How It’s Made:
The Crime and Kombucha Podcast

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I. Introduction

The goal of this senior project is to write, produce, edit and market a podcast through the application of skills acquired throughout the culmination of a Cal Poly journalism degree. The podcast created in conjunction with this senior project is called *Crime and Kombucha*. *Crime and Kombucha* is a true crime and pop culture podcast hosted by two bubbly best friends, Marcela Cabral and Melissa Nemeth. It explores the relationship between true crime and pop culture, both of which cannot exist without the other in modern internet culture, using one genre to understand the other. In fact, the “Kombucha” in the name is a placeholder for pop culture. *Crime and Kombucha* aims to be a form of catharsis for its listeners, because, let’s face it, the world is crazy and it is human nature to desire sense out of what is being experienced and justification for beliefs and fears. Successfully communicating this mission is another key objective in this project.

To demonstrate how these goals were achieved, the final form of this project will include:

1. 10 podcast episodes
2. One sample script
4. *Crime and Kombucha* Facebook Page
5. *Crime and Kombucha* Twitter Page
6. Episode Intro jingle
II. Research and Application

The first place to start in terms of creating a podcast brand is coming up with the name. My cohost and I knew that we wanted to discuss true crime and pop culture (outside of kombucha), so we came up with “The Kombucha Mysteries”. We used that name for about a month but agreed that it didn’t make sense as we were not covering ghost stories and suspicious disappearances. *Crime and Kombucha* came to Marcela and me in a bottle of kombucha -- quite literally. The name is catchy and memorable because of its alliteration. Alliteration enforces brand recognition, making it an incredibly persuasive tool in marketing as it enforces brand recognition and facilitates more positive associations with the brand (Davis, 2016). *Crime and Kombucha* properly addressed the intersection of pop culture and true crime genres. “Kombucha” serves as a placeholder for pop culture -- it’s bubbly, effervescent, and most importantly, fun!

With the podcast name checked off the list, we then researched who our audience was. The genre of true crime heavily skews towards women. They make up 73% of the audience (Edison Research, 2019). The true crime genre is, hands down, the most popular genre for women aged 18+, but is especially popular among new moms and the 25-34 age group (Destillery, n.d.). This is because women are more fearful of being a victim of crime, thus learning from the stories of others at a safe distance as how to not be a victim (Weller, 2016). Podcast listeners tend to have a household income over $100,000 or more, making them able to afford merchandise or tickets to live shows (Edison Research, 2019). They consume their shows as they make their daily commutes to their full time jobs or at home while doing mundane chores (Edison
They prefer headphones to speakers, increasing “perceived intimacy” with a given podcast host (Matei, 2022). In fact, once they discover a podcast that they like, they listen to every single podcast they download (Koba, 2022). Even more impressive, they often listen to seven different podcasts a week (Edison Research, 2019).

After we nailed our demographics, we analyzed what other podcasts were doing, taking aspects of what we liked about them and putting our own spin on it. Our main focus was on My Favorite Murder. It was a model true crime podcast for us as it is hosted by two female comedians, Karen Kilgariff and Georgia Hardstark, and we were already fans of it. It also is the highest performing podcast in its genre, along with Serial, And That’s Why We Drink, and Crime Junkie. We liked that the first 10-15 minutes of each episode was dedicated to banter, allowing us to get to know the hosts better. After that, the ladies take turns sharing their murder story of the week, each of them live reacting to the other; another component we included in Crime and Kombucha. One thing My Favorite Murder excels at is branding. Their fanbase, “murderinos”, latches onto one liners such as “Stay sexy, don’t get murdered”, causing it to evolve into their signature signoff. It cued My Favorite Murder to make merchandise out of it, which is now a complete line of sweatshirts, mugs, and even a board game. The community feels as though they are all in on an inside joke, thus strengthening their connections with their hosts.

As for the structure of Crime and Kombucha, the first 15 minutes was dedicated to banter, pop culture tidbits, and “UwUs”. Of course, each episode opened with our signature jingle, produced by Marcela’s friend, BeatsbyBlaney. It introduced the podcast
with a spooky vibe, signaling the listener to settle in. In the first part of the podcast, we discussed current events and what was going on in our lives, while somehow tying in references to Jersey Shore in this section. We did this so our listeners got to know us first and were able to settle into the podcast before the topics got dark. The UwUs section was an original idea of ours. According to dictionary.com, am UwU is an “emoticon depicting a cute face… used to express warm, happy, or affectionate feelings.” It was a fun way to discuss the things that sparked joy that week, such as celebrity gossip, music, television shows, or new items at Whole Foods Market. More often than not, it was just us talking about Kacey Musgraves and drag queens. We didn’t want to pigeonhole ourselves into only true crime, should we choose to pivot at a later time. Eventually, our plan was to cut ads into our UwUs. For example, many podcasts are sponsored by meal kit delivery service HelloFresh. It would have been so easy to talk about how we liked the service in an ad, considering we already listed off a variety of things we liked that week.

After UwUs, Marcela cued the transition into the bulk of the content, by saying the magic phrase “Spill the fermented tea”. I implemented that phrase into our scripts after a few episodes as it lent well to branding and merchandise ideation. It was a callback to the kombucha component of our podcast and functioned as a pop culture reference. To “spill the tea”, means to share juicy gossip, so it made sense to tie the two together. From then on, the podcast was quite straightforward. Marcela and I would swap true crime tales, live-reacting to one another. The show ends with final thoughts and a “Craigslist Missed Connection”, concluding on a silly note.
With our demographics and episode structure in mind, branding and logo development were easy for us. We wanted to stray from the traditional black and red color palettes often used in the true crime genre brand books. That, along with the ransom note effect, were overdone. In the first draft of the logo, the colors were far too deep and difficult to look at. It also depicted two kombucha bottles “clinking” so as to “crack a cold one” together, whether it’s myself and Marcela or us and our audience. The story we were trying to tell with our logo was not being communicated in the way we wanted, but it felt like we were on the right path. We did like the font selection, however. We used the sans serif “Single Sleeve” for our headline font. It has a fluid, rounded look, which is associated with femininity and is unexpected for the true crime genre. Our body font was “American Typewriter”, which functioned as an homage to the ransom note effect and offered a tinge of masculinity. The font “Mistral” is a graffiti accent font that looks like handwriting, addressing the humanistic aspect of our storytelling, but was not disruptive to the headline text.
At the time we came up with the podcast, I was an intern at Verdin Marketing in San Luis Obispo. I showed our logo to the graphic design team. They reimagined our logo with a knocked over bottle spilling a single drop of blood, which ended up being the final iteration to the design. Marcela and I changed the color theme to salmon, lilac, navy, and a grayish white so we appear more approachable and fun. Femininity was a secondary feel to the look.

As a college-budget, beginner level podcast, finding the right software and tech to fit Crime and Kombucha’s needs was a challenge. Of course, Marcela and I wanted to create studios out of our rooms, but that was not feasible. However we pulled it off -- I spent $159 on my first month of podcasting, then $35 a month thereafter. Below are the tools we used to produce, edit, and distribute our show:
Microphone

The Blue Yeti microphone is one of the most highly rated, beginner friendly microphones, used by creators in a variety of fields. It comes with a stand, a charging cord, and a pop filter. It is incredibly versatile as it is multipattern on the flick of a switch, meaning it can isolate sound based on the direction it is coming from. The Blue Yeti can accommodate multiple speakers at once, which is great for in-person podcast guests. It is affordable new at $129.99. However, it is easily found for less and in good condition on eBay. Marcela and I were both lucky to find ours each for under $100.

Boom Arm

While Blue Yeti microphones come with their own stands, it is far more ergonomic to buy a boom arm. That way, the podcaster can sit up upright and enunciate properly from their diaphragm. The arm allows the microphone to be dynamically positioned, should there be multiple people using the microphone at once. The Yeti can easily be screwed into the arm and the arm itself can be screwed into the edge of a desk. It is very portable and light which is perfect for college students. The boom arm my cohost and I each purchased are cheap on Amazon, starting at $23.99.

Headphones

Wearing headphones while recording episodes also helped detect weird sounds in the background and test audio quality in real time. I was fortunate to have a friend who gifted me his Audio Technicas, the creme de la creme of headphones.
Remote Audio Recording Service

At the time that Crime and Kombucha was an active podcast, I was located in San Luis Obispo and Marcela was located in Sacramento. Under the suggestion of Cal Poly journalism department Broadcast Engineer Thomas Morales, we recorded our episodes remotely via Cleanfeed. Cleanfeed produces high quality audio, is very user friendly, and makes it easy to download content. Best of all, it is free so it is highly recommended for college students or podcast beginners to use.

Podcast Hosting Platform

A podcast hosting service is critical to distributing a podcast, its show notes, and its cover art. The hosting platform acts as the go-between for the podcast creator and listening platforms like Spotify or Apple Podcasts. It also helps with marketing, monetizing, and tracking performance analytics. Podbean is one of the most highly rated podcast hosting platforms and used by big name shows like Crime Junkie and New York Times’ The Daily. Podbean offers multiple pricing packages (they even have a free package!). We chose the Unlimited Audio package, which gave us unlimited bandwidth and storage space, as well as access to the ad marketplace. It was $29.99 split between us monthly.

Audio Editing and Graphic Design Softwares

I used Adobe Audition and Premiere to cut episodes, edit audio, and create clips for social media. Marcela used Photoshop and Illustrator to create our graphics. We chose Adobe because, quite frankly, we already had access to the entire Creative Suite.
However, we would have purchased the software anyway. I had an Adobe student subscription plan for $19.99 a month while Marcela got hers paid for through her job.

To promote *Crime and Kombucha*, we relied on organic advertising and engagement via social media. This is because we were operating on a college budget, with all of our money going toward production and distribution. We posted on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, as that is where our demographic is most active to grow our followings (JAR Audio, 2022). The Instagram pages that perform the best are the ones that prioritize aesthetics because they have higher brand recognition (Thömmes & Hübner, 2020). Facebook was an easy platform to manage; it is synced with Instagram which made it easy to push the same content to both platforms, thus increasing our reach. For these platforms, we emphasized a uniform aesthetic, color palettes, and heavy visual branding. As for Twitter, we responded to tweets under a trending topic, such as “#truecrime” with thoughtful dialogue or a meme. We also searched for tweets from people asking for podcast recommendations and responded with links to *Crime and Kombucha*. We prioritized conversation over visuals on that platform. On both Twitter and Instagram, we soought out podcasts that were at our stage of growth as they were more likely to see our comments and respond to them. On Facebook, we joined true crime groups and posted links to our episodes in comments or started conversation threads about conspiracy theories. Lastly, our parents shamelessly promoting our podcast to their friends the old fashioned way (word of mouth) also helped -- thanks Mom!
Social media success is dependent on the quality and consistency of the brand’s content. Our recurring content franchise were the collages that accompanied every episode, posted to every social media platform. Each collage added visual context to the two true crime tales of the week and our UwUs. For example, in episode three, I covered the Fyre Festival scam of 2017. In marketing that event, it was supposed to be a luxurious destination festival, complete with air conditioned platform tents, private planes to the island, and five star catering. The graphic for this episode illustrated “Expectation vs. Reality”: the viral white bread sandwich with a greasy cheese slice, grounded tents with zero ventilation, and the infamous executive who almost performed fellatio to save the festival. Outside of the obvious humor of this post, “Expectation vs. Reality” was an Instagram trend at the time while Netflix and Hulu’s competing Fyre Festival documentaries were trending topics on Twitter, causing footage from the event to recirculate in real time. Selecting Fyre Fest for that week illustrated how we had our fingers on the pulse of pop culture. Lastly, our UwUs for that week were the movies Atomic Blonde and Drive, as well as the show The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel.
The other half of our social media content strategy was dedicated to spontaneous topical content and memes. We also shared photos of Marcela and me to show the humanistic side of *Crime and Kombucha*. For example, we posted Valentine’s Day cards on social media depicting different criminals for Valentine’s Day. One of them was a drawing of Martin Shkreli, with the sentiment of “Your Love is My Drug”, referencing his nickname of “Pharma Bro”. It was an original way to tie in the lovey-dovey holiday to true crime. It also served as a reference to a 2010 Ke$ha song by the same name, further playing on the pop culture aspect of our brand. It was nostalgic since the cards looked like the ones that children receive from their classmates in grade school.

In piecing together the whole picture of a successful podcast, community is at its core. This was at the center of *Crime and Kombucha*’s purpose, outside of pure entertainment. For example, there is an ongoing joke within the true crime community, especially around the time that movie *Get Out* came out, that serial killers obsessively chug milk. We used it as an opportunity to make jokes on Twitter with another podcast, *8-Bit Couch*. This built
credibility between both of our audiences; exposing one another to our content and bringing fans of true crime together. It also invited the audience to join in on the conversation. We created DM groups on Instagram with other podcasts at our level of growth, often reposting each other’s content to achieve the same effect. On Twitter and Instagram, we had few fans who would message us with sentiments along the lines of “OMG my girls! I think the brother killed JonBenet”. Everyone has their own theory about who killed pageant child JonBenet Ramsey and wants to take part in the discourse. Our Craigslist Missed Connections proved to be very popular as post detailed one man’s hunt for the best burrito he ever had. Our followers sleuthed the ultimate burrito spot in San Francisco. We also did an open call for the “Pets of True Crime” where our followers could submit photos of their animals and we created an Instagram Story series about it. We also did an open call for our listeners to email us with their own personal true crime stories. One follower smuggled an open bottle of Bacardi on their flight from Mexico to California by accident - tres scandalous! With these initiatives, our followers felt included in Crime and Kombucha.
III. Finished Project

Ten Podcast Episodes

The goal of releasing ten Crime and Kombucha episodes was not only achieved, but surpassed. Listen to all 15 Crime and Kombucha episodes on Spotify.

Sample Script

See Appendix A. My cues are in bolded text.

Instagram Page

Visit the Crime and Kombucha page on Instagram.

Facebook Page

Visit the Crime and Kombucha page on Facebook.

Twitter Page

Visit the Crime and Kombucha page on Twitter.

Intro Jingle

Listen to the jingle here.
IV. Evaluation and Learnings

As for lessons learned, and to no surprise, podcast production is time consuming. Editing just one episode can take up to eight hours. As we recorded our episodes a day or two before we released them, it was quite a hectic timeline to adhere to. To ease the pressure of posting episodes on time, my co-host and I agreed that having “appointments” blocked off during the week would have been beneficial. For example, we could have had two hour slots in the mornings for writing scripts, when our minds were fresh. We also devised weekly check-ins to work on pitches, formulate our year long plans, and conduct administrative work. As my co-host and I are friends, we often straddled the line of hanging out and conducting business. It made being business partners quite difficult at times. Creating a schedule that sets boundaries for work and play would allow us to hold ourselves accountable to getting work done.

One regret of ours was recording the first couple of our episodes via Skype. That, paired with the fact that my apartment complex had communal internet, caused the audio to come out a bit distorted. It required quite a bit of editing and forced us to record episodes late at night, when the router in my complex was not experiencing as much traffic. Recording at night caused our voices to have vocal fry, which feels like nails on a chalkboard to discerning ears. We resolved these issues by recording episodes on Cleanfeed and in the morning when our voices were fresh and the wifi was plentiful. There was a huge difference in audio quality after these small switches.

One comment we got a few times was that our episodes were too long. As the average episode was one hour and fifteen minutes, we agreed. Marcela and I decided
to alternate sharing our individual true crime tales each week after episode 15. This would have cut our episodes down to about 45 minutes long. It would lighten the workload on both of us, allowing us to spend less time doing research and editing. We wanted to focus on community building as that is the core of a successful true crime podcast. On a transparent note, I must admit a crime of my own. On one of our first episodes, it is very apparent that I had overedited my section of the podcast. I had cut out natural pauses between thoughts as I was doing my best to cut down on time. Not only did that not make a notable difference in run time, it also sounded cacophonous to the ears. It is a mistake I will not make again as it was far too humbling.

While we are proud of what we accomplished with completely organic advertising and engagement, Crime and Kombucha could have reached more audiences with outside sources of income funding our marketing budget. Thus, Crime and Kombucha could have been profitable. As we were in the talks with a few brands to sponsor the show, Crime and Kombucha was on the road to placing ads in our episodes. We looked into applying into companies like Midroll or Red Circle, both of which play matchmaker between brands and podcast creators. We also considered creating a Patreon with bonus content to generate more revenue.

Building a podcast brand from scratch was an incredibly positive and transformative experience for me. A lot of the lessons were simply trial and error -- the whole point of “Learn by Doing”. The incredible milestones that Crime and Kombucha achieved in six months are ones that most creators do not see until years into their careers. At one point, we grew to 2,000 followers on Instagram with an active community and high engagement. We had a worldwide listenership, even reaching
Mongolia. It was rewarding to have super fans who messaged us on social media, addressing Marcela and me as if we were close gal pals to them because of our distinctive brand voice and personalities. Having internet sleuths participate in our little mysteries about a life-changing burrito meant that we properly assimilated to the true crime community and culture. We did it right. Even three years later, I get notifications on Facebook that our posts are reaching people. All of the work put into the podcast felt like it paid off when we were invited to a kombucha festival as brand guests. Not only did we partner with Wild Tonic, we also established relationships with several brands from different industries, from grocery delivery services to high end sunscreen. At that point, podcasting (and microinfluencing, I guess!) felt like it became a viable career option for me. Even after I stopped producing episodes, I get notifications on Facebook that Crime and Kombucha posts are reaching people. It is a gentle reminder of how much I achieved, especially as someone who had debilitating Lyme disease for the entirety of production. In closing, Crime and Kombucha was a gift to me, sneakily packaged in my journalism senior project. I learned so much about myself and grew into my confidence. I improved upon the improvisational skills I acquired at theater camp when I was ten and developed my public speaking techniques. It was a great addition to my portfolio, which got me all of my jobs out of college in the Los Angeles entertainment industry. I was lucky enough to work at Dear Media, a woman owned and operated podcast studio. Crime and Kombucha is living proof that practical projects create real world results.
Bibliography


https://doi.org/10.1037/e570052013-030.


Episode Intro:

- Hello and welcome all fermented friends. This is Crime and Kombucha, a true crime and pop culture podcast hosted by two northern californian gals. I am Marcela, or as they call me in the streets, DJ Vocal Fry Cels
- And I am your gorl, DJ Ginga Silk, which used to be my name on Twitter. I am better known as Melissa though
- Guys, we have a very embarrassing correction to make, last episode we said that Vinny and Angelina from Jersey Shore are from Long Island. And that is NOT true, they are from Staten Island. So to all the good people from both states, we give your deepest apologies for not giving credit where credit is properly due.
- While we are on the topic of corrections… y’all know how we like to analyze the signs of well-known killers and criminals? It has been shown that most killers cluster in the Pieces and Gemini sign (and some in Sag). Well, we did an episode about the Kennedy Curse recently… and guess what sign killed our most adored president who banged both Jackie O and Marilyn Monroe? That’s right… Harvey Lee Oswald was a Libra… so y’all better question everything Marcela says considering she keeps making up different signs for who has the biggest kill streak and is a Libra.
- There has been so much drama this week that I do not know where to start. Kris Jenner really should be writing a PR textbook with this whole Jordyn Woods banging Tristan Thompson scandal.
- I know that this is everywhere so tbh I don’t think we need to talk about this at all, so let this podcast just be your escape for all things Kardashian-Jenner related…for now lol. Let’s see how long we can go without talking about them. So Melissa, tell me your thoughts and feelings. What have you been living for this week?
- My official UWU is all of these absolute bangers that have been released over the past week. Kehlani and Solange might just have saved R&B or sum. RPG and Love Language (for those of yall wondering, mine is hanging out) my favorite of Kehlanis new album called While We Wait. Solange served us VISUALS with her album called When I Get Home and my favorite songs are Down with the Clique and Stay Flo. Its the same bluesy-jazz R&B that we know and love from Seat at the Table. The cover is gorgeous and I really should be paying to see this content. Also my favorite band Broods dropped Don’t Feed the Pop Monster which I had no idea about until yesterday even though I have been following all of their released singles. Give Hospitalized a listen.
- Before I get shit for talking about movies, I am gonna put a disclaimer that this is about a movie but not actually. My other UWU is Coco, which is about the Mexican holiday Day of the Dead. I recently listened to a talk by the Director of Lighting for Pixar, Danielle Feinberg. She told us about the lengths Pixar went to make the movie authentic to Mexican tradition and how they really wanted to do right by the Mexican people. Not only did they do hella research trips and consult with actual Mexicans (big win here), but also they really pushed deadlines and boundaries to serve a real story. For example, they had like less than a month to create 70 Alebrijes, which are Mexican folk art animal spirits, from scratch that had to glow and be differentiated and it was a last minute project that was nearly impossible. It made the story more believable. It was just heartwarming for me
to know that this movie gives Latinx people the same feeling that Lady Bird does for me in that its personal and that it is a tangible fictional story, especially since people don’t often look like them on the big screen.

- The fact that Melissa really said Latinx makes me so happy, haha. So my first UWU for the week goes out to Luca Guadagnino’s remake of the original 1977 film, Suspiria, that came out last fall. I wanted to watch it in theater but it was only available in select theaters so I just bought it on amazon prime this weekend and oh my god.
- First of all, I absolutely love Luca Guadagnino. He’s the same director as Call Me By Your Name, which is one of my all time favorite movies and he also did A Bigger Splash, which is named after my all time favorite painting by David Hockney, and in Suspiria and A Bigger Splash, they both star Dakota Johnson and Tilda Swinton. I normally don’t care for Tilda Swinton but I actually really liked her character in Suspiria and I absolutely LOVED Dakota Johnson in this movie.
- Fun fact, I love Dakota Johnson so much, and I always felt like I connected with her on another level, not just because we both have foreheads that you can project an imax movie on, but also because we both share the same birthday
- So the movie is about a dancer in 1977 who moves to Berlin to join a dance company, but turns out that the dance troupe is actually a coven of witches and it’s just really good. Very spooky and gory and do you wanna know what the true chef’s kiss on top of all of it is? The movie soundtrack is all done by Thom Yorke from Radiohead, one of my all time favorite bands, so that shit fucking goes
- My second UWU also is musical and it’s just a little appreciation to Cat Powers’ Sea of Love cover. It’s such an old cover, but I was watching a movie this weekend and one of the melodies reminded me of that song and it took me back to 2007 when I first listened to it on Juno so it made me happy and I hope that if you’re someone who needs to feel a little bit of a lyrical embrace and love, go listen to it and melt a little
- Anyways, Mel, it is TIME. Spill the fermented tea for us queen!

**Episode Story: Anna Delvey, the SoHo Grifter**

- If you haven’t noticed from my constant references to Fyre Festival… I am obsessed with the case. It really was the perfect storm of social media, Blink 182, the iconic sandwich, and Kylie Jenner starting shit (@Jordyn Woods @ Kris Jenner @ Khloe @Bachelorette thank you for your services to this country)
- Our boy Billy McFarlane is behind bars for staying on his bullshit (we respek the hustle though) and JaRule is still claiming that this was all a set up against him and that he had no clue that this was going on. BUT y’all did not know that as Billy was scamming Fyre Festival ticket buyers and the hearts of America… a woman named Anna Delvey was scamming him and the rest of his cohorts as well as a few hotels.
- Anna is known as the SoHo Grifter. She is a total Gossip Girl moment because she literally is like a Dan Humphrey and was kind of the misfit of the New York elite.
- She was born in Russia on January 21, 1991 as Anna Sorokin, so it is critical to note that she is an Aquarius!
  - Aquarius are known for their charm, wit, and charisma. An article I came across from Thought Catalog said and I quote “Aquarius is the con artist poster child, luring people in with their charm and hustling them right under their nose. You would go to jail after your vengeful nature gets the best of you and you start messing with people who know you well enough to catch on your scams.”
For reference, since I am a Sagittarius, I would go to jail for theft since I am too sensitive to other people’s emotions to hurt them but realistically, I would never be caught because I am so elusive.

I am QUAKING at how on point this is.

- When she was 16, her family moved to Germany where her classmates described her as a shy girl who couldn’t speak or read German very well. She just was good at minding her business I guess.
- She graduated high school in 2011... so she was 20.... And moved to London to attend art school. She dropped out shortly after enrolling and moved back home.
- Back at home, she started a PR career and then moved to Paris to work for a magazine called Purple. This is where she changes her name to Anna Delvey
- In 2016, she had worked her way up to elite status and was the chameleon in the crowd due to her fake identity as a German heiress. She also posed as the daughter of her Russian billionaire father, who accumulated his wealth from oil, solar energy, or antique dealing. She also claimed her was a diplomat (plot twist: her dad was just a trucker).
  - Regardless of the identity she gave people, she always told them she was meeting with billionaires.
- If you look up her Instagram account, which is @theannadelvey, its very true to her character. Its has a wannabe influencer vibe and looks like she is going for aesthetics, but the filters are pretty bad, so sis really should have invested in a photo editor if she really was committed to looking rich. Overall, its pretty boring, but somehow she has over 52k followers. Regardless, I think this helped with her image among these socialites because numbers and popularity are what gets you into the club... or those weird Instagram photo ops with security guards in LA that you have to have a verified account for.
- Anna had many targets, but I will focus on her close friend group for this story, specifically, her Vanity Fair writer friend named Rachel Williams.
- The girls met in 2016 at their favorite bar called Happy Endings where they found out that they fell into the same social groups since Anna worked at Purple and Rachel worked at Vanity Fair.
- Anna was known to Rachel as a quirky, misunderstood European heiress of a Russian solar power magnate who was learning how to be a proper socialite in New York. She said Anna was overconfident, but in a charming way and that she rubbed people the wrong way sometimes because she was direct, but Rachel found it endearing and thought it to be a product of self-preservation due to her lifetime of being an heiress and the trust issues that came along with that. Rachel was empathetic to her and was happy that Anna trusted her to be in her tiny friend group of three girls. Rachel was also charmed by Anna’s modernized Juicy Couture sweatsuit look of black leggings, big Celine glasses, and Supreme hoodies.
- Whenever they went out, Anna always footed the bill without hesitation and life was obviously very sweet for Rachel until they had to part ways for 6 months because Anna claimed she had to go home to Cologne before her Visa expired. They kept in touch and Rachel was flattered as she was not used this type of care, given the New York elite culture.
- In February of 2017, Anna was back in town, staying at the 11 Howard for a month. Anna leached onto Rachel, Anna inviting her to her personal training sessions 4 times a week. Anna’s personal trainer was the third girl of the group, but you really cannot find her name anywhere and is always referred to as the personal trainer, so she lawyered up.
• Anna took Rachel to dinners at Le Coucou, often pregameing the meal with wine and oysters. Anna even befriended the executive chef, Daniel Rose and he often made off-menu special meals for her. Anna's tabs kept growing, always being left unpaid for.
• Living at the 11 Howard, Anna became friends with Neffetari Davis, who worked in the concierge and who was the fourth girl of the group. Anna would come to gossip with Neff, but Neff never really thought anything of it because people often came to complain to her about their rich people problems. The rest of the staff thought Anna was rude by calling everyone poors, but Neff didn’t think much of it and enjoyed her company.
  ○ However, the staff got over their frustrations and began fighting over who gets to deliver Anna’s packages to her room because she would always drop $100 tips.
• She checked out of the hotel and into Bill McFarland’s penthouse. She originally told him that she would stay for a few days then she would leave… but then she stayed for weeks and refused to leave. Billy was apparently too much of a little bitch to say no to her... just like how he was in the Fyre Festival ordeal.
• Anna was always in and out of New York because she never had an actual place to live and relied on her suitcase to be her sense of home. She claimed that it was for Visa reasons and so that justified all of her extravagant trips she took between apartments.
• Since she had so many contacts built up, she was that much closer to chasing her dream of opening a swanky ass club called the ADF (Anna Delvey Foundation)... with the balance of $3 she had in her account. She envisioned it to be similar to SoHo house but with art, which is sooo exclusive and is very much like those luxurious golf clubs. You have to be nominated by two members to join and can only stay there if you have a membership.
  ○ I am going to Amsterdam in a few weeks and they have a location there. I applied for funzies so I will let y’all know if they consider me. They literally ask you for your profession when you ask about a reservation and I have to wait a whole day for them to consider me. There are a shit ton of rules they have too.
• In May 2017, she moved back into the 11 Howard and talked about taking a trip to Marakech... which is when everything went downhill.
  ○ Rachel suggested going other places but Anna assured her that she would pay her back once the trip was over... Anna made Rachel also invite her photographer friend so he could document the trip so she had some content to start with for her arts club
  ○ She was gonna check out of the 11 Howard to head out when the manager of the hotel noticed that Anna had not paid her bills... well since she started staying there.
  ○ Hotel management changed her room code and withheld all of her items from her.
  ○ She shrugged it off and just said that she had to contact her back to deal with her inheritance account. She said she would wire transfer the money as soon as possible.
  ○ Anna transferred a few of her suitcases to the Mercer where she was planning on staying after her trip to Morocco and they hopped on their plane
• Anna brought her squad with her and rented out a house with a personal butler for 7k a night... but the usual issue of not having a credit card on file came up and she just shrugged it off and said it was a bank issue but the Morrocan hotel management was not buying it.
• Anna kept pushing Rachel to pay for all of their dinners when they went out and made her pay for clothes because her debit card kept declining.
• Once the group was back at the villa, the hotel management kept pressing Anna for her credit card info. They pulled her aside to work it out as it was disclosed to Rachel that a
worker was fired over Anna’s lack of credit card info being on file. ANY PARALELLS TO FYRE FEST YET?

- Rachel was eventually forced to put her credit card down because Anna’s card was not going through and the men were growing impatient. The whole cost of the trip was $62k. Rachel went home a day before Anna and was assured multiple times that she would be wired $70k to cover everything, which was more than what Rachel made in a year.
- Soon everything was back to normal and Anna was back into New York but staying at the Beekman, not the Mercer like she had planned because they were sold out apparently.
- Anna kept texting her over the span of a week, promising to pay her and that she was working with her trust fund to work it out. Rachel grew increasingly frustrated and kept turning down Anna’s invites to hang out.
- After a month, Anna finally claimed to have the money straightened out after she cleared a work emergency and said she would deposit it ASAP. Rachel was like nope bitch I’m coming for your ass and showed up unexpectedly the next day at the Beekman.
- When she got there, Anna’s room was an absolute circus with clothes and papers strewn everywhere. Anna claimed to have lost the check in the Tesla she rented when she was dealing with her work emergency and that Rachel would have to come with her to meet with her lawyer and all these hedge fund investors. Rachel followed her around all day until 11 PM when she was like “ok I am done, see you tomorrow at 8 AM”
- So what do you know… Anna goes missing the next day. Rachel begins to poke around and contacts a German man who had known her since she had lived in Paris and who loaned her money once. He explained that Anna’s father was a oil magnate, even though Rachel was under the impression her dad worked in solar energy. She supposedly received $30k at the beginning of each month and could not manage it, which explained why she always needed cash. She also told the man that she was to inherit $10 million for her 26th birthday but her dad was apparently so tired of her shit that he was making her wait until 9 months after her birthday to get the money. The German man told Rachel that he had to bother her for weeks on end until he threatened legal action, to which she broke down because she could not afford to be deported.
- Rachel then researched information about Anna’s family but could not find anything… In July of 2017, Anna’s personal trainer reached out to Rachel to ask what’s up with Anna because she was sleeping on her couch. The next day, Anna begged Rachel to stay at her apartment and Rachel was like fuck no bitch, but ended up being too nice and let Anna stay there.
- Once Rachel started coming down from all of the drama, she came to her senses when she remembered that Anna was so pissed off that the 11 Howard hotel wanted her to pay for her stay in advance that she bought the website names that corresponded with the hotel managers and wanted them to pay $1 million for it. She apparently learned that from Martin Skrelli, which was her idol. BIG SURPRISE.
- In August of 2017, Rachel decided it was time to turn Anna into the police. She filed a report, which was valid, but the officer explained to her that she would not get the $62k back from the Morocco trip so she would have to start a GoFundMe.
- Rachel got her time when the personal trainer called her and said to hurry her ass over to her apartment because Anna was loitering in the lobby. They called another friend and confronted her over lunch, while Anna wore the same dress she had been wearing for several weeks because the Beekman hotel confiscated her suitcase. Anna was very distraught over lunch about being called a wannabe socialite and for the rumor of her dining and dashing as well as not paying her hotel bills getting out. She refused responsibility for everything that happened.
• Rachel was soon contacted by the police saying that she had been friends with Anna Sorokin, who is a con artist.
• Investigations revealed that while Anna was away from New York during her 6 month hiatus, Anna created fake European bank documents that stated she had $60 million in her accounts so she could secure the $33 million loan for her club. She
• Anna even told Rachel that she her plans either went well or horribly wrong... which should have served as a foreshadow.
• When her trials were going on in June of 2018, the judge gave her hella shit for not showing any sorrow or regret for her fraud schemes and for only caring about who would play her in the Netflix series that Shonda Rhimes is producing about her.
• For the record, its Jennifer Lawrence.
• She was convicted for grand larceny and is wasting away at the age of 28 at Riker's Island. She will spend the next 15 years there.