

## **Unsolved Episode 310 – Mother and Son Murder/ Fatal Home Invasion**

### **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 thousands of friends and families who have lost loved ones, thousands of people who got away with a crime and thousands 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 Department homicide case number 016-02242-1615-011, the murders of 54-year-old Michelle Kelly Love and her son, 27-year-old Jordan Love. I've interviewed Detective Steve Blagg many times throughout the years and he's been involved with some pretty high profile cases. But this time, he tells me he's got a case that's been bugging him for the last few years. So he invites me over to the department's Homicide Bureau in Monterey Park where I meet up with him and his partner Detective Gil Morales. Blagg takes us back to February 27, 2016 in the city of Carson.

### **Detective Blagg**

Just before midnight, Michelle Kelly Love and her son Jordan Love along with Michelle's elderly mother had just returned to Jordan's home after a night out in the city of Orange with family. They had went to a restaurant in the city of Orange, viewed a movie with other family members and after the movie, they went back to the restaurant for a short amount of time, and then eventually Michelle was driving Jordan home. As they sat in Michelle's vehicle out in front of Jordans residence, witnesses reported seeing a dark colored vehicle possible sedan drive north on Tillman Avenue, when several gunshots rang out. Both Michelle and Jordan were struck multiple times. Fortunately, Michelle's mother was not injured by any gunfire, and both were pronounced deceased at the scene.

### **Steve Gregory**

Who was driving?

### **Detective Blagg**

Michelle was.

### **Steve Gregory**

The mother was driving son was in the passenger seat?

**Detective Blagg**

He was in the right rear passenger seat and then Michelle's mother was in the right front passenger seat.

**Steve Gregory**

So when you said that the car approached as you look at the vehicle parked in the driveway, would they have approached from the right or the left?

**Detective Blagg**

They would have approached, because Michelle's car was parked along the west side of Tillman or I'm sorry, east side of Tillman facing north and the vehicle approached from their rear so it would have been right on the driver's side of Michelle's car.

**Steve Gregory**

Sergeant, do you know, were the windows up or were they down?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

The windows were up.

**Steve Gregory**

They were up. So did it appear that the gunfire came from only one weapon or multiple weapons?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

One weapon.

**Steve Gregory**

One weapon and do you know what the weapon was?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

We believe it's going to be a 40 caliber semi-automatic pistol.

**Steve Gregory**

Okay. And see it since this was in 2016, it's it's probable or it's likely that there could have been some maybe a Ring camera or surveillance footage in the area?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

There was cameras in the area. Unfortunately, it was very dark and it's hard to see the street from from these cameras. Aside from that, it doesn't appear that the the suspects in this case got out of the car, they shot from the car so you can't actually see any any individuals.

**Steve Gregory**

This 19500 block of Tillman Avenue, can you describe the neighborhood? What kind of a neighborhood?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

It's a residential neighborhood in the city of Carson like the north end of the city, and just a residential neighborhood of a single family residences.

**Steve Gregory**

Any particular issues or problems in those areas?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

There is a gang that that frequents that track of homes it's the East Coast 190 Crips gang members, they're from that track of homes.

**Steve Gregory**

So then Detective Blagg, do you suppose, you know, first of all I should ask were you gentlemen on this case from day one?

**Detective Blagg**

We were. We were both, we were partners at the time of this case, we were called and responded to conduct this investigation together in the early morning hours.

**Steve Gregory**

So then, knowing what you know about it with what the Sergeant just said. Do you immediately hone in on the East Coast 190s?

**Detective Blagg**

Yes, and no. We look for to see if either the victim or any of the victims families have any association with the East Coast 190s, or if there are any issues between the victims and any members of the East Coast 190s, because as Gil said, the 190s actually claim that area, that area of I believe it's Leadership Park area, is what the residents in Carson refer to it as. And the 190s claim that area as part of their gang territory.

**Steve Gregory**

So when they, when you say 'claim' the area, you know, what kind of an area, what's the size of the area?

**Detective Blagg**

I would I don't know the exact boundaries of East Coast 190. I know that that that housing area, the Leadership Park area is it's called is claimed by that gang as part of their territory. So if any rivals were to look for members of the 190s, they would actually go into those areas, and if 190s saw rivals within that area, they would commit some act of violence to get them out.

**Steve Gregory**

Sergeant what kind of you know, and I don't want to go too far down the this path, but I think for perspective, I want people to know, with the gangs with this East Coast 190s claiming the territory in which this crime happened. What kinds of crimes is the East Coast 190 mostly responsible for?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

You got your violent crime scene, you're shooting your robberies, burglaries, just the whole gamut of different crimes that they're they're involved in.

**Steve Gregory**

So then when Detective Blagg was talking about, you got to look at associations with the people in the vehicle. Did you come up with any connection whatsoever with anyone in the car in any gang activity?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

Not from the individuals in the car? I think Jordan had just moved from up north...

**Detective Blagg**

Sacramento

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

...to the city of Carson to be living with his father, who also lived at that location.

**Steve Gregory**

Okay, so you said it in an interesting way, no one in the car was connected?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

That's correct.

**Steve Gregory**

Is there anyone in the family connected?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

So and tell me if I'm wrong, that the actual residence, there were some reports that we looked at historically, that this may have been an area, this residence where these gang members may have hung at?

**Steve Gregory**

Oh, so like a just a place to crash or place to hang out and party or whatever?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

That's correct.

**Detective Blagg**

Yeah.

**Steve Gregory**

So who, would it have been Jordan's father that was that?

**Detective Blagg**

No, no, it was a relative of Jordan.

**Steve Gregory**

Okay, so then going down that path, where did it take you?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

So, nothing yet, as far as that aspect, you know, there was no connection that they were targeted because of some gang affiliation. You know, one of the other things we looked at, because they were driving in their car, and they had just arrived and they were sitting in their car for a few minutes before the shooting occurred. So we're also looking at maybe there was a road rage incident that occurred from Orange County to Carson and I know that we talked to the grandmother to see if anything had happened as far as like a road rage and she didn't indicate that was the case. But that was one of the angle that we were looking at.

**Steve Gregory**

More about the case of the murdered mother and son in Carson. But first this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI-AM 640, time now for a news update.

**Steve Gregory**

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**Steve Gregory**

Welcome back, we're at the Homicide Bureau of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and we're joined by Sergeant Gil Morales and Detective Steve Blagg. They're telling us about a case going back to February 27, 2016, the shooting deaths of Michelle Kelly Love and her son Jordan Love, they were sitting in a car in the 19500 block of Tillman Avenue along with Jordan's grandmother, when Michelle and Jordan were shot and killed. Before the break, Sergeant, you said that you had explored the path, the gang connection path because that was a known gang activity area, the East Coast 190, as you said, which is an affiliate of the Crips, right?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

Yes, yeah.

**Steve Gregory**

So you were talking about that kind of going down with all the affiliations. You did say that the home that in the 19500 block has been associated with gang activity only, I shouldn't say activity, but affiliation. Right. Is that a better way to say it affiliation, because they used to hang out at the house?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

That's correct.

**Steve Gregory**

There was evidence that they would hang at the house. You said that there was no indication that the shooting was necessarily gang related, but it could have been something as benign or simple as a road rage incident.

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

So that was one of the aspects we're looking at. If that was possible that something happened when they left Orange County and drove back to Carson, and we didn't see anything like that, but we couldn't rule it out.

**Steve Gregory**

The vehicle, all you said was that it was described as a dark sedan?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

Yes.

**Steve Gregory**

Did you get any information or indication whether it was more than one or two people in the vehicle?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

We believe that it was at least two people...

**Steve Gregory**

At least two people, one shooting one driving?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

Yes.

**Steve Gregory**

Yep. So these drive by shootings like this are these pretty common in that area?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

As far as a common in that area, there's a lot of shootings that occur within within the Leadership track.

**Steve Gregory**

Detective Blagg, you know, when you when I hear that this could be something as like I said, benign, I used, that's the only word I can think of right now is a road rage incident. In your years of experience doing this drive by shootings like this is that is that the preferred method of retaliation on something like this?

**Detective Blagg**

It is, I mean, gang members, for a while there was a code amongst some gang members that when they commit a shooting, they're supposed to get out of their vehicle, identify their target before they shoot, because if they didn't and they hit somebody, an innocent who was a non gang member, there was some type of retaliation by their own gang. But unfortunately, that's kind of morphed into gang members riding in a car will shoot from a car, especially in a rival neighborhood, and really not even identify who their targets are. So like Gil was saying we we can't rule out a gang angle on this double homicide, because of

the fact that it was within the 190s area. Rivals know that area and they know where to find potential targets, and it's quite possible that it was a rival gang that rolled in there and fired these shots. The road rage angle is another angle that we can't discount as well, as well as a possible follow home robbery, because the vehicle that Michelle was driving was a was a nicer SUV, and which, to us seems would have been a prime target, but yet there was no attempt to take the car. There was no attempt to take anything from any of the persons in the car. And like Gil said the shooter never exited the vehicle they were in, they shot from inside that vehicle, and it was multiple rounds. One of the witnesses reported stating that the gun to them sounded like automatic gunfire but it was coming from a 40 caliber pistol.

**Steve Gregory**

How many rounds Sergeant?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

It was 16 expended casings that we recovered.

**Steve Gregory**

16 casings. In your years of experience, that many shots fired, does that tell you anything?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

Probably that it was a high capacity magazine that was inserted in the weapon. Because 16 rounds seems an enormous amount of rounds to be fired.

**Steve Gregory**

Well beyond that, beyond the mechanics of that, though, that many rounds fired at somebody or something, or people, as opposed to one or two shots fired, that many rounds expended, is that tell you anything about the nature of the crime?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

It tells me that they they wanted to do some harm and even kill the the individuals in the car. But we don't know if they knew who was in the car, because like I said, the street was very dark. You know, you had Michelle was driving, her mother was in the passenger seat and Jordan was in the backseat. But that many rounds, you'd have to believe that the shooter wanted them dead.

**Detective Blagg**

I mean, Michelle's the windows on her vehicle were tinted. So even if you're a person wants to pull up alongside you wouldn't necessarily be able to see. But what we kind of believe happened is, whoever these the suspects were driving through the area, the headlights of their vehicle would have at least illuminated the back to where they could at least see how many bodies were in the vehicle. Not necessarily the sex, the race or any identifying characteristics, just the fact that the vehicle was occupied, and then pulled up alongside an opened fire on the car.



**Steve Gregory**

When we come back, I want to explore a little bit more, you just threw something up when he's talking about the tinted windows. Now that's got me asking some new questions. So stay put this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI-AM 640, time now for news update.

**Steve Gregory**

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**Steve Gregory**

Welcome back, we're inside the LA County Sheriff's Homicide Bureau speaking with Sergeant Gil Morales and Detective Steve Blagg. These two picked up a case on February 27, 2016, the shooting deaths of Michelle Kelly Love and her son Jordan Love. Before the break Sergeant, you were telling me that you were talking about the shells that were expended and that based on your experience, that whoever opened fire wanted to do harm and wanted to kill. But an interesting angle now that Detective Blagg just brought up is that these windows were tinted in this SUV parked in the home of Jordan Love's home at the 19500 block of Tillman Avenue. With tinted windows, how can I ask this? I think I've asked so many times in all the years I've been covering these kinds of stories, but is it possible that they didn't know who was in the vehicle at all and this was mistaken identity?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

It's quite possible. I mean, it was obvious that, you know, Michelle, she's, she's a middle aged woman and her mother's about 80-years-old at the time, if they would have saw that I just don't understand why they would open fire on two women, one being very elderly. Steve said, you know, Jordan was in the backseat, he wasn't really observable, I believe, from outside the car.

**Steve Gregory**

Detective Blagg, you know, with this area having such an active gang activity and I know the whole code about snitching. But was there a reward offered offered fairly early?

**Detective Blagg**

Yes, the city of Carson put forth a \$25,000 reward for information leading to an arrest and conviction in this case. Shortly after this murder, we went public with a press conference, and we received nothing in return from the media coverage on this case and the reward offered.

**Steve Gregory**

So we're talking six years ago?

**Detective Blagg**

Yes.

**Steve Gregory**

Six years.

**Detective Blagg**

Six and a half years.

**Steve Gregory**

By now, is the reward still active, technically?

**Detective Blagg**

Technically, yes, the city of Carson, it's still out there, so it is still available.

**Steve Gregory**

And usually the reward is a motivator.

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

It is a motivator, and but on this case, we have received zero tips.

**Steve Gregory**

And that seems like in in the gang world, shooting a mom and a grandmother seems a little out of code seems a little out of sorts for a gang hit, am I right?

**Detective Blagg**

By all means? Yes. I mean it, like I had talked about earlier, there was a code for a while for if you were going to shoot you had to be out of a car and there was no shooting from a car. But that code has changed and especially in this case, when you have two innocent people and potentially three, but just fortunately, the grandmother was not hit by all of these rounds that went through that car who were who were shot, and we don't even think were specifically targeted.

**Steve Gregory**

Is the grandmother still alive?

**Detective Blagg**

I have not had contact with her for a while. I know that Jordan's father, Michelle's ex husband, every year he hosts a vigil at the residence for what has happened. I have not checked in to see if grandma's still with us or not.

**Steve Gregory**

I just wondered if there was any new activity because eventually you guys know this, eventually someone talks, don't you think?

**Detective Blagg**

That's what we've been hoping for? Yeah,

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

Yeah, but unfortunately, so far, we haven't gotten any information that from somebody that oh, you know, somebody told me this happened and they were involved in this and we haven't gotten that in this case.

**Steve Gregory**

What you talked about, oh, a witness. Did you have more than one witness?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

There was at least one witness that we spoke to but no one was an eyewitness that actually saw the shooting it's more you know, I saw a vehicle pass by then I heard shooting...

**Steve Gregory**

Where was the witness at?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

In the neighborhood...

**Steve Gregory**

Just like on the sidewalk walking around?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

No, no, had just arrived home, parking her her vehicle...

**Steve Gregory**

I see.

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

...and she knows that a suspicious vehicle, drive past her and then heard gunshots.

**Steve Gregory**

Noticed a suspicious, a suspicious vehicle. Can you explain that a little more when what is a suspicious vehicle?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

The vehicle it wasn't the vehicle being suspicious. it was the fact that they made a U turn down the street.

**Steve Gregory**

So the behavior...

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

....the behavior of the driver.

**Steve Gregory**

Yeah. Okay. So then after all this time, you've had no absolutely no break or no lead at all?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

There was one lead that we received, and that was an NIBIN hit on one of the cartridge casings that we recovered at the scene.

**Steve Gregory**

Explain what that is.

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

So an NIBIN hit, it's National Integrated Ballistic Information Network and what that is, is we have analysts that compare your cartridge casing and compare it to cartridge casings of other shootings and see if there's a link seeing if the gun, the same gun was used and multiple shootings. In this case there was a hit. What we learned is that two, actually three weeks before the Loves were killed, there was a shooting in the city of Long Beach, and our murder weapon was used in that in that shooting. Nobody was killed, but someone was injured. So we're, you know, we had that information.

**Steve Gregory**

When we come back then I want to explore that a little bit more because now that's bringing up questions. You guys keep bringing up new stuff, it's like you're burying the lead all the time. So when we come back, we're going to talk a little bit more about that. But first, this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI-AM 640 I can't find am 640 Time now for a news update.

**Steve Gregory**

KFI-AM 640, live everywhere on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved. You can reach the Unsolved team on email, just send us a message [unsolved@iheartmedia.com](mailto:unsolved@iheartmedia.com) that's [unsolved@iheartmedia.com](mailto:unsolved@iheartmedia.com).

**Steve Gregory**

Welcome back, we're inside the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Homicide Bureau, we've been talking with Sergeant Gil Morales and Steve Blagg, a detective with the LA County Sheriff's Department's Homicide Bureau, and before the break, you told us that there was you had some a little piece of evidence or a break in the case, if you will, in that you had some matching casings and that you found out that the weapon used to gun down Michelle Kelly Love and her son Jordan was actually used in a shooting in Long Beach. Now was that also a homicide, or a murder?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

No, no.

**Steve Gregory**

It was just a shooting.

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

It was just a shooting.

**Steve Gregory**

So Detective Blagg, what does that tell you then? If you know that it's been used in another crime were you able to get anything from that crime to help you?

**Detective Blagg**

Unfortunately not. The victims and witnesses in that case, one, weren't too cooperative...

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

That's correct.

**Detective Blagg**

...and two, claim they could not identify who the shooter was in that case.

**Steve Gregory**

And does that make you suspicious?

**Detective Blagg**

Yes, it does, because those victims were somewhat gang related, not to any gang within the city of Carson. But outside the city of Carson, I mean, to us that kind of strengthens the potential of this being a gang shooting only because now when we get that hit on the fired cartridge cases, and we look at those victims on the Long Beach shooting, which preceded the double murder. Now knowing that they're somewhat associated with gang members, our shooting happens within a gang area, it kind of points us more in that direction, even though we're still not going to discount any other possible road rage, follow home robbery, anything like that, but it kind of focuses us a little bit more. But again, the weapon was not in custody and those victims on Long Beach shooting just weren't cooperative at all.

**Steve Gregory**

So I suppose that they would translate that being cooperative as being snitches of some kind.

**Detective Blagg**

Oh, exactly. Yeah. That's why if they were persons not associated with a gang, they may be more apt to speak to us and provide information. But the gang culture and the gang credo of snitches get stitches, it's just, we don't get a lot of cooperation.

**Steve Gregory**

Sergeant, so like with DNA, for instance, when I talk to Cold Case detectives about DNA and it's been dormant for a while, then they'll request it to be run again, to check in the APHIS system or something like that to where see if another hit comes up. Do you do that with and I'm sorry, what was the acronym again that you used...

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

NIBIN?

**Steve Gregory**

Whatever the letters,

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

It's a National Integrated Ballistic Information Network.

**Steve Gregory**

So NIBIN, so do you, how does that work then? Can you go back in and request another run at it to see if, if the weapon pops up somewhere else?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

So if there was this a shooting that happened recently, those cartridge casings would be analyzed, and if that gun it was used in our murder, then we would get a hit that, you know, your gun was used in a recent shooting or a recent homicide. So you don't have to rerun it again.

**Steve Gregory**

So it's automatic?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

Yes.

**Steve Gregory**

Much like isn't that the way DNA is now too is that once you put it in there, if it comes up it flags and goes to the detective on record, right?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

That's correct, it goes through CODIS

**Steve Gregory**

Yeah, now is that is that NIBIN, is that nationwide or just statewide?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

It's nationwide.

**Steve Gregory**

Nationwide. Is that all juristic federal and local and the whole nine yards?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

I believe so.

**Detective Blagg**

Yeah.

**Detective Blagg**

And whoever has access to NIBIN and uploads the information in and then we will get a hit notification.

**Steve Gregory**

It's only as good as the information loaded into the system. Right?

**Detective Blagg**

That is correct.

**Steve Gregory**

Okay. Yeah. So now, gentlemen. What is it you want the public to know here? What is it you need?

**Detective Blagg**

We need somebody to come forward with information. I mean, Michelle, 54-years-old, getting close to retiring from her job, and you know, living out of the area but still had several children, including Jordan, was gunned down. Jordan was a young man who had just moved here from Sacramento, moved back home to Carson and was gunned down. I mean, again, just by pure luck, Michelle's mother was not also killed in this. But they've left a grieving family behind. I mean, Jordan's father Jose Love every year still holds a vigil at the house to try and get information from the community. But nobody has come forward to him as well and this was just it was a tragic double murder. I mean, every murder is tragic, but even more so in this case, because you had a mother and son killed together. And that that's just that's just unspeakable.

**Steve Gregory**

Sergeant based on your years of experience in your instincts. What do you think happened?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

You know, it's hard to say because...

**Steve Gregory**

I mean, just because of what the detective just laid out, when you've got a mother, a grandmother and a son, son with no known connection to gangs, the two women in the car, tinted windows, what does all that tell you? What does your gut tell you?

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

I believe that the shooting was an opportunity shooting. I think that whoever shot these people probably didn't know who was in the car, but they saw the car parked in front of a gang hang out and took an



opportunity to well if they're in front of the house that must belong to the house and started shooting into the car. Without knowing that you know, Michelle and her mother and her son were in the car.

**Steve Gregory**

Gentlemen, appreciate your time. Detective Steve Blagg, Sergeant Gil Morales, LA County Sheriff's Homicide Bureau. Let's hope to shake some trees and the \$25,000 award still active from the city of Carson.

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

It is...

**Detective Blagg**

That is.

**Steve Gregory**

Very good Gentleman, thank you for your time.

**Detective Blagg**

No thank you.

**Sergeant Gil Morales**

Thanks

**Steve Gregory**

Coming up a horrendous case out of Woodland Hills involving the brutal murder of an 81-year-old woman. But first this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI-AM 640, time now for a news update.

**Steve Gregory**

KFI-AM 640 live everywhere on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved.

**Steve Gregory**

Los Angeles Police Department homicide case DR number 2221-12485, The murder of 81-year-old Ok Ja Kim. A few weeks ago I received a text from LAPD Deputy Chief Alan Hamilton. He told me about a disturbing case involving the robbery of a woman in Woodland Hills. He told me this one was not a typical robbery, this one was different, more brutal, more heinous, and one that really got to him. He told me there was a reward pending as well as a press conference, so I did keep an eye on it. I eventually got word the conference was scheduled for Thursday morning October 20th at LAPD's Operations Valley Bureau in Panorama City. So I reached out to Deputy Chief Hamilton, who put me in touch with the lead

detective on the case Sharon Kim. Kim had arranged for me to interview not only her but members of the woman's family immediately following the press conference. But as you listen, you'll understand why I chose not to do a sit down interview. This is a graphic case and a very painful one for the family. I opted not to have them relive that moment again. That's why for these next two segments, you're going to hear the actual press conference complete with my Q&A. We're inside the roll call room of the LAPD operations Valley bureau.

### **Councilmember Bob Blumenfield**

Hello, I'm Councilmember Bob Blumenfield. I represent the West San Fernando Valley, Woodland Hills, Reseda, Winnetka, Tarzana, Canoga Park. I'm joined today with members of LAPD and the family of Woodland Hills resident Ok Ja Kim. In fact, if y'all want to come on up as well as we have this and family can come on up as well as we do this, not gonna ask you to speak but it might as well be together at this moment. So, as you know, on August 2, Miss Kim was the victim of a brutal home invasion and murder, horrific murder the likes that we have not seen in our community for a very, very long time. And it was something that really rocked the community to its core. Ms. Kim, family, friends, community members are mourning, but also seeking answers and seeking justice. I mean, it took a while at the beginning to get over just the shock and the pain of this happening in our community, happening to someone who was a loved person in the community. It's heartbreaking on so many levels, and it's also very disrupting in the community in terms of how we all feel about our safety. So last week, City Council approved a motion that I introduced for a \$50,000 reward to help homicide detectives from LAPD Valley Bureau gain more information related to this horrific crime. And the hope is that this money will spring loose some information that's out there some people who know more than they have told so far. And I certainly urge anyone hearing that who has information to come forward. But let's we're going to have a few speakers here. Let's first start on behalf of LAPD is Commander Valenzuela and Detective Sharon Kim. If you guys could come to the...

### **Commander Craig Valenzuela**

Good morning my name is Commander Craig Valenzuela with Los Angeles Police Department Operations Valley Bureau on the assistant commanding officer here in the bureau. First Councilmember Blumenfield, thank you, thank you for helping us shine a light on what, as you described, is a horrific crime that that we need help we need the public's help to solve. Second thank you to the investigators, I know you've all worked very hard to get to this point to get us to where we can hopefully get this solved as quickly as possible to ensure public and community safety. And finally to the to the family, as I committed to you when we met before, we're going to continue to work hard, we're going to continue to put the resources necessary to solve this crime to give you the closure that that you need. And again to support community and public safety so that the Valley continues to be one of the safest places in this city. To talk a little bit about the particulars of the crime I'm going to ask Detective Kim to come on up and fill you in. Thank you.

### **Detective Sharon Kim**

Good morning, everybody, thank you for coming. My name is Detective Sharon Kim, I'm the lead investigator in this case. Sometime in the late evening hours of August 1, this year, and August 2, 81-year-old victim Ok Ja Kim was brutally murdered in a what appears to be a home invasion robbery in her Woodland Hills home on Martha Street. I've worked many years in homicide and even more than that, investigating violent crime and I can honestly say that in my entire career I don't think I've ever seen such a senseless and brutal act of murder and just you need to feel safe in your own home and your home is your castle and just to know that some criminal came in and brutally murdered this 81-year-old woman is beyond thought for me. It hits home for me as well, you know, the victim was Korean, Korean American. I'm Korean American I grew up here and a lot of the background roots hit home for me, and despite our tireless investigation, we've worked extremely hard in this we're asking for the public's help in

developing leads in this case. Just to speak a little bit about the victim and her background, I'm going to turn it over to the victim's family to give a little speech about her.

### **Clara Kim**

Hello. First, we'd like to thank Councilman Blumenfield and the LAPD for their support, their dedication and their resolve and finding the person responsible for this horrendous crime. I am Ok Ja Kim's daughter, and I'm here today with my sister and our spouses to ask for your help in finding the person responsible for repeatedly stabbing, strangling, and burning the body of my 81-year-old mother. My mother was a person that truly gave more in this life than she ever took. She came here to this country 50 years ago, with no more than \$500 in her pocket with my father and they built a life for themselves, and that life was built on super hard work. They worked six days a week, 11 hour days, so my sister and I could have the opportunities that they were never provided. Excuse me. After about 40 years of those kinds of hours, they finally got to retire, and my mom spent the better part of her golden years taking care of my ailing father, and she was confined to the house as just as much as my dad was he was sick and eventually lost the use of his legs. And then when she finally got her time for freedom, my father passed last year, she had less than a year less than a year and this was robbed of her she deserved this so much. As a family, we're going to be grappling with this the circumstances of her death for a very long time. But the reality of it is, this could have been anybody's family. This could have been your mom, this could have been your dad, this could have been your grandparent, this could have been your child. This is a person that preys upon the most vulnerable in our community, and we need to stand together and stop them because they will do this again. If you have any information, please come forward and do what's right. Please help us right this wrong for those individuals living in the Carlton Terrace neighborhood of Woodland Hills. Take another look at your surveillance videos on the evening of August 1 or the morning of August 2. If there's anything suspicious, please report it. There isn't anything too trivial to overlook. We need your help. This was monstrous. This was disgusting. And this needs to be stopped. Thank you.

### **Steve Gregory**

Coming up, we move to the Q&A portion of the press conference. But first this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI-AM 640, time now for a news update.

### **Steve Gregory**

KFI-AM 640 live everywhere on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved. To learn more about this case and others go to our website at [KFIAM640.com/unsolved](http://KFIAM640.com/unsolved). That's [KFIAM640.com/unsolved](http://KFIAM640.com/unsolved). We're in the roll call room of the LAPD Operations Valley bureau. You've been listening to the actual press conference regarding a \$50,000 reward being offered to catch the person or persons who brutally murdered 81-old- Ok Ja Kim inside her home in Woodland Hills, sometime overnight from August 1 into August 2. And before the break we heard from LA City Councilman Bob Blumenfield, who arranged for the reward. We also heard from the LAPD command staff lead detective and the victim's daughter, Clara Kim. Now we begin with the Q&A portion of the press conference. Well, I have some questions for Detective Kim, if you don't mind. You step up to the microphone, and my apologies to the family in advance for asking sensitive questions. Detective, obviously, you're asking for help here today, so you've sort of run out of leads. Can you give us a sense of if this type of crime has been committed anywhere else? I mean, home invasions have been going up quite a bit lately, the valley and it seems like the elderly are being targeted, are you seeing a pattern in that at all?

**Detective Sharon Kim**

Well, certainly violent crime has gone up. We have seen more home invasion robberies, you know, the RHD at LAPD has created a special task force for follow home robberies. I don't think this is one of those that kind of fits into that category, a lot of those follow home robberies are committed by gangs working in concert together. This seems a little bit more, I guess, unusual, a little bit a little bit more brutal, not just for the sake of financial gain, but there's a different element to it. I don't know if that answers your question.

**Steve Gregory**

Well it does, and I guess that's where I'm headed. So did this particular crime, obviously, other than the heinousness of what happened, were there elements of this, that made you think this might have been a one off? That Mrs. Kim was targeted, this is part of a bigger operation, anything that stuck out at you?

**Detective Sharon Kim**

I mean, certainly anything is possible. The vicious nature of this, you know, we've been investigating similar crimes, I haven't been able to find anything that's anywhere near sort of like this with all the elements, you know. As Claire described, the victim was not only stabbed, but she was strangled and set on fire, which is extremely overkill. But again, violent crime is up, this person could be committing other similar crimes, just burglaries or home invasions, and maybe they just haven't gone to that extent before, we don't know. So we do think it's part of a larger pattern of increasing crime in general. But to say that for sure, we can start, you know, link this person to another series of crimes. We don't have that just yet.

**Steve Gregory**

Was there evidence of forced entry, or was she followed home? Or, I mean, do you know how the person got in?

**Detective Sharon Kim**

We do know that, we believe that there was forced entry into the home. We don't know whether she was followed or anything of that nature, which is why we're asking for the public's help for any additional footage or information that they might have.

**Steve Gregory**

And Miss Kim, if you don't mind a couple of questions for you as well. You just made a plea for people in the neighborhood of the Carlton Terrace area. Is that correct? Can you describe that neighborhood, what kind of neighborhood is it?

**Clara Kim**

It's a quiet residential neighborhood really family oriented. There is a school two blocks away from where this actual crime occurred. That is a school I'll tell you right now where I hold fundraisers. My children are not part of that school, but we use their facilities. There's local block parties in this neighborhood. It's a very active neighborhood that has a very big social footprint on both Ring on Next Door. This is a neighborhood that people choose to come into because it is family friendly and say.

**Steve Gregory**

I'm reticent to ask you this. But I think people need to know what it was like getting this call.

**Clara Kim**

It's one of the most horrific, grotesque. I mean, I don't have an explanation, you're paralyzed. You're in disbelief. I mean, it's still to this day, we wake up and we think this is all a dream. Yeah, it's my husband's the one who discovered her body and I will forever until this day, you know, he will have that vision in his head, and I remember hearing the words and, you know, it felt like it was an echo. It wasn't a reality that I could grasp.

**Steve Gregory**

Now that this crime is very public. You know, how do you feel about the fact that everyone knows these very horrific details about this crime?

**Clara Kim**

I think the public absolutely needs to understand the details of this crime, they need to understand that we're all vulnerable to a level of vulgarity and disgust that just exists in this world. And people need to act, they need to be cognizant of it. They need to take action, they need to respond. They need to come forward, they need to do something to help stop this.

**Steve Gregory**

Thank you, ma'am. Appreciate it.

**Reporter**

Was it a gated community?

**Detective Sharon Kim**

No it's not a gated community.

**Steve Gregory**

Councilman Blumenfield, if you don't mind, what's the threshold to ask for this kind of reward? What's the criteria?

**Councilmember Bob Blumenfield**

Well, the criteria I mean, we work I've done this, sadly, a couple of times throughout my career, and it's really working in close concert with the police, and they can speak to that when they tell me that it can make a difference, then I immediately put a motion forward. So I don't have any other thresholds other than police are telling me that it will help.

**Steve Gregory**

And then what about your constituency, this happened in your district, have you had others come forward to you with concerns about this type of crime?

**Councilmember Bob Blumenfield**

Nothing like this, this is so egregious this is this is a horrific crime that I have not that we have not experienced in this community, during my tenure. There's been some terrible crimes that have been committed and this is a this is a big city and there are crimes, but nothing quite like this.

**Steve Gregory**

But overall crime, you know, these types of crimes, as Detective Kim mentioned, has gone up asking if your constituents have voiced their concerns to you directly, and what is it you're doing with either in concert with LAPD or your office alone? What are you doing to sort of calm these fears?

**Councilmember Bob Blumenfield**

The public safety is always the number one issue and we live in, in the West Valley, a relatively, you know, part of the safest part of the city. I mean, that's the interesting, I mean, we are safer in the West Valley than than anywhere else in the city. More people die of traffic accidents than homicides in the valley. But that doesn't mean that crime obviously is very real. So I work with LAPD, I'm on the Budget Committee, I tried to make sure that they are funded at the highest levels this year, we authorized more, more police than they can even hire. And you know that that has always been a big priority in terms of making sure that that we have the resources that we can. That's what we spend the largest part of our city budget on is public safety in and on police. Any other questions?

**Steve Gregory**

I do have another one but I want to give my colleagues a chance. If anyone else doesn't have anything.... You we're asking for surveillance footage. Mrs. Kim, I am curious if you know there are cameras out there do you think there are cameras have weather Detective Kim or Clara if you know if there are cameras out there that caught something that you just haven't gotten yet, concrete?

**Detective Sharon Kim**

Yeah.

**Steve Gregory**

So you have some possibilities that there are some footage out there?

**Detective Sharon Kim**

Well as part of any investigation, we pull hours and hours and hours of footage so we have a bunch of footage but there's nothing that can concretely tie to this investigation.

## **Steve Gregory**

Okay, thank you very much. Coming up. We had to Santa Ana for a cold case on a teenage girl killed over a cell phone. But first, this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI-AM 640, time now for a news update.

## **Steve Gregory**

Santa Ana Police Department homicide Cold Case Number 14-16963, the death of Ruby Rubio. This case shocked the residents of Santa Ana because it was the senseless murder of a young girl over nothing more than a cell phone. Santa Ana Police Detective Mike Gibbons takes us back to July 13, 2014, 11:56 in the morning.

## **Detective Mike Gibbons**

Ruby Rubio, she's a 15-year-old girl just recently had her quinceañera. She's a sophomore at Saddleback High School and she was walking fairly close to the school, it's summertime and she's with her seven-year-old sister. So they're walking westbound on Warner from Flower area, and as they're walking, they get approached by what's described as a male Hispanic, in his late 20's, about 5'8" to 5'10" like medium build. He's wearing a black baseball cap, white tank top and some light blue jeans. This male comes up and he asks Rubio, Ruby Rubio, what time it is. She reaches in to grab her phone to check the time to help him out, and he grabs the phone from her and takes off running. And he runs in the opposite direction that they had been walking. He runs east bound to the next street, which is Towner and Ruby goes chasing after him. Sad story, she went chasing after him because she had been in trouble. She had lost two phones previously and she had just recently got this one for doing well in school. So she was not going to let it go. And so she ran she chased after him, and the male jumps into a car that actually is waiting in the middle of the street, so this was staged. Car is waiting, he jumped in the passenger side and she realizes that she's not going to be able to get up to him, and she makes the decision that she is going to jump on the trunk of the car. So she jumps onto the trunk of the car as it's driving away. It starts driving away and she's hanging on to the car by the antenna and the driver starts driving back and forth making zigzag motions as he speeds down the street about 40-45 miles an hour on a residential street. Ultimately, they're successful and they they toss her from the car and she strikes her head on the on the roadway. And her little sister had to witness this and runs runs up to her and finds her unresponsive. So the car drives and flees. This vehicle is a gray or silver, they believe it's possibly a Pontiac GrandAm like early 2000s. It continues driving southbound and ultimately out of view. A neighbor comes out sees Ruby laying down in the roadway and they call for law enforcement and for fire department. Ruby's unresponsive still she's transported to the hospital with significant injuries, including a skull fracture. She's in intensive care for a couple of days, but on on July 5, at 5:30pm, unfortunately, the hospital notified us that that Ruby succumbed to her injuries.

## **Steve Gregory**

She actually at one point had regained consciousness.

## **Detective Mike Gibbons**

She had consciousness very briefly.

**Steve Gregory**

And was she able to tell you anything?

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

No.

**Steve Gregory**

No.

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

No, the statements that we received were solely from there was another pedestrian that was in the immediate area and witnessed the incident, including from when she first took the cell phone out and then also saw the person run around the corner and get into the car, and from Ruby's seven-year-old sister.

**Steve Gregory**

You said earlier that this was a setup. Explain that. I mean, was this was this a setup to steal the phone all along or was there some other purpose?

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

So there's, particularly at this time being 2014, there was a lot of we call them snatch and grabs, there was a lot of robberies where people were stealing chains or different jewelry or items from somebody. But the fact that Ruby was walking westbound on this south sidewalk, the person that asked her what time it was was walking eastbound. And then after they took the phone from her, continued running eastbound, and on that very first street in the middle of the roadway was in a waiting vehicle. So that that indicates to me, it would appear that the person was dropped off with the intention of going up and trying to steal from her and the car was waiting.

**Steve Gregory**

Her? Or do you think they think that they were...just anybody that showed up?

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

It's hard to say whether but the fact that that this car was the very next street East would suggest to me that it may have been somebody that had driven by, saw her viewed her as a potential target or an easy target. You got a 15-year-old girl and a seven-year-old little girl, and at least now who doesn't have a phone with them. So if their intent was to steal a phone, unfortunately, they they were cowards and and chose to attack a 15- year-old.

**Steve Gregory**

And you do have a sketch of a guy, so there presumably was another man driving?



**Detective Mike Gibbons**

Correct.

**Steve Gregory**

So you have at least two men out there that are potential suspects?

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

Yes.

**Steve Gregory**

This happened in 2014, the guy was described is late 20s, early 30s. So was there any evidence on the phone? Were you able to gather any evidence from that? Like, like DNA kind of stuff?

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

Yes, so that phone obviously was taken initially. Within hours, detectives were tracking that phone, that phone was tracked to a residence on the very street that that Ruby died, or where her injury occurred. Detectives stopped a vehicle that was leaving, and and they were able to locate the phone. But unfortunately, it was from a neighbor that that found the phone on the ground. Apparently the suspects after they realized that she got flung off of the car, they didn't want the the phone anymore, so they they threw it out the window. And a neighbor opted to take the phone and place it in his car instead of notifying anybody. So we did collect DNA, but now we have a mixture of whoever previously had touched the phone, including Ruby and whomever else may have access to that phone, the suspects DNA, now we have another contributor. And when the contributors become too many, it's problematic for us to get an actual profile and identify a particular person.

**Steve Gregory**

In a case like that, is DNA more preferable than a fingerprint? Were there any usable fingerprints on the phone?

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

There were none.

**Steve Gregory**

No, okay.

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

None that were able. A print is actually fairly difficult. You have to get so many points of identification. So we really like DNA. DNA is easier for us to gather something that's identifiable. But whether it's DNA or fingerprints, you put a whole bunch on top of each other and it gets...

**Steve Gregory**

It's a mess.

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

Yeah.

**Steve Gregory**

We're talking with Mike Gibbons of the Santa Ana Police Department, cold case unit. When we come back we'll talk more of the case of Ruby Rubio 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 a comment about the show, just tap the red microphone on the app and record your message.

**Steve Gregory**

We're talking with Detective Mike Gibbons about the death of Ruby Rubio, a horrific story of a 15-year-old girl who wanted her cell phone back, that had just been nabbed by somebody, and she jumped on the trunk of a car, and the driver of the car swerved hard enough. Throwing her off of that trunk, she lands on her head on the pavement, dies a few days later at a hospital. Before the break, Detective, we were talking about, you know, some descriptions and I understand that the description actually led to a sketch, why don't you talk about that?

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

Yes, in an attempt to better identify the suspect and to also distribute the sketch not only **to** our patrol personnel, but through the media for attention within the community. A composite sketch was drawn, and that was distributed. It did generate some interest shortly after the incident itself. Some people had called in listing potential suspects. In particular, there was somebody that was not a male, but a female, that dressed generally in males clothing with a very short haircut, that bore a very strong resemblance to the person in the sketch. Ultimately, we have not been able to either identify somebody through forensics or obtain enough incriminating information to determine if that particular individual is involved or not. We've also reviewed surveillance video we obtained surveillance of the vehicle itself. We've had some people call in regarding similar vehicles, and done follow up, tracked those cars down, interviewed owners we're able to you know, in some cases determine alibis that that this particular individual had his car at work at the time of this incident, and it was in like South Orange County. So we were able to rule some of these out. There's some that we have not been able to rule out. But we don't have anything that's that's yet short of any witnesses that are willing to come forward. It's my belief that there are people that have

talked about it, you know, within potentially within the the gang gang culture. I believe that the death of a 15-year-old girl is going to generate quite a bit of conversation. But people are, for whatever reason, not willing to come forward to law enforcement with it. So one of the hopes is today with the passage of time that somebody's going to hear this that somebody will be in a different position in life that they won't be either in high school and subjected to any type of criticism, somebody that now maybe have a family and they can sympathize. We did a story on this, this particular case on our segment our YouTube segment called For The Record, it's a homicide spotlight. And if anyone were to go on and view that link, you can see an interview with the parents and eight years later, the anguish in in her parents, it's no different than if it happened yesterday.

**Steve Gregory**

Sure.

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

And just to see how defeated they are and how, I mean just imagining as a parent, how they've lived the last eight years of their lives, just in tremendous pain every single day with the loss of their daughter.

**Steve Gregory**

What about a reward, is there a reward in something like this?

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

Yes, again there is a high probability that the person involved in this is from a gang. If we can attribute the the the initial robbery or theft of this to a gang member and attribute this as a gang homicide, then then it would be eligible for the Santa Ana Police Department gang homicide reward program with a reward of up to \$50,000.

**Steve Gregory**

And that's usually a big motivator.

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

That's, that's why it's there.

**Steve Gregory**

The surveillance video you said you got, where did you get the surveillance video?

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

So we did a an area canvass in the direction of travel of the vehicle just going through from house to house to house looking for surveillance cameras. And although they're not as prevalent as they are today, there's still plenty of houses that had surveillance cameras. So we tracked it as far as we could, and obtained footage from as many cameras as we could. None of them yielded a full license plate for the car.

**Steve Gregory**

What about the parents in this case, are you in touch with the parents?

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

We have been in touch with them, they were here last year. We we included them in our For The Record segment, so they had the opportunity to speak about their daughter. Again, it it tugs at your heart every time to see that video and just realize how one incident just destroys an entire family. You know, all over a phone.

**Steve Gregory**

A phone, yeah, a piece of property, a small piece of property at that. The car and you said earlier that you know that it might have been a Pontiac TransAm type vehicle, but you said you were able to see the vehicle in the surveillance video. Were you able to confirm that in the surveillance?

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

It's hard to say definitively that it's a GrandAm. The general consensus among most of the detectives is that it's a early 2000s Pontiac Grand Am.

**Steve Gregory**

Gray or silver?

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

Yes.

**Steve Gregory**

Yeah.

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

A light, if it is gray, it would be on the lighter end of the spectrum or even faded.

**Steve Gregory**

Do you think, and I know it's all very speculative, but I want to ask if you think the perps are from Santa Ana, or do you think they were outsiders coming into town for opportunity?

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

No, I would expect that they were from the from within within the city, and probably most likely from generally the central portion of the city.

**Steve Gregory**

Why do you say that?

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

With as many gangs as there are in Santa Ana, people don't generally gang members don't generally go into rival gang neighborhoods to do street crimes. They will go of course to go and commit violent acts against their rivals, but they won't generally go a great distance to commit something as as little as a as a snatch and grab or just a theft from a person.

**Steve Gregory**

Well, listen, Detective, appreciate your time. I certainly hope you get your person in this one. And I can't even say get your man because it could be a woman that you're looking for.

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

It's entirely possible we're not going to roll anything out. If anyone is able to view that photo, or go to our YouTube page or even the Santa Ana police Instagram page and view that For The Record version or on your website for the photo.

**Steve Gregory**

We're gonna link, I think we're gonna link and embed all that in there. So they'll go to the KFI site, there'll be able to link through this and that way we can keep it all right with the case notes.

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

Perfect.

**Steve Gregory**

Thank you for your time, really appreciate it, and best of luck to you on this poor girl, this poor girl. I hope you find the person that's responsible.

**Detective Mike Gibbons**

Thank you very much.

**Steve Gregory**

And that's going to do it. Unsolved 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. Our field engineer is Tony Sorrentino, and our technical director is David Callaway. Our digital producer for this episode is Michelle Kube, our social media producer for this episode is Lena Chappelle. Coming up it's Coast To Coast, but first this is KFI-AM 640, time now for a news update.