



## Second Chances

Dateline checks in with the brothers accused of killing their father in 2001

TRANSCRIPT

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To this day, does anyone understand how it happened? They were so young. TOO young, some said back then, even to understand the awful thing they did.

Here they were, nearly eight years ago -- two little boys in leg irons. And they looked so innocent, guileless, as they stood before a judge to hear the charge that they had killed their own father with a baseball bat.

Little boys? How was it possible? And how should the courts deal with them? How, indeed?

**Derek King in 2009:** It-- it blows me away. I mean, it's just so shocking that I would do something like that.

The little boys are not little anymore.

**Alex King in 2009:** I remember very clearly what I went through. I remember very clearly the price I paid for my mistakes.

Now, Alex and Derek King give their first interviews ever --about a horrible, baffling crime ---

and the surprising turns their lives have taken since then.

How did it begin? Well, it started with a family. Two boys, barely toddlers, their father, Terry King, a printer by trade and a mother who paid the bills as an exotic dancer. When the boys were six and seven, she abandoned them all. It didn't take long for single-parent-life to overwhelm the father. His older boy, Derek, was a live-wire ---so he sent him away to live with a foster family.

After that, Derek rarely saw his father and little brother, but he seemed to be doing all right with his new family. The younger brother, Alex stayed with his father -- keeping quiet, doing what he was told. He attended the Pentecostal Church with relatives. Went to school --off and on -- and stayed with a family friend, Rick Chavis, when his father was busy.

**Rick Chavis:** He was financially, you know, in a bind, you know for a while.

As for Derek ---he'd been living with that foster family for about six years when he started acting out. So in the fall of 2001, his foster family sent him back to his father. Dad and boys, together again.

Seven weeks later Dad, Terry King, was dead. It happened the Sunday after Thanksgiving. Firefighters responding to a house fire found King dead in his recliner, his head smashed in.

The boys, now 12 and 13, were gone when their father's body was found -- but two days later Rick Chavis turned them over to the police. And that's when they confessed.

**Derek King:** I made sure he was asleep. i got the bat and i hit him over the head."

Derek, the older brother, said he did the killing.

**Derek King:** I hit him once, and I heard him moan. And then I was afraid that he might wake up and see us, so I just kept on hitting him.

Alex said he was behind it all.

**Alex King:** Derek took the hits. But i was the one that gave him the idea.

The boys also admitted they'd started the fire to cover up the killing.

**Derek King:** My anger just so overwhelming that i just did what I thought was right.

What he thought was *right*? Had their father beaten them? Abused them? Well, not really, said the boys. He hit them occasionally, but...

Their friend Rick Chavis said it was more like mental abuse - just the way their father Terry looked at them.

**Rick Chavis:** It was just a real hard stare, it was like one of those type stares.

Chavis says he had told the boys to watch out for that kind of mental abuse..

**Rick Chavis:** I was truly worried. But -- what can I do?

But aside from that, said the boys, Terry wasn't a bad father. And yet, here they were, Alex and Derek King, at 12 and 13- two of the youngest children ever to be charged with murder and arson as adults.

They faced a possible sentence of 22 years to life.

**Rick Chavis:** I've never imagined in a million years, children were capable of this.

From the start, investigators were as perplexed as anyone about the motive behind the murder, but that family friend Rick Chavis had caught their interest. Chavis lived in a fenced compound filled with video games and computers, things kids crave. He had a record: in 1984 was convicted of sexually abusing two 13 year old boys. And he seemed especially fond of Alex.

All this information clearly troubling, but still, the boys had freely confessed to the murder. So, charged as adults, they spent six months in the county jail awaiting trial. And then, it was the spring of 2002. They suddenly changed their story.

They didn't kill their father, Alex and Derek told a grand jury; the real killer was Rick Chavis.

Rarely has a story captured the public's attention the way this one did. Brothers Alex and Derek King, just 12 and 13 years old, had confessed to killing their father with a baseball bat. But then they changed their story-claiming they didn't murder their father. Their family friend, Rick Chavis, did it.

So they all were charged with the murder of the boys' father - and Rick Chavis would be the first to go on trial.

**Judge:** This is very unusual set of circumstances.

Unusual because the boys would be tried as adults on that same charge as soon as Rick's trial was over.

**Kathy Medico:** I think for a prosecutor to-- to try two cases this way is absolutely unheard of.

Watching from the sidelines back then -as mystified as everyone else - was a stranger named Kathryn Medico. She was a journalism professor who had heard about the case from a former student, now a reporter.

**Kathy Medico:** I called her and I said, "This needs looking into a little." And so, we began as a team just to try to solve the mystery. And it led to the writing of a book.

For her research, Kathryn Medico had begun writing the brothers and talking by phone. Her daughters had gone to the same school as the boys -- and were about the same age. They took an interest as well.

**Kathy Medico:** They felt a connection early on and they began talking on the phone for hours and hours.

So when Rick Chavis' trial began, Kathryn Medico brought her daughters to court. It was August, 2002. With defendant Rick Chavis sitting there listening, Alex took the witness stand. This would be the first time television audiences would hear from the boys. And what they heard was jaw-dropping.

**Prosecutor David Rimmer:** Alex, did you have a sexual relationship with Ricky Chavis?

**Alex King:** Yes, sir.

**Prosecutor David Rimmer:** when did that begin?

**Alex King:** I don't know.

**Prosecutor David Rimmer:** did you at some point believe that you were in love with ricky chavis.

**Alex King:** Yes, sir.

Prosecutor David Rimmer laid out the theory that Chavis had killed the boys' father to get him out of the way, so he could have Alex to himself. Alex testified that on the night of the murder, he and Derek were asleep in their house -- their father was asleep too -- when Rick sneaked in.

**Alex King:** Rick came in our room and he woke Derek up and told us to be quiet.

It was just after midnight, Alex testified. He said he and his brother went out to Chavis' car. They waited. Then Chavis came out of the house and drove them to HIS house. It was there, said Alex, that Chavis told the boys he'd killed their father.

**Alex King:** He said that he had done it for us and he said that our dad would have killed us before he let us go live with him.

Derek King told jurors essentially the same story -- then answered a question about his relationship with his father.

**Derek King:** I did like it with him. When ... When i was there with him and around with him. But he ... He said he'd make it better and that he'd -- like he'd, he'd he would help us and like make it better and give us stuff like get a TV and stuff like that. But he didn't have a chance to.... [*cries*]. I'm sorry could I please take a break? Judge?

Then Chavis' attorney presented his defense --- and the key to it all was the boys' description of their father's death in that detailed confession.

**Alex King:** He was still trying to breathe and um made sort of like a sound like the person who has a slightly stopped up nose.

The Chavis case went to the jury, and that panel reached its decision in a relatively short period of time. But just what the decision was remained a secret, under seal, until after Alex and Derek King could go on for exactly the same crime. Opening arguments in THEIR case would begin the following month.

So next: The Trial of the King Brothers. The jailhouse scrubs were gone and the brothers were dressed in their Sunday best. Now THEY were the defendants, accused of the pre-meditated murder of their father.

**Prosecutor David Rimmer:** Alex was the one who wanted his father dead, who encouraged his brother Derek to do it.

Derek didn't take the witness stand this time. But Alex did. And again, his relationship with Chavis provided prosecutors with their motive

**Prosecutor David Rimmer:** you've identified all these love letters that you wrote to rick.

**Alex King:** Yes, sir.

These were extraordinary notes that Alex -- barely 12 years old -- had written about Rick Chavis.

*My life used to be cloudy before I made friends with Rick. My ultimate goal in life now is what his is. It is about sharing your life with someone else's. Before I met Rick, I was straight, but now I am gay.*

The prosecutor suggested these notes showed Alex was so fixated on Chavis that he would kill his own father.

But when it came time for the boys' defense, their attorneys portrayed Rick Chavis as the pedophile who pulled the strings in this whole ugly mess.

**James Stokes:** Once he began his relationship with Alex he started more on "Terry can't love you the way I can." Terry is abusive and Derek has been allowed to watch as this 40-year-old pedophile sits Alex on his lap and kisses him.

The boys' defense suggested Chavis had lured them into a private play world and then convinced them to take the fall for him.

**Alex King:** He let us smoke weed and like play his games and stuff.

The stakes couldn't have been higher - and yet, Kathy Medico says the boys really didn't seem to grasp it.

Kathy: when James Stokes, the attorney for Alex, was giving this very impassioned plea before the jury, fighting for this child's life literally, he finally went and-- and he sat down at the defense table and looked over at Alex to see Alex's reaction. And Alex was hiding a laugh. He had no concept. He was oblivious to what was going on.

The jurors almost certainly noticed that childish demeanor, but what did it mean? That these children were so emotionally detached that they really could have beaten their father to death? Or that they were so infantile they could be manipulated into covering for Rick Chavis?

In the waning days of summer 2002, while most kids were getting ready to head back to school, Alex King and his brother Derek were waiting to find out if they were heading to prison. Would a jury convict them of murdering their father with a baseball bat? In five hours, the boys had their answer.

Jurors said it was Alex's banal yet horrifying description of the murder scene that told them the boys weren't in Rick Chavis car at all: They were there in the house, present at the killing.

**Alex King:** And he was still trying to breathe and, um, made sort of like a sound like the person who has a slightly stopped up nose.

The brothers simply knew too much. But Rick Chavis was there too, they thought. He may have even swung the bat. And that explains the verdict: Given all the controversy -- was the state of Florida *really* going to send these boys to adult prison?

Apparently the judge had his own misgivings. A month later he threw out their convictions and the lawyers worked out a deal. The boys pleaded guilty to third degree murder. Alex was sentenced to seven years. Derek -- eight. They would end up serving time in separate Florida juvenile detention centers.

And Rick Chavis? His jury didn't like him -- but they didn't think there was enough evidence that he swung the bat, so Chavis was acquitted. The courts weren't through with Chavis. A few months later he was charged with lewd and lascivious battery involving Alex. Again, he was acquitted.

But Chavis faced more charges related to the murder because he had hidden the boys and washed their bloody clothes that night. This time he was convicted, of accessory after the fact to first degree murder and tampering with evidence. He's now serving 35 years in prison.

So the case was settled in a way -- and writer Kathryn Medico had her book. But she wasn't done with the boys because her interest had become deeply personal. She had spent months writing letters to them and talking on the phone -- and she had developed a special bond with Alex. She didn't actually *meet* him until late 2002 -- when she got a chance to visit him in prison.

**Kathy Medico:** As soon as I met him, there was just a connection as though he was a child that needed me in some way.

Kathryn and her family frequently wrote to Alex and visited him in prison..

**Keith Morrison:** How many people thought you were out of your mind?

**Kathy Medico:** I don't know. s--

**Keith Morrison:** I mean, some people did.

**Kathy Medico:** Substantial amount, I'm sure.

And she wasn't the only stranger taking a personal interest in the boys. In the midwest and Texas, a handful of people had come together through the internet to express their outrage that once again, children had been thrown into the adult legal system. Their anger morphed into concrete support for the boys -- and in 2003, this group of strangers founded The King Brothers trust.

Lisa Drew Alton started it all.

**Lisa Drew Alton:** It was a gesture of faith and hope for them that we're going to be here for you, the people involved in the trust are going to be here for you and there's some money here to help you get started in your life.

Lisa had gotten to know a man named Dan Dailey online. Dailey is a widower and freelance writer who lived in west Texas. - and the King Brothers case had galvanized him into action. As he tells it, he sort of happened into a friendship with Derek after Lisa suggested he send the boy some books in prison.

**Lisa Drew Alton:** And then, I got this-- thank you letter from-- from Derek. And I really couldn't believe it, and yet, you know, here I was holding a letter from Derek King. It was the beginning of our friendship.

They wrote frequently -- and if there was any lingering doubt about what really happened, Daily said he was impressed that Derek readily admitted his guilt.

Several times he made the drive out to Florida to visit Derek in prison. Another stranger entering the lives of the King Brothers. Random people, waiting on the outside, while the boys grew up in prison -- from children to teenagers to young men.

**Dan Dailey:** This is-- I mean, this is a chance to really-- help someone change their life.

All this attention and care to two boys who became famous by killing their father. Were they worth it?

They say you can read a person's soul by looking in his eyes. What's going on behind these eyes?

Two boys famous - infamous - for murdering their own father. Boys who grew up in prison -- where young offenders can harden into full-fledged criminals. So -- what became of Derek and Alex King? Now, for the first time, a chance to find out.

**Keith Morrison:** How are you doing?

**Alex King:** How am I doing? Well, presently, I am fabulous.

**Keith Morrison:** (*laughter*) Well, that's-- well, that's good.

That's how Alex King talks. Troublesome memories? He steers clear of them, keeps it light. Nearly a year and a half out of prison, 19-year-old Alex King is savoring the life he's found with the kind of family he never dreamed he'd have. And he'll tell you he's a very different kid than the one who went to prison.

**Alex King:** It's as though I was walking around dazed all the time, not processing, not registering the fact that what was around me was actually real.

Alex talks vaguely about his first few years in prison. And mostly he says -- he felt nothing. And then in April of 2005, with three years left to go on his sentence he pulled a stunt that could have added 15 more years. And it woke him up.

**Alex King:** And who would have thought a moment of utter stupidity would have brought me to my senses?

He and another boy tried to escape.

**Keith Morrison:** Now, what'd you do?

**Alex King:** Well, made our beds up to-- it would look like there was somebody in there using our clothes. And we just went into the classroom. And we tried to escape through the roof. And--

**Keith Morrison:** Through the ceiling?

**Alex King:** Through the ceiling.

**Keith Morrison:** Where'd you wind up?

**Alex King:** We wound up back in the classroom-- and really there was nothing that we could do.

**Keith Morrison:** Except say, "oh, god, we're-- we're done."

**Alex King:** Yeah. We really are stupid. (*chuckle*)

They were caught, of course, taken to county jail and booked on a whole new set of charges.

**Kathy Medico:** I-- I went to him to see him. And I said to him, "I've been so worried about you." And that's when he said, "you don't have to worry about me. You're not my mother." And I said, "Oh, yes, I am. I am."

I told him that he was, in fact, my son as much as my children were. And he didn't say anything at that moment. But, later on, the letters were addressed, "dear mother," and he's called me mother ever since.

And then Alex caught a very big break. Instead of giving him more prison time, the judge gave him a second chance, sending him back to the juvenile facility to finish his sentence.

And then, perhaps for the first time in his life, Alex began to do some grownup thinking.

**Alex King:** It really hit me that my actions don't affect me alone. They affect other people. And I really felt things for the first time.

He read. He prayed. He studied: the boys whose education had been spotty at best was hitting the books -- in prison. His keen mind was finally engaged -- and he earned his high school diploma.

And on April 9, 2008, Alex left prison in South Florida to begin a life with the family of Kathryn Medico.

**Alex King:** It was a wonderful day-- walking out of the gates was just kind of-- I was kind of stunned.

Anything stand out in that first few days, few weeks?

**Alex King:** The main thing just being with family.

Which brings us to Jacksonville, Fla. and this neatly manicured suburb. It is here where Alex King is settling into that new life of his and from here the chaos and poverty of his childhood, and the crushing monotony of prison life must seem light years away.

The adjustment was not instant, but in time Kathryn and Alex learned to talk easily, although Kathryn says they have never discussed Alex's role in the murder of his father.

**Keith Morrison:** What can you tell me about your dad?

**Alex King:** I don't have too many memories of his personality because we didn't have too good of communication. Well, he was usually tired a lot, you know, from having to work and running around. And he was always stressed. And so, he slept a lot.

They were poor, they moved a lot and Terry was often out of work.

**Keith Morrison:** What kind of work would he do?

**Alex King:** He worked at a printing shop.

And sometimes took Alex with him. Sometimes on the night shift, Alex slept there. Nowhere else to go.

**Alex King:** And it just kind of left me in that state where I'm confused and not really knowing anything around me.

**Keith Morrison:** Have no friends?

**Alex King:** No friends. N-- nothing.

Alex wasn't in school long enough to know anybody.

And then we mentioned the one who called himself friend: Rick Chavis --and the cheerful, chatty Alex got quiet.

**Keith Morrison:** A kid like that is sort of a sitting duck for-- somebody with videogames and a compound you can go to and all the treats to give you and things like that. - this guy--

**Alex King:** Rick?

**Keith Morrison:** --presented himself. Yeah. Was it in that situation kind of?

**Alex King:** Really, I don't think about it. I don't dwell on it. It's not a really joyful part of my life.

And clearly, Alex was also uncomfortable when the questions turned to his father's murder.

**Keith Morrison:** So what made it happen? What was the trigger? That's what I still don't get.

**Alex King:** The trigger?

**Keith Morrison:** Yeah.

**Alex King:** I don't really know. Maybe it was stress, you know. Maybe it was Ricky Chavis' influence. Maybe it was, I don't know, something else. I really-- I can't say.

Instead of talking directly about his role in the murder, Alex talks about making "bad decisions."

**Keith Morrison:** Just take ownership of it for one second. What's the worst choice you made?

**Alex King:** What's the worst choice I made? *(pause)* I honestly can't say what the worst choice was.

**Keith Morrison:** They said that it was you who had the idea to do to your father what eventually was done. Was that the worst of your decisions? Can i help you out with that?

**Alex King:** I'll say this. I really don't know what the worst of my decisions was. I made bad decisions. That's blatantly obvious.

**Keith Morrison:** I want to know how this could happen to a 12-year-old boy. How you and your brother could wind up doing what you did.

**Alex King:** You know-- since I've been out, I've read things that-- centered around the whole trial and everything. And it's like it's another person that I'm reading about.

**Keith Morrison:** when you see the pictures of that young towheaded boy in court, does that not feel like it's you?

**Alex King:** It doesn't. I don't even associate myself with the person who went through all of that.

Does he know what's in that memory locker of his? Will he ever open it? Even to himself...?

**Alex King:** It's more one of those things I'd rather forget. I have my family. I have my friends. I have a life now.

When Alex talks about family, what he means is the people he lives with here in Jacksonville and they of course are not blood relatives. He seems to have not very much interest in seeing his birth mother. Maybe someday, he says, and then there's his brother - and that's complicated, isn't it?

**Alex King:** We ha-- I've spent very little time with him, actually, throughout my life. We've not really had much chance to form any bonds, or any real relationships, or anything.

And those who know them will tell you how different they are. Always have been. Alex is reserved, Derek is outgoing. And according to his confession, Derek is also the one who did the killing.

So now that Derek is out of prison, he will face the same kind of curiosity and questions that his brother has faced. How will HE answer?

Alex King wound up in an ordinary American suburb. Derek King -- far from it. In fact, Derek-- 21 and fresh out of prison, landed pretty far away from just about *everything*.

We met up with him about two months after his release in a remote part of the Southwest --- living off the grid.

**Derek King:** I like time alone, away from everything away from all buildings, away from people. I like going out hiking. I see a lot of wildlife you know, deer. Saw a bear one time. That was interesting.

A quiet retreat to a rough-hewn house owned by that man who sent him those books years ago -- Dan Dailey.

Derek was just getting his footing -- - and savoring all this newfound freedom after eight years behind bars

**Derek King:** It's kinda like when Scrooge, on a Christmas carol, woke up on Christmas Day. And he finally realized when he-- you know, how close he was and what his life could be like, and when he woke up that morning, he had a second chance.

Alex and Derek's mother didn't visit them too often in prison, but she was with Derek the day he walked out. And he remembers it as just about the happiest moment of his life.

And happiness for Derek, has been hard to come by. His early childhood is a blur, but he holds onto a smattering of pleasant images: a little boy with a brother, a mother and father.

**Derek King:** It wouldn't be something that i could describe: just pictures. Nothing-- nothing much else.

And nothing that lasted. Derek was just seven when he went to that foster home. He still doesn't understand why. But he says it wasn't all bad. He was enrolled in classes for gifted children. He says the family was stable.

**Derek King:** And they took me, raised me as if i was one of their own children. And I was with them for about seven, either-- seven or eight years.

Derek admits he made it tough for them, wouldn't listen, caused trouble -- and that's why they sent him back to his father after all those years. And of course when they did his life hit a hairpin turn. And a ruinous one.

**Derek King:** I-the change of surroundings was very, very difficult. Because I just came from a family, you know, that had been married, have kids, grew up and stuff like that. My dad was a single father of two boys. And he's trying to

make it on his own and provide for his kids.

If his father had been seriously abusive -- that might explain why Derek killed him. But Derek never blames his father -- or anyone else. Not even Rick Chavis. Not now anyway.

**Derek King:** I really don't wanna focus on it. And I've tried to put it behind me. And it was-- it was horrible.

And now Derek turns to the murder, the trial and the aftermath.

**Derek King:** It blows me away. I mean, it's just so shocking that I would do something like that, and that I was so close to being, you know, being lost forever it's kinda like slowing down a video, and seeing a bullet graze past your head.

The trial he says, is hazy. But the verdict; now THAT that he remembers, because it brought his fate into focus.

**Derek King:** I was in a state of shock. Didn't feel anything. It was just like-- the reality of the situation sunk in.

Derek, like Alex, wouldn't go into details about the murder itself-- but he did talk about the crime and its impact.

**Derek King:** I've realized what I've done. And if I had a chance to do everything over again, I would never have done. But we can't change the past. If I dwell on, and if I beat myself up over I'll always feel guilty. And I'll always feel the shame, if I'm always saying, well, always considering myself a convict, an ex-con, a murderer. If that's what I always define myself as, I'll never become more than that.

And again -- the question of why goes answered. Eight years ago Derek confessed to some terrible anger he had that night.

*My anger was so overwhelming, I just did what I thought was right.*

So what happened to all that anger? Is it still there?

**Derek King:** I don't know what-- what triggered the murder. That's one of the things I wanna study, I wanna understand, so I can move on past it.

There is someone who might be able help him figure it out. Someone who knows what he knows. Derek and Alex will be joined forever-- by the childhoods they lost -- and the death they'd like to forget.

You could have bet good money back in 2001 that no good would come of the King brothers. So how do you explain Alex King -- and the life he's led since prison? The scrapbook Kathryn Medico put together speaks volumes --- about a lost boy's extraordinary opportunities --- and mother's commitment.

**Alex King:** I have had the wonderful fortune of having people in my life to help me. The most prominent is my mom. Another good example is my sister. Whenever I'm feeling down or depressed, I can always talk to her.

And, actually, another prime example is Deepak Chopra.

Ah yes -- Deepak Chopra -- doctor, philosopher, peace activist -- that Deepak Chopra. He too has taken an interest in Alex King. And it all started when Kathryn took Alex to Dr. Chopra's peace conference in Barcelona. They were asked to speak.

Just a few months out of prison -- and here he was.

**Alex King:** I'm just so grateful to expand, to be more than what I was.

Deepak Chopra asked Alex to talk to young Americans about non-violence --- and he has. He's visited high schools and given talks -- steering clear of probing questions about his conviction for murder.

**Alex King:** What happened to make me incarcerated -- let's just say I was put in a bad situation and I did not make the best of it and so -- yeah, I made some pretty bad decisions.

Alex's foray into public service almost makes up for a huge disappointment he's faced since his release. He can't get a job.

**Kathryn Medico:** it was very difficult because he came out very excited about working and was willing to do absolutely anything. So, we immediately hit the pavement and applied at the grocery store. We applied for construction jobs. We applied for dish washing jobs. And it would get to the point where it would say, "Have you been convicted of a felony?" And he always wrote down quite honestly yes, that he had. That stopped everything dead in its tracks. So he focuses on his education. He's enrolled in a community college and working hard.

**Alex King:** I guess my true passion career-wise would be microbiology.

**Keith Morrison:** That's quite an ambition. That's great.

**Alex King:** Thank you.

**Keith Morrison:** At the same time, you like reading also.

**Alex King:** Love to read.

He really comes alive with family and friends. Alex has friends -- more than he ever had as a kid. And he dates. Distinctly absent from this happy picture is Derek. He's just getting started at life on the outside. And he's desperate to shake off his old life on "the inside."

**Derek King:** And I've encountered a lot of people. "Oh, this is all you're gonna be. You've grow up in prison. Six months, you'll be back."

He says he'll prove them wrong. This past June, Derek traveled to Springfield, Mo. to meet some of the people who have supported him and Alex all these years. They weren't family. But they cared. Lisa Drew Alton took Derek to the dentist and the eye doctor. Her family dragged him out for some fun.

**Derek King:** They accepted me for being who I am. They accepted me, because of what's on their heart, you know.

**Dan Dailey:** You know, we pay a lot of lip service to giving kids a second chance. But the fact is, is that it just doesn't happen very often.

Dan Dailey, Kathryn Medico, and others-- the random people who surfaced in these boys lives have come to agree on at least one point: Children should not be tried as adults. And the King brothers, they say, were the lucky ones. Kathryn Medico believes Alex was saved -- when he was taken out of the adult prison system.

**Kathryn Medico:** He ended up being in-- a juvenile institution for seven years, which I feel was completely appropriate now, had we just gone ahead and given him 15 or 20 years to think about it, I really think we wou-- he would not be salvageable.

The brothers say they are grateful for all this --- but something's been missing. For all these years -- they've been apart. Remember when we first met Alex he hadn't even seen Derek since they went to juvenile detention. Some of the adults around them felt that was okay -- given their history.

But a few months ago, Derek and Alex took charge. They met in Pensacola for a brief and quiet reunion.

And then in late July Derek was invited to a weekend-long birthday blowout for Alex -- who was turning 20.

Nothing quiet about this visit. Derek was suddenly immersed in a very different kind of life -- Alex's life -- complete with family and friends his own age. It all seems so normal. But given the underpinnings of this extraordinary reunion -- it was anything but.

What do they think about -- talk about -- now? We started with a question about second chances --- and both brothers agree they are deeply grateful to those who made that happen.

**Derek King:** I don't say I owe it to them, but I want to show them, I want to show them that all that effort wasn't in vain.

And Alex ? Well, he's been out a lot longer than Derek --- long enough to know that people outside his devoted inner circle --- potential employers for instance -- don't always welcome a convicted killer. He's starting to wonder if he'll EVER get that job.

**Alex King:** When I go in for that all they see is the record and um a lot of people that I meet, it's the only thing they seem to, the only thing that they seem to see. It's the only thing they recognize about me.

That hint of bitterness disappears when Alex talks about his friends --and the joy of life's unexpected turns.

**Alex King:** We didn't know how you would build up friends, or, I would have never imagined this --- (*thunder sounds*) You see the lightning?

A spontaneous moment to break the ice -- and start a conversation about the future. They talked about the possibility of being together again.

**Alex King:** Oh yeah.

**Derek King:** Yeahhh.

**Alex King:** Oh yeah, he's my brother there (*laughs*) -- um hopefully soon, we'll be living together, hopefully - that'd be great -- yeah, definitely.

**Derek King:** Start over, start fresh you know.

**Alex King:** Yeah.

Easy to talk about on a weekend loaded with family love and good intentions. But are they serious about being together after so much time apart? Apparently --- yes.

Shortly after the party, Derek made a surprising announcement, or maybe it wasn't such a surprise : He's moving to Jacksonville. And true to form, Katharine Medico is stepping in, now for Derek.

She has enrolled him in the same community college Alex attends, and will help him rent an apartment walking distance from school.

Derek's reasoning is clear. They've been through so much together: fractured childhoods, a shocking murder whose intimate details only they really know, a trial in the public eye. Now, Derek wants to share something redemptive. He wants an education, he wants friends and above all, he still wants a brother.

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