

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

Sleep number smart beds individualize your sleep experience by responding to your movements throughout the night and providing personalized insights to help you sleep better.

Sleep next level. Unlock your unique potential with a smart bed that can perform as well as you. And now, save \$400 on the new Sleep Number C4 smart bed, plus special financing for a limited time, only at Sleep Number Stores or sleepnumber.com.

See store for details.

Tonight on Dateline.

It happens on TV. It doesn't happen to your family, to your brother, but it does.

No one thought it could happen to him. He was a tough guy, prepared for anything.

He always would say, if anyone tries to break in here, I'll kill him.

Instead, he was killed, stabbed in his own home.

You sure your dad's cold to the touch?

His son and daughter-in-law stumbled into a terrifying scene.

That's when I saw the gun.

They said we're going to have to kill you now.

A strange story that only got stranger.

They had purple gloves on.

And they had blue fuzzy gloves.

Something isn't right here.

Could he have killed his own father? What really happened in that house?

I did not do this.

Then, a witness came forward and changed everything.

In this bizarre story, the strangest thing of all was the truth.

He planned for any scenario, except for the one that happened to him.

I'm Lester Holt, and this is Dateline.

Here's Keith Morrison with Mystery at Payson Canyon.

There are people on this glorious sun-kissed planet of ours who get up each morning to the miracle of being alive and worry.

Not that there aren't things to worry about, of course.

Whether we can do anything about them or not.

But some people worry a very great deal indeed,

and do try to be prepared for whatever.

And one of those prepared people was a brilliant retired university professor named Kay Mortensen, whose sister was a woman named Fern.

I said, well, Kay, what would happen if I'm not prepared and I'm hungrier, my kids are hungrier, can we come to your house?

No, I'll probably just shoot you.

You know, so adjustingly, he wouldn't have,

but he was definitely willing to protect what he had.

Oh, yes, he certainly was.

And sure enough, one night.

9-1-1, what's the address of your emergency?

But we're getting ahead of ourselves.

What happened that night was a long time coming.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

It was long before that when Kay became a survivalist with attitude.
You knew exactly what he thought about everything,
and even though he knew what he was saying was going to be outrageous and not accepted,
he would say it anyway.
He had a black belt in karate.
He owned scores of firearms,
kept guns in just about every room of the house,
and in all of his cars,
a fully stocked concrete bunker outside his home in patient Utah.
He had food, he had everything there, you know,
water, waiting to go to the bathroom, magazines, books to read.
Kay was very clear about it with his wife, Darla.
And he'd say, this is where you and I are going to end up,
because there's going to be a nuclear war.
And I'd say, I don't want to live if everybody else is dying.
So, he was a true patriot,
and he worried about things,
and wanted to be prepared for the civil war that was going to erupt.
And so he was a little over the top.
Darla wasn't thrilled about it,
but she accepted him at his radical views.
After all, they were still kind of in their honeymoon phase.
It was all kind of surreal.
I think we both felt like we were back being teenagers again.
Because we both, you know,
hadn't really had love for quite a few years.
They'd found each other late in life after both had raised families.
Kay had three adult children by then,
one of whom, his eldest, Roger, stayed close.
He was my best friend.
We did everything together.
Mind you, Roger was not at all like Kay.
For one thing, he'd suffered a brain injury in an accident years ago,
so unlike Kay, he couldn't work much, lived on disability.
But he liked to hang out with his dad.
We lived less than a mile apart
because we did enjoy spending so much time together.
If I ever needed help, he'd be there in a minute to help me.
Although, said Roger's wife Pam,
it wasn't always easy.
That's just the way Kay was wired.
Roger's dad was a very strong-willed person.
It was his way or the highway.
So, Roger learned early to shy away from confrontation with his father.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

If he said something that Roger maybe disagreed or wanted to do it a different way, Roger would leave, he would come back, and everything would be good again.

Not at all how it was with his new love, Darla.

When she was around, they said,

Kay's tough hide melted.

We knew then that he really loved her
and that he was willing to compromise and do some things
so that he could make her happy also.

Did it seem to kind of soften him up a little bit?

Yes, it did. A lot.

So Kay and Darla got married.

Married couple.

And they were as happy as either one of them had ever been.

He'd say, what else do we need to do?

We're retired, we have plenty of money.

We'll just have fun.

Kay was a rich man,

and most of his money buying gold at 250 an ounce, said Darla.

He just had the foresight.

He was, you know, the dollar bill's not going to be worth anything.

He put his money into a trust

so that Roger and his other children would inherit everything once he was gone.

Heaven knows, he wasn't spending it.

Worth millions, but...

He was very frugal, very frugal.

And I used to say to him, you know,

he just, I said, when is it you're going to spend your money, you know?

What are you waiting for?

So Kay promised Darla he'd travel with her,

see the world,

but he made sure his bunker was stocked

and he kept his guns close to hand,

just in case.

And then it was November 16th, 2009.

Darla was away watching her granddaughters.

Kay was alone at his house in Pason.

911, what's the address of your emergency?

It was evening when the call came in.

I have help on the way, but I just need to get some information.

Are you sure that he's dead?

Darla was on her way home.

Her cell phone chirped.

It was a neighbor.

And he just says, well, something terrible's happened

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

in Pason Canyon and he says, I think it's at your house.
Darla's mind flashed to Kay and his guns.
And I thought, oh my gosh, he's probably shot somebody, an invader or something.
She phoned a family friend named Chris Andrews.
I said, something's going on.
I'm alone.
I just, I need to be somebody.
Can you come down and be with me?
Chris rushed to meet Darla at the foot of the canyon.
Police had blocked off the road that led to Kay and Darla's house.
And now Darla and Chris thought exactly the same thing.
Kay probably shot someone.
Turned out Kay never got the chance.
Are you sure your dad's cold to the touch?
His son makes an agonizing discovery and stumbles right into a murder scene.
They said, you're in the wrong place, wrong time.
Everyone knew that Kay Mortensen was always prepared.
Surrounded himself with a veritable arsenal of firearms.
Just a tough old bird who could defend himself against just about anything.
He always would say, if anyone tries to break in here, I'll kill him.
But life, no matter how well we prepare, is full of rude surprises.
As it was for Kay Mortensen, it was November 16, 2009, just before Thanksgiving.
Hi, this is, we have the police on the way to help you there.
Are your dad's, your dad's cold to the touch?
Kay did not shoot some intruder, as he'd long promised he was prepared to do.
No, somebody killed him without firing a shot.
And the man on the phone reporting the crime, Roger Mortensen, Kay's eldest son.
It wasn't long before Kay's wife, Darla, had made it to the mouth of the canyon
and was led to the command post that had been set up just down the hill from their home.
That's where they gave her the news.
Your life just comes tumbling down.
You know, you have it all planned out.
You think, you know, what it's going to be and then everything's gone.
Kay caught off guard?
Not Kay, thought Darla.
Impossible.
But that seemed to be just what happened.
At least that's what Roger and Pam told the police and later us.
And a very strange story it was.
That began, they said, when Pam received a pie at work as a gift.
We knew how much he loved that pecan pie and we decided as soon as she got home from work to
take him that pie.
So they said they went to his house, intended to drop off the pie and then leave.
But when they got there, they said, there was an unfamiliar car in the driveway.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

Pam said she knocked on the door and a young man answered.

I said, is Kay here? He said he is. He's upstairs.

I said, we're just here to drop off a pie.

And they said, go ahead in.

I got to about the landing.

When I was asked to come back down, I heard the door shut.

And when I turned around, that's when I saw the gun.

What was it like to see that?

It was a shock.

As soon as we turned around and saw the gun, another guy started walking down the stairs also.

He had in his hand a wad of zip ties.

They turned to us and said, you're here at the wrong place, wrong time.

Pull out your hands.

The intruders zip tied their wrists, forced them down on the living room floor, then zip tied their ankles.

After we were tied up, they said that, well, I'm sorry, but you've seen our faces.

We're going to have to kill you now.

Pam, quaking in terror, she said, looked up at a picture of Jesus that was hanging on the living room wall.

I kept thinking, Heavenly Father, if you really love me and care for me, please make us get through this.

And it calmed me to keep looking at that picture of Christ and to be able to help Roger stay calm.

That really had an impact on you.

It did.

Oh, why?

It just brought me comfort.

It brought me peace to know that...

Even if they killed you.

To know that my Heavenly Father loves me and that he would do the right thing for me.

Both men left a room, they said, and then Roger began praying aloud.

He was in mid-sentence, he said, when the men walked back in.

And something quite amazing happened.

My wife nudged me and she says, OK, be quiet, they're back.

And one of them says, no, that's OK.

Keep praying.

Go ahead.

And they both folded their arms in front of them and bowed their heads.

And listened to me as I continued this entire prayer.

How weird is that?

When I got done with the prayer, we both sat down and their demeanor changed at that point.

One of them looked at us and says, well, we've decided we're not going to kill you.

We've decided that we're going to tell you a story that you need to relay to the police.

What was that story that the intruders told them to say?

The three black men with ski masks invaded the house.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

Three, not two, as they actually were.

Black, not white, as they actually were.

And then, said Roger, they took his driver's license, told him they'd know if he or Pam ever told the truth.

And if that happened, they'd hunt him down and they'd kill him.

And then the two men left.

Roger and Pam waited a while, got out of the zip ties, and Roger ran upstairs while Pam dialed 911 and was on the phone with the operator when Roger found his father in the upstairs bathroom.

And I saw my father kneeling over the bathtub.

His feet were tied and his head was down in the bathtub.

Inconceivable, tough, resilient, armed to the teeth K, murdered with his own kitchen knife.

What a story.

Sergeant Eric Knudsen of the Utah County Sheriff's Office was assigned as one of the lead detectives.

He was sitting in the office when, from up at the house, the first officer to talk to Pam and Roger called him.

He said, you know, something isn't right here.

It seems from his perception that maybe some things were staged or some things were just not what he would think would be normal for a crime as heinous or as vicious as this.

Something about that bizarre story didn't sit right.

He just couldn't put his finger on it.

Not yet, anyway.

Coming up, problem was that bizarre story got weirder by the minute.

They had purple gloves on.

And they had blue fuzzy gloves.

Really?

When Dateline Continues.

This show is sponsored by BetterHelp Online Therapy.

The lights are off.

Everything is quiet.

You're ready for sleep.

But your brain isn't.

It's going a mile a minute, stressing about every detail of your life.

Like that awkward thing you said when you were 13.

Or whether you chose the right career.

Or that unanswered text you sent earlier.

Sound familiar?

Whether they strike before bed or any time throughout the day, racing thoughts are a pain.

Therapy can give you a place to work through all those thoughts and come up with solutions so they don't keep you up at night or stop you from enjoying the rest of your day.

With BetterHelp, just fill out a brief questionnaire to get matched with a licensed therapist based on your needs and preferences.

Connect by phone, video or chat from wherever you are.

Switch therapists anytime and use flexible week-to-week scheduling to book appointments.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

Get a break from your racing thoughts with BetterHelp.

Visit [betterhelp.com slash NBC Dateline](https://www.betterhelp.com/slash-nbc-dateline) today.

To get 10% off your first month, that's BetterHelp, H-E-L-P dot com slash NBC Dateline.

The death of Kay Mortensen was horrific, humiliating, helpless to defend himself inside his own sacred fortress.

The killer had bent him over his own bathtub, slashed his throat several times, stabbed his neck, all those guns, and not a single one fired.

It seemed so personal.

Sergeant Eric Knutson of the Utah County Sheriff's Office got a briefing from the first officer at the scene who turned on his audio recorder when he met Kay's son Roger and Roger's wife, Pam.

Roger had found the body and was already suggesting possible killers.

He told me he had an appointment for lunch at noon with a guy named Mike Kipp, who discussed him \$25,000 worth of guns.

Mike Kipp? Mike was Kay's former student.

Roger and Pam identify him real quick. They say he's involved. He owes my dad money. He's the one who did this.

Roger told detectives that Kay was holding a collection of Mike's weapons, about 30 of them, mostly pistols and rifles, and some shotguns.

Kay put the guns in his bunker. Roger thought there might be a grudge involved.

When detectives went to look for the guns, they were gone.

So we pull in Michael Kipp that night too. We interview him and we can get his alibi. It's quick.

Nothing suspicious about it, it turned out. Mike had not a thing to do with Kay's murder.

He simply needed money and Kay agreed to buy his guns. By now, tips were coming in.

And this female said it's the Baker Boys. She said the Baker Boys did this.

The Baker Boys were brothers who, fairly or not, had developed a reputation as the town's troublemakers.

Detectives found them. They had solid alibis.

Then the next day another tip. A woman who implicated her own husband.

He came home last night at the time frame before the homicide. He grabbed a bunch of stuff, including a knife, and he's been looking for guns.

So I know he's involved.

But the woman's husband was eventually eliminated as a suspect.

Detectives hoped maybe the stolen guns would lead them to Kay's killers.

And we recovered a lot of firearms that were stolen, just again, none linked.

And that just highlighted another aspect of the mystery.

Kay, remember, collected firearms at close to a hundred valuable guns locked up at his house.

Yet the thieves just stole the cheaper ones from the bunker.

Pretty bizarre robbery to take those guns and not take a far more valuable collection that Kay had agreed.

In fact, the inside of Kay's house was pristine, untouched.

No sign anybody had stolen anything.

If this was a home invasion, it was an odd one.

But by then, truth be told, detectives were already homing in on the two people who admitted they were there the whole time.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

Kay's son, Roger, and his wife, Pam.

You sure that he's dead?

Starting with that 911 call, they made something odd about it.

It may sound how I would think that a phone call should be made to 911 after discovering your father had just been killed with the throat cut and zip tied in a bathtub.

Roger and Pam, said the detectives, appeared to be unemotional, uncaring, even callous.

Even though they claimed that gunmen stood over them, kept them hostage for almost two hours.

At first, Pam couldn't seem to describe them in.

The guy that had the gun, what did he look like? Was he white guy, black guy, Hispanic?

Pam, I don't know.

She seemed uncertain, even about the number of gunmen.

How many were there? How many guys were there?

Um, there could have been three.

But listen to what happened next. Roger took the phone and changed the story.

Were they white, black, Hispanic?

They were white.

Three white males, Kay, but how?

Two white males.

Roger explained the reason for all the apparent confusion,

that if they ever revealed what their captors looked like, they'd be hunted down and killed.

Did you buy that?

Not really. I didn't.

They didn't appear fearful.

They were saying it.

They weren't really acting fearful.

Anyway, why would vicious killers not have killed them, too?

Night of the Murder, Knudsen interviewed them.

My name's Eric Knudsen, by the way.

I'm Pam Moore.

Did they seem nervous or...

Not really nervous or agitated.

Just kind of unemotional.

Even at times cold toward the victim, Roger's father.

He's a container's old fart, and he said his mouth to everybody.

And as they told their stories, detectives started noticing subtle differences.

And they had blue fuzzy gloves.

They looked like women's winter driving gloves or something, the fuzzy kind.

They had, I know they had purple gloves on. Purple, you know, your medical gloves.

Lots of details on which they didn't agree.

So Sergeant Knudsen decided to employ a well-known police interview technique.

He got tough. Accusing.

Quite frankly, I think the story's a bunch of crap.

I think the story's a bunch of crap that you and Roger have come up with.

Okay?

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

Sorry you don't believe, but...

I'm trying to...

Does it sound too rehearsed?

Or...

Yeah.

Okay.

I want them to say, I had nothing to do with this.

You know, detective, you're crazy. I had nothing to do with this.

That's what I wanted to hear, and it never came out.

But listen to what did come out.

Is your husband capable of killing somebody?

I didn't get a drink.

I wouldn't hope.

I mean, I wouldn't think he is.

I wouldn't think that he's capable of killing his father.

A search of Roger and Pam's home showed they appeared to be in financial trouble, detectives around collection notices and unsent mortgage coupons, suggesting at least that they were behind in their house payments.

I know we're in a lot of debt, but we...

I personally would not have my father-in-law killed for his money.

And yet, as Roger told the detective...

I'm not so beneficiary, but I get a big share of my dad's millions, too.

Within days of the murder, Pam and Roger agreed to go back to the house with detectives for a videotape retelling of their intruder's story.

Don't go ahead.

At the front door, my wife was holding a pie right here.

Does that provide you any useful information?

It provided useful information from our standpoint, as far as more circumstantial evidence that they're not being 100% truthful.

Once again, detectives heard foggy memories.

She either knocked on the door or rang the doorbell.

I believe she knocked on the door.

They heard dialogue that sounded like a bad crime.

He pointed at us and said,

you're here at the wrong time.

Put out your hands.

But then there was that same strange lack of emotion.

When Roger described what should have been the worst moment of his life.

I came back downstairs and my wife was talking at the time to 911 dispatch.

And I said, he is dead.

Roger and Pam took a polygraph test.

And what do you know?

Roger was found to be deceptive.

And Pam was jumpy.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

The operator couldn't complete the test.
But still, Roger and Pam swore up and down they had nothing to do with it.
They were victims themselves.
Truth be told, the police needed some real evidence.
And out of the blue, something arrived.
And that new evidence?
Something else that was strange.
Someone saw the killing in a dream.
So I have a photo lineup drawn up and then she puts her finger on it.
She puts it right on Roger's face.
Within days of Kay Mortensen's murder,
members of his family began hearing deeply troubling reports from the Utah County Sheriff's Office.
The investigation was leading sure as can be, detectives told them,
that Kay's own son Roger and Roger's wife Pam.
Darla said she couldn't believe it at first.
I was just adamant that they couldn't have done it.
I was their biggest defender.
But then detectives asked her to listen to Roger and Pam's recorded statements.
And she too started to wonder.
They told lies and then it just put more suspicion on them.
Gradually her conviction grew.
Same for Kay's sister Fern.
I could buy the fact that they were thinking of Roger's involvement.
There were just too many things about Roger and Pam's story.
Didn't make any sense to Fern.
And there was something else too.
A possible witness.
Remember that woman who suspected her husband was involved?
The police found him here in Salt Lake City at a drug binge with some friends.
They were high on meth.
And one of the people there, a woman named Cammie Bills,
told the detectives she had a story to tell.
How about a dream she'd had?
She describes in what she calls a dream.
Well, seeing somebody get killed.
She describes being outside of a room.
She describes a female off to her left crying in hysterics.
And she describes three or four males in the bathroom.
And she says there's one male who I think is related to the female that's on the floor screaming.
Now remember, the woman was on methamphetamine.
Reporting not what she saw, but what she dreamed she saw.
Still, you never know until you ask.
So I have a photo lineup drawn up.
And she stares at it and she puts her head down and she puts her finger on it.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

She puts it right on Roger's face.

The next day, detectives took Cammie to Kay's house, showed her the crime scene.

And again, she named Roger.

I can't really see Roger just arms.

He's holding Kay.

You don't hear a story like that and say,

wow, that's a piece of crap and go on from there?

No, not when she gives that amount of detail.

This mission of Roger and Pam was hardening by the minute.

Detectives kept the rest of the Mortensen family informed of developments.

What did this do to you?

Oh man, it just, it, it threw me for a loop.

When Pam and Roger attended Kay's funeral, the tension was thick.

It was very difficult to be there because everybody wanted to know what happened that night.

But they couldn't say anything, said Pam.

Detectives told them not to.

And my sister came up to me at one point and says,

tell me what really happened.

And I told her, I'm sorry, I cannot talk about this.

Shortly after Roger and Pam took the polygraph test

and were told about the dismal results, they hired a lawyer.

Few in the Mortensen family could understand why they would do a thing like that if they were innocent, that is.

I tried to say, well what would I do if I was in their situation?

I would do everything I could to help get these people that had caused such horror in their lives and murdered Kay.

On the advice of their attorneys, Roger and Pam stopped talking

and the lopsided rift in the Mortensen family widened

from mistrust, to anger, to outright accusation.

Chris Andrus, the woman Darla called the night of the murder,

was one of very few people who continued to support Roger and Pam.

They were left to hang out and dry.

How'd you feel about that?

Oh, I was so angry.

I was just so, so angry.

I couldn't believe that you could love somebody and do that to them.

Even if I thought Roger had done it, I would not have abandoned him.

And they did?

Oh, absolutely they did.

Not only did they abandon him, they crucified him.

Months dragged by, Roger and Pam were headline news in Utah.

But in the absence of definitive physical evidence linking them to Kay's murder, they remained free.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

Day by day they went about their business, as if their lives were still quite normal.

Then on July 28, 2010, Utah County prosecutor Tim Taylor took a dramatic step to break the log jam.

He presented the case against Roger and Pam to a grand jury.

So why call the grand jury? Why not just charge him?

We thought the grand jury was a great tool to force them to come in to talk.

It was a secret proceeding.

No defendants, no defense attorney,

only prosecutors, police, some members in the Mortensen family,

even some of Pam's co-workers, all in front of 16 jurors,

whose job was to decide whether or not they should charge Roger and Pam with Kay's murder.

And in just over an hour, the jury decided to indict.

So what did that say to you?

Well, there was enough to proceed.

It sort of reinforced what you were already thinking.

It did.

And that same day, eight months after Kay Mortensen was found dead in his home,

Roger and Pam were deposited in the county jail.

Chris Andress, the family friend who still believed they were innocent,

went to Roger's sister.

I said, Julie, we need some money to hire an attorney for Roger.

We think Pam's family can come up with money for Pam,

but we've got to get him a separate attorney.

Can you help me?

There's millions of dollars in the trust.

She told me her words were not one red penny will be spent on his defense.

Julie told us she did not use those specific words,

but she said the family was advised by their attorney not to use Kay's money to pay for Roger's defense,

which meant that Roger, who stood to inherit a big chunk of his dad's millions,

would have to rely on a public defender.

Were he and Pam diabolical killers as detectives and their own family had come to believe?

Of course, we and everybody else just had to know.

Coming up, Roger and Pam face questions from Dateline.

As the interrogations continue, your stories didn't stay the same, according to the police at least.

When Dateline Continues.

You'll find Ford workers, not just assembling vehicles, but building the future of automotive manufacturing.

It's why Ford employs the most hourly auto workers in this country.

Can't speak for the other guys, but we're all in on America.

Built Ford Proud.

Based on 2022 year-end hourly employment data.

When life gets crazy, and when doesn't it, Shoprite helps you keep it all together.

Now with a little extra help from Instacart.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

If you need your groceries now-ish, but your options for going to Shoprite are later-ish or never-ish, you can get everything you need delivered through Instacart right to your door in as fast as an hour. Skip the shop and savor more of your crazy busy life with Shoprite and Instacart.

Visit [Instacart.com](https://www.instacart.com) to get free delivery on your first three orders.

Offer valid for a limited time, minimum order \$10 additional term supply.

Much of Utah County, along with Roger's own family and many of their one-time friends, joined a lineup arrayed against Roger and Pam Bortenson as they sat in jail, charged with murdering Roger's father Kay, and they waited for their day in court.

The evidence against them?

Their strange demeanor, their alleged financial troubles.

Roger's failed polygraph, but mostly according to detectives.

The bizarre and ever-changing story they told about the night of the murder.

What was the truth?

We asked the only people who knew for sure, starting at the beginning, with that strange 911 call.

Who held you hostage?

Our viewers hear that 911 call and they're like, wait a minute, something's wrong there.

People scream on 911 calls. They're crazed.

And I think I was in a lot of shock too, and I don't know the real reason why.

I could stay as calm as I can, but that's just my personality and that's the type of person I am.

And although she didn't sound like it, she was terrified, she said.

Their captors had just threatened to kill them if they told the truth.

And so when the 911 operator asked me how many were there,

I was totally confused what to say.

Do I tell the truth? Which is what I wanted to do.

Roger said he knew exactly what he had to do when he discovered his father in the bathtub.

And I haul her down to her while she was still on the phone.

Tell them the exact truth. We are going to get these guys.

But Pam said she still couldn't spit it out.

I was kind of staggering through what was going on.

Well, there was two, maybe there was three, because I didn't know.

I was terrified for my life still.

And I didn't know what I should have said.

What about their police interrogations when their stories didn't match?

I thought their gloves were one color. She thought their gloves were another color.

Other than that, our stories were basically the same.

They both cooperated fully, said Roger, kept talking for days, even as police brought up one accusation after another.

There was an inheritance involved.

Yes.

And you talked about that with the police?

I may have, I'm not sure.

Well, according to them, you talked about it.

And it provided one of the classic motivations that children have for killing their parents.

Cops run into it all the time, right?

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

They say they do.

And that's clearly what they were thinking when they talked to you.

Yes.

Did they make that clear?

They didn't make very much clear to us.

They just said that we were not being cooperative with them, even though from the very beginning we told them everything that happened.

They just didn't believe it.

They didn't believe that two people would kill one person and leave two more alive.

Perhaps.

But what about Roger and Pam's apparent financial troubles?

We were not having any financial problems.

If we were having financial problems, my father would be glad to help us.

We had that type of relationship.

They were certainly not debt-free, they said, but didn't amount to a whole lot.

And as for the pile of unsent mortgage coupons, they simply started paying online, they said, like everybody else.

And as for that failed polygraph test,

Roger said he should never have been asked to take it.

Remember, he's on disability because years ago he had a serious accident that left him with a brain injury,

which caused, among other things, short-term memory loss and confusion and the sort of thing that would make a polygraph result quite useless.

I said, how could I have felt I did not do this?

So, was he lying or did police have it all wrong?

They didn't know how to proceed.

They could not find fingerprints because the people had gloves on.

They didn't find a gun because they took it with them.

They didn't know what to do and so being confused, they went after the easiest subjects they could find.

It was us.

We had a case that I believed in.

We had a case that I thought we could defend.

At the end of the day, I was scared.

And no one was prepared when one cold winter day in the Utah County Sheriff's Office, the phone rang.

Coming up, the unexpected call the truth revealed.

A surprising ending you won't believe.

Summer turned into winter again.

The family marked the grim anniversary of Kay Mortensen's murder.

As Kay's son Roger and his daughter-in-law Pam cooled their heels in jail awaiting trial,

all the while maintaining their innocence.

Pam said she was offered a deal

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

if she turned state's evidence against Roger.
If you just tell them what they want to hear,
then you could go home.
But for me, I was not going to lie
just so that I could be a free person.
Roger's public defender, Anthony Howell,
believed his client was innocent.
I was looking for that piece of evidence that would be,
ah, that's the thing I can't explain.
There just was nothing.
But here was the rub. Howell knew juries.
And as trial approached, he was deeply unsettled.
I was worried he was going to be convicted
regardless of what I tried to do.
Why?
Because this is the kind of case where
a jury would be worried that if they didn't convict,
that they would be letting their murderer go free.
But Howell didn't get the opportunity
to defend his client in court.
The reason was that phone call
to the Utah County Sheriff's Office,
a call from a woman named Rachel Bingham.
And here's what she had to say.
I've just been blocking it out.
Like, it didn't happen.
And I just watched the news
and these people are going to go to jail.
Prison, probably live seven.
What she had been blocking out was a bombshell.
Her ex-husband, Martin Bond,
told her he and a friend named Benjamin Rettig
went to Kay's house to steal his guns.
They pulled out their guns.
I told him to put the ties on.
He said that he wasn't willing at first,
but he eventually did.
Bond, she said, told her everything.
He said that they took him to the bathroom
and bent him over the tub.
And cut his throat.
And then...
He said that right after that
they heard the door, the doorbell ring.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

And it was the two.
The two were Roger and Pam.
And we know the rest of the story.
Rachel Bingham kept the secret for months
until finally her conscience won out.
And she told the police one more thing.
How the crooks got the drop on Kay Mortensen.
It turned out that Martin's dad and Kay were old friends.
Kay had known Martin as a kid,
which is why Kay, armed against intruders,
welcomed him in and turned his back to his killers.
He had planned for any worst-case scenario to happen,
except for the one that happened to him.
In that, there are so many ironies, aren't there?
There are so many ironies, yeah.
The biggest, perhaps?
Roger and Pam's crazy story about armed intruders
was true all along,
though Sergeant Knudsen still had trouble believing it.
I can pick up the case, and I can read through it.
And I can read through it,
and I can see discrepancy after discrepancy.
I can see...
But can you see where maybe that ain't enough?
Yeah.
And as for treating as possible evidence,
the dream sequence of a girl on meth?
This is evidence?
Well, it's more circumstantial evidence.
It's a lead.
You'd even call that circumstantial evidence?
I think it's definitely some we follow up with.
Saying she had a dream, it's a good dream,
and it's pretty close.
And in the end, the prosecutor admitted
he and the detectives got it wrong.
Based upon the new physical evidence
that we have located,
we anticipate dismissing the charges
against Roger and Pam Mortensen tomorrow.
Roger and Pam were finally freed.
Those four and a half months seemed like
four and a half thousand years.
I felt like I was in there forever.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

Pam got a standing ovation from an unlikely crowd.
As I was walking out of that big dorm area,
there was 90 women clapping and cheering for me.
They knew I was innocent.
And for me, having the situation that we dealt with,
with Roger's family turning against us,
friends turning against us,
to have that support of those people
that people would consider criminals,
to have them cheer and yell and scream,
was a very emotional thing for me.
Pam wanted the prosecutor to issue a public apology.
That would help make up for what all this has cost them, she said.
We offered the prosecutor this forum.
Am I sorry? Yeah, I am.
I have no problem with saying that I made a mistake.
We didn't try to defraud anyone.
We didn't try to lie.
We didn't try to fabricate anything.
We made a mistake.
Pam and Roger filed a lawsuit,
arguing that the prosecutors and detectives
lied to the grand jury.
But just a few months later,
the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that
grand jury witnesses and prosecutors
were immune from civil litigation.
So the judge dismissed their case.
So let me understand this.
The police come to your house,
you're arrested, your names are dragged through the mud.
Then somebody gets the right guy.
And they say, well, bye, see you later.
Exactly.
As in so many cases, Bond and Reddick
ended up blaming each other.
Reddick took a deal, got 25 to life.
Bond went to trial, was convicted,
and is doing life without parole.
The star prosecution witness, Rachel Bingham.
And if she hadn't come forward,
would two innocent people be in prison today?
It's gonna chase you for a while.
A little, but I can put it behind me.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

The case is closed out.
What I'm happy about for me personally
is the family has closure.
But do they?
It isn't just Kay's murder they must learn to live with.
But also the wreckage,
strewn for God knows how long,
through the family's story.
I had emotions of happiness and relief,
but still there's some regret
that I didn't support Roger and Pam
from the beginning.
It changes your perspective on the world.
It really does.
And, by the way, said Roger and Pam,
a little piece of advice.
If anything happens,
and there's anything dealing with law enforcement,
you don't say a word and you get an attorney.
As for Darla, who'd finally found the love of her life,
what was there to say?
That moment of sunshine snatched away, huh?
Yep, you just take what life brings you
and it's not always what you'd expected.
When you're a young girl,
you have all your dreams of what your life's gonna be
and somehow it just doesn't quite work out that way.
That's all for now.
I'm Lester Holt.
Thanks for joining us.
Here at Ford,
we don't know any first responders
who only give 90%
or farmers,
workers who build our towns,
roads, infrastructure.
They don't stop it halfway.
Good luck finding a small business owner
who's happy with an 80% effort.
That's why they use Ford Trucks.
Ford F-Series,
100% assembled in America
because we're all in on America.
Built Ford proud.

[Transcript] Dateline NBC / Mystery at Payson Canyon

Of foreign and domestic parts.