

Audio Snapshot I: The Other Side of the Door

David: When I saw all the blood I . . . literally, I didn't know if he was alive or dead, or what had happened to him. I had no idea. I just saw blood everywhere, and it's scary; like, dripping enough that it's making puddles from above. I had no idea what I was going to find.

Joe: My name is Joe Grissom. I am a teacher with Chicago Public Schools - 6th grade.

David and I, we were neighbors . . . I mean, we hung out in the building, and we were friends in that sense, but we never really went out together very much . . . and I don't remember who, but one of us pitched the idea of going out and just having fun.

David: First of all, because I know Joe, and I know what he was going through at that point, like, he was separated from his partner - his boyfriend . . . he was, you know, laid off from his job.

Joe: I was in between jobs . . . and my partner and I were taking some time off.

Rarely do I get really drunk, but this night, I got really drunk, like kind of funny drunk, like just ridiculous.

We had a good time. Went to a few neighborhood bars. Took a cab up to, ah, Jackhammer, which is quite far north from where we were, and then took another cab down to Andersonville and went to a few bars there; late, late, late . . .

And we were walking home from a bar on Clark Street.

David: We ended up like running down the street – it was really cold out – it was February, so we were both running and laughing – and sometimes he was ahead and sometimes I was ahead, and then at some point, as I was turning this corner, I was ahead of him, and so as I turned the corner and start to go into the gate of the building, I looked back . . . and he had stopped.

Joe: I saw someone just kind of lingering on the street and I initiated talk with him, and I invited him home.

David kind of walked . . . I think he walked ahead of us a few feet, I think, just to give us our privacy.

David: I didn't know what was going on. I assumed it's somebody he knew. So I kind of kept my eye out for him . . . he didn't come back down yet. So I went into the building,

and because my unit looks over the sidewalk, I waited to see him come back, and he did come back with the guy.

Joe: It all felt very . . . very natural, I guess. I invited him in and we got comfortable on my couch.

David: I had a, like, strange vibe about the guy. To me he looked like . . . I felt like a certain rough edge.

Joe: And I don't remember what we were talking about. It wasn't very long of a discussion, but we started heading to my bedroom.

David: I went ahead and got ready for bed - and he lives directly above me at the time, so, you can hear walking or creaking or things, but, it was quiet. I didn't hear a lot up there.

Joe: We - not fully - but we did disrobe. And I remember being on my bed . . . and there was some informal, sexual acts. And that's when I noticed that something was wrong, and he just seemed like psychologically, he snapped.

I wasn't scared though. I remember I was not scared, but I knew that he wasn't the same person that he was when he came in. And, I think I offered him a polite exit. You know, maybe he wasn't attracted to me, or maybe he'd changed his mind and he'd rather just leave.

So, I remember - and this will be more significant perhaps later in the story - but, I was just in my underwear. I walked him to the door, I guess, after he put all of his clothes back on.

And I had no clue. I did not have an ounce of fear in me, or doubt.

That was my last memory . . . being at my front door, and I think I was unlocking the bolt.

David: It's about 30 minutes and I had brushed my teeth, and as I stepped out of the bathroom . . . as I was walking, I heard what sounded like a body hitting the floor.

What really struck me I guess was cuz I had some sense of knowing he took somebody up there. It felt weird . . . like wrong. Like something about it made me scared.

That had to all be on a hunch of a sound of something hitting the floor was not the right kind of fall. It felt like a body dropping.

But then I also was thinking, you know, that Joe's taken somebody home and maybe I don't want to be overreacting. So you have this little battle with yourself about, "Oh, my God, what if I'm overreacting" and how embarrassing.

But something about it didn't feel right, so I went and called him, and it rang like four times, and he didn't answer. And then I had a feeling of like, "Something's really wrong."

And so I grabbed my telephone and ran upstairs.

Joe: By that time, David had heard what was going on and was outside of my front door banging, you know, on the other side of the door.

David: As I got to the door . . . I could hear a noise; something was happening in there, and then I knocked on the door, there was silence.

Joe: I don't remember David banging on my door or making a ruckus. But I do remember being on my kitchen floor and being in a choke-hold and pleading for him not to kill me.

David: And I yelled out for Joe . . . I said, "Joe, are you OK?"

And I heard nothing. And I could feel the other person on the other side of the door; you could feel that someone was standing there.

So there was silence, and I said "Joe, if you don't say something right now, I'm going to call the police." There was silence, so I dialed 911.

Joe: You know, not too many people can say they know what it feels like to be attacked at a level where you think you're going to die. And I was almost certain I was going to die. And that's probably the most horrifying feeling one can have.

David: When all that's happening and I'm talking with the police, or 911, then the commotion starts again . . . and I hear doors opening to the back deck.

Joe: I said it will become more important later in the story - or the incident - that I was in my underwear? Because it was mid- to-late February . . . lots of snow out, it was very cold. And he, for some odd reason, opened my back door, onto my back patio on the second level, and brought me outside . . .

David: I ran back downstairs – I left my front door open – and I ran back through my place out to the back deck . . .

Joe: . . . and continued pummeling me out there . . . there was blood, you know, everywhere.

David: When I opened my back door and walked out, there was blood pooling on the deck in like three or four different places . . . a lot of blood . . . like, it was big puddles.

And I could hear stuff happening, like . . . I don't know what's happening . . . but commotion. And I yelled up, and I said "I've got the police on the line and they are on their way, so whatever's going on, the police are coming, right now."

Then I heard some running footsteps, and then I realized that somebody was running out the front door of his unit and coming through the stairwell . . . and my front door was wide open.

So I ran across and shut mine and locked it as that person passed my door.

And then I ran out back to see Joe.

Joe: I was sitting, or perhaps lying, by my neighbor's back door, almost naked, mid-winter.

David: I raced off my deck an around, and I'm running up, and as I turn the corner and got up to his area – he had moved down from his deck to a walkway area – and he was sitting in a chair and he was just covered . . . I could just see, like, his blue eyes, and everything else was red . . . like "Carrie," the movie . . . like, it's, like, just blood and blue eyes.