

Bill Hunt Talks about the Haidl Incident

Friends for Fullerton's Future
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FFFF: You've taken a lot of criticism for some events that happened a long time ago with Haidl's son, specifically the October 26, 2003 incident. Can you tell us what happened?

Bill Hunt: "Here's what happened. At the end of the day, me and my captain were sold out by a sheriff and assistant sheriffs, Jaramillo and Haidl, who were involved in this thing behind the scenes and then lied about it and tried to hang it on me. And you'll remember by that time I was candidate for the office [sheriff]."

Hunt continues, saying "This is the one thing my opponents have been using against me. Greg Haidl was the son of Don Haidl and he was out on bail on a rape charge, a gang-rape charge, and we knew he lived in San Clemente. He was living with his mom, his dad actually lived in Newport Beach, his parents were separated. I knew he'd lived there but I hadn't had any contact with him. In fact I never did have any direct contact with Don Haidl ever that I'm aware of. I think I saw him in the hallway at headquarters one time and up there at a meeting. About 10 o'clock at night, 10:30 or something like that, I get a call from my sergeant. And I had only been the chief down there for 6 months and this was a calamity of errors and boy I learned my lesson on this one. I get a call from Dick Downing, he was one of two hold-overs from the original San Clemente Police Department. And Dick Downing was a physical wreck, God rest his soul, he just passed away this year, he was a mess. He was one of these guys who stayed on the nights, did not want to deal with the brass. But he handled his stuff pretty well and the guys liked him.

He calls me and says, 'Bill, I'm out here in the field, we've got Greg Haidl, there's pot in the car, it's not his pot. I've already taken him home. I just wanted you to let you know because of who it is.' I'm like, 'It's not his pot?' [Dick Downing replies] 'Not his pot.' [Hunt says] 'You sure', [Dick Downing replies] 'Yes.' I said 'Great, not a problem.'

To me, this is a nothing deal. It's marijuana to the chief of police. It means nothing to me. In fact I got back to bed and I said to my wife, 'Shit, you know what I better call my boss.' I call my boss and said, 'Fred, it's Bill. Dick Downing just called me and here's what's going on. He told me there were three eighteen-year olds skateboarding with marijuana in the car. He [Dick Downing] says it's not Haidl's. He [Fred] says, 'Well whose is it?' I said, 'I don't know, it's marijuana, I didn't ask him.' He [Fred] said, 'Ok, well in the morning just give me call with the details and the names.' I said, 'Great.' I go back to bed. I go in the morning, the next morning and they work midnight shift, they were gone, the deputy and sergeant handling it. I looked for the sergeants log and 99% of the time the sergeants turn in the log. It's not uncommon though that they forget or there was nothing relevant and it doesn't get turned in. But there's no sergeants log. So I have my secretary get me the deputy's log. And I call my boss and it says no prosecution on there, but again it's a marijuana case so it doesn't mean anything to me. Well I call my boss and say, 'What do you want to know?' He [Fred] says, 'Who are they?' [Hunt replies] 'Here's where they are, here are the names, here's where it occurred, no prosecution.' [Fred asks] 'What does that mean?' I said, 'I guess they didn't charge anybody.' He [Fred] goes, 'Fine, we're done.' I think I'm done.

So about four or five days later, I think it happened on a Sunday night, that was a Monday morning. Well that Friday I get a call from my boss, Fred. He says, 'Hey, what happened with the Haidl thing?' I says, 'Shit, I don't know Fred, Dick handled it.' He goes, 'Do me a favor, I'm coming from a meeting and people are talking about it; the

marijuana was destroyed, destruction of evidence, preferential treatment, and everything else.' I said 'What?' He [Fred] goes, 'Just look into it and see what happened.' So I call Dick Downing who was the sergeant. I said 'Dick, what happened with the Haidl thing?' [Dick Downing replies] 'Nothing.' [Hunt asks] 'What do you mean nothing happened?' Dick Downing replies] 'Well, Roche,' who was the deputy on assignment, 'had cert training that day in the morning for long gun shooting and he was off for three days and I was sick that night and I've been off for three days and we were going to come in tonight.'

Now to give you some reference as to why this wasn't an alarm to me is because this was a marijuana case. These deputies are busy and sometimes they don't write reports that are non-custody arrests, it's not uncommon. So I ask [Dick Downing], 'Where's the marijuana?' [Downing replies] 'In my file cabinet.' I go, 'What's it doing in your file cabinet, Dick?' [Dick Downing replies] 'Well I was going to handle it when I got in on Monday.' [Hunt asks] 'Why didn't you just book it?' He [Dick Downing] said 'I was just going to see what happens and book it.' I said, 'Here's what you're going to do. Your going to come in here right now and book the marijuana. I'm going to call Roche and handle this thing.' I call Roche and asked him, "Roche, what happened with the Haidl thing?" [Roche replies] 'Nothing.' [Hunt asks] 'What do you mean nothing?' [Roche] replies, 'Well, we just kicked him loose.' [Hunt says] 'Give me the circumstances.' [Roche replies] 'I went up they were skateboarding, all three were out of the car and I had them all sit on the curb, and I go look in the car and I can see some marijuana on the backseat next to a like an empty bottle and a pack of cigarettes.' I said, 'Ok whose were they?' He [Roche] goes, 'They were Haidl's' [Hunt asks] 'Was the marijuana Haidl's?' [Roche replies] 'He denied it but I though it was.' [Hunt] 'Ok, so what happened?' [Roche] 'I talked to the driver, the driver owned the car, he denied it and said it wasn't his. And I talked to the kid,' this is the first time I hear the term "kid" and I go, 'What kid?' [Roche] 'The sixteen-year old.' I go, 'There wasn't a sixteen-year old.' He [Roche] goes, 'Yeah, there was a sixteen-year old.' I said, 'Ok, what did the kid say?' [Roche replies] 'Well the kid said it was his dope.' [Hunt asks] 'Ok, so what did you do with the kid?' [Roche answers] 'We kicked him loose.' [Hunt] 'So let me get this straight. What did you do with Haidl?' [Roche] 'I drove him home.' [Hunt repeats] 'You drove Haidl home, but you kicked the kid who admitted to possession of marijuana. You let him drive home with this twenty-year old.' [Roche] 'Yeah.' I said, 'Ok what are you doing right now.' [Roche] 'I'm watching my kids.' [Hunt] 'You need to be in here. Dick Downing is coming in to get your dope in. You're going to get your god damn report ready.' He [Roche] says, 'Fine.'

So I got a meeting to go to so I call in a second sergeant who is my administrative sergeant, Nancy Gafner. I go, 'Nancy, we have a cluster-fuck with the Haidl deal on Sunday night. Dick's coming in to bring in Roche's dope. Roche has got to come in and write his report and get this thing handled. You take care of it while I'm going to be gone.' She says, 'No problem.' So I leave and come back a couple of hours later and she says, 'Roche is in taking care of his report.' I said 'Great. Let me know when it's done.' My intention was to just call my boss and let him know yeah it's done everything is booked. So then she [Nancy] comes in a few minutes later and she's got the report. She goes, 'I wanted to get your opinion on this.' [Hunt asks] 'On what?' She goes, 'Well, I'm not happy with this report.' [Hunt asks] 'What's the problem?' [Nancy replies] 'Well, he [Roche] has a comment here that I don't think belongs here.'

So I read the report and he is writing a possession of marijuana on the kid. But he writes in there ...blah, blah, blah, 'I talked to the driver, he said it wasn't his. I talked to Haidl, he said it wasn't his. I talked to the sixteen-year old and said it was his,' comma, 'but I didn't believe him, I thought it was Haidl's.' So I see her point, she's right. In police reports unless it's like a traffic accident where you have a professional opinion, you don't put opinions in, you put the facts because this is supposed to go to the DA who's going to try the facts. Now if your writing possession on this kid who admitted it and you put in there you didn't believe him, what's the DA going to do?

So we call Roche in because I want to get his mind set. I only talked to him on the phone and I was already pissed at him then. I go, 'What's the story here, Roche?' [Roche] 'I think it was Haidl's dope.' I said, 'We all got that. I understand that but what are you writing here?' [Roche] "Possession on the kid.' And so then I have a long discussion with him. I go, 'Look. We all know our police out here know plenty of houses they are dealing dope out of but you can't just go kick the door down, right. We have probable cause we have to meet, people have constitutional rights. You can't arrest people just because you don't like them or because they're Don Haidl's kid.' And Roche is a very black and white guy and he's kind of a just the facts guy. Great guy, very good deputy, excellent training officer. But he's got a stick up his ass over Haidl. I've worked dope all over the county with thousands of dollars and piles of dope. Marijuana means nothing to me. I'm just trying to get him to see to do this thing right. I say, "Look, you essentially have two things you can do. You can go constructive possession on everybody because everybody technically had access to the car and it could have been everybody's. Or you could go possession on the kid because he admitted it. But you can't write the report on the kid with this statement in here, it doesn't make sense. I support Nancy on that. So we talked over and he decided he would take that out and file it. Then I reviewed the tape on this thing."

Hunt continues, "You have never seen a more solid confession in your life. He [Roche] was convinced that it was Haidl's dope and it probably was. And I believe that at some point eighteen months later the grand jury determined it was. But basically he [Roche] talks to the driver, 'is this your dope,' he [driver] says 'No, I never saw it, it's not my dope,' blah, blah, blah. Same thing to Haidl, 'It's not mine.' [Roche replies] Bullshit, you're a liar. [Haidl] 'It isn't.' [Roche] 'Yeah, bullshit. Why are you letting him take the heat? You're out on bail. You're just letting him take it?' [Haidl] 'No, I'm not.', blah, blah, blah. The kid same thing. [Roche] 'You're just covering for him.' [sixteen-year old] 'No I'm not.' [Roche] 'Yeah it is his. What's it doing back there with his stuff?' He [sixteen-year old] says 'You know what, I got out of the car and I realized I had pot in my pocket and I thought if the cops pulled up I don't want the pot in my pocket and I reached in the back seat and dropped it there.' That's the kid's explanation.

[Hunt to Roche] 'You decide. If you're going to be charging the kid, that statement doesn't belong in your report.' Now Roche isn't saying much. He isn't happy about it but he doesn't sit and bitch about it. But he was apparently not happy with that; he thought control and everything was taken out of his hands. Which it should have been. If it gets to a lieutenant's desk, you had a chance to do your job in the field and so did the sergeant. If it's a week later and you still didn't do your job and it's becoming a political nightmare, then you don't have authority left to make that decision, you lost that. We're going to make sure it gets done right which is what I did. I called my boss and said, 'Here it is, this is what happened.' I went in and told the grand jury just what I just told you.

Ultimately, the department ended up doing an investigation and they determined that I was at fault for improperly telling the deputy to take that statement out of his report. Then they submitted that report to the attorney general's office. The attorney general didn't do an independent investigation. No one ever talked to my sergeant. They essentially criticized me for that action. There are times you may not agree with what I'm doing but I violated no law, no policy, I was trying to find the right solution for that problem and I still believe it was. The DA could have filed on Haidl if they wanted to, they had the facts.

Once the attorney general's report came back, Shroeder and Carona's people leaked it. They've been saying I was involved in a cover up. But let's fast forward to a year and a half later Scott Moxley pulls the phone records and finds a six minute conversation between George Jaramillo and Mike Carona that night. Because here's what happened: I don't find this out till two years later after this thing and the investigation. You can't talk

to your sergeant or your deputy about this incident when its under investigation. My sergeant didn't know what to do. He called the watch commander, Lloyd Downing, he's a great guy but he's a little bit of a kiss butt and he screwed this thing up because under the whole Carona administration, the first guy with the bad news to the boss looks good. So what he did, Dick Downing called him and basically said 'Haidl's here and he's got dope.' To which Lloyd ends up calling Jaramillo who tells him 'Don't log it, take care of it.' He says to Jaramillo 'It'll be our little secret.' So he calls Dick Downing and tells him don't log it which is why I didn't get a sergeant's log.

But see Downing's not dumb, what Downing did was this: he told Roche, 'Log it. I'm not going to put it in the sergeant's log.' Because the sergeant's log is an official log, but it's not the official record like the deputy's is. So you see Dick's trying to walk the line. He never called me. His intention of calling the watch commander was to get Haidl's number so he could tell him 'Hey, we got your kid out here, they've got dope, it's not his dope, he's not in trouble but I thought you should know since you're an assistant sheriff and we're about to drive him to his mom's house, just giving you a heads-up.' That was his intention but this watch commander gets involved he calls Jaramillo, Jaramillo calls Carona, and there's a six minute conversation about what happened in the field. That's why Dick was reluctant to tell me. He doesn't want me to know about the conversation with the watch commander. Which I never did know about that until about two years later, I get a call from my buddy who was the San Juan Chief at the time, he's the assistant sheriff they just let go. He says 'Bill, you watching TV?' I said 'No.' 'Turn on channel X.

They got the Haidl thing. You're not going to believe this.'

And I sat down and watched it and I couldn't believe it. And I knew we were F'd then. So what's happened I got me and my captain who I'm communicating with who's telling Jaramillo. Jaramillo never tells my captain about his conversations with people in the field. The watch commander never called my captain, never called me. This stuff is all going on outside of us. It's a pot thing. Dave Lopez interviewed Carona and asks, 'Did you get involved with this on October 26, 27, or 28?' Carona responds, 'No. No sir.' Scott Moxley pulls up the record and there's that six minute conversation with Jaramillo. So if you look at the indictment of Mike Carona, that's on page 19. It says in there defendant Carona, defendant Jaramillo, and co-defendant Don Haidl conspired to arrange for preferential treatment for co-defendant Haidl's kid. And they don't mention me in there. But remember, the attorney general didn't know about this. They didn't do an independent investigation. They didn't pull phone records. They took a corrupt Sheriff's word on an investigation that only looked at us and didn't look at their involvements. My captain went to Jaramillo several times and said let me go to the media and explain it. This is a nothing deal that you let spin out of control. They wouldn't let us and that's why. If they found out what our involvement was it didn't make sense with what happened on the back end. They wouldn't be able to get the stories straight."