

UNSOLVED MYSTERIES PODCAST | MURDER IN BOYSTOWN

EP45 Transcript

NEWS CLIP: It was a gruesome murder. The man was stabbed to death forty times. Kevin Clewer was murdered in this apartment, and no one knows why.

JOHN CAMPBELL: Probably within a day or two of the homicide taking place, I had an understanding of what happened to Kevin and how horrific it was. The gruesomeness, just how many times Kevin was stabbed, lead you to wonder what was going through the offender's mind at that particular time. And at this point, the only person who really knows is the person who killed Kevin.

NARRATION:

ON THE NORTH SIDE OF CHICAGO, NOT FAR FROM WRIGLEY FIELD, IS THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF NORTHALSTED. THE AREA IS KNOWN FOR A BUSTLING ART SCENE, VIBRANT NIGHTLIFE, AND BOUTIQUE SHOPPING. IT'S ALSO THE OLDEST OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED LGBTQ NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE UNITED STATES. LOCALLY KNOWN AS "BOYSTOWN," NORTHALSTED HAS A REPUTATION AS ONE OF THE SAFEST NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE CITY OF CHICAGO. BUT IN THE SPRING OF 2004, THE HORRIFIC MURDER OF 31-YEAR-OLD KEVIN CLEWER SHOOK THE COMMUNITY TO ITS CORE.

I'M STEVE FRENCH AND THIS IS UNSOLVED MYSTERIES: "MURDER IN BOYSTOWN."

RON CLEWER: My name is Ron Clewer, and I am older brother to Kevin. Only brother to Kevin.

NARRATION:

RON AND KEVIN CLEWER GREW UP ABOUT 2 HOURS OUTSIDE CHICAGO IN THE ROCKFORD AREA OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS.

RON CLEWER: When Kevin was born, I was seven years old, and we were pretty close. But then, once I hit those teenage years, he was the little kid who was kind of in my way, you know? He's your younger brother. But once Kevin went through his teens, we became very close again. That was about the time he came out that he was gay. Kevin first came out to my mom. He was 15. He was living with her at the time. She was very open, very accepting. And then, he came out to me and my wife shortly after he came out to my mom. From there, he came out to my stepmother, and eventually my dad. He was most worried about how my dad may accept or not accept him, because he saw a lot of friends whose parents, especially fathers, didn't accept their gay sons, and he was, he was worried about that. But I think he and my dad had some very good discussions that, I think, just expanded their relationship over time. And when Kevin brought his first boyfriend home, no different. Boyfriend, girlfriend, it was somebody Kevin cared about and loved and, uh, he was part of our family. We understood that, to be happy, he wanted to be a gay man, and his world was set to be a gay man, and he wound up with a ton of support.

NARRATION:

KEVIN'S FAMILY HAD A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP. ALTHOUGH JIM AND PAM CLEWER DIVORCED WHEN KEVIN WAS YOUNG, THEY REMAINED FRIENDS, AND LOVED AND SUPPORTED THEIR KIDS UNCONDITIONALLY. HOWEVER, GROWING UP DURING THE 1980'S AND '90S, FEW OTHER PEOPLE IN KEVIN'S HOMETOWN WERE READY TO ACCEPT HIM AS A GAY MAN.

RON CLEWER: I knew that our community was fairly conservative and not open to gay individuals. I remember we had gone out for his 21st birthday when we lived in Rockford, and after we had gone out, you know, it was middle of the night. We, uh, stopped at a place for breakfast, and, you know, I remember men in the restaurant making some comments about him being queer, and, you know, he thought that Kevin and I were a couple. The ignorance really scared me, and it made me worried for him.

NARRATION:

KEVIN LOVED HIS FAMILY DEEPLY, BUT KNEW HE WOULD NEVER TRULY BE WELCOMED IN THE ROCKFORD COMMUNITY, SO HE SET HIS SIGHTS ON MOVING TO CHICAGO.

RON CLEWER: He really looked at moving to Chicago as a way for him to kind of come into his own, be in a neighborhood, the Boystown, Halsted Street area, where there were other young gay men and gay individuals who he could hang around with and feel more at home with. So, when he said he was eventually moving to the Boystown area, I was actually relieved. I think, in my mind, I felt he'd be around people who were living the same life he was living, and likely would be much safer.

NARRATION:

KEVIN'S OPPORTUNITY COMES WHEN HE ACCEPTS A JOB AS A COST ANALYST FOR FLEXTRONICS, A MANUFACTURING COMPANY IN CHICAGO'S ELK GROVE VILLAGE. HE FINDS A ROOMMATE, AND TOGETHER THEY RENT A TWO BEDROOM APARTMENT IN THE LAKEVIEW AREA OF BOYSTOWN.

RON CLEWER: Kevin's apartment is, like, the typical Chicago walk-up. Had 12 apartments. He lived on the third floor in the apartment that, uh, was closest to the street, and at the north end of the building. He was working for a company doing cost estimating for electronics assembly, and he loved his job. He was very happy with his employer and his coworkers, and the firm was north of the city, in the suburbs, so he'd commute daily back and forth from work to the Lake View neighborhood as he came home or left for work. He was single at the time. He had previously broken up with the boyfriend he was with, but he was, you know, he was seemingly really happy. He was spending a lot of time with friends, and looking to meet new people, and enjoy the friends around him. That's kind of one of the trademarks of Kevin was, he had a very large circle of friends, and he could be relied upon to help out when they needed.

NARRATION:

BY 2004, KEVIN IS THRIVING. NOW 31 YEARS OLD, HE'S BECOME WELL-ESTABLISHED IN THE NORTHALSTED NEIGHBORHOOD. HE REMAINS CLOSE WITH HIS FAMILY, BUT BOYSTOWN IS HIS COMMUNITY NOW, AND HE'S LOOKING TO BUILD A FUTURE THERE.

RON CLEWER: Once he moved to Chicago, we didn't see him, obviously, as frequently as we did when we lived so close together, but we still saw each other pretty frequently. He was talking about buying a home in Chicago. So, he wanted the neighborhood to be his permanent home. He wanted to have a family. He wanted to raise his own children, and he had the hopes and dreams we all have.

NARRATION:

WHILE KEVIN SEEMS TO HAVE SETTLED NICELY INTO HIS NEW TOWN AND LIFESTYLE, HIS MOTHER STILL WORRIES ABOUT HER SON.

RON CLEWER: My mom had a very strong connection with Kevin, and she worried a lot, more than I did, or really folks in my family did, about whether or not Kevin was going to be safe as a gay man. They would speak often, but if she didn't hear from him, you know, she'd be like, "I haven't heard from Kevin. What's wrong with Kevin? Is he okay? Did he talk to you?" It'd be like, "Mom, Kevin is fine."

NARRATION:

RON SPEAKS TO HIS BROTHER REGULARLY AND KEVIN HAS NEVER EXPRESSED ANY CONCERNS ABOUT HIS SAFETY, SO HE HAS NO REASON TO WORRY ABOUT HIS BROTHER — UNTIL THE PHONE RINGS ON MARCH 24TH, 2004.

RON CLEWER: I was at work, and my mom called me, and I was in a work meeting, and it went to voicemail. So, by the time I got out, I got her voicemail and she's like, "I'm worried. I haven't heard from Kevin." I honestly thought it was like any other time she was worried about Kevin. And my aunt calls me and says, "Hey, your mom's worried about your brother. She wants you to call her." And I'm like, "I understand," I'm like, "So, you know, Aunt Mary, she called you too?" And she's like, "Yeah. Evidently, he didn't show up at work and work called." Well, that immediately sent up red flags to me, too, because it would be unlike Kevin to not show up at work. And it was more than he didn't show up at the office, he was supposed to pick somebody up that was coming in from overseas and he didn't show up at the airport to pick up this person. He wasn't answering his cell phone. He wasn't online or answering emails. So, my mom had already talked to my dad.

NARRATION:

JIM CLEWER LIVES 45 MINUTES FROM KEVIN'S APARTMENT. CONCERNED, HE LEAVES IMMEDIATELY TO GO CHECK ON HIS SON. HE FINDS KEVIN'S CAR IN THE PARKING LOT, BUT WHEN HE BUZZES THE APARTMENT, NO ONE ANSWERS.

RON CLEWER: So, my dad rings the bell of a neighbor apartment across the hallway, and that individual let my dad in. My dad went up to the apartment, was beating on the door, and no

answer. And my dad was so worried, he literally broke the door in. When he broke the door in, he went into the apartment. Kevin's bedroom door was shut, and he opened the bedroom door, and as he opened the door, at the foot of Kevin's bed is where my dad found Kevin.

NARRATION:

KEVIN CLEWER LIES NAKED ON THE FLOOR IN A FETAL POSITION. HIS BARE BACK IS COMPLETELY COVERED WITH STAB WOUNDS.

RON CLEWER: My dad saw all the knife wounds, but he just didn't comprehend, until he went to touch him. And then he touched him, and he was cold, and he realized that he actually had been stabbed. He was not incredibly coherent at the time other than to say, "Call 911."

NARRATION:

STILL UNAWARE OF HIS FATHER'S DISCOVERY, RON CLEWER IS DRIVING HOME FROM WORK WHEN HIS MOTHER CALLS HIM WITH THE NEWS.

RON CLEWER: She was, as anyone can imagine, incredibly hysterical. I had no idea what she was trying to tell me. I was just literally on my way home. I arrived at home. I had exited my car and I'm standing in the driveway at home. And I'm on the phone with my mom, who was crying hysterically and just kept repeating, "He's dead." And I'm like, "I don't believe it's true." It was a horrible situation.

NARRATION:

RON CAN'T ACCEPT THAT HIS BROTHER IS DEAD. HE AND HIS WIFE LEAVE THEIR DAUGHTERS WITH RELATIVES AND HEAD TO KEVIN'S APARTMENT IN CHICAGO. WHEN THEY FINALLY ARRIVE, RON IS CONFRONTED WITH THE GRAVE REALITY.

RON CLEWER: By the time we got there, it was already dark out. There were cops everywhere. There was a crime scene unit and, you know, there were people coming in and out of the hallways. It seemed exactly like the movies, and it was horrific. Kevin had been stabbed 42 times in the back. That seemingly was the cause of death. We wound up, the next morning, having to go to the coroner's office to identify Kevin. And so, I went with my dad and my stepmom. My dad was a hulk of a man, big, barrel-chested man's man, if, uh, you want to say that. And I just saw him melt as he came back, and literally had to hold him up because he couldn't hold himself up. It was horrible. And so, I reached out to touch Kevin and touch his cheek, and they told me we couldn't touch him. But they confirmed that the stab wounds were what killed him.

NEWS CLIP 1: It was a gruesome murder. Kevin Clewer was murdered in this apartment, and no one knows why.

VOICE [POSSIBLY JIM CLEWER]: ... many times a day, I tell them how I found him, and it's hard.

NEWS CLIP 2: It was a brutal murder, and it's still raw...

VOICE [POSSIBLY JIM CLEWER]: I'll do anything I can to try and find Kevin's killer.

JOHN CAMPBELL: So, the Kevin Clewer murder drew a lot of attention by the media here in Chicago. The gruesomeness, just hearing how many times Kevin was stabbed, and obviously, somebody getting killed in their home, it makes everybody cringe because that's where you're supposed to be safe at, at least of all your own home.

NARRATION:

JOHN CAMPBELL IS A COLD CASE DETECTIVE WITH THE CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT. ALTHOUGH NOT PART OF THE ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION, HE WORKED IN THE "AREA THREE" DETECTIVE DIVISION AT THE TIME OF KEVIN'S MURDER AND HAS BEEN THE LEAD INVESTIGATOR SINCE 2017. HE KNOWS EVERY DETAIL ABOUT THIS CASE.

JOHN CAMPBELL: When detectives arrived to the scene, we have a specialized unit they will put together just for large crime scenes where there could be a ton of forensic evidence, and they're called ERT, Evidence Response Team. Basically, they recovered everything that could potentially link an offender to the scene. Drinking glasses that were around, anything that fingerprints might be on, or that we might recover DNA evidence, anything that maybe an offender could touch. There may have been sexual activity, just by how Kevin was discovered, which was, uh, naked. So of course, the evidence from his body was preserved and obtained and eventually analyzed by the Illinois State Police Crime Lab. They also found a broken window just adjacent to the kitchen, so it wasn't part of the primary crime scene, which was of course Kevin's bedroom.

NARRATION:

INVESTIGATORS ALSO DISCOVER ITEMS MISSING FROM KEVIN'S BEDROOM, SUGGESTING HE MAY HAVE BEEN KILLED DURING A ROBBERY. BUT THE GRAPHIC NATURE OF THE CRIME SCENE ISN'T CONSISTENT WITH A TYPICAL PROPERTY CRIME.

JOHN CAMPBELL: Kevin's room was definitely missing some things that were stolen during the incident, but the home itself wasn't ransacked — just personal items and money or jewelry that were taken from Kevin. All his stab wounds were to his back. So he was, you know, in a very vulnerable position. It's rare you see such an attack take place in which somebody is stabbed so much. There had to be some type of rage. The gruesomeness, just how many times Kevin was stabbed, leads you to wonder what was going through the offender's mind at that particular time.

NARRATION:

42 STAB WOUNDS. WHO COULD BE CAPABLE OF SUCH EXCESSIVE VIOLENCE? NONE OF THE FINGERPRINTS OR DNA FOUND AT THE CRIME SCENE REGISTER A MATCH IN CRIMINAL DATABASES. AND WITH THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE NOT POINTING THEM TOWARDS A SUSPECT, INVESTIGATORS WONDER IF SOMEONE HAD A REASON TO WANT KEVIN CLEWER DEAD?

JOHN CAMPBELL: There were a number of people interviewed, including family, community people, relationships he might have had with other men that may not have ended well, and anybody else who might have been close to Kevin that particular day. But there was nothing that stood out as far as relationships, that this was a domestic altercation that went, um, really, really horrible. A lot of his former boyfriends, those relationships didn't really end badly, they just ended, and they were still friends, and they were broken up that Kevin was no longer with them and how someone could do that.

NARRATION:

INVESTIGATORS ARE ALSO ABLE TO VERIFY THE ALIBIS OF EVERYONE THEY INTERVIEW, WITH ONE NOTABLE EXCEPTION. KEVIN'S ROOMMATE TELLS POLICE THAT, ON THE NIGHT KEVIN WAS KILLED, HE WAS IN THEIR APARTMENT SOUND ASLEEP.

JOHN CAMPBELL: His statement to detectives was essentially, he's a heavy sleeper. Not much wakes him up. He believes he did hear Kevin and somebody else come in the apartment, and whatever was going on did not alarm him at that particular time. It sounded like Kevin and whoever his guest was, everything was going fine, enough so that he went back to sleep. And when he woke up and went to work in the morning, he noticed Kevin's door was closed, and he left it like that. He figured Kevin would be getting up shortly to go to work. But there was nothing else that alarmed him, or nothing that made him have to want to check on him. Obviously, there were concerns about the statements of the roommate. You naturally assume that an attack of that nature would be very loud and would wake up everybody. But the apartment building that Kevin lived in was shared by other people, and no one else could kind of hit on a time that this attack took place, because there was nothing substantial as far as noise, or banging, or screaming that anybody reported to police, or reported later when they were interviewed by investigators.

NARRATION:

ASIDE FROM A SHAKY ALIBI, KEVIN'S ROOMMATE GIVES POLICE LITTLE REASON TO CONSIDER HIM A SUSPECT. HE IS GENUINELY DISTRAUGHT BY KEVIN'S MURDER AND PROVIDES INVESTIGATORS WITH A DNA SAMPLE. HE ALSO VOLUNTEERS TO TAKE A POLYGRAPH EXAM, WHICH HE PASSES. WITH NO EVIDENCE POINTING TO HIS ROOMMATE'S INVOLVEMENT, AUTHORITIES DEVELOP A DIFFERENT THEORY ABOUT THE EVENTS THAT LED TO KEVIN'S MURDER.

JOHN CAMPBELL: The detectives felt that the facts of the case, and based on the interviews of everybody involved, Kevin met a stranger, somebody that he didn't know and that his friends didn't know, went back to Kevin's apartment, sexual intercourse took place, appears that everything was consensual. And at that point, something took place. Now what happened, we can only speculate, but what we can say is that items and money were stolen from Kevin. So, that leads you to wonder, was the purpose of the sexual encounter to steal from Kevin or to rob him of his valuables? Or did something take place during the sexual encounter that caused the other individual to snap and lose it? All we can do is speculate, and at this point, the only person who really knows is the person who killed Kevin.

NARRATION:

BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH HIS FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND COWORKERS, INVESTIGATORS RETRACE KEVIN'S STEPS ON THE EVENING OF MARCH 23RD. IT WAS WHILE HE WAS OUT BARHOPPING WITH A FRIEND THAT KEVIN MOST LIKELY MET THE MAN WHO WOULD END HIS LIFE.

JOHN CAMPBELL: On March 23rd, Kevin had made plans to go out with a friend of his named John. John came in from out of state, from Minnesota, for work, but also to spend time with his buddy, Kevin. Had dinner at Kevin's place, along with his roommate. And then, they decided to go to some of the local nightclubs that were a brief walk from Kevin's apartment. Kevin and John went to three different establishments, all within walking distance, all within basically the same area. Went inside, had some drinks, started talking to different people. While they were out at one particular place, Kevin started talking to an individual who's actually from the Philippines. This individual never met Kevin before, never met John before, but they started carrying on a conversation and talking about different things, what they like to do, and then Kevin noticed a male Hispanic who identified himself as Fernando. Kevin seemed really attracted to this Fernando and they started talking.

NARRATION:

REALIZING KEVIN'S INTERESTS LIE ELSEWHERE, THE MAN FROM THE PHILIPPINES MOVES ON. AS THE EVENING PROGRESSES, THERE SEEMS TO BE CHEMISTRY BETWEEN KEVIN AND FERNANDO.

JOHN CAMPBELL: At the end of the night, when the clubs are closing down, John, Kevin and Fernando left the bar, started walking back toward Kevin's place. Kevin and Fernando seem to be hitting it off well, so John went to his car and drove back to his father's place and Kevin and Fernando went back to Kevin's apartment, and that was the last time that John saw his best friend alive. Fernando was definitely a suspect. I think we used the phrase "person of interest," but he was the last one seen with Kevin while he was alive. That's not to say that there isn't someone else that might be involved, but Fernando was with Kevin and left and Kevin was fine, you would think he'd want to come out and say that. Those conversations never took place, because we were not able to identify who this Fernando is.

NARRATION:

JOHN AND THE MAN FROM THE PHILIPPINES WORK WITH A POLICE SKETCH ARTIST TO CREATE A LIKENESS OF FERNANDO, BUT AUTHORITIES WORRY THAT IF THEY RELEASE THE SKETCH, FERNANDO MIGHT FLEE THE AREA. INSTEAD, THEY BEGIN STAKING OUT THE BARS AND NIGHTCLUBS ON HALSTEAD STREET, HOPING HE WILL MAKE AN APPEARANCE. BUT AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS WITH NO SIGN OF FERNANDO, POLICE RELEASE THEIR SKETCH TO THE PUBLIC.

JOHN CAMPBELL: We took a ton of phone calls about potential individuals who might be involved. Those individuals were not just interviewed, but in most cases, a buccal swab was

obtained from them so that their DNA could be compared against the DNA recovered from the crime scene.

NARRATION:

MONTHS AFTER KEVIN'S MURDER, POLICE ARE NO CLOSER TO FINDING FERNANDO THAN THEY WERE THE DAY OF HIS MURDER. DESPERATE FOR ANSWERS, RON CLEWER AND HIS PARENTS DECIDE TO OFFER A \$20,000 REWARD FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO THE ARREST AND CONVICTION OF KEVIN'S KILLER. MORE LEADS ARE GENERATED FOR DETECTIVES TO FOLLOW, BUT ONCE AGAIN, NONE OF THEM POINT TO A VIABLE SUSPECT. THE CLEWER FAMILY RESCIND THEIR REWARD OFFER, BUT DOUBLE DOWN ON THEIR EFFORTS TO LOCATE KEVIN'S KILLER.

RON CLEWER: To be honest with you, I don't know that any of us really processed Kevin's death. I think we existed while we were trying to avenge Kevin's death. We had handed out tens of thousands of flyers, held press conferences, did a ton of interviews. Really spent a great deal of time in the neighborhood seeking information because we heard from the police that it really required somebody to come forward, and so it became a campaign, if you will. Probably so we all didn't have to accept that Kevin was dead in some regards, but also to see if we couldn't find these answers.

NARRATION:

BUT THE ONGOING QUEST FOR JUSTICE EVENTUALLY TAKES ITS TOLL. JUST OVER A YEAR AFTER KEVIN IS KILLED, HIS MOTHER DIES UNEXPECTEDLY AT THE AGE OF 56. TWO WEEKS LATER, KEVIN'S FATHER PASSES AWAY AFTER SUFFERING A HEART ATTACK. RON CLEWER IS CERTAIN THE STRESS OF KEVIN'S GRUESOME MURDER CONTRIBUTED TO HIS PARENTS' DEATHS.

RON CLEWER: When I saw my mom a few days before she died, I thought, "Wow, she has really aged so much in the last year." And then, when I saw my dad, you know, just before he passed, I thought the same thing. I thought, you know, they both incredibly aged over the last year, and it was scary.

NARRATION:

RON CLEWER'S GRIEF ONLY AMPLIFIES HIS DETERMINATION TO FIND HIS BROTHER'S KILLER. HE SPENDS MORE THAN A DECADE KEEPING KEVIN'S STORY ALIVE IN THE PRESS. HE INCREASES HIS GRASSROOTS EFFORTS TO FIND INFORMATION THAT COULD LEAD TO FERNANDO, AND HE KEEPS THE PRESSURE ON AUTHORITIES TO CONTINUE THEIR INVESTIGATION. IN 2017, RON MAKES A FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST TO GAIN ACCESS TO KEVIN'S CASE FILE.

RON CLEWER: A lot of the documents are significantly redacted, but there are things that I could glean from there. And so, I sent a report back to this police department and said, "This is unacceptable. There are things in Kevin's case that haven't been processed yet, including DNA. This needs to change." And I called for a new detective to be assigned.

JOHN CAMPBELL: Ron Clewer had sent a letter to our superintendent. He also sent a letter to the Mayor of Chicago, Rahm Emanuel. And it definitely got attention, and our Chief of

Detectives immediately contacted our lieutenant and our commander and said, "Hey, we need to take a look at this case, and we need our detectives to contact the family."

NARRATION:

IN MAY OF 2017, COLD CASE DETECTIVE JOHN CAMPBELL IS PUT IN CHARGE OF THE KEVIN CLEWER MURDER CASE.

JOHN CAMPBELL: When I first contacted Ron, explained that I was assigned this case, commended him on the letter. I mean, quite honestly, it's, uh, you got the attention of everybody that ran the city of Chicago. That's an undertaking, quite honestly. We had him in our office, and he had a lot of questions and, obviously, concerns. And I know there was some expression of what he came away with about detectives who were assigned to this. And all I could try to do is, "I'm going to change your opinion about our Chicago Police Department, and we're going to do the best we can. And least of all, I'm going to be here to answer your questions. I may not have the answers to them, but I'm going to do the best I can to give you those answers." And obviously, the main answer would be, "Who did this to my brother?" That's our goal, to answer that question, and of course, pursue criminal charges if we can.

RON CLEWER: Detective Campbell is on the case. I'm really thankful for him. He is a good communicator. He has gone back and scoured the case, and we have good conversations, and he can't tell me if I'm right or wrong in any of my assumptions, but he listens to them, and I believe he's actively investigating. I believe that he's been able to push for leads that we haven't seen before. But he also knows that I'm willing to push, too.

NEWS CLIP: Today, Kevin Clewer's family handed out flyers on Halstead and Cornelia, near the apartment where he was murdered in March of 2004. Kevin's family has been coming to this corner for nearly 15 years trying to find someone who knows something.

NARRATION:

WHILE DETECTIVE CAMPBELL EMPLOYS THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE ONLY TO LAW ENFORCEMENT, RON COMES UP WITH HIS OWN IDEA ABOUT HOW TO GENERATE LEADS. HE CREATES A FACEBOOK PAGE CALLED "FINDING FERNANDO." USING TARGETED FACEBOOK ADS, HE POSTS CONSTANTLY TO ANYONE WITH CONNECTIONS TO THE BOYSTOWN AREA AROUND THE TIME OF KEVIN'S MURDER. IT TAKES SEVERAL FRUSTRATING YEARS, BUT EVENTUALLY HIS EFFORTS PAY OFF. IN AUGUST OF 2020, RON RECEIVES A FACEBOOK MESSAGE FROM A PERSON CLAIMING TO KNOW FERNANDO'S REAL IDENTITY.

RON CLEWER: This individual had some very quality information and some very detailed information that others weren't aware of about Kevin's case. The individual was more comfortable speaking with me than the police, and so brokered a conversation with the police and the individual. Eventually, there was an in-person interview.

JOHN CAMPBELL: This person who contacted Ron didn't have direct information. However, they were able to provide some really good information about a suspect.

NARRATION:

ACCORDING TO THIS TIPSTER, AS A CHILD LIVING IN CHICAGO IN 2004, THEIR FAMILY KNEW A YOUNG GAY MAN FROM PUERTO RICO. THIS MAN OFTEN BRAGGED TO THE FAMILY ABOUT CRIMES HE HAD COMMITTED AND AT ONE POINT CLAIMED HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MURDER OF KEVIN CLEWER.

JOHN CAMPBELL: This individual, who was a friend of their family, was a gay male, Hispanic. But what he would brag about would be picking up gay, drunk men in gay bars in that area by Wrigley Field, going to their homes, and this person would take their money, take their jewelry, take expensive items, and then leave. This family has told us he would use different names with his potential victims, and they didn't recall Fernando being used, but he matched the description, height, and weight. Everything about him matched. He has been arrested previously for similar, related offenses, and uniquely enough, when we were able to bring up his arrest booking photos from 2004 and 2003, to see those photos and compare them against the sketch was hair raising. It was so close. It does appear that he fled to Puerto Rico shortly after the murder took place and right around the time that the sketch was released. Those actions are suspicious just in and of themselves.

NARRATION:

COULD THIS MAN BE THE SAME PERSON WHO VIOLENTLY MURDERED KEVIN CLEWER? IT'S A PROMISING LEAD, BUT TO BUILD A SOLID CASE, INVESTIGATORS NEED DIRECT EVIDENCE THAT LINKS THIS SUSPECT TO THE CRIME. WITH THE SUSPECT IN PUERTO RICO, CHICAGO POLICE ARE UNABLE TO QUESTION HIM OR COLLECT HIS DNA FOR TESTING. INSTEAD, THEY CONTACT KEVIN'S FRIEND JOHN, AND SHOW HIM A PHOTO ARRAY THAT INCLUDES AN OLD MUGSHOT OF THE SUSPECT. IF THIS IS THE SAME MAN WHO WENT HOME WITH KEVIN THE NIGHT HE WAS KILLED, JOHN COULD MAKE A POSITIVE I.D.

JOHN CAMPBELL: John was looking at the suspect for a long period of time but was not comfortable making the identification. He was very scared that so much time has passed that if he's not remembering it properly, somebody'll get in trouble who wasn't involved, and that was overwhelming for him, as he explained. The following day, John called me on the phone, left a voicemail that our suspect stood out in his head and basically believes it was him. But still, a negative photo array, and unfortunately that doesn't help to move forward with criminal charges.

NARRATION:

WITHOUT A POSITIVE I.D. OR OTHER DIRECT EVIDENCE THAT PLACES THIS SUSPECT WITH KEVIN THE NIGHT HE WAS KILLED, INVESTIGATORS CAN'T OBTAIN THE WARRANT THEY NEED TO PURSUE HIM 2000 MILES AWAY IN PUERTO RICO. AT LEAST FOR NOW, THE PRIME SUSPECT IN KEVIN CLEWER'S MURDER REMAINS BEYOND THEIR REACH. AUTHORITIES ARE HOPING SOMEONE WHO LIVED IN THE CHICAGO AREA IN 2004 WILL SEE THE POLICE SKETCH AND REMEMBER THIS MAN WHO CALLED HIMSELF FERNANDO.

JOHN CAMPBELL: To bring charges against somebody for first degree murder, there is a level you need to reach. We're not there yet. Those people who were thinking about him but saying, "He's too nice of a guy. He wouldn't have done that." We need to talk to you.

NARRATION:

MORE THAN 18 YEARS AFTER KEVIN CLEWER'S MURDER, THE CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT CONTINUES TO SEARCH FOR THE EVIDENCE THEY NEED TO FINALLY PUT THIS COLD CASE TO REST. FOR RON CLEWER, THE LOSS OF HIS BROTHER IS A WOUND THAT WON'T HEAL AND HE REFUSES TO REST UNTIL KEVIN'S KILLER IS FINALLY HELD ACCOUNTABLE.

RON CLEWER: I think about him all the time. Like, a song will come on, I'll think of him. I'll be driving in the car and pass something that had nothing to do with anything, but it just reminds me of him. He was an amazing and beautiful person. And I know we hear that all the time when we lose people, but he legitimately was an amazing and beautiful person. And I am sad that his life was cut short, and he did not have the opportunity to have a family and have the things he wanted. You know, after both my parents passed, I made promises before they died, and I made promises after they died that we wouldn't stop until we got the answers. Based on the year that my parents and I had together after Kevin's death, I think that they would be happy that I haven't walked away from it. I have other people who tell me otherwise, who suggest that my parents would want me to live a life without thinking about it. That's never going to happen. I made a promise to Kevin. I made a promise to my mom, and I made a promise to my dad, and my kids, and the rest of my family. And I won't stop until we get the answers. That's how I live.

NARRATION:

VERIFYING THE IDENTITY OF THE MAN CALLING HIMSELF FERNANDO REMAINS THE KEY TO INVESTIGATORS CRACKING THIS CASE. HE WAS DESCRIBED IN 2004 AS A WHITE HISPANIC MALE, APPROXIMATELY 25 YEARS OLD AND 5'7" TALL, WITH A SLIM ATHLETIC BUILD AND A HISPANIC OR EUROPEAN SPANISH ACCENT. THE SUSPECT WOULD BE IN HIS 40s TODAY, AND MOST LIKELY DOES NOT USE THE NAME FERNANDO. AUTHORITIES BELIEVE HE IS CURRENTLY IN PUERTO RICO.

ANYONE WITH INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SUSPECT, OR THE MURDER OF KEVIN CLEWER, IS ENCOURAGED TO CALL THE CHICAGO POLICE AREA THREE DETECTIVE DIVISION AT 312-744-8261. YOU CAN VIEW THE ORIGINAL POLICE SKETCH OF FERNANDO, OR SUBMIT A TIP USING FACEBOOK AT THE PAGES "CHICAGO POLICE AREA THREE COLD CASE" OR "FINDING FERNANDO—A 2004 HOMICIDE PERSON OF INTEREST," OR BY VISITING OUR WEBSITE AT UNSOLVED.COM.

NARRATION: NEXT, ON UNSOLVED MYSTERIES...

COY COX: The big glaring fact in this case is both Bill and Peggy had to die. There was plenty of opportunity to kill Bill by himself, if someone was angry at Bill. Same thing is true for Peggy. Well then, why would both of them have to die? That's the million-dollar question.

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