

The Starved Rock Murders with Andy Hale

Episode 12: Motives for Murder (and answers to questions from listener emails)

ANDY HALE: Welcome back to the Starved Rock murders with Andy Hale, a podcast where we are examining a tragic triple murder that took place over half a century ago, back in 1960 at the scenic Starved Rock state park located in lasal county, Illinois, where three women were brutally bludgeoned to death. My client Chester Weger was a 21 year old dishwasher at the Starved Rock lodge who was arrested for the brutal crimes convicted and served over 60 years in prison. Chester is currently 83 years old and out of prison on parole. We've been making the case on this podcast that Chester Weger was wrongfully convicted of these horrendous murders. Today, we're going to discuss the issue of motive, which is a crucial issue in any crime. Why, why were these three innocent women beaten to death? We have a lot to talk about. Let's begin.

(sound of eerie music begins to play)

ANDY HALE: Even though the murders at Starved Rock took place over six decades ago, the anger, frustrations, fear, grief, and guilt experienced by all the people involved feel as palpable today, as they did in 1960. Three women lost their lives. One man went to prison for 60 years. Children lost parents, parents lost their children and countless other souls became collateral damage in a horrendous miscarriage of justice that has left generational trauma and shattered lives in its wake. The question that haunts everyone who touches this case is what motivated this brutal crime. What demons possessed whoever performed this heinous act to savagely take the lives of three innocent women. Was it money? Was it lust? Greed? What sin drove someone to want one or more of these women dead and why to do justice to this case, we must peel back all the layers of the onion, no matter how much it might sting the victims, the accused and the families and community members whose lives were forever altered, deserve the truth. As we've said before on this podcast, you can bury the dead, but you can't bury the truth. The ghosts of this case have haunted the dreams of too many people for too long. The truth is out there. We owe it to the victims to not be afraid to discover that truth, no matter how painful it might be.

(music fades out)

Transition to conversation between hosts:

ANDY HALE: Whitney, Episode 12, which is basically three months we've been doing this. Is that right? I know.

WHITNY BRAUN: Yeah. It's uh, it's, it's, it's just, it's crazy to me cuz initially I, I thought, oh, we're we're gonna tell this story quickly. And then every step along the way more details have emerged. And I've, I've just, uh, I I'm so fascinated by all of this that I, I feel like we could go on for hundreds of episodes, but, but we won't, we'll spare people back.

ANDY HALE: Yeah, me too. And I, you know, we thought that the DNA results will be back by now, obviously. Yeah. So we would wrap it up, but we've got a couple more to go today. I wanna talk about motive and I wanna talk about a few miscellaneous issues. Questions people have asked that I wanna try to answer is your seat belt fastened? Are you ready to go?

WHITNY BRAUN: It is as, as always. And I am more than ready.

ANDY HALE: All right. So let's I wanna talk about motive. I've got a book in front of me by Oprah Winfrey. It's called 'what I know for sure'. Have you read this book?

WHITNY BRAUN: I actually have. Yeah.

ANDY HALE: It's an excellent book. Don't you agree?

WHITNY BRAUN: Oh yeah. Yeah.

ANDY HALE: What I know for sure. You know, when she has chapters on things like she talks about, you know, different topics. What I know for sure. Joy, gratitude, power. I wanna talk about what I know for sure in the Starved Rock case this, as I sit here today on episode 12, this is what I know for sure. The Lois Zelensek memo is a spoken gun. Lois Zelensek the telephone operator is an incredibly credible source who is telling the truth. The kid with the bloody clothes in the truck of the car is involved in the Starved Rock murders, Glen Palmatier who places the call from the payphone in Aurora is involved in some way in the Starved Rock murders. His brother William Palmatier, who receives the call, the auto dealer in Peru is involved in some way in the Starved Rock murders. And I think that shows once you, once you pause there.

ANDY HALE: Okay. That, that's what I know for sure. That document. And I urge everybody to read it, please. It's incredible. That document is what I know for sure. I know what's in there is true. And I know what Lois Zelensek, the telephone operator said, my hero is, is true and accurate. So I think once you get to that foundation, and that's what I know for sure that really can help us take a, a turn in the road. We've come to a fork. I think one fork in the road is premeditation. The other fork in the road is this random kind of, you know, somebody who had an opportunity, uh, Gerald Nemkee walking through the, the woods, you know, uh, uh, sex maniac walking through

the woods who happens to just randomly stumble upon the three women and then, and then kill them. Right? And that's, that's the Chester Weger story, right?

ANDY HALE: Sure. It's just this I'm on my break and I run into these three ladies. Once we, in my mind determine that the Palmer brothers are involved in some way with the kid, with the bloody overalls in the trunk of the car. And I think there's more than those three. That to me means we now take we're driving on our road trip. We now take the exit for a premeditation mm-hmm <affirmative> that's the route we're now going. We're not going down the random, oh, I just happen to run into these ladies and now there's gonna be a confrontation. I'm gonna kill them. Is this premeditated act? Are you with me so far?

WHITNY BRAUN: I'm following. Absolutely.

ANDY HALE: What do you think about that?

WHITNY BRAUN: Uh, I mean, to me after all that we've been through there, there's no way in my mind that you can convince me that it's not premeditation at this point. I think after the journey we've been on to your point, Lois Zelensek is a credible source. She could not have made this up. And in light of what she says, I can't see this as being anything but a premeditated crime.

ANDY HALE: Yeah. I, I agree that document just is so important. So that brings me to the next point. Once you take the exit for premeditation, I really, I only really see two scenarios now that I wanna talk about option one, I'll call, um, vengeance slash retribution slash revenge in option two would be the husbands being involved in some way. Mm-hmm, <affirmative>, let's, let's talk about option one, which I'll call vengeance slash retribution or revenge. Meaning somebody planned this to either they had an axe to grind with one of the husbands.

WHITNY BRAUN: Sure.

ANDY HALE: Uh, or they had an axe to grind with one or more of the victims. Okay. I think it's much more likely if we're just staying with option one. I think it's much more likely that the offenders had some axe to grind with the husbands, as opposed to the ladies. I don't think the women were targeted. Like somebody was mad at them. Uh, it seems more likely that it would be an act against the husbands, you know? Um, mm-hmm <affirmative>, you know, and the thing about it, which is strange to me is let's, let's play that out. Let's say somebody's out there. And for some reason they wanna get revenge against Mr. Murphy or it could be any of the husbands. The only thing I think is doesn't make sense in that scenario is all three women are

killed. Yeah. So if you wanted to send a message to let's just take Mr.

ANDY HALE: Murphy, if you wanted to send a message to Mr. Murphy for some reason, and, you know, remember Bill Jansen in, in his report, it's quoted that he should be looked at to see if he had enemies in the Moline area or he was an attorney. Okay. Yeah. And we're gonna talk more about Bill Jansen in a moment. So Bill Jansen, that was on his radar screen. The thing that makes no sense to me is if you wanted to get revenge against Mr. Murphy by killing his wife, why are you killing the other two? Yeah. You know, why is it why you would just think Mrs. Murphy would be targeted solo she's coming out of the grocery store. She's parking her car, you know, in the driveway. Yeah. And then it's, then it's kind of like in your face, like, Hey, Mrs. Murphy got executed and it's a clear message. Mm-hmm <affirmative> but the way it goes down, unless, you know, unless somebody was trying to get back at all three of the husbands, for some reason, like I don't, you know, I, I can't rule anything out. Sure. It just seems like it just kind of odd that all three get killed. So what, what are your thoughts on that scenario?

WHITNY BRAUN: Yeah. I mean that, I, I agree with you. It seems like if this was a crime of vengeance against, let's say one of the husbands yeah. Pick a place that's more directed at the husband. Don't get all three women in a place away from, from their homes. I mean, I that, that seems like a strange hit to me. Yeah. It just, it just doesn't logically flow. Right. Well, go ahead. Sorry.

ANDY HALE:

No, go ahead.

WHITNY BRAUN: Well, I was just gonna say like, okay, maybe, maybe if you're expecting some sort of retribution and your wife is killed along with, uh, you know, two other women, you go, oh, that's meant for me, but it, I, why, why go do that? Right? Why not just, why not kill her in the driveway? Why not kill her in her home? Why not do something that is sending a direct message? Why go to all this trouble so that it that's what doesn't sit right to me about the vengeance, um, scenario.

ANDY HALE: Right? I agree. It'd be a direct, you would think it'd be a direct message. Yeah. One person's killed and you wouldn't, you wouldn't wanna kill these other two ladies. It just doesn't make any sense to me. So that just doesn't quite jive to me. Mm-hmm <affirmative>, you know, in the premeditation sense. Uh, but I qualify everything. When I always say in all these true crying kisses I've worked on, there's always more to the story. True. There's things you don't know. So who knows, let's go to option two. And I don't say this lightly. I, I, you know, when you're talking about the husbands potentially be involved one or more other husbands, you

know, this is a theory that's been out there as well. This is the theory, not a theory. This is what the man from Hennepin told me. Smokey Ronna told him mm-hmm <affirmative> is that one of the husbands wanted his wife killed, you know, wanted a divorce.

ANDY HALE: Apparently she wasn't gonna give a divorce or what or what not. And that's what he said, Smokey Ronna told him. So there is some, you know, that there's evidence of that coming from him. And let's talk about that. There are some parts of that option too, that actually make more sense. Mm-hmm <affirmative>, I've always felt the crime scene was staged to make it look like something. It wasn't where the women dragged into the cave, their clothes pulled down. I also think killing two other companions does make it look like this random yeah. Kind of psycho attack. Nobody was thinking at the time. Oh, I think one of the women's was targeted because three got killed. So I actually think it's kind of consistent with trying to stage something. And it makes sense under that option too, that you would have a couple women be collateral damage cuz it disguises the true intent of what you're doing. Yeah. What are your thoughts on that?

WHITNY BRAUN: That makes a lot more sense to me because if I'm trying to remove someone from existence, right. I'm trying, I'm trying to kill my wife. Uh, having it appear to be this very strange random act of violence in the woods puts a lot more distance between me and her death. You know? And, and, and so to me, this feels like a more logical explanation. And then it's corroborated by this, this account from the man from Hennepin. So I mean, my gut, uh, for what it's worth is that this, this is the, the avenue that we should proceed with in terms of further investigation.

ANDY HALE: And I wanna be clear about this. I, I don't say this lightly, cuz I know this is a heavy topic for families to hear. Yeah. But I think we have to have an honest discussion about it. You know, there are things we're not just pulling this out of the blue. I think there is a context to have this discussion and let me go a little further. I was going through my file and I'm always finding things of interest. Like I say, that are more interesting now than they were on day one. And so I came across something recently that is much more interesting to me now than it was when I first read it. I don't even know why this is in the file. It is a handwritten letter to sheriff Ray Utzi. It is got it in front of me. It's gosh, it's four pages long.

ANDY HALE: A friend of his writes to him and it's just signed. I only got a first name. It looks like it's from a, a first name of Harris and it's written April 27th, 1960. I'm gonna post this on the website. It's on stationary of the union club, Purdue Memorial union, Lafayette, Indiana. And the person is clearly friends with Ray Utzi and is making suggestions on questions that Ray Utzi needs to answer to try to solve this crime. Here's the paragraph, there were number

paragraphs, here's a numbered paragraph that kind of caught my eye paragraph four said were any of the husbands running around with some other babe who wanted at least one of the wives out of the way and had to kill all of them to get it done. Question mark. Okay. So that's interesting. This friend of sheriff Ray Utzi is raising that yeah. As something that he should look into.

ANDY HALE: So if we analyze that question, I think we have to discuss the fact that Robert Murphy did remarry two years later in may of 1962, Robert W. Murphy who was born on August 29th, 1909, married a woman named Marion Anderson who was born on September 7th, 1922, which would mean at the time of the marriage. Mr. Murphy was 52 years old and Marion Anderson was 39 years old. I don't know very much about her, but I want you to talk about what you found out about Marion Anderson, what little you know about her and then what you know about her in 1960, January of 1960.

WHITNY BRAUN: Sure. So, so Marion Anderson is the second wife of, of Robert Murphy, uh, the husband of Francis Murphy. And there are rumors out there, but I have not been able to substantiate this, that she was his secretary at Borg Warner. Again, I cannot find any sort of record of employment, but Marion Anderson gave birth in January of 1960 to a baby boy by the name of James when she married, uh, Robert Murphy two years later. So she gave birth two months prior to the death of, uh, Francis Murphy. All right, she has this son from what I can tell, there's not a father of record, a biological father of record. She is a single mother raising this boy. She then two years later when the boy is ex almost exactly two married exactly too marries Robert Murphy, Robert Murphy adopts him. He takes Robert Murphy's name. So he becomes James Murphy and he raises him as his own.

WHITNY BRAUN: He, he goes to college on a, you know, same, same college. Alma mater becomes an attorney follows in the same footsteps as his stepfather. And that has always been, I think something that's kind of raised eyebrows for people is who is this? Who's this boy's father. And you know, what was the nature of the relationship, uh, prior to the marriage in 1962, now a lot of people have poo-pooed it because there was an erroneous newspaper article that said that they got married two weeks later. And when that was disproven and it was like, oh no, it was actually misprint. It was two years later. People went, oh, two years later. I guess my point that I'll just say for, for what it's worth is two years is not a long time. <laugh> either. Um, and so I, I, I don't know that whether it's two weeks or two years necessarily changes my, uh, suspicion about this. I'll just leave it at that.

ANDY HALE: I do think it's relevant that the woman that Robert Murphy marries two years later gave birth to a son in January of 1960, just

a couple of months before the Starved Rock murders. Did you actually find the birth certificate?

WHITNY BRAUN: Yeah. Um, and so what's interesting to me is there's no father okay. Listed. So what I found was a birth registry now on a birth registry, typically it lists the mother the date of birth, uh, the child's name and the father's surname. Now on this particular birth registry, it lists her surname as his surname. There's no father's surname given. So he's James Anderson. So there's no clue given as to who the biological father is. So yeah, I, I mean, which doesn't prove anything and I don't, I don't wanna just be a gossip monger, but I'm just saying it's, uh, I think that has fueled the speculation. Okay.

ANDY HALE: Well, I think it's a relevant point that has to be discussed, especially when we've got the man from Hennepin telling us, I think in a very credible way. Mm-hmm <affirmative> that Smokey Ronna told him one of the husbands wanted his wife, you know, eliminated mm-hmm <affirmative>. So I think this is a discussion we have to have. And I would like to know more about the genetics here, you know, cuz I do think it's a relevant issue who fathered that boy in January of 1960. I think it's think it's something we have to talk about. Right. I don't see how we can ignore it. And when I've talked about this Starved Rock murders with people, I can't tell you how many people have said to me right away. Get very skeptical the husbands. Yeah. As just kind of like a first impression I've tried to be in this podcast, very factual and try to base things on, on facts that I know.

ANDY HALE: I think, you know, we're talking about this now in episode 12 and I think there is a context to do it in light of us. I think proving it's a premeditated act because of the lowest Lennic issue. We're in a premeditated, you know, that's where we're at now. I think clearly mm-hmm <affirmative> we've got the man from Hennepin telling us what smoke you were have told him. So I think now we actually have a proper foundation to have this discussion. So I think that is a road that makes a lot more sense to me than somebody wanted revenge on one of the husbands then killed all three ladies. That makes less sense to me. So that's where we're at. I don't, you know, I don't know if we're gonna get, you know, unless somebody reaches out with some more information or tips with anybody knows anything, you know, please reach out.

ANDY HALE: I don't know what else we're gonna find out on this. Unless the DNA hopefully maybe gives us some insight and we can connect some dots. I've always hoped the DNA is what gave us the resolution. Yeah. So I think we have to sit tight until we get them. But I think as we sit here today with motive, I don't see any scenario other than somebody was wanting to get back at the husband's

or one of the husbands wanted, uh, his wife out of the way to you. No. Is there a, is there a third possibility?

WHITNY BRAUN: Not that feels remotely plausible

ANDY HALE: Right? Based on what we know.

WHITNY BRAUN: Yeah. Based on what we know, I feel like it, it has to be one of the two and, and maybe it's because I am a woman and inherently suspicious, but my, my mind goes to one of the husbands wanting to remove his wife from the equation. Mm-hmm

ANDY HALE: <affirmative> one other issue. We had a listener reach out with an interesting little point. Let me read you a portion of her emails. I noticed after listening to episode eight, that Mr. Murphy was not buried by his late wife, like many spouses do. He was married to a new lady and buried with her. The other ladies, Lillian and Mildred were buried in the same cemetery as their spouses, just an observation. And then she sent me another one, this same listener. Uh, when I followed up on this, I went on findagrave.com and that shows Mrs. Murphy is not buried with him. Strange because most people who lose his spouse still are buried with them. Parenthesis first wife, at least that's what I think. And I did note, uh, she sent me photos. You can see that Francis Murphy is buried at a cemetery in Geneseo, Illinois, Robert Murphy and Marion Anderson are buried to the same cemetery in Atkinson, Illinois.

ANDY HALE: They're only eight miles apart. And another thing worth noting. Robert Murphy had married Francis Cady in 1936 or 1937. He had been married to Francis for 23 or 24 years at the time of the murders. And they had four children at that time. So this burial issue, I'm not sure how much weight to give it, but it's another fact that needs to be acknowledged. The other thing we've noted this Whitney on, I think in episode five, when I first talked about premeditation, Mrs. Murphy does have some unique things that happened to her. She's got that missing fingertip, which no one has an explanation for which I always thought was something very significant. Her autopsy says there's soiled clothing. And I pointed out those weird interrogation questions to Chester about him, defecating or urinating on any of the victims. Yeah. I tie those two things together. And then she's the only one where they note there's a vaginal injury.

ANDY HALE: And I would note in Chester's interrogation, they asked him, did you kick anyone in the crotch? So it just seems like Mrs. Murphy perhaps is being singled out more so than the other two. Yeah. In those three areas. So it's something we all have to look at. Uh, and I'm gonna continue to investigate that. Can I pivot now to another topic, Whitney, please do. Uh, I wanna just give a couple updates before we move on to a couple miscellaneous things. You've

heard us talk about bill Jansen quite a bit. He was this young, recent Michigan state college graduate in 1960 was interning at the Illinois state. Police gets assigned to the Starved Rock murders to be this fresh set of eyes. And ears works up there a couple months and does this 40 page report that we've been trying to get our hands out, but we've quoted a bunch of it from newspaper articles.

ANDY HALE: So Whitney and I tracked him down. We went out and met with him. Face, face, spent five hours with him and his lovely wife, Nora. They could not have been nicer, super smart. This is my biggest takeaway. Bill Jansen. I brought with me the Lois Zelensek memo. He had never seen it. He was not aware of the issue. He was not aware of the Palmatier brothers and what Lois Zelensek report. If she heard, I thought that was really significant Whitney. If this guy's breeding brought in to be the fresh set of eyes and ears, why isn't he given the Lois Zelensek memo? Why isn't he told to investigate that? How come he doesn't know about it? Yeah. That's awfully suspicious to me.

WHITNY BRAUN: I, I just don't understand how, how you don't hand this over to the guy you're asking to analyze the case. You've got this piece of evidence. You, you can't tell me that's an accident or just, oh, I forgot to slide it on your desk. That to me feels like a very, it's a volitional act of suppression. I am tr I don't want him to see this, whoever, whoever I am, right? Whoever this, this person is, somebody did not give this to him. And that is very, that's fishy. It's so fishy to me.

ANDY HALE: That's the only conclusion you can draw. I mean, this is a bombshell, it'd be one thing. If he said, you know, I investigated it and these are the reasons why I didn't find it credible, or these are the things that I found out about it. Yeah. Whatever that might be. He never saw it. And the there, the, to me, the only explanation is this thing got buried. Yeah. I, I, I, I, I was pretty stunned. I mean, I was expecting him to say that, frankly, that he'd never seen it. And that's what I thought he'd say. And he was pretty surprised to see it. Um, yeah, so that was my big takeaway from that with bill Jansen. But it was interesting just hearing him talk about being a Starved Rock, the murders, you know, he does say that, you know, he Chester was like his number two suspect.

ANDY HALE: I think it's based on really, not much other than he thinks the women got a ride to starve to the, to the St. Louis canyon, uh, which may be true, but not having seen the Lois Zelensek memo was really, really important in telling another update. We reached out Lois Zelensek, has she had some children who are now, you know, basically 69, 70 years old reached out to them. They were not aware of this issue of their mom reporting this Starved Rock, murder, telephone conversation. They were very intrigued by it. They did gimme a tip that, that one of their mom's best friends is still alive. I think she's in her early nineties. So I'm gonna try to talk

to her, uh, soon. So hopefully, maybe I'll have an update on that issue. I'm I want people to know I'm I'm tracking this stuff down. <laugh> uh, just like the Palmer brothers.

ANDY HALE: We are trying to learn more about them. I don't have anything significant to report. I'm all ears. If anybody knows anything about them, please reach out. And one more update. We talked about Chester's cousin, Danny Weger, who was found hanging from a tree a few years later, his death was classified as an older African American male. We had a woman reach out who said she actually saw the body. We are scheduling a, a call or a meeting with her. So I'm hoping to have an update on that as well. So stay tuned. All right. Let's switch gears. I wanna talk about two issues where people reached out to us. I wanna kind of answer a couple, I thought good questions that were, were given the first I'm gonna, I'm gonna read you this email got an email from a listener. Okay. It says listening to episode seven, where you think the people from Aurora and lasal are talking about the bloody overalls is fascinating, but did you know just a few days after the Starved Rock Murders, the entire wind's family from Seneca was found shot to death in their home.

ANDY HALE: On Saturday, March 19th, 1960 Seneca is also in Lasalle county. Could the two men have been talking about those murders by the way, great job with what you're doing. All right. I thought that was a really interesting question. And for people that don't know, here's, here's the background, cuz I've had several people ask me if this wind's family that was all found dead was related to the Starved Rock murders. Let me explain what happened on Saturday, March 19th, 1960, 29 year old William winds, his 28 year old wife, Patricia and their three children all under the age of five were found in their home shot to death. The children were found dead in their beds. William winds and his wife Patricia were found dead in the living room with a 22 caliber pistol nearby neighbors had reported that the lights had been on in the house since the prior Thursday, which would've been March 17th, 1960, the day after the women's bodies were discovered at Starved Rock in St.Louis canyon.

ANDY HALE: There's a few things odd about this case. Whitney. I wanna describe it was initially reported that William winds had killed his wife and children and then killed himself. But within a few days, the police were reporting that they now believe that Patricia winds had killed her husband and children and then shot herself because her husband had been shot in the center of his forehead and she had been shot in her right temple. So I guess they theorized that she killed her husband and then killed herself. Her body was also apparently found laying across the lakes of her husband. This is what's interesting on March 28th, 1960, there's an article in the time Streeter that said state laboratory tests have failed to reveal any powder deposits on the hands of either William winds or his wife, Patricia, that might indicate who wielded the gun that brought death to them and their children in their Seneca home 10 days ago.

ANDY HALE: So it's odd that there was, they couldn't tell from any kind of, you know, gunshot residue test of either of them firing a gun. And they in on April 19th, there's a coroner's jury that rules that Patricia winds killed her husband and three children just based on how the bodies were found. Okay. So let's pause there. I've been asked many times. Do you think this is related to the Starved Rock Murders? I don't have any evidence that it is. So I, I that's my answer. I just don't have any evidence that it's related. It does happen within a couple days. It is strange that these five people are, you know, the husband, wife and the three kids are all found shot to death and there's no powder deposits on either the husband or the wife. But this is what I wanna say about whether the Palmer brothers were talking about this murder, the winds murders.

ANDY HALE: Uh, I think the answer is definitely no, but here's why if you remember in the Lois Zelensek memo, Glen Palmatier starts out saying there's a big article in today's paper about the murders. Well, I know, and I already posted this. There's a huge article in Chicago. Tribu in March 21st about the Starved Rock. It is the headline huge article. All the articles about the winds murders are all taking place on March 19th and 20th. That's the thrust of the articles mostly on March 19th, not March 21st. And we know from that Chicago Tribune article that March 21st article that talks about the Starved Rock murders, they talk about the auto dealer in lasal who gives this tip, which clearly to me sounds like William Palmatier. And that clearly links into what Glen Palmatier is calling his brother William about. Yeah. The other thing is, this was a shooting, you know, you've got three kids dead in their bed.

ANDY HALE: Looks like they're shot when they're sleeping. Mr. Winters has a shot to his forehead. Mrs. Winters has a shot to her temple. Yeah. I don't think you would necessarily have bloody overalls. It's not that kind of a crime. The people are shot. It's not like you've got three women who have blunt force trauma who are beaten to death and dragged into a cave where you're gonna get all this blood on you. And the brothers did not claim, you know, when they were, when they were asked about this phone call, they just denied, there was a phone call. They didn't say, oh, we were talking about that. Wind's murderer. We were talking about that guy whose family was shot. So I think it's a really interesting question that that person reached out to ask.

WHITNY BRAUN: Yeah, exactly.

ANDY HALE: I think the wind's murders is awfully suspicious and weird, but I don't have any basis to say it's related to the Starved Rock Murders. What are your thoughts about the whole issue? Yeah,

WHITNY BRAUN: I, I think they're just two separate matters. Um, you know, I mean two horribly tragic crimes that I don't think are

necessarily linked by anything more than geography, because to your point, I mean, if, if I'm Glen and William Palmatier and I'm asked by the police, you know, you're talking about a murder in this phone call apparently, and I am not doing anything wrong, I would just immediately go. Yeah, exactly. I was, uh, I was talking about the, the wind's crime. Yeah. That's what we were talking about. Moving on, right. It just, to me, to me, I think it's just, it's just a separate crime that tragically happened in a very close geographic proximity and timeline, but I don't, I can't find any connection, uh, between these two crimes. Yeah. And I I've looked, I mean, again, I've

ANDY HALE: Looked. Yeah. I mean, I I'm all ears. I, I, I I'm all ears. If anybody has information about it, I haven't seen anything yet. Yeah. Other than it's suspicious that the there's no, you know, powder on their hands. Yeah. And I'm also, you know, just, yeah, it just it's, it's strange. I've got another reader comment. I, I wanna read an email. We got, let me read this one. Mm-hmm <affirmative>, here's what the listener says. In episode five, you keep referring to the point that the women were not quote, sexually assaulted and a quote, as there was no injury or semen found as a forensic nurse, I can assure you that most victims of sexual assault do not have any injuries and that she puts in parenthesis as per majority of the research. And you assume all assault is a penile vaginal assault. The women could have been assaulted by an object fingers, et cetera.

ANDY HALE: These are all examples of sexual assault that do not meet your criteria. As stated in the episode, if you're going to comment on sexual assault, it is so important that you define what you mean so that your listeners are aware that a penile vaginal assault with semen present is not the definition of a sexual assault. There's so much more to that term and that a vast majority of victims of sexual assault have no injuries, post assault. I think that's an excellent point. That listener is absolutely right. It's an excellent point. So I wanna just be very clear I've in this podcast, I've tried to be very factual and transparent mm-hmm <affirmative> and I think her point is well taken. I just want you, let's just talk about what we know, what you and I know based on the autopsy. Can you just describe what the autopsy notes for victims a, B and C and that's all we can, that's all we can really say is what the autopsy says.

WHITNY BRAUN: Exactly. We're we're going off of what, uh, the 1960 report says, and, uh, in the 1960 report body, a, which was Mrs. Murphy's body is said to have on her labia major on the left side, she has edema, which is swelling and a hematoma, which is a bruise it's largely around the, the synthesis pubic, which is, um, basically she has a large swollen bruise, um, outside of her vagina. But that, that bruising and trauma does not extend inside the vaginal canal. And then the summary, uh, in the report says, there's no anatomic evidence of rape. We could speculate all day that other things might have happened, but there's all we have to go off is the autopsy report, which says, again, there's no anatomic evidence of rape.

There's some sort of external blunt force trauma to her crotch, but not any further evidence that would suggest what made that.

WHITNY BRAUN: We don't know. We can just speculate. Maybe it was a kick. Maybe it was, uh, a blow by something we don't know body B uh, and body C have basically exactly the same write up in the autopsy report. And that's, uh, that's Mrs. Linguist and Oetting, uh, and, and the autopsy report says we were unable to determine whether or not they were raped. There is no evidence though, of forcible entry or, or separation, uh, of the skin. There's no evidence of sperm in the vagina and there's no bruising or laceration visible on, on the vagina. So it would appear, uh, on both, um, of Mrs. Oetting and Mrs. Linguist that, that part of their body was not harmed, right. There was, there's no visible evidence of any sort of assault. Mrs. Murphy does have bruising, but it appears to be external in nature. Um, and nothing that, nothing that was traumatizing to her internal anatomy, but to this listener's comment, we just simply can't know if there was non-traumatic, uh, interference with any of their, their anatomy. We, we don't know, there's no, there's no reference to that, but, but the theory that this was a violent sexual assault, can't be substantiated. We have no proof of that. And I think that's the bottom line. We have no proof that there was a sexual assault here.

ANDY HALE: Got it. Thank you for, for kind of walking through that autopsy and on the topic of, of sexual assault. I wanna say one other thing in a prior episode, I wanna kind of give an apology here. In a prior episode, I was talking about allegations that Chester had been accused of rape in a young girl when he was 12 years old. And I made kind of a flippant remark, like, so what meaning it had nothing to do with the Starved Rock Murders of these three women. I wish I could kind of take back how I said that, cuz it was, it was insensitive and appropriate, you know, rape, let me be clear. Rape is a very serious issue and it should never be diminished or dismissed. So I did not mean to, to kind of give that impression. I regret the manner in which I discussed that issue.

ANDY HALE: And I just wanna apologize. I just think that needed to be said. Uh, and one of the little, well I'm on the subject of kind of corrections. I also wish when I talked about George spars, I would've characterized his death as simply being he died by suicide. I think that's the correct way to, to say that. So I wanted to clear both those things up Whitney. I think that's covered all my topics for today. I really thought it was important. I've been wanting to talk about motive. I mean, I always look at this case. Why, why would these three women have been killed in this fashion? And I thought today, episode 12 was the right time to do it. We've patiently waited to discuss it. Mm-hmm <affirmative> because now we've got the factual foundation of premeditation.

(music begins to play)

Knowing what the man from Hennepin has told us today was the day. I think we needed to have that honest discussion. And I'm hoping we can learn more about the why question as we move forward to everybody out there. Uh, thank you for joining Whitney and I on this podcast road trip, we're getting close to our destination. I'm looking at our GPS. We are getting close, but we've got a few special episodes left that you're not gonna wanna miss. We're not done yet. Stay tuned. We'll be back next Thursday with a brand new episode and Whitney, I look forward to continuing the discussion.

WHITNY BRAUN: Oh me too.

(music fades out)

ANDY HALE: Thanks for listening to this episode of the Starved Rock murders with Andy Hale, we have to continue to take a hard look at the issue of motive. In this case, we have a lot more work to do. As I mentioned, we are starting to wind things down until we take a break to await the DNA results in late July, but we have a couple more special episodes that you won't wanna miss. Please visit our website AndyHalPodcast.com where each week we are posting the documents and newspaper articles that we discuss during each episode. If you know anything about the Starved Rock murders, please email us no tip or information is too small. It all matters. And we need your help. And if you know anyone that you think was wrongfully convicted, if there's another Chester weaker out there, reach out. We would love to hear about that as well. If you enjoy today's episode, please subscribe, rate and review us wherever you get your podcasts. Your reviews and ratings mean so much to Whitney and me. This show was produced in collaboration with Phineas Ellis sound designed by studio D design content and promotion by Bell and Ivy and hosted by myself and Whitney Braun. We'll see you next time.