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**SHOW:** 48 HOURS (10:00 PM ET)

June 21, 2001, Thursday

**TYPE:** Leads

**LENGTH:** 427 words

**HEADLINE:** 48 HOURS

**BODY:**

HOST: Dan Rather

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Susan Zirinsky

DAN RATHER: (Voiceover) 48 HOURS, we take you there.

(Home video; photos of Dyke and Karen Rhoads)

RATHER: (Voiceover) They were newlyweds...

ANDREA: They lit up the room as they came in together.

RATHER: (Voiceover) ...murdered in their small hometown.

(Photographs of the Rhoads; footage of the home, a grave stone)

ANDREA: (Voiceover) They were so alive and so happy, and then somebody just wiped that all out.

(Photographs of suspects)

RATHER: (Voiceover) Eyewitness testimony convicted these two men.

(Footage of suspects during their trial)

Mr. MICHAEL MacFATRIDGE: They're murderers.

(Footage of convicted men in prison; photo of crime scene)

RATHER: (Voiceover) But both men insist they had nothing to do with the crime.

SUSAN SPENCER: Did you have anything at all to do with the deaths of Dyke and Karen Rhoads?

Mr. RANDY **STEIDL**: No, absolutely not.

(Footage of Professor David Protes; Northwestern University sign; college students)

RATHER: (Voiceover) Now this college professor and his rookie reporters are taking up their cause.

Professor DAVID PROTESS: It struck me almost from the start that this was a likely miscarriage of justice.

(Footage of one of the suspects being led by police; jail cell door)

Ms. KRISTA LARSON: I think there were a lot of things that didn't add up.

(Footage of Spencer in grave yard; college students)

RATHER: (Voiceover) Susan Spencer reports how these student sleuths...

Mr. GREGG JOHNSON: Let's hit the road.

Ms. DIANE HAGG: (On cell phone) Is it all right if we stop by and talk to you again real quick?

RATHER: (Voiceover) ...uncovered new witnesses...

(Footage of Ben Light in front of a house; photo of the Rhoads' home)

Dr. BEN LIGHT (Former Neighbor): With the house located just 100 yards away, we would have heard something.

(Footage of witness with identity concealed)

Unidentified Woman: What caught my eye was they had trench coats on in July.

(Footage of documents; photo of Dyke and Karen Rhoads)

RATHER: (Voiceover) ...and new evidence.

Prof. PROTESS: I hear this voice shrieking into my telephone, 'We've got it! We've got it!'

(Footage of Herb **Whitlock** and Randy **Steidl**)

RATHER: (Voiceover) Will it be enough to set these men free?

Mr. TONY RHOADS: The truth is still out there.

(Photograph of Karen and Dyke; footage of students working on the case)

RATHER: (Voiceover) A 48 HOURS Mystery: Impossible Mission.

(Introductory footage)

**LOAD-DATE:** June 22, 2001

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**SHOW:** 48 HOURS (10:00 PM ET)

June 21, 2001, Thursday

**TYPE:** Profile

**LENGTH:** 2070 words

**HEADLINE:** IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, MURDER 101; PROFESSOR DAVID PROTESS AND HIS JOURNALISM STUDENTS TAKE ON THE 14-YEAR-OLD MURDER CASE OF DYKE AND KAREN RHOADS

**ANCHORS:** DAN RATHER

**REPORTERS:** SUSAN SPENCER

**BODY:**

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

DAN RATHER, host:

It's the kind of crime that makes big news in a small town. Authorities move quickly to close the case, and officially they do. But years after the headlines fade, many people remain convinced that the whole story, the real story, has never been told.

Good evening. It was a terrible crime: a young couple, newlyweds, murdered in their home. Law enforcement did its job. Despite a lack of physical evidence, two men were convicted. One got life in prison; the other a death sentence.

But was the job done right? For a college professor and his students--outsiders, really--there are serious doubts. And so they are digging deeper into the case, going behind the headlines. Their assignment: to find out if two juries got it wrong, and whether the real killers are still out there. Susan Spencer reports tonight on what seems like an impossible mission to unlock the truth.

MURDER 101

(Footage of prison)

SUSAN SPENCER reporting:

(Voiceover) Behind these concrete prison walls killers' claims of innocence are commonplace. But once in a great while...

Mr. HERB **WHITLOCK:** As long as I breathe I'll never accept what's been done to me.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...one just might ring true.

(Footage of **Whitlock** walking; Northwestern University campus)

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, MURDER 101; PROFESSOR DAVID PROTESS AND HIS JOURNALI

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Behind these ivy-covered walls at Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism...

(Footage of students)

Ms. DIANE HAGG: We would like to know why it happened.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...one class wonders if justice has been served.

Ms. KIRSTEN SEARER: We still aren't sure who did it.

(Footage of Spencer with Professor David Protes)

Professor DAVID PROTESS: My goal, which I think is the highest goal of our profession, is for them to find the truth.

(Footage of Protes and students)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Professor David Protes has led classes on that search before, investigating past crimes, producing evidence...

(Footage of other men freed; newspaper headlines)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...which in five cases has helped free innocent men.

(Excerpt from news report of Anthony Porter greeting people outside prison)

Unidentified Reporter: (From footage) After more than 16 years on death row, Anthony Porter was finally free, free to publicly show...

(Footage of class)

Prof. PROTESS: Well, this is not your normal homicide, and that's why...

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Now Protes has a new case and a new class.

Ms. SEARER: We're never dealt with a murder before.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Twenty-year-old Kirsten Searer, and 21-year-olds Diane Hagg, Gregg Johnson...

Ms. KRISTA LARSON: (Speaking on telephone) Oh, OK. We'll be there in, like, two or three minutes.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...and Krista Larson...

Ms. LARSON: We're going to have to go back.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...are about to step back in time 14 years.

(Footage of students at work)

Ms. HAGG: Whoever committed this murder pretty much committed a perfect murder.

(Photographs of crime scene)

Ms. LARSON: I think the truth has always sort of been there, and the pieces have always been there, and now it's just kind of trying to figure out how it all fits together.

(Footage of students)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) It may be the biggest story they'll ever cover.

Ms. LARSON: It's become, I don't know, an obsession, if you will.

Mr. JOHNSON: Sleeping and dreaming about this; eating and thinking about this.

(Photographs of crime scene; wedding photo of Dyke and Karen Rhoads)

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, MURDER 101; PROFESSOR DAVID PROTESS AND HIS JOURNALI

SPENCER: (Voiceover) The investigation of the grisly murderers of newlyweds Dyke and Karen Rhoads.

(Sound of piano music; excerpt from wedding video of the Rhoads)

ANDREA: (Voiceover) The pastor who married them, there were three things that struck him about Dyke and Karen and they were their smiles and how they lit up the room as they came in together and the love that they had for their families and the love that they had for each other.

(Footage of Andrea and Spencer looking at pictures)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Dyke's sister Andrea was 14 when her brother died, just days before his 28th birthday.

Mr. TONY RHOADS: Oh, I think I like these wedding pictures the best.

ANDREA: Yeah.

(Footage of Tony Rhoads)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Dyke's younger brother, Tony Rhoads.

Mr. RHOADS: Well, it's been 14 years ago this July, and it still is as real as if it was yesterday.

ANDREA: That's how Karen looked when we met her.

SPENCER: Oh, OK.

(Photographs of Karen and Dyke)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) In the summer ever 1984, Dyke met 24-year-old Karen Spensard; pretty, athletic a kindred spirit.

ANDREA: (Voiceover) She had a beautiful laugh.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Both were college graduates. Dyke worked in landscaping and Karen was an office assistant.

(Footage from wedding video)

ANDREA: Once he met her, it was, he was in love.

Mr. RHOADS: Right.

(Footage from wedding video)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) The couple married on March 22nd, 1986.

ANDREA: (Voiceover) I remember Dyke's smile when Karen came in the church and he turned around to see her for the first time. I remember that. I think I always will.

(Footage from wedding video)

Unidentified Minister: (From video) I now pronounce you husband and wife.

(Photograph of Dyke and Karen Rhoads)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) But less than four months after the happy day...

(Sound of radio dispatch; footage of burned out home)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...a fire engulfed their home.

Mr. RHOADS: My dad came over at 6:00 in the morning--I never will forget that--and told me that they had been killed. He told me about their house burning, so we just naturally assumed that they had died from the fire. And it was--

## IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, MURDER 101; PROFESSOR DAVID PROTESS AND HIS JOURNALI

n't until 2:00 that afternoon that we found out that they had been stabbed or murdered.

(Footage from wedding video of Dyke and Karen Rhoads)

ANDREA: (Voiceover) You can't explain how that feels when you see these two people that were so alive and they were so--so happy and so ready to take on the world. And then somebody just--I mean...

(Footage of grave stone)

ANDREA: (Voiceover) ...they wiped that all out in a matter of minutes.

Ms. HAGG: Well, I feel really bad knocking on their door and saying, 'Hi, we're working on a class project. Do you want to talk about this?'

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Now almost 14 years later...

You've interviewed how many people, do you think?

Ms. LARSON: Oh, goodness...

SPENCER: Fifty?

Ms. LARSON: More than that probably.

Ms. SEARER: Fifty--yeah.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...these student sleuths are reopening the case.

Ms. HAGG: There's something going on that's not coming out.

(Footage of students)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Recreating the crime scene in their mind's eye.

(Footage of fireworks; neighborhood; inside of house; photos of Dyke and Karen)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) It was the Fourth of July holiday weekend.

Mr. JOHNSON: (Voiceover) Dyke and Karen were sleeping in bed. The people came in, they attacked Dyke first, stabbing him in the back. Karen had time to wake up, maybe grab her glasses off a nightstand, and then was stabbed herself, mostly in the chest.

(Photographs of crime scene; wedding photo of Karen and Dyke)

Ms. HAGG: (Voiceover) Both of them had been stabbed more than 25 times.

(Photographs of the crime scene)

Ms. SEARER: (Voiceover) There was blood all over the room, on their clothes, on the bed.

Ms. LARSON: And there was a fire that had been started in the bedroom.

(Photographs of the crime scene)

Mr. JOHNSON: (Voiceover) And then they set a second fire downstairs to try to destroy evidence.

Ms. SEARER: The whole side of the house is just scorched.

(Photograph of the house)

SPENCER: The students begin their search for the truth here in Paris, Illinois, where it all happened so long ago. Their assignment: find the killers of Dyke and Karen Rhoads. That may strike some here as a bit odd. After all, two men already are behind bars for this crime.

## IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, MURDER 101; PROFESSOR DAVID PROTESS AND HIS JOURNALI

(Footage from 1987 of **Whitlock** being led out of the courthouse)

Unidentified Reporter: (From 1987) Want to make a comment?

SPENCER: (Voiceover) In 1987, juries handed down guilty verdicts to 41-year-old Herb **Whitlock**, part-time construction worker and small-time drug dealer...

(Photograph of **Whitlock**)

(Footage of **Steidl** being led out by police)

Mr. RANDY **STEIDL**: (From 1987 footage) This wasn't a trial, it's a lynching.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...and his pal, 35-year-old Randy **Steidl**, who also worked construction and had several convictions for assault. The motive, prosecutors said, a drug deal gone bad.

(Photograph of **Steidl**; footage of **Steidl and Whitlock** being place in police cars)

Prof. PROTESS: It struck me almost from the start that this was a likely miscarriage of justice. Look, this young couple was tragically stabbed over 50 times. These men would have been covered in blood. There would have been blood in their automobiles, there would have been blood on their clothes. There would have been hair, fiber, something that linked them to the crime scene. Nothing did.

(Footage Andrea and Tony)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Professor Protes's skepticism incredibly is shared even by Dyke Rhoads' own family.

Mr. RHOADS: We weren't 100 percent convinced that--that they were the ones who did it.

(Photographs of the crime scene)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Their doubt is based both on the lack of physical evidence and on the supposed motive.

The prosecutor contends to this day this was a drug deal gone bad.

Mr. RHOADS: Yeah.

SPENCER: Is that something that you can maybe accept?

Mr. RHOADS: Absolutely not.

SPENCER: But did Dyke use drugs?

Mr. RHOADS: He had been an occasional pot smoker. That's...

SPENCER: What about Karen?

ANDREA: No, absolutely not.

Mr. RHOADS: No, never.

But there is a big difference in somebody who's an occasional pot smoker and somebody who gets involved with a drug deal that's gone bad... and is going to cost you your life.

(Photograph of Karen and Dyke Rhoads)

Mr. RHOADS: (Voiceover) The truth is still out there, in my view.

(Footage of Medill School of Journalism; students)

Prof. PROTESS: If that's the case and the two wrong guys are behind bars, that means the actual killer or killers are roaming free.

## IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, MURDER 101; PROFESSOR DAVID PROTESS AND HIS JOURNALI

Number one, you're not going to stay anywhere in the immediate vicinity of the town. Number two, you are not going to tell any of the sources you talk to where you're staying.

(Footage of students preparing to leave)

Ms. LARSON: All right.

Mr. JOHNSON: Let's hit the road.

Prof. PROTESS: (Voiceover) And number three, I don't want you to stay in the same place two nights in a row.

Ms. LARSON: Pedal to the metal, baby.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) For the next six months...

(Footage of the students driving; outside scenery)

Ms. SEARER: Ouch!

Ms. LARSON: Oops! Sorry. I'm sorry.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...the students will spend most weekends on the road...

Mr. JOHNSON: This drive is so long.

Ms. HAGG: My mom makes me call her a lot. She gets nervous.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...making the 180-mile trip from Chicago...

(Footage of 'Welcome to Paris' sign)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...to the small town of Paris.

(Footage of students looking at old records)

Unidentified Clerk: We even have some that are older than this.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Their mission: to plow through police reports, court records and track down new leads...

Ms. HAGG: Hey, is it all right if we stop by and talk to you again real quick?

(Footage of students visiting witnesses)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...and old witnesses, wherever they can find them.

(Footage of Johnson with camera)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) They'll document their investigation on videotape.

(Footage of Hagg in front of Paris sign)

Ms. HAGG: Watch out, Diane Sawyer, huh?

(Footage of students looking over records)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) As they try to find holes in what would appear to be an airtight case.

(Footage of Darryl Herrington and Debra Reinbolt)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) After all, there were two eyewitnesses to this crime.

(Footage of Debra Reinbolt)

SPENCER: You held her down while they stabbed her?

Ms. DEBRA REINBOLT: Yeah.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) That's next.



IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, MURDER 101; PROFESSOR DAVID PROTESS AND HIS JOURNALI

(Announcements)

**LOAD-DATE:** June 22, 2001

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**SHOW:** 48 HOURS (10:00 PM ET)

June 21, 2001, Thursday

**TYPE:** Profile

**LENGTH:** 1955 words

**HEADLINE:** UNDERSTANDING PARIS; FOUR NORTHWESTERN STUDENTS GO TO PARIS, ILLINOIS,  
TO LEARN ABOUT LIFE THERE AND INVESTIGATE THE RHOADS MURDER CASE

**REPORTERS:** SUSAN SPENCER

**BODY:**

UNDERSTANDING PARIS

(Footage of sunrise; of the students leaving for Paris, Illinois)

Ms. KRISTA LARSON: OK. So the first bar we're going to go to is Burgey's.

(Footage of students driving; excerpt from "Sweet Home Alabama," by Lynyrd Skynyrd)

SUSAN SPENCER reporting:

(Voiceover) For two months now, the four Northwestern journalism students have lived every college kid's dream assignment...

(Footage of students visiting various bars)

Ms. DIANE HAGG: (Voiceover) We've been to the Friendly so many times.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...staying out late...

Ms. HAGG: (Voiceover) We don't need to close it down again this time.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...hitting the bars...

Mr. GREGG JOHNSON: A Sea Breeze and a Bud Light.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...chugging beer...

(Footage of students in class)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...and all with the blessing of their professor, David Protes.

(Footage of students in class)

Professor DAVID PROTESS: My feeling was is that the way an investigation like this begins is by becoming part of the culture of the town.

(Footage of bar; excerpt of "Smooth," by Santana)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Because understanding Paris, Illinois...

(Footage of man riding by on a motorcycle)

## UNDERSTANDING PARIS; FOUR NORTHWESTERN STUDENTS GO TO PARIS, ILLINOIS, T

SPENCER: ...may be key to understanding who killed...

(Footage from wedding video of Dyke and Karen Rhoads)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...Dyke and Karen Rhoads 14 years ago.

(Footage of Herb **Whitlock** and Randy **Steidl** in custody)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...and whether the men convicted of this crime really are guilty.

(Footage of students in a bar)

Ms. HAGG: Thanks again. It was nice to meet you.

Unidentified Woman #1: You're welcome. Nice to meet you.

Mr. JOHNSON: Nice meeting you.

SPENCER: Were they surprised when you told them that you thought they ought to go to Paris and hang out at the bars?

Prof. PROTESS: Yeah. Actually, my dean was surprised.

SPENCER: I'll bet.

(Footage of various sites in Paris)

Ms. HAGG: Here we are at the sign marking the entrance to Paris...

Ms. KIRSTEN SEARER: Here we are at the murder scene.

Ms. HAGG: Here we are at the Friendly Tavern.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) What was your impression of Paris the first time you saw it?

Ms. HAGG: The first thing I thought is I could understand why this murder was such a big deal in a town like this.

(Footage of Paris, Illinois)

Ms. HAGG: (Voiceover) It's very innocent, you know? On the outside it looks like your average small, Midwestern town. It fit every stereotype that I had in my head.

(Footage of boys playing basketball; cattle auction)

Unidentified Auctioneer: This heifer right here. I'm over here at 84, now a five, now a six, now a seven.

Ms. HAGG: And I can understand why 13, 14 years later, this murder is still the biggest thing that's happened here.

(Footage of students driving to Paris)

Mr. JOHNSON: So when you get to McDonald's turn right and then--but don't go down High Street, angle left onto Crawford.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Weekend after weekend...

(Footage of the students going to various homes)

Mr. JOHNSON: (Singing) Nobody's home, nobody's home.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...the students have struggled to track down new leads and old witnesses.

Mr. JOHNSON: I want to go knock on his door but...

Ms. SEARER: Do you really?

## UNDERSTANDING PARIS; FOUR NORTHWESTERN STUDENTS GO TO PARIS, ILLINOIS, T

Mr. JOHNSON: Oh, I do.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) A lot of people in Paris in 1986 are still in Paris today.

When you went in the bars, you would occasionally see some of the same people that Dyke and Karen Rhoads...

Ms. HAGG: Oh, all the time.

Mr. JOHNSON: Definitely.

Ms. LARSON: All the time.

(Footage inside the Friendly Tavern)

Ms. RITA KNIGHT (Owner, Friendly Tavern): The people that I've talked to think that they're doing a--a great thing.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Rita Knight, owner of the popular Friendly Tavern, says she's always wondered about the Rhoads murder.

(Footage of Knight and customers)

Ms. KNIGHT: To see somebody that doesn't--isn't from this town, that knows nothing about it, get that involved with it and take it that seriously, I think that's great.

(Footage of Paris' main street)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Not everyone in town agrees.

Mr. MICHAEL MacFATRIDGE: This clearly was the biggest case that I ever handled, and to my knowledge, probably certainly the biggest case, you know, of--of the century perhaps.

(Footage from MacFATRIDGE during the trial)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Michael MacFATRIDGE was the prosecutor.

What's your view of this group of Northwestern students?

Mr. MacFATRIDGE: That's fine. It's certainly interesting. I think when the dust settles, they'll be very disappointed because, in fact, **Whitlock and Steidl** are guilty. I mean, they're the murderers.

(Footage of MacFATRIDGE in 1986; Herb **Whitlock** and Randy **Steidl** in custody)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) But in 1986, the young prosecutor had a tough time building a case against **Whitlock and Steidl**.

Mr. MacFATRIDGE: (From 1986) There is probable cause, a reason to hold the-- Mr. **Steidl** and Mr. **Whitlock** for several counts of murder.

(Footage of grave stone)

SPENCER: With few leads and no good forensic evidence, the investigation into the murders of Dyke and Karen Rhoads went absolutely nowhere for two months. But then police got an amazing break. An actual eyewitness came forward; an eyewitness who put Herb **Whitlock** and Randy **Steidl** at the scene of the crime.

Mr. MacFATRIDGE: I believe in September of '86, Darryl Herrington came forward.

(Footage of Darryl Herrington)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) And who was Darryl Herrington?

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Ms. LARSON: He went from being, you know, the town drunk on a bicycle to being someone who owns a fleet of automobiles, has a successful drywall business.

(Footage of Herrington)

SPENCER: He's been described to me as the town drunk.

Mr. MacFATRIDGE: Well, at the time, that would be a fair assessment, would be that he was a big drinker.

(Footage from 1986 of police interviewing Herrington)

Unidentified Police Officer: Now are you aware your voice is being recorded?

Mr. DARRYL HERRINGTON: Yeah.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Herrington uses an artificial larynx. We've added a voice to repeat his words to make them clearer.

Unidentified Voice: ...yelling and screaming.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) In this taped statement to police...

Unidentified Police Officer: (From 1986) What kind of yelling and screaming?

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...Herrington said he woke up in Randy **Steidl's** car...

Unidentified Voice: Apparently somebody was damned scared about something.

(Footage of the Rhoads' home)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...outside the home of Dyke and Karen Rhoads.

Unidentified Voice: I could hear a woman screaming, and a man saying 'Please don't hurt me' or 'kill me,' or something like that.

(Footage of evidence; crime scene; Herrington)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) After using his credit card to jimmy open the lock, Herrington says he went inside and up the stairs where **Steidl** confronted him.

(Footage from 1986 video of police interviewing Herrington)

Unidentified Police Officer: Darryl, did you notice anything different about Randy?

Unidentified Voice: He had blood on him.

Unidentified Police Officer: Did he have anything with him?

Unidentified Voice: He had a knife.

(Footage of knife; photo of crime scene)

Unidentified Voice: Then I looked up and saw a body on the bed.

Mr. MacFATRIDGE: He knew certain things that, at least in our minds, were not things that the town drunk would know.

(Footage of Herrington walking)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Town drunk or not, Herrington was key to the investigation...

(Undercover footage of Herrington with **Steidl**)

Mr. RANDY **STEIDL**: You don't know nothing about this. I wasn't down there.

Unidentified Voice: Yes, you were.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...even going undercover to try to get Randy **Steidl** to confess.

## UNDERSTANDING PARIS; FOUR NORTHWESTERN STUDENTS GO TO PARIS, ILLINOIS, T

Mr. **STEIDL**: Are you trying to tell me that I am the one who killed them (censored) people?

Unidentified Voice: I seen you.

Mr. **STEIDL**: I haven't done nothing. You're (censored) nuts. You seen somebody else.

(End of undercover footage)

**SPENCER**: (Voiceover) With Herrington, but without a confession, MacFatrige was stuck.

Mr. MacFATRIDGE: We were not going to indict or charge somebody until we had a reasonable chance of conviction. We had one eyewitness, and with no corroborative evidence.

(Footage of Debra Reinbolt during the trial)

**SPENCER**: (Voiceover) But three months later, that changed when, incredibly, a second eyewitness came forward with that much-needed corroborating evidence. Debra Reinbolt, a self-described drug addict and alcoholic, told police she'd not only seen it all, she'd provided the weapon, even helped with the killing.

(Visual of newspaper headline; photographs of the murder weapon; crime scene)

Ms. DEBRA REINBOLT: It gets worse and worse as the years go by.

**SPENCER**: (Voiceover) Today, Debra Reinbolt says she's clean and sober. But in 1986...

Ms. REINBOLT: I mean, I always drank. I always drugged.

(Photograph of Dyke and Karen)

**SPENCER**: (Voiceover) And she'd been drinking the night of the murders.

What happened that night?

Ms. REINBOLT: A big mess.

(Photographs of crime scene; Dyke Rhoads)

Ms. REINBOLT: (Voiceover) Everything went wrong. I mean, they were just going to go down there, try to scare Dyke. And then things just got out of hand.

**SPENCER**: How well did you know Herb and Randy at the time this happened?

Ms. REINBOLT: I--I knew them just through the drug thing.

**SPENCER**: You remember seeing them stab Dyke?

Ms. REINBOLT: Mm-hmm.

**SPENCER**: Both of them?

Ms. REINBOLT: Mm-hmm.

(Photograph of Karen)

**SPENCER**: (Voiceover) And what's happening with Karen in the meanwhile?

Ms. REINBOLT: She's trying to get up off the bed, and I had went over there and I was telling her that everything'd be OK.

(Photographs of the crime scene)

**SPENCER**: You held her down while they stabbed her?

Ms. REINBOLT: Yep.

UNDERSTANDING PARIS; FOUR NORTHWESTERN STUDENTS GO TO PARIS, ILLINOIS, T

SPENCER: Where did this knife come from?

Ms. REINBOLT: It was my husband's knife, and they wanted it.

(Photograph of the knife; footage of Reinbolt being escorted by police; photos of the crime scene, broken lamp)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Reinbolt's story impressed police, especially when she accurately described a broken lamp found in the Rhoads' bedroom.

So it was broken before they were killed or while they were being killed?

Ms. REINBOLT: Yeah.

(Visual of sketches of the juries)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Two separate juries believed both the eyewitness accounts.

(Footage of Herb **Whitlock** and Randy **Steidl** being led out of the courthouse)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Herb **Whitlock** got life; Randy **Steidl**, the death penalty.

Mr. HERB **WHITLOCK**: (From footage) Some day everything that went on behind closed doors will be published in the press.

(Footage of MacFatrige; Reinbolt)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Despite prosecutor MacFatrige's recommendation for no jail time, Debra Reinbolt served two years in prison for concealing a homicide.

(Footage from 1986 police interviewing Herrington)

Unidentified Man: The homicide deaths...

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Herrington was never charged.

(Footage of the students in Paris at night)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Coming up next, the students get a break...

Ms. HAGG: It did not happen the way that the state's witnesses says that it did.

(Footage of **Whitlock and Steidl** in prison)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...and the convicted killers speak out.

Mr. **STEIDL**: I defy anybody to say I was proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

(Announcements)

**LOAD-DATE:** June 22, 2001

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**SHOW:** 48 HOURS (10:00 PM ET)

June 21, 2001, Thursday

**TYPE:** Profile

**LENGTH:** 1499 words

**HEADLINE:** HARD TIME; AFTER 10 YEARS IN PRISON, HERB **WHITLOCK** AND RANDY **STEIDL** STILL MAINTAIN THEIR INNOCENCE IN CONNECTION WITH THE MURDERS OF DYKE AND KAREN RHOADS

**REPORTERS:** SUSAN SPENCER

**BODY:**

HARD TIME

(Footage of Menard Prison; Herb **Whitlock** and Randy **Steidl**)

SUSAN SPENCER reporting:

(Voiceover) Illinois' century-old Menard Prison grips the bank of the Mississippi like a fortress. It's home now to Herb **Whitlock**, sentenced to life in prison in the Rhoads murders...

Unidentified Guard: These are death row inmates.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...and to Randy **Steidl**, sentenced to death.

Mr. RANDY **STEIDL**: I defy anybody to say I was proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

(Footage of **Steidl** during trial; **Steidl** walking in prison)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) More than a decade in prison has changed Paris' former good ol' boys.

Mr. **STEIDL**: (Voiceover) I was pretty wild on the weekends.

I worked all week and partied on the weekends. That was--that was my lifestyle back then.

(Footage of bars in Paris, Illinois)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Parties and bar room brawls and scrapes with the law. But murder?

(Footage of prison)

SPENCER: Did you have anything at all to do with the deaths of Dyke and Karen Rhoads?

Mr. **STEIDL**: No, absolutely not. I had no involvement whatsoever with that crime.

SPENCER: Do you know anything about it in terms of who did?



HARD TIME; AFTER 10 YEARS IN PRISON, HERB WHITLOCK AND RANDY STEIDL STILL

Mr. **STEIDL**: I wished I did. I truly wished I did.

SPENCER: How would you describe Randy?

Mrs. **BOBBIE STEIDL** (Mother of Randy **Steidl**): Oh, like a big old huggable puppy dog. Randy and I have always been terribly, terribly, terribly close.

(Photograph of the **Steidl** family)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Not surprisingly, Randy **Steidl's** mother, Bobbie, has believed in her son's innocence from the start.

Mrs. **STEIDL**: He said, 'No, Mom, you know I couldn't do anything that--that horrible.'

(Footage of Professor Protes arriving at Bobbie's home)

Professor **DAVID PROTESS**: Hello. Hello.

(Voiceover) She's kind of the den mom of this project.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) It was Bobbie **Steidl** who pestered Protes to take on Randy's case.

Ms. **KRISTA LARSON**: You know, to her, I think, we're a hope. It's sort of this hope that if there's something to be found, that we might be able to somehow find it.

(Footage of Protes and the students at Bobbie's kitchen table)

Mrs. **STEIDL**: I've always had a lot of questions to ask the kids.

Prof. **PROTESS**: Well, you guys certainly need a break.

Bobbie sort of pushed me over the line and convinced me to do it.

(Footage of **Whitlock** being led from the courthouse; footage of **Whitlock** in prison)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) His students are looking into Herb **Whitlock's** case as well.

Mr. **HERB WHITLOCK**: As long as I breathe, I'll never accept what's been done to me. So I'm just stuck--anger and depression.

SPENCER: How did this happen to you?

Mr. **WHITLOCK**: My lifestyle left me wide open to be targeted for something like this.

SPENCER: What do you mean your lifestyle?

Mr. **WHITLOCK**: Pretty much running around drinking most of the time. A--a tavern life, whatever.

(Footage of **Whitlock**)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Not only does **Whitlock**, like **Steidl**, deny committing the murders...

Did you kill Dyke and Karen Rhoads?

Mr. **WHITLOCK**: Absolutely not.

SPENCER: Did you know anything about who did?

Mr. **WHITLOCK**: If I did, I wouldn't be here.

(Photograph of Dyke and Karen Rhoads)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...they both say they didn't even know the victims.

HARD TIME; AFTER 10 YEARS IN PRISON, HERB WHITLOCK AND RANDY STEIDL STILL

Did you know Dyke and Karen Rhoads?

Mr. **STEIDL**: No, I didn't.

SPENCER: Did you know who he was?

Mr. **WHITLOCK**: No, I honestly did not.

SPENCER: And Karen?

Mr. **WHITLOCK**: I'd seen her once in my life, and I think around the holidays in the Friendly Tavern.

(Photograph of burned house; footage of Debra Reinbolt and Darryl Herrington)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) With no forensic evidence, only the eyewitnesses, Debra Reinbolt and Darryl Herrington, ever directly linked the two men to the crime.

Ms. **DIANE HAGG**: It did not happen the way that the state's witnesses says that it did.

(Footage of Herrington during the trial)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Herrington's story put the murders at shortly after midnight. The students zero in on that...

(Footage of students in the car)

Ms. **KIRSTEN SEARER**: (On cell phone) Hi, is Donnie there?

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...and find a new witness.

Ms. **SEARER**: Hi. This is Kirsten.

Prof. **PROTESS**: A witness who was never interviewed, who was a childhood friend of Dyke Rhoads, known him for almost his entire life.

Ms. **SEARER**: (Voiceover) We're here with Donnie Alexander. It's February 13th.

He's pretty sure about what he saw.

(Footage of Alexander and Spencer in the Friendly Tavern)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Donnie Alexander was one of the last people to see the Rhoads alive, in the Friendly bar.

Now show me the booth you were talking about.

Mr. **DONNIE ALEXANDER**: It's this one right here.

SPENCER: So who was sitting where?

Mr. **ALEXANDER**: Dyke and Karen were sitting there. I was sitting right here. We were just talking and laughing and...

SPENCER: Which would have been when?

Mr. **ALEXANDER**: Oh, I guess probably about a quarter after 12, 20 after 12 probably.

(Footage of Herrington; photo of the Rhoads' house)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) That's the time eyewitness Darryl Herrington told police he was at the Rhoads' house.

(Footage of the sign outside the Friendly Tavern; music heard in background; footage of inside the bar)

HARD TIME; AFTER 10 YEARS IN PRISON, HERB WHITLOCK AND RANDY STEIDL STILL

Prof. PROTESS: (Voiceover) So how, if they're at a tavern at 12:15, do they manage to stop drinking, pay the bar bill, get to their house, get unclothed, get into bed, fall asleep and get stabbed?

(Footage of clock; Herrington during 1986 police interview)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) And roughly 12:15 is when Herrington says he heard Karen...

Unidentified Voice (For Darryl Herrington): ...yelling and screaming.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...screaming 'please don't kill me.'

Dr. BEN LIGHT: I don't recall any yells, screams.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Ben Light, who then lived just across the street, heard nothing.

Dr. LIGHT: You could hear a--a pin drop two blocks away.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) The police never interviewed him.

(Footage of Light in an operating room)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) The students found Light in Pittsburgh where he is now a doctor.

Dr. LIGHT: And this is the location of the...

(Footage of Paris; photo of Light)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) But in July of 1986, he was a Paris teen-ager up late that night.

Dr. LIGHT: Well, it was Saturday, July 5th. I remember being out here on the porch from about 11:30 to 1:30.

(Footage from 1986 of Herrington)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) During the very time Darryl Herrington says Karen was screaming.

Dr. LIGHT: You would think that with the house located just 100 yards away or less, that we would have heard something.

Prof. PROTESS: What these new statements by Ben Light and by Donnie Alexander indicate is that this crime occurred much later in the night, at a time when Randy **Steidl** and Herb **Whitlock** were nowhere near the scene.

(Footage of **Steidl and Whitlock**)

SPENCER: And there's one other thing that doesn't quite add up. Herrington told police that after the murderers, he was standing here by what was then the Rhoads' garage, with Randy **Steidl**. Debra Reinbolt also says she stood here with Randy **Steidl**. Both eyewitnesses saw Randy **Steidl**, but remarkably they never saw each other.

Ms. LARSON: You know, the fact that they're both there but that they don't see each other, to me, that just didn't make any sense at all.

Mr. MICHAEL MacFATRIDGE: It--it could have happened that way. As a matter of fact, it must have happened that way.

(Footage of Spencer and MacFatrige)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Former prosecutor Michael MacFatrige.

They both say, though, that they saw Randy **Steidl** in the back of the house, and yet they never see each other.

HARD TIME; AFTER 10 YEARS IN PRISON, HERB WHITLOCK AND RANDY STEIDL STILL

Mr. MacFATRIDGE: Yeah. Yeah. There's no lights on in the house.

SPENCER: Behind the house. They both say they saw Randy **Steidl** there.

Mr. MacFATRIDGE: Yeah. Yeah. Right.

SPENCER: So what--what's the explanation for that?

Mr. MacFATRIDGE: That argument was presented at trial to two different juries by two different defense attorneys. They juries found the defendants guilty.

(Footage of Spencer with Debra Reinbolt)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) MacFATRIDGE may not find it odd that his witnesses never saw one another, but Debra Reinbolt sure does.

Ms. DEBRA REINBOLT: I thought, 'Somebody's made this up. Somebody's lost their friggin' mind. This is the town drunk.' There is no way this man was there.

(Footage of Reinbolt during the trial)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) But now there are questions about Debra Reinbolt's eye-witness account. Was she really there?

(Photograph of the Rhoads' house)

Ms. LARSON: I think there were a lot of things that didn't add up.

(Photographs of the crime scene; footage of Reinbolt watching herself on videotape)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) That's next on 48 HOURS.

(Announcements)

**LOAD-DATE:** June 22, 2001

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**SHOW:** 48 HOURS (10:00 PM ET)

June 21, 2001, Thursday

**TYPE:** Profile

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**HEADLINE:** IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, TRUE LIES?; THE VARIOUS TESTIMONIES OF DEBRA REINBOLT, WHO SAYS SHE WAS AN EYEWITNESS TO THE MURDERS

**ANCHORS:** DAN RATHER

**REPORTERS:** SUSAN SPENCER

**BODY:**

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

DAN RATHER, host:

As they go digging for the truth in the murders of newlyweds Dyke and Karen Rhoads, four college students, rookie reporters, are developing new leads and uncovering new witnesses. And what those witnesses remember about that night in Paris, Illinois, 14 years ago, is raising fresh doubts about the original witnesses whose testimony was so critical to convicting Herb **Whitlock** and Randy **Steidl**.

Still, the students have a lot more questions than answers. Did the prosecution witnesses lie? If so, who else could have committed the murders? Two men already behind bars are hoping the truth will set them free, and they're counting on four reporters in training to find it. Here again is Susan Spencer.

TRUE LIES?

(Footage of Paris)

Unidentified Student: (Voiceover) There are definitely people out there who know more than what they're willing to share at this point.

SUSAN SPENCER reporting:

(Voiceover) Charged with ferreting out the truth in the Rhoads' murders...

(Footage of women entering building; photograph of Dyke and Karen Rhoads)

Unidentified Woman #1: Some of these cases we don't have any more.

(Footage of students working)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...the students are quickly learning just how elusive truth can be. A case in point: eyewitness Debra Reinbolt.

You can remember seeing them stab Dyke?

Ms. DEBRA REINBOLT: Mm-hmm

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, TRUE LIES?; THE VARIOUS TESTIMONIES OF DEBRA REINBOL

SPENCER: (Voiceover) This was Debra Reinbolt four years ago. Not only have her looks changed, so had her story.

(Excerpt from videotaped deposition)

Mr. MICHAEL METNICK: When you testified, was that truthful testimony?

Ms. REINBOLT: Not at--no.

(End of excerpt)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Debra Reinbolt's testimony was key to the guilty verdicts against Herb **Whitlock** and Randy **Steidl**.

(Photographs of **Whitlock and Steidl**)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) After all, she said she had seen the murders, even helped.

(Footage of **Whitlock and Steidl** being led from the courthouse)

Mr. METNICK: The case rested or fell on Debra Reinbolt's testimony.

(Excerpt from videotaped deposition)

Unidentified Woman #2: Do you swear that the testimony you are about to give...

SPENCER: (Voiceover) But over two days in a sworn video deposition...

Ms. REINBOLT: I do.

(End of excerpt)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...she matter of factly told **Steidl's** lawyer, Michael Metnick, she had lied on the stand.

(Excerpt from videotaped deposition)

Mr. METNICK: What parts were untrue?

Ms. REINBOLT: Oh, I don't know that Randy was there. I don't know that Herbie was there.

(End of excerpt)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) As for those impressive details she'd provided about what she had seen inside the house...

(Photographs of inside and outside the Rhoads' house)

(Excerpt from videotaped deposition)

Mr. METNICK: Have you ever been in Dyke and Karen Rhoads' house?

Ms. REINBOLT: No.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) But hold onto your hats...

(Excerpt from videotaped deposition)

Mr. METNICK: Were you there the night of the murders?

Ms. REINBOLT: Nope.

(End of excerpts)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Here's what Debra Reinbolt says today.

(Footage of Reinbolt watching herself on videotape)

## IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, TRUE LIES?; THE VARIOUS TESTIMONIES OF DEBRA REINBOLT

SPENCER: He--he says, 'Had you ever been to the Rhoads' house before?' You say, 'No.' 'Where you there the night of the murders?' 'No.' At the beginning of this tape, you hold up your hand, you take an oath...

Ms. REINBOLT: Yes, I know.

SPENCER: ...'This is absolutely true.'

Ms. REINBOLT: And I understand that. I understand I did that. And I shouldn't have did that.

(Footage of Reinbolt on videotape)

SPENCER: In a head-spinning reversal, Debra Reinbolt now says she lied on the tape, that her original eyewitness account of being there at the scene of the crime was and is true. Is it? By our count over the years, Debra Reinbolt has changed her story six times.

But why have you changed your story so many times?

Ms. REINBOLT: Basically, wanting to get out of this, just wanting it over. The bottom line is I can't change a story that's true.

SPENCER: But you have several times.

Ms. REINBOLT: And keep it changed, is what I'm saying.

(Photographs of the crime scene)

Mr. BILL CLUTTER: You know, when you look at the crime scene, and you look at the...

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Bill Clutter, an investigator working on Randy **Steidl's** case, thinks he has proof, beyond her various accounts, that Debra Reinbolt never saw the murders.

(Footage of Reinbolt; photographs of the crime scene, broken lamp)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Remember the broken lamp?

Mr. CLUTTER: The prosecution used the lamp as the centerpiece of their evidence, corroborating Debra Reinbolt's account of what happened this night.

(Footage of Reinbolt)

SPENCER: And it made her believable.

Mr. CLUTTER: It made her believable.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Reinbolt testified the lamp was broken when she got to the Rhoads' bedroom.

(Photographs of crime scene)

SPENCER: It was broken before the fire?

Ms. REINBOLT: Yes.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) After the fire, black soot covered the crime scene.

(Photographs of the crime scene, broken lamp)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) It's absolutely white.

Mr. CLUTTER: (Voiceover) It's absolutely white. It's bone white.

SPENCER: You're contending that if the lamp had been broken, the inside of it--the broken pieces would have had soot on them.

Mr. CLUTTER: It would have soot on it.

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, TRUE LIES?; THE VARIOUS TESTIMONIES OF DEBRA REINBOL

(Photographs of the broken lamp inside the Rhoads' house)

SPENCER: So Debra Reinbolt couldn't possibly have seen it broken then?

Mr. CLUTTER: She could not have seen a broken lamp.

SPENCER: How could that have happened?

Ms. REINBOLT: I have no clue.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) But five years ago, Reinbolt did have a clue.

(Footage of Spencer and Reinbolt watching videotape)

Ms. REINBOLT: (From videotaped deposition) And they would come up with, 'Well, there was a broken vase or a broken lamp there.' And then I'd say, 'Well, OK, so there was.'

(Footage of Paris Police Department car; photo of broken lamp)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) She said the police fed her the information about the lamp.

But as far as them suggesting details to you, you're saying now--even though on this tape you said they did that--you're saying now they--they never did that?

Ms. REINBOLT: No, nothing was suggested to me.

SPENCER: Not about the lamp or the knife or anything else.

(Photographs of the broken lamp and knife)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) But **Steidl's** attorney has another reason to doubt Debra Reinbolt.

Mr. METNICK: The knife that Debra Reinbolt provided had a blade that was five inches long.

(Photographs of the knife; Dyke and Karen Rhoads)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) The supposed murder weapon.

(Photographs of the crime scene)

Dr. MICHAEL BADEN: There were six-and-a-half-inch stab wounds that caused a great deal of internal injuries.

(Photograph of the knife; footage of Spencer talking with Dr. Michael Baden)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Defense consultant Dr. Michael Baden, formerly New York City's chief medical examiner, has a real problem with the depth of those wounds.

(Photograph of the knife)

Dr. BADEN: The Reinbolt knife couldn't have made many of the wounds, and it could not have made the severest wounds.

(Footage of Michael MacFatrige during the trial; photographs of lamp and knife)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Former prosecutor Michael MacFatrige dismisses the lamp, the knife, the recantations as in any way significant.

(Footage of Spencer and Reinbolt viewing Reinbolt's deposition)

Mr. MICHAEL MacFATRIDGE: You know, there's no concrete evidence, you know, that sits there and says, 'Well, these guys didn't do it.' I mean, they did it. I mean, I'm--I have absolutely no doubt they did it.



IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, TRUE LIES?; THE VARIOUS TESTIMONIES OF DEBRA REINBOL

SPENCER: Did you ever ask Herb or Randy why they did this?

Ms. REINBOLT: I don't think it ever crossed my mind to ask them.

(Photographs of Dyke and Karen Rhoads, the crime scene)

SPENCER: I mean, they slaughtered two people right in front of your eyes and you never asked them why?

Ms. REINBOLT: No, I didn't. I probably wouldn't today.

(Footage of **Steidl** being escorted from police vehicle)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Randy **Steidl's** attorneys got a court to hear the new evidence. While they failed to get a new trial, the court did cut his death sentence to life in prison.

(Footage of Spencer talking with **Steidl** in prison)

Mr. RANDY **STEIDL**: I don't know. I feel like they were trying to get me out of the spotlight, to keep me from having my case scrutinized like it should be, 'Get him a natural life sentence, and maybe he'll fade away.'

(Footage of students working)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) The students are determined it not fade away.

Mr. HERB **WHITLOCK**: These kids now what's been done. More power to them. Let them go out there and dig. At least somebody knows what was done to **Whitlock**.

SPENCER: Mm-hmm.

Mr. **WHITLOCK**: That--that's something.

(Footage of people playing pool; talking in a bar; students talking to people)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Now after five months, the students think they've scored a big break in the case.

Mr. GREGG JOHNSON: The real killers were seen that night by--by this woman.

(Footage of cars driving by; man walking)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) A new witness...

Unidentified Woman #3: (Voiceover) And one of them was a big guy with blond hair.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...next on 48 HOURS.

(Footage of street)

(Announcements)

**LOAD-DATE:** June 22, 2001

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**SHOW:** 48 HOURS (10:00 PM ET)

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**HEADLINE:** IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, THE FLORIDA CONNECTION; THE STUDENTS FROM NORTHWESTERN EXAMINE EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OF A CAR WITH FLORIDA LICENSE PLATES SEEN IN TOWN AT THE TIME OF THE MURDER

**REPORTERS:** SUSAN SPENCER

**BODY:**

THE FLORIDA CONNECTION

Ms. KRISTA LARSON: 412--412-8109. 412-8109.

SUSAN SPENCER reporting:

(Voiceover) After months of pounding the pavement...

(Footage of students exiting cars; walking in building)

Ms. DIANE HAAG: I can't wait to go to sleep.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...and doggedly chasing leads...

(Footage of students)

Mr. GREGG JOHNSON: What was your view, like, from where you guys were sitting?

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...the student sleuths make a chilling discovery...

(Footage of students gathered around table)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...one that points the case in an entirely new direction: South.

(Footage of report being read by student; document)

Ms. LARSON: And they don't get a lot of out-of-state plates, obviously, in Paris.

(Footage of **Whitlock and Steidl** in prison)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) A new clue that could help prove Herb **Whitlock** and Randy **Steidl** are innocent of the murders of Dyke and Karen Rhoads.

(Photograph of Dyke and Karen Rhoads)

Professor DAVID PROTESS: This one came out of the blue. Krista called me at home.

Ms. JOHNSON: He says I was screaming. I think I was just really excited.

## IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, THE FLORIDA CONNECTION; THE STUDENTS FROM NORTHWESTE

Prof. PROTESS: And then I heard this voice shrieking into my telephone, 'We've got it! We've got it! You've got to pick up! Are you there?'

(Footage of students setting up video camera)

Prof. PROTESS: They'd interviewed this witness...

SPENCER: (Voiceover) A witness who never spoke to police, but allowed the students to videotape her story.

(Excerpt from videotaped interview)

Unidentified Student: Do you remember that weekend of July 4th in 1986?

Unidentified Woman: Yes, I do.

(End of excerpt)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) She is still so frightened that she asked we obscure her face and use a different voice.

(Footage of woman speaking with Protes and students)

Unidentified Woman: (Voiceover) I noticed two men standing opposite of the street light by Dyke and Karen's house. Now what caught my eye was they had trench coats on in July. And it was very, very hot, and I wondered why they had trench coats on.

(Footage of the street)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) She saw them around 9:00 the night before the murders.

Unidentified Woman: (From videotaped interview) And one of them was a big guy with blond hair, and the other guy was small-framed and looked like he had dark hair. But they were just standing there looking toward Dyke and Karen's house.

(Footage of house; train going by; street)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) And she thinks she saw the same two men the next night, the night of the murders.

Unidentified Woman: (Voiceover) This car started coming around, and it was white with a gold stripe down it. And it had Florida license plates. It would just go by, turn in front of Dyke and Karen's house, stop.

(Footage of car coming down the streets; a house; car driving away)

Unidentified Woman: (Voiceover) And I seen them looking, you know? And then take off. They did this about 10 times, just--I mean, continuously. Why would anyone be doing that?

SPENCER: (Voiceover) And she's not the only one who saw a mysterious Florida car that night.

(Footage of Bryan Jones talking to Kirsten Searer)

Mr. BRYAN JONES: I used to work 11 to 7.

Ms. KIRSTEN SEARER: You worked 11...

Mr. JONES: Eleven to 7.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Bryan Jones was a teen-ager in July 1986.

(Footage of students talking with Jones)

Mr. JOHNSON: Did you hear sirens or any of that stuff?

Mr. JONES: No, I didn't really...

## IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, THE FLORIDA CONNECTION; THE STUDENTS FROM NORTHWESTE

SPENCER: (Voiceover) He was working at a Paris convenience store the night the Rhoads were killed. And around midnight...

(Footage of inside a convenience store)

Mr. JONES: I just mainly remembered a good-sized person and a Florida plate.

Unidentified Student: And what made you notice that?

(Visual of the word Florida)

Mr. JONES: Well, I was born and raised in Florida. I always look at license plate, just kind of a habit.

(Footage of outside and inside of bar; people playing pool)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Across town, the students also tracked down J.C. Foley, who was working the late shift at a local gas station that night.

(Footage of gas station; Florida license plate)

Mr. J.C. FOLEY: (From videotaped interview) A long through the middle of the night, a car came in with Florida plates on it. And I thought that was unusual, especially in the middle of the night in a town that you don't see too many cars with Florida plates in.

(Footage of gas pumps; person lifting up gas nozzle)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) But what really caught J.C.'s attention was what the driver bought.

(Footage of someone filling gas containers)

(Excerpt from videotaped interview)

Mr. FOLEY: Several containers of gasoline. You know, that's not uncommon at 3:00 in the afternoon, but 3:00 in the morning, I thought, 'Well, that's strange.'

Mr. JOHNSON: Do you recall how much gas you sold to this man?

Mr. FOLEY: Yep, I do. It was 21 gallons because it was in, like, seven three-gallon cans.

(Footage of gas pump)

Mr. FOLEY: And it stuck in my mind because I remember thinking that was a lot of gasoline to be buying at 3:00 in the morning.

(End of excerpt)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) An hour later, the Rhoads' house was ablaze.

(Footage of house on fire; photograph of the Rhoads burned house)

SPENCER: Paris police interviewed both Bryan Jones and J.C. Foley, but the Florida connection went nowhere. Police never even knew there was a third witness, who over the years hasn't exactly volunteered information.

(Excerpts from videotaped interview)

Unidentified Woman: After I found out what happened and what happened to Dyke and Karen, then I thought, 'No, I better not get involved.'

(Photograph of Dyke and Karen Rhoads; footage of car driving by)

Mr. JOHNSON: You think you may have seen the actual killers?

Unidentified Woman: I mean, the thought crosses my mind. 'Was that them?'

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, THE FLORIDA CONNECTION; THE STUDENTS FROM NORTHWESTE

(End of excerpts)

(Footage of car coming down street)

Prof. PROTESS: (Voiceover) She saw them riding around the block on the night of the crime some 10 to 12 times, circling the block.

Mr. JOHNSON: You don't drive from Florida to circle the block unless there's something going on.

(Footage of car driving by)

Prof. PROTESS: Two men, not Herb and Randy, driving a two-door, light-colored car with Florida plates.

Mr. JOHNSON: It wasn't coincidence that that's the night they were murdered. I think we all agree that the real killers were seen that night by--by this woman.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) What do you think this all means?

Unidentified Woman: I think they're not guilty, and I think they was framed.

(Footage of car driving down the street)

Prof. PROTESS: I think it's pretty clear that she saw the killers, that her observations are corroborated by two other sources. I believe 100 percent, from every part of my heart and mind, that Randy **Steidl** and Herb **Whitlock** are innocent and are serving life for a crime that they did not commit.

(Footage of the moon; the street; a house)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) But why would two men from Florida travel to tiny Paris, Illinois, to commit murder? That's next.

(Announcements)

**LOAD-DATE:** June 22, 2001

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**HEADLINE:** IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, REASONABLE DOUBT; THE NORTHWESTERN STUDENTS LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY THAT DYKE AND KAREN RHOADS WERE MURDERED BECAUSE OF SOMETHING THAT KAREN MAY HAVE WITNESSED

**ANCHORS:** DAN RATHER

**REPORTERS:** SUSAN SPENCER

**BODY:**

REASONABLE DOUBT

(Footage of Dyke and Karen Rhoads from wedding video)

Mr. RANDY **STEIDL:** They were a clean-cut couple. All indications was that they were athletic, very health-conscious people.

(Photographs of Dyke and Karen Rhoads)

SUSAN SPENCER reporting:

(Voiceover) Randy **Steidl** says he often thinks about Dyke and Karen Rhoads, the young couple he and his friend, Herb **Whitlock**, were convicted of killing.

Mr. HERB **WHITLOCK:** I don't know of anything after 13 years that anybody even knows a motive for these people being killed.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) But the prosecution convinced two juries it knew the motive: that Dyke owed money for drugs.

(Footage of **Whitlock** being led out of courthouse; **Steidl** being placed into a vehicle)

Mr. **STEIDL:** I think about the victims' families, too. I think it hurts me to know that the state tainted Dyke and--Rhoads' memory by saying they were involved in drugs.

(Footage of outside the prison; guard unlocking gate; **Steidl and Whitlock** walking)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) For 13 long years, **Steidl and Whitlock** have adamantly denied any involvement with the murders.

Mr. **WHITLOCK:** I think the odds of--of anyone ever proving who did this are extremely remote.

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Incredibly, the Northwestern students investigating the case...

## IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, REASONABLE DOUBT; THE NORTHWESTERN STUDENTS LOOK INT

(Footage of students)

Mr. GREGG JOHNSON: (Answering the telephone) Hello?

SPENCER: (Voiceover) ...may be getting closer to proving him wrong.

Mr. JOHNSON: (Speaking on telephone) Is this Shawn? How are you doing?

(Photograph of Dyke and Karen Rhoads)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) The students are focusing on a new theory, one that involves not Dyke Rhoads, but Karen.

Ms. KIRSTEN SEARER: Karen had told several family members and friends that she had seen something at work that had scared her.

(Photograph of Karen Rhoads)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Something she stumbled on to in the parking lot, something involving other employees.

Ms. SEARER: She had seen large amounts of money and a gun put in a trunk that was on its way to Chicago.

(Visual of a Florida license plate on a car)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Professor Protesch thinks there could be a link between what Karen saw and the shadowy men from Florida. Could this have been murder for hire?

(Footage of gas station, person filling up gas containers)

Professor DAVID PROTESCH: But who are these guys? Why'd they come to Paris? Why'd they kill them?

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Dyke's brother and sister feel the answers aren't far from home.

(Footage of Tony Rhoads and Andrea Rhoads talking with Spencer)

Mr. TONY RHOADS: There's people in this town to this day that know what happened.

SPENCER: Although Karen's fears are mentioned in the police report, it's unclear how much the police actually investigated. In any case, former prosecutor MacFatrige concedes there was little interest once the eyewitnesses came forward.

Mr. MICHAEL MacFATRIDGE: **Steidl and Whitlock** are guilty of murder. They should--they should spend the rest of their lives in prison, and that's just the way it is.

(Footage of students walking)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) But the students hope the courts will take a hard look at what they have helped dig up.

Ms. DIANE HAGG: I think we're all convinced with the new evidence that's out there now there's no way they can be convicted if they get a second trial.

(Footage of **Steidl** walking into prison)

SPENCER: (Voiceover) Since we first brought you this story a year ago, the Illinois Supreme Court took up **Steidl's** appeal. But after considering his case, they denied his plea for a new trial.

Mr. **STEIDL**: That's all I ask, is to have a shot at a new trial and a fair trial.

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, REASONABLE DOUBT; THE NORTHWESTERN STUDENTS LOOK INT

SPENCER: (Voiceover) And as for the Rhoads family, they say peace will come only with the answer to one fundamental question.

(Visual of the Rhoads' gravestone)

SPENCER: What is the one thing above all that you want to understand about all this?

ANDREA: Why.

(Photograph of Dyke and Karen Rhoads)

Mr. RHOADS: (Voiceover) The truth is still out there, in my view.

ANDREA: (Voiceover) And I think it will be found someday.

DAN RATHER, host:

It maybe sometime before the final word can be written in this case. But the Northwestern students have already learned some valuable lessons about journalism and about justice, and that it's never, ever too late to care about the truth.

Politicians are learning some lessons, too. Last year, the governor of Illinois imposed a moratorium on executions.

(Footage of prison)

RATHER: He cited 13 cases where inmates on death row had been wrongfully convicted; including several cleared with the help of Professor Protes and his journalism class. In addition, Congress is now considering a bill to provide new, stronger legal protections for death row inmates and some others claiming to be innocent.

Many Americans believe that convicted criminals can already play the system for too long, and there's some truth in that. But if we are to maintain confidence in our honorable and admirable, though imperfect, justice system, then there must always be room to set the record straight, find the truth and do justice, especially when someone's life is on the line.

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