

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

What summer without a trip to the beach?

Elevate the journey with style from behind the wheel of your ultimate BMW at the Summer on Sales event.

Experience an inspired performance and class-defining style in the four-series Grand Coupe.

Or make the most of the versatile BMW X5.

With everything you need to make the trip to the beach one to remember.

Just be sure to arrive before all the beach chairs are gone.

BMW the ultimate driving machine.

Get a credit of up to \$2,000 on select models now through September 4th.

Something wasn't right at her house.

I saw a lot of police cars.

That woman was a fighter.

She would never leave her daughters.

She would never do it.

Michelle ran the home.

She was very proud about how she was able to make ends meet.

Lloyd helped with the kids.

They're wonderful girls. They're amazing.

The end came much too soon.

Most looked and I'm concerned.

There appeared to be a body hanging from a banister.

From first look it would appear as though it was a suicide.

But then they looked closer.

It appeared that there was a struggle.

My guy was telling me there's something wrong here.

Did someone want Michelle dead?

Was someone else willing to help?

At that point we're shell shocked.

A bond forged in blood.

We keep crying.

I'm lying.

We call it the lying cry conversation.

Betrayed by blood.

What are you hoping for?

Some conversation between the two of them about the death.

We have an investigator look at the video surveillance

and he goes, I don't like what I'm seeing.

Are you theorizing the darkest scenario?

Yes we are.

Evil.

The case too twisted to be true.

Except that it is.

I'm Lester Holt and this is Dateline.

Here's Dennis Murphy with The Ultimatum.

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

The long road to prima ballerina,  
the dreams of thunderous bravos,  
the cascade of roses,  
begins for the youngest of dancers  
in a ballet school of tutud 10 year olds.  
Stretching, stressing.  
It's very disciplined.  
An athletic discipline of concentration and body control.  
Learning poise under pressure.  
It took a lot, especially when we were young,  
to stick with it, but it was worth it.  
A ballet academy in upstate New York  
was where Mina Raj got to know her friend, Carrie Nyreider.  
I met Carrie when she was eight.  
She was very sweet, very bubbly personality.  
Both of them were girly girls,  
but wanted to grow up to be like their dads.  
Our dads were both engineers,  
so we were both going to become engineers  
and be professional ballerinos on the side.  
And everyone could see that Carrie was very close to her dad,  
Lloyd Nyreider.  
Every Saturday he'd not only drive his daughter to class  
in Corning, New York, he'd stay to help out.  
He was the only father there  
that was bringing the kids in the morning at that time.  
Mina's mom Cynthia would see him on those Saturdays,  
but rarely his wife.  
Instead of doing the children's hair at home,  
he would always sort of bring them there  
and brush their hair out and put these buns together.  
With some skill and art?  
Yes, and he definitely enjoyed the admiration  
of the other mothers around him.  
As their daughters rehearsed for the annual Nutcracker,  
Cynthia and another friend, Rose Coluccio,  
became friendly with Lloyd.  
Lloyd was, I would say, eccentric.  
Always the center of attention.  
Of course, we eventually asked about his wife,  
and he said that Saturday was really her day's off.  
Lloyd's wife, Michelle, had a full plate of her own.  
She had a master's degree in literature,  
but chose to be a full-time mom,

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

homeschooling their kids  
and taking an active role in charity work.  
Here she is making Thanksgiving dinner  
for the needy at their local church.  
It would be really odd to have Thanksgiving at home,  
just us and not be here.  
Thanksgiving is celebrating with the community,  
giving back.  
Michelle had met Lloyd in high school.  
Her mom, Jeannie, remembers a teenage boy  
who was smitten from the first date.  
I think she thought he was intelligent,  
and she could have intelligent conversations with him.  
So maybe a peg above the other kids in the school yard  
or her circle?

Yes.

The high school sweethearts married  
when Michelle was just 20.  
They'd later settled into a farmhouse in upstate New York  
and have three girls, Carrie, the middle child.  
Michelle's younger sister, also named Carrie,  
admired her so much.  
Tell me about your sister as a mom.  
She always wanted the best for her girls.  
She was always very supportive,  
because, of course, when I had children,  
I asked her all my questions and looked up to her.  
I always looked up to her.  
Though they lived coasts apart,  
Michelle's sister and her husband were close with the nieces.  
The oldest one really bonded with Kevin,  
and Carrie and I very much bonded.  
But as with so many people,  
the Nye Rider family ran into lean times,  
diminished prospects during the Great Recession.  
Lloyd moved out of state to find work as an engineer.  
What happened is Lloyd,  
it was a tough time in Corning, New York,  
and he took a job in New Jersey.  
Michelle stayed behind with the girls  
out in the country in Corning.  
But the separation put a strain on the marriage,  
and in time, Michelle and Lloyd divorced.  
She was always positive,

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

kind of make the most of everything,  
and then one day out of the blue,  
she called me and said we're divorced.  
Right, it was very random.  
After the divorce, Michelle sold the farm,  
and the kids split up.  
The oldest went to live with her dad in New Jersey,  
while Carrie and the youngest daughter  
stayed in Corning with mom in a new house.  
But the divorce was hard on everyone.  
Carrie and her mom sometimes butted heads.  
The arguments could get heated.  
She was living with her mother,  
finishing high school,  
but it got more and more strange as the years,  
as she approached her senior year.  
By late August 2017,  
Carrie, the one-time ballerina,  
had left home and was a sophomore at RIT in Rochester.  
Her younger sister still lived with her mom.  
It seemed like a typical Monday afternoon  
when a family friend came by the house  
to pick up the youngest for swim practice.  
But something looked very wrong.  
He called 911.  
She's motionless and I'm concerned.  
The friend said he glimpsed  
a shadowy female figure on the stairway.  
So she's just standing there not moving?  
Kind of hard to tell, dark.  
Something very dark had happened in that house.  
And when the curtain was pulled back,  
it would reveal a monstrous story,  
like something out of a Greek tragedy.  
With an ending, no one could fathom.  
This is absolutely ghoulish.  
When we come back,  
there appeared to be a body hanging inside the door.  
And someone was missing.  
No 14-year-old was discovered.  
So where is this child?  
That was one of the first concerns.  
August 28, 2017.  
Police officers responded to the home of divorce mom,

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

Michelle Nyreider.

A friend of hers had called 911  
to report a disturbing sight.

There appeared to be a body hanging inside the door  
about 15 to 20 feet,  
hanging from a banister.

Corning police chief told us  
that there was a body hanging inside the door  
about 15 to 20 feet,  
hanging from a banister.

Corning police chief told us  
that there was a body hanging inside the door  
about 15 to 20 feet,  
hanging from a banister.

Corning police chief Jeff Spalding  
says his officers got in and found the body.  
A woman with a rope tied around her neck.

It was Michelle.

Apparently a suicide.

From first look, yes, it would appear as though  
it was a suicide.

No reason to think not, huh?

No.

Officers searched the home,  
they found no suicide note,  
but no 14-year-old was discovered.

So where is this child?

That was one of the first concerns.

It turned out the youngest was actually  
with Carrie at school in Rochester  
100 miles away.

Police learned that when Carrie called them herself  
after a friend gave her the shocking news.

They called and told me that my mom found herself.

Yeah, we are looking into it.

Can you give me any insight  
into what might have happened?

I don't know. I decided to go home.

Carrie told police she had stopped by the house that night.

When I got there,  
my mom started freaking out.

In Carrie's words, they had a fight.

Her mom went yelling and screaming.

Carrie told investigators she stormed out of the house

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

taking her teenage sister with her.

Not all that unusual.

Police learned that raised voices in that household were sadly routine.

A bad divorce with kids caught in the middle.

This is, as they say, a house that's known to law enforcement.

Yes.

Over the years, been what? 9-1-1 calls to the location?

Probably in a course of two or three years, a dozen, a little more than a dozen calls.

So, chief, I'm thinking, even with this brief history you have, the fragmentary history of trouble inside the house, mother, daughter, something's going on, it does maybe give you an explanation of why she's a death by suicide.

Exactly.

Investigators also got in touch with Michelle's ex-husband, Lloyd, who lived in New Jersey.

He was rushing to upstate New York to be with his daughters.

The last time I spoke with her, I couldn't even say...

Lloyd told a detective by phone

he wasn't completely surprised to hear the news.

He said that despite her cheery demeanor,

Michelle had actually contemplated suicide in the past.

From before we were married,

she made suicide plans with high school friends,

and that was something that alarmed me way back then.

Police continued to process the scene

while Michelle's body was taken to the medical examiner for autopsy.

What is she finding?

The words again, consistent with suicide, are used.

In a round of phone calls,

Michelle's sister out in California

got the news about the suicide.

When you first heard that,

did it make sense in any kind of way to you

that maybe she'd gotten in a bad place?

I mean, I knew that she had been fighting with the girls.

I really thought maybe she had a bad moment.

Then she had to relay the awful news to their mom.

She said Michelle died,

and I said no, she didn't.

I said no, I said no, she didn't.

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

That's a lie, don't say that.  
I said don't tell, don't take, say that.  
The friends back in Corning could hardly take it in.  
Michelle gone and by her own hand.  
My mom called me.  
She didn't want me to see it on line  
or on social media before I heard it from her.  
And you went to see her?  
I did, I went home.  
It was so shocking.  
As funeral arrangements began,  
Michelle's friends were haunted by a request  
she made just months before her death.  
She said, well, promise me that if anything ever happens to me,  
that you will look after my daughters.  
And then I reassured her, naively perhaps,  
that she was going to live a long life.  
But she was pretty persistent,  
and so I said, okay, and we left it like that.  
Sorry she got me with that story.  
But even in their grief, there was confusion and doubt.  
The friends thought that Michelle they saw  
in her final days was anything but suicidal.  
What were her plans?  
Was she forward looking?  
Constantly.  
We were always working on what was next.  
That wasn't where she was in her life.  
Say she's a fighter, right?  
That woman was a fighter on Saturday morning  
when the rest of us would be lounging around in our sweatpants.  
She'd say, it's a good day.  
We're going to get up.  
We're going to get dressed,  
and we're going to make the best of it.  
Even if Michelle were suicidal,  
they just could not see their friend  
hanging herself like that  
in a way that her daughters could find her.  
I started googling  
means that females use for suicide,  
and I think it was what I could find  
was around 9% of females will actually hang themselves.  
The most popular option by far is pills.

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

But Michelle's mood and statistics aside,  
they kept coming back to that lack of a suicide note.  
Michelle had a master's in English as well as an MBA.  
She was a prolific writer.  
Michelle would have written a note of explanation,  
so once there was no note, I think...

Right.

Yeah, we just said something's wrong.  
Little did they know exactly how wrong  
this would all turn out to be.

Coming up.

Maybe it wasn't suicide.

The way that one around her chin  
did not seem consistent with a hanging.

Maybe it was murder.

My god was telling me there's something wrong here.

When Dateline continues.

Our national parks and forests  
are home to some of the most picturesque views on the globe.  
But sometimes the most beautiful places  
hide the darkest secrets.

I'm Delia D'Ambra, and in my show Park Predators,  
that's what I'm here to warn you about.

Join me every Tuesday all summer long  
as we dive into cases that continue to hot the histories  
of these beautiful destinations.

Listen to Park Predators now,  
wherever you listen to podcasts.

Hey guys, it's Hoda Copy from the Today Show.

My podcast Making Space is full of conversations  
with spiritual leaders and teachers.

People like Viola Davis, Wynona Judd,

Oprah Winfrey, Mel Robbins, and so many more.

Hear how they found the strength to make changes  
in their lives, and how you can do it too.

All of them inspire me today.

Listen to all three seasons of Making Space  
with Hoda Copy.

Available now.

Just search Making Space wherever you're listening now.

Police were investigating the hanging death  
of Michelle Nyreider as a possible suicide.

But they still needed to know more about  
her final weeks and days.



## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

Investigator Voli?

Hey, how are you?

Good, just cautious about how I approach a car.

I don't want to startle anybody.

The deceased ex-husband Lloyd, resettled in New Jersey, had rushed to upstate New York after Michelle's body was found.

Now, sitting in a police car, he seemed eager to talk.

How long has Michelle lived at the residence over on the way, you know?

It's about five years.

Okay.

She bought that after we divorced.

He told them about his early relationship with Michelle.

We went away to school together.

We did everything together.

So I never thought like that.

Like, oh, under some circumstance, I'll just walk away.

When did she has divorced?

We divorced in August 2012.

He explained that while the divorce

had been finalized years earlier,

their custody issues were far from settled.

They were still fighting over their youngest daughter.

She wanted to live with me and her mom through a tantrum.

Lloyd suggested his ex-wife was unstable and emotional wreck.

Michelle was screaming and furious.

I know of that from past behaviors.

That there was an occasion where Michelle was having a tantrum that she would open the door and scream things down the stairs and then slam her bedroom door and did that so many times, she actually broke the door frame from doing that.

That she was just completely out of control.

But Lloyd admitted his information was secondhand.

He'd heard the stories from his children.

I don't even know if she was seeing anybody

or who else she was doing things with.

She really pushed me out of her life.

Lloyd spoke with police for over an hour.

As the interview ended, he had a question.

When could the kids retrieve their stuff?

In case I could pass a word,

is there any idea when the kids could get into the house to look for...

If it were a simple suicide, the investigation wouldn't take long.

But New York state investigator Eric Hurd,

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

who was among the first on the scene,  
thought not so fast.  
My gut was telling me there's something wrong here.  
It wasn't just cop intuition.  
There was physical evidence in his experience  
inconsistent with a suicide,  
starting with the position of the thin nylon rope on Michelle's body.  
The way that one around her chin did not seem consistent  
with a hanging.  
He noticed wounds on Michelle's head, too.  
On her face, you see, it looks like scratch marks.  
Like, maybe she's pulling whatever's around her neck trying to get it off.  
And then there was Michelle's friend Rose.  
She rushed up to the scene with something urgent to say.  
A parent's suicide, did that make any sense to you?  
No.  
She had told me.  
She's like, I know her, she's friends with me.  
She would never do this to herself.  
We were just with her the other night.  
We were having a great time.  
She wouldn't do this.  
It's not exactly evidence, but it's a piece.  
It's not evidence at that point.  
And when police formally interviewed the friends,  
they got a different picture of Michelle and the divorce.  
They said Lloyd was the crazy one,  
relentlessly badgering his ex-wife with dragged out custody fights.  
I was at their house and I think Lloyd had just served another petition  
for child custody of the younger child.  
And she was frustrated.  
Her life was looking very positive and then this came up again.  
Object of appraisal or friends taking sides.  
Either way, they insisted Michelle wasn't a frazzled out of control single mom.  
She was making the best of a bad situation  
and dealing with an ex who demeaned her for years.  
Basically everything she did was criticized.  
He made her feel she was really ugly.  
He made her feel that she couldn't make any right decisions.  
She was a lousy mother that she couldn't do anything right.  
So homicide versus suicide.  
On the one hand, the nasty divorce may have given Michelle  
plenty of reasons to be depressed and want to weigh out.  
But it was a police photo of Michelle's bedroom

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

that caused investigator her to think otherwise.  
You can see where her bed was pushed out of place.  
He spent hours poring over the pictures.  
Looking at the wall and kind of zooming in,  
you can see things that may be not visible to the naked eye.  
Didn't jump out at you at the time.  
Didn't jump out at first at everybody.  
But it looks like we see something that looks like blood on the wall.  
So that was concerning.  
Blood on the wall and a bed out of place.  
To her, it pointed to only one scenario.  
It appeared that there was a struggle.  
He believed Michelle had been attacked.  
The suicide scene staged.  
At the house, there was no sign of forced entry, nothing taken.  
And investigators theorized that a random intruder  
wouldn't bother arranging such an elaborate scene.  
In an unknown intruder, the one our man doesn't figure in here either, right?  
No, we never thought, never thought that.  
No, they thought someone close to Michelle had to be responsible.  
So what do we do now is a question of?  
Yes.  
It was time to go looking for suspects.  
Coming up.  
The obvious suspect, ex-husband Lloyd, had an alibi.  
I think I have every receipt for the last seven days.  
Michelle liked to say things too.  
Could the mystery be solved from beyond the grave?  
I started finding screenshots of texts.  
Michelle Nyriker's mother, Jeannie,  
was still dealing with the loss of her elder child.  
And atop that grief was a long-standing sorrow, a strangement.  
Michelle had abruptly stopped talking to her mom ten years before.  
I missed her, I loved her.  
I didn't know what was going on because we had never had a fight.  
If we'd had a fight and hung up on each other,  
you know, you'd get over it.  
But we did not have that fight.  
Jeannie didn't know exactly what had gone on in Michelle and Lloyd's marriage,  
but she knew she'd never liked him.  
And my husband was like,  
okay, she can do better than this, why is she?  
What does she see in him?  
And looking back, what makes you say that, Jeannie?

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

He was arrogant from the beginning.

He was always arrogant, he was full of himself.

Michelle's sister agreed.

He wanted to be like, oh, I'm going to put you in your place.

Did you talk to her about how things were with her and Lloyd?

No.

Or do you just seal that away?

I knew.

Is that a no-go topic?

That's a no-go topic.

Michelle's family says Lloyd's my way or the highway attitude extended to the way he disciplined the children.

The doting ballet dad wanted his girls to be a little too on point.

He kind of raised his kids with a military bearing, huh?

Yes.

I mean, they had to, he would snap his fingers and they'd line up and they would stand there like little soldiers.

He would make them kneel with their nose to the wall, hands behind their heads, like they're being executed.

I'm sorry, for a minor household infraction?

Yeah, like for nothing sometimes.

He would just be mad at them.

After Michelle's death, Jeannie flew out to the East Coast to be with her granddaughters.

That's when she finally learned just how bad things had become for Michelle.

It was all there in her daughter's journals and boxes of court papers.

I started finding court documents and I started finding screenshots of texts.

My daughter documented everything to death.

What was the narrative picture that had come together for you of what had happened in her life?

That she was just constantly abused, emotionally abused.

By her husband Lloyd?

Yes, especially.

You'd believe that he ganged up the children against her?

Yes.

Michelle's mother, Red Howley, on happy marriage turned into an unhappy divorce.

He was taking her to court over and over and over.

The acrimony between Lloyd and Michelle had been well known to Michelle's friends for years.

They'd seen it up close.

If her death was a murder, the history of that marriage and divorce told them exactly what happened.

When asked at the scene what I thought my answer was, I think you did it.

The husband, the ex.

Absolutely.

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

No problems.

The very same Lloyd, who had calmly and clearly volunteered so much information to investigators.

She was just completely out of control. demeanor.

What are you hearing in there?

He was very cooperative.

Would you like me to move up a little?

No, you're fine.

Are you sure?

I'm fine.

Police had reason to believe Michelle died sometime after midnight Saturday going into Sunday.

So the question, where was Lloyd?

Tell me the way you came up.

Sure.

To go to Rochester.

He told police he'd driven up from New Jersey to Rochester to help Carrie move into her college apartment.

She couldn't fit everything in the car.

So I had totes back in Princeton that I had to bring.

So when I arrived on Saturday, I went to the apartment and I unloaded my car, her stuff.

Carrie's apartment.

Yeah, Carrie's apartment.

And then he said he spent the night in a nearby hotel.

From 11 to 7 then you're in the hotel?

Yes.

By yourself?

Yes.

He said he had been to Rochester to help his daughter move into college, spent the night in the hotel, stayed in the hotel all night long.

Lloyd said he drove home the next day

and only returned to the Corning area after Michelle's body had been found.

He could account for all of his movements.

I think I have every receipt for the last seven days.

Now they needed to put Lloyd's timeline under a microscope.

Police pulled his phone records and guess what?

His cell never left the hotel that night, so far so good.

And the story told by the phone meant he couldn't be an hour and a half south in Corning as Michelle was about to die.

So police had to consider others in Michelle's inner circle.

And that included the last known person to have seen Michelle alive.

It was someone who'd admitted in a phone call with police to fighting with Michelle that very night.

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

Her middle daughter, Carrie.

When I got there, my mom started freaking out and she was yelling and then she got quiet, so I waited for you to come out and talk to me.

I know you're upset, but if you can take a breath for me so that I can understand what you're saying a little better?

Yeah, yeah, okay, I'm sorry.

Sure, Carrie sounded distraught, but the officer who first took down her account of that night didn't like what he was hearing.

He said right away, he's like, something's not right.

What was he referring to?

Carrie specifically was not telling the truth about what happened that night.

Coming up.

What was Carrie hiding?

The younger sister says, I get woken.

It sounds like somebody's in the house attacking my mom.

When Dateline continues.

Our national parks and forests are home to some of the most picturesque views on the globe, but sometimes the most beautiful places hide the darkest secrets.

I'm Delia D'Ambra, and in my show Park Predators, that's what I'm here to warn you about.

Join me every Tuesday all summer long as we dive into cases that continue to haunt the histories of these beautiful destinations.

Listen to Park Predators now, wherever you listen to podcasts.

I'm Lester Holt with NBC Nightly News.

The past couple of years have been challenging and exhausting for so many, and the headlines can often feel overwhelming.

We all want answers. We want to know what it all means for us and our families.

These are the questions we try to answer every night, making sense of the major stories

and learning about the people and moments that inspire us.

I hope you'll join me every evening.

Watch NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt

or listen wherever you get your podcasts.

Here's a truism.

Cops don't like to be lied to, especially cops investigating an unsolved death like that of the courting mom Michelle Nyreider, especially if they're suspicious that the victim's 19-year-old daughter is the one doing the lie.

In a statement to investigators, Carrie, the middle child, admitted she had arrived at her mother's house just shortly before her death.

She had initially told us that she got there and had a fight with her mom,

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

and she left, so she let us to believe this was a 15 or 20-minute stay at her mom's house. The thing was, her cell phone records said otherwise. You can see that she's at the house for about two hours. That lot longer than we anticipated her to be there. So was Carrie hiding something about what happened after that argument? Those who knew her best never considered Carrie to be anything but honest. Family friend Rose was one of the first people to speak with Carrie after Michelle was found. We just sat on the phone together for about a half hour and just cried. And Mina said there was no way her smart and kind-hearted friend would have played any kind of role in a murder. I could never picture her being violent. But police had a different take. They remembered there being turmoil in Michelle's house. All those calls to police years earlier had that shouting finally boiled over ending in murder. And there was an ear-witness of sorts. Carrie's kid sister, the 14-year-old, had been sleeping downstairs. She told the detective she remembers hearing screams. The younger sister says, I get woken. It sounds like somebody's in the house attacking my mom. She used that word? Yes, she did. Then her sister tells her, we gotta leave. Mom's upset. She's really mad. We gotta go back to Rochester. She's coming with me. Carrie's story was way out of whack. As hard as it was to wrap their heads around it, the detectives were coming to believe that the college student daughter may have murdered her own mother. Unthinkable. This is her mother. You know, I just keep coming back. This is the mother. The mother, her own mother, that to me was the most chilling part of this whole thing. But if it were true, the young woman was too petite, they thought, to have pulled it off alone. There's no way that Carrie could have physically carried out the act. If it was to be homicide, she would have needed some help. But from whom? They naturally looked at those closest to Carrie and who was closer than her dad, Lloyd, going all the way back to those ballet school days. Cops also knew that Lloyd had been in the area that weekend

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

helping Carrie move into her college apartment.  
In more detail, you could tell us about things.  
Obviously, it's more helpful to us.  
But what about his apparently ironclad alibi  
backed up by his cell phone records  
that he never left his hotel at night?  
From 11 to 7, then, you're in the hotel?  
Yes.  
Alright.  
Investigator Hurd sent a colleague to spool through  
the hotel's security cam footage.  
He goes,  
I don't like what I'm seeing.  
It looks like that dad and Carrie left together  
about 10 o'clock that night.  
What was that?  
The dad and the daughter together?  
Leaving?  
And when they fast-forwarded the hotel's security video,  
there was Lloyd Nyriker seen again  
walking through the parking lot at 6.30 a.m.,  
more than eight hours later.  
Are you theorizing the darkest scenario  
that dad and daughter are in on this thing together?  
Yes, we are.  
That's a monstrous theory.  
Yes, it is.  
The authorities held their cards close to the vest.  
None of their suspicions leaked out.  
Stubbein County District Attorney Brooks Baker  
was consulted as investigators got search warrants  
so they could tap father and daughter's cell phones.  
Where are you now, sweetie?  
I'm still back at the Denny's rest stop.  
What are you hoping for?  
What we're hoping for is some conversation  
between the two of them about the death, about money.  
Hi.  
Hi, sweetie.  
I'm sorry, I didn't get your call right away.  
And?  
We didn't get much.  
Investigators decided to ratchet up the pressure,  
what's called in cop talk, tickling the wire.



## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

Hi, is this Kerry Nyriker?

Yes, this is Kerry.

We have an investigator from QuinnMPD call Kerry and say, hey, I want to talk to you.

And the hope is that that'll get a conversation going between Lloyd and his daughter.

I didn't know if you had time to meet up with me.

I know it's break time and I didn't know what your plans were.

Yeah, would we be able to talk on Monday?

OK.

With her wire tickled, would Kerry take the bait and call her father with the latest?

She did exactly that.

Hi, sweetie.

Hey.

So I just got off the phone with officer or whatever from the according police department he called.

He's like, oh, you know, I just like to meet with people face to face as well.

You know, I'd like you to not do that if you can avoid it.

Tell him I'm sorry.

I got a counseling appointment back in New Jersey tonight.

I got to get to my counseling appointment

and tell him this has been really hard on me.

Yeah.

Could you cry?

Yeah.

I'm like.

We call it the lion cry conversation

because it's when all of our hackles kind of went up.

He's telling his daughter to lie.

He's telling his daughter to lie to the investigator.

Lie to him.

And by the way, if that doesn't work, can you cry?

You cry and say, I'm sorry, I have to go.

God, it would be nice if it was just over.

That would be the dream.

Well, that's really all I got to suggest right now.

By now, investigators had a working theory of the crime that it was probably not the dad helping the daughter, but the reverse.

That dad, they theorized, was the mastermind.

But authorities lacked hard proof of anything.

They needed more.

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

How bad?

Yeah.

After two more months of tapping the phones,  
they decided showtime had arrived.

They would simultaneously appear unannounced to interview  
both Kerry and Lloyd in separate locations  
and confront the two directly.

In late January, 2018,  
like commando synchronizing their watches,  
they swooped down.

Right, me too.

In New Jersey, two FBI agents appeared at Lloyd's workplace.

He agreed to meet with them in a conference room.

The agents gave him an update on the case.

A medical examiner is determined to be a homicide or a suicide.

And in conjunction with that,

I want to ask you,

did Kerry have something to do with her dad?

No.

I just don't think Kerry has it in her to kill another person.

Can you think of something,

whether it was things get out of hand,

she gets into a fight and it's a self-defense thing?

I mean, can you see that happening with Kerry?

It's hard to imagine.

But can I picture it?

I can't.

And instead of jumping and saying,

no, this is my daughter,

she wouldn't do something like that.

But can I picture it?

It's the longest pause in the entire time you talk.

I can't.

So he's not Papa Lyon protecting his cubbies here?

No.

He's how do I sort of toss her under the bus kind of thing.

Lloyd had to realize the walls were closing in.

Still, the interview ended with handshakes.

Well, we appreciate you sitting down with us  
and interrupting your day and everything, so...

Well, my goal is to help.

The agents allowed Lloyd to leave  
after his very bad day at the office.

Then they tailed him and listened in as he phoned his daughter.

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

How are you?

Not great.

I'm not great either.

250 miles away in Syracuse, New York,  
daughter Carrie had also been confronted by police.

And she too had had a very bad day.

What did she tell her inquisitors?

Coming up.

After one faked suicide,  
would this one be real?

He's gonna jump.

He's got his phone and he wants to talk to his daughter.

Carrie Knight Rider,  
who'd always been on script about the night her mother died,  
said they'd had a fight.

She'd left, end of story.

But now she sat in a room with New York State investigators  
determined to get the truth.

Can you tell us what you observed, what you remember?

Carrie quickly caved and admitted she'd lied.

Her dad had been there with her.

Who went in the house first?

Dad went in the house.

Well, we went in the house at the same time.

Okay.

And then...

Wait.

No, that's a lie.

I'm sorry.

I'm...

I went in the house.

We should go get out of there.

And there was more.

My dad went upstairs into my mom's room.

And she was like,

What are you doing?

What are you doing?

Why are you here?

And so she was yelling.

And then she was like,

Why?

Why?

Then it started to tumble out the nightmare story.

She told investigators her dad,

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

drowning in alimony and child support payments,  
had given her an ultimatum.  
Him or her mom.  
There was something along the lines of,  
you know, she's out of money.  
He can't pay rent.  
He can't pay for stuff.  
So basically he was going to kill himself.  
Or there is a way to make it so  
he would kill himself,  
which was killing my mom.  
Why, at the crossroads, did she decide to help?  
She says she saw no other alternative.  
Why did you guys first discuss  
that it was supposed to be a look like a suicide?  
The first time he told me about this.  
Then she told the investigators what her father did.  
I didn't know what it was telling her mom.  
Did she be quiet?  
Put the rope around her neck and hang her.  
Carrie's job was to disable any security devices  
and to distract her younger sister asleep downstairs,  
totally unaware of what was going on.  
Yeah, she woke up, but I had to take her out.  
I was freaking out.  
I didn't know what's going on.  
I was like, oh my god.  
I mean, I put her in my car.  
Now we had the framework of the story together now.  
I mean, what a bombshell in the rooms of the ears  
that are listening to this.  
At that point, we're shell-shocked.  
At last, the authorities had enough to arrest Lloyd.  
He'd left work, seemingly unnerved by his chat with the FBI,  
and New Jersey state police had tailed him  
as he drove to the top of a five-story parking garage,  
got out of his car, and sat on a ledge.  
Apparently, suicide seemed a better option than prison.  
And there he is out on the ledge.  
On the ledge.  
Five stories down into concrete threatening to kill himself.  
So he's going to be a jumper.  
He's going to jump.  
He's got his phone, and he wants to talk to his daughter.

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

After a 90-minute negotiation, a homicide detective tackled Lloyd and put him under arrest.  
Back in New York, authorities read his daughter Carrie her rights to.  
Murder charges for both.  
Michelle's mom across the country was in disbelief.  
Said, no, not Carrie.  
Not Carrie.  
Please not Carrie.  
The friends in Corning couldn't absorb it either.  
Him, of course, but her too.  
The little ballerina they'd watched grow up, now charged with murder.  
That's the unbelievable part.  
We love this child.  
As time has passed, Michelle's friends are starting to learn of a family's brainwashing, of a controlling father who poisoned his daughter's minds with the drip-drip of a phony story that went on for years.  
That their mother was no good, crazy, that they'd all be better off with her out of the picture.  
A father's manipulation that went all the way back to ballet class days and probably earlier.  
What flashed back to me was that time I saw a seven-year-old Carrie standing front and center, shaking.  
And I personally believe it was this accumulation of control.  
I felt that she had been brainwashed.  
And looking back, Michelle's mom is now certain it was Lloyd who was behind the unexplained rift with her daughter.  
I think that he'd already started alienating her, manipulating her mind.  
Putting a false narrative in her head about who she was and who her people were.  
I have often referred to him as Jim Jones.  
It's almost cult leader-esque, what he has done to Carrie and her sisters.  
It appeared that father and daughter would be tried together.  
Both entered pleas of not guilty.  
But as the case moved forward, Carrie alone in her cell removed from her father

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

it was as though the spell was broken.  
Carrie flipped and decided to testify against her father.  
At what point has your dead person approached you with this plan?  
Now she gave a second, even more detailed confession  
and prepared to be the star witness at her father's murder trial  
and a new wrenching detail.  
She had helped move her mother's dead body.  
We dragged her around the corner  
and he tied the rope to the one prong of the banister  
and lifted her up and put her over the side.  
Sorry.  
That's okay.  
But her dad's trial never happened.  
Lab results came back showing the ex-husband's DNA  
was all over Michelle's bedclothes  
and that house he claimed never to have been inside.  
In October of 2018,  
Lloyd and I writer pleaded guilty to murder one.  
I was stunned and he gave it up.  
He told us exactly what happened.  
Lloyd gave a full statement  
owning up to being the master manipulator  
that friends and family said they'd witnessed all along.  
He described the process by which he would abuse Michelle  
in front of his girls, belittle her, convince them  
that she was insane, that she was dangerous.  
He's a narcissist.  
The world revolves around him.  
His password to all of his accounts was  
all my girls love me.  
Oh, you're kidding.  
That's how he operated.  
Ultimately, that power led Carrie to say yes  
because dad says it's so.  
If dad says it's so, it must be so.  
Lloyd was sentenced to life without parole.  
Hey, last of your toys.  
District Attorney Baker allowed Carrie to plead  
to a lesser charge of manslaughter.  
She was sentenced to one to three years.  
The DA sees the daughter as a victim too.  
You want to be sympathetic because she's a sympathetic character.  
She deserves sympathy for where she was,  
but she's still guilty of murder,

## [Transcript] Dateline NBC / The Ultimatum

and that's the injustice has to happen.  
And friend Cynthia can't shake that emotional conversation  
she had with Michelle just before she died,  
the one where she promised to take care of her daughters.  
If anything happens to me.  
Yeah, they came back very strong for me.  
Carrie was released from prison after a little more than a year.  
She finished her college studies and graduated.  
She's very remorseful.  
She misses her mother very much,  
and she has said that her mother would know what to do right now.  
She would know how to help me.  
Still grieving over the death of her daughter,  
Michelle's mom is now facing another kind of sorrow,  
coming to terms with this unthinkable crime  
and the granddaughter who said yes  
to a father's deadly ultimatum.  
She is a human being.  
She's still a child.  
She might be considered an adult,  
but I hear the child.  
And yet she killed your daughter.  
And she killed my daughter.  
She's a victim.  
I struggle with this.  
I struggle.  
I ask Michelle.  
I say, Michelle, what do you want me to do?  
What do I do with this child of yours?  
And I honestly believe that my daughter would want her  
to be accepting responsibility for what she did,  
and she is.  
That's all for now.  
I'm Lester Holt.  
Thanks for joining us.