

**Proof: A True Crime Podcast**  
**Season 1: Russian Roulette**  
**Episode 2 - Us Rome Boys**  
**Monday, March 14, 2022**

**[Phone Rings]**

**Kevin Fitzpatrick:** Hey

**Jacinda Davis:** Hey, do you have a minute?

**Kevin Fitzpatrick:** Yeah.

**Jacinda:**

We just spent three-and-a-half hours with Amanda Bowling, Brian's sister.

**Kevin:** Wow. Okay.

**Jacinda:**

She told a story which I found heartbreaking. You know, after it all happened, Josh was sitting on her parents' bed and he was crying and, and emotional and she went in and hugged and said, "Don't worry, it's gonna be okay. It'll all work out."

And it's heartbreaking because that was genuine, like, she genuinely felt that way and I think she loved Josh and then she now thinks he did it, you know?

**Kevin:**

At the moment did she think it was an accident, that he had shot Brian, or did she think it was, like, Brian may have done this?

**Susan Simpson:**

She thought Brian had done it because that's what they were being told. So, yes, she believed it was Russian roulette or somehow Brian shot himself and she did not doubt that.

**[01:08] Susan Simpson:** In the aftermath of Brian's death, though, his family did begin to have doubts about what Cain Joshua Storey had told them. And investigators would later conclude that Brian's injury had not been self-inflicted, that he had instead been shot by someone else.

Eventually, Cain would be charged with Brian's murder. But investigators also concluded that he hadn't done this crime alone. They believe that he had to have had help. And that's how Lee Clark ended up being charged in this case as well.

**Kevin:**

But everybody keeps insisting he was there. I don't even understand why Dallas Battle, or the cops had to physically put him there.

**Jacinda Davis:** They couldn't believe Cain could have done it, or Josh.

**Dan the Cameraman:** Right.

**Kevin Fitzpatrick:** It made sense.

**Jacinda:**

This makes sense. Of course, it was Lee who put him up to it. Of course, it was.

**Susan Simpson:**

They are just certain that Josh would not have done this alone and couldn't have done it. That they can't get past. So, there has to be a Lee or someone like Lee. Lee had to have been there, otherwise, Josh wouldn't have done it.

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**[02:05] Susan Simpson:** Hi, my name is Susan Simpson. I'm an attorney and podcaster and previously I hosted the *Undisclosed* podcast.

**Jacinda Davis:** Hi, I'm Jacinda Davis, and I'm a true crime TV producer.

Last year Susan and I decided to team up and re-investigate the murder of Brian Bowling. Along with Kevin Fitzpatrick, president of Red Marble Media, we decided to launch – Proof.

You can listen to *Proof* like you would any podcast.

And you can Follow us everywhere with the handle @proofcrimepod, and on our website, proofcrimepod.com

Thanks for listening and welcome to Season One, Episode 2 of *PROOF*.

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**[02:52] Jacinda Davis:** Floyd County, Georgia is a little over an hour northwest of Atlanta, in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. The town of Rome is the county seat, set among seven hills, just like the Italian city it's named for.

Rome is a mid-sized town, with a cute downtown area, with shops and restaurants that line the main street.

The community of Silver Creek, where Brian Bowling and Cain Storey grew up, is about 10 miles south of Rome.

It's a rural area. And on the stretch of highway where Brian and Cain lived, there's only one commercial establishment, the Silver Creek Mini Mart, it's a little convenience store just a quarter of a mile from the Bowlings' trailer.

Last year, we met up with Lee's brother Jamie who showed us around where Cain and Brian had lived. And on our way, we stopped by the Silver Creek Mini Mart.

**Kevin:** So we're gonna drive up on this road here and make a left?

**Jamie Clark:** Yeah, yeah.

**Kevin:** Okay.

**Susan:** Does that sign say "BitCoin?"

**Jamie:** Yeah, it does. A lot of...

**Kevin:** They take BitCoin here.

**Dan the Cameraman:** Yeah.

**Susan:** BitCoin and live bait! BitCoin, ATM, and live bait in one store.

**Jamie:** Oh, It's got ding ding in there, too.

**Jacinda Davis:** It's got what?

**Jamie:** Ding ding. Y'all ain't never played ding ding?

**Susan:** No, what's ding ding?

**Jamie:**

Oh my goodness it's so fun. It's gambling.

Yeah, see yeah turn left right here. Man this is so growed up. None of this was grown up like this back then. It was all flat grass, I mean you can see it's changed so much.

**[04:23] Susan Simpson:** Back when Jamie was a kid, he and his brother would often hang out in this part of Silver Creek.

**Jacinda:** Okay, so who's older, you or Lee?

**Jamie:** Lee. He's got me by two years.

**Jacinda:** Were you guys close growing up?

**Jamie:** Yeah, we was real close. When they'd let me hang out with them.

**Jacinda:** Well, tell me about his friend group.

**Jamie:**

We had a little group, it was me, Doug, Don, Cain. Which, some of them called him Josh, but most people that knowed him called him Cain. Brian.

We all run together. We'd hang out in that cemetery, around his house and stuff. We'd go over to Cain's house and spend the night.

**[05:12] Susan:** One Friday evening in October of 1996, it was just Jamie, Lee, and Cain hanging out together.

They'd driven around, listened to music, smoked a joint. Nothing too exciting. And then Cain had shown them the revolver. A Smith & Wesson .38 Chief's Special. Cain said he'd taken it from his father's bedroom.

**Jamie:**

That night, I got - Lee and Cain had been riding around and I, I, they picked me up in Lindale. Then we pulled in here, dropped Cain off, he got out of the car, Lee told Cain, he needed to get that gun back to his daddy's safe and put it up. Cain said that's where he was going, he was going home. And that's the last we've seen of Cain.

**Jacinda:** Which way did Cain go?

**Jamie:**

He went on the other side of the store, he went behind the store to the road back here. This road back here goes right down past Brian's house.

**Susan:** Should we head over there?

**[06:17] Jacinda:** The trailer where Brian lived is still there behind the Silver Creek Mini-Mart, but it's been abandoned for years now. It's broken down to the point, that the first time Susan and I went there, we couldn't even recognize it from the crime scene photos.

[GPS – Your destination in on the left]

**Susan:** Really.

**Jacinda:** There it is.

**Susan:** That's it? That's the trailer?

**Jacinda:** Are we sure that's it?

**Susan:** No, but...

**Jacinda:** How come nobody puts a...

**Susan:** Yeah, why doesn't anybody believe in mailboxes?

**Jacinda:** And I thought he lived across the street from a cemetery?

**Susan:** That could be it right there, that's it.

**Jacinda:** So, I think we go down that road.

**Susan:** Down the creepy road past the cemetery?

**Jacinda:** Yup.

**Jacinda:** Jamie had no trouble finding or recognizing the place that 25 years earlier, he, Lee, Cain, and Brian would all hang out.

**Jamie Clark:**

Right, right up here this first road to the right. Right there is Brian's trailer, right there.

I ain't never been up here in 20 something years.

**[07:46] Susan Simpson:** Jamie and Lee say that, after dropping Cain off at the Silver Creek Mini Mart, they'd driven back together to Lee's apartment in the nearby community of Lindale.

Cain says that he started walking back from the Minimart but on his there, he passed by Brian's trailer and decided to stop in... with his father's .38 revolver still in his pocket.

According to investigators though, Lee and Cain had not actually parted ways that night. They'd gone to the Bowlings' trailer together. Only, Lee hadn't gone inside.

**Jamie:**

See right back there was Brian's room right back here, you can see the window from here.

**Susan Simpson:** This window was an important part of the murder case against Jamie's brother, Lee. According to investigators Lee had been standing outside of this window when the shot was fired.

Brian's sister Amanda and her husband Kenneth told us why it makes sense that Lee would've used this window to get to Brian's bedroom that night.

**Amanda Bowling:**

You know, Brian's window was busted. So, he had a piece of plywood up, you know, to just cover the bottom part because that was all that was busted. And, you know, Josh knew it, everybody knew his little window was broke, you know, and you could get in and out, without having to go through a door or anything.

**Kenneth:**

You know, that's why when we did hear about somebody being at that back window, his window, the reason why the board was down and stuff, I mean, it'd have been easy just to pull that curtain back and be standing right there.

**Susan Simpson:** Jamie confirmed for us that he and Brian's other friends had often gone in and out of the Bowlings' trailer through the busted-out window.

**Jamie Clark:**

I remember sneaking in the house many a time. On the back side back there, there was a piece of wood, we'd, we'd move it out of the way to get down.

**Susan Simpson:** How would you move it out of the way?

**Jamie:** Just slide it out of the way. Like in his, in his room.

**Susan:**

So it was inside his room, so you would just kind of reach in, and...

**Jamie:**

Yeah, yeah we'd just like slide it down and... I mean we snuck in and out that window all the time.

**Jacinda:** How did you guys get in and out of the window?

**Jamie:**

The bed was right there I mean we leaped in, just leaped in the window. Back then we could leap. I couldn't now, I could like roll over in there, ain't no way I could leap in that window now.

**[10:00] Susan Simpson:** Cain Storey was the only other person in the bedroom with Brian when Brian was shot. But the busted-out bedroom window explains how Lee Clark could've participated in this murder too, even when everyone agrees that he never set foot inside the trailer that night.

According to investigators, the scenario looks something like this:

You have Cain inside the bedroom with Brian, pretending to have stopped by for a friendly visit, when really, he's just there to keep Brian distracted.

And then you have Lee, lurking outside the bedroom window, and sliding the loose plywood board aside so that he can peer inside the room.

And finally, there's Brian, sitting on his bed, talking on the phone to his girlfriend, his back to the busted-out window. Oblivious to what's going on behind him.

And then either Cain or Lee pulls out a gun, and shoots Brian in the head.

So that's *how* Brian Bowling was killed, according to the case at trial. But what about the *why*. Why would these two teenagers have conspired to kill their friend? And why did the community think they were capable of such a crime?

To understand that, we need to take a closer look at the three boys involved in this case, and the friendships between them.

**[11:20] Jacinda Davis:** When we talked to Amanda Bowling, she showed us some family photos of her brother Brian.

**Amanda Bowling:** (Laughs) That was him.

**Susan Simpson:** Let me see.

**Jacinda Davis:** Giving the middle finger.

**Amanda:** And that one too, that was when he was little. Giving the finger too.

**Jacinda:** This one cracks me up because look he's all in his suit.

**Amanda:** Yeah, he was at a wedding.

**Jacinda Davis:** Looking all proper.

**[11:40] Jacinda Davis:** Then, Amanda came across what she thinks might be the very last picture ever taken of Brian.

**Amanda Bowling:**

And this one was taken in August of '96, so that's the last picture we have of him.

**Jacinda Davis:**

Wow. You can see, he's like, you know when boys go through that phase -

**Amanda:** Yeah.

**Jacinda:**

Where all of a sudden, they like, grow tall and like, start looking like men.

**Amanda:**

Start looking like men. And he did. He had slimmed up, you know, and was tall. And he was very handsome.

I didn't realize how handsome my brother was until afterwards.

**Jacinda:** Back in 1996, Brian's best friends were Cain Joshua Storey, and another boy named Tommy Hyde.

**Amanda:** Tommy lived up on the hill.

**Susan Simpson:** Oh, is he Cain's ne-, or Josh's neighbor?

**Amanda:**

Yeah. Josh's neighbor. So, he had been - him and Brian were best friends too. All three of them. They were three peas in a pod.

**Jacinda:** Cain, Tommy, and Brian all lived on the edges of the Pleasant Hope Cemetery, just a short walk from one another. Brian's uncle, Mikel - who also lived near the cemetery back then - remembers them hanging out together just about every day.

**Uncle Mikel:**

I would say Tommy was his best friend. And Josh would have been the second best.

Those guys were always together. Now, Lee was his friend, but Debra and Rocky didn't like Lee. I'm not sure exactly why. So, he was supposed to stay away from Lee.

**[13:15] Jacinda Davis:** Brian's sister remembers that Josh would sometimes bring Lee by their place, even though Brian's mom and dad didn't like Lee coming around.

**Amanda:**

Lee, I never met Lee until probably- I was like 14, because he just popped up up here, you know, up at Josh's house, and, whenever he was around, he wouldn't come down to the house that much. They would walk by.

**Susan Simpson:** Mm-hmm.

**Amanda Bowling:**

And my brother was always outside, you know, and they - he would stop him, you know, and they would chitchat for a little while, but when Lee was around, Josh never would hang out with Brian. He wouldn't hang out with us.

**Susan:** So, would you say Lee and Brian were friends or...

**Amanda:** Not so much as friends, but friend of a friend.

**[14:12] Jacinda Davis:** According to investigators, Lee Clark had been in a gang with Brian Bowling. But everyone, including Lee, agrees that he and Brian only ever hung out when they were with their mutual friend Cain-slash-Josh Storey.

**Lee Clark:**

I was friends with Brian, but I wasn't, I wasn't close with him like Cain was, you know what I'm saying? Cain lived right there in the neighborhood with him. Cain seen him pretty much every day. I would just see him here and there when I went over there. And it wasn't every time I went over to see Cain, I'd go see Brian. It wasn't like that.

He was too much for me. The hyperactive stuff. I'm not like that, I'm a laid back, easy going type of guy. I just want to do stuff, take it easy, chill.

I liked Brian, and I liked him as a friend, but I just wasn't close to him like Cain was.

**[15:00] Susan Simpson:** I asked Lee what he meant about "the hyperactive stuff," and he told me a story about one time when he, Brian, and Cain had all been hanging out together.

**Lee:**

I mean I been with him and Cain walking down, walking down the street from his road, Craton Road to cross Rockmart Highway and we're crossing the highway and I've seen him get out in the middle of the highway and lay down in the middle of the highway with damn trucks coming down through there and it's dark as hell, you can't see shit.

And I'm like, "Man what the hell are you doing?"

He's like "Oh no, watch this watch this! Watch this, they'll stop."

I said, "You stupid ass, they can't see you man and they're going to run you over."

But he would do that just trying to get attention.

**[15:44] Susan Simpson:** Other friends of Brian's that we talked to told us similar stories. About Brian playing chicken on motorbikes or dodging trains.

And Amanda told us that the incident Lee recalls with Brian on the Rockmart Highway was not the only time her brother had done something like that.

**Susan Simpson:** You've heard this one?

**Amanda Bowling:**

Yeah, about him laying in the road right here? He used to do that out here all the time. And I would always be irate with him, you know, "Get up, get up!"

**Susan:** Why would he do that? Cause he could?

**Amanda:**

Yeah. Just, because he was just a joker, just, like, always getting in trouble, doing stuff he wasn't supposed to be doing.

**Susan:**

According to the transcript, your brother was on home arrest at the time.

**Amanda:**

House arrest, yeah. He had went off with somebody and gotten into some trouble after my daddy had a brain aneurysm. He had a gun charge, because he had stolen a gun out of that house. It was an old gun, you know, it didn't work but, you know, he still stole it from that house.

So, he got that charge. He got a bunch of charges that day, a lot of charges. It was through the juvenile courts.

So, the judge, he was expecting to get sent off, you know, and now I kind of wish they would have sent him off.

**Susan Simpson:** Amanda, like most kids in Silver Creek, had attended the nearby Pepperell High School. That's where her brother had started off in school too. But because of some of the trouble he'd gotten into, Brian had been transferred up to another school in west Rome.

**Amanda:**

Yeah, well, he rode one of them little, short buses. He got kicked off all the time, so. But so, he rode one of them.

**Susan:** "A" school, I've heard it called.

**Amanda:**

Yeah, behavioral school, yeah, so, that would be "A" school, something like that.

**Jacinda Davis:** Like alternative school?

**Amanda:** Yeah.

[17:40] **Jacinda Davis:** It was while attending "A" School in Coosa that Brian Bowling had met his girlfriend, fifteen-year-old Caprice Hiott.

**Susan:** (Knocking) Hi.

**Caprice Hiott:** How are y'all?

**Susan Simpson:** Good, are you Caprice?

**Caprice:** Mm-hmm.

**Jacinda Davis:** Hi, I'm Jacinda:

**Susan:** We stopped by your mom's earlier.

**Jacinda Davis:** When we showed up on Caprice's doorstep, it was October 19th. The day after the anniversary of Brian's shooting.

**Caprice:** Yesterday was the anniversary, I already know. I'll never forget it.

**Jacinda:** I'm sorry.

**Caprice:** It's been 25 years and I'll still never forget it.

**Susan:** Yeah.

**Caprice:** It was rough, it grew me up real quick.

**Jacinda:** I bet.

**[18:16] Jacinda:** Brian Bowling had been Caprice's first boyfriend.

**Caprice:**

I was fifteen, and he was fifteen, and I went to Coosa High School and- he went to the "A" school which used to be behind Coosa in the trailers and he was on the little short bus that took him home all the way across town.

And I was walking, and he hollered at me off the bus [laughing].

He was like, "Hey, can I get your number?"

I was like, "Sure." He was cute, you know. But he was kinda like my first little puppy love thing.

**Susan:** And then he calls you?

**Caprice:**

He did. And we talked up until the day all that happened.

But it was natural, it was like, I mean, he was head over heels, and I was smitten, you know

**Susan:** Did he ask you to be boyfriend and girlfriend?

**Caprice:**

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah. He did that. He'd go, first time we talked," he said, "I just, I seen you, I just knew, I wanted you to be my girlfriend."

**Susan Simpson:** The first time you talked to him?

**Caprice Hiott:** Yes. I mean, what do you say that but okay? (Laughs).

**[19:28] Jacinda Davis:** Because Caprice and Brian didn't attend the same high school – and because they were 15 and couldn't drive themselves anywhere – they weren't able to meet in person all that often. Mostly, they talked on the phone – which they did just about any chance they got.

**Caprice:**

You know, like I got out of school. We, he either called me or I called him. And we were on the phone, like until my, (Talk over) until my mama got me off.

**Jacinda:** I remember those days.

**Caprice:** You know what I'm saying? Like that's what we did.

**Jacinda:** On the day that Brian was shot and killed, Caprice, like usual, had called him as soon as she had gotten home from school. Brian was usually around to answer -- he was, after all, on house arrest.

But it had been Brian's brother-in-law, Kenneth, who answered the phone that day. He told her that Brian wasn't home yet, she'd have to call back later.

**Kenneth:**

Brian was working with the Childers that day. He was working with them, because he had got in a bunch of trouble like the week or so, or a couple weeks, or month or so before. He had got in a bunch of trouble.

I got mad with him again and tried to tell him, "Look Brian, you're messing up, 'cause I'd done been there, done that, done messed up my life," and I told him, I said, "Look man, you gonna screw your life up, you know?"

And he went to work with the Childers to try to get back, you know, doing something. Trying to get away from people.

**Jacinda Davis:** Brian's family told us that in October of 1996, Brian had been trying to turn his life around. But he was still hanging out with friends that his family thought were a bad influence on him. And, as his Aunt Melody told us, that's what she thinks led to his death.

**Aunt Melody:**

He just ran with that, with the, with a crowd. Brian had never been arrested. Not to my knowledge, not unless someone kept it from me. But, if they did, they kept it from my mom, too.

But, you know, I mean, he wasn't perfect. You know, a typical boy. 15 years old. You know. But, he had a good heart and it just really destroyed our family. I divorced, my brother divorced, my mom and dad divorced, Debra and her husband divorced, and I mean, it was just, you know, a lot of chaos. I mean it...

**Jacinda Davis:** Shattered everybody.

**Aunt Melody:**

It did. And it wasn't about the trial or anything, it's just... emotions, I guess.

**Susan Simpson:** At the time of Brian's death, his family had not considered Cain Joshua Storey to be one of the bad influences in his life.

**Amanda Bowling:**

Because Josh was just, Josh was a funny, you know, we all goofed with him. You know, he was just not the type of person to have any kind of violence in him. He was not a violent person.

**Susan Simpson:** Josh and Brian had been so close that, to the Bowlings, Josh was basically family as well. Brian's uncle Mikel told us that, before Brian's death, he hadn't been aware of any conflict or bad blood between the two boys.

**Mikel Baker:**

Josh and Brian were at my house like, constantly. You know, they were good friends, so they were there almost daily.

Even the day before that happened, Josh and Brian was at my house and I had a barn. And they weren't shooting guns, but they were shooting water guns. Running around shooting each other, you know, so.

**Jacinda Davis:** We met Cain's mom, June Storey, at her home in Rome. She lives in a double-wide at the bottom of a steep hill. The kind of hill that makes you feel like you're on a rollercoaster ride, but somehow scarier.

**Jacinda:**

Do you think it's going to be around here? We don't have that far of a drive, though, do we?

**Susan:** No. It's like a mile. .... This makes me real nervous.

**Jacinda Davis:** This road?

**Susan:** Coming up over this hill, can't see a damn thing.

**[25:21] Jacinda Davis:** When we finally made it to her place, you could tell immediately that the years since Cain's arrest and conviction have taken a toll. Cain's dad passed away a few years after the trial, and June says she spends most of her time thinking about the "what-ifs."

**June Storey:**

You know, I was just hoping he would graduate from high school and go on, maybe to college. If he didn't want to go to college, just find a nice lady and get married and have children and things like that.

**Jacinda Davis:** Just a simple normal life.

**June:** Normal life, yeah.

**Jacinda:** And how did it turn out?

**June Storey:**

It turned out pretty bad. It did. Now that's why I don't think God wants to give people the knowledge to see the future. If I had seen the future, I wouldn't never probably been able to, to bear it. To know that that was going to happen down the line.

**[26:14] Jacinda Davis:** June showed us pictures of Cain from when he was in high school. He is tall - almost 6' 3" - and rail thin. And although he was 17 in 1996, he looks much younger. You can hear the pride in her voice as June describes the pictures.

**June:**

That was in his Spring concert at Pepperell High School. He was in the music program. They were singing some song.

**Jacinda:** So he was active in high school?

**June:**

He was active as music goes and you know, he - yeah. He was - he wasn't like in sports. He wasn't like, in all that stuff, but he loved music. In fact, one of the concerts they had he sang before a crowd of about a thousand people.

**Jacinda Davis:** On paper, Lee and Cain might not have seemed to be the likeliest of friends – they had very different interests, and very different personalities. One of those differences was Cain's musical talent.

**Lee Clark:**

He wanted to be a musician. He wanted to be a musician. That's what he wanted to do. And I'll give it to him. Cain, he can play guitar and he can sing. He's got a beautiful voice, he does.

**Susan Simpson:**

So, his big plan was to get a band going.

**Lee Clark:**

He wanted, yeah, that's what he wanted to do. That was his, that was his dream, he loved music, he still does love music.

**Jacinda Davis:** Lee remembers that Cain and some of his friends put together a garage band.

**Lee:**

It's a band from Cain and his little buddies. It won't no big stuff. Just some stuff they'd get together over at Cain's house on the weekends, playing their little guitars and stuff.

**Susan Simpson:** Lee told me he didn't know much about the garage band, or Cain's other musical pursuits. It wasn't something that Lee shared Cain's interest in.

**Lee:**

I can't play instruments and you sure don't want to hear me sing. It sounds like a cat being thrown off the top of the Empire State Building.

**[28:10] Susan Simpson:** Back in 1996, it had seemed like things were going well for Cain. He was still attending the regular high school, playing in the band, participating in his church's choir. And before October of that year, he didn't have a record.

**Susan:** I don't think he had a record I don't remember seeing –

**Lee:**

No, he didn't, he didn't have no record. Cain was kind of squeaky clean. He was kind of squeaky-clean.

**Susan Simpson:**

Lee's brother Jamie told us that when he first heard Cain had been arrested in connection with Brian's death, it never occurred to him that Cain might be accused of doing something to intentionally harm his friend.

**Kevin Fitzpatrick:**

Do you remember the first time where you heard that Cain was a suspect in Brian's death because like it went on before Lee came in. But do you remember hearing Cain was a suspect?

**Jamie Clark:**

I do. And I thought Cain was just a suspect for bringing the gun down there and, and on the same note you know, I, I, I could have seen Cain accidentally shooting the boy by accident, you know, when that happened. I can see that happening, you know, because he was just goofy like that. He'd trip over a cordless phone. I mean, that was just Cain.

**Susan Simpson:** A lot of people we spoke to while investigating this case told us that, on his own, Cain-slash-Josh would never have gotten involved in any kind of murder conspiracy. That just isn't the kind of kid that he was.

**[29:35] Jacinda Davis:** In fact, Brian's Uncle Mikel believes that it had to be because of Lee's influence that Josh went along with what he thinks was a plan to murder Brian.

**Susan:**

Everyone describes him as kind of like a follower and sort of a, I don't want to say weaker personality but...

**Mikel Baker:**

He was. I mean, and that's what we all kind of thought, too. That Lee had more influence over him, you know? And I think, honestly, like I said, that Lee was either in the room or outside the room kind of making Josh do it. Because I don't think Josh would have never ever ever harmed Brian, ever, on his own.

**Jacinda Davis:** It wasn't just Brian's family who felt this way. A lot of Cain's and Brian's friends told us something similar. Which wasn't something we had anticipated when we first started looking into this case.

**Kevin Fitzpatrick:**

Wow, I mean, it's just, the interesting thing is that, is that some people really think that Lee is capable of orchestrating all of this. And I guess I didn't expect that going in, you know?

**Jacinda:** I didn't either.

**Susan:** Meanwhile, Cain, Josh, just looks like a goofy, lanky-

**Jacinda Davis:** -crying-

**Susan:**

-mess. He does not look sinister; he does not look like someone capable of organizing all this. He looks just like a goofy lanky teen.

**Kevin:**

Yeah, I mean, if you were gonna cast it as a film and cast, like, the movie as like a killer and the guy who is his follower, you would cast, you know, Lee as, as the lead guy and Cain as the follower, like, that's how you would cast it.

**[31:08] Jacinda Davis:** Lee is well aware that, even before Brian's death, there had been people in Cain's life who thought he was leading his friend in a bad direction.

**Lee Clark:**

When he went to school at Pepperell High School, he always had this old goody-two-shoes persona around him, you know what I mean?

**Susan:** Yeah.

**Lee Clark:**

People looked at him and, and there were people in high school, I remember when I was still going to school, before I quit. Who kept telling him, "Man, what are you hanging out with him for, man?"

Like I was just this bad influence like I was just a straight piece of trash.

**Jacinda Davis:** Since being incarcerated, a lot of things have changed for Cain. For one, he no longer has that squeaky-clean record.

**Lee:**

Went down the wrong path. Which hey, he's famous for going down the wrong path. Over and over again. It kills me.

**Jacinda Davis:** In the 24 years after their arrest and conviction, Cain and Lee ended up serving time together at three different prisons in Georgia. But it's now been several years since they last saw each other – Cain's disciplinary record means that he's ended up in higher-security facilities.

Lee told us more about Cain's life in prison.

**Lee:**

Every time I call over, talk to my mama or something, I get little updates. Something about Cain done did this or Cain's back in the hole, or this and that. That boy ain't never gonna learn. 41 years old and still ain't learned shit.

I don't think he's got no good common sense, Susan, that's what I think it is. The boy ain't never had no good common sense.

Common sense takes you a long ways in this world. When it comes to books, the boy's a genius. He is a genius when it comes to books. When it comes to music, he's a genius. I'll give him that. But when it comes to good common sense, he ain't got none. Period.

**[33:00] Susan Simpson:** When we began working on this podcast, I reached out to Cain through his mother, June. I asked her to let him know what I was doing, and to tell him that I was hoping to hear his side of the story about what happened that night in the Bowlings' trailer.

June got word back to me that Cain was adding me to his phone list, and I was hopeful I'd soon speak to him. He didn't call though. When I talked to Lee about this, he was frustrated, but not surprised.

**Lee:**

I mean, that don't make no sense to me. Me, if, if roles had been reversed, as soon as I would have heard about all this I'd have been trying to find some kind of way to get in contact with you right then.

**Susan:**

It sounds like he's found a way to exist right now and he doesn't care about changing.

**Lee:**

He has, he told me before, he said, "Look, man". He said, "We going to die in here," and all this mess.

I said, "Look, Cain. I said I'm going to tell you right now, brother," I said, "I'm not dying in here."

I said, "I'm not going to do it, man."

I said, "I ain't going to sit here and sit there and say that I'm going to die in prison for something I didn't do. Man, that don't even sound right, man."

I said, "You, you're just giving up any hope of ever getting out of this place."

**[34:00] Susan Simpson:** Not long after that, I received a letter from Cain. He said he'd been trying to reach out to me but the facility that he was at would not let him call. In his letter, he described the events of the night that Brian was shot, and closed with the following:

*We did not kill Brian Bowling. We are two innocent men who have been incarcerated since we were teenagers for a murder that never happened. Brian killed himself while playing Russian roulette with my father's gun.*

*Where Lee was at, I do not know. All I know is he was not at that house that night, and I did not kill Brian.*

**[34:49] Jacinda Davis:** Almost everyone who knew Brian Bowling and Cain Storey agree that – acting on his own -- Cain would not have killed his friend Brian. They believe that Cain's

involvement in this crime can only be explained by some kind of outside influence. By someone who was standing outside of Brian's window, and who either shot Brian themselves, or who forced Cain to be the one to do it.

So, what is it about Lee Clark that made people think he could have been the someone standing outside the window that night? We reached out to Lee's dad Glenn for an interview. He suggested we meet at the church where he is very active, just a short drive from where he lives in Cave Springs.

**Glen Clark:** My name is Darrell Glen Clark

**Jacinda:** Tell us where we are today.

**Glen:**

We are at Live Oak Baptist Church in the town of Cave Springs, Georgia.

**Jacinda:**

And why, why did you suggest this location? What does, what does this church mean to you?

**Glen:**

Well, this church right here it's just there's no better place to be in the house of the Lord, hun, and just thought it'd be a good place to be here.

**Jacinda Davis:**

When he was growing up, what did you picture his future would be like?

**Glen:**

Well, I've been in the tree business all of my life. Okay? And I maintain right of way for utility companies. And I, I thought maybe he may fall into that. You know what I'm saying? Because there, there really wasn't nothing else. Here in this town, you either work in a cotton mill, carpet mill, pants factory. That's what they got here.

**[36:36] Jacinda Davis:** Glenn Clark's vision of what his son's future might've been isn't much different from how Lee imagines things would've gone too, if he hadn't ended up being arrested for murder when he was 17.

**Susan Simpson:** If this hadn't happened to you, where do you think you'd be?

**Lee Clark:**

Me? Honestly, I'd probably be out there somewhere right now cutting trees with my dad right now. I like to think that I would have me a little bit of money saved up and I like think I'd have me a wife and a couple of kids by now. I'm fixing to be 41 years old and I really want kids. I want them bad. I just can't get out there to get any.

I feel like I'm in a point in my life right now that I've really got my head on my shoulders good and I feel like I'd be a great dad.

Back in 1996, part of Lee's imagined future had already come to pass – he was already cutting trees with his dad. It was a job his dad helped him get when Lee decided to drop out of high school.

**Lee:**

Yeah, I was a drop out. I quit that in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Yes, I quit and had my dad sign the papers that I ain't going back. If you don't sign the papers, I'm just going to skip.

And he told me, he said, "Okay," he said, "I got something for you."

He said "You want me to sign them papers? Alright."

He signed them. As soon as we got back to the house, he said, "Come here."

I said, "What's that?"

He said, "That's a job application, fill it out."

I said, "What?" I said, "Man, you crazy."

He said, "Boy, I'm going to tell you right now." He said, "You think you're going to quit school and you're going to lay around here. It ain't happening, hoss. Fill them papers out, you're going to work."

And he put me to work the next day, cutting trees.

I thought I was grown. I really, literally did. I was working full-time, making money, paying the bills, and thinking I was grown. Not knowing the whole time, I was a long way from it.

You couldn't tell me nothing. I thought I was the shit back then. I thought I had it going on. I loved to get in front of my buddies with my older girlfriend. Hang out with her. Thought I was real cool. Thought I was real hip.

It's so sad. I ain't lying. If I could go back and just see my sixteen-year-old-self... I guess that's just the way it is, with your homeboys. We all thought we were the shit, and we finally figured out we ain't, but by then, it's too late.

**[38:53] Jacinda Davis:** Glenn doesn't disagree. He says Lee thought he had it all figured it out, and it was starting to get in the way of their relationship.

**Jacinda:**

Now, you were saying that when Lee became a teenager, you started to butt heads, and Lee started to get into a little bit of trouble. Tell me about that.

**Glen Clark:**

I think most the thing that irritated me about him was that I would give him, you know, a job. And I was a supervisor. I put him on crew and he was liable to work one day and not work the next two days. And that would really crawl under my skin, and I really stayed mad at him for that.

We started butting heads kind of then. I mean, I was mad with him.

I said, look, you've got to take up some responsibility. Go to work. Do your job. You play after you do your work. That comes later.

So, that's kind of when we started, you know, kind of drifting away a little bit, you know.

**Jacinda Davis:** Lee's parents and Cain's parents were friends when the two boys were growing up, so Glenn Clark knows Cain Storey, too.

**Jacinda:**

Tell me more about Lee and Cain's relationship. Had they been friends all their lives?

**Glen:**

Yes ma'am. They're months apart. And they'd been knowing each other all their life, all their life. We raised up with them as kids, right on up.

I think after we, I don't know, 6, 7 years old, we kind of, we kind of moved away from them. But, they'd been long-life friends.

**Jacinda:** Even though the boys grew up together and had been close all their lives, Glen no longer approved of his son's friendship with Cain.

**Glen Clark:**

Him and Cain were running around together, and I know Cain's mother brought Cain over to our house one day and dropped him out. And when Cain got out of the car, he was cussing his mama, saying some words that I wouldn't tolerate.

And I told Lee, I said, "Look, you need to quit hanging around with that boy right there." I said, "He's gonna get you in trouble."

I said, "He ain't no good. He's no good."

**[41:00] Jacinda Davis:** Lee's brother, Jamie, has a slightly different perspective. He thinks Lee and Cain were equally bad for one another.

**Jamie Clark:**

Yeah, Lee and Cain were real close. I don't want to say the wrong thing about nobody but, they wasn't best for each other I'd say. I mean, they was always into mischief. I guess, which I was right along with them, most of the time.

**Jacinda:** What kind of mischief? What kind of trouble did you guys get into?

**Jamie:**

Oh, just kids stuff, doing stuff, get, stealing my dad's tools everywhere you know, stuff like that, stuff we wasn't supposed to be doing.

Things we shouldn't be doing, too. I'd call it terrorizing the neighborhood a little bit. Like we might find a dead animal or something, set it on somebody's porch just for fun and giggles.

Wasn't nothing funny about it, but we didn't realize that then. We was kids.

**[41:56] Susan Simpson:** Not all of what Lee and his friends were up to was just kids' stuff, though.

**Lee:**

Have I told you how bad I was with this stealing though, Susan? Did I really tell you how bad I was with that stuff?

**Susan:** How bad were you?

**Lee:**

Ok let me tell you, look. I wouldn't do- I didn't just steal that safe from Cain's momma and daddy. I didn't just steal that safe from them. Look, I'd steal stuff from my own daddy. I steal stuff from my step-dad, my mom's ex-husband now. Because I thought all that stuff was cool.

I was just stealing stuff from people all around the neighborhood, people that didn't live in the neighborhood with me. I thought I was just hip. I thought I'd just do whatever I wanted to do.

Wasn't thinking about the time the people were putting in, hours that they were slaving every week to get this money, to buy these things to put in their house, to give their families, to buy stuff for them.

I wasn't thinking about none of that stuff. Didn't none of that stuff mean nothing to me. I mean yeah when I was - yeah, that's the worst things I ever did. I was a thief when I was a kid. I was an idiot.

Lee's dad told us that for a while, Lee and his friends had been able to get away with what they were doing.

**Glen Clark:**

Yes. Detective Battles and some of these other detectives and all, they had caught on that they knew these boys, that Lee and Cain were doing this, but they could not catch them.

**[43:35] Susan Simpson:** Lee's brother, Jamie, says that it wasn't just what Lee was *doing* that caused him to be a person of interest for local law enforcement. It was also what Lee was saying.

**Susan:**

So, you think that Dallas Battle's problem with Lee was not so much the bad kid stuff he was doing but his disrespect of...

**Jamie Clark:**

Yeah, disrespect toward the law. Yeah, I mean, because he was - Lee was disrespectful toward him.

**Kevin Fitzpatrick:**

And what did, what did you brother, what are some of the things that your brother would have said to him?

**Jamie:**

Oh, I mean look, the cops would walk up and he'd be like, "I smell bacon. Y'all smell that?"

If it was, "What the hell do you want, pig? What you, what you doing?"

And, you know, just kind of tell them, "You got a problem," and walk off from them. There wasn't nothing they could do.

There was one officer in particular that Lee and his friends would have run-ins with. Floyd County Police Sergeant Dallas Battle.

**Lee Clark:**

Overall, I think that's the basic fact of what got me, the way I talked to him.

**Susan:** How did you talk to him?

**Lee:**

I talked to him real shitty. He used to ask me about burglaries and stuff I was doing.

I told him, "I ain't out here doing no burglaries. But if I was, I wouldn't let no stupid mother fucker like you catch me."

Hate to say that, but that's the way I was back then. That's the way I would talk.

**Susan:** How'd he react? Did he say anything back?

**Lee:** Who, Dallas?

**Susan:** Yeah.

**Lee:**

He just used to tell me he was gonna get me one day.

Yeah, he got me, too. He got me good.

**Susan Simpson:** On the night Brian was shot, Sgt. Dallas Battle became the lead investigator on the Brian Bowling case. Right away, he concluded that Brian's death had been an accidental self-inflicted shooting. A game of Russian roulette in which the odds hadn't gone in Brian's favor.

But a few days after the shooting, Sgt. Battle changed his mind, and he began to investigate Brian's death as a murder.

Next time, on Proof.

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**Don:** *Yeah, I heard something about a pillow.*

**Susan:** *What'd you hear about that?*

**Don:** *Somebody told me that they found a pillow where it was... a pillow was used for a silencer or something.*

...

**Amanda:** *Mom had told them that somebody had put something in there. And they said, "Well, Ms. Bowling, the only way we're gonna be able to know that is if we exhume his body."*

...

**Susan:** *So, you don't really know when you learned about the Free Birds or when they were?*

**Kenneth:** *Not me, I don't remember. I'm going to say it was probably after they had dug him back up, about the little stuff they had found in the casket and everything.*

...

**Uncle Mikel:** *After the funeral was when it actually happened. We were getting in the family car to leave to go to the burial, and they were screaming out the window... and I was trying to pull him out of the car, or we kind of ... everybody started fighting, you know?*

**Jamie:** *Yeah, there were several people throwing punches. I don't know who they were. I mean it all happened so quick.*

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**Jacinda Davis:** You've been listening to *Proof*, a podcast by Red Marble Media.

We'll be back next Monday for Episode 3. Send us your questions and comments at [proofcrimepod@gmail.com](mailto:proofcrimepod@gmail.com). We'll respond during our bonus episodes – *PROOF: SIDEBAR* – starting this Thursday.

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That's all for this week... thanks so much for listening.

