

UNSOLVED WITH STEVE GREGORY EPISODE 107

TRANSCRIPT

SEGMENT 1

Announcer

KFI AM 640, heard everywhere on the iHeartRadio app.

Steve Gregory

On any given day in Southern California, hundreds of investigators are working more than 10,000 unsolved cases. That's 1000s of friends and families who have lost loved ones, 1000s of people who got away with a crime, and 1000s of murderers who still walk the streets, killers who may be your neighbor, go to your church, or could be dating a close friend. For the next two hours, we'll highlight cases that have gotten cold, baffled investigators, or just need that one witness to speak out. This is Unsolved with Steve Gregory.

Los Angeles County Sheriff's case number 019-13922-1616-011, The shooting deaths of 19 year old Erin Lavender and 17 year old Daleaja Hearn. January 15, 2020 - Los Angeles County Sheriff's Headquarters in downtown LA Sheriff Alex Villanueva.

Good morning, everyone. We're here to provide information regarding the events that took the lives of two innocent young woman Erin and Daleaja. Murders tears at the very fabric of our communities. It tears apart families, it scares our children. It discourages everyday activity and impacts the entire community is always tragic when a life is lost. But when two young ladies lose their lives is extremely heartbreaking. These ladies were just beginning their lives and we need the publics help to locate those who are responsible for this heinous crime.

Joining us now is Detective Steve Blagg with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's department's Homicide Bureau to talk about a very disturbing case from December 15, 2019 The victim's 19 year old Erin Lavender and 17 year old Daleaja Hearn. Detective, thanks for joining us. Let's get started with an overview of the case.

Detective Blagg

So shortly before 9pm On December 15, 2019, Erin Lavender and Daleaja Hearn were seated inside of Erin's vehicle, which was parked alongside the road in the 203100 block of Albeau Avenue in the city of Carson. Both Erin and Daleaja, along with three friends who were seated in the backseat had just

finished spending time with the family across the street from where they were parked, paying their respects for a young man who had recently died of a drug overdose as Erin, Daleaja, and their friends were sitting in the vehicle. They were drinking, smoking, just talking and having fun when two individuals approached the vehicle. The the two individuals which we have on security camera, walked from Delamo Boulevard which is just south of where they were parked. They walk north on Delamo as one of the individuals stayed on the west side of the street. Our main suspect walked directly to the driver side of Erin's vehicle, produced a handgun and fired multiple shots inside direct directed at Erin in the front passenger compartment of that vehicle. Both of those suspects then fled together. They ran south on DelAmo and then they turned on what westbound on DelAmo Boulevard and out of sight we did not see them get into any type of a vehicle. At that point, one of the persons who was in the backseat saw that both Erin and Daleaja had been hit by gunfire they were able to pull air into the back. That person then got in the driver's seat and then started driving to a local hospital to try and get help for both Erin and Daleaja.

Steve Gregory

And they both died at the hospital?

Detective Blagg

They both were pronounced dead at the hospital.

Steve Gregory

So going back then the 2300 block of DelAmo Avenue, is at a residential area or commercial area?

Detective Blagg

It's kind of a mixture. The whole area along DelAmo Boulevard is industrial. But once you go on Albo, that is actually a residential neighborhood there

Steve Gregory

So they were they were in your neighborhood or they were in a neighborhood then?

yes, they were within a residential neighborhood right across the street from where a vigil was being held for the young man who had passed away.

Now the girls in the car with him, were they also teenagers or, you know, they all the same age approximately,

it was two girls and a male and they were all between 19 to 20 years old.

Okay, so and what were they able to tell you about what happened? Just I know what you just said. But were they able to give you any more detail?

Detective Blagg

No, unfortunately, is they were sitting listening to music and talking or on their phones. All they heard was gunshots, and none of them actually saw the shooter or the other stuff.

Steve Gregory

Where did you get the security footage from?

We were able to get security footage from the businesses along DelAmo Boulevard.

And what specifically did that show you?

Detective Blagg

It shows two individuals, it's tough to tell if they're male or female or one of each, but they're both wearing dark colored hooded sweatshirts. As they walk, they're walking very casually, East on DelAmo. And then northbound on the Albo. And then after the shooting, they both run run away from the location. The shooter actually there is a dark colored SUV that was leaving the neighborhood and driving south on Albo. And the shoot did actually had to stop to avoid hitting the shooter. It looks like the shooter points, their firearm at the vehicle and then the shooter then runs.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so did the video show you how the two approached the vehicle did they approach from the front or from the back or the side?

Detective Blagg

They originally approached as the vehicle was parked along the East curb facing north. Okay, so they walk from behind the vehicle. And then what right when they got basically kind of right alongside the driver side, the shooter walks directly across the street to the driver's door of the of Erin's car.

Steve Gregory

So they were across the street and then came over from behind and kind of walked up diagonally up to the car

Detective Blagg

No, almost straight across the street. They walk the vehicle was parked along the East curb. They walked on the west sidewalk. Okay, and then the shooter then walked directly across almost perpendicular to the driver's door.

Steve Gregory

So was there in like you say they probably those teenagers in the car probably had no idea people walking by all the time. So did they give you any indication that they saw someone approaching?

Detective Blagg

No, they were unable to give any description. All they heard was gunfire. They all ducked down in the back seat and then ran. I mean, one of the things to note in this is that we did have some fire cartridge cases recovered at the scene. We don't believe that those were related to the actual shooter. In this case. There were some people that were at the house where the vigil were was being held. From what the information we gathered after they heard the gunshots. Somebody came out with a gun and actually fired at the suspects as they fled because the evidence we have that was recovered inside of Erin's car did not match up to the evidence we had on the street. It wasn't the same caliber weapon. So we know that somebody in the house actually fired the suspects, but we don't believe they hit any of that.

Steve Gregory

So then, because typically these types of attacks are over within seconds. So did someone hear the shots and come out of the house and shoot or were people standing in front when they shot?

Detective Blagg

Nobody was standing in front. They were all in the backyard of that residence which was directly across from Erin's car. We think they after hearing the shots, they came out saw the person's running and then fired at them. They fired actually on our suspect.

Steve Gregory

More with Lieutenant Steve Blagg, but first, this is KFI AM 640. Time now for a news update.

SEGMENT 2

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640, heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory, and this is unsolved. We're talking with Steve Blagg, a detective with the LA County Sheriff's Department's Homicide Bureau about the shooting deaths of Daleaja Hearn and Erin Lavender. Both were shot while sitting in a car on December 15, 2019 in the city of Carson. Detective, before the break, you were talking about the fact that people at this home on the the 2300 block of Albo Avenue were in the backyard. They were there for a wake, and that after they heard the gunfire in the front, and at least someone ran out and perhaps fired it those two individuals that opened fire in the car, correct?

Detective Blagg

Yes.

Steve Gregory

Do you believe this was a targeted attack or random?

Detective Blagg

We believe that may have been targeted towards Erin Lavender, potentially.

Steve Gregory

Oh, okay. And the reason I ask is because I'm wondering if there was a connection to the individual whom they had the memorial or the wake for? Was there a connection there? Maybe they thought there was a connection? You see where I'm headed there?

Detective Blagg

Correct. I mean, the house that they were at was, and is a known gang residence for a gang within that area. But neither Erin or Daleaja, or the other passengers in their vehicle were associated with any gang members whatsoever. It was one of Erin's friends who lived at that location who had passed away from a drug overdose. So they she was merely they're paying their respects. And we have no indication that they were hanging out with gang members who may have been at the location, but they were just there to pay respects to the family. That's why we kind of believe that Erin was targeted just based upon the way the shooter walked directly to where Erin was seated in the driver's seat, walked directly to her window and open fire. I mean, in the normal game, shooting it, a person would not target a specific person, they would just fire multiple rounds in a direction even to a vehicle that they believe potential gang members were there. So we think that that shooter knew Erin was there somehow, and walked directly up to her window and opened fire without paying any attention to the people in the back seat.

Steve Gregory

Was the window down?

Detective Blagg

No, the window was up.

Steve Gregory

Was it tinted?

Detective Blagg

No.

Steve Gregory

So what do we know about Erin?

Detective Blagg

Erin, she grew up in the city of Carson. She was an avid softball player. She played softball for club teams. And currently she was going to Compton Community College, where she was playing softball. She had a lot of friends. In fact, some of the witnesses and people that were in the car with her were her friends that she had grown up with that they all played softball together at different levels, Daleaja. We believe Erin had recently met Daleaja. Daleaja had grown up in in the Carson area, but had moved to central California with her mom. She was down visiting family just before the holidays that year, when

somehow she had met Erin, they established a friendship. In fact, we know that they had spent time at another friend's birthday party the night before. And they were just basically hanging out together. I mean, Daleaja was a cheerleader at the high school that she was going to in central California.

Steve Gregory

What about Erin's siblings? Were her siblings involved in gangs?

Detective Blagg

Now we have no indication that any family members have either Erin, or delays have ever been involved in gang?

Steve Gregory

Was there anybody that Erin might have been dating at the time?

Detective Blagg

We we spoke with Erin's girlfriend who had stated to us that she knew of no real problems that Erin was having with anybody. And so we don't believe that her girlfriend had any involvement or any knowledge of why or who did this to Erin.

Steve Gregory

Based on your experience, what tells you that Erin was the subject of that attack?

Detective Blagg

Well, what we do know for our investigation is that Erin, she believes she was owed money by some a few different people. In the days prior to her murder, she actually went to a few different locations. And unfortunately, she broke out the windows of one person's vehicle windows to another person's residence because she was upset over money that was she believed was owed to her. We haven't completely cleared those people of being involved yet. I mean, that's something that we're working on. But we also don't have any evidence directly linking those persons. So that's why we kind of believe that Erin was the one who was targeted, is just based upon what had happened in the days leading up to this.

Steve Gregory

So this is a possible retaliation?

Detective Blagg

Yes.

Steve Gregory

Has Erin ever been in trouble with the law before?

Detective Blagg

I think she has a very a couple minor arrests, but nothing to where she has ever done anything violent. Nothing violent.

Steve Gregory

any jail time?

Detective Blagg

No.

Steve Gregory

What is it you want the public? What do you need from the public?

Detective Blagg

We're looking for help. We're looking for any information that would help us find who did this to Erin and Daleaja. I mean, the city of Carson has issued a \$20,000 reward in the LA County Board of Supervisors have issued a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the suspects. Total \$30,000. I mean, we're just looking for any information from anybody in the public that would help point us in the direction who murdered these two young ladies.

Steve Gregory

From the video that you've got? Do you have any kind of a description of any kind?

Detective Blagg

No, unfortunately, due to the distance of the video, we're, again, we can't even tell if they're male or female, but one is probably around six foot. The other is probably closer to about 5'6 or 5'7 but they're both wearing hooded sweatshirts with the hoods pulled up over their head as they walk in the video.

Steve Gregory

Since it was targeted like this, do you suppose that the individuals that walked up to that car and the one who opened fire knew she was going to be at that event?

Detective Blagg

We believe so, yes. Whether it be from somebody who was at the weight or do her social media posts, potentially.

Steve Gregory

Okay. Okay. So has there been any other activity in those families? Is there been any other calls for service in that area of, you know, domestic violence any, I'm trying to piece together where there was any other retaliatory actions?

Detective Blagg

Well, we know that the day prior to Erin's murder, there was an actual shooting at the house where they were there for the week, a person drove by shot at the front door, but that person was taken into custody and was arrested. So we don't believe that that was associated to Erin and Daleaja's murder. We know again, that house was a known hanging out for gangs. But we don't believe that Erin and Daleaja were targeted because they were just parked alongside that house game we believe based upon our evidence that delete or that Erin was specifically targeted, and Daleaja because she was sitting in the front passenger seat next to Erin. Some of the some of the bullets missed Erin and actually hit Daleaja.

Steve Gregory

How many rounds fired?

Detective Blagg

At least five or six.

Steve Gregory

If you have any information about the murders of Erin and Daleaja, dial #250 on your cell phone and remain anonymous. Coming up next, we head out to Fontana to discuss a bizarre case of an apartment complex owner who was most likely killed in Southern California then buried in Arizona. But first this is KFI AM 640. Time now for a news update.

SEGMENT 3

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640, heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. This is Unsolved. I'm Steve Gregory. Fontana Police Department case number 88-7727, the murder of Angel Martinez. Detective Katherine Clark is a 14 year veteran of the Fontana PD and handles cold cases. She joins us now with an overview.

Detective Clark

Back in 1988, specifically Wednesday, June the Eighth, 1988 at approximately 8pm - Angel Martinez who's our victim in this case. His wife, Mary Martinez, went to the Cyprus Police Department to report Angel missing. She communicated with the Cyprus Police Department that Angel owned an apartment complex in the city of Fontana called the "Arrowood Apartment Complex". And that morning, earlier that morning, he had received a call from his apartment manager. Her name is Paula Emmons, requesting that he picked her up. That call, Mary reported happened at about 5:55am It was Mary's understanding that they had plans to a lawn mower and go to the apartment complex to prepare the grounds of the apartment complex for sale they were getting ready to sell the complex. So Angel left their home in Cypress California at approximately 6:55am and from Mary's understanding, he was driving to the city of Fontana to pick up Paula and then get a lawn mower and go to the apartment complex to to get it ready for sale.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so it was something that was typical that that Angel would get these calls early in the morning before sunrise to go pick up people or pick up in this case pick up Paula and with a lawnmower, was that something that would typically happen that you know of?

Detective Clark

No, Mary said that this was something that was unusual. She also stated that she believed Angel had a large amount of money on him, at this time, and that she was also expecting to get a call from him. At about noon that day, he was supposed to pick her up so that then they could go to the escrow office to sign papers to complete the sale of this apartment complex.

Steve Gregory

So they didn't quite own the apartment complex yet?

Detective Clark

No, they owned it. They were selling it.

Steve Gregory

They were selling, excuse me, yeah, you said you were they were selling it. So why did he have a large amount of money?

Detective Clark

So that comes out later in the investigation. We believe through interviews that he had been holding the rent money from April of 1988. And this money now was going to be put into escrow for the sale of the apartment complex.

Steve Gregory

So, this started out as a missing persons case, correct? Okay, so the apartment is in Fontana or was in Fontana at the time. So how did it become? How did it work from a missing persons case to a homicide?

Detective Clark

So, the initial missing persons report happened June 8 of 1988. As time moved on June 17 of 1988 is when Angel's vehicle was located. It was located in the city of the Duarte at a bowling alley on June 17, at about 8pm. That vehicle was subsequently towed to the Orange County Crime Lab and later processed for forensic evidence. And we can talk about that in a little bit. But then on Monday, the 20th of June 1988. A body is located near Dome Rock and the interstate 10 freeway in La Paz County, Arizona. The body was badly decomposed and at that time the coroner who examined the body believed that it had been there for at least 10 days. That body was eventually positively identified as Angel Martinez through dental records.

Steve Gregory

So now you have a homicide?

Detective Clark

Correct.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so now went from missing persons and then missing on the 8th by the 20th, you find the body in La Paz, Arizona. Coroner says approximately 10 days. So somewhere in that two days between the 8th and the 10th of June, something happened.

Detective Clark

Yes.

Steve Gregory

And what do you think happened?

Detective Clark

Well, Angel was killed. I believe he was killed in the city of Fontana. And then his body was then transported to La Paz County and disposed of there by the suspects.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so that was initial investigation. When did you get the case?

Detective Clark

I got the case when I came over to the cold case unit and March of 2020.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so you've had this case for a little over a year then.

Detective Clark

Yeah.

Steve Gregory

Okay. So how do you approach it? What is your particular style of approaching a case like this?

Detective Clark

Well, this case in particular is it's very big. For lack of a better term.

So we're talking at least 1000 pages of an investigation, I would say, you know, approximately, approximately. So the first thing that I do is I sit and I read the case from beginning to end. And I take notes as I go through the case, things that are intriguing to me that I have questions about perhaps, that oftentimes I find the answer as I read on, sometimes the answer to my question isn't found in the case. And I'll follow up with that later. I write down all the important players in the in the investigation, the victim, the victim's family, who they're associated with whoever was interviewed at the time. And hindsight, you know, they say is 2020 so many times reading a case now, especially when that happens so long ago, you can kind of see things from different perspective, then investigators could at the time when they were in it.

Steve Gregory

Yeah. So what popped out at you when you you're reading these, this some 1000 pages of report. I mean, what on earth pops out at you?

Detective Clark

Well, part of the investigation led to the fact that Angel's credit card was used after his death. And that stood out to me as a good lead to try to narrow down who our suspect could be.

Steve Gregory

We're talking with detective Katherine Clark from the Fontana Police Department about Angel Martinez. He went missing back in June of 1988. His body was found some Well, it looks like on the 20th of June in La Paz County, Arizona. And Detective when you took the case over back in 2020, you said you were going through it and things were popping out the credit card. Had that been a lead that was investigated by earlier investigators?

Detective Clark

Yes.

Steve Gregory

Okay, And what did they find?

Detective Clark

So investigators found out that information that his two of his credit cards were used after he was killed. One was an American Express card, one was a Discover card. And they obtained that information because Mary noticed it on her credit card statements and contacted investigators to let them know. So that investigators really jumped on that and investigated where those traveler's checks were purchased, and who cashed them.

Steve Gregory

Okay. And so they were ever able to discover that and get that information. So when you take the information in that pops out to you. How do you approach it differently than the original investigator does?

Detective Clark

Well, in this particular situation, I'm lucky because they already they already looked into it, they already got the answer as to as to who cashed those traveler's checks, and they interviewed those individuals.

Steve Gregory

And you know, one of the challenges here and when we come back, I'm going to talk about this. One of the challenges here is that you're talking about a case from 1988. So some of these individuals that you need to talk to or want to talk to, may not be around, or they may have moved away change their names for all you know, but Well, I want to talk a little bit about that challenge, when we come back. We're talking with Detective Katherine Clark with the Fontana Police Department. It's KFI AM 640. Time now for news update.

SEGMENT 4

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640, heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. This is Unsolved. I'm Steve Gregory. We're talking with Detective Katherine Clark with the Fontana Police Department about a cold case from 1988. It was the death of Angel Martinez. He was the owner of an apartment complex in Fontana. He was about to sell it. And he went missing in June of '88. His body was found on June 20, 1988, in La Paz County, Arizona. Detective before the break, we were talking about you needing to reach out to people that were part of the investigation. And one of the things that jumped out at you was the use of Mr. Martinez credit card after his death. And you said the original investigators had already looked into who

used the credit card. So when you look at that, do you go back and do you re-interview the same people?

Detective Clark

Sometimes I will. Yes.

Steve Gregory

And did you in this case?

Detective Clark

In regards to the traveler's checks, not yet. The credit cards were used to purchase the traveler's checks.

Steve Gregory

Oh, okay. Okay, interesting. So then were you able to go back and find those people?

Detective Clark

The original investigators were, they were okay.

Steve Gregory

So you never did talk to him?

Detective Clark

Not yet.

Steve Gregory

Okay. So then, not yet. Oh, so there's something in the future, then?

Detective Clark

Perhaps, you have to plan these investigations very methodically, because talking to a particular individual at the wrong time, could compromise the thoroughness of your investigation or the cooperation of other people in your investigation? If you talk to people in the wrong order, sometimes only interesting.

Steve Gregory

So timing really plays a big part of this.

Detective Clark

Yes.

Okay. So how did you strategize that?

So with the information that I was able to receive through the initial investigation, I know who cashed those traveler's checks, because Investigators spoke with them. Those people were to Lithia Mayberry, and Charles Mayberry, I was able to read through their investigation, and the interviews that they had with those individuals. And in those interviews, those individuals talk to investigators about where they obtained those traveler's checks, right, because you got to think this is a direct link to our victim. Sure, homicide victim. So that's a very serious piece of evidence. And so if you're the person cashing those traveler's checks, doesn't look good, really for you. Right, right. So they were very cooperative with investigators at the time, at least from the way that the investigation reads, and they informed investigators that they received those traveler's checks by two individuals by the name of Robbie Kaufman and Fred Dwayne Harrison. And the reason why those two individuals asked to Lithia and Charles to help them cash these traveler's checks is because Robbie and Dwayne Fred, Dwayne Harrison goes by Dwayne, they didn't have an identification, any form of identification at the time that would allow them to cash these traveler's checks. So they went to Charles and Talia, who actually lived at the Arrowood Apartment Complex, where which is the apartment complex Angel owned.

Steve Gregory

Is there significance in that?

Detective Clark

well, everybody knows each other.

Okay, so how did Robert Kaufman and Dwayne Harrison get a hold of the credit card?

So there's no I don't, I can't say for sure if they're the ones who use the credit card to purchase the traveler's checks, but I do have information as to where they obtained the traveler's checks from someone else. And that information is not something that we are releasing to the public at this time.

Steve Gregory

So back in '88, there was probably no surveillance cameras.

Detective Clark

correct.

Steve Gregory

So you weren't not able to go back and trace the point of sale?

Correct. Today, if something like that was to happen if somebody was to steal your credit card and use it to purchase traveler's checks at an ATM, there would be video of that person and we would have a face, back in 1988 that didn't exist. We just have the documentation, the data of the transaction taking place where it took place, and then the data and information of where those traveler's checks were then used or cashed.

Okay, so where was the credit card used to purchase the traveler's checks?

Detective Clark

That credit card was used to purchase those traveler's checks at the Los Angeles airport.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so LAX? How soon after the discovery of Martinez's body in La Paz County, did the credit card purchase show up?

Detective Clark

Mary contacted us on August 11. But the credit card purchase actually happened June 10th. So that's two days after Angel went missing.

Steve Gregory

So does that help you establish a bit of a timeline on what you think might have happened to Martinez?

Detective Clark

It definitely helps establish a timeline as to when he was probably murdered.

Steve Gregory

well, that's what it's going to ask. So based on your experience, when someone uses a card like that, after someone goes missing, or you in this case you found out later murdered. Is it your experience that that person is already dead by the time someone uses a card? Or could they have been in captivity or something?

Detective Clark

Well, I think with this particular case, and the hindsight that we have, we can say that Angel was dead at that time, and that his credit card was being used.

Steve Gregory

So is it your assertion then that on June 8, when he was reported missing? Do you believe he was killed on June 8?

Detective Clark

That is my belief because when Paula was interviewed, one, Mary called Paula asking if Angel ever arrived to her house, and police also interviewed her, and her statement was that Angel never arrived to her home on June 8, okay, so he left Cypress, California at 6:55 in the morning to go to her home and never arrived, according to her initial statement.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so when you're looking back at this, and you're trying to retrace steps, because that's always a difficult thing to do. There are no breadcrumbs, but there are some things that you can do to help you

figure this out. Let's talk about for a moment, Paula Emmons, because she's the one that actually called Angel early morning on the eighth of June, asking him to come pick her up and bring a lot more, right?

Unknown Speaker

Yes, he asked him for a ride because what she told investigators was that her parents took her car and took her children to San Diego. So she lives at her residence in the city of Fontana with her husband, Calvin Emmons and their children. And the car that she was left with was a pickup truck that was a manual transmission stick shift. And so what she told Angel was that she didn't know how to drive the truck, and that she needed a ride. And also that she thought maybe they could use the truck to go pick up this lawnmower, and then take it to the apartment grounds to get it ready to be sold.

Steve Gregory

So did Paula have an alibi for that day? So, what was her explanation or reasoning into the disappearance of Angel Martinez? Or did she know?

Detective Clark

She said that she didn't know she when the investigators asked her about what she thought might have happened? She did allude to that she thought it could have to do with the money that he had on him. The rent the rental proceeds that he had been holding back since April, in the cash that he had. She told investigators that after waiting for Angel and he didn't arrive to her home that she had her husband take her to work where she worked throughout the day until he picked her up later in that evening.

Steve Gregory

So Paula claims that that Angel Martinez never followed through and picked her up then.

Detective Clark

Correct.

Steve Gregory

Okay, when we come back when we'll explore a little bit more about that. This is KFI AM 640. Time now for news update.

SEGMENT 5

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640, heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. This is unsolved. I'm Steve Gregory

Welcome back, we're talking with detective Katherine Clark from the Fontana Police Department. She's a cold case detective who's gotten this case from 1988. It's the death of Angel Martinez. He was the apartment owner of the Arrow Wood Apartment Complex. He was reported missing. His car was found a few days later. And his body was found a few days after that. So before break, we were talking a little bit about Paulette Emmons, who was the apartment manager for the era wood apartment complex. And she had initially called him early that morning at five about what 5:55 That morning on June 8, to come pick her up, and also pick up on a lawn mower that they were using to help manicure the lawn and get it prepared to sell for the apartment complex. So I was asking you a little bit about Paula's alibi. And you told me she said that she didn't know what happened. And he never did show up to pick her up. Is that correct?

Detective Clark

Correct.

Steve Gregory

So do you just leave her word on something like that? Or do you do it attempt to find out what her alibi is? Or was at the time?

Detective Clark

Investigators also spoke with her husband, Kelvin Emmons as well to get a statement from him, I believe probably in an attempt to corroborate her statement as far as what her alibi was. And so he, when he talks to investigators, he lets investigators know that at one point in time, he actually was a handyman for the apartment complex as well. And that he was terminated about two months prior to this incident to Angel's death. And something that stands out to me about what I have on record about Kelvin statement is there's not a lot of detail about what he did during the day. But there's information as to what he did that night, June 8, that night into the morning of June 9. They also investigators at the time also spoke to Paula about that as well. And their timelines of what they did don't exactly match up completely.

Steve Gregory

Well, let me tell you, when you told me that he was a handyman, who has just been fired two months prior data immediately sends up a red flag for me.

Detective Clark

Yes. And the reason why he was terminated was Kelvin had a drug problem at the time. So he, from what I have found through the investigation is he was unavailable due to his drug problem. And after he completed what he was taking care of. He was not rehired by the apartment complex.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so now, as an outsider looking in, as a complete layman on this show, you've got an apartment manager who knew about a large sum of money, married to a man who used to do work but had a drug problem and got fired or didn't get rehired. You've got stories now that don't corroborate? So. Is that where original investigators started to focus then?

Detective Clark

Yes, they did spend a good amount of time talking to Paula and Kelvin. And in trying to tighten up, you know what they said they did that day. Eventually, search warrants were conducted in various locations. And it was learned that you know, Calvin and Paula and the other names that I've mentioned already, they're all know each other. So, Robbie and Dwayne and Charles and Talia, Calvin and Paula, they all know each other. And as far as the traveler's checks go, it was Charles and Talia. Theo's understanding that the money that they got from the traveler's checks that they gave to Robbie and Dwayne was shared with other individuals, Faith Campbell, who's Paula's best friend, and Randy, who has faith Campbell's boyfriend at the time, and everybody knew each other.

Steve Gregory

Oh my gosh. So you're, this is becoming more and more complicated, but it's, but it seems very simple to me. Also. It's funny because we're talking with Katherine Clark. She's a detective with the Fontana Police Department about this cold case from 1988. We have Angel Martinez, who owns this apartment complex. And then there are all these players. So this is kind of mapping out to be a you know, a drama of the week here, because now we've got an apartment manager, her husband, friends of theirs, and they've all now there, and I used the word fingerprints for lack of a better word, but their fingerprints are on everything. Now somebody has touched something, in this case, as an investigator yourself, is that something does this look like? It was a coordinated effort with if they were all in involved or not involved in? What are your suspicions take you at this point.

Detective Clark

My suspicions take me. Basically, I believe that one or two of these individuals was responsible for the death of Angel Martinez. And then everything that happened after that other people in the group may have been enlisted by the suspects to assist with the purchasing of the traveler's checks using of the

credit card, because one of his credit cards beyond the traveler's checks was also used in San Bernardino at three different locations. You know, purchasing the traveler's checks, were that was the credit card used. So we don't have we don't know exactly who used the credit card. But we have those transactions and where they took place. And follow up investigation was done by investigators at the time with the clerks in an attempt to get those people identified.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so let's fast forward now to present and what you're doing with the case. So all of this stuff is going on back in 88. And being investigated back in 8889. What are you doing now you've read all this, and you're telling us all this historical part of this case, but what are you doing with it?

Detective Clark

So something now that's much different than 1988? Is the advent of technology? And sure, the area forensics. So through this investigation, multiple, I guess, you could say, locations and things were searched by investigators and Evidence was collected. So we have the Martinez home was looked through, currently, presently, well, back then back then. So what happens with these cold cases is, they might be 30/40 years old, but the evidence, we still have the evidence, and maybe back then technology really didn't exist, to analyze it, forensically, but now, technology does exist. So we've got some evidence that was collected from the Emmons home from Angel's vehicle, from the crime scene, or from I'm sorry, where his body was located out in La Paz County. And so we've got multiple items of evidence at these different locations that my job now is to use the technology that's available, and ideally, get some more information forensically as to who's responsible specifically for Angel's murder.

Steve Gregory

And the fact that we're talking right now leads me to believe you didn't get any new information. Or if you did, it's not enough still to connect the dots. Right?

Detective Clark

Not to the standard that I need, for lack of a better..

Steve Gregory

Okay, so if my spidey sense is correct, right now, you probably have some people in mind that are responsible for this, but you just don't you can't get there yet. I just need a little bit more. The how many pieces of evidence do you have from

Detective Clark

I can't tell you an exact number. But numerous, we've got more than a dozen, more than a dozen more than 20 pieces, physical pieces and pieces of evidence, recovered from search warrants that were conducted. The processing of Angel's vehicle, the Emmons home, the dump site where angels body was dumped multiple items were recovered with his body. So in order for those items to get there, right, somebody had to move them from place A whether it be a vehicle or whatever the case is to to that location. So we leave our DNA all over the place and I don't think that in 1988 I don't think they realize that.

Steve Gregory

We're talking with Katherine Clark detective with the Fontana Police Department about a case from 1988. More with the detective as we returned to Unsolved with Steve Gregory. But first, this news update from the KFI newsroom.

SEGMENT 6

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640, heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. Download and subscribe to the Unsolved with Steve Gregory podcast on the iHeartRadio app, Spotify, Apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. We're talking with Detective Katherine Clark from the Fontana Police Department about a case from 1988. Angel Martinez was reported missing June 8, 1988. He was supposed to meet some people and never came back, never returned home. His car was found a few days later, his body a few days after that in another state. So detective, La Paz County, Arizona. Was there any significance to that county in any of the players in this case?

Detective Clark

None that can be noted. No. It appears that the suspect drove Angel's body as far away as they thought that they could. Probably purposely across state lines and to a desolate desert area to dispose of his body in hopes that it would be some time before he was located.

Steve Gregory

And then what was the condition? You said the body had been decomposed. And I know Arizona is obviously a very hot state. So how was the body buried? Had it been wrapped in anything? What was the condition the body?

Detective Clark

I can't go into detail as far as if it had been buried or wrapped in anything? Because that's part of the evidence that we're holding back.

Steve Gregory

Can you really say whether or not he was buried?

Detective Clark

He was not completely buried. No, no. Okay. But his body had clearly been there for enough time to where it was badly decomposed to the point where his dental records had to be used to identify who

Steve Gregory

fully clothed?

Detective Clark

He did have clothes on.

Steve Gregory

And then this area in La Paz County was like off of a road a dirt road, a freeway was a close to anything?

Detective Clark

It said dirt road, and from the best that I was able to find out through the investigation is it's I believe there was like mining that took place in that area.

Steve Gregory

Yeah, that would make sense. We're back now to questioning. Paula Emmons, Kelvin Kelvin Emmons, both of whom had direct ties to the apartment complex and to Angel Martinez, you know, in all of this, too, and I wanted to ask you, Mary Martinez angels wife, did she check out? Was there any indication she may have been involved?

Detective Clark

No, there was not no.

Steve Gregory

Okay. So now what? So with the investigation, you've now introduced at least no fewer than six players. Now in this case? Where does your investigation take you now? Present day?

Detective Clark

Well, present day I can I continue to work the forensic evidence. And then I have gone out and I've interviewed some people that I've mentioned. I can't go into detail about those interviews or who I've spoken with.

Steve Gregory

So how many of these 123456789 players that presumably are still alive? How many of those have spoken with?

Detective Clark

One.

Steve Gregory

One?

Detective Clark

Yeah.

Steve Gregory

And is it because the others you can't find? Are they dead? Or why?

Detective Clark

No, I, while I haven't gone out to speak to every single one of them through our investigative resources, I have a pretty good indication as to where everybody is at

Steve Gregory

really? And are they all still here?

Detective Clark

No, they are people most of them are. I can't say who's where but there, there are people who are all the way across the country.

Steve Gregory

Oh, really spread out, then.

Detective Clark

Yes, yeah. That's common with these cases, we travel quite a bit to do interviews, on cold cases,

does this make it more complicated for you? Can you talk to him on the phone? Or do you have to talk to him in person?

bsolutely. Very rarely would we do a interview or talk to these people on the phone? With, it's really easy to hang up on someone? Yeah. And to just say, I don't want to. And, you know, most of these people have very valuable information as to how Angel was killed in this particular case. And so when you show up at somebody's door, you know, on the east coast, and you tell them I'm from California, and I'm a cold case investigator with the city of Fontana and I'm investigating the murder of Angel Martinez, it's really hard for them to shut the door on you. Because, you know, most people do have a conscience. Even if they've committed crimes in their past and having knowledge of something like this, it tends to stick with people and weigh on them. And when you're there at their door, it's just something it's hard to explain. They look at you and, and, and they welcome you. And most of the time,

Steve Gregory

it's more impactful and more effective.

Detective Clark

Correct.

Steve Gregory

I'm just curious, when you travel to another state or another jurisdiction, are you obligated to notify that local law enforcement agency that you're going into that jurisdiction?

Detective Clark

Well, we're not obligated to most of these interviews are.. You know, we don't, it depends on the person. Let me say that. So if I was going to, let's say, another state to contact a suspect, then absolutely, I would notify that local jurisdiction, I would let them know who's going to be in the area, me and a partner of mine, when we're going to be there, what our intentions are, in those types of things, when we're going to just do what we would call maybe like a witness interview, then typically, we wouldn't let them know. Unless we anticipated maybe something, something that wasn't going to work out maybe in our favor or go wrong for safety reasons.

Steve Gregory

Does your experience tell you that when you've got a case like this, where as I mentioned, I'm going to take take, I said nine other players other than Angel, I'm going to subtract his wife. So eight players, out of the eight players, is at your experience, when you have that many people tied to something like this, that eventually some one of them is going to talk,

Detective Clark

Somebody's going to shake loose... eventually.

Steve Gregory

Is there a reward on this case?

Detective Clark

There is not currently a reward on this case.

Steve Gregory

So what usually, I think you just said guilt is a big motivator here. But do you suppose at some point, that someone here is going to tell you what you need to know.

Detective Clark

I believe so. Or someone that any one of these eight individuals knows or talked to confided in, spent some time with, I believe that something like this, even the most hardened criminal tends to share with someone you know, get it off their chest and share the story about what they experienced. So if any one of these individuals doesn't reach out, then hopefully somebody that's in their life has some information that we could use.

Steve Gregory

Are they all aware that this case is still being investigated?

Detective Clark

Not all of them, at least two of them are... And I would say maybe even three because of their associations that some of them still speak with each other. So sometimes the reminder that these homicides never go away until they're solved, gets people to realize that we're always going to be there. Whether it's now or 10 more years down the road with another detective, it's gonna, someone else is going to jump is gonna knock on your door. And it doesn't matter where you move, that will fly will fly to your state and we'll find you and we'll knock on your door. And it's never, you know, a requirement that anybody talked to us but we just remind people that we're still here and we're not going anywhere.

Steve Gregory

More with detective Katherine Clark, but first this is KFI AM 640. Time now for news update.

SEGMENT 7

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640, heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory, and this is Unsolved. We've been speaking with Katherine Clark. She's a detective with the Fontana Police Department. And we were talking a lot about sort of connecting the dots, theories, kind of trying to piece this thing together. Because you in your mind, it sounds like to me, you have the case mapped out. It sounds like you know what happened? Right?

Detective Clark

I feel like I have a pretty good indication of what occurred. Yes.

Steve Gregory

Can you tell us what you think happened?

Detective Clark

No, sir.

Steve Gregory

Okay. Well, you know, the fact that we're talking means that you're, you're missing some critical pieces. Yes. And those pieces could be anything. I mean, witness testimony to a piece of evidence, right? So let's do a recap of the case. Because it is a complicated case, because there's so many players. Yes. And I'm going to go down the case. I want to make sure that I get it right. And so the so people listening get it right. So we're talking about Angel Martinez. This is a man who owned an apartment complex in Fontana. In June of 1988. He got a phone call from Paula Emmons. Paula was his apartment manager. And the call came at 555 in the morning, and Paula wanted Angel to come over and pick him up and bring a lawn mower so that they could do the lawn at the apartment complex, which was called the Arrowood apartment complex because Angel was in the process of selling the apartment complex, correct? Yes, that's correct. Okay, good. So Paula calls him. Then he leaves he leaves about an hour later 655 in the morning, and then that's it. No one hears from him. No one knows what happened. His wife says he didn't return home. He was reported missing later. On June 17. Angel's car was found in Duarte at a bowling alley. Then on June 20, a body was found in La Paz County, Arizona. And it ended up being identified as Andrew Martinez through dental records. So far, so good. Yes. At this point, somewhere in there, when investigators started to question and figure things out, they get notified by Mary Martinez, who's Angel's wife that his credit card had been used. And we find out that the credit card had been used to purchase traveler's checks. And then you find out that the traveler's checks had been cashed by Lisa Mayberry, and her husband, Charles Mayberry, they said they got those things, those items from Robbie Kaufman, and John Harrison. Right? Correct. So at this point, you've got people that have sort of been touching the case. And to further make it more interesting or complicated, however you want to put it. Everyone knows everybody. Yes. And then you've got even further evidence that the credit card was used, you know, in the days following that, so the traveler's checks were purchased at LAX. Was there any significance to that, by the way, I mean, that it was at LAX that they were purchased.

Detective Clark

Not that we can say.

Steve Gregory

no one was trying to fly nowhere. Okay, no, no. Okay.

Detective Clark

And there are two different credit cards that were used. One was used for the traveler's checks and the other credit card was used here in the city of San Bernardino

Steve Gregory

Okay, so we pretty much got it together. Now. The backstory on it? Well, what you found out, or what investigators initially found out, is that Paula Emmons and Kelvin Emmons and Kelvin now is the husband of Paula. But he was also a handyman for Angel Martinez at the complex and had been terminated three months prior because of a drug problem. There was also concern that angel Martinez carried or had a large sum of money that could have been the tenants rental receipts or the tenants rental money. And so now it's all starting to kind of come together that something is amiss between Paula Emmons and Kelvin Emmons, because you also said their version of events on that day don't match. You've taken over the case, you took it over in March of 2020. You're going back and reviewing the cases you said you've only interviewed one of the nine players involved so far. You can't see who it was. You do anticipate in interviewing others, but you say timing is very important on that in the order in which you interview people's important. Yes. So have we done a good summary here? Yes, sir. Okay, good. So what we're trying to find out is who definitively killed Angel Martinez, and why going back and looking at all of this with your approach on this, and you talked about making sure everyone's being interviewed in a specific timeframe. Do you worry that these people may still be associated or friends and that somebody tips off somebody else? Absolutely, yes. So do you think they're all still friends? I mean, so in the case of Talia Mayberry Charles made barrier they still married? I don't believe they are. But do you like people like that? Do you? Is your experience tell you that they still communicate?

Detective Clark

Absolutely. It depends on associations that they've had with each other in their past. Right. So, for example, like you said, Charles and Tilia, they were married at one time, Paula and Calvin, they're no longer married, but at one time they were married, and they share children together. So with all I have to take all of that into account, and also if they're still friends are in at some type of association with the other people that we've mentioned.

Steve Gregory

If they're all spread out across the country, you said most of these people now are all spread out? Do you believe they still have roots here in San Bernardino in Fontana in this area?

Detective Clark

I believe some of them do. Yes.

Steve Gregory

And so do you think that people that might be listening? Do you believe that someone there is probably going to know these names and know these players?

Detective Clark

I believe so. You know, I grew up in the city of Fontana and Fontana has a way of everybody seems to know someone who knows someone from Fontana. So..

Steve Gregory

what is what does you really want from people in this case? I mean, what is it you're hoping happens?

Detective Clark

I'm really hoping that somebody hears this, they recognize one of the names we've discussed, maybe they remember the crime that happened. And they know whether or not they've spoken to police or not. And I hope that this inspires them to come forward and talk to police, whether it's something they knew at the time when it was taking place and they never reached out to the to the police department, or it's a conversation that someone has had with anybody, you know, whether it be Paula or Kelvin, Robbie or Dwayne, Faith, or Randy Noble Dick or anybody that they that it raises that question mark in their head, and, you know, inspires their conscience to say, You know what, I need to make a phone call and talk to this detective

Steve Gregory

is Mary Martinez is still alive?

Detective Clark

She is still alive. We speak with the Martinez children. Mary is elderly. And unfortunately, she's, you know, she's got some medical problems. And so she's not really capable of communication because of those medical problems.

Steve Gregory

Are the kids completely familiar with the case?

Detective Clark

Yes.

Steve Gregory

And how, how old were the kids when this happened?

Detective Clark

I can't say exactly how old they were. But Angel and Mary had three children. One was a son and two daughters. The son was the oldest, I believe he was actually in his 20s at the time, maybe even mid to late 20s.

Steve Gregory

Looking at in the detective just handed me a photo, a family photo. And it's so distressing to look at this and know that the Father is no longer with them. And this is a typical looking family photo from 1988. Or I don't know what your the photo would have been taken. But certainly you got it from back then. Of course, we'll have this posted at KFIAM640.com keyword "unsolved". And you can see the family for yourself. This is just as bad a normal family as it gets right here and appears. And so you've got the three kids. So they look like they're all old enough to understand what happened. So you just say you just said that you're in touch with the family of the children, right?

Detective Clark

Yes, specifically, we speak to the two daughters more, it's just worked out that way in the in these cold cases. There always seems to be at least one or two advocates from the family of the victim who never gives up. And they will periodically reach out to investigators to ask for an update on what's going on with the investigation or the case. And so that is mainly both of the daughters are the ones that reach out to us the most and so we keep in contact with him.

Steve Gregory

We're gonna wrap up the case when we come back, but first this is KFI AM 640. Time now for news update.

SEGMENT 8

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640, heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory, and this is Unsolved. We're wrapping up the case of Angel Martinez, an apartment complex owner, who in 1988 was reported missing. A few days after that his car was found and days after that his body was found. And it was

found in Arizona. We've been talking with Detective Katherine Clark from the Fontana Police Department about all of the timelines all the players involved in this case, it is complicated because it has so many people that have touched this case in one way or another. And the detective has been telling us that she has a pretty good idea of who she believes is responsible for this crime. You know, the one thing it didn't ask you is whether you think it's one person or more than one person?

Detective Clark

I believe what more than one person was responsible for not just killing Angel Martinez but disposing of his body out in Arizona.

Steve Gregory

Okay. And because you want to preserve the investigation, you don't want to go into much detail about that. So just want to make sure everyone knows that. It's not that you're unwilling to tell us it's not that you're refusing to tell us this year, and you can't because of the case itself?

Detective Clark

Correct.

Steve Gregory

But I do want to ask, over the years, you know, with all of these different players, and if you count the wife, there's nine names you've told us so far. Have they all been talked to repeatedly over the years? Or was there any big downtime?

Detective Clark

Yes. So what's interesting about this case is in 1988, when the initial report was filed in Cypress, California, you have one police department, they're starting the missing persons investigation. Then you've got his vehicle that's recovered in Duarte, California, and then that is processed by a different jurisdiction, then his body is recovered out in La Paz County, Arizona, and that's another jurisdiction that is involved in and it's almost like three different independent investigations until they all merged together through the work that all those investigators did at the time. La Paz County, at the time, when they were investigating the body. They were out here in California doing interviews,

Steve Gregory

and they had no idea what it happened....

Detective Clark

Correct. So they worked side by side with the Fontana Police Department investigators at the time. And eventually it was determined that all of the evidence, all of the reports, and the investigation would come to the Fontana Police Department, which is where it now stays. So they did a great deal of investigation back in 1988. And they spoke to as you've already said, multiple people and done follow up with whether it be credit card purchases and traveler's checks. And then over time as investigators move on to other assignments, because every department is different. And in my police department investigators don't stay detectives for sure a lifetime or an entire career. So then other investigators come in, and they take over the investigation. And over the years multiple investigators have talked to everybody that we've mentioned in this case, more than one time.

Steve Gregory

But when was the last time someone's been talked to before you took the case? And how much time has been dormant. How long has this case been dormant?

Detective Clark

I would say it was probably the early 2000s, when a couple investigators took this case up and really put in a great deal of effort to try to get it solved and get it filed. And they reached either the end of what they could do, or they rotated to a different assignment. And then...

Steve Gregory

As they say is for nearly 20 years, then the thing this is just collected dust, and I don't mean it negatively, but it's just the case hasn't moved in almost 20 years.

Detective Clark

That's fair to say. Yeah,

Steve Gregory

okay. In those 20 years, a lot can happen. A lot has happened.

Detective Clark

Correct.

Steve Gregory

So you as the new investigator comes in on this? Is it a daunting task?

Detective Clark

It is. And to be fair, right before I got assigned to the cold case unit, another detective did have this case and started to work it. And then my department decided to assign a detective to just do cold cases. And so that's when I took them all. So but it was still probably about 19 or 20 Some years and it can be a daunting task in that. You know, we say in cold case that all these cases are cold for a reason. Because none of them are easy. They all have their challenges. They all have things that we have to sometimes be creative and address different ways to overcome the challenges that the case is present to us. So in that it can be daunting, but part of what we do is never giving up, then there's a sign out there and in our cubicle that just says never, never, never, never give up. Because once you've reached what you think is the end, you get your team together, you look at it, and maybe there's something else there that you just couldn't see by yourself and fresh pair of eyes sees it. And so then you attack it from a different angle.

Steve Gregory

You said that you already have in your mind, who you believe is responsible for the death of Angel Martinez, the players involved in this? Did the previous investigator share the same? The same conclusion?

Detective Clark

Yes.

Steve Gregory

Okay. So for this whole time, you've known the individual and individuals you believe are responsible for the death and disappearance.

Detective Clark

investigators have agreed and had strong indications Yes, as to who's responsible for the death of Angel Martinez.

Steve Gregory

As we wrap up, on this case, how can, I want to ask this the right way. What type of information or piece of evidence do you need? I mean, is it? Is it a major piece of information? Or the most minut of information?

Detective Clark

Well, my instinct to answer that question is to say the most minut of information. And the reason is, is because sometimes, you know, people who don't look at these cases all the time might think, Well, what I know, isn't that important, but you would be surprised with the smallest amount of information that somebody knows that we don't have in our investigation, could be the deciding factor as to whether or not we can actually prosecute this case, because at the end of the day, that's what these investigations are about, is yes, it's solving the case, but it's being able to solve it and successfully prosecute it in the court of law. And sometimes just that little piece of information is what, you know, teeters it to make it so that we can file the case.

Steve Gregory

It's amazing to me how just a couple sentences might be all you need someone saying two sentences to you. It is very possible, it makes a difference and the smallest of rumors, the littlest of observations, correct, those all can contribute

Detective Clark

correct, because even a rumor, you know, my job is the detective then is to follow that rumor back to where it came from. Right. So it's possible.

Steve Gregory

Finally, tell us something about this case, you've never said publicly before.

Detective Clark

I mentioned earlier, I grew up in the city of Montana, and now I work there. So I was living in Fontana when this crime occurred. I was a child. And so to think that, you know, these other children were going through something so horrendous in their life at the same time that I was there attending school. You know, it inspires me and motivates me to to see this through the finish line.

Steve Gregory

Well, that's gonna do it. For more on this in other cases, go to our web page at KFIAM640.com keyword "unsolved". And don't forget to download and subscribe to our podcast on the iHeartRadio app. Unsolved with Steve Gregory is a production of the KFI News Department for iHeartMedia Los Angeles. Robin Bertolucci, program director Chris Little, news director. The program is produced by Steve Gregory and Jacob Gonzalez. The digital producer is Andro Mammo. The field engineer is Tony Sorrentino, and the technical director is David Callaway. Coming up next it's Coast to Coast but first this is KFIAM640. Time now for a news update.