamb told that version to prosecutors. He told it to a different grand jury. He told it to jurors at two trials.

He maintained that account up until Sept. 12, when he signed a sworn statement, recanting it all. He recanted to Casciaro’s appellate attorney. He recanted to producers from ABC’s “20/20.” If he tells it on the witness stand, he could nullify his immunity agreement and face a murder charge.

“Quite simply, he’s got nothing to gain,” his attorney Paul DeLuca said. “He’s got everything to lose. Everything. He’s facing a murder indictment. What does he have to gain?”

His recantation is part of a lengthy petition filed by the attorney handling Casciaro’s appeal. Casciaro’s defense attorney Kathleen Zellner is asking the trial judge to toss Casciaro’s first-degree murder

conviction.

Casciaro is serving 26 years in Menard prison for first-degree murder with intimidation for Carrick's death.

After the early August letter was sent to the Northwest Herald, Lamb began talks with producers from ABC. In the weeks leading up to his recanted testimony, Lamb rejected the state's offer on new weapons charges and retained a private attorney.

In court Aug. 22, he erupted at the prosecutor who once relied on Lamb to help convict Casciaro. Lamb called Assistant State's Attorney Michael Combs a bully.

"One day this guy's shaking my hand, the next day he's trying to put me away for life," Lamb said on one phone call from inside the McHenry County Jail.

The Northwest Herald was provided with about 25 hours of Lamb's phone conversations through a Freedom of Information request.

"I'm not doing this because I'm being vindictive," he said in one call. "These people lost a grocery store, their brother, their son. I can't have that. It wasn't really real until [Casciaro] got convicted. ... I hear he's sitting in Menard prison for 26 years. I can't see him in Menard. The point is, I'm losing sleep at night over it."

Lamb gave indications he would recant in a second letter to the newspaper. That letter, dated Aug. 22, was the same day he exploded on Combs.

"I am sick of being bullied by the McHenry County state's attorneys. It has been going on for 16 years now, enough is enough. It is time for me to do the right thing."

Later he writes. ... "I can tell you with 100% first hand knowledge that both the police and states attorney's [sic] lie."

In his sworn statement, Lamb alleges Combs told him what to say to implicate Casciaro, and Combs knew that story was not the truth.

Lamb's statement to prosecutors was video recorded in 2010.

"Why would I coach a witness, or force a witness to say something when the cameras are rolling, and in the presence of his lawyer?" Combs has said.

After receiving the letters, the Northwest Herald attempted to speak with Lamb at the jail, but he immediately told the reporter to leave, blasting the way he's been portrayed in this newspaper. Lamb is a five-time convicted felon. In 1999 he was arraigned on attempted murder charges. In that case, he did not fire the weapon. The shooter, Bobby Sterling, was sent to a \$12,500-a-month behavioral treatment facility paid for by his family. Lamb was sentenced to a juvenile detention center.

Lamb is set to face a jury in January on the new weapons charges. Casciaro's case was docketed for Oct. 7.

The “20/20” episode will air Friday at 9 p.m. on ABC. The piece includes an interview with Casciaro, who never testified at trial, but has maintained his innocence. His family and attorney also are interviewed. The State’s Attorney’s Office has declined to participate, citing Casciaro’s pending appeal.