

## **Kathleen**

**Mike Cobb**

*While liberties have been taken as to form, character and detail, and names have been changed, what you are about to read is based on a true story.*

Kathleen was special. She came into my life at an inflection point, if you will. At a time of self-doubt and self-discovery, that critical period between adolescence and early adulthood when one's life can turn in several different directions. Some good. Some bad. I needed her. And perhaps she needed me in ways that I could not comprehend. That I still don't understand.

Not long after Kathleen's death, I chose to follow a path that could, in hindsight, be described as one of self-destruction. I experimented with a variety of drugs, whatever I could get my hands on. I abandoned my family for a time. I turned on. Tuned in. Dropped out. I am grateful that I have a nonaddictive constitution. In time, I managed to find my footing and get my act together. But it took a drug bust to set me straight. And some good old-fashioned grabbing myself by the scruff of the neck and shaking really hard. I don't regret that period in my life. It's integral to who I am today. But I now wonder, with the benefit of retrospection, whether the trauma of Kathleen's death contributed to my recklessness. Was I acting out a response to an unacknowledged inner pain? Or was I just another hippy, doing what hippies did in the sixties?

No one has bothered to complete Kathleen's story. Certainly not her family, who chose to bring her death to a close with a perfunctory, three-sentence obituary of sorts in her hometown paper. Certainly not the police, who treated her death with a shocking degree of insouciance at best, malfeasance at worst, so much so that her murder was largely ignored and to this day remains unsolved. In a sense, she was buried three times. Her body was buried in a cemetery in her hometown. The details of her murder and the evidence surrounding it were buried by the police. And her life story was buried by her family.

I moved on with my life. I married. Had children. Pursued a career. But she was always with me. In the back of my mind. It was not until I reached semi-retirement that Kathleen came back into the forefront of my thoughts. It coincided with the serious pursuit of an abiding passion, that of writing. And time on my hands.

I would like nothing more than to contribute to solving her murder, and I will make every effort to do so. But regardless of whether that endeavor succeeds, I intend to tell her story. That's the least I can do.

## Atlanta

The year was 1970. Eight thirty in the morning. It promised to be an unseasonably cool November day. I was about to walk out the door of my parent's house when I noticed the morning paper lying on the kitchen table. Carefully folded to page fifteen. It wasn't the headline at the top of the page that I saw first, but rather the photograph. They say our eyes are drawn to pictures before words. Her hair was different, darker than I knew. I surmised the picture had been lifted from her college yearbook. From a time of innocence and naiveté long since lost. But those eyes. Her deep, penetrating gaze. And her delicate smile. These images are, almost fifty years later, still seared in my memory.

I picked up the paper and read the headline. SLAIN GIRL'S PATH TRACED. I pictured the last time I had seen her, eleven days prior. She had escorted me, as she had on several occasions in the short time I knew her, to a tiny below-ground bistro in a block of rowhouses on a cobblestone street called Baltimore Place. I was seventeen to her twenty-three.

Someone close to me at the time, a family member, had introduced us. *I want you to meet my friend*, I remember him saying. *She and I see each other sometimes. I think you might like her. Maybe she can show you around, take you to some of the places she frequents. You need to get out of the house. Expand your horizons. For Christ's sake, you're seventeen years old and you're still sitting at home reading books.*

She was the older woman who took this wide-eyed adolescent into her charge. The one who bought me drinks while those in positions of responsibility around us somehow overlooked her seeming indiscretion. To this day, I wonder why she took such an interest in me. Had the family member, seeing an opportunity to pull my shy, awkward self out of my shell, implored her to do so? Or had she perhaps used me to ingratiate herself with him? While I longed to be the object of her seduction, I was left only to wonder what might have been. The situation was too close to home for that to have ever happened. The nearest we ever came was holding hands in that dark, smoky cavern, drinking cheap beer and listening to Joel Resnick, a musician from Athens, play guitar and piano, and sing James Taylor medleys.

And now she was gone. I wept inside.

Reading further, I learned that her bullet-riddled body was discovered on a construction site in a run-down part of town called Grove Park. That she was last reported having been seen the prior Friday evening. That she told a neighbor she planned to change from her work clothes into a new dress and, later that evening, meet the man she was dating. That investigators theorized she was abducted while waiting at the bus stop outside her apartment.

Construction workers discovered her lying face down in the dirt. They had gone there to pour concrete. She was nude. Her clothes were never recovered. She appeared to have been slain at the spot where she was found. I tried hard to imagine what she must have gone through as someone forced her to that site, made her disrobe and shot her three times, twice in the head and once in the buttocks. I was struck by the indignity of it all. The senselessness. The depravity. The agony she must have experienced in the last hour of her life.

A large ring adorned her finger. She wore a gold bracelet. Two small earrings were found on the ground beside her, a detail that will always remain an enigma to me.

That's what the newspaper told me. And I had no reason to doubt any of it. But one thing I have learned over the past fifty years is that journalists sometimes don't get the entire story right. Misunderstandings. Misleading narratives. Nuances. These can all get in the way of the truth. I know that now.

Returning the newspaper to the table, I wondered why it had been neatly folded to page fifteen and placed on the table's edge where I would surely see it as I passed by. Was it coincidence? Had my parents somehow known about her? About my relationship with her? About the family member's relationship with her? I dared not broach the subject.

One of my parents' closest friends was a homicide detective. He was a senior member of the bureau. He would have been immersed in the case. I knew him well. His son and I had been best friends for a time. His family and mine shared a closeness that transcended your typical friendship. He was known to drop in occasionally unannounced, sometimes in the early morning on his way to work. Had he perhaps stopped by that morning and left the paper for my parents and me to see? What details of Kathleen's connection to me, or to someone else, might he have known? I dared not discuss this with him either. Again, some things are too close to home. What I did know was that he would do anything within his power to protect his friends and their families. A case in point: several months after Kathleen's death I found myself in a bit of trouble and spent a night in the city jail. It was he who saw to it that I was released early the next morning on his recognizance. That's the kind of person he was.

### Kathleen

Less than a year prior to that fateful Friday evening, she had arrived on a Greyhound bus with no job, no place of her own and no guarantee that she would be able to make it in a city eight hundred miles away. Eight hundred miles from Ursuline Catholic Preparatory School. Eight hundred miles from perquisite, privilege and coming-out parties. That was not her world.

She knew it never could be. So she had packed her bags and headed south. Her married sister was in Atlanta. She would stay with her until she found a steady job and a place to live.

The ad in the paper had called for a secretarial position at the Fulton Cotton Mill, on the eastern edge of town in a down-at-heels neighborhood called Cabbagetown. She had responded to the ad and secured an appointment only three days after arriving in the city. On the appointed day she took the Number 5 Decatur Street line to the interview, after transferring downtown, and arrived almost an hour ahead of time.

Her recollection from that first day was the constant drumming of the looms. The deafening noise as the administrative assistant led her through the maze of bobbin racks and cotton bolts. The whirring and clacking as the metal shafts rotated, swinging the picking sticks along a horizontal plane. As the picking sticks engaged with the ratches and catches. As the flying shuttles struck against the pickers and began their free flight, only to do it over again a hundred times a minute. It was all so surreal to her. She watched as the mill workers, men in faded dungarees and women in denim slacks and sleeveless blouses, mounted cotton yarn from winders onto the creels, directing the threads from each cone onto a large beam. They looked up from their work as she passed by. Some nodded. Some acknowledged her with a smile or a discreet wave of the hand. She imagined that a new face on the mill floor, especially one dressed in skirt and heels, was a rare occurrence. Having spent her short life up to that point in the sheltered confines of upper-middle-class Youngstown, she was mesmerized.

“This is Mill Number One,” the woman shouted over the cacophony. “If you get the job you’ll be working in the office building next door. My recommendation is that you spend as little time as you can out here. The noise will drive you mad.”

She was shown into a sparsely furnished room on the third floor. It was there that she waited for what seemed like an eternity, pacing the floor and peering out the window at the cars making their way up and down Boulevard Avenue. Finally the personnel manager arrived, cigar in hand.

“You’ll be working directly for me,” he said. “You’ll take my calls. You’ll make my appointments. You’ll type my letters. You’ll file and you’ll bring me coffee. That’s just about it. Do you think you’re up for it?”

She explained that, while her typing skills were better than average, she had never worked as a secretary before. He offered her the job anyway. Two-fifty an hour with overtime. She accepted on the spot. She would report to work the following Monday.

She had been on the job less than a week when she was given the opportunity to help edit the weekly employee newsletter for an additional fifty cents an hour. She was delighted to put her English degree to use and make some extra cash

Against the advice of the administrative assistant, the one who had hosted her on her first visit, she would spend her breaks and lunches on the mill floor. Rather than drive her crazy, as she had been warned it would, the experience piqued her desire to make a difference. She would soon learn the dark side of the source of her fascination with the goings-on at the mill. She would hear stories of the failed labor strike years before. Of the mill workers' dashed hopes as the textile union's efforts to improve their working conditions bore little fruit. Of the fears of work borne illnesses with exotic names she couldn't hope to pronounce. Illnesses that cut the workers' lives short by a decade or more. While she and her father, a prominent physician, did not have the best of relations since she had moved away from her home town, she would call him periodically. What exactly is byssinosis? Asbestosis? She cared for the plight of the workers. She made it her mission to improve their lives. She hoped the newsletter would become one vehicle for achieving that.

She secured a one bedroom ground floor apartment at Pershing Point, at the northern confluence of Peachtree and West Peachtree Streets. It was ideally located on a major bus line, with a stop right outside her door. And it was just up the road from the art museum. An avid art enthusiast, she would visit the museum often. She was also an ardent reader.

But there was another side to her. An edgier side. A side that likely first surfaced when she left the confines of her past. She would frequent night clubs in the evenings, more often than not partying and drinking a bit too much. Not long before her death, she took a part-time evening job working in a cocktail lounge.

She knew that building meaningful relationships in a new city is never easy, even for an attractive twenty-three-year-old, and especially if they are sought out in nightclubs and bars. Most of the people she met weren't interested in anything other than casual encounters. It was in one of those bars that she would meet and fall for a man five years her senior. A married man with a young child and another soon to be on the way, but with a wandering eye and a penchant for amorous play. A casanova to her paramour. I knew the man well.

### Eddie

Eddie "Chain Gang" Wilson was also twenty-three when, six months following Kathleen's death, he was fatally wounded after shooting a Douglasville patrolman four times in the chest.

The policeman would survive, but Wilson was found shot through the head, a .22 caliber revolver lying beside his body. Three of his accomplices, ranging in age from sixteen to eighteen, were discovered hiding along a creek bank and arrested soon thereafter.

Detectives sent Wilson's gun to the state crime lab. The weapon was found to have been used in the robbery/murder of a local steel executive. The unfortunate man, having been wounded from a single gunshot incurred during the robbery, drove his car several blocks before crashing into a building on Marietta Street and dying in the front seat, his engine still running. Police speculated that he was trying to make his way to the hospital. As it turns out, Wilson had been picked up on a traffic charge a few days before that incident, and a second handgun of the same caliber had been found in the glove box of his car. That gun was linked to the robbery-murder of another victim, a female operator of a grocery store located only a block and a half from where Wilson was living at the time. She was found lying outside the store, shot in the face, side, and wrist. Police found an open cash register drawer inside, all of its contents having been removed.

Police speculated that, because the guns were of the same caliber as that used to kill Kathleen, Wilson may have been her killer. They set out to compare the guns to the bullets found lodged in her head and back. But their caliber was one of the most common bore sizes used in the commission of crimes in the sixties and seventies. It was also one of the most common calibers for private gun ownership in general. Many of my friends owned .22 caliber handguns. There is no evidence that the police found a match to Wilson's weapons. He was never conclusively linked to her murder.

Eddie Wilson's nickname was well-deserved. In his short life he had led a gang of black teenage thieves, all of whom lived within a few blocks of each other on the eastern edge of Vine City, a shabby section of town known for its debris-laden streets, *no-knock* drug raids and high crime rate. In addition to having slain at least two innocent victims, perhaps more, he was reputed to have been linked to the robbery and rape of several women in the city, although the detail behind those incidents seems to have been lost to history. Was there more to the story of Eddie Wilson? Was he a drug dealer? Perhaps a *break and run* burglar? Even a contracted criminal? Or was he nothing more than a common street thug?

### Moving On

I remember running into her lover on the the morning I learned of her death. When I brought it up he was distant, evasive. He changed the subject.

I moved on, as we all must. But on occasion something will trigger a memory and my thoughts will return to her. A song on the radio reminds me of a moonstruck evening in a smoke-filled bar called the Bottom of the Barrel. A drive down West Peachtree past where her apartment had been, long ago replaced by a park surrounded by the sterility of metal-and-glass high-rises. An article about the gentrification of an abandoned cotton mill into upscale, overpriced lofts.

When I think of her I ask myself why? Why was she killed? The possibilities run through my mind like indelible images burned onto a continuous loop.

Evidence suggested, but did not prove, that the motive was not larcenous. The ring. The bracelet. The earrings. In a disturbing sort of way I find robbery to be more tolerable than something more salacious or perhaps more sinister.

Semen was found on a baby blue Kleenex near where Kathleen lay. There were bruises on her body. Was this primarily a sexual crime, or was sex collateral to something deeper, more calculated? Was she raped? The presence of semen suggested so. But rape kits would not be used for gathering evidence until eight years later.

Was she pregnant? Medical examiners would likely not have tested for that. Even today, autopsies often exclude examination for early-stage pregnancy unless there is reasonable cause to suggest a link to the death itself.

Was her killing premeditated and nefarious? Could she have been murdered because of something she knew or secrets she shared?

Did she know her killer? Or was she just an unfortunate, nameless victim?

And what about this Eddie Wilson character? Was he her slayer, as detectives had once suspected but never proved? Her death was not pinned on him. But if perhaps he was the one, did she wander into his purview by accident or was it planned that way?

I have wondered at times whether perhaps her burgeoning activism at the mill had aroused anger on the part of management, anger that could have resulted in an act of revenge.

### The Detective

Rarely do I ponder these possibilities without thinking about my parents' friend, the detective. What role did he really play in all of this? I wish, in hindsight, that I had mustered the courage to discuss her death with him. To ask him what he knew about her relationship with the married man. While he did not know the man as well as I, he knew him well enough. When the

detectives scoured the walk-up where she was living, they would surely have found his imprint inside.

Her apartment was small, a living room / kitchen / dining combo and a small bedroom. I know because I was there on several occasions. As I had begun to explore romantic relationships of my own, Kathleen would let me use it to entertain my girlfriend. I can picture her living room as if I were sitting, today, in an overstuffed chair looking up at the ceiling. Her married lover had an affinity for outré, avant-garde, bohemian decorations. He had adorned her ceiling with upside-down miniature furnishings—a dinner table replete with place settings, two chairs, a side table and lamp, as if the observer's world had been turned topsy-turvy. Surely this would have elicited curiosity and scrutiny on the part of the investigators. Surely the detectives would have found her lover's fingerprints throughout her apartment. But they claimed they were unable to lift any prints, which I find inexplicable. And, although she kept a diary, there is no indication that the investigators ever recovered it. Surely my parents' friend, the detective, was there to witness all of this. After all, the homicide department was small at the time, and he was a senior detective.

There is another odd thing about the detective that I have thought about often. When I was ten I would spend weekends with his son at their home north of the city, in what was at the time a rural neighborhood but is now just another casualty of suburban sprawl. We would roam the woods near his house, swim in the neighborhood lake, shoot BB guns and ride go-karts down a road that is now heavily traveled by soccer moms in SUVs. And, when his parents were away, we would sneak upstairs into their bedroom, careful not to arouse the suspicion of his grandmother, who lived in an apartment in the basement. The hinges would creak as we cautiously opened the closet door. Our hearts would pound with anticipation as we pushed back the suits and dresses and shoes to find the cardboard box secreted in the back of the closet. We would slowly open the lid of the box, our ten-year-old hands trembling. Inside we would find hundreds of eight-by-ten, black-and-white glossies from homicide crime scenes. Some were of nude or partially clothed women. Why, I wonder today, did he keep all of these gruesome photographs in his home? The fascination of adolescent boys when confronted with such hidden prey is one thing. After all, *boys will be boys*. But for an adult to hoard and hide them in his closet is quite another. Was it to satisfy some pent-up lurid, salacious or sadistic desire? Did he justify having them at home in the event he might need ready access to evidence from an unsolved case? Was it to keep evidence out of the hands of others? I wondered whether, seven years later, photographs of Kathleen's corpse may have ended up in that same cardboard box.

The detective has long since passed away, as have most of the people impacted by her death, except for me and her siblings—and her lover. And although our paths rarely cross, I have not had the courage to broach the subject with him when they do.

Of the murder scenarios that play and replay in my mind, only a few stand out. I conjure up images of what might have happened, of how things may have unfolded that Friday evening.

### What If? - An Unfortunate Case of Wrong Place / Wrong Time

She stood outside her apartment under a solitary streetlamp, her eyes fixed on a six-block stretch of West Peachtree toward downtown, straining to make out what she thought was the bus stopped at Fourteenth Street. She had run into her next door neighbor about an hour earlier. She had told him that she was going to a party. But the real story was that she would ride the four miles to Buckhead, where she planned to meet her boyfriend at the Five Paces Inn, an off-the-beaten-path dive bar on Irby Avenue, a block off of Roswell and sufficiently discreet to allow them to tryst away from prying eyes.

She was decked out in her new blue dress, a sexy, silky, low-cut number, bought especially for the occasion. She was sure he would like it. Who wouldn't? They would enjoy a few drinks in a dark corner of the bar. He would drive her back to her apartment and there they would remain until the wee hours of the morning, when he would return to his family, making up one of a host of improbable stories.

Was it because of her preoccupation with the bus that she didn't notice the faded '60 Chevy Impala that pulled up alongside the curb where she was standing? The window rolled down? The carload of street thugs? The .22 caliber revolver pointed at her?

They pulled her into the car. Gagged her. Blindfolded her. Ordered her to crouch on the back-seat floorboard as they took off toward Grove Park. At the construction site they removed her from the car and ordered her to disrobe.

The leader of the gang of thugs was the first to have his way with her. Then the others.

"Give me your jewelry and money," the leader -- was it Eddie Wilson? -- shouted as he handed her clothing to his nearest accomplice. Get rid of the evidence.

She took off her earrings and was about to remove her bracelet and birthstone ring when the thugs were startled by the headlights of a truck at the far end of the construction site.

"Let's get out of here," one of them yelled. Not thinking clearly, she set her feet as if to run. The leader shot her twice in the head. She staggered in the direction of the headlights, and as she did, he fired a third shot into her buttock.

The thugs sped off down Hollywood Road with nothing to show for their deeds but her new blue dress, bra and panties—and a gang rape. No money. No jewelry. Regardless of how things had unfolded, it is unlikely she would have left Grove Park alive.

### What If? - The Out-of-Town Firebrand

Nobody likes a troublemaker, especially one who rolls in from out of town and, just a week or so on the job, takes it upon herself to start riling up the workers. Her boss knew as soon as she started spending her breaks and lunch hours on the mill floor that something wasn't right.

It had been decades since the mill employees, urged on by the United Textile Workers, had organized a strike that garnered national attention. The strikers had failed in their efforts to unionize, but their actions had set the company back immeasurably. And then this twenty-something piece of tail shows up thinking she's going to be their savior. He'd be damned if he was going to let her screw things up.

It had all come to a head when she decided to publish an article in the employee newsletter urging the workers to organize. He called her on it. She was defiant. Obstinate. Insubordinate. He threatened to fire her. She stood her ground. Management's relationship with the rank-and-file men and women on the floor was tenuous at best. It wouldn't take much to push them over the edge. Something had to be done. He knew a man, an ex-spool handler, who could take care of things for him. Whatever it took, so long as his hands were clean.

A phone call and five hundred dollars. That's all it took.

"Just get it done. And keep me out of it," he remembered saying. "And bring me back proof."

He told the man where she lived, when she got off work, the route she normally took home, of her fondness for weekend partying. The man would stake her place out for a couple of days before finally catching her getting off the bus in front of her apartment on that Friday evening. But before the hired gun had an opportunity to confront her, a neighbor appeared. He waited patiently and, as he had predicted, a short while later she reappeared at the bus stop. That's when he pulled a gun on her, forced her into his car, and took off. He knew of the site work in Grove Park. The construction workers would have clocked out for the day. He would take her there, force her to disrobe and kill her. Her clothes would serve as proof of the act. And while he was at it, he might just release some tension. Why not? On the outskirts of a desolate construction site with an attractive woman, a nude one at that.

But what of the earrings? Perhaps he had planned to take them as further proof but, in the heat of the moment, he failed to do so, leaving them beside her body.

### What If? - A Lover's Revenge

She stepped off the bus a little after six thirty. She was about to enter her place when she ran into her neighbor. They spoke briefly before parting ways. She had about an hour to get ready before the man she was dating was to pick her up at the curb outside her door. She would change from her work clothes into the new dress he had bought her. He had given it to her, along with a pair of earrings, the prior weekend as they had sat at a quiet table in a dark corner of The Five Paces Inn.

As she waited under the streetlamp for him to pick her up, she replayed in her mind the events from a week earlier. When they had entered the bar, they had taken the same table in the dark corner where they always sat. They had ordered drinks. As they sat side-by-side he had slowly reached his left arm under the table. He had run his hand along the edge of her dress and part of the way up her thigh. When they had first met, it hadn't taken her long to realize that he was not the affectionate type, far from it, but he knew in short order how to captivate her.

He had reached into a shopping bag and pulled out a small box, handing it to her. She had opened it. Inside were two gold stud earrings. She had removed them from the box and held them in her right hand. She remembered reaching up and kissing his cheek as he looked away, scanning the room. She had removed the earrings she was wearing and replaced them with the new ones. In the bag she had also found a blue satin knee-length party dress. She had promised to wear it the following weekend when they were to meet.

"I have something I have to tell you," she remembered saying as her hands trembled. It had seemed as if someone else were speaking and she was a mere observer, the words muffled and obscure. "I think I'm pregnant."

"How could that be?" he had replied, his face reddening, his lips pursed.

"I missed my period."

"Aren't you on the pill?"

"I stopped a month ago." She had not been able to bring herself to make eye contact with him, looking down at her lap as she spoke.

"How could you do that?" he shouted at her as nearby patrons turned to look at them. "Gather your things. We're leaving now." He threw a twenty-dollar bill onto the table and stormed out the front door. She followed close behind and got into the car. He dropped her off at her door. They did not speak all week except to make plans to meet again this evening.

She saw his car approach. Her pulse raced. Her hands were cold and clammy. She wondered how the evening would unfold after what had happened the week before. He stopped right where she was standing, reaching over and opening the passenger door. She got in and closed the door behind her. He barely looked up as he drove off. Instead of merging onto Peachtree Street toward Buckhead, as she expected, he took an abrupt left and doubled back onto Spring Street. He peeled off at Tenth Street and headed west.

“Where are you taking me?”

“Be quiet.”

Those were the last words he spoke until he pulled the car up alongside the construction site off Hollywood Road. He reached over and opened the glove box. He kept a .22 caliber pistol there.

“Get out of the car,” he shouted. She sat in the passenger seat crying. “I said get out of the car, now.”

He took her about a hundred yards away, where he knew they would not be seen from the road.

“Take your dress off. And the studs.” She looked up at him standing over her, tears running down her face. “I don’t want to see you wearing them.”

“Why are you doing this to me? Please don’t. We can work things out. I would never do anything to hurt you.”

One final act against her will, a last hurrah of sorts, before the end.

Then, as she stood nude before him, pleading for her life, he raised the pistol in his right hand, took aim and fired two shots into her head. She swirled around and took a single step, but as she did he fired one more shot into her lower back, felling her to the ground. He grabbed her dress and underclothes and took off in his car, leaving the earrings lying on the ground beside her. He returned home to his wife and young son to face another day, but not before swinging by Kathleen’s place (her apartment key was not found on her body) and removing any incriminating evidence, including her diary.

### What If? - A Lover’s Revenge Redux

At times I envision a similar Lover’s Revenge scenario playing out. This time it isn’t her lover who does the deed, but rather a hired gun, perhaps Eddie Wilson, perhaps someone else.

In this version, her lover managed to keep his composure upon learning the news of her pregnancy. I know he could have done that. He could be cool when circumstances called for it.

Silently and stealthily vindictive, he would choose instead to plan her murder in such a way that it would be harder to pin it on him. The story would play out in a similar fashion to the Out-of-Town Firebrand scenario, but in this case the motive was a lover's revenge and the desperate act of someone with a lot to lose. Her dress would serve as proof of the act.

### Letting Go

I wish the person I was at seventeen had had the presence of mind, in the moment, to confront others, to pursue the facts, to ponder eventualities. Unanswered questions remain, but opportunities to answer them diminish with time. With the help of a private investigator friend, I have gained access to the decades-old cold case murder file, retrieved from somewhere deep in the innards of the police department. The available cold case material is noteworthy not because of what is in the file but because of what is glaringly absent. There is no indication that the married lover was ever brought in for questioning, even though he was named in affidavits filed with the police, and it would have been easy to have located him. The evidence box has not been located even though the murder file contains a detailed list of its contents, including the baby blue Kleenex. There is no indication that any fingerprints were recovered. Not from her apartment. Not from the crime scene. While a cursory, perfunctory cold case audit was conducted several years later, the case was never seriously reopened in the intervening years since her death, when DNA evidence could have shed light on the killer's identity. I can think of only two cogent explanations for these glaring oversights. Either the detectives did not collect key evidence, destroyed existing evidence, and failed to pursue clear leads in an effort to protect someone. Or they were guilty of remarkably shoddy police work.

I continue to pursue the truth, working with the private investigator. But even if my efforts pay off, much of Kathleen's past, her hopes and desires, her relationships both platonic and otherwise, in the open and clandestine, her life cut short senselessly and inexplicably, will never be brought to full closure.