

Episode 12



Season 1 : E12 - Nothing Left to Booze: Bruce Roland

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Speakers: Bruce Fischer, Jamie Snow, Tammy Alexander, Lesley Pires

Episode Description: In 1999, repeat DUI offender Bruce Roland wrote to the McLean State Attorney's Office twice, pleading for leniency, saying he could get them an indictment in the Clark gas station murder. But when they sent detective Crowe to interview him nothing happened, because Roland only reported rumors he heard from others. But in 1999, he was in jail for another DUI. This time he really needed the favor. So he said Jamie confessed to him. A polygraph showed Roland was lying, but he testified against Jamie anyways. Other witnesses refuted his story, and testified that it was impossible, but Jamie was still convicted. Ten months later, Bruce Roland and his wife their own plea deals in return. This twelfth episode of Snow Files highlights the repetitive nature and tactics consistently used by snitches and prosecutors alike to get by in McLean County.

Music Intro: Injustice Anywhere presents Snow Files: The wrongful conviction of Jamie Snow and how they got away with it.

The mission of the Snow Files Podcast is to expose the misconduct of the State's Attorney's office under Charles Reynard. It is not our intention in any way to disparage the current State's Attorney's Office or the Bloomington Police Department.

Jamie Snow: It didn't surprise me at all that Bruce Roland was unable to identify me in the courtroom. And it was a surreal moment in the courtroom when Tina Griffin asked him to identify me and he couldn't do it. And it turned out that he was able to do it, kind of I guess in the same way that Danny Martinez was able to identify me. They whittled his pick down to one. And when she couldn't even prompt him to identify me, she just went over and held up one picture and said, who's this? And, of course, he was able to catch on to that. Oh, that's Jamie. So it was a really surreal moment. And it played out in front of the jury. And I don't even know what they were thinking.

You know, we did find out from another woman later on that after that happened, they started to... Before people would go in and testify, they'd tell them where I was sitting at and what I was wearing. You know, they didn't want to have a replay of that. You know, Bruce is just like the rest of the witnesses. He took advantage of the fire sale for deals for testimony. And the Bruce Roland situation kind of helps to illustrate how the state misrepresented the evidence to the jury. They lied to the jury and they withheld evidence. I mean, and they still are. Bruce was writing to the state's attorney Tina Griffin telling her that he had information that could bring indictments in the case, and that he wanted something in return for it. So she sent Charlie Crowe to talk to him. And whatever they talked about, whatever information Bruce gave Charlie, they've never turned it over to this day. We don't know what it was.

But all of that took place before him and I ever were in the same institution together. And when you guys take a look at these letters, you're going to see a guy that was so desperate for help from the State Attorney's Office, that he was begging. and he was trying to... even was throwing his wife and daughter under the bus, trying to get them some jail time as well. Trying to blame everything on them. So he was desperate. It was after he wrote those letters that him and I happen to be in the same institution together, and would have been after this alleged confrontation and confession took place.

But he never wrote the state's attorney back. And I think that's really important. When you look at the letters, he was writing the state's attorney, and how desperate he was for them to help him. Had I have really ran into him, which I didn't. Had I really ran into him and confessed this crime to him, he would have absolutely recontacted the state's attorney and been like, you know, "Hey, I've got some new information." So it didn't happen. The evidence that they withheld from us, I think

demonstrates really well why they withheld it. Because I've said this before, I'll always say, you know, credibility--witness credibility--is what this case was based on. The jury had to make a determination based on the credibility of witnesses. And the evidence that was withheld went directly to his credibility.

One last thing I want to point out about Bruce is that in the letters that he was writing for the state's attorney, he was suggesting that they... maybe you can take one of my sentences and run it concurrent rather than consecutive. And if you fast forward to 2001, he'd gotten out and was right back in jail. Was in trouble again, getting more penalized, and more felonies, driving on revokes. He was facing better than 10 years. He was facing extended terms on everything. And he got less time for his third and fourth DUIs than he did for his second. They sentenced him properly in the beginning in November of 2001. They gave him consecutive sentences. Because the Illinois statute says that when you're out on bond for one felony and you catch another one, when you're convicted you have to serve those sentences consecutively. And they ran them consecutively. But then just one day out of the clear blue, some judge entered a amended sentence and took one of his sentences and ran it concurrently, just like he'd asked years earlier. So that's what was going on. And this is what's keeping me from getting any forensic testing done.

So, you know, Bruce is, he's... We've contacted him. We've reached out to him and asked him if he would like to come on here and clarify anything, clear anything up, defend what he did. And he's just another one that is choosing not to, so. That's just another one of McClain County's finest witnesses in this case.

Bruce Fischer: In December of 1999, Detective Katz was contacted by Bruce Roland's attorney, Mack Arnold, and said that Roland had been arrested for what would have been his fourth or fifth DUI charge. But he felt his client's information would be worth a free pass on those charges. Arnold asked Detective Katz to contact State's Attorney Charles Reynard to see what kind of deal Reynard would be willing to make. The next day, Reynard told Katz to tell Arnold that if his client was totally truthful and if his information was correct that his office had a history of taking the person's cooperation into consideration at sentencing time. Within three days, a taped interview was conducted by Katz with Roland in reference to the Bill Little homicide.

Roland told police he learned about the crime the next day through the media. And a couple of months later, he had a conversation with Susan Powell. And she had asked

him to buy a leather coat, as it had been something to do with a murder. And that she ended up pawning the coat and stated that she had gotten the coat from Jamie Snow. Roland stated that the next time he heard anything was in February of 1994, when he was in Lincoln Correctional Center. He stated he ran into a couple of guys from Bloomington, C Note and Travis Gaddis. And that Travis Gaddis had told him that Jamie Snow was involved in the case.

After being transferred to Logan in April of 1994, Roland stated that he had a conversation with Jamie Snow while on assignment as a trustee. He went on to say that Jamie was in solitary confinement as he was on the circuit, and was being transferred from prison to prison. Roland stated that Snow told them they were out partying at Whitmer's house, which is three or four houses down from the gas station. Snow went on to say he went to the Clark gas station to buy a pack of cigarettes and that the attendant would not give them to him, and that Snow didn't have enough money to buy them. That's when Snow tried to unsuccessfully take the cigarettes.

According to Roland, Snow went on to say that he and Stretch left, but went back to the station, grabbed the cigarettes, and the guy started an altercation. And Snow shot the guy and took the money out of the register drawer, and got in the car and left. And that he thinks maybe Stretch was driving the car, but he isn't sure. And he shot the guy because the guy recognized him from earlier that evening. And they left Bloomington after that. Snow said he got at least one pack of cigarettes and some money. And that it was a hell of a lot more than \$40 or \$60. Roland said that's the only conversation he had with Snow, and Snow was transferred out shortly after that. Roland testified at both Susan and Jamie's trials much the same. However, he omitted the parts about the leather murder coat, as well as Travis Gaddis telling him that Jamie committed the crime. Roland testified that he did not get any promises from the state in reference to his DUI charges, and that he was testifying because he was a good citizen. There was however an interesting exchange at Jamie's trial when Tina Griffin asked Roland if he knew Jamie, and asked him to identify Jamie in court:

Griffin: Do you see Jamie Snow here in the courtroom today?

Roland: No, I don't.

Griffin: You don't see him in the courtroom today?

Roland: I don't see him over there.

Griffin: You don't see Jamie Snow here?

Roland: Uh uh.

Griffin: I am going to show you what is marked as People's Exhibit Number 53 and ask if you recognize him in this photograph.

Roland: Yes.

Griffin: Who do you recognize that photograph to be?

Roland: Jamie Snow.

Griffin: And showing you what is marked as People's Exhibit Number 56, ask if you recognize who is in that photograph.

Roland: Jamie Snow.

Griffin: Okay. And I'm going to show you what is marked as People's Exhibit Number 36, and ask if you recognize anybody in that.

Roland: Yeah.

Griffin: Who do you recognize that to be?

Roland: Jamie Snow.

Griffin: Now are you indicating that you don't see anybody in the courtroom that looks like those photographs of Jamie Snow how you knew him back when you knew him?

Roland: That's correct.

Bruce Fischer: Jamie has always been emphatic that he didn't know Bruce. Bruce couldn't do an in-court ID, even after Tina Griffin showed him three pictures of him.

He was also asked directly about the car and the money:

Griffin: And did he actually indicate to you after he shot William Little that he took the money out of the drawer?

Roland: No, no. He said. He did say that he took the money and cigarettes, and took off.

Griffin: Okay, did he indicate how they had left?

Roland: Not necessarily. He didn't say whether he peeled out of there or whatnot. But they left.

Griffin: Did he indicate that they got into a car?

Roland: No.

Bruce Fischer: It's the little inconsistencies that are critical. Note, they did not have any proof of a car at the scene, and the cash drawer was missing. So they couldn't have him testifying that he took the money out of the drawer. Finally, Roland testified emphatically that he never contacted police about this case until his DUI charge in 1999. He testified as follows:

Griffin: When you got released from prison, did you go to the police station with this information and share it with them?

Roland: No.

Griffin: Did you know why you didn't?

Roland: I just didn't want to be involved with it.

Griffin: Did there come a time, in fact, you did go to the police and give them this information?

Roland: Yes.

Griffin: Can you indicate how that came about?

Roland: I was arrested for a DUI and discussed it over with my attorney. The information I knew. And he suggested that I should probably come forward.

Griffin: Did your attorney then make contact with the police for you?

Roland: Yes.

Griffin: You met with them and shared the information?

Roland: Right.

Griffin: Would that have been in December of 1999?

Roland: Yeah.

Griffin: Now when you talked to the police the first time in December of '99 or anytime since, did the police or state's attorney or anybody make any promises or guarantees about you receiving anything in return for your statement?

Roland: No.

Bruce Fischer: At Jamie's request, his attorney also called Brian Whitmer to the stand. You know, the guy whose house they were supposedly partying at. Brian basically testified that he knows of Jamie, and that they did have an altercation in 1988. But then he has never hung out with him, and Jamie has never been at his house. He also testified that he was locked up on March 31, 1991. So he couldn't have been having a party anyway. Brian's father Carol Whitmer also testified that Brian was locked up that night, and that there was no party at the house. Carol states that he didn't recognize Jamie from the pictures shown to him. The state then presented records stating that Carol visited his son in jail that day, and tried to insinuate that Jamie could have been at his house that night while Brian was in jail during the hour that Carol visited Brian.

So that is all the jury knew at the time of both trials. But as usual, there's a lot of stuff that has been discovered since the trial. Roland's attorney Mack Arnold and Detective Barkes, one of the lead detectives on this investigation, were neighbors. Their children played together, and they frequently spent evenings together. In fact,

Barkes testified for Arnold when Arnold had a disciplinary hearing in 1994 for buying 10 ounces of marijuana for \$2,400 from Associate Judge William Mark Dalton, a judge who also presided over Arnold's cases in court. That's right, a judge who sold weed to attorneys who appeared in his court.

At that time Barkes testified, he was a police officer in the criminal investigations division and a drug enforcement coordinator for the Bloomington Housing Authority. Barkes testified that he saw no conflict with his position and seeking advice from Arnold, and that he would still let Arnold babysit his children. Arnold was found guilty. His law license was suspended for a year, and he was ordered to participate in a drug abuse support and testing program, and monitored for three years. We learned through FOIA requests that Roland had indeed reached out to both the police and the state's attorney's office, and had exchanged letters with the state's attorney's office in both May and April of 1994.

In a letter dated April 5, 1994, Roland writes:

Dear Charles Reynard, This letter is concerning information that I have leading to the indictment on the persons involved in the shooting death of William Little. I believe that I have enough to bring indictments up, but I am serving a three year sentence for a DUI and driving on a revoked license. I understand that there is a reward of \$5,000 from private donors, and Crimestoppers is also offering a \$2,500 reward leading to indictments. I would be happy to assist you with all information I have if there's help for me getting something like a conditional discharge or early release from the IDOC. I think I should be transferred to McClain County to discuss this matter. It just does not seem safe to discuss everything here in Lincoln Correctional Center. I'm willing to do what it takes to get this indictment. I hope we can help each other. Thank you, Bruce Roland.

Bruce Fischer: On April 12th, Assistant State's Attorney Tina Griffin notifies Crowe of the letter. On April 18th, Griffin responds to Roland:

Dear Mr. Roland, our office received your letter suggesting that you had information which could be of assistance in a pending investigation in our county. I have contacted the primary investigator assigned to the case, Detective Charles Crowe. And I have advised him of your letter. Detective Crowe should be contacting you in the near future to discuss your information with you. Very truly yours, Tina Griffin, First Assistant State's Attorney.

Bruce Fischer: We know Crowe contacted and met with Roland because of the letter that follows dated May 6, 1994. But apparently, there was not much information. There's also not a police report referencing this meeting, which is very unusual for Crowe who is meticulous about keeping records for interviews.

Dear Miss Griffin and Mr. Crowe, I have now received four more years for the charges of theft over \$300 and tampering with an ATM machine. The reason for the charges are strong, and out of faith that I had in my lady friend. She showed me how to make the deposit and how to withdraw the cash. Her and my daughter receive all cash. Also, the checks I wrote were for the things she stated she needed while I was gone in prison. This was clearly a con. And I was a fool enough to believe her. She promised me that she would pay for all these transactions. I'm not sure why or what I was feeling. But the truth is that I feel that she also should be charged for something. She helped with the deal with the ATM. I know my information was not much in the Little case, and I surely wish I could have helped more. I feel that my sentence was very harsh. This will cost me seven years of my life. I am in the process of filing a motion to reduce sentence to concurrent instead of consecutive. Can you please help me? I believe that maybe I could help you in the future. Thanks, Bruce Roland.

Bruce Fischer: Recall in his testimony, Roland repeatedly stated he never contacted the state until December of 1999. These letters were hidden from Jamie's defense team because they discredit the state's theory, because Jamie was not in prison with Roland at that time. And Roland is literally begging for help, and stated he will do anything to get it. And as we'll later here, he got the exact deal he asked for in his letters. As mentioned, we didn't know what happened at the meeting exactly. But according to movement records, Jamie was assigned a court writ for Logan on 11/21/94. And coincidentally, Roland was assigned to the sanitation crew at Logan on 11/22/94. The two assignments set them up to be at least in the same vicinity, with Roland having free movement.

Jamie stayed at Logan for exactly seven days, from 12/7/94 to 12/14/94. This is when he allegedly confessed the murder to Roland. Remember in Roland's initial police report when he mentions Travis Gaddis told him Snow did the crime? We discovered an interview from Travis Gaddis from 12/22/98, in which he is also asking for a deal. He states that Jamie and Stretch confessed to him in August or September of '91. And states that Jamie shot the kid because he thought he

recognized them. We think this is where Roland got his initial story, but Gaddis was left out because well, the detectives agreed to a deal on the tape. So he couldn't very well be used as a witness:

Detective: If we need to, would you be willing to talk about this again at a later time?

Gaddis: If certain things were done, yes.

Detective: Okay. And by certain things, we're saying that we'd talk to the state's attorney and see if you could possibly get some time out of this.

Gaddis: Some time out of it?

Detective: Some time reduced out of this.

Gaddis: Some completely reduced. Because I mean... I'm about to get off into my other speculations here.

Detective: We don't need to get into any other speculations. But you haven't, at this point you haven't been promised anything. Correct? Other than obstructing justice and harassing frankly.

Gaddis: Well, no. I don't want to be charged with nothing whatsoever. Nothing.

Detective: Right.

Gaddis: Or I don't want my [redacted] to be charged with anything.

Detective: As long as they're not. As long as you are him or not (illegible).

Gaddis: Neither one of us are involved.

Detective: Okay. This concludes the end of the taped interview.

Bruce Fischer: We also discovered that Bruce took and failed a polygraph in 1999. Although the polygraph was discovered, the results were omitted prior to trial. We only recently received these results. Also discovered was a police report from

February 2000, in which correctional officer Kenny, Roland's work supervisor in 1994, was interviewed. Kenny stated he remembered Bruce from Logan Correctional Center. Katz explained to Kenny that Bruce claimed to have a conversation with Kenny back in 1994 at Logan, that he had information about a murder case, and wanted to know what to do with it. Kenny said if Bruce would have said anything about a murder, he would have reported it. That he didn't recall the conversation. Of course, that report was never disclosed before trial.

It also turns out that in June of 2000, a couple of months before Susan's trial, another informant Karen Strong was being wiretap. The taped phone calls were between Strong and Bruce's then wife, Danielle Roland. Danielle made it very clear in the calls that she was seeking new evidence in this case in order to help her husband. We have the overhear tapes from 6/9/2000 and 6/28/2000. But it appears there were others referenced in the report. We have yet to get those. Between Susan's trial and Jamie's trial, they let Roland out on bond and even let him leave the state. During that time, Roland got another DUI that was never mentioned at trial. Jamie was sentenced in May of 2001. And both Bruce and Daniel Roland had plea hearings on November 9, 2001.

Danielle received two years probation and \$40 restitution for possession of a controlled substance. The following charges were dismissed:

Three counts of forgery, one count of obtaining a substance by fraud, and deceptive practices of writing a bad check.

Because of prior DUIs, Bruce was eligible for an extended sentence. However, he received less time on the following charges than he did on his second DUI:

1999 DUI, revoked license, uninsured vehicle, squealing screeching tires, headlight out

2000 criminal felony, driving with revoked or suspended license

2001 criminal felony, driving with revoked or suspended license

2001 criminal felony, aggravated DUI, driving with revoked license

2001 deceptive practices, writing a bad check

Roland received five years total. Both Roland and Danielle got their deals. In 2012, Danielle Roland came forward and came clean, even submitting an affidavit. Danielle stated that Bruce gave false information at trial. And that right after his conviction,

he told her he had lied, and they had numerous conversations about it. She stated that prior to him coming forward, Barukus and Katz harassed Bruce. Then he caught a DUI and called Katz. She stated she was with Bruce when he called Katz, and Bruce wanted to talk to Katz about the Jamie Snow case. She said Katz and Barkes came to see them the next day, but Bruce did not want to talk to them without a lawyer and hid upstairs. And that Katz told Danielle he was eligible for an extended term.

Danielle stated Katz was very flirtatious with her. And that he called her all of the time, even after the trial. Katz pressured her to make sure Bruce cooperated, telling her they could put Bruce away for 50 years. Further, Katz's wife was in charge of licensing home daycares, and Danielle had a home daycare. Katz made it clear that he had the power to do whatever he wanted through his wife. She stated Bruce caught another DUI between trials while he was out on bond, and that he had to serve time on that case. She stated her ex-husband was involved with Bill Little's sister Susan Little, and that he--her ex--was recording phone calls without her knowing. She stated Karen Strong called her out of the blue and told her that she was going to her ex-husband's and Susan's place and buying drugs. And that her kids had been there.

She stated when she found out, she took the tapes to Tina Griffin and Reynard to try to end visitation with her ex-husband. But instead, they got eavesdropping orders from Judge Bernardi--both Jamie and Susan's trial judge--and told her to find reasons to call her and grill her on the case. They wrote notes to tell her what to say. Danielle stated that after sentencing she told Jamie's attorney that Bruce had lied, but nothing ever happened. Bruce called Tammy Alexander as well after hearing a podcast about the letters he wrote the state from prison. Bruce admitted to Tammy that he doesn't remember seeing Jamie and Logan in 1994 and that they were not allowed to talk to inmates and could not have had a conversation.

Bruce remembered receiving the response to his letter from Tina Griffin. He stated that Crowe came to see him four days after he transferred to Logan in 1994. And that he told Crowe that all he knew was hearsay, and two inmates in another prison told him that Jamie did it. Bruce stated that Crowe or Katz wrote out a statement for him and had him sign it, but didn't say when the statement was signed or what he was referring to.

Bruce went on to say that the police followed him constantly after he got out on bond for a DUI, and that he also caught another DUI while he was out on bond. He stated the police threatened him with a max sentence on the charges, and that Katz was around all the time. And that Katz actually drove him to Springfield to have him take a polygraph. And the results were inconclusive. Bruce also stated they told them what to say at trial. Tam, what's the deal with the letters Bruce Roland wrote from prison? Can you expand on those?

Tammy Alexander: Sure. We discovered those letters in a FOIA request, and no one had seen them before or even knew they exist. We actually did an entire episode about those letters on the Injustice Anywhere Podcast. Bruce, you probably remember that a few years ago. No one knew anything about them. Roland called me after the show, because I had been trying to get in touch with him just to reach out to him. He would never respond. And then after the show, he called. And the first thing he said was that he didn't write those letters. And I was like, "Bruce, have you seen the letters?" And he said no. And I told him, you know, they're in handwriting and they're written from prison.

Because he was trying to say that his wife or then wife or someone else had written them, and was just trying to get him in trouble. But then he just came clean. And he told me that he had never seen Jamie in prison. I distinctly recall him saying that they were putting him under tremendous pressure, just like the others that we've seen before. They were making sure that he knew that he was eligible for an extended sentence. Even Danielle said much the same when I spoke with her. She said they were all over him. And he told her he was doing this for his family, that he just couldn't be locked up for that long. Obviously, this was a common tactic for those detectives.

Bruce Fischer: One of the most striking things about Bruce Roland was that he couldn't even identify Jamie in court. What was that like?

Tammy Alexander: I mean, it was ridiculous. And what strikes me the most about this is that that Tina Griffin, the Assistant State's Attorney, was allowed to show Roland three photographs of Jamie. And then she followed up with, you know, now are you indicating that you don't see anybody in the courtroom that looks like those photographs of Jamie Snow how you knew him back when you knew him. And I'd love to hear opinions from attorneys out there, it seems like Picl should have been

objected. I don't know how. How was she allowed to show him three photographs after he was unable to make an in-court ID?

And then, after all of that, he still couldn't identify him. I remember Jamie saying something like, when she was questioning him, she'd walked over to the defense table and kind of gesture towards him. But, you know, Bruce Roland should have been like, "Hey, it's the dude over at the defense table, that's not the lawyer." So that whole scenario was ridiculous. And I just don't understand how she was able to just show him three pictures of Jamie, when he couldn't ID him in court. In the hopes that he could. And why that wasn't even objected to. I have no idea why that wasn't objected to.

Bruce Fischer: So Jamie's attorney didn't challenge that at all.

Tammy Alexander: Not at all.

Bruce Fischer: Jamie Snow is sitting right in front of them and he can't identify him at all. He's pointing to an attorney.

Tammy Alexander: He didn't point to anybody. He was just like, I don't see him in the courtroom.

Bruce Fischer: It's amazing.

Tammy Alexander: And she walked over to the defense table, and she was kind of gesturing towards Jamie. You know, the whole time she's (illegible). I mean, I could just see her eyes darting to the left. A little head nod. But no, and he still didn't identify him. It was just a crazy scenario. It seems like the judge would have popped in or something.

Bruce Fischer: Tam, who is Travis Gaddis, and what was his deal?

Tammy Alexander: Travis Gaddis was just someone else who was trying to get a deal on the back of this case. In his tape, he even says that blatantly. But Detective Shepard tells them, you know, he'll get him one. So I think that might be why he was never brought into it. He was never called to testify. I mean, he said Jamie told me he did it, just like the rest of them he made up this elaborate story. We only heard his interview tape when we received from the FOIA lawsuit, so we didn't know this

before. Like I said, he didn't testify. But that tape is telling, and we're going to put it up. Because it's telling him that, because Detective Shepard didn't turn the tape off. He wasn't as careful seemingly as Katz and Barkes were. So, he just let it run. And he was talking about them giving a deal. Travis was like, get his brother out of it, get him out of it. And you know, and how they better get no time for this kind of information. So, it's very, very telling on how the detectives were working this case. And that's what's important about it. Because there were others too that they were threatening, but either they couldn't use or they just couldn't put their timeline together to make it fit into their theory.

Bruce Fischer: It basically show how they were willing to manipulate witnesses.

Tammy Alexander: And give them what they wanted. I mean, that Travis Gaddis tape is incredible. Because they are talking about the deal and they're negotiating the deal. It's incredible, which is why of course it wasn't used.

Bruce Fischer Who was Karen Strong? How was she involved?

Tammy Alexander: Well, Karen Strong was Stretch's--which was Mark McCowan's--girlfriend at the time of the crime. She would testify that Jamie came over to their house the night of the crime looking for a place to hide, but she wouldn't allow it. I don't even know if she knows at this point if they were wiretapping. But we're going to cover her testimony in the next episode. But it's strange how these people start coming together. You know, all of these people from the past are coming back up, and they're kind of weaving them into their narrative. I will tell you, Stretch and Jamie were best friends growing up. He was one of the only ones that was actually... Jamie could, yes he was my best friend. So they were buddies from the time they were very young. But by the time Jamie was older, like during this time, they weren't hanging out as much. They were kind of going their separate ways. Jamie had kids, so it was the whole nine yards.

But a lot of people, and you see it over and over in this case, say that stretch and Jamie did this. And you can see over and over where they were trying to implicate Stretch in this crime. It varies. You know, stretch and Danny Hendrix and... you know, they bring other people around. Oh, it was him. It was him. It was him. And everybody's got a story. But there's no evidence that Stretch was there. Stretch actually testified for Jamie, was called to testify for Jamie to attempt to impeach

Karen Strong's testimony. But we're going to do a whole episode on Karen Strong. That'll be the next episode, so we'll learn a lot more about her.

Bruce Fischer: We're gonna provide a lot more information about Karen Strong.

Tammy Alexander: Yes, we are.

Bruce Fischer: Leslie, Roland testified at both Jamie's codefendant's trial and at Jamie's trial. We heard how he couldn't even identify Jamie in court, but what else went on there? What was he like with the lawyers?

Lesley Pires: Well, the testimony at both trials was identical by the prosecution. It really could have just been copy and pasted. It was all in the same order. And the trials were only five months apart. So it makes sense. Because in his conversation with Tammy, he said that they prepped in a room moments before the trial, and they had told them what to say. And he also had that exact same story in his 1999 recorded interview, and it's never changed since then. What is interesting to me, though, is that there's only one thing that changed slightly when the prosecution was questioning him. At Susan's trial, the prosecutor Tina Griffin asked him to specify that he didn't get anything in return for his DUI charge. But in Jamie's trial she specified that he didn't get promised anything in exchange for any of his testimony.

And his sentencing hearing wasn't for 10 more months, so it's possible that was a play on words and he just hadn't gotten anything yet. And the reason why I find that interesting is because she literally copied the transcript from Susan's trial and read it word for word at Jamie's trial. And then she changed that one question at the end. So to me, that shows some kind of consciousness that she paid more attention to the edit in that question. And as we found out later, they did withhold information about him asking for favors in return for his information. And Crowe didn't give him anything back in 1994. So that just shows me, as she likes to say so much, consciousness of guilt that she did something during the trial.

So with the defense at Susan's trial, Defense Attorney Steve Skelton kept it really brief. And he only wanted Roland to admit that Brian Whitmer's house was less than two minutes away from the gas station, which inferred to the jury that it made no sense for him to take a car back to the crime scene to fight over those cigarettes. He also got him to admit that he was in a lot of trouble for that DUI and could go back to

prison, and that it had been five years since he supposedly heard the confession and reported it. But we know now that that's not really true, because he told the police that story in 1994. And like we keep telling you, those letters were withheld in an effort to hide the begging that he did for that deal. And it makes me wonder if he would have ever come back to play with Katz and Barkes in 1999 had he stayed straight and not been arrested again for that DUI.

So surprisingly at Jamie's trial, Defense Attorney Frank Picl did a lot more defense work with Roland than Skelton had done at Susan's. Of course he opened with his classic move, asking him if he thinks that he's an outstanding, honest, trustworthy citizen, to which Roland agrees to of course. But then Frank elaborated a little more on Skeleton's DUI tactic and flat out accused Roland of still being able to finagle a deal for himself, stating that although he had not been promised anything by the prosecutor, he could still plead to the judge during his sentencing hearing that he's a good citizen who did the right thing with this case, and therefore could get favor out of it.

And he also makes Roland recite the whole argument over the cigarette situation several times in a move to point out how ridiculous it is that someone would get shot over that. He asked him several times if Jamie ever said he could have just left with the cigarettes, shoplifted them or stole them instead of killing someone over it, which actually makes a lot more sense to even the most diluted of criminals. But Roland just kept saying he didn't mention if that was an option.

So most importantly, Frank got the Whitmers to testify for Jamie. You might remember they're the people who lived really close to the gas station who other witnesses also threw into the mix before. At the trial, both father and son said they couldn't identify Jamie, with the father saying he can't even recognize him in his younger photos. And they both insist they never met Jamie, and there was absolutely no party at their house that night--as the son Brian was in prison and the father was home with his wife and granddaughter. The father said he remembers the night so well because police came to his house to investigate right after the shooting, and he even let them into his garage. So he recalls for sure there was no party.

That was excellent impeachment testimony. It was just as good as the two Frank brought in that we talked about in the last episode, where Jamie's supervising C.O. said Jamie and Ed Hammond never crossed into each other's yards. And Ed Hammond's relative said Ed admitted to him at court that he never even knew Jamie.

So Frank did really impeach both of those snitches, and it could have been like that the whole time if he had tried just as hard with all the other witnesses.

Bruce Fischer: Who exactly are the Whitmers, and why were they brought into it?

Tammy Alexander: The only thing we can figure out about the witnesses is that Brian Whitmer used to get in trouble too. I mean, obviously he was in jail the night of the crime, so he was in McLean County. He was the only house of a known person that was getting in trouble. You know, he was just in that element. So he was the only house that was close. Someone brought it up early on, and we think it's part of the narrative that they were feeding people or it was actually part of the rumor that was going around.

Now a lot of this is based on rumors. They built this story on that. So recall, a lot of these guys were in prison together. Moffitt, Hammond, Palumbo. Then you got Roland and Travis Gaddis that have the same narrative. Moffitt, Hammond, Palumbo--same narrative. I think they all just assumed that Jamie knew Brian. But what they didn't know is that Brian and Jamie didn't really know each other, just of each other. And what they did know of each other, they didn't like. So they never hung out. They never went to parties together. That's why Jamie was so adamant about getting him on the witness list. He knew Brian was going to be pissed when he came to court. I think he was in Menard, which is all the way down south. Transports are hard. You're usually shackled for hours. That means feet and hands, and that's painful. You have to get up for the sun comes up. You're driving all this way, in a van. He was not happy by the time he got on the stand. And that's really evident in his testimony.

I would encourage everybody to read his testimony because it's just interesting some of the things he said. He was a hostile witness. And he's like, no I don't know Jamie. I know of him and I don't care about him. So you know, and like Lesley says, they were excellent witnesses to have. But they tried to put this window of time, and they did the same thing to Tammy Snow. You know, when she made a snarky remark when they were hammering her about if Jamie was ever out of your sight that day. And she said I don't know, he might have walked across the street to get a pack of cigarettes. And they just honed in on that.

Well, they did the same thing with him. He was like, well yeah, Brian was in jail that night. We went and saw him for an hour. But it wouldn't have been any longer than

an hour. No, there wasn't a... They tried to say there was a party in this house while they were gone on Easter Sunday, to go visit their son in jail. How much sense does that make? But they just pick apart like every little tiny thing that they can. But that was so incredible for them to say that. I can't even imagine a jury member believing that scenario. But they had to tie Brian into it because they had the other people. Part of their narrative was that he was down at the Whitmer's house. And that's what it was.

Bruce Fischer: It's interesting how they can build the doubt though, because there's little... You know, any window of time where something else could have happened, it leads the jury to think, hey maybe that did happen or that was possible. So it is a tactic that can work.

Tammy Alexander: You know, it's true.

Bruce Fischer: As ridiculous as it sounds. I mean, we've seen cases where people literally have 10 minutes to go murder their entire family and go back to a basketball game, and the jury buys it. We had that with David Cam in Indiana, a police officer. He literally had less than 10 minutes to leave a basketball game at a church, go murder his entire family, and come back and finish the game.

Tammy Alexander: Eleven witnesses he had.

Bruce Fischer: How do you build a case on that?

Tammy Alexander: They did. And he sure did go to prison.

Bruce Fischer: So I mean, I can understand why these tactics are used. You'll hear as well. Well, wait a minute, you weren't with them 24/7? There was seven minutes where you didn't see him?

Tammy Alexander: That is so scary because first of all, this dude was a cop. And then all the people that he's playing with are like church going, pillars of the community. And like eleven people came up and was just like, he was playing a basketball with us. I mean, he was playing basketball while his family was murdered. That just destroys all their credibility, because they're just so determined to get him.

Bruce Fischer: Right. And that's what these people are doing here too. That's what the prosecutors are doing. They're just trying to find little windows where they can show some doubt that hey, they weren't with them 24 hours a day. They don't know what they were doing. But when you look at the whole picture, it's just ridiculous.

Tammy Alexander: It is.

Bruce Fischer: Tam, can you elaborate on how Roland and his wife got deals in November that same year, how Roland had his sentence switch to a concurrent sentence, the exact thing he had wanted back in 1994 for the fraud charges.

Tammy Alexander: Well from what Danielle told me, when Roland got his second DUI between trials--that was after Susan's trial, but before he was to testify in Jamie's trial--they came to him and told him that he was going to have to start some time. Initially, she said that they were actually going to get Roland probation for that DUI, even though that would have been his third DUI. But because he got another DUI while he was out on bond, they were telling him that he had to get time. We think that sentence is illegal because he did get a concurrent sentence. I mean, he had two DUIs, and one of them he had while he was on bond. And the statute clearly states you cannot have a concurrent sentence on a felony committed while out on bond.

Now there's case law to support that is evidence of a deal, when somebody gets a sentence that sweet, especially an illegal sentence. Because it also says you can't have two felony concurrent sentences. So there's case law to support that that is evidence of a deal. You said the letters were withheld in an effort to hide his begging for a deal, which is very true. But there was another reason that's really important, because that would have discredited their theory. Because Jamie and Roland were not in prison together in May and April of that year. So it couldn't have, you know... If we would have known that Crowe went and talked to him, and then he writes back and he's like, I'm sorry I couldn't give you enough information. And that's seven more years on this bogus charge, and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. So you know, he didn't give them enough information. He just said all he knew was hearsay. And that's critical because recall, they put them together in November of that year.

And it's always been very odd to me because they assigned Jamie a writ, which was a court writ. That means that you go to another prison to stay there before you're going to court. He's not on the circuit, the game circuit, and being moved to all of

these different prisons. They just made that up to make him look like a bad person, but he was only there for seven days. But he was assigned that court writ from Centralia was where he was. He was assigned on November 21st. The very next day, Bruce Roland was assigned to be a sanitation worker, which gave him movement. And that has always been very curious to me. Was he supposed to be in that place at that time? Did they go back to him? Was he placed there? I mean, it would be great to have some communications to see what was going on, because it's not far-fetched that they would put a jailhouse informant in a cell with somebody they're trying to get information from. That happens. So that's always been odd to me. But all we have right now are the movement records and the dates. Does that make sense to y'all?

Lesley Pires: Yeah, for sure. And the other thing that I picked up on while you were talking was that Crowe knew that Roland was full of shit, and had already told him he only knew hearsay. So we talked about Crowe in Episode Five, and how he took the stand, and how the prosecution was really evasive and didn't ask him any questions. And he didn't even really implicate Jamie in the crime at all. Episode Five with Crowe was all about the lineup. That's all Crowe testified to was the lineup and the photos and Danny Martinez. So obviously when Crowe was on the stand, Crowe knew all the information about these other witnesses that he had first hand knowledge of. And the prosecutors all knew it, and the detectives all knew it. And it was just a game of not mentioning it, not saying it, and not laying the foundation for it. And I'm just wondering how come Crowe was on the stand and Frank Picl couldn't pull out a list of all of these supposedly confession witnesses and say, "Did you interview this guy? What did he say?" I don't understand that at all. And if it was because he couldn't do it because there wasn't a foundation laid for it by the prosecution, why couldn't he call them as his own witnesses? So he could do a direct examination and ask about all these interviews. It's insane.

Tammy Alexander: And could he have said, was there anyone... I believe Skelton was the one that brought out about the lineup, was there any others who refused to go. Right? Because he's saying there were others. So I wonder if he could have just said, was there anyone you interviewed that you didn't believe? Or maybe...

Lesley Pires: Yeah.

Tammy Alexander: Some type of question like that to force him to answer. Jamie swears he's an honest cop. It was a matter of just...

Lesley Pires: Compelling him.

Tammy Alexander: Just answer what I ask you. Just answer what I ask you. And that's how they played their game.

Lesley Pires: Yeah. And it also to me sounds like, you know... Crowe was retiring. He was sick and tired. He was wanting to get out of there, and he was a little irritable. So he just did what he had to do and he was done. And he washed his hands of the whole thing. But I do wonder if he would have lied. I don't think he would have. Do you think you would have?

Tammy Alexander: Jamie doesn't think he would have. I don't know. I do know that there are many, many police reports where he cleared other people, where he cleared Jamie. People were trying to say it was Jamie and it was part of this rumor mill, and he was like cleared. This was cleared a long time ago. And Jamie trusted him for some reason. That's why he took the polygraph in 1994. He only took it after he had a discussion with Crowe. Crowe was the one that said, I guess talked him into it, taking a polygraph. I think Jamie said Crowe said, "I don't think you did it" after he passed the polygraph. "I don't think you did it, but I think you know who did." Jamie said, "I don't know who did this."

And also the Bob Ruff podcast, when Tammy Snow was talking she said that Crowe, when they were trying to haul her and Susan in every time they turned around, she felt like he was good. He would just ask them questions and let them go. He wasn't harassing. He wasn't confrontational. He would just ask them questions and let them go. So I think he has a fairly good reputation there. But I do see things throughout this case that are questionable to me. In my opinion, if he didn't stand up when he knew this was going down. And he spent nine years, ten years on this case, then he's a bad cop. Period. That's how I feel about it. And nobody's gonna change my mind about that. He won't talk to us now. He won't write this. And like you said, he knew things were bullshit and he just let it go. So he lost an innocent man go to prison for something he didn't do. And his family practically be destroyed over it. So I don't think he's a good cop. That's just my opinion.

Lesley Pires: That's really true. And it seems like he has more of a problem with his own integrity being questioned than he does with the value of Jamie's life being taken.

Tammy Alexander: Exactly. And his family's.

Bruce Fischer: I mean, both things can be true. Jamie could have trusted him and viewed him as a trustworthy guy, and he can also be a bad cop that just retired and went off into the sunset without fixing the problem. So I don't think Jamie actually misread him when he thinks that, you know, when he thought for all those years that he could trust him.

Tammy Alexander: Yeah. And I understand what you're saying but I just haven't... I know that both things can be true, I just think he's a bad cop. If he threw his hands up and retired after knowing all of this was bullshit, it's wrong. And you know, he might say, well I'm retired. It's not my responsibility. But he didn't do anything at the time.

Lesley Pires: Well, we also have to remember who's at the top of this stinking fish head is Charles Reynard. He's the one who trained Tina Griffin. He's the one who arranged for all this to go down and he's the one who had direct access to the judge. And he's the one who all these other men have also been wrongfully convicted under him. So I hope we do an episode on him.

Tammy Alexander: You know what you can do though. Let me tell you. Juan Rivera had, in Illinois, in Lake County, had three trials. He was accused of killing an 11-year-old girl, raped and killed her. After his second trial, they had DNA. And he went back for a third trial, and they convicted him again. Now he was a young kid at this time. Now the sheriff stood up, when the state's attorney... His case got overturned by the higher courts because they were like, this is ridiculous. So they change their narrative as they often do. They changed their narrative and said, well somebody else raped her and he killed her. Now he would never take a deal, which he was offered plenty of deals. But Juan would not take the deal.

When they said that they were going to fight, that the case had been kicked back and overturned, the sheriff came out and did a press conference and said we are not charging. We are not. We do not stand by the state's attorney. We are not going to do this to this man. This is not going to happen. It was not his DNA. And I mean, people lost jobs over it and it wasn't that sheriff. So you can take the stand. What they said was that Holly was an 11-year-old girl who was sleeping with all these different people. That's what the state turned around and said when they changed

their narrative. And that's when the sheriff came now. We're not going to do that to her. She was a victim of rape and murder. And this is not going to happen. And heads started rolling, and then there was all kinds of wrongful convictions happening in Lake County.

My point being, he stood up. It was a sheriff, and yeah he had some authority. But he doesn't have, you know, state's attorney has the ultimate authority. But I'm telling you, that state's attorney was forced to retire. He was kicked out. And now they have an integrity unit, so you got to reach that tipping point. And that's what it was. I think that can happen here too.

Bruce Fischer: It's a great example to show that police officers and detectives, anybody can stand up and, right or wrong. We don't see it often, though. I have to say, we just don't.

Tammy Alexander: That was very unusual, but I agree with that. That was very, very unusual.

Bruce Fischer: It's difficult when you have a police officer on the stand. You have to be careful what questions you ask, because you can go down the wrong road really fast. So I mean, as far as what you guys were saying about, you know, he could have been used better at trial. Of course he could, because we know Frank sucked. But I do think that you can get on the wrong track really fast with the police officer on the stand. And really hurt your client. You get him to say one more time, yeah I'm not sure if he did it, but I know he knows who did it. All of a sudden now you're got yourself in a whole world of shit.

Tammy Alexander: And people believe police officers. They just automatically think that they're telling the truth. Juries believe them. And I'll tell you what Jamie told me, is instead of how your family sits behind you in court when you're doing the trial... They had a row of police officers dressed in their uniforms behind him, which made him look bad.

Bruce Fischer: Yeah, that's powerful. I mean, the juries are influenced heavily by that. Even today with all the negativity you see around police, when things go to trial, even in today's environment, things usually end up in favor of the police.

Tammy Alexander: Right. You know, I mean, you sit there and watch somebody be murdered.

Bruce Fischer: I mean, we're going back years ago now, and I'm even looking at today. You would think with today's media and everything going on today that there'd be a shift, but there's not. Because there's all a bunch of anger, and then you go to trial and the police walk every time.

Tammy Alexander: Walk every time. So you know, just to bring that back. People are automatically going to believe them. But you know what? That sheriff in Lake County used his powers for good. Because he knew people would believe him. And he did the right thing, even if it was just to not disparage the memory of that little girl.

Bruce Fischer: I think this is kind of what fueled that whole thing, is he saw a victim of being smeared. All to try to keep a murder conviction and a rape conviction. And he just wasn't gonna stand for it. There was a dynamic there. It was unique.

We invite any witness featured on the Snow Files podcast to come on the show to give their point of view or to clarify anything that they think might have been misstated.

Lesley Pires: In Episode 12, we showed you how brazen snitch proposals can get, and why the prosecution needed this one kept out of court. Bruce Roland originally wrote detectives in 1994 asking for help with an early release for a three year DUI sentence, saying he was willing to do what it takes to get their indictment. When he got even more time, he wrote again, suggesting they throw his girlfriend in jail too. Saying he surely wishes he could help more, maybe in the future. He suggested a consecutive sentence on his crimes.

Five years later, he contacted cold case detectives when he got another DUI. This time, they played ball. Roland testified that Jamie confessed through a six inch steel cell door while he mopped the floor. And in return, Roland received an amended sentence just nine months later. But years later, he admitted to a supporter that he was coached right up until he took the stand. But he has never given an affidavit to Jamie's defense team.

If you have any information that may help Jamie, please call the tip line at 888-710-SNOW. There is a \$10,000 reward for any information leading to a new trial or the exoneration of Jamie Snow. The tip line is free and confidential.

As part of the story, Roland said Jamie did the crime with his friend Stretch. His story was bolstered when Stretch's old girlfriend Karen showed up to court and told Jamie's jury a tall tale of her own. How did Karen Strong get away with it? That's next time on Snow Files.

Transcribed by: Caywood Yamnik

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