

Meet George, Working on a Podcast

a fakeout where he seems COOL until the reveal of his garage studio

BUT - I also want to break this up with bits of HIS LIFE so maybe he does MORE THAN ONE BIT?

NOT BE ABOUT THE FIRST VICTIM (dummy!) It should be about the LAST!!

RESEARCH: 9.21.21 article “Social Media Detectives” re: podcasts/websleuths!

The Process: stop-and-start, he’s not doing a live show, so we see his life while he is rewriting, thinking, recording.

(Then - How does he make a living??)

We also see it in the hoarder-density of his work space, a mess of file cabinets, shelves crammed with file boxes, etc.

He tells us HOW he got into it:

What Brought This memory back to trigger the hunt?

Something CHANCE and TRIVIAL!

(George was born in 1972.)

WOVEN-INTO this “meet George” scene:

Meet The Chemistry Set Killer - CSK - In The Podcast

George Promises Reveal - then Dies - POISONED!

Meet Madelyn - At Work Turning Down A Promotion

see what will get **DISRUPTED**:

she is content, happy in her small, SAFE life.

Madelyn arrives and meets Det. Elmes At Crime Scene

The POINT: Mad's been THROWN IN THE DEEP END

And she WANTS TO GET BACK HOME TO SAFETY

Elmes is driving the scene - Mad is on the defensive

(is it legally possible to make someone the executor of your estate without their knowledge?) (If not: how did that work?)

How was the body found?

After Police Leave: Madelyn Starts to COPE WITH George's Death -

Zena calls back - asking to come visit - Mad says NO

Meet Norman Murch

Shop Scene / Reminder / Zoom starts there

A pissed-off journalist in his mid-50s.

Lives in Akron, Ohio (site of his last job)

Lives in a one-bedroom apartment: sleeps in the living room (fold-out sofa), uses the bedroom as an office

He IS writing a LOT on his book

- broke? What does he do for money? Severance?

Unemployment?

Does he drink a lot? Cliche of newspaper reporter - which might be attractive to him. Functional but drunk?

but he has messed up his schedule and so he does it by phone while leaving the shop and driving home

THAT EVENING: CrimeCrowd Zoom: Zena Proposes Taking Over Podcast & Finding CSK

Beat: BEAT: George only had 4 subscribers - when Zena says it, people in the group give their excuses (No time/He tells us everything personally/I was going to...) Which means none of them were among the 4

Meet Carl Dundoski - the meth dealer

Zena on Dundoski - she is very flattering to Dundoski because she thinks he is an idiot - but also he is scary a meth dealer (and addict) with a personal desire to bring killers to justice, a feeling for victims and the underdog. "Why can't a meth dealer have a sense of justice?"

Meet Arvin McLean - wall st conspiracy nut

*a genuine conspiracy nut
hyped and busy - needs group to help with the stress of high-demand (low in company) financial-industry job*

Meet Nurse Shrimpton: she's out

only in this to relax and forget her troubles

Norman tries to convince Zena NOT to rob Madelyn

Norman heads out to intercept - to PROTECT her

SO FAR, SO GOOD

later - Madelyn, mourning alone, gets drunk/stoned

She DOES NOT WANT TO LET IN FEELINGS

doesn't ALLOW herself to GRIEVE or even really THINK
about George - safety - her narrow life

Part 1: Talking to work on the phone

- SHOULD leave BUT is finding excuses NOT TO...

Part 2 - food delivery (bit with delivery person)

Part 3 - she finds drugs and takes them

ACCIDENTALLY finds a HIDDEN STASH of drugs -

HOW DOES THIS ACTUALLY HAPPEN?!

What If the KID offers it?!

then CUT to her -mid-indulging

and THEN she rants at george

RESENTS George for destabilizing her life (& 30 yrs ago!)

(Bernard S comment: Mad is forced to remember what a different life she had been living when she learns of George's

death. Those memories may be bitter (that's why she changed) but they may be sweet too - that was the life she had chosen for herself so that unwanted reflection may allow her to question her claims of happiness and contentment)

She says to the house/ghost: screw you, George - I'm not staying, I'm not cleaning up your mess.

Dundoski Tries To Get The Files - STEP I: Reconnaissance.

Dundoski rings the doorbell and tries to talk with Mad - to SNOOP out the sitch.

I lost my dog

I'm thinking of buying this house

I grew up in this house

Has she found Jesus?

When he rings the bell - she's DRUNK/HIGH

Dundoski waits outside. She doesn't leave. He goes in.

(she's smashed and in for the night.)

Norman interrupts D's Breakin - Fight!

Dundosky breaks in

Norman SEES that - so NORMAN Breaks in/Barges in -

- and tries to get D out -

*- so they FIGHT
and Mad HELPS NORMAN*

Zena & Co react to Norman interfering

Dundoski would REPORT IN! (He CALLS an emergency Zoom meeting)

IT IS the MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT!

ideally let a TINY CLUE of Zena's murderousness show here!

: coldness **MEANNESS** (kind of like an algorithm
REROUTING the GPS)

she's like HAL in 2001 **BUT THIS IS BURIED** - it is her **DEEP DARK SECRET SELF**

she does not do violence out of **ANGER** or emotion - it's a calculated career move. (Sociopath much?) So when things go wrong she is **NOT violent**

Zena heads out to George's home

Zena lives with her well-off California coastal parents (Orange Country)

She has to explain to them where she's going and we get a bit of insight into her

Norman Ends Up Staying The Night - In Bed Together - CHASTE

Norman sees there's only one bedroom and bed - and he makes the "executive decision" to let her rest there

(They lie ON TOP of the covers)

Morning - they wake and make love

He (**very self-consciously**) asks if she is able to consent

AFTER: - Mismatched Strangers With A Lot to Talk about

Madelyn Tells Norman about Marriage To George

She was young and free-spirited. 18 when she married

what world is she from?

Their marriage was a frightening disaster.

Why?

It scared her straight: she became REALLY CONVENTIONAL.

How?

Had NO contact with George - didn't even know he had become a podcaster.

Now: George's death and this whole plunge into his unstable world is making her REFLECT on her life.

Making her want to be free-spirited and brave again.

Has just decided (or is just deciding) to change her life and study to be an EMT or a THERAPIST

The USE of George is to tell us about MADELYN!

He is what she SHUT DOWN in herself.

He was a musician when she met him: punk and grunge.
Romantically, attractively "all or nothing" - which seemed very "rock and roll"

"He puts it all on the line" - DEVOTION, DETERMINATION - NOT CARING WHAT ANYONE THINKS

those are things she loved and admired - then got scared off of

but what he REALLY was was addictive, obsessive -
- and as a teen, he just happened to lock into music.

(Figure out the full story of his obsessive nature by telling his life AFTER the divorce TO Madelyn)

George's STORY: after his rock and roll 20s -

He went from musician to DJ - late night DJ, one of those who talked all night at an FM college station - and thats how he transitioned into podcasting!

he had OTHER obsessions (NAME THEM!)

the start of the internet

orY2K

Madelyn left him TO SAVE HERSELF

Norman Explains About His Book (& Life)

Now that she's able to hear it - we finally get the backstory on Norman in the group

For Norman, this community is just a single chapter in his major book surveying how wrong all of the 21st century is - how crowdsourcing ruins everything.

What are other chapters??

(Models for the book: Evil Geniuses, Anti-Social)

He has something of a "pitch" that he falls into when he talks about the book

We will NOT get WHOLE norman story (or whole Madelyn) here - it's just the FIRST STEP

Norman's Romantic (& Journalistic) Past

Norman has NEVER HAD a GOOD relationship.
feels WRONGED in his work AND relationships
Has many stories of EPICALLY bad relationships
BECAUSE he CHOOSES women who are CLEARLY
DISASTERS

because he has GIVEN UP on the IDEA of a good
relationship

**because He is DEFENSIVE - AFRAID OF BEING
HURT**

- Over-critical
- over-analytical
- too idealistic Unable to compromise
- Lacks faith (operates from buried Fear)

He does NOT admit this is his fault

Why Madelyn likes Norman

Because SHE SEES THROUGH HIM

*now doesn't EVERYBODY? No...he actually must be
GOOD at his analytical stuff*

**Madelyn points out GIVING UP is the CAUSE of his
problems (not the effect): HE GAVE UP SO EARLY
(Defensively) HE DOOMED HIMSELF**

(therapist in training! a natural)

*realistically...this would be obvious...if he had friends
BUT HE DOESN'T*

Zena SHOWS UP

Upset about Norman interfering -
- tries to talk to Norman PRIVATELY FIRST.

Madelyn lets Zena Look At The Files

How does Zena get this permission?

By disarming them by being PERSONAL - in fact, Mad partly does it just to get Zena OFF the personal stuff...

ZENA IS WORKING THEM - her chipper manipulative likeable self

HER MAIN ACTION is to GET INVOLVED IN THE LOVE STORY! This is where she “reads the room” and realizes that there is a romance blossoming between these two OBSTACLES to her mission - so she ASSUMES THE ROLE of “RomCom Friend” and confidante!

Zena discovers George’s Plan: LURE Killer with Fake claims

There IS NO NEW Evidence: George just figured he would PROVOKE the killer

*Problem: time...how is this info quickly available to Zena?
HOW does she discover this? Did he write it down?
Podcast-record it?*

How does everyone react to this news about George?

Mad is pretty pissed at him - the cop was right: George GOT HIMSELF MURDERED

Some of the Sleuths might rather ADMIRE this move. He risked his life to lure the killer - and it worked! So to them: bravo George you are a hero.

Norman is INTENDING TO LEAVE when the killer calls

Much as he likes Madelyn - he can't just STAY here and get into this craziness

Deakins calls Madelyn to say I DIDN'T DO IT

calls to say: I did NOT kill George.

That's the most important message - the ACTION of this contact.

NO THREAT YET - he is only ASKING them to be KIND
asks: Let sleeping dogs lie

We MEET Elmore Deakins (The Serial Killer)

INTERCUTTING -

in theory he would call on a burner cell, in a public place NOT near his home (so he can't be tracked; they can locate cell towers where calls came from)...BUT then we don't get to see his life yet...

Something gentle, sweet. NOT "making up for what he did"
- just **RETIRED**.

He is an artisinal-soap maker

(possibly uses fat from victims for soap...

possibly names his soaps things like “innocence”)

In his 70s, wrinkled, weathered, white-haired. Wears simple workmanlike but artsy clothes - denim, cotton. Listens to “Americana” and folk music.

He says he STOPPED: **(a lie, he’s still doing it just not with poison)** tells some story that makes him seem noble, changed, sympathetic.

what is this story?

He is a MONSTER

kills to FEEL POWER

BUT WE DON’T GET THAT HERE!

Here we get the “retired killer”

TWIST: Killer Is ON THEIR TEAM - trying to find out who killed George

Deakins Has To Prove He is Real

Sleuths are SKEPTICAL: demand that the killer PROVE he IS THE KILLER to make his denial believable

On the call in George’s house are Mad, Norman and Zena.

Who exactly is skeptical? Norman? Zena?

in order to convince them of innocence re-George, the killer has to PROVE he IS the killer.

He’s startled: He did not PREPARE proof. Theoretically “things only the killer would know”

But then how could they know if it was TRUE?!

(That’s a great beat - when they realize/say that.)

He has to get unexpectedly HONEST and VULNERABLE

*MAYBE HE REVEALS THAT he is PART OF THEIR GROUP
(under a screen name, anonymous)*

We need to unexpectedly feel: *gosh, this intelligent, reasonable retired killer has been unfairly dragged back into the spotlight by George's murderer*

They Believe Him

He has alibi - but telling them what it is would expose his new life...

Maybe he says: listen, it looks bad for me!

He knows about the Evidence Claim (but not what the evidence is...) and so -

he KNOWS A LOT ABOUT GEORGE. He WAS defensively researching. And now that George is dead, that research looks like murder-prep.

(He KNOWS A LOT ABOUT THEM ALL - so they are vulnerable -- but THEY WERE HUNTING HIM and he is reasonable and apologetic

Please help me, trust me.

that leads directly to them HELPING HIM BY:

They tell him the truth: there IS no evidence

they tell him George was just baiting him -

AFTER: everyone is relieved - but then they realize THIS CALL is evidence...

He HAS to come after us now...and therefore WE HAVE TO

go after him

This is going to be a SERIES of STEPS/REALIZATIONS

a SET PIECE - one long call (on speaker for them) - or maybe it's actually a series of calls

He doesn't say he's got to kill them: **THEY** say it to each other

**“we are already IN OVER OUR HEADS -
the only way OUT now is catch this killer...AND
whoever killed George**

Madelynn Norman & Zena Realize They're All In This Together Now...

BECAUSE they are ALL THREATENED

They can't CONVINCED the murderer they will keep his secret - he is after all, despite his apparent reason & humanity in the calls...a serial murderer, a monster.

they ALL need to be in danger from the killer

the end of the pilot

*now we need to get to - the end of episode:
they have agreed not to hunt/expose the killer
and the killer has agreed not to kill them
...and BOTH SIDES privately realize they can't TRUST the
other keep their word*

SPARE PARTS

**SHOW PEOPLE IN THE STORY LISTENING TO
OLD EPISODES OF GEORGE'S PODCAST!~!!
(Including cops at crime scene and Mad later...)**

Killer lets loose: what is wrong with you people? Who made YOU the sword of justice?! SELF APPOINTED AMATEURS?!
(Norman's point)

SPARE PART:

Norman - we were a bunch of people who talked about serial killers like people talk about sports. And the all of a sudden - the ball is in OUR room, it's bouncing around - and it kills people.