

**UNDISCLOSED, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves**  
**Episode 10 - The Story of Rome Georgia**  
September 11, 2017

**[0:23] Susan Simpson** Back last year, after I spoke to Gary for the first time, and after I'd first started looking into this case, I think my only real goal was to try and figure out whether the things Gary was telling me were things that had actually happened. I wasn't planning to investigate the case, not really, and finding out how Grace had actually died seemed too ambitious, given how old the case was. But the stories Gary was telling me didn't sound like the kind of stories that could be true, didn't sound like the kinds of thing that happened in real life, and yet he'd also said he had records to verify much of what he was telling me.

So, I wanted to at least check that out. It couldn't hurt, right?

And the thing of it was, there actually were records that backed up what Gary was telling me. And as I started doing my own investigation, finding new records and new witnesses, they also backed up what he'd told me. I didn't always agree with Gary's *interpretations* of the facts, or his theories about what had happened -- actually, I think I disagreed with him there, more often than not. But the basic facts of the case, what he'd told me had happened, those things, again and again, checked out -- they were true.

And before long, the question I was trying to answer had shifted from: *did all of this actually happen?* to *how could all of this have actually happened?* Because, how could Bo Salmon have actually done everything he seems to have done? How did he and the people he ran with get away with so much before he was finally stopped, in 1981, after being convicted of the murder of Henry Ridley Jr?

And like I've mentioned before, I think part of the answer is the whole "rednecks killing rednecks" thing -- this sort of institutional aversion, when the people involved were themselves bad guys, or considered bad guys, because in that case, why bother? But that's only part of the story. The other part, maybe the biggest part, was police corruption. As I would see again and again while investigating this case, corruption in law enforcement agencies was endemic in Northwest Georgia in the '60s and '70s. And, no doubt, many other places and many other times as well. But here, in cases I was seeing, it's not like they were even really trying to hide it.

And it wasn't just Georgia, that's for sure. GBI Director Vernon Keenan had been assigned up in Northwest Georgia back in those days, and he told me about a southern town, outside of Georgia, that had had it worse than most places did.

**[2:45] Vernon Keenan** And, uh, had a corrupt sheriff and police department. That was... generally if you had, if you had a corrupt agency, the other one would be okay. But they, they had the bad luck of havin' both of 'em corrupt.

**[2:58] Susan Simpson** Director Keenan told me about the struggles the GBI often had in the those days, about dealing with local law enforcement agencies and the problems there. Sometimes, you'd try to investigate the criminals, only to find out that the local police were working with them hand in hand.

**[3:12] Vernon Keenan**

And we did the first auto-theft wiretap up in Whitfield County, and actually caught a Dalton Police officer on the wiretap, tipping them off that we had an investigation going. Caught him on the wiretap.

**Susan Simpson**

I have noticed that it's kind of a common theme for the GBI and these cases. They're the ones catching the local police who are, uh, tipping off the, the targets.

**Vernon Keenan**

Yeah. It was always, there was no one else to investigate the police (laughs). We had good prosecutors up there, though. That was uh, that was the saving grace. They had good, good district attorneys. The weak link was law enforcement.

**[3:53] Susan Simpson** When I say police corruption is part of the story of Gary's conviction, I don't mean by the officers that were directly involved in the investigation of Grace's murder. Those officers did do a terrible job, and they made it so that we'll never have any of the answers that the crime scene might've been able to give us, but that wasn't the corrupt part. That was caused by, as Director Keenan put it in an earlier episode, the absence of a much needed professionalism among many local law enforcement agencies.

Again and again throughout the case though, it seemed like there were opportunities where law enforcement could have halted the events that would happen -- stop what was unfolding, but again and again they failed to do so. And I don't just mean in Grace's case, but in all the cases Bo is linked in. Because, investigating this case, it often felt like every time I turned over a rock I'd find a new murder that Bo had been connected to in some way.

Take, for instance, the ambush killing of Billy Kelly and Jack Patton in a Whitfield County cemetery -- and that murder was never solved. But when I got the GBI files it was clear that the GBI, at least, had thought they'd known who'd done it: Bo Salmon.

And that had surprised me, because Jack Patton had been a pretty close friend of Bo's. I'd first learned of Jack due to some crimes that he and Bo had done together down in Floyd County. So I wasn't sure why the GBI might've thought Bo would be involved in his murder. I contacted Jack's niece, Teresa, and luckily enough, Teresa herself had done some investigation into her uncle's murder, a couple decades back, and she still had her notes and files from the things she'd looked into back then. She also had some old family photos of Jack, which she showed me when I met with her and some of Jack's other relatives up in Dalton.

**[5:31] Teresa Patton Cronon**

Um, Jack was in prison at that time, wasn't he? (Indecipherable) That's you standing, standing in front of Jack?

**Male Patton Family Member**

That's Whitfield County, the old prison.

**[5:41] Susan Simpson** Teresa told me about how her father had learned of his brother's death. How no one had seen Jack since the night before, so when rumors started going about town, about some bodies found at the cemetery, Jack's family got worried.

**[5:55] Teresa Patton Cronon**

Word had got to them that these bodies were found, and so they went to the cemetery to try to find out if it was Jack and, and found out it was.

**[6:06] Susan Simpson** The investigation into the murders stalled out about as soon as it began. In fact, Jack's family got the sense they never really tried to solve it at all.

**Male Patton Family Member**

I guess because of the, the record that Benny and Jack had, you know their backs...

**Female Patton Family Member**

They had criminal records

**Male Patton Family Member**

Yeah. And they just didn't really care.

**[6:25] Susan Simpson** Teresa had been too young when her uncle died to be that involved, and she never really knew much about the case until she decided to do her own investigation back in the 1990's. Unfortunately, she ran into the same problem that now, in

2017, I ran into: the murder of Jack Patton and Billy Kelly is an open case, and the police files are not available. Still, back then, when she spoke to a detective about the case, he did give her some clues about where to look.

**[6:51] Teresa Patton Cronon**

I, I really never did hear anything until I came up and met with a detective and he pointed me in the direction of Bo Salmon.

**[7:02] Susan Simpson** The detective that she spoke to didn't get much more specific beyond that, but Teresa came away thinking the cops had known all along who was primarily responsible for her uncle's murder.

**[7:11] Teresa Patton**

Well in my notes somewhere, um, I remember the detective told me that he did not think that, he thought that Bo Salmon was involved, but he didn't think he was actually trigger man because he was more "talk" than "do."

**[7:28] Susan Simpson** When I'd talked to Benny Kelly, the son of Billy Kelly, the other victim in this case, he told me more or less the same thing. Word around town had always been that Bo was responsible. Though, like the Patton family, he'd also suspected that the police had known a lot more than they'd let on.

And when I spoke the ex-wife of Billy Kelly, she got more detailed about what she'd always believed. She and Billy had separated before his death, but they'd remained close and on good terms, and she very much wanted his murder to be solved. Still, she said, she never thought that'd actually happen -- in fact, she'd assumed there was a decent chance that law enforcement had been involvement in the killing themselves, one way or another, and therefore wouldn't be likely to try very hard to investigate it. She told me how when the police came out to her house to talk to her about Billy's death, she hadn't wanted to and she told them, "Well, did y'all cover up for the ones who done it, or did you have it done?" Which of course made the police mad, and they left.

But her concern that the police might have been involved in some way wasn't irrational. Because yes, some elements of law enforcement in Whitfield County were, for sure, corrupt at that time. The sheriff would later be charged for cocaine and firearm conspiracies and serve time in prison.

And it's clear that that Bo and his group did enjoy some kind of mutually beneficial arrangement with local law enforcement. In fact, local law enforcement officers had indirectly provided assistance to the murder of Henry Ridley Junior. JW Patterson was one

of the friends that Bo tried to recruit for the murder. However, he had actually turned informant, and told the GBI about how Bo and Teddy Bear had been warned in advance that the police would be raiding their place that weekend. Which was handy, because Bo had been storing a 30-30 rifle there at Teddy Bear's place. And thanks to the heads up from the police, Bo was able to move the rifle to a safe location so the police couldn't seize it -- and that rifle would later be used to kill Henry.

**[11:15] Susan Simpson** Northwest Georgia is no longer quite the wild west it once was. And I'm optimistic that many of the failures in the criminal justice system that went on in Gary's case and other cases from that time period would never happen today. But, these failures of law enforcement, the corruption and malfeasance -- that's not some old timey thing from a dead and bygone era. And I don't think things have changed quite as much as we would like to think. I remember talking last year to a retired police officer, one who'd been involved, in a tangential way, to both the Gary Mitchum Reeves case and the Joey Watkins case, and I'd asked him about some of the stories Gary had told me about police tipping off the local criminal. He told me, simply, "Nothing's changed there." And he was right -- just this year, a Rome officer was arrested for the same old conspiracy as always, tipping off the drug dealers about when a raid is coming in.

Or to take another example: Stanley Sutton. He was the lead investigator in our Season 2 case, from 2000, but he was also a police officer back in the '70s. And sometimes it feels like I can't take a step in Floyd County without hearing another story about Stanley Sutton. About someone else's car he put dope in, or someone else he threatened to put away forever if they didn't implicate a friend of theirs in some crime or another.

**[12:30] Gayle Godfrey**

I was on the grand jury when Stanley Sutton was bringin' cases, and you really had to sift out things that Stanley said because, uh, he was tryin' to make a name for hisself.

**Charles Ledbetter**

That's all he done.

**Gayle Godfrey**

Puttin' people in jail. I'm sure there were people who went to prison that shouldn't have under Stanley.

**Susan Simpson**

I know one of 'em!

**[12:59] Susan Simpson** And to show just how little some things have changed in Rome in the past 40 years, here's a bit of a side story, about how it is I came to find Gary's case in the first place. I've mentioned before that I stumbled on Gary's case while researching our Season 2 case, and that there were overlapping people and themes between the two cases, but I didn't say what the overlap was. And, in a nutshell, it's that Bo Salmon isn't the only member of his family who has been involved in the contract killing business, or at least claimed to be involved in the contract killing business.

In Season 2, we covered the Joey Watkins case. Joey was 19 at the time of the crime, and he was convicted of killing Isaac Dawkins, a former classmate who'd once dated the same girl Joey had dated. Supposedly, Joey and his friend Mark had been in a little blue car, driving along a divided highway, when they'd fired two shots at Isaac's pickup, with one shot going through the back window of Isaac's truck and hitting him in the back right side of his head.

But there'd been a string of highway shootings in Rome that same year, and although none of the four or five other ones I came across had been solved, or even really investigated, I was curious about them. And then one day I was glancing through an old issue of the Rome News Tribune when I saw an article that stood out to me. Seven months after Isaac's death, a 25 year old that I'll call JT, had been driving in southwest Rome area when someone had fired two shots at his pickup, with one shot going through the back window of his truck, and hitting him in the back right side of his head.

Luckily for JT, it was apparently some kind of reverse magic bullet that hit him, because the shot wasn't fatal, and didn't actually injure him that badly. But the similarities between the two shootings were startling. Clare, from the GIP, decided to pull the police records for JT's case, although it turned out there wasn't hardly anything to it beyond what was already been reported in the newspaper. There was one notation that was new though. Three months after the shooting, someone had added a short update to the report:

1/12/2001 FROM INCIDENT DATE UNTIL OCT. 4, 2000, INFORMATION THAT [RESPONDING OFFICER] RECEIVED, COTTON SALMON IS THE SUSPECT. VICTIM IS REFUSING TO COOPERATE. CASE CLEARED.

**[15:12] Susan Simpson** Cotton Salmon is Bo Salmon's nephew. But at the time, I didn't know who Bo was, and didn't know of Gary's case. I was already well aware of who Cotton Salmon was though. And finding out that he'd been the suspect in a shooting that was all but identical to the one that had killed Isaac, seven months before, that was startling for a few reasons. The first is that Cotton's sister and nephew had once talked to a PI hired by Joey's family and tried to convince the PI that a man named Joey Boyd had done the murder, even though their story couldn't be corroborated in any way, and I still don't

understand the origins of it or why they were telling it to him. And the second is that Cotton Salmon was actually one of the jailhouse snitches in the Joey Watkins case. In fact, out of all the very many jailhouse snitches, Cotton had probably been the most accurate of all of them in describing the murder -- he even knew the make of the pistol that had been used to kill Isaac, supposedly, or at least that the GBI's ballistics report claims was used.

**[16:08] Stanley Sutton**

.. 'kay, testing, testing one, two, three. Havin' a little problems with the um, tape recorder, I had to change batteries - 'kay, this is Investigator Stanley Sutton. Today I had went up to the Floyd County Jail and interviewed uh, took a guy out by name of Ronald Wayne Salmon - he's got a nickname Cotton - I been knowing him 'bout thirty years. But he was incarcerated in the same cell block as Mark Free. But I received some information that Cotton Salmon had some information 'bout Mark Free, telling him about the killing of Isaac Dawkins and knew a great detail and so I pulled him out and talked to him today and basically what Cotton told me that he spent five months in the cell prior to Mark Free going to trial uh, this year 2002 in February. That uh, he bragged to uh, Cotton that he was a hit man, that he hit moving targets and that he was 9 millimeter expert sharpshooter and told him all about the Army and about how that he could uh, you know, kill people and that's what he's gonna do, that he's gonna be a hit man and he told Cotton that if he had anybody that he wanted hit just to let him know and he gave him his numbers and everything where he can get - get in touch with him when he got out.

**[17:20] Susan Simpson** I was never able to find any evidence that could link, in any way, Cotton Salmon to Isaac's killing, and I don't think he was involved there. But what I find remarkable is just how comfortable Stanley Sutton's relationship was with Cotton.

Because remember, Sutton had to have known at the time Cotton came to him with this story, Cotton himself had been the lead suspect, the only suspect, in a shooting that came a hair's breadth away from being a murder. But the police had closed the case, apparently without much investigation, and that was that. Then, when Cotton came forward to tell Sutton about Mark being a hitman, responsible for Isaac's murder, Sutton considered him a reliable source, no questions asked.

So why would the Floyd County Police have so abruptly discontinued their investigation into a very near murder that Cotton seems to have been involved in, and yet they were so gung-ho in accepting his story about a jailhouse confession? I can't help but remember some of the things I've heard in Floyd County over and over again about Sutton.

**Charles Ledbetter**

Well, Stanley protected some of his people who would tell him stuff.

**[18:25] Susan Simpson** To try and figure out why exactly the investigation into Cotton Salmon had been dropped, Clare reached out to JT, the victim in the case.

**[18:32] Clare Gilbert**

We came across, in the course of investigating his case, an incident where your name was mentioned, uh, where you were shot in the back of the head by your, above your ear. And, and survived. Um, our client is accused of doing the same thing to someone. Well, convicted of doing the same thing to someone else. Um, and so I was just wondering if you would be willing to talk with me at all about what happened in your case.

So, um, I guess the police thought that Cotton Salmon did it?

Ok, so, they... the police report said that you had decided not to prosecute? Um..oh, so if you had found who it was you would have wanted to prosecute?

**[19:52] Susan Simpson** JT was reluctant to talk, and didn't want to give too many details, but he did tell Clare about the events that had led to him being shot in the back of the head.

**[20:00] Clare Gilbert**

So he had a, he says he had a trailer on his property that was full of stuff that got stolen. And about a week later he saw it driving down the road, someone driving it down the road, um, in a dark -- the driver had a dark truck. So he did a u-turn, did a u-turn, got in front of the truck, tried to get the truck to stop and that's when he got shot. He was looking in the rearview mirror.

**[20:36] Susan Simpson** But as for whether Cotton had been the shooter that he'd seen in the rear view mirror, that he couldn't say.

**[20:41] Clare Gilbert**

Yeah, but it's pretty clear he didn't want to implicate him.

**Rabia Chaudry**

Yeah

**Clare Gilbert**

For whatever reason.



**Rabia Chaudry**

All I know is, everytime Cotton Salmon's name comes up, people get scared.

**Clare Gilbert**

Yeah (laughs)

**Susan Simpson**

A little bit.

**Rabia Chaudry**

Right? I mean that's what I've noticed in like two days. Anytime comes up - uh, I don't want none o' that...

**[21:00] Susan Simpson** Last year, I played Cotton Salmon's statement to Mark for the first time. Mark had known, of course, that Stanley Sutton had used a lot of snitches in the case against him, people who'd claimed that he or Joey had confessed in jail, but Mark had never known that Cotton Salmon was one of them.

**[21:14] Susan Simpson**

Have you ever heard that before?

**Mark Free**

I never heard that. First of all, Cotton -- talkin' bout a hit? Cotton Salmon come to me about "wanna put a hit on somebody?" At a lake in Alabama, one of the guys killed one of the Hell's Angels brother or somethin' like that and, ya know...

**Susan Simpson**

So Cotton did approach you about a hit? (laughs)

**Mark Free**

Yeah, he did. I said I'm not a hitman. (Susan laughs) I said, I don't do that kind of stuff.

**[21:36] Susan Simpson** Maybe Cotton's offer was legit, but I don't buy it. I have to imagine that if Cotton really needed to hire a hitman, some skinny kid he met in Floyd County jail, that would be an awfully long way down his list of top choices. But, Cotton was persistent in his efforts to recruit Mark.

**[21:50] Mark Free**

And he gave me details and everything about the man, the tattoos, and this and that. I kept telling him, I said, I'm not into that kind of stuff. I said, I don't do that.

**[22:02] Susan Simpson** My guess? Cotton never had any intent to hire Mark has a hitman. He was trying to get Mark to say something incriminating, to do something that would give him some kind of dirt, so that he could report it to Stanley Sutton, the police officer that he'd been knowing for about 30 years.

**[23:46] Susan Simpson** So as for Gary's case, as for how all this was able to happen, that's the best I've got. About how Bo was able to carry on for so long, why it took so long for anyone to care. It's these patterns of selective enforcement of the law, of special privileges given to certain criminals, and a "let the rednecks kill the rednecks" mentality, as well as a "it's okay to get the right guy for the wrong crime" mentality -- all of that led up to what we saw in Floyd County, and in Murray and Whitfield counties. All of that was how someone like Bo Salmon was able to exist.

But there's still another question to be addressed here as well, of course. And that's what actually happened to Grace that night on August 13, 1974.

Unless and until more witnesses come forward, there are some questions here that we just won't be able to answer. We won't be able to know what happened, not exactly.

But I do think I've got a pretty good idea. And it all goes back to why exactly Gary got paroled in 1981.

From the start, Gary's story there just seemed incomplete. Yeah, it's possible he was paroled 7 years into a life sentence for normal, everyday reasons, despite the fact he showed no remorse for his crime, because he was still claiming innocence. But shortly before he was paroled, Gary was told something that seems potentially relevant: that the GBI had an informant who said Gary hadn't even been there when Grace was killed.

And, if I could find that informant, assuming they existed, maybe I could learn more about why Gary had been released from prison. And about who had really killed Grace. So I spent the next couple months tracking down GBI records, and I got a break. There were several informants in the GBI files. And two of them were informants that came forward saying they had knowledge not just on the Henry Ridley Jr. murder, but about other murders Bo had done as well.

Confidential Informant 167 didn't have a name, and gender neutral pronouns were used, so I still don't even know if it's a woman or a man. But the other informant, #166, her identity was not well hidden. She was actually Beverly Ensley -- the woman who'd testified against Bo at both of his trials, both for arson and murder. Only, Beverly wasn't her real name -- that was just an alias she'd adopted. Her real name was Lana. And she was the reason the FBI, the Federal Bureau of Investigation as opposed to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, had been involved in the Bo Salmon case in the first place. She had been a bank robber, which is apparently what had drawn the fed's attention, and it also seemed that she'd worked out some kind of deal which is why she did testify against Bo at trial twice. Once for arson, for the firebombing of The Office, and once at his murder trial for the killing Henry Ridley Jr. But then also a third time, against Bo's co-defendants in the murder, Teddy Bear Mulkey and Earl Green.

I didn't know much about her, though, beyond what's in the transcripts of her testimony at the trials, but I was finally able to track her down and give her a call. I wasn't sure if she'd wanna talk to me -- as you might expect, you don't always get a friendly response when you call up someone out of the blue to ask about their involvement in a murder from 40 years ago.

But sometimes you do. When I told Lana that I was investigating the Henry Ridley Jr. murder, and that I was calling her because I'd found her name in the court and GBI files, she began telling me about the events that led up to that, everything that happened back then. I never got a chance to tell her about the other cases I was looking into, or about how I'd originally started looking at a case that happened back in Floyd County.

And then, she brought the case up herself. Right as, from the sound of it, she was driving through a tunnel, and I couldn't be sure that I'd heard what I thought I had.

**[27:26] Lana Ensley**

Well what, one of the ladies, if you call (indecipherable) was a, she was the one that Bo lived with, Charlotte.

**Susan Simpson**

Charlotte?

**Lana Ensley**

(Indecipherable) Charlotte. Charlotte -- Bo had killed her mother....(indecipherable)

**Susan Simpson**

Sorry, you're cut...you're a, you're a...sorry, the phone just a, dropped out for a second. What'd you say?

**Lana Ensley**

I said Bo Salmon, he had killed Charlotte's mother years ago. So he was goin with her in Rome, Georgia. And her husband, boyfriend or whatever it was, got sent off for that. And I tried to tell those people back then, that's not who did that. They did that. And they said well, how can you say that. And I said because he told me that he went in, he went in there and he poured liquor and stuff all over hisself and got on the couch and they couldn't, they said they couldn't even move him, and I said because he didn't want you to move him. But he shot the man through the window, through the kitchen window. Or shot the woman, not the man. And the, the husband got sent off for it, the boyfriend or whatever. But so he did stuff like that. They were wicked, they were mean. They would kill you.

**Susan Simpson**

So he shot Charlotte's mother?

**Lana Ensley**

He killed Charlotte's mother, yes. And the husband got blamed for it.

**Susan Simpson**

Do you know why he killed her?

**Lana Ensley**

Well he went out with her, he was dating her, I mean, you know behind the back, you know and she didn't want to leave that guy, and so he killed her. He walked around the house and shot her through the window. Kitchen window

**[28:57] Susan Simpson** I had a million questions for Lana. Five million. But she'd had an appointment to make and had to get off the call, though she promised to call me later.

That evening she did call back, and this time, she was slightly more reticent than before. She'd noticed my phone number was a Georgia number, even though I'd told her I lived in Washington, DC -- and that got her wondering. Was I really in DC? Or was I from Georgia?. After all, she had people in Georgia who might still hold a grudge against her. So she asked, Who was I again, and why did I want to know about her role in the trials for The Office burning and for the murder of Henry Ridley Jr?

**[29:36] Susan Simpson**

Hello?

**Lana Ensley**

Hi there!

**Susan Simpson**

Hi! Thanks for calling me back! Is now a good time to chat?

**Lana Ensley**

Yeah! Now, you have a Georgia number...

**Susan Simpson**

I do, I'm from Georgia. I live up in DC now, but I kept the old cell phone.

**Lana Ensley**

Oh okay, I knew that's a Georgia number. Uh, (laughs), so what, I've gotta ask you a question, what got you started thinkin' about Henry?

**Susan Simpson**

So, it's a few things. What I do, I do sort of an internet radio show on legal justice issues.

**Lana Ensley**

Uh huh.

**Susan Simpson**

And, but, I don't only do this, but one of the main things I focus on is wrongful convictions. Um, and there's a man down in Floyd County who was convicted of a murder of his wife, that he says he didn't do.

**Lana Ensley**

He's dead isn't he, Bo?

**Susan Simpson**

Yeah, he is. But the man convicted of the murder is not, and that was the murder of Charlotte Salmon's mother.

**Lana Ensley**

Honestly, he didn't do that, he didn't do that.

**Susan Simpson**

How do you know that?

**Lana Ensley**

(chuckles) 'Cause Bo told me. I mean, you know, I worked with these people, when I say I worked with these people, you know what I mean, I mean I've done things for these people...

**Susan Simpson**

Well that's work?

**Lana Ensley**

Well yes, and it paid you a lot of money. And then you got a lot of problems. But I do know that, uh, Mr. Salmon told me, Mr. Bo, he, we were ridin' along one day, and he, we were talk- I said, how do I, look. I'm not goin' for anything to kill someone. I'm not gonna do any of that stuff, that's not what I do, and if that's what, you know, I'm never gettin' involved in anything like that. So uh, he said that it's easy, it's, I've done it before, and I said, "Well what are you talkin' about? What do you mean? Who? What? Do I know?" And he said "No." And he told me the story of Rome, Georgia that he was goin' with her mom. And uh, her mom did not want to leave that guy. And so he walked around and he shot the guy through the kitchen window. He shot him. No, I mean the woman. And then he ran in there, he said, "And I poured the whole bottle of liquor on myself, laid on the couch, and pretended I was passed out." And he said, so, and he had--you know, that's just the way it was-- the guy did not do that! I said, all those years ago, to the ATF, the FBI, the man did not do that! And you know, Bo gave all the facts, and how he did it and everything, and I believe he told the truth! I do not believe the man did it!

**[32:09] Susan Simpson** It was kind of hard to process everything Lana told me, because it was just so unexpected. But one thing in particular stood out to me: the only person that Lana could've gotten this information from was Bo Salmon himself. She didn't have any firsthand knowledge about the murder of Charlotte's mother, and she hadn't even met Bo until a couple years after it happened. And she didn't know anyone else involved in the case except for Charlotte, who she knew through Bo.

So everything Lana was telling me, that was something Bo once told her. She didn't know, and couldn't have known, anything else about the case aside from what had come from him -- in fact, she'd assumed that this man, whoever it was, who was convicted of the murder of

Charlotte's mother, that he was still in prison. Because the law enforcement officers she'd spoken to, they had told her they couldn't really do anything, it was beyond their control.

But she'd always wondered what had happened to that man, and she was glad to hear when I told her that he hadn't spent the rest of his life in prison after all.

**[33:26] Susan Simpson** Lana still lives in the south, up in the Appalachian mountains, where she's helping raise grandkids and working on her garden. She left Whitfield County, years ago, after Bo's trials, and she never looked back. If it wasn't for a friend she visits there from time to time, I don't think she'd ever go to Georgia. Too many bad memories.

And, as luck would have it, when I met with Lana, there was a pretty fierce storm coming in, so, fair warning, sound quality is not always the best.

**[33:52]** *short clip Lana talking, few distinguishable words, with windy storm in the background.*

**[33:57] Susan Simpson** Back in the late 70's, Lana had been living in Dalton. That's how she met Bo Salmon and the rest of the folks he hung around with.

**[34:04] Lana Ensley**

I worked at uh, a small bar, startin' off, called The Pub, I think that was the name (laughs). But uh, my brother shot pool at that Sportsman tavern. And that's how I met Bo, and uh, Jack Patton, and uh Teddy Bear, Randall Williams, you know, Johnny Vaughn, a lot of people. And you just knew them, you kind of, you know, knew them out of work, you got to know them, you were lookin' for certain kind of people, I was, lookin' for a certain kind of people to help me do somethin'...

**[34:48] Susan Simpson** Lana didn't hang around in the Sportman herself. That was Bo's favorite bar maybe, but it wasn't really a place you'd go to relax.

**[34:54] Lana Ensley**

I don't think any place I've ever saw was quite like the Sportsman. It was like, rough and rugged, you better know what you're doin' when you get in there. Um, I remember this one guy, he was a good guy, he worked, he came in there to have a beer one morning, and uh, there was this gal from Louisiana named Sheree, and she was with this one guy. And he and the guy that worked got in a fuss, Sheree's boyfriend, and Charles Carroll I think was that guy's name, and he got up and beat the crap out of Sheree's boyfriend. And Sheree gave the guy a butcher knife, and

when Charles got up on the stool, I'm sure it was Charles Carroll, then that guy stabbed him through the back with a butcher knife and killed him.

**Susan Simpson**

In the bar.

**Lana Ensley**

In the bar. There's whatcha got.

**[35:43] Susan Simpson** But living in Dalton could be hard. And not just because of the violence. Financially, it was a struggle as well, and Lana was a single mother as well, and raising four children on a bartender's salary, that wasn't gonna cut it. Looking back now, she has a lot of regrets about the life she got into in Dalton. The risks, and the consequences, had been far greater than she'd imagined at the start. And besides, it was just the wrong way to live your life. But at the time, it had all seemed to make sense.

**[36:10] Lana Ensley**

You know, I mean, we robbed banks. That's what we did. That was, you know, what my thing was...

**Susan Simpson**

Can I ask how you did it?

**Lana Ensley**

Well, you know, it was known, it was a no-nonsense bunch of stuff. You better know what you were doing. Today you wouldn't do that, because you know and I know, everything's computerized, everything's more upbeat, on the ball, police are different. They're smarter.

**[36:42] Susan Simpson** But back in the day, back before modern technology, Lana's methods worked well enough. And she couldn't see any reason that being a woman should stop her from getting into the field.

**[36:50] Lana Ensley**

It was just like, men were the ones that got to do things to make money. And then you just think, why does the man get always considered? Why are they the people?

**[37:10] Susan Simpson** She was only interested in serious jobs -- not that penny-ante stuff, as she put it, that Bo and his crew liked to do. Lana figured if you were going to do a



crime, then make sure that no one gets hurt, and make sure the pay day is worth it. So what she was interested in, what she wanted to do, were the high profile jobs.

**[37:26] Lana Ensley**

If you're gonna go, if you wanna go make money, go make money, but be able to, you know... how'm I gonna say this, be able to do your part with a calm head, don't be drunk, don't be drugged, know what you're doing and know who you're doin' it with. So your whole thing depends on who you're doin' it with.

**[37:53] Susan Simpson** Which is why, although she'd become friends with Bo Salmon, he was not someone she worked with professionally, not for the big stuff. Sometimes she would do penny-ante stuff, and they'd work together for that. But Bo was a liability -- he wasn't someone you could trust to do any kind of serious deals with.

When Bo testified in his own defense though, at his murder trial, he'd given a slightly different explanation for why he was never involved in the bank robberies.

**[38:19] Susan Simpson**

You wouldn't have been able to hear testimony, 'cause you were a witness too, but Bo testified at one of the trials that, he was saying that you only testified against him because you were mad at him because you'd asked him to help with a bank robbery and he said no.

**Lana Ensley**

(laughing) That's a lie!

**Susan Simpson**

I thought it was when I read that (laughs).

**Lana Ensley**

We would never have took, listen, we would never have taken him! Nooooo.

**Susan Simpson**

Oh so he was no good?

**Lana Ensley**

He shot drugs. Bo lied. We would never, I wouldn't (inaudible), why would you want to take a chance of goin' to do somethin' with somebody and maybe he would leave you layin' and take all the money?

It's a crazy life, Susan, and people can say, "Well what was she doin' there? What were any of 'em doin' around--" well it's just a lifestyle. When you get involved in a lifestyle like that... things seem normal to you that's not normal and when other people look on people like me, all those people, and say everyone should have been run into prison. Well maybe we should have. Maybe we should have. Um... like I said, it was just wild crazy, long ago and far away days that... was a bunch of it fun? Sure it was, 'til, like I said, people got hurt.

**[39:42] Susan Simpson** Over time, while working at the bar, Lana had gotten to know Bo and Teddy Bear, and they spent a lot of time together. She was probably closer to Teddy Bear overall, and certainly thought better of him overall, but she and Bo would hang out too. He even had a nickname for her -- though I think his choice of nickname says a lot more about Bo than it does about Lana.

**[40:00] Lana Ensley**

He told me, he said, because, everybody said you're beautiful, he said "ugly," and he called me Ugg, short for ugly (laughs).

**[40:09] Susan Simpson** Lana liked Bo well enough, though, 'friends' isn't a term she would use to describe him. Or anyone that she hung out with at that time, really.

**[40:16] Lana Ensley**

Well, not in that kind of lifestyle, you know, you never, no friends, really.

**[40:21] Susan Simpson** And Bo's drug use meant that even though they could be friends, doing serious jobs with him was not an option.

**[40:27] Lana Ensley**

Well, like I said he's not one I would have used in a grand plan, because, uh, you know if you gotta stop and do some drugs, you don't need to be doin' too much.

**[40:37] Susan Simpson** Bo fancied himself a pool shark, that was one way he made money, and according to Gary, he was quite good. That's part of why Gary had invested in the pool table in Grace's beer joint -- it brought in customers, and Bo could play and make money. But in Dalton, Bo's reputation as a pool player was decidedly more mixed. And according to Lana, Bo did have success in pool tournaments. It's just that his success shouldn't necessarily be attributed to his skills as a pool player.

**[41:03] Lana Ensley**

When I met Bo, I realized he was involved in a lot of stuff. He considered his self to be a major pool shooter, but he did put a lot of stuff in a lot of people's drinks. To um, to win money in pool tournaments, you know...

**Susan Simpson**

So he would drug the competition?

**Lana Ensley**

He would, I mean, among other things, yeah.

**[41:27] Susan Simpson** It wasn't just when playing pool though, that Bo had a habit of using drugs as a way of getting an advantage over other people. Lana told me about one incident with Bo, a time when he'd offered her drugs, and to her, it had been a signal that something was very wrong.

**[41:42] Lana Ensley**

Someone had told me that I needed to be really careful because there was Randall that wanted me killed, and um, I wondered if Bo was the one he was gonna ask... anyway, my crazy mind... I got right in the car and said, you know, let's go, we'll go get somethin' to eat. Then he didn't want to go get anything to eat and he started fixin' me my shot of morphine. I said, "What're you doin'?" He said what he was gon' do, and he did his, and he started fixin' another one and I said, "What're you doin', takin' another one?" And he said, "No, I'm fixin' this for you." And I said, "You know I don't do drugs. You're not fixin' it for me." I said I don't get into crap like that. But see in his mind he thought, maybe she will and it'll be easy this way. But uh, and I had a .357 stuck down by the car door, but he knew I had it down over there, that I always had it there. And uh, it was a real, it was in the fall of the year, late fall, the moon was out, it was a cool night. And uh, he said "Pull over right here." And uh, he got out and stood and I seen his hand go down to his beltline where he had a gun there and he said, "Get out, and let's look at the moon." I said, "Bo, get in the car. You need to get in the car, and I've got to go, I've got to go pick my kids up." And, you know, (sighs), it was, I mean he could have tried, but I'm sure I was sittin' in a position to kill him before he could ever think, because I would have just, of course I would have had to shoot. And he told me goin' back over there, and I said, "What're you doing, what're you thinkin' about?" and he said, "You don't understand, there's a lot of money ridin' out here." So I don't know who the money was riding from, but, anyway, thank god in heaven it didn't happen. And uh, we didn't have to do the ol' western thing.

**[43:39] Susan Simpson** Lana doesn't know for sure what Bo's plans were that night, or what money he was talking about. But she's pretty sure if she had gotten out of the car that night, things wouldn't have gone well for her. And she also knew about other murders Bo had done. Some of them, anyway. The stuff Bo had told her.-Like the cemetery murders, where Jack Patton and Billy Kelly were ambushed and killed in 1978.

**[44:02] Lana Ensley**

He said they got, Billy got what was comin' to him. I said that was kind of bad, about them, and he just kinda, he was smokin' a cigarette and he just kinda had this crazy laugh. And he just said, "Ugg, he got what was comin' to him."

**Susan Simpson**

But he didn't mention Jack getting what...

**Lana Ensley**

No, he did not. He never mentioned Jack. But they would have had to kill Jack because Jack would have come back to it.

**[44:26] Susan Simpson** Lana knew that Bo had believed that Charlotte had had a relationship with Billy Kelly, and wouldn't break it off. As Lana took it, that is why Bo had him killed. And Lana knew others involved in the case. Bo hadn't gone to the cemetery alone, and they told Lana more or less the same story she'd gotten from Bo. That it was Billy Kelly he'd wanted to kill, not Jack Patton. Jack had been Bo's friend, but his death was sort of a necessary accident, but not really intended.

**[44:53] Lana Ensley**

Well, he wasn't planned. It wasn't a planned thing for Jack to be there. But they knew, they were set up when they pulled into the graveyard. And um, they could have never have let Jack go because Jack would have come back and killed them both.

**Susan Simpson**

Jack ran.

**Lana Ensley**

Jack tried to get away, yeah, when he saw what was goin' on.

**[45:12] Susan Simpson** I told Lana about Charlotte's statement, the one she'd given to the GBI about the murders, and when she described what Bo had told her supposedly and how the murders had happened. There were a few parts of Charlotte's story that made Lana's

eyebrows rise, but the basic outline of it, she thought that was right, or at least it was more or less the same story she'd heard all those years ago.

**[45:30] Lana Ensley**

And she can sit there and say, well it's mainly over me. Well, not the Jack thing wasn't. He was just there. I don't they expected him to be. Anyway, point being is, people are dead and uh, there's never going to be any kind of investigation for all that, that was a done deal, Bo's dead, and he would have been the main player in that.

**[45:57] Susan Simpson** Lana had remained friends with Bo after the cemetery murders. And when explaining this part of her life now, to me, she kept describing how, yes, now, in hindsight, obviously, from the perspective of a normal human being, that's something that can be hard to fathom. But back then, in the life she was living, they were all living, in that mindset she'd had at the time, that's just how things had been.

**[46:18] Lana Ensley**

It was just like this person you had to become in your head to survive.

**[46:24] Susan Simpson** But the murders of Jack Patton and Billy Kelly were one thing. But then, in 1980, Henry Ridley Jr. was murdered. And that was a different thing entirely.

**[46:32] Lana Ensley**

Was I surprised when he killed Billy and Jack? No. Surprised that he killed Jack. But um, I guess that had to be. Um, really surprised that he would have done the thing with Henry Ridley. No one should think that way.

**[46:49] Susan Simpson** Both Teddy Bear and Bo had been involved in Henry's murder, which had horrified her, but even after it happened, she still regarded Teddy Bear a bit differently from Bo.

**[46:58] Lana Ensley**

But I think with Bo, it was different than Bear. It was a thing, it was a thrill, it was a... like trappin' an animal in a headlight, you know, I think he got a thrill out of plottin', plannin', and hurtin' people.

**[47:20] Susan Simpson** There's one incident from after Henry's death that stands out in Lana's memory, although Lana still can't quite make sense of it.

**[47:27] Lana Ensley**

After Henry got killed, after they (raises voice) MURDERED Henry Ridley, someone had a goat at the barbecue, they were gonna barbecue a goat. And Bo says, no. I'm keepin that goat. You're not gon' hurt that goat. So he got the goat for his kids, it was okay to kill little Henry but it was not okay to barbecue the goat.

**Susan Simpson**

He took the goat to the vet.

**Lana Ensley**

Yes. He made a pet out of it.

**[47:56] Susan Simpson** Lana's story gave me an answer to one small question anyway, that I'd had. In the GBI files, it describes how, in the middle of covering up for Henry's murder, Bo and Charlotte had made a side trip to take a goat to the vet, which had seemed odd and random to me. But I at least know now where that goat came from.

It wasn't just Lana who'd been upset by Henry's death though. Even for most of Bo's group, even by their *extremely* loose standards, for many of them, the killing of Henry was a bridge too far. Or at least nothing they wanted any involvement with. Basically all of them had known that Bo was part of that murder though, because as far as I can tell, there's hardly anyone Bo knew who he *didn't* try to recruit to help with it.

**[48:36] Lana Ensley**

Even, the guy Pistol Whitener, now he was a character. But um, even he backed off from the kid.

**Susan Simpson**

Oh, so he did, he was not...

**Lana Ensley**

Bo had talked to him, just like he did other people, you know, and you gotta think, that was rather silly, to go...

**Susan Simpson**

Well yeah, why did Bo do this?

**Lana Ensley**

Why did he go around and say, "Do you wanna help me do this," I mean, that's not even scratchin' the surface on him. Do you wanna do this and that, and a lot of people would say no. But we would all know what he was wantin' to do.

**Susan Simpson**

Why would he do that?

**Lana Ensley**

Mm, that's just who he was I guess.

**Susan Simpson**

He just went around and asked for help for murders...

**Lana Ensley**

Well, I mean, I'm sure they were all guilty, since that's why Pistol Whitener, if I recall correctly, he had went to prison for killin' his wife.

**[49:25] Susan Simpson** Bo hadn't tried to recruit Lana's help, not for that crime. But she had been informed of Henry's death in advance, something she still grapples with today.

**[49:34] Lana Ensley**

Well, sometimes when you go back on memory lane, it's like, shouldn't you have said something to somebody somewhere. And I think no, because I would have been killed. You know.

**Susan Simpson**

Mhm.

**Lana Ensley**

I was a thrill seeker, but I wasn't that crazy.

**[49:51] Susan Simpson** By the time Lana was involved, by the time she knew anything, Bo had already tried to kill Henry three or four times, and failed three or four times. And then one night, Bo, Teddy Bear, and Henry pulled up to the house she was staying in, and Teddy Bear came to the door.

**[50:05] Lana Ensley**

When Bear said--I had borrowed the gun from, Bo or Bear one, for somethin', that I needed it for, not to kill anybody, but um, I had kept the shells. I hadn't gave him

back the shells. And that night he came by and he needed the shells back, and I said, "What you guys gonna do?" And he said, "We're goin' up to the mountain, we're gonna go deer huntin'." And this person that was at my house, I remember him sittin' there and he was watchin' me and watchin' my reaction to all-- and I said, um, and he told me he said, when they had left the driveway, he said um, "You know where they're goin', don't you?" And I said, "Deer huntin'?" and he says "No, they're takin' that boy and they're gonna kill him." I said "Oh my gosh, oh my gosh. What can we do?" and he said, "What is it to you? It's none of your business, what do you mean 'what can you do'?" And I remember him sittin' there, he was starin' at me, and he was watchin' me, because he and I did a lot of high profile stuff together, and I thought, he's going to watch me and see how I'm going to react to all this.

**[51:13] Susan Simpson** In reality, I think Lana was right. That by the time she knew what was going on, there just wasn't much of anything she could have done, not as things were then in 1980. It reminded me in some ways of the story Gary told me, about the time he and his friend Dink had delivered a rifle to Judge Scoggin, and Dink had told him of what would happen next. There was little that either Lana or Gary could've done to change future events. Likely nothing they could've done. And in the case of Henry, people had tried to intervene already, tried to make Henry understand what was happening. It just hadn't worked.

**[51:46] Lana Ensley**

Where were you gonna go? What, who were you gonna tell? Were you gonna tell the killer cops? Were you gonna tell Jack Davis the sheriff that ran the drugs? You know? He was the biggest drug dealer down there. What were you gonna say, "They're trying to take somebody up there and kill him?" But you know, it just, was not possible. And would he have believed it if I had got him up and said, "Look, stop bein' an idiot, they're gonna try to kill you."

**Susan Simpson**

He was warned...

**Lana Ensley**

He was very warned.

**[52:14] Susan Simpson** In the end, there was nothing that Lana could do that night, that Bo and Bear and Henry came to her door. But there was one thing she could do afterwards. She could turn state's evidence.



It wasn't Henry's death alone that made Lana come forward, not that by itself. Henry's death helped push her over the edge, but everything changed for her when a federal agent showed up on her doorstep one day not long after Henry's death.

**[52:48] Lana Ensley**

The ATF agent came with subpoena to go to court and I said no. And he said, you better listen to me, Walter Holden made a deal that said I drove the car where they took...where they jumped out and blew nightclub up.

**[53:04] Susan Simpson** Walter "Squeaky" Holden. As far as I can tell, Squeaky was the linchpin that set all the prosecutions against Bo in motion, and he'd saved his own skin in doing so, and got a good deal for it. Of course, Squeaky by himself, was hardly enough to get the job done. He just wasn't all that credible. But what he could do was give the investigators leverage over other witnesses, more credible witnesses -- other people who could testify against Bo at the arson and murder trials. And one of the people he could give them was Lana.

**[53:34] Lana Ensley**

He said, we're gonna have a some...there's some FBI agents gonna come and talk to you. You gonna get a choice. You're gonna either tell the truth or you're going to, uh - - we're gonna remove your children and you're goin' to prison. So, when...not wanting my kids to be put into foster care, if I had not had children involved it would have been a different story. I might not have been the PTA mom, but, um, if I didn't work a 9 to 5, I still tried to, you know, to make sure they had clothes, went to school, and the normal things. I didn't want those kids taken into the Department of Social Services. So I said okay. And then I thought about it and I thought, why do I care anyway? They killed Henry Ridley.

**[54:20] Susan Simpson** When Lana talked to the GBI, as part of the investigation into Bo's various crimes, as well as things that Lana herself been involved in without Bo, one of the things Lana told them about was about a murder that Bo had told her he'd done in Floyd County. One day, when they'd been riding along, Bo had tried to recruit her as a hitman, and told her a story about just how easy it was to get away with murder.

**[54:43] Lana Ensley**

When I met Bo, after I met him and known him for a while, and when he said "what is your game?" and I said, "well what is *your* game?" and he said, he was...I was driving, he was sitting, and he said, "killing people is my game, Ug." And I said, "oh be ridiculous!" And he said, "no I'm very serious." He said, uh, "we could do a good business together, you and I." And I said, "well it depends on what kind." And he

said, "what'd I just say?" And I said, "you are so silly!" And he said, "lemme tell you how easy this is." And then he told me about a lady named Grace. That he shot her through the kitchen window. And then he poured a bottle of liquor over hisself and ran in and lay down like he was passed out. And he said, and they came in, and he said, "they knew I couldn't have done it, because, why not -- I'm passed out."

**[55:33] Susan Simpson** Lana didn't know much about Bo's motive in the murder. Or rather, from what she understood, the motive was about as simple and straight-forward as it gets -- a simple narrative of a lover scorned.

**[55:44] Lana Ensley**

Ah, he made a remark one time that he wanted the mother but got the daughter.

She had something, she owned a little beer joint or something like that.

**Susan Simpson**

She did.

**Lana Ensley**

I can't quite... yes, yes. And uh, Bo was in there helping out and all that stuff. That's how he got involved in the, and you know he wanted her and she didn't want him. When it come down to it, she wanted the other man. And he killed her.

**[56:07] Susan Simpson** Bo never mentioned Gary's name, or any details about him, really. All he'd said was that Grace had been with another man, and that man had been the one to go down for her murder.

**[56:16] Lana Ensley**

He just said an old boy down there got... I said, well who got...who...surely the police had to get someone for killing that woman? And he said,well they did. And he thought that was real funny, and he said but it wasn't *me*. And I said, well what happened to the person who...did they get..? And he said, they went to prison, that's what happened to them. And I always wondered if he'd lied and you know and once I had an opportunity to uh, ask this person that was a GBI agent, I ask him, I said: Is this true? Is this, could this possibly be true, because I had met him down there, and I said, would you, could you find out if there is an innocent man somewhere in jail for this murder? And then he told me, he said -- yes, there is. There is.

**[57:03] Susan Simpson** After I spoke to Lana, she listened to the podcast, and for the first time heard some of the details about what had actually gone down in Floyd County, and

how Gary had been convicted. But from the very first episode, there was one thing Lana didn't get. When Gary woke up in that jail cell with no memory of what had happened and, why did he not know instantly exactly what had occurred?

**[57:22] Lana Ensley**

When I heard your podcast, there about, the guy can't remember. And I asked you, why can't he remember to know, if he knew Bo, what Bo did? Bo's drug of choice was a Quaalude or morphine.

**Susan Simpson**

So, if Gary would have known Bo well, he'd have known that's what Bo did?

**Lana Ensley**

Yeah, he would have. I'm sure he would have.

**[57:41] Susan Simpson** Gary hadn't known Bo well, though. Hadn't known about his methods of getting an advantage over others. So for Bo, getting away with murder in this case, had been as simple as he told Lana.

**[57:51] Lana Ensley**

They come in, they had to pick him up and drag him off. He said, by he said I was aware of the whole thing. And he said, now do you see how easy it is? I said that's awful someone's sitting somewhere. He thought it was funny. He'd laugh his old crazy laugh and say, that's life, Ug, that's life.

**[58:05] Susan Simpson** As far as Lana could tell, her story about Grace's murder was forgotten by the authorities just as soon as she'd told it. That wasn't a case they were working on, and that wasn't something they could help her with. And that's just how life was.

And then later, after the trials, after Bo and Bear and Earl Green were convicted, Lana left Georgia. She kind of had to -- because there were other cases she'd been involved with, other cases she'd helped on, and those involved people who were truly dangerous.

**[58:33] Susan Simpson**

You were in witness protection, right?

**Lana Ensley**

I tried that. I tried that, I just wanted to see what it was like.

**Susan Simpson**

It wasn't for you? [Both laugh]

**Lana Ensley**

No.

**Susan Simpson**

Well, what happens when they put you in witness protection?

**Lana Ensley**

Oh, well, well. They say, sell your car, you know, let's get ya- we're gonna take you and we're gonna do all this stuff- and, just for my own, you know, one more time, let's get on a little adventure here, and see what all this is about, um, but it wasn't from that mess, you know. That was not what it-

**Susan Simpson**

Oh, this was from the other mess?

**Lana Ensley**

Oh, yeah, this was not anything to do with those bozos.

**[59:10] Susan Simpson** She chose a new name. Toni. With an I. Because, as she told me, why the heck not? But, under the witness protection program, she got assigned to a state in the northeast, a far cry from the Appalachian Mountains that she'd grown up in and spent most of her life around. And when it came to choosing between the Dixie Mafia who wanted to kill her and living around Yankees, the choice was obvious. She left witness protection and went home. And tried to start a new life there.

**[59:35] Lana Ensley**

You have to uh, come to this point in your life where you um, come to realize... things just need to be as normal in people's lives, as they can be. Just do the 9 to 5 thing. Just do the family thing, you know? Just try to be normal.

**Susan Simpson**

So what happened to you after the trial? After the trial for Bo and uh, Earl Greene and them?

**Lana Ensley**

Well, I came back home and tried to be normal. [Laughs]

**[1:00:15] Susan Simpson** I'm not so sure that the GBI didn't do anything about the story Lana had told them. The GBI seemed very much interested in what she'd said. Or, at least, Agent Bill Dodd, the lead investigator did. Charlotte told me he'd questioned her about it, back in 1981, he'd brought up the case and asked her if Bo'd been involved, and she'd told him no, that he was off track - that the right man was already behind bars for it.

But Dodd's files don't reflect anything about the Floyd County case. Perhaps he has files elsewhere, under some GBI case number that I haven't found yet. And if so, I'd like to be able to find it one day. Maybe there's answers there.

Because here's the thing. Lana was *an* informant who told the GBI about Grace's murder, but she was not *the* informant that I was originally looking for. She's not the witness that Gary was told about back in 1981, when Officer Jerry Boyd pulled him into his office and told him that the GBI said they had an informant that said he wasn't even there when Grace was killed. Lana no clue about where Gary was or was not at the time of the murder,, that hadn't been a part of any stories that Bo told her.

Which means there is another informant out there, somewhere. Actually, we know for a fact there is, because there's at least one other informant that the GBI got info from, Bill Dodd's files say as much -- in addition to Lana Ensley, CI 166, there was also CI 167. And I've yet to be able to discover who CI 1-167 really is. They may be dead, or may be one of the witnesses who decided not to speak to me, or maybe it's someone it never even occurred to me could have been one of the GBI's confidential informants.

For now, though, Lana's story is what we have. And there's plenty there I'm still struggling to understand.

I am convinced that Bo told Lana the things she describes. What I am less certain of is whether Bo was telling her the whole truth. And Lana's story still can't tell us everything about what happened that night, because I don't think Bo didn't tell Lana everything. She only knows the parts she heard, and she hadn't even really cared to hear even that at the time.

But, parts of the story that Bo told Lana are definitely true. Like the part about Bo seeming passed out when the police go there. That's exactly what the police and Beverly had observed after the murder, and why they were so confident that Bo hadn't been involved in Grace's death. But, according to Lana, it had all been a pretty transparent act, really. He'd dumped liquor on himself and pretended to be passed out, and everyone else just assumed he really was.

Other parts of Lana's story were completely out of left field for me, though. Like the part about Bo and Grace having a relationship. That I hadn't seen suggested before -- Gary had never mentioned that he had any clue that Bo and Grace had anything but a platonic relationship. I had floated the idea to him before, once or twice, as one of a thousand random ideas I was trying out, but he'd said no, he'd seen nothing to suggest that. And it's not just that he'd failed to notice -- if there had been something going on, he said, he thinks he would have noticed.

**[1:03:21] Gary Reeves**

I didn't see any flirting with them on that. She- I've seen Grace flirt around, you know? But I never did notice anything there

**Susan Simpson**

So, you would have noticed flirting? You didn't notice flirting with Bo?

**Gary Reeves**

I would have noticed this, but I never saw her- I never saw that- her with Bo.

**[1:03:45] Susan Simpson** I'm less than completely convinced by this. There are things Grace hid from him, secrets she'd kept, that he hadn't had a clue about. Her history with Bo could've been one of them. And I do know that Bo and Grace knew each other from before. From before Bo went to prison for attempted murder, back in the 60's. Grace and Gary didn't get together until about 1968, and by then, Bo was already locked up. But, before then, in the mid 60's, the early 60's- they knew each other. They were friends, or maybe more than friends. And after Bo got out of prison again, in 1974, he'd started a relationship with Grace's daughter, Charlotte, and that had bothered Gary some. Charlotte wasn't his kid, he had no authority over him as a parent, but it had obviously been a bad situation. And Gary couldn't understand why Grace was okay with it.

**[1:04:32] Gary Reeves**

When I first started planning I realized I'd made a bad mistake was that Daytona trip. I knew then that this was not good. When she started telling Bo Salmon how proud she would be to have him as a son-in-law and I remember thinking, you have lost it. Of course, she was drunk, and she was probably was ribbing me, at that.

**[1:05:01] Susan Simpson** I think Bo was probably being truthful when he told Lana that he'd had a relationship with Grace, and that he'd wanted her but she wouldn't leave Gary. I'm not sure, though, about whether his story about the motive, about why he'd done it, and why he'd done it then, I'm not convinced that part was the whole truth.

**[1:05:28] Susan Simpson** On the day Grace died, Gary had already made up his mind to leave. He was tired of the chaos, tired of what life in Rome was like. And the beer joint wasn't working out either -- Grace had gotten into some financial and legal troubles with the guy that was essentially the landlord, and it was not going to end well. Gary was done with Rome. And if Grace hadn't been killed that night, Gary would've been gone the next day, or maybe the one after, headed back to Atlanta probably, with his son Sean, and try to get his old job back, or found a new one.

But his plan hadn't been simply to disappear in the night. Grace knew Gary wanted out, and that he was going to leave.

**[1:06:07] Gary Reeves**

Grace had- was in a mess.

**Susan Simpson**

The bar was going down one way or another, pretty much.

**Gary Reeves**

The bar was gone. It was- the bar was history. I told her look, you wanna get away from this? Let's- I'll figure out some way. We'll come up with the money, you know. Whatever you owe the guy. Look, let's go to the mountains, get away from here for a while. 'Cause, I was- I did try to get her to leave with me.

**Susan Simpson**

And she didn't say no?

**Gary Reeves**

She didn't say no. No.

**[1:06:43] Susan Simpson** She didn't say yes, either. She wasn't ready to go. But things were still up in the air, and the possibility, at least, was there..

And this reminds me of one of the things Beverly told me, about how on the night Grace was shot, there'd been some kind of conflict that day, something to do with Charlotte and Bo leaving or something, and I wonder if, just maybe, Beverly had the story backwards. It wasn't Charlotte and Bo that were leaving -- it was Grace and Gary. And that's what set Bo off.

That would mean it was a crime of passion, almost -- plotted a few hours in advance, maybe, but not methodically planned days in advance, and if Bo was that angry, if he was

set off by something, wouldn't Gary have noticed something or shouldn't there have been some kind of sigh?

Actually, he may have been. That day before Grace was shot, Bo had wrecked a car, and then tried to start a fight with Gary.

**[1:07:40] Gary Reeves**

I wish I could remember word for word. I can't remember... It took me by surprise that first of all, he survived the wreck, and climbed out of the car cussing and raising Hell, like, like I caused the wreck. It was all my fault, you know? But, that was a strange... thinkin' back on it. . It was weird because we had had no words whatsoever- ever- it was strictly business stuff with him and Richard and me.

**[1:08:15] Susan Simpson** Gary doesn't recall exactly what it was Bo was yelling about, and he doesn't recall Grace being mentioned. One thing he does remember Bo saying is "I'm not afraid of you or your guns." Gary had recently bought an imitation machine gun. Not a real machine gun, but a replica that kind of looked like one, and Bo knew about it. They'd even gone and practice shot together. And as far as Gary could tell, that's what Bo was referencing. But, Gary's not really sure what any of that means. The wreck was always part of the story about what happened that day, but he's never given it much importance -it's just something that happened. I became interested in it because of the possible implications it had for how Grace got home from the beer joint that night - since Charlotte had to drive Bo home from- in Grace's car, due to the wreck, it meant Grace didn't have a car of her own. After talking to Lana, though, I began to wonder if the car wreck was significant for another reason. And, if perhaps I'd dismissed this story as meaningless simply because I didn't know how to make sense of it at the time.

We'll never know now what exactly was going through Bo's head when he crawled out of that wrecked car and started raising Cain and fussing at Gary, but it does lend a little support, at least, to the idea that Bo could've had some kind of personal motive that day, for hurting Gary.

And that brings us to the last big thing from Lana's story. The part that, at least to me, was the biggest WTF out of everything Lana had to say. Because Bo told her that he'd committed the murder in a way that I'd never considered, never entertained the possibility of it happening. He told her that Grace had been shot not by someone in the kitchen, but by someone standing outside and firing through the kitchen window.



Summers in Georgia are hot and muggy and there was no air conditioning in the Maple Street house. So, the window itself would've almost certainly been open. The idea that a shot came through the window... it's possible, anyway.

Or rather, it's possible that a shot came through the window. What is not possible is that all of them did. Without a record of the crime scene, without photos, without an autopsy, there's only so much we can know for sure. But what's as near certain as it can be is that there were 4 or 5 or 6 shots that hit Grace, and at least 5 or 6 shots in all. And at least one shot was presumably fired down after Grace had already fallen, and went through her to strike the floor.

Still, could one of the shots have been fired through the window?

I don't know. I have stared at photos and house diagrams and google maps and tried to make sense of it all, but at the end of the day, I have to conclude that I can't conclude one way or another. Without a record of the crime scene, of the bullets... basic details- pretty much anything could be possible here. But, one of the shots that night failed to hit its target -- it struck the backsplash of the kitchen counter instead. And, intriguingly, but maybe misleadingly, that stray gunshot hit directly across from the kitchen window. Then again, maybe that's just a coincidence.

There is one common detail, though, between Beverly's stories and Gary's stories that may offer a clue here. When Gary describes his memories of the shooting, his story is often as wild and flexible as Beverly's - all kinds of possibilities are entertained, in a sort of dream like reconstruction of events. But one detail is always the same. Gary goes to the kitchen and gets some ice -- they didn't have a freezer, so they'd bring ice home from the bar and put it the sink to use -- and it's always just as he gets to the sink- gets to the ice, that he hears a gunshot and all hell breaks loose. It's just one shot he hears, he never remembers hearing more, and always it's at the sink.

Beverly tells that part of the story in a similar way. When that first shot rings out, Gary is always at the sink.

**[1:12:13] Gary Reeves**

Well did you see me shoot her?

**Beverly Reynolds**

Do what?

**Gary Reeves**

Did you see me shoot her?

**Beverly Reynolds**

Well, that's all I remember is seeing you standing at that kitchen sink.

**Gary Reeves**

So you didn't see me shoot? You didn't see me fire a gun-

**Beverly Reynolds**

I did not say like I said in court. I never seen your gun shoot- and I told you I would be willing to go under fucking hypnosis. I would go under truth serum. If I knew the truth. Because Gary, all I remember - swearing before you and God - is you standing at that sink. That's all I remember. [Voice cracking]

**[1:12:57] Susan Simpson** Beverly's stories about the next four or five shots are all of the place, there's not much consistency to them. But, there is one version of the story she's told several times, although it made attorneys very frustrated every time she tells it.

**[1:13:15] Attorney**

You now say there's how long between the first shot and the other five?

**Beverly Reynolds**

About 10 minutes before I got to the door.

**Attorney**

You mean it was ten- it was that long, honey?

**Beverly Reynolds**

Yeah

**Attorney**

Now, now... You, now, ten minutes is a - now I'm not trying to-

**Beverly Reynolds**

It's a long time

**Attorney**

I'm not trying to back you up, but I mean from the time you heard the first shot until the other 5, it was ten minutes that elapsed?

**Beverly Reynolds**

I lay down on that bed from 5 to 10. Before I got up to the door.

**Attorney**

Why? Why did you wait so long?

**Beverly Reynolds**

I don't know. I was scared.

**[1:13:44] Susan Simpson** But, the most believable part of Beverly's story, at least to me, was that she was too scared to move when the shooting happened. And I think, maybe, possibly, she heard 2 different shootings while hiding there. The first shot, when Gary was at the window, that's like she and Gary always describe. But it wasn't until five or ten minutes later, that a shadow came into the kitchen. And four or five more shots were fired, and if Grace hadn't been dead already, she was dead by the end of that. Only, it wasn't a shadow, because shadows don't leave bloody footprints. And shadows don't carry away guns that are never found.

And shadows don't have the same profile as Richard Holcomb. Perhaps Beverly's stories about the shadow are made up too, but I think they could be true. The shadow that had the general height and build of man who could've either been Gary or Richard -- maybe that happened, and maybe Beverly guessed wrong. Because even though Bo may have told Lana that he was behind the murder, that he carried it off, that doesn't mean that part's the whole truth. What I do know is that in every single crime Bo has committed at any point in his life that I have a record for, Bo didn't do the crime alone. He always had an accomplice. Always. Even when having an accomplice was a terrible idea that did nothing to help out the plan, he'd invite friends along. And, if Mystery Man and Ray Almond are telling the truth, Richard was telling people that Bo had invited him along for this crime too.

And all of this is just a guess, but it's the best way I have to make sense of everything I know. I'm still hoping to find more evidence, more witnesses who might remember things, and maybe they can help fill in gaps here. But, for now, this is what I have, and I think my guess is a lot closer to what really happened than is the version of events the state told at Gary's trial.

All of which would mean Beverly lied at Gary's trial when she testified.. Whatever the truth is there, of all the people that contributed to Gary's conviction, she is the only one that ever tried to make it right. Even when it came at great personal expense to herself.

**[1:15:54] Beverly Reynolds**

But I want you to know, when and if all this comes to a head, ok? I hope that you forgive my testimony, 'cause I really believed that you killed my mama. I did that.

**Gary Reeves**

Well, Beverly-

**Beverly Reynolds**

I had my doubts, I've told my husband, I told my mother. I lived the fact that you killed my mama. But I always doubted you killed my mama.

**Gary Reeves**

Well, you asked me to forgive you on April 8, 1975, for what you did on the witness stand against me, and I forgave you then. And I forgive you now. You know, I've forgiven you years ago.

**[1:16:58] Susan Simpson** One of the ironies of this case is that Beverly may be the one person who can best understand what Gary has gone through and what it has cost him. Because she's gone through it herself. After her confession, Gary, his family, and the people working on his case they all thought Beverly had killed Grace. And at times, her own family felt the same. And due to the false swearing charge, Beverly also ended up serving time in prison for her mother's murder.

**[1:17:22] Susan Simpson**

I really think her pain is as real as yours. She doesn't know what happened and wishes she did.

**Gary Reeves**

I do too. And what bothers me, um, like you said how you felt in that interview with her, and me going back to these tapes, and all these years, I've- I hear myself on some of these tapes and I thought, God almighty. I wish I'd never have said that. I wish I hadn't have been so-- tunnel vision for her. I always felt like the other people were involved in it. I didn't know how, but after she confessed to it, that's what I had. That's what I kept believing. But this last year, since you've got involved, and you told me what you believed, and then me re-listening to these tapes, and hearing -- that girl was pitiful, sorry, broken hearted. And I - I felt like a jerk. My God. What have I done. I've been accusing her as much as, I - as the law has been accusing me, I've been bad as them on her.

**[1:18:32] Susan Simpson** As for Charlotte, I still don't know what to make of her stories. I think most of them may just be meaningless noise, things cobbled together from transcripts and statements of other people, to fit a narrative she wants to tell. Talking to Charlotte didn't give me any useful answers, because almost all the stories I'd heard were stories I'd heard before -- it's just, they were told by someone else at the time, usually Beverly. And as far as Charlotte is concerned, everything in the GBI's files about her is a made up story, that the GBI made up for - God knows why. But she has nothing more to contribute there.

But Lana knew Charlotte personally, and she knew how things were between Charlotte and Bo. So I do give weight to her view on the dynamics between them, and about why Charlotte might have been willing to lie about what happened on the night her mother died.

**[1:19:17] Lana Ensley**

And I know Charlotte was terrified of him. And I'm sure people look on Charlotte and think you're a sorry person. I look on Charlotte and think, he knew that he could control her. He knew that he could get her to say and do anything he asked her to do.

**Susan Simpson**

She was a lot younger than he was.

**Lana Ensley**

Oh my gosh, he was a kid. Yes.

**[1:19:37] Susan Simpson** As for Bo himself... his story mostly ends after his conviction in 1981. He was never paroled from his life sentence, and he spent the rest of his days in prison. Bo and Charlotte had three children together, all of them very young when Bo went away, and after that the children's lives were turned upside down. It wasn't until they grew up, and became adults themselves, that they ever got a chance to know their father, and have a relationship with him. Bo had done terrible things in his past, he acknowledged that to them, and expressed regret for what he'd done. But to his kids, he was not the same person who had gone to prison all those years ago. They were with him in the hospital when he died, in 2005.

The last time Gary saw Bo was in November of 1977. It was at his final post-conviction hearing, down in Carroll County. Bo was at the court, because he'd actually testified at that hearing, though he didn't say much on the stand -- mostly just laughed about how he'd been so drunk he couldn't recall anything about what had happened.

But, for a lot of reasons, that hearing had been pretty brutal on Gary -- the judge had mocked his father and threatened to lock his sister up, and then issued a swift ruling from

the bench denying his petition. Once court was over, after Gary had lost his motion, he went out into the hallway. And he saw Bo.

**[1:20:51] Gary Reeves**

We had come out in the hall, and had lost. And he come out, and he said, the wheels of justice turn slow.

**Susan Simpson**

Bo told you that?

**Gary Reeves**

Bo said that out in the hall at the Carroll county courthouse.. The wheels of justice turn slow. My sister talked about that for a long time. She always remembered that.

**[1:21:15] Susan Simpson** Initially, I'd assumed that this exchange had been Bo's way of mocking Gary, of taunting him on losing what was almost certainly his last legal challenge to his conviction. But Gary told me, no, it hadn't been that way at all.

**[1:21:27] Gary Reeves**

It was more like it was uh- he could understand, y'know? He wasn't taunting me, I don't think, and he wasn't mocking- or whatever. It was more like, 'Hey man, wheels of justice turn slow,' and kinda maybe disappointed for me, is the way I- best I remember -- and I'm tellin ya, the condition I was in with that judge, if it had been a mockery, or putting it like, 'Okay well you still ain't gonna get out of here,' I'd have probably struck. But it wasn't presented that- he didn't say it that way.

**[1:22:13] Susan Simpson** I think that is likely the closest thing to an acknowledgment of his innocence that Gary will ever get from anyone who was involved in his case. But Gary's story didn't end there, and it's not over today. Legally, Gary is still guilty of Grace's murder. Georgia does have the power, though, to issue him a pardon on grounds of innocence. It's a slim chance, but it's a chance, and Gary is never giving up on his dream of, one day, finally clearing his name of a murder he didn't commit.

**[1:22:38] Gary Reeves**

I know the story is ending, but I- it ain't ending. I was talking with a friend one day, and I said to him, I've lived 26 years with this thing on my head. I've lived 43 years carrying it. If I could get exonerated, you know, I wonder how many- how much time I've got left. I know I don't have as many years left as I've lived with it, but he said something to me, and he said, if it's ONE DAY, it'd be worth it. So that long shot, that

you're still talking about, and it's a long shot with a pardon of the parole board. But, I've lived long shots all my life.

**[1:23:33] Susan Simpson** And that's the last episode of Undisclosed, the State v. Gary Mitchum Reeves. But stay tuned for this Thursday's addendum -- Jon Cryer is back, and he will interview me and Mitchum, and you won't want to miss it. As always, transcripts, case docs, and photos are available on our website, at [undisclosed-podcast.com](http://undisclosed-podcast.com), and if you'd like to talk about the case with other listeners, check us out on FB, Twitter, Instagram, and Reddit.

This series has been a bigger undertaking than I think I realized when I started, and could never have been done without the help I've received along the way. First credit has to go to Christie Williams, my husband and in-house tech support, for his unfailing support and patience over the course of the project. He's a trooper. A very special thanks also goes out to Dawn and Joseph Evans -- because without their help, this podcast would have been a much shorter, and much more incomplete story. Thanks also goes to Alexis Nemeth, who volunteered to help with some out of state research, and did a fantastic job digging up new information related to this case... which, unfortunately, did not get covered on the show, but was no less appreciated for it. I am also grateful to our intern, Najah Bhatti, who spent endless hours deciphering difficult sections of audio. And, if you've used the episode transcripts to decipher some of the accents, you can thank Erica Fladell, Brita Bliss, Dawn Loges, and Skylar Park for their efforts to provide a transcript for every episode in this series. And finally, our sound editor is Rebecca Lavoie, of the Crime Writers On podcast -- if you like true crime podcasts and you're not listening to Crime Writers On, you're doing it wrong.

Next Monday, we'll be back with a new episode, about a new case, in a new city. Actually, we'll be back with a new series of cases, from the same new city. Because wrongful convictions don't happen in a vacuum. They aren't accidents. When the right conditions are in place, when the wrong people are in the wrong positions of authority, and when the system has decided not to look too closely at how the sausage is being made, wrongful convictions happen again and again. And even in a big city, sometimes the same names start to appear. Again and again.