

True Believer: Episode 08 - Polygraph Clips Transcript

Clip 1 (at 00:00)

Sam Yarbrough:

I didn't explain to you, you were gone, but I did tell your attorney that I'm not a police officer, but I am conducting this interview at the request of detectives. So, as far as this form is concerned and the interview portion of it, it's just as if a police officer or a detective were talking to you or conducting the interview. So I want you to know that.

Clip 2 (at 5:50)

Michael:

The main thing that changed my mind was, I talked to the president [Paul Kooistra] a couple of times. He's not certain whether I should take it or not, but he'd like the police to get off my back. That was kind of like his thing. He thinks I'm innocent.

Both what he and Steimel told me was that if the case isn't closed that, and if I was still a suspect, that the police would just kind of like keep coming at me, you know, six months later, a year later, that type of thing. They'd talk to...

If I got a job in a church, they'd come and talk to a senior pastor about it. They'd come and talk to other people about it, and that uh... it would just continue.

And uh, I didn't want to take the polygraph test, with the idea that if they didn't have evidence against me, they couldn't arrest me. If they arrested me, it would probably ruin me as far as my career is concerned. So I just wanted to protect it in that way.

And the other reason I decided to take it was it would ruin me if I didn't take it, if people are gonna run around constantly asking questions about me, about me in the ministry. Hopefully it would take some heat off of me.

Clip 3 (at 24:05)

Sam Yarbrough:

Why would you have a clinical psychology background and be employed in this particular area?

Michael:

Well that's a good question. It's kind of a long story. I originally went to the seminary at Trinity for the counseling program. I had applied too late and I wasn't accepted. And while I was there, I just decided, I was a full-time custodian there. And I just decided to study more theology and not really get involved in a program after some frustration trying to get into one.

And then after that I was interested in pursuing a master's of history degree. That's one of the reasons I went to Wheaton, but that didn't work out very well either. So it's been one thing after another. And finally I decided to go back to seminary for the M.Div. At Trinity, I would've been involved in the M.Div counseling and not in the M.Div for pastoral work. Does that make sense to you?

Sam Yarbrough:

Mm-hmm.

Clip 4 (at 26:22)

Sam Yarbrough:

You know, you say you've lost your temper with your wife. The way you said that indicates to me that this happened more than once.

Michael:

It's happened more than once.

Sam Yarbrough:

What do you do when you get angry with her?

Michael:

Usually we shout at each other. There have been a couple of times where I've... where I've shook her once. One time I kind of grabbed her hair at one point. I've never struck her, but it's been things like that. That's happened about... three or four times.

Sam Yarbrough:

Grabbed her hair and did what?

Michael:

Just kind of grabbed her hair, you know. Not really much of anything. I shook her one time. Things like that.

Sam Yarbrough:

How does she react to this kind of behavior?

Michael:

Well, a lot of it, she... usually, we make up rather quickly after that. I think she understands that a lot of it is a situation where she's somewhat to blame for it.

She'll kind of get on me about something. She'll just kind of... Oh, there's a lot of things going on and she just kind of pushes or nags on something; especially after I've done a lot, gone out of my way to do a lot of things for her or something like that. And I think she understands that there's some blame on her side as well. So I don't think... It's not something that's a lasting problem between us or anything like that.

Clip 5 (at 29:52)

Michael:

Her memo was just... was just a little scrap of paper that came to me later in the week.

Sam Yarbrough:

What did it say?

Michael:

Let me see that. I thought that's what you were talking about. What's on here?

Sam Yarbrough:

She hand wrote in a lot of things on yours. She wrote-

Michael:

No, that isn't what... May I look to see what's at the bottom?

I haven't seen this at all. I hadn't seen this at all.

Sam Yarbrough:

What did the... what did the note say that she sent to you?

Michael:

Oh, I still... Oh no. See, I haven't seen that at all. I don't know where that was.

The note that she said to me said, "Oh, don't take things so seriously. Don't get so worked up about it," or something like that. "Let's just get together and talk about it." It was that kind of thing.

Sam Yarbrough:

Let's get together and talk about it?

Michael:

Yeah. Just call... No, she said, "Call me sometime, just call." Or "Call me sometime."

Clip 6 (at 31:15)

Sam Yarbrough:

Do you think that whoever did this to Elizabeth should be punished by a higher authority than man?

Michael:

Well, I believe that there's forgiveness for something like this from God, but I would think that God would punish and all, but if it wasn't something that they confessed to God or anything like that. They should be punished. I think God does, put it that way. That sort of thing. Is that what you're asking?

Sam Yarbrough:

Mm-hmm.

Michael:

In other words, are you saying that I think that God punishes evil?

Sam Yarbrough:

Mm-hmm.

Michael:

Yeah.

Sam Yarbrough:

Hypothetically, if you did this to Elizabeth and it was because of the situation and you did it totally, even completely out of character of yourself, would it be safe to say that at this point, subsequent to that kind of an act, you would truly be sorry for having done it?

Michael:

Yes.

Sam Yarbrough:

And do you think if you were to express, truly, this sorrow that you'd be forgiven?

Michael:

Yes, you know.

Sam Yarbrough:

And you think someone else would be, if it were me that did it.

Michael:

Oh, I would think so.

Sam Yarbrough:

And I were truly sorry for it.

Michael:

Well, it'd be the faith and it wouldn't just be remorse. It'd be the idea that Christ has paid for, it's faith in what Christ has done as well.

Sam Yarbrough:

But I mean, do I have the same opportunity to be forgiven as you?

Michael:

I would think so.

Sam Yarbrough:

Do you think that if the person is truly sorry, and I mean that they're truly sorry for what they did, and they in their own heart believe that because of their true sorrow for their act, that they have been forgiven by God, do you still think that they owe society for what they did?

Michael:

Yes, I think so. I think God has put the authority here. Scripture is really clear about that, that God has set the authorities here. I think they should come clean on that aspect as well.

Sam Yarbrough:

Do you think that their true regret and sorrow for what they did should have any impact or bearing on the civil approach to it? I mean, if God's willing to forgive.

What I'm saying to you is from what you have just said, again, you seem to be in contradiction to your religious feeling. You're saying that a man does something wrong and God can forgive them, but his fellow man can't.

Michael:

Well...

Sam Yarbrough:

Or shouldn't, or won't.

Michael:

I'm not saying that it can't be forgiven, but I think there is the aspect of justice that's there as well as restitution.

Sam Yarbrough:

Where is the justice in the Lord then? Where is His justice?

Michael:

His justice would be in putting it on Christ and Christ paying for it. But then still, on the civil level if I were to... for instance, if I were to have stolen something, I may be sorrowful for it, and an expression of that sorrow for it as well would be making restitution for it as well. I think Scripture is really clear about that.

Sam Yarbrough:

But don't you think it's rather easy to make restitution for a piece of property or amount of money as opposed to taking someone's life or taking their dignity or whatever they need. How do you replace that?

Michael:

I don't know.

Sam Yarbrough:

And in some sense, the civil law is satisfied when you make restitution.

Michael:

I guess I'm still not certain... I guess I've answered it the best I can. I think... I'm not certain.

Sam Yarbrough:

Oh, that's fine. I mean there is no proper answer. Certainly I don't have the proper answer.

Michael:

I really don't know. I guess there is a... I'm not certain either.

Clip 7 (at 37:51)

Sam Yarbrough:

So I'm gonna go down these questions with you as they're going to be asked and in the sequence that they're going to be asked.

Michael:

Yes.

Sam Yarbrough:

Listen to each one carefully and then answer it appropriately.

Michael:

Okay.

Sam Yarbrough:

First question:

Is today Friday, April 20th, 1990?

Michael:

Yes.

Sam Yarbrough:

Regarding Elizabeth Mackintosh's death, do you intend to answer all of my questions truthfully?

Michael:

Yes.

Sam Yarbrough:

Do you think I will ask you any unreviewed questions during this test?

Michael:

No.

Sam Yarbrough:

Before this year, have you ever committed any act of violence because of a loss of temper?

Michael:

Yes.

Sam Yarbrough:

What would that be?

Michael:

That'd be the thing in high school, I guess.

Sam Yarbrough:

Now you said you didn't injure this person.

Michael:

Well, I guess it depends how you define violence. If you were talking about injuring, were they injured...

Sam Yarbrough:

Violence, bringing harm, injury, destruction...

Michael:

No, then no.

Sam Yarbrough:

Never?

Michael:

No, not that I can remember.

Clip 8 (at 39:05)

Sam Yarbrough:

Question five:

Did you kill Elizabeth Mackintosh?

Michael:

No.

Sam Yarbrough:

Question six:

Since being at Covenant, have you ever seriously wished dire harm would come to anyone?

Michael:

No.

Sam Yarbrough:

That isn't in keeping with your Christian attitude.

Michael:

I don't think so, no.

Sam Yarbrough:

Question seven:

Are you in any way responsible for Elizabeth's death?

Michael:

No.

Sam Yarbrough:

Question eight:

Have you answered all of my questions truthfully during this test?

Michael:

Yes

Clip 9 (at 40:10)

Sam Yarbrough:

Well then, answer another question for me. Why during the course of this test, didn't you cooperate like I've asked you to?

Michael:

Cooperate in what way?

Sam Yarbrough:

Well, I mentioned your breathing and instead of remaining the same or improving, it got worse.

Michael:

I don't know what to do about it. I'm just breathing. That's all. I don't know what to do about it. I guess maybe I usually sit like this. Maybe when I just sit like...

The second time I was consciously trying to make my breathing regular. But outside of that, I'm not conscious of doing it.

Sam Yarbrough:

I'm going to tell you something. When I see someone doing the things consistently during the course of recordings that I see coming from you, now this is purely opinion on my part because I can't read your mind or anyone else's. But in my opinion, that is almost tantamount to deception in and of itself because you're not letting the process take place as it should.

Clip 10 (at 43:31)

Sam Yarbrough:

So motive, opportunity. And there are other factors I'm sure involved, too. I'm sure that this person that did this is not a cold-blooded murderer.

Michael:

Mm-hmm.

Sam Yarbrough:

So I'm sure that there are other things going on in their life at the time that were factors also, other pressures. People don't do things like this without a lot of different pressures being exerted on them.

Michael:

Well, I didn't kill Elizabeth. I know that I had pressures on me and everything else, but I didn't kill her and I didn't see her in the morning.

I don't know what I'm doing wrong with this. I'm not... I think I'm just trying to relax too much. I'm trying to be I don't know, but I didn't kill her. I'll try to relax more when you try it again if you want to, but I didn't even see her that morning.

Clip 11 (at 46:32)

Sam Yarbrough:

You know, given all the circumstances as they're known, and I realize there's some variables involved. You know what would make me feel a lot better about you?

Michael:

What?

Sam Yarbrough:

If you had of seen her that morning.

Michael:

I know, I didn't see her though.

Sam Yarbrough:

I'm just saying if you had... Because that was your intent or at least part of your intent. Maybe it wasn't a pleasant thing you were looking forward to but at least...

Michael:

Now, let's put it this way. I looked for her in all the places where I thought she might be. I didn't go into the men's room because I didn't see the door open. I am going on the assumption that she was dead when I was there. I saw the door closed. I didn't... I assumed she probably wouldn't have been in there.

Clip 12 (at 48:20)

Sam Yarbrough:

I don't really care about this polygraph test. I mean, that's secondary here. What I do care about, and this may sound kind of, I don't know, strange or phony maybe even to you, but I feel about letting Elizabeth's soul rest in peace. And I honestly don't believe that that can be done until everything is resolved. That's a primary thing involved in all this.

Michael:

I didn't do it. I just didn't. I don't understand what... why this won't work on me. I don't understand it unless I'm just tense, unless I'm trying to control myself.

I'm not consciously... I'm trying to relax. I'm trying to control... I'm trying to control myself so I don't feel all flustered and stuff like that.

Sam Yarbrough:

That can't be. I mean you're...

Michael:

I don't know...

Sam Yarbrough:

You're being accused by the police of committing a pretty serious crime. I don't know how you can not be flustered and upset, innocent or guilty.

Michael:

Uh huh.

Sam Yarbrough:

I don't think your innocence or guilt has anything to do with-

Michael:

I don't understand why this isn't working.

Sam Yarbrough:

Now that... is a question that I cannot answer because I'm doing what I can to get the... I want the recordings to be proper.

Michael:

I'd like to try it a couple more times and see what happens, cause I didn't do it.

Sam Yarbrough:

I don't feel good about you taking this test.

Michael:

Okay.

Sam Yarbrough:

Seriously...

Michael:

I just wanted it clear. I didn't do it. I just wanted it clear. I came down here, everything else to do it. I honestly didn't murder Elizabeth Mackintosh. Honest to goodness, I didn't do it.

I just feel like I'm stuck now. There's no way I can resolve it as far as with the police. I can't confess, cause I don't even know exactly how she was killed. So why confess to them because I didn't do it. What am I supposed to do?

Sam Yarbrough:

Well, that I can't tell you, Mike.

Michael:

I didn't do it. Now, I wish there was some way to infallibly or whatever determine it because I just didn't do it.

Sam Yarbrough:

I do too. I sincerely wish there was some way to do that. I also wish there was a way to find out beyond any doubt who did it.

Michael:

So do I. Well, you asked if I was angry with the police. You know, I can understand why the police do what they do, and I can understand why they have to investigate the way that they do. I thought they would've found somebody. I thought somebody must've seen something. Something must've popped up there.

You know, they took hair samples. I thought something like that would've come up. Now there was... I don't understand why something didn't come up. I can understand why they investigate me. That's why. I mean, I've been frustrated with it at times, but I can understand it because they're not on a mission, either.

But I didn't do it and I just don't know what to do about it. I know, I'm a weird individual. I walked through there and I really didn't... I walked through there because I thought, "Well, I'd like to get this over and confront Elizabeth and kind of talk it over with her."

I didn't see the other note that you had. She didn't send it back to me, so I didn't know. I thought she was fairly kind of cooled down. I had my head bit off by her before, I didn't want...

On the other hand, I kind of halfway didn't want to find her. But I did look where I thought... I heard things and I saw lights on and stuff like that.

You know, what would it have been if I walked in? What would've happened if I walked in the bathroom and found her dead? Would that have absolved me?

I mean, you know, what am I supposed to do? I didn't do anything. And I just... It is just this continual cloud hanging over my head. So I thought, "Well, they want me take the polygraph test. I'll take the polygraph test. I might as well." I know they are...

Sam Yarbrough:

Is there any possibility something else happened that day but you're afraid to say because of your relationship with her, that you're afraid that people are going to add two and two and end up with five?

Michael:

Oh I see, you're asking if I did see her, and I just don't want to tell anybody about it?

Sam Yarbrough:

Yeah.

Michael:

No, I didn't see her either. See, that's the thing. I almost wish I had. It's happened just the way I related it. And that's what is frustrating about it. I just can't... I wish somebody had been there with me and gone through it or something. I just don't understand why it...

I'm sorry. I just feel like such a loser. I don't know what my problem is.

[END]