

‘SERIAL’ EXAMINES ‘NO SNITCHING’ CODE, EVEN AFTER A BABY HAS BEEN SHOT TO DEATH

Sarah Koenig sat down with Davon Holmes and Robert “RJ” Scott — two witnesses to horrific crimes where children were shot to death — who maintained that they would never snitch.

By **Gina Tron**



Sarah Koenig

The fourth episode of “Serial’s” newest season, which has been focusing on examining Cleveland’s justice system, looks into a 2015 shooting death of 5-month-old Aavielle Wakefield.

She was shot while she rode in a car with her mother and other relatives after a bullet struck her in the chest; someone was shooting from outside the vehicle, and it does not appear that the baby was the intended target.

... the current climate of distrust of law enforcement has created an environment where the public doesn’t cooperate with the police, no matter how important the crime it is they are investigating,” Joseph Tully, a criminal lawyer from California told Oxygen.com.

Host Sarah Koenig (pictured left) interviews Davon Holmes who was charged with Wakefield’s murder before prosecutors dropped the case. Police would not rely on physical evidence for his arrest—instead, they would use questionable eyewitness identification to justify it, Koenig notes.

Still, Holmes had a lengthy criminal record, and as Koenig put it, he was “the usual suspect.”

“[This episode of ‘Serial’] delves into two separate but related topics: How once law enforcement ‘gets their man,’ they stick with that suspect, no matter how flimsy the evidence, no matter whether they know they are right or wrong and how the current climate of distrust of law enforcement has created an environment where the public doesn’t cooperate with the

police, no matter how important the crime it is they are investigating,” Joseph Tully, a criminal lawyer from California told Oxygen.com. “If you really want to know what’s going on in our courts and justice system at large, you’ll want to check this one out.”

Charles Wakefield told Koenig that he knew Holmes wasn’t the shooter.

In fact, he said he knows the gunman’s real identity, and he informed the police.

Holmes also told Koenig he had nothing to do with the shooting, but that if he had seen anything, he would not help police.

“That’s not how I was raised,” Holmes said, later adding that it’s against his “religion to tell on somebody. I would feel like less than a man.”

The episode covered another child’s untimely death due to a shooting.

Robert “RJ” Scott saw the drive-by shooting of 3-year-old Major Howard. He jumped in to try to help the boy, and also held him on the way to the hospital.

But despite telling police he saw the shooting, he later claimed he didn’t while on the stand.

“I don’t know what to do,” he said during a trial for a man accused of shooting the child, adding that he doesn’t want to

be a snitch. A prosecutor showed Scott a photo of the dead boy in the courtroom and he broke down crying. She accused him of being scared of retribution for breaking the code of not snitching.

“I broke the code already by talking to you,” he responded. “The code’s already broke.” ■