

**Female voice: A listener note: this episode contains audio of a police shooting.**

**Chief Steve Conrad: Ok everybody got sound, and picture? Everybody ready to go?**

**Narrator Eleanor Klibanoff:** It's March 13th, 2020, and Louisville Metro Police Chief Steve Conrad has called a press conference.

**Chief Conrad: Good afternoon, early this morning, we had a critical incident involving one of our officers who was shot and another person at the scene who was killed.**

**Narrator:** Conrad says officers were serving a search warrant when they were shot at. They returned fire and killed someone — after an officer was shot in the leg.

**CONRAD: I want to say that we are extremely fortunate that our officer, Sgt Jon Mattingly was not more seriously injured. Sgt. Mattingly underwent surgery for a leg wound early this morning and thankfully, he is expected to make a full recovery.**

**Narrator:** Usually at these things, Conrad releases body camera footage from the shooting, but in this case —

**CONRAD: We have no body-worn video cameras to share with you from this morning's shooting.**

**Narrator:** The shooting occurred during the execution of a search warrant by the Criminal Interdiction Division and despite promising in 2016 to equip every officer with a body camera —

**CONRAD: Some of the officers assigned to this division do not wear body-worn video systems.**

**Narrator:** LMPD has long made it a practice to call a press conference when one of their officers kills someone. Between 2016 and this moment, LMPD officers have killed 16 people. At a lot of these press conferences, Conrad uses the same phrase that he uses at this one —

**Chief Conrad: Police work is inherently dangerous and as police officers, we hope we never have to fire our weapons. But when we're forced to do so, we understand and we accept the high level of public scrutiny that results from that.**

**[sound begins to overlap from several different press conferences]**

**We accept the high level of public scrutiny...**

**We accept the high level of public scrutiny that will result from it.**

**Narrator:** But historically — many of these police shootings didn't attract that much public scrutiny. The city offered their story, then, a few months or years later, the case was quietly closed with no discipline for the officers.

**Narrator:** That's what seemed most likely to happen after this police shooting in March 2020 — particularly as the city — the whole country — the world — turned to focus on — the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Narrator:** But even a pandemic couldn't stop the word from spreading about what really happened to the woman LMPD killed that night: Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old frontline worker, a beautiful young woman who wanted to be a nurse, who was in bed when police began banging down her door — all because she was still entangled with an ex-boyfriend who sold drugs.

**Narrator:** And then on May 28th, 2020, just days after Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin murdered George Floyd — the Louisville Courier Journal released this 911 call.

**Dispatcher: 911 Operator Harris, where is your emergency?**

**Male voice, anguished: I don't know what is happening, somebody kicked in the door and shot my girlfriend.**

**Narrator:** That's Kenneth Walker, Breonna Taylor's boyfriend, calling the police because — as far as he can tell — an intruder has broken into the apartment and shot his girlfriend.

**Kenneth Walker: Oh my god**

**Dispatcher: How old is your girlfriend?**

**Narrator:** This call makes it seem like Walker didn't know they were the police when he fired one shot, striking Mattingly in the leg.

**Kenneth Walker: Bre...oh my god.**

**Dispatcher: You said 26? Where was she shot at?**

**Kenneth Walker: I don't know. She's on the ground right now. [crying] I don't know.**

**Narrator:** Kenneth Walker was initially charged with attempted murder of a police officer and assault. Those charges were later dropped.

**Narrator:** Over the last 18 months, a lot more information has come out about the Breonna Taylor shooting. A detective was fired for untruthfulness on the search warrant application. Another detective was fired for blindly shooting into Taylor's apartment from outside. Officers didn't involve the more highly trained SWAT team, didn't bring an ambulance and didn't perform life saving measures on Taylor. And while the officers insist that they knocked and announced themselves as police — three of the neighbors say they didn't hear that.

**Narrator:** But on May 28th, we didn't know any of that yet. All we knew was that this 911 call didn't line up with the story the police department had been telling — and that was enough.

**Narrator:** Because the water had been rising for years in Louisville— and when the city heard Kenneth Walker’s pain, his anguish, his confusion — it opened the floodgates.

**Narrator:** THIS IS DIG, SEASON TWO: THE MODEL CITY from the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting and Newsy. I’M ELEANOR KLIBANOFF.

**[Lil Boosie Fuck the Police is playing]**

**Narrator:** On Thursday, May 28th, just hours after the release of that 911 call, hundreds of people began to gather downtown.

**[People singing along Fuck the police]**

**Narrator:** Protests had recently exploded in Minneapolis after the police killing of George Floyd, and now, Louisville seemed primed to follow suit. It was a warm night. People kept showing up. Like Tamika Davis —

**Tamika Davis (slightly muffled, speaking through a mask):** We’re just fed up. We’re tired...I fear for my children. I shouldn’t have to live in fear. It’s crazy what they did to Breonna. It’s crazy with Ahmaud, it’s crazy about Floyd, like, it’s ridiculous...And I can’t just sit idly and just hope for things to get better. I gotta do something.

**Narrator:** It was a big crowd, but the atmosphere was relaxed — besides the anti-police chanting, it felt more like a street party than a protest. People were trading LMPD war stories — like 28-year-old Lee Crenshaw who grew up in the Russell neighborhood in the West End —

**Lee Crenshaw:** I done been pulled over with guns pulled straight to my head, talking about they’re gonna kill me if I do any other movement, when they asking for what they’re gonna ask for, license, registration, whatever they still gonna threaten me with violence when I ain’t threatened them with nothing.

**Narrator:** As the sun set, the crowd started to march. They ended up a few blocks east, in front of the KFC Yum! Center, a glimmering sports venue built on the banks of the Ohio River.

**[crowd chanting No justice, no peace, no justice, no peace, no justice, no peace, no justice, no peace! chants continue under narration]**

**Narrator:** Police body camera footage shows a man at the front of the crowd yelling at the police - pointing out the guns, Tasers, and riot gear they’re wearing. He offers a warning — this movement is just getting started.

**Male voice:** Y’all gonna have a long ass shift!

**Narrator:** More police begin showing up. Some protesters surround the police cars, and the city said, it looked like they were trying to get officers out of the cars. A supervisor issues a 1030 — officer in distress — summoning all available law enforcement in the county to downtown Louisville.

**[Police chanting: move back, move back, move back, move back]**

**Narrator:** There's a line of officers in riot gear — sticks and shields — advancing on the crowd of protesters, chanting move back, move back.

**[chant under narration MOVE BACK]**

**Narrator:** It's terrifying, but effective. As the crowd begins to disperse, though, a call comes across the radio —

**Police on radio: Can we get an update on the crowd at that location?**

**Narrator:** A voice on the radio asks what the crowd looks like at 6th and Jefferson. An officer responds —

**Police on radio: They are organizing to take the intersection again.**

**Narrator:** They're organizing to take the intersection again, he says.

**Narrator:** At 6th and Jefferson, there's a small park, notable not for what's in it, but for what's around it — it's surrounded on all sides by city bureaucracy — the mayor's office, council chambers, the courthouse. The police department is a block down, the convention center a block up.

**Narrator:** That park at 6th and Jefferson would become the headquarters of a protest movement that lasted far longer than anyone could have imagined that night. The summer of protests would upend the city, and pit the police against the people they were supposed to protect and serve — and it all started that night, at 6th and Jefferson, when all of a sudden — shots ring out from within the crowd of protesters —

**[Scene sound: crowd noise, gunshots, people screaming. Police voices: Shots fired/hold your positions/hold/gunfire/oh my god/hold the line.]**

**Narrator:** It's unclear who is shooting — or who they are shooting at. People are screaming and running. Someone sets off fireworks. Police start ordering people out of the square.

**Police, urgently: Go. Get the fuck out, go, get out of here.**

**Narrator:** Seven people were shot from within the crowd. This seems to be the turning point for the police —

**Police officer:** This has got to stop now.

**Officer on bullhorn:** Under Kentucky Law, This is an unlawful assembly and I command all persons assembled here to immediately and peacefully disperse. If you do not disperse, we may disperse chemical agents and you will be arrested —

**Narrator:** Protesters don't disperse — so the police make good on their promise --

**Police:** Let me know when to shoot.

**Narrator:** -- firing pepper balls and tear gas and smoke canisters into the crowd.

**[Sounds of gas and pepper guns and flash bangs]**  
**[people reacting to getting tear gassed]**

**Narrator:** Later, in a quiet moment, officers discuss the scene they've all witnessed.

**Officer 1:** Dude, my back's gone.

**Officer 2:** What a night. What a night! **[Incredulous laughter]**

**Officer 1:** Who thought this would ever?

**Officer 2:** Never thought they'd go ahead and say 'throw gas.'

**Narrator:** One officer seems like he can't believe what he's just seen in Louisville, Kentucky, saying he never thought he'd hear the command to throw tear gas.

**Narrator:** Tear gas burns your eyes and lungs and gets stuck in the back of your throat. For many people out there that night, that gas stuck in their minds too — the clearest example of exactly what they were protesting — a police department they felt cared more about exerting its authority than protecting its citizens.

**Narrator:** This was what people had been complaining about in Louisville for years — for decades. This was what 21st Century Policing was supposed to fix. But it didn't — and now whole swaths of the city had decided they were done waiting for the city to listen — they were going to be heard — whatever it took.

**Unnamed protester:** That girl had to die all because of a no-knock warrant

**Narrator:** The next night, Friday, protesters and police took to the streets again. Body camera footage shows a man approaching a line of officers clad in riot gear. We don't know his name. But for almost eight minutes, he lectures them on what he sees as the failings of this police

department — and, whether he realizes it or not, he's addressing many of the core tenets of 21st Century Policing, too. He talks about use of force —

**Protester: Every black person aint trying to kill you, bro...you don't have to use excessive force every single motherfuckin' time.**

**Narrator:** He talks about traffic stops —

**Protester: You pulling my granny over and you're searching her car, and you're going all ham on her, and she don't sell dope.**

**Narrator:** It's hard to hear, but he actually name checks the police union as part of the problem. This guy even talks about police legitimacy — in his own way.

**Protester: We out here exercising our motherfucking constitutional right to assemble, and we should be really using the right to overthrow you motherfuckers, because it's way too out of control.**

**Narrator:** The officers don't respond to his tirade, and he even says at one point that he knows he's yelling at the wrong people — you're just pawns, he says, for city leadership —

**Protester: That's why you can't answer, because you ain't the police chief. Where is he at?**

**Narrator:** What the protesters really wanted wouldn't come from the officers on the front lines of the protests. They were demanding that the city fire, arrest and prosecute the three officers who shot their weapons into Breonna Taylor's apartment that night — Brett Hankison, Jonathan Mattingly and Myles Cosgrove.

**Narrator:** These demands — fire, arrest, prosecute — would become the focal point of the protests over the coming weeks. But as we know, it can be complicated to fire a police officer in Louisville, Kentucky. Mayor Greg Fischer repeatedly urged patience as the investigation that would determine whether the city had grounds to fire the officers stretched for weeks.

**Narrator:** Shameka Parrish-Wright is a protest leader, a sort of matriarch of the movement. She helped set up the headquarters at 6th and Jefferson.

**Narrator:** She says the Mayor came down to visit with protesters one day —

**Shameka Parrish-Wright: I told him right there, I was like as a mayor, I would have fired those officers. And dealt with — he was like, 'Shameka, they'll sue.' I said, 'So what?'**

**Narrator:** She says a lawsuit would have been a small price to pay —

**Shameka Parrish-Wright: Fighting the justice for Breonna Taylor movement has cost millions upon millions of dollars. It costs revenue, it costs everything.**

**Narrator:** The decision to fire the officers, or not, belonged to the police chief, who answers to Mayor Fischer. But the job of prosecuting them — or not — would normally fall to the local Commonwealth's Attorney, Tom Wine. Wine recused himself from the case, citing a conflict of interest because he was also prosecuting Breonna Taylor's boyfriend, Kenneth Walker.

**Narrator:** A little more than a week later, Wine dismissed the charges against Walker. But the state still appointed a special prosecutor: in this case, the Attorney General himself — Daniel Cameron, Kentucky's first Black Attorney General — and the first Republican to hold the job in over 70 years.

**Narrator:** Cameron said in the interest of fairness, his office would start its own investigation from scratch, rather than relying on LMPD's internal review of the case. He would then ask a Grand Jury to decide whether to press charges against the officers.

**Narrator:** That was a process that was set to take months. But people were done waiting. The vast majority of protesters that took to the street that first weekend were just peacefully trying to have their voices heard. But some took things a step further. They shattered windows, lit trash cans on fire, and threw fireworks. Someone threw a Molotov cocktail that caught an officers' pant leg on fire. The city said police officers were shot at several times. There was vandalism and burglary at stores downtown.

**Narrator:** The police were overwhelmed — and so — they fell back on crowd control techniques that 21st Century Policing specifically warned against using.

**Male voice: Make no mistake about it, the police can turn a protest into a riot.**

**Narrator:** That's not a protester or an activist. That's Garry McCarthy in January 2015, when he was superintendent of the Chicago Police Department. By the end of that year, McCarthy would be fired over his handling of a police shooting of a young Black man. But first, he spoke to the 21st Century Policing task force about how to handle mass demonstrations.

**Garry McCarthy: Military equipment such as armored vehicles and rifles should never be present at demonstrations.**

**Narrator:** But during the protests in Louisville — there *were* armored vehicles and military trucks, and the National Guard and LMPD with rifles in hand.

**Garry McCarthy: We used crowd control techniques and patience, not tear gas, to avoid escalating a confrontation.**

**Narrator:** LMPD started throwing tear gas that first night of protests, and continued to use it for the next four nights. Rashaad Abdur-Rahman watched with frustration as Louisville ignored advice they'd gotten first-hand. Back in 2016, he worked in the mayor's administration, and was there when a Department of Justice representative visited the city.

**Rashaad Abdur-Rahman:** **What stuck out to me and I'll probably never forget, is that he specifically spoke about...protests, and how police need to stop using tanks and tear gas and rubber bullets and riot shields and billy clubs. He was like, you've got to stop doing that stuff. Because we have seen in Ferguson how this escalates situations and makes things worse. It continues to, you know, damage any potential for relationships.**

**Narrator:** According to that 21st Century Policing workbook, LMPD took this guidance to heart: They reviewed their emergency response plan and revised department policies to re-emphasize crowd dispersal and protecting innocent bystanders, and they distributed guidance from the Department of Justice.

**Narrator:** But that first weekend of protests in May 2020 — that's not the response Louisville saw.

**Narrator:** 147 people were arrested just in the first weekend; several told reporters they were assaulted in the process. Police destroyed supplies of water and milk, claiming there were flammable materials hidden in them. An officer hit a kneeling protester in the back of the head with a baton. The officer later resigned, and pleaded guilty to a federal charge of excessive force. Another officer fired pepper balls at a TV reporter and cameraman with WAVE3 News as they were live on air.

**[Reporter screams]**

**Host:** Are you OK?

**Reporter:** We're getting shot

**Host:** Who are they shooting at?

**Reporter:** Us! They're shooting at us! It's these rubber... pepper bullets

**Narrator:** LMPD policy says officers should fire pepper balls at the ground or above the crowd, not directly at people. But that weekend, some were firing pepper balls indiscriminately, often at close range, or from vantage points above the crowd, or at reporters just walking down the street. The Courier Journal posted a photo of a young woman offering flowers to LMPD Officer Katie Crews. Crews posted it on Facebook, claiming in the caption that the girl did a lot more than hand out flowers. Crews wrote, quote, I hope the pepper balls she got lit up with a little later on hurt. Come back and get ya some more, ole girl, I'll be on the line tonight.

**Narrator:** Hour after hour, night after night, protesters and police officers were nose-to-nose, facing off, closer than many of them have ever been to each other. But metaphorically, they'd never been further apart.



**Narrator:** At one point, an officer asked, Why are they still here?

**Officer 1: Why are they still here?**

**Officer 2: Because we're here, probably.[ runs under narration ]**

**Narrator:** His colleague responded — because we're here, probably. These two sides were locked in with each other. It didn't feel like there was any way for the city to emerge from this in one piece — it felt like we were building to something terrible.

**Narrator:** That's what worried Sadiqa Reynolds, the president and CEO of the Louisville Urban League. After the first night of protests, she called a press conference at the Urban League headquarters in the West End —

**Sadiqa Reynolds: We have to respect the memory of Breonna Taylor. She was a woman who was fighting to save others. We cannot put our lives at risk in seeking justice for her. We must be here to fight. We must be here to ensure that justice is served in this case.**

**Narrator:** Reynolds stood behind a podium on the sidewalk, surrounded by pastors and community leaders. As she spoke, it began to rain.

**Sadiqa Reynolds: Well, our city is crying, and the rain is appropriate. And we are saying that Bre is the last one.**

**Narrator:** But — Breonna Taylor would not be the last Black person killed by law enforcement in Louisville. The city wouldn't even make it through the weekend.

**[Kris Smith Singing to rap music, same music that opens episode 1]**

**Narrator:** These officers had spent a long weekend responding to large-scale protests. They'd experienced gunfire, thrown tear gas, fired pepper balls, been called every name in the book as they tried to police people who were protesting *them*. And then — at the end of that tense weekend, when emotions and anger and exhaustion were running high — they were sent into the West End.

**Kris Smith: shots fired, shots fired**

**Narrator:** Katie Crews, the officer who posted on Facebook about lighting up protesters, was part of the group of officers and Guardsmen who showed up at 26th and Broadway, to break up — a curfew violation.

**Narrator:** When people started running into Yaya Barbeque, Crews pursued them, firing several pepper balls, including at least one that seemed to strike David McAtee's niece. McAtee leaned out the door of his restaurant twice, firing his gun each time. Law enforcement — including Crews — returned fire.

**Kris Smith: SHOTS FIRED, shots fired**

**Narrator:** When the gunfire stopped, McAtee was dead on the ground, killed by a bullet from a National Guardsman — and any lingering hopes that Louisville had managed to become that Model City were extinguished once and for all.

**[theme music in guitar]**

**Narrator:** Dexter Pitts was in Arizona when he saw the video of David McAtee being shot and killed. When Pitts was an officer with LMPD, he'd gone to Yaya's Barbecue all the time — To see his friend killed — it shook him.

**Dexter Pitts:** That man lost his life, and why? I mean, I saw the video of him shooting, but it's just I don't understand his mindset at the time, who he thought was shooting — there's no telling. I don't know. And it's just heartbreaking either way. Nobody won, nobody won in that incident. Nobody won with Breonna Taylor, nobody won with George Floyd. We are losing together as a country.

**Narrator:** Dexter had left LMPD in October 2018. But now, less than two years later, he couldn't stop watching what was unfolding in Louisville.

**Dexter Pitts:** I wish I had a way at that moment, when I was watching it, to teleport myself from my couch into the midst of what was going on, just because I felt guilty for not being there.

**Narrator:** He decided to reach out to LMPD.

**Dexter Pitts:** And I told them what do I need to do to come home, to get back home?... And I just couldn't get there quick enough. I was just asking like, 'Hey, what's the soonest I can get back? What's the soonest? I need to come now.'

**Narrator:** Dexter was back on the force, and back on the frontlines by June 15th, just over two weeks after protests started. He returned to a changed city. Police Chief Steve Conrad had been fired after the McAtee shooting, just weeks before he was set to retire. But this had done little to quell the protests, which were still raging.

**Dexter Pitts:** It really looked like something out of a war movie...Just seeing the spray paint and the boarded up buildings, the main thing, the boarded up buildings. Downtown was a ghost town. And it really made me feel and remember back when I was in Iraq in 2004 when we would go into Abu Ghraib.

**Narrator:** When he reunited with his old colleagues —

**Dexter Pitts: They were my guys, but they weren't the same guys. I could just tell some of them were just done. They were tired, beyond tired.**

**Narrator:** That summer, officers were quitting in droves, leaving fewer officers to respond to the nightly protests.

**Narrator:** And morale seemed to be...nonexistent. A lot of officers felt like city leadership was siding with the protesters — against *them*. Mayor Greg Fischer attended a roll call one morning in a show of support for the police and some officers booed and walked out on him.

**Narrator:** Weeks into the protests, Chief Conrad's replacement moved to fire one of the officers from the Taylor shooting —

**Mayor Greg Fischer: Thank you for joining us for a brief, but important announcement. Chief Schroeder today initiating termination procedures against Louisville Metro Police Officer Brett Hankison.**

**Narrator:** In the pre-termination letter, interim Chief Robert Schroeder wrote that Hankison showed, quote, an extreme indifference to the value of human life when you wantonly and blindly fired 10 rounds into the apartment of Breonna Taylor.

**Narrator:** For protesters — this was a drop in the bucket compared to what they were asking for.

**Narrator:** They wanted the officers arrested and prosecuted. But the Attorney General's investigation stretched for months...and the longer it lasted, the longer the protesters stayed in the streets — and the wider the gap between the police and the community grew.

**Narrator:** This had repercussions far beyond the protests. Because while all eyes were on 6th and Jefferson, the West End was facing a different crisis of epic proportions. Gun violence was soaring to unimaginable heights — leaving real people — business owners, families, youth — in the crossfire.

<<music comes up>>

**Narrator:** Out at 26th and Broadway, David McAtee's friends and family were trying to keep Yaya's Barbecue open — and trying to keep all the problems facing the area at bay. The restaurant had always been like McAtee's good friend, Will Pitts, described it — the eye of the storm.

**Will Pitts: You know what the eye is? It's the most calmest place. Everything else going on around it is chaos. And that was that.**

**Narrator:** My colleague Jake Ryan was out there at Yaya's BBQ a few days after David was killed.

**Jake Ryan:** So what's on the grill tonight?

**MARVIN MCATEE:** Same as we always have, hamburgers, links and ribs, you know we keeping it going man.

**Narrator:** David's nephew, Marvin McAtee, was manning the grill — which was a new responsibility.

**Marvin McAtee:** The only thing that he specialized over me is cooking. Everything else we 50-50 down and I wouldn't get on that grill to save my life. It's not my, it's not my thing. But keeping the bills paid. Keeping drinks and keeping everybody calm that's my job.

**Narrator:** While Will Pitts and David McAtee had grown up and left the West End, Marvin had mostly stayed. He had a lengthy criminal history — drug dealing, petty theft, probation violations, a lot of domestic violence issues. He'd been in and out of the criminal justice system a lot.

**Narrator:** But he'd started to find his way, in part through working with his uncle at Yaya's Barbecue.

**Marvin McAtee:** I would want to go buy a microwave, right? And he'll be like, well, let's go to the flea market. I said, why come I just can't go buy a microwave? He said, it's always good things for good value, you want to go after something that's brand new and think it's always the best thing for us, you know? And that's how I was at first, you know, I always like everything new.

**Narrator:** Will Pitts says that's how Marvin was.

**Will Pitts:** He's the West End, if you know what I mean...He gonna dress nice, he gonna be flashy, you know what I mean, he gone do things his way because he felt like he earned the right to do those things.

**Narrator:** After David was killed, Marvin really stepped up.

**Will Pitts:** It helped him click into gear faster because he had to. You know, you could see the maturity, he matured. You know, he was growing, you know, and I was happy for him.

**Narrator:** There was a tremendous community outpouring of support after David was killed.

**Narrator:** For Marvin, it felt like his uncle's spirit was alive in him, telling him to keep the restaurant going, to keep the community fed and — to keep trying to build a relationship with the police.

**Marvin McAtee:** What brings my uncle back is me living for him and doing this, making it right, keeping this alive. We put in too much love and soul for this. If a police come over right now, I would shake his hand and give them a drink and give him a burger.

**Narrator:** But Marvin says — the police stopped coming. LMPD Officer Dexter Pitts says it wouldn't have been very smart of an officer to just go down there on their own.

**Dexter Pitts:** When somebody that beloved in the black community is shot and killed and the media is reporting that possible LMPD shot and killed this guy, retaliation and anger mixed together is a very, very dangerous substance, and people wanted to hurt officers.

**Narrator:** The West End was in an impossible situation. The city's failure to reform the police department — to build trust and fight crime — was coming home to roost in unimaginably tragic ways. Will Pitts and Marvin McAtee watched as the storm grew ever closer to their little corner of the universe. Will says they just stayed at Yaya's — away from the trouble 26th and Broadway sometimes attracted.

**Will Pitts:** We always talked about, man, we don't go across the street.

**Narrator:** One Friday night in late September, Will wasn't there.

**Will Pitts:** It was just a strange day, like usually we're always there and for some reason that day nobody was there.

**Narrator:** But someone was there — Marvin, and a friend. And for whatever reason — that night — the men did cross the street —

**Dispatcher:** 911 operator what is your emergency?

**Woman:** Dinos, he's hit

**Will Pitts:** He walked across that street and was killed. In a matter of minutes.

**Narrator:** Marvin McAtee was 47 years old when he was killed in a shooting near the same intersection — 26th and Broadway — where his uncle had been killed, just months prior. The other man was shot as well, but survived. Will Pitts was stunned.

**Will Pitts:** We all met down there the next day, and it was like an eerie silence, you know, something wasn't right...just to lose people that you care about with no explanation... I guess the case is stalled or whatever, so. It gives you that hopeless feeling again.

**Narrator:** There's very little information available about what happened that night. The police released photos of a potential person of interest — and that's the last they've said publicly. These three men, on three paths, all came to 26th and Broadway to try to make something special. To try to make something different. To try to make things work in the West End.

**Narrator:** All three are the human toll, the true cost, of this city's broken promises — whether killed by law enforcement, killed by gun violence, or left to clean up the mess — and figure out how to possibly keep moving forward.

**Will Pitts:** **The whole city has to do a better job collectively as far as the relationships, police and, you know, the citizens. Has to be a bridge that people don't mind crossing either way, you know, and we don't have that here.**

[music comes up]

**Narrator:** Four days after Marvin was killed, Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron made his announcement: LMPD Detective Brett Hankison would be charged with wanton endangerment — for the shots he fired into Breonna Taylor's neighbor's apartment. No one was criminally charged for her death.

**Narrator:** Months later, a similar conclusion was reached in David McAtee's case — no charges for the officers or Guardsmen who shot at him. A federal investigation is ongoing. And Marvin — he became one of 173 people killed in Louisville in 2020 — nearly a 50% increase from the previous high.

**Narrator:** For protesters — there would be no justice. For the West End — there would be no peace. Louisville, Kentucky had become exactly what it once feared — a city torn apart by protests, distrust. Fear.

**Narrator:** Into this crisis stepped Mayor Greg Fischer, with a bold plan to move the city forward from this moment —

**Mayor Greg Fischer:** **What I see the opportunity coming out of this is to be a model city in terms of police reform, police community legitimacy, co-production of safety with the police and the community, and then racial equity as well.**

**Eleanor Klibanoff:** **Couldn't you argue that Louisville was given the chance to be that model city, to rethink all of this stuff, to be on the vanguard of all of this in 2015, and blew it?**

**Mayor Greg Fischer:** **No, that's a gotcha kind of thing, it's because things happen in life, no matter how perfect you are.**

**Narrator:** That's next time on Dig.

Female voice: This season of Dig was reported by Eleanor Klibanoff of the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting and Carrie Cochran, Karen Rodriguez, Maia Rosenfeld and Maren Machles (MAIR-en MACK-less) of Newsy. It was produced by Eleanor Klibanoff. It was edited by Kate Howard, Laura Ellis and Ellen Weiss. Data reporting was by Rosie Cima (Chee-mah) and Mark Fahey (FAY-hee). We received production assistance from Rip Rinehart and Chris Julin (JOO-lin). Field producing was by Zach Cusson (KOO-sahn), Mai Nolasco-Carranza (MY No-LASS-koe Cah-RAHN-zah), Tyler Franklin and Chelsae Ketchum (CHEL-see KETCH-um). Kojin Tashiro created our theme music, with Ryan Marsh. Fact checking is by Kelvin Bias. Alex Cooper is our intern. Special thanks to WAVE 3 News. We received support for this project from The Fund for Investigative Journalism.