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[Intro]

Steve-Hey everybody. Welcome again to another episode of Thinking Sideways. I am Steve, of course joined by...

Devin-Devin!

Joe-Joe.

D-Yeah!

S-Yeah!

D-I didn't forget my pseudonym.

S-No.

J-I almost...I was going to say Devin.

D-I know. Cause it's your real name.

J-Uh huh.

S-This week, we've got another mystery, which is not "how do we do this same bit every week?" But instead, a real mystery. This week we're going to be talking about...well this is kind of an odd ball mystery to me. It's one of those ones I keep reading over and over and over, and you just kind of scratch your head going "What's going on?"

J-It seems to be a bit of an odd one, yeah.

S-Yeah. And this is the death of a gentleman by the name of Blair Adams. Before I forget, this was suggested by Denise a while back.

J-Hey, thanks Denise.

D-Thank you.

S-We did get to it.

D-We do get to them.

S-Yeah, yeah.

D-Usually.

J-It takes a while.

D-Some of them do take a while.

S-It's a big list.

D-Yeah. It's a really big list (Steve laughing). And it just keep growing.

S-Ok. Well let me give everybody a quick summary before we get into the story, cause there is kind of a bunch of details here. Blair Adams was a Canadian man whose body was found on the 11th of July, 1996 in the parking lot of a hotel that was currently under construction, in Knoxville, Tennessee. He was wearing a ripped shirt, and nothing else.

D-Hm.

J-Was it ripped, or had it just been torn open, like you rip it open without unbuttoning it?

S-I think it was probably torn open, but you hear it referred to as 'ripped.'

J-Yeah.

S-So we'll go with whichever one you like. There was somewhere...here's where it catches everybody's attention. There was somewhere between four to six thousand dollars in paper currency laying on the ground around him, and that was in US, Canadian, and German currencies. He also had a bag near him, which had about two thousand dollars in precious metals and jewelry.

J-Uh huh. And that was his fanny pack, right?

S-That was his fanny pack.

J-Yeah. So that wasn't on him, that was near him, right?

S-No. No, it wasn't on him. But thanks for giving away the fact that I was holding on to that he had a fanny pack.

J-Oh, ok.

D-Oh, the '90s.

S-Ruined it.

J-Yeah, sorry.

S-Yeah, it was the '90s (laughing).

D-One could assume.

S-But by all indications, Blair had no reason to be in Knoxville, and it doesn't appear that he knew any body there. So we don't really know what happened and why he died there.

D-Yeah, and it's obviously not a robbery.

S-Not with all that cash laying around.

J-Apparently not.

D-Unless there was, like, four times as much before.

J-That's always possible.

D-And they just left some behind cause they're like "Well, there's so much here make it look like it wasn't for that."

S-Yeah. No.

D-No. That's unlikely.

S-That's not it.

J-Seems unlikely.

S-All right. Well, let's go ahead and start at the beginning of the story.

D-Ok.

S-Blair Adams was 31 years old, and he lived in Surrey, British Columbia, which is right on the border between the US and Canada. And it's, uh...I couldn't ever tell if it was it's own city or a sub, a community of Vancouver.

J-You know, I don't know. Maybe it's their equivalent of a county?

S-I don't know. I looked it up, but the point is it's right there, and this is kind of important in that that relationship of the border, because if you look at the west coast, I-5, or Interstate 5 runs from the bottom of California up through Oregon, up through Washington, and where it hits the Canadian border, that's Surrey. So it runs right in to there.

J-Yeah. Right there at Peace Arch. You've been through Peace Arch before, right?

S-I don't know that I have.

D-I haven't.

J-Huh. You haven't?

D-No, I've never been to Canada.

J-You've never been to Canada, really?

D-Yeah.

J-Oh wow.

D-I know, it's weird, right?

S-Yeah, a little bit.

D-I've lived here my entire life and I've never been to Canada (Steve laughing).

J-Yeah, seriously.

D-It's like a five hour drive.

J-Yeah, it's not that far. You should go to Vancouver sometime. It's a cool town.

D-It's on my list.

J-Yeah.

S-So Blair, he was a foreman at a construction company, and by all accounts he was a nice, normal, well-liked guy. You do see some things in the internet reading that hint at some other problems he might have had, but we'll address those later. Basically, there was nothing unusual about his character.

D-Largely unusual.

J-Not really.

S-Yeah, nothing stood out. According to his mother, though, in the beginning of the summer of 1996, he started acting more and more erratic, to the point that he started having, to her, what seemed like mood swings. She describes them as pretty erratic, or strong mood swings.

D-And he was single, right?

S-Yes. He was a single man.

D-So she was pretty much the closest relationship of his.

S-I got that impression.

D-Yeah.

S-She did eventually ask him, you know, what's going on here, and he replied "I don't think I should tell you about it."

D-Hm.

S-Which you could read a lot of things into that. But that's what he said. There have been some after the fact reporting. I'm going to call it after the fact reporting, that says he told other people around him that someone was out to kill him, which makes him sound pretty paranoid.

D-Yeah.

J-Unless somebody was actually out to kill him.

S-That's always it. Unless there actually was somebody.

D-Yeah, you're right. It's like you're only paranoid unless...

S-Unless something actually does happen.

D-Uh huh. And then...

S-It's too late.

D and J-Yeah.

J-Oops.

S-Nobody believes you, if only they had.

D-Hi, NSA (S and J laughing).

S-On the 5th of July, 1996, Blair went to the bank and he drained his savings account and he emptied out his safety deposit box. So he got all of his money in cash, and then he went to his safety deposit box, and that's where he got the coins and the jewelry that, the precious metals that he would have on him when he was found dead.

D-And, forgive me, I may have missed it, but is it ever explained why he owned those things?

S-Nope.

D-So it wasn't like a family heirloom? It wasn't like...

S-I don't know. I mean I know that some of the metals were coin, so it may have been that he was a coin collector.

D-But the jewelry?

S-But I don't know if it was maybe the family's box.

J-Some people, you know, like to buy gold.

S-Yeah.

D-Yeah, that's true

J-Actually, I was planning, if I hadn't been cheated out of my 1.6 billion dollar Powerball jackpot a couple weeks ago, I was planning on buying a stout wooden chest and filling it with gold and silver coins.

S-And burying it in your basement?

D-Sinking it?

J-No, I was just going to have it out so I could just open it up and [can't tell what word he says] my hand into it.

D-Scrooge McDuck?

J-Yeah, yeah (S and J laughing).

D-Yeah.

S-Ok, to answer your question, I don't know why.

D-Ok.

S-Ok, so, Blair goes to the bank, gets all of his money. By the way, the fanny pack, like we said, is where he was keeping all of it.

D-It must have been a big fanny pack.

S-Well that's where he, I don't think he kept the cash in the fanny pack.

J-Well, I've heard it both ways. I've heard it in the fanny pack. I've heard he stuffed it into his duffel bag.

S-That amount of money, four to six thousand dollars, and I don't know the exact conversion to say how many bills were in what versus what, but that's still a lot of cash. And it seemed like too much to put into a fanny pack.

J-Uh, not really. If you get it in twenties, it's going to be a hundred bills in a packet, assuming it's in packets.

S-Uh huh.

J-So that's two thousand bucks, so basically, three packets of bills. Not that much.

S-Thanks for just destroying that on me, Joe (all laughing).

J-Sorry.

D-On top of a fair amount of coins and, you know, gold.

S-All the other stuff. Yeah.

J-Yeah.

S-It would have been a tight squeeze.

J-Some of those fanny packs were pretty big.

D-I remember. Yeah they really really were.

S-God, they really were. Back to our story, though. Enough about fanny packs. So he went to the bank on the 5th, which was Friday. On Sunday, which was July 7th, he went to the US border and tried to cross.

J-And this was by car, or what?

S-By car.

J-Now I heard this...

S-He was going to get, I think you drove to the ferry, if I remember correctly, and the ferry took you across. So it wasn't like he was just driving down the road.

J-Well, this is the part I don't really get, is that why, if you live in Surrey, why would you...cause I had heard he arrived from Vancouver Island, which means you get there by ferry. But when you're in Surrey, you just drive a little ways south and you're at the border. Why would he go by, go over to the island and catch a ferry from the island? It's just a really expensive way to go.

S-So, there are so many things that he did that are so unexplainable that I don't even know where to begin with that question, let alone a bunch of the other questions that we're going to have.

J-Hm, yeah.

S-I have no, I can't answer that, Joe. I have no idea.

J-Yeah. It's again, this has been kind of muddled, because...

D-I almost wonder if he just thought it'd be easier to get across there?

S-Maybe.

D-You know, on the ferry he could just blend in with a group of people and, you know, sneak through somehow or something like that, versus...

J-Well, that is one thing about it, especially if you catch a big ferry, then suddenly those guys at the customs shed, they're all of a sudden overwhelmed with people, you know. And I've been through that whole thing, yeah...

S-Yeah.

J-And going up to Victoria, and yeah, it's a lot of people getting off that boat all at once.

D-So that would be my guess, is that maybe he just thought, he probably thought, just by his actions, it seems like he was a little agitated...

S-He was trying to blend in, he was trying to hide.

D-He was trying to not be stopped at the border.

S-Yep.

J-Yeah.

D-And if you're driving across in a car, you're going to get stopped. They're going to search you, versus if you're just blending in to a group of people.

S-Well, they don't search everybody, but they'll pick out the ones that are acting suspicious, which he was, he was very agitated. And customs stops him, checks him out, realized he's got all this cash on him.

J-Uh, that looks a little funny.

S-They flag him as being involved in the drug trade in some way, either as the dealer or a courier.

D-Well you would assume, yeah.

S-Yeah! Cause he's a white male, he's unmarried, and he's got a boatload of money on him. Yeah, we're not letting you cross the border, so they turn him around and they send him home.

J-Yeah, next time he, you know, the smart thing to do in situations like that is to, like, duct tape the money to your back, you know what I mean? (Steve laughing) Instead of having it in a fanny pack.

D-Yeah, no, don't just have it in the fanny pack.

J-Of course they're going to look in the fanny pack.

S-Yeah, I don't know. But ok, let's move forward here. We're going to go to the next day, which is Monday, the 8th of July.

D-Uh huh.

S-Blair went to work and promptly quit, and asked for his paycheck.

D-Ok.

S-I have read conjecture in both directions of whether he did or did not get that check, and if he did or did not get it cashed at the bank, so I can't say if he did that. But he got a job out of the way, he then turned around, he went to the airport and he bought a ticket for the next day to go to Germany. Spent \$1700 bucks to get an airplane ticket. Which, you know, means he wants to get out of town. Still, he's trying to get out of town.

D and J-Yeah.

D-And that explains why he had German money as well as Canadian and American.

J-That would explain that, yeah.

S-Yeah, that totally does.

D-Ok.

J-And then, uh, \$1700 bucks. He probably could have got a better deal if he had bought it, like, a little earlier.

D-Weeks in advance.

J-Yeah. You think?

D-Not a day.

S-If things had been planned.

D and J-Yeah.

S-Instead of what seems to be spur of the moment.

D-Although, in the 90s it was a little easier to just kind of get, you know, that like really flags you these days, right? If you're like "I need to get out of this country immediately. I will take the first flight."

S-Blair was doing everything in cash at this point, is what I can tell.

D-Right. But even, I'm just saying, that is the sort of thing that these days people are like "Uh, no."

J-Yeah, one way tickets and paying in cash.

D-"No, probably not." But in the '90s...

S-That didn't stand out at all.

D-Yeah, not really.

S-But he couldn't wait.

D-No.

S-To leave the country. Flying out the next day was not soon enough for him. So what he does is he shows...

D-But he still bought the ticket.

S-He has a ticket. He then goes to a friend's house that night, and knocks on the door, it's in the middle of the night, saying "Hey, can you take me to the border, can you get me out of town, I gotta go, I gotta go, I gotta go." This friend has her kids at home, says "Blair, my kids are here, I can't just drive you to the border." At which point he gets all flustered and frustrated and leaves.

J-Yeah.

S-And then we know that the next day he does make it to the airport. He does go to the Vancouver airport. This is going to be Tuesday the 9th.

D-Ok.

S-But instead of getting on his plane, he cashes out his ticket, turns around, and rents a car, and drives south to Seattle.

D-Ok.

S-He manages to get across the border this time.

D-Well he's \$1700 less.

S-No, as far as I can tell he got his money back.

D-Oh, he got his money back?

J-Yeah. But yeah, and then he drives...

D-He got it in cash? He didn't get it as a voucher?

S-I am under the impression that he got it as cash. But I cannot say.

D-Ok. I just wonder because of the things that happen next. He could have gotten it as a voucher.

S-Maybe.

D-And that would have been less suspicious crossing the border.

S-Eh, no. There's some weirdness about the cost of ticketing. But.

D-Ok.

S-But we're almost there, so. Ok, he, this is again, we're still on Tuesday. He drives across the border. He doesn't get stopped this time. He goes to Seattle. He then books a ticket at the airport. I believe he would have been at Sea-Tac at this point.

D-Yep.

S-He books a ticket to Washington, D.C.

D-Ok.

S-Weird thing about the ticket, and this is what I was just pointing at, is again, he buys a one way ticket. That one way ticket costs 770 bucks. He could have got a round trip ticket for 300 to 400 dollars.

J-Dumb move on...

D-Well, and that's maybe a little bit why I wonder if it wasn't that he got a voucher, or it was like part cash, part voucher, that they gave him.

S-They would only refund so much.

D-Right. That they would only refund a certain percent, and then they said you know what, actually they said "Fine, here's a voucher" for you know, a ticket, that it didn't really matter.

S-That could be. I don't know. The value of the ticket is just so weird. I'm a natural cheapskate, though. Even if I don't intend to come back on the return flight, I'm totally going to go for the cheaper one.

D-It is weird, absolutely weird. You're going to buy it anyway. Totally.

J-Oh hell yeah, of course.

S-I mean, it's not so much that case anymore, but at that time one way flights were obscenely expensive compared to round trips.

D-Uh huh.

J-Oh yeah.

D-Yeah. But, I don't know, that was one of the things I was thinking that, like, it would make sense he didn't really care how much he had spent on the plane ticket because he had that voucher.

S-That he had already spend the money, so who cares?

D-That he had 800, 900, maybe a 1000 dollars on the voucher, and was like "I don't care."

S-Yeah.

D-"It doesn't matter. It's there, I have to spend it."

S-That's a good idea.

J-I have to say based on his behavior, subsequent behavior and previous behavior, he didn't seem really to care that much about money.

S and D-No.

J-Yeah.

S-No, money was no object. It was not high on the list at all.

J-Yeah.

S-Blair got on the plane, to Washington, D.C.

D-On his one way ticket.

S-His one way ticket. The flight didn't leave on Tuesday. He actually left sometime in the early part of Wednesday, so again this would be July 10th, just moving forward in the time line. I have no idea what he did during the time that he was waiting for that plane to take off. I'm guessing he just milled about the airport.

D-Oh. I was going to say he went and set up the mystery soda machine. Obviously.

J-Oh, that's a good plan.

S-No, I don't think that was it.

D-Oh.

S-Regardless though (laughing), he gets on his flight, he lands in D.C. He then goes ahead and rents another car. He rents a white Toyota Camry, and he starts driving south.

D-Talk about, let's talk about the things that are expensive one way, a rental car one way, incredibly expensive.

J-Yeah.

D-Incredibly expensive.

S-I don't know that the rental was a one way. I know that he was due to return the rental on the 12th or the 13th.

D-Do you know where?

S-I'm just, I'm trying to remember, and I don't know that it was ever said where he was supposed to be taking it back to.

D-It's insanely expensive to return to any kind of car rental facility that's, you know, not within two miles of the original one. It's insane.

S-Yes. It is. It's super expensive, but the point is he takes this car and he drives.

D-Ok. Sure.

S-Heads south. We know he heads south because he shows up in Knoxville, Tennessee, which is, he's actually at a gas station on Strawberry Plains Pike, which is about 500 miles south, eight hours worth of driving.

J-Actually, I don't even know if it's within the city limits of Knoxville.

S-It does not look like it's actually in...it's on the outskirts.

J-Yeah, it's one of those freeway interchanges where they got a bunch of gas stations, a couple of fast

food places, a few hotels.

S-It's nothing but gas stations and hotels.

J-Yeah.

S-This area where he shows up, Strawberry Plains. Here's uh, here's where things start to get even weirder.

D-Ok.

S-Ok, so Blair gets his gas. He pays for it, and then he can't get his car started. He goes up to the attendant. The attendant, being nice, comes up saying "Hey what's going on, what's wrong?" He says "I can't start the car." He says "Oh, well let me see your key." He figures out quite quickly that Blair has the wrong key.

D-For the car?

S-As in he's driving a Toyota, and he's got a key for a completely different brand of vehicle.

D-Ok.

J-Yeah.

S-Which begs the question, how the hell did he get there?

J-Well also, when you're driving a rental car, the key always has one of those little tags hanging off of it.

S-It does.

J-You know, that's kind of a give away.

D-And it has, like, four keys on there. Yeah.

J-Yeah.

S-Yeah, they're giant wads of plastic and stuff. They're not convenient at all (laughing).

J-No. Keys, uh...

D-No, they are made to be obtrusive so you don't forget that you have them.

S-Yes.

D-Yeah.

S-So, the gas station attendant says "You can't use this key. It's the wrong key." He tries to help. He says "Ok, let's go through your pockets, let's go through your stuff." They can't find the proper key to

this vehicle that he drove to the gas station with anywhere.

D-Is there surveillance footage at this gas station?

S-Not that I am aware of, no.

D-Ok.

S-I don't think that it was...it's '96, surveillance footage wasn't all that common.

D-I just wonder cause, you know, maybe he wasn't driving the car.

S-That is a very good question. And that does show up later on.

D-Uh huh.

S-In our theories section.

D-I know.

J-Yeah. But the attendant, the gas station attendant didn't say anything about seeing somebody with him.

D-But I don't know that you'd necessarily notice.

J-You might not.

S-It's self-serve. You're doing other stuff.

D-Yeah.

J-That's true.

S-You might not notice who shows up in every car. That's completely plausible.

D-Although one would think that, uh, if Blair was like "Oh yeah, but my friend had the key." So.

S-If there was a second person, yeah. You would think that would happen.

D-Yeah, you would.

J-You would think, yeah.

S-Now, we're really used to this now, but this is the mid '90s, when chipped keys were really starting to take off. So for anybody who says "Well, it was a '90s car, they just should have had a locksmith figure out what it was and they could have cut a new key." That wasn't a possibility.

D-So it was going to take a while.

J-It was...so they were...that Camry was a chipped, it did have chipped keys?

S-Toyota in the '90s was starting the chipping. I know that they were. Cause I know that Fords in the '90s had the chips, and Fords were the slowest to pick up the technology.

J-Yeah.

S-So, I'm pretty sure that it would have been a chip key.

D-But even if they did, it's not as though, like, you know, you take a car with no key to a locksmith and say "Cut me a new key."

J-It's kind of hard to do.

D-Especially at what, 5:30 in the evening.

S-Yes.

D-Right, it's not as though you just walk up to a locksmith and they're like "Oh yeah, give me, like, five minutes and I'll do that."

J-Uh huh.

D-It's a process.

S-It is a long process.

D-At the end of a workday, probably you're just out of luck.

J-Well, you'd want to go to the rental place, I think.

D-Ideally.

J-But that...

S-But they were closed.

J-Yeah, they were closed. But here's the deal. I can't remember, I don't actually rent cars very often. It's been a while since I have, but it seems to me when they rent a car they give you two keys, don't they?

D-Ok. This is actually...this is, like, on the heels...They do give you two keys, but they lock them together with one of those...

S-A brad? Or a rivet. It's a rivet or...

D-Yeah, you can't...they clamp it together.

S-A ring.

D-On a big ring. So there are two keys, but it's on the same keyring.

S-It's the dumbest thing in the world. Why give me two keys if I can't separate them?

J-If you can't separate them?

D-Yeah, but you can't separate them.

S-Yes.

D-I think you can if you...I think it's because you're only meant to have the one driver, unless you actively say we're going to have two drivers, and I presume that they can separate them at that point and they say "Ok, here's your two keys." But typically, they just hand you a wad of keys that are on that same thing. I rent cars a lot, as it turns out.

J-Oh yeah?

D-And um, they do. They stick them together.

J-Well that's stupid.

D-I know. I agree.

J-Yeah.

S-It's very weird.

D-It's super stupid (Steve laughing).

J-Yeah. It is.

S-Car rental is the worst.

D-It is the worst.

J-Yeah. It is. But I just wanted to say though, just coincidentally, I lost my keys just this morning (S and D laughing). And uh, well, in my defense, I gotta say, I'd only had one cup of coffee and I frankly didn't get a good night's sleep last night.

D-Yeah, you want to talk about not...but anyway.

J-Yeah, you too (laughing).

S-This is not the mystery we're discussing (Devin laughing).

J-Nah, nah, but he could have done the same thing I did this morning. I'm patting down my pants, they're not there. So I go look in the usual places, the usual place where I leave them. And I look on other flat surfaces like the kitchen counters and everywhere, the bureau in my bedroom, you know. And nothing, so I search my jacket pockets, not there. So I go through, there's a pair of pants laying on my

bed, I don't remember if I wore those yesterday or not, but I go through the pockets. Not there. And I go do the whole thing over again, finally find my keys, cause I was wearing a fleece, and they were in the pocket of the fleece.

D-Hm.

J-And, like I said, in my defense, it might have been the same thing. He might have actually had his keys on him.

D-Yeah.

S-But they were in, like, the shirt pocket or something he didn't realize it.

J-A place he didn't think to check. It's happened to me more than once.

D-Yeah.

S-It's possible. I mean it's totally possible.

J-Yeah.

D-Uh huh.

S-But, the long and the short for Blair in his situation, is because the rental place was closed, it's now past 5:30, and he can't get into his car, they call a tow truck and they tow the car to a garage and say "Call them in the morning."

D-Uh huh.

S-"We'll figure out how to get your key in the morning when they're open, man."

J-See, this is said...now I heard in one place that the tow truck towed him to a hotel.

S-So you will see, I have seen this as well, and it's not that they took the car to the hotel. It's that they took Blair to the hotel or, and then took the car to the shop, or they took the car to the shop and Blair walked or hitchhiked to his hotel.

J-Yeah. According to...

S-I've seen both directions.

J-Yeah. According to the Knox County Sheriff's Department, they had a thing online, they said that he was given a ride by the tow truck driver to the hotel.

S-And I'm inclined to believe that he got a ride. But you do see some places where people will say "and then he walked." Or they will say he hitchhiked. I'm not inclined to buy that, I mean, if you've got a tow truck driver, then you get a ride from the tow truck driver, cause you don't know where you are.

D-Yeah, usually.

J-Uh huh.

S-Durr. But you'll see it both ways. He's now at a hotel, as we've just talked about that. He gets to this hotel somehow, and he walks into the hotel, and he, uh...I'm almost certain that he, by the way, was at the Fairfield Inn and Suites.

J-Yeah, that is the hotel, yeah.

S-And he goes ahead and he walks into the lobby, and he hangs out, and then he does, he exhibits some very odd behavior. He's there for an hour, in and out of the lobby a total of five times, before he finally gets a room. People have watched the surveillance tape, and they say...

D-Gets a room or asks for a room?

S-He pays for a room.

D-Ok, so, no I meant...that's a big difference, right? It's one thing to just be this random person who's just walking back and forth. It's another to like, walk up to the counter and say "I need a room," and then kind of hang out for a while.

S-Ok, let me clarify. He walked in and out, hung out, hung out that entire hour, before requesting a room.

D-See, that's the clarification I was looking for.

S-Yeah. So he hung out in the lobby, wandered around, like he waiting for somebody is what the tape looks like.

D-Uh huh.

S-And then, finally, goes up to the counter, pays for a room. Which, by the way, this is another point where he doesn't seem to care about money. He pays for a \$50 room with a hundred dollar bill, and doesn't stick around for his change.

J-Uh huh.

D-Did he have a cell phone?

S-Not that I know of.

D-Ok. Just...

S-I've never seen mention of a cell phone.

D-Pager? Beeper?

S-I've never seen mention of anything like that.

D-Ok.

S-At all.

J-And this was between about six and seven p.m., right, on the night of the tenth?

S-So he left the hotel, from the footage, he walked out of the hotel at 7:37 p.m.

J-Oh, ok. Yeah, so 6:30 to 7:30.

S-He got there somewhere around 6:30ish. Somewhat like that.

D-Ok.

J-All right.

S-And then did his milling about before leaving. At which point he leaves the hotel, and we have no idea what he does, at all, for the rest of that evening and over the course of that following night.

J-Actually, I have an idea what he did. He got killed (Steve laughing).

D-He died, sometime in between the twelve hours he died.

S-Wow, Joe.

J-So I know that, yeah.

D-That's true.

J-Yeah.

D-That's accurate. We did solve this mystery.

S-We do kind of do that. Ok, so the next day (still laughing).

D-We shouldn't be laughing. We shouldn't be laughing.

S-No, I'm laughing at Joe. I'm not laughing at the case.

D-Yeah.

S-At 7:30 in the morning, a construction crew shows up at their work site, which is another hotel. Again, there's hotels, this place is just lousy with hotels.

D-It's just that strip, you mean, every place has that strip, right outside of town.

J-I personally think this particular spot had a excessive number of hotels. I counted, there's 13 hotels there.

D-That doesn't surprise me that much.

S-And it's like a mile and a half by a mile and a half. It's crazy.

D-There's a stretch of road right outside of DIA that has like 14 or 15 hotels.

S-Yeah, but that's by an airport.

D-Yeah. Well, this is outside of a major city.

S-True.

J-Yeah.

S-True. Fair. Ok, so...

D-Thanks, Steve (Steve laughing).

S-Ok, so, he is found, this construction crew finds Blair's body. He is in the parking lot of the...it's probably the Red Roof Inn, it's possible that it could have been the Super 8 as well, cause they're right by each other.

D-Hm.

J-Yeah, it's on Crestwood Road, or Crestwood Drive.

S-But it's on the opposite side of Interstate 40, cause Interstate 40 cuts through this whole little pocket of gas stations and restaurants and hotels of where he was at.

D-Uh huh.

S-And his hotel was on one side of the freeway, and he was found dead in the parking lot of another hotel on the opposite side of the freeway.

J-Yeah, it actually was, like, a parking area. I don't know if it had been paved yet or not, but the hotel was under construction at the time.

S-Yeah, I don't know. I don't know if it was paved and I'm gonna...so there's going to be a bunch of people who are going to remember this case because they saw it on Unsolved Mysteries.

D-Hm.

S-Which, by the way, I managed to track it down, but we need to remember that Unsolved Mysteries is doing reenactments.

D-Yeah.

S-So what I saw...immediately I was like "Oh, look at that, the parking lot was paved. And it was this color of building, and oh..."

D-But you have to remember, no no no, no it's not that way.

S-I can't use those details because they're reenactment details.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah, and I saw a screen cap from that, and it was obviously not the same hotel, cause it was the Red...

S-Red Roof.

J-Red Roof where his body was found.

S-Red Roof.

J-Yeah. Red Roof. Redrum.

S-Redrum.

D-Redrum (in spooky voice).

J-Yeah, it was the Red Roof Inn, and the Red Roof does not look anything like the hotel in the picture. And so, yeah, they obviously just went out and found the nearest motel or hotel or something like that. Which makes sense, it saves you a lot of money.

S-No. Well yeah, so I can point out something. I watched that segment. There's a building number on the hotel that they take him to stay at. The building number doesn't match anything in the area.

J-Oh yeah?

S-So this is just kind of a clue that you can't rely on that.

J-Yeah.

S-But, the police obviously are called, because there's a body.

D-Uh huh, like you do.

S-We've got Blair dead on the ground with blood around him.

D-Uh huh. And money.

S-And money. And so the cops investigate, and they ruled it a homicide. Blair had...so, I couldn't get his actual autopsy or any of the records like that. I can't find them on the 'net and I think part of that is that this case is technically still open.

J-It is, yeah.

S-A cold case unit started looking into it again, I think four or five years ago.

J-I think in 2010 is what I read.

S-Ok.

D-So six.

S-But, there are some things that indicate that he had defensive wounds on his hands, and some smaller wounds on his body. And like we said, of course, there's all that cash strewn about him.

J-And one thing about the defensive wounds. In one of the newspaper articles I read about this that was written at the time...

S-Yeah.

J-Shortly thereafter. It said that he had one wound on one hand that could have been a defensive wound, and that was it.

S-And I was...yeah. I haven't seen a whole lot to describe what the wounds are, so I kind of have to take it at face value that they were defensive, but you have a great point that it could have been that his hands were just banged up from something.

J-Yeah, something that was totally unrelated.

S-And appear to be that way.

J-You know, actually I called the reporter that wrote that article, she works for the Knoxville News Sentinel.

S-Uh huh. Oh the Sentinel, yeah. Cause I pulled a couple of their articles.

J-Yeah, I called her. Surprisingly she answered her phone. She was very friendly and chatty.

S-Yeah.

J-And so I asked her about this, and she didn't remember it, and it was, like, 20 years ago, I understand (Steve laughing).

D-Yeah.

J-And she covers, like, crime and murder. And I described it to her, and she says "Oh yeah, that kind of rings a bell." But she was like "You know, but I cover this murder stuff all the time."

D-And you were like "I know that feeling."

J-Exactly (laughing).

S-"Yeah, I do a podcast. We do a different story every week."

J-Yeah. So she gave me a phone number to call the Knoxville PD, and I called them and left a message.

D-And they haven't called you back yet?

J-Uh no, actually, they called me back too. And he told me that actually it's not their case, it's the Knoxville County Sheriff's case.

S-Oh ok.

J-And so he gave me a name and a number to call, and so (Steve laughing), so I called and left a message and I haven't heard back.

D-Back from them. Ok (Joe laughing). I was like, this has to end in an "I haven't heard back."

J-Yeah. And if I do hear back, we'll do an update or something.

D-Yeah.

S-Yeah, we'll put something out there.

D-Well, I mean, something that could be construed as a defensive wound is, right, like scrapes on the palms of your hands, or...

J-Which you can get from falling, yeah.

S-Or wounds to the outside of your hands.

D-Or, like, when you fall on gravel and, like, skid, or you know, catch yourself, or get angry and punch a wall.

S-To a degree. That can be...punching a wall could be misconstrued, yes I will agree. Scraping your hands on the ground, not so much.

D-Not as much, but a little.

S-Yeah.

D-I mean, it depends on how you fall.

S-It's very true. So Blair has, he's got his fanny pack near him, and it's got all his money.

D-Uh huh.

S-His duffel bag is around the corner, by the way. It's not right with his body. It's kind of around the side of the building.

D-And did we see his duffel bag in the footage?

S-Yes. He had that duffel bag with him the whole time.

D-I just wanted to make sure. Ok.

S-He kept it closed.

D-Like you would.

S-Like you would. He's laying on the ground. Like I said, there was blood around the body.

J-Was he face down or face up?

S-I've never seen it described which way he was.

D-Again, yeah, autopsies if they haven't been released it's hard to tell.

S-Yeah. But ok, let's describe what we do know. What we do know is that his shoes were off.

D-Ok.

S-We know that his socks were off and they were inside out. And we know his pants were pulled off and they were inside out.

D-They were...his socks were pulled off inside out.

S-His socks were not on him.

D-Ok.

S-And they were inside out. And the same goes for his pants.

D-Ok.

S-There's no mention of underwear, so I'm going to presume he was going commando.

D-Ok.

S-I'm just going to make that presumption.

J-Or it could be that the murderer, you know, pants him, took the underwear, and that's really...it's just some sort of psycho that's really into underwear and he didn't care about the money, he just wanted those shorts.

D-He just wanted the underwear.

S-You're the worst (S and J laughing).

D-This is the sort of thing, this is why we have to keep an eye on Joe.

S-I know.

J-I know.

S-And then Blair's shirt was torn open. And like we said at the beginning, it may have just been popped open if it was a button up shirt, and not actually shred, tear open.

D-Uh huh.

J-Yeah, this is uh...it'd really be helpful, I guess the police are withholding these details, but there was blood...

S-Yeah.

J-There was violence and there was blood. It'd be helpful to know if the blood was on the inside or outside of his pants. Cause that would tell us if the pants were pulled off after he was killed, or before he was killed.

S-I haven't hear anything that ever said that there was blood on his pants.

J-Uh huh. Inside or outside.

S-No.

J-Yeah.

S-I've never seen anything that said, that mentions the blood on his clothes. I'm sure there was blood on his shirt cause he was laying...

J-Uh huh.

S-But I don't know of anything ever talking about it on his pants.

J-Yeah.

S-Same thing with the socks and shoes.

J-It just kind of seems to me if the killer, if he was actually killed by somebody, they were looking for something. And they didn't care about the money or the gold coins.

S-That has...that fuels at least one if not two theories.

J-Uh huh.

S-That absolutely does.

J-Yeah.

S-I don't know. You know what they weren't looking for?

J-Yeah?

S-His car key. To his white...

D-Yeah, cause he didn't have it.

S-No. To his white rental...

D-Yeah, cause he didn't have it.

S-His white Toyota Camry. It was ten feet away from his body.

D-What?!

S-So he had the key the whole time.

D-Or whoever killed him had the key.

S-Or we can go down that rabbit hole.

J-Yeah.

D-Sorry, but I mean it's...

S-It's potential. No it's totally...the theories section in this, by the way, is going to feel like a mess.

D-Uh huh.

S-I've tried to organize it as much as possible...

D-There's no way. There's no way. Yeah.

S-But it...but the key is there. And, by the way, we haven't said this but what he died of...

D-Yeah, cause there was blood around his body and I don't know why there was blood around his body.

J-Good point.

S-I don't know, I don't know why there was blood around the body because the cause of death was blunt force trauma, which ruptured his stomach.

D-That, ah...

J-That's gotta hurt.

D-That has to hurt. Also, I don't...my grasp of anatomy is not the best, but I don't understand how that happens, but ok, sure.

S-So, Joe actually again, Joe made the good move of contacting an expert for us.

D-Hm.

J-Yeah, I talked to, I didn't talk to, I sent an email to one of our listeners, Jeff. Hi Jeff! And he wrote me back. I just said, um, what I was asking him was if you get hit hard enough in the abdomen to rupture your stomach, how long would it take you to die?

D-Yeah.

J-And his answer, you know, does your heart stop because all the gross stuff in your stomach spills out and stops your heart? And he wrote back and said well it all just depends, you know. It could be an hour, several hours of bleeding out. Uh you know, it just all depends.

D-But...

S-But the other thing is that it's super hard to rupture the stomach.

D-Right.

J-Well, it's really hard to unless the stomach is full.

D-Like, really full.

J-Yeah, you'd have to be stuffed.

S-Like Thanksgiving dinner full.

J-And this is one of the things that mystifies me. And of course, you know, security cameras were probably not as ubiquitous back in 1996, but still, that one hotel he went to had security cameras. I wouldn't be surprised if the nearby McDonald's and other places had them.

S-Uh huh.

D-Usually, yeah.

J-So, I would say, according to what Jeff said, if his stomach ruptured, it must have been full. Which means he must have had a nice big meal, so why didn't...I mean they canvassed the area. Nobody saw him. No security cameras picked him up.

D-Well more than that, it seems like they should have been able to...it's not as though his food would have been, like, fully digested, really.

S-Yeah, no. If his stomach was full enough that a blow would rupture his stomach...

D-It shouldn't have been digested.

S-It couldn't have been digested.

D-So then they should have been able to test the contents of that and say oh, it was a meal that was kind of like this and these are the places...

S-He had a Big Mac.

J-Yeah, McDonald's.

D-McDonald's, or you know, it's the Red Robin around the corner, or he had a steak and these four

places do steak within a reasonable...

S-Yeah.

J-Yeah, and so I...

D-Yeah, so that's interesting.

J-This is a bit of a puzzler for me, yeah. How did he get his stomach full without anybody seeing him?

D-And also how did he just die? Cause it seems like, it seems reasonable to assume that this is the scene of the crime, right? His body wasn't relocated.

S-Not necessarily.

J-I think actually...

S-I don't think so.

J-Yeah, if he was alive for several hours, or even an hour, he could have come from a long distance away. I mean not a *long* distance, but he could have actually staggered...

S-He could have traveled some distance, so...

D-Ok.

S-It's very possible that where he died is not where he sustained his injury.

D-Ok. That's fair, yeah.

S-Oh, and uh, so we do have possibly one time frame indicator for the whole thing with Blair at the parking lot at the construction site. The security guard at the area, for the construction area, said that he heard at 3:30 a.m. a loud, short scream.

D-Hm.

J-Yeah.

S-Which people say means it must have been Blair, but there's no way to know because that area has got people pouring in and out of it.

D-Yeah.

S-Could have been anybody.

D-It also seems...again it's one of those things where it's like a trauma that's ongoing probably if he's bleeding out over the course of an hour or more...

J-Yeah.

S-He's bleeding out internally.

D-He's not just going to just scream and then fall over. Like that's not going to happen, probably.

J-Well...

S-No, that's only in the movies.

J-Well, and the security guard also, I thought he said it sounded like a woman to him.

S-He did.

J-Yeah.

S-He did.

J-And also, by the way, what kind of security guard was he? I mean, he heard a scream but doesn't investigate (laughing).

D-He heard a scream and was like "Nah."

S-It was Shaggy, obviously.

J-Yeah.

D-Yeah.

S-I'm going to stay in here, with my cookies...

J-Yeah.

S-Yeah, obviously.

D-Cookies? Uh huh. Cookies.

S-Yeah, you got that. Shall we move on to theories?

D-Yeah.

S-Cause we have a boatload of theories on this one.

D-Yeah, we do.

J-And again, just to reiterate, so the only people who testified to having had contact with him were the gas station attendant, the hotel receptionist...

S-And that's it.

J-Well, and the tow truck driver.

S-Oh, yes.

J-Yeah, yeah.

S-Those are the three people that we know for sure, that came forward.

D-Ok.

S-And had interactions with him. Anybody else who met him has never said a word.

D-Ok.

S-So.

J-Yeah, but again, he must have, in those hours, he must have gone to a McDonald's or somewhere.

S-He had to have talked to somebody.

D-You have to stop saying that because people are going to think they are sponsoring us.

J-Oh, yeah. Good point. Ok. Not McDonald's. I take that back. Forget it. Wipe your brains (Steve laughing). Yeah, I was going to say Jack in the Box.

D-Yeah.

S-White Castle. Piggly-Wiggly.

D-Yeah.

S-Somewhere.

D-Chick-Fil-A.

S-Yeah.

J-Yeah.

S-Ok, so now that we've got that out of the way, let's go into theories.

D-Ok.

J-Sure.

S-Theory number one, the unnamed assassin.

D-Bunk.

J-Yeah (Steve laughing).

D-Next. I'm sorry.

S-Wait. No no no.

J-This is a popular one out there, actually.

S-It is very popular, so we've got to at least talk about it a little bit, is that people say because Blair said that somebody was trying to kill him, that some unknown organization was after him. Ok, he worked for a construction company, so let's just, let's pretend that he figured out that his company was doing something on the sly, you know, whether they're getting contracts incorrectly...

D-Burying bodies in concrete.

S-Or doing shoddy work. Ok? We're just going to say that's it. We have no way of saying that's it, but we're just going to run with that.

J-Yeah.

S-So then his boss figures it out, or he thinks his boss figures it out, at which point he freaks out and decides to get out of town. The problem with this whole thing is that the assassin would have A. Squandered the chance over the course of the weekend to knock him off when he was still in town at home...

J-That would have been a lot easier,huh?

S-And then chase him all over North America.

D-Uh huh. Also, it's a pretty ineffective way to kill somebody.

J-Well, that's it...

S-Well, it's inexact.

J-It's not...

S-You don't know that you're actually going to kill him by punching him in the gut like that.

J-Exactly.

D-Right.

S-If he's, if that's what caused his stomach to be ruptured.

J-Unless you're a ninja assassin, and you know the killer death blow (Steve laughing).

D-Right.

J-It could be.

D-Yeah.

S-Cobra strike.

J-Exactly.

S-Ok.

D-No I mean, I think it seems like he had been feeling like something was wrong for some time, right?

S-Yeah.

D-So had he actually found out about something, he would have been murdered, assassinated way earlier than that. It's really easy to make a construction thing look like an accident, right. Like why would they just have that happen?

S-Yeah.

D-They would have done that.

S-Yeah, a load of lumber accidentally fell on him.

D-You don't take him all the way to Knoxville.

J-Absolutely.

S-Yeah. No. Now I do want to bring up, you will see this bandied about that the assassin was following him, and when he got to the gas station in Knoxville, swapped out his key...

J-Oh yeah.

S-...so he couldn't leave Nashville, which is...

J-Or Knoxville, you mean?

S-Or Knoxville, thank you. Which is so far flung from reality.

J-So how is that...so the assassin...here's what I think. I think the assassin strangled the gas station attendant (Steve laughing). The gas station attendant picked his pocket and swapped out the key.

D-Uh huh.

J-Yeah.

S-Uh huh.

J-Ok. How're you liking that one?

D-No.

J-Yeah. I think the...I've seen that one too, and that's the most absurd thing I've ever seen.

D-Yeah. I don't like it.

S-Yeah. And if it's an assassin, the assassin would have stayed with him until he was dead. If it's an assassin worth their salt.

J-Yeah.

S-And why, then it makes people wonder, ok, so what kind of weirdo is the assassin that they strip him?

D-Uh huh.

S-"Oh, well, I was bored. Just wanted to see if he'd move." I mean, it doesn't make any sense.

D-No. It's not a good...

S-The assassin one, I really, it's weak sauce.

J-The only thing I could say for the assassin thing, is if the assassin was looking for something, again, that would be a good reason to pull his clothes off. Now they made note of the money pack scattered around the body.

S-Right.

J-If he's searching for something, tears open the shirt, pulls off the pants, shoes, everything. Turns all that stuff inside out, looking for something. Could just be a piece of paper, might be a piece of jewelry, even. Gets into the fanny pack, pulls out bundles of money and just throws it because he doesn't care about that. He's looking for something.

S-Yeah, that's not their target.

J-And then so he...he might not have...he may only have temporarily disabled this guy. He may not have actually intended to kill Blair.

D-Yeah.

J-Maybe he just accidentally did so, but he was after whatever he was after. And again it could have been something in that jewelry...

S-His job was to retrieve something.

J-It could have been a sticky note with a password on it. I mean it could have been something.

S-It could have been a bajillion things.

J-Yeah. And so maybe that would explain the money being scattered around.

S-It would.

J-Yeah. And of course, it's just a theory.

S-Yeah.

J-And this is all, again, to follow him all the way to Knoxville and not lose him.

S-Yeah.

J-And not be seen by...

S-Yeah, that's really good.

J-Yeah.

S-Really good.

J-I do want to say...

S-Which is why we're going to move on to the next theory.

J-I do want to say a thing about the lost key...

S-Which is why we're going to move on to the next theory (Devin laughing).

J-No no no. The lost key.

S-Ok, let's have it.

J-If he really truly was being pursued, or at least believed he was being pursued by an assassin, it might be that he only pretended to lose his key so he'd have an excuse to haul, to call a guy to tow it away, to lock it up in a shop overnight so it couldn't be spotted.

S-The car?

J-Yeah.

D-I mean, I guess.

J-Yeah. In other words, he wants to spend the night, he's tired. He was up the whole previous night in an airplane.

D-But the problem with that one is presumably that person is following them, they're watching the whole thing, they're going to watch where that car is towed to.

S-They're going to be so close to him.

D-They're going to see where he checks in. I mean, it would explain why he checked into a hotel, paid

for a hotel and then left, right? But then they'll see him leave probably too. I mean, it's...

J-Well, that's the thing, like, yeah. Maybe he felt like he had shaken them off, but they were going to be looking for his car.

D-It would explain why he was going in and out, like trying to make sure he wasn't seen by the person who was following him.

S-We have fully wandered into "But maybe, what if" territory.

D-You're right. I'm sorry.

J-Oh yeah.

D-We're rabbit holing.

S-The assassin one, I don't think it works, and it's a total "well, what if." And you can so lose yourself in there. And then reality just goes out the window.

D-Yeah.

J-Oh yeah. No, that's just a theory as to the lost key, because...

S-Yeah, no...

J-He obviously had it on him the whole time. I mean...

D-That or his killer did!

S-Or, or there's something else that could be, and that's our next theory, which is...the next theory is that he had an unknown traveling companion. Here's where, you brought this up earlier, Devin.

D-Yeah.

S-Ok. If you go through some of the early articles about Blair and the whole situation, one of them talks about the fact that in his duffel bag, he had receipts for every, most of the things from his trip. And one of the things that was in his bag was a receipt for the rental car, which was signed for by somebody else.

J-Yeah, his Canadian pal.

S-A fellow Canadian who is never named, by the way, so I can't say "oh, it was this person." But it's completely possible that Blair and this other person drove across the border. Blair and this other person got on a plane together, landed in D.C., and Blair rented the car, and the other person got in the car, and they drove that whole distance. At which point, as we talked about earlier, unknown person gets out of the car to go use the bathroom, has the car key with him. Blair has, let's say it's his own key he's trying to use, and then completely flips out and this whole thing goes sideways.

D-Yeah.

S-Now, what happens between Blair and his now stranded traveling companion. I can't even fathom a guess.

J-Well, he must have been, that's the thing though. He must have been in the bathroom a hell of a long time.

S-Well, it was an 8 hour drive.

D-I mean, not only would he, he or she, would have had to have been in the bathroom a long time, I also just have a hard time with it because, barring any kind of, like, psychotic break or something else going on with Blair at the exact same time, he would have said "Oh, maybe my friend has it." Right, like there's no reason for him to have just ignored the fact that his totally amicable traveling partner had the key.

J-Well...

D-Or even if they were, like, even if they had had this huge fight and the other person wandered off, he still probably would have said "Ah, crap, I think the other person has the key." He wouldn't have been like "I don't know. I must have lost it."

S-Or it's possible that the signer was Blair, and just signed a different name.

J-That's always possible. The thing about it is, if the friend was in the bathroom, and uh...

S-You know I made the bathroom part up completely, right?

J-Oh, did you really? Ah, ok.

S-Yes. I'm totally, I grabbed the bathroom out of thin air so that the attendant didn't see this person.

J-Ok. I see. So...

S-The friend could have been in the chip aisle, or gone across the street to the Taco Bell.

D-The friend could have...

J-But the friend would have come back, here's the deal...

S-Yes.

J-He would have come back. He would have found Blair and the car gone. He would have asked the guy "What happened to my friend and our car?" And that guy would have told the police about it. He didn't do that.

S-No. There's no report of this.

J-So unless they agreed to part ways at this place. Maybe the friend was, you know, going to meet somebody there and go off on his own. I mean, it's possible. I kind of doubt it.

S-No. I don't think that's it.

J-Yeah.

S-Let's move to theory number three. Ready?

J-Oh yeah.

S-Canadian drug dealers. They're the scariest, by the way.

J-Yeah. Eh?

D-Sorry (with Canadian accent).

S-(Laughing) In articles, again, and this is earlier reporting, you will see this line repeated over and over, which is, and I quote, "There was a history of mental illness in his family, and Adams had spent years battling alcohol and drug addictions." I can't find the foundation of this statement, I just see it over and over, so it may just be a copy, paste scenario that somebody tacked on by inferring something that somebody else said. I don't know where it came from.

J-Yeah, I don't know either. He might have...

S-I also want to make the point that there was no drug and alcohol, or drug or alcohol found in his system.

J-Uh huh. He was clean.

S-When his autopsy was done.

D-Uh huh.

S-He was clean as a whistle.

J-Well, it doesn't mean that he didn't used to have a problem, you know. He could have just cleaned up his act.

S-That's absolutely right.

J-Actually, and this is the perfect guy for a drug courier. You don't want a junkie to run drugs for you.

S-No, you want a guy who's clean as can be.

J-Yeah.

S-And it's entirely possible that Blair may have fallen in with the wrong people and, let's just say, let's just presume he was doing something. Let's presume that he was a courier, I think we talked about that earlier when he was trying to cross the border. He's a courier, and he's working for some bad people, and then he does something that makes them mad, or thinks that they're mad at him, and that they're gonna get him, and has to get out of town. Cause everybody knows that snitches get stitches.

D-Uh huh (laughing).

S-So he may have been “Oh, oh, oh I gotta go. I gotta get out of here. They're so gonna kill me.”

D-Yeah. I don't know...I agree that a clean person is usually the ideal candidate for drug slash money couriering of any kind, but typically not somebody who's recovering. So if there was actually a history, if he was an ex-drug abuser, usually you aren't like “Hey, I know you used to have this thing with drugs, but you're totally clean now. We're just going to give you a bunch of drugs and just set you loose on the world.”

J-Yeah (laughing).

D-Usually that's not the plan.

S-Not according to Hollywood.

D-Well, ok, Hollywood can...(Steve laughing).

J-Yeah.

S-I see where you're pointing where Hollywood can stick that.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah, but here's the deal about the snitching too.

D-There's lots of deals tonight.

J-He's in Surrey, right? So he's snitching to the Surrey P.D.

S-Yeah, let's say he gets busted, yeah. So he's turned State's evidence.

J-Right. So he's ratting out his friends to these guys.

S-Uh huh.

J-He's agreed to become an informant for them.

D-Uh huh.

J-And so that's the case, and if you have Knoxville P.D., and or the Knox County Sheriffs calling you up and inquiring about this guy, isn't somebody going to make note of the fact that he was an informant?

D-Ok, flip side on this, right? If he was an informant, if they still have an active sting going on, right...

S-They can't disclose that he's a CI.

D-If it was a couple people, and you don't want to, like, freak them out by saying “Yeah, there was a CI

in there, but he got killed.”

J-True.

D-Because then they'll think “Oh, there might be more.” And they'll clean house.

J-But here's the deal, it's been 20 years.

D-I agree.

J-They had plenty of time to wrap up that investigation.

D-You are right.

J-And then found his murderers.

D-Absolutely. So, ok fine.

J-So therefore, he couldn't have been a rat.

D-But like you were saying with, I mean, you called this reporter who was reporting on it and she was like “I don't remember that case.” It's possible that it just fell through the cracks. You know, at the time they said “Listen, we can't divulge any information about this person.”

J-That's true, I suppose.

D-They said “Ok, great.” And then, you know, that was that.

J-Yeah, that's a possibility too.

D-It's just, you know, somebody in the drug department, the narco department in Surrey was not, that wasn't their top priority, of following up with the Knoxville Sheriff's Department.

J-Uh huh. But here's the deal why I think it didn't fall through the cracks. So our drug kingpin here, Canadian drug kingpin, his name is John Smith. He's got a file. Blair is informing on him, and so Blair turns up dead, you know, through some sort of violent incident. So, aren't you going to make a note in his, John Smith's file, that somebody who was informing on him turned up dead?

D-Yeah, probably.

J-Through a violent accident or possibly homicide?

D-You're right.

S-But it's so far away...

D-Knoxville is really far away.

S-That's, that's...Knoxville is so far away. Now you will see things that say “Well, it was some kind of

network and they faxed out his picture to all their...

D-Faxed out.

J-Yeah, I know, I know.

S-Yes, it was the days of fax. They faxed out his picture to all their gangs, and one of the gangs spotted him and did him in.

J-Uh huh, I heard that one.

S-And they didn't take the money because it was proof of death is what they needed to get paid, which is...

D-But money, you would take the money, though.

S-You would.

D-At least part of it.

J-You would, yeah.

D-Right?

S-You totally would take the money.

D-No, I don't think it was a Canadian drug dealer (Steve laughing).

J-No, no. I'm very sure it wasn't.

D-I don't care how Trailer Park Boys that is, I just, they're not.

S-Ok, let's go on to our next international suspect. Cause we have another theory.

D-Is this serious?

S-Yes. This is actually out there. It's the Germans.

J-These guys were angry Germans. Otherwise known as Sour Krauts (Steve laughing).

S-You will see information out there from the sources that say that Blair had spent some time in Germany doing construction work. Anywhere from two months to a year, depending on the source.

J-Yeah, I heard in one source three months, four months.

S-Yeah, it's all over the map. And that he also left before the job was done for unknown reasons. And also, there is supposedly a woman involved. A German woman.

D-Woman?

J-Yeah.

S-A girl, maybe.

J-Yeah, I think she's a woman. 17 or something like that.

S-You hear, it's a young woman.

D-Hm.

S-Blair at this time...

D-A young woman...

S-He was 31 when he died.

D-Yeah.

S-So he probably, let's presume that this is accurate, cause I have some serious concerns with some of this, but let's say that it's accurate, which means that he would have been, at the most, 30 at that time.

D-Yeah.

S-So, hard to say. It says she was underage, and then from here, we get two theories. So this one, as we're going to see in a lot of these, breaks into two different directions.

D-Ok.

S-The first direction is that Blair left Germany because her parents were angry and he had to go.

D-As you can imagine.

S-Yep. And they, maybe she was pregnant, or maybe she was ill, I don't...

D-Or maybe they were high profile.

S-Something like that. Or maybe they wanted him to pay up, and he eventually did. Or he was unwilling to do it but he realized that they were going to betray him. Sounds like a spy novel, I know. And so he decides to go on the run, and then realizing that he's going to stiff them, these folks turn around and chase him down to collect their final payment, which is not in the form of money.

J-Yeah.

S-Or, the other direction this goes is that Blair decided he was going to go back to Germany to meet this girl, which is why he bought the ticket to Germany.

D-Uh huh.

S-But then something happened from some relation that scared him off, and that's why he went on the

run.

D-Hm.

S-The only thing that really ties this, is the German currency and the ticket to Germany. That's where this seems to come from.

D-Well, I guess part of it also maybe is, if he was in some kind of trouble, and you know, he was moody and trying to figure out what's going on, and his mom said "Blair, what's going on?" and he obviously isn't going to be "I don't know, Mom. I've knocked up a 15 year old in Germany. That's what's wrong." You know.

J-I could see why he wouldn't want to talk to mom about that.

D-I know, right.

S-It's possible. But here's where my concern with this whole German angle comes from.

D-Oh, I have lots of concerns.

S-Oh, there's a very simple concern, which is...

J-Same one as before, right? How'd they find him?

S-No. No, not at all. It's the source. The source of the German angle is what really makes me question it, cause there's a website called sitcoms online dot com.

D-Oh yeah.

J-Oh yeah, those guys.

S-And it's a forum, and in that forum there's a user who is only posted six times, and all of them were about Blair's case. And that user goes by the name of Nerdgirl.

J-Yeah, I saw her posts.

S-And Nerdgirl talks all about Blair and their relationship, and the whole thing, when I read it, cause I've read all of her posts, they sounds either like trolling, or attention. You know, garnering attention because I'm involved in this case.

D-So Nerdgirl was claiming to be the young woman that...?

J-No.

S-No, Nerdgirl was a friend slash previous girlfriend of, uh, Blair.

D-Blair.

S-And gives all these details. This is everything that you ever cite, find anywhere else that talks about

his interactions in Germany, this potential issue, they all stem from this set of posts.

D-Yeah. I don't like that.

S-And I found one other person who also had a one time post that seemed to reveal a bunch of information about the case in this same thread.

J-That was...

S-That posts one time.

J-That was Corine something, right?

D-On sitcoms online?

S-I don't remember that particular person's user name.

J-That was the one, if I recall right, "revealed" quote unquote, that he was bisexual, right?

S-Yes.

J-And that, yeah, yeah.

S-Yes.

J-And she claimed to be female and to know him. I think she posted at least twice in that thread, if I remember right.

S-(sigh) I don't know...

J-But you know, it doesn't really matter. These people could all just be totally lying.

S-That's my problem...

D-Or the same person.

S-I'm not ripping on forums, but I'm also saying that when the only source of information comes from here, I can't give it a whole lot of credit.

D and J-Yeah.

S-So I want to leave that where it is, knowing that.

J-Uh huh. Yeah, and there was also, just for fun, speaking of the German angle, another variation on that was somebody out there said that it was possible that this girl was from a Muslim family, and since there's a substantial Muslim population in Germany, back then there was. Now there's a really substantial Muslim population in Germany. And so it could have been an honor killing.

D-Hm.

J-But again, this runs aground on the rocks of, again, how the hell did they find him?

S-Yeah. How did they track him down? He did a really good job, he did exactly what you do when you're trying to shake a tail.

D-Yeah.

S-He changed his plans constantly and he went nowhere that made sense.

D-Yeah.

S-So, yeah, that's where the whole thing runs afoul. Let's move to our next theory. Actually, the next one is the header for several theories, cause again this is...

D-Hm. Pulling a Devin.

S-Well...

D-Nope, you're pulling a Devin.

S-I used dashes, not bullets.

D-Oh. Well, that's because you are a heathen who doesn't know how to organize things, obviously (Steve laughing).

S-Ok. Our next theory is what's going on, it's that Blair was having some kind of mental break, some kind of, it's a socioaffective disorder.

J-Schizoaffective.

S-It is schizoaffective?

D-Schizoaffective, yeah.

S-I knew I was mispronouncing that, so that's why I double checked this time. Instead of just pretending I knew what the word was.

D-Uh huh.

J-Yeah.

S-Which got us in trouble before.

D-Uh huh.

S-So it's possible that his behavior leading up to the time that he left town was showing when whatever he was suffering from was building steam, and getting worse and worse and worse. And from there, we can split into several sub-theories.

J-Yeah. The only problem I have with this entire thing is I think typically if you're a guy and you're going to get schizophrenia, it comes on between, like, 18 and 25 years old.

S-No, it's later than that.

J-No, that's typical, I looked it up. It's between 18 and 25, although it can, possibly, show up later.

S-It can set in later...

J-Yeah, so it is possible.

S-It's not such a narrow band.

J-Yeah, it's not as likely as I would think.

S-No, I'm not saying it's likely.

J-I have never actually heard of anybody, you know, getting it at age 31. Usually if you make it past about 25 you're home free.

S-True.

D-Uh, just to add, if the accusations that Blair was a drug and alcohol abuser, there's a really strong causal connection. It's not a proven connection but it's a causal connection between drug and alcohol abuse and schizoaffective disorders.

J-Uh huh.

S-We talked about this in the Bamber...

D-We talked about this in the Bamber one, right. That like, one....you know...

J-It exacerbates the problem.

D-Kind of, a little bit. But so that it's possible that maybe Blair was a little bit exhibiting signs in his, like, you know, 25, and then just was trying to self medicate with drugs and alcohol, and that exacerbated the problem a little bit.

J-Uh huh.

D-Uh, and when he took himself off of those things, it really came in full force. I don't know, that's...I mean, again, I'm not a doctor so I don't know, but what I have read is, uh, what Joe has read is it's the 18 to 25...

S-Uh huh. Yeah, that's the traditional range.

D-But that it's not unheard of for somebody to kind of be self medicating and then, when, you know, somebody says "Hey, you're an alcoholic. You gotta go clean." You say ok, you go clean and all this other stuff...

S-The things that were being masked by the addiction.

D-Right. Yeah.

S-Yeah, absolutely. Ok, so we're going to go into sub-theory one, which is Blair made the wrong person mad.

J-Yeah, because you know, people who have mental issues often say and do inappropriate things.

S-Or come across...

D-Or come across like that, yeah.

S-Yeah. No, I mean it's entirely possible. So, and if you think about it, if he is in an altered state, and he leaves the place that he's familiar with, and he's in this "somebody's out to get me" mindset.

D-Uh huh.

S-The farther that he gets away from what he's familiar with, the deeper and deeper he's going to fall into this story that he's created for himself. And that would explain why he was acting so irrational or strange in the hotel, and then leaving. But he could have, he could have gone to one of the restaurants, he could have gone to a gas station, he could have gone to a store in the area, he could have met the wrong trucker who didn't like what he was saying. He could have met somebody at McDonald's, or at Taco Bell. He might have met the guy who was just frustrated and tired after driving his 50 foot RV all day long. I mean, it could be anybody...

J-Uh huh.

S...who then gets upset by something he says or does, and attacks, because we've had this before. The people who are most likely to be hurt...

D-Victims.

S-Or victims of mental illness, they're the ones who are likely to experience the violence.

D-Uh huh. Especially with the schizoaffective disorders.

S-Yes.

D-Yeah.

S-So he could have done that, and so somebody could have gotten PO'd at him, and taken a couple of swings at him, and landed a lucky blow, and then didn't know that they had done it. And then Blair wanders off. He goes to this hotel parking lot that's under construction. He's ill now because his stomach has been ruptured.

J-I'm sure he's hurting.

S-It's hurting.

J-He's probably feeling a little light headed from all the blood loss, too.

S-There's that. He potentially could have had a very rapidly onsetting fever of some kind. You know, his temperature could have elevated, or he could have felt like he was hot. He's in an altered state "Get these clothes off, they're hot." Which to me, explains why everything is inside out.

D-Uh huh. You're just kind of stripping, yeah.

S-I'm a dude, and I'm lazy. I drop my pants and I start stepping on them and pulling my legs out, and that pulls, if I'm wearing thicker socks, that'll pull both my pant leg inside out and start my sock going inside out.

D-Yeah. Well, I mean, the other thing to think about is if he died, his stomach was ruptured, so he would have had one heck of a stomach ache, right?

S-Yes.

D-And, like, when my stomach hurts, I don't want...my entire torso needs to have no, like, I don't want anything...

S-Nothing touching.

D-No pressure at all.

S-"Why is the air on this area?"

D-Ugh, this hurts so bad, so, like, I would strip my pants off too. I would just be like, these hurt really bad, you know, especially if you are in an altered mental state, which you probably are, because your body has experienced some pretty big trauma.

S-Yes.

J-It's a damn shame that he didn't go get help. Because where he was at, he was in this...the hotel was under construction, but it was in between two other hotels. A Super 8 and...

D-Well, I almost wonder if he thought he was where he was supposed to be. You know?

S-Or if he, still in his delusion, he's hiding.

J-Or if, perhaps, he's lost so much blood that he can't think straight. I don't know. But he was actually, he actually could have saved himself. I mean he was, just like I said, really close to two hotels.

D-Yeah. Or even, he was a construction worker, right? So like, maybe in his kind of muddled brain...

S-He was going to work?

D-He was like, "Oh, I know construction. Yeah, that's a place I recognize. I know people who are there. I'll go there."

S-Yeah, that's a great point. It's familiar.

J-Well, except for...

D-I mean, it was night, yeah.

J-Except it's dark, yeah.

D-It's dark and it's not great, but, I don't know if...

S-It actually wouldn't have been all that dark, cause there was so many things around there, that the place would have been fairly decently lit.

D-Yeah. But also, you don't know what's going on, I mean people's brains do really weird things when they've experienced that much trauma.

S-Uh huh.

J-Yeah, true that. He was in shock, probably. I'm sure he was in shock because of the blood loss.

S-Oh, yeah.

J-Yeah. Although, you know, it's interesting. He goes to the construction site, he's in construction. Did he actually, maybe, know somebody who was working on that project? Was that the point of making his little stop off in Knoxville?

S-I...you are reaching for straws there, brother.

J-Oh, totally. Totally I am (laughing).

S-Oh my gosh, stop that.

J- I say, let's arrest them all!

S-Let's move on to subsection two of this theory, which infers that it was some kind of self-inflicted wound.

J-Yeah. He punched himself in the gut.

D-Uhh...I don't know if you can punch yourself that hard.

S-No. So the way that this goes is there's one of...and again, this splinters, but there's two ways. Either he is blindly running and he runs into something, let's just say there's, you know, boards or something and he hits himself in the gut. Or he climbs on something and falls off of it and falls down onto something that is sticking upright, and it hits him in the lower abdomen and below the ribs. That would exude enough force. It also, to me, maybe would explain why people say it looks like defensive wounds, because if he fell, if he was falling, either he would try to stop himself, or his hands would flail and hit the things around him. Now, I don't think that that is what it is, but people say that it's possible that somewhere in that construction area he may have fallen down on something or run into

something.

D-Yeah, new theory...

J-He wouldn't have to fall that far, either, really.

S-Not really.

D-...he got takeout and was choking, and was trying to self Heimlich.

J-That's a good one. I like that one.

S-That actually is a good one.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah, yeah.

D-And missed. Cause that's the big thing they talk about...

S-Except no food was reported to be found. Oh, but he could have wandered away from where ever he was eating at, I guess.

D-Well, after, right? He, like, tried to self Heimlich, stopped choking, obviously. You know, coughed up the little bit, was like "No, I don't feel good. Alright, better try to walk back to my hotel."

S-Confused about what hotel, cause there's a jillion of them there.

D-Yeah. And he obviously wasn't paying that much attention.

S-Uh huh. Yeah, that's entirely possible.

D-That's my theory.

J-All right.

D-Cause that would be a thing. It would be pretty easy, if you were really, really full, to accidentally rupture...

S-Yeah.

J-I don't know how easy it would be (laughing).

D-Yeah, I don't think it's be that easy. Just as easy as it is to self-inflict that wound, like, at all. Right?

J-Oh yeah. Now, if you really, really wanted to self-inflict the wound, you could actually probably do it. If you found something that's sticking out of a wall, and you run into it with great force. It's just that you can't punch yourself in the gut that hard.

D-Yeah.

S-No. No, you'd have to run into something entirely.

J-Yeah, you would. Yeah. Or fall, or something.

S-The third subtheory in this group is that Blair was hit by a car.

D-Hm.

S-I don't put any stock in this, because if he was hit by a car, I would expect more physical damage to his body. Like broken bones kind of damage.

D-To have him hit that hard.

S-Yes.

J-Although, you know, you never know, because...

S-That's a one in a million shot.

J-It's...

S-Not that it's not possible, but...

J-But it's unlikely...

S-Highly unlikely.

J-The hotel where he was staying, the Fairfield Inn, was on the opposite side of I-40 from where his body was found.

S-It is.

J-And he might have been crossing the freeway at night. Because there actually were a couple of restaurants on the other side of it. Maybe he was heading to get some food. He's crossing the freeway...

D-No, he was full of food.

J-He get's hit by a car. Yeah. Oh, that's true, he would have had to eat before that.

D-He would have had to have been full.

S-But, again, if he's hit...

J-Oh, I know, I know. He went and ate and he's crossing back over, get's hit by the car...

S-But if he's hit by a vehicle that's on a freeway doing 60 plus miles an hour...

D-Yeah, there's no way.

J-Yeah.

S-Again...

D-Yeah.

S-So much more physical damage should have been done to his body.

D-There's have to be. It's not shoulda, it's woulda.

J and S-Yeah.

D-Yeah.

S-Exactly. So again, I don't put a whole lot of stock in that.

J-It's uh, well yeah. There's the other thing too, was it would have done other damage. For example, if it hits him, doesn't break any ribs or anything like that, but it's going to knock him over and he's going to have contusions on the back of his head.

S-He would be covered in scrapes...

J-He'd be bruised, yeah.

S-So, I'm not saying that one's a viable one. Which takes us to our last one you will see put out there, which is, and there's no supporting evidence for this, but the area he was at, Strawberry Parkway Pike...

J-Strawberry Plains Pike.

S-Thank you. Yeah (laughing).

J-Yeah.

D-It's complicated.

J-It is! I call it SPP.

S-It was not exactly the nicest place to be in the mid-'90s. Cops have talked about the fact that it's kind of a truck stop, and prostitutes were known to be there. And it's believed Blair possibly decided to...

D-I don't care. I'm just heading you off. This is a dumb theory, because there's money all over him, are you kidding me?!

J-Well, there's that, yeah.

S-Even if he did get a prostitute and either she tried to rob him or he did something that freaked her out and she attacked him or her pimp attacked him, they would not literally leave that money on the table.

D-You don't leave that money. No.

J-Yeah. Probably not.

S-That doesn't...yeah, the whole prostitute angle is out there.

D-No. It's bad.

S-But I don't think that that's at all plausible.

D-Bad.

J-It's not likely.

S-That's actually the end of all of our theories.

J-Really?

D-Hm.

S-I personally, I lean more towards the fact that he was probably in some kind of altered state and probably got hit by the wrong person, physically, you know, had a physical alteration. Not hit by a car.

J-Yeah.

S-That's the one that I lean to.

J-You mean a physical altercation.

D-Altercation.

J-Yeah.

S-What did I say?

D-Alteration.

S-Well, it was an alteration of his stomach.

D-It was.

J-That's true. Yeah.

D-Technically.

J-Yeah, I mean, that's entirely conceivable that some guy or a couple of guys, you know. Cause if he was truly schizophrenic, and I don't know that he really was...

S-That's why I'm just calling it an altered state, because I don't know what...I can't even guess.

D-Some kind of mood disorder.

S-Yeah.

J-But yeah. But I can see him walking, you see those guys walking down the street angrily talking to themselves. And I can see somebody hearing him and taking offense, thinking it's directed at them. I mean, maybe, I don't know.

S-Or you know, I mean I've seen the same thing. You see them walking down the street and someone comes into their field of vision, and it's a completely different person to them. And they are having a completely different experience, and in somebody's face, and that person is like "Whoa, get away from me. You're freaking me out, you're in my bubble." And it usually involves some yelling and some shoving.

D-Uh huh.

S-It's not a good thing,

J-Yeah.

S-So that's why I'm inclined to believe that may be what happened.

D-Yeah. I don't know how I feel about it. I mean, probably the Nazis.

J-The Nazis?

D-That was a theory, right? Somewhere in there.

S-No. The Nazis never actually were...

D-How about aliens? Is that a theory?

J-You know...

S-They were, but they got cut in the third revision of the script.

D-Oh. Ok.

S-They...

D-Then I, yeah, I don't know where I stand. I'm sorry.

S-Ok (laughing).

D-I can't go to my two tropes, so I'm done. I don't know.

J-Yeah. I don't know either. I'm inclined to think that it was...I think something half and half. I'm going to go sixty forty. Sixty that it was some kind of accident...

D-Uh huh.

J-And forty that it was a fight. Some sort of a fight.

D-I just don't think...yeah, I don't really, the assassination thing does seem really crazy.

J-Uh yeah, it's out there.

S-It's the most far fetched.

D-But also I don't have a good explanation as to why he couldn't find his car keys. That's the big outlier for me.

J-Well again, I kind of like my theory, is that he was pretending to not be able to find his car keys so he could have it towed and have it stored in somebody's shop.

S-But again, that makes no sense, Joe. Because the person who was following him would have had to have been close enough for him to realize that they were there, and then pull that ruse.

D-I mean, unless you *thought* you were being followed and you weren't...

J-Yeah.

S-If it was totally in his mind.

J-He thinks he's being followed. He thinks he's shaken them, but he doesn't want to leave the car out where it could be found, spotted, you know, by somebody. So while he's overnight in the hotel, he wants the car to be locked up somewhere behind closed doors. It was found in a shop.

S-It was found at a mechanics. That doesn't mean it was actually locked up in the shop.

D-Yeah, but it doesn't matter, it's not a hotel.

J-And it's far away from him.

S-True.

J-And so, yeah, and so it could have been part of the whole paranoia thing. It's an expensive way to deal with that...

D-But he obviously didn't care.

J-Apparently not.

S-Yeah. Money was, he was spending money. He didn't really care.

J-Uh huh.

S-Well, if you have thoughts on this particular case, you are more than welcome to share those with us.

You can go ahead and send us an email. Our email address is thinking sideways podcast at gmail dot com. You can also send story suggestions, anything like that, to us. That all goes through the email. We'll have the links for some of the research on this story, and you can listen to the episodes. All the episodes are on the website. The website is thinking sideways podcast dot com. Uh, there is also on the website, on the right hand sidebar, if you are so inclined, we do have merchandise available, so there's shirts and mugs and all that fun stuff.

J-And a night light.

S-Yeah, and the night light. Joe's favorite night light.

D-It's his favorite thing.

J-Oh yeah.

S-There is also, there's two links there. One is to the Paypal, and the other is to Patreon. So if you are so inclined, and you do want to lend financial support to the show, you're welcome to do it. Paypal is a one timer. Patreon is patreon dot com slash thinking sideways, and that is a recurring amount of your choosing. These things are totally optional, guys. Don't feel like you have to. But for everybody who has...

J-Yeah, totally voluntary.

S-...thank you so much.

J-Yeah. We do appreciate it.

S-You have no idea how much that helps out.

D-Yeah, it's really great.

J-It does help to defray expenses.

S-Now, oh there's other places that we should probably tell people that they can find the show.

J-Oh yeah.

S-We are, of course, on iTunes.

J-Of course.

S-So if you're on iTunes, leave a comment and a rating.

J-And a really good rating.

S-Looking at the number of ratings that we have on iTunes, and it is amazing.

D-We, it's insane. It's crazy, yeah.

S-We're also available for streaming on just about every streaming service that I know of at this point.

J-I'm sure all of them.

S-And so you can get us on any of those. We are on social media. We've got the Facebook account, so find our Facebook page and like it, and if you want to join in, join the Facebook group.

D-Uh huh.

S-We're also on Twitter. Thinkin Sideways, drop the 'g' in the middle. Devin is quite active on that. It is a lot of fun (Devin laughing). And we also have a subreddit, which I have no idea how to find, but evidently go to reddit and google it (laughing).

D-Oh, I've never been more embarrassed in my life.

J-Yeah, me too.

D-Ohhh...

S-That wasn't totally on purpose, I swear.

D-I'm sure that's true.

J-Go to the Google.

S-All right. Uh, well I believe that is all of the information that we need to share with you fine folks (laughing).

D-Yes.

J-Yeah.

S-So we're going to get out of here and we will talk to you again next week.

J-Yeah, with another groovy mystery.

D-Bye guys.

J-Tootle-oo.