

# Will Sands Interview Transcript

**Wednesday, December 14, 2022 – 10:00 a.m.**

Will Sands is the longtime bartender at The Roadhouse Bar & Grill.

Detectives Murphy and Parker talked to him at the Yoknapatawpha County Sheriff's Department.

## **Participants**

Detective S. Murphy

Detective E. Parker

Will Sands

*Detective Murphy:* Will Sands, how are you?

*Will Sands:* Not bad, not bad at all. How about you, Detectives?

*Detective Parker:* Can't complain.

*Will Sands:* Haven't seen y'all down at The Roadhouse in a while. What's keeping you?

*Detective Murphy:* Work as usual, Will.

*Will Sands:* That's a sorry excuse, and you know it. Ha! So I'll be expecting y'all at happy hour.

*Detective Murphy:* We'll see.

*Will Sands:* So what is it that you need from ol' Will this morning?

*Detective Parker:* Your name and address for the record, for starters.

*Will Sands:* Oh, that one's easy. My name is Will Sands, and I live at 1002 College Hill Road, Oxford.

*Detective Parker:* Do you know Jackson Walker?

*Will Sands:* Sure do. He's the Ole Miss professor that was found dead over the weekend, right?

*Detective Murphy:* Yes.

*Will Sands:* Sad thing there. He was pretty young. Have y'all found out what done him in?

*Detective Parker:* No. We were kinda hoping you might have some information about it.

*Will Sands:* Ah, that sounds like you think something's rotten here. The news had it that he was sick. But if Murphy and Parker are on the case, that probably means Professor Walker didn't die of the flu.

*Detective Parker:* Did Jackson ever come into The Roadhouse, Will?

*Will Sands:* Yes, ma'am. He wasn't a regular. But if his older brother Jeff and his father Craig were in town, they'd be in the bar until closing.

*Detective Parker:* Jackson was a big drinker, then?

*Will Sands:* Nah, he'd have a can of beer here, a glass of wine there, that sort of thing. Jeffrey is the big drinker. He's the pound-a-beer, crush-the-empty-on-his-forehead type of guy. Craig would try to keep pace with his oldest kid, only succeeding in adding more fat to his already fatty liver. All the while, Jackson would humor them both, slowly milking his glass of merlot.

*Detective Parker:* Did Jackson ever come in with a lady friend recently?

*Will Sands:* Now that you mention it, I believe he did a time or two.

*Detective Murphy:* When?

*Will Sands:* In the last couple of months.

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*Detective Murphy:* Who was the woman?

*Will Sands:* Ah, one of the volleyball coaches for the Rangers up at the community college in Senatobia. Sylvia something.

*Detective Parker:* Mason?

*Will Sands:* That's the one. I met her first when she came in with her fellow coaches after a big win against Rust College, I think they said. That was the first or second weekend in September.

*Detective Murphy:* Did any of the players join them?

*Will Sands:* Not that I ever saw. Their significant others did, though. Denny Boykin was there with his wife, Kendra, who I know is on the staff. Denny's father and I are fishing buddies, so I know that family well- good folks.

*Detective Parker:* Did Jackson meet Sylvia there then?

*Will Sands:* No. I'm guessing they weren't an item at that time. She had another fella hanging all over her.

*Detective Murphy:* You don't know who it was? Someone Will Sands doesn't know? That's a first.

*Will Sands:* Yeah, you said it. Y'all will have to cut me some slack. It was the only time that fella had been at The Roadhouse, and he never came up to the bar to talk.

*Detective Parker:* All right, let's pull up the Ole Miss faculty pages from the school's website from my phone for you, Will. Here, take a look at this picture. Is this the guy you saw hanging all over Sylvia?

*Will Sands:* Yes, ma'am, it is! Adam Cooper, eh? All right, I got a name for the face now. Hold on a sec. That would mean this here guy Cooper is a colleague of Jack Walker's, don't it?

*Detective Parker:* Yep, that's what it means.

*Will Sands:* Well, don't that beat all. I suppose y'all are wondering if this Cooper was upset at Jack for swiping his girl.

*Detective Parker:* More like investigating.

*Will Sands:* Well, I don't know for sure, but I'd say you're probably beating the right bushes.

*Detective Murphy:* How many times did you say you saw Sylvia and Jackson come into the bar?

*Will Sands:* Two, that I remember.

*Detective Murphy:* When was the first time they came in?

*Will Sands:* First part of October.

*Detective Parker:* Anything that stands out to you about that meeting?

*Will Sands:* Not really. I believe Jack ordered wine for the both of them at the bar. They went to a table to eat, just the two of them. I recall making a joke about the steak special, knowing that Jack didn't eat meat. He knew I didn't mean it and smirked. So, no, nothing really stood out about that night. It looked like a date night for them to me.

*Detective Parker:* What about the other time? When was that?

*Will Sands:* The end of that month.

*Detective Murphy:* Another date night?

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*Will Sands:* Nope, it was another one of those Walker family outings I told y'all about earlier. Craig came in first with his boys, Jeff and Josh. They'd been at other bars that night, and Craig was already three sheets to the wind.

*Detective Murphy:* So you're familiar with Josh Walker?

*Will Sands:* Sure, since Craig and Jeff live out in New Albany, if they were in town, they were probably first at Josh's place in Oxford. It wasn't uncommon for the trio of them to come in together.

*Detective Murphy:* How did you find out that Craig was already intoxicated?

*Will Sands:* 'Cuz when he came up to the bar to order a round of beers, he was wobbling all over.

*Detective Parker:* Did you serve him?

*Will Sands:* I did not! The Roadhouse doesn't have that kind of reputation, no, ma'am. I told Craig he'd have to sober up before he'd get a beer from me. He got himself into a huff, complaining how thirsty his boys were and such. I stood my ground like any good bartender would.

*Detective Parker:* What did Craig do then?

*Will Sands:* He got downright ornery and said he'd take his business elsewhere. I told him that if he tried driving in his state, his business was gonna be wrapped around a tree somewhere. With that, he up and left.

*Detective Parker:* You mean he did actually drive off?

*Will Sands:* Yes, ma'am. Still drunk as a boiled owl. I called the cops, and they said they'd look out for him. What's more, he left his two thirsty boys there at the bar. I wonder when it hit him that he stranded them?

*Detective Murphy:* What happened next?

*Will Sands:* Josh and Jeff had already started a game of darts across the bar and didn't notice that their old man had left them. Eventually, Jeff came over to ask where his dad and his Lone Stars were. I got him his beers and told him that his dad had stormed out. Jeff didn't seem too surprised. Between you and me, it's probably happened to Jeff before. Jeff just took out his cell phone and called Jack for a ride.

*Detective Parker:* So that's when Jack and Sylvia came in.

*Will Sands:* Yep. Around 15 minutes or so later.

*Detective Murphy:* What was Jack's demeanor like?

*Will Sands:* He didn't seem very happy about taking the role of the drunks' chauffeur if that's your meaning. He was even less pleased to see his brother Josh there. I don't think they get along too darn well.

*Detective Murphy:* Why do you say so?

*Will Sands:* Gut feeling. They don't talk to each other. The sneers. Bartending's all psychology, you know. Reading people. Can't help it. I'm a people person.

*Detective Parker:* That's why you end up in this chair so much.

*Will Sands:* Yeah. Ha! I guess so. But, look, I have to tell you that Sylvia wasn't turned off by Josh. She was staring at him the whole time she was there. Then, when Jack said, "Okay, it's time to take y'all back to Josh's place." Josh said, "No, Jeff and I are gonna play another round of darts." Jack rolled his eyes, but I saw Sylvia smile behind Jack's

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back. Jeff said, "You're on! Not tired of being my bitch, eh?" And they played another three or four rounds of darts.

*Detective Murphy:* What was Jackson doing during that time?

*Will Sands:* Stewing in a single glass of merlot.

*Detective Murphy:* What was Sylvia doing?

*Will Sands:* *Watching Josh, like I said. Once, when Jack went to the restroom, Sylvia didn't hesitate to flirt with Josh a bit. Come to think of it, seems like this Sylvia gets around a little, huh?*

*Detective Murphy:* Possibly. Well, Will, you've sure helped us out once again. I think we're done here.

*Will Sands:* Glad to be of service. Now that our business is over, it's only two shakes of a lamb's tail 'til happy hour at The Roadhouse. You ladies are coming in, and I ain't taking no for an answer.

*Detective Parker:* It's a date, Will. We'll be down soon... sometime.

*Will Sands:* The door of The Roadhouse is always open. See y'all.

**Interview ended – 10:26 a.m.**