

Hi crime junkies, I'm your host, Ashley Flowers.
And I'm Britt.
And the story I have for you today
is about a young mother whose sudden disappearance
immediately set off alarm bells for her family.
From child abuse allegations to custody battles
and hair-raising testimony,
investigators thought they knew every detail
of what happened to her.
But to put a ruthless killer behind bars,
they needed proof before time ran out.
This is the story of Mung Chi Ji.
It's 3.35 p.m. on October 10th, 2019,
when a call comes into the 311 Citizens Hotline
in Columbia, Missouri.
The caller says his name is Joseph Elich.
He's 23 and he's calling to report
his 28-year-old wife, Mung Chi, missing.
The hotline operator passes the information
onto the Columbia Police Department
and an officer heads out to their apartment
later that evening.
According to Gregory Daley's reporting for KRCGTV,
when police arrived, Joe explains
that he hasn't seen his wife since two nights before,
at around 11.30 p.m. just before they went to bed.
He says everything was completely normal,
literally no red flags,
until he woke up to the sound of their infant daughter crying.
And when he got up, he realized Mung Chi was just gone.
So what, it took him two days
to get the baby to stop crying?
No.
Why is he just calling now?
No, you're not wrong.
So that stuck out to me too.
And honestly, the officers even make note of it,
but they're not just gonna jump right
into interrogating this guy.
They're more worried about getting Joe's
full version of events first.
So anyways, Joe goes on to say that when he woke up
on the ninth, he found both Mung Chi's keys
and phone in the apartment,

which told him that she hadn't just gone out to run an errand or something.
Now, police don't see any signs of fourth entry or any signs of a struggle.
So at least from what they can tell, it's like she just vanished into thin air.
So they asked Joe for more details.
And here's the full story he gives police.
He says that two nights ago, which would have been October 8th, he gave Mung Chi a massage and his plan was to initiate sex.
Of course, there was a plan available. I was always, ever.
Ever, yes, true.
But he says she denied him.
She was basically like, no, I got an early day tomorrow. I just wanna go to sleep.
So that's what they did.
And then the next thing he knew, poof, she was gone.
So maybe it's my purity culture upbringing talking, but that massage to sex plan feels like a weird, intimate detail to include, doesn't it?
It kinda does, right?
Unless it was important to him, right?
I'm thinking if Eric left, and truthfully a normal day, like yeah, there's times where like, dude, I don't need the massage, it's okay.
I gotta wake up early tomorrow.
But if he went missing the next time, unless I think that he left me because of that, I don't think I would include it.
It's just so intimate.
Right, like it seems like extra details that don't have anything to do with like, hey, let's find this woman.
Yeah, and I think that it's stuck out to investigators as well, because even though it seems small, they can tell that clearly it's stuck with him.
Like it bothered him.
So anyways, he goes on to say that he woke up at five the next morning to their baby crying.

But he realized Mengqi was gone,
so then he got up to look for her.
Now he couldn't find her,
but that's when he realized that her keys
and her phone were still there,
so he just went back to bed.
Okay, if I woke up and Justin was gone,
but like all of his stuff was still there.
It's even more weird.
I don't think I'd go back to bed.
Yeah, I would like search the house.
I would find him, I feel like.
And to point out again, this is an apartment,
so it's not even like,
I think about like your parents' big farmhouse, right?
If your dad wasn't like-
You go upstairs, go to the basement,
go out to the like, out in the land, whatever,
but this is a contained space.
Yeah, there's not a lot of places to look,
so even more concerning that all of her stuff isn't there,
she's not around.
Again, it's not like, oh, he's just like laying
on the couch in the basement.
Like he always does, I'll see him in the morning.
I don't know, it's, again, just a little weird.
But he goes back to bed,
and then he says he got up again around eight
because their daughter was crying again.
And again, Mengqi still wasn't back.
But he didn't try to figure out where she was.
Instead, dude put his daughter in the car
and took a drive to the town of Jefferson City,
which is like 30 minutes away, to quote unquote, relax.
Why the fuck does he wanna relax?
He just woke up, right, yeah.
This is the moment that stress and anxiety work for you.
You channel that into solving the problem.
In this case, the problem is finding your missing life.
Yeah, it gets even sketchier
because he goes on to say that he'd never really been
to Jefferson City before, but apparently he liked it
because- Okay.
Yeah, listen to this, because later that day,

while he still has no idea where his wife is,
he took his daughter again and drove around
to another nearby town that he's also not familiar with,
to again, relax.

Now, he says that he was looking for a place
to take a hike with his one-year-old daughter.
Like that's why he's doing all this driving around.

Ashley.

Britt.

Nothing about hiking with a child,
let alone a one-year-old is relaxing.

Yeah, and here's the thing, it's not the hike so much
for me, because again, this is where everyone's
a little different, I love being outside.

And it actually can be very relaxing.

I'd rather be outside on a hike
than being just stuck in my living room.

Yeah, sure.

To me, it's the random searching of the place to hike.

Like I am on a timer with the one-year-old.

There is a schedule, there is a departure time,
there is an arrival time, there is a plan.

You don't just like swirl around and figure it out.

Just roam, yeah.

Now, long story short, I'm not sure if he says
he actually went on this hike, but he says
that after he left his last destination,
which was the city of Rochepoint about 15 minutes away,
he headed back east to Columbia.

And the icing on top of this poorly constructed cake
was that both times he left the apartment,
he locked the door and took Munchie's keys with him.

So he wasn't expecting her to come back.

Exactly.

Things are not looking great for Joe here.

And at this point, any other theory police may have had
about what happened to Munchie basically goes
at the window because this tells them all they need to know.

Joe is most likely responsible for her disappearance,
but they don't have any proof, not yet at least.

So they learn a little bit more about the couple's background.

Munchie had emigrated from China in 2012
to get her master's degree at the University of Missouri,
and Joe had actually gone to the same school,

but they hadn't actually met until 2015
when they were both working as engineers.
Munchie was Joe's supervisor,
and when they started dating at the beginning of 2016,
their relationship was a whirlwind.
By September of 2017, 21-year-old Joe popped the question,
and then just two weeks later,
Munchie and Joe were married.
Two weeks is not much of an engagement.
No, and no judgment, sometimes when you know, you know,
but the vibe is that everything was just a little rushed,
you know?
I mean, they had their daughter in October of 2018,
and at first, from the outside,
everything seemed to be going well, rushed or not.
That is until Munchie's disappearance.
According to reporting by Skyler Rossi
for the Columbia, Missouri,
Munchie's parents fly in from China less than a week
after she was reported missing.
Now, they don't speak English,
so they have to work with translators,
but pretty much as soon as they're in the States,
they start working with detectives
to offer any help they can.
Now, her parents say that they haven't been in contact
with her since she disappeared,
which to them means she didn't just walk away.
She and her mother have a standing video call
every single day,
and they know that she missed her call
on the day she disappeared,
and she hardly ever missed that call,
which actually had prompted Munchie's mom, Karen,
to contact Joe, but when she tried, he never answered.
So desperate for information,
she called a friend of her daughters
and asked her to run over and check on her,
and it was only then that Joe admitted to anyone
that he didn't know where Munchie was.
So honestly, who knows how long
he would have kept that info to himself
had her parents not had this standing video call
and kind of intervened.

So that's what prompted him to finally call?
I mean, what if the mom didn't have a friend's number?
There's so much here.
Yeah, it seems like that is what made him call,
and again, he called 311, like that weird information number.
That was weird to me at the beginning,
like not emergency services, what?
Yeah, and what they ended up finding out
as they're again talking to Munchie's parents and everyone
is he hadn't even informed his own family
that his wife was missing.
So they're really having to pull this out of him.
Now, even though Joe clearly didn't talk to anyone,
police start talking to everyone they can,
friends, family, even Joe himself, and surprise, surprise.
Let me guess, their marriage isn't what it seemed to be.
Brett, it is like you've done this before.
So Joe admits that their relationship
was contentious at times,
and he felt like they were growing apart,
especially when it came to physical intimacy,
which again, this ties all back to that massage,
that weird detail that he had.
He also told police that he suspected
that his wife had been flirting with this guy that she knew.
And they also learned from one of Munchie's former boyfriends
that she had reached out to him
and asked him for information about divorce attorneys,
and that was back in August.
But it's actually Munchie's mom
who is able to give them the most insight
into the couple's dynamics.
K-Wren says Joe was super controlling.
And despite Munchie being a really social person,
he hated when she went out, especially if he wasn't with her.
And she also says that he'd get upset with her
if she left home for, quote unquote, too long.
So this isn't just a not great marriage.
She was an emotionally abusive relationship.
Exactly.
Now at this point,
and we're about a week into the investigation,
all eyes are on Joe,
who by all accounts doesn't even seem all that concern.

He's just living his life,
going to class because he's still in college
and taking care of his daughter,
which is why it's odd when he speaks to reporters
for the first time on October 15th.
According to reporting by Gladys Batista for KRCGTV,
Joe tells reporters that they were growing apart
in the past few months.
And he knows Munchie was talking
to someone else romantically.
But then he's also quick to say
that she's a doting mother stating, quote,
she's been a great mom, like the best mom ever.
End quote.
I'm sorry, she's been a great mom?
That is past tense.
You caught that.
Now, the one thing I will say is,
I mean, what he's saying,
so right he says in one breath, like,
oh, I think she was romantically involved with someone,
but she's been a great mom.
So if the implication that he's trying to make
is that she ran off with another man,
then to be fair, like abandoning your kid
is not a stellar mom move.
But also like, nobody believes that at this point, right?
Like, so I think they're honing in
on the same thing you did.
And this whole interview is just pretty weird.
Like there's even one part where he's saying
she might have left because she was scared
and confused and felt like she was alone,
but he doesn't really explain
why she might have felt that way.
All in all, this interview he does
doesn't clear up anything.
So that same day, police bring him into the station
for a formal interview.
And he tells basically the same story,
but they also asked to see his cell phone this time.
And listen, if they weren't already convinced,
Joe had something to do with Mengqi's disappearance,
what they find on his phone, all but confirms it.

First, they get his location data
for the night Mengqi disappeared and the morning after.
When they take a look, pretty much everything matches
the route Joe described, until the very end
of that second trip, the one where he said
he wanted to take a hike with his baby.
After he left Rocheport, he drove west
to areas along Highway 41 and the Lumine River,
which are literally in the opposite direction of his house.
And then he stayed in that general area for about 45 minutes.
Did he actually go hiking?
I don't know.
I mean, he obviously did something in that area.
Police just don't know what yet,
but they do make note that both of the two places
he went to that day were like right on the Missouri River.
And one of them was in this super secluded wooded area.
Weird, that seems like the perfect place to,
I don't know, hide a body.
It does, but for whatever reason,
investigators, when they see this information,
they don't like send out search parties just yet.
Now, they also find hours of audio recordings
of arguments between Mengqi and Joe,
where Joe's heard saying things like,
quote, go back to China and quote,
I'm ready to be done talking to you forever.
And listen, those things that I said,
those are the tame ones.
To sum it up, Joe is heard being beyond
emotionally abusive to Mengqi.
He is misogynistic, he is racist, he threatens her,
saying he will quote, bury the earth under you,
and quote, I don't like being with you.
I'm eager to end it.
Those are pretty telling statements.
And I don't know why he would keep something like that
on his own phone.
Yeah, so weirdly enough,
the recordings come from Mengqi and Joe's phones,
which I agree is super strange.
I don't know why they were recorded in the first place.
I don't know if they were recorded
and then shared between phones,

or if they each had different conversations.
I mean, at this point,
who knows what's going on in this guy's head?
Now, two days later, on the 17th,
police search a pond located near their apartment complex.
I'm not sure what brought them to the pond
in the first place.
Like, it's not one of the places that Joe stopped
on either of his super sketchy drives,
but I mean, is that their apartment complex?
I don't know.
Either way, it doesn't really matter
because they come up empty.
Okay, but why haven't they searched
those other places yet?
I don't know.
I mean, he made a few stops
and some of the places that he went to are pretty remote.
So, I mean, if he's getting rid of evidence,
or at this point, maybe even her body,
he could have hidden her anywhere.
And really, I don't wanna understate
how massive of an area we're talking about
to have to search.
Okay, you gotta start somewhere
and those areas aren't getting any smaller.
No, and I totally get it,
but like, at the same time,
you have to deal in the realm of like reality
and the reality is resources are limited.
So, I think they're trying to learn more
so they can hone in and be as successful as possible
with whatever search they conduct.
And they're not just like, again,
you don't wanna burn all your resources
just starting everywhere.
And then when you feel like you have something really solid,
you don't have the time, money, manpower, whatever.
Right, right.
And it might have been good that they waited
because listen, they do learn more.
They learn that Mungchi might not
have been the only person he hurt.
A day after the pawn search,

a woman comes forward and says that back in February, she received a call from Mungchi and subsequent photos showing bruising on the bottom of a female child, which presumably is their daughter. So by October 25th, investigators get a search warrant and head over to Joe's apartment. And when they arrive, they find Joe packing. He's loading a bunch of clothes and other items into his car with the help of his mother Jean. And police are like, yeah, hey, you can't just take off, especially not with your child that you are now suspected of abusing. So they don't let him leave and they search the apartment. And when they do, they confiscate several items, including both cell phones, at least one of their computers, a pair of muddy boots, and a backpack of Joe's that has two notebooks in it. And what's in the notebook is wild. Police describe it as several handwritten scripts. I'm sorry, scripts? So, dude's gonna start a podcast? Right, no. Honestly, I think that would be almost less weird. He wrote out ways to speak to the press. And he also had this weird diary of the days leading up to Munchy's disappearance, where he wrote, I mean, hour by hour, where he was. So a timeline, like he's trying to get his story straight. Yes, and listen, I've said this before, where if something like this happens, someone disappears, I think it's actually really beneficial to write stuff down, because the farther you get away from an event, the muddier things get. And I can't tell you how many people we've talked to, they're like, God, I just don't remember, I wish I did. So to me, the timeline is not even to me the bizarre thing. It goes back to these scripts. I'm gonna say the timeline with these scripts, I feel like it changes everything. Because basically, the scripts look like they are answers that he wrote down for interviews with the media. And I'm telling you, they are so weird,

I can't even do them justice
without just reading them verbatim.
So Britt, will you just read these?
Oh boy, here we go.
So one says, refuse to answer any speculation.
Another says, only speak in the present tense.
Nice.
Which also he didn't do, by the way.
That does not feel like something
you should need reminded about, right?
And then this other one says,
there's only one emotion the public will relate to.
Sadness, sorrow.
It's, this is sickening, Ashley.
It's super eerie, right?
But even with this,
they still don't feel confident charging him
in connection with Mengqi's disappearance.
Although they do feel confident
about the child abuse accusations.
According to reporting by Gregory Daly
and Kyrie on Lane for KRCG TV,
police asked him about the incident with the bruising.
And he admits to being the one who caused it.
But he said that it was an accident.
He said that his daughter was crying.
So perhaps he quote unquote, held her too hard.
We both know that would not cause bruising like that.
Of course not.
And police aren't buying that line either.
They say that the bruise was more likely
a result of a strike.
Luckily, they have probable cause to arrest him
and he is booked on charges of child abuse and neglect
and held on a \$500,000 bond.
Even though this isn't related to Mengqi's disappearance,
it'll at least keep him in custody
so they can keep searching for her.
According to reporting by Hunter M. Gilbert
for the Columbia, Missouri,
Mengqi's parents file for custody of their granddaughter.
However, so does Joe's mother.
Now, sins of a son are not the sins
of his mother necessarily,

but I can totally understand Mengqi's family
not wanting their granddaughter to be in the custody
of anyone named Eleg at this point.
Well, and not to mention Jean,
his mom was with Joe when he was caught packing up
as cartelies.
So I think their concerns are pretty warranted.
100%.
Now, here's where the story kinda splits in two
because as the beginnings of a custody battle are brewing,
police announced publicly that Mengqi's disappearance
is now a criminal investigation and foul play is suspected.
But I'm gonna focus on the custody side of things first.
The public is fully on Mengqi's parent side
with Hunter Gilbert reporting for the Columbia, Missouri
that over a dozen people show up to the courthouse
to show their support.
And over 100 people sign a letter
asking the presiding judge to award custody
to Mengqi's parents.
There are a lot of hearings over the following weeks
and they dredge up a lot about not only Joe's competency
as a father, but also his relationship with Mengqi
and her whole family.
Like for instance, when their daughter was born,
Mengqi's parents actually came to stay with them
for a while just to help out,
which is an amazing thing to do.
And it's all well and good,
but they say that Joe treated them horribly
when they came to help.
He would make fun of them for not speaking English.
He even told them to leave and go back to China
after he thought that their mom was using
a cutting board the wrong way.
I mean, I cook a lot, a lot.
And I don't think there's even a way
to use a cutting board wrong.
How is that a thing?
It's not a thing, no idea.
So you can understand why Mengqi's parents
are making it very clear that they're not comfortable
with anyone but them having custody of their granddaughter.
And where is the baby through all this?

So she's actually with Joe's mom since she technically filed for custody first, which ends this whole battle. Now, as these hearings are happening, everyone is still looking for Mengqi and investigators are finally focusing on Joe's movements from the day she disappeared. According to reporting by Hunter Gilbert, in a press release issued on November 15th, police asked for hunters and landowners to remain on the lookout for anything out of the ordinary. They also released a map of Boone County and eight adjacent counties through which police believe Joseph drove through from the time he told police he knew Mengqi was missing to when he actually reported her missing. But still, no luck. And so a little under two weeks later with no new developments, they step up their game. Police with the help of the Mid-Missouri Sheriff's Dive Team begin searching the Lameen River from Mengqi's body. And divers are searching despite freezing temperatures. And they do this for two weeks, but even two weeks in, they still don't have anything. And listen, they're not just searching one spot. This river is about 60 miles long. So there is so much ground to cover. An Illinois-based company that specializes in searching bodies of water with sonar technology even joins the search to give them a hand. But even though police feel that they're searching in the right place, the sonar also finds no sign of Mengqi. Meanwhile, Joe's still making his way through the court system. And in late December, a grand jury indicts him on an additional charge, first degree endangering the welfare of a child. Boone County prosecutor Dan Knight states that he added that charge because police believe Joe caused Mengqi to be separated from their child. And that separation caused, quote, a substantial risk to the life or body or health to her. End quote.

The prosecutor also implies that this new charge isn't just about the baby.
He firmly believes that Joe killed Mengqi.
And so he says that he's going to prove Joe killed her through the child endangerment trial.
So he's going to use Joe's time under oath to gather information about Mengqi's disappearance.
Bingo.
And we've seen this in other cases, like if they don't think they can win with a criminal trial, victims' families will often go like the civil suit route to get more information.
But the prosecutor has to be super careful.
According to reporting by Danielle Duclos for the Columbia, Missouri, a professor of criminal law at MU, Ben Trachtenberg, explains that if the questioning does not directly relate to the charges, then it becomes a potential issue of scope and ethics.
However, with the way Dan's brought the child endangerment charge, it seems like he's saying the endangerment was caused directly by Joe separating Mengqi from their child.
So in that case, questioning relating to her disappearance would be fair game.
Right.
So this is all basically legal gymnastics.
He's basically attempting to try Joe for murder without a body and without a murder charge.
Right.
So on December 23rd, Joe pleads not guilty to the new charge and the holiday season comes and goes without any sign of Mengqi.
By this point, it's almost impossible for the search to continue because the river's freezing over.
And again, they've been searching for weeks, so much so that there's not much more they feel they can even do.
There's also a preliminary decision reached in the custody case and it's decided that Joe's parents and Mengqi's parents will share custody.
And although I don't think Mengqi's parents

are super happy with the limited arrangement,
the court seems to think
that that's what's best for the baby.
And now is when things finally get going.
Because on February 19th, 2020,
Joseph Elage is charged with first degree murder
for the death of Mengqi Ji,
despite her body not being found.
F***ing finally.
Yeah, it is a relief for everyone.
But investigators still aren't giving up
hope of finding Mengqi's remains.
And so as the weather warms, they slowly push on,
searching in the Lameen River area through the spring
into May, 2020.
There are several last-ditch efforts to find her,
but summer gives way to fall.
And according to Mark Slavitt's reporting for KRCGTV,
a full year after Mengqi disappeared,
police end their search for her body.
Meanwhile, Joe is denied bond
and his trial date is set for November 1st, 2021.
But as Mengqi's loved ones prepare to fight for justice
without her remains,
they get the news that they've been both hoping for
and dreading.
According to a press release from the Columbia State Police
released on March 25th, 2021,
a hiker at Rockbridge State Park discovers human remains
and various items in a shallow grave.
They immediately contact the park rangers
who in turn contact the police.
They rushed to the scene,
and even before they can be identified,
police suspect that they have found Mengqi.
And sure enough, on April 6th,
it is confirmed that they found her.
And did you wanna know just this terrible detail
that I can't get over?
That park where Mengqi was found
was the same park where Joe proposed to her.
Oh God, that is such a cruel, cruel connection.
And what's wild to me is finding her here.
This is closer to Joe's story

than I ever expected it to be.
Law enforcement didn't even look here
because they figured he was lying about the hike,
but I guess maybe he wasn't.
Well, you know, I don't think that the truth
was only in the hiking part of the story.
When Mengqi was found, she had four broken ribs
right where Joe had described giving her a massage,
although they're not able to determine
whether they were broken before or after she died.
They're also not able to determine her cause of death
because her remains are so decomposed.
But I actually wanna rewind for a second
because even though her cause of death is unclear
and her remains are decomposed,
police are able to definitively put Joe at that park.
Because I don't know if you remember,
do you remember those muddy boots
that they found at his apartment?
Honestly, this has been such a journey.
I do not.
I do not remember those boots at all.
Yeah, it's because they found the boots
at the same time that they found those scripts.
That was kind of the highlight.
But they did find muddy boots at his apartment
at the same time they found the scripts.
And what they did is they had taken those into evidence
and they compared the dried mud to mud found near the grave
where Mengqi was buried.
And sure enough, it is a match.
It is the same freaking mud.
There are also juniper needles stuck to them.
And what happens next is really freaking cool.
So you know how all living things have DNA, people, animals?
Yeah.
Turns out even plants.
Well, apparently DNA testing for plants is a thing.
What?
I know.
So basically what investigators do with this case
is they're able to extract DNA from those needles
and match them to a tree near the burial site.
How are we like 600 episodes in

and I'm just now learning this is possible?
I literally have no idea why this has never come up before.
I love that.
Again, to your point, 600 episodes in
and we're still learning new things.
So basically with everything they've got,
there is no way he can say that he wasn't there.
All of this evidence is piling up against Joe
and his defense is pulling out all the stops
to try and keep as much evidence against him
from being presented at trial as possible.
And this includes those recordings
of Joe and Mung Chi arguing,
the ones where he said that he couldn't wait to end things.
But the prosecution's not having it
and they fight to obviously keep everything in.
Dan Knight, who again is the prosecutor,
argues that these recordings prove
that Joseph hated Mung Chi
and that they ultimately play into his larger theory
about what happened to her.
He believes that Joe tried to have sex with Mung Chi
the night she disappeared and she said, no.
As she had been doing for some time
and this made Joe snap, so he killed her.
The recordings are allowed in
and the trial begins on November 1st, 2021.
But the defense comes out swinging with a curveball
that no one saw coming.
In their opening statement,
they say that Joe did kill Mung Chi,
but it was an accident.
You have got to be kidding me.
Nope.
Joe's defense attorney says
that on the night of October 8th,
the couple got into an argument
and began shoving one another.
When he shoved her one last time,
she fell and Joseph heard a thud.
He decided to go for a walk afterwards,
just to clear his head
and he assumed Mung Chi was just asleep in bed.
When he got home, he went to bed too,

didn't realize anything was wrong
until he woke up to their daughter crying
and found Mung Chi dead beside him.
But the prosecution paints a totally different picture.
They say that their relationship was toxic.
Joe was abusive and Mung Chi
was getting ready to leave him.
He couldn't handle the rejection,
so during that massage, Joe got so angry
that he pressed harder and harder on Mung Chi's back
to the point where she couldn't breathe.
They allege he pressed so hard that he broke her ribs
and didn't let up until she was dead.
According to reporting by Elise Person for KRCG TV,
the prosecution also brings two researchers in
to testify about the validity of the mud and plant evidence.
And they say it's extremely unlikely
that the mud on the boots came from anywhere else
besides where Mung Chi's body was found.
But of course, the defense brings their own experts in as well.
Specifically, a pathologist who testifies
that the trauma to Mung Chi's ribs
could be caused by a forceful push into a countertop.
But it couldn't have happened accidentally.
That's the caveat.
Upon cross-examination, the prosecution confirms
that even if her ribs were broken
by being shoved into something,
it would have had to have been a purposeful,
forceful push at the hands of someone else.
Now, Joe also takes the stand in his own defense,
but I'm not gonna bore you with any of what he has to say
because he just sticks to, you know,
this whole thing's an accident story.
So fast forward to November 11th, 2021,
both sides rested their cases
and it doesn't take long for the jury to deliberate
because just six and a half hours later,
Joe is found guilty of murder in the second degree.
That's not the first degree conviction
the prosecution was hoping for,
but it's still a guilty verdict.
Joe is sentenced on January 7th, 2022,
and in a bit of poetic justice,

he is sentenced to 28 years,
the same age Mung Chi was when he took her life.
So whatever happened to the other charges he was facing
for endangerment and child abuse.
Well, so on that front,
he ultimately gets charged
with one count of child abuse or neglect,
one count of first degree endangerment of a child
and one count of third degree domestic assault,
all of which he actually pleads guilty to later that year
in February.
He was sentenced to 10 years for those
on top of the 28 for Mung Chi's homicide.
As far as I can tell,
their daughter still lives with Joseph's mother in Missouri,
but Mung Chi's parents, K-Ren and Zhao Lin
get updates and regular contact with her.
And even though she's safe and healthy,
she'll never get to grow up knowing her mom.
If you or someone you know
is experiencing domestic violence, help is available.
The number for the National Domestic Violence Hotline
is listed below in our show notes.
It is 1-800-799-7233.
You can find all the source material for this episode
on our website, crimejunkiepodcast.com.
And be sure to follow us on Instagram at [crimejunkiepodcast](https://www.instagram.com/crimejunkiepodcast).
We'll be back next week with a brand new episode,
but stick around, we've got some good for you.
Ashley, it is seriously almost the end of April already,
which means it's time to share the good with everybody.
If this is your first time you're listening to the Good segment,
don't forget you can visit crimejunkiepodcast.com
and follow us on Instagram at [crimejunkiepodcast.com](https://www.instagram.com/crimejunkiepodcast).
And if you're new to this channel,
please do subscribe to our channel.
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please do subscribe to our channel as well.
Don't forget you can visit crimejunkiepodcast.com to learn more.
You can find the direct link to the Good page in the show notes.
And Ashley, I think I speak for the both of us
in asking everyone to please keep sharing the good with us.

We have absolutely loved being able to share these stories with the rest of the crimejunkie community, and it just wouldn't be possible without your incredible submissions. So you can submit your story to the Good page as well. All right, let me read you one of my favorite messages that we've gotten recently.

Dear crimejunkie,

I was involved in a car accident and had to go to physical therapy. During that time, my therapist told me about crimejunkie. My answer was, I'm a police officer. Why would I listen to people telling me about crime? I decided to give it a go. I have been a faithful listener since then. Some of the stories told of the twist and turn and me yelling at the radio because I can't believe how some of the victims' families have been victimized all over again. The show helped me as an officer to become more attuned to the victims' stories. For example, one of the crimejunkie episodes about teen romance violence, Pena and Walker. After I was done listening to that episode, I received a dispatch call about a subject threatening to commit suicide. When I arrived, I saw a male walking away from a female. EMS personnel and I got him to stop. While he was speaking with the medic, I asked the female, why is this gentleman trying to kill himself? Her response gave me pause. She told him that it was over between the two of them. That is why he said to her that he was going to kill himself. Crimejunkie alerted because of the Pena and Walker episode, I asked more questions that I and other officers usually ask. And that is when she told me that every time he physically abused her, she tried to leave him. The male tells her that he would kill himself. Needless to say, my training from Crimejunkie kicked into full gear. I explained that what he was doing was a form of control and gave her all the information needed to get a protection order and give her an avenue of escape from that toxic relationship. In closing, I appreciate the work you guys are doing. Keep it up. I am about to cry. That is amazing. I love that.

To me, this is always the best compliment
because I know we can be critical on law enforcement.
We're critical when you do a bad job,
but I love to applaud them when they do a good job.
And I know for every bad officer, there is a good one out there.
At least I like to hope.
I take it as such a compliment when we get messages like this
where, to me, I look at them as they're supposed to be the experts.
And when someone like them can say,
like, oh, I'm still learning from you, who we're just out here,
you know, sometimes thinking we're only educating,
you know, the people on the other end of police.
I don't know.
I don't know why this is so meaningful to me,
but it really, really is.
And this is just, like, one of the outcomes
that we aim for each and every week.
Like, yes, I want to solve the cases.
I want to raise the funds and name the does.
But I want to be a part of everyone's life.
And I want to make an impact every week
and teach something new every week.
And I just think it's so cool that we've been able to do that.
And I actually have one more that I want us to share.
It is just freaking great.
But why don't you read this one?
Of course.
I wanted to tell y'all that I love your podcasts.
I started listening last summer and have binged all your projects.
I'm a police officer in Fort Worth, Texas.
At first, I was skeptical, but I soon realized
that you were fair towards my profession,
calling out bad investigations and shouting out good ones.
See, we do.
I also realized that your podcasts have value
in making me a better officer.
I have almost 20 years on the job,
and I'm currently a sergeant in patrol.
One of my biggest fears is screwing up an investigation
by making errors when we arrive.
If we don't interview correctly or protect the crime scene,
our patrol officers can taint slash ruin the investigation
and chances of future apprehension.
Thank you for the time and effort you put

into keeping victims in the limelight.
I have even used some of your podcast excerpts
to teach my patrol team.
Please keep up the great work.
Is that bananas?
I love it.
I love that.
I love this segment so much.
You guys are awesome.
I know.
I think it's so cool.
You know, we've just been working on the deck investigates,
and I think some people have been like,
oh, you're so critical of law enforcement in that.
Then we need to be.
It's the way you should be with any job,
and I understand that it's more public facing,
but the stakes are so high.
You're dealing with people's lives.
And if we can't look back,
if anyone got there at the end of the podcast,
what I said is I don't judge the people now
for the mistakes that were made.
I'm judging you now to see if you're going to do your best
to fix it and do the right thing.
But if we don't have a conversation about all the things
that went wrong and look at that critically,
how are we going to do better?
That's what that's about.
It's always my intention to see somebody really latch on
to that.
Yeah, there were bad investigations.
I'm listening to everything that happened.
I'm making sure I'm not doing that.
If we help one case in Texas,
because this amazing sergeant is like,
I'm not doing that shit I heard.
Yeah, right.
How cool is that?
How cool is that?