

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 501: The Stanfield Hall Murders

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I'm here at Kevin's doorstep where he just executed a textbook package pickup.

Kevin, talk us through these deals you scored.

Well, the parents are touted.

I knew this coffee grinder deal would be a winner.

Yeah!

Thank you, Kevin.

I love you, Mom!

Prime big deals on everything from home to electronics.

It's on Prime big deal days October 10th and 11th.

Hey, weirdos, I'm Ash.

And I'm Alina.

And this is Morbid.

But you know what's a not Morbid?

What?

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We have a freaking coffee that is launching and like realistically what goes better together than true crime and coffee time?

Truly.

Truly.

You know how much we love coffee.

And we get to introduce the first Morbid coffee with Dead Sled Coffee!

The absolute most perfect and badass collab out there.

True.

I have been loving Dead Sled for literal years at this point.

I've been a fan girly of Dead Sled Coffee.

In OG.

They've collabed with some of my favorite people like Elvira.

They have Rob Zombie, Coffee, like they're, I'm losing my mind at this collaboration.

So guys, now they have us because in honor of National Coffee Day, we are launching not just one, but two Morbid brews just for you weirdos.

One is just for me and the other is just for Alina.

Alina's is really exciting.

It's got like luxurious black packaging and it's called Alina's Death Brew.

Hell yeah.

It is a blend so strong it will actually wake the dead.

And I think we're kind of hoping that you savor this dark, raw, raw.

We're kind of hoping that you savor this dark roast though so you can enjoy the notes of Tiramisu as you energize your inner creativity.

Hell yeah.

Yum.

I'm so excited about my packaging.

I can't wait for you to see it.

I'm even more excited possibly because Ash's packaging is Ash to a T.

It is literally spellbinding pink packaging.

Pink.

And it's called Ash's Witches Brew which is made for all you witches on the go, go, go.

On the go, go, go, go, go, go, go, go.

And we love it because it's a medium dark roast which has an essence of lavender and honey in it.

Very Ash.

And it's the perfect blend to harness the power of your fucking higher self.

And not only this, so that we have this coffee coming out, the two different ones, you can also get one of the new Zodiac Mugs out of our Zodiac Mug collection that we're launching.

It's going to go along with your coffee blend of choice because we said we can't just give them coffee, we have to give them something to put the coffee in.

Hell yeah.

So you get to choose between Zodiac Mugs that channel either your inner Elena with a dark goth vibe or you can channel your inner me, Ash, and those Mugs have a bright and groovy vibe.

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And more exciting, you can also personalize your star sign on your mug with your name or for like a fellow weirdo that you love.

Where are my fellow cappies out there?

Gemini.

And what's exciting too is this is also going to come with a coffee tray that can hold all your coffee accoutrements, all your essentials, and it comes in two different styles.

Hell yeah.

One's Ashie and one's Elena-y.

Yeah.

This is the most exciting thing ever and I actually, I'm not even joking you, it's so gray outside right now that I need a cup of our coffee and we brewed Elena's roast this morning.

Yes, get the gray away.

Oh, seriously, so gray.

It's morbid and it's rainy.

Rainy, rainy, rainy.

It's very gray up.

It is very gray up.

It's very gray in too.

It's gray in, it's gray out.

I feel gray.

It's gray all around.

Gray all day.

Gray all day.

Gray all fricking day.

But you know what?

We're bringing it.

Oh yeah.

We may be feeling gray right now, but we're bringing it.

Bringing it right to you.

We're bringing it, we're bringing you some gray old timey shenanigans.

You know what's funny, whenever you tell an old timey story in my head, I see it in black and white.

So it is gray.

I love that, so it is.

It's very gray scale.

Yeah.

You know what this is?

Brought to you by Gray.

We said that word so many times, I think it just lost all meaning.

But yeah, today's going to be an old timey one.

It's an interesting one because it's just got so many old timey elements to it.

It's got heirs and estates and landowning and I just slam my head into my microphone.

Landowning, so old timey.

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Wait, I think the writer's strike just ended.

Oh, shit.

That's what somebody just texted us.

Someone, someone just texted us.

Somebody told us.

It's true.

They had come to a like tentative agreement, so it's still tentative.

So well, everybody's got to sign off on it, but hey-oh, sounds good.

Okay, let's go, brothers.

Yeah.

Sorry, I knew you were looking forward to that.

Let's go, brothers.

I was.

Thank you.

That is exciting.

Let's hope that it all continues going in the right direction.

There you go.

Because then it's the actors next.

They got to get on board.

Oh, gosh.

But that's exciting.

That's exciting.

I know.

We love to hear it.

And this case is called the Stanfield Hall Murders.

And it's very, it's in England, it's very, like if you, I want you to look up Stanfield Hall.

Okay.

And if you look up Stanfield Hall Murders, you will get a picture of the place that this happened as it looks today.

It is the most gorgeous estate I have ever seen.

So that's why people were fighting over it.

And I'm pretty sure it sold like recently for like 5.25 million or it was on sale for 5.25 million.

Is it this?

Yes.

It's gorgeous.

I love a building covered in greenery and moss and ivy.

Give me an ivy covered stone building with a moat around it and sign me the fuck up.

I love that you said there has to be a moat.

There has to be a moat around it.

This place has a moat.

Look at that fucking, I'm saying it's gorgeous.

Oh my God.

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So this happened.

So on November 28th, 1848, a guy named Isaac Jeremy and his son found themselves under attack at their Windmantam estate, Stanfield Hall in England.

I think it was Norwich where it was.

What led to their murders was a long feud that, like I said, involved estates, rightful heirs, and angry land tenants.

Oh, the worst of the worst.

A lot of messiness involved here.

So and the guy that did it, that was convicted of doing it, and at the end we'll obviously tell you who, he had a lot of stuff go on in his life that you're like, there's a lot of coincidences around you that when you look back on it, you're like, huh, oh coincidences. Air bunnies, air bunnies, quote unquote.

Yikes.

So let's get into it.

Well, first let's talk about the Jeremy family because these are the victims, these are the ones that own the estate at the time.

So born Isaac Preston on September 23rd, 1789, Isaac Jeremy had resided at the family's estate, which is Stanfield Hall, for pretty much all of his life.

There were some years in between where he spent some time training at Westminster School to become a lawyer.

But other than that, it was Stanfield Hall or bust.

He was living there.

I feel that.

But after he graduated from Westminster and he got admitted to the bar, bully for him.

That's pretty great.

He practiced law in Norwich.

And after this, he ended up taking a seat on the Norfolk circuit court and then became appointed as recorder of Norwich in 1838, which was a pretty, pretty good position.

And he held it until his death.

He's a big deal.

Now, when his father, Reverend George Preston, died in 1837, Isaac inherited the family estate, which included Stanfield Hall, because he's the oldest boy.

I'm the oldest boy.

And it was then that he took the name, and this is where it gets a little like, you're like, what the fuck's happening right now?

Cause old timey shit gets weird.

It does.

When he inherited this estate in Stanfield Hall, he took the name of his ancestor, William Jeremy, which was necessary for him to take ownership of the family estate.

You got to change your whole ass name if you get like land transferred to you.

So instead of being a Preston, he now had to be a Jeremy.

Because the Jeremy's owned the estate.

Yeah.

So it's like that it was like necessary by law.

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Weird.

And so he also had to take on the Jeremy coat of arms for it to become legally his.

I kind of like the tradition of it all.

It's kind of fun.

Yeah.

I mean, it's complicated and fun.

I love it.

It would suck if you're like, what, like 30 and then all of a sudden your name's William and it used to be Isaac.

Like that might be a bit concerning, but well, I mean, well, he could keep Isaac, but he had to be Isaac Jeremy now.

Oh, okay.

So now maybe I wasn't clear about that, but he, yeah, Isaac Preston became Isaac Jeremy.

So it's like you're marrying the house.

I was just going to say, so it's like, yeah, you're taking someone else's name, taking the house's name.

Yeah.

Okay.

I like that.

You know, Stanfield Hall should.

It deserves that.

I would marry that place.

Why not?

So he became Jeremy.

He has the Jeremy coat of arms and at the time of his death, he lived in the house with his son, Isaac Jeremy Jr.

Oh my God.

I know.

He also lived with Isaac Jeremy Jr.'s wife who was pregnant at the time of the murders and several domestic workers who lived on the estate.

So this guy lives with his son and his daughter-in-law.

Exactly.

Okay.

And like a bunch of people who worked in the house.

Sure.

Following the death of Reverend George Preston, so the dad-

His dad.

Exactly.

In 1837, Thomas Jeremy and his cousin, John Lerner, part of the fam, both members of, but not direct heirs of the Jeremy family, they were like, wait a second, no, no, no.

Why is Isaac Preston now Jeremy getting this entire shit?

Why is he taking possession of the estate?

I want to claim it for me.

I'm a Jeremy.

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But you're not.

You're not.

But he's not a direct heir.

Yeah.

That's the biggest fuck.

That sounds simple to me.

Right?

They want to try to take it, claim it for themselves, and I say nice tridudersons, but it's not going to happen.

The bloodline just doesn't work that way.

Exactly.

I'm the eldest boy.

And Thomas said, me too, but of a different family.

And then Jeremy said, ah.

He said, no, it's mine now.

I have the coat of arms.

He said, you may be an eldest boy, but I'm the eldest boy.

That's a succession reference, by the way, in case you're like, why are you screaming that?

Yeah.

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Hey, weirdos.

We want to thank you for keeping it weird with us, traveling back in time with us, and journeying through the strange and very unusual with us.

I have a question.

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What is it?

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Do it!

No, seriously, do it.

Do it!

So, when they tried to convince the courts that they were the rightful heirs, meaning Thomas Jeremy and his cousin John Lerner, that was in September 1838, the courts were like, no, no, you're not.

So not one to sit down and, you know, listen to logic, Thomas Jeremy gathered a group of laborers and attempted to take the estate by force.

Oh, my God, like Gaston and Beauty and the Beast.

Yeah, they tried to storm the castle and be like, it's mine, it's so true.

They brought a big old tree lump with them, stump, I mean, a tree lump, I meant to say stump.

I told you, I told you I was gray inside, a tree lump and stump.

All right, men, we have our tree lump, let's go.

Get your torches and your tree lumps now.

Your tree lump.

I don't know why that is so funny.

No, that is funny.

Yeah, he Gaston'd it and everybody had torches and shit and they were going to take that shit by force, but they were turned away by a name, a man by a name, a name came strolling out and was like, no, no, I'm sure he had a name.

He did.

His name was James Rush.

He served as Isaac Jeremy's bailiff at the time and he came out and was like, no, no, no.

Because Isaac Jeremy said bailiff.

Bailiff.

He was like, Judge Judith Shynlaw.

That's exactly it.

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She calls the bailiff.

I'm sure it was just like that.

It's similar.

But Thomas, so they got turned away.

James Rush was like, I don't think so.

He's like, get on out of here.

And Thomas Jeremy was actually brought to trial, but was ultimately acquitted for this whole thing.

Damn.

But still was not satisfied, even though he got acquitted.

He got away with almost taking that estate by force.

Is that like conspiracy to commit burglary or not even burglary, just like conspiracy to commit home invasion?

Yeah.

Like grand larceny of house.

Of home.

Of estate.

But like conspiracy because he didn't ever get there because he just didn't get there.

He just planned that.

He just had to take your tree lump and go home.

And then the bailiff said, nah.

But he wasn't satisfied with that.

So he returned after getting acquitted, getting away with it, like take your lumps and leave.

He returned to Stanfield Hall on September 24th, and this time he brought a much larger group with him.

And a bigger tree lump.

And a bigger tree lump.

And they broke into the mansion with crowbars.

Oh, shit.

And once inside, they forced all the workers to flee the house and barricaded themselves inside.

Damn.

So they took over this house.

And we're like, this is mine now.

Now rather than try to convince them to come out, like coax them out, Isaac Jeremy called for military assistance and they were forcibly taken out of the house by military assistance.

This is insane.

And they were put on trial.

What the fuck?

Eventually they all pleaded guilty to minor offenses of rioting, which is a minor offense in comparison to what they could have gotten because Thomas Jeremy and John Lerner each only served three months for the offense against Isaac Jeremy and the laborers that they assembled for the purpose of breaking into this house.

They got even lighter sentences.

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Wow.

And Isaac Jeremy was in like, like I said, he was the recorder for Norwich.

So he was in a pretty big position in the county.

He was the county recorder and he could have easily pursued very tough sentences against these, especially Thomas and John.

Right.

The ringleaders.

Because they had seized his home, like that you could have fucked them up.

After trying multiple times.

He had all the right to and he had all the power to, but he chose not to.

It's family.

And even with that, even with Isaac being like, I'm going to let you just serve a little bit of a sentence and hopefully that kind of knocks some sense into you, still the animosity over the incident got really bad.

And there was still the continued belief that Isaac Jeremy wasn't the rightful heir.

So it created a huge rift between the families that continued until Isaac's death in 1848.

Wow.

So during the first attempted takeover of the Stanfield estate, James Rush, who I talked about before the bailiff, his name is James Bloomfield Rush.

He actually played like a huge role in stopping the men from trying to take over the house.

Like that was him who stopped that.

But even though he was still in an employment with Isaac Jeremy at the time that this all ended, like when like, you know, Thomas and John were sentenced to three months and all that, the relationship between them had kind of soured.

It had become a little complicated by this time.

So even though he was a huge role in stopping that whole thing in the first place, things were not going as smoothly as they could.

He was born in 1809 to Mary Bloomfield.

And he was the product of a rather illicit affair between Mary and a gentleman farmer in Windmanham.

And that affair ended pretty quickly when he was like two years old.

Oh, that's sad.

And when it came to an end, she actually, Mary sued this man for breach of promise and was awarded a lot of months, like a good amount of money by the courts because he was supposed to marry her.

But she used that money to care for her son.

And James never really ended up knowing who his father was, like he didn't want anything to do with him.

What a sad, like sad start.

Yeah.

So she ended up, luckily, Mary ended up meeting another man, James Bloom, James Rush.

And he was like, you know what, I like this little kid.

I want to marry you.

So she convinced him, like, you know, this can be your father.

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Okay.

This is your father figure now.

Mr. Rush, I'll call him Mr. Rush just to make it easier because James Rush, Mr. Rush.

So the father, Mr. Rush, he basically treated him as his own child and even amended his name to include his surname.

Wow.

Because remember, he was James Bloomfield before this, but now he's James Bloomfield Rush.

Gotcha, gotcha.

So his parents got married, his stepfather and his mom got married.

And James and his mother moved in with Mr. Rush, who was a tenant of Reverend George Preston.

Who was Isaac Jeremy's father.

Father, okay.

Yeah, I know.

No, you're doing a good job because I would be so confused right now.

I'm glad, I'm glad that it's making sense.

And Reverend George Preston had given them this home, which they could rent.

It was like a modest house adjacent to the Stanfield Hall estate.

Oh, they look like a guest house kind of.

Yeah, it was kind of like that whole thing.

So again, Mr. Rush, the stepfather, he didn't have any children of his own at the time that he married Mary.

So he really did treat James as his own son.

He sent him to the best school in the area.

And upon completing schooling, James Jr. there returned to Norwich in 1828 and he got married.

After this, he began working as a tenant farmer for W. E. L. Bolwer at Dollingwood Farms.

But Rush thought that farming was going to be a little easier than it actually was.

I don't know what gave him that idea because farming to me looks really hard.

Sounds like a lot of hard work.

And within a year, he was losing money on his farm.

And in an attempt to get back some of these losses, he actually ended up setting fire to a bunch of stacks of wheat and submitted an insurance claim saying that they had caught fire by accident.

That's fake as fuck.

And there were definitely rumors everywhere in gossip that he had definitely set that fire.

And even rumors that he was going to be arrested for arson.

But there was no proof of him being the arsonist.

So the company did pay out the claim.

Oh, probably like so begrudgingly.

Yeah.

And it definitely gave him a false sense of confidence, like, oh, I got away with it.

So a few years later in 1830, while still living under that tenancy agreement with

Bolwer with a farm where he was living, James again found that he was losing money.

He was struggling financially.

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But this time, he started blaming outside sources, not like his inability to farm.

Now he was blaming the competition, other farmers for his inability to make a profit.

It was all their fault.

That's not that he couldn't do it.

And so he decided, you know what, instead of working harder or trying something else that I might be better at, I'm just going to turn to more felonious behavior.

So he assembled a mob of laborers, which seems like something that a lot of people enjoyed doing back then, I guess.

Yeah.

You get mad and you just assemble laborers.

Call up some laborers.

And he led them to a farm in nearby Folsom, where once they got there, they destroyed a ton of pieces of huge farm equipment.

And then they all ran in opposite directions.

So they fucked up all the farm equipment and then left basically trying to make it so this farm would get, wouldn't be able to function.

Yeah.

So he was trying to fuck up the competition instead of just doing better himself.

That's not a good way to win.

He did end up, Rush was arrested a short time later and he was tried, especially for leading the mob, but no verdict was ever returned.

And he was released into his own recognizance to keep the peace.

What?

So it's just like, they're like, don't do that again.

I don't know what to fuck around.

So it's like, cool.

This guy just keeps getting away with this shit.

Damn.

Now his tenancy agreement with Bulwer came to an end in 1835, probably to everyone's like, few.

And that's when he entered into a new tenancy agreement with Reverend George Preston, Isaac Jeremy's father.

Okay.

He had known him as a child because remember, he had grown up on that property with his stepfather

and his mom.

So he knew this man.

He knew the Preston family, knew all of them.

And so they were like, yep, we'll give you a tenancy agreement to live on our property.

So with this new agreement, he was allotted a parcel of farmland and a home.

And that was in exchange for a fee of 110 pounds per year and a percentage of the profits from farming for a period of 18 years.

So he would have to pay, rent, and he would also have to give a, give a percentage of whatever he got from his crops for 18 years.

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Damn.

That was a shitty agreement.

I guess it was kind of, this is another little like side note because it's weird that I'm doing this one right now because this makes weird sense to me now.

I'm reading Slew Foot by Brom.

It's a really good book.

You guys should read it.

Check it out.

I think I posted it on my stories, but I'll post it again.

And in that, it's from like the 16th or 1700s.

They have a similar agreement of like, I'll tenant out this farmland to you.

You have to pay me rent and also give me a percentage of the profits for like 10 years.

Okay.

And that's part of the story in Slew Foot.

So hearing this now, I'm like, this is weird that this is coming back.

Yeah, that's always weird when that happens, when you find out like random information and then it applies like somewhere else in your life.

I didn't mean for that to line up like that.

Life is a simulation.

So, you know, he's got a deal.

He's living on there.

He's got to, he's got his own farm.

He's just got to share some of it.

So what he did was he also entered into a second tenancy agreement for his father-in-law under the same conditions.

But this time he was going to be paying 130 pounds per year.

So he's under a tenancy agreement with Reverend George Preston, and he's under a tenants agreement for like another farm for his father-in-law.

Okay.

So he's paying out, but he's making money.

It's one of those things that used to happen very often back then.

And the next year, he actually entered into a third agreement for tenancy with Preston again, for another farm on the Stanfield Hall estate with similar conditions.

But this one was at 500 pounds per year.

Oh, wow.

And at that same time, he entered, he accepted a position as Reverend Preston's steward and advisor in all matters of business.

Wow.

So now he's under three tenant agreements.

He's got a place on the Preston estate.

He's paying out this money to three different, well, Preston,

he's given two different rents to, and then he's paying off his father-in-law.

But he's also got this new position now advising Reverend Preston.

So he's like, he's getting there.

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He's doing good.

Yeah.

Seems like it's going to be like, all right, let's go.

Right.

And you know what?

For Rush, this whole thing was good in life and working with George Preston was good.

But when he died in 1837 and possession of the family estate passed to Isaac Preston, now Jeremy, and it ended up being discovered that the three tenancy agreements that he had actually entered into had actually been illegally executed.

Oh.

So is that like a get out of jail free card for him?

So that's not, it's not good for any, like his land is technically like.

Oh, yeah.

So although Isaac did keep Rush on as his steward once his father had died, he rescinded the illegal tenancy agreements and issued new leases for the three properties.

Okay.

But he issued these leases at slightly higher rates from the other agreement.

It's a different time.

Am I doing inflation?

That was an illegal one.

So it sounds like Reverend George Preston was like kind of doing him a little bit of a solid.

Yeah.

And Isaac was like, I'm going to run things a little different here.

Yeah.

Which at least he was, he was like, I'll give you new ones.

But like for the right price.

Now, despite the increased fees being more or less comparable to the rates of the day, the increase was the first issue in their relationship.

The first issue in a series of events that would eventually lead to Isaac Jeremy being murdered.

Oh.

So several years later in late 1843, Isaac got his eye on a potash farm.

I think it's how you say a potash.

Okay.

That abutted the land on the place where Stanfield Hall was sitting.

Okay.

And he directed Rush, his steward, to go assess the land's value and to make an offer of purchase to the seller.

So he was like, go get that land for me.

And what Jeremy didn't know was that Rush also had an interest in the land and hoped to get it for himself.

So Rush valued the property at 3,500 pounds.

And at Isaac Jeremy's behest, he made a bid on the man's behalf for 3,500 dollars.

But immediately after that, Rush went back and submitted his own bid on the property for 3,750 dollars outbidding Isaac Jeremy and taking the property for himself.

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And was he just going to waive from his, like to his employer from the land?
That's what they just bought.
Stole out from under him.
Yeah, like what the fuck?
What's your plan there, dude?
And Isaac Jeremy was pissed.
He was not pleased by this because he was like, you're duplicitous.
What the fuck?
Yeah.
But even then, he agreed to lend the man the money to purchase the land.
He was like, well, you outbid me.
But I have to give you the money?
Yeah.
That doesn't even make any sense.
Exactly, because he's like under his tenancy.
And so he was like, all right, sure.
And he wrote up a new agreement for the amount of 5,000 pounds.
And under the terms of the new agreement, the sale was charged to the Jeremy estate and mortgage to Rush at 4% interest per year, which was roughly, I think around like 200 pounds.
And this was with the understanding that the mortgage would be paid off as of November 30th, 1848.
So I think by now you can see it's getting messy.
Yeah.
This is messy business.
We're intertwining a lot of things.
There's a lot of faith being placed on people's, you know, honesty and in honor of which it doesn't look like there's a ton going around.
And also, and here's where the side note comes in about James Rush.
He owned, he ended up owning this land along with his stepfather, Mr. Rush.
Okay.
And on October 24th, 1844, they, the two of them, Mr. Rush and his son, James Bloomfield Rush, they went out hunting together alone.
And when they returned alone, Rush Sr. was in the kitchen of this property, admiring Rush Jr.'s new shotgun when it accidentally went off.
They were alone.
Oh, Rush Sr. was killed by this when they were alone, when they were alone.
And he was just admiring the shotgun.
Yep.
And I just boom, they had a wonderful hunting trip before that together.
Yep.
Huh.
Yeah.
And one would look at this and maybe say,
Sus.

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Were you looking to get money from his estate?

Well, unfortunately for him, Rush Sr. had left his estate to his wife, Mary.

Well, yeah.

James' mother.

Mom, uh-oh.

So he didn't get any financial payout for that death.

Not that I'm saying that he wanted it.

No, because we don't know.

It's strange that they were alone.

And this happened.

And the only person to be able to tell this story is James Rush, who was in need of financial compensation another time.

A little troublesome.

But, you know, whatever, he didn't get paid no matter what.

So it didn't mean anything.

So now in 18, there'll be more of that, by the way.

So now in 1844, this meant that Rush now owned three farms with tenancy agreements held by Isaac Jeremy.

And in the years that followed, Rush borrowed more money to renovate and expand his farming operation.

So he was under a lot of debt.

And by October 1847, he'd fallen very behind on his payments to Jeremy and was eventually served eviction papers from the property on the Stanfield Hall estate.

And at this point, he went to live.

So that property on the Stanfield Hall estate, he got evicted from.

Okay.

And he ended up moving to live on the Potash farm.

Okay.

Or Potash.

I don't know if it's Potash or Potash.

Somebody's going to yell at me about it.

I like Potash.

I like Potash.

It just feels right.

Or Potash.

Potash.

No, I like Potash.

It's like, Potash seems like you're spitting.

You're like, Potash.

Yeah.

You know, like patoo.

But either way, not farm.

A few months later, when Rush still didn't pay Jeremy

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after he moved to that other farm,
Isaac filed suit for breach of covenants
and the case went to trial in March, 1848.
So now he's suing him for not paying him.
Good.

This same year, James Rush's mother died, Mary.
I knew that was coming.

And it was said that John or that James was
incredibly attentive to her in her final days.
Uh-huh.

And servants in the home were quoted as saying
that they witnessed him serving her soaked breads
by hand right before she passed away.

Soaked in what?

So I don't know.

I don't know what happened there.

She died though.

Parents die.

It's one of those sad things, you know, at that point.

But you know, what's strange about this one is like,
you know, his stepfather has died
under a strange and tragic circumstance.

Not long after.

And he said that money's mine, right?

And they said, nope, it's your mom's.

And he said, oh, then his mom died
under tragic circumstances with him being by her side
in her last moments.

And then he says that money's mine, right?

And they say, no, she left it to her grandchildren.

Oh, shit.

I wonder why she didn't leave it to him.

That's a little sus.

That's the other piece of this puzzle is like,
what was your problem?

How come no one left you money?

Like, how come?

Yeah.

What if we told you that there's a darker side to royalty?

And more often than not, life as a prince or princess
is anything but a fairy tale.

I'm Brooke Sifrin.

And I'm Arisha Skidmore-Williams.

And we're the hosts of Wondery's podcasts

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Even the Rich and Rich in Daily.
And we're so excited to tell you about our brand new podcast
called Even the Royals,
where we'll be pulling back the curtain on royal families
past and present from all over the world.
On Even the Royals, we'll cover everything from stories
you thought you knew, like Marie Antoinette,
who was actually a victim of a vulgar propaganda campaign
which started a wild chain of events
that led to her eventual beheading.
Or Catherine de Medici,
who was assumed to be responsible
for one of the most devastating massacres in French history.
But in reality,
she was a mother holding on to her dying dynasty.
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We've all been there,
turning to the internet to self-diagnose
inexplicable pains, debilitating body aches,
sudden fevers, and strange rashes.
Though our minds tend to spiral to worst-case scenarios,
it's usually nothing.
But for an unlucky few,
these unsuspecting symptoms can start the clock ticking
on a terrifying medical mystery.
Hey listeners, it's me, Mr. Bollen,
host of the Mr. Bollen podcast,
and I'm so excited to tell you about my newest podcast,
Mr. Bollen's Medical Mysteries,
which turns inward and looks at the human body,
which is both incredible and also the stuff of nightmares.
We've spent months researching totally true
and thoroughly twisted medical horror stories
and diagnostic mysteries
that are surgically calibrated to make your blood run cold,
and we can't wait for you to listen.
Listen to the trailer
and follow Mr. Bollen's Medical Mysteries

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wherever you get your podcasts.
New episodes come out every Tuesday,
starting October 17th.
Prime members can listen early
and add free on Amazon Music.
And so, you know,
being not a man to sit down
and let things just play out
the way that they're supposed to,
he forged her signature
and did an amendment on the documents
to make him in control of her money.
And if that doesn't tell you a little bit
about what possibly happened,
I don't know what does.
Oh, no, no, no, no, no.
Seems a little suspicious.
Just a little.
A little suspicious, you know.
I don't know, I wasn't there.
Maybe this is all,
maybe he's just being followed
by very ghastly coincidences,
but I don't know.
Take what you will from it.
He ended up getting control of the money.
And yeah, meanwhile, as that's happening,
the eviction in the lawsuit with Isaac Jeremy
is only worsening their relationship.
It had already been crumbling
and it's getting worse at this point.
Right.
In a few weeks after the trial,
James Rush actually published
and distributed a pamphlet
that claimed to present
a fair and accurate representation of the trial.
Okay.
Yeah, it's very Hamilton.
How could that be fair and accurate
when one of the parties involved is writing it?
Thank you.
And in it, Rush claimed that he only took
on the tenant farming leases

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with the Jeremy family
just to improve his financial situation
for his family.

Okay.

And he said, quote,

And this is no reason why I should be
ruined in character by this villain,
as well as my property being swallowed up by him.

And apparently showing evidence
of Jeremy's villainry,

he put forth the false claim

that Isaac Jeremy had no right

to the property in the first place.

So he decided to jump on that bandwagon.

John Larnar and Thomas Jeremy bandwagon

and say, he's not the rightful heir.

Even though I stopped them

from doing whatever they were planning.

I may have put completely back to him

when it benefited me,

but now that it doesn't,

he's not the rightful heir.

That's fake.

He said, this fellow Jeremy

has no right to this Stanfield property.

He knows it and he knows I know it as well.

His whole conduct and keeping possession

and taking the name of Jeremy

and his behavior to those poor people

who have a right to it.

Those poor people who he chased out of the house

when they were trying to take it over

has been most villainous

and disgraceful to any man

any man who have any pretension to respectability.

And which I should be most happy to prove

when called on to do so.

If there's any truth in the Bible,

such villainy is sure to be overtaken.

And that when it may be at least expected.

So he's saying, if there's any truth to the Bible,

then that place is going to be taken back

by the rightful owners.

And it's like, I don't know, that sounds aggressive.

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Why are you bringing the Bible into that?

That's a big leap.

That doesn't, I don't know about that.

Are you sure about that?

So he had a full plan

and that he is setting into motion

that he's like, okay, you want to fuck with me

because I didn't pay you what you are rightfully owed.

That's what I love.

He's like, oh, oh, what?

You want to be paid?

Right.

Well, you are rightfully owed, sir.

How dare you?

No, no.

You're going to bring me to court

to get money that I owe you?

Huh?

No, I'm going to fuck with you.

And he's like, I'm going to destroy your reputation.

And it became even clearer

when they found a letter he had sent to his own son

in April, just after the pamphlet had been published.

And in that letter, he said,

I have at last got Jeremy in a fix

and the Rouge and villain knows it well.

How he will act now will soon be seen.

At all events, he now knows if he ruins me, I can him.

Or you would not have seen him as you have.

But I do not want anyone know this

except for your wife and her aunt.

So he's basically being like, I've put it out there.

He knows now you fuck with me.

I fuck with you harder.

Yeah.

And he's saying like, basically,

he knows I can ruin him no matter what,

even if he's correct in what he's asserting.

Okay.

And he's like, I don't want anyone to know

that I'm pulling this shit.

Okay.

And which is like, you're just outing yourself

all over the place.

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That's the thing.

I'm like, you don't want anyone to know this,
but it sounds like we all know.

A big old case of the dumb.

But over the summer and into the fall of 1848,
Rush got to scheming and scheming and scheming.

And all he wanted to do was get out of those leases
with Jeremy because he was like, get me out of here.

And he's enlisted the help of none other
than Thomas Jeremy and John Larner.

I knew we weren't done with them yet.

And in a letter from October 3rd, 1848,

Rush laid out his plan to them vaguely
hinting at the idea of retaking Stanfield Hall.

And he figured what we can do is that Thomas Jeremy
and John Larner will take possession of it, their family.

So he said, after the new possessors

take possession of Stanfield Hall,

this whole plan would mean that they now agree to new terms
for his tenancy leases at a much lower rate.

So he said, help me take over this place
and give me a lower rate on my tenancy.

Exactly.

Okay.

Help me take over the place.

You get Stanfield Hall.

And then by taking over Stanfield Hall,
you take on my tenancy agreements,
you give me a lower rate and we all win.

Okay.

Which is, to them, sounds good.

Sound like a good plan, I would think.

But they weren't exactly confident in Rush's ability
to prove that Thomas Jeremy was the rightful heir
to the family estate.

Because he's just not plain and simple.

And they're like, we've been down this road.

We went to court.

And the court just said, no.

So the two of them said, no, thank you.

Which is shocking.

But then we've had enough.

So they were like, no, thank you, we're good.

But then James Rush produced what he claimed to be George

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Preston's, Reverend George Preston's, the father,
his original will, which he said named Thomas Jeremy as the heir.
But that doesn't even make any sense.
That's not his child.
Exactly.
Like that would never say that.
James Rush had forged this document only a couple of days before this.
Correct.
So the forged documents apparently were witnessed being forged
by Rush's mistress, Emily Sandford.
The plot thickens, baby.
And even though they were clearly forged,
that Emily had watched the whole thing go down,
Thomas and John were like, sounds good to me.
That seems like something you could prove.
So they were like, let's go.
We'll help you with this.
So in the weeks before the actual,
because they weren't just planning to just take over Stanfield Hall,
their plan was to kill Isaac Jeremy.
They needed to get him out of the way.
Forever.
So in the weeks before this all happened,
and they, I think what their plan was to like take over the hall,
but Rush's plan, I believe all along was to get him gone.
Right.
So in the weeks before this all happened,
Rush started showing some unusual behavior.
He would go out late at night with his gun,
and he would claim he was looking for poachers on the property.
But his mistress there, Emily, was like,
he would just go trudging off with his gun.
And it was like not something he did.
She was like, I think he was losing it.
Yeah.
And on the morning of November 28th,
he instructed a local farmhand to please lay a path of straw
from Rush's homestead on his least land.
All the way towards the fields behind Stanfield Hall.
That's sketchy.
Stanfield Hall, excuse me.
And he said he, so, and he was like,
you do that while me and my family go into town for the afternoon.
And later it was revealed that he had actually instructed

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this young farmhand to scatter the hay
so that it would make sure not to leave footprints
when he walked from his place to the Stanfield Hall.
I had a feeling that's where you were going with that.
Now, when they came back from an afternoon out,
Emily Sanford, his mistress, began making dinner.
And Rush told her, there's just time for me
to go into the garden and fire off my gun.
And she was like, what?
At what?
Was like, can you just eat my dinner, motherfucker?
Yeah, like what?
He didn't say what he was shooting at
or why he was going out to shoot.
He just said there's time.
And she was like, there's time.
And she was like, not dinner's ready, motherfucker.
He's like, oh, shit, Emily.
I can shoot my gun for like a little bit.
Couple minutes?
There's like time.
He's like a child.
And she's like where though?
And he's like in the garden.
And she's like at one.
He's like nothing in particular.
Just shooting.
Just shooting for shooting's sake.
That's all.
Weird.
So she was just like, okay.
I kept him like out you go.
And when he came back a short time later for dinner,
Emily noticed he seemed very irritated,
much more irritated than when he had left.
And we get out of there, babe.
And yeah.
And so he also brought up this weird story.
He said, I've been thinking a good deal
about the story we read the other day
about the Scottish chief.
And what he was referring to was a well-known parable
about the battle of Benekburn by author Robert Bruce.
And he said, I've tried several times

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and the next time perhaps I shall be successful.
And he was like, she was like,
what the fuck are you talking about?
And she later said that he appeared extremely agitated.
And she supposed him to be in tears,
though she couldn't understand why.
He was rambling.
Crying.
Crying.
It's almost in tears, like very agitated.
She was like, what the fuck's going on?
Poor Emily.
Sometime between seven and eight PM,
just after they finished dinner,
James stood up from the table, didn't say a fucking word,
but just went into his bedroom, dressed himself in a dark cloak,
dawned a mask to cover his face.
No.
Then armed himself with a pistol
and just left the house without saying anything.
Got a mask on.
And Emily just watched this entire thing,
which I'm like, Emily.
Get out of there.
Come on, girl.
Get out.
Like you gotta do something here.
So he just leaves and puts on like a disguise,
like a dark cloak, a mask.
That's scary.
Which I guess the mask was like a face mask
with like whiskers on it or some shit.
What?
Yeah.
Now that happens on the property.
Where are we?
And at Sandfield Hall, the Jeremy family
had just finished up dinner.
Some sources say they were having a small dinner party,
but either way, they had just finished up dinner
a little before eight PM.
And Isaac had just hung out at the dinner table.
And Isaac Jr. and his wife went to the parlor for tea.
Okay.

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And the like workers began clearing dishes
and all that fun stuff.

And Isaac Sr. got up, left the room,
and he went out onto the porch to get some air,
which is something he literally always did after dinner.

It was a very routine thing for him.

This was almost like a ritual after dinner for him.

Now having been employed by the family for many, many years,
James Bloomfield Rush would have definitely known
that at the same time every night after dinner,
he would be out there on the porch
a little before eight PM, taking him away.

I'm scared.

So as soon as Isaac Sr. went out the door and onto the porch,
Rush stepped out from the shadows, raised a pistol,
and fired a single shot into his chest without saying a word.
The bullet passed through his heart and knocked him onto his back,
and he died instantly.

Oh, that's so awful.

Then James Rush entered the house from the side door
and passed the main staircase.

And as he did, he dropped two pieces of paper from his cloak.

So he was messy already.

Okay.

And he moved through the house and was spotted by the butler,
who was frightened by the sight of a gun
and ran back into the darkened hallway
and hid himself out of view because he was scared.

Imagine.

Yeah.

Now, as James Rush passed through one door into the main hall,
Isaac Jr. came out of the parlor,
and they just looked at each other in silence,
and then Rush raised the gun and shot him in the chest.

He dropped to the floor and he also died instantly.

Oh my God.

Now, obviously, people are hearing the sounds of gunshots happening.

So Isaac Jr.'s wife ran into the hall from the parlor.

By the way, she's pregnant.

Yeah, I thought you had said that.

And just missed Rush as he entered into the dining room
as she ran from there.

She found her husband's body and she screamed.

So her scream drew one of the maids, Eliza Chastney,

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or Chastney, it's seen both ways in different sources.
She ran into the hall,
and the two of them are standing in the hallway freaking out,
and Rush comes out of the dining room,
sees the two women, raises the pistol, and shoots twice.
He hit Mrs. Jeremy in the arm.
She's the pregnant wife.
Oh my God.
And hit Eliza Chastney in the leg.
Both of them fell to the floor,
and they both tried to pretend they were dead.
Now, he figured he had killed the whole family.
Right.
So he left the house through the same side door
that he went into, fled into the fields,
and made his way back to his homestead.
Remember, via that hay-covered path that had been laid out.
But as he did this, he was spotted by several workers
who lived on the estate,
and had been drawn out of their homes on the property
by the sound of gunshots and screams.
Does he still have his cloak and his mask on?
He does.
They all saw a black cloaked man escaping into the fields.
Okay.
Now, but the thing would be,
Emily saw him put on that cloak.
Right.
And so fearing the house was being attacked
by the same kind of like, we're going to take over shit.
A stable hand made his way to the edge of the property,
swam across the moat to get to the house,
because it does have a moat.
And went to the nearby home of a man named Coleman,
who sent the message to the Norwich police,
and they let them know what had happened.
So after sending help for help from Norwich,
Mr. Coleman, the neighbor, gathered other neighbors,
and they all made their way to Stanfield Hall
to just try to help however they could.
And when they got there,
they found Isaac Sr. dead on the front porch.
Isaac Jr. dead on the floor in the main hallway,
just outside the house.

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And nearby, they found Eliza Chastney,
who was wounded in the leg.
And by that time, the other workers had carried Isaac Jr.'s wife
upstairs to a bedroom,
and were doing their best to treat her wound in her arm,
because she was bleeding heavily,
and the upper part of her arm was really badly damaged.
And they carried both men into the parlor,
both the bodies of the two Isaac Jeremy men.
And they noticed singed clothing around the bullet wounds,
which indicated that they had been shot at pretty close range.
Although they had been through a wild ordeal,
Isaac Jr.'s wife and Mrs. Chastney both said
they thought they recognized the shooter,
and they said it's James Bloomfield Rush.
How do you think they knew?
So he was wearing a fake beard, a mask, and a cloak,
but they said that they knew his body type,
and they knew how he held certain things and how he walked.
And they were like, we know that that was him.
He had like a specific way about him.
So when the telegraph was sent to the Norwich police,
it included a note from the local magistrate,
Mr. Kahn, instructing them to apprehend James Bloomfield Rush.
Damn.
No, police made their way to Stanfield Hall
while Rush ran to his house a little after 9 p.m.,
knocked on the door to be let in by Emily.
There was no light in the front room,
because you have to remember this is 1800s,
it's not like they flicked on the light.
And so Emily knew, only knew that it was James entering the house.
Didn't see how he was dressed or what he was carrying.
She said he went right upstairs, directly upstairs.
And when he came back downstairs, he wasn't wearing any boots,
any outdoor attire, and he instructed her to light a fire and go to bed.
Okay.
But before she retired for the evening,
Rush said, quote,
if any inquiries made about me say I was not out more than 10 minutes.
So a few hours later, Emily was awoken by a loud banging at the door
and opened it, find Rush, who is now coming back.
He had left.
Okay.

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And he was trembling and seemed very upset.

And he said, now you be firm and remember that I was only out 10 minutes.

Okay.

He told her again, this time she said in a much more aggressive tone.

So he is now returned at 9 p.m. after murdering this whole family or trying to.

He has taken off everything that he wore.

He's come downstairs, told her to light a fire and to go directly to bed.

Don't pass go, go to bed.

So she was like, cool, I'll just go up.

And as he does this, he tells her, I was out 10 minutes if anyone asked.

And she's like, got it.

She goes to bed.

Then hours later is awoken by banging at the door.

It's him arriving back from somewhere.

I thought you had misspoke.

I was like, wait, what?

He had gone out again.

And then he had said, by the way, remember, I was only gone 10 minutes.

But more aggressive this time.

And she's like, what the fuck is going on?

So by the morning, police had completely surrounded the Rush homestead.

And as soon as they saw the first lantern lit inside,

they summoned a stable boy named Savory and told him to call Rush to the door.

So as, you know, Rush of course said, what?

Like, how could I ever be at fault for the mayhem that happened at Stanfield Hall?

And he said, good God, I hope they do not think it was me.

And he said this to Emily in front of everybody.

And he said, it is rather a serious charge.

Yeah.

And Emily's like, what the fuck am I supposed to say here?

And upstairs in the main bedroom, investigators started searching.

And they found two guns in a closet along with Rush's black cloak and boots.

And both of them were wet.

Like he had been walking through a dewy field.

Like I'm glad you're dumb.

But I thought when he left again, it was to discard those things.

And in front of the police, they heard Rush say to Emily,

I'm accused of murdering Jeremy and his son.

And he said, but you and Savory can clear me.

For he washed my boots at half past five and you know, I didn't go out.

So now he's trying to get her to lie for him.

And in all the confusion and just mayhem that was happening here,

and probably the stress, Emily had forgotten exactly what she was supposed to say to the police.

So she told the investigators that, yes, James had gone out the previous evening.

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Because at first he had told her to say that.

Yeah.

But he was, and then she said, but he was only out for about a quarter of an hour.

So she's added a little time onto that.

Mom, you were supposed to say 10 minutes.

And Rush is listening to this and he stops her and says,

I was not out more than 10 minutes and you know, I had my slip shoes on.

So he's like, I was not wearing those boots and I was only out for 10 minutes.

And for some reason, and thank goodness, Emily got a little brave.

And she said, I don't know if you had or not, I did not see you put your boots on.

She said, fuck you, I'm not playing this game.

I'm not going to lie for you.

She said, I didn't see you put them on.

Good for her.

So during questioning, James Rush repeated his story several times over saying that's Emily was his alibi, but he definitely acknowledged that he and the Jeremy family had not been on good terms in recent years.

He was like, I'm not going to lie about that.

Yeah.

He said, I have no doubt I shall be suspected because we have been on such bad terms.

But he said, but lately the old one and I have been more friendly.

But the young one was my greatest enemy.

That's why I don't know if you should say that.

Either way, both of them are dead, my God.

And when they had no more questions, James Bloomfield Rush was taken into custody.

He was transported to the local jail.

Windman Ham, I think it's Windman Ham, Bridewell.

And he was questioned further by the magistrates.

Now, Rush was pretty much identified as the shooter by like many people.

A traditional investigation proved kind of unnecessary at that point.

But once the bodies had been removed from Stanfield Hall and the initial chaos had kind of subsided, police officers did begin an investigation into the house.

And that's when they discovered the papers that had dropped out of Rush's cloak when he had entered.

I forgot about those.

Yeah, he's a mess.

And the two papers appeared to be the covers of a book.

And on the back of one was written a note.

This note said, there are seven of us here, three of us outside and four inside the hall, all armed as you see us too.

If any of you servants offer to leave the premises or to follow, you will be shot dead.

Therefore, all of you keep in the servants' hall and you nor anyone else will take any harm.

For we are only come to take possession of the Stanfield Hall property.

Okay, so they were going to try to make it look like another C's kind of thing.

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Yeah.

And it was signed Thomas Jeremy, the owner.

What?

So Thomas Jeremy.

Oh, oh, okay.

Yeah, that guy.

Yeah.

I know it's hard.

No, no, no.

I don't believe you're being like, for a second, I was like, who?

No, because remember, they had that whole plan.

Thomas and John were going to take it over.

So he went against the plan entirely one night.

It sounds like he took it a little into his own hands.

Sounds like he went a little whoo, whoo, whoo.

So news of the murders were reported in the press a day or two later.

And the sensational language being indicative of Isaac Jeremy's important role in the community.

So the Times London's paper of record described the killings as the most atrocious murders ever perpetrated in Norfolk or perhaps in any other English county.

I don't know about that.

So obviously his position is what's making this the most atrocious murder.

Of course.

Similarly, the Liverpool Mercury referred to the scene at the hall as the dreadful and mysterious tragedy.

Oh my God.

Now the coroner began his examination of the bodies and the police in Norwich shifted their focus from Stanfield Hall to now James Rush's homestead.

The initial search of the home turned up a clearly wet cloak and a set of clearly wet boots.

Also a pair of recently fired guns, which suggested that Rush could have been involved, but the discoveries made on the second search left little doubt that he was responsible.

In the closet in Rush's bedroom, investigators found a woman's black wig and long face veil hidden in a box at the back of the closet.

That's weird.

In the same closet, they also found forged documents that Rush had used to convince Thomas Jeremy and John Larnar to participate in the crimes with him.

That's a big yikes.

Yeah.

Another search of the home, the investigators found additional disguises, including a black wig of a particular make with moustachios and whiskers coming round and under the chin.

Moustachios, you say?

Yeah.

Moustachios.

So he had all these fucking disguises hidden in his closet, like a weirdo.

Yeah, that's creepy.

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Maybe he's just a Halloween enthusiast.

I don't think so.

Now, on November 30th, a jury was brought together for the coroner's inquest, and they viewed the bodies and heard the results of the coroner's examination. And they also heard a number from a number of the staff who was at Stanfield Hall on the night of the murders.

The butler who hid when he first saw them, James Watson, told the jury, at the time I saw the man passing the corner, it occurred to me that it was Mr. Rush. I knew Mr. Rush perfectly well.

The man I saw was like Mr. Rush in size, height, and in his walk.

And Watson also told the jury that Rush was in the habit of entering the house through the servant's door at the side of the building where the killer had also entered.

Right.

And he knew that.

He said the reason that this is so pertinent is he said that the door was never locked before 9 p.m.

Oh, and he knew that.

He said the cook, who was also at the estate that evening, also said a similar thing.

He said, the moment I saw the man, it struck me it was Mr. Rush, who had very frequently within the last five months been at the hall.

The man was short and stout.

He held his head a little on one side.

Sorry, I just have to answer this.

Hello.

The moment I saw the man, it struck me it was Mr. Rush, who had very frequently within the last five months been at the hall.

The man was short and stout.

He held his head a little on one side, just in the way Mr. Rush carries it.

So he has a very particular way of walking and standing.

In my own mind, I think it is impossible I can be mistaken in my opinion.

I had such an opportunity of seeing his person that I cannot be mistaken.

Although I cannot from not having seen his face positively swear it was him.

Okay.

So a third witness was a sheriff's officer named Mr. Bacon.

Who?

Hell yeah.

So gave evidence, and this is a quote, gave evidence as to the certain expressions of Mr. Rush, indicating revengeful feeling towards Mr. Jeremy.

Now the most important testimony came from Emily.

So she quickly abandoned any kind of alibi that he tried to force on her.

Under questioning from police, she refused to provide that alibi.

And initially she told investigators she had been quote, reading a book which interested her very much.

And so she did not keep a very good accurate account of the time.

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Okay.

So she said she couldn't be sure how long he had been out of the house, but they pressed her and she caved and told investigators Rush quote, was absent from the house all the evening of the murder.

And when he came home, he appeared to be in a state of great agitation and rushed into the house saying he was very ill.

Now according to Emily, after he had gone into his bedroom, she peered through the keyhole and witnessed him removing the various pieces of disguise. Because remember when he came home, she said she couldn't see him very well.

Because there was no light.

He just rushed upstairs.

Right.

But she looked through that keyhole and saw him taking off all the pieces of the disguise.

And she explained that he had pretended to go out looking for poachers that evening, though she very much doubted that that was what he was doing when he left the house.

So her statement was given to the police and the magistrate asked whether Rush had any questions or anything to say in response.

And he said, no, she has said enough to hang me already.

That was his response.

Damn.

She got you.

During the inquest, the coroner happily reported that both women were expected to survive.

That's good.

And despite the severity of the wounds to their arm and leg, he hoped that they would be able to avoid any amputation.

A few days later, though, the situation definitely changed for Mrs. Jeremy, who shot in the left arm above the elbow.

There was so much damage.

It had shattered the bone in several places and the surgeons had to amputate her arm near the shoulder.

As she's pregnant.

Pregnant.

Holy shit.

Now after hearing all the evidence, the jury left the inquest just for a little bit of time to discuss what they heard.

And they returned with a verdict of willful murder against James Bloomfield Rush.

And a warrant was issued for his arrest as well as the arrest of a key witness, Emily Sandford.

Why did she get arrested?

They were already in custody.

So the warrant went out just because she was there and she had initially lied.

Now, on March 29th, 1849, the trial began at the Court of the Sizes at Norwich Castle, which was presided over, yeah, in a castle, presided over by Magistrate Baron Rolf.

There was a ton of news coverage about this, a lot of public interest.

So it was packed.

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Infected mittens into the courtroom was by ticket only.

Wow.

And by 8 a.m. it was like packed full.

Damn.

Acting on behalf of the Crown were Sergeant Biles, Prendergast, and Evans.

James Bloomfield Rush was acting as his own attorney.

Oh no, honey.

Now, in addition to testimony, the jury was going to see evidence that included a ton of stuff.

But some of them were the forged documents, the drawings of the property, floor plans, scale models of Stanfield Hall, and Rush's farmhouse.

They'd all been created for the occasion.

And before opening statements were given, the charges were read for the court.

And this is when Rush was asked to step forward and repeat his plea.

And he replied, not guilty.

He was described as resolute and set, but his hands trebled excessively, not only at first, but during the day.

Reporters also said his shoulders support a short bull neck on which a large and massive head, which a craniologist would declare indicative of the possession of strong animal passions and considerable intellectual power, is firmly set in such a way as to render it rather difficult for its owner to look straight before him.

So his head was slightly crooked.

Slightly to one side, just like the staffers said.

Yeah.

That the person who came in and killed all those people had.

Yep.

Now, during the jury selection, the name John Biles was called.

And the prosecution objected, and this potential juror was dismissed.

And in response to this, Rush interrupted to ask why the man had been dismissed.

And the judge explained it was because the prosecution objected.

And Rush said, I wish to make one observation to the jury.

I shall not challenge any of them.

But I hope if any of them have any unfair influence in this case, they will retire of themselves.

So what he had wanted was for his comments to the jury to emphasize his cooperation and how he wanted this whole thing to be fair.

Yeah.

You know, because he's so innocent.

He just wants all this to go the right way.

But he didn't understand how the process worked, which just made him seem dumb.

Yeah.

Because that's like the whole, like that's what they're doing right now.

Exactly.

And it's like, so now you're going to defend yourself.

So now you've already stepped into this looking very unprepared with this whole thing.

Yeah.

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So that's not good.

And this was demonstrated again just a few minutes later because he asked the judge, my Lord, may I make a few observations before the council makes his opening speech?

And the roll for applied, this is not the right time to do that.

You'll have an opportunity hereafter.

Yeah.

So he doesn't even know how this all works.

And he's going to defend himself.

So do you need an attorney?

Yeah.

So they did the jury selection and Sergeant Biles took his place in front of the courtroom and began his opening remarks.

So the prosecutor laid out all the evidence against James Rush and said, about the year 1844, the late Mr. Jeremy advanced to Mr. Rush considerable sums of money upon the potash farm or potash farm.

Who knows the balance of which was coming due just days before the murders occurred.

Okay.

So he was going to have to pay this debt days before the murders happened.

And lacking the money to pay what was owed to Jeremy, Sergeant Biles explained that Rush had intended to kill the Jeremy family to avoid any of the negative consequences of his debt.

That makes sense.

Now, as evidence of motive and intent, Sergeant Biles read aloud from the letters exchanged between Rush and his son, sent just after the civil trial between Jeremy and Rush for unpaid fees, and also showed that forged documents intended to mislead the jury as to who was the rightful heir of the Jeremy estate and the ownership and like who should take ownership of Stanfield Hall. Those had been discovered, like we said, hidden in a box in Rush's closet.

So special.

Sergeant Biles told the jury, now gentlemen, I will call your attention to the contents of this pamphlet as showing you two things, the state of the prisoner's mind, and that he contemplated taking some steps with reference to the claim of these persons to the Stanfield Hall property.

But I shall also put in a letter, put in a letter in the handwriting of the prisoner in order to show his feelings towards the late Mr. Jeremy.

So as far as the prosecution was concerned, the case was pretty simple against Rush.

He owed a ton of money to Jeremy and he couldn't pay.

Rather than find a way to get the money or try to arrange some sort of better deal, he just came up with a plan to kill the Jeremy family, conspire with Thomas Jeremy and John Larnar to forge the documents, and it would ultimately benefit everybody involved.

It was pretty blocking the way to me.

Yeah, his evidence to support this theory was pretty strong and they found the recently fired guns in Rush's bedroom closet, along with the boots, the cloak, the disguises, all of that. And finally, most importantly, they had Emily's testimony.

Right.

Which not only contradicted what Rush was saying about that night.

It fit the timeline.

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Yeah, it led directly to a lot of the evidence that was being presented in court, including the forged documents that were hidden in a very secret location. So once the prosecution hadn't finished presenting their case, James Bloomfield Rush rose and began what became a 14 hour speech in his defense.

No.

14 hours.

How do you, he like consecutively?

Yes, 14 hours.

How do you even talk that long?

And this was described by the press as, quote, without making any impression whatsoever in his favor. His address was full of repetitions and everything really material might have been said in a quarter of the time.

So he just fucking rambled for 14 hours.

14 hours.

Which probably pissed everyone off.

Unbelievable.

At that point, I'd be like, well, you're guilty.

You're guilty no matter what because you're guilty of being an asshole.

Now, in his version of the events, he was, quote, innocent, but admitted that he knew something about, was about to take place at the hall before the night of the murders.

According to him, a day before he had been approached by Jeremy and Lerner, Thomas Jeremy and John Lerner, who wanted to enlist him in their plan to take Sandfield Hall by force.

Just as they attempted to do years earlier, he was like, remember, they've done this before. Of course they're going to do it again.

But he said, no, no, I won't help you with that.

Now he's flipped it.

And the following evening, he had gone out after dinner to check the grounds for poachers, as he obviously did all the time, even though Emily was like, he didn't do that all the time.

But when he got to the edge of his property, he felt ill and decided to turn back.

And then he heard a pistol go off and then a second shot.

And it caused him to run back into his house.

Okay.

Now he said after his, so after his rambling and exhaustive speech, he began making several complaints to the judge and the jury about, among other things, the way he was treated in the press by them and by the magistrates.

And by eight PM that evening, the judge had finally had enough and adjourned the court.

It was like, I'm done listening to you.

I'm surprised they let him go on that long before doing that.

Yeah.

And they adjourned for a few days.

They didn't come back for a few days.

And then when they did rush called a bunch of witnesses, all of whom provided testimony that was irrelevant, pretty contradictory to what would help him.

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And all, none of them were contradictory to the evidence that was presented by the prosecution.
So none of it helped.

Wild.

Because it's black and white here.

So Rush rested his case after six days.

And Judge Barron Rolfe began summarizing the case for the court.

And according to the press, the process was repeatedly interrupted by the prisoner.

Who attempted to correct him and to give different versions of the evidence.

Wow.

And finally, he dismissed the jury to review and deliberate.

Now, given how sensational the crimes had been and how crazy this trial had been,
the audience in the court, they all waited.

Like they wanted to hear this.

Then they thought they were going to like wait for a while to hear this.

Like they thought all this was going to build up.

But the jury returned just five minutes later with a guilty verdict.

Of course.

Because they were like, fuck you, guy.

Fuck that.

Rush was pissed and yelled, I am innocent, all the same.

And God almighty knows it.

So I don't know when you got there, man.

Everyone went into a tizzy, but order had to be restored.

And the judge addressed Rush directly.

He said, James Bloom filled Rush after a trial unusually protracted.

You have found, you have been found guilty of the charge of willful murder.

A crime the highest any human being can perpetrate on another.

The deepest under any circumstances of extenuation.

But I regret to say that in your case, there is everything
which could add a deeper die to guilt, the most horrible.

It appears from letters which you yourself put
in that to the father of the unfortunate victim of your malice.

You owe a deep debt of gratitude.

You commenced a career of crime by endeavoring to cheat your landlord.

You followed it up by making the unfortunate girl whom you had subdued the tool
whereby you should commit forgery.

And having done that, you terminated your guilty career
by the murder of the son and grandson of your friend and benefactor.

More cannot be said.

It unfortunately sometimes happens that great guilt
is too nearly connected with something that is calculated to dazzle the mind.

But unfortunately in your case, you have made vice as loathsome
as loathsome as it is terrible.

Whoa.

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Beautiful.

Very poetic.

Very poetic.

Rush immediately tried to argue with the judge.

He was like, no, no, no, I get the final word.

And the judge cut him off and said,
you have been convicted on testimony so clear,
the observation and comment are unnecessary.

Wow.

So he's like, I don't want to hear shit from you.

Shut up.

It's black and white that you did this.

And with that, he was removed from the court
and taken back to his cell.

Now, after the reading of the verdict,

James Bloomfield Rush was sentenced to be hanged
on the grounds of Norwich Castle on April 23rd, 1849.

And it was reported that while he was waiting for the execution date,
he sat quietly in his cell and didn't have any visitors.

He wouldn't let anyone in.

Damn.

But the night before his execution,
he received a short note from one of his children.

Oh, that's sad.

I forgot that he had kids.

On April 23rd, the excitement that had surrounded the initial trial
seemed to have come back because now we got ourselves an 1800s execution
and you know people love that shit.

So apparently crowds of individuals from both sexes
had been hurrying throughout the morning
from all parts of the county and even far beyond it
to the awful scene of ignominious death.

Wow.

That was from the Caldonian Mercury paper in 1849.

So a little after 12 p.m., he was let out of his cell
and he walked past all the onlookers and led to the gallows.

And in the days leading up to this,
he had tried to persuade anyone who listened that he was innocent,
but nobody believed him.

And because of that, when he was asked if he had anything to say
before his execution, he said no.

And all he did was simply repeat the Lord's prayer to himself quietly
while the lever was pulled and the floor dropped out beneath him
and he was killed instantly.

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Wow.

He had no family member willing to claim his body.

That's rough.

Yeah.

James Bloomfield Rush was buried on the grounds of Norwich Castle.

And after his death, the press reported,
thus was closed the life of him whose murderous deeds
and other wicked acts have excited universal abhorrence
and of whom it may be said England never furnished his parallel.
That's haunting.

So just like as a closing thing here,
a death mask of James Bloomfield Rush is on display
at the Welcome Collection in London.

I saw that.

Yeah.

Staffordshire Potteries produced collectible figures
of Rush and Sanford.

Emily, who's mistress.

I don't know about that.

Plus the locations of the farm,
their homestead and Stanfield Hall and Norwich Castle.
So you could get collectible figures of these things.

Interesting.

He was also Rush himself was made into a wax figure
and was at Madame Tussaud's.

Wow.

Because remember there was a time when
Madame Tussaud's had a Chamber of Horrors section.
We had a couple of other people that have been in that section.

Yeah, I think.

From long, long ago, like 1800s.

That's creepy.

Yeah, they had a Chamber of Horrors section
that would have like murderers in it and like crime scenes and shit.

Ooh.

He was on display in that from 1849 until 1971.

Wow.

Yeah.

That's wild.

There were several like, you know,
I think there was a novel made about this case.
It was the inspiration for a film from 1948
called Blanche Fury,
which starred Valerie Hobson and Stuart Granger.

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Listen to that.
And last but not least,
Charles Dickens was very intrigued by these murders.
Random.
He was there for the execution.
He was present for it.
I think, I feel like he's been present at other executions.
Charles Dickens loved an execution.
Yeah, I think.
He was, he was at a couple.
You're right.
Yeah.
He went, later went to Stanfield's hall
because you could, you can still go and still house.
I mean, I think it's like a private residence now.
Yes.
I don't go there.
Don't go there.
Yeah.
Don't do that.
But you could before like actually go and see it.
Right.
Right.
And he called it, which this is such a fucking,
this is a poet like author would be saying.
He called it, quote,
a grand place for a scoundrel's exit.
Oh, that's, that's nice.
You got a grand place for a scoundrel's exit.
That's deep.
What, what a thought.
And that is the story of the murders at Stanfield hall.
Wow.
What a, what a wild ride.
It was.
Because I really thought like Thomas and John.
Yeah.
I thought they were going to be like the,
the key assholes in the stories.
Yeah.
The main baddies.
No.
The big bads, if you will.
And then they flip James on his ear

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because he's the one who stops them the first time.

Yeah.

And you don't think he's coming back.

No.

No, I had no idea.

And then all of a sudden you're like, guess what?

I'm like, well, shit, James.

I was crazy.

You really fucked me up.

I'm going to, I'm going to go have a glass of coffee after that.

I love a glass of coffee.

I just said, just go get a glass of coffee.

A nice mug of dead sled, baby.

Dead sled.

Well, we hope you keep listening.

And we hope you keep it weird.

But that's a way that you don't go by our coffee

because it's so yummy.

It's going to be so fun.

It's going to be in coffee.

And delicious.

Yum.

Yum.

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