

UNSOLVED MYSTERIES PODCAST | SILENT WITNESS

S1E22

ANGIE MOCK: In no way do I believe that it was a robbery gone bad. I believe the person, or persons, planned it. I believe they calculated it. It is unsettling to me that they are still out there, and it really makes me angry. I don't ever want that person, or those people, to think that they got away with it.

NARRATION: LATE ONE MARCH AFTERNOON, 48-YEAR-OLD GARTH RECTOR ARRIVES AT HIS HOME IN RURAL INDIANA, AND AS USUAL, GOES TO LET HIS DOG, DOLCE, OUT OF HER CRATE. THE SIX-MONTH-OLD PIT BULL WAS LIKELY BARKING, TRYING TO WARN GARTH THAT THERE'S AN INTRUDER IN THE HOUSE, BUT IT'S TOO LATE. A BULLET RIPS THROUGH GARTH'S BODY. THEN, MORE SHOTS IN QUICK SUCCESSION. THE ONLY WITNESS TO THE BRUTAL MURDER IS GARTH'S DOG. THE SHOOTER ESCAPES INTO THE NIGHT.

I'M STEVE FRENCH, AND THIS IS UNSOLVED MYSTERIES: "SILENT WITNESS."

IT'S MARCH 21ST, 2008. IN THE TINY COUNTY OF COWAN, NEAR MUNCIE, INDIANA, GARTH RECTOR LOOKS FORWARD TO A FAMILY TRIP OUT OF STATE. GARTH'S OLDER SISTER MARTY IS RETIRING FROM THE MARINES, AND THEY'RE CELEBRATING AT HER HOME IN CARLSBAD, CALIFORNIA. GARTH'S YOUNGEST SISTER, ANGIE MOCK, HAS ALREADY LEFT FOR THE EVENT, AND GARTH PLANS TO HEAD FOR THE AIRPORT LATER THAT EVENING.

ANGIE MOCK: We know that Garth left work roughly 30 minutes late. We're not really sure why he left work late. Clocked out at 3:30, stopped at the market and got a few things for the trip, got home, I'm guessing roughly five o'clock, give or take. He said, you know, he was going to wake up about 11 o'clock, take a shower, pack everything in the car, and he was going to head to Indianapolis and pick up his daughter, April. So about 11 o'clock, I called and I got no answer. And I left a message on his phone and said, "Hey, just want to make sure you were up. I hope you're in the shower. Give me a call when you wake up."

NARRATION: GARTH NEVER RETURNS THE CALL. ANGIE ARRIVES IN CARLSBAD THAT EVENING, ALONG WITH GARTH'S WIFE, ANGIE SUE. THEIR SISTER, MARTY, IS THERE TO MEET THEM.

ANGIE MOCK: When we got to Marty's complex, she was outside waiting for us and she said, "Hey, come on up to the apartment." So, we go on in, and Marty said, "I need you to sit down. I need to tell you something." And she said, "Garth's been shot, and he's dead." And it was just silence and I just kept staring at her. I didn't even blink. I just stared at her thinking, okay, she's joking. Not that she would ever joke like that, but this doesn't happen to us, you know. So, I sat there for a second just staring at her, and immediately Angie Sue just goes hysterical. She starts crying, and she starts praying and she, you know, "Oh, please just tell me he's gone to heaven. Please tell me he's going to heaven, please. I just need to know that he's gone to heaven."

NARRATION: GARTH'S DAUGHTER, 23-YEAR-OLD APRIL SANCHEZ, LIVES IN INDIANAPOLIS, AND WAITS FOR HER FATHER TO PICK HER UP FOR THE FLIGHT TO CALIFORNIA.

APRIL SANCHEZ: I was up watching TV, probably one or two o'clock in the morning, because I just, I couldn't sleep. You know, we had the trip in, you know, a few hours. When I got the phone call from my mother's father, my grandpa, my first reaction was disbelief. He had told me my dad had been shot, and I just couldn't imagine how or why. I don't remember the whole conversation. It's kind of blurry. I just remember him telling me and that the coroner would call me with more information. I was in complete shock. I didn't know how to react. It was just horrible. I immediately ran into my room and I sat in my closet, on the floor, and I just cried, and I just kept thinking, there's absolutely no way this is true. I'm supposed to see him in a few hours, and immediately thought about my mom, and how she would feel when she heard this news, and I was just sick to my stomach.

NARRATION: STUNNED BY THE NEWS OF GARTH'S MURDER, THE FAMILY RUSHES BACK TO MUNCIE, WHERE THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY IS DEVASTATED BY THE LOSS OF THE POPULAR WRESTLING COACH.

ANGIE MOCK: When Garth was killed, it was all over the newspaper. Growing up in Muncie, Garth's nickname was Buddy. In middle school, he started wrestling. And then when he got into high school, he pretty much just stayed with wrestling. Garth had a huge impact on Muncie through sports, through coaching his daughter April's teams — softball, then volleyball. And then of course, him being a wrestling coach himself, and then working at Ball State. He was Manager of Inventory, Shipping and Receiving in the cafeteria. Garth was about five-foot-ten, black curly hair, very muscular, very, very, very handsome. And he had a smile that just lit up a room. He had the biggest heart and he just loved people.

NARRATION: AT THE AGE OF 21, GARTH MARRIED ANGIE SUE, AND TWO YEARS LATER IN 1983, THEIR DAUGHTER APRIL WAS BORN.

ANGIE MOCK: April was just always on his hip. He never went anywhere without her. He was such an amazing father to April, and he loved his little girl more than anyone could ever love their child.

APRIL SANCHEZ: My dad's personality was very outgoing, social, caring, kind. He was just a really, all around, good guy, easy to talk to. We did everything together. Camping, bike rides, sports. Anything and everything, we all did together.

NARRATION: BACK IN MUNCIE, GARTH'S FAMILY LEARNS MORE OF THE MYSTERIOUS DETAILS SURROUNDING THE MURDER. IT WAS GARTH'S LANDLORD WHO DISCOVERED HIS BODY WHEN SHE RETURNED HOME FROM WORK. SHE LIVES ON THE NEIGHBORING PROPERTY.

ANGIE MOCK: The woman that Garth rented the home from noticed there were no lights on, knew that Garth had planned to be up and showered and ready to go. She then went to the

house that Garth was renting, knocked on the door, got no answer, and went in, turned on the light, and she found Garth.

DET. WALTHOUR: 10pm on March 21st, 2008, I received a call, and our road officers had gotten called, to a possible homicide.

NARRATION: DETECTIVE KURT WALTHOUR IS PUT IN CHARGE OF THE INVESTIGATION.

07:44

DET. WALTHOUR: I actually got to the scene probably within 10 minutes. It is very rural. There's a lot of farmland around here, a lot of cornfields, a lot of bean fields. There was a woods behind the house. There were some neighbors within a couple 1000 feet of his house. But as far as the traffic on the road in front of house, it's the kind of road that has a car go down it every two hours, maybe, if that. I walked through the front door to the house. Garth's body was laying in the kitchen and he was already pronounced dead at that time. And it was a crime scene by the time I got there, so it was roped off. There's two back entrances, an attached garage, that we later found out had, the small side door, the window had been broken out of it and looked like that was the point of entry.

ANGIE MOCK: When we pulled up to the house — it's a farmhouse — there were sheriff's deputies outside, of course. There was yellow tape around everywhere and the first deputy we saw said, "Now, I just need you to know that this is not like a TV show. This is not solved in an hour."

NARRATION: BASED ON THE BAG OF GROCERIES SITTING ON THE KITCHEN TABLE, DETECTIVE WALTHOUR ASSUMES THAT, AFTER LEAVING WORK AND A QUICK STOP AT THE MARKET, GARTH HAD JUST ARRIVED HOME AROUND 5PM. HE WAS ALMOST IMMEDIATELY SHOT MULTIPLE TIMES BY AN INTRUDER, OR INTRUDERS, WHO WERE ALREADY IN THE HOUSE, POSSIBLY LYING IN WAIT. THE ONLY WITNESS TO THE MURDER WAS GARTH'S PIT BULL, DOLCE.

DET. WALTHOUR: Garth did have a dog in the kitchen. It was a larger pit bull, but it was definitely frightened. And it was not vicious as anyway. When we let it out, it was scared to death.

APRIL SANCHEZ: I thought, how horrible was it that my dad's dog saw this? She saw everything that no one else in this entire world could see or will possibly know about.

DET. WALTHOUR: We did find some bullet holes. There wasn't a whole lot of signs of struggle. It looks like he walked in the front door of the house, he laid his items that he had just purchased after leaving work on the kitchen counter, and encountered whoever was in his house, and was shot right in the kitchen. He still had his, it was cold out, so he had his winter jacket on. We looked around to see if any major, big things that we could tell were gone, like TVs, major items, safes, guns, anything like that. We did locate, a gun in a closet. All the TVs were there. It looked like nothing had been taken. The only thing that we found that was not there that

should have been there: Garth's wedding ring. We talked to several family members and friends and coworkers that said he was still wearing his wedding ring at the time of the incident.

APRIL SANCHEZ: As far as I know, the only thing missing from the crime scene was his wedding ring. It's very strange that that's what they would take.

ANGIE MOCK: If he was being robbed, they didn't take his computer, they didn't take his car, they took nothing. So I don't really buy that it was a random robbery.

NARRATION: ONCE THE CRIME SCENE IS CLEARED, ANGIE GOES INTO THE HOUSE, HOPING TO FIND SOME CLUE TO HER BROTHER'S KILLER. IT'S A SCENE SHE WILL NEVER FORGET.

ANGIE MOCK: I could see a splatter of blood on the kitchen table. And then to my left, in front of the refrigerator, I could see blood going down the, like smeared, down the white refrigerator. And I could see a puddle of blood where Garth's head had ended up. Strangely enough, my next thought was, "Oh, I just wish he was here. I just wish I could see him one more time. I just need to know that this is real. That you know, I just... this can't be Garth, can't be Garth." From the blood splatter that I could see, Garth obviously slung his arm around after he was shot. And, and that could have been from the shot pushing him backwards, I don't know. But I do know that he was shot in the back and he stood up, and he did face the killer. If you know that someone is pointing a gun at you, you have to be scared to death. And when he was laying there, after he had been shot, all I can think is, he wanted his mom. And he was there by himself, and died by himself.

NARRATION: POLICE CANVASS THE AREA AROUND GARTH'S HOME, HOPING TO FIND SOMEONE WHO MAY REMEMBER SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY THE AFTERNOON OF THE MURDER.

DET. WALTHOUR: We've interviewed roughly, close to 100 people. There was someone who saw a car backing out of the driveway at the time of Garth's murder, and we put that out. But all we have is a dark colored car. We had two different people that saw a vehicle back out. One said it was silver, one said it was black, and we get that a lot. People really don't pay attention when you're just driving down the road and you're seeing stuff until after the fact. And we try to go back through your memory, sometimes it's hard to remember colors, and things like that.

ANGIE MOCK: They put it in the newspaper immediately. "If you know who was driving this car, if you were the owner of this car, please come forward. We just want to touch base and rule out, you know, any involvement in what had happened." But no one came forward. There was an Avon lady who was delivering Avon to the house next to where Garth was, and she had a white car, and she actually did come forward, but it wasn't her. It wasn't her kind of car. So, whoever it was, was afraid to come forward, or did something wrong and didn't come forward.

NARRATION: WITH MULTIPLE SHOTS FIRED AT CLOSE RANGE, GARTH'S MURDER SEEMS LIKE A CLASSIC CASE OF OVERKILL. COULD THIS HAVE BEEN A CRIME OF PASSION? GARTH'S PERSONAL LIFE QUICKLY BECOMES THE FOCUS OF THE INVESTIGATION.

ANGIE MOCK: In October of 2007, Angie and Garth separated, at Garth's decision, and he insisted on renting a home in Cowan from a coworker that also worked with him at Ball State University. He stayed in contact with Angie the entire time. They did talk. Of course, he was in contact with April, his daughter. It's not like it was a bitter, uncomfortable situation. Of course, Angie was heartbroken, Angie Sue. But the thought that, you know, there was a chance that they were going to reconcile was what was holding her together.

APRIL SANCHEZ: At the time that I lost my father, my parents were going through a little separation. I was living in Indianapolis, and my dad had moved out and was living in a little rental home that he had gotten. And I wasn't very happy with my dad for that. I kind of would get angry with him very easily around that time because I didn't agree with him moving out.

NARRATION: DIGGING DEEPER INTO GARTH'S LIFE AND RELATIONSHIPS, DETECTIVE WALTHOUR LEARNS THE TRUTH BEHIND THE TROUBLED MARRIAGE.

DET. WALTHOUR: We did receive a lot of tips from Garth's coworkers about a couple of girlfriends that he had at the time that were married.

NARRATION: YEARS EARLIER, GARTH HAD BEEN INVOLVED WITH A MARRIED CO-WORKER. WHEN INVESTIGATORS INTERVIEW THE WOMAN'S HUSBAND, HE SEEMS TO STILL HARBOR SOME DEEP-SEATED RESENTMENT TOWARD GARTH.

ANGIE MOCK: The husband of the woman that Garth had the affair with years ago, refused everything. He would not come forward. He would not talk to the police. He denied any request they had of a lie detector test, anything. He refused, and they could not make him come in and talk to them. So, I guess in my mind, if you have nothing to hide, why wouldn't you come forward?

NARRATION: POLICE ARE UNABLE TO IMPLICATE OR EXCLUDE THE HUSBAND, SO THEY MOVE ON TO GARTH'S MORE RECENT ROMANTIC INTEREST. AT THE TIME OF THE MURDER, GARTH WAS ALLEGED TO BE INVOLVED WITH THE WOMAN WHO JUST HAPPENS TO BE THE PERSON WHO DISCOVERED HIS BODY.

DET. WALTHOUR: It was a new relationship to him and it wasn't his only relationship. I think she wanted the relationship more than he did, from talking to everyone. I guess that put her as a person of interest, just as a jealousy factor of him going out and dating other women. She did have an alibi. She was at work. She's on video, being at work at the time. She was the person that found his body, also, and from the tapes and audio recordings from 911 and the call-ins, they sounded pretty legit. When somebody finds a body that they care for, it's hard to fake it when that happens. And it really didn't seem like she was faking it.

NARRATION: DETECTIVE WALTHOUR LEARNS THAT THIS WOMAN HAD RECENTLY ENDED A RELATIONSHIP WITH A MAN WHO SHE HAD PLANNED TO MARRY. THIS JILTED EX-FIANCÉ BECOMES THE NEXT PERSON OF INTEREST.

DET. WALTHOUR: He was older. She had broken up with him. He couldn't let go. He still wore the engagement ring. He still visited the girlfriend. Garth actually lived right beside the girlfriend in a house that used to belong to her mom and dad. That's what he was renting.

NARRATION: COULD GARTH'S MURDER BE A CASE OF JEALOUSY FUELED BY REVENGE? WHEN INVESTIGATORS DO A FORENSIC SWEEP OF GARTH'S HOME, THEY FIND BOTH DNA AND FINGERPRINTS BELONGING TO THE EX-FIANCÉ.

DET. WALTHOUR: This person of interest had done a lot of remodeling in this house. So, his DNA, his fingerprints, were all over the house anyway. And he'd been in the house several times. He had alibi but it's really, really shaky. He went to a couple locations. It was all family members, which he never does. He never visits his family. He never misses any work at all. He went home sick that day. He visited his dad, who was in very bad health, and he only stayed about five minutes. He took him lunch. He went to his brother's house. He said his brother was not home. His brother hasn't talked to him for years. He went to his daughter's house. His daughter was not at home. He does talk to her every so often. And then he returned home, and that was his story. We could only confirm that he had went to his dad's house because we did talk to his dad. The others weren't home. They didn't know if he actually showed up or not. It was just really, really strange. And he just never missed work. He was that guy, that was his life. He went to work every single day, and that's all he did. Everything pointed towards him at the very beginning. It was almost too easy, if it was him. And he did take a lie detector test and, it was a voice stress test, and passed it.

NARRATION: UNDER INTENSE SCRUTINY, BOTH GARTH'S GIRLFRIEND AND HER EX-FIANCÉ COOPERATE WITH THE INVESTIGATION.

ANGIE MOCK: They turned over their bank accounts. They turned over their cars, anything that the police asked them to do, they did it.

DET. WALTHOUR: We never really did dismiss him as a person of interest. He's passed away now, but we still get tips every so often that come back towards him. The murder weapon was not found, and still has not been found. We do have casings from that weapon. So, if it is ever used in another crime, and it gets logged into the federal database, there is a possibility that that could match our casings, and we could go back and determine that that is the murder weapon.

DET. WALTHOUR: I got to keep an open mind. There's, like, two avenues that are on my top of my list. The crime of passion, with the person that has passed away. The other one was a random burglary. They were just hitting houses out in the country, burglarizing them for wherever they could get. When Garth arrived back home and confronted them, they tried to

get out of the house, couldn't find a way out. He's a big guy, so they ended up shooting him to get by him and get out.

NARRATION: GARTH'S DAUGHTER, APRIL, HAS HER OWN THEORY ABOUT WHO COULD HAVE KILLED HER FATHER.

APRIL SANCHEZ: Someone had an issue with my dad, and hired someone, or possibly did it themselves, and set it up and shot him. There was a guy from work he had an issue with. There were a few people that didn't particularly like him, which is very out of the ordinary. They had some issues with him, from what I understand. People are petty, and I think that that was their way of fixing the situation so they didn't have to deal with him anymore.

NARRATION: GARTH'S SISTER ANGIE IS ALSO CONVINCED THAT GARTH KNEW HIS KILLER AND MAY HAVE EVEN WORKED WITH THE PERSON.

ANGIE MOCK: It is unsettling to me that they are still out there. It's unfair. And it really makes me angry. The people of interest, for probably the first three to four months, saw me on a regular basis outside of their home and outside of their work. I would go to Ball State when I got off work, and I would sit on a picnic table and wait on people to leave work. Never spoke to them, never said anything. Just watched them leave work. I don't ever want that person, or those people, to think that they got away with it. Even though they may not be arrested, I still want it in the back of their mind, "They're not letting this go. I still need to be careful. I still need to worry."

APRIL SANCHEZ: The last time I spoke with my father was a really good conversation. And, the day before he was murdered, I received something from him in the mail, and I opened it and it was a newspaper article that he had found from when I was maybe two or three, and I was on his shoulders, and it was a softball team. And it said something about their team, and it said, "and their mascot April." And so, I called him and told him how much I loved him, and how cool it was that he found that. And I still have that, obviously, to this day. So that was our last talk, was me telling him how much I loved him. I was very lucky to be able to have had that closure with him. My son, sadly, will never be able to meet him, and know how amazing of a grandfather he would be, and how he would be in his life, and love him with every ounce of his being.

ANGIE MOCK: When someone rips someone from you, and you don't have that chance to say goodbye, that last "I love you," that last hug, there's an emptiness. There's a hole in your heart that you'll never get back. When Garth left us, he left a hole in the wrestling world. He left a hole in our hearts. The world will never see his smile, hear his laugh, see that twinkle in his eye when he was being ornery. Garth had his faults, there's no question. I've never denied that. He was not perfect in any way. But he was a perfect big brother. He was a perfect son. He was a perfect daddy. And I know that he loved Angie. Anyone and everyone that knew him knows that they lost someone special.

NARRATION: IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON THIS CASE, PLEASE CONTACT THE DELAWARE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT AT 765-747-7878, OR SUBMIT YOUR TIPS THROUGH UNSOLVED.COM.

NEXT, ON UNSOLVED MYSTERIES...

BEVERLY MYERS: I was at my desk and I heard from one of her students. And he said "You know your friend, the professor?" It's like "Yeah," and he said, "Well, I have some really bad news." He says, "She was murdered." And I was in shock, of course, so, I said, "No."

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Unsolved Mysteries is a production of Cosgrove Meurer Productions and Cadence 13. It is executive produced by Terry Dunn Meurer and Chris Corcoran. Produced by Lloyd Lochridge, Christine Lenig, Courtney Ennis, Paige Hymson and Paul Yates. The Story Producer for this episode was Caitlin Cutt, and it was edited by Paul Yates

From Cadence 13, editing, mixing and mastering by Chris Basil, Andy Jaskiewicz and Bill Schultz. Production support by Sean Cherry and Ian Mandt. Artwork and design is by Curt Courtenay. Publicity by Josefina Francis and Hillary Schupf.

The original theme music was composed by Gary Malkin and Michael Boyd.

THANKS FOR LISTENING TO EPISODE 22 OF UNSOLVED MYSTERIES.