

STATEMENT OF PROBABLE CAUSE

Date: January 20, 2017

Police # 04168048000

I, Darron F. Blankenship, a Criminal Investigator with the Missouri State Highway Patrol, upon my oath and under penalties of perjury, state as follows:

1. I have probable cause to believe (Michael Gullett, white male, date of birth December 20, 1955, Crossroads Correctional Center, 1115 E Pence, Cameron, Missouri) committed one or more criminal offenses in Jackson County, Missouri

2. The facts supporting this belief are as follows:

a. On May 29, 2004 a human leg was located at the Missouri River access in Callaway County, Missouri. On May 30, 2004, two fisherman located a human torso in the Missouri River near the 177.5 mile-marker in Moniteau County, Missouri. The head and both legs were missing from the torso. The leg and torso were matched by DNA comparison on June 16, 2004.

b. Doctor Valerie Rao conducted a three-day autopsy at the Boone County Medical Examiner's Office from June 2, 2004 until June 4, 2004. During the autopsy it was believed the bone of the leg had been cut with a heavy instrument such as an axe or hatchet. There were tool marks on the torso from where the head and legs were removed that matched the tool marks from the leg. It was also noted, there were fractured ribs in the torso. Doctor Rao suggested the above described wounds were postmortem and stated the traumatic injuries could explain the cause of death may be found with the victim's head. Doctor Rao believed the leg and torso were dumped in the river between late Thursday, May 27, 2004, to early Saturday, May 29, 2004.

c. On July, 23, 2015, Aaron McDonald an Arizona resident contacted the Missouri State Highway Patrol concerning his missing brother, Ryon McDonald. Aaron McDonald had been on the Missouri State Highway Patrol Missing Person Website in an attempt to locate his brother. During his search, he discovered information and pictures of tattoo's unique to his brother Ryon.

d. A lab report from the Missouri State Highway Patrol Laboratory dated February 16, 2016, was issued. The report explains the DNA comparison was conducted between the victim and his mother. The report indicates with high probability; the victim is in fact Ryon McDonald.

e. On April 7, 2016, I interviewed Kenneth Barnes concerning this investigation. Barnes said one night he heard the suspect, Michael Gullett and the victim arguing. He witnessed Gullett pick up a piece of wood and hit McDonald's head with it.

Barnes said the victim fell to the ground and was not moving. Barnes ran over to where Gullett and the McDonald were to question Gullett's actions. Barnes said Gullett picked up a crowbar and struck him (Barnes) in the neck which knocked him out.

f. Barnes said a few hours later he regained consciousness. Barnes said he did not see the victim but noticed his belongings including his tent were still there. Barnes described the piece of wood Gullett hit the victim with as a big block of wood, similar to those they used to burn in their fires.

g. Barnes further stated he was worried about what occurred so within a couple of days he left the camp to go stay with a friend. Barnes said he began hearing people talking about Gullett cutting the victim up and throwing him in the river.

h. I asked Barnes if he remembered the time of year this incident occurred. Barnes said it was so long ago and he did not want to try and guess. Barnes said the weather was nice but not too hot at the time. Barnes said it had to be before the 4th of July, because he wasn't at the camp to observe aerial fireworks. Barnes said the year the incident occurred was 2004.

i. Barnes stated the camp he was living in and location of this incident was an area along the Missouri River near Front Street and Kansas Avenue, Jackson County, Missouri.

j. On April 14, 2016, I interviewed Lonnie Boler as part of my investigation. Boler stated one night while eating dinner with Gullett, Boler brought up the victim and asked Gullett when he thought he would be coming back. According to Boler, Gullett said, "He aint ever coming back. I hit him in the head, cut him up with an axe and threw him in the river." Boler thought it was late spring or early summer of 2004, when the conversation took place.

k. I asked Boler if Gullett ever mentioned killing anyone else. Boler said Gullett talked about killing two Mexicans because he didn't like them. Boler further stated he always thought Gullett was just talking tuff so no one would mess with him.

l. On April 21, 2016, I interviewed Michael Gullett concerning the death of Ryon McDonald. Gullett asked where the body was recovered. Gullett said it would not be a surprise if Kansas City arrested him for what occurred in 2004. Gullett further stated he has been sweating it since 2004. Gullett said he thought when the police came to see him in 2004, he thought they would arrest him then and is not sure why they did not.

m. On August 19, 2016, Kansas City Police Department Detective Brent Taney and I interviewed Michael Goring. During the interview, we asked Goring about the victim. Goring stated he heard Gullett killed him but could not recall any specific information. Goring stated Gullett had an axe he kept in his tent or close

by. Goring stated he witnessed Gullett kill another person during the same time period as McDonald's murder.

n. An interview with the victim's father, Ronald McDonald and Ronald's current wife Lola, confirmed the last time Lola spoke with the victim was October 2003. Lola said the victim told her he was staying in a homeless camp in Kansas City.

o. To date, the Patrol has not released the identity of the victim or how he was dismembered.

DARRON BLANKENSHIP

Print Name (Detective)


Signature (Detective)

THE COURT FINDS PROBABLE CAUSE:

Date

Judge