

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Blood Ties

On the scrubby hills around Bakersfield, California, the oil derricks pull with the shrinking black lake far below, way down below, where an answer to a secret may lie, or a victim, or a ghost.

Whatever is down there, it called up to a sister's devotion.

I don't go a second of a minute of an hour of a day without thinking about her.

The buried secret tugged at her, took her to dark places no one should tell.

There was guns around and there was bullets. It was the scariest moment of my entire life.

And in the end, the secret led to the lowest place of all, a human heart bent on murder.

You want me to do anything else? Just bump on the f***ing hand, draw her off, and have her after her sister.

A dark tale, but one illuminated by the unconquerable love shared by twins.

There was still a uniqueness between us that I can't hardly describe. It was like she was a part of me, definitely.

Growing up in the 60s, Teresa and Lisa Siebold were inseparable, sharing late night confidences enclosed.

They're bond a refuge from a troubled family.

Eventually, their parents split. Three older brothers remained in California with their grandfather.

But the twins, just three years old, were sent away to live with relatives in Oklahoma.

They're like two sides of a coin. They developed into two very different people.

She liked hanging out with the guys and going outside all the time.

And I liked staying in my room and reading books and doing my homework.

Rick Siebold was one of three brothers that been forced to leave behind.

But he remembers how Teresa watched out for Lisa.

Teresa was like a mother figure to help her through the hard times and help her along in school.

And she was just always there to help Lisa.

I would have these nightmares routinely, like I remember them as far back as when I was five and six years old,

where there would be a monster in the dream and different types of monsters,

but it was always had the same ending where I would jump out in front of my sister

so the monster would get me instead of her.

Teresa worked hard, putting herself through college while Lisa drifted.

Still, the same inextricable link stuck fast and the same pattern.

She would call me the exact same time I was calling her.

One time she got into some trouble when I was in college and I could feel it.

They always knew when something was wrong between each other.

And in fact much had gone wrong.

In 1985, Lisa had tried to take her own life after a failed romance in the death of their mother.

Teresa worried incessantly.

And then just two years later, Lisa, by then 25 years old, met her happily ever after.

Or so she hoped.

His name is Bryce Thomas and he seemed the polar opposite of all the ne'er-do-wells piled up in Lisa's past.

Bryce was handsome and stable. He worked the oil fields around Bakersfield.

I think he kind of kept her settled down and she seemed to be enjoying life

and I would come and stay with him about every six weeks and everything seemed to be picture

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perfect.

For Teresa, Bryce became not only a brother-in-law but a close friend.

He just was like a real close brother.

We were able to, you know, open our hearts up about all the, you know, personal things that you can't always even talk to with a brother about, but I was able to talk to him about.

In October of 1987, Lisa gave birth to a daughter, Christine.

Lisa and Bryce got married the following year and four years later there was another daughter, Brianna.

Teresa also got married and had two children and finally after all those difficult years, it seemed like the parallel tracks of the sisters' lives were heading in the right direction.

I felt like I didn't have to be her parent anymore or worry about her.

The worrying was the biggest part.

But there were secrets even then and they were buried deep.

Rick, the brother, caught just a hint in Lisa's behavior and husband Bryce's glare.

We have this way of demeaning Lisa, you know, like she was stupid or that she didn't understand how to give Christine guidance or discipline.

And whether it was that reason or some other call of the old wildlife,

Lisa began to seek the comfort of other men.

One man in particular and she declared herself to be, again, impassionate, irresponsible love.

Where are you going?

Away from you.

Finally, in the summer of 1996, Lisa and Bryce decided to split.

But there was something odd about the way it happened.

Their marriage had been increasingly troubled as Lisa cheated and Bryce, jealous and angry, seethe.

What was odd was the impending divorce seemed quite peaceful.

They even had their paperwork and it was all very mutual.

They were friends about it.

A controlling husband and a wayward wife don't usually add up to an amicable divorce, but as far as Teresa and her brother knew, in this case, it did.

That's why they thought nothing of it when Lisa called them for a favor when August weekend in 1996.

That's the weekend that Teresa and I got her children while she was going to look for an apartment.

So she was left alone in the apartment with Bryce.

Lisa and Teresa spoke on the Sunday night.

Everything was on schedule.

But by Tuesday, August 13, Lisa had failed to pick up her daughters.

Teresa was not altogether surprised.

I had her kids, everything was fine.

I thought Lisa would always take advantage of my babysitting.

So if she didn't make it till Tuesday night or Wednesday morning, I wouldn't have been surprised.

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Lisa was known to be flaky, so I kind of let it slide.
Then by Friday, I was getting ready to pull my hair out from the four kids and getting worried and mad.
I was mad at Lisa.
That Friday, it was Bryce Thomas who came to pick up the girls, not Lisa.
He didn't seem to be concerned about Lisa's failure to show up.
After all, he said Lisa's new boyfriend had recently gotten out of jail.
Maybe they'd left town, taken a trip to celebrate.
But was Lisa even with her new boyfriend?
Had the boyfriend actually been released?
She called the prison to make sure.
Teresa wasn't prepared for what the official told her.
He came back to the phone and he said,
Yeah, he's here, all right.
He hasn't heard from your sister in a couple of weeks.
He was kind of worried himself.
As soon as he told me that, I just said, Oh my God, she's dead.
I know my baby's dead.
And with that inexplicable twins instinct,
she also felt she knew something else.
She knew exactly where to look for her lost sister.
How different they were.
Teresa Sebold had her twin sister, Lisa.
Teresa so stable.
Lisa defiant, occasionally irresponsible.
And now on the very night she was leaving her husband, Lisa had vanished.
And Teresa knew.
The bones of her shared DNA that something was terribly wrong.
Everyone said that I was letting my imagination go wild.
That she's not dead.
She's just out partying.
She just need to be patient.
And I was very insulted by all this because I knew she was dead.
Lisa's whole family suspected that she was dead.
And she's not dead.
She's just out partying.
She just needs to be patient.
And I was very insulted by all this because I knew she was dead.
And all families suspected that Lisa's controlling husband Bryce Thomas had something to do with her disappearance.
The police were suspicious too.
And they questioned him at his front door.
But God no further.
They did not have a warrant to go in or had any reason to be suspicious.

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That's why we knew we had to have evidence to be able to get the search warrant.
I said, well, the first thing that I'd like to do is go to the apartment
where we know she last was.
And it was late at night.
And so we did.
It is bleak and dark outside the apartment of Bryce Thomas.
They checked.
He wasn't home.
Teresa, Rick and a few friends stood in the dark yard.
But now, suddenly Teresa knew what she had to do.
She turned to the others and said,
As far as I'm concerned, Lisa died in that house.
She never left it alive.
And we need to get inside their house.
That's what we need to do.
She never left their live.
And she did not leave there voluntarily.
So Teresa says, I'm going to break in.
And I said, are you sure, Teresa?
You know, she said yes.
It was kind of a scary alleyway.
And there was only a ledge this big for me to stand on.
And the window was up to here.
So it was not a very feasible thing.
But I thought, you know, my sister can do this.
So we were very competitive athletically.
And I tried to open the window thinking it was just going to open right up.
And there was a bar in it.
I thought, you know, if I don't get in this room, this house tonight,
right now, I'm never going to get another chance to do it.
So I decided to try one more time.
And I went to go try to push the window open and it just slipped right open.
Magically.
I mean, it was the weirdest thing.
I mean, you tried to open it before.
And I couldn't do it.
It would not open.
It would not.
All of a sudden it slipped magically.
I mean, I went, I went to myself.
I went, whoa, like that.
And I had goosebumps all over me.
And I said, okay, here goes.
You know, I knew that I just felt like my sister was assisting me.

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The silence of the empty house was eerie.
But as she opened the door for her brother, Rick,
they were assaulted by an unusual odor.
Immediately when the door opens, the place reeks of like a pine cleaner
where he had been cleaning, you know,
and there was a carpet shampooer right in front of the front door.
So we knew that was a bad sign right there.
Teresa tentatively walked through the apartment,
afraid of what she might find.
First she noticed that he was not sleeping in the bed.
He had a little bed made on the floor in the spare bedroom.
So we knew he had been sleeping there.
And we thought, well, that's strange.
So then Teresa, she noticed that the bed was not made like it normally was.
You said you were standing by the mattress thinking, I'm supposed to be here.
And I didn't even know what I expected to see,
but something told me to look there.
So I started stripping the bed.
So you were tearing away at the bed without really knowing why,
except you felt like you.
Why aren't I seeing anything?
So I went over to the side of the mattresses
and put my hands underneath to push it up to look in between.
And it was all wet in between the mattresses.
And I went, Rick, come here and help me please.
The mattresses are all wet.
And I was almost crying.
He picked up the mattresses and blood was everywhere on both sides,
just soaking wet with blood.
And I just started screaming and I ran out of the apartment.
And it was, I knew, of course, then she was dead.
There's no doubt that was it.
What was it?
What was the feeling that made you so certain?
I felt her spirit just come and grasp upon me.
And when I ran out that door, I knew that I had to get the cops there
and find out the truth.
Teresa's discovery gave police the grounds
they needed to get a search warrant for Bryce's home.
What they found was disturbing.
Not only was the mattress bloody,
but blood spatters were picked up on walls,
the chest of drawers, and other bedding.
Rosemary Wall was the lead investigator.

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What does it say to you we should see that kind of evidence?
Well, that tells us that someone was violently assaulted in that room because of the cast off and the pattern that the blood spatters left on the furniture and also on the walls.
But DNA testing of blood can sometimes take months.
Police, of course, had their suspicions, especially when cleaning materials were found.
Have the spatters been erased, wiped away?
There were what appeared to be evidence of him trying to clean.
The room could wash the walls down, but it didn't take away the blood evidence that was still there.
But Bryce Thomas told police he had no idea where Lisa was.
Where are you going?
Away from you.
After all, he said, she was leaving him.
And about the blood, he had an explanation for that too.
He remembered her time not too long before she came up missing that she had a pretty heavy nose bleed and that was his reason for the blood being on the mattress.
The story which, frankly, the police were not inclined to buy.
I was not convinced that something terrible didn't happen to Lisa that night.
There was just too much evidence, physical evidence, and his statements did not seem to be that of a husband that was deeply concerned about his wife, somebody that he was supposed to love and was the mother of his children.
His reaction to everything that occurred just didn't seem right.
So why not take him into custody at that time?
Well, you have to have more than just a gut feeling to make an arrest for a murder.
You have to have probable cause and you have to have your evidence and you only get one shot at taking a case to trial and we weren't going to blow it.
And what kind of a case do they have anyway?
Was Lisa Sebold even dead?
Without DNA results, police couldn't be sure the blood was in fact Lisa's.
There was no weapon, no body.
Yes, Lisa was missing, but remember, she had been known to disappear before.
She was, to say the least, unpredictable.
What if they charged Bryce Thomas with murder?
And then Lisa showed up alive.
We sent teletypes nationwide to have other law enforcement agencies check their databases to see if they had contact with her and we had to do everything that we could to show that she didn't exist anymore.
And anyway, even Teresa was having second thoughts about the main suspect.

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She wavered a little.

Bryce insisted on his innocence, even established an 800 number and begged people to call with information about Lisa.

It was, frankly, confusing.

It was really hard because it was like I was pointing the finger at somebody I loved, you know, as like a brother.

And so police went on dredging the depths for secrets.

Had Lisa been dumped in some abandoned well?

After all, Bryce did know where something could be hidden.

But the only find came above ground and it wasn't pleasant.

The cops went door to door around Lisa's old haunts

and discovered she had been using crystal meth,

had been drawn into the drug underworld, had been seeing some very dangerous people who did not seem anxious to cooperate with police.

The cops did tell me they left business cards on the people's screen doors and stuff and they were never contacted.

Six long months passed, each month worse than the last.

The fear and guilt were almost overpowering.

And those nightmares that I used to have

and that I couldn't put myself in front of her to protect her from getting killed,

I should have been the one to jump in front of her and be the one to be killed rather than her.

In her heart, Teresa knew if anyone was going to unearth the secret of what had happened to her sister,

it would have to be her.

Once again, she decided to take matters into her own hands.

She was about to go undercover as her own sister.

It was a decision that would almost cost her life.

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What happened to Lisa Thomas?

What would cause a 36-year-old woman, a mother of two little girls, to vanish into thin air?

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Murder?

It looked that way, but there was no body, no weapon.

Certainly her twin sister, Teresa, was suspicious,

but that didn't give police much to go on.

Had Lisa's husband Bryce killed her in a jealous rage,

he insisted he had nothing to do with it.

And Teresa spiraled into a deep depression.

I was desperate to find her body,

and they also told me that they couldn't do anything until the body was found.

But finding a body in Bakersfield, California,

posed a particularly daunting challenge.

It happens to be the cradle of the West Coast oil business.

Over a century, thousands of wells have been bored into the pool of oil down below.

Many of them now just deep holes, long since abandoned,

as Bryce Thomas, the oil worker, knew very well.

Was Lisa in one of them?

And so police sent down probes into the dark.

They plumbed the desks of a local aqueduct of nearby rivers,

and they found nothing.

Every lead a dry hole.

The investigation seemed to stall.

Weeks went by.

Teresa began to second-guess the police.

Did they think Lisa wasn't worth it?

My feeling about it was that because of Lisa's background,

because she wasn't exactly the doctor's wife,

they didn't find her crime to be that high on the list of priorities.

Remember, that DNA had been set away months earlier,

and still, no results.

Sometimes the wills of justice work slowly.

How did Teresa respond to that?

Well, Teresa didn't quite understand the way the justice system works,

and she tried to be very helpful, but she wanted immediate results.

She was going stir-crazy.

I remember one time the district attorney said that Teresa was driving her nuts,

because it was a daily thing where Teresa was...

Why didn't you know what was going forward with the investigation?

And she wasn't patient with it,

so she basically took the investigation on all herself.

Half a year had passed.

Teresa could no longer sit and wait for results she had to do something.

She distributed posters, created her own special twin hotline.

She pestered her local newspapers to keep the story alive.

She even arranged for coverage on national TV.

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Private investigators searched and rescued teams,
and even psychics were brought in,
and there were agonizing forays into the endless oil fields.
I would be right there in front, leading the pack,
and I would go going, or if I'm the one that finds it, you know,
it would kill me, you know, to see her like that.
Did you feel as if you'd go crazy if you didn't find out?
Yes, I did. I felt like I couldn't live.
And then Teresa decided she would have to get down there in the muck,
go to the very places where Lisa had spent her last days.
Remember, police had discovered that Lisa had been using meth,
had been hanging out with a rogue's gallery of drug dealers.
But for police, getting access to that bunch had been impossible.
They wouldn't even open the door to the cops.
They wouldn't have anything. In fact, they'd just act like they weren't home, probably.
But what if they knew something?
Maybe Teresa decided there was one way to find out.
Tell me, how was it that you decided to play the part of your sister?
I needed to find out as much about her life at that time as I could.
So I decided that the best thing for me to do is just try to pretend like I'm Lisa as much as I can,
so they would open up to me like they would her.
If anyone understood Lisa inside and out, it was her twin sister.
They weren't identical twins, but Teresa felt sure she could assume her sister's identity,
like a second skin, and maybe unlock the mystery of her disappearance.
Remember, Teresa had always been the good twin.
Not now. Now she would be as wild as Lisa.
She traded her genes for short skirts, painted her face, and like a stranger in a strange land,
Teresa walked into the smoky bars of Bakersfield, undercover.
I would drink beer. I'd never drink beer. Yeah, I tried to be just like her.
I even tried to hold my cigarette like her. It worked beautifully.
What was your assessment of how dangerous it was for her?
Well, she was dealing with drug users and people that had criminal backgrounds,
people that had been in custody for different crimes,
and she was just trying to find answers, and it didn't matter to her
that she was having contact with these type of individuals.
I cautioned her a number of times to be careful and not to go into situations that may cause harm to
her,
but she was on a mission.
There were times when Teresa would disappear, and I wouldn't hear from her for days.
I just had to say my prayers and hope I'd hear from her again.
In that dangerous world, Teresa befriended anyone who may have known her sister in her last
weeks.
She was frightened, but not exactly alone.
There's no doubt that I feel is my sister handing me things,

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and I think that she realized at that point that if I didn't find out something, I was going to go crazy. She cruised the bars, made small talk with criminals.

What could they tell you? How could they help?

One of the things that they told opened up to what happened the night before she died.

She heard that Lisa and Bryce had met with a well-known drug dealer the night before Lisa disappeared.

She managed to arrange a meeting with that drug dealer, and when she arrived, was met by gun-toting bodyguards and a private lair that looked like a scene from a bad gangster movie.

It was like he had all these metal boxes and shelvings and stuff to protect him from anybody getting to him,

like a shield from weapons or something.

It was weird, and he had monitors of every single angle from his house, from the outside, so he could watch everything going around his house.

And he had guys at the doors with guns. It was the scariest moment of my entire life.

Did you think that maybe these people had something to do with her death?

Oh, yes, most definitely. You should have seen there was guns around, and there was bullets in bowls like you'd have, like candies in a bowl.

They had bullets in a bowl, and they had people's names carved into these bullets.

Could have been them. Could have been somebody in that group killed your sister.

As scared as she was, she wasn't too scared to get what she came for, information about her sister's last hours.

The dealer confirmed that he and his girlfriend had visited Lisa and Bryce around 10 p.m. the night before her disappearance.

Bryce was out on their balcony, and he had a gun in his belt kind of, you know, like stuck behind here, which was unusual.

For him to even have a gun out or gun period, I didn't know anything about it.

And he also was acting very funny.

According to the story, the whole group, Bryce included, got high on crystal meth.

But something about Lisa's demeanor was unusual.

She was listless, groggy, almost helpless, not her usual meth high at all.

Teresa listened to the story and wondered,

had Bryce sedated her sister, making her powerless to resist a coming attack?

So why were you able to find these things that the police hadn't found?

I truly believed that throughout this whole ordeal that my sister was guiding me

and communicating with me from the other side, I felt, and I was never into this kind of thing.

I wasn't even a believer in it, you know, speaking to the dead or whatever.

I was not a believer in any of this.

Teresa went to police and told them the story she'd heard.

But remember, these weren't hard facts. Much of it was hearsay.

But now there were more witnesses to check out.

And then, disaster.

Somehow, word got back to her source in the drug hangout.

Teresa was a police informant. Her cover was blown.

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How did those people feel about your having infiltrated their world?

I think I was shot at the next day.

Teresa Sebold had gone to hell and back in a desperate search for her twin sister, Lisa.

Had scoured the scummiest neighborhoods of Bakersfield, California,

had entered her sister's world, the dally with drug dealers and low-life thugs.

And then her cover was blown.

Her new friends in the drug world learned she'd gone to the cops.

That they were not happy was made frighteningly clear a few days later as she drove down the freeway.

But I tell you, when I got shot at going down the freeway, I learned I felt like I was Rockford, you know.

And I had to lose the person to keep from getting killed.

Surely that just happens in the movies.

We saw the bullet, you know, the bullets on, you know, we heard them.

They passed us. We went on the freeway, 65, 70 miles an hour.

I heard a, phew, go past my ear.

So whatever, it was definitely someone chasing us.

It certainly seemed like Lisa's friends had something to hide.

One by one, they were brought in for questioning.

But no matter how many were interrogated, all leads kept pointing to one person.

It was Bryce. That's where we kept coming back to.

Even though you'd questioned some CD characters.

Yes.

Then finally, a break.

After 10 months, the DNA results from the spatters of blood in the bedroom were back.

The result? There was a 99.86 probability it was Lisa's blood.

The DNA results, along with the crime scene evidence, convinced police they now had enough to charge Bryce Thomas with the murder of his wife, Lisa.

Where are you going?

Away from you.

After an excruciating wait, a warrant went out for his arrest and Bryce Thomas had vanished.

What had happened to him?

About three weeks prior to the arrest, he decided to relocate to Anchorage, Alaska and live with his mother.

Police did find Thomas in Anchorage and after much legal wrangling, he was extradited to California.

But the biggest challenge was yet to come.

Now, you had to go to trial and you had no body.

It's taken you a long time to prove for certain that she was even dead.

That must be a difficult case to prove.

Well, it's a general rule. A circumstantial evidence case is, you know, difficult.

It is a difficult case to put on and to win.

The trial lasted three weeks. Despite Teresa's hard work, the case was far from a sure thing.

You just couldn't prove guilt without a body.

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And so the whole town, including the DA's office and everybody said they're going to have a no guilty verdict.

The defense at the Kern County Courthouse painted Bryce Thomas as a hard-working husband and father,

whose willful wife had spiraled out of control.

He just woke up one morning and found her gone.

It was Lisa who had the bad reputation, said the defense, not Bryce.

And sure enough, she was known as somebody who could be wild.

But the prosecution painted a very different portrait of Bryce Thomas.

He had a side that he would show at work as the upstanding, stable, good guy.

And then he had this dark side that he kept from everyone.

It was not uncommon for him to go through her things, to follow her when she went places, to put recording devices in her vehicle, to take conversations that she might have with friends or possibly another man.

The prosecution argued that the apparently quiet, steady Bryce was filled with rage at his wife's last infidelity.

Several friends testified Bryce had threatened Lisa's life on more than one occasion, even saying he would kill her first before she could leave him.

Testimony from another friend told an even more frightening story, that Thomas had offered the friend \$5,000 to kill Lisa's boyfriend.

But it would be Teresa herself who offered, perhaps, the most damning testimony.

In chilling detail, she recalled her discovery of the bloody mattress in Lisa and Bryce's bedroom.

She also recounted what she had learned on her journey to the dark side of Bakersfield, where Lisa had spent her last days and nights.

For over 10 hours, Teresa recounted what she'd found in her zealous search for her sister.

Teresa was so overwhelmingly convincing as a witness.

But testifying against her brother-in-law was devastating.

It was the week of my life.

I totally fell apart the first half hour on the stand.

Totally fell apart.

I couldn't stop crying.

It was the first time I'd seen him.

And, of course, my chair was pointed right at him, even though I tried not to look at him.

I felt very guilty.

Guilty?

It was like telling on my brother or sister.

It was like telling on somebody that I really cared about.

And if Teresa was conflicted, the jurors were facing their own dilemma.

How to return a murder verdict without a body, or even a weapon.

And so the jury worked through the case,

digging down, trying to find the truth about what had happened to Lisa Sebold.

It would take three days for the jury to reach a decision.

I was walking inside the courtroom when they were coming out of the courtroom, and someone yelled, Teresa Guilty, or something like that.

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They yelled my name and said Guilty.
She had done it.
She had made a difference.
Bryce Thomas was found guilty of second-degree murder.
He was sentenced to 15 years in prison.
And the two-year nightmare, it seemed, was over.
So tell me how that felt.
Like the world was lifted off my shoulders completely.
I felt so light, finally, because everything felt so heavy before that.
And I feel like, you know, my hard work finally paid off,
and that it was just a good thing I didn't give up.
But sometimes murder cases are not so easy to button up all neat and tidy.
Yes, Thomas was behind bars, for now.
But he wasn't finished with Teresa.
It only takes an instant for your entire world to change.
We're talking about the families of missing persons.
Now, maybe you can help bring their loved ones home.
Somebody somewhere knows what happened.
Dateline, missing in America.
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The jurors stepped forward with a problem.
Oh, there was a juror that was trying to do a mistrial,
claiming that there was jury misconduct.
He would have got out of prison on a mistrial.
One juror insisted that her fellow panelists had not followed the judge's instructions.
Lawyers and judges returned to court to wrangle over the juror's allegation.
Thomas remained in prison while his lawyers tried to secure a mistrial.
But Thomas did not simply sit in his jail cell and wait.
Word spread around the prison that Thomas wanted a favor,
and only a certain kind of person could do it for him.
So while he was incarcerated in prison,
he set up a \$10,000 hit on Teresa.
If there was a new trial,
Teresa would again be the prime prosecution witness.
So in prison, Thomas made a few useful friends
who approached a very large, very tough hitman.
What did they tell you they needed?
They told me they needed somebody to act as a professional murderer,
otherwise known as a hitman.
What Thomas didn't know was that the hitman was actually J.R. Rodriguez,

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then an undercover investigator for the Kern County Sheriff's Department.
Skillfully, Rodriguez adopted the guise of Garo,
a killer with no conscience.
A phone call was arranged between Garo and Bryce.
Rodriguez's instructions were very clear.
He had to walk a verbal tightrope,
reeling in information without tipping his hand.
The phone call that Bryce made was secretly recorded.
I was looking away to get out.
She's the prime witness.
Without her there ain't nothing.
She's the cause of a lot of hell in my life.
She took my kids from me and everything else.
So you just want me to bumper or what, is that it?
Yeah, I want her to disappear.
Well, I could make it happen, but you know, you got to pay.
Without a trace.
Well, I need to know how much.
Well, depending on how hard, maybe \$10,000.
Well, I can do it.
It'll take me a while to do it.
Unaware that he's being recorded,
Thomas negotiates.
He thinks he's arranging a murder
for less money down than it would take to buy a used car.
Maybe \$500 to get started?
I can come up with a few hundreds about all I come up with right now.
I don't have to weasel my grandma out of that.
There's no question what he wanted you to do.
Yes, sir.
What did that feel like inside?
Well, like I said, it was chilling to have somebody
want somebody killed number one, but number two,
and the manner that the body would be found.
The voices on the tape are almost casual
like a couple of men planning a surprise party.
Bryce tells Rodriguez he wants Teresa killed in her sleep.
But even more shocking, he knows during the planned murder,
Teresa's children will be sleeping just feet away,
and his own small daughters will be there too.
So you want me to give you this piece forever?
What about the kids?
I don't know.
Two of them are mine.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Blood Ties

The oldest one there will be mine. She's 10.
So if they wake up and find no auntie,
she'll be able to handle the situation until authorities arrive.
What kind of a man would want a thing like that?
A sick man.
In court, Thomas had steadfastly denied he had anything to do
with Lisa's disappearance.
Now he seemed intimately aware of the more gruesome details.
Actually, what I'd like to happen is to leave a blood trail there.
To leave a blood trail?
Yeah.
Because that's similar to what happened to their mother.
To the one that accused the murderer.
And she disappeared.
You know what I mean?
Do you want me to do anything else?
Just bump in the f***ing head and rub her off.
Yeah.
Get rid of her completely.
The man who had claimed he was innocent of Lisa's murder
was now caught on tape trying to arrange the murder of Teresa,
the woman who had brought him to justice.
Or had she?
I thought they went home and they would find this b***h.
That's what happened to her sister.
Teresa C. Bold had risked her life
helping police put her sister's killer behind bars.
Now that man, her brother-in-law Bryce Thomas,
had attempted to hire a hitman to kill Teresa,
the prosecution's star witness.
His biggest mistake?
The hitman was actually an undercover investigator,
and the phone call arranging the hit was recorded.
But as we sat down together in 2005,
Teresa was about to hear that tape for the first time.
We listened.
So did she.
You know, I've gone out to watch this b***h for a couple days
and see what she do, you know?
I understand.
And we watched her body stiffen.
Anything else you want me to do to her?
Do whatever you want with her.
Okay.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Blood Ties

We can handle that, sir.

I just want it done.

What's her name, sir?

Teresa.

That's the first time ever that I've heard that tape.

I'd forgotten all about the details of how he wanted me dead and what kind of gave me that...

The worst was his description of how to get to my bedroom, you know, and the blood trail.

Kill you in just the same way Lisa was killed.

Yeah.

Give a blood trail.

Make her disappear.

Talk about you as coldly as a person possibly could.

There's no doubt about it.

I felt it.

I felt something go...

You know, like pull my guts in or something.

It made me realize that, you know, our family's...

As long as Bryce is alive, our family's not safe.

Bryce Thomas' plot failed.

Instead, he received a 12-year sentence for trying to arrange the murder of Teresa Siebold.

And for the murder of Lisa, the trial verdict was allowed to stand.

No mistrial.

The sentence, 15 years to life, was upheld.

But still, a mystery.

Where is the body of Lisa Thomas?

Out there at the bottom of some well?

Maybe.

There was a story that he told that he had burned her in a tank in the oil fields.

Because he had access to hundreds of miles of oil fields, keys to the gates and all that.

I'm hoping that someday getting him to tell us exactly what happened with the remains.

Is there any way to describe the damage that you feel has been done inside there?

I don't have any insights left, I feel.

I feel like it's just was exploded and can never be put back together, really.

No, not for Teresa Siebold, anyway.

She was never the same after losing her twin sister Lisa

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Blood Ties

in 1996.

Twenty years later, Teresa died.

According to Rick Siebold,

his sister's heart just stopped.

She was only 56.

Rick told us that over the years he has often thought

of visiting Bryce Thomas in prison

to let him know he didn't just kill Lisa.

He killed the whole family.

The end result of murder.