

UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves
Episode 5 - Henry
August 14, 2017

[0:22] Susan Simpson Late one evening in 1980, a couple of Murray County deputies were on patrol. Driving along an empty stretch of mountain highway, not far from Fort Mountain. It's pretty country up there, not far from the Tennessee border, but much of it is sparsely populated, and remote. And nearly half the county is barely inhabited at all, taken up by Fort Mountain State Park and the Chattahoochee National Forest.

Which is why the deputies were surprised when the headlights of their patrol car suddenly hit upon the figure of a young man limping alongside the highway, miles from anything that you might call civilization, or any place you might want to go on foot, even if it hadn't been in the middle of the night. The patrolman pulled over, and asked the young man if he needed a ride, and the man -- more kid, really, barely out of his teens -- hopped in. He was battered and bruised and singed from a recent fire. As someone would later describe him, he looked just about more dead than alive.

The young man introduced himself as Henry Ridley Jr., and when asked what had happened, he told them that he'd wrecked his car on the mountain. Well, he'd wrecked *someone's* car anyway, *somewhere* on the mountain. He must've fallen asleep at the wheel, or crashed the car somehow and knocked himself out... or something. At any rate, when he'd come to again, the car was on the side of the mountain and [was] starting to become engulfed in flames. He couldn't get any of the doors open, but luckily, the electronic windows still worked -- he was able to roll the windows down enough to scramble out of the car, and just barely escape the flames in time. Not knowing what else to do then, he'd made his way up the highway and started walking back to town.

The deputies asked him where the car was, but Junior couldn't tell them. He'd just crawled out and started walking, he didn't know exactly where from. Of course, a burning car doesn't stay hidden for too long, so eventually someone found it and called 911 to report it. Like Henry had said, his Oldsmobile had run off the side of the mountain but it turns out it wasn't *his* Oldsmobile. When they ran the tags, it came back belonging to a woman named Charlotte Reynolds.

It turned out that Henry had decided to buy the car from Charlotte and her husband Bo -- the two had lived in a house that they actually rented from Henry's mother, and as a result, Bo and Henry had been hanging out some socially. When Bo had decided to sell his Oldsmobile, Henry had agreed to buy it from him. Only, Henry had wrecked it on the

mountain in his first ride in the car, before he'd even got a chance to pay for it. Worse yet, Henry didn't yet have the money to pay Charlotte and Bo back. So Henry's mother agreed to let Charlotte and Bo live in the house they were in rent free, until they'd made up the cost of the car that Henry had wrecked.

So that resolved the situation. Although, privately, Henry would tell his girlfriend he was still kinda confused about what had happened. He hadn't wanted to buy Charlotte and Bo's car, and he couldn't figure out why he'd agree to do it. He must've been drunk -- that's probably why he'd ended up going off the mountain in the first place.

So, life went on in Murray County, much as before. Then, two months later, a kid was out riding his motorbike on Fort Mountain early one Saturday morning and made a turn down an old dirt side road. There he found a corpse laid out in a ditch. It was Henry. He had been shot in the head

And it was Henry's death that, 36 years later, would set me on the path to finding the case of Gary Mitchum Reeves.

[5:07] Susan Simpson After Gary's trial, Bo and Charlotte, that's Grace's eldest daughter, ended up leaving Rome together. They moved about an hour north to the Murray and Whitfield County area. That's how they ended up in the little house that was owned by Henry's mother, near the county line between the towns of Chatsworth and Dalton. Charlotte stayed home and watched their three kids, while Bo was, ostensibly, working at a tavern in nearby Dalton called The Sportsman's.

Now, Dalton and Chatsworth are the county seats for Whitfield and Murray Counties, respectively, and while the towns may have been once fairly similar in character, today Dalton is much larger. When I-75 was built it went through Dalton, while Chatsworth, off the beaten path, has remained much more frozen in time since then.

But back just a few decades ago, before the highway came through, Dalton and Chatsworth, like Rome, still had something of the Wild West to them. As one person described it to me, Atlanta was a two hour drive and a hundred years away.

Chatsworth is a pretty small town, more isolated. But Dalton's larger, and in a lot of ways, similar to Rome. Still, as far as the investigation for the podcast has gone, there's been one very significant difference between Rome and Dalton. In Rome, I've never been able to talk to any of the prosecutors or judges involved in the cases, so it was welcome contrast to Floyd County when it turned out that all of the attorneys and officials involved in the

Murray and Whitfield County cases that I was looking into were willing to talk to me. That's not to say, however, that they were wholly un-skeptical about why I was there. Especially when I explained that I was working on a series for a criminal justice themed podcast that has a focus on wrongful convictions.

[6:40] Leslie Waycaster

Well, I can cite a lot of facts in this case that I... cause me to wonder how you got this into the wrongful conviction category.

[6:49] Susan Simpson At one point, I even had an attorney agree to talk to me, though it came with the disclaimer that he fully expected that I'd turn out to be just be another northeastern reporter looking for a story that could make a southern attorney look bad. Which led me to the slightly horrifying realization that, somehow, my life had gone in a direction where someone from my home state of Georgia could consider me to be a Yankee.

But, they were still willing to talk, which means for the Whitfield and Murray County cases, you'll be getting the prosecutor's point of view too.

That brings us to 1981, seven years after Grace's murder. Up until that point, Bo hadn't been convicted of anything in Whitfield or Murray Counties, but he had been there long enough to become known in the area as a dangerous man. And he was very much a contributor to that Wild West atmosphere.

[7:32] Leslie Waycaster

One of the stories I heard was that Elbert Klein and Bo Salmon and some other guys were in some kind of a card game, here in Dalton, over on the east side of town. Somebody accused somebody else of cheating, and much like the Wild West, gun play started becoming involved. And they were riding around in cars on the east side of Dalton, chasing each other around, shooting at each other.

[8:00] Susan Simpson That was Leslie Waycaster. Back in 1981, he was co-counsel for one of Bo Salmon's co-defendants in a case in Murray County.

[8:09] Leslie Waycaster

Uh, I'd also heard a story, I don't know if it's true or not, but I'd heard a story that there was a fella who got involved with Bo Salmon's girlfriend or wife or something. That guy ended up in jail. He ended up being in the same jail facility as Bo Salmon, and somehow or another Bo got the means to pour gasoline lighter fluid or

something on this guy and set him on fire. So, I'd heard some things about him -- just in connection with other cases and that sort of stuff.

[8:45] Susan Simpson That story about Bo burning someone in prison, that part of it is true, there are articles that can prove it. In 1967, the Rome News Tribune reported,

"[...]Bobby Salmon, 25, [...] was sentenced to 10 years by Judge Robert L. Scoggin after a jury returned a guilty verdict on an assault with intent to murder charge. Salmon was charged in connection with an incident at the Floyd County jail in which a prisoner was seriously burned while serving supper on Nov. 25. Raymond Parris, 32, suffered second and third degree burns when lighter fluid was thrown on him by one prisoner and he was set on fire by a second prisoner. Jack Patton, 26, [...]who was being held for Gordon County authorities was also charged with assault with intent to murder and is scheduled to go on trial this week..."

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 Meanwhile, Bobby Salmon, 25, of Rome Rte. 1, was sentenced to 10 years by Judge Robert L. Scoggin after a jury returned a guilty verdict on an assault with intent to murder charge.
 Salmon was charged in connection with an incident at the Floyd County jail in which a prisoner was seriously burned while serving supper on Nov. 25.
 Raymond Parris, 32, suffered second and third degree burns when lighter fluid was thrown on him by one prisoner and he was set on fire by a second prisoner.
 Jack Patton, 26, of Resaca Rte. 1, who was being held for Gordon County authorities, was also charged with assault with intent to murder and is scheduled to go on trial this week.
 Meanwhile, Moses Pittman, charged with armed robbery, is on trial today.

[9:29] Susan Simpson Raymond Parris survived, at least for a few years after that, and as sort of consolation prize for his injuries, he was released from prison early.

But as for the *why* of it, why Jack and Bo burned him, that's not recorded anywhere. Charlotte told me that the burning had nothing to do with any kind of romantic entanglement. Instead, Parris, the victim, had been a runaround at the jail, able to leave the

jail at times, and Jack and Bo had given him money to buy them snacks. When Parris had returned without either snacks or their money, they burned him.

And then there's still a third theory of what happened. Some people who knew the defendants thought that the burning might have been due to racial violence, potentially -- that at the time, there had been some serious conflicts between white and black prisoners, and Raymond Parris had been attacked due to his race, not due to a love triangle or snack money. Whatever it was, though, both Bo and Jack went to prison, and Bo wasn't released until June of 1974, a couple of months before Grace was murdered.

Incidentally, at one point, Gary thought Jack Patton might have been involved in some way in Grace's murder down in Floyd County. He remembered a Jack who'd been from Dalton that hung around with Bo at the beer joint, though he never got a last name. And he thinks that this may have been Jack Patton. I'm doubtful of that -- there are some old notes in Gary's case files that seem to suggest Jack Patton might've been involved in some way with Bo and Richard's dispute with the Georgian Tavern, involving the incident where the two of them got arrested for robbing the manager at gunpoint. So there's something there, some kind of connection, but I could never find anything concrete. And at any rate, Jack himself was killed in 1979. He and a friend were gunned down in a cemetery in Whitfield County, and the murder has yet to be solved.

But, like I said, Bo's activities in Dalton hadn't gone unnoticed by local law enforcement. Steve Williams is in private practice now, but in 1980, he was the District Attorney for the area, and oversaw two cases against Bo Salmon.

[11:30] Steve Williams

Bo Salmon -- if you were to meet him, he's just a guy. Just kind of a ... not an offensive, mean-spirited kind of a guy. Just a guy, you know, kind of likeable.

[11:49] Susan Simpson *But*, one can smile and still be a villain.

[11:53] Steve Williams

But there was a deep, dark side to Bo. Uh, he'd killed some people before.

[12:00] Susan Simpson The attorneys and investigators I spoke to almost all seemed to have an awareness that Bo had been involved in some other crimes, other killings, before they'd got involved in the cases for which Bo was ultimately convicted. But they were going off memories of a 37 year-old case, and couldn't be completely sure of what it was they

remembered. And none of them had been involved in any of the prior cases against Bo so they had no firsthand memories of it.

[12:24] Susan Simpson

And you don't recall any other murders maybe, that Bo Salmon was believed to have been involved in?

Agent Vernon Keenan

No, no, not in the, not in the counties I was responsible for.

Susan Simpson

Ok

Agent Vernon Keenan

Um, I know that he was believed to be involved in several up in that area, but as far as, I don't know the -- I don't know the specifics of that. So I only knew him by reputation as being a Dixie Mafia type. Very hardcore criminal. Very dangerous. That was his reputation. But other than that, I didn't, I didn't know anything about him.

[12:54] Susan Simpson It makes sense then that when Henry Ridley Jr's body was found up on Fort Mountain, in November of 1980, once investigators learned that Bo Salmon had been one of the last people to see Henry alive, he quickly became a person of interest in the murder.

[15:14] Susan Simpson In 1980, Junior was 21 years old, and living with his girlfriend in an apartment his mother owned. Henry's mother, Margaret, actually lived just across the street, with Henry's two younger brothers, the oldest of whom was 12 at the time. Henry didn't have a job, not then in 1980, so she let Henry live there rent free, and she'd give him money sometimes for things like groceries.

[15:36] Chris Saylor

We called him Crazy Henry. He was just a good guy, but he was wild, you know?

Susan Simpson Chris Saylor had been friends with Henry for years, and at one point they'd been pretty close. They hung out a lot, along with some other guys in their circle. They went to clubs, talked to girls, had fun. But in August of 1979, Henry's father, Henry Sr., passed away. And after that, Henry Jr's life took a darker turn. Henry hadn't exactly been living on the straight and narrow path before then, but he'd been functional and maintained relationships with his friends and had jobs. In the year following his father's

death, that changed. He stopped coming around as much, and started drifting away from his old group. His friends didn't get to see him much anymore.

[16:18] Susan Simpson

I've heard that after his father's death, he uh, apparently his drug abuse got pretty bad.

Chris Saylor

Yeah. Yeah it did.

[16:25] Susan Simpson It wasn't just Henry Sr's death that was the problem. Henry Jr's relationship with his mother was very much a conflicted one -- they may have been kin, but their relationship wasn't always one of kindness. The real problem, at least in Henry's eyes, was how quickly she had moved on after his father's death. A guest that had come to Dalton for Henry Ridley Sr.'s funeral, could've stayed to attend his widow's wedding to her new husband, Earl Green.

Henry's uncle told police that Henry had resented Earl Green coming in and taking over his father's belongings, and bossing him around. Henry's girlfriend, Lisa Bryant, told investigators much the same thing, that it was obvious Henry and Earl Green didn't like each other. "The trouble," she said, "seemed to be his father's death, and the way Earl Green had come in and took over everything, and Henry couldn't take that since his father had been the one who had built everything." Lisa said there had seemed to be a family feud about his father's estate, almost constantly. It got so bad that Henry's mother ended up leaving her house and moving in with Earl Green at his -- which is why, in May of 1980, Bo and Charlotte moved in to Margaret's place, across the street from the apartment Henry was at.

As a result of that, Bo and Henry started hanging out. They'd go out together, Bo would pick up Henry and they'd go drive to the river and go fishing, or just hang around. Bo sold pot, and Quaaludes, and morphine, and it seems like Henry's contact with Bo escalated his drug use. According to Lisa, in his last few months of his life, Bo was the only friend that Henry really had contact with.

But even with Margaret moving in with Earl and farther away from Henry, that hadn't been enough to defuse the situation. As Lisa told the police, just before Henry died, "It was getting pretty nasty again, because they had a fight Sunday before we went to the store and then down to Bo's. And it was mostly over his father. . . . [His mother] was always telling

[him] that he's no good like his father, and [Henry] just [couldn't] take that without blowing up."

The trouble went both ways. Henry was angry and wild around his family, his mother told the police. And he was, he'd even pulled a gun once, as his younger brother remembers now. Henry's next door neighbor also told investigators that Henry had a temper to him, though, she allowed, he wasn't as mean as his mother had made it out.

Still, even if things were tense, there was a family relationship there. Chris Saylor, Henry's friend, recalls a time when Henry's mom had bought him a new car, so that he could make a trip to Texas.

[19:02] Chris Saylor

She did buy him, that was right after his dad died, she went and bought him a new Trans Am.

Susan Simpson

She told the cops about that, she was like I spent money on his braces, I spent money on a car, I spent lots of money on him.

Chris Saylor

Yeah. But it's his money, I mean cus it's all willed to him, 'cus he was the elder son. From what we all gathered.

Susan Simpson

Yeah, apparently he signed over his share to her.

Chris Saylor

Oh, did he?

Susan Simpson

Well, that's what she says. I don't know if it's...

Chris Saylor

(sighs) I don't know.

Susan Simpson

It was clearly a point of contention among them.

[19:40] Susan Simpson Henry told several people before his death that he thought his mother had killed his father, though he doesn't seem to have had any actual evidence of it. But, Charlotte would later say to Earl Green, in a conversation recorded by a wire,

"Why I know Junior told me he believed his mama done it. He didn't believe his daddy had no heart attack, because he said, uh, he drank that beer. He said it was just a few minutes before he had to throw up after he drank that beer. And when you drink one beer, you don't have to throw up. Junior told me that she poisoned him and that she stopped them from doing an autopsy, said that Sheriff let her do that. That's what Junior told me, that's all I know. I didn't know 'em then. I couldn't say she did and I couldn't say she didn't. I don't know."

Earl Green responded to Charlotte, "Junior told me that too. [But] he's dead and gone and he's not going to tell a goddamn thing."

Others I've talked to have suggested that Henry hadn't just suspected that something was amiss in father's death -- that he had in effect been holding this belief over his mother's head -- that that's why she let him stay in the house rent free, and that's why she kept giving him grocery money.

But whether Henry had any evidence to support his belief or not, he wasn't the only one to think along those lines. The GBI reports shows that the lead investigator in the case, a man named Bill Dodd, very much suspected that Margaret's little jar of strychnine had been involved in Henry Sr's demise, though like Henry, it's hard to say if his belief is based on anything real. According to Charlotte, again on the wire, Bill Dodd had also told her that he suspected Margaret's role in Henry Sr's death,

She said, "They told me, Bill Dodd told me the other day, that, that he believed that Margaret killed her husband. Do you believe that? He said if they could, he said the judge wouldn't let them, but if they could exhume the body, he said he'd bet a million dollars that they'd find poisoning, that's what he said."

[21:40] Susan Simpson The last time anyone saw Henry alive was on the evening of Friday, November 7th. The GBI report of the statement from Henry's girlfriend says:

Bryant stated that Earl Green, who is Ridley's step-father, had been to their apartment between 4:30 P.M. and 5:00 P.M., Friday, November 7, 1980, and that Green had given Ridley twenty dollars to buy food and gas. After Green had left their apartment, Ridley told Bryant that Green had told him to go to Bobby Salmon's house and get one pound of marijuana, so he could make some money. Bryant stated that when Ridley left at 7:30 P.M., he told her that he was going to Bobby Salmon's house to get a pound of marijuana. Ridley told Bryant that he would be back in about two hours.

Bryant stated that after Ridley had not returned home at the time he had promised, she did not get upset because he had done this before. She said that she had not inquired to his whereabouts and had not talked to anyone about him after he left until she heard about his death.

The next morning, on Saturday, November 8th, 1980, Henry's body was found on an old dirt trail near Fort Mountain, by a 15 year old boy on his motorbike. The road was inaccessible to cars, but other traffic came by on occasion, and was less than a couple miles from the main roadway. So it was a bit isolated, but not terribly so.

Investigators from Murray County responded to the scene, but as some point, they realized they needed help from a better-equipped agency. That's when they called in the GBI -- the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. And, unusual for that time, three different GBI agents ended up working on the case. The lead investigator was Bill Dodd, but two other agents, Vernon Keenan and Lamon Gillis, also assisted. Agent Gillis was the first GBI agent on the scene.

[23:19] Agent Lamon Gillis

I remember that Saturday afternoon, and I was watching the Georgia Florida football game (chuckles), when I got the call, I was the on call agent for region one that weekend, that's how I ended up with that case. I was fairly new at the GBI at that time, and I traveled to Murray county. I remember it was cool, in the fall of the

year, the scenery, although it was a very gruesome murder scene, the scene on the mountain was very beautiful.

[24:00] Susan Simpson It's been nearly 40 years since Henry's death, but Lamon Gillis has a pretty good memory of the scene still.

A good memory of the whole *day*, really. We'd started talking about Georgia football, and Gillis was able to tell me a play-by-play that the radio announcer had given on his drive up to Fort Mountain to the crime scene.

[24:14] Agent Lamon Gillis

I can tell you, I listened to the Georgia game all the way to Chatsworth, it looked like Georgia was going to lose but it was a close game all the way through. But it's only a few seconds left, just before I got to the crime scene, and then he said, "Lindsey caught the ball..."

(Recording of football game commentary)

And a throw and a run, complete to the 25, to the 30, Lindsey's got 35, 40, Lindsey's got 45, 50...

Agent Gillis

...Hollerin', "Run Lindsey run." But anyhow, Lindsey did run, scored the touchdown, and won the game.

(Recording of football game cheering)

Susan Simpson

Go Dogs!

Agent Gillis

That made that case a whole lot easier to handle. (laughs)

[25:00] Susan Simpson It's a good thing, though, that GBI agents had been called to the crime scene. Because the GBI only has jurisdiction over a case if the local authorities call them in. In this case, Murray County had asked for the help, otherwise the GBI wouldn't have been there at all. But it's clear that for local agencies, the crime scene processing wasn't always as methodical as you might hope. Or even remotely as methodical as you might hope.

Gillis' partner, and the second GBI agent on the case was Vernon Keenan. He's actually Director Keenan now, of the whole GBI, but he took the time to talk to me about what he could recall of the Ridley case.

[25:40] Agent Vernon Keenan

There was a very much needed professionalism in Georgia law enforcement during that period of time, and what set the GBI apart from everyone else is that we actually wrote reports! Many agencies didn't write reports at all, and they relied on memory for, you know, for testimony and for just the case itself.

[25:55] Susan Simpson And this lack of professionalism was apparent at this crime scene too.

[26:01] Agent Lamon Gillis

I know that Sheriff Poag was at the scene, and he had, uh, supposedly secured the scene, but not very well because he let people ride horses right through the crime scene.

[26:17] Susan Simpson I heard this story from just about everyone who was at the crime scene that day, so it must've made quite an impression. Apparently the dirt road where Henry was found was used by horseback riders, and in the middle of processing the crime scene, a group of riders came up the way. And, rather than tell them to turn back, Sheriff Judy Poag had turned to the investigators and said, "Hey, you boys -- step back and let those horses through!" I can only imagine how horrified the horseback riders must've been as they walked their horses through the crime scene, and looked down to see Henry's body below.

Jack Partain is now a senior judge, but, back then, he was a new prosecutor, and he told me how, when he'd arrived on the scene, he'd been horrified to see a Murray County investigator who was checking the scene for evidence, go through, and when he found two newish looking 30-30 cartridge cases near the victim, collect them, take them into evidence, but, when he found some oldish .30-06 caliber cases a little farther away, he'd decided they weren't related to the crime scene, and chucked them back in the woods. When the GBI arrived, they did collect those rejected .30-06 cartridge cases and brought them into evidence. But apparently, the Murray County investigators would have been fine with simply assuming they weren't involved and leaving it at that. The GBI investigators also made the Murray County officers put back the beer can they'd found at the crime scene and moved, so that photos could be taken and crime scene sketches could be made, depicting things more or less how they'd been before the cops got there.

In the end though, other than the cartridge cases, there hadn't been too much evidence to find.

The investigation

Luckily for investigators, right out the gate they had some pretty clear suspects to look into.

[28:05] Agent Lamon Gillis

Well, the first witness that I ever did, she pretty much laid out names of people we needed to talk to. She mentioned the mother, the stepfather...

[28:16] Susan Simpson That would be Lisa, Henry Jr's girlfriend. She told investigators that she couldn't think of anyone who would've wanted to kill Henry... unless maybe it was his mother, or stepfather, or Bo Salmon. Besides, it seemed significant that, the night Henry went missing, Earl Green had stopped by to tell Henry to go see Bo. And that's where he had been going, when he left the house that night.

And then there had been Margaret, Henry's mother. It's clear that GBI Agent Dodd's suspicions about her weren't limited to her possible involvement in her husband's murder -- he thought she might have been involved in her son's as well. Dodd spoke to Margaret several times, and the first time, immediately after Henry's death, you can tell from Dodd's report that he was alarmed at her apparent lack of concern. For instance, the report notes:

[Ms. Green stated that] she had lived in pure hell for the past several years, because Junior and his father were just alike, and would drink as much as a quart of whiskey every day.

Ms. Green stated that she had lived in pure hell for the past several years, because Junior and his father were just alike, and would drink as much as a quart of whiskey every day. Ms.

And there are several reports like that, throughout the file, both from interviews with Margaret and others. Although her attitude towards Henry softened as time went on, Dodd wasn't wholly convinced by the apparent change. As one of Dodd's interview summaries read,

Margaret was still talking about being accused of being involved with her son's death. Margaret made the statement that probably every one thought that she also had something to do with her husband 's death.

Margaret' s attitude toward Junior seemed to have changed since the previous interview. Ms. Green was showing some motherly love and affection at this time. Ms. Green was asked about the change in her attitude. Ms. Green again went into detail about spending \$3200 on Junior's teeth. Ms. Green stated that had she known Junior was in trouble she would have done anything to help him. Ms. Green stated she was providing Junior a place to live and groceries to eat. She stated she would not have been doing that had she not loved him. Special Agent Dodd advised Ms. Green that this was not the attitude she had displayed earlier and that this was a change after the death, not prior to the death.

It seems as if Bill Dodd thought that Margaret may have been protesting her innocence a bit too much, with her detailed lists of how much she'd spent on Henry, offering that up as proof of maternal love. On the other hand, there's no dispute that Henry and his mother had a conflicted relationship, and Margaret's conflicted feelings perhaps make more sense in light of that.

Henry had other friends too though, who, either due to rumor or just hunches, shared Agent Dodd's suspicions. Chris Saylor, Henry's friend, hadn't learned the outcome of the eventual trial in the matter, not until I talked to him recently, but he'd always had the belief that Henry's own family had been involved somehow in his death.

[30:55] Chris Saylor

What I understood was-- his dad, see his dad passed away. His dad was a good guy, he was a contractor, laid block, brick. And he was the elder son, so they, he willed everything to him. And then he had this little brother, that's kind of a momma's boy, and they got rid of him so it'd all go to him, to the younger son. [Susan: Huh..] And then from what I gathered, the mother was the one that's trying to hire someone to get rid of him.

[31:27] Susan Simpson Henry seemed to have signed over the estate to his mother. There'd have been no reason for anyone to get rid of him for that.

But then investigators learned of something else. Henry's mother was the beneficiary of several life insurance policies that had been taken out on Henry, worth at least \$40,000 in all. And the most recent one, for \$35,000, had been taken out just that June.

And, strangely, Henry hadn't signed it. His mother had taken out the insurance policy, but there was no sign Henry had knowledge of it being done. When the insurance agent had come to Margaret's house, she'd bought the policy on Henry, saying he'd been riding a motorcycle and she was scared that he would crash it, and he'd been living dangerously. But Henry had been home and right down the street, and she could have called him over to sign it. Instead, she'd had her middle son, 12 year old Timmy, sign the policy in Henry's name.

The GBI may have been tipped off to the existence of these policies due to the efforts of Earl Green and Margaret to collect on them. The Whitfield Coroner, Leon Helton, called the GBI to express his concerns about strange calls he'd gotten from Margaret and Earl. He hadn't yet signed the death certificate on Henry, and they wanted that fixed, quick. As the report stated,

Mr Helton advised that Margaret and Earl Green, both, [had] talked to him. Mr Helton stated that at one time, he felt as though they might be going to offer him some type of reward in signing a death certificate on Junior. Ms Green told Mr. Helton that she had almost \$100,000 worth of insurance on her son. Mr. Helton stated [that] she brought up the subject about her husband dying and made the remark that she had stood all of Henry she could take. Mr. Helton stated [that] Ms. Green made almost the same statement about Junior. Mr. Helton stated [that] he left the conversation open and expected to receive another call from them.

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Before more could be learned about the insurance policy, investigators got their first big break in the case.

[34:40] Susan Simpson When Henry had left the apartment he shared with Lisa, he'd been driving his brown station wagon, and it was still missing. It wasn't until a day or two later that Earl Green and Margaret drove by a Golden Gallon gas station, in Murray County, and saw it parked there. It was unlocked, keys still in the ignition, and, according to people who worked at the store, it had been there ever since the morning Henry's body had been found. Agent Vernon Keenan, now the GBI director, went to process the scene. He said though that at first, he hadn't really been optimistic they'd find anything.

[35:15] Agent Vernon Keenan

Now at the time we found the vehicle, there was a Coke can in the front seat, and it was in an awkward position on the front seat, so I knew if the vehicle moved, that the can was going to turn over. But the can, it was half empty, and there was condensation on the bottom half of the can where the fluid was at. And I told Gale that I was going to process the can for fingerprints, but that there wouldn't be any prints on it because it was wet, but it would be easier to explain that I processed the can and got no fingerprints than try to explain in court why I didn't process. So when I processed the can, when I put the powder on, got the brush and the powder and put it on the can, perfect fingerprints showed up on the dry part of the can. Which was a valuable lesson that I applied later at the GBI many times - don't ever assume you're not going to get something. As it turned out it was Salmon's fingerprints. Which was a key piece of evidence. It was also one of the times in my career, that I have believed that divine intervention, or the working of the Lord, or whatever you want to call it, where you're dealing with someone who is evil, and the Lord decides I've had enough of this and I'm going to give you the evidence to put him away.

[36:38] Susan Simpson There was other evidence found at this secondary crime scene as well. For instance, whoever had driven the station wagon to the gas station had left a footprint as they exited the car, which the GBI carefully photographed. But all the other evidence that they found, including at the crime scene on Fort Mountain, paled in comparison to that fingerprint from Bo Salmon that was in Henry Ridley Jr's car.

Still, that alone wasn't enough for the arrest. That's when investigators got their second big break, the one they needed to make their case. A confidential informant came forward to tell them that one of Bo's friends, a man who called himself Two Brick, was a close associate of Bo Salmon. They were part of a car theft ring together in fact.

[37:15] Agent Vernon Keenan

You know what happened, back then you also had auto theft was a big industry, particularly in NE, NW Georgia. It was like a bona fide profession.

[37:27] Susan Simpson It was certainly Two Brick's profession. Bo Salmon's too, though he seems to have had a more diverse skill set. But he and Two Brick were part of this interstate car theft ring that they carried on, mostly by stealing rental cars in Florida and driving them to Georgia, changing the tags out, and selling them up there. The GBI actually had an entirely separate investigation ongoing into the car theft ring, which overlapped with the murder investigation.

Now, earlier, you heard Vernon Keenan describe Bo Salmon as a 'Dixie Mafia-type.' And that's relevant here, because it explains a bit of the nature of Bo's relationship with Two Brick. According to a few witnesses, Bo wasn't just the Dixie Mafia type, he was actual Dixie Mafia, to the extent 'Dixie Mafia' is a thing you can be. It's worth noting, that the name, 'Dixie Mafia,' might imply a greater level of organization than was actually present. It wasn't a family thing, or a well-regulated joint enterprise. It more like a was a sort of voluntary organization for criminals in the south.

[38:25] Agent Vernon Keenan

At that time they were very active. And that was, the Dixie Mafia was just a loose organization of career criminals, that knew each other, and sometimes they cooperated with each other, but that was a term that applied to the career criminals, that were very hard core, very dangerous. Engaged in a lot of criminal activity, various kinds, murder for hire being one of them, arson, auto theft, everything you saw Salmon involved with, the Dixie Mafia crowd was doing the same thing.

[38:54] Susan Simpson There was no leader of the Dixie Mafia, no set hierarchy, no list of members. And the Dixie Mafia only had one real rule, though the penalties for breaching it were steep. And that was: Thou shall not talk to the cops.

A lot of the times, this rule worked. But, not always.

So the GBI tracked Two Brick down in Florida, and arrested him on auto theft charges. Two Brick's real name, it turned out, was JW Patterson. And when he was confronted not just with the auto theft charges, but with the possibility of being charged as a co-defendant in Henry's death, JW broke the First Rule of Dixie Mafia, and he told the GBI everything he had to tell.

According to JW, he'd known Bo for maybe a decade, just from prison and things like that, but they hadn't been close until recently, when they'd both ended up in Dalton. One day, JW said, he and Bo had been fishing on a creek bank, drinking pretty heavy, when Bo turned to him and asked, "Just how damn good are you with a rifle?"

JW said, "I'm damned good".

So Bo asked, "Would you have the stomach to kill someone?" JW said, Yeah. He would.

And that's when Bo made his pitch. He told JW, "I have somebody that I have tried to kill and failed to kill. One time, I took him down to Rome to try and kill him on the river, but a game warden interfered. And the next time I took him up on Fort Mountain in my Oldsmobile, after he was drugged up on Quaaludes. I poured gas in the car and lit it on fire and pushed it off the mountain, but somehow he lived. The next time I can't fail. I'm getting \$3,000, and I'll give you \$1,500 if you help me out with it".

JW was game for the plan, so he and Bo got to scheming. Bo asked JW how he would do it, if he was going to kill this person, and JW said he'd probably use a 12 gauge shotgun, and just either wait for them to drive by, and shoot them then, or wait in ambush in their home, and shoot them when they walked in the door. Something simple like that.

So the next day Bo showed up at JW's trailer with a shotgun, and they sawed the end off with a hacksaw, and tossed the ends and hacksaws both into the river.

The plan didn't get much farther than that though. Two weeks went by after that, but the plan was not discussed in detail again. But Bo would occasionally mention that the job did need to get done "pretty quick". Still, concrete plans never went ahead.

Then one morning about 5am, Bo showed up at JW's trailer. He'd killed the boy he was trying to kill, he said. The job was done. Or, so, he hoped. "I just shot him three times in the head," Bo said, according to JW. "If he lives through this one, I'm done with it, I'm never gonna try again." Then Bo asked JW to hide his car, hide a spare pistol of his, and give him a ride home.

JW took Bo home, hid the car, hid the spare gun, and went back to his own place.

But the next day, Bo showed up again at JW's trailer. He asked JW to go fishing with him, and this time, according to JW's statement, he was a bit alarmed. The statement said: "I was

a little leery because I'd known what he had done, and I was a little afraid he'd get one off and kill me. We went off anyway." It turned out that Bo didn't want to kill JW, he just wanted JW to go with him to the Golden Gallon to check out where he'd stashed Henry's car. He was worried he'd left evidence there, he said, and he wanted to clear it up, but was too nervous to approach, afraid they might have a watch on it.

JW said he asked Bo how Henry's car had gotten there in the first place. And Bo told him, "That's where we parked it. Afterwards." And then Teddy Bear drove me home.

Teddy Bear was actually a man named Harold Mulkey. But no one calls him that, everyone calls him Teddy Bear. He would, eventually, also be charged in Henry Jr's murder. So would Earl Green. Henry's stepfather. But, that wouldn't be for months yet. At that time, what police had, with JW's statement, was the evidence they needed to arrest Bo Salmon.

[43:14] Susan Simpson Jack Partain, the main prosecutor at the trial, now senior judge, was there for the arrest of Bo Salmon. He remembered going up to the house with the GBI and FBI and all the local agencies, and he had this image in his head, still, of seeing Bo Salmon, when they came in the door. Sitting inside. In the living room chair. He had on a tight white shirt -- so tight, Jack Partain said, you could see his little heart just about beating out of his chest. He looked completely terrified.

But, terrified or not, Bo did abide by the Dixie Mafia's one commandment. In the waiver of counsel sheet that they'd given him to sign when they questioned him, in the hopes he'd agree to waive his rights and make a confession, there was a note scrawled onto the side of the page. It said:

"I haven't ever talked, and I'm not gonna talk now."

<p>2 haven't ever talked & I'm not going to^{5.} talk now.^{6.}</p>	<p>accor by th const to he state</p> <p>That be as reser</p> <p>That right</p>
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In June of 1981, Bo went to trial. He was convicted for Henry's murder. And sentenced to life in prison.

[44:24] Susan Simpson Earl Green had decided to hire Bo to kill his stepson, Henry. He'd wanted Bo to make it look like an accident. So that no one would know it was a murder in the first place. And then, he'd paid Bo \$5,000 for his trouble. Turns out though, JW was wrong when he'd told the GBI that Bo had tried to kill Henry Jr. twice before. He'd actually tried at least three times. Maybe four. Because Bo Salmon and Teddy Bear were something of a bumbling duo. Their attempts to kill Henry didn't work out. But Henry trusted them. They were friends; or so he thought. And, according to Charlotte, Bo had been trying to make friends with the boy. Trying to go fishing with him, hang out with him. Trying to get him to trust him. So that he'd be able to kill him, for Earl Green. And Earl Green assumed that Bo was a capable man, and could get the job done. But, he was almost wrong in that. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern would've done a better job of it than Bo Salmon and Teddy Bear did. Their efforts would be comical if the end goal hadn't been so tragic.

[45:27] Susan Simpson The first attempt to kill Henry had been that time that he had driven himself off a mountain. It turns out he hadn't, actually. Hadn't driven *himself* off the mountain, anyway. Henry had never managed to explain what had really happened that night, but according to witnesses, Henry hadn't driven himself off a cliff like he'd assumed. Henry might not remember it, but he hadn't bought a car from Bo Salmon, and he hadn't wrecked it. Bo and Teddy Bear had drugged him with Quaaludes and put him in the back of the car, and dumped gasoline in it, then driven up to Fort Mountain, and shoved him off to his death after lighting it on fire. But somehow, even a drugged state, Bo had woken up, and found the button to open the electric windows. He'd escaped.

According to Lisa, Bo had found it funny. When Henry came back, made it back to the house, all scratched up, and cut up, and looking near dead, Bo had laughed and thought it was hilarious.

[46:24] Susan Simpson The second attempt hadn't even involved Teddy Bear. He was innocent of this screw up. Bo had gotten a different friend instead, a man named Pistol Whitener, and they'd decided they would kill Henry in a way that looked just like an overdose death.

As Charlotte would testify later:

"They had bottles of morphine and needles setting on the table when I walked in, and they were shooting up with this morphine. And Junior became sick—he couldn't

take any more. So Bo got a Coke, poured half the Coke out, and went into the bathroom, and poured the bottles of morphine into the Coke, and gave the Coke to Junior to drink. Junior got sick and threwed it up—he couldn't drink it."

With their attempts to cause Henry to overdose failing, they moved on to murder attempt number three; the fishing trip. Charlotte said that Bo was supposed to get Junior and Lisa to go to the river to go fishing. And there was supposed to be another person that would be on the side of the river. This person would shoot Junior, and Lisa would be Bo's alibi that he was innocent. Bo had gotten the rifle from Earl that he was going to use, and he gave it to a friend who was a good shot to stand on the river bank. Bo and Henry and a third person went down to the river, but when they got to the place where Bo's friend was waiting with the rifle, nothing happened. It turned out that, while waiting, a game warden had stumbled on Bo's friend in the woods with a rifle, and assumed that he was there, not for a murder, but to poach. So he'd told the friend to scram and he had to leave. So, murder attempt number three didn't work either.

So, those are the three failed attempts to kill Ridley that were mentioned at trial, the ones that Charlotte knew about. But after talking to Henry's friend Chris Saylor, I realized there may have been yet another attempt. One that never made it into trial testimony.

[48:06] Chris Saylor

Well I know, uh, they tried to drown him in Carter's lake one time, and he outswammed him.

Susan Simpson

I've had people tell me that um, Junior was warned- he was warned in advance that people were trying to hurt him, and he sort of laughed it off.

Chris Saylor

Well, that's what I'm talking about, about them trying to drown him in Carter's Lake.

Susan Simpson

You think that would have tipped him off...

Chris Saylor

That's what tipped him off, yeah.

Susan Simpson

So he knew? He was fully aware.

Chris Saylor

Yeah. He knew something was up. Or- but- he didn't elaborate on it... you know?

[48:35] Susan Simpson So, after three, or maybe four attempts at killing Henry, things hadn't gone well for Bo. And it had reached a critical point. It was time to fish or cut bait. Either they killed Henry for real, or they just gave up on the idea.

As one witness at the trial would later describe the conversation:

"Bo had been lamenting his failed attempts to kill the Ridley boy."

The witness said:

"They were talking, they were all sitting around and they were talking, and Bo told Johnny that it was the damnedest thing he ever saw in his life. That the boy could fight so hard to live, you know. But, he had this deal going with Earl Green, and the boy had to go, you know. I mean--"

[49:15] Susan Simpson Though the plan had been to kill Henry in a way that no one could tell it was a murder, and have it be called an accident, Bo and Earl's impatience seems to have gotten the better of them, because the fourth time, there was little method to the plan. According to Charlotte, Earl had finally told Bo that he had to have Henry killed; that it had to be done now or not at all; that the accident part wasn't working, so they would just have to do it any way they could.

What we do know, is that Henry left his house that night, saying he was going over Bo's, and one witness saw him briefly later on. She'd been at a place she was staying, watching TV with a few others, when Teddy Bear dropped by. Though they hadn't come inside, she'd seen Henry and Bo in the car waiting for him. And, Teddy Bear had his .30-30 rifle with him. When someone asked Teddy Bear where he was going, Teddy Bear had said, deer hunting.

There is a lot of uncertainty about what happened next, exactly. Initially, the medical examiner thought that the shot that had killed Henry had been fired from more than 2 feet away, due to lack of any stippling from the gunpowder. But, by trial, he'd revised his findings, and concluded that it had likely been a contact shot -- that the rifle had been

pressed against Junior's head or just about, at the time it was fired. One of the family members told me that some investigator, he didn't know whether it was state or county, had concluded that Henry had been laying on the ground when he was shot -- that that's what the blood and wound patterns had showed. But a half-smoked cigarette was found in Henry's hand, leading others to conclude that Henry had been standing up when he was shot, smoking a cigarette.

It does kind of seem, though, that Henry never saw it coming. There was no sign of a struggle. Although, as one of his friends told the police; If Henry had known what Bo and Teddy Bear were up to, it might not have changed anything. The friend said:

"If Crazy was forced somewhere with someone whether he was afraid or not, he would go and if he was being threatened he would probably just stand there and try and talk his way out of it. He would go anywhere with anyone; he was just that crazy."

The theory that makes the most sense to me, that seems to come the closest to fitting the evidence that we do have, is the theory that Agent Gillis told me. About what he thought had actually happened to Henry that night.

[51:34] Agent Lamon Gillis

I think that who wanted to kill him was walking behind him, and uh, they were reportedly shining for deer. That's what they told the victim. And I think probably he may have had the spotlight. We did not recover a light. But, uh, according some witnesses that's what they were going to do. They told, at least they told the victim that's what they were going to do. And, I think, uh, the one with the .30 caliber rifle probably was walking behind, uh, the victim, and he did not know that he was fixing to be shot.

[52:14] Susan Simpson Bo would be convicted of the murder in June of 1981, and Earl Green and Teddy Bear went to trial together in December, and they too were convicted. Henry's mother, Margaret, was never charged, though she did end up being arrested at the end of Earl's trial for calling and threatening the GBI Agent Bill Dodd. Actually, it wasn't just Bill Dodd she called. When I spoke to Steve Williams, who'd been the DA, he told me Margaret had called him too.

[52:37] Steve Williams

The trial lasted all week. In the middle of the trial, it had been either Wednesday

night or Thursday night, I was at home, and I got a phone call. Ohhh... somewhere between 8 and 9 that night. And, uh, it was Margaret. And she was calling up and just raising Cain about the fact that we were prosecuting Earl, her husband of the last couple years. She had married Earl after her first husband, who was Henry Ridley Sr. died. And he died under ki- unusual circumstances. I can't remember what they were; and then refused to have an autopsy done and buried him quite quickly. So there was always a little suspicion about how Henry Ridley Sr. died. So. She was raising Cain with me on the phone that night, and I was just kinda playing along with her- it didn't frighten me, or cause me any consternation, I was just having a little fun with her, really. She was rantin' and ravin' and finally she kind of slowed down, and so I said, "Well you know, Margaret, when this trial is over with, and we convict Earl, you know what we're gonna do then?" "WHAT," she said. I said, "Well, we're gonna dig up Henry Ridley- Henry Sr. - see what killed him!" And she just, exploded on that. She just started rantin' and ravin'; and just went off the deep end. And finally after a few minutes, she slowed down and thought a minute. There was a pregnant pause, and she said, "Well you know what you'll find when you dig him up?" I said, "What?" She said, "He's still drunk." [Laughs]. Oh I about fell down I was laughing so hard at that.

[54:31] Susan Simpson But I'm still unsure about Margaret's role in this case. Or if she had one at all. Different people have told me complete opposite versions of the story -- some have said she knew exactly what she was doing, that she must've. While others had recalled her as being an alcoholic who was controlled by Earl Green, and to them, there was no chance the poor woman had been involved in either her husband's death, or her or son's death. But the evidence we have is limited, and most of it comes from Bill Dodd's case file, and his feelings of Margaret's guilt were plain. This seems to come through in his case reports, interpreting all evidence in a way to make Margaret look guilty. The thing of it is, though, there isn't actually any evidence -- just people's suspicions, and Margaret's admittedly off behavior.

So had Margaret been naïve to what her new husband had been planning for Henry Junior? Or had she been part of a scheme to kill her oldest son for money? The evidence is ambiguous, and can be read either way, really, and there's probably no way we can ever know now. But despite the suspicious circumstances, I do think it's telling that no witness ever came forward to say that Margaret *had* been involved definitively, that they knew it -- and given how many witnesses did end up talking in this case, that's saying something.

But of all the witnesses to come forward, the most interesting to me was Charlotte. She didn't testify at Bo's trial -- she didn't even come forward to investigators until after his conviction, and she was used at the trials of Teddy Bear and Earl Green. And she was an

invaluable witness there, but there were some parts of the story she told to investigators, about Henry's death and the deaths of others, that I'm still trying to make sense of.

[56:08] Leslie Waycaster

Cause as you show me these things that Charlotte said, it seems to me, I almost get the impression that Charlotte was telling what she thought they wanted to hear.

Susan Simpson

See, that's what I wonder, too.

Leslie Waycaster

Sometimes, to help herself.

[56:40] Susan Simpson And that's it for Episode 5 of Undisclosed, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves. We'll be back next week with Episode 6. And if you'd like to learn more about the case, ask questions, or talk about the episode with other listeners, you can follow our social media accounts on twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Reddit. And, you can follow me on Twitter -- my handle is @theviewfromll2.

And if you're up in Dalton or Chatsworth, or anywhere else in the world, and have knowledge about any of the cases discussed in this series, I'd love to hear from you. You can reach me on Facebook or email me at undisclosedpodcast@gmail.com

As always, big thanks to Mital Telhan for her help in producing this episode, and to our amazing sound editor, Rebecca Lavoie.

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