

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 474: Denise Huber- Part 1

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Hey weirdos, I'm Alina, I'm Ash, and this is Morbid.

Yeah.

It is morbid in here.

It usually is.

Yeah, it's always very morbid.

It's your case, so I'm sure it's pretty fucking morbid.

This case is a really sad one.

It's going to be in two parts because I want to do a little bit more to the second part, and I think it's just a lot of information to take in.

This is the murder of Denise Huber.

I don't know if you guys have heard about, you guys have probably heard about this case.

I remember hearing about it briefly, but I didn't know the details.

That's pretty much where I'm at.

When I got into the details of it, I was like, holy shit, this family.

I just want to wrap my arms around this family because my goodness, this is so senseless and so fucked up.

I know part of the end, and I can't imagine what this family went through.

Yeah, I really can't.

And I've been in this, I had to step away from it, and I didn't help myself because this will be coming out weeks after this happened, but the whole submarine thing, the missing submarine, we don't have to get too far into it, but they just figured out that it was like a catastrophic implosion, which is just wild.

And I've been super hyperfixated on every detail of this thing just because the ocean is terrifying to me, and the Titanic is terrifying to me, but so fascinating.

And it just took me on this ride of suddenly starting to research free diving as a competitive sport, which I didn't know was a thing.

You're the randomest person.

Yeah, my brain goes into a lot of places once I start one place.

I can't even make fun of you, though, because my brain is very chaotic, yours is just chaotic in such a different way.

It's chaotic in a very linear way.

It just takes actually into the whole, it goes forth and then it's like, put the branch off and go to this one, but it's kind of connected.

And then from there, which free diving is you take a breath and you go down 600 feet.

How is that possible?

I take a breath and I go to the deep end of the fucking pool and I'm not okay.

I just had to take a deep breath thinking about it.

I don't know if you just saw that.

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I was like, I literally just had, and I couldn't, my lung capacity could never.

No, I feel like I also know what you're going to say next, and that makes me have to take a deeper breath.

Yeah, because then I got, so once I started looking at free diving and I started becoming an expert on scuba diving and free diving, because now I know everything, I started rolling into, because I got suddenly, I came across something that was like, oh, have you heard of the nutty putty cave incident?

And I was like, gut wrenching, excuse me, and I started looking into it.

I'm not going to explain it to you here because I'm going to cover it in an episode because the nutty putty cave incident and caves in general are a whole different set of nightmares to me.

Caves?

No.

Spelunking is not for me.

Spelunking is a no for me dog.

The Descent was a great movie, but also did not help my aversion to spelunking.

I don't want anything to help your aversion to it.

I hope you stay averse.

I mean, it's probably, it's the easiest thing to avoid, I feel like.

So I think I'm okay.

I don't think I'll ever accidentally spelunk, but this really pushed me further away from it.

But yeah, I will definitely be covering that, but I just wanted to let you guys in on what I have been obsessively telling Ash and John about for days and Mikey.

Mikey's also been privy to all of this.

I walked in the house this morning and John was like, is she doing the same thing to you?

And I was like, oh yeah, 100%.

I was like, you were, you were gone for a while yesterday.

Yeah.

I heard all of it.

Yeah.

You're like, oh, I've heard everything.

And he was like, yeah, I'm back now.

And here I heard all of it too.

And she doubled down on it.

But I know you guys are the same way you've said that before that you, I've heard people message, they've messaged me before and been like, I do the same thing.

I go crazy on things.

But this was one of those cases that I'm about to cover the first part of that I could not stop digging into because it's awful.

Oh no.

And we always say like these, you know, the victims always you're like, what the fuck?

Like they would have done so much in this world.

And niece is one of those people that you were just like, and it just makes it all the

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more tragic.

Like a light snuffed out, truly.

So I want to begin this whole thing by talking about Denise Huber.

Denise Huber was born November 22nd, 1967 in Modesto, California.

She was the oldest child of two children born to Dennis and lone Huber.

Very quickly she displayed a love of learning and real, real intelligence.

Like when she wanted to learn something, she absorbed it all.

And it's kind of funny that you were just talking about that.

And it kind of made me think of her because she seems like one of those people that just loved to learn and would just eat up any kind of knowledge she could get.

And it's she didn't just eat it up.

She was able to absorb it and use it.

Like she's just a really intelligent person.

And she also loved making everyone around her laugh and was really like from a tiny age.

And she was like a tiny little stand up comic for the adults in her life.

Stop that reminds me of one of yours.

Yeah.

And she loved watching I Love Lucy and Three Stooges.

And she would act out sketches from the show for her family and friends.

That's adorable.

I love that.

And she was adventurous too.

And in the early years together, the Hubers lived in Fair Oaks, which was a neighborhood in Sacramento.

And while living there, she would usually bring her younger brother, Jeff, along on her adventures around the neighborhood, you know, like things that kids do, like searching for buried treasure and all that kind of stuff.

He later said, my sister was kind of a tomboy when she was a kid.

That included her clothing.

Right up until she went to college, she always wore jeans and a t-shirt.

And she was very athletic, really good at baseball.

Oh, cool.

She sounds like such a cool girl.

And in 1973, her father, Dennis Huber, accepted a new job as a mortgage officer with a bank in the San Fernando Valley.

So the family had to pack up and move.

They did this a lot because he would have to be moved a lot for his job.

Okay.

So they moved five and a half hours south.

And that was to a neighborhood where they settled into a house in Northfield, which was a suburban community just outside of downtown LA.

Now the Hubers were religious, but not overly strict with their practice or beliefs.

And they just believed in the, like, you know, the practice of it.

And Denise and Jeff went to school at Valley Presbyterian School, where their mother actually

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worked as a teacher.

Jeff later described this saying, Denise did very well and I got passing marks.

We couldn't get away with very much with mom teaching there.

That's funny.

So Denise continued to excel in her school work and she really took pride in it.

She took pride in being a good student.

And by the time junior high rolled around, she was actually really interested in literature.

And she just ate up books.

She loved to write.

She loved to read.

And she really fell in love with the work of James Harriet in particular.

And one of his works was a book called All Creatures Great and Small.

And it was about animals.

Yeah.

And it actually inspired Denise to want to become a veterinarian when she got older.

I love that.

Now Denise eventually transferred to Los Angeles Baptist School in seventh grade.

And she stayed there until about the end of high school, actually.

And according to her best friend in high school, Andrea Ludin, I believe it's pronounced.

Denise was still a tomboy through high school.

She never really got out of that phase.

And really started expressing more of her passions like nature.

She loved being outside, hiking.

Hell yeah.

And she loved sports especially.

It sounds like she was so multifaceted.

She was.

That's the thing.

Because when you see her, she's like this cool tomboy girl, but she's like beautiful.

Right.

And like she has this brilliant smile.

She's really smart.

She's really funny.

She loves the outdoors.

She's in the school, but she's also a bookworm.

Like she hits everything on the list.

She does.

And she's a Sagittarius.

So it makes sense that she's like an adventurer and like a wanderer always wants to find new things.

There you go.

I think Sagittarius people are really cool.

Yeah.

And she was also a star on the basketball and softball teams at school.

Hell yeah.

Star player.

It honestly felt like she could excel pretty effortlessly at everything she tried.

But the reality is she also put in the hard work.

She sounds like Mandy Stavig.

Yeah, she really does.

I was thinking that too.

And it's like she made it look effortless, but it was just she, she had natural abilities of course, but she really worked hard for stuff.

Yeah.

Like she put in the work.

Yeah.

And outside of school, Denise also loved the ocean and swimming, like speaking of the ocean, which, and she was a very strong swimmer.

Yeah.

She had like really practice at home.

They had a pool at home and she made sure she was like, she was like, I could swim across the ocean if I wanted to.

Hell yeah.

Now, shortly after she entered her senior year at high school at Los Angeles Baptist, her dad, Dennis, actually his company wanted to transfer him to Richardson, Texas, which is a suburb of Dallas.

The move didn't really seem to bother her brother, Jeff.

He was like, whatever, that's fine, I'll move.

But Denise was devastated by the idea of moving away her senior year from her friends.

That sucks.

Yeah.

They were extremely disgusted amongst themselves.

And although they were not super comfortable with the idea or happy with it, they eventually agreed to allow Denise to remain in California for her final year of high school and stay with a family friend who was the Claudia Moreland and her family.

They knew them through with their church.

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And Alina.

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So then they agreed, like, we will absolutely take her for the year.

That's amazing.

And like, what good parents.

Make that decision even though they weren't necessarily comfortable with it.

That's the thing.

I'm sure it was really hard on both sides to be away from each other.

But like, they did what was best for the other person and like, that's cool that they were

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able to like, come to that decision and have that kind of like love and respect for each other.

That's the thing.

It's a total, that seems like a respect thing.

It is.

Like the parent, like her parents respected her enough to be like, I understand where you're coming from.

Yeah.

And they came up with a solution and although it was hard and not ideal, they went with it.

It worked out.

That's great.

It worked out because after she graduated, she went to Texas and moved in with back with her family.

So like it all worked out.

And so that just kind of shows you what kind of family this is and who these parents are.

And Denise then did two semesters at junior college and then applied and garnered acceptance to Covenant College in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

While there she met someone who would become a very close friend of hers, Debbie Dottar.

And Debbie later said about Denise, it was very easy becoming friends with Denise because she had such a bubbly personality and everyone liked her.

And their closeness led them to become roommates as well.

They were rarely seen without the other.

And she said, whenever I needed her, she would always be there.

She just sounds like a really fucking awesome girl.

Right.

It's just like, damn, like these are always the ones where you're just like, I want to know you.

Yeah.

Like I want to know you more than like because of what happened to you.

Exactly.

And like I'm pissed that the world is such a gross thing.

Gross, disgusting place so that animals walk among us.

Exactly.

Now, after two years at Covenant College, Denise went back to live with her family who by then had actually moved back to Newport Beach, California because of another transfer for Dennis's company.

Oh man.

I must have been really stressful for him.

I know.

And Denise had no trouble like falling right back into Southern California life.

Sweet.

But once settled there, she didn't really know.

She had wanted to be a veterinarian, but right now she was kind of like, I don't know.

On the fence.

I don't know if that's what I want to do.

She had a passion for animals still in nature, like still loved all that.

But she was like, I don't know if I want to like make that my job kind of thing.

It's hard when you're 18 and people are like, Hey, what do you want to be for the rest of your fucking life?

You're like, I have no idea.

And so she was just kind of trying to figure out what her purpose was.

So she had also been dating a young man named Stephen Horrocks and was just settling in.

So she enrolled at the University of California in Irvine to finish out her degree and she got a job as a waitress at the old spaghetti factory.

Oh, I think that place is haunted.

I think it is.

Yeah.

Didn't we talk about that with M?

We did.

Yeah.

And that's why we drink.

Go listen and that's why we drink.

I think we talked about the one in Canada.

I think we did.

You're right.

It was like an old train car or something.

Yeah, you're right.

This one is in Irvine and she continued working there until the summer of 1991.

1991 was the year that the Hubers would find their lives turned upside down.

On Sunday, June 2nd, 1991, Denise had tickets to see Morrissey perform.

Oh, so she's the coolest ever.

The coolest thing.

Yeah.

And he was performing at the Forum in Inglewood and she had gotten two tickets weeks earlier for her and Stephen, her boyfriend.

And unfortunately, Stephen couldn't get out of work to go at the last second.

And although Denise was bummed, of course, she offered that because he was like, give the ticket to someone else.

Yeah, like someone else.

You to go.

So she offered the second ticket to a co-worker of hers named Rob Calvert.

She was friends with him, like they got along really well.

And he was psyched to go with her and later actually said about her, she was everyone's dream date.

Oh, my God.

And he said he knew they were just friends and that was fine with him, but he was just happy they could hang out together.

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What a compliment.

Right?

Like she was everyone's dream date.

What a nice thing to say.

And Denise picked Rob up at his apartment in Huntington Beach and they drove to the theater and they didn't want to pay for all the stuff inside of the venue because it's crazy expensive.

So they just drank vodka and orange juice in the parking lot before going inside.

They got the amount of time.

It's called pre-gaming.

It's called pre-gaming.

And during the show, Rob went and bought a 20 ounce beer for the two of them to share and now they had a fun, like dancing, singing, having a great time.

And they didn't want the night to end after the concert was over.

They were like, this is too much fun and now we got to like download and like debrief about the concert.

You know, you always have to do that.

Oh, absolutely.

Because you're on such like a high.

Yeah.

You're like, we have to talk about everything.

Like the ghost concert, poor John after that, I just debriefed him the entire way home.

I was driving.

And he was like, I was there.

Hold by myself after that.

And I was just, it was a wild experience.

Yeah.

It was a wild experience.

He drove home very quietly.

He did.

And I was like, turn it on again.

I was like, I think I'm going to queue up some Harry.

Yeah.

But Denise found a restaurant in Long Beach and they stopped in for a couple more beers, ended up staying till closing time, just chatting, hanging out, eating some food, just reliving a probably a great show.

And after the bar had closed to Denise drove Rob back home, dropped him outside his apartment a little after 2 a.m.

The next day, Lone Huber, her mom, discovered that Denise had not returned home.

So she was concerned and she called her friend Tammy Brown to ask if she knew where she was.

And Tammy called around to their friends, including Rob Calvert, and none of them had seen or spoken to her since the night before.

Obviously this was very distressing to her parents and now to her friends too.

Great.

So later that evening, Tammy actually decided her friend decided to retrace the route that

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Denise and Rob would have taken to get to and from the forum in Englewood.

Wow.

What a good friend.

Yeah.

So around 10 p.m., Tammy came across Denise's 1984 Honda Accord.

Oh.

Yeah.

It was pulled off to the side of the road on the Corona Del Mar freeway just before the Newport Beach exit.

Oh, I really hate that.

That's always so haunting.

Yeah.

Just the car.

Oh, I hate it.

The car's tire was flat and there were skid marks where it appeared Denise had likely come to a sudden stop after kind of blowing a tire.

Sure.

But there was no sign of Denise still being there at all.

So she was nowhere around and Tammy went right to the Huber home, told them what she had found and they immediately called the police.

Yeah.

So Costa Mesa police officers were dispatched to the scene where Denise's car was located and there wasn't really a lot to tell them what happened.

Right.

The keys weren't there.

Denise's belongings weren't there in the car.

There was no sign of a struggle or anything of that nature that they could tell and looking around they saw that the area was well lit.

There was several emergency call boxes around like within walking distance.

Oh, wow.

So if an emergency had occurred there was really no reason Denise wouldn't have been able to quickly and easily call for help.

Right.

Officers also noticed a large opening in like a chain link fence and it was bordering the freeway but it was behind like there was like a gravel slope that led down to the street out inside of this hole and basically you could have gone down there and gotten to several gas stations, hotels, restaurants like somewhere to get help.

Oh, wow.

Okay.

So they looked at the whole scene and they were like something just feels off here.

Like where is she?

What happened?

Right.

So they were concerned that she didn't take any of these obvious avenues available for

help and then like just sat back at her car.

And so days later police captain Tom Lazar actually told reporters we have feelings about these things and this one doesn't feel good.

Oh, no.

So that night they brought sniffer dogs like bloodhounds and they were able to track Denise's scent several yards beyond where her car stopped but then it just stopped suddenly.

Okay.

To them this indicated that she most likely got into another vehicle and was taken away.

Yep.

Now, as it turns out, Denise was not the only woman to go missing in the area that day.

So shortly before Denise disappeared, another woman had dropped her children off with her ex-husband and then just disappeared.

So the next idea was that Denise maybe ran away but almost immediately that idea was dismissed as highly unlikely.

And yeah, it just seemed very unlikely that she would have run away.

There was no reason.

There was no reason.

She didn't show that was like a pattern of behavior at all and she wasn't fighting with her parents.

She wasn't, you know, like she had a boyfriend, she had a life and clearly like she and her parents could talk about things if she didn't want to do something or go somewhere.

Exactly.

We have evidence of that.

And I think it's showcased really well with what happened in her senior year of high school.

It's like she obviously has a very open line of communication with them.

Exactly.

And they respect her, her thoughts and feelings.

Exactly.

Detective Ron Smith also agreed.

He told reporters later, I guess it's possible, but we don't see any despondency.

She seemed to be, by all accounts, a very reliable young woman steady in her employment.

Like nobody was worried.

And detectives began investigating Denise's disappearance as a missing person's case.

But there was very little evidence to work with and almost no leads.

It was just a car with nothing really to tell you about anything.

They were able to trace her movements up until she pulled off the freeway.

But after that, it was like she just went poof and just vanished without so scary.

Yeah.

That's the thing.

It's like, because usually you'll see something, you know, blood evidence, like evidence of a struggle.

Just anything.

But it's just her car.

Something left behind, even that like, why'd she leave that behind?

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Yeah.

And it's like she had just dropped her friend off.

Like he was like, I didn't see anything wrong.

Like nothing was awry.

And without anything else to go on, investigators tried to actually post a car near the area where Denise's car was discovered.

And the officer in this posted car just sat and wrote down license plate numbers of commuters that they saw.

And then they later contacted these people to see if they had seen anything the day that Denise went missing, because they take that road.

Smart.

So if they saw anything of note, meanwhile, Denise's parents started their own search campaign from their house in Newport Beach.

They were calling Denise's friends, people she had known before, people in different everywhere, states to try to talk to them and see if they knew anything.

Just try to, and also just to try to get the word out about like this is going on and be on the lookout.

Yeah, Denise is missing.

Be on the lookout for her.

I apologize if you can hear a lawnmower in the background.

It will stop in a second, but our neighbor is mowing their lawn.

They were just trying to get the word out that Denise was missing.

Right.

Just get eyes on what was happening.

So from the moment that Denise was officially considered missing, the investigators were very honest and upfront with the Hubers about the likelihood of finding her.

Well, that's so awful to have to hear that and to have to deliver that news.

Exactly.

But they refused to accept that any odds were against them.

In fact, her dad, Dennis Huber, told reporters, we have put the pressure on.

And in the three weeks since Denise had disappeared, her parents were working 24-7 to keep everyone

aware of this case, calling television and radio shows, raising reward money, making and distributing thousands of flyers.

They were talking to people.

They were calling people.

They were like, everything they could do.

And after all their hard work, they did make stuff happen.

Their commitment to their daughter and her case got them featured on America's Most Wanted.

Oh, and that's exactly where they needed to be.

The program started generating tips immediately, and they actually, as far away as like Pennsylvania and New Hampshire, but none of them really produced any leads.

The family also got a lot of psychics calling them and claiming to know where Denise was.

Dennis was not super into that part of it.

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But he said, I don't put too much stock in that.

But even though he didn't necessarily believe them, he always passed their information to the Costa Mesa police for follow up.

Because he was like, although I don't put stock in it, who knows?

What if I didn't?

What if I don't pass it on?

Exactly.

So any information could potentially be valuable, and they recognize that.

The hubers were very aware of that.

And the hubers even convinced, and this was really impressive, they convinced the local chapter of the Adam Walsh Resource Center to aid in the search for Denise.

Holy shit.

And the thing is, this organization typically works on cases of missing children.

Right.

But in the case of Denise, they were willing to make an exception, and Denise was 23 years old.

Oh, wow.

Yeah.

And the center director, Linda, said, she's still their daughter.

She's still their child.

Oh, that's true.

Absolutely.

Now, the search continued throughout the summer, and by September, nothing was really coming up.

No investigators were not close to finding Denise.

They got them.

That must have been the longest summer of their entire lives.

And even after all they had done, like the America's Most Wanted, the Adam Walsh Resource Center, like they did all the right.

They put out all the flyers.

They did the searches, and they weren't finding anything.

It's like she just disappeared.

It's so scary that that can happen.

It's so scary, and the attempt to contact commuters on the Corona Del Mar Freeway, that produced several tips, but according to Detective Jack Archer, quote, all the ones we've got in, they've either been the wrong week or the wrong location because it's hard.

Yeah.

I don't remember any days that I'm driving.

I wouldn't be able to help.

We've said that before.

And the lack of new leads, any information, anything moving forward was really discouraging for investigators who were becoming less and less hopeful of finding Denise alive at this point.

Detective Archer told reporters, unfortunately, that's what history has shown, but you can't

give up hope.

We've got to keep working on everything.

If we're fortunate, we'll find her.

Now, the Hubers really kept hope alive that they would find Denise, but they were also really disappointed with the lack of progress that was happening.

I would think so.

Lone, her mother actually told the LA Times, I know the police are still working on things, but nothing really solid has come up.

They are never really very specific about anything, but they do say they're working on leads.

And that's hard too because the Hubers aren't getting a lot of information or communication because a lot of times victims' families get shut out of these things a lot of times.

And by the fall, the Hubers had actually managed to raise \$10,000 as a reward fund from private donations.

Wow, the fact that they did that just like themselves is incredible.

And I mean, the story was in the news.

It was on national programs like Inside Edition, it was everywhere.

And even despite their best efforts, leads were nowhere to be found, nowhere.

In early September, Dennis actually had to return to his job at the bank too, but he found it incredibly difficult to work.

How do you go back and just work?

Just had to go back and do, like just had to go back to regular life and Lone actually said she was nowhere ready to return back to work.

She told one reporter that she was, quote, just kind of existing, taking one day at a time and surviving.

Exactly.

That's the thing.

It's like, how do you put your mind elsewhere and be able to perform like you did before at your job?

Exactly.

Like nothing's important anymore.

No.

Like nothing would feel important at all.

No.

Everything would feel actually so much less important.

And once it became October and the investigation had pretty much stalled at this point, just hit a wall.

The Huber's hired a private detective named Logan Clark, who they were hoping that maybe just a different set of eyes could look at it from a different angle.

Yeah, fresh set.

So the theory that had developed from the investigators in the case was that Denise had pulled off the road when her tire blew out and she was abducted by a stranger as she walked possibly to the call boxes.

Now this would account for why the dogs lost her scent right near her car.

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But Logan Clark, the special, the private investigator, he thought something totally different.

He said that Denise was not a victim of random circumstance.

He said that she was abducted by someone she knew in his opinion.

And why did he think that?

He said she was abducted somewhere other than where her car was found and he believed that she had been murdered and that her abductor abandoned the car on the side of the road on the side of Corona Del Mar Freeway to throw investigators off the trail.

And like slash the tire.

Yeah, had like made it look like she had pulled off so that they, he said, he thinks that they were making it look like this was the crime scene.

So they would only focus on this scene and never look somewhere else.

I mean, it kind of does kind of seem that way now that you say that.

He was quoted as saying if it happens to be the wrong scene of the crime, they'll never solve it.

Right.

Now Logan Clark's theory was based on something that like was a little tenuous.

He was based on a gap in time between when Denise dropped Rob Calvert off at two oh five a.m.

And the earliest report of her car being seen by commuters on the freeway, which is a little after five a.m.

That's like a big window.

It was during that time gap that he thought that Denise was abducted and murdered and then the car was dumped on the freeway later to be found by Tammy Brown.

Detectives said that they welcomed his cooperation in the search, but they stopped a little short of confirming any of his assertions.

Okay.

Sergeant Ron Smith told reporters, my approach is to not go chase theories, but to concentrate on facts and keep an open mind to all possibilities.

Yeah.

I mean, yeah, that's the best thing you can do.

Exactly.

Now, as the months went by, leads were becoming fewer and fewer at this point.

It was like this happened and then nothing.

After this theory, there was nothing to back either one up.

And it was starting to look less and less like they were going to find Denise alive.

And at the one-year anniversary of Denise's disappearance, Lone Huber said, you want to keep that hope, although I feel realistically the chances are pretty slim.

And after a year of constant endless searching, media appearances, family and friends like helping everything, they were still rallying around the Hubers and they were still as determined as ever to find that they were not resting.

It's not like they were just resting and being like, well, we haven't found her.

So we have to like just go back to our lives.

You can never go back to your life.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 474: Denise Huber- Part 1

They were going back to their responsibilities as best as they could, but they were dead set on us.

This was their main focus.

And Denise's co-worker actually said, as long as you don't know, you can't say that a person is dead, but it's like giving up if we say Denise isn't alive.

So Costa May said detectives kept pursuing any of the now fewer and fewer leads that were just trickling in at this point.

And it was really getting tough because they were hitting a lot of dead ends each time.

And in disappearances like Denise's, there's usually some evidence if there is a homicide or like sometimes as an attempt to extort the family for money or just anything.

Something.

There was just virtually no evidence in this.

It's like banished.

And that must have been maddening for her parents.

Truly.

Maddening.

You just want one thing, just something.

Anything.

Sergeant Ron Smith remained committed to finding Denise and remained committed to the idea that she didn't disappear voluntarily.

He was like that because people kept going back to that.

That must have been so frustrating, especially when you know your child and you know your family member.

That's the thing.

And luckily this guy, Sergeant Ron Smith said, everyone pretty much sees her as an innocent victim in this.

There's a high emotional involvement on the part of detectives.

So for his part, the private investigator, Logan Clark and his team of private investigators kind of gave up at this point.

Oh, so they weren't on this for very long.

Their theory that Denise was abducted and probably killed by acquaintances was also connected to them saying that she was probably killed by acquaintances in the rock music industry.

Okay.

So it's giving like the devil made me do it kind of like rock music made someone murder her.

I don't think so.

I don't usually think that's the case.

Strangely, they were never able to bring any supporting evidence for this theory.

So he just turned the case back over to detectives and was like, I'm good.

That's the thing.

Because I was like, well, what makes him think it was someone she knew?

What is telling you that?

I think it was, to be honest, and this is just me speculating.

I think it was like he was looking at what the police were doing and saying what is the exact opposite.

Right.

Because we haven't looked at that side yet.

Which I guess can be a good tactic.

I think it's a good, hey, you might as well look at it.

Exactly.

I guess he's doing the right thing by saying, I have no evidence to support this.

I should just hand it back over.

Yeah.

But later during the trial, his theory, which again relied very heavily on that time gap of two to five AM, it was further undermined because a newspaper delivery person testified that she saw Denise's car on the side of the road at two 25 AM.

Oh wow.

So she went missing.

Very closely.

20 minutes after dropping him off.

Yeah.

And he made him sound like he was good.

So as one year turned into two, the leads had become basically nothing.

They weren't even coming in at this point.

No tips, nothing.

It was really becoming inactive.

And that's the sad thing.

These cases take up so much media attention right away and then fizzle out and then it's like everybody just forgets.

And then people forgets.

And that's like, it's so sad.

But the family doesn't.

That's the thing.

The family never does.

The family lives with it every day.

Right.

And to make matters worse, in the fall of 1992, Lone Huber was diagnosed with breast cancer.

Oh my God.

It had to undergo very aggressive treatment for it.

She told the LA Times, whatever's going to happen to me is going to happen.

And she said of the breast cancer, in comparison to what we've been through, it's no major thing.

She must have just felt like life was just knocking her over and over again.

And it was a tough journey.

And she found herself, it was an emotional toll that was a very harsh reminder that their beloved daughter Denise was not there for this, like was not there to be an emotional support.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 474: Denise Huber- Part 1

For her comfort, you know.

And her kind and loving voice was silent.

And something like this made it even more apparent.

Because they said she was, she made people feel better, like I wanted her there to make me feel better.

I mean, she was a caretaker.

She wanted to be a veterinarian.

And Lone said, as time goes on, I realized Denise is probably not alive.

Just to know and not have to constantly wonder what happened would be easier to handle than this mystery.

Yeah.

Because your mind fills in the blanks.

With the worst.

Yeah, I was just going to say our minds are the scariest thing we have.

Unfortunately, in this case, the reality is probably worse than what her mind could come up with.

Oh, God.

Now, more than a year after this would pass, but for the mystery of Denise's disappearance would be brought to light.

And the story was more heartbreaking and bizarre than anyone could have imagined.

Now, on a hot afternoon in early July, Elaine Canalia and Jack Court had an appointment with a man named John who was supposed to be selling them some paint colorant that they had hoped to resell through their paint manufacturing business.

Random.

So they drove out to a new housing development in Dewey, Arizona to meet him for this paint.

Elaine had actually met John several weeks earlier at an outdoor market.

And that's when they like got to talking and he told them that he had some product back at his house that he wanted to get rid of.

And if they were interested in coming by to see it, he had it for sale.

This is just what they did, like, you know, is to resell sketchy.

And when they reached John's house, Elaine immediately questioned her decision to come out that far to buy something from this man.

Yeah.

There wasn't anything specific.

She said that made her like a little uneasy.

Just a gut feeling.

Just a weird feeling that something about the situation was off, but always listen to your gut.

But they carried on.

And when they got there, John led the couple back to the back of the house where he had a large rider truck, like a rider rental truck parked out back and it was covered a little bit by a blue tarp.

Creepy.

And around it were unlabeled paint cans.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 474: Denise Huber- Part 1

And they noticed that there was also an extension cord running from the back of the truck into the house.

What?

So immediately they were freaked out.

They were like, this is just a little fucking weird.

But Elaine was like, you know what, let's get these fucking paint cans, let's get them in the truck, let's leave.

So they do.

And as they're pulling out of the driveway, Elaine noticed that the rider truck had what she originally thought were Massachusetts plates.

And although it was common that a moving truck would have plates from out of state, renters have to return the vehicle to the company when they're done with it.

That truck looked as though it had been there for several months.

She's like, that was not a new truck, like that was sitting in that spot for a long time.

So like, she's like, did he steal this?

And I guess when they got in there, Jack, her husband said, I'll bet the doggone thing is stolen.

And I guess he said it like very like off the cuff.

And apparently they had dealt with some theft recently.

So Elaine was like sensitive.

She was like, that causes a lot of stress and aggravation being a victim of theft.

So like, I'm going to help these people out.

So she grabbed a piece of scrap paper and she jotted down the license plate number of the truck and any words that were on the sides, any numbers, that's my fucking girl right there.

And she took, she took charge and she was like, I'm going to mention this to the authorities. Like I just want to make sure.

Now once they were back at the warehouse in Phoenix, she dropped the paper on a desk and kind of forgot about it a little bit because she went back to like working and all that. But a few days later, a friend of theirs who happened to be a detective with the Phoenix police came in the store to buy some paint.

And suddenly she was like, oh, and she gave the scrap paper to him and was like, here's the license plate.

I think it might be stolen.

If this is what breaks the fucking case, Elaine forever, Elaine forever and just like how kismet and insane and she trusted that gut.

She said something's not right about this.

I'm going to write down the information.

Maybe it's nothing, but maybe it's something proof and evidence that you should always trust your fucking gut.

Yeah.

So Elaine passed the information to Detective Steve Gregory, who later followed up with the local writer agency to see what was up with this.

Now at first the agent at Ryder was like, yeah, I don't have any information about that.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 474: Denise Huber- Part 1

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

So Detective Gregory was like, can you just double check if this is one of yours?

So a few hours later, the agent called back and said, actually that vehicle had gone missing.

It was stolen from Orange County, California.

Okay.

California.

Uh-huh.

Now for some reason he said the agent apparently went unnoticed by Ryder at first.

It wasn't reported stolen, they just didn't know it was gone.

That's kind of wild.

Like a whole ass truck Ryder.

Like what the fuck?

You guys must have a lot of trucks.

But Detective Gregory reported the stolen vehicles to deputies at the county sheriff's office and Deputy Joe DiGiacomo, I believe it's how you say it, was dispatched to investigate the truck and speak to the man named John, who was the homeowner.

So Deputy DiGiacomo drove around the neighborhood where the truck had been seen and eventually he saw one in a driveway, but the vehicle had Maryland plates.

And he was like, huh, I thought they were supposed to be Massachusetts.

So he was like, I don't want to unnecessarily disturb a family if I don't need to.

So he called Detective Gregory and like reiterated the information and he was like, and Gregory asked what we all probably are asking right now, wasn't it possible that whoever stole the truck had switched the plates?

That could also be possible.

Or she got it wrong, like Maryland, Massachusetts.

Yeah, similar.

So DiGiacomo was like, yeah, that's probably a pretty decent possibility because he was like, should I bother these people?

Like, you know, this is it.

So he went to the property and he checked the VIN number on the truck and it did match for the vehicle stolen in Orange County.

There you go.

And with another sheriff's deputy by his side, DiGiacomo came up to the house and knocked on the door, but no one came to the door.

Okay.

Now he looked around the property and he was like, huh, they both thought that this could maybe be some kind of like drug lab or some other like hub of illegal activity because it was very rundown and covered in empty paint cans and a lot of debris.

It just, to them it looked like there was something weird going on here.

It's giving meth lab.

Cause they also didn't know like that he had anything to do with painting or professional painting.

So they're like, what is all this paint can and like paint thinner and shit.

Right.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 474: Denise Huber- Part 1

Like what are all these chemicals doing on your property?

So the deputies got back up from the Dewey area narcotics team, which is called Pant, who arrived at the house around 1.15 in the afternoon and they found no evidence of drug-related chemicals or paraphernalia when they went, but the truck appeared as though it was there for months.

Okay.

The extension cord coming from the back of it suggested that there was something weird going on in there.

Yeah.

Like what the fuck is that about?

Unfortunately, the back of the truck had a padlock on it as well, so they needed to wait for a warrant to get into it.

Now, smartly deputy Digiacoimo had planned ahead.

I just had a feeling he was a smart guy.

I just kind of felt that way.

By the time the warrant arrived on the scene, he already had a locksmith ready to remove the lock from the door like sitting there with a thing of bolt cutters, just waiting for the warrant to come through and then he was like, snip, let's go.

Inside the truck, investigators found a large number of paint cans, other contracting materials. They followed that extension accord and they found a large chest freezer pushed all the way back to the back of the cab and it was on.

The freezer also had a padlock on it and there were tons of pieces of heavy tape placed at the point where the lid met the bottom of the freezer.

That's fucking weird.

That's suspicious at all.

I'm sorry, is the chest one, it's like the long horizontal one?

Yeah.

Gotcha.

So they carefully removed the tape and Detective Mike Garcia opened the freezer.

Immediately they were hit with the very recognizable odor of decay coming from something that had been wrapped in black garbage bags and placed in the freezer.

Oh my God.

The bags were covered in frost and had kind of obscured whatever was in there.

Also Detective Garcia gently reached inside and felt along the outside of the bag before pulling his hand away and saying, it feels like a human arm.

Oh God.

Now, immediately additional officers and a forensic team were called to the scene to help with this whole thing.

And while officers were trying to get anybody from inside the home because they felt like somebody was in there.

And clearly not answering on purpose.

Yeah.

Others were removing the contents of the freezer and cutting away the black garbage bags. After opening the bags, they unfortunately revealed the nude body of Denise Huber.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 474: Denise Huber- Part 1

Her hands were secured behind her back with metal handcuffs.

Oh my God.

With the body removed from the freezer, they could also see what was quote, apparently frozen blood body fluids and ice crystals on the floor of the freezer.

The frozen fluids and lack of any blood spatter anywhere else they could see suggested that whatever happened here happened somewhere else and she was placed in here.

And later after she was killed.

Okay.

Also, Denise's body did show some signs of decomposition, which indicated that she had been dead for at least a few hours before she was placed in the freezer.

And the truck and all of its contents were towed to a forensic lab in Phoenix.

And Denise's body was taken to the medical examiner's office for autopsy.

And she'd been missing for years at this point.

She was in that freezer.

This was three years at this point.

What the fuck is this person keeping her in a freezer for for three years?

So they did come to the conclusion that no one was inside the house at the time.

And so they went next door to talk to the neighbors and they confirmed that the truck had shown up about six months earlier.

Okay.

And while they had seen a man going in and outside of the house, they didn't know his name.

So officers ran the plates on the white dodge parked alongside the rider truck and it belonged to John Fomalaro.

Okay.

Just as they received that information, John pulled into the house.

And was probably shitting himself.

Oh yeah.

And a jeep driven by his mother.

What?

And he was immediately placed under arrest for felony theft of the truck, which would be enough to hold him while they investigated the unidentified at this point body found in the freezer.

Oh my God.

And that's where we're going to leave you for part one.

You're fucked up.

I would like to tell you that part two is, I mean, this is very disturbing anyways, but we're going to go into the autopsy stuff and what happened to Denise, Denise is fucking awful.

So.

And it doesn't seem like she knows this person.

No.

What the fuck?

So we will be getting to that and stay tuned for part two.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 474: Denise Huber- Part 1

And yeah.

This is a devastating story.

This is a tough one.

Wow.

This is a real tough one.

I knew about the freezer, but I didn't know all the strange logistics.

Nope.

Like why did it just show up there six months earlier?

So I, the whole thing is like so upsetting and when you find out more about, you know, there's a lot of things that were found in his house, like he kept a lot of connections to this.

Really?

Like a lot of trophies, a lot of, yeah.

And do we know, can I ask, is this the only person that we know that he's killed?

I think, yeah, I believe so.

Wow.

Yeah.

What the fuck?

Okay.

Well.

Yeah.

We hope that you keep listening.

We hope you keep it weird.

Bye.

Yeah.

Not, not that weird.

No.

Nope.

That's, that's beyond weird.

Oh my God.

Oh my God.

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