

# Investigators hear varying stories from murder conspiracy suspect

By Dave Olson  
Forum News Service

FARGO — “What did you see, Will?”

The question was asked many times during interviews Fargo police conducted with William Hoehn in August of 2017, just days after a pregnant Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind disappeared from a north Fargo apartment building.

Cass County District Court jurors watched videos of those interviews during the third day of Hoehn's trial on a charge of conspiring to murder LaFontaine-Greywind, who disappeared from her north Fargo apartment building the afternoon of Aug. 19, 2017.

Her body was found in the Red River eight days later without the baby she had been pregnant with.

In videos jurors watched

Thursday, Sept. 20, Hoehn, who has pleaded not guilty to the charge, is seen in a police interview room answering questions.

The answers are sometimes punctuated with F-bombs and sometimes Hoehn's voice drops to a hush that is difficult to hear.

In an interview Hoehn gave police the night of Aug. 22, he tells investigators that when he returned home from work about 2:30 p.m. on Aug. 19, 2017, LaFontaine-Greywind was in the apartment that he shared with Brooke Crews, his girlfriend at the time.

He said Crews briefly introduced him to LaFontaine-Greywind and he went to “fire up” his computer so he could play video games later and then he proceeded to the bathroom, where he prepared to take a shower.

Hoehn said at one point he heard a knock at the apartment door, so he cracked open the bathroom door to hear who it was.

He said he could hear LaFontaine-Greywind's father, Joe Greywind, chatting with Crews but he couldn't hear what they said.

He said LaFontaine-Greywind had left the apartment by the time he finished his shower.

The story changed when Hoehn was interviewed on Aug. 24, 2017, after police executed a search warrant at his apartment and found Crews in possession of a newborn child later determined to be LaFontaine-Greywind's daughter.

Hoehn said in that interview that as he entered his apartment after work on Aug. 19, 2017, he found the bathroom a bloody mess and Crews presented him

with a newborn child, stating, “This is our baby, this is our family.”

Hoehn said he responded with “What the ...?” but then went to work helping Crews clean the bathroom.

He said he put bloody rags in two bags and stored them in the apartment until he was able to take them to a dumpster somewhere in West Fargo.

His answers turned quiet and vague when he was asked about LaFontaine-Greywind, telling investigators at the outset: “I'm not going home tonight; nothing is going to get any better for me at this point.”

Hoehn told investigators that for months he had been under the impression Crews was pregnant, but he still wasn't sure what to make of things when he came home from work that fateful Saturday and “found a

baby in my house.”

Investigators repeatedly asked Hoehn about LaFontaine-Greywind and everything that he saw when he arrived home from work.

“What did you see?” they asked again and again.

Sometimes the question was met with long silences.

Sometimes Hoehn offered a short answer: “I saw a baby.”

“I believe you walked in on a lot more than that,” said one of the investigators, who pressed Hoehn on how it could be possible for a baby to have been born and for LaFontaine-Greywind to have disappeared in the approximately one hour that elapsed between the time it is believed LaFontaine-Greywind went to the apartment and the time he got home from work.

Crews has pleaded guilty in the case and is serving a life sentence.

It is possible that a video of an interview she gave to police will be shown during Hoehn's trial.

Crews is ultimately expected to take the stand sometime during the trial, which resumes today.

## WETTERLING

From Page A1

Cold Spring in 1986 and months later sexually abused and shot Wetterling. He led authorities to Wetterling's buried remains as part of a plea agreement on child pornography charges.

Gudmundson said the investigation “went off the rails” early on.

Despite the similarities in the two attacks, the Cold Spring case didn't appear in investigative files until five weeks after Wetterling's abduction.

“How many other boys were abducted in Stearns County? Well, there was one, the Cold Spring boy. The investigators should have been on that in mere moments after Jacob was taken,” Gudmundson said.

Similarly, one of several boys who had been groped by a stranger in Paynesville in the three years prior told investigators two days after Wetterling was killed that it was likely the same man who did it. Both attacks were “quick, military and efficient,” the investigative notes say.

Yet, no one followed up on that lead for more than two months.

Once they did, the Paynesville police chief said Heinrich should be considered a suspect. A sheriff's office investigator noted Heinrich bears a “strong resemblance” to a composite drawing of the Cold Spring suspect.

### Heinrich failed lie detector test

Days later, Heinrich took a lie detector test and registered “deceptive on all questions” pertaining to both Wetterling's disappearance and the Cold Spring attack. The same day, his shoes and the tires of his car were found to be consistent with tracks left in the dirt where Wetterling was taken.

“What are the chances of



Scott Takushi / St. Paul Pioneer Press

Al Garber, center, the FBI investigator in charge of the Wetterling case in 1989, reacts vehemently to the conclusions of Stearns County Sheriff Don Gudmundson after listening to Gudmundson's news conference Thursday in St. Cloud about the closing of the investigative file regarding the abduction.

anyone else matching both those? Pretty slim,” Gudmundson said. “Not just slim, but miniscule.”

Investigators surveilled Heinrich and took his car. Scheierl sat in the back seat and said the car was the one he remembered riding in when he was assaulted a year earlier.

Scheierl recalled Heinrich keeping a police scanner in his car. Investigators located records from Heinrich's 1986 drunken driving arrest, which said he'd had a scanner then, too.

However, when Scheierl was asked to pick his attacker out of a lineup, he did not choose Heinrich.

In February 1990, investigators arrested Heinrich anyway for the Cold Spring assault. After an hourlong interrogation, the county prosecutor let him go for

lack of evidence.

FBI criminal profilers who watched the interrogation told detectives they didn't think Heinrich was guilty, Gudmundson said, citing his own conversations. The FBI's investigative files on the Wetterling case have not

been made public.

After that, “Heinrich is essentially forgotten,” Gudmundson said.

When the investigation “goes wrong, it really goes wrong,” he said. “In short order, this task force was not just on the wrong path, it was on the wrong freeway and, later, it was on the Autobahn with no speed limit.”

### FBI agent: ‘We had to keep looking’

Following the news conference Thursday, FBI special agent Al Garber, who was in charge of the case, took issue with the sheriff's characterization of the investigation.

“Don wasn't there. He didn't see the day-to-day operations,” he said. “He didn't see how many investigators were working so hard on this case.”

He said investigators “absolutely” felt Heinrich took Wetterling but couldn't prove it.

“(Gudmundson) tells you we should have given up, no other leads, just investigate Heinrich again and

again and again,” Garber said. “That's ridiculous.”

But more than one person confessed to killing Wetterling. They had to keep looking, he said.

“I remember a guy who confessed,” Garber said. “He said, ‘I kidnapped Jacob, and I put him in this lake,’ and we found him in state of Washington. Are we supposed to not go and talk to this guy? Of course not. Another guy confessed to an inmate in prison. ‘I did it, and this is how I did it, and this is the car I used.’ Are we supposed to say, ‘He's in prison. He didn't do that.’”

“I want the picture to be clear: We're not dopes. We're not stupid. We don't miss big things. We didn't do everything right, but we certainly didn't do this.”

Jerry Wetterling, Jacob's father, attended the news conference along with Garber and another FBI agent, Steve Gilkerson. Wetterling declined to comment.

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