

UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves
Episode 9 - Through a Window, Darkly
September 4, 2017

[0:23] Susan Simpson When Grace's casket was exhumed, back in 1997, and it turned out there was no gun inside the bag that was placed in her casket, all the momentum that had been building in Gary's case stalled out. That possibility of the gun, that was all that was keeping Gary's case going. It was the last great hope Gary had -- because if something had been there, if there had been a gun, that would have provided something that Gary's case has never had: physical evidence.

Because there was no physical evidence in Gary's case -- when I say that, I mean literally, there was no physical evidence, in the broadest possible sense of the term. We essentially know nothing that does not come from witness statements. And the little info we have about that crime scene, is really just more hearsay.

So what do you do in a case where you have no physical evidence, and not even so much as a description of the crime scene? How can you ever say who is right, and who is wrong, or what may have happened, and what definitely didn't happen? It all starts to feel hopeless. You can't really rule out possibilities. You can't really say anything definitive about the crime scene, which means you can't really tell if any given witness statement is true or not. You can't compare it to reality, so how can you say which ones are wrong and which ones are true?

And to make things worse, in this case, we don't even have police statements from the night of the murder. The only statements we have come from the days, months, and years after the murder. After witnesses had time to reflect, or adjust, or forget their stories. What Gary does have, is the phone calls he recorded back in the 1990's. Unfortunately, this is an old case, witnesses have died -- they're no longer available, and those phone calls and those recordings provide the only glimpse we'll have of what the witnesses in this case might have said. There are calls from three people in particular that stand out to me. Three people whose calls, I think, give us some clue about what may have happened here.

The first was from Ray Almond. He was a pallbearer at Grace's funeral, and after the exhumation, he talked to Gary and told him what he knew. The second was a guy that I've dubbed the Mystery Man. And the third was Beverly Reynolds, Grace's daughter, who had confessed to Grace's murder back in 1976.

Back when Gary was trying to reopen his case, some of the calls he got were from people like Magalene Culberson -- people who thought they had bombshells to share with him, who thought they might have the key that could unlock the whole story. But others were much less optimistic about whether they had anything useful to share with him, about whether they knew anything at all that could make a difference.

[3:16] Ray Almond

I don't know what I could do to help you...

Gary Reeves

(sighs)

Ray Almond

'Cause the only thing I know, is ya know the facts before and after. I wasn't there during.

Gary Reeves

Yeah.

Ray Almond

I just know before and after

[3:30] Susan Simpson That's Ray Almond. He's passed away in the years since this call was made, but he's someone Gary knew, and he was more or less friendly with. And he lived close to where Gary had moved up on Maple Street when he came back to Rome in 1974. He often hung out at Gary and Grace's bar and played poker at Grace's trailer, the one he'd set up to play poker in after the Newberry ladies had busted into their house and made poker games at the Maple Street house an untenable idea.

But in the 1990's, when Ray Almond first spoke to Gary, he was reluctant to get involved. He'd been at Gary's house both before and after Grace was killed, but during that 45 minute time period when Grace was killed, he hadn't been there and he didn't know anything, or so he thought. But Gary was persistent, and finally Ray Almond called Gary back and said, look, are you sure you wanna talk to me? Because what I know isn't going to prove your innocence.

[4:24] Ray Almond

I don't know enough to clear you on that.

Gary Reeves

Okay.

Ray Almond

I know enough to justify, to put a reasonable doubt 'n all a that, but I can't clear you on that.

[4:32] Susan Simpson It seems to me that Ray Almond really thought Gary was probably guilty of the murder. He was skeptical, therefore, that anything he had to say could help Gary. But he also knew that the official version of events, the official story -- that wasn't true either. What the State said happened didn't happen. And although the real story didn't make Gary innocent, if Gary was guilty, he was guilty in a way that's different from how the state claimed.

But Gary told him, yes, please. Talk to the PI anyway. I don't care. Anything you have to say to him, I wanna hear. So, Ray Almond agreed, and he called up Gary's investigator -- a man named Larry Kellet. Unfortunately, Larry Kelley's recording is really terrible, and it gets worse as the recording goes on.

[5:18] Larry Kellet

Gary tells me that you might recollect some stuff about that, uh, that time his wife was killed...

Ray Almond

Yeah, well like I say, I was with him all that day, at the time when we were comin' home I dropped off Bo and Tiny, and then I went on home, and hell it wasn't 45 minutes that Charlotte come 'n got me and I got back to the house. It wasn't 45 minutes or an hour because I just had laid down when she knocked on the door.

Larry Kellet

What'd she say when she knocked on the door?

Ray Almond

Said that Gary had killed mama. I said, you're shittin' me!

[5:52] Susan Simpson According to Ray Almond, on the night Grace died, he'd been hanging out at Gary's gambling trailer all evening. And after they finished playing for the night, Ray had driven home Bo and his friend Tiny Hill back to Gary's house on Maple

Street, where he dropped them off and went home. Now, Bo, obviously, is Bo Salmon. That's Charlotte's boyfriend -- the guy who was living in the house with them and who was there the night Grace got killed.. Tiny Hill, who you've probably forgotten, was Bo's friend -- and, as you'd probably guess from the name, he was a very large man. And I still don't know if Tiny Hill himself was ever involved in this case in any serious way. It's hard to say, it seems unlikely, but Gary himself, in his memories, he seems to recall that on the night Grace got killed, he got a call from Tiny Hill's wife. That's the only reason he went inside the house in the first place.

[6:46] Gary Reeves

Okay, I didn't go on in the house when I got there. So, I was sittin' out there talkin' with Richard Holcomb. So Charlotte comes to the door and says you got a phone call. I went to the phone, and she said 'this is Tiny Hill's wife. He's got arrested for DUI, could you sign a bond?' I said no, I don't own any property. And that's when I went into the kitchen to get a drink and then that's when the shot went off. And then everything from there was, as I said.

[7:15] Susan Simpson I don't know what to make of this story. As far as I can tell, there's no source for it, so I can't rule out that it's a real memory. At the very least, he didn't steal a story from any trial transcripts he's read.

But whatever the deal is with that call, well I can't rule out that Tiny Hill was involved in some way with the events of that night because Ray Almond claims that Tiny Hill was hanging with Bo, just before Grace was killed. And, according to Ray Almond, he dropped off Bo and Tiny Hill at Gary's house, not long before the murder occurred and went home for the night, where less than an hour later, 45 minutes later even, one of Grace's daughters came to his door and give him the news.

Ray says it was Charlotte that got him, but that's not right -- in the 20 years since this happened, he must've misremembered or something, because Beverly says it was *her* that went there -- she went and fetched Ray Almond. And Charlotte says too it wasn't her, she didn't do it. But regardless, one of the girls fetched Ray, and Ray went back over to Gary's house that night, before Grace's body had even been removed. And according to Ray, he watched the police take out two men from the house in handcuffs -- Bo Salmon and Tiny Hill.

No, there is no other source that claims Tiny Hill was also arrested at the Maple Street house that night, and I don't know why Ray recalls this. But aside from the Tiny Hill stuff,

which, no, I can't make sense of, here's the part of the story that Ray remembers that really matters:

[8:49] Larry Kellet

When was the next time you heard anything about it?

Ray Almond

Uh, 'bout 5 days later.

Larry Kellet

And who... who did you talk to?

Ray Almond

Richard Holcomb.

[8:57] Susan Simpson Ray says he heard the story from Richard Holcomb. But, Richard Holcomb, Bo's friend, who ran the poker games, and who was at Gary's house the night Grace died, he claims he left before she was shot. He actually testified to this under oath at one of the habeas hearings.

But, according to Ray, Richard told him he hadn't gone in the house that night. As Ray told the investigator: "[Richard] wasn't there, he let Gary out and left. And then he met Gary later that night. And after Gary picked up Sean and took Sean down to his daddy's house. Then they got Gary before daylight that morning and all. Then Richard took the pistol and gave it to another guy and the other guy threw it in the river."

To break that down: Richard told Ray Almond that just before Grace had been killed, he'd dropped Gary off at home, and then, later on, after the murder, Gary had gone and picked up his son Sean from the babysitters, and then driven over to his parents house, where he'd apparently met Richard again, and given him the gun used to kill Grace. And Richard had given it to a third guy, who had tossed it into the river.

I wish I'd gotten a chance to speak to Ray Almond, to see if there was some way to make sense of this. Because there's just so much he says to Larry Kellett that raises questions that can never be followed up on now. Like when he says that all he knows about Grace's murder is what Charlotte told him, and he didn't know what the police had said. So Larry Kellet told Ray, "Well they said had Gary shot her, and that was it. Shot her 5 or 6 times, something like that." But Ray responded to that: "And then he was supposed to have turned her over and shot her one more time." Which Larry Kellett agreed to -- which I don't know

why, because that's *not* what is supposedly happened. Why would Charlotte have told Ray about Gary turning Grace's body over and shooting her once more? That's not something I'd ever heard of before, other than this one statement. And maybe it's all made up by Ray. Or maybe Charlotte told that to him, in which case I wanna know why.

But if what Ray told Larry Kellett is true, then Richard Holcomb was telling people that he was the one who helped dispose of the gun used to kill Grace. That's a big deal. Though, you can see why Ray Almond woulda been skeptical that his story could help Gary at all -- because Richard's story doesn't make Gary innocent, it just makes things more complicated. But what Ray Almond didn't know is there is no way Richard's story is true. There's no way Richard could've met up with Gary, after the murder, at Gary's parents' house to hand over the pistol. The timing, logistics just don't work for that -- that didn't happen. So, if Richard had the gun that killed Grace, there's another reason that he ended up with the gun.

[12:59] Susan Simpson That brings us to our second call. Back in '95 or '96, so still before Grace's casket was exhumed, Gary received another call, this time from Mystery Man. That's the name I've been using for him, anyway, because I don't have another. Gary never knew who he was, and none of my guesses about his identity have panned out so far. So for now, he's just the Mystery Man.

And one day, out of the blue, Mystery Man called Gary up. "You probably don't remember me", he said, "but I used to come to your bar. And I remember when you got convicted for Grace's murder. And I've got something I need to tell you".

[13:38] Mystery Man

...because now my wife, she is..she told me to stay out of it. See she don't remember you, and I do remember, y'all were good people.

Gary Reeves

Well thank you, I appreciate it.

Mystery Man

And I, it was just unreal.

Gary Reeves

Well sir, I appreciate it very much, and I promise you that....

Mystery Man

Well when it happened, you know, I was just like anybody else, they were...you was in there, and you and your wife had a fuss up, and you killed her, and you was drunk, and I thought well, God, that doesn't sound like Gary.

Gary Reeves

No, it was just amazin' that they didn't..I didn't have a prior record, you know, I hadn't been in jail for anything, traffic, I had a DUI. You know, but I hadn't been in there for violence or anything.

Mystery Man

Grace, she seemed to be a nice lady too. In fact it seemed like she could get a little temperamental quicker than you.

[14:38] Susan Simpson The Mystery Man had been surprised at Gary's conviction but he hadn't doubted Gary's guilt, either. Gary must've gotten blind drunk and shot Grace in a fit of rage, and that's it. These things sometimes happened, after all.

But then, years later, Mystery Man heard something about Gary's case that shocked him. And he hadn't acted on it right away; it had stuck with him though, all these years, and now he wanted to come forward. Because one night, years ago, he'd been in a barroom with a guy he knew, and Gary Reeves' name had came up.

[15:10] Mystery Man

Somebody said "That's about like that Gary Reeves case. Ya know, he said he was drunk and don't remember nothin'. Boy spoke up about it, he said Gary Reeves didn't do it.

I forget how the subject come up - somebody said somethin' about your name, and I said, "Yeah, he's still serving time for that, isn't he?" And just, you know, they told me, "Nah, he ain't serving time. He wasn't guilty."

[15:49] Susan Simpson There were two different men involved in Grace's death, Mystery Man had been told. And initially, Mystery Man tried to be all cloak and daggers about it. He refrained from naming anyone in his call, using like code names instead. "The one who's in prison" or "The one who's dead."

[16:06] Mystery Man

And, ah, and at that time they hung around down there, at the, at your place, all the time, together.

Gary Reeves

Yeah, they did.

Mystery Man

But he's, uh, the little one who did it, for the one who is in prison, and I won't call out names cuz you know who they are. [Gary: Yeah] But the one who is in prison is in prison, for a hit, he was paid to hit somebody.

[16:38] Susan Simpson And, according to Mystery Man, the person who had wanted the murder done, who had wanted Grace killed, that would be "the one in prison" -- that is, Bo Salmon. But there was another man involved too: "The one who's dead" -- that was the shooter, Mystery Man said. But before he died, the one who's dead, he had talked a lot more than he ought to have.

[16:55] Mystery Man

This person, when he gets to drinking he's got a loose mouth.

Gary Reeves

Oh the one who's dead told this person?

Mystery Man

So it would be hearsay, but the one who's dead, he's got a, ya know, he played cards a lot, [Gary: Yeah] and he'd tell how he'd cheat and everything.

[17:13] Susan Simpson Thankfully, eventually Mystery Man would stop with the cloak and dagger stuff, and started using the actual names of the people involved.

[17:21] Mystery Man

...and ah, he run with him all the time -- well hell, there ain't no use in keeping no secrets, you know who we talking about, he run with Richard all the time. [Gary: Yeah]

[17:29] Susan Simpson Richard Holcomb, that is. And what I found significant is that, at the time of this call, Richard's name hadn't come up in any of the reporting. There's no way someone who was just reading the news about Gary's case could've learned that Richard had any connection to it at all.

But, according to the Mystery Man, he and Richard Holcomb, they'd had a mutual friend, and this friend had a tongue as loose as Richard's was.

[17:53] Mystery Man

I did know Richard. When he's drunk, he's got a loose tongue. He liked to brag. And uh he had told this boy that, and that boy told me that, and he told me, I said "I don't know, what reason would he have to do it?" and he said uh, he didn't. He done it for Bo. Uh, Bo was goin' with her daughter, and Grace was having a fit about it, wanted him to leave her alone, and so that Bo's name wouldn't be brought up in it and all that stuff, 'cause he was known to be involved with her, and Richard wasn't, and Richard was the one that done it for him, as a friend.

[18:35] Susan Simpson But Mystery Man said that by the time that he'd learned of Gary's innocence, it had been after Gary had been released on parole. And yeah, it had bothered him to learn an innocent man had been convicted of something he hadn't done, but since Gary was already free anyway... well, Mystery Man had put off taking any action himself. And then Gary's case hit the news. He saw the story on Inside Edition, had seen how Gary was still striving to prove his innocence. And Mystery Man began to question his decision not to come forward sooner. Finally, he decided to pick up the phone and call Gary with what he knew.

[19:16] Mystery Man

I've been uh, debating this for a while, and I just, I mean it's gotta be done. Somebody's gotta do something.

Gary Reeves

I appreciate it. God knows I appreciate it. I don't know what I'd do.

[19:35] Susan Simpson Mystery Man was inspired to come forward in particular because he thought his story might help Gary prove his innocence. And although Mystery Man had never heard about the gun being buried in Grace's casket, he wanted to let Gary know that if he ever did succeed with getting the body exhumed, and if the gun was found, well there was one person in particular whose fingerprints should be tested against the gun.

[19:58] Mystery Man

I don't know how you could actually prove it, but if you open it up, and if the gun is in there, you...probably more than likely you would find that person's fingerprints on it.

[20:13] Susan Simpson Still, Mystery Man did not want to attach his name to his story. He wanted to remain anonymous. But he also wanted to help Gary, and was willing to take a chance to do so.

[20:25] Gary Reeves

I'm trying to get the police department to re-investigate, but I'm having a hard time getting them to do anything.

Mystery Man

If there was some way that I could remain anonymous, but see, you have to have it, and I know you're an innocent man.

Gary Reeves

What about with my attorney? If my attorney, if you could tell her this and remain anonymous.

Mystery Man

Yep.

[20:46] Susan Simpson And the fear that Mystery Man's had, the reason he wanted to remain anonymous, is that the one who was in prison -- a.k.a., Bo Salmon -- would not always be in prison.

[20:56] Gary Reeves

We will make sure that you'll remain anonymous, and your name will not be leaked out in any way to anyone..

Mystery Man

That's the only way that I can do it, because I have a...I mean this, you know I don't want my family hurt in any way. You know the one that's in prison, one day he'll get out.

[21:14] Susan Simpson Mystery Man told Gary that he had no hesitations about being a rat or a snitch if that meant clearing an innocent man's name -- being called a snitch wouldn't bother him none. But putting his family in danger, that he couldn't do.

So Mystery Man never told Gary his name, but he did arrange for a time to go with Gary to see his attorney and give her a statement about what he knew.

[21:36] Gary Reeves

Well could you meet us Wednesday?

Mystery Man

Well, uh, yeah let me write this number down -- now my wife don't know I'm doing this, I'm in the bedroom, that's why I'm talking low. She told me don't get involved.

[21:52] Susan Simpson Despite his wife telling him to stay out of it, Mystery Man did show up at the meeting with Tami Colston, and he told his story to her. Gary isn't sure now if Tami actually recorded it, or if she just took notes. Mystery Man did offer to let them record it, so if they needed to they could take it to a judge, but if it was recorded, Gary never got a tape, and Tami Colston no longer has any files on this case, so if it was recorded, it's gone forever.

But in that call, the one that Gary recorded, Mystery Man said the reason for the murder had to do with conflict over Bo Salmon's relationship with Grace's oldest daughter, Charlotte.

[22:29] Mystery Man

And it was over her.

Gary Reeves

Oh Really?

Mystery Man

Yes it was. The one in prison, was, uh, goin' with her.. And uh, Grace, was uh, mad about it. Was going to stop it.

[22:46] Susan Simpson When I spoke to Beverly, she told me a story that was almost, but not quite, the same as what Mystery Man told Gary. It wasn't that Grace had objected to Charlotte and Bo going out together. The trouble had been when Charlotte had been planning to leave with Bo to go somewhere. Or, something like that. I don't understand all of Beverly's story, because I don't think she understood it herself, but she told me that on the day her mother had died, Bo Salmon had wrecked his car. And for some reason -- Beverly's not clear why, that part was fuzzy -- but for some reason, that wreck had caused Grace to learn that Charlotte and Bo had plans to run off together. And Beverly told me, "I guess [the wreck] is what brought it to Mama's attention and stuff and she asked Charlotte where they were going and she said she was leaving with Bo. But I don't know where they were going and I don't know the whole story because I was left out of all that."

So it seems like maybe there was some sort of conflict about Bo and Charlotte and Grace not being happy with what they were up to. But this could also just be memories and rumors twisted by 40 years of hindsight. But still, Mystery Man felt certain: Gary was off track in blaming Grace's daughters for her death. They hadn't done it. Though, Mystery Man allowed, Charlotte must've at least known the truth of her mother's murder.

[24:09] Mystery Man

You know, you was talking on that thing, that the daughter done it. [Gary: Yeah] She did not do it. But she is as well as involved as the rest, because she won't come clean.

[24:28] Susan Simpson So Mystery Man wasn't sure *why* exactly Charlotte would have accused Gary, why Charlotte would have said, at trial or otherwise that Gary had killed Grace, but, he said, it wasn't a crime she'd done that she was trying to cover up. There was something else at work for why she had covered up for what Bo had done.

[24:41] Mystery Man

I mean, he is *cold*.

Gary Reeves

So she would still be afraid of him.

Mystery Man

Yeah because, it's either love, or...

Gary Reeves

Fear

Mystery Man

Or fear. And that's why she's not coming clean.

Gary Reeves

Hmmm

[25:16] Susan Simpson And that brings us to the calls from Beverly, and all the statements she made to Gary back in the 90's. In those calls, she talked at length, at all manner of things, and yet sometimes I wonder if the best thing to do would be to dismiss all of it as meaningless noise. Because trying to make sense of Beverly's statements is probably a

mistake, and I wonder: Am I fooling myself if I think I can somehow pick out the kernels of truth amid the piles of meandering noise? Maybe. I don't rule that out.

But, for better or for worse, after talking with Beverly, and then hearing her calls with Gary, there are two things I strongly believe. The first is that Beverly did not see Gary shoot her mother. And the second is that Beverly thinks Charlotte is lying to her about what happened that night.

And to explain why I think this, I have to go back to Beverly's older statements, the ones before the recorded phone calls, to the ones back in the 70s.

Beverly's story has always been infinitely flexible, she incorporates random creative details at will or whim, it seems. Almost as if stolen from a soap opera. That's why it's so easy to dismiss everything she says, because sometimes what she says is just nonsense.

But, there are some fixed stars in what Beverly has said. When she describes Grace's shooting, it always starts with her in her bed, on that back porch bedroom attached to the back of the kitchen. Just before it happens, her mother is always standing next to the stove, just on the other side of the wall from Beverly. What Grace is doing- that changes -- sometimes Grace is about to start cooking, sometimes she's lighting a cigarette, but she's always there at the stove. And then there's a gunshot, and Grace makes a small noise, something less than a scream. Grace falls. The shooter leaves the room, and on the way out turns off the lights. Only after the shooter leaves does Beverly leave as well. Walks out through the door in the kitchen. Across to the dining room, where she finds her sister. And then, she calls the police, though what phone she uses is one of the details that is often in flux.

But, if there are any parts of Beverly's stories that are true, I think it has to be those facts, the details she always goes back to. And looking at them as a whole, I think there is a way to explain that's why that is the story she sticks to. Because, I think Beverly was in bed when the shooting happened, and I think she stayed in her bed until it was all over. And when she was testifying at Gary's trial, what she was describing were the things she had imagined had happened, based on the things she had really experienced. She wasn't a witness to those events herself, but she really believed that might be what had happened. That's the best and really only way I can make sense of Beverly's statements, anyway, how she stayed so consistent on some things, and how most of her story is an ever-changing dream.

But that story she told at trial, the one about her jumping out of bed when the gunshot happened, running to the kitchen doorway and watching three or four or five more shots be fired -- I really don't think that ever happened.

It's the story she told the attorneys after Gary's trial, the one about seeing an unknown shadow in the kitchen -- I think that one may be true.

[28:37] Attorney

Alright now, you told the police that Gary shot her.

Beverly Reynolds

That's all I knew.

Attorney

Alright, now, why did you tell 'em that?

Beverly Reynolds

Uh, it just seemed to me Gary could be the only one, cause Gary's the only one I saw besides just a shadow.

[28:54] Susan Simpson Beverly's story about the shadow, the way she tells it, is so fanciful and abstract it's easy to see why it's often dismissed as just another one of Beverly's stories. But I think this story may be literally true. She did see a shadow -- or rather, a silhouette. Because, see, Beverly's bedroom the little one back behind the kitchen, that back porch it had been tacked on there at some point, some kind of addition to the house, but the back window of the kitchen, the one that had once looked out over the backyard, it now looked over the porch, once that was added on. There was a curtain on the kitchen-side of the window, and it was blocking the window so at least most of the view from the porch into the kitchen was cut off, but the white curtains didn't cut off light. Beverly told me about how when that had been her bedroom, there had actually been two beds out there, one of them intended for her little brother. But Beverly would always sleep in the one in the farthest corner, because that was easier to sleep in, there was less light into her eyes, coming through that curtain.

Which makes me wonder. Even if Beverly didn't run to the door to witness her mother's murder, could she have seen part of it from her bed, through that curtained window, in a sort of shadow play of her mother's death?

Because if that's what Beverly saw, then perhaps that's why Beverly concluded it was Gary that was shooting her mother that night. All she saw was a shadow -- and her brain filled in the blanks.

I don't think Beverly was ever told to say that she saw Gary in the kitchen that night. 'Cause she didn't have to be. Like Beverly told Gary, she wasn't pressured to identify him as the shooter, that's just the conclusion she reached on her own.

[30:45] Beverly Reynolds

From that night, the only thing I seen, I seen Gary in the kitchen. And that's just all that went in my mind. Nobody told me that.

[30:54] Susan Simpson There's no way now to know for sure, now, but Beverly's explanation makes sense to me. She thought the shadow in the kitchen had been Gary, so she concluded, not unreasonably, that Gary had killed her mother. No one needed to coach her into saying that.

But this theory, about what Beverly really saw that night, isn't just a theory, because for years after the murder, it's exactly what Beverly claimed happened. Even at the very first post-conviction hearing, in April '76, Beverly said this, more or less. The prosecutor had asked her whether her trial testimony was true, and when she said it was not, she was asked what was not true about it. And she said: I didn't get up to see it. I didn't see the shots. Well, then, the prosecutor asked, what *did* she see, then? Nothing, Beverly said, until [she] came out and seen Mama on the floor in the kitchen.

Later, in that same hearing, she qualified: "There was a shadow in the kitchen. From where I was laying, through the window, there was a shadow on the wall."

The prosecutor also asked Beverly, well, if that's all she'd seen, this shadow, why had she said at trial that she'd seen Gary shoot Grace, if that wasn't true? And Beverly told him: "Because I wanted to believe that Gary done it." I don't know what, exactly, Beverly meant by this, and she wasn't asked to elaborate, but I think she might have meant what she said -- she wanted to believe Gary done it, because that was easier and more appealing than having the answer be in doubt. Or perhaps, it was easier and more appealing than some other answer that she thought might explain what had happened that night. But she hadn't seen what she said she'd seen, and she wanted to get that sorted out now. The truth was, she said, "I don't really know who did it, but I don't feel Gary done it."

Then, fast-forward a year, to the extraordinary motion hearing in 1977. Beverly testified again, and again she described how she'd seen the shooting, and claimed Gary had been there in the kitchen -- but she saw this all through that little window, **not** the doorway. "I heard a gunshot," she said, "and I heard mama scream, and I jumped back on the bed. I was scared that whoever was out there shooting her would shoot me. That's all that was in my mind, and I jumped up, and I looked in the little window in the back room and Gary was standing there with a gun. I jumped back on the bed, because I was scared he would shoot me, because I had seen it," and she stayed there. In her bed. For ten minutes after the shooting. Until she'd finally crept out to the dining room.

Finally, in the 1977 Habeas hearing, Beverly gave the same answer about what she'd done during the shooting -- that she'd hidden in bed. "I just couldn't go in there," she testified. "I couldn't move. I couldn't say nothing or do nothing, I didn't know what to do." She never did jump up to the kitchen door, she said. She didn't see what happened in the kitchen, and she waited ten minutes after the shooting before she'd finally gone out and ran to the dining room.

Although the court transcripts don't show annoyance, I can't help but read that into the judge's tone when he asked her, "Well, what is your testimony here today? Now what do you want this court to believe?" And Beverly told him: "It's just like I said at first, I don't know what really happened. I didn't [see the murder]."

We don't have Beverly's police statements, so we don't know if this is true or not. Whether that's really what she said at first. But it's possible it was.

And if I'm right about what Beverly saw, what the reality is here, that she never saw a damned thing, then I can only imagine how frustrated she's been over the years. How trapped she must be by her later statements. Because if that's the case, Beverly *has* told the truth before, repeatedly -- actually, every time she testified after the trial, in three different proceedings. Where she testified that she didn't leave her bed, and that she saw everything she saw through the window. But no one ever seemed to believe her.

And maybe that's why, whenever Beverly is implored to fix all this by telling the truth, she always sounds, at least to me, bitter and a little scornful.

[35:07] Beverly Reynolds

We're gonna try to make it right.

Gary Reeves

We're going to try to make it right. And remember what my sister told you years ago: the truth will set you free.

Beverly Reynolds

The truth will set you free.

Gary Reeves

And that will take all of this off of us. Both.

[35:28] Susan Simpson Maybe Beverly had told the truth in this case before. But the truth hadn't set her free at all. She'd had no more luck with the truth, than she'd had telling lies -- and at least with the lies, sometimes other people would believe them.

[36:08] Susan Simpson And that brings us to her calls to Gary. Because when Beverly would call him back in the '90s, she could be all over the place. Sometimes she was sad, sometimes she was chatty and nostalgic, sometimes she was angry at all the shit she'd had to go through in her life, and sometimes she just sounds confused and puzzled about how her mother had died.

But as confused as she often was, I think Beverly thought that Gary was more confused than she was.

[36:32] Beverly Reynolds

I don't actually remember- I don't think that you remember, I think you've got that night that the fuckin' card game went on, and them women came up there confused with the night it actually happened, Gary, I think you are confused.

[36:48] Susan Simpson Throughout all her calls with Gary, Beverly never expressed a belief in Gary's guilt. She is unequivocal about the fact that, whatever really happened, she never saw Gary kill Grace. That didn't happen.

[37:01] Beverly Reynolds

I never seen you killin' her [muffled].

Gary Reeves

Well, let's uh- let's see if we can...

Beverly Reynolds

Let's do something about it.

Gary Reeves

Let's see if we can do that.

[37:11] Susan Simpson But as confused as Beverly might have been about things related to that night there's one thing Beverly was strangely confident in. And that's that Bo Salmon didn't kill her mother.

[37:23] Beverly Reynolds

But, put two and two together. The night that mama got killed, I do not think Bo Salmon killed my mama. I sit on Bo Salmons' chest, I slapped him in his face. I jerked him up out that bed. The police did, too. I think it's Charlotte.

Gary Reeves

Hmm.

Beverly Reynolds.

I do not think Bo Salmon killed my mama.

[37:57] Susan Simpson Beverly told me the same thing, when I talked to her. Bo had been absolutely passed out and nonfunctional on the night Grace died. Beverly had seen that, as she put it with her own two eyeballs. She'd been frantic to wake him up, hitting him, yelling at him, shoving him, pushing him off the bed, but he hadn't budged. It had taken two police officers dragging him out, bodily, to get him out of bed and out of the house. So, she had ruled him out of any involvement in the case. He'd been dead to the world.

[38:28] Beverly Reynolds

If you wanna find who killed my mama, I think I know. I don't think Bo Salmon pulled that trigger Gary. I could almost swear Bo Salmon was knocked out, passed out.

[38:42] Susan Simpson In her calls with Gary, Beverly often cycled through all kinds of ideas about what might have happened that night, what happened to the gun, who was involved, but her conviction was that Bo was not part of it. Beverly didn't consider Bo to be an option.

[38:57] Gary Reeves

What do you think about that Beverly, about them finding a damn sack in the casket.

Beverly Reynolds

Honest to god? I think somebody dug her up before...

Gary Reeves

Yeah I do too.

Beverly Reynolds

Want to hear my opinion?

Gary Reeves

Yeah.

Beverly Reynolds

I think it had already been, I think the coffin had already been broke into, I think her vault had already been broke before they ever done it. And I think that... I think Doyal Wade is covering up for Charlotte. I do think he's got somethin' to do with it. I don't think he killed Mama, Gary. I don't know, I don't know, I'm tellin' you from my heart, I know Bo Salmon didn't kill my mama.

[39:44] Susan Simpson That was back in 1997, though. Twenty years later, Beverly's no longer as certain about this. When I spoke to her, she told me,

"I don't know what to believe anymore. At the time, that night, I thought he was passed out cold and knew nothing of the murder, you couldn't tell me any different. But learning all the shit I've learned over the years about the drugs he was hauling, the things he was doing -- and I guess him and Charlotte were fixing to move somewhere."

From everything I've seen and heard, both from Beverly herself and those who knew her, I think Beverly doesn't so much have theories about what happened as she has fears about what happened. About whether everything might add up in ways she might not be able handle. Especially given the way that Charlotte was reacted to Gary's push in the '90s to reopen this case -- Beverly was really frustrated by that. Charlotte often wouldn't talk to her, but now Charlotte was seeking her out, in fact, hunting her down at work and telling her to keep quiet, talk to no one. And Beverly wondered: why? She had nothing to hide, so who was Charlotte to tell her not to talk?

[40:48] Beverly Reynolds

She came and saw me at my job at twelve o'clock at night. She told me not to worry, we're the only two that knows what happened. I said Charlotte, I'm at work, you know, Debbie brought her to where I worked. I got work, I'm not interested in this shit, because Gary I'm gonna tell you, I have not been scared from the beginnin'. I didn't kill my mama. I know I didn't.

[41:18] Susan Simpson Charlotte was making things difficult for Beverly, almost as much or more so than Gary was. As Gary pointed out during one call -- if Charlotte was willing to tell their family that Beverly had been involved in Grace's death, who else might she tell that?

[41:35] Gary Reeves

About Charlotte. If she, if she's told Joan, your aunt, that you killed Grace, what do you think she would tell the authorities if they did close in on her? And they will. Eventually.

Beverly Reynolds

Well, I'm sure she would probably say what she told Debbie and Wilburn, she'd probably tell em that I'm the one that done it. I mean, I don't know, you know, um, what do I do? I mean what do I do? If I can't remember, what do I do?

[42:18] Susan Simpson But Beverly does recall some things about the night that her mother died. And she remembers one thing in particular very clearly: where Charlotte was, and what Charlotte said after Beverly finally left her bedroom that night, crept out to the dining room, to the main section of the house. And when she got there, to the the living area on the other side of the kitchen, Beverly saw Charlotte, sitting quietly in a dining room chair, in the dark.

[42:43] Beverly Reynolds

Between me and you, and if I had to stand before Jesus Christ today, I don't know, I may be wrong and he knows all, if she didn't do it, she knows who did. I don't know, but I know she was in that livin' room, I know that night when I walked in that dinin' room, and I said Charlotte, don't come in here. And she said "I've already been in there." And how would she got there quicker than I did, when I was closer, and all I was doing was trying to protect my pregnant sister. She said, "I've already seen her." And I didn't even know she was dead.

[43:27] Susan Simpson And as much as I'm inclined to distrust Beverly's stories, there's something about this one that stands out to me: Beverly has told that same story, nearly word for word, in statements 20 years apart.

When I talked to Beverly last year, Gary hadn't yet gone through his tape recordings. I didn't know they existed, let alone what Beverly said on them. And when I eventually did listen, later on, I realized that what Beverly had told Gary in 1997 was the same thing she told me in 2016. For Beverly, who almost never tells the same story twice, that was striking. She couldn't have known what she'd said to Gary all those years ago, and she couldn't have known that she had to keep her story consistent between what she said then and what she said to me. Because, no one knew there was a comparison to even worry about. I think she told me the same story in 2016 she told Gary in 1997 because it's a real memory that she's held onto, that she'd lived with for 42 years.

[44:27] Beverly Reynolds

And I was sayin' "Charlotte, don't come in here, Charlotte don't come in here," 'cause I was thinking she was pregnant and she didn't need to see Mama layin' there, and she said "I done seen her."

[44:37] Susan Simpson And when Beverly told me this story, the words were the same, but the emotions were more pronounced. The way Charlotte responded to Beverly that night, seems to have been burned forever into Beverly's memory because of the wrongness of it. What seems to stand out the most in Beverly's mind, what still brings her to tears when she recalls it, is how sarcastic her sister sounded. Beverly began crying when I asked her about it, and though I basically never believe witness reactions, and don't put weight in them, I put weight in it this time. I will never believe that Beverly was faking how she responded. She told me,

"When my sister looked at me that night and told me she'd already been in that kitchen, I've wondered for 42 years. What did she go in there for? What was she doing? And I still today don't know why, my brain just won't let me understand why she went in there. It's the way she said it -- I looked at her and said, please don't go in there, she said --- '*well I already been in there.*' It's the way it came out."

Beverly doesn't know who killed her mother. I can't prove it, but I believe it, very much. But I think she has suspicions that cause her to shut down when she tries to think about it, though I think her suspicions are more an expression of her fears than what she actually knows.

[45:51] Beverly Reynolds

But I do think Charlotte shot that gun. I'm sorry. I'm not sorry. I want to know.

[46:03] Susan Simpson I don't think Charlotte fired any gun that night. It just doesn't explain the evidence we have, or what we know probably definitely happened that night. Like the large bloody footprints in the back hall and one of the bedrooms -- they were too big for Gary to have left, and they couldn't have been left by Charlotte. Whatever happened to Grace, it has to explain how those footprints and how they got there.

And Beverly herself seems to realize that there's another way to add up all the facts she knows, another potential solution that would fit the pieces she's been given.

[46:35] Beverly Reynolds

From that night, I could not think nothin' different but Gary killed Mama... Gary, I didn't see you pull that trigger. They asked me if I seen fire come out the gun, I couldn't say yes. I don't know, re-read or whatever, I don't know what the transcript says. I remember what I said, all I said was you killed my mama.

Gary Reeves

Yep.

Beverly Reynolds

And that's all I can think of. And then I said it might have been Richard Holcomb. You and him kinda looked alike, if they put y'all up beside each other. Not really, but he kinda look like you, sandy hair, big nose, I was just kinda, I was a kid Gary.

[47:21] Susan Simpson So, it's worth nothing, Beverly didn't say that at trial, or anywhere else. She has never mentioned in any transcript that I've seen that the thing she saw that night could have been Richard Holcomb. But she's also never read the transcripts, and has a very stilted view of what she actually did say and did not say on the stand. So, I wonder if she's remembering here what she wished she had said, not what she actually did. And then, in a different call with Gary later on, she repeated this same story:

[47:47] Gary Reeves

But then the other guy said that Richard Holcomb shot her.

Beverly Reeves

Well, if you remember correctly I said that in court Gary. That if it wasn't you, then it had to have been Richard Holcomb, 'cause y'all look, if you were standing looking at

you and him, to me, y'all resembled each other, except for him havin' that big scar on his face. And I did say that in court, that it could have been Richard Holcomb.

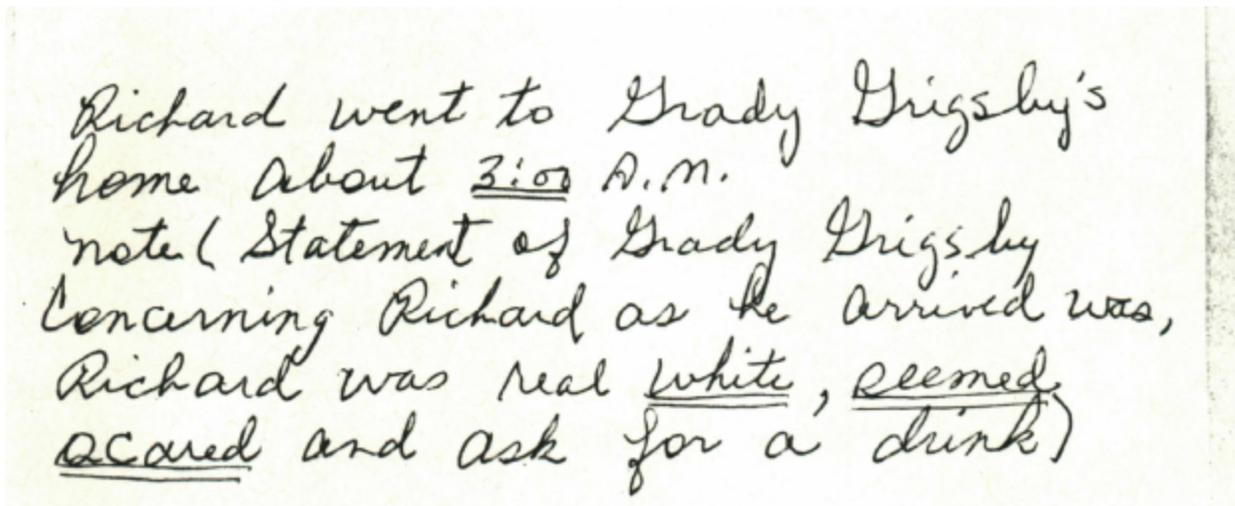
Gary Reeves

Before she was sh...

Beverly Reynolds

And I'm not saying you were ugly (laughs). Richard Holcomb was an ugly man but y'all resembled each other. The hair was about the same color. Y'all were about the same height...

[48:26] Susan Simpson Richard testified that on the night Grace was killed, he left Gary's house, before her murder, to go sleep at his friend Grady Grigsby's house. Grady Grigsby is dead now, and I can't ask him about it, but in the very detailed records that Gary's sister kept, there is a note to back this up. Grady told one of Gary's brothers that Richard Holcomb had come to his house that night, at around 3am -- and he was "real white, seemed scared, and asked for a drink."



Richard went to Grady Grigsby's home about 3:00 A.M.
note (Statement of Grady Grigsby concerning Richard as he arrived was, Richard was real white, seemed, scared and ask for a drink)

So what if it was Richard that Beverly saw that night, and not Gary? Is that what Beverly was hinting at, in her conversations with Gary? Because she's right, Gary and Richard don't look alike, not if you were examining mugshots side by side. Their features were very different. But if you're not considering the details -- if you're just looking at height and build and general coloring -- well, Richard and Gary aren't that far apart.

And if we're to believe what Mystery Man and Ray Almon told Gary all those years ago, then Richard Holcomb had a real loose tongue. He talked a lot, even when he shouldn't, and

again, if Ray Almon and Mystery Man are telling the truth, Richard had more knowledge of Grace's murder than he acknowledged having in his testimony at one of the hearings.

But maybe Richard Holcomb isn't the only one with a loose tongue. As shown from the events that happened later, Bo Salmon was never that worried about covering his tracks, and he often talked a lot. If Bo Salmon was involved in Grace's death, I don't think he would have been totally silent about it.

[49:55] Lana

And I told those people that many years ago, I said please don't let that man stay in prison, and they said "What do you want us to do?" And I said, "I want you to make him tell the truth! Get that guy out of prison! Bo did this!"

[50:26] Susan Simpson And that was Episode 9 of Undisclosed, the State v Gary Mitchum Reeves. Next Monday will be Episode 10 -- the final episode in this series, though stay tuned later in the week for a special addendum.

As always, don't forget to check out the website for episode transcripts, people maps, timelines, and case materials, and if you'd like to discuss the case, join us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Reddit.

Mital Telhan helps produce the show, and our sound editor is Rebecca Lavoie. And by the way, if any of the clips this episode sound terrible, you can blame me, not her. I wanted them there anyway.

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