

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 466: The Murder of Dawn Hacheny

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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 Morbid, baby.

This is morbid!

I made it like, it's morbid, baby.

This is morbid, baby.

Yeah, like Tiana.

Yeah!

You just sounded actually just like Tiana.

Ooh, did I?

She's my girl.

You're a princess.

Oh my god, I'm like my favorite princess.

Oh my god.

She's also the sweetest one that we met in, um, what's that place, Disney World.

You can say it.

My body rejects it.

But we met her and she was so sweet and she called everybody sugar.

I didn't get to meet her because I wasn't with you guys at that point.

I think John, like, John was like starstruck with Tiana.

I mean, I would be starstruck with Tiana.

Like we straight up were like, that's Tiana.

Is that Tiana?

She's right there.

Oh my god.

It's Tiana.

I mean, she's a great Disney princess.

She is.

She's underrated as fuck.

I feel like she won't be humble opinion.

She won't be soon because Disney got rid of Splash Mountain and they're doing like a whole princess and the frog themed ride.

It's about fucking time.

When did that movie come out?

I know.

You know, it's about time.

I didn't realize how how long that movie had come out because at that point I had like

I wasn't watching Disney movies religiously anymore.

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Yeah.

I mean, now it's like, I don't know if I really was, but now you are though.

Now I am.

I love Disney.

It came out in 2009.

I thought it was.

It's about time, guys.

It's about time you give Tiana her due.

And Prince Naveen, underrated prince in my opinion.

Did it just get hot in here?

Yeah, it did.

And it was Prince Naveen.

He's a really hot fictional character.

Oh yeah, he is.

I don't know how I feel about making that statement out loud, but here I am.

My girls love Prince Naveen.

I know.

He's their guy.

He is.

Yeah.

I think he's probably like out of all the princes, I would say he's the hottest.

I'm telling you, literally underrated criminally in all facets is that movie, those characters, the songs, the soundtrack, slaps.

Never did I ever think that we would have this conversation on this podcast.

No.

No, I did not.

It was a really.

I don't know how we got here, but I'm glad we did.

I said it's more of a baby.

Oh yeah.

And then you did like Tiana arms and everything.

Yeah, I was crazy.

It's really uplifting right now.

It is.

We need it.

We know.

Yeah, we sure do.

What the world needs now is Tiana to save my life.

Please.

Please.

I just started crying.

Please.

I'm just saying.

Everybody's like, what the fuck is wrong with you?

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Nothing.

We just crazy.

Nothing.

Also, I'd like to clarify, I feel like a lot of people thought that Drew and I broke up and that's like not what we're talking about right now.

We are alive and thriving.

Okay.

Oh hell yeah.

I just wanted to put that out there because we just sounded very stressed and I didn't want people to start speculating further.

No, everything's honestly, it's just one of those weeks.

I think Mercury just came out of retrograde and we're in a shadow period.

Yeah, we were feeling a weird way.

We turned the room around.

Yeah.

We changed positions and now we're feeling much better.

We're kind of like at a chat set now.

It's pretty good.

Yeah, it's pretty sweet.

We were feeling that way, like the way that we were.

Not only Mercury was in retrograde and now it's in a shadow period.

I don't know if the moon is still in cancer, but as of yesterday it was and that gets you in your motherfucking feels, but then we're entering Gemini season.

The best season.

So everybody's feeling like the best season.

Debatable.

We could do this all day.

So everybody's feeling like a bitch.

I just proved that.

And so did I was like, let's go.

Everyone's feeling like a bitch.

True.

You're like, I don't know.

Correct.

So, you know what, be your best bitch self and I hope everybody watched the Vanderpump Rules reunion.

Oh, fuck.

How did we not open up with that?

I know.

I mean.

Guys, I don't know what to say about it.

I'm going to get a time out.

It was when James said, nah, it's not hitting for me.

It's not hitting for me.

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I didn't even listen.

It sang.

It sang to me.

James and Lala's friendship forever.

Oh, all four.

All day, every day.

Ever.

I'm very excited about episode two and three and I hope that you guys are too.

Yeah.

Just one more quick thing.

Lala on her podcast, which everybody should go listen to.

It's called Get Them Lala.

Fucking love it.

And she said that she texted her producer about the first part of the reunion and was like, holy shit.

This was incredible.

I like, yay.

I love it.

And the producer was like, oh, you think this is good?

It doesn't even stand up next to part two and three.

Don't even tell me that.

I already did.

I think I told you twice because I'm pretty sure I told you because I'm going to wish time away.

I mean, me too.

Are we all?

We are.

But yeah.

So we, we Tiana'd, we Disney'd, which was crazy.

We Vanderpumped.

And now we're going to morbid.

And we zodiac too.

Oh, we did.

We did.

Well, you know, we zodiac to add astrology.

So now we're going to morbid.

Yeah.

We're six minutes in, I think.

So like perfect.

We're good.

I like it.

So here we are.

I'm going to bring you down because this is a really, really sad case, a really tragic case, a really gnarly case.

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Oh, good.

And I feel like this case may, it makes the most sense to start in the middle, which I used to do a lot and I haven't done that in a while.

Oh, I love that.

I'm excited to go.

I'm going to start in the middle.

We're going to work our way back to sort of the beginning and then obviously we will cover the downfall of the monster of the case at the end, but I'm not going to like give it away who it is just yet.

Don't worry.

Don't give it away.

I won't.

Don't you fucking dare.

I said I fucking wouldn't.

All right, I'll trust you.

That's good.

We should always trust each other.

We should always trust each other.

Always trust me.

Always.

I don't really know what happened there.

Anyways, so bring it down.

So everything happened just one day after Christmas.

Oh.

Yeah.

That's upsetting.

And it was December 26, obviously, the year was 1997 and police and fire were called to the home of Nick and Don Hackney in Bremerton, Washington.

So when they got to this house, it was absolutely engulfed in flames, but as far as the investigators knew the house was empty, that unfortunately changed when they were able to make their way inside and they were immediately hit with the smell of burnt flesh.

Oh, no.

Yes.

And somebody thought, you know, maybe it was like one of the dogs that got stuck inside.

Oh.

But as the firefighter searched through the first floor of the home, they weren't finding the source.

And then when they reached the Hackney's bedroom, they unfortunately did.

And they found 28-year-old Don Hackney badly, badly burned, like beyond recognition. 28 years old.

Just laying in her bed, laying in her and her husband's bed.

And her husband, Nick, had left early that morning for a hunting trip with his friends.

So obviously he was okay.

And this was what he was going to come home to.

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So the fire had started well after Nick went out for the day.
And the Hackney's neighbors, Tim and Amy Pitz, they were the ones to call the fire in.
And how they noticed it was Tim's coworker, Jeff Richardson, was his name.
That guy usually picked Tim up for work in the morning.
So he was the first one to see the fire and he called it in, or he didn't call it in.
He started banging on the pit's door to wake them up and like screaming like, call 911.
Okay.
And the wife called 911.
And Tim and Jeff ran over to the Hackney's home to see if they could help anyone who was still inside.
Ugh.
Now, Jeff was able to kick the door open, but by that point, the fire had already spread to the first floor.
And the room was filled with not only flames, but like super thick black smoke.
It was obviously beyond dangerous, but Jeff tried to make his way into the living room, just wanting to help anybody that was inside.
Yeah.
He kept trying, kept trying, but the flames and the smoke kept pushing him back.
It was obvious he wasn't going to be able to get inside without getting physically hurt himself.
So at that point, there was literally nothing they could do except wait for first responders to get there.
So they just stood on the lawn and watched the house burn.
Oh, that's awful.
I can't imagine.
No.
Like you see that in a movie and you're like, oh my God, like I can't imagine.
Oh, that's awful.
So Nick Hackney pulled up to his house, this chaotic, or what was left of his house, this chaotic scene a little after 10 in the morning.
And he was met at the steps of the home by Chief Deputy Coroner, Jean Jeremy, I believe you say it.
And a coroner walking up to you.
Yes.
So she steered Nick away from the house, luckily, and back towards her truck and she explained what had happened.
And he was like, oh my God, Don and I spent Christmas together with our family earlier, like yesterday, but she wasn't feeling very well.
She had a gnarly head cold, so she took Benadryl to go to sleep.
And he said that he had woken up around 2am, excuse me, she had woken up around 2am to take another dose and she wondered out loud whether she had no tolerance for it because she didn't take that medicine very often.
So she was like, oh my God, like I'm kind of feeling this.
So that's, that was his explanation to the coroner the day before.

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And how she would sleep through and how she would sleep through it.

So it made sense to the coroner because the position of Don's body on the bed suggests that she hadn't even tried to get up to escape the fire, which at first was baffling to investigators.

They were like, nobody would just sleep through a roaring fire like that.

But if Don wasn't used to taking Benadryl, it was possible that it had a strong effect on her and it kept her sleeping entirely while the fire occurred.

Some strong Benadryl.

Oh, it is.

Yeah.

So as far as anybody as anybody could tell, Nick Hackney was completely devastated and he started leaning closely on the members of his and Don's church while he grieved.

He and Don had been married about seven years at that point and they'd been together even longer from when they were dating.

So this was going to be a process for him to get over.

Yeah.

But before we get into that whole process and what it looks like, I want to tell you more about Don, more about Nick and more about their life that they had made together.

So Don Marie was born December 5th, 1969 in Seattle, Washington to parents Donald and Diana.

Donald worked in a shipyard, which I think is really fucking cool.

That is cool.

And Diana, Diana was a homemaker and Don was their first child and she would eventually be the oldest of four kids and their only daughter.

She had her brothers, or excuse me, she and her brothers, Dennis, Darren and Derek, they were all raised in Bremerton, Washington.

So she had lived there her entire life.

Now their childhood was not always the easiest.

Don's mom, Diana, struggled a lot with anxiety and from the sounds of it, probably depression too.

She was really going through it.

And she, by her own admission, quote, required more love than she could get from her husband, Donald.

Oh.

So I think it was one of those things where they were very, like they were religious people.

So I think they stayed together even though they weren't necessarily the happiest together.

Yeah.

That makes sense.

And for that reason, Diana would sometimes look outside of her own marriage for love and affection, or to put it less lightly, she was stepping out on Donald.

Uh-oh.

So in 1980, when Don was 11, Diana actually left the family and moved in with a man that she was having an affair with.

I'm going to stay over here quiet.

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Yeah, me too.

Now it also turned out that she was pregnant and this man was the father.

Oh.

Yep.

And then Darren with him, but eventually things fell apart with whoever that guy was.

And she ended up returning home to the family with her new son.

And they all just kind of made it work together.

Wow.

So obviously things were tense to see the least.

Yeah.

I mean, you just left your whole family.

And then you just come back with a baby.

I'm like, oops, sorry, I'm back.

Here's your brother.

So things were tense when she came home and the kids could feel the tension in the air.

So in response to all the tension at home, Don really leaned into making her mom happy and she became just determined to achieve, achieve, achieve.

I don't want to call her an overachiever because I feel like that's, that's like a weird label.

Like an overachiever.

It makes it sound like a bad thing.

Well, people give it a negative connotation.

Yeah.

Exactly.

Because people do it when you're like working too hard.

They're like, oh, you're such an overachiever.

And it's like, okay.

It's like, I just like achieving.

I just like achieving.

Okay.

Yeah.

It's like achieving.

All right.

So I'm not going to call her an overachiever.

I would really just say that she decided to be the light that she thought her mom needed and worked really hard at it.

I like that.

So in grade school, what she did to do this, she became a champion speller, which eventually led her to participating in the Scripps National Spelling Bee, which would later lead to a visit to the White House where she got to meet then-president Ronald Reagan.

Wow.

I know.

Wow.

Wow.

I mean, spelling.

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Yeah, spelling.

Right?

Exactly.

So about her school year, she kept that same tenacity, worked super hard at everything she did, and it would actually lead her to becoming Bremerton Christian School's valedictorian in 1988.

Damn.

Get it, girl.

Now, after high school, Dawn enrolled at Northwest College of the Assemblies of God, which is informally known as Northwest Bible College.

Damn.

Like even the people there call it that.

That's a mouthful.

It is.

I think that's why they shortened it to Northwest Bible College.

It's just the Bible.

The Bible.

And it was at college, the Bible College, where she met Nick Hackney.

Just like Dawn, he was also born and raised in Washington.

He was just raised about like a half an hour from Bremerton in the coastal city of Palsbow,

I think is how you say it.

I love it.

I looked it up.

So yeah.

I looked it up.

I looked it up.

Still.

I just like trailed off there.

That's it.

Now, so he grew up there.

And while Dawn's family had their issues, it seems like they were able to keep the home life somewhat stable at that Dawn's house.

Okay.

That wasn't necessarily the case for Nick's family.

The author of Twisted Faith, which is a really good source on this book.

And actually I was looking at another book and then I saw that book advertised and that's how I found this case.

It's a good name.

It is.

Twisted Faith.

Yeah.

I like that.

And it's by author Greg Olson.

He's an incredible writer.

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So definitely read that book.

But anyways, I digress.

He put it that Nick came from a troubled family.

Okay.

Nick's father, Dan, he worked really long hours as a mechanic.

And when he was home, he wasn't really emotionally there.

He was very distant from his children and it seems his wife.

Cool.

Yeah.

And Nick's mom, Sandra, excuse me, did her best to support the family.

She ran a daycare out of the home and she would take in foster kids when she could.

But it didn't seem like she thought too much about the fact that her children were already looking for more themselves and other children just kept coming into the house.

Yeah.

She's spreading herself too thin.

She is.

And I mean, for like a great cause, yeah, and foster kids is amazing.

Take care of these kids that are already here first.

Yes.

Make sure their cup is full.

I agree.

So that's the thing.

Their home life became even more chaotic with all these other kids running around.

And this is really sad.

Later in life, Nick would tell his friends he always felt like his mom preferred his brothers and his sisters.

And he said sometimes even the foster kids to him, like even his foster brothers and sisters.

Oh.

And he said, looking back on the situation, I don't think she ever loved me.

Actually, I think she hated me.

Oh my God.

Really?

That's awful.

And I'm like, I don't know why, why, why you thought she hated you like what would make you think that?

Exactly.

That's troubling.

It is.

So obviously we don't know if she actually truly hated Nick or not, but what we do know is that she did unfortunately also suffer from long bouts of depression that left her really repressed and also emotionally unavailable.

So these kids didn't really have an emotionally available parent.

That's tough.

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And when she wasn't feeling that way, her time was spent managing the chaos and the needs of all these children in the house.

She didn't have a lot of time left for Nick.

And because of that, he ended up spending a lot of time alone.

And eventually, while he was alone, he turned to the Bible and kind of like found peace and harmony and that, and it was then that he developed an interest in Christianity.

Okay.

According to Nick, quote, it was God's calling that gave him strength and shaped every bit of his character.

Wow.

So yeah, Nick found a new confidence through his dedication to religion and all throughout his teen years, it seemed actually like his self-esteem was really improving.

But unfortunately, that didn't always endear him to other people.

Huh.

Yes.

When he and Don first met at Northwest Bible College, Don's friends and roommates thought it was really odd that she would have any interest in Nick.

Some of her friends thought he was pushy.

He was like too self-assured, like almost came off cocky.

And others called him a loser, a guy who tried too hard and was clueless about it, which that's not very nice, but you know.

So they also started to notice a change in Don whenever Nick was around.

Before Nick, Don was super confident, super self-reliant, always working hard, accomplishing accomplishing like I said, and just like looking for her next goal that she was going to crush.

But around Nick, she kind of seemed to mute all of those parts of herself.

She was reserved, she was shy, and she started looking to him when it came time to make a decision for anything.

Oh no.

And that's never a good thing.

No.

Like you don't want your partner to mute the best parts of you.

You want your partner to bring out the best parts in you and make you feel comfortable.

I remember one of my best friends had this significant other who was always like annoyed by their like outgoing personality and would like kind of like mute them down, like you're being annoying.

Right.

And it always bothered me because I was like, no, like that's one of the best parts about this person.

Yeah.

And if you think it's annoying or not, that's like who they are and if you think it's annoying, you're not meant to be together.

Yeah, like if your love is conditional in that way that like only if you tamper yourself down a little bit, then you don't love that person.

Exactly.

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And spoiler alert, they did not stay together.

They didn't work out.

And also, I feel like it honestly just always comes from a place of jealousy when somebody is trying to stifle like those parts of you, like your outgoingness, your ability to make a decision.

It's something they don't have.

Right.

But they wish they could do.

So they want to take that control over you and not let you do it either.

Love should not be conditional.

Naver.

But after two years at Northwest Bible College, Dawn, she got her associate degree and in 1990, Nick did end up proposing to her.

The proposal actually sounds adorable.

It was over Oreo cookies and milk on Alki Beach.

Okay, that's really cute.

Yeah, like give me Oreo so I know it's real.

Hell yes.

They got married on April 20, 1991, and they ended up moving back to Bremerton where Dawn had grown up.

Okay.

Now she started work as a loan officer at a credit union, and Nick started pursuing a job as a youth pastor at Christ Community Church, which was on, yes, Bainbridge Island. And that's a small island community right across the bay from Seattle.

I love these little islands with like a spooky little church on it, like Midnight Mass.

Oh, it's a spooky little church.

All right.

That just gave me like Midnight Mass vibes a little bit.

I don't know anything about Midnight Mass, but you have to watch that show.

I know I'm late to Midnight Mass, and we just finished it in the beginning of the year sometime.

John and I, I was super late on the Midnight Mass train, but it sucks to be late on something like that because you're like, guys, Midnight Mass, and everybody's like, yeah, I watched that like years ago with the fuck.

You're just like, you're just doing that now.

I'm like, but it's so good.

Can I talk to someone?

You need to find somebody who has, well, I haven't seen it.

You need to watch it.

I was like, you need to find someone who hasn't seen it.

Why don't you go look?

I should go take a poll in the streets for someone that's never seen that.

See if someone is willing to watch that.

Girl, you would like it.

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I'll watch it.

I have to finish succession first.

You do.

And then I also, off shoot, I just really want to watch Yellow Jackets too.

Me too.

Okay, great.

We'll start that together.

It's a spooky little church, like Midnight Mass vibes, and if it's anything like Midnight Mass, it did not end well for anybody.

Well, you're great at foreshadowing what you would author, [tinyurl.com slash the butcher](https://tinyurl.com/slash-the-butcher) in the round.

So to her friends, Don seemed happy enough, but a lot of them were still worried about her and how easily she was deferring decision-making processes to Nick, even when his decisions went against her own preferences and seemed to make her uncomfortable.

E.

Like that's not good.

There's one thing if you're just like, I mean, I'm super indecisive, so I'll be like, Drew, what do you think?

Oh, yeah.

Do we finalize it like this?

But when you're uncomfortable, deferring all, and when you're uncomfortable with the outcome of the situation, then it sounds like you could have made your own decision.

You knew where your heart was leading you.

Yeah, that's not good.

And it makes me sad that she felt like she had to do that to be okay.

Yeah, like she couldn't make her own choices or something, you know, would go awry.

Right.

And I think part of that, and I think author Greg Olson also points this out, the reason why Don was submitting to her husband was because she believed in quote, the fundamentalist edict that submitting to her husband's authority was God's plan and the greatest gift a woman could give him.

That sucks a lot in my personal opinion.

Believe whatever you want to believe, but I personally, I think that sucks ass.

If the greatest gift a woman can give a man is to submit to their wishes, I will never give a man the greatest gift.

But you know what, or a woman, it's all consensual, man.

If you decide that that is something that you can send to and you enjoy doing, go off and go off Queens and Kings, go right off.

Personally, that just sounds like fucking awful to me.

Yeah.

I'm not.

I'm not.

I'm not good at that.

I'm not good at that as well.

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I'm not good at that.

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I have no idea.

I am uninspired.

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Again, that's HelloFresh.com slash Morbid16 and use code Morbid16 for 16 free meals plus free shipping.

It is every parent's nightmare unfolding in South Jersey.

The search is on for an 11-year-old Cape May County boy missing since yesterday afternoon.

So far, searchers have found only his left sneaker near his home.

It's hard to imagine losing a loved one, a wife, a husband, a child.

For many, it's their biggest fear.

I'm Larissa Jones, host of The Vanished, a podcast that tells the stories of often overlooked and unsolved missing persons cases.

Every week, I dive into a new case, sharing the details of their mysterious disappearance, including interviews with family, friends, law enforcement, and even suspects in an effort to reveal the truth.

And I'm proud to say that this podcast has aided in a number of arrests.

It's important to me to remember the human behind the headline and help family members find their vanished loved one, or at least a sense of peace.

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But Nick had dreamed of becoming a youth pastor, and he specifically wanted to work at Christ Community Church because of his connection to his own former youth pastor, who was Bob, also known as PB Smith.

He sounds like a really cool guy.

I'll put it out there.

Good.

He sounds like he was like a nice gentleman.

That's great.

And he still worked at the church.

All right.

He had been in charge of the church since the late 1980s, but by the time Nick arrived on the island and was hoping to kind of like link up with PB and become this youth pastor, PB already had a partner that he was leading the church with.

Okay.

Robert, I think it's Biley, Robert Biley.

It could be Billy.

I couldn't figure it out.

And I looked it up.

She did.

I was there for it.

Thank you.

Yeah.

So Robert, I'm just going to call him either Robert or Pastor Robert for the rest of this, so I don't piss anyone off.

But Robert, he was this like charismatic, very animated man.

He was in his early 40s.

He'd been raised in a wealthy family.

He kind of seemed to like, he would start these like really big projects and like have like this big picture in mind, but then it would all kind of fizzle out.

And he had just left a job working for the Galloping Gourmet television program.

I'm just going to urge you to look further into that.

It's wild.

But to most and especially to Nick, my Google machine, the Galloping Gourmet television program type in Robert B.I.L.Y.

So to most and especially to Nick, though, he seemed like an odd fit for church leadership.

OK. OK. OK.

P.B. Smith, he took more and he's the nice gentleman.

He took more of a friendly, but still conservative approach to church leadership, where Pastor Robert was very strict and extreme.

OK.

According to Greg Olson, quote, Robert seemed to try his best, but neither sympathy nor empathy appeared to be in his repertoire.

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Wow.

That's something you don't want in a pastor, I think.

Something I don't want in like anyone.

Yeah, I would like to hang out with people that have sympathy and empathy and their repertoire.

Also, repertoire is a really fun word.

Feels good in your mouth.

Yeah. Now, even though that was his approach

and on top of that, he actually had no theological training.

Oh, even though of all of those factors, the church board still voted to promote him to pastor.

OK. I don't understand how any of that works, but interesting.

But all right.

But OK, go off.

So his new positions seem to go to his head almost immediately.

P.B.

sermons, they usually related to the more like traditional subject matter of the Bible.

And his whole message was just about forming a strong relationship

with God and your community.

Those were like his main goals.

Yeah.

But Roberts, they were really theatrical, his sermons.

OK.

He incorporated very different elements of belief systems

that were like on the fringes of Christianity, like not really there.

And he also, this was like the main thing that he did that I was like, oh,

he set up a new deliverance counseling program

that was put into place to help the congregants, quote unquote,

build a stronger relationship with God.

But to me, it sounded more like setting up scare tactics.

Oh, I don't love that.

Yeah. So these sessions, again, according to Olson, were intense, dramatic

and stepped in fear and shame with Robert and P.B.

praying and screaming at demons to exit the afflicted church members.

OK. P.B. had never done that before.

Oh, this is all new.

This is all new.

These these church members had never had demons screamed out of them.

Oh, no.

But they would ask the congregants all kinds of personal questions

in these counseling sessions about their marriages, their sex lives,

like they wanted to get any kind of deep, deep, dark secret out of them.

I hate that.

And they would also focus on, of course, how wrong it was to be gay,

how shameful it was to have an abortion, those kind of things.

Yeah.

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That we personally don't agree with.

Boo.

Mm hmm.

So Greg Olson goes a bit further into his book.

This this whole piece of this in his book.

And I would really recommend reading that section at the very least, because, holy shit, the things that they were doing during these counseling sessions are fucked. Oh, I hate that.

And it's not even like the actions like I think the actions of like, I don't like the idea of exorcisms personally.

No, it was more like the topic of conversation.

And like they just seem to be trying to shame people into submission.

I think that's the like that's the vibe I'm getting.

And that's why I don't like it.

Like that's why I said, Boo, it just sounds like this is really steeped.

Like you said, and like shame, fear.

Yeah, but like almost bullying.

Absolutely. In some way, you know, like this doesn't sound fun.

No, and it wasn't what Christ Community Church was before.

Yeah, that's the thing, because it sounds like it was like a, you know, regular church that people seemed happy with before this.

And this, oh, by the way, I meant to mention it.

It's a very small church.

It's compromised of only like a hundred families.

Oh, really? Yeah.

So yeah, these are people that are that are used to something.

And they have a sense of community and family.

And then all of a sudden this guy walks in and kind of like disrupts all of that.

Yeah, I don't like that.

I feel like a lot of people were probably on edge.

Yeah. So that was the environment that Nick Hackney entered into when he finally managed to get an offer to join that congregation.

Oh boy. As youth pastor.

He achieved his dream of becoming youth pastor, but it was different.

It was different these days.

It was different.

And that's the thing.

He saw a PB as like, again, this charismatic warm man, somebody he really looked up to.

But then he walked on the scene and realized that this guy had been completely pushed to the side by Pastor Robert and Pastor Robert was domineering and dominating the entire conversation of the church.

And the other thing was not only had Pastor Robert risen up the ranks quickly, but he had completely changed the entire church along the way.

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Like that sucks.

So by the mid nineties, Pastor Robert had convinced the congregation that he had a direct relationship with God and was one of his apostles. Like he could get messages from God and then convey those messages. Is this is an actual question I have.

Isn't that exactly what a cult leader does?

Yes. OK, absolutely. OK.

So but the thing was and he essentially was a cult leader.

Yeah, I'm just going to go ahead and say that that's my opinion.

Yeah. Well, that's literally isn't that what a cult leader does.

They say they have some kind of connection to a very direct current connection to a higher power. Yes.

And that's how they get everybody to do their bidding.

Yes. Honestly, the beginning of all of this kind of reminds me of the Holy Rollers case that we did.

I think we did it with Rachel O'Brien on her podcast.

Yeah, I was that really does remind me of that.

It's it's spooky.

But yeah, so he was like, I have direct messages from the big guy to tell you, and that makes my word more valuable than PB Smith's or anybody on the church boards because they're not talking to God directly.

Now, most members at the church, they fully believed him,

I think because they either believed fully in their faith or because they were scared into believing him. Yeah.

And there were also some members in this congregation that said they were starting to receive messages and prophecies from God or they had all along and just realized it. Yeah.

But those who didn't believe

Pastor Robert were definitely scared into silence when one of these people spoke out and called him a false apostle.

So that man who was brave enough to say that, is it a apostle or a apostle?

I don't really know.

Do you say an apostle or a apostle?

A apostle. It's a apostle. All right.

Sorry. No, I didn't get it later.

It's a possible.

So this man called him a fake apostle.

There you go. It's losing all meaning at this point.

It sure is.

But that man and his entire family were ex-communicated, excuse me, from the church in a 10 page letter that was actually written by P.B.

Smith and circulated throughout the entire congregation.

Damn. So this family, they made an example out of them.

Yeah.

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So Robert was free to and continued to take the church in a more conservative direction at this point.

And now he was insisting that they should be homeschooling their children, eating healthier diets.

Oh, don't tell people what to do with their kids.

Don't tell people what to do with their kids or their bodies.

So yeah, he wanted them to not only do all of that, but also start dressing more modestly.

This is becoming a call to everybody.

It absolutely is.

Jesus.

Now, since it was well known that Nick and P.B. were close, Robert didn't really have much interest in Nick when he first joined the church. He figured Nick would probably just be kind of an extension of P.B. and not worth his time or somebody to push out.

Yeah.

So it kind of came as a surprise to the pastor when Nick approached him and asked Robert to take him under his wing.

Like Nick said to Robert, will you take me under your wing?

He apparently said, I'm working with P.B. and we never do anything.

I don't want his culture to affect me and cause me to become like him.

You don't want to be a charismatic warm man.

A charismatic man.

A charismatic warm man.

Yeah, what the hell?

Like what?

I think you look at this guy and you want to be like him, like.

I mean, cult leader power.

Yeah.

So even though he'd been close with P.B.

for years, Nick clearly identified Robert as the stronger of the two.

And that's why he wanted to align himself with him.

He wanted to align himself with the guy he thought was going to come out on top.

Oh, that never works out, man.

It doesn't.

Unfortunately, Robert did kind of seem to come out on top, but that's upsetting.

It didn't work out for Nick.

But similarly, Robert saw Nick as a tool to help him achieve his goal of outstaying P.B.

and just taking over the church once and for all as senior pastor, which I didn't realize that there was even levels of pastors.

I didn't either.

I knew there were like, that's interesting.

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Yeah, I knew there was like youth pastors for I thought that was like just because they were like kids.

Me too.

Yeah.

But anyways, by early 1997, Nick and Don had gotten really sick of moving around.

They were moving around a lot and obviously the inevitable cost that comes along with that, they were in like the little side business of flipping flipping properties, but Don was also getting tired of that.

She just wanted to move into a home where they could build a life together.

And not have to like fix up a ton of shit.

Absolutely.

So when Nick found yet another fixer upper for sale in East Bremerton,

Don just reluctantly agreed that it was time for them to become homeowners.

They were going to buy this house, fix it up, flip it, but not sell it.

OK.

But she didn't want to do that, but she agreed because it's what Nick wanted.

A yet another house to fix defaults.

Yeah, right.

But the thing was she and Nick spent the better part of the winter in early spring remodeling, but by the spring of 1997,

the cost of renovating and the second mortgage that they had taken out on the house put them very deeply into debt, which is not good.

Not a good place to be.

Not a good place to be.

Tensions run high.

Tensions were running very high inside of the house.

But the congruence of the church thought that Nick and Don just had the perfect marriage.

They saw them as this loving couple.

They saw that Don seemed to be willing to do whatever it took to support Nick's dreams, and she was.

She absolutely was.

It sounds like it.

She worked really hard to always support Nick, but the renovation and the spiraling debt was really starting to put a strain on their marriage.

And it went deeper than probably anybody could have imagined.

Now, one afternoon, Don met for Don meant met.

I kept saying meant meant.

Don met for lunch with her friend, Eunice.

Eunice had also fallen on hard times recently,

so she moved back in with her parents and she was one of Don's friends that wasn't really so fond of Nick, but she was still surprised

when Don confided in her saying, if Nick and I end up splitting to I would never, ever want to live with my parents.

So Don or Eunice is like, oh, she's even mentioning the fact

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that like they could split like even putting that out there as a possibility.

Like that's a big fucking deal.

Yeah. So she laughed it off just like casually and was like, well, if that ever happens, you can live with me.

Like, don't worry about it.

She was half joking, but Don apparently applied or replied, OK, that might happen.

Oh, yeah. I'd be like, do you want to say anything more?

I think it was like a very like passing exchange.

But at the very least, it suggested that Don was thinking of a world where Nick wasn't a part of her world anymore.

And it was significant enough that Eunice remembered it years and years after Don had passed.

So Don and Nick's marital issues, they didn't only boil down to the renovation and the debt coming just from that.

It was more Nick's reckless spending and irresponsibility with money in general, like not just with the house, but with everything.

If the church needed something, he would volunteer to buy it.

If a congregant needed money, he would lend it to them without any expectation that they pay the money back, which is like very kind.

Sure, absolutely.

But like, but not when you're when you can't when you have a family, like you also have to have a responsibility to them.

You've got to put your oxygen mask on first. Exactly.

You know? Yeah.

So by 1997, he had started also funneling money into his latest dream project, which was a Christian youth camp.

He really, really wanted to go all in for this.

And he actually even started eyeing some property in Jefferson County.

He thought it was going to be perfect for the camp.

In fact, he thought that this was the camp that God wanted for him.

And his feeling was only solidified further

when Sandy Glass, another member of the congregation, who claimed to have very frequent visions from God himself,

she claimed that her latest and most prominent vision

was that of a new church on a property

just like the one Nick had seen for his youth camp.

Interesting.

Yep. She said she saw this new church prospering under Nick's leadership.

And of course, with her own support,

she would be more than willing to help and support.

My goodness. Yay. Look at that.

My guy, Greg Olson, he notes that notably absent from the vision

was any mention of Sandy's husband, Jimmy and Nick's wife, Dawn.

I was wondering that myself.

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No, they weren't in the mission. Yeah, I was like, is Dawn in there?
God said, forget about that. No, he said, no way.
So Sandy Glass, just to tell you a little bit more about her,
she came from a difficult background.
She had really gone through her fair share of tragedy.
She was only in her 20s at this point.
And her first serious boyfriend had died from an unspecified disease.
Her father had been killed in a construction accident.
And her brother was struggling with addiction,
which was causing a lot of stress and heartbreak for their family.
Oh, she's going through it.
And she's only in her 20s at this point.
Oh, jeez.
So I can understand why she turned to God for sure.
Oh, absolutely.
I can understand why a lot of people do.
Yeah, absolutely. And that's all I'll say about that.
Yeah, exactly.
Now, she didn't she wouldn't let those things become excuses.
And I think or yeah,
she did her best to be a strong source of support for her kids and her husband, Jimmy.
But by nineteen ninety seven,
things with Jimmy hadn't been going well for a while and money was tight
because they were a single income household,
only relying on Jimmy's salary as a carpenter
because Sandy was staying home with the kids. Yeah.
But she also was very reckless with money like Nick
and couldn't stop spending money that they didn't even have. Oh, no.
So obviously, that led to a lot of fights between her and Jimmy,
where Jimmy would just yell and lose his temper
or completely distance himself from the situation
and go to the bar for hours and hours and hours.
And they have kids. Yeah.
So he's either there and like they're fighting or he's not there at all.
Yeah, it's sad. Yeah.
Now, like a lot of the other couples at Christ Community Church,
Sandy and Jimmy decided to turn to the church for help with their marriage.
With the Deliverance Counseling.
In their case, that meant turning to Nick Hackney
and again, the Deliverance Counseling Program, to which I say big fucking yikes.
Oh, and Jimmy's parents also said big fucking yikes. Oh, really?
James and Mary Glass, they were like, I don't know about this.
They thought that Sandy and Jimmy's decision to turn to the church for help
seemed rash.

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And they also wondered if Nick had the experience or even the qualifications to help their son. Yeah. And they especially started to worry when Nick seemed to take a very, very defined interest in Sandy instead of Sandy and Jimmy as a couple. Oh, and his interest in special attention also wasn't just happening within the walls of Sandy and Jimmy's counseling sessions. He was calling Sandy at all hours of the day, especially during like family gatherings and events that she would have. Even if she was the host, the host, she would walk away and excuse herself and be on the phone with Nick for like way too long, just privately. What the fuck? Yeah, that's inappropriate. It is. And Jimmy's parents, James and Mary, they weren't the first members of the congregation to notice that Nick seemed to pay not only special attention to Sandy, but just to the women in the congregation in general. Oh, Nick. Actually, when Nick took over the counseling program a couple years before, there were multiple people that complained about them, about him and how he was interested in things that they considered to be very, very private. One woman actually went to Pastor Robert about Nick and said all he wants to do is talk about sex. And for that reason, she didn't want to go to the church for counseling anymore. She was like, I'm at the point where like, I want to look outside of the church for counseling because this asshole that you have running it is disgusting. Ew, can you imagine? Like, what a pig. What a pig, absolutely. And I just feel so bad for anybody that had to go through the counseling process with him because it's like you're at a low point already in your life or you're struggling at the very least and you're turning to a place where you you believe in and this guy just ruins all that for you. And this guy is like being really inappropriate and gross. Exactly. What a low feeling that must be. Right. Like it must take you even lower. Yeah. He just preyed upon people. Now, Pastor Robert's wife, Pamela, she was yet another person who noticed how Nick was treating the women and she was starting to get really ticked off and troubled by it. So she actually took Nick aside herself and she was like, I want to have a conversation with you about this counseling program. And she was like, you are too eager to involve yourself in people's

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marital issues and especially their sexual problems.
And you need to knock it off.
Well, I'm glad somebody was like, you creep.
Yeah. And I love that it was a woman.
Yeah. She was like, Pamela cut the shit.
She literally told him, and this is a quote, this is marital abuse.
You need to focus on Don, like your wife.
Yeah. You need to comfort her.
And Don needs to know that she's number one in your life.
Good for her.
So she was like, hey, why don't you focus on your own fucking family?
Yeah, stop being weird.
So Nick, surprisingly, not one to welcome criticism.
Just brush the conversation off and forgot about it.
Pamela was the first woman to openly criticize him,
but she probably wouldn't be the last.
Other people at the church were being quiet about their opinions,
but they also felt like Pamela did and like James and Mary glass did.
It was clear to them that Nick did not give a shit about Don's feelings at all.
And they thought it was really gross how he threw himself head first into private issues.
But at the same time, they trusted PB, who was still with the church.
And Pastor Robert, I don't know if they trusted him,
but I think they just didn't want to pick any fights with him.
Yeah.
And they assumed that Nick wouldn't be in charge of this program if he couldn't be trusted.
So the church had almost been completely
transformed by the fall of 1997.
And in late August, Pastor Robert had officially pushed PB out.
Oh, no.
As the senior pastor.
And it was a decision that was actually backed by the church board.
Oh, no.
So now that he wasn't in charge of the church,
PB and his wife just headed off to Africa to do some mission work.
I mean, good for PB and his wife.
I love it.
I think they were like, this has gotten really weird
and we need to get as far away from this as possible.
Well, they were probably like, we're going to go do what we are like preaching.
Yeah.
And we're going to go help people.
Exactly. We're going to do what we believe in.
You can continue doing like your version of this,
but we're going to do what we were setting out to do.

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Exactly. Yeah, I agree.

But back at the church, the deliverance counseling sessions, they were starting to become routine and they were getting stranger and stranger and stranger.

Nick was relishing in this newfound power and Pastor Robert was too busy to give a fuck.

Ew. Too busy becoming a cult leader.

The sad thing about telling this story is that because she passed away when she was so young and because if she had spoken out against anything, it would have caused a huge uproar.

We don't know how Don felt about all the changes going on in the church.

And that's sad.

Yeah. And not only just the changes going on in the church, but the changes going on in her husband.

Yeah, her marriage.

Like, we don't know how she felt about it because when she passed away so young and also because I don't think she was allowed to say it.

Yeah, she didn't feel comfortable.

Exactly. That's sad.

It is.

By all accounts, she was smart, gorgeous, self-reliant and she definitely would have had an opinion about what was going on in her home in the church.

But like I said earlier, maybe she wouldn't have said it out loud because she took the conservative church doctrine very seriously. She always believed that the wife should be subservient to the husband. So even if she suspected that Nick was cheating on her or being inappropriate at the very least, it's not that likely that she would have confronted him. Because as part of the whole thing, it's like.

Deal with it. Yep.

Quietly and with a smile on your face.

So, you know, she may have been staying tight-lipped about her suspicions, but by the end of the year, more and more people in the congregation were starting to notice that Nick was really going for it with the inappropriate behavior.

And especially they were noticing that he was spending a lot of time with Sandy Glass in particular.

So more and more people were going to Pastor Robert to say, like, we're concerned about this.

We don't like this.

The counseling sessions are getting weirder and weirder, but he didn't care.

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Yeah, as long as Nick wasn't planning to take over power of the church. It didn't do what I wanted. So toward the later half of 1997, the concerns were becoming so frequent that even Pastor Robert couldn't push them off. He tried his best, but they started. They were coming in probably daily at this point. When Pastor Robert is doing anything besides leading a cult, you know that it got intense. You know, it's real. Yeah, exactly. But instead of pulling Nick aside, he pulled Sandy aside. And he was like, hey, your relationship with Nick is inappropriate and you should focus on your husband, Jimmy, because your relationship is already fucked up. So I'm sorry, can we talk to the church leader? No, it's Sandy's fault. What are you talking about? Obviously, she's a woman. Of course, it's her fault. So Sandy didn't receive this well nor would I not well received. Not well received me either. Now, she maintained that she believed that God wanted her and Nick to be together. Oh, literally said that. And in a letter to Pastor Robert, she said, Oh boy. Yeah. So like, essentially what she was saying is God wants me and Nick to be together. And if you don't believe that, then you don't believe in me. And fuck everybody else. Yeah. Yeah. This is a wild story. It's truly crazy. Now, outside of the church, Sandy and Nick were barely hiding their affair and it was taking a toll on literally everybody around them. Yeah. And this is really sad. I just want to let you know this is going to bum you out big time. One day, one of Sandy and Jimmy's kids went to their dad, upset and crying and told him mom and Nick told us that after you die, Nick's going to be our new dad. That is fucked up in a way that I can't even describe. Can you shame? Imagine on them. Shame on them. Shame on them.

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Because it wasn't like Nick told us this.
It was mom and they're all told us like that's fucked.
Visity, visity fucked.
Yeah. And not shame on them.
That hurts my heart so badly
that that kid was probably terrified of their dad dying.
Poor confused little child.
Like, who says that to a kid?
Like, that's fucked up.
It's so weird.
Oh, it's it's beyond these two are gross.
But Jimmy refused to entertain the idea that Sandy was cheating on him,
even still at this point, when the affair was so public
that even his kids were coming to him with it.
So the tension in the glass family was growing and growing and growing.
And it was dangerously close to a breaking point, like dangerously close.
And by Thanksgiving, the cracks were beginning to show even in Dom,
who, as we know, usually put a brief face forward.
She told two other women in the congregation,
things are not so good right now.
I'm overwhelmed by everything.
Our finances are a mess, but mostly I'm worried about Nick.
I don't think I make him happy.
He's never home.
He's gone all the time.
I don't even know if he wants me anymore.
Oh, that's so sad.
And what's sadder is she was trying everything she could do to make him happy.
She was trying to lose weight, which she did not need to do.
She was beautiful.
She was just doing anything she could think of.
That's so sad.
It is.
So the woman in the congregation, they tried to reassure her
and they were like, whatever is causing problems
between you and Nick is not your fault.
Like, and I'm I'm happy that somebody told her that.
Yeah. Not like, yeah, like try this diet.
Yeah, I'm glad that people will do that.
Absolutely. And it sounds like, you know,
there were people around her who could have said that.
So I'm glad that she had people who were like, no, like, you don't need to change
your fault, anything about yourself.
If he doesn't love you, you're crazy.

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And that's the thing.

I like doing research for this.

I watched a couple of shows about it and all of the people that in Dawn's life, like, absolutely loved her.

She had friends that were her friends in high school that she was still friends with.

Like and like friends in like grade school that she was still friends with that spoke her praises.

So, you know, that's a good person.

Of course.

So, but the thing was, people could still tell there was something deeper and more complicated that was upsetting Dawn.

Yeah.

And she told them, my life isn't what I would, what I thought it would be.

And then she went on to explain that there were major and irreconcilable differences between she and Nick's long term plans.

Oh, geez.

And at the forefront of that was that she desperately wanted to be a mother.

She wanted to have kids so bad and Nick did not want children.

Oh, which I think we talked about that a couple of weeks ago.

Like just so fucking sad if you find yourself in that situation.

Yeah.

That you weren't, that you didn't talk about it beforehand or we're honest with each other beforehand and now you're married and you're in two totally different camps that way.

And she feels stuck.

And when you want kids, yeah, it is a feeling and a need that you simply cannot ignore, like you just can't.

Like when John and I decided we wanted kids, it was a desperation.

Oh, I remember.

Kids, like when it was when it was hard, yeah, it took a long time.

And we had to go through the fertility treatments.

It was devastating.

Of course it.

The thought of not being able to was devastating.

So I can't imagine what she was going through.

I'm not even at the place right now.

We're like, we're taught, like we're talking about it obviously, but like I'm not at the place where we're like ready to make that happen.

But one of my biggest fears is like not being able to.

Yeah, it's it's horrifying, honestly, because of seeing what you guys went through.

Yeah, it was gut-wrenching.

It is.

It's really, really off.

So knowing she desperately wanted kids and he was just like, no, no, that's gut

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wrenching to me.

I'm sure it wasn't even a conversation.

It was just like, he said no, and that was the end of it.

Oh, that's awful.

So sad.

Now, strangely, all of the chaos actually seemed to be affecting Nick too.

By December, he seemed absolutely exhausted to everyone who knew him, which was a big change, because normally outwardly, he was very enthusiastic and like excited about church and being weird in deliverance counseling.

But there were a few women in the congregation in particular who seemed to be demanding his time more and more other than Sandy.

And then there was still Sandy, whose messages from God were growing more demanding.

She was urging Nick that he needed to take action toward that dream of the youth camp.

Oh, yeah.

And as Christmas got closer, it seemed like there was something big that was going to shift and it was going to be Nick who shifted it.

So Dawn woke up on Christmas morning to find that, like I said, she was sick with a cold.

Remember, I said that at the beginning.

Yeah.

She'd been fighting a cold the previous day.

And when she woke up on Christmas, it was even worse.

She didn't even want to go out, but she always showed up for everybody in her life.

So she and Nick took the ferry to the mainland that morning and they spent the day with her parents and her brothers.

Later that night, they actually dropped by to see PB Smith's family.

They played board games and Nick made plans with PB's daughter, Lindsay, and two other friends to go hunting the next morning.

Okay.

Now, when Dawn and Nick said good night, their friends had no idea that would be the last time they would see Dawn.

Obviously, because she died in a tragic fire.

So the next morning, December 26, Lindsay Smith and her husband, Phil, met Nick to go hunting just before Dawn at the Hood Canal Bridge in Jefferson County.

They spent a couple of hours in the woods, but they never fired a single shot.

There was nothing to hunt to which I say, ha, but around nine a.m.

They decided they were going to call it a day because like nothing was going on.

Yeah.

So they drove into town to have breakfast at a local diner.

And as they were eating breakfast, Nick suddenly jumped up like out of nowhere and was like, Dawn and I still haven't had time to open our Christmas presence.

And then he asked for the check and quickly headed home.

Oh, now the time stamp on the credit card receipt showed that it was nine 30 in the morning when that happened.

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So Nick would have made it home a little after 10.

Okay.

No, as we know, he did show up a little after 10 to his home completely engulfed in flames and heard the news that his wife, Dawn, had been killed in a fire.

Now, as far as fire investigators could tell, the blaze had been actually mostly confined to the bedroom at first, which now was like a burned out shell of what it had been.

And the cause of the fire appeared to be a faulty space heater, which escalated quickly due to, quote, the abundance of newspapers and wrapping paper and a collection of mini propane containers near the headboard on one side of the bed.

Um, okay.

Are we looking at that as the origin point?

So Nick, Arson accident.

Okay.

So Nick explained to the investigators that he and Dawn had opened their Christmas gifts the night before.

Uh huh.

Do you remember when earlier he just said they had him?

Yeah.

Yep.

No, they did.

And since Dawn wasn't feeling well, they just headed right to bed instead of cleaning up all the wrapping paper.

And they were like, okay, totally.

What about the propane tanks?

Like what's that about?

Well, that I'm like, did you get propane tanks for Christmas?

Yes.

Oh, that's literally the, okay.

Yes.

Okay.

He told the investigators that they had actually been a gift to him from Dawn because they were still using space heaters to heat the home throughout their renovation.

Okay.

Now, overall, the death seemed to be an accident.

It was truly a tragic one, but unfortunately in the winter months, a very familiar accident.

A faulty space heater poof, you're up in flames.

Okay.

So once the scene had been cleared, Pastor Robert showed up.

Woohoo.

Oh, good.

He was like, I'm here to help.

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Yeah, things weren't chaotic enough.

Let's bring this guy in.

He showed up and, you know, he wanted to try to provide support and comfort to Nick.

And when Nick told Robert what had happened that Dawn had passed away, Robert immediately suggested that they try to raise her from the dead with the power of prayer.

Shut the fuck up.

I'm sorry.

That's not what I meant.

That, you can believe whatever you want to believe, but like they suggested they try to raise her from the dead with the power of prayer.

That, I mean, that like literally can't happen.

So like that's really fucked up to do to someone.

Of course it is.

To place that kind of hope in there.

Okay.

But he had been doing that back at church.

His sermons at the church had recently come to include the belief that certain people, those of the truest faith, had the power to resurrect somebody from the dead.

Okay.

Or the truest of faith had the power to resurrect themselves.

Okay.

And to him, it seemed like there was no better time to put that practice than with somebody from his own congregation.

Yeah.

He was like, let's go.

But the mention of resurrection seemed to alarm Nick.

He jumped up from the truck bed where they were sitting in and insisted that nobody should try to pray over Dawn's remains.

He insisted to pastor Robert and told him she's been so badly burned, she'd be in terrible pain.

It would be awful.

Okay.

Which if that is a belief system that people are holding here, that this could happen, that is a very reasonable thing to say.

Yeah.

And something that I can absolutely go, oh, yep, I get it.

For sure.

Like that sound, that would be terrible.

Like just thinking about that is fucking terrible.

I mean, I would think that like if you can resurrect from the dead, like that's crazy in a miracle in itself.

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So like maybe if you got that ability, you would just like come back, like not. But if you don't know, you don't know that's a possibility that I can understand. Like I don't want her to be in pain or like horribly disfigured or yeah.

Okay.

Totally.

So even though their relationship had gone off, gotten off to a rocky start, Robert always knew Nick to be among the most faithful in the church. So the fact that he refused to even try to raise Dawn from the dead, it struck Robert as strange.

You just went, hmm, so instead Nick asked Robert if he could inform Dawn's family of the death, which Robert also thought was strange.

He was like, you want me to go tell them?

And Nick was like, yeah, I do.

I just can't bring myself to do it.

Yeah.

And he was like, okay, no problem.

So the news made its way through the church congregation very quickly.

And a lot of the congregants were absolutely shocked by this.

Nobody expected Dawn to pass away in a house fire.

Like, yeah, why would you ever?

So they formed a prayer chain to pray for Dawn's soul, which that's nice.

Yeah.

And, but at the same time, not everybody was so quick to accept this explanation of what had happened.

Huh.

Sandy's mother-in-law, Mary Glass, had a lot of insight into the tensions at church, not only with just like her daughter-in-law and that whole side of the marriage, but she, she seemed to have eyes on everything in the church. She knew it was up.

And she suspected that Dawn's death was not an accident.

Oh, look at her.

She did not think so.

And she told her husband, she was like, I don't think it's an accident.

Like, I don't know if we should go talk to somebody about this.

But he said, if Nick really had something to do with the fire, the police will certainly discover that in their investigation.

And we need to keep our noses out of this.

As far as he was concerned, it was best that they stay as far away from this investigation as possible.

Okay.

Okay.

Um, but Mary was quickly proven wrong.

Just days later, the fire and Dawn's death were ruled accidental.

And the Bremerton police handed the investigation off to Safe Co.

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Insurance Company, who had already received Nick's request to process Dawn's life insurance claim, which he was struggling with money.

So, sure.

Yeah.

No, uh, some people were like, okay, yeah, her death was an accident.

And, you know, Nick is just a victim of cruel circumstances.

So the church community held a celebrations of life event as a funeral for Don and they invited family and friends to tell stories and just celebrate Don's life while they grieved her death.

Nick ended up giving a 45 minute eulogy.

And some people were like, how is he capable of being so clear so soon after his wife tragically died?

Yeah.

To give a 45 minute eulogy.

But then on the other side of things, people were like, absolutely touched by it and thought it was beautiful.

And then there was probably that whole, and also the fact that he's a pastor.

He's a pastor.

That's what he does.

Yeah, like the turn to God and tragedy.

Exactly.

So with the house destroyed by the fire, Nick moved in with the Smith family, actually, he moved into their daughter, Lindsay's old bedroom.

And around that time, some people started noticing how strangely hot and cold he was when it came to the subject of Dawn's death.

At times he seemed like he was like almost performatively grief stricken.

And then there were other times where it seemed like he couldn't be bothered to even think about Dawn.

Okay.

Now, one day when Lindsay came back to the house to get some of her things, she found a photo collage of Dawn that she'd made for Nick and probably for the funeral.

And she found it stuffed into the back of her bedroom closet.

And she was like, at first she was like, that's weird.

And obviously, like Nick must have been the one to stuff it back there.

But then she said to herself, it must have been really hard for him to look at that every day.

Okay.

Fair.

Yeah.

So in the weeks and months that followed, it's just Nick's way of grieving was a constant answer to a myriad of bizarre, callous and rude behaviors by Nick.

He snubbed his neighbors.

He kept having inappropriate relationships with young women from the church.

And he seemed to be using his widower status to try to make other people feel bad for him.

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Yeah, I don't like it.

I don't either.

Just months after Dawn's death, he started confiding in several women from the church, including PB's daughter, Lindsay, the one married to his friend, Phil.

Oh, yeah.

But rather than see his behavior as extremely inappropriate, all of these women seemed honored that a leader of the church had chosen them to trust with his most inner thoughts, his innermost thoughts.

So some people, they made sure to keep their relationship platonic and just, you know, be a shoulder to lean on.

And others welcomed his sexual advances, excuse me.

And they were sure that it was what God wanted for them.

Okay.

This is going to blow your fucking mind.

Nick was able to manipulate Dawn's own mother into thinking he was a suffering widow and they too slept together, not long after Dawn's death.

Dawn's mother.

Had sex with her husband, had sexual relations with her husband after she died.

That's fucked up.

I was, I don't need, like I'm shocked right now when I already knew that, obviously.

When I, I was reading it in the book and I was like, oh my God.

And for those that are going to read a twisted faith, just know that it's a little graphic in that scene.

Oh my.

So I'm going to move on now.

Oh boy, please do.

Just kept on abusing his power and taking advantage of his congregation.

He's a fucking filthy animal.

Yeah.

He kept taking advantage of his congregation for a few more years, but it got to the point where the complaints were too numerous for the church board to ignore because now people were not, they were going over fucking Robert's head there to the board and being like, what are you going to do about this?

Glad that you guys were taking it seriously.

So they couldn't ignore it at this point.

He wasn't just carrying on affairs with a few women, that would have been bad enough, but there were some cases where he was clearly just leading women on and taking advantage of them.

I'm so confused by this.

Yeah, so these women, obviously they felt completely betrayed and victimized and they weren't going to let things go.

Yeah.

So finally in the spring of 2001, they had a church board meeting about the issue and it was decided that Nick needed to leave Christ Community Church.

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Damn, finally.

Not only did he get demoted, he had to leave the church.

Now, some congregants called for forgiveness, but a majority seemed happy to see him go and they were happy because the tension and the drama that he had caused for years, they were like, okay, maybe this will finally come to a close.

So being kicked out of the church that he devoted almost a decade of his life to was a big blow to Nick.

But it was just the beginning of his troubles.

Oh.

Because on April 10th, 2001, Sandy Glass and her lawyer sat down with the county district attorney and Sandy was presented with a document offering her immunity from prosecution in exchange for her testifying in court to something that she'd been keeping to herself since the end of December 1997.

Shut up.

Don's death was not an accident.

Oh, no.

It was a fucking murder.

Fuck Nick.

She had been murdered.

According to Sandy, Nick called her on the morning of December 26th and all he said, this cryptic motherfucking asshole of a loser said, I did it.

Before the call was interrupted by another incoming call.

What?

So Sandy put Nick on hold to answer the other call, which was actually somebody from the church calling to say to tell her what had happened to John.

So Sandy was like, oh my God.

And she went back to her phone call with Nick.

And she was like, what are you talking about?

And all he would say to her was, it's done.

What?

It's done.

So maybe she was too scared or maybe she didn't want to know.

But Sandy allegedly didn't ask Nick for further clarification until a few weeks later.

And when she finally asked him what he meant, according to Sandy, Nick told her that on the morning of the fire, this is terrible and graphic.

He had given Don a large overdose of Benadryl and then covered her face with a plastic bag to smother her.

Oh my God.

According to Nick, the Benadryl had been enough to mostly immobilize her, but she was still awake and quote, could see him through the plastic bag and what he was doing.

Oh my God.

She literally watched her husband kill her.

Through a plastic bag.

Through a plastic bag in their bed.

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In their home.

That's horrific.

So once he was sure that she was dead,
he scattered old newspaper and wrapping paper around the room
and under her body
and placed the propane tanks by the bed
and set the heater up in a way that it would cause a fire
and destroy any evidence of a crime or so he thought.

Oh my God.

This story seemed too bizarre to be true to investigators
and parts of it didn't seem to make any sense.

But it did explain some of the more unusual aspects of the case,
like why Don wasn't even slightly roused by the raging fire around her.
She was already dead.

Why there was no soot or carbon monoxide in her lungs.

I'm sorry.

We ignored that to begin with.

We didn't ignore it now,

but we came up with a very fucking weird bizarre reason for why that happened.

Or why in one of the photos of Don's corpse taken immediately
after the fire was extinguished,
why you could see paper lying underneath her body.

I don't know how anybody didn't question that.

Wow.

I think some people looked the other way because this was a pastor.

I mean, this is wildly wild.

Wild.

Wild.

The fire marshal at the time said he never forgot about this case
all throughout the years.

He was like, I didn't think it was an accident,
but there was it wasn't up to him to decide.

Yeah.

So when the prosecutor asked why Sandy hadn't come forward
with all this information before now,
all she could say was that she was too afraid she'd lose her kids
if the police thought she was involved,
which I understand, but wow.

And then at the same time,
she also had been thoroughly manipulated by Nick
to think that their relationship was what God wanted for them.
And it was only after she learned that he was
stepping out on her too with other women in the church
that she realized she was being used.

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Damn.

She realized the relationship was not what God wanted.

And then she realized that if this relationship wasn't what God wanted, that meant that God hadn't preordained Don's death.

It was murder.

Oh no.

The story was wild.

Yeah, this is wild.

Reckless.

I can't believe that this just like came to me.

Yeah.

I never would have heard of this otherwise.

No.

I was just looking at another book on Amazon.

This one came up suggested.

Happened to pop up.

And I saw the whole description and I was like, what the fuck?

This is wild.

Wild.

So this, yeah.

It was enough for investigators to reopen the case and look into what Sandy alleged.

Yeah.

So they revisited the evidence that had been collected in the initial investigation,

and they spoke to most of the witnesses and members at the church that they had spoken to before.

And in talking to those folks, they learned all about the other women that Nick had been having affairs with.

Oh no.

And the investigators also reviewed the original autopsy results with the forensic pathologist, who not only discovered that Don had toxic levels of Benadryl in her system.

Oh, oops.

She had five times the normal dosage in her system.

Holy shit.

But that's why he said she didn't think she had tolerance for it and she just kept taking it.

Of course.

Yep.

He was trying to set it all up.

But there were also signs of her having been dead

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before the fire started.

Like I said, no soot in her lungs.

In the original autopsy,

it was noted that there was no carbon monoxide in her lungs.

And once blood work was done,

there was no carbon monoxide in the blood.

And obviously, like you were just saying,

that was something that did stick out

to the forensic pathologist initially,

because carbon monoxide always attaches itself

to red blood cells in a case like this.

And if a person is breathing while a fire rages around them,

they will sure as shit have some fucking soot in their lungs.

Absolutely.

But this pathologist was working under a preconceived idea

that the fire was accidental and this was a pastor's wife.

There couldn't be murder involved here.

No way.

That's wild.

So that's looking the other way.

Of course it is.

Like there's no, to put that along too with them being like,

it is weird that she didn't move at all while being burned alive.

Yep.

Like Benadryl.

You're telling me Benadryl makes it

so you don't feel your flesh burning?

Like I'm sorry, she would have moved a little.

And maybe it was because it was five times the amount,

but even still I would think.

It doesn't paralyze you.

It doesn't kill all the nerves in your body.

You're going to feel it.

And your body's going to move a little bit.

You're going to at least attempt to move or shift.

And for them to take that,

and also take that along with the fact

she didn't have sit in her lungs,

and along with the fact that there was propane tanks.

It's like, and to not look at that and go,

we should take a little more of a look at this and just go,

yep, accident.

That's wild.

Well, they decided to take a look into other stuff.

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They decided to take a real big look into why there wouldn't be any carbon monoxide in the blood or the lungs.

Yeah, they went really hard in proving why that is all not weird at all.

No, they literally did.

Instead of looking the other way and going, well, that's weird.

What they did was they kept researching for some reason why this case would be different,

and they found their reason in a medical journal.

That's no, no.

So the article that supported the pathologist belief that this was still accidental pointed to something called a laryngospasm, laryngospasm.

Essentially in a flash fire like the one at the Hackney's house, apparently it is possible for the larynx to suddenly close off, and the airway is sealed because of the high heat.

It is very, very incredibly rare, but possible.

But now that Sandy had offered up what she knew, and it sounded like Nick had killed Dawn before setting the fire, and considering all of this newly found evidence, the prosecutor's office felt like there was enough to move forward, and so a warrant for Nick's arrest was issued.

Good.

And the pathologist changed the cause of death.

Because of this lady saying all of this, and being like, yeah, I know he did it, like I know that this happened, he admitted it to me, and then you put it along with all that stuff.

It's like, okay, I know rare things can happen, that laryngeal spasm or whatever it is.

Thank you, it's rare to say that.

That can happen, and if there wasn't other things involved, I'd be like, wow, yeah, like rare cases, that happens.

But when you put it next to somebody saying, no, he killed her first, come on.

Right, and how specific it was.

And there's newspaper and wrapping paper under her body, when he just told his friends that morning that they hadn't opened Christmas gifts yet, and then immediately got to the house fire, and was like, oh, we opened Christmas gifts last night, and we haven't even cleaned up.

And it was propane tanks.

Yeah, wild.

I think she actually might have got him propane tanks

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for Christmas, because I didn't see anything about him purchasing those beforehand.

Oh, yeah.

So I think that might have actually maybe been a gift, but I don't know.

But maybe it was just like a-

He might have already had them, yeah.

So, yeah, so yeah.

On the afternoon of September 12th, 2001, detectives did arrest Nick in the parking lot of a Kinkos for the murder of his wife.

He immediately insisted that he had absolutely nothing to do with Don's death,

and this was all a conspiracy being carried out against him by the members of Christ Community Church, particularly Pastor Robert.

He insisted to the investigators, you have no idea what these people are capable of.

Wow.

But regardless of his denial,

Nick was booked on a charge of first degree murder the next day, and his bail was set at \$750,000.

Bye-bye.

So the news of his arrest came as a shock to a lot of people in Bremerton, and to some people, I guess, at his former congregation, but I think others were like, yeah, I saw that coming.

Yeah.

So for a little stretch there, at least, he was a well-respected youth pastor and a leader in his community, and now people were portraying him as a manipulative, full-on murdering murderer, like stark contrast there.

And one of the more unsavory facts released in the media just after his arrest was,

after collecting the insurance payout from Don's policy, Nick couldn't even be fucking bothered to purchase a headstone for his wife's grave.

Shut the fuck up.

He took out her entire life insurance policy, got all of that money, and it wasn't much, but still, it would have been enough to pay for a fucking headstone.

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Anything.

Anything.

A marker.

Wow.

It was literally like a taped piece of paper to the area.

That tells you something.

Of course it does.

Piece of fucking shit.

And instead of spending the money

on what he should have, the headstone,

he quote, took several women shopping for new clothes.

Yeah.

Fuck this guy.

So hard.

So hard.

Now, just for the comfort of everybody's mind,

like all of us in this room

and all of us out there in the world,

luckily a victim's rights organization

did end up paying for a headstone for Don,

so she has one.

That's amazing.

Which like, the fact that a victim's fucking rights organization had to do that, thank goodness they exist.

Yeah.

What about anybody else that loved her?

Jesus fucking Christ.

So some of Nick's former congregants

from the Palsow Offshoot of Christ Community Church,

so it's like a sister church, I guess, I don't know.

They showed up at the hearing to support him.

And his lawyer tried to suggest

that their showing up was evidence of Nick's reliability.

Oh yeah, absolutely.

Because he was hoping to get him released

on personal recognizance.

When I first read that, I was like, wow.

So personal recognizance, according to Google,

is a release without the requirement of a posting of bail

based on a written promise by the defendant

to appear in court when required to do so.

It's the honor system of bail.

You're on trial or you're about to be

for the murder of your wife.

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This isn't a game of monopoly.
There's no get out of jail free Carter.
Like I promise I'll come back.
Hey, just spit on your palm and shake my hand
and tell me you're going to be here tomorrow.
Scouts on it, man.
Yeah, absolutely.
Like you're literally sitting in this room
because we think you burned your wife in a fucking house fire
after suffocating her with a plastic bag.
And you just think that you're going to walk out of here?
After drugging her, yes.
Thank you, there was also that.
Make sure you include that.
So obviously the judge was unmoved to say the least.
Thank goodness.
And he only reduced the bond to \$500,000,
which nobody was going to be able to pay to get him out.
So on September 17th, Nick went before a judge
where he pleaded not guilty to the charge of murder.
He also again claimed that this entire thing
was a plot against him by the former church led by Pastor Robert.
And he also claimed, are you ready,
that Pastor Robert had placed a curse on him
and the reach of his diabolical influence
was just so much deeper than the police
or anybody could possibly comprehend.
You have no idea.
I have been cursed.
I have no idea.
He is correct about that.
Oh, I have no idea.
I have no idea.
How?
You really thought in a court of law,
you could look up at the judge and say,
you couldn't possibly comprehend
how diabolical this pastor is.
He cursed me.
Couldn't possibly.
Can't possibly comprehend.
Sir, this is a court, is what the judge said.
This is a Wendy's.
This is, this is better than a Wendy's.

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Not surprisingly, the judge was not interested in talks of curses or conspiracies.

And he said, OK, trial date November 7th.

See you there, asshole.

Probably a little more eloquently.

Probably.

Now, when Nick was in jail awaiting his trial,

the Kitsap County Prosecutor's Office

was obviously building their case against him.

In early October, Deputy Prosecutor Neil Watcher,

or Watchter, excuse me,

announced that they were considering changing

the original charges to aggravated first-degree murder,

which meant that Nick could face life in prison

without the possibility of parole.

Now, the change in charges was because of the arson of it all.

The prosecutor's office was considering it

an aggravating factor.

And that charge also meant that if he were guilty,

Nick would have been eligible for the death penalty.

Damn.

But prosecutor Russ Haug, I think it is,

assured the press that they weren't going to go for the death penalty.

Now, as part of their investigation, Jesus Christ,

I keep saying Jesus Christ through that,

and it's very ironic because I don't know if I usually say that.

I was going to say because I don't even think you usually.

No, but it's just coming to me in the moment.

It's happening.

It's a vision.

But the prosecutor started collecting testimony

from the women that Nick was having affairs with at the time.

Three of those women were willing to give testimony,

but one of them named Nicole was now engaged to Nick.

Shut up.

They had gotten engaged.

Shut up.

And she was refusing to cooperate.

Nick and Nicole actually were planning to get married

and then move to Tennessee at the time that he was arrested.

Yeah, I bet they were.

Like they were already planning it when he was arrested.

But they were planning to move to Tennessee.

So the prosecutor's office was like,

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no, don't reduce his fucking bail.

Yeah.

And they also had to get a court order to compel her testimony. And they were like, yeah, like he's got to run away to Tennessee and complicate this whole case further.

Do not let him out.

And luckily at the final bail hearing in late October, the judge agreed with them and the bail was left at 500,000.

Oh my goodness.

And he said, killing of a wife is one of the most serious crimes in our system of justice.

Yeah.

You're not just going to be able to go away for that.

No.

So.

Fall turned over to winter and Nick's trial date kept getting pushed back for like different reasons.

The prosecutors and the defense team were arguing over what was going to be admissible, what wasn't.

But the gist is that the defense didn't want most of the affairs to be discussed because they, they claimed that they didn't start until after Don had died, which that's not true.

And like we can create a timeline.

So they were like, they can't be used as a motive.

What's the point in talking about it?

Shut up.

It's like a character, like maybe.

And then relating to Sandy and Nick's whole affair, they couldn't argue that it was going on while Don was still alive.

Like it absolutely was.

So they just argued that her testimony was questionable because she was a woman scorned.

Oh yeah.

Okay.

So the prosecution obviously fought both of those claims and they said even if the affairs hadn't started until after Don's death, Nick was still counseling all of these women at the time.

Yeah.

One of which was the teenage daughter of his own mentor, P.B. Smith, Lindsay Smith.

And their argument was that Nick was laying the groundwork for sex through these counseling sessions.

And he murdered Don to quote unquote free himself up for this.

It's so gross.

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So the judge, superior court judge Anna Laurie decided with, excuse me, sided with the prosecution and noted that Nick quote, had romantic attachments in the form of flirting hugs, physical contact and intimate conversations with several women prior to the death.

And these relationships were sexually consummated once he was freed of the confines of his marriage.

Wow.

Yeah.

So a few more delays after a few more delays,

Nick finally went on actual trial on November 4th, 2002.

In his opening statement, the deputy prosecutor, Neil Watchter, told the jury in the early morning hours of December 26, 1997,

Nick had drugged his wife with a toxic dose of Benadryl, placed a plastic bag over her head and suffocated her until she had died.

Then to cover up the murder,

he scattered and arranged a large number of flammable items around the room, precariously close to a faulty space heater.

Wow.

Which he turned on and then left for a previously planned hunting trip with his friends,

which he was fully intending to use as his alibi.

Damn.

And they argued, obviously again,

that he did all of this to free himself up to have relationships with all these other women.

And not only that,

but because he had put himself in a shit ton of debt from his church activities and the home renovation,

so he hoped to cash in on the life insurance policy

to remedy all those financial troubles.

This is so careless.

It's so messed.

And they also said in their opening statements

how he couldn't even use that money to buy a headstone for his wife.

And how he spent a lot of it on women he was having affairs with.

Yeah.

Now, Mark Yellish, the defense attorney there,

claimed of course that quote,

the initial investigation was right.

It was an accidental flash fire like the medical examiner said it was.

Wow.

Sure.

He said he tried to obviously put doubt in the minds of the jury telling them that the prosecutor's office had to suggest otherwise

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was one jealous witness.

That's all they had to

Okay.

To point away from this.

Yeah, obviously.

It's ridiculous.

Absolutely ridiculous.

So the prosecution called all four women that Nick was having affairs with around the time of dawn's death to testify.

And it was through these women that the jury learned about the heavy influence that the church had on their lives.

And they also heard all about the visions and direct messages people claimed to have from God that played a role in dawn's death.

Yeah.

And how Nick used those visions as messages for justification and manipulation.

Lindsay there, formerly Lindsay Smith, she was married now,

but she told the jury about how she had met Nick through her father PB

and how she'd been groomed by Nick as a teenager.

Oh, just after dawn died,

they did engage in a sexual relationship.

And that happened until she actually finally left the area about a year later.

Oh man.

Mm-hmm.

And the prosecution also introduced into evidence a large number of sexually explicit emails between Nick and Lindsay that contained, quote, a mix of protestations of love, fantasies about sexual contact yet to come, and attempts to explain to one another how God could allow what they were doing.

Wow.

I can't.

Like, can you hear the blink blink?

I cannot.

So some of the more important testimony came from the pathologist, Dr. Emanuel Lasina, who had performed the original autopsy on Don.

Now, like we know,

his original report concluded, quote, a spasm in the woman's larynx

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when a flash fire engulfed in her bedroom
must be the explanation for absence in her lungs
or carbon monoxide in her blood, that's a quote.

But when he was informed by the police
that they suspected Don had been murdered,
he changed the results of the autopsy
when he learned about more of the details.

Yeah.

Meaning the change was purely on the circumstances,
not new evidence.

So that was a little tricky.

Ah, I was gonna say that can get a little hairy.

It got a little hairy

because the defense obviously used this to their advantage.

Yeah.

And they said,

well, would you change your results

if it turned out that Sandy's story was proven false?

Yeah, would you like flip it back?

And he said, yes, I would.

So the defense pushed even further.

And they said, does having a bag over one's head,

like, would that cause a violent reaction?

But this backfired when the doctor noted

that absolutely it would cause a violent reaction.

What kind of question is that?

But only if a person is fully conscious

and at the time of her death,

Don had been drugged to the point of sluggishness,

which meant that she couldn't put up a fight.

Exactly.

So I think what they were trying to do there is say like,

well, if he put a bag over her head,

why didn't she fight back?

And he was like,

because she had five times the normal dose of benadryl
in her system and was immobilized.

He had drugged her first.

Idiots.

They did everything they possibly could,
the defense, to undermine the state's evidence
against their client.

But it was Sandy Glass

that the defense attorney pushed the hardest.

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The case against Nick obviously rested a lot on Sandy's statement to the police that Nick had confessed to her. So they were determined to frame her as this jealous ex-lover who wanted revenge when she found out about all these other women, of course. They pointed to the fact that Sandy never warned anybody about Nick before going to the police, which is true. And the fact that she waited years before reporting about a murder. So the defense attorney asked her, you never warned your good friend Annette and didn't you have any fear of him yourself? And Annette was one of the women he was having an affair with. So that's the crazier thing. A lot of the women that he was having affairs with were friends. I know, that's wild. And like if you read Twisted Faith, it goes a lot more into their relationships with one another. And I think what got Sandy to the point of being like, this is wrong and I can't believe I've been going along with it for this long. Oh man, this is so messy. It is. But so he said, you know, you never warned anybody and you weren't scared yourself. So obviously suggesting she was lying. Yeah. Now finally he got at what he had been implying all along. And he said, by accusing Mr. Hackney of murder, haven't you changed your role in the relationship as a victim that you were manipulated by a murderer? So he's like, you're just trying to rewrite history here. Trying to point to the fact that she herself was involved in this affair and could have been involved in this murder. And now it's like, oh no, no, no, I'm the victim. And I want to believe that Sandy didn't know about the murder. I also want to believe that. So that's what I'll believe for now. But anyway, the trial lasted nearly two months until finally on December 26th, 2002,

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which was super eerie because it was five years to the day since Dawn had been discovered.

The jury retired for deliberation.

They deliberated for less than a day

and ended up siding with the prosecution

and found Nick Hackney guilty of aggravated first degree murder.

In his statement to the press, prosecutor Neil Watchter said,

we are extremely gratified by the verdict and we are happy

they could reach the only common sense verdict here.

Yeah.

Now on February 7th, 2003, Nick Hackney returned to Superior Court

where he was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility for parole.

Damn.

And after the sentence was passed,

Nick obviously was allowed to make a statement

and he did the whole, I'm innocent, I loved my wife,

I did bad things, but I'm a good man.

And he told the courtroom, which included Dawn's parents and family,

I didn't murder Dawn.

There are a lot of things that I regret

that I wish I could take back and undo.

I'm sorry for the pain of going through this trial

and losing your daughter.

Dawn was kind and beautiful and true.

She deserved better than me.

I loved her with all my heart.

No, the fuck you didn't.

I'm going to call bullshit on that.

You don't place a plastic bag after drugging your wife over her head

and then light your entire house on fire when you love that person.

Yeah, you don't.

No, I can confirm that.

And Dawn's father was absolutely pissed that that was his statement.

Yeah.

And he jumped up and yelled at Nick.

Then why didn't you even buy a headstone for her?

Good.

And then her brother, Derek, was equally pissed and added,

you don't know when to give up.

And they were just yelling at him.

The judge was about to call the room back into order,

but they both just left.

I'm glad they were both like, you're fucking worthless.

See you later.

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See you never.

And I think the fact, I think they should be able to respond to that statement.

Because that's an absurd statement.

It is.

And I'm glad that they got to.

Yeah.

Now, unfortunately, any comfort found in Nick's conviction was a little bit undermined in the spring of 2007, when the state Supreme Court sided with him on an appeal that nixed his mandatory life sentence, which then sent him back to court for resentencing.

Essentially, what Nick's team argued was that the jury was not properly instructed on the aggravating factor thing.

Because Dawn was already dead since Nick had suffocated her, the fire happened after the murder.

And technically, they were arguing it wasn't an aggravated factor during the course of murder because she was already dead.

It's, I don't know how you find that loophole.

And yeah, sometimes these little loopholes are like, really.

But it worked with the appeal.

He was still convicted of murder,

but because it wasn't technically aggravated murder, the life sentence was thrown out.

And he was re-sentenced to 26 years in prison.

I love that they were like, it wasn't aggravated murder because he didn't burn her alive.

He just did that.

He just put a bag over her head after drugging her.

So that's not really aggravated.

No, it's just, that's just murder.

Yeah, it's just straight up murder.

Just murdering her.

Oh, OK.

So that means he could get out within like the next several years.

That's awesome.

And that is the tragic case.

Wow.

Of the murder of a beautiful, beautiful soul.

I know, like if you look at pictures of her, she just seems like such a sweet, kind, beautiful soul.

You are better than everyone in this story.

Yeah, truly.

Except to your friend Eunice and like a few of the supporting people.

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Everyone.

Yeah.

She is better than all of these people.

You deserved a lot better.

She did.

And the fact that life didn't give it to her pisses me off.

Yeah.

That sucks.

It does.

It was a really tragic case to research.

But again, I really, really recommend that book, Twisted Faith.

I was, it's a fucking page turner.

Yeah, it sounds wild.

Yeah.

And you can get it on the Kindle if you want, if you like to do that.

You can get it on the Kindle, everybody.

You can get it on the Kindle.

You can get a hard copy.

It's available.

It's available.

You can just read it.

Yeah, it's available.

I'll link it in the show notes.

Oh my God.

That's story.

Cuckoo nuts, bananas.

And just senseless and so sad and like ridiculous.

Like the visions and all that.

Yeah.

It's just too much.

There's a lot.

Yeah, it is.

That's what it is.

It's too much.

So we need to go have a palette cleanser.

Yeah, for real.

Yeah.

All right.

Well, guys, we love you.

We hope you keep listening.

And we hope you keep it weird.

But not so weird that any of this.

Just go hug some on and touch grass.

Yes, do all that.

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