

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

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.

Binge all episodes of Over My Dead Body Gone Hunting right now, ad-free on Wondery Plus.

Hey weirdos, I'm Ash.

And I'm Alayna.

And this is morbid.

This is just morbid.

It just is.

It is.

It's just morbid.

I was trying to think of something else to say, and that's all that came up.

I was also trying to think of something to say in the intro, like, and this is.

And then I was just like, morbid.

Just go with it.

It's just morbid.

Oh no.

I don't know.

We're tired.

It's a gloomy day here.

Yeah, I had a yucky tummy yesterday.

It still feels yucky.

Which what's up with everyone's GI issues suddenly?

Everyone's just living in a land of GI issues.

I mean, welcome to my actual life.

I was going strong on my IBS journey for a minute there.

I was like, living regular life, and it was fine.

Sorry, my phone just turned off.

I swear.

You would think five years into this, I would have figured that out by now, but.

Never.

Never.

It's just like, oh my gosh, where's the ding?

I don't know.

No.

Yeah, your journey was going pretty solid there.

I know.

I think I got like a little tummy bug.

I don't think it's my bus.

My IBS.

Your IBS.

Yeah, everybody's got weird.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

I was that TikTok beach gym.

My girly.

My girl.

Our pediatric emergency room doctor who everybody should go follow because she's awesome. Fantastic.

Amazing.

World-renowned.

I'm just going to keep giving you TikTok recommendations.

You're good on it.

I find some good ones.

You absolutely do.

But she was saying that it's like GI bugs this year are like everywhere and also like weird.

Like there's like a million different ones.

It's not just straight up neurovirus now, which like I don't like that, but these things are like different.

Like they're all like the little branches off of neurovirus.

Yeah.

So I think it's just like maybe I think the pandemic like everyone's immune system's got a little fuck during that.

Yeah.

I think we're just going to see some weird viruses for a little while, but hopefully it'll settle down.

Yeah.

It was just like run down and run into the bonnio.

To the bonnio.

I was going, girl.

I'm sorry for that.

I'm sorry for your ass.

Now that you know all my, my GI business, my GI business nasty, if you will.

Business nasty.

Do we have any business nasty?

You do.

We do.

Oh, there's a couple of things.

We did a collab with red handed and it was so much fun.

They're so awesome and their accents are the best.

So soothing.

Yeah, guys.

Hannah's name is not Hannah.

It's Hannah.

It's Hannah.

And I will fight anyone who calls her Hannah.

Hannah.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

Hannah.

And it's so fun to say.

It is.

Hannah and Siruti.

Oh, they're just really sweet and they're hilarious.

They're the kindest girlies.

I would do collabs with them all day, every day.

Up the la zoo.

You know, but you just got one.

So don't worry.

We're not going to bombard you.

But it was a lot of fun.

It was a lot of fun.

We're glad we did it.

Check it out because we did kind of like a handoff.

So there's one on their feed, one on our feed, and they're really cool, like old timey fun stories.

But other than that, go buy your preorder of the paperback version of the Butcher and the Ren because you know why?

There is a sneak peek at the sequel.

And I read it and I said, oh, my mother fucking gosh.

That's what she said.

So you can get a little sneaky peeky at the sequel so you can know what's going to be what you're in for.

Or if you're like me, you're currently reading along as she writes.

But yeah, go get your preorders.

You can go preorder them anywhere.

They're on like, you know, Barnes and Noble, Amazon, anywhere you want to check it out.

I don't think it is tinyworld.com slash the butcher and the Ren anymore.

So it will be, I think, at one, but it'll be with the new book.

Oh, OK, because I'm excited.

Don't worry, we'll give you another one of those.

Yeah, please, please give me that.

But yeah, go do that.

It'll be great and paperbacks are fun and you can just throw them in your bag or you can, you know, bend them around if you need to.

I love doing that.

And then the spine gets all crazy and the spine gets all like cracks like your spine does when you go to like a chiropractor.

Yeah, that. Yeah, that's what it is.

So go check that out.

Oh, I'm excited to see it.

Yay.

Yay books and reading and literature and literacy and literacy.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

You're you're I was going to say you're a literate,
but it sounded like you're illiterate and you're like, wow, you're like the most literate.
Thank you. Yeah, some would argue that.
But you know, fuck them.
We don't listen to those.
They're not true.
So sorry, I really had to readjust my seat, though.
You hear the squeaky squeaky squeakies.
So it's like, see.
That's from Sabrina, the Teenage Witch for later years.
I can do it now, too.
The later years.
Do you guys remember that?
Don't worry, we're going to get into the case.
But no, we're not.
Sometimes we take it old school and we just need to like talk at you for a little while.
Yeah, just like get into it, you know.
And it's funny because there's a we still there still is very divided camps
on whether they want to hear us speak about being human beings or not.
And that's funny to me.
But that does anyone remember the later years of Sabrina, the Teenage Witch?
I bet you you wish you didn't.
But no, I thought they were good.
I'm not like later high school ones were good.
And maybe the beginning of college, but after that.
What do you mean?
I don't I'll watch it like hi, I'm here.
I'll watch it.
It's not my favorite those last couple ones.
It's almost like the last season of Gilmore Girls or the last couple of seasons of the office.
Yeah, you lost me there.
You're just I'll watch it because I'm here.
I'm here for this ride, but like I'm not enjoying myself.
I know I love I love Roxy, though, in the later years.
Yeah, she's a great one.
I think it's when Sabrina starts working at a newspaper that it gets that it starts.
Well, she starts dating a guy that I'm very confused by to this day.
Josh. No, Josh, I understood.
It was this other random.
I don't remember his name.
I don't remember either.
That's how much he matters.
Maybe I didn't see the last season.
Yeah, I think it's the one she's going to marry until.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

Oh, no, no, no, no, no, OK, yeah.

Which like, thank goodness, the heart.

I love it.

But you know what?

That was Sabrina for today.

And now we're going to talk about something not as fun at all.

Nope, no, not at all.

But this is like a pretty well known true crime case.

And I know you guys like to hear like some more current ones.

So I figured I'd hand this on over to you.

This is the Amato family murders.

It's a really sad case.

And at the center of it is a man's named Grant.

Grant Tiernan Amato was born on May 20th, 1989, in Chuliotia, Florida.

And if you look at that, you would never think that it said Chuliotia.

But guess what I did?

I went to pronounce names.com and she told me how to say it.

And I said, thank you, I love that.

But anyway, Chuliotia, he was the youngest son of Chad and Margaret, a pharmacist and an operations manager, respectively.

I really love saying respectively after a sentence.

I don't know about you, respectively, respectively.

Now, Margaret brought a son, Jason, to the marriage from her previous marriage.

And actually, Chad wouldn't end up adopting Jason down the road.

Oh, OK. I thought it was really sweet. Yeah.

But then the couple went on to have Cody, the middle son, and then finally Grant, the youngest son. OK.

Now, Margaret and Chad raised their family, like I said, in Chuliotia, Florida.

It's like a semi small rural town in the Seminole County of Florida.

It's about half hour outside of Orlando, OK, which like I'm going to be there soon.

And I'm like, oh, spooky, not in Chuliotia.

That is in Orlando, Orlando.

But by all accounts, the family dynamic was a good one.

Chad and Margaret both like were able to maintain stable, really well paying jobs.

They could provide a good life for their children.

And they could also pursue their own passions and their own hobbies outside of work.

And for Margaret, I just think this is so sweet.

That hobby for her was her love of horses.

And she particularly loved this one horse named Lady.

Lady. What a cute name for a horse, right?

Lady was actually a former racehorse that Margaret adopted in like the late 2000s.

And she'd been boarding Lady at the Miracle Lane Stables not too far from their house.

OK. Now, according to people that knew Margaret,

her relationship with Lady, who was like a rather stubborn horse,

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

was really reflective of how she was so committed to the people that she loved, especially like her husband and her children.

Yeah. She had an unwavering commitment to those people.

Cute. Now, while their household was generally loving and supportive,

Jason would later tell a jury that his father could be strict and had very high expectations for his children.

And this was occasionally a source of tension, especially as the boys started entering their teenage years.

Grant and Cody, though, they were inseparable while growing up.

Like they had a bond like no other.

They were really close in age.

There was just two years between them and they had a ton in common.

By the time they were in high school,

they went to Timber Creek High, if you're from the area.

They were doing almost everything together.

They were both on the school's weightlifting team in high school and even beyond high school.

They still maintained like a super close relationship.

After graduation, they both enrolled in nursing programs at the University of Central Florida.

And once they finished those nursing programs, they wanted to continue their education.

So they each decided to study anesthesiology.

Oh, wow. Which like, like, all right, you know.

And now, according to Grant, their long term plan included buying matching BMWs and living in their parents' house together after Chad and Margaret moved to a smaller retirement home in Tennessee that they actually purchased a few years before their deaths.

So part of the plan was buying matching BMWs?

Yes. OK. No comment.

Yep. It's giving stepbrothers. Yeah.

Right. Like let's get matching BMWs and live in mom and dad's house when they move to Tennessee and both be nurses.

It's giving them Menendez brothers as well.

See, I actually don't know a lot about that case.

Yeah, that's that's a that's an interesting one.

We'll cover that one eventually.

Yeah, that's a you case for sure.

It's giving Menendez brothers in like one respect, not in both respects.

One of these people is fantastic.

The other, not so much.

Yes. Yes.

Now, while their commitment for each other went both ways,

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

Cody definitely was the more responsible of the two and usually got Grant out of a lot of shit and would like clean up his messes, solve his problems. Yeah. You know, because from the outside, Grant seemed like he was, you know, successful and responsible and all that. But things really took a turn in the mid 2000s. I never know how to say that. Twenty tens, twenty thousand and ten. Yeah, there you go. I don't know. It's weird. It's not like this in the 20s and the 20 tens because that was when Grant was kicked out of his graduate nursing program and instead found a nursing job with Advent Health, a large hospital system in Central Florida. OK, it's sort of unclear why he was kicked out of the anesthesiology program at the University of Central Florida. But that definitely is the event that marked the beginning of a very downward spiral that would eventually lead to murder. Awesome. So on June 21st, 2018, staff at Advent Health actually realized that eight bottles of Propofol, which is a powerful sedative that they usually get people before surgery. Sedative. Oh, my God. Idiot. Why can't I talk? No, you shouldn't have let that go because it just sounded so cute. Sedative. I'm reading. Maybe that is one way to say it. Who knows? I hope not. I never know. I like sedative. But yeah, sedative that they give people before surgery. They realize eight bottles had gone missing from the locked cabinet where they usually kept it. Now, the empty bottles were found a short time later in two rooms that were being overseen by Grant. As far as anybody could tell, the medication hadn't been ordered and security record showed that it was Grant who checked the medication. Ah. So when he was confronted about this whole thing, he swore up and down, no, I wasn't stealing it to sell it because they probably thought that that's what was happening there. But instead, he told them, quote, he administered the drug to patients who were not being adequately relaxed. Oh, OK. So. All right. Slightly understandable, but like, you can't just like take that out

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

for no reason and not tell anyone.

So the hospital had no proof of any wrongdoing, but they also believed that this was not the first time that Propofol, in particular, had gone missing under Grant's watch. So he was fired immediately.

Yeah, I can kind of see that.

Now, what made the entire ordeal worse was that during the confrontation over the missing medication, Grant made a ton of comments about relating to self harm and suicidal ideation, so they had to call the police. And he was he had to be taken into custody as like a protective measure.

Yeah. Now, at the time,

Advent health administrators seemed to be intent on planning or seemed seemed to be intent on pressing charges for the theft of the medication.

So now Grant was unemployed and he was waiting to hear whether he was going to face charges for Grant Larson, so he started spending a lot of time online.

Oh, I guess that's what you do.

It's not it's not great.

And he was never leads to good things.

No, he wasn't on like ziprecruiter.com looking for a job sponsor us because that was just a little drop there.

There you go.

But he was frequently visiting porn sites and he really loved to use Twitch for watching lives and gaming.

So he's just gaming and doing stuff in his room.

Yeah, you know, you know, he actually told his parents, though, not long after he was fired, that he really wanted to build a career for himself as a live streamer on Twitch.

OK, which, you know, I'm like,

I'm sure you could probably make good money doing that at this point in time.

But I think back then that was a relatively new platform.

So that might have been a little worrisome to us.

I could see that.

I'm sure like the YouTube thing in the beginning, too, when somebody's like when it first came out and people were like, I'm going to be a YouTube star.

People are probably like, yeah, yeah, like that's never going to happen.

But now it really can now look.

So at the same time, though, because they were they were starting to get worried about about Grant, because at the same time, Chad and Margaret had been noticing large amounts of money missing from their bank accounts and multiple credit card charges from websites that they'd never heard of.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

So when they confronted Grant about this missing money, he actually spilled the beans.

He admitted everything and said he had taken the money and he had used it to promote himself on Twitch, OK, which wasn't necessarily true. That's not great.

No, either way, that's not great.

Well, don't steal money.

That's the thing like you can't use people's money to do those things.

No, you got to use your own money.

Yeah. Now, or you could ask for a loan

because that's also an option. There you go.

If you do want to use other people's money, you just ask first precisely.

Now, what Chad and Margaret didn't know about they were about to find out was that Grant hadn't taken the money to help build his career.

He really was spending it on private shows and conversations with a cam girl named Sylvia Sylvie Vences Lavova.

Oh, hopefully. OK.

Now, Grant had been spending a lot of time on Sylvie's site in particular and her site operated by like users would buy tokens that they could use to pay for performances.

And her performances cost 90 tokens per minute.

Oh, which like damn, damn girl.

Now, tokens could also be used for tipping and like any kind of other transaction on the site.

I don't really know how it works.

But Grant was probably Sylvie's most generous customer and he would purchase five thousand tokens a night for six hundred dollars.

And he was spending about four hours every single night on this website.

Oh, he was developing.

Oh, yeah, that's becoming a problem.

Yeah. And as his addiction to the website got worse and worse, he started sending Sylvie, quote, clothes and sex toys, which she would model for viewers.

But he's not spending like he's spending his parents' money on these things to send to the school.

That's the thing. It's like this is not OK.

No, it's one thing if you're sending it like with your own money, like have at it.

Yeah, like you, whatever you're I don't care into.

But like you're taking your parents money.

You can't take other people's money and do these things.

And also like, you don't feel yucka yucka about using your parents' money for this.

Yeah, like I would. I would feel yucka yucka.

Yeah, that's just me. I don't know.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

There's I don't need that's just me.
Yeah, we don't have to go into it.
But anyway, I don't know.
I was like, I'm about to go into it.
And I was like, you know what? No, you know.
Trends and fads come and go,
especially when it comes to health and wellness,
I feel like there's always something to keep up with in the fad world of that.
But Noom is not a fad.
They use psychology, not trends,
to help you make intentional and sustainable choices
that are aligned with your values and your weight loss goals.
I've personally been using Noom and I freaking love it.
First of all, the app is super easy to use
because you get to decide how often you want to use it
and you get to decide like how much time
you're going to spend on your weekly lessons.
Personally, I spend like five minutes a day
and I feel like that's enough for me.
And I've been learning so much about myself and the way that I eat,
especially the fact that there are no bad foods.
You can have whatever you want. It's just about moderation.
That's what I've learned.
And that's what I've been implementing into my lifestyle.
And I really am seeing a difference.
Whatever your health goals are,
the flexible program focuses on progress instead of perfection,
which I think is so important.
If you get hung up on perfection, you're not going to get anywhere.
You choose your level of support,
like I was just saying, from five minute daily check-ins
or you could even do personal coaching.
I haven't done that, but I bet it's awesome.
Progress is rarely a straight line and off days are totally OK.
Noom will help you get back on track.
So stop chasing health trends and build sustainable, healthy habits
with Noom's psychology based approach.
Sign up for your trial today at [noom.com slash morbid](https://noom.com/slash/morbid).
That's [noom.com slash morbid](https://noom.com/slash/morbid) to sign up for your trial today.
Check out Noom's first ever book, *The Noom Mindset*,
a deep dive into the psychology of behavior change
available to buy now wherever books are sold.
Most of you guys have probably heard me saying the praises of pros
and their truly custom made to order hair care.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

Switching to a custom routine from pros was literally one of the best things that I've done for my hair and the results that I'm seeing, you guys keep getting better. I don't even have my extensions in right now and I feel like my hair is so long and I'm so excited about it because I'm growing it for the wedding. And that's why I started using pros again in the first place, because I know how good my hair feels when I use it. I've been using the pre shampoo mask, the shampoo and the conditioner. It makes my hair so shiny and so soft and it's just looking strong. Pros knows that there's more to you than just your hair type. Pros has given over one million consultations with our in depth hair quiz. You just answer questions that are super easy like to know about yourself. Zip code, eating habits, how damaged your hair is, how often you exercise, because all of those factors count towards your hair. And by analyzing over 85 personal factors, pros, hand picks, clean, sustainably sourced ingredients that get you closer to your hair goals with every wash. It's kind of fun to think about that in the shower while you're sudsing up, you're just like, oh, my God, I'm so much closer to my goals. My personal favorite feature, though, is pros' review and refine tool, which lets me tweak my formula for any reason in case I change up my address, my hair color, my diet, if I put my extensions back in, then I kind of chill out on like all the masks and everything like that because you don't want those little beads getting loose. As a carbon neutral certified B Corp, pros is an industry leader in clean and responsible beauty. All their ingredients are sustainably sourced, ethically gathered and cruelty free, which is my favorite thing. They are also the first custom beauty brand to go carbon neutral. So like if you're not 100% positive that pros is the best hair care you've had, they will take the products back. No questions asked. Custom made to order hair care from pros has your name all over it. Take your free in depth hair consultation and get 15% off your first order today. Go to pros.com slash morbid. That's P R O S E dot com slash morbid for your free in depth hair consultation and 15% off. So over time, Grant's relationship with Sylvie came to include chat sessions. They were texting and like other communications, like the performances and stuff like that. It did give the illusion of a personal relationship because that's the point. But in reality, Sylvie was just promoting herself and obviously encouraging Grant to spend more money because that's her job. Of course.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

Girls got to eat.

Yeah.

On Grant's end of things, though, the constant contact and the emotional high was enough to convince him that he was deeply in love with Sylvie.

Oh, no.

And for that reason, he kept stealing money in order to keep in close contact with her.

Oh, this is really stressful.

It's really sad.

It's so sad.

That's the thing.

It's like very stressful and sad.

Yeah.

So the more money he had to spend, the closer he felt to her.

Now, the illusion of a romantic connection between Grant and Sylvie was mostly fueled by the performances, the texts, the chats, like the emotional high.

Performances, the texts, the chats, like I was just saying, but it was also kind of fostered by this online community on the Camgirl site because Grant wasn't only chatting with Sylvie, but he actually made friends on this site and he was catfishing all of these people, leading them to believe that he was this super successful gamer guy who drove a BMW and owned this beautiful house when in reality, none of that was true. He did live in a beautiful house, but it was his parents own.

Yeah, exactly.

In a letter, he wrote to five or six friends about a month before his whole family was murdered.

He vented about his family, calling them controlling and complaining that they, quote, did not understand how I could care for someone as much as I cared for Sylvie.

Well, this really is sad.

It is.

Now, by the fall of 2018, so remember, this started like in like the 2010s.

Now it's 2018.

This has been going a while.

Grant had retreated even further into this fantasy world.

He was stealing more money from his parents.

Now he was stealing from his brother, Cody, to continue this relationship.

And when he wasn't able to get hands on their cash, he would steal their belongings.

Cody had some guns that Grant ended up stealing and selling for cash.

Oh, this is like very real addiction.

Oh, it's like very deep and very real addiction.

Super real.

Yeah.

And around the same time, he also managed to take out a \$65,000 loan using his parents' house as collateral.

Holy shit.

Isn't that bonkers?

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

What? Like there is this is so intense.

It's so deep rooted. Oh my goodness.

So the family finally reached their breaking point in late November.

At that point, Grant had stolen around \$150,000 from his parents and \$60,000 from Cody, his brother.

Shit. Mm hmm.

So they sat down and confronted him.

They were like, we need to figure this out.

Like, this isn't OK.

And this is so unhinged that it's like, that must have been really scary to sit him down and be like, this can't happen because you're like, what is he going to do?

It's gotten to a point where clearly he'll do anything.

Something is, yeah, like he's got no boundaries.

Yeah. So I'd be scared. Yeah.

So when they confronted him, he admitted that, no, he wasn't just promoting himself on Twitch.

He really was stealing money to send to Sylvie, the Bulgarian model that he was in love with, he said.

So the family tried to be supportive because they realized what this was.

He was struggling with addiction and with their support, he actually started to get serious about getting his life together and, you know, like getting healthier.

Yeah. So things really started to improve in early December.

Advent Health actually dropped the charges against Grant for the stolen medication.

Wow. So now he wasn't facing those charges anymore.

That's lucky for him. Really lucky.

And he and Cody had been planning this trip for a long time to go to Japan.

They had planned it like before he lost his job.

And Cody was like, let's still go.

Like, let's still go on the trip. We'll figure it out.

Wow. So they went on the trip together.

Wow. So he had like a very supportive unit around him.

Like way more supportive than a lot of families would be.

Abs of fucking literally.

Like he had these people on his back and especially his brother.

And that's very rare.

But unfortunately, by the time they got back home,

Grant seemed to be slipping into old habits.

Just days after they got back from their trip to Japan,

Grant and his dad got into another argument about the stolen money and the fact that Grant was saying he was going to get a new job, but not making any moves to do so.

Because I think his dad was like, dude, like you just got home

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

from this trip that you probably shouldn't have even gone on in the first place.
And now you're just like lounging around my house all day.
Like, yeah, it's time to get a job.
It's time to start paying back the money you took like 30.
Yeah, come on. Like get it together.
Get it together. Yeah.
In the regard of like look for a job.
Yeah, like being adults. Exactly.
So Grant would later say of his father, quote, with him,
it was every single day, hours a day, he'd come home from work
and then he just talked to me about the same exact thing over and over
and over and over again.
Like, yeah, probably because they wanted you to better your life.
And as your father, he's concerned.
And when you're making no move to better your life,
they're going to keep saying the same thing, hoping that sometime it clicks.
Right, because you're just doing the same thing over and over and over and over and over.
They feel like they're banging their heads against a wall.
We're they're all in the same boat.
Yeah. Now, a few days later, on December 19th,
the attention caused yet another fight between Chad and Grant.
And this time, Grant stormed out of the house and didn't say where he was going.
Now, in the weeks leading up to this latest fight,
the family had actually started going to family therapy together.
Oh, wow.
And Grant was said to express during these meetings, quote,
strong feelings of worthlessness.
And at one point, he, quote, broke down emotionally
and admitted to being severely depressed.
OK. And he hadn't said anything about wanting to harm himself,
but because he was clearly in this like heightened emotional state
when he left the house after the fight with his dad,
Cody and Margaret were really worried.
I see that.
Especially when he still didn't come home the next day.
They were like, I don't know.
Like, yeah, I would have been worried about this.
Yeah. They were like, he's in a low place.
He left in the middle of a fight.
Like we don't were very worried.
And he's been very unpredictable.
He's very much not himself. Very erratic. Exactly.
A lot of like very, you know, he's being very impulsive.
Yeah. Like for a while now.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

So it's like, I would be worried.

And we and we love him, you know, like that's the brother in the sun.

Part of family, it sounds like.

They are.

So they decided the best course of action

would be to file a missing persons report just to find out where he was.

According to the missing person report,

Cody and Margaret told officers that Grant had been in contact via text

since they reported him missing and that he told them he was, quote,

really tired of dealing with everything

and he is just going to handle it his own way,

which worried them even more.

Yeah.

Because given the stress that he'd been under

and the fact that he had easy access to fire home, firearms,

excuse me, in the family home, Cody and Margaret were at this point,

quote, a hundred percent convinced that Grant would try to harm himself.

So the day after the missing persons report was filed,

the Seminole County Sheriff's Office got a call from an officer

in a pop guy, I believe is how you say it, Florida,

saying that Grant actually had been located, luckily.

And when officers responded to the call about a suspicious car,

they found that it was registered to Grant Amato.

So that's how they found him.

When they spoke to them, he said he came to a pop cut, a visit family

and then told them that he needed a break from his mom

and he had no intentions of hurting himself.

He was like, you have nothing to worry about.

I just needed to get out of here for a while.

Yeah.

So the interviewing officer asked the standard questions

about safety and self harm and was able to determine

that Grant didn't need any kind of psych of Al, like he was all right.

And it turned out, though, that after the fight with his father,

Grant had gone to his aunt Donna's home and she would later tell police

he showed up, quote, skinny and lost looking and that he slept all day

since he arrived and she was worried about him.

Now, while she originally thought that he probably had come to her

in a time of need, he was really just scamming her.

Yeah, I could have seen that.

A few days after Grant had shown up at the door,

Donna noticed strange and unfamiliar charges to her credit card

in large, large sums of money.

And this poor lady is just trying to just try to be a good family member.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

And she's not by marriage, too.

Oh, so she didn't even like she had no, like, you know, her obligations were pretty small here.

And she really took, damn, this guy sucks.

Like, this is so mean.

It is due to people who care about you to fuck over your family like this.

Yeah, like, it's just like this lady is taking you into her home.

Like, that's really shitty.

Exactly.

Now, knowing that the situation was getting touchier and touchier by the day, Donna decided that it would be better to speak with Cody, Grant's brother, than confront Grant head on.

So she called Cody and told him everything that had happened.

And he was so apologetic, so embarrassed and also begged his aunt not to press charges and actually told her he would pay back his aunt, whatever Grant had charged.

Like, he was like, if you don't press charges, I will pay this back to you.

Like, please, like, we're trying to get him straight.

Like, we're trying to make this work a precarious time, a very precarious time.

Chad also begged his sister-in-law not to press charges.

And he actually broke down crying over the entire situation.

And it was, quote, the first time Donna said she had heard him cry in the 27 years she knew him.

Oh, my God, that breaks my heart.

Just like so stressed.

Yeah.

And he explained to her the full extent of Grant's problems.

And he confided in Donna that he and Margaret actually had to remortgage their home.

Oh, my God.

In order to cover the 150,000 that had been stolen from them.

I can't imagine what this poor family was going through.

It must have just been hell.

And it was years of this.

Yeah.

Like, just years.

And ups and downs.

Like, oh, yeah, exactly.

And it was like, just when they thought he was getting better, he goes and fucks over.

Like, it's one and I'm sure it's one thing for him to fuck them over.

Like, you're angry about that.

But then you're like, oh, my God, you're you're my child and you're capable of doing this to you're taking it into the extended family.

Exactly.

And like the embarrassment and the shame and the shock.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

Like, that's awful.

I can't imagine.

Now, according to Donna, Chad told her, yeah, I'm going to have to work a few more years than I thought I'd have to.

But it's OK.

I'll do it for Grant.

I don't want him to go to jail.

Oh, my God.

Yeah.

I don't even know what to say.

It was clear that the stress was taking a considerable toll on everybody, but especially Chad, at that point, he had to take on a second job just to cover Grant's debts so that his son wouldn't go to jail.

That breaks my heart.

And I'm looking at pictures of this family and I'm just like, oh, right.

And that's like love, like the love that he had for his son.

Like, that's the thing.

It's like that's straight up just loving your kid unconditionally.

Just wanting to.

And I know they're like probably shielding a lot.

And it's like, but you just want to.

You want to shield them from any harm.

Even if they're the ones doing harm, you want to shield them.

I mean, we've even seen it in our own family.

Of course, people.

And I've seen it in other people's families like it's family.

So sad.

You know, and he was the youngest too.

So I feel like that plays such a role like it's your it's actually your baby.

That's definitely part of it.

And that's the thing.

As far as everybody could tell, the Amato family was going to incredible lengths.

And some people's opinions, maybe even too far, of course, to shield Grant from the consequences of his actions.

But at the same time, they were also trying to create and enforce boundaries.

But as we know, it's impossible in a situation like this.

There's no way of knowing how to deal with this kind of situation.

No, because there's no right or wrong way.

There's no handbook on it.

There's nobody reacts different in these kind of situations.

He's so incredibly addicted to this that it's like it could be any reaction under the sun that could happen.

And there's no way to predict it.

Exactly.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

You know, like you might come at him nicely and that might piss him off.

Right.

You might come at him aggressively and that's the thing that comes him down.

You have no idea.

It's just like raising kids.

Like how you have to like treat each kid differently.

You have to tailor how you react to each one.

Exactly.

But so that they were going to these incredible lengths to create all these boundaries, but stealing from the extended family from Donna and Troy Amato was the last straw for Margaret and Chad.

Yeah.

And on December, or excuse me, no, don't excuse me.

I was saying the right thing, but excuse her anyways.

And just excuse me, excuse me.

I don't know why that was funny.

But on December 22nd, the entire family surprised Grant with an intervention in Donna's driveway.

Among other things, they insisted that he take responsibility for the mistakes that he'd made and they demanded him.

They were like, it's come to the point where you need to check yourself and to rehab like we've got to figure this out.

Absolutely.

So he ultimately agreed to checking himself into a clinic in South Florida and he was going to be addressing his addiction to sex and pornography.

OK.

So Grant returned home from rehab on January 5th, 2019, after less than two weeks of treatment, and in addition to the more than \$200,000 at this point that he'd stolen from his parents and brother, he racked up several more debts that he had no means of paying.

On top of the \$10,000 he paid so that the two could take the trip to Japan.

Cody agreed to cover \$8,000 in accrued attorneys fees and the \$15,000 bill for the stay at the South Florida rehab.

His brother sat there and took all of that on for him.

And when you I keep looking at the pictures that I'm like, he does have like Cody has such a kind face.

Oh, I mean, he was like a nurse.

And that's the thing, like he's just like a good person.

Oh, absolutely.

A good person like rips my heart out.

Everything that he was willing to do to keep his brother who didn't give a shit.

Yeah, exactly.

Like, oh.

With my schedule, getting into the kitchen and cooking a nourishing meal

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

is easier said than done.

And I do love eating healthy, but if I'm not making my own meal, my options are very limited and I order so much takeout.

And then I'm like, oh, my God, what have I done here?

But no, no, no, take a step back, because that's why I love Daily Harvest.

And it has been such a game changer for me.

Daily Harvest delivers de freaking licious smoothies, flatbread, soups, harvest bowls, bites and more built all on organic fruits and vegetables and all delivered right to my door with easy to prep options for any time of day.

Daily Harvest keeps my freezer stocked with good food that is ready always when I am.

And the best part, no shopping, no chopping or heavy lifting ever.

I am obsessed with Daily Harvest.

I love to have my smoothie first thing in the morning.

I love the mint and cacao smoothie.

It tastes like you're eating ice cream for breakfast,

but you're not eating a healthy smoothie for breakfast.

So feel good about yourself, baby.

And by working directly with farmers, Daily Harvest sources the best ingredients, freezes them at peak ripeness to lock in flavor and nutrients.

And they never use artificial preservatives or ingredients.

Daily Harvest is committed to human and planetary health, which means they do their absolute best to ensure transparency and integrity when it comes to their ingredients.

By supporting farmers who invest in practices that increase biodiversity and improve the health of our soil and by delivering food and recyclable and compostable packaging where possible, Daily Harvest does all the work.

So all I have to do and all you have to do is eat and enjoy.

Their latest drop is a collection of grains that's actually been helping me get dinner on the table in literal minutes, you guys.

Not only are they perfectly balanced with whole grains, veggies and legumes like wild rice, squash and cauliflower, but they pair perfectly with every meal I make.

Eating delicious, nourishing and easy to prep meals has never been easier thanks to Daily Harvest.

Go to DailyHarvest.com slash Morbid to get up to sixty five dollars off your first box.

That's DailyHarvest.com slash Morbid for up to sixty five dollars off your first box.

DailyHarvest.com slash Morbid.

Since his death in 2009, the world has struggled with how Michael Jackson should be remembered as the king of pop or as a monster.

I'm Leon Mayfock, the host of Fiasco and the co-creator of Slow Burn.

And I'm Jay Smooth, a hip hop journalist and cultural commentator.

Michael Jackson was accused of child molestation for the first time in 1993.

Our new podcast, Think Twice Michael Jackson, is the story of what came before and what came after.

Throughout the podcast, we explore what makes Michael Jackson seemingly uncancelable.

And we dig in to the complicated feelings so many of us have when we hear Billy Jean

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

at the grocery store.

Through dozens of original interviews with people who watched the story unfold firsthand, Think Twice is an attempt to reconcile our conflicted emotions about Michael Jackson, the man with our deep seated love of his art.

Listen to Think Twice, Michael Jackson, wherever you get your podcasts or you can binge the entire series ad free on Audible or the Amazon music app.

So similarly, Chad, father, had allowed the fraudulent sixty five thousand dollars on the house to go through uncontested.

Oh, come on.

Quote, so it wouldn't be reported because they figured this would give Grant a clean slate to start over, but there was going to be changes in expectations if that was going to be the case.

But at the same time, it's like maybe if you would let some of this go through and he had gotten in real trouble, like maybe that's sometimes that's what people need. I'm not saying it would have stopped anything.

I'm just saying sometimes you got to let some tough love slip through there, especially to a 30 year old.

It's like, absolutely, I think he needed that.

But I can, but it's easy to say that from over here.

If that's your own kid, no fucking way.

Totally.

You know what I mean?

But like looking at it from the outside, you're like, just let him get in trouble.

Oh, you know, but like I've seen it in families where the person doing this or the person, you know, struggling with addiction is like 50, 60, and their parents will still do anything.

Oh, yeah.

That's no matter what.

And so many families have this happening in various forms and various degrees.

Like every, I feel like more families do have this going on than do not.

And that's so sad.

Yeah, it's so sad.

Oh, and you never think that as a parent, that you're going to be, you know, 70 or like moving into retirement age.

And this is what you're going to be dealing with.

Because that's what they like to prepare.

Like I had said, like they, they were preparing to retire and to see they bought a home that they wanted to retire in, like, and it's like, and then they had to take on a second job to have done your the hardest part of your job, you know, raise them.

Exactly.

But but this is where it got even harder.

That's my heart.

So Grant comes home from rehab early, like did not get the treatment that he should have, and the family decides that they're going to have dinner at a California pizza

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

kitchen, which like great fucking decision.

I love California pizza.

I do too, actually.

I haven't had that in a long time.

Me either.

Me and Drew used to go on dates there all the time when I worked in Boston, because there was one like right there fucking good.

Wow.

But this one probably wasn't that great.

So the evening after he returned home, they head over to California pizza kitchen, probably thinking like a public place will be a better place to have this discussion and Chad laid out a series of rules and expectations that he had written up for his son.

It was like a two page two pages on a yellow legal pad.

OK, among other things, Grant was expected to get a job during the day.

How terrible.

I was just going to say already, fuck it.

Right.

Discontinue his use of the internet past midnight, which like you're in my fucking house. Well, and it's a you have proven that you can't be trusted with it.

So we do have to give you a boundary.

And it's it's for your own good.

That's the thing he needed to begin paying for his own cell phone bill.

Yes, such basic shit.

He needed to develop a plan to pay back the money he's stolen from his family.

Members rational, go to regular therapy, apologize and make right with the people he'd stolen from all great and most importantly, he needed to sever his relationship, quote unquote, with Sylvie immediately.

It's like all of that.

You can see what they negotiating.

Right.

That last one, I'm sure was the the non-negotiable one.

Totally.

Yeah.

So the document, it also highlighted the reasons for the new set of rules.

It stated that, quote, Grant through his past trans get excuse me, transgressions has relied on knowledge.

The family would not report him and cover him.

Yeah.

And accused him of, quote, family relationship abuse beyond, beyond tolerance.

That's 100 percent how to describe it, too.

Family relationship abuse, because it is knowing that they will not do anything and using that to your own advantage.

Absolutely.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

And it hinted at the hurt that he'd caused the family around him.

Chad's document pointed out, quote, you chose a stranger, physically non-existent over your entire family.

That's the part that's like in the way that that that that said is really hits you hard because it's true.

Yeah.

I mean, it's like there's really no other way to describe that.

But it's it's so fucked because like to us, we're sitting here like it's a girl on a website.

But to him.

But his mind was in such an altered state because of the addiction that he he formed, you know.

Yeah.

That's why it must be so wild.

Like for them to be sitting there, it's probably so frustrating for them because it's very clear and logical that statement, right?

But to him, it's like this.

Sylvie was his girlfriend.

Yeah.

Like as far as he's concerned, you're severing a the most important relationship in his life.

Exactly.

Which it's like, that's why that's why therapists and psychiatrists and mental health facilities exist because they know how to deal with that kind of thinking.

Right.

Like normal people are not supposed to like every day people, I mean, like your family are not supposed to know how to deal with like, I don't know how to deal with that.

No.

And that's what I think.

Honestly, that's why they were going to family therapy.

Exactly.

Like they were even making the effort to try to understand.

Exactly.

And that's what like therapy is for.

It's like, you really, but he needed some intensive therapy.

I feel like this family is like the, like the poster children of like what you should do, you know, because it seems like they were doing everything they could, like they were trying to keep him out of trouble so that they could handle it as a family.

They were going to therapy.

They sent him to rehab.

They paid for the rehab.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

They laid out what he needed to do and then laid out why he needed to do it when they had no need to do that.

No, it was pretty clear why he needed to do all those things, but they took the extra step to be like, this is why we are asking this of you.

That's huge.

And I feel like, and that even shows like all the work that they did with behavioral specialists, because I was going to say that does seem like very much a tool that you would get through, like, you know, therapy or treatment.

Exactly.

It's like, you need to explain why you are requiring these things of this person.

It's just, it's like a small child, like a form of respect.

I'm asking you to do this.

You should know why.

Right.

You know, and it's like kids.

It's like, yeah, when you're teaching them, like you can't do this because this will happen.

This is the reason I'm not just asking you to do this, you know, but it would be, it was made clear to Grant during the meeting that if he broke any of the rules or any of those expectations, he would be kicked out of the house immediately.

Like this was, this was the final.

We've reached the end game here.

Exactly.

So he agreed to the terms during the meeting, but it's pretty unlikely that he ever had any intention of following through with that promise to change his behavior in a letter sent to his friends from the cam girl website.

He referred to his father as controlling and abusive and claimed that his mother was quote, simply around for security.

Oh God, which I'm like, you don't know what you're talking about.

Like ridiculous.

And the letter also hinted at just desperation and discouragement that he felt over the ultimatum.

He told his friends, I hate myself for what I did and I hate the thought of never getting to be with her again, meaning Sylvie.

After everything that I gave and everything that I tried to do with her, I just can't comprehend being without her.

Seeing her be able to be so happy without me in her life is something I guys hope is something I hope you guys never have to live through.

Wow.

This is so, so deep.

It really is.

So it's unknown whether the letter raised any red flags in grants online porn community, but if it did, nobody took the alarming tone or the obvious desperation

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

seriously enough to contact.

Which happens a lot.

Of course.

Yeah.

That's why online is just not safe.

No, it's really not.

But at the same time, nobody ever could have expected that his frustration of course not would manifest into what it did a very short time later.

Just after nine o'clock on the morning of January 25th, the Seminole County Sheriff's office got a call from Craig Cisco, an administrator actually at Advent Health.

He was one of the multiple employees who were really concerned after Cody had failed to show up for work that morning.

Cause remember they worked together before Grand got fired.

Mm hmm.

Cody also wasn't responding to any of the calls placed to him by co-workers.

It was entirely unlike him.

And according to Cisco, Cody quote, had never missed a day of work.

Oh, no.

Now, because it was so out of character, his co-workers were requesting a well being check.

So the deputies arrived at the Amato host on Sultan Circle just shortly after taking the call and they found Cody's car parked in the driveway as well as Chad and Margaret's cars parked in the garage.

They continuously knocked on the door, but nobody was coming to answer.

So when their knocks on the door failed to get anybody's attention, officers called the cell phones of the three people inside, believed to be home and actually even blasted air horns in an attempt to get their attention.

Yeah.

But nothing.

So as far as they could tell, the windows and the doors were locked.

So one deputy ended up having to use a knife to disengage the deadbolt on the back door and the officers went into the home to conduct the wellness check.

Now, when you can't get in like that, you must.

I wonder what those like investigators were thinking, because when you can't get in like that, you have to be like, we are not coming into something good.

Exactly.

You know, and they were not as soon as they walked in the house, deputies immediately discovered the body of Chad Amato.

This is really brutal.

Just so you guys know, the discovery of these bodies is rough.

Okay.

He was lying on his back in the kitchen.

It was clear that there was no signs of life.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

He'd been shot twice in the head and it was lying in a large pool of his own blood. There was actually a holster around his waist when he was discovered with a handgun tucked inside, but it didn't look like he tried to retrieve it before he was shot. Oh man. So they moved throughout the house and they found Cody's body next. This is horrible. He was curled into a fetal position in the storage room off of the garage and he had been shot in the face and was covered in blood. He was still wearing his nursing scrubs, indicating that he just got back from work. Oh my God. And like his father, a handgun was discovered on the floor just a few feet from his body. Oh, then the officers found Margaret last. She was lying face down at her computer in the family's office. She had been shot in the back of the head and there was blood covering her entire face. So to the responding officers, the house seemed neat and orderly other than what they had just found in there were a lot of valuable items easily visible throughout the house, but nothing seemed to be missing. So they were pretty much able to rule robbery out right off the bat and investigators obviously suspected that the motivation was execution because the evidence at the scene pretty much showed that. Yeah. So crime scene technicians noted that Cody had barely made it into the garage when he'd been shot, meaning that the killer did not hesitate to pull the trigger as soon as he got the opportunity to. And evidence chilling. It's so chilling. Evidence collected from the kitchen seemed to indicate that Chad had been shot while standing, but the second shot was delivered, quote, execution style while he was on the kitchen floor near the center island. And Margaret had been taken out similarly because she was also shot in the back of the head execution style. So the picture to investigators was becoming clear. Whoever killed this family had come to the house with that exact purpose and no other purpose whatsoever. So the deputies had been dispatched to the home actually less than a month earlier. So they knew that there was another occupant of this house. But when they arrived, he, that person wasn't home, Grant, and neither was his car. So a Bolo alert beyond the lookout was immediately issued for Grant, even though at the time it was unclear whether he was a suspect, a victim or neither. And investigators also started pulling toll records for his toll transponder, which showed him driving eastbound in the morning, then westbound in the afternoon. But other than that, they were unable to locate him. Oh, so you know what's going on. Mm hmm.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

So his absence in the house became even more suspicious when the investigators spoke to Cody's girlfriend, Sloane.

She told them all about the issues that had been going on between Grant and the rest of the family.

And according to Sloane, Cody had become concerned about Grant's unstable behavior in the weeks leading up to the murders.

Okay.

She said he, quote, was afraid that Grant would kill everyone.

Like he was literally worried about it.

That that was even a thought.

I think because he was getting more and more unhinged as like the days and weeks went on.

Wow.

Can you imagine having that be an actual fear of yours?

Absolutely.

About your own flesh and blood, like being like, I am legitimately scared that they are going to kill everyone in this family.

I can't even imagine.

Like, I can't even.

It must have gotten to such a point.

And she also told the officers that she had been at work with Cody on January 24th, the day before the family was discovered, he got a call from his father

a little after nine and his Chad said to Cody, like, you need to come home.

Like something's wrong.

Yeah.

And when Sloane asked Cody what was going on, all he said was stupid fucking bullshit.

And then he left work.

He's probably so sick of it.

So absolutely.

You know, like it was probably just like daily.

Oh, it had to.

You know, so he's probably like, Jesus.

And when you're not the one creating all the issues and you're like yanked into it every time, exactly.

I can't imagine.

He must have just been so frustrated.

But a half hour after that, she texted Cody to check in and she was like, Hey, like, is everything okay?

And he said, all okay, you didn't need to worry, which like, so sad.

And that was the last time they spoke.

So when he didn't show up for work the next morning, that was when she and Chris Cisco got concerned and requested the well-being check.

Man.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

So while a team of officers interviewed friends and associates of the Amados, Detective James Galena Galena and, uh, Liliun, a Grinconi, I believe, okay, spoke with Jason Amato and let him know.

And that's the oldest brother.

Yeah.

Let him know that quote three unidentified bodies had been discovered in his home.

Okay.

Or in the Amato home.

He didn't know there.

So Jason explained to the investigators that while he was Cody's emergency contact on most forms, he really didn't speak much with their family or engage with them very much.

He said the only person that he talked to regularly was his mother and they spoke every week.

Okay.

He confirmed what Sloan had told police about Grant's theft and destructive behavior.

He knew all about that.

And when they asked whether he could think of anybody who might want to harm the family, Jason told them about Grant's relationship with Sylvie.

And he mentioned, you know, Grant gets mail from her sometimes.

So she has our address, like, or she has their address.

Yeah.

So that became like, Oh, like another layer to the story.

Like, Oh, is it her?

Like, are they together?

Like, yeah, they have to think of all these things.

So the next morning Grant's car was located by the Orange County Sheriff's deputies in the parking lot of a double tree hotel in Orlando.

According to hotel staff, he had checked in the day before, which was January 25th.

He checked in just after two 30 in the afternoon and he only registered himself for one day.

He was scheduled to check out the next afternoon.

So quick, quick, quick.

Yeah.

Now, as officers were speaking with the front desk staff, he actually came out of his room and was confronted by the deputies.

Wow.

Raising.

Wow.

So he eventually agreed to return to the Sheriff's office for a formal interview.

Wow.

Bonkers.

I mean, they would have got him anyway, but the fact that he just came out

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

of his room, crazy.

Yeah.

During their interview, he confirmed that he had met Sylvie six months earlier and since then he'd been talking to her regularly and sending her tons and tons of money.

He told detectives that he initially agreed to the ultimatum that he got from his dad when he had gotten back from rehab, but then he felt that the rules were very unfair, quote, because he believed Sylvie was his girlfriend and they had a relationship.

It's like very unfair.

Yeah.

You know what I think is unfair?

The fact that your parents had to remortgage their home.

Yeah.

Because you stole that much money from them.

I'd say that's pretty unfair.

I would say so.

Now, according to Grant, his dad found out that he was still speaking with Sylvie and on the evening of the 24th, they got into an explosive fight over the relationship.

Grant said his dad grabbed him by the shirt and demanded that he get out of the house.

So he was able to scoop up some of his belongings and then he said he got out of there.

He said he was driving down the street and he met Cody and Cody told him like, oh, I'll go straighten things out with mom and dad and like come back later.

Like I'll figure it out for you.

But he said that was the last time he saw or spoke to any of his family members.

So the detectives were like, OK, yeah, like, cool, cool, cool.

Like one problem with your story, though.

Cody was working that night, so you didn't run into each other.

Oof.

Yeah, I didn't think of that.

Did you like you didn't run into each other by chance on the side of the road?

Like you claimed no.

So Grant was like, oh, sorry, I was lying.

Oh, yeah, oops.

But I'm going to thank you for reminding me that I was lying.

I'm going to tell you the truth.

Yeah.

Like I'm of course you are that I actually didn't leave home right away.

I waited for Cody to get back home.

You know, like my dad just let that happen.

Yeah, we got this explicit fight.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

Oh, yeah.

And then he got home and I told him everything.

And that's when he said he would talk to our parents and I left.

And no, of course, I haven't been back yet.

No. And he said I got that wrong.

My bad. Sorry.

It was like he was at home.

It was the side of the road.

Yeah, totally.

The same. It's crazy. Yeah.

He told them it was around midnight that he left and that he spent the night in his car in the parking lot of a public's grocery store.

So he then told them that he had every intention to return home the next morning.

And he actually started heading that way and he got to his neighborhood.

But at the last second he changed his mind and he decided, you know what, I'm not ready to go back yet, but he did get to the neighborhood.

So the detectives were like, oh, like, did you see anything on ordinary?

Or like out of the ordinary, like the morning because that that could have been when it happened.

Like, did you see anything crazy?

Yeah. And he was like, no, nothing's us at all.

Hmm. But of course, the detectives knew that

wild had he actually returned to the neighborhood that morning.

He would have seen several police cruisers and news vans parked outside of the house, which would certainly qualify as out of the ordinary or at the very least memorable to me. I was just going to say, I think that would be something that I would mention. Like, hey, there was this crazy thing.

Yeah. That I saw.

So they pushed back with that.

They were like, that's weird that you didn't see all the news vans and like the police presence. That's wild.

You didn't see that. And he was like, oh, I'm so sorry.

I just keep lying.

Like, I'm going to tell you the truth again, though.

Sorry about that.

I did see those cop cars and the news vans and that's why I left.

Oh, OK. He's like, thank you for reminding me of that as well.

I totally forgot that I saw this, but I did.

Yeah. And then I was like, I did.

So the detectives were like, you saw all that.

Like most innocent people stumbling upon a scene like that on their front lawn would want to make sure everyone in their house was safe and unhurt.

Like you didn't. Yeah.

And Grant was just like, I don't know, I don't know what to say.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

He's like, you know what?

I don't have an answer for that.

He just told them once he left the area,
he went to a local fast food restaurant to use their Wi-Fi.

And when he did, he checked a local news site
and that's how he learned there was a shooting in his neighborhood.

Wow. A shooting. OK.

And when asked again why he didn't feel compelled to check on the family,
he told the officers, I just didn't want to know.

Wow. Like you're.

You're something.

You are the worst liar I have ever heard in my entire life.

Truly. Yeah.

So he was interviewed like this for hours and hours and hours
by the Seminole County Sheriff's detectives.

And throughout most of their interview, all.

Wow, I just got really.

I was just going to say, damn, you got real buff.

That was wild. Yeah.

All Grant did was make himself look more suspicious.

And after more than three hours of the conversation,
Grant still hadn't asked detectives what had happened to his family.

Are you kidding me? Three hours.

And they're like, yeah, you have any curiosity.

Heavy police presence shooting.

Like you want to know what happened?

No. And he still didn't seem to alarm by the situation at all.

Wow. OK.

So Detective Maltari was getting more and more convinced
that this is their guy, clearly. Yeah.

And he was really hoping to get a confession, though,
because, of course, that's what you need.

Yeah. So she placed or sorry,

I had said he earlier, she placed multiple crime scene photos
of Cody's body in front of Grant and directly asked, quote,
did you leave the house with your brother Cody looking like that?

Shit. And Grant covered his face, but gave no response.

So Maltari then produced crime scenes of Chad and Margaret and said,
or did you leave the house with your father looking like that?

Or your mother?

Oh, is that how you left your family?

Damn. And Grant glanced at the photos
before covering his face again, saying, no, I didn't do any of this.

Wow, like, looked back at them and was like, no.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

Initially, he suggested it could have been a murder suicide and he tried to blame Cody.
Are you kidding me?
The person that was there for him through everything.
Oh, that pisses me off.
Through wrestling in some type of way.
Through work, through their trip to Japan,
through the fucking craziness with Aunt Donna there, through rehab,
through all of it.
The best brother you could literally ever ask for.
Or even dream up to be quite honest.
Must have been Cody and then he must have just turned the gun on himself.
Oh, my God.
What an actual piece of human fucking shit.
Like, that's where I'm like, fuck.
Yeah, like this, like, obviously you're a fucking murderer.
Like, go fuck yourself. Exactly.
And you had to twist it at the end there.
You really had to do that.
And it's like, dude,
Cody was found in the fetal position barely in the house.
And evidence that doesn't even make sense.
Evidence showed you didn't even hesitate
before you shot your brother in the face.
What a piece of shit.
Your own flesh and blood.
What a piece of shit.
Shot him in the face.
Like, wow, you're disgusting.
Truly.
Because it's one thing to steal money from people
when you're going through addiction.
Like, that's not OK, but I understand you're suffering.
It's a very different thing to shoot people in the face.
Oh, yeah, I would say so.
That's, holy shit, on another level.
Yeah, piece of shit.
So the detectives were like, yeah, no, like, straight up monster.
No, that doesn't work like that.
So then he admitted, you know, I know I have all the motives.
I have all the means to carry out this murder,
but I didn't do it.
Like, I know it looks that way, but I didn't do it.
So the detectives were like,

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

if it's not you, then who would have done this?

And he said that it's not you, too.

Right.

He said, I don't know.

I've been getting blamed blamed for the last half a year for everything.

And I've been trying to move forward in a positive direction.

And then every day I'm reminded of all the trouble I caused.

And then I keep being told the same thing over and over again, that there's nothing I can do to change it.

Is how old is he again?

Like 30, like in his 30s.

OK, so he's not six.

No, no, no, he's not.

Because like, really, really, like every day, I keep hearing the same stuff.

Because I steal money from them.

It's like, what the?

It's like, yeah, OK, yeah, people are pissed.

Now you're talking about your dead family, by the way.

Yeah, like if you really it on your brother who did everything for you, that is so the fact that he was so willing to turn around and be like, probably Cody, it's like so crazy to me.

Shit, dude, you are like bottom of the barrel piece of shit.

Legit.

Like you couldn't even say some stranger came in there.

You blamed Cody.

Right. What the fuck?

Like that is what a coward on another level.

But at the same time, detectives felt like they were super close to getting a confession because they're poking.

They're oh, yeah.

And they're like, we're going to get there.

So what they did was they ended up contacting his older brother, Jason.

And they were like, well, why don't we get the two of you in a room together and we'll confront him?

I know. So Jason goes in the room and immediately asked Grant whether he had anything to do with it.

And Grant said, no, I have nothing to do with it.

And Grant told him, I want or excuse me, Jason told him,

I want to believe you, Grant, but you're the last person I could put in that house.

And I know what happened over the last six months.

I can understand that that trouble that you've been going through.

But it's hard for me to think you would break to this point.

Yeah.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

So they had a 15 minute conversation as detectives watched.
And they could tell it was clear that Jason didn't believe Grant's denial either.
No. And it became particularly evident when he wondered out loud
what would have happened had he been in the house at the time of the murders.
He said, I may not have been able to stop you.
You probably may have hurt me, too.
But at least I would have known what happened.
Oh, and he kept going, just trying to get Grant to confess.
He said they didn't deserve it.
No matter what feelings were felt by anybody, they were good people.
Yeah.
And just when they thought Grant was going to budge,
he said, I know, and they showed it by protecting me.
Wow.
It's like, so now you were home.
Wow. And they protected you and you're the sole survivor.
Like, what the fuck?
What?
And it's like, are you talking, is he talking about that?
Or is he talking about protecting him throughout this whole ordeal?
I don't even know.
Either way, it's like, wow, you're a fucking monster that you're acknowledging that.
Right. Like, wow, exactly.
Holy shit.
So while all of that was going on down at the sheriff's office,
crime scene technicians began a thorough search of the house,
Grant's car and the hotel room that he'd been staying at in Orlando at the double tree.
Now, in the search of his car, crime scene analyst, Eric Brothers,
found a handwritten letter that detailed all the issues
that had been going on in the family for the last six months.
And it included a quote saying, I said, I'd take care of all your problems
at the house and I have no one will bother you again regarding this.
Just please come home.
What the hell was that?
So back in the interview room, like detectives heard about this
and they asked Grant about the letter and he said,
he was the one that had written it.
He was like, yeah, like, that's mine.
And the quote was something Cody said to him the night that he was kicked out of the house.
And they were like, why would you write a letter in first person as Cody?
And he said he was just trying to document their conversation.
But like, if I was just trying to document that conversation, I'd be like,
and then Elena said, yeah, no, like, that doesn't make any sense.
That doesn't make sense.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

So meanwhile, analysts combing through the evidence at the double tree found several credit cards after he murdered his family.

He stole their credit cards.

They found multiple longings to Cody and Chad.

That checks a lot.

And a later search of the Amato House would turn up even more credit cards and also images showing the credit card information that Grant had stolen from his aunt and uncle. Based on the quote totality of the investigation, an arrest warrant was issued and Grant was officially taken into custody.

He was charged with three counts of first degree premeditated murder for the deaths of Cody, Chad and Margaret.

Wow. So in March 27th, 2019, there was a bond hearing to determine whether he should be eligible for bond, which is wild.

Yeah. His lawyer, Jeff Doughty, argued that there was no physical evidence tying Grant to the murders because he lives in the house.

I was going to say. Of course. Yeah.

And he should be allowed bond in order to prepare for the trial.

But during the hearing, the prosecutor played the 16 minute conversation between Jason and Grant during his initial interview.

And that was followed up by testimony from Jason, who was able to detail all the issues that had been going on in the home.

And in his closing arguments, the prosecutor, Stuart Stone, said, everything points to the defendant in this case and no one else.

No one else had any issues or problems with the victims.

And even though there was a lack of forensic evidence linking Grant to the crime scene, but that's because he lived there.

Like it's hard to say what's the lack of forensic evidence linking anyone to the crime scene. Exactly. That's the problem here.

Exactly. Yeah.

But because or excuse me, even though there was that, the judge actually denied the request for bond.

Oh, OK. And Grant was returned back to his cell by Mitch by.

But the issue of bond was revisited again in late April.

And the defense attorney pointed again to the lack of forensic evidence, blah, blah, blah.

And the judge actually ended up siding with him because still at this point, there was a lack of proof coming from the prosecution side.

So he granted a seven hundred and fifty thousand dollar bail.

Damn. Which Grant would need to pay 10 percent of.

Yeah, he's not gonna. No.

And it came, of course, with additional requirements.

Grant, if he was to be out on bond, would have to wear a GPS ankle monitor, avoid contact with any witnesses in the case and avoid the internet altogether, which we all know would not have happened. No.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

So even though he was in jail and strictly forbidden from using the internet, meaning he had no way of keeping in contact with Sylvie, he was committed to his belief that she was, in fact, his girlfriend. In a handwritten letter to the girlfriend of his cellmate, Grant explained that he and his cellmate had bonded over their shared interests and work histories, he said to the woman, I know the pain of being separated from the woman you love. My God, you've always been separated from the woman you love. Literally always. And then he went on to tell her that he and Sylvie had plans to take a cruise, quote, once all this jail stuff is behind us. Once all this jail stuff is behind us. BB, you murdered your entire family. And even if you're still claiming innocence that you didn't, your entire family was murdered. Thank you. That's that was going to be my next thing. It's like, even if you're going to keep claiming that you had nothing to do with this, that's not something you're going to put behind you, that your whole family was brutally slain in their house, in the house that you plan to live in with your brother that was curled up in the fetal position in the garage or in the storage room. None of this is bothering you at all. I know he's just going to go on a cruise with Sylvie. Cool. Very cool. I'm also like, did Sylvie know that? Yeah. Did Sylvie know that you guys were going on a cruise? Cause I don't think so. That's what does Sylvie know? She knew that he became obsessed with her and she was just like, it wasn't that for me, it was work. Yeah. Like there was no relationship. No, he was just under the impression. I think she must have been terrified. Yeah. So it's honestly unclear why Grant was writing long detailed letters to his cellmate's girlfriend. Yeah, I was going to ask that next. Yeah, I don't really know. But most of his other correspondents made sense under the circumstances. He was clearly unable to come up with the \$75,000 bond. So he tried to access the payout from his parents' life insurance policy. Fuck that. Are you kidding me? But, you know, he was informed that his indictment for their murder happened to make him ineligible for that money. They're like, there's this little thing standing in your way.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

Tiny rule of like, if you're the one on trial for the murder, you actually don't get that.
You actually don't get that. It's crazy.
I know it's wild. Sorry.
Very unfair. Sorry about that.
But speaking of unfair.
Yeah. Yeah.
You know all about that, Grant.
For sure.
But anyway, the conditions of his bail made it so that he couldn't use any funds from his parents' estate any way to make bond.
So instead, he began reaching out to news outlets, offering, quote, trade to trade exclusive interviews to reporters in exchange for getting money to bond out of jail. Wow.
So he's like, yeah, yeah, I'll talk to you about.
Yeah, it's so I can get out of here.
And an email to a reporter in New York, he complained about his inability to come up with the money saying, it seems to be my half brother's mission to make my life that much harder by not believing me, communicating me or even helping me, even after I was blessed with a very high bond.
Wow.
Like you think it's fucking Jason's responsibility to bond you out of here? You murdered his mother, his adoptive father and his half brother.
He's so delusional.
He is.
His other message to journalists were very similar in tone, and they usually contained a list of repetitive complaints about everything from his experiences in jail.
He would write about his interest in Japanese culture, and then he would start complaining again about the lack of support outside of jail and his, quote, unquote, elitist neighbors back home.
He called them elitist.
What? I'm like, I don't think they're judging you because like you don't have money.
Yeah, I don't think they're judging you because you murdered your whole family and you murdered their neighbor.
So I think that's that's part of the judgment.
I don't think it's elitist.
No, I wouldn't say it was.
Now, despite his, quote, unquote, efforts, Grant was never able to come up with the money and he remained in jail awaiting trial.
But as he was trying his hardest, the Seminole County investigators continued collecting and analyzing a seemingly endless amount of evidence actually coming from the car and from the house.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

The more prominent evidence included hundreds and hundreds of images and screenshots of Sylvie.

There were text conversations between the two and there were screenshots of the bank transactions showing proof of his countless purchases of those tokens that he could use on the camp girl website.

So his trial for the murder of his parents and his brother finally began on July 15th in the Seminole County Circuit Court.

Stuart Stone was arguing for the prosecution.

And again, Jeff Dowdy was leading the grant leading grants defense team.

So in his opening statement, Stone laid out the prosecution's theory that Grant had been faced with the ultimatum of giving up his fantasy relationship with Sylvie or losing the support of his family.

So he chose to continue that relationship with Sylvie and also chose to murder his parents and brother.

Awesome. Thinking that with them out of the way, he would be free to continue on in his relationship and live off of their money.

Yep. Now, the prosecution pointed to the fact that just a few hours after killing his family,

Grant logged on to the Wi-Fi at Publix and tried to connect with Sylvie.

Oh, my God. A few hours.

This is so beyond obsession.

Yeah, I can imagine. Wow.

So the prosecution told the jury, quote,

his parents and brother's bodies aren't even cold,

and he's already reestablishing or trying to reestablish contact with Sylvie.

Yep. He was just waiting for her to say, I love you, too.

Come to Bulgaria. Come see me.

But that didn't happen. Oh, my God.

Because this is her job.

It's not she's not in love with you.

She's not in love with the thing. No.

Like, this is literally her job. Right. That's it.

So throughout the trial, it went on for two weeks.

The jury was presented with by then well-known story of Grant's full blown obsession with Sylvie, his theft of more than at that point,

\$200,000 from his family and the incredibly tense relationship

that had developed between him and specifically his father as a result.

But the more damning evidence actually came from the murder weapon.

It was in, I hope I got this right.

I.W.I. Jericho 941 pistol that belonged to his best friend, Blake Turpin.

So Turpin was called to testify.

And he told the jury that he realized his gun was missing

from his home about a month or two earlier and remembered leaving

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

Grant in his bedroom where the gun was kept, quote, for about 10 minutes, two weeks prior to the killings. Oh, damn. So he not only stole a shit ton of money from his family, stole their belongings, but he stole from his best friend to kill his family. I was going to say, and then use that thing to murder his entire family so that it would be traced back to his best friend. Wild. And was willing to say that it was Cody who did everything. Yep. Like, he will throw anybody under the bus. Anybody. So on July 31st, 2019, after more than eight hours of deliberation, which I truly can't even believe it took that long, the jury unanimously delivered a guilty verdict. Good. Guilty, guilty, guilty. Bye. And all three charges of first degree premeditated murder. Yep. And the penalty phase of the trial took place on August 12th. And it was particularly important because actually Grant was potentially facing the death penalty for these murders. Oh, damn. But during that part of the trial, Jason Amato testified and told the judge, it's so hard to go through the grieving process when there are multiple losses and uncertainty in the future. I have them that through all this, though, I'm a proud Amato and I will rise up smarter and stronger than before. And ultimately, the judge sentence sentence Grant Amato to life in prison without the possibility of parole. By Grant. The end. By Grant. Fucking. Holy. Wild. Wow. I am like without words for that. Wild. I didn't know that story. I can't believe I never heard that story. I actually, I have to tell you and I have to give credit where credit is due. I actually learned of this case from Bailey Sarian. Oh, shit. It was one of the first videos I ever watched of hers. Oh, I love that. Yeah, like years ago. Oh, that's crazy. Oh, I love Bailey. I love Bailey so much. Like the sweetest human. Like truly. So if you want any more information on this case, I would definitely suggest going to Bailey's channel and watching that. Oh, man. You know what it is? It's the name sounded familiar. Yeah, but I did not know this. Yeah, I did not know.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 455: The Amato Family Murders

It's crazy that it really wasn't that long ago.

So sad.

I know. It's such a sad case like that.

At the end, you're like, bye, Grant.

See you later. But then you're like, fuck.

Oh, but like everyone.

And it's like, I feel so bad for Jason.

Like having like what he said, going through the grieving process with this as part of it, you can't even you're grieving your entire family and grieving the loss of your brother to your remaining brother who did all of this.

Of course, it's so upsetting.

And I can't imagine I would just never trust anybody ever again.

No, no, honestly, you shouldn't know.

I mean, I don't know anyway, but.

Wow. What a story.

So sad. Well told.

Thank you.

Shout out to Dave for helping me with the research.

David, the most beautiful, beautiful being.

The majestic unicorn.

Him.

So yeah, guys, we thank you for listening and we hope you keep listening and we hope you keep it weird, but not so weird that any of this, yeah, none of it, not even one part of it, except like shop at Publix, because I heard it's a great grocery store.

Definitely do that. All right, love you. Bye.

Hey, Prime members, you can listen to more of it early and ad free on Amazon music.

Download the Amazon music app today, or you can listen ad free with Wondery Plus and Apple podcasts.

Before you go, tell us about yourself by completing a short survey at [Wondery.com slash survey](https://wondery.com/survey).