

# 11 rapes, 4 states, 1 suspect: The ‘extraordinarily improbable’ defense of Calvin Kelly

**Matt Mencarini, Lansing State Journal**

**S**hawana Hall ran across two lanes of the empty highway and through the rain-soaked grass in the median.

She ran across two more lanes and toward a fence. Fleeing through the western part of Kalamazoo, she spotted the police car, a laptop screen illuminating the vehicle, so she kept going. Over the fence, through a

parking lot. She sprinted up to the patrol car, beat on the window and said she'd been raped.

The man had a knife and struck her in the face, she told the officer. She met her attacker that night, but didn't know his name.

The officer gave Shawana a number to call if she wanted police to pursue the case and then took her to a nurse trained in collecting information and evidence, including swabs and samples, they hoped might identify her rapist. The process took hours. She left alone and in different clothes when the exam was over, having never spoken with police again.

Eight months later, in December 2008, DNA evidence identified a suspect: Calvin Kelly, a Memphis man who spent decades as a truck driver and traveled all over the country.

Shawana wasn't the first woman whose rape led police to Kelly. Marie, a St. Louis woman, said he raped her in the back of his truck the year before. And Shawana wasn't the last. A woman in Virginia the following year told police she was raped, the investigation once again leading police to Kelly. Three women in three states in three consecutive years.

Kelly maintains his innocence. He never raped anyone, he's said, and these women lied to settle a grudge.

Yet a look at these women reveals something else. Kelly's victims were poor, black and vulnerable, characteristics that make them more likely to be raped and less likely to be believed. Almost all the investigations ended without charges, the most common outcome when a rape is reported. Indeed, less than one percent of rapes end with a rapist in jail.

"These are challenging, but also simple cases," said Angela Povilaitis, an experienced sex crimes prosecutor who at the same time led the prosecutions of Kelly and disgraced former doctor Larry Nassar.

"It really comes down to do you believe his version or do you believe the victim's version."

Kelly's case went to trial in September 2017. After six days of testimony – including from Shawana and Marie and the woman from Virginia – and a day of deliberation, Povilaitis found herself waiting for the verdict as

confident as she'd ever been as prosecutor. The jury, however, found Kelly not guilty.

But that isn't the whole story. And that isn't the end of the story.

## **Falsely accused or serial rapist?**

What Povilaitis knew and couldn't tell the Kalamazoo County jury was that it wasn't just three women in three states in three years.

It was 11 women in four states over the course of three decades who told police that they'd been raped with the ensuing investigations leading to Kelly.

So Kelly is either a man who has repeatedly been falsely accused, or Kelly is a serial rapist.

The first known rape report police connected to Kelly is from Memphis in 1985, when a small, red sports car pulled up alongside a woman walking down the street.

The driver offered a ride, and she accepted. Once inside the car, he hit her in the chest and pulled out a gun. He drove her to a lot behind a school and raped her twice. The woman picked Kelly out of a photo lineup, but by the time police went for their warrant, Kelly had moved to St. Louis and an extradition effort failed.

Two years later, in May 1987, a woman told St. Louis police that a man raped her in her home. DNA evidence eventually linked the case to Kelly, but not until 2015.

In November 1987, a woman told police she was standing near an intersection in the rain when a man drove up and asked if she wanted a ride. She said yes, and he drove her to an alley, pulled out a knife and raped her.

He told police they had sex in his car and she wanted money afterward, adding that she had a knife and tried to cut him. At the police station, she identified Kelly as her rapist.

Prosecutors didn't charge Kelly.

In 1989, two women told St. Louis police they were raped in Sherman Park. Police made the connection between the two cases and tracked down Kelly. He told police the women were prostitutes and he hadn't paid them.

Prosecutors didn't charge Kelly in either case.

Months later, in August 1990, a woman told police that she'd invited Kelly, whom she knew, into her home. He later choked her until she passed out and then raped her on the floor.

Kelly told police the sex was consensual. He fell asleep afterward, and when he woke up, he thought the woman had stolen from him.

"I got so mad, I hit her one time, and that's what she got mad about," Kelly told police during an interview in the St. Louis police sex crimes unit. "She knew I had been down here for rape before, and she was mad 'cause I hit her. That's why she called the police and said I raped her. There was no rape."

For the fourth time since November 1987, St. Louis prosecutors didn't charge Kelly.

The pattern in St. Louis – reported rape, denial and no charges – would play out again.

## A fight in the dark

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Seventeen years later, in March 2007, Marie stood in the rain on a St. Louis street. She'd missed her bus and was facing a 45-minute wait for the next

one when she turned to see Kelly getting out of a tractor trailer parked at a gas station.

He'd called out to her, and she walked over.

She was 36 and had been fighting drug addiction for 19 years. She'd been clean for four months but recently relapsed. She was feeling down and was headed to see a friend.

Marie didn't know Kelly, but he offered a ride.

He assured her he'd take her to her friend's house but had to drop off the trailer first. Marie expected the detour to be quick.

As he drove, he asked if something was wrong, and they talked about her relapse.

A short while later, he pulled into a lot, within sight of a St. Louis police station, and got out of the cab.

When Kelly got back in, he lunged at Marie.

She struggled to fight him off in the darkness. She kicked him. She bit him. She tried everything she could. Then, as he put pressure on her throat and she struggled to breathe, she stopped fighting. Maybe, she thought, if she stopped she'd live through the night.

She says he raped her on the bed in the back of the cab.

Marie had a knife with her that night, tucked into in her sock. She reached down and searched for the handle as he raped her. But he noticed and got there first.

He continued raping her, telling her how much he liked it and that he could continue all night. Marie isn't sure how long this went on, but when he was done, he became a different person. The violent man was gone; he was back to the man who offered her a ride and refuge from the rain.

As he drove her to her friend's house, Kelly said he wanted to date her and wondered what they'd tell their friends about how they met. Marie forced herself to smile because she wanted to get out alive.

When he pulled up to her friend's house, he gave her back the knife and handed her a piece of paper with his phone number.

After he drove off, Marie called police and told them what happened.

"He was telling me that he drives from state to state and that he pick girls that get high because he knows that the police won't believe them," Marie said. "And all he's got to do is say 'They mad because I didn't pay them what they wanted. I promised to pay them, and I didn't. I just got what I wanted, and I didn't have to pay them.'"

"And he said they would believe him over me. He said he had done it before. He got away with it before."

As she began to see that police didn't believe her – they pointed out that she used drugs and questioned why a rapist would give his phone number – Marie told them the man forced her into the truck with a knife of his own.

"I wanted them to take me serious," she said. "I wanted them to act on what just happened to me. And it's like, as long as they stood there and debated whether I was telling the truth or not, they was letting him get away."

She also told them that he forced her to smoke crack, knowing police would find out that she'd recently used and that would be yet another reason to doubt her. She admitted these lies to police about two weeks after the initial report.

After she reported her rape, police took Marie to the hospital where a nurse collected evidence for the rape kit that would be processed and later be entered into a database accessible by law enforcement all over the country.

"I left the hospital and just said forget it. I just felt like nothing was going to come of it," Marie said. She believed police saw her as a drug addict who got into a truck with a stranger and maybe deserved what happened.

"That's how they make you feel."

In March 2007, for the fifth time since 1987, St. Louis prosecutors decided not to charge Kelly.

# 'I ran from here'

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About a year later, in April 2008, Shawana was celebrating her 31st birthday. She had a few drinks with her aunt and sister, then walked to a friend's house in Kalamazoo, had a few more drinks and got high.

Shawana had been around drugs, in one way or another, most of her adult life, but she didn't try crack until 2007.

Shawana had talked with her younger sister Talaya about rehab and was thinking about going. But the night of her birthday she was still using.

As Shawana and her friend walked to a nearby liquor store, a light-colored four-door car pulled up and the driver struck up a conversation.

He was with someone both Shawana and her friend knew. When he asked if he could go back and party with them, they said yes.

Back at the house, Kelly asked Shawana if he could buy her a birthday drink but said they'd have to swing by his hotel first so he could grab his wallet. She said yes, expecting a quick trip before returning to the house.

They drove down Frank Street to Westnedge Avenue and then about 15 minutes later they were on U.S. 131, on the western edge of Kalamazoo driving through the rain and heading toward the Red Roof Inn.

The car slowed and pulled over to the side of the highway. He got out but didn't say why. Shawana thought something was wrong with the car, but then he came back with a knife and told her to get in the back. Frightened, she did what he said.

She cried as he raped her and feared he might kill her, she later testified.

She asked him to stop, but he didn't. He'd rape her twice more, she said, driving the car further along the highway between each rape. Finally, he opened the door and told her to get out.

He drove off and she started running, in the dark and through the rain. Across the highway and over the fence and up to the police car.

Shawana, scared and crying, wanted police to find her rapist. She also worried what might happen once the officer discovered there was a misdemeanor warrant for her arrest.

"After what I just went through, I didn't want to go to jail," she said. So she gave the officer a false name. That wouldn't matter, however, because by the time a detective was assigned to the case, eight months later, Shawana was gone.

"After the incident happened, I ran from here," she said. "I thought he still lived here. I had no idea he was not from here. I didn't want to be nowhere near him, nowhere around where he could hurt me again."

## 'Let me start here'

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In 2012, Special Agent Karen Fairley started her first case for the Michigan Attorney General's Office looking for the wrong person.

Not only was this her first case in the AG's Office cold case sexual assault unit, this was her first sexual assault case. She'd retired from the Detroit Police Department after a career investigating fraud cases, internal affairs complaints and employment matters.

Fairley went through new training. She learned memory is complicated, even before trauma is added on.



In fact, rape and sexual violence trauma can lead to the most fragmented or forgotten memories, said Jennifer Freyd, a professor of psychology at the University of Oregon.

Sometimes the victim will focus on one thing to the exclusion of all others, maybe it's the wallpaper or an odor or a weapon. Sometimes a victim can't keep the memory away and sometimes, Freyd said, even if they want to remember, they're unable to bring all or even pieces back.

And victims don't always react to an assault in a way that makes sense. The neurobiological response might prevent them from screaming or fighting, said Tom Tremblay, a former sex crimes detective. And because of the chemicals the brain releases during a traumatic event, the victim might smile or show little emotion when talking with police.

Police should view trauma as evidence of non-consent, said Tremblay, who teaches the victim-centered approach, a shift away from the traditional method of investigating sexual assaults.

"The way that the police have been trained to respond to all crimes is to respond quickly. Ask what happened, what happened next, what happened after that," he said. "When a victim struggles to recall details and sequence of events, again, police have looked at this suspiciously."

This new approach hasn't been around long enough for multiple studies, but the early returns are positive, said Rebecca Campbell, a Michigan State University psychology professor.

"What we do know is that generally that the more that you can help people alleviate stress, alleviate trauma, and can help them feel safe and secure, they're more likely to provide information," she said. "They're more likely to engage in a longer period of time. It is easier for them to remember details."

Law enforcement's poor treatment of victims and mishandling of rape investigations have been documented in cities across the country.

The cold case sexual assault unit was set up to be an antidote to the ills that weaken rape investigations. The idea was that a small unit embracing the victim-centered approach could make a difference on the most difficult cases, the ones that had languished for years without suspects being identified, without regular contact with victims or without much investigation at all.

Fairley joined the AG's Office expecting to investigate fraud cases and was now focused on crimes she never particularly wanted to investigate, but there was a case among the dozens sent over by the State Police that caught her eye.

"I noticed, according to the Excel sheet that we had, he had four different (DNA) hits, four different states in which he was named as a suspect," she said. "So I'm like, what's up with this? Let me start here."

One of Fairley's first stops was the friend Shawana had been with that night in April 2008. In that interview, in August 2012, Fairley learned Shawana had lied about her name.

Once she had Shawana's name, Fairley had to find her, which proved difficult.

After months of exhausting every avenue she could, Fairley put the case aside and moved on to others. She picked the case back up in September 2013 and once again went to see Shawana's mother. This time, however, she left with a lead.

Shawana was in jail in Indianapolis.

## 'A good spirit'

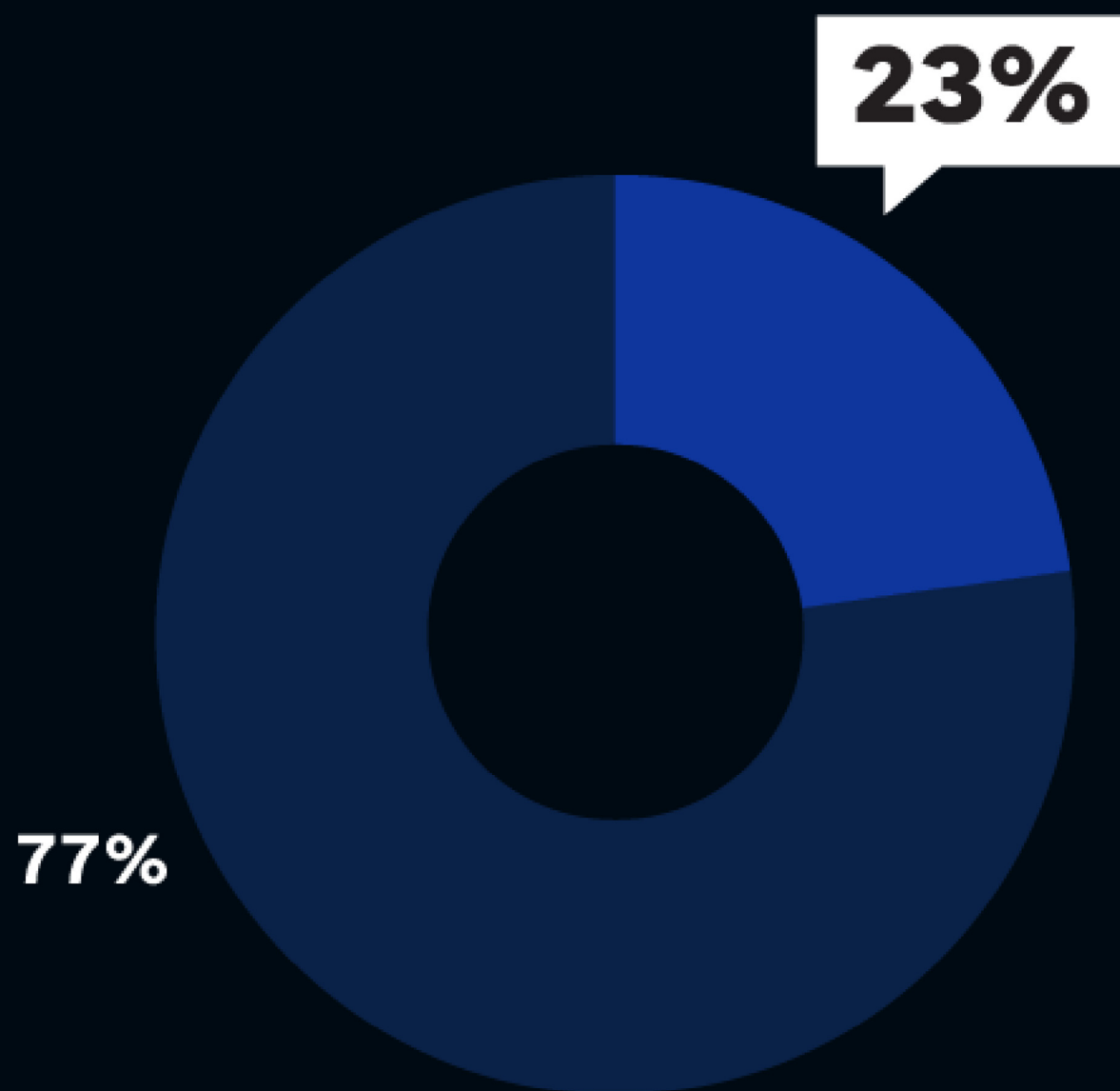
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Two months after she met with Shawana, Fairley went to meet with Marie, who was skeptical of the Michigan detective.

Before he dropped her off in 2007, Marie says Kelly told her that he had inside connections. She took this as a warning should she ever decide to report him to police.

That's why she didn't trust the St. Louis detective who came to see her when she was in drug treatment in 2010 after DNA results were returned from her rape kit.

# Percentage of rapes or sexual assaults reported to police in 2016, according to National Crime Victimization Survey



SOURCE: National Crime Victimization

## SOURCE: National Crime Victimization Survey, USA TODAY

Rape victims often have trust issues, said Thema Bryant-Davis, an associate professor of psychology at Pepperdine University.

When they're raped by a stranger, the issue becomes "Not only do I have difficulty trusting in intimate relationships, but trusting people in general," she said. "So just walking down the street, having to be very vigilant and being super guarded."

Marie agreed to meet with Fairley in November 2013, but just as she had since the rape, Marie carried her gun with her. And she had a friend follow them.

The officers who first responded to Marie's report made her feel so small she can measure it with her thumb and index finger nearly touching. And she still feared the inside connections Kelly mentioned.

But Fairley made her feel comfortable. She believed Marie.

"Her spirit was a good spirit," Marie said. "And I felt that. And so I took the gun back into the house and I was like, I think I'm all right."

The two women sat on Marie's porch and talked.

"I never forgot about the rape. I just didn't want no part of it," Marie said. "But then after Ms. Karen came, she made me realize that if I didn't speak up he was just going to keep harming people."

# Vulnerability

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Fairley returned to Michigan with Marie's agreement to testify against Kelly if the AG's Office charged him.

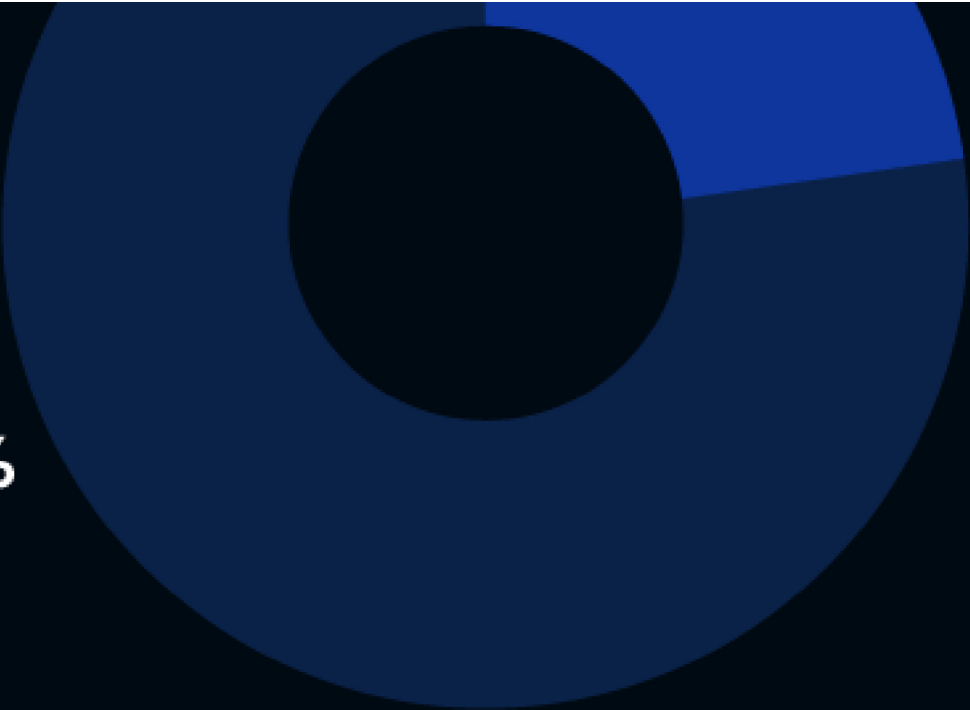
As Fairley's investigation continued, so did the evidence to suggest that Kelly might be a serial rapist. Fairley and Povilaitis not only had the cases from 1985 to 1990, they had Shawana's case, Marie's case and two investigations after, in Virginia in 2009 and in Memphis in 2010.

Research suggests that rapists usually have more than one victim, a finding further bolstered as once-untested rape kits have been processed.

**Percentage of sexual assault victims from 2005-10 who sought out a victim service agency**



**23%**



77%

SOURCE U.S. Department of Justice study,  
USA TODAY

Cities like Detroit, Los Angeles, New York City and Cleveland all had large inventories of untested rape kits. In Memphis, where Kelly lived for years, more than 12,000 once-untested kits have been sent for processing.

Rachel Lovell, a Case Western Reserve University researcher, who is working with the Cuyahoga County prosecutors to look at Cleveland's backlog. She and other researchers found that a quarter of the defendants

were linked via DNA to more than one untested rape kit in the backlog. A similar trend was found in Detroit's kits.

Analysis of these once-untested kits is also revealing that a rapist's choice of targets centers on vulnerability, Lovell said. So they'll rape children, intimate partners and strangers.

"That vulnerability makes it much less likely to have successful investigative outcomes, successful prosecutorial outcomes," she said. "Prosecutors are less likely to take the case. There's less evidence to do this. Jurors have a harder time convicting on these cases."

Most women who are raped don't tell police. In 2016, according to the most recent National Crime Victimization Survey, less than a quarter of rapes were reported. Prosecution and conviction also is uncommon. In 2006, researchers put the likelihood of a rape being reported, prosecuted and resulting in incarceration at just 0.35 percent.

In one way or another, Kelly avoided prosecution on rape charges for decades, but that ended in 2014 when Povilaitis, the assistant attorney general, moved forward with charges for the rape of Shawana.

Kelly was arrested, and Fairley went to interview him in a Memphis jail. She already knew his defense. She'd read the police reports.

During interviews on consecutive days, Kelly tried to convince Fairley that prostitutes or women with grudges had falsely reported him. He emphatically denied that he raped Shawana or Marie or anyone.

"No, ma'am. No ma'm," he told Fairley, moments later adding, "There was no rape."

Kelly told Fairley he could see how all this looked, but he was telling the truth. And if he had to, he'd take the case to trial.

## The trial

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Kelly kept his word and exactly three years later, jury selection began in a Kalamazoo County courthouse.

It was 2017 and Kelly, who police identified as a suspect in multiple rapes going back to 1985, was going on trial for the first time.

Years had passed between Kelly's arrest and trial because the prosecution and defense fought over what the jury could hear.

Eight women who'd reported rapes had agreed to testify, and Povilaitis, the assistant attorney general, wanted to call them all. Kelly's attorneys only wanted the jury to hear Shawana. The Michigan Court of Appeals twice overruled the trial judge's rulings limiting the number who could testify.

"It strikes us as extraordinarily improbable," a three-judge panel wrote, "that eight unrelated women in four different states would fabricate reports of sexual assault after engaging in consensual sex with defendant."

Povilaitis ultimately called Shawana, Marie and the woman in Virginia to testify.

The final delay came in July 2017, just days before the trial was to begin, when one of Kelly's two court-appointed attorneys withdrew from the case. The trial was reset for September.

Jury selection started on a Monday, and the following afternoon Povilaitis and Becket Jones, Kelly's remaining court-appointed attorney, gave opening statements.

Kelly faced five charges, including rape and kidnapping, all connected to the incident with Shawana in Kalamazoo.

Povilaitis argued the case was about the rapes of Shawana, Marie and the woman in Virginia, and the pattern they revealed. Jones argued the case was about credibility, prostitution deals gone wrong and what happened with Shawana, not with Marie or the woman in Virginia.

Povilaitis presented the jury with three women who'd been targeted, isolated and raped. Jones presented the jury with three prostitutes who used drugs, tried to rob Kelly and then tried to exact their revenge when he wouldn't pay.



During the trial, Povilaitis used a phrase to sum up Kelly's defense: "Admit what you must, deny what you can't and attack the victims."

Some research suggests this is a common defense. Freyd, the University of Oregon expert on memory and trauma, describes the familiar approach as deny, attack and reverse victim and offender, or DARVO.

Central to the defense strategy was Kelly's description of these woman as prostitutes and drug users, implying that their intentions were malicious and their memories were flawed.

However, aside from Kelly's statements, there's no evidence any of the three women who testified had been prostitutes at the time they met Kelly or before, and only two, Shawana and Marie, had used drugs the day of their attack. Both said their drug use didn't impact their memory.

Jones spent much of his time asking questions about the women's inconsistent statements to police. For example, Shawana told the initial officer she'd been raped, but didn't say that she had been raped three times. In the police report, she is said to have described Kelly's weapon as a small, white folding knife. But she told Fairley years later that he had a large knife.

Jones told the jury these weren't just signs that Shawana had changed her story, but also evidence that Fairley's investigation was flawed from the start.

"So when you start your investigation with a victim-based approach, you've started your investigation with a bias," he said in court. "And you're trying to fit your facts to your conclusion. ... What's scary about that is that when you have a conclusion already set and you fit your facts to the conclusion, innocent people can be found guilty."

Povilaitis rested her case on the sixth day and the court broke for lunch. Before the jury returned from lunch, and while the courtroom was nearly empty, Kelly, sitting alone at the defense table, turned to someone near him.

"Boy, I know they waiting on me like a star," he said. "You hear what I said? I bet they waiting on me like a star. The jury. No, I just said let me talk."

When the trial resumed, Jones called Kelly as a witness.

Kelly answered questions about his life, his career as a truck driver and his family. And he also explained to the jury that the three women were in fact prostitutes who tried to rob him or who grew angry with him when the terms of the deal fell apart.

The questions changed when Povilaitis had her turn.

"Mr. Kelly," she said, with no introduction and little hesitation, "you are an incredibly unlucky man, aren't you?"

"Ma'am," Kelly responded, "I don't know what you're talking about, ma'am."

False reports of rape are rare, and Kelly was adamant that not only did three women in three states in three consecutive years falsely accuse him, but they stuck to those lies for at least eight years. So Povilaitis asked him if he thought this was unlucky.

"Ma'am," Kelly said. "The only thing I'm doing is telling the truth."

He denied that he raped Shawana, Marie, the woman in Virginia or anyone.

"You took my life away from me," he said at one point to Fairley, who was sitting at the prosecution table. "I ain't rape nobody. You know I ain't rape nobody."

## The verdict

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Povilaitis and Jones gave their closing arguments on the seventh day, once again framing Kelly, the women and the incidents in opposing narratives.

Povilaitis wanted the jury to see Kelly's pattern. The way he approached the three women and isolated them. The way he forced them to comply, the way his personality changed back after the rape.

And she wanted them to understand why she felt Jones asked so many questions about drugs and consistently used the phrase crack cocaine.

"This was an attempted attack to disparage the victims so that you wouldn't care about them and that you wouldn't believe them when they told you what happened."

Jones asked the jury to consider the version of Shawana that he'd been presenting for six days, a prostitute kicked out of a car on the side of the road who realizes not only is she without a ride, but she's also without the money.

"I think none of us can really imagine ourselves in that situation," he said. "But I think all of us can make an attempt to imagine someone who is frankly a hooker who has a crack cocaine problem in that situation."

Povilaitis had the last word with the jury.

"It is going to be up to you to decide whose version of events you believe," she said. "And you really can only believe one version."

The jurors reached their verdict the following day.

Povilaitis had been a prosecutor for more than 15 years and hadn't lost a jury trial in nearly a decade. She sat at the prosecution table and didn't move until the last not guilty verdict was read. Then she leaned back in her chair.

"Did I have concerns that maybe we'd have a rogue juror or two who might have a question or hang the jury?" she said. "I mean, I thought that was a possibility." Never did she think this would be the outcome.

Kelly started to cry and asked Jones if he could thank the jury. Jones told him to hold on. Through his tears Kelly thanked the jurors as he stood and they walked out of the courtroom.

"Thank, ya'll," he said. "Thank, ya'll. Thank you. Thank you."

Fairley and Povilaitis walked out of the courthouse together.

Povilaitis started the long drive back to Detroit.

Fairley sat in her car and called Shawana. And then she called Marie. She called the woman from Virginia. There were phone calls with Shawana's mother and sister. Fairley tried to explain, through the disbelief and distress coming from the other side of the call, what happened and what it meant.

Then Fairley, drained from the case and the trial and the day, started her drive home.

# 'He took my life'

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To understand what happened to Shawana requires understanding what trauma does to a person.

There are nightmares and flashbacks, difficulty sleeping or concentrating, trust issues and suicidal thoughts. These are usually worst in the first weeks, when a person might withdraw from family or friends, but can return years later if something — like a police investigation — reactivates the trauma, said Campbell, the MSU researcher.

And things can get worse.

"If you have economic resources, if you have a social support network, you will have that trauma, but you'll have other ways of recovering from that versus the person who is already marginalized," said Carolyn West, a University of Washington researcher.

"And perpetrators oftentimes go after those people. They go after the neglected people, the people who society sees as kind of throwaway, people who almost don't seem to matter."

Most victims don't get help. Researchers found that from 1994 to 2010 just one in four rape or sexual assault victims sought out a victim service agency.

Shawana had been bubbly and happy, eager to do things. The incident with Kelly changed her.

"I have no self-respect for myself. I'm nothing like I used to be before this situation happened. ... Now, just," she said before a long pause. "I can't explain it."

Kelly took something from her that night on the side of the highway.

"He took my life," she said, holding back tears. "I just want to black it all out."

Back in Indianapolis, life got harder for Shawana after the trial. There was more drug use and less time with her family. The final delay before the trial started seemed to have been more than she could handle. And while the trial and case gave her a sense of empowerment, there was a price.

She saw her younger sister Talaya less and less as the months went on. Shawana was using heroin and her body had started to waste away. She was different.

But then, for a night, Shawana wasn't.

In mid-October 2017, Talaya had a party for her 4-year-old son's birthday.

Shawana arrived late, but when she did the mood changed. She grabbed a bag of candy that Talaya had stashed away and tossed pieces around as the young children danced and laughed through the living room to Pharrell's "I'm Happy."

She was Shawana once again, but it wouldn't last.

In the early morning hours of the Sunday before Thanksgiving, Fairley's phone rang. Talaya was calling.

Shawana was dead. She died at 40 years old of an overdose attributed to ethanol, fentanyl and cocaine.

When Talaya talks about Shawana, there's laughter alongside the tears. Her son's birthday party, the last quality time she spent with Shawana, is the last memory her children will have of their aunt. Talaya's grateful for that.

"She's a hero. She is," Talaya said. "She could have crawled away and did what she did and died in the corner somewhere. But she chose to fight back. ... She looked at her demons in the face. Like I told my children, she's the hero to me. She really is because she didn't have to do what she did. She didn't. And she really wanted to get him off the streets so he wouldn't do this to somebody else.

"And I admire her for that. That and a lot more. She made me proud to be her little sister."

# The ending

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Ten weeks after the acquittal, Povilaitis' prosecution of disgraced former doctor Larry Nassar ended when he pleaded guilty to 10 sexual assault charges. The investigation and prosecution had been grounded in the same approach as the Kelly case. Povilaitis found herself in the national spotlight during Nassar's sentencing hearings and the year that followed.

She's since left the Michigan Attorney General's Office for a job with broader impact fighting sexual assault and domestic violence on a statewide level.

Povilaitis still thinks about Shawana. It's hard for her not to.

Fairley still investigates cold case sexual assaults, the cases she didn't think she wanted to handle. The work is important. And her first investigation is never far from her mind.

"This is the common case that we ignore, okay? And it is. This is a common (case)," she said. "These rapes happen all the time. Guess what? Do we care? No, we don't care.

"But these are the ones that we should be looking at. ... These are stories where most of them will never be heard. And nothing will ever be done about it."

A month after Kelly's trial, the cold case sexual assault unit's funding was renewed, ensuring its work will continue.

Marie still lives in St. Louis and has been sober going on nine years.

"When you have been through a lot of stuff like I have been through, the rape was just one of the things that I went through," she said. "I wouldn't say that it did no real damage to me. I was already damaged. And it just added on."

Today, she proudly pulls photographs out of an envelope to spread on the coffee table, showing off the smiling faces of her, her fiancé and her grandchildren on a recent vacation.

This is her life now.

Police and prosecutors in St. Louis declined to be interviewed, either about Kelly, his cases or about rape investigations and prosecutions in general.

Memphis, where Kelly spent much of his life, continues to review results from its once untested rape kits. Police there declined an interview request.

Prosecutors in Memphis declined to be interviewed, but in an email said that at the end of 2018, 206 indictments have come from recent testing of the rape kit backlog and 38 more cases are pending action by the grand jury.

"Investigations into Kelly and his activities in Memphis/Shelby County are ongoing," a spokesman said.

Kelly declined to be interviewed, but in a letter said he told the truth during the trial and said the Michigan Attorney General's Office lied.

He returned to Memphis after his acquittal. He went to a local TV station and shared his story, saying he'd been wrongly prosecuted in Michigan and professing his innocence.

"I need my name rectified," he told the station. "People that I know here, they don't believe all that garbage."

There were 11 known cases linked to Kelly when he went to trial in Michigan. The eleventh case was from Memphis, in 2010, when a woman told police that a man stuck a knife against her back and dragged her to a field.

"He told me to take my clothes off," she told a detective. "I did. I was afraid. I just wanted to get out of there alive. It was so cold. He made me take everything off. I was freezing. He raped me for an hour.

"He would hit me. Then he would say he was sorry. He said that he was a truck driver. ... I think he's raping other women because he asked me if he had raped me before."

DNA evidence identified Kelly as a suspect and he denied the rape.

"Kelly is possibly a serial rapist in Memphis and in St. Louis," the detective wrote in his report, the day before prosecutors declined to charge him.

"Unable to proceed in any case in Memphis or St. Louis."

Seven years later, after the 2017 trial and acquittal in Michigan, the case had been reopened. On May 25, a Tennessee grand jury indicted him on rape and kidnapping charges.

Kelly, 61, was arrested on the seven-month anniversary of Shawana's death.

He's in jail in Memphis awaiting trial once again.

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Contact [\*Matt Mencarini\*](#) at (517) 267-1347 or [\*mmencarini@lsj.com\*](mailto:mmencarini@lsj.com). Follow him on Twitter [\*@MattMencarini\*](#).