

## Interrogation Transcript

SUBJECT: Gordon Cripps  
CASE NUMBER: 22-134-5973-85B  
LOCATION: Harris County Jail  
INTERROGATOR: Special Agent Frampton Bone  
TRANSCRIBED BY: Melissa Looney

FB: What is your name?

GC: So your name is Frampton. Were you by any chance named after Peter Frampton, the rock star?

FB: Please answer my question.

GC: I'll answer yours if you answer mine.

FB: No.

GC: Is that no you were not named after Peter Frampton, or no you're not going to answer my question?

FB: No, I was not. Now please answer my question.

GC: I am, as far as I know, Gordon Cripps.

FB: Where were you born?

GC: I was born in Marfa, which is a small town in West Texas, not far from the Mexican border, in the middle of nowhere, as they say. I always thought that Nowhere, Texas, would have been a better name for the town. Has the ring of truth to it. Truth is all about integrity. I was always big on integrity. That doesn't mean I'm an idealist. People respect integrity. In life you get ahead by giving people what they want. Lot of salt of the earth people in Marfa. People who have integrity in their bones. You probably didn't know that Marfa's claim to fame is that the movie "Giant" was filmed there, and it's the location of the so-called "Marfa lights," which are said to be the camp fires of ghost Indians or aliens snooping around or some other cockamamie phenomenon. So it's kind of a fun thing. A small town in the wilds of West Texas needs something to be proud of. Still, it was just about the worst place you can think of to grow up if you have your eyes set on something bigger. I was the third of 12 children, so I felt more like the member of a club than a family. My father was in the "ohl bidness," as he liked to say, and more absent than he was at home, and when he was at home, that meant I would soon have another brother or sister coming along. My mother was always under a lot of stress, but, bless her, she did the best she could to be nice to us—some benefited more than others, of course. Sometimes I got the feeling she had trouble recalling my name. I'd say, "remember how I was named for uncle Gordy," and then a dark look would come over her face and she'd say, "get along now, whatever your name is, and behave yourself." It was a fun time, but I couldn't wait to get out of there—that house and Marfa. The Greyhound had a stop in Marfa. It didn't stop often, but when it did, I'd go running down to the bus stop to see who might be getting on or getting off, anticipating the day I'd be one of them.

FB: When did you leave?

When I went off to college. I got a scholarship to Harvard.

FB: How did that happen?

GC: I was the best in my class, the best that had ever graduated from Marfa High, at least that's what they told me. Honestly, I think Harvard had a special quota to fill: obscure small town from an obscure part of the country. Marfa came up, and I was it. For me, it was like winning the lottery. Many of my friends said it was a mistake to go. They had the idea that too much schooling is a waste of time, maybe even an impediment. Probably true if all you want to do is work on a ranch. No question, I was getting on the bus.

FB: Was it at Harvard that you met Travis Quinn?

GC: He had a different name back then, but yes. I was enrolled and he was sneaking into courses. I met him when we were both in the same economics class. He came up to me one day and said he appreciated my comments in class. He seemed nice, but he was obviously trying to suck up to me. I didn't mind being sucked up to, but I was hesitant because he seemed snobbish and self-important, but he was obviously smart and popular, so that got him a pass, and I was having trouble making friends, so I welcomed his friendship. We hit it off, and I soon became part of his clique. He was always trying to figure out how to get ahead—not just ahead, but way ahead, and as quickly as possible. A man in a hurry, as they say. And he had no qualms about taking whatever shortcuts he needed or shoving other people aside who might be in the way. No question, he thought of himself as an alpha. He had a certain mystique, not exactly like he was hiding something, but hot to remake himself. He always refused to talk about his background, but bits and pieces of information got around that he was an orphan and came from a poor family. If you asked him about it, he'd say, "I came from straightened circumstances, but it did a lot for giving me the character I needed to succeed." It sounds like bullshit, but I think he was pretty sincere—at least a lot of people thought so. What do I know? No doubt he had a gift for convincing people how clever he was. He certainly knew how to milk an opportunity. Once he saw how many students came from wealthy families, he had this idea of setting up an investment club. We all worked on it. We called ourselves the Merry Band—like Robin Hood. And it turned out to be a huge success, supposedly because he was such a financial genius. Little did we know at the time that, in reality, he was running a Ponzi scheme.

FB: You didn't realize what he was doing?

GC: We didn't know about it till much later, once it had been closed down. We were basically just salesmen, selling these investments that magically seemed to make lots of money. You bought x number of shares, and the next month it would be worth x amount more—and pretty much every month after that. He made all the investment decisions himself, using his superior mathematical intellect and financial acumen. It's not something you question if it appears it's working like gangbusters, which it was. Or apparently was.

FB: But at some point you had a falling out.

CG: There was always a smoldering antagonism. We tended to rub each other the wrong way. He had a very high opinion of himself; I thought he was a phony and a fraud. Your classic yin and yang. There was bound to be a falling out. And sure enough it happened. At the time I had a huge crush on Sylvia Savinelli, one the Merry Banditos. Lovely girl. Smart and reasonably attractive. Plus, she seemed to like me. There was something new. What was that all that about? Of course I was responsive. Movies, TV, novels all had primed me for this moment. Someone

was apparently attracted to me, so naturally I was attracted back. Other people noticed, often to their amusement, but it seemed like the real thing, whatever that was. Then Quinn suddenly decided to dump his current girlfriend du jour and make a play for Sylvia—apparently alternatives were not in the offing, even among the freshman class, his favorite hunting ground. Or, more likely, he couldn't stand me acquiring a girlfriend right under his nose. So he swooped in. Sylvia, to my disappointment, took the bait—hook, line and sinker, as they say. Having one's heart broken is said to be a rite of passage, but as I discovered, it wasn't that at all, but rather a major revelation—something that made me realize that I actually had absolutely no interest in romantic relationships. None, zip. It wasn't a question of men versus women, it was simply an utter lack of an attraction for either sex. Apparently I wasn't even on the spectrum, or if I was, maybe I was in the middle, at zero. It was a life-changing light bulb going off in my head. Finally everything came into focus. I remember thinking: "Well, that certainly simplifies things!" More to the point, I could see how lacking that unremitting drive, that hungry monster people have in the middle of their brains, day in and day out, would allow me to totally focus on what really interested me—myself. Getting ahead. Making something of my life.

FB: All right. Let me stop you there. Let's move on to your life after college.

CG: Quinn had always talked about continuing with The Merry Band on a professional level—setting up a real investment fund, a legal corporation, with offices and salaries and 401(k) pension plans—the real deal. We already had a customer base. Quinn would be CEO and we would all have executive titles. We all loved the idea. Everyone in the Merry Band was invited to join. But not me. Quinn told everybody it was my decision because I had other plans, but, no, it was a deliberate snub. I didn't have other plans. The man broke my heart. You never forget something like that. So now I had to come up with something. I'd always had a knack for math and science, especially computers, so I just sort of drifted into IT. I was very good at it, and people were willing to pay me lots of money to hack code. Computers need code, lots and lots of code. It's hard and requires a high level of skill. So there's always a need for people who can do that work. Fortunately I was one of those people. Once you're in, it's like going to heaven. You get to come and go as you please, work any number of hours day or night, wear whatever you want, sleep whenever you want, take baths whenever you want—as long as you do what you really loved to do within a reasonable timeframe. Nobody bothers you. Your boss treats you like a national treasure. The CEO of the company treats you like a national treasure.

FB: I see that you worked for quite a few companies.

GC: More than what I might have wished. A huge inconvenience, actually. A former friend once told me I seem to have a knack for wearing out my welcome. Probably true. I think it all goes back to a lack of respect for authority on my part. Apparently many people place a high value on that, even when those in authority are incompetent, foul natured, or sometimes even clinically insane. I gave respect when it was earned, which didn't happen very often—thus my checkered employment history. A case of really bad luck. Either that or the work of a mischievous deity getting a kick out of tormenting me. The Lord works in mysterious ways, as they say. Some are rewarded, some tormented. No one is able to convincingly explain why. Our so-called moral codes are a joke. Those who follow them get their reward in heaven, those who don't, get richly rewarded here on planet Earth. I once worked with a man from China who spoke pretty good English but he had a huge problem with idioms and things like proverbs. So the way he would put it was: "bird in hand, worth two bushes." I think he was right.

FB: How did you get hired at FrijoloLoco?

GC: After college, I lost track of Travis but several years later I bumped into him at a conference in Las Vegas. There he was, big as life, high and mighty, with the same swagger but a totally different name, and the title of CEO of a regional Mexican restaurant chain. He pretended to be pleased to see me, but I could tell he was mightily annoyed. Let's put it this way, I think he knew that if we were playing poker, I had some pretty high cards in my hand. At the time, I was trying to raise capital to start my own company, and having absolutely no luck with it. Not only wasn't I working but I'd been forced to live with my parents back in Marfa, so cash flow was an issue. An embarrassing come down, to say the least. I never thought I would be riding that Greyhound back into Marfa, but there I was. Now things were looking up. Here was this wealthy, well-positioned man, a supposed former friend, with a checkered past and lots of skeletons in the closet. I saw my chance. I knew the last thing he wanted was to have me back in his life, but at the same time I was pretty sure he was worried sick over the fact that I knew who he was and what he had done. Knowledge, as they say, is power. For a few seconds, I wasn't sure which way he would swing. Then he smiled, and I knew. I knew that smile! I could have predicted the next thing out of his mouth. He had always felt bad about mistreating me in the past, he said, and hoped there would come a day when he could make it up to me. Happy to oblige, I said. I told him about my idea for my own company, showed him my business plan, talked it up as the greatest idea since sliced bread, and said I'd be thrilled to have him as an investor. He goes, "I don't invest." How about a job? A job where? At his company of course, FrijoLoco. I'd love a job, I said. I was great at IT. The best there is. Cutting edge. Full of ideas. Driven to succeed. Etc. Etc. How about running his IT department? He said he already had someone doing that. I said, "Yeah, but this person I'm certain doesn't know what I know. I can scale operations to a point that would give you a measureable bump up in competitive advantage." Or some such bullshit. I talked a mile a minute. At some point I stopped making sense. But it still sounded terrific. More important, it conveyed that I would accept nothing less. He got the message. He wasn't stupid. He knew he didn't really have a choice. You get dealt a hot hand, you go for it. Go for the max. That's how I got on the FrijoLoco payroll.

FB: That's quite at odds with what you said at Charlie's Kitchen.

GC: Yes, it is. At Charlie's Kitchen I was telling Travis what he wanted to hear. Tall tales. None of it was true. I was incognito.

FB: So prior to your employment at FrijoLoco, you were not involved in making or distributing illegal drugs?

GC: No, I was unemployed and trying to start up my own company, as I said.

FB: After you were hired at FrijoLoco, were you involved in helping Mr. Quinn launder money from drug sales?

GC: Of course not. At that point I had no idea what he was doing. I was busy ramping up their hopelessly antiquated IT infrastructure.

FB: Why was Mr. Quinn paying you \$5000 a month?

GC: I had managed to convince him of my business idea and he was making investments in my company. Simple as that. Nothing more.

FB: Why would he invest with you, when he had previously said he wasn't interested?

GC: He changed his mind? Once he got to know me on an almost daily basis and I had the chance to brief him in greater detail, he saw what an attractive opportunity I was offering.

FB: What sort of business was it?

GC: An IT consultancy.

FB: Was it ever launched? Are you in business now?

GC: No.

FB: You were not secretly recording Mr. Quinn's conversations regarding money laundering for the purpose of blackmailing him?

GC: Absolutely not. As a paid informant for the FBI, I was gathering evidence. Mr. Quinn had tried to enlist me in his criminal activities. At first I resisted, but then after I reported what had happened to the authorities, I was encouraged to gather evidence against Mr. Quinn. As a loyal and law abiding citizen, I saw it as my duty to cooperate.

FB: How do you explain the personal animus toward Mr. Quinn that you displayed in the Charlie's Kitchen recording?

GC: I've made no secret of my dislike of the man. At Charlie's Kitchen a lot of that ugliness came out. I'm not proud of that, but sometimes we let our emotions overcome our better judgment. We are weak creatures, all too human. That night, before going to bed, I fell on my knees and prayed, asking for God's forgiveness and promising I would never speak so vilely ever again.

FB: Who at the FBI was your contact during this time?

GC: Special Agent Cutter.

FB: In the Charlie's Kitchen recording why do you admit to kidnapping and drugging Mr. Quinn?

GC: In retrospect, that was ill-advised. Of course I had nothing to do with his kidnapping. That story I told was pure fiction—lies—and preposterous on the face of it. Seeing I had an opportunity—maybe the only one I would ever have—to hurt him and exact some modicum of comeuppance for his mistreatment of me and lack of respect over the years, I foolishly took credit for incidents that I knew had hurt him deeply. A terrible failure of judgment and human forbearance on my part. So, yes, let's call it what it was—a cruel act of revenge. No doubt I've compromised my own innocence in these matters, but I can't undo what's been done. I'm of course ready to apologize for my indefensible behavior and hope I can somehow make amends. My own guess is that Mr. Quinn most likely was kidnapped by the cartel. I personally had nothing at all to do with it.

FB: What motive would they have?

GC: They might have suspected he was skimming or talking to the FBI. Maybe they just didn't trust him anymore. Or maybe he was targeted by others purely for the money. There are so many gangs, and they don't exactly consult with each other. A lot of people think the kidnapping was his own idea—as a way of getting out the fix he was in. There are lots of theories. I doubt

whether we'll ever know for sure. He's conveniently lost his memory, so you'll never get an answer from him.

FB: Thank you. We're done for now.