

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

You're listening to a morbid network podcast.

Mike Williams set off on a hunting trip into the swamps of North Florida where it was thought he met a gruesome fate in the jaws of hungry alligators, except that's not what happened at all.

And after the uncovering of a secret love triangle, the truth would finally be revealed.

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Hey, weirdos, I'm Alaina.

And I'm Ash.

And this is Morbid.

It's Morbid in the afternoon.

Yippee-ki-yay.

It hasn't been Morbid in the morning for a while, because we're always doing admin shit in the morning.

Yeah.

And it's like kids go into school, so it just gets chaotic in the morning now.

It really does.

The puppies are like cry, cry in the morning.

Yeah.

Now, there's puppies involved in the whole thing.

So our mornings start, John and my mornings start at like 3 a.m. now, so terrible.

It's been a ride.

Oh, and by the way, thanks, everybody, for mentioning Litter-Mate Syndrome.

I have gotten more messages than I can count about Litter-Mate Syndrome.

Fun.

And I appreciate the concern.

I did research Litter-Mate Syndrome before I got these puppies.

So I know all about it.

We have a trainer.

We're very like on it.

That's when they get.

They're being separated with training and being separated with sleeping and all that good stuff.

They just snuggle together sometimes during the day.

The Litter-Mate Syndrome thing is when they get like two bonded and then they hate you.

Yeah.

They either like, they like super bond with each other and don't bond with you or they get super aggressive with each other and can get like, it can get like dangerous.

Like they get like too aggressive with each other.

Yeah.

So we're, we're, we're on it.

You know, my cats just like sniff each other's nose, to be honest.

Well, Sydney and Blanche seem to dig each other.

Yeah.

They're, they're good bros.

Yeah.  
They're good bros.  
I love them.  
They can handle being apart right now.  
So that's good.  
Yeah.  
We'll just keep it up.  
Dogs and cats.  
But thanks for everybody mentioning that.  
I appreciate it.  
But just know that I know what it is.  
So I promise I know what it is.  
Yic yic.  
I didn't.  
I thought we were going to say something.  
No, I thought I was too.  
And then she took a breath.  
Yeah, I really did.  
And she looked at her page and I said, ooh, what's, what's coming?  
And then nothing came.  
I think I just forgot how to do this for a second, which is bad.  
It's been a busy week.  
Yeah.  
We've had a busy week.  
We got to collab with Bailey Sarian.  
With the girls from Red Hand.  
With the girls from Red Hand.  
Hanna.  
Hanna.  
It's Rudy.  
It's Rudy.  
They, all three of those gals are top fucking notch humans.  
They really are.  
Let me tell you.  
It's so weird though seeing that many humans within a one week period.  
Yeah.  
Because we live a life where like we see each other, our spouses and Mikey.  
And that's literally it.  
And it's even weirder because we have collabed with Bailey before.  
But it was over soon.  
But only via the internet.  
And like we feel like we know each other.  
And then we got to do it this time in person.  
Right.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

So we were like, we're meeting each other.

But like, we're not meeting each other because we know each other.

Yeah.

But it was very strange.

And then Red Hand was in person too.

So it was like, we're usually doing these things on zoom.

So it was a whole week of in person getting to hang with pod friends.

It was great.

It was so much fun.

It was just wild.

Like I forgot how to act for a minute.

Yeah.

I always forget how to act.

I was like, oh, hi.

I'm Ash.

Hey, weirdos.

And then they're like, this is life.

This is life.

Ash, are you broken?

I'm like, oh, hey, weirdos.

What's going on?

They're like that.

What?

Me checking out at Target.

I'm like, hi.

Oh, yeah.

Weirdo.

Keep it weird.

Bye.

Just like short circuit everywhere I go.

Weird.

Bye.

Weird.

That's who we are.

I feel like a robot sometimes.

But don't we all?

Don't we all?

Yeah.

I'm trying to think if I have any more.

I'm sure I'll have more TikTok shoutouts for you guys in the next episode.

I haven't been on TikTok as much.

Yeah, that's fun.

But I'm going to get back on to it.

So I'll have some more for you because it's fun to shout out TikTok people.

**[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella**

Did you see Tom Sandoval on Watch What Happens Live last night?

Oh, was it Tom Schwartz?

Oh, no, God, no.

Tom Schwartz.

Excuse me.

No, I didn't.

No, that happened in an alternate universe.

Yeah.

No, Tom Schwartz was on Watch What Happens Live.

And he told people to hug Tom.

No, Tom Schwartz was on.

And he told people to hug Tom Sandoval if they saw them.

Wow.

And did you see Lala's response to that?

No, but I bet it was off social.

She said, we're not going to hug him.

We're going to atomic wedgie him.

Which I was like, yeah, that's pretty epic.

Don't put your hands on anybody else.

But atomic wedgie Tom Sandoval.

I like it.

That, I mean, welcome to VPR Corner for a second.

Man, I can't wait for that reunion, guys.

And it's not happening until like that end of May.

I know you keep telling me that, and it's almost like you punch me in the face every time you tell me.

Well, it's because if I remember it, I feel like I've been punched from within my face so then I have to outwardly punch you in the face, but like figuratively.

Yeah.

You know?

It makes me sad though.

I don't want to wait that long.

I know.

I don't either.

But Ariana looks phenomenal.

She looks so fucking good.

The revenge dress.

Oh my God.

Shouldn't we all be so lucky?

Shouldn't we all be that goddess?

This bitch on the planet.

Right?

She really is.

But you know what?

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

I have a long one for you today.

I'm here for it.

There was really no way to transition out of Vanderpump rules into true crime.

There never is.

We should probably begin with Vanderpump rules, get into chit chat and then go into the story because it's probably an easier segue.

Yeah.

Sagu.

But who knows?

Who, isn't that, where did I hear Sagu?

Was it the office?

No.

Oh, it's, and that's why we drink.

Oh, they say that?

Yeah, Sagu.

Oh shit.

I don't think I can read because I remember hearing that word.

I like Sagu.

I like it a lot.

And I like it.

That's why we drink.

Hey, I'm Christine.

Hey, what's up?

We love you.

Okay.

Well, yeah.

So we're going to be talking about what's one of my favorite things in the entire world other than old Hollywood.

Socialite.

And old socialite.

I fucking love it.

And we're going to be talking about Doris motherfucking Duke.

Oh, let's go.

And she's actually one of the most famous socialites in America.

And from the very start of her life, she had access to quite literally all the money and all the power in the world.

Wow.

But weirdly, she spent a good portion of her life, like bouncing from one disappointing relationship to the next.

Unfortunate.

Yeah.

Every time she entered a new relationship, she was more and more jaded from the last one. And it was kind of a pattern that was taking shape.

Doris really seemed to be losing control of herself and her emotions toward like the middle

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

part of her life.

Not great.

But it could be part of the reason that she is linked to the suspicious death of one Eduardo Tarella.

But because he appears in like the later portion of her life and there's a lot to cover before that, we're going to start at the very beginning before we give too much away.

Looks good.

Because I know you guys don't like if we give too much away.

So I said, no way.

I won't.

I won't do it.

I won't.

I will cater to you, my little baby.

And I meant that lovingly.

Not like you're being a baby.

I meant like you are my baby.

I meant you are my baby.

My baby.

My baby.

Actually, Moira Rose is on the other side of my mic right now.

So Doris, she was born on November 22nd, 1912.

And from the time she took her first breath, she was among the rarest class of individuals set above and apart from other Americans because of all the money she was born into.

It's the whole lot of money in a small fucker.

You know what I mean?

You know what I mean?

You know what I mean?

Well, like, yeah.

Totally.

So her father was James Buchanan Duke, better known to his friends and family as simply Buck. Buck?

Which I'm like, if you have a motherfucking name like Buchanan, don't you dare shorten it to Buck.

Yeah, don't.

Buchanan is beautiful.

Yeah.

I mean, come on.

He could do whatever he damn well pleased because he was one of the richest men in the world and he was one of the richest men in the world because he had inherited his father's tobacco company and also a power company later.

So he expanded the tobacco company greatly.

He actually made them the first company to operate automatic automated cigarette machines in the U.S.

Oh, delightful.

**[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella**

So cool.

But like so terrible.

Wonderful.

Cool that like he invented something that could make it happen so quickly but bad because cancer sticks.

Truth.

So by 1900, he had gained control of a lot of the competing brands and he consolidated all of them and formed the American Tobacco Company.

Awesome.

Yay.

So happy about that.

This is wild.

Eventually he owned almost 93% of the tobacco market in the U.S.

Wow.

And a power company on the side.

Damn.

Like money.

The money.

The money.

I told you it's a whole lot of money.

That's a lot of money.

It's almost all of it actually.

Damn.

And you said that money and power and you meant it.

Oh, I meant it.

You really meant it.

Literal power.

I was being sick.

Like you meant like power.

I got the power.

But it's literal power and tobacco which is also power at this point.

Yeah, I really, I know.

Yeah.

At that point people thought like smoking cigarettes cured everything.

Exactly.

So Buck married his second wife who was known as Nanny.

That's what they called her because her name was Nanalene, I believe is what I said.

I love a Nanny.

Yeah.

My grandmother was Nanny.

Yeah.

My kid's grandmother is Nanny.

My kid's grandmother will also be Nanny because my mother, well soon to be mother-in-law is Nanny.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

Yeah.

And she spells it just like our Nanny does.

Oh, I love that.

Which makes me happy.

Yeah.

So yes, he married Nanalene, Nanny Holt-Inman in 1907 after a very messy and very public divorce from his previous wife just one year before.

Her name was Lillian, but I didn't really look into her to be honest.

That's okay.

So I'm sure Lillian was fine.

Who really knows?

Because they got divorced.

It could have been him.

It could have been her.

It could have been on my business.

But Nanny, she's my business.

Nanny.

She had become a young widow in 1902 when her husband, wealthy industrialist, is that how you say that?

Yeah.

Thanks.

William Inman, he died in 1902 from what is listed as diabetes, but in all likelihood it might have been alcoholism.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Diabetes will do.

So that'll do.

That'll do.

Yeah.

She died of death.

She spent years traveling, shopping, being a young society woman, pretty much all I've ever hoped and dreamed of until she met Ben Duke, who was Buck's younger brother.

And they met in 1906 at Lake Toxaway Resort, which I'm like, did you name it Toxaway?

Because even back then it was trendy to get the toxins away.

Oh, I like that.

Or maybe it's a place I don't really know.

But who really cares what it was?

I mean, maybe you do, but whatever.

The meaning changed the entire course of Nanny's life is the point here.

Ben ended up writing a letter to his older brother and told him, quote, I have met the most beautiful woman in the world, essentially trying to set his older brother up with this sexy ass lady.

Good for him.

And guess what?



## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

What?

The plan worked.

What?

And by the next year, Nanny and Buck were married on July 24th in a small ceremony in Brooklyn.

Oh, adorable.

Yeah.

Now, Nanny, she brought a huge inheritance to this new marriage and also her son from that previous marriage, Walker Inman.

Buck initially actually wanted to adopt Walker because, you know, he would be a son.

He would go on to carry the Duke legacy.

And it would be wonderful.

But Walker was like, fuck all of that.

He didn't care.

He literally said that.

It's a direct quote.

I don't know where I found it, but it's direct.

He was not interested.

He made it clear from a very early age that he did not wish for Buck to adopt him.

And they actually fought a lot over their years, like a ton, but especially more and more as Walker got older and the fights led Buck to worry that he was not going to have anybody, especially like a child, to leave his fortune to or to carry on his name.

Yeah.

Like he's like, well, shit, this is all going to end with me and this is like an amazing empire.

Yeah.

I just let it load off into the ether.

That would suck so bad.

Yeah.

Stranger take it?

I know, right?

So luckily in the spring of 1912, that all changed when at 42 years old, Nanny discovered she was pregnant.

Whoa.

Right?

Which like must have been crazy back then too, because like we know a lot more about pregnancy now.

But like in 1912, I feel like that must have been a little scary.

Yeah.

You know?

Yeah.

Like I don't think she expected to find herself pregnant.

No.

Definitely not in 1912.

Exactly.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

So she was born into labor, actually unexpectedly, and Doris, our girly girl, but like not really, was born in the master bedroom of Buck and Nanny's rented house, which was on New York 78th Street.

And as she was born, she was surrounded by, quote, a fleet of high priced private physicians and nurses.

She was just surrounded by money.

By money.

They just, as she came into the world, they just threw cash at her.

They absolutely did.

Yep.

They were like, let's make it rain up in here.

Let's make it rain for this infant.

And this, like, it's really interesting that this happened, but it's also really scary, because her birth made headlines in major cities across the country in America.

That's terrifying.

And of course, the press noted that she was now the sole inheritor of Buck's \$100 million estate, which led to her being nicknamed the richest girl in the world.

Oh, that's a little scary.

Right?

That's a little scary.

Maybe I'm thinking of it in, like, a now age, where, like, social media is so scary and things fly so quickly.

But I mean, back then.

Back then, the news was the news, obviously.

But it was, like, social media, kind of.

Yeah.

It's like, oof.

That's a little scary.

And a lot to put on a baby.

A lot to put on a baby.

Yeah.

And on her family to shield her from.

And by the way, as estate was worth \$100 million then, today, that would be worth \$3 billion.

Where do you bring me into a place of billion?

I don't.

My mind cannot.

No.

Comprehend a billion.

No.

Like a billion.

That's watching Succession the other night.

They were talking about some deal and they were like \$10 billion.

And they were just saying it like it was.

It sounds fake.

**[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella**

Here's a Cobb salad.

Like, it was just like, it was so normal.

And I was like, billions, like billion.

Billion literally sounds fake to me.

Billion exists.

Like that's so crazy to me.

It's wild.

Yeah.

Just ask, you know, Shiv and Logan Roy.

I will.

They exist.

It exists.

And they throw it around like Monopoly money over there.

I mean, when you get to billion, I feel like it is fucking Monopoly money.

Yeah.

At that point, it's got to be like, whatever.

What's scary is I was never going to Monopoly money.

So I don't know.

I was never a Monopoly gal.

I am going to go on the record right now.

I fucking hate Monopoly.

That's a bold stance to take.

I will, you know what, I'll stand with you, but only because I cannot remember the last time I played Monopoly.

Don't be either.

And I never remember it being a good time.

It's never a good time.

I can never do it.

Whenever it was like brought forth that we were going to bring out the Monopoly board,

I was like, I would rather go lay in the middle of the world.

You're going to bring out Clue.

Let's motherfucking go.

We'll make a night of it.

Yeah.

I got kids Clue for my kids recently.

It's really cool.

It's so much fun.

You have to figure out who broke the toy.

That's what you do in kids Clue, because I'm not going to introduce them to murder right now when they're seven.

Why not?

But I know it's crazy.

What do you mean?

But man, they love that and they keep asking me to play the adult Clue and I'm like, not

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

yet.

Not yet, just because of the basis of it.

Yeah, you don't need to like...

It's a little hard to explain.

One, I don't want to explain that to you.

And two, you don't need to go to school and talk about like, the butler was murdered in the kitchen.

With the candlestick.

Oh my God.

Wow.

But kids Clue, who broke that toy and what toy was it that broke?

Yeah.

It's fun.

It's fun.

It's all the same characters.

I like that a lot.

I love it.

But yeah, Clue, I'm all about Monopoly.

Not so much.

No.

Fuck Monopoly.

Too much.

But Doris.

But Doris, too.

She's rich as fuck.

And from the moment she was born, it was clear her life was going to be very, very different than anybody else's life around her.

Buck was also a huge germaphobe and he was like incredibly protective of her.

So he bought a private Pullman car that he named Doris.

That way the family could travel around New York, just like totally isolated from the general public.

But the car was stocked with champagne, cigars, and staffed with a full time chef.

So wait, this is a car for the child?

In like the family.

But like he got it so that the child wouldn't be like just wheeled around in a little.

I thought you meant this was literally just for the child and it was like stocked with champagne, cigars, tobacco.

He bought it when they had the child.

It's kind of like when you get like, when you have more than two children and you get a third row.

Yeah, like you get the bigger car.

You get a rich little baby to give all your inheritance to so you get them a car that's stocked with all that shit and a chef.

That's sick.

**[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella**

Which I was like, but where does the chef cook though?

Yeah, that was my first question that I was going to have about that is like, what's happening there?

What kind of chef is it?

Is it only a salad chef?

He's a full time chef.

He's a full time chef.

So also it's like, is he just hanging out in that car always all the time?

That's not good for you.

At the ready.

I don't know.

And it's like, where's the where is it?

Is everything up to code?

I don't think there even was a code.

Is the temperature of everything right?

Probably not.

When he starts cooking?

I don't know.

Like, I don't know about that.

It's going to get real fuming up in that car.

Yeah, I'd rather just stop and get some burgers on the way.

Yeah, too much going on.

But Buck also hired what was described as a battery of nurses and bodyguards to protect his daughter.

Because he was rightfully convinced that she had become an attractive target for kidnappers since everyone was like, hey, this bitch has three billion, three hundred billion dollars.

Yeah.

You know?

Wait, no, three billion, not three hundred.

Excuse me.

That'd be insane.

That would be crazy.

And you know what?

I don't blame him.

I don't do that.

He can afford to do it.

Do whatever the fuck he wants.

Do it, man.

It's for your kid.

But that's the thing.

When she had been born and dubbed the richest girl in the world, it opened the floodgates and tons and tons of letters were starting to be sent to the family on a regular basis, begging the baby for money.

Like she can't even write you back.

**[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella**

People have always been people.

And yeah, people, you know, like people always just, people always take it that extra mile.

People stay people.

And they do.

Yeah.

True.

Like you said that and I was like, what the hell?

And then I was like, no, that makes sense.

That's really not.

Open up your Venmo.

Yeah.

But the thought of someone kidnapping her for ransom wasn't far-fetched.

So Buck was spending money to protect his daughter out of pure fear and constant paranoia.

And when he wasn't doing that, he was showering her and his wife with like super extravagant gifts and artwork and antiques.

Like craziness.

Sounds sick.

Sounds like the life.

Is it the life of Riley?

Did they say it?

It sounds like that.

Yeah, it is.

Is it Riley?

Is it Riley?

But from the moment she arrived in this world, there was a very loud and clear message being conveyed to Doris that you could have whatever the fuck you want whenever the fuck you want and there is nothing that can't be bought because you have the means to do so.

And herein lies the problem.

All of that other stuff, you're like, that sounds cool.

Beautiful.

Awesome.

Yeah.

Yeah, why not?

You got the money for it, do it.

But then when you get to that part, you're like, and there it is.

That's the issue.

Yeah.

Exactly.

That is the issue.

Exactly.

Because that doesn't make a great adult.

No.

Or an easy to deal with adult.

No.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

No, no.

No, no.

So shortly after Doris was born, the family actually moved back to Duke Farms, which was their 2,700 acre in Hillsborough Township, New Jersey.

It's actually cool to read about Doris because she's from around here.

I know.

That is cool.

She spends most of her time in New York, New Jersey and Rhode Island, actually.

Oh, that's funny.

Yeah, like out in the Newport Mansions will become a thing in this.

The Newport Mansions, they have such like a cool mystique about them.

Oh my God.

Like they're so knives out.

They are.

Like they're so like murder mystery.

Yeah.

They just got that vibe about it.

I just love it.

I was like looking at some of them online as I was doing this story just to see because I've never been inside of one.

Have you?

No, I don't think I've actually been inside the Newport Mansions.

I can, though.

Yeah, they do tours and stuff.

Yeah.

I want to do that.

And I think like part of them, isn't like Salve Regina, that campus, like some of the mansions are part of it or something.

Probably.

I think it's like a beautiful campus.

Oh, love that.

I didn't even know that.

Just saying.

I just said probably because it sounded good.

Probably.

Do you ever sit down on your ankle and then you go to move your ankle to the opposite way and you're afraid you're going to break it in half?

All the time.

That just happened to me.

So like bare with me a moment.

All the time.

Fuck.

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Getting to know yourself can be a lifelong process, especially because we're always

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

growing and changing.

I feel like this year, especially for me, has come with so much growth, so much change, and every now and then it can get a little exhausting.

I'm like, what do I expect next?

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That's my favorite thing about BetterHelp and about therapy in general, is there is somebody out there that can listen to you, eat up all your problems, and give you a bit of a solution to figure out, I love therapy.

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Hey, weirdos.

Before we get back to our regularly scheduled programming, I wanted to let you know that Wondery's shocking true crime podcast over my dead body is back for a fourth season that will literally give you literal goosebumps.

The newest season covers the story of Mike Williams.

It was Mike's sixth wedding anniversary when he set off on a hunting trip into the Gator-infested swamps of North Florida.

He figured he'd be back in time to take his wife Denise out to celebrate, but he didn't come back.

Friends and loved ones feared he met his fate through bad luck in a group of hungry alligators, leaving his young family behind.

Except that's not what happened at all.

And after 17 years, a kidnapping, and the uncovering of a secret love triangle, the truth would finally be revealed.

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So they moved back to New Jersey to their, you know, there's like small, quaint little farm with 2,700 acres.

No, in addition to the...

No, we do.

Yeah, NBG.

Yeah, just a couple.

Just a couple.



## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

Just a few acres.

Yeah.

But in addition to the main house, the property included more than 40 other buildings.

Damn.

Nine lakes.

Nine lakes.

And one and a half miles of stone walls.

Huh?

So before Doris was born, the property had actually been open to the public.

Like they were welcome to come stroll on the grounds.

There was a lot of diverse wildlife that could be spotted.

The landscape was beautiful.

It was like visiting a park.

But when the family returned, Buck was way too scared of having the public room the property while they were there.

I don't blame him.

Yeah.

Especially because a lot of interest had peaked in his family.

Yeah, of course.

So he closed the property and he said he effectively kept the world from his daughter and keeping his daughter from entering the world.

That's tough.

And it's like, the thing is, totally protect your kid at all costs, but you can't cut them off from the world.

I know.

But I understand why that was so hard.

Yeah, totally.

To balance.

Because it's like, how do you balance that?

Because I'm sure...

Especially in that position.

Well, I was just going to say, I'm sure every parent feels that to a certain degree.

You want to shelter your child as long as you can.

But then to enter all the money that they had into it, it's scary.

That's when it gets really, really tough.

But I don't know.

I feel bad.

That's a shitty...

I know what I'm saying.

I feel bad for billionaires.

I'm not saying that.

No.

But I'm saying that position.

I feel bad.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

You feel bad for this father.

That you're worried about your kid.

Yeah.

You're like parent to parent.

Parent to parent.

Not much in common.

Not many.

By nine legs, you know?

So while she was shut out from the outside world at Duke Farms, Buck doted it on his daughter entirely.

He would buy her anything she could have wanted, toys, pets, ponies, but he never really let other children come over to play with Doris.

And on top of that, for the first 10 years of her life, I just got super Boston right there and I felt it.

For the first 10 years of her life.

But she was homeschooled by private tutors.

So between being kept away from children her age and play and at school, her social skills were lacking to say the least.

Yeah.

But luckily, luckily, he came around and in 1922, when Doris was 10, her parents decided to enroll her in the Brearley School.

I think that's how you say it.

It was an all girls private school on the Upper East Side of New York.

Oh, excuse me.

XOXO.

Gossip girl.

No.

I had it right.

I was originally wrote-I had originally wrote that she became best friends with a girl named Blair and Serena and then they lived happily ever after the end.

There you go.

You remember the character Doris?

Yeah.

Right?

I had originally wrote in that.

Yeah.

You had written that.

They wrote in her out of her.

Now school helped Doris dive into different interests and things like music, art and literature.

Which those were all things that she really loved to like dive into, but school didn't do much to improve her social skills.

She was still getting piles and piles of letters from strangers, either making threats to her

or begging her for money.  
And she would show them to her classmates,  
very unaware that this was not something  
they would ever relate to.  
I was gonna say, what do you say to that?  
I'd be like, that's wild.  
You wanna be friends?  
That's really scary.  
I'd be like, I'll help you.  
I wanna help you.  
Now, one friend she did make  
recalled that Doris was, quote,  
a smart girl, sardonic and kind of scrawny.  
But then she went on to say she was definitely  
something of a pariah among the other kids.  
That's sad.  
It was giving me like a little princess.  
Remember that movie?  
Oh my God, you know I've been thinking about that movie.  
Really?  
Yeah.  
For some reason, the vibes were similar.  
That's how I felt.  
Yeah.  
Sometimes you and I are like really,  
like lately I feel like too,  
like I'm like, can you just like leave my head  
for a moment?  
Get the fuck out of my head.  
It's my head.  
I just feel bad because it's not her fault.  
No, you know, like it's not her fault she was born into.  
It's just a her for, it's not her fault.  
She wrote it.  
She wrote in it.  
It's a her for, it's not her fault  
that she was born into a family of a billionaire,  
like, you know, legacy.  
Yeah.  
One in a billion chance.  
Yeah.  
It sucks that like she kinda,  
she reaps the benefits of it,  
the monetary benefits of it.

**[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella**

Of course.

But that's not everything.

Exactly.

And it's like, obviously it's,  
that's really tough for a kid.

Exactly.

I do too.

For the kid.

But sadly, things were gonna take a sad turn for Doris.

That is sad.

Because in 19, it's sad.

Brought to you by sad.

In 1925, life shifted really dramatically for her  
because her father's health  
started to take a serious decline.

As she was getting older,

like into her like 10, 11, 12 years,

I don't know what the fuck you call those.

Her 10, 11, 12s, you know?

Yeah, the 10, the 11, the 12s.

Preteen.

He was constantly fatigued.

He was constantly sick.

But now it was becoming clear that  
this was a lot more serious  
than anybody had originally thought.

Oh no.

And on October 10th, John Buchanan Duke  
did end up dying from pernicious anemia.

Pernicious.

Yeah.

Damn.

It's a condition where the body is incapable  
of absorbing enough vitamin B12.

Eek.

Yeah.

Yeah, that's rough.

Now Doris was a self-described daddy's girl  
and Buck's death, excuse me,  
left a major hole in her life  
and left her alone with a very cold  
and very distant mother.

Oh no.

And of course a house, a full staffed house.

**[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella**

Of course.

But the year before he died,  
Buck had established the Duke Endowment  
with a \$40 million donation to Trinity College  
in North Carolina where he was from.

Damn.

After that, the school was redeveloped  
and branded as Duke University to honor him.

Oh, that one.

Some people say that like,  
he made them rename it after that,  
but like if he donated \$40 million, I think that's fair.

Yeah.

I would say so.

I'd want it named after me at that point.

He definitely bought that name, like that is for sure.

You know?

Now after he died,  
his will left another \$65 million to the school,  
but the bulk of his estate went to his daughter,  
leaving 13-year-old Doris with roughly, again,  
\$100 million in cash.

Damn.

She's flushed with cash.

And again, \$3 billion today.

So she had \$3 billion in cash.

Damn.

She on top of that had control of Duke farms  
among other properties.

Wow.

At that point, she quite literally was  
the richest girl in the world.

Wow.

The entire world.

The world, the planet.

All of it.

The planet.

But sadly, her inheritance put more of a strain  
on the relationship she had with her mother  
because Nanny, which I would too,  
resented the fact that her husband  
had left everything to their daughter.

Can you imagine?

Yikes.

**[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella**

You marry this man's.  
And like, I want my kid to be taken care of  
for my future kids, but like, they get everything?  
Yeah.  
All those nights we spent together.  
That's a tough hit.  
And they get everything?  
That's a tough hit to take.  
That's rough.  
I will say that.  
And what was even harder of a hit to take was  
there actually ended up being a lawsuit  
where Doris sued Nanny over the sale of Duke Farms  
because Nanny wanted to sell the property,  
but Doris wanted to keep it.  
So she ended up suing Nanny and the executors  
of the will successfully.  
Wow.  
And she kept Duke Farms and the family until she died.  
It was like her primary residence.  
Wow, look at that.  
Isn't that crazy?  
But like 13 years old and she sues them.  
13 years old having to sue them too.  
And that's so traumatic too.  
Like, what the fuck?  
And it's like, how do you?  
How do you even come to that place?  
And you guys just.  
You know, like, how do you even know to do that?  
Yeah.  
And you guys just like go home and eat dinner together  
after your lawsuit gets settled out of court.  
And like, who got her to do that?  
And I do have been somebody, I think.  
I don't know.  
Because it's like that person must have had a vested interest.  
Maybe it was just her though, because she sued her mother  
and the executors of the will.  
Maybe.  
I don't know.  
And she's a very steadfast girl.  
I mean, yeah.  
So that definitely could be it.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

Now, fast forward a few years from that to the fall of 1930.  
Now, Doris is celebrating her 18th birthday  
with a big old coming out party.  
Oh, you've always wanted one of those.  
A debutante party with the white gloves.  
Ever since you saw it on Gilmore Girls.  
Oh, I've always wanted a debutante party.  
Yeah, you wanted to do a fan dance.  
I really, really wanted to do the fan dance, y'all.  
Like, I don't know any of the inter-workings  
or anything else, but I really want to do the fan dance.  
Yeah, you don't want to have anything else to do with it.  
You just want to do the dress, probably the food.  
Absolutely.  
And the fan dance.  
And the white gloves.  
I love it.  
Now, most society women would have this at this time  
and love it and all that jazz.  
Doris fucking hated this.  
She wanted to go off to college.  
She didn't want to have one of these.  
But Nanny was like, you are having a coming out party.  
Of course.  
Like, duh.  
Your Doris Duke.  
Now, the coming out party was held at Rough Point,  
which was their New York Rhode Island,  
no, Newport, Rhode Island estate,  
that will end up becoming a huge point in this story later on.  
But it marked Doris' entrance into high society.  
High society.  
And the world of the elite and the wealthy American families.  
Cha-ching, cha-ching.  
Which all sounds pretty terrible, if you ask me.  
But like, the food and the white gloves and the fan dance,  
sign me up into it.  
So the coming out party, like I said,  
definitely meant a hell of a lot more to Nanny  
than it did to Doris.  
Nanny was a member of what was referred to as the Old Guard.  
Which is just like the old high society.  
The original.  
It's like how it meant more to Emily Gilmore than it did to Rory.

And Lorelai.

Exactly.

Exactly.

Now, so she took Nanny, she took the rights and responsibilities of society life very seriously.

While Doris, on the other hand, saw the responsibilities of all this wealth and privilege she had as an inescapable burden.

At some points, I'm sure.

She probably loved it.

There was probably some pretty sick parts of it.

Yeah, definitely.

Not gonna lie.

But at least at this point in her life, she felt like it was an inescapable burden.

Yeah, I'm sure there were definitely those moments of being like, oh, cool, everyone wants to kidnap me.

Yeah, exactly.

That's a burden.

And I'm sure it was very difficult to make friends that were not of her station.

Exactly.

Like you don't know if people are just being friends with you because you got money.

Exactly.

Now, she would tend to hang out Doris with a different crowd that Nanny deemed the lower class.

And she called them undesirables.

Wow, I call you an uncrustable.

That's a compliment, though, so don't even call her that.

But these people, what flavor, though?

What's not a great flavor?

Remember when I got them to tweet at me about the grilled cheese flavor?

That was a good time.

I need uncrustable to please bring back that flavor.

I never had that, but I'm intrigued by it.

It was greasy and beautiful and everything that dreams are made of, if you ask me.

And it also probably sent me into a very, I don't even know, very unhealthy lifestyle.

Breathing down the health highway.

Yeah, that was me.

Beat me up backwards.



## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

Yeah, yeah, exactly, with my lights off.  
But these people who were the undesirables to Nanny were Doris' friends.  
They were the musicians, artists, and writers.  
And they would all hang out at the Harlem Jazz Clubs.  
Oh, that sounds cool.  
Which Doris discovered in her late teens and absolutely fell in love with.  
She was a big, big fan of jazz.  
Bada-baw.  
There you go.  
What did the Watch What Crappens guys call the lady?  
Oh, Trixie Monocle.  
Trixie Monocle.  
Go listen.  
If you love Bravo, go listen to Watch What Crappens.  
Ronnie and Ben are chef's kiss.  
Chef's kiss.  
And we love them.  
We do.  
Now, try as she might to express her disinterest in the high society life that was so important to her mother.  
Doris could not escape the responsibility or the pressure of her wealth.  
And the most important expectation that she was faced with was finding a husband that her mother felt was a good match for her status and social position.  
Oy.  
Now, Nanny tolerated Doris' art and musician friends from the Harlem Nightlife, but they would literally never do for a husband in Nanny's eyes.  
Yeah.  
Now, Nanny had her eye on another man and Doris' left.  
Oh.  
I don't know why I'm getting southern, because they're not even southern.  
But this guy was Jimmy Cromwell.  
He was an aspiring politician, and he was also the sole heir to a fortune that was made from investment banking with one JP Morgan.  
I wonder if he was also related to the family from Halloween Town.  
It's entirely possible.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

I couldn't find any valuable sources on that information, but you should look into it.  
I'm going to look into it.  
I think you should, you know.  
Do you know Marnie?  
Do you?  
Jenny?  
Halloween is cool, OK?  
What's the scale?  
Is it Benny the skeleton?  
Yeah, Benny.  
He's my favorite.  
Yeah.  
But Cromwell, he sounds like a big creep.  
He's not like Benny.  
That's not great.  
He had his eye on Doris, and she was just 16 years old, and he was 33 at that point, so.  
And I, oop, I'm out.  
What's that?  
Tiktok's how we're like, that's weird.  
But as they got older, the relationship was actually encouraged by Nanny Duke.  
I hate that.  
And Friends of the Duke family.  
They all felt that, quote, a merger of the two families would strengthen their position and consolidate their wealth.  
Ew.  
So they were like, yeah, it's totally fine that he's been hitting on her since she was 16.  
Will it make us richer?  
Let's go.  
Let's go, girl.  
Let's go.  
So Jimmy and Doris, they actually did end up marrying in 1935.  
Doris was 22, and he was 39.  
OK.  
The ceremony took place in the library of the Duke's New York home at East 78th Street, which I'm pretty sure is where she was born.  
Oh.  
And was described by The New York Times as un-austentatious and somewhat mysterious, which is the theme of my wedding.

**[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella**

Thank you.  
I like the somewhat mysterious.  
It's somewhat.  
Not entirely mysterious.  
Not totally.  
But somewhat.  
But there was a little mystery in there.  
I like that.  
Un-austentatious.  
Un-austentatious.  
I like it.  
Yeah, I feel that.  
I'm into it.  
They're like Tom Sandoval and Rachel.  
Oh, their age gap.  
I was like, in what way?  
Their age gap.  
That's true.  
In the creepiness of it all.  
There you go.  
Yeah.  
Now Doris had made it a point to shield herself  
from the press throughout her entire life,  
and that's why the wedding was as private as it was.  
Un-austentatious.  
Very, very private, and I feel about too.  
Now she and Jimmy made a quick exit after the wedding.  
They headed to the Habba, and they got on board  
an Italian ocean liner that was bound for Egypt,  
which was where they would spend their honeymoon.  
Oh, OK.  
Right?  
My friend actually just went to Egypt.  
Hi, Holly.  
And it looked so fucking beautiful,  
and now I want to go to Egypt.  
Let's go to Egypt.  
OK, cool.  
Now in the years before Jimmy and Doris were married,  
Nanny was really confident, like I was just saying,  
that his wealth was sufficient.  
She seemed to think that his intentions with Doris  
were genuine.  
She never thought he was a gold digger.

**[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella**

Until the stock market crash of 1929.

Uh-oh.

Then she said, I think he might be a gold digger.

You know what?

She started getting a little skeptical of Jimmy Boy there and his motivations to marry her precious daughter, because the financial crisis had caused his family to lose a large amount of their fortune.

So he was kind of clinging to his relationship, and it seemed to be a way of keeping up appearances and maintaining a lifestyle that he'd gotten used to.

Oh, no.

Versus, like, being in love.

Yeah.

But still, no matter how right Nanny might have been about this man, her constant criticism of Jimmy only seemed to push Doris closer to him.

Uh-oh.

It was like Doris wanted to spite her mother any chance she could get.

Of course.

Defiance was kind of a pattern in her relationship with her mom, whether it was the coming out party, the wedding celebration, or even the marriage.

If Nanny thought it should be one way,

Doris was like, cool, I'm going to go the other way.

I'm so sad that Nanny was not, like, a radical Nanny.

I know.

And I mean radical in the way that's, like, radical.

Raw.

Yeah, like, rad.

She's so rad.

Radical.

Yeah, she should be, yeah, no.

I was like, I don't think.

She kind of seems a little radical, actually.

I think she maybe was.

Yeah.

Yeah, I'm mad that she's not rad.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Bumps me out.

She's a product of her environment.

She sure is.

But, you know, you have a choice.

Yeah, don't be a shit.

Don't be a bitch.

Yeah.

Don't be a bitch.

Don't be a bitch.

She's like, what did you just say, young lady?

Now, another theme emerging in Doris' life was her desire for privacy and this tendency to avoid the press.

This was probably a behavior that grew over time, I think, and most likely came from Buck's last words to her.

On his deathbed, he had told her, never trust anyone.

I mean, solid advice.

Those were his dying words to his daughter.

I can't even, like, 13-year-old daughter.

Solid advice.

Solid advice.

Like, definitely don't trust anyone.

I wish she had said, like, a little bit more.

And if you're going out, if you're going out, that's all.

You're like, I got to throw something important in here.

That is solid advice to throw out at the buzzer.

Like, also, like, go see what you want to see in the world.

I mean, I hope an I Love You was thrown in there, is what I'm sure it was.

I bet it was, because he loved his daughter.

And I'm sure maybe that's what it led up to.

Maybe it was, like, this whole thing, like, I love you.

I never want anything to happen to you.

Fly, fly, little bird.

It was all these wonderful things.

And it was like, follow your dreams, travel the world, but don't trust anyone.

And that was the end of it.

Maybe I'll give my kids that advice when I die.

I think it's good advice.

I would.

I'm already handing out that advice to everyone I know.

Don't trust anyone.

Don't trust a hoe.

I'm not giving it to people I don't know, because I don't trust anyone.

Especially if you don't know them.

But anyway, she was probably right to guard her privacy, because, like we know, since she was a child, it was this endless line of strangers asking for money, threatening her safety, or prying into her personal habits to write about them in tablets.

Sounds awesome.

And even her mom kind of had a way of slipping in and out of those categories, especially when it came to one, money, and two, how Doris' choices would affect her social status.

It was like, Nanny had, I think she had good intentions at her heart, but it was also always layered with, like, well, how will people think of us?

I think it's literally, and I know, like,

It's like Emily Gilmore.

It's like Emily Gilmore.

It literally is.

It's like, there's times when you're watching that show, and you're like, fuck yeah, Emily.

You love them.

I know you love them.

I know you want what's best for them.

And then there's times where you're like, God, Emily, what the fuck? Shut your mouth.

And it's always to do with, like, appearances.

Yeah.

And, like, what is, like, socially acceptable?

And I think it's just, like, that's the, that is a product of how they were raised.

Totally. Unfortunately.

The old period, the society they were in.

It's so surface level, though, all of it.

And that's what sucks is, like, Doris was looked at on such a surface level from her own mother.

Yeah. No, it's true.

And the reason why I think she was, like, like she did love Doris and had good intentions is because she was really, really worried about Doris getting together with Jimmy.

Yeah.

So worried so that she actually, before they were officially married, hired a private detective to dig into Jimmy's life.

Hell yeah.

Which I think was, again,  
a mixture of caring a lot about her daughter,  
but also, like, what could come out.

Yeah, making sure that you,  
you aren't gonna tarnish my legacy here.

Exactly.

Now, it could have tarnished her legacy in her eyes  
because the investigation, for one reason or another,  
led her to believe that Jimmy was a gay man.

And that would not be acceptable for her daughter,  
which is lame.

Yeah.

Now, of course she warned Doris,  
but I can literally picture Doris rolling her eyes  
into the back of her head and not giving a shit.

Yeah.

Because she's like, cool mom, bye.  
And she probably thinks at this point  
that her mom's gonna say anything to make it  
so that she doesn't marry Jimmy.

Now, whether it was because Jimmy  
wasn't necessarily interested in Doris physically or not,  
signs of a troubled marriage began almost immediately  
after they got on the ship headed for Egypt.

According to one biographer, quote,  
they had delayed sex to enjoy the ship,  
but they retired early.

She slipped on a negligee.

Jimmy asked his bride what he could expect  
in the way of annual income.

Wow.

So like, those are two different things.

She's trying to go a little spicy  
and celebrate the mirage.

Of course.

The marriage.

The mirage.

I was gone for a minute, but I'm back now.

I literally died, like actively, actively died.

You might have heard some of that actually.

I don't think we cut it.

Entirely possible that you heard me die slightly.

Yeah.

But I'm back now.

She's back.

Here I am.

So yeah, she's trying to get a little spicy  
and he's just focused on his yearly projections.

Yeah.

I'm just getting ready for taxes.

Which like, imagine like the night after you get married  
or like a couple of nights after you're like,  
ooh, like let me put on this outfit  
where I look a little cute and like, let's go.

And he's like, so like how much money  
are you gonna give me annually?

I'd be like, I fucked up.

Can you sign this tax form for me?

Like God.

Like, yeah, that's not good.

Yeah.

So this night laid the foundation for a marriage  
where Jimmy constantly wanted more, more, more  
when it came to money  
and Doris wanted more, more, more  
when it came to intimacy.

It was not ideal, but at the same time  
a divorce would have been a scandal.

So, hey, right back.

They went on as a married couple for a good while  
with both of them just maintaining affairs on the side,  
trying not to get caught by the press.

Wow.

Yeah.

Now the marriage finally did fall apart though  
in early 1943 and it was a messy divorce.

Oh no.

Doris told the press that Jimmy was a reckless spender  
and he was constantly demanding more money  
and Jimmy pointed the finger back at her  
and revealed a ton of the affairs  
that she had had throughout the years.

Did she say like, same to you?

Pretty much, I'm sure.

You too.

Direct quote.

But the court did end up siding with Doris,



probably because she had more money and influence.  
Probably.

Jimmy got literally nothing  
and he would spend years contesting the divorce  
and still begging for more money.

Oh no.

So the divorce from Jimmy,  
it really marked the beginning of a new era for Doris.

New year, new her.

That's right.

She dove deeper into her interest.

She started traveling more.

She took tons of trips abroad to Europe  
and in the last days of World War II,  
she was like going there constantly.

Wow.

And she fell in love with the culture  
and of course the men.

We love a European man.

Of course the men.

Of course the men.

She kept going back more and more  
and she was so inspired that she started writing  
and eventually took a position as a foreign correspondent  
for major newspapers across the country.

Oh shit.

Like, bad bitch.

I didn't know that about her.

Nor did I until I started looking into it.

["Pomp and Circumstance"]

Now, it was during one of her European trips  
that she met Porfirio Rubirosa  
and I did look up how to say that  
and I'm doing my best.

Like, and I nailed it if I do say so myself.

I think I did all right.

Now, he was a Dominican diplomat  
and actually the former son-in-law  
of a Dominican dictator.

Oh.

So he was a little messy.

Well, he was a little messy.

A little bit of a lot going on.

Now, Rubirosa was usually on the fringes

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

of violent political movements  
and a lot of people were really fucking terrified of him.  
Yeah.  
One, because he was perfectly fine being aggressive  
and two, he had major, major, scary, scary political ties.  
Eek.  
And also, he had a reputation as a popular ladies man.  
Oh, look at that.  
He's like super handsome.  
It's, hey, I got all this in my mouth.  
Don't think he was the best human being,  
but like super hot.  
Sometimes the worst human beings have good faces.  
They sure do.  
He'd actually been linked to our girl Marilyn.  
Oh.  
Miss Marilyn Monroe.  
Damn.  
And also to Rita Hayworth and Veronica Lake.  
Oh, wow.  
So he really like.  
He got around.  
Yeah.  
Now, when Doris met him in Paris in 1945,  
he was still actually married to popular French actress,  
Danielle Daru, I believe is how you say it, or Darryu.  
But he was.  
Oh my.  
I just looked him up.  
Is it a little hot in here?  
It's unfortunate.  
I know.  
Not the kindest man, though.  
But he was still married to this French actor,  
actress Danielle Darryu, I believe.  
But he was completely taken with Doris  
and she felt the same way toward him.  
He was to her sexy, dangerous, exciting,  
quite frankly, everything that Jimmy was not.  
All right.  
And no surprise that not long after meeting,  
Doris and Ruberosa started an affair  
that would eventually lead to marriage.  
OK.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

Now, by the time she married him, she knew it was highly unlikely that she was ever going to build a relationship on love and mutual respect because she was one of the wealthiest people in the world. That sucks.

And unless she wanted to keep having her heart broken over and over again, she just kind of had to accept that most people were attracted to her at least partially because of money. OK.

Now, this was 10,000 million gajillion percent true of Ruberosa.

He was already known to swap one opportunity or partner out for another if it was for more money, which is sad.

Yeah.

So and this is fucking wild.

Doris put up \$1.5 million for her relationship with him.

Whoa.

A million dollars went to Danielle with the expectation that she would divorce her husband and walk away, which she did.

Holy shit.

She was like, umily, umily, umily.

She was like, all right.

She was laughing straight to the bank.

Literally laughing to the bank.

Yeah.

And that was in 1947.

Damn.

And then Doris and Ruberosa were married in September of 1947.

Wow.

Now, in true Doris fashion, the ceremony was understated.

It took place, I think this is really cool, it took place at the Dominican consulate in Paris.

And there was just a handful of guests there.

And at that time, actually, Doris was working as a fashion correspondent for Harper's Bazaar.

Look at Doris.

So a lot of the guests were coworkers from the magazine.

Now, she definitely entered the marriage with eyes wide open, but it also didn't make it suck any less that her husband was almost entirely motivated by her money.

Yeah.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

Within days of the wedding, he was already making demands and clearly expected to be showered with expensive and extravagant gifts, including an apartment in Paris and an airplane.

Just a little stuff.

That's what I got drew for our wedding.

I was going to say, just stuff that you expect when you get married.

Here's a chateau and a flying device.

Love you.

Love you.

Mean it.

Jokes.

Now, things couldn't go on that way, obviously, and be hunky-dory forever.

So as the years went on, Doris started getting more and more jealous and resentful of her husband between his demands of her and his flirtations with other women.

So she would try to work on things, but he saw it as her making unreasonable demands of his time.

So it just forced a greater wedge between them.

Now, to get away from all of that, just as she had done with her mother when she was a teenager, Doris hid from the status and wealth in the quiet cafes and nightclubs in Paris.

In the post-war years, Paris was getting more and more popular with Americans and jazz musicians.

So that was drawing huge, huge crowds of people who either knew nothing or didn't care about high society.

That's kind of cool.

Yeah, it's awesome.

So she could just be another American jazz enthusiast when she was out with them instead of the richest girl in the world.

Oh, that's cool.

Yeah.

So after spending more and more time in the club, she actually started sitting in with the bands, playing piano and socializing with the people there who liked her for who she was.

That's wild.

Not what she could buy them.

Yeah.

Her newfound popularity and acceptance

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

at the jazz clubs of Paris only exacerbated the tension between her and her husband, though. At first, it started as her getting away, but then it was like, I'm sure her eyes started to open and she was like, what the fuck am I doing? Yeah, she's like, why am I settling for this? I can have this life just as easy. Yeah. So the final nail in the coffin came when Rubarosa was named Dominican Republic's ambassador to Argentina, which meant that he was going to have to move to Buenos Aires. What a terrible predicament to be in. What a terrible one. Doris, she didn't want to move there for multiple reasons. And she was especially concerned over fears for her personal safety. So she decided to stay back in the US. But she bought him yet another airplane that he could use whenever he wanted to see her. My god. Which was. She'd buy an airplane. And she was like, for whenever you want to see me, but he barely came home to see her. Of course. Sad. Yeah. So the distance clearly made things worse. And by 1948, her second marriage had completely fallen apart. They were barely together a year. But this time, she had planned ahead. And they had signed a prenup that actually I read in one source. The US government helped pen this. Holy shit. Yeah. But it allowed for a quick divorce. But also, unfortunately, required her to pay him \$25,000 a year for the rest of his life. Holy shit. Which she did until 1965 when he was unfortunately killed in a car accident. Wow. Now, allegedly, their relationship

actually never truly ended, sexually at least.  
And she was so upset over his death when he did die,  
she spent several days in bed.  
Oh, wow.  
So it's like.  
So she really loved him.  
She really did love him.  
Or cared for him.  
I think she loved him.  
In a big way, for sure.  
That's sad.  
And I think it's also a parent how much she loved him.  
Because this relationship, I think,  
changed her fundamentally.  
Really?  
She knew that everybody wanted something from her.  
And throughout the year, she had  
learned to use that to her advantage.  
But I think years of trying not to let that bother her  
were starting to catch up.  
Yeah, that makes sense.  
She was spending more and more time at the jazz clubs.  
And the lifestyle in her case was a bit of a catch-22.  
She was learning more and more about the music and the culture,  
and having really a lot of fun with that.  
But at the same time, she started  
to experiment more with drugs.  
Oh.  
Now, this scene eventually led her to Joseph Joey Castro.  
He was a young jazz musician.  
He was gaining popularity in LA.  
And in 1950, Doris invited him to stay with her in Hawaii.  
She had part of the house renovated  
to accommodate musical performances, as one does.  
I was just going to say, that's what everybody renovates  
their house for.  
Yeah, like my boyfriend's in a band.  
So let me just renovate part of my house for him.  
Of course.  
Now, she had cultivated a lot of relationships  
with the people in the jazz scene.  
And a lot of these people, she considered close associates.  
But Joey was one of the few people that she actually  
considered a close friend.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

They shared a passion for music.  
But he also understood things about her  
that a lot of people had overlooked.  
She struggled massively with social anxiety,  
and he understood that and could help her.  
Yeah.  
It was actually the reason that kept her from actually  
pursuing a career in music or performance.  
What's her social anxiety?  
Oh, that's sad.  
I know.  
Social anxiety sucks.  
It does.  
I get social anxiety.  
Me too.  
I think everybody does.  
It makes things very difficult.  
Just varying degrees though.  
Oh, yeah.  
And I think hers was on the higher end of the spectrum.  
Yeah, for sure.  
But eventually, their friendship, Joey and Doris here,  
grew into a romantic relationship.  
And in 1953, Doris actually bought a home for them  
in LA where they could unwind.  
Unwind?  
This is my unwinding home.  
I was going to say, you just have a home.  
I unwind in that one.  
We make music in that one.  
We unwind there.  
We sometimes eat cereal in this one.  
This is where we watch The Price is Right.  
And this is where we watch The Spooky Stories.  
Exactly.  
Imagine.  
Imagine.  
Now, according to her biographers,  
Doris's purchase of the house in LA, quote,  
implied a commitment to Castro.  
But she had only made the decision  
to buy the place after her on and off again relationship  
with another man, novelist Louis Bromfield,  
appeared to be going nowhere.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

Yes.

Now, the end of the affair with that man's freed up more of Doris's time, so she refocused that time to her relationship with Joey.

Now, by 1954, Joey had actually assembled a small jazz combo with Doris, and they were performing together in small clubs with Doris in disguise so she couldn't be recognized.

Oh my god, she is like Duke Silver, Ron Swanson.

Bitch, I literally wrote that in the script.

Oh my god, I love that.

I literally wrote that.

I love it.

I also said I couldn't help but picture her wearing a sea a wig and playing a saxophone.

Right?

Right?

I literally all I could think of was Duke Silver.

Oh my god.

I'm obsessed.

I love it.

So it wasn't quite as stimulating as her last relationships, but this relationship with Joey, excuse me, was comfortable and familiar for Doris and also allowed her to pursue her love of music.

It was a bit out of convenience, I think.

He sounds like it.

Unfortunately, again, it was a lifestyle that put Doris in contact, close contact, I'll say, with a lot of questionable characters, including those who were more than willing to sell her drugs. She's getting a little more on drugs throughout this time period, which we all know doesn't lead to wonderful, wonderful things.

No.

Always.

Now, by 1956, Doris' world had undergone a dramatic and unexpected transformation.

In a very short amount of time, she had gone from introverted socialite to secret jazz performer.

And this is where I wrote, it's giving Duke Silver.

She was literally traveling around the world at this point, performing in some of the most prominent jazz clubs,



## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

of course, still in disguise.

And while she may have been privately living out her fantasies, she was like, I think she was really going through it,

I think, mentally, and then I think the drugs didn't help.

And she couldn't ignore the reminders

of a lot of past failures starting to creep in around her.

That year, Louis Broomfield died.

And it was the first of several events

that hit Doris really hard.

After he passed, she learned that Ruberosa,

because this was before he had passed too,

had married socialite and her former rival, Barbara Hutton.

And the disappointments and heartbreak

caused her to retreat even further into her secret

lifestyle, which made her dive even further into drug use

and casual sexual encounters.

So by the early 1960s, her relationship with Joey Castro

started to become more strained because of that.

Mostly because she was also reluctant, excuse me,

to fully commit to their relationship.

Joey really wanted to get married,

but Doris was like, no.

And according to her cousin, Pony Duke.

Doris loved Joey's music and appreciated his companionship,

but quote, was not about to get married again.

She didn't want to get married again.

She'd been scoring twice.

I was going to say, yeah, you can't really blame her.

So instead, she quote, orchestrated

a strange sort of marriage ceremony

that was not really a marriage ceremony to appease Joey.

So I think she low key made a fake wedding.

I was just going to say, so what you're saying is.

It seems to me like he was very much under the impression

that they were legally married.

But to her, it was like, nah, this

is like not for realsies.

Wow.

Yeah. OK.

Now, the sham marriage did ease tensions for a little bit,

but the fights were going to start back up again.

Yeah.

And by the end of their relationship,

the arguments between Doris and Joey

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

had not only increased in frequency, but also intensity.

Oh.

They usually ended violently.

Oh, no.

And things took a dramatic turn for the worse in June of 1963, when during one of these intense arguments, Doris grabbed a butter knife from the kitchen counter and allegedly stabbed Joey in the arm.

Oh, that's not a normal fight.

She stabbed him, y'all.

That's not a normal argument.

That's if you are grabbing any kind of knife to stab your partner in the midst of an argument, it's time to walk away.

Yeah, any kind of weaponry that's being brought into an argument is really that that's the time to think about it.

Yeah, I would say so.

Yeah, that's the time to really take stock of what's happening here.

Seek guidance.

Yeah.

Everybody needs that occasionally.

That's not good.

So by 1964, Doris and Joey had become completely estranged.

And he's not not guilty in all of this either.

Yeah.

But he and we'll get there.

He was totally cut off from the life of luxury that he'd been enjoying with Doris for a decade at this point.

So as a result, he filed a shit ton of lawsuits and divorce suits demanding financial compensation anywhere from \$5,000 to \$150,000.

Oh.

I guess it just depended on how he felt that day.

Yeah, you know.

Yeah.

But he also wanted part ownership of the house in LA.

Now, among other things, his suits alleged that they had been married twice, first in Rhode Island in 1956, and then again in Philadelphia in 1960.

But in response, Doris filed for and was awarded a restraining order in May of 1964,

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

which barred him from ever publicly claiming to be her husband and effectively ended his pursuit of a quote unquote divorce.

Oh, damn.

Or any kind of compensation.

Because they were like, you're not married.

Now, he had allegedly broken her jaw at one point in 1966 after she pulled the plug on his record company, which she owned.

What the fuck?

The morning after she fled to Hollywood to go to Newport with her designer and a man that would soon be at the center of this story, Eduardo Eddie Tarella.

Uh-oh.

Now, Doris's life before this point had always been kind of like a fairy tale.

Whether she liked it or not, her wealth, her money, and her privilege shielded her from a lot of the more difficult realities in her life.

Yeah.

But they were only going to protect her for so long, and she knew that.

Now, that knowledge and that where were starting to show in her personality.

Any time a relationship ended, and especially because they usually ended badly, she would become harder and tougher on the outside and more depressed on the inside.

And at the same time, her experimentation with drugs, paired with her mental struggles, that was starting to make her a lot more impulsive, and that was becoming more clear, especially in the violent fight she was starting to have.

I mean, she literally stabbed her sort of husband.

Yeah.

Her fake husband.

And while she hopefully regretted those arguments and altercations, they were not going to be the last time she became violent.

Oh, no.

And the next time should have come with greater consequences.

Eek.

So even though she felt more and more comfortable with the LA nightlife through Joey, during the 1950s,

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

she was kind of retreating further into herself.

And at the same time, she was surrounding herself with what her cousin referred to as a colorful group of Hollywood types, which included Eddie Terella.

And I would also assume that he was probably referring to her butler, Bernard Lafferty, and this other woman, Shandy Hefner, who Doris actually ended up adopting when Shandy was like 35, and Doris was in her like 60s or 70s.

It's like a sidetrack story that I can't get into here because we'd be here for hours.

OK.

But please go look into that.

Oh, yes, I will.

It is wild.

OK.

Yeah, OK.

Yeah, I would definitely.

I'm going to accept that information.

Definitely read some of the biographies that I'll link in the show notes and the variety.

Vanity Fair articles written about her.

But right now, we're going to focus on Eddie.

OK.

Now, it's crazy, though, like that that happened.

Wow.

Yeah, I think there's a whole A&E show about adopting adults.

They should feature Doris.

Oh, my OK.

So anyways, Doris met Eddie Terella in LA in 1959.

This was before she had cut Joey off.

And that's how they met.

He was an aspiring interior designer and occasionally moonlit as a nightclub singer, which I think is really fun.

Moonlighting as a nightclub singer.

That's so like old Hollywood.

Yeah.

Badaboom.

It's also how Lady Gaga got big.

I'm pretty sure.

But then she used to sing in nightclubs.

Yeah, probably.

Wasn't she on the hills?

**[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella**

Oh, my God.

Yeah, she was.

I think that's when she was starting to get bigger.

Getting her outfit together on an episode.

Yeah, you're not wrong.

When she was singing like poker face, I think.

That's a deep cut.

Yeah.

I want to watch the hills now.

But Eddie had played some of those same venues that Joey had played because, remember, he's also like a singer guy.

Oh, yes.

And Joey had learned that Tarella's real passion in life was for design.

And while they were still together, Joey told Doris about Eddie because it just so happened, she was looking for an interior designer.

Yeah.

Of course.

She's rich.

So it was Joey who suggested she take a chance and hire Eddie.

Literally the only thing that Doris and Eddie had in common was that they had both grown up in New Jersey.

It started and ended there.

I feel like that's like the ultimate in common thing, though.

It's like, if you're both from Jersey,

I feel like it's like, that's OK.

That's it.

I think so, too.

Yeah, actually.

I just don't know why.

You'll hit it off.

It'll be great.

Yeah, I think you'll get each other.

It's not great here.

No.

But they did seem to sort of get each other.

I think Eddie got Doris a little more than Doris got Eddie, but I think she got him to a degree.

Cool.

Now, by all accounts, Eddie was a charming, popular, and super, super talented dude.

**[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella**

In high school, his classmates actually referred to him as Playboy of the Western Front, which I'm obsessed with that.

Who are these high school kids that came up with that?

Well, high school kids were way better back then.

That was the 40s and 50s.

I feel like they all had transatlantic accents.

They were just like, hey.

These are high school kids that had cigarettes rolled up into there, which don't smoke cigarettes.

But back then, it was cool.

Yeah.

Yeah.

So after graduating from Dover High School, he had pursued a career as a dancer and an artist.

But as he was trying to pursue that, he got drafted into World War II.

And when the war ended and he returned home, he worked on Sax Fifth Avenue, designing hats for people like Mae West.

Oh, who's she?

Yeah, crazy.

I love her.

Now, then he decided to move out to LA, where he started gardening, and he found work with famous clients like Alan Ladd and Peggy Lee.

Yeah, he was in touch with big people.

He was an incredibly hard worker.

He really never had any trouble finding a job, especially through word of both of these very famous influential people.

It was just that he struggled to maintain an interest in one job or one field for a long time.

By the early 50s, he was actually, though, becoming pretty successful as a designer in Hollywood.

But because he refused to join a union, it limited the work he could get.

So to make extra money, he was singing in the nightclubs, where he met Joey.

Just moonlighting.

Moonlighting.

Now, his first work with Doris was when she had him remodel and design the 20 greenhouses at Duke Farm.

Jesus.

Now, I thought you would be all over this.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

She wanted him to revive them, and she wanted them to be used as a public attraction, because she opened the grounds up again.

Oh, OK.

Now, Eddie impressed the shit out of her when he redesigned each greenhouse into a garden that represented a different ecosystem or part of the world.

Shut the fuck up.

That's awesome.

How fucking cool is that?

I want to see that.

Right?

I love a theme.

I love a good theme.

You guys know we love a theme around here.

We love a theme.

But like, transforming gardens that represent different ecosystems.

That's cool.

That's a cool mind right there.

Yeah, that was a mind at work.

Yeah.

So she was like, oh, let's fucking go.

Like, you're my guy.

Yeah.

She was super excited to dive into her love of gardening, because she actually was an avid gardener with the completion of the project.

She was like, let's go.

But she had also gained a new companion.

And at this point, her relationship with Joey Castro is falling apart, and then it ultimately does fall apart.

So she wasn't interested in a romantic relationship with a man.

She just missed companionship, which she had found in Eddie.

And he was the ideal companion because he was a gay man.

He wasn't after her for love or anything like that.

Yeah.

She knew that he would stick by her and not lose interest in her sexually.

And at the same time, he was funny, talented, and also nice to look at.

Now, according to Pony Duke, Eddie, quote, was the mixture of masculinity and taste

that Doris Duke found so very attractive.  
And the perfect ornament for Doris as she aged.  
The ornament.  
I was like, wow.  
Damn.  
But her dramatic and theatrical aesthetic  
was also a perfect match for Eddie  
because he was just starting to make a name for himself  
in the theater and film industry.  
Very multifaceted man.  
Oh, OK.  
Oh, he was a handsome man, too.  
Monsonny?  
He was just looking at him.  
Super handsome.  
Just looking at him.  
Don't look at too much.  
Just looking at him.  
Just looking at him.  
Just looking at him.  
Now, I know.  
Really good.  
Just like, he looks friendly, doesn't he?  
He does.  
He's got a friendly face.  
I like his face.  
I'd give him a little smooch.  
But probably not because he'd be like, get away from me.  
I'd give him a little smooch.  
A little smoochy kiss.  
If you watch Bluey.  
Smoochy kiss.  
Now, before long, Doris had actually made space for Eddie  
and all of her houses and apartments,  
which there's a lot of them.  
He always had his own room wherever they went.  
He could have privacy when they traveled together.  
But aside from him getting to sleep in his own space,  
Doris was starting to dominate all of his time.  
Because remember, she doesn't have a man's right now.  
And she's somebody that needed to have someone.  
Yeah, I'm starting to see that about her.  
She treated Eddie like a romantic partner  
in all ways other than sexually.  
And a lot of times, she would actually get jealous



## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

if she wasn't feeling like his first priority,  
but they're not together.  
Yeah, so it's like, uh.  
And that was a lot for him.  
And by the mid 19th, oh, sorry, I just kicked you in the foot.  
Kicked in my feet.  
Foot five.  
But by the mid 1960s, her demands  
were starting to wear on him.  
He was on the payroll and happy for the work,  
but the expectation that he would be at her beck and call  
every hour of every day was getting exhausting.  
It was a little above his pay grade.  
It was.  
One of his friends said he hated those nights,  
the nights that he worked for her  
and had to spend time with her.  
But as tired as he was,  
he was trying to stick with it as long as he could  
because he had bills, he had debt,  
and working for Doris paid a pretty penny.  
Now, as she got older  
and started cutting more and more people out of her life,  
Doris was actually starting to seem a lot more  
like the generation before her that she used to hate.  
Yeah.  
Her mom's generation that treated working people  
like that people that were working for them like the help.  
That's how she was kind of starting to act.  
Yeah.  
She was getting that attitude  
and that's something that Eddie was starting  
to really hate the most.  
It was making it harder and harder for him to stick around.  
And he also felt like he was getting pulled  
in another direction.  
He really wanted to make a name for himself in Hollywood  
and it actually seemed like that dream  
was headed in the right direction.  
Because by 1965, his work in LA was finally paying off  
and he had landed a job doing the set design  
for the Sand Piper,  
which was starring Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor.  
Who are they?

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

I don't know.

Two relative unknowns.

Yeah, just like credited briefly.

Yeah.

Then in 1966, film producer Martin Ransom is that how you say that?

I think that's how you say that.

Sounds good to me.

Him.

He offered Eddie the production design job on Don't Make Waves, which was a movie starring Tony Curtis and Sharon Tate. Oh, Sharon T.

Yeah.

And it was due to start production that fall.

Now this opportunity was like exactly what he was hoping for.

And it was proof to him that he could make it in Hollywood.

He was starting to make strides.

And it was also proof that he could get out from Doris's thumb.

But Doris lost her GD mind when Eddie told her about the job offer.

Yeah, I was thinking it would happen.

He was sure that she was going to fully freak out if he told her that he had already accepted the job, which he has.

Ooh.

So instead he told her he was only considering it.

Now Doris was begging him not to take the job.

And she thought of every last thing she could offer him to stay, but he just wasn't committing one way or the other.

So she kept begging and pleading for months and months.

And she invited him to come to her family estate in Newport, Rhode Island for the fall.

Remember Rough Point from the beginning of the story.

Okay.

Here's where it becomes a pinnacle point of the story.

Now Eddie did finally cave and he agreed to send the fall in Rough Point with Doris.

And that was a decision that was going to change his life forever.

Oh no.

Eddie arrived at Rough Point early in October of 1966.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

And he had still planned actually to work on Don't Make Waves, but at the time he was really behind on taxes.

So when Doris offered him more money than he was making before, he couldn't refuse.

He had to go there with her.

His plan was to get the work done for Doris that fall and then returned to Hollywood and begin building the career that he wanted.

And he was finally going to be free.

So it's really unclear what happened on the evening of October 7th, but by most accounts,

Doris' mental state was not very good that night, Eek.

In the months leading up to that fall at Rough Point, she had been drinking a lot more than usual.

She was still using drugs

and she was experiencing very intense mood swings and depression that related

to her failed relationship with Joey.

And then the most, or, and then the recent death of Ruperosa.

This is what he did die.

Oh no.

And it was, that was among like many other things too.

Now she could have, she, for most of her life was used to getting what she wanted.

She even meant she could get from them what she wanted.

But at some point they were going to leave her and move on to someone else.

And now it seemed like that was happening with Eddie and she simply couldn't take it.

Yeah.

Now that fall, she had rented a 1966 Dodge Polaris station wagon to use while she and Eddie were in Newport.

On the evening of the 7th,

when she was not in a very good headspace, they got into the station wagon a little after 4pm.

They were going to actually meet with the president of the Newport Preservation Society

because Doris wanted to discuss her interest in funding a project that was actually going to preserve a lot of Newport's historic homes.

She was like, I want to pay for that.

That's pretty cool.

Yeah.

It was also probably a really good tax write off.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

Yeah.

But for one reason or another,  
Eddie and Doris were arguing with each other  
even before they headed out  
and they were still said to be arguing  
as they were getting into the car.  
And when they got to the bottom of the driveway  
leading to the road, Eddie put the car in park,  
pulled the parking brake and hopped out of the driver's seat  
to open the large iron gate so they could pull out.

I'm very nervous.

You should be.

Okay.

As he turned around to start back,  
walking back to the car,  
he saw that Doris had moved from the passenger seat  
to the driver's seat,  
where she disengaged the parking brake,  
shifted the car into drive and quote,  
pressed down so hard on the accelerator  
that she left tire-wide gouge marks in the gravel.  
Oh my, the car sped forward, struck Eddie,  
which sent him flying up onto the hood.  
Then she tapped the brakes, he rolled off the car  
and landed in the middle of Bellevue Avenue.

Holy shit.

She stopped the car momentarily  
while Eddie laid screaming in the middle of the road  
and then she hit the accelerator again,  
drove forward, crushing Eddie under the front tires.  
Oh my God.

And dragging his body across the street  
under the weight of the station wagon.  
Before the car jumped onto the curb  
on the opposite side of the street,  
drove through a fence and came to a stop  
when she finally hit a tree.

Holy shit.

So days later in autopsy would show  
that the first impact had broken Eddie's hip,  
which had sent him up onto the hood.  
But the second impact caused crushing injuries  
to his lung, spinal cord and brain,  
which killed him almost instantly.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

Damn.

The police arrived on the scene,  
no more than five minutes later it said,  
where they found Doris in a daze behind the wheel of the car.

Eddie, or excuse me, Edward Angel,  
who was the first officer to arrive.

He remembered seeing a small amount of blood  
coming from Doris' mouth.

And his report describes that as a steering wheel injury.  
But other than that, she was physically fine.

As he approached the car, she jumped from the driver's seat  
and just started frantically pacing back and forth.

And then she ran back into her mansion  
looking for someone named Ed.

Even though she knew he was underneath the car,  
she had just driven over him.

Oh, no.

Now, once they were able to calm her down,  
police escorted her to the nearby Newport Hospital,  
where she was treated for facial cuts and severe shock.

But other than that, she was literally fine.

Oh, no.

So the next day,

This is very upsetting.

It's horrible.

The next day, the local paper, The Newport Daily News,  
ran with the headline, Doris do kills friend and car crash.

The article was like very light on information

and noted that police chief Joseph Radis,

or yeah, Radis, could not be reached for comment on the case.

Ooh.

And reporters were told that he would not be available  
that day for questions.

It would actually be two days before the police chief  
made a statement to the press about the death of Eddie  
Torella.

And when he did, it was to inform them  
that an investigation had been conducted.

And it was determined that Eddie's death  
was the result of an unfortunate accident.

Oh, yeah.

That's OK.

That's what we're going with.

Yeah.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

According to Doris, who wasn't interviewed by the police until over a day after the incident, she was in the passenger seat. When Eddie got out to open the gates, she slid over into the driver's seat to drive the car out onto the street. She told police it was something we'd done hundreds of times before. But this time, she said, quote, the car leaped forward. And after that, everything was a blank. Oh, my. Cars usually don't leap forward on their own. I was just going to say. I've never had that experience. The old car leapt forward defense. It's very similar to dog ate my whole life. Yeah, that's not a great defense. Now, the only other information that the police chief was willing to report on was that as far as he knew, Eddie and Doris were, quote, on very good terms. No, they were not. No, the hell they were not. They were literally arguing as they got into the car, and he was planning on leaving, and she was begging him not to. Oh, no. Now, two days after he responded to questions from the Newport Daily News, a larger press conference was held, and the police chief told reporters that Tarella's death was definitely an accident, quote, and quote, as far as we're concerned, the case is closed. How, though. Quick, kush hush, bye-bye. How, though, is what I need to know. Yeah. How, though. Yeah. So Doris may have been able to use her money to hide from any kind of responsibility or public scrutiny in the past, but times had changed, and people cared a lot less in 1966 about this random American social life. Times they are a-changing. They were pissed by the lack of information on the case, and they found it extremely suspicious.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

In Newport, the press were super critical of the way that this was handled and the way that the police released information, and they felt actually like the police chief had handled similar incidents poorly. Because in the years past, he had written off crimes like this that involved the rich summer residents.

Ah, mm-hmm.

Shocking.

Even though people were upset and critical over the investigation, it still seemed like whatever had happened at the gates of Rough Point were to remain a mystery.

And as far as Doris Duke was concerned, Tarella's death was nothing more than a tragic accident, and she went on to live the rest of her life, saying so.

That is shocking.

Shocking.

That that just was like crescendo, crescendo, crescendo.

Then it's like, no, it's fine.

Oh, no, we're not done yet.

But I mean, that part of it.

Oh, yeah.

Just that it's like, it ended.

Oh, and this big crazy thing happened, and oh, my god.

But everything was fine.

It was an accident.

Yeah, it was just like, you're like, oh.

Don't you know that closely, Ferd?

You should watch out for that.

You don't even have time to be like, oh, no.

Because it's like, oh, oh, OK.

Well, it's just an accident.

OK, we're just going to live the rest of our lives.

That's fine.

What the fuck?

So the following year, Eddie's five siblings filed a wrongful death suit against Doris in the Superior Court of Rhode Island.

They were seeking \$2.5 million in damages.

And they alleged that Doris had, quote, negligently and carelessly operated the car that led to their brother's death, which is literally the truth.

Now, the case actually eventually

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

made its way to the Supreme Court of Rhode Island in 1973.  
But the justices mostly sided with Doris.  
And the family only received, and I say only  
because she's a billionaire, \$75,000.  
Wow.  
That's it.  
Wow.  
Like, who did you pay off?  
I'd be so pissed.  
They were also treated terribly by her legal team.  
They made it seem like Eddie was worse.  
Like, they made it seem like he was worse than Doris somehow.  
What the fuck?  
Yeah, very strange.  
And in the, sorry, I messed up, hold on.  
Oh, silly me.  
What I meant was it was worse in the way  
that the family was treated by the legal team during the trial,  
particularly when it came to their brother's legacy.  
They described him as an opportunist who hung around  
famous people, hoping their talent and fame  
would rub off on him.  
Wow.  
I'm like, no, he didn't need it to.  
He was incredibly talented on his own.  
I was just going to say, like, let's just ignore the fact  
that he had any success on his own.  
Yeah, absolutely.  
Actually didn't need Doris.  
Ignore all that.  
Fully intending to leave her employment.  
But now.  
His niece later told reporters she killed him twice.  
She destroyed his body and then eviscerated his memory.  
Yeah.  
Which is so sad.  
That is so sad.  
And throughout the trial, investigators privately  
and publicly tried to get any information from Doris  
about the incident or the accident, excuse me.  
But by then, she had completely shielded herself  
with lawyers and doctors that made it impossible  
to get anywhere near her.  
But by the early 1990s, she was a fucking shell of herself.



## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

After Eddie's death, she pulled even more into herself and she became almost entirely reclusive. And more and more people were cast out of her circle. In the end, there was only a very small group of doctors, lawyers, and quote unquote hangers on who hoped she was just going to leave them something in the will.

When she turned 79 in 1992, allegedly her butler talked her into getting a facelift and that started a slew of health problems.

Oh.

It would go on to include a broken hip, a knee replacement surgery, and a severe stroke in the fall of 1993.

Oh, man.

And that's just so scary.

Right?

Like the stuff that can happen from plastic surgery like this.

And you hear about like implants and stuff, like the scary sort of like health problems that can come from it.

It's crazy.

You watch Michelle Visage's documentary on that.

There you go.

It freaked me out.

I was like, OK, never, never, never.

But on October 28th, 1993, Doris Duke did die of a cardiac arrest at 80 years old.

Damn.

She had no children and no spouse to leave her enormous fortune to.

Wow.

Because she had a huge falling out with the woman that she had adopted.

Oh, I forgot she's adopted a 30 something year old.

Yeah.

But they had a huge falling out.

And that's like its own whole separate story that involves her very shady butler.

Holy shit.

But she left a lot of her like enormous fortune to the butler Bernard Lafferty.

Oh, I knew you were going to say that.

I knew it.

And a lot of people speculate on his motivations and whether or not he had something to do with accelerating

her death, I'll say.

Oh, boy.

Yeah.

But that's like layered in for another time.

Good velocity.

So when Doris passed away, most people figured any revelations about the more mysterious aspects of her life had gone with her, especially the accident that murdered Eddie Tarella.

Yeah, that's a big one.

Yeah.

But that all changed in the summer of 2020.

Whoa.

When journalist Peter Lance published an article about Eddie Tarella's death in Vanity Fair.

I love Vanity Fair.

I do too.

I actually just signed up to get their hard copies too.

Nice.

Because I had online access.

And then I got signed out for some reason.

And I was like, ooh, give me hard copies.

Yeah, they have great articles.

They do.

Now, Peter Lance, he had actually been born and raised in Newport.

And he remembered not only Eddie's death, but the controversy and the suspicion surrounding it.

A lot of people in town believed that there was a cover-up.

And the story he wrote prompted a flood of comments and memories from Newport's residents who pretty much confirmed the suspicious nature of the quote-unquote accident.

Oh, man.

One man in particular would take Peter down a path that would eventually uncover what many accept as the truth about Eddie's death.

What?

Bob Walker was a 13-year-old paper boy living in Newport when Eddie Torello was killed.

And on the afternoon of the quote-unquote accident, he was out on his route delivering papers near the Rough Point mansion when he heard a commotion coming from the direction of a massive estate.

He would later tell Peter, quote,  
I initially heard the argument and screaming of two people.  
And he said, because it was usually  
such a calm and quiet area, it was very easy to hear  
that these people were definitely  
pissed off at each other.

He said the argument was followed by silence  
and then, quote, the roar of a motor,  
the crash, and the screaming of a man.

Oh, no.

Now, according to Bob, he could hear the accident happen  
and rush to the scene, arriving well before the police did.

And when he got to the gates, he said

Doris was just getting out of the car  
and was staring down at the wreckage  
when he rode up on his bicycle.

And he asked if he could do anything to help  
because he had no idea what was going on.

Doris turned to him, pointing and screaming,  
you better get the hell out of here.

Oh, that just gave me chills.

And then she began what he described  
as a kind of crouched pacing in front of the car,  
like she was trying to block his view of whatever  
was beneath it.

And she kept yelling at him, get out of here now.

It was literally like walking around the car,  
like an animal, exactly like an animal hiding his view.

So Bob was completely shaken by this.

And as far as he could tell, she wasn't hurt.

So he got back on his bike and got out of there  
because that's all he had seen.

Yeah, he's like, what the fuck?

But when he got his bundle of papers for delivery the next day,  
he saw that headline about the accident

and he read the article, but everything in the paper  
didn't match what he had seen and heard that afternoon.

So he ran home to tell his father  
and explain what had happened the day before.

But he got a very different reaction  
than what he was expecting.

When he got home and he told his dad everything,  
his dad grabbed him by the shirt  
and slammed him up against the wall and told him,

**[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella**

now you listen to me, son,  
you will never, ever tell anybody this story again.  
You will not tell your brother, you will not tell your friends.  
And of all people, you're not going to say anything  
to the police.  
Do you understand me?  
Do you understand me?  
What?  
Bob Walker did not understand  
because his dad was usually completely adamant  
that his children always tell the truth.  
But Bob said he was so serious that it was scary  
and he didn't want to say anybody,  
didn't want to say anything to anybody  
about what he had seen until years and years later.  
And by that point,  
everybody had more or less forgotten about Eddie Terolla.  
Holy shit.  
So years, like way down the road years later,  
as his dad was declining in health,  
Bob asked his dad why he reacted that way.  
And this is what his dad told him.  
You know, son, at the time when you told me the story,  
I recognized that you could have shown motive and intent.  
I was concerned that you as a key witness  
could have gone or could have been doing your paper route  
on the ocean drive  
and a truck could have come up on you from behind.  
The life of my child was more precious to me  
than that woman on Bellevue Avenue.  
That's why I reacted the way I did.  
Oh my God.  
You know, basically he was saying like,  
that woman has all the money in the world  
and all the power.  
And I was protecting you.  
You a little informant,  
anything could have happened to you or our family.  
And I love you more than I love anyone in this world.  
Oh my God, I got full chills.  
Because at first I was so mad at Bob Walker's dad  
when I first read it, I was like, what the hell?  
See, in my head, I was like, he's scared.  
He's your mom.

He's scared.

Like he's scared that something is gonna happen to his kid and he's like, I don't give a fuck about anybody else.

Right.

I care about you.

When I found that out, I was like, literally crying right now.

Cause I would be the same way.

You don't give a fuck about anybody else.

Exactly.

I'm protecting you.

Exactly.

Damn.

And the thing is, even if Bob had gone to the police and spilled everything that he had seen that day, it wouldn't have made a difference.

No.

Because Doris was spending all that money restoring the homes in Newport.

Exactly.

So it wouldn't have made, the only difference it would have made was putting Bob in danger.

Exactly.

But literally the reason why Eddie's death was covered up is because she had so much money and power and she was doing so much for the community that they were like, okay, it didn't happen.

Like it will take blood money for you to restore these homes.

Damn.

So as Peter dug deeper into Bob Walker's story, he found that there were other people who had come to similar conclusions about Eddie's death, including a police sergeant who had been assigned to the case at the time.

His report concluded there was no way this could have been an accident and that Tarella's death was most certainly intentional.

And he also learned that right after the accident, Doris hired the county's acting medical examiner, the one who was literally filing the autopsy and the death certificate as her private doctor.

Wow.

Conflict of interest.

I was just gonna say, can you say?  
And there were other people in town,  
including police chief, Radis there,  
whose lives and personal fortunes  
seemed to drastically improve  
in the weeks and months following Eddie's death.

Holy shit.

AKA, she paid a shit ton of people off.  
Yeah, it certainly looks that way allegedly.  
So Peter allegedly, Peter definitely,  
took all that information to the police  
and they sat on it until they felt enough public pressure  
to reopen the case.

Whoa.

And they especially felt that pressure  
after Peter Lance's book, homicide at rough point,  
which I definitely recommend reading,  
was published.

Now, unfortunately, the reinvestigation of the case  
was just as doomed as the initial case.

And just after a few days of review, days,  
the Newport police determined, quote,  
that new evidence presented in the book  
is insufficient to warrant further investigation.

I love that they were like,  
we've thought about it for 48 hours  
and we decided that after that long think on it,  
we're not even gonna look into it.

Yeah, like that, cool.

In a statement to the press,  
the town administrator said,  
it remains the opinion of the Newport police department  
that there is not sufficient evidence  
to draw any firm conclusions  
as to the motivations of Mrs. Duke.

For that reason, it appears that this will continue  
to be a case that will have to be left  
to the court of public opinion.

Yeah, that's what everybody wants to hear.

So they essentially said,  
you can think whatever you want  
and you're probably right, but according to us, nah.  
We're gonna agree to disagree.

## [Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella

But as far, exactly.

But as far as Peter and pretty much all of the residents of Newport Rhode Island are concerned, the police had all the evidence that they needed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Doris Duke intentionally murdered Eddie Tirella. But it seemed that even 30 years after her death, nobody wanted to fuck with the Duke family name.

Wow.

Trust no one.

Trust no one.

And that's the really, really sad story of the death of Eduardo Tirella.

That is very sad.

Right?

Damn.

What a story.

A bunker story.

What a life.

What a legacy.

Right.

What a downfall.

Yeah.

Like shit.

I definitely recommend looking even more into Doris because I'm sure that felt like a very long episode.

I think it might have been.

But there was so many things that I ended up skipping over because we could have just been here for like hours and hours.

That's a wild story.

She lived a crazy ass life.

Yeah.

And at the end of it, she wasn't a great person.

Allegedly.

Allegedly.

You know?

Maybe the car hopped forward, you know?

Maybe the, as cars do, they do leap forward sometimes.

Allegedly.

Allegedly.

Allegedly.

That's all there is.

Allegedly, that's it.

**[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 452: Doris Duke and the Murder of Eddie Tirella**

So, allegedly, we hope you keep listening.

And we hope you.

Allegedly.

Keep it weird.

Allegedly.

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