

## [Transcript] Crime Junkie / MURDERED: Deanna Cook

Hi, crime junkies, Ashley here, and I want to share with you some very exciting news. Britt and I are teaming up with Mariette Bonvoy to bring some lucky crime junkies the ultimate behind-the-scenes crime junkie experience.

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Hi crime junkies, I'm your host Ashley Flowers.

And I'm Britt.

And the story I have for you today is about a woman who has failed over and over again by the people and the systems who should have rushed to her side in her time of need.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and this year I wanted to tell you about a case that has infuriated me to my core.

This is the story of Deanna Cook.

It's Sunday, August 19, 2012, and Vicki Cook has a bad feeling because she hasn't been able to reach her 32-year-old daughter Deanna in two days.

Deanna's not answering her phone, she hasn't posted on Facebook, and she didn't come to church this morning.

So Vicki's mom senses are telling her that something's wrong.

She decides to head over to Deanna's house to check up on her, probably hoping that she's maybe just overreacting.

And she doesn't go alone.

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She takes her other daughter Carlita as well as Deanna's two daughters who don't live with their mom.

But any hope she had that she was just overreacting fades as she approaches Deanna's house and sees water flowing from beneath the garage door.

Two of her dogs are outside too and they are barking in the backyard.

So the women walk around her house pulling on the front door and the back gate trying to get inside but both are locked and they can't see anything amiss other than this like water flowing outside which is kind of a big thing to be amiss right.

They know they have to get inside.

So they call the Dallas police for some assistance.

I mean they don't just want to like go breaking into her home.

But the officer they speak with doesn't give them the help they need.

She says that before any officers get sent to the house they need to check all the local jails and the hospitals which like by the way isn't a thing for a welfare check.

No I'm flabbergasted.

Yeah and I honestly know this because literally just yesterday me and Delia had to like do a welfare check on someone so all you need is the address.

But this dispatcher or whoever they're talking to won't do anything.

So Vicki, Carlitha and the girls are like forget it we'll figure this out ourselves.

Now I don't know if they end up making calls to the jails and hospitals or whatever but they decide they're getting into this house one way or another.

So Carlitha decides to just kick in the back door but as soon as she gets inside Carlitha turns and bolts because the smell coming from the house is terrible.

Vicki forges ahead literally wading her way through the water that comes up to her ankles. She's searching for her daughter but with each step this pit that has been in her stomach gets heavier and heavier.

According to an ABC news article by Alyssa Newcomb Deanna usually keeps her house pretty well organized but there are things like thrown around everywhere.

Now eventually behind Vicki the girls go inside too as does Carlitha.

They search each of the rooms I'm sure hoping to find Deanna but I mean almost also while hoping she's not there right?

But when they get to her bedroom their hearts sink because the door has been busted in and inside her room looks like a tornado went through it.

There is stuff everywhere lamps are knocked over the bed's been flipped same with the bathroom that's off the bedroom like the toilet seat has literally been ripped off.

And when Vicki goes in that bathroom she sees the source of all of this water.

The faucet in the tub is running but that's not what catches her attention.

It is a shadow behind the closed curtain and when she opens it she sees something that no mother no person should ever have to see.

Laying in the bathtub face down only in her underwear is Deanna.

Vicki screams, Carlitha screams, Deanna's daughters scream and then they have to contact police who now take their call much more seriously and first responders are dispatched to the house.

Now even before anyone arrives Vicki already knows who did this to her daughter.

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According to court documents there is no doubt in her mind that her killer is Deanna's husband Del Vecchio and when police arrive she is quick to tell them this.

The two had what she describes as a quote unquote very rocky up and down relationship. He was physically abusive and there had been a plethora of times over the last four plus years when she had seen Deanna with bruises or scrapes and scratches.

So in Vicki's mind there is no one else who could have done this.

Does she know where Del Vecchio is now?

No but she had actually talked to him when she was trying to find out where Deanna was. They had talked the night before and even this morning and Del Vecchio told her two similar stories although they weren't totally the same.

So last night he had said that he had last spoken with her on Wednesday and it's Sunday now and he had even told her that he sent a few people over to Deanna's to check on her but when they not know and answered the door and then this morning he said that the last time he talked to Deanna was Thursday and again he says that he sent some folks to check on her but she didn't answer.

I mean that's not a huge difference but it's also something I'd flag I'm sure she noticed it.

She did yeah I mean to her it's more confirmation that he has probably something to do with this.

Now as officers make their way through the house and secure the scene they think Deanna has likely been there for a few days but they also take notice of a few more things that her family may have missed.

For instance something that sticks out is the position of the deadbolt on the door to the bedroom.

So it had been locked from the inside but based on the damage to the door itself it looks like it was locked after the door had already been forced in so like the lock part is sticking out from the door but the door frame isn't damaged there if that makes sense.

Okay so what does that mean?

I don't know if it means anything I think it's just something that stands out to them as they walk through something I saw like theorized online or even like kind of put forward is was she trying to lock the door as someone was coming through right again I don't know if that's a big thing it's just something that they notice.

Yeah that's what I was thinking like I remember being a kid and trying to lock the door behind myself like from my siblings and accidentally locking it basically open while I was trying to close it.

Right and that's an option there's also the option where when the door got busted and it got jostled and came out like again I don't know if it means anything.

Now based on what Vicki's telling them their first priority is to track down Delvecchio.

They learn that he is living with his stepfather in the town of Bulch Springs which is about like a 15-20 minute drive east of Dallas but there's no guarantee that's where he is right now.

Okay so I know he's like suspect number one and for good reason I mean he'd be the first person I'd look at too but is there anything to suggest that he was there?

So yes actually so they had done a canvas of the neighborhood and investigators find

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several people who report having seen him in the area recently.

Okay.

For instance a couple mornings prior this would have been on the 17th one of Deanna's neighbors noticed him sitting on the back of a car outside of Deanna's house and he didn't respond when he tried to get his attention.

And according to those same court documents I mentioned earlier Deanna's mail carrier comes forward and says that she saw the two walking down the street towards her house on the morning of the 17th.

And it's so convenient how he just happened to leave out that he was in the area when he was talking to Vicki right?

Can they tell how long Deanna's been dead?

At this point I think all they know is that she has been deceased for a couple of days

I mean they'll have to wait for an autopsy to get a better idea of her time of death

but in the meantime police track down Dovecchio in Bulch Springs and he is arrested on several active warrants.

And what does he have to say for himself?

So I actually couldn't find how he responds.

Anything about any questioning they do has never been released as far as I can tell.

I do know he ends up denying any involvement in her death but that story is real hard to stick to when investigators find that Deanna had called 911 twice in the days leading up to her death and the contents of those calls pretty much destroy any defense he could have come up with.

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Three days before her body was found, Deanna had called 911 to report that Delvecchio was hanging out at the park across the street from her house.

She said that she was worried because she was trying to go to work and she didn't want him to break into her house while she was out.

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And this was probably around the time the neighbors saw him, right?

Right, yeah.

So she told the 911 operator that they had had multiple incidents where he had to be escorted from her house, but she hasn't been able to get a restraining order.

Geez, why not?

I don't know, but in this call she asks for police to come by the house, whether they did or not.

I don't know, but the next day at 10 52 a.m.

She calls 911 again.

The Morning Dallas News published a partial transcript of the call in an article by Tanya Iser on the call, which has been reported as being 11 or 17 minutes long.

Deanna can be heard begging for her life among unintelligible screaming and dogs barking in the background.

And she's speaking to someone she calls red, saying, stop it, please.

I'm not doing anything.

And why are you doing this to me?

The operator consistently asks for an address.

But Deanna had called 911 without her attacker knowing.

In fact, the man can be heard asking if she called the police several times, which she denies.

So she can't just like tell the nine or not operator where she is.

Like that's going to give her away.

Right. She can't just shout her address for no reason.

Right. Now, at some point on this call, she stops referring to this person as red and she calls her attacker by his name, Delvecchio.

And Delvecchio can be heard saying, I'll kill you.

I'll kill you.

I'll kill you.

Then there's a sound of a struggle.

What sounds like maybe water splashing and someone choking.

And then about eight and a half minutes in, there's nothing.

Just the sound of a dog still barking.

The operator sat on the line listening.

And I think occasionally calling out to check if anyone was there.

Now, she was eventually able to home in on an address.

So at that point, she hung up, called back twice, once at 11, 10 a.m.

And then again at 11, 12, but no one picked up.

How did police not find her that day?

Well, here's the story.

So there were police who were dispatched after that call.

But that's really where things went from bad to just downright and neglectful.

Because the two officers who responded to the call didn't feel the need to rush over to Deanna's house.

For whatever reason, they stopped by another house to check out a burglary alarm that had

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been accidentally tripped.

When they saw it was a false alarm, they then decided to swing by 7-eleven.

Then they finished up some paperwork that was left over from another call that they had responded to.

Why the f\*\*\* do they think they could just take their sweet time getting there?

I don't know.

Apparently, Eric Nicholson reported for the Dallas Observer that the 9-1-1 operator had marked the call as urgent.

But I guess hadn't communicated that there was an attack literally going on at that very moment?

Okay, but you'd think urgent would be enough to get their butts into gear to get there quickly?

Before going to 7-eleven, before going to paperwork, I don't know.

It took them 50 minutes to get to her house.

And by the time they did, they didn't see anything suspicious.

They said they knocked on the door, they walked around,

checked to see if some of the windows were locked or broken, but they didn't see anything.

They even called Deanna's phone again, but of course she didn't pick up, so they left.

Well, and you said 50 minutes to get to her house from the time the operator told them to leave?

At that point, there's already been 8 minutes of silence at least that the operator has just been listening to.

It's been over an hour since the call started in the first place.

I can't comprehend this breakdown in communication.

I mean, the operator here is, I'm going to kill you, a struggle.

And then when they get there, there's no sound inside.

No one answers the door.

I'm sorry, break down the door.

Yeah, that's like every reason you need, right?

Yeah.

And listen, everyone feels the same.

Deanna's family, the broader Dallas public, they all have plenty to say about this.

So literally by the next day, August 20th, the whole city knows about the complete failure on every level to protect Deanna.

The department ends up issuing a statement saying that they're doing a quote unquote comprehensive review of the whole thing from the operator who took the call to the officers who responded, basically to see if the issue was a communication breakdown or indicative of a larger issue.

And it's on that same day they make this statement that Deanna's autopsy is conducted.

Based on the state of her body and the evidence from the 911 call,

the medical examiner determines she more than likely died on the 17th.

Yeah, when she made the 911 call.

Yeah, that was definitely when and the water splashing that was hurt on the call,

that was the how Deanna died.

Her cause of death was drowning and other homicidal violence.

But what's interesting is that the 911 call is really what pushes the Emmy to rule her case as a homicide.

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Because without the call, there's not much physical evidence to suggest that Deanna was murdered, like she didn't look like she'd been beaten, there's no bruising.

So without that, he states that her death would have only been a mysterious death.

I mean, definitely really suspicious, but not automatically a homicide.

So she basically classified her death as a homicide herself.

Yeah, so that call is even more important because her talk screen shows that she had PCP and alcohol in her system at the time of her death.

So I mean, when you think about it, had that call not been placed,

I can totally see a world where her death would have been written off.

And we'd be doing a mysterious death episode trying to convince a police department to reopen her case.

Yeah.

And I don't have a whole lot of faith that they would have nailed that investigation based on how they've handled things so far.

Totally.

And I'm assuming they do like fingernail clippings and stuff.

I mean, is any of Delvecchio's DNA found on her body?

If she was fighting, I mean, I have to imagine she could have scratched him or something.

Yeah, yeah, they do it all.

Fingernail clippings, sexual assault kit, the works.

And they find DNA actually from two men from the sexual assault kit.

But what's interesting is neither belong to Delvecchio.

And to be honest, they're not sure what the circumstances were when it comes to the encounters with those other two men.

But when it comes to the fingernail clippings, at first, those come back clean.

There was no one else's DNA, but hers present under her nails.

But, and this is sort of jumping head a little bit,

they end up doing another more sensitive test later on,

and they ultimately conclude that there is a DNA sample,

and they can't rule out Delvecchio as a contributor.

Can't rule out Asin?

Asin, it's only like a partial sample.

But I think when we hear partial, we're like, oh, you know, a lot of people could be ruled in.

They do clarify that this partial sample does rule out 99.9% of all other males.

Oh, okay.

So yeah, pretty good.

Yeah, and I mean, let's also not forget that she said his name.

On the call, I know.

I mean, what else do we need?

Not much more.

Because by Monday, he has been charged with murder.

And by Wednesday, the police department announces that they're making some changes to the way 911 calls are handled.

Wonderful.

Yeah, well, specifically to the way they're classified.

An article by the Associated Press for NBC5 states that with this update, calls that involve things like death or serious bodily injury are classified as highest priority.

Hold up.

What were they before if they weren't the highest?

I don't know.

I mean, what could be higher than literal deaths?

I don't understand.

It's a great question.

I tried to find out, but I couldn't find anything about their previous ranking system.

So, I mean, I don't know what it would have to be.

Like a mass shooter or something like that, which...

Terrorism, yeah.

Yeah, let's keep something like that high up.

But one death should be treated the same as well.

Whatever.

So, at least now they have their priority straight.

A little too late.

Yeah.

But okay.

Now, the operator who took the call is suspended and that officer who told the family that they had to contact local hospitals in jails first.

Remember back when they wanted to do the welfare check?

That officer is fired because that was apparently the third call that she had mishandled.

Beautiful.

So, what about the responding officers, the ones that felt the need for a slurp or something in a 7-Eleven first?

Yeah.

So, I can't find anything else about them.

So, you can take that potentially as an indication that they weren't formally punished.

Okay.

To me, they're just as culpable though.

They skipped the whole urgent part and read it as totally okay to stop by 7-Eleven, do extra paperwork, whatever.

I know.

Maybe it was gas they needed at 7-Eleven.

Again, I think this goes back to...

I don't know what the protocol was before.

If urgent wasn't really that urgent, you know what I mean?

Or if it got lumped in with something else?

Or if urgent doesn't mean actually urgent, use a different word.

I totally agree.



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Almost overnight, Deanna becomes the name everyone in Dallas associates with the need for a change in how law enforcement handles calls relating to domestic violence specifically. Because the more investigators and the public learn about the history of Deanna and Del Vecchio's relationship, the clearer it becomes that something should have been done a long time ago. If you guys didn't know already, we are a SimplySafe fam.

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Deanna and Delvecchio's relationship goes back years.

They got together in 2008 and eventually got married.

But by January 3rd, 2009, they were already having major troubles.

That was when Delvecchio was arrested for assaulting Deanna after she didn't answer her phone.

He showed up when she was visiting with a friend, completely in a rage, and he grabbed her by the neck and began choking her.

In front of her friend?

Yeah, her friend left the room for a few minutes, but when she came back, Delvecchio was already attacking Deanna.

And this friend's screaming for him to stop, which he did, but he threatened to do the same to her.

So eventually, the police were called and Delvecchio was arrested.

And Deanna requested a protective order, but I'm not sure if it was granted.

What I do know is that in October 2009, she filed for divorce.

But that divorce was a little messy.

She didn't follow through, so the case was dismissed,

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and then a few months later, Delvecchio filed for divorce, but that was dismissed again when he didn't follow through. So it seems like they were both totally okay getting out of the relationship, at least for a bit at some point in time. And maybe at different times too, right. But the violence didn't end in 2009, because in March of 2010, Deanna was arrested for assaulting Delvecchio. Although, to be honest, the situation wasn't as cut and dry as the last one was. Deanna ran, almost naked, save for her bra and underwear to her neighbors, begging to come in saying that Delvecchio was going to get her. And this neighbor even saw Delvecchio in the yard behind Deanna. But Delvecchio, like, left when he sees that the neighbor lets her inside. So everyone knew this was a violent relationship. Right, and that neighbor even later testifies that their relationship was, quote, fearsome and violent. But that time, it wasn't Deanna who called the police, or even the neighbor. It was this motel employee a few towns over. So they'd called to report Delvecchio, who was sitting in the lobby, bloody. And the responding officer noted that he had been stabbed in one of his shoulders, and had other scratches on his face, tongue, and arm. And when the officer talked to him, he claimed that Deanna had stabbed him. And when police searched her house, they found a sort of tire tool that matched the type of wound that he had. So they go to Deanna and she claims that Delvecchio had attacked her, that she was defending herself. But she was still arrested because he had the injuries and she didn't. Now, according to the court docs I keep mentioning, she did end up being acquitted. But that wasn't the end of their violent scuffles, not even close. In May of 2011, Delvecchio was arrested again for assaulting Deanna, an officer who responded to a disturbance found the two arguing, and Deanna had slashes on her hands from where Delvecchio had cut her with a knife. So this was escalating. Yeah, and he had even threatened her with a knife before. And from what I can tell, this may have been the first time he actually, like, cut her with one. So I know he's arrested that time, but I'm not sure what happens after that arrest, like if he was charged with assault or released or what. But by July 28, 2012, this would have been less than a month before Deanna was killed. He was back at it again. This time it was Deanna who called 911. Because Delvecchio was lurking in her neighborhood and she wanted someone to come take him away. She actually called a couple of times that day. Delvecchio just kept showing up and she asked for police to come and again, just get him out of here.

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That second time, she said that he was lurking in a parked car across the street from her house, just watching, I guess, because she was supposed to be leaving for work.

And like she was later on, she had this fear that he was going to break in while she was gone.

So she wanted an officer to come and remove him.

But she asked that they not tell him that she was the one who called because it, quote unquote, triggers him.

Now, in that instance, officers were dispatched and they found Delvecchio in the park with two bags of clothing with him.

And when they asked him what he was doing, he said that he was waiting for his niece to come get him.

But I mean, obviously that wasn't what was happening.

But at the same time, there wasn't necessarily a crime being committed.

So officers drove him back to his stepfather's house.

I always get really upset when I ask this question, but I'm going to ask it anyway.

Stalking isn't a crime.

I know the laws on it are super weird, and it's like a very specific definition, but this seems pretty obvious.

I agree, but I don't think they were seeing it as stalking or they didn't have enough evidence that it was stalking or didn't take the time to look into it enough.

I don't know, yeah.

Now, in September, Deanna's mom, Vicki, sues numerous people who were involved with Deanna's case.

In the lawsuit, she alleges that they violated the 14th Amendment's due process and equal protection clauses, basically saying that if Deanna was white or lived in a different neighborhood or the call hadn't been about domestic violence, then maybe things would have turned out differently.

She's also claiming they violated Texas's negligence, gross negligence, bystander recovery, wrongful death, and survival laws.

And she sues a lot of people.

We're talking city of Dallas, the Dallas police department, and seven individuals.

And I think the easiest thing to do, just kind of go through the list of these people slash entities one by one for the sake of clarity, starting with the city of Dallas.

Vicki alleges that they quote, failed to implement policies, practices, and procedures that respected Deanna Cook's constitutional rights to assistance, protection, medical treatment, and equal treatment under the law.

Basically, it's the city's responsibility to make sure

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that there are some systems put in place to ensure that everyone has equal treatment, and she's saying they failed to do that. The police department is being sued because it took the responding officers 50 minutes to get there. And while this is obviously a problem with those officers themselves, Vicki alleges that Deanna's volatile and dangerous relationship was known to Dallas PD, and therefore they had a responsibility to act. Okay, all of that makes sense. The call taker who answered Deanna's 911 call is listed because she basically failed to respond properly. It took her 10 minutes to contact the police dispatcher and request assistance, even though it was clear there was an assault actively happening, and she didn't note that there was an assault underway in her notes. Now, when it comes to the supervisor, she was supposed to be on the call floor during her whole shift. There's always supposed to be someone there to assist call takers in classifying calls and providing general support. But when Deanna's call came in, the supervisor was in a meeting, and so another call taker had to assist. That call taker is also named in the lawsuit. She was the one who told the original call taker to hang up and call Deanna back. And then when it comes to the police dispatcher, she's named because once she got the information, even after seeing that it was marked as urgent, she allowed officers to volunteer to go to Deanna's house. This is where all of the breakdown is happening. So when you say volunteer to go to Deanna's house, do you mean instead of assigning officers? Right, which shouldn't have been the case because that just takes away some of the urgency of the situation. Like, hey, you need to get there right now versus like, is anyone available? Like, when you have a minute,

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and the rest of the people we kind of already know about, the two responding officers who took their time getting to the residence and then left when they didn't see anything. And then finally, the former officer who told Vicki to call the hospitals and jails first. So listen, Deanna's family acknowledges that the problem wasn't just with the individuals who handled the calls. There is a much larger problem going on here. For one, the call center, it's supposed to have 90 positions filled, but at the time of Deanna's death, they only had 64 people working there. But even if they had all 90 positions filled, they didn't have the updated technology to be able to respond to a call like Deanna's quickly. See, Deanna made that call on her cell phone, not a landline. So according to Tristan Hallman's reporting for the Dallas Morning News, it took almost 10 minutes for the call taker to find a location and dispatch someone to check on her. And actually, Samsung and T-Mobile ended up getting added to the suit as well, with Vicki and her family alleging that they didn't implement the technology that was needed to make locating the cell phone happen faster. So really, there was only so much that the people at the call center could even do without that technology. Timing-wise, again, in just locating, we got 10 minutes, there was a lot more time, but yes, they weren't able to locate the cell phone right away, but that doesn't excuse literally every other moment where they dropped the ball big time. Now, I'm not going to go into all of the details of the lawsuit, but eventually, everyone who worked at the call center is dropped from the lawsuit. The original call taker even ends up resigning. The police officers and the Dallas Police Department get dropped from the suit. So by 2014, the updated suit includes T-Mobile, Metro PCS, Samsung, the city of Dallas, and the ex-officer who refused to send help

until the family called hospitals and jails.  
Geez, 2014, I'm never not surprised  
at how long it takes for things like this  
to drag themselves through the system.  
Yeah, I mean, for Deanna's family,  
it's years of waiting and fighting  
and then waiting some more.  
That was the theme of 2014 for them.  
But by 2015, they have another battle ahead of them,  
one that they have to fight at the same time as the lawsuit.  
That's still Vecchio's trial.  
It gets delayed a few times,  
but on May 18th, 2015, it begins.  
And it is a doozy.  
If you're tired of your traditional old workout gear,  
you have to check out Viori.  
With Viori, everything is designed to work out in,  
but doesn't look or feel like it.  
Viori clothing items are so comfortable, so versatile.  
I basically live in the performance joggers  
because they're so, so, so soft  
and come in so many different colors.  
They just released some brand new colors, actually,  
so it might be time to brighten up my wardrobe again.  
Even my husband Justin has gotten on the Viori train  
with the men's Sunday performance jogger  
and the core short,  
which evidently is the most comfy-lined athletic short ever.  
And if you need any more reason to join us  
and get totally ducked out  
in the amazing clothing Viori has to offer,  
you gotta hear this.  
Viori is 100% offsetting their carbon footprint  
and actively reducing and offsetting 100%  
of their plastic footprint from 2019 and beyond.  
Good products doing things the right way.  
You'll love to see it.  
Viori is an investment in your happiness.  
For our listeners, they're offering 20%  
off your first purchase.  
Get yourself some of the most comfortable  
and versatile clothing on the planet  
at Viori.com slash crime junkie.  
That's V-U-O-R-I dot com slash crime junkie.

## [Transcript] Crime Junkie / MURDERED: Deanna Cook

Not only will you receive 20% off your first purchase, but enjoy free shipping on any orders over \$75 and free returns. Go to [Viori.com](http://Viori.com) slash crime junkie and discover the versatility of Viori clothing. You guys, Joe has been on the move since she's been 10 months old. I am talking nonstop moving from sun up to sun down. That girl does not sit still. And she doesn't quite tell me when she needs a diaper change either. So I need something that is going to hold up even if she is hanging upside down. Enter Pampers Cruisers 360. Pampers Cruisers 360 aren't just for potty training. You can start using them when baby is just one year old. And not only do they absorb and hold everything in, thanks to the unique 360 degree stretchy waistband, it makes it easy to change your wiggling baby fast. With Cruisers 360, your baby will feel dry and comfortable while they walk or crawl or explore. Thanks to a gap free fit and a blowout barrier. I love that name because it is so honest. That blowout barrier is at the back waist to help prevent up to 100% of leaks, even the blowouts. Download the Pampers Club app today and earn Pampers Cash. Redeem your Pampers Cash for exclusive Pampers coupon savings and rewards. Only redeemable via Pampers Club. Redeem Pampers Cash, no cash value. For trusted protection, trust Pampers. The number one pediatrician recommended brand. The prosecution's presentation of the case is no surprise. They go through pretty much everything I've laid out. The 911 call, the way Deanna's body was found, Duvecchio's history of violence, but the defense tries to pull some real sh\*\*. They claim that Deanna wasn't murdered. Rather, she died from a combination of PCP and stress. Stress? Like stress from being drowned? I don't understand. Well, they basically say that Deanna and Duvecchio's relationship was stressful. Understatement of the century. And they say that in combination with the PCP,

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it caused her heart rate to increase, her blood pressure to rise, and ultimately caused a release of norepinephrine that caused hallucinations and disorientation.

Wait, are they saying Deanna hallucinated everything?

Basically, yeah.

Then how do they explain the drowning?

They're saying that it was accidental.

No, no.

I know.

F\*\*k that.

It's infuriating.

And they also, they point to her history of mental health.

According to that same court doc, she had been diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder, and a mood disorder not otherwise specified, and unspecified psychosis.

And she had self-diagnosed herself with ADHD.

I'm sorry.

I threw up a little bit in my mouth when you said that they were blaming this on her mental health, but how does any of this explain the 911 call?

It's not just her hallucinating and saying his name.

You can literally hear Devecchio saying he's going to kill her.

Thank you.

If she's hallucinating, so is the recording of the 911 call.

Right.

And can I tell you something else that makes this story even more unbelievable?

Know what they were never able to find at the scene?

Her cell phone.

No.

The cell phone she called 911 from?

She can't drown in the bathtub and then hide her cell phone or get rid of it.

Get ready to pull your hair out because this next part is infuriating.

Already there, but okay.

The defense calls a forensic and clinical psychologist

named Dr. Compton to the stand who says,

she can't hear any water splashing on the call,

which she says you'd expect to hear if someone was being pushed underwater.

So that combined with the lack of physical evidence that there was a struggle makes the defense basically come to the conclusion of, yeah, she was hallucinating.

Oh my God.

Okay.

We know the phone likely wasn't super close because



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Delvecchio didn't know that she was even making the call.  
You said the 911 operator could hear water.  
Is this even up for debate?  
I'm confused.  
Yeah, I don't know what the 911 operator heard,  
but like right that came to light before we're ever at trial making argument.  
Yeah.  
So I have to imagine that that sound was there.  
It's present.  
I think the only argument is that some people say they're hearing splashing water.  
Others say, oh, well, I hear that as like a faucet running.  
I'm sorry, same difference.  
Yeah, there's water and we know the faucet was running, right?  
Because all that water like came out of the house filled, whatever.  
Right.  
But with all the screaming and the dog barking, I mean, I think, I don't know,  
there's so much going on in this call,  
including, let's come back to, you can hear another voice on the call.  
I know.  
That is not hallucination.  
I know.  
I think this has got to be up there with like the top 10 worst defenses of all time.  
Now, the one thing I can maybe see being a decent argument from the defense is when they  
bring up the presence of the two unknown male samples found when they did her sexual assault  
kit, because to this day, those men have never been identified.  
And the defense argues that the investigation was incomplete because police didn't try to  
even track those two other men down.  
Okay.  
But there was only one male voice on the recording, one that I'm assuming sounded a  
heck of a lot like Delvecchio.  
Oh, it totally did.  
Right.  
I mean, she calls him out by name.  
And that voice is saying, I'll kill you.  
And she totally could have been with two other guys consensually before she  
was killed.  
That means nothing to me.  
Exactly.  
And ultimately, the jury agrees.  
Delvecchio ends up being found guilty, and he is sentenced to 85 years in prison.  
But even though that's done, Vicki and her family still have another battle to fight,  
that lawsuit.  
And this time, they don't get a win.  
The judge ultimately dismisses the case.

## [Transcript] Crime Junkie / MURDERED: Deanna Cook

Vicki appeals a few times, but she and her family are up against a city that's not going to back down.

In fact, Robert Walonsky reported for the Dallas Morning News that the city spends over \$350,000 fighting them instead of settling.

The most recent update I could find was an appeal for March of 2019, but I can't find anything after that.

So I don't know what happened.

I don't know if it got rejected, if it was swept up in the whirlwind of the pandemic, or what.

But to Deanna's family, it doesn't feel like true justice.

Yes, her killer was put away.

But what?

We're going to just focus on putting away killers instead of preventing the killing?

Right.

Every year, we partner with a nonprofit doing important work with survivors of domestic violence.

And this year, we want to feature more than a phone.

This incredible organization works with domestic violence organizations across the United States to provide free smartphones and four months of cellular data to DV survivors.

Because when you think about it, many survivors leave in a hurry and they don't bring their phone or they don't have one or the one they have can be tracked by their abuser.

I don't know that if I had to give up my phone right now that I could function.

Like I would be kind of lost.

I mean figuratively and literally I use my maps for everything.

I don't know anyone's number anymore.

So I think a lot of us would be.

That's why having a safe, reliable, unmonitored phone is so important.

It allows people to contact their loved ones, access online resources, which is everything you need is on the internet now.

So pivotal.

It's a fresh start and a lifeline.

More than a phone has donated almost 6,000 phones to survivors at the 73 nonprofits they support.

And both of those numbers are only going to keep getting bigger.

Their biggest fundraiser of the year, more than a tailgate, is actually happening in Indianapolis this fall.

So if you're interested in donating now is the time.

We'll have all their information linked in our show notes.

And you know, every month, not just October, almost without fail, we get messages from listeners who say that one of our DV episodes hits home.

It was the push they needed to leave.

They recognized earlier signs of violence.

I mean, there have been so many unbelievable stories.

So this month, if you are listening to this and something about this episode hit just a little too close to home, I need you to listen to me.

## [Transcript] Crime Junkie / MURDERED: Deanna Cook

You are not alone.

One in three women and one in four men experience physical intimate partner violence in their lifetime.

And every single person you included, you especially, is worthy of being treated with love and respect.

And I know what you're being told by the person who might be abusing you.

But hear me right now.

You are not being too sensitive.

You are not overreacting.

If anything I talked about today rings true for you.

We will have resources listed in our show notes.

We love you.

Stay safe, crime junkies.

You can find all the source material for this episode on our website, [crimejunkiepodcast.com](http://crimejunkiepodcast.com).

And follow us on Instagram at [crimejunkiepodcast](https://www.instagram.com/crimejunkiepodcast).

We'll be back next week with a brand new episode.

Crimejunkie is an audio check production.

So, what do you think Chuck?

Do you approve?

Looking for a great way to spend the weekend?

Head to the Annapolis Power Boat Show October 5th through 8th.

Walk the docks and board hundreds of boats.

Soak in the boating lifestyle.

Pick up nautical clothes and gear.

And enjoy the best time of the year in Annapolis.

It's a boating celebration you don't want to miss.

Learn more and save when you pre-purchase tickets at [annapolisboatshows.com](http://annapolisboatshows.com).

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See you there.

This show is sponsored by BetterHelp.

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Like, you know what you should do.

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Therapy helps you figure out what's holding you back, so you can work for yourself instead of against yourself.

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It's entirely online, designed to be convenient, flexible, and suited to your schedule.

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