

The Delphi Murders: First Person: Chief Deputy Tobe Leazenby

2/12/2025

[Aine 3:31]

Content warning, this episode contains discussion of murder, including the murder of children. Tobe Leazenby was the sheriff of Carroll County in 2017. He was one of the law enforcement leaders who helped run the search for 14-year-old Liberty German and 13-year-old Abigail Williams when they first disappeared.

[Kevin 3:50]

As sheriff, he became one of the public-facing figures in the case. Behind the scenes, he supported his detectives as they worked to solve the murders.

[Aine 3:59]

Now that his term is over, he's gone back to being the chief deputy of Carroll County, continuing to serve the community there.

[Leazenby 4:05]

Today, he will speak with us about his law enforcement career before becoming sheriff, his role in the case, and what the families of the girls mean to him.

[Aine 4:15]

Now that the gag order is lifted, Chief Deputy Leazenby and others are free to speak about their experiences with the Delphi case. Well, a quick disclaimer here. Law enforcement in this case, including the sheriff's office, stopped doing new interviews a few weeks ago. We were fortunate enough to have done our interview with Chief Deputy Leazenby earlier in January before that cut off. We did not do this recently, but the information within is still highly relevant.

[Kevin 4:48]

This episode will feature our interview with Chief Deputy Leazenby. This episode is part of our first-person interview series. We will seek to interview as many of the individuals with first-hand experience in the Delphi case as possible in the coming weeks and months. If you had a direct role in the case and are open to speaking with us, please email us at murdersheet at gmail.com. This is part of our ongoing effort to report on the Delphi murders. For many years, we have not gotten the chance to hear directly from some of the principal figures in the case. That all changes now.

[Aine 4:14]

My name is Aine Cain. I'm a journalist.

[Kevin 5:16]

And I'm Kevin Greenlee. I'm an attorney.

[Aine 5:19]

And this is The Murder Sheet.

[Kevin 5:20]

We're a true crime podcast focused on original reporting, interviews and deep dives into murder cases. We're The Murder Sheet.

[Aine 5:21]

And this is The Delphi Murders. First person, Chief Deputy Tobe Leazenby.

[Aine 6:17]

To start off with, could you please tell us a bit about your background?

[Leazenby 6:21]

My name is Tobe Leazenby, and I grew up actually in Clinton County, the next county south of us, but once I graduated from college in the 80s, I began contacting agencies surrounding Clinton County, and I consider it fate

or God leading me. Carroll County was the last agency on my list to call to check for job openings. And so I applied for actually a part-time jail officer's position in 1986 here. I was hired, and fast forward to today, I moved up the ranks, if you will. I started here in 1986. I kind of pride myself on starting my 38th year with the sheriff's office, August 1st of last year, and I've continuously served Carroll County since then in some kind of capacity, obviously, eight years as sheriff. And back to Chief Deputy's position, which I served eight years of that under my predecessor, Sheriff Tony Burns. So, and then of course, I ran for sheriff and was elected for two terms. And yeah, so I came on board, supported Tony during his campaign, and he decided to keep me on board. So here we are.

[Kevin 7:38]

It sounds like right out of the gate, you knew you wanted a career in law enforcement. What was the motivation for that?

[Leazenby 7:44]

Actually, way back when, I had a friend of mine that was actually going through training to become an Indiana Conservation Officer. And I actually went to college at Vincennes University to get involved with conservation. I actually tested for it and didn't make that process. And in 1988, when I became a sheriff's deputy, again, I considered it fate and got on board as a sheriff's deputy in 1988. But it started out with a friend of mine that was an Indiana Conservation Officer as far as law enforcement.

[Kevin 8:24]

Then obviously, you've served the people of Carroll County, as you say, for 38 years. You're very focused on that. Now, there's people who follow this case, obviously, all over the world. They probably have very little understanding of what Delphi or Carroll County is like. How would you describe this part of the world to people who have never been here?

[Leazenby 8:44]

I used it a number of times during the investigation, and that is, I know it sounds somewhat cliché, but small town USA. City of Delphi, it's a mix, very diverse, in my opinion, has become diverse, particularly with local employer, Indiana Packers Corporation. And so, a mix of all kinds of backgrounds, families, there's family history here, a lot of family history. You know, unfortunately, in our business, I've dealt with, and this is where I really start to feel old, I've dealt with, I think last count I had, maybe the fourth or fifth generation of certain families that have been clients, if you will, in our business. So there's a lot of family history involved in the Delphi area.

[Aine 14:38]

Absolutely. And then going back, what made you want to run for Sheriff? And sort of tell us about that.

[Leazenby 14:47]

I guess if you go back and look at Sheriff's Office history, there's a progression, if you will. Obviously, our agency is small enough that we don't have a lot of upward mobility as far as, you know, we have my position as Major Curr position. Then we have one night sergeant. And that's about as far as rank goes. So it was a progression. I know before Sheriff Burns, Sheriff Dennis Randall was a part of the agency since the early 80s. And so he ran for sheriff. Before him was Lee Horde, and he was sheriff in the 90s. It was kind of like, I can't think of the exact right word to use here. But just a progression as you go along with a small county agency, the next senior guy, if you will, usually runs for sheriff. Now, granted we've had outside individuals come on board, but for the most part, if you've been with an agency long enough, most people in the county and the community get to know you and know what you're all about. And so they come on come alongside of you.

[Aine 16:06]

You've been with the sheriff's office for so long. I guess, before we start talking about the Delphi Murders case, I was just curious, are there any other

memorable cases you've worked on in some capacity that sort of come to mind for you?

[Leazenby 16:18]

Actually, I did an interview here while back in the two that do come to mind, and these were family-related type cases in the home scenarios. Crime scenes were in the home. These were in, let's see, one was late 80s, early 90s. Again, I was just basically a road deputy during both of these cases. I didn't play a huge role, but assisted like Indiana State Police and detectives and stuff like that. But, and that is the Buchanan case in Pittsburgh, where a young man killed his grandparents, then Richard Temple in Lockport, Northeastern part of the county, killed his grandparents in the 90s back then. And so those two cases come to mind.

[Leazenby 17:10]

Actually, before we get to Delphi, I think I'd like to ask a pretty basic, maybe even naive question. What is a typical day life for a person working this job?

[Leazenby 17:22]

Basically, as I've described through the years, going back to the small town, USA comment, we also were in the capacity where we handle something as graphic as a homicide in our county, all the way down to complaints of dog string off of a neighbor's property. So that spectrum, if you will. So a basic day, again, that's the thing I've always enjoyed about, particularly being involved with a county agency is, in essence, you don't know exactly what your day is going to be like. You never know what's going to roll into you. So obviously, we investigate car accidents. We have calls for civil issues, maybe neighbor disputes, things like that, or even people going through a divorce and there's issues there. All the way up to, well, as an example, yesterday one of our deputies responded to a call of burglary to a church in a rural portion of our county, up off of 029. So anything anyone may think of, it's not, it's not Hollywood. You know, it's not, it's not always exciting around

here and not that we're always looking for that excitement, but there's again, a broad huge spectrum there as far as what we attend to.

[Kevin 18:59]

And another thing that occurs to me is sheriffs are obviously elected, as opposed to like police officers or even the Indiana State Police. Does that mean you have like a closer or a different relationship to the public than those other agencies might have?

[Leazenby 19:14]

I think so. There seems to be that personal connection, you know, with a lot of people that I know in the county, being able to have that one-on-one opportunity with families. You know, even the families that I mentioned earlier that we've had run-ins with, you know, I've always felt like, and I've had people approach me and say, you know, they have a lot of respect for what I do. And so, yes, I think there's a closer connect. The other thing is, too, particularly in an elected position as sheriff, people have that voice, that opportunity to vote. You know, hey, I want John Smith in here, I want, you know, Bill Jones.

[Aine 20:01]

Going back to February 13th, 2017, how did you first hear about, do you remember where you were when you first heard that two girls were missing at the trails?

[Leazenby 20:10]

Very good question, and I've been asked that a number of times, and yes, to answer your question. One of a few times they have done it in this county, but our county council was meeting that afternoon, or it was a late afternoon, early evening type meeting, courthouse. And so I was at a county council meeting, and I can't remember which one of our deputies it was, but he came into the meeting and said, hey, we've got two girls that are missing,

and we're in the early stages of a search and trying to locate them. So I was in a county council meeting.

[Aine 20:53]

And one thing that was really a theme that came out of the trial was people in Carroll County did not think anything nefarious had happened at first. Did you share that sort of initial view just based on knowing this place and sort of knowing what kind of crimes happened here?

[Leazenby 21:11]

Most definitely, as I've again stated before, I kind of prided our agency in being able to successfully locate, whether it was missing seniors or elders or missing children. And so our track record, if you will, at that time was just fantastic. I mean, we were able to successfully locate with happy endings, if you will, most individuals that came in as missing.

[Aine 21:44]

And stranger type murder abduction crimes would be considered a rarity, not only in Carroll County, but just in this part of Indiana, is that fair to say?

[Leazenby 21:54]

Yes, I would agree.

[Aine 21:56]

Can you tell me about the initial night, the initial response to sort of what you were doing and sort of what the office was doing in terms of just the initial search?

[Leazenby 22:06]

I remember as things became ramped up, if you will, involving the search, my position, and I held this position throughout being the sheriff, and that was more focused on the administrative aspect versus boots on the ground, if you will. So a lot of my initial time was spent at the Delphi City Building

slash, at that time, Fire Department, where efforts were being coordinated for search groups and teams. And so obviously, Steve Mullin was chief of police at that time. So Steve and I communicated, as I recall, often Indiana State Police representatives came on fairly early, obviously, in assisting with the search. And in the bigger sense, community, I mean, and this is the thing that just astounds me to this day is the amount of community help that came on board quickly, and said, hey, what can we do to help out? And, you know, so they were assigned a team or whatever, and you go this way, you go this way and check.

[Aine 23:21]

Did that surprise you or did that kind of coincide with what you knew about Carroll County and its people?

[Leazenby 23:27]

It did not surprise me, really. It's amazing. You know, being, and I guess more so I've seen it, particularly being a farming community. We've had farmers injured or even passed, passed away and passed, and so other farmers have come in to help, like during harvest or springtime. So overall, in the bigger picture, it didn't surprise me when people came on board.

[Aine 23:52]

Can you talk us through your experience as the night got later and we get into early morning and things are kind of official search is called off around 2 am and just like what that was like to experience that, I imagine. You know, you're expecting to find two injured girls.

[Leazenby 24:10]

Yes. I think the word frustration comes to mind, you know, and just trying to grasp what, what was going on here. You know, we've again, I kind of, I kept going back to, you know, again, that that issue or the factor that we had been able to locate, you know, again, missing children or seniors fairly quick, actually, in most cases. And so, as time went along, I just, I started, I'm

generally, I always tried to be optimistic and positive most days. And so, as time went along, that optimism and positive attitude kind of started to waver a little bit.

[Aine 25:04]

It's obviously very easy for people to sort of Monday morning quarter back, something like this, where it's an ongoing situation. You know, one thing that has attracted criticism is the decision to call off the dogs, so to speak. Can you tell us just more about that and sort of just, you know, I don't know, I guess maybe contextualize it.

[Leazenby 25:22]

As I recall, and I may have my timing off on this, but we did have what was a highly recommended group of canine search dogs on their way from, I want to say Missouri, but I could be wrong on that state. As I recall, once the girls were located, that is just maybe shortly before that is when we called them off because obviously we had found them. I don't recall us actually stopping that process prior to that. Now, again, I, yeah, it's been some time ago, so it's hard to remember exactly the timing on that. So, and the search itself, and I know I was criticized then, and certain people still criticize me to this day as far as the search stopping, but the one thing I want to point out is even though, as you referred to earlier, the official search was temporarily stopped, there were still members of the community out there, even though we had said, okay, we're, you know, from a law enforcement, from a first responder standpoint, that we're stopping for the night, but that didn't stop others from continuing their efforts.

[Aine 26:41]

Right, so would it be fair to say that, in a way, the search never really stopped, even though technically from a liability perspective, it had to officially end at 2 am?

[Leazenby 26:52]

Yes, yes.

[Aine 26:55]

I want to talk about February 14th, and I guess, you know, at that point, it's our understanding that state police more of starts coming in to assist prior to the discovery of the bodies. Can you tell us about that?

[Leazenby 27:09]

Again, as the clock continued to tick, then there was a sense of this being more grave, if you will, than what was initially thought. You know, like any situation, you know, as best you can, you want to try to bring in the best resources you know, at that point, and have them come alongside you and help you out.

[Aine 27:39]

You know, can you tell us about hearing that not only have two bodies been found, but then pretty quickly it's coming out that this is likely not some sort of tragic accident, this is actually a double homicide?

[Leazenby 27:51]

Yeah, I've described it before, and I guess I consider myself to have a simple mind some days, and so the simple feeling that I had then was like it was as if somebody just come up and kick me in the stomach, kick me in the gut. You know, and that flurry of questions, like many, for many others, I should say, came to mind as how, why, you know, this can't be, you know, that kind of thing.

[Aine 28:29]

And can you tell me how you all hit the ground running? And my understanding, correct me if I'm wrong, is that it was detectives Kevin Hammond and Tony Liggett on this initially, and sort of talk me through the decision to keep it as a Carroll County case, and the decision, you know, I guess like just kind of those early days.

[Leazenby 28:49]

I, and to this day, I still feel the same way. No disrespect to any of the outside agencies that came alongside of us and helped us. I have pride from the aspect that, as particularly at that time being sheriff, this was on our soil, if you will. This blood had been spilled on our soil. And so, I want to, I felt like this is a quote unquote county case. This was in the county. And so, therefore, yeah, maybe there were some pride involved, but I wanted to make sure that we, not necessarily were considered the lead agency, but we were in charge, if you will. And so, and I remember having a conversation and I saw where he had done an interview here a while back and brought this up, but I had a conversation with Jerry Holeman. And Jerry kind of jogged my memory and said, you know, that Tobe and I had this conversation that ISP doesn't want to come over, come in and take over, but we're here alongside to help you out with the case. And so, and I remember, I guess somewhat of a humorous moment, Doug Carter and I even having a conversation about, well, we're going to do this, this, and I'm like, time out, Doug, you know, time out. We're, you know, let's, and the thing I always somewhat jokingly, I'll put it that way, Doug Carter and I always, at least what I always reminded him was that, Doug, you were a sheriff at one time of Hamilton County. He acknowledged that. So anyway, you know, whether it be pride or anything else, I guess I'll say I felt, you know, the pride of the pride aspect of it and keeping it in Carroll County.

[Aine 30:44]

The other agency that's kind of associated with Delphi is, of course, Indiana State Police, as you mentioned. Can you tell us a bit like what it was like working with them?

[Leazenby 30:53]

The plus was, particularly for District 14, which is Lafayette Districts, particularly with my years of service, I knew, and still to this day, I know a lot of personnel at that district. And so, you know, faces were very familiar. And

so, you know, when they initially came on board from the Lafayette District area, you know, we had worked together before. And so we were very comfortable with each other, you know, as far as being able to work together. And so, yeah, it was, I guess, again, not to sound cliché, but it was kind of a no-brainer, you know, in having that partnership, so.

[Aine 31:44]

You could trust them. They weren't just going to come in and bulldoze.

[Leazenby 31:47]

Right.

[Aine 31:49]

If you don't want to answer this, I understand. But, well, Doug Carter eluded to getting into a fight with you in the community building at the press conference.

[Leazenby 32:01]

Canal Center.

[Aine 32:02]

Canal Center. What were you fighting about? Please tell us. We are so nosy.

[Leazenby 32:07]

No, very, very good question. And I, you know, again, Doug and I look back on it and laugh today. But as I recall it, and maybe Doug's got a different version, but we are to that news conference, we were in the kitchen and I had gotten word. I don't care. Remember who told me, but I got word before the news conference that Doug was going to go out there by himself. And for my language, but I in my mind, I thought bullshit. I'm the sheriff of this county. I'm going to be out. I'm not going to say anything. But again, kind of going back to that pride thing, most sheriffs will tell you people want to see their sheriff. You know, whether it's on TV and newspaper, you know, they

put that individual in office. So they want to see their sheriff. Call it political, call it what you may. But so anyway, as I remember, Doug initially said, hey, I'm going to handle this on my own. I said, no, you're not. And he, yeah, he kind of got red in the face, and I'm sure I did too. And that was, as I recall, and again, Doug may have a different story that he remembers, but I want people to know that we are still heavily involved, you know.

[Kevin 33:34]

That kind of story kind of brings up something. You said people want to see their sheriff. People also want information about the case. But at the same time, you were fully aware that if you gave out too much information, it would damage the integrity of the case. So how did you navigate that and walk that line between giving the people the information they had it right to without damaging the case?

[Leazenby 33:59]

Very good question, Kevin. And obviously, there was a very fine line, if you will, there. You know, and I remember saying during subsequent interviews in the past that I kept saying, you know, whenever a question that I didn't feel comfortable in answering came up, I would say, I'm sorry, but we are preserving that for the courtroom. I kept saying the courtroom is what's important, you know, for this case. And so there were times that, and I remember, you know, early on, Rob Ives was County Prosecutor, and Rob, you know, bless his heart, he's always been a stickler about, don't say too much, don't say too much, don't say too much. And those words were kind of circling, or have always circled in my mind about, again, preserve what's important for the courtroom. And so I, you know, I may have sounded like a broken record, but I kept bringing that up all the time. I can't talk about this because that's what we want to present in the courthouse. I don't know if that answers your question, but okay.

[Kevin 35:13]

And I appreciate it. When you would give answers during that time, people would always try to parse some and try to figure out what you were hinting at. I'm curious, during that time, did you have some educated guesses as to what you thought the killer was like or who he might have been?

[Leazenby 35:28]

I guess somewhat related in my opinion. I kept saying I always felt like practically since day one, particularly knowing the topography of that area out there, that it either had to be someone that knew that area of the county, was familiar with it, and then either had grown up in the area and knew that area and had come back, or they still lived in the area and had been out there previously and again knew the layout of the land, if you will. And so I had always felt it was local. As far as educated guesses, I just had that hunch, that gut feeling in my mind that it was again a local person involved.

[Kevin 36:25]

I'm curious, obviously, this case attracted a lot of attention from outside Delphi, outside Indiana, even outside the United States. Do you have any thoughts as to why so many people got so interested and so involved in this?

[Leazenby 36:40]

A lot of it, I think, again, was, and this is not a critical statement, but social media driven, a lot of aspects. I think to the credit, particularly family and Mike Patty in general, because I remember Mike doing an interview, I think, the first night out here in front of our office outside, and so the family coming out early on and saying, hey, you know, initially, obviously, we're missing two young girls that are, you know, their family, and then, you know, February 14th, rolling around. And so the dedication, love, drive by the family to continually get this out there. And I know, because I remember talking to Mike about it somewhere during the investigation, they went to, I don't know, what's the, not Comic Con, but Crime Con, yeah, going to those events. So I credit family members in keeping this in the forefront.

[Aine 37:45]

How did it feel being sheriff of a community where there was like the possibility that someone in the midst was, had done this and just sort of went back into their lives?

[Leazenby 37:57]

If I had the opportunity early on to talk to whomever was involved, a lot of the simple questions from early on was, would have been how or why, you know, what was the purpose behind this? And again, kind of going back to what I described early here this morning is, you know, we have that huge spectrum of what we investigate in this county and have investigated in this county. And I described earlier as this being small town USA, but to add to that what I've said before is that we also have our share of, quote unquote, big city issues too. As time has went along, obviously, we've seen an influx of bad actors, if you will, coming from Lafayette, Kokomo to the east, Logansport to the northeast, you know, even Indianapolis come up here and commit various things, crimes. And so I was hoping as time went along, this wasn't going to send a message of, you know, hey, if you want to commit whatever crime you're thinking of, come to Carroll County. Didn't want that.

[Aine 39:12]

And then one thing that kind of came out of trial, and I was wondering if you could sort of speak to this more, is that with this investigation, you know, your sheriff, you're running a whole sheriff's office in a whole county, your role within the investigation was more on the managerial side. Is that fair to say?

[Leazenby 39:31]

Yes.

[Aine 39:32]

With detectives Liggett and Hammond taking on more of the role. So can you talk us just through what that was like and sort of like kind of where you were, like are they keeping you updated or like how does that work as far as your role within that?

[Leazenby 39:47]

Sure. Yeah. As best we could, depending on what the guys may have been working on during a certain time period, we would at the very least try to have a weekly meeting. Generally, they were here in this office and they would both sit down and say, okay, at that time period, we're looking at this and we're looking at this. Of course, we started up, if you will, the Investigation Center in West Delphi. I would, as best I could, make efforts to go to that building and meet with, not only Kevin and Tony, but with any of the other investigators involved at that time and have conversation. I know that we would also have randomly, I can't remember how often, but we would have meetings that would bring the core investigators, which obviously was at that time, Indiana State Police, FBI, our agency, that kind of thing. We would have meetings then as far as bringing things up to date.

[Aine 41:00]

So you're not really doing as much as the day-to-day investigating, just kind of like, what's going on with this?

[Leazenby 41:05]

Right.

[Aine 41:06]

How would you characterize detectives like it and Hammond in terms of their work and what it was like working with them on this?

[Leazenby 41:13]

I guess the one thing, particularly for Tony, and I have that most respect for him from the aspect of he was doing a lot of reading, of the ongoing tips that

were coming in, and obviously some were good, some were not so good. And so he was, and not taking away from Detective Hammond, but Tony was very in-depth, very much immersed in this. And I think that's, again, not sound political, but I think that's what's helped him to become or be a good sheriff. And so he's into the, being an investigator, he's into the detail. And so both of them, you know, would, whenever certain, what they felt were important pieces of information would come in, they would go out into the field and do their follow up and then, you know, document that. So, but I, particularly for Tony, I think he was very, very involved, very immersed with the whole case from the get go.

[Aine 42:32]

In terms of, you know, this case, Kevin alluded to this, but it's attracted such interest from around the world. And unfortunately, one side effect of that has just been a lot of rampant and sometimes cruel, frankly, speculation and sort of misbehavior online, I guess I would characterize it as. And what has it been like to deal with that from your perspective?

[Leazenby 42:57]

And I was going to include the word speculation and assumptions that took place. And honestly, as the saying goes, in one ear and out the other scenario. And I respect free speech and people having that opportunity to say what's on their minds. But I've always been about, particularly in our business, two sides to every story. And more so, this is where I get frustrated with media nowadays because they don't always seem to get that second side. And so, it's like the old saying, engage more of your listening and less of your mouth, so.

[Kevin 43:43]

Some of this online speculation actually led into the Carroll County Sheriff's campaign. There were some out-of-state people who made off-the-wall, frankly, allegations, filed a lawsuit alleging all sorts of stuff that was pretty

swiftly dismissed. Do you want to address any of that and educate people as to the facts?

[Leazenby 44:09]

Yeah, I mean, I guess I'll circle back around to what I just said. I mean, the whole story, both sides of whatever the situation was, and again, that's something that, yeah, I remember that, but I don't think about it daily, because that's the same goes water under the bridge, you know. And so, but it was frustrating to, you know, say, you know, and there were some personal attacks against me, I know, at the time. And fortunately, depending on how you look at it, I've become hardened, if you will, or calloused through the years. And so certain things bounce right off of me. But I'm also human too. And it was unfortunate that particularly there were players that I thought were friends at the time, had been friends for a number of years. I'm not going to name names, but I found out they weren't actually true friends. So, you know, it was, again, eluding to what I said earlier, I've always tried to keep that positive thought rise to the next level, because the minute you stoop to whatever level that is, you're going to lose out.

[Aine 45:30]

I want to go to the big break in this case, which of course came about through volunteer Kathy Shank. I guess to start off with, did you know Kathy Shank from her work at CPS prior?

[Leazenby 45:44]

I Did. I did. Yeah. Known Kathy for a number of years.

[Leazenby 45:48]

What is she like?

[Leazenby 45:49]

The first word that comes to mind is driven. She's like an animal that pursues something, and once she gets a hold of it, she just won't let go. She's like a huntress.

[Aine 45:59]

That's cool.

[Leazenby 46:00]

Yeah. Kind of like the female lion, if you will.

[Aine 46:06]

She's like, I was really struck by her dedicating her career to protecting children and the county, and then volunteering with this case.

[Leazenby 46:15]

Because I remember back in the day when she was still with CPS, and it was kind of an internal joke that whenever the guys would get a call to go with Kathy on a particular case, and she would get a hold of something, there were a few cases that admittedly so we would roll our eyes like, where is she going with this? And at the end of the investigation, we're like, oh, the light bulb came on and we're like, she was on it. So yeah.

[Aine 46:46]

Where were you when you heard that something was kind of breaking open?

[Leazenby 46:52]

I can't remember specifically. And again, I think, as I roughly recall, I think Tony actually called me. And again, I think at that time, then we had one of our bigger meetings, so that the ones presenting it wouldn't have to repeat themselves a number of times. So we want to make sure that the core group of the investigators were listening and hearing what was being presented.

[Kevin 47:22]

You mentioned Prosecutor Ives a moment ago. I'm curious, what's your impression of Nick McLeland?

[Leazenby 47:30]

Very, very impressed. You know, Nick, I think he alluded to this at the news conference and has before, you know, he came from the world of being a defense attorney when he first started his career. And so, you know, there's that love-hate relationship between defense attorneys and law enforcement. And so when he became prosecutor, you know, ironically, you know, Nick's local, his family's local, is well known. And, you know, in fact, he went to high school with some of my family members here at Delphi. So I've known him a number of years. And so as time, I guess to sum it up, as time has went along, I've been very impressed, particularly with the trial and the way he presented the facts of the case. And so I've been just outwardly impressed. I've seen him come along in his career and learn quite a bit to the point that he's become an outstanding prosecutor.

[Aine 50:37]

What did you make of this defense team?

[Leazenby 50:40]

We understand defense attorneys have a job to do. And those gentlemen and that they had a job to do. And that was to present for their client the best case they knew. And so, do I respect everything that happened? Absolutely not. I'll say, it's much like the office of sheriff. Throughout the years, I've respected practically most individuals that have been sheriff, whether it be in Carroll County or any other county. But more so, I respect the office that they retain, if you follow what I'm saying. So, I respect from the defense aspect, their positions. It's not really an office, but their positions as defense attorneys. So, I respect that again, they had a task set before them.

[Aine 51:37]

And I'm also just curious, in this case, had you had any awareness of this defendant prior to any of this happening, like just going to CVS?

[Leazenby 51:48]

Yes. The only CVS in the county, so you don't have very many options. And so, yeah, I recall rarely did we speak, but whenever I was looking for something in the store, he happened to be nearby. And I think, of course, normally I'm uniformed and even a sheriff I wore a uniform. And so, I remember maybe once or twice going in the store and looking around, and he came up to me and said, can I help you find something? Sure, he was very professional and was doing his job. And honestly, I had no clue at that moment, at that time period.

[Aine 52:33]

Wow, I wanna ask about the trial and just what was your experience at trial?

[Leazenby 52:42]

Since I was listed as a defense witness and that separation of witnesses, my time within the courtroom was obviously limited until I was released from that subpoena. And so, if there's anything positive from the whole trial aspect of the thing, I thoroughly, because for the most part, I consider myself a people person. And so, it was fantastic to interact with not only outside law enforcement agencies that came on board, but community people that came to the courthouse, just whether it be nosy or whatever you want to call it, came in just to find out, you know, they knew they couldn't get in the courtroom, but they just kind of wanted to linger a little bit to find out what was going on with the trial on whatever particular day it was. So, just the overall interaction, outside personnel and our own personnel, and again, saw some people I haven't seen in years. And so, it was, you know, the interaction just, you know, being able to, if you will, break bread with other law enforcement and just have that interaction throughout the trial.

[Kevin 53:58]

This case has occupied a big part of your life and of your heart and of your mind for close to eight years now. How did it feel when a verdict came in?

[Leazenby 54:11]

And it's huge relief, you know, because throughout, even though I was not frequently in the courtroom, I was still, you know, hearing information outside of the courtroom, you know. And so, you know, there were times, you know, particularly when the defense maybe brought something up that we thought or I thought, boy, I don't know if we're going to, you know, how this verdict is going to turn out. And so, just a huge, huge relief factor in hearing that verdict. And I was actually in the courtroom the day was, because I'd been released from the subpoena at that time. I was obviously in the courtroom when that verdict was read. I also described in the past, as shortly after the trial and the verdict was read, that it was, in my own mind, it was somewhat surreal, so to say. It was like we had been living a bad dream for a number of years now. So, to see the system come to fruition the way it did, and to see justice, no, I consider myself a huge man of faith, and I believe in God. And I know during the day when we had the news conference at the Methodist Church and it was short, I remember it, but I remember standing up and saying, I believe in a God of justice and righteousness. And I boast for God when I come back around and say, God came through with that justice and righteousness in my humble opinion. So.

[Kevin 56:01]

Has your faith been tested by some of the things in this?

[Leazenby 56:05]

Yeah, yes, yeah, I'm human, you know, and so, yes. But, you know, I frequently think back to scripture where Jesus said, he that is without sin throw the first stone. And so, as best I can, particularly in the business we're in, you know, I try to not throw those stones. And probably part of the reason why I don't participate in social media.

[Aine 56:36]

I'm curious, you know, this obviously became like a pretty, like, group of investigators who were working together closely to solve this, you know, Unified Command, I'm thinking of. And then folks like yourself, who are also kind of in those managerial roles, who are part of the process. Now that you've been through this, what do these different investigators and prosecutors, you know, mean to you that you've all gone through this together, I guess?

[Leazenby 57:03]

It gives me faith and hope. Since I'm, you know, in the next couple of years, I'm probably going to be retiring from this business. And so, you know, there's always the talk of concerns of the younger generation. And so it gives me faith and hope and knowing, particularly for Carroll County, the people filling or in these positions and knowing that moving forward, everything's going to be fine. We're going to be okay. Because we have strong individuals filling or involved with these positions. And so they're going to be able to handle whatever comes at them.

[Leazenby 57:48]

To circle back to something we talked about earlier, this was a Carroll County case, but there was a lot of work with ISP and with even other agencies that would come in and help. And now that it's over, looking back, what does that mean to you? How do you reflect on that?

[Leazenby 58:09]

I think, again, it wasn't perfect, but again, the communication, just the open communication that happened on a regular basis, and whether it was a good idea or a bad idea on that particular day, at least it was talked about and brought out into the open. And so, I think the word respect for one another comes to mind, you know, and knowing that what, you know, a particular detective or sheriff's deputy or even a police officer was looking at, there was still the opportunity to sit down and have that conversation.

And then, at the end of the day, even though you didn't agree with it, you still respected whomever was providing that information with courtesy and professionalism.

[Aine 59:05]

You mentioned Mike Patty earlier and some of the advocacy done by Libby's family, but what do the families of Libby and Abby mean to you now?

[Leazenby 59:14]

I guess what comes to mind, again, not sound cliché, but they're rock stars, you know, for them to, they could have easily and I think we've all seen it with other families in similar situations. They could have easily just gone into the background, say, you know, it's a police matter, we'll let them handle it. And they didn't, you know, and I'm glad, I'm glad because they, you know, they kept, and I'm hoping, and I don't know why this still comes to mind to this day, but I remember when they were on Dr. Phil, and I remember seeing that map behind them of the whole United States that had, like, I think red dots on it showing all the unsolved murders or homicides throughout the United States. And so I think, I think back to that map, I think, you know, again, we can at least remove that red dot on the state of Indiana.

[Aine 1:00:15]

And then what do Libby and Abby themselves and their memories mean to you?

[Leazenby 1:00:25]

Again, the strength is one word that comes to just how strong they were. And, you know, obviously none of us were there when this all happened, but having the mindset to turn on our phone or video and collect it, you know, and I, you know, I commented here a while back that if we didn't have that, I don't know. I wonder whether or not we'd still be investigating it to this day. So just utmost respect and just knowing what they went through and just being strong, particularly for one another.

[Aime 1:01:14]

Is there anything else that we didn't ask you about that you think it's important for people to know or understand?

[Leazenby 1:01:20]

You know, just I would encourage people, you know, whether a situation like this arises in their community, whatever, just be objective, be open-minded. Don't immediately dismiss. Don't believe everything that you may hear. Because you know, I've always said, again, that's sound cliché, but you know, if you want to know the truth, go to the horse. You know, what's coming from the horse's mouth is, you know, more than likely is going to be the spot on truth. So listen to the source or at least reach out to that individual and say, hey, I've heard this. What can you tell me? Be honest and you know, just be open with people.

[Aine 1:02:14]

Well, thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us.

[Leazenby 1:02:10]

Thank you. It's been a pleasure.

[Kevin 1:02:19]

We really want to thank Chief Deputy Leazenby for taking the time to speak with us. We truly appreciate it. Thanks so much for listening to The Murder Sheet.