

# The System\_104

**Disclaimer** 00:00

The System contains adult content and may not be suitable for all audiences. Listener discretion is advised.

**Tonya Strong** 00:17

Is there anything you can say right now in your own defense?

**Kevin Keith** 00:20

I did not harm anyone and I love kids. I would never do that to nobody's kids. Never. I did not do this crime.

**Michael Corwin** 00:28

See here, who's this?

**Quanita Reeves** 00:28

Daddy's friend.

**Michael Corwin** 00:36

See I got six pictures.

**Quanita Reeves** 00:39

Okay,

**Michael Corwin** 00:40

Right here. Okay, I just want you to look at them. And if you can't see him that's okay, but if you see him, you just point at him and you tell me which one he is.

**Rachel Troutman** 00:47

I have never seen a more biased photo lineup for somebody to pick Kevin in this case, and she did not.

**Quanita Reeves** 00:56

The fat man looks like him, but that's not him though.

**Michael Corwin** 00:59

That looks like him, but that's not him?

**Quanita Reeves** 01:01

No.

**Michael Corwin** 01:01

Because the guy you saw doesn't have a lump on his head?

**Dr. Scott Groenland** 01:06

Non-identification research shows is actually indicative of innocence. And so I argued that her identification actually lends support the idea that Kevin Keith was not the perpetrator.

**Richard Warren** 01:17

When I asked Marichell who's that, she said, Kevin something. He said, you should have thought about that before your brother started ratting on people.

**Lori Rothschild** 01:31

Captain Stanley records the call and this woman identifies herself as Amy Gimmets and she is the ICU nurse taking care of Richard Warren. And Amy Gimmets says, he's saying that a guy named Kevin is the one who shot him. The problem is that there is no Amy Gimmets that worked at that hospital.

**Richard Warren** 01:49

Can I ask you a question? What is that guy's name?

**Michael Corwin** 01:54

Well, Kevin, you got the right first name.

**Rachel Troutman** 01:59

It's very troubling that nobody can pinpoint exactly when and how the name Kevin came into the case.

**Kim Kardashian** 02:11

So far, we've heard Richard Warren say that his girlfriend told him the name Kevin before she was shot that night. We've heard Quanita say that the shooter was someone named Bruce. The police didn't interview Quanita until after Kevin was arrested. Over the course of several years while investigating this project, the team reached out to the surviving victims, Quanita Reeves, Quentin Reeves and Richard Warren, who politely declined to be involved with this project. And we totally understand given the horrific circumstances. I really used to think that justice was black and white. And that if someone did something heinous, the truth would be revealed and the right person would be held accountable. But now, I don't think it's always that simple.

I'm Kim Kardashian, and this is The System.

**News Clip** 03:06

Three members of the Chatman family were killed including four year old Marchae Chatman. Three others were shot several times each but surprisingly did not die. What if one of the survivors from the shooting says that you did this?

**Kevin Keith** 03:20

I can't believe that because I wasn't there.

**News Clip** 03:23

Now we're told that's exactly what happened, all three, with the two kids identifying him as Uncle Kevin. We're told Keith shot the kids he once babysat for because he didn't know they were going to be there but couldn't risk leaving any survivors as witnesses. Our sources say, the only part of the plan that backfired. This is the Bucyrus police chief the day after Kevin Keith was arrested.

**Chief Joe Barron** 03:48

Well, I didn't go to bed last night worried that we had the wrong man. Not at all.

**Kim Kardashian** 04:00

After Kevin's arrest on February 15, 1994, news outlets began to report that all three surviving victims had pointed the finger at Kevin Keith. This in fact wasn't entirely true. Richard Warren had given the name Kevin, but as you heard Quanita identified the shooter as Bruce. Also, when shown the photo lineup with Kevin's picture as number five, Quanita denied that number five was the gunman that she saw that night. Richard said that he couldn't be 100% sure.

**News Clip** 04:52

The motion for a change of venue was filed eight minutes before the trial was set to begin. Keith's attorney James Banks called the article which appeared Monday inflammatory and said his client was being denied a fair trial.

**Kim Kardashian** 05:06

The morning of the trial, a local newspaper, The Mansfield News Journal, ran the headline "Three Survivors Finger Keith." Police Chief Joe Baron has been interviewed for the article. James Banks brought a copy of the newspaper into the courtroom and presented it to the judge as an example of the media strategically influencing the trial. He argued that the jury might be unjustly influenced by the release of this headline timed with the beginning of the trial, which was just starting three months after the murders.

**Attorney James Banks** 05:40

This man has been tried and convicted in this town by the Mansfield News Journal, through information given by the police chief. Through my investigation, and I only had a short time to do it, I found that not only did the Chief give this information, but he also called the Mansfield News Journal editor and requested that he run the article. And here it is, on the front page headlines the morning that were to go to trial, stating that the survivors have fingered Keith. And he alludes to fingerprints, there is no lab report whatsoever with fingerprints of Kevin Keith on any type of evidence.

**Kim Kardashian** 06:19

This wasn't the first time Banks raised an issue with Kevin's trial.

**Attorney James Banks** 06:23

Still of all the jurors that we've seen thus far there have been no minorities, not to suggest that the system is not fair or adequate because we understand how it's done. And it's done through computer and numbers, but when the court has the discretion to increase the number of jurors that can be used

as peremptory challenges for our side, we would respectfully request the court to increase that to 12. And so there was no question on the defensive side about his ability to be able to pick a fair jury.

**Kim Kardashian 06:58**

To help mitigate the defense's concerns about the jury pool, Banks ask the judge for 12 peremptory challenges instead of six. This would allow both sides to reject 12 jurors prior to the start of the trial without having to state a reason. Judge Kimerline denied this request. Despite all these concerns, the trial proceeded in Crawford County as scheduled, leaving Kevin Keith to be tried by an all white jury.

**News Clip 07:30**

Keith's family and friends are still professing his innocence, and some are questioning the decision of an all white jury.

**Kim Kardashian 07:34**

In Richard Warren's recorded statement, he says that the night of the murders his girlfriend, victim Marichell Chatman mentioned Kevin was involved in some recent drug bust. So if this was true, what was Marichell talking about? What exactly was Kevin's criminal history? And what would be the motive for this crime? For anyone? This is Chief Joe Barron back in 1994.

**Chief Joe Barron 08:07**

Well, I don't believe we were looking at any kind of a robbery motive. So I would say that a random attack would be I think we've pretty clearly eliminated that as being the motive. So the whoever killed them was trying to kill them. It appears that it was directed towards these people. Yes.

**Lori Rothschild 08:28**

So if you look into Kevin Keith's past, Kevin Keith was a drug dealer.

**Kim Kardashian 08:34**

This is Lori Rothschild, again, a TV producer and innocence advocate.

**Lori Rothschild 08:40**

He, you know, he was, he's not shy to this day to tell you that he didn't have a perfect life. He wasn't, he wasn't a you know, a clean, upstanding citizen, and he wasn't trying to put food on his table. He wasn't trying to feed his kids. He liked the power of selling drugs. That's who he was. And he ran with his family and dealt drugs. But we're not talking really, really big time drug dealer. We're talking about a small time drug dealer. You know.

**Kim Kardashian 09:11**

The following interview is between Kevin and Tonya Strong at News Five. This interview was conducted while Kevin was in custody.

**Tonya Strong 09:21**

Kevin, you were recently indicted on a cocaine trafficking charge.

**Kevin Keith** 09:25

Yes.

**Tonya Strong** 09:27

And you do have a prior conviction for robbery, I believe of a purse snatching from a few years ago.

**Kevin Keith** 09:32

Yes.

**Tonya Strong** 09:35

Someone looking at this might say well, he has a prior record. What's to stop him from going to the next step and actually killing somebody especially if he's been involved with drugs and perhaps was not thinking properly, was not of sound mind.

**Kevin Keith** 09:51

I couldn't hurt anybody Tanya. Let alone shoot somebody. I couldn't do it.

**Tonya Strong** 09:56

While I'm playing devil's advocate here, you stole somebody's purse.

**Kevin Keith** 10:00

I was younger, it was stupid.

**Tonya Strong** 10:06

Detectives are also saying that this is drug related yet they say the victims were not involved with drugs. Do you know anything about that?

**Kevin Keith** 10:14

No, I don't know anything about that.

**Tonya Strong** 10:18

How've the last 48 hours, last 72 hours been for you?

**Kevin Keith** 10:22

I haven't slept. I laid down but I haven't slept. I just can't, just believe that they would even think I would do a thing like this.

**Tonya Strong** 10:29

Who's they?

**Kevin Keith** 10:30

The police.

**Tonya Strong** 10:33

Why can't you believe that police believe you would do it?

**Kevin Keith** 10:36

Because I haven't done anything. Well, I had that one robbery. When I snatched that purse, but I paid for that. And I wouldn't do a thing like that.

**Kim Kardashian** 10:49

The only violence on Kevin's record was a robbery. He had previously been charged with pushing down a woman and stealing her bag. The other crimes on his record were thefts and a failure to pay city income tax. In the last episode, we played Richard Warren's interview with the police. In that interview, he stated right before the shootings that Marichell told him the man in the apartment was named Kevin, but Richard couldn't remember the last name. Richard also stated that Marichell said the man in the apartment was involved in a recent drug bust. Later on, Richard remembers that the gunman told the family begging for their lives, "You should have thought about that before your brother ratted on me." I had a few questions about this. What drug bust was Marichell referencing? Who was supposedly the rat and who did the rat tell?

**Damon Chatman** 11:40

People was drug dealing you know, that's like when crack cocaine hit the scene around in like the 80s. But then it kept getting bigger and bigger, so. That's what everybody was dealing was crack cocaine. Kevin was dealing crack cocaine and my brother was hooked on crack cocaine. He got in trouble with the police and wore a wire on Kevin and his family and that's why, that why this all happened over some drugs.

**Kim Kardashian** 12:10

This is Damon Chatman again, victim Marichell Chatman's brother. Their other brother is Rudel Chatman, allegedly a local drug dealer. And at the time, a police informant.

**Damon Chatman** 12:22

Because we already knew that, you know what, what's going on about the snitch and stuff. And nearly got his family put in jail and stuff. And he was the one that wanted revenge on on my brother. And like I say he didn't have to shoot no innocent people that didn't do nothing to him. Even if you know my brother snitched on him or whatever. He still didn't have to go there and kill my people. Because they didn't have nothing to do with it. They know nothing that was going on. Not a dang thing. They would still be here. If it wasn't for him snitching on Kevin Keith.

**Kim Kardashian** 12:56

Damon says that he and his family partially blamed his brother Rudel for the murders of Marichell, Marchae, and Linda. Damon said his brother Rudel was involved in drugs at the time, and had accepted a deal from the police in exchange for ratting on other drug dealers in the area, including Kevin. Again, this is Damon's personal belief.

**Damon Chatman** 13:18

I told him straight out you got my sister killed. You got our niece killed. You know, for the stupid things that you did because you wanted to run around here and be on some drugs and messing around with these, messing around with Kevin and all them people you know, and I don't care what nobody say. He did that to Kevin and Kevin, then Kevin turned around and got revenge by killing my family. All over some drugs stuff, which neither one of them was a man to me.

**Kim Kardashian** 13:53

Kevin Keith was in fact drug dealing around this time in 1994. A group of dealers including a few members of the Keith family had recently been arrested during a drug bust in January, which we'll go into later on. But it's important to note that Kevin was not the only one arrested during this bust. Kevin was out on bail for these drug charges when he was arrested for the Bucyrus Estates murders.

**Tonya Strong** 14:19

So why you? Why do they arrest you as the suspect in this?

**Kevin Keith** 14:23

Probably because I'm black.

**Kim Kardashian** 14:25

Again, this audio is from Kevin's interview with Tonya Strong. During the interview, Kevin sits next to his attorney James Banks who allows him to answer Tonya's questions. But occasionally Banks steps in.

**Tonya Strong** 14:39

Think about some of the coincidences though. You know, this family. They say it's drug related, you have a recent charge against you that involves drugs.

**Attorney James Banks** 14:52

So does 20 other people were involved in this same last recently. And certainly it'd be important to try to think about who all would have a motive instead of just one particular person.

**Tonya Strong** 15:04

Well, let's get back to motive. There's something else that you told me when you heard about this crime. You weren't necessarily surprised.

**Kevin Keith** 15:12

No I'm surprised because I had picked my girl up from work and she came out crying and I was shocked. Cause I thought it was my two nephews in it too.

**Tonya Strong** 15:21

You've been charged with trafficking, were you trafficking?

**Attorney James Banks** 15:23

He can't answer that right now, because of the pending litigation so.

**News Clip** 15:30

The Crawford County prosecutor confirmed Keith was convicted of a theft almost a decade ago. But more importantly, Keith is currently under indictment for cocaine trafficking and was out on bond at the time of the shootings. And other sources tell us the victims were friends of a witness scheduled to testify against Keith in his drug trial and that the shootings were designed to persuade them not to talk. The prosecutor would not confirm or deny this.

**Prosecutor** 15:56

I really don't want to confirm or deny that at this point, for reasons that I have to keep kind of to myself. Now, there's a lot of people that were interested in protecting, and again, I don't want to try the case in the media.

**Lori Rothschild** 16:07

Once I got further into the case, I realized that what everyone believes to be the motive of this case is that Marichell's other brother, one brother Damon, who ran into the apartment that night, her other brother is a guy named Rudel Chatman. Rudel Chatman was a known confidential informant for the police. He was known to snitch on local drug dealers to keep himself out of harm's way. And it is very common knowledge now that the motive of this case regardless of who went into that apartment and shot those people was because of Rudel's being a confidential informant and snitching. The problem is, which case was he snitching on that would cause a murder? Right, that would cause not a murder, but a gruesome murder of women and children. So when you look into Kevin Keith's past, and this is what the cops did, right? So now they have the name Kevin Keith, now they need a motive. And the motive, is okay well, we know that the killer was after Rudel, but why? Why would he be after Rudel? Well Rudel just snitched on the Keith family two weeks before when there was a drug raid in Crestline, Ohio. And two weeks prior, there was, right before this, you know, this awful massacre happens. The Keith family is caught dealing drugs. And Rudel was the snitch. So to the police, that was enough for them to say well, they're pissed at Rudel, the Keith family's pissed at Rudel. And Kevin being this big drug dealer took it upon himself to go find Rudel and make him pay for this. Right?

**News Reporter** 18:06

All the people say you were trying to get back at one of the Chatman family members for being in essence, the stool pigeon in this drug case?

**Kevin Keith** 18:17

No. I'd never hurt those kids.

**News Reporter** 18:22

Does that motive make sense?

**Kevin Keith** 18:23

No, it doesn't make sense. That was, even if I was charged with a drug crime, that would, that wouldn't provoke me to do something like kill up a bunch of women and kids.

**News Reporter** 18:34



Well you are charged with a drug crime.

**Kevin Keith** 18:39

That wouldn't provoke me to do anything violent like that.

**Lori Rothschild** 18:43

And again, if you look at that crime, and you look at those drug raids, what was Kevin facing? Kevin wasn't facing really that much, nothing that he was afraid of. I mean, Kevin, Kevin Keith had already done time in prison. He knew what it was like to go away for a few months. And, you know, in talking to Kevin, and other people who have dealt drugs in this way, in my career, it's part of the game, they know that that at some point, they could get caught. You know, and what are they facing? You know, what are they facing? Well, they're facing, probably have to go away for 90 days, probably gonna have to go away for six months, a year and a half, whatever it might be. It's almost part of their existence. It's part of the hustle, is knowing that you can get caught, right? That's the way Kevin Keith talks about it and other drug dealers too, once they get caught. So he wasn't afraid of going to prison, especially for what would have amounted if you look at the paperwork on that case, to a Felony Three. Felony Three is, you know, it's not great. I mean, so it's not, it's not the best thing in the world to have a felony on your record. But Kevin Keith wasn't afraid of that. And he certainly wasn't going to kill Rudel over it, based on what I've talked to Kevin about, like, why would he? Why would he murder children who he babysat for? Women and children, why would he do that? So the question then becomes, well, what about the alternative suspects?

**Kim Kardashian** 20:32

Theoretically, the Keith's family drug dealings were not the only offenses, Rudel could have known about and ratted on. There was other criminal activity happening in the area, and we'll get into that later. Let's take a look back on what we know. We've heard from the surviving victims. We've heard Kevin's alibi. We've established potential motive. So what about the other suspects? Do the police have any other names? When you look at the case file, it seems like they did. There's one police report from the night of the murders. That seems inconsequential at first. But when you follow that thread, it brings up a lot of questions.

**Lori Rothschild** 21:14

In one of the police reports, a Sheriff Schober he said he advised that the night of the shootings, he was at the scene. He was sitting in his vehicle and stated that a man named Rodney Melton was also at the scene and came over to his car and spoke to him. And, you know, again, you have to remember that the sheriff's thought it weird enough to actually put it in a case file. Like he actually went back and had to type this out. Back in 1994, it wasn't like he was cutting and pasting, he was actually typing it on a typewriter. So it had to be really important to include it right? And he says that he found it curious that Rodney Melton made it a point of knocking on his window, and telling him that his own car was broken down and that he had to get a ride from Mansfield to come over when he heard about the the shootings. From the 30,000 foot view, it might seem like nothing, some nosy guy knocking on a window and being like, Hey, what happened here? My car's in the shop, like I couldn't get here, whatever. And Sheriff Schober, again, these people know each other enough. And again, I didn't, right, so I'm like, oh, that that's kind of curious. Why would he put that in a report? Why would that be important? The police

started investigating, well, who could be this large black man they didn't know the name Kevin until hours and hours later, they have all night to start putting together the pieces of the puzzle, right? So one of the things about this case is that, is the car, right, is that cream colored, light colored vehicle that smashes into the snowbank. So the surviving victim is Richard Warren, the guy who got up and ran to the restaurant, and you have Quanita and Quentin Reeves, the little kids who actually survive. The only other person, the only other eyewitness is a woman named Nancy Smathers. And she's one of the neighbors. She's the neighbor who heard the gunshots, who looked out the front door and saw the large black man running, getting into a cream colored vehicle and smashing it into the snowbank and getting away. When that killer smashed that car into the front end into the snowbank it actually left an imprint of the front of that car, including an imprint of the license plate. So they could see three letter numerals you know of that license plate in the snow. So they had a partial license plate that night, they had a description, large black man, which could be anybody. What does large mean to you? What does large mean to someone else? Cream colored vehicle with a 043 specifically in the license plate. And that's what they had. They had that's all they had and they didn't tie Kevin to any vehicle at the time of his arrest, to any vehicle ever, being cream colored with those three numbers.

**Tonya Strong** 24:16

How do you explain the license plate imprint in the snow that detectives say perhaps played a role in them fingering you for this as a suspect?

**Kevin Keith** 24:28

I don't even have license plates on my car. I have 30 day tags.

**Attorney James Banks** 24:31

He has a 30 day tag on his car.

**Tonya Strong** 24:36

You have a 30 day tag on your car?

**Kevin Keith** 24:38

Yes.

**Tonya Strong** 24:39

And you don't drive any other car.

**Kevin Keith** 24:41

No.

**Tonya Strong** 24:41

With your license plate on it?

**Kevin Keith** 24:43

No.

**Tonya Strong** 24:43

What kind of car did you drive?

**Kevin Keith** 24:45

A Dynasty, Chrysler light blue.

**Tonya Strong** 24:47

What year?

**Kevin Keith** 24:50

80...88.

**Tonya Strong** 24:52

Okay. When we get finished with the interview, I'd like the license plate number, so that we can compare everything.

**Attorney James Banks** 24:58

Where's your car?

**Kevin Keith** 25:00

Over at Miss Davison's apartment.

**Attorney James Banks** 25:02

Okay, it's parked there now?

**Tonya Strong** 25:06

Can you explain the license plate either you or your attorney?

**Attorney James Banks** 25:09

Well, my understanding at this point in time is that the prosecutor is not pursuing that because the license numbers that they thought belong to him, the numbers didn't prove out. Then in talking to him and him verifying the fact that he had 30 day tags instead of steel plates. There's no way a 30 day tag could leave an imprint in the snowbank or however they were calculating that.

**Lori Rothschild** 25:32

Weeks after Kevin's arrest, they pull over Melanie Davison in her grandfather's car, which is kind of like a greenish. It's like a green car. It's a greenish blueish car.

**Kim Kardashian** 25:47

Just as a reminder, Melanie Davison is Kevin's girlfriend, his secret girlfriend, if you will. This is the woman Kevin went to visit in Mansfield on the night of the murders.

**Lori Rothschild** 25:58

She actually goes to visit Kevin in prison in jail. He's he's in jail that at that moment, and Melanie being Melanie, and bringing stuff into Kevin, sneaks a joint in to Kevin in his the waistband of a pair of sweatpants. But she happens to go and do that and takes her grandfather's car. And it's his green colored car that unfortunately has 043 in the license plate. It's a green car 043, she takes it to the jail to go see Kevin. And she gets stopped. She gets stopped because she brings in the joint but then they're like, hey, wait a minute. This car is 043 in the license plate. Maybe this is the car that Kevin used to commit the crime. Now they do, they impound the car. They look in the car, Kevin Keith's DNA, nothing is in that car that matches to Kevin Keith at all. But still now they have a light colored car with a 043 that Kevin could have had access to. They believe that's the car that he used to crash into the snowbank. This is something that sticks with you, right. It's like, and it seems impossible. Like if you think about it, it's like, that's something that you really trip over in this case. You do, you trip over it. And the other really unfortunate part of it is that Melanie had the tires changed on the car. Now why would she do that?

**Rachel Troutman 27:35**

Over the years that I worked on Kevin's case, Melanie Davison was difficult to get hold of.

**Kim Kardashian 27:41**

Here's Rachel Troutman, Kevin's current attorney from the Ohio Public Defenders office.

**Rachel Troutman 27:46**

She had at least on one occasion expressed that she did not want to be involved and to not contact her. And then one day after Kevin's death sentence was commuted to life. I got a phone call from her. And she agreed to talk to me and she agreed to do it under oath. My main question dealt with the tires because nobody knew why the tires had been changed. So in talking to Melanie, she was very, very teary eyed during the whole conversation. She was clearly kind of embarrassed, seemed kind of traumatized. She talked about how she would use her grandfather's car on occasion, she had her own car, but she was having multiple different sexual relationships. And some of the men she had relationships with were married. And so from time to time, her car would get messed with, as she put it. I think one time, she noted that she thought her tank was sugared. So her car was not working. And she needed to get to nursing school. And so she had borrowed her grandfather's car. In January, she said it was about January 1994. She remembered coming out to go to school and her tires had been slashed. She used her doughnut and she borrowed a tire from a neighbor or somebody who lived around there. And she was able to get the car to Blevins Tires, which was nearby, got four new tires put on the car. And so she was very kind of assuming that the reason this was happening to her was because of her relationships. And she was really, really embarrassed about the idea that her grandfather would find out. And so she she didn't want him asking questions about who would possibly slash your tires. She mentioned how she was their first grandchild and kind of the apple of their eye. And I asked her, you know, if he ever found out the truth, and she said that after everything came out, you know, obviously at the time when she had switched out the tires, she didn't know that this car was going to be the subject of you know, in a murder trial. But after everything came out, she she told the truth to her grandfather. Let him know what had happened. But she was adamant. I mean, she was adamant with the police at the time. And she was still adamant in 2010 when I interviewed her. Kevin had never been in that car and he had never certainly never driven it because her grandfather wouldn't

have permitted it and she would not have violated that rule with him. It was probably about three weeks after the crime occurred and Melanie was going to visit Kevin in jail. She drove her grandfather's car and she brought I think it was a pair of sweatpants with a joint in it to go visit Kevin and she signed in under the name Sherry Brown. Pretty immediately I believe she was identified as you know trying to smuggle in this this marijuana cigarette and that that was not the, not a correct name. And so the person who was at the desk, they contacted the patrolmen who was out on the street gave him the description of the woman and he was able to pull her over. And he noticed the 043. That day, I believe they impounded the car and took it to have it be processed and examined for any single piece of forensic evidence they could find that would link it to Kevin into the scene. The police question Melanie, right after they picked her up with the car, and she described the evening's events from February 13th. And she told them that Kevin came over to her house, she told them about how they went to Gracie Keith's house and they ended up back at her house. Then they also asked her about the car whether Kevin had ever been in that car. And she said no, he had not had it that evening. She also talked about how the police never even asked her about whether she had changed the tires on the car. And I asked Melanie, if she happened to have a receipt still. It was 16 years afterward, so she said absolutely I do not. I believe I tried somehow to locate it. And I think Lori has also tried to see if she could identify or find a way to get a receipt to prove that sale. That's one of those things that if I could go back in time, if they had just asked her at the time, maybe at that point, you know, they could have gone and gotten that receipt. But nobody questioned her about it. But regardless, she wanted him to have four matching tires. So then she went to Blevins and got the four matching tires.

**Kim Kardashian** 32:20

Here's Melanie.

**Melanie** 32:21

Well, he would have known and they would want to know what was going on. I didn't want them to think that I wasn't taking care of the car. There's a lot of responsibility. I felt. I mean, nobody put this on me. This was what I felt that I needed to do. So I said that I needed to go and get my grandfather's some new tires.

**Lori Rothschild** 32:21

That's her story. It's flimsy, it's weird. I don't, I like do believe her right away. It's weird. Like the whole thing is strange, like to the 043. And now you just happen to change all four tires, ones that was used in a murder, and they have tire track impressions of the actual getaway car. You know, and so I've talked to Kevin about the car a lot, because it bothers me. And every time I talk to him that it's always the same answer. It's like, Lori, I never drove that car. I can't tell you. I have no idea. I was never in that car was never allowed to drive that car. I was driving Zina's car. I had a blue Dynasty. I was in that car that they dusted for fingerprints. Go find it. They didn't. They have me in a car that I was never in. And he's consistent in this. So the first piece of the puzzle is, well who is this large black man, and by the way, Nancy Smathers said she saw a cream colored vehicle and when they started looking at the imprint of that car, the 043, they started looking immediately into who that could be. So I actually have the original report of that. So they start looking into it. So one of the first things that they do is they run a report, right? Who in Ohio has 043 license plate in this in this area and matches a cream colored vehicle and they do that and this is February the 14th, hours after. You can see right from this, this is the actual

police report that Rodney Melton is the suspect that they have. Rodney Melton, cream colored light colored vehicle, it's a 79 Impala. So he's already on their radar. So probably that's why Sheriff Schober thought it important that he referenced that Rodney Melton not only knocked on his window and said hey what's going on. But he thought it really important to say hey, my car is broken down. I had to get a ride from Mansfield. What car? You mean your cream colored car that actually matches that only matches the description of the eyewitness saying the killer got into and got away but actually has a 043 in the license plate. You mean that car? Why would he tell that? Sounds like he's making an alibi for himself. And why would a sheriff think that that would be important to put into the document for this case. We know that Rodney Melton grew up and lived in Crestline. And the murders happened in Bucyrus. And that's about 30 minutes away 30 to 35 minutes away from each other. So that's where he lived. Where he was that night, I can't tell you. I had no idea what the connection was to to the Chatman family but I can tell you this. Rodney Melton has a brother named Bruce.

**Kim Kardashian 36:08**

So the police had other leads, but the only person charged with this crime was Kevin. You can see these police reports for yourself by visiting the website hyperlinked in our episode description. We'll go deeper into this next time on The System. The System: The Case of Kevin Keith is a Spotify Original Series, produced in partnership with Big City TV and Tenderfoot TV. I'm Kim Kardashian, your host and Executive Producer. From Big City TV, Executive Producer is Lori Rothschild Ansalidi. From Tenderfoot TV, Executive Producers are Donald Albright and Payne Lindsey. Lead Creative Producer is Meredith Stedman. Production, editing, and sound design by Tristen Bankston and Cameron Tagge. Production Manager is Tracy Kaplan. Music by Makeup and Vanity Set. Mixed and mastered by Cooper Skinner. With additional support by Devin Johnson. Additional sound design by Cooper Skinner. Associate Producer is Jaime Albright. Voice work by Miles Agee. From Spotify, Executive Producers are Julie McNamara and Liz Gateley with support from Podcast Executive Lila Benaissa. Senior Program Manager is Jessica Dao with support from Program Associate Matt Greene. Special thanks to Dawn Ostroff, Tracy Romulus, Christy Welder, Ollie Ayling, Travis White, and all the cross-functional teams at Spotify that helped bring this program to life. Visit the link in our show page or in the episode description for more resources on this case. New episodes of The System: The Case of Kevin Keith come out every Monday on Spotify. Be sure to hit the follow button so you never miss an episode.