

Felonious Podcast
Episode 8 - Neurology and Crime

Disclaimer: This transcript was generated by an AI and may not be 100% accurate. If you have any questions about any of the information found here, please visit our contact us page on our website feloniouspod.com/contact/

00:00:00.000 [Opening Music]

00:00:04.000 Introduction

Emma: Hello and welcome to this episode of Felonious. A podcast where we discuss the realm of true crime from chilling cold cases to the wild and wacky, we'll explore it all with the perfect blend of seriousness and humour. My name is Emma

Naza: and I'm Nazia. To keep up to date with what's coming up be sure to follow us on Instagram [@felonious_pod](https://www.instagram.com/felonious_pod) and visit our website feloniouspod.com. We hope you enjoy this episode, so let's get to it.

00:00:32.000 Banter

Nazia: Right. What have we got this week?

Emma: This week, I just replaced an article on here actually.

Nazia: Yeah, I was going to say that looks different.

Emma: Yeah, I just found it. I thought it was a bit more interesting and crime related.

Nazia: Yeah.

Emma: But this is on Euronews and they found that Tenerife airport - the workers there have been arrested for stealing two million euros worth of items. They've suspected that they've been stealing them anyway. And it's a range of, like, luxury watches, cash and mobile phones missing from checked in luggage. I don't know who's checking in cash. Like, if you're checking in cash, then you deserve to have it stolen in my opinion.

Nazia: Yeah. I guess people just assume it's going to be safe. I don't know. I mean, people hide bundles of cash in shoe boxes under their bed, so.

Emma: Yeah, that's true.

Nazia: There's got to be someone. But yeah.

Emma: Yeah, so 14 workers have been accused by police, and another 20 airport employees are under investigation.

Nazia: That's quite a significant number of employees.

Emma: Yeah.

Nazia: That's like a little network.

Emma: Yeah.

Nazia: If it's true.

Emma: Like a little mafia, airport mafia.

Nazia: Yeah, that's what I was thinking of.

Emma: The Tenerife airport handles about 11 million passengers a year. And most of them are European tourists.

Nazia: Wow. Well, I hope those people were at least insured.

Emma: Yeah, so do I. The thefts took place as the baggage was being placed on the aeroplane.

Nazia: So what? Was their luggage, like, open when it came back on the Arrival's carousel?

Emma: They think the thieves forced open the suitcases, took out the valuable items and then shut the suitcases again.

Nazia: Okay, so maybe like the padlocks or the locks were missing or tampered with but the suitcases were shut

Emma: Yeah.

Nazia: And you see those people in airports where they like wrap loads and loads and loads and loads of cling film around their suitcases

Emma: They always look dodgy.

Nazia: I can see why.

Emma: Yeah, I can see why.

Nazia: They've got cash in their suitcases. That's why.

Emma: Yeah, I see them a lot in India.

Nazia: Yeah.

Emma: On the luggage belt

Nazia: Yeah, yeah, because in those countries, I mean if it's like Bangladesh, you get a lot of thefts in the airports there.

Emma: Yeah.

Nazia: So I can understand that. But, uh... Yeah. Maybe people should start cling filming their luggage if they're flying to Tenerife.

[laughs]

Emma: Yeah. Or putting like some sort of... I don't know, like, dye, if you break the...

Nazia: Yeah, like they do in some shops where they have the security tags on clothes.

Emma: Exactly. If you break the seal, you get covered in dye.

Nazia: Yeah.

Emma: Then you will get caught red handed.

Nazia: Or blue handed. I think the inks blue... blue handed. Yeah. They should have done it red really.

Emma: They used to be in the shop that we used to work in.

Nazia: Oh really?

Emma: Yeah. The Levi jeans used to have red dye security tags.

Nazia: Well that makes sense because the jeans are blue.

Emma: Oh yeah.

Nazia: But also, then you're actually red handed.

Emma: Yeah.

Nazia: Ah, interesting. Well, shall I talk about my find? It's not as serious.

Emma: Yes, I saw this and I thought it was my find, but it is your find.

Nazia: So yeah, a woman in Australia has been charged with stealing a delivery van packed with 10,000 Krispy Kreme donuts. That is a lot of donuts. Now the van went missing from a petrol station in a Sydney suburb in the early hours of the 29th of November. So this is a BBC article. The police found the vehicle a week later, along with thousands of spoiled

donuts. What a waste of donuts.

Emma: What a waste of donuts and what a smell. That must've smelt really bad.

Nazia: But yeah, so they arrested a 28-year-old woman and she faced his charges including vehicle theft and driving while disqualified. And apparently she was lingering at the service station before getting inside the unattended delivery van and then driving away. It's unclear if she knew if the van contained 10,000 donuts, but her delicious haul included Christmas themed and classic donuts. Krispy Kreme reported the incident to the police and that they were working to replace the 10,000 donuts that didn't reach their customers. There could have been so much that she could have done with those donuts instead of letting them go to waste. Obviously she's not gonna eat all 10,000, but she could have given them out to family, to the homeless, gone to a party, you know, catered some party that was looking for some donuts.

Emma: Yeah. It sounds to me like it's a bit of a prank.

Nazia: Either that or she was on substances.

Emma: Yeah, true, and she didn't know what she was doing.

Nazia: Yeah, I mean, she was disqualified from driving so we don't know why or maybe she had some other problems that we don't know. I've never eaten Krispy Kreme donuts. Not even the vegan ones. They've opened a Krispy Kreme in Paris. If they do vegan donuts, I might check it out one day. My first donut at the age of... I forgot how old I am. Am I 36?

Emma: Yeah, 30 something.

Nazia: Yeah. The wrong side of 35. But yeah.

Emma: What, I mean, what could you do with 10,000 donuts? Apart from feed the homeless.

Nazia: If you had a wedding and you didn't want a cake, you could do a donut tower. But that would be really, that would be a really big donut tower.

Emma: Yeah. Oh, yeah, you'd be desperate to steal a van full of donuts for your wedding, really.

Nazia: 10,000 as well.

Emma: Yeah.

Nazia: Just give them out for free.

Emma: Yeah.

Nazia: If you're going to do a crime like that, give, do a Robin Hood style crime and just give it out for free.

Emma: Yeah. Just be a nice thief for once.

Nazia: Yeah. The Krispy Kreme Robin Hood. There you go.

Emma: Yeah. Nice.

Nazia: Oh, well that was my find.

Emma: Yeah, that was a very good find, well done. I thought it was mine.

Nazia: It probably would have been yours, but I'm awake at stupid o'clock in the morning reading, my, whatever comes up on my newsfeed. I just send it to you because I knew you'd enjoy it.

Emma: I do enjoy stories like this, just because they're so unusual and like why would she still a Krispy Kreme van?

Nazia: Yeah.

Emma: I mean it must have been a pretty big van to hold ten thousand donuts.

Nazia: I'm trying to envisage what does ten thousand donuts look like? I can't comprehend that.

Emma: Yeah, and you can get a box of 12 of them.

Nazia: Yeah, I don't want to do the maths. It's too far too late in the day to do maths. Maybe I'll go on some AI image generator later. And I'll just type in 10,000 donuts in a van. I'll see what it comes up with.

Emma: Yeah, if it comes That was something really good. We'll put it on the website.

Nazia: Yeah, or on our Instagram, I dunno, we'll see. If it is - only if it comes up with something worth sharing.

Emma: Yeah, definitely.

00:09:00.300 Episode Introduction

Nazia: Right, so moving on to today's episode, we are going to bring the mood right down from donut-stealing culprits.

Emma: You might need a therapist after this.

Nazia: Yeah, today's one is gonna be heavy. So, we will be discussing the link between the brain and crime. In episode three, we discussed the case of serial killer, Diogo Alves, whose head was chopped off after his execution in 1841 and preserved with the intention to have his brain studied. However, there is no evidence of such studies taking place, So we decided to look at what studies have been done to look at the links between neurology and crime. We will also be looking at some notable cases who were known to have suffered head injuries

in their early lives, which may have contributed to their behaviors as criminals. And these cases include Aaron Hernandez, Richard Ramirez, Albert Fish, Fred West, and Alexander Pitch-Oh my God.

Emma: Pichushkin. Yeah.

00:10:13.540 Disclaimer

Nazia: Yes, so you may be familiar with some of these names already. And if you aren't just to give you a heads up, we are going to be discussing head injuries. We're also going to be discussing all the nasty things like drug use, domestic abuse, sexual violence, including assault, rape and incest, child abuse, both physical and sexual, murder and violence, including that of children and suicide. So don't listen to this in front of your kids, don't listen to this while you're having breakfast or dinner.

Emma: Yeah, don't listen to this if you're sensitive in any way. Go and listen to one of our lighter episodes.

Nazia: Yeah, huge trigger warning for this episode. If you are listening to it on the way to work, I'm sorry if it brings your mood down before you go to work.

Emma: Yeah, blame Nazia, not me.

Nazia: Yeah, sorry -It was your idea to do this episode. No, oh, yeah. Sorry, sorry.

00:11:26.420 Research on Neurology and Crime

Nazia: So, first we'll look at some of the research that's been done on neurology and crime.

Emma: I just have to say before you continue.

Nazia: Yeah

Emma: There are a lot of scientific terms in this episode.

Nazia: Yeah, there are.

Emma: With challenging names, or the challenging for me anyway to pronounce.

Nazia: Maybe my level three anatomy and physiology will come in handy. Who knows? I don't know, probably not.

Emma: Use your skills, Nazia.

Nazia: I'll try. Yeah, there's going to be a lot of terminology. There's also going to be some discussions of psychological conditions and social conditions. We are by no means perfect, but we are very well-meaning. You know, we don't want to generalise when we talk about any of these topics at all. We're just discussing the research that has been done and the results that they have produced. And I'd like to think a lot of the studies that have been done have are quite sensitive as well to the topic, especially this first one, which was a study which is titled "Neurodevelopmental and Psychosocial Risk Factors in Serial Killers and Mass Murderers". So this was a study from the University of Glasgow in 2014 and it's the first ever analysis looking at all available literature on serial killers and mass murderers. So just to be clear on the definitions, a mass murderer is someone who kills three or more victims over a short period of time, usually over hours, but sometimes over days. A serial killer is someone who murders their victims separately and over a period of time with breaks in between. Usually a serial killer is defined as someone who has killed three or more individuals. So this study explored ASD, so autistic spectrum disorder, and head injuries, as these were looked at in previous research. It concluded that research on mass and serial killing was still very limited. However, in some cases, there are suggestions that neurodevelopmental problems such as ASD or head injury can be linked to these adverse outcomes. The study suggested that new research is required and that any perpetrators who are apprehended should be thoroughly assessed using standardized tools for investigating neurodevelopmental disorders. So out of 239 eligible killers in the study, 28% were found to have had definite, high probable or possible autistic spectrum disorder; 21% had suffered a definite or suspected head injury, and 55% of those with ASD and/or a head injury had experienced psychosocial stresses, such as significant traumatic events during childhood.

Emma: That's quite interesting. Over half of the participants in the study, are they participants?

Nazia: Err, I'd s- maybe cases.

Emma: Cases. Okay.

Nazia: Yeah.

Emma: Were found to have experienced those stresses.

Nazia: Yeah. And I guess the whole thing about childhood trauma, it makes sense.

And when we look at the cases later on, I mean, none of the cases that we're going to talk about in the second half of this episode are said to have had any sort of autistic spectrum to sort or anything like that, but they all had very traumatic childhoods. So yeah, it makes

sense.

00:15:20.980 Brain Scan Evidence

Emma: I'll talk about brain scan evidence now. And in the last 20 years, researchers in neuroscience have explored the potential of monitoring various types of brain activity as a means of lie detection to help guide law authorities. One method is using functional magnetic resonance imaging or fMRI, which tracks the blood flow in the brain. The theory is that lying makes the brain work harder. Researchers say they can determine the veracity of a person's statements through this method by asking the subject questions while being scanned. Another method is Electro-encephalography. That's a very hard one to say.

Nazia: Yeah.

Emma: Or EEG for short, which looks for a blip in electrical activity, which occurs 300 milliseconds after someone has experienced a stimulus, for example, like looking at a picture or a word on a screen. The method looks at the familiarity that person has with the stimuli.

So, for example, investigators investigating a crime could ask a person if they are familiar with a piece of evidence, the crime scene or the victim, and there's a potential of seeing that blip. Some studies say that these methods can be highly accurate if used correctly, but there are some that disagree, and in some cases the evidence has been thrown out due to admissibility. These techniques are considered inadmissible in most countries. India and Japan used to rely on these techniques but they no longer do today. In India in 2008 before these techniques were banned, EEG was used to convict Aditi Sharma. She got a life sentence for poisoning her fiancé, but it was overturned when appealed as the Supreme Court believed Aditi's rights against self-incrimination could have been violated. Some other studies now...In 2011, the Karolinska Institute in Sweden and Oxford University in the UK conducted a study which found

that a severe head trauma doubles the risk of someone committing a violent crime later in life. The study found that there was no link between epilepsy and violent behaviour as previously thought. In 2019, in Scotland nearly 25% of prisoners involved in a study were found to have had a head injury prior to committing crime. In some cases often having three episodes of head trauma. The prisoners involved were compared to the general population with a 3-to-1 match in gender age and area-based social deprivation. Also in 2019, the Disabilities Trust in the UK did a study of 173 female prisoners at HMP Drake Hall. 64% of the women studied reported a history of traumatic brain injury, TBI for short, and the study showed 62% of the women reported that they sustained a TBI due to domestic violence, and 29% of TBI's were caused by traffic accidents. In 2012 in the US, a study found that 30% of young offenders had a previous head injury and that young offenders are more likely to receive head injuries.

Nazia: That's really interesting.

Emma: Yeah, there's quite a big number of young offenders.

Nazia: Yeah, and even in the women's prison, there's quite high numbers.

Emma: Yeah, so 62% of the women reported that they had a TBI to domestic violence. That's a

big number.

Nazia: Yeah.

Emma: Although it only looked at 173 female prisoners, it's quite still a big chunk.

Nazia: Yeah.

00:19:14.700 What Makes a Murderer documentary

Emma: So in part of the research for this episode I watched a documentary called What Makes a Murderer. It was a Channel 4 serial documentary. And they looked at a number of people who had committed violent crimes. The documentary wanted to look at the neurological and social factors behind why people committed certain crimes and they looked at four case studies. And one of them was a man called John Massey who was convicted of murder in 1976. He is known as Britain's longest-serving murderer and is... I won't say that bit. It didn't seem apparent that he was resentful to me.

Nazia: He was just saying it for the sake of it, wasn't he? Because they were doing the study on him.

Emma: Yeah, so on the 24th of September 1975, John Massey shot Charlie Higgins with a shotgun. After he shot Charlie Higgins, John stepped over Higgins' dead body and shot more rounds at the bar. He was sent to prison and he served 43 years, during which he escaped three times. After one escape, he went to see his parents on the way to Spain, but was extradited three years later. The two other times were to see his dying parents, and his sentence was extended each time he was caught. The documentary features two criminal experts. One is Professor Adrian Raine, who has spent 42 years looking at the causes of crime in brains, hormones and genes of convicted murderers. He found common biological characteristics that predispose them to committing murder. According to the professor, his research is quite controversial. If you have a very low resting heartbeat, you are 39% more likely to grow up to become a violent criminal offender. People with brain traumas are four times more likely to end up in prison. My mum and myself have a very low resting heartbeat and we haven't committed any crimes.

Nazia: Yeah and I might be, I hope I'm not incorrect in saying this, but some athletes have low resting heart rates.

Emma: Yeah.

Nazia: And yeah anyway. I don't know what I think about that theory, but yeah.

Emma: Yeah, no wonder it's controversial.

Nazia: Yeah.

Emma: The other expert was Dr Vicky Thakordas-Desai. I'm sorry if I pronounced that wrong. She's a forensic psychologist who has spent 20 years working in prisons. She is an expert in how life experience shapes behaviour and in the documentary she conducted psychological interviews with John Massey. On the night of the crime, John was on a pub crawl which ended up at the Cricketers in Hackney. The drinks were flowing and things kicked off. A fight broke out between the bouncers and the group Massey was with, which left his mate badly injured. John wanted to retaliate and left to get two handguns and two shotguns, where he got these from, I don't know. The bouncer Charlie Higgins answered the door to the pub and Massey pressed the gun against his chest and warned

him to get back inside the pub. The bouncer refused and he was shot in the chest. The judge described Massey as a cold-blooded murderer, but it is more complex. So what happened in his past and his biology to lead him to commit a crime? Professor Raine took Massey to the University of Birmingham for brain scans. In a previous study done by Raine, he had scanned 41 brains of murderers and 41 brains of non-murderers and compared the results. He found parts of the brain that were different in the murderers like impulse control, emotion regulation, fear and morality. Images of John's brain showed that there was shrinkage in the amygdala on one side of his brain, and the amygdala is the area that controls the flight or flight response and it processes emotions. The shrinkage can cause a lack of fear which is a major risk factor for crime and violence. Shrunken amygdala's are also found in brains of psychopaths. Professor Raine made a 3D image of the scans of John's brain and found another abnormality. The striatum is the part that activates when we anticipate rewards. John's striatum was enlarged, which means he seeks out more rewards, more than someone with an average sized striatum. This could mean that John takes big risks to get big rewards and coupled with a lack of fear, could explain why he murdered Charlie Higgins. Environmental conditions could have made things worse for John. During the years leading up to the murder, John was hired for driving and helping with bank robberies. They weren't planned robberies, he felt fearless and in total control and he was armed. As he became more confident, he took on riskier jobs. He was stopped once by a squad car, but John and his mate hijacked it. He spent his stolen earnings on things like cars, boats and a house. It was a continuous run of offending and the money increased and increased.

Nazia: And that's probably where he got his guns from.

Emma: Yeah, thinking about it.

Nazia: Yeah.

Emma: Professor Adrian Raine analysed Massey's blood to see if his genes had an effect on his behaviour. His DNA showed that he had low serotonin, which can be associated with blunted stress responsivity. The lack of fear and stress together can make someone quite dangerous. These genes can lay dormant until triggered by certain events. Bad childhood experiences can activate these genes. John was born in 1948. His mother took him to a children's home at three years old, and he remained in the system throughout his childhood. Research suggests that early maternal abandonment can have an effect on how people experience emotions and it can turn on and off certain genes. Nearly a quarter of all prisoners have been in care at some point in their childhood. Traumatic childhoods can also contribute to the disruption in the development of that person's personality. John's brain was scanned to see if the area that experiences empathy activated when shown an array of faces, showing different emotions. The results showed that when looking at fearful faces, his brain didn't respond the same way as the average humans. Both the genetic and biological factors and the neglect in childhood led to psychopathy, a lack of feeling for other people, a lack of empathy, which is what John showed when he murdered Charlie Higgins.

Nazia: Yeah, that was an interesting document, it was just very annoying because I found John Massey to be really annoying. But it was really interesting, especially if they can do brain

scans on living perpetrators. Even if it doesn't change anything legally just to have some sort of understanding.

Emma: Well, it would be nicer for people here in children's homes, for example, to have more support.

Nazia: Yeah, like that's going to happen with the Tory government.

Emma: Yeah, good luck.

Nazia: Depends which country but, yeah.

Emma: It could cause changes along those lines like before anything bad happens.

Nazia: Yeah, you'd hope so.

00:26:58.900 Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) and Crime

Nazia: So now we're going to be looking at chronic traumatic encephalopathy? So chronic traumatic encephalopathy, otherwise known as CTE, and the relationship between that and crime. So CTE is a degenerative brain disorder usually caused by repeated head injuries. It is commonly found in individuals who have participated in contact sports or military service, as well as other activities where head trauma is common. Unfortunately, the only way to diagnose CTE is post-mortem with an autopsy of the brain. Researchers are trying to develop ways to diagnose the disorder while individuals are alive, and there is currently no cure for CTE. There's a lot of information, very scientific information that explains what protein in the brain and what part of the brain CTE relates to, but I'm not going to go into that because I have no idea what I'm talking about. So I don't want to, I don't want to butcher the science.

Emma: We didn't do degrees in biology.

Nazia: Neurology.

Emma: Or neurology, yeah.

Nazia: So symptoms of CTE include cognitive impairments such as memory loss and trouble thinking, impulsive behavior and aggression, mood disorders and motor symptoms such as motor neuron disease and Parkinsonism. The symptoms don't appear straight away but over time such as years and even decades. Research in CTE began in the 1920s when it was known as dementia pugilistica or in other words punch drunk syndrome or Boxer's madness, due to Boxer's displaying cognitive and emotional disorders following repeated head injuries. As time went on, other activities were looked at such as American football, ice hockey and military combat.

00:29:00.220 Aaron Hernandez

Nazia: So we're going to look at the case of Aaron Hernandez, and he's a very recent case, really, really sad situation. There's a documentary, I can't remember how many parts it is, but there's a multi-part documentary on Netflix, and there's various podcasts and lots of news articles about this case. So he was an NFL player who was charged with murder and then he ended up dying by suicide. So Aaron Hernandez, he was born on the 6th of November in 1989 in Bristol Connecticut to Dennis Hernandez and Terri Valentine Hernandez. Aaron had an older brother, Dennis Jonathan, Jr., also known as DJ. And Aaron's father was a former NFL player, and he raised his sons to be athletes as well.

However, he achieved this by being strict and violent with his sons, and Dennis' senior was also abusive towards his wife, Terri. According to Aaron's brother DJ, Aaron was sexually abused as a child by a teenage boy in his babysitter's house. This began when Aaron was only six years old and continued for several years. In 2006, when Aaron was 16 years old, his father died from complications from a hernia operation. Despite being a victim of domestic abuse, Aaron looked up to his father and his death impacted him significantly. He began acting out, taking part in criminal activity and drug use during high school. He also became estranged from his mother and moved in with his cousin, Tanya Singleton. During high school, Aaron excelled in sports such as basketball and track running, as well as American football. He was captain of the Bristol High School football team and was named high school all American. At the same time, he started smoking large amounts of marijuana. Aaron began dating his future fiancé, Shiana Jenkins, who he had known since elementary school. Later on, his teammate, Dennis SanSoucia, revealed that he and Aaron had a secret homosexual relationship for a few years, and that Aaron had many sexual partners. During Aaron's childhood, his father made it very clear that he did not tolerate homosexuality. In 2007, Aaron punched an employee at a bar. He was not charged though. Later that year he was questioned by police after two men were wounded in a shooting. Again, no charges were filed. In 2010 he was drafted by the New England Patriots and helped his team to the Super Bowl.

Emma: Why was he questioned by the police, the two men that were wounded in a shooting? Was he nearby or did he know them?

Nazia: Yeah, he was seen at the scene of the crime.

Emma: Ah, okay.

Nazia: The documentary does go into it in a lot more detail, but yeah, if it's the incident I'm thinking of, he was seen at the scene of the crime.

Emma: Ah, okay.

Nazia: There were witnesses. So in July 2012, Daniel de Abreu and Safira Furtado were murdered in a drive-by shooting. Shortly after, Aaron signed a five-year, \$40 million contract with the Patriots. That same year he and his fiance welcomed their daughter, Avielle. In February 2013, after parting together in a strip club, Aaron allegedly shot his friend Alexander Bradley in the face. In June 2013, police discovered the body of Odin Lloyd near Aaron's home. They were able to trace evidence back to Aaron even though he destroyed his cell phone and surveillance footage from his mansion. Odin was dating the sister of Aaron's fiance. Aaron was charged with first degree murder and firearms violations. He was released from the Patriots very soon after his arrest. In 2015, he was given life imprisonment without parole for first degree murder. In the same year, he was formally charged with witness intimidation for the shooting of Alexander Bradley. In 2017, he went on trial for the murders Daniel de Abreu and Safira Furtado, but was acquitted. Two survivors of the shooting identified Aaron as the perpetrator, however this information was excluded from the trial. According to news reports, his friends in the NFL helped pay for his defense. Aaron then died by suicide in prison at the age of 27 on the 19th of April 2017. So I've just given a very, very brief history of his life, his rise in sports and also his downfall through crime. But as I said, there's podcasts and there's not- the

documentary that go into a lot of detail.

Emma: The friend that he shot in the face, Alexander Bradley, did he survive?

Nazia: Yeah, he survived and I think if I remember correctly, he took him to court as well.

Emma: Right, okay.

Nazia: Yeah. But I can't even imagine surviving that. So Dr Anne McKee, who's the director of the CTE Centre at Boston University, said, "Hernandez suffered substantial damage to crucial parts of the brain involved in memory, problem-solving, judgment and behaviour, including the hippocampus and frontal lobe. So, obviously, his brain was studied after he passed away. The medical examiner didn't give Hernandez his brain over to the family straight away, even though they had already released his body because they considered it a destruction of evidence. Which makes sense.

Yeah. Emma: They got Hernandez's lawyer from the murder trial involved in this because he thought the medical examiner was just holding the brain because I don't know really why. He just thought they were taking their sweet time over handing it over for no apparent reason.

Nazia: Yeah, which is silly. I mean, if you look at a sport like NFL, there's a lot of head injuries and also there's the fact that he he was taking drugs. I don't know, I don't know why anyone would oppose to having the brain studied if it can give some clearer answers.

Emma: Yeah, exactly.

Nazia: Especially, you know, he died by suicide as well, so there was something going on. So individuals with severe CTE are known to have difficulty with impulse control, decision-making, inhibition of impulses or aggression, often emotional volatility and rage behaviors. And Doctor McKee said that Hernandez had the most severe case of CTE they've seen in someone his age. Individuals, and this is a quote from McKee, individuals with similar gross findings at autopsy were at least 46 years old at the time of death. And a 2023 report from the CTE Centre stated that CTE had been found in the brains of 345 out of 376 deceased former NFL players. That is a huge, huge number.

Emma: That is, yeah. I wonder if- are they putting anything in place to stop that from...

Nazia: It's a violent sport, isn't it?

Emma: I know they wear helmets.

Nazia: Yeah, but it obviously doesn't do anything.

Emma: No.

00:36:46.160 Other cases related to CTE

Nazia: So I mean, like there's a couple of other cases related to CTE,. So in 2019, Justin Lewis Bannan, he shot an acupuncturist while he was hiding in her therapy room. During his trial, he pleaded not guilty on grounds of insanity, and his lawyer argued that he had CTE from his football career. However, he was sentenced to 16 years in prison. In 2017, Kenneth Manzanares, a 43 year old, murdered his wife while they were on a cruise ship and his family were on that cruise ship as well but he murdered her in their room. His lawyers asked for leniency arguing that he had possible brain damage from contact sport related injuries as well as having bipolar disorder and mood disorders. He was sentenced in 2021 to 30 years in prison.

00:37:33.120 Using CTE as a defense in trial

Nazia: So a review was published in 2020 which was called a review in the role of chronic traumatic encephalopathy or CTE in criminal court. In 2017, the New York Times published an editorial asking, "Is CTE a defense for murder?" The lawyers who wrote the piece argued that Aaron Hernandez, who was convicted of murder, should not have been charged with first-degree murder because his lifetime of playing football was to blame for his crimes. The review concluded that one of the challenges of using CTE as a defence in murder cases is the fact that it can only be diagnosed after death. There is also a debate about CTE being valid as a distinct illness and its connection to problematic behaviour and whether it can be used to excuse criminal behaviour. Using CTE as a legal defence would require changes in the legal system alongside advancements in neuroscience, which is all completely fair.

Emma: Yeah, I mean, if they made it so that they'd get a lesser sentence for having CTE, then everyone would be, you know.

Nazia: Yeah, even if they get a lesser sentence or they're acquitted and the problem is there's no cure for it at the moment and those people will still be a risk to society. So I guess the alternative would be they're putting an inpatient unit or under some sort of psychological neuropsychiatry care.

Emma: Yeah, we're there monitored.

Nazia: Yeah, and I mean there's no, like if there's no therapy for it, it's a really, really difficult thing to manage. And the fact that, you know, it can't be diagnosed until after death, so anyone can argue that they've got CTE.

Emma: Yeah, that's what I'm saying.

Nazia: Yeah. Yeah, like if they do a certain sport like ice hockey and American football or they've been in the military or their boxes like anyone can argue or maybe I've got CTE and like no one can know at that the moment. So yeah.

00:39:47.000 Richard Ramirez

Emma: So, we'll move on to examples of serial killers who have suffered head injuries. And we start with the lovely Richard Ramirez.

Nazia: Oh God, he is a piece of work.

Emma: Also known as the Nightstalker, he was a notorious serial killer in Los Angeles during the 1980s. He was born on February 20th, 1960 and committed a series of gruesome crimes including murders, sexual assaults and robberies. In March 1985, Maria Hernandez returned home and encountered Ramirez in her garage. When she raised her hands defensively, Ramirez shot at her, but the bullet deflected off her keys, sparing her life. Ramirez entered the house where Maria's housemate Dayle Okazaki hid behind the kitchen counter. When Dayle peered over the counter, Ramirez shot her in the forehead. Maria, concerned for Dayle, went to the front of the house, confronting Ramirez as he exited. Surprised to see her, he spared Maria, who questioned the need for another shooting. Later another murder of Tsai-Lian Yu occurred nearby. Maria provided a description to the police, contributing to a sketch that resembled a suspect in

an attempted kidnapping. 10 days later, on the 27th of March, Ramirez got in the house of Vincent and Maxine Zazzara, through an open bathroom window. He stole \$40,000 worth in jewellery and other valuables. Vincent was shot in the head while sleeping on the sofa and Maxine was killed in the bedroom. She had been raped and had stab wounds. He had also cut her eyes out which he took with him. There was also a shoe print left in the flower beds. The following victim who survived was six-year-old Anastasia Hronas. Ramirez got inside Anastasia's home through a window and got her to follow him back out. He reminded her of a family member and she thought she knew him. He put her inside a car and told her to open the glove compartment which held a gun. They stopped somewhere and Ramirez made Anastasia get inside a zipped-up duffel bag and told her to be quiet. He took her to a room that was very unclean with a soundtrack of Madonna playing in the background. Ramirez sexually assaulted her. He put her back in the duffel Bag and got back in the car. He then drove to a gas station and told Anastasia to get out and call 911 to get her family to pick her up. There was a number of child abductions at this time. The descriptions of the man the children gave were very similar to that given by Maria Hernandez. The police officers working on Dayle Okazaki's murder considered it to be the same man, but the child abductions department didn't believe there was a link. On another occasion, a group of girls were followed by a man in a car, which they reported to police along with the number plate. The description they gave of the man matched that of Maria Hernandez's - longhair, tall, light-skinned Mexican. The police put a surveillance team on him and followed him to a restaurant where he drove around the car park and then followed a lone female. She realised and got away. The surveillance team was still following him and decided to arrest him. His name was Arturo Robles. The police took his mug shot and put it in a collection of others and showed it to Maria Hernandez, and she said that it was possibly the same guy. The police got a search warrant and found all kinds of photographs of women in his apartment, along with underwear that was sliced in the crotch. They put him in a line-up but nobody picked him out, not even Maria Hernandez. On the 14th of May, 66-year-old William Doi was shot in his home. His wife, Lillian, was raped, beaten and robbed. William called 911 just before he died in order to save his wife. The crime scene was violent and destructive. Lillian had handcuffs on her and the police didn't have any evidence, but then they were contacted by a child-obduction department with a shoe print that had been left at another crime scene. The victim was eight years old and sexually assaulted on a construction site. Labourers had poured fresh concrete that day and the suspect had stepped in it, leaving a footprint. It was very similar to that left at the Zazzara's house. Later that month, two sisters, Mabel Bell and Florence Lang (Florence was disabled and they were both in their 80s) were attacked and beaten in their bedrooms. A gardener found their bodies two days later. Mabel died after being found, but Florence was in hospital in critical condition. Mabel Bell was taped with electrical tape, sexually assaulted and beaten with a hammer. Florence Lang was barely alive. An alarm clock was found on the floor with a partial footprint on it. He had stood on the clock to separate it from the electrical cord which he used. The police lab matched the print with the others that they had on file. In June and July, just a few days apart, Ramirez

murdered 32-year-old Patty Elaine Higgins and 75-year-old Mary Cannon by slitting their throats in their homes. On the 5th of July, 16-year-old Whitney Bennett was beaten with a tire iron in her parents' home. She survived but only remembered going to bed. She woke up with a bloody head and her room was ransacked. She had big lacerations and skull fractures. The police found a pink comforter which had a shoe print in blood on it. The same footprint as the other prints the police had collected. This guy- this case is...

Nazia: It's never ending.

Emma: Yeah.

Nazia: I've... like the whole time, even though I know this, but I've just got my hand over my mouth like in disgust.

Emma: I just... I can't believe that a human being can do all this.

Nazia: Yeah, I know.

Emma: The 6th of July, Lorraine Rodriguez was woken by a loud noise while she slept on the sofa and her husband John was asleep in the bedroom. John, who was a police officer, got his gun and walked around the house. Lorraine saw a painted shut window had been fully opened, and police later found footprints outside which matched the ones from previous crime scenes. Police started to investigate the footprints and discovered the shoe brand of Avias. With the help of Avias, they were able to find the model and size and upon further investigation, they discovered only one pair was sold in Los Angeles but they couldn't track where exactly. They also started looking at other unsolved murders to see if there were any similarities to the ones they were investigating. The police uncovered another old case that was similar. The attempted kidnapping of a young female who fought off the suspect and escaped. The suspect left it in a Toyota and later on committed a traffic violation for which he was pulled over. He didn't have a license and he was searched for weapons. As the police officer went back to his motorcycle to get his paperwork, there was a broadcast over his radio about the attempted kidnapping and a description of the car. The suspect heard it. He then drew a pentagram on the roof of the car and escaped. The Toyota was stolen and the officers investigating the killer asked to process the car but were stone blocked by another county.

Nazia: How did he have time to draw the pentagram before escaping? It just seems really bizarre to me.

Emma: Yeah, there must be a lot of paper work this police officer was getting.

Nazia: I know, yeah, yeah.

Emma: But imagine the police, the policeman had the broadcast over the radio and was like checking with...

Nazia: Yeah, maybe he was like, "can you repeat?"

Emma: Yeah, I've got the guy here.

Nazia: Yeah.

Emma: On the 7th of July, 60-year-old grandmother Joyce Nelson was beaten to death and a footprint was left on her head. There was a footprint left outside on the concrete which matched the ones police had from other scenes. The suspect then entered Sophie Dickman's house through the car door. Sophie Dickman was raped, robbed and

handcuffed her bed. She managed to pull the bed over to the window so she could get her neighbour Linda Arthur's attention in house opposite. Linda happened to be a crime scene technician.

Nazia: How did he get through a cat door? I have so many questions.

Emma: Yeah, I mean...

Nazia: He's quite skinny. But, still.

Emma: I've seen pictures of him, he's really, really skinny.

Nazia: But still.

Emma: But he's lanky as well.

Nazia: Oh, maybe he was like...

Emma: A contortionist.

Nazia: Yeah, that's what I was thinking.

Emma: On the 9th of July, please go hold of the Toyota that had the pentagram painted on the roof. However, no fingerprints at the time of the incident were taken. And the car had been left out in the sun, so the fingerprints had gone. However, they did find the business card for a dentist in the vehicle. They interviewed the dentist and discovered the suspect had been in a few days before the murder of Joyce Nelson and the attack on Sophie Dickman. They obtained the name Richard Mena, along with a fake address. They also obtained X-rays and were informed the suspect would return for an impacted tooth. Instead of putting in surveillance, the police installed a robbery alarm. However, when Richard did come in for his appointment, the alarm didn't work, so he got away. The dentist was like saying to police, "Where the fuck were you? I was pressing the buzzer and no one turned up, but he was just here."

Nazia: They didn't want to put surveillance because it was more expensive or something?

Emma: Yeah.

Nazia: Yeah, so they went for the cheap option that didn't even work, which could have saved more lives.

Emma: Yeah, exactly. On the 20th of July, Max Kneiding, 68, and his wife, Lela, 66, were found by their daughter and they had been murdered. Max's head was nearly decapitated and Leela had been shot in the face. Another murder also occurred. Chainarong Khovanath was shot in the head. His wife and eight-year-old son were sexually assaulted. Jewellery and other valuables were also stolen. The same gun was used in both crimes. The wife of Chainarong gave a similar description to that of Maria Hernandez, which the police went public with. On the 6th of August, Virginia Peterson was shot in bed through her nose. The bullet missed vital organs and lodged in her neck. She screamed and her husband sat up and was shot in the head but also survived. Chris Peterson chased Ramirez out of the house. A different gun was used in this case compared to previous attacks. After reading in newspapers that one of his previous victims had called 911 before being murdered, Ramirez began disabling the phone lines or removing the phones of his victims. On the 8th of August, Elyas Abowath, 35, was shot dead in the temple with the same calibre used on the Peterson's. His wife was sexually assaulted.

Nazia: Yeah, and they had two sons, one of them was three years old and the other one was only eight weeks old.

Emma: That's terrible. They won't even remember their parents.

Nazia: Oh yeah, like, I don't even want to imagine.

Emma: On the 18th of August, Peter Pan, who's 65 years old, was shot in the head. His wife was raped and also shot in the head, but she survived. Ramirez ate food from their fridge, then regurgitated it on the kitchen floor. He then masturbated in the living room and carved a satanic symbol on the wall. By this point, there was a \$10,000 reward to catch the killer.

Nazia: Yeah, I think I remember from your notes and the podcast that I've listened to about him. The police were really desperate for the media not to release any information that could make him realise that they were onto him, so things like the footprint.

Emma: Yeah, the make of shoe, yeah.

Nazia: Yeah, yeah.

Emma: The dental records.

Nazia: Yeah, so they didn't want, and I think the police had to kind of bargain with the press, so that they wouldn't.

Emma: They gave them other information that they could publish.

Nazia: Yeah, yeah, which is like, the fact that they have to do that with the press is just ridiculous.

Emma: There was also, was it the mayor of some county? She gave a press conference and she verbatim told the press everything that the police had.

Nazia: Yeah, yeah, I think I vaguely remember that.

Emma: And so the police had to do like a video showing them what they had and all the mug shots and stuff.

Nazia: Yeah, yeah.

Emma: It's crazy. On the 24th of August, Bill Cairns was shot in the head, leaving him in critical condition. His girlfriend was sexually assaulted and also shot. A witness saw the car the suspect used and remembered part of the number plate. The police received a phone call to report a stolen car which matched the number plate and the car was located and a fingerprint was found on the rear view mirror. Three days later the police received a call from a woman whose father had befriended a man called Rick, who he believed to be the night stalker. Rick had told him about killing an Asian couple with a semi-automatic pistol, which was not public knowledge at the time. The police were able to track down a gun and a radio through this man, and the radio was purchased by the Lang's Grandson. The Lang's Grandson, he had the receipt to prove that it was the radio that they found. Police then obtained the name Richard Ramirez through an informant, whose mother's boyfriend had met. They were then able to match the fingerprint to the name as he had a petty theft criminal record. His picture also matched all of the descriptions given by victims. On 31 August, police put in surveillance at the Greyhound bus depot where they expected to see Ramirez. Ramirez returned from Arizona visiting his brother and recognised the covert police. They wore dirty clothing but they had no bad odors or bad teeth.

Nazia: Yeah, and I've put a note there. Ramirez would know because he had awful teeth and halitosis.

Emma: Yeah, his teeth were bad, weren't they?

Nazia: Yeah, and apparently some of the victims, like when they were describing - the surviving victims, when they were describing him, they would comment that he had really bad breath.

Emma: Oh, God. That's a smell you don't forget as well.

Nazia: I don't think I've ever smelled someone with, I don't think I've come across anyone with halitosis.

Emma: I have.

Nazia: Oh you used to work in a dentist, didn't you?

Emma: No. I worked in an opticians.

Nazia: Alright. Completely different.

Emma: Are you still getting close to people's faces, aren't you? Just looking at a different part of the anatomy.

Nazia: Yeah, yeah.

Emma: Yeah, it's not nice. Ramirez went into an off-license where he saw pictures of himself in newspapers. He panicked and got on another bus where he was recognised by a passenger who pulled the cord in the bus. I think he was reading the newspaper.

Nazia: Yeah! And they locked eyes.

Emma: He looked at the newspaper, then looked across at Ramirez. Looked back at the newspaper.

Nazia: It's like a movie moment, isn't it?

Emma: That must have been real scary though.

Nazia: Yeah, but I mean you're going to go on about how he was caught is just epic.

Emma: Yeah. Ramirez is then still someone calling the police from a nearby phone booth. The same person instructed a truck driver to follow the bus. As he was recognised by more people, they called the police too and tracked him. He ran across a freeway and tried to carjack Faustino Pinon, who wrestled him off. Ramirez then tried to carjack Angelina De La Torre before Manuel De La Torre hit Ramirez over the head with a metal stick. He was chased by members of the neighbourhood who circled around him when the police turned up. In January 1989, he faced trial for 43 crimes including 13 murders, robbery and rape. On September 20th, he was found guilty on 43 counts and sentenced to death by gas chamber. He spent more than 20 years on death row before dying of cancer on the 7th of June, 2013.

Nazia: Yeah, and that trial was just a bit of a circus, wasn't it?

Emma: Uh, yes, yeah, because, no, he didn't represent himself, did he?

Nazia: His family hired a lawyer who wasn't very good at his job.

Emma: Yeah. But he started to realise that he was getting attention from...

Nazia: Yeah.

Emma: ...from women who liked to contact serial killers in prisons.

Nazia: They found him attracted...It's like with Manson and...

Emma: Sobhraj

Nazia: Sobhraj... and erm, what's the other one. I don't know if it's Ted Bund -sorry, you might hear my cat using the litter box. I don't know if it's Ted Bundy or Jeffrey Dahmer or

maybe both of them.

Emma: I think it was both of them.

Nazia: Yeah, but like he had admirers. That's a whole other study. Why do people admire serial killers?

Emma: There's actually a term for it as well and I can't remember what it's called.

Nazia: Especially if they've got bad breath, it's like, ergh!

Emma: Yeah.

Nazia: He's a disgusting human being with bad breath. No thank you.

Emma: But you see as the trial goes on, 'cause it went, the trial happened a few years after he was arrested, right?

Nazia: Yeah, that's it, yeah.

Emma: But you could see his change in appearance, 'cause when he first started going to his court appearances, he was in his regular jail outfit orange jumpsuit. And then as time went on, he started to wear suits and he'd wear sunglasses in the courtroom.

Nazia: Trying to build an image for himself.

Emma: Yeah, exactly. But there were women that were interested in the actual courtroom as well.

Nazia: I'm just shaking my head.

Emma: Yeah in disbelief. I feel like I need therapy after that case.

Nazia: Yeah, it's not gonna get much better with the other ones.

Emma: I've got another slide to do as well.

Nazia: Yeah, we've got to talk about, we've got to talk about what could have led him to become such a piece of shit.

Emma: Yeah, I forgot that's what we're actually doing for this episode. Richard Ramirez was born on the 20th of February 1960. His parents were Julian and Mercedes Ramirez. He was the youngest of five children and Richard's father, a former police officer, was abusive towards him. On one occasion, his father, in order to reprimand Richard, tied him to a cross in a cemetery overnight. He received a major head trauma two years old, when a dresser fell on his head, he had to get 30 stitches. When he was six he was hit on the head by a swing which caused him to lose consciousness. And at 11 years old, he was diagnosed with epilepsy. When Richard was 12, he spent time with his older cousin, Miguel Ramirez. He was a US Army green beret who shared his violent experiences of the Vietnam war with Richard. According to one source, Miguel showed Richard pictures of rape victims and a picture of him posing with a severed head of a woman he had abused. The two cousins bonded over horrid war stories while smoking marijuana and Miguel taught Richard how to kill with stealth. Richard often slept in the cemetery to escape his father's violent outbursts. In 1974, Richard witnessed Miguel murder his wife. Later that year, Richard moved in with his sister and her husband, who was a peeping Tom. Richard had started to use LSD and became interested in Satanism. His cousin, Miguel was found not guilty for his wife's murder by reason of insanity and was released in 1977 after having spent four years in jail. The cousin's relationship picked up where it left off. While still in high school, Richard took a job at the holiday inn and often used his master key to access guests' rooms and steal their belongings. Richard was fired when a

guest returned to his room and saw Richard trying to rape his wife. The husband beat Richard but charges were dropped against him after the couple declined to testify against him. Richard had dropped out of high school and moved to California when he was 22 years old. There are arguments that suggest the head trauma and the abuse he received during his childhood and adolescence led to him becoming a serial killer.

Nazia: No shit, Sherlock. And it's also this relationship he had with Miguel, like, you know, that's one way of teaching a young boy how to have no respect for women.

Emma: Yeah, especially at that age when they're so influential.

Nazia: And like the, you know, the strange thing is with Richard, he - usually killers have, but they go for a certain type of victim, whereas Richard just seemed to be going for anyone and everyone.

Emma: Yeah.

Nazia: But he was sexually assaulting women and children, but he was killing anyone and everyone.

Emma: Yeah, he didn't stick to a certain profile

Nazia: No, it's fucking awful.

Emma: Yeah.

Nazia: Absolutely terrifying. And we're not gonna get much better with the next couple of cases. I'm afraid.

Emma: We did say it was dark.

Nazia: Yeah, it's probably like, and the thing is we're not even going into as much detail with these cases. A, because we don't want to talk about them for ages and B there's enough information about these guys out there. So we're giving you a light version of the horrible things these people have done.

01:03:10.720 Albert Fish

Nazia: So the next case we're going to be talking about is Albert Fish, who was born Hamilton Howard Fish on the 19th of May in 1870 and he was a serial killer in New York. Fish had a family history of mental disorders. At least seven family members identified as having illnesses, while two of them reportedly died in asylum. Fish was only five years old when his father passed away and his mother put him in an orphanage in Washington. In the orphanage he was relentlessly and violently abused by his teacher along with other students. They were subjected to a severe form of shame punishing, where they would be stripped of their clothes, beaten and whipped, while the other students were forced to watch. These experiences led to Fish developing desires to inflict pain on others, and to have pain inflicted on himself, which also developed into his sexual arousals. Later in life, Fish would indulge in pickerism, where one inserts needles into the genital and anal areas.

Emma: What? Why?

Nazia: Yeah. Apparently there's an X-ray image of this.

Emma: Oh, God.

Nazia: Don't do not Google. Don't Google.

Emma: Iteven has a name for it.

Nazia: Yeah. So in 1880, Fish's mother started to work in the government which allowed her to take him out of the orphanage. By this time he was known for running away from home and frequent bedwetting. At some point in his childhood, Fish fell from a cherry tree which gave him a concussion that led to subsequent headaches, dizzy spells and a severe stutter. At age 12, Fish developed a relationship with another boy who introduced him to drinking urine and consuming feces. He also started to visit public bathrooms to watch other boys' undress for his sexual gratification. Yeah, we forgot add that in the disclaimer. So when he graduated from public school at the age of 15, he changed his name to Albert to get rid of the nickname Ham and Eggs, which bullies gave him in school. It's quite funny to be fair.

Emma: Ham and-, because his name was Hamilton, okay.

Nazia: Hamilton, ham, yeah, you know what bullies are like, they'll come up with anything stupid. By age 17, he was working as a house painter. As he grew older, he racked up a criminal record, including charges of grand larceny, petty theft, and writing obscene letters. He was also in and out of mental institutions at various points with doctors declaring him abnormal and psychopathic. At the age of 28, Fish married a 19-year-old who he had six children with. She eventually left him for another man, leaving their children behind, but taking all of their possessions. Fish then tried to blame his later sexual crimes on his wife's infidelity. And I think if I remember correctly, so while they were married apparently he was still being a disgusting human being but tame, quote marks, but then as soon as she left him he was like "Well, might will go the whole hog then."

Emma: Yeah, "I haven't got anything to tie me down."

Nazia: Yeah, yeah.

Emma: Mmm.

Nazia: So on the 14th of July in 1924, Francis MacDonald was reported missing after he failed to return home from playing outside with friends in Port Richmond, Staten Island. A search was conducted and his body was found hanging by a tree in a wooded area close to his home. He had been sexually assaulted and strangled with his suspenders. He had extensive lacerations on his legs and abdomen and the flesh from his hamstring had been almost entirely stripped. McDonald's friends told police that they had seen him being taken away by an elderly man with a grey moustache. A neighbour also gave a similar statement. Francis's murder remained unsolved until Grace Budzmerder, who we'll discuss a bit later, was solved, when witnesses identified "Fish" as the man they had seen on the day he had disappeared. Fish initially denied the charges, but in 1935 he confessed raping and murdering Francis, also admitting that he intended to castrate the boy, but fled when he heard someone approaching the area. On the 11th of February 1927, William "Billy" Gaffney was playing with two other boys aged 12 and 3 in their apartment hallway in Brooklyn. The 12-year-old left for his apartment and the younger ones disappeared. The three-year-old Billy Beaton was later found on the roof of the apartments and said the bogeyman had taken Billy Gaffney. His body was never found. Another serial killer, Peter Kudzinowski, was the initial suspect. However, a witness who later saw a picture of Fish in the newspaper recognized him as the man he saw trying to

quiet a little boy who was not wearing a jacket and was crying for his mother. The witness's description of the bogeyman matched Fish and his description of the child matched Billy. At the time of Billy's disappearance, Fish was working as a house painter for a Brooklyn real estate company. Later on, Fish wrote a letter to his attorney confessing that he took the boy to a house where he tied and gagged him. The next day, he tortured the boy and decapitated him. He threw most of his body parts in pools of slimy water along the road going to North Beach, while the rest he took home to consume.

Emma: Oh god.

Nazia: I forgot to add cannibalism to the disclaimer as well, sorry. There's a lot in this episode that we forgot. It's just a horrible episode, sorry listeners. We promise next week isn't going to be this bad.

Emma: You are listening to a crime podcast, so...

Nazia: Yeah.

Emma: You shouldn't be too surprised.

Nazia: Yeah, that's true. So on the 25th of May, 1928, Grace Buds went missing. Fish saw a classified ad from her 18-year-old brother Edward Bud, who was looking for work in the country. Fish visited the Bud family in Manhattan under the pretence of hiring Edward, but with the intention of tying him up and mutilating him until he bled to death. Fish introduced himself to the family as a farmer called Frank Howard. He promised to hire Edward and his friend and he told them that he would hire them in a few days. When he eventually returned to the Bud's home, he met Edward's 10-year-old sister Grace Bud. He turned his attention to her instead, and made up a story about having to attend his niece's birthday party. He asked the parents if he could take Grace with him. At first, her mother turned down the request, however the father persuaded her to let Fish take her. The family were already struggling with seven children at the time, and they admired Fish's apparent wealth. So he went to the family with like a basket of strawberries and he made out that he owned a farm and they were quite poor. So I guess they just thought why not because if it means Edward gets hired and we get money.

Emma: And they must have thought what a nice man.

Nazia: Yeah. Because he looked like a grandpa.

Emma: Yeah.

Nazia: So it is believed that Fish realized Edward had the potential to overpower him if he tried to carry out his original plans, and Fish perceived Grace to be a boy, even though she was wearing a dress. He took Grace to an abandoned house he had previously picked out. There he strangled, decapitated and dismembered Grace before eating her entire body. Although it's not confirmed if he had her entire body, but it's believed that he did, or as much of it as he could. Police originally arrested Superintendent Charles Edward Pope in 1930 as a suspect after he was accused by his estranged wife. However, after spending 108 days in jail, he was found not guilty at trial. Then, Fish wrote his infamous graphic confession letter to Grace Bud's mother, which led to his capture in 1934, six years after his crime. In the letter, he writes detailed account of his crimes, but he says that he did not rape as if it's that that's some kind of reassurance. And you can find this

letter online if you want to read it, but it's just disgusting. Police were able to trace the letter back to an apartment Fish had previously stayed at because of the emblem on the envelope. He was arrested on 13 December 1934 and put on trial for the kidnapping and murder of Grace Bud. During the trial several psychiatrists testified about Fish's extensive list of fetishes. He was noted as a psychiatric phenomenon. He was also a religious fanatic who attempted to justify even his worst crimes through biblical scriptures. He believed he was making sacrifices as penance for his own sins, and that if God did not approve, then the angels would have stopped him. One psychiatrist explained that Fish associated his cannibalism with communion. Mary Nicholas, Fish's stepdaughter, described her Fish had taught her and her siblings several games including overtones of masochism and child molestation. For example, he would ask his children to sit on his back while he wore trunks and asked them to hit him with a paintbrush or a paint stick. He also stuck pins under his fingernails in front of his children. Fish claimed to have sexually assaulted at least 100 boys, most of them were African-American or had developmental disabilities, which he sought after with the belief that the police would not fully investigate the crimes against them. He also claimed to have murdered at least five other children and teenagers, but it is suspected he was involved in others. Although the jurors found him to be insane, they felt he should be executed. He was therefore found to be sane and guilty. On the 16th of January 1936, he was executed by electric chair at the age of 65. And there's an Albert Fish documentary, it's a terribly produced documentary, but they have Katherine Ramsland who's a professor in forensic psychology in this documentary, and she labelled Fish as a psychopath, stating that he was intelligent enough to know how to elude the law. He was manipulative and like other serial killers, he could compartmentalise so he could be accepted as an ordinary family man. He would switch from one persona to another when the need arose. There is no single determining reason as to why a Fish committed his crimes, but it is very likely that the interactions between biological, psychological and environmental factors led to them.

Emma: Whoa.

Nazia: *Sigh* Yes.

01:14:17.440 Fred West

Nazia; Now we're gonna move on to Fred West.

Emma: As if we didn't have enough already?

Nazia: Yeah, we've just got two more people, guys. Just two more. Sorry, we're almost near the end. Fred West, I actually didn't know much about him until this. I'd have heard of him, but I just didn't know how much of a shitbag he, him and his wife were.

Emma: Yeah, I'd seen documentaries about them.

Nazia: Yeah.

Emma: They're just fucking horrible.

Nazia: Yeah, so we're not gonna talk about Rose West as much. We're just gonna focus on Fred. So Fred was born on the 29th of September in 1941, in Hertfordshire, to Walter, Stephen West and Daisy Hannah Hill. Fred was the first surviving child of six children

who survived out of eight. The family were poor farm workers, but close-knit. Fred later claimed that his father had incestuous relationships with his sister, and he himself was sexually abused by his mother. He also claimed to engage in bestiality as a young teenager. However, Fred's younger brother Doug denied these claims, and just said these were Fred's fantasies. As a teenager, Fred would aggressively pursue women and girls and would abruptly assault them. He saw them as objects of pleasure. When he was 17 years old, he had a motorbike accident which resulted in a fractured skull, a broken arm and leg. He was unconscious for seven days. After this incident, he was prone to fits of rage. Two years later, he groped a girl on a fire escape outside a youth club he often visited. She punched him, sending him falling two floors, resulting in another head injury. Good for her though.

Emma: Yeah, shame it didn't do anything further.

Nazia: Yeah. In June 1961, Fred's 13-year-old sister Kitty revealed to their mother that Fred had been raping her and had gotten her pregnant. He was arrested and boasted to the police that he had been abusing young girls since his early teens. However, the case was dropped after Kitty changed her mind and refused to testify. Fred was disowned by his family and went to live with his aunt. In 1962, when he was 21 years old, Fred re-acquainted with Catherine "Rena" Bernadette Costello, who he had briefly dated in 1960, before she went back to Scotland. They married and, at the time, Rena was pregnant with an Asian bus driver. They relocated to Glasgow because her family disapproved of her pregnancy with a mixed-race child. When her daughter, Charmaine, was born, they explained her mixed ethnicity by claiming Rena had suffered a miscarriage, so Charmaine was adopted. In 1964, Rena and Fred gave birth to their daughter Anna Marie. Fred was harsh with both girls, caging them in their bunk beds when he was at home. The couple had a nanny, Isa McNeil, through her they met 16-year-old Anna McFall, who spent a lot of time at their flat. Fred had numerous affairs and had a child with another woman. This led Rena to have an affair with a man called John McLachlan. Fred knew about this affair and there were numerous occasions where the two men had altercations and John would be Fred up. This just sounds hilarious. This John character sounds just hilarious, just beating Fred up. Being the husband of his...

Emma: Yeah.

Nazia: Affair...

Emma: He must have been like not so powerful for another man then.

Nazia: Yeah, I mean he doesn't look it, I don't know anything about his physique, but when you look at photos of him, he doesn't look particularly like, he looks like someone who would lose the fight against another man. So in 1965, Fred accidentally ran over and killed a child with his ice cream van and he was cleared of any wrongdoing. Later that year, Fred moved into a caravan with the two girls. Rena joined them in 1966 with Isa and Anna. Fred became domineering and controlling over all three women, and physically and sexually abused Charmaine. He encouraged Rena to turn to prostitution, to supplement his poor income as a lorry driver. Charmaine and Isa devised a plan with John and Isa's boyfriend to escape Fred with the girls. But it was suspected that Anna informed Fred of

the plan as she was infatuated with him. Another physical altercation occurred between Fred and John, Charmaine, Isa, John and Isa's boyfriend John Trotter left, but the daughter stayed behind with Fred and Anna. In 1967 Anna disappeared when she was 18 years old and pregnant with Fred's child. She was never reported missing but her remains were later found in 1994. Fred later confessed to a visitor after his arrest that he'd killed her following an argument. However, this explanation is inconsistent with the findings of the state of her remains. A month after her disappearance, Rena moved back in with Fred. However, she then left him the following year leaving the children again. Fred placed them in the care of social services as there was no woman to care for them. In 1969 Fred met 15-year-old Rosemary Letts at a bus stop. He lavished her with attention over the next few days at the same bus stop and won her sympathy by claiming his wife had abandoned him and their two daughters. Eventually Rose fell for Fred's attempts and they began a relationship. She also left her job to become a nanny for the two girls. Her family disapproved of the relationship and she was placed in a home for troubled teenagers. After she turned 16 and left the home, she moved in with Fred. In 1970, she became pregnant with Fred's child and was placed into care again. She was discharged on the condition that she would terminate the pregnancy and return to the family. However, she went back to Fred and was disowned by her family. In October 1970, Rose gave birth to their first child, Heather Ann. Fred was imprisoned for six months shortly after for theft of car tires and a vehicle tax disc, leaving Rose to care for the three girls at the age of 17. Anna Marie and Charmaine were subjected to abuse. Charmaine was later murdered by Rose while Fred was still in prison. Rena returned one day to either discuss the welfare of her daughter's or to seek custody, however she was murdered. It is believed that she was killed by strangulation and possibly sexually assaulted prior to her murder. Fred and Rose married in January 1972 and in June Rose gave birth to their second daughter May-June. Rose then started working as a prostitute and would also have casual sex with both men and women. Her and Fred would take part in threesomes which often involved bondage as they both took pleasure in dominance and violence. They later collected videos depicting bestiality and child abuse. Rose gave birth to six more children, at least three of whom were conceived by her clients. From September 1972, Fred and Rose began to sexually abuse Anna Marie, including rape and fostering to prostitution from the age of 13. In October 17-year-old Caroline Owens was hired as a nanny. After their sexual advances, Owens tried to leave the house but was later lured back in by the couple. She was assaulted by both Fred and Rose. One day she escaped and ran back to her home. Her mother reported the crimes to the police, but Caroline felt she could not face testifying in court. The Wests pled guilty to indecent assault and causing bodily harm and walked away with a £50 fine each. And I think this decision led Caroline to attempt suicide, understandably. The couple's first known murder was Lynda Gough, who was abused and murdered three months after the assault trial of Caroline Owens. The Wests had met her through one of their lodgers. She moved into the home in April 1979 and disappeared shortly after. Other tenants were told she had been evicted for hitting one of the children, but her remains were later discovered in an inspection pit under the garage. Between November 1973 and April

1979, other victims were abused, murdered and dismembered in the location and were buried in the cellar or garden. They were 15-year-old Carol Ann Cooper, 21-year-old Lucy Partington, 21-year-old Therese Siegenthaler, she was from Europe, 15-year-old Shirley Hubbarb; 18-year-old Juanita Mott; 18-year-old Shirley Anna Robinson (who was eight months pregnant with Fred's child at the time of her murder); and 16-year-old Alison Chambers. After Anna Marie ran away, in 1979, Fred focused his incestuous desires onto Heather and May, even going as far as intending to impregnate them. The girls tried to protect each other, Heather was particularly affected by the abuse and convided in friends at school. Her bruises and welts were also noticed in school. Shortly after she finished school, age 16, Heather was murdered by her parents and buried in the garden. In May 1992, Fred began to rape his 13-year-old daughter Louise. She eventually convided in a friend who told her mother, who then reported this to the police. The police started an investigation and while Fred was awaiting trial, Anna Marie contacted the police to give her statements. Initially, the case against the Wests collapsed. However, an investigating officer heard about the family joke, quotes, "that Heather was under the patio. So Fred would often threaten his kids like, "Do you want to end up like Heather under the patio?"

Emma: Oh my god.

Nazia: Even though apparently she had run away or whatever. So the police focused their efforts on trying to find Heather since there was no evidence that she was still alive. Good on that police officer for acting on that hunch. They also discovered that there were no missing persons reports for Rena and Charmaine. The police obtained a search warrant and discovered Heather's remains first. Both Fred and Rose were charged formally in 1994. On the 1st of January 1995, Fred asphyxiated himself in his cell. He left a suicide note which read, "In loving memory, Fred West, rest in peace where no shadow falls. In perfect peace he waits for Rose, his wife. But apparently in the trial she turned against him.

Emma: Ah, okay.

Nazia: If I remember. Emma: She passed away fairly recently, didn't she?

Nazia: I think so, yeah, yeah.

Emma: What a nasty bit of work.

Nazia: Absolutely disgusting. We're almost done, guys. If you've made it this far, I don't even want to say thank you. That's a weird thing to..Just, yeah, we're almost done.

01:25:50.380 Alexander Pichushkin

Emma: We'll move onto Alexander Pichushkin, now, who's also called the Chessboard Killer. He's believed to have killed at least 48 people in Moscow in Russia. He's known as the Chessboard Killer because police found a chessboard in his apartment, which he had used to record all of his victims, one per square. He committed his murders in Bitsevsky Park, which is a massive park in Moscow.

Nazia: That's huge!

Emma: This park is 2,700 acres and in comparison, Hyde Park in London is just 350 acres. Apartment blocks surround the park and the area is known as the Arsehole of the World.

Alexander grew up in one of these apartments with his mother and was still living there when he he was arrested. Ten of his victims lived in the same block of apartments as him. It is believed his odd behaviour started after he fell backwards off a swing, which then struck him on the forehead as it swung back. In 2001, people started to disappear, but as they were mostly homeless or pensioners, nobody really noticed. Then he started to kill people he knew. He would acquaint himself with people in order to kill them, and the book "How to win friends and influence people" was one of his favourite books. Alexander would always take his victims to the wells inside the park that connected the city's sewer system. He would first hit them over the head, but not hard enough to kill them. He wanted his victims to know what was happening. He was sometimes full shards of glass into the victim's skull before pushing them down the well, which was a 30-foot drop. The bodies ended up at the Wastewater Treatment Centre, but it was much later that the police connected them to Bitsevsky Park. It is believed 13 of his victims' bodies are stuck inside the sewage system.

Nazia: Gross.

Emma: Yeah. His first victim was his classmate who he told about his wants of killing someone. His classmate followed him thinking it was a joke. Alexander killed his classmate when he realised he wasn't serious about killing. He was 18 at the time when this happened, and 9 years passed before he killed again. In February 2002, he tried killing Maria Viricheva who was pregnant. She was pushed down the well but she was able to climb back out and ran to her hospital where she told police about the attack. Police found out that she was in Moscow illegally and told her if she kept quiet about the attack, then they would look the other way about her illegal habitation.

Nazia: Fucking hell!

Emma: Three more people were killed in the following three weeks, and then Alexander met 13-year-old Mikhail Lobov. It is believed they met at a metro station, where kids often hung out drinking vodka. Alexander offered him alcohol and cigarettes, and they went to the forest together and ended up at the well. Alexander hit Mikhail on the head and pushed him down the well. Alexander then left the park without realizing that Mikhail's jacket had been caught on a piece of metal in the well. Mikhail managed to climb out and found a police officer and reported the attack, but the officer told him to go home. The following week, Mikhail saw Alexander again at the Metro station where he tried to get another police officer to do something, but he was told again to go away. It was four years after Mikhail's attack when Alexander Puchuskin was finally stopped, and he was sentenced to life in prison.

Nazia: Well done for keeping that one brief. I don't think... Are we going to do an episode or more in depth episode on him later? Do you think?

Emma: I think he's worth a visit. Yeah

Nazia: Not anytime soon.

Emma: No, I'm not sure how much more information I can find out about him, but it would be interesting to find out more about his childhood and what led him to do these kind of things.

Nazia: Because this is more of a recent one as well.

Emma: Yeah.

01:30:06.180 Conclusions

Nazia: So other notable cases of serial killers who had head injuries as children, and we're not going to talk about them. There's John Wayne Gacy, Dennis Raider, who's also known as BTK Killer, and David Berkowitz?

Emma: Berkowitz?

Nazia: Son of Sam. But yeah, I mean, if you want to find out about these people, there's plenty of documentaries and other podcasts that deep dive into them. Yeah, so yikes. That's all I can say.

Emma: That was a heavy episode.

Nazia: That was a really heavy episode. Apologies if we did miss any things that we should have included in the disclaimer, but we hope that in the introduction, you got a picture of what this episode was going to be about. But yeah, that was a dark one. The first part was interesting, the science you bit.

Emma: Yeah, if you stop listening after that, I don't blame you.

Nazia: Yeah, we don't blame you. I don't really have anything else to say, but they're all just very, very horrible people.

Emma: Yeah, I mean, what can you say? I mean, it is interesting, the link between like head injuries and criminal behaviors.

Nazia: Yeah, I mean you hear about it like not people that become serial killers but you hear how some people when they have head injuries it does change their personality or like make them more aggressive. So it kind of makes sense but I think it's the scary ones where people can just about function in society and hold down a job or whatever and go on as long as they do unsuspected, committing these horrible, horrible crimes until they're caught. Like Albert Fish, he was working as a house painter and pretending to be this sweet old granddad. And like even Fred West and Rose West, like their house was friggin dodgy but they still had lodgers and yeah they just got away with it for that long.

Emma: And I think also the police weren't on the ball in some of these cases.

Nazia: No yeah exactly. It's like I don't know if it was I think it was John Wayne Gacy like he was a family man. His family didn't even suspect that he was killing people and burying them in his own house. So, those are the scary ones where they can live that double life.

01:32:43.700 Next Episode

Nazia: Anyway. So next week, no one dies next week. That's the...They don't.

Emma: Yeah, I'm trying to remember.

Nazia: No, next week we are going to be looking at Robert Hendy Freigard, aka The Puppet Master, who is a British con man and all-round asshole. He did start off his crimes in the UK, but the reason we're covering him is because he was arrested in Europe last year. I think it was last year, but he's on trial.

Emma: Ah, that's it.

Nazia: I should know this because I've literally just finished doing the notes. But yeah he's been arrested for attempted murder so thankfully no one died, but he did ruin a lot of lives

Which we'll find, we will discuss. Yeah so if you're not put off, please join us next week.

Emma: Yeah please join us.

Nazia: We promise it won't be as disgusting and horrible and sickening, but it will be just as frustrating because he really is an arsehole. I don't know how else to describe him.

Emma: And we'll have lighter criminal topics to discuss in other episodes as well.

Nazia: Yeah, yeah, we're going to try and keep it a little bit - at least the next two episodes, we're going to lighten the atmosphere a bit. So you don't have to go through this with us again for a while.

Emma: But you can follow us and download us from Spotify, Apple podcasts, Amazon Music, or wherever you get your podcast from.

01:34:37.660 Outro

Nazia: Thank you for listening to the show. We hope you enjoyed this episode. You can find more information about the show on our website at feloniuspod.com or on our Instagram [@felonius.pod](https://www.instagram.com/felonius.pod).

Emma: Links to our show notes can be found in the episode description as well as through our website and social media. You can visit our contact us page and tell us what you think about the show and if there are any cases you would like us to cover. We hope you join us for the next episode. Goodbye!

Nazia: Bye!