

Episode 42: Jami found a stranger in her bedroom

Today we're going to hear from Jami. Jami had something happen to her when she was a teenager, and it clearly had a huge effect because she still thinks about it to this day.

One night she came back home from a trip to the grocery store. She parked her car, and before she got out she saw a strange man standing on the sidewalk, right in front of her car. He stood there looking at her, through the windshield.

Less than 10 minutes later, that man was in her bedroom. Yeah, this is a creepy one.

And if you like the way Jami tells this story, hang around til the end because we'll talk about the true-crime podcast she hosts.

And as always, I invite you to join the other listeners who support this show – you can do that at [WhatWasThatLike.com/support](https://www.whatwasthatlike.com/support).

And now, here's Jami.

Scott

You were a teenager when this happened, right?

Jami

I was. I was a senior in high school at the time - 18 years old.

Scott

Okay. Where were you living?

Jami

So I was living in Redlands, California at that time, which is in southern California. It's what's known as the Inland Empire near San Bernardino, Riverside. I was living with my mom in an apartment, actually, in a nice part of town.

Scott

I understand that your parents had recently divorced. So, it was kind of a new situation with you and your mom being just by yourselves, right?

Jami

It was. It was the first place that she and I moved to when my mom and dad split up. We hadn't been in the apartment for very long - I don't know exactly how long. You're right - it was a fairly new situation. I was going to high school - Redlands High School. My mom was working full time. She was a very busy career woman and she was also in law school at that time. Yeah, that was a fairly new situation for us.

Scott

In the area where you were - obviously, I'm in Florida and I haven't ever been to that area - did you have any safety concerns at all about that area or that neighborhood?

Jami

Not at all. I mean, I never even thought about not being safe at all. In general, Redlands is a pretty safe town. There are bad parts, but the apartment was, sort of, on the south side of Redlands, near Loma Linda, which was a good area. It's a very nice apartment complex and it's very clean. I think a lot of, like, single professionals were living there at that time.

Scott

This happened at nighttime. It was around eight o'clock, so it was dark. Can you just take us through what happened that night?

Jami

Yeah. As you said, it was around 8 o'clock in the evening. I want to say that it was a weeknight. My mom reminded me later that it was my dad's birthday, which would have been June 12 of 1996 - whatever day of the week that was. It was dark and my mom was in her room studying. I think she was studying for the bar exam at that time. I just remember it was a warm summer night. I remember going into her room and just, kind of, said, "Hey, Mom, I'm gonna run across the street." I took my car to a grocery store. There was a Stater Brothers, literally, just right across the street. I said, "I'm gonna grab a few things". She said, "Okay, see you later". So I got in my car. I went to the store. I was there for maybe 15 minutes. My mom reminded me later of what I bought and she kind of made fun of me. I bought these stupid-- at that time, there were these sort of wedge-like flip-flops that were made of, like, this foam material. I know that sounds awful, but this was the 90s and Stater Brothers sold them. So, I went across the street to go get those and who knows what else. Anyway, I was only there for a few minutes. I drove back to my apartment. I entered the apartment complex. I didn't think about it until later - there was a car right behind me at that time. I could see the headlights but that could have just been anybody entering the apartment complex behind me.

Scott

Was this a gated community? Did you have to put a code in or you can walk right in?

Jami

I want to say that there was one of those sticks - kind of, like, those security arms that raise up after you put your code in. So, I had done that and I don't remember if this person behind me rolled in without putting in a code, as we often do. He may have done that. So, I came in and the parking lot was very standard looking for an apartment. It's a bunch of parking spaces - some of them are covered and some of them are not. When you rent an apartment at these apartments, maybe, you have 1 or 2 assigned spots that are covered that are, sort of, near your apartment. Before I pulled into our assigned parking spot, I went over to the community mailbox - it's a mailbox that we all share. You put your key in and there are a bunch of mailboxes. So, I was checking my mail at the time. I just remember that there were headlights behind me. It was dark outside, and the headlights of the car are very bright, so it caught my attention. It was sort of distracting, so I turned around, and I noticed that it was a white-and-gold or white-and-beige 4-door Lexus. It was a very nice car. I just, sort of, looked because the lights were really bright and not for any other reason.

I noticed there was a man sitting in it - no big deal. I just thought this was somebody who probably lived at the apartment. I continued getting my mail, got back into my car, pulled around to the left just a little bit, and parked in my assigned parking spot. I was sitting in the driver's seat, parking my car, turning the engine off, and gathering the mail, which I put in the passenger seat. I grabbed all the mail, looked out my window, my windshield, and I saw a man walking right in front of my car with both hands in his pockets. He was glaring into my windshield,

looking at me, and it gave me a very weird feeling. I mean, it wasn't one of those things where, "Oh, he's just glancing over and looking at you and, then, he goes about his business." He was glaring into the car and it was weird - it made me feel weird. I was a naive teenager. Nothing bad had really ever happened to me - nothing super traumatic in my life.

So I just gathered my mail. This was before cell phones were popular. Maybe cell phones existed, but I certainly didn't have one. Maybe, if I did, I would have called somebody, or maybe not. So, I got out of my car and locked it. My car was parked in the assigned parking. So, directly in front of my car, if I'm looking out my windshield, I can see a sidewalk that is running horizontally to my car. He was walking on that sidewalk in front of my car. When I got out of my car, he was still walking. So, by the time I got out of my car, got onto that sidewalk, and started walking, he was now directly in front of me - he's about 15 feet in front of me, not too far. He was continuing to walk with both hands in his pockets. I was behind him and I just, kind of, brushed off the glare and thought, "Okay, let me just walk to my apartment, no big deal". So, he continued walking. Now, as you continue walking on the sidewalk, it comes to a bit of a fork or a Y - it looks like a Y - so, you can either continue walking straight, which is one part of the Y which is where he was going, or you can veer off to the left to the other part of the Y, which is where my apartment was.

So, he was walking straight. When I got to the section where I needed to turn left, he was still in front of me. I started walking left toward my apartment and I noticed that he had nowhere to go. If you continue walking straight on that sidewalk that he was walking on in front of me, eventually, you're going to get to somebody's apartment door. So, that's what he did. He went and walked as far as he could and basically stopped on their doormat right in front of their door almost as if that's where he was going the whole time. Maybe, he knew these people. Or maybe, he lived there. Or maybe, he lived there exactly. I didn't know the people who lived there, but I'd seen them coming in and out, and my first thought was, "I don't think he knows those people." I know that sounds so weird but, in my mind, I was like, "I don't think he knows those people."

He was standing at their door. Maybe, he's going to knock. Maybe, he does know them. I continued veering to the left from where he was standing, facing their front door. To his left were about five or six-foot hedge-like bushes. In other words, he was standing at those people's front door as I continued walking toward my apartment. Eventually, we were not able to see each other anymore because this hedge was a pretty tall hedge. So, I got to that point. I kept walking on the sidewalk toward my apartment. He was standing in front of that people's door, and I could no longer see him. Something in my mind told me that I needed to turn around and see if he had backed up to where he could watch where I was going because if he would have stayed standing in front of these people's front door, he would have not seen where I was going because the hedge was blocking. If he wanted to see where I was going, he would have to back up and come to where the hedge was no longer in his way. So, something in my mind made me feel very strongly that he was following me or that he wanted to see where I lived - just a red flag or gut instinct.

So, I did it - I turned around. Sure enough, he had walked away from the front door and he was standing there watching where I was going. He wasn't walking. He wasn't moving. He was just peering. He was just staring at me to see where I was going. Then, at that moment, when I thought, "Shit, something is going on. He doesn't know those people. He was only standing at their door to wait for me to walk past. He came around the hedge and now he can see where I'm going." I just got a chill through my body. So, at that point, I wanted to run to my apartment,

go inside, and lock the door, but I didn't want to alarm him and make him aware that I'm aware that he was watching me, so I walked really fast, but not so fast to where it looked funny to not raise any red flags to him. So, I walked really fast. I was scared as hell. Of course, it's almost like a scary movie.

When I got to my apartment door, there are two locks - there's a deadbolt and then there's a lock on the doorknob. My mom's a lock freak - she always locks every door. I mean, she does not leave a door unlocked ever no matter what time of day it is. So, I pulled up my key and started to unlock the deadbolt. Of course, it's like a scary movie. It's like, "Oh, gosh, it feels like it's taking hours." So, I got that one unlocked. I got the doorknob lock unlocked. I went into my apartment, shut the door really fast, locked the deadbolt, locked the other lock, stood there in my living room, and I was like, "Okay, I'm safe. Even if he is watching me or following me, he can no longer get me anymore." Again, I was a naive teenager and nothing traumatic has ever happened. So, I didn't think I was in danger anymore.

I thought, "I'm in my apartment. So, even if he is a weirdo, I'm good." This is the part of the story where I look back and I just think, like, "Jami, what a dipshit. You should have done something. You should have said something but you didn't." I basically went straight down the hallway into my mom's bedroom. She was still studying at her desk in her bedroom. I just started to tell her what I had gotten at the store. We just started having small talk. It was a summer night. It was warm out.

This is a rare occasion, but on this particular night, my mom had her bedroom window open, so the breeze would come through. My mom is also a privacy freak. She doesn't like people looking in on her, especially when we lived in a bottom-floor apartment - there's a sidewalk right outside her bedroom window. So, she had her blinds closed but the windows opened. I didn't think about this at that time. I thought about this later that the man - from where he was standing to watch me walk into my apartment - would have been right outside my mom's bedroom window. So, since it was open, he could hear everything that she and I were saying. I mean, I didn't know this at the time. When I think about it later, he could hear everything we were saying. More importantly, he knew at that moment that I was not in my bedroom. He knew exactly where I was in my apartment. He knew that I was in my mom's bedroom as she and I were just, kind of, making small talk. 3-5 minutes went by. My bedroom was right next to hers. It's just a 2-bedroom 2-bathroom apartment. It's not very big.

Scott

Plus, he could see that the light was on in your mom's room and not in your room - right?

Jami

Correct. Exactly. I think that's another important thing where he could confirm, "Okay, she's not in her bedroom. Not only do I hear her in her mom's room but her mom's light on. Her mom's light is on but her bedroom light is not on." As is the case with a lot of bottom-floor apartments, the only window I had in my bedroom was a sliding glass door with vertical blinds - I didn't even have a regular window. It's just a sliding glass door that, if you opened it and walked out, you would walk onto a little rectangular patio with a 3-4 foot tall wooden fence with a little hedge that surrounds the fence. So, it would be very easy for somebody to, sort of, hop over that hedge and be on our porch. Since it was summertime, when I left to go to the store, maybe, consciously or unconsciously, I had left my sliding glass door open just a little bit - maybe, like, a foot - but the screen and the vertical blinds were totally closed, so nobody could see in. I couldn't see out, but the sliding glass door was cracked open about a foot or so.

Scott

Your mom being a lock freak, if she would have known that the sliding glass door was opened, would she have closed and locked it?

Jami

Absolutely. Just because she was in her room, she left her window open - that was fine. I wasn't in my room and my window is a sliding glass door, so somebody could easily walk in. My mom would have totally closed that sucker and locked it had I left it open, but she didn't know. She was preoccupied. So, when I was done talking to my mom in her bedroom - I have one or two bags of groceries in my hands - I went and walked into my bedroom. When you enter my bedroom, you would see the vertical blinds and the sliding glass door straight ahead. So when I went to walk into my bedroom, the first thing I noticed was that the vertical blinds were, sort of, swinging back and forth a little bit in the area where the door was open, where you would walk in, and it caught my attention.

Everything happened so fast. I didn't really have time to react. Before you know it, all of a sudden, I see the top of somebody's head coming through the sliding glass door. Within seconds, there is a man standing in front of me in my bedroom. I don't know if I dropped the groceries or what. I didn't remember what I told him at that time - my mom had to tell me later. When I saw him, I kind of took a step back and I said something like, "Who the fuck are you?!" I was just very shocked. I remember being angry and like, "How dare you?! Why are you in my bedroom?" The strange thing is that I startled him. He obviously was not expecting me to walk into my bedroom at that moment. I think, looking back on it now, he was trying to take advantage of that moment when I was talking to my mom in her bedroom. It was nighttime. I had a walk-in closet at that time. I had a daybed where there was a lot of room under the bed, where he could have laid, hid, and waited for me to go to bed. I think he was trying to take advantage of the fact that I wasn't in my bedroom. He was going to sneak in and who knows what he was going to do afterward. I caught him. I mean, I walked in at the perfect moment. To this day, I think about where would he have been if I would have walked in even 5 seconds later. Would he have been in my closet? Would he have been hiding somewhere, caught me off guard, and attacked me?

Scott

That's kind of the scariest part of the whole story. What could have happened if you hadn't--

Jami

It terrifies me. I mean, I joke about it with friends now. I think and talk about it often. Obviously, I got out of this safely, but it is so terrifying to think how my fate would have been different if I walked in just a few seconds later. I don't know if he would have waited for me to go to bed and then struck. I don't know if he was just there to get something out of my underwear drawer. I just don't. It's very scary to think about. So, when I walked in, I kind of said something like, "Who the fuck are you?! Why are you in my room?!" He was very startled and caught off guard. He didn't know what to say. He hadn't planned for that. It was very obvious.

He kind of stuttered and said, "My c-cat. My cat ran into your bedroom and I'm just trying to get my cat." This and that. He just totally made up a story on the spot. It was obvious. I just kind of yelled at him again. I said, "YOUR FUCKING CAT IS NOT IN MY ROOM! I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TAUGHT! GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!" Then, he said something - I don't know what he said - and my reaction was, I said "EWWW". My mom told me later that I said that. I

think that I said that because I remember feeling at that moment, "GROSS! PERVERT! WHO ARE YOU?! GET OUT OF MY ROOM!" I don't know what words were exchanged after that. I couldn't tell how long he was in there - it was probably 30 to 60 seconds.

At that moment, he backed out. He left my room. He went back out the way he came in. Another part of the story, I think, that seems almost unbelievable is my mom was just in the other room. She could hear everything that was going on, but she thought I had a boyfriend at that time and he would come over often, and we were always very playful and joking with each other. She was preoccupied. She was studying. She could kind of hear something going on, but she thought I was just having playful banter with my boyfriend. I mean, at that time, you wouldn't automatically assume that some bad guy was in your daughter's bedroom. So, it took her a few seconds to realize "My daughter is in trouble." At some point, she did realize, "Oh, shit. There is something going on. I can hear Jami's voice or something."

Well, my mom always packs a gun - my mom's a little bit of a badass. She had a loaded gun on her desk, as she always did. So, she came running into my room with the gun in her hand. I said, "There was a man in here. He went that way." So, she ran out my sliding glass door and jumped over the hedge, which he probably did to escape. She got the gun pointed and she was just looking around. It's nighttime. She didn't see him anywhere. I said that he probably ran that way toward the parking lot. I actually don't remember if she chased him all the way to the parking lot. She must have done some running around to see if she could find him, but he was nowhere to be found. So, I was just shaking. My mom was shaking.

We called the police right away. I remember the police showed up. They took a report. They asked me the standard questions. "What does he look like? What did he look like? What did he say?" I've tried to get my hands on that report. I couldn't remember exactly what they said. I called the Redlands PD. I want to say-- I mean, it almost sounds like a movie, like it's not real because they had some sort of flood or something with their system and there was no way to get that report. I actually still want to make a few more attempts. I feel like it's probably still somewhere but I just didn't talk to the right person. I remember them asking me specifically about his description. To this day, I remember very, very specific details about what he was wearing, what color his hair was, he was Caucasian, and all these things.

When the police officer looked at me and said, "Okay, did he have any facial hair?" The oddest thing is I couldn't say whether he had facial hair, although he was standing right in front of me for at least 30 seconds. He was standing 4-5 feet away from me. I just think I was in so much shock. I don't know if it's something that the brain does. Maybe I wasn't trying to look at him. Maybe I was just in so much shock that I really didn't clearly look at his face. It's kind of hard to explain.

Scott

That would be a weird psychological phenomenon to explore. I mean, you said you could remember what he was wearing, but just not what his face looks like.

Jami

Absolutely, yeah. He was about 5'10" to 6 feet tall, a Caucasian man, has silver or gray short and clean-cut hair. He had a white nice polo-style collared shirt - I don't know if it was short sleeve or long sleeve. He had nice khaki pants. He had dress shoes on. I worked in the corporate field for about 18 years of my life and I know how men dress when they have a professional job. I don't know if he was an accountant. I don't know if he was an attorney.

Maybe he was a real estate broker. Maybe he worked at a bank. It almost looked like what a man would wear on a casual Friday at a business-type job. He was very well dressed. I remember, at that time, I would tell people, "He looked like the CEO of a bank. He probably had many people who reported to him at work."

He truly looked like a professional. My theory is that he lives and works nearby that area. It's a small town. I mean, Stater Brothers is not the type of place where somebody would just be driving through and stop there, but they live 45 minutes away. I'm almost positive that he lived or worked in the Redlands or Loma Linda area - probably very close to that grocery store. I think that he was probably working and decided to stop at the grocery store on his way home from work. I think that he saw me at the grocery store - this is what the police theorized - and decided at that moment to follow me home. I think that he was probably in the car behind me as I was pulling into my apartment complex. I think that he was in that Lexus when I was getting my mail. Again, it was a very nice car.

Scott

Was he the one that was glaring at you into your windshield?

Jami

Yes. That was the same guy. There were all these startling moments and all these red flags that I should have picked up on. I did pick up on them, but I ignored them. Maybe I'm a naive teenager or whatever. I just kept telling myself, "No, Jami. Bad things don't happen to you. That just happens to people on the news." You're just a dumb teenager. If you've never been through anything really traumatic in your life, I guess, you would just, sort of, explain things away. You just think that bad things only happen to somebody on the news.

Scott

Are you an optimist by nature?

Jami

I am.

Scott

Okay. You don't expect anything bad's gonna happen too. It's all gonna be good until proven otherwise.

Jami

That's right. I think that I've shifted now. I host a true-crime podcast and I have really been into true crime for many, many years. I have a certain paranoia now. I have a certain distrust. The other day, I took a quick walk at work in the middle of the day in a nice area. There was a man walking behind me and I kept, sort of, turning to my side just to make sure that he wasn't running up on me because I think of those things. Now, I do know that it is possible for you to be attacked and to be a victim of a crime. Back then, I trusted almost everybody. I thought everybody was my friend. I really didn't think that anything bad would ever happen to me. It's just interesting that there were so many red flags there. I got chills. My gut was telling me that something was wrong. When I got that feeling, I probably should have stayed in my car and drove around the street. Maybe, I should have gone back to Stater Brothers, called my mom, and said, "Hey, there's a weird guy looking at me." I guess, at that time, you don't think of the worst.

Scott

No, you don't. There's something about intuition - in particular, female intuition. You can sense-- I don't know what it is. There's nothing that you can probably quantify, medically or psychologically or anything, but I've been in situations like that with a female who was like, "Okay, this doesn't feel right. We need to get out of here." So, we did. Were you even able to sleep that night?

Jami

No, I slept. I didn't want to sleep in my room. For some reason, I didn't want to be near windows, so I slept on the floor in a hallway where there were 2 walls on either side of me. I just slept right there because I was so freaked out. I didn't want to be in the apartment. I definitely didn't want to be near windows for some reason. My mom and I were so freaked out that this guy knows where we live and he hasn't been caught. So, we went to the apartment management office the very next day, and said, "Hey, we want to put up some flyers with a description of this man. He came into my daughter's bedroom last night. We want to warn everybody." Well, of course, the apartment complex didn't like that because saying that a crime happened here is bad for sales for these apartments, so they wouldn't let us put up the flyers. Well, that pissed my mom off. My mom is very feisty. Obviously, she's very concerned about her daughter's safety and her safety. She said, "We'll just let you know we're moving out. I know we have a few more months on our lease, but we're going to break our lease." I think the apartment complex manager tried to argue with her a little bit about that, but my mom was like, "Yeah, try me. We're leaving."

Scott

I like your mom. I don't even know her but I like her.

Jami

I love her. The way I would describe her is that she's a 5'2" little feisty pitbull. She's awesome. She wasn't having it and she said, "No, no, no. We're moving out." So, we did, of course. They never came after us for breaking our lease and moved. We still stayed in Redlands, but we moved to a house that is, kind of, a few miles away. To this day, this man that I know of has never been caught. The craziest thing that I always think of - besides what would have happened if I would have walked into my bedroom just a few seconds later - is that this man struck me as somebody's husband, somebody's boss, possibly somebody's grandfather, a professional, probably somebody who's well known in the community. That's kind of the way that Redlands is - professionals. There are all these networking groups. Everybody knows everybody. My thought was, "I don't know if this is the first time he has ever done this. I doubt it would be the last time because I think that somebody who has those urges, I think, will continue to do things like that." It just struck me as so shocking that this man is in our community. He's probably going to go to work the next day. He's going to lay down in bed next to his wife. They have no idea that he follows young girls home and comes into their bedroom. I mean, he did not look like a creepy guy at all. I mean, he probably doesn't even have a criminal record prior to that time and, maybe, still doesn't.

Scott

That makes me think... BTK was a pretty well-respected guy too.

Jami

Yes. By the way, BTK is probably the serial killer that fascinates and scares me the most. Part of the reason is these guys are very well known in the community. BTK was very involved in his Church. His family had absolutely no idea. I think it's the same for the guy that came into my

room. I really trip out on the fact that people have no idea of his extracurricular activities. I've reached out in my Facebook group. I posted pictures because I still have family and friends in Redlands, and it is a small town. I still have his description. I would bet money that he lived in that area at that time. I know somebody knows him. I know what his car looked like. So, I feel like I have enough information to, maybe, say something as simple as, "Hey, did you have a friend, or know of anybody who had a friend, who had a dad who drove a Lexus that looked like this and worked a professional job back in 1996?" I had people comment before. There was one girl in my Facebook group who said, "Somebody had come into her house." I tried to set up a time to talk to her to see if, maybe, it was the same guy. For some reason, we were never able to talk, but I'm very interested to find this guy. I wonder, "Is he in jail? Is he out in the community?" I don't know.

Scott

Have you looked through mug shots? Do you think you would recognize him if you saw him in a mug shot?

Jami

I was just talking to my daughter about this the other day. I feel that if he were to walk by me and bumped shoulders with me, I would have no idea that it was him. Obviously, as I said, he is medium-built, Caucasian, and had silver hair at that time. I know all those things, but I could never look at his face right now and go, "Oh, that's definitely him" because he looks like so many white men that I've come across in my life. So I don't know. I could tell you who it wasn't. I mean, maybe I could say, "Oh, no. That's definitely not him." I probably wouldn't be able to pinpoint.

Scott

Of course, if you saw him now, his appearance would have changed as well.

Jami

Absolutely, yeah.

Scott

Since that time, have you ever been in a situation where your gut told you something and you still ignored it?

Jami

Hmm, good question. Not that I can recall. I'm pretty hyper-aware since then, especially after becoming a mom. At the age when this happened to me, I didn't want to offend anybody. I think, as a female, you wanted to please everybody and you don't really want to offend anybody. But I'm 41 now and I have 3 kids. I could give two shits about being rude to somebody if I think that they're being inappropriate or if they're walking behind me and making me feel awkward. I would have no problem now just turning around and waiting for him to walk in front of me. So, I don't have somebody behind me watching where I'm going, but I can't think of a time that I ignored my gut since then. I've learned a big, big lesson from that incident.

Scott

Do you have security cameras in your home?

Jami

We do. And dogs. I keep lights on when my husband's out of town. I keep the backlight on the front lights on. I think that lights are a really good deterrent. I think dogs help.

Scott

Close those patio doors...

Jami

Oh, I'm a lock freak. I not only lock them, but we put a stick in the sliding glass door too. You would definitely have a certain paranoia if something like this happens to you, and I think it's healthy. My family makes fun of me sometimes because my daughter was like, "Mom, stop." When my daughter - she's 17 - takes Ubers, I always make her give me a screenshot of what the person looks like, their name, and their license plate number. That's not to say that that will stop them from committing a crime against her but, at least, I have that information. I always tell her, "Drew, when you get in the car, just say something casually like, 'Oh, yeah. My mom and dad monitor everywhere I go' just to make them aware that we know you're in the Uber with him, that you screenshotted a picture of him, and sent it to your mom." She was like, "Oh, I'm not going to do that. That's weird." But I was like, "Well, just put them nicely on notice that we know who they are."

Scott

Right. You can do that without being rude or offensive, just so they are aware. If he is listening right now, what would you say to him?

Jami

Gosh, so many things. I would say, "What were your intentions that night? Do you have a family? What would your family think of you following a girl home and coming into her bedroom? Try that again, motherfucker, and I'll kill you." Excuse my language.

Scott

I think he would be aware of that and would go for an easier target next time.

Jami

I hope so. Well, I mean, I hope he doesn't go for any target. Yeah, I still get angry thinking about it because it's just such a violation, honestly.

Scott

Well, this story you just told so wonderfully was a topic of a true-crime podcast episode. It's not just any podcast - it's your podcast. It's called "Murderish". Can you tell us about your show?

Jami

Yeah. I did tell this story on my podcast called "Murderish" and it was funny. It's called, "A Stranger In My Bedroom". At the time I recorded it, I was very new at podcasting. I had run out of material. I was running behind on a story that I was researching, so I thought, "Oh, let me just tell this story on the podcast. Nobody's going to like it. It's going to be my worst episode. It doesn't end in murders. Nobody's going to be interested." I recorded it just because I was simply out of material but wanted to put out an episode. To this day, it's my most downloaded episode, I think. I guess people are interested in hearing, maybe, like, a first-hand account of something like this that happens. But yeah, I started podcasting. I started "Murderish" just over, probably, like, two and a half years. I've always been somebody who is very fascinated by true crime.

Ever since I was a preteen, I was reading books about serial killers and following court cases on TV with my mom because she's also always been very into it.

I started listening to podcasts because I had a really horrible commute here in LA for many years. So, one of my co-workers said, "Jami, why don't you listen to podcasts in your car?" I had no clue what a podcast was. he told me to listen to this podcast called "Serial". Of course, I did and I loved it. I became obsessed and I started just binging podcast after podcast. I love telling stories. I love talking about true crime. What really launched my podcast - or was, sort of, the catalyst - was I was chosen to be a juror on a first-degree murder trial out here in Los Angeles County for a murder that happened out here where I live. So, I ended up being the jury foreman. The trial was a little over two weeks. It was a fascinating, very sad, and exhausting experience, but I wanted to tell that story. So, that ended up being my first episode. I opened up "Murderish" with the Arvizu murder with my experience as a juror, and it has just gone from there.

Today, I kind of tell people that, on the podcast, I give listeners a 3D look into fascinating murder cases. I always start with the town where it happened. I talk about the victim, the perpetrator, and their backgrounds. I talk about how the victim and perpetrators worlds collided, how they came to know each other details of the crime, what happened, why it happened, what was the motive, and the investigation. Then, I sort of walk you through the trial, the verdict, the sentence, and then anything that has happened after the trial. The episodes are about an hour-long each time. I try to go really deep to give people all the details that I would want to hear if I were listening to a true-crime podcast.

Scott

I know about your show, but I've only recently discovered it, so I haven't really listened to too many episodes. What's one of your favorite episodes that you've covered?

Jami

Oh, man. Well, it's sort of weird to say it's my favorite episode. It's my worst episode because it's the case that haunts me to this day. It's a case that I always swore that I would never cover because, to be honest, whenever it would come on the news, I would change the channel selfishly because it was so horrific and so sad that I didn't want to dive into the details. I knew enough that it broke my heart. That's the Gabriel Fernandez case. I decided to cover it. I think I had a listener who reached out and just said, "Hey, you should cover this case". I was kind of resistant to it, but I finally did, and it is the absolute worst murder case I have ever come across in my life. He was a young boy who was actually murdered by his own mother and her boyfriend out in Palmdale, California, which is not far from where I live. It's a horrific, very, very sad case. I have very loyal listeners who listened to every episode, and that's one of the episodes that they say they couldn't listen to. So, I would just say it's my favorite episode because it's, sort of, the case that is closest to my heart, that would made me think about the victim most often because it's just so horrific.

Scott

It does pretty intense.

Jami

It is.

Scott

I have loyal listeners too. There's one episode of my podcast that some people are unable to listen to, and that's about a man who ate his own foot and experimented with cannibalism, but it's not as bad as you might think. I mean, he's a very intelligent, well-spoken man. Well, you just gotta listen to it.

Jami

Okay. When you first said that, I thought, "Okay, he did it to save himself."

Scott

No, there was no survival.

Jami

Oh my gosh.

Scott

It's not one of those stories. It's called "Shiny Ate His Own Foot". So, I have some listeners who listen to all my shows, but some of them would say, "Oh, I just can't do that one."

Jami

It's the one episode. Wow. It wasn't even that he was, like, super hungry. He just was experimenting for some odd reason.

Scott

Yeah, it was odd. That's for sure. With a group of about 10 friends.

Jami

Oh, my God. It wasn't even just one who was interested in eating themselves. That's interesting.

Scott

Yeah. How did you come up with the name "Murderish". I love that name, by the way, because as soon as you hear it, you know what this thing is about but, yet, it's not really a word. So, you really have a monopoly on that word. How did you think of that?

Jami

Thank you. I love the name of your show as well. It tells you exactly what you're getting into. I don't know if it's a Southern California thing that we would speak very casually - there's a lot of slang - or if it's just something that I do a lot, but I tend to put an "-ish" on the end of a lot of words when I'm speaking to friends. I might say, "Oh, yeah, I'll be at dinner at 10ish", or "Yeah, that movie was good-ish". There's just sort of an "-ish" that I throw on the end of words in my everyday vocabulary. As I was getting ready to launch the podcast, I kept thinking in my head, "It's not that I'm a murderer. I'm just somebody who is interested in learning about the psychology of murderers, the details of these murders, and why they happen." So, I kept circling around in my brain. It just came to me and I just said, "Well, I'm not a murderer. I'm just 'murderish'." So, now, that's kind of my slogan that I say at the end of every episode - "Listen, listening to this podcast doesn't make you a murderer, it just means you're 'murderish', meaning you like to learn about murder cases and you'd like to watch True Crime TV." It's fun because I have a Facebook group with a lot of listeners in there. We chat, say funny things, and share funny posts - I call them "ishers". They use the word often too, and they'll say, "Oh, yeah. Don't worry. I'm not gonna murder anybody. I'm just murderish. Don't be afraid of me." and it's a lot of fun. That's kind of how I came up with the name. It was sort of random, I guess.

Scott

You are so good at branding. That is incredible. I mean, especially when you say the line, "If you like this, it's not because you're a murderer, you're just murderish." It's like you're giving people permission to enjoy hearing these stories even though they're so horrific. Maybe they should feel guilty about enjoying these stories, but you're saying, "Oh, it's okay. You're just murderish."

Jami

Which is smarter-ish.

Scott

Awesome. So how can people find your show and contact you if they wanted to?

Jami

Yeah. I just built out a website - finally, after two and a half years - so they can check out the show and a little bit more about me. They can actually listen to the show at murderish.com. They can find me on all podcast listening apps. I'm on Spotify, iHeartRadio, Google Play, Apple podcasts, you name it. They can find me on social media. I'm on Twitter at [murderishpod](https://twitter.com/murderishpod). I'm on Instagram and I have a really fun Facebook discussion group. So, if you just go to Facebook and search for "Murderish podcast discussion group", you'll find it. Just hit join, answer a couple of questions, and we'll have a lot of fun in there.

Scott

All right. Well, I'm sure we'll send a few listeners your way because even though "What Was That Like" is not really a true-crime show, some of the episodes that we deal with are true-crime by nature. So I know there's a lot of crossover in that audience. So, I look forward to hearing that. Thanks so much for sharing your creepy story.

Jami

Thanks so much for letting me tell it. I really appreciate it, Scott. It's been fun.

Scott

I hope you enjoyed that story as much as I did. If you check out Jami's podcast, "Murdererish" tell her that you found out about it here on "What Was That Like." I got a message from a new listener. She heard me recently on another podcast called "Podcast We Listen To". It's hosted by Jeremy Collins. Jeremy and I talked for about an hour about my show and the crazy stories we have on here. If you want to listen to it, just do a search on your podcast player for "Podcasts We Listen To". My interview is the episode that came out on January 15, 2020. Anyway, Irene heard me on that show, so she came over, checked out "What Was That Like", and she wrote me this email...

"Hi, Scott. I just listened to the episode about the lighthouse keeper. You mentioned you'd like to get contacted by your listeners, so here I am. I heard you on "Podcasts We Listen To" this morning and downloaded your podcasts. The best thing, so far, for me, is that you have an incredibly soothing voice. You need to be podcasting. Oh, you are? You listen very well and you don't interrupt your guest. I stopped listening to some podcasts because they keep interrupting the story."

Irene, I have to tell you, I agree with that. That's one reason I'm pretty conscious of trying not to do that. Back to the email...

"I'm looking forward to going through your back-catalog. Then, I might be brave enough to listen to your computer podcast to see what I can learn. I have a love-hate relationship with computers. Anyway, I really do like your podcast.

*A new fan,
Irene"*

Thank you for that, Irene. I love getting messages like that. If you want to be like Irene and send me a message, you can email me at scott@whatwasthatlike.com. You could even record an audio message and send that - I might just play it right here on the show. If you haven't joined our Facebook group yet, seriously, what is wrong with you? Great discussions with other listeners over there. So join up at [whatwasthatlike.com/facebook](https://www.facebook.com/whatwasthatlike). That's it. I'll see you in two weeks!