

The Delphi Murders: First Person: James Luttrull: Part Two

1/23/2025

Working together, a prosecution team of Nicholas McLeland, James Luttrull and Stacey Diener successfully secured the conviction of Richard Allen for the murders of Liberty German and Abigail Williams. We are speaking with all three of them this week. This is the second of two episodes featuring our interview with Mr. Luttrull.

They will be released on the same day, so go back and listen to part one if you've not done so already.

In this episode, Mr. Luttrull talks about the trial, including his crucial cross-examination of defense firearm and tool mark expert Eric Warren, and what it was like to wait for the verdict.

Now that the gag order is lifted, Mr. Luttrull and others are free to speak about their experiences with the Delphi case. These episodes are 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 talking with us, email us at murdersheet@gmail.com. This is part of our ongoing efforts 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. My name is Áine Cain. I'm a journalist. And I'm Kevin Greenlee. I'm an attorney. And this is The Murder Sheet. We're a true crime podcast focused on original reporting, interviews, and deep dives into murder cases. We're The Murder Sheet. And this is The Delphi Murders First Person, James Luttrull, Part 2.

[Aine 2:53]

In this case, as you sort of eluded to, there has been a sizable international, I would say, online following of it for quite some time, and

certainly a lot of mainstream media scrutiny, things of that nature. What was it like working on a case with all of those considerations and trying to still bring it back down to terra firma?

[Luttrull 3:18]

I think treating it as a case, Stacey and I had more experience than Nick, but Nick had had the benefit of having defense experience, criminal defense experience. We looked to our experience to guide us. We looked to the investigators and to the laboratory work done on the case, and we focused on those things, and we didn't really pay much attention. I didn't pay any attention to the international following, the YouTubes and the podcast. I really just focused on the case. And I think those inspirational aspects of the case were critical to helping me do that. I can't answer for Stacey or Nick, but what the families had every right to expect of us, and what the officers who had put so much blood, sweat, and tears into this case, what they deserve was us giving our best and not being distracted. I think it helped. There was a downside to being the old guy on the team, and I had to deal with some old guy jokes. And I bored people by saying too often, you should have seen me 20 years ago. I was really good then. But I think there is a benefit to not having approached this case with an ego, I guess, is the only way to think about it, that I really wasn't concerned about anything, but doing the best I could about the case. And I don't know that 20 years ago, I could have done that. So I'm not saying I'm anything special. I'm just saying that I was at a time in my career where I was just, I was only there for one reason, and I had the benefit of maybe some life experiences and some prosecutorial experiences that helped with that. And I didn't have that kind of pressure. So I'm not saying I would have been the same way 20 or 30 years ago. But I found it easier than I thought to ignore the noise.

[Kevin 5:22]

What was it like to work with Stacey Diener?

[Luttrull 5:25]

Stacey and I had two difficulties. Number one, she didn't understand any of my jokes. She's a very concrete person, and some of my snide sarcasm she took as seriousness. And when I meant it to be a joke, and that's a reflection of my fault, not hers, and then she can't read any of my writing. My writing has deteriorated from bad to really bad. So I would write a note during the trial, and then I would rewrite the note as carefully as I could, hand it to her, she would just hand it back, saying, I can't read it. Other than that, Stacey was terrific. Both of those problems were my fault, not hers. She's got a really, she and Nick are both great listeners. I think she listened differently than I did or Nick did in meetings or in interviews in court. And I think she really was very good at that. She's a frank person who just very common sense and direct in a nice way. So I think she was good at some of the communication that had to happen before and during the trial. We relied on her a lot. She did great with the witnesses that she was assigned to. She had all the mental health professionals as well as family and the civilians that were a part of the timeline. And I thought she just did a great job with them. Now, you had through, Nick's the elected prosecutor, so he's a boss. I had been a boss. She had been a boss. So you had three bosses sitting there at the trial. And I think we had to have an understanding that there's a different role Stacey and I are playing now than we would have played back when we were heading our offices, because she had been an elected prosecutor as well. So once I think we learned that, or at least I learned that, it was easier to be of assistance to Nick.

[Aine 7:49]

You've mentioned some of the law enforcement officers who worked on this case and sort of what the investigation meant to them. I'm just curious what do you make of the investigation that they put together that then you all were able to run with for this trial?

[Luttrull 8:08]

Yeah, well, it was, they were under incredible pressure and scrutiny. It probably was a benefit for me not to have been a part of the 2017, 2018, 2019 that come in as more of an outsider, but it's harder for me to understand and appreciate the type of pressures that they were under

during all these years. But they were, they were excellent to work with. You know, everybody is human. We're all, we all make mistakes. There was just a real emphasis on, okay, let's deal with that and let's move on. How do we, now that we know something that we didn't know, how do we incorporate that? There was a real absence of egos, which was remarkable. So I really appreciated being able to work with them. As I said, I knew, I knew Jason Page from previous work that he did in Grant County, but the other officers and Jason, I was just very impressed by this is, we have work to do. This is a case. We, this is a case like other cases, and we're going to do our best. And I appreciated that, that focus. And of course, I'd long been a fan of the Indiana State Police Lab, the Laboratory Division, it just does great work. And so while I had some difficult subjects that I worked on personally, the firearm and tool mark, the DNA, the crime scene, the autopsy, I also was dealing with very experienced witnesses who understood how to communicate to a jury. So that was a benefit that I had. And if I can just add one thing about inspiration and motivation in this case, to work as hard as you can and do your best. It just occurred to me recently that how much we respected this jury. And you all were observers of the time that they put in, the attentiveness, the questions, the long journey that they were on with this case. That also is a compelling motivator to now need to do my best. These people really deserve the best I can give them because they seem to be taking it so seriously and they seem to be doing their job. It's all the more reason to do mine.

[Aine 11:09]

Yeah, our observation was just from the questions that the jury was paying attention. I remember in one year, I believe, cross-examinations maybe, I may be butchering this, so Kevin, correct me if I'm wrong. You started to ask something, I think it was overruled, and then one of the jurors asked it immediately afterwards. I was like, they're really engaged with this. My question though, I want to go to the state's witnesses that you worked with. You mentioned you're working with a lot of forensics professionals. They're experienced in terms of being expert witnesses. What was it like to prepare them and go over all of that with them in the lead up to trial?

[Luttrull 11:49]

Yeah, it was the most enjoyable part of the case. It's a demanding part of the case and a challenge. Because they were so committed to doing their best and being true professionals, it was much easier than I would have thought. They were patient with me. It was God's little joke on me that my English and political science major that I had to understand physics and biology and deal with all of these difficult subjects that I had avoided in college. They were very patient in going over things. I don't know how many times I said to Melissa Oberg or Stacey Bozinovsky or Pat Cicero, I know I've asked this question before, but help me understand this. Tell me what this is again. And I hope that that was effective with helping the jury to absorb and understand information, because I wasn't, I had to start where maybe some of them were with not knowing much about the topics. I had worked on firearms and DNA and attended autopsies or had pathologists testify on numerous occasions, but I still always tried to approach it as help me understand this. And I think they were wonderful to work with. Dr. Kohr had been testifying for a number of years. So they were all very dedicated, very professional. It was a challenge, but one that was really, I felt in some ways I had an easier role than Stacey and Nick did Nick had to handle the cell phones, which boggles my mind still to this day. And plus a lot of the other law enforcement matters. A broader area, mine was more focused.

[Kevin 14:00]

Well, doing the crime scene stuff, the autopsy and things of that nature, that certainly would not strike too many people as being an easy burden. How did you prepare those witnesses and deal with all that?

[Luttrull 14:16]

Well, again, I benefited from the fact that they were all experienced and had all testified many times. The challenge was a lot of information to absorb and trying to understand that we can't give the jury everything. It wasn't my plan, for example, to have firearms testimony take all day. The direct exam tended to go a little slower than what I had planned, but I wanted to make sure, even though it may have felt methodical at times, that it was building a wall that would survive scrutiny and would help to prove our case. And so

it was a challenge and to spend a lot more time with the crime scene photos than what I would have wanted to. That was certainly a difficulty, but it comes with the territory, and it's part of the downside of such a wonderful opportunity to be a part of the case, is just the price I had to pay. But the witnesses were very professional, prepared, and I hope we told a compelling and coherent story.

[Aine 15:34]

You mentioned the forensic firearms taking all day. I remember being very impressed with Melissa Oberg's performance on the stand, especially, I mean, in direct, yes, but also in a very, very lengthy cross-examination. And I guess I'm just, what's it like for you, where that's your witness in a way, and then that's going on, and it's kind of dragging on, I guess just like what's going through your head at that moment?

[Luttrull 16:02]

Just trying to assess when to intervene and when to stay out of it. She's such a, I found her to be a very outstanding scientist, a forensic scientist, and understood her role in her job very well. She's so dedicated to the discipline, and I felt like she was prepared. So just knowing when to step in and when not to step in, as her example, if you were referring to cross-examination, that was just something you tried to do. I probably deferred to her experience and understanding of subject matter more than I would have if she were less experienced and less experienced at testifying. I just thought she did a great job. It's a difficult subject. Mr. Rozzi was very diligent in his preparation. So she and I both had a big task. It was an important part of the evidence. I thought the defense did what they could to address and to rebut her testimony. I thought she did a great job.

[Luttrull 17:20]

I want to focus on the portion with Stacey Bozinovsky for a minute. The big thing that comes out is that there's not really usable offender DNA evidence in the case, which for people following it, I don't think was necessarily too much of a surprise. But one thing we hear a lot is, how can there be no DNA in a case? And I guess just as a person with such experience

prosecuting cases, I was wondering if you can kind of underscore, you know, maybe, I guess talk about the CSI effect a little bit or about how people's perceptions may be different from the reality.

[Luttrull 17:59]

Yeah, I think that, you know, if we're encouraged to follow the science, the science makes it very clear that there is DNA evidence that is, there's overwhelming DNA, and then there's the rich source of DNA, and then there's the very poor or bad source of DNA, and that given the facts of this case, there was, I think her testimony helped to illustrate that, there was any touch DNA that would have been present would have been overwhelmed by an incredible amount of DNA in the blood, and all of those locations where touch may have occurred were also places where there was an extraordinary amount of blood present. And I think getting that across was the biggest challenge. So our effort was to show there was a thoroughness in the crime scene investigation and the crime scene gathering of evidence and that they did their job appropriately. And that there was certain, because of time, because of the environment, because of the creek, because of the sand and dirt, that there were inhibitors present, and that once the evidence got to the DNA lab, that Stacey did her job appropriately. And it's not a good fact or a bad fact. It's a fact. It is what it is. But I wanted the jury to believe what I believed, which is that the work that was done was done thoroughly and professionally and forensically, in a sound forensic way. And that was the message that we hope to communicate.

[Aine 19:50]

I felt, and maybe this was just my perception, that you and Rozzi were pitted against each other a lot in terms of witness for witness and sort of cross-examining each other's witnesses. And I'm just curious, what was that experience like? You mentioned that he was very thoroughly prepared around ballistics, and I guess if you could speak more to that.

[Luttrull 20:12]

Yeah, I think that was completely coincidental. I don't know that he knew or I knew that that was gonna happen. I don't think there was, in either side, as far as I know, there was no, like, we'll match lawyers against lawyers. I think it was just the way the experience level and the skills of the various lawyers involved were matched up in that way. And he was a skilled and experienced lawyer. I knew he had done his homework, and it's kind of what I hope and expect from a defense attorney in court is to put us to our test and test the evidence. And I think in regards to the physical forensic evidence that I was involved in and that he was involved in, which was causing manner of death, some of the crime scene, the DNA and firearms. It's interesting. Yeah, we were matched up against each other. You know, it was, we're both done our jobs. And I thought he brought his skill and experience to the courtroom.

[Kevin 21:19]

We've talked a bit about how you would prepare witnesses for direct examination. I'm curious, another, obviously, another important part of your job was to cross examine defense witnesses. How would you prepare for that?

[Luttrull 21:32]

You know, there's different, different things you do. You try to gather as much information as you can. You talk to your own expert in that area, since the areas I was involved in involved expert testimony. In some cases, we anticipated cross examination pretty well because in the firearms portion, they had done a deposition of the state's witness, Ms. Oberg, and I had done a deposition of Mr. Warren, Dr. Warren. So those experiences prior to trial gave you "some heads up as to what the issues might be. And just do as much research as you can on the topic. Try not to cross swords with an expert in their area of expertise. Or if you do so, do it with your eyes wide open. You know, there's a statement that you hear some trial lawyers and teachers of trial advocacy say that never ask a question unless you know the answer to it. I think that's wise advice, but not always practical. So don't ask a question unless you can handle the answer or believe you can handle the answer even if you don't know what it's going to be. So that's

always a challenge and every trial lawyer is aware of the one question too many. So you try to avoid that question and sometimes you don't know it until you've asked it. And that's unfortunate. So trying to have a plan and stick with the plan is something that every cross-examiner tries to do. Maintain control as much as possible. That's one of the goals of cross-examination. The goal of direct examination, especially with an expert witness, is to be transparent and to be invisible is what I should say. And let the jury see that witness and you're just there trying to think through in a stage director way, the questions that this person needs to answer and stay out of it. I just soon did not even know I was there. And then cross-examination, the goal is always to maintain some level of control. It's easier said than done.

[Kevin 23:42]

It's interesting you say that about being invisible, because I remember during the three-day hearing over the summer when you presented the testimony of Pat Cicero. I didn't even realize how good a job you had done, because you made yourself so invisible. And it was like later I remember saying to Áine, wait a minute, he did an incredible job. So that's interesting that's something you were deliberately trying to do, because you, that was an amazing job. And I also felt in terms of cross-examinations, your cross-examination of Warren, who was their ballistics expert, really was amazing and it was crucial, because he of course was trying to dispute the analysis of Oberg. I'm curious, what was your impression of that particular cross-examination?

[Luttrull 24:35]

Well, that's a situation where I think I'd rather let the observers have the say on that than me.

[Kevin 24:43]

Fair enough.

[Luttrull 24:44]

There were times where you're kind of in the moment and you're trying to assess how it's going and you really have to rely on other people to give you kind of a heads up about it, but I guess I'll let observers decide about that.

[Kevin 25:03]

Is it stressful to do a cross like that when you know it is potentially very important?

[Luttrull 25:09]

Oh, it certainly is. It's stressful for me anyway. There's an art of cross-examination and any successful artist knows there are rules to art. It's not just all throw it up on the wall, creativity. And if you know the rules, then you can know when to maybe deviate slightly from those rules and take a chance on something. So cross-examination has always been a great challenge, but it is stressful. And it's something that as I'm preparing for it, I think I'm going to, you know, this is great. This is exciting and invigorating. When you're in the middle of it, sometimes you're not so sure. And afterwards, you're either think you did a great job or you think you did a horrible job. But in the end, the goal is to get the jury to see as clear a picture of what your perception and understanding of the facts are. You know, there's the case you try, there's case you plan to try, the case you try, and the case you wish you had tried. I go through that with every aspect of a trial whenever I'm dealing with it. It's not always exactly what you planned and later you're wishing you had done something a little differently. And I don't know if this particular aspect of the trial was any different for me. But it was, yeah, it was stressful. The jury questions add a different component to directing cross-examination, you know, and that's something that happened in the latter part of my career. It's when Indiana allowed jury questions. At first, you think this is nothing but a bad idea, but it becomes part of the trial. And I think it has an interesting and had an interesting impact in this case at times.

[Aime 27:01]

I'm curious for you, what was the most memorable moment at this trial?

[Luttrull 27:07]

There were several, obviously very compelling, emotional testimony. Even when you have a job that you're focused on and you're doing, you still are impacted by a grandmother's testimony, for example, or a sister's testimony. Those are very powerful.

Maybe the most memorable, if this makes any sense, is Nick McLeland's final argument. Hearing so much of what we hoped the record would show and realized that we did get that into evidence, that evidence did come into the record, and it came in in largely compelling ways. And for him to put it all together in his final argument, pretty complex factual scenario, the timeline that we had discovered and presented to the jury, that was really a moment where I was both had a satisfaction that what we had hoped to do, we had done, and proud that Nick delivered it, I thought so well and so compellingly.

[Kevin 28:21]

We've talked about your thoughts on Prosecutor of the McLeland and Ms. Diener. I'm curious if you had any observations you'd like to share about Judge Gull and the defense team.

[Luttrull 28:34]

Judge Gull had a difficult job to do in the case. I think she brought a lot of experience as a judge to a difficult case. She had been involved in several high-profile cases, which I think served her well. So, those are my observations. She had a difficult job to do as an experienced and dedicated judge. I think she maintained control of the case and the trial. I thought the case handle was very orderly, which is what a judge is supposed to do. Defense, skilled and experienced, and obviously smart. They definitely saw this case very differently than what the prosecution did. At least the case that they presented and the arguments they made and the evidence that they sought to introduce was very different than the case that the prosecution team had, the way we analyzed the facts. That's probably all I can say at this time.

[Aine 29:44]

What was it like when the final arguments were done and then it was time to wait for the verdict? What was that process like for you and what was it like in this case?

[Luttrull 29:57]

That's a very dramatic part of the trial. I'm also a fan of Anatomy of a Murder. I don't know if you're familiar with that film, but the novel is great by Robert Traver. I have several Robert Traver books. He's amazing. People know his story about being a prosecutor in Marquette County, Michigan, and then eventually becoming on the Michigan Supreme Court. He was an excellent trial lawyer, but he was an even better fly fisherman and wrote this really insightful book and very great read. And then I thought it was made into a great movie. Jimmy Stewart and George C. Scott. I mean, how can you go wrong? But there's that scene where they're just, Jimmy Stewart is playing the piano and they're just in this law office waiting for the verdict and there's that tension that it seems to capture. I thought that's the most realistic picture. And I probably transpose or put in a lot of my emotions into that movie when I watch that part of it. So you're on pins and needles and then you realize you may and likely are in for a long wait. So you have to pace yourself. Adrenaline is leaving your body from now that your work is done. And so it's a really odd time and it's a difficult experience. You just don't know. Everything that we viewed about the case was that it would not likely be a quick verdict. And that a long deliberation, which is often thought to be a signal and advantage to the defense was not necessarily the case. So we were patient, but it was an odd time. And I'd never had, it had some long jury deliberations, but I never had something go this many days. And so that was an adjustment. It was a surreal experience. I don't know if I answered your question or not, but.

[Luttrull 3200:10]

You did. And I say we love Anatomy of a Murder. We love Robert Travers books. And Anatomy of a Murder is actually the book we're reading in our programs book club this month. The perfect timing.

[Luttrull 32:23]

There's a book Small Town DA that I happened to find in a used bookstore. It has all these little short stories about his experiences. And it's just such a great writer. Yeah, very, very great.

[Kevin 32:39]

He's a great storyteller. You were living this, so I don't know if you paid any attention to any of the media coverage. If you did, do you think the media covered this trial well?

[Luttrull 32:52]

I really don't. I'm not in a very good position to say so because I really didn't follow. You'd hear bits and pieces, but just like my critique of some of the media is you don't know the context. And sometimes I would hear media story and realize I have to tell myself, I don't know the context. I don't know what they may have said in an earlier broadcast or what they may be saying in the next broadcast. So I didn't want to be overly critical or overly sympathetic or positive about anything, because they didn't have the time to really take it all in. So it would have been a very challenging case, I think, to report. So I'm not in a good position to give an opinion.

[Luttrull 33:48]

Talk me through about hearing that a verdict came out and what that experience was like.

[Luttrull 33:53]

It'd be interesting to be hooked up to a blood pressure cuff at the time that you get that news, but there's just a quickening and a nervousness that kicks in. The jury deliberation had been long enough that any outcome was plausible. Obviously, there was the fear of a hung jury after that many days, but I don't think it was something that was a given, but it was certainly something that we were afraid of. So when we heard a verdict coming, you just realize it could be either good news or bad news. So that was a nervous time. I don't know how many times, I guess 200 times or so, I've

been through that, never gotten used to it, never feel like I know what's getting ready to happen. You watch the jury when they do file in and you just never know.

[Aine 34:52]

What did it feel like to hear that was guilty on four counts?

[Luttrull 34:59]

Yeah, that was a big affirmation and a big relief. Grateful. I felt very good about the evidence that we presented. I feel like those three areas that we wanted to focus on, Bridge Guy is the murderer and Richard Allen's Bridge Guy, that's his bullet at the crime scene between the two girls, and his confessions are reliable and truthful. Those were the three things we wanted every bit of evidence to focus on. And I felt like it came in in a convincing way. Just never know about the jury. They seem to be very attentive, and there seem to be a cohesion with the jury that doesn't always exist. They seem to be patient and appreciative of each other. You don't know if that's the case, but as you watch them just body language, it seemed to be the case. And so I took that to be a good sign.

[Kevin 36:07]

You've talked throughout our conversation with obvious affection towards people like Prosecutor McLeand, Stacey Diener, Steve Mullin, Jerry Holeman. What do all of these people mean to you now that you've been through this incredible experience together?

[Luttrull 36:25]

Yeah, I think I look at them as I have a unique vantage point of being an outsider, and also those 38 years I went on and on about of experience, and to care so much about justice in the community. On final argument, I've told this, I've used this illustration in Grand County before that Grand County Courthouse used to have a dome on it, and on the dome was a statue of Lady Justice. The dome burned, and they've never replaced it, and so we're without the dome or the statue. But you, ladies and gentlemen, are ladies and men of justice, and you can speak for your

community. And I just felt like there was such a, I just respect the commitment that I saw from each of those people. There's been some things said about Kathy Shank, and I was very glad that she was really a necessary witness to explain the turn in the investigation and the focus of the investigation on Richard Allen. But just the kind way that she had food for people when they showed up for meetings, she had just showed up for a work day. And Nick's staff were just great. But those officers that you mentioned, their dedication, it was just a privilege to be a part of it. And to someone who knows how important this is to a community, to have trust in the work that law enforcement is doing, is so critical to a healthy community. So it was an honor to be a part of it.

[Aine 38:16]

Now that it's over, at least the trial is over, what do the memories of Libby and Abby mean to you? And what do their families, surviving loved ones mean to you now that you've been through this experience?

[Luttrull 38:30]

Well, I had high expectations for the kind of gravitas and compelling, moving victim impact statements before we got to the sentencing. But even with those high expectations of what I expected from those individuals, having learned a little bit about them, they went over and beyond that. For me, grateful to have had a little bit of a part of getting to that place where they could have that opportunity to speak and to say what they said with such grace, and even through such pain and their demand for justice, it was very moving and grateful to be a part of it.

[Aine 39:22]

What are the memories of the girls?

[Luttrull 39:25]

Yeah. I think of the girls, I think of those individuals, sister, mother, father, grandfathers, grandmothers, other relatives. I think of them, I see them through those people. I think those girls would be very proud of the way their families were so steadfast and so determined and so patient and yet

desiring for justice. It's such a shame that there have not been high school graduations and proms and college experiences and weddings or other experiences that these families should have had, these girls should have had. So that's obviously very sobering, still hard to understand. We'll never fully appreciate why these things happen. Such a loss, such a senseless loss.

[Kevin 40:31]

I'm curious, what's next for you? Are you going to back into your well-deserved retirement, or you have other cases you might be willing to come back for?

[Luttrull 40:40]

Well, I think my name's on a list with the Indiana Prosecutor-Attorney's Council for Senior Prosecutor Options. Told myself and my wife that I wouldn't put my name on that list unless I knew I could say no when appropriate. So I'll see if anything comes along there that I feel like I can be the right person to handle occasionally. We're blessed with 12 grandchildren who are on two different continents. Some, even the ones in North America, some of them are far away. So we want to visit and see them. There are still some cathedrals in the UK and Europe that we haven't seen yet, and so there's some traveling that we want to do and some things to pursue. You know, one of the things I did, you'll be interested to know in my six-month retirement, is I took a short story writing class. So I don't know if that's going to be a part of my future or not.

[Kevin 41:46]

I was literally about to say, you have so many great stories, and it's evident we've just barely, barely scratched the surface. Is there any possibility of writing your memoirs or even fictional stories?

[Aine 41:58]

Small town DA too.

[Luttrull 42:00]

Oh man. There's such a discipline and effort required with writing. I know some people, a couple of people, are good writers and one, it just pours out of them, and the other one is just fits and it's just agony to do it, but then they have a great product in both cases after they're done. I don't know how you guys, whether it comes easy or not for you, but I don't know. I would like to tell, I love good storytellers. I have been blessed with a lot of good stories. Maybe that'll happen.

[Kevin 42:41]

I selfishly hope it does because I would enjoy reading that. Wrap up question. So question we always ask at the end. This is such a huge complicated case. Are there things you wanted to talk about that we didn't ask you about, or are there things people should know that we haven't discussed with you today?

[Luttrull 43:04]

I think we covered a lot. There's certain prudent judgment that needs to take place in terms of what, in my specific role as a deputy prosecutor and officer of the court, there's so many limitations on what is appropriate to share. And so I think we've covered pretty much everything. Shout out to a few people that I didn't mention that really aren't, not a part of Delphi, but a part of my experience and people who have helped me in my career. I had two chief deputies while I was prosecutor, Bill Heck and Lisa Glancy. And I just want to thank them for their dedication and their work that helped me be prosecutor I am. And one of the rewards of going back to your hometown and being a prosecutor, although there's some complications obviously, is to get to work with people you knew as a kid. And one of my childhood friends, one of my closest friends is a law enforcement officer named JK and he is a deputy or a chief deputy of the now at the Grand County Sheriff's Department, had been captain of detectives for many years in Marion Police. And then when he retired from that, I was able to hire him as an investigator for the prosecutor's office. And he's just a remarkable public servant and dedicated law enforcement officer. And when I look at any of the officers I had a pleasure to work with in Carroll County, I kind of use him as a standard to compare. And fortunately, many

of them were, if not up to his standard, were close to what he's done. So I just want to thank those people who have helped me be the prosecutor that I am.

[Kevin 45:01]

Not long after we recorded this interview, Mr. Luttrull got back in touch with us. He actually sent us an e-mail sharing a few more thoughts he had about the case. We thought what he had to say was worth sharing with you all. So we got him on the phone for kind of a last minute addendum to our interview.

[Luttrull 45:25]

Kevin and Áine, I want to come back to the topic we touched on earlier. People often ask, would ask me, they ask police and prosecutors, how do you do this job? Dealing with the very worst of what people do to other people. I've been asked this question in one form or another a bunch of times, and certainly in the Delphi Murders case, that was a very common question. It's a good question. The blunt answer is that it just has to be done, so you do it. But how you do it really makes a difference. It's not just in your success as a communicator in court, but also to avoid the subject matter destroying you. And there's three things I thought about how I tried to do it. And I think all of us working on this case exhibited the same three categories. You go about...First, you do it with professionalism. Second, you do the job from within a team, or really, in this case, more accurately within a community. And finally, you seek to do it in a way that honors the victims, Abby and Libby. By professionalism, I mean communicating this horrific story competently, but also respectfully. I felt like our CSIs did that. They had a job to do, and they needed to do it thoroughly and correctly, but also with respect to the victims. A great example of this was our blood-stained pattern expert, Major Pat Cicero. He was clear and knowledgeable and scientific in his descriptions, very gruesome and disturbing sins and injuries. But he was also a compassionate contender at the same time. And I think that matters. It matters not just for the court, for the jury, for observers, but it matters to Pat. It mattered to me, certainly, and helps you get through these difficult things. And you do it within, as I said, a

community. When I consider the remarkable community of those people who worked on the Abby Libby case, I'm reminded of one of my favorite writers, Wendell Berry, a Kentucky native son who's an environmentalist, novelist, an essayist, a farmer. He has these Port William stories, this fictional town in Kentucky, and one of his great characters is Burleigh Carter. Burleigh says in one of the stories, the way we are, we are members of each other, all of us, everything. The difference, Áine, in who is a member and who is not, but in who knows it and who don't. Membership in a community is a big theme in Burleigh's stories. I thought of that membership when I thought about the team and the community that worked on this case. They really developed a lovely membership in the Delphi Murders investigation among those who investigated and those who supported the investigators. Some of us were aware of it and some of us weren't, but it was a unique membership. It was an honor to participate in the case. I referenced that earlier in our conversation about it being an honor. And to many people, when I talk about accepting the responsibility of joining this team, but more importantly than the honor it was to be in this community, I believe Nick and Stacey and I sought to honor Abigail and Liberty. The novelist Marilyn Robinson, main character in Gilead, says near the end of the story, and he's speaking about being a servant in a small town community. He says, the theologians talk about a prevenient grace that precedes grace itself and allows us to accept it. I think there must also be a prevenient courage that allows us to be brave, that is to acknowledge that there is more beauty than our eyes can bear, that precious things have been put into our hands, to do nothing, to honor them is to do great harm. And therefore, this courage allows us, as the old man said, to make ourselves useful, to allow us to be generous, which is another way of saying exactly the same thing. So that quote comes near the end of the novel Gilead. I thought about that that line, precious things have been put into our hands and to do nothing, to honor them is to do great harm. I thought about that line frequently when I worked as a prosecutor, when I worked at DCS, and certainly on this case. This case allowed me a front row seat to see generosity and courage for the honoring of precious things. A local community and investigative team that has the courage and wisdom to recognize that precious things have been put into our hands, to do

nothing, to honor them is to do great harm. The precious things placed in our hands were first and foremost Abigail Williams and Liberty Jeremy and the necessity of seeking justice for them. But secondarily, a town's sense of community and neighborliness and a town's trust in the justice system and all that that means. Those are the precious things that needed to be affirmed and defended. And ultimately, they were, and it was really an honor to be asked to be a part of it.

[Luttrull 51:18]

Thanks so much for listening to the Murder Sheet. If you have a tip concerning one of the cases we cover, please email us at [murdersheet at gmail.com](mailto:murdersheet@gmail.com). If you have actionable information about an unsolved crime, please report it to the appropriate authorities.