

UNDISCLOSED, The State v. Greg Lance
Episode 1 - Fully Involved
September 9th, 2019

Rabia Chaudry: Hi Undisclosed Listeners, Rabia here. Thank you so much for tuning into our fall season and thank you for listening to all of our series and supporting us all of these years. I want to ask that you please support our sponsors, because our sponsors support us, and a big thank you to them. Without them, we couldn't continue to do the work to help the wrongfully convicted. The second thing I want to say before we dive into today's episode is this: whether it's this case or any other case we have worked on, we've actually got a tipline, so if anybody out there has some information they think could help us in our investigation into this case, The State vs. Greg Lance, or any of the cases we've worked on, please give us a call. The tipline is (410)-205-5563.

[0:55] 911 Operator:
9-1-1?

Female Caller:
Yes, I live out on Poplar Grove Road...

911 Operator:
Yes?

Female Caller:
There's a house on fire, it's an old building...

911 Operator:
[Undecipherable] ... a house?

Female Caller:
It's Victor's house.

911 Operator:
Do you know what the address is?

Female Caller:

I live at 6525, they live across the road!

911 Operator:

6525, that's right across the street.

Female Caller:

Yeah, we heard a big boom-

911 Operator:

Poplar Grove Road, right?

Rabia Chaudry: At approximately 3am on the night of August 5th, 1998, a house located on a quiet back road in Cookeville, TN went up in flames. A single story brick rancher at the end of a long driveway, it sat surrounded by lush fields, and woods that rose up into hills in the distance. The closest neighbors lived across the two lane road, still a few hundred yards away, far enough to keep what happened on both properties private, but not so far that you couldn't see one from the other.

On that night, by the time first responders arrived, the rancher was fully ablaze. According to a State Fire Marshall's report, the structure had been on fire approximately 20 minutes before the arrival of police and firefighters. The 911 call had been made at 3:30am.

Bomb and arson investigators were on the scene by 6am because at that point it was clear that this fire was no accident. As firefighters fought back flames and extinguished the fire throughout the home, they immediately discovered two bodies, a man and a woman, among the ashes in what was once the master bedroom. It didn't take long to determine that it wasn't the fire that killed them. They had both been murdered, shot execution style.

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Hi and welcome to Undisclosed, this is the State v Greg Lance. This is Episode 1 of the new series, *Fully Involved*. My name is Rabia Chaudry, I'm an attorney and author of the New York Times Bestseller *Adnan's Story*, and I'm here with my colleagues Susan Simpson and Colin Miller.

**Susan Simpson:** Hi, I'm Susan Simpson, I'm an attorney in Washington D.C. and I blog at TheViewFromLL2.

**Colin Miller:** Hi, this is Colin Miller, I'm an Associate Dean and professor at the University of South Carolina School of Law, and I blog at EvidenceProfBlog.

**[3:53] Rabia Chaudry:** Tucked away in the upper Cumberland region of middle Tennessee, slightly over an hour away from Nashville, is the beautiful, scenic city of Cookeville. The seat of Putnam county, Cookeville is a little bit of a hidden gem with a rich history, a vibrant art and food scene, and natural surroundings that attract nature lovers to explore its hills, lakes, trails, and even caves. It's known today as a micropolitan city, small but with economic significance. It's even a college town, home since 1915 to Tennessee Tech, one of the top STEM universities in the south.

While the food and art scene may be newer, there is no question even back in 1998 Cookeville was seemingly an idyllic place to buy some property and put down roots. But this doesn't exactly explain how Victor and Alla Kolesnikow ended up there. The dwelling that went up in flames in the early morning hours on August 5th, 1998 at 6510 Poplar Grove Road in Cookeville, Putnam County TN belonged to the couple, 60 and 59 years of age at the time they were murdered. They were Ukrainian nationals, very far from home, in rural Tennessee where there certainly wasn't any Ukrainian or Russian community. Victor did have one sister, Lily, who also lived in Cookeville, but otherwise this retirement-age couple, known by the neighbors as "the foreigners," was a bit of a strange transplant.

At the time of their deaths, Victor owned multiple rental properties in the area, including a trailer park, which he had sold as part of a partially owner-financed deal the previous year. From the looks of it, he seemed to be just a few steps shy of being a slumlord.

But Victor was no average slumlord. In the case file we found an FBI document classified as "Secret", the highest level of classification, subject line on the cover page reading "Victor Kolesnikow". This classified document was partially declassified and when documents are declassified, they often contain redactions. This one was no exception, nearly every page was heavily redacted in thick black lines and next to every line were the redaction codes "b1" or "b7C". These codes tell us the reason this particular information is exempted from becoming publicly available. So, for example, the code b7C is an exemption for information the government believes would constitute an unwarranted invasion of someone's privacy if publicly released. The b1 exemption, however, applies to material that is:

“Specifically authorized under criteria by an executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy and are in fact properly classified to such Executive Order.”

According to this document the FBI went to interview Victor Kolesnikow on August 11, 1992, six years before he was murdered. The interview seemed prompted by an application for a visa that Victor had made for himself and his wife Alla to visit Ukraine, their home country. He told the agents he had left the Soviet Union more than 20 years prior, settling in Canada. He then moved to California where he worked as a subcontracting computer consultant for the US Department of Energy. By this time he was a US citizen and went on to work for the Department of Energy for seven years, wrapping up his government career in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. After that, he stayed in Tennessee, settling in Cookeville.

**Susan Simpson:** In that '92 interview with the FBI, Victor told the FBI that he had recently visited Canada, and he had applied for a Ukrainian visa at the Russian consulate. But with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and Ukraine's declaration of independence from it in 1991, the Russian consulate was no longer handled immigration matters related to Ukraine. And if you're wondering why the Kolesnikows didn't just apply at a Ukrainian consulate, well the first Ukrainian consulate in the US didn't open its doors until December 1992, a few months after this FBI interview took place.

But that visa application apparently triggered a security check, which is how and why the FBI showed up at the Kolesnikow's door. The investigative document ends with the note “Kolesnikow is not an apparent security threat to the US. REDACTED. In view of this, this case is being closed.”.

So what was Victor actually doing for the Department of Energy in California and later on in Tennessee? Well in that same interview, Victor told the agents that he had a US government Q level clearance. A Q level clearance is the Department of Energy's security clearance required to access Top Secret Restricted Data, Formerly Restricted Data, and National Security Information, as well as Secret Restricted Data. People with this level of clearance have access to “Critical Nuclear Weapon Design Information” and it is a designation reserved for non-military personnel. It is one of the very highest clearance levels and according to the Federation of American Scientists, people holding this clearance are involved in the “theory of operation or design of the components of a thermonuclear or implosion-type fission bomb, warhead, demolition munition or test device.”

**Rabia Chaudry:** Victor Kolesnikow mentioned working in Oak Ridge, Tennessee for the Department of Energy. Oak Ridge wasn't just any Tennessee town, though. It's known as the secret city, a city that housed tens of thousands of employees and their families who worked on a 60,000 acre facility for a little government project you may have heard of: The Manhattan Project. Oak Ridge is in fact the birthplace of the atomic bomb, created at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. The secret city was home to four nuclear plants: two uranium enrichment plants, a liquid thermal diffusion plant, and a pilot plutonium production reactor and was completely fenced in with armed guards along the perimeter. A picture from 1943 of the town shows a billboard reading "What you see here, what you do here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here".

**[10:12] Rabia Chaudry:** In the 1940s many of the workers didn't realize what they were actually part of as they manned the thousands of different positions involved in the enrichment and weaponization of uranium and related research on the effects of radiation. In 1957 President Eisenhower launched the "Atoms for Peace" program, after delivering a UN speech of the same name, from Oak Ridge. The program provided information, resources, and equipment to both government and non governmental entities, like schools, hospitals, and research centers both inside and outside the US. Modern day historians see the speech and program as a cold war maneuver to convince European allies to shift NATO strategy from conventional to cheaper nuclear weapons, but the administration hoped it would also act to convince the American and global public that peaceful atomic energy was the call of the future.

Oak Ridge was eventually given over from military to civilian control and incorporated as a town. Over the years two of the four atomic bomb making facilities were demolished, but two still stand today.

Now, while we don't know for sure what Victor Kolesnikow did at Oak Ridge when he worked there in the 1980s, given his clearance level it seems fairly certain that on August 5, 1998, a nuclear scientist and his wife were executed and then set on fire.

**Colin Miller:** Three families lived on the land directly across the street from the Kolesnikows, land that was in fact owned by the Ukrainian couple. David and James Redmond, brothers, lived in separate trailers on the property, and their sister Peggy Horn, her husband Sam Horn, and their daughter Samantha Horn lived in a small house to the right of the trailers on the land.

In the days after the fire the Redmonds and Horns gave statements to the police. Sam Horn told investigators that he and his wife had been in Nashville during the day and returned home around 1:30am. They were in bed by 2am and heard nothing until fire engines and first responders arrived at the scene, at which point they woke up from the sirens and saw that their neighbor's home was on fire.

The Redmond brothers had more to offer though. Both brothers had returned home from work around 2:30 am. David went to bed at around 3:00 am but woke when he heard an explosion like a firecracker go off about thirty minutes later. He said he then heard a vehicle with a loud engine start up and roar off. He said it sounded like a 4 cylinder. When he looked out the window of his trailer he saw what he said were "headlights on the main road headed to town," which sounds odd for a vehicle driving away, so we can assume he meant tail lights.

At that point David noticed smoke rising from Victor's home so him and his wife went over to his brother James' trailer. By that time flames were visible across the street.

**[14:36]** James Redmond gave a similar statement to the police - he arrived home with this brother from work at around 2:30 am. At that time the Kolesnikow home was dark, he didn't see any lights, and both of their vehicles were parked in their driveway. He went to bed around 3:00 am but got up when he likewise heard a "boom like a firecracker" or a car door slamming. He noted that the sound did not sound like a gun. At that point he heard his dogs barking and when he looked out his front window he saw a car with headlights on pulling out of the driveway - he doesn't specify what driveway though, whether it was the Kolesnikows or his own driveway. He went on to say the vehicle sped away and while he couldn't be sure if it was a car or truck, it seemed to have a 4 cylinder engine with a very loud muffler.

**Susan Simpson:** James Redmond also noted he saw a flicker in one of the front windows at the Kolesnikow house as the vehicle was driving away. He yelled for his wife to call 911 and 5 or 10 minutes later the house was completely engulfed in flames. His son then made a second call to 911.

In their statements to police, both David and James noted that they'd been struck by the fact that the Kolesnikows owned a dog and had motion detector lights and, it seems, an alarm system, but no one ever heard the dog bark or an alarm sound, and those lights were never seen to come on. Which could also explain how the Kolesnikows were caught unaware by whoever came to their house that night.

That alarm system remains a mystery but could also be a clue. It's referenced a number of times in the records but no one seems to know what happened to it. Two days after the fire, Tennessee Bureau of Investigations investigator William Barker returned to the scene to find any evidence that an electric line or a phone line had been cut in effort to circumvent an alarm system, because, according to his report, "victims had owned one in the past." But the fire damage was so extensive that he couldn't make any determination at all. In other records though, it says they had recently disconnected the alarm system because it was having issues. So, on the night of the murders either the culprit got really, really lucky that the system wasn't working, or he or she already knew it wasn't working, or the perp disabled it themselves - either on the night of the fire or maybe even beforehand.

It would have been a hell of a stroke of luck for the culprit to have just gotten lucky that the system wasn't working that night, and it seems more likely they knew it wouldn't work, which suggests some familiarity with the family or the property.

**[17:03] Rabia Chaudry:** The Kolesnikows also had a neighbor to their left, Sally Pelliciotti, who lived on a house up on a small hill with a wooded area between the two properties. Diagonally across the street from her lived Don Savage and his family.

Pelliciotti awoke from the sounds of her dogs barking sometime after 3:00 am. She tried to ignore them but then eventually got up to see what the ruckus was about. The glow in the woods was unmistakable - something was on fire, and her fear was that it was the actual woods. She then heard fire trucks heading down the road and around 3:30 am left her home and walked down the driveway, which was when she realized Victor and Alla's house was on fire.

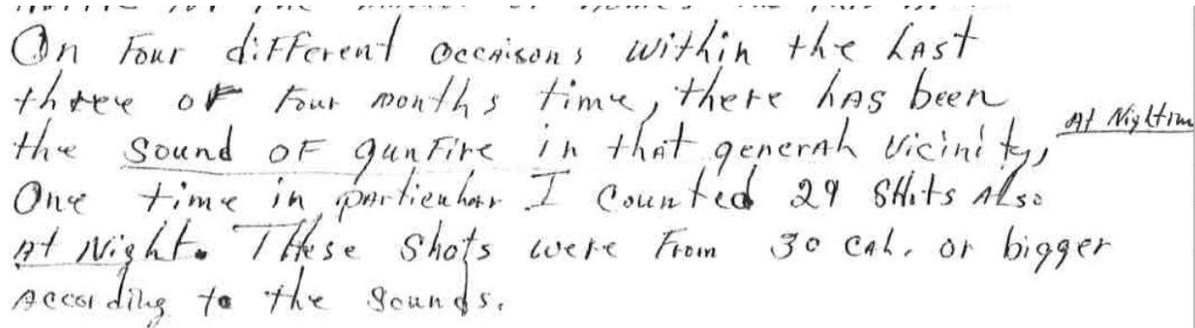
She walked towards the trailer where both Redmond families stood on a porch, watching the blaze across the street and asked if Victor and Alla were safe. No one knew but one of the men, one of the Redmond brothers, told her he heard an explosion and then saw a vehicle leave the Kolesnikow driveway with its lights off, which is different than what both Redmond brothers said in their police statements. Remember, they said they saw headlights pull away.

Pelliciotti watched the fire and waited outside for two more hours, hoping her neighbors survived the fire. When it was clear there was no sign of life, she returned home.

Don Savage, who lived a bit further down the road than Pellicotti, awoke with the sound of sirens. As he headed towards the Kolesnikows he heard a few small explosions and

some sort of a hammering sound. At first he thought it was first responders trying to break through some part of the house structure but then realized the sound was coming from the “back end of the old West house,” which was the house that the Horns lived in behind the Redmond trailers.

Savage saw that the Kolesnikow house was fully engulfed, on fire from one end to the other, and realized there was nothing he could do to help. In the statement he gave police six days after the murders, he noted:



On four different occasions within the last three or four months time, there has been the sound of gunfire in that general vicinity, <sup>at Nighttime</sup> One time in particular I counted 29 shots also at night. These shots were from .30 cal. or bigger according to the sounds.

*On four different occasions, within the last three or four months time, there has been the sound of gunfire in that general vicinity, at nighttime. One time in particular, I counted 29 shots also at night. These shots were from a .30 caliber or bigger, according to the sounds.*

Interestingly enough, no one, not Pellicciotti, not the Redmonds, or Savage heard any gunshot sounds on the night of the murder itself.

**[20:15] Colin Miller:** The first to arrive on the scene was firefighter Stacey Lee, responding to a 3:30 am 911 call. Lee was on scene at 3:38 am to find the 2,400 square foot home engulfed in flames. A neighbor ran towards the scene and advised Lee that the homeowners couldn't be located and were likely inside - two vehicles, a car and a truck, stood in the driveway.

District Captain Robert Lane lived just a few minutes away from the victims and was resting on his sofa when he was alerted that the Kolesnikow house was on fire.

**Captain Robert Lane:**

The pager went off and it was sometime in the morning, probably 2-3 o'clock -- I can't remember.

**Rabia Chaudry:**

Yeah, probably around 3 o'clock, yeah.

**Captain Robert Lane:**

Yeah. I had fell asleep on the couch with my clothes on and jumped up and one of the firemen radioed me and said "You want me to bring the truck?" And I said yes, I'll go to the scene. And so I drove my personal vehicle down, so I was only like probably 3 minutes away.

**Rabia Chaudry:**

Oh, okay.

**Captain Robert Lane:**

I was probably approximately 3 miles and I probably made it in 3 - 3 ½ minutes. And when I pulled up on the scene, there was two cars sittin' in the front yard -- obviously must have belonged to the people that lived there. And the entire house was on fire from one end to the other.

**Rabia Chaudry:**

Wow!

**Captain Robert Lane:**

Which immediately made me think it was most likely arson.

He immediately noticed three things. First, as he mentioned, there were the cars in the driveway - not a good sign, that meant people were likely inside. And he knew these people, he had had dealings with Victor in the past. Second, he noticed the garage door was wide open - it had either fallen off due to the fire or had been left open by someone before the fire began. Third, he noticed skid marks from car tires leaving the Kolesnikow driveway:

**Captain Robert Lane:**

There was two skid marks where somebody had took off real fast.

**Rabia Chaudry:**

Were they in the driveway or on the road?

**Captain Robert Lane:**

They were in the driveway. They were in the driveway 'cause I made it a point not to drive on them, you know, to keep from disturbing it.

Lane quickly got to business, rounding the corner of the house toward the back, hoping to find someone who had made it out. At that point, though, a propane cylinder exploded, followed by numerous other explosions of spray paint cans.

The fire was so intense that flames eventually reached between 20-30 feet beyond the roof, all of which was completely ablaze, and Lane and Lee couldn't do much other until other fire personnel had arrived with multiple engines and a tanker. As aerosol cans continued to explode in the garage, firefighters began attacking the fire where they thought the couple's bedroom might have been, at the front of house, on the opposite end from the garage. It was also the only part of the house that was sort of still kind of standing. Much of the rest of the house had burned to the ground. Here is Captain Lane, reporting to dispatch from the scene of the fire:

**Captain Robert Lane:**

[Undecipherable] on fire. We got a subject here -- his neighbor says everybody's in the ... the eastern end of the house that has not caught fire yet. But there's nobody stirring about. But I'm gonna make it's way to the front of the house real quick.

**Dispatcher:**

Ten-four, I'll be to ya in a minute

**Captain Robert Lane:**

I can't get close enough to the house to check. I got the power lines fixing to fall off the house here. It's fully involved. I can't hardly get close enough.

It took nearly an hour of showering the flames with foam to get it to the point where firefighters could actually approach and enter what was left standing of the house.

That was when, shortly after day break at 6:11 am, they found two bodies, burned beyond recognition in the master bedroom. Captain Lane climbed in through one of the two bedroom windows at the front of the house, and nearly stepped on the first body. It was a male, collapsed on the floor and leaning against the bed that stood between the windows. The dead man still had one hand still wrapped around the bed railing.

On the opposite side lay a female victim, still in bed. She was on her back, closest to the bedroom door. Her left foot, which had become severed from her body due to the fire, was found lodged underneath the collapsed bed.

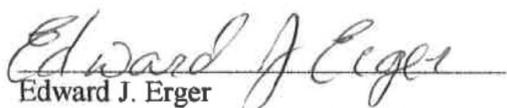
While it couldn't be official yet, everyone on the scene was pretty sure the victims were the homeowners, Victor and Alla Kolesnikow.

**[24:31] Susan Simpson:** Arson investigator Phillip Gentry was awoken by a call that morning at 5:30 am and was on the crime scene 30 minutes later. He did a quick external inspection to make sure personnel could enter the structure safely, and then went directly to where the bodies had been found covered in fire debris. Firefighters had put out the flames but were continuing to put water on the two bodies to keep them from further fire damage.

A number of clues immediately alerted investigators that Alla and Victor were not victims of the fire itself. Alla was her on back, which, as later noted by an investigator, is not how victims of fire are typically found. It was also unusual to find victims of fire who looked like they hadn't made any attempts to escape, especially when they were so close to windows that they could have crawled out, or at least attempted to.

Firefighter Edgar Erger later noted in his official report:

*The question in my mind is why both victims were within a few inches from a window, and the fire started at the opposite end of the building, and victim #1 did not seem to have made any attempt to get out. Victim #2 looked as though he may have turned to get off the bed, or if the bed collapsed and he rolled off.*

  
Edward J. Erger

The reason they hadn't try to escape became apparent pretty soon.

As Gentry removed debris from Alla's body, he noticed the pillow under her head soaked in blood. It didn't take long to find the shell casings under her head and see that her hair had been imprinted into the pillow from the impact of being shot at close range, likely as she slept. While none of the reports at the time note it, Bob Lane still clearly recalls seeing a gunshot wound to Alla's head:

**Captain Robert Lane:**

The only one I remember vividly was the one where she ... somebody shot her right between the eyes.

**Rabia Chaudry:**

You could make that out?

**Captain Robert Lane:**

I could, because the flesh was burnt back and there was a bullet hole in her skull, right between her eyes. Jerry Abston was the Sheriff then, and he was actually there at the scene. I called and had them to notify the Sheriff's department on radio and he come on up there. I remember what he said when he came there. He said, once we had discovered the bodies and he said, "I guarantee ya this was murder." And it certainly was - he was right. When I got in there and saw the bullet holes, of course that clenched it, ya know?

**Rabia Chaudry:**

Yeah.

As investigators cleaned off debris from Victor's body, Gentry recognized a strong odor of gasoline coming from it. When the body was moved, investigators noticed a pool of gasoline underneath him. Once the floor was cleaned, an entire pattern emerged. Gasoline had been poured around the bed and out the bedroom door. And a State detection dog tracked a trail of fuel from the bedroom, on the east end of the house, to the west end of the house, through to the open garage.

After the bodies were photographed, bagged and removed to be transported to the Medical Examiner's office, investigators determined that the direction of heat ran from the kitchen, on the opposite side of the house, to the bedroom and the floors were burnt throughout the path, meaning the fire traveled a trail of accelerant through the house. In the investigator's opinion, the murderer and arsonist had lit the fire using an open flame from the outside kitchen door on the west end of the house.

According to Lane though, whoever set the first couldn't have much time to do it and escape without getting hurt themselves.

**Captain Robert Lane:**

Well here's what happens when you pour that gasoline in a confined area -- whoever poured the gas, they sloshed it on the bodies and the bedroom, and

they come out pouring gas all the way down the hallway, through the house, probably -- and I'm assuming the kitchen was probably on that end, and out the garage door. And then they threw a match in there between the garage and... you know, right off the garage door into the house, and the fumes -- at that time gas puts off tremendous fumes, by that time that house turned into an inferno in 10 seconds.

**[28:23] Rabia Chaudry:** Dr. Charles Harlon received the bodies of Victor and Alla Kolesnikow at the Putnam County Medical Examiner's office on August 5, 1998, the morning of the fire, and completed autopsies on both by that same evening.

Victor had been shot three times. Once in the head, above the left ear, then in the chest, on the lateral left side, and a third time in the abdomen, the bullet again entering from the left. 80% of his body was covered in 4th degree burns and a positive identification was made using dental records.

Alla's body was burned even more badly, with 90% of it covered in 4th degree burns. She had in fact been exposed to such intense heat that both of her arms had been fractured from the heat and her chest and abdomen had been burned nearly through. All of these injuries were post-mortem however. She was already dead by the time the house was set ablaze, shot three times like her husband, but unlike him, all three bullets to the left of the head at close range.

Given the position of the bodies and the injuries, it seems as both husband and wife were sleeping when the killer approached their bed from the left side, the side closest to the bedroom door, and first shot Alla dead. Victor was likely awakened and stumbled out of bed, attempting to come around the bed and escape or confront the intruder. One can only imagine his disorientation, shock, and terror at waking to gunshots at close range, which didn't last long because he was shot and killed by the foot of the bed before he got too far.

Back at the crime scene seven empty shell casings for a 9mm pistol were found in the fire debris and three full bullets were found under the bed springs where Alla had been murdered. Given the six total bullet wounds to the victims bodies, this means only one of the seven bullets fired in that bedroom that night didn't hit its target.

**[30:03] Rabia Chaudry:** So how did the intruder or intruders manage such perfect shots, because assuming Victor and Alla were both asleep when the killer approached the bed, the lights must have still been off. After all, if the lights in the bedroom had

been flipped on the couple would have likely awakened and there may have been some sign of struggle or attempted escape. But from all the signs, Alla was killed in her sleep, not having moved an inch.

Figuring out how the killer had such great aim in the dark was a bit of a mystery. That is, until investigators found the murder weapon.

**[32:07] Colin Miller:** When investigators did a search of the property they were looking closely for any and all evidence that could help identify who was behind the horrific killings, but most importantly they were searching for the murder weapon itself.

They found mostly debris and items that seemed like they had been blown out of the house or garage during the blast and fire. The only thing that seemed like it didn't come from the house itself was a pair of wire cutters in the yard. The cutters weren't rusty and showed no sign of fire damage the way other items strewn around the yard did, but it was possible they had been dropped in the yard sometime recently by Victor or one of the men who worked for him recently.

An interview with Victor's sister Lily, who also lived in Cookeville, shows that the Kolesnikows owned a dog, two cats, and chickens but strangely enough there is no mention of any of the animals in the entirety of the arson reports, trial testimony, or witness statements. We aren't sure what happened to any of the animals, they seemed to have disappeared into thin air. What we can be sure of is that none of them perished in the fire, otherwise that would have been noted repeatedly in various arson records. So, did the killer take them? Did they escape and run into the surrounding woods? Did a neighbor find them and take them in? No one seems to know for sure.

A receipt written out by the victim's estate attorney shows investigators turned over various jewelry items, silver spoons, and documents found in a safe to him five days after the murders. These items were collected from inside the house, the few valuables that survived the fire. Those documents in the safe, put a pin in them, they'll be of interest to this mystery down the road.

Then there is the mysterious gas can. The evidence log in the case lists a red plastic container as exhibit E-19 but an August 6th Herald Citizen newspaper report reads "Neither he (Phillip Gentry) nor (Sheriff) Abston would elaborate on what that physical evidence was, but the sheriff did confirm that no gasoline cans or containers were found. "We didn't find any cans," Abston said. "If the arsonist had been using a plastic container, we wouldn't be able to find it anyway because it would have been destroyed

with everything else in the fire." The next day another piece repeated the same thing, that no gas container had been found at the scene. In fact, not a single report written by investigators in the days and months after the crime mentioned a gas can which would seem like a glaring oversight by the many different officers on the scene.

**[34:22] Susan Simpson:** One official report by Phillip Gentry of the Bomb Arson section of the TN Fire Marshal's Office reads "Before entering the structure I made an exterior inspection of the yard. I found several items on the ground that had been discharged from the house into the yard by the force of the fire. We made a perimeter search and marked the items that could have been thrown from the fire by a blast. One specific item, a pair of wire cutters lying on the ground behind the house had no visible effects of being in the fire...the other items found on the ground, wall insulation and aerosol cans, were not taken as evidence. I subsequently released the wire cutters to Investigator Pollard..."

Again nowhere in there is there any mention of a gas can found on a property in a clear arson case.

It should be noted though that the evidence log doesn't specifically call the item found in the front yard a gas container, it refers to it instead generically as a "red plastic container".

If it was actually a gas container found in the front yard, it would have been an important piece of physical evidence that could potentially link back to the culprit, and we'll be discussing this plastic container more later on this season.

But as for what investigators really hoped to find during their search, the murder weapon, well, no gun was found anywhere on the property.

On August 7 1998, two days after the murders, investigator Phillip Gentry organized a dive of a nearby creek to search for a weapon, but they came up empty again. Having searched the house and the yard already, they decided to expand the perimeter search and on August 8 they conducted a search of the field around the victim's home. Once again they found nothing.

In the meantime though, they had other leads that needed investigation - most importantly, drilling down into all the different reports of the getaway vehicle. The suspect or suspects didn't just vanish into thin air, they had to have had a vehicle to get away fast enough to evade the authorities, who showed up within minutes of the 911

call. And Poplar Grove was a two-lane country road, there was even a chance the culprits would have passed first responders as they arrived on the scene.

**[36:32] Rabia Chaudry:** And then of course Captain Lane had seen tire marks in the Kolesnikow driveway gravel with his own eyes. He had come down the mountain from behind the property towards the fire, and from what the Redmond brothers had told him, the getaway car had left in the opposite direction.

Both statements given by the Redmond brothers, who claimed to hear a vehicle race away, described it as “loud” but they couldn’t say if it was a car or truck. Interestingly, neither of them noticed the vehicle already at the property when they arrived home from work that night, or heard the car arrive to the scene itself. How exactly did this loud car get to the victims home without anyone hearing it? At trial, the State would theorize the killer either drove the car very slowly with its headlights off, or it cruised, with its engine shut off, all the way into the victims driveway.

But what kind of car was it? In a police report written the day after the murders, Sgt. Joe Nash wrote:

*Patrolling east of Cookeville on Hwy. 70 on the 5th day of August, 98, I was checking the Coke machines at 11, one of our county businesses.*

*This was around 03:30 hours, before or after 03:30 hours is not known.*

*At this time a vehicle exited the Poplar Grove Road and travelled toward Cookeville. This vehicle was a medium size pickup truck. It was dark in color and was an extended cab.*

*Vehicle make not known.*

*I did notice that there were 3 subjects in the vehicle, and I saw one person in the passenger side, saw one person sitting in the little back area of the cab, and someone was driving.*

*I noticed that the subject sitting on the passenger side of the vehicle did look toward my patrol vehicle. Subject appeared to have dark hair with a short dark beard. Hair also appeared to be short too.*

This is the only description I can remember about the vehicle and the occupants of the vehicle.

| STATEMENT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                |      |        |               | Agency ID  | Year | Month | Day | Time |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------|--------|---------------|------------|------|-------|-----|------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                |      |        |               | TN# 710001 | 98   | 08    | 05  |      |
| Name                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Sex            | Race | D.O.B. | Address       |            |      |       |     |      |
| Sgt. J. Nash                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                |      |        |               |            |      |       |     |      |
| Date/Time                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Location Given |      |        | To Whom Given |            |      |       |     |      |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                |      |        |               |            |      |       |     |      |
| <p>Patrolling East of Cookeville on Hwy. 70 on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of August, 98 I was checking the coke machines at (1) line of our County business. (bet it + Geo Market)</p> <p>This was around 0330 Hours, before or after 0330 hours is not known.</p> <p>At this time a vehicle <del>a vehicle</del> exited the Poplar Grove Road and traveled toward Cookeville. The vehicle was a medium size pick-up Truck. It was dark in color and was an extended cab. Vehicle make not known.</p> <p>I did notice that they were (3) subjects in the vehicle, or I seen (1) person on the passenger side, saw (1) person sitting in the little back area of the cab, and some one was driving.</p> <p>I noticed that the subject sitting on the passenger side of vehicle did look toward my patrol vehicle. Subject appeared to have dark hair with a short dark beard. Hair also appeared to be short two.</p> <p>This is the only description and can remember about the vehicle and the occupants of the vehicle.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Sgt. J. Nash<br/>08-06-98<br/>0800 Hours</p> |                |      |        |               |            |      |       |     |      |

If this report is accurate, that seems like a very solid lead because this truck was seen leaving the dark lonely Poplar Grove road exactly at the same time as the 911 call was made about the fire at the Kolesnikows. Was this the car the Redmonds said sped away and was just missed by Captain Bob Lane?

But investigators didn't really spend any time looking for that truck. From the very first day of the investigation, the TBI already had a lead suspect in the case, a man investigators focused on from the day the Kolesnikows were murdered and never wavered from. And while that suspect had a truck, it didn't match the description of the truck Sgt Joe Nash had seen leaving the area that night. But this suspect did have access to a car that could have been what the Redmond brothers described.

In a search warrant executed by agent TBI agent Bob Kroffsik a week after the murders, he states:

*On August 06, 1998, at approximately 1:00 AM, the Affiant personally observed and heard the engine noise of the above described vehicle while it was being driven. The Affiant observed the sound of this motor was consistent with the sound of the motor described by the aforementioned eyewitnesses leaving the residence of Victor and Alla Kolesnikow prior to the discovery of the fire. Also, the Affiant noted the size of said vehicle was consistent with descriptions, given by eyewitnesses, of the vehicle leaving the residence prior to the discovery of the fire.*

5. On August 06, 1998, at approximately 1:00 AM, the Affiant personally observed and heard the engine noise of the above described vehicle while it was being driven. The Affiant observed that the sound of this motor was consistent with the sound of the motor described by the aforementioned eyewitnesses leaving the residence of Victor and Alla Kolesnikow prior to the discovery of the fire. Also, the Affiant noted the size of said vehicle was consistent with descriptions, given by eyewitnesses, of the vehicle leaving the residence prior to the discovery of the fire. The Affiant checked the registration of said vehicle with the Tennessee Department of Safety. Said vehicle was

It seems clear from the records that the investigators already had a bullseye on a principal suspect from the jump, and were now gathering evidence to support a case against this suspect, instead of following the evidence where it took them. We know this because on the very top of an evidence examination request filed the very day after the murders to the TBI lab the heading read:

Victims:

Kolesnikow, Alla

Kolesnikow, Victor

Subject:

Lance, Greg

Next time, on Undisclosed.

Greg Lance has been in prison since 1999. If you'd like to drop him a note of support, or a card, or anything to let him know you are following his story and thinking about him, address your letters to:

Gregory Paul Lance  
ID# 00325463  
Bledsoe County Correctional Complex  
1045 Horsehead Rd  
Pikeville, TN 37367

Now, lots of thank yous. A big thank you to all of our sponsors who help make this episode, this series, and really all of our work possible. We could not continue to investigate wrongful convictions and to help those wrongfully convicted if we didn't have our sponsors. So, if you want to support our work, if you want to support the people we are trying to help in our series, please support our sponsors, they make the production possible.

Thank you to our Wizard of Oz who keeps everything running like clockwork behind the scenes, Executive Producer Mital Telhan. Thank you to our audio producer extraordinaire, Rebecca LaVoie, host of one of my favorite podcasts, *Crime Writers On*. Thank you Baluki for our logo, Patrick Cortez for our theme song. Thank you to Linda Bozeman and the family of Greg Lance for working with us in order for us to do an investigation into this case. And a huge thank you to my legal intern for this entire case Usrah Qureshi who has just put in days and days and weeks and weeks of going through documents and organizing things and just making my life easier. And finally, thank you to all of our listeners for staying with us case after case, year after year, Follow us on social media. We're on Twitter at the handle @UndisclosedPod, and remember to tweet us your questions for the Undisclosed Addendum using the hashtag #UDAddendum. We're also on Facebook and Instagram and our website is [www.undisclosed-podcast.com](http://www.undisclosed-podcast.com).