

[Transcript] Sword and Scale Nightmares / Immaculate

customers are rushing to your store. Do you have a point-of-sale system you can trust, or is it a real POS, if you know what I mean? You need Shopify for retail. Did you know Shopify powers selling in person too? Shopify POS is your command center for your retail store. From accepting payments to managing inventory, Shopify has everything you need to sell in person. With Shopify, you get a powerhouse selling partner that effortlessly unites your in-person and online sales into one source of truth. Track every sale across your business in one place and know exactly what's in stock. Connect with customers in line and online. Shopify helps you drive store traffic with plug-and-play tools built from marketing campaigns from TikTok to Instagram and beyond. Get hardware

that fits your business. Take payments by smartphone, transform your tablet into a point-of-sale system, or use Shopify's POS Go mobile device for a battle-tested solution. Plus, Shopify's award-winning

help is there to support your success every step of the way. Do retail right with Shopify. Sign up for a \$1 a month trial period at Shopify.com/swordandscale. All lowercase. Go to Shopify.com/swordandscale to take your retail business to the next level today. Shopify.com/swordandscale. All lowercase and no spaces. Shopify.com/swordandscale.

In a quiet neighborhood in Springfield, Tennessee, used car salesman Joseph Parker sat in his empty but immaculate home, trying to figure out what to do with the many curveballs life had recently thrown at him. At his job, he was a different person than he was at home. As a husband and father at home, he was quiet and reserved. But at work, he enjoyed mingling with people and making a commission from every car sale. That is, until he lost his job. Now, he couldn't pay his bills and he was in danger of losing his home. On the evening of November 7th, 2014, emergency personnel received a call from him that would unequivocally be the strangest they had ever heard.

Welcome to sword and scale nightmares. True crime for bedtime, where nightmare begins now. Is your beauty routine getting redundant? Your favorite products just not really doing it anymore? Well, FabFitFun makes it easy to refresh your beauty, hair care and home needs by delivering full-size

products right to your door at unbelievable discounts. Sign up as a FabFitFun member today at fabfitfun.com/podcast to get exclusive access to shop thousands of curated products from top lifestyle products and brands like Fenty, Kate Spade, Glossier and many more for up to 70% off. Join the shopping membership loved by over one million happy customers and named number one

by Glamour magazine for 2023. Guys, I got a FabFitFun box for my girlfriend and she knows a lot about beauty products, she knows a lot about this kind of stuff. I don't so much because I'm ugly, but she does and she absolutely loved it. I think you will too. If you're shopping for yourself or your loved one, this is a great treat. And now's your chance to get a great deal too. Sign up at fabfitfun.com/podcast, customize your box and get access to discounts up to 70% off on brands like Fenty, Free People and Hour Plays just to name a few. Not in love with this season's options, well take the credit to shop their exclusive flash deals of up to 70% and save on the biggest name brands out there. If you join FabFitFun as a new seasonal member right now, you'll also get 20% off your membership so your first box is only \$47.99 for up to a \$300 value box each season. But only while supplies last, FabFitFun boxes sell out. Join FabFitFun today and save at

[Transcript] Sword and Scale Nightmares / Immaculate

fabfitfun.com

slash podcast, fabfitfun.com slash podcast. 45 year old Joseph Parker was pacing in his living room when he wasn't sitting with his bald head in his hands, letting out enormous plaintive sighs.

With a recent job loss, he knew he was in trouble financially. Money was dwindling and bills were mounting. Pretty soon the house was going to be in foreclosure. The beautiful house on Clydesdale Lane in Springfield, Tennessee was picturesque, with an aesthetically pleasing exterior, a nice concrete driveway and a polished landscape. Both Joe and his wife Samantha were meticulous about the appearance of their home, inside and out. But Samantha was extremely tidy and concerned with keeping it just perfect. Joe was 12 years married to Samantha, a girl from Ohio, and this day happened to be their 12th anniversary. They met through a mutual friend who remembered that Joe had an eye for the ladies and was attracted to Samantha's petite frame and

blonde hair. Samantha and Joe raised a daughter together and didn't have marital issues other than what any other couple would have. The last thing Joe wanted was to disappoint Samantha. But it looked like it was going to come to that. So much stress and so much pressure to maintain the lifestyle they both enjoyed. His wife Samantha hadn't been around for a couple days, so Joe was using this time to sort out his troubles. He wasn't getting anywhere though, just more frustrated. It was while alone pondering his predicament that he heard a noise. What was that mumbling sound? Joe wondered as he fretted about his situation.

The small sound was becoming a buzzing in his ears. Faint, but getting louder. He walked rigidly through the back hallway and checked each room. Nothing. Then he doubled back to the living room,

then the kitchen. Still nothing. No one. Finally, he realized it must be coming from the only remaining part of the house, the garage. He stealthily approached the door from the house to the garage. It was definitely louder, so he reached for the door, turned the knob, and entered. Walking across the smooth concrete, he saw the upright freezer he and Sam had purchased to store extra meat. As he walked closer, he concluded that it must be broken. He had to tug on the door to get it to open, and when he did, it swung open violently.

He was taken aback by the force of the opening door, but worse than that is what he saw inside. The contents did not consist of extra food or storage. It was empty, except for his wife. There she was, frozen and crackling as ice continued forming around and on her.

Crumpled inside, her body looked like it had been forcefully shoved and stuffed in there, but her eyes were wide open. The eyeballs were blankly staring at the inside refrigerator wall until he saw her blink. He was relieved to think she was still alive, and so he told her to blink once more for yes and twice for no. He realizes she's probably thirsty, so he goes to get a cup of water. Her lips are blue and still stiff from the cold, but she manages to swallow a little bit, and it seems to help. At least, Joe thought so. Any questions? Are you okay? Two slow blinks follow. She was obviously not okay, so he quickly placed a 911 call.

On the call, he tells them he left the front door open and she's in the garage.

Then he gives instructions for paramedics to go to the kitchen to get into the garage and forming them they would see her once they were in there. He warns them that she's a mess. Joe is far from hysterical. In fact, the calmness in his voice was a strange contrast to the dire circumstances he faced. He continues explaining that she can't talk, but he was able to get her to blink. He assured Sam that he would be calling 911 for help

[Transcript] Sword and Scale Nightmares / Immaculate

and tells the 911 operator she's been frozen for two days. As an aside, he claims that it's amazing she's even alive. Surprising since she's got a big hole in the temple of her head, he describes the injury and tells them there is no exit wound. Joe tries to assure the person on the line that he made her as comfortable as he could make her and even offered her some water, but he also admits that she was in bad shape and reiterates needing help for her right away. The words that followed presented an eerie contrast given how stoic his voice was. Calmly, he says, ma'am, it's like urgent. I mean, I think she's dying. She's got a big hole in the temple. Joe felt like he wasn't believed, so he resorted to hand gestures, even though the operator couldn't see him. He started pointing to his temple as if he were face to face with the operator. Joe continued, she needed paramedics. She needed everything, according to Joe, so he asked for an ambulance and maybe even a helicopter to be sent because of her trauma. Though very skeptical, the operator answered, okay, we'll send somebody out there. Even though Joe's sentences were a bit slow and he had a distinct southern accent with the slow drawl, his words portrayed what seemed like part truth, part fiction, because if this guy was telling the truth, well, that didn't seem possible. But if so, this would be one of the most bizarre murder attempts in the history of Tennessee.

Customers are rushing to your store. Do you have a point of sale system you can trust, or is it a real POS, if you know what I mean? You need Shopify for retail. Did you know Shopify powers selling in person too? Shopify POS is your command center for your retail store. From accepting payments to managing inventory, Shopify has everything you need to sell in person. With Shopify, you get a powerhouse selling partner that effortlessly unites your in-person and online sales into one source of truth. Track every sale across your business in one place and know exactly what's in stock. Connect with customers in line and online. Shopify helps you drive store traffic with plug-and-play tools built from marketing campaigns from TikTok to Instagram and beyond. Get hardware that fits your business. Take payments by smartphone, transform your tablet into a point of sale system, or use Shopify's POS Go mobile device for a battle-tested solution. Plus, Shopify's award-winning help is there to support your success every step of the way. Do retail right with Shopify? Sign up for a \$1 a month trial period at Shopify.com/swordandscale. All lower case. Go to Shopify.com/swordandscale to take your retail business to the next level today. Shopify.com/swordandscale. All lower case and no spaces. Shopify.com/swordandscale. Despite the strange call dispatch answered about a man's wife in the freezer, responders fled to the scene, even though it sounded unlikely a woman could survive being in a freezer for two days. Not only that, but the caller said that his wife had suffered a huge wound in the temple, and now she was communicating with him from the icebox. On the call, Joe's even tempered voice gave the impression that maybe this was a hoax, but he assured the 911 operator that he was telling the truth. There was also more to the discovery of his wife in the freezer, as he indicated on the call. What he would say to the operator was unimaginable and preposterous in the sickest way. Joe confesses as if the operator on the other end of the line is a priest. Flatly, he says this is what's happened. He notes their 12 year marriage and admits that on November 4th, two nights ago, he shot his wife in the temple at four in the morning. He recounts the shocking details that followed, starting with his belief that he had killed her.

[Transcript] Sword and Scale Nightmares / Immaculate

Wondering what to do next, he knew he needed to buy time, so he dragged her body across the cement floor and carefully placed her in the garage freezer. After pacing and stewing and feeling horrible for two days about what happened, his mind began to play games with him. He checked

on her that night and discovered, to his amazement, she was still alive with the gaping hole in her temple. He laments that when he saw her, she looked uncomfortable, so he tried to reposition her body but remembers how difficult it was. She had been in the freezer for 48 hours, so when Joe moved her arm, it snapped along with the ice that formed around it.

Finally, he insists that this is no crank call. He needs somebody to get out here right away and help her out. The responders acted fast, but on the way, they chattered about how ridiculous this all seemed. They answered so many calls that turned out to be nothing. They were sure this was no different. As they pulled up to the home on Clydesdale Lane, they saw the well-kept lawn with perfect green grass and beautiful architecture. They knocked on the door even though it was wide open. Then they shouted for someone to answer the door and loudly hollered out, police, come to the door. But no one came, so they gingerly moved forward into each room. So the cops are now creeping

through the house, not knowing what or who they would find. The eerie silence is palpable. The hush, along with pristine rooms, almost made them feel as if they were in a perfectly put-together furniture display gallery rather than a lived-in dwelling. After clearing the house, officers make their way to the garage, the scene of this supposed crime where a frozen corpse awaits. When they spot the upright freezer, they realize they may just encounter something legit, something only a cold-blooded killer could imagine. They open the freezer door with guns ready. You never know. What they see is harmless, but alarming. There is Samantha Parker, crumpled into a fetal position and surrounded by ice crystals, with blue lips and frozen limbs.

There's no way she's alive. Samantha indeed took a gunshot to the temple with a 38 caliber gun, to be exact. The shooting obviously occurred before Joe's attempts at dismembering her.

Parts of limbs were missing, including one of her arms. Her wrist was crudely hacked apart.

Keeping the rest of the body intact would be difficult to do when removing her from the freezer.

Apparently Joe kept his wife's wish for a clean home because a cursory inspection yielded no signs of blood or tissue, but a closer look would reveal corroborating DNA. No records ever indicated that Joe was violent, or that there were substantial marital troubles.

And Joe repeated on the call that he did still love his wife. He added that he had loved her every single day of their marriage, but they just had a rough stretch.

Rough indeed, I would say. Otherwise, there were no domestic disputes. Police had never been called

to the premises for any reason. He maintained that they simply had a real bad night. Then he brought up the gun and acknowledged that he got himself in trouble. Perhaps Samantha snapped at him to pick up something off the floor or tidy the place up. After all, witnesses said so.

Samantha was fastidious, almost a neat freak, and more than once friends or family had seen or heard her sharp tone directed at Joe. One thing seemed very likely, though. Joe just snapped under the weight of looming bills and the potential loss of their house.

He had always provided for his family, and now he felt like a miserable failure.

The initial job loss triggered him into feeling less than a man. Less than a good husband. And after he snapped, hallucinations caused him to believe his frozen wife was still communicating

[Transcript] Sword and Scale Nightmares / Immaculate

with him. His drastic actions couldn't be undone, and now he had to figure out what his next move was. Regardless of cause or effect, his guilt and pangs of conscience took over and prompted him to call for help. But now, what to do with himself? So, he evacuated. He even told the 911 operator that he cleared the premises and got away. He was not going to be there, but promised it was a legit call. In an apologetic but bland voice, he admitted still loving her and acknowledged that this would be hard to believe after what he's done. Joe announced that he left the front door open and all the lights on in the house, so it would be kind of easy to spot. He was very detail oriented, like his wife. He was a fugitive now, and put himself as the central figure in an immediate manhunt. But strangely, he even told the communication center he was driving to Chattanooga via I-24. Detectives were wary of this information since suspects don't usually reveal their plans or their intended locations. Police were on top of it after they pinged his cell phone in Nashville early the next morning. By that time, Joe was on the top 10 most wanted list. He was deemed armed and dangerous, and residents in the area at large were told not to approach him. Joe might indeed be the most honest killer in history, or else it was that he wanted to get caught. He was telling the truth about where he was headed. Joe isn't finished destroying lives, though. While he's at it, he's going to make certain people pay. It's their fault, not his. While being hunted down, he claims he will return to the Rivergate-Toyota dealership where he was recently employed. And when he gets there, he's going to kill multiple people. Speeding down the highway maneuvering between the cars and trucks en route, he sees and hears helicopters overhead. He feels more pressure than ever. There's no way out. He digs deep into his mind and asks himself whether he wants to spend the rest of his life in the confinements of prison, or whether he would rather spend eternity in hell. The lights, the sirens, the helicopters, intrusive drumming, his mind buzzing. Police are now behind him on Interstate 65 North, in Kentucky. Joe steals himself because he knows his next move.

Joe Parker is running from the law. He knows he's on the top 10 most wanted lists and he no longer has a wife to go home to. He snapped. She's gone. So, in a final move, he pulls the car over to the shoulder of the highway. Cops are blockading the road, so no cars are to be seen. Only the blaring noises of sirens and helicopters. Cop cars are everywhere. And now he hears the familiar bullhorn he's heard on TV and in the movies. Get out of the car. Put your hands above your head. He looks around inside his vehicle, gaining comfort, knowing he's still surrounded by metal and windows. He doesn't have to get out, he thinks. No one can make him. So, he reaches for his gun and aims it at his head. Bang. Buzz. Then silence. His car is now his bloody casket. And he'll join his wife in the afterlife, hoping she will forgive him for his most heinous act. Joe and Samantha had an adult daughter. By this time, she was fully aware of her dad's actions and her mom's shocking murder at his hand. Most people in this situation would be bitter and overwrought, but surprisingly, she harbored no hatred toward her dad and forgave him instead. A year after the loss of both parents, a balloon release ceremony took place in honor of them. Mackenzie Parker memorialized her parents by saying she missed them both equally and that she wasn't angry. Numerous people questioned how this could be, and surprisingly, she answered, they showed me what I would like to have in a marriage someday. Although she described the experience as a nightmare in which she vividly recalled all that happened, she said she could forgive by the grace of God because her parents raised her to be forgiving. Mackenzie echoed her

[Transcript] Sword and Scale Nightmares / Immaculate

dad's sentiments the very night he killed her mother by saying that it was just a very bad night and he snapped. She was aware of her dad's job loss and pending foreclosure, but couldn't imagine this drastic an ending. At the ceremony, the crowd chanted Roll Tide in honor of Samantha's love for the Alabama sports team, Crimson Tide. A gregarious, people-loving woman, Samantha didn't feel like anyone was a stranger to her, that is, until the night of her death, when her own husband became just that. A stranger whose final actions would cost her life in the most disturbing way. Samantha didn't like messes, so she would have expected this man to clean up after himself, but instead he bailed. The stress Joe was feeling the night of November 7th, 2014, had built up inside of him and he couldn't figure out a way to make things right. In fact, he felt he was the one wronged when he was fired from his job and when he wasn't able to stop his house from going into foreclosure. The night he killed his wife, he felt cornered and didn't see a happy exit. Didn't see an exit at all, I would imagine. But once he'd done the deed, reality and then remorse set in. During the two days, his frostbound wife waited, crumpled in her cold, lonely, dark casket. He fled the scene, but not before making a full confession to the law. Then he took the only way out that he could conceive. He would join his wife. Their loving daughter had her own way of sealing the loose ends and moving on when she affirmed, the memories and moments are what you want to hold on to. In the end, she chose to remember her parents in all the good times, all the happy moments and all the happy memories, rather than the real life nightmare that ended both of their lives. If you enjoyed the show, please consider joining plus at swordandscale.com slash plus. But if you can't, consider leaving us a positive review on your preferred listening platform. Sweet dreams and good night.

Customers are rushing to your store. Do you have a point of sale system you can trust or is it a real POS? If you know what I mean. You need Shopify for retail. Did you know Shopify powers selling in person too? Shopify POS is your command center for your retail store. From accepting payments to managing inventory, Shopify has everything you need to sell in person. With Shopify, you get a powerhouse selling partner that effortlessly unites your in-person and online sales into one source of truth. Track every sale across your business in one place and know exactly what's in stock. Connect with customers in line and online. Shopify helps you drive store traffic with plug-and-play tools built from marketing campaigns from TikTok to Instagram and beyond. Get hardware that fits your business. Take payments by smartphone. Transform your tablet into a point of sale system or use Shopify's POS Go mobile device for a battle-tested solution. Plus, Shopify's award-winning help is there to support your success every step of the way. Do retail right with Shopify? Sign up for a \$1 a month trial period at Shopify.com slash sword and scale. All lowercase. Go to Shopify.com slash sword and scale to take your retail business to the next level today. Shopify.com slash sword and scale. All lowercase and no spaces. Shopify.com slash sword and scale.