

THE UNSOLVED MYSTERIES PODCAST | A KILLER COMES KNOCKING

E74 Script

JUDY POWELL FORREST: She called me that Saturday and said, "Ma, someone knocked on her door. And then they said that they were FBI." And she said, "I didn't open the door." She said, "I told them to show me some kind of ID, or a warrant, or something," because they put some kind of fake ID up to the peep hole. I was totally naive. I didn't think that it was gonna lead to somebody killing her.

NARRATION:

IT'S A THURSDAY, LATE IN THE SUMMER OF 2008 AND KANIKA POWELL IS LOOKING FORWARD TO A RELAXING WEEKEND TRIP TO ATLANTA, GEORGIA, WITH A NEW FRIEND. THE 28-YEAR-OLD TAKES THE MORNING OFF WORK TO RUN ERRANDS AND GET HER CAR SERVICED FOR THE LONG DRIVE SOUTH. BUT WHEN SHE RETURNS TO HER APARTMENT IN LAUREL, MARYLAND, KANIKA WALKS STRAIGHT INTO A DEADLY AMBUSH. WITHIN SECONDS OF SPOTTING THE HIDDEN ASSASSIN NEAR HER FRONT DOOR, KANIKA IS GUNNED DOWN IN BROAD DAYLIGHT, WITH NO WITNESSES AND FEW CLUES TO THE SHOOTER'S IDENTITY.

I'M STEVE FRENCH, AND THIS IS UNSOLVED MYSTERIES: "A KILLER COMES KNOCKING."

DISPATCH: 911, what is your emergency?

NARRATION:

ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 28, 2008, A RESIDENT AT THE DEERFIELD APARTMENT COMPLEX IN LAUREL, MARYLAND CALLS 911 AFTER HEARING SCREAMS FOLLOWED BY A SERIES OF GUNSHOTS. POLICE AND PARAMEDICS ARRIVE TO FIND KANIKA POWELL RIDDLED WITH BULLETS, CLINGING TO LIFE NEAR THE FRONT DOOR OF HER APARTMENT.

SGT. GREGORY MCDONALD: An unknown subject approached her and shot her multiple times in the upper body, fled the scene. We had no eyewitnesses. The only witnesses we had were residents that lived in her apartment building that heard the gunshots. One of her neighbors opened his door, looked out. He could smell gunpowder in the air. He looked downstairs over the balcony and he could see her lying on the floor in a pool of blood, and the neighbors notified the police, and patrol officers responded to the scene.

NARRATION:

IN 2008, SERGEANT GREGORY MCDONALD WAS A HOMICIDE DETECTIVE IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, AND TODAY SUPERVISES THE COLD CASE SQUAD IN CHARGE OF THE KANIKA POWELL INVESTIGATION.

SGT. GREGORY MCDONALD: Her neighbors could hear Kanika stating, "No, no, no." And then they heard four to five gunshots in succession. We did not believe that it was a robbery, because this subject didn't attempt to take anything. He shot her multiple times in the upper body and fled the scene. All her personal property was with her. Purse, car keys, everything of value was on her body.

NARRATION:

NOTHING ABOUT THE BRAZEN DAYLIGHT ATTACK MAKES SENSE. KANIKA'S APARTMENT COMPLEX IS CONSIDERED A NICE PLACE TO LIVE IN A SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD.

SGT. GREGORY MCDONALD: It was a medium-sized apartment complex with normally no criminal activity that we had to deal with on a daily basis. The only way we can look at it was, she definitely was the target. We don't have a lot of violent crime in that part of the county. So, we definitely know, for some reason, whoever was targeting her, she was the direct target.

NARRATION:

BUT WHO WOULD WANT KANIKA POWELL DEAD? HER MOTHER JUDY WAS AT WORK WHEN SHE RECEIVED THE MOST PAINFUL PHONE CALL OF HER LIFE.

JUDY POWELL FORREST: It was an afternoon, maybe about one o'clock, somewhere around there, when I got a phone call. And it was from, he said, "This is Detective So-and-So and I'm calling about your daughter, Kanika Powell." And he told me they were at the apartment building. She'd been shot in the hallway of her apartment. They took her over to PG Hospital and I needed to get over there as soon as possible. And I guess they didn't want to tell me everything, or how bad of a shape she was in. At the hospital, I'm still thinking in my head, "Oh, she gonna be alright." She just probably got shot, and maybe they — they never told me where she was shot or anything. They just came and told me, "Your daughter is in bad shape. We're trying to clean her up now before you come in to see her." And I was like, "Bad shape?" Well now, I'm just, like, falling all apart. And that's when I asked her, "Well, where did she get shot at it?" And she said, "in the head." They had her hooked up to these machines and, I just couldn't believe it. I still can't believe it after 14 years later, that my daughter had to go through that. And then people just started coming in. I mean, I still didn't know how serious this was because I'm asking them, "Well, when you're gonna operate? Is it gonna be operation?" Because I'm thinking they just gonna go operate, take the bullets out, and my daughter gonna be fine. And they was like, "No. No operation right now. We got to stop the bleeding," I said, "Oh my goodness." We were at the hospital all night long up until that afternoon, they pronounced her dead.

NARRATION:

AT 28 YEARS OLD, KANIKA POWELL WAS IN THE PRIME OF HER LIFE.

JUDY POWELL FORREST: Kanika was born January 1980. It was a very cold winter. I was a single parent, and she was just a bubbly baby from the start. When I was carrying her, I just wanted a unique name, and I liked African descent names. And I went through the book and I saw Kanika, which meant a black cloth. And then I tried to figure out, "Well, I like the name, but why is it a black cloth?" And then I realized the black cloth was something sacred, something special. And then she just grew up, you know, she went through her typical teenage years. She was feisty sometimes. She was a very opinionated person, but she had a very pleasant personality. She got along with everybody. She always had friends, always made friends, and new friends. She was about 20 when she went in the military. She did her last year in Korea. And she wrote a lot of letters back then, cause you know, we didn't have cell phones. So I got a lot of letters from her apologizing for her behavior as a teenager and all this

stuff. I thought they were so sweet, and so touching. I kept those letters. I still have them today. That's her personality. That was the kind of person she was. Kanika had a very loving heart.

NARRATION:

ONE OF KANIKA'S CLOSEST FRIENDS WAS AYANA, WHO HAD KNOWN HER FOR 15 YEARS.

AYANA BALL WARD: Kanika and I first met when she moved into the neighborhood that I was living in. Her mom and family moved across the street from my family. I think I was going to the eighth grade, and she was in the ninth grade. And we just hit it off automatically, just being across the street from each other outside, you know, with the other neighborhood kids. We just hit it off and became really close and really tight. It was never a dull moment with Kanika. She was very upfront and honest. She always expressed how she felt about certain situations. She was very silly, very goofy, loved to have a great time, loved to hang out and go to parties. Just a free-going and free-spirit person. When Kanika graduated from high school, she just went into the workforce. I think she took a year off, and then she eventually went into the military. When she got ready to go off to the military, of course, I was there at her send-off. She eventually got stationed in Korea for a while. But our paths never separated. We were always in touch and made sure that everything was okay, you know, with each other.

NARRATION:

AYANA STILL REMEMBERS THE MOMENT SHE LEARNED HER BEST FRIEND WAS DEAD.

AYANA BALL WARD: It was like everything just stopped, like my heart was in my feet because, you know, that's my best friend, that's my sister. I had never felt that type of pain. Ever. When my dad showed up at my house and told me what happened, when he opened the door, he was already, he was in tears cuz Kanika was like his daughter, his second daughter because that's how tight we were. You know, we were always together. Either she was at my house or I was at her house, so my parents considered Kanika like a second daughter. So when he walks into my house, he's already in tears and I'm looking at him like, "What's wrong? Like what, why are you crying?" He said, "It's Kanika." And at that moment I just dropped to my knees. I just couldn't breathe.

NARRATION:

WHEN SHE LEFT MILITARY SERVICE, KANIKA STARTED WORKING AS A SECURITY SPECIALIST FOR THE APPLIED PHYSICS LAB AT JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY. IT WAS HER FIRST OFFICE JOB.

JUDY POWELL FORREST: She was so excited. I just remember her saying she was going to be handling classified information and she may have to travel here and there to drop off something, or drop off documents or pick up documents.

AYANA BALL WARD: I can't tell you anything about her job. She was very private about it. I don't think she could really speak of it. It kind of reminded me, like, of the FBI. You know how people work in the FBI and they can't speak on what they actually do? That's how it was with her. She couldn't speak on what she does.

SGT. GREGORY MCDONALD: Because Kanika had a top-secret clearance, when Kanika was initially murdered, everyone including local media, was speculating. Did her place of employment lead to her murder? Was she leading a double life and the fact that she carried a security clearance, and the location that she worked, made people surmise that her job may have led to her murder.

NARRATION:

AS THEY BEGIN TO INVESTIGATE, DETECTIVES FIND NO EVIDENCE LINKING KANIKA'S MURDER TO HER EMPLOYMENT. BUT THEY QUICKLY DISCOVER THAT IN THE WEEK BEFORE SHE WAS KILLED, KANIKA EXPERIENCED SOME UNUSUAL INCIDENTS THAT MAY VERY LIKELY HAVE BEEN THE PRECURSOR TO HER DEATH. IN AN EMAIL SENT BY KANIKA TO HER FRIENDS AND FAMILY JUST DAYS BEFORE HER MURDER, SHE SAYS THAT IN THE EARLY EVENING OF SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, A STRANGER KNOCKED ON THE DOOR OF HER APARTMENT.

SGT. GREGORY MCDONALD: The thing that really upset Kanika was, prior to her murder, a gentleman knocked on her door, and stated that he was an agent from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and he needed to speak with her in reference to a fraud investigation. She requested that he show her some identification, and he was holding what resembled a law enforcement badge up to her peep hole. He did not show her any kind of official identification. So, she refused to open her door and he walked away, and she never heard anything back from him. So, after that, she had the presence of mind to call her local FBI field office and inquire if an agent actually did need to speak with her. They checked, told her they did not. And if they need to speak with her, a lone agent would not respond out to her apartment by themselves. It would either be two or maybe three agents that will respond out to speak with her, and that was not the case. And they told her that they did not have an investigation that they needed to speak with her about. Her description of the subject that portrayed to be an FBI agent was: he was a black male, dressed in a black hat. He had black glasses and a black North Face jacket on in August, which is a hot time of the year in Maryland. So, when he left, she went to her side-window where she could see the exit of her apartment building. And she saw him walking towards the rental office, and she thought he was carrying some type of folder or maybe an envelope in his hand when he was walking away.

NARRATION:

KANIKA TOLD FRIENDS THE ONLY VEHICLE SHE SAW WAS A RED CAR SPEEDING AWAY FROM THE COMPLEX, BUT SHE COULDN'T BE SURE THAT IT WAS THE MAN WHO HAD KNOCKED ON HER DOOR.

JUDY POWELL FORREST: She said, "I don't know why this guy got on a North Face jacket in August." So that was another thing I didn't think about it at the time. I thought about it later. Why'd this person have on a jacket on in August? So, I'm thinking to myself after the fact, he must have been hiding the weapon or something in there. I don't know. So, she did call FBI the same night as she called the police.

SGT. GREGORY MCDONALD: Patrol officers were dispatched to the area. They responded out. They checked the area. And at that point, they advised her that they would increase the patrols in her neighborhood that day, and days following. Kanika also contacted her rental office and advised them of the situation.

NARRATION:

WHEN THEY RECEIVED HER EMAIL, KANIKA'S FRIENDS WERE IMMEDIATELY CONCERNED AND REACHED OUT TO HELP. THEY ALSO RECALLED A PUZZLING AND FORBODING COMMENT KANIKA MADE THE NIGHT BEFORE THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER SHOWED UP.

AYANA BALL WARD: So on the 22nd, we were all together, just a group of friends. We were all hanging out for my birthday and Kanika had whispered to myself and one of our other girlfriends, you know, "I need to tell y'all something, got something to talk to y'all about, but we could talk on Saturday." Well, when Saturday came, she called and I'm thinking we're about to talk about that. But she tells me that someone knocked on her door posing as an FBI agent. She said, "We'll talk about it later. Let me clear up all the stuff that I need to do right now with getting these reports filed for what happened today, and then we'll talk." But the conversation just never happened.

NARRATION:

BOTH KANIKA'S MOTHER AND AYANA WERE SO CONCERNED ABOUT THE FAKE FBI VISIT THAT THEY EACH TRIED TO GET KANIKA TO STAY WITH THEM FOR A FEW DAYS.

AYANA BALL WARD: I felt that it was really weird. I told her, "Hey, you can come stay with me at my house with my husband and my son, but maybe you shouldn't stay there tonight." She was like, "No, I'm gonna get up in the morning, and I'm gonna go on base, and I'm gonna get some protection, and I'm gonna get an alarm system put on my door. And, you know, I'm fine. I'm not gonna be scared to stay at my own house." I'm just thinking, okay, this is the military in her. The military has made her tough and, you know, believe that she gonna be okay. And I was like, "Okay, if you ever feel like you aren't safe, you can always come here." She was like, "Okay."

NARRATION:

THEN ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27TH, FOUR DAYS AFTER THE FIRST MYSTERIOUS VISIT, THERE WAS ANOTHER KNOCK AT KANIKA'S DOOR.

SGT. GREGORY MCDONALD: Several days after the subject portraying an FBI agent came to her door, a gentleman trying to be from FedEx to deliver a package to her arrived at her apartment building.

JUDY POWELL FORREST: Someone knocked on her door, said he had a package for her, delivery package. And she said, "Leave it at the door." "No, you got to sign for it." She said, "Well, I didn't order anything, so I'm not opening my door." And she called FedEx or UPS or whatever, she called them and asked them, had they sent a package to her? And they told her, "No, we don't have you on the list for delivery." So that was really scary.

NARRATION:

KANIKA'S COUSIN, WHO LIVED ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE DEERFIELD COMPLEX, HAD JUST ARRIVED HOME THAT EVENING AND SAW THE ALLEGED FEDERAL EXPRESS AGENT AT KANIKA'S APARTMENT.

SGT. GREGORY MCDONALD: The subject, they described him as being approximately six feet tall. He had facial hair and a beard. He was an African American male. He had a FedEx shirt on with either short, or the sleeves were cut off. He had shorts on that was made like the brand of Dickey-style shorts, short pants, white socks, tan Timberland boots that he was wearing. They never saw a FedEx truck nearby, nor did they see any type of vehicle that he entered and left the apartment complex in. He walked away and he left their eyesight.

NARRATION:

KANIKA WAS CONVINCED SHE WAS BEING STALKED BY SOMEONE, BUT HAD NO IDEA WHO IT COULD BE.

AYANA BALL WARD: When she was telling me about the FBI agents and the FedEx guy coming to the house, I asked. I said, "Who did you upset? Like, who did you go off on, or who did you say something to that maybe wasn't right, that you could've, you know, pissed somebody off?" And she was like, "I promise I haven't said anything to anybody. I don't know what's going on. I don't know what's happening." And she said, well, it's really weird because every time I come home from work, there's cigarette butts or, Black and Mild, it's like a cigar that has a tip on it. Those tips are laying on the ground in front of my door. Like somebody's sitting here waiting on me. And again, I told her, "Look, come on. Come stay at my house." And she was like, "Yeah, my mom said the same thing. She wants me to come stay with her." I said, "Well, I think you need to take one of us up on this offer. You need to come stay with one of us."

JUDY POWELL FORREST: She said, "Ma, I don't know whose cornflakes I done pissed on." You know, said, oh. I guess she mean, she don't know who she done ticked off, you know. But that was her little saying that she said. So that happened Wednesday night. Now, it's Thursday morning. And so, she said, "I'm not going to work today. I'm going to go and get my car serviced, because I'm driving to Atlanta, going out of town tomorrow," which was going to be Friday. "And I don't want to be out at night trying to get my car. I want to get it done when I get off work. I don't want to be out late trying to get my car serviced," and so forth. I said, "Okay, that sounds like a good idea." And before I know it, a couple hours after that, I got the phone call. That's when it dawned on me that this person had been trying to kill her for the last three days that they came to her house. And that's when everything just came down. I felt guilty that I didn't go over and get her out the apartment. It was awful. It was nothing that a parent ever want to hear.

SGT. GREGORY MCDONALD: The type of person that will commit this type of homicide is a true monster who has no regard for life. Broad daylight, they are driven to commit the crime that they're set out to do and they carried it out. That type of person is callous. No regard for life, for my opinion. And the number of years I've been a homicide, so... Really didn't care. It was mission driven.

NARRATION:

WHILE IT SEEMS CERTAIN THAT THE PREVIOUS VISITORS TO KANIKA'S APARTMENT WERE INVOLVED IN HER MURDER, INVESTIGATORS COME UP EMPTY TRYING TO IDENTIFY THEM.

SGT. GREGORY MCDONALD: We really can't say if the person portraying to be an agent from the FBI and the person that was portraying to be from a FedEx delivery person was one and the same. They could be one and the same or they could be two different people.

NARRATION:

WITH LITTLE TO GO ON, INVESTIGATORS TURN TO KANIKA'S PERSONAL LIFE. BY ALL ACCOUNTS SHE WAS WELL LIKED AND HAD NO ENEMIES.

SGT. GREGORY MCDONALD: She stuck closely with her primary friends that she was close with, and her family. Social life, she appeared to be pretty much a homebody, and she would go out socially with friends but did not appear she did that that often. She would go to work, come home, and that was type of lifestyle she led. The typical lifestyle that the average American leads. Go to work, come home, pay their bills, mind their business.

NARRATION:

HOWEVER, IN THE WEEKS BEFORE HER MURDER, THERE HAD BEEN A CHANGE IN KANIKA'S SOCIAL CIRCLE.

AYANA BALL WARD: I know that Kanika had started hanging with some new people, a new friend group outside of our normal friend group. And, me personally, I'm not the one that gravitates to new people. So, you know, I didn't hang with them at all. I'd never really hung out with them.

NARRATION:

KANIKA HAD BECOME CLOSE TO ONE WOMAN IN PARTICULAR AND THEY HAD STARTED DATING. THAT SAME WOMAN WAS APPARENTLY GOING TO JOIN KANIKA ON A WEEKEND TRIP TO ATLANTA FOR THE LGBTQ PRIDE FESTIVAL — THE TRIP THAT NEVER HAPPENED.

AYANA BALL WARD: Kanika was bisexual, but she didn't hide it, but she didn't offer the information either. She was very private about her relationships as well. It's not something she just put on the front street or blasted all over the internet or anything like that.

NARRATION:

KANIKA'S MOTHER JUDY MET KANIKA'S NEW FRIEND, JUST BRIEFLY.

JUDY POWELL FORREST: I just talked to her a couple of times, but when I first met her, I got, you know, a pretty warm feeling from her. You know, I'm a hugger. We always hug each other, and I hug her friends and stuff and we meet and we hugged. And, you know, my first time meeting her, I didn't get any ill feelings from her, but like I said, I didn't really know her either.

NARRATION:

WHAT JUDY DIDN'T KNOW AT THE TIME WAS THAT THIS NEW WOMAN HAD AN EX-BOYFRIEND, WHO MAY HAVE SEEN KANIKA AS A THREAT.

JUDY POWELL FORREST: I just thought to myself, maybe somebody didn't want her and that young lady to go to Atlanta together. They didn't want them to go out of town together. That's the only thing that I could come up with, because I don't believe it was the job. I don't believe it was any of — I know for a fact that wasn't any of her closest friends. This was the only thing. It was a young lady that was new to the circle, and all of this trouble started. So that's all I got to go by.

NARRATION:

AFTER THE MURDER, KANIKA'S LONG-TIME, CLOSEST FRIENDS BEGAN TALKING ABOUT THE EX-BOYFRIEND AND HOW HE WAS CLEARLY NOT HAPPY ABOUT KANIKA COMING INTO HER NEW FRIEND'S LIFE.

JUDY POWELL FORREST: They just said that he just had these weird looks about him, that he wasn't a very friendly person. They weren't very friendly looks. They didn't get very good vibes from him. I don't know. I never saw the person, never saw the guy, and never spoke to him. So, I have no idea what they meant. I just took their word for what they said. I guess he was jealous of Kanika and the young lady's relationship. I don't know. Kanika never told me herself. But this person, supposedly, it was her ex-boyfriend or something like that. I found all this out at the hospital. Like I said, after Kanika had been shot.

NARRATION:

COULD KANIKA'S MURDER BE THE RESULT OF HER NEW ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP?

JUDY POWELL FORREST: I know that that new friend she was talking to, I think she had told her she was going to get her car serviced and she wasn't going to work that day. They shot Kanika right there before she could even get in her apartment, around 11 in the morning. So I'm trying to figure out who knew she was home.

AYANA BALL WARD: The new friends that Kanika was hanging with, none of them showed up to the hospital. None of them showed up to the funeral from what I can remember from the funeral. They were nonexistent after this moment.

NARRATION:

DETECTIVES DECLINED TO REVEAL THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THEIR INVESTIGATION INTO KANIKA'S NEW FRIEND AND THE JEALOUS EX-BOYFRIEND.

SGT. GREGORY MCDONALD: At this moment, we do not have a person of interest in the murder of Kanika Powell.

JUDY POWELL FORREST: When her friends were coming over, and my nieces and them, and they were saying, you know, who they had suspected to be involved, that it was gonna be a slam dunk case. They was gonna go get this guy, arrest him, and he was gonna be charged for the murder of my daughter. And it did not happen and has not happened.

NARRATION:

TRAGICALLY, IN A BIZARRE COINCIDENCE, TWO AND A HALF MONTHS AFTER KANIKA WAS GUNNED DOWN, A 31-YEAR-OLD MAN NAMED SEAN GREEN WAS FATALLY SHOT NINE TIMES BY A MASKED ASSASSIN WHILE STOPPED AT A TRAFFIC LIGHT IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY. LIKE KANIKA, SEAN HAD A TOP SECRET SECURITY CLEARANCE FOR HIS JOB WITH THE GOVERNMENT.

JUDY POWELL FORREST: As soon as I read about the Sean Green case, oh they came out. People were calling me and texting me and, "Ooh, it sound just like Kanika's case."

NARRATION:

DETECTIVES CAN'T FIND ANY LINK BETWEEN THE TWO SLAYINGS AND CONCLUDE THEY'RE UNRELATED. THEN A NEW SUSPECT SURFACES IN CONNECTION WITH KANIKA'S MURDER: A YOUNG, SOFT-SPOKEN UPS WORKER NAMED JASON THOMAS SCOTT IS INDICTED IN 2009 FOR TWO MURDERS, AND IS QUICKLY LINKED TO THREE OTHERS. HE AND KANIKA HAD ATTENDED THE SAME HIGH SCHOOL AND JASON SCOTT'S M.O. WAS SIMILAR TO KANIKA'S KILLER. HE USED HIS JOB AS A UPS EMPLOYEE TO IDENTIFY, LOCATE AND STALK VICTIMS AT THEIR HOMES. BUT THERE WERE ALSO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN SCOTT'S M.O. AND KANIKA'S MURDER.

SGT. GREGORY MCDONALD: Jason Scott was interviewed in reference to this. He was ruled out as a suspect. This did not fit his method of operation, the way he operated. And it also was not the area that Jason committed all of his homicides and all of his crimes. He did not commit any crimes in the northern part of the county, and especially in Laurel.

NARRATION:

TODAY, SERGEANT MCDONALD CONTINUES TO LEAD THE COLD CASE INVESTIGATION INTO KANIKA'S MURDER AND HE'S EXHAUSTING EVERY AVENUE AND EVERY POSSIBLE LEAD.

SGT. GREGORY MCDONALD: The crime scene of Kanika Powell's murder, when it was processed, ballistic evidence was recovered. And over the years, every handgun that has been recovered in the county and nationally has been checked, and to this date forward, no handgun has been recovered that was used to murder Kanika. The most frustrating part of this investigation is we cannot develop a person of interest. We cannot develop why someone would want Kanika murdered. She did not participate in any criminal activity. She didn't participate in any gang activity. She didn't participate in any activity that would lead to her murder. We're going to need the community's help. Any information that anyone has, no matter how small, no matter how minute that they think it is. They may not think it's important to us. We wish for them to call us and provide that information to us, doesn't matter day, time, or when they want to call us. They can remain anonymous.

JUDY POWELL FORREST: I know there's somebody out there that knows. When she said two people came to her door, two people, I'm sure they told somebody. People don't keep everything to themselves. These episodes started Saturday before Kanika was murdered. Saturday, Wednesday and Thursday morning, when they kept coming to the house and then later Thursday morning when they were successful. You know, I just thought to myself, maybe somebody didn't wanna want her and that young lady to go to Atlanta together. They didn't want them to go outta town together. That's the only thing that I could come up with cuz I don't believe it was the job.

AYANA BALL WARD: I definitely think that jealousy could have been a motive or, I wouldn't say a hate crime. In the situation, I would just think it was jealousy more so than a hate crime.

NARRATION:

EVEN AS THEY PURSUE JUSTICE FOR KANIKA, HER FAMILY AND FRIENDS CONTINUE TO EMBRACE THE MEMORY OF THEIR DEAR LOVED ONE.

AYANA BALL WARD: What I miss most about Kanika is just her honesty, her friendship, her loyalty to myself and my family. That one person I knew I could count on to get a good laugh, that one person I knew I could call and, if I actually needed advice, she would give me top-tier advice on how I should handle a certain situation. She was my biggest supporter, and my biggest critic all at the same time. She was just a great person, a great friend and I miss all of that.

JUDY POWELL FORREST: What I loved the most about Kanika was her smile. What I missed the most about her, I miss that voice. You know, she'd come in, smiling. "Ma, what's up?" If she was living now, I know that we would still be close. We would still have that close relationship, and we'd be hanging out together, mother daughter, doing our little things from time to time. I had a beautiful relationship with my daughter, and I just wish that anybody that knows anything, or think they know anything, to still come forth and say something.

NARRATION:

IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THE MURDER OF KANIKA POWELL IN LAUREL, MARYLAND, CALL 1-866-411-TIPS OR GO TO UNSOLVED.COM.

NARRATION:

NEXT, ON UNSOLVED MYSTERIES:

SCOTTY HILL: I was told there were four bodies inside the double wide. Once we found out the extent of their injuries and the fact that their throats were cut, and then they were shot postmortem, it seemed very personal and somebody full of rage and hate. I've never seen anything like it before or since.

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Unsolved Mysteries is a production of Cosgrove Meurer Productions and Cadence 13, an Audacy company.

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Thanks for listening to Episode 74 of Unsolved Mysteries.