

Edutainment in Podcasting: A Content Analysis of Education and Entertainment in the *Serial Killers* Podcast

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School
Of Millersville University of Pennsylvania

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the requirements for the Degree

Of Master of Arts

By: Kristy M. Daniel

This Thesis for the Master of Arts Degree

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01/03/2024

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Edutainment in Podcasting: A Content Analysis of Education and Entertainment in the *Serial Killers* Podcast

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Millersville, Pennsylvania

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Serial Killers is a popular true crime podcast that discusses the mental and psychological disorders of infamous serial killers throughout history. As the podcast continued producing more episodes, the line between educational and entertainment started to fade. By analyzing the discourse, this study reflects on the quality of definable and researched information while capturing the graphic audio narrative. The data shows that defined medical and psychological terminology were used as previous knowledge to push the conversation forward. Official citations to renown organizations, definitive publications, and topic professionals increased over time to convey trust and truth in their conversation. The terms and resources work in tandem with visual narrative about the serial killers and victims alike to provoke an emotional response not to the podcast creators, but to the crimes and criminal being discussed. Thus, *Serial Killers* is a beginning to understanding how podcasts could focus on providing edutainment through discourse analysis.

DEDICATION

To my family and friends: Thank you is not enough to show my gratitude for your support, love, and assistance throughout my entire academic career. Between the hour-long conversations laying out an outline, the late-night text messages, laughs, and so many virtual hugs, I couldn't have done it without you. You are the backbone to this being completed and the gentle push I needed to stay on track. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to come to you for another set of eyes, another ear to listen, and another shoulder to lean on. You're the best people I could have asked to go on this rollercoaster with.

To my loved ones who have passed away during this journey: Thank you for watching me from Heaven and keeping me on this path. You were always in my heart throughout this journey, and I couldn't have done it without you. I hope that I have made you proud and I miss you every day. Thank you for pushing me to pursue my passions. I miss you and love you so much.

To the production team of Serial Killers and to all podcast creators: Thank you for producing an interesting podcast about serial killers and for the complexities of their psychology. Thank you for constantly having new episodes and answering some of the difficult questions. Thank you to podcast creators as they are bringing entertainment to the 21st century. Without you, my drives and chores would be quiet and boring.

To the faculty at Millersville: Thank you isn't enough to show my appreciation for what you do. You are inspiring and enthusiastic for knowledge, and encouraging to learn more. I can't express how much you have impacted my writing, reading, and personal reflections along the way.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

None of this would have been possible without the extreme patience from Dr. Pfannenstiel.

Thank you for listening to my dozens of ideas, coming down to making a podcast, then changing the idea to analyzing a separate podcast. She has been the most patient with my process and allowed me to change direction a million times in order to find the right path. Thank you for the guidance and positive remarks.

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***Serial Killers*, the Narrative Pedagogy beneath the surface: Study Introduction**

My Connection

The journey to wanting to study *Serial Killers* was formed from listening to other podcasts and becoming interested in true crime podcasts. The first podcast I listened to was *Welcome to Nightvale*, a utopic fictional radio-broadcast narrative that produces an hour-long episode each week. From there, my interest included listening to other podcasts like *In Bed with Nick and Megan*, *No Bad Ideas*, and *Start With This*. Spotify provides advertisements for other podcast shows by giving a short excerpt of the upcoming episode. Typically these would pop up on the app as ‘sneak peeks’. Some of the advertisements were for shows like *Alice Isn’t Dead*, *Chilling Tales for Dark Nights*, or *Mythology*. Based on the advertisement, I became intrigued by *Mythology* because the producers incorporated different sound effects and voice actors to create a multi-dimensional listening experience. By the time I was engrossed with *Mythology*, I had four podcasts to listen to each week. They provided an avenue for my curiosity into many different topics without having to dedicate time to researching the information myself. After I caught up with *Mythology*, I took notice of other podcasts produced by the Parcast Network. At the end of an episode of *Mythology*, the creators included a sneak peek into *Serial Killers* and the conversation surrounding the psychological impact that plays into true crime. From there, my interest was piqued.

Podcasts are pre-recorded conversations that use RSS feeds for others to listen to. They range from conversations involving different people to lecture notes from professors. Similar to the wide range of formats, the topics are boundless. As mentioned above, the show *Mythology* tells different folklore and myths from different cultures with individual voice actors for the main characters and a narrator to tell the story. *Welcome to Nightvale* is set up as a fictional utopian

newscast that describes the events of the day, including the weather, which is a musical break by an up-and-coming musician. *In Bed with Nick and Megan* is a conversation between Nick Offerman, Megan Mullally and a guest within their home. These podcasts are available in apps like Spotify, Apple Podcast, Google Podcast, or on their producer's website for free listening and have the option to download for offline listening.

After surface listening to the episodes of *Serial Killers* back-to-back, I noticed a pattern within the discussion that included quotes from different individuals that were involved in the case, citations of Criminology professors, and psychiatric research. Considering that I have no criminology experience and minimal psychology background, the language throughout the podcast sparked my interest, which led to me listening to the episodes closely. When citing professional organizations or referring to academic journals, I noticed a pattern emerge. The hosts would include a citation during the conversation, then follow up at the end of the show about where to locate the citation for the audience to review. I found that once the hosts defined a term or disorder, they would continue using it without redefining the term. This evolution creates a cycle of new information that builds from this shared knowledge. I found the building of information from one episode to another to be an opportunity to grow my vocabulary and learn more about criminology and psychology without classroom instruction. At that moment, I began listening not as an avid listener of the podcast, but as a graduate student critically listening to the discourse for citations and examples of the defined terms or other patterns. Therefore, I developed an early fascination and dedication to understanding the discourse of podcasts and their educational value.

My first project idea was to start my own podcast then explain how the podcast was engaging and educational to the listeners based on the activities and community built. However,

the immense amount of work required in the beginning production of a podcast and needing to grow a listener base to study would have taken quite a long time before having enough data to analyze. Additionally, I had ethical concerns about building a fanbase simply for the purposes of studying their engagement and behaviors. Engagement should be a natural relationship between the creators and their audience instead of a curated effort. Therefore, instead, I decided to analyze several podcasts that had a significant publication record (more than 50 episodes, recent productions, popularity in podcast listening), continued listenability, and was accessible for others to see if there was a pattern across all of them. When researching about podcast analysis and how to determine whether a podcast contains an educational component, I found limited methods for analyzing podcasts. Because of the limited methods that are published to analyze podcasts, I would have to listen to each podcast show as intently as *Serial Killers*. The amount of data and time that would have been required to analyze trends across each podcast, then across the sample would have been overwhelming. Yet, after reviewing articles about educational podcasts as a genre and their design, I decided to single out one podcast. Since I was actively listening to *Serial Killers* at the time and became accustomed to their vernacular, it was fitting that that was the podcast I chose. That is how I came to the idea of analyzing *Serial Killers* for their entertainment and educational overlap.

Overview

This thesis uses a rhetorical lens to demonstrate how the popular true crime podcast *Serial Killers* combines research and shared knowledge components (references, citations, definitions), personnel (protagonist, victims, doctors), and biographical narrative to educate listeners on highly renowned criminals. This thesis dissects the small sample of episodes for educational opportunities. The producers foster a body of shared knowledge by providing

detailed explanations of medical and criminology terminology while persuade listeners to follow up with the new episode each week using cliff hangers and signposting. The analysis is then read through the Rhetorical Framework developed by the Council of Writing Program Administrators, National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Writing Project. This thesis attempts to understand the components within a podcast that stimulates the audience through active and emotionally charged language, clearly defines a purpose for investigation, and the context that allows for the concepts to be interpreted. This thesis is an attempt to understand how the discourse facilitates opportunities that capture the listener's attention while providing trusted references. This research begins the conversation of how podcasts can be used to expand learning outside of the classroom through audio narrative. It creates an opportunity for podcasts to be used as primary rather than supplementary materials within a classroom. This thesis contributes to rhetorical knowledge being used in digital media by analyzing how a podcast presents information in an engaging manner.

Chapter 1 provides descriptions and explanations of the podcast and the relevance of the rhetorical framework. I begin with descriptions of the listening platform, Spotify, as a space and the podcast as the place of listening followed by an explanation of the rhetorical framework in how it applies to the research and data collected. This chapter explains the terminology used within the following chapters and provides oversight into the format of the podcast itself. Having clarity on the language being used provides the foundation for the research. The preliminary terminology allows for the research and data analysis to be interpreted without question of the topic.

Chapter 2 follows with a comprehensive review of literature on podcasts in the classroom and community engagement. By reviewing articles, case studies, and educational artifacts, I

include a variety of research to showcase how podcasts are currently being used and analyzed in higher education. Currently, podcasts are mainly used as a writing activity for students to enhance their understanding of audience, purpose, and content, however, the use of podcasts as integrative resources was scarce and limited to only test preparations. The design and functionality of podcasts are generalized as functional opportunities to share information with others. The primary focus on the design is for community engagement and listenability for a specific niche. Throughout my research, the average listener is sought to be educated at a bachelor's degree level or higher, seeking out information, and multi-tasking. Taking this information into consideration allows for my research to further advance how podcasts can be used within the classroom based on the expertise, knowledge, and content of the podcast. Following the terminology, this chapter encompasses research past to show what is previously discussed by scholars, communication analysts, and digital content creators. This chapter supports the critical review of podcasts for an educational opportunity.

Chapter 3 lays out the method used to collect and analyze data from within the transcripts of the small corpus of podcast episodes. The coding scheme and explanation for each step allows for a process that is replicable for individual podcasts instead of multi-show analyses. By looking at only one podcast, but multiple episodes, the patterns within the data provide support for how to integrate podcasts as a source of information within the classroom. This chapter also allows for any citations to be reviewed for accuracy of information.

Chapter 4 identifies the results and observations of each episode by topic and then as a whole unit for consistency and patterns within the discourse. The data collected shows the counts of terms within each category. The data may reveal a pattern of interest in regards to how the discourse fosters their audience's knowledge while captivating their attention which is beneficial

in the classroom. The discussion of the podcast analysis provides insight into observations made during the process of coding and the components that fit within the categories of the rhetorical framework.

Chapter 5 details the final results and reflection of the data coding process. The chapter argues for further research on podcasts as primary sources of information and usage within higher education. The concluding thoughts include the consideration for researcher bias as well as the specifics of reflecting the process through one listener platform. As podcasts and digital media advance, social interactions and how people share information, further integration of the medium is highly recommended. The final observations and results showcase what elements of a podcast create a new type of experience in education. The impact of narrative pedagogy through modern technology allows for education to expand further than a classroom setting.

Chapter 1: Background Information

The Space - Spotify

Spotify is the main platform I used for downloading and listening to *Serial Killers*. Spotify login can be connected through Facebook, Google, or a separate email account. Listeners are able to share, like, and download playlists onto different devices for off-line streaming with a free account. Because of the algorithm, no two listeners have the same experience. Listeners can log into Spotify from multiple devices at any location due to it being a web-based software or mobile application. The platform is free with ad interruptions between songs or can be purchased as a monthly subscription for zero-ad listening. Even with a paid subscription, there are advertisements within the podcasts to provide breaks in the listening for the audience to take a moment and think about what they heard.

The platform customizes the listener's experience through an embedded algorithm that reviews previous listening to suggest future listening. The podcasts contain target ads, songs, upcoming releases, and podcasts for an individual experience. Spotify creates a 'Made for You' category of playlists constructed to match the listener's taste, the option to discover new artists, or repeat recently listened to content. This customization is what lead me to *Serial Killers* in the first place.

Podcasts and songs are able to be located on Spotify through the search option, the top ten list for the genre, or through a personalized algorithm that reviews the listener's likes or dislikes and suggests media based on the data results. If researchers are not comfortable with creating a Spotify account, there are other streaming services that are available for review.

Spotify provides information about podcasts and episodes that are pertinent to the listening experience. They share the podcast name, a thumbnail picture of the logo, brief podcast description, episode title, episode description, length in time (minutes: seconds), and publication date. The podcast episodes can be sorted based on title, date published, length, and progress by the listener. The sorting feature was essential for determining which episodes to include in the analysis. The progress bar is typically gray, but turns blue as the individual listens to the episode. A completely blue bar indicates the listener has completed the episode. The information provided by Spotify is mechanical and technical. Extraneous details, including ratings, comments, or reviews, are not an option on the platform. The lack of community engagement leaves the listeners to make their own decision on the podcasts without outside influence. Having a space for community engagement could potentially foster support for shared knowledge and the interpretation of the content that would support podcasts as primary materials in the classroom.

The Podcast – Serial Killers

Serial Killers produced by Cutler Media, LLC published their first episode in July 2017 and originally had one episode published on Mondays, but then transitioned to publishing two 30-45 minute episodes describing historically infamous serial killers per week – one on Mondays and the other on Thursdays. Currently, they have over 600 episodes available on Spotify for free. Hosts Greg Polcyn and Vanessa Richardson research the individuals and delve into the possible psychological reasoning behind the crimes to better understand what influences a serial killer. While neither Greg nor Vanessa have degrees in criminology or psychology, they quote and consider professional resources as support for their interpretation. Each serial killer is discussed from birth to capture (or death) in terms of their psychological disorders and criminal record

across two episodes and the influence they had on society. The creators have designed the podcast in a consistent format for listeners to know what is discussed in Part One and Part Two.

Although audience members are able to listen to the podcast through multiple platforms, transcripts of the episodes were difficult to locate and are not available on Spotify. The lack of transcription calls for concern as members who are unable to listen to the podcast should have another means to enjoy the content. After a search on Google, I came across a site that had accessibility to transcripts of some Spotify podcasts. The website, Podgist.com houses podcast transcripts of popular shows, but not every podcast published. The site provides some transcripts for free but has a \$3-per-month subscription fee for access to all transcripts. Another way to receive access is by contributing corrections to over 30 transcripts. Across the web, this is the only site that contained unofficial copies of transcripts of the *Serial Killer* podcast. The use of the transcripts was incredibly important to code the data; therefore, a one-month subscription was justified for accessibility to all transcripts.

The Episodes

Each episode is laid out in a consistent format that includes signposting at the beginning and end of the episode, advertisement breaks embedded by the podcast creators, and what to expect to hear in their conversation. A signpost in podcasts brings forward crucial information to the listener to provide them with information about the content (O'Sullivan). The opening signpost is when Greg Polcyn brings listeners' attention to the offensive and crude content they discuss, some of which is deemed not suitable for children under thirteen. This is to alert the listener of graphic language, situations, or imagery discussed in the episode. While the podcast creators warn listeners about the content, there is not a way to prohibit minors from listening to the podcast.

After the statement, one of the hosts describe a traumatic event that happened within the serial killer's life, whether a crime they committed or something that happened to them to hook the attention of the listener. It is followed by the podcast opening theme song and introduction to the series. The introduction to *Serial Killers* includes their production company, Parcast, and how to rate their show on podcast directories. They close the introduction by asking for reviews and rating on the listener's podcast directory. The end of the signpost summarizes what the hosts will discuss in the first episode dedicated to a serial killer then foretells what will be discussed in the second episode. It is important to separate the signposts from the main body of the podcast as the primary focus of the signpost is on the podcast and the overview of the episode itself and does not add to the conversation or content knowledge about that particular serial killer.

The body of the podcast is formatted consistently across all episodes for continuation of information or when starting a new topic. Because each topic spans two episodes, each pair of episodes are consistent in the design of the discussion. The first episode begins with the upbringing and familial life of the serial killer including any traumatic or life-altering events. They continue the narrative biographically through childhood into the first crime. The chronological format allows for the listener to follow a timeline and a foundation of who the individual was before they decided to commit murders or other crimes. The second episode picks up from where the first episode leaves off in the serial killer's life, but mainly focuses on the most prevalent crimes leading to their arrest or death. If the serial killer influenced any book, movie, or theatrical production, the hosts mentions the production and creator. It ties up the end of the body with how they became a cultural influence today.

The closing signpost is similar to the beginning in that it shows gratitude for the listeners, gives a preview of the upcoming episode, and lists the production crew who helped research and

create the podcast episode. The hosts of the episode again ask for a review and rating of the podcast on the listener's preferred podcast directory. The repetition of the beginning signpost iterates the importance of the ratings and summary for the listener to promote the show. Neither signpost is taken into consideration when analyzing the data because they are focused on the call to action for the listener to promote the show instead of discussing components of the show.

I focused on the terms that are defined, the references identified, the descriptive language used to characterize protagonist, and the number of additional individuals discussed within each episode. I chose to focus on each of these categories as they pertain to audience engagement, context of the content, and the purpose of each episode. This is to show how the language influences listenability and audience engagement with the podcast. Because the research is focused around the language and discourse, I collected a smaller sample size that spans across the life of the podcast. Having a smaller sample of episodes allowed me to pull the words being defined and their definitions, see trends about the types of references being used, and count how much descriptive language surrounds the protagonist. Patterns that emerge throughout the lifespan of the podcast indicates that the language evolved for a more educational experience. These patterns provide a way for understanding how a podcast can be used as primary materials in a classroom setting. The smaller sample gave me the opportunity to look for trends that begin with the first topic then a new topic every six months until January 2021. The six-month topic determination was based on the date of first publication through the latest episode and to show an evolution of the show. The sixteen episodes are Part One and Part Two of eight individual serial killers from birth through incarceration. The serial killers discussed include Albert Fish, Edward Gein, Amy Archer-Gilligan, Dale Hausner and Samuel Dieteman, Ronald Dominique, Earle Nelson, Lawrence Bittaker and Roy Norris, and Christopher Wilder.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Podcasts are understood to be digital audio recordings or broadcasts that can be delivered to consumers in many forms – RSS feed, download, or live streaming – without any direct cost to the consumer (Drew, “Edutaining Audio” 48; Mou 475-476; Perks, “Podcasts and Productivity” 97). The intent of podcasts is to communicate experiences, knowledge, or information about a topic and create a shared place of interest amongst the listeners. Since podcasts are not censored or regulated by the FCC like radio or television broadcasts, each production has freedom to discuss any topic at large (Wrather 44).

The main podcast I used in this study is categorized as True Crime, one of the most popular genres of podcasts to listeners (Greer 155). Both Amanda Greer and Martin Spinelli et al., review True Crime podcasts in their research because of the impact and audience infatuation with the topic. Greer uses *My Favorite Murder* as the basis for her study that evaluated the reasons audiences listen to these podcasts. Her results explain that people listen to podcasts as a way to discuss their anxiety surrounding traumatic experiences, confront their fears, or gather information on how to survive in a violent situation (159). In a separate study, Martin Spinelli uses *Serial* to discuss journalistic integrity within narrative storytelling (180). Both scholars reflect on true crime podcasts for a distinct purpose, one for audience engagement, the other for the process of gathering information. Greer’s study about audience engagement allows my research to focus on how the choice in discourse encourages listenability. Her analysis of why someone would listen to a podcast directly impacts how the discourse is delivered to capture their audience’s attention. Thus, the context of the language would reflect the audience’s interest. Spinelli’s analysis of narrative storytelling to discuss criminal and legal cases creates a new

avenue for podcasts to be used as primary materials in higher education. His research into true crime and scientific podcasts is based on interviews with the creators and investigation strategies for podcasts. By having a clear interpretation of the discussion within a podcast, that podcast is able to contribute to growing knowledge for their listeners. Spinelli revolutionized the interpretation of podcasts as educational, specifically true crime and scientific podcasts. He contributed to the argument of podcasts as primary materials in an a classroom setting. My research on *Serial Killers* builds on both Greer and Spinelli's research by taking into consideration why someone would listen to a specific podcast, and how the audience impacted the creation process. This research allows me to build on the audience's engagement as to what makes a podcast attractive for enjoyment. I am able to focus on the entertainment of the language – active, synonymous, defined – and how it is portrayed – emotionally driven, factual, research supported – instead of the different ways the discourse could be interpreted.

Podcasts are used in education as writing and analysis exercises, as supportive materials for learning outcomes, and as introductions to published materials. Yin Mou confirms, a podcast can be used “as a productive tool for enhancing college student learning either in a classroom or online learning setting” (476), with Christopher Drew specifying that the use of podcasts as supplementary is more common than complete integration (Drew, “Educational Podcast” 203). Even more, most of the research on podcasts used in the classroom are created by the instructor or as projects by students instead of published works available for listening. Beard, Drew, Hurst, and Owens are a few sources that support podcasts in the classroom, but conceive it as supplemental materials to a learning outcome. With the rise in online learning, the use of podcasts as an integrated primary materials filled with useful educational information should be highly considered.

Jennifer Bowie's podcast *Rhetorical Roots and Media Future* is an example of a podcast that fosters learning and knowledge. She created, recorded, and transcribed a podcast dedicated solely to using rhetorical canons in the classroom. Her podcast is supported through the academic journal *Kairos* and complies with textual citations and research. Since academics are moving towards digital communication to publish knowledge, the consideration of any podcast or digital media should be included. Her publication as a podcast shows that there is an opportunity to provide podcasts as a resource for classroom learning. It can be seen as intending to be consumed as educational digital media that fulfills student learning outcomes. By knowing there is published research in the format of a podcast lets me to believe that there are non-academic researched podcasts that can be applied in classroom learning. The consideration of well researched and sources podcasts in the classroom fosters open accessible materials to consider not only scholarly journal publications, but personally invested projects.

Scholars Emily Hurst (278), Christopher Drew (51), and Wenqi Cui (2) consider the audience, purpose, and context as highly influential rhetorical elements of creating a podcast. These three fields are the foundation of podcast creation for an educational purpose. Similarly, The Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) has guidelines that consider the analysis and understanding of audience, purpose, and context to be "*rhetorical knowledge*" (6). Specifically, CWPA includes, "*Composing in multiple environments* refers to the ability to create writing using everything from traditional pen and paper to electronic technologies; including select, evaluate, and use information and ideas from electronic sources responsibly in their own documents and analyzing electronic texts to explore and develop criteria for assessing the text" (CWPA10). Collin Brooke supports the use of computerized collections of information to analyze rhetoric within the context of media as it becomes more culturally appropriate (101). The

support for digital media analysis and reflecting on the writing of others develops a new opportunity for qualitative research of how technology can be used as a rhetorical device.

Johnstone (199) and Drew (“Edutaining Audio” 58) share a common idea that shared knowledge produces new text and trends for future studies. With the support of the CWPA, Emily Hurst, Christopher Drew, and Wenqi Cui, the analysis of podcasts based on those foundational elements encourages learning through listening outside of the classroom. The combination of CWPA’s definition of rhetorical knowledge and scholarly examples of podcast listening and creation in the classroom support my research of podcasts that are not created within education can be educational.

The analysis of podcasts requires transcripts and data to support how the discourse considers the audience, purpose, and context. Barbara Johnstone confirms, “A transcript is, by necessity, a partial representation of talk” (19). For my research, the transcript allows a database to be created and utilized to understand the podcast. The data collected about each of those categories shows how serial killers are discussed in one podcast. Kozinets reaffirms the use of transcription for data by defining data as “trustworthy pieces of information, things known or assumed to be factual, evidential and reliable,” but that it also “has to be tested on the path to discovering something meaningful” (191-192). The use of data in this research is to show how a non-academic podcast can be considered educational through the *rhetorical knowledge* guidelines set by the CWPA while still being enjoyable to the audience through use of language and discourse.

In Johnstone’s book *Discourse Analysis* on page 8, she lists how discourse is shaped by and shapes other discourse, but for this study, I believe there are two that fit best:

Discourse is shaped by prior discourse and discourse shapes the possibilities for future discourse. Discourse is shaped by the media and it shapes the possibilities of its media.

My research focuses on how the discourse is used to interact with the audience, the purpose of the language, and what the content does for the conversation as it relates to educational standards of citations while being entertaining. The hosts include the author's name or organization supporting the research, the title of the publication, and how to locate the documents during the podcast episodes. The quote by Barbara Johnstone supports reflecting on the progression of the podcast episodes, especially if the content builds upon itself. The future episodes are shaped based on what was previously discussed. On the other hand, the prior episodes encourage how the show transforms. While the podcast has a consistent pattern, depending on their audience participation and how the discourse evolves, the format could change.

The second part of the quote by Barbara Johnstone reinforces how the structure of podcasts are influential to the discourse. Since podcasts are downloadable, accessible, and consistently release new episodes, the discourse has to build from the previous episode while being relevant to the entire topic. My research surrounds podcasts as an avenue for a different type of learning since it is a newer type of technology. By breaking down how *Serial Killers* is educational through the rhetorical knowledge guidelines surrounding audience, purpose, and content of the Counsel of Writing Program Administrators, the opportunities of podcasts as a reliable source of information as subjects of analysis or as primary materials in a traditional educational learning.

Audience – Who's Listening?

Bowie, Cui, Garcia-Marin, Johnstone, Mou, Owens, and Perks detail the importance of understanding and studying audience interaction and gratification of podcasts. From targeting podcast projects in schools (primary through higher education), the types of people listening, and expectations set upon their audience, their studies reveal the distinct factors that, when compacted together, create a foundation for the creation of a podcast.

Instructors in education across all levels see the value in incorporating podcasts in the classroom. Roxanne Owens published an article examining the collaboration between 5th and 8th grade classes who wrote and produced their own broadcasts. In their research, they found teachers were “enthusiastic” about the students’ ability to focus on listening, creating, and engaging with the content (66). Not surprisingly, the teachers were able to show the effects of literary elements of storytelling, character development, and language during the project. Bowie affirms the use of podcasts in a writing-based classroom, but in a first-year collegiate setting. Even though the end-project is the same – digital oratory – Bowie’s study is reflecting the rhetorical canons being analyzed by students (“Invention” 2). The use of media, specifically digital media, as it pertains to educational learning and analytical review has been emerging since the early 2000’s, which is relatively young in comparison to ancient classical education (Drew, “Edutaining Audio” 49). Researchers are able to study how digital media and technology has evolved the student’s educational experience. Considering the new types of media that arise as technology advances, it is critical to provide research and data on how best to keep students engaged. Bowie, Drew, Cui, and Popova agree the growth of communication technology enables education to enhance teaching methods. Popova’s study concluded podcasts are no longer unfamiliar technology to generations today (334). With new media in the classroom, it becomes a forefront avenue for displaying and conversing about research. Ultimately, the use of podcasts

as a project or as primary materials in the classroom have a clear indicator of whom the audience is, unlike publicly produced podcasts since the student-based projects are focused and driven by learning outcomes.

Podcast listener communities share something incredibly special: a sense of identity based on one common interest (Kozinets 111). Many studies have considered the age, education level, and income of the average podcast listener and come to the same conclusion. Listeners, on average, are individuals who have a higher level of education and earn greater salaries according to Steven McClung et al. (84). Kris Markman seconds this idea and contributes the minimum education level as a Bachelor's degree with some specific audiences having a minimum education level as a graduate or professional degree (553). Another supporter behind Steven McClung et al.'s study is Wrather whose corpus indicated "young, affluent, and social motivated" listeners who are "generally more wealthy, educated, and active on social networks" (45). Having a fundamental understanding of the age range, educational level, and income of listeners to a specific type of podcasts provides the creators with an awareness to how the content impacts their community both culturally and socially. The data and background of the listeners enhances the likelihood of podcast creators evolving the podcast to fit their listener demographic. However, these are just the socioeconomic stereotypes of podcast listeners. According to Yin Mou, 27% of podcast listeners were living in the United States in 2015 (475); however, in Lisa Perk's article dated 2018, over 40% of the listeners were living in the United States ("Podcasts and Productivity" 97). The geographical knowledge of where listeners are located allowed creators to consider the discourse and language of individuals based on the overarching understanding of that location. Based on Mou and Perk's studies, they can assume these listeners speak primarily English, have an understanding of holidays like Thanksgiving and Independence

Day, and know about history pertaining to the United States. These are types of conscious details that reflect in podcast creation and engagement with their audience. These demographics are only relevant for who is listening, not why.

With true crime podcasts on the rise, Amanda Greer found that women listened to true crime stories as a way to confront their fear of death, work through anxiety, or identify “survival cues” (155). McClung’s study states that women are more likely to listen to true crime podcasts as “motivation to find information, interpersonal use, entertainment, convenience, or the pass the time” (84). According to Lisa Perks study, it also allows listeners to feel gratitude for getting more completed since listeners are able to multitask; learning more while doing more (Perks, “Podcasts and Productivity” 108). Lastly, Spinelli’s findings support listeners searching for knowledge or a newly found self-awareness within podcasts as well (79). By understanding why people are listening to true crime podcasts, creators can adjust their discourse based on the targeted audience. Their focus on community engagement provides a niche opportunity for suggestions of crimes to cover. *Serial Killers* encourages listeners to contribute to the conversation by commenting on social media platforms which topics or serial killers they would like to see covered. True crime podcasts have enabled listeners to create their own place to deepen their knowledge and relationships with one another through common interests and building a unique, intimate community (Wrather58).

When considering their audience, podcast creators have to expect their listeners to engage in different ways, whether for gratification of learning something new, intrigue from the narrative, or influence based on the social connection among friends. Martin Spinelli believes listener engagement is based on how the podcast will be “consumed” and trust of the listeners to “live up to the expectations” (91-92). Supporting this argument, Garcia-Marin believes in

flourishing the connection between the creators and listeners by introducing social media platforms. The audience/creator symbiotic relationship is poetic in that one cannot continue without the other, they continually shape how media is designed and evolved. The awareness of this relationship helps the production continue through its series (O’Sullivan60). Perks (“Use and Gratification” 629), O’Sullivan (60), and Mou (488) consider audience gratitude and fulfillment for new information as an influence to whether their audience continues to listen to the series. By providing a means for the audience to engage and participate with the podcast, listeners can become relevant influencers of their interpersonal relationships that grow the community of each podcast. Without sharing information in social environments – whether friends, family, coworkers—the podcast has an unfortunate chance of losing listeners and having to stop production. The symbiotic relationship would cease to exist, and the purpose of the podcast would hinge on the need to survive instead of wanting for creativity.

Purpose – Why Podcasts?

There are many different reasons why podcasts are gaining attention for educational entertainment through the discourse. Johnstone wrote, “Every choice about what to count as a text for analysis is a choice not only about what to include but also about what to exclude” (17). I have found articles about the different purposes of podcasts and the purpose of creating a podcast. To support the use of podcasts as an educational source of information, I have included scholarly reviews of educational podcasts and their purpose both theoretically and practically, the entertainment as it relays to audience engagement and hermeneutic (or enigma) code, and their listenability as it pertains to flexibility in listening and continued production.

Educational podcasts are mainly secondary or optional resources used by instructors to demonstrate research, encourage curiosity, relate materials to real-world experiences, and extend

the possibility of learning outside the classroom (Markman⁵⁵⁷; CWPA⁴; Jones⁸⁸; Drew, “Edutaining Audio” 51). Educational podcasts as supplementary materials are perceived to extend classroom learning (Markman⁵⁶⁶). By having podcasts support lectures, interviews, and discussions, Popova supports educational podcasts as a way to connect with students outside of the traditional classroom (331). One scholar considers educational podcasts as a replacement for textbook reading claiming, “students commented on the survey that they preferred listening to podcasted lectures rather than reading as the textbook was difficult and tedious to read” (Beard²). These podcasts inform students about the coursework or replace other secondary materials (readings, announcement reminders, etc). The function for these podcasts are not integrative into the curriculum.

Christopher Drew contests that supplemental and substitutional podcasts are considered nonessential learning, but integrating podcasts – guest interviews, lessons pertaining to podcast episodes, debating discourse for others to reflect – would afford insight into diverse texts creating an educational benefit to see multiple perspectives (“Educational Podcast” 201). The purpose of educational podcasts would evolve to include intellectual engagement strategies to invoke a deeper foundational comprehension of topics while encouraging multimodal resources (Kozinets²⁵⁰; Jones⁷⁷). Combining learning with digital media merges the division between spoken word and written text. The requirement of code-switching for students of differing demographics would fade as the written and spoken represent the same purpose and functionality. Leigh Jones (88) and Jennifer Bowie (“Invention” 3) contest separately that providing real-world examples and understanding “what is under the hood” engage students, which then connects the students with the podcast’s audience. Bowie discusses in their podcast Episode 5 – “Memory and Delivery” and Episode 6 – “Audience, Purpose, Context, and Tone”

how the purpose of podcasts draw students to consider what they are writing, how they are writing it, and who will be listening. “Purpose changes because of the change in audience,” stated by Jennifer Bowie supports the use of podcasts for more than extra educational opportunities, as a direct, advantageous technology to capture the attention of their audience while teaching new information (“Audience, Purpose, Context, and Tone” 3). Educational podcasts should consider the purpose of their podcast as a chance for listeners and students to expand upon their knowledge and encourage future exploration.

Part of what is entertaining about true crime podcasts is partially based on the hermeneutic code. Martin Spinelli (180), Collin Brooke (75-76), and Robert Kozinets (361) agree that the hermeneutic code offers the listener a mystery to solve by excluding information only to later reveal its importance or including large amounts of information and finding it is all connected at the end. It is entertaining to the listener to try to deduct or piece together the information in order to see the whole story. The hermeneutic code enables the listener’s imagination and creativity to evoke an emotion (Greer 155). As the Council of Writing Program Administrators identifies, “creativity is the ability to use novel approaches for generating, investigating, and representing ideas (4). By investigating true crime and having listeners attempt to solve the mystery, listeners are able to apply their learning to their life whether through deductive reasoning, problem-solving, or being involved in the evaluation of the crimes (McNamara 306).

With true crime, there are moments that are emotionally and mentally difficult to digest. In *Serial Killers*, the anguish and disassociation of the hosts from the content creates an emotional response from its listeners. This constructed narrative is intentional to develop a relationship between the audience and the podcast (Riddell 30). A bond between the podcast and

the listeners is tested during moments of difficult topics or when the discussion is not conducive to the audience (Spinelli 92). The purpose of manifesting negative mental images in the listener is to have them sympathize with the hosts/creators of the podcast and create a uniquely shared moment. Having an increase in mental effort to create an emotional response also leads to increased learning (McNamara 305). It enables the listener to continue to the next episode and strengthens the trust between podcasters and their audience.

Because podcasts allow people flexibility to listen, the content of the oral narrative has to be captivating. Flexibility as defined by the CWPA means, “the ability to adapt to situations, expectations or demands...and reflect on the choices that make light of context, purpose, and audience” (5). As previously discussed, the flexibility of podcasts to be experienced as a secondary activity is advantageous to the listener (Spinelli10); however, because listeners are looking to learn something as well, the narrative storytelling best shapes stories for teaching (Drew, “Educational Podcast” 206). Oral storytelling inspires a “personal, affective, engrossing, and memorable” experience which facilitates a greater focus surrounding the narrative (Drew, “Educational Podcast” 206; Spinelli34-35). This experience and focus allow the listener to create an understanding and relationship with the text – whether person, situation, or culture being discussed (Cui4). Yet, the listenability of the podcast is nothing without the delivery of the discourse, including changes in tone, word-choice, and imagery (Bowie, “Memory and Delivery” 3-4). Without a visual representation of the story, the other literary elements must reinforce the information being told. With flexibility in the content, the listener is able to take into full consideration every angle of the literature without having to use additional resources. Having all of the information spoken in a variety of ways creates a heuristic approach to understanding the main focus.

Context – How Are They Portrayed?

Patterns surrounding the discourse create an outline of what is being conveyed through the podcast. The delivery of language provide context to the message of the podcast. For instance, the language within sign-posts provides a summary of the episode, which signifies the beginning or end of a podcast episode. A pre-introduction provides a generalized summary of the podcast episode while also leaving out enough information for the listener to feel the need to listen to the entire episode. Post-conclusions typically include contact information, website, credits of the producers, and any licensing required for the show to be in compliance with federal or contractual obligations. These signposts are preferred for learning so that the main points are revisited as a summary at the end of the episodes (Riddell28). The linguistic choices (formal or conversational), both the sign-posts and main content, provide context of whether the conversation is about a serious topic, or comical. The specific language and inflection type is important to consider when listening to a podcast. The CWPA defines convention as, “the formal rules and informal guidelines that define what is considered to be correct (appropriate) or incorrect (inappropriate) in a piece of writing” (9). For podcasts, conventions are individually identified since there are no regulations like television or broadcast radio. In the freedom of creating a podcast, there are common elements that are typically used to engage and provide background information to listeners.

Listeners of podcasts rely on the creators to lay a foundation of information before starting the episode. Anguelina Popova categorized information within podcasts as *advanced organisers*, which are materials that “provide ideational scaffolding at a higher level of generality” (332). She continues to claim the purpose of advance organisers is to “evoke prior knowledge on a given topic and/or creation of a common background” (332). Having a pattern of

advanced organisers provokes the listener to know that the information was previously discussed and is now considered prior knowledge to build upon. The content creates a contextual understanding of the layout of the episodes. Some podcasts creators may follow a similar pattern like audiobooks by having an introduction, body, and conclusion (Perks, “Podcasts and Productivity” 102). Consistent formatting enables the listener to understand where different pieces of information can be found within the episode. The repetition of format and language creates an informal guideline to help the audience retain information similar to an introduction or conclusion of a research paper.

Conversational styled podcasts have strengths and weaknesses for providing audience engagement. Researchers Garcia-Marin (57) and Drew (“Edutaining Audio” 58) found semi-formal conversation provided an authoritative figure similar to a teacher or familial hierarchy. This type of fluid conversation can be seen as closeness between the podcast hosts and the audience like a classroom seminar setting. An unfortunate side-effect of having more than one host is interruptions, including laughter, sneezing, or coughing. Bowie recommends sound editing to deliver the best performance and improve the quality of the podcast, yet, depending on the context of extended silences, verbal tics, or sounds, they may enhance the discourse surrounding it (5-6). These moments may be reduced for timing. On average, podcasts typically run between forty-eight and fifty-two minutes from start to finish (Hurst278). With having two signposts running approximately 45 seconds each, the body of the podcast is filled with conversations pertaining to a specific topic (Bowie, “Memory and Delivery” 2-3).

The use of storytelling, narrative pedagogy, and world-building are the primary elements of serial media, especially within podcasts. Kozinets (250), Drew (“Educational Podcast” 206), Riddell (28), and Perks (“Podcasts and Productivity” 107) identify storytelling as one of the

longest living pedagogical styles that captivates an audience's attention. Storytelling is a strategic option for podcasts since the literary elements within oral cultures are designed for narratives to be passed from audience to audience. The act of using these stories for educational purposes falls parallel to narrative pedagogy. Both allow the listener to learn about the moral or objectives of the spoken narrative (Beard2). Contextually, the use of storytelling in podcasts sparks production to expand upon concepts or objectives that may take longer amounts of time to cover. Similar to an in-person setting, breaking down concepts into smaller manageable pieces increase a deeper understanding over time (O'Sullivan50). In creating a learning environment in an online platform, the design of the podcast invites its own world of escape for listeners.

Serial narratives are created using six monumental elements: world-building, personnel, design, iteration, multiplicity, and momentum (O'Sullivan53-55). Each element reflects each other to provide listenability, recognizable features, and to continue the story. Sean O'Sullivan uses these elements to describe serial television series, but they can describe podcasts as well. World-building creates a space for characters to live within their own universal rules (57). These worlds portray characters that know what a daily routine includes, however, the story begins when a conflict occurs – the plot – that upsets the universal rules. The design of the characters, specifically the conflicts within their relationships, introduces sub-plots that aid in resolving the conflict. According to O'Sullivan, the iteration of repetitive, recognizable features creates a family-like dependency for the characters (51). Their consistency allows for the multiple sub-plots and outside spaces to be introduced without disrupting the space of the story. The interconnected relationships and secondary plots create momentum for the overall story to continue into the next episode.

Translating this to podcasts, world-building remains the space of the podcast story; whether it is current day laws and rules or a dystopian world where human-like creatures fly across the sky, each story takes place in an imagined location set by rules of the creator. Characters that are either fictitious or real consider the space a lived experience and contain personal relationships with the other characters within the story. They can even include the hosts or podcast creators depending on the type of narrative. Designing the space and the characters in a podcast contribute to the longevity of a story. Verbal description of the space in which the character lives provide contextual clues for the listener to imagine, whether the environment surrounding their home, or people they interact with. For true crime podcasts, some shows describe in depth the crime scene with the main characters then add secondary characters as victims or law enforcement as they become involved to drive a main conflict in that world (O'Sullivan51).

Yet, the seriality of the podcast comes from the iteration, multiplicity, and momentum of the story – patterns within episodes that aid in the hermeneutic code through storytelling. Patterns within consistent iteration of main characters or hosts direct the focus on the content instead of how the podcast is being narrated (53). Without the iteration, multiplicity would not work as there would be too many new pieces of information to account for within each episode. Having the same host and format of the podcast allows the content to change and reflect new information or leave conflicts unresolved. These open-ended questions create momentum for the upcoming episode. The publication between episodes, whether a few day(s), week(s), or month(s) dangle the need for listeners to see the conclusion of the story. Spinelli shares an example with *Radiolab* that reminds listeners that their perception is structured around an order to make sense (30). The structure – iteration, multiplicity, momentum – by O'Sullivan supports a

pattern to serial content to enhance the listening experience. Serial immersive narratives that include stimulating language produce a creative image within the listener's mind.

Discourse and language choices combined with the consideration of audience and design influence the listener's reaction provide context to the main idea. Through critical analysis of the discourse, listeners can dissect the content for credibility, bias, or quality (CWPA7). By using language that can be interpreted through many lens, the podcast producers evoke their listeners' emotional response. Barbara Johnstone (157), Jennifer Bowie ("Invention" 4), Owens (68) and Robert Kozinets (250) support selective discourse as a means to connect to listeners emotionally and personally because it can cause a reaction. This connection to listeners requires both trust and reliability of the podcast. Spinelli found that podcast *The Heart* used more transparent and slang language to relate to listeners and apply a personal feel in the conversation (73). Similarly, Cui (3) and Bowie ("Audience, Purpose, Context, and Tone" 5) state the audience has to 'buy' the message being conveyed in order for the discourse to work appropriately. Without audience engagement, whether emotional or participatory, the content becomes obsolete and uninteresting. The three main elements – audience, design, and context – provide a heuristic approach to analyzing and creating podcasts.

Conclusion

These resources together have provided a fundamental background to analyzing *Serial Killers*. By understanding audience participation and integration, design elements for seriality, and contextual cues, I am able to adapt the principles into the analysis of the podcast content. The Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) provides clear educational goals required for writing programs. Their concepts and outcomes are not limited to the classroom setting, allowing me to implement them in my analysis of podcasts. Analyzing the audience,

purpose, and context of the discourse within *Serial Killers* is a combination of digital media studies, rhetoric, composition, and media analysis. The fusion of these disciplines allows me to approach *Serial Killers* in a new, analytical format. I am able to reflect on how podcasts engage with their audience through the purpose and context of the discourse. By combining the research of others, I am able to build on how podcasts are considered resources within education.

I intend to focus a method and research solely on *Serial Killers* to introduce podcast analysis for educational opportunities, specifically to enable educators and scholars to use edutainment digital media in their curriculum. Sarah Riddick stated support for analyzing media to understand audience engagement (13). With podcast studies being relatively new technology, new revolutionary ideology may transform how educators and scholars implement and reflect on podcasts. However, with expanding the use of podcasts in education, Christopher Drew cautions against generalizing categories. Drew advised against universalizing podcast design principles in his article “Edutaining Audio: An Exploration of Education Podcast Design Possibilities.” This is based on factors such as, the lack of regulations and guidelines surrounding podcasts, the growing number of genres available, and the diverse number of podcasts. The lack of regulations and guidelines means that there are creative and varied liberties when it comes to creating a podcast. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to capture all of the different formats as the same. Thus, creating a universal expectation of podcasts would alienate the endless possibilities of their influence in advancing technology, culture, or social gratitude. My analysis is to show how an analysis of a podcast could be done, but not the only way.

Method

Introduction

The Methods section outlines the process I used to collect, code, and analyze data from the *Serial Killers* podcast. It provides insight into how to create a playlist of episodes under review, the titles of the episodes being used within my research, the location of the transcripts, and how they are coded for analysis. This chapter begins with my personal journey to finalize this topic for research, including the coding process, in order for other scholars to replicate the process to evaluate other podcasts.

Serial Killers can be found on multiple podcast directories; however, I focused on Spotify as it was the platform where I first found the podcast. The show was advertised in another podcast, *Mythology* which is produced by the network, Parcast. It was also suggested through the Spotify algorithm based on previous listening and interests. I chose to continue with Spotify since it is the platform I am most familiar with and have open accessibility to the episodes.

Because of my previous listening with the podcast, I have preconceived notions about how the podcast contains both educational and entertaining components. The ideology of edutainment stems from multiple hours of close listening to the podcast and engaging in conversation with others about their interpretation of the episodes. This bias drove my interest into how podcasts are used in education, but extended further by analyzing the discourse. The research is to help explain my understanding of the podcast, but in the results and observations, I take the bias into consideration.

Creating a Playlist

Because podcasts have multiple episodes, in order to have the data available without having to search through the podcast directory, for the purpose of this study, it was important to create a separate playlist with the episodes to ensure a separation between casual podcast listening and research materials. The playlist also was a verification step that I had the episodes easily accessible for listening. It also allowed me to listen to the episodes without having to search for them individually and instead, created a direct avenue to the episodes. For repeatability, I have written the steps I have taken to find the episodes and create a playlist. If the website would change the format of creating a playlist, this method should be helpful in recreating the podcast episode collection.

Spotify has a free web-based player or downloadable software for desktops. It also has an app for mobile devices; however, the steps below are only for the desktop web-based player. I have a Spotify account already set up for entertainment listening, so the account creation process was not necessary. If I would not have had a previous account, an account can be created either through an email registration or through a Facebook account. Spotify also requests the user's name, birthday, and gender, while requesting to share the registration data for marketing purposes. After completing the form, there is a CAPTCHA button to attest that I am an individual and not a robot as a verification step before signing up. The materials on Spotify are available for listening upon the final creation of the account.

Once logged into Spotify, at the bottom of the web page, there is a site navigation that has three columns titled Company, Communities, and Useful Links. Based on figure 1, under the Useful Links column are three options: support, web player, free mobile app, I clicked on the Web Player for access to their available streaming.

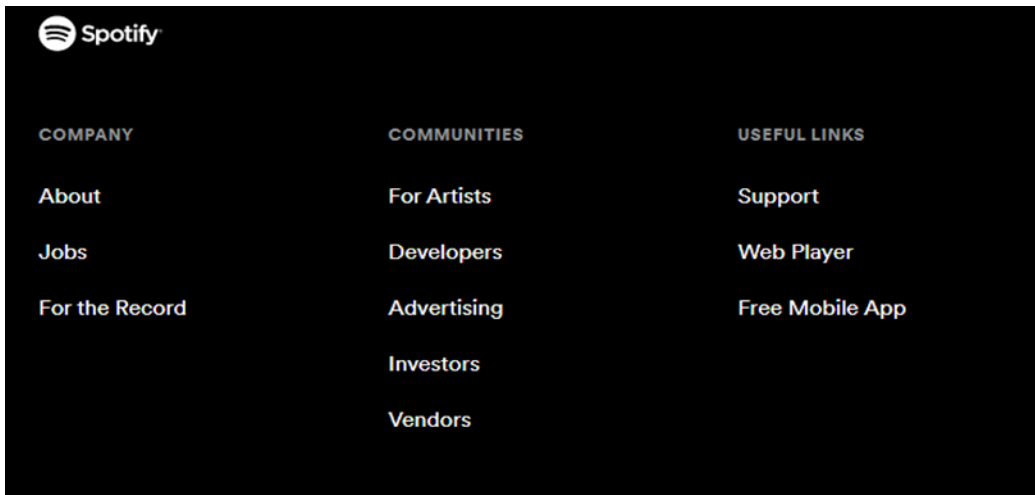


Figure 1. Spotify navigation across the bottom of the main page, Spotify.com

The webpage appears different with a left navigation and my suggested listening in the middle of the screen. In Figure 2, the left navigation below the Spotify logo, there are five total options: Home, Search, Your Library, Create Playlist, and Liked Songs.

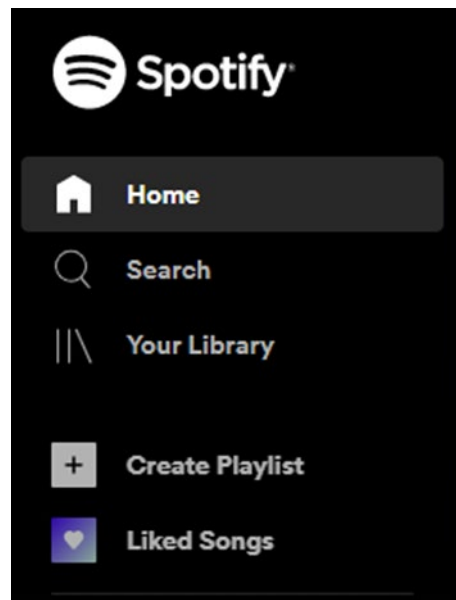


Figure 2. Spotify left navigation to search on their website, Spotify.com

Next, I clicked the second option, “Search.” From there, categories appeared such as “Your Top Genres” and browse all with different genres of music available. Above the category “Your Top Genre” is a white fillable box that has a magnifying glass as identified in Figure 3. I used this as the search function on Spotify to locate the podcast.

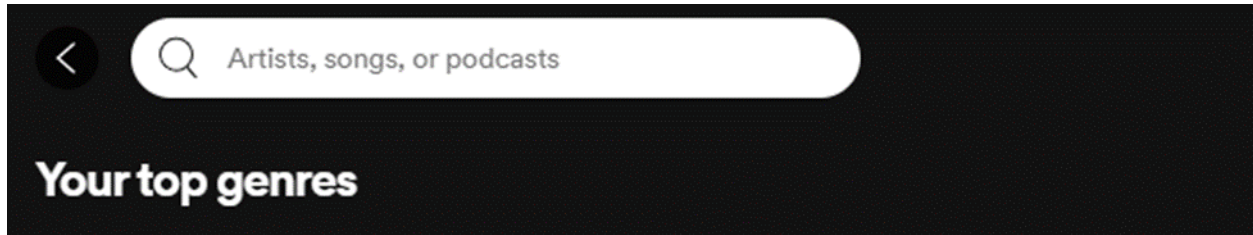


Figure 3. Spotify's search option based on the web player on their website, Spotify.com

In the search bar, I entered Serial Killers, which was one of the top results based on my previous searches (see Figure 4).

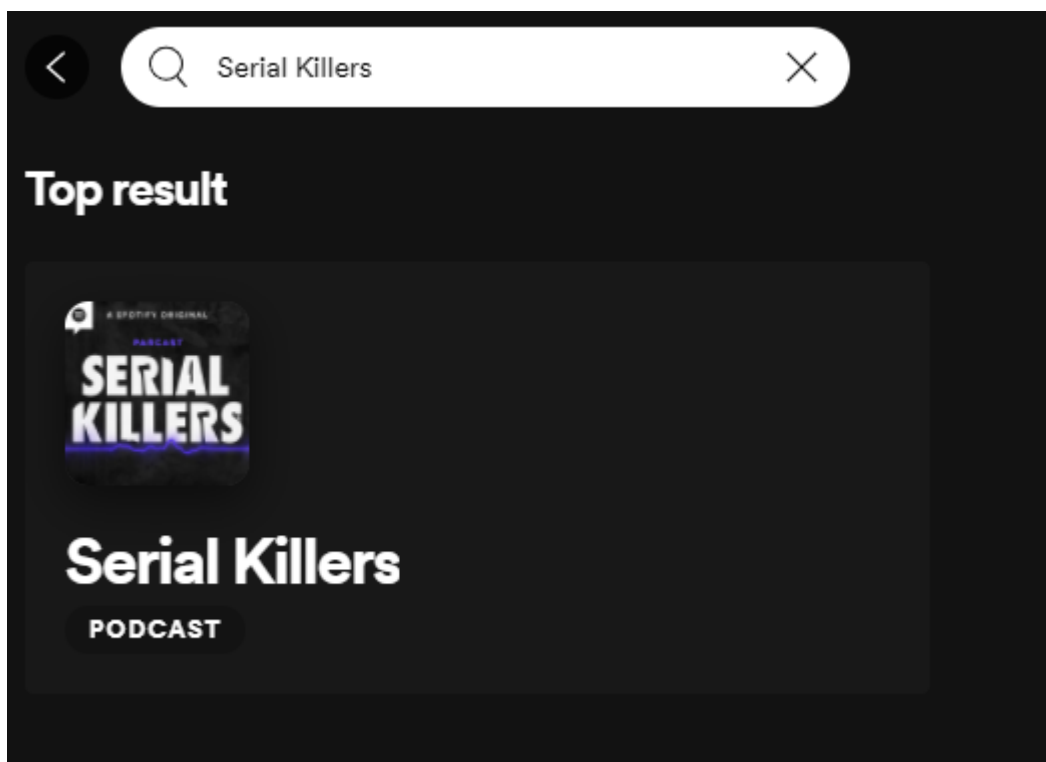


Figure 4. Spotify's search results when looking for *Serial Killers* on their website, spotify.com

I selected this podcast in the generated options. As seen in Figure 5, the middle section of the webpage took me to the podcast's information and episodes with options to Follow and Share the podcast with others. Under the introduction are the playable episodes in publication date from the newest episode to the latest. Because of the number of episodes within the podcast, the

screen needed additional time to load when scrolling through the episodes that were previously published.



Figure 5. Serial Killers landing page on Spotify's webpage, spotify.com

Each episode is listed first with the thumbnail logo of the podcast with the title and brief description. The arrow is linked to play the episode. The month and year are listed to show when the episode was first published. If you listened to the episode before, it will show the word 'Played' with a green checkmark next to it so if you lose your place when listening, you can scroll until the episode no longer has that statement. In Figure 6, the episodes I have previously listened to show the green checkmark.

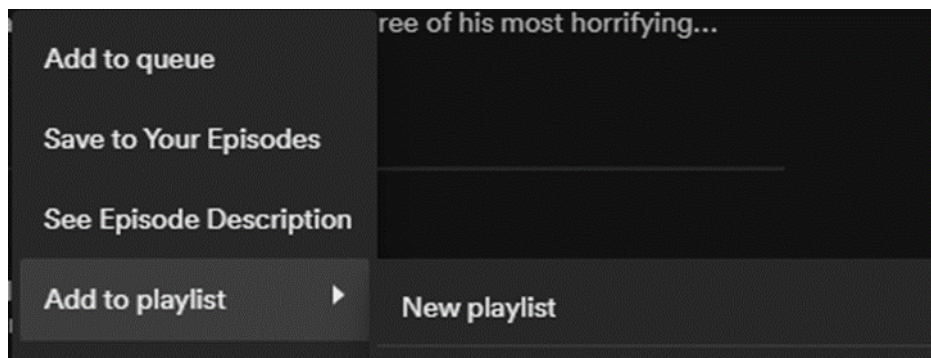


Figure 6. Episode descriptions of Serial Killers previously listened to through spotify.com

By right-clicking in the episode, a dropdown menu appears with the options: Add to queue, Save to your Episodes, See Episode Description, Add to playlist, Share, Open in Desktop App. Figure 7 shows the first four options since our focus is on creating a new playlist.



Figure 7. The dropdown menu to create a new playlist in Spotify.

I created a playlist of the episodes for my corpus in order to have easier accessibility to the materials. In the dropdown menu, by hovering the mouse over “Add to Playlist”, I had to create a new playlist since it was not appearing with my other playlists. I clicked on the option to create a ‘New Playlist’ which is the first option. From there, I was able to add the episodes to the new playlist. The creation of a new playlist provided me with the opportunity to listen through the episodes within my study without having to worry about clicking through their entire publication history

In creating the new playlist, on the left-hand navigation, the title of the playlist reflected the podcast episode, which would create confusion as to whether it's just one episode or all of the ones within this study (see Figure 8). I took additional steps to change the title to reflect the purpose of the playlist and the contents.

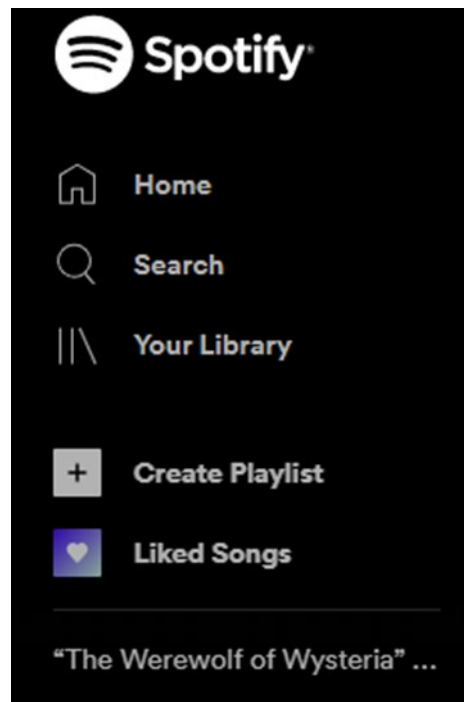


Figure 8. An image of the title of the newly created playlist in Spotify.

By clicking on the title, the playlist title, my name and photo, the number of episodes or songs within the playlist, and the total time duration of the playlist appear. Below that information, the podcast episode is listed with the title, podcast name, add date, and duration time as shown in Figure 9.



Figure 9. The title of the newly created playlist with the total amount of songs and duration.

To not confuse the playlist with the episode, I changed the title of the playlist to something that captures the entirety of the playlist. It allowed for an easier identification between the podcast episode and the sample so I could skip, restart, or pause the episodes without worry about changing the playlist queue. I made the change by clicking on the ellipsis next to the green arrow under the title of the playlist, then clicking on the ellipsis for a dropdown menu that appeared (Figure 10).

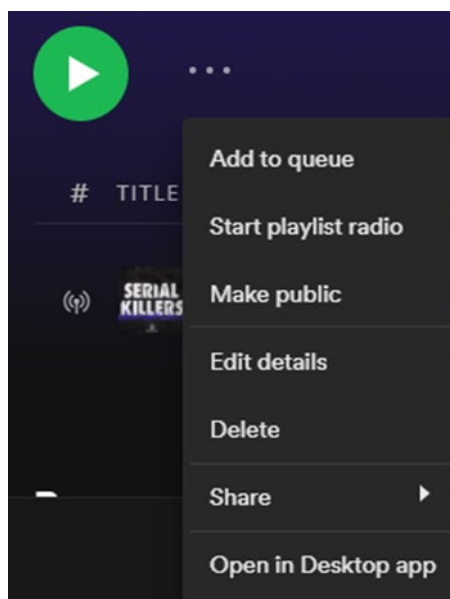


Figure 10. Dropdown menu to make changes to the playlist on Spotify.

From the dropdown menu, I selected the fourth option, “Edit details.” A new window appeared in the forefront of the playlist information. In this window, I could update the

thumbnail photo, title, and description of the playlist. Just for clarity purposes, I have updated my playlist title to say ‘Thesis Listening’. Then selected “Save” to save the changes to the playlist.

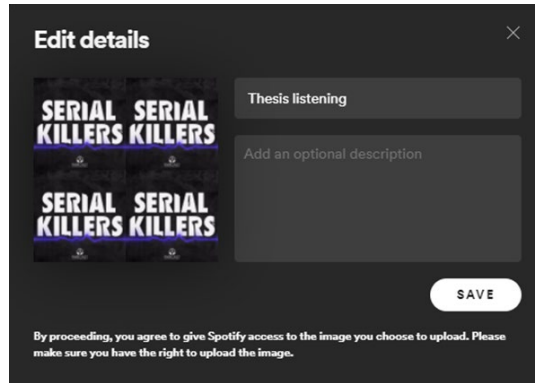


Figure 11. Editing the playlist title for clarity on Spotify.

Once I had the playlist complete with all the episodes of the corpus, I was able to return to this playlist at any time to see the episode materials available and listen at my leisure.

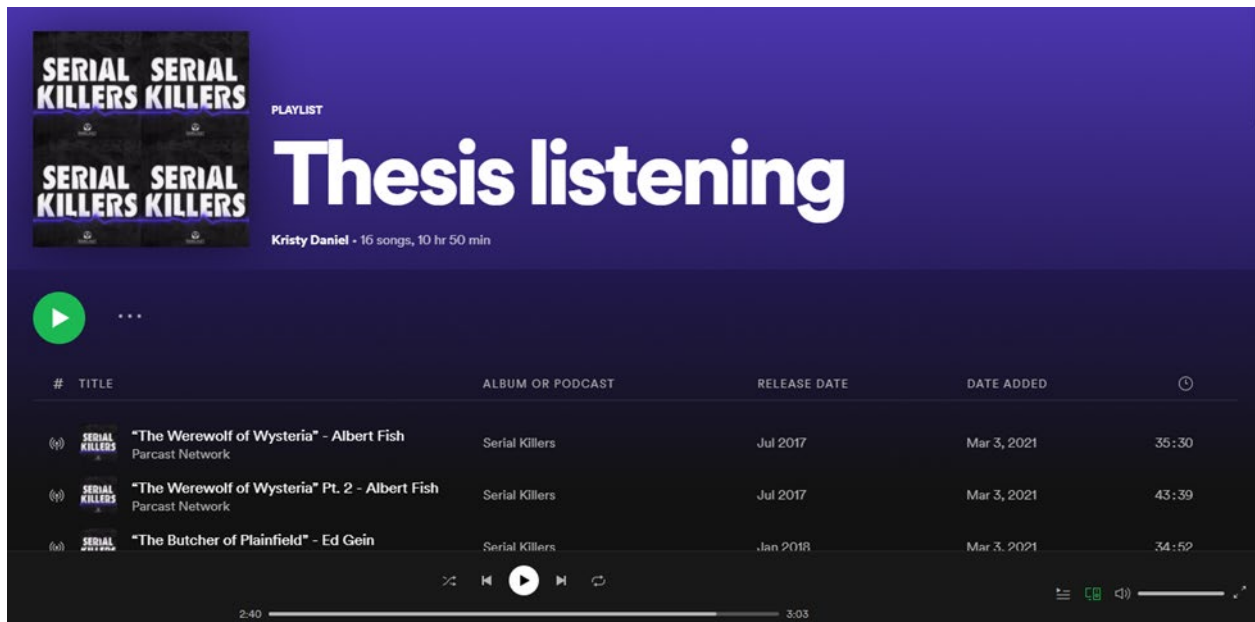


Figure 11. The final title and summary of episodes for my sample.

The bottom navigation bar shown in Figure 12 identifies the song or podcast episode that is playing, with options to reverse by 15 seconds, skip back an episode, play, repeat, time

duration countdown, and volume control. These controls are to navigate through the podcast episode and the playlist. This came crucial during the editing process to recover proper nouns and correct vocabulary during the transcript revision.

Data Corpus

As of June 9, 2021, *Serial Killers* has released 275 episodes since their beginning in June 2017. Starting with June 2017, I collected one topic (two episodes) every six months for 16 total episodes ranging from June 2017 through January 2021. The sixteen episodes/eight topics discussed in this sample include: “The Werewolf of Wysteria” - Albert Fish (Part 1 and Part 2), “The Butcher of Plainfield” - Ed Gein (Part 1 and Part 2), “The Murder Factory” - Amy Archer-Gilligan (Part 1 and Part 2), “Phoenix Serial Shooters” - Dale Hausner and Samuel Dieteman (Part 1 and Part 2), “The Bayou Serial Killer” - Ronald Joseph Dominique (Part 1 and Part 2), “The Gorilla Man” - Earle Leonard Nelson (Part 1 and Part 2), “The Toolbox Killers” - Lawrence Bittaker and Roy Norris (Part 1 and Part 2), and “The Beauty Queen Killer” - Christopher Wilder (Part 1 and Part 2).

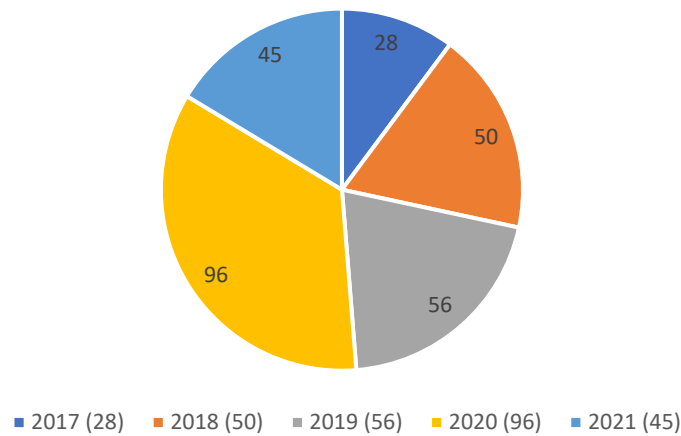
In comparison with the total number of episodes published to date, the sample reflects 6% of the entire podcast. To break it down per year, the sample contains 14% of the episodes published in 2017, 8% of the episodes published in 2018, 7% of episodes published in 2019, 4% of episodes in 2020, and currently 4% of the episodes currently published in 2021. The pie graph in the figure below represents the podcast episodes that were published each year. Please note only two of the episodes are from 2017 and 2021 as the first episode was published in June of 2017 and the final publication for June 2021 was not released at the time of retrieval of the podcast episodes.

The size of the sample is an indication of transition over time. By looking at a smaller corpus, the research is focused on any patterns that continued throughout the publication. Any change in the publication schedule could be correlated to the listener’s engagement or the amount of information provided in one topic. 6% of the episodes provide evidence of continuation in practice and reflects how the creators focused on the context, audience, and purpose of the episodes for listener engagement and seriality.

Table 1

Total number of Serial Killer episodes published between June 2017 and June 2021

Total Number of Serial Killer Episodes Published Between June 2017 and June 2021



Source: Episodes published on Spotify.com counted by Kristy Daniel

Transcript Collection

While my primary focus is on the podcast episodes as audio, collecting the written transcripts of each episode was found to be beneficial for collecting data and coding moments within the discourse that contain pieces of education and entertainment. The transcripts were found through podgist.com, a subscription-based transcript generating website that provides a

rough copy of podcast transcripts. They have episodes ranging from morning talk shows like *The Mark Levin Show* to *Conspiracy Theories*. Their subscription costs \$3 per month, which allows access to all transcripts, requests for new episodes, and ad-free scrolling throughout the transcripts. The transcripts are web-based; therefore, in order to revise and edit the transcripts, I exported the transcripts to a Word Document.

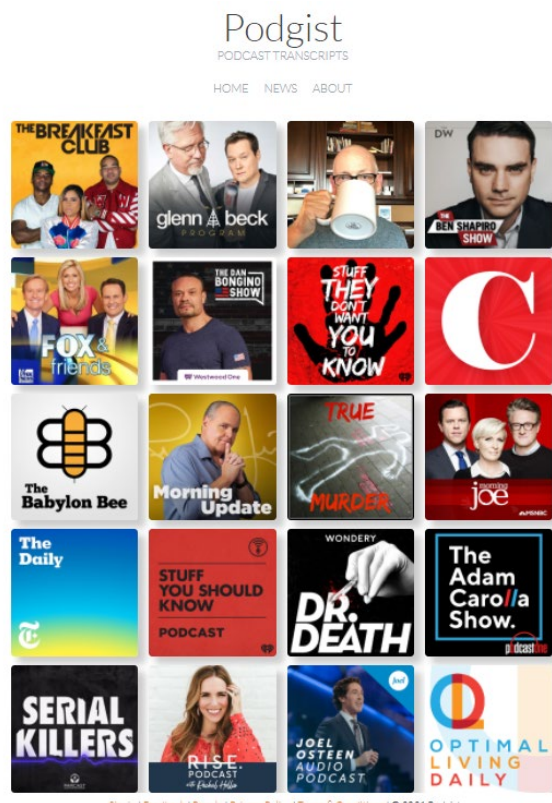


Figure 12. Homepage view of the podcast transcription site, podgist.com

On the Podgist.com website, the Serial Killer thumbnail that matches with the Spotify image leads to the show transcripts. Clicking on the image took me to the archive of the *Serial Killer* transcripts. Similar to Spotify, the podcast description is listed at the top with the episode transcripts underneath. The episodes are in order of publication date with the newest episodes on

the top. I scrolled through the transcripts until I found the ones that matched the episodes of my sample.

Serial Killers
<https://www.podcast.com/serial/>
 Every Monday and Thursday, Serial Killers takes a psychological and entertaining approach to provide a rare glimpse into the mind, methods and madness of the most notorious serial killers with the hopes of better understanding their psychological profile. With the help of in-depth research, we delve deep into their lives and stories. Serial Killers is part of the Podcast Network and is a Cutler Media Production.

← Ads by Google
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Introducing Devious Dads	2021-06-08
"Montana Child Murderer" David Meirhofer	2021-06-07
"The Cross-Country Killer" Tommy Lynn Sells Pt. 2	2021-06-03
"The Cross-Country Killer" Tommy Lynn Sells Pt. 1	2021-05-31
"Mall Santa" Bruce McArthur Pt. 2	2021-05-27
"Mall Santa" Bruce McArthur Pt. 1	2021-05-24
🔒 Cults Crossover: "The Narcosatanist" Adolfo Constanzo Pt. 2	0:58:34 2021-05-20
🔒 Cults Crossover: "The Narcosatanist" Adolfo Constanzo Pt. 1	0:53:02 2021-05-17

Figure 13. Transcripts of episodes of Serial Killers by podgister.com

The episodes that are available for free viewing have three stacked lines before the episode title. The episodes with a lock symbol in front of the title required a subscription to view the transcript in its entirety.

☰	"The Tweed Creeper" David Russell Williams Pt. 2	0:39:44	2021-05-06
🔒	"The Tweed Creeper" David Russell Williams Pt. 1	0:39:27	2021-05-03

Figure 14. Differences between open and locked transcripts on podgist.com

Once I found the episodes listed for the sample and paid a three dollar subscription fee, all of the transcripts became accessible. I clicked on the title of the episode to view the computer-generated transcript which included timestamps, ads placed throughout, and large paragraphs of text.



Figure 16. ““The Beauty Queen Killer” Christopher Wilder Pt. 1’ by *Serial Killer* transcript on podgist.com

In order to have editable copies of the transcripts, I had to turn them into Microsoft Word documents. From Podgist.com, once the transcript was open, on the webpage with the transcript, I right clicked in the middle of the webpage for page options to appear, then selected the fifth option, print.

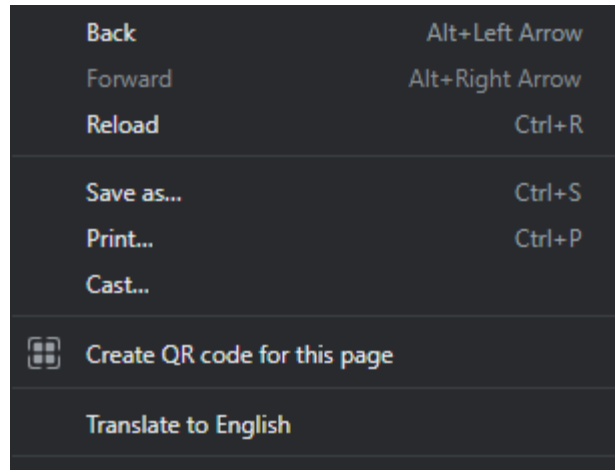


Figure 17. Website enhancing options available.

A new window appeared for print specifications. Instead of printing the webpage as a document to a printer, I changed the destination from a printer to Save as PDF, but keep the pages as All and the layout as Portrait. Then I clicked Save in the bottom right-hand corner to prompt the print as PDF.

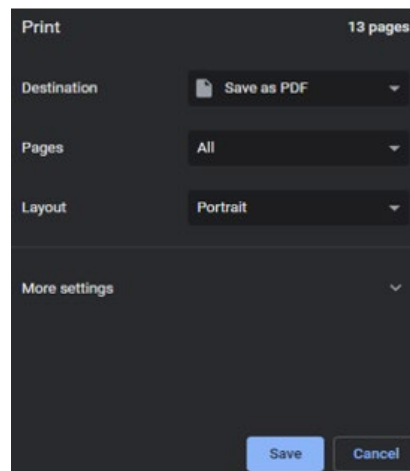


Figure 18. Printing options for the transcript webpage.

Next, I opened the PDF document of the transcript downloaded. On the right-hand side of the document is an arrow to burst open options for the document including Create PDF, Combine Files, Edit PDF, Fill & Sign, and Export PDF.

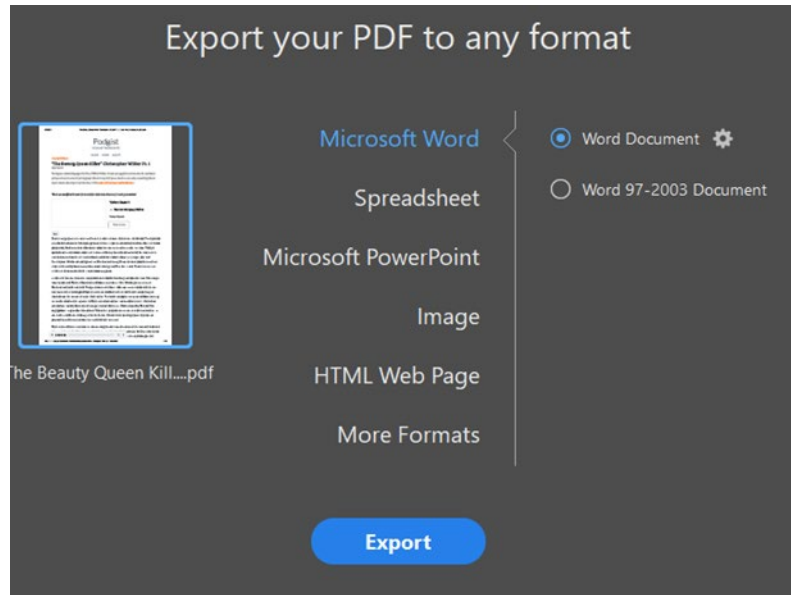


Figure 19. PDF formatting of the downloaded transcripts.

In order to make edits to the document, I chose to export the PDF. A new window appeared requesting the type of export. Because Microsoft Word is a traditional word processing system that I am comfortable using, I chose to keep that option before selecting Export. The process for exporting the document took a few minutes to complete.

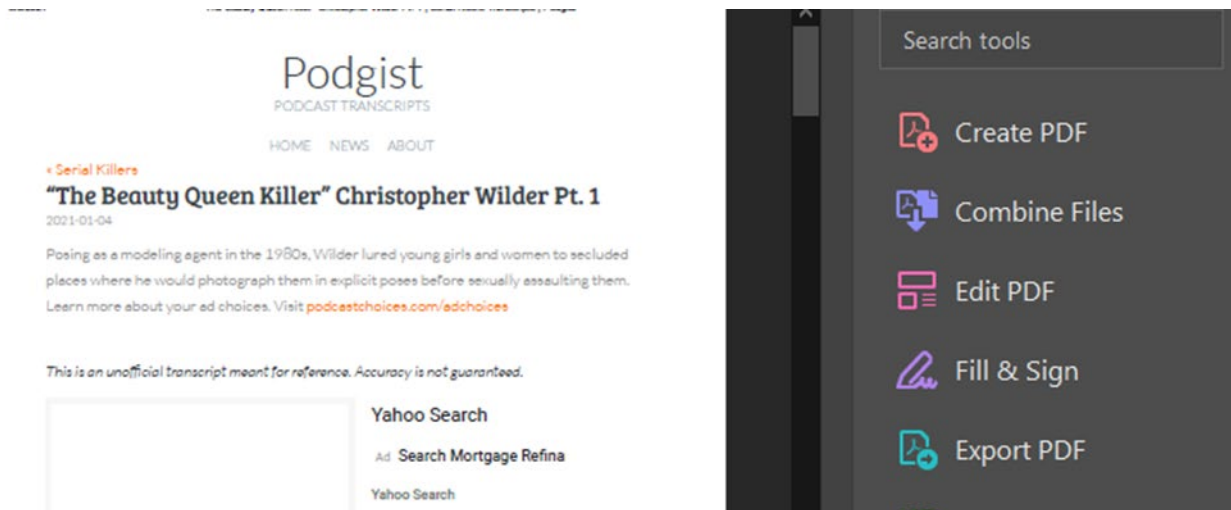


Figure 20. Exporting one transcript from PDF to Word.

After the transcript was exported as a Word document, I began editing and revising the document by first removing all of the Ads, photos, textboxes, or hidden items through the use of the selection pane in Microsoft Word. The Selection Pane can be found under the home navigation, editing dropdown, then the Select with a cursor symbol as shown in Figure 21.

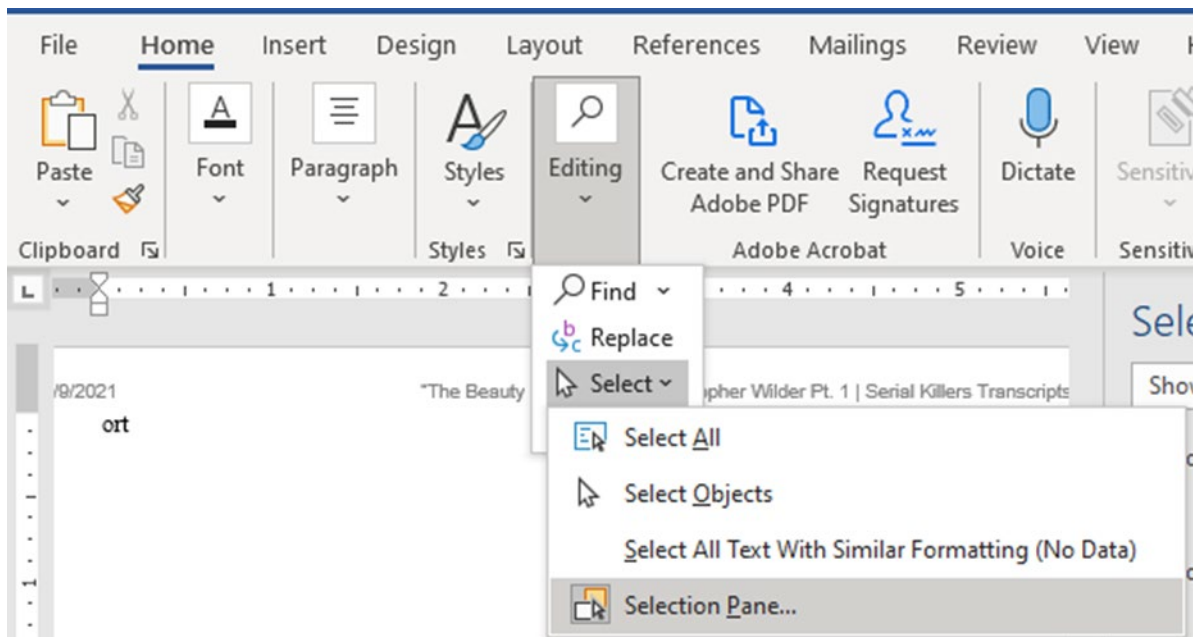


Figure 21. Finding the selection pane for editing in Microsoft Word.

By opening the selection pane, I was able to see all of the items hidden within the document. I highlighted each item in the selection pane and used the delete button on the keyboard to remove the item. This was required to clean up the document and make sure the formatting was consistent on each page of the document.

After removing the hidden items from the document, I formatted the font and spacing to condense the information and provide easier readability. I chose to format the text as Times New Roman, 12pt, Automatic Color, with normal spacing, and normal position then adjusted the paragraph setting for equal spacing. I chose Left Alignment, 0 indentation from inside or outside, selected auto spacing before and after, and the line spacing at 1.5. At this point, the document

seemed extremely spacious due to the reformatting; however, it provided a crucial starting point in revising and editing the transcripts for accuracy. Before listening and editing the transcripts, I removed as much of the additional spacing as possible to provide an easier listening experience.

Podgist

PODCAST TRANSCRIPTS

HOME NEWS ABOUT

« Serial Killers

“The Beauty Queen Killer” Christopher Wilder Pt. 1

2021-01-04

Posing as a modeling agent in the 1980s, Wilder lured young girls and women to secluded places where he would photograph them in explicit poses before sexually assaulting them. Learn more about your ad choices. Visit podcastchoices.com/adchoices

|

This is an unofficial transcript meant for reference. Accuracy is not guaranteed.

Figure 22. Word documentation of transcripts before removing the additional spacing and revisions.

The process of revising the transcripts took approximately two days for each episode due to the length of the episodes and details they provide. I decided to revise the transcripts to have the ability to have accurate counts of names and research to see how the discourse revealed what was being said. It allowed me to take a step away from the auditory to focus on the language itself rather than how it was presented.

Revising the transcripts required listening to the episodes at standard 1x speed or .8x speed in order to make corrections. The transcript revisions required at least two listens in order to target the small errors including (but not limited to) who's speaking, punctuation, common word spelling errors, and advertisement breaks, and to correct the names of the individuals discussed within the episode. To make sure all of the names were correct (even the production team), I researched through GoogleScholar and a traditional Google search for accuracy in spelling of each person's name or organization. It is important to have the correct spelling of each name for the episode counts that happen through the coding process. It also provides an easier way to find information about a specific individual, whether victim or psychiatrist, when looking into the references and citations for accuracy and truth. Accurate transcripts made the coding process straightforward with the information instead of having to stop and research along the way.

Data Coding Scheme

The data coding scheme is used to identify how the language engages active listening while being educational. The coding process is focused to look at the three main principles of the Rhetorical Framework: audience, purpose, and context. Based on the coding scheme, specifically surrounding the purpose and context of the discourse, I found that each episode focused on targeting an emotional response from the listener using specific language. The data coding scheme allows for patterns emerge surrounding the specific language and how the discourse is being portrayed to audiences.

The educational components used in my coding scheme are based on Christopher Drew's educational design concepts definitions and references. I chose these two specifically as they relate to CWPA's guidance for rhetorical knowledge and they provide a foundation for new

information (6). Similarly, the protagonist and additional personnel discussed within the narrative fall under Sean O'Sullivan's category of personnel. I chose these specific concepts as the podcast is about people who have done crimes against others. Due to my previous listening, I noticed terms being defined and references to psychologists or written works and chose those categories specifically to understand exactly how much of each episode is relaying new information or citations. I chose to separate the protagonist from the other characters because the primary focus of each episode surrounds one serial killer. The discourse that describes the serial killer separately creates a unique identity in comparison to the others and is considered their own category.

The first two categories, definitions and references, are considered the pedagogical approach to podcasts. The collection of definitions shows how the podcast takes the audience's knowledge into consideration. By showing that a term is first defined in Part One then carried through Part Two without being re-defined, the podcast assumes listeners have either listened to Part One and understand the terminology or have the knowledge beforehand. This creates a learning opportunity by building on the information previously stated. Having the references counted and collected shows how the podcast refers to primary and/or secondary sources for information about the serial killer. It provides insight into the types of sources the creators use whether quotes, case studies, or research articles. The references provide insight into whether the podcast could be considered pedagogical through their relaying of information.

The last two categories – protagonist and additional personnel – are considered one unit under the category of personnel within the narrative and entertainment components. By separating the protagonist from the other individuals that appear throughout the narrative, the data collected show how each character is portrayed and how the language instills an audio

identity to the listener. The collected descriptive language surrounding each person shows the importance of choosing one word over another. For example, the difference between consume and eat changes the imagery portrayed to the audience. Those subtle details are what provide an entertainment factor within the discourse by capturing the audience's attention. The imagery of each specific word evolves the image of who the serial killer is and the crimes committed. It reflects a new dimension to the story. The language could be considered educational as well if studied in the classroom. For this study, the distinction of discourse is considered an entertaining component of the podcast.

The four categories provide insight into how the discourse follows the rhetorical framework for an educational experience that can be used within classrooms. The categories combine together to consider the purpose of the language, the context in which the terms are described, and how it can be interpreted by the audience. The data collection focused on how the rhetorical framework combined with entertaining discourse for an engaging listener experience. During the collection process, counting how many times a term is used, whether a definition or the name of the protagonist, showed how the discourse focuses on the serial killer as an individual from birth through death or incarceration instead of focusing on the crimes alone. It supports how the terms are used in relation to each other from unknown terminology, example, then implementation. The count for references is important to understand where they find their information, and if it could be considered an academic source. The evolution of the podcast from the first episode to today's most current production supports a shift in their citation and discussion format which is identified through the coded data.

Data Coding

The transcripts were reviewed and color coded for four separate categories: definitions, references, protagonist, and additional personnel. The defined words are bolded in yellow with the following definition italicized in yellow. This includes any words that are followed by an explanation or stated as ‘x is defined by z.’ References are bolded in green with the information they are discussing italicized in green. This includes specific individuals or organizations, i.e., American Psychological Association, Doctor Wertham, as well as generalized groups or individuals. The protagonist’s legal name and any/all nicknames are bold in red with any descriptive language italicized in red. Lastly, the additional personnel (victim’s names, parent’s names, etc.) are bolded in blue with any descriptive language italicized in blue. The color coding is to show the relationships between each category and to see if a pattern emerges from the layout of the text.

In addition to the color coordinated text, I kept an excel spreadsheet for each episode that shows all of this information in individual tabs for each episode. Because one topic is discussed across two episodes, each spreadsheet tab has a unique number relevant to the episode. There are eight topics with sixteen episodes. Each topic is represented through the first number with the version (part 1 or part 2) represented in the second number. For instance, 1.1 equates to Albert Fish – Part One, while 1.2 designates Albert Fish – Part 2. This series of numbering 1.1 through 8.2 allows for each episode to contain its own information.

Each tab contains the same information that is being color coded – definitions, references, protagonist, and additional personnel. However, since the data was kept in an Excel spreadsheet, I kept track of how many times each piece of information is used. When a term is defined, a count of how many times that term is used is listed in the spreadsheet next to the term. This additional piece of data shows how much of the discourse is being used to educate,

describe, or inform audiences about the topic at hand. Having the data separated by episode allows for each episode to be analyzed individually before being combined per topic, then as a whole unit to reflect the podcast.

Table 2

Example of the data collection and coding process for each episode of Serial Killers

Episodes	Episode Title	Duration Length	Date published												
12 - The Viewout of Victim's Eye - Albert Fish				7/6/2017											
Pedagogical Agents				Personnel											
Term	Definition	# of its Reference	Who said it	References	Legal Name	# of times	Nicknames	# of times used	adjectives	# of its verbs/adverbs	# of times	Legal Name	# of nicknames	# of the words used for det.	
Cannibalism	Culture, traditions, and views	21	Quote	Albert Fish's abduction of Billy Gaffney	Albert Fish	25	Fish	171	cannibalism	18	murder	22	Grace Budd	26	infamous victim, E-pe
Insanity Plea	entered by the defense when	3	Reference	The Narrative of Arthur				9	schizophrenic	6	kill	20	Billy Gaffney	18	EBB
			Reference	German cannibal and serial killer				3	abandoned	6	corrupted	20	Edward Budd	3	Edward
			Quote	sexual excitement from eating someone				4	sado-masochism	6	control	10	Francis McDonnell	9	Francis
			Quote	atypical cannibalism over a sign of rage				2	traumatized	6	arrested	10	McDonnell	2	McDonnell
			Quote	sexual gratification from cannibalizing a person				2	killer	4	abduct	8	Albert Junior	6	
			Testimony	Doctor Fredric Verham				4	insane	4	abuse	6	Mrs Budd	4	Della
			Quote	the law of Fish to his victims, Grace Budd				3	elderly	3	torment	6	James Dempsey	3	Dempsey
			Testimony	Doctor Fredric Verham				3	monster	3	dismember	5	Mr. and Mrs. Budd	3	Budd's
			Testimony	Doctor Fredric Verham				2	designed	2	ate	4	Billy Gaffney	3	Billy
			Quote/enter	Court Documents				2	evil	2	compulsion	4	Mr. Beaton	3	
			Testimony	Psychiatrist Reports				2	twisted	2	kidnap	4	Thomas Redden	3	
			Report	Psychiatrist Reports				2	quiet	2	law	3	Villa Corran	2	Villa
			Confession	police records				2	cooperative	2	inlet	3	Doctor Fredric Verham	1	Doctor Verham
			Quote/enter	Albert Fish				2	normal	2	cooked	3	Verham	6	
			Quote	Detective Will King				2	sexual pervert	2	desire	3	Detective Will King	1	Detective King
			Quote/enter	Albert Fish				1	house painter	1	sexually abused	3	King	3	King
			Quote/enter	Albert Fish				1	farmer	1	remorse	3	Fitz Haamann	1	Haamann
			Testimony	prosecutor's psychiatrist				1	Christian	1	suffering	2	Anna McDonnell	1	
			Reference/Judge	judge				1	sexual predator	1	stripped	2	Anna Fish	1	
			Reference/Judge	judge				1	child abuser	1	led	2	Edge Allan Poe	1	first wife
			Reference	juror				1	guysome	1	triggered	2			
								1	sadistic	1	harassed	2			
								1	aluring	1	consume	2			
								1	inert	1	disappointed	2			
								1	oriented	1	overpower	2			
								1	invincible	1	strangled	2			
								1	poison	1	poison	1			
								1	selection	1	selection	1			
								1	pegged	1	pegged	1			
								1	tricking	1	tricking	1			
								1	sparkled	1	sparkled	1			
								1	excitement	1	excitement	1			
								1	masturbate	1	masturbate	1			
								1	desired	1	desired	1			
								1	surprise	1	surprise	1			
								1	subdue	1	subdue	1			
								1	involved	1	involved	1			
								1	outsmarting	1	outsmarting	1			
								1	dominating	1	dominating	1			
								1	retroverting	1	retroverting	1			
								1	assault	1	assault	1			

Source: Data collection from episodes of *Serial Killers* processed and analyzed by Kristy Daniel.

Data Analysis

The coded data was analyzed through the mixed scheme to show that the podcast considers the audience, purpose, and context. Critical analysis of the counts and content together support the use of oratory as an educational opportunity that engages its listeners. The analysis considered placement of the persons discussed within the podcast, definitions, and references as they work together to clearly portray an individual who has committed multiple crimes throughout their lifetime, not just the crimes committed towards their serial killer identity.

Each of the citations and references are analyzed to confirm the professional support behind the terminology. The data showed a relationship between the definitions, references, and

protagonist. This connection is analyzed to understand how the purpose of the content educated listeners through discourse and aided in the narrative.

The analysis identifies the balance between biography and pedagogy to create an avenue for alternative listening for those with curiosity in the content. The literal intention of the discourse and concept of each episode is analyzed to understand the intention of the content and how the discourse being conveyed.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND OBSERVATIONS

Introduction

The data collected in Tables 1 through 7 compare each episode and topic across the corpus to support combination of the rhetorical framework with serial entertainment concepts. The data showed a consistent consideration of Part One as educational through the incorporation of resources and definitions through the descriptive language surrounding the protagonist. Patterns in favor of Part Two focusing on entertainment can be seen in the language surrounding the protagonist, the additional persons, and the names used throughout the episode. This pattern focuses on creating prior knowledge to the listener of the technical discourse before creating an image of the serial killer’s world. The patterns in favor of education and entertainment applied to the main objectives of the research show the combination as effective pedagogical narrative.

Table 3

The percent of coded data per episode in relation to each category

	Albert Fish Part 1	Albert Fish Part 2	Ed Gein Part 1	Ed Gein Part 2	Amy Archer-Gilligan Part 1	Amy Archer-Gilligan Part 2	Dale Hausner and Samuel Dieteman Part 1	Dale Hausner and Samuel Dieteman Part 2	Ronald Joseph Dominique Part 1	Ronald Joseph Dominique Part 2	Earle Nelson Part 1	Earle Nelson Part 2	Lawrence Bittaker and Roy Norris Part 1	Lawrence Bittaker and Roy Norris Part 2	Christopher Wilder Part 1	Christopher Wilder Part 2	Total Percentage of all data collected
% Definitions	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
% References	2%	8%	13%	16%	11%	11%	4%	3%	4%	5%	6%	3%	6%	3%	3%	3%	6%
% Protagonist Description	2%	6%	6%	6%	7%	6%	8%	8%	9%	7%	9%	10%	9%	10%	8%	3%	7%
% Personnel	2%	3%	4%	5%	3%	6%	3%	4%	2%	2%	1%	3%	1%	2%	2%	4%	3%
% Other	93%	82%	75%	72%	79%	77%	84%	85%	85%	86%	84%	83%	84%	85%	87%	89%	83%

Source: Episode transcripts from Podgist.com with revisions and collection processed by Kristy Daniel

In Table 3, the percentage of each category for the episodes shows a total count of how much of the discourse was coded for analysis. While a majority of the podcast is not coded, it is important to look at the minority categories for consistency or patterns from one episode to another, and from one topic to another for progression. The episodes are coded using language about or around the protagonist. Discussion surrounding historically relevant events or location descriptions were not included in the coding, but could be further research for relevance to the discussion. It is important to acknowledge that the majority of the podcast content is considered in the ‘other’ category as the minority – definitions, references, protagonist descriptions, personnel – are a review of the podcast as it pertains to educational and entertaining components. The cells highlighted in green within Table 3 show the categories that were discussed for more than 5% of the episode. As the data revealed, the comparisons within each topic individually show the discourse as supportive for educational relevance through audio entertainment.

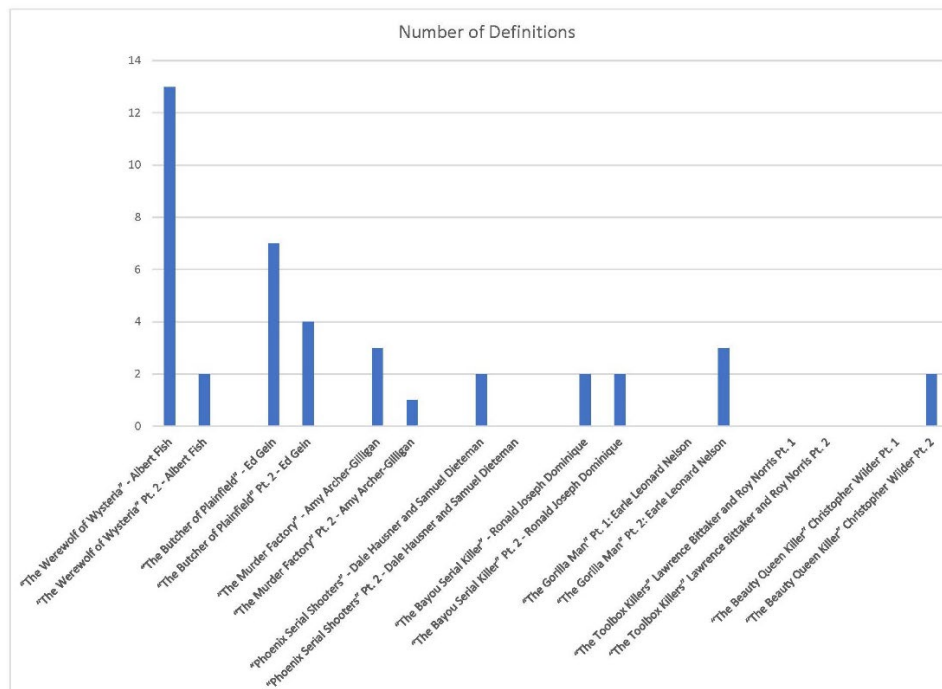
Definitions Collected

The use of definitions within each episode shows an inconsistent pattern of terms being defined but indicates that the terminology is primarily supportive of the discourse instead of the main focus. In Table 3, only 1% of the entire discourse that was coded was solely to identify, define, and revisit specific terms. This small percentage indicates that the creators consider their audience to have some prior knowledge of medical and psychological terminology and only need to expand on the discourse to support the general discussion. The pattern of types of definitions emerged after the collection of the data. It further provides insight to the discourse and expectations of the listener. Table 4 shows the number of unique terms that were defined within

each episode. There is an inconsistent pattern of terms being defined in Part One, but not in Part Two.

Table 4

Comparison of Definitions within each episode



Source: Episode transcripts from Podgist.com with revisions and collection processed by Kristy Daniel

Half of the topics in Table 4 support defining terms used within the discourse in Part One than Part Two. By defining a term in Part One, the hosts are able to then re-visit the term at a later time in the upcoming episode or further along the publication series. This creates shared knowledge for the listeners that have listened from the very beginning of the podcast in that the creators build upon the language instead of re-defining it each time. Further collection revealed that once a term was defined, the hosts would refer back to the term throughout the episode and in later episodes. The use of definitions and layered concepts is indicative of educational growth with the materials.

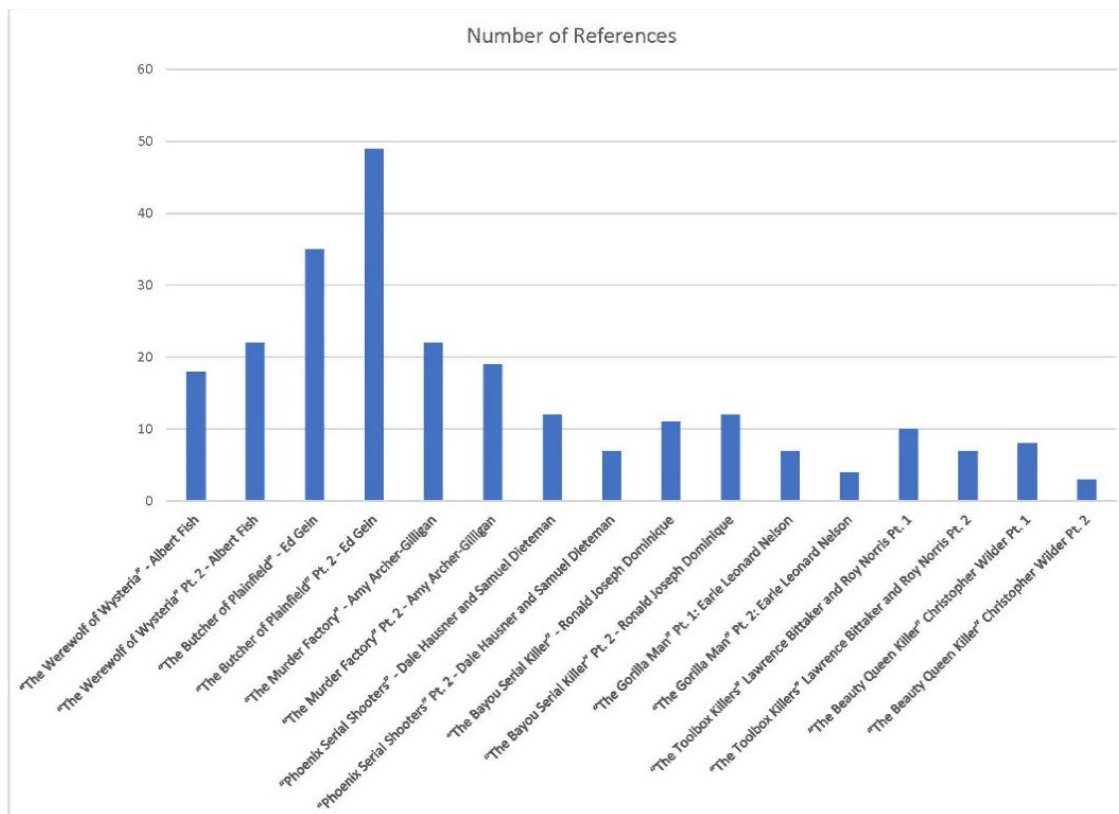
The types of definitions provide insight to the context of the episode and what the creators were trying to communicate to listeners. This information is not included as part of Table 4 above, but does indicate the rationale behind their inclusivity in the episodes. Of the terms defined, 27 were psychological disorders, 8 were legal terminology, 5 were actions, 3 were items, 1 was a medical condition, and the last was the show itself being defined. 60% of the terms defined were related to the psychological field. The finding reveals that the creators are focusing on the psychological aspects of the serial killer and want to provide their audience with a clear understanding of the disorders. The context of the definitions tie with the audience closely because of their purpose to create knowledge to build upon.

References Identified

The use of references within the podcast episodes brings educational value to the podcast. The data collected in Table 5 showed a decrease in number of unique references; however, 6% of the discourse accounts for the citation, quote, or paraphrase of a source. It is imperative to study the inclusion of references and citations as it creates trust between the listener and creator. The relationship between the creators and listeners allows the creators to discuss theories and expand the listener's knowledge on a particular medical condition and/or serial killer. The resources and the type of resources support the audience's engagement with podcast and provide context to the intention of the podcast episodes.

Table 5

Comparison of References by Episode



Source: Episode transcripts from Podgist.com with revisions and collection processed by Kristy Daniel

In reviewing the types of references used throughout the podcast, a transition emerged from generalized studies to precise citations that are traceable back to the original source. During the first episodes, the generalized citations included references like “several studies” (found in “The Butcher of Plainfield” Pt. 2 – Ed Gein’). Yet, by “The Toolbox Killers” Pt. 2 - Lawrence Bittaker and Roy Norris’, the citations included references like “Ronald Markman, author of *Alone with the Devil: Famous Cases of a Courtroom Psychiatrist*”. In Table 5, we see an increase in the number of references within the first 6 months of the publication of *Serial Killers*, but the steady curvature after their second year indicates the consideration of sources based on their specific topic instead of general knowledge information. The shift in explaining the resources used to support the podcast supports the critical and extensive review of the

individual's biographical timeline and the major psychological influence on the protagonist. It supports the context of the podcast – to educate and entertain listeners about serial killers. The design of the podcast to include the psychological diagnosis of the protagonist encourages the use of citations for the most up-to-date research on the disorder. Similarly, by providing exact citations, listeners are enabled to continue their personal interests by researching the articles, books, movies, or sound clips as they are available.

The use of references as a way to engage with the audience supports the purpose to educate listeners. Because of the specified citations in the later episodes, listeners can engage in the podcast with secondary materials. When imagining the podcast in the classroom, the citations would be supplemental materials that help to encourage student involvement. By connecting outside materials or allowing avenues to find the references, the creators of *Serial Killers* aid in the evolution of how listeners engage with the podcast. The audience is now able to continue independently or connect through their Social Media platforms. This type of relationship between podcast creator and listener is beneficial for both parties in that they share a motivation for more insight into the protagonist's life and crimes. The references are not the focus of the conversation in the podcast but sparks the listener's curiosity to understand more about the subject at hand.

Protagonist (Name, Description, Action-based language)

Based on the data coded in Table 3, 7% of all of the coded data was used to describe the protagonist. This category contains the most words across all 16 episodes than any of the other coded categories (with the exception of the "other" category). Breaking apart how the discourse describes the protagonist shows where the focus lies within each episode and provides further support for whether the descriptions support rhetorical framework. The data shows how the

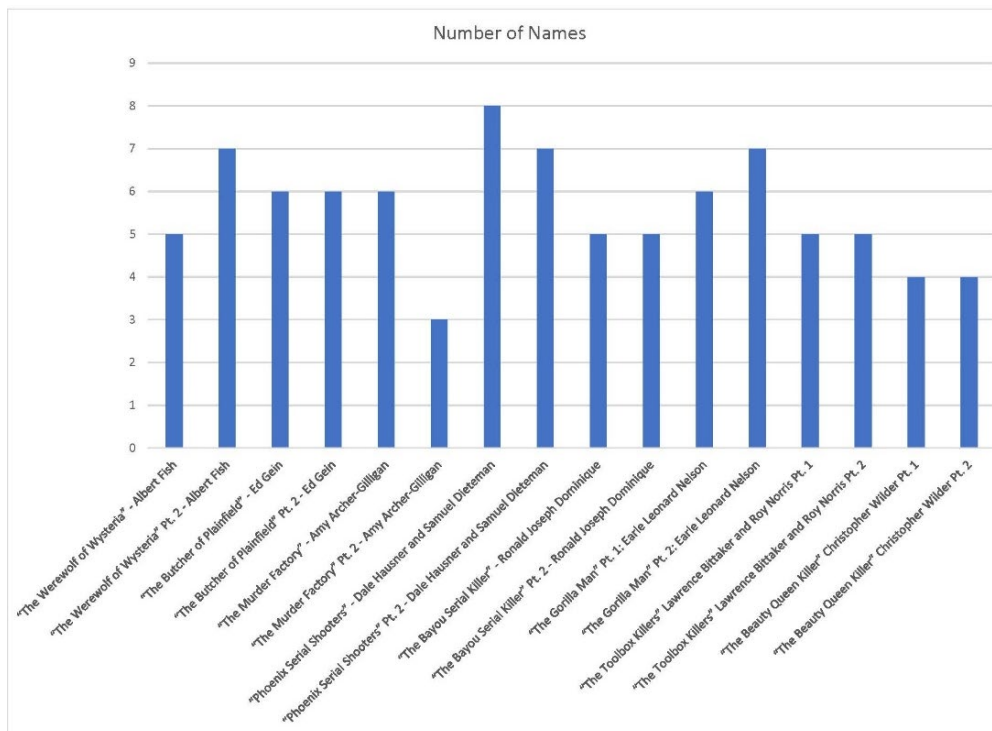
context of the discourse is important for understanding the tone and emotional response of the conversation while reflecting on how purposeful and impactful the descriptions can be for the audience’s interpretation.

Names

The number of different names used from Part One to Part Two in four topics remained consistent in Table 6. That equates to half of the podcasts using the same naming conventions throughout the topic. By having the names of each protagonist consistent, it allows the listener to focus on the entertainment components, the actions and descriptions of the serial killer, instead of redirecting the attention to the persons being discussed.

Table 6

Comparison of the different Protagonist Names by episode



Source: Episode transcripts from Podgist.com with revisions and collection processed by Kristy

Daniel

The creators of *Serial Killers* used multiple names to identify the protagonist including their legal name and media-created nickname. It is first seen in the way the podcast titles the episodes – first with the media-created nickname followed by the individual’s legal name. “‘The Werewolf of Wysteria’ – Albert Fish’, or “‘The Beauty Queen Killer’ – Christopher Wilder’ are just two examples of the consistent naming convention used for the episodes. However, the unique names are not just saved for the title, but used throughout the episode. Table 6 shows a count of the different types of names used to identify the protagonist within the discourse across all of the episodes. The use of different names peaks the interest of listeners by having their imagination and mind pay attention to the different names, and advances the context of the podcast to understand the different reactions to each protagonist.

The major outlier, Amy Archer-Gilligan instills a different perspective on how the different naming conventions rely on the crime and media coverage. Not only does this reflect the only female serial killer within the data collection, but in listening to the episode, reporters were primary investigators of Amy Archer-Gilligan. Though not official police, the amateur investigative columnists were not reliant of police investigation to create a catchy title for the front page of their news source. Instead, they focused on the consistency of the crime itself to come up with the name, “the Murder Factory.”

With the different types of names used specifically in each episode, the audience’s focus can be directed to the topic of the conversation. The use of the media-created nicknames sparks the interest of the listener because of mystery behind the name and is used more in Part Two. In the podcast, most of the discourse was based around components of the individual’s legal name (i.e. Albert, instead of Albert Fish, Gein instead of Ed Gein). The creators used the legal name more in Part One to keep the separation between the protagonist, hosts, and the other characters.

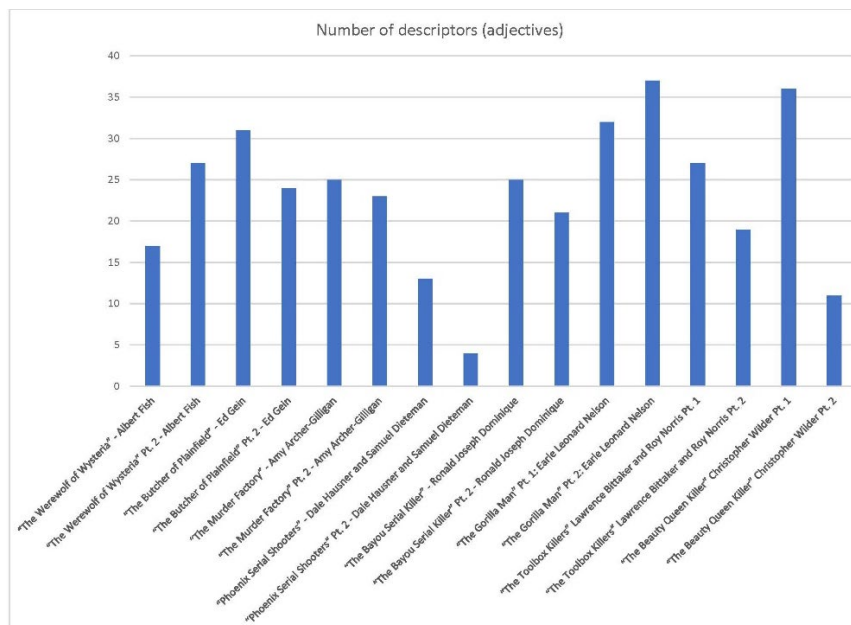
The limited use of nicknames clears any confusion of who is performing each action until the listener has become comfortable with hearing each person within the episode.

Descriptors

Physical descriptions of people guide the listener’s imagination to depict the protagonist in a particular manner. This visualization is captured through the different types of descriptive language used to identify the protagonists of each episode in Table 7. Six of the eight topics include more variety in their descriptive language in Part One than Part Two. This trend similarly aligns with the different types of names used within the podcast, however with more consideration of their audience and purpose to entertain. The consistency across categories shows how the entertaining components work in tandem with the educational moments. By focusing on the terminology and definitions in Part One, Part Two is able to provide context and imagery of the gruesome crimes committed.

Table 7

Comparison of the unique physical descriptions of the Protagonist



Source: Episode transcripts from Podgist.com with revisions and collection processed by Kristy Daniel

The variety of descriptive language in Part One provides an entertainment purpose to the podcast. Repetition of the same language is not as exciting to the listener's ear and can lead the mind away from the podcast episode. One instance of repetition of the same type of language can be seen in “‘Phoenix Serial Shooters’ Pt. 2 – Dale Hausner and Samuel Dieteman’ where the variety of descriptions fell below five types of descriptive language in Table 7. In further reviewing the data collected, the lack of description was due to the primary focus being on the crimes committed since they had an extensive history. If the individuals were more important to the creators, they would have spent more of the discourse about them, and less on the crimes. Thus, describing the protagonists provides an entertainment purpose instead of an informational purpose. The descriptions aided in the excitement and creating a well-rounded image of the individual instead of moving the timeline forward.

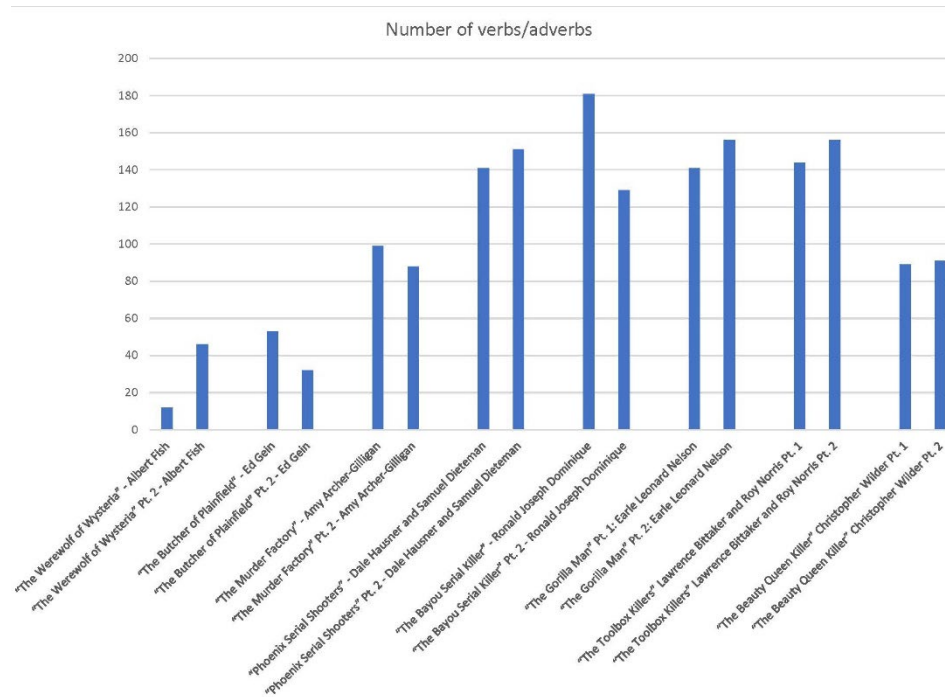
Listening to the hosts describe a man as ‘old, gray, and fragile’ like in “‘The Werewolf of Wysteria’ Pt 2 – Albert Fish’ instead of just an old man provides their audience with the opportunity to imagine the characters. There is more capability for the listener to create their own vivid interpretation and be intrigued by the discussion. Table 7 shows how expanding the discussion around the protagonists in Part One leaves the audience with curiosity about the crimes and how the individual was caught in Part Two. The creators purposefully left out more descriptive language to redirect the focus on the crimes in Part Two and educate the listeners on the entire timeline. This bait and switch technique is similar to cliff hangers in television series. By not completing the discussion of how the serial killer was caught, it leaves the audience

wanting to know more and tune in for the next episode. By filling Part One with the descriptive language, it leaves the audience wondering how it ended in Part Two.

Action-Based Language

The variety of actions and crimes of an individual provide another level of engagement for the listener and aids in the progression of the timeline. Similar to the physical descriptions, the action verbs used to describe what the protagonist is doing helps to provide visual aids for their audience’s interpretation. In Table 8, the number of unique action verbs used within each episode show that a majority (five out of eight) of topics had an increase in the different ways of describing what the protagonist is doing. This increase supports the use of different verbs as a way to engage the listener and provide context to the podcast timeline.

Table 8
Comparison of unique action language (verbs) of the Protagonist’s actions



Source: Episode transcripts from Podglist.com with revisions and collection processed by Kristy Daniel

How many ways can a podcast say choke? Strangle, asphyxiated, smothered, or suffocated are just a few examples that appears in episodes about “The Gorilla Man” – Earle Leonard Nelson. They all point to the same crime; however, they all create uniqueness in how the podcast episodes continue to move forward. If the creators would only use one word to describe an action throughout the entire episode, the content would not entice excitement. The variation in active language shown in Table 8 is an indication of how the discourse entertains listener engagement through synonymous discourse. Similar to physical descriptions, the use of action verbs provides an entertainment component to the podcast through the newness of each word, and an educational component by connecting synonyms for the listener.

Listeners engage with the podcast through the discourse. Using the example above, each alternative for the word choke carries more excitement and weight to it because it is more specific in action. The more specific the action is utilized, the more a listener’s imagination can fill in the gaps of the story and create a visualization. For instance, when considering the word ‘smothered’ it is easy to consider a pillow or object over someone’s face. That one specific term creates a vivid image into the audience’s mind. Since most of the action partakes in Part Two, the listener’s engagement of the entertaining discourse shifts from the physical description of the protagonist to the actions. The shift is a recognition of how the focus in the podcast changes from the individual to their crimes while still keeping the audience’s attention as seen in Table 8. By including the different types of language, whether to describe the protagonist or explain the events happening, the listener is able to interpret the scene and persons involved clearly.

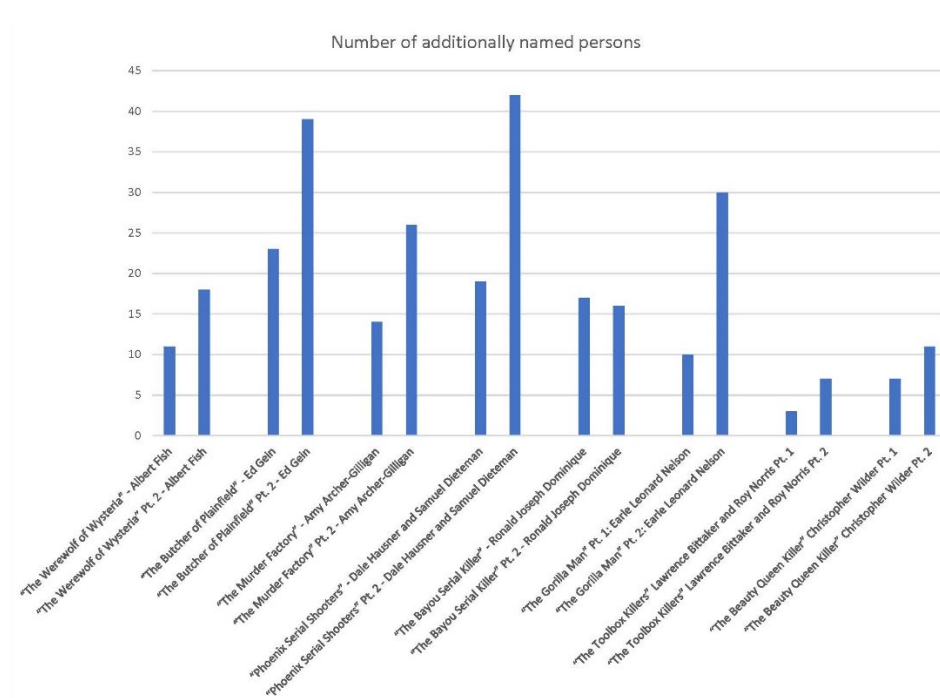
Personnel (Additional Individuals Identified)

From parents to judges, the additional personnel discussed within each podcast episode adds to the personification of the protagonist and their biographical narrative. While these

individuals are not highly discussed throughout each episode, they support the timeline of events and create an emotional response from the listeners. In Table 9, seven out of eight topics saw an increase in the number of supportive characters within the podcast. This increase parallels the number of action-based verbs associated with the protagonist. This pattern supports the focus of the podcast shifting from the individual to the crimes they committed in Part Two. The shift supports the purpose of the podcast to educate about true crime and entertain through deliberate discourse.

Table 9

Comparison of additional individuals represented in each episode



Source: Episode transcripts from Podglist.com with revisions and collection processed by Kristy Daniel

The use of names for the additional persons involved within the podcast provides a human element to the conversation. By providing names for each person, the podcast does not regard the victims as objects of crime; the podcast creators capture the importance of knowing

who they were. Without a name, the protagonist becomes the only focus during the conversation instead of the crimes and impact they placed on their community. The use of names not only for the victims, but for the investigators, judicial council, and family drive the narrative by creating relationships. Each relationship between the protagonist and the supportive characters brings a new conflict and resolution. These sub-plots are pivotal in developing the growth of the protagonist until the end of the main narrative. Without the connections, the crimes would be background information to the protagonist. In Table 9, the data clearly indicated the movement of the narrative to conflict and resolution. The connections between each individual are designed to propel the timeline forward and dive into the listener's emotional appeal.

The names of the individuals involved with each serial killer provide an educational and emotional impact to the listener. By hearing the victims' names, not only are the listeners able to acknowledge who the victims are, but also understand what they went through. The use of names personifies the victims. The personification impacts the listener's emotional response and understanding that the victims were real people whose families were traumatized. In Part Two of "The Werewolf of Wysteria" – Albert Fish, the familial impact he had on the Budd family is relayed through their reactions and quotes used within the episode. By using the family's response as part of the conversation, the podcast is purposefully impacting how the listener emotionally interprets the narrative. The emotional connection between the listener and the podcast is based on the victim's relationship with the protagonist. This connection in part drives the listener to continue listening to other episodes and become more emotionally invested into the series. By including the names of the investigators and judiciary council, the listeners are able to get a reprieve from the negative emotional connection and receive the necessary closure

of the conflict. The context of the podcast plays on the emotions of listeners to keep them engaged for the long term, but the discourse keeps their attention from one episode to another.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The comparison between Part One and Part Two of each topic in the corpus of *Serial Killers* episodes indicates educational moments within attention-grabbing discourse. The data in Chapter 4 identified the use of words as a purposeful function to increase listener engagement through emotional and vivid descriptive imagery while providing accurate, reliable resources as support for their discussion. The consideration for who the listener is, quality of the materials, and purpose of the podcast are relatable to higher education standards. This research contributes to higher education by providing a starting point for the use of podcasts as resources when conducting research and in the classroom. By including the most used vocabulary below in tables 1-6 with each section with the data described in Chapter 4, the results indicate a shift from informal to formal discussion with a defined expectation for the listener to base their listening on an objective (whether for entertainment purpose, to gain insight into serial killers, or to belong to the community) and gain new knowledge.

Definitions Analyzed

The connection between the number of terms being defined and the type of term indicates a consideration for the type of listener and their knowledge level. I cannot confirm their intended audience; however, the data collected in Chapter 4 in comparison with Table 10 below create an expectation for the listener to continue listening to more episodes of the show to evolve their knowledge. The context of the language confirms the use of relevant information as an educational tool for understanding the narrative. The most used defined terms listed in Table 10 show a pattern of introducing new terminology in Part One, then using that term to build upon the story in Part Two. As the show progressed, the expectation of the listener was to expand on

the prior definitions as foundational knowledge. Some of the episodes contain blank information in Table 10; those blank spaces show that there were no terms defined in the episode. The earliest podcasts contained more definitions to introduce the terminology they would be using consistently throughout time. Because they expand on the knowledge and continue to use the same discourse, the content is able to direct the focus on another element of the content.

Table 10

The different terms defined within each episode of the podcast.

	Albert Fish	Ed Gein	Amy Archer-Gilligan	Dale Hausner and Samuel Dieteman	Ronald Joseph Dominique	Earle Leonard Nelson	Lawrence Bittaker and Roy Norris	Christopher Wilder
Part 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hallucinations 2. Sexual Sadism 3. Paraphilic Disorder 4. Delusions 5. Sexual Masochism 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Necrophilia 2. Gender identity 3. Sexual Orientation 4. Sexual Psychopathy 5. Necrophiliac fantasy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arsenic 2. Bright's Disease 3. Antisocial Personality Disorder 4. 5. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meth 2. Codependency 3. 4. 5. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paraphilia 2. Self-efficacy 3. 4. 5. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Part 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cannibalism 2. Insanity Plea 3. 4. 5. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pleading insanity 2. Dissociative amnesia 3. Dissociative State 4. Bifurcated trial 5. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waved Examination 2. 3. 4. 5. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shame 2. Guilt 3. 4. 5. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Necrophile 2. Nomadic Dementia 3. Necrophiliac Homicide 4. 5. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stockholm Syndrome 2. hedonistic killer 3. 4. 5.

Source: Episode transcripts from Podgist.com with revisions and collection processed by Kristy Daniel.

Based on the patterns collected in Table 10, the creators of *Serial Killers* expect their listeners to start from the beginning of the show and not jump into the middle of a series, unless they have prior knowledge of the discourse being used. Table 10 shows the trend of more terms being defined in Part One more than in Part Two, but the types of definitions identify the listeners as individuals who do not have an extensive background in psychological terminology.

Because their discourse revolves around the psychological impact of each protagonist's relationships from childhood through adulthood, the definitions are required for listener comprehension. Of the terms defined within the sample, only one term, necrophilia/necrophiliac, is defined twice – once in Part One of Ed Gein, and again in Part Two of Leonard Nelson. While the medical terminology is difficult to grasp, the reiteration of necrophilia provides listeners with another perspective of the disorder. In Part One of Ed Gein, the term is defined as “the sexual attraction to dead bodies and two of them don't involve having intercourse” while in Part Two of Leonard Nelson, the term is similarly redefined as “a person who feels sexual attraction towards human corpses”. The main differences between the two definitions are that Ed Gein did not act on his attraction to corpses while Leonard Nelson did. This subtle difference is necessary when listeners are playing the episodes back-to-back because they may question the term's true definition and then disengages the listener from the episode. From this terminology change, the expectation is for their audience to binge through the episodes until they are caught up on the publication schedule. By having an awareness of their audience and the expectations for how the episodes are listened, the discourse creates a learning opportunity with fundamental terminology.

The creators introduce new terms into a topic through a three-step process: identification, definition, then integration. For instance, in Part One of Albert Fish, they introduced the term “schizophrenia”. The introduction to the term happens when describing Fish, but instead of continuing with other descriptors, they pause to explain schizophrenia. The definition is followed by an example as it relates to the protagonist (in this example, Albert Fish's symptoms in relation to schizophrenia). By having a consistent pattern for each term and using the terms throughout the episode, they allow the listener to grasp the definition for future reference. In Part One and Part Two of Albert Fish, *The Werewolf of Wysteria*, the term ‘schizophrenia’ was used three

times in Part One and six times in Part Two. The data from Chapter 4 and from Table 10 indicate how the concept of entertainment within an educational environment occurs when the discourse is elevated to an academic level. Incorporating a standard for defining terms provides an expectation of the writers to incorporate the language in further episodes while encouraging the audience to expand their analysis of the serial killer.

As shown in Table 10, the diverse vocabulary creates a complex listening experience focused on entertaining the listeners. By using a multitude of terms to describe the mentality or characteristics, like ‘schizophrenia,’ ‘hedonistic,’ or ‘necrophilia,’ the language alludes to a multi-dimensional protagonist within each episode. The audience is able to be entertained by the psychological influences of their actions through another layer. The focus on creating a rounded picture of the individuals is a tool within narrative storytelling to develop a character. By revealing the psychological disorders of each individual, the writers are exhibiting how the serial killers grew into their crimes. The growth of the serial killers is an example of a rhetorical pattern by combining a variety of language with the purpose of the language for the listener to stay engaged in the discussion. Based on the data, the discourse is an educational narrative for listeners to expand their knowledge of true crime.

Lastly, the definitions have a consistent pattern of being told by Vanessa, who previously identified as not an expert, but a researcher of the psychological implication of each protagonist. Because of the disclaimer at the beginning of each episode, having the definitions spoken by Vanessa allows the listeners to believe the definition as truth based on her research. It builds on the relationship between the podcast as a trusted source of information to the listeners. Having the same host speak about the definitions allows for the audience to expect definitions from Vanessa while Greg asks questions or provide insight into the life of the protagonist to support

the term. This dynamic creates an entertainment factor through a conversation instead of a classroom question-answer style of discussion. Having only one person identified as a researcher also enables listeners to consider the podcast as a secondary source of information. Because they have already done research on the terminology, citing the podcast in higher education is similar to any interview or voice recording. The terms being defined play a considerable portion in providing an educational opportunity for listeners to use as a reliable source of information.

References Researched

The types of resources being cited as shown below in Table 11 indicate the different types of sources being used as support for the conversation of each serial killer. These sources, when considered, acknowledge the importance of educational research and citing the resources at the appropriate time which can be compared to any research project. Incorporating the exact location where the hosts found their information is an indication of the evolution of this podcast from focusing on entertainment to education.

Table 11

The types and total count of references used within each episode of *Serial Killers*

	Albert Fish	Ed Gein	Amy Archer-Gilligan	Dale Hausner and Samuel Dieteman	Ronald Joseph Dominique	Earle Leonard Nelson	Lawrence Bittaker and Roy Norris	Christopher Wilder
Part 1	16 Quotes 1 Police Record (17 total)	4 Direct Citations 3 Movie clips 18 Quotes 7 General References 2 Sound Clips 1 Testimony (35 total)	6 Direct Citations 1 Testimony 15 Quotes (22 total)	7 Direct Citations 5 Quotes (12 total)	9 Direct Citations 1 Quote 1 General Reference (11 total)	6 Direct References 1 Quote (7 total)	3 Direct Citations 4 Quotes 3 General References (10 total)	6 Direct Citations 2 General references (8 total)
Part 2	1 Confession 6 Quotes 4 Letters 5 General References 1 Psychological Report 5 Testimonies (22 total)	3 Case Studies 3 Direct Citations 1 General Reference 3 Laws 1 Movie Clip 38 Quotes (49 total)	7 Direct Citations 12 Quotes (19 total)	4 Direct References 3 Quotes (7 total)	6 Direct Citations 4 Quotes 2 General References (12 total)	3 Direct Citations 1 General Reference (4 total)	6 Direct Citations 1 Quote (7 total)	3 Direct Citations (3 total)

Source: Episode transcripts from Podglist.com with revisions and collection processed by Kristy Daniel.

The shift in sources from primary quotes to medical professions is indicated between Parts One and Two of Albert Fish as shown in Table 11. While the use of quotes from the court proceedings around Albert Fish enhance the listenability of the podcast, it also increases the reliability of the podcast by pulling both primary and secondary sources as support for the conversation surrounding the mental capacity of the serial killer. The first-hand experience of the serial killer engages with the listener’s imagination as a way to create a visual representation of the person. Yet, the secondary resources, like the American Psychological Association, or the University of Alberta: Sexual Assault Center, encourage the listener to support the podcast’s interpretation of why the criminals behaved and acted upon their instincts. Understanding the use

of primary and secondary resources within the podcast gave credibility to the writers as researchers in true crime. The context of the sources indicates the discourse as a true analysis of the psychological and physical capabilities of each serial killer based on the complexity and variety of the sources. The use of different resources as shown in Table 11 of this podcast provides an example of how oratorical narratives can be used as an educational source to further the understanding of true crime and psychological disorders to their audience.

The podcasts mainly consisted of the hosts talking to each other. Guests were not invited onto the show, however, the creators used voice actors during the episodes about Albert Fish to create an entertaining narrative. The voice acting was not continued in future episodes which is an indication of the evolution of the podcast's focus from entertaining narrative to educational. It coincides with the way the podcast writes refocus their efforts on analyzing the serial killer's psychological capacity instead of only on the crimes. This small change can be seen in Table 11 at the end of their second year with the episodes about Dale Hausner and Sam Dieteman. The data showed how over time, the podcast's educational components became more apparent to support the entertainment of true crime.

Unfortunately, there is not a works cited page for review of the podcast episodes; however, if a large quantity of the research came from one source, Vanessa re-affirms the author and title of the resource specifically. Because there is not a written component of the podcast, all citations are correctly identified at the given moment of use. They follow the same citation style in the podcast as any oratory style communication. By giving the title, author, and/or publication in the citation, the audience is able to review the materials on their own for clarification or further knowledge. The podcast supports additional research by providing that information to their audience and creates more trust in their research practices as an educational and critical use

of information. Thus, the relationship between the creators and listeners is founded on accurate information and avenues for self-discovery of new information.

Protagonist (Name, Description, Action-based language) Detailed

Each of the categories below – name, descriptors, active language – have patterns emerged from Chapter 4 and Table 12, Table 13, and Table 14 that confirm the use of language to emote an emotional response from the listeners based on the purposeful discourse. The Tables mentioned confirm the use of variety as an entertaining tool for listener engagement while creating an educational opportunity to interpret the discourse.

Names

The naming conventions of the protagonist reflected in Table 12 reflect how the podcast creators interact with true crime as their main subject. The naming convention of the individual being discussed (whether their legal first name, legal last name, or by the media's nickname) indicated the severity of their crimes by separating those that targeted adults from those that targeted minors. Table 12 shows how the podcast audience can differentiate between content and host based on the naming conventions of the individuals. Similar to the definitions, some of the episodes have used less than five naming conventions for the serial killer. The episodes without five different names mainly use the individual's legal last name as the standard throughout the episode. By creating this standard, the audience and hosts disassociate with the crimes of the protagonist, connecting the personal and emotional response with the victims.

Table 12

The different types and use of names of the protagonists within each episode.

	Albert Fish	Ed Gein	Amy Archer-Gilligan	Dale Hausner and Samuel Dieteman	Ronald Joseph Dominique	Earle Leonard Nelson	Lawrence Bittaker and Roy Norris	Christopher Wilder
Part 1	1. Fish (131) 2. Albert Fish (19) 3. Albert (9) 4. Boogie Man (8) Hamilton (6)	1. Gein (100) 2. Ed (32) 3. Ed Gein (11) 4. Eddie (5) 5. The Butcher of Plainfield (3)	1. Amy (153) 2. Amy Archer-Gilligan (7) 3. Amy Archer (6) 4. Amy Dugan (1) 5. Mrs. Archer (1)	1. Dale (134) 2. Sam (68) 3. Dale Hausner (13) 4. Sam Dieteman (11) 5. Hausner or Dieteman (3)	1. Ronald (136) 2. The Bayou Strangler (10) 3. Ronald Dominique (7) 4. Dominique (5) 5. Ronald Joseph Dominique (1)	1. Earle (117) 2. Earle Nelson (14) 3. Earle Leonard Nelson (4) 4. The Gorilla Killer (3) 5. Earle Feral (4)	1. Bittaker (87) 2. Norris (69) 3. Lawrence Bittaker (9) 4. Roy Norris (8) 5. Toolbox Killers (3)	1. Wilder (198) 2. Christopher Wilder (7) 3. Christopher Bernard Wilder (3) 4. The Beauty Queen Killer (1) 5.
Part 2	1. Fish (171) 2. Albert Fish (25) 3. Mr. Howard (9) 4. Frank Howard (8) 5. Boogie Man (4)	1. Gein (194) 2. Ed Gein (9) 3. The Butcher of Plainfield (2) 4. Ghastly Gein (2) 5. Mr. Gein (2)	1. Amy (155) 2. Amy Archer-Gilligan (7) 3. Amy Archer (3) 4. 5.	1. Dale (133) 2. Sam (86) 3. Sam Dieteman (15) 4. Dale Hausner (10) 5. The Serial Shooter (9)	1. Ronald (99) 2. The Bayou Strangler (15) 3. Ronald Domanique (7) 4. Dominique (2) 5. Strangler (2)	1. Earle (148) 2. Earle Nelson (15) 3. The Gorilla Man (9) 4. The Dark Strangler (5) 5. Earle Leonard Nelson (3)	1. Bittaker (93) 2. Norris (76) 3. Lawrence Bittaker (9) 4. Roy Norris (9) 5. Toolbox Killers (4)	1. Wilder (143) 2. Christopher Wilder (8) 3. The Beauty Queen Killer (3) 4. Christopher Bernard Wilder (1) 5.

Source: Episode transcripts from Podglist.com with revisions and collection processed by Kristy Daniel.

As seen in Table 12, the different identities of the protagonist in each episode help to distinguish them from the hosts and additional individuals (including victims, family members, and psychiatrists) as a way for the listener to know when the content is focusing on the serial killers. Albert Fish, Ed Gein, Lawrence Bittaker and Roy Norris, and Christopher Wilder are primarily discussed with their last names due to the nature of their crimes preying on minors or already deceased individuals. Amy Archer-Gilligan, Dale Hausner and Sam Dieteman, Ronald Domanique; and Earle Nelson were identified by their first name since their victims were mainly adults. This pattern seen in Table 12 reflects how the creators separate themselves and victims from the protagonist. By creating this separation, the listener is able to disassociate the hosts and podcast from the crimes. This way, any emotional reaction is targeting the content and not the

podcast for expanding on the serial killers. Ultimately, the naming conventions for the protagonists is a consistent pattern that indicates the severity of each person's crimes.

The use of the protagonist's legal name provides context to the severity of the crimes. For instance, if the hosts called Ed Gein, "Eddie" the entire time, the context of the podcast would be considered playful and child-like in their conversation. "Eddie" is used a total of 5 times in Part One of Ed Gein as identified in Table 12. The use of childhood or neighborhood nicknames indicates an innocence about the protagonist. However, in Part Two, the name "Eddie" was not mentioned once. Instead, the formal title, "Mr. Gein" appears to reflect the mature manner of the content and his numerous crimes. The choice to stay with the legal first or legal last name of the individuals symbolizes the severity of each crime, which is to be acknowledged by the listeners as a sobering topic to learn from.

Media-generated titles for serial killers play into how the audience connects with the community's reaction to crimes that affected their livelihood and culture. The naming conventions in Table 13 that are not surrounding the protagonist's legal name indicate the consideration of communal shock through the agreed upon names. Names like "The Butcher of Plainfield" and "Toolbox Killers" create a strong visual for the listener of the methods behind the crimes. The data showed the consideration of another perspective on the serial killers based on the media and community. This inclusion shows the growth from innocent members of society to murderous and criminal activity of the protagonist. It encourages the listener to continue listening from Part One to Part Two to gain knowledge about the naming conventions as they parallel with the crimes.

Descriptors

Table 13 below shows the shift in the discourse surrounding the physical description of the protagonist in Part One and Part Two. Descriptive language surrounding the serial killer’s age, behavior, and physical size evolve from generalized terminology to specific details to keep the listeners engaged to the content. Because the definitions and resources are heavily incorporated in Part One of the topics, the descriptions are less vivid, especially in Part Two of Dale Hausner and Samuel Dieteman, which only has four distinct descriptions of the two men. That episode in particular focused on the friend of Samuel Dieteman as witness and police tip as well as the crimes to show how the team was caught. Because the narrative centered around the testimony of Dieteman’s friend, the description of the serial shooter duo became a secondary detail. Once the foundation of the serial killer is explained, the language indicates a focus on the idiosyncrasies. The discourse shapes the emotional response from the listener through the portrayal of each protagonist. It is an indication of listener analysis and investment to continue to follow the narrative in Part Two. By including the descriptive language surrounding the protagonist, this podcast constructs both personal and criminal development of each individual.

Table 13

The top five descriptions of each protagonist in Part 1 and Part 2

	Albert Fish	Ed Gein	Amy Archer-Gilligan	Dale Hausner and Samuel Dieteman	Ronald Joseph Dominique	Earle Leonard Nelson	Lawrence Bittaker and Roy Norris	Christopher Wilder
Part 1	1. Killer 2. Monster 3. Opportunistic 4. Elderly Man 5. Pedophile	1. Necrophile 2. Inspiration 3. Weird 4. Local handyman 5. Old	1. Sociopath 2. Caretaker 3. Kind 4. Religious 5. Sister	1. Happy 2. Electrician 3. Bartender 4. Jobless 5. Homeless	1. Helpless 2. Gay 3. Nervous 4. Frail 5. Short	1. Large 2. 18-year-old 3. Dangerous 4. Young 5. Massive	1. 38-year-old 2. Psychotic 3. Highly Intelligent 4. 30-year-old 5. Manipulative	1. Strong 2. Modeling Agent 3. Monster 4. 38-year-old 5. Handsome
Part 2	1. Cannibal 2. Schizophrenic 3. Abandoned 4. Sadomasochistic 5. Traumatized	1. Legally insane 2. Schizophrenic 3. Grave robber 4. Murderer 5. Inspiration	1. Manipulative 2. Religious 3. Benevolent 4. Saintly 5. Kind	1. Attacker 2. 32-years-old 3. Drinking buddy 4. 33-years-old 5.	1. Short 2. Murderer 3. 42-year-old 4. Ill 5. Cooperative	1. Large 2. Long 3. Maniac 4. Wanderlust 5. Necrophiliac	1. 31-year-old 2. 38-year-old 3. Sadistic 4. 39-year-old 5. Delighted	1. Middle-aged man 2. 39-year-old 3. Photographer 4. Modeling agent 5. Hedonistic killer

Source: Episode transcripts from Podgist.com with revision and collection processed by Kristy Daniel

As seen in Table 13, the language surrounding descriptions of the protagonist is less vivid to provide focus on the research and terminology early in the topic. By layering Tables 1 and 2 together against Table 13, the data demonstrated the importance of introducing resourceful information to the listeners. By using descriptions that are not hyper-detailed like, “killer,” “happy,” or “weird,” the listener is able to direct their attention to the preliminary information. The language considers the audience by not providing overly graphic details that may dissuade their audience from continuing the podcast. The lack of details encourages listener curiosity by not answering questions like, “What type of murderer are they?” and “How did they grow up to become infamous?” It allows the creators of the podcast the ability to stretch out the materials and content across two episodes, which provides more details about the serial killer. The data showed a consistent structure for saving the graphic visuals during the second episode to engage the listener to learn more about the analysis of the protagonist.

Of the most used descriptive words used in each episode, only two were repeated from Part One to Part Two in Table 13: kind (to describe Amy Archer-Gilligan) and large (to describe Earle Nelson). The distinct discourse between episodes indicates that the compiled research for each serial killer forms their unique personalities. This way, the content of the podcast is based on their specific psychological and environmental influences instead of placing them into generalized stereotypes. By describing each personality and their traits individually, it educates the listener of the range in factors that contribute to the protagonists’ crimes. Similarly, as Part Two of each topic describes the crimes, the descriptions indicate the multitude of crimes and

how the media interpreted these criminals. The pattern within the corpus indicates the use of description as an educational tool for describing the severity and juxtaposition across the crimes.

The shift in the descriptive terminology in Part Two shows the complexity of each protagonist. In Table 13, the vivid language presents the serial killers as more than just criminals, but as people with experiences and psychological implications that contributed to their actions. It provides the audience an educational assessment of the capacity of each individual through terms like ‘sadomasochistic,’ ‘hedonistic,’ and ‘manipulative.’ The language enhances the listener’s mental image of the protagonist while explaining the psychological disorders that impact the decision-making capability of the protagonist. Similarly, the physical descriptions – age, occupation, health, dress – incorporate physical attributes to the audience visualization. The holistic view immerses the audience into the narrative to continue their bingeing or listening enjoyment. The focus on description in Part Two, as shown by the data in Table 13, confirms the shift in the content as well away from educational to entertainment. The creators allow the listener to absorb the educational information to create shared knowledge in Part One then build on that knowledge in Part Two through creative imagery and storytelling. Having a primarily entertainment episode follow an educational episodes allows the listener time to absorb the new information without being overwhelmed with the discussion. It encourages a long-term learning environment that parallels with higher educational institutions.

Active Language

The discourse surrounding the actions of the protagonists in Table 14 is purposefully emotional to encourage a response from the listener. Similar to Table 13, the data in Table 14 indicated specific verbs were used to conceptualize the crimes and physical capabilities of the protagonists. The discourse entertains the visual representation of the crimes; however, it is more

educational since each synonymous action carries a different dimension of a physical action. It is educational to use a variety of language to build terminology and create a vivid image of the situation. The use of active language to indicate the severity of the crimes as they progressed provides listeners with more context as to how the serial killers were able to act out each crime.

Table 14

The top five verbs used with each protagonist in Part 1 and Part 2

	Albert Fish	Ed Gein	Amy Archer-Gilligan	Dale Hausner and Samuel Dieteman	Ronald Joseph Dominique	Earle Leonard Nelson	Lawrence Bittaker and Roy Norris	Christopher Wilder
Part 1	1. Murdered 2. Sexually assaulted 3. Confessed 4. Preyed 5. Committed	1. Visited 2. Interested 3. Confessed 4. Admitted 5. Removed	1. Killed 2. Murdered 3. Neglect 4. Poisoning 5. Lied	1. Met 2. Telling 3. Lived 4. Moved 5. Enjoying	1. Felt 2. Killed 3. Tell 4. Drove 5. Offers	1. Wandered 2. Refused 3. Decided 4. Grew 5. Developed	1. Spent 2. Arrested 3. Released 4. Attempted 5. Found	1. Drove 2. Wanted 3. Walked 4. Arrested 5. Raping
Part 2	1. Murdered 2. Killed 3. Confessed 4. Controlled 5. Abducted	1. Remembered 2. Shot 3. Claimed 4. Charged 5. Robbed	1. Needed 2. Killed 3. Wanted 4. Murdered 5. Manipulating	1. Fired 2. Speeding 3. Pulled 4. Driving 5. Killing	1. Killing 2. Feel 3. Claimed 4. Confessed 5. Lived	1. Strangling 2. Kill 3. Wander 4. Violated 5. Left	1. Wanted 2. Raped 3. Tortured 4. Feel 5. Murdered	1. Raping 2. Drove 3. Pulled 4. Abducted 5. Approached

Source: Episode transcriptions from Podgist.com with revision and collection processed by Kristy Daniel

The discourse surrounding the actions of the serial killers provides context into how the podcast captures the listener’s attention while being informational. In Table 14, the data indicates the use of targeted vocabulary with words like ‘abducted,’ ‘wandered,’ or ‘preyed’ hold an educational value to the conversation. By using these words instead of synonymous verbs like ‘took,’ or ‘walked’ provide a clearer picture of the narrative. For the listener, not only are the actions useful in creating an imagine, but the verbs also listed in Table 14 have a negative connotation attached to their meaning. The pointed language purposefully encourages the listeners to have a response to the content. Without having such distinct language, the narrative

would lose the excitement of true crime and the final justice being served. In collaboration with the descriptions of Table 13, the discourse indicates the power of ‘showing not telling’ by choosing specific terms that provide a clear visual interpretation. The use of descriptions in podcasting is similar to written communication in their attempt to clearly communicate a message. Stories, in any form of communication, whether true crime or fictitious, rely on clarity of the characters and their conflicts.

Just like the physical and psychological descriptions of the protagonists, the actions indicate the different behaviors and mindsets for each serial killer. The data in Table 14 indicate subtle hints about their abilities by using the terminology. For instance, in Part Two of Earle Nelson, the term ‘strangling’ instills the interpretation of immense physical strength to the listener. This notion places an image of a large, strong individual as the main protagonist within the episode. Similarly, in Part One of Amy Archer-Gilligan, the creators used the term ‘poisoned’ to not only tell of her murdering technique, but to portray the killer as a weaker, smaller individual who has easier accessibility to vulnerable individuals. In both examples, the action aided in the creation of the protagonists through descriptive language. Using both the action and physical descriptions aid in clearly visualizing each character. If the discourse would have not been as specific with the terms, the narrative would have lost its excitement and intensity to the listener. Without the creative components of the story, the entertaining portion would be lost.

Personnel (Additional individuals identified)

The inclusion of victims, psychiatrists, and family members within *Serial Killers* turns the protagonist from a villain in a story to real-life individuals who have committed horrendous crimes. In Table 15, the use of names for the victims gives them a voice for the justice system, an

awareness of the impact the crimes had on their community, and severity of true crime. The lack of other people discussed in Part One of Lawrence Bittaker and Roy Norris indicates the complexity of their friendship. The absence of family, victims, or other connects allows for the audience to understand the friendship on different levels include growth and trust within prison. These details increase the dynamic of their crimes and reliance on one another. Part Two redirects the narrative towards the crimes and the stories of the victims similar to the other episodes. The podcast brings the lives of the victims to the forefront as they were intertwined with the protagonist. The inclusion of all supporting personnel motivates the listener to sympathize with the victims and families. Without these people being discussed, the crimes would be disassociated with our current reality and the message about true crime would be missed.

Table 15

The names of the top discussed individuals and their relationship to the protagonist within each episode.

	Albert Fish	Ed Gein	Amy Archer-Gilligan	Dale Hausner and Samuel Dieteman	Ronald Joseph Dominique	Earle Leonard Nelson	Lawrence Bittaker and Roy Norris	Christopher Wilder
Part 1	1. Francis McDonnel (victim) 2. Doctor Frederic Wertham (psychiatrist of Fish) 3. Thomas Kedden (victim) 4. Anna (wife) 5. Anna McDonnel (victim’s mother)	1. Henry Gein (brother) 2. Augusta (mother) 3. Mary Hogan (victim) 4. George (father) 5. Bernice Worden (victim)	1. James Archer (first husband) 2. Carlan Goslee (investigative reporter) 3. Doctor Howard King (doctor/accomplice) 4. Lucy Doran (prior resident of Archer home) 5. John Seymour (family friend/home of Archers)	1. Jeff Hausner (brother of Dale) 2. Randy Hausner (brother of Dale) 3. Tony Mendez (victim) 4. Ron Horton (Sam’s friend) 5. Tracy Spyker (wife of Dale)	1. David Mitchell, Jr. (victim) 2. Datrell Woods (victim) 3. Larry Ransom (victim) 4. Officer Harrelson (arresting officer) 5. Gary Pierre (victim)	1. Aunt Lillian (aunt) 2. Mary Martin (wife) 3. Jenny Nelson (grandmother) 4. Charles Summer Jr. (brother of victim) 5. Mary Summer (victim)	1. Cindy Schaefer (victim) 2. Doctor Markman (Bittaker’s psychiatrist) 3. George (Bittaker’s father) 4. 5.	1. Jane (wife) 2. Fiona Parsons (photographed by Wilder, not victim) 3. Rosario Gonzalez (victim) 4. Theresa Ferguson (victim) 5. Elizabeth Kenyan (alleged victim)

Part 2	1. Grace Budd (victim)	1. Bernice Worden (victim)	1. Franklin Andrews (victim)	1. Ron Horton (Sam's friend)	1. Ricky Wallace (almost victim)	1. Clara Newman (victim)	1. Shirley Ledford (victim)	1. Tina Marie Risico (accomplice/hostage)
	2. Billy Gaffney (victim)	2. District Attorney Earl Kileen (prosecution against Gein)	2. Michael Gilligan (second husband/victim)	2. Reginal Remillard (victim)	2. Christopher Sutterfield (victim)	2. William Franey (witness to a victim's death)	2. Andrea Hall (victim)	2. Linda Grober (victim)
	3. Edward Budd (brother of victim)	3. Art Schley (arresting sherrif)	3. Hugh Alcorn (State Attorney)	3. Jeff Hausner (brother of Dale)	3. Nicholas Pellegrin (victim)	3. Mrs. Russell (victim)	3. Jackie Gilliam (victim)	3. Terry Walden (victim)
	4. Francis McDonnel (victim)	4. Judge Robert Gollmar (judge of murder charges)	4. Doctor Howard King (doctor/accomplice)	4. Nathaniel Shoffer (victim)	4. Mitchell Johnson (victim)	4. Emily Patterson (victim)	4. Joe Jackson (Norris's friend from jail)	4. Dawnette Wilt (victim)
	5. Doctor Frederic Wertham (psychiatrist of Fish)	5. Doctor Schubert (psychiatrist of Gein)	5. Alice Gowdy (victim)	5. John Kane (friend of Dale)	5. Alonzo Hogan (victim)	5. Laura Beale (victim)	5. Leah Lamp (victim)	5. Beth Dodge (victim)

Source: Episode transcripts from Podgist.com with revisions and collection processed by Kristy Daniel.

The inclusion of additional personnel in the episodes turn the podcast biographical to understand the background and development of the protagonist. In Table 15, the inclusion of family members highlights the childhood and environmental of the protagonist, especially when female role models are taken into consideration. For two of the protagonists, the inclusion of their female family members provide insight into their relationship (both physical and psychological) that influence Ed Gein and Earle Nelson's actions. The inclusion of judges and psychiatrists provide clarity on the legal process once the serial killers have been captured and whether their psychological capacity was a contributing factor. The psychological evaluations done by professional psychiatrists confirms the podcast's analysis of the protagonist's mental capacity and provide educational support for the conversation. For the listener, the inclusion of professional observations and research make the podcast reliable with both primary and secondary resources. It reiterates the importance of knowing the terminology and resources in Part One as seen in Table 10 and Table 11 above.

The names of the victims and their families give a voice to justice being served and the severity of their deaths. In Table 15, the victims identified were described by their age, gender, and/or physical characteristics. By describing the victims of the serial killers, the listener has more of an emotional response to their deaths. The discourse surrounding each of the victims is respectful by use of their legal names. Naming the victims is purposeful in making their lives a reality to the listener. It portrays the victims as meaningful people whose lives were uprooted in a moment. Using the names of the victims also connects the listener to the events and have an emotional response. The listener is driven to finish the episode to bring closure to their connection with the victims and bring justice to the serial killer. Closure for the victims and their families brings awareness to the extensive judicial proceedings. It is an educational moment to respect the victims by understanding their lives before being murdered. By discussing each victim individually, the narrative provides multiple testimonies against the protagonist, allowing for the listeners to create their own opinion on the protagonist.

The discourse, from the beginning through the end, details the chronological lives of the protagonists in many different ways, yet the severity of the crimes is not understood until the end of the episode with the legal sentencing. An explanation of the court cases and the sentencing show just how each crime impacted their community. Wrapping up the conversation about each protagonist with their judicial charges provides closure for the listener. It allows their audience to comprehend the end of one serial killer in preparation for the next.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Serial Killers, a podcast not originally intended for academia, is an educational and entertaining podcast based on the discourse surrounding their audience, purpose and context. The research about podcasts as an educational tool and the data collection based in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 support the use of this podcast as a resource for research and in the classroom. The research on podcasts not specifically created for academic use are worth analyzing as they relate to education. If an individual or group of people are researching, critically assessing, and reporting on a specific topic, their expertise and publication are similar to producing a scholarly article. Research into podcasts not specifically created for education and the unique discourse of individual podcasts would produce a query of new opportunities for audiences with niche or peaked interests. In creating a new rubric to analyze podcasts, and showing a new way of understanding edutainment, this study is just the beginning of endless possibilities of research into podcasts.

The study of the discourse within the podcast shows there is an educational and entertainment aspect to the show. While *Serial Killers* is focused on providing listeners with an entertaining experience to learn about of the psychological and mental disorders behind the crimes of serial killers, the discourse and terminology reflected an academic component. The terminology that is used throughout the show provides the audience with information to build their knowledge. The creators do not assume that their audience has any experience or exposure to medical or psychological terminology. Similarly, the transition of general references to specific citations and organizations that have extensive insight into the psychological and mental capacities of the serial killers creates a sense of trust between the audience and the podcast creators. The definitions and citations are highlighted through the use of imagery to describe the

protagonist and additional characters within the narrative. The purpose of adding verifiable resources is to encourage the listeners to research the topics outside of the podcast. It validates the discussion and allows the audience to re-focus on the crimes. By describing the serial killers, their victims, judges, and/or family members, the discussion surrounding the crimes becomes more visual and active. Understanding the terminology highlights the captivating language of the descriptions. Contextually, the discourse surrounding the victims and family members provokes an emotional response from the listener, which entices them to continue listening. Each word strung along purposefully to create a narrative that engages with the audience's imagination. Together, the educational and entertainment components encourage listeners to progress through the show with more insight into serial killers than before.

The research I have done is only a small fragment of podcast analysis. I have not analyzed the vocal inflections by the hosts, including scoffs, sarcastic laughter, or dismissing tsks. Those idiosyncrasies could be their own research and identify a new layer of intrigue or listenability to the podcast. The research is only on one podcast. Analyzing multiple podcasts for similar qualities could provide insight into a pattern of edutainment podcasts. There are numerous directions that could contribute to podcast analysis for future incorporation within education, especially as a newer form of media that is recently accepted as an avenue for learning new information.

My contribution to researching podcasts is the procedure for coding and analyzing the discourse in a new perspective. Sharing one way of analyzing the edutainment of a podcast opens new opportunities for research. The creation of a repeatable methodology provides the opportunity for other podcasts that were originally created as entertaining media, to be analyzed for components within the rhetorical framework. Moreso, it creates an unlimited number of

possibilities for interdisciplinary theories to fuse together to create new concepts. While the research I completed combines the educational and entertainment components of the podcast, there are other options available to research in this podcast, for instance the impact of media communication with the justice system, or historic medical practices utilized for care.

Edutainment is but one recently discovered interdisciplinary concept that could grow beyond a descriptor of sources, but a way of learning. The rubric within this research pushes the understanding of how podcasts are educational in a new direction, instead of a genre, but as an integrated resource of information.

In consideration of the endless possibilities of educational podcasts, I have found a new podcast platform called, Podscholars (podscholars.com) that databases published research as audio or video media. Podscholars are currently favorable to scientific research; however, this is just one example of how the world of podcasting and digital media is expanding and evolving to encourage curiosity and sharing information. The possibilities of the integration of podcasts in education on any level, surpass the current use as supplemental information. I am excited to see how future technology is incorporated in education and brings people together based on their shared interests.

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