

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

You're listening to a Morbid Network podcast.

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

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

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

Hey weirdos, I'm Alayna.

I'm Ash.

And this is Morbid.

Whoa.

You might hear some faint- you probably won't actually, but if you do, you hear- if you might hear some faint like rain tipped tapping on the window.

You guys like that.

Ambience.

Yeah, you guys do like that.

We've gotten a lot of people who are like, I love that sound.

It's very calming.

But I don't know how you don't like the sound of rain tipped tapping.

It's very calming.

You might not even be able to hear it because we have soundproofing, but like, you never know.

I don't know.

I don't know your life.

I don't know your ears.

I don't know what you're doing.

I don't know what you're doing, okay?

Who are you?

So I'm just kidding.

You're a weirdo.

I love you.

Welcome back to part two of the H.H. Holmes saga.

Yay.

So excited to be here.

We're going to get into it today.

So the first part was kind of setting it up, where he came from, his first marriage, how he was a philanderer, how he was a schemer, how he was a shitty student, how he smelled of a smegma.

No.

I didn't want to say it again.

He was a liar and a cheater and a frauder and just, he's just an all-around shit person.

Yeah.

Well, now we're going to add murder to his repertoire.

Oh, what a repertoire.

Yeah.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

He's awful and he's going to get awful-er.

So let's-

And then he'll get awful-est.

Yep.

He's going to become one of the most awfules ever.

So when we last left you guys, he had just moved to Chicago after he was going to try that whole scheme, selling the bodies of the wife and the child, of his friend, the insurance, all that stuff.

That whole thing.

And then he just abandoned that.

And then he's like, oh, that's why there's bones buried in my basement, you idiots.

Of course.

I didn't murder anybody, except I murdered a lot of people and now I'm going to brag about it.

So figure it out.

So figure it out.

But yeah, so we left you there.

So he's in Chicago now.

And as if you know the story of H.H. Holmes, you know that it really does revolve around Chicago.

Chicago is kind of like the room where it happened.

Very much the room where it happened.

Devil in the white city, there he is.

So once he'd arrived in Chicago, he somehow passed the exam to become a pharmacist.

Wow.

I would think that that's a pretty difficult exam.

Yeah.

And he was only one of like a-like a handful of people.

Like I guess he had something in there.

Maybe chemistry was his thing.

And that's-he did a lot of extra stuff with chemistry, so maybe he really did give himself a leg up in that department.

Maybe.

But maybe it just wasn't great in other things, or he just wasn't a good student.

You know?

Yeah, exactly.

That pretty much makes sense.

But he ended up finding work at Holton Drugs, which was a pharmacy on the corner of 63rd in Wallace, and it was owned by an elderly woman named Mrs. Holton.

Ah!

Come on, imagine that.

Holton Drugs.

Isn't it funny to think of like stores just being named like something drugs?

Yeah, just like Holton Drugs.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

But she explained to Holmes that the pharmacy actually belonged to her husband, Dr. E.S. Holton, but he was very sick, very elderly, you know, ailing at the moment.

Oh, so H.H. wants to kick him down the stairs and take over the fucking pharmacy?

Yeah, the fucking pharmacy kid.

And she was finding it a little hard, a little difficult to manage this entire pharmacy by herself.

So, of course, like we said, his ears perked up.

He was sensing opportunity here.

And Holmes told her, huh, I too am a doctor.

I thought you were going to say he said, I too am sick and elderly.

No, he would lie like that though.

He would just sit there like at 27, he'll be like, I'm also elderly.

Why don't you believe me?

But yeah, he was like, you know what, I'm a doctor.

I have a lot of experience in the pharmacy.

He did not.

But he did pass the pharmacy exam.

So I think him cheated.

Something happened there.

But he was like, you know what, I'm absolutely certain that I can transform this into just a thriving business again if you just give it to me.

So not long after he began work at the pharmacy, because she believed him, of course, she's a sweet woman.

Dr. Holton did die and he left the store and everything in it to Mrs. Holton.

So Holmes sees this happening and he's like, you know, he's angling toe in this store.

So he frames it like he's doing her a favor because he's like, you're old and ailing.

Your husband just died.

You don't want to run this whole thing.

So he's like, I'll buy this from you and I'll allow you to live on the second floor.

And she was like, kind.

My God, sweetie.

You are so nice.

So she agreed and he did pay her.

So she did, she used the money that she got by mortgaging the stores fixtures, fixtures.

Fixtures.

Why couldn't I say fixtures?

It's hard.

It's a, I said like fixtures.

Because you have to do like a titch.

Yeah, that's hard.

Fixtures.

You know, words are hard in the stock and actually Holmes bought the pharmacy and he re-branded the entire things as H.H. Holmes pharmacy.

So he took out the drugs and he replaced it with pharmacy.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

Well, there you go.

He made it more upstanding.

He was like, you know what?

I think we do a little more here than just drugs.

You know what?

I'm pretty upstanding.

So let's change this.

In the early days of him owning this new pharmacy, a lot of the customers would come in and they'd ask about Mrs. Holton because people loved her.

She was a sweet old lady.

Totally.

And every time he would say that she went on a trip to California.

Now this wasn't strange because this is something she had said she wanted to do, but she never had the money to do it.

Oh, sweetie.

She's not upstairs anymore.

And she hadn't returned for several weeks.

No.

And people are still asking where she is.

And when they would ask, Holmes would just be like, well, you know, she just loved California so much that she just stayed there.

She's just there.

You can't call her on the phone because like we don't have those 1800s here.

So like you did this, you know, deal with it, I guess she stayed with that.

So there was no actual physical evidence of him having killed Mrs. Holton, but there's no evidence that he didn't either.

And there's probably some circumstantial evidence that points to her probably being killed.

Yeah.

I think her disappearance was not so much that she moved away or she went on a vacation to California.

I think he just got rid of that whole situation so that the entire building could be his.

It does sound like that.

And it's very on brand with what he would do anyways.

So it makes sense.

There you go.

These are things that he would do later.

So it's like, why would we not think that it would be this time?

I believe she might be his first victim, but what about the boy?

I thought you thought the boy was.

That one I'm like, I go back and forth with.

That one for sure could be his first victim.

But you like fullheartedly believe that she.

Mrs. Holton, I have very little doubt that he killed Mrs. Holton.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

So she's either his first or his second.

Yeah.

It should be noted too that there are variations in this story.

If you're researching this case yourself too, like one of the stories is that the woman, Mrs. Holton is not super elderly in that he got ownership of the store in exchange for promising to marry her.

Oh, shit.

And either her or her daughter, like the story never really makes it clear.

Cause again, he confessed to so many different things that some of these stories got intertwined, but this seems the one I told seems to be the most correct one.

Okay.

But the other story is that like they both go missing or one of them goes missing.

And in another version, the woman's name is Elizabeth Sarah Holton, who is the doctor and the pharmacy is owned by her and her husband, but she's the doctor.

They said, let's go with the feminist.

Yeah, exactly.

And that they are a young couple and she decided to sell the pharmacy when she became pregnant.

So like that's another story in this version, the couple doesn't disappear and they were actually still living in the neighborhood afterwards.

So like it doesn't show.

Either way, though, he wanted the pharmacy, he got the pharmacy and then the two people that previously owned the pharmacy were never seen again.

So like, I think the puzzle piece of Moida is put together to quote,

I think so, to quote Spencer and the Moida department.

Yeah.

To me, it just, you know, Mrs. Holton was older.

People came in looking for her.

She said she went to California.

She didn't go to California.

Yeah.

No matter what he took ownership of that pharmacy in late 1886.

So now the pharmacy is open and it seems to be running pretty smoothly with them at the helm, at the very least.

He, he's like, everything seems to be going good.

So like, you know what?

I'm going to look for some romance.

I'd like to point out that he is still married to Clara.

Yeah.

Uh, but yeah, there's that.

So he's turning his attention to the ladies.

Now when he was in Minneapolis, he met a woman named Ms.

Mirda Bellnap murder.

I think it's murder.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

Um, they've sparked up a flirtation and she seemed pretty smitten with him at the time and he made his life sound very exciting, which like at the time it kind of was, he was traveling all over the place.

Um, and because at the end of 1886, Mirda's life was small.

It was kind of unexciting.

She was in the small town, you know, like, I could never really see the world.

Yeah.

She lived with her parents in Minneapolis and worked in a music store.

It was like a cute little existence, but like to her, that wasn't enough.

She didn't feel like she was getting out there.

I get that.

So Holmes seemed very enticing to her and he was very charming.

So, and he also represented himself as a very intelligent man.

He's a doctor.

Like that's like, whoa, hey, I mean, that's like you're young and you're getting it.

And he's also a business owner in Chicago.

So Holmes knew all of this.

And so he wrote to Mirda and courted her very aggressively, burst through letters and then he did it in person.

Like he was really playing the long game here.

And after only a few months of talking back and forth, he took a bold move and he proposed to Mirda and the two ended up being married January 28th, 1887.

Oh, okay.

He's still married to Clara.

I was like, how does they just didn't realize in this district because it was like another district?

Oh, I think it was just in the 1800s and they like, there's no electronic records happening.

There is 1800s, but I keep forgetting that.

I'm like, why didn't they just look it up on the computer?

Why didn't they just like break that down somewhere?

So Mirda was very excited about this marriage, but I think that excitement would have been slightly tempered if he did let her know that he was still married to a woman named Clara.

Not usually do it.

Yeah.

Strangely, two weeks after he married Mirda, Holmes filed a divorce petition in Cook County Supreme Court against Clara, stating that, quote, on the 28th day of June, 1883, in the city of Ann Arbor in the state of Michigan, the said Clara A. Mudgett, wholly disregarding and in violation of her marriage vows, covenants and obligations, committed adultery and had carnal knowledge with one J.M. Downer.

What?

So he's claiming they should divorce Clara and he.

Yeah.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

After he's already married a second woman, by the way, he's now filing for divorce against Clara, saying Clara committed adultery.

Like, sir, you are number one.

You did that super duper backwards.

You're straight up committing adultery.

You motherfucking hypocrite.

Like you are in the throes of adulterous behavior.

And you are saying she was, she adulterated years ago?

What?

It's a lot.

He's doing, he got married to another woman.

Like, are we clear?

Melina, that's his right as a man.

That's his right.

He's a man.

So, and he's a doctor.

It gets even weirder.

In this divorce decree, he also had put in there this, he had put in there, he further represents to your honor that he has ever since the time of said marriage conducted himself as a true, kind and affectionate husband.

You dirty little liar.

And during that time has faithfully discharged all of his duties.

Now, do you remember when he abandoned her several times with their child, lived off her money alone and beat her to the point of black eyes?

Do you remember?

I do recall.

Does any of that ring is true, kind or affectionate?

Nor.

No.

Nor.

Oh, well, he also added into the decree that their six-year-old son, Robert, quote, is now living and is under the care, custody and control of your orator, Herman Webster Mudgeit.

That simply wasn't true and never was.

Wait, so he was saying like, I take care of the child?

Like, he literally had put in the divorce decree that that child is now living and is under the care, custody and control of him.

And that's not at all the truth.

He had been with Clara the entire time.

Also, that's so easy to prove.

At one point, he tried to go get Robert and take custody and she was like, no bitch.

I remember.

And then it didn't happen.

Right.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

But he's now having it put in the decree that Robert is in his custody.
I don't know if he thought he would get more money or something like that or something would come out of that, but like, you're an idiot.
And again, so easy to prove.
Like you go to his house, does he have a child's bedroom?
Yeah.
Like the end.
The end.
And then also, you don't want that child.
So you're just doing that to be an asshole.
Oh, for sure.
But how many parents do that?
Oh my God.
They don't actually want custody of the child.
They just want to do it to hurt the other parent and it's like, fuck you.
Yeah.
So they looked and no one could ever find a J.M.
Downer either that Clara supposedly had carnal knowledge with.
What does that mean?
They fucked.
Oh, carnal knowledge is fucking.
That's fuked.
That's fuked.
He likely didn't exist.
Like he likely did not exist.
No.
Holmes was a lying sack of shit, but it doesn't really matter anyways because he also failed to show up on and follow up on any of the administrative requirements and the petition.
Yeah.
And the petition, like I hear that, but like in the petition just lapsed.
It was eventually dismissed by the court for quote default of appearance of complaintant.
It's unclear whether Clara ever even received notice of his intention to divorce her.
I don't even think she knew he ever wanted to divorce her.
So he didn't get divorced.
You know what this is giving a little bit?
Sheena and Raquel, he makes this fake TRO, except it's not a TRO.
It's any doesn't even show up for the fucking hearing.
He doesn't.
That's where my head's at.
Except he except he actually like should have just divorced Clara.
Like, why are you not getting divorced?
Why are you married to like several women at a time?

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

That will.

He's the Sandoval in it all now.

So like, obviously, that's exactly what you think of with HH Holmes.

But like his marriage to Clara, Holmes' relationship with Myrta started off like that of like any couple in love.

She helped him run the pharmacy and she became very just like impressed and enamored with his work ethic because he was really running this shit.

Like she thought, wow, what a cute family we are.

Like I'm helping you run your pharmacy in Chicago and we're so successful.

And she later said, quote, ambition has been the curse of my husband's life.

He wanted to attain a position where he would be honored and respected.

He wanted wealth.

And again, we see the hallmark of his behavior is always based on money.

He's got to be there's got to be Capricorn in his chart.

I'm pretty I think his birthday, he's a cancer, like a son.

But I'm like, there's Capricorn somewhere in there.

Money motivated, money motivated and to a fault.

But in the spring of that year, Myrta actually became pregnant.

And the bulk of the work she did was shifting, you know, off of her.

And her husband had to kind of like take a bigger role back in the pharmacy.

See, I want to be excited for her, but I feel like it's going to end bad.

No, you definitely don't want to be excited for this whole thing.

But she was separated from Holmes a lot.

Like she was kind of she had to be in the back.

Right. Like she could do office work.

So she was just kind of relegated away from the public too.

And she was lonely. Yeah.

She got lonely.

So her parents moved from Minneapolis to Willman,

a small village about 15 miles outside of Chicago.

I love that they were like, we'll be with you.

We'll come and hang with you.

And after they like settled in there, Myrta moved in with her parents

and gave birth to their daughter, Lucy.

Cute. At first, Myrta's parents were very suspicious of H.H. Holmes.

Well, because this all came about very quickly, like married, baby, business.

And I feel like parents, they know it's like he went after young women.

Yeah. At the time.

And he and he went after young men for like schemes and stuff.

So he was always going for people who he knew he could con.

Like young and unexperienced.

But older people, I feel like like elderly people fell for it.

But somewhere in between, like the parents of the whole generation were like, something is suss about you.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

And I don't know what it is.
And he didn't exactly endear himself to them.
Despite his wife and child living in the house, he was barely there.
Like he never came to visit.
So they were like, do you want to see your infant child?
No. No. OK.
Well, literally never came to see them.
That's good.
Immediately, they began to question the kind of man
that their daughter had married and had a child with.
And soon, though, he was able to charm his way into their good graces.
I'm not sure how, but it took a lot of his yo-yoing on his part.
It was mainly when they saw the ways that he like,
he wasn't around all the time, but he showered Myrta and the baby with gifts
and adoration every time he would be there.
So he would love bomb a lot of the time.
He was there when he was there.
He was there. He was just never there.
And he also was beautiful.
You know, pro poetry.
He also always had an excuse for his long absences.
It was never just like, oh, whatever, fuck it.
Like, dude, it is always like, oh, my God, I know.
It's just like running a farm, running a business.
You know, I'm just such a such a business man.
Business money that it's like, look at this briefcase.
Like I'm very important.
Meanwhile, there's nothing in it.
It just opens and it's like flies out.
But he would say that things were busy at the store
and there was so much to do in Chicago and making it seem, you know,
like that he was just up to his neck and work and he was just trying to support
his little family.
And according to Eric Larson, who I will source his work in our show notes,
Holmes's manner of dress and how he would
frequently give a lot of gifts and like he was always about the material things
that really gave off and especially back in those days,
like that he was a man of importance, like he gave off that air to everybody.
Dress for the job you want, not the job you have.
That's the thing.
He was very concerned with that.
Like he always wanted to present himself as being a man of importance,
a man of means, a man of power.
And it honestly went a long way to making her parents at least be eased

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

a little bit, thinking, well, he's going to take care of them.

Yeah, I get it.

Yeah.

Moms are just like really great people overall.

Like moms can do anything.

Sometimes they even lift cars and stuff to like save what's underneath the car, which is usually their baby.

Well, when it comes to finding an unforgettable mother's day gift, movement makes stylish watches and inspired jewelry as unique as she.

Yo mama is movement.

A small team of dreamers in Venice Beach, California have perfected sleek, original, ultra clean watch design and stunning minimalist jewelry, which is my personal favorite.

And for Mother's Day, they are having a huge site wide sale, which I am stoked about.

So you can get a tried and true gift that won't break the bank.

Get something for your mom and get something for yourself

because I am obsessed with movement.

I have a movement watch that I love.

It's like this old timey looking gold watch that just makes me feel like a rich girly and then I'll pair it because movement also sells sunglasses.

I have this pair of like rectangular

tortoise shell ones.

And when I match those two things together, I feel like the baddest bee that has entered the room.

And then I continue to feel that way when I actually literally enter the room because people are like, oh, my God, where is that watch from?

OMG, where are your sonnies from?

And I'm like, movement, movement, movement.

Time is a beautiful and meaningful sentiment.

Show the moms in your life how much you appreciate all the time they've given you.

They'll see their watch and they'll think of you every day, which is perfect for a Mother's Day gift, a tried and true gift of style.

By the way, one size fits all for a chill shopping experience, fast shipping and returns always.

Save big on your best Mother's Day gift ever from movement.

Get up to 40 percent off at MVMT.com and use code Morbid Pod.

Exclusions may apply.

That's MVMT.com code Morbid Pod for up to 40 percent off.

Hi there, Morbid listeners.

It's Ash and Alina.

Hi.

As you all know, on our show, we share a passion for all things spooky, the paranormal and, of course, some mind blowing true crime cases.

There's another podcast that we think you will all enjoy called Suspect,

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

Five Shots in the Dark.

This latest season looks at a case with two victims, one murdered in cold blood and one imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit. It follows Leon Benson's story, a man who spent more than half of his life, a total of 24 years in an Indiana State prison for the murder of Casey Shane, a man he never met.

There was no physical evidence, no known motive and no one coming forward with information. He was sentenced to 60 years in prison, all because one person swore they saw something. But what if she was wrong?

From Wondery and Campside Media comes season three of the hit podcast, Suspect.

You can listen to Suspect early and add free on Wondery Plus.

Find Wondery Plus in the Wondery app or on Apple Podcasts.

As this is happening, he is now thinking about that infamous murder castle that everybody knows about, because now he's in Chicago.

He's settled there.

He's in an apartment, I'd like above the pharmacy, but he wants more.

And he's got grand, grand plans.

And during the later decades of the 19th century, Chicago was going like there was a huge population boom.

A lot of people were moving west for work and opportunity and like a bigger, brighter life.

Kind of like how everybody's like, oh, my God, let's go to California and become stars.

Like it's the same kind of thing.

California, New York, Chicago, same vibes.

Yeah, exactly.

As a result, new buildings were popping up all over the city because like people were coming in, the economy was starting to boom.

People were trying to make way for a ton of residents to be living their big apartment buildings.

And since arriving in Chicago and starting work,

Holmes had been eyeing this empty lot that happened to be across the street from the pharmacy.

And finally, in the summer of 1888, he managed to buy it.

And at the time, he registered the deed under the false name, H.S. Campbell.

This is the beginning of him using many, many aliases to get many, many things.

Also, can I just know it wasn't 1888, Jack the Ripper?

Yeah, so they were operating at the same time.

That's so crazy to think about, like two of the world's most fucking notorious serial killers operating at the same time.

And it's opposite ends of the world.

Yeah, it's like so crazy.

That's why a lot of people think there was some like layover between the two.

Really?

Like a lot of people think H.H. Holmes is Jack the Ripper.

Oh, OK.

Vice versa. Oh, I think we talked about it in the episodes.

Yeah, it's a I don't know.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

It's a theory. It's a theory.

I was like, I was like, we mentioned it.

But we didn't go super into it because I don't.

One, I haven't looked too.

I haven't looked hard enough into that theory to be convinced by it.

Yeah. And I don't want to give a full

opinion on something that I haven't given the full court press to.

Well, and it kind of seems like, at least from what I know, H.H.

Holmes is like operation of murder is very different than Jack the Ripper's.

Right. It is.

And he is he's mainly money vote motivated with his and Jack wasn't.

But very he liked killing as well.

Like H.H. Holmes liked killing and he liked killing women.

Yeah, he did enjoy that.

And it did. It wasn't to me.

H.H. Holmes isn't just a I kill for financial gain.

Sometimes it's I killed because I wanted to kill.

Right. Or I killed because this bitch was in my way, essentially.

Yikes. Like not.

That's essentially no, no.

I would say, you know, and it's like, that's how he kind of presented himself is like she was a problem.

Yeah. So out she had to go. Damn.

And the way he would talk about it was very cold like that.

Like, well, she became an issue.

So down the chute, she went crazy.

And he was very like intricate about the ways he would do it.

To me, it doesn't really line up so far with what I've seen

between the two cases because of mainly because of the two,

I think environments with which they were killing in

are so vastly different that their methods of murder don't add up together.

But I don't know if that has to do with the environments.

Yeah, possibly that the person tailored himself to those environments.

Right.

But who knows?

I mean, when we talked about it in

when we talked actually, when we talked about it with Tobias,

he made a valid point of like, we always thought, but like, I'm like,

I don't know, in Whitechapel, if it was like somebody like HH Homes

who dressed like a man of importance all the time, it was very like showy.

He would stick out like a sore thumb.

And it's like, so I don't know.

But then the reports of Jack the Ripper that he did look a little fancy.

So it's like, but you don't know, you know, like we've come through

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

a lot of different theories with that.
And it's like, it could be mistaken.
It could be, I don't know.
I just hate the unknown.
It's an interesting theory.
And I will look further.
I'm, you know, and I'll probably look further into it by the end of this series because I would like to touch upon it more by the end.
But I definitely want to look further into it and look at some dates and look at, you know, because I know there was some possibilities that HH was out of the country at certain times and that maybe Jack had left at certain times.
And it would be how fucking crazy would it be if he was?
It would be nuts because 1888 is when Jack ended, right?
1888, Jack was still going.
Oh, he was still going.
OK, all right.
But but he did like, I think this is when he was coming to an end.
So which is interesting because this is really when HH really started beginning going over here.
So that is interesting.
It definitely is.
I'll be I'm excited to hear what you have to say once you are more into it.
I definitely want to look further into it for sure for the divergence there.
And we'll talk about it. Don't worry.
It's really not a divergence, though, because it's all the same.
Cool. But so we were saying that by the summer of 1888, he had registered this lot across the street from the pharmacy under the false name H.S. Campbell.
So this is when Holmes committed the first murder that he would wholly admit to.
OK. He claimed he killed a friend and former schoolmate named Dr. Leacock. Now, he did this because this man had a large life insurance policy. And he said he lured his friend to Chicago under some kind of bullshit pretence, gave him, quote, an overwhelming dose of Lodinum and killed him that way. After his murder, Holmes took the body of Leacock to Grand Rapids, Michigan. He did this because it would look like Leacock had died accidentally in his home. And then he collected the \$40,000 from the life insurance policy.
Kind. Now, this is one of the murders people waiver about because he loved to talk about murder in Mayhem when he was caught. And he really wanted to make everybody like, you got to know I'm a fucking monster. Like he wanted you to know he was like, let me tell you how bad I am. He doesn't need to make us believe he is a fucking monster.
That's the thing.
Like he has no need to exaggerate.
And yet he does all the time.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

It's very strange.

But either way, there is mention a lot in his youth, like in his early days, in any research you see of a classmate at college named Robert Leacock.

Now, he was actually the one that Holmes claimed helped him originally come up with the idea of faking a death and using a medical dead body to claim insurance fraudulently.

So it would be a little poetic of Holmes to then use that plan on his friend, who he came up with it with, but take it to another level and just murder him for it.

Like it would be something he would do.

That's a lot.

And when he confessed, he said, quote, like the man eating tiger of the tropical jungle, I roamed about the world seeking whom I could destroy.

Dramatic. That's him.

Yeah, that's him.

That's him and his mustache.

Very dramatic.

Now, for the.

So this all began.

This is what began the murder castle idea.

It was what he said.

OK.

He said, after this whole scheme, after he went through with it, he got the money.

He was ready to go.

He said, I had this grand idea for a murder castle.

And according to Holmes, the design and the purpose of it really came to him all at once after this.

This was like the igniting thing.

He had like an epiphany.

Yeah, he said he originally envisioned a massive three floor building, three stories up the first floor would have retail shops, pharmacies, jewelry shops, clothing stores.

In his words, he said it would be, quote, to generate income and allow him to employ as many women as possible that he could then that he could then murder.

OK, the second and third floors were going to be apartments for rent.

And he was going to have his own very fancy apartment in the giant corner unit of the second floor, like essentially kind of like a penthouse.

Exactly. And he would have a large window that he could gaze over sixty third and Wallace. Well, I just got distracted.

My palace. Like I kind of want that.

I know you don't want this one.

Not this one. No.

Now, this was all the normal logistics of a building, it seems like that seems like a very normal building. It's great.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

Except all the women.

And it seems innocuous to a certain extent.

Sure. Pretty normal.

Seems like some kind of he seems like a piggy guy who just wants to like hire women.

He's like Doug Dimmodome. There you go.

So well. Dimmodome.

Well, this part was important to him, like that it was important to him to have a very front facing business model, a very front facing looking building.

Yeah, no one could question.

But what was more important to him was these macabre little details that were going to be hidden inside the bones of the building.

They were much more important and much more exciting to him in particular.

To us, they're fucking horrifying.

To give you an idea, some of the features he wanted was a giant shoot

that would extend from one of the apartments on the second floor

all the way down to a secret chamber in the basement that would seal off.

Then he also wanted a large room in his own personal apartment

that you would have to walk into.

And then there was a walk in vault in that that was airtight with iron walls.

Oh, why would you want that?

Also, how do you talk to the contractors?

We'll get to that. Don't worry about it.

He also wanted gas jets throughout the entire building that would be controlled only in his personal office.

So he could turn on gas and just gas you anywhere he wanted to.

No one's going to notice that in the blueprint.

No, he also don't worry.

We're going to get to that.

He also wanted a large basement with secret storage chambers inside that would seal off. OK.

And like you said, your first thought is how are you going to get this built?

My guy, right? How are you going to do this?

Well, he wanted this all to be very practical from the sense of his murderous intentions, obviously.

He needed easy ways of disposing of and hiding dead bodies.

He was not willing to bend on any of this.

This was his vision.

But he also wanted this psychological aspect to it.

Like he knew this was all there, but no one else was going to know this was there.

He knew the gas jets would be there, but the guests wouldn't.

And he loved the idea of this like whole like I know, but they don't kind of thing.

And it all just fed into his desire to like just fuck with people and also kill people.

But he knew like we do that even though he wasn't willing to bend on any of this, he was making this happen.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

He knew that these curious design aspects maybe would draw a little suspicion from any architect, like you said. Perhaps.

So without any kind of skill set in designer building, he actually began drawing up plans for the building himself.

That's really crazy.

Yeah, that's the thing that kills me with him.

He's one of those people that you're like, you could have done something great if you would just put your mind to it.

Like you weren't a brilliant guy, but you had a working you had hard work ethic when you put your fucking mind to it, but not for a good cause, terrible causes. Exactly.

And it's like, like this, like you're learning a skill set yourself to accomplish something, but you're accomplishing a skill set to build a murder castle because you're scared someone will figure it out.

What a wild fucking like, like this is a real too.

Like this is real like what this is real.

And what's so there was a population boom in Chicago, like I said at the time, people were moving over there and it meant that there was going to be no shortage of labor.

Like people were going to be wanting to work on these kind of things.

But there was again, still that problem that these workers were going to ask too many questions.

So even though he had put together the blueprints and he was going to have somebody help him, he devised a strategy that would allow him to get the building constructed without any suspicions.

The plan was he was going to constantly change the architects, buildings, laborers.

None of them were going to be able to get a clear or complete picture of what was being built.

They wouldn't be able to ask any questions because they were only going to get bits and pieces of it. I feel like that's like that's such a gamble to take.

His whole life was a fucking gamble.

Everything he did was a gamble.

I'm just thinking of like work we've had to do on the house and I'm like, wow, I can't imagine being like, OK, you finished that.

No, I'm going to call someone else.

Like he just and what he would do was he would just not pay the person and be like, fuck you, you're you're fired by chicken.

Like just bring someone else in and be like, OK, start working on this.

You're creating so many issues for yourself.

And they would just be more confused really.

Like they just were like, what?

And not realize how weird all of this was together.

And also due to the lax inspection processes in Chicago at the time and the limited protections for laborers, he was going to be able to get away with not really paying anybody like it really wasn't going to be an issue.

Like you were saying, two people are so desperate for work that they're probably not asking that many questions. Exactly.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

They do that. That's the other thing.

He's banking on that.

But it is a really like cunningly smart thing to do to one, start the blueprint process yourself to make sure you get all those weird things in there, right, then hire architects, have them work a little more on it, then fire them before they're done.

Hire another one to build off that other thing, fire that one, bring in laborers to start building this little extension, fire them when they're done with it, hire another one to do that one.

Like that way you're getting it piecemeal together and nobody can fully get a full picture of what's happening here.

Maybe they know a shoot is in there, but they're like, what's that shoe for?

And you're like, I don't know, garbage, bye.

Like it's just no one can really get into the like nitty gritty of what's happening.

It's like you're giving everybody a little piece of the puzzle, but like but nothing that they can jump off of. Exactly.

The construction of the quote unquote murder castle, which he was calling the Homes Castle.

Yeah, began in the summer of 1889.

Again, partially working from Homes's own design blueprints and also working from plans partially developed by local architects, two of which were Charles Berger and Edward Gullner.

The labor and materials were going to be from etna iron and steel.

Homes was ready to begin using this murder castle before it was even started, though, like he was like, let's go before the foundation had even been completed.

He was already making plans to get this thing going.

Early in the construction, he actually approached a bricklayer named George Bowman and he approached him with a very strange proposition.

There's just a bricklayer doing his job.

Yeah, I know about Homes and bricks.

Yeah. Now Bowman later said he asked me

if I wouldn't like to make money easier than what I was doing.

And of course, I told him yes. Yeah, who wouldn't?

And according to Bowman, he said a few days later, he came over to me and pointing down into the basement said, you see that man down there?

Well, that's my brother-in-law and he's got no love for me.

Neither have I for him.

Now, it would be the easiest matter for you to drop a stone on that fellow's head while you're working.

And I'll give you fifty dollars if you do it.

What? Fifty dollars?

Well, at the time. Oh, we're talking in 1888.

I know, I got to keep remembering it all.

That's a loss. I'm like, fifty dollars.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

That's it for the murder of a man.
It's honestly unknown what the purpose of this kill proposition was, to be quite honest.
He probably just wanted to see that he could do it.
He wanted to either make money from some avenue by doing this
or he was just honestly asking to see if Bowman was a guy he could trust.
I think he was looking for a guy he could trust.
But either way, Bowman quit and never returned to the job.
Smart man. He was like, bye. No, thank you.
Trust me, though, not everyone working the job site
was so kind and willing to run away from this man.
In April of 1889. I'm so scared.
Holmes met, excuse me, and it was in
it's later than April in 1889.
I had the wrong month.
Holmes met a carpenter by the name of Benjamin Pytzel.
I think it's Pytzel.
I think you're right.
At first, Pytzel's job was to take care of the horses
that were going to be used on the construction site,
because again, we're in the 1800s.
But we are. We are.
But over time, he actually gained Holmes's trust a lot.
And he became like an assistant to Holmes, like a personal assistant.
Pytzel was a little like Holmes.
He had a history of petty crimes, misdemeanors.
Kind of an air duel.
And eventually it all caught up to him
and he was arrested for passing bad checks in Indiana
while he was out, while he was still working for Holmes.
That was a stand up month.
So Holmes actually bailed Pytzel out of jail.
Yeah, that's his right hand.
He paid the amount in bad checks, by the way.
He bailed him out with bad checks.
Bailed the man sitting in jail for bad checks out of jail with bad checks.
The Irish is nothing but a poet.
Pytzel failed to return to Indiana for the trial.
So now they were just like now they nothing could happen.
They're like, we're out.
They're like Jay-Z and Beyonce on the run together.
They're thick as thieves together
because now they're the boss and the assistant.
It's like the assistant to the regional manager from the office.
There you go.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

Now, after a year or two, the unpaid bills and the schemes and the lying and the fraud, it started to catch up with Holmes. That'll happen.

Unfortunately, for the most part, though, individual laborers, many of them were immigrants.

They had no way of getting the money owed to them.

That's so fucked.

Yeah. And that sucks.

He just got away with that.

But remember, he's using iron and steel for the supplies.

That's a major company who doesn't give a shit about your feelings.

So they sued his ass.

And when he didn't pay his debts, they were like, we're fucking taking all this back, dude.

But when they sued him in the fall of 1889, he tried to use like usual bullshit tactics and excuses that he did to get out of paying them.

One thing he did was he changed the deed on the property to make it look like it was owned by his mother-in-law.

Yeah. So he said he wasn't responsible for the debt because it was in her name.

How do you just do that?

He just did that.

Like, what?

For the most part, like, so literally he had first registered that deed under a false alias.

Right. But that's.

And then when he started getting in trouble, he just shifted it all into his mother-in-law's name.

It was like, these are her debts.

I don't know what you're talking about.

Well, I love that.

And like, nobody was like, yeah, dude, like, clearly you just did that.

Yeah. That's the thing.

Back then, you could do that easily.

You can shift out like who's going to catch you, you know?

You just like write her name in there.

And you're like, there it is.

You just like, check up on it.

On the previous writing, rub it off.

Exactly.

So for the most part, all his like legal shit was handled by his lawyer, Edward Marr, who actually did manage to successfully like push off creditors for a while.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

But he was and he was honestly his lawyer
till he was like executed, essentially.

Damn.

And he did manage to help him out in this scenario.

I think they just like kind of backed off a little bit
because it was under her name.

That was going to be an issue.

But you wouldn't think this murder castle would be like,
you would think that this would be a very long process of building this thing.
It's huge.

And with all this complicated, it's an annoying long project.

There's all the constant turnover of workers and architects.

There's legal troubles now associated with it.

But the actual construction of the building happened really quickly.

Really?

It was literally like pretty much done by the end of 1889.

Wow.

So like a year or excuse me, it was done by 1890.

OK, so like two-ish years.

Yeah. And I think they were putting like finishing touches on it until 91.

But it was essentially like livable at that point.

Holmes had already moved murder Lucy and her mother,
the one he had thrown the deeds into,
into the large corner apartment on the second floor.

I think that's how he was able to get away with doing these kind of things
was he would then, don't worry about it, don't worry about it.

I'm I'm handling it.

Here's your beautiful penthouse.

Yeah, like here you go.

It's like a Jada essence hall.

Look over there. Exactly.

So yeah, they all got to live on there.

And a short time later, he sold the drugstore across the street,
the original one that he got from Mrs. Holton.

And the new owner who bought it, he was like,
oh, like you're going to love it here.

You have no competition.

There's no other drugstore.

Like you're the only pharmacy.

Like I'm telling you, this place is going to be a booning.

It's great. Like don't worry about it.

And he was like, oh, great business.

See you later. Bye.

He turns around and opens a new drugstore

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

on the first floor of the murder castle.
What an actual douchebag.
Yeah, but that's a perfect example
of why you don't just have an agreement by word of mouth.
He's such a dick. Yeah.
Like he's just such a dick.
Yeah. He does things just to be a dick.
Because he's such a fuck boy.
He gets kicks. He really is.
He loves it.
Now, among the first few, because again,
you don't know which one is his first murder victim.
That's so crazy.
But among the first, among them,
in Chicago was John Dubri.
And it was actually one of his investors
in the murder castle.
It was a man that Holmes owed money to.
Dubri had actually arrived in Chicago
to see the complete, completed construction of the castle
and to get his money that he owed.
This was on April 18th, 1891.
Because like I said, in 91, it was like dunski.
Sure.
And he hadn't even entered the building
when he actually dropped to the ground outside the pharmacy
and began convulsing.
Oh.
According to Benjamin Nixon, who was like,
I think he was in the jewelry store on the first floor.
He might have even owned it, I think.
He saw Holmes rush outside to Dubri's side
and quote, poured a dark liquid down Dubri's throat
and he died immediately.
What?
On the street.
I wonder, so did what Holmes have anything to do
with his convulsions beforehand or no idea?
Or if it was just a happy accident
that he was able to pour something down his throat
that would kill him instantly.
Holy shit.
I don't know.
But Dubri's death may not, like he didn't get any money

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

from it, but he didn't lose any money either.
Well, yeah, because he's gonna have to pay him.
So he kind of did get money out of it.
And he would have had to pay a small fortune to him.
I mean, he was an investor in the thing.
That was a lot.
He was essentially alone on the castle,
but he didn't have to pay anymore.
Right, so he did get money out of it.
Now, during the construction of the castle
and into its first year, he was engaged in a lot of schemes,
like little schemes, you know,
like the snake oil salesman kind of schemes.
Like he would sell mineral water to people
and say it would like cure all this shit,
but it was just vanilla infused tap water.
Sounds kind of good.
He would con widows out of their pensions.
You know, he was very into that.
He's such a, like low down fucking asshole.
He is a low down, just dirt bag, he really is.
I mean, he's capable of murder, so obviously,
but like- He's so low down in every way, though.
The little like petty crimes on top of that.
Widows out of pensions, like god damn.
I just want an elderly woman to beat him
over the head with her purse.
But he was still very committed,
but while doing these schemes,
he was committed to his murder for profit idea.
That was his main thing.
And in 1891, shortly after everything was done,
Holmes approached a woman who did his laundry
and he had a proposition for her.
Oh god.
And she was the laundress for like the actual castle.
And he, I know, he would pay the one,
he said, I'll pay you \$6,000.
That's a lot.
Back then?
I'll pay you \$6,000 to take out a life insurance policy
in the amount of \$10,000.
Which is even more.
And she was like, why the fuck would you pay me to do that?

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

Like, I don't understand, why would I do that?
And he said, well, then after you die,
I would make \$4,000 profit on the investment.
And in the meantime, you can spend the \$6,000
however you want.
You just get \$6,000 free and clear.
And this woman was really young
and her job as a laundress really didn't make her any money.
So she was going to absolutely agree to this.
She was like, of course I want \$6,000 right now.
Nothing is ever that good.
Like he had her.
But then he apparently leaned in close to her
and softly said, don't be afraid of me.
And if that was Thomas Shelby, sign me up.
Like I will buy that life insurance policy.
Does he say that to people?
Like no, but I just thought that's something
that Thomas Shelby would absolutely do.
Like he has that vibe.
Like I'm not afraid.
But this is Herman Webster-Mudget
who smells like scrotum.
Exactly.
So she immediately said something about him.
Just that was off.
It scared me.
And she was like, I immediately declined the offer.
Anybody that says don't be afraid of me
for out of the blue, no reason.
I'm afraid of.
And I think he was trying to do the like,
don't be afraid of me.
Like, you know what I mean?
Like aren't I charming?
Like being so on the nose that like.
But you're like, you actually are scary.
Like that's what I meant when I said like,
if Kylie and Murphy is leaning into you
and saying, don't be afraid of me.
I'm like, I'm not.
You know what though?
I would still be afraid.
I would not.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

The sexy Harry motherfucking styles could walk up to me
and say, don't be afraid of me.
And I'd be like, you know what, Harold?
It's been a good run.
It's been a good fucking run.
But Herman Webster-Mudget says that to me.
And I'm like, bye.
I would run so far away.
So that this lady was like, absolutely not.
Just like, what is wrong with you?
Yeah, he's trying some shit.
It's like when people say like, I don't bite.
I'm like, yeah, I figured because we're all humans here.
Yeah, exactly.
So in 1890, like the year before,
after a long bidding and like crazy process,
it was announced that the next World's Columbian exposition
would be held in Chicago.
And it was going to be held between May and October of 1893.
So this timing was supposed to coincide with the celebration
of Christopher Columbus's arrival in North America.
Holy shit.
The World's exposition was a huge fair
with all the fair accoutrements.
And it was held in and around Jackson Park.
It was going to be celebrating the scientific
and technological advancements of the modern world.
It was so funny to think about.
Very mustache twisty and bowler hat wary
and old sport kind of vibes, you know?
Like everyone's got a cane.
Loves it.
Yeah, it just feels right.
Parasols in the air.
Yeah, you just don't care.
Exactly.
The fair was going to be a massive spectacle.
It was going to very much draw in hundreds of thousands
of visitors to Chicago.
Visitors, you said.
It was going to be a huge, huge boom
for the local economy.
It was a huge win for them to get it here.
And a huge win for Mr. H. H.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

Yay for Chicago.

In Holmes, he was probably pretty psyched about tourist dollars coming in, like regular ones. Like, you know, there was going to be a lot of boom in the economy.

That's good for everybody.

But he was not one to waste opportunities that were just going to stroll into his life, especially if it involved bringing unsuspecting women into his orbit.

Exactly.

So he was like, well, this is even better.

Like, this works for me.

So that's when Ned and Julia Connor arrived in Chicago.

No.

They were in need of work, a place to stay.

And somebody they knew was like, you should check with this guy, H.H. Holmes.

He's got a new building.

I'm sure there's employment opportunities in it.

There's also places to live, like he's a perfect guy to go to.

And apparently they were right because he had a jewelry store on the first floor and he happened to need somebody to work there.

It was crazy.

Oh, wow.

So Ned was hired, like, on the spot to work in that jewelry store.

What a great one.

And they ended up moving into an apartment in the Holmes castle.

Better still, Holmes was like, Julia can work in the pharmacy with me.

Oh, God.

And I can train her to keep the books.

Like, you guys just got two jobs and one.

That's wild.

And then Julia's sister, Gertrude, moved into the city a few months later and he was like, I'll employ her as well.

Wow, what a great guy.

Such a nice guy.

And that's so sad too,

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

that they probably were like, wow, like, how lucky are we?
And like, what a kind guy.
Like, he's just like ready to help people
who come into the city.
Now, to Ned, things felt like, wow,
we've been really struggling
and this is finally falling all into place.
But he said that, but there was always something
about H.H. Holmes that he said made him uncomfortable.
Was it a smell?
He just didn't like it.
Probably the smegma.
He seemed overly interested and attentive
to Julia and Gertrude.
Yeah.
Crossed him out, made him feel weird.
He had that feeling.
He continued to feel some type of way about Holmes
as they started to become better acquainted.
And he said, he kept noticing stranger
and stranger behavior.
He was just an odd guy.
And he said, on one occasion,
Holmes was like, I got something to show you, Ned.
And he was like, okay.
And he showed him that large vault
that he'd installed in his apartment.
And he showed him another one in the basement.
And he showed him one in the basement
and said, Ned, step inside.
No.
And Ned stepped inside and he closed the door.
And before he closed the door, he said,
I just want to show you how well this is soundproofed.
Oh my God.
And so he shut the door and he said,
I shut the door and put my ear to the crack,
but could only hear a faint sound.
And he was immediately worried
and put off by the fact that Holmes had made a point
of showing him this weird secret vault
and then demonstrating to him how it locks
and how, by the way, Ned, no one will hear you in here.
He let him out of it.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

So terrifying.

But this was definitely a, just so you know.

This is where I can put you.

We're moving out in two and a half minutes.

Goodbye.

Bye.

Now over time during this whole thing,
because remember, Holmes is paying a lot of attention
to Julia, like it's getting weird.

So things between Ned and Julia are becoming strained.

Right, because she's kind of fallen for it.

Julia being.

Again, H.H. Holmes is very charming.

He's got it all.

These women are being told the world.

They are seeing the world.

They are seeing him as this very important guy,
this very wealthy and connected guy.

And at the same time, they're making money.

Exactly.

Now they're arguing a lot, Ned and Julia,
and you know, he was really having trouble
with how much attention was being paid to her
and how she was seeming to like it.

And he later told reporters,

I finally told her we could not go on that way.

I told her that I told her on a certain day
we would quit, that she could go her way
and I would go mine.

And when that day came, I did not go upstairs to our room
but stayed downstairs and slept in the barber shop.

Oh, that's so sad.

So in the months let followed this,

Ned tried to get his relationship back on track.

He was like, we were fine before.

Right.

This is ruining everything.

Like this guy literally came in
and just like took complete control over you.

And Gertrude, her sister left the city a while later.

So like she wasn't around anymore.

So now it was just Julia and he was trying to fix it.

But during this time, Holmes suddenly offered out of nowhere
to sell Ned the pharmacy.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

What?

On the first floor.

And does Ned even have like pharmacy experience?

Well, and he was like, I want you to own the store,
like not be a pharmacist,

but I want you to own the business.

And of course, Ned is like, hell yeah, are you kidding me?

And he's like, this is going to be the thing
that's going to improve me and Julia's relationship.

I'm going to be a business owner.

Like I'm going to take her attention.

But unfortunately the business made things worse
because Holmes had sold it to him knowing
he hadn't paid a fucking dime to any of his creditors.

And now those debts, sorry, Ned, those are your debts now.
You inherited all of those.

So now not only is he struggling to keep this thing afloat,
but he's now having creditors coming after him for money.

Oh, shit dude.

That he didn't do.

No.

Now the issues between Ned and Julia
were made way worse by the fact
that Julia had actually given birth to a daughter named Pearl.
Pearl.

So any divorce would include a pretty unpleasant custody
agreement between the two of them.

So it was getting to discord.

It's just getting worse and worse.

Very contentious.

But things were not improving between them.

The pharmacy was being a huge money pit
and a big struggle on both of their lives.

So Ned told Holmes, I took a job with a jewelry company
in downtown Chicago.

I don't want the pharmacy.

I want out.

And a short time after he'd left the castle,
Ned made one final attempt to try things,
to make things work with Julia.

But by then, she was engaged in a full affair with Holmes.

Very uninterested in Ned.

Julia refused to get back together
and Ned packed up his things and moved to Gilman, Illinois.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

And he filed for divorce and he signaled his intent to gain custody of Pearl.
I hope he did.
Keep hoping that.
Why you say that to me?
So by the fall, Holmes had moved to Myrta and Lucy.
Yeah, his wife and child.
You remember?
Yeah, were they living?
Sorry, were they in his apartment?
Or were they in the, oh, they were in his apartment.
Remember, he's also married to Clara still.
Yep, and Myrta.
And he's also having an affair with Julia.
Yeah, so.
How does he even keep all their names straight?
Yep, so, well, don't worry.
He moved Myrta and Lucy, his wife and child, into a house several miles away.
In downtown Chicago.
And he was just spending most of his time at the castle where Myrta didn't know it, but he was having a full blown affair with Julia Conner.
So this affair was super intense, like very passionate, very intense.
And Holmes kept telling her, I'm going to marry you. I'm going to marry you.
And it's like, my guy, you're married to two other women. You're not even supposed to be married to the woman you're married to at this point.
And Julia knows that he's married.
And it's like, if he's telling you he's gonna marry you, do you really think that means that much to him?
No.
So he's constantly promising he's going to marry her, but once Ned left Chicago, suddenly it all,
Yeah, because it's not as exciting.
Yeah, all of a sudden he'd lost interest.
Now, the risk of getting caught was gone.
There was really no, there wasn't
There's no competition.
Forbidden fruit anymore.
Right.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

And he's uninterested by it.
That's so fucked.
So by November of 1891, Julia told Holmes
that she was pregnant.
Again, yeah.
Oh.
Her pearl is Ned's child.
Yes, yes.
No, I know.
But she's pregnant again.
Oh no.
So said, now you have to marry me.
He doesn't think so.
Holmes was like, okay.
And then he was like, yeah,
I guess I do have to marry you.
So he was like, yep, I'll marry you, but on one condition.
And she was like, what is that?
And he said, you're gonna get an abortion.
Oh my God.
And he said, and I'm gonna perform it.
Oh God.
Oh no.
Julia reluctantly agreed.
And several weeks later, she was on an operating table
that he had put together in one of the empty apartments
on the second floor of the castle.
That's dirty.
She's on the table.
He poured chloroform onto a rag
and held it to her mouth and nose to sedate her.
But he should have only had to do that for like a second.
Instead, he just held it on there, held it into place
and continuously dripped more and more chloroform
onto the rag while it was on her face.
She struggled to get off and tried to fight him off.
But after several minutes of this horrific torture,
he felt for a pulse and she was gone,
as well as the unborn child.
Wild that he could do that
to a woman carrying his child too.
It gets worse.
Oh, he then walked into Pearl's bedroom.
Oh no.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

I forgot about Pearl.

And did the exact same thing to Pearl.

Oh.

A child who was likely about five or six.

Oh my God.

Oh, I hate him so much.

Well, maybe not even, she might have been like four.

Oh my God.

Now, once everybody was dead,

Holmes contacted a man named Charles Chappell,
who Holmes knew was a trained articulator.

What is that?

A person trained in stripping the flesh
from human bodies in preparation for medical instruction.

Wish I never asked.

Yeah.

He'd make them into an articulated skeleton, essentially.

Great.

Charles Chappell asked absolutely no questions
when he was led to an empty apartment in the castle
where the dead body was.

He knew Holmes was a doctor,
and he just kind of accepted the claim
that he had been doing some kind of dissection,
and he wanted this body cleaned.

Ay, ay, ay.

So he offered him \$36 to clean the body,
make a fully articulated skeleton and skull,
and he was like, sure.

So Chappell returned the body afterwards,
and Holmes sold her skeleton
to the Heynman Medical College in Chicago.

No one knows what happened to Pearl,
but when investigators excavated
the basement of the castle,
they did find the bones of a child
between what they think is the ages of four to 10 years old.
So it could have been her.

Sweet Pearl.

Now, in the days after this,
Julia's neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. John Crow,
who lived in the castle, asked about her and Pearl.

Where did she go?

Where did they suddenly disappear?

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

And no one else in the building had seen them for days.
And finally, they caught up with Holmes,
and they were like, what happened?
And he was like, oh, Julia and Pearl left early
for a planned trip to Davenport, Iowa.
Obviously, like, didn't she tell you?
And they were like, I don't know about that,
but they were like, okay,
I guess we have to just accept this explanation.
Right.
And it was only after his arrest
that they learned that Julia had never gone to Davenport.
They didn't learn until after he was arrested.
And then imagine like,
obviously they have no reason to,
but the guilt you would feel.
Yeah, what are they gonna think when you murder?
Like this.
So in January, 1892, a new family moved
into the Connors old apartment,
the Julia Ned Connors apartment and Pearl.
And when they arrived to move in,
they found it completely the way it was.
The dishes were still out on the table.
Pearl's clothes were laid out on a chair.
Oh my God.
It was like they had just walked out one afternoon
and never returned, which is what happened.
Because that's exactly what happened.
Right.
Holmes explained to them that Julia,
the person who had lived here before,
her sister had become ill a few weeks earlier,
and she and Pearl had had to leave right away to tend to her.
And according to Holmes,
there was no need to pack up their belongings
as Julia and Pearl were well provided for
and would not be coming back.
I'd be like, yeah, that's great,
but like you're the landlord,
you should have had this place to clean the shop.
You were supposed to clean the shop.
Yeah, like what the fuck?
Like I have to just like take all this shit out of here now

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

and move mine in.

Yep.

Now he gave a different version of this story to others when they asked, because he's giving three different things about what happened to Julia and Pearl.

It's also like maybe you should stick with the same story, brother.

Yeah.

I mean, glad you didn't, but.

Yeah, when others asked, he claimed that Julia had briefly come back in early January to settle up rent, she owed him.

And at that time, quote, announced not only to me, but to her neighbors and friends that she was going away.

Yeah, she didn't say that to anybody though.

But apparently he knew ahead of time that Julia had mentioned to others that she had plans to visit her sister in Iowa at some point.

So the story would seem legit.

He had planned this all out.

Fuck.

He also vehemently denied any claims or rumors that he had any kind of inappropriate sexual relationship with Julia.

They were just friends.

What are you talking about?

Yeah, for sure.

Even though like it was very clear, like very, very clear, like Ned knew, everybody knew.

But he later said, quote, that she is a woman of quick temper and perhaps not always a good disposition, maybe true.

But that any of her friends and relatives will believe her to be an amoral woman or one who would be a party to a criminal act.

I do not think.

Okay, Jan.

So that happened.

In the spring of 1892, Benjamin Pitzell, his assistant there, he traveled to Dwight, Illinois, which is a small village about 25 miles from Chicago.

I found this interesting because immediately

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

for some reason I thought of him like I made the little quip about him being like assistant to the regional manager.

Yeah, that's Dwight.

And then we've traveled to Dwight, Illinois.

That is funny.

But he went there because he was getting treatment for alcoholism.

Ben was?

Benjamin, yeah.

He was doing that at the Keely Institute.

And while he was there receiving treatment, he met a young woman named Emmeline Segrand.

And at that time she was working as a stenographer for the Institute.

What's a stenographer again?

The like type person.

Right, thank you.

Takes a transcript.

Yep, yep, yep.

And Pitzell was just taken by her beauty.

Like he saw her just like, oh my God.

So when he returned home to Chicago after the treatment, he told Holmes all about this magnificent beautiful young woman.

Girl, shut your mouth.

Oh, he did this on purpose.

He knew that Holmes would be seriously interested in this.

He was doing his job as an assistant.

I found you a pretty young thing.

But he's, oh, here I am thinking that like he's in love with this chica.

Oh no, he said she's just beautiful.

She's beautiful, you should kill it.

Hey, she's this beautiful young woman.

You would probably like her.

Oh my God.

So he knew that he would be very interested in this and he was right.

He loved the idea of a beautiful woman almost as much as he loved the idea of killing a beautiful woman.

So Holmes wrote to Emmeline and based only on Pitzell's description, he wrote to her.

Like, heard Pitzell's description

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

and he was like, got it right to this girl.
Very King Henry VIII.
Very much.
And he offered her a job at twice the salary
she was making now as a stenographer
at the Keely Institute.
So of course she was like, uh, yeah.
Like twice the salary.
Are you kidding me?
But he would sign up for that.
So she arrives in Chicago.
She finds a room at a boarding house
and she begins work as Holmes' assistant
with the ABC copying company,
which is one of his sham businesses
that was operating on the first floor.
He had a shit ton of those.
The OBS closing company.
Yeah, right.
And he had like a glass bending business down there
that was a sham too.
But the landlady of the boarding house she was staying at
called Segrand a very pretty girl
and was a favorite among the boarders.
So she seldom went out with any of the young men.
So she's known very much so as a beautiful woman.
But apparently she immediately liked Holmes.
He was all over her, praising her constantly,
spoiling her with attention and gifts.
And the landlady later said
she was greatly infatuated with Holmes
and never ceased talking about him.
I did not like him.
He could not look one in the face.
To me, this signals a little bit of a difference
to the he didn't look you in the eyes thing.
He wouldn't even look you in the face.
Yeah.
Like this guy, there is a little, there's something there.
There is.
It's different than the Strabidmus kind of situation
where you can't like focus on your eyes.
Exactly.
He wasn't even looking you in the face.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

It's also like all these women are taken with him.
The women that are taken with him work beneath him.
Exactly.
So it's that whole like, oh, like man in power kind of thing.
But the women who are like, I don't know.
I always thought he was going to murder someone.
Yeah.
They're the ones that are like doing their own thing
and having his number.
I don't need your shit.
Right.
And it wasn't long until he shammed his way
into a romantic relationship with poor Emily.
Now other employees noticed like at the castle
in the different businesses they noticed
and everyone around them knew something was going on.
One of Holmes's castle tenants,
Dr. Maurice Lawrence told the inter ocean.
We felt that she was to be more pitied than blamed.
He was apparently very kind to her,
always buying flowers and presents for her
and taking her to the theater in places of entertainment.
They nearly always ate their meals together in his office,
having them sent up from the restaurant on the first floor.
So they're living this like beautiful life
and eating like lunches together
and buying her things, taking her out.
Very much like just showering her.
I'd like to remind you, he is married to Clara.
He is also married to Murda.
He has a child Lucy.
He was carrying on a fare with a woman named Julia
who had a child named Pearl,
who was also pregnant with his child.
He murdered Julia and that child and Pearl.
And is still married to Murda and Clara.
And Clara has a son with him, George.
Robert.
Robert, why would I say George?
You were like, actually it's Robert, but yeah, absolutely.
Now, which it's like, what the fuck?
So at this point, he would have had three children?
At this point, he would have had three children.
Okay, okay.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

Or no, he would have had two children
because Pearl was not his.
But she was pregnant, Julia.
Yeah, but he had just says Robert.
And Lucy.
Oh, and Lucy.
Yes, you're right, you're correct.
So he's Robert, Lucy, and he would have had Julia's child.
So yeah, he would have had three children.
And he would have had a step child, technically.
Absolutely.
Fucking asshole.
Actual piece of shit.
And Murda's just across town.
Yeah, like a few miles away.
And he's carrying on this like, very public affair.
And she has no idea.
According to everything she doesn't know.
Okay.
And if she did, she was like, fuck you.
Now, in the winter of 1892,
Emmeline told several people
she would be returning to Lafayette, Indiana
to visit her parents for a few weeks before Christmas.
Now, according to her cousin, Dr. B.J. Segrand,
who'd visited with her very shortly
before she was scheduled to leave,
he said Ms. Segrand was changing her feelings towards homes.
Sounds like something happened that turned her off.
Don't know what.
Maybe he leaned in and said, don't be afraid of me.
Don't be afraid of me.
Because then several days passed
and no one in Inglewood had seen or heard
from Emmeline Segrand.
No.
When the wife of Dr. Maurice Lawrence,
the tenant in the castle who had that other quote,
asked about her two homes,
he simply said, quote,
oh, she's gone away to get married.
Oh, what?
This obviously was a little weird
because she'd never dated anyone but him.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

It was pretty clear that they were in a relationship and Emmeline never mentioned leaving early and no one ever heard of Emmeline being engaged to someone else.

Also, she said that she was very put off about how he spoke about it.

He was very anxious appearing.

He couldn't look at her when he said it.

He was very monotone.

He didn't want to talk too much about it.

And now this is the second woman who's just up and left him suspiciously.

And to her, it felt like he was hiding something and scared it was gonna come out if he said too much.

Like he was really hiding something here.

And so the next day,

she notices that she sees homes and two of his assistants carrying a heavy trunk out of the castle and loading it into a wagon.

One day after that,

Holmes left Chicago for the house in Wilmette where Myrta and Lucy lived and murdered his parents.

Because remember, he's married with a child two times over.

I just want to keep reminding you of that.

He went to his wife's house.

When he returned a few days later,

he made a point of showing Mrs. Lawrence in particular who had asked about Emmeline.

He showed her an envelope that he'd got containing cards announcing Emmeline's supposed wedding.

To Robert Phelps on December 7th, 1892.

As if she would send him a wedding invitation or an announcement.

Well, a few weeks later,

Emmeline's trunk arrived at her parents' house in Indiana.

It had all her clothes,

all her belongings that she had taken with her when she left for that job.

And according to Eric Larson's book,

her parents hoped that she'd sent the trunk because she must now be marrying a wealthy man and she doesn't need all this old stuff.

So she's sending it back to us.

But her cousin, BJ, pointed out

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

that Emmeline was in the habit of writing her parents two or three times a week.

If that was the case, she definitely would have written and she had not written.

So you think the big trunk was all her things that they moved out?

Oh no, I think she was in that big trunk.

And they disposed of her along the way.

So whatever the case, the trunk arrived, that was the last time that her family got anything from her.

Now according to Holmes' confession later, Emmeline, quote, had become almost indispensable in my office work and the idea of losing her to an unknown fiancée in Dwight was unacceptable.

Oh, so he stuck with that?

So he said, I endeavored upon several occasions to take the life of the young man and failing in this, I finally resolved that I would kill her instead.

I don't think so.

So he claimed he lured Emmeline into the large vaults in his office and closed the door, causing her, quote, to suffer the tortures of a slow and lingering death. Jesus Christ.

What is worse about this is it's very likely true.

Yeah, I believe it, because he tested it out with Ned.

The name Phelps, which is supposedly her fiancée's name, was a known alias of Benjamin Pytzel, which he was using around the time he would have met Emmeline at the Keely Institute.

Oh shit, so it would have never existed.

And then people would have been like, oh yeah, like she did talk to a guy named Phelps.

Now too, on January 2nd, after she disappeared in 93, Holmes asked Charles Chapelle for help.

Now do you remember Charles Chapelle is the articulator.

And he said Holmes sent him a trunk containing a young woman's body to be stripped of flesh and articulated.

Now a few weeks later,

the LaSalle Medical College of Chicago received a delivery of a nicely articulated skeleton.

When police searched the castle after he was arrested, inside that large vault that he said he put her in,

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

they found a woman's footprint in the enamel on the wall,
and it was made with so much force
that it was unable to be wiped off.
Oh my God.
She was trying to escape and like kick her way out of there.
That is so cool.
So it 100% was true.
So brutal.
And he was selling their articulated skeletons
to medical colleges.
Those medical colleges must have been haunted as fuck.
What the fuck?
And that is where we are gonna end for part two.
I didn't see that coming, you arsehole.
Because we're gonna get some more.
Trust me, we have a lot more coming and it's a lot.
So we're gonna, and I wanna look into the Jack the Ripper
thing a little more for part three.
I wanna like to see if I can get into that a little more.
Yeah.
So hang tight.
Okay.
But he's just gotten started.
And he's already this bad.
So.
Awesome.
Yep.
So that is part two of HH Homes.
We have the murder castle being built.
We have it being in full operation so far.
We haven't seen the little macabre elements,
all the macabre elements being used.
We've seen that vault being used quite a bit.
Yeah, we have seen that a lot.
Yeah, but. I'm scared.
There's, yeah, there's a lot that's about to happen.
And I'd like you guys to hang tight.
And I'm scared about the bricks of it all.
Yeah.
Just, just hold on to your butts, you know?
Okey-dokey smoking.
Well, we love ya and we hope you keep listening.
And we hope you keep it weird.
You already know the drill.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 458: H.H. Holmes Part 2

You don't, don't do this.

Don't ever keep it that weird.

Don't move to Chicago or anywhere for that matter
and build a murder castle.

It uh, don't do it.

Build a haunted castle.

Hey, Prime members, you can listen to Morbid early and add free on Amazon Music.

Download the Amazon Music app today.

Or you can listen add free with Wondery Plus and Apple Podcasts.

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