

Summary – Sylvia Mason's Colleagues

YOKNAPATAWPHA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Investigating Officer(s): Det. S. Murphy, Det. E. Parker

Incident No.: 006057-12L-2022

Case Description: Jackson Walker death investigation

YCSD investigators spoke to Sylvia Mason's co-workers at Northwest Mississippi Community College.

Members of the athletic staff were asked what they knew about Mason's relationship with Jackson Walker and/or Adam Cooper.

The interviews summarized are some of the most typical or relevant to the investigation and are representative of all the interviews conducted.

Julie Dodd (age 26) – Junior Athletic Trainer

Ms. Dodd said she didn't know very many specific details about the nature of the relationship between Ms. Mason and Mr. Walker other than from Ms. Mason's comments. Ms. Dodd said Ms. Mason occasionally talked as if she and Mr. Walker were romantically involved but primarily referred to him as her "bestie."

Ms. Dodd said Ms. Mason did appear to have romantic feelings for someone, and it was no surprise to her that Ms. Mason would keep this type of relationship close to the chest after what happened with Adam Cooper. When asked to explain, Ms. Dodd said Ms. Mason and Mr. Cooper were passionately and publicly affectionate, as evidenced by the photos of the two that Ms. Mason would sometimes share with certain of her co-workers.

Ms. Dodd admitted that she was one of the unfortunate few subjected to images of the couple's post-coital cuddles in locations that offered the excitement and danger of getting caught. Ms. Dodd said that while Ms. Mason claimed never to have been intimate with Mr. Cooper on the Northwest campus, word got around of Ms. Mason's exploits, and Ms. Dodd believes that Ms. Mason was reprimanded.

Julie Dodd (age 26) – (continued)

Ms. Dodd said she never met Mr. Cooper during the ten or so months he was dating Ms. Mason. While Ms. Mason never mentioned that the relationship ended, in early October, Ms. Mason introduced Mr. Jackson as her "new friend." Ms. Dodd said her first impression of Mr. Walker was that Ms. Mason would soon grow bored with him because he didn't seem like the adventurous type.

Ms. Dodd said Ms. Mason had mentioned the previous Friday that Mr. Walker was under the weather, but Ms. Mason seemed unconcerned, so Ms. Dodd thought it was something minor.

Ms. Dodd said Mr. Walker's death was a shock to everyone, and Ms. Mason appeared to react with confusion and disbelief. Ms. Dodd said Ms. Mason told her she "didn't know how to behave" and "didn't know what to do next," which Ms. Dodd understood to be the "shellshocked" phase of grief.

Robert Rawlings (age 33) – Equipment Manager

Mr. Rawlings said he was pretty sure Ms. Mason and Mr. Walker were in some sort of intimate relationship and was sure Ms. Mason had romantic feelings for Mr. Walker.

Mr. Rawlings said he had considered asking Ms. Mason out but decided against it two weeks ago when he found Ms. Mason in the locker room breathing on a mirror and tracing a heart around the letters "SM + JW" with her finger. Mr. Rawlings said that Ms. Mason was mortified to have been caught doing what she described as such a "juvenile" thing and asked him not to tell anyone about it.

Mr. Rawlings heard rumors of photo evidence of Ms. Mason's exploits with a guy named Adam, but he himself had not seen any of that evidence. Mr. Rawlings admitted that those rumors piqued his interest in Ms. Mason. Mr. Rawlings said he had never met this Adam person and never discussed any of it with Ms. Mason.

Robert Rawlings (age 33) – (continued)

Mr. Rawlings said Ms. Mason did mention to him that Mr. Walker was ill, and Ms. Mason told him that waiting for results was torture. Mr. Rawlings was confident that Ms. Mason was talking about ensuring Ms. Mason hadn't been exposed to a contagious virus since Ms. Mason's father is at risk and Ms. Mason is abundantly cautious in order to protect him.

Mr. Rawlings said Ms. Mason was putting on a brave face regarding the news of Mr. Walker's passing. When Mr. Rawlings spoke to Ms. Mason to give his condolences, Ms. Mason told him she had to be strong for her sick daddy, and she couldn't let any sadness overtake her.

Tami Vance (age 36) –

Head Coach, Women's Volleyball Team

Ms. Vance said it is her strict policy to maintain professionalism, and she does not share personal information with her staff. She said that she observed Ms. Mason and Jackson Walker together occasionally when Mr. Walker attended home-court volleyball games.

Ms. Vance said Ms. Mason appeared to be very close friends with Mr. Walker, and on occasion, in the past, the two had been physically demonstrative by holding hands. Ms. Vance said recently the relationship between Mr. Walker and Ms. Mason appeared to be more platonic in nature, even though Ms. Mason sometimes referred to Mr. Walker as her boyfriend, e.g., "my boyfriend is in the stands tonight."

Ms. Vance said she had never met Adam Cooper but knew of him through staff gossip. Ms. Vance said she received a complaint that Ms. Mason was sharing intimate photos of herself with Mr. Cooper in flagrante delicto. Ms. Vance said she took immediate action to formally reprimand Ms. Mason and schedule her for mandatory sexual harassment prevention training.

Ms. Vance said Ms. Mason did not discuss Mr. Walker's health condition with her.