

Episode 301: The Disappearance of Bryce Laspisa

Announcer

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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 gone cold, baffled investigators or just needs that one witness to speak out. This is Unsolved with Steve Gregory.

Steve Gregory

Los Angeles County Sheriff's case number 013-11964-0691-400 The critical missing case of Bryce Laspisa. The Unsolved team receives many emails from listeners most curious about a case some include comments about the show and others have tips. In the last few months, the team has received quite a few emails about the same case Bryce Laspisa. I remember covering the case back in 2013, college kid driving home from Northern California on the five headed to his parents home in Laguna Niguel. The 19 year old stops along the way makes contact with a few people but hours later he disappears and leaves behind his wallet laptop and SUV. I called Captain Andy Meyer. He's the head of the LA County Sheriff's Homicide Bureau he puts me in touch with Detective Bob Martindale who coincidentally was one of the original detectives on the case in 2013. Martindale begins our conversation with the day he got the case.

Detective Bob Martindale

That was on September 9, 2013, I believe early in the afternoon of that day. We received the case for our Missing Persons Unit. And that's in normal protocol goes to our Missing Persons Unit we have some skilled investigators in our Missing Persons Unit that investigate all missing persons ...adults, here in our Homicide Bureau. However, just the media interest alone in this case was kind of overwhelming the Missing Persons Unit. And just the unusual nature of Bryce's disappearance also, I think at that point wanted a team of homicide investigators and that would be myself and Investigator Q Rodriguez, are assigned the case to take a look at it, one, to see if it if it was a missing persons or if there's anything like criminal culpability or if foul play involved in his disappearance. So it was just a not only do we augment the Missing Persons Unit, but again, it's just four sets of eyes on it, as well, just to again, give it a a clearer look at to what was going on and how he disappeared in the unusual circumstances regarding his disappearance.

Steve Gregory

And that's interesting, because as a homicide detective, you look at a case differently than a missing persons investigator would look at it right?

Detective Bob Martindale

Yes, yes.

Steve Gregory

And what would be those differences? What are those nuances?

Detective Bob Martindale

Well, in this case, obviously, homicide, we're looking at the foul play. In this case, on the missing persons case, we had a timeline somewhat when he went missing and where he went missing from, based on where his car was found, and some unusual behavior that that started before his disappearance. That really put it in the realm of a missing persons investigation at this point, there was no indication based on the interviews our missing persons had done up to that point of his disappearance, that would suggest that there was foul play involved in this case. And then when you look at the way the vehicle was found, the investigation done post and pre I should say when he the interviews that were done prior to Bryce going missing, was suggested he probably was a kid who had some psychotic break or some type of pre-planned suicide that was going on with him.

Steve Gregory

Okay, yeah, we'll dig deeper on that as we get going. But what I want to do now is I want to go back to the timeline that sets it up to when you took the case because you'd said yourself behavior, there were unusual behaviors leading up and that's those are the things that you were looking at. So let's talk about that. Going back to August 26, leading up to when he was actually reported missing. So tell us the circumstances leading up to that.

Detective Bob Martindale

I know when it first started, I think when we spoke to Kim Sly, I believe was her name, the girlfriend, I'll just refer to her as Kim. I believe she was going to Chico State. Bryce was going to a junior college there in Rockland. I believe, unbeknownst to her, he just showed up one time at her dorm room, just before we went missing, unannounced, she was in class got a call from a roommate, and then if I can recall going back almost nine years now, she left class met Bryce there and Bryce was acting a little unusual. She thought he was intoxicated. She also indicated that he was using a substance called Vyvanse, which is similar to like Adderall, it's for people with ADHD. Yeah, so it can be like a very potent stimulant, you know, could have the same effects is similar to like methamphetamine. She thought he was under the influence of that or alcohol, which was kind of unusual for her. She said he had been taken to stay up late, not first necessarily studying, but to play Madden NFL and stuff like that on his Xbox. So that's where it kind of his life started seem to spiral out of control a little bit. But before that, she says he was drinking heavily on the weekends before that, and they call it a handle, I didn't realize I think that's a seven milliliter bottle of, of alcohol, and he was going through one or two of those a weekend. So was, this is based on what she's telling me. I haven't any kind of corroboration of that. But based on her interview, and I don't think she has a reason to lie, because she really did care for Bryson, like we all do. We've hope he returns one day, or we find him some, you know. But anyway, she indicated he appeared intoxicated came over unannounced, she took his keys and apparently I think that's when their relationship ended, Bryce was going to end the relationship. So it seems like that's the start of something strange is going on with his life. It seemed like the relationship was going strong at that point. He shows up on announced and is breaking up with her. She takes his car keys, because she doesn't want him to drive. However, either the roommate and also Kim, talked to Karen Laspisa on the phone, and there's some conversation back and forth between Bryce and Karen. Ultimately, the decision was against Kim's wishes to give the keys back to Bryce and give the car keys back to Bryce, and then at some point, Bryce then tells his mom and this is again this is going after the fact now that he's going to head back home to the campus. He's living off campus, but next to I think is Sierra College, if I'm not mistaken in Rocklin, but he's living with a roommate off campus. However, he never does return back home. He never goes back to to Rocklin at this point and we know that based on cell records that show from that point, he's slowly making his way looks like southbound on the five freeway eventually towards Buttonwillow. But that seems to be something the turning point in his life. What caused that? I don't know. No one seems to know what abruptly made him show up at Kim's house. They ended their relationship, and then then we now know he's heading southbound on the five freeway towards again Buttonwillow.

Steve Gregory

Talking with Bob Martindale, the detective with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department about Bryce Laspisa, a huge missing persons case back in 2013. We covered it here on KFI. Before we get to the break, Detective, you were talking about the medication of this drug that Bryce was taking, was that prescribed?

Detective Bob Martindale

According to Kim it was not, apparently it's readily available, readily available, easily available, you know, in the college settings.

Steve Gregory

And was there any idea? Based on interviews with parents or family, other family members, was he diagnosed with ADHD or anything like that any kind of a disorder?

Detective Bob Martindale

No, not that I'm aware of. I've have no indication that he was according to speaking with the parents, there's no indication that he was using any controlled substance other than like maybe some college kids marijuana or occasionally or recreational but nothing that suggests that he was had ADHD, or was prescribed any type of medication.

Steve Gregory

Before we get back to more with Detective Martindale, I want to tell you how you can contact the Unsolved team. If you're listening on the iHeartRadio app, simply press the red microphone and record your story, idea, tip or comment. Or you can press pound 250 on your cell phone and say the key word unsolved. That's pound 250 and the keyword unsolved. More on the disappearance of Bryce Laspisa, but first, this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI AM 640, time now for a news update.

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640 heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory, and this is Unsolved. If you're listening on the app, you can send us a tip about a case a story, idea or comment about the show, just tap the red microphone on the app and record your message. We're talking with detective Bob Martindale with the LA County Sheriff's Homicide Bureau about the mysterious disappearance of Bryce Laspisa. Before the break, Martindale was talking about Bryce's behavior just before he jumped into his SUV and headed south on the five from Northern California. Martindale explains that Bryce was close to his parents.

Detective Bob Martindale

Matter of fact, before he actually made his started to make his way south from Rocklin, he did have a conversation with his mom, because mom, I think they knew something was just not right with Bryce. Maybe after the breakup with Kim and it was kind of a unannounced or just unplanned, it seemed like it was just out of the blue. But something prompted mom to say I'm gonna make a reservation and fly up there to up to Rockland and or Rockland to see Bryce, but when we did speak to mom, mom, to Karen, which is Bryce mom, she indicated that Bryce says, No, don't make a reservation, I'm going to come down to Laguna Niguel where the parents were living, because we have a lot to talk about, I have a lot to talk to you about, and that probably that statement alone is the one thing that baffles me to this day. And I think also to Karen and Mike, the parents, they don't quite know and I can't make it out and I don't think

anybody can, is he had when he says I have a lot to talk to you about. You just don't know what that meant. And haven't done have been with this case for nine plus years, I still get to this day calls from people speculating and given me their opinion or theories of what that I got a lot to talk to you about might be, but I just did to this day I don't know what he meant by that.

Steve Gregory

What are some of those theories?

Detective Bob Martindale

The biggest one was, was the one that comes up the most, which is unusual, and there's no indication this, but maybe Bryce was going to come out of the closet per se, and say, maybe he was gay or something. I get that quite a bit. That's probably 90% of the theory selling this, I get anonymous calls on my voicemail here at work. I also get some that he has gone off the grid and he's left the country that he just wanted to get away. So again, you name it. There's some that are very outlandish of what he was going to do what that meant. I don't think either of those are true. I don't think there's any indication that he was gay or bisexual or anything like that. By all accounts, he's had girlfriends and he was with Kim for some time. But I still to this day, don't know what he meant by telling Karen, I have a lot, I want to talk to you or I have a lot to talk to you about. And I think that was a driving force of him maybe coming down south at that point.

Steve Gregory

He left his girlfriend and others up in Rockland. Was he under the influence of anything? Did they know that or indicate that?

Detective Bob Martindale

If you if I when I interviewed Kim Yes, it sound like he was under the influence of something. That's why she took his car keys. She did not want him to drive. Obviously, I think they just were the relationship was they're separating, right because Bryce was up there and you're going to end a relationship. So I think the things you'd probably want him to do is to leave the apartment not keep the car keys, but obviously she cared for Bryce. And it she felt that he was under the influence of something. And what that is I don't know whether that's drugs or alcohol or any other controlled substance.

Steve Gregory

I guess what I'm getting at based on the timeline here, is if...do you think when he spoke to his mother, that he was still under the influence of something?

Detective Bob Martindale

It's quite possible, yeah. Because he never made it back home from Kim's house. He was mom anticipating him to go back to the his dorm room or the apartment, he was living off campus, but he never made it back there according to I think that Shawn was the roommate if I'm not mistaken. And so but at this point, have a now his cell records we can kind of map out his travels from that point forward.

Steve Gregory

So now he's headed southbound by all accounts, correct?

Detective Bob Martindale

Yes. Yeah.

Steve Gregory

So go ahead and pick up the story from there.

Detective Bob Martindale

<sigh> Yeah.

Steve Gregory

Big breath there. Yeah. This is a lot to unpack.

Detective Bob Martindale

Yeah. Because now, for me getting involved in this case, obviously, I'm now a couple weeks behind when he's in the case itself. But knowing now, the really glaring inconsistencies with Bryce's behavior really becomes apparent. We can probably look at the one with breaking up with Kim in as probably the tipping point something's going on. But then something really kind of goes south in his life fairly quickly, when he gets to Buttonwillow, which is just over the grapevine just north of the Santa Clarita area there. That's where he's there at Buttonwillow, at some point, he gets roadside assistance and that's when Mike and Karen have that, like I believe, linked at her phone or account, so they get notification of roadside assistance. And this is where he's kind of contemplating do I go south, what am I going to do because he's at Buttonwillow for, anywhere from, if I'm not mistaken, going back, anywhere from 12 plus hours, he stays there. And the roadside assistance actually comes out to him I think, if I'm not mistaken twice, he fills up brings Bryce \$3 worth of gas, because he ran out of gas, fills up the car gets to Bryce to get him to the gas station, Bryce uses the credit card puts up only \$49 or charges \$49 to the account, or \$40 to the account, but then \$39.50 of that's recredited to the account. So it looks like he was going to put gas in but never did because the credit went back on. And then at some point later, hours later, still mom's trying to communicate with him. Mom gets a hold of because now Bryce is should have been home by now at least, you know, the two or three hours it's going to take to get to from Buttonwillow to Laguna Niguel, he should have been home long ago. So mom reaches out to I think it's Castro Towing, which was the roadside assistance operator at the time. The driver actually goes back out to Buttonwillow doing mom a favor and finds Bryce sitting in the same place that's where he left them. And which is strange.

Steve Gregory

And Buttonwillow is a rest area.

Detective Bob Martindale

It's a rest area and also, you know, off the side a little off. It's got a racetrack but it's it's really...

Steve Gregory

And just as a sidebar. Did he stop there because he had run out of gas or did he stop there first and just just stop there on his own?

Detective Bob Martindale

It's hard to say what prompted him to stop there. I mean, it's it's a major stop before going over the grapevine and dropping down into you know, the the LA basin in there. Yeah.

Steve Gregory

Okay. I'm sorry. Go ahead.

Detective Bob Martindale

Yeah. So looking back on that. Again, he's telling Mom, don't come up here I'm going to drive down and talk to you because we have a lot to talk about. But for some reason he's delaying that talk, because he's staying in Buttonwillow for a long period of time going nowhere. At some point

Steve Gregory

More with Detective Bob Martindale on the disappearance of Bryce Laspisa. But first this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI AM 640, time now for a news update.

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640 heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved. To reach the Unsolved team through the iHeartRadio app just press the red microphone and leave us a story idea, tip or comment. Or you can always press pound 250 on your cell phone and say the key word Unsolved. We've been talking with detective Bob Martindale of the LA County Sheriff's Homicide Bureau about Bryce Laspisa, a college kid who has been missing since 2013. And before the break, the detective is about to tell us something that struck him odd about Bryce's behavior after he pulled over at the Buttonwillow rest area southbound on the five just before the grapevine.

Detective Bob Martindale

It struck me odd because if we look at the time knowing what we know now he's there for almost, say nine to 12 hours at this truckstop area. It's almost he's contemplating doing something, whether it's to go south or go back north, go east west, I don't know. But there's no reason for him really to be at the rest stop. For the long period of time he was my belief he's contemplating something in his life at this point.

Steve Gregory

What do you mean?

Detective Bob Martindale

Looking back on it, before he left to go south, to Mike and Karen's house in Laguna Niguel, what a lot of people do that are contemplating suicide, is he gave away items, items that you not necessarily give away if you plan on returning, and for instance, he gave his Xbox away. Karen had given him some diamond earrings ,he also gave those to Sean the roommate. So he's kind of given away, you know, possessions, and those are possessions your mom gave you, right? So you're probably they have some sentimental value to you. Maybe not the Xbox, but the earrings and stuff like that you don't give those possessions away just on a whim but it happens quite a bit, seeing a lot of suicides over the years, a lot of those things are telltale signs of people that are, you know, maybe going to take their own life because you're taking them with a finality, you're gonna give those to a good friend, he was a good roommate, whatever it might be. So you do sometimes give away possessions that you know what you think would be valuable to you, not monetarily but sentimentally, like the earrings, his mom gave him would be the last thing to

give away. So it gave us a telltale sign that why he's there at Buttonwillow for a long period of time. And he's really not moving. And it's not a it's not a matter of he's out of funds, he has the money, he has a credit card as his parents have, he has an American Express card, he's at a restaurant with right across the street to put gas in the car. It looks like at some point, he did charge, if I'm not mistaken, on American Express, debit \$40 on the American Express card, but almost right after \$39.50 was put back onto the cart. So maybe 50 cents was the service fee that is not going to be refunded. So again, here's a kid that was going to charge \$40 of gas then decided not to. So he's sitting at a at a rest stop. Why would you not put gas in the car and just go south if everything's okay. So, and he's just sitting there.

Steve Gregory

We're talking about a 19 year old boy.

Detective Bob Martindale

Yes.

Steve Gregory

So on top of having a potential drinking issue.

Detective Bob Martindale

Yeah.

Steve Gregory

Taking this medication which simulates Adderall, or has similar effects.

Detective Bob Martindale

Yeah.

Steve Gregory

You've got that combined with the mind of a 19 year old boy who just broke up with his girlfriend,

Detective Bob Martindale

Yeah, Correct.

Steve Gregory

This young man was processing a lot of stuff. It sounds like.

Detective Bob Martindale

Yes, I think is processing more than what we know. I don't know if it's the girlfriend. I think all his possessions if looking back nine plus years now were given away before he went up to seek him. Maybe that's the breakup right? I'm going to break up with you. And then if you give your possessions away, then you go to your girlfriend or break up with with her. And now you left her and now you're telling mom, I got a lot to talk to you about and something there's some break in there. Something happened. And I

think it's something that I just can't pinpoint at this at this time what that was. Could have been the Adderall and drinking did he have a psychotic break? I don't, I can't pinpoint it. But giving away your possessions, breaking up with your girlfriend to maybe ease her pain if you go, if you go missing, or if you do take your own life, I don't know what his thoughts are on that. But it kind of all adds up in the timeline. And then so you got the giving away your possessions, breaking up your girlfriend and then sitting at a rest stop for upwards of 12 hours contemplating what you're going to do. And something's going on in his mind that I can't, I don't know, I've never met the man before. But just going off the timeline, something unique is going on as to why he's staying there in Buttonwillow.

Steve Gregory

What is your experience tell you? What was your, what was your gut reaction?

Detective Bob Martindale

Why are you staying there?

Steve Gregory

All of this that you just said, all this stuff he's processing, based on your experience as an investigator, and maybe as a father?

Detective Bob Martindale

Yeah.

Steve Gregory

What was your first instinct?

Detective Bob Martindale

I think this is a man who was going to take his own life, a young man that was going to take his own life and why to why he was going to do that I just don't know. But it has all the telltale signs of, of somebody's going to take his own life. And if you look at then if you keep on going down the timeline, you know, to where he's sitting there to where Christian, I think it's the the driver who worked for Castro actually comes back to him because I think at some point, Karen, again, knows there's been a service charge. And then she actually calls Christian and Christian goes back out and talks to Bryce. And then Bryce is still sitting where he's at, in the rest stop area. Then, at some point, you know, I think Christian goes out there, if I'm not mistaken, a third time, and Bryce has not moved. He's there. He's still at the..

Steve Gregory

Is there a dialog every time he goes out?

Detective Bob Martindale

Yeah, according to Christian, he seemed like he's lucid. He's telling, basically telling Bryce, Hey, your mom's worried about you, you know, at some point because Christian, really good, really good man for doing this right. He's busy, he's operating a tow truck service. He's going out because it is kind of a rural area out there. And he's helping Karen out because Karen's, hey, my son's sitting at this truck stop, can you go back out and see if he's there. And sure enough, Christian finds him there. And so Christian is trying to liaison between be a go between between Karen and Bryce and trying to get Bryce to get on the

freeway go south. Eventually, Christian goes out, I think the third time and actually gets Bryce at some point on the five freeway. He's basically following him on the five freeway at some point to get him on the freeway to get make sure he's going in the right direction to kind of scoot him along. Right and at some point, but as Bryce goes down, and now he's traveling south on the five freeway, it's become an outside of the Castro service area for the tow truck service, so he turns back around and heads north. Bryce is going south. But at some point, almost four or five hours later, Bryce is still not home. They're still, Mom's now having communication problems. Bryce is not picking up his phone.

Steve Gregory

More on the mystery surrounding the disappearance of Bryce Laspisa. But first, this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI AM 640, time now for a news update.

Steve Gregory

This is KFI AM 640 heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved. If you're listening on the app, you can send us a tip about a case a story idea or a comment about the show. Just tap the red microphone on the app and record your message. We're talking with LA County Sheriff's homicide Detective Bob Martindale about the disappearance of Bryce Laspisa in 2013. So up until now, Detective you've told us that Bryce broke up with his girlfriend at college was known to drink heavily and experiment with drugs. He told his parents he was headed home to discuss something important, so he drove southbound on the five and made it as far as the Buttonwillow rest area just before the grapevine, he made contact with a tow truck driver at least three times. The driver says nothing seemed unusual. But Bryce won't talk to his parents. And he's been sitting in his SUV for at least 12 hours, which brings us up to August 29 2013.

Detective Bob Martindale

Correct. And there's nothing preventing him from going south. There's not any mechanical issues with the car. So it's, it's that what am I contemplating doing? Why am I here? And it's a long time to sit there at a rest stop area. And so, he's contemplating doing something. And I think if it wasn't for Christian and Castro's tow service, you know, doing what they did and the I'm not sure Bryce would have ever left the the Buttonwillow he might have gotten north, south, east or west. I just don't know what he would have done at this point.

Steve Gregory

Was this tow truck driver, Christian, and you talked about was he helpful in that describing what was inside the vehicle? Did he see anything you know, medicine bottles, a weapon, anything? Did he see anything like that in the vehicle?

Detective Bob Martindale

No, but his focus was more on making sure that the car was mechanically sound he had gas...and

Steve Gregory

But after speaking with his mother and the mother was concerned, I just wondered if his heightened you know, if he had a little bit heightened awareness after that.

Detective Bob Martindale

No, not that he brought up he didn't bring up anything that's indicated Bryce was intoxicated in any way. It just seemed like he he had the same feeling that we did of his reluctance to get on the freeway and go there's nothing preventing him from going. No road issues, no road closures. Nothing. It's just a matter of at this point, he should have had gas in the car and should have been on the five freeway heading down to Laguna Niguel. But at some point Christian does follow him on the five freeway south but again, at some point it's out of his service area, so he has to turn around and he's now going back northbound on the five freeway as Bryce is going southbound on the five freeway.

Steve Gregory

Now we're up to Thursday, August 29, 2013. At this point, though, I think the father calls California Highway Patrol. They've already got an incident report at this point.

Detective Bob Martindale

Correct.

Steve Gregory

Father also calls the Orange County Sheriff's Department, excuse me, the Orange County Sheriff's Department to report him missing. And I guess he had already filed a missing persons report.

Detective Bob Martindale

Yes, that's correct.

Steve Gregory

But then, he was actually was he pulled over at that point by Kern County?

Detective Bob Martindale

You know what actually wasn't pulled over, what they did is the initial agency Orange County had pinged his phone, what we mean by ping is basically sends a signal to the phone so it's using triangulation between cell towers so gives you geographically where that phone might be located. So using that geographic area, Kern County actually located Bryce along there, but actually, Kern County located on back he's on, he didn't get far down, but he's just a little south of Buttonwillow, again, off of I think was Lagoon Drive. He hadn't gone very far. So after, it looks like Christian got off the freeway, it looks like Bryce almost stopped immediately thereafter. And now he's again he stopped he's not going southbound. So now, two Kern County deputies have contacted Bryce on Lagoon Drive, they're in Buttonwillow, it's still considered Buttonwillow and they have a conversation with Bryce. They also do a field sobriety on Bryce, he doesn't seem to be intoxicated or drugs or alcohol. With Bryce's consent they searched the vehicle. There's no drugs, no alcohol in the vehicle. The unusual thing, having spoken to the current officers, is it seemed like in their opinion, Bryce was reluctant to tell his mom. Now up to this point, Bryce had been avoiding mom's phone calls and text messages, so he wasn't answering the calls. This is what prompted the Mike and Karen to report Bryce missing. And you know, the pinging of the phone and now Kern County's involved. So they call Karen and let her know hey, we found Bryce up in Buttonwillow. He's safe. But it seems like when I spoke to the two deputies, Bryce is reluctant to to speak to his mom. They almost have to physically take their phone or Bryce's phone dial Karen and put that phone in Bryce's hand to have Bryce speak to Karen. So there's, there's some unusual things going on in this kid's life that now he doesn't want to go south, doesn't want to go doesn't want to speak to mom. Yet, earlier, he said, I'm

going to come down to see you because we have a lot to talk about. But yet he doesn't want to talk to mom on the phone

Steve Gregory

That would lead me to believe as a layman looking inside from the outside, that he was either embarrassed and or ashamed of something.

Detective Bob Martindale

It's very possible.

Steve Gregory

Yeah.

Detective Bob Martindale

Or he's made up his mind to do what he's going to do and he feels guilty and he doesn't want to let on or if he does, if he gives any indications it's possible that might prevent that from happening especially when you have two Kern County deputies standing next to you, if they sense that maybe you're you're a danger to yourself or others or you're contemplating suicide, you know, that will take some law enforcement actions to where you know there might be a psychiatric hold or some something of that nature.

Steve Gregory

Where does the case go now? We'll find out next with Detective Bob Martindale, but first this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI AM 640, time now for a news update.

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640 heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved. By now, 19 year old college student Bryce Laspisa has made his way from Northern California to a rest area southbound on the five just before the grapevine. He sat alone in his SUV for at least 12 hours, a tow truck driver made contact at least three times, and deputies with the Kern County Sheriff's Department questioned him, they even give him a field sobriety test. But according the LA County Sheriff's homicide detective Bob Martindale Bryce has done nothing wrong.

Detective Bob Martindale

There's nothing to hold him on, there's nothing suggesting he's in danger or is a danger to himself or others at that point. So there's every indication that after speaking to Mom, he's going to he's getting on the five freeway south again. And by all indications, he's going to make his way to Laguna Niguel. And at some point he does get on the five freeway. Mom's having some some communication with him as he's now going through the grapevine coming down the grapevine into the Santa Clarita Valley area. But at some point, Bryce has said he's going to pull off the five freeway and rest. Before that they're asking for landmarks, like some road signs so they can get some indication of based on that, where he's at to when he's going to arrive. Given everything that's going on, they're concerned for him, alright. So they want to know give a at some point, give me some landmarks of where you're at in a given time. That way can gauge when you're going to get down to Laguna Niguel it but at some point around two in the morning, I think on the 30th. Now we're into Friday, Friday, early morning hours. He tells mom he's going to basically pull over and get some rest off the freeway. And we've that at that point, that is the last communication that Bryce has with his mom, either via text or a voice call at that point. So and then that's later about six

hours later, that's when CHP gets a call of Bryce's vehicle, it's basically on its side on a closed launch ramp to Lake Castaic. So the unusual thing about there's no way of getting on that road because the road is closed, so it's got a barrier across it, it's locked because the lake is closed after hours. But it looked like the vehicle had gone off like a 20 foot 20-25 foot embankment kind of like a lawn dart almost landed on the engine compartment and then rolled to the side. Now we have a vehicle Bryce's vehicle that looks like it's gone off the embankment crashed and looks like based on there's a glass breaking tool. On the inside of the car. It looks like somebody the driver had broken the glass from the back window from the inside of the car and then crawled out. Now Bryce's looks like a little duffel bag, his wallet is left behind outside the car, and there's a laptop inside the car. Very little blood there's a couple of spots of blood like someone might have got a minor injury, very minor, but nothing significant. Like like a scrape mark almost in the drivers area but nothing significant that would say he was incapacitated or suffered any traumatic injuries when the car went over. But it appears that the glass is broken out from the inside. So it tells you that whoever is driving that car, and we believe it was Bryce, managed to escape the vehicle and then looks like he just walked away at this point.

Steve Gregory

Was there any way to to match the blood to make sure it was Bryce's?

Detective Bob Martindale

I believe we did do a DNA, I believe it was Bryce's blood on that. Also, we had some other items of Bryce's as well.

Steve Gregory

Oh, they were able to extract some clothing or something

Detective Bob Martindale

Yeah, yeah.

Steve Gregory

So in the duffel bag, you know, so he left his belongings including his wallet.

Detective Bob Martindale

He left his wallet behind, his his duffel bag, his belongings, his laptop, and it simply looks like the driver and I have no, I should say there's no indication somebody else was driving the car, I believe it was Bryce driving the car, walked away from that crash and there's no blood outside. In other words, doesn't look like somebody's like, doesn't suffer a traumatic injury because I would expect to see a lot of blood in the car and or outside the car but there's nothing so.

Steve Gregory

Did he have a seatbelt on?

Detective Bob Martindale

You know, in this case it it's hard to tell this is an older car

Steve Gregory

Oh so you didn't have the computer.

Detective Bob Martindale

We don't have the computer so we're not able to tell? Yeah, the black box to see if he was wearing a seatbelt at the time.

Steve Gregory

Yeah, what kind of vehicle was it?

Detective Bob Martindale

It was a Toyota Highlander.

Steve Gregory

That's right. It was an SUV.

Detective Bob Martindale

Yeah.

Steve Gregory

So.

Detective Bob Martindale

Which didn't suffer, you know, surprisingly, going over this embankment had some damage to it, but not significant damage. Yeah.

Steve Gregory

Were there skid marks?

Detective Bob Martindale

No, because in this case it was a dirt embankment. And this is...

Steve Gregory

But still, I mean, some skid marks would have appeared in the dirt, would it not?

Detective Bob Martindale

Well, you, in this case, looking back and the dirt itself going off the it's like a 25 it's a embankment, it's an embankment that basically runs parallel to the launch ramp road that goes down. So it's an embankment off to, if you're going down the launch ramp road or descending down to the water, the embankment would be on your right hand side, it looks like he came off that embankment over it. The car probably lost

all four wheels are in the air and it basically landed on the engine hood. And then basically the momentum and rolled on to its passenger side or the right side of the vehicle.

Steve Gregory

I guess what I'm trying to get to is was could this have been the moment that he was trying to finish himself off and fly off the maybe he was thinking he was driving off into the lake.

Detective Bob Martindale

That is my belief, and I believe that, having gone back now to the area, the only way to get to how Bryce was able to manage to go off that embankment was the road to Lake Hughes road goes continues up and an eventually reaches to Palmdale area. Well, it looks like based on we can follow the path of where the vehicle went back up the hill, there's a cell tower site, that's would be just I guess, would be east of where the car went off just basically east and north side of Lake Hughes Road. There's a guardrail that covers the road up there, but there's a slight opening in that guard rail, a very slight opening to allow a service vehicle to enter to service this cell tower area. So in other words, it's not like Bryce is coming down Lake Hughes Road if he's going back towards the five freeway west towards the five freeway and lost control the vehicle and careened off the road into the launch ramp. You physically have to navigate to this small little guardrail opening to get to where Bryce was. And then at some point that it starts to descend down the mountain side. But now we're talking that mountainside during that time has thickets they're pretty sagebrush, bushes and grass and whatnot and rocks. If you were just to put the car in neutral, the car probably would roll down a little bit, but it all those that thick vegetation would have stopped the vehicle. Even if you lost your brakes, it's not going to you're not going to get very far. But this case, we know he's accelerating, one because you can see the dirt getting turned up. Also, he's unearthing large boulders that are hitting the undercarriage of that car. So even at some point, coasting those boulders would have would have stopped the momentum of that vehicle. So he's he's looks like he's accelerating at a good speed down that hill. Now at nighttime when he we know based on cameras in the area that read license plates going up Lake Hughes Road, he went up at about two o'clock in the morning, and then again, he went back up that road about four in the morning. Now those license plate readers only capture vehicles going up Lake Hughes Road going would be eastbound towards the Palmdale area, there's not one catching traffic going in both directions. So we know he went up once came back down for some reason, and then went back up about four in the morning. So the license plate reader captures his vehicle twice. Now at four in the morning during that time is fairly dark outside. Having stood in that very spot where Bryce went through that guardrail opening towards a cell tower, and where he eventually hit the accelerator and went down the hill. It really Steve looks like for me to you like that's the water. It's very deceptive. It looks like you can throw a rock and hit the water.

Steve Gregory

Sure.

Detective Bob Martindale

And you would think it's that close, but it's still a quarter mile away. But you think if you hit the gas, you're gonna go on right in the water and maybe he's going to end his life that way. But at this point, he's going down a steep incline or not steep, but I'd say maybe 20-30 degrees at the very most, down into that brush. But again, he's accelerating because it looks like to me he's trying to reach the water, but he's the vegetation and rocks and everything stopping the vehicle. And eventually he gets that embankment and then goes over that and embankment, hate to use like the lawn dart but he goes over and eventually, all wheels come off the dirt and he gets air and then he basically the engine collides with the launch ramp road itself which is closed at that time.

Steve Gregory

More on the Bryce Laspisa case but first this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI AM 640, time now for a news update

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640 heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved. If you're listening on the app and have a tip, story idea or comment, simply press the red microphone button and leave your message. We've been talking about the mysterious disappearance of Bryce Laspisa, a 19 year old college student who was last seen August 30 2013. Before the break, LA County Sheriff's Detective Bob Martindale was telling us about the SUV Bryce was driving and evidence showed that Bryce intended to drive off an embankment at Lake Castaic perhaps to launch himself into the lake itself. Is that about right, detective?

Detective Bob Martindale

That's correct. And again, you could not get to where Bryce is at. And initially, you couldn't go through the guardrail. It's a very narrow open, you had to navigate through the guard rail it's not like he's coming down, Lake Hughes Road, lost control and then went over it. This is a deliberate act, a very deliberate act. And again, without accelerating, he wouldn't have made it through that, that thick brush.

Steve Gregory

So you're obviously you're not called to that scene are you?

Detective Bob Martindale

No, that's initially investigated by the California Highway Patrol as a as a traffic accident at this point and the driver had walked away.

Steve Gregory

Is that a state road?

Detective Bob Martindale

It is, I believe, because it's a it's a county park and now I'm not sure exactly why CHP or Santa Clarita because it might be an unincorporated county where CHP it handles that.

Steve Gregory

There might be an agreement or something.

Detective Bob Martindale

Yeah.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so at this point, CHP arrives, and I mean, how did did someone notice the vehicle? How did that?

Detective Bob Martindale

Yeah, it's when it, the parks people were opening the gate for, for another words for traffic for the lake to open. It's not a lake that's open 24 hours a day, this flows down to the main launch ramp, and also leads down to the dam itself. So at some point, the gates are closed, there's two big metal gates that are closed and locked. At some point, the parks operator was unlocking the gate and discovered the vehicle.

Steve Gregory

So CHP does the initial investigation and what do they find?

Detective Bob Martindale

Again, that's where they find it looks like the special tool that was used to break the glass. It's a special glass plate tool that people sometimes carry in their car.

Steve Gregory

Pointed edge, pointed one yeah, very fine point.

Detective Bob Martindale

Very fine point. It's like I think it's a it's a fluorescent color, like an orange or red for it's very visible. That's in the back cargo area. Again, the cars on its side on the right side or the passenger side. Glass is broken out from the inside the tools on the inside of the back cargo area, and outside the car again is Bryce's little duffel bag with his clothes and his wallet, I believe it had some money, his ID and inside the cargo area was a laptop. All that stuff was left behind, and it looks like simply Bryce, I have no indications other than Bryce driving the car looks like he simply walked away. Which direction we don't know at that point.

Steve Gregory

No footprints?

Detective Bob Martindale

No footprints in that case again, doesn't look like someone was like seriously injured, like they're walking away like they're leaving shoe impressions and blood. And again at that, on that road, it's a paved road. And again, at that initial time, CHP is looking at it as a traffic collision not necessarily saying there's there's foul play involved or missing person. So they're they're looking at it just as somebody maybe potentially was intoxicated, went over, walked away from a collision.

Steve Gregory

And now in that case did they notify you folks?

Detective Bob Martindale

CHP did. That's correct, yeah. And then she went to Santa Clarita Sheriff's station, which then came out and that's when we get involved because Bryce had been initially reported missing, and that's where we became involved Sheriff's Homicide Bureau our missing person unit after CHP took the traffic collision report.

Steve Gregory

But then what happened?

Detective Bob Martindale

At this point, our initial our our Missing Persons Unit handled the case and they did what they could up to that point did a great job up to that point of trying to locate Bryce. However, it's whatever reason this gained not only local but I think national news attention because a 19 year old kid a college kid we're in Santa Clarita walked away his car is found, the unusual circumstances that that preceded his disappearance. It then became to a level of the media scrutiny and it allowed and also overwhelmed our Missing Persons Unit. So at that point, Q Rodriguez and myself became involved in it to supplement or to augment the Missing Persons Unit in trying to locate Bryce at this point. Um, at some point we did, we met with Mike and Karen in Laguna Niguel. We ultimately did recover, we didn't I don't, we took some articles of clothing for DNA comparisons, some socks he had in there, some dirty socks, I believe. I don't think there was a necessity to get his wallet. But we did take the laptop. We did ultimately because CHP, again, they're looking at a traffic collision, they're not necessarily looking at criminal culpability. So there was no reason for them to retain those items, the wallet, the duffel bag, and it's like a little gym bag, not a big duffel bag, but just something you can carry just some overnight clothes in, and the laptop. So those returned to the parents for safekeeping. And I didn't have any problem with that initially to give that back. So now at this point, we're involved in it now. We're looking at Bryce had walked away from this car is my belief he walked away. So we bring in bloodhounds and cadaver dogs..

Steve Gregory

At this point, I remember bringing in the dogs. You had a whole search team.

Detective Bob Martindale

We had search teams from...

Steve Gregory

And dive teams...

Detective Bob Martindale

We had search teams from air, on foot, on horseback, on ATVs four wheel drive vehicles. We had our dive crew or divers come out and search the lake as well. Bloodhounds, two separate bloodhounds. We had cadaver dogs come out from the at this time was a cadaver dog attached to Coroner's Department. I think the lake is some 200 plus acres it's a fairly it's a big lake but also the grounds around it pretty expansive area for a park. We searched that for a long weekend, day and night searching for Bryce because we thought well maybe he was injured, or possibly walked away and became incapacitated somewhere near the vehicle. But we found no indications that of Bryce anywhere near the vehicle.

Steve Gregory

Dogs never picked up a scent.

Detective Bob Martindale

But that's where the bloodhounds on two separate days, we use two separate bloodhounds just to be sure. Now having Bryce's scent, we're able to go back at this point using two separate bloodhounds, which tracked almost identically on different days. We now can follow Bryce's scent, leaving the car going down,

not down the launch ramp road, it would be easier just to continue down the launch ramp road towards the lake, and then to, but that leads down to this there's a sheriff's station down there, there's cameras down there and then there's there's cameras along the road itself down below towards the the launch ramp itself. So looks like whether he knew this or not or wanted to be unseen, but potentially by people in the park or parks with those employees or whether he knew it was down at the launch ramp. It looks like he continued down a rugged kind of the mountain terrain and eventually went across the dam. There's a drive there's a pathway you can drive a vehicle, although it's blocked off so the average citizen could not drive a vehicle across, service vehicles could, but you can drive a vehicle across the dam. Now each of those dogs picked up the scent walking Bryce's set where he went across the dam. Now you would think back then we would have the there would be cameras that would cover the dam area itself but it doesn't it covers the launch ramp where people have to pay fees to use the launch ramp but it does not cover the dam.

Steve Gregory

More with Detective Bob Martindale. But first this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI AM 640 Time now for a news update.

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640 heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved. To leave us a comment, hit pound 250 on your cell phone and say the keyword Unsolved or press the red microphone button on the iHeartRadio app. Also, you can email the team unsolved@iheartmedia.com, that's unsolved@iheartmedia.com. We've been talking with LA County Sheriff's Detective Bob Martindale about the disappearance of Bryce Laspisa. Before the break, Martindale was telling us about Bryce intentionally driving off an embankment at Lake Castaic, then leaving the scene walking across the dam, leaving behind his wallet and backpack, including a laptop. So did the laptop revealed any clues?

Detective Bob Martindale

Well, the laptop probably had some information on it. But according to our forensic examiners that that looked at the laptop, at some point, after Bryce went missing, I don't know how all the details of how they do it, and how the forensic works on computers, it's not my forte or expertise, but I was told that there was some manipulation on that computer. So some things were deleted, whether intentionally or unintentionally, were deleted, such as the search history on the computer. So that occurred after he went missing. I haven't spoken to Mike Bryce's father, I think it's just not I don't think Mike's the biological father, but the adoptive, he adopted Bryce as a young kid. I think at some point, he was searching the computer for obviously trying to find his son, which would be a likely means to search the search history at some point to see...

Steve Gregory

The father was curious too.

Detective Bob Martindale

Curious as I would be as well, I have a son as well and have a daughter and if they went missing, I would look over their computer, right? We keep our lives, our phone, everything our whole lives are on these things these days. But however, that search history had been either manipulated or deleted, so it's wasn't recoverable for us. So that could, to me, that's a big piece of the puzzle. I don't know what was on that search history. When I think, if I'm not mistaken, I don't want to put words into Mike's mouth. But looking back, I think, Mike, that being Bryce's father was looking like we are trying to find his son to see if he was searching for, if I'm not mistaken, like locations or drug rehab or some type of alcohol facilities in the area

see something of that nature. So but whether it was I don't dispute it, but somehow the the content was deleted, so the search history.

Steve Gregory

So the computer was wiped or just the search history.

Detective Bob Martindale

There are some certain things that were altered or deleted on the computer that I think could have helped us or helped our forensic team, look at the computer maybe to analyze Bryce's patterns, where he was going to go what he was searching on those days, or the days before, or weeks or months, or what was going on in his life. So that data could have been very probative for us.

Steve Gregory

And did the parents give you an indication as to why they might have deleted it?

Detective Bob Martindale

I think it was just unintentional. Yeah. Yeah.

Steve Gregory

Well, that could have been a, like you said a big piece of the puzzle right there.

Detective Bob Martindale

It could be yes. And also, I don't know what was on that search history, because it could have been very benign. Maybe there was nothing on there. But I would have liked to have seen it myself or, you know, see what's there or have our forensic people analyze the computer without any manipulation done to it or someone logged into it.

Steve Gregory

Did you say, did I understand you correctly when you said the father, to your recollection, the father had indicated there were searches for rehab.

Detective Bob Martindale

Yes. So obviously, I think the parents knew that maybe there's something going on, that could have been something related to him from Kim, the girlfriend or maybe Shawn, the roommate and maybe drinkin or something like that. Or maybe just his bizarre behavior. They're searching for something in that area, whether some type of facility, maybe some he was maybe he stopped and he was seeking some type of help from a facility in that area. So maybe that's why Mike was on there looking for the search history.

Steve Gregory

Were there, and speaking of search history going back to his cell phone when he was down at Buttonwood and the rest area we talked about earlier, had he called any other people?

Detective Bob Martindale

No, most of the calls are just between Karen Mike and and Bryce back and forth.

Steve Gregory

So he wasn't like maybe trying to call rehab or clinic or anything like that.

Detective Bob Martindale

No, there's no other call, we've got the call detail records, which we refer to as CDRs. So we're able to basically with those CDRs because those CDRs also give us a latitude and longitude or we call GPS location history, as well. So we're able to see his call history from going back in time all the way prior to his meeting with Kim on that, that fateful day where he broke up with her and things kind of spiraled out of control. We're able to see his movement patterns all around Rockland, up to Chico where Kim was going to college, and then back down so we're able to follow his pattern, that phone all the way down to Santa Clarita, and then that's basically where it ends at that point.

Steve Gregory

So now, he's basically classified as a critical missing, right?

Detective Bob Martindale

Correct. Yeah.

Steve Gregory

So at this point Detective, you say that bloodhounds found him going across the dam, dive teams never found anything. No one else found anything really. So..

Detective Bob Martindale

The unusual thing that the bloodhounds both tracked on on the the west side of the dam there there's like they call 100 year spillway. It's a very wide concrete spillway. Both those and you can walk across it, it's not an easy trek, but we got across that spillway. Both dogs, again on separate days, different dogs, different handlers, tracked him almost near the same pattern, aacross that spillway, out of the park. There's a park area on the west side of the spillway. And basically Bryce's scent took them towards the rest stop area there on Lake Hughes Road there, there's a rest stop area there, it's a large trucking area, Lake Hughes Road and the five freeway, there's a large trucking area like Buttonwillow before you go over the grapevine, whether you get in food, fuel or whatever it might be. That's where the scent dissipated or they lost scent. So we're we were kind of thinking at that point. When he went his scent tracked across to this rest stop area. Did he get did he catch a ride with somebody? Did he catch a ride with a long haul trucker going north, south we just don't know. But that's where but by the time we get involved in a time of his disappearance, we go back and there's again in 2013, there's not a lot of cameras in that general area. Some cameras that covered the interior of like restaurants and fast food places but nothing on the exterior. But we did canvass that area for cameras and we cannot pick up Bryce on any of those cameras. Same nor could be pickup Bryce down by the launch ramp. So the cameras on there's the launch ramp facility where the sheriff has a office down there cover the launch ramp but those cameras do not extend out over the over the dam so anyone can walk across a dam and not be picked up on those cameras.

Steve Gregory

So he literally just disappeared into thin air.

Detective Bob Martindale

Disappeared into thin air when he tracked into that scent to Lake Hughes Road and near the five freeway. He basically disappeared. So again it's my belief, I don't believe he met his demise anywhere in that park given the search efforts on land in the water. He basically walked away and was caught a ride somewhere with a long haul trucker, again going east or north or south on the five freeway. And from there, he has absolutely vanished into thin air

Steve Gregory

Coming up we'll wrap up the case and talk about theories and rumors. But first, this is unsolved on KFI AM 640, time now for a news update.

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640 heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved. LA County Sheriff's Detective Bob Martindale has been retelling the case of Bryce Laspisa, the missing college student from 2013. Given all the publicity, not only locally, but around the world, what kinds of signings or tips have you received over the years?

Detective Bob Martindale

I think I've have sightings from east to west coast, but most of those sightings are mostly in the western states. I mean, from California to Northern California, to Oregon to Washington. I think we've had some sightings in Mexico. But most of those, and then some on the far extreme over on the east coast. But I get the bulk of them here on the west coast in the Mountain States area. And, but we investigate all those tips, whether it's, it's and I'm going to investigate it, because geographically some of these tips are are some are old, days old, sometimes they call Hey, I think last week, I saw Bryce or somebody who resembles them at a grocery store say in Oregon, well, what we do is we reach out to local law enforcement in that area, based on that tip and see if they can, they can assist us and maybe go back to where the tips are saying they saw and to see if they can gather some what video evidence or anything to corroborate or dispel that sighting to vet that, that, that tip for us. So we do that in all cases, we don't just take them. There are some that are in the extreme that are just outlandish. But nonetheless, we still have to vet each tip.

Steve Gregory

So give us an example. What's been probably the craziest tip you've got about him.

Detective Bob Martindale

I can't think of the most outlandish one at this point. But I just, I probably shouldn't use the word outlandish it's just, there's....

Steve Gregory

Well just highly unusual

Detective Bob Martindale

You get all characters calling in about theories again, about why he went missing, and you know, that he's alive. I think I've got stuff that, you know, the government's involved that he's some type of, you know,

covert agent, you know, to anywhere from, you know, the drugs and alcohol played an issue to where he's coming out of the closet, doesn't want the parents to know that he has another identity, all these things across the gamut. But again, I get because this went nationally, I get people from all over the country calling. Again, all types of people call me some that are on the far extreme of things that just are out there and far left field, but and then some it seems are like very credible tips. And but we do try to vet those, not the ones that are really outlandish, you could tell some people are calling it's just some crazy stuff. Really. I mean, crazy crazy, like Martian stuff like you know that he was abducted by aliens stuff. But when it's a credible tip, or someone see somebody resembling that we do follow through on to this day, and I think the last tip, we did a show called disappeared that aired nationally here. And that still gets reruns every now and then. And I still get tips to this day. I think one was as close to maybe a week or two ago, maybe a month ago. And we still follow up on those. Because it's my hope that someday that Bryce will be found alive. When I first years as years pass in his case, well, I first think he walked away and was living off the grid somewhere. But having his license flagged, his Social Security flagged, name flagged, his prints, his DNA, all those things flagged at this point. And there's been no sightings, no arrests, no contact with law enforcement, you know, after nine plus years, and this is Bryce to me, based on all indications was not a survivalist. Like some people might be able to survive and live off the grid. It's not impossible that he didn't develop those skills afterwards. But he just didn't seem like the type of person that would be that person is just going to..

Detective Bob Martindale

Maybe it's in the search engine.

Detective Bob Martindale

It could be it could be in the computer. Maybe he was searching how to live off the grid and just wanting to walk away from life. But I think as time goes on, I think given all that I know on the case in his unusual behavior leading up to his disappearance, I think at some point now as nine years have passed, I think he Bryce met his demise. I think he took his own life somewhere outside the region of Lake Castaic. I think he he wanted to end his life somewhere, but it didn't happen there but basically, when he walked away, he's going to fulfill that, that desire to end his life and it just wasn't there at Lake Castaic. But I think I don't think there's anything that was going to stop him from doing that, or to turn that around. Now, whether he walked away or drove away from that area, it's still unknown. But again, 250 acres, and it's kind of rough area. You know, we got mountain lions, coyotes up there. So if he did walk away and take his own life somewhere in that rugged terrain, the animal activity, it's quite possible, we never would find his remains.

Steve Gregory

I do recall, how soon was it after the official disappearance? That was the shallow grave up there with the burnt body?

Detective Bob Martindale

Actually, you know what the body was just basically on the roadside like a turnout.

Steve Gregory

I remember. I mean, myself, along with all my colleagues, drove like bats out of hell up there, because we thought that was Bryce.

Detective Bob Martindale

Yeah.

Steve Gregory

And so we had a lot of those kinds of things going on. I mean, that was an unusual case, in itself, if memory serves, but...

Detective Bob Martindale

Yeah, you know, it's not unusual. If you continue up the road, I think it's up to five freeway pass there I think there's a road called Templin. I think, at least the LA DWP powerplant that's up there. I myself and going on 17 years and in here in the homicide bureau have handled two burning bodies up there.

Steve Gregory

Yeah.

Detective Bob Martindale

And that's not but a couple of miles from there. It's just a rural area.

Steve Gregory

San Bernardino deals with the same thing.

Detective Bob Martindale

People this, this burning body was found out that that individual had been was a homicide victim, I think out of the LA South LA, and it's not uncommon, they, they drive them up there to get them out of the area, whether you're killed, they think they're gonna destroy evidence by setting the body on fire. It's not unusual. So when I first saw that I'm going, Bryce had been missing for some period of time, I doubt that someone's going to go back, discard the body right along the roadside and set it on fire for it to be found. So well, I almost knew right away it wasn't Bryce, but again, has been rolled out, it's not Bryce, but I'm hopeful this day, he'll be found alive. But I think at some, it's my gut instinct now after nine years that he took his own life at this point.

Steve Gregory

And it's very possible that someone picked him up that day, not realizing they were driving him to his demise.

Detective Bob Martindale

Yeah, it looking back, and it's no fault of like, say Christian, the, the Kern County officers, the deputies, mom, or Mike or Kim or Sean, anybody in Bryce life. If somebody is hell bent on taking their life, they can fool you. You may prevent it today, tomorrow, but maybe not the next day. And they could put up a good front and all everything's fine, oh, I'll be home in a little bit. And they can really fool you, but knowing full well, that they're basically set on doing this of ending their own life and they can take a put on that front and mislead you and I think that's what Bryce did for a little bit. He misled Kim, Mike and Karen, I think he just said I'll be home in a bit, I'm going to come south, but ultimate, everything suggests at this point giving away that is always possessions is worldly possessions, things he cared about, the staying at

Buttonwillow for an inordinate amount of time. Like he's contemplating something that's not contemplating something good, because it's only a two hour drive to go see mom and dad, right? Or turn around and go back home. He's contemplating what he's going to do in his life and that contemplating, I think, was why I don't know, I don't think I'll ever know at this point of why he's going to take his own life. I think everything leads up to that. As sad as it sounds, I think he did somewhere. You know, and as I knock on wood, or say God willing, you know, he'll be found alive but at some point, I hope at least some his remains will be found if he did take his own life to put closure to this for Mike and Karen and for us as well and for that, you know, for they can bury their son at some point, you have a proper burial,

Steve Gregory

Detective Bob Martindale, I appreciate your time and thank you so much for recapping this case, so many years later. I hope you get the closure as well as the family.

Detective Bob Martindale

Thank you, especially for for Mike and Karen, I think they they need it and I don't know how they it's got to be difficult for them to live for just because even after nine years of not knowing what happened to their son.

Steve Gregory

Very good. Thank you, sir. Appreciate your time.

Detective Bob Martindale

Thank you.

Steve Gregory

And that's going to do it. 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 field engineer is Tony Sorrentino, the technical director is David Callaway. Coming up next, it's Coast to Coast, but first, this is KFI AM 640, time now for a news update.