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S. Ct No. 93781-8
COA No. 32514-8-III

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

STATE OF WASHINGTON, Respondent,

v.

JOHN CAMERON IRA YOUNG, Petitioner.

PETITION FOR REVIEW

Kenneth H. Kato, WSBA # 6400
Attorney for Petitioner
1020 N. Washington St.
Spokane, WA 99201
(509) 220-2237

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A. IDENTITY OF PETITIONER

John Cameron Ira Young asks this court to accept review of the Court of Appeals decision terminating review designated in Part B of this petition.

B. COURT OF APPEALS DECISION

The Court of Appeals decision Mr. Young wants reviewed was filed October 4, 2016, a copy of which is in the Appendix.

C. ISSUE PRESENTED FOR REVIEW

1. Did defense counsel render ineffective assistance by stipulating to admission of Mr. Young's confession when there was no independent evidence apart from his confession, under the corpus delicti rule, sufficient to establish all the elements of first degree murder?

D. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Mr. Young was charged by amended information with first degree murder with a firearm enhancement. (CP 82). Before trial, defense counsel stipulated to the admission of all statements made by Mr. Young while he was in police custody. (4/11/14 RP 42). In his interview, he confessed and admitted killing the victim, J.S. (*Id.* at 43). The State acknowledged that any statements made by Josh

Hunt (known as RJ), who was involved in killing J.S., could not be used against Mr. Young. (*Id.* at 46).

Justin Danner was working at the Desert Food Mart on July 4, 2013, when a distraught Mr. Young came in around 8 a.m., needing to call 911 because he saw someone get shot. (4/16/14 RP 99-100, 107). Law enforcement responded; the suspect, RJ Hunt, was outside in the parking lot when arrested. (*Id.* at 130-31).

Detective Scott Runge responded to the homicide report that morning. (4/16/14 RP 142). He went to the Desert Food Mart in Benton City, where he saw Mr. Young telling other deputies RJ had shot somebody. (*Id.* at 145). The detective took him to the location where J.S. was located. (*Id.* at 146-48). Apparently, the victim owed RJ some money for drugs. (*Id.* at 162).

Officer Scott Lien was dispatched to a homicide report on July 4, 2013. (4/16/14 RP 190). Near the Horn Rapids ORV Park, J.S. was found deceased, lying in the sand dunes. (*Id.* at 191-92). Mr. Young told the officer, "I didn't have to do it." (*Id.* at 195).

Mark Allen looked for a backpack tossed into the river and found it. (4/16/14 RP 210-11). Detective Dean Murstig, the crime scene investigator, photographed the area where J.S. was found. (*Id.* at 226). It looked like there were two other shoe patterns

besides J.S.'s. (*Id.* at 245-46). Three sets of footprints went towards where J.S. was found and only two sets went away from his body. (*Id.* at 259-60). One set was consistent with J.S.'s shoes. (*Id.* at 262). Other shoes were found in the backpack retrieved from the river. (*Id.*). RJ had been wearing Adidas shoes and Mr. Young Nike shoes when J.S. was killed. (*Id.* at 328-333). The backpack contained ammunition, a plastic holder for ammunition, and shell casings. (*Id.* at 303-04). A firearm was located in a metal can in the backpack. (*Id.* at 307).

Detective Murstig found two bullets in the sand, one pristine and the other deformed. (4/18/14 RP 292-92). There was a hole in J.S.'s left front shirt pocket and his chest. (*Id.* at 321-22). Another hole was under the bill and the front of J.S.'s cap. (*Id.* at 322-23). J.S. died of gunshot wounds. (*Id.* at 335). The detective had no doubt Mr. Young was at the scene of the killing and had left. (*Id.* at 362).

Mr. Young took the gun and shot J.S. in the head. (*Id.* at 362-63). J.S. had three entrance wounds and one exit wound. (*Id.* at 363). The gunshot wound through-and-through was in the head area. (*Id.* at 364). Three holes were in the head and one in the chest. (*Id.* at 366). Mr. Young told Detective Athena Clark that RJ

shot J.S. once in the chest and three times in the head. (*Id.* at 369). J.S. stopped twitching when Mr. Young shot him in the head. (*Id.* at 371).

On July 4, 2013, Detective Jeff Bickford took Mr. Young to the police station interview room. (4/18/14 RP 463-64). The detective began to interview him and Detective Clark showed up later. (*Id.* at 465-66). Mr. Young showed Detective Bickford how he aimed and fired into J.S.'s head in the temple-cheek region. (*Id.* at 468). Detective Clark knew Mr. Young from before when he was a student at Richland High School. (4/21/14 RP 652). She assisted in the interview. (*Id.* at 654).

Mr. Young interjected the terms humane and inhumane explaining his decision to fire the last round into J.S. after seeing him suffer. (*Id.* at 658). He shot J.S. in the head. (*Id.* at 658-59). Mr. Young confessed to the crime. (*Id.* at 704). Detective Clark testified he told her he did not aggressively take the gun from anyone. At her prompting, he indicated he was going to put J.S. out of his misery. (*Id.* at 717-21). A video of the interview with Mr. Young was played to the jury in its entirety. (*Id.* at 670, 688).

The detective said Mr. Young told her he froze up before firing. (4/21/14 RP 721). He said J.S. was twitching and after he

shot him, there was no more twitching. (*Id.* at 730-31). Mr. Young made sure he had stopped twitching and then walked away within 3-5 seconds. (*Id.* at 739-41).

In the defense case, Detective Murstig confirmed a five-shot revolver was used in the killing and five bullets had been recovered: two by J.S.'s head area in the sand, two in his body, and one by the road. (4/23/14 RP 802-06). He said it was extremely likely one shot missed J.S.'s head. (*Id.* at 821). RJ shot when J.S. was standing up and then went down. (*Id.* at 839). Mr. Young shot J.S. while he was on the ground. (*Id.*). RJ shot once to the chest and twice to the head, followed by Mr. Young shooting J.S. once in the head. (*Id.* at 857).

Detective Clark testified Mr. Young told her he did not aggressively take the gun from anyone. At her prompting, he indicated he was going to put J.S. out of his misery. (*Id.* at 717-21). A video of the interview with Mr. Young was played to the jury in its entirety for illustrative purposes. (*Id.* at 670, 688). The detective said Mr. Young told her he froze up before firing. (4/21/14 RP 721). He told her RJ shot J.S. three times. (*Id.* at 722).

In closing, the State argued the requisite intent for the murder came from Mr. Young's confession:

I looked at his head, and I pointed at him. You know, I didn't do it at first. I didn't want to do it, but I had to, man. I thought about it. You know, I thought about it. I couldn't do – do it. I couldn't just leave him there, not knowing if he was dead or alive. . .

So, I had to do it for my own sake, man, for his own sake, but this is – get it over. (4/24/14 RP 965).

Again pointing to the confession, the State noted Mr. Young acknowledged he had to cock the trigger and pull the hammer back on the gun. (*Id.* at 966). The argument then again quoted from his confession:

I had to think about it. You know, I had to do that. So, you know, I had to think about it. You know, I had that fucking choice to do it, and I fucking did it, man. That's why I'm so mad, and then I think, "Why couldn't I just not have done that?" and that's just fucking let RJ do his thing, man. I don't know, but I just couldn't do it. (*Id.*).

The jury convicted Mr. Young of first degree murder with a firearm enhancement. (CP 214, 216). He was sentenced to 372 months, including the 60-month enhancement. (CP 220).

The Court of Appeals affirmed his conviction on October 4, 2016, in a published opinion.

E. ARGUMENT WHY REVIEW SHOULD BE ACCEPTED

Review should be accepted by this court because the Court of Appeals decision conflicts with other appellate decisions. RAP

13.4(b)(1), (2).

To prove ineffective assistance of counsel, a defendant must show (1) his counsel's performance was deficient and (2) the deficient performance prejudiced him. *Strickland v. Washington*, 466 U.S. 668, 687, 104 S. Ct. 2052, 80 L. Ed.2d 674 (1984); *State v. McFarland*, 127 Wn.2d 322, 334-35, 899 P.2d 1251 (1995). A lawyer's performance is deficient if he made errors so serious he was not functioning as the counsel guaranteed the defendant by the Sixth Amendment. Prejudice requires showing counsel's errors were so serious as to deprive the defendant of a fair trial. *State v. Jeffries*, 105 Wn.2d 398, 418, 717 P.2d 722, *cert. denied*, 479 U.S. 922 (1986). But the defendant need not show counsel's deficient performance more likely than not altered the outcome of the case. *Strickland*, 466 U.S. at 693. Legitimate tactics or strategy will not support a claim of ineffective assistance. *State v. Hendrickson*, 129 Wn.2d 61, 77-78, 917 P.2d 563 (1996).

Here, defense counsel did not contest the admissibility of his client's confession, but rather stipulated to it in its entirety. In light of the corpus delicti rule, that decision to stipulate to admission of the confession was ineffective assistance as there was no independent evidence sufficient to establish all the elements of first

degree murder, particularly premeditated intent. See *State v. Green*, 182 Wn. App. 133, 142-43, 328 P.3d 988, review denied, 181 Wn.2d 1019 (2014).

Under the corpus delicti rule, a defendant's extrajudicial statements may not be admitted into evidence without independent proof of the existence of every element of the crime charged. *State v. Ashurst*, 45 Wn. App. 48, 723 P.2d 1189 (1986); *State v. Cobelli*, 56 Wn. App. 921, 924, 788 P.2d 1081 (1989). The Court of Appeals decision, however, does away with the rule's requirement of independent proof of every element of the crime. It is true that in a homicide case, the corpus delicti usually involves two elements: (1) the fact of death and (2) a causal connection between the death and a criminal act. *State v. Aten*, 130 Wn.2d 640, 655, 927 P.2d 210 (1996). Mr. Young was charged with premeditated first degree murder, not just homicide. This offense required proof of intent. That essential element takes it out of the "usual" corpus delicti in a homicide case. *Id.* Under the corpus delicti rule, the defendant's incriminating statement alone was therefore insufficient to establish this crime took place. *State v. Brockob*, 159 Wn.2d 311, 328, 150 P.3d 59 (2006).

The independent proof of the crime charged need not be sufficient to support a conviction, but the State must present “evidence of sufficient circumstances which would support a logical and reasonable inference” that the crime occurred. *State v. Hamrick*, 19 Wn. App. 417, 576 P.2d 912 (1978). Moreover, the corroborative evidence must be to the charged crime, not just any crime. *Brockob*, 159 Wn.2d at 329. This also shows that this is not the “usual” homicide as the element of intent goes to the charged crime of premeditated first degree murder.

The corpus delicti rule focuses on the sufficiency of the independent evidence other than the defendant’s confession. *State v. Dow*, 168 Wn.2d 243, 249, 251, 227 P.3d 1278 (2010). The rule’s purpose is to ensure other evidence supports the defendant’s statement and satisfies the crime’s elements. *Id.* To determine the sufficiency of independent evidence under the rule, the truth of the State’s evidence is assumed and all reasonable inferences are viewed in a light most favorable to the State. *Aten*, 130 Wn.2d at 656. The independent evidence must only provide prima facie corroboration of the defendant’s statement, *i.e.*, the independent evidence of sufficient circumstances which would support a logical evidence must support a logical and reasonable inference the crime

has occurred. *Brockob*, 159 Wn.2d at 328. Indeed, the State must still prove every element of the crime charged by evidence independent of the defendant's statement. *Dow*, 168 Wn.2d at 254.

The State had no evidence independent of Mr. Young's confession to prove every element of first degree murder, as expressed in Instruction 9 stating "[a] person commits the crime of murder in the first degree when, with a premeditated intent to cause the death of another person, he causes the death of such person or of a third person." (CP 200). The to-convict instruction went on to state the elements of the offense:

To convict the defendant of the crime of murder in the first degree, each of the following elements of the crime must be proved beyond a reasonable doubt:

(1) That on or about the 4th day of July, 2013, the defendant acted with intent to cause the death of [J.S.];

(2) That the intent to cause the death was premeditated;

(3) That [J.S.] died as a result of the defendant's acts;

and

(4) That any of those acts act occurred in the State of Washington. (CP 201).

Other than Mr. Young's confession that he froze and had to think about it before shooting, the State produced absolutely no

independent evidence that he acted with premeditated intent to cause J.S.'s death. Without having such evidence beside the confession, the corpus delicti rule was violated as there was no prima facie corroboration of Mr. Young's statement as to any facts, circumstantial or otherwise, tending to show premeditated intent. Absent any independent evidence, the State failed to prove every element of the crime charged. *Dow*, 168 Wn.2d at 254. The Court of Appeals' decision rejects this requirement and thus conflicts with other appellate decisions.

Citing trial strategy, defense counsel stipulated to the admission of Mr. Young's confession. The purported defense was that he missed. But under the circumstances, there can be no claim of legitimate trial strategy when counsel's decision relieved the State of not only proving the premeditated intent element of first degree murder, but also that Mr. Young's acts caused J.S.'s death. RCW 9A.32.030(1)(a).

In essence, counsel conceded guilt as no independent evidence proved intent apart from the confession. This was deficient performance that so prejudiced Mr. Young that it deprived him of the defense based on the corpus delicti rule. *Strickland*,

supra. The first degree murder conviction should have been reversed and the charge dismissed.

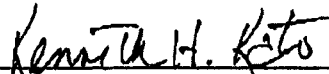
The decision of the Court of Appeals endorsed the reasoning of Division I in *State v. Hummel*, 165 Wn. App. 749, 266 P.3d 269 (2012), *review denied*, 176 W.2d 1023 (2013). Both decisions conflict with other appellate decisions. Review is warranted so the Supreme Court can decide the issue. RAP 13.4(b)(1), (2).

F. CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing facts and authorities, Mr. Young respectfully urges this court to grant his petition for review.

DATED this 31st day of October, 2016.

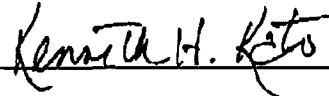
Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth H. Kato, WSBA # 6400
Attorney for Petitioner
1020 N. Washington St.
Spokane, WA 99201
(509) 220-2237

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on October 31, 2016, I served a copy of the petition for review by USPS on John Cameron Ira Young, # 364180, 1830 Eagle Crest Way, Clallam Bay, WA 98326; and by email, as agreed, on Andrew K. Miller at prosecuting@co.benton.wa.us.



APPENDIX

FILED
October 4, 2016
In the Office of the Clerk of Court
WA State Court of Appeals, Division III

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON
DIVISION THREE

STATE OF WASHINGTON,)	
)	No. 32514-8-III
Respondent,)	
)	
v.)	
)	
JOHN CAMERON IRA YOUNG,)	PUBLISHED OPINION
)	
Appellant.)	

SIDDOWAY, J. — John Young appeals his conviction for first degree murder, arguing that he received ineffective assistance of counsel when his trial lawyer stipulated to the admission of his confession. He contends that in order to establish the corpus delicti of the crime, the State was required to present independent evidence of each of the crime’s elements, and his confession was not admissible until it did. He argues that the State would not have been able to offer independent evidence of premeditation.

To establish the corpus delicti of first degree murder, the State need not present independent evidence of the mental state required for that crime. Because the State presented ample independent evidence of the fact of death and a causal connection between the death and a criminal act, the corpus delicti was established. We affirm.

FACTS AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

On the morning of July 4, 2013, John Young entered the Desert Food Mart in Benton City and asked the cashier to call 911 because he had witnessed a shooting. When Lieutenant Chuck Jones of the Benton County Sheriff's Office arrived, Mr. Young, who the lieutenant described as appearing "nervous and scared," told him that "he witnessed somebody get murdered," and that the perpetrator, Joshua Hunt, was outside in the parking lot. Report of Proceedings (RP) at 129-30. Mr. Young informed Lieutenant Jones that the victim was 16-year-old Jacob S.¹ Police immediately arrested Mr. Hunt.

When Sheriff's Detective Scott Runge arrived at the Food Mart, Mr. Young repeated his claim that Mr. Hunt—his friend—had shot someone at the nearby Horn Rapids Off-Road Vehicle Park. Detective Runge would later describe Mr. Young as "excited—to the point of almost being inaudible" and Sergeant Danny McCary, who was also present for this initial contact with Mr. Young, described him as "distracted. He was crying off and on." RP at 149, 183. Together, Detective Runge, Mr. Young, and Sergeant McCary drove to the Horn Rapids Park. At this point, Mr. Young was being treated as a witness.

¹ "Jacob S." is a pseudonym for the juvenile victim. See General Order of Division III, *In re the Use of Initials or Pseudonyms for Child Victims or Child Witnesses* (Wash. Ct. App. June 18, 2012), http://www.courts.wa.gov/appellate_trial_courts/.

The park was in Richland, and the Richland Police Department was notified of a possible shooting victim. It dispatched two officers, who quickly found Jacob's body and secured the crime scene.

As the Benton County sheriff's officers proceeded to the park with Mr. Young, Detective Runge spoke to him about Jacob and the events of the night before. Mr. Young told the detective that Jacob had previously stolen two ounces of weed from Mr. Hunt and owed Mr. Hunt \$70. Despite that, after Mr. Young and Mr. Hunt ran into Mr. Jacob and his girlfriend at a party the night before, the three men ended up driving to the park, where they smoked marijuana. Mr. Hunt had been carrying a handgun.

According to Mr. Young, after smoking, Jacob "got[] up and asked, 'Now what?' and Mr. Hunt basically pulled out the pistol and said, 'This is now what,' and began firing on him." RP at 150. Mr. Young told the officers he and Mr. Hunt later traveled to the Benton City area, where they disposed of their shoes and other evidence by placing them in a backpack that they threw into the river.

When Detective Runge explained to Mr. Young that the city of Richland had jurisdiction, Mr. Young agreed to speak with Richland detectives. Richland Police Officer Jeff Bickford drove Mr. Young from the park to the Richland police station, where Mr. Young consented to audio and video recording of an interview.

During a break in the interview, Officer Bickford learned from another Richland police officer that Mr. Hunt was telling a different story, implicating Mr. Young in the

murder. Upon reconvening the interview, Officer Bickford read Mr. Young *Miranda*² warnings and obtained his agreement that he understood he was now a suspect and any statements he made could be used against him. Mr. Young then confessed that he fired the final shot at Jacob. He claimed Mr. Hunt shot Jacob three times, then handed the gun to him, and that he then fired one shot into Jacob's head near the temple-cheek region. Mr. Young said that Jacob's body had been twitching when Mr. Young was first handed the gun, but that he stopped twitching after Mr. Young shot him in the head.³

Mr. Young told officers that after he and Mr. Hunt shot Jacob, they went to the Desert Food Mart (the same one from which he later called 911), bought cigarettes, drove up the road, parked, and switched out the shoes they had been wearing for ones that Mr. Hunt had in his trunk. They then put the potentially incriminating shoes, the handgun, and ammunition in a backpack, loaded the backpack with rocks to weigh it down, and dropped it in the river. Mr. Young described the shoes they had disposed of in the river as a pair of gray, neon yellow, and green Nike tennis shoes (Mr. Young's) and a pair of black Adidas (Mr. Hunt's).

² *Miranda v. Arizona*, 384 U.S. 436, 86 S. Ct. 1602, 16 L. Ed. 2d 694 (1966).

³ Mr. Young's videotaped interview was played for the jury but is not transcribed in the verbatim report of proceedings. A transcript of the interview prepared before trial was admitted as an illustrative exhibit but was not designated as part of the clerk's papers on appeal. We are left to rely on certain unchallenged witness testimony about what Mr. Young said in the interview. *E.g.*, Clerk's Papers at 706, 722, 729-31.

Richland police were able to locate and retrieve the backpack containing Mr. Young's and Mr. Hunt's shoes, ammunition, and Mr. Hunt's Charter Arms five-shot revolver. The shoes matched footprints and shoe patterns that had been found in the sand near Jacob's body.

The Washington State Patrol Crime Laboratory determined that all of the bullets recovered from the crime scene had been fired from the Charter Arms revolver found in the backpack. A pristine bullet found in the vicinity of the body suggested one shot had missed.

Interviews of Mr. Young's and Mr. Hunt's acquaintances yielded a witness who had heard Mr. Hunt comment in the two weeks before the murder about shooting people, including about shooting Jacob. The witness heard Mr. Young and Mr. Hunt talk about "a place to go to take [Jacob]" and the fact that Mr. Hunt had five bullets. RP at 384.

Jacob's girlfriend confirmed that the last time she had seen Jacob was in the early morning of July 4, when Mr. Hunt, Mr. Young and Jacob dropped her off at the apartment complex where she lived.

It was concluded from the autopsy performed on Jacob that he had been shot three times: he was first shot in the left mid-chest while standing, was then shot in the head while standing, and was finally shot in head while lying on the ground. Mr. Young was charged with first degree murder.

A first order of business when the case was called for trial was to conduct a CrR 3.5 hearing. Instead, Mr. Young's lawyer stipulated to the admission of the videotaped interview, telling the court:

[W]e believe it's in our interests to actually stipulate to the 3.5 hearing, and I've discussed that with Mr. Young, and I know the Court will make its own inquiries, but he knows and understands he has a right to that hearing, but we believe it's in our benefit and strategic interest to proceed with the stipulation.

RP at 41-42. The court questioned Mr. Young, who stated he understood he had a right to a hearing on the admissibility of the statements but was agreeing instead that all of his statements were admissible.

During trial, Mr. Young's videotaped confession was played for the jury. At the conclusion of the evidence, the jury returned a guilty verdict. Mr. Young appeals.

ANALYSIS

Mr. Young identifies only one issue on appeal: he contends defense counsel provided ineffective assistance of counsel by stipulating to the admission of Mr. Young's confession "when there was no independent evidence apart from his confession, under the corpus delecti rule, sufficient to establish all the elements of first degree murder." Br. of Appellant at 1. If Mr. Young is correct about the extent of independent evidence required, Mr. Young's confession would not have been admissible. "It has long been the rule in Washington that such statements [by a defendant] cannot be considered by the

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finder of fact unless the State first establishes the corpus delicti of the crime by independent evidence.” *State v. Hummel*, 165 Wn. App. 749, 758, 266 P.3d 269 (2012).

To demonstrate ineffective assistance of counsel, a defendant must show that defense counsel’s representation was deficient, *i.e.*, it fell below an objective standard of reasonableness based on consideration of all the circumstances; and that the deficient representation prejudiced the defendant, *i.e.*, there is a reasonable probability that, except for counsel’s unprofessional errors, the result of the proceeding would have been different. *Strickland v. Washington*, 466 U.S. 668, 688-89, 104 S. Ct. 2052, 80 L. Ed. 2d 674 (1984). The defendant must show in the record the absence of legitimate strategic or tactical reasons supporting the actions challenged. *State v. McFarland*, 127 Wn.2d 322, 336, 899 P.2d 1251 (1995). If one of the two prongs of the *Strickland* test is absent, this court need not inquire further. *State v. Hendrickson*, 129 Wn.2d 61, 78, 917 P.2d 563 (1996).

Professor LaFave has observed that

[m]ost corpus delicti cases are homicide cases, where the difficulty may be either (a) that, the victim having simply disappeared, no dead body can be produced so as to make it absolutely certain that the victim will not later turn up alive and well, or (b) that, although a dead body is found conveniently lying about, examination of the body and the surrounding circumstances reveals that the death may have been caused as well by accident, suicide or natural causes as by someone’s foul play.

WAYNE R. LAFAVE, 1 SUBSTANTIVE CRIMINAL LAW § 1.4(b) at 30 (2d ed. 2003)

(emphasis omitted).

In a homicide case, the corpus delicti generally consists of two elements: (1) the fact of death, and (2) a causal connection between the death and a criminal act. *State v. Aten*, 130 Wn.2d 640, 655, 927 P.2d 210 (1996); *State v. Lung*, 70 Wn.2d 365, 371, 423 P.2d 72 (1967). It can be proved by direct or circumstantial evidence, which need not be enough to support a conviction or send the case to the jury. *Aten*, 130 Wn.2d at 656. In assessing whether there is sufficient evidence of the corpus delicti independent of a defendant's statements, we assume the truth of the State's evidence and all reasonable inferences from it in a light most favorable to the State. *Id.* at 658; *City of Bremerton v. Corbett*, 106 Wn.2d 569, 571, 723 P.2d 1135 (1986).

Jacob was found dead, proving the first element. And one gunshot wound to the chest and two through the head would appear to establish the causal connection with a criminal act. If that were not enough, any possibility of self-infliction of the wounds was eliminated by the testimony of an expert pathologist that the first shot to the head would have resulted in an immediate loss of consciousness. It was also eliminated by the fact that the revolver from which the shots were fired was found miles away, in a backpack that had been weighted down and disposed of in a river.

Mr. Young nonetheless argues that our Supreme Court held in *State v. Dow*, 168 Wn.2d 243, 227 P.3d 1278 (2010), that the State "must . . . prove *every element* of the crime charged by evidence independent of the defendant's statement." Br. of Appellant at 9 (emphasis added). He attributes the asserted deficiency in the State's independent

evidence against Mr. Young “particularly” to the lack of independent evidence of premeditated intent. *Id.* at 7.

A defendant made the same argument in *Hummel*, relying on *Aten*, *Dow*, and *State v. Brockob*, 159 Wn.2d 311, 150 P.3d 59 (2006). But in a decision whose reasoning we endorse, Division One of our court held that Mr. Hummel “misconstrues these cases and ignores the decades of case law explaining the application of the corpus delecti rule in . . . Washington.” 165 Wn. App. at 762.

The panel in *Hummel* acknowledged that the court in *Aten* had raised the mental state required to prove the second degree manslaughter charged in that case, but it pointed out that the *Aten* court did not discuss how the independent evidence did or did not establish that mental state. Instead, the court “addressed only whether the evidence supported a reasonable and logical inference that the infant died as a result of a criminal act.” *Id.* at 763.

While *Dow* states that in order to establish the corpus delecti the State must prove “every element of the crime charged by evidence independent of the defendant’s statement,” that statement was entirely unnecessary to the court’s decision. 168 Wn.2d at 254. As *Hummel* points out, the State had no evidence to prove that a crime had been committed in *Dow* apart from the defendant’s statements, so discussion of the quantum of proof was dictum. 165 Wn. App. at 764.

Finally, *Hummel* points out that a requirement to prove every element of the crime “directly contradicts, without explicitly overruling or distinguishing, decades of Supreme Court and Court of Appeals decisions holding that proof of identity, while a necessary element to be proved at trial, need not be proved to establish the corpus delicti of the charged crime.” *Id.* at 765.

For all of these reasons, we agree with *Hummel* that the State is not required to present independent evidence sufficient to demonstrate anything other than the fact of death and a causal connection between the death and a criminal act. It unquestionably demonstrated those facts in this case.

Mr. Young’s claim of ineffective assistance fails for the further reason that he has not undertaken in his briefing to show in the record the absence of a legitimate strategic or tactical reason for the stipulation—this, despite the fact that Mr. Young’s lawyer told the court that he and his client believed that stipulating was “in our benefit and strategic interest.” RP at 42. A strategic reason is suggested by the record.

One of the detectives who participated in the interview of Mr. Young was formerly a resource officer at his high school, and she described Mr. Young at trial as someone who was “sensitive,” RP at 721, and who

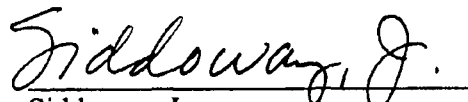
doesn’t like to see people suffer. He doesn’t like to see people bullied. He doesn’t like to see, you know, someone being beaten up.

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RP at 720. She agreed that Mr. Young told officers that before firing the gun he “froze up” and “began tripping out”—a reaction she believed would be consistent with the personality characteristics of Mr. Young she had described. RP at 721.

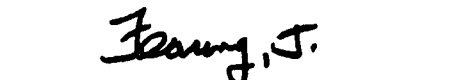
In closing argument, Mr. Young’s lawyer urged the jury to conclude that it was most likely Mr. Young—“sensitive,” “frozen,” and “tripping out”—who fired the one shot that missed. RP at 1071-72 (“John Young does not know whether he hit his target or not, if you could even really consider it a target. He doesn’t know that.”) It appears from his closing argument that Mr. Young’s trial lawyer believed his client’s videotaped interview would advance that argument. Mr. Young fails to demonstrate that his trial lawyer lacked a strategic reason for the stipulation.

Affirmed.


Siddoway, J.

WE CONCUR:


Korsmo, J.


Fearing, C.J.