

**UNDISCLOSED; The State v. Greg Lance**  
**Episode 10 - Putnam Pit**  
**November 11th, 2019**

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**Rabia Chaudry:** Hi Undisclosed Listeners, thank you so much for tuning into the Greg Lance case and to tuning into all of our cases. We couldn't continue to do our work to help the wrongfully convicted without your support, and here's two more ways you can support us and our work. First, please support our sponsors, because they support us. The products and services that we bring to you, are products and services that we love. They're sponsors that we love. So make sure to patronize them for yourself, for family, for friends, as a gift ... pass it along. And a big thank you to our sponsors who have stood by us for now nearly 5 years. Another way to support us, a really important way, by the way, is to actually subscribe to our podcast. Subscribe to us on iTunes, Stitcher, Spotify, or wherever you listen to your podcasts, and please make sure to leave us a 5-star review, because that helps other people discover this podcast, and the more people that listen, the better it is for our work. Thanks again, and now let's get into this week's episode.

**[1:33] Mike Heron:**

I'd be behind that kid 'til the bitter end. I mean, just ... honest, as nice, and ... I mean, I couldn't believe when they came down with all this stuff on him. There was just ... there's no way that he did this. They said that Greg had gas and stuff on his shoes, and all this stuff. I mean, we were in gas and worked in his garage around the tractors. I mean, they coulda grabbed anybody's shoes over there and found, ya know, as far as that kind of stuff ... I mean, Greg was kind of sloppy with that and he was in wrenching on something. I mean, we were always messing around in that stuff, and I mean, they probably could have found that stuff on 10 pairs of his tennis shoes.

**Rabia Chaudry:**

Right, right.

**Mike Heron:**

You know, and on his clothing. They could have found it on mine.

**Rabia Chaudry:**

Right. What did you burn?

**Mike Heron:**

Any trash that I had. Stuff laying around. I always had a little burn pile going. And the tree -- the big oak tree that they dug the rounds out of?

**Rabia Chaudry:**

Yeah?

**Mike Heron:**

That was like our backing for what we'd shoot against.

**Rabia Chaudry:**

Oh ...

**Mike Heron:**

There was a couple of big trees that they could have dug bullets out of any of 'em.

When the prosecutor tried to bring me out, and they actually wanted me to testify to things that were totally not true, so I think I ended up being a hostile witness for 'em. And, ya know, they flew me out there and it was like -- you guys are barking up the wrong tree, and no, these things are not true.

**Rabia Chaudry:**

Can I ask you, when you say "they", was it they put you on the stand and tried to get you to say things that are not true, or did they talk to you beforehand?

**Mike Heron:**

No, they interviewed me prior. They interviewed me prior ...

**Rabia Chaudry:**

Do you remember who it was? Was it the TBI Agent or was it the prosecutor?

**Mike Heron:**

It was both. Both of 'em were tryin' to feed in information and, ya know, it was ... basically tried to hold some idle threats over me, and I basically, between me, I told 'em to pound sand. You know, I said -- you guys are cooking the wrong guy here, and you want me to ... if you put me on the stand, I'm gonna basically tell them you're trying to fabricate stories on the kid.

It was basically, ya know, that he wasn't ... he lied about him being out here in California with me. working in Arizona, prior issues about the gun and shooting at my property, and all that stuff. Just little stories that were fabricated. Actually stuff that Keith was saying, and, ya know, they wanted me to collaborate stories that I knew were not true, and I wasn't gonna do it, ya know?

**[4:30] Rabia Chaudry:** In one short conversation I had with Mike Heron, he undermined much of the State's theory about Greg's guilt, and he managed to cast doubt on the integrity of State officials involved in the case.

And that lines up with what we examined in last week's episode - how witnesses were coerced, through rewards and threats, to testify against Greg despite much of that testimony being impossible, thanks to the laws of nature and physics.

So it's important, then, to take a look at the players involved in the case whose history should make us question nearly everything they touch.

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**[5:25] Rabia Chaudry:** Hi and welcome to Undisclosed. This is Episode 10 of the Greg Lance series - Putnam Pit. 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, this is Susan Simpson, I'm an attorney in Washington DC and I blog at The View from LL2.

**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 Evidence Prof Blog.

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**[6:08] Rabia Chaudry:** The Putnam Pit blog, which calls itself Putnam County's "Watchdog Press", has a fascinating story. I came across it one day as I was researching alternate suspects in the case, and instead I ended up in this very deep, very dark rabbit hole with some familiar names in it.

Now, the website itself is...a bit chaotic. And the stories -- they're a lot of reposts from other sources, part editorial and satire, lots of links, a whole lot of innuendo, and what seems like a dogged pursuit, lasting years and years, to take down former Putnam County District Attorney General, Bill Gibson.

Geoff Davidian is listed on the site as the editor and publisher of the blog, and the site itself links to articles about his prior work. Before launching headfirst into chronicling and exposing the corruption in Putnam County as his life's mission, Davidian already had a colorful career.

A 1998 profile in the Houston Press reported this about Davidian:

*“A former musician and one-time road manager for the rock band Canned Heat in the sixties, he claims he was busted in Lebanon in 1969 while smuggling hashish and he spent the next three years in a Lebanese prison. He eventually returned to the states and earned a masters in journalism from Marquette.*

*Davidian's first journalism gig was in a location with an eerie mystique of its own -- Roswell, New Mexico, the world capital for flying saucer conspiracists. He later worked for the Milwaukee Journal and the Arizona Republic before joining the Houston Chronicle reporting staff in 1990.”*

**[7:40] Susan Simpson:** But Davidian’s time at the Houston Chronicle came to an end when a chance encounter in 1995 completely changed the trajectory of his career.

**Rabia Chaudry:**

So tell me all about Cookeville, and how you ended up there, and what was going on.

**Geoff Davidian:**

I ended up in Cookeville because a woman in Portland, Maine happened to get into a hotel courtesy shuttle bus with me. She asked me what I did and I said, “I’m a reporter,” and she said, “Boy do I have a story for you.” And boy did she! Her daughter had been murdered with ... in an accelerant, is the word they used, and they poured something in her home while she slept and lit it on fire. She ran out with her nightgown burned ... nylon melted to her foot, and she stayed alive for another 10 days, or so, before she died.

Darlene Eldridge’s home had been set on fire on November 1st, 1992. She died eleven days later and the fire that was ruled an arson by the state fire marshal. According to Davidian, Darlene had allegedly been in a three way affair with two men - her boyfriend, and a local law enforcement official.

**Geoff Davidian:**

It involved cocaine and sex. Well, when this woman tried to break off the relationship and ... she was a school teacher ... she wanted to break off the relationship. Her house was started on fire ... I’m not saying because ... about the same time her house started on fire. She ran out.

The murdered woman’s sister, Chantal Eldridge, happened to be an attorney. She was living in California, but when her sister was murdered, she came back to Cookeville.

**Geoff Davidian:**

She moved back to Cookeville. She'd been living in Los Angeles or somewhere, and she moved back to Cookeville to try to find out who killed her sister. She started a little law practice and then her dogs were getting killed and, I mean, the mother was roughed up by the cops, and it was just ... anybody who tried to find out anything about this murder was obstructed in one way or the other. Either through physical threats or whatever.

None of her efforts amounted to anything either though. No one was ever arrested or prosecuted for the murder of Darlene Eldridge. Her sister's murder wasn't the only thing that brought her back. It was also because their brother, Fabian Eldridge, had been arrested for the attempted murder of Darlene's boyfriend, Robert Fahey.

The night before Darlene died from her injuries in the fire, Fabian went to Robert Fahey's home, and according to Fahey, burst into his residence and held a knife to his throat. Fabian had been convinced Fahey was responsible for setting the fire to Darlene's home.

Fahey told the police that Fabian had attacked him with a "buck knife", a knife with a folding blade. But Fabian challenged that account, saying it was Fahey who had attacked him with a kitchen knife. Another man who'd been with Fabian, and who was also charged as a co-defendant, backed up this account.

The buck knife that Fahey said Fabian had was never found at the crime scene, but a kitchen knife with blood and fingerprints was found.

Fabian Eldridge was arrested and charged with Fahey's attempted murder, though he maintained it was Fahey who had tried to kill him. And the knife recovered from the crime scene, well it disappeared from the State's custody.

The case got weirder, though, when two private Cookeville attorneys were appointed by the District Attorney to prosecute the case, instead of the DA's office handling it directly. Those two attorneys were also, however, representing Robert Fahey in a civil suit for 3 million dollars against Fabian Eldridge, at the same time as they were prosecuting him.

Yeah, you heard that right. The private prosecutors in this attempted murder case were prosecuting a defendant that *they were also suing on behalf of the victim* of the alleged attempted murder. And they won the criminal case - Fabian Eldridge was convicted of attempted murder in 1993.

However, Fabian's conviction was overturned in 1998, once infamous attorney, Alan Dershowitz, represented him before the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals. At the appeal Dershowitz argued to the court: "the private prosecutors admitted they went into settlement negotiations in which they said if Eldridge would settle the civil suit for between \$250,000 and \$300,000, "Mr. Fahey would have no objection to the [criminal] case being dropped."

The offer to drop the criminal prosecution if Fabian Eldridge agreed to pay Fahey \$300,000 came through his co-defendant's lawyer - public defender Marshall Judd.

And the DA who appointed those two private prosecutors was the same man that Darlene Eldridge's family said she was allegedly having an affair with - District Attorney General Bill Gibson.

**[14:22] Colin Miller:** Geoff Davidian got to Cookeville in 1995, a few years after Darlene's murder and her brother Fabian's conviction. But he dove right in, trying to sniff out all the missing pieces, specifically why no one was ever arrested or prosecuted for Darlene's murder, and what happened in that investigation?

He tried hard to get information from the county but it was nearly impossible:

**Geoff Davidian:**

So anyway, I got to this town and they would not give me any of the records. I couldn't get the police records. I couldn't get the investigative records. I couldn't get the autopsy records. But I did get a speeding ticket, and with that ticket I said: I think the DA is ... this is a prosecution for the DA that tried to investigate me, and I want him to... and this is just in my defense, right? This is a bogus ticket. I wasn't speeding. And, I want the DA to bring all of his records about the murder to court.

Davidian didn't just subpoena Gibson. He subpoenaed the entire city council of Cookeville and the judge presiding over the speeding ticket. None of that panned out and Davidian lost the legal battle to get the information he was looking for, but that didn't deter him. In fact, he tripled down, and started the Putnam Pit in 1996, originally printing off 200 copies and handing them around town. By the next year he took the publication online and he hasn't quit being a thorn in the side of Cookeville officials since, filing copious public records requests and reporting every instance of corruption he felt was happening by every level of city employee, from police officers to the County Court Clerk, and even the DA.

In 1997, Davidian sued Cookeville for the right to see the "cookies" in city computers. A 1998 Salon article about Davidian titled, "Cookie Monster" reported "the city delayed for three months, then allowed Davidian to inspect the computers. He found no cookie files there -- he says the city had deleted them. The Pit editor sued in Tennessee court, which removed the case to federal court." Another time, he sued the city for hacking his website, forcing the city to litigate and settle the action in Wisconsin, where the Putnam Page was being published from.

All these years though, Davidian has done this work in the face of consternation, hostility, and exasperation by County officials and local media. Most don't take him seriously, treating his online critiques and investigations of officials with a healthy dose of side-eye or just ignoring him altogether.

But Davidian takes Putnam County officials seriously. Seriously enough that he never spends the night in Cookeville, feeling threatened. When the nation took notice of Cookeville in 1998 after the murder of state senator Tommy Burks by his political opponent Byron "Low Tax" Looper, the case we mentioned earlier in this series, here is what Davidian told the Houston Press:

*"I'd been writing about what a wacky place Cookeville is -- it's beyond what straight journalism can deal with. In that Salon article I said there are people dying there, and the next thing the guy dies there," marvels Davidian. "The law doesn't apply in Cookeville. It's just a real frightening place."*

**Geoff Davidian:**

Now this is like in the south on a southern plantation back in slavery. If you're a slave, and you see the master beating up a slave, you just shut your mouth and keep on working and nothing will happen to you. But if you interfere, they'll just kill you. And that's how it is down here. The sheriff is the plantation ... the boss, and everybody does what he says.

Now, there is certainly no way for us to verify the many, many allegations that Davidian makes against a variety of city officials within the scope of our work, but of course the allegations raised against DA Bill Gibson peaked our interest. The killer in Darlene Eldridge's case, he believed, was allegedly linked to Gibson, and Gibson intentionally refused to investigate and prosecute the case.

Davidian even brought the issue up during another lawsuit that Davidian filed against the County:

**Geoff Davidian:**

This case asked whether the government may silent somebody based on the content of speech, which was admitted to by the city manager, Jim Schiffley. He said, "Geoff, whatever your website is, we will never link to it." They had ... they linked to local businesses, any local business you wanted a link they had a page in the city website that was linked to local businesses. So I said, "Well the Putnam Pit is a local business. Put us in there talking about how you all cheat and murder."

**Rabia Chaudry:**

(Laughs)

**Geoff Davidian:**

And he said, "No, we're changing it to not-for-profit." I said, "Then I'll go not-for-profit." They said, "No, now we're gonna go tourism. Only pro-Cookeville." And I said, "Then I'll do that." I made a webpage: Travel to Cookeville: *This is where the DA may have started the fire with the girl. This is where the coroner steals the money. Take a tour, it's open*

*from 9-5. You can do a walking tour of criminal activity. This is where a cop held the gun at the other cop's head and called him his bitch.*

And I said, "This is a travel page." And he said, "Well that isn't a travel page." I said, "Of course it is." And I said, "This is a wonderful place for civil rights law practice, with so much violation of civil rights here, this is a great place to start your business. So it's pro-business, pro-travel." And they said no, so I sued them in a public forum suit.

**[19:58] Colin Miller:** Davidian had a way of getting city officials in court to try and dig on other issues so in 2001, DA Bill Gibson was deposed for the public forum lawsuit. A video of the deposition is actually on youtube but it is missing the first part of Gibson's questioning.

But we'll read it because that first part contains the questions related to Darlene Eldgridge:

17 Q. So with respect to the implication that  
18 the killer has not been prosecuted, was there ever a  
19 suspect identified?

20 A. There's never been a suspect  
21 identified.

3 Q. Now, with respect to the implications  
4 that the city attorney was protecting you, the district  
5 attorney general, from having to testify about possible  
6 Cocaine use with a dead woman and other facts that would  
7 have brought the killer to justice, first off let me ask  
8 you this question. What do you have to say about  
9 Mr. Davidian's accusations about your possible Cocaine  
10 use with the dead woman?

11 A. I've never used Cocaine with anybody.  
12 And I didn't know Ms. Eldridge at any level. I knew she  
13 was a school teacher. I can't say that we never met, but  
14 certainly before this I couldn't have picked her out of a  
15 crowd or told you who she was.

16 Q. And with respect to Mr. Davidian's  
17 implication that your testimony would have revealed facts  
18 that would have brought the killer of Darlene Eldridge to  
19 justice, what say you to that?

20 A. There's nothing about that. There's  
21 nothing that I could have testified to or knew that...  
22 If there were a killer of Darlene Eldridge, I would love  
23 nothing more than to see the person arrested and brought  
24 to justice. There's been never anything hid. There's  
25 nothing to hide in this case.

In this same deposition, Gibson continued to deny many of the allegations made by Davidian, illustrating the kinds of things the paper publishes about him:

[22:28] Q: What is your response to what Mr. Davidian has published there, if it's Mr...either as editor or off?

**Bill Gibson:** Well I'd have to quote some of it to respond. It starts out, "how it feels to be short shorn, without mention of honor, guts, glory, integrity, ethics, competence or brains. How much decency we feel we must seek to satisfy District Attorney Bill Gibson's seeming, at least to us after thoughtful consideration, for months and years with no malice, something that in the past the Putnam Pit would unattractively have called 'inferiority', I must control, sociopath-driven, need to prevail."

And then it's got here, a picture of me with a circle-slash over my face, and the headline is "How we feel about what you can tell from a man's eyes - whether or not we feel you can tell whether he was a bad, bad boy." And over the circle-slash that is over my face, it has what would seem to be a quote from me saying "Will you forgive me, I have faith in God. I won't do it again, as far as you know. I swear." And then it comes on down and says "Does it feel like Billy's been a bad, bad boy? Did it feel bad when you were feeling you were being a bad, bad boy?"

Q: Mr Gibson, let me ask you, with respect to the matters of the Putnam pit that discuss the operations of the office of the District Attorney General in the 13th Judicial District, do those articles characterize that office in any kind of a fair light?

**Bill Gibson:** No, whatsoever, no fair light at all. No objectivity, no fairness, and this is a perfect example of the kind of publication, the smut that he puts out in his publication.

Q: Is there anything in the Putnam Pit that you've seen...well let me just ask you, how would you believe that someone thinking about locating a business here, ahhhh, well let's start with that. Someone seeking to locate a business here or do business there, how would they interpret, excuse me, how would the Putnam Pit cast this area in terms of the criminal justice system?

**Putnam Pit Attorney:** I'm going to object to that question as vague, I'm not sure I understand it, and to the extent it cause for him to give an opinion as to how other people would react, I'd certainly think it would be speculative, and he's in no...there's no foundation that he can give and at that type of opinion as to what other people think.

**Bill Gibson:** The misrepresentations of the Putnam Pit would, if believed, reviewed by people, it would cast this area in such a poor light, in my realm in particular in regards to the criminal justice system, to suggest that there's dead babies in the District Attorney's backyard, that the Tax Assessor was first prosecuted or persecuted inappropriately for political reasons while the killer of the State Senator is still running free, that the District Attorney is a cocaine user, a cocaine addict...none of which, none of these things are true, and they cast this area in a terrible light for anybody that should happen to see it.

Gibson and all the other city officials that Davidian criticized and wrote about have always denied every allegation raised against them, but there is one allegation DA Bill Gibson couldn't deny. And it was an allegation that eventually cost him his law license.

**[28:25] Rabia Chaudry:** On September 14, 2006 the Board of Professional Responsibility of the Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference filed a Petition with the Tennessee Supreme Court for the Temporary Suspension of the license of William E. Gibson alleging he posed "a threat of substantial harm to the public." This petition included an affidavit by attorney named John Parsons, who was appointed in 2006 to represent a defendant by the name of Christopher Adams.

In his youth Adams had murdered his father, and ended up in a psychiatric institution. He had a long history of crime, and in 2003 he brutally murdered a 79 year old woman. Even though Adams confessed, he was offered and took a plea for second degree murder and aggravated robbery and he was sentenced to 35 years in prison.

When Attorney John Parsons got his case, Adams was in the middle of a post conviction appeal and his previously appointed attorney had withdrawn from the case. He refused to represent Adams because he said he refused to cooperate. The old attorney told the new attorney, Parsons, that the client had been talking to the State, but Parsons couldn't figure out what the details of those talks were. He spent a month or so reviewing the files, checking all the pleadings, and he found nothing related to such talks.

And then he finally sat down with Chris Adams and interviewed him, and he asked him why his previous attorney had withdrawn. Adams responded that it was because he had been in direct communication with DA General Bill Gibson for some time - they had been writing letters to each other for years.

Parsons was shocked and he asked for the letters, which Adams sent him. The letters shocked Parsons even further. They seemed to him to outline "a scheme to commit a fraud on the court and to rig Mr. Adams' post conviction proceeding to enable him to obtain a more favorable sentence." There are eleven letters written by Gibson to Adams, and most of them are full of prayers, Christian guidance, and personal updates. There are however, strangely, discussions of cases Gibson is handling, other prosecutions and other defendants.

But the most troubling communications involve Gibson advising Adams about taking a plea deal at trial, and how Gibson's own Assistant DA David Patterson, the same David Patterson who helped Gibson to try Greg Lance's case, would respond to any post conviction matter raised by Adams. DA Gibson also advised Adams on a plea deal. He gave Adams his opinion about his appointed defense counsel Brit Jared, and he assured him that if he won on post conviction, he won't have to worry.

In a January 2006 letter, Gibson wrote, "David Patterson is the ADA who has had your case (whenever I wasn't interfering with it). He is a good man, a strong practicing Christian. He is also a good prosecutor and very hard or tough on crime. David got your amended petition and said we should just agree to the post conviction and then take you to trial for 1st degree! I have not told him a lot about our communication because I don't want him thinking I am biased or that I have been snowed. Besides, that is between you and me and God....we need to pray hard for David and for your lawyer, they both need to open up to the leading of the Holy Spirit..."

A few months later, in another letter, DA General Gibson wrote "I saw the letter Patterson wrote to Jared and the part about retrying you for a bigger sentence was just to scare him. I am telling you that will not happen. You are at the max you will ever have to worry about." Later in the same letter he said about Patterson, "He has just not sought the Lord on your situation personally. He knows that I have but he has just not done it yet. David knows that I make the final calls and he respects that."

Now, it's highly unlikely that Gibson ever told his ADA Patterson about any of these communications, because he clearly knew they were completely unethical. In one of his early letters to Adams, as the State was negotiating a plea deal with him before the trial, he wrote, "I am taking a chance by writing to you without your attorney knowing it. It would mean a lot of trouble for me if you ever mentioned it. It is against the rules to communicate with someone who has counsel without the permission of the lawyer. Anyway what I want to say to you is not necessarily anything I want to get his approval on. So please keep this between you and me."

According to the Cookeville Herald Citizen, DA Gibson then himself "fashioned the plea bargain that allowed Adams, who had been charged with first degree murder, to instead plead to second degree murder for a shorter sentence and Gibson then also allegedly hoped to help Adams get even that sentence cut shorter through a post conviction relief petition."

**[33:20] Susan Simpson:** Well it obviously didn't stay between Gibson and Adams and it's kind of amazing that it took years to come out. But Gibson didn't back down when the complaint was lodged against him. He cited his long, successful history in public service and prosecuting crime, and told the media "I have done what I consider to be morally right and I don't plan to resign my job or do anything but go forward."

His license was suspended, and he was replaced as chief prosecutor in the DA's office, though he continued to collect his salary as the Attorney General, until a couple of years later when local legislators sponsored a bill to have Gibson removed entirely from the office.

By that time another story had emerged about an inappropriate relationship that he had developed with a different defendant he was prosecuting, again, a defendant he befriended without her attorney's knowledge.

The Herald-Citizen in Cookeville reported that Tina Sweat was a young woman who pleaded guilty a few years earlier to meth offenses and then sought help from DA Gibson in getting her criminal record expunged so that she could attend law school. Criminal charges of "official misconduct" and "tampering with or fabricating evidence" were brought against Gibson in January of 2008, but a grand jury failed to indict him.

It seems the combination of the legislation against him and the Sweat story finally prompted Gibson to resign in April 2008. The following year, his was disbarred from the practice of law entirely.

Then in 2010, Gibson joined the Power of Putnam, an anti-drug coalition, as their Executive Director. He applied for his license to be reinstated in 2016, and the Tennessee Supreme Court granted it. He didn't return to the practice of law however, he continues to act instead as the Executive Director of the Power of Putnam.

Today his LinkedIn profile reads: "The creator put each of us here for a purpose and equipped us with all the tools we need to accomplish our purpose. He put desires in our hearts, things we want to see happen, things we want to do, and have and be. Our individual responsibility is to identify what these are and go after them. Life is an adventure which is full of ups and downs, blessings and tragedies, constantly changing."

**[38:24] Colin Miller:** Gibson wasn't the only official connected to Greg's case to fall from grace and lose his professional licence. Medical Examiner Charles Harlan became known nationally in 2010 when he was featured in a 20/20 story about him and the many cases botched thanks to his inaccurate and false testimony. Harlan began his career as a medical examiner for Davidson County, Tennessee in 1983, working alongside his wife, who went to medical school with him in Memphis. The couple was featured in a local news profile in 1986 titled, "Coroners in Love."

"Death is a way of life for Charles and Gretel Harlan. They listen to classical music together, drive matching Mercedes and solve murder mysteries as Nashville's only husband and wife team on the death shift," the article begins. It goes on to say, "The two fight depression and the pressures of the job through officiating sports and singing in the church choir at their Baptist church. 'Most forensic pathologists happen to be very strong religious people,' Charles says. 'I'm fulfilling a function that is necessary to society. We help people who are grieving over the loss of their loved ones sometimes and help them through a time of stress.'

By 1989, Harlan was the chief medical examiner in the county, replacing the coroner who had signed Elvis Presley's death certificate and conducted the autopsy on Martin Luther King Jr. Big shoes to fill, but Harlan was only able to fill them for four years, after which he suddenly resigned. Now, it's not clear why he resigned from this post. A 2014 court opinion noted, "He denied that this resignation was based on allegations of unprofessional conduct regarding autopsies but stated, rather, that it was based on allegations of harassment by other employees." It wouldn't be his last resignation though. Harlan went on to work as a medical

examiner in Nashville, a post he was forced to leave in 1994 after three female employees sued him for sexual harassment. Harlan stopped working in an official state or county capacity then, going into private practice conducting forensic autopsies across the state for different jurisdictions. But the complaints against him didn't stop racking up - complaints of all sorts of weird behavior that are too hard to categorize as just one thing.

According to news reports, once, when he was asked by a bank for an official confirmation that someone had died, he wrote "ML is dead" on a blank piece of paper and faxed it to them. When the bank responded that the note wasn't sufficient for their purpose, Harlan gave it another shot. This time, he used his letterhead, and on it he hand wrote, "M.L. is dead. She is green and has maggots crawling on her" and faxed it over again. In another instance, "a tenant renting a house from him found a jar of body parts in the laundry room and tissue samples stored in a chocolate box." In 2002 he pleaded no contest to charges that he put a tracking device on the undercarriage of a car of a female employee. But while these incidents are alarming, it was his behavior in his official capacity as a medical examiner that truly shocks the senses.

In misconduct throughout his career, ranging from unethical to bizarre to frankly criminal, Harlan botched autopsies. Once, while conducting an autopsy in a murder case, Harlan let his dog into his autopsy room. According to a state prosecutor, the dog ended up eating body parts of the deceased. In another case, the widow of a deceased man explicitly stated she did not want Harlan to conduct the autopsy on her husband. When Harlan found out, he demanded the body, went ahead with the autopsy and then immediately destroyed all the organs of the deceased to make sure no other examiner could perform another autopsy.

**Rabia Chaudry:** Harlan misidentified bodies, in one instance sending the wrong bodies to the wrong families, and in another misidentifying a burnt body through dental records to belong to a man who happened to be alive and well and in prison at the time. When Harlan was questioned about the misidentification, he responded that, well, the unknown victim must have had a tooth implanted from the man in prison. But apparently, the single tooth Harlan had used to make the identification had actually never left the mouth of its original owner.

Harlan also misidentified the cause of death in case after case. In some cases, he found the cause of death to be homicide, when the death was natural, and in others, he determined the cause of death to be natural, when there was clearly foul play. The trend in the latter cases seemed to be mostly in the deaths of infants and children.

For example, a horrific example, in 1995 Harlan performed an autopsy on a ten year girl who weighed, at the time of her death, only 18 pounds. She was found unresponsive at her house by authorities, with her 8 year old brother attempting to perform CPR on her. Harlan listed the cause of her death as malnutrition, dehydration and muscle wasting as a result of bacterial meningitis in early childhood. Apparently, another sibling of the girl had died a year earlier, and that death was also determined to be from meningitis. Even given her condition and the death of her sibling, Harlan refused to indicate neglect or abuse on the autopsy report. Now law

enforcement opened an investigation into the young girl's death and when Harlan was interviewed by a detective about his autopsy findings, he responded that the girl was lucky to have lived as long as she did, that she didn't feel any pain, and that she was going to die anyway.

In numerous other cases, he found the deaths of young children and infants to be caused by falls and accidents, when in fact there were clear signs of abuse, like broken bones and bruising. Other pathologists in these cases determined the children's deaths were homicides caused by abuse. Harlan repeatedly determined that Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, SIDS, was the cause of death in infants where there were clearly other reasons the babies had died, like illness and abuse.

Proceedings to revoke Harlan's medical license began in 2003, when he was brought up on charges of gross negligence by the Tennessee Medical Board, including 27 allegations of unprofessional conduct, fraud and negligence. After decades of misconduct and two years of hearings, he was finally stripped of his credentials in 2005 by the Tennessee Department of Health. And yet, Harlan was permitted to continue to perform autopsies through his company, as long as he didn't sign any doctors reports. Not only that, he was allowed to continue to testify as a State's expert. He had, in fact, continued to testify throughout the years the TBI was investigating him, and on the day after his license was revoked, he testified in yet another murder trial.

That 20/20 story about him wasn't just about his failure as a medical examiner, it was about the impact of his botched autopsies on criminal cases. Numerous defendants have maintained that Harlan's inaccurate reports and testimony lead to wrongful murder convictions, including convictions that sent people to death row, which ended up opening the door to appeals for such defendants. Now Harlan eventually left the state and returned to Mississippi, where he lived out the rest of his years with his mother. He died in 2013 at the age of 65.

While some defendants have had success challenging their convictions based on Harlan's involvement as the medical examiner, in Greg's case there wasn't really such a path. After all, both Victor and Alla's deaths were clear cut homicides, with obvious and fatal gunshot wounds. And no matter how awful he was at his job, even Harlan probably couldn't mess that one up.

**[46:06] Susan Simpson:** If there was anyone in this case who could have and very much did mess it up, it would be TBI Agent Robert Kroffsik. To be clear, he's not the only law enforcement official involved in this investigation, but he was the lead investigator, and not only called the shots, but also held the hammer above the heads of witnesses. Unlike Gibson and Harlan though, Kroffsik did not end his career disgracefully. Quite the opposite in fact.

Kroffsik joined the TBI in 1997 after having already served 16 years in law enforcement in Orlando and then McMinnville, TN. In 2002 he was nominated unanimously by the Special Agents in the TBI's Criminal Investigation Division to receive their Employee of the Year award,

for, most notably, garnering a murder confession from a man whose wife had been missing for two years. In that case, Kroffsik didn't have a body, but he did have a hunch, and he interrogated the husband until he broke down and confessed to murdering his wife and hiding her body in a barrel that had been sitting behind his trailer for over two years.

The award nomination also noted that Kroffsik was the lead investigator one of the most high profile cases the State had seen - the murder of Senator Tommy Burks which resulted in the arrest and conviction of Byron Low-Tax Looper.

Kroffsik's personnel file is, in fact, full of letters of commendation and praise from superiors and across agencies. His file also contains a 1998 certificate noting his successful completion of a course on the Reid Technique - the interrogation technique that we now know has the propensity to produce false confessions. Which is precisely what happened in 1998 with arrest of Larry Selby for the 1993 murder of Pam Spurlock, his 29 year old neighbor. Spurlock was found beaten and stabbed to death at her trailer, and when questioned, Selby told authorities he had seen her arguing with two strange men in a black Buick the night she was killed. Selby also told the police that her 6 year old son came out of the trailer during the argument and she told him to go back inside. The next morning, the 6 year old boy woke up to find his mother's body.

Investigators searched for those two men in the black Buick, and for the murder weapon, but came up empty handed, and the case went cold for 5 years. That's when it caught the attention of a fairly new TBI agent - Robert Kroffsik. Kroffsik noted that Selby was the last person to see Spurlock alive, which was a red flag as far as he was concerned. Not long after that, Selby ended up getting arrested for drunk driving and Kroffsik took the opportunity to interview him while he was there in the jail. But Selby stuck by his original story.

Then, when Kroffsik returned for a second interview, again while Selby was in jail, well, this time, Selby confessed to the murder. Here is what Kroffsik said about the confession:

"He told me he made all that up back in 1993 because he was afraid he'd be identified by her little boy as someone who was there that night. He said he hadn't meant to hurt Pam, said things just got out of hand and he got mad. He said he just popped. He said he had been trying to get her to have sex with him.

Apparently though Selby didn't exactly remember murdering Pam Spurlock but he did remember having a knife in his hand when he left her trailer. He threw the knife onto the roof of one of the trailers that night, and not long after this confession, Kroffsik did indeed find a knife on the top of a nearby trailer. And, according to Kroffsik, every time he visited Selby in jail, he had new details to add, further bolstering his confession.

**Colin Miller:** Selby was arrested and charged with first degree murder by none other than DA General Bill Gibson, but a year later all charges against Selby were dropped when DAs office

filed a motion saying “the State has received information that needs further investigation concerning the guilt or innocence of the defendant.”

The State didn't come out and say that they had basically gotten the wrong man, but a new witness had apparently provided information that steered them in another direction. Besides, according to Selby's attorney, none of the evidence gathered from the crime scene matched her client. Not any fingerprints, DNA, or really anything connecting him to the crime or putting him inside the trailer.

Why then, an article in the Cookeville Herald Citizen asked, did Selby confess to the crime? Well his attorney believed that Selby, an alcoholic, was in an alcohol withdrawal stupor and didn't know what he was saying when he confessed. Which could certainly be the case, but undoubtedly Kroffsik was putting the Reid technique to use as well, and getting the results he wanted. It seemed that he used that technique down to the book, as Attorney Laura Nirider observed in Addendum 5 of this series. The transcript of Kroffsik's interviews with Keith Herbstreith demonstrated classic Reid technique maneuverings, and produced the desired confessions, even when they could not have possibly been true given the timelines in the case.

Now, it may be a stretch to call the use of a common law enforcement technique abusive or unethical, but combined with the ways we believe Kroffsik threatened and even coerced witnesses in this case, he was clearly crossing lines to get whatever he wanted. And not just with the witnesses who actually testified. Another one of Greg's associates, a man by the name of Lee Gabbard - whose fingerprints, by the way, were also compared to the ones on the flashlight battery - told Greg after he was arrested that when Kroffsik interrogated him, he offered him \$2500 to sign a statement against Greg.

Now we don't have an affidavit to this effect or any other evidence than a handwritten note documenting this exchange took place, and unfortunately Gabbard is one more person in this case who is now deceased. But his statement certainly does line up with how Kroffsik approached the other witnesses in this case, and the part about having Gabbard sign a statement, not write a statement but sign a statement, stood out because nearly every single witness statement in Greg Lance's file is written with the same handwriting - Kroffsik's. And every hand drawn map of the Heron farm that the witness statements say they drew themselves are also drawn by the same person, Kroffsik. Kroffsik just got the witnesses to sign the documents after he himself drafted them.

Another potential witness who never made it to trial was a woman by the name of Michelle Vaughn, who provided Greg's family a signed statement in 2003. Michelle was Rocky Harmon's girlfriend at the time of the murders, and later became his wife. You might remember that Greg and Becky had pizza one night after the murders with Rocky and Michelle, and from there the rumor began that Becky had told Michelle about their sudden marriage, explaining it by saying a wife couldn't testify against her husband.

According to Michelle, the following year in June or July of 1999, not long after Greg was arrested, Kroffsik barged into her house unannounced after following her home from work. He threatened to arrest Michelle if she didn't provide him with information against Greg, and he asked her whether Becky had told her that Greg and Becky got married because a wife couldn't testify against her husband. In the 2003 statement, Michelle said, "I told the TBI that when this remark was made by Becky, she was referring to the traffic incident in Smithville on the weekend before the murder of the Kolesnikows."

Becky had not been talking about herself and Greg, according to Michelle. She had been referring to the couple involved in the road rage incident and noting that the wife couldn't be made to testify against her husband, the man Greg got in an altercation with. Michelle's statement ended with this: "If you didn't tell Bob Kroffsik what he wanted you to say, he would coach you until you said what he wanted you to say."

**[54:03] Rabia Chaudry:** The problem of getting people to say what you wanted was that it could end up conflicting with cold hard facts, like all the evidence putting Greg in other locations when Kroffsik's witnesses put him elsewhere, or when the forensic evidence in the Spurlock case didn't match Selby.

And there was something else about the Selby case that stood struck me - the knife Kroffsik allegedly found on a trailer roof after Selby confessed to throwing it up there. But if Selby's confession was false, how did Kroffsik find evidence to corroborate it...unless Kroffsik himself planted that evidence there? Which made me think about the one piece of evidence that could be the only potential evidence tying the Heron farm to the Kolesnikow murders - those 9mm bullets that mysteriously appeared the second time the TBI searched the farm.

Now I think it's fair to say that someone was burning something on the farm the day before the bullets were found, after all both of the Powells, Judy Wells, Joe Brown, Marlon Ray and Brian Brinker all witnessed it. Ray and Brinker were the only two to have seen the man doing the burning, a man they described as Mexican looking, dark complected. And in his letter years later, Marlon Ray described a man sitting in the courtroom during Greg's trial that he thought was actually the man at the burnpile that day.

Just to refresh your memory, he described the man in the courtroom as dressed like a "goody boy", he was about six feet tall, with wire frame glasses, dark hair, and pock-marked skin.

When I asked, neither Greg or his mother Joyce recalled anyone by that description but then, as I was researching Kroffsik, I came across a picture of him that I would describe in nearly the same words as Ray did about the man in the courtroom. Black hair, olive complexion, wire frame glasses, and pock-marked skin. That picture, by the way, is our title image for this episode, so check it out yourself.

And as a law enforcement officer, Kroffsik was likely sitting in the courtroom in a suit and not in casual clothing like others, which may have been the goody boy outfit Ray was referring to. Is it possible that it was Kroffsik himself out on the Heron farm burning wood with bullets in it the day before the TBI was to conduct its second search, and the day after their first search where they found nothing? The appearance of those many bullets, where none were found just two days prior, has always been baffling, especially considering that none of the neighbors heard gunshots between those two days.

Now remember, the science behind matching bullets to a firearm is weak at best and to me, a number of things suggested the bullets at the Heron farm might have been planted, as we discussed in an earlier episode. Because really, investigators just needed to find some 9mm bullets there to make the case that Greg had been out there target practicing weeks earlier, he had left some gas cans behind, and then he had returned to burn evidence.

But planting bullets is no easy task, especially when they need to be fired bullets, but you can't really do any firing at the scene because the nosy neighbors might hear.

**[57:55] Rabia Chaudry:** However, such bullets could be fired somewhere else, into something like, say, a chest of drawers, or logs, or other kinds of wood, and that wood could be hauled to the site where the bullets need to be found, and there, it could be burned right before the authorities search the place. I know, it sounds far fetched. But who else knew that the TBI would be searching the farm? At first I thought ,okay, Mike Heron knew about it, Greg knew about it, and of course law enforcement knew about it. But that's not actually accurate.

Remember, Agent Winkler told Mike Heron they needed his permission to search the farm, and Mike gave it. But Winkler didn't tell Mike WHEN they would be searching it, and we know that because we have the transcript of the call. For all Mike knew they could be searching it the same day as the call, or the next day. But the TBI didn't search the farm until two days after that call. So, in reality, neither Mike nor Greg knew when the farm was going to be searched.

The only ones who really knew when the search would take place was law enforcement itself. And conveniently, instead of moving in immediately to conduct what you would think would be an urgent search in a double homicide with no leads, they waited two days. And, conveniently, someone was out there the day before, to make sure there was evidence to find.

Plus, is it really that far fetched that if Kroffsik planted a knife in the Selby case in 1998, which it seems he must have, that he wouldn't have planted bullets in Greg's case the same year?

It actually may be the only reasonable explanation of what really went down at the Heron farm on the day all those folks saw a man burning evidence - except I am now pretty sure he wasn't burning it, he was planting it.

Now, you may be thinking if Marlon Ray saw Kroffsik in the courtroom and realized that was the man they had seen burning drawers at the Heron farm, why didn't he just say so in his letter? Why did he describe him but not mention his name, because he must have known who Kroffsik was. After all, Kroffsik was the one who rushed down from the farm to Joe's place when Ray and Brinker were there looking for rabbits. Joe mentioned in his statement that when Ray and Brinker refused to give their names, Kroffsik put his hand on his gun and told them, yes they would indeed be providing their names and identification.

And it was Kroffsik to interviewed both Brinker and Ray just a few months before the trial- remember, he wrote their statements in his own handwriting, and he drew their maps of the farm himself, too. This question nagged at me- Why didn't Marlon Ray just name Kroffsik? But then I realized that if Kroffsik could intimidate half a dozen witnesses in this case to make up stories that simply couldn't have taken place because of the laws of time and physics- if he could intimidate Ray and Brinker to lie on the stand and identify Greg as the man burning the dresser drawers, when there was no way it could have been him, then there was no reason he couldn't intimidate Ray and Brinker into covering up that it was actually Kroffsik himself doing the burning.

And Marlon Ray was scared in that letter he wrote from prison, describing the man in the courtroom. He said he didn't want to get further involved or provide an official statement, telling her that he was afraid of being targeted by law enforcement. So if that was the case, he had very little incentive to name Kroffsik in a letter that would have likely been read by prison officials on its way out.

I realized I was limiting my imagination as to how far a cop who intimidates and coerces witnesses and plants evidence would go. After all, there is just very little incentive for corrupt officials to have boundaries for their corruption. Am I saying I know for sure that Kroffsik was at the Heron farm planting evidence the day before the TBI search? No, I can't know for sure. But I am saying that I see no reason he couldn't be.

Kroffsik took mandatory retirement from the TBI in 2006 and then he joined the TN Department of Corrections, but not long after he was diagnosed with bladder cancer. The cancer metastasized in 2009, and it eventually led to his death in 2012 at the age of 66.

**[01:02:19] Susan Simpson:** It's rarely completely clear in wrongful conviction cases why the police got on the wrong suspect in the first place. Sometimes, it just looks like tunnel vision. In a lot of our cases, like Joey Watkins and Adnan Syed and Chester Hollman and of course this one, the police got on the trail of a single suspect from the very outset of the case, and really just never looked back.

And in some cases, there just aren't a lot of other places to look, but in this case, that couldn't be further from the truth. If anything, Victor Kolesnikow had an embarrassment of enemies, all potential suspects in this case.

Let's start close to home, the mysterious third person who lived with Victor and Alla but was nowhere to be found on the morning of the murders- or ever again, actually. He's been described by many witnesses who knew the Kolesnikows as "the Russian man."

Two of these witnesses were husband and wife Michael and Reba Sanders, who had bought property from Victor, financed by him, in January of 1998. The Sanderses gave investigators a statement on August 10, 1998, 5 days after the murders. According to them, around the first of every month Reba would go to Victor's house to make their monthly payment.

When she went in June of 1998, two months before the murders, no one answered the door when she knocked. So Reba went around to the garage door entrance, where she saw a man walk around the corner of the house, coming from the back yard.

Reba said he was about 5' 4" tall, a stocky 210 pounds, had graying black hair, a tattoo of an anchor on his right arm and wore old wire glasses. He looked to be in his 50s or 60s, she said, and he was rough looking; Bumps on his face, eyes set in the back of his head, and a large, flat nose.

Right behind this man was Victor, who told Reba they had been working on building a deck in the back of the house. So, Reba went inside the house with Victor and made her payment to him and left shortly thereafter. Later in the same month, Reba was at a yard sale when Victor and Alla arrived with the same man. He couldn't speak English, Reba said, and Victor was talking to him in Russian or German, it sounded like to her.

Victor bought two sports jackets from the yard sale, one for himself and the other for his friend, and told Reba he was paying for them because the man with him was very poor and only made a dollar a day. That was what Victor was paying him to help with construction chores around his house. A dollar a day plus room and board.

**[01:05:06] Colin Miller:** This mystery man was mentioned in another statement by a woman named Patsy Pittman, who lived with her husband Ray Pittman and gave defense investigator Ronald Lax an interview in May of 1999.

That interview was as full of innuendo and inaccuracies and rumors as was the interview of Sherry Wilkins, the new trailer park manager who had found the murder poem. Patsy told Lax that she knew the evidence was overwhelming against Greg, that she was scared of him (even though he was arrested at that point), and that she knew about the murder poem, which she said described the murders of the Kolesnikows in gory detail.

Patsy also believed that one of Greg's friends had helped him commit the murders. She heard that the cops took Keith's car and found substantial amounts of gasoline spilled in it, and had found blood in the little red car that belonged to one of Greg's friends too.

She was leaning towards Keith being Greg's co-conspirator since both he and Greg had married their girlfriends and moved from the area after the murders, a clear sign of their guilt, as far as she was concerned. She also heard that Greg had threatened to kill Victor two days before the murders because Victor had found out that Greg was embezzling money from him, so there was his motive right there.

Patsy told Lax that the police had come with a cherry picker to Greg's house to retrieve something from high up in the tree in his yard- explosives, she believed.

If there was anything Patsy Pittman could get wrong, she did get it wrong, but that's what happens in these cases. Someone gets arrested for something terrible, and the people left behind fill in the blanks, playing telephone, and comb[in]ing bits of truth with loads of fiction and telling themselves whatever story they need in order to make sense of it.

Patsy did, however, seem to have some information about the Russian man living with the Kolesnikows. She told Lax that he was a relative of Alla's and had returned to Russia about ten days before the murders.

With a witness like this, it's hard to parse what information is accurate from what's inaccurate, so maybe Patsy was right about this man and had first hand knowledge that he had indeed left the area before the murders. Or maybe she had heard it from someone. Or, maybe she just made it up.

At the end of the interview Lax asked her why she thought that Victor made so many trips to New York, monthly trips according to numerous witnesses who knew him. Patsy paused, quiet for a moment, and then asked Lax if he really wanted to know her opinion.

Yes, Lax responded. He did want to know.

It had something to do with the Russian mob, she told him. And, she said, she believed the Russian mafia hired Greg to kill Victor.

**[01:07:42] Susan Simpson:** The Russian mafia thing has been floated here and there, especially given Victor's background as a nuclear scientist, but there simply doesn't seem to be any evidence of a connection there.

Why would the Russian mafia want this Ukranian slumlord in Tennessee dead? Maybe it had something to do with his monthly trips to New York, which did raise the suspicions of those who knew him. But, no one seemed to know what he was up to during those trips and while he apparently took his handyman Claude Wright with him, no one has ever asked Wright what they were doing up there every month.

We haven't been able to track Claude down, so unfortunately the question still lingers, but we may have found an answer in an old profile of Victor and Alla that ran in a local paper. The article noted that both husband and wife were very involved in charitable work for Ukraine, where people were suffering from great poverty, and part of their work was collecting clothing, shoes, and other items they sent back to Ukraine regularly.

It's not uncommon for immigrants in America doing charitable work overseas to collect nonperishable items to have shipped back to their home countries for distribution to the poor. And almost always, at least on the East coast, that shipping is done via cargo containers carried by freight ships from ports in New York.

So, one theory, maybe, is that that's what Victor was doing during these New York trips, but for now, that's all it is, a theory.

**[01:09:13] Colin Miller:** But as if the intrigue of the Russian mafia wasn't enough, there was also an anonymous informant who reached out to the Putnam County Sheriffs' office on August 10, 1998, in the week after the murders.

She had information, and she wanted to meet an investigator at the Food Lion parking lot in 20 minutes. She would be driving a red Oldsmobile, and wearing black pants and a blue sweater.

The notes from that meeting describe the informant as a 32 year old computer analyst working for the Cracker Barrel company. She refused to provide her name but told the detectives that on that very morning she visited a friend at the Ford Mobile Home Park and heard that Jack Phillips, the Mayor of Monterey, Tennessee had dealings with Victor and may have had something to do with the murder. Victor had, apparently, screwed him over as he had done to others in his property dealings.

She told the investigators, who were likely regretting the entire encounter, that she heard the Mayor had enough money to get what he wanted done.

She heard all this from someone else at the trailer park, and that person also told her that everyone at the trailer park was so terrified to talk and that no amount of money to get them to talk would make a difference. They were afraid something would happen to them, she said, and "they wanted to live."

Now, it's very likely that people were scared. After all, their former landlord and his wife, foreigners with mysterious foreign ties, were just brutally murdered and the killer or killers were still at large.

Remember how scared Kay said Keith was? He couldn't sleep for weeks, waking up violently from nightmares, certain that someone was going to kill him in his sleep and set his trailer on fire. He told Kay repeatedly that "they were going to get him, they were going to come after

him," but she never knew who he was talking about. The Russian mafia? The cops? The Mayor of Monterey?

Okay, the Mayor thing does seem odd. But it actually appears again in the file, in a report of an interview taken from Ray Pittman, the husband of Patsy Pittman, who we mentioned earlier.

According to Ray, Mayor Phillips was angry at Victor for not using laborers and materials from Monterey to work on his properties. He also apparently had a property he wanted Victor to buy, but apparently wasn't able to make the sale.

Of course, the police don't pursue the Mayor of Monterey in any way as a suspect, and why would they? If the only reason to do so was because he had a property or business dispute with Victor, well he could get in line.

As fire captain Robert Lane told us early in the season, Victor didn't do right by a lot of different people.

**Fire Captain Robert Lane:**

The Russian guy, he wasn't a very pleasant person to be around. He was contentious. Very few people liked him. He tried to take advantage of every situation and make it work his way, whatever he could do to do that.

He really wasn't- he's pretty fearless as far as caring about anybody's concerns or whatever. He just sort of pushed ahead. That was my impression of him.

**[01:12:12] Rabia Chaudry:** On the morning of the murders Victor's own sister, Lily Kolesnikow, told investigators that she thought he had been threatened by people he had evicted. And he had.

There were the two dozen or so folks we found in court records that he had evicted in the past few years, and among them was a man who had ongoing run-ins with the Kolesnikows for over a year before their murders, a man named Michael Parks.

According to a complaint filed against him by Victor and Alla, Parks had put a \$250 earnest money deposit on a piece of property in April of 1997, a property that Victor and Alla were trying to sell. That deposit was made for the purpose of negotiating a sale for the property. But Parks apparently took possession of the property and began making changes on it before they had even reached a sales agreement, or before he gave them any more money.

In their August 1997 complaint the Kolesnikows asked the court to evict Parks and grant them damages and attorney fees.

Parks responded to the complaint by denying all the allegations and demanding strict proof of them, and he asked to be awarded judgement by the Court. He filed this response a day after he filed a criminal trespass charge against Victor and Alla for entering what he claimed was his property.

In their next filing the Kolesnikows alleged that on September 4th, 1997 Michael Parks threatened Victor and Alla with a gun and threatened to kill them if they continued with their lawsuit. And, indeed, the next day Parks was arrested for aggravated assault but he bonded out for \$10,000.

The Court set a final hearing date in the matter for June 24th, 1998, about six weeks before the Kolesnikows were murdered, but on the day of the hearing, Victor and Alla moved the Court to dismiss the case altogether.

It could be that they had reached some sort of agreement with Parks by then or that he gave up the property himself or that they just didn't want to deal with it anymore.

After all, the Kolesnikows were juggling so many other eviction suits. Including one filed just two days before they were killed, which may have in fact been the spark that ended up burning down their lives.

Next time, on Undisclosed.

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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  
The Bledsoe County Correctional Complex  
1045 Horsehead Rd  
Pikeville, TN 37367

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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 series, 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).

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*Transcribed by Brita Bliss, Erica Fladell, Dawn Loges, and Skylar Park*