

## UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves

### Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case

July 10, 2017

**[0:24] Susan Simpson** This wasn't a case I'd intended to make a podcast series about. I came across it by accident, last year, while working on the Joey Watkins case for Season 2 of Undisclosed. I was trying to research Joey's case, but again and again, articles about this other murder case kept coming up, mixed in with the search results I actually wanted. The other case was also from Rome, Georgia, but it was old. From 1974. And there really wasn't much about it that was similar to the murder Joey had been charged with, aside from the fact the defendant in that case was also claiming innocence.

At first I'd just skim over these articles as I came across them, and move on. But, in the process I'd pick up these fragmented bits and pieces of a story, about a woman shot to death in her kitchen late one night 43 years ago, and the husband convicted of her murder, and the ramifications that those events would have on the people involved for decades to come. But the bits and pieces I was picking up were jumbled and bizarre -- it was hard to see how all they could all fit together into a single whole. Finally, I decided that I needed to look up how the case had turned out, so that I'd stop wondering about it. Once I knew what the ending had been, I could move on and forget about it. Only, it turned out the case had never been resolved. There weren't any answers to the questions I had.

So I called up the defendant to ask. That was easy enough to do, because although he'd been given a life sentence in 1975, he was paroled in 1981 and has been free ever since, so it was just a matter of looking him up in the phone book. Still, I wasn't sure how he might react when I called out of the blue, and said, "Hi, is this the same Gary Mitchum Reeves who was convicted of murdering his wife 40 years ago? And if so would you be willing to tell me about it?" He didn't hang up on me though, and he didn't mind telling me about it, even though he was understandably surprised by my call, and had no idea who I was or why I wanted to know. It turns out I wasn't the first one to call him up to ask about the case, far from it. I was just the first one to have done so in a couple of decades. But, back in the mid-90's, there'd been a time when there was a lot of national interest in his case, and he'd gotten a lot of phone calls about it.

#### **[2:26] Debra Norville (Inside Edition)**

Hello, and welcome to Inside Edition. I'm Debra Norville. 20 years ago, in a trial that took only five hours, Gary Reeves was sentenced to life in prison for a murder he says he didn't commit. He's free now...

**[2:40] Susan Simpson** During that first phone call it quickly became clear that this was something more complicated than could be figured out in a single conversation, so I made plans to meet with Gary, and to look at his files, and to see whether any of what he was describing to me could actually be true. I told myself that once I did that, once I saw the files, I'd be able to let it go. But, then, after seeing the documents and learning more from Gary about what had happened back then, I still couldn't make any sense of it, and I needed to look just a little bit more. I wasn't trying to take the case on, I wasn't doing it for the podcast, I wasn't trying to solve it, and I definitely wasn't going to do a show about it. I just wanted to know more about what the heck had happened back then. Until eventually it reached a point where I had to stop pretending to myself that I wasn't investigating the

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

case, because clearly, I was. I knew from the start it would be a longshot to get anywhere here, but maybe there was still a rock or two left unturned out there.

**[3:36] Dave Walker (Radio)**

He's done his time, but Roman Gary Reeves vows to move forward with every effort available to clear his name of the pistol slaying of his girlfriend Grace Wade back in 1975. Reeves' plight is the subject of an Atlanta TV news special, and news magazines, including Dateline and Inside Edition, have gotten involved in Reeves' efforts. But thus far, District Attorney Steve Lanier has been too involved in current legal affairs to deal with a 20 year old murder case. He's turned the matter over to aides for the time being.

**[4:12] Susan Simpson** I think I was just fascinated by how, on first glance, the case seems so black and white. The evidence at trial showed that Gary Reeves and his common law wife Grace Reynolds had come home after a night working at a bar Grace owned, when they had some kind of an argument, it's not clear what, but Gary responded by pulling out his pistol, shooting Grace 5 or 6 times, then getting in his car and driving away.

This narrative is so old and so well-established that we know how the tale ends before it even begins. Add in the fact that there were two witnesses who saw him do it, and that the defendant was unable to offer up any sort of alibi or explanation for what had happened, and you can pretty much close the book on it. Sure, there are a couple details that maybe don't fit as well as you'd like, but really, on the whole, the answer is obvious here. The husband did it. After all, when you have competing hypotheses, the one with the fewest assumptions should be selected. And when you hear hoofbeats, you should think of horses, not zebras.

But this case has been a constant reminder that just because something is obvious, doesn't mean it's true. And that just by learning a few more details that you didn't have before, an explanation that initially seemed improbable or impossible can suddenly turn into plausible or even likely.

To explain what I mean, here's a hypothetical example. Let's say you have something like the classic murder mystery set-up. Five people in an isolated structure somewhere-- let's call it the Orient Express, or the Clue mansion, or a rustic hunting lodge with a snow storm rapidly approaching. Suddenly, one of the five people is murdered, and the other four are now your suspects:

The first is the victim's spouse.

The second is someone who benefits financially from the victim's death.

The third confesses to the murder.

And the fourth is a serial killer.

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

Any one of the four makes for a likely suspect. And any one of them would be the obvious killer, if it wasn't for the fact the other three suspects are all also the obvious killer. You're going to have to go through all of these suspects carefully in order to find out what's really going on.

But let's say instead that you didn't know all that, that you only have a few facts to begin with. Say that all you knew is that Suspect #2 is desperate to escape the cabin, and the only way they can get out is if the victim dies and leaves them an inheritance they need to make their escape. And, let's say later on you learn that same suspect has been repeatedly changing their story. At this point, you may be tempted to focus all of your investigative resources on following that lead -- after all, it's clear what's probably happened. But if you wrapped up there, you would never learn that suspect #4 has a prior body count a mile long and is in possession of the murder weapon, or that suspect #3 knows details that only the real killer would know and had been seen arguing fiercely with the victim all day before the death, or that suspect #1 wasn't actually at the location where they'd claimed to have been at the time of the murder.

And of course, with four such likely-seeming suspects, there's another possibility that's in danger of being overlooked: that, perhaps this murder didn't take place in a closed system after all. Maybe it turns out that a sixth person snuck onto murder island in the middle of the night, killed one of the five inhabitants, and then sailed away again in a lifeboat even before the murder was even discovered.

I guess what I'm trying to say is this: in all cases, but maybe especially this one, keep your options open. And don't assume you know the answer before you do. Because maybe that broom you're holding is actually the elephant's tail.

**[9:38] Susan Simpson** Gary Mitchum Reeves was born in Floyd County in 1948. His middle name was picked out by his older sister -- she was a huge Robert Mitchum fan, and later on in life Gary would be, too. Back then, before the murder, he went by Gary, but after his release from prison, he started going by his middle name instead. People in town would hear the name Gary Reeves, and immediately think of the murder. But the name Mitchum Reeves... well, that was at least some protection against immediate judgment by others.

And besides, the name Mitchum fits him better anyway.

But since Mitchum is the name I know him by, you may hear him referred to as both Gary and Mitchum in pre-recorded audio. For the sake of consistency, though, I'll use the name Gary wherever possible.

Gary has been free a long time now. He got a life sentence in 1975, but he was paroled in 1981, had his sentence was commuted in 1985, and received an administrative pardon in 1990. After he got out of prison Gary started off in a career in the office furniture business. That's how he met his wife, Linda. They were married in 1987. They live now in Silver Creek, a couple miles south of Rome, in a mountaintop house overlooking a valley. They've

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

usually got a retriever mix named Spirit hanging around, hoping that someone will decide to throw a tennis ball, and you can't go inside without Linda and Gary doing everything in their power to make sure that you're not thirsty, that you're well-caffeinated, and that the room temperature is within one or two degrees of your maximum comfort.

**[11:10] Gary Reeves**

You want me to cut that fan off, you gettin' cold?

**[11:12] Susan Simpson** They've got family pictures up everywhere, and antique furniture, including a grandfather clock that sounds off every hour-- which, just a heads up, you will sometimes hear in the audio that was recorded at their place.

Whatever hurdles Gary's criminal record has caused in his life though, they're not immediately apparent from the outside. But, he remains a convicted murderer.

**[11:32] Gary Reeves**

Now that pardon is an administrative pardon. It doesn't... it restored my rights back- I could vote. But convicted murder is still on my head. My grandchildren may run into this someday. I would love to get it cleared before I leave this planet. You know. Because if it don't happen while I'm alive, it probably never will happen. And really I have no hope of nothing going on because, 1997 when they did the bodies, nothing has happened.

**[12:08] Susan Simpson** Not long after I first met Gary I remember wondering, how much an exoneration would really matter now, 43 years on. At this point, wouldn't that be little more than a formality, not worth that much more than the paper it came on?

But if I didn't quite get it then, I do now. His conviction is not just some kind of legal technicality. It's something he carries with him every day. And that he's carried for a long time now.

**[12:32] Gary Reeves**

You can't imagine what it's like, carrying a charge like this on you. You can't imagine what it's like being accused of taking someone's life, that you didn't do. .... It's the god awfulest thing, you can't imagine it, no one can imagine it... Only a person who's actually been behind bars, and had those doors shut on you- And when you walk into.. .and even after you get out of prison and -- you walk into places and you see people, Hell they don't have to say anything. You can see them, you can feel it coming from them. You know, 'Well, there's a convicted murderer.' It's a God-awful feeling.

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

**[13:13] Susan Simpson** That was from a phone call Gary made in the mid 90s, trying to explain why he was, at the time, bringing back up a case that was by then already 20 years old. The case is now 43 years old, but Gary's desire to prove his innocence hasn't changed. Although, with each passing year, the challenge of finding out what actually happened on that night grows harder. Evidence is lost, witnesses die, memories fade. But there's still evidence out there, and there are still people who remember. It's just a matter of finding them.

**[13:58] Gary Reeves**

Grace was her name. We had been together off and on for several years.

**[14:05] Susan Simpson** Mitchum doesn't have many photos of Grace, and the ones he does have are small and slightly blurry, and, frankly, they're just not that flattering photos of her. So when I saw a full size photo of Grace for the first time, with her leaning casually against a kitchen table, hair in rollers, a can of Schlitz beer in her hand, I was surprised to see just how beautiful she'd really been.

**[14:25] Gary Reeves**

Back in 50's, 60's, there was a beer called Black Label, and there was a commercial -- "Mabel, Black Label!" And Black Label had a brewery here. And Grace was- looked a lot like that actress on that, and she was known as the 'Mabel, Black Label' girl.

**[14:44] Susan Simpson** Life in Rome back in the Mabel Black Label days was, at least in the circles Gary and Grace ran in, very different from life in Rome now.

**[14:53] Gary Reeves**

Rome was like the Wild West here at one time. It was a wild place, you had beer joints everywhere. The Cotton Block on Broad had 5 beer joints at one time. Uh, liquor was not legal, so you had a lot of bootleggers.

**[15:10] Susan Simpson** Gary was one of them. Thanks to restrictive liquor laws, bootlegging was still an available career option in Floyd County up until the early 70s or so. Gary had been introduced to the trade by an older brother, and he'd quickly picked it up. Over the years, Gary worked all kinds of jobs, many of them legal, but, often he was transporting moonshine, and moonshine-making supplies.

**[15:41] Gary Reeves**

Again it was knowing the back roads. And the cops were not equipped then as they are now. Uh, I was a pretty good driver. I- They never did catch me with a load. They they caught me a few times, but I wasn't loaded.

*(Music from Thunder Road plays)*

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

**[16:22] Susan Simpson** When Grace and Gary first met, back in 1968, Gary was still bootlegging at times, and working as a clerk in a liquor store at other times, while Grace was waitressing at various beer joints around Rome. A beer joint, by the way, is basically just a bar, except they can only serve beer, and also you're a lot more likely to get shot. After Gary and Grace got together, they opened up their own beer joint, Grace's Place, down off Cave Springs Rd.

**[16:45] Gary Reeves**

And anyway Grace and I were together, off and on. And we opened up our first beer joint together. Um, a guy got shot two weeks after we opened so that didn't help business none.

**[16:59] Susan Simpson** Eventually Grace and Gary left the Rome beer joints to start a life in Marietta, and then Atlanta. They'd continue living together off and on for 5 years, and sometimes Grace's daughters would live with them as well. During the times they were together, Grace would often use the name Grace Reeves, and she was generally referred to as Gary's common law wife, although they were never legally married -- that wasn't an option, because Grace had never gotten around to getting divorced from her last husband, Doyle Wade.

Then in 1970, Gary and Grace's son Sean was born, and for a time Grace, Gary, Sean, and Grace's daughters all lived together down in Atlanta. Like always, though, Grace and Gary's life together didn't last for long, and Grace left Gary to return to her life in Rome. Gary got custody of Sean, and stayed in Atlanta -- he had a good life there, and a good job. But, since he was working second shift, finding child care was hard -- which is how, in the spring of 1974, Gary found himself once again in Rome.

**[17:53] Gary Reeves**

I was running a liquor store, beer and wine store, in Atlanta, over by Emory, had a good job there. Grace had split, and she'd opened up another beer joint. I came up to visit my folks. I-I don't know how long it'd been since I saw Grace. I'd had problems with sitters. I think I was bringing Sean up to stay awhile with them until I could get something worked out, and I stopped by that Cattle Barn and I wasn't a big beer drinker anymore, but I did stop in there to get a cold beer, just to stop by ...there she was. And here I go. I leave that job and, um, I come back to Rome and I rented a house and I bring all that furniture back.

**[18:47] Susan Simpson** Gary started working at the Cattle Barn, Grace's new beer joint. He bought a pool table for it and installed a jukebox, and started selling BBQ sandwiches, since that made more money. There wasn't much money in the beer itself., but the juke boxes, the pool table, that could bring in an income. And Gary also rented a house on Maple Street for them to all live in. By then, Grace's two oldest daughters, Beverly and Charlotte, were back living with their mother, and all of them moved into the Maple Street house. Beverly had just turned 15 at the time, and Charlotte had just turned 17. Sean, the youngest, was 3.

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

It wasn't a very big house -- only two bedrooms. The plan was for Grace and Gary to have one, and for Beverly and Charlotte to share the other. But then Charlotte, Grace's oldest daughter, had her boyfriend Bo Salmon, also known as Bobby Salmon, move in with them. Gary ended up converting the back porch into a makeshift third bedroom for Beverly, and the five of them, plus little Sean, were all living together at the Maple Street house.

So from that spring into the summer, Gary and Grace were both working at the Cattle Barn, with the two girls often hanging out down there as well, though Sean stayed with a baby sitter while they were at work. But life at the beer joint was chaotic. And as the summer wore on, Gary started to think that maybe he'd make a mistake in coming back to Rome.

**[20:02] Gary Reeves**

It was so much going on with her and the girls and Bo Salmon moved in, and I kinda felt like I've done a stupid thing here, I'd left a good job, I was making good money in Atlanta. I was running that package store. Then, I had started making the decision, man I gotta get out of here. So I had decided, had decided-OK, I'm going to go back to Atlanta and see if I can beg and get my job back. I don't know if I can or not. If I can't I'll get one somewhere. And my plan was to leave the next day.

**[20:52] Susan Simpson** But before he could get his plan into action, before he could actually leave Rome, everything changed.

**[20:58] Gary Reeves**

It was August 13, 1974, and it was hot. Like today. But it was hotter even. I had opened up the joint that morning. Grace and Beverly came in later that day, and relieved me. So she relieved me, I went home and took a shower.

**[21:19] Susan Simpson** The day started off normal. More or less. Not much more chaotic than normal, anyway. But throughout the day, Gary was plagued by a sense of uneasiness.

**[21:29] Gary Reeves**

I looked around in the house. You feel like, when a storm is coming, everything gets real still and hot and humid, in the south here, and you know a storm is brewing somewhere. And that's what it felt like.

**[21:48] Susan Simpson** After Grace had relieved him at the bar, Gary went home, got a shower then ran some errands, before heading back to the Cattle Barn that evening. But it turns out that Gary wasn't the only one who felt like there was a storm brewing somewhere -- Grace felt it too. At midnight, they decided to shut the bar down and head for home.

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

**[22:04] Gary Reeves**

I remember Grace saying, let's close early, I feel like something bad is going to happen. So, I get in my car, I say- okay, I leave, and I go to pick up Sean. I *know* I picked up Sean. I can remember going to pick up Sean.

**[22:22] Susan Simpson** As for what happened after that... that's something Gary has spent the last 43 years trying to piece together. But what we know for sure is that shortly after 2am, someone from the Maple Street house called the police and told them there had been a shooting. When the police arrived, they found Beverly and Charlotte, Grace's 15 and 17 year old daughters, on the front porch. One of the girls told police that their stepfather Gary had shot their mother. And inside the house, on the kitchen floor, they found Grace's body. She'd been shot at least four times, but there may have been some shots that missed. One bullet was dug up out of the linoleum floor, and another out of the backsplash of the countertop behind where she fell.

Within 10 to 15 minutes of the call reporting the shooting, the police had arrived at Gary's parents' house. They lived on Park Rd, just a mile or two away, and they found Gary's car in the driveway there. When they got inside they found a .38 pistol on the dining room table. Sean was asleep in one of the bedrooms, and Gary was in bed, the covers pulled up over him, as if he was asleep. But when the cops pulled him out of bed he was still dressed in his clothes.

**[23:23] Gary Reeves**

In a little while, here come the cops. They were everywhere. I mean, every cop in town. They come in, they get me out, take me to the car, uh, and I wake up in city jail the next morning. And here come a detective and a justice of the peace, or whatever he was, some kind of a judge, and he had a warrant- had a murder warrant, and they charged me with 1st degree murder. And I couldn't remember nothing. I could not remember anything. Um. None of the stuff I've told you I could remember.

**[24:03] Susan Simpson** That's how Gary learned of his common-law wife's death. When he found out in jail that morning that he was being charged with her murder.

But if ever there was an open and shut case, this is it. The victim's teenage daughters were both eyewitnesses to the murder, and had seen their stepfather gun down their mother, leave the house, get in the car and drive away. When he was questioned about it, the defendant didn't even deny that he had committed the murder -- he just said that he didn't remember it. It's pretty obvious what happened here, and the investigation was minimal. Well, non-existent, really.

**[24:32] Gary Reeves**

They didn't do anything. They just, they got there, the girls told them I did it, they arrested me. And I was guilty when I got to the county jail.

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

**[24:42] Susan Simpson** And to make matters worse, memory loss and the murder charge weren't Gary's only problems.

**[24:46] Gary Reeves**

I woke up in jail -it was an old city jail- and I was sick. I've had a lot of hangovers in my life, but I was a pretty professional hangover guy, I mean, I knew how to handle hangovers, (laughing) but this was different than having a normal hangover. It was sick, I couldn't keep nothin' in my stomach.

So they came and read a murder warrant to me. And then they transferred me to the county jail. And so I asked the guy, the deputy, I said hey man, uh- could y'all give me something before you lock me up. And he said, "The county can't afford to take you to the hospital, and you're going to get the death penalty for killing this woman anyway."

**[25:31] Susan Simpson** Over time, Gary says, in the years following the trial, there were memories, or what seemed like memories, that started to come back to him, in bits and pieces, and he would come to recall more about that day. But at the start, Gary says, he couldn't remember anything about the events on Maple Street that night -- and he had no way to figure out what had happened beyond what people told him.

A few weeks after the murder, Charlotte visited the jail to see the sheriff, and while there, she spoke briefly to Gary. And Gary told her: Well, if you and Beverly say I killed her...

**[26:00] Charlotte Reynolds**

... And he told me, that- he said, 'If y'all say that I killed your momma, then I must've done it.' He said, 'but I don't remember it.' But he said, 'But, if there's anything you know that might help me,' he said, 'I'd sure appreciate it.' And that's all he said to me.

**[28:48] Susan Simpson** At the start, Gary had been able to hire a private attorney to represent him, for some of the initial proceedings. It was the same attorneys he'd used in Atlanta a few months before to draw up a will. But when it came to paying attorneys to represent him at trial, the money ran out fast. And, then Gary was sent away from Floyd County, and wouldn't return until just before his trial.

**[29:06] Gary Reeves**

Because I couldn't remember anything, Scoggins, the judge, ordered me sent to Milledgeville, for the criminal [sic] insane. I mean, the criminal insane, because I said I couldn't remember anything. So they sent me down there, and I stayed there 9 weeks. And, you were in the - called the Bailing (?) building. Well, there, you-um, you slept in an open dormitory, with cots, and they were all kind of people who really had serious problems. What I had was a no memory problem. I wasn't crazy- I had a no memory problem. I just couldn't remember doing anything of what they said I did.

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

**[29:47] Susan Simpson** And Gary's dad was trying to get money to hire an attorney to represent Gary, but because of the recession at the time, banks weren't lending, and he couldn't get a mortgage. That left Gary without an attorney, with his scheduled trial date only weeks away.

**[30:00] Gary Reeves**

The first time, when they came to my cell, I thought he was, um, a drunk man. And I said, "Oh god they're going to put this drunk man in here with me."

**[30:09] Susan Simpson** It was not a drunk man being put in a cell. It was Gary's court-appointed counsel.

**[30:13] Gary Reeves**

The attorney I had was named Buffington. He, uh, was an alcoholic. The man was in bad shape. Man, he- well, actually, I got a copy of his death certificate- he died 9 months later after the trial from cirrhosis of the liver. So, he was a bad alcoholic.

**[30:31] Susan Simpson** Gary didn't ever see much of Bill Buffington. He saw him twice before he was brought to court for his trial, and neither time did Buffington ask Gary about the case. He did, however, have other important questions for Gary.

**[30:42] Gary Reeves**

And, it's uh- He asked me for five dollars to get a pint of whiskey. Uh-

**Rabia Chaudry**

Your lawyer asked you? For 5 bucks? For whiskey?

**Gary Reeves**

Yeah. Yeah. I s-- he came back again, and, uh, he was so drunk then, the Sheriff had to- he said- I'm either gonna have to- you're gonna have to leave or I'm gonna have to lock you up. I didn't see him any more till the day of the trial.

**[31:05] Susan Simpson** Worse yet, Buffington was refusing to do anything to investigate the case. He wouldn't talk to any witnesses, he wouldn't visit the crime scene, he wouldn't do a thing. Except ask Gary and his parents for money for liquor. And maybe, while they're at, could they also give him a ride to the liquor store to buy it.

After a few continuances, the trial was set for January 27th, 1975. It didn't actually begin until January 28th, though.

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

**[31:30] Gary Reeves**

The day of the trial, uh, they carried me over there, and the lawyer was drunk. So the judge said, "if you're not in a condition tomorrow, then I'll have to appoint somebody else. Now remember, I've only seen him twice. Here, this is the third time I've seen him and he was drunk every time I saw him. So, I never did see him sober. Uh- Next day he came in, and, but, he was so hungover, and such- had the shakes so bad- they had to get another lawyer to strike the jury.

**[31:58] Susan Simpson** This story about Buffington needing help to would later come up in the habeas proceedings. While defense witnesses testified to what Gary was saying about Buffington's condition, and him needing another attorney to help strike the jury, there's no transcript of the voir dire, so we can't know for sure what happened. But at the habeas proceeding, the prosecuting attorney testified that the second attorney had only been brought in to sit at the table to whisper suggestions to Buffington -- it wasn't anything more than that. This attorney was very accommodating fellow, the prosecutor said, and he'd have helped anyone who asked with jury selection.

So who knows. But whether Bill Buffington was drunk or sober that day, when judged by modern standards rather than by the norms prevalent at the time, I'm not sure you could find any attorney who wouldn't agree that Buffington's performance at the trial was grossly ineffective. But, unfortunately, modern standards didn't apply.

**[32:57] Susan Simpson** Gary's trial was quick. About five hours, from start to finish, with Judge Robert Royal presiding. Prosecutor Robert Englehart called seven witnesses, while defense attorney Bill Buffington called one.

Fifteen year old Beverly was the first to testify, followed by her older sister Charlotte. There's no audio from the trial, but, five months after Gary's trial, both Beverly and Charlotte would, once again, be giving statements about the case, and this time they were tape recorded. Of course, they're not a perfect substitute for the trial testimony -- because the reason the tapes were made in the first place, is that their stories had been changed. But some portions of the post-trial statements are consistent with the trial testimony, more or less, and that's what you're hearing now. Here's Beverly, describing what happened after they left the cattle barn that night.

**[33:38] Beverly Reynolds**

Me and momma and Gary rode home together, all three of us. And we left at 12 o'clock. We got home about 10 minutes after 12. And mother and Gary sat down on the front porch, and Gary walked in the house and told me to fix him a drink. Well I went in to fix the drink -- and him and mother was on the front porch, as I was coming back out she told me to bring her a beer. And I went back in to get the beer. And Charlotte Reynolds, Bobby Salmon, Richard Holcombe, was sitting out on the front porch with Mother and Gary. And Richard said he had to go home -- and I was coming out the front door, I heard him say he had to go -- so he left, and Charlotte said that she was going to bed, so she made her bed on the couch. And Bobby, he passed out, and mother made him go on in there and go to bed. And me and momma

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

and Gary were sitting out on the front porch. Gary told me to get him another drink. I told mama I was going to bed, and he told me there wasn't no use in going right then, he said stay out with him and momma a while. Well I fixed a drink and come back out, and he said he was going to shoot the Kayo window-- lights out. Mama told him there wasn't no use in doin' that, said that he'd just get himself messed up.

**[35:15] Susan Simpson** And, In case you're like me and have never heard of a Kayo, that used to be a gas station brand, before it stopped operating in the early 80s. There was a Kayo gas station across from the house on Maple Street, and it's the gas station lights that Beverly is talking about. As for Gary threatening to shoot those lights out... well, there's more to that story. We'll get into it later. But Beverly testified that after the Kayo light discussion, she went back to her bedroom on the back porch and started listening to records.

**[35:40] Beverly Reynolds**

So I went in the back room and started playin' some records. I played 3 records, and I heard Momma and Gary talkin'.

**Attorney**

But they weren't arguing?

**Beverly Reynolds**

But they weren't arguing. Well, they came into the kitchen. I still- I could hear 'em talkin', but the records was over their voice, but they, I know they weren't fussing from the tone of their voice. And, Gary was talking about something to eat still, he was talkin' about fixing something to eat. And Momma said, "Okay." She had already turned the eye on. And when I heard that 1st shot, the record player was cutting off itself. I jumped up, and I run over to the door. I glanced at Momma, I glanced back at Gary. His hand was straight, but the gun, the shots kept firing.

**[36:40] Susan Simpson** Beverly testified that there had been no fighting going on in the kitchen before the shots rang out. Everything was calm and peaceful. She says that from her back porch bedroom, right behind the kitchen, she heard Grace and Gary come to the kitchen, and heard Gary ask for something to eat. Grace said okay, and then Gary killed her. But Beverly has never been consistent on what she says she happened before the murder. Or during the murder. Or after the murder. For instance, in the preliminary hearing, less than a week after Grace's murder, Beverly testified that her mother and been lighting a cigarette when she turned around to see Gary. Her mother announced, "I always knew this day would come," and Gary responded, "It is here," before shooting her.

At the trial, though, Beverly doesn't describe any last words between Gary and Grace. But she does describe how her little brother, 3 year old Sean, ran into the kitchen when the shots rang out, and then started asking for a bottle. When he saw Gary, Sean cried out, "Daddy, don't shoot!" And when he noticed his mother on the ground, he turned to his father and asked, "Daddy, why did you shoot her?"

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**  
**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**  
July 10, 2017

Then, Beverly says, Gary grabbed Sean and left.

**[37:47] Beverly Reynolds**

I looked at Momma, I looked at Gary, then Charlotte -- uh, Gary he went out, picked up Sean, flipped off the light, and walked out. Charlotte run in there and she screamed, and when she screamed I jumped, and I realized what I was doing. But I couldn't keep my mind off Momma at the time it was happening.

**[38:07] Susan Simpson** Charlotte's testimony was fairly similar to Beverly's, at least in the broad fuzzy outlines. But, she says that she and Bo had been at the bar with everyone else, and they came home early, because Bo had been really drunk.

**[38:20] Attorney**

...Why did you leave before they did?

**Charlotte Reynolds**

Well, uh, Bobby Salmon, this um, guy I had been going with, me and him just left earlier and went home. He'd- he had been drinking pretty heavy that night and he'd been staying with us. And so mother wanted me to go home and take him on home so that in case the law come in they wouldn't lock him up. So she told me to go on and get him in the bed and they'd be along in a little while.

**[38:51] Susan Simpson** After Charlotte and Bo arrived home, their friend Richard joined them to hang out on the porch, and a little while later Gary and Grace arrived home, too.

**[39:00] Charlotte Reynolds**

I was sitting on the front porch of our house.

**Attorney**

By yourself?

**Charlotte Reynolds**

Uh-huh.

**Attorney**

[...]

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

**Charlotte Reynolds**

Uh, well, Momma, and Beverly, and Gary came home at about 12:30. And Momma and Beverly got out and came into the house. And Gary left, and uh, he went to pick up my little brother Sean, at the nursery-- at the baby sitter. And um, we were sitting on the porch, we were still sitting on the porch when he came back. He was gone about 10 minutes. And he came back and he put the little boy in the bed. And there was another friend of ours there who had been there before they came home. His name is Richard Holcombe. He came right after me and Bobby that night. So he came between the time that we went home and they came. And so me and him and Momma and Beverly and Gary were sitting on the front porch.

**Attorney**

And who was this fella's name now?

**Charlotte Reynolds**

Richard Holcombe.

**Attorney**

Oh, Okay.

**Charlotte Reynolds**

And um, we were all sitting on porch. And they were just talking. Me and Gary and Beverly were sitting on the swing on front porch.

**[40:05] Susan Simpson** Charlotte testified that there had been no arguing on the front porch, no sign of disagreement. She didn't mention anything about the Kayo lights. She just said that, at the time she went inside to go to bed, everyone had been getting along just fine. So, Charlotte went in and got some blankets and slept on the couch that night, in the living room, and the next thing she knew, she was awoken by gunfire.

**[40:25] Charlotte Reynolds**

So I went into the house and I went into the bedroom and got some cover and I went to sleep on the couch. And uh, that's the last thing I remember [to that time]. And the next thing that woke me up, well I heard a shot or something. And it just... It was a loud noise that awakened me --- and uh, I looked up and I saw Gary standing in the kitchen. And I couldn't move, I didn't know what was happening. So I finally got up and I walked to the dining room table. And I saw Gary standing at the kitchen door with a gun. And by the time I got there, my Momma was already laying on the floor. But from where I was standing the only part I could see was her head, you know, where I was standing.

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

**[41:14] Susan Simpson** Charlotte said Gary then walked over to Grace's body and fired three times down into her, before walking back into his bedroom, grabbing Sean, and leaving out the front door. According to Charlotte, Sean never said a word, he just cried.

But to understand what is so troubling about Charlotte's story here, you need to understand the layout of the Maple Street house. It has a single entrance, facing Maple Street, and it opened up into a living room. The living room opened directly back into the dining room, which opened directly back into the kitchen, which opened directly back into the back porch that was Beverly's bedroom. The kitchen was tiny -- maybe 8 feet back to front. And the doorway from the back porch and the doorway from the dining room are directly facing one another. If someone was looking into the kitchen from the back porch doorway and someone was looking into the kitchen from the dining room doorway, the two would HAVE to have seen each other. They would be essentially face to face, less than 10 feet away. If Charlotte had been looking at Gary, she would've seen Beverly, and vice versa. Not to mention, since Gary walked out through the door that Charlotte was in front of, Gary would've had to get by Charlotte somehow -- Beverly should've registered her presence then, as Gary pushed her aside or somehow sidled by her to get through the doorway.

But one of the few things Beverly is consistent about is that she never saw Charlotte until after the murder was over and Gary had left. And at least at the trial, Charlotte says the same thing about her sister: she never saw Beverly until after everything was all over. Here's what Beverly said in her post-trial statement:

**[42:37] Attorney**

Did she hear the shots?

**Beverly Reynolds**

She says she did. She said she seen it too. But from the point I was standing I didn't see her. The only person I saw was our little 4 year old brother was standing in the door. He had woke up and came in there, and that was after he had done killed her.

**Attorney**

Oh your little brother came in after?

**Beverly Reynolds**

And was standing at the door.

**Attorney**

And he was the only person that you saw other than Gary and your mother, is that right?

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

**Beverly Reynolds**

Yes sir.

**[43:13] Susan Simpson** But if both of them had really been there that night, watching the scene in the kitchen, watching Gary shoot Grace, both of them would've seen each other. But they didn't. Which means one or both of them is lying about if or how they witnessed the murder.

**[45:19] Susan Simpson** There are a bunch of facts that Charlotte and Beverly can never seem to agree on, many of them pretty significant, such as whether the other one actually saw the murder. But the strangest contradiction between their stories has to be about what Grace was wearing when she was killed.

We don't have photos of the crime scene, so we can't see exactly what she was wearing when police arrived. Along with the rest of the police file in this case, the crime scene photos disappeared decades ago. Gary's attorney was never allowed to see them, and the rules back then didn't require the state to allow the defense to look at that kind of evidence. So by the time he got out of prison and requested the file, it was already gone. But from trial testimony describing the photos, we know that when Grace died she was wearing a denim bra and underwear, and an open blue robe or housecoat.

Problem is, Beverly says that is not what Grace was wearing when she died that night.

**[46:06] Gary Reeves**

But the girls – now this is... I'm telling you some things that I don't know the answer to, except this is recorded on the transcripts. Grace wore...put on these lounging clothes when she'd come home, and you know, she had these pink pajamas - she liked to lay around in those. And when um, um she was shot, uh - I mean that's what she had on. But her clothes had been changed, and when the police got there, she had on denim panties and bra, and that was all. And the girls got into an argument at the courthouse saying she had on pink pajamas when she was killed, and the other one said "no, she had on panties and bra," so that - we don't know what that was about. This is a strange case.

**[46:59] Susan Simpson** Charlotte, the older sister, said their mother had been in a bra and panties and blue housecoat, just like the photos showed. But Beverly kept insisting that her mother had been wearing pink pajamas when she died, and she wouldn't budge from this.

Beverly's story can be maddeningly inconsistent. There are some really important facts about the crime that she can never seem to get straight from one story to the next. Things like her mother's dying words, or the number of shots that were fired, or how long she waited after the shooting to leave her bedroom to go to the kitchen, or where she ran to in between the time the police were called and when police arrived at the house -- she's all over the place

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

on things like that. But when it comes to what her mother was wearing that night, this is one fact that Beverly is dead certain of. She has never wavered on this point, over the span of 40 years.

**[47:44] Attorney**

How was your mother dressed.

**Beverly Reynolds**

We got that mixed up too. I said pink pajamas. She was dressed in a blue house coat.

**Attorney**

In a blue housecoat? Alright, and, and how, uh was that the way she was when the police arrived?

**Beverly Reynolds**

I don't know cause they never let me see her when they come.

**Attorney**

Well I mean nobody changed clothes on her did they?

**Beverly Reynolds**

Yeah just like I said, she had on pink pajamas last time I seen her. And Gary, he give his testimony she had on pink pajamas last time he seen her.

<pause - music>

**Attorney**

And is that, when your mother, when you got to the door, was she on the floor then? Uh, was she...

**Beverly Reynolds**

When I got to the door she was on the floor. She fell, she fell with her head back against the cabinet.

**Attorney**

Well what did she have on at that time?

**Beverly Reynolds**

When I seen her from the door, she still had on her pink pajamas.

**[48:50] Susan Simpson** And Beverly's answer 40 years ago is the same answer she gave 20 years ago and the same answer she gives now. In the mid-1990s, Beverly would call Gary sometimes. To talk about the murder, and

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

what she remembered. And the fact that Grace's body was found in that blue house coat, instead of those pink pajamas, is something that Beverly can no more explain now than she could back then.

**[49:11] Beverly Reynolds**

And I will never forget that. I mean I swore in court that, and I know when I went into my room, I know what my mama looked like. I'm sorry but that was just one thing I remember, it seemed like that was her favorite pair of pajamas. And, you know, they were decent, to run around the house in, and I remember her going in there and putting those on.

**Gary Reeves**

And when the police got there she had on just the panties and bra and a blue robe?

**Beverly Reynolds**

Yeah, they shoved that picture in my face.

**Gary Reeves**

And there was, there was no bullet holes in the blue robe. The clothes had definitely been changed.

**Beverly Reynolds**

But that's puzzling, isn't it? Why?

**Gary Reeves**

The clothes? Yeah.

**Beverly Reynolds**

Why change the clothes?

**[50:02] Susan Simpson** For whatever reason, Beverly is convinced she last saw her mother in pink PJs, even though the evidence at the crime scene shows conclusively that Grace was wearing the underclothes and a housecoat when she died. And, at the trial, they just gave up on trying to resolve it. They passed it off as Beverly being Beverly, and moved on. Still, it's puzzling.

In addition to the two girls, five other witnesses testified for the state: three police officers, the medical examiner, and the coroner. But Charlotte and Beverly were the only eyewitnesses to the crime. Charlotte's boyfriend, Bo, or Bobby Salmon, had been in the house that night, but he'd been passed out in bed when the police got there. The police were worried that Bo would wake up from his drunken slumber and wander through their crime scene, so to protect their crime scene, and him, they carted Bo down to the jail for the night, so that he could sober up.

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

**[50:52] Attorney**

And you two youngsters are really the only witnesses -- Now I don't believe there's anybody else in the house at the time the shots were fired where there--

**Charlotte Reynolds**

Uh, yeah, that boy Bobby Salmon was but he doesn't know anything about it--

**Attorney**

Why?

**Charlotte Reynolds**

He was drunk. He was, --

**Beverly Reynolds**

He'd had a car wreck that night and he was out.

**Attorney**

He was just out?

**Charlotte Reynolds**

Yeah he didn't know anything about it until the next morning.

**[51:14] Susan Simpson** The police officers didn't have too much to add to the basic story, but Chief Detective John Barnett said he'd recovered three bullets from the crime scene and concluded they were from a .38 -- the same weapon that the police found at Gary's parents' house when they arrested him. That would make for an open and shut case once again, except for there's one problem: the .38 they found in Gary's parents place had not fired any bullets that night. All the officers who testified about it agreed. It was too clean and too oily to have been fired recently -- and there hadn't been near enough time for Gary to have cleaned it that well between the time of Grace's murder and the time the police arrived to arrest him.

The gun that killed Grace never was found, and although the police made an intensive search of the Maple Street house for any other pistols that might be there, Detective Barnett testified that no other pistols were found. But at least one should have been found because there was another pistol in the house that night. Grace had a .38 as well that she kept on a high shelf in their bedroom, but the police didn't find it when they looked. So what happened to Grace's gun and why did it go missing on the same night she was shot?

Sgt. Benny Smith was one of the officers who arrested Gary. He was asked to testify about whether Gary was drunk at the time of his arrest. Sgt. Smith said no. When the prosecutor asked if Gary had been coherent enough to

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

communicate at the time, Sgt. Smith said he couldn't answer because he only escorted Gary to the police station, he didn't ever ask him any questions.

But then Sgt. Smith volunteered something during re-direct: while Gary hadn't seemed *drunk*, he hadn't seemed sober either. When asked if Gary was able to get in the police car, Sgt. Smith said: "We helped him into the car. As far as just putting him in there, he was -- he was sort of -- he acted sort of groggy but yet he didn't act like he was drunk. He really didn't act like a drunk person but yet his movements were slow."

The prosecutor ended his questions after this response, and Buffington declined to follow up, so Sgt. Smith never got a chance to clarify what he meant or what he was describing here.

The State's case seemed strong, but then it was time for the defense. Unfortunately for Gary, Defense Attorney Bill Buffington had exactly one trick up his sleeve - and it wasn't a good one.

During his cross examination of Beverly, Buffington asked her what her father's name was. The prosecutor objected, complaining that Buffington was once again improperly trying to raise morality of the witness as an issue, and Judge Royal dismissed the jury so that he could quiz Buffington on what the point of the questions was. "Why on earth," Judge Royal asked Buffington, "do you want to know who Beverly's father is? What relevance does that even have here?"

Buffington responded that it was the very heart of his defense:

"The relevancy of the question, if your honor please, is I propose to establish that the *allegata et probata* is not going to coincide with the indictment; that this woman, the alleged victim, that her real name was Grace Wade and still is Grace Wade."

But Buffington butchered his question here. What he was *trying* to say was "there was a fatal variance between the *allegata* and the *probata*" -- that is, what was alleged in the indictment does not match what the evidence introduced at trial showed. [Gary] was accused of killing Grace Reeves, but the evidence showed that he'd killed a Grace Wade. But even if Buffington has said the defense right, he still wouldn't have an argument, and Judge Royal properly shot it down. In a 1942 case, the Courts of Georgia had already concluded that a man indicted of killing a "Clayburn Blash" could be convicted of the murder of "Cleveland Blash." As later caselaw relying on the same cases that existed in '75 found: "Where a variance exists between the victim's name as alleged in the indictment and as proven at trial, ... the variance is not fatal if the two names in fact refer to the same individual, such as where a mere misnomer is involved or where the variance is attributed to the use of a nickname or alias by the victim."

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

In other words, Buffington's defense was a legally meaningless claim. And a factually meaningless one as well, because Buffington failed to introduce any evidence that Grace Reeves was not, in fact, Grace's name.

And that was it. That was Gary's only defense at trial. And perhaps because Buffington felt he had to do *something*, anything, to make it look like he put up a defense, Buffington decided, what the Hell, let's put the defendant on the stand. Before the trial, he'd told Gary and his family that he didn't need to talk to Gary, because he wasn't going to call Gary to the stand to testify - so it didn't matter. But when the court recessed for lunch, Buffington told Gary, I'm going to call you to the stand.

So without ever having any kind of substantive conversation with his attorney, Gary would testify at his own trial.

**[56:17] Gary Reeves**

They put me on the stand, and I still -- I don't remember killing her, is all I could say. I don't remember it, I have no memory. Um, and the 9 weeks at the bailing (?) building, that didn't do anything for me. The doctor down there said I was a, 'victim of circumstances' or something.

**[56:37] Susan Simpson** Gary's testimony, to say the least, did nothing to help his case. "I don't remember everything that happened. I remember picking up the boy at the nursery and I woke up down at my mother and daddy's and all the police was there," Gary said. "It was like a nightmare the whole -- even in jail, when I woke up in jail, they were reading a murder warrant off to me, and it didn't seem real, you know. I didn't really believe it."

And when asked whether he denied signing the Miranda waiver that Det. Barnett said Gary had signed on the night of his arrest, Gary could only say, "I'm not denying. I Just don't remember signing it."

Finally, Buffington asked his own client, "Are you telling this jury you are innocent or guilty?"

Gary replied, "I'm telling this jury I don't know what happened. It's just, I don't know. "

Then Englehart cross-examined Gary, though I'm not sure why because Buffington had already done a thorough job of that. But once again Gary was asked if he denied shooting his wife, and Gary responded, "I don't deny it; I don't remember it."

And that was it. The jury quickly returned the verdict, and Gary was sentenced to life in prison.

**[57:52] Susan Simpson** The story might've ended there, with Gary's conviction. He might've gone on to serve a life sentence, maybe getting paroled a couple decades down the line, his guilt unquestioned by anyone not related to him.

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

But then in April, a few months after Gary was convicted, Beverly spoke to Floyd County Sheriff Lynn Garner. She had lied at Gary's trial, she said, and she wanted to fix the record. She'd never seen Gary shoot her mother.

In June, she was interviewed again, this time by the prosecutor at Gary's trial, Robert Englehart, along with Gary's new defense council, Jerry White.

**[58:25] Robert Englehart**

Well have you told the truth? Did you tell the truth when they tried him?

**Beverly Reynolds**

No sir.

**Robert Englehart**

You did not. Well isn't that wrong?

**Beverly Reynolds**

Yes.

**Jerry White**

All right. Now where didn't you tell the truth?

**Beverly Reynolds**

When I said he killed her.

**Robert Englehart**

All right. Did you, In other words, you're saying now that you don't believe he killed her?

**Beverly Reynolds**

No I didn't believe it then. I haven't never believed it.

**[58:48] Susan Simpson** This change in Beverly's statement was... awkward, to say the least, for the law enforcement officials and prosecutors involved in the case.

**[58:55] Gary Reeves**

When she confessed to perjury, in 1975, all hell broke loose, right here, accusing the sheriff of influencing her to change her testimony.

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

**[59:08] Susan Simpson** Beverly's recantation set the stage for a proxy battle in a pre-existing political fight between two factions in the Rome and Floyd County local government, with one side accusing the sheriff of coercing Beverly to change her statement, and the other accusing the police and prosecutors of letting an innocent man sit in prison because they couldn't admit they were wrong. In the end, though, Beverly's recantation didn't change anything. In April, the court denied an extraordinary motion for a new trial, concluding it didn't matter what Beverly said, because Charlotte had seen the murder, too, and one witness was good enough.

But then, a few months after that, Beverly would change her story again. This time, she was in prison down in Clayton County, for writing bad checks, and one night she wrote a note and handed it to one of the correctional officers. The note said that she, Beverly, had been the one who had killed her mother. Beverly's note was short, ending with a simple admission: "I shot her and walked off and got back in bed."

Lieutenant Jerry Schaeffer, with the Clayton County Sheriff's Department, was called into the prison and given Beverly's note. He was left with the task of figuring out what to do about it. Schaeffer knew nothing about Gary's case or Grace's murder, or even if the murder Beverly was apparently confessing to had actually happened. He brought her in for questioning, read her her rights, obtained a waiver of right to counsel. And, as he would later write in an affidavit,

*"I asked her if she had in fact murdered her mother as she indicated in the note, and she said that it was true. [Beverly] then told me that it happened on Maple Street in Rome, Georgia and Capt. John Barnett had investigated the case. [Beverly] stated that someone else was in jail for the murder and she felt bad about what she had done to him. I contacted John Barnett from Rome, and he traveled the next day to Clayton County where we met with Beverly again. Beverly was again informed of her constitutional rights as described above, and Beverly then told John Barnett that the contents of her note were true and she had given the statement freely and voluntarily."*

Two months after her confession in the Clayton county jail, Beverly was taken in for a polygraph test, and asked three questions:

1. Did you shoot your Momma, just like you said?  
Answer: Yes.
2. Did you shoot your Momma with a .38 caliber pistol?  
Answer: Yes.
3. Did Sheriff Garner persuade you to change your testimony in any manner?  
Answer: No.

According to the polygraph examiner, Beverly passed the polygraph. There were no indications of deception noted.

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

Beverly went to prison as a result of her confession, but not for the reasons you'd think. She would eventually recant her confession, and her confession, like her original recantation, would have no impact on Gary's own post-conviction proceedings -- there was a habeas as a result of it in 1977, but that got denied, too.

**[1:02:02] Susan Simpson** For the past 40 years, though, Gary has thought Beverly was the one who killed Grace, as have many of his friends and family, and others who have looked into the matter. After all, why would someone ever confess to a murder, unless they had done it? Twenty years ago, Inside Edition looked at Beverly's confession, the transcripts, the polygraph report, and decided to question her about it.

**[1:02:20] Inside Edition Host (Narrating)**

We wondered what Beverly would have to say about all of this. We found her still living in Rome, Georgia. This is what happened the first time we tried to talk with her.

**Inside Edition Host**

I just wanted to speak with her -

**Michael Minshew**

Do you realize the police are on the way?

**Inside Edition Host**

That's fine with me. You're threatening me with a baseball bat, now. All right.

**Beverly Reynolds**

Michael.

**Inside Edition Host (Narrating)**

Later, we confronted Beverly.

**Inside Edition Host**

Did you kill your mother?

**Beverly Reynolds**

No.

**Inside Edition Host**

Did you shoot her?

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**

**Episode 1 - A Straightforward Case**

July 10, 2017

**Beverly Reynolds**

No.

**Inside Edition Host**

But you confessed to that, though, did you not?

**[1:02:53] Susan Simpson** But... false confessions happen. And polygraphs aren't science. And what if Gary isn't the only one who has spent the last 40 years carrying around the weight of a murder that they didn't do?

**Beverly Reynolds**

I didn't kill my Momma, Gary. I did not kill my Momma, Gary.

**Gary Reeves**

I believe that, um...

**Beverly Reynolds**

You know I didn't, you know I didn't. I'm talking to you person to person, you know I didn't kill my Momma.

**[1:03:25] Susan Simpson** I'll be back next Monday with Episode 2 of Undisclosed: The State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves. There won't be weekly addenda for this series, but stay tuned until the end -- we'll have one after the conclusion of the series. Until then, you can discuss the case on our social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. Or, if you have any information about the case, or any of the cases we talk about in this series, I'd love to hear from you. You can email me at [undisclosedpodcast@gmail.com](mailto:undisclosedpodcast@gmail.com), or reach me on Twitter or Facebook.

Thanks go to Najah Bhatti for her work on this project, and to our behind-the-scenes guru, Mital Telhan, for her help on, well, basically everything. Our sound editor is Rebecca LaVoie of Crime Writers On. You should follow her on twitter [@reblavoie](https://twitter.com/reblavoie) and check out that fancy blue checkmark she finally forced Twitter to give her.

And finally, a very special thanks goes to Dawn and Joseph Evans -- this series couldn't have been made without their assistance.

---

**Transcript compiled by:** Skylar Park/[@TheWindAndRain](https://twitter.com/TheWindAndRain), [@oldsinglebitter](https://twitter.com/oldsinglebitter), & [dawn@slowdawning](https://twitter.com/dawn@slowdawning)