

## **Episode 41: Lauren was attacked by a monkey**

Today's conversation is with Lauren. A few years ago, Lauren worked at a private zoo here in the United States. And one of her jobs was to take care of the monkeys.

But these weren't just any monkeys – these were howler monkeys. You want to guess how howler monkeys earned that name? You got it, because they howl. But it's probably not the kind of sound you expect to hear when you think of howling. You know, you kind of think of a dog with that kind of high-pitched noise, that's kind of charming because it seems like they're trying to sing. Nope, this is something very different.

This is what a howler monkey sounds like.

(audio)

Yeah, that's not a dog. That sounds more like something from *The Exorcist*. But that's just what they do.

Part of Lauren's job was giving the howler monkeys their food and water. But there was one howler in particular that didn't like Lauren. And one day, he had a brief opportunity to act on it, and he took it.

This experience led Lauren to actually leave her career with animals. She went to graduate school and is now a high school science teacher, teaching Earth Science and Biology. And that knowledge plays a part in the podcast she co-hosts with her fiancé Nick, called *Just Na Science*. You can check that out at [JustNaScience.com](http://JustNaScience.com).

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And now, let's hear from Lauren about her encounter with the monkey.

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### **Scott**

Would you ever consider having a pet monkey for yourself?

### **Lauren**

I have been asked this a lot, but absolutely not at all. You see a lot of those videos on Facebook about how cute monkeys are, but no - they are wild animals. I never would. They're much dirtier than people think.

### **Scott**

Interesting. I've thought about one of the guests that I hope to have on a future show - I don't have anybody in particular in mind for this yet - but I'd like to talk to someone who has a monkey or chimp for a pet about what's involved with that, the pros and cons, and everything because everybody thinks, "Oh, that'd be so fun. They're like little humans." But what I found scary about this story is the fact that monkeys are smart, they are very quick, they have teeth and claws, and they can get angry. You, kind of, experience all of that in one package. How did you end up getting a job as a zookeeper?

### **Lauren**

Well, my undergrad degree was in environmental studies and I, kind of, ultimately wanted to go into wildlife conservation. So, I started working at an animal shelter right out of college. Then, from there, I got an internship at a Big Cat sanctuary down in Arkansas, learned some of the ropes, and then finally landed a job at a zoo with a whole menagerie of animals, including monkeys. My friend had worked in the office there and they had an opening, so she reached out and I just kind of ended up falling into some of these roles.

**Scott**

It pays to know people.

**Lauren**

Yeah, definitely.

**Scott**

I'm an animal lover. I've got kind of mixed feelings about it. It seems like working with animals like that all day is like a dream job. On the other hand, from a philosophical or moral standpoint of keeping animals in cages, it's kind of against my grain as well because they should be free. But yeah, that would definitely be an interesting place to work. So, what were all the types of animals that you were taking care of there?

**Lauren**

At that zoo, in particular, I tell people all the time that I, kind of, have all the leftovers. I had everything from different species of monkeys, flamingos, snowy owls, sloths, and aardvarks - you name it. I had an array of animals.

**Scott**

Wow, that is quite a variety.

**Lauren**

Yeah. So, I had to learn a lot very quickly.

**Scott**

What did you do with them aside from feeding them? What were your duties there?

**Lauren**

Well, as you said, a lot of people think, "Ah, working with animals must be great. That'd be a dream", but getting to interact with them on a level that you'd want to is the last thing you get to do. There's basic cleaning - you're cleaning up all of them, whether it's their food that they threw around, feces, everything. You're changing whatever is in their cages - the straw, the hay, and whatever they have in there, and then just trying to build enrichment for them to, kind of, keep them stimulated. Then, if you have time afterward, you can try to build relationships.

**Scott**

Because they see you every day, inevitably, there'd be some kind of a relationship being built there - good or bad. Okay, let's talk about this particular attack. Before we get into that, though, can you describe how was the cage area laid out?

**Lauren**

Right. In a lot of zoo enclosures, you have the main enclosure. When you first step into it, you're in what's called the keeper area - that's where you may keep some tools for cleaning, maybe some extra water, and bare-bones basic tools - that is your area that the animals do not go into.

**Scott**

So, that's like a room?

**Lauren**

Right. There's almost, like, a partition in between you and the animal space. Then, beyond that - there's like a gate and a door of some sort for whatever animal you have - that's their space.

**Scott**

And how many monkeys were in this particular enclosure?

**Lauren**

There was 3 total. There was the male howler, the female, and then they just had a baby - it was mainly on the mom's back or belly at that time.

**Scott**

A Howler family...

**Lauren**

Yes.

**Scott**

Can you talk about what is a howler monkey? How's it different from other types of monkeys?

**Lauren**

Howlers are pretty interesting monkeys. They are generally found in South America and they're known for having, like, an enlarged Adam's apple or a balloon on their throat, which allows them to do these incredibly loud and almost scary sounding territorial calls or danger calls - they can be heard from like miles away with this.

**Scott**

And how big are they?

**Lauren**

It's tough to say. Well, that day, I learned that they have a lot more hair than you'd expect. Overall, I'd say the male would, probably, be at least 2.5 feet tall. If you are standing up, they don't look that big, but I can tell you that he can cover you from your knee down to your ankle completely.

**Scott**

I guess the reason they have the name is that they actually howl. When I picture that, I always think of the scene in Harry Potter where Ron Weasley got the Howler card that screamed at him while he was sitting at the table. They do make a lot of noise, right?

**Lauren**

A ton of noise. Yep.

**Scott**

What is their mouth like? Is it like a human mouth or is it like an animal mouth with lots of sharp teeth and stuff?

**Lauren**

It does, kind of, look like a human mouth, except their canines are much bigger. Even though they're generally on a vegetarian-type diet, they still have fairly large canines - I'd say about an inch long and definitely sharp for things like defending their families and territory.

**Scott**

You mentioned this particular one-- which one was it in the family?

**Lauren**

It was the male.

**Scott**

I know you've written that he had a distinct dislike for you. Well, why do you think that was?

**Lauren**

When they were first introducing me to the job and to the animals that were going to be in my section, I just remember that I think I screwed this up with him from day one. I don't know if it was my energy. They're really just like people and there are some people that you just don't mesh and click with - they're the same. I think, maybe, I came on too strong or I'm just too alpha of a personality for him that he was just not having me from day one.

**Scott**

You only get one chance to make a good first impression with people or monkeys. Alright, take us through that day, minute by minute. Just tell us what happened.

**Lauren**

Since this was a private zoo, we were generally not open to the public. So, only one day a month on member day could people come and be brought around by other zoo staff and see the animals. Of all days, this happened on a member day. You have a ton of work to get done before people would arrive, usually around 10 AM. So, first thing in the morning, probably a little bit before 8 AM, I start to do my morning checks. Every morning, as a zookeeper, before you do anything else, you want to go check, make sure animals are okay, nothing happened overnight, they have water, etc. So, I got down to my Howler enclosure and they saw me come in. They always run inside when they see me because the male does not like to leave me unattended. He always wanted to see what I was doing and give me a hard time about everything. The first thing you do is enter the keeper area, and make sure everything's good, and nothing broke. As always, they had flipped their water bowl overnight - this was something that generally happened every night. I had really been bugging the zoo staff to do something about this because we had some other monkeys on the property that had their water bowls, kind of, sectioned off so that they couldn't be flipped - they were, like, held down by metal grates - so that they would have water all night. There were no issues. More importantly, it was very safe for the keeper to go in and replace the water. But for whatever reason, they were kind of dragging their feet on doing it with the Howler. So, I went in. Again, the water was flipped and it was, kind of, in the middle of that enclosure. So, it's a little bit far in for me to reach, so I had to use one of my tools to, kind of, open the feed door to reach and get it.

**Scott**

How big is that opening in the feed door?

**Lauren**

The feed door should only be as big as the bowls for it to go in and out. Generally, it was just big enough for the food and water bowls to come in and out, but I was about to find out that it was also big enough for the male howler to get out, which I don't think anybody ever assumed or realized, because they look a lot bigger with their hair. Just like when a dog gets wet, you're like, "Oh, wow, you're actually a lot smaller than we thought." So, unfortunately, the howler didn't like me very much. Every morning when I would come in, I would take their bowl, put water in it, and slide it back in. All he would see is me taking something of his. So, he would always give me a hard time. Sometimes, he would pull back the bowl. It was just never a 1, 2, 3 type of thing - I was always in there for a few minutes. So, I had to grab one of the sticks to drag out the bowl. I didn't really like to bother them, especially with a new baby in there. The male was not having it. The one odd thing I found about that morning is that, just as I was about to bring the bowl all the way out through the feed door, I noticed him backing up in the enclosure. I thought it was kind of odd that he was giving me some space. Maybe, he was finally maturing. Mind you, the feed slot, thankfully, is on the floor, so I had to kind of crouch down to do this. As the bowl is right in the doorway, he started rushing and running full speed toward the door - he was there in, like, a split second. I couldn't close the door back all the way because the bowl was in the way. The monkey's halfway through. I knew that he was coming through that door, so I decided that it'd be better for me to stand up so that my face wasn't right there.

**Scott**

I'm trying to picture this. You had the opening for the bowl and that was the only opening. Was the rest solid wall or was it glass so you can see what he was doing?

**Lauren**

So the rest is almost like a fence where you can, like, stick food and things to the fence. I would often do that for their own enrichment.

**Scott**

You can see him even though you were down at the hole.

**Lauren**

Yeah, I could see them perfectly. I could have put my fingers through the cage, but I wouldn't do that with him.

**Scott**

So that's how you knew he had backed up. It seems like this was all premeditated on his part.

**Lauren**

Well, after this had happened, I played this back again and again in my head and I realized that he was hanging around that door more and more in the weeks leading up to this. She would, like, put his hands on it, he would put himself up against it. Looking back now, I realize he was really measuring it up and assessing the situation because he would see his bowl going in and out every day - he didn't like it, so I really feel like he was planning this, as scary as that sounds for some time.

**Scott**

That is incredible. Okay.

**Lauren**

At this point, he had just pushed through the bowl in the door. I had stood back up and he immediately latches on to my right leg with his hands just completely engulfing it.

**Scott**

Oh, so he is out through the hole now?

**Lauren**

All the way through the hole. He shot through that hole like a rock. It happened so fast - I can't even describe it to you. So, he got me from my knees down to my ankle. Luckily, that's the only area he attacked. For some reason, he was just, kind of, hyper-focused on that area. His body just took over the entire shin of my right leg. They have a prehensile tail. He was wrapped around it, and there was really no getting him off at that time - he was like an octopus wrapping onto you. They had pretty long fingernails just like ours - they seem a little thicker, though, so they do a little bit more damage. So, I had claw marks of his nails all over my shin. He was ripping my shin open with his teeth.

**Scott**

But you were wearing long pants at that time, like jeans - right?

**Lauren**

I was wearing jeans. Then I was no longer wearing jeans from the knee down - he had completely ripped my jeans off. I couldn't even tell you about the instance he did it - he did it so fast. Before I even knew it, it was just a flap of jeans open on that area now. So obviously, I was in complete shock at this moment. I couldn't believe this is happening. A million things ran through my head so fast. I was thinking to myself, "Okay, I have a radio on my hip. I could call for help. But how would someone even get in here because now we're basically tussling in the keeper area? They couldn't get in without him attacking them or him completely escaping to the outside. I also had, kind of, like a Swiss or Leatherman Army Knife tool on my hip. Do I try to use the knife to try to get him off me? But I really didn't want to injure him and, God forbid, kill him. As upset as I was at that moment, I still didn't want to hurt him. So, I was going through all of these ideas in my head and I figured the best thing I could do at that moment was to not try to use my hands to pull them off, maybe, because he definitely would have bitten my fingers off and, then, use that as leverage to probably climb up my arm to get to my face and my neck where, no doubt, he could have probably killed me. So, looking at the partition or the fence that kind of separates the keeper area from the animal area, I figured that my best shot would be to try to kick him a few times until, like, some of the wooden posts in there. So, I gave him a few good kicks into it since he was just wrapped on my leg. Luckily, it kind of snapped him out of it and he ended up jumping off my leg and then scurrying up to the diagonal corner of the keeper area from me. So, now, he's like up high looking down on me at his corner and I'm backed into mine.

**Scott**

But you're still in the same room, obviously.

**Lauren**

We're still in the same room. I kind of banked on this idea that he was now scared himself because it seemed like it snapped him out of it. He had never been in the keeper area before,

so this was new territory for him. I think he felt a little uncomfortable, so I was like, "I need to do something quickly because he could dive-bomb right on my face and it can go really south again." We had a shepherd stick on the wall - a big wooden Shepherd stick just like Bo Peep would use - and I, kind of, just grabbed and use that to keep distance with him. With the other hand, I unlocked the big door that separates the keeper area and the animal area - the one that I would go through if I needed to go in and do, like, a big change-up of the enclosure, obviously, if the animals weren't in there.

**Scott**

So you're opening the door where the mother and baby were...

**Lauren**

Right. Luckily - I had made note of this - she had run to the outside area. She was scared and she was never an animal that was aggressive with me, so I kind of banked on her not coming in also. She probably wanted to keep the baby out of the situation as well. I noticed she was outside and it was just me and him inside. I threw this door open. I took the chance that she was going to come back in, and threw it open as wide as I could while keeping the shepherd stick to keep distance from him. Luckily he decided to just scurry back in because, as I said, I'm sure he felt uncomfortable at that time. As soon as he got back in, I just dropped everything, closed every door back up, and made sure everything was locked so that it wasn't going to come back out at me or anyone who came in after me to check on the situation. Then, I went back outside and left the building. I just took a deep breath and, kind of, reassess what just happened because, at this point, nobody knew - nobody was around. Everyone was off in the zoo in their own sections doing their morning checks. So, it was scary to think that, like, "Wow, maybe, we should be working in pairs" or all these ideas that start coming in. I still had to deal with the situation at hand, so I radioed my curator or my boss and I just said, "Hey, where are you?" She said, "I'm up at the main barn." I was like, "Alright, stay there." I'm sure one of the other keepers at that time - the carnivore keeper - heard the call come in. She told me that she could tell there was something off with the tone in my voice, so she had actually met us up at the main barn as well. I had to get myself back to the zoo, back up to the main barn.

**Scott**

How far was that?

**Lauren**

Maybe a quarter of a mile or a little bit less, and it was all uphill, so I was like, "I'm not walking up there right now." So, I jumped on my RTV vehicle that I had to, kind of, bring supplies around the zoo. If anyone knows those RTV vehicles, those pedals are so stiff and the last thing I wanted to do was, like, press down this hard pedal with my leg that had just been wrapped up. But my adrenaline was still rushing, so I just did it, I just bared through it, and I met them up at the main barn. Oddly enough, my curator was in the safe at that time. I had all the tranq guns and everything. She was probably just, like, making sure everything was accounted for - well, that would have been good, like, 5 minutes ago. I was like, "We have a problem." She peaked her head over the safe door, looked at me, and I was like, "The male Howler came through the feed door and really got me good on the leg." Then, she saw my leg and she was like, "Oh my God!" So, they had me sit down. The carnivore keeper came in at that point. My pants were very bloody, so they opened the flap of my jeans, pulled it off my leg, and saw three huge bites on my leg. They were like, "Oh, my God!" That was really the first time I had looked at the damage myself - I didn't want to look before I didn't want to pass out or be really freak out, so I got somebody else. It was worse than I could really imagine just because-- on TV, you see these

situations where people are fighting and stabbing with a knife, but a knife gives a nice clean cut - this was the furthest thing from a clean cut. I could see, like, chewed-up flesh - it's something you really have to see to really imagine. It's very scary looking.

**Scott**

Especially when it's your own.

**Lauren**

Yes, especially when it's my own. I kept saying, "I can't believe this just happened! Did this really happen? They didn't call an ambulance because I don't think they wanted that kind of negative exposure coming to the zoo, especially when you have members arriving shortly - very wealthy members at that."

**Scott**

Wealthy members mean donors to the zoo?

**Lauren**

Yes.

**Scott**

Okay.

**Lauren**

Yeah. I'm pretty sure our membership was close to 100,000 for the year - \$2,000. So yeah, very wealthy people were arriving at the zoo, so they wanted to get me out of there as fast as they could and not have any remnants of what happened. They called the owner, told her to come, and told her to bring me to the hospital, and she did just that. They gave me some cold packs - I don't think those helped at all, but they drove me to the hospital. At that point, they put me in a wheelchair, wheeled me in, and then checked me in. At that moment, I felt so bad because there was this mother and her young daughter in the waiting area as well. Her daughter was looking at me and I was trying to signal to her not to look because I didn't want her to get upset - it was rough to look at. The girl looked like she had seen a ghost, so I'm pretty sure that I've traumatized her, unfortunately.

**Scott**

When you're in an ER, you can see just about anything.

**Lauren**

I know. Poor girl. There was a team of doctors that brought me in. At that point, my adrenaline was, kind of, wearing off a little bit. They were asking me all these questions. It was a little awkward because the owner of the zoo was there and I didn't want to get anyone in trouble, but I wanted to be honest so that they could take care of me like the way they needed to. They're like, "Oh my god, a howler monkey?! Where was this?! We didn't even know there was a zoo in the area!" So they had to call the CDC because I didn't know if there were any, like, disease alerts out for howlers - luckily, there weren't any. They're like, "Good thing this wasn't a rhesus macaque monkey because they are full of diseases that can be transmitted to humans." So, I was good with that. They numbed me up and gave me a total of only 8 stitches. They said, "Normally, if this was any other kind of wound, you would have gotten about 50 between the 3 bites, but you can't close up animal wounds all the way because it will get infected or just more

likely to get infected. Animal bite wounds need to, kind of, drain and ooze for a few days to make sure everything goes well.

**Scott**

Because of the bacteria in an animal's mouth being transmitted?

**Lauren**

Absolutely. Yep. At that point, they stitched me up and wrapped me in gauze that is almost instantly bloody. So, my whole right leg down from the knee to the ankle was wrapped in bloody gauze. I feel like I looked like a war victim who had war injuries limping out of there.

**Scott**

Had the people at the ER ever seen a monkey attack before?

**Lauren**

No. Some of the women who were working on me definitely had not - they didn't mention it, but they were pretty excited but, also, dumbfounded as well. I guess there is not a dull day at the ER.

**Scott**

I guess. Well, I recently did an episode with a man who was attacked by an alligator. I saw him when he was at the hospital. It's like they were all calling, "Hey, we got an alligator attack! Come over here! Look at this!" So, it's probably the same thing.

**Lauren**

Yeah, there were definitely more people that may be needed to be in the room, probably, just to kind of see the situation because it was different than what you'd normally see. I'm sure they've seen dog bites and whatnot, but dog bites are what they normally see. On the other hand, a monkey bite is a new one. Then, at that point, they brought me back to the zoo. I had to call my friend to pick me up. She came with her boyfriend so that they can grab my car.

Well, I contacted her before this interview, and I said, "Hey, I'll be having this interview about this monkey attack. Was there anything particular that stood out to you about that day?" She said, "Well, when you called me, you were like, 'You're never gonna believe what just happened.' Given that you work at the zoo, it was definitely plausible. Then, you were, like, 'Ah, it's bad, but at least it didn't get my face.'" When she came to pick me up, she was like, "Your adrenaline's definitely still running because you were not really absorbing the full impact of what just happened. She was like, "You were trying to get in the car yourself. You were telling me that we're going to go to this barbecue. We had to get ice for the barbecue." Because you have to keep in mind, as a zookeeper, you have essentially no social life. My weekends were Tuesdays and Wednesdays for a year at that point - that was also the first Saturday. Essentially, I didn't have work for the rest of the day and someone I knew was throwing a barbecue. All I wanted to do was go because I felt pretty good at that point. They numbed me up and gave me some painkillers. Let's just go to the barbecue for a few hours because I haven't been out for the longest time. So, we went and there were a lot of people. I was meeting them for the first time and they were like, "What happened to your leg?!" and I was like, I was attacked by a monkey!

**Scott**

You were like the star of the show, right?

**Lauren**

I don't think most people believe me. They're like, "Okay" and they just walk away because I was sitting there with my leg, like, propped up on a chair and had it elevated. I probably looked insane to most people. Once the painkillers wore off, I was definitely ready to go home was like, "Oh my God, get me out of here." And we did and that was-- what a day...

**Scott**

What would have prevented this from happening? Just the water bowl being secure so that you didn't have to reach in? Were there any other reasons you'd have to reach in to the enclosure?

**Lauren**

Just to either give food or water or to obtain the bowls back. You don't want a lot of, like, old food bowls sitting in there because that can get gross pretty quickly. It's mainly just to take the bowls in and out. Otherwise, there is no reason for me to go into the enclosure. Everything should be coming through these feed doors.

**Scott**

But we've already determined that the feed door is only big enough for the water bowl to get through, and the monkey can fit in that space. So how can you prevent this?

**Lauren**

Right. Well, I think they realized afterward that, maybe, this wasn't the proper enclosure for these animals - I'm sure they never assumed or guessed that they would be able to fit through a door they weren't supposed to. Otherwise, securing those food bowls like the other monkeys is a surefire way to fix this problem.

**Scott**

Yeah. In most cases, the monkey wouldn't have any desire or need to try to fit through that little hole just because of his anger toward you.

**Lauren**

Right. And you have to remember - they spend 24 hours a day in these enclosures, 365 days a year. I know it gets boring sometimes. They know every inch of that enclosure better than you with their eyes closed. So, if there's anything new and different where they can get to, I'm sure they want to and in a heartbeat because they're just sick of their normal day-to-day.

**Scott**

Obviously, you got well enough that you could go back to work. Did you end up dealing with this monkey again after that?

**Lauren**

Yeah. They only gave me three days till I had to come back, which definitely did not seem like enough. But yeah, I begged and pleaded with them to take him out of my section after this or do something so that he and I will not work together, but they just never did. I tell you that definitely affected the employee-employer relationship because it was incredibly stressful going back to his enclosure every day. I felt like I was reliving it every time. From then on, I wouldn't even go into the enclosure unless I looked through the windows first and made sure everything's closed from the outside. I was overcautious at that point. Then, I never went anywhere without an intern after that - I wanted somebody with me - because it was incredibly stressful for me to go back in there with him.

**Scott**

I can imagine. I mean, the distress of having to, kind of, relive that when you have to go back in and deal with the same monkey again... Was there any value in the idea of facing your fear and getting past it by going back in there?

**Lauren**

No. I mean, the only thing I can think of really is, like, it was a stark reminder that you're dealing with wild animals and to never let your guard down - I kind of learned that lesson already without having to go back in there every single day.

**Scott**

Yeah. I can understand the stress that it would add to the employer-employee relationship. They're supposed to have your back, but they're sending you back into the war zone.

**Lauren**

No. I think, maybe, like, 2 or 3 months after that, the monkeys were due for some of their vaccines and their shots. They asked me if I wanted to go into the animal section with the vet - use some nets to try to capture them so that we could give them their vaccines - and I was like, "You think I am the best person to do this?! I don't think so. No." So, after that attack, I lasted maybe 6 more months before I realized that my safety probably wasn't a high priority for them and it just wasn't worth it for me to be there.

**Scott**

It seems like if you want to work with animals, there are a lot of other options other than being in a cage with a dangerous monkey.

**Lauren**

Yeah. There are, but there are no two days alike when you work with animals - that's something I think a lot of people need to be cautious of when it comes to like having exotic pets, which I don't really recommend. You have to really be on your game every single day, and that wears you off after a while..

**Scott**

Right. Because it's so easy to get into a routine and let your guard down - that's when the bad stuff happens.

**Lauren**

Absolutely.

**Scott**

It seems kind of weird that this monkey didn't like you. You seem like a nice person.

**Lauren**

Well, thank you.

**Scott**

Before we wrap it up here, I want you to tell us about you have a podcast. Can you tell us about that? What is it about?

**Lauren**

Yeah, so I do the podcast with my fiancée, Nick, and it's called "Just Na Science". It's basically this comedy but also educational aspect of Twitter science. We find some ridiculous science or pseudoscience on Twitter and we, kind of, break it down. Tell you why it's so ridiculous, and why it's not true. Then, we build you back up with some evidence-based facts and let you know the real science behind everything.

**Scott**

Okay, what's an example of something you would talk about?

**Lauren**

Well, our first and one of my favorite episodes was about Flat Earth. There's a lot of false information out there about the Earth and this flat Earth movement, so we kind of broke down some earth science about it and some physics a little bit about why the Earth isn't flat, why it couldn't be flat, some of the crazy things people say, and where did they come up with this stuff.

**Scott**

Yeah, how does that ever get any traction or have any credibility with anyone?

**Lauren**

But it does get a lot of traction

**Scott**

It's crazy. Okay, so you do this podcast. Tell me the name of it again. I mean, can you explain the name?

**Lauren**

Sure. It's "Just Na Science". The reason why we picked this name is because "Na" is basically on the periodic table. It's a portion of salts, "NaCl". So, the whole idea is that we're getting salty about bad social media science. So, every episode starts with a title like, "Is climate change a scam?" Na... like, no, that's not true. There's no way that this could be it. So, it kind of has this double meaning about being salty about it and just be, like, "Na, this is not true at all."

**Scott**

That's interesting. When I saw the title, I could see that "Na, that's not true." but I didn't catch the periodic table reference on sodium. That's cool. So, how can people find your show? How can people contact you if they would like to?

**Lauren**

Yeah, absolutely. Our Twitter and Instagram handle is @justnascience. We have a Facebook page. Our email is justnapodcast@gmail.com. You can reach out to us through any of those outlets.

**Scott**

All right. I'll have all those links in the show notes as well for this episode for anybody who wants to find that. Lauren, thanks for coming on the show and telling us this story. After hearing what you've said, I'm just gonna stick with my 2 Yorkies and not have wild animals as pets.

**Lauren**

Sounds like a plan. Thank you so much for having me on!

**Scott**

Hey, this is Scott again.

You know something? There are so many stories out there that would be great for this podcast. I mean, today's show is episode 41 and I feel like I've barely scratched the surface.

Maybe YOU have a story. Or maybe you know someone who has been through something extremely unusual, and would want to come on the show and tell about it. But if you have a story in mind, you should also be aware that there are a few stories that I typically don't do. I don't do anything related to the paranormal, I don't usually do stories that are primarily medically related, like medical miracles, so to speak. And I don't do stories where the primary topic is drugs or sex.

So what stories would I be interested in? Well, there are a few specific stories I am looking for right now. So be on the lookout for these:

- discovered a suicide
- survived falling off a cruise ship while underway
- rescued after being buried in an avalanche
- passenger in a car when it was hit by a train
- forgot a baby locked in the car
- falsely accused of child sex offenses and later exonerated
- victim of human trafficking by a non-family member, then rescued
- won the showcase on The Price is Right
- has a pet chimpanzee

And of course, as I mentioned earlier, there are absolutely a TON of story ideas that I haven't even thought of yet. So I'm open to ideas from you. Remember, it has to be REALLY unusual. It has to be something that, when you look down at your phone and see that new episode is out, you look at the title and say "Okay, I HAVE to hear that story." So if you have something, email me at [Scott@whatwasthatlike.com](mailto:Scott@whatwasthatlike.com) or submit it from the website.

And don't forget to join our private Facebook group – some great discussions are going on over there!

And I'll see you in two weeks.