

Discussion Round 1: Article -

<https://people.com/crime/how-a-podcast-helped-cops-arrest-paul-flores-for-murder-in-kristin-smarts-disappearance/>

# How a Podcast Helped Cops Arrest Paul Flores on Accusations He Murdered Kristin Smart

Police investigating the disappearance of Kristin Smart arrested Paul Flores after interviewing new witnesses found through the popular eight-part podcast *Your Own Backyard*

By [Christine Pelisek](#) Published on April 14, 2021 03:59PM EDT



Authorities in California are crediting a true-crime podcast for helping them solve the [Kristin Smart](#) case.

At a Tuesday press conference announcing the arrest of [Paul Flores](#) and his father Ruben in connection with the death of Smart, San Luis Obispo County Sheriff Ian Parkinson said investigators interviewed new witnesses thanks to the popular eight-part series [Your Own Backyard](#).

"In 2019, we interviewed several witnesses that had not been previously interviewed and some of that information came to light through the podcast that many of you are familiar with," he said.

The witnesses enabled authorities to secure a search warrant authorizing the interception and monitoring of Flores' cell phone, said Parkinson, who added that the search warrant led to evidence that built the case against Flores.

For his part, the podcaster, Chris Lambert, said he "was one piece of the formula."

"The podcast was one part of the whole formula," Lambert told the [San Luis Obispo Tribune](#). "Even with what I found, I can't go arrest somebody. I needed [the sheriff's office] to do their job. I was willing to do what I could to assist in that. You can get varying levels of agreement about whether what I did directly led to an arrest. My personal opinion was that I was one piece of the formula."

Back in 1996, with classes finished before the long Memorial Day weekend, Smart, a 19-year-old California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo student, called her parents on Friday, May 24, and left a message telling them that she and some friends were heading to a party at 8 p.m. that night. While she told her parents to call her before she left, she never spoke to them.

[Kristin Smart Disappearance Suspects Taken into Custody](#)

Smart ended up attending an off-campus party, where she became intoxicated and passed out on a neighbor's lawn, according to witnesses.

Paul Flores, Smart's former university classmate, was the last known person to see her alive after [volunteering to walk her home](#) in her inebriated state from the party, police have said.

No one ever saw Smart again. Police [questioned Flores](#) but over the years he was never charged and remained mum about the case, invoking his Fifth Amendment right to remain silent when he was deposed in a 2005 wrongful death civil suit brought against him by Smart's parents, which they subsequently dropped.

Flores, now 44, was [arrested](#) simultaneously along with his 80-year-old father Tuesday. Flores faces a murder charge. His father, Ruben, is facing a charge of accessory to murder.

Smart's remains have never been found.

Lambert believes her remains are "local."

"It's part of the reason I got involved in this," he told the *Tribune*. "It's part of the reason I called it 'Your Own Backyard,' because of the frustration at the beginning was, 'Why are not enough people talking about this? Why is the community not pushing for something to get done? And if her body is here and local, I or anyone could potentially find it with a shovel and sleuthing skills.'"

About the case, Lambert said he feels good about the direction it is heading.

"I feel good about the case at this point," Lambert told the *Tribune*. "But I've felt good about it for a long time. It was just a matter of the way the machinery works. You just have to wait a while for things to get done — the District Attorney's Office, the Sheriff's Office and who's going to do which part. I've been waiting for a long, long time to come to some sort of resolution."

An attorney representing Flores, Sarah Sanger could not be reached for comment. Nor could Ruben Flores' attorney, Harold Mesick.

## Discussion Round 2: Picture



Elizabeth Eckford's walk through a crowd of hateful tormentors into Little Rock Central High School in 1957 is a defining image of the tumultuous effort to desegregate schools.

Bettmann/Getty

## Discussion Round 3: Poem

### In Lieu of Flowers by Shawna Lemay

“Although I love flowers very much, I won’t see them when I’m gone. So in lieu of flowers: Buy a book of poetry written by someone still alive, sit outside with a cup of tea, a glass of wine, and read it out loud, by yourself or to someone, or silently.

Spend some time with a single flower. A rose maybe. Smell it, touch the petals.

Really look at it.

Drink a nice bottle of wine with someone you love.

Or, Champagne. And think of what John Maynard Keynes said, “My only regret in life is that I did not drink more Champagne.” Or what Dom Perignon said when he first tasted the stuff: “Come quickly! I am tasting stars!”

Take out a paint set and lay down some colours.

Watch birds. Common sparrows are fine. Pigeons, too. Geese are nice. Robins.

In lieu of flowers, walk in the trees and watch the light fall into it. Eat an apple, a really nice big one. I hope it’s crisp.

Have a long soak in the bathtub with candles, maybe some rose petals.

Sit on the front stoop and watch the clouds. Have a dish of strawberry ice cream in my name.

If it’s winter, have a cup of hot chocolate outside for me. If it’s summer, a big glass of ice water.

If it's autumn, collect some leaves and press them in a book you love. I'd like that.

Sit and look out a window and write down what you see. Write some other things down.

In lieu of flowers,

I would wish for you to flower.

I would wish for you to blossom, to open, to be beautiful.”

# THE Rights TO THE Streets OF Memphis

RICHARD WRIGHT

Hunger stole upon me so slowly that at first I was not aware of what hunger really meant. Hunger had always been more or less at my elbow when I played, but now I began to wake up at night to find hunger standing at my bedside, staring at me gauntly. The hunger I had known before this had been no grim, hostile stranger; it had been a normal hunger that had made me beg constantly for bread, and when I ate a crust or two I was satisfied. But this new hunger baffled me, scared me, made me angry and insistent. Whenever I begged for food now my mother would pour me a cup of tea which would still the **clamor** in my stomach for a moment or two; but a little later I would feel  
10 hunger nudging my ribs, twisting my empty guts until they ached. I would grow dizzy and my vision would dim. I became less active in my play, and for the first time in my life I had to pause and think of what was happening to me. **A**

“Mama, I’m hungry,” I complained one afternoon.

“Jump up and catch a kungry,” she said, trying to make me laugh and forget.

“What’s a *kungry*?”

“It’s what little boys eat when they get hungry,” she said.

“What does it taste like?”

20 “I don’t know.”

“Then why do you tell me to catch one?”

“Because you said that you were hungry,” she said, smiling.

I sensed that she was teasing me, and it made me angry.

“But I’m hungry. I want to eat.”

## Analyze Visuals ▶

What impressions of tenement life does the painting on page 119 convey?

**clamor** (klām’ər) *n.* a noisy outburst; outcry

### COMMON CORE RI.1

#### **A** CAUSE AND EFFECT

After only the first paragraph, you can already begin drawing conclusions about Wright’s early life and the ideas he expresses in this autobiography. At this point, what cause-and-effect relationship did Wright start to recognize? Cite evidence in your response.

*Alley* (1942), Jacob Lawrence. Courtesy of Clark Atlanta University Art Galleries. © 2007 Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



“You’ll have to wait.”

“But I want to eat now.”

“But there’s nothing to eat,” she told me.

“Why?”

“Just because there’s none,” she explained.

30 “But I want to eat,” I said, beginning to cry.

“You’ll just have to wait,” she said again.

“But why?”

“For God to send some food.”

“When is He going to send it?”

“I don’t know.”

“But I’m hungry!”

She was ironing, and she paused and looked at me with tears in her eyes.

“Where’s your father?” she asked me.

40 I stared in bewilderment. Yes, it was true that my father had not come home to sleep for many days now and I could make as much noise as I wanted. Though I had not known why he was absent, I had been glad that he was not there to shout his restrictions at me. But it had never occurred to me that his absence would mean that there would be no food.

“I don’t know,” I said.

50 “Who brings food into the house?” my mother asked me.

“Papa,” I said. “He always brought food.”

“Well, your father isn’t here now,” she said.

“Where is he?”

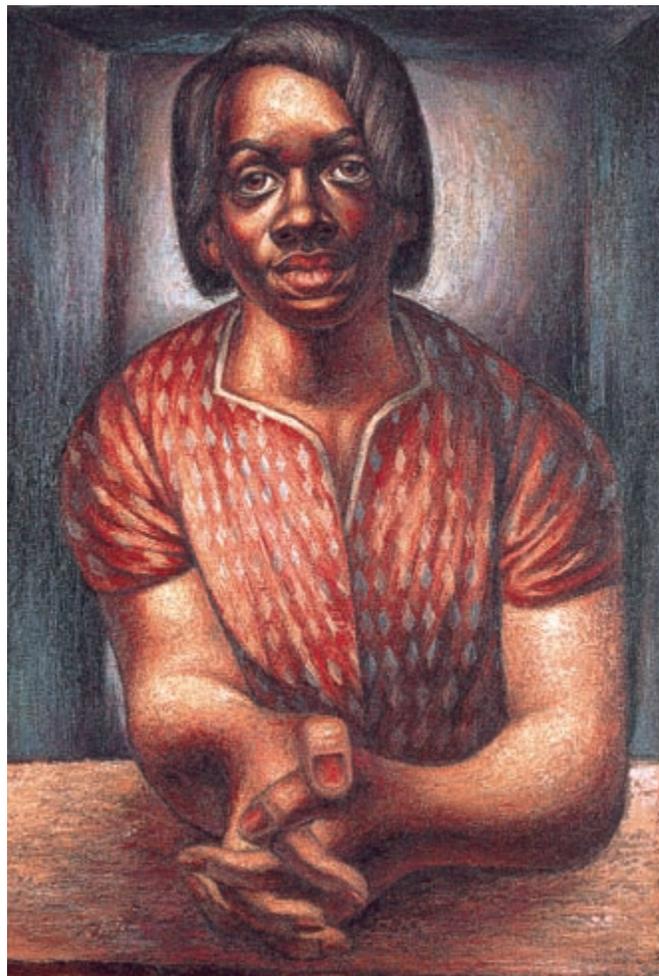
“I don’t know,” she said.

“But I’m hungry,” I whimpered, stomping my feet.

“You’ll have to wait until I get a job and buy food,” she said. **B**

As the days slid past the image of my father became associated with my pangs of hunger, and whenever I felt hunger I thought of him with a deep biological bitterness.<sup>1</sup>

60 My mother finally went to work as a cook and left me and my brother alone in the flat each day with a loaf of bread and a pot of tea. When she returned at evening she would be tired and **dispirited** and would cry a lot. Sometimes, when she was in despair, she would call us to her and talk to us for hours, telling us that we now had no father, that our lives would be different from those of other children, that we must learn as soon as possible to take care of ourselves, to dress ourselves, to prepare our own food; that we must take upon ourselves the responsibility of the flat while she worked. Half frightened, we



*Woman Worker* (1951), Charles White. © 1951 The Charles White Archive.

**B AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

Reread lines 39–56.

What life-changing event does Wright reveal through **dialogue**?

**dispirited** (dĭ-spĭr'ĭ-tĭd)  
*adj.* dejected

1. **deep, biological bitterness:** bitterness caused by the pangs of hunger.

would promise solemnly. We did not understand what had happened between our father and our mother and the most that these long talks did to us was to  
70 make us feel a vague dread. Whenever we asked why father had left, she would tell us that we were too young to know.

One evening my mother told me that thereafter I would have to do the shopping for food. She took me to the corner store to show me the way. I was proud; I felt like a grownup. The next afternoon I looped the basket over my arm and went down the pavement toward the store. When I reached the corner, a gang of boys grabbed me, knocked me down, snatched the basket, took the money, and sent me running home in panic. That evening I told my mother what had happened, but she made no comment; she sat down at once, wrote another note, gave me more money, and sent me out to the grocery  
80 again. I crept down the steps and saw the same gang of boys playing down the street. I ran back into the house. **C**

“What’s the matter?” my mother asked.

“It’s those same boys,” I said. “They’ll beat me.”

“You’ve got to get over that,” she said. “Now, go on.”

“I’m scared,” I said.

“Go on and don’t pay any attention to them,” she said.

I went out of the door and walked briskly down the sidewalk, praying that the gang would not molest me. But when I came abreast of them someone shouted.

90 “There he is!”

They came toward me and I broke into a wild run toward home. They overtook me and flung me to the pavement. I yelled, pleaded, kicked, but they wrenched the money out of my hand. They yanked me to my feet, gave me a few slaps, and sent me home sobbing. My mother met me at the door. **D**

“They b-beat m-me,” I gasped. “They t-t-took the m-money.”

I started up the steps, seeking the shelter of the house.

“Don’t you come in here,” my mother warned me.

I froze in my tracks and stared at her.

“But they’re coming after me,” I said.

100 “You just stay right where you are,” she said in a deadly tone. “I’m going to teach you this night to stand up and fight for yourself.”

She went into the house and I waited, terrified, wondering what she was about. Presently she returned with more money and another note; she also had a long heavy stick.

“Take this money, this note, and this stick,” she said. “Go to the store and buy those groceries. If those boys bother you, then fight.”

I was baffled. My mother was telling me to fight, a thing that she had never done before.

“But I’m scared,” I said.

110 “Don’t you come into this house until you’ve gotten those groceries,” she said.

### **C** AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Why do you suppose Wright includes such specific details about this experience?

### **D** GRAMMAR AND STYLE

Reread lines 91–94. Wright uses **strong verbs in a series**—like *yelled*, *pleaded*, and *kicked*—to help readers visualize the attack.

COMMON CORE RI.4

### Language Coach

**Idioms** An **idiom** is an expression that cannot be understood literally. In lines 102–103, the expression “what she was about” is an idiomatic expression. Based on the clues in the story, what do you think this idiom means?

“They’ll beat me; they’ll beat me,” I said.

“Then stay in the streets; don’t come back here!”

I ran up the steps and tried to force my way past her into the house. A stinging slap came on my jaw. I stood on the sidewalk, crying.

“Please, let me wait until tomorrow,” I begged.

“No,” she said. “Go now! If you come back into this house without those groceries, I’ll whip you!”

120 She slammed the door and I heard the key turn in the lock. I shook with fright. I was alone upon the dark, hostile streets and gangs were after me. I had the choice of being beaten at home or away from home. I clutched the stick, crying, trying to reason. If I were beaten at home, there was absolutely nothing that I could do about it; but if I were beaten in the streets, I had a chance to fight and defend myself. I walked slowly down the sidewalk, coming closer to the gang of boys, holding the stick tightly. I was so full of fear that I could scarcely breathe. I was almost upon them now.

“There he is again!” the cry went up.

They surrounded me quickly and began to grab for my hand.

“I’ll kill you!” I threatened.

130 They closed in. In blind fear I let the stick fly, feeling it crack against a boy’s skull. I swung again, lamming another skull, then another. Realizing that they would **retaliate** if I let up for but a second, I fought to lay them low, to knock them cold, to kill them so that they could not strike back at me. I **flayed** with tears in my eyes, teeth clenched, **stark** fear making me throw every ounce of my strength behind each blow. I hit again and again, dropping the money and the grocery list. The boys scattered, yelling, nursing their heads, staring at me in utter disbelief. They had never seen such frenzy. I stood panting, egging them on, taunting them to come on and fight. When they refused, I ran after them and they tore out for their homes, screaming. The parents of the  
140 boys rushed into the streets and threatened me, and for the first time in my life I shouted at grownups, telling them that I would give them the same if they bothered me. I finally found my grocery list and the money and went to the store. On my way back I kept my stick poised for instant use, but there was not a single boy in sight. That night I won the right to the streets of Memphis.  **E**

**retaliate** (rĭ-tăĭ'ĕ-ăt') v. to pay back an injury in kind

**flay** (flā) v. to whip or lash

**stark** (stărk) *adj.* complete or utter; extreme

#### **E CAUSE AND EFFECT**

What effect did the fighting have on Wright’s personality?