

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 450: Arthur's Seat Coffins

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I have really, really cool news.

Okay.

So about a year ago, I got to share the absolutely life-changing, mind-blowing, like, universe-warping news about writing my first book, *The Butcher and the Wren*.

I could never have dreamed of the support that I received then and that the book continues to receive now from all of you.

You are amazing.

You set records with the numbers of pre-orders.

You made every edition a bestseller.

It's you guys.

You did it.

You guys even nominated recently for an audio award.

It's for best audio book with a multi-voice performance.

Yep, yep.

Those voice actors are the best.

And now I am so proud and so thrilled to share two pieces of incredible news with you.

I have been sitting on these two pieces of news forever and I can't wait to scream them to you.

So the first one is that *The Butcher and the Wren* is going to be out in paperback this summer on July 25th, so you can finally get that paperback edition.

And to make this even cooler, guess what the paperback edition is going to have?

What?

It's going to have a sneak peek of a chapter from book two.

Oh my God.

And guess what?

I got to read it and I can tell you it's a really good chapter.

It is, that's right.

There's going to be a sequel.

It is coming.

You get to read part of it in that paperback if you get it.

And what's even better is that my publisher is giving away free signed copies of the paperback to the first 50 people who pre-order.

So if you want to pre-order the paperback with that sneak peek chapter of book two in it, you can go to [tinyurl.com slash T-B-A-T-W paperback](https://tinyurl.com/T-B-A-T-W-paperback).

That's [tinyurl.com slash T-B-A-T-W paperback](https://tinyurl.com/T-B-A-T-W-paperback).

Thank you guys so much.

You're amazing.

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Thank you so much for listening, supporting, reading, being the best weirdos that you ever could be.

I can't tell you how much.

I appreciate you and love you.

I just want to hug you all, but I won't because it's virtual, but feel it, okay?

I can't wait for you guys to read more of Jeremy and Ren this summer and it's going to be awesome.

Just you wait.

Kapowee!

Hey weirdos, I'm Alina and I'm Ash and this is Morbid.

Yay, I love Morbid.

I love Morbid too.

I love you.

Oh my God, and I love all of you.

Yay.

And you know what?

I wasn't here last episode.

You guys got Caleb instead.

Caleb.

Kaleeb.

It was a fun episode with Caleb, but you were obviously very missed, but it was a good time.

Of course.

We love Caleb.

Yeah, we do.

We love Caleb.

He's literally like our brethren.

He's our brethren.

We call him our brother in Christ.

Yeah, I call him our brother in Christ all the time.

Yeah, he's wonderful.

We love him.

Very thankful to him for stepping in when I had to dip out real quick.

Would you do?

I went to New York City.

I don't think I did a really great job of explaining like why you were gone.

I was like, she's getting like honored at a gala.

I don't know.

It's like a New York minute thing.

Her and John are going to be fancy.

Yep.

That's pretty much it.

That's basically what I said.

I'm going to go to the Poet and Writers Gala and be a literary table host, which was cool.

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It was really fun and it was LeVar Burton was the host and he sang the Reading Rainbow theme song.

That's really fucking special.

So that was worth its weight in gold.

He was amazing.

And then we went to the, I think it's like the, I can never say it right, the Audis or is it the Audis?

Audis.

Audis.

Audis.

Audio.

Audio.

The Audis.

Yeah.

The Audis.

But it looks like Audi the car.

And that was us trying to figure out how to speak on a podcast.

Thanks for tuning in.

But yeah, the Butcher in the Red was a finalist in the multi-voiced performance category.

Which is a big deal because there's only like 25 categories.

Yeah.

Sophie and Joe, the narrators who did the narration for the Butcher in the Red, the audio book, they were like, they did such a fucking awesome job.

Did you get to meet them while you were there?

I didn't.

And you know what the thing is?

Here it is.

Sophie, if you're listening right now, I need you to know this.

I don't think Joe was there.

Okay.

But Sophie, I think I saw Sophie and I was with Sabrina.

Yeah.

My wonderful literary agent.

I love Sabrina.

And I was with John and I looked over and I said, I think that's Ren.

And they were like, what?

And I was like, I'm pretty sure that's Ren.

And then I was like, I'm scared to go up to her and say, are you Ren and have her be like, who the fuck?

I don't know.

Like, I don't know who you are.

I got very social anxiety about it.

But Sophie, I think I saw you and I, and it was exciting because I was like, you're Ren.

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That's so cool.

Look, it's Ren.

And I didn't say anything.

And I regret it now.

I know exactly how that feels though.

Like, I know exactly the feeling that you were feeling.

I get very intense.

Well, not intense because I never read a book and had somebody narrate it.

I'm like, I know exactly what that's like when I go to these galas and I get on it.

But there's social anxiety.

You know, like, it's, it was, it was intense and it was a very different vibe for me because it was such a fancy event.

And it's well, it's well, but you know, it was fun, but that was my outing for the year.

I don't blame you.

I will not be doing anything else.

So there was that.

So that was fun.

But yeah, I had to miss the episode recording.

I know.

And Caleb was like, I got you.

Yeah.

That's literally what he said.

I got you.

Quite literally said that.

So he said, I got you doggie.

Yep.

I got you doggie.

That's what he said verbatim.

But this is, this kind of works out because the last episode that I did was the Burke and Hare case.

I loved that.

Well, I didn't love that, but it was a fascinating case, right?

Like it's a very interesting Scottish case, one of the craziest Scottish crimes in Scottish history.

And this connects to it.

So it's like a fun little like continuation, a little offshoot.

This is actually, I'm going to talk about the Arthur Seat coffins today.

If you were at the obituary show, or if you have been at any of the obituary shows, I assume, they mentioned these little coffins.

Okay.

And when I saw them, I was like, oh, I've been meaning to dive into those.

You actually leaned over to me and said that exact sentence.

I literally did.

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I was like, oh, that's one I wanted to like put on the list to make sure I get to.
And when we decided to do Burke and Hare, which is another one I've been wanting to do forever, I was like, oh, these connect so we can just do them back to back.
And here we are.
Hello.
So let's tell you what Arthur Seat is first, because you're probably like, what is that?
So Arthur Seat is the largest section of a three-part ancient volcano system that erupted more than 300 million years ago and is now extinct.
It was lit.
It was very lit.
It's located about one mile east of Edinburgh's old town neighborhood, not very far from the coast.
It has slopes and cliffs.
It's like very scenic.
And it basically combines with other hills and geological features like the Salisbury crags and all these things together form Holly Roode Park, which is one of Scotland's royal parks and the largest open space in Edinburgh.
That's really cool.
Yeah.
It's very cool.
I don't think I realized that there were volcanoes in Scotland.
Yeah.
What a silly girl.
Well, they're in way more places than you think.
Yeah.
Because a lot of them are extinct.
So it's like you would never know that that was once an active volcano.
Or even a dormant one, because now it's like...
It doesn't do it anymore.
That was me making the...
It's dead.
She did the hand across the neck.
Yeah.
The visuals are hard around here.
They are.
They're hard on a podcast.
But here we are.
Also, if you go on TikTok or something while you can, if you can, it's fingers crossed.
When you type in like Edinburgh, or you type in like Arthur Seat Scotland, you're going to get some really cool fucking videos of it.
If you type in Scotland into TikTok...
We were just watching some of TikToks actually, and you're like, I want to go to there.
Planning a trip to you immediately.
But yeah, it's wild.

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And you see our car castle and a lot of them, and I'm like, okay, that's just my castle.
That's the latest ancestors.
That's just my ancestors.
Oh wait, those are my ancestors too.
No, they're just mine.
No, they're mine.
Just kidding.
We can share them.
So the area of Arthur Seat has a lot of history.
It was once home to the Vododini, I believe it's pronounced, an Iron-aged-era society of Bretonic people who occupied the area until about the 5th century.
It has a position as the highest point in the region, which is good because it made it a really good location for a hill fort.
Because obviously from that high up, it would have been very defensible from all four sides.
And over time, the area has served a number of important social functions too.
It was a super fruitful hunting ground.
It was the grounds of the Hollywood, I always want to say Hollywood.
Hollywood?
Hollywood?
It's Hollywood, Abby, which was a haven for debtors during the Victorian era.
And it is among Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's favorite locations in Scotland.
Oh, interesting.
In fact, Prince Albert felt so strongly about this region that he actually enacted programs to clean up the overly polluted royal park, and he put in policies to protect basically its natural splendor.
That's really cool.
Yeah.
Now, although the origins of its name are not like super, no, we think we know where it came from.
It's not like it's solid.
We don't have the concrete evidence we need to be like, that's what it is.
We're making inferences.
We are.
Inferences.
There you go.
And one of the most popular theories for where the name came from is that it was the site of Camelot.
Oh, home of King Arthur.
I know that.
Knights of the Round Table.
Knife stuck in the rock.
You know, like, what's the knight's name in that?
Isn't it Camelot?
Lancelot.

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Lancelot.

I knew it was a lot.

Is it a Camelot?

Camelot was like the kingdom, I think.

Oh, OK.

So Arthur's seat, King Arthur.

It's not there.

Makes sense that this area would be called Arthur's seat for Camelot.

I like it.

I think that is the origin because it's fun.

And I can't think of any other origin.

No, it's fun.

It's whimsical.

I like it.

It's fantastical.

I like it.

Yeah.

There are some less exciting theories of where it came from.

Fuck these following theories.

You know, one of them is that it could be an evolution of an ancient Scott Gaelic word.

I'm going to try it, guys.

Go for it.

Ardnes said?

I believe you.

Which means height of arrows.

OK.

I, you know, yeah, sure.

Fun in a way.

Yeah, words.

In a different way.

You're literary.

Yeah, you know.

I'm literate.

You're lit.

You are indeed.

And it's fun in, like, oh, fun language and words way.

But it's not fun in, like, a Camelot nights of the round table kind of way.

If there's not a night, it's just like, if there's not a night, what do we even hear for?

That's, you know, like, I'm a night owl.

Oh, me too.

But I'm.

But I'm.

But yeah.

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And then, you know, like, so there's that.

And then more theories are that it was once, you know, the home of an ancient dragon.

OK, that's really fucking fun.

You're like, fuck these following theories.

I'm like, oh, no, this one's pretty good.

Was Daenerys there?

Perhaps, and you know what, this one, I think you're really going to like.

Oh, let's fucking go.

Some people say that the dew on the morning grass contains magical properties that will keep you looking young and beautiful.

Give me those motherfucking tuck everlasting drops.

And this dew magic actually is such a prevalent legend that many a young woman often climb the hillside on May Day and wash their faces in the morning dew.

Because youth.

What's May Day?

May Day is a day.

Is it in May?

May.

Fuck.

Because I want, I think we're probably going to go in summer if we go.

Yeah, because that's supposedly like the best time to go.

Yeah.

And like, you know, kids not missing school and stuff, but like, fuck, I want to go on May Day.

I mean, maybe you can just go and get the dew anyway.

Maybe it has the same.

I mean, act like I'm not going to act like I'm not going to rub dew on my face.

Act like I'm going to rub all the dew on my face.

Oh, yeah, you are.

Shit.

I'm excited about that.

Fuck Botox.

I think it's pretty great.

I'm going to have their seat do.

I'm about to.

Some hollyrood dew.

Hollyrood dew.

Any Scottish listener right now is like, my God.

I'm like, please.

My God.

Azul Amir.

Step aside.

Exactly.

There you go.

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Damn.

The hollywood dew is where it's at.

I am a big believer that cat should be seen, of course, but not smelled.

I mean, is there anything worse than walking into a house and just being smacked in the face with a nose full of cat stank?

No, there's not.

But that's why I use pretty litter because it's got the best in class superior odor control.

And that's really just one reason I love it.

Here are plenty of other reasons.

Numero uno.

Pretty litter actually, their crystals change color to indicate early signs of potential illnesses in your cat, like urinary tract infections, kidney issues, and way more.

And then the other thing is that nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing beats Pretty Litter's odor control.

It's ultra absorbent and it instantly traps odor.

It's lightweight, virtually dust-free, and works for up to a month without clumping.

That means no more wasting litter.

Plus, Pretty Litter ships free right to my door in a small lightweight bag.

I never run out.

I don't have a massive container of litter taking up space, and I don't have to lug that bulky container from a store to my car, into my house, down to my basement, or out in the court.

Like, no.

I freaking love Pretty Litter.

The fact that my house doesn't smell like a bunch of cats live there, because, girl, I have three cats.

Like, that's a lot of pee, a lot of poop to be stank in.

But because I have Pretty Litter, you're not stanking it.

People walk in my house and they're like, wait, you have cats?

And I'm like, yeah, of course, look.

Anyway, you don't want people coming into your home and being hit with a nose full of cat stank.

So get Pretty Litter today.

Go to [prettylitter.com slash morbid](https://prettylitter.com/slash/morbid) to save 20% on your first order.

That's [prettylitter.com slash morbid](https://prettylitter.com/slash/morbid) to save 20% on your first order.

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Terms and conditions apply, see site for details.

It's the fall of 2017 in Rancho Tejama, California.

A man and his wife are driving to a doctor's appointment when another car crashes into them, sending them flying off the road.

Disoriented, they stumble out of the car only to hear dozens of gunshots whizzing past them.

This is just one chapter of a much larger nightmare unraveling in their small town.

This is actually happening presents a special limited series called Point Blank, shedding

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a light on the forgotten spree killings of Rancho Tejama, where a lone gunman devastated a small town, attacking eight different locations in the span of only 25 minutes.

The series follows five stories of people connected to the incident, from a father that drew the gunman away from a local school, to the sister of the shooter.

These are riveting stories that will stick with you long after you listen.

Follow this is actually happening wherever you listen to podcasts.

You can listen ad-free on the Amazon Music or Wondery app.

So given its geographical prominence, it's splendor, it's aesthetic beauty, it's magical properties.

It does make sense that Arthur's seat would be a pretty significant piece of any Scottish and Gaelic folklore.

It's like a perfect place for it.

It's like the fairy glens in the Isle of Skye in Scotland, which she just told me about.

I go look at that to the fairy glens or the whole Isle of Skye, really.

I'm getting the fuck out of America, you guys.

I mean, you look at Scotland or really like any of those kind of places and you're like, what am I doing over here?

If we get to go to there, I'm like going to look at some real estate.

I want to go to there.

I'm not even joking.

I want to go to there.

I want to go to there.

Bye, y'all.

Yeah.

Interestingly too, this place is so like magical and beadious and wonderful.

It is attracted, you know, obviously it's been part of Scottish and Gaelic folklore, but it's also attracted non-European groups like the Mormon Church, right?

I said that too.

That's exactly my reaction.

Truly all I know.

They incorporated it into their origins as far back as 1840.

So that's just like an interesting little thing.

Right now, as we sit here, it's a very popular like tourist destination.

That makes sense.

And you can get there by a short hike.

You can get there.

Like it's not one of those things that you're like, well, you have to like free climb up a cliff to get there.

You know, like it's not one of those.

You can just like run up that hill with Katie.

You can just run it up that hill.

Yeah.

Exactly.

So you're good.

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But let's talk.

So now we know where Arthur's seat is.

I almost said Arthur's.

It got really weird.

Arthur's seat.

And now we know what Arthur's seat is.

We can now talk about the coffins, the Liliputian coffins.

What is Liliputian?

Thank you for asking that.

I don't know.

Oh.

That was really funny.

I really thought you were like, thank you for asking that.

You walked me into my next statement and you go, thank you for asking that.

I literally don't know.

I'll look it up.

Keep going.

I'll look it up.

I don't know why.

You know what it is?

I think I got so excited about the word Liliputian because it's beautiful.

It feels great.

I know.

It just means trivial or very small.

Okay.

Yeah.

There you go.

It's a very small person or thing.

There you go.

Because you know what?

Say Liliputian.

Oh, I will.

Liliputian.

Doesn't that feel just like, anything usually that starts with Lil, I like to say.

Specifically.

Shun at the end of things feels very like, youshun.

Yeah.

Feels like blah.

Blah.

And Shun are very yummy names in my mouth.

They are.

They just, it's got good mouth feel to it.

It does.

I think I got Ryan Lil really quick.

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Oh my God.

Ryan Lil.

Yeah.

I knew that you would be on board with that.

For a moment.

Yeah.

Just take a quick little detour.

Don't worry.

I'm not going to like.

We're not going to go forever.

Let us pray.

Let us.

To Ryan Lil.

Ryan Lil.

We're going to have to link his stuff in the, in our show notes because it's so worth knowing this human.

You need to check out his books, which we will also.

His newest one is, I want to make sure I get the.

It's in the pines.

In the pines.

I just wanted to make sure I got the exact.

Yeah.

Name, Ryan.

It's in the pines.

In the pines.

He also has.

Music.

Music.

Is the song a Dormie that we like?

Oh my God.

Or is it just a Dormie?

No, it's a Dormie.

It's a Dormie, right?

Yeah.

It's a Dormie.

It's, he's just a very talented human being.

He's an amazing makeup artist.

His other book is on the wire that is already out.

I believe the.

On a wire.

On a wire.

And then the next one is going to be coming out soon.

So look out for it.

We're just going to link his shout him out everywhere.

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Yeah.

We're going to link his link tree in these show notes because I'm obsessed with him and so are you.

He's a wonderful human and it's just like one of those people that you're like, you know what?

Yeah.

I just want you to be the happiest human.

Yeah.

So follow Ryan Lill Washington to L's and Ryan Lill on Instagram.

Yeah.

And go check it.

The books are.

They're phenomenal.

Listen to the music.

Can confirm.

Watch the music video for a Dormie.

Watch the music video for a Dormie.

You showed it to me and I was over the moon.

Also just like scream out the lyrics to a Dormie.

Scream them.

Whenever you can.

Scream them out your sunroof.

Because my God is at a bop.

While someone else is driving, by the way.

But yeah.

So that's our short little detour.

But Lilaputian.

Lil.

Lilaputian coffins.

In late June 1836.

So just, you know, a couple of years ago.

Yeah.

A group of local boys, they were just venturing into a hollywood park.

They were going to hunt for, I can't help it now.

No, I love that.

They were going to hunt for rabbits.

I hate that.

It was 1836.

I don't care.

I don't care.

People do that now.

I don't know why.

I'm acting like this isn't only 1830.

I'm like it was 1836 when people hunted rabbits, okay.

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You know what?

I think this year rabbits have changed to my favorite animal.

Whoa.

Look at you.

I'm not even.

I believe that.

I believe that.

A spiritual connection with rabbits lately.

But I'll shut up now.

I think you, yeah, rabbits and you, you're together forever.

But they were going to hunt rabbits and as they arrived, they were, you know, looking for rabbits.

And as they did that, they looked for, they noticed a really small opening, which when you read this story anywhere, it's commonly referred to as a cave, but like it's kind of just like a depression in the side of a mountain.

Yeah.

Don't set people up to be disappointed.

Don't set people up thinking this is a fucking cave.

So it's probably a cave when it's just a question.

But yeah, it's like, I guess it's like a tiny cave, but they noticed this in the rock wall along the relatively secluded northeast side of the hill.

So they get closer and they noticed that the opening is actually covered up by what was three thin pieces of slate stone, rudely cut at the upper ends into a canonical form and then placed into a row.

So that's.

Strange.

That's not organic.

They did this and they assume that this was likely done to protect whatever was inside from the effects of the weather, the elements or anything that would come from the outside.

So they removed these slabs of stone, which like personally, I think was the first of their bad ideas.

I'm going to agree.

I think when, when you find something that has been like purposely protected by slabs of stone in the side of a mystical hill, don't touch that.

Just assume that it's meant to be there.

You know that expression, like you break it, you buy it, that doesn't mean necessarily that like you purchase it.

It means like that's yours now.

That's yours.

And you fucked up.

You own whatever is happening now.

You own the mistake that you've created.

Little boys.

They didn't do that.

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They didn't listen to hear our warnings from 1836 because they moved them.
And inside they discovered a 12 inch by 12 inch depression in the earth.
So they're like, what the fuck is this?
So they look in and inside someone had placed 17 Lilliputian coffins, 17 and these tiny coffins had been arranged in two tiers of eight, each separated by a thin piece of slate.
And I know you're thinking two rows of eight is 16.
Because when I first read that, I was like, that's 16.
I'm confused.
Yep.
I was waiting for rows of eight.
And then there was a third row that had begun with one.
Okay.
And for me, I'm like, was there supposed to be more?
Probably.
Somebody was like, obviously putting more and starting a new row.
I need to know more.
Yeah.
And then they got caught.
And then Burke and Hare got caught.
Is that what you're telling me?
I'm saying.
So the, that origin story, how they were found like that, that's the one that is everywhere that is generally accepted as how they were discovered.
Okay.
But it wasn't the only story at the time that was circulated.
There was a couple more.
A short time after they were discovered, there was another story that went into a journal, a print journal titled notes and queries.
And it was under the headline, a fairies burial place.
Oh, bitch.
I love that.
I kind of love that.
And like anytime you throw fairies into the mix, I'm like, oh, okay, let's go.
Get into it.
Yeah.
And this one had a much more dramatic account of how they were found because that one's just like some boys were hunting rabbits and they went where they shouldn't have.
Yeah.
But this one said in the print version, while I was a resident at Edinburgh, either in the year 1836 or 1837, I forget which, a curious discovery took place, which formed the subject of a nine days wonder and a few newspaper paragraphs.
Some children were at play at the foot of Salisbury, Craigs, when one of them more venturesome than the others attempted to ascend the escarpment of the cliff.
His foot slipped and to save himself from a dangerous fall, he caught at a projecting

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piece of rock, which appeared to be attached to the other portions of the cliff. It gave way, however, beneath the pressure of his hand. And although it broke his fall, both he and it came to the bottom of the craig. Nothing daunted, sorry, had to swallow. Nothing daunted. The hardy boy got up, shook himself and began the attempt a second time. When he reached the point from whence the treacherous rock had projected, he found that it had merely masked the entrance to a large hole, which had been dug into the face of the cliff. Okay. So similar discovery. Yeah. Boys. Yeah. Just a boy falling off the side of a craig cliff. Just like, yeah, just that. We just added some adventure to the whole thing. And this version of the story does add some more details about the coffins. It says they have handles. This isn't true and can be easily disproven by just looking at the actual coffins and seeing they don't have handles. So it makes this one feel more of like a jump off of that actual original discovery and trying to make it more exciting, which I'm like, you didn't really need to. The original one's pretty fucking exciting. I don't care what they were. They could have been going there to blow their noses and finding that and I'd be like, that's fucking awesome. Like that was legendary because they found 17 tiny coffins in the side of a fucking mystical hill. You don't have to spice that up anymore. You don't have to give me some crazy story. That sentence alone is wild. Right? Like that's wild. Now the coffins themselves were roughly 3.75 inches at length. Oh my. So very small. And each coffin was hand carved out of a single piece of pine. With metal, which they thought was most likely tin, kind of adorning the lids. So they had cut out tin and made like decorations on the lids of them. So tin, metal, and what other? Pine. Okay, okay. So, and they were held, this tin was held in place with wire springs or brass pins.

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And each coffin was a hand carved wooden figure of a human and they were, quote, dressed in custom made clothes that had been stitched and glued around them.

This is freaky as fuck.

Right?

And some of them had black boots painted on their feet.

Eight.

Now, it wasn't, they described them as not being like some kind of ancient artifact.

Like how most ancient artifacts are pretty crudely done.

Yeah.

Because different materials.

And materials and skill sets and all that.

These appeared to have a pretty orderly and neat way about them.

Like someone had taken really great care and meticulous time to do this, to create them and to place them where they had put them.

And they had not all been put into this little tomb at the same time.

And how could they tell that?

So according to news reports, quote, the rotten and decayed state of the first tier of coffins and their wooden mummies, the wrapping clothes being in some cases moldy, while others showed various degrees of decomposition.

And the coffin last placed as clean and fresh as if only a few days had elapsed since their entombment.

Oh, wow.

That's how they were able.

Like that first tier was old and then it got less so as it went.

And that last row for it to be, that's creepy to me that someone could have just been there placing that coffin.

That's really creepy.

Because imagine if those boys had planned their hunting trip like days earlier.

And it caught the person doing that.

I wish they had because maybe we would know that I'm nervous.

Like I'm kind of glad they didn't at the same time because I'm like, what would have become of you?

Yeah, I don't know.

I mean, they didn't.

They weren't really nice to the coffins.

They were boys.

Nobody really knows why or what they thought.

I don't know how old these boys were either.

Yeah, maybe they were like rambunctious, but it's like also like you should know better because they nobody really knows what they thought when they found these.

But the earliest reports say that at least half were destroyed by the boys pelting them at each other as unmeaning and contemptible trifles.

Why are boys so stupid?

Yeah, like what's the fun on the record?

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Why are they so stupid?

Especially these boys.

Why were you so silly?

Of course, the discovery was obviously significant enough for at least one of them to mention the coffin to somebody else or we wouldn't know about them at all.

According to a report from the mid 1950s, the following day after the they were discovered way back in 1836, this was so we didn't find out about this like how this all went down until the 1950s.

Oh, shit.

They said that the boys in one of the boys at least told one of their school masters, a man named Mr. Ferguson, who was a member of a local archaeological society that they had come across these.

It really is just taking everything in me right now not to say turd Ferguson.

Thank you.

Bye.

Go ahead.

You're like you're 12.

Shut up.

But you said it.

I told you.

So later that day, Mr. Ferguson, a very Scottish name, he retrieved the remaining coffins from the cave in the hillside and he took them home and then shared them with other members of the archaeological society because once he had heard the story from the kid, he's like, are you fucking kidding me?

Yeah.

Like I can't imagine how pissed he was hearing that they had broken half of these.

Seriously.

I'd be like, are you kidding me?

Have I taught you nothing?

Like you just tossed them around like they were trash.

What a bunch of idiots.

Now it should be said that the original accounts of this whole discovery don't mention a school teacher and they don't provide any details about how those coffins went from Arthur's seat to the town below.

But I believe in Ferguson.

Well, so the original one doesn't say it, but we know they somehow got from A to B. And then in the 1950s, that's when the story came out about Mr. Ferguson, the local archaeological society, you know, all that stuff.

La-di-da-dee.

And it was in an article by Robert Chapman that was circulated among the regional Scottish papers at the time that according to Mike Dash, who I will, I'm going to put the reference. Here we go for what this is for.

He said, a search of the contemporary street directories shows that two school masters named Ferguson were working in Edinburgh in 1836.

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Okay.

George Ferguson as a classics master at Edinburgh Academy and Findlay Ferguson as a teacher of English and math at Easter Duddingston.

I want it to be Findlay.

So I know I love that name.

So there were two Mr. Ferguson's in the area at that time working as school teachers.

So this lives up.

Yeah.

Now it wasn't long after they'd been dug out of the hillside that the Edinburgh press jumped on this mystery of these tiny little coffins.

So they of course put forward a ton of theories.

The Scotsman reported a few days after the discovery, quote, none of the learned with whom we have conversed on the subject can account in any way for the singular fantasy of the human mind.

And in the article, they said, our own opinion would be had we not some years ago, abjured witchcraft and demonology, that these are still some of the weird sisters hovering about Muscat's Karn or the, or the Windy Gowl who retain their ancient power to work the spells of death by entombing the likenesses of those they wish to destroy.

Literally love.

I, right.

I'm saying, I think it's Karen.

I think I said Karn.

It was Karen.

You did your best.

Muscat's Karen.

Now, I immediately wanted to know what Muscat's Karen is.

I don't know about you.

I do.

Uh, so I looked it up, just got to talk about what Muscat's can is and why that makes any sense, why this would be like a weird thing.

So at the Eastern part of Holyrood Park, there's a seemingly innocuous, innocuous to this day pile of rocks that is actually a Karn.

A Karn serves as some kind of landmark or memorial.

Sure.

It's like a pile of rocks.

In this case, I suppose it's both because see on October 17th, 1720, a surgeon named Nickel Muscat, he lured his 17 year old wife Margaret into that spot and murdered her in cold blood.

Well, fuck him.

Slit her throat.

Jesus Christ.

Her dying words were, my love, my love, do not murder me.

Yeah.

Oh my God.

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I'm saying.

Now he had an accomplice in the crime named Campbell who apparently was sent to Australia after this.

I really want you to do this next.

Right?

It's a while.

I'm intrigued.

He had apparently been trying to get rid of his wife and or kill her for a while, but had failed several times.

He tried to force infidelity on her to force a divorce at first.

And when that didn't work, like he'd try to like get her drunk and like throw a man at her.

You wanted to make her infidel?

Yeah.

So that he could divorce her without like having any kind of like issues because back then you couldn't just divorce.

Yeah.

No, I know.

It was a infidelity thing to be like, oh, she cheated on me.

Wow.

And it's like, that's weird.

But then when that didn't work, he tried to poison her and only ended up making her extremely ill.

He did that several times.

Then he tried to get her super drunk and drown her in a pond.

He then planned to have her put her on horseback and was going to tie her like not well into the saddle.

She would have her horse, his horse, like flip her off and kill her.

What the fuck?

And his reasoning for all this, he just didn't like her.

He had grown weary of her.

Weary of her?

Yeah.

I'm just kind of over it.

I'm tired of it.

Can't you leave her for no reason?

Can't.

That's why he was trying to force infidelity.

Just lie.

I'm saying.

I'd rather you be a liar than a murderer.

A vicious murderer.

For real.

He confessed after he actually killed her at this muscat.

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What is now called muscat's cairn.

I wish it wasn't named after this fucker.

I know.

And he confessed and during his confession, he said he never loved her and was ashamed of her visiting him before they were married.

But out of.

Fuck him.

Right?

Like he like further shits on her memory.

Name this after her.

Right?

And that's the thing.

Like it's kind of lost history.

Her name.

Like it's Margaret.

Margaret Hall.

But what was her name?

Oh, okay.

But it's like that's that's not part of the thing.

It's frustrating.

Name it Maggie's cake carn.

Maggie's cairn.

Cairn.

Cairn.

Yeah.

She's proud of convenience.

He's a fucking pig.

Ew.

But he was hanged for his crime in Grass Market in Edinburgh.

Oh, it's giving Scandamall vibes.

The cairn.

Right.

The cairn was created in her honor.

Good.

And it still remains there.

You can see it to this day.

I just like name it something else.

What's sad is like that's the place she was murdered.

Like that very place where that cairn is.

Gosh.

But that was just interesting to me.

But back to the coffins, shall we?

Wow.

Okay.

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Other newspapers quickly joined the speculation for what these little Lilapetian coffins.

Lilapetian or Peutian?

Lilapetian, excuse me.

Don't say it wrong.

Don't say Lilapetian.

Excuse me.

I know.

That's such a good word.

I know.

The courier suggested that maybe they were an example of an ancient custom in Saxony, in which one would bury a miniature effigy for departed friends who had died in a distant land.

That's beautiful.

Which is beautiful.

But the courier couldn't help put forth like another romanticized version of this theory.

Gotta sell the papers, baby.

Of course.

Saying, and this is also just like what we find out is not true, they said that it could be a superstition which exists among some sailors in this country, where the wives of the sailors who had been lost at sea would bury a tiny proxy, basically, to kind of like make a Christian burial, like happen.

Yeah.

What they couldn't do it.

So they could actually bury their loved ones.

If they drowned.

It's like an effigy.

I like that.

Now, a watch was kept on the hillside at Arthur's seat for days after the discovery, because they knew that last one had been placed there rather recently.

But now it's all over the papers that it's been discovered.

Thank you.

And that's why I'm like, guys, you ruined it.

You ruined it.

No additional coffins were placed, of course, because it had already been fucking out there.

This person's reading the papers.

Come on.

Now, within a few weeks of the discovery, the public's interest apparently kind of like died down.

What the fuck happened to make their interest die down?

Which I'm like shocked because I'm still not over it.

I gave this 2023 and I'm not over it.

Something had to have happened.

But apparently the coffins, what were left of them, made their way into the private collection of Robert Frazier, who was an Edinburgh jeweler at this time.

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Why did he get them?

Now, Robert Frazier, apparently he bought them, I guess, but he displayed the coffins in his private museum on South Andrew Street.

And then he retired in 1845.

They were there all the way up until there.

And then, quote, the celebrated Lilliputian coffins found on Arthur's seat sold to a private buyer for just four pounds.

How much is that?

That's like four, almost five bucks, American.

Oh, that's it?

Right?

I was shocked by that.

And what year?

Right.

In 1845.

Okay.

I'm going to do the conversion.

Now, once they went into the hands of this private buyer, they kind of disappeared for a while.

No one knew what really happened to them.

That was until more than 50 years later.

So the coffins appeared again in 1901.

Okay.

This was when a private donor actually ended up gifting eight of them to the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

Ooh, that's a beautiful thing to say.

In Scotland, you know?

I just love all these words, too.

Yeah.

This would eventually become the National Museums, the National Museum of Scotland.

There's no way to know, like, basically how or exactly who donated these to the Museum.

Yeah, they probably passed hands like so many times.

Yeah.

And basically, like at first, because of this, a lot of people were like, are they the actual coffins or these like, you know, something else?

But apparently, according to Smithsonian Magazine, it said, circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that these coffins were the same group as the one Frazier obtained in 1836.

And that's really all they're going off of.

I trust the Smithsonian.

Yeah, I trust them.

So I think it's right.

But the coffins coming back into the fold kind of, it sparked a new interest in them again.

Okay.

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People were finally thinking about it again, because I'm really sad that they like just got forgotten about it.

These are fascinating, they were found in the side of a mystical fucking craggy rock.

How do we just let that go?

How do we just like lose interest in it?

But that speaks to the fucking human psyche.

Human, like just human condition.

But it wasn't long before they were back in the news again.

So in 1906, five years after they had been donated, there was an article that appeared in the Scotsman and it proposed a new and very unverifiable theory as to their own origins.

But according to the article, a woman living in Edinburgh at the time said that shortly after they were found, her father, who was only called Mr. B, had been visited several times at his business by a quote daft man.

And during one of these visits, the man produced a hand-drawn picture of three small coffins.

Under those coffins were written the dates 1837, 1838, 1840.

Now there was no context or explanation.

So Mr. B just kind of dismissed this picture as like, you know,

This is Mr. B.

This is just crazy.

Yeah.

He's just like, I don't know.

And so whatever.

But the following year, 1837, a relative of Mr. B died.

Mrs. B.

And who knows?

Another B.

Mr. C.

And this was followed by the death of another relative in 1938.

Mr. D.

And then the death of his brother in 18, or excuse me, it was 1838.

And then the death of his brother in 1840.

Now according to the man's daughter, the mysterious man that came with this picture, he appeared at her father's business shortly after his brother's funeral and was quote glowering at him before disappearing and was never seen again.

So they believe basically the Scotsman said that it is not possible, is it not possible that this man was the maker of the Arthur C.

Coffins driven mad by the loss of his treasures or was the whole story nothing but coincidences.

So they think that this whole thing somehow is connected to the things that this guy was making these little treasures.

They were discovered.

Possibly that was the private donor who had them.

I know he's pissed.

He was pissed.

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And you know.

Maybe.

I mean, it's not like totally unthinkable, but there's just not enough there.

There's better theories, one of which includes Birkenhair, but that's my fucking theory.

That's my favorite.

Now throughout the 20th century, the coffins continued to make huge fantastical theories crop up everywhere.

A lot of supernatural explanations.

Like in 1978, Walter Havernick, who was the director of the Museum of Hamburg History, he suggested the coffins could be kind of a talisman, like the totems carried by German sailors for luck.

Now according to German folklore, sailors would carry mandrake root or some form of a doll in a small coffin as a protection at sea.

Oh, that's cool.

And he theorized that these Arthur C. coffins could be quote, a horde of lucky charms hidden in the hillside by a merchant to be sold to sailors.

All right.

This all sounds great.

That kind of like, okay, yeah, maybe, yeah, but the National Museum of Scotland pointed out that quote, while the use of charms persisted in Scotland well into the 19th century, no evidence of this particular seafaring tradition has ever been found.

So I think while that sounds like it would have been a good, good little thing, it was made up.

That's not a real tradition.

That's a bummer.

So I kind of love it because although that's like a nice like fun, I love a seafaring spooky sailor siren song tradition for sure.

Like any of those stories are fun.

Like that song, Brandi.

I don't know what that is.

Yeah.

You do.

I can't sing it right now because I have Florence and the machine stuck in my head, but we can just move past it.

Okay.

Cool.

I'm sure I know what it is, but I don't.

I'll sing it to you later when I can't.

You know what a song is stuck in your head?

Yeah.

And you can't get past it.

You're a fine girl, such a fine wife you would be, but my life, my love, or my lady is the sea.

I've literally never heard that in my entire life.

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No, you absolutely have.
Papa loves that song.
And then it goes, I'm probably not doing a good job.
I wish you guys could see the head motion that's happening right now.
Like it's very much like a night at the Roxbury kind of head motion right now and she's
like, I'm going to have to find it on.
Is it on Spotify?
Of course it's on Spotify.
I'll play it for you later.
And you're going to be like, oh, I didn't know if this was like a salty sailor tune
that I couldn't find on spot.
It's about a sailor because the, the, his, his life, his lover, his lady is the sea
she has.
She is.
She is.
And Brandy's, she, she like, Brandy's works on the bar.
I don't know.
I feel so crazy.
I literally screaming it at you and they're yelling at me for not doing a good job of
singing it.
I got to find it somewhere.
Okay.
We got to find it.
I'm so sorry.
I'm so second of it or something.
Can we do that?
Can we play a second of it?
I'm sure we can play a second of it.
Okay.
Let's play a second of it.
I just sang half the song.
I was going to say.
I don't even know if they're, I think.
And that's what I mean.
I love like on Tik Tok.
The sea shanty.
That sea shanty shit.
That's like, dirt, dirt, dirt, dirt, dirt, dirt, dirt, dirt, dirt.
Like that kind of shit.
I'm like, I'm into it.
And I love.
Oh, oh.
I know you know the song.
It sounds familiar now.

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No.

I don't know.

I don't know.

Hold on.

It's sounding a little familiar.

Oh yeah.

But I never, I, I didn't know any of the lyrics to that song.

Really?

Well, that's the song.

I thought it was going to be a sea shanty that you were yelling at me.

No, it's just about a sailor.

That's all.

It's just about a sailor who likes this girl who works at a bar, but he can't be with her.

Yeah.

See, I'm like, I like those old timey, like when we did, we put a sea shanty in one of our.

Exactly.

Like our house.

We did like, yeah.

For those ones, I think we did some sea shanty things.

But that's, I like those.

I like like a legend, like a seafaring legend.

Yeah.

I like a seafaring monster.

I like a siren.

Lessy.

Oh my God.

Nessy, I mean.

I know.

Lessy.

I'm on the scissor today.

You like, you love a sea serpent, a lake monster, if you will.

I like those kind of things.

So that's fun to me.

I like that theory, but it's not as troubling as the Burke and Hare one would be.

Yeah.

I'm nervous about like where, like, yeah, are we going to, yeah, no.

So because they were so popular and that people were so kind of like obsessed with them for a while, and there was such mystery surrounding these, it's pretty surprising that like throughout the decades and decades that they were trying to figure out what these were, no one really performed any kind of thorough analysis of the Arthur Seat coffins.

Like they just, they were like, I wonder what these are.

Yeah.

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Huh.

And then they would just like throw them off to the side and it's like, do you guys want to like science it a little bit?

Like just, maybe not a lot of science going on back then.

Someone put on some glasses and just take a closer peek at these.

Well, I bet Ferguson did.

You know, I'm sure he did, but-

Just like maybe didn't write down enough info.

It wasn't until the 90s, Kevin.

It was the 90s.

Yeah, I'm talking about the 1990s.

Shit.

That anyone really gave these their due attention.

So the examination of the remaining Arthur Seat coffins was done in the early 1990s by Alan Simpson, who was the former president of the Royal Scottish Society of Arts.

Bitch.

He was joined by Samuel Menafee, a senior associate of the Center for National Security Law at the University of Virginia.

Bitch.

Both of them were visiting fellows at the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh at the time.

Bitch.

There you go.

I had to wait for that.

Now, they all looked pretty identical, but Simpson and Menafee did note that there were some variations in them.

So the dimensions did vary a little bit in size from 3.7 to 4.1 inches long, anywhere within that thing.

They would vary.

I wonder why.

0.7 to 1.2 inches wide and 0.8 to 1 inch deep.

So that's like so little that I feel like-

That it could have just been like, hey, I made this one.

I put it in the hill.

I'm doing this one off of memory and I'm like a little off.

Right.

That's the thing.

There's a lot of these things where I'm like, well, I think it's this.

I'm going to ask a question.

Who knows if I'll have the answer, really?

Do you know if they had rulers back then?

When did the rulers- rulers were like- I mean, they had ruler instruments long ago.

Yeah.

Okay.

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So-

That was my question.

But I don't know when.

Okay.

I don't know when that began.

Like what year an actual ruler-

When did the rulers really get popular?

When did the rulers start to rule, is what I want to know.

Oh my goodness.

That's what I want to know.

Okay.

What they also found out was that most of the coffins insides were made of rag fiber cloth, but one was lined with paper.

Huh.

Which was interesting.

Two of the coffins were originally painted pink or red.

Okay.

They generally were two kind of shapes.

Most had square cut corners, but three had rounded corners, which could suggest two things to me.

They think it suggests that more than one person did it.

Okay.

Which absolutely could be true.

Like Burke and Hare.

Or it could be that- well, I don't think both of them did it either.

But-

Oh shit.

Or it could be that like we were just saying, the variations in these things are like, well,

I just put one in the hillside a couple weeks ago.

Yeah.

I'm going to do this one.

I don't remember if I rounded off the edges or not.

Sure.

I think we're not giving people enough credit for being-

Silly.

Somewhat lazy and inconsistent as humans.

I think we're just-

Humans do be-

Not giving us that much.

I think we're like, it must be more than one person.

It's like, nah.

It could just be the same.

Yeah.

Inconsistent fuckery.

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You know?

I'm super inconsistent, so I get it.

It happens.

Now the dolls contained within the coffins did appear to come from a set of figures with flat feet and arms that would swing.

So they thought that those could have been toy soldiers originally.

Oh, I'm going to have that stuck in my head now.

I immediately did it.

Yup.

We're getting so sued.

The eyes of each figure were open.

Oh, I don't like that.

Which they said made it unlikely that they were designed as corpses.

Yeah.

I don't think I agree, because almost every corpse I worked on in the morgue had open eyes.

Really?

Yeah.

I hate that for you.

When people die, a lot of times their eyes stay open.

Yup, they sure do.

And you can't close them.

If they are designed as corpses, then this person who made them might have seen these people when they died and their eyes were open.

Yeah.

I'm just saying we can't totally be like, I don't think these were corpses, guys.

The eyes were open.

Like, I don't think that's-

Yeah, we need a little more.

We can't completely discount that as a thing.

Now some of the figurines were also missing their arms.

They believed that maybe they were removed so they would fit better into the coffins.

My opinion, maybe it was representative of injury or dismemberment, but that's just my sick-ass mind.

You do have a sick-ass mind.

That it's supposed to represent murder victims, perhaps, or just dead people, then maybe they're being representative of what injuries they had.

Perhaps.

I don't know.

I'm just saying.

My mind is a weird place.

But-

I bet it is.

It is a strange place.

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You don't really want to be in there.

To identify who might have carved the coffins, there was really no clues for an actual identity, but they were able to take a little bit from some of the adornments, like the tin adornments on the coffin lids because they said that it's the use of applied pieces of tinned iron as decoration which struck them, and it's similar to the type of tin used in contemporary shoe buckles.

So-

Shoe buckles, you say.

It could mean, thank you, that it could be someone who was a shoemaker or a leather worker.

I don't know if everybody remembers this, but Birke Birke Birke Birke was a shoemaker.

But you didn't kick him, right?

He was a cobbler.

But I have something to, you know, think of that.

Something to say.

So a shoemaker, they were saying, would have the skills to make these coffins, but they weren't a carpenter.

They didn't have carpentry tools, so they wouldn't have made them as perfect and identical as you would think, and that's why maybe they're a little inconsistent.

Now when it came to the figures themselves, they said that they still think that these are supposed to be like toys of some kind or representative of living people.

This is what they initially thought, and not, you know, effigies for dead people because they said that they could see strong lines across some of their brows, which indicated that they had hats at one point.

And that there was carefully carved lower bodies formed to indicate tight knee breeches and hose below which the feet are blackened to indicate ankle boots.

I still think these could be dead bodies.

I don't see why that changes things.

I don't think so.

If they were originally toy soldiers that they changed into these little dolls, then they maybe removed a helmet or hat of some sort, and that's what those are from.

Agreed.

But Simpson and Menafee used the figures appearances to date them back to 1790s at the earliest.

Oh, wow.

Now the clothing on the figures, which apparently had been like sewn and glued into place, like very carefully.

It represented a style of dress that didn't correlate to period grave clothing.

So they said it was looked like it was supposed to be representative of everyday wear and not like funeral wear.

Like what somebody died in.

Thank you because they said that they were probably done just to cover the figures decently and not to represent any kind of specific period or occasion.

But if they were murder victims, like you said, then they would be dressed in the clothing that they died in, guys.

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They wouldn't be in proper burial clothing.

And if they were brick-and-hares victims, I would think that they probably all had similar shoes because they all came from a similar place.

Exactly.

And if you look at the pictures of these little dudes, when I first read the description, I was like, oh, so they have like clothing, that's why.

When you look at it, clothing is a loose term, like coverings, I would say, that were glued and sewn on.

Yeah.

Keep meaning to look at pictures.

Yeah.

So the rag cloth lining of the coffins was dated to the period after 1780.

But they believed that all the coffins were created probably no earlier than 1800.

And they said that the deposit into the hillside, they believed, wasn't done until after 1830.

And they said, so that kind of makes sense because that would be within five years of the discovery, which is when that first tier makes sense that it wouldn't put in there.

So Naomi Tarant, who is the curator of European textiles at the National Museum of Scotland, she said that based on relatively good condition of the fabrics, that they were definitely buried in the early 1830s.

Okay.

Yes.

And in several of the cases, they were sewn using three ply thread, which wouldn't have been manufactured until after 1812.

So this does line up.

Okay.

Now, in the conclusion of their report on the analysis of these little coffins, Alan Simpson and Samuel Menafee noted, quote, that the problem with the various theories is their concentration on motivation rather than on the event or events that cause the interments.

The former will always be open to argument.

But if the burials were event driven by, say, the loss of a ship with 17 fatalities during the period in question, the speculation would be at least be built on demonstrable fact.

Stated another way, what we seek is an Edinburgh related event or events involving 17 deaths, which occurred close to 1830 and certainly before 1836.

Go ahead, girl.

One obvious answer springs to mind.

The Westport murders by William Burke and William Hare in 1827 and 1828.

Yep.

These are creepy as fuck.

Very creepy.

And follow.

So I'm going to give you a quick little like, like, lesson, second lesson of Burke and Hare.

In case you didn't listen to it, you should go listen to it, but in case you're here and you're like, oh, shit, I want to finish this first and then go listen to that.

Yeah.

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So following the death of a border at William Hare's lodging house in November of 1827 and this will be quick.

Don't worry if you've already listened to the episode, Burke and Hare realized, you know what, it's a sign of the times and we can make a ton of money selling corpses to the Edinburgh Medical College.

This was a very big thing at the time.

They were called resurrection men, these people who did this.

And they prompted, this prompted the two of them to go on a murder spree because what is, you know, why wait for people to die?

Why not just murder them?

And they killed at least 16 people and sold their bodies to local surgeon and instructor, Dr. Robert Knox.

Now Burke and Hare, remember they killed 16 people, sold that first one.

That is 17 altogether.

Sure is.

And then Hare were eventually caught when a lodger in William Burke's house discovered the body of an elderly woman, woman that they had killed.

And they, they both confessed to the murders of 16 people, but Hare definitely blamed Burke.

It was a whole thing.

Definitely listen to it because it's very interesting what happened with them.

So they were, they confessed to the murders of 16 people in the unlawful sale of the body of the lodger at the boarding house.

And given that they were all marginalized people that were victims, Simpson and Menafee think that the coffins could have served as like a proper burial at Arthur's seat because these people wouldn't have gotten a proper burial to begin with.

I think I see where you're going.

He said, considering beliefs such as the alleged mimic burial given to Scottish sailors lost at sea, it would not be unreasonable for some person or persons in the absence of the 17 dissected bodies to wish to perpetuate these dead, the majority of whom were murdered in atrocious circumstances by a form of burial to set their spirits at rest.

That makes sense to me.

Well, it is always possible that that other disasters could have resulted in an identical, identical casual, identical, I don't know why that was hard to say, casualty list.

The Westport murders would appear to be a logical motivating force.

Now in 2005, producers from the National Geographic Channel, they convinced the curators at the Museum to allow forensic science service expert, Mike Barber, to test the coffins for potential trace DNA.

They were hoping to match it to Burke, basically.

So they have some of his DNA, I guess?

They have his body.

So they have his skeleton.

I didn't know that.

Oh, yeah.

Now the tests on the coffins didn't turn up any trace DNA that they could use, which

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is sad and neither did the figures.

But the museum wouldn't allow Barber to take the kind of samples that he would usually use for that kind of analysis.

So it's not really even a really good test, really.

And they would have to take DNA from the skeleton of William Burke, and he is kept under lock and key at Edinburgh University, which is very interesting.

Did you say that last time?

Did I forget that?

I don't think I mentioned it in that episode.

That's cool.

Or maybe I didn't.

I'm not sure.

Either way, they weren't going to let him do that, because they're not going to let him denigrate that DNA.

Now despite the DNA tests finding absolutely nothing, quote unquote, Mike Barber is pretty convinced that it was Burke who created the coffins.

And it makes sense.

So he said, I think it's pretty clear, he told this to the Edinburgh Evening News, that people I've spoken to during filming believe that it was Hare who was the real bad one.

Yeah, I believe that too.

And Burke was easily led and copped to it when he was shopped by Hare.

What they believe is that basically William Burke had some kind of guilt and was making these.

To give them proper burial.

To give them a proper burial.

And sorry, was he the shoemaker?

He was the shoemaker.

That's all I could say about this entire time.

And while it's possible that they could have been placed there by Burke or Hare, probably Burke if we're really going to talk about it.

I think there's a better theory that is still connected to William Burke and William Hare.

So William Burke was tried and executed not very long after his arrest for the 16th murder.

So that was my problem.

That's the part that gets me.

I was like, when would you have done that?

Especially like that last one.

Exactly.

And William Hare, as well as both of their ladies, they were run out of Scotland by an angry mob as soon as they were released from police custody.

So it's pretty unlikely that they would have been able to place them there without somebody seeing them and killing them.

But another similar explanation was offered in 2005 by George Dagly-Esch, I believe it is.

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I know, right?

He's a curator of Scottish history at the National Museum of Scotland, and he said he thinks the coffins were made by a close associate of Burke and Hare, who, quote, had a strong motive to make amends for their crimes.

The doctor, the possible explanation put forth by Dagle-Esch, I'm sorry, seems very plausible and it is that Dr. Robert Knox, to whom the bodies were sold, he stayed in Edinburgh for many years.

We talked about this after Burke's execution.

He presumably felt some kind of guilt for his participation in the whole thing.

And before his arrest and execution, actually, William Burke, like we said, was a shoemaker, so he would have had acquaintances with other shoemakers who could have done this.

But either way, either a shoemaker who knew about what was going on and worked with Burke or Dr. Robert Knox makes so much sense to me.

Yeah, because we don't know really much else about Dr. Knox and what his hobbies were and things like that.

Exactly.

We don't know.

I kind of like that.

I like the Knox theory.

I do, too.

I think it really makes, it's like him making amends for it.

And it makes sense, and it kind of makes me feel better.

Yeah, it would, it would honestly be like, not that it's, not that it like, it doesn't sense.

Exactly.

But like, it would be at least something.

They're like a point, too.

Because you're like, I'm glad you had some kind of conscience.

Yeah, like you felt guilt.

Now, they do point to one thing that could stray away from this theory, but I don't think it's an issue, to be honest.

They said, no fewer than 12 of Burke and Hare's victims were female.

We know that.

They said the clothes bodies found in the coffins were dressed in male attire.

The clothings used to dress the figures definitely were like crude and not like fully clothed.

And in my opinion, much more crude than they're giving them credit for.

But they said that they would have been pretty easy for them to put a dress on it rather than pants and a shirt.

But like, if you look at it, they kind of just put onesies on all of them.

They really just covered up their limbs with cloth.

Yeah, I agree.

And to be honest, a lot of these victims were found were brought to Knox naked.

So it's like he wanted this feels like it was just kind of like they closed these dolls in very, very simplistic shrouds a little bit.

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Like that's what it looks like to me.

If you look them up, that's what it looks like to me.

That's what they are.

Neither.

I don't believe they are gendered clothing.

I believe they're very like just down the middle could be either.

I agree with you.

And it's also really hard to tell on most of them fabric.

A lot of them have like molded away.

Exactly.

So you don't know.

Well, these things freak me out.

They're really creepy.

This the one that specifically terrifies me is wrapped up in like all white and this the figures eyes are still so prominent.

I know.

It's so creepy.

Yeah.

Now, and they also pointed out that, you know, 17 bodies were sold by Birkenhair, but they only kill confessed to killing 16.

But I don't think that's an issue because of the body.

Yeah.

And it's to me that makes sense because you have the two rows of eight, which would be who they killed.

And then you have that one standing alone, which to me makes interesting.

Yeah.

Like that's the larger that that's the beginning, but they put it as the end.

I think it's I think it's definitely related to Birkenhair.

I don't know who I believe did it, but I definitely think it's related.

Right.

It just makes sense.

Yeah.

Now the scientific analysis of the Arthur C. Coffins was definitely able to reveal like a pretty good deal about the construction of them, the time period where they were made and it gave a little bit of insight into the type of person who likely would have been able to make them, but it didn't really explain their original purpose.

Yeah.

And that's what everybody was trying to figure out, and it kind of only like deepens the mystery.

And when you connect it to Birkenhair, it almost makes it more mysterious because it's like, what was the purpose of these?

Was it to give them a proper burial?

Like I need to know what that or, or was like, was this somebody, you remember, if you go back to the episode, they involved a few people in their scheme and it's like, were these

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people who felt guilt, were these people who were involved in it and decided to do this as some like weird, like count of the victims?

You know what I mean?

Like, yeah, it could mean a lot of different things.

It definitely could.

But the other thing that I can think of is that the guy who was involved in that one murder with them and that maybe that one coffin could represent that one murder.

That's true.

It definitely could.

But I lean more toward the, the 16 that they did as they murdered and then the one that they sold.

Yeah.

That was natural.

And despite their inability to actually solve the mystery, like concretely yet, right?

The Arthur C.

Coffins are like still so popular.

They're interesting.

And yeah.

And by late 2000, the Scottish tourism industry began to like really embrace Scotland's dark history and dark tourism.

And they would like cater to people who are interested in the Birkenhair case, Mary Queen of Scots, the Hellfire Club, like all that stuff.

Maybe I need to go there.

Mary King's Close.

Mary King's Close.

And this was really just like tourism, but in 2000, actually a popular Scottish crime novelist, Ian Rankin, he decided to incorporate the Coffins into his novel, which I think is cool.

That is cool.

It's called The Falls.

And he was introduced to them at the Royal Museum in Edinburgh.

And he said, quote, this curator pulled me aside and said, here, you like this kind of stuff.

And he showed me the Coffins.

I was just knocked out by them by the idea that these small objects could generate so much mystery for so long.

Yeah.

I love that he put them in a novel.

I think that's cool.

Wicked cool.

And in 2018, the Coffins actually came back into like front page news.

This time, there was a claim that the mystery had been solved.

So after he'd spent months studying the case, a Scottish American writer and amateur historian Jeff Nisbet claimed that the Coffins were definitely a memorial to the event, this event

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known as a radical war of 1820.

This wasn't really a war.

It was more like an uprising.

But it refers to a period of civil disobedience in 1820, which was motivated basically by bad working conditions for labourers.

And they were basically commencing an uprising to call for improved working conditions, more rights among several other things.

And the uprisings came to an end pretty quickly, not long after they started.

And it was when three leaders of the movement were executed for their activities, and many others were sent to a penal colony in Australia, I don't know why I said October.

But the following year, a group of unemployed weavers were put to work by the Crown building a path around Arthur's seat, and it was going to be known as Radical Road.

I want to live there.

Radical Road!

And according to Nisbet, the Coffins, he thinks, were placed in the small cave in this place where these weavers were doing labour, building the path around Arthur's seat.

They were put in this small cave as a coded memento to the ideals behind the labour struggles in Edinburgh.

And in an interview with the Herald, he said, by the time the Coffins were discovered, the rebellion had been largely forgotten, safe perhaps by those whose loved ones had been either lost by the hangman's noose or a ship bound for Australia.

And so it's my theory that the artifacts raised on debt was to honour the radicals, and that they were later resurrected in an attempt to keep the flame of a rebellion lit in a land too quick to forget an attempt that ultimately failed.

As evidence for this theory, he says, quote, all appear to be male and have their eyes open represent men not dead yet, maybe.

Another clue can be found in their clothes made by it from a type of cloth the weavers would have been familiar with.

Interesting.

His theory suggests that he's definitely familiar with that time period.

This is a good theory.

The fact that he's able to say that the cloth is pretty representative of what these weavers that were there at the time building this path would have been able to work with.

All of that makes sense, the fact that they're technically, they think that they're a bunch of male dolls, but I think that's really like a loose confirmation there.

I agree with that.

And that their eyes are open, like, sure, you can definitely put it in there and make it fit.

It's a decent one.

But I think experts are pretty unconvinced by this.

The principal curator of the National Museum of Scotland's Scottish history, David Forsythe, told the Herald, I wouldn't scoff at this theory, and it's interesting to hear another idea about where the coffins come from.

But Mr. Nisbitt's ideas outside the established canon that surrounds the coffin, coffins,

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and I think that the connection to the victims of Burke and Hare remains the most likely explanation.

I agree.

So even the principal curator of the National Museum of Scotland's Scottish history thinks that there is a connection to Burke and Hare.

Then I'd put my money on it.

And to me, Nisbitt's theory, I think is a great one.

Yeah.

I think it's like when you put it all together, you're like, all right, yeah, I can see that.

For sure.

And if it actually ended up being the origin story, I'd be like, you know what?

That makes sense.

I believe that.

Still a cool origin story.

But I can't, I think it's Burke and Hare related.

I think that it's the 17.

Well, that's the thing.

Because he didn't explain the 17.

I was waiting for that part of the explanation.

Me too, when I was reading it.

So you got the three, the leaders who were killed.

Uh-huh.

You know, I'm sure there was more than 17 people involved.

That's the thing.

So I'm like, what's the 17?

And why would they be placed at different times?

Exactly.

It's like, I don't know.

I just think.

And why is one alone?

Yeah.

That doesn't make sense to me.

So nearly two centuries after they were found in that mystical hillside in Hollywood Park, the Arthur's, damn it, I almost said it again, the Athos seat, coffins remain much a mystery to this day as they were that day that they were pulled out when those kids were either rabbit hunting or free climbing a cliff, who knows what they were doing.

But that analysis that was done in the 90s was really the only thing that gave us any insight about when and maybe by whom they were created.

They should try to do something now that like technology has advanced even more.

I want to keep looking into this.

I feel like we can figure this out and the real, the big theory for their creation is definitely the connection to the Birkenhair, the 17 just sticks with me.

I think it sticks to everybody else.

It's a plausible theory.

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But either way, no matter what they were, they were totems that were tucked away in a secret location carved out of an ancient volcano.

That alone is all you really need to tell people.

And it's like, what a period, right at the end of that sentence.

Was it wise to remove them?

Ready?

Ready?

Say it with me.

No.

I don't think it was.

We don't take things from ancient places one more time.

We don't take things from ancient places.

Maybe just, you know, don't touch that, peek in.

You can peek in.

Take a look.

See, you know what you do?

You got one of those little dental mirrors where they it's like the big long mirror that they can look in the back of your mouth with.

Yeah, gross.

Stick it in there.

Yeah.

Oh, and maybe take a little picture if you want to.

Maybe even that's kind of going far.

But then.

Get out of there.

Scoot on out.

Get out of there.

Go.

I wonder what those are.

Just say, whoa, I saw those.

And that's the thing.

Crazy.

I'm in a situation with this because I think like, I don't know what these were and I don't know if it was a good idea to move them, but we don't know if man placed them there in the first place.

There you go.

Maybe it was beast.

Maybe it was a.

Maybe it was.

Maybe these are fairy coffins.

I don't know.

I don't know.

Maybe we don't know.

Did we fuck around and find out?

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Maybe.

We didn't find anything out.

That was the problem.

Maybe we like fucked around and found out like we didn't find out the things we wanted to find out.

We found out.

We found out.

Yeah, dude.

Like, I don't know.

And that's it.

But now that we have removed them and it's been, you know, a little bit, maybe we should put them back.

Maybe we should.

I don't know.

I don't.

I don't think that's how it works, though.

I don't think it's like gives these backsies.

I think like, I think they're like, we don't play that way.

Yeah, they probably don't.

But like, if it's not that maybe it's centuries, Mike, I don't give these backsies anymore.

It's like leprechaun and like gives these backsies my lad, my lad, you know.

But I think now that we have them out of the ancient volcano on a mystical Arthur's seat.

We've already fucked around.

We've done it.

We fucked around.

So now let's find out.

I'd like to find out what these are.

I think we should keep looking into them.

I'd like more to come out because a lot of people are like, we will never know.

And it's like that.

I don't think so.

I think about a million gajillion things.

I think we never figure out summerton man here.

Exactly.

I think we'll have so many things.

Yeah.

Every, every problem has an answer.

There you go.

That's part of Snoop Dogg's affirmations for kids.

They're great.

You should do them if you want affirmations for kids.

There you go.

They're really fun.

My kids love them.

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Yeah.

We listen to that song so many times.

Problem has an answer.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Anything is possible.

There you go.

My family loves me.

Yeah.

I love that.

My feelings matter.

I love it.

But yeah, so that's the story of the Arthur C. Coffins.

They're, they're wily and like a coyote.

I think we're going to figure out what they are.

And I think it's going to be either Birkin hair related or Faye related.

I agree.

That's just me.

That's where I'm at too.

So, so.

Thanks for listening.

Yeah.

We hope you.

We hope you.

Keep it.

Weird.

Wow, that's bad.

That's weird that you forget how to enter show.

Yeah.

I think that's been the not so weird a lot lately, but definitely not so weird that you take anything from an ancient place.

Put it back.

Yeah.

Put it back.

It's so weird that you listen to your mama's over here and you put it back.

Look with your eyes, not with your hands.

Yes.

Okay, friends.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

Bye.

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