

## Part 1

- Overview of episode
- The first part we will talk about the death of Debbie Carter. Warning, this case is very gruesome, even those who investigated the case were sick, listener discretion advised
- The day was December 8, 1982, Carter's life-long friend Donna Johnson went to Carter's home to surprise her when something was not right.
- Johnson stepped in glass as she walked up the stairs to Carter's apartment. She noticed the front screen door to the apartment was open and the window in the front door had been broken out. Johnson heard the radio playing and found the front door to be unlocked. When Carter did not answer, Johnson looked inside and saw the apartment was a mess. Sofa cushions and clothes were thrown on the floor. Written on a wall was "Jim Smith next will die". Written on the kitchen table was "don't look for us or ease". (mention spelling) which is very interesting. The victim's jeans and a blouse were found on the kitchen floor
- This is the part where I remind the listener, if you can not handle gore, please skip ahead to (4 minutes and 2 seconds) for a quick summary of what occurred without the details of the scene, listener discretion is advised
- The victim's bedroom showed signs of a struggle. Her bed was out of place, pushed up against the door almost blocking entry to the room. A bloody palm print was discovered on the wall approximately 18 inches from the floor. Carter was found on the floor on the far side of the bedroom, lying on her stomach, nude except for one sock-covered foot and a bracelet on her wrist. On her back was written "Duke Graham" in ketchup. On her chest was the word written "DIE" in fingernail polish. A blood-soaked washcloth was stuffed into her mouth and down her throat. A belt and an electrical cord from an electric blanket were found underneath the body. Next to the body was a crumpled bed sheet and inside the sheet was a ketchup bottle missing the lid.

- During the autopsy, numerous fresh bruises and scrapes were found on the victim's face-on her forehead, right above her right eye, along her right cheek, along the left side of her mouth, under her chin, and on the back of her neck. Bruises and bite marks were found inside her mouth and on her tongue. A narrow ligature mark was found around her neck. Fresh bruises were also found on her chest, arms, hips, knees, and on the inside and outside of her thighs. Fresh bruises were found in her vaginal area. Also, the lid to a ketchup bottle was found in her anal canal. The washcloth in her mouth was found to have been pushed down that is was blocking her airway. The medical examiner testified that the victim's injuries were inflicted prior to her death. He determined the cause of her death was asphyxiation from the ligature strangulation.

- Quick recap for those who skipped

- Testimony from an expert on crime scene reconstruction showed a substantial amount of time had been taken by the perpetrator to stage the crime scene to make it look as though two people were involved in the crime. Evidence offered to support this testimony included glass broken both on the inside and outside of the window in the apartment front door, and the writing on the victim, on the wall and on the kitchen table
- Let's get into the trial and wrongful convictions
- In 1988 Ronald Williamson and Dennis Fritz were convicted of the murder of Debbie Carter. both Fritz and Williamson were found guilty in 1988. Williamson received the death sentence, while Fritz was sentenced to life without parole.
- The evidence included in their testimony was hair analysis, which is now regarded as unreliable. The experts concluded that 13 of the 17 hairs found at the crime scene were microscopically consistent with those of Fritz and Williamson, and alleged that one of them was a match. The defense failed to point out that although the hair samples could have implicated the pair, they equally could have cleared them both.
- Despite his rapidly failing mental health no emotion was made to the asses of williamson competence

- After their sentencing, a confession by a man named Ricky Jo Simmons Williamson became increasingly convinced that Simmons had committed the murder and repeatedly demanded his arrest. Although Simmons was never charged. At one time on September 22, 1994, Williamson was only five days away from being executed when the execution was stayed by the court following the *habeas corpus* petition.
- Here is some audio clips from the documentary trailer for the innocent man on netflix
- {insert clips of documentary trailer}
- After 11 years on death row, and following several appeals, Williamson and Fritz were cleared by DNA testing, and were finally freed on April 15, 1999. The innocent man also happens to be a book about that is about the cases we are speaking about right now and after the the book was the netflix documentary that came out in december 2018 the innocent man that talks about the book and cases as well
- Here is a snippet of audio from John Grisham who wrote the book the innocent man
- {insert audio}
- In 2003, they sued the City of Ada and won a settlement of \$500,000; the State of Oklahoma also settled out of court for an undisclosed amount.
- {commentary about can the money won fix the time spent in jail}
- Many of the residents of Ada continued to believe that Williamson and Fritz were guilty long after they were exonerated. Indeed, both men reportedly felt it necessary to be very wary of their release, such was their belief that the prosecutor, Bill Peterson, and other officials of the Ada police would try to bring them to trial again.
- Glen Gore, an Ada man who had testified against both Williamson and Fritz, was ultimately convicted of the murder of Debbie Carter. He was the last person seen with Carter, and also had been seen arguing with her on the night of her death. Although he was interviewed by the police he was not fingerprinted, nor did he give saliva and hair samples. While Williamson and Fritz were incarcerated, Gore was also imprisoned on another unrelated violent crime conviction.

- Once Williamson and Fritz had been cleared of murder, Gore eventually came to trial, based on the same DNA evidence that had cleared Fritz and Williamson. This evidence proved that it was Gore's DNA that was left at the scene. On June 24, 2003, Gore was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to death, but his death sentence was overturned in August 2005. He was eventually convicted at his second trial on June 21, 2006, and sentenced to life without parole which was required by law due to a jury deadlock on sentencing.
- **Recap**
- You're listening to 91.3 WHJE and this has been another episode of mystery Mondays