

Colin Miller: Starting on January 12th, 2000, the Rome Police Department was in charge of the investigation into the murder of Issac Dawkins. Based upon misinformation about an alleged shooting six months earlier, Joey Watkins soon became the prime suspect. But, based upon an inability to find evidence against him, such as evidence tying him to the car used by the shooter, or the likely murder weapon, he was soon written off as a suspect. Joey Watkins, however, was far from the only suspect investigated by the Rome Police Department, and questions remain today about whether we can write off those suspects as well.

Hi, and welcome to episode seven of Undisclosed. Today's episode is, "The Unusual Suspects." I'm Colin Miller, Associate Dean and Professor at The University of South Carolina School of Law. I also blog at [EvidenceProf blog](#).

As always, I'm joined by my colleagues, Rabia Chaudry (Rabia is an attorney and fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace,) and Susan Simpson. Susan is an attorney at the Volkov Law Group and she blogs at [The View from LL2](#).

In Jones versus State, the court of appeals of Georgia noted that, as a general rule, a defendant may introduce evidence which tends to show that another person committed the crime with which he is charged. Such evidence, however, must be otherwise admissible, and it's probative value must not be outweighed by the likelihood that it will cause undo delay, prejudice or confusion. Specifically, this evidence must be relevant to the accused's trial, show facts inconsistent with the accused's own guilt, and raise a reasonable inference or presumption as to his own innocence.

Such evidence must also directly connect the third party with the crime at issue and point clearly to the third party's guilt. Evidence which can have no other effect than to cast a bare suspicion on another, or to raise a conjectural inference as to the commission of the crime by another, is not admissible.

You could understand why Georgia courts would want evidence directly connecting a third party to a crime before a defendant could present it to a jury. We don't want defendants to be able to defame the good names of the innocent, and we don't want jurors to be confused by a bevy of the usual suspects.

On the other hand, Georgia courts have consistently said that circumstantial evidence, even in the absence of direct evidence, is sufficient to support a jury's finding of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. So, is it fair to hold defendants to a higher burden than the state?

Rabia Chaudry: Especially considering the fact that defense council is not gonna have the same powers that the state has to conduct an investigation and find that kind of evidence.

Susan Simpson: At the same time, I mean, in this case, it's a good example. If the defense had been able to point to every suspect there was, well, that would have lead to a lot of confusion on the jury's part because there were a lot of suspects. And a lot of them had plausible sounding reasons to be looked into. But for the purposes of our investigation and our podcast, I think it's important to see what the Rome police did and who they looked at before the Floyd County police settled on Joey.

Rabia Chaudry: So, as we mentioned before, once the Floyd County Police Department got involved in the case, there were no other suspects but Joey. Joey and a to-be-determined accomplice were always the target. And the only one. But in the first seven weeks of the case during the Rome Police Department's investigation, other suspects were pursued and other leads were followed.

Some of these alleged suspects were know by the defense and they were actually raised either at the trial and post-conviction, while other were just footnotes in the case that the defense never thought were worth pursuing. Or, they never knew about in the first place.

Susan Simpson: I mean, from the outset, this was going to be a hard case to investigate. Other than Joey, there was no hard suspect at first. Because Issac, he seemed like an unlikely person to be the victim of violent crime. He had no history of drugs or criminal activity, no obvious generalized risk factors, and a lot of people in his life seemed to have been unaware of any issues he might have had with anyone, including Joey.

For instance, here's a note taken by Moser when he spoke to Joy Boden, one of Issac's ex-girlfriends. She said that she'd talked to Issac on Monday, the day before he died. That evening, in fact. And Issac gave no indication of any problems with anyone. In fact, Joy Boden had never heard Issac mention any problems with Joey or Paul Allen.

Now, the reason Moser was asking about that? We know why he's asking about Joey, but Paul Allen was, at the beginning, the other suspect in this case.

Colin Miller: Yeah, so while Joey was one of the earliest suspects in Issac's death, he wasn't necessarily the first. Because at the same time that detective Moser was attempting to track down and interview Joey, he was also pursuing another teenager as a suspect of interest. And that was Paul Allen.

Now, Paul had been one of Joey's close friends, although they weren't as close at the time that this all happened. Now, Paul wasn't a suspect because of anything having to do with Joey. It was because the rumor was that Paul and Issac had bad blood between them as a result of Paul recently dating Issac's

sister Samantha. In fact, sometime in the fall of 1999, Samantha had actually moved in with Paul against her family's wishes, and although the rumors were of a dubious origin, the word around town was that, a few days before Issac's death, Issac had confronted Paul at his house and had taken his sister back home.

And, according to witnesses at the hospital the day that Issac was shot, Paul drove a black Comero. Now, of course, that's not a Honda, but it's of course closer to a Honda than a white truck.

So, on January 13th, a couple of days after Issac was shot, Detective Moser interviewed Paul. And it wasn't just as a witness; Paul, in fact, was given his Miranda warnings. He was interviewed as a potential suspect from the case. In response to the interrogation, Paul told Moser that he hadn't known Issac well, but they were friendly enough and they hung out, which they sometimes did on account of their girlfriends being best friends.

Now, Paul denied he'd ever had any bad words with Issac. He said he didn't know him that well. They'd talk sometimes, but they never had any words, never had any problems. And besides, he had an alibi for the night of the shooting.

Rabia Chaudry: So Paul's alibi was just a little bit loosey-goosey. It changed a bit as things went on, and the timings got a little more favorable to him. But still, it's clear that at some point that night, not too long after the murder took place, he was in northwest Rome because he was changing a tire for his aunt, Cricket.

Paul remained at the periphery of the investigation. He wasn't seriously considered as a suspect, but he was never actually cleared, either. And back in the months immediately after Issac's death, one of the more common rumors going around was the Joey and Paul had committed the murder together.

Here's Jessica, BriAnne's friend, talking about something she'd heard.

Interrogator: Alright, you said that, um, you'd heard some other rumors throughout the community. Alright, can you tell me um, the rumor - one of the rumors you had, you mentioned to me, you might've told Stanley some more, but one of the rumors you said was about Joey and Paul Allen. Tell me that story and tell me who you got it from and all, just in your own words.

Jessica: I'd um, went into work one day and a girl that I worked with named Tiffany was there. She came up to me and was like, I know who killed Issac and I was like, what are you talking about? She said there were two guys in here talking about their friend Paul, that was

sitting in a car when Joey and Issac got into an argument outside Joey's truck, and Joey shot the gun to scare him but it accidentally hit him.

Interrogator: Okay. And this conversation took place where?

Jessica: American Eagle.

Interrogator: American Eagle. Alright, and that's between you and Tiffany. And Tiffany's last name is?

Jessica: I think [unintelligible].

Interrogator: Alright. She tells you -- how did she learn that information?

Jessica: There were two guys talking about it in the store.

Interrogator: Who were those two guys?

Jessica: I have no idea, she didn't know.

Interrogator: She didn't know. Alright. And she said that - that Joey had the weapon?

Jessica: Yes, sir.

Rabia Chaudry: Eventually, Paul and Joey both begin circulating rumors that the other one had done it. And actually, both of them were getting their rumors from the same source: a guy named Josh Felmister. And both Paul and Joey would believe him, which was kind of a stupid move on both of their parts.

But Josh would go to Joey and tell him about how Paul had confessed that he'd done the murder, and then Josh would run and go say the reverse story to Paul and his friends. And both Paul and Joey believed Josh's stories about the other guy. Because, I mean, anything to get the police off their backs, right? And Stanley Sutton was pretty relentless.

So, if someone was telling you who the real murderer was, wouldn't you point that way, too, just to get the heat off of you? Because for awhile, Joey really did think that Paul might've done it.

Susan Simpson: Do you remember Josh's stories about Paul?

Joey Watkins: Not really.

Susan Simpson: And a recording?

Joey Watkins: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yes I do. Yes, I do. I do remember that. You're talking about the tape recorder that I had under my seat.

Susan Simpson: You really had one under your seat?

Joey Watkins: I really had one. Josh kept telling me that Paul had something to do with this, Paul did this, Paul said he did it, he admitting to doing this, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. So, I ended up going and getting Paul, I called Paul and I was like, look, man, I want to talk to you. And he was like, cool, what's up? And I was like, let's just meet up and, you know, we'll go off, we'll do something. So, I ended up picking him up, instead of going to his house, cause his mom and him didn't like me and my mom and dad didn't like him, I ended up going and picking him up at the Dempsey Dairy little turnaround right there, he walked up there, and me and Paul actually went to Buckhead that night. And the whole way there I had a little recording up under my seat, and uh, you know, kinda nonchalantly we would talk about the investigation and this that and the other with Issac, the deal with Issac and Paul was kinda - he wouldn't talk about it, when I asked him where he was at and what he was driving that night, and I kept telling him what I kept hearing and the only thing that he would admit was that he was driving Samantha's car that night and Samantha was in his car. Samantha and BriAnne were supposedly at a basketball game -- this is what Paul told me -- Samantha and BriAnne were supposedly at a basketball game and him and Chad and somebody else were in Samantha's car.

Susan Simpson: Did you keep that recording?

Joey Watkins: Unfortunately, Josh Flimster ended up with it.

Susan Simpson: Wait, how did that happen?

Joey Watkins: After that happened, like, two or three days later I went to Josh's house and Josh said, let me see the recorder, I'm going to talk to Paul, I'm gonna try to scare him into telling me what really happened, so I gave Josh the recorder and Josh was supposedly gonna get a confession out of Paul. Well, I went to Josh's house like two, three weeks later and that's when Josh was laid out on the floor, on pills, passed out, and I ended up telling his dad, look, I can't even wake him up, he's barely breathing. And I went back home, I told my mom what was going on and then went back to Josh's house and his grandparents had got him and I think they

took him to the hospital. So, when he recovers, he don't know what happened to the recording.

Susan Simpson: Oh...

Joey Watkins: So.

Rabia Chaudry: Now, Paul of course, returned the favor to Joey. He's the one that reports Josh's stories to Sutton in November, which leads to Joey's arrest a few days later and he testified against Joey at trial, adding embellishments to his stories that were really damaging to Joey.

Susan Simpson: When I met with Paul, or rather, surprised him at his workplace at the end of a shift, he was a bit surprised to find out who I was when I introduced myself. But he was friendly and willing to talk and unlike the vast majority of the state's witnesses, he didn't tell me to fuck off when I got there. He was very curious about Joey's case, but seemed deeply uncertain of what to think about it. In fact, if I phrased a question in a way that seemed to express doubt about Joey's conviction, he would usually jump back with an anecdote about how BriAnne had driven Joey crazy and how he probably should've tried to claim an insanity defense on the basis of that.

But if I phrased a question in a way that expressed doubts in Joey's innocence, Paul would surprise me by jumping in and trying to contradict me saying that, you know, it wasn't like that. Or that Joey wasn't anything like what he's being made out, he wasn't that bad, it wasn't the way it's being portrayed.

I spoke to him for probably half an hour, and I never could get him to express a firm opinion one way or the other as to whether he thought Joey was innocent. Joey's opinion on Paul, though, is a little less ambiguous.

Susan Simpson: I talked to Paul, too.

Joey Watkins: Paul who?

Susan Simpson: Allen.

Joey Watkins: I'm sorry.

Susan Simpson: He was actually really nice. You know, I thought he was one of the more interesting people I've talked to because he seemed so conflicted about you. And one of his workmates was there and whenever someone would make a comment like, oh yeah, Joey was

really bad or something, he'd be the one to be like, oh, no man, he wasn't that bad. It wasn't like that.

Joey Watkins: Ha. Yeah. I don't know. It's -- you know, people don't know me. What they hear about me -- they... they form an opinion and it kind of sticks.

Susan Simpson: Yeah. It just surprised me to see Paul Allen to be one of the ones who was pushing against it.

Joey Watkins: He must feel bad. But with Paul, you know, like I said, he was like my little brother. I loved -- I loved Paul to death. And if you messed with Paul, when we were younger, you had to mess with me. And um, you know. Hopefully one day I can look him face to face, you know, tell him, hey man, you know, I forgive you. But Paul did lie. And Paul did help do this to me.

Susan Simpson: While it's not that I don't understand Joey's point of view, I have a more charitable view of Paul than he does. Yes, Paul testified about some things at Joey's trial that weren't exactly true, but the things he stretched were minor in comparison to some other testimony in the case. And Paul had a lot more at stake than did any of the other kids caught up in this mix. Because, in a parallel universe, I think it's possible that Paul could've ended up where Joey is now for all the same wrong reasons.

And yeah, Paul was running around accusing Joey of murder on very flimsy evidence, but Joey was doing the same thing to Paul in return.

Joey Watkins: Yeah, I don't know.

Susan Simpson: He told me that he was lucky that there was a video surveillance of him changing his aunt's tire, or else he would've gotten in deeper than he did. I don't think there was a video.

Joey Watkins: There's not a video.

Susan Simpson: I didn't think there was either.

Joey Watkins: Yeah, that's -- that's BS.

Susan Simpson: Yeah.

Joey Watkins: See, Paul... I don't know. He doesn't kind of a -- I don't... I don't know.

Susan Simpson: Yeah.

Joey Watkins: I just know when all the heat -- the heat came down, they all pointed the finger at me.

Susan Simpson: And you pointed at him.

Joey Watkins: Yeah. I did.

Susan Simpson: And okay, yes, either in the past sixteen years Paul has invented a more favorable memory to explain why he had an alibi, or just straight-up lying to me, because, no, there was no video surveillance footage of him changing his aunt Cricket's tire. But, while things worked out better for Paul in the end, he still had to deal with being the runner-up suspect in a murder case for over a year. Which is probably while I feel sympathetic towards Paul. It really isn't hard to imagine a world where it's Paul locked up for killing his ex-girlfriend's brother in a rage over Issac coming between him and Samantha. And a world where I'd be ambushing Joey at work one day and having him tell me stories about how yeah, I remember Paul, I'm not sure what to think of his case, but if it hadn't been for that girl I bet we'd still be hanging out today.

Colin Miller: Now, while Paul was a clear, identifiable person who was a suspect in the investigation into Issac's death, our next alternate suspect is someone without a face or name, and we're going to refer to this person as Issac's doppelganger.

During the Rome Police Department's investigation, they came across rumors and potential leads pointing in all directions, but one of these that's especially interesting occurred on January 12th, 2000, the day after Issac died and Detective Moser took the following notes after talking to Issac's mother, "According to mom, V stopped by RPD months ago, truck searched, wrong truck, mom thinks mistake made by shooter." So that gives you the general gist of this theory. It's that Rome police officers pulled over Issac's truck months before the shooting and their searched it because they mistook it for a truck of someone apparently involved in criminal behavior. And so, you can imagine what might have happened here if someone driving a similar-looking truck was involved in nefarious activities, it's possible that not only the police, but a potential shooter on January 11th might have seen the truck, thought Issac was someone else and might have shot at him in the truck. So, nothing too concrete here, but certainly an interesting possibility of Issac being mistaken for someone else and that person being the target of the shooting.

Rabia Chaudry: And then there's the person that Issac possibly thought was following him. If Issac's death was a case of mistaken identity, the same thinking might explain the following: according to Moser's notes, in January 15th, 2000, four days after Issac was shot, he spoke with someone named "Ms. Nulan," the identity is not really clear. But according to Ms. Nulan, Issac had told her not long before his death that he thought he was being followed while driving in his truck, but he didn't know who the person following him was. In fact, Issac had told Ms. Nulan that he'd actually written down the car's license plate number but she didn't know the number.

A few days later, Issac's parents called Moser and told him that they had found a notepad in Issac's room with a note written on it. It said, "red neon sport with blue stripe," and had a license plate number on it. Although, they couldn't tell if one of the letters was a "T" or a "J." So Moser looked up both licenses, and while the "T" version brought up someone who didn't seem to have any possible connection with Issac, the "J" version actually belonged to a family who lived not far from the Dawkins in Armuchee, and who had a 15 year-old son that was a student at Armuchee High School, which Issac used to attend.

So, Moser ended up talking to people about the student and the notes he has says things like, the student was on medication, he was weird, and he would look right through you. And then he interviewed his mother and the notes there say, "son not violent - ADD." The notes also seem to indicate that Dawkins was a patient of the student's mother, who was a nurse. The notes say, "victim was patient?" So, we're not gonna use the student's name because this is all too speculative. But still, it is a confusing issue in the case. Why did Issac think he was being followed? And did he really think the 15 year-old from Armuchee had been the one following him?

Nulan wasn't the only one who Issac had reported this to, by the way.

Susan Simpson: And then we have statements from Issac's best friend, Jay Barnett. He also mentions that Issac had concerns about being followed, although in Jay's 2001 statement, it seems that Issac's concerns were directly related to Joey.

Investigator: But apparently, what you're telling me, that Issac felt like he was threatened and apparently he was gonna get a gun, did he elaborate on that or anything?

Jay Barnett: Well, I had asked him one night, we were coming back from a party and I'd saw it in there and I think it was like a 3-80 or something like that and I'd asked him, you know, why'd he keep that in his truck and he said just in case and then I was like, well, in case what? And he's like, well, I don't know, I just -- I just want one in here and he's like, well, you carry one, and I was like, well, I said, yeah, but I said I don't really ever give it a second thought and all of a sudden you start carrying one and then, uh, he kept saying, you just never know what

some people are gonna do and then I was like, what are you talking about, Joey? And he was like, well, I don't know, he's like, he's crazy enough to, but I don't know if he ever would or not. I said, well -- that was about the same time that Issac had started talking to me about breaking up with BriAnne because of all this.

Colin Miller: Next we'll have, as an alternate suspect, the person we'll refer to as the Kingston Bypass Shooter. And that's because there's a series of unexplained shootings at moving vehicles that occurred in the month before and after Issac's murder. All of them seem to be clustered around the East Rome bypass, though, and not Highway 27, but beyond that there's some eery similarities to the shooting of Issac Dawkins.

So here are a couple of the shootings. On December 27th, 1999, at 6:00 P.M., we have, "the above victim was traveling west on Kingston Road in a 1990 Chevy truck, when someone threw or maybe shot an object at his vehicle and shattered the right side of his windshield. He further states he heard what appeared to be a gunshot coming from a wooded area just off Kingston Road near Georgia 1. The area was checked, nothing or no one was found."

Next, we have this report from January 2nd, 2000, so about nine days before Issac was shot, 7:08 P.M., so similar to the time of the Issac Dawkins shooting, this says, "complainant states, that on or about date or time of above location, someone threw a rock from the side of the road, striking and busting the passenger side window of his white '93 Nissan pickup."

Susan Simpson: Now, it's not clear why, exactly, the January 2nd complainant thought that someone had thrown a rock at him as opposed to someone shooting at him. I mean, that's a busy section of the road he was on, it's not really a place kids would be hanging out and he didn't see any kids. So, either someone had a really strong arm and really good aim, or he just didn't identify it as a gunshot. Which, on the face of it, seems more likely to me.

And then there's a third incident. This one was much later. It was on February 26th, and took place at about 11:30 P.M., or at least it was reported at 11:30 P.M.. The report says, "on the date and time above, I was dispatched to Georgia loop 1 and Highway 411 to make contact with the victim who stated that while heading east on Georgia loop at the YMCA fields just west of the first bridge, an unknown subject shot at her vehicle, which was a '95 Toyota Corolla, green in color. The subject busted out the passenger-side window and put a dent in the passenger side rear, just right of the rear window. The police K-9 Kilo was used to try to find the suspect, but the suspect was not found." And there's also a second report that says, "the second vehicle involved in the shooting was a 2000 green Toyota Tacoma. This vehicle was being driven by another individual and the passenger window was shattered."

I actually spoke to the woman who was involved in the February 26 incident. The one who was driving the little green car. And it seems absolutely clear from talking to her that this was a gunshot. This was not rocks. Somehow, rocks weren't thrown to hit the cars three times. She could hear a shot, she couldn't see anyone, but there was a big field there that in the dark you couldn't see that well and that's all we know at this point. There was someone in the field, definitely shot at her, and it's very close to where the other two motorists reported that they had their windows busted out and one reported hearing a gunshot.

What I also find interesting, though, is that every single incident involved a pickup truck, and at least one of them was white. That was the January 2nd one, which was a pretty similar model to what Issac was in. Now, it's Georgia, so it's a high percentage of pick-up trucks, anyway, but it is weird. And I think it's mostly weird cause of the lack of interest in it. You'd think that where there were three possible shootings and two basically confirmed shootings in the same stretch of road in a two-span, people would be taking that seriously. But as far as I can tell, it was only looked in to because of Issac's case and then dismissed pretty quickly.

Rabia Chaudry: Were there any ballistics recovered from the other two shootings, like a gun, or bullets that would - could be matched?

Susan Simpson: No, not they found.

Rabia Chaudry: But this lady you spoke to, who is positive it was a gunshot, there's no actual bullet found in her car, is what you're saying.

Susan Simpson: No, they had the window shattered and they had the dent in the part of the car behind the window but that was it.

Colin Miller: Yeah, I mean, going back to the introduction it's one of those things where there's not direct evidence linking this possible other shooter to Issac's shooting, but there's something in evidence law known as the Doctrine of Chances and that's, what are the odds that you'd have this number of shootings of people in white trucks in the same general area and it's not the same person... I would have to think the odds are pretty low. I don't know that this is anything specific that points away from Joey, but it's certainly something that is interesting and I wish had been investigated more.

Susan Simpson: Yeah, if Issac had been shot on the East Rome bypass and they looked to Joey, that'd have been insane. But Issac was not shot on this highway. He was shot to the south, about, maybe a six minute drive away, seven minute drive away, on highway 27, so it's not the same place where these reports were being made.

Colin Miller: Moving on to the next possible alternate suspect, this is a woman by the name of Beth Lambert, and her nickname was "Loco," so this is Beth "Loco" Lambert, and the fascinating thing here is she supposedly confessed to Issac's murder.

Specifically, on January 15th, four days after Issac was shot, the police received a call from a woman by the name Sandra Stokes and she said that a woman named Elizabeth "Loco" Lambert had been bragging about committing the murder. Now, the tip also said that she'd been staying at the Rome Hotel, but when they went to check out they found out that Beth, Elizabeth, had skipped out on her bill on January 13th and hadn't been back.

So eventually, on January 26th, the police went to interview Sandra. Sandra told Detective Moser that Beth had been drunk at the time Sandra heard her confess to, or rather, brag about the murder of Issac. So, here are some notes from that interview.

Rabia Chaudry: Beth was drunk, Sandra heard her say, "I got me one." Beth bragging about what she heard, "I told you I was gonna get one. Shot him and he ran off the road." The notes go on to read, "Queen folks, coming up highway, was coming up road, shot towards rear window, white female, 132, old blue car, 140."

Susan Simpson: In other words, Sandra was saying that Beth had committed the murder in order to advance in rank in her gang, which was part of the Folk Nation. Now, later that same day, Moser did follow up with Loco, or, well, Beth.

Rabia Chaudry: Here's what the transcript says, "Moser: Now, are you a member of any gang? Lambert: No, I'm not a member of a gang. Moser: Do you want to be a member? Lambert: Unh-uh. Moser: Okay, do you pretend to anybody that you are a member? Lambert: No. Moser: Not at all? Uh, you know what a 'Queen' is? Lambert: A-huh. Moser: Okay, you -- you ever said anything about wanting to become a Queen? Lambert: No. Moser: Are you familiar with what initiation different gangs may have? Lambert: A-ha."

Susan Simpson: So, Moser goes on to ask her if she's heard about any initiations that are necessary to get higher up in a gang or having to shoot someone to get higher up and Beth says, well, I've heard about different organizations, they might do something like that, but hers never did. And she insists that having violence to initiate someone would be a violation. So, Moser asks her, what type of initiation would you go through in your organization? And she says, well, you know, they would be sat down and talked to and asked questions to get a feel for them and what their values and stuff were, what their morals were like. And Moser starts quizzing her about what morality in gang life is like, although Beth insists that it's not a gang, it's an organization. Much better word. She won't tell Moser

the name of it, but she denies being a Queen, says she doesn't want to be a Queen because that comes with certain responsibilities that she doesn't want to take.

Rabia Chaudry: So Moser asks, "So is your organization friendly?" and Lambert says, "Yeah." And Moser says, "Well, give me an idea of what your organization would want accomplished?" Lambert responds, "Uh, the basically, the -- the -- mental, physical and economical growth of our people, of our organization." Eventually, Moser gets to the point, "So, all, this all, as you know, this is all in confidence, us talking about um, hanging out, you know, around the motels. Do you --" And Lambert says, "I don't hang around motels. I took Kent out there to see his girlfriend, and we ended up getting in a fight with her." So Moser says, "Oh yeah, which -- did she, he's, who's his girlfriend?" And Lambert says, "Sandra Stocks."

Susan Simpson: Ah. There we go. So, according to Beth, she'd had a fight with Sandra on the 14th, which ended with Sandra promising to get Beth back. Beth says that the next day somebody came and told her that Sandra had called the police on her and told the police that Beth had shot someone. And, according to Beth, her reaction was that she didn't care, "I mean, I hadn't done anything. I mean, it kind of upset me that she would, you know, just get dirty like that cause I think that's kind of a low-blow, but --" And Moser asks her, "When she's talking about killing somebody?" And she says, "Yeah, that's kind of, you know. But I haven't done anything. So I'm not really worried about it."

Rabia Chaudry: And Beth was also able to name someone else, she said, who could verify her alibi. All-in-all, it seemed like the story just didn't check out. Still, there is one thing that's kind of interesting. On January 10th, the day before Issac's death, Beth bought a new car. A black-ish, blue-ish Delta '88. Not exactly an Accord, and not exactly small, but if the cops had ended up deciding on Beth as their suspect, you know that coincidence would have been the keystone of the case against her.

Susan Simpson: And then we have Stanley Brummet. He's only known from Moser's notes. There's a few references to him, and it was something that Moser checked out, but we don't know anything beyond what's written there. It seems that it was known that Stanley Brummet was mentally ill and had a reputation for road rage, and apparently, allegedly, owned a 9 millimeter.

Now, it seems like it came to the attention of the cops because, on several occasions in late '99, early 2000, before and after Issac's murder, Brummet had pulled a knife on Sears store employees up in Mount Berry Square, and then on the morning of February 26th, he actually pulled a knife on a Sears store employee that he ran into at Bo Jangles. And, when the Sears employee left, Brummet was overheard threatening to cut the employees head off. So, the police were called, Brummet was told to stay away from Sears, Brummet said, you can't make me, I'm gonna be there anyway. Not sure what happened with the Sears or Bo Jangles issues, but for unknown reasons, Moser's notes seem to link Brummet to the bypass shootings.

There's no indication of why, or like, other than the date, I guess, of February 26, why Moser thought Brummet might have been involved there, but he was looked into as a possible suspect in Issac's death until his friend Pete Powell gave him an alibi for the time of the shooting. Pete says that he was with Stanley Brummet at the time of the shooting. In fact, he was at Stanley's apartment, a little bit north of where Issac's wreck happened. And, in fact, when he left Stanley's house at about 7:30, he drove past the white truck wrecked in the woods.

So, Stanley Brummet had an alibi, it seemed like it was not related, probably wasn't. But I did find one thing that was kind of interesting. He was arrested in 2008 for pulling a gun on another motorist in a road rage incident while driving a Honda Accord. There's no indication is he had the Honda Accord back in 2000, but if Benson really is colorblind, could he have mistaken a red Honda Accord for a blue one? Maybe.

But beyond Moser's notes, we have no information on Stanley Brummet or Pete Powell, and both have now passed away, so it's not clear if there's anywhere else to now take this lead.

Rabia Chaudry: I mean, I would say he does seem to have a very clear alibi and whether his car is red or there's even colorblindness involved, it just seems like it wouldn't even matter.

Susan Simpson: Yeah, but the alibi is his friend, who conveniently was very close to the wreck at the time of the wreck. So, probably not related, but I still want to know why Moser thought he might've been involved in the other road side shootings.

Colin Miller: Next, we have the curious case of Joseph Boyd. In April 2000, three months after Issac's death and fourteen months before Joey went to trial, James Hudgins, a preacher and long-time Floyd County resident went to talk to Rome Police detective Jim Moser about the case. And what he told Moser was pretty interesting. According to Hudgins, his neighbor, Joseph Boyd, confessed to fatally shooting Dawkins because he was dating Boyd's ex-wife.

Boyd also added that he lived about one to two miles away from the murder scene and had heard a single gunshot from the Boyd property on January 11th, 2000, although he can't remember when it was fired. Moser followed up by interviewing a few people, such as Boyd's ex-wife and son, as well as Issac's friend Jay Barnett, and Boyd's ex-wife and son denied knowing Dawkins, but the son did acknowledge that his dad did have guns and he used to shoot them on his property.

Bernett also said that his friends and he had not heard of Ms. Boyd or any relationship she might've had with Dawkins. In the end, Moser wrote up a two to three sentence report about Hudgins' statement, but it was never passed along to the district attorney or the defense.

Rabia Chaudry: So thirteen months later, and one month before Joey's trial, Hudgins, the preacher, apparently decided to check into what had or hadn't happened with the statement. So he went to talk to Hal Goldin, an assistant District Attorney in Floyd County. Goldin's recollection of this conversation matches up with Hudgins own recollection. Hudgins told Goldin that he'd had a conversation with his neighbor, Joseph Boyd or John Boyd, he goes by both names.

And, according to Hudgins, Boyd told him that he, "killed that boy down on the highway," because he was dating his ex-wife. Hudgins also told Goldin that he'd had some problems with Boyd because Boyd had killed some of his Guinea fowls. But Hudgins also reported that Boyd had told him he'd been saved. Meaning that Hudgins, as a licensed minister, forgave him.

Like Moser, Goldin did not pass on this information to the defense. Finally, about two weeks after Joey was convicted of murdering Issac, Hudgins told the same information to Assistant D.A. Steve Cox and Tami Colston. After the interview, Cox immediately passed on this information to the defense, and Stanley Sutton interviewed Hudgins. Here's the audio of Sutton interviewing Hudgins in August of 2001.

Stanley Sutton: Mister Hudgins, just -- just tell me, um, since we're on tape -- you understand we're on tape -- just tell me everything that you know about this -- this Dawkins case. How you began to learn about this case?

James Hudgins: Well I began to learn about it, I had had some guineas go missing, and had found out that Joseph Boyd had done away with them and went up to -- he went to church down where uh, Major [unintelligible] and said he had got saved. So I, as a minister I can forgive you if you done me wrong and I went up to tell him that I could forgive him for doing away with my guineas and he says, "I didn't do away with 'em, I killed 'em." Had his little baby in his arms and he kinda grinned and smarted a little bit and he says, "I killed that boy down on the highway," I says, "Who?" He says, "The Dawkins boy." I said, "What'd you do that for?" He says, "He was dating my wife." I says, "How do you know?" He says, "She told me so. Had she been down there, I'da killed her, too."

Rabia Chaudry: During the interview, Hudgins said that this confession came soon after the Dawkins shooting.

Stanley Sutton: What month did this happen, when this conversation takes place between you and Joseph Boyd?

James Hudgins: Uh, don't remember, but about a month after, probably February or March, after the uh, boy was killed down on the highway.

Rabia Chaudry: Hudgins also told Sutton that Boyd threatened him after he reported this information to the police.

James Hudgins: Then, uh, rocked on there for a little while and I don't know where they interviewed him or interviewed her, but he came back down in my house and jumped on to me about that and told me he could get by with anything, he had friends up here in this police department, so. Whether that's true or not, I don't know.

Stanley Sutton: Are you saying that Joseph Boyd jumped on you, that he learned that you went to the city and he came to your house?

James Hudgins: Came to my house into my yard, yes.

Stanley Sutton: And threatened you?

James Hudgins: And basically threatened me, yes.

Stanley Sutton: In what way? Intimidating you? Threatening you?

James Hudgins: Intimidating me, telling me he had friends in the police department, could do anything he wanted to and get by with it.

Colin Miller: After Sutton interviewed Hudgins, he interviewed Joseph Boyd in October 2001, and during that interview, Boyd confirmed that he had had a conversation with Hudgins in which he admitted to killing his guineas.

Stanley Sutton: And exactly what did you tell him about the guineas?

Joseph Boyd: Uh, I told him that they were messing with my roosters and uh, I asked him about it several times and then he went and got some more, then he went and got a few more and um, then one day I come home, fed my roosters and they were all up by in one pile, and I shot them with my shotgun.

Stanley Sutton: And you told him this?

Joseph Boyd: Yes, sir.

Stanley Sutton: How long -- when did you kill his guineas?

Joseph Boyd: Must just have been about a year and a half ago, somewhere in there.

Colin Miller: According to Boyd, though, in this conversation, he did not admit to killing Issac Dawkins. Moreover, according to Boyd, he didn't even know Issac Dawkins.

Stanley Sutton: At that time, the conversation, that you told him that you killed his guineas, did you tell him you killed Issac Dawkins?

Joseph Boyd: No, sir.

Stanley Sutton: You didn't tell him that, uh, "I killed your guineas like I killed Issac Dawkins," or something like that?

Joseph Boyd: No, sir.

Stanley Sutton: You never told him that?

Joseph Boyd: No, sir.

Stanley Sutton: Did you tell anybody you ever done that?

Joseph Boyd: No, sir.

Stanley Sutton: Had anybody ever come to you that said that they bragged about killing Issac Dawkins?

Joseph Boyd: No, sir.

Stanley Sutton: And you never knew Issac Dawkins?

Joseph Boyd: No, sir.

Stanley Sutton: And you wouldn't mind taking a polygraph test?

Joseph Boyd: Not at all.

Stanley Sutton: And you're telling the truth today?

Joseph Boyd: Yes, sir.

Colin Miller: Now, as we said, none of this information was passed over to the defense in advance of trial, so you can imagine what happened when the defense got this information from Hudgins even though Boyd was denying it, they claimed that this was a Brady violation, that the information about Boyd confessing to killing Issac Dawkins was material exculpatory information and therefore that Joey Watkins was entitled to a new trial. So, the court held a hearing on the matter, and ultimately though, they denied Joey's motion for a new trial for a few reasons.

So first, they found Joey's co-defendant, Mark Free, was represented by the same attorney, that he learned about Hudgins' statement before Free's trial but didn't use it, so as a result, the trial court found, "we have the distinct impression, that defense council determined his testimony (Hudgins testimony) would not be helpful to the defense in the case."

Second, according to the court, Boyd denied either confessing or killing the victim and the place where Mr. Hudgins claimed the fatal shot was fired was over a mile away, with hilly terrain, from the murder scene.

And then, finally, third, they concluded, "Moser found nothing to substantiate any part of Mr. Hudgins' story."

Thereafter, Joey Watkins appealed this decision up to the Supreme Court of Georgia, but they ultimately affirmed the lower court's decision, concluding as follows,

"In assessing Watkins' contention that the State violated Brady versus Maryland by withholding the testimony of James Hudgins, the trial court correctly analyzed the evidence to determine if Watkins carried his burden of showing that, 1.) The state possessed information favorable to Watkins, 2.) Watkins did not possess the evidence, nor could he obtain it with due diligence, 3.) The prosecution suppressed the evidence, and 4.) A reasonable probability exists that the outcome of trial would have been different had the evidence been disclosed.

We find no error in the trial court's determination that Watkins failed to establish the fourth element, and that a review of Hudgins' testimony at the motion for a new trial supports the assessment that Hudgins' version of events was devoid of credibility when compared to the uncontested and objective evidence established at trial.

Rabia Chaudry: So, what the court is saying, basically, was that there was actually no prejudice to Joey by this not being turned over. That there wouldn't have been a difference in the outcome of the trial had this, you know, preacher testified that this other guy confessed to him. But in my mind, I'm

thinking, it seems like somebody who has a status, a member of the clergy, testifying to something like this would actually seem to carry a lot of weight with the local community, with the jury.

Colin Miller: Yeah, while Boyd denies shooting Issac Dawkins, he acknowledges he had this conversation with the preacher, Hudgins, about shooting his guineas. And the question is, why would Hudgins correctly relay that portion of their conversation and yet invent this entire separate confession where Joey Boyd is supposedly confessing to the murder of Issac Dawkins.

Rabia Chaudry: And I mean, come on. If Boyd is being questioned by the police, is he really gonna come forward and say, "I did shoot him." I mean, I would assumed he would immediately and consistently deny shooting Issac. But beyond that, the only way to explain this preacher, Hudgins, making up something like that would be maybe if he has this ongoing feud with him, he's really angry that he killed his birds. But it's a stretch to me to think a man of the cloth would do that. But maybe I'm giving him a little too much credibility.

Colin Miller: Yeah, that's certainly what the courts hold, and you can see, I think the key part of their conclusion, which is really the key part of a Brady analysis is, it's not enough just to have exculpatory information. The question is, is it material? Can it be corroborated? Do we have anything out there to be able to support this claim that someone else confessed to the murder?

Rabia Chaudry: Right.

Colin Miller: But at least as of a couple of weeks ago, we really didn't have anything to refute that. It was consistent with what the court had said, there was no evidence we could find in any of the files that tended to corroborate Hudgins' story.

But then, a couple of weeks ago, the Georgia Innocence Project was able to get recordings of an interview done by an investigator hired by Joey's father back in 2004. They had gone missing for years, but they had finally been uncovered and what we found in the file was this investigator interviewing a man by the name of Tony Sellman.

Rabia Chaudry: So this man, Tony Sellman, knew a young woman named Brianna. And this is not the same Brianna as our BriAnne Scarber, who used to date Joey and Issac. And Sellman once let Brianna catch a ride with him to the store.

This Brianna, who's also know as Breezy, had gone to Coosa High School, and she was dating Joey Boyd. And the fact that Boyd thought Sellman was now seeing Brianna made Boyd furious and it lead him to constantly harassing Sellman at his house. Now, at first, this got on Sellman's nerves. But things got worse when someone, presumably Boyd, shot the back window of Sellman's truck.

Tony Sellman: Yeah, he's kind of get on my nerves a little bit.

Investigator: I bet. 'Specially after getting your window shot out. Gotta get you agitated, a little bit. Uh, could you tell what shot the window out? Was it a shotgun or rifle or something like that?

Tony Sellman: Whatever it was, it come through cross-ways and hit my window. Back window, and come through. It never hit my front window.

Investigator: Never hit it?

Tony Sellman: Unh-uh.

Investigator: Okay.

Rabia Chaudry: Beyond the fact that Boyd had been coming to Sellman's house and harassing him, Sellman had another reason to believe that Boyd had shot the back window of his truck. He didn't report the shooting to the police. In fact, he had the window fixed the next day. But despite that, here's what he said.

Tony Sellman: It's like, after that -- you know, I seen him somewhere and he said something about my window getting shot out. And I don't even know how -- he didn't have a reason to know that my window got shot out unless something he'd been involved with it. Not saying he did it. Again, cause I had my window fixed the next day and uh -- I want to say he popped out of the woodwork saying something about it.

Rabia Chaudry: So, given the similarity of this shooting to the Issac Dawkins' shooting, you might have reason to believe that Boyd shot Dawkins. And according to Sellman, people indeed thought that Joey Boyd had killed Dawkins.

Tony Sellman: Later on I heard about Joey's name getting mentioned, you know, after my window got shot out. And I said things to a couple people. And they said, you know, lot of people think that he's the one that done that.

Rabia Chaudry: Sellman said that Issac must have known Brianna.

Investigator: Do you know if Brianna knew Issac?

Tony Sellman: *I'm sure she did. Issac was a -- he lived behind me growing up. He was about three or four years younger than me, I think. And so was Brianna, I'm sure they went to school together. We all went to Coosa.*

Investigator: *Issac went to Coosa?*

Tony Sellman: *U-huh.*

Rabia Chaudry: But, did the two date? We haven't been able to get confirmation one way or another. And what about the possibility that Issac was dating Joey Boyd's ex-wife, which is what Hudgins claimed was the reason that Boyd shot Issac. Here was Sellman's response to an open-ended question about Joey Boyd's possible involvement in the Issac Dawkins murder.

Investigator: *Did you ever hear anything else about the murder, or Issac, or anything like that? You know, other rumors? What'd people say when they were talking about Joey Boyd?*

Tony Sellman: *I'd say, um, was Issac foolin' with his -- Joey's ex-wife?*

Investigator: *That's the answer we're trying to find out. I don't know if it was with Joey's ex-wife or Issac was seeing Breezy or anything like that, I just -- I'm trying to see if there was anything behind that.*

Tony Sellman: *I -- I'm -- I think it was his ex-wife, cause I'm pretty sure that -- I'm not positive on it, but seems like his ex-wife has a few stalking charges on Joey and Issac was seeing her, or something to that effect. And maybe I'm getting confused, maybe it was Breezy, but. Or Brianna. But I think it was his wife, and I don't know if him and Brianna was married, but it was prior to him and Brianna getting together.*

Colin Miller: You know, I don't know anything about Sellman or his credibility, but he certainly seems to be saying his recollection is that Issac Dawkins was either dating Brianna or Joey Boyd's ex-wife, and of course, that is Hudgins' story. That Boyd got wind that Dawkins was dating his ex-wife or possibly his ex-girlfriend and that's why he killed him. And you know, this is exactly the corroboration that the Georgia courts were looking for to find a Brady violation. And Sellman's interview seems to provide it. I mean, I don't know how credible he is, but I mean, I don't know. Rabia, what do you think. It this something were Sellman might just be spitballing or something where you think there's some real substance to this claim?

Rabia Chaudry: I mean, I think it's real hard to determine and part of the problem that I have looking at this particular suspect is, what Sellman is relaying -- it could also be the result of him having heard rumors. Because things get around town and maybe people heard that this preacher Hudgins had been saying this, but what kind of frustrates me is that you could be able to better corroborate this by actually investigating. You know, the police could have actually investigated what Boyd was doing at the time. Did he have an alibi? Did he own a gun that would have made sense? What about a car? Could he have been connected to a little blue Honda?

There's very little investigation, or none maybe, that's actually done other than talking to a couple of people and -- and that's it. I don't see any evidence that they actually went out and pursued this as a serious possible lead in Issac's death. I have no information about what Boyd was doing on January 11th, 2000 at 7:00. I don't know what kind of car he owned. And that's the frustration is that -- and Sellman, this interview also was done years later with an investigator, it wasn't done around the same time.

So it's this huge missed opportunity to gather the kind of evidence that may or may not have corroborated Hudgins' statements.

Colin Miller: Yeah. And that's the problem is we just have a couple of sentences from Moser and for whatever reason, Hudgins' information wasn't passed along, so it's just -- three years later where this private investigator talks to Sellman and here we are fifteen, sixteen years later and trying to piece together what might have happened and yeah, it's a loose end out there. I don't know whether it's meaningful, I don't know whether it's meaningless, but certainly we have in this case a preacher coming forward, describing a conversation that undoubtedly happened, and the only question we have is, in addition to admitting to killing the guineas, did Joey Boyd confess to killing Issac Dawkins? And if he did, was that a legitimate question, or was that something that maybe was bragging, making something up, hyperbole, etc.

Rabia Chaudry: There's also another possibility which actually seems kind of obvious. And that's this: that this was a road rage situation gone terribly wrong. Because it would fit with what Wayne Benson saw and it would fit with all the evidence that we have. If it weren't for Issac's prior feud with Joey, or the feud that people think they had, I think that everyone would assume that this is actually what happened. Because let's start by looking at the information that wasn't disclosed to the defense before Joey's trial.

Susan Simpson: One of the things Clare was able to obtain was the file from the GDI. That's the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. And they're a state-level agency. They don't have first jurisdiction over crimes like this, but they can be called into help local police departments if they need assistance with forensics or other things they might not have the infrastructure to handle themselves. Now, there's a

story there as well about how GDI got to be involved in Issac's death. But, when Clare finally got the file, she saw what GDI agent James Garmin had written on March 9th, 2000. And it says, "Moser stated that information received also indicated that Issac Dawkins was hot-tempered while driving and possibly became involved in road rage. Moser advised Dawkins' reportedly was involved in many instances as the aggressor while driving on the highway. This information came from friends and co-workers."

And, in fact, we have a few references to that in Moser's notes. Including a note written on January 25th, with one of Issac's co-workers.

Colin Miller: So here are notes from an interview that Detective Moser had with a co-worker of Issac's by the name of Donna McCullum on January 25th, 2000.

"Donna McCullum via phone never mentioned any problems with anyone, happy-go-lucky, came in one month ago, running late, said coming down highway 27 behind old man talked with someone about old man, man flipped them off, victim impatient, drove too fast."

Susan Miller: Yeah, when explaining while Joey had to be the killer, Stanley Sutton had a common refrain: random shootings don't happen in Rome, Georgia. In New York or Atlanta? Sure. But not in Rome. This had to be a personal killing, he said. That's the only type that they got in their neck of the woods.

But of course, that's not true. Road rage shootings do happen in Rome. There was one not too long after Issac's death involving a 9 millimeter up on highway 293, and a man named Wayne Diamond I spoke to not too long ago said that in August of 2000, he was driving back at night towards the Rome area when he came across a car that was driving pretty slowly, kind of weaving, not driving right. Wayne wanted to get around him, so, you know, he honked, went around the car, passed it, and then they heard a gunshot.

His wife actually got shot through the chest. Although she didn't realize it at first, she just felt the burning. And then when they realized that was a gun shot, they took her to the hospital, police met them there. But that was it. There was no investigation to be done. But that was it. There was no investigation to be done. Because random road rage shootings are hard to investigate.

And then there's one more example of a road rage shooting happening in Rome.

Colin Miller: Probably the most famous painting by surrealist Salvador Dali is The Persistence of Memory. It's the one with the clocks melting in the sun, and critics have said that what makes the

painting so iconic is that we're not used to seeing watches decaying. Dali flips the normal expectation of time as eternal by depicting his clocks decaying.

It's the perfect metaphor for the investigation into a man named Heath Wilson as the person who might have killed Issac Dawkins, because, depending upon a matter of mere minutes, he could be the likeliest suspect or the biggest red herring. And the problem is that all we have to go by are a bunch of melted clocks.

Rabia Chaudry: On the night of January 11th, 2000, Rome Floyd E 9-1-1 received a phone call from a motorist. There's this blue Honda, the caller says, and it's speeding, weaving, driving aggressively. You should get someone out here.

But this encounter didn't just end with aggressive driving. A few minutes later, the blue Honda fires off two shots, one of which hits the back of a truck. But this is not the truck driven by Issac Dawkins. On the same night that Issac was killed, another highway shooting was reported, this time on highway 20. And the alleged shooter was a man named Heath Wilson, from Coosa High School, driving his aunt's '86 Honda Accord. The truck was driven by a man named David McDaniel.

Two shots were fired somewhere close to the Tannin station on 20, and one hit the left side of his tailgate. A few inches higher and it would have struck him. And by chance, David McDaniel recognized the driver of the vehicle who was believed to be the shooter: Heath Wilson.

David McDaniels: Uh, that night, I was in my vehicle and I was driving down the road and Ashley was in her car, and we had a car come up fast from behind us and started flashing the lights and was trying to go from lane to lane, just showing really upset behavior through the window, the car wouldn't go away, it wouldn't go around, it just kind of leaving there with us for a minute, almost like, harassing, you know, just flashing the lights and like road rage real bad.

The car would speed up, slow down, speed up, slow down, keep flashing the lights, do to your left side, go to your right side, and you know, we tried several ways to try to deescalate the situation but it seemed like no matter what we did the person in the vehicle was very irate. And that's when, a little while later, I noticed a flash. I didn't know what had happened at the time, but it sounded like somebody had threw something and hit my vehicle. A few minutes later we approached town, I remember pulling up to a red light, and by this time the car had pulled in front of me to the left. Like, just wouldn't go away.

There was a truck driver, an eighteen-wheeler driver, and you know, I can't remember a lot about that truck, where he was positioned at while we were driving, but I remember that

when I pulled in just in front of the GE plant there was a gas station there and I pulled in and I remember that the car pulled up and I remember this eighteen-wheeler come just barreling out of nowhere and then this driver gets out and he had a tire tool in his hand and, uh, I see the car pull forward, back up, and anyway, I really feel at that point that that truck driver -- it was almost like a citizen hero, really, cause I really feel that if that truck driver hadn't have come to the scene there and showed like, hey, somebody else is here with this guy, you know, he could see what was going on, that I may've been shot that night.

Susan Simpson: *Again.*

David McDaniels: *Yeah. Well, that was -- that was before I knew that I even got shot at, you know. It wasn't until later the next day that I actually knew a hundred percent sure that I actually got shot at.*

Rabia Chaudry: On Friday, four days after Issac was shot on Highway 127, Heath was arrested for the Highway 20 shooting.

Susan Simpson: Officer Adams from the Floyd County Police testified at Heath's trial about the arrest.

Officer Adams: *I went by the residence and I noted that the vehicle they were giving the look-out on was located at that residence. So I went approximately a half-block up the road and observed.*

Lawyer: *Alright, and how long do you reckon you sat there and watched?*

Officer Adams: *Probably about an hour, hour and a half.*

Lawyer: *Did anything happen after you'd been waiting an hour, hour and a half?*

Officer Adams: *Yeah, it did. After about an hour and a half I heard gun shots. Well, it was like a semi-automatic weapon being fired.*

Lawyer: *Okay. And how many shots did you hear?*

Officer Adams: *Probably 10, 12. They appeared to be coming from a field right behind the residence and I observed to subjects running from that field toward the -- it looked like a trailer of the residence.*

Lawyer: *Could you tell if they were male or female?*

Officer Lawyer: *Uh, male and female. I could also hear, she was like screaming about running or something like that.*

Lawyer: *Is it fair to say that your stress level went up a little bit?*

Officer Adams: *Yeah. Raised the hair on the back on my neck, you know, to be honest.*

Lawyer: *Alright. What'd you do?*

Officer Adams: *Well, I got out of the car, ran over to the residence and asked them to come outside, basically with their hands over their head, and after doing it about three times, a female subject came outside.*

Lawyer: *Okay. Did you later find out who this female was?*

Officer Adams: *Yes. And it was apparently his girlfriend or something. When she came out, I asked her where the male subject was, she said inside, I asked her to have him come outside, she went back into the residence and brought him out. I asked her where the weapon was they were firing. And she said inside. So, I asked her to go back inside and get it. She then went inside and brought the weapon back out.*

Lawyer: *What weapon did she bring?*

Officer Adams: *She brought a .380 caliber. She handed me that weapon and I smelled it and I asked them if this was the weapon they were firing and they both stated yes and it didn't smell like it had been fired.*

Lawyer: *What'd you do then?*

Officer Adams: *I asked the suspect to have a seat in the vehicle and as I started talking with her again, I said, this weapon doesn't appear to be fired, where's the weapon that you all were using. And she stated it was inside. At that time I asked her to go get it. She brought the weapon out, and when she brought the weapon out, it smelled. You could tell it had been fired. He looked at her and she looked at him and he said if anything had happened with that weapon, he said, it don't belong to me, it belongs to a friend.*

Lawyer: *What'd you do then?*

Officer Adams: Well, at that time, one of the investigators called and asked me what caliber weapon was seized at that residence, and I advised him it was a .380 caliber and also a 9 millimeter.

Rabia Chaudry: Despite the apparent similarities between the two shootings, and Heath's possession of a 9 millimeter, the Rome Police Department almost instantly ruled out Heath Wilson as a suspect in Issac's murder. An article in the News Tribune a few days after it reads as follows, "'The shot was likely fired while Dawkins was driving,' speculated RPD chief Hubert Smith. 'I don't want to make any statements that might spook the public, but I doubt seriously that we have a nut out here that is randomly shooting. But at this point in time, we don't know what we have.'"

Heath Wilson was ruled out as a suspect in the Highway 27 shooting because he had an alibi. He'd been involved in the shooting on Highway 20 at the time. According to Jim Moser, the timing of the Highway 20 shooting ruled out Heath Wilson as Issac's shooter. Here's his testimony at Heath Wilson's trial.

Lawyer: Detective Moser, I want to call your attention back to January of the year 2000, and ask if you became involved in the investigation of the murder of Issac Dawkins?

Detective Moser: Yes.

Lawyer: Okay. At some point during your investigation, was there an individual by the name of Heath Wilson who was initially a suspect in that shooting.

Detective Moser: No. I mean, he wasn't a suspect in my opinion.

Lawyer: Okay. Okay. Can you explain a little further as to why he was not?

Detective Moser: Well, at the time that Mr. Dawkins was shot, which you may remember, on the 11th of January 2000, was at 7:20 P.M., approximately the same time, there was an incident on 20 West past [unintelligible] Cemetery that occurred where there was a well, what I was advised in my investigation, a road rage incidence that occurred right around the same time frame of 7:19 to 7:25. Uh, it was during my preliminary investigation into that and that information that the person involved in that incident could not be by any means the same person involved with the shooting of Mr. Wat - uh, Dawkins, rather, on 27 South there by Alcan.

Colin Miller: Now, let me provide some context for the conclusion being drawn by Detective Moser. The police believe that Heath Wilson shot at David McDaniel on Highway 20, approximately 10 miles northwest and about a fifteen minutes drive from where someone shot at Issac Dawkins on January

11th, 2000. Now, obviously, Detective Moser is saying that the shooting at David McDaniel happened between 9:19 and 7:25 P.M., and given that someone shot at Issac Dawkins about 7:18, 7:19 P.M., obviously it would be impossible for Heath Wilson to be involved in both shootings if, in fact, the David McDaniel shooting happened between 7:19 and 7:25 P.M..

But here's where we start to get into melted clock territory. Because when initially there was reporting on the shooting at David McDaniel, the first news article said that shooting took place between 8:00 and 8:30 P.M.. And that's consistent with both the affidavit and the warrant for Heath Wilson's arrest, which also listed the time of the shooting between 8:00 and 8:30 P.M.. It wasn't until later, when police reviewed the handwritten dispatch logs, that they concluded the Highway 20 shooting at David McDaniel had actually taken place between 9:19 and 7:25 P.M., thus ruling out Heath Wilson as a suspect in the Issac Dawkins shooting.

But the question remains -- are those handwritten logs reliable? Because without the Sally records, the computer printouts showing the exact time that all calls are received by E 9-1-1, we have no way of knowing what time those calls were actually made. In fact, we believe it's possible that the shooting at David McDaniel actually happened at 7:00 or earlier, which would make it feasible that same shooter was involved in the Issac Dawkins shooting.

Obviously we'll deal with much more of this later, but one thing that we do know for certain is this. Heath Wilson's car. He was driving, on January 11th, 2000, a little blue Honda Accord. We believe it's blue, it might be navy blue or black, it's not entirely clear. But it's definitely a little Honda Accord. We know from the police notes that detective Moser and Lieutenant Bernet went out to a lot where Heath Wilson's Honda had been towed, and they took pictures of it, but for some reason, those pictures were never shown to Wayne Benson, the eye-witness to the Issac Dawkins shooting. He was shown a whole photo album full of photographs of hundreds of cars, but he was never shown Heath Wilson's Honda Accord.

Susan Simpson: They showed him pretty much every other single small, bluish foreign-make car in basically all of Floyd County. Except for the one that was definitely involved in a shooting that night.

Clare Gilbert: It's amazing. It actually took me quite a long time to figure that out, because I had such a strong assumption that they would have shown him the car. And it -- I -- I just... I'm really floored that they never did. They had the pictures. These pictures were taken by Detective Moser. Not by Floyd County.

Susan Simpson: That's what I was gonna ask. Moser took them. So there's no reason to take photos but for the Issac Dawkins investigation.

Clare Gilbert: Right. But they still didn't show them to him. I don't understand it.

Susan Simpson: When we interviewed Mr. Benson, that's one thing we wanted to do. Without telling him what the photos were, show him photos of Heath's car, and just see if it looked anything like the car he'd seen that night.

Mr. Benson agreed to meet with us. Although, he expressed to us from the start that, based on everything he'd heard about the case, he firmly believed in Joey's guilt. And, although willing to answer our questions, he warned us at the outset that we were wasting our time, that he knew nothing that could help Joey. And Joey was already where he belonged. But, if we really wanted to hear what he had to say, he'd speak to us. He didn't necessarily agree with our goals or what we looking into but he thought it was only fair to let us know what he'd remembered.

Towards the end of the interview with Wanye Benson, Larry Davis, the private investigator assisting the GIP, showed Benson pictures of Heath's car. And his reaction was not at all what we expected.

Susan Simpson: While we were interviewing Mr. Benson, and a little bit after we showed him the photos that we - we'd just got today, actually, after we -- after we had to call 9-1-1 to get into the police station to get the documents we had an appointment to pick, um, but, while he was looking at the photos -- not right at the start, a little bit later on, he kind of like this -- not quite a grin, kind of this wry smile sort of. Um, but definitely a smile.

Clare Gilbert: I didn't know what to make of it. I mean, my -- my -- at the time, I was just like, what is going through his head, is he thinking about something completely not related to this? But then, shortly after that, he's like, I -- I see what you guys are doing. You're getting me in a loophole here. He was holding the pictures of Heath Wilson's car, looking at them very closely while he was doing that, and what he was saying about -- about the loophole.

Susan Simpson: I'm not sure what kind of loophole Mr. Benson thought we'd found, or what caused him to smile, but he told us that, yes, the car in those photos was similar to one he'd seen that night.

Clare Gilbert: The thing that was most fascinating to me, and I was like, I was so nervous about him looking at the car that I couldn't even give it to him, I wanted you to give it to him. Um, but -- I mean, from the minute he looked at these pictures of Heath Wilson's car, he was like, well, that looks similar to what I saw. I mean, there -- there wasn't any hemming and hawing. I mean, he looked at it.

Susan Simpson: He stared. He stared deeply.

Larry Davis: He did and I was -- I was very happy to see that. I was concerned as well that he was gonna take the, you know, the first picture and immediately dismiss it and say, no, that's nothing like the -- the car that I saw. Um. But, uh.

Susan Simpson: He kind of did a double take.

Larry Davis: He -- he did. And the fact that -- the issue of the antenna, the way that he had described it as being unusual, uh, and then seeing the -- you know, the antenna on the -- the front portion of Heath Wilson's vehicle that he's now concluding that that very well could have been the antenna that he saw and remembered as being unusual, um. You know, says a lot. The other thing, of course, that struck me, is that he was never shown these photographs.

Clare Gilbert: Right.

Larry Davis: He was shown hundreds of other pictures and yet, you know, photographs of a vehicle that they knew had been involved in another shooting was not shown to an eye-witness. That seemed very unusual to me.

Colin Miller: Yeah, and Susan, I definitely want to make sure that we're highlighting the importance of this. It's my understanding, right, that back in 2000, 2001, Wayne Benson was shown pictures of hundreds of cars and said none of them really looked anything like the car that he saw involved in the Issac Dawkins shooting, and it was a completely different reaction when he was shown Heath Wilson's car, right?

Susan Simpson: I mean, I don't know if it's hundreds, but I've seen the photo album they showed Mr. Benson, and it's pretty substantial. It's a complete notebook of little, bluish small cars. But there wasn't an Accord of this year, or around that year, in the book. And the only one that Mr. Benson had flagged as even being possibly close to the car he had seen is actually the closest one in the book to Heath Wilson's car.

Rabia Chaudry: Am I the only one whose mind is boggled that you have another shooting that same night, and that person's car, like the picture of that person's car, that suspect, is not shown to -- to the one witness who could have identified it? It just seems like a huge lapse in the investigation.

Susan Simpson: Like Colin said, though. This could also just be the biggest red herring in the history of cases. Because yes, it all seems to match up. It's a little blue Honda that looks like the one that shot Issac, by someone who was arrested a few days later with a gun, a 9 millimeter. And his statement to the cops at the time of the arrest was, "if something bad happened with that weapon, it did not belong

to me, it belonged to a friend at work." Obviously, you're look at this guy as a suspect. And the cops did. The problem is, they decided that the shooting on Highway 20 happened, essentially, at the exact same time as the Highway 27 shooting. And those locations are too far apart for Heath Wilson to have been at both.

Colin Miller: And the two locations are, for point of reference, about 10 miles apart. And if you look at Google Maps, at least in 2016, they say the drive between the Highway 20 shooting and the Highway 27 shooting is about fifteen, sixteen minutes.

So, that's where things stood after seven weeks of investigation into the death of Issac Dawkins. The Rome Police Department had written off Joey Watkins as a viable suspect, and they had several possibly viable leads into the identity of the person who took Issac's life. But things were about to take a drastic turn. And that's because there was a new sheriff in town. At the behest of Issac's family, sheriff Stanley Sutton of the Floyd County Police Department took over, and he has a markedly different way of approaching the case. Next time, on Undisclosed.

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Episode seven is in the books. Thanks for coming along for the ride, everyone. And here come the credits. As always, out thanks to the Georgia Innocence Project for bringing us Joey's case. Find out more at www.GeorgialnnocenceProject.org.

Much love to our three great sponsors: [Casper](#), thank you so much for the mattress, we are really enjoying it here in the Robinson household. [Audible](#), and of course don't forget, you can get a 30 day free trial and a free audiobook at Audible.com/undisclosed. And our most delicious sponsor, [Blue Apron](#).

I want to thank you, the fans, especially the ones that have voted for the Undisclosed panel at South by Southwest. Folks, you can continue to vote for us up until September 2nd at the following URL. Bear with me, it's a little bit funky. Here is comes. www.panelpicker.sxsw.com/vote/67597. Or, you can just go to the Undisclosed Twitter, Instagram, Facebook pages and find the link there. Might be easier than trying to type in that URL.

The folks that make Undisclosed behind the scene, here they come: Ramiro Marquez and Patrick Cortes with the theme music. Ballookey with our logo. Nina Musser and Christie Williams with our website -- don't forget you can check out that website at: www.undisclosed-podcast.com.

Rebecca Lavoie of Partners in Crime Media and the podcast [Crime Writers On](#) is our producer. She gets help from Hannah McCarthy and Brooke Gittings. Don't forget Brooke's podcast, Actual Innocence, it's great, go listen.

Mital Telhan is the producer of everything. Here's your friendly weekly reminder to go ask Mr. Jon Cryer questions @TheUndisclosedAddendum, all you gotta do it tweet or Instagram with the hashtag #UDAddendum. Ask case questions. Hopefully, we'll read them on the show.

Otherwise, get at us on the social medias. You can find us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at our handle @UndisclosedPod and drive the discussion using the hashtag #Undisclosed.

Undisclosed Executive Producer is Dennis Robinson and he looks forward to your continued listenership next week for episode eight. Until then.