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[Intro]

Devin-Hey guys. Welcome to another episode of Thinking Sideways, the podcast. I am Devin, joined as always by...

Joe-Joe.

S-And Steve.

D-We're going to talk about a mystery today, unlike most days (Steve laughing). We're going to talk about the story of Andrew Gosden, who's a missing teenager. Well, he's not a teenager anymore, but, um, and before we get too far into it, because I'm really good at forgetting, this was a suggestion from, I think, Katrina, or Katerina. I am sorry, I don't know which one it is (Steve laughing).

J-Well.

D-But thanks for suggesting it.

S-Both of them.

D-Both of them, yeah.

J-Yeah, thanks guys.

D-And I know we've gotten suggestions for this in between the time that she suggested it.

S-Oh yeah.

D-But I didn't write any of the other names down, apparently.

J-Ah, damn it.

D-I know. Andrew Gosden was a normal 14 year old guy. He was a very bright young man, described as "quite the math genius" or a "quiet math genius," whichever.

J-Yeah.

D-Yeah. He had a hundred percent attendance record for school.

J-Except for this one time.

D-Well. He had won a number of national math competitions. And he was the kind of kid who would leave a note, um, pretty much if he just, like, went around the corner. I don't...were either one of you guys, neither of you guys were kids like that, right?

J-No.

D-I was a kid like that. I would leave a note for my parents if I left for any reason.

S-Yeah, I had to. But I usually had somebody at home, so it was easy.

D-Yeah. He was also really into heavy metal, and that's the description you'll hear about him. That's it.

J-Yeah, that's one of the frustrating things about this case...

D-Uh huh.

J-Is I don't really feel like I know much about Andrew.

D-I agree.

S-No, there's a very patent, or patent, what's the word I'm trying to say? Very pat description of him that is out there, and it is almost verbatim these four or five lines.

D-Yeah. When uh, um...so in the development marketing world, we call that a broilerplate [sic].

S-Boiler.

D-Nope. A broilerplate.

S-Broiler. Yes, you're right.

D-Where it's just, you know, three lines about this thing.

S-Yep.

D-That's what this is.

S-Yes.

D-And it's the only information that I can really find about this guy.

S-I know.

J-Yeah, I don't even know if he had friends. You would think...

D-I have no idea. I would assume so, but I don't know.

J-Probably.

D-On the morning of Friday, September 14, 2007, Andrew woke up a bit late and was grumpy, and his mom thought that was kind of odd. He was usually kind of awake on time and ready for school. But he got dressed in his uniform anyway and put his backpack on and left for school with his typical "Bye, see you later." I'm going to pause here to apologize. I am recovering from a cold (D and S laughing), so

if I sound a bit stuffy or weird, that's why.

S-[nasally]A little funny.

D-Sure. You're a jerk (D and S laughing).

S-No, you actually sound fine.

J-Actually, you sound all right. I wouldn't worry about it.

D-Ok. Well, to our listeners I'm sorry. All right, back to Andrew. After his parents left for work, Andrew actually returned home, and changed out of his uniform.

S-So he skipped around the block and basically hid for a bit.

D-Yeah. I don't know what he did in that time. I think it wasn't that long.

J-Hm. I heard that he went and sat in a park for a little while.

D-Yeah.

J-What's really sad about this is that Andrew's perfect attendance record was kind of ruined, by him doing this.

D-That's true, yeah.

J-Yeah.

D-Weird.

S-Well, there's only so many years when perfect attendance really matters.

D-That's true.

J-Uh huh.

S-I had it, as a kid.

D-No you didn't!

S-Oh, totally.

D-Did you?

J-Did you have perfect attendance at school?

S-I totally had perfect attendance for years in a row. I, well, you know me. I don't get sick.

D-Yeah.

S-And I never played hooky. And then one day, I was like, eh...

D-"I don't want to go anymore."

S-"I don't care anymore."

D-Yeah.

S-And so I started cutting class.

D-Well, and the rest was history.

S-Yeah.

J-Yeah. And that's why you're poor (Steve laughing).

D-Ok, so whether he went to a park or whether he just walked around the block a couple times, I actually, frankly, don't know how we would know really what he did.

J-Ok.

D-But anyway, he left the house for a little while and then he returned home, and he changed out of his uniform. He put the shirt and pants in the washer like he normally did when he came home from school, put his blazer on the back of his chair in his room like he normally did.

S-Cause he had a school uniform.

D-Yeah. Almost everybody in Britain has a school uniform, I think.

S-Yeah.

D-That's a thing, I think that's a thing there. Sorry, I don't mean to offend anybody if it's not (S and J laughing). But I think it is. So this is, he was following the typical thing that he would do when he was home from school. Which leads people to believe that he was trying to make it look like he had come home from school.

S-Right.

D-Right. At the end of school. He changed into a set of clothes that was kind of what I would say was his actual uniform (Steve laughing), you know there are people who have uniforms in this world.

S-Yes.

D-And it was a pair of jeans and a black t-shirt. It was a Slipknot t-shirt.

J-Slipknot the band.

S-The band, yes.

D-Yeah, cause he was really, really into Slipknot. He took his bag with him and left. And never returned home. Yeah, so that's our mystery.

J-Yeah.

D-Where he went.

J-Did he take his passport?

D-No, not as far as I know.

J-Yeah.

D-His parents reported that none of his clothes were missing, other than the jeans and t-shirt that he had worn. As well as it looked like his charger, he took his PSP with him, his portable Playstation with him. But it looked like he left the charger there. So that is meant...that bit of the story telling is meant to infer that he didn't pack an overnight bag, although, and we'll talk about this a little more when we get into the theories, which I know is everyone's favorite thing to hear from us. But I don't know that parents would necessarily notice if you had grabbed a couple extra Slipknot shirts...

S-I was going to say...

J-Yeah.

D-Or another pair of jeans.

S-...there was a bag, and the bag didn't look like it was empty, which makes me...

D-Yeah. It wasn't stuffed full, certainly.

S-No. It's not like he put all his worldly possessions into one bag.

D-Yeah.

S-But it did look like there was stuff in it, and mom and dad don't know what you have exactly.

D-Yeah. Although, if I was taking a PSP with me, I would probably take the charger.

S-Yeah.

D-Those chargers are expensive. They're like iPhone chargers. So it's not as though a 14 year old boy is necessarily going to have backups of that. Although maybe he did, and they just didn't know. Who knows.

J-Maybe.

S-I don't think that he thought about it.

D-Yeah.

J-He could have just forgot.

D-Yeah. So it wasn't until Andrew's mom asked his sister, Charlotte, who's also often referred to as Charlie, to call him for dinner that they realized he was missing. You know, since I mentioned, it seemed like he had just come home from school and, you know, was just in his room

S-Oh, so did...I...

D-I think he closed the door. That was the sense I had.

S-I was going to ask, again cause...

D-It's never explicitly said, but that was the sense I had.

S-I was going to say, yeah we don't know. Is he the kid that just always went upstairs right after school, dropped his clothes and shut the door.

D-Seems like it, yeah. So his mom and dad and sister started calling around to his friends, so he did have friends.

J-Apparently.

D-We never hear from them. And it sounds like they realized at that point that he hadn't actually been to school that day, which of course was very odd for him. They called the police immediately and reported him missing. Which I guess you can do. In the States I don't think...

S-24 hours.

D-I don't know what the age is.

S-No actually, for a minor, I don't think it's 24 hours.

D-I don't know, yeah. I don't know what the time limit is there. It wasn't until the following Tuesday that any leads emerged about where Andrew might have gone. An employee at the railway, an employee of the railway came forward and said that she remembered selling a ticket to Andrew to King's Cross Station.

J-In London, right?

D-In London, yeah. And she remembered him for two reasons. One was that she thought he was maybe a bit young to be going to London alone.

S-Because he, though...

D-He actually looked like he was probably about 12.

S-Yeah, he's 14, but he had...

D-Yeah, he looked young for his age.

J-He was pretty short too, right, for his age?

D-Yeah. He was 5' 3".

J-Yeah.

D-Yeah. So...

J-You're 5' 3", right?

D-I'm smaller than 5' 3" but not by much.

J-Ok.

D-So he was about my size, which you know, for a 13 [sic] year old boy, boys get tall at different ages, so it's not as though he would have maybe been short his whole life, but...

S-But he wasn't a big kid in general.

D-He wasn't a big kid. And he did look very young.

S-Yes, he was baby faced.

D-He did have a baby face, yeah. The other reason that the railway worker remembered Andrew was because she had mentioned that a round trip ticket back from London would actually just be fifty pence more, but he said that he just wanted the one way ticket.

J-Only fifty pence. Cause, I mean, the one way ticket was something ridiculous, like, right? Like sixty pounds or fifty pounds or something like that?

D-Uh, actually we don't have a number on that. We have some inferences on how much it might have cost, but I don't know that I've ever seen anywhere that explicitly said...

S-Because the rates change.

D-Yeah.

S-The rates are variable and it's seven...

D-And we'll talk about this all in the...

S-Actually, it's nine years now.

D-Yeah, so we'll talk about all this in the theories, as well, also as to why he might have declined that offer. His path to the train station became pretty clear actually. He had walked from his home in Doncaster to the railway station, also in Doncaster. And it's about a 20 minute walk, which figures pretty solidly into the time line of the events of the morning. And he actually stopped on the way at an ATM and took out 200 pounds of his, out of his savings account. And there's obviously a transaction, a receipt for that transaction.

S-Right.

D-So they were able to find that out through the bank, that he did in fact do that. And reports differ on this, if that actually drained his savings account or if it was just 200 pounds out of his savings account. On the website that his parents run, it says that he drained his account, but in other, fairly credible retellings of the story that I would say, it said that he just took 200 pounds out of his account.

J-That might have been the daily limit, too.

D-That it was nearly...yeah.

S-Well, he did withdraw 200 pounds, whether he drained it or not, that's maybe why it's stated that way, I don't know.

D-Yeah, so I guess for me it's just a small clarification that I wish we had.

S-Yep. There's a lot of them.

D-I guess I'm willing to say that if his parents' website says it drained his account, then it drained his account. But then that brings up more questions to me about some other stuff we found out later. Either way, there was a woman on the train who came forward much later, I think like a month later, and said that she recalled him being on the train, quietly playing his Playstation around 9:35 am on the train from Doncaster to London, that morning.

J-Doncaster's about, what, 80, 100 miles from London? Something like that.

D-It's about an hour and a half long train ride.

S-It's about a three hour car drive.

J-Oh, ok.

D-So, all of the times...I should just stop to say that up until we lose track of Andrew, all of the times of what happened up until then totally match up. There's not a question in anyone's mind that this isn't what happened, because it's all exactly, the times are always perfect.

S-It stitches together.

D-Yeah, it's seamless. So 27 days later, investigators were finally able to find three frames of Andrew at King's Cross at 11:20 am, which is when that train arrived in London on September 14<sup>th</sup>. And he was leaving the station. All of the other CCTV from the area had been wiped by that point. And it's the last confirmed sighting of Andrew, like, ever.

S-And it was wiped because nobody maintains that kind of record indefinitely. They have to cycle...

J-Yeah.

D-It was wiped.



S-...through the tapes.

D-Yeah. And I actually was just going to talk about a few other things before that, but we can just talk about that now. The CCTV in London has an automatic 30 day data override.

S-Uh huh.

D-They obviously don't publicize when this happens.

J-Well, I don't think, I think it happens every day, yeah.

S-Every day.

D-Right, so but it's not clear to me...I believe that's the case but in some of the tellings people seem to be under the impression that every 30 days it just wipes the last 30 days.

S-That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard.

J-Yeah, I know, that's ridiculous.

D-Thank you for quoting me (Steve laughing).

J-Because there are people out there who say stuff on the internet. It's like, "How did Andrew know that they were about to delete all that stuff?"

D-That's exactly it, right, yeah.

J-He's a smart kid, but...

D-People are like "Oh, he timed it." That's what I was going to bring up, that you'll see in a lot of stuff on the internet that somebody says "Oh yeah, he timed it perfectly, so that he knew the tapes were gonna be deleted just that day, so it was perfect timing."

J-Just right after he walked by.

S-That's somebody who doesn't understand how data is recorded and stored.

D-Yeah. Well, so the only thing I guess that's a little frustrating is that they did discover those three frames 27 days later, which would have given them three days to say "Hey, everybody with CCTV footage from around this area, we need to see it now!"

S-Well, they might not have discovered the footage. They may have gotten the footage and then had to comb through it, and by the time they combed through it and found him, it had already passed 30 days. In other words, on the 27<sup>th</sup> day, they pulled, they got all the footage, and then when they'd gotten the chance to go through it all and figured out he was there...

D-Sure.

S-...several days had passed and it was too late.

D-Yeah, the way that I always read it is that on the 27<sup>th</sup> day they found these three frames. So, you know, to me, again, it's one of the tiny little frustrating things about this case, that it's like, well, c'mon guys, just...

J-It would have been nice if they'd preserved some of that. At least...

D-It would have been. It would have probably solved a lot of this stuff.

J-Yeah. If they had at least preserved something for say, even a couple hundred yards around the station, you know.

D-Uh huh.

J-Well, I mean, that would have been nice.

D-Well, I guess, I guess the question really for me is that it only took them three days to find out that Andrew was headed to King's Cross, so why weren't they immediately saying "Oh, there's a lot of CCTV around there. We should probably look at it."

J-Yeah.

D-Three days later. When there's definitely no chance of it ever having been wiped.

S-Well, no. When did the rail employee come forward?

D-Three days later. The Tuesday after he disappeared.

S-She was the person, ok.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah, so that would have been, yeah. Probably would have...

D-Pretty helpful, yeah.

S-But I...ok, I know that London is one of the most surveilled cities out there, but I don't know that all the CCTV systems are operated by the same organizations. They may have different time frames for how long they keep their data. Do you know what I'm saying? Like...

J-Yeah.

S-One group may say "We only keep a week's worth, and then we start recycling."

D-That's true. Yeah.

S-So even the rail station...

D-Well, even three days later...

S-So the rail station might have been one that said “Well, we keep it long term” and that's the only way they dug it up. But I don't know.

D-Yeah, but...for me again, it's the three days. Why in three days did they not just say “Hey, everyone, this might be helpful.” (Steve laughing).

J-I know. Preserve that.

D-Yeah.

J-There's a guy on one webpage that, I suspect he was British, that said “With all these Orwellian cameras all over the place, they still can't get any useful information. Why do we have this crap?”

D-Yeah (S and J laughing). I mean, that's such a good point to bring up.

J-Yeah.

D-Yeah. Most people say, and I've never been to King's Cross station and I don't have a good sense of where these three frames are taking place or anything like that, but they say that it vaguely looks like Andrew's headed to the area where you would pick up a taxi out of King's Cross. But also, taxis go on the street, so it's also possible he was just exiting to the street.

S-I was going to say, Tube stations always just spill right out onto the street, so I, it's hard to draw much from that.

D-Absolutely, yeah. But you'll see that around, and it does kind of pertain to some of the theories that are out there. There are some oddities in this case, and we're just going to bullet point them out cause I think that's the easiest way to approach them. One of them was the CCTV that we've already covered. Another one is that Andrew had about one hundred pounds in cash that he'd been given for various holidays that was found left in his room. So for me, that's kind of a big question mark, especially if he withdrew all of the money from his savings account.

J-Uh huh.

D-Why wouldn't you take that extra hundred pounds?

J-Well, I think it does sorta...

D-If you needed all of the money you could possibly get your hands on.

J-Yeah, it does kind of shoot a hole in the theory that he left to start a new life theory, you know.

D-Yeah, that would be silly. That you would only do it with 200 pounds if you could have 300 pounds, why not?

J-Yeah, and I don't mean to give away our secret theories, but as everybody know by now, any time somebody disappears...

D-That's a theory.

J-...from age two upward, it's "Oh yeah, he crawled off to start a new life. He was only two years old."  
Yeah (laughing).

D-Yeah.

J-So you know that things going to be out there.

S-Crafty baby.

D-The next kind of oddity, I guess, is that Andrew might have had a cell phone. I was never really clear on if he had a cell phone or not, cause I did see some things saying that he never really used his phone, but I also saw a lot stuff saying that he didn't have a cell phone, so.

S-I was looking at the stuff from the family site this morning, and it said that he didn't.

D-Ok, great. That makes things a little easier (Steve laughing). But he did have access to a computer. Again, I'm not clear, I think there was a computer in his room, that was the sense that I had, but again, I don't know that for sure. I guess I just assumed that because, I don't know, it was 2007, that's about when kids started kind of locking themselves in their rooms and chatting to people online and things like that. But I don't know.

S-I got the impression it was a shared family computer, but...

D-Yeah, that's also possible. Again, he just definitely had access to a computer, for sure. The investigators did search that computer and they found nothing.

J-Were there computers at his school that he went to?

D-Yes. But they also searched those.

J-Oh, they did?

D-I believe.

J-And also, I know public libraries, at least here in the States, all have lots of computers.

D-Uh huh.

J-Is it similar in Britain?

D-Yeah. It's tricky cause in 2007, I mean, computers were pretty prevalent but still not...

S-They were still everywhere.

D-I mean...

S-They were boxes, they weren't laptops.

D-Yeah.

S-There were desktop computers everywhere.

D-And it was all, like...yeah, that's true. I have a hard time remembering 2007 (Steve laughing).

J-Yeah, me too.

D-Yeah.

S-No, there would have been computers everywhere.

D-Oh yeah, there would have been computers everywhere. I was in college in 2007. Yeah, there were computers everywhere.

S-Yes, so to answer your question, Joe, I would imagine that there would be computers in their library, but I don't know to what degree.

J-Yeah.

S-Like now I go to the library here and they're everywhere.

D-It's almost all computers.

J-Yeah.

S-Ten years ago there was three to a floor, or something like that.

J-Uh huh, yeah.

D-Yeah.

J-They've gotten a lot cheaper, for one thing.

D-Yeah, they have. So the investigators said they didn't find anything.

S-And they did have their computer forensic guys, whatever you want to call that, I know they went through it. So it wasn't just some cop clicking through the back button on the browser.

D-Yeah. But, ok, so private browsing was around as early as 2005. Tor networks have been around forever. Andrew was a really bright kid, and he was a teenage boy, so it's super likely that he knew how to keep his browsing history private.

J-Well, you probably want to do that.

D-Yeah.

J-Even if you have your own computer, you probably want to do that.

D-Yeah. I would say yes.

J-Yeah.

D-Yeah. Steve looks like he's concerned about this.

S-What, I...I am. There's some things about the descriptions of Andrew in general that I think twist this story. And so I'm really concerned when you say "It's super likely that he knew how to do that." He may have, he may not have. I mean, it's a fifty-fifty split.

D-Sure. I guess...

S-I mean, he was an intelligent kid.

D-...I'm just saying that, like, in the scope of 14 year olds in this world, he is on the much more likely spectrum of knowing how to do things like that than, say, I don't know, a 14 year old girl in suburban midwest.

S-I don't think that's true, actually.

D-That is dumb (S and J laughing). I don't know. I mean I hear you...

S-I'm not saying that he wouldn't have it but I don't want to cast it as he was a computer genius.

J-Yeah.

D-No, I don't want to cast it that way either, but I just, he was a smart young man.

S-Yes, absolutely.

J-That we actually really know nothing about.

D-Yeah, we really don't.

S-That's where I always like, I feel like we're walking this weird edge.

D-Sure.

S-With the descriptions of him because we've got so little.

D-That's fair. Yeah. I, I...he's just a smart young man, and my understanding of 14 year old boys and their browsing habits are that it's something that you might want to keep from your parents.

J and S-Oh yeah.

D-So you would, like, figure out how to hide that pretty quick probably. Yeah.

S-Oh yeah.

J-Yeah, when I was 14 I didn't have any browsing habits.

D-Uh huh.

J-Yeah.

D-You did, actually. It was like, called free HBO or something like that (Steve laughing).

J-Oh yeah.

S-Those magazines.

D-The like, really grainy...

S-You hid them under the mattress.

J-Yeah, that's true.

D-Uh yeah, the, like...

S-Yeah.

D-The Victoria's Secret ads you get. Yeah.

J-Hm, yeah. Dad's Playboys (Steve laughing).

D-Uh huh. Anyway...

S-Back when they had naked people in them.

J-Yeah.

D-I will agree with you that it may be overstating, but I will also say that he was a smart 14 year old boy so he probably knew, whether it was to the extent that it could be hidden, cause private browsing, there's still a record of that. You can still find stuff like that if you're a computer forensic scientist. So.

S-Can we, do you mind if at this point we go into something else, which is some of the descriptions of Andrew that I really have been concerned about everywhere I've read it?

J-Oh, ok.

D-Sure.

S-Which is that he's a math genius.

D-Ok.

S-Again, everything says he was good at math. I'm not questioning his aptitude, he competed in competitions, and I think he was in the intermediate level, which is for kids between the ages of 12 to 15.

D-Uh huh.

S-And he did well, but that doesn't mean that he was a genius. He was good at math, but that's one of the things I keep reading online. It's almost like, you remember, was it Dorothy Arnold where you were reading, Joe, and in the forums her family was mean to her, and then it just progressively grew to pure cruelty?

J-Yeah.

D-Uh huh.

J-It got to the point that they're all going "I just can't blame," they'd totally convinced themselves. It's hilarious to watch.

S-And as I've read stuff from the beginning, and then moving towards now, his genius level math skills have grown that very same way. I mean, I've read stuff from his teachers who say "He could do stuff, he could do certain equations in his head and other kids couldn't do it." So he obviously had a math aptitude, but again, that doesn't make him some kind of genius.

D-I guess for, I would...

S-He's a very smart kid.

D-I guess I would say that he may have been a genius, but he certainly wasn't a savant, you know? He wasn't, like, a prodigy. But he may have been really, really good. I think for me genius means, like, much better than children of his age. Right?

S-Correct. I would agree with that.

D-Versus he was a genius and he was talking college level...you know, it's not Good Will Hunting, right (Steve laughing).

J-No. I think that, no, I don't think that he was particularly advanced, right. He wasn't taking stuff way beyond his age.

D-No. I just think he was way better than other children his age.

S-Than the kids around him.

J-Yeah.

S-So again, that's another thing I want to bring in is that the descriptions have evolved over time, I've watched.

J-Uh huh.

D-Yeah, yeah. I'll buy it. Uh, one of the other things you'll see a lot is that he definitely wasn't being bullied, but that comes from his parents, and I'm not a hundred percent sure that I, that you can trust what parents say.



J-Yeah.

D-Not because I think that they are maliciously saying “No, he definitely wasn't being bullied.” But I think that parents just might not know.

J-Yeah. He probably wouldn't go home and tell his parents that stuff.

D-Yeah.

J-And also...

S-Yeah, he walks up to his locker and the bully walks by and shoves him in every class period.

D-Yeah.

S-He's not going to tell them that. It's embarrassing.

J-I saw one bulletin board out there where people were discussing it. There was a guy who claimed he went to the same school.

D-Uh huh.

S-I can't remember that.

J-I think he was, like, a year ahead or behind. And he said he was not aware of actually any bullying. He said that Andrew was not one of the cool kids, so he did catch a little bit of crap, but he said it wasn't really bad.

D-Yeah. Well, but you never know how kids are gonna react to stuff like that. You know, it's really easy as a teenager to, as a preteen or a teenager to build things like that really out of proportion.

J-Uh huh.

D-And you know, that's not to say that's what was happening. It's not to say he was absolutely being bullied, but also it's to say that take it with a grain of salt when his parents say absolutely there was no chance he was remotely being bullied, cause I don't know, he probably was a little bit (laughing).

S-Every kid gets bullied to some degree.

D-Every kid gets a little bullied.

J-Yeah, it does happen, yeah.

D-Yeah. Andrew had a very, very heavy prescription in his glasses, as though, like, he was almost blind without his glasses.

J-Like Coke bottle glasses.

D-Yeah. So he needed his glasses, or at least contacts, but he would have had to have gotten contacts,

cause he never had contacts in his life. He also had a very unique ear. Did you guys, you guys looked at pictures of this, right?

S-Oh yeah.

J-Yeah.

D-It's very interesting. They describe it as a double ridge on his right ear, and I can't really describe it.

S-I don't know how to describe it either.

D-I...just look it up?

S-Yes.

D-Literally if you Google 'double ridge ear' pictures of his ear will come up first. It's the first ones.

J-How often does that happen?

D-It's incredibly rare.

J-Yeah.

D-It's really, really, really rare. And a lot of people seem to leave that out in the tellings and descriptions of him, so people think "Oh, he was a 14 year old boy, he could disappear to anywhere." Not mentioning that there's this very distinct feature on him.

J-Well...

S-Ears are also really hard to identify by. It's not like you can see that on somebody 20 yards away.

J-Well, and didn't he wear his hair kind of long?

S-He did.

D-Yeah, absolutely.

J-To cover the ears.

D-I just mean, it'd be hard for him to be carrying on a totally new life with nobody having noticed. "Oh hey, this guy has a weird ear. Oh, I've heard that there was a boy that was missing that has a weird ear too."

S-Maybe.

D-It's worth mentioning.

S-Yeah. No, no, no, the ear's definitely unique.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah, so, you know, if you happen to spot a guy, how old would he be now? He'd be about, uh...

D-He would be 23.

J-23? 23.

D-23.

J-Yeah, if you spot a guy with a funny ear anywhere in the world, cause who knows, he could be anywhere.

D-Yeah.

J-If he's still alive, let us know. Don't tell the police.

D-Tell us, not the police. Yeah.

J-Yeah. Exactly.

D-Next up in the weirdness category, a ticket from Doncaster to London isn't cheap. Right now it's anywhere from 65 to 100 pounds from what I could gather. It was likely about ten percent cheaper, I think that's what the kind of inflation has been calculated at. But still, that's a lot of money, and because of the time that Andrew was on the train, it would have been considered peak hours.

S-High commuter time.

D-So actually they call it 'super peak hours' or 'super off peak hours.' That's a thing (Steve laughing). I went to the train website and I, like, really thought that there was a troll thing happening because it said 'super off peak' and I was like "What do you mean, 'super off peak?'" Got it. Cool." So they would have been the most expensive tickets, basically.

S-Uh huh. Yeah.

D-Which means that he would have not had a whole lot of money left over when he hit London.

S-If it was a 90 pound ticket then he'd have 110 pounds left.

D-Yeah, 110 pounds, which doesn't go far in London.

J-Not really.

S-No.

D-And one last thing in the weirdness category worth a quick mention, is that I've read vague things that suggest Andrew might have had family living in London, maybe a grandmother or maybe someone else. The family has made vague mention of some family, the actual close family has made some vague mention of maybe some family that lives in London, but never explicitly said anything.

J-Why haven't they said anything?

D-That's a good question.

J-Yeah.

D-Yeah. One would assume that they have ruled out their involvement at all, so they just don't think it's worth dragging these people in to the whole mess, but I don't know. It's a good question and one that I don't really have a good answer for. So yeah.

J-In the meantime, Andrew is still gone. Andrew, if you're listening, give us a call.

D-Yeah, yeah.

S-What's that phone number again, Joe?

J-Yeah. Uh, send us an email.

D-Uh, yeah. Send us an email, yeah. You want to get into theories?

S-I think we should.

D-Ok.

J-Let's do.

D-So, to start off with the theories, along with the seamless time line of Andrew getting to London, everyone agrees that Andrew went willingly or semi-willingly, to London.

S-Yeah, he didn't look like he was under duress at all.

D-There is no, yeah, and there is no sense of that being suspicious at all. The reasons why he went to London may be suspicious, but that seems to be a thing that everyone agrees on. I mentioned that Andrew was into metal, right?

J-Yeah, you did.

D-Yeah.

S-That is, again, one of those things that's broilerplate [sic], yeah.

D-Yeah. His parents describe him as goth. I wouldn't consider, from what I've seen I wouldn't consider him goth. I would just consider him to be a fan of heavy metal, but his parents were super Christian, so they may be a little confused.

S-Ok.

D-I mean, he seemed like a metal head to me, not a goth.

S-Yeah, I would agree with that.

J-I've only seen, like, one or two pictures, well, a couple of pictures of him, and he, yeah, doesn't look like a goth to me.

D-Yeah. Not to me either, but hey, there you go. We can't discriminate against goths (Steve laughing).

J-Oh no.

S-It's true.

D-As I understand it, the metal slash goth community in London is pretty close knit, so I've seen a lot of stuff online with people saying that you could probably ask pretty much anyone in that community if they had heard of a youngish boy trying to join that community. But again, I don't think that's probably the case. I think that's probably an over exaggeration of how close knit any group of people are. And we actually looked into a lot of the bands that were playing. We did our research. Oh my gosh, surprise (Steve laughing).

J-Well, at least you did.

S-Yeah, talk about boring. Clicking through the show listings.

D-I know, for real. Even on the Wayback Machine, it was like, oh, these websites didn't exist. Ok, fine. Gotta go back all the way. Fine. Actually, some of this came from the suggestion of one of our listeners named Anthony, so I want to thank him for his help in this matter. There's this band that's called SikTh (attempting to pronounce name) "sicketh," "sickth."

S-"Sixth."

J-I think it's "sixth."

D-"Sickth."

J-"Sixth."

D-It's not "sixth." It's "sickth." Like sick people.

S-We all sound so dumb right now.

J-Yeah.

D-Like how, yeah, it's uh, s-i-k-T-h.

J-Yeah, let's call them "sick."

D-I'm going to call them "sickth." They are a progressive metal rock band that's often called a mathcore group. And mathcore is a particular kind of hardcore metal that is also part of the math rock genre. Both mathcore (stumbles over words) and math rock, I'm having a hard time with my "th's" right now, I'm sorry.

J-I didn't even know there was such a thing as math rock.

D-Yeah. They make use of unusual time signatures in their song composition. I have a pretty cool quote here. One critic, who I'm going to quote (Steve laughing), describes this style of music as, quote, "Dynamic, violent, discordant, technical, brutal, off-kilter, no rules mixture of hardcore metal, prog, math rock, grind and jazz." Unquote.

J-Well.

S-So take all music, throw it in a blender...

D-Uh huh.

S-And that's it.

D-And turn it on, with a fork.

S-Yes.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah. I'm confused.

D-That's it. Um, I actually, I listened to some of SikTh's music (stumbles over name, laughing). I can't say it.

S-I tried too.

D-And I did not care for it. Maybe cause I'm sick. Ha ha ha.

J-Ha.

S-Yeah, it's definitely, it's a very distinct style of music.

D-It is.

S-But I've never been a real metal fan.

D-Well, I think I probably would have liked it when I was a teenager. You know, again part of it is maybe because, like, my head hurts really bad, so I (laughing), grindy, loud music is maybe not the best in my brain right now. But I definitely can see the appeal of it, particularly to somebody who was into metal. And then, I don't know, I'm not into math, like, at all, so I don't know if that's a thing that factors into people who like mathcore or math rock, if having an understanding of math gives you a heightened appreciation for that music. I don't know.

S-I've never had a math or musical aptitude so I can't say.

D-Yeah. And I don't know, I think that...yeah, I don't know either way. But it's an interesting extra facet to this whole bit.

J-Yeah, I'll have to listen to it. I've got pretty good math aptitude, actually, so. I'll listen to it and see.

D-Anyway, SikTh is from Warford (stumbles over name)...

S-Watford.

J-Watford.

D-Watford, thank you. In Hertfordshire.

J-Is that pronounced "hairfordshire?"

S-"Hairfordshire."

D-"Hairfordshire." They formed in 1999. In May of 2007 they announced that two of the vocalists would be leaving the group after the conclusion of their summer 2007 tour, and conveniently the final show of this tour was at the Carling Academy in London, on...

S-Which is an O2 club.

D-Yeah, it's an O2 club, one of the, like, 20 in London.

S-Yeah.

D-And it was on, you guessed it, September 14, 2007. The Carling Academy is less than a mile from King's Cross Station, which means it would have been a 20 minute or less walk, so pretty walkable, really. The tickets for this venue range, but it's pretty cheap, actually.

S-Yeah. It's the low budget O2 location.

D-Yeah. Even now tickets for a similar SikTh show, because they actually reunited in 2013, so they had a show there in 2014, and the tickets for that were less than 20 pounds. So even, and then, you know, I looked at a lot of the other ones, and it seemed like there wasn't a single ticket that went for more than 20 pounds there, even with the service charge and all that stuff. I'm willing to say that it was...

S-They were cheap.

D-It was really cheap, so he would have certainly had money for this ticket if some were available.

S-And then a bunch of money left over for beer.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah. Absolutely.

D-As a 12 year old, 14, 14 year old boy who looks like he's 12. Yeah.

S-Yeah.

J-Yeah.

S-Totally going to work out.

D-So, and actually that's the thing that I run into the most here, is that concert venues like this typically have age restrictions on them, so you know, maybe it's an 18 and over, maybe it's 21 and over, or maybe it's an all ages, but they certainly don't admit all ages just no matter what. It's all ages with an adult.

S-Eight is the youngest that can go into that venue.

D-But they have to have...

S-And it's from, I think it was from 8 to 14 has to be, has to have an adult with them.

D-Huh. Interesting.

S-Cause I looked up their policies...

D-Yeah.

S-...on it. So he couldn't have just gotten in by showing up with 20 pounds at the door.

D-Right. Yeah. Well and particularly because, like, so then there are other extra age restrictions on certain shows. So every show I've ever seen, cause I looked at a lot of different venues for SikTh's concerts, and it's all 18 and over. Or, 14 and over, 14 to 18 with an adult.

J-But of course, he might have actually known an adult in London that would go to the show with him.

D-Well, so yeah, and we can talk about that.

S-Or he might have just befriended somebody in line.

D-Yeah.

J-Could have done that too. True.

D-So the other thing that I run into here is that this show was actually a rescheduled show. I don't know when it was originally scheduled for, but they had not originally intended to play on that night, at that venue.

S-How far in advance, do you know?

D-I don't know.

S-Oh, ok.

D-I do not know.



S-I never saw that, so.

D-I didn't either, yeah. But I think that's an interesting little thing to throw in there as well. But it is reasonable to assume that anybody at that time would have thought that this was SikTh's last show ever, so...

S-If they say they're quitting after that, you presume that's their last show.

D-You just assume, yeah.

J-Yeah.

S-Even though musicians always say...

D-Always get back together.

S-..."That's it, I quit. Until next year."

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah. I could see the motivation there, if he really liked these guys a lot.

D-Yeah. Well, and there were a number of other concerts that have been suggested in London on that night.

S-Uh huh.

D-I mean, it's not as though the music scene is lacking in London. All of the other...I would say that this concert in particular is the best option if he was going to a concert. All the other ones that I saw were like, alt rock that were also a 20 minute car ride away from King's Cross Station, or...

S-But bear in mind, he wasn't completely and wholly dedicated to metal. I mean, his dad talks about the fact that he took him to a Muse concert not too long before.

D-Well, Muse is pretty metal.

S-I don't consider Muse that metal at all.

D-Really?

S-Yeah. They're very tame compared to, like, Slipknot...

D-Slipknot.

S-...and some of those guys. So I wouldn't, I wouldn't say he was only into the hardcore stuff. He was a boy who liked what he liked.

D-Yeah, but I also guess I wouldn't, I would say that Muse is solidly, like, a rock band, versus like...

S-Yeah, I would call them a rock band, not a metal band.

D-Yeah, but there's also, most of the other stuff that was found was, like, alternative rock, which is, like, adult soft rock (S and J laughing). You know, like Coldplay.

S-Easy listening (laughing).

D-Coldplay is alternative rock, right.

S-Yeah.

D-So, that's not, that didn't seem like it was his scene as much, and they were much harder to get to.

S-I would agree with that, yeah.

D-This, I listened to this music, it seemed like it was totally the kind of music that he was into. He thought it was their last show. It was really, really convenient from King's Cross, because that's the other thing too, right? That maybe, like, there are train stations that are closer to the other venues that he could have gotten tickets to. He could have stayed on the train longer to get off more conveniently, whereas this one, King's Cross, was the most convenient station.

S-To that particular venue.

D-To that particular venue, yeah. Although he also had hours.

S-Yeah, he had a day to kill.

D-Like half a day, yeah.

S-Cause the show, it was an evening show.

D-Yeah, it wasn't until seven or something like that.

J-Uh huh.

D-Maybe even nine. I don't have the actual time, but that's when the shows usually start.

S-Which is what boggles me when it comes to the "he was going to a show" theory. Because obviously he traveled at, what was it, super high peak time. Ok, well if you know the show's not going to be until seven o'clock at night, and it's an hour...

J-Catch a later train, yeah.

S-Yeah.

J-Yeah.

S-Or go dink around in town for a couple of hours.

J-Well, he might have had something to do in London before seeing the band.

D-That's true. He also, I don't know if, I don't know what his parent's jobs entailed, or his sister, for instance, or if he thought, you know, if you're a kid who's literally never bumped off school, right? You don't know. Your first day skipping class, you're going to think, "I am going to get caught." You don't know, you might run into your parents, you might run into your parent's friends, you might run into another kid who's going to tell. So it would make sense to me that he would be trying to get out of town as fast as possible, because it's way less likely that somebody in London is gonna say "Oh hey, aren't you supposed to be in school?"

J-Ok.

S-That kid's obviously been caught.

D-I mean, I remember the first time I skipped school, and I was terrified. I really thought I was going to get caught. And then, you know, it gets easier as you do it more (Joe laughing), and then you just keep doing it more and more and more.

S-Not that we're advocating skipping school.

D-No no no, don't skip school, please. Stay in school.

J-Yeah. Stay in school.

D-But...

J-It's a good idea. Don't get pregnant, either.

D-So that would make sense to me, is that maybe he, cause he kind of seemed like the kind of kid who might have been a little nervous about something like that.

S-Yeah.

D-So I guess that would be a reason why he would try to leave as early as possible.

J-Yeah. I think that the thing I like about this theory is that it explains a lot.

D-Yeah.

J-I think what happened was he was befriended by the band. He went back to their room later and partied, and they were doing huge lines of blow...

D-Uh huh.

J-And he'd never done that before, and his heart gave out. So the band hid the body.

D-Yeah. That makes sense.

J-And they probably wrote a song about it. If you listen to their songs there's probably one song on

there that's got some coded messages about how they disposed of the body.

D-Probably.

J-Yeah, ok, I'm just kidding.

S-And that's Joe's Scooby Doo theory.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah.

D-So it's possible that Andrew was on a chat and met somebody online. It's possible that he was part of a forum that was a fan club for SikTh or some other band, or just, you know, metal enthusiasts in general. And, you know, maybe he planned a meeting from there. Maybe he met some guys online or some people online, and they said "Yeah, man. This show's happening. I got tickets for you. You want to come meet me in London?" And he was like "Yeah, absolutely I'll come meet you guys in London." Even though that's, like, super nerve wracking and totally out of character. "I'm going to come meet you guys." So he came early, he met them, they all went to the concert venue together. Maybe it turns out that the people he was supposed to meet, or the person he was supposed to meet, were actually not who, how they represented themselves, which is in a different theory. But, you know, it would also explain why he didn't buy a return ticket, in that the two questions for me on the return ticket are the 50 pence ticket, was it open ended or did you have to pick a time? Right?

S-Same day.

D-Right, but did you have to pick a time? Cause they have both of those as return options.

S-Ok. So if you, if you get the, uh, super peak, is that what it is?

D-Uh huh.

S-Super peak is not, and you get your return ticket, the return ticket is 50p if it's not an open ended time.

D-Right. So...

S-It's much more expensive when you just say "I'm going to get on a train," and they're that same day.

D-Right. And so that, to me, makes me think that he didn't really know when he was going to be coming home. Which would corroborate going to a concert you don't know...

S-The last train left London at 11:30.

D-Yeah.

S-11:35.

D-Yeah.

J-Uh huh.

D-So but maybe you don't really know when you're going to want to go home, or maybe since you're meeting some friends there, maybe they say "Oh yeah, my friend can, he's got a car, so he can, he's going to be headed your way so he'll drive you back your way." And so you think why waste a crazy amount of money for the later ticket.

J-Uh huh.

D-Or you know, maybe the 50 pence one was, yeah, if you return at 5:00, it's 50 pence, and he was like "Well, the concert won't even have started by then." So to me, that helps to corroborate that story a little bit.

S-Uh huh.

D-As an idea. That specific, that really just addresses why he would have gone to London. It doesn't really address why he never came back from London. But I think it's a strong possibility of why he went to London.

J-Yeah.

S-I can see the "I was going to get a ride from somebody," but it's such a long drive.

D-Yeah.

S-It's just, I mean, if he left late enough that he couldn't catch the last train...

D-Well, but he, it's possible that he could have, but that's what I'm saying. So he would have had to buy an open ended ticket.

S-Uh huh.

D-As a return ticket.

S-Right.

D-Which would have been really, really, expensive, probably more expensive than just going and buying the ticket when you're trying to return, cause then it's an at time ticket. And then that the, or that the 50 pence return ticket was for a specific time that wasn't the time that he wanted to return.

S-Correct. Yeah, the 50p was probably for a certain duration.

D-But it could have been that that didn't apply to the 11:30 train, it only applied to the 5:00 train. So it would have been way more expensive anyway to get that later train.

S-No, I can see how it could have been, you know, it could have taken the other half of his money.

D-So that helps to explain why he would have not gotten the return ticket as well. Cause it may have just been cheaper in the end to walk up to the kiosk and say "ok, I'm ready to go."

S-Uh huh.

J-Ok.

D-Instead of buying, prebuying it.

J-Huh.

D-So I guess maybe we should talk about maybe why he didn't come back.

J-Yeah. I have some ideas along those lines.

D-Yeah, I do too. One of the theories is that he was lured to London by a stranger.

J-Yeah, he met a perv online.

D-Yeah. It's possible that while Andrew seemed to have been a smart kid, at least at math, he could have just been pretty naïve, like most 14 year olds are.

S-I would believe that.

D-Especially in 2007, you don't necessarily think, I mean, it was still a thing, like there were bad people online, but that wasn't a thing that you really thought about as much. I didn't, and I was much older, and I am much older than Andrew, and you know, even in 2007 I wasn't necessarily thinking "Oh, there are bad people online and I don't want to meet them." You know? So that's part of it. Although I never, like, met anybody that I met online in real life, cause I'm not dumb, but he was 14.

J-Yeah.

S-Even as an adult at that time, I didn't believe anything that people said online.

D-Right. Because you're smart.

J-Oh yeah.

S-Because it was total, you knew it was bull.

D-Right, but when you're 14, it doesn't seem as bull-y.

S-True.

J-Well, and it might be, you know, it might be too that, you know, Andrew was smart enough to, like, you know, want to meet this guy in a public place, or maybe he didn't even know it was a guy. Maybe he thought it was a woman.

D-Yeah.

J-Or a girl.

S-Gender bending. Somebody's portraying themselves as one sex and is actually the other.

D-Uh huh. That still happens.

S-That's super common.

J-Yeah.

D-Yeah, it is.

J-And then he gets to the appointed place and there's no girl, there's some guy and he says "Oh yeah, I'm her older brother and I'm supposed to take you to meet her." You know?

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah.

D-Yes. So I would classify this as the predator theory. That some online predator of some kind misrepresented who they were and lured him to London for any reason. It could have been to come to a concert. It could have been just been "Hey, come and visit me in London." Or, you know, people think "Oh, he wanted a new life," so maybe somebody said "Ok, I can help you with a new life."

S-The one thing...

D-I don't think that, we'll talk about a new life in a minute, but...

J-Yeah.

S-I was going to say, this whole...I kept trying to figure out how he could have been, if somebody did indeed lure him away, ok they looked at the computer and there was nothing on there. I know that you, you kind of believe that he may have been able to private browse or Tor it...

D-It would be possible but I also don't think it would, it's likely.

S-But you know what I really wonder about? Because I've never heard any mention of it being looked into. You know he had an Xbox at home, right?

D-They do talk about the Xbox Live chatting.

S-And I wonder if he was talking to somebody, because Xbox Live now has the actual text chat function.

D-Uh huh.

S-But that didn't come into effect until 2008, so it would have all been voice, but I just wonder if anybody looked at "What games was he playing? Can you tell us who was in the game at that time?" Cause he could have had, built an extended relationship with somebody.

D-Absolutely.

J-Uh huh.

S-In that world, and got talked to that way.

D-Yeah.

S-And then got convinced...

D-The same is true for, like, if he...I don't know if he was, like, a WOW kid, a World of Warcraft kid. I don't know if he liked online games like that but those all existed too, and you could chat with people at that point as well.

S-Yep.

D-And that's not necessarily logged.

J-Nope.

S-Yeah.

D-So I think that's a really good suggestion as well. Although I just think that it's not possible to look up that information.

S-Oh, it's way too late now.

D-Well, I think even at the time it probably wouldn't have been possible, just because of the huge volume of people that...

S-Uh, you know what, Big Data loves data. I bet you that Microsoft is logging the crap out of that stuff, and probably had the records for a while.

J-Uh huh.

S-You know, I would say, let's just, you know, they would have had it for months if not years. It could have been pulled.

D and J-Uh huh.

S-I bet you...

J-Maybe, yeah.

S-...if somebody said, "I have, I've went to the judge and I have this order that says Microsoft, give me this data." Microsoft would have went (makes coughing noise) "Here it is." They would have totally coughed it up.

D-Similarly...

J-Oh yeah, they would have.



D-Similarly, one would assume, that you know, the CCTV would have been able to be pulled, but hey.

J-Yeah, I know. I think it might very well be that his parents and the police, you know, didn't really, you know, weren't involved in that sort of stuff...

S-No.

J-And didn't realize what was going on.

S-No. It's a game. It's a video game.

D and J-Yeah.

S-"What? He's just playing the Nintendo thingy."

J-Yeah, exactly. But yeah, that's one way he could have been, like you know, lured to London by a perv.

D-Yeah.

J-You know?

D-Yeah.

J-It's just a question of, you know, the theories are, is what happened to him afterwards. Of course, everybody thinks that, well, he was, the perv did his pervy stuff and then murdered him. Although, for alternative theories, I would say that maybe he's just locked in a basement somewhere, and maybe we'll, he'll be discovered alive some day. Although I kind of doubt that.

D-I hate to say that that is one of the most optimistic theories.

J-It is a more optimistic theory (laughing).

S-It is.

D-That he's currently locked in a basement somewhere.

S-And weirdly, it happens and then these people, sometimes people escape.

D-Yeah.

S-And we find out about it.

J-Uh yeah.

S-The women in L.A., is that the one, last year?

J-Yeah.

S-Year before?

J-Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

S-I mean, it happens. It's nutso, but it does happen.

J-Yeah. And he'll have, when he does escape, if he does, he'll have a very, really interesting story to tell, I'm sure. But another possibility that occurred to me, again this is outlandish (Steve laughing), but it's possible, is he meets this guy. They go to Starbucks for a cup of coffee. The guy roofies him, not to have sex with him, but just to, like, smuggle him out of the country and sell him into slavery.

D-Yeah.

J-So, that's another very optimistic theory.

D-It's possible.

J-Possible, not likely.

S-London is a port town.

J-And one of the questions I have for this, and I asked you already about this, but I don't know if the police, when they are looking at missing children, and looking for them, is check the child pornography sites. And stuff like that.

S-I don't want that job.

D-No.

J-No, I wouldn't either.

D-But you kind of hope somebody is checking them, right?

J-Well, it would seem like the thing to do. At least send pictures of these missing kids to the sites and just say "Hey, you know, would you post these pictures and tell your users if they see any porn with these children in it?"

S-I don't think...

J-I don't know that they'd get a lot of cooperation.

S-...that there's that much oversight in those kind of websites.

D-The child pornography ring? Yeah.

J-Yeah.

D-I don't think so either.

S-Because if the police know who runs it, to send that information to them, they're busting them!

J-Uh huh, yeah.

D-Yeah. That's true.

J-I know, that's kind of the obvious thing there, yeah. But they could still crowd source it. They could say "Hey pervs." (S and J laughing). "Hey, all you pervs out there, keep an eye out for this stuff."

D-I don't think it works that way, yeah (laughing).

J-"Keep an eye out for this stuff and let us know anonymously."

S-You Pedobear.

J-Yeah.

D-Yeah. Yeah. Just as a point of interest, I guess, they did search the "Tames"?

S-Thames.

D-Thames, thank you. I can't say that word, cause it's not spelled the right way.

J-I know, they misspell everything over there.

D-Yeah, they really do. They did search the river.

S-We're going to get so many angry letters. Thank you.

D-You're welcome.

J-We're just kidding.

D-They did search the river, and they didn't ever find any remains of Andrew, so he's probably not there.

J-Probably not, but there's lots of other places to put a body.

D-Yeah. Next theory is that Andrew wanted to start a new life.

S-(sighs tiredly)

D-Now why would Andrew, 14 years old, relatively, seemingly relatively happy, want to start a new life?

J-Well, one theory that I was thinking about is, I have no idea, I was wondering if maybe he was gay?

D-Yeah.

J-I didn't feel like his parents would understand.

D-No.

S-His parents were, they are strongly religious, so I could see where that...

J-Yeah.

D-Well I was just, you know, I think he probably wouldn't have a reason to want to run away and start a new life. But as we stated, his parents were heavily Christian, and you know, they described him as goth, so...

S-That doesn't mean that they were going to be intolerant of his life choices.

D-No, it certainly doesn't.

S-I don't want to come across as saying that.

D-No.

J-Yeah, exactly. I think that, it sounds to me like his parents were kind of tolerant, you know?

D-They sound like they do seem to be genuine, they do seem to genuinely love and miss him. On the website they run, they run a website and they have a letter to him, and it's, you know, very moving. But you know, I don't know if I really want to say this or not, but as cynical as it sounds, it's easy to say things like that to your kid after they're gone. And that isn't to make a presumption that they weren't loving and open and caring, but it is to say that as a teenager, it's very often easy to interpret what your parents are saying and doing as intolerant or, even if they aren't intolerant, just to assume, if your parents are constantly saying "Oh, I can't believe that this person is gay. I don't know how to deal with that." You're going to say, "Oh my God, I could never be gay." Regardless of the fact of if you came out to them, they would actually say "Oh my gosh, we love you so much. Of course we'll accept you." And again, this is not to, I have never seen anything that has said his parents were intolerant in any way.

S-Uh uh.

D-But I also know that most of the information we have comes from his parents...

J-True that.

D-And again, you know, I just hesitate to say that it's, cause that sounds really horrible and cynical and awful, and I understand that and please don't write me letters cause I already know how horrible and awful and cynical it sounds. But I just want to point out that it's...

S-It's very curated information.

D-It is very curated information and it is, that's when you say those things, those "Oh my gosh, we never meant to hurt you. Come back."

J-Yeah.

D-But again, not to disparage the family, cause as far as I can tell, they are a wonderful, loving very...

S-There's no indication that what we're guessing about is even real.

D-No, no, no, no. They seem like they are...

S-We're running down a rabbit hole.

D-...very genuine and amazing and really just had something horrible happen in their family and I don't want to cause them any extra pain, but I also do want to mention that.

J-On the other hand, about the gay, running away because he's gay thing. What would argue against that is that he's only 14. He doesn't really...uh, in one place I heard he's actually 13, his birthday was coming up. Oh no, wait. Hang on. I'm getting my unsolved mysteries mixed up.

D-You are (all laughing). You are.

J-That's the murder in India. Uh, yeah, ok. But he was 14. He didn't really need to decide the whole gay thing. I mean, he may not have totally known he was gay, if he was gay. But you know, he could wait until he was 18 and go off to college.

D-I don't know. It's self denial. I mean, that seems like a thing...I know a lot of gay people who say, I mean, like I've known my whole life, like have been actively gay for as long as they've been alive, basically.

J-Yeah.

D-So, you know, again that's kind of like asking somebody to repress part of themselves just to stay in their house, which I guess, some people do, but some people don't want to do. But again, it's hard to tell with him. Another fact you'll see, that's thrown around, I guess it's mildly interesting. I don't know how valid it is, but we're going to just throw it out there anyway. It's reported that Andrew's favorite TV show was The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin, which is a series, it's a TV series that follows a middle aged man who fakes his own death to start a new life. But I've read a lot of synopses of this series, and I actually don't think it pertains to this case, like, at all.

S-Do you know, when does this show come out?

D-Well, the show originally aired in, like, the '70s.

S-1976 to '79 is when it ran.

D-Uh huh. But then it was released on DVD, actually, in like 2006.

S-But that is so weird, for his favorite TV show that he identifies with, to be this random TV show from 30 years prior, suddenly rereleased.

D-That happens to be about somebody who fakes their death and goes to start a new life? Yeah, it is weird. It's weird. I don't know, I mean, maybe his dad liked it, you know.

S-I think that's where this comes from. Is he and his dad sat around and watched it...

D-Sat down and watched it.

S-And he said “This is great, son!” and he said “Yeah, Dad, I really like it. This is my favorite.”

D-Yeah.

S-Whether he was honestly saying that, or looking at his dad, rolling his eyes, going “It's my favorite.”

J-Here's the thing about running away to start a new life. Is that, pretty quick, you're 14. I don't even know what the labor laws are like in Britain. What if he goes to London to try and get a job, and he can't because he's too young.

S-Oh no, he's too young.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah, and so, pretty soon you're going to run out of money and you're going to be calling your folks and saying “Hey, can you come to London and get me?”

D-Yeah.

J-You know, how...

S-That's what happens a lot of times.

D-Well, there's this vague mention of him, somebody said oh yeah, his grandma, I don't know where this information came from, so I don't know, I think it's probably totally made up. But somebody said “Oh yeah, his grandma lived in London, and he ran away to live with her.” Or he went to visit her and she was ill, or I don't know why that gets brought up, cause it's just in forums and I don't know where people are getting that information from, but people are getting it from somewhere. It's also suggested that maybe his parents just didn't know he was being bullied so he ran away to start a new life because he was being bullied, which is dumb (Joe laughing). And then, you know, some other people said “Well, he was really bored at school, so he didn't want to go to school anymore, so he ran away to start a new life, because he didn't want to go to school.” But I think that's silly cause if you're smart enough to not, to be bored in school, you say to your parents “I'm bored in school. Bump me up a grade.” You don't say “Oh, I'm bored in school, so I think I'd better go start a new life so I can prove to everyone that I'm smarter than them.” And this is where this part of not knowing anything about him becomes very frustrating to me, because I don't know anything about his demeanor. I don't know, I wish I knew, like, did he have an ego?

S-Was he creative enough to come up with that?

D-Well, not even was he creative enough to come up with that. Like, did he just think he was smarter than everyone else? Did he think he could pull the wool over everyone's eyes, or did, was he just, you know, a normal, smart teenager who was kind of bored, or was he just rebellious, or, you know. I don't know anything about him other than that boilerplate of information, and I just, that's so frustrating to me because I feel like I could more solidly throw my weight behind one of these theories if I understood more about him.

S-Uh huh. Yeah, I would agree with that entirely.

D-But there's nothing about him. Yeah.

J-Yeah. I think that if he was bored at school and he went away to start a new life, he probably would have very shortly found himself really bored with his new job at Starbucks or where ever he was working.

D-Yeah.

J-And gone home.

D-Yeah. I think so too.

J-Yeah.

D-Or at least contacted his parents at some point.

J-Yeah.

D-Cause they're, you know, every time they do anything, they say "Oh, and Andrew, if you're hearing this, we love you. Just let us know you're ok. You don't even have to come home."

S-They do a ton of stuff.

D-They do a lot. They really do.

J-Yeah.

D-They are still very actively looking for him.

S-They're very committed to the search.

D-Yeah, they are.

J-Yeah, well I hope they get him back someday.

D-Yeah. So I guess for me, my strongest theory would be that he went to London for a concert, and an accident happened, something happened, like he met some friends or met some people he had met online, and something happened and he died, and they tried to cover it up. And the only reason that I say that is because it's the added little bit that in 2008, in November of 2008, a guy showed up at a police station and said he had information about Andrew, and the person who was there said "Oh, we're not open yet. Come back."

J-Now, I heard that one too...

D-And he never came back.

J-Excuse me, when is a police station not open?

D-Well, apparently this one wasn't.

J-Really?

D-I...

S-Everything, they roll up the sidewalks in Britain at eight o'clock at night. I kid you not.

D-Yeah.

S-It's amazing. We're very spoiled in this country. Things are open all the time.

D-I mean, I think certain precincts are probably open, like there are probably always police on duty, but that doesn't mean that every single office is open at all times.

J-Well that's true. Maybe people are at the counter to take your information...I heard another version of this, was that he showed up saying he had information, and then by the time they found some police man to come down and talk to him, he had left.

D-Uh huh.

J-That's another version of this I heard.

D-Yeah. Similar, very similar versions.

J-But he could have been a crank.

D-Yeah, he could have been a crank, but also he could have been somebody who knew something and felt guilty, and was coming forward, and then lost his nerve, cause he thought "Oh, I'm gonna get blamed for this." But again, that's all. That's the likeliest thing I can come up with, because there's just no information about this thing.

J-Uh, not really.

D-Do you guys have anything else you want to add?

J-I would just say, is that if you are the, you know, I suspect, my biggest belief is he did meet a perv online, and the perv, you know, did his thing and then murdered him. And so, if you happen to be one of our listeners and you're that perv...

S-Stop listening now, please.

D-Yeah. Please never, ever listen.

J-No, actually you, yeah, don't listen anymore after this episode, but send us an email. And I mean, you can do it anonymously. Get a trashmail account and send us an email and let us know what happened.

D-Yeah.



J-And just so we...

D-I don't really want to know.

J-...can tell his parents and they can have a little closure. Ok?

D-Or just tell his parents.

J-Or yeah, send the parents an email.

D-Yeah, don't let us know...

J-That's a good plan, yeah, actually now that I think about it.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah.

D-Steve...

S-I personally think that he used his remaining money, he bought another ticket, he rode through the Chunnel, he went to France, and he's now working at Euro Disney.

D-You know, they probably would have hired him actually.

S-They would have hired him.

D-Yeah.

S-He could have been one of the munchkins in a number of the rides as a 14 year old boy, and that is the happiest ending that I can come up with for this frickin' story.

D-That's a good ending.

S-So I'm sticking to that.

J-Yeah.

D-Although the Chunnel tickets are really expensive.

J-I bet they are.

D-They are really, really, expensive.

S-I don't care.

D-Ok.

S-He works at Euro Disney, and he is fulfilled and happy, and he has lots of little mice around him.

D-All right. So he's basically just Cinderella, but a boy?

J-Yeah.

S-Yes.

D-Ok. I'm pro.

J-What's that, you're thinking that too?

D-Yes. Now I'm thinking that too.

J-I don't think that's it. I think the best case scenario is he's chained up in a basement somewhere, and he's going to escape next week or so.

D-You don't think Disney is the best...

J-Well, that's, yeah, but...

S-Joe, c'mon. Disney.

D-Disney.

J-Ok, all right. Fine. Disney.

S-It's the best theory.

D-Yeah.

S-Disney.

J-Disney. Well maybe he just went to live on a farm somewhere.

D-Like Lassie? (S and J laughing).

J-Yeah.

D-Probably. Well, if you have theories about this, about this or any other story suggestions or you want to tell us stuff about things or whatever, you can do that in the comments section of our website, which is thinking sideways podcast dot com. Leave a comment on the actual episode, not in, like, the 'about the show' or anything, cause that's really hard to figure out what you're talking about.

S-Sometimes (laughing).

D-If it's there, yeah.

S-It's really hard to figure out where I have to move them.

D-Yeah. There's also links to some of our research and past episodes there as well. You're probably

listening to us on iTunes. If you are, give us a comment and a rating, and subscribe if you haven't already.

J-Yep.

D-You might be streaming us. If there's a way to comment and rate, do that too please. You can find us on social media. We're on Facebook, we have the group and the page, so you can like us and find the group. If you want to be part of the discussion, you should join the group. If you just want to show your support, you can like the page, or just do both. You can find us on Twitter. We're thinkin sideways. Reddit, it's r/thinking sideways. You can email us if you have any of the things I mentioned before, like story suggestions or expert or feedback. That email address is thinking sideways podcast at gmail dot com. And if you want to support the show, you are welcome to do that. You can buy some merch. There's links to that on our website. You can donate via Paypal, also a link on the website. Or you can become a sustaining supporter on Patreon, which is patreon dot com slash thinking sideways.

J-Cool.

D-No obligation, but we do love that support.

J-Yeah, thanks.

S-Absolutely.

J-Yeah, a lot of people have done that and it's great. And if you haven't done that, that's fine. Don't feel guilty.

D-Yeah.

J-I read tons of websites and I don't hit the tip jar, so.

D-It is literally the thing that Joe says every week.

J-Yeah. It is. I know.

D-All that having been said, I think we're going to get out of here.

J-I guess so. Another mystery solved.

S-Talk to you soon, guys.

J-Bye.

D-I got a train to catch.