

Episode 13



Season 1 : E13 - Karen Calls the Cops: Karen Strong

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

Episode Description: In 1999, BPD held an in person meeting with Karen Strong. Karen reported that her ex-boyfriend, Mark "Stretch" McCowan, supposedly told her years earlier that Jamie was involved in the Clark Station murder-robbery. Two months later, Stretch told a grand jury that they never had that conversation. But Karen told them it happened. She added in that Jamie was once in a lot of trouble and tried to hide out at their place too. Nine months later, Karen and her friends got wiretapped, and when she didn't know the cops were listening, she told a different story. A month later, she told the BPD she had a lot of time to think it over since the Grand Jury trial and she had more to tell them, that it didn't look very good for Stretch or Jamie. She testified again just six months later. This time, she told Jamie's jury that he actually tried to hide out at her house the night of the crime. Again, Stretch told the jury it didn't happen. Years later, a friend came forward to report that Karen actually said she didn't know anything about the crime. This thirteenth episode of Snow Files reveals the he-said-she-said lover's quarrel that was presented to Jamie's jury, and examines why Karen might have had motive to interfere with authorities.

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.

Bruce Fischer: After advertising for Episode 13 of the Snow Files podcast featuring Karen Ballenger Strong's testimony, we were sent this post from an anonymous person from Karen's Facebook page:

"Let's just get this out here straight and center. I was involved as a hearsay witness to a murder trial many, many years ago, and they are just now putting my testimony on a podcast. And I really don't give a fuck. Believe what you want and listen to what you want. This girl is no longer involved in that bullshit. Or the reason this man is in prison for the rest of his life. The Innocence Project has hassled me for years and asked me to change my testimony. And when I wouldn't they got to blast me on a podcast. Still not changing my shit so fuck the fuck off."

Bruce Fischer: We would like to make it clear that Jamie is being represented by the exoneration project. They in no way have any control over the content nor the production of this podcast. The Snow Files podcast is solely managed by supporters for Jamie Snow. Having said that, Jamie would like to respond to Karen's post.

Jamie Snow: What I want to do right now is comment on a recent post by Karen Strong on Facebook, characterizing, I guess, what she thinks she did, what she says she did or, you know, what she says we've done or what we're trying to do or whatever. You know, I don't want there to be any confusion about anything. And I mean, that's what this, this podcast is about. Nobody. Nobody gets to control the narrative anymore in the dark - it's all in the light.

Karen said that we set the exoneration project at her and all we wanted her to do is recant and that's a lie. First off, the exoneration project has been to see her two times, has sent investigators out talk to her two times. Both times she refused to talk to us. So I don't know how she assumed that we were looking for her to recant. I think it's pretty funny that she just automatically assumed we wanted her to recant. I think that probably comes from a guilty conscience. You know, you lied, so we want you to recant that's just me personally, that's what I think. But I really couldn't care less to be honest with you if Karen Strong ever recants.

The truth is, is clear as day. We're saying now that we've gotten all the videotapes, the tape recording, all the police reports and all the statements you can put it together clear as day she lied. You know, my jury would have known she lied. Had my lawyers not been incompetent, the state hadn't withheld so much. I don't care if you ever recant, Karen. I even now, still today, want to give you the benefit of the doubt, you know. I want to believe that you weren't just this horrible, nasty person that didn't have anything better to do on a weekday than to go in and help these people take my, my life for something I didn't do. I want to believe that there was something else going on. That there was some way that they were putting pressure on you.

Did you get in trouble? And and you were trying to work it out? Did they pay you to testify? Or did they promise you anything to testify? And, or is it that, you know, they dropped the charges against your your husband in return for your for your testimony? I just don't want to believe that you would do it, just to be doing it. So that's one thing that I want to clear up. I don't care if you recant. I just want to know why you did it.

People- people want to say, Well, I was just a hearsay witness. I was just be hearsay witness. Well, you weren't just a hearsay witness, Karen. You, you got on the stand and you testified that I came to your house between the hours of 10 and midnight, looking for a place to stay. You saw me with a ball cap on which you had never said before, to anybody in any of your, your reports, and then all of a sudden you just, you know, conveniently come up with a ball cap description, which is what Danny Martinez said, you know, the suspect the claims he saw had on. And you saw the front of the car parked in your driveway, you know, and that was in a contradiction to what you said in the very beginning. So you weren't just hearsay witness.

The state attorney argued in closing argument, how could Jamie have been at home with his wife and kids when he was at Karen Strongs house looking for a place to stay between the hours of 10 and midnight. So you weren't just some hearsay witness; and when we get to the hearsay testimony that you say Mark told you this and Mark told you that. I mean, who are we going to believe? Are we going to believe Mark, who has never changed his statement? Even though, you know, they went to the prison, he was in, put him in seg, threatened, you know, giving more time for obstruction of justice, put every screw to him that they could possibly put to him. And he stuck to the same statement all along. He said all that he never saw me on Easter, that I never came to his house looking for a place to stay, that he never told you none of the stuff that you've testified to. Do we believe him? Or do we believe

you, the person who we can we can lay it all out and we can see how your your story changed with the direction of the wind. As soon as the 'witness whisperer' got in there and started whispering in your ear what he needed you to say you went right along with it.

So whatever gets you through the night. Whatever helps you get through the day. If you want to call yourself a hearsay witness or whatever, you know, go ahead. But the truth is you wasn't a hearsay witness. You got up there, and you help these people take my life for something I didn't do. And you know you did. And some day, we hope that you'll you'll just tell the truth. I mean, we know the truth. We just want to know why. Just tell us why you did it. And that's the reason for the podcast... is so, that all the truth, everything that was done in the dark is now in the light.

Nobody can lie about it anymore. Nobody gets to put their own narrative on, on what they did and what they didn't do and, and what they want to say we want from them or anything like that. You know this, this is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. That's something you should try. I need you to just sit down and just tell us the truth. You come on the podcast and tell your truth. That's all we're looking for, Karen, not that I'm asking you to recant. I'm just asking you to tell us the truth. You know, what was it that got you to do what you did? But at the end of the day, you have to live what you did. Just as much as I do.

The next person that I want to talk about is someone who... She actually kind of hurt me on a personal level, because I actually did know her. Karen Salinger Strong was someone who I had known since I was probably 14, 15 years old. And I couldn't understand for a long time, why she did what she did and Karen's testimony really, you know, wasn't her saying that I had told her that I committed the crime, but it was that someone else told her I did it. And I couldn't understand for a long time why she did it. And Ray and Tammy, through filing all the Freedom of Information request, I think, found out what it was and why she did what she did.

In the beginning, the detectives Dan Katz had contact her who is the witness whisperer in her taped interview, you know, she says, you know, at some point in time in 1991, he came to my house looking for a place to stay and I told him he couldn't stay and he left. And, you know, she she was living with a good friend of mine Mark McCowan. She said, you know, I told him he couldn't stay and and him and Mark took off walkin' because they didn't have they didn't have a ride they didn't have a

car so they took off walkin.' Mark wanted to hang out with his buddy you know, they, you know, they had to leave and they took off walking, is what she said.

And it was a it's a great it's a great demonstration of how these detective get the stories out of people because Katz is like, "Well, let me see if I can help you out here a little bit. You know, the crime happened in March and he was arrested at his sister's house in April. So, would he have came to your house before the crime happened to her after?" And, you know, she she was like oh, it would have been after... So, you know, in her first original statement to the police, she was like, you know, at some point in time in 1991, he came to my house, I wouldn't let him stay, blah, blah, blah. So then you fast forward to, you know, later on, we're going to the grand jury, and she's given other taped interviews and, you know, now all of a sudden her story morphs into he came to my house, on the night of the murder, March 31, 1991, he came to my house between the hours of 10 and midnight, and was looking for a place to stay, and he had on a ball cap and and I told him he couldn't stay and she was able to see the front of the car that we were in. So now we have a car. In the beginning we didn't have a car. Now we've got a car and it's not just some time in 1991, she's narrowed it down to the hour between the hours of 10 and midnight on on the night of the murder, you know. And I didn't know about this part of the story til later on after I'd been convicted and I got all the taped interviews and stuff.

And you know, it's just amazing to me that these people's story just, just change in such a blatant manner and my attorneys just kind of, you know, let it ride. Like I said, I know that that Mark, her boyfriend and my friend at the time, you know, they, you know, they had a, you know, they broke up and I guess it wasn't a very amicable thing. And I always wondered if maybe that was why she was doing what she was doing in an effort to maybe get back at him or something, you know. But, um, through the FOIA requests, we found out that her new husband had a bunch of criminal charges pending, which just so happened to get dismissed, uh, right after she testified. So, it seems that when it came to the deals that were given, you know, they were being given out. I mean, I don't know why they didn't just take an ad out in the paper and say something along the lines of you know, "If you testify against Snow, we'll give you a deal. We'll let you go." It's amazing to me that lightning, in this case, struck over and over and over and over again in the McLean County Courthouse when it came to the deals these people were getting. You know, it's it's just amazing to me that people don't see it.

But, you know, Karen was someone who it just I couldn't believe that she stooped to the level that some of these other people stooped to. It was, and is still, disappointing. It's just another one of the witnesses, it's another part of the case that doesn't add up. It's it's absolutely clear that they were telling her what to say. I mean, and that there was something given in return. And, you know, this is the this is the evidence that's keeping me from getting forensic testing. It's people like her that the McClean county State's Attorney's office have argued for all these years and, you know, the evidence is just so overwhelming that no forensic testing would ever change it, and I think it's disingenuous on their part, to argue that as the facts and the evidence come out.

So Karen is another one that we have reached out to over and over over the years. My attorneys have reached out to her. And, you know, we've just reached out to her recently, and asked her if she wanted to come on here and explain and defend what she did. And so far, we haven't heard anything from her or out of her. So the refusal, to me, to answer, you know, the allegations that are being made, is basically an adoption of the allegation. You know, I mean, if somebody was saying something about me that that wasn't true, and I knew that that's what they were doing, I would address it, you know. And the fact that she doesn't, Bruce doesn't, the rest of these people don't, you know, I think it's evidence that what we're saying is true. So the doors still open, Karen, you can you can respond at any time. We'll absolutely put you on there and let you state at your piece. So come on with us.

Tammy Alexander: So you said that you knew Karen since y'all were 14 or 15. But she was always like, no, I didn't like Jamie Snow, he wasn't allowed in my house. He wasn't, you know, as if y'all never hung out together. Y'all never (unintelligible).

Jamie Snow: Oh, she's lying. She's, she's a total liar on that, on that, on that front, I was always going- I was always at her and Stretches house. They had a house in Greenwood and they had a house...they had a house over on...where was that other place they lived in? They, they've lived together in a couple different places.

Tammy Alexander: So you, so you did spend the night at his house plenty of times, or you just went over there to hang out?

Jamie Snow: I know that I, I know that I, you know that I hung out with them all the time. I think I have spent the night there before. Yeah, we used to hang out all the time. We used to go, you know, we used to go to the Mackinaw river together. We

used to... you know, we used to hang out, you know, so when Karen did what she did, I mean that just, I couldn't believe it, you know, it just blew me away, because, you know, I always thought that Karen had a much different level of ah, you know, character. You know, Karen was always good people. You know, I liked her. And it just blew me away. I never could understand. I always wondered, was it because her and Mark had a had a, you know, a nasty breakup. And, you know, she just, she knew that, you know, me and Mark were really, really good friends. And she she was just, you know, getting back at him by doing that, or, you know, or was it something else? And then when you and Ray got the FOIA request, and we see that after after she testified, all these charges were dropped on her on her on her new husband. You know, it's, I mean, it's as clear as day what had happened. Guaranteed that's what happened. They were giving everybody deals.

Bruce Fischer: The first interview that we have of Karen is from June 6, 1999 with Detective Katz and Barkes. We know they met with her previously.

(From recording)

Dan Katz: We met at your trailer. And while we were there, we had a brief conversation about if you had any information that you could share with us in reference to William Little's death, is that correct?

Karen Strong: Yeah.

Dan Katz: And what did you share with us?

Bruce Fischer: Then off the bat, she tells detectives that Stretch, Mark McCowan, killed Jamie and Susan Powell was the driver. She doesn't remember the month, but she knows it was in 1991.

Dan Katz: And can you tell me about when this conversation took place?

Karen Strong: I don't know what month, but it was in 1991.

Dan Katz: Just to kind of clarify things...he came home one day in 1991 and said that Jamie needs a place to stay.

Karen Strong: Yes.

Dan Katz: Why did he need a place to stay?

Karen Strong: Because he was hiding from the police and then that- I asked him why he couldn't go, you know, to his own friends or his own family's house to stay. He said because he was in a lot of trouble and finally come out and told me that he had killed someone.

Dan Katz: Did he say what was used to kill William Little?

Karen Strong: A gun.

Dan Katz: Did he say what kind of gun?

Karen Strong: No. If he did, I don't remember.

Dan Katz: Did he...did tell what kind of car?

Karen Strong: No.

Dan Katz: So you really didn't, give you any particulars?

Karen Strong: No, he just said that Jamie had killed the gas station attendant and that Susan was driving the car.

Dan Katz: Did you ask why he killed him?

Karen Strong: Yeah.

Dan Katz: Did he say?

Karen Strong: Over money. And that he can be identified.

Dan Katz: And Mark told you this?

Karen Strong: Mm-hmm.

Bruce Fischer: She knew it was warm out because they had to walk. They didn't have a car and Stretch said something to her before his arrest in 1991...and after. They talked about it twice. So Stretch told her that Jamie committed murder. And she never told police until this interview in 1999.

Dan Katz: I have nothing else. Thank you.

Rick Barks: Well, I have one question. Prior to today, which is June 2, 1999, has anybody ever talked to you about the shooting (unintelligible) today, has anybody-anybody from the police department talked to you about the shooting of William Little (unintelligible) on March 31, 1999?

Karen Strong: No.

Rick Barks: This interview's concluded.

(End recording)

Bruce Fischer: This tactic was used before. Was there a prior police report or conversation with police that we don't know about? Karen goes on to testify at the grand jury in September of 1999. Recall in her interview a couple of months before, Karen stated that Mark asked her if Jamie could stay and she didn't know what month, but it was sometime in 1991. This time she testifies that sometime between the crime and when Jamie was arrested, Jamie came to her apartment and asked to stay there for a few days before he went on to his sister's:

Question: Do you know about when that conversation occurred?

Answer: I'm not sure on the timeline. But it was before Jamie was arrested for the incident.

Question: Now, what was the nature of that conversation you had with Mark about?

Answer: He had told me that Jamie had killed someone.

Question: You know how that conversation came up? Or what brought that up?

Answer: Jamie had come to our apartment and wanted to know if he could stay there for a few days before going on to his sister's.

Question: And basically at that time, did you learn or get the impression that Jamie was there on the run from something?

Answer: Yes, I did.

Bruce Fischer: The state's attorney clearly leading her into saying that Jamie was on the run.

Question: So this all happened before he got arrested at his sisters in Missouri. Is that correct?

Answer: Uh-huh.

Question: Was it after William Little was shot?

Answer: Yes.

Question: At the Clark station?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Now did Mark have any other conversations with you then, about Jamie shooting somebody?

Answer: Yeah. He said that Jamie shot him because Jamie knew that the kid could identify him.

Question: Did he indicate that Jamie got out of it or what?

Bruce Fischer: In her grand jury testimony, Karen mentions that at the time of her testimony that she worked with Julie Knight and had known her for three or four years, and that Julie told her the same thing. And also that Julie said that Susan Powell was driving the car and that she was there. And she said there were other people in the car, but she didn't say who. Lastly, Karen states that she did not see a vehicle:

Question: Do you know how he got your apartment? You didn't see whether he came in a car?

Answer: No, somebody brought him here, but I didn't see who it was.

Question: You didn't see a vehicle even?

Answer: No.

By Miss Griffin: anything else?

Bruce Fischer: No response. Stretch also testified to the grand jury. Stretch testified that he was not with Jamie or Susan on the night of the crime. And that Jamie did not come to his house and ask if he could stay, that Jamie had never told him that he committed the crime. As far as we knew, the next instance of Karen was her testimony in the trial. But through Freedom of Information Act requests we discovered wiretap conversations from June of 2000. Recall in Episode 12 when police pressured Bruce Rowland's wife Danielle to call Karen Strong, even though she didn't even know her. They told her to just strike up a conversation with her. But now we know that Danielle Roland told her friend, Stacy Sewell, that she would help her if Karen helps Danielle. Danielle called Stacey on 6/9/2000, but seems they had a previous understanding of the deal.

Tammy Alexander: *"Karen and Stacy both live in the trailer park. Dorothy is the manager. Apparently, Dorothy doesn't want Karen to have a dog at the trailer and is trying to get rid of it. Danielle is helping Stacy out by going over Dorothy's head to Joe, Dorothy's boss, to make Stacy the manager; if Stacy's the manager, Karen gets to keep her dog and all as well again in the trailer park. Danielle is working on all of this because she really needs to help her husband Bruce get new information for a murder trial before he talks to his lawyers again, because the state is threatening Bruce with an extended sentence and multiple DUI charges."*

Bruce Fischer: So that's the deal. The deal on Jamie and his family's life is over Karen's dog who's getting kicked out of a trailer park.

(From recording)

Danielle Roland: Joe kind of has a, I guess, you know, when I talk to him, he kind of has a slight idea that I, you know, he's doing a favor for me, in turn you're (unintelligible), and Karen's doing a favor for (unintelligible)...favor for me for you. In turn from Karen doing a favor, you know, back.

Stacy Sewell: Right.

(End recording)

Bruce Fischer: Danielle is desperate to make a deal. It continues throughout the night to get in touch with Karen. Stacy asks again about Joe. What did he say about her being the manager of trailer park? And should she go ahead with a petition? Then Stacey goes on to a long winded story about the incidents at the trailer court. And Danielle reiterates the deal. Did we mention that Dan Donath is monitoring the calls. You know, the current Bloomington police chief, and signed by the Honorable Judge Bernardi. Both Jamie and Susan's trial judge.

(From recording)

Dan Donath: This is detective Dan Donath and today's date is June 9, nine- or the year 2000, the time now approximately 17:25 hours and I'm here with Danielle Roland. And we are going to be conducting an overhear signed by the Honorable Judge Bernardi; and I'm going to be making a telephone call to number 820-1591 which is the residence of Stacy Sewell and attempt to speak with a Karen Ballenger.

Danielle Roland: Stacy mentioned your situation to me and- with the dog and Dorothy and so forth. And I told Stacy today that I went in, put the wheels in motion to take care of, you know, help you out. I went to them, you know, and I'm going to talk to them again this weekend. And I kind of just, you know, I'm doing everything I can, but I will, you know, help you the best I can on it. And she says that you're willing to help me out here. So-

Bruce Fischer: In this accounting, Karen says it's "Stretch" brought Jamie home to stay for a couple of nights.

Karen Strong: Brought Jamie to the house and left him outside because he knew I didn't like him. He wanted to know if he could stay for a couple of nights. I said no,

no way. Then I don't know... Mark said he took off and went to his sister's, or something, in Missouri.

Bruce Fischer: Stretch said Jamie took off and went to his sister's in Missouri, and proceeded to tell Karen what went on.

Karen Strong: He just tell me what went on. You know, he said that Jamie did something really bad and that the cops were looking for him. And if they found him he was, you know, going to go to prison for a very, very, very long time. And he come out and told me that, that Jamie did do it. And that, uh...oh what's her name? The Powell girl.

Danielle Roland: Susan.

Karen Strong: Yeah.

Danielle Roland: Susan Claycomb.

Karen Strong: Yeah. Was the one that was driving the car. And I told him that..that's it. That's all I want to know. I don't even want to know anymore. And he told me that, well see, when they questioned me, they wanted to know where Mark was on Easter Sunday.

Danielle Roland: Right.

Karen Strong: And I said, well, you know, as far as I can remember...that's what? 15 years ago, or 10 years ago, whatever. That, uh, when we were together, we went to Easter dinner, at his mom and dad's. I said...and I said, I know that we were there to eat. I said, I couldn't tell you what time it was or none of that shit...I don't have a photographic memory or anything. And they wanted to know if when we went home did Mark stay home... and I was like, I have no idea. I couldn't tell ya.

Danielle Roland: So you, so you, cause he's- okay, I see what you're saying. So you didn't tell- you actually didn't say that that that Mark wasn't with him. You just-

Karen Strong: I- you know, I can't even remember. I know that Mark and I went to his mom's, cause' we did every Easter. You know, when we were together for

years.

Bruce Fischer: But it's never clear when she's talking about. She eventually says the only thing Stretch told her is that Jamie shot somebody. He didn't tell her who and then eventually it just all fell together for her. But later in the interview, she does say that Stretch asked her if Jamie could stay because he was having problems with his wife.

Karen Strong: When Mark came in the apartment, he made Jamie stay outside. I know that that Jamie was in a car, but I don't know what kind of car I don't know who was with him or anything else. And wanted to know, he said that him and Tammy were having problems, could he spend the night. You know, stay a couple nights, until things cool down...I said no...Fuck no.

Bruce Fischer: Karen goes on to say that she's heard that Susan and Jamie made a pact. They both shot Bill Little, but Susan fired the fatal shot. But since they both shot him, they each couldn't tell on each other. She also talks about an interesting interview she had with the prosecuting state's attorney who questioned her up and down. We've not seen any reports between Karen and the state's attorney. She then starts to relate Shane Talen's story. And then Julie Knight's story. And again, she says that all Stretch told her was that Jamie was in trouble, had a fight with his wife, and needed a place to stay for a few days. She then starts relaying stories that Susan Little, Bill Little's sister, had told her. And she says that Dan Katz told her there were three people there.

Danielle Roland: If you think that it's possible that Mark was there, is there any- You have any idea where he was when it happened? If he was in the car, or standing outside the place, or in the place?

Karen Strong: I don't know that either. And see, I've heard that there was three people. Detective Katz even told me that there was three people. And that's why-

Danielle Roland: Dan Katz did?

Karen Strong: Huh?

Danielle Roland: Detective Katz did?

Karen Strong: Uh huh. He says that there was more than Susan and Jamie there. He said there was another person.

Danielle Roland: And see, the thing is, is that what I go...what, you know, like if I give Bruce information and he has to get- goes with them he, I gotta have, you know, he- not that he says where he got it, but it's got to be stuff that you know from Mark. See Jamie has like, Jamie...isn't he like your guys' age? I mean yours (unintelligible) went to school with your guys's era, right?

Karen Strong: I didn't go school with him, but yeah, he was my age.

Danielle Roland: Okay, so how how would he thinks that this kid- Little kid- the Little kid got murdered would would recognize him or know who he was?

Karen Strong: I don't know. Unless he knew him.

Danielle Roland: But you don't know if he knew him?

Karen Strong: I don't know. You know, I don't know that.

(End recording)

Bruce Fischer: Good question, Danielle. We hear from Karen again on July 11, 2000. This time she did a videotaped interview. And her story became much more detailed.

(From recording)

Dan Katz: Detective Barkes and myself, detective Katz...a while back. And during that conversation that we had, (that's ok). At that time, we talked about the William Little homicide case that occurred back in 1991. And you gave us a tape statement as to at that time, what you can remember. And since we talked to you back in 1999, you testified in front of grand jury.

Karen Strong: Yes.

Dan Katz: And you've had a lot of time to think about this. And you came back in today at our request. And we're here today to see if you remember anything else

about the case. Why don't you tell us what you remember about March 31, 1991, which was Easter Sunday.

Karen Strong: Um, I remember Mark and I went to his mother's for Easter dinner. And I am guessing that we you know, it was done...eating was done by three o'clock in the afternoon. We we went home and between, let's say five and six o'clock, Mark, I'm guessing, at this time left the house. He was... I don't remember if he was with Jamie or not; I don't remember if, you know, Jamie came and got him, or if he met with Jamie, or even Vinny, ya know, I don't remember that.

Dan Katz: Okay, let me stop you real quick, before you go too far. You had, shall we say lunch, breakfast, brunch, some similar, early Easter get together at Mark's parents' house.

Karen Strong: Yes.

Dan Katz: And you believe that you finished eating by three o'clock and you and Mark had gone back to your residence by around four o'clock.

Karen Strong: Right.

Dan Katz: Sometime between five and six o'clock that evening, Mark leaves the house.

Karen Strong: Yes.

Dan Katz: Now, is it possible that somebody picked him up?

Karen Strong: Yeah, it's possible.

Dan Katz: Did you or Mark have a car that time?

Karen Strong: Yes.

Dan Katz: So Mark went outside, but you don't know what happened to Mark after that?

Karen Strong: No.

Dan Katz: When was the next time you saw Mark on Easter Sunday?

Karen Strong: That evening between ten and midnight.

Dan Katz: What were you doing when you next saw Mark?

Karen Strong: Sleeping.

Dan Katz: And what are you...where are you sleeping at?

Karen Strong: In the bedroom. He and I are in the front room. And he came and woke me up and wanted to know if Jamie could stay a couple days that he was in trouble and he needed a place to stay. And I said, no, absolutely not. I got up to walk into the bedroom and through the back door, I could see Jamie standing there with a car behind him. I couldn't see, you know, what kind of car I just could tell that there was a car back there you could see headlights. Mark asked me again, you know, could he please stay, and I said no, absolutely no way. Then I went to the bedroom to lay down... went to bed.

Dan Katz: Mark stayed at your house?

Karen Strong: Yes.

Dan Katz: Did Jamie stay at your house?

Karen Strong: No.

Dan Katz: When Mark woke you up, did you ask Mark how he got home?

Karen Strong: I don't remember. I just assumed since the... you know, Jamie was outside and there was a car out there that Mark got a ride from him.

Dan Katz: Did you have a driver's license at that time?

Karen Strong: I don't think so. But I don't have any idea. I don't. I don't think he ever had one, to be honest, but I don't know.

Dan Katz: Do you remember Mark telling you that a female had given them a ride to your house that night?

Karen Strong: I'm not sure but he could have...I'm not, positive, but it could have been.

Dan Katz: Okay. When you saw Jamie standing at the back door of your house, do you remember what he was wearing?

Karen Strong: I could see from the waist up that he had a light color shirt and a ball cap on. I couldn't see from the waist down.

(End recording)

Bruce Fischer: So now she's got her story down pat, exactly what the police wanted her to say. She gave a detailed accounting of Stretch's timeline the entire night, put a vehicle at her home, put Jamie at her home and gave a window of time for Stretch to be implicated. Never mind that it contradicts what she previously said. Even on the wiretaps when she didn't know police were listening. She would go on to tell her final story at trial, pounding another nail into Jamie's coffin.

Stretch again refuted her stories under tremendous pressure from police. Stretch was in jail at the time, and he claimed that Detective Katz brought him downstairs a few days prior to him testifying, and asked him if he was going to plead the fifth. Stretch said he interpreted that as an intimidation tactic to discourage him from testifying. So why did Karen do it? We can only examine what we have discovered.

Kevin had quite the record. On June 25, 1999, Kevin was charged with driving on a revoked license two months after Karen testified in front of the grand jury on November 24, 1999. Kevin had a plea hearing and received 12 months probation and fines. On January 7, 2000, Kevin was arrested for two counts of domestic battery and bodily harm, one count of domestic battery with physical contact, two counts of interfering with reporting of domestic violence, one count of criminal damage to property less than \$300 and two counts of resisting and obstructing a police officer.

On July 11, 2000, the exact same day as Karen's last interview with police where she gave all of those new details. Kevin pled guilty to one count each of domestic battery, bodily harm, interfering with reporting of domestic violence, resisting, obstructing

police officer correction employee. The rest of the charges were dropped, and Kevin received 24 months probation for the remaining charges. Karen testified at Jamie's trial on January 9, and January 12th of 2001. On February 22, 2001, Kevin had another case for deceptive practices of writing a bad check. Jamie was sentenced on May 10, 2001. And on June 6, 2001, Kevin was arrested again for two counts of domestic battery with bodily harm and two counts of unlawful restraint. Both felonies. All charges were dismissed. Coincidence? We don't think so.

In 2009, a longtime friend of Karen's, Mark Huffington, submitted an affidavit stating they grew up together and called each other brother and sister. Huffington stated that he was locked up in 1991. And when he got out, he saw Karen all the time. And they talked about Jamie's case all the time, and had several conversations in 1995 and 1996. And again in 1999. He said Karen told him that the night Bill Little was killed, Stretch came home and woke her up. That's all she knows about the case. She went on to tell Huffington that she and Stretch hadn't talked that night. He's sure if she knew anything about that case, she would have told him...they were very close. He said he was shocked when she later testified in the case, because she had told them she didn't know anything about it.

In 2010, Stretch submitted an affidavit affirming his testimony. He also stated that he heard Karen was working off a cocaine arrest, and that she knows Mike Angelos was arrested for cocaine, and that Karen was the only woman coming to his door to buy cocaine. We don't have any evidence that Karen was arrested for cocaine. But we did review Angelo's record, and it's pretty interesting. On January 5, 2001, Angelos had multiple counts of possession... up to 15 grams, resisting arrest, drug conspiracy for manufacturing and delivery of cocaine, manufacturing and delivery of cocaine and manufacturing and delivery of other narcotics. All charges dismissed. He was only convicted on one count of manufacturing and delivering cocaine, and he received seven years... that shows you how much time you would have gotten and all those other charges not been dismissed.

On January 19, 1999. The day Jamie's trial ended, he had a charge of resisting dismissed as well on February 5, 2001. He had a driving on a suspended license with no insurance charge also dismissed. We don't know if this is related, but it's pretty interesting that Angelos is mentioned in stretches affidavits as being Karen's dealer. And he received those dream deals within a month of her testimony against Jamie, but many don't know, is the police really wanted Stretch for this crime. So much so

that after Jamie was convicted, but before he was sentenced, police offered Jamie 40 years if he would implicate Stretch in this crime.

Jamie Snow: One thing a lot of people don't know about this case...and about, you know, Karen and all these other people that are involved, you know, these people were trying to throw Mark under the bus too. His name was all through the discovery materials. You know, Karen was trying to throw him under the bus and make it look like he was involved in the case as well. You know, after I've been convicted. I wasn't awaiting sentencing, a detective approached me in the hallway at the county jail. He was like, you know, look we want McCowan, you know, we want him, too. If you'll give us him, you know, the states attorney will agree on giving you 40 years. He said, you know, that's 20 years, you're going to do 50%. He said, you know, you're not going to get to see your kids grow up. You know, right now, you're not going to get to see your kids grow up... but you'll be out in time to see your grand kids grow up.

And that is exactly what has happened. I mean, had I have done that...had I have jumped on the bs bandwagon that- that was rolling in McLean county at the time, you know, and just threw Mark under the bus. I would have been out a year ago. But you know, I just couldn't I just couldn't do it and it's, it's, it troubles me sometimes when I look at my hair getting gray and and you know, I'm getting older and I've got this life sentence for something I didn't do, and I stand here and I look out over the wall, you know, I can see over the wall from where I'm at, I can see cars driving down the street, you know, I can be on the other side of that wall, living my life. If I would have just traded Mark's life for mine. You know, I'm thankful that I had the heart not to do that, you know, and I'm thankful that Susan had the heart not to do it you know, I mean, it's it's a hard pill to swallow sometimes you know? You know, you've traded your your life for the truth and you've traded your life for, you know, someone else's, you know, and I sometimes wish that I could be a scumbag like the rest of these people, you know, that did this to me. And I just can't, I just can't do it. It's just not in my nature.

You know, I hope that one of these days, some of these people like Karen will get up one morning and look at herself in the mirror, and, you know, actually come to terms with what she did, and, and just do the right thing. You know, it's never too late to do the right thing; I say that all the time. It's never too late to do the right thing. I think one of the things that kind of hurts me the most is that you know, after I had this conversation with the detective in the hallway, you know, I went back to the, to the cell block that I was in and I hollered over and I told Mark exactly what had

happened, you know, and exactly what was going on. And I haven't heard from him since. I haven't heard a word from him. He hasn't reached out to me one time, you know, and I get it. He probably wants to distance himself as much as he can from something like this, but you know, I mean, at some point in time... right has got to be right and wrong, it's got to be wrong, you know, and, and, you know, I still, to this day wish him well, and he should probably get up every morning, get on his knees and thank God that he's not in a cell in this prison somewhere because they sure did want to put him in here as well. And Karen tried to help him along the line with that. So that's the truth. All the rumors and everything else that goes on around Bloomington. Doesn't stand up to the truth. That's the truth. So there you go. Paul Harvey. The rest of the story.

Bruce Fischer: Tam, Karen is a bit different than the other Stitch girlfriends we've heard from before. In the past, the women's statements have been used to lend credibility to their boyfriends lies. And they've only claimed to have overheard things. But with Karen, she knew Jamie and her boyfriend always said she was lying. How does Karen get roped into this?

Tammy Alexander: Well, the first sentence we have is Barkes, and he just says they met at her trailer. That's the first interview in 1999. So they had met prior to that June 2nd, that 1999 interview we just don't know. Apparently that's not documented or we don't have it. The June 2nd, 1999 interview was conducted at the police station. It appears as if they reached out to her though I can only guess that's because of Mark. They're really trying to get him on this as well. In fact, after Jamie was sentenced police came to him in his cell and offered him 60 years if he would say Mark was with him. But Jamie said no that he wouldn't do the same thing to Mark that everyone just did to him. Karen would testify in the grand Jury in September of that same year. One key thing about her testimony, though, or Grand Jury testimony, is that she said that Mark and Jamie were walking and there was no car. She was asked specifically by a juror if there was a car, and she stated "No", that would change later.

Bruce Fischer: At the Grand Jury, Karen said that both her boyfriend and Julie Knight told her the same thing that Jamie killed the clerk for a small amount of money because he could identify him. But at trial she never asked about Julie, who is Julie Knight, and does she ever come up again in this case?

Tammy Alexander: Actually, yes, Julie testified in the grand jury and at Susan's trial. She testified that Susan dated her brother Christopher Talen. Jamie used to live next

door to her when he was four or five years old. She also testified that Susan had told her many times that she drove the getaway car, and that Susan used to laugh about how Jamie got away with it. She talked about how intimidating Jamie was, and how he was always such a macho guy- that just makes me laugh. She said Susan also mentioned that Jamie had murdered someone in Florida. It's been said by others that Julie was about to get her kids taken away from her, and that's why she testified. Also her brother Christopher Talen, who also testified was in trouble as well. Their mother testified as well in the grand jury so I guess it was a family affair. We have more info on this issue and may do may do an episode on Julie Knight.

Bruce Fischer: Last week we talked about the repeat DUI offender, Bruce Roland, and how he had his wife get plea deals to flip on Jamie. Now we see that his wife Danielle helped urge Karen to flip too... how was Danielle Roland involved in all of this?

Tammy Alexander: Danielle was just trying to do everything she could to help Bruce with his impending sentence. Danielle stated that Karen Strong called her out of the blue and told her she was going to her ex-husband's place to buy drugs and that her kids had been there. She said she found out Bruce had been recording her calls and took the tapes down to the state's attorney's office to help with ending her kids visitation with her ex-husband. But instead Renard got eavesdropping orders. They knew she didn't know Karen, but they told her to come up with the reason to call her, to strike up a conversation and grill her on the case. She said that they had yellow pads and were making notes to her to tell her what to say, asking her to ask to ask Karen where the gun was.

The day after Jamie was convicted, but before he was sentenced, Danielle was arrested by detectives on an unrelated case, and they told her, they held off on arresting her to make sure that Bruce cooperated with them at trial. It's really important to note that we did not have the overhears at the time this affidavit was given and the information in the tapes corroborate what Danielle stated in her affidavit.

Bruce Fischer: And of course, that is all information we've received years later.

Tammy Alexander: Yep.

Bruce Fischer: Let's get into those wiretaps. The detectives really didn't get any information out of those wiretaps about the crime. But they obviously worked, because the detail and Karen story grew immensely after these calls. So what was the deal with these wiretaps?

Tammy Alexander: There's just mentioned in June of 2000, a year after Karen gave her statement to the police, Danielle was coerced by detectives to make calls to Karen. And they have this wild scenario about Danielle going through Stacy, to help Karen with the trailer park manager, who was trying to get rid of Karen's dog. Danielle would then help Karen to keep her pit bull in the trailer park ,if she in turn told police the right stuff about Jamie. Danielle said she was protecting Bruce who was meeting with his lawyer that week about his crimes.

So after these calls- two weeks later, on July 11th, Karen is interviewed again, and this time she tells police that she's had a lot of time to mull it over since testifying to the grand jury and she has more information to give now. Her new information as it Stretch told her all about Susan being the driver. And she even has to stop and ask the detectives what what her name is. She says is that what the drivers name is? So this time she supposedly knows a lot of details about the actual crime and she never told anyone before that Susan drove and waited outside for Jamie in the back of the store. They threw the gun off a spillway, and that she had seen Susan driving Jamie around several times. Once even been passing them on the highway and recognizing them. Jamie and Susan never even drove together by the way, and she got the color of the car wrong, saying it was dark. While Stretch testified he and Jamie had light colored cars. She also speeds up the timing of the conversation with Stretch.

At the Grand Jury, she said it was within a month of the crime, now she says days and that she broke up with Stretch within two weeks because they were arguing and she didn't like his friends, especially Jamie. When gently questioned about these inconsistencies, she just can't remember. Interestingly, she ends her interview saying that she will keep racking her brain for more information and get back to them before trial. She was being overly helpful and cooperative here.

Recall initially, she said this event happened sometime in 1991. Now she says she knows for sure it was Easter Sunday 1991, knows where they went, remembers that Jamie was wearing a ball cap and a light colored shirt and that they left in a car. It's all very indicative of someone getting a plea deal and we see the same behaviors

with other snitches like Steve Sheil, who just agreed with the detective so he wouldn't have to go back to prison. And Ed Palumbo, who was heavily pursued by the detectives, and started agreeing with their line of questioning, so he didn't have to stay in prison. Both of these informants have since recanted, but not Karen.

Bruce Fischer: So once again, we have a textbook definition of detective leading a witness. I mean, even stops in the middle at one point to ask the name.

Tammy Alexander: Yeah, she...

Bruce Fischer: It's amazing to me. I mean, it's how does this possibly get viewed as credible? Karen's new husband Kevin may have been involved in these deals as well. What do we know about Kevin?

Tammy Alexander: Well, Kevin did have charges. Kevin got a driving on revoked charge in June of '99. And he received 12 months probation. He was arrested in January of 2000 and charged with three counts of domestic battery, two counts of interfering with reporting of domestic violence, and one count of criminal damage to property. And also two counts of resisting arrest. On July 11 of 2000, when all was said and done, he was sentenced to 24 months of probation. Note, this is the same day, July 11 2000, that Karen was interviewed for a second time and she remembered all of those details. Kevin was also arrested in March 2000 for deceptive practices, but the sentence information isn't available. And then finally on June 6, 2001, Kevin was again arrested for two counts of domestic battery, second or more and two counts of unlawful restraint. Both of those were felonies and all of those charges were dismissed.

Bruce Fischer: I'm always shocked that so many of these people involved are all dealing with arrests. They're all in those in the system, we have girlfriends, boyfriends, husbands, everybody's dealing with being arrested and they all have their own problems to deal with.

Tammy Alexander: I know it's like a huge shit show.

Bruce Fischer: What the hell is going on? Is there any girlfriend or boyfriend or husband that isn't in jail or been arrested?

Tammy Alexander: And they keep intertwining with each other? You know, they keep coming back.

Bruce Fischer: I don't know why. It's just very interesting to me. I don't know

Lesley Pires: It was. It was a vicious circle of people as Ray put it last episode.

Bruce Fischer: I think. Yeah, I think he says that perfectly when he said that because everybody involved has their own shit to deal with. They're all doing something.

Lesley Pires: They're all beating people up too...I mean, the charges are, you know, it's not like they're just getting in trouble. It's battery for- or rape. It's terrible.

Tammy Alexander: Yeah. it is...bad charges.

Bruce Fischer: I guess it's like a circle of people. I don't know. I don't understand it, but I'm waiting for one person that's totally clean.

Lesley Pires: They don't testify because they don't lie.

Bruce Fischer: Right. That's why they're not involved. They're not looking for any deal. So they're not involved. Lesley, how did Karen's testimony play out in court? Her boyfriend, Stretch testified against everything she said. What was that like?

Lesley Pires: The most interesting things that Karen said at trial that we're different than her original accounts were when these conversations with Stretch actually took place. She told police that Stretch asked if Jamie could stay over and hide out sometime in 1991. And her testimony at the Grand Jury was the same in 1999, but she wasn't sure about the timeline, but it had been some time before Jamie was arrested in April of that year for a different crime. But now all of a sudden at Jamie's trial, she tells the jury this new story, it's the same story that she just told detectives six months ago for the first time. She's saying that she can now remember that the conversation about Jamie needing a place to stay happened on Easter, the night of the crime.

When defense attorney Frank Picl tries to point out how weird it is that she would have had forgotten that it happened on Easter, considering she read about the shooting in the paper the next day, she covers for that and says, Oh, she always

knew that the conversation took place on Easter, but no one ever asked her so she didn't give a specific date. But that's an absolute lie. She was asked at the grand jury flat out if she recalls when the conversation occurred, and she said she's unsure of the timeline. Frank did not pull out her testimony to hammer on this and he backed off. On redirect, the prosecutor tries to cover for her and asked her if it's possible she didn't make the connection until later that perhaps she always knew Jamie was at her house trying to stay there the night of the crime, but didn't know it was for the shooting until later. And Karen agrees to that saying there was a second conversation in which her boyfriend Stretch told her more about the details. And that's when she figured it out.

Stretch also took the stand next and he refuted everything Karen said saying he never even asked if Jamie could stay there. And Jamie never told him he robbed the Clark station, and neither did he. He also was a character witness for Ed Palumbo, saying he was a known liar and a braggart, and he refuted Bruce Roland saying he was never at a party at the Whitmore's that night, and he refuted jailhouse snitch Bill Moffitt stating that he was in jail with ample phone privileges, writing supplies and access to guards every 30 minutes. Even when the prosecution came at him hard, he still insisted he never had any conversation with Karen or Jamie about Jamie's involvement in a robbery. And he never asked him to stay over.

After his testimony, he does tell the court that he felt Detective Dan Katz was trying to intimidate him and discourage him from testifying by pulling him into a room a few days prior and asking him if he was going to testify or plead the fifth, insinuating that he would get himself in trouble for what he could say on the stand, so you better be careful. Dan Katz actually testified three days prior, and he was only asked about interviewing snitches, Randy Howard and Kevin Shaw, crime scene witness Gerardo Gutierrez and the naughty correction officer Mary Burns;but never anyone else...not even Karen. Picl only asked him about the composites and how he got to be in charge of the case after Crowe retired. And that's literally it. Detective Rick Barkes wasn't even called to testify. It's just very alarming that there are all these inconsistencies in every snitch statement and both these detectives, lead witnesses and intimidated them. And now we have one witness willing to testify to that fact. And they aren't even questioned about it at trial at all.

Bruce Fischer: This is all very interesting. And the dynamic with Karen and Stretch was really important that they were both recalled to the stand just days later, what happened then?

Lesley Pires: Karen was recalled to explain about what she knew the night of the crime, how that conversation differed from the others. She told the prosecutor all she knew the night of the crime was that Jamie was in trouble. She went on to tell Frank Picl that there were actually more than two conversations about Jamie's involvement. There are many, and actually three that were important. And she just didn't want to be involved. So she didn't tell anyone and left parts out when she did. Well, this was bad. So prosecutor Tina Griffin jumped in and save the ship. She coddled Karen on the stand and had her explain that she's so tired and scared...something happened the night before to affect her mental state, and she's just having trouble remembering. And it was quite shameless.

So Stretch came back, too, right after that. And this time, only the defense wanted to talk to him. And that's not surprising. I mean, why would Tina Griffin want to ask him any more questions about Karen. Frank had him refute Karen's new story that he told her Jamie was in a lot of trouble the night of the crime. And he got him to vehemently confirm again, he absolutely did not have that conversation with Karen. Stretch also told the jury about Karen's drug habit and said she still had a bad habit today. And I wish that Picl had been able to ask Karen about it herself. And if she was ever in trouble for it, and I can't tell if it's because he wasn't allowed to or if because this was just an afterthought thrown in at the end. But it's very interesting that Stretch reports it again later in his 2010 affidavit stating that he heard she was arrested for cocaine, and he thinks she testified to work off that arrest. So he mentioned it on the stand in 2001. And then nine years later doubles down on it with more detail. So we have to ask if that was a possible motive for Karen's testimony against Jamie.

Bruce Fischer: Has Karen ever been contacted by Jamie's defense team and given the option opportunity to come clean? What's happened with that since the trial in 2001?

Tammy Alexander: She has been contacted and she's refused to talk. You know, she's been contacted by Jamie's investigator. I contacted her. And, you know, she blocked me. You know, she I apparently she doesn't want to talk. But again, she is welcome to contact us to reach out to us and we'll happily have her on the podcast. And she can, you know, if she wants to refute anything that we've said, or she can contact us privately. And, you know, if she wants to talk to the investigator, that would be amazing, because we'd love to hear from her.

Lesley Pires: So one thing that I was thinking about was that it just kills me that Stretch took the stand and was credible and had the same story the entire time, saying everything Karen said was absolutely untrue. And he couldn't be shook. And the simplest explanation for why his story never changed, and he was so adamant was because she was lying. And he was telling the truth. And that's why he was unwavering. And that's the same that happened with Jamie, when he testified for himself. He was unwavering and just said over and over again, it's not true. That never happened. But neither of them were believed by the jury. And we know for a fact that both of them are telling the truth. Because all these years later, we have all these affidavits where people admitted that they lied.

So it just really strikes me that it was so hard for the jury to believe the simplest solution that the two who say the same thing over and over again and can't be shook are the ones who are liars. But the ones that you can believe are the ones wrapped in this huge web of lies with 12 different people, and you have to do back flips to even understand their story. And you know, it just makes me wonder if people like jurors just can't accept that some things that are brought into court are just blatant fabrications.

Tammy Alexander: And you know what's interesting, we talked just a few minutes ago about the affidavits and, you know, Stretch was in trouble at that time. And they were coming to him. They were coming to him in, in, in jail. And they were doing the same tactics using the same tactics that they did with the others. And he was like, no, he never said that to me. And he was not believed. And Mark Huffington, you know, in his affidavit, you know, was also like, Karen told me straight up, you know, she didn't know anything about it. She never remember anything about it. And they had talked about it several times, and they were good friends. Who's lying the people that are getting the deals or pressure?

Lesley Pires: Well, it's just like Occam's razor, the simplest thing is probably the most true. It's-well, you know, I guess we don't really even have to talk about that, because unreasonable doubt, just went completely out the window in this case, too. But you know, I guess it'll just never stop boggling my mind, you know why these principles were just so hard for the jury to believe?

Bruce Fischer: Lesley, I think you make really good points about, you know, testimony that's unwavering. And then all the contradictions we see now. But I think

we have to look closely and see how many of these contradictions have been noted after the trial, because there's been so much hard work done by Tammy and Ray and, and his attorneys to find all these contradictions after the trial. But we really need to see how many of those contradictions were known during the trial phase. Because a lot of this stuff unfortunately wrongful convictions that comes out into the open later. And of course, as we see now it takes decades to fix.

Lesley Pires: Yeah, that's true. That's very true. But I mean, Jamie was saying it all along. And I you know, I guess it's just his defense attorney didn't pay attention didn't maybe didn't present it, either.

Tammy Alexander: Bingo. That's it. Yeah. It wasn't all of this information. He could, you know, have have have gotten it was a horrible defense, horrible defense. All he ever did was say, did you see Jamie shoot Bill Little? I mean, that was his big, you know, strategy.

Lesley Pires: Oh, and then also, are you an honest and truthful person? Are you lying now? Or were you lying then? That that's his other classic

Bruce Fischer: Picl strategies. But that all goes to the point. I mean, he had a terrible defense. So all this stuff wasn't brought to light when it should have been brought to light.

Lesley Pires: I also just wonder as like, a juror Why is it so hard to believe somebody's saying it didn't happen? It's a lie. And that's it over and over again. Why is that so hard, but yet they just get caught up in all the salaciousness of what all these other people are saying and the hostile witnesses and you know, the girlfriend's coming on, and the prosecutor telling her story at the end. I guess it was just really dramatics that made the difference here.

Bruce Fischer: This is my own personal opinion. But I do believe that juries want to believe in the justice system and they want to believe the prosecutors have it right. And I think that does lead to some biases.

Tammy Alexander: I think also that it was, it was the volume of people. It was just the volume of people. People, you know, we know, we know a lot more now than we knew then. Jurors. I hope they're getting more educated about this stuff. But I think we're talking about this on the page. Why do they need this many people to lie?

What- you know, because they didn't have any evidence. That was it; that's the whole reason. Because, one one way to look at it is "Wow, all these people couldn't be lying" and I think that's how the jury saw it. And also with the Danny Martinez and Luna, you know, all that was presented to them was they were hundred percent sure it was Jamie. That's it. So that's what they saw. So the jury saying this and then all of these people, because they just eviscerated Jamie's character. So they're they're thinking, yeah, he probably was in there. Everybody was saying, brag, brag, brag, brag, brag.

So he's doing one and a half years, one and a half years on an obstruction of justice charge, and he's going to go to prison and tell everybody there that'll listen, that he killed Bill Little telling all of these convicts that he doesn't even know that he killed Bill Little and there's reward out. Everybody knows that. Jamie knew that they were after him for this crime at the time because he took a polygraph before he went to prison and said, you know, are you going to, if you, if I pass this, are you going to leave me alone about it? And that was it. So he's going to take a polygraph, he's gonna-knows there's a big reward out for this. And then he's going to go to prison on one and a half years and and tell everybody that he committed murder. That makes no sense at all. So they had to have all of these people together. It was a cumulative volume conviction.

Lesley Pires: Well, Bruce, last week, you were saying it might be a bad idea to have a police officer on the stand so that you could ask them questions about who they thought was lying and how their interviews went and things like that, because you never know what they're going to say. And you know, I found that very interesting when I was going over Dan Katz's testimony for this episode just trying to see, you know, what was he asked about Karen or Stretch - and he wasn't at all. And then I noticed Barkes was never even called. And then if we remember, detective Crowe was only asked selective questions that didn't even really matter about that investigation. So what do you think about that now? Do you have any insight into you know, why would you not shred them and ask them about how these taped interviews went and all the leading?

Bruce Fischer: Right I don't want to let Picl off the hook because we all know he was a piece of shit attorney. But the fact is, you know, it's defense 101...a defense attorney does not ask a question that they don't already know the answer to. And you can really get yourself into trouble. If you start asking questions, literally go fishing, to ask questions when you really don't know what the answers are gonna be.

So I think that defense attorneys do use caution there but I really don't want to use that as a defense for Picl because he was terrible.

Tammy Alexander: They didn't have all of these tapes. So there was only there was only 30 tapes. Something like that given over and now we have 70.

Bruce Fischer: Right. Just to get back to what Tam was saying about the volume of witnesses. I mean, Paul Ciolino mentioned it in a previous episode, Ray mentioned it, Tam has mentioned it multiple times, when you don't have a real case, you just stack a whole bunch of witnesses up in overwhelm the jury. And that's exactly what we saw here. There's no credibility, but the information is overwhelming. And I think that's part of what we saw happen in this case.

Lesley Pires: Yeah. So imagine you as a listener, you're now hearing I don't know what are we on the eighth? The eighth witness against Jamie saying I heard this from so and so. You probably can't even remember their names...you probably can't even remember, oh, this one was the one who said he overheard something at the party. That was the girlfriend to that one. This is the one who said it when they were passing each other in the car. This one saw...this Karen woman says she randomly saw him driving down the highway and she can tell who was in the driver seat. Like you, you can't you probably can't keep up with all this. So I'm telling you, yeah, we're giving you all the documents, we're taking over an hour to talk about every single one. So imagine how these jurors felt, or even the judge, you know, after one week, 40 people.

Bruce Fischer: You know, you listen to everything they say none of their stories line up. But just as long as there's one or two sentences in there somewhere that says Jamie did it or Jamie was involved. That's all they needed.

Lesley Pires: Yeah, that's all that stood out.

Tammy Alexander: We need these people to come forward and talk to us and we need anybody that knows anything about this. These witnesses, where they were, going through timelines, and we're going through where they said they were, you know, we need we need people to come forward and if they have any information about that, to let us know.

Bruce Fischer: You know, Tam, as you and Lesley always say everybody's always welcome to come here and talk to us.

Tammy Alexander: Yeah. Or privately.

Bruce Fischer: I do look at people Jamie and Jeff (unintelligible) one of my favorite ones too, because I mean, they're unwavering. Their story lines have never changed, no matter how much has been thrown at them over the years, they refuse to change their story because what they're telling is the truth, you can tell the same story for 20 years, and never be pressured into saying anything else and never be tricked or never be, you know, influenced to change one sentence. You're telling the truth.

Lesley Pires: Well, I'll never forget on Truth and Justice with Bob Ruff. When Jamie was first interviewed about a lie, Jamie just flat out says that's a lie...that never happened. The whole thing never happened. Bob said, Wow. So you're just gonna say that whole conversation never happened, I'm surprised I thought that you were it was gonna turn into a he said- she said, Oh, he said, you know, he twisted my words around. That's not really how it happened. But no, you're gonna say that it never happened at all. And he said, yeah, it never happened. And, you know, that was the first time I ever heard a defendant myself, especially in one of these cases that you see on TV or on podcasts, just say no, it never happened. It was a lie. And then it just kept going on and on and on and on all down the list all these different people Nope, never happened. It was a lie. And it's just a lot easier to believe that now to hear. Because it's just true. It didn't happen for any of these people.

Tammy Alexander: And that's a that's a stark realization, because I remember when I started, I mean, it took me about, like... 10 years ago, or whenever it was... about six months to go through all this stuff, because I did it, you know, everything we had at the time, which was we didn't have all of this information at the time. You know, so I'm sitting here, you know, reading the testimony, and I'm like, you know, I mean, my God, you know, and Jamie's like that did, that didn't happen, and we started following clues and I'll be damned if he wasn't right. You know, every single thing he said, came true... came to fruition. It wasn't, it wasn't right. He was telling the truth, you know, and that's when you just start going Jesus Christ. You know, this is fucked up. I mean, really, really, really fucked up. I just wanted to add that Tina Griffin said that when you guys were talking about the truth never changes...she used that. She said, she said the truth never changes.

Bruce Fischer: Of course they put that against you.

Tammy Alexander: But, and all of these people were lying now we know, you know, but she said that she had a lot of nerve.

Bruce Fischer: But if you look at all the people that that they had, and then you're talking to Jamie early on when you first got involved, and you got 10, 12, 14...however many people he's talking about, and he tells you about each and every one of them. And then you do all the research and you get all the FOIA requests, and you lay it all out. And everything lines up with what Jamie said, that's impossible. There's no way that a liar could have laid all that out to you. It's not possible. So those are the things that I look at because there's no way that he could have spoken to in the beginning, told you about all these people, and then all the research lines up t what-to what he said, there's just no way for that to work unless he's telling the truth.

Tammy Alexander: That's an excellent point. I have not looked at it that way. But that's-

Bruce Fischer: He's not a genius. I mean, I'm sorry. He's a very intelligent guy. But he's, I mean, there's no way that he could probably lay all that out. I mean, there's just no way for it to happen.

Tammy Alexander: Right.

Lesley Pires: And the other thing is, when I talked to Jamie about these people, a lot of the time they'll be like, imagine how I felt when, you know, she got up there. And she said that or they said that, and I just had to sit there. And I'm like, yeah, it's just, you know, over and over again. You have to sit there and you can't take it. And it's all lies, but I don't have to imagine how I felt anymore. Because I was watching the Chappelle show last weekend, and they put on that episode where, though, you know, this white banker all of a sudden gets a public defender and gets treated the way that poor people get treated in the criminal justice system and they have him sitting at the table. And Bill Burr plays the naughty detective who takes a stand against them. And he's like, yeah, the guy tried to sic his dog on me and we had to shoot the dog in the face. See this white rich banker just sitting and he's like, that's not true, your Honor. And the judge is like, you're scumbag, you will shut up. And I was laughing at first, but then I was like, no. And then Bill Burr pulls out like a pound of cocaine out of his jacket. He's like, yeah, we found this. So I'm laughing. But then

I'm like, no, that's exactly what happened to Jamie. And that's exactly how Jamie felt like, I can't laugh at this anymore.

Bruce Fischer: A lot of times comedy does relate to real life unfortunately-

Lesley Pires: So I'll find that clip and put it on our (unintelligible).

Tammy Alexander: I remember that episode. I remember that.

Bruce Fischer: Just one other point about- one other point about Jamie too, when he was telling you his story early on. He had no idea what you were going to discover and all those requests - all those FOIA requests. There's no possibility that he would have known because he had never seen them. And everything he told you early on lined up with what you found.

Tammy Alexander: You know, it's not that, it's not so much that, though he said, he said he's lying. You know, this is a you're you're gonna you know, you have to find this, you have to find this. I mean, he knew you can read it in his in his pleadings. You know, when when he has a letter that he wrote a handwritten motion that he wrote to the judge, after his sentencing when he was trying to get rid of his lawyers, and, and I swear to God, almost every everything in there, if not everything and more, has has come to fruition. He knew it, because he knew who was testifying against him and he knew like that, you know, that can't be true. You need to go to this person. You need to go to this person and talk to them, you know, you need to get these records. You need to do this. I mean, he probably would have been better off defending himself.

Bruce Fischer: Right. He had no fear of research because he knew what the truth was.

Tammy Alexander: Right? That's, that's another great point.

Lesley Pires: Yeah, that's really powerful statement.

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

Lesley Pires: In Episode 13, Karen called the cops and interfered with authorities by lying to put an innocent man behind bars. Some things never change, right? Karen knew Jamie, they got along. But eight years after the crime, she suddenly recalled a third-hand murder confession, told tales about how much she actually disliked Jamie. And then went to his trial to face off against her ex- Stretch, who refuted her entire story. When she got flustered under pressure, she said she was tired and upset. Karen's privilege served her well. And she was relieved. Times are changing, though, and Karen's are being exposed all over the country. This Karen has never come forward.

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.

Karen wasn't the only woman to insert herself into this case. Gal pals Bridget and Julie made up a story about Jamie's wife confessing at a bar and Julie even gossiped about a possible second murder. Both of those stories made it into court. How did Bridget Lawson and Julie Knight, get away with it? That's next time on Snow Files.

Transcribed by: Cathy McElhaney

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