

RANSOM SEASON 1, EPISODE 5: HILTON'S STORY

Art Rascon: On the last episode of Ransom, Hilton Crawford told his sons and a prison guard that a man named R.L Remington had helped with the kidnapping. Hilton said McKay Everett was either being held by Remington in New Orleans or he was on a bus back to Houston.

But then on the night of Saturday, September 16th, 4 days after kidnapping McKay, Hilton changed his story.

After meeting with his wife and lawyer, Hilton drew Sheriff Guy Williams a map, with directions leading to McKay.

Guy Williams: He says, Do you know what Whiskey Bay is? I said yes on Interstate 10. In the Atchafalaya swamp, he goes, You'll find him here.

Art Rascon: It was a remote site in central Louisiana Four and a half hours East of Conroe, the Atchafalaya swamp is a largely uninhabited area between Lafayette and Baton Rouge.

It's such a remote area, that google street view hasn't even captured it.

So my producer Ben Kuebrich and I drove out there.

Ben Kuberich (on site): So we're now, we're on this super long flat bridge up on these tall pylons over this swamp. It's so incredibly remote.

Art Rascon: Hilton said to take the Whiskey Bay exit off of the middle of the 18-mile long Atchafalaya Basin Bridge. One of the longest bridges in the world, it's an eerie place.

Art Rascon (on site): I mean, we're out in the middle of nowhere because miles to the east of us and miles to the west of us, all there is his water just swamp lands. And whiskey Bay exit is one of the few areas where there's just little land here.

Ben Kuberich (on site): no gas stations no rest stop.

Art Rascon (on site): You can hear the road, it's a shell road as Hilton described.

Art Rascon: The map Hilton drew said to go north until the road stopped being paved He said the road led to an iron gate. And behind the gate was a wooden shed.

Art Rascon (on site): We just passed the gate.

Ben Kuberich (on site): So we just passed the gate, and he said there's just sort of a wooden shed. Yeah, so it might have been there. It looks like nothing out this way, maybe let's turn back and see if there's anything by that gate.

[Driving noises]

Ben Kuberich (on site): You know I bet that's the shed.

Art Rascoon (on site): Yeah this looks like a shed that has been here for many many years. Wow I mean if one wanted to try and dump a body in the middle of nowhere this is certainly it I mean, it's just greenery everywhere this whole area's untouched.

Ben Kuberich (on site): We've got a car that pulled up behind us.

Art Rascoon (on site): Oh,

Ben Kuberich (on site): Is it one of the people we're trying to meet?

Art Rascoon (on site): It may be let's get out and see.

Art Rascon: It was the man we came here to meet, Marcus Guidry. Back in 1995, Guidry was a deputy for St. Martin Parish in Lafayette and it was around midnight when he was dispatched to the scene.

Marcus Guidry: I got a call from the FBI, just advised that they were investigating and abduction, kidnapping, and possibly dumping of a child's body. Just gave me a very vague description of the area, and I've been here all my life.

Art Rascon: Guidry drove his unmarked black camero to the area he thought Hilton had described.

Art Rascon (on site): There's no lights around this area. Were you kind of nervous about what you might find?

Marcus Guidry (on site): Yes, we're always cautious when we come to this area. It's one of the most remote places right off a major interstate. I've worked several homicides here in the same area.

Art Rascon: Guidry says that as he neared the shack, it became obvious that something was decomposing nearby the odor was overwhelming.

Marcus Guidry (on site): I rolled my window down and smelled it.

Art Rascon: Guidry got out of the car and shined his flashlight into the foliage. He saw an area where the tall grass was parted like someone had walked through it And a couple yards in, Marcus saw red eyes glowing in the darkness a possum's eyes reflecting back his flashlight.

And there beneath the possum was the body of 12-year-old McKay Everett, lying facedown in the swamp.

Marcus Guidry (on site): I can still envision that picture today.

Art Rascoon (on site): Wow it's just so sad, just a tragic story all around.

Marcus Guidry (on site): I contemplate this every time I pass here. How a parent could lose a child under those circumstances, you know. Poor little twelve year old boy. Innocent as innocent could be. Just didn't deserve none of this. I mean, a kid would be, what, 40 years old today, right? Could have done something that may have changed his world. No one will ever know.

Art Rascon: Back in Conroe, Law enforcement got word that they'd found a body in the swamp. McKay Everett was dead.

Guy Williams: And here all of a sudden is okay, we're at this point and crap, all we've done is for naught, we're not getting him back alive.

Art Rascon: All the polygraphs and interviews, the overnight shifts and sleepless nights hadn't been enough. Paulette's visit to Connie and Carl's pleading press conference had been too late. McKay Everett had been dead the whole time.

And the moment had come for someone to break the news to Carl and Paulette.

From KSL Podcasts, I'm Art Rascone. This is Ransom, Position of trust. Episode 5: Hilton's Story.

[Music]

Art Rascon: At 4 in the morning on Sunday September 16th, 1995 law enforcement called the Everett's pastor over to their home. Paulette was still sleeping when they broke the news to Carl that McKay was dead.

Carl felt that he should be the one to tell Paulette

Paulette: When I woke up, it was early Sunday morning, wee hours in the morning, Carl woke me up. There were FBI agents that were family and friends. And he said, Polly, I'm so sorry. I wasn't big enough to get McKay home. Those words still ring in my ears some days.

Art Rascon: Polly, I'm so sorry. I wasn't big enough to get McKay home.

And immediately I threw my head back and started making this funny sound. Just a groaning sound. And I was out of my body. You know, I was looking down on them. And then the next thing I know, I was gone. I'm looking around going, where am I? It was man, women, children

everywhere. Just cheering and happy. I don't like crowds. But it didn't bother me. And I told myself, that's odd. You don't like crowds.

And then I looked to my right. And there's McKay on the shoulders of angels. And I was like, Oh my gosh.

He had on this different sort of cloth. It was just effervescent, and ethereal. It was just unbelievable. And then angels carried McKay into that amphitheater. They had wings, but their faces are what I will keep focusing on. The countenance on their face was strong. And I was like McKay's in good hands.

I was yelling at McKay going, Look at me. Just look at me one more time. Just look at me one more time. And he never turned around. typical teenager. But I could tell by the side of his face, that I had a big smile. And I don't have to worry.

And it was just the most amazing moment. I didn't want to leave because I was so calm. And then God tells me you can't stay.

And the next thing I know I opened my eyes and I was back down, laying flat on my back in the bed.

Art Rascon: Paulette had never experienced anything like it before in her life. When she came to, she found she was paralyzed.

Paulette: I tried to move and I couldn't, I tried to talk and I couldn't.

Art Rascon: The only parts of her body she could move were her eyes. Since the first night when she'd found out that McKay was missing, her body had been acting strangely.

Paulette: That first night, I didn't know what was happening. But my left arm started pulling up, I started dragging my right leg, my voice started slurring. Of course I didn't know what it was, I was only 45 years old. Even after I died and came back from heaven. And I couldn't walk, talk. It never dawned on me, stroke, everybody just thought that what had happened to me was just I was stressed. Well, yes, I was. But the ramifications of that stress presented itself in the fact that I had a stroke.

Art Rascon: Paulette would later learn she'd suffered a stroke to her basal ganglia that left her temporarily paralyzed.

Paulette: And so for that first day, I told myself, today, I will move a big toe, And so for that first day, I told myself, today, I will move a big toe. I may not can do anything else, but I will move my toe.

Art Rascon: When Paulette describes this time period she focuses on the physical the stroke and how she worked to overcome it because the emotions she felt after McKay's death are painful to relive and impossible to describe.

Paulette: It's devastating it's there's really not a good word in the English language that describes it, you know, it's just think of every word that's negative and leaves you feeling totally empty and roll them all into one. It's like every vital breath, of every thing you lived for, just you're just it's gone. For the longest I felt like I was dead.

Art Rascon: One moment, she'd feel empty and numb the next, she'd be overwhelmed by emotion.

Paulette Norman: The intense rage and anger was unbelievable. It wasn't just anger. It was downright rage.

Art Rascon: It was an awful situation, but she was buoyed by the out of body experience she'd had during her stroke seeing McKay and the angels.

Paulette: I told myself, girlfriend you're in for the fight of your life. You've lost your child. And now you can't move or talk. I've been under struggle in my life ever since and I will not give up.

Art Rascon: That same night, some 5 miles away, Hilton Crawford was in a very different struggle for his own life.

Interrogator: Before we take the statement, I need to go ahead and give you your Miranda rights. And that is you have the right to remain silent.

Art Rascon: In a tan prison uniform, Hilton sat on a couch in an interrogation room with a video camera rolling and he was racking his brain, trying to find words to explain what had happened. Hilton needed to tell investigators a story that would keep him off of Texas's notorious death row.

Interrogator: I think probably the best way for us to start is to go ahead and begin with how you began planning this particular incident when that first started and who you contacted to make it work.

Art Rascon: Hilton looked down at the carpet and rubbed his hands together nervously.

Hilton: When I first met this guy, starting from there?

Interrogator: Yes sir. Go ahead then the people that are the two people who are involved in this thing besides yourself

Art Rascon: Hilton had previously told his sons and a jail guard that the kidnapping was masterminded by a man named R.L. Remington. But at the time he'd told them that McKay was still alive. Hilton now admitted McKay had been murdered, but insisted that he wasn't the killer. Hilton said Remington was the one who had killed McKay.

That would mean McKay's murderer, R.L. Remington was still at large and the investigation was far from over.

Art Rascon: Investigators needed the full account of how the kidnapping had taken place. They had to determine all the people who'd been involved in McKay's abduction and murder. In particular they needed to know: who was the mysterious R.L. Remington

[Music]

Art Rascon: Before we get to the question of who was R.L. Remington, I want to introduce you to author Tannie Shannon.

Tannie Shannon: Hi, well I'm Tannie Shannon.

Art Rascon: Tannie interviewed Hilton Crawford extensively for his book *Seed of Villainy*, which tells an account of the crime from Crawford's perspective.

Tannie Shannon: My next door neighbor happened to be an attorney who was appointed to Crawford's case. And she came home one evening, and my wife and I were on the back deck sharing margaritas. And we waved and motioned her over. And she came over and told us all about the case and told us about Hilton Crawford and what a nice man he was, and how she just didn't really think he could have done this.

Art Rascon: Tannie was an author, and he was looking for a project.

Tannie Shannon: And she said, you know, this is a guy you need to write about, he's a very interesting character, I said well. Okay, give me his name. And I'll write to him. The first thing I asked him was why he did this. And he said, Well, honestly, I don't know. He said, I just felt pressured. And one thing led to another and desperation sort of led me into it. So I sent my letter back and I said, Well, if you will allow me to explore it with you, I would love to try to discover the causes or the reasons that that prompted you to commit this crime.

Art Rascon: Tannie is probably the person who spent the most time with Hilton after his arrest. And Hilton has since passed away, so Tannie is therefore key to understanding why Hilton committed this crime and Hilton's version of what happened.

We likely won't ever know exactly what happened in part because Hilton's story changed over time. But he was consistent throughout his life that he wasn't a killer.

Tannie Shannon: He maintained that he had kinda been duped into this. And that the intent was to return McKay, whether or not the ransom was paid. He indicated that he struggled with the whole thing but he described it to me as feeling like he was in a dream. And, and just going through the motions automatically. I don't know that really makes any sense or not. But that was his description.

What I do know is that he was pressured to do this and that he felt an extreme need to, to cut his losses to, or to get his hands on some money. So he could cover up all of these bad things that had happened.

Art Rascon: We'll dive into what Hilton was desperate to hide in the next episode, but first let's walk through what Hilton told Investigators the night they found McKay's body.

Interrogator: Go ahead and begin with how you began planning this particular incident.

Art Rascon: The audio can be hard to make out, so I'll make sure to re-state the important parts.

Hilton: I went down to the lower level of Louisiana Downs.

Art Rascon: Hilton told investigators he'd met R.L. Remington a little over a year ago at the Louisiana Downs Race track. Hilton owned a racehorse that was competing that day.

Tannie Shannon: He described him as a well dressed, kind of Cajun looking guy with a Cajun accent.

Art Rascon: Hilton said Remington wore alligator skin boots and a bolo tie. He said the first time they met, Remington asked him a couple of questions about his horse and then asked for his business card.

Hilton: He said "Do you have a card on you?" And I says, yeah I do. And that was it.

Art Rascon: After that, Hilton said he would occasionally run into Remington at the racetracks they would exchange tips about racehorses to help one another place bets and Remington would sometimes call Hilton at work to chat. Hilton said he didn't have Remington's number. Remington was always the one who called him.

In May 1995, four months before the kidnapping, Hilton had gotten himself into a bad financial situation. He declared bankruptcy, but in the months afterwards he hadn't gotten his spending in check or downgraded his lifestyle.

Tannie Shannon: He just kept getting in deeper and deeper and deeper. He just didn't know when to say uncle and admit that he had put himself in a very bad position.

Art Rascon: According to Hilton, Remington called him in June, and Hilton told him about his financial difficulties.

Remington said he knew how Hilton could quickly make hundreds of thousands of dollars through kidnapping.

Hilton said that at first he dismissed the idea, but his financial situation kept getting worse, and a ransom kidnapping started sounding more appealing.

Hilton: It started kinda growing on me and growing on me and growing on me.

Art Rascon: Hilton said a month before he abducted McKay, Remington called him and again brought up the kidnapping. Hilton remembered Carl talking about making a lot of money through Amway, and he decided McKay was the perfect target.

Tannie Shannon: As he told it, he was resentful about Carl trying to pressure him and to the Amway business and so forth. But in truth, he may have simply been trying to justify his actions

Art Rascon: Remington told him it was best to find a woman to make the ransom call.

So, Hilton reached out to an ex-employee of his, Irene Florez. He kept things vague, telling her that he had a job coming up where she could make some fast money, and she'd only need to make a phone call.

Hilton: She said "well I'm ready"

Art Rascon: Hilton said that on Sunday, September 10th – two days before McKay's kidnapping, Remington called him again and Hilton told Remington about Carl and McKay.

Hilton: I said well I got this friend of mine I know he's pretty well off.

Art Rascon: Hilton told Remington that Carl was having an Amway meeting in two nights and that McKay would be home alone.

Hilton: He said "well set it up"

Art Rascon: Hilton said he finalized the plans with Remington, and called Irene the next day.

Hilton: I talked to her Monday. We went over what she needed to say and so forth and so on.

Art Rascon: The next day, on the night of the kidnapping, Hilton had an early dinner with his wife, Connie, at her sister's house. He said he initially planned to bring one of his employees to the Everett's Amway meeting, but that man had bailed. Still the plan was in motion, so he drove through the rain to pick up R.L. Remington at a strip mall.

Tannie Shannon: He met Remington at a strip center that was fairly close to McKay's house.

Art Rascon: Hilton said he found Remington waiting by himself with a duffel bag.

Tannie Shannon: And they went together to McKay's home.

Hilton: On the way over there. He opened up that duffel bag. He had like a policeman's shirt.

Art Rascon: When Hilton had told the story to his sons the day before, he'd said there was a 3rd man present, who put on a policeman's shirt and abducted McKay but in this telling, it was just Hilton and Remington.

Hilton said Remington put on the policeman's shirt, and put a hood with a drawstring into his back pocket. Hilton pulled up into the Everett's back driveway, and Remington went up to the house.

Tannie Shannon: According to Crawford, Remington went to the door.

Hilton: he walked up to the door rang the doorbell and stayed there 30 or 40 seconds. They talked a little bit I don't know what was said there.

Tannie Shannon: And got McKay to open the door and then just put a bag over his head and abducted him and put him in a trunk.

Interrogator: Was McKay struggling?

Hilton: Yeah looked like it, yeah

Tannie Shannon: Crawford says he backed out suddenly. And there was a neighbor across the street, bringing out garbage cans, he almost almost hit the person.

Art Rascon: That neighbor of course was Bill Kahn who saw Hilton's gold chrysler back down the driveway. And he made note of the crown dealership sticker on the back left bumper before the car sped off.

Phone records show that a few minutes later at 8:37, Hilton called Irene Florez from his cell phone presumably to tell her that he'd abducted McKay and the plan was in motion.

At this point, the story Hilton originally told law enforcement and what he later told Tannie diverge slightly.

In the story Hilton told Tannie, he looked down at the dashboard, and realized he was running on fumes.

Tannie Shannon: he had to stop and buy gas, with McCain in the trunk of his car. What kind of planning is that? A number of things there just don't make any sense. Especially someone that has the law enforcement experience that he had.

Art Rascon: And in the story that Hilton told Tannie, this unplanned stop angered R. L. Remington.

Tannie Shannon: Remington became very irate about the the things that Crawford had done wrong.

Art Rascon: We know from a gas station receipt that Hilton did stop for gas at 8:55 just after abducting McKay. Interestingly, though, he left this stop for gas out of the story he told police. In his initial telling to law enforcement, it was Irene Flores who messed up the plan.

Hilton says that, around 11:00 pm, as he drove across the border from Texas into Louisiana, he tried to call Irene Flores again, to confirm she'd made the ransom call, but he couldn't reach her.

Hilton: I reached her mother and Irene wasn't at home.

Art Rascon: Hilton said he kept trying to call Irene, but Irene's mother told him she wasn't home.

Hilton: And I called again and I got hold of the mother again.

Art Rascon: Presumably these would be the 3 phone calls made from Hilton's cellphone to Irene Flores's number at 11:10, 11:13, and 11:30.

Hilton: And we never did get a hold of Irene.

Art Rascon: In Hilton's story to law enforcement, this was the point where R. L. Remington became enraged.

Hilton: And that's when he started getting upset because he said y'all don't know what you're doing.

Art Rascon: From this point on, Hilton's stories to Tannie and law enforcement were relatively consistent In both, R. L. Remington is angry as they drive East on interstate 10, towards Lafayette, Louisiana.

Tannie Shannon: Remington was telling him what a fool he was and so forth. The sounds of McKay struggling for his life. Trying to pry open the trunk of the car with a tire iron.

Hilton: And the noise in the trunk kept being a little bit louder and he said to pull off the side of the road

Art Rascon: R.L. Remington was furious and told Hilton to pull over onto the shoulder of the highway.

Hilton: So I pulled off the side of the road and he said open the trunk up.

Art Rascon: Hilton said Remington grabbed a flashlight from the glove box and marched back to the trunk.

Hilton: I heard something like [makes banging noise twice]

Art Rascon: According to Hilton, Remington beat McKay with the flashlight then got back into the car as if nothing had happened.

Hilton: I said what'd you do? He said he's alright but he's going to be quiet for a while

Art Rascon: Remington told Hilton that McKay was alright, but he'd be quiet for a while. it's remarkable how cold and clinical Hilton is, while describing Remington beating McKay Everett, a child he supposedly loved. A child who called him Uncle Hilty. The trunk was now silent as they continued on I-10 through Lafayette, Louisiana.

Outside Lafayette, Hilton said Remington told him to pull over behind a Burgundy Cadillac, which was waiting for them on the side of the road.

Remington got out and spoke to the man driving the car. This was the point in the plan where they were supposed to hand off McKay to this accomplice, who would keep him in New Orleans until they got the ransom money.

But when Remington returned from speaking to the other man, the plan had changed.

The Cadillac started driving off, and Remington told him to follow it.

Hilton: He said follow that car.

Art Rascon: Hilton said he followed the Burgundy Cadillac onto the long bridge between Lafayette and Baton Rouge that crosses over the Atchafalaya swamp. They took the Whiskey bay exit and drove north onto the shell road. The Cadillac pulled into a small driveway.

Hilton: And he pulls into a driveway, a shell driveway and there's a gate there and he told me just pull on up past that car and he hadn't said two words for a while.

Art Rascon: Hilton said, Remington went quiet. Then told him the kidnapping wasn't working at all.

Hilton: This isn't working at all.

Art Rascon: Remington said, "You can't get a hold of your woman, you don't know what she's said, this whole thing has gone bad." Then Remington told him to open the trunk.

This upcoming description is gruesome. But I want you to pay attention to how matter-of-fact and remorseless Hilton sounds as he describes these events.

Hilton: So I open the trunk and I looked in there and there was a lot of blood in there.

Art Rascon: it was bloodier than he'd imagined McKay was unconscious, his face was covered in blood.

Hilton: His face was covered with blood. I said I don't like what's going on here.

Art Rascon: Hilton expressed outrage to Remington, but Remington told him the deal was done.

Hilton: He said this deal's over with and I said "What are you talking about?"

Art Rascon: Hilton said he kept a pistol in the trunk of the car, inside a gun case. Remington spotted the case and grabbed the weapon.

Hilton: He said grab the kid.

Art Rascon: According to Hilton, Remington and his partner lifted McKay out of the trunk.

Hilton: Remington had his legs and this other guy had his arms

Art Rascon: They threw him down off the side of the road.

Art Rascon: McKay wasn't moving.

Hilton: McKay never did move.

Art Rascon: and Remington took Hilton's gun out of its case.

Hilton: He took that gun out and he pulled that chamber back and of course it had a round in it and the round came out. And he walked over there and he shot twice. I couldn't tell you where he hit him.

Art Rascon: Hilton said Remington shot McKay twice, then walked back and threw the gun into Hilton's trunk.

Hilton: I said, man I don't know what's going on." He said, "y'all screwed the deal up."

Art Rascon: Remington told Hilton to leave, and not to say a word about the crime or he'd come for Hilton's family.

Hilton: He said, "You best get your ass in the car and not say a word about it because we'll get your family" or something. I says, "this is terrible."

Art Rascon: Hilton said that was the point where he drove back to the Best Western in Beaumont, Texas and checked in at 4:00 a.m. But investigators had follow up questions

Tony Wargo: Before you go any further let me back you up a little bit.

Art Rascon: Investigators wondered why Remington had let Hilton live, as he was the only witness to the murder.

Investigator: Why do you suppose that he lets you go? You just witnessed a murder. Why did he let you go?

Hilton: I have no idea.

Investigator: That's another problem I got with your story. You watch the murder. You're a witness to it. Some guy who you don't even know is just going to let you leave?

Art Rascon: And they pointed out it was strange that they hadn't gotten rid of the gun.

Investigator: And it gives you the gun back? Why doesn't he just destroy it? It's evidence.

Art Rascon: Especially, because by Hilton's own admission, Remington wasn't wearing gloves and his fingerprints would be all over the weapon.

But when law enforcement recovered the weapon, they found no fingerprints on it.

And they never managed to track down Remington either. R.L. Remington, if he even exists, remains at large to this day.

Art Rascon: One of the big mysteries surrounding McKay's abduction is R.L. Remington and whether he was a real accomplice or whether he was a fictitious character concocted by Hilton Crawford, so Hilton wouldn't have to admit to killing McKay.

Agent Cindy Rosenthal says the FBI searched for R.L. Remington, but they never found him.

Cindy Rosenthal: They tried to find an R.L. Remington they couldn't find anything or even a reasonable facsimile of one. And then it just kind of died from there.

Art Rascon: Agent Donnie Miller says Hilton maintained until his death that he hadn't killed McKay.

Donnie Miller: He said after his death somehow Remington would come to light and we would understand how he'd played into this.

Tannie Shannon: Someone had told him that R.L. Remington was in Europe, I don't remember where he got that information. That was well after the fact. I relayed the information to the FBI. I don't know whether they ever addressed it or did anything about it.

Art Rascon: To this day, Paulette isn't sure whether she believes Hilton's story about R.L. Remington.

Paulette: I don't know if it was a blame shift. Are but I do know that I did not know Hilton to smoke. I did not know Hilton to drink beer. where they found McKay there were cigarette butts and beer.

Art Rascon: Near McKay's body, crime scene investigators found two Bud Light cans and an empty cigarette pack that looked like they'd been left there recently.

They found a latent fingerprint on the cigarette pack belonging to someone other than Hilton But ultimately it was unclear whether the beer or cigarettes had any connection to the crime.

That was one of the reasons my producer and I visited the crime scene.

Ben Kuebrich: And now I'm seeing this Coors can over here. Like do you think this is sort of more or less? Like what it would have looked like in terms of stuff lying around? Or is it different today than back then?

Jerry Stassi: It's a lot more heavily traveled right now. But at the time he I mean you could see you know a beer can here and there because it hunters they like to drink man throw can out and somebody get off the interstate sometimes to come here and use the bathroom, Sometimes, you know, might empty out their car.

Art Rascon: Tannie Shannon, the author, who interviewed Hilton extensively in prison, says that many of the investigators working on the case weren't sure what to make of Hilton's story.

Tannie Shannon: Law enforcement personnel in general, were pretty much split down the middle over whether or not he actually did this.

Art Rascon: Tannie thinks that when initial searches for Remington turned up nothing, law enforcement gave up and decided Remington wasn't real.

Tannie Shannon: They just really assumed that he was making it up. Their determination was that he was using it to justify his crime or using that as a story to lessen his responsibility? That was a decision that they reached rather early on, or that they seem to reach and seem to be trying to prove rather than actually look at all of the evidence in the case. Now, I might be wrong here. But at least that's the impression I got.

Art Rascon: But while Tannie spent years interviewing Hilton, he didn't talk to investigators about their side of the story.

All the investigators we spoke to felt a thorough search had been done, and that they'd ruled out the existence of R.L. Remington.

Guy Williams: The FBI did a deep deep dive

We did everything we could. To put meat on the bones of that story.

Mike Addudell: a lieutenant in the sheriff's office did a composite drawing of RL Remington. And it went out all over the United States.

Beth Martin: They went searching for everything with Remington. They asked all these people.

Bob Lee: No one we talked to knew knew of this person. There were no records that we could find that revealed an RL Remington.

Guy Williams: You know, as you start digging and digging and digging, it's like, this could be this could be this could be maybe it could be, aw this is crap.

Bob Lee: extensive investigation turned up that Remington probably didn't exist.

Guy Williams: We always thought that that was just him trying to lessen his conscious at some point.

Art Rascon: It's hard to prove that R.L. Remington didn't exist. After all, law enforcement wasn't even sure that R.L. Remington was his real name.

Ralph Harp: It's a constant headache in law enforcement, when they start making up these random stories, because you have to try to convince people that it didn't happen, and it's hard to convince people that something didn't happen.

Art Rascon: It's hard to prove a negative Hard to prove that somewhere out there in the world, there wasn't a man with alligator boots and a cajun accent, who'd helped kidnap and murder McKay.

But what made seasoned investigators doubtful of the Remington story was the fact that Remington had seemingly left behind zero evidence.

Ralph Harp: You have to follow the evidence.

Art Rascon: And all the evidence pointed back to Hilton. There was blood spatter on the clothing he'd been wearing the night McKay was killed. Spatter that suggested that it was not the mysterious R.L. Remington who bludgeoned McKay in the trunk but rather Hilton Crawford.

Ralph Harp: It was his vehicle, it was his gun.

Sam Lynch: The evidence just it was too overwhelming.

Art Rascon: And at the crime scene, investigators found two more pieces of evidence: the brass casings of the bullets shot into McKay and what company manufactured those casings? Remington.

Art Rascon: There was another mystery separate from the question of R. L. Remington. Why had Hilton done this?

Tannie Shannon: It just boggles the mind. I could not understand what would drive him to that. And that's why I started interviewing him to begin with.

Art Rascon: Why had this 56-year-man, with a wife and two children risked everything on such a fool-hearty scheme.

Tannie Shannon: You know, here's a guy that had so much going for him. He had a wonderful family he was capable of earning. He had friends, that cared about him and so forth. He had an awful lot going for him for someone that would go to this extreme.

Art Rascon: How had he sunk so low that he could heartlessly kill 12-year-old McKay Everett, the boy who called him Uncle Hilty.

Next Time on Ransom.

Man's Voice: If I would have put all this stuff together, I would have done something. Then McKay would still be alive.