

chell if he had seen anyone else on the towpath the hat he had twice passed "a couple walking together," never—"about twenty"—wearing Bermuda shorts.⁷⁷ The name was never identified, and he never came forward. Roundtree testified about seeing the couple, a point that Roundtree bolstered his credibility, but Sylvis had observed the couple never came forward to police. Aside from never substantiated that Mitchell had been on the towpath the other day.

Roundtree's calm demeanor, Roundtree probed for weak spots in Mitchell's report with military precision his time on the towpath immediately when and where he was located at each of several points along the line of the murder. Roundtree focused on another point in Mitchell's well-rehearsed precision: Had he been on the towpath he was forced to concede that he hadn't; he couldn't say the times he gave were exact. He admitted that he had not been on the towpath the time he returned to the Pentagon on the "clock tower [Pentagon] basement athletic center," which Roundtree read as a small but significant detail, again establishing a doubt about Mitchell's account.

Roundtree noted that the man he passed weighed "about 145 pounds" and was of average build. It was too close for comfort, in spite of Mitchell's testimony that he had seen a man "about my height, about five-feet eight inches tall, about as heavy as Ray Crump." The weight match wouldn't be lost on Roundtree. At the end of his testimony, William Mitchell's sheen remained a model citizen, and he had delivered precisely what corroborated the less-than-stellar witness Henry Giddens and ironically resuscitating the Wiggins testimony. Roundtree's testimony, in the eyes of the jury, it may have still been

the prosecution called its final witnesses. Agent Warren, a forensic expert, told Hantman there were no powder burns on Crump's hands or clothing because he had been in the water. Roundtree, however, had already established that the police had not searched Crump or his clothing for the presence of nitrates. More consistent with the fact that the standard paraffin test for gunshot residue typically involves the suspect being asked to wash his

hands repeatedly throughout the testing procedure. If a suspect had fired a gun recently, the presence of nitrates would still show up. Since there had been no nitrates discovered on Crump's clothing or on any part of his body, Roundtree argued, there wasn't any evidence he had fired a firearm that day.

Agent Johnson's testimony did confirm—and underscore—that whoever killed Mary Meyer had shot her from close range and was likely highly skilled, possibly ambidextrous, in the handling of a .38-caliber revolver. In describing the shots, Johnson had corroborated Deputy Coroner Rayford's testimony about which hand had fired which shot.⁷⁸

Next, Special Agent Paul Stombaugh, of the FBI's crime lab, testified that in twenty-one out of twenty-two characteristics, Ray Crump's hair sample was a match for a single hair found inside the golf cap recovered the day after the murder. This forensic analysis, he maintained, linked both the jacket and cap to the defendant. The cap and jacket on exhibit did belong to Ray Crump, but the hair match wasn't evidence that he was guilty of murder.

In her cross-examination of Stombaugh, Roundtree called into question the entire field of hair and fiber analysis. In preparation for the cross-examination, she had read a number of textbooks, a dozen of which were stacked on the defense table. Stombaugh wasn't able to answer questions about the latest literature in the field, because he hadn't read it. He was also unfamiliar with a University of Pennsylvania study Roundtree cited, showing that hair and fiber analysis was far from an exact science. She then compelled Stombaugh to admit that he had never published anything in the field and that he was not, in fact, an expert. But the witness attempted to fight back. He explained that his FBI laboratory relied heavily upon something called neutron activation in analyzing hair and fiber samples. "There is a great controversy raging right now," Stombaugh testified, and "this field [neutron activation] hasn't been perfected yet to the point where we can positively identify a hair of some particular person through this method."⁷⁹ That admission inadvertently succeeded in making Roundtree's case for her.

In the end, Stombaugh's testimony dealt more than one blow to the prosecution. The FBI's state-of-the-art forensic laboratory in Washington, D.C., had failed to find any forensic evidence—hair, clothing fibers, blood, semen, skin, urine, or saliva—that linked Ray Crump to either the murder scene or the body and clothing of Mary Meyer. Similarly, there had been no traces of Mary Meyer's blood, hair, fibers, or saliva found on Ray Crump. If the first gunshot had produced a wound that, according to Dr. Rayford, very likely spurted blood, wouldn't Mary Meyer's assailant be covered in it? Even if the

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