

Death By Gaslight Chandler “Chaz” Halderson

(musical interlude) Ring around the rosy; A pocket full of posies; Ashes, ashes; we all fall down.

Sherry: Welcome to the Parricide Podcast. I’m Sherry...

Marie: And I’m Marie.

Sherry: And today we're going to finish up with Part 2 of the episode, Death by Gaslight. This is the story of Chandler Halderson - who murdered both of his parents.

Marie: In Part 1 of this episode, we introduced you to the many people who were being gaslit by Chaz. We covered the murder of his parents - and are, right now, in the process of sharing his cover-up efforts (as well as how he gets caught). If you have not yet listened to Part 1, you may want to go and do that right now. You've missed a lot! We'll wait right here for you. We're going to jump right in.

As always, this podcast contains adult language and adult themes - it's not for kids. I would like to add that this podcast is, perhaps, more graphic than some of our other podcasts - just because of the nature of the murder. So, please take that into account when you're deciding to listen.

Sherry: Remember, Chaz reported his parents missing on July 7th. So, now we're to the 8th of July. The police asked for and received that video footage from the neighbors. Chaz could be seen leaving and returning all of those times between July 1st and July 7th. The police will later match his comings and goings to other electronic data that recorded those trips he took to his crime scenes; as he spread his parents’ remains around Southern Wisconsin. I

n the early evening of July 8th, Chaz could be found on the front lawn - holding a news conference. He sounded oh-so-brave and oh-so-noble as he confidently stated, “We'll find them.” Regarding the naysayers who were claiming they were dead, he replied. “It's better not to listen to the negative theories.” His positivity seemed too good to be true. And while he was having that news conference, the search for the Haldersons intensified. Detective Baverstock began interviewing friends, and while interviewing Kat on July 8th he says there were some red flags. But he didn't go into details. Next up was Cresent.

Marie: Why wasn't Dulce interviewed next?

Sherry: Well, Dulce had actually already done her part. While at school that morning - the 8th - she'd been mulling over everything she knew about Chaz and his missing parents. She kept thinking about that day when Chaz had appeared asking to take a swim. She really didn't know if she trusted Chaz anymore - she didn't think she did. And she hoped she was wrong - but she was pretty sure she wasn't. She'd come to a decision; but she wasn't convinced that it was the correct decision. She quietly contacted Detective Liz Allen at the Dane County Sheriff's Office and said they needed to talk. Detective Allen and her colleague, Detective Baverstock, headed to her school to see what she had to tell them. Remember, this is Kat's mother.

She told them all about what had happened on the 5th - how Chandler had appeared asking to swim but somehow wound up out in the woods instead. And then how he'd subsequently shown up at the pool; taken a weird little pool bath and left. She told them it might be nothing, but she was very worried that her daughter was caught up in something pretty bad.

Anyway, Crescent didn't really have a lot to add. She knew Dulce had talked to the police and she knew they'd searched her property already. In fact, the police had declared her home a crime scene and begun a more thorough search that afternoon. As she was being interviewed she corroborated what Dulce had told them about the 5th of July.

Marie: Wow, the whole farm was declared a crime scene?

Sherry: Oh, yes.

Marie: That's horrible.

Sherry: Um-hmm.

Marie: Why?

Sherry: Guess what they found.

Marie: What? Blood?

Sherry: Um-um.

Marie: A body?

Sherry: Nope.

Marie: Then what?

Sherry: They found body parts. Well - a body part; concealed from view with tree branches and small logs. It had been secured with black rope. They also found a bloody tarp. It had a shoe print and a fingerprint that Forensics were able to tie back to Chaz.

Marie: Mmm...I think you kind of cheated. That's kind of a body.

Sherry: (chuckles) Says who? They also found a saw blade, a pair of scissors, an antique saw with a chrome handle, and some bolt cutters hidden in a nearby oil drum. The Investigators quickly confirmed that the remains were those of Bart Halderson.

Marie: Oh.

Sherry: Yeah. The torso had bullet holes in its back. Bart had been shot at least three times.

Marie: That's horrible. And in the back.

Sherry: Um-hmm. The ultimate betrayal. There was still a lot to do before Felony charges could be filed. The Investigators had yet to discover what they would find of Krista's remains - at that swimming hole. But they knew that both Bart and Krista Halderson had been murdered by their son.

He was booked into the County Jail for providing false information in a Missing Person's case at 9:30 that evening.

Marie: What a bad son.

(musical interlude)

Marie: So, what really happened? Why did he kill them? And why does he have so many stories about his success - when he had no actual success? Who is he really?

Sherry: Those are a lot of good questions. Um. Let's see if we can answer a few of them.

A lot isn't known about Chaz and his childhood, but we do know that he lied about who he was and what he did on the regular as a young adult. Chaz's parents had always told their boys that they needed to be in school or have a job in order to live at home. For whatever reason, Chaz wasn't willing to do either. He decided that living rent-free was a better plan. But he needed to keep his parents fooled in order to make this happen. Chaz started a gaslighting campaign intended to keep him doing as he pleased - when he pleased - without having his parents nagging him to work on creating a good future for himself. He told them he was in college and working for American Family Insurance. When pushed, he created false records, a few fake emails, and even a fight with a fictional, inept campus employee. He deflected their questions with a dour, disrespectful attitude - this same demeanor can be seen on the tapes of him being interrogated. You can look them up on YouTube.

Marie: Okay. What, exactly, is gaslighting?

Sherry: Gaslighting is a manipulative tactic wherein the victim is left questioning reality because they are fed a steady stream of lies. The Gaslighter actively questions facts, undermines reality, refutes memories the victim has, and uses psychological warfare to push the victim into questioning all reality. I have a friend who once told me she would never need to do LSD because her gaslighting child constantly challenged any grip on reality she had.

Marie: Wow! That sounds really hard!

Sherry: I think that would be a very hard life to live.

Chaz actually had gone to school at the Madison Area Technical College. He'd taken a few courses in Psychology - although he'd told everyone he had majored in Renewable Resource Engineering - which was a lie. His grades had been less than dismal, and he was no longer in school. When his father began to get an inkling of his spectacular failure as a college student, Chaz sprang into inaction. In the Summer of 2020 - when the school was breathing down his neck; insisting he perform - his dad insisted on seeing issues with the college resolved. Chaz knew his father was challenging the truth of his stories. Incensed, he contacted the fake Daniel Spieth - who didn't really work at the school at all - and requested a meeting. And then he answered himself. Here's one of those fake emails. It's addressed to both himself and his father; which should have been his first clue - given FRPA laws. Here, do you want to read it?

Marie: Sure. So, this email was August 5, 2020, at 5:10 p.m. "Hello, my name is Daniel Spieth, I just spoke to Chaz on the phone earlier today and I will be handling this ticket. Unfortunately I will not be able to hold the meeting until Tuesday the 11th at 10:30 am. If there are any conflicts please let me know as soon as possible to reschedule. When the call starts at 10:15 i will send the link, zoom is a browser

application that will need access to your camera and microphone so be sure to allow them when prompted. Thank you and have a great rest of your day, Daniel Spieth.”

Sherry: So, the first problem with this email is that it is addressed to both Chaz and his father which would be breaking the FRPA laws.

Marie: What are FRPA laws?

Sherry: FRPA stands for Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. It's the Federal law that pushes parents out of their children's lives when they enter college. The colleges and universities still try to hold the parents responsible in paying for schooling but - unless the child signs a waiver - no information about that child will be disclosed to the parents. So, if your child is struggling, in real trouble, failing, suicidal, or whatever - the school won't tell you a thing about it. It's usually not a big deal if your child is problem-free. But in this case, it allowed Chaz to get away with huge lies.

Here's a tip for parents: as your child enters the university, you can have them sign a waiver allowing the school to give you information, when necessary, that can literally save your child's life. Each school has their own waiver form that's available upon request and I'd recommend any parent who's at all worried about their child to have that waiver form signed.

Marie: Oh, okay. That's really good to know.

Sherry: Yeah. The second problem with this email is its sender. The sender is Danielspiethmatc@gmail.com.

Marie: Oh, yeah. That's weird. There's not an institutional email?

Sherry: No. That's - especially for a university or a college, or even a technical school - that's super weird.

Marie: Yeah.

Sherry: Yeah.

Marie: Then I noticed - when I was reading it - it's also got grammatical errors. Like the 'I will not be able to' - we've got some lowercase l's and i will send the link. There's not really any punctuation; other than periods. There's this really strange salutation. It's kind of like a Tech Support email, rather than a university complaint email.

Sherry: Right. They're handling a ticket. And the other thing that I found super interesting is - he has asked for six days to solve it. Just like this murder case. He murdered them on the 1st and took six days before he went into the police.

Marie: Yeah. That's very strange.

Sherry: And kind of eerie.

Marie: It is.

Sherry: Anyway, Chaz went so far as to call the college with his father listening nearby. He yelled at a poor unsuspecting clerk; accusing the school of messing and mixing up his records - and insisting it get

fixed (despite his already knowing there was nothing to be fixed). The bad grades on his record were actually the grades he'd earned. And he wasn't even a registered student at the time. He wasn't close to graduating, for certain.

Marie: This is a real mess.

Sherry: Everything in his life is a mess. And it's like he's this shell of a person who's creating all of these fake stories - instead of just becoming a person.

Marie: Yeah.

Sherry: But despite strong evidence to the contrary, Chaz continued to claim his student status - claiming he would be graduating with his Associates Degree that Spring. Spring came and went, and Chaz didn't graduate. According to his girlfriend, Kat, he was one class short of actually getting to walk - but the Graduation Office had missed that fact until it was too late. When his dad relentlessly pursued the issue of his not graduating as pretend-planned, claiming it was due to the records mix-up, he used a tragic fall down the stairs to miss an important meeting that he'd fake-scheduled to discuss it - and used fake Aaron Hoover to reschedule another fake appointment that was out past the planned murder date. There was no length that was considered to be too far when he was set on deceiving someone.

Marie: Yeah. I mean, you could argue that he spent more time and energy gaslighting people than it would have taken to actually just go to college, get a job, make a good life for himself.

Sherry: Absolutely right.

Marie: It's also, like, he created two fake emails and made these correspondences where he'd write, "I'm very upset about this." And another person would say, "Oh, well. Let's set a meeting." And he did all of this just to trick his parents?

Sherry: Well, he actually created four different fake emails to use when deceiving his parents regarding both schooling and his employment. He had Tom Selznick for American Family; Aaron Hoover, Alyssa Brandt, and Daniel Spieth for MATC. Fake people who fake-helped keep his deception going when his parents got too close to the truth.

Marie: It's a lot.

Sherry: Yeah. But his dad was pretty much on to him. Like all parents, Bart had been doing back bends trying to believe the lies his son concocted. But after a while he quietly started going behind him; checking facts. This is why Bart called the school - posing as Chaz - to ask why his transcripts had not been mailed to him as requested. By the time fake-Chaz had finished with the phone call, he knew the real Chaz had lied about being in school, the subjects he'd taken, when he was in school, and his reported success in school. He also knew about how Chaz had invented fictitious college employees and used fake emails to deceive him. Knowing how Chaz lied - and what actions he took to bolster up his lies - must have been hugely disappointing and upsetting. His dad immediately sent Chaz a text; letting him know the jig was up.

This is where his dad's mistake was. Chaz's lies had exposed the one big truth he didn't really want to know - his highly accomplished son was actually just a failure-to-launch kid.

Marie: See, I think this is where it gets dangerous is...for people who create this identity - they wrap their own self-worth and personal identity up in the lies - and if it's exposed, they get really angry at the person who exposes it.

Sherry: And they become determined to not let that person destroy their house of cards.

Marie: They act like it's that person's fault.

Sherry: But it wasn't just school that he was lying about. He'd also been lying about his current job and the SpaceX offer.

So, one common thread that we do see a lot in Youthful Parricide Offenders is lying. And the case of Chaz Halderson provides a graphic example of how lying can morph into gaslighting. The parent or parents are often scrambling to figure out exactly what the truth of their child is, and what their child's doing.

Chaz had told his family and friends that he worked for American Family Insurance as a remote Online Help Desk. This was in 2021 so, of course, he was working from home - just like his dad (because of Covid). This arrangement had its drawbacks. He spent all of his days on his computer - everyone thought he was working, so they were fine with that - when he was actually playing computer games. But Chaz's dad was all over his butt to be up and working at 8 a.m. This was not supposed to happen! But it beat looking for real work, so he took it. There was a second problem that was, well, much more problematic. His dad was a CPA, so he was very much a 'show me the money' kind of guy. When he asked Chaz why he was still broke if he was working, Chaz came up with a string of excuses. First, he said that HR had messed up. He was registered as a salaried employee - but HR had messed up and set him up as an hourly employee. They had decided to withhold his pay until they could get everything set right. Then he'd get one big paycheck.

Marie: Yeah. That lie could only hold up for, at most, a month. That's really not how people do it - especially a Fortune 500 company.

Sherry: No. That's not how they do it at all. But when that was cleared up, he said he'd messed up. He'd given them the incorrect deposit number - so that needed to be cleared up before they could actually pay him again. Next, he said the amount they paid him was so big, the bank questioned the deposit and had held his funds - so they could investigate.

Marie: Okay. So, a lot of flimsy lies.

Sherry: Um-hmm. And I don't think his dad was buying them.

Marie: No.

Sherry: All of his claims, though, were backed by emails - that went back and forth between Chaz and his fake HR people. This was a lot of work and, of course, he still had his dad to answer to. Because they were both working from home.

Marie: Hmm. So, how does he get his dad to back off - and also provide a reason that no one is seeing any income from a current fake job?

Sherry: It's easy! Get hired by a prestigious company that's out of State. Dad will think of you as a go-getter and get off of your back - and you can say you're saving all of that money to get a car and your new home setup.

Marie: Ah.

Sherry: And a new lie was hatched. Chaz announced he'd been hired by SpaceX, and he needed to save all of his money so he could buy a car and pay for an apartment deposit in Florida. He was supposed to complete online training for one week – and leave for his new job on June 11th - and officially start at SpaceX on June 14th. This was an excellent job offer.

Marie: But a pretty harsh deadline.

Sherry: Um-hmm. Yes.

Marie: Now, I realize these are all lies, but how is he paying for his expenses?

Sherry: Well, we do know that he didn't own a car - he used his parents' cars, he lived in his parents' home, he used his parents' insurance, and he ate his parents' food.

Marie: But he had a girlfriend. How did he pay for things like dates and little gifts?

Sherry: He didn't. Chaz's girlfriend paid for their dates. He had told her his income was going toward their future. He told her he'd bought a car and paid the fees for their new apartment in Titusville. He was moving there in July - and she would follow him in August when the lease on her apartment was up.

Marie: So, he was just a mooch.

Sherry: Um-hmm. There was no car. There was no apartment. There was nothing. He couldn't even afford a gun to shoot his parents. That apparently was handed to him as a gift - by one of his gamer friends.

Marie: That's terrible. I can't imagine that's a fairly normal gift. I wonder if his friend knew what he was going to do with it.

Sherry: According to that friend – no.

Marie: I did have a question about this timeline.

Sherry: Okay.

Marie: If he's supposed to leave for his new job on June 11th - and start on the 14th - how is he going to not move until July?

Sherry: That's a really good question. So first, his brother, Mitch, was diagnosed with Diabetes - Diabetes Type 1. He went to the doctor not feeling well and found himself in the hospital. It was very serious. And, of course, Chaz said, "I can't go now. I'll call them and delay my start date." And then a week later is when he threw himself down the stairs.

Marie: Ahh, Okay. So, it was a delayed move date.

Sherry: Right. So, he had delayed that move date to July - and then had this injury.

Marie: Okay.

Sherry: So, back to this gun that he was given.

Marie: Um-hmm.

Sherry: One of the guys he'd met during his endless days of gaming - when he was fake-working - was a man named Andrew Smith. Andrew had been living in Germany when they established their virtual friendship. In June of 2021 - two weeks before the murders - Andrew was Stateside and decided to become friends with Chaz in real life. He traveled to Wisconsin to spend some time with him. On June 12th, Andrew gave him that gift - an SKS rifle and 400 rounds of ammunition. This is the gun that he used to shoot his father in the back two weeks later.

Marie: I know that this isn't super important, but I don't know a lot about guns. What does SKS mean?

Sherry: It's a semi-automatic rifle originally designed by the Soviet Union. The acronym, SKS - I hope I don't murder this - but it stands for Samozaryadnyj Karabin Simonova. Semi-automatic means it self-loads - which means it uses the force of - usually recoil - to expel the bullet casing, and it loads the subsequent bullet.

Marie: Oh, okay. So, this is a pretty high-powered gun.

Sherry: Yes. It's a very powerful rifle. The truth of who Chaz was had begun emerging with all of this new information. With all of the trappings removed, it appears this case boiled down to this: Chaz decided to kill his parents when he realized his dad had caught him red-handed. He didn't want to be kicked out of the house. He liked his lackadaisical lifestyle, and he needed to find a way to afford it with, of course, the least amount of effort. He was aware that they had a million dollars in life insurance alone - so his dead parents meant he wouldn't have to move, and he would have the resources to live the life he wanted without having to deal with them.

Marie: That's horrible.

Sherry: It is. It's pretty devastating.

Marie: It is. And, once again, I go...well, you really should not tell your children about your financial situation; and especially not about your life insurance.

Sherry: No. You might want to make them aware that there's a small policy - and the small policy might be five billion dollars - but don't tell them what the amount is. Don't get them planning on any of your money.

Marie: I think that what I'm going to do...is make a little folder and put it in my desk. And when I die and they go through my things, then they can find out. They don't need to know right now.

Sherry: That's right. I think that's the wisest course of action.

The last conversation his father had on this earth was that one with the school wherein he confirmed Chaz had been lying to them all along. The last text he sent was to Chaz. He sent one letting him know that he'd spoken to the school and knew all about the lies. Chaz panicked as he watched his father

systematically work toward the truth - and he knew it was time for him to get away with murder. Directly after that, Chaz murdered him - shooting him in the back with the SKS his friend had given him.

(musical interlude)

Sherry: As you can see, what Chaz said he was doing was rarely what Chaz was doing. He was an inveterate liar. I think I'll just make this sentence a macro since I use it every time I write one of these podcasts.

Marie: I think that's what made our first episode with Nikki Reynolds so intriguing. Although she does admit that she lied a lot, she's one of the few kids who didn't show up after the murder with a pack of lies ready to hand out.

Sherry: I agree. I think that she at least had that freshness of honesty after the murders.

Marie: Yeah.

Sherry: But let's go over the evidence regarding his lies and see if we can see anything more.

Marie: Okay. I think we should probably just start with what the Investigators found. Um...and let's start with SpaceX.

Sherry: Okay.

Marie: In June, of course Chaz had to know he was in trouble - because he was supposed to start. He'd set these deadlines for himself, and his lies had left everyone expecting him to pack up and move to Florida to work for SpaceX.

Sherry: But he didn't have any money, and he didn't have anywhere to go, and he didn't have a job.

Marie: Yeah. So, that's kind of scary. Um...and he had...he also had this fake appointment set up at the college that his father was insisting on attending with him. So, now he desperately needs a way out of these lies - and I guess he found a solution that was less painful to him than telling the truth.

On June 17th, he threw himself down a set of stairs and said it was an accident. He was acting funny, so he was taken to the Emergency Room to get checked out. After this trip he appears wearing a cervical collar. He told everyone the doctor had told him he had a serious brain injury. In fact, he claimed the doctor told him he needed to worry about this being a serious spine injury - or an aneurysm. It was so serious he may need surgery in the near future to avoid potential paralysis. And the worst news; the doctor said he should not fly or travel long distances. So, Florida was impossible, and SpaceX was off the table.

Oh. And that appointment with his dad and the school was delayed.

Sherry: Wow, that fall down the stairs seems to really have solved his problems.

Marie: Yeah. But can you imagine throwing yourself down the stairs, instead of just telling people the truth? What if he had been hurt?

Sherry: I'm sure he was very careful with how he threw himself down the stairs. There were no witnesses - his father just heard a bump bump bump.

Marie: Oh, okay.

Sherry: So, who knows how true even the fall was.

Marie: That's true.

Sherry: But isn't that amazing - that people were believing him when he said it might be an aneurysm, it might be a brain bleed, it might be a spinal injury. My legs, I can't feel them.

Marie: It's very strange. Now at trial, the Emergency Room doctor was called as a witness - and said that although it was likely the tumble had left Chaz with a mild concussion, his CT scan did not show any abnormalities whatsoever. He did not tell Chaz that there was the possibility of any spinal injury, brain bleed, aneurysm, or paralysis.

Sherry: But he had that cervical collar.

Marie: Well, the doctor had told him that he was fine. Chaz had complained about pain in his neck, so the doctor offered him a cervical collar - which Chaz accepted.

Sherry: Oh!

Marie: Yeah. But the doctor had thought Chaz would wear the collar for a couple of days - and just take it off when he was feeling better. It wasn't a big deal, and it really wasn't even necessary. He also flatly denied telling Chaz that he may need surgery in the future. And he never told him he couldn't fly or travel long distances because, again, the examination and CT scan indicated that Chaz was fine.

Sherry: And yet he wore that cervical collar every day - and he capitalized on having his girlfriend and his mother get things for him, help him up the stairs, help him to walk - like he was an invalid.

Marie: Yeah. I think, at his core, he just wanted to be pampered and this was just another way to have people do whatever he wanted.

Sherry: So pathetic.

Marie: Um-hmm. On July 1st, Krista left work at around 5 p.m. Surveillance videos show her arriving home at about 5:10 p.m. and going in the house. Other than the text she'd sent to her son saying she was in White Lake, Krista had not used her phone since sending Chaz a text promising to buy him a soda on her way home from work, as per his request. But at 8:15 p.m. her vehicle pulls out of the driveway and stops at the Quick Trip store where Chaz exits the vehicle and purchases two 10-pound bags of ice.

Sherry: Well, that's interesting. He wasn't lifting anything - or doing any chores.

Marie: No. This was the first time since his accident that Chaz had been seen not wearing his neck brace - and the neck brace never reappears.

Sherry: Oh, my.

Marie: So, it seems like the neck brace was just for his family's benefit. On July 2nd, some neighbors noticed that someone was burning stuff.

Sherry: In the middle of July?

Marie: Yeah. That's really strange, right?

Sherry: Yeah.

Marie: The fire appeared to be coming from the Halderson fireplace in the early morning hours. And at 7:00 a.m. Chaz is seen purchasing a tarp - and that is the tarp which they find on the farm with blood and his bloody footprint.

Sherry: Ahh. Okay.

Marie: They also found a Target bag filled with bloody cleaning rags with Kat's name on it - along with an order date. Which we talked about a little earlier. They determined that that was the bag she had bought him cleaning items in - like a Target pickup - so her name was on the bag.

Sherry: That makes sense.

Marie: Yeah. And, again, they don't think she had any knowledge that this was anything to do with a murder.

Sherry: Okay.

Marie: She just thought he needed a Swiffer. And then there was also a rope tied around the tarp holding his father's torso - and that was an exact match to the type of rope that was found in the Halderson's garage.

Sherry: Interesting.

Marie: Yeah. And then that text message - supposedly the last one Krista ever sent? Telephone triangulation indicates that the message was sent from Windsor, Wisconsin - which makes sense, since the police found both Krista and Bart's phones wrapped together in tin foil and a paper towel and hidden in a shoe under a shelf in the house. The message had clearly been faked by Chaz.

Sherry: Did Chaz think they would not search the house at some point?

Marie: Yeah. I don't know why he would hold on to their phones. Maybe he needed them for passwords or something?

Sherry: And hide them in a shoe under a shelf - that's nutty.

Marie: I mean, he had to know that the police would eventually search the house. But he seemed to think he was above investigation.

Sherry: Um-hmm. And he was pretty lazy.

Marie: He was.

Sherry: He wasn't lazy, though, when he was cleaning up.

Marie: No. He was pretty thorough. After his arrest the investigators returned to the home to complete a more intensive search. Remember the fireplace where Chaz said he'd shattered the glass playing ball with his dog?

Sherry: Um-hmm.

Marie: During that search, they found part of a human skull in that fireplace.

Sherry: Oh!

Marie: Yeah. And luminol testing indicated traces of blood everywhere. In the garage, they also confiscated an axe that was found to have human blood on it, and a pair of Chaz's shoes that had a reddish-brown stain on the bottom of one shoe.

Sherry: Ick.

Marie: I know. They also found the black rope that matched the rope at the crime scene. And a freezer chest in the basement that hadn't been there during the first search. The chest's drainage system tested positive for human blood.

It's awful. As...this is one of the most awful cases - as far as the evidence goes.

Sherry: These are really really hard sometimes.

Marie: They are. But forensic analysis of all the evidence indicated Chaz had stored his parents in the chest. Um, pulled them apart and tried to burn them in the fireplace at home to get rid of the evidence - not realizing he couldn't get a fire hot enough in a home fireplace. And then he began a series of macabre trips around Wisconsin to incrementally dispose of their bodies. But the police still didn't have the gun he used to shoot his father.

Sherry: Hmm. That seems to be problematic.

Marie: Yeah. You usually need the murder weapon. But in October, when Crescent cleaned out her tobacco shed at the edge of the woods, she happened across the SKS-style rifle that was used to murder Bart hidden behind some boards.

Sherry: He put everything at Crescent's house?

Marie: He did! I almost wonder if he, kind of, thought, 'Oh, well I'll misdirect them by making it look like maybe Kat did it. I'll put parts of the body at Crescent's house. I'll put some of the cleanup tools at her house.

Sherry: And then, in case they miss the clues, I will literally leave her name at the scene.

Marie: Yeah. I mean, he left the murder weapon there. It just doesn't seem like he was worried at all about whether Kat was implicated - and maybe even wanted her to be.

Sherry: He does actually look like he was trying to set up a defense for himself by implicating other people.

Marie: I think so. But anyway Crescent, of course, immediately turned the rifle over to the police.

Sherry: Good for her!

Marie: Yeah. And I bet she never shares her pool with anyone again!

Sherry: (laughing) Probably not.

Marie: (heavy sigh) Oh. Speaking of swimming. Remember when Chaz said he was a member of the scuba diving team for the Madison Police Department and had also been diving with the Department of Natural Resources diving team?

Sherry: Um-hmm.

Marie: Well, those teams didn't exist. That was all a lie, too.

Sherry: Wow.

Marie: Pretty much everything in his life was a lie.

But when he was taken in for questioning on July 8th, they hadn't found his mother's body yet. He confidently shut down the interrogation by asking for an attorney. That was fine, the investigator said. And they put him under arrest for Providing False Information in a Missing Person's investigation. He panicked and told the Detective he wanted to be taken back up to the interrogation room - where he promised to tell them everything. The detective explained that that was good and well - but because he had just invoked his right to counsel, the interview was over. And Chaz responded, "What if I want to tell you everything - with an attorney present to guide me?" Again, reiterating that he wanted to tell them everything.

Sherry: That's like, 'My attorney will be present - my attorney will not let me speak.'

Marie: That's probably what would happen. So they said, 'With an attorney present? Pass.' The detective told him to just wait for his attorney - they had new information in the case and they were preparing to move forward. Chaz became wide-eyed and told him, "You don't know the whole story." The Detective agreed - and reminded him to wait for his attorney.

During the booking process, they ask you if you're suicidal - because they have a duty to protect you; even from yourself. And when he was asked, Chaz responded that he didn't feel bad about what he did.

Sherry: Ugh.

Marie: Yeah.

Sherry: This is kind of incredible. The not feeling bad about what he did is...incredible on many levels. But these policemen followed it by the book and protected his Constitutional Rights very closely. A lot of police officers would have said, "Let's go back up and talk." And that would have, kind of, muddied it and given him some Process Issues that might have gotten him off. And they kept it very clean.

Marie: They did. And I...it's interesting most of our cases are not this recent; this is a very recent case; and I'm hoping that means that police training has improved and now they know how to not ruin their cases.

Sherry: Right.

Marie: So, that aside aside, Chaz was detained and a Bail Hearing was set. His attorney fought hard for his release. She did not feel the pending investigation had any bearing on the fact that her client was being detained without filed charges.

Sherry: Well, they had a filed charge, right?

Marie: They did. But the Detention Calculations for someone who has Interfered With a Witness versus someone who has murdered two people is going to be different.

Sherry: Okay. That's right. Because those are Felonies, right?

Marie: Yeah. And so, she was saying, 'No, you can only consider that he is a person charged with Providing False Information in a Missing Person Investigation. You can't consider the fact that he's about to be accused of murder, because the investigators - while they were busy working on those charges - they weren't ready to file them.

Sherry: Oh, okay. That makes sense.

Marie: Yeah. So, it's one of those things where it gets a little tricky - because everyone knows he's going to be charged, but he hasn't been charged.

Sherry: Yeah.

Marie: So, initially the Commissioner set his bail at only \$10,000; ordering him to remain in Dane County and to wear a GPS locator at all times.

Sherry: I know that made a lot of people mad - that the low bail wasn't high enough for these two murders. That makes sense why it wasn't.

Marie: Yeah. It's really hard, because Detention Hearings - they're not saying whether we think they're guilty, whether we think they're a bad person...

Sherry: ...or whether we think they even did something else.

Marie: Yeah. And he could only consider the crime that he was charged with. The actual crime had not - the charges hadn't been filed, yet. So, the Judge cited Chaz's lack of criminal history, the lack of criminal charges, and his lifelong ties to the community - as well as his Eagle Scout - as reasons for his decision.

Sherry: I'm pretty sure Eagle Scouts should not be doing stuff like this to start - and did he really have an Eagle Scout? With all of the lies he told.

Marie: Who knows with him. But it seems like that shouldn't be a factor; since women can't get an Eagle Scout. I don't know, it just doesn't seem like we should consider something that's only available to half the population.

Sherry: That's true.

Marie: But the District Attorney was just getting started. They'd spent hours untangling the lies and deceptions Chaz had created during his six-day window. They took the advice of Chaz's attorney and quickly wrote up the Federal Charges they had so far - and filed them immediately.

Sherry: (laughs)

Marie: Yeah. They did a really good job. But they put another hold on Chaz; which prevented him from bailing out of jail at all.

Sherry: I'm not thinking that Chaz's attorney was expecting that.

Marie: No. But she may have been. I mean, eventually it was going to happen.

Sherry: Right.

Marie: So, on July 14th, they questioned Kat yet again. She had mentioned the shattered fireplace in her previous interviews, but now there was something else on her mind. She was remembering that day that Chaz had shown up in an unexpected location on her tracker.

Sherry: Ohh.

Marie: She helpfully shared her screenshot with the police. They could see he had been in a forest on the banks of the Wisconsin River, near Prairie du Sauk, by a bridge on July 3rd. This worked just like a macabre treasure map - but instead of treasures, the investigators found a portion of the remains of Krista Halderson.

Sherry: Ohhh.

Marie: Yeah. It's really sad. Um. But, in a way, I'm really glad that they recovered at least part of her body so the family had some of her to bury.

Sherry: That's true.

Marie: And, by the family, I mean his brother - not him.

Sherry: Right.

Marie: On July 15th, Chaz again found himself with a new bail amount: \$1 million. This was set at the Hearing after the charges for his father's murder had been filed. He'd been charged with First-Degree Homicide, Hiding a Corpse, and Mutilating a Corpse - along with the original charge of Providing False Information on what was now called a Kidnapping. The charges for his mother's murder came shortly after that - and were identical to the charges against him for his father's murder.

Sherry: So, he reported this on the 8th - and by the 14th they had all of these charges in place. They are very competent.

Marie: They are! They did a great job. And they did a great job with not messing up their own case and their eagerness.

Sherry: Um-hmm.

Marie: But I also think this is reflective of what we see in a lot of these child cases - where they think that they are so clever and excellent liars and great at cleaning up their messes - because their parents believe them. Not realizing that their parents are believing them - not because they're so clever - but because your parents want to believe you.

Sherry: And they love you.

Marie: And when they try to fool people like the police, it doesn't go very well. Because they're just not that clever.

Sherry: And the cops don't love them. (laughter)

Marie: Right.

During the trial, a list that Chaz had made directly after murdering his parents was publicized. It listed five items as Weekend Chores.

Sherry: Oh, I don't know if I want to hear these. Are they all macabre?

Marie: Uh, not if you don't know what they're for.

Sherry: Oh, okay. So, what are they?

Marie: Well. First was H₂O₂ Lemon. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the Periodic Table, H₂O₂ is Hydrogen Peroxide.

Sherry: Ohh! Which he wanted Kat to pick up for him!

Marie: Exactly. When you mix it with lemon, it's really good at cleaning up blood; while also getting the blood smell out. Which Chaz apparently knew.

Sherry: Wow.

Marie: Second, door handles. Not sure what that was for.

Sherry: Hmm.

Marie: Third was Move your (pardon my French) shit upstairs. Uhh.

Sherry: Oh. So, maybe everything he was using to sleep downstairs?

Marie: Maybe. It's unclear why he was doing that if it meant his bedding if it meant part of the murder stuff so that Kat wouldn't see it. I'm not sure.

Fourth was, shockingly, get a job.

Sherry: What?

Marie: I know. He must have been channeling his father finally.

Sherry: Ugh.

Marie: But if he would have just done that first, he wouldn't have done this.

Sherry: Oh, yeah. I...that's just beyond me.

Marie: I know. And fifth, clean the floor.

Sherry: What a list.

Marie: I know. But I guess those were the chores that were keeping him so busy.

He was, of course, found guilty. And for Bart's murder, he was found guilty of First-Degree Intentional Homicide, Hiding a Corpse, Mutilating a Corpse, and False Information on a Kidnapping. And he was also convicted of his mother, Krista's, murder and again found guilty of First-Degree Intentional Homicide, Hiding a Corpse, Mutilating a Corpse, False information on a Kidnapping.

Sherry: So, was this a jury trial?

Marie: Yes, it was. Um, and you can see a lot of the trial on YouTube if you want to.

Sherry: Oh, okay with the Law and Crime Network. I'm glad they have those files. Oh, also, I think one of the news stations, Channel 3000.

Marie: Okay. Yeah, it's...it's interesting to see. But, um, we can't tell you how he's doing in jail - or any of that - because he won't even be sentenced until March 17, 2022 - at 1:30 p.m.

Sherry: Oh, so everybody can watch for that. That's coming up soon.

Marie: Um-hmm.

Sherry: So, that's everything for today, right?

Marie: Um-hmm. It's time to thank some people.

Sherry: Okay. So, we'd like to thank the Law and Crime Network, heavy.com, WKOW-tv, Wisconsin State Journal, NBC-15, News 3 Now, and Channel 3000 for much of the materials and photos we used to bring you this case.

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This has been the Parricide Podcast and remember...

Marie: Always sleep with one eye open.

(Musical outro) Ashes, ashes; we all fall down.