

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 457: H.H. Holmes Part 1

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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 Ash.

And I'm Alayna.

And this is officially a big series of morbid.

It's a multi-parter.

And it's like a celebration of our fucking five podcasting years, guy.

Five years.

Five years.

Dot com.

I'm holding my hand up to signify five.

Should we high five, Freddie?

High.

Oh, that was a good one.

That was a really good one.

Eyelash at my head.

Oh, we knocked the eyelash out of Ash's eyes.

I was quite literally like, oh, that was a good one.

Oh, that was a really good one.

Oh, that was a good one.

That was a really good one.

Eyelash at my head.

I bet, oh, we knocked the eyelash out of Ash's eyes.

We literally, oh, fuck.

Oh, man.

Okay.

Death destruction.

You know, and they're like not yours, so then they stop you.

This is it.

It's five years.

We're blinding Ash right now.

God, I've been going through it on this podcast lately.

Oh, guys, every episode last week, I was like, yeah, my stomach hurts.

I got the stomach bug.

That's what it was.

She was, she was gearing up to that stomach bug.

The last episode that we did, I got the stomach bug that night.

Yeah.

Because everybody was like, huh, Ash hasn't been doing great.

Every episode I was like, I don't know.

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My stomach is just really off, really off.
It was off for like a week.
And then I was like, you know what I should do?
I should eat chicken and waffles.
Yeah.
And then the stomach bug said, oh, you thought stupid bitch.
That's what it said.
Yeah.
I heard it all the way from here.
Yeah.
But yeah, somehow she got the stomach bug and she kept it to herself.
So I appreciate that.
That's because you weren't anywhere near me.
Thank goodness.
Love you so much.
I love you so much.
I wanted to be alone.
Alone.
Leave me alone with my neurovirus.
Hopefully, you know, we're getting out of that season, I hope.
So let's, let's all just stop giving each other the stomach bug and shit.
Be careful.
Because GI bugs are really, they're really having a moment right now.
Yeah.
Ask Beach Gem on TikTok.
Beach Gem on TikTok.
She'll tell you all about it.
Oh, and you know what I learned from Beach Gem?
I think it was Beach Gem that said it and you've said it before too.
But I think you said it last time you were sick.
You can't use hand sanitizer to get rid of the neurovirus.
And do you know why?
Because it's wrapped in a lipid.
Which is a fat.
Look at that.
Which is a fat.
Lipids.
Science.
Science.
With morbid.
And Beach Gem.
Yes.
You have to wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.
Yeah.

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So use soap and water.
That'll get rid of the GI buggies.
But other than that, they're sticking around because.
Oof.
Oof.
They're going to get gone.
No, you said hopefully they're leaving.
I hope so.
Let's all knock on wood together.
April showers bring no stomach bugs.
That's how that goes.
So.
It's called rhyming.
Look it up.
It's called manifestation.
Okay.
So yeah.
Like we said, this is five years, guys.
And I know you looked at the title of this episode.
So this isn't going to be a big exciting surprise right this second.
But like, I hope you're excited because you hit play.
You have been asking all of you.
For a long time.
For five years.
All of it.
For HH Homes.
Yeah.
I have been wanting to do HH Homes for five years.
It's true.
But I knew it was a big long one.
Similar to Jack the Ripper.
I knew that it needed like real attention paid to it.
Like, because it's just got so much extra.
To it that I was like, this is like, you know, it's got history.
It's got all this mayhem to it.
You got to siphon through all the lies and find the actual facts in the case
because this motherfucker lied.
Like a liar.
Like a liar.
He lied right to everyone's face holes all the time.
I like how you're doing a lot with your hands right now.
And the way that you were just like digging through the lies.
I'm digging.
They made me think of the little girl had knocked up and she's like,

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and then you dig and you dig.
And then the babies inside.
That's exactly it.
You dig and you dig and you dig and you find a little of the truth.
That's what they said.
It's a little truth, baby.
But yeah, he was a liar.
And I think we're going to get right into it.
I don't know how many parts this is going to be.
Many.
So just strap in.
I think it's at least going to be three.
Buckle up.
I'll let you know probably in the next episode for sure how many how many parts it will be.
But you know, strap in this is our big five year series that we wanted to give to HH Holmes because he's a piece of shit.
And you know, the story is wild.
Yeah.
So let's start at the beginning.
That's a good place to go.
It always is.
In the late 1800s, Herman Webster Mudgett.
Herman Webster Mudgett.
Take that in.
HH Holmes' real name is Herman Webster Mudgett.
So he could have been HM Mudgett.
Yeah.
Wow.
HM Mudgett.
Yeah.
Webster.
Yeah.
I was a little bit close for you.
Okay.
We'll just flip it off side down.
I was kind of just thinking about the Real Housewives of New York when Luan says like the Herman Munster shoes.
There you go.
Of course you were.
Yeah.
But this is where we need to begin because it's like, all right.
So HH Holmes.
Made up.

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Objectively is a is a cool name like HH Holmes flows.

It's a very like smooth name.

You would probably trust in HH Holmes if he didn't know this HH Holmes.

Yeah.

Like all this aside, like every, all of it.

Of course.

It would be a stage name.

It would.

Like HH Holmes sounds cool.

Yeah.

Herman Webster Mudgett.

It doesn't sound as scary.

No.

Or maybe sounds scarier.

Actually.

I should say.

It sounds scarier.

It just sounds kind of lame.

But you know, Holmes, we're going to, we're going to refer to him as Holmes because that's what he went by for most of his name.

That's what people knew him by.

That's what his crimes are really under.

We'll call him Herman for part of this, like in the beginning, but you'll know who we're talking about.

But AKA HH Holmes, he claimed and confessed to officially killing up to 28 people.

Some people, most people, all people believe that it could be well over 200 people that he has killed.

You believe?

I believe he's way up there.

Yeah.

I think he's more than 28.

Okay.

Well, the full extent of his crimes and the number of lives that he did take is probably something that we may never know to the nth degree, you know, like when I don't think we're going to be able to find every single person, I would love to believe we could.

It was really his ability to kill without conscience or hesitation really for financial gain most of the times.

Sometimes he did it because he just liked to do it, but most of the time it was for financial gain.

Do you think it was like financial gain and he liked it?

Oh, it was for sure.

Yeah.

It was for sure a mix.

And I think it was also the systematic way that he got rid of his victims in his murder

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castle, which don't worry, we will get to.

It feels like a horror novel.

It doesn't feel like real life.

Yeah.

When you read the actual facts of this, you're like, that's not real, but it is.

It's wild.

And in truth, he wasn't really like a genius.

He wasn't as calculating as he's really made out to be.

He was just a man who learned pretty early on in life that being a confident liar can get you a long way in the world, unfortunately, sad, but true, especially if you can create enough chaos and confusion to make it absolutely impossible to actually tell the difference between facts, fact and fiction.

You ever seen the great Gatsby?

There you go.

If you can spin a tale so wild that people can't tell if it's real, fake, what is, what is, and there's nuggets of truth here, there and everywhere.

He can.

He got a long way with it.

Yeah.

And when we go through this, you're going to see, damn, he went a long way with it.

I'm actually really like excited to hear your telling of this because I don't know that much about HH Holmes, to be honest.

He's they it's weird that like, I think a lot of people, a lot of people know the name HH Holmes.

They know the murder castle.

They know the things about it that we've all been told, but when you dig into it and you realize he was not just a monster, he was such a piece of shit.

He was a piece of shit in every aspect of his life.

It was like he was just such a shitbag.

It's wild.

Fantastic.

And he was such a fucking liar, such a liar.

He had no qualms about hurting everybody along the way in various ways, like emotionally, financially, physically, anything.

You think like he didn't care?

He didn't care.

Full blown sociopath.

I think he is full blown.

Yeah.

Full blown.

And all he gave a shit about was money.

Yeah.

That's all he cared about.

And it didn't do him well in the end.

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I feel like if your main goal is just money, it's never going to work out that well.
If you look at like money obsessed people throughout history, they usually are like...
Yeah, it doesn't work out in the very end for them.
In the very end it doesn't.
It might work out along the way, but in the end it doesn't.
It can't be your only goal.
No.
It ultimately, it ends up eating you alive.
It really does.
Now, let's start at the very beginning of H.H. Holmes.
Yes, yes.
So H.H. Holmes, like I said, was born Herman Webster Mudgett in Gilminton, New Hampshire.
Ah, bitch.
On May 16th, 1861, his parents were Levi Mudgett and Theodate Price.
I think that makes him a tourist.
Oh, there you go.
Wow.
I didn't see that for him.
I'm going to double check, though.
But according to H.H. Holmes himself, his early years in New Hampshire were, quote,
no different from those of any other country bread boy, and I was well trained by loving
and religious parents.
I don't know about that.
His parents were Methodists.
They were very strict Disciplinarians.
His father, Levi, was a house painter and would later go on to serve as the town's postmaster.
And his mother stayed at home.
She was a housemaker.
OK.
Now, they were not known to be, like, strange, mean, to have any, like, dark ways about them
by neighbors or anything like that.
According to Adam Seltzer's book H.H. Holmes, this true story of the white city devil, neighbors
remembered the budgets as, quote, very upright, God-fearing citizens living in a quiet, secluded
section of the country with no trace or taint of immorality or vice in the family history
for at least three generations.
I love that they were like, now, we can't tell you about that fourth generation.
They could be heathens of the highest order.
But for three generations, these people did the damn thing, and they seemed OK.
OK.
Like, we can vouch for three generations.
We're not going back to that fourth.
I don't know.
It's weird because you get little, again, with that there's a lot of parts of this story
where you hear Holmes himself tell 40 different versions of the story or you hear other places

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just give you different things.

You will find if you read about them that they were, you know, there was nothing of note in his childhood with his parents that seemed to set off anything, but him saying, like, you know, they were good people.

I didn't really have anything wrong with them.

That is probably true.

Remember, it was the 1800s.

So I'm pretty sure they were strict disciplinarians, meant they beat the shit out of their kids when they got in trouble.

And that was just normal back then.

So I think it was one of those things that it was like, oh, yeah, like any whatever.

And normal, like, all throughout his life, really.

So what would he have said?

Whatever.

But Herman himself, I'm going to call him Herman for now, wrote an autobiography from prison later

called Holmes's Own Story.

And he wrote it in 1895.

And he starts the book like this.

This will tell you everything you need to know about what kind of theater kid this guy is.

Quote, come with me, if you will, to a tiny, quiet New England village nestling among the picturesquely rugged hills of New Hampshire.

This little hamlet has for a century been known as Gilmonton.

Here in the year 1861, I, Herman W. Mudgett, the author of these pages, was born.

Narcissist.

Like, wow.

OK, girl, calm down.

Like, I.

Twas I.

The author of these pages was born.

It's fantastic.

It's like, and the world was a worse place for it.

So thank you for bringing us back to that moment where we all went, fuck.

I also know that he starts the book with, come with me, if you will.

Everybody else is like, nope.

I was like, no, no, I know it reminds me of like the, in like Willy Wonka, when he's like, come with me, and you'll say, no, like that.

And it feels the same.

Like when Willy Wonka did it, I was like, no, thank you.

And now when he does it, I'm like, no, thank you.

I don't.

Anytime someone says, come with me, say, no, thank you, I'm going to go this way.

So like we said, the budgets were a well-liked family, Holmes's childhood seems fairly unremarkable for the time period, especially.

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His mother remembered him as, quote, a good little child, very pretty and loving.

As most moms remember their children being very pretty and loving, but not everyone remembered him as being so pretty or so loving as he began to get older.

According to Ira Penwick, a cobbler in Gilmonton, he said, quote, Herman was a hard worker, but still there were some things about him I didn't like.

He was too fond of money.

And Penwick told reporters that there were a lot of times when he was around the shop that he would see money go missing when he had been around, or when Herman would claim that he'd sent payment for a service, he would just pocket the money himself.

That's fake as fuck.

And in fact, of the many stories that people got after he was arrested finally, which we will get to in the ultimate episode of the end, a lot of people said that he was generally polite and pretty fine.

No one was like, wow, he was so popular, cool, or oh, he was so weird and odd, and we hated him.

It was just like, oh, he was fine, I guess, whatever.

But they always mentioned him possessing a very unhealthy preoccupation or obsession with money.

That was always the thing.

People were like, yeah, he was fine, he was polite, I guess.

He wasn't super offensive, but my god, that guy was obsessed with money.

And it's like when everyone in your life, that is the one common thread that everybody can touch upon, that's bad.

You want to be known for a little bit more than that.

A little bit more than Scrooge McDuck, your way through life, I think.

I like that.

Is there a really good way of doing it?

Was that an ad for?

Yeah.

No, that would be L-Y.

That was a verb.

It was a verb.

I like it.

I like it.

I like that you Scrooge McDuck does a verb.

But by most accounts, he did struggle a little to develop healthy interpersonal skills as a child, which to me would be a red flag now, considering his adult activities.

But at the time, you know.

Also the 1800s.

Yeah.

Was there even people to make friends with?

Was anyone having healthy interpersonal skills at that point?

I don't think so.

But according to one of his neighbors, as a boy, he was, quote, a boy easily influenced

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and did not appear to be well grounded and firm principles, notwithstanding his excellent home training and instruction.

So he just couldn't stand in his own convictions and honestly didn't seem to hold any real moral strongholds of his own.

And that's not good.

That's a red flag to me.

But other neighbors remembered him spending a lot of time by himself kind of being a little bit of a loner sometimes.

Another neighbor named Betsy, Betsy Holdley.

Fucking love the name Betsy.

I thought you were going to be like, I know Betsy.

Oh my God.

That's my good girl Betsy Holdley.

She said, I don't know if you heard that part, but she said, quote, he always seemed to be by himself.

I know that instead of playing with the other boys, he would wander off alone or on long walks.

He was never much of a favorite with the other boys.

He seemed to be very secretive.

He was too arrogant and domineering to be popular with the children.

Again, that alone to me isn't a huge issue, but added into everything else later.

And it's definitely another red flag that you're like, and what was he doing off by himself?

That's the thing.

And being secretive, it's like, are you killing animals?

And also of note, many who knew him as a boy later said that he would never make eye contact when addressing children or adults would not look you in the eye.

He wouldn't look anyone in the eye.

To me, I was like, oh, that's, that's a little sketchy, but then if you read a little further into this, you see that a couple of medical professionals did diagnose him at one point with Stravidmus, which is technically like I'm cross-eyed.

Oh, OK. Now this can make it nearly impossible to maintain eye contact physically.

And people, you know, it can actually like hold people back because people think, look at it as being like, oh, you're sketchy or untrustworthy.

I just can't. But it's really like he honestly just couldn't look people in the eye.

Oh, that's like that isn't super fair to like label as like, oh, that's a little like, here's the thing. I'm sure he was like he was objectively untrustworthy and objectively a criminal.

So like, even if he could look you in the eye, I'm sure he wouldn't.

But right. Physically, he couldn't.

So like, we won't use that as a red flag.

We'll rest on that.

Now, although he did like to invent things when he was younger and he showed interest in a few areas, he never showed a real direction and he seemed to kind of float around without a real purpose for a while. Same.

It was really a bit later that he finally settled on medicine as his thing.

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Now, the stories recounted to reporters after he was arrested are definitely influenced by what he did and what he was charged with and what he was bound to have done.

So it is like a little biased when you look at it later and people are seeing hindsight in full 2020 now, remember?

Now, these things are never super red flags until they add up and you sprinkle in some murder and then you're like, oh, yeah, that all makes sense.

Exactly.

Nevertheless, people definitely all kind of came to a consensus that he was odd.

He was very apathetic.

He was fucking obsessed with money.

And honestly, when you put that on with today's understanding of the psychology of con artists or killers, it's pretty on par.

Lines up, yeah.

Those line up.

So it's not like everybody's just making shit up.

This is who he was.

Now, one interesting story that's often told was that when he was a young boy, he always had like a fear of the local doctor's office, which is pretty common in kids.

And especially I'm sure in the 1800s, the local doctor's office was a scary fucking nightmare done.

So they just have all their like, yeah, just tools laying out like I I'm not going to fault little little Herman for that one.

He's like, I bumped my knee there.

Like, we're going to cut it off.

Yeah.

It's like, ah, and this guy, his name was Dr.

Nahum White, I believe his last name was or his full name was.

And he was a known dice, like he was very into dissection.

He was an anatomist.

He was very good at his job.

He was very respected, but he took dissection to another level sometimes.

OK, so he had things in his office that would have been a little morbid.

TM. Oh, and also like a little scary.

Yeah, child.

So that makes sense.

But one day a couple of older boys dragged Herman forcibly into one of the rooms in the office and showed him a skeleton.

Where where are all the employees?

I mean, 1800s, they're like, I don't give a fuck.

Damn, they're just like, yeah, we're going to run in here real quick.

Don't don't run in.

Let's talk about glasses, because I love them.

Warby Parker offers everything you need for happier eyes.

My eyes are the happiest eyes in the game.

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Eyeglasses, sunglasses, contact lenses and eye exams.
And you can shop with them online or in stores.
Glasses start at \$95, which includes prescription lenses.
Try Warby Parker's free home try on program.
Order five pairs of glasses to try at home for free.
There's no obligation to buy ships free
and includes a prepaid shipping label.
Try five pairs of glasses at home for free at Warby Parker dot com slash morbid.
You guys, I did the at home try on program.
And it is one of the coolest things that I think any company has ever come up with
because you take the quiz, you pick the glasses that you want.
It's super easy.
And then you have five days to try them in your real life.
Like wear them to the grocery store.
See if you got complimented.
See if you feel confident.
Wear them to a party that you have upcoming and see what people think.
Say, look at my sexy glasses on my sexy face.
How great do I look?
And they'll be like, you look awesome.
You should buy those and then you can.
I freaking love Warby Parker.
Usually when I buy glasses from them, I never just buy one pair.
And actually right now you can add a pair and save.
You can get 15% off when you purchase two or more pairs of prescription
eyeglasses or sunglasses.
And if you prefer shopping in stores, Warby Parker has over 190 retail
locations throughout the U.S.
So again, guys, try five pairs of glasses at home for free at warbyparker.com
slash morbid.
Care of is a subscription service that ships high quality personalized
vitamins, supplements and powders conveniently to your door every month.
I was on my care of grind.
I was on my health and wellness grind for a while and I fell off of it
because, you know, we all enter rut sometimes.
But then recently I had that kind of like aha moment where I was like, hey,
girly, maybe you should take care of yourself.
And my brain was like, yeah, let's do that.
It agreed with me.
So I had that aha moment and I was like, I need to take better care of my health.
I need like a wellness routine.
You know, I'm going to be getting married here.
We're starting to talk about our future with children.
I want to be my best self and then care of popped into my head.

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And I was like, oh my God, I know care of care of is there to help me get started by taking the guesswork out of what supplements are best suited for me. So I went over to the website, I logged in. Well, you don't log in. You take a quiz, I took a quiz and it's all about, it's super short, but it's like super in depth and it's all about your lifestyle, your health goals. And you'll get personalized doctor backed recommendations. And the quiz can be retaken at any time. Like obviously I've taken it in the past, but you know, a lot has changed since then. So I wanted to switch up my packs because my lifestyle has changed a bit. It is super duper easy. It takes barely any time at all. And then you're going to get the care of vitamin pack shipped right to your door. They're literally so easy. They're like, you'll never miss taking your vitamins because you could take them on the go because they have just like little daily packs and they say your name on them, which is my favorite thing ever. You guys are going to love care of. I personally love it so much. I can't wait to get my new vitamin shipped to my door. So for 50% off your first care of order, go to takecareof.com and enter code Morbid 50. Again, that's 50% off your first care of order. Go to takecareof.com and enter code Morbid 50. This skeleton by all accounts was set up so that it had its arms outstretched, which Herman said made it look like it was about to grab him. Yeah. And it was like this like big open mouth skeleton, like scary. And so it scared the shit out of him. Like totally traumatized him. But at the same time, it fascinated him. OK. And he said that was the beginning of his fascination with medicine and anatomy. OK. I'm sure it scared the shit out of him. I don't know if that was the beginning of his real like fascination with medicine. I think he's trying to use that as like, here's this origin tale of my of my great career in medicine, which was bullshit anyway. So it's like, I don't know about that. Well, because a lot of times you're inspired by like multiple things. Yeah, exactly. I was like, no, I think that you knew that doctors made more money. And so you wanted to do that. Yes, I think that's more of a pretty cool. Yeah, I think it's more that, my friend.

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But during his teen years, he graduated high school at 16 and he started working a number of odd jobs.

And finally, he ended up teaching at a local school for a little while.

It was during this time where he was teaching that he fell in love with Clara Lovering.

Clara was a girl from a prominent family in nearby Loudon, New Hampshire.

And now, interestingly, people who knew Herman early in life said that he had been obsessed with getting married very early in life.

Even when he was like 14 years old, he was trying to get that dowry.

He was trying to get that dowry. There you go.

And in fact, after his grandfather passed away,

his grandfather left him a small parcel of land, which was very common.

And he took this as like, well, I'm a landowner now.

So I need to get myself a wife.

That's slow down.

So he had 14.

He proposed to this girl who was actually

boarding with that cobbler, Ira Penwick, who was like, he was a weird kiss.

Yeah, and probably stole money from me and also proposed to this lady

that was living with me when he was 14.

I guess this girl that he proposed to was like visiting the country

from New York or something, like was staying and boarding at Ira Penwick's for the like some period of time. Sure.

And so Ira Penwick was like, yeah, you can't marry this girl.

She's going back to New York and like, I'm supposed to be taking care of her.

And like, you can't just like, I can't like marry her off to you, you psycho.

Like what the hell happening?

So she had apparently either accepted it and it was like, no, you can't do that.

Or she didn't accept it and the proposal returned to New York shortly after.

But he was undaunted, though. Don't worry about it.

He wasn't going to. That wasn't the end of his romanticism.

But he tried again when he met Clara Lovering.

So Clara was very well liked, very respected.

People thought she was sweet and kind and really didn't have a bad thing to say about her.

A neighbor once said about her, quote, she was a very pretty little woman

when she was first married and was very devoted to her husband.

She was a she was of a modest and retiring disposition.

OK. That sounds great for 1800s.

Like that's Victorian, like you go girl, I think she was an she was an it girl.

She was a hot girl.

They were like, I always see her in the morning on her hot girl walk.

She's drinking her greens. That's right.

She is. She's getting it.

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People said you couldn't help liking Clara.
Oh, I know. Apparently the two of them began
officially dating at a church social when Herman slash Holmes
saw another boy hitting on her.
Oh, no, you don't.
And he basically threatened this boy's life.
If he didn't back off, that worked apparently.
And like, why did that work so well?
I know. I was like, you're not going to do shit, Herman.
You can't look me in the eye.
But this guy was probably like, he probably will kill me.
Because a lot of people throughout his life were like,
I think that guy is going to murder people. Exactly.
They just like thought it like he didn't even need to do anything violent.
He did later.
But when even before he was like actively, outwardly violent,
it's like people were like, I don't know.
I just feel like he's going to murder someone some day.
Like he just had that vibe and I'm like shadowing.
I know you can't really do anything off of that vibe.
Like what are you supposed to do?
Be like, I feel like you're going to murder someone
so you should get arrested.
The air. It was it does worry.
Go listen to the rewatcher.
That's a funny, funny little tidbit from there.
The air worries about him and it does worry about it.
But it worked for Clara, this whole threatening
the guy that was hitting on her thing.
I mean, I mean, a guy that she was like, all right.
Back in the day to fight for my own.
Yeah, two guys fighting over you.
But you know what's sad?
He's not going to. No, no, no.
He's a piece of shit. Yeah, of course.
But he proposed not long after they began courting.
And the two eloped in Alton, New Hampshire in July of 1878.
And they were both 17 years old.
Now, on par with Herman's secrecy and general oddness,
it was several months before his family or Clara's family
even knew that they were married. Wow.
When they found out they because they just got married in front
of like a justice of the peace. Yeah.
When they found out they were not happy on either side.

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Apparently Herman's mother.

So H H Holmes's mother said Clara couldn't have found much worse.

Which feels like a stark turn from the sweet family

neighbors, remember, and from Herman being like, yeah,

my family is so kind and wonderful.

I'm like, your mom didn't think this girl could find much worse than you.

Oh, that's his mom.

That's his mom. Oh, shit.

So that's what I mean when I say, like, imagine if you found out

that your mom said that about you. Yeah.

And she was like, and I guess she said, like, oh, she's going to have to support you.

Oh, because she because she knew she was like, he's a fucking deadbeat.

Like, I know this. He's pretty.

But that's money and he loves money, but he can't get it himself.

So he's going to take yours. Yikes.

It's like, damn, your own mom knew. That's rough.

But then later, if you research a bit deeper into their family,

it seems there was this weird strange jealousy

that his mother and his sister Helen actually had

whenever he found a girl that he liked.

I don't like that.

There was something strange afoot there.

I'm sure of it. I just don't know what.

You know what, though, like some families are like that.

Yeah, like, especially if there's one boy.

It's he's always like the crown jewel of the family.

And it gets weird sometimes where it's like, I'm going to kill any girl

that comes near him and stuff. And it's like, yeah. Yeah.

I don't know. I think there's a TLC show about it.

It's it's always been a weird vibe to me.

Yeah. When like it immediately makes me question when like a

like, that's why I love my mother-in-law.

Like she was never ever like that. No, mine neither.

Like it's in fact, she always is like, you know, thank you for making him so happy.

Like she's just always like so kind and like supportive of it.

And she always has been. Yeah.

It's always a little off-putting to me when like mother-in-laws or future

mother-in-laws are like, I'll fucking kill you.

And it's like, OK, all right, like I'll see TikToks where like people

who don't like even have kids yet, they're like, someday my son,

I'll hate his girlfriend.

And it's like, why are you gearing up for that?

Here's the thing, like you can't. Yeah.

Period. Like you can't.

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Like, and you know what I'm saying. Sit down.
You can't. You cannot.
It's just a it's a weird vibe.
It is like you should like my personal thought process with that.
And like, we're not getting off on a tangent.
So don't worry. Or maybe we are.
It doesn't fucking matter. I'm not going to say I'm not going to go far.
Don't worry.
But my personal thought about that is that like I want to love the person.
And I think we've talked about this before.
They're like, I want to love the person my kids love, of course, whoever they are.
As long as they're a good person and they make them happy.
I'm like, cool.
Eventually I get more kids like I get to be.
Dude, that's what my future mother-in-law always says.
Drew's mom literally says she has six kids.
See, and that's like it's like that you should want.
Why wouldn't you want that?
Yeah, that's the ultimate goal. Exactly.
I will love to love the people my loved ones love, right?
You know, like that's how it should be.
Like you want to make sure they're like if they're a shit person, obviously.
No, no, no.
But if like they've done nothing and you're just going into it being like,
I'm going to fuck your world up, like that's a bad way to go into any relationship.
And again, you can't. You can't.
So so. So Herman Munster's mom, you can't.
Yeah. Oh, wait, not monster. God damn it.
Herman Webster stuck in a place of Rony.
You are. So Herman Webster's mom, you cannot.
And sister, you can't either, because that's even.
That's that's all just yuck.
That takes it even to a waiter place.
But Claire's family was not too policed either,
but she was they were not pleased that they weren't really established.
He wasn't stably working.
Like they were like, ah, you guys kind of jumped into this.
And they were both 17. Yeah.
I mean, which at the time, I guess it probably wasn't that weird in the 1800s.
But like they weren't.
I think they were more just like, I would like you guys to have like a decent life.
So we got to get you on track.
So Claire's family took matters into their own hands
and set Herman up with a job as a clerk at the grocery store at a grocery store

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in East Concord, and it was a grocery store where Claire's family owned.
And a lot of Claire's family members worked there, too.
And they said if he they went while working with him, they got to know him better.
Yeah, that's probably why they did that.
Yeah. And it was smart because they said one thing about him
was that if he even got the slightest compliment about anything,
it would blow his head up wildly. Oh, like a very much like a narcissistic
kind of vibe to it. I'm not diagnosing him. Don't worry.
But get out of your arm chair. Get out.
I'm out of my arm chair.
But I'm just saying that that's vibey with narcissism, for sure.
He was definitely like a narcissism adjacent is what I'm saying.
But he loved to be complimented, OK, and would obsess over it.
And it would just make him be like, oh, you know what I mean?
Like, oh, you did really great at stocking those shelves.
And he'd be like, well, that's because I'm the greatest shelf
stalker this side of the Mississippi.
You fuckers, like bow down before me.
Like it was like too much like it was never like, thank you.
That's usually what you should just go with.
But, you know, whatever.
By all accounts at this time, the couple seemed fine.
They seemed happy.
In fact, people said he was seemingly in the beginning very smitten with Clara.
People said he would walk like miles to see her after work
and then walk miles back to work. I hate saying.
Oh, I know, because in the beginning, it looks like there was intentions
of possibly living a life with a clean life, you know?
But I think the intention was probably
fleeting to the point of being like, maybe it will and it's gone.
Like it was literally like, yeah,
like couldn't even couldn't even blink without it.
Like it was that quick
because he never had any good intentions ever again.
Good. Now, a year and a half later,
the couple's son, Robert, was born in February 1880.
Um, in his teens, he had been, like I said, very aimless,
didn't really know what he was doing.
But they said when when he got married and when he became a father,
it did seem to awaken some kind of like I got to get my shit together.
That's good. That's usually what it should do.
He wanted to be somebody.
He was claiming.
And Holmes's position as a store clerk

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didn't really give him an opportunity to like rise up the ranks in his opinion, like enough and he's so and it really was only meant to be a stepping stone because I think it was Claire's uncle who had owned the store.

And he was like, I was just trying to give you this to get like a leg up.

Yeah. You know, so like calm down.

Save some money.

Don't don't worry.

He's like, I didn't want you to take over the fucking business asshole.

Well, and his whole idea was like, hey, I was giving you this leg up.

Maybe you learn this business and maybe you go open your own store somewhere.

Yeah. Maybe you get to know this whole business.

You and then your store owner somewhere else.

Right. And we can, you know, everybody's happy.

And even if not that, like you took some money away.

And you learned a little bit about business, you know, in working with people and finances and all this stuff.

Just about being in the working world.

Just being a human, you know, but he Holmes quickly,

Herman, I should say at this point, he's Herman,

but he quickly grew pretty tired of this work.

He thought, quote that he thought he was, quote,

altogether too bright for the life of a country storekeeper.

OK. In an interview after he was arrested,

Clara actually said to reporters, father tried to encourage him

by telling him that someday he could have a store of his own

and could make a very comfortable living.

But he seemed to think he was too smart for such an ordinary occupation.

He thought he could make a lot of money fast.

He became imbued with the idea of becoming a doctor.

And he used the talk of the immense fortune

fortunes that physicians had made in a short time,

especially if they invented some patent medicine.

He became obsessed with creating some kind of patent patented medicine.

I remember that part of the story.

Now, despite his penchant for get rich, quick schemes,

like he was that kind of guy, like, you know, those kind of people.

Tommy Haverford. Exactly.

He did seem at this time that he was becoming very serious about becoming a doctor.

So which wasn't a get rich, quick scheme.

He was going to have to go through a lot of training, obviously.

And spend a lot of money. Exactly.

So he did quit his job at the general store

and he started studying with Dr.

Nahum at Nahum Wright, who are white, excuse me,

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who had owned that practice in Gilmonton, the one who owned that office and was an anatomist that was very respected, very renowned. Amputations, though, right? Loved amputations, loved a like very morbid dissection. Like he was just and he again, he was a very good doctor by all accounts. He was very respected, held many esteemed positions, like not bad things to say about this doctor at all. He just at the time was seen as someone who took it to a different level. OK, now maybe it wouldn't be. OK. Back then it was. But he started working with him, he was studying underneath him. And it's funny because he came full circle back to that office with the skeleton that scared the shit out of him. That is funny. Well, maybe that's why he said to like, oh, it all started here. Yeah, and it's like, I wonder if his like extreme dissections and extreme like kind of displays of anatomy in that office was something that Holmes suddenly found himself drawn like sparked something within him. And when he wasn't working with Dr. White, he would spend a ton of time studying on his own time. Medical books, any medical book he got his hands on because he just wanted to start right away. And by 1881, he took a job teaching at the Potter District School in Gilmonton, which remember he had taught before. And this was like a small class of like 15 students. So he didn't have a ton that he had to do for that job. So it allowed him a lot of time to study on the side. OK. Meanwhile, Clara and Robert were living with her parents in Loudon. She was essentially raising him as a single parent. Like he was kind of absent from that child's life. Or well, maybe that's a better thing, actually, maybe it was better for him. But the distance between her and Herman at the time was just getting bigger and bigger. And in the spring of 1882, Holmes left Herman left Gilmonton for Burlington, Vermont, and he started studying medicine at the University of Vermont. So he was even further away. Now, it should be noted that medical schools at the time were regarded pretty dubiously. If you listen to our Birkenhair series, you remember talk of resurrection men, resurrectionists or grave robbers. How could I forget? Med students themselves were basically known to grave rob for their anatomy lessons. It was almost one of those things where, like, you could show how committed you were by being like, I dug my own corpse for anatomy today. Fantastic.

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Corpses were not easy to come by legally at the time.
And pre-doctors got a doctor.
So they're going to do what they got to do at the time.
They got a doctor.
I found in one of the sources that we will list in the show notes,
I found this epitaph of a nine-year-old girl named Ruth Sprague from
nineteen eighteen forty six, who died in Husik Falls.
This just kind of shows what people thought of physicians at the time.
It reads, her body dissected by fiendish men, her bones
anatomized, her soul we trust has risen to God, where few physicians were eyes.
Oh, shit.
They said physicians go to her.
I was like, I don't know if that's really fair, but they might save
your kid at some point or like you.
At the time, that's the only way they had just discovered
that you can't properly teach physicians without dissecting corpses.
It's just the way it is.
To this day, we do that because you have to, right?
In order to learn about the human body, you got to open the human body up.
It's just the way it is. Hands on, baby.
There you go.
I'm like, fortunately, now it's all legal and all very, you know,
much more ethical, much more all of that good stuff.
Back then, nothing was legal or ethical or anything or fucking even hygienic.
Like it's like.
Or they still throw shit out the window at this point.
It was wily then.
Like if you look at pictures, I got to find the picture
and we'll try to post it of like these, you know, early med students
in the 1800s doing a dissection and we can like blur out the thing if you want.
But I mean, they even put a note exactly.
Just so you know, it's really not gruesome, to be honest.
No, but all of them are in three piece suits and just wearing
like leather aprons over their three piece suits while doing an autopsy, essentially.
And it's like, I can't imagine eviscerating in a three piece suit.
I don't think you are meant to like that is a wild.
But how fucking dapper is that?
Oh, I was saying to you earlier today, we were having this discussion,
even just like the fact like how women used to do their hair.
I'm like, yeah, I want to do my hair like that.
I'm about to start fucking sleeping with socks wrapped all up in this nod.
Yeah, to make it be soft curls.
Yes. Yeah, I love it.
The voluminous of all things back then, they had it right.

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I mean, would I say that you should eviscerate in a three piece suit now?
No, but we got cool pictures from back then.
So that's all that matters. Cheers.
But either way, again, they were they were looked at as a little little side eye.
You digress students.
I just wanted to set the tone.
So very few peers or college faculty
really seem to have even remembered Herman much from this time period.
But those that did said they wasn't exactly their favorite person.
Well, he wasn't terrible.
He just wasn't that great either. OK.
A woman named Mrs.
Brew, who Holmes actually boarded with for nearly his entire stay in Burlington
because they met students would stay at boarding homes.
Like people would keep them in there.
It's like Top Chef. There you go.
She's exactly like that.
She was a project.
You know, there you go.
She remembered Herman saying that he was married
because he was still married to Claire at the fence.
Don't you forget it?
Technically.
But he was, quote, always flirting with a number of young girls in Burlington.
What a piece of poop.
And he actually paid particular attention to Bruce's daughter,
which she did not like. Oh, no.
And they're living together. Yes.
Mrs. Brew also said that
Herman would wake up early every morning and leave the house
for what he said were long walks for his health.
Got to get those steps in.
But yeah, it's like he put on his Apple Watch and he was out there.
Herman on a hawk trying to get that trying to close those rings.
Trying to get to 10 K, baby on a hawk or a walk.
But he also would have wine with an elderly widow every day.
And at first, you know, that's lovely.
But then it's like, no, he was just trying to get her money.
Yeah, like he absolutely was.
And even Mrs. Brew was like, that bitch was trying to get her money.
Yeah, like 100 percent.
You fake piece of shit.
It's like in Gilmore Girls when Kirk befriends
elderly residents of Stars Hollow so that he can be put in their will

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and get their diamonds.
And then he sells one to Luke later to propose to Lorelai.
You know, it's just like that.
Isn't it wild that Kirk did that?
Yeah, like, I love Kirk.
It makes sense. It does.
I think he doesn't quite get the bad of it all. Exactly.
You know, now, according to Mrs. Brew,
Herman was fine, generally pleasant,
besides being like a super flirt.
OK, but she said when aroused and meaning aroused, like I was like,
I was going to say, I feel like I need to like quickly be like,
she doesn't mean sexually aroused.
She doesn't mean they were when aroused,
like when he would get like worked up.
He had a most vicious and uncontrollable temper.
My personal particular Herman story that is my favorite
is that on one occasion, apparently,
and this was confirmed by multiple people in the house,
Herman's roommate, Fred Engels,
borrowed Herman's mustache wax without asking for it,
without asking permission.
And this led Herman to literally beat the shit out of him.
Oh, no.
A huge physical altercation arose between them,
like they fought the two of them.
Shit.
In quote, the Gilminton boy literally cleaned up the room
with his companion.
That's how it was described.
Oh, my God.
And I mean, this is my favorite because of what it is over.
It's ridiculous.
And left him with black eyes and a scratched face.
Over a little bit of mustache wax is so Victorian.
I can't.
The only thing I can think of is that, like,
it would have been probably pretty expensive back then.
And I also think he was just like a wild man.
Yeah, I was just ready to hurt someone at a moment's notice.
I think you call that issues issues.
I think so.
Give him a T.
No, during this time, Herman was very focused

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on getting through med school as quickly as possible.
He wanted to start making that bank.
And that's like, no, not the way you want to do it.
That school, not like quick.
And this was seemingly at the cost of literally everything
in his life.
Well, most people knew he was married to a woman in New Hampshire.
He never really spoke about Clara to anyone.
She never visited him.
Instead, he just spent his time studying
or he would kind of just pursue subjects
that he didn't think were covered well enough in school,
which you would think would make him smarter, but it didn't.
Mrs. Brew.
But it didn't.
It didn't.
Mrs. Brew said, quote, he always pictured himself
as at the top notch of his profession.
I rather thought he had a very high idea of his ability
that he was self-conceited.
Well, those are like the worst kind of people to be around to.
Like you're just like, oh, you were like, like,
and know it all is not my faith.
And know it all is the worst kind of person ever.
They really are.
We fucking hate know it all.
I hate them all.
They're the worst.
Every time I look in the mirror, I'm like, fuck you.
Oh, my God.
That's not what I was doing.
I had to say my funny book.
I love it.
It's not funny.
Every time I look in the mirror, I'm just kidding.
You know, you have to laugh at yourself.
But of all the subjects that he covered in med school,
he was really into chemistry, which is a very grim foreshadowing
of his future activities in Chicago, by the way,
which we will get to.
Oh, I hate that.
Can I just say, I fucking hated chemistry in high school.
I like chemistry, but it was one of the hardest subjects to me.
I never, I never understood chemistry.

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It's very interesting to me, but it is fucking hard.
That was one of the subjects I struggled with.
It is interesting.
Biology, I got you.
But biology I loved.
It's hard.
And organic chemistry, I think that's
what I had to take actually in high school.
And I literally took organic chemistry in high school.
OK, maybe not.
I was like, what the fuck?
Probably not.
I was like, probably not.
Organic chemistry just sucks.
I don't know.
Whatever we took, I didn't understand.
But what's worse than chemistry is the other fucking one
that you have to take.
Maybe it starts with a P physics.
Yeah.
Fuck physics.
Fuck physics.
Oh my god.
And I had this.
I mean, like, don't fuck physics, like, in reality,
because, like, we need it.
No, we need so much physics.
But, like, I don't want to learn about it.
Anurshia, who knows her?
I don't know her.
Who knows?
Anurshia, I hardly know her.
Anurshia, I hardly know her.
There we go.
Don't worry, I fixed it.
OK.
So, loved chemistry, not a great foreshadowing
in his future.
Mrs. Bruce said he was just always fucking around
with liquids and concoctions in his room at the boarding house.
I don't love that.
With, like, and with what little free time he had,
he actually got a tutor to help him in chemistry
because he was so focused on it.

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OK.

Dr. J. O. Linsley, who was a physician and expert in chemistry, and he did this because he thought the chem department just did a shit job.

He was like, you're not doing enough.

OK.

That's just like who he was.

It's also like, you don't know what you're doing yet.

So how do you know that they're not doing enough?

He don't really know.

But he quickly turned his room at the boarding house into, like, a laboratory, essentially.

Tons of bottles and all kinds of test tubes and fluids and unlabeled shit and, like, just it was starting to get wily up in there.

And it scared the shit out of Mrs. Bruce.

Like, it would scare me, too.

He was like, she was starting to get a little too much for me.

I think I'm, like, fucked in the head with, like, things that I, like, relate other things to.

Why? What are you relating to this thing?

All I can think of right now is Jack in the nightmare before Christmas trying to figure out the meaning of Christmas.

And then Sally is Mrs. Bruce.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Absolutely.

But my brain just did that.

Like, he's just sitting there, like, fucking around with the liquids in his room.

Yeah.

Yeah, right?

He's, like, you know, dissolving.

Herman's, like, what's this?

Ornaments and just, like, that's what I like.

There's magic in the air.

I hope not.

Oh, no, he said, but murder in the air because he's fucking terrible.

He is not Jack Skellington.

I still have Jack Skellington.

It's wild.

The amount of people that are in the same boat as you.

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Yeah.

And it was honestly, it was a foreshadowing
to who I would marry because I love me a tall,
a tall skeleton of a man.

That's what I love.

I love that.

With a great voice.

Oh, my gosh.

So there you go.

Because I loved Jack's voice.

And everybody on planet Earth loves John's voice.

I mean, I can't believe me.

He does.

He has a great one.

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It is so easy to get caught up in what everybody else needs
from you and never take a moment to think about what you need
from yourself.

I feel like that happens to parents,
that happens to caregivers.

That happens to me because I'm, like,
a bit of a people pleaser.

But when we spend all of our time giving,
it can lead us to feeling stretched thin and burned out.

But guys, therapy can give you the tools
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That's what it's all about is balance.

So you can keep supporting others,
but not leave yourself behind because you're
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I freaking love therapy.

You guys know how much I love therapy.

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to get 10% off your first month.
That's betterhelp, H-E-L-P, dot com slash morbid.
Say goodbye to boring workouts.
Guys, I'm really bad at sticking to any workout routine
because I just get bored.
I need constant entertainment.
I need something happening all the time.
As soon as there's a lull, I'm like, OK, I'm over this.
But Peloton, make sure that you don't fall into that rut
because they keep you entertained.
These coaches tell you stories.
They sing songs to you.
They motivate you.
They have an amazing music selection.
They're Bradley Rose.
I mean, what else can you ask for?
It's so entertaining, so fun.
It's the only thing I've been able to stick to.
And Peloton is more than just a bike company.
They actually make a treadmill and a rower, too.
So you can discover a whole new world of exciting classes
that change working out from another dreaded task
to something you actually want to stick with.
It's hard to find the motivation to move
when you see so many of the same boring workouts.
That's why Peloton gamified the workout experience
with Lane Break.
So now you can pedal to crush levels.
No matter where you're starting from,
Peloton's expert instructors are there
to guide you with contagious energy
and supportive instruction at every level
to really take the guesswork out of the working out process.
And you know what?
I've loved it.
I've had a great experience with it.
It's the only thing that now, for a couple of years,
I've been able to stick with.
And I plan to stick with it forever and ever.
You're never getting rid of me, Peloton.
So try Peloton tread, row, or bikes risk-free
with a 30-day home trial.

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New members only, not available in remote locations,
see additional terms at onepeloton.com-home-trial.
Now, according to Mrs. Bruce, quote,
Herman was fairly wild over chemistry.
Wild and out.
He was wild.
Wild and out.
I love that you used that word, too.
Like, he was fairly wild.
She was like, that dude was feral up there.
He was going off.
But she said, and he was all the time experimenting
with liquids in his room.
And while she kind of looked at it
as he was just very committed to med school,
it's probably more likely that he just wanted
to get as much experience with chemistry
because he wanted to patent that medicine
to become fucking rich right away.
He knew that was the subject.
That's why he got the tutor.
That's everything.
It wasn't, oh, they're not doing enough at school
and I'm just really committed to my education.
It's like, no, I need to make a medicine
so I can get a million, zillion dollars.
Fast track.
Now, he was always telling everyone at the boarding house
that he knew what he was doing with the chemicals.
Everyone needs to chill,
but I don't blame everybody for being scared shitless.
I'd be scared that it was just gonna explode.
I'm also surprised that he was allowed
to have the amount of chemicals he had.
I know they just kind of let it happen,
but Mrs. Bruce also said that when he left,
finally, that they found about three pounds
of shingle nails hidden away in his closet.
I'm sorry, Hwa.
And they never understood what he had them for.
That's probably for the better.
Probably.
We probably don't wanna know why he had those.
What are shingle nails?

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Like big nails.

I think like roofing nails.

The fuck?

Oh, like shingling nails.

Really heavy duty nails.

But again, very determined to get this done as fast as possible.

And he was kind of overextending himself in all directions to get this done.

He was constantly taking on extra work, but then one day this took a very dark turn.

What, Ro?

Because again, he's doing all this extracurricular work on top of all his work.

So the darkest one might say was when Mrs. Bruce did her daily house cleaning.

And one of these times she was sweeping upstairs and noticed a strong odor coming from Herman's bedroom.

So she starts investigating the smell and she's coming over to his bed and she's like, what is this smell over here?

What the fuck is this?

So she sweeps her broom under the bed and something comes flying out.

And she was fucking horrified to discover that when she swept out the object under the bed that was creating the stench,

it was, quote, the body of a baby, less than a year old, stretched out on a board.

Oh my God, I was not expecting that.

None of us were.

A real baby.

A human baby, less than a year old, who had obviously died, was obviously being used for dissection and he took it home.

But you can't be doing that.

You can't just take it home.

Because it was on a board, so it was obviously being a medical specimen, quote, unquote.

Sure.

To be dissected, but he took it home to use it.

No, no, no, no, no, no.

That's not at all normal in any stretch of any imagination.

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Or legal.

Nope, not at all.

She fucking lost it, obviously.

Immediately confronted Fred Ingalls,
because that was his roommate.

Oh, yep.

He was like, where the fuck did this come from?

And Fred was like, so he said, he had, quote,
he had, excuse me, Fred confronted Herman.

Yeah.

Because he was like, I don't know what that is.

Like, holy shit.

That's not mine.

And he said that Herman told him
that he had, quote, brought the body in during the night
and had started to dissect it.

And he had no idea how or where he had acquired this body.

But he said, quote, the site was so repulsive to him
that he could not go to sleep,

realizing that that body had been in his room for how long.

No, fucking way.

Mrs. Bruce said she couldn't sleep for weeks
and even like 13 years later, when she talked about it,
she was still like shuddering about it.

Of course, I can't imagine.

You have no idea what you're about to sweep under that,
from under that bed and it's a baby.

And he did it again another time.

He brought him another baby at one point.

I'm surprised you didn't kick him out.

Not to this morning house.

Right then and there.

Well, that's the thing.

He never said where he got this baby,
but as soon as he got back that night,
she was like, okay, new house rule.

Dissection of human remains cannot happen in my house.

Didn't think I'd have to say that.

Didn't think I had to add that to the lease agreement,
but here we are.

Wow.

It's like when you see those stupid warnings
on things that are like,
hey, don't eat this very horrible liquid

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that will turn your stomach inside out.
And it's like someone ate that.
Oh, 100%.
For that to have to be a warning
or don't stand in this trash compactor.
And it's like, that was because someone did it
and they had to put it down.
No, it's true.
Now that's in her lease agreement for future tenants
and people are like, someone did that
and you have to agree to it now?
I'm not little asshole that one time ate a glow stick.
Damn.
I had to go to the hospital.
I forgot about that.
I was like very little though.
Like it wasn't very recent.
Yeah.
It was like five years ago, guys.
Okay.
It was like the other day.
No, I'm just kidding.
It was a while ago.
But when the semester ended that summer,
he told Mrs. Brew that he would most likely not be returning
to Burlington the following semester.
And she was like, bye.
Yeah.
And she was like, that's fine.
And she actually said that he quote,
did not think that the university here offered enough advantages
for such a brilliant and promising young man.
That's what he thought.
Wolf.
And that's basically what he told her.
Get out of here.
Yeah.
And he was also apparently disappointed
with the limited number of chemistry courses offered.
Very into chemistry.
I wonder why.
And he felt that he could go to the University of Michigan
at Ann Arbor, and that would be a better place to go
with a better price.

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I'm from Michigan.

I'm from Michigan.

So just a few months later, he followed through with the plan and he enrolled at the University of Medicine at the University of Michigan.

I was like, blah, blah, blah.

The medicine in the Michigan and the medicine in the blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

So for now, he's leaving New England.

My girl, Amir.

Don't come back.

Oh, and throughout this entire thing,

Clara has been supporting him financially, by the way.

Clara, sweetie.

And also raising their son.

Sweetie, no.

Like literally, his whole life is being supported by Clara.

Herman?

I don't know her.

Herman, fuck off.

So Herman relocates to Ann Arbor in 1882.

And despite his mom and his sister not being happy about it,

Clara and the baby went with him this time.

How dare you live with your husband and father?

Remember, they have a weird thing.

His mom and sister, Helen, never liked Clara

because of that weird jealousy thing.

And they would frequently encourage him to end the relationship.

Kind.

Meanwhile, Clara's doing everything for him.

But OK.

According to Laura Young, who ran the general store after Herman left, she was Clara's cousin.

She said, quote, when Herman went to Ann Arbor to study, Mrs. Mudgett and Helen thought it was outrageous for Clara to go with him.

His sister, Helen, made the statement long before Herman left that he was not going to live with her any longer, and she must support herself.

The sister used to say that Clara was not bright enough, not refined enough for Herman.

Bet you guys regret that, huh?

Yeah.

Because your brother turned out to be one of the most disgusting

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con men and serial killers in history.

Also?

Outrageous.

What is that?

Yeah, Helen.

Clara's not bright enough or refined enough
for your fucking monster of a brother.

Clara takes several seats.

You want to walk that statement back?

Helen and Mama Mudgett?

Like, really?

That's a whole bunch of wild right there.

Yeah, that's one of those you wish you could take back.

That did an age well.

No.

Now, Clara began working as a dressmaker in Ann Arbor
while he focused on finishing his medical degree.

But they did not have a good marriage.

Even before the couple left for Michigan,

Herman had said to Laura Young, Clara's cousin, quote,
being married would likely prevent him from rising
as far in the world as he would have otherwise,
and that he thought that he and Clara would not
get on together very well.

He is wildly narcissistic.

He's literally like, mm, it's her dead weight.

That's making me not rise up in the world.

And it's like, no, I think you're just dumb.

And I don't think you're good at this.

You're only moving around on her dime, asshole.

Literally, she's the only one doing anything
and raising your child.

I think she could actually launch you into success
if you fucking gave her a second.

So when they moved to Michigan, they lived in a boarding house.

And the other boarders there said
that they remembered Clara very fondly.

They said she was, quote, a very pleasant woman
and willing to make any sacrifice
that she might help homes along in his course.

So they saw her as very sweet, very kind,
and that she would do fucking anything for him.

Yeah, they also said the couple fought a lot
and that Clara, quote, was sometimes seen

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around the rooming house with black eyes.
Oh my God.
Ding, ding, ding, he officially crossed over
into monster territory.
What the fuck?
So not only is he just like a lazy asshole piece of shit.
He's a woman beater.
He's a piece of shit too.
So we have violence.
Fuck you, Herman.
Now, Clara struggled to keep the family afloat
by herself for nearly two years
and the relationship was just crumbling steadily.
And finally, just months before Herman graduated
from the University of Michigan, she decided
she had fucking enough abuse
and she packed up the few stuff that she had
and took her son back to New Hampshire.
I'm so happy that she was able to do that
on her own volition.
And later in letters, she claimed that in the decade
that followed her going to New Hampshire,
she, quote, had known very little of her husband.
Wow.
They actually remained married until he was executed.
Oh shit.
They never got divorced.
That's right, he never divorced her
but married several more times.
That's so crazy.
Yeah, he was a piece of shit.
Upon returning to Gilmonton,
Clara and Robert lived with actually Herman's parents
for a little bit until she was, yeah.
How was that?
I know, until she was able to find work as a dressmaker
and she relocated herself away.
And once she was away from, you know, the budgets,
I was gonna say, that situation.
She focused only on Robert.
She didn't think a fucking thought
about what the fuck Herman was doing.
She didn't give a shit.
And actually, Clara's cousin, Laura Young,

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said even after he deserted her,
she never chased after him as many women would.
I think, however, that if Clara had followed Herman
after he left her, because that's the thing,
he had left her to go away and kind of abandoned her
while he was in school and took all her money.
And she just didn't stick around.
But it was her who left at the end.
Yeah.
Like she really got out of there.
But she said, I think, however,
that if Clara had followed Herman after he left her
and went west, that we never would have heard of her again.
I think that he would have killed her
as soon as she commenced to be in his way,
for she would have never countenanced his action.
Absolutely, because he was escalating.
By first, he's like talking shit about her,
then he starts hitting her.
And then he, as we all know, escalates to murder
to the nth degree of course.
He's cheating on her.
He's just like a piece of shit.
Yeah.
I have no doubt he would have killed her.
She's very lucky to be ridded of that piece of dead weight.
So good for her.
Clara lost like 100 pounds.
There you go.
Well, in Burlington, you're like,
I don't know how much he weighs,
but however much he weighs, that's how much he lost.
He lost a few stones.
Exactly.
Well, in Burlington,
Herman was a rigidly devout student of chemistry,
obviously, like we said, but in Michigan,
he now shifted away from chemistry a little bit
and back to anatomy.
And he really liked dissecting bodies.
I don't love that.
In fact, one of his fellow students, John Madden,
said, quote, he seemed to take a good deal of pleasure
in the uncanny things of the dissecting room.

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That's what, I mean, when you look at it now,
hindsight is 20, 20, and you're like,
oh yeah, that's fucked up.
But like, I don't know.
Dissection is interesting.
I can't really like say it's not,
but the fact that he's a murderer makes that weird.
I've never dissected anything.
No, so it's definitely interesting
if you're doing it for the right purpose.
Yeah, for like biology and shit.
Yeah, but he also was,
that John Madden fellow student was quoted as saying,
Holmes talked a great deal about what he had done
in the dissecting room with what appeared to me
at the time unnecessary gusto
and told me that the professor of anatomy at the time
was to permit him to take the body of an infant home
with him for dissection during the spring vacation,
which was to begin the following day.
I asked where he would find a place to carry on his work
without offending his neighbors.
And he replied with something to the fact
that he would find a place.
So see, it happened again,
where he asked to take home an infant.
Why is it an infant that he wants?
I don't know, but it's weird.
Do you think, I feel weird saying this,
but do you think it's like an infant
is easy to carry home versus an actual body?
I guess.
I mean, that makes absolute logical sense.
Like logistically, that does make sense.
But infants are also very hard to dissect.
I would think.
Like it's not an easy evisceration or dissection
for they're tiny, you know, like it's all tiny.
And it's upsetting.
It's more upsetting than any human dissection
has an element of sadness to it,
but it's like a baby is a whole different level.
And I would think that you would want to learn
on a full grown body,

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because I would think learn more.

Except, well, there's just certain thing.

I mean, at least you would think he would try it out.

I don't know, though.

It's just a strange thing, a strange quirk of him.

But all in all, he was said to be a pretty below average student, which is very interesting with all his extra work and everything.

I don't know.

Maybe it's that he like,

he wasn't staying focused on actual.

I think that's exactly.

And like taking the right steps.

Like he was going to Z when you should have been at F.

Exactly.

I think it was he was concentrating on what he wanted out of it and not what he needed to get out of it.

And a lot of times you need like the foundations to build upon and he was building with no foundation.

Exactly.

I don't think he was really focusing on the curriculum.

I think he was just looking at what he wanted, which was chemistry, so he could patent a medication.

And he was looking at anatomy,

because I think he was starting to feel some type of way.

And I think he was only focusing on the things

that he wanted for different reasons

and not for a medical degree to become a doctor to help people.

Because does he ever become a doctor?

He does.

Oh, he does.

Okay.

Yeah.

He'll get there.

He graduates.

And he does like he works as a doctor for a little bit.

Oh, okay.

I don't know about that.

But he's really a fraudster and always.

One teacher even voted against him graduating.

Really?

So he graduated by the skin of his fucking teeth.

Shit.

He was not good at medicine.

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He was not, he was not very adept at it.
And one student described him hilariously as quote,
he was distinctly what might be termed dumb.
He was slow to grasp ideas and not ready at all in reasoning.
Okay.
Which is funny to hear considering he's an actual piece
of shit.
It's like, you're dumb.
Exactly.
Well, and he like thinks he's so fucking smart.
Oh, he thinks he is the gift.
This is also hilarious and disgusting,
but another said he was below mediocre.
Another student also said that he smelled strange
and that he had a nickname.
Do you want to know what his nickname was?
Of course I want to know.
His nickname was Smegma.
Oh.
Oh.
Please look that up if you don't know what it is.
That's so gross.
Just, just Google it and look at the first definition
that comes up.
I want to look at the first definition
that comes up anyway now.
That's going to give you an idea of what he smelled like
apparently.
Why did he smell like that?
I was just looking at that.
Oh my God.
I can't even say that out loud.
That's why I didn't.
I'm just going to encourage you all.
I can smell like foreskins.
Why?
Why though?
Why?
Why though?
Oh, ew.
You know when you say a smell and then you feel as though.
And this is what, this gave me joy
because it's like the great H.H. Holmes,
the like infamous like criminal of the century

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was called Smegma by his peers in med school.
So this little bitch is nothing,
but a foreskin smell in below average student
who couldn't even keep his first wife.
That's really fucking gross.
Yeah.
So moving on from that,
now without Clara supporting his stupid ass,
Herman was forced to find his own fucking job
and support himself while he finished the degree.
I'm still really affected.
So he now founded his own job with William Herdman
who was an anatomy instructor with the university.
And he worked as his assistant.
He was responsible to like, you know,
menial things like tending to the horses,
doing his errands,
but he also prepared the bodies
and assisted in the dissecting room.
At this point,
maybe he had plans to murder and defraud
on like a galactic scale later.
Proud.
But I think it was more that this was kind of the training
along with the whole chemistry obsession.
This is all the stuff that just kind of like slowly
put the pieces together for him to become that later.
I don't know if he had all that in mind quite yet.
I don't think he really had the foresight.
Probably came over time, you know?
But it was also at this time that he claims
he and his classmates first came up with the idea
of faking a death and then using a body
as proof to defraud an insurance company,
which became his thing.
That's not good.
Also in 1884, Holmes was in some serious trouble.
He had to defend himself before the medical faculty
after being charged with breach of promise.
Breach of promise?
He got himself a breach notice,
which is not a fun notice to get.
Cause they're usually bullshit.
Usually.

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So he married, this one I think was real though.
So he married, he's married to Clara.
He's married to Clara, hasn't divorced her,
hasn't legally separated from her in any way.
Fantastic.
He married until he was executed, remember that.
Well, he's staying now at a boarding house
and the person who owns this house is a widow
who also was a hairstylist by the name Mrs. Fitch.
She and him started a relationship.
They started sleeping together.
Girlie, he smells like Smegma.
No, ew.
And he made the promise of marriage to her,
probably to get her into bed.
And to get her money.
That's definitely what it was.
To make her sleep with him,
he was like, I will marry you.
Of course, I'll make you an honest woman.
Back in these days, that's fucking serious.
That's serious business.
You can't be married to someone else
and promise marriage to another
just to get them into bed.
That's not just like distasteful in bed.
That's like, ooh.
Can't you like hang for that shit back then?
I mean, I don't know if you can hang for it,
but you're not gonna graduate medical school,
that's for sure.
It's adultery, isn't it?
Yeah.
So Mrs. Fitch found a letter he was writing
to his actual wife, Clara at the time,
who he was still talking to and corresponding with
and kind of like stringing along a bit.
And she ran to the medical faculty and was like,
look at this.
Look at this.
And then also showed them a proposal letter
he had written to her,
like written down the proposal, signed it with his name.
Well, shit.

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And she said, this is breach of promise.
He promised me marriage and he's married to another.
And if found guilty,
he would not be allowed to graduate medical school
and everything he had done would be for fucking not.
So how did this fucker dance his way around?
I'm not.
So he denied it all.
And his professor,
Professor Herman,
who he was assisting under,
her anatomy and her assistant,
he came to his defense and he vouched for him saying,
he thought he was truthful.
He was like, he's an upstanding guy.
I've never had a problem with him.
I didn't, you know, I don't believe that this is real.
Well, Holmes got off on the charges
and poor Mrs. Fitch was left to look like a liar.
So he graduates, he's able to graduate.
On fucking graduation day,
he shakes Professor Herman's hand or excuse me,
Professor, his name was not Professor Herman.
Oh, no, not Herman.
It was Herdman, excuse me.
So I was close.
It's like you heard with her.
You heard, man.
But you heard with her.
But he shakes Professor Herdman's hand and says,
doctor, those things are true
that that woman said about me.
So he allowed this man to vouch for him.
And then on the day of graduation was like, ha ha, fucker.
That is such a dick move
because he could have just like shaking his hand
is one thing when you're a fuck,
when you lied to his fucking face,
you're shaking his hand and being like,
hey asshole, you lied for me technically.
And didn't even realize it.
Wow, that's fucked.
And Herdman later said that this was the first moment
that he realized that Holmes was quote, a scoundrel.

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Yeah.

And he later found out that he was more of a scoundrel because after this he dug a little deeper and found out that Herman, Holmes there, had burglarized his home.

Herdman's home?

Yup.

And while staying with him once in an extra bedroom, he had pried open a locked drawer in his private library and had tried to steal stuff because he knew he kept valuables in there.

What the fuck?

So he had totally betrayed this man.

Probably felt like he got like bitch slapped, right?

Like what a violation in every way.

And I would imagine like at that graduation, they're in front of a bunch of people.

Yeah.

And he can't have any reaction to that.

And he's just quietly being like, hey, you vouched for me and you shouldn't have.

Wow.

But like, thanks.

What is douche rocket?

And he said he did it with diploma in hand.

Shook his hand.

It was just like, thanks for letting me get this.

Like, what a piece of shit.

Wow.

I'm trying to like think of anybody that I can even compare that to.

Right?

It's just so dirty.

It is.

It's such a dirty point.

Down and dirty.

Now Herman graduated from the University of Michigan in the late spring of 1884.

And almost immediately he relocated to Moore's Forks.

Yeah, girl, you did that.

Not sure if I saw that, right?

You did.

It's a tiny hamlet in the upstate New York.

It had previously been part of a larger town of Champlain.

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Oh, okay.

So once there, he opened a small tree nursery.
He got weird with it like Matthew Hoffman did.

Oh, yeah.

He got a little weird with it.

Not as weird as Matthew Hoffman did, I will say.
Because he just kind of abandoned it a few months.
It wasn't profitable, so he just abandoned it.

Okay.

But like, what a weird little direction to take.

And he does that to everything in his life
that doesn't serve him, how he wants it to.

He just abandons it.

At one point he hired a primary school teacher
named Minnie Everett for French lessons.

Why?

She terminated that relationship pretty quickly
because she said, quote, and at the time she said this,
there is something lurking in that man's character
that time will reveal.

Oh, shit.

I do not like him.

I firmly believe that he would commit murder.

Wow, Minnie.

Like you were just here to teach him French.
What made you think he's gonna revolt to murder?
And for her to say that time will reveal,
it hasn't happened yet, but something's in there.

I love that she was a full-blown witch.

Oh, a full-blown witch.

You can't tell me anything else.

No, Minnie Everett, she knew.

There's been people that I've said that,
oh, not the murder thing, but like,
that's what I was feeling when you're like,
I fucking knew you were off.

I had your number the second I saw you.

You have done that a couple of times
that were like, chefs kiss perfect.

Oh my gosh, thank you.

Like in a first, you're like, no, it's fine.

And then later you're like, what the fuck?

How did you know that?

Sometimes I just get a vibe.

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I bet Minnie was an empath.

She definitely was.

Anyway.

He also aggressively refused to leave her alone after this for some time, so he was a stalker as well.

Fantastic.

Yeah, he's a little bitch.

But after this failure, Holmes petitioned the local school trustees to hire him on and he was put in charge of the primary school.

Like he was able to get a lot of, he's one of those that you're like, how are you able to get all these things?

But it's, oh, he's a con man.

Yeah.

And he saved money doing this.

He was able to save a lot of money and he opened his own medical practice.

That's terrifying.

During this early period in New York, he kind of perpetrated a small, but kind of big medical con. It was his first one.

So a smallpox scare broke out in this town.

And people were urging residents to get vaccinated against smallpox.

And he saw this as an opportunity.

So he somehow got his hands, probably by stealing, on a load of vaccines and he loaded up a wagon and he went door to door through the northern part of the state, vaccinating, vaccinating residents and telling them that it was mandatory.

Oh, and he was quote, representing himself as an authorized official of the board of health.

He made the people think that it was compulsory and in every household, he managed to get several cases for which he charged 25 cents each.

So at the time, no one questioned his authority or asked to see his credentials.

They just allowed it.

If this man's is trying to poke you with a needle.

Yeah, you've got to ask for his cred.

Ask for anything.

Ask his name.

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Ask for his library card and literally anything.
Christ on a cracker, everybody.
He made a lot of money doing it, though.
But, and obviously people must have been terrified.
So they probably were like, just vaccinate me.
But that's what he fed on.
He prayed on it.
He loved praying on that kind of shit.
Wow.
So that was his first medical con.
Can you imagine if that shit still happened today,
like knock, knock, knock, horrifying.
I'm here to vaccinate you.
No, I don't have any idea.
Don't ask me about it.
Please leave.
Like, no, I'd love your credit credentials.
Thank you.
Do you ever look at your bank statement and you're like,
wait a second, how have I spent that much money this month?
There's literally no way.
You know what it is?
It's all those subscriptions that you forgot about.
You sign up for something and then two weeks later,
you're like, you know what?
This actually isn't what I thought it was.
But then you forget that you're still paying for it.
There are so many of those that add up and I notice them
on my bank statement all the time.
But then I heard about Rocket Money.
Rocket Money, baby.
They will cancel subscriptions for you and like,
who wants to cancel those on your own?
It's super tricky.
It's time consuming and it's annoying.
So get Rocket Money because they will do it for you.
Rocket Money is a personal finance app that finds
and cancels your unwanted subscriptions,
monitors your spending and helps you lower bills
all in one place.
That's called a dream, baby.
But no, it's real, it's real life and it's Rocket Money.
Over 80% of people have subscriptions
that they forgot about and chances are you're one of them.

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Like the Stars app, just to watch that one show
or that free gaming trial that you never actually used.
I sign up for so many of those that I never end up using.
But good news, Rocket Money will quickly
and easily find your subscriptions for you.
And for any that you don't want to pay for anymore,
just hit cancel and Rocket Money will cancel it for you.
It is that easy.
Rocket Money also helps you manage all your finances
in one place and automatically categorize your expenses
so that you can easily track your budget in real time
and also get alerted if anything looks off,
which that is a great idea.
Like you definitely need to keep tabs on that.
Over 3 million people have used Rocket Money,
saving the average person up to \$720 a year.
You know what you could do with that money?
Save it or go somewhere.
I don't know.
You could do a lot with that money.
So save that money and go crazy with Rocket Money.
Stop throwing your money away, cancel unwanted subscriptions
and manage your expenses the easy way
by going to [rocketmoney.com slash morbid](https://rocketmoney.com/morbid).
That's [rocketmoney.com slash morbid](https://rocketmoney.com/morbid),
[rocketmoney.com slash morbid](https://rocketmoney.com/morbid).
But back in his medical office,
he started setting up a laboratory
because he was really trying to get that patented medicine.
He was gonna get rich from it.
And to help him with this,
he was said to have brought in to stay with him for a while,
his six-year-old son, Robert.
No, no, no, no, no.
And he quote, and put him to work in the laboratory,
putting up in bottles the liquid
which Herman manufactured.
Although he never sold any of these things that he made,
like he just couldn't get the right concoction together.
Sure.
But he also couldn't convince anybody to try any of his cares
because people didn't trust him.
I mean, they were like,
Minnie came to teach him French

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and she was like, you're a murderer.
Yeah, like you're a murderer, Minnie knows.
But what's weird about him is he's somewhat of an anomaly
in the sense that he was a get rich quick guy
and he was a con man,
but he also didn't shy away from hard work.
Like he would work for his cons.
That money motivated.
Yeah, like he's very strange in that way.
Like he doesn't have that like cut and dry,
get rich quick personality.
Right.
It's strange, but it should be said that
while he claimed the boy in his company was his son,
there is a lot of speculation
that this was a completely unrelated boy
who disappeared a little while after this.
Oh no.
According to the New York Times,
there was a report filed shortly after he was arrested,
like way later.
And it said that after he left his teaching position
in New York that he had, quote, went home,
went to Massachusetts, but returned in a short time,
accompanied by a small boy
who disappeared shortly after his arrival,
home saying he had gone home.
It doesn't appear that any investigation
went into this boy's identity or disappearance
and nobody really went further into it.
But if this boy has, like was part of something nefarious,
then he was his first victim.
Holy shit.
Do you know what do you think?
And they were never able to confirm
whether that was Robert or not.
And you would think it would be as easy
as like somebody reaching out to Clara.
Yeah.
And it's like, I don't,
I think this might have been a boy that he took.
Wow.
And used until he didn't need anymore.
I hope not.

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I hope it was Robert
and that he just went to Massachusetts to take him home.
I hope so too.
Like that's honestly, I'm hoping that,
but I don't know.
I can't be sure.
Cause he's such a piece of shit, right?
It was also in New York
that there were rumors about his inappropriate behavior
with women and inappropriate, like he was a pig.
And on several occasions,
he was known to have treated out-of-town women
for what's only referred to as organic trouble in his office.
What is organic trouble?
Not sure.
And there were rumors that they were all,
like that these women were treated and then disappeared
because they were from a house of ill repute.
Oh.
You know, so they were treated as less dead.
Yeah.
But there was never any confirmation of this,
no identities that we can like hang our hats on.
But that probably happened.
It probably happened.
And there were reports of Herman paying quote,
violent attention to a young woman named Allen.
What?
Who eventually left town and was never heard from again.
Oh.
Hopefully she actually did leave town.
Yeah.
And actually there were rumors around this New York town
that Holmes had actually married her,
but they said that like there was rumors
that he had married her,
but then there was rumors that she left town.
But the ones that everybody kind of sits on
is that she probably met a sinister end at his hands.
It kind of sounds that way.
And they just couldn't prove it.
And especially.
But she was never found again.
Yeah.

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That's definitely he did something.
Especially if he had already killed that boy.
Yeah.
Something happened here.
Right.
That's what I mean when I say there's definitely more
over the ones he confessed to and are confirmed.
Right.
And I think a lot of people think that.
Now, despite honestly referring to him as a hard worker
and a generally like fine man aside from his like
preoccupation with like out of town women
and being a little weird,
residents found something just off-putting about him.
Right.
Like people around him were like,
he was never like mean outwardly to people.
He didn't do like, you know, he was a little weird,
but like not like super strange or eccentric.
Like there was just something about it.
It's like Minnie said,
there was just something that was going to be revealed.
Can't put your finger on it.
We just didn't know what was.
And women in the village began sharing stories
of his, you know, unwanted advances.
And the men began noticing a growing trend of homes
ignoring debts and making false promises to pay for things.
And, but he always had an excuse.
Of course.
He always had an excuse.
So he was a woman.
He was getting the reputation of being a pig.
Men, he's getting the reputation
of being a fucking deadbeat.
So on one occasion, his landlord confronted him
and was like, hey, you haven't paid your rent.
And I've tried to get you to pay your rent
for like fucking months.
Oh, shit.
And he said, it was, and he had come forward to him
when he knew he had plenty of money.
He was like, he's a doctor.
Like, I know he has money.

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And he said, quote, the doctor would stand quietly by and hear himself called a scoundrel and a swindler in the strongest terms.
Then the tears would appear in the doctor's eyes and trickle down his cheeks,
but he never said a word and reply.
So he would just sit there and let people be like, you're a fucking scoundrel.
You're a swindler.
You're a piece of shit.
Like, you're just like, you're a deadbeat bo and you would just sit there and cry and never say anything.
That's very strange.
Right?
And also like, sad, but like, I don't want to feel sad.
No, he's, no, cause I think it's fake.
It's fake as fuck.
Those tears are crocca dial tears, my friend.
He would cry because he knew it was gonna disarm anybody around him to see this mustachio gentleman weeping openly after being called a scoundrel after refusing to pay for things he should have fucking paid for.
Well, and I think he's especially a physician.
They were probably like, what is happening right now?
And back then they're like, a man crying, what?
So strange.
He definitely did it just to disarm everybody.
And probably he was just unhinged, I feel.
Yeah, he was fucking monster.
But he took similar approaches with his medical office landlord because he always had an excuse for not paying.
And then he would make empty promises to pay and then he would just cry when he was confronted or he would go into a rage sometimes when he was confronted and they would just be like, forget it.
Well, I was gonna say that.
Some people cry when they're mad.
Yeah, and it could be that he was just trying to like keep it together, but he was crying.
Right.
And at one point he produced a letter

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that supposedly was sent from someone in Gilmonton where he was from, claiming his uncle had died and left him a substantial inheritance, which he said, oh, see, I'll be able to pay you. Yeah, you just have to open the email attachment. Yeah, just like this, yeah. Open that email attachment, it's definitely not a scam. Your royal uncle has passed away. Exactly. So Herman's reputation in this New York village continued to decline towards the end of his residency in the village. And not long before leaving, he was involved in a scheme that was to avoid paying his debts that definitely will give you a little bit of a foreshadow into his later crimes. According to the Daily Boston Globe, there was an older soldier, a veteran living in town, who had for several months been dealing with like an unknown illness. It was like a shuttering cough, a lot of pain. And the doctors kept trying to tell him it was malaria. But this soldier said, no, that's not it. He refused to believe this diagnosis. And he believed that it was being caused by an injury he had received during the war. He said he'd gotten shot. There was a bullet lodged in his lungs, in his like the area of his ribs. And he said, it's pressing his ribs against my lungs. And it's making it hard for me to breathe. I know that's what it is. Oh. But ultimately he was dying. So it really didn't matter to him personally what was going on. But if the injury was the result of him serving in the war in the military, his widow when he passed away was gonna be granted his full pension. So he wanted to make sure, which I'm like, I'm like, dun dun dun. I know in this poor man is like,

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I want my wife and my family to get all of that money.
Yeah.
So I need to make sure that I'm diagnosed
before I die correctly.
Like he was doing this only for them.
I'm like, what a good man.
Also, what a fucking like future to face.
So for that reason, he asked Herman's landlord,
Edward Steele, to be present for his autopsy,
which I'm like, oh my God, imagine having to ask that.
No.
But Edward Steele couldn't come to the autopsy.
So it was conducted without him there.
And again, his cause of death was labeled as malaria.
So Edward Steele felt horrible
and he was desperate to make sure
this widow got the full pension.
So he asked Herman to do a second autopsy with him
to help him and he was like, of course I will.
I love dissection.
So when he, so Steele's like, okay, you finish it.
You tell me what you think.
I want to see what you have to say about this.
So he asked them for the results at the end of it
and Herman looks at him and says, yeah, I have evidence,
but only, I'll only give it to you.
So he's already extorting him.
If that my rent is paid in full.
Wait, like I'll only do my job if you pay my rent.
Like dude.
You're asking me to help out of the goodness of my heart.
Which I don't have.
This widow to make sure he had this man's dying wish.
You're, I have evidence that could help this,
but I will only give it to you.
If you say that my rent is paid in full.
What a fucking jackass.
And he said, if you don't do that,
I'm going to keep the evidence of the autopsy
and the widow won't get the full pension
and I don't give a shit.
Oh my God.
And the evidence he had, he had the actual ribs.
He had evidence that they were pressing against that one.

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The man was correct.
He was correct.
Wow.
He kept those broken ribs
because Edward Steele looked at him
and was like, go fuck yourself.
Yeah, you asshole.
I'll figure out another way to get her her pension.
And you know what?
He did.
Thank goodness.
He got that widow his pension
and Holmes Herman there, Herman fucking Mudgett.
He kept those two broken ribs.
What a fucking.
No one knows what he did with them,
but he kept those fucking ribs.
He never gave them over.
Crazy person.
Like what?
That's so weird.
Like what?
Yeah.
So shortly after he had done this,
you know, extorted false evidence for payment of his rent.
Yeah.
He tried to leave this village
without saying anything to anyone
or paying any of his debts.
He was just going to leave all of it behind.
And although his landlord literally found him
loading the wagon and being like, hi,
you still owe me all this money,
he couldn't really stop him.
Like he just, the last anyone heard from him
from this village was a letter sent
from Tilton, New Hampshire saying,
he had business to attend in New Hampshire
and he would be in touch to settle his debts
at a future date.
Doubted.
Ding, ding, ding.
He never did.
Wow.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 457: H.H. Holmes Part 1

After leaving, Holmes returned to New Hampshire briefly and just tried to take full custody of Robert.

Yeah.

Wow.

Why not?

No.

I haven't been part of his life for six years, but why not?

No.

And again, Clara and he were technically still married, so he never actually lost custody of him.

He just abandoned them.

It's unclear what actually happened here, but Clara ended up taking their son to her father's house and he left the state.

So like she was like, no, good try.

She's like, you're a murderous piece of shit.

No, you can't have our son.

But he definitely tried to.

And without a job now, or any source of income, he said, quote, starvation was staring me in the face.

Doubted.

And he sold his horses in Tilton and he boarded a train for Pennsylvania.

And when he left New Hampshire for the last time, he wanted to leave behind everything, meaning he wanted to leave behind Herm and Webster budget.

He was now going to be known formally as Dr. Henry Howard Holmes.

H.H. Holmes.

Do you have any idea how he came up with that name?

I do not.

He just wanted H.H.H.

Yeah, sounds like H.H. Holmes is a, I don't know how, I mean, I think he just made it.

He thought it sounded good.

There's all kinds of speculation that he used Sherlock Holmes as his inspiration, but that wasn't published until a year after.

Oh, so incorrect.

So wasn't it?

You pressed an incorrect key.

So I think it was just, it was a name he came up with, I guess.

Oh, okay.

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It was unfortunately a good one.

So H.H.H. Holmes now arrived in Norristown, Pennsylvania, which is a town just outside of Philadelphia in the fall of 1885.

And he found the city wasn't as bumping as he thought it was going to be.

A lot fewer opportunities than he was expecting.

He was such an elder.

Wow.

This place is bumping.

Wow, guys.

This place is so bumping.

I don't know, man.

A city could bump, I suppose.

But that was great.

A lot isn't really known about this time period.

There is some evidence that suggests that just days after having arrived, he walked into the police precinct and told officers there that he was, quote, on the verge of starvation and had come here with the express intentions of committing suicide.

That's a quote, by the way.

I don't know if that actually happened.

That is a report.

Police officers did say that happened.

So who knows what that was about?

They took pity on him and they let him stay in the station while they tried to find him some work and they ended up finding him work in the Norristown State Hospital, which was a state-funded psychiatric hospital a few miles from Philadelphia.

So I thought that would never happen today.

Well, here's the thing.

He either, because it's not clear if that particular part happened.

There's some stories like that.

I don't know if that was later concocted by him to gain some sympathy.

But he did get a job working at this hospital.

You just don't know how.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 457: H.H. Holmes Part 1

This is the story he tells.
I wouldn't believe shit that comes out of his face.
I don't know if I buy that.
They just took such pity on you, you poor lad.
But no matter what,
he did get work at the Norristown State Hospital.
And years later in his autobiography,
Holmes said that it was a very troubling experience for him.
He said, quote, so terrible was it
that for years afterwards, even now sometimes,
I see their faces in my sleep.
Good.
The patients at the psychiatric hospital.
I'm glad he was haunted.
Now, after just a few months in Norristown,
he actually abandoned that job at the state hospital
because that's what he does
and found a new position at a pharmacy in Philadelphia,
which is much more his speed.
As would become his MO,
this job also didn't last long.
And there was some mysterious shit
that happened before he left it.
Right, bro.
He abandoned the job and Philadelphia completely
after a local boy died
after taking some medicine purchased from Holmes
at the pharmacy.
Oh, he claimed he had nothing to do with the medicine,
nothing to do with the boy's death.
But it definitely put a black mark
on his already questionable reputation.
And there really wasn't a future for him
in Philadelphia after this
because people were like, no, thank you.
Yeah, like we're all set.
Yeah, I'm doing an X sign with my fingers
just so you know, everyone went, no, thank you.
X sign. Get away from us.
So this is when the idea of faking a death
and using a substitute dead body
to defraud insurance came back around.
They had talked about it a little in college,
it's coming back and Holmes now is ready to do it.

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Okay.

Because now he's like, I've tried this working thing for a minute or two.

Too hard.

And it's hard.

So let's just scam insurance.

Money, please.

Now, aqua money.

So according to him, he apparently contacted an old college friend,

which imagine how hard that was back in the day.

Yeah.

You had to really want to contact someone.

I think that all the time when I'm driving

and I have my GPS on,

I'm like, how the fuck would I ever get anywhere?

Yeah, I wouldn't know where anything was.

Like, how do people do that?

How do you do it?

Maps, I suppose.

They didn't, there was a point in time

when they didn't have that shit.

Either way, he was also,

his friend was in dire straits financially as well.

And they decided that they would get

one more friend involved and this other friend

was gonna be the one to increase his life insurance

to \$40,000 at the time.

And he would do this by telling the insurance company

that he dealt with some kind of life altering experience

that made him concerned for his family's wellbeing.

So he wanted to up the amount.

I feel like you might need to get a little more specific

than that.

I guess back then insurance was just like, sure thing, buddy.

Now he would then later,

this man, the plan was to send his wife and child

somewhere out west near California.

And he was going to fake confess via letter

that he had killed them both

in some kind of alcohol induced frenzy

and add that he had dismembered and pickled their bodies.

Christ.

I figured that was to make sure

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he didn't have to show bodies to insurance,
but like, that's not the case, which is weird.
And then he was going to have claimed
to have killed himself in the note, this friend.
Okay.

Then the money would go to a quote unquote
relative of this man, wink, wink, nudge, nudge his friends.
And he would move out to where
his very much alive wife and kid were,
live with some of the money that was shelled out to him.
It was going to be between the three of them,
you know, live in obscurity.

That's something I've never thought of.
Like, if you murder your family and you're a murderer,
who gets your life insurance payout?

Like, well, like, do you get a payout
if you've murdered somebody?
No, I don't think you get it if you were like,
but no, but like the person, so like,
if you have murdered and then killed yourself,
whoever is in your policy gets that money.

Exactly.

Ooh.

Ooh.

That's a weird thought.

I know it is weird, right?

And that's what they banked on was like,
they could control who he wrote down in his policy.

Now, me thinking the dismemberment detail
was to make sure he didn't have to show bodies.

Apparently that wasn't right.

They had to show bodies regardless.

Three bodies, which meant they were going to have to procure
three imposter dead bodies, including a child.

And put them in a pickle jar.

Yeah, and like, I was like,
you would have to dismember them?

Yeah.

That's a lot.

So he went to Minyan, so at this time,
so this is what they wanted to do.

Planned the whole thing out.

So Holmes had went to Minyanapolis
and Chicago during this time.

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I don't know why I said Minyanapolis.
Minyanapolis is what I meant.
I was going to let it go,
and then I was thinking the world won't.
You know, I was glad you correct me.
Thank you, because that's, I rolled over and I said,
ah, that's not a big deal.
Then I said, yep, that's a big deal.
Then I went back.
Minyanapolis is what I meant.
And Chicago during this time,
and he was able to get a job as a drug clerk in a pharmacy.
And according to him,
he was able to procure bodies pretty easily
by buying them from med school anatomy rooms at the time,
because now he had money.
Mr. Burke, Mr. Hare.
Exactly.
Now also, that was just very easy to do back then,
so he got two bodies.
He was able to buy two bodies,
probably adult ones, I assume,
and put them into barrels,
which he stored in a room at the McCoy Hotel in Chicago.
Damn.
But apparently, after hearing or reading
about how well insurance companies
checked into cases like this,
and would like require a lot of evidence and proof.
Right.
He decided they should abandon the whole idea.
Now, he had two bodies now.
Yeah.
So, this is when he says, oh, okay, well that's,
I just said like, oh no,
and I just buried those bodies in my basement.
Like, not a big deal.
This story, people believe, was possibly concocted
and changed a bit to help him explain
why there were a lot of bones found buried
in his Chicago place.
Oh, good.
They were probably the result
of something even more sinister,

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just what we don't know,
but he wanted to make it look like,
well, I purchased bodies legally,
and then I just buried them down there
because we decided not to go ahead with the scheme.
Like, don't fucking put those on me, buddy.
And it's like, no, I think you killed those people.
Like, there's a lot to unpack here.
That's the thing, like he comes out with things
and it's like, legal.
Right.
I did it legally.
And it's like, no, I think you killed them.
And I think you're so good at lying.
That's the only thing you are good at
is you're making this story up
so that we don't question those bones in the basement.
But in reality, if they had questioned those bones
in the basement, which they didn't in time
to identify them or figure something out,
we probably would have figured out
that those were missing people probably.
Hondo P.
Guarantee you.
Damn.
He leaves Philadelphia in the spring of 1886
after definitely murdering people.
And he eventually settled in Englewood,
a suburban neighborhood on the south side of Chicago.
And this is where shit really starts to get wild.
And it's where you're gonna break.
And it's where we're gonna end part one.
I knew it.
I'm way too far to.
You shh.
Because the Chicago Chronicles are really where.
It's a whole new era.
Are the Chicago Chronicles bumping?
They're bumping in some way.
Not in a good way, I suppose.
Is that what you said?
I said bumping.
I sure did.
That was something I said.

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You know, bump bits are coming back?
That's upsetting.
Yeah, that's how I learned this episode.
Yeah, that's an upsetting end to this episode.
That's it, bye.
Just kidding.
But yeah, stay tuned for part two.
And he gets worse and worse, so.
Fantastic.
Yeah.
Happy anniversary to us.
Yay.
Five years.
Thanks, guys.
We love you and we hope you keep listening.
And we hope you.
Weird.
But that's weird that this entire time,
every single time Alina has said something
about him writing his own autobiography,
all you can think of is actually Simpson singing
autobiography while Henry Holmes,
or is that his name, Henry?
Yeah.
And while he writes his autobiography,
and he's like, my autobiography.
That's all I've been thinking.
Bye.
My autobiography.
Bye.
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the most prestigious boarding school in the country,
and the most cutthroat.
Bishop Gray is like no other school on the planet.
The best fencing team in the country,
elaborate black type,

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 457: H.H. Holmes Part 1

run enough drugs to sustain a blue whale,
and more money, status, and privilege than God.
I'm not supposed to be here,
but I'm here now,
and I'm not gonna settle for mediocrity.
These secret society people,
they prey on scholarship kids.
Eva Richards, you are called.
So you're the Bishop Gray Illuminati.
Do what you have to do to survive, Eva.
That's what I would do.
You're in the night of the wolf?
I wanna take the next step.
Get away from me!
Oh my God.
You have a bright future ahead of you.
Don't fall in with this crowd.
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