

[Transcript] Crime Junkie / MURDERED: QC Chadwick

Hi, Crime Junkies. I'm your host, Ashley Flowers.

And I'm Britt.

And the story I have for you today is about a loving, devoted mother whose senseless murder rocks the quiet community of Newport Beach, California.

But rather than accept justice,

her murderer does all he can to avoid facing the music,

even if it means crossing international borders and abandoning his family.

This is the story of QC Chadwick.

The Chadwick brothers were never the last ones at the bus stop in the afternoon.

Either their mom, Kui Chu, who goes by QC, or dad, Peter is always waiting

by the time their bus pulls into the neighborhood, rain or shine.

Which is why, on the afternoon of October 10th, 2012,

they catch the attention of one of their neighbors, this woman named Gwen.

She's driving her own kids home from a nearby bus stop

when she spots the brothers all alone, still apparently waiting to get picked up.

Now, her kids and the Chadwick brothers go to the same school,

so she pulls over and asks if they've been able to reach their mom or dad.

But they say, no, they've been trying to, but neither are answering,

and they've been waiting for over an hour.

If Gwen wasn't already concerned, she is now.

I mean, the Chadwicks are not the kind of people who are even a few minutes late to anything, much less over an hour.

And she's not about to just leave the boys who are 9 and 12 there at the stop alone, so she offers to give them a lift back to their house.

They say yes, and then they all pile into her car and head home.

Once they arrive, Gwen immediately notices that QC's car

is just sitting right there in the driveway.

And although Peter's SUV is nowhere to be seen,

I can imagine that it's a relief seeing at least one of their vehicles.

Yeah.

Maybe Peter ran out to do some errands,

maybe their wires got crossed about who was supposed to do the picking up of the boys.

Unusual for this family, but not out of the question.

So they all walk up to the front door,

and any relief that Gwen might have felt before vanishes.

Because according to an episode of the podcast,

Countdown to Capture produced by the Newport Beach Police Department,

there are some packages sitting on the front stoop.

And to her, this is another red flag.

QC would have brought those in if she was home.

So she knocks and rings the doorbell,

but they don't get an answer.

They even knock again.

Nothing.

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But don't the boys have a key?

They don't, but mostly because they've never needed one before.

I mean, whenever they're coming or going, their mom or dad is always with them.

Plus QC's a stay-at-home mom, and Peter works from home.

So I'm not kidding when I say someone is always there.

Yeah.

But now the house is quiet.

By now, Gwen has this bad feeling about all of this.

So she takes the boys back to her house and starts making some calls to friends, neighbors, anyone who might know where Peter and QC are.

But call after call, she gets the same answer.

Nobody's seen them.

And this is pretty much the last straw.

So by 7pm, with still no word,

the Newport Beach Police are called for a welfare check.

Once the police are filled in on the situation, a few officers head out to the neighborhood.

And they start going through the same motions that the Chadwick's friends and neighbors already did.

Going door to door, asking people if they'd seen the couple recently.

Even knocking on their door and calling Peter and QC's cell phones.

Now QC's phone rings and eventually rolls over to her voicemail.

But Peter's phone just goes straight to voicemail.

Next, they call around and check local hospitals thinking maybe there'd been some kind of accident.

But again, no dice.

Well, all that would be enough for me to just break inside already.

I mean, why don't they start there?

Well, so again, I kind of thought like as soon as someone calls a welfare check, like that is what could happen.

Right.

But you actually have to have some kind of probable cause that something is wrong.

And again, everything they're seeing is like it's completely normal.

Again, this is just wires crossed, someone messed up, someone forgot who was supposed to be here, whatever.

And so they need a reason to believe that someone is like in danger or harm.

Yes, exactly.

So before they even think about going into the house,

they take a more thorough look through around the exterior of the home,

basically looking for anything out of place, signs of forced entry,

maybe a glance in a window that could give them some insight as to what's going on.

But even then, they don't see anything.

But not seeing anything is cause for concern.

So it is at this point that the officers decide to go ahead and go in the house

because they are reasonably sure that the Chadwigs are in some sort of crisis.

When they walk inside at first glance, nothing appears to be out of place.

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The house is super clean, super organized.

In fact, 48 hours reported in an episode that aired in August of 2019

that there are lines on the carpet that make them think that it was just recently vacuumed.

But even though everything's neat and tidy, there are a few things that stick out.

Like the door that connects the house to the garage is just open.

There's also plates and containers of food that are just left on the counter, like someone was right in the middle of preparing lunch.

And there's also a safe that is open and has clearly been rifled through.

Is there anything missing?

Well, they can't tell just yet and they don't really stop to go through it.

I mean, again, their objective right now is to find Peter and QC first.

So they head upstairs next and it's more the same.

Everything is neat and orderly until they get to the primary bathroom.

And it does not look like the rest of the house.

The rug in front of the tub is all like ruffled up and there's shards of glass on the floor.

There's a broken vase by the bathtub.

A towel is lying on the floor.

And most concerning of all, there are these reddish brown smears in the bathtub and some teeny tiny spatters of what look like blood on the walls.

And based on all of that, the officers realize this isn't a welfare check anymore.

This house is now a potential crime scene.

They immediately call for backup and crime scene investigators descend on the house.

And when they go through it, they find something that the first officers didn't.

They actually find QC's phone.

It is sitting in the primary bathroom, plugged into the charger, laying beside both her wallet and her wedding ring.

Meanwhile, other officers start scrubbing through security footage, looking for any sign of the couple.

The Chadwicks lived in a gated community and there is a surveillance camera at the entrance, which they're hoping could have caught them like coming or going or whatever.

And sure enough, at 1.32pm, they see Peter's SUV leaving the neighborhood.

Can they see if anyone's in there or at least who's driving?

Well, from what I can tell, they can see that it's Peter driving, but they can't see QC.

Although I'm not sure how stellar this footage is, so for all they know QC is in the car, maybe they just can't see her, like they're not ruling anything out at this point.

But at this point, they still aren't able to get ahold of Peter.

So investigators start interviewing neighbors and friends to get a better sense of who QC and Peter are.

Now, no one they talk to has any idea where they could be,

but the one thing that police hear over and over again is that they wouldn't leave their kids, especially not QC.

They say she is such a dedicated mom, she's so punctual, she's on top of everything when it comes to her kids.

And when people even talk about her, she's described as the center of attention, like the life of the

party.

An article for NBC4 reports that she's originally from Malaysia and had moved to the U.S. to go to college,

and that is where she met Peter.

And at first, she really depended on him.

I mean, she was in a new country, she didn't speak English super well,

and he was her support as she navigated the new customs and traditions here in the U.S.

They had gotten married in 1991 and had three boys,

the oldest of whom is either like 14 or 15 at the time in a way of boarding school.

And over the years, I mean, especially recently, QC had been like coming out of her shell more and more.

Her friends say any security that she had had since she immigrated had just melted away, and she was truly coming into her own.

But Peter, on the other hand, is described as being almost painfully shy.

They say he's a nice guy, but he takes a while to warm up to people.

And overall, they're actually a pretty private couple, but it seemed like they had a great marriage.

Their neighbors and friends say that they have this picture-perfect life.

All three kids are extremely well-behaved, all three do well in school.

Peter manages assets and develops real estate for his father's business,

and with their financial success, they've been able to do fun things,

like travel abroad frequently to visit friends and family.

And actually, Peter's family is from the U.K., so he has dual citizenship.

And with lots of QC's relatives still in Malaysia, again, the whole family is traveling a lot.

This looks like the picture-perfect family.

And while I'm talking about actually traveling abroad,

CSI takes a look at that open safe you had asked about.

Was anything missing?

Well, it's immediately obvious what's not there.

Passports for all five members of the family.

And there also aren't the typical things that you'd expect to find in a family safe.

Like, I don't know, family jewelry, money, like, this thing is pretty much cleaned out.

Whatever was in there is no longer.

Slowly but surely, investigators are putting together an image of what the Chadwick's lives look like.

But as we all know, what you see on the outside typically isn't how things really are on the inside.

And for all their success, this family was no exception.

They hadn't been without their struggles, some of which QC shared in some emails to a friend who shared those emails with police when they came asking questions.

Amber, I actually have a few quotes from those emails here. Would you mind reading them?

Sure.

So this one says, quote, sometimes I feel lost. Pete isn't here.

Otherwise, I will tell him how I feel and he will laugh at me and said, what's wrong with you, end quote.

And then she says, quote, it's been a very tough month, October for me, end quote.

Do you know what she's talking about here? Like, was there something specific or just in general?

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Well, so she'd lost both of her parents within like a two year time span, which with them being in Malaysia and her being in California was really difficult. And from what police have been hearing, Peter wasn't exactly the most supportive husband when it came to her emotions.

So at this point, we're talking it's like early morning hours of October 11th.

The boys have spent the night at a friend's house not having any idea where their parents are.

And there is still no sign of QC or Peter.

That morning over in San Diego, police there get a call that ends up taking the investigation south. At about 530 in the morning, 911 dispatchers in San Diego get a call from a man who says that his wife is dead.

He says, quote, they took her, they took her.

And when the dispatchers ask what he means, he says, the guy broke into my house.

Now, right away, something is off about this guy.

I mean, he's speaking in a very monotone voice.

Like the best thing I can compare it to is someone reading lines off of a page or something.

Like he's clearly trying to sound concerned, but like it's not working.

That's not what's coming across.

Anyway, the dispatcher asked the man for his name and he says it's Peter Chadwick.

And then he launches into this story about what happened the day before at his house.

According to the countdown to capture podcast, he says that at about 11am, he was at a property that he manages when a man named Juan walked up to him and asked for work.

And Peter said that he couldn't offer him a job at the property that they were at, but he needed some painting done at his home.

So he and Juan hopped into Peter's SUV and he drove them both to his house.

Now, at some point, he says, while they're at the house, Peter left Juan alone and went into his home office.

Just then, though, he heard QC screaming and he says he rushed upstairs and found Juan holding his wife down in the bathtub, drowning her.

But he says he couldn't do anything to help her because Juan had pulled out this Swiss army knife, which he like used to hold him at bay as QC was drowned.

And he said he had to just like stand there helplessly.

So Juan didn't break in. He was let into their home.

Yeah, I don't know why he initially said that someone broke in. You're right.

And Juan is supposedly holding QC down with one arm and keeping Peter at bay with a pocket knife.

Yeah, that's what I mean. Yeah, yeah.

I mean, as his wife is being killed, Peter's just standing there.

Yes. And to your point, when you say pocket knife, this isn't a massive knife.

Like he describes it as small, like two inches.

Yeah, I have a Swiss army knife.

This is not a big scary weapon to be wielding, in my opinion.

And definitely not something that would keep me from trying to save someone I loved.

Well, apparently for Peter, it is.

And so clearly right off the bat, his story is a little off to say the least, but that's not where it ends.

Peter says that Juan then ordered him to get a blanket and then forced him to help wrap up QC's

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body, take her downstairs and put her in his SUV.

He also says that he was forced to empty the family's safe, which had cash and jewelry inside, and then he was forced to drive through the night.

At some point, Juan mentioned heading to Flagstaff, Arizona, but they ended up going toward the U.S.-Mexico border instead.

How is he even making this call now? He just, what, escaped somehow?

No, no, no, no. He doesn't escape. He says at some point Juan just let him go.

Basically, Peter says that after getting close to the border, Juan made him pull over at a gas station where he apparently met up with some other man named Chi.

And then the two of them took QC's body, Peter's cell phone, the cash and the jewelry out of the SUV and placed it into their own pickup truck.

But before they drove off, they warned Peter to remain in his vehicle until they called with the location of QC's body, and then they just like drove away.

So they just let him go? Just like that?

Yeah, and Peter says he didn't listen to their instructions. He said after they drove away, he just waited a couple of minutes, ran into this gas station and asked to use their phone, and this is him calling police now.

I'm sorry, there is no way anyone is buying this story.

No, absolutely not. But he still gives the operator his location, and when police show up, he willingly goes with them to the station in San Diego.

And that is when SDPD calls the Newport Beach Police to fill them in, and investigators make the hundred mile or so drive down there to interview him.

And when they all sit down, he tells them mostly the same story that he told the 911 operator, but his details kind of change.

Like he adds that Juan sat on his chest to prevent him from giving QC CPR.

And then he says he was forced to undress for some reason, and I don't know what that's about.

Okay.

But his changing story is just the tip of the iceberg though, because the more he talks, the more suspicious he looks.

Like, for instance, despite all this time that he apparently spent with Juan, Peter can't describe this guy's physical appearance.

Like he ends up landing on Juan being in his late 30s, maybe early 40s, 5'10", 5'11", muscular, clean shaven, and he says he has a thin nose and brown eyes.

And I don't know if he's even able to describe Chi at all, the guy that supposedly met up with Juan.

But I mean, it is a grind to get Peter to even come up with this much, which is so basic. I don't know how you're going to find anyone.

Now, it's worth noting that he has some pretty obvious injuries when they're sitting there with him.

Like he's got scratches on his neck and his arms, a bite mark on his forearm, and he says this is all coming from a struggle that he had with Juan.

Well, okay, I'm very excited about this whole thing, and we haven't even talked about the timing of it all.

I mean, if it's only like 100 miles from Newport Beach to San Diego, that's even shorter than the drive from my house to your house, Ashley, and that takes me two hours.

Why the f*** did it take 16 hours for Peter to call?

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Yeah, bingo. It takes about an hour and a half when you map it out to drive from Newport Beach to San Diego.

So, again, you want to add traffic, you want to say, okay, they started heading to Flagstaff, like they said before turning around.

The timing still doesn't make sense. This whole story is so bizarre, as is his behavior throughout this whole interview.

2020 actually released an episode on this case, and in it, they report that Peter has moments of crying and then, like, on a dime, he just, like, switches to being completely calm.

And here's the wild part. He never once, not one time, asks about his kids. What?

Like, there's no concern for where they are, which on top of everything else makes investigators even more certain that his story isn't adding up.

Does the gas station he claimed they met this Chi guy at have security cameras?

Because that could at least prove whether these two guys even exist.

It sure does, and it's one of the first things that investigators check.

Okay.

But there is no sign of Juan or Chi or even the pickup truck that they said they drove off in.

But there's someone else who may have seen Juan.

Peter says, as he was driving, he got pulled over by a California highway patrolman.

Now, the interaction itself didn't last long, and he didn't ask for help or anything, but investigators want to talk to the officer who pulled them over, right, to see if they saw anything.

Now, he didn't get an official citation or ticket, so it's going to be, like, a little difficult to find.

They make some calls to the two CHP officers that patrol that stretch of highway that they're, like, thinking this happened on, asking to see if any of their officers remember pulling him over.

Now, while they're looking for that, in the meantime, they also search the SUV.

What they find is blood in the trunk and on the bumper, and a ring that they determined to be QCs is trapped between two seat cushions.

Surprisingly, there's nothing to suggest a man matching Juan's description was ever there in that car, like, hairs, for instance.

But there is a packed suitcase filled with a bunch of Peter's clothing.

And we're not talking, like, this nicely packed suitcase with everything all folded, like, he was planning on going on a trip and that, like, just happened to be in the car.

Everything is in there, like, it was just, like, jumbled and all hastily thrown, whatever.

So are the family's passports and the missing money in there with all that stuff?

Peter's passport is.

But QC's passport, the kids' passports, the jewelry, the cash, none of that is found.

So at this point, police are pretty sure Peter had something to do with QC's disappearance and, most likely, her murder.

But they need to prove it.

Investigators get this idea. They go back to the Chadwick's house to look for anything that might have needed to be painted.

Again, what they're trying to do is really, like, prove or disprove, like, any part of Peter's story.

And remember, he says he picked Juan up because something in their house needed to be painted.

Right.

But when they go to the house, they can't find anything that needed to be painted.

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In fact, according to that 2020 episode, the house had been freshly painted recently. So, unless he wasn't happy with it, there's no reason to have this Juan guy come over in the first place.

Yeah.

And, again, let's be clear here. They don't actually think Juan exists at all.

They're just trying to, like, tie up any loose ends.

They're checking all the boxes, right?

Yes.

By this point, the whole house has been meticulously combed through.

And crime scene investigators have come across even more evidence that Peter and QC's relationship was headed downhill fast.

Most disturbingly, they come across a piece of paper tucked into QC's wardrobe.

And it's a list.

From the handwriting, it looks like she was the one who wrote it.

And at the very top, the title says, From Pete's Computer.

And below it is a list of 35 Internet searches.

And these searches provide a detailed look into Peter's mind.

Britt, I'm going to have you read some of the things on this list written by QC, from Pete's Computer.

Of course. Google searches are my favorite incriminating thing.

So, there's some searches for a divorced attorney, but there's also searches like Sexy Chinese Girl, Vietnam Massage Girls,

Chinese Massage Girls Escort, and how to torture.

Yeah.

I have a lot of thoughts. One, dude clearly has a problematic obsession.

Mm-hmm.

Two, I don't think anyone is just casually looking up how to torture, so that's great.

And three, there's no way this is like a new thing for him.

Hands down, he's cheated before.

Yeah.

In that same 2020 episode, they end up confirming that Peter had been unfaithful without QC's knowledge or consent beforehand,

which just made their relationship that much more contentious.

So, no, this list doesn't prove that he killed her.

Right.

But it is proving that, like, maybe they weren't that happy.

Right, right.

Now, eventually, they hear back from the highway patrolman who confirms that he actually did have an interaction with Peter.

He said he noticed Peter's SUV pulled over on a portion of the highway where you aren't allowed to pull over, so he stopped to see what was going on.

And Peter explained that he had stopped to make a phone call.

The patrolman says nothing was really fishy about the situation, so he basically just told Peter, like, okay, get out of here, get on your way.

But he is 100% sure that when he had this interaction with Peter, Peter was alone.

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This is something I just never understand.

Peter's obviously lying, but in a way that is so freaking easy to get caught.

Right?

Like, duh, they're going to ask that patrolman about pulling you over to verify your story.

It's literally the easiest thing in the world to look into, just like the security cameras at his house.

Exactly.

The security cameras at the gas station.

I guess, thank God for dumb criminals, but if you're gonna lie, at least do it right?

I don't know.

Yeah, to me it's so strange, it's almost like he's pointing them at the things to, like, prove his lies wrong.

So say you stopped at a gas station, you don't remember which one.

It would take them time to figure out.

They may never find the gas station, but instead you tell them exactly which one you're at.

The exact one, yeah.

They know it's only you there.

Why even tell them about this patrolman pulling you over because they're gonna talk to the guy?

You didn't get a ticket, you didn't get a citation.

Like, this could have never happened, and they would have never looked into it, and they would have never verified that you were lying.

Again, you have to remember, he's also the one that called in, right? Like, is there something in him that, like, wants to be caught?

I don't know.

Yeah.

Now, even though investigators still don't have a body, between the searches, Peter's sketchy behavior and his unbelievable story, they decide that they do have enough to charge him.

So on October 11th, he is arrested and charged with QC's murder.

Now, he lawyers up right away and refuses to tell them where her body is, and he pleads not guilty.

But then, six days later, completely out of the blue, investigators get a call from Peter's attorney, saying that Peter is ready to tell them where QC's body is.

Thank God.

But is he still sticking to the one story, or did he admit that he did this all on his own?

So I couldn't find anything about, like, exactly what he says.

I know that he makes it clear he is sticking to his not guilty plea, but whether Juan was or wasn't involved, I don't know.

I mean, to me, if you're sticking to not guilty, you are still saying that this guy's involved?

I don't know.

Right, right.

What I do know is that when investigators sit down with Peter, he tells them that once he left the neighborhood, he headed toward San Diego and then pulled off near Wildcat Canyon, which is a valley in San Diego County.

And there, he says, he put her body in a dumpster off a remote road.

So, again, the weird thing to me is, like, obviously, the story has changed dramatically, right?

Because before Juan and Chi were going to dump her body and let him know where it's at, now he's

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at least admitting he dumped it.

I don't know how you do that and still say you're not guilty.

Right, right.

Now, he's able to describe the location of the dumpster in an up-detail that they head off to find it. And just like he said, off a remote road in Wildcat Canyon, they come across a dumpster.

From the number of flies circling overhead and the smell alone, they don't even have to open it to know there's a body in there.

Now, when they do open it, it's full.

But as they start pulling items out, they find QC's ID, her permanent residency card, the missing passports, even other personal items.

And then as they keep moving items, they come across a green blanket.

And in that green blanket is QC.

Oh, and just a random fact that I think is just so amazing how kind of the stars aligned for this case.

That particular dumpster, according to the Countdown to Capture podcast, they reported it was supposed to be picked up the day after Peter left QC's body in there.

But apparently there was some kind of billing dispute between the owners of the property that it was on and the garbage company.

So the only reason that they still found all that stuff and she was still there was because it hadn't been picked up because of this billing dispute.

Oh my God.

Yeah.

Can you imagine if it had been picked up though?

I mean, everything would be gone.

Her, all her personal items they found.

Yeah.

And who knows how long it would have taken them to find all of that?

If they would have found it all.

I mean, how many times do we hear about landfill searches that don't result in anything?

Right.

So call it luck, divine intervention, whatever.

It is a freaking miracle that it had not been picked up.

When they're able to get QC out and do an autopsy, it reveals that she had a violent struggle before she died.

She had wounds on all of her limbs on her head and neck and torso.

So this girl was clearly putting up a fight.

Hannah Fry reported for the Los Angeles Times that she had been strangled and possibly drowned.

But there's no doubt that her manner of death is homicide.

But despite all of this, Peter is still sticking to his not guilty plea.

In December, his bail is set at \$1 million, which with his financial success, he has no trouble posting.

And so he gets to go home, which the investigators disagree with.

They think considering everything that he's done so far, this guy's going to try and conceal more evidence, maybe even run.

But the judge disagrees.

They say since he has no criminal history, since he has ties to the community and he's surrendered

both his passports,
not to mention he has a suitable dwelling with three kids.
So they say therefore he is not a flight risk.
Okay, but if he did this, he literally was already willing to leave his kids high and dry.
That definitely wouldn't convince me we should let this guy out.
But innocent until proven guilty.
And actually, speaking of the kids, I don't want the kids to get lost in all of this
because I can't even begin to imagine what this was like for them.
Their mom is murdered.
Their dad is accused.
I mean, they had to go live with their aunt and uncle in Pasadena.
And understandably, this is a really challenging transition.
I mean, the younger two are able to keep going to their same school, but it's over an hour away.
So their aunt and uncle make that drive every single day.
Those two kids eventually end up in boarding school later down the line like their oldest brother,
but this whole thing has hit them the hardest.
I mean, when you think about it, their worlds have been turned upside down.
They lost both of their parents in an instant.
But to go back to Peter, as his case makes its way through the court system leading up to trial,
things seem to go pretty smoothly.
He moves in with his dad in Santa Barbara, but he still makes his court appearances
and both investigators and prosecutors are confident that he will eventually be found guilty.
But this would be a really short episode if that's where the story ended.
Things are rarely that simple, and this case is no different.
Because in January of 2015, Peter misses not one, but two, pre-trial hearings.
And according to an article for the Santa Ana Orange County Register,
when they go arrest him for skipping out, no one can find him.
What?
Yeah.
Now, things are a little fuzzy here, but from what I can tell, at least initially,
his dad says that Peter had recently been suicidal.
But when they search the house, investigators find things that suggest he might have just straight
up ran
and not that he like took his own life or anything.
Like they find research on how to cross the border into Canada,
books on how to change identities and disappear,
materials on how to leave false trails.
Basically, all information pointing to him running away with plans to continue living,
maybe even as someone else.
Cool, cool, cool.
And with that much of a head start, he could be anywhere.
Anywhere, especially because they learned he'd emptied his safety deposit box
at the bank which contained about a million dollars.
And not even to mention the fact that he made a max cash withdraw on his five or six credit cards.

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So even though he doesn't have a passport, dude could probably be anywhere. So it is all hands on deck, boots on the ground, we gotta find this guy. Investigators call in the U.S. Marshals, and that's when they take over the search. First, they dive into Peter's financial history. He hasn't used any of his cards over the last few weeks, and they know that he's traveling with a large amount of cash, which they can't trace. But they do come across a lead almost right away. When they investigate how he might have gotten away, they find that someone took a cab from his house to the Santa Barbara Airport three weeks ago. So they head to the airport, and sure enough on surveillance cameras, they spot him walking in, sitting down, and then just kind of hanging out in the airport for several hours. What? Yeah, he just kind of sits there for a while, and then eventually gets another cab, and then poof, disappears. So no flight? No. Okay, where did the other cab drop him off? That I don't know. I would think that the cab company would be able to give the marshals that info, but if they do, it's never been reported on. All I know is that after he catches that other taxi, he seems to just vanish. And according to reporting by Kelly Puente for the Santa Ana Orange County Register, his cell phone was turned off on the day he disappeared too. Once it's clear that the trail is starting to go cold, the marshals turn to Peter's son, thinking that they might have an inkling about where their father went. And sure enough, the oldest of the three boys tells them that Peter had mentioned that he was going to run. He says that his dad had this whole plan about how he was going to drive up to the Canadian border, walk across, and from there somehow fly to another country where he could then reunite with his kids. Fly with no passports? Okay. Yeah, I don't know. And what's his relationship with the boys been like since the murder? I mean, it sounds like they're at least still talking. So that I don't really know. They have fortunately been kept out of a lot of the media coverage on this case, which I think is so good. So I can't say what they're thinking and feeling throughout all of this. Devastated, I imagine. But I mean, you also have to think like Peter is still their dad from everything I've read. He's got a super stable upbringing and then again, one day, like on a dime, everything just flips.

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So to learn your dad could have done this terrible thing to your mom and then trying to reconcile that with the man that you knew and loved, especially at a young age, I would think that'd be confusing and hard. So the decision of whether or not they even want to keep him in their lives is their choice and there's a loan to make. But it's a good thing that the police talk to the boys because this plan that they knew of actually makes sense. Peter knew people in Canada and even lived there as a child. So if he was going to go anywhere, Canada seemed like the most likely place. But still, they can't find him. There's no sign of him in Canada and he never contacts any of his friends up there either. The U.S. Marshals keep trying to track him down as do investigators back in California, but they just keep hitting brick wall after brick wall. And that's when years start to go by. And by 2018, they are pretty much at a loss. What they really need is public awareness. If more people know him, what he looks like, then they might get a tip that they need to bring him back home. So toward the beginning of August, Sergeant Depwood, the lead investigator, goes to Jennifer Manzela, who's the Newport Beach Police Department's public information officer. He basically says, we need to republicize this case. What can we do? Jennifer comes up with the idea to do a podcast. Yes, love this. Same. Now, they had never done a podcast before. In fact, Sergeant Depweg, yeah, right? But Sergeant Depweg had never even listened to one. At least we had that going for us. Oh, yeah, seriously. But Jennifer knows how much of a reach that they can have. And so she thinks, why not? She works with Sergeant Depweg and others who have participated in the investigation to basically put the story together from start to finish. They title it Countdown to Capture, which has been one of our main sources for this episode. And their first episode released on September 17th, 2018. Whoa, that is a quick turnaround. Yeah, again, they weren't thinking about this in August. I think they put this whole thing together in like three weeks, which is incredible. That is wild. Yeah, but they released six full-length episodes detailing QC's homicide. Peter's escape and the efforts to track him down. And this literally breathes new life into the case.

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They go from having very little press, very few tips coming in to having news conferences and tips coming in from people not only in the US, but from across the world. I mean, they're getting tips from Japan, Canada, Ukraine, Netherlands. And Peter's face is everywhere. Once again, I am in awe and even more in love with the Power of Podcasts. I mean, it's a beautiful thing. It's a beautiful thing. They're accessible, they're powerful. We've seen it firsthand. They can make impactful change happen. And it doesn't even stop there. Peter ended up being placed on the US Marshals Top 15 Most Wanted list, and a combined \$100,000 reward for information is put up. Wow. But despite all the new tips and all the new press, they still can't track this guy down. And they start thinking, if Peter were going to reach back out to anyone in the States, it would probably be his kids, particularly his oldest son who is in college at this point. So investigators set up an interview with him, and sure enough, he admits that his dad had called him back in 2016 from Mexico. Peter had called to tell him that he had been in a car accident. Basically, he'd fled to Mexico, got an apartment, and was just, like, living his life. He'd even developed a close relationship with a woman in Claudia. But it all came crashing down when he was speeding and lost control of his car. Like, the car got totaled, and Claudia, who had been in the car with him, was killed. And after this happened, he fled again. And since then, like, this sounds like I have no idea where he is now. Oh my God. Do we even believe this accident thing, though? Dude's been telling some stories. I mean, at this point, they probably don't even know if Claudia is real. So no one knows what to believe, because you're right. He tells stories right and left. Like, they're going to have to do some digging to know if what he's telling his son is on the up and up. But at least now they're on his trail. So they focused all of their efforts on Mexico working with Mexican authorities to try and track Peter down. And finally, in August of 2019, they get the tip that they've been waiting for. Michaela Muscofo, Amanda Carr, and Karen Schiffman reported for ABC News that he had been spotted making a call at a pay phone in the city of Chalula. And on August 5th, Peter is picked up by Mexican authorities. Apparently, when the authorities knocked on the door to his apartment with a warrant for his arrest, he offered them \$10,000 to leave him alone. But luckily, they weren't having it, and they arrested him anyway.

[Transcript] Crime Junkie / MURDERED: QC Chadwick

When he's brought back to the States and interviewed, he details his full time on the run, starting with the day he left.

And he says that he had done some research into leaving false trails, which is why he made some searches and bought some books on Canada.

But he never actually planned to go there.

The plan was always to go to Mexico.

But this man doesn't have his passport. How did he get in?

Well, apparently it was like super easy to get in, like without having to show your passport when he fled.

So I guess no one was asking him for an ID or any kind of official documentation.

He literally just like walked through the gate in a crowd of people.

And after he made it through, he caught a bus and headed south.

He stayed in nice hotels, bounced around the country a little bit, picking up several fake IDs in the process and going by different aliases.

But he says that a wrench was thrown into his plan when Mexico changed their immigration laws.

So I guess one of the new policies was that non-residents had to show a passport when staying at a hotel.

And like you said, he doesn't have a passport.

Right.

So he started staying in hostels and basically anywhere he could that would just accept cash.

And he started picking up some odd jobs here and there, even started teaching English to bring in some extra money.

But he got nervous when he saw an influx of media about him, like that podcast.

Then all of a sudden there were some documentaries, news articles, and his face was everywhere.

And so he fled again, eventually ending up in Cholula, where he got that apartment and just kind of flew under the radar until he was eventually caught.

So was there really another woman that was killed?

Yeah.

So Claudia was a real person.

And even though Peter was driving recklessly and was responsible for her death, he didn't end up being held liable for it because of this document that he had her mom sign basically absolving him of any wrongdoing.

So.

Oh.

I have some questions about that too, because even though he is arrested for QC's murder, he never faces any legal repercussions for Claudia's death.

Though it is worth noting that document that he had isn't actually valid anymore because for the document, he used an alias rather than his real name.

So if Claudia's family wants to file charges, they actually might be able to now.

And I don't know if they're thinking about that.

I don't know.

But again, whatever was signed is pretty much null and void.

Interesting.

After his capture, Peter calls his oldest son and apologizes for everything that he's done, saying,

[Transcript] Crime Junkie / MURDERED: QC Chadwick

quote,

I'm so sorry for all this messing up your life and what happened to mom, obviously.

And everything.

I'm so sorry.

I screwed up.

End quote.

But an apology can't take away the years of grief he caused his kids and his family and his friends.

He's denied bail.

Good.

And in February of 2022, he accepts a plea deal and pleads guilty to second degree murder.

They sentenced him to 15 years to life and he will be eligible for parole in a minimum of 12 years.

This story plays out almost like a movie script.

The murdered wife, the husband on the run, the kids caught in between.

But Peter Chadwick didn't just end QC's life and ruin his own.

He caused irreparable damage for his three kids, whom he abandoned repeatedly.

He was at a bus stop and once when he fled to avoid justice.

And even though he eventually admitted to murdering the mother of his children, it took this coward far too long to do so.

And in the mix of all of this, you could say he took Claudia's life as well.

A case like this makes me wonder what justice really looks like.

I mean, sure, he's behind bars and hopefully will be for the rest of his life.

But I mean, this guy got to live stolen years as a fugitive, living it up at resorts while his children were left behind to pick up the pieces of their shattered lives.

And how can we in the community, we as the system help support those who are left in the ripples of a crime and become victims in their own way.

One of the amazing organizations that I found that tries to do this is Homicide Survivors.

They're an organization out of Arizona that are truly there just to support the family members after something tragic like this.

We're going to put a link to their organization in the show notes.

I highly recommend you check them out if their services are applicable to you.

And again, even if you're just looking for an amazing organization to support.

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 the following week with a brand new episode, but make sure to stick around for the good segment.

All right, everyone, we know it's not technically the end of March yet, but since we're off next week, we couldn't skip hearing the good with you all.

So if this is the first time you're listening to the good segment, you can visit crimejunkiepodcast.com to learn more.

There's a direct link in the show notes to the good page.

And we also want you guys to keep sharing all of the good with us that comes from what we're doing.

So you can go through that link anytime to submit your own story or send us an email.

Britt, do you want to read this one?

[Transcript] Crime Junkie / MURDERED: QC Chadwick

Obviously I do.

My name is Lynette.

I work at a high school as a security guard and I am a big fan.

I own a lot of crime junkie merch and I always have students and staff members asking what it is.

Our school has a special ed program that is made up of students who are considered to be severe.

And about a week ago, we got a few new students.

Yesterday, a special ed student was walking to the front of the school to wait for his bus and I heard him yell, crime junkies, I love crime junkies.

And it warmed my heart.

I always try to find a way to connect with these students whenever we get called in for help in their classroom.

I usually go for the usual like anime or favorite colors, but knowing that I can talk to him about crime junkies made me so happy.

I'm obsessed.

Ashley, I love this story.

I know.

Oh my goodness.

Anyway, that student's name is Kayden.

So hi, Kayden.

Hi, Kayden.

Our team sent Lynette some CJ merch for Kayden and we actually got a response, which they said, when I gave him the shirt, he couldn't believe it.

He thought I was lying.

He was so happy.

His eyes got watery and he put the shirt on right away.

Thank you so much for doing this.

I appreciate you all.

And then she sent pictures, which are amazing.

My eyes also got watery.

Oh my gosh.

I mean, I love the people who are able to connect over the show.

Sometimes the most unexpected people.

And it's one of my favorite things that we've built is not just, you know, yes, there's so much advocacy you want to do and the cases we want to cover, but there's also this community.

But the community.

I love it.

I love it.

So thank you so much for writing in and thank you for listening, Kayden.

Crime Junkie is an audio chuck production.

So what do you think, Chuck?

Do you approve?