

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Introducing: Murder in Apartment 12

It was murder, alright?

Anyone who walked into apartment 12 that winter night could plainly see that.

A brutal, violent death.

Lamps overturned.

Blood soaked into the carpet, smudged on walls, splattered on the kitchen stove.

I could just see that someone at her hurt her terribly.

A local beauty queen, battered and beaten, dead, the week before Christmas, just days short of her 20th birthday.

They had found a condom wrapper in the crime scene.

Her body was disrobed.

There are boyfriends who became suspects in this story, one with blood on his hands.

I didn't do it, I didn't do it, I didn't do it, I didn't do it, so scumbag did this to my girlfriend and I wanted to put in jail for it and I didn't do it.

But there was also a stranger who lived nearby, one with a history of violence against women.

So who did it?

The young detective in charge was sure he knew.

I crossed this crime scene, that's my primary function in this department, is to collect evidence, interpret a crime scene, and I'm good at it.

Our latest podcast takes us to a small town where murder is rare and intense media coverage is unheard of.

This case probably had more statewide publicity than any criminal case in many, many years perhaps ever in Arkansas.

It's a story of what happens when the awesome power of the state is misdirected, when theory trumps fact when opinion distorts truth.

This is a little town in Arkansas, they wanted a neck, they wanted somebody to hang.

Everybody has an opinion, but that doesn't convict in our courts.

It's about hubris and pride and reputation.

I have been brutalized nationwide, that I'm an inept investigator, that I don't know what I'm doing, locally I've been fried, I've had enough of that.

Most of all, this is the story of how decisions made long ago on a frigid night in apartment 12, nearly put an innocent man in prison for life, and allowed a predator to roam free.

And I'm really glad I found the courage to call the police on this man, because there's no telling what could have happened if I didn't.

I'm Keith Morrison, and this is Murder in Apartment 12, an all new podcast from Dateline.

Beginning Tuesday, September 26th, you can listen to the latest episode of Murder in Apartment 12, each week completely free.

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Okay, no flying cars, but as soon as they get invented, they'll be on AutoTrader.

Just you wait, AutoTrader.