



CITY OF
FORT LAUDERDALE
POLICE DEPARTMENT
PRESS RELEASE

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**COP KILLERS PAROLE
HEARING**

On July 21st, 1974, a member of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department was brutally murdered during an armed robbery that went awry. Officer Walter Ilyankoff, a fifteen (15) year veteran of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department, was ambushed after responding to an armed robbery of the Red Lobster on North Federal Highway in the City of Fort Lauderdale. Officer Ilyankoff was survived by a wife and a son.

On that fateful day, Officer Ilyankoff was patrolling the north section of the City when the call for an armed robbery at the Red Lobster was broadcast over the radio. The police department had received an alarm from the business as well as a call from a witness. The witness called in saying that three armed men had entered into the rear of the Red Lobster and were holding two female employees hostage. The witness then said that the three robbers quickly fled the Red Lobster in a green Volkswagen. Without hesitation, Officer Ilyankoff responded to the business to check on the safety of the victims. As Officer Ilyankoff arrived on scene, he could not foresee that a murderous man named Alvin Ford was armed and lying in wait.

Officer Ilyankoff arrived on scene, within minutes of the call going out, and parked his patrol vehicle behind the business. Officer Ilyankoff approached the rear of the business and everything appeared to be normal. As Officer Ilyankoff opened the rear door to the business Alvin Ford fired two shots, striking Officer Ilyankoff twice in the abdomen. Officer Ilyankoff fell to the ground, clutching his torso; his blood-curdling "officer down" message could be heard by his fellow officers over his portable radio.

Realizing his three fellow conspirators had fled without him, Alvin Ford panicked and saw Officer Ilyankoff's marked patrol vehicle as a perfect getaway vehicle. Alvin Ford began demanding the keys from the wounded officer and started rummaging through Officer Ilyankoff's pockets. After finding the car keys, Alvin Ford brandished his firearm once more and stood over the bleeding Officer Ilyankoff. Without hesitation, Alvin Ford executed Officer Ilyankoff by shooting him in the head from point blank range. Alvin Ford then stole Officer Ilyankoff's service weapon and patrol vehicle, fleeing in the direction of the three other co-conspirators who had already left the scene.

The three other co-conspirators were later identified as George Decosta, Alvin Lewis and Henry Robinson. Decosta, Lewis and Ford were all apprehended within 24 hours of the

murder. Robinson was arrested in Guatemala three (3) months later, after living under an alias, and was extradited back to the United States to face trial for the heinous crimes he had committed.

After a thorough investigation, Fort Lauderdale Detectives were able to link the four men's connections to one another leading up to the botched robbery.

Alvin Ford and George Decosta were acquaintances in northern Florida for several months leading up to the robbery. On July 20th, 1974, Alvin Ford stopped at George Decosta's house in Jacksonville and suggested they drive to Fort Lauderdale to "make some money." Ford explained to Decosta that a friend, Alvin Lewis, had already scouted out several Red Lobsters and was waiting for them to arrive in Fort Lauderdale. While still in northern Florida they met a mutual friend, Henry Robinson, and began the long drive to Fort Lauderdale. George Decosta drove the trio south until he got a speeding ticket in the Orlando area. After the speeding ticket, Henry Robinson drove the rest of the way.

The three men arrived in Fort Lauderdale on Sunday, July 21st, 1974, at approximately 12:30 A.M., where they met up with Alvin Lewis on the turnpike. Lewis directed them to a motel on North Federal Highway, just three miles south of the Red Lobster. At the motel, they began planning the robbery and prepping themselves for the brutal crime they were about to commit. George Decosta later admitted that his initial role was to enter the restaurant and secure the employees after Alvin Ford gained entry.

At approximately 8:00 A.M., on Sunday, July 21st, 1974, Alvin Lewis picked up the three men from the motel. All four subjects then drove to case out two different Red Lobster Restaurants. The group decided on the Red Lobster located at 5950 North Federal Highway in the City of Fort Lauderdale. Once they picked their location, they armed themselves and committed to undertaking the violent crime.

As Alvin Ford and Henry Robinson entered the rear of the restaurant, George Decosta and Alvin Lewis sat outside in the getaway car, armed with a .22 caliber rifle. When restaurant employees fled from the restaurant to escape Ford and Robinson, they were confronted by the armed George Decosta and Alvin Lewis. Lewis locked a female employee in a small utility room at the direction of George Decosta. Decosta then grabbed another fleeing female employee from the parking lot and dragged her back into the restaurant.

At one point, George Decosta got spooked and felt the police had been notified of the robbery. Decosta broke a rear window of the restaurant with the .22 caliber rifle and yelled for Alvin Ford and Henry Robinson to flee. Decosta and Lewis were fleeing the scene when Henry Robinson ran from the restaurant and jumped into the moving getaway vehicle.

Alvin Ford was still armed and left behind...

Alvin Ford was found guilty and sentenced to death; he died in prison while awaiting execution for his monstrous crimes. Henry Robinson was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison for his part in the crimes. George Decosta and Alvin Lewis were allowed to plead guilty to 2nd Degree Murder in exchange for a life sentence.

The Florida Parole Board is set to hear Decosta, Lewis, and Robsinon's pleas for parole. The hearing is set to take place in August of 2012.

Ilyankoff's widow, members of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department, and a prosecutor from the State Attorney's Office will be speaking out against parole at the hearing. They believe that "life means life" and the three co-conspirators should continue to serve their original sentences regarding their involvement in the crimes.

If you want your voice to be heard by the Parole Committee, please email walter2012@fortlauderdale.gov with a short statement expressing feelings on whether the three men should be paroled or not. We are hoping to receive all sentiments by May 1st, 2012, in order for them to be presented to the parole board.

If you are interested in more information regarding the brutal murder of Officer Ilyankoff, or the upcoming parole hearing in August, please feel free to contact Detective Mark Shotwell at 954-828-5517.



Officer Walter Ilyankoff
End of Watch: July 21st, 1974
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