

## UNSOLVED MYSTERIES PODCAST | WHERE'S THE MONEY?

S1E27 Transcript

AMERY EWING: In college, I remember, my mother warning me, "Be careful because people can put things in your drink, and it happens so quickly, and you will be out of your mind, and not know what's going on, and you don't have control over your body." So, I imagine that it had the same effect on him, which would make it real easy for someone to push him into the water, if they got him out there.

NARRATION: IT'S MONDAY MORNING, MAY 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011. A MAN WORKING ON THE ROOF OF THE CLARION HOTEL IN HOT SPRINGS, ARKANSAS, SPOTS WHAT APPEARS TO BE A CAR SUBMERGED AT THE EDGE OF LAKE HAMILTON, NEXT TO THE HOTEL PARKING LOT. HE CALLS 911 AND POLICE ARRIVE TO DISCOVER A BRAND-NEW BLACK CADILLAC UNDER THE WATER. IT'S REGISTERED TO 56-YEAR-OLD CHARLES EWING, A MILLIONAIRE ON VACATION FROM HIS HOME IN TUNICA, MISSISSIPPI. NOT FAR FROM THE CAR IS CHARLES HIMSELF, HIS LIFELESS BODY FLOATING FACE DOWN IN THE WATER, AND NO ONE SEEMS TO KNOW EXACTLY HOW HE, OR THE CAR, ENDED UP THERE.

I'M STEVE FRENCH, AND THIS IS UNSOLVED MYSTERIES: "WHERE'S THE MONEY?"

AMERY EWING: I was at my office in Holly Springs at the time, and my phone rang, and it was my Daddy's longtime attorney, and he told me that his body had been found. And it all is just kind of a blur after that. My Daddy lived such a wild life, and he was just one of those people that you thought was invincible. It just shocked me so much. I just never imagined.

NARRATION: NO ONE KNEW CHARLES EWING BETTER THAN HIS 31-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, AMERY, WHO WORKS AS A CRIMINAL PROSECUTOR. SHE REMEMBERS HER FATHER AS A DEDICATED FARMER AND BUSINESSMAN, A PERFECTIONIST WITH HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR HIMSELF AND EVERYONE AROUND HIM.

AMERY EWING: I remember him very fondly. When I was a little girl, he would sing with us and play with us. And he was a really hard worker. He farmed, and you know, he was up before the sun came up, and he worked till after dark. And he was very generous. He took care of other people, the people who worked for him, their families, you know. He made sure they had what they needed.

NARRATION: CHARLES WORKED HARD IN HIS LIFE BUT ALSO LIKED TO ENJOY THE MONEY HE MADE. IN EARLY MAY 2011, AFTER SPLITTING UP WITH HIS FIANCÉ, HE HEADED TO THE RESORT TOWN OF HOT SPRINGS, ARKANSAS, 200 MILES FROM HIS HOME IN TUNICA, MISSISSIPPI, LOOKING FOR A GOOD TIME.

AMERY EWING: I had never been to Hot Springs, probably ever in my life. I think there are a variety of people who go there for different reasons. Lake Hamilton is there, and so, if you're a water person, it's obviously a beautiful place to go and ride boats and jet ski. But there's also kind of a seedy underbelly of Hot Springs as well, with a lot of what we call adult entertainment. So, you know, I think that there's different types of people who go there. I think that my father went for all of those reasons.

NARRATION: AMERY LEARNS THAT HER FATHER ARRIVED IN HOT SPRINGS ON WEDNESDAY NIGHT, MAY 11TH, WITH TWO YOUNG WOMEN IN THEIR 20'S. AFTER CHECKING INTO THE CLARION HOTEL ON THE SHORE OF LAKE HAMILTON, THE THREE HIT THE TOWN. IN THE NEXT FIVE DAYS, THEY'RE SEEN IN BARS, RESTAURANTS, AND STRIP CLUBS, MAKING EXPENSIVE PURCHASES AND PARTYING LATE INTO THE NIGHT, EVERY NIGHT. PEOPLE NOTICED THIS EXUBERANT HIGH ROLLER AND THE ONE THING EVERYONE REMEMBERS IS THAT CHARLES EWING HAD CASH. LOTS OF IT.

JANICE BROACH: He throws money around. He shows money. He acts a little strangely, according to what people said.

NARRATION: JANICE BROACH IS A VETERAN JOURNALIST BASED IN MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, WHO COVERED THE MYSTERY SURROUNDING CHARLES EWING'S DEATH.

JANICE BROACH: It was said that he had a cooler filled with money, could have been a million dollars. I don't know if it was actually that much, but he was someone that everybody was going to notice. Looking at this, talking about buying this, flashing money. Behavior that does not make a lot of sense unless there's something not quite right about you.

NARRATION: CHARLES'S FLASHY, FLAMBOYANT BEHAVIOR WAS NOTICEABLY BIZARRE TO THOSE HE ENCOUNTERED IN HOT SPRINGS. BUT TO AMERY THIS WAS A SIDE OF HER FATHER THAT SHE HAD SEEN BEFORE.

AMERY EWING: When we were little, I think I was around nine, he had a real bad head on wreck while on the farm, and he was in a coma for two weeks, and he had severe head trauma. And he never was quite the same after that. I would hear all these stories about him and his generosity, even after he died. But he was very troubled as well. We all have our demons and I just think he had more than others, possibly.

NARRATION: AMERY ALWAYS SUSPECTED THAT HER FATHER MIGHT HAVE SUFFERED FROM BIPOLAR DISORDER. HE WOULD EXPERIENCE BOUTS OF DEPRESSION, FOLLOWED BY MANIC EPISODES DURING WHICH HE BEHAVED ERRATICALLY. AMERY BELIEVES THAT IT WAS DURING ONE OF THESE EPISODES THAT CHARLES ARRIVED IN HOT SPRINGS, ARKANSAS, FIVE DAYS BEFORE HIS DEATH.

AMERY EWING: When he got manic, you know, he went from being passive, and calm, and more loving, and kind, to staying up all hours of the night and day, and he was looking for the next big thing to do, the next fun thing to do. My daddy always carried cash and part of being on one of these, like, manic highs was flashing money and showing what he could buy. And so, he was spending a ton of money. He bought a Dodge Challenger May 12th, and then on May 14th, he bought the Cadillac.

NARRATION: CHARLES EWING'S MANIC SPENDING SPREE CAME TO AN END SOMETIME IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF MAY 15th. 36 HOURS LATER, IN THE AFTERNOON OF MAY 16th, HIS BODY AND \$40,000 CADILLAC SEDAN ARE DREDGED OUT OF LAKE HAMILTON. BASED ON EVIDENCE AT THE SCENE, INVESTIGATORS CONCLUDE THAT CHARLES, UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS, ACCIDENTALLY DROVE HIS CAR FROM THE HOTEL PARKING LOT INTO THE LAKE. TO POLICE, IT'S A CLASSIC OPEN AND SHUT CASE. BUT WHEN AMERY GOES TO HOT SPRINGS AND STANDS IN THE PARKING LOT, THE SCENE OF THE TRAGEDY, SHE KNOWS HER FATHER'S MYSTERIOUS AND UNTIMELY DEATH WAS NO ACCIDENT.

AMERY EWING: It's directly on the lake. But, the way that the parking lot is, the cars are turned away. So, you wouldn't be parked in a parking spot, looking directly into the water. But even if he were trying to park and overcorrected, or, or didn't make the spot, there's, like, all these huge jagged rocks, and there's, like, raised land, and then there's vegetation. There's all of these obstacles in between the parking lot and the water that he would have had to overcome to get into the water without any scratches or damaging any bushes, or even the grass. And I'm not saying it's impossible. I'm just saying that it's unlikely to have happened in the way it was suggested it happened and there not be anything disturbed. And no one's seen anything and no one hear anything.

NARRATION: JOURNALIST JANICE BROACH COMES TO A SIMILAR CONCLUSION. THE POLICE SCENARIO DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.

JANICE BROACH: It was strange. I saw the pictures of it, and when you, when you see it in person, it doesn't seem like you would be able to do that. There was a little barrier that should stop most people, if they didn't realize they were driving into the lake. But he did go in at night. I talked with the person at the hotel, the security, who told me that, that night, they heard a car, a revving up sound. And I would think that you would have to, almost like taking a running start, get your car going to get over that little, small barrier. But it was just puzzling that he ended up in that water.

NARRATION: WHEN THE CADILLAC IS PULLED FROM THE LAKE, THE DOORS ARE CLOSED BUT THE TRUNK AND ALL THE WINDOWS AND THE SUNROOF ARE OPEN, WHICH PROBABLY MADE THE CAR SINK FASTER INTO THE WATER. ACCORDING TO ONE WITNESS, CHARLES'S BODY WAS FOUND

FLOATING NEARLY 60 FEET FROM HIS CADILLAC. SO, IF HE DROVE HIS CAR INTO THE LAKE, HOW DID HIS BODY END UP OUTSIDE OF THE CAR?

JANICE BROACH: If you think about someone getting out of a car, let's say they can't move for some reason. If the door is closed, the steering wheel, if you're the driver, would keep you where you are. It would seem unlikely that you could float out no matter what was open. The fact that he was out of the car without any explanation for how that happened, because it was an accident was very, very puzzling.

NARRATION: AMERY FORCES HERSELF TO VIEW HER FATHER'S AUTOPSY PHOTOS, HOPING THEY WILL REVEAL SOME CLUE ABOUT HOW CHARLES DIED AND WHY HE WAS FOUND SO FAR AWAY FROM HIS CAR.

AMERY EWING: It was horrible, horrible. He looks like he weighed 50 pounds more than he weighed naturally. If the sunroof had been open, and all the windows were down, you would think you'd be able to get out. How would his bloated body be released from the vehicle after death, but he couldn't get out while alive? That never made any sense to me. The autopsy report indicated that he had water in his lungs, and it indicated no foul play, no marks to his body that may have been, like, someone struck him over the head, or anything that would have knocked him out. But it also showed us that there were no injuries from a car wreck. When I've spoken to various investigators or talked to them about this, I've always been told that it appears to be a car accident, very unfortunate event, and he drowned. But he could swim. So, we were made to believe that, for some reason, he had this wreck, came out of the vehicle, drowned. So, that made no sense to me.

NARRATION: WHEN THE AUTOPSY REPORT IS COMPLETE, ONLY PROZAC, CANNABIS, AND A LOW LEVEL OF ALCOHOL ARE FOUND IN CHARLES' SYSTEM, WHICH CONTRADICTS THE POLICE THEORY THAT CHARLES WAS UNDER THE INFLUENCE AND ACCIDENTALLY DROVE INTO THE LAKE. YET THE MEDICAL EXAMINER SUPPORTS THE POLICE THEORY THAT CHARLES'S DEATH WAS AN ACCIDENT.

JANICE BROACH: A lot of weight is given to coroners, or medical examiners. When the medical examiner says, "This is it. This is why that person died," that closes the book. Law enforcement in Hot Springs might have been puzzled as to how all of this happens, but when the medical examiner says it's an accident, and they don't have anywhere to go, then they can close the case. You have to have somewhere to go. You might think it's weird, but it was ruled an accident by the medical examiner and that's that, showed that he drowned. It's not even a cold case, because it's solved, as far as they're concerned.

NARRATION: DESPITE THE INVESTIGATORS' EAGERNESS TO CLOSE THE CASE, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER SUSPICIOUS DETAILS SURROUNDING CHARLES'S DEATH THAT GO UNANSWERED.

AMERY EWING: He had \$25,000 in his boot. He had \$5,000 wrapped in rubber bands in his back pocket, and he had three guns on him. Daddy was always paranoid that someone would hurt him because of, I guess, the way he lived his lifestyle, I'm not sure. But for whatever reason, he always had a handgun on him. I mean, he would have a little one, like, in his boot, and then he would carry one openly, like on his hip. And if he felt threatened in any way, shape, or form, he would have protected himself.

NARRATION: WHAT INVESTIGATORS DO NOT FIND ON CHARLES'S BODY IS HIS EXPENSIVE, DIAMOND STUDED ROLEX WATCH. IF CHARLES WAS THE VICTIM OF FOUL PLAY, WHY WOULD SOMEONE STEAL THE WATCH, BUT NOTHING ELSE? ANOTHER DETAIL THAT PUZZLES AMERY IS THAT CHARLES IS FOUND WITHOUT HIS GLASSES, WHICH ARE LATER DISCOVERED ON THE BED IN HIS HOTEL ROOM.

AMERY EWING: My daddy was blind as a bat, as they say, couldn't see hardly anything. And when his body was found, he didn't have his glasses. And one of the girls that was with him said he had left them on the bed by mistake when he went outside, and I submit that he would not even be able to find the elevator to get outside without his glasses, or someone helping him to do so. He was so blind. That just wouldn't have even been possible.

NARRATION: IF CHARLES LEFT THE HOTEL ROOM WITHOUT HIS GLASSES, WOULD HE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SEE WELL ENOUGH IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT TO FIND HIS WAY TO HIS CAR? AND WOULD HE HAVE TRIED TO DRIVE WITHOUT HIS GLASSES? THE MYSTERIOUS CLUES STACK UP, BUT AMERY STILL GETS NO HELP FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT.

AMERY EWING: At every turn, I felt like I was told that I needed to move on. I felt like they didn't want to offend me any more than I was already hurting, and that it was uncomfortable to talk to me about these things. And they summed it up in their minds, that this one was one that was going to be wrapped up easy, you know. He drowned. Fine. Move on.

NARRATION: BUT AMERY CAN NOT MOVE ON, KNOWING IN HER HEART THAT HER FATHER'S DEATH WAS NO ACCIDENT.

AMERY EWING: There was no way that he just drowned. First of all, he could swim. But we also knew that it was highly unlikely that he would have died in this manner. Based on the fact that my father was found without his glasses, that the windows were down, the trunk was popped, and the sunroof was open, and the body and the vehicle were found separately, indicates to me that someone put the car in

the water. Plus, no one heard a wreck. Nobody's come forward and said that, so I think that it was eased into the water, and it didn't mess up any of the grass, or the rocks, or what have you. And I think he was pushed into the water separately.

JANICE BROACH: I guess you might imagine that he was outside that late in his Cadillac, either because he had an argument with someone and was going to take off and he was angry, or someone lured him out there. From what I understand, he was pretty big, about six feet tall, overweight, a person who wouldn't float out of their car. So, it does go to a theory that he was never in the car to begin with. You could drown him, I would assume, especially if you have more than one person just by holding him down. And then you drive the car into the water not thinking that it's going to be puzzling that he's not in a car, where he should be. If some people did this, it doesn't look like their plan was totally thought through.

NARRATION: DETERMINED TO FIND ANSWERS, AMERY TRIES TO IDENTIFY THE WOMEN WHO WERE WITH HER FATHER IN HOT SPRINGS. SHE LEARNS THEY WERE ACQUAINTANCES OF HIS, ONE FROM HIS HOMETOWN OF TUNICA, MISSISSIPPI, AND THE OTHER A DANCER FROM MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE. ON THE NIGHT OF HIS DEATH, CHARLES AND THE TWO WOMEN WERE AT THE HOTEL AFTER ANOTHER WILD NIGHT ON THE TOWN, BUT APPARENTLY CHARLES WASN'T FEELING WELL. AROUND 1AM, ONE OF THE WOMEN CALLED A MASSAGE THERAPIST TO COME TO THEIR HOTEL ROOM.

AMERY EWING: My understanding is that the massage therapist came to the room around two, I believe. She was dropped off. And, apparently, this was her first call out, too. This was her first ever gig, apparently, so, I'm sure she was terrified. So, she went into the room with the girls, that was adjoining another room that my Daddy was standing in. He was standing in the doorway, and she said he had on a button down and jeans, and he had a cigar in his mouth. She said that the girls brought her a tray of drugs, and offered her some, and that there was all kinds of things on it: pills and white powder. She said there were hard clear rocks, and weed. And she said she didn't do drugs, and didn't want any drugs, and just took a beer that they handed her. She thought that Charles was smoking marijuana in the other room, because she could smell the marijuana. But then he started pacing around the room, in the girl's room where she was, saying that he didn't feel good, and his face was real blotchy, and he had red spots, like all up and down his neck and his cheeks, and just continued to say he didn't feel well. And then he refused the massage, and said he was going to lie down. He didn't feel well enough to do so. The massage girl said she could not see him, at that point, from the other room. He said he was going back in, and I'm assuming it was dark in there. All of a sudden, she started to feel dizzy, and she said she didn't have any coordination. Like, her muscles were kind of spasming. And then they started handing her things, various things around the room, like, the remote, or a pen. They just started handing her stuff and she would hand it back. And, of course, the theory behind that is they were trying to get her fingerprints all over everything.

NARRATION: FRIGHTENED, THE MASSAGE THERAPIST CALLS SOMEONE PICK HER UP. THE TWO WOMEN TIP HER \$100 AND TELL HER TO GET OUT. WHEN SHE ASKS WHERE CHARLES IS, THEY TELL HER HE WENT DOWN TO THE LOBBY, BUT WHEN THE WOMAN LEAVES, SHE DOESN'T SEE HIM THERE.

JANICE BROACH: The masseuse was told to do some pretty bizarre behavior. Touch things. Now, that's a little diabolical. These two women didn't seem especially sophisticated. So, I would be surprised if they came up with that. But if they didn't come up with that, who did? Could be someone who might have been working with them. I have not heard of whoever that person could or could not be, but they could easily have been working with someone else, who set up this thing to try to get rid of Charles Ewing, or at least steal everything he had.

NARRATION: AMERY SUSPECTS THAT THE MASSEUSE'S SUDDEN ILLNESS IS THE RESULT OF THE DATE RAPE DRUG GHB, OR POSSIBLY ROHYPNOL, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS A ROOFIE. IF THAT'S THE CASE, IT'S POSSIBLE THAT CHARLES WAS ROOFIED AS WELL.

AMERY EWING: In college, I remember it coming out and, you know, my mother warning me, "Be careful because people can put things in your drink, and it happens so quickly, and you will be out of your mind, and not know what's going on, and you don't have control over your body." So, I imagine that it had the same effect on him, which would make it real easy for someone to push him into the water, if they got him out there. I think they were smart enough to know that he had three guns on him. That would be the only way to overcome someone that's as paranoid as him, and as violent as he is, by nature.

NARRATION: UNFORTUNATELY, AMERY'S THEORY ABOUT HER FATHER BEING DRUGGED COMES TOO LATE.

AMERY EWING: We went ahead and had him cremated, thinking that the autopsy would help us, because it was conducted, but we didn't have them test him for Rohypnol, or anything like that. We didn't understand that it was a special test you would have had to have done. It won't just show up.

NARRATION: DURING THEIR INITIAL INVESTIGATION, POLICE INTERVIEW THE TWO WOMEN WHO WERE WITH CHARLES IN HOT SPRINGS AND CONCLUDE THEY ARE NOT CONNECTED TO CHARLES'S DEATH. BUT AMERY IS NOT CONVINCED—CHARLES' LAPTOP WAS LAST SEEN IN THE HOTEL ROOM HE SHARED WITH THESE WOMEN AND THE LAPTOP WAS NEVER RETURNED TO AMERY. THE ICE CHEST FULL OF MONEY SEEMS TO BE MISSING, AND THESE WERE THE LAST PEOPLE TO SEE CHARLES ALIVE.

AMERY EWING: The last time anyone saw my daddy was on Sunday morning, around 2:15am. Nobody saw him again until they saw his body on Monday morning, some, I don't know, 36 hours later. They never reported all of Sunday that he was missing to anyone. It could tell me they were thankful he had just disappeared, or that they were a part of helping him disappear. Those two young women were sitting on the balcony, watching, as they pulled the car and the body out of the water. It made me think that they were just waiting until someone found him.

NARRATION: AMERY HOPES VIDEO SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE FROM THE HOTEL WILL CORROBORATE THE STATEMENTS SHE'S GATHERED FROM WITNESSES.

AMERY EWING: We had hoped to have gotten the video because the videos of the parking lot, or at least the hallways of the hotel, or even the lobby would either substantiate or invalidate all these stories that we have been fed by various witnesses. We could at least have seen who he was with, if he was inebriated. It also would have simply shown if he'd had a wreck. I mean, if he'd had a wreck, and it was that simple, I don't understand why they wouldn't just turn it over. But we've never been able to see those in 10 years. The detective that was with the Garland County Sheriff's Department, he was off until July at the time, and so they just had nobody else to handle it. I went to multiple law enforcement. I went to the FBI in South Haven. I went to DeSoto County Sheriff. I went to Tunica County, and everybody kept saying it wasn't their jurisdiction. So, none of the video from the hotel, or the parking lot, or anywhere else was obtained, it wasn't secured. It wasn't even watched because it got recorded over after so much time and they wouldn't release it without warrant. So, we weren't able to ever get it.

NARRATION: AMERY IS ALSO FRUSTRATED TO LEARN THAT LAW ENFORCEMENT ALLOWED CHARLES' TWO COMPANIONS TO LEAVE THE HOTEL THE SAME DAY HIS BODY WAS DISCOVERED.

AMERY EWING: Well, the cops didn't even, like, clean up the room. They told the girls to go clean it up, said, "Clean up his stuff, get his stuff together, and take it back to Mississippi. His children want his things." So, we don't know what was in the room. They drove the Dodge back to Tunica County, and the Tunica town police met them outside. I was at the police department when they pulled up to take possession of the car. And when they popped the trunk to get their stuff out, there was a stun gun in it. And they have it. It was bagged and tagged and taken into evidence, but they had a stun gun with them.

NARRATION: POLICE FIND NOTHING TO CONNECT THE STUN GUN TO CHARLES'S DEATH AND THE TWO WOMEN AREN'T DETAINED. AMERY HAS LITTLE TIME TO CONSIDER THE IMPLICATIONS OF A STUN GUN IN HER FATHER'S DEATH, WHEN ANOTHER TWIST IN THE CASE SENDS HER IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT DIRECTION. SHE LEARNS THAT SOMETIME BETWEEN MAY 15th AND MAY 16th, WHILE HER



FATHER WAS FLOATING IN LAKE HAMILTON AND BEFORE NEWS OF HIS DEATH HAD EVEN BEEN MADE PUBLIC, HIS HOME IN TUNICA, MISSISSIPPI, 200 MILES FROM HOT SPRINGS, WAS BROKEN INTO AND BURGLARIZED.

AMERY EWING: Daddy's from a small town, so the police were called by his family attorney to go secure his house. And when they got there, they found that it had been broken into already. His room was flipped upside down. You know, drawers were pulled out. The mattress was flipped. The TV was gone. And the, there was cash gone. There was no cash in his house, and that wasn't even remotely possible. He always had cash. And he usually kept it under the mattress, like in between the box springs and the mattress, and I have the bedside table. There was a small drawer in it, and it's got like a fake top in it. It's an antique. Whoever came in the house knew that that fake drawer was in there, and that drawer had been pulled out and was open, broken. So, it was somebody who knew what that was. You would have to know what you were looking for.

JANICE BROACH: They went through papers, letters, things like that, threw them around. Some of it was burned outside in the driveway. That's certainly puzzling. That is not a normal break in. Breaking into someplace and rifling through things, burglars do that. But that burning in the driveway is what moves it up to another level, and makes it bizarre, and makes it seem like it is connected to Charles Ewing's death.

NARRATION: AMERY FINDS IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT HER FATHER'S DEATH AND THE BREAK IN COULD BE A COINCIDENCE. BUT WHO COULD HAVE COORDINATED THE CRIMES? AMERY SEARCHES FOR POTENTIAL SUSPECTS AND DISCOVERS HER FATHER HAD BECOME FRIENDS WITH THE CAR DEALER IN HOT SPRINGS, WHO SOLD HIM THE DODGE CHALLENGER. THIS MAN WAS SEEN PARTYING WITH CHARLES AND THE TWO WOMEN THE NIGHT BEFORE HE DIED, AND ON SUNDAY, BEFORE CHARLES'S BODY WAS FOUND IN THE LAKE, IT WAS THE CAR DEALER, NOT CHARLES'S FEMALE COMPANIONS, WHO WAS THE FIRST AND ONLY PERSON TO SEEM CONCERNED THAT CHARLES MIGHT BE MISSING.

AMERY EWING: I was told that my father had been identified by the car salesman who appeared on site at the Clarion Hotel the day he was discovered. What's also really interesting is that before that, for some reason, the same car salesman had called the sheriff's department, the police department, and every hospital in the area asking if he was there because he hadn't heard from him for a day. The investigator told me that the car salesperson was very upset about the loss of my father. He wanted to speak to me. He had some information for me. So, at some point, I did go to the dealership, and sat down with him and talked to him. He was pointing the finger back to the girls that Daddy was with, and about their behavior, and how bizarre their behavior was. And again, I'm not saying he had bad intentions, but I just feel like he was super involved to just to have been the guy that sold the car. Why was he going out with them and partying with them? Over the course of months, he would contact me

to check on me and see how the investigation was going. He was always really, really interested in what we knew, you know, at any given point.

NARRATION: FRUSTRATED BY THE LACK OF LEADS, AMERY GOES PUBLIC WITH HER INVESTIGATION, OFFERING A REWARD IN EXCHANGE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT HER FATHER'S DEATH.

AMERY EWING: I got an anonymous letter in the mail within six months, I think, of Daddy dying. And it was in all different kinds of fonts, and it outlined what the man believed had happened, and all these various questions about who could have possibly been involved, and that everyone in Hot Springs knew that my father had been killed, and that this person thought that the car dealers and the women that were with Daddy were all involved together to make this happen.

NARRATION: NO EVIDENCE EMERGES TO IMPLICATE THE CAR DEALER IN CHARLES'S DEATH. DIGGING FOR OTHER POTENTIAL LEADS, AMERY WONDERS IF HER FATHER'S EX-FIANCE, KELLY, COULD SOMEHOW BE INVOLVED. THEY HAD STARTED DATING ONLY SIX MONTHS BEFORE HIS DEATH. TO AMERY, THEIR RELATIONSHIP HAD ALWAYS SEEMED STRANGE AND ONE-SIDED. THOUGH IT'S BELIEVED THAT KELLY WAS NOT IN HOT SPRINGS AT THE TIME OF CHARLES'S DEATH, SHE COULD HAVE EASILY KNOWN ABOUT THE SECRET STASH OF MONEY IN HIS HOUSE IN TUNICA.

AMERY EWING: I found out later that they had been in a relationship some years before, but those weren't relationships that he talked to us about. From what I can gather, Kelly was from the area, and she's only probably a year older than me. She had been married and divorced, I'm not sure how many times. I think it was an arrangement of sorts, because I found a lot of notes that he had written about how he cared about her, but she wasn't intimate with him. I really just think she was using him. He bought her childhood home that was a couple hundred thousand dollars. He bought her vehicles. Some five months later, she managed to become the beneficiary of a million-dollar life insurance policy. He had apparently changed the beneficiary, or someone changed the beneficiary, to Kelly, within maybe a month or so before he died. But the insurance company never got an original, and no one could find the original, so there was only a faxed version of the change of beneficiary. So, we contested it. And we ended up settling that claim out of court. After Daddy died, she got married within two weeks. I don't think I've ever been so disgusted in my life. That marriage, she actually divorced that guy and when that all fell apart soon thereafter, I spoke to that husband, and told him I needed his help. If he had any information, I'd give him the reward. I would ask that he have immunity. I would do anything, and he said he could not get involved. He wanted as far away as possible from her.

NARRATION: AS PART OF HER OWN INVESTIGATION, REPORTER JANICE BROACH ATTEMPTS TO REACH OUT TO KELLY TO SEE IF SHE'S WILLING TO TALK ABOUT CHARLES.

JANICE BROACH: Kelly's attorney said she didn't have anything to do with it, and didn't want to be involved with it at all. I assume she didn't want to be pulled into it. I can't blame her for that. Nobody was saying that she did anything. Nobody had any evidence that she did anything. So, she chose just not to get involved in something that was pretty sordid.

NARRATION: SEVERAL YEARS GO BY WITHOUT ANY NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CASE. BUT THEN, IN 2017, KELLY CONTACTS AMERY OUT OF THE BLUE, CLAIMING TO HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT WHO MURDERED HER FATHER.

AMERY EWING: Daddy's fiancé from back then had written me a series of messages wanting the reward money for information. Of course, this is six years later. And she's agreeing that, if I'll give her the reward money, that she'll come forward and give the information and says in the messages, she was there that night and saw what they did. I did not respond to her. I sent it to the sheriff's department in DeSoto County, and was hoping that they would go vet her. True or not, when someone sends you a message that they watched your father be murdered, and they're only going to give you the information if you pay them \$25,000, I really didn't want to go be alone with her. Just didn't think it was real safe choice.

NARRATION: SINCE THE CASE WAS ALREADY CLOSED AND THERE WAS NO SOLID EVIDENCE CONNECTING KELLY TO CHARLES'S DEATH, AMERY DOESN'T BELIEVE THE AUTHORITIES INVESTIGATED KELLY'S CLAIMS. AFTER NEARLY 10 YEARS, THE STORY OF CHARLES EWING'S DEATH IS STILL OPEN TO SPECULATION.

JANICE BROACH: When I went to Hot Springs, saw where the water was, saw the hotel, the accident theory didn't seem that plausible. There are too many bizarre things around all of this to dismiss it as an accident. There's a lot that's missing. That's why this story is so interesting. Some of the people that I talked with after I did the stories, they were puzzled as well. And they wanted to know, "Well, what do you think happened?" And I really couldn't answer them, because I don't really know. I don't blame Amery for chasing this. She wants answers. She is an intelligent, levelheaded person. She never appeared to be overly emotional in front of me. She just believes that this doesn't look right, and there are answers out there to what happened, and she wants them. And I don't blame her. This is her father, and it just doesn't add up.

AMERY EWING: It was an obsession to the point that my life fell apart. I got divorced, and I lost so much weight. My hair started falling out. I couldn't understand why there was no justice that was being pursued. And I feel like we've been denied that at every turn. I would like an investigation opened, a true investigation from a cold case team, or from someone who's not directly involved with the local authorities. And I would like them to look into and vet all of these people and see if there's something

I'm missing. And if there's not, if this was a horrific accident, I would like it explained to me, and I'm not gonna give up. I'm not. I'm not gonna let it rest. You know, I told my little girl, my 10-year-old, not too long ago, that she's able to have the things she has now and the education she has, and the schools that she goes to because of her grandfather. That he loved us enough that, when he passed away, he left us these resources that we can use for her education, for the things that I know he'd want her to have. But in that, we need to honor him, because he's honored us. And we need to honor his memory, and we need to honor him by discovering what happened to him. He deserves some justice.

NARRATION: IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THE DEATH OF CHARLES EWING, PLEASE SUBMIT A TIP AT [UNSOLVED.COM](https://www.unsigned.com). NEXT, ON UNSOLVED MYSTERIES...

BERNADETTE PEREZ: And that's where the story gets to be an unsolved mystery, because some people believe he got out of the Jeep and he went wandering through the Harriman State Park. I believe somebody was waiting for him, or he may have had another vehicle parked there. Eugene knew the woods like the back of his hand. He was a woodsman.

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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 Cynthia Bowles, and it was edited by Ryan Dann.

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 27 OF UNSOLVED MYSTERIES.