

# *Values and the Glorification of True Crime Fandoms*

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## **Introduction**

True crime podcasting has become a booming journalistic avenue over the course of ten years, with rising mainstream media attention focused on the past three. True crime appeals to many people, whether it be morbid curiosity, to understand history, the psychology of perpetrators, or to help someone feel prepared if they become a victim. There are currently over two hundred true crime podcasts on the Apple Podcast app. With so many options for content, it is no surprise that the true crime fandom has grown because of the appeal and keeps adapting with the media genre. While true crime is becoming more mainstream in movies, TV, and media, it is still a sensitive and hotly debated subject among many true crime fandom discourse communities. It is controversial because of the questions surrounding the ethics of discussing death and the potential glorification of perpetrators. We as humans have done the retelling of true crime stories for centuries because we are naturally curious about traumatic events. Although this is human nature, telling true crime stories specifically for entertainment instead of awareness is a new journalistic approach. There is also the potential impact on new legal action for existing cases, since the information will reach new communities.

There are multiple studies about the fascination with true crime, the audience demographics, and how true crime impacts the genre through public opinion (Boling, 2018; Boling, 2019; Williams, 2021; Thurston, 2021). There is an intricate and reciprocal relationship between podcast hosts and their audience. In the study "True Crime Podcasting: Journalism, Justice or Entertainment," author Kelli Boling details her findings on the podcasting genre from the production's perspective. True crime impacts the genre through public opinion and criminal justice reform if the producers so choose. Boling focuses specifically on the production's responsibility to and relationship with their audience. Boling found through interviews that the hosts of true crime podcasts are generally not worried about swaying their audiences' opinions on certain cases because they believe their research is adequate for retelling a crime. The majority also stated they interject their personal opinions into their episodes. They again brought to light the strategies producers use and choose to inform their audience on the specific issue they are covering in an episode (Lindgren, 2016; McHugh, 2016; Boling, 2019).

There are ethical questions (Boling, 2019; Boling, 2018) that address whether the retelling of these crime stories' purpose is to highlight injustices, expose deep-seated corruption in our American justice system, or for pure entertainment. For example, the Netflix show "Making a Murderer" (D'Addario, 2016) walks the line of being a reality TV show for entertainment and a documentary for exposing one town's corrupt police department. The ethical dilemmas are a significant source of contention among consumers of true crime and the victim's families. Issues regarding these ethical dilemmas often question if true crime fandom is purely entertainment at the victim's

expense. Further, producers often profit from the tragedies of people they are not relatives of and true crime content can lead to "armchair detectives," aka underqualified fans making claims regarding or interfering with ongoing investigations that can lead to actual harm on said investigations. These are just a few ethical dilemmas that lead to the most critical ongoing conversation in the true crime genre: whether true crime glorifies and fetishizes the perpetrators of crimes such as well-known serial killers like Ted Bundy and Richard Ramirez, as reiterated in "Fandom and Controversy" (Williams, 2021). The case study "Dark Fandoms: An Introduction and Case Study" (Broll, 2018) details one ethical dilemma involving people so fascinated by the Columbine Shooting that they, in turn, decided to emulate the shooters Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold by also committing acts of violence. The article also details what happens when serial and mass murderers achieve fame and infamy, such as in the case of Ted Bundy with the inaccurate portrayal of his life by Zac Efron in the Netflix special "Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil and Vile." The movie decided to leave out critical aspects of Bundy's real-life crimes, such as necrophilia, then used a handsome, famous actor to represent the murderer, which in turn made the movie lighter and gave Ted Bundy endearing qualities. Whereas TV programs and movies use visual media to shape their narrative for viewers, podcasts must use their words to shape the narrative they want a viewer to follow. The visual media representation blurs the lines between education and entertainment; podcast producers must use their words and imagery to create their message, so they stand out. The host's delivery is influential to how their audience receives the content and how the audience thinks about cases after listening. There is more room for misinterpretation of

the host's tone with auditory delivery than visual media. For example, without visually seeing someone speak, there is more room for misinterpretation of sarcasm, making the host seem hostile or unintelligent when relaying a story about someone's murder. There is a fine line between idealization and storytelling within these true crime podcasts. There are communities and fan bases creating environments that purposefully glorify these heinous perpetrators and their crimes. These communities are harboring a toxic fandom environment. Nevertheless, what makes these podcast fans harbor these values? What makes fans choose objectivity over advocacy after listening?

With true crime fandom coming under new scrutiny, there is little information on what impacts fans to foster sinister values after listening to true crime content. How can a podcast producer create a thriving fan base that upholds positive values and critical thinking on the air and in the audience's messaging boards? With critical thinking at the forefront of this conversation, how do we facilitate that line of thought and have it be entertaining to the booming popularity of true crime? There are very few true crime comedy podcasts dedicated to comedic entertainment and victim advocacy. *Last Podcast on The Left* is the most successful true crime comedy podcast to date, with over a million subscribers across multiple streaming services and 105,000 members dedicated to their main Reddit page. *Last Podcast on The Left* (LPOTL) started in March 2011 as the first true crime comedy podcast hosted by two comedians, Henry Zebrowski and Ben Kissel, alongside their journalist researcher Marcus Parks. Together these hosts have created boundaries with their comedy in the show, like not making fun of victims and creating a clear message to their audiences. The message is always to invoke critical

thinking skills and learn from the history of others how to be better for the future. This makes me wonder how they keep an audience engaged by humor without being offensive to victims or glorifying criminals. With other community fan bases romanticizing serial killer entertainment, what makes the LPOTL community different? These questions lead me to my central research question: what strategies do the hosts of LPOTL implement to uphold their values reflected in the fan Reddit community? How do they create an environment that lends itself to their success with their audience? My research follows explicitly the LPOTL Reddit discourse community, where there appears to be a unanimous decision not to put these notorious criminals on a pedestal. By interviewing and observing the Reddit discourse community, I will find the strategies that promote critical thinking and LPOTL values imprinted upon the community members. This information is valuable to the longevity of entertainment true crime podcasts and can shed light on how to come back from toxic fandom to promote advocacy.

## **Methodology**

While researching how the LPOTL Reddit community members engage with the hosts and each other on message boards, I decided to use multiple methods of gathering the necessary information. Since the group is significant, I would need to expand my methods to truly encompass how the community expresses their values and what they would have to say about advocacy in the Reddit community. Therefore, I decided to use surveys and perform observations of the Reddit thread to gather information on the questions and thoughts above.

First, I decided to create a survey to remain impartial and gather as many responses as possible from the community to seek their insight for my primary research. The surveys are an excellent tool in comparing users' experiences through listening to the show and implementing LPOTL knowledge to the Reddit page. It also allowed me to field more responses than interviews would have. I chose to use a few multiple-choice questions and left most questions open-ended to get the participants' honest thoughts and feelings. I also asked questions to throw off the participants since my initial observations of the Reddit community were that they were quite intelligent but also quick to criticize. I created the survey in a way that would encourage respondents to give honest answers by thinking that the survey questions were unorganized and not too serious. As participants, they didn't realize I was truly studying them and their reactions and not their actual responses to the survey. The participants chose to take the survey via a Reddit post approved by the Moderator. They could take the survey through a Google Doc and answer the questions in their own time.

Finally, I used observations to provide data that was not curated through my line of questioning. It showed organically how the LPOTL hosts influence the community. How the content of the show, hosts themselves, and the comedic aspect makes the LPOTL fan's values differ from other communities. Since observations are an integral part of my research, I decided to select two weeks of posts to look through to observe themes in what was posted, language used, and patterns. The Reddit community page has engaging conversations about episodes, as well as memes, advocacy posts, tour date information, and conspiracy theories. While I could not tell body language or change in

verbal lexis, I was able to see how people honestly thought behind the anonymity of a username and cartoon profile facade. Overall, the observations were to show how each user interacted with each other and talked about true crime in a group.

## **Results and Discussion**

When looking through the Reddit page observations and eighty survey responses, four main themes were constant within my primary research: humor, education, advocacy, and comradery among the hosts. These themes were apparent for almost every response and throughout the messaging boards and are also quite apparent when listening to the LPOTL podcast content. The themes also led me to understand the multiple values the hosts impress on their listeners: truth, a sense of morality, not victim-blaming, defaming perpetrators, and “hail yourself.” It became clear that the hosts' messages effectively integrated themselves into the Reddit discourse community through my primary research.

### *Humor*

The hosts' first and most evident strategy is their comedy and type of dark humor. Each host has their own unique personality and style of humor, which blend together for a complementary dynamic. Zebrowski, Parks, and Kissel have cornered the market on self-deprecation and dark humor, but not at the expense of the victims, which is a boundary they have set for a long time. The subjects they discuss are taboo, but their jokes around mental health, insecurities, and personal issues validate listeners who also experience these issues. The humor adds a certain lightness to the dark content they discuss in each episode. One response to the survey details, "humour has also been

shown as a better approach to understanding a topic or remembering certain details as it has re-listenable appeal." This response reveals how comedy makes recalling details more accessible and encourages reoccurring listenership. It is easier for a listener to recall information from the research-heavy episodes if you enjoy the jokes. The recall of information plays into the value of truth within LPOTL. Truth is a constant value for the hosts, whether through adequate research and sourcing or being honest with the people around you. The ability to recall information is essential when retelling a story. If listeners told others about a case or episode that was factually incorrect, it could perpetuate stereotypes, damage a person's reputation, and impact the talker's credibility. This is also why Marcus Parks quotes sources, provides backup evidence, and implores listeners to continue research on their own. Recalling information via the comedic aspects by not perpetuating false information is just one way listeners encompass the value of truth from their listenership and an approach to improving their media literacy.

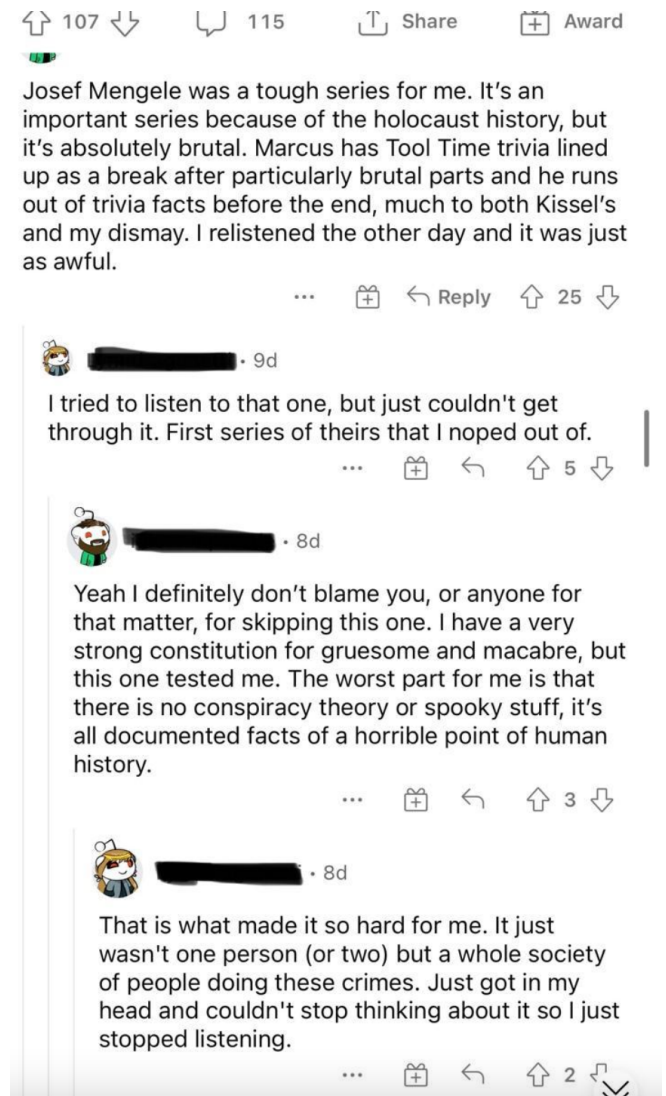
Many survey responses also revealed that the dark comedy, taboo nature, and uncensored opinions caused them to be recurring listeners. This response to the LPOTL content is imperative to the success of their podcast, showing that the comedy helps cultivate the community value of morality. There is morality set within almost every joke or comedy bit within an episode. By providing specific examples of the host's personal view as morally acceptable or unacceptable, they can show their personal values on the macabre content. The underlying morality of the comedy and jokes translates to the listener community what they view personally right or wrong throughout the Reddit community page, whether it be discussions regarding, or individuals questioning, the



morals in different episodes. On the surface, there are jokes poking fun directly at the perpetrators, which shows the apparent "murder is a sin or evil, do not commit murder" ethic. But there are less obvious jokes with meaning and morals attached to them. An obscure but classic comedy example is the "get the net" quote from the trio. "Get the net" refers to Parks's openness about his bipolar disorder in "Episode 413: Lobotomies Part I – The Cathartic and the Emetic" and "Episode 414: Lobotomies Part II – Assistant to the Bone Slicer." These episodes heavily discuss mental health and the treatment of individuals with mental health disorders, specifically regarding the usage of lobotomies instead of adequately researched approaches to mental health care. The quip "get the net" transpired from Parks talking about his medication, how it feels to not have access to it due to the United States healthcare system, and how dangerous it can be for his psyche. Kissel and Zebrowski were improvising off each other and said when Parks gets out of hand, they need to "get the net," which is also a reference to an actual method insane asylum used to secure individuals to put them into straight jackets. On the surface, "get the net" may just mean to rein in Parks's bipolar tendencies or rants, but for many fans, this quote can be seen as a loving yet humorous remark about how Kissel and Zebrowski care deeply for Parks and his mental health. "Get the net" can be seen throughout the Reddit community posts and comments. The morality within this quote is twofold: it shows care for Parks, i.e., the value in acknowledging and showing care for people with mental illness, while also showing how we used to not provide that care to previously imprisoned individuals with mental disorders. With morality being the supporting value behind the jokes and improved banter, listeners begin to understand

the hosts' values and improve upon their personal values and ethics. If the morality of the comedy resonates with them, they then use that information when making their own valued judgments.

During my observations over the past two weeks, I found a lengthy discussion on February 27, 2022, regarding episodes that made listeners uncomfortable. One recurring theme was mentioned while reading through the comments and understanding exactly when made these commenters uncomfortable. While the subject material in specific episodes was graphic, unnerving, and provoked grief in the listener, the material was digestible because of Henry Zebrowski's comedic commentary. One comment on the thread addressed how the comedy breaks the tension of how unbelievable the crime was. Hearing real-life horror stories can harm your psyche and cause you to question humanity. When there is a comedic break, it gives listeners the ability to break their line of thought, causing a distraction to allow a listener to regulate their emotions on the often tricky content. Giving time for regulation is essential because if the content is too overwhelming, listeners may not actively listen or they may be



potentially triggered but too engrossed. Creating these breaks in tension also allows the listener to check in with their bodies to see how they are feeling about the content and if they are overwhelmed. The comedic timing allows space for listeners to check in with themselves and evaluate if they want to keep listening or take a break. Breaking up complex content via a joke also helps a listener not feel the melancholy and desolation that listening to horrific crimes may invoke. The comedic timing of jokes and the application—such as Zebrowski's voice acting for specific characters, Charles Manson's impression, and digs about Manson's character—made the episode more enjoyable. Another commenter stated that they would not be able to make it through the graphic content without the palate-cleansing effect of the jokes and side tangent discussions. Listeners felt that sometimes the material was so overwhelming that a mental break was necessary to not dwell on the worst of humanity.

Humor is always aimed at another person or thing's expense, and LPOTL aims humor at the perpetrators or the failing criminal justice system that failed to perform adequately. The boundary and value Zebrowski perpetuates is not to tell a joke at the victim's expense. I believe this hard line that he created is beneficial for cultivating the audience and keeping them engaged. There is no need to have jokes aimed at the victims of these horrific crimes, yet some podcasts do engage in this as an attempt at humor. By not involving the victim, the hosts show their value of not victim-blaming and how to break down those stereotypes. The comedy is also very effective in bringing



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The demystifying of the killers as the fucking dullards they are is also good. So sick of the "cunning mastermind" narrative.



down the notoriety of these perpetrators. When we try to understand the depravity of human nature, society ends up turning the perpetrators into monsters and myths like in a storybook. The LPOTL hosts seek to destigmatize and humanize the perpetrators by not focusing on the infamy or legend. However, by not treating them with reverence, the hosts condemn them to their listeners. The hosts separate the sensationalism of the murderers by focusing on their crimes. For example, take the case of Dennis Rader, the “BTK Killer.” “BTK” stands for "bind, torture, kill," which was Rader's self-proclaimed and created name that was unfortunately adopted by the media. In the two-part episode on Dennis Rader, and included in the *Last Book on the Left*, the hosts use comedy to show that Rader was not the prolific embodiment of evil that we as a society may think. By making fun of Rader's creative writing pieces, diaries, nicknames, and ultimately pointing out the hilarity of how Rader was caught, it shows listeners that he was not as otherworldly as previously suggested. When the hosts point out all these embarrassing and amusing facts about Rader, it brings him down from the prolific serial killer to a despicable human being that should not be idolized. Society tends to emphasize how serial killers are masterminds, evil, unhinged, and ungodly because we cannot imagine committing these crimes ourselves. But, by detaching the human element from these killers, we, in turn, sensationalize them. Therefore, comedy and pointing out the mistakes, stupidity, selfishness, and obnoxious characteristics of the perpetrators help listeners realize these people are not notorious or infamous; they are just awful people who took advantage of others around them and our criminal justice system. There is another aspect, that serial killers specifically want that notoriety and strive for attention; by

making fun of them and using comedy at their expense, we are taking away their power over their perverse narrative.

### *Education*

Education is the core of LPOTL, with tens of hours of research into each episode. There is also an extreme variety to the podcast's content, such as serial killers, cryptids, conspiracy theories, and legends. One survey response summarized why listeners believe LPOTL is unique compared to other podcasts; "They somehow manage to find the balance between being informative, respectful, and having dark humor. I feel like a lot of other true crime podcasts are just reactionary and sensationalist." Parks is the lead researcher for the show and has a team of assistants to help with gathering sources. They always cite sources and credit authors influential to their content material within the episodes. While sharing all source material they come across, the hosts explicitly say to check multiple sources. They emphasize that listeners always question, analyze, and use critical thinking skills when searching for information in order to promote media literacy. For the sake of this project, critical thinking is defined as the objective evaluation and analysis of thoughts into a judgment.

The hosts also have a unique aspect that shows distinct roles in each episode. Parks is the researcher telling the story, while Kissell essentially plays the role of the audience, asking crucial questions to dive into the material further. This dynamic shows a conversation between the hosts and allows for additional commentary from the actual audience once the episodes are released. The hosts' tactic helps facilitate further conversations and questions for their audience, imploring them to use their critical

thinking to answer questions. The hosts also provide different viewpoints on the subject, providing outside views on the source material to offer alternative narratives that still follow the facts in the case.

One example of how the tactic further facilitated a conversation was observed on March 3, 2022. A user gave some background information on a *Side Stories* episode in which a nineteen-year-old man lost part of his legs and fingers due to meningitis suspected of being caused by digesting rotten Chinese takeout. This original poster (OP) was so intrigued by this phenomenon mentioned by Kissel and Zebrowski that he decided to go searching for more information. By searching for more information, OP followed Parks's adamant wish for the audience: always do your research and come to your own conclusions. "We always like to say: This is what we think, this is our opinion on this. We always encourage people to go out and do their research and to form their own opinions on things because we are not experts" (Miller, 2020). This direct quote from Parks from a *Vulture* interview lays out their line of thinking and what they hope their audience will learn from them. When asked

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### No need to fear leftover Chinese Food.

Also this may or may not factor into how vulnerable he was to meningitis but one source pointed out that he smoked two packs of cigarettes a week, smoked weed, and took cough-suppressant and antihistamine recreationally and regularly. Also what is pointed out is he was prone to ear infections when he was younger which in my mind, note not a doctor just speculation based on logic if I'm wrong I'm wrong and apologize, that his immune system may have not been the best.

This weeks sidestories mentioned how a young man may have gotten meningitis via leftover Chinese food. I decided to check a few other sources because this sounded a bit outlandish even to someone who has listened to this podcast for years.

According to these sources and the doctors within them the meningitis the 19-year old contracted was most likely due to the young man living within a college dorm and being within physical contact of multiple individuals while unvaccinated but was currently in the process of getting to be so against meningitis. Where many or most colleges require a student to be vaccinated for fear of contraction.

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<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/02/27/metro/did-bad-leftovers-lead-new-england-teen-losing-his-legs-thats-ridiculous-doctors-say/>

about how LPOTL implements their values on the show, five out of eighty responses to the survey specifically noted how the hosts encourage them to search subjects on their own, always stay curious, and be a little skeptical when researching or hearing about complicated subject matter. The five out of eighty represented the most to mention a specific theme. The OP ended up citing the source material they found in their inquiry and explaining their reasoning behind coming to a different conclusion than that of the hosts and *Side Stories* episode. They also considered the new information and alternative viewpoints, a typical critical thinking response. The comments were also very interesting in OP's post. A Pediatric Physical Therapist also weighed in on the causes and reasoning for contracting meningitis, continuing the discussion to further readers' knowledge.

In the survey, eighty percent of users responded that they identify as a critical thinker, 1.2 percent responded no, and the rest were maybes and of the like. During the survey, three participants interjected their personal opinion about the survey in the open-ended questions. One participant critiqued the prompts and questioned how I would possibly compile and collate the responses into usable data. This type of response shows another prime example of the LPOTL influence on critical thinking because this participant considered the survey deeply and was trying desperately to understand the purpose.

### *Comradery Between the Hosts and Their Audience*

The relationships between the hosts create comradery amongst themselves and with their audience that is integral to their success. The audience can identify how caring

Zebrowski, Parks, and Kissel are with each other and that their relationship has transcended through their careers and throughout the fifteen years of the podcast. One

user responded, "the general chemistry of 'three old friends' appeals both to those attracted to para-social relationships but also

allows individuals a different way of accessing content that would otherwise be

difficult to approach" (A,6). This response adequately sums up the appeal of listening to a three-host podcast. If it were not for the

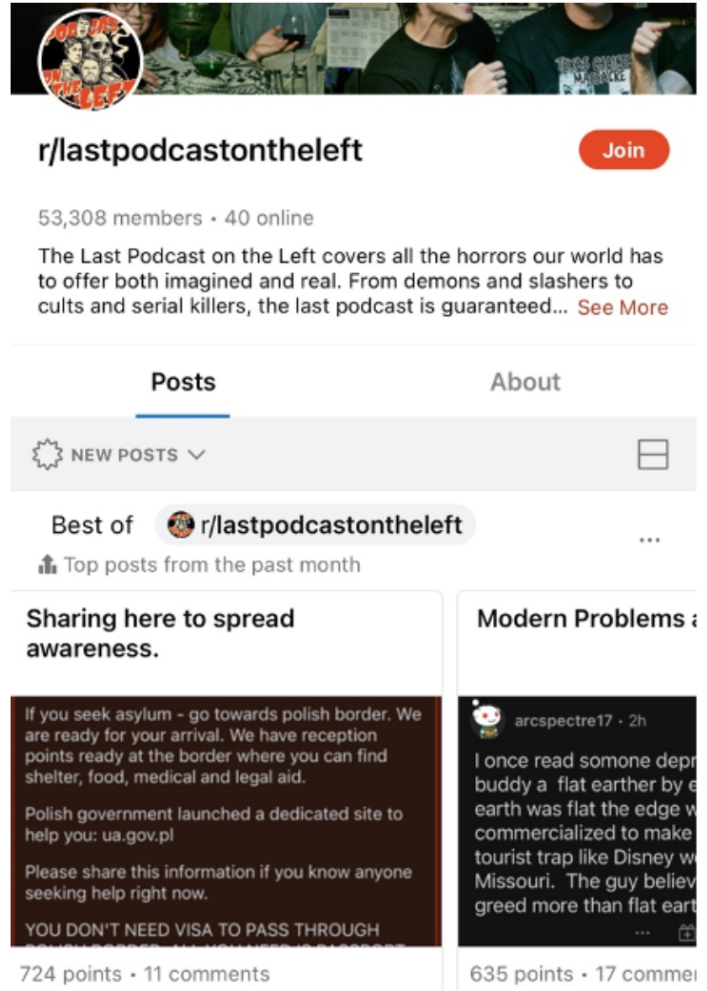
aspect of true friendship, the banter and talking over one another might be a significant negative factor for listeners. The comradery between the hosts translates

over to the Reddit page with kindness among the Reddit community. One survey

response showcased this through support. The user responded, "I posted on the LPOTL subreddit about a health problem and how Ben helped me get through it and got nothing

but sweet words and 'Hail yourselves' from everyone who commented." The previous example of the OP concerned with their family member who may be involved in a cult

showed this same level of care. The commenters gave beneficial advice for OP regarding how to help the family member and how OP needs to help themselves in order to best





handle the situation. An important value that LPOTL instills in their audience is a sign-off used during every episode. "Hail yourself" is the sign-off the hosts came up with to end each episode as a reminder. A reminder that one should be "taking the reins of life, claiming your own territory (while respecting that of others) shaping your own reality and stuff." I was quite lucky to find a Reddit thread in my observation timeline that specifically went into one of the core values LPOTL speaks on. Coined from "hail Satan", the term "hail yourself" came about during the early years of the podcast; none of the hosts state that they adamantly prescribe to any particular denomination, but they wanted to impart some words of wisdom that you should praise and respect yourself over a deity.

### *Advocacy*

The "best of" r/lastpodcastontheleft top posts of the month showed some insight into the advocacy present on the page. One of the first posts in the "best of" was a post on spreading awareness for Ukrainian citizens searching for border exits posted on February 2, 2022. LPOTL has many international listeners, and the Reddit page has patrons from all over the world. There were updates in English and Ukrainian within this post and information with multiple resources. In the discussion of the post, there was a deleted comment, to which a user replied, "this literally needs to be spread across as many subs as possible to try and spread to those who need it." illustrating the message that LPOTL fans are willing to call out unjust statements even if it is one of their own.

Although not every single community has the same values and ideals, most Reddit users follow the community's guidelines. An observation I came across on a post from March 5, 2022, discussed a member trying to elicit information and resources from the community.

They were fearful for their close family members and reached out to the community for opinions and guidance on handling cults, a heavily talked about issue on LPOTL. Multiple members engaged in the conversation with the OP. There were thoughtful and calculated responses on how to help OP with their family members and acknowledging how this can also affect OP's mental health. This response elicits critical thinking skills beyond typical resources, showing empathy and forethought about this situation and potential outcomes.

The LPOTL hosts are also involved in their advocacy for mental health awareness and organizations such as the Last Prisoner Project. When discussing mental health jokes, there is always a reoccurring follow-up that the hosts say: "your mental health is not your fault, but it is your responsibility." Addressing these issues also normalizes the common occurrences with listeners. Kissel, Parks, and Zebrowski also took a stance on criminal justice reform in regards to the Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act which is a bill proposed "to decriminalize and deschedule cannabis, to provide for reinvestment in certain persons adversely impacted by the War on Drugs, to provide for expungement of certain cannabis offenses, and for other purposes" (Last Prisoner Project, 2022). The creation of the Last Prisoner Project is a prime example of the hosts' core values. For the entirety of the podcast's run, the aim has been educating their listeners on the history of our society through comedy and storytelling; consequently, they found a gap in advocacy within our society. They were seeing murderers and rapists receive lesser criminal sentencing than individuals who had cannabis on their person. By acknowledging this discrepancy, they decided to act on it. They all value advocacy as a

tool for change within our criminal justice system. They live out their values around advocacy even if others disagree with them by openly talking about the injustices they see.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this paper I showcased the ways the LPOTL hosts use humor, advocacy, education, and comradery in order to combat the glorification of serial killers within the true crime realm. By observing, collecting surveys, and being a part of the LPOTL Reddit discourse community, my research supports the idea that if a podcast production team has set values and intentions it will sway their audience away from the idolization of true crime perpetrators. This is highlighted by the number of fans who adamantly detest the nature of infamous true crime figures. I set out to conduct this paper to find out how LPOTL differs from other podcasts in how their audience perceives their message. While true crime may always be an avenue for entertainment, with the correct production and influential hosts it will not end at entertainment. LPOTL leads by example with their advocacy efforts, call for criminal justice reform and how their audience receives and relays their values, in order to create a podcast that hosts an environment of success with their listeners by using strategies that invoke critical thinking across multiple themes.

There is a larger issue with our society on how we treat and react to true crime content. We still have a long way to go understanding why individuals who consume true crime content choose to fetishize serial killers instead of trying to enact change through advocacy and criminal justice reform. I chose podcasts specifically because I am

passionate about them, but there are so many media portrayals that should be researched. Unfortunately, since crime never stops, there will be endless content for producers in all media spaces; the sky is the limit for further research that can be conducted to replicate the values *Last Podcast on the Left* showcases on their platform.

## APPENDIX A: Survey Questions

1. What is your age?
2. Highest Level of Education Completed
3. How many podcasts do you listen to on average in a week?
4. Why do you listen to true crime podcasts?
5. Is LPOTL your favorite podcast?
6. What are your favorite aspects of LPTOL? Why do you keep listening?
7. What makes LPOTL unique to you compared to other true crime podcasts?
8. Why do you think the humor in LPOTL appeals to so many people?
9. Do you identify as a critical thinker?
10. Do you believe the LPOTL fanbase values critical thinking?
11. What about LPOTL makes you think critically of their content? What have you learned from their research?
12. In general, do you think true crime podcasts idolize or glorify serial killers, mass murderers, etc? Please explain.
13. In your opinion why do you think people fetishize serial killers, mass murderers, etc?
14. How do you feel about the stardom some serial killers have reached? For example, Ted Bundy and Richard Ramirez.
15. Would you consider LPOTL to have a toxic fandom?
16. Does LPOTL content make you want to get involved in advocacy?
17. What do you believe the values of LPOTL and the hosts are?
18. How does LPOTL create an environment that lends itself to success with its audience?
19. What strategies do you feel the hosts of LPOTL implement in order to show their values?

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## **Author Bio**

Malissa Brooks is currently a Junior finishing her Education major and Juvenile Justice minor. After finishing her bachelor's at Western Oregon University, she intends to enroll in a dual Masters of Social Work and Doctorate in Human Sexuality program. With a passion for true crime, social work, and sexuality studies, she hopes to follow a career path that will advocate for children experiencing abuse.