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An Iowa murder mystery is deepening. From a twisted sex ring, to destroyed evidence and a killer never caught. Twenty-year-old Lisa Peak was raped and murdered 34 years ago, while she was a student at Wartburg College. Her mom is still searching for answers. But investigators' last hope for finding solid evidence may be running out.

Lisa Peak no longer lies in her Knoxville grave. Detectives dug up her body hoping to find DNA evidence. But now, they say her coffin was too broken down, her body too deteriorated to preserve her killer's DNA. The secrets of who killed her may stay locked out of sight forever. But Lisa's mom thinks one man's bizarre sex ring may have set the murder in motion.

"We saved clippings and have a scrapbook full of them here," says Mary Peak.

Mary Peak can't look back at her daughter Lisa's college graduation or wedding.

"I think I ran out of places to stick these eventually."

Instead the pages of her scrapbook remind her of the torture leading to Lisa's death.

She says, "That was the worst of times."

And when Mrs. Peak looks back, one face sticks in her mind. John Carmody lured Lisa into a shocking sex ring in Mason City just months before her murder.

"They arrested Carmody and he was sentenced...That was the police man," says Mrs. Peak pointing to a picture of Mason City Investigator Duane Jewell.

"We first got involved with Mrs. Peak bringing her daughter to the police station, bringing Lisa here," says Jewell.

Mrs. Peak adds, "We went up to Mason City, took her up there and that's when Duane Jewell thought she was some silly girl trying to cover up what she'd been doing."

"It seemed a little far out, yes. But then when we got another girl, once you get another one telling you basically the same thing then hey we gotta get into this a little bigger," says Jewell.

The girls told of a life of terror, trapped under Carmody's will, forced into sex.

"It was really intimidation, walking around with a gun," says Jewell. "That was the big thing, that they saw these guns and they were scared to death not to do anything. So it wasn't beat up rape, it wasn't knock down rape, it was rape by intimidation."

And Carmody photographed the humiliation. "Worse than Penthouse," says Jewell.

Jewell says Carmody controlled close to 15 girls. They could leave, but knew they had to come back. I tracked one down, now a grown woman.

She tells me: "He flaunted pistols and knives and we were afraid of him. He kept threatening to do things to my father, who lived in town, and would report on things my father was doing as if he was having him followed."

And the girls believed Carmody's power went far beyond Mason City.

The anonymous victim adds, "We truly believed he had mafia ties. He told us his father was in the mafia and that he (Jack) had bodyguards."

After nearly a year of living hell for some of the girls, police moved in.

"We got search warrants looking for guns and pictures," says Jewell.

Adds Mrs. Peak, "The police in the nighttime went out and raided the place where

Carmody lived."

Carmody was arrested at his house in the middle of Mason City. He lured the girls up the stairs one by one and inside windows, he turned their lives into a nightmare.

"This is where he lived and this is where he did his deeds," says Jewell. "His bathroom was just full of aftershave, cologne all over the place, I suppose he thought he was appealing."

And police found more than aftershave there.

"This is where they found the gun," says Jewell. "That's the gun, that's the baby right there that Carmody used to threaten his girls with," he says, holding the weapon out. "I've been carrying the gun now for many, many years and I've always felt kind of proud to carry it because it was a kind of case we cleared up."

Detectives clinched the case with one more discovery at the house of another person who helped Carmody.

"We found some Samsonite luggage there. In my haste, rather than the key, I broke it open and there's these, tumbles out these pictures, dossier, file on every girl," says Jewell.

The pornographic pictures put Carmody behind bars, in May 1976. Then Jewell put the pictures out of reach.

"Our CSI I guess you'd call it at that time, he witnessed me cutting up every one of those pictures, took me a long time, destroyed all those pictures, but I wasn't going to let anybody else go away with them. I had three girls of my own and I thought my God, if some guy had one of my daughters and said I'm going to kill your dad if you don't do what I say, you know, it could happen," says Jewell. "The head of the DCI was awful made at me about that, destroying evidence or whatever. Well the case is over."

But just four months later, the final shock, Lisa was raped and murdered, while Carmody was still in jail.

"Oh just complete desolation, what can you do, it's done you can't go back and of course then saying to ourselves well maybe we shouldn't have made her go up and tell about Carmody, maybe she'd still be alive if we hadn't done that," says Mrs. Peak

Jewell counters, "When that first happened, I knew that Carmody didn't do it, he was in prison and I knew he didn't have any connections... He was just a small town hood himself... Organized crime don't have one-man operations like that."

Detectives never tied the cases together and Mrs. Peak now believes Carmody wasn't involved, but she still draws a line from him to her daughter's death. She believes Carmody's sex ring set her daughter on the path to meet her next rapist, the man who would kill her.

"I think that was the thing that did it. I think he'd heard about her and it interested him and he wanted to get a hold of her," says Mrs. Peak.

She adds, "I keep hoping this is not the end, that it's going to keep going on until we tie up the pieces and we have a conclusion... Before I go here, I go here and Frank goes there. Since we're both over 80 now it won't be long until we're out here too."

Until then, Mrs. Peak can only hope for answers, peace and justice.

Even without new clues from exhuming Lisa's body, investigators are not giving up. They say they've made slow progress over the years and still have hope they can find Lisa's killer.

We also tried to track down John Carmody. Up until last year, he was in a civil commitment center for sex offenders in Cherokee. But the paper trail ends there.

Carmody is now 71 and out there, somewhere.

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MONTICELLO, Iowa (AP) -- The future of Lake Delhi is in limbo.

For decades the nine-mile-long lake offered a northeast Iowa retreat. But when the dam broke Saturday, the lake drained away in hours.

Homeowners in the area owned the dam. Its only purpose was recreation.

Department of Natural Resources officials say if homeowners want to rebuild, they have to meet design requirements.

Maggie Burger is executive director of the Lake Delhi Recreation Association. She says the future is unclear. Officials have to first assess the damage.

The dam failed Saturday as rising floodwater from the Maquoketa River ate a 30-foot-wide hole in it.

Areas below the dam, including in Hopkinton and Monticello were evacuated.

Information from: The Des Moines Register, <http://www.desmoinesregister.com>