

**Parricide Podcast** ◉  
Party of the Century Pt. 2  
Tyler Hadley

(musical interlude) Ring around the rosie; A pocket full of posies; Ashes, ashes; We all fall down

**Sherry:** Welcome to the Parricide Podcast. I'm Sherry...

**Marie:** ...and I'm Marie. And you're listening to Part 2 of the Party of the Century; the Tyler Hadley story.

**Sherry:** In Part 1, we told you about the Hadley family - Blake and Mary Jo Hadley were a gentle couple who loved life and were beyond proud of their two sons; Ryan - their older son - who was a decent kid and responded well to their laid-back, and rather indulgent, style of parenting, and Tyler - who wasn't doing as well. He'd been in trouble with the law for aggression, burglary, and for lighting a couch on fire in a Wildlife Preserve - which set the Preserve on fire. Besides his out-of-control behaviors, he was struggling with drug and alcohol issues. Well, according to the adults in his life, he was struggling. According to him, he was just fine.

After working hard to bring Tyler's life back to okay, his parents had to make a hard decision. Tyler was going to have to abandon his outpatient drug rehab program and move into a more serious inpatient program. But Tyler had other ideas. He decided to murder his parents and then throw the party of the century - with their bodies still in the house. And that's exactly what he did. To catch the nuances - and more information about how this tragedy came to be - be sure to listen to Part 1 of this episode.

Remember, Michael Mandell had been attending Tyler's blowout party when he came to realize Tyler's dead parents were lying in their bedroom. Completely unnerved, Michael had told other partygoers what was going on. For example, he told his friend, Jessie, and then - like a true teenager - asked him not to tell anybody.

**Marie:** (chuckles) Isn't that funny? Don't you think they know they're going to tell everyone?

**Sherry:** And don't you think they're going to figure it out at some point?

**Marie:** I guess they do at some point.

**Sherry:** Right. But, I mean, it shows the degree of upset that he was.

**Marie:** Yeah. I mean, I can't imagine being more upset than being at a party and learning there are dead people at the party, too.

**Sherry:** Um-hmm. He also told Dustin Turner - who of course didn't believe him. So, Michael and he went on a little field trip to the backyard where Michael let Dustin see for himself. These other friends had wisely bounced out of that party. Once he came to his senses, Michael approached another party goer - Ryan Stonesifer - and quietly told him they needed to leave. Stonesifer had responded, "Why do we have to go?" When Michael told him what was going on, Stonesifer said, "Stop playing with me."

As Michael explained he wasn't playing, Tyler had entered the room. After an awkward moment, Tyler went to the kitchen to find food and the police showed up at the door - in response to a noise complaint lodged by a neighbor. Michael knew the right thing to do in this circumstance - and Michael did it. He and Stonesifer had booked it out of there as fast as they could. And he'd called and reported the

incident to an anonymous tipster hotline. At the very same time, Tyler had been back on Facebook inviting everyone back to his house for a second party that evening. As the hotline staff were contacting the local authorities about Michael's call, another call came into the 9-1-1 Dispatch. It was Tyler's friend, Jesse Duryea and his girlfriend, Maggie. She'd convinced him it was the right thing to do to call the police and report their suspicions of murder.

Maggie started the call by saying:

"It's not an emergency. Just - I kind of. Just someone had a party tonight and someone reported that this kid had killed their parents."

Taking the phone from her, Jesse continued the call:

"I was at a party with one of my buddies and it was at his house. He said his parents went out of town. He said his parents went out of town, so he was throwing the party. And I'm at the party. And we're all hanging out. Everything's cool. He's acting fine" but then Tyler's best friend pulled me aside and "he told me, uh, he told me that the kid, Tyler, was effed up. And he was, like, he told me the gist of it. That he did something to his parents. He murdered his parents, and they were dead in their bedroom. I was like, 'Bro, I don't want to know any details. He said he'd already called and reported everything to Crime Stoppers. I was just calling because I felt like I needed to."

**Sherry:** The dispatcher asked, Did he say what specific...like, what did...what did he say? Did he, like, hurt them? Are they still alive?

And Jesse continued:

**Marie:** "It's, uh, it's - like - no. It's like, my understanding of it was...that he killed them. His parents are supposed - the bodies are supposed to be at his house; apparently. That's my understanding of it. It all got jumbled up. I mean, I'm really, like, scared, like, and confused, you know? Like, I heard something about - he did something with a hammer and, like, he tried to point out blood to me in the house? And I don't know if it was blood 100% but, I think, it's just curious. I just don't think that they're joking about it. That's the whole thing. I don't think anyone would be serious about - take it this far. So, I don't think it's a joke. I know...I think he really needs help."

**Sherry:** Jesse also talked about the money Tyler had taken from his parents' bank account that day saying:

**Marie:** "The kid, Tyler, had, like, a bunch of money. Like, \$5,000 out of nowhere. I don't know where he got it."

**Sherry:** Upon arriving at the house for the second time this morning, the police took note that both parents' cars were in the driveway, along with Tyler's. And despite the early hour, the lights were on in the house. The police peered into the front window and could see Tyler moving back and forth between the family room and a bedroom - throwing more items into the room. Police knocked and identified themselves. And the house went silent. Then the house went dark.

**Marie:** That sounds really scary.

**Sherry:** Um-hmm. The police began to secure backup and make a plan to enter the home when Tyler suddenly and sullenly appeared at the door; asking them what they wanted. There was a tense moment

at first; because he had his hand waist-high behind his back and they were worried about a weapon. But it was a false alarm.

**Marie:** That's good.

**Sherry:** Um-hmm. The police asked Tyler if his parents were at home - and he said no. Then they asked if he knew where they were. He stated they were in West Palm Beach. In response to their next questions, Tyler said - no, they could not be contacted, and no, the police could not come in and check for them.

**Marie:** Well, that's suspicious, right?

**Sherry:** Yeah. And this was a welfare check. So, the police - knowing they were there to check on the safety of Brett and Mary Jo - kind of looked around and took everything into account; because the police were only being polite when they asked if they could come in. Their observation of the house, the phone call, the cars in the driveway, and the seventeen-year-old son's inability to contact his parents gave them grave concern for the safety and well-being of the Hadleys - which is a catchphrase the police use to say they needed to go in. That was all they needed to enter the home - with or without permission.

**Marie:** That's really good. Because it's kind of scary to think that someone could murder you and then stand outside and say, 'Sorry, you can't come in.'

**Sherry:** Exactly. And I think that's why this Grave Concern clause came into play...

**Marie:** ...with the police.

**Sherry:** Right. So, Tyler was handcuffed and kept on the front drive as the police - unlike every vampire Tyler had ever heard of - entered the house without his permission and began searching through the rubble of the party for any signs of his parents. The police came upon a locked bedroom door which appeared to have blood on the doorframe, a nearby hutch, and nearby floorboards. Tyler was unable to produce a key to that door - but one officer was very lucky. He was able to twist that doorknob hard enough to force it open. The officers had a difficult time maintaining their composure at what they saw. The bedroom was completely filled with all of the furniture, family memorabilia, artwork, all types of books and incidentals, and blood. Lots of blood.

**Marie:** That's awful.

**Sherry:** Like Michael, the first indication of murder they saw was Tyler's father's leg - buried deep in the broken remnants of his life.

**Marie:** That's so sad. I'm sure that that is an image that the policeman will never get out of their heads.

**Sherry:** Right. It's such an unbelievable story.

**Marie:** It really is. And how disrespectful. He's already murdered them, why couldn't he just leave them alone.

**Sherry:** Um-hmm. There was a huge degree of cruelty in this one, don't you think?

**Marie:** Um-hmm.

**Sherry:** So, what happened next?

**Marie:** Tyler was arrested without further ado, and the case slowly wended its way toward trial - with Tyler doing his best to trick everyone into believing that he was insane. The pending decision for Miller v Alabama also had a bit to do with the delays in this case. The courts did not want Tyler treated unfairly and needed the results of that decision before they could make theirs.

In a strange twist of events, Tyler was allowed to plead No Contest to the murders of both of his parents in February of 2014.

**Sherry:** Wait, this happened in 2011. So, that took three years?

**Marie:** Um-hmm.

**Sherry:** Why?

**Marie:** Well. Perhaps he did it to avoid a death sentence. Perhaps because he hoped to circumvent the Slayer Laws and inherit. Perhaps he was confident he would receive a parole date due to the recent Miller decision. Or perhaps he just really didn't care.

His sentencing was set for one month later; in March of 2014.

During that sentencing hearing, Tyler's Defense Attorney claimed he was insane at the time of the murders; stating no one in their right mind would have done what he did. She asked for a sentence of two 30-year terms to be served concurrently - with a review after 20 years.

**Sherry:** She wanted him to be able to be paroled after 20 years? I think I know who wasn't in their right mind in this case.

**Marie:** (chuckles) I agree. I also hate that argument that because the murder was so brutal that proves that this person is insane.

**Sherry:** And it never works. I don't know why they ever try it.

**Marie:** It doesn't make sense. I think it's a poor excuse for really vicious behavior.

**Sherry:** Right. And we do have some cases where I think the murderer was, in fact, insane. And we'll do a couple of those - they're very different from this because they h-- in order to claim insanity, don't you have to be able to prove that you didn't know right from wrong at that time?

**Marie:** The standard is a little different; depending on what State you're in. But you do have to prove that you didn't know that what you were doing was wrong. In some states, you also need to prove that you have a diagnosed or diagnosable mental illness. But in all the cases we've looked at, you don't have this degree of organization and planning and cover-up if the person is actually insane at the time of the murder.

**Sherry:** Right.

**Marie:** So, anyway, the District Attorney agreed with us - and thought that this was a ridiculous idea to have him paroled after 20 years. They reminded the Judge that Tyler had heartlessly planned these murders over a long period of time, had discussed killing his parents with his friends, had sent out a Facebook invitation for a party at his house before he killed his mother, and had thrown that blowout

party afterward - wherein he was completely nonchalant; hanging out, doing drugs, listening to music, even trying to keep the kids under control.

**Sherry:** Other than really wanting everyone to know what he'd done.

**Marie:** That's true. He made a poor decision there; but other than that, he really had it together. The District Attorney said they had never prosecuted such a cold, calculated, premeditated murderer.

Tyler's older brother, Ryan, took the stand and testified that he and his younger brother had been very close over the years - but noted that Tyler had caused problems within the family because he would steal his parents debit card and take his father's truck keys without permission. At the end of his hour-long testimony, Ryan said he loved his brother very much - and then he said this: "Well, I guess what I want is for him to get the maximum penalty possible - which I understand is Life In Prison Without Parole.

**Sherry:** I think that Ryan is such a strong man. We'll talk about his story a little bit later - but he went through some incredibly terrible times because of this murder.

**Marie:** I'm sure. I'm not sure how you would ever recover from something like this. But the family didn't all agree with Ryan. Ryan's grandmother (on his maternal side) wanted Tyler to get paroled and this caused a few family rifts in the wake of the murders.

Countering his grandmother, was their Uncle - Mike Hadley. He spoke poignantly about the loss his family felt. They'd lost his brother, his sister-in-law, and his nephew, Tyler. And they're still struggling with this loss. It broke his heart at the Sentencing Hearing to realize Tyler was still unremorseful. Mike Hadley doesn't visit Tyler in jail, and he doesn't think Tyler should ever be released. It was obviously hard for him to come to this conclusion - but with tear-filled eyes he said, "He took away my best friend, my confidant, my brother. How can you sit down and have a normal conversation with someone who has robbed you of something so precious?" He hoped that, after three long years of grieving and legal wrangling, Tyler would be sentenced to Life Without the Possibility of Parole so the family would finally be able to pick up the pieces and move on.

**Sherry:** You know, that is one of the problems with these murders is - because it's a family member who committed the murder and murdered family members - the remaining family...they have such a hard time trying to grieve while also preparing for trial. Because on top of their grieving they have everyone contacting them - the press, the District Attorney, the police, the Defense, and often even the murderer. And so, they have a very difficult time trying to come to terms with what had happened. And my heart just goes out to every one of them.

**Marie:** Yeah. It's awful.

**Sherry:** Anyway, what happened next?

**Marie:** Tyler, himself, spoke at his Sentencing Hearing. According to the Palm Beach Post, he apologized to his family - but told them he didn't really expect they would forgive him. He said, "I know it's hard. I understand. And I can't even begin to explain what happened." He later added, "Not a single day goes by that I don't think about my parents or my entire family.

**Sherry:** Hmph. Do you believe that?

**Marie:** I do believe it - but not in the way he meant it. Tyler was very busy in jail; but he was busy signing his autograph on related news articles for fellow inmates who said that he goes by the nicknames of Hammer, HamBo (which is short for Hammer Boy), and Bamm Bamm.

**Sherry:** Oh, gross!

**Marie:** Yeah. It's really lurid. And then over the signature he writes, "It's hammer time."

**Sherry:** Are you kidding?

**Marie:** No. It's really awful. Umm but in line with the cruelty and total disregard for his parents as human beings - that he showed in the murders, themselves. So, yeah, I do believe that he thinks about his parents every day; but not in the way he was implying.

**Sherry:** He's a bad son.

**Marie:** I think that with a lot of these murders, we can find some sympathy for - even - the defendant; the person who does it. This one is very hard to find a way to be sympathetic toward him.

**Sherry:** Oh, I completely agree.

**Marie:** But the judge was working with a moving target during this hearing. The Miller v. Alabama ruling had just been handed down, and if you listen to our episode, Life After Life, you know about the new requirement that careful scrutiny be given to these sentences when a youthful offender is involved. The Florida Legislature had just changed their Sentencing Guidelines and Judge Makemson knew that the law now banned Judges from sending minors to prison for Life Without Parole - except under rare circumstances. And, man, he realized this may be one of those rare circumstances - but the procedures had not yet been agreed upon.

**Sherry:** That's so difficult when they have something like that happen. Um, I wonder if that's why he decided to plead guilty. He wanted to push this, and he hoped that there would be a problem with that gap in between - when the law is laid down and the procedures are put in place. Where he could, maybe, have extra appeals or something.

**Marie:** Probably. That would be a good strategy. But after careful consideration, Judge Makemson set Tyler's sentencing hearing as what he would call a Juvenile Mitigation Inquiry; allowing extra time for mitigation to be thoroughly examined.

**Sherry:** And what's mitigation again?

**Marie:** Mitigation is looking at the factors that may have made the crime less horrible or explain why this child would do it. Like, if they come from a childhood of horrible neglect and abuse - that would be a mitigating factor. Even if they're found guilty or plead guilty to a crime.

**Sherry:** Okay.

**Marie:** So, this Judge was highly cognizant of the fact that - even with the recent changes to the law - his decision was impacting the lives of the remaining family as well as the defendant. And this is why the hearing was allotted additional time.

**Sherry:** How much time was allotted?

**Marie:** Seven days - which is a lot. A lot of sentencings take less than one day. In the end, the Judge agreed with the Prosecution; scolding Tyler for trying to get an insanity plea by faking symptoms and manipulating experts over years. According to the TCPalm, the Judge - as he imposed two consecutive sentences (which means they're going to be served one at a time) of Life Without Parole - had said "The Court acknowledges that juveniles are different from adults. But the question here is whether this Defendant - 153 days from being 18 - suffered from such a mental illness to such a degree that a Life Sentence Without the Possibility of Parole should not be imposed. This was a brutal, horrific crime. I think everyone will agree to that. There were two people killed and they were the Defendant's parents. The first attack was the Defendant's mother. There were a total of 36 blows to his mother - both to her head and back. There's evidence that the mother was aware of the attack, and she was facing the defendant during at least some of the attack - and there's also evidence that she asked, "Why, Tyler, why?"

**Sherry:** That breaks my heart. But, at least, he got two consecutive sentences of Life Without Parole. He won't get out anytime soon. So, was that the end of it?

**Marie:** Well, no. Tyler was quickly back in court filing his appeal - and it was all about using the Miller Decision to shorten his sentence. He wanted a parole date, and he was confident that Miller would become his get-out-of-jail-free card. He won the appeal under two claims: 1) there was a lack of statutory provision allowing judicial discretion and crafting an individualized sentence; and 2) the omission of any mechanism for a Juvenile Defendant to have a sentence Judicially Reviewed in a proceeding where evidence of improved maturity, judgment, and rehabilitation could be adduced.

**Sherry:** Okay. So, what does that mean?

**Marie:** It meant Tyler was entitled to be re-sentenced within the auspices of an Individualized Sentencing hearing wherein a sentence could be tailored specifically for him.

**Sherry:** Isn't that what happened with that seven-day-long hearing that the Judge held?

**Marie:** Kind of. He's asking for a hearing much like Judge Makemson *had* striven to provide; but the procedure was now formalized and codified. For the second part - as the Miller Decision evolved, it had been decided that Juvenile Offenders should get a, sort of, second bite of the apple. A Judicial Review of each case had become mandatory; wherein the Offender could basically say, 'Hey, Judge, I've changed, and I have better judgment and I'm a better person now that I've grown up.' And if the Judge believed the evidence that supported this claim, the Judge - at that time - could reduce the original sentence without any further court proceedings.

**Sherry:** Oh! So, this is kind of like a parole hearing?

**Marie:** Kind of. It's like a more intense review but similar to a parole hearing and the stakes are higher because this one Judge has your entire opportunity for a future in his or her hands.

**Sherry:** Oh, okay.

**Marie:** This Judicial Review Mechanism had been absent in Tyler's sentence because it hadn't existed when he was sentenced. If you want to gain a deeper understanding of Miller v Alabama - and why or how it got Youthful Offenders out of Life Without Parole sentences, go back and listen to Episode 22 - Life After Life.

Tyler's Resentencing Hearing was held from October 1st through 8th of 2018. His attorney would bring with her a litany of experts who would talk about how the frontal cortex is not fully developed until age 25. They would also speak to the effects of drug and alcohol use on brain development. The Prosecution did not vary from their original stance; this was a heinous, brutal, premeditated crime committed by a young man who was so remorseless that he threw the party of the century in the evening hours after the murders.

**Sherry:** So, I think it's really odd when people go on and on about full brain development occurring at the age of 25 - and how that's a really good excuse for a kid to have a shorter sentence or actually not be punished. And, yes, that's when the prefrontal cortex is finally fully developed - but our brains are living organisms. Once the brain is fully developed, it begins to atrophy; just like a flower that buds, and then blossoms, and then withers. Research studies have shown that you're already past the full flower of development by the age of 30 - when you're on the opposite side of development, and your brain is starting to atrophy. So, using the 'fully developed frontal cortex' argument, only people aged like 25-30 are running around with fully developed, robustly equipped brains. Which should please them, because most kids, at that point, think their parents are dotey old people. And usually they are - obviously because their brain is not fully developed. But should we start giving breaks to murderers who are 40 since they also aren't making decisions with a fully developed brain? It just doesn't make any sense to me.

**Marie:** No. I think it's really hard; because, obviously, a child...when we think of a child. Like, a 10-year-old, doesn't have a fully developed brain, or personality, or even understanding of society and why we have the rules we have. But then - you're right - as soon as your brain is fully developed, it starts to atrophy. So, I think it's very hard to use that specific piece of biology to say no one before 25 should be held responsible. Which is why we go with 18 for an adult. But this kid is almost 18. He's not a 10-year-old.

**Sherry:** Right. he is almost 18. And I think of kids like, um, Daniel Petric. We did the episode on him. He was 17, too, and making *ridiculous* arguments. He was a hunter, if you recall, saying, 'Well, I didn't *know* if I shot them that they wouldn't reset - because I play video games.' I think sometimes the arguments made in court sound ridiculous.

**Marie:** And I think that, sometimes, they know they're ridiculous; but they're willing to try anything.

**Sherry:** That's true.

**Marie:** So, unfortunately, I don't think that argument is going anywhere soon - but, hopefully, people will dive into it a little deeper.

**Sherry:** I hope so, too.

**Marie:** But Tyler was wrong about that get-out-of-jail free card. Judge Makemson had been thorough and meticulous in rendering his decision despite being the Judge who went first after that precedent-setting Miller v Alabama decision. Tyler's sentence could have been anywhere within the Sentencing Guideline of 40 years to Life.

**Sherry:** Hmm. So, what happened at this Resentencing Hearing?



**Marie:** Well Judge Sweet, the Presiding Judge, noted that in order to be sentenced to Life Without Parole as a Juvenile Offender the Court would have to find the Defendant “irreparably corrupt” and that his “crime reflects permanent incorrigibility.”

**Sherry:** So, that sounds like a pretty high standard.

**Marie:** Of course! It's Life Without Parole. It should be high, right?

**Sherry:** And they will be spending quite a few years in prison, if they're so young.

**Marie:** The Judge then went over the mitigating and aggravating evidence: 1) Tyler was born prematurely and was small for age; 2) He'd been diagnosed with an endocrine disorder (hypothyroidism) at a young age; 3) Tyler had been treated throughout the years with medications such as Human Growth Hormones, thyroid medications, ADHD medications, depression and anxiety medications, and acne medications.

**Sherry:** You know that hormone...the Human Growth Hormone thing really bothered me at first - because I know a lot of people do that because they want a big boy. When you realize he had thyroid problems at a very young age - it was not the mother who put him on growth hormones; it was the doctor.

**Marie:** Yeah. I think that he did have some medical problems that may have contributed towards some anger issues, but he also made a lot of choices - like doing drugs, and using alcohol, and continuing to be pretty awful, and then eventually murdering his parents.

**Sherry:** Right.

**Marie:** Um. I think it's also important to remember there are many other young boys and girls who are on medications like this - who are not violent at all.

**Sherry:** Right.

**Marie:** So, the 4<sup>th</sup> factor considered was that Tyler was disrespectful, disobedient, defiant, and dishonest throughout his entire adolescence. He both lied to - and stole from - his parents on numerous occasions.

**Sherry:** I like those four D's: disrespectful, disobedient, defiant, dishonest.

**Marie:** Yeah. I mean, those are pretty bad. Fifth, Tyler participated in drug use, sales, and purchases and was criminally detained for arson, vandalism, thefts, aggravated battery, and now murder. There was also a \$15,000 Civil Suit pending - after Tyler had hit and injured a child while driving his father's car in June of 2010.

**Sherry:** Wow! That's a lot!

**Marie:** Yeah, he'd already behaved with reckless indifference toward human life; and now he'd intentionally murdered people.

**Sherry:** And he's only 17.

**Marie:** Yeah. It's quite the rap sheet for a kid. Sixth, Tyler would closely protect his dark thoughts from others until they would manifest as violent crimes. This makes him not just dishonest, but dangerous to

others. Seventh, his school performance was poor, and he had dropped out of school despite the privilege he'd enjoyed - and despite the extraordinary efforts his parents made to introduce him to potential activities of interest. His only interests were hanging out and smoking weed. And eighth, Tyler refused to even try to become a good person or shape up - and this refusal is why he formulated a plan to murder them.

The Judge noted that Tyler had told his friends he would wait to murder his parents until after his brother, Ryan, had moved to North Carolina. It seems like this decision was similar to how he shut their lab in the bedroom closet. He was afraid that Ryan would protect his parents, so he waited until he couldn't.

The Judge reviewed each of the steps Tyler took that indicated planning and the preparation that went into these murders. They had been vicious - with the victims fighting for their life throughout. He had dealt his mother at least 36 blows and his father at least 39 blows with his hammer. I keep saying, 'at least' because with that many strikes with a hammer, it's really hard to forensically determine how many times.

**Sherry:** Right.

**Marie:** The Judge summarized, saying Tyler had displayed perverse premeditation, heartless cruelty, savagery, extreme violence, a willingness to mutilate, and absolute depravity. All these factors, taken together, illustrate the fact that this conduct describes the nature and attributes of Severe Criminal Conduct - justifying the system's harshest punishment.

**Sherry:** That must have made Tyler mad.

**Marie:** I'm sure it did. Judge Sweet noted the following Factual Findings: 1) one of the killings was committed for financial gain; 2) the killings were heinous, atrocious, and cruel - and were clearly premeditated and without justification; 3) these actions devastated other family members, as well as the surrounding community (in fact, the murders had led to a large rift in the extended families pitting the maternal relatives against the paternal ones because of their differences of opinion as far as what should happen to Tyler); 4) he considered Tyler's age, maturity, intellectual capacity, and mental and emotional health at the time of the offense.

**Sherry:** This Judge was very thorough.

**Marie:** I think that they were being very careful to get it right. Judge Sweet concluded that Tyler had, indeed, met the standard for being irreparably corrupt and permanently incorrigible.

Tyler's original sentence of two continuous terms of Life Without Parole were reinstated - but this time the Judicial Review Mechanism was put in place.

**Sherry:** I'm glad that happened. I'm glad that everything turned out this way with this case.

**Marie:** Me, too.

**Sherry:** This was a very disturbing one.

**Marie:** Yeah.

**Sherry:** So, how is everyone?

**Marie:** Well, Ryan went to visit his brother for the first time after their parents' funeral, saying he was now Tyler's legal guardian, and it was what his parents would want him to do. He quickly realized he could not act as Tyler's guardian for the remaining six months of his childhood - and that responsibility was lifted from his shoulders by a caring cousin.

**Sherry:** Good.

**Marie:** Yeah. The support from Ryan's family was deep, constant, and admirable - but they, too, were grieving and did not have the bandwidth to meet all of his needs. These murders had toppled Ryan's world and left him - at the young age of 23 - trying to work through a wall of grief and fear while navigating the loss of his entire nuclear family. He had just taken his first step toward adulthood a few weeks prior, and now he'd been pushed into the ugliest, most difficult kind of adulthood in existence.

Ryan credits his survival of this tragedy to the support he received from his family, his girlfriend, Kelly - and her family, and from his now-friend, Dan Yearick.

**Sherry:** You know, I think it would be really difficult. He said...I hadn't ever thought of this before...but he said he didn't feel that he could properly grieve or get the help he needed from someone who had their own grieving to do. That was really powerful. I really hadn't thought of that before.

**Marie:** Yeah - it's really hard - because everyone around you also loved your parents and has experienced a loss. Ryan would be the first to tell you that his ability to navigate these murders was heavily predicated on the heavy lifting done by Dan Yearick - who is a counselor who decided to forego traditional therapy and simply be there for him as a neutral but constant support. Well, sort of. He is a Trauma Counselor who is trained in EMDR - which he used to help Ryan.

**Sherry:** What is EMDR?

**Marie:** EMDR is a fairly new technique. It means Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, and it was only developed in the 80s. Umm.

**Sherry:** Oh. So, it's considered new and kind of experimental?

**Marie:** Not really experimental anymore - because they've proven that it works.

**Sherry:** Okay.

**Marie:** But it's not as popular as you would think; given the results that people report.

**Sherry:** Huh. I wonder why.

**Marie:** I'm not sure. I think that it is just because it was only developed in the 80s.

**Sherry:** But it's something that seems to work well for people who have been through deep trauma. I don't understand how eye movement could do this.

**Marie:** I'm not a Trauma Therapist. But from what I can tell, it's because trauma can't be processed through words - it has to be processed through emotions and thoughts and, kind of, in your body. And so, you have to get your body involved - and here it's just your eyes. Which is helpful and can be done in any therapist's office. It does require some preparation that's pretty intense - but it is, um, a really helpful technique for a lot of people.

**Sherry:** Oh, okay thanks.

**Marie:** So, yeah. I mean, I think this is a really exceptional counselor - but their relationship and story is really unique and compelling and they wrote about it.

**Sherry:** Oh!

**Marie:** Yeah, which I think is really cool, um, because I don't think a lot of people have been through something quite this traumatic - but I think a lot of people can benefit from understanding how a therapeutic relationship and trauma techniques can really help you move forward.

**Sherry:** Okay.

**Marie:** And if you'd like to read the book - and don't mind lending a little bit of support - you can go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) right this minute, hit the Supporting button and choose FoMo 411: Home of the Parricide Prevention Institute, and order their book - which is called A Thousand Fireflies. And it's by Ryan Hadley and Dan Yearick. It's poignant, honest, and heartbreaking. Ryan guides the reader through this horrific ordeal and reveals how he navigated those dark years - and found a way to survive with Dan as a unique support. I read the book and it's very compelling. It's a pretty quick read because it's so interesting. And it's not too long. So, if you're worried you'll be overwhelmed; it's not a huge commitment. It's just a really good read.

**Sherry:** I'm going to have to borrow that from you.

**Marie:** Okay! Ryan also married the love of his life, Kelly, who had supported him throughout this ordeal, and they seem to be doing well.

**Sherry:** Aww. I think that's sweet. I think it would be really difficult. Usually trauma can break people up - and that she was able to support him (probably with the support of her family) and they could actually make it when they were already young when they met each other - in a long-distance relationship. I just think that's a sweet love story.

**Marie:** Yeah.

**Sherry:** So, did the rift in the family that this murder caused ever get repaired?

**Marie:** It did. So - as we've said - Blake and Mary Jo's families found themselves on, kind of, opposite sides of the aisle (both figuratively and literally). Blake's family loved Tyler but felt he needed to go to prison and stay there for the rest of his life. They didn't contact Tyler once he'd found himself in jail, and then in prison. But Mary Jo's family stood behind Tyler. They visited him in jail, and his grandmother - Mary Jo's own mother - testified on his behalf at his Sentencing Hearing; asking the Judge to show leniency and grant him a short prison term.

**Sherry:** I do not understand how people do that.

**Marie:** I don't, either. And neither did Blake's family.

**Sherry:** Well, it's just me, but if Ryan is saying that he thinks his brother should be in prison for life - you would think his grandmother would support him.

**Marie:** You would hope so. But she's also experiencing a huge loss - and may have personal beliefs that affect her opinion on this. It's just hard to know without being there.

**Sherry:** That's true.

**Marie:** Yeah. But this created a rift between a family that had once stood shoulder to shoulder in support of this little family. At a Sentencing Hearing, a tiny step was taken to heal this rift. Blake's brother, Mike, gave Mary Jo's mother a tiny hug, told her they loved her and her family - and how they missed and thought about them every day. It seems like they might eventually be okay. Which is good - because even Mike acknowledged that they need each other for support.

**Sherry:** Ohh. I am so glad they were able to move toward fixing that.

**Marie:** Me, too.

**Sherry:** So, we talked a lot about Michael Mandell - his friend. What happened with Michael Mandell?

**Marie:** Well, Tyler's best friend has had a rough time of it since the murders in the subsequent party. He remained in the Port St. Lucie area and had to deal with the fallout of being friends with a murderer. Additionally, he has continued to make bad choices for his own life.

**Sherry:** That's too bad.

**Marie:** Yeah. It's sad. Do you remember that selfie he took with Tyler?

**Sherry:** Um-hmm.

**Marie:** He thought that was the last time he would cross paths with Tyler; but he was wrong.

**Sherry:** Oh!

**Marie:** Yeah. After Michael's own mother died, he went to visit one of her old friends - and stole a gun from him.

**Sherry:** Oh, no.

**Marie:** I know. But then - like every good criminal - Michael sold the stolen gun to a local pawn shop and helpfully produced his driver's license and allowed his thumbprint to be taken as part of the sale.

**Sherry:** (laughter) Oh my.

**Marie:** Yeah.

**Sherry:** So, was this theft of a gun because he was still doing drugs?

**Marie:** Yeah, of course the authorities - because he had been so helpful - identified him as the thief, talked to him, found him in possession of drugs, and his drug test came back positive.

**Sherry:** Mmm.

**Marie:** Unfortunately, this was a violation of his parole in another case, so they put him in jail - which is fairly common in cases where an offender is dealing with drug issues. It's usually not a huge deal - and part of relapse. The offender is left in jail to get the drugs out of his system; giving him a better chance

of success, and then he is released. But in this case, the jail had a dilemma. Tyler had won his appeal for re-sentencing and had just been returned to the same jail in which Michael would be serving his time.

**Sherry:** Oh, no!

**Marie:** Yeah. Especially because there was a good chance Michael would be called again as a witness to the rehearing.

**Sherry:** They must have been very worried about some violence in their jail.

**Marie:** Um-hmm. They took it very seriously. They didn't want these two men running into each other at all. But through their efforts and planning, any chance of meeting was effectively averted.

**Sherry:** I'm glad. I bet Michael was very afraid when he was in that situation.

**Marie:** Oh, I'd be terrified!

Well, that's it for today.

**Sherry:** Well, there is one more thing. These murders were rough on everyone; there is no escaping that fact. His brother wasn't okay. The family wasn't okay. The friends weren't okay. The community wasn't okay. Not even the house was okay. In 2015, a bank purchased the home for pennies on the dollar and had it demolished; planning to donate the land to the city. There was nothing physical left of Ryan's family for him. The walls wherein his family had lived, brought home babies, and flourished collapsed to the ground - erasing physical memories of the love, support, frustration, violence, and dark agenda that had played out in it. But the home wasn't quite finished. It had one last gift for Ryan. Hidden inside was a love letter written by Mary Jo to Blake.

**Marie:** Aww.

**Sherry:** From before they were married, before they had children, before they were murdered. In it, Mary Jo tells Blake she enjoyed visiting him, couldn't wait to see him over the holidays, and that she loved him. I like to think Ryan's parents had a hand in getting this little bit of love to him.

Thanks for listening to the Party of the Century today. We appreciate you and hope you learned something new about parricide. If you liked this episode, please Follow or Like us and tell two friends about our show.

**Marie:** We'd like to thank Jade Brown for our music, and we'd like to thank our newest Patreon member, Max. Welcome! And thank you...

**Sherry:** Hi, Max!

**Marie:** ...and thank you for your support. We'd also like to thank the Palm Beach Post, CBSNews.com, Daily Mail, Murderpedia, Facebook, Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and Law, WGPV Channel 20, WPTV News- Channel 5, the Palm Beach Post, TCPalm.com, the Rolling Stone, the Detroit Free Press, the Stewart News, the Herald-Palladium, the St. Lucie News, the book - See How Much You Love Me by Amber Hunt, and the book, A Thousand Fireflies by Ryan Hadley and Dan Yearick for the information and pictures we've used in this episode. Seriously, you should check out Ryan's book. It's very insightful.

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Thanks for listening.

**Sherry:** This has been the Parricide Podcast, and remember...

**Marie:** ...always sleep with one eye open.

**musical outro:** Ashes, ashes; We all fall down.