Witness: Jeffrey Cleveland

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Called by: Defense

Phase: Penalty

Examinations: Direct – Pat Harris

Day 1 of 1 for this witness

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Direct Examination by Pat Harris

HARRIS: Good afternoon, Jeff.

CLEVELAND: Hi.

HARRIS: I actually wanted to put you on after Joanne, because you actually know Joanne; is that correct?

CLEVELAND: Yes. I met Joanne New Year's Eve, 1981.

HARRIS: Where was that?

CLEVELAND: That was in, I believe that was Utica, New York, Schenectady. Cold, a lot of snow.

HARRIS: When she came to California, did you follow thereafter?

CLEVELAND: Oh, yes. I mean who could not go to California, San Diego, California, from Atlantic City, New Jersey. Of course.

HARRIS: She was a friend, right?

CLEVELAND: Huh?

HARRIS: She is a friend, correct?

CLEVELAND: Yeah.

HARRIS: She's remained a friend all these years?

CLEVELAND: Oh, yes. Constantly.

HARRIS: You, when you came to San Diego, Joanne introduced you to the Petersons; is that right?

CLEVELAND: As a matter of fact that was the one of the first things we had to do was get my Volkswagen out of the back of a U-Haul trailer. And Jackie and Lee were kind enough to have a loading dock. And somehow or another we managed to get the thing off. Lasted me another 18 years. It's a good car.

HARRIS: Did you end up having a business relationship with the Petersons?

CLEVELAND: Huh?

HARRIS: Did you end having a business relationship with the Petersons.

CLEVELAND: Oh, yes. Shortly thereafter, they were good enough to teach me how to make crates.

HARRIS: Go to work for them?

CLEVELAND: Yeah. I worked for them for nine years after that. I guess they liked the way I made crates. Make crates for them for about five or six months, and then they kicked me inside the office when they found out I had business experience, and just became a general factor.

HARRIS: What years was it you worked for them?

CLEVELAND: I started with them in February 1983. And that lasted until about September of 1992.

HARRIS: So you had a lot of experience to see the interaction with the family?

CLEVELAND: Constantly. Because it's what's referred to as a mom-and-pop business. And everybody pretty much within the family worked there. Art, who was Lee's father, was working there part time, doing a lot of the small packaging. Very gentle, good hands for that. Lee he was out there. Joe Peterson, he was pretty much the shop foreman, being taught, brought up that way. Mark, his brother, Lee's other son, he did outside sales. And we had sort of a little mascot, that happened to be Scott. If Lee was there, Scott was, normally was there.

HARRIS: What did you observe as far as the family dynamics and the way the operation ran?

CLEVELAND: It's one of the few families that I have ever met that it was almost seamless. There was no rough edge where they joined. There was no friction. My impression of Scott was that somehow or another he sloughed off from Lee. A lot of Lee just fell off, and there was Scott. Everything that Lee did Scott would do in a smaller way. For instance, Lee was out making crates using the pneumatic nail guns and staple guns, and working on the power saws cutting wood. Scott was out there cutting wood with a handsaw. He was out there nailing it together with a regular hammer, not a pneumatic hammer. And he was out there building whatever it was he was building. I could never figure out what it was. Looked like it was very constructive. Whatever Lee was doing, that's what he felt, either by nature or by nurture, that's what he was wanted to do. He always expressed an inner contentment and peace in doing it. A lot of times you have a kid who is stuck and got to work with my dad. It was never the case. Always there, enjoyed being around his father. His father always enjoyed having him around.

HARRIS: What were the dynamics, like the rest of the members of the family, as far as the business and how it ran?

CLEVELAND: Again, it was, you have to understand, I have to explain one thing about the Petersons. I have never seen a family that was so mellow, if you will. There is no abuse in any level that I ever observed from anyone. There is no physical abuse. There was no mental the abuse. There is no emotional abuse. I never heard them raise their voices against him. He never saw anger expressed. And it wasn't as if they kept it all bottled inside. There wasn't anything to keep inside. They were just happy, contented, peaceful people. And they all interacted that way. Lee was his son. Art was the sort of, Art was the most quality gentleman I ever met, and Lee was Art's son. Joe, the same thing. Joe is a, still is. He's just a sweet, gentle, kind man. Couple of kids. Good family man. Doing a nice job running the business. And same thing I observed from Scott. He was just a smooth, a nice, contented, neat little person.

HARRIS: How did they treat you as an employee?

CLEVELAND: I'm sorry?

HARRIS: How did they treat you as an employee?

CLEVELAND: I never felt as though I was an employee. As a matter of fact, quite surprised once or twice when I received paychecks for what I was doing. I just belonged there. I wouldn't say

they took me into the family, but they made it so that I felt that I belonged. Lee and I would have little contests over who is the oldest and who looked the oldest. As I looked the oldest, from that I was called geezer. Those things were still going on. Who is actually the oldest, we haven't determined that yet. Just of a relationship that we have had for years and years and years. We pretty much parted our ways in 1992. I have been doing things. Lee has been doing things. But as soon as we see each other, we're, Jackie, or just like we never split.

HARRIS: What have you been doing since?

CLEVELAND: Since then I worked for a while in the corporate world. Burned out of that. Gave myself a 50th birthday, joined the Peace Corps for a couple of years. Got out of that. Couldn't get back in the corporate world again. I'm now working for a non profit that works with substance abuse prevention, mostly minors, and alcohol, methamphetamine, things like that.

HARRIS: When you worked for the Petersons, during the time you worked for the, I'm sorry. During the time you worked for the Petersons, did you ever see, in any way, shape, or form, anger?

CLEVELAND: No. There was nothing to be angry about. I mean that people find things to be the angry about. They don't have enough sleep, or they are hungry, they are cranky, their car isn't working well. They just take it in stride. Just part of being alive. They were always in control. Always contained. There was no great, great emotion, positive or negative. Everything was just, just cool.

HARRIS: Thank you, Jeff. That's all I have.