

07-12057

This statement given by Matthew Edward McDowell on January 14, 2008 at 9 AM in Capt. Frank Brians office of the Colbert County Sheriff Dept., in the Colbert County Court House in Tuscumbia Alabama.

Matt McDowell is 26 years old, his date of birth is [REDACTED], he lives at [REDACTED] Florence Alabama 35633. Home phone number is [REDACTED], his cell number is [REDACTED]. Matt works at [REDACTED] in Muscle Shoals Alabama. The phone number at work is [REDACTED]

Matt stated that he went hunting by himself on December 29, 2007. Matt was deer hunting and decided to go to the Freedom Hills Management Area. The specific location was just south of Barton Alabama near County Road 33. Matt stated he got there about 4 PM. Matt stated he parked his truck, a 2002 Toyota Tacoma, and walked into the area he wanted to hunt. No one was with him. Matt had told his brother David McDowell where he would be hunting. Matt shot at a deer and went to look for a blood trail. Matt then noticed he did not have his flash light. At that time the sun had just gone down. Matt was unable to find his way back to his truck. Matt stated he then walked off an embankment. Matt stated he already had spinal problems and was afraid he might have done some more damage to himself. Matt said that there was no moon at that time and he could not see. Matt decided to stay where he was.

Matt stated he was there for hours, it was still dark. Matt stated he then heard a helicopter. He looked and saw the helicopter. Within minutes Matt heard Seth Moody, who is a friend of his brother. I hollered back, then Matt heard his brother. They worked their way to Matt. Matt stated he then fired his 30-30 Winchester, model 94, serial number 3554506, lever action rifle into the air. Matt stated he fired twice into the air to alert the rescuers where he was. My brother, Seth and another rescuer then said they were coming. They did come to me. That is when the helicopter went down. The helicopter had been further away and was coming to us when it went down. My brother stated before the helicopter went down "it looks like it is about to land on us. Matt then heard a sound like "tock", then, we noticed the helicopter was coming down. The time between when he fired the two shots and when the helicopter went down was about ten minutes. One of the rescue workers asked us not to go near the downed helicopter, that was about 100 yards from us. There was an explosion just about the same time the helicopter hit the ground. The helicopter had hit at the bottom of the ravine below us. We then went up to where the ambulance was about 200 yards away.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]