

01:00:09:00 - 01:00:17:06

Sarah

Welcome to Brains, a podcast exploring the inner workings of our brains. Mental health and disabilities and how film and television portray them. Hosted by me film and television editor Sarah Taylor.

01:00:17:07 - 01:00:35:00

Heather

And by me, writer director Heather Taylor. Before we begin, we want to acknowledge the lands from which we recorded this podcast and from where you were listening are part of territories that have long served as a gathering place for diverse indigenous peoples. And we are thankful as guests on this land to be able to live, work and gather here together.

01:00:35:02 - 01:00:39:19

Heather

We continue to learn about the history that came before us and encourage you to do the same.

01:00:39:21 - 01:00:59:20

Sarah

We all know that October is spooky month, so we have two episodes that touch on all things spooky and the impact they have on our brains. Today we have the fabulous Guinevere Turner as our guest. She's the screenwriter of films like American Psycho, and Charlie says, and she is originally published When The World Didn't End.

01:00:59:22 - 01:01:02:14

Sarah

A book about her experience growing up in a cult.

01:01:02:16 - 01:01:24:05

Heather

On this episode, we do a deep, deep dive into the representation of cults in film and TV and look at what filmmakers get right and what they get wrong. We also discuss the characteristics of a cult who is susceptible to them, the impact cults can have on one's mental health, and how to help family and friends who may find themselves deeply entwined in a cult community.

01:01:24:07 - 01:01:32:18

Heather

Lastly, we talk about why it's hard to find the right therapist if you are a cult survivor and why the world is so obsessed with cult stories.

01:01:32:20 - 01:01:49:20

Sarah

This is a really good a quick reminder to our listeners that this interview should not be taken as

medical advice. And it is for informational purposes only because everyone's brain is different. Please consult your health care professional if you have any questions. A content warning for our listeners On this episode. We talk about cults, coercion and mass suicide.

01:01:49:22 - 01:01:59:06

Sarah

And now one of your one of your. Thank you so much for joining us on Braaaains

01:01:59:08 - 01:02:00:16

Guinevere

Thank you for having me.

01:02:00:18 - 01:02:09:01

Sarah

I've had absolute pleasure listening to your book over the last few weeks. I feel like I know you really well because I've been listening to you as I walk my dog.

01:02:09:02 - 01:02:14:00

Guinevere

And also just, you know, we're really familiar with the sound of my voice, which is surreal.

01:02:14:02 - 01:02:21:15

Sarah

It really is. But I'm really happy that you're here to talk with us today. And so to start things off. I'd love for you to tell us a little bit about yourself and what you do.

01:02:21:19 - 01:02:49:20

Guinevere

I'm Guinevere Turner. I guess my primary profession is screenwriter. I'm also an actor, and I teach screenwriting. I'm about to start a semester as a visiting artist at Syracuse University and taught at NYU and Columbia and UCLA. And I just wrote a book, which is a first for me and recorded the audio, as you know, from what Sara just said, and then got hired to record another audiobook that has nothing to do with me.

01:02:49:22 - 01:02:51:14

Guinevere

And I'm like, Is this my new sexy career?

01:02:51:14 - 01:02:55:11

Heather

So tell us a little bit more about your memoir.

01:02:55:12 - 01:03:16:09

Guinevere

When the World Didn't End. So when the World Didn't End, which just came out in May, is about my childhood growing up in a cult until I was 11. Or I would have told you at the time. 11 and a half. If you read the book, you'll see why. I really think when I say 11, it's like I go through a lot.

01:03:16:09 - 01:03:36:05

Guinevere

By the time I'm the age that I leave because I'm a very grown up kid. And then the second half of the book is kind of the, you know, getting out into the real world, the hideous situation that I found myself in, which ironically is way worse than the cults. That's just true. But I kind of enjoyed that.

01:03:36:05 - 01:03:53:16

Guinevere

Like, Oh, you you came here to read a creepy book about a cult. Guess what? A nuclear family can be creepy or the Nikko. And so it's my journey through that, getting out of that. And, you know, it ends when I'm 18 and almost fully ending, but I don't die because here I am talking and.

01:03:53:16 - 01:03:58:15

Sarah

Thank goodness for that. We'd love to know from your perspective what is a cult?

01:03:58:17 - 01:04:18:23

Guinevere

And I've been thinking about this book, writing it and now, you know, talking about it a lot, I started to realize that I'm not entirely comfortable calling the place I grew up in a cult, which is ridiculous. It literally if there was a checklist, if there was a cult for dummies, like it would be like being being checked.

01:04:19:01 - 01:04:42:13

Guinevere

But what I can't have come to recently is that the problem with the word cult is that you're in danger when you're calling that group of people something that they wouldn't call themselves. Mm hmm. And there's no such thing as a cult that calls themselves a cult. Some people aren't even comfortable with the word who've been in them, and they call them high demand groups or situations of coercive control.

01:04:42:15 - 01:05:20:01

Guinevere

The difference is, I guess, with cults is the level of control. There's there are several people who come up with kind of smart checklists. And one of them is if you left this group of people that you may not think you could cope with the rest of your life, fall apart, has it become everything? And I think that that just that really basic one is is a great tool for people to think about because,

you know, a very common cult tactic is to slowly isolate you from friends and family seem to keep you so busy and working toward some goal that it becomes completely time consuming and it often involves, you know, free labor and

01:05:20:01 - 01:05:42:08

Guinevere

involves a kind of loss of self. Right. So but the thing is source I call this is one that's a common thing that people get super into. It's not a cult. I don't know, because then you go get a green juice and go to your next level journey. Me like that to me is like, you know, really good branding and marketing.

01:05:42:10 - 01:05:43:08

Guinevere

Yeah.

01:05:43:10 - 01:05:45:16

Heather

Obsessive, too. People get obsessive.

01:05:45:16 - 01:06:12:14

Guinevere

Yeah. And it encourages obsessiveness. And so there's copy culty vibes. But to me, when you think about the great harm that so many cults have done, I sort of balk at calling SoulCycle a cult. Yeah, I believe in Buddhism because it costs us a lot of money. So you're just you're just doing okay. If you're going to SoulCycle, it's all your money or they're not tithing you to the point where you can't afford anything but the clothes on your back.

01:06:12:16 - 01:06:22:00

Heather

Yeah, exactly. What are some other warning signs that you may be in a cult? Not cultish behavior, but like a literal organization that outsiders would call a cult.

01:06:22:02 - 01:06:41:18

Guinevere

For some, the list of indoctrination is love bombing. So if you were invited into a group of people that suddenly you felt seen and you felt like you had a new community and a new group of friends, and all of a sudden it's dangerous only on the outside and you're struggling to get the attention of the leader or people higher up.

01:06:41:20 - 01:07:03:23

Guinevere

That is just, again, cult 101. If you got drawn into something out of love and attention and, you know, being starved for affection and now it feels like you're working really hard and you can't

seem to get ahead and it's your life that's that's a cult. And and also, I would say to people, there's a whole population of, quote, people like me who are born into it.

01:07:04:04 - 01:07:29:10

Guinevere

But for people who might think they were, they are in one or they have been in one. I would say that, you know, these kinds of people, is this particular kind of coercion really targets vulnerable people, which is to say, have you recently had a break up, a death in the family, some radical life change, or are you just a person in general who is, you know, what they call a seeker?

01:07:29:12 - 01:07:53:01

Guinevere

And if any of those things are true, you're already vulnerable. And in a really smart woman, I think it was in a documentary and you say, Well, I could never be sucked into a cult. You're also one of the top five kinds of people who can because using your immune, it's a really important thing, I think, for everybody when they think about cults and people who get sucked into them is that it's, you know, it's like domestic violence.

01:07:53:01 - 01:08:04:20

Guinevere

It's it transcends class, race and region. Like all kinds of people get sucked into all kinds of things that they have a heart they have to swim out of with all their money or that to save their lives.

01:08:04:20 - 01:08:25:23

Sarah

Sometimes, because I've been interested in understanding cults and why how people end up in cults. I've been listening to a lot of cult content and I've realized we're often very judgmental of people who we've heard from a cult or lived in a cult, and some of the things you've mentioned in other interviews where it's like, we have to remember that these are people, that there are people in these places, and yet it can happen to anybody.

01:08:26:03 - 01:08:49:16

Sarah

And so I've definitely shifted my perspective on how I view people who have lived in a cult. And I think some of that comes from what we've seen on film and television. So I'd love to hear from you. What kind of shows do you find that good representation that's somewhat accurate to your experience and what you would like to see more of that better represents the experience of living in a cult.

01:08:49:18 - 01:09:25:18

Guinevere

I think one of the hallmarks of the kind of sensational like, Ooh, it's going to be a thing is that

they feel the need to have like human sacrifice or something like so, so undeniably bad and scary. And that's not what's generally going on when I see those kinds of things. Like spoiler alert, midsommar, for example. I mean, I just loved Florence Pugh, so I watched the whole thing even though I was a little like, This is dumb slash, I am grossed out midsommar.

01:09:25:22 - 01:09:57:20

Guinevere

That could have been a movie where it's just creepy. Mm hmm. And that like, just just living like that in an isolated community with, like, rules and a lot of, like, eye contact and odd rituals. That's enough for me. Do you know what I mean? And that's way closer to reality. But when you watch a movie like that and so many stories are like that, it is this like automatic way of marginalizing it, like a and being like that's not real either.

01:09:57:22 - 01:10:22:08

Guinevere

Like real cults are real, but that that was a fun ride or all cults are secretly doing human sacrifice. Yeah, the movie Martha marcy May Marlene, I think does a really good job, especially of representing the just being out and figuring out and kind of being drawn back in and what sort of not being sure if you made the right choice.

01:10:22:08 - 01:10:48:16

Guinevere

I think that does a really great job of it. And doesn't. Does it lean to heavily on sensational stuff? Although, you know, I was like, I may have forgotten a couple of the more brutal scenes. At least it's not like secret rituals, you know what I mean? It's just like sort of standard kind of dominance, gaslighting, you know, that feels that feels way more grounded and would what people are capable of and what people are capable of in families.

01:10:48:21 - 01:11:07:14

Guinevere

I can't underline enough that cults are just like an abusive family, you know, on steroids. The dynamics are the same. The control tactics are the same. Anyone who's been in an abusive relationship can recognize that slowly people are going to say, That friend isn't good for you. That friend isn't good for you. You know, like your parents were kind of shitty to you.

01:11:07:14 - 01:11:37:22

Guinevere

Maybe you shouldn't talk to them and all of a sudden you're completely isolated by this person who's saying, I love you. I see you. I'm the only one who sees you in over that, okay? And then you're like, Oh, wow. No, I have nothing. And this person is my life. That's so-called work just on a larger scale. What I saw this movie recently that I hadn't heard of called them that follow about the part of Pentecostal religion that use snakes as a way that poisonous snakes or the snake.

01:11:38:00 - 01:12:00:09

Guinevere

And if you if you have God in you, it will bite you. And if it does bite you, God will take the venom out of you. But people die. It's very intense. And that obviously that's not how I grew up. There were no snakes, But the representation of a small community and the lead character is a young woman.

01:12:00:11 - 01:12:20:09

Guinevere

Her conflict, because her father is a pastor and she really believes in this stuff. That one is really beautifully done. It also it has Olivia Colman in it and some other great actors, so I highly recommend that one because it it caught the vibe that was that was good. Minus the snakes.

01:12:20:11 - 01:12:28:07

Heather

Feel like that that could be a general across most people's childhood. You're like it was a little bit off, but not the snakes.

01:12:28:09 - 01:13:06:10

Guinevere

Was a little weird and my family believed weird stuff. Me and weird neighbors snakes now and that one's upsetting from moment one and just gets more and more and more upsetting, but not in a creepy, gory way in this grounded way and this really kind of heartbreaking way that really examines and this is where I would I love to see beliefs and especially for people who grew up in it, When when you try to challenge that and how hard it is for your brain, if you were if you just born into something you've always known it and not just people who grew up in cults can identify with that.

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Guinevere

Anyone who grew up on any kind of organized religion or whatever your parents believed or the people who raised you believed, because almost always for people in close knit communities even or even in, you know, religious practicing religious families to deny it or decide that it doesn't quite make sense or it's not what you believe is to lose your entire community and often your family, and that that is well represented in that movie, for sure.

01:13:34:23 - 01:13:55:22

Guinevere

I'm in a discussion group for people who are raised in cults, and so I've had a lot of these conversations with predominantly women who say, We're still struggling. I asked someone, someone recently, what do you what do you still do that's culty, even though you're a long out? And actually a lot of people had an answer for it.

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Guinevere

I have an answer for that. And I haven't been in a cult since I was 11. I'm afraid of commercials.

01:14:02:04 - 01:14:04:06

Sarah

That's. Oh, yeah. And I can understand why.

01:14:04:06 - 01:14:30:20

Guinevere

After listening to your events nine months ago. Here's the thing. So for listeners who don't know my story, I was just raised in an environment where commercials were evil and like you were, there was a switch where you would turn off the commercials and it was a very stressful job. But really important because commercials had evil in them and like while people could get into your soul.

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Guinevere

So as an adult way out of that life, I will find myself like I am in like a bar that has a TV and the commercials on. I will stare at a commercial like like a dummy. And then you're like, What am I doing? Then I'm like, Who cares? And my God, commercials. Yeah, because I had never watched them as a kid.

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Guinevere

And so, like, there was this sort of mystery fear and just like commercials of silk wool, and I'm like, Oh.

01:15:01:12 - 01:15:02:07

Sarah

So many layers.

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Guinevere

I thought in the mini series about Waco, there are two, and one is like, we go and one we go. The aftermath. And in the second one I think that one is half dramatization and half actual interviews of people. Would it did that so few representations of cults do is it humanized David Koresh and his followers to the point that brought me to tears and it brought me to tears when it was happening.

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Guinevere

I didn't know much about it and it was pre-internet, I think it was like 96 or something. But I was

watching it unfold because it took like there was a standoff, you know, for like 50 days, 55 days, I think. And I was watching and I was like once they said the ATF was coming, if Janet Reno was coming, and I was like, oh, no, don't you know?

01:15:48:10 - 01:16:08:10

Guinevere

Of course, no one knows this because people in enforcement aren't trained about cults. Don't you know, if you if you give an apocalyptic cult a showdown, it's a prophecy. Like it's there's no way people are not going to die. People are going to be like, this is what he was talking about. I will sacrifice this, this and this.

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Guinevere

And that's an even quite what happened to them. You know, it was kind of more complicated and they kind of accidentally with them on fire. And it's a really tragic story. But I loved that it created empathy for them, even though, like they they did a lot of negative things. A lot of questionable things. But that doesn't mean everybody needs to die in an inferno.

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Guinevere

It means that people need to be saved. And, you know, it needs to they need to take away their guns or whatever. So I was very moved by that. I guess what I'm thinking as I'm listening to myself is either ones that have empathy for the people instead of being about a person coming into it for the first time, it's like, What are you trying to get out of it for the first time?

01:16:48:08 - 01:17:13:12

Guinevere

What am I just like living with the people who are This is their lives. And so and that's the same with them that follow. We never see anyone outside of this community. We only see these people. And I'm like, Why do we always need an inn that's, you know, someone who's normal? Ultimately, what I want people to feel is that it could be you given a certain set of circumstances in a time and place.

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Guinevere

It could be you. And I mean, especially if you were in your early twenties, in the late sixties and early seventies. Like I think everybody who thinks that a cult is above them should ask themselves, There were two things you could be at that time. You were either countercultural or you were the man and raving. And so I'm pretty sure I would have been countercultural.

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Guinevere

And so given that, who knows what I would have encountered. And it was a time when, you

know, safety was kind of a it was a whole different framework, right? So I would get any number of party bands and they ended up at Spahn, Charlie Manson's ranch. It's kind of what happened to my mother. And here I am when I was writing my film, Charlie says, which is about the women who killed for Manson.

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Guinevere

I would ask myself all the time and like, Wow, this could have happened to me as a person in a time and a place. And I feel like right now there's so much instability is kind of like our it's our brand now as a human race. It's a totally different vibe from 1968, But we are in a place that feels kind of really cult ready between governments and climate change and all the bullshit that's coming down from that.

01:18:23:10 - 01:18:36:16

Guinevere

There's a desperate need or I think, urge to be like, Can I just go create my own community? Can I Is there a way out of this? Is the way to make sense of this? Is there a way to not live with this anxiety every day? So I feel like right now we're very ready culture.

01:18:36:18 - 01:18:57:12

Heather

Yeah, it makes sense. There's a book called The Storm Before the Calm, and it's about how we live in cyclical times in terms of political shifts and then cultural shifts. And in this moment in time, we're at the intersection of both a cultural shift and a political shift which creates massive turmoil. And it's yeah, the book was like, it's going to get worse.

01:18:57:14 - 01:18:58:04

Guinevere

Before it gets.

01:18:58:04 - 01:19:00:19

Heather

Better. And I'm like, Oh.

01:19:00:21 - 01:19:04:15

Guinevere

Well, we have to be wiped out and start over, I guess.

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Heather

So dinosaurs or style, right?

01:19:06:20 - 01:19:15:12

Guinevere

Like this. And it's not funny to people who have kids, but I'm like, I'm 55 and I don't have kids. Like when this goes down, I'm going to be dead.

01:19:15:18 - 01:19:38:04

Heather

I was really looking at the things that like after you said this idea of the humanization, and I was looking at them through those lens like I was watching Waco before we convened today and going, Oh yeah, they really are looking at, well, how could this be? Like there's people who, heaven says, you had this house in Hawaii and this other job and now you're here.

01:19:38:06 - 01:19:59:01

Heather

And even though the person isn't always happy with, like the outcome, his fervent belief of this person to say like he just knows more than anything that anyone that I ever witness and just feeling like it's really real feelings and a real person and not being sensation like. But everyone felt really real.

01:19:59:03 - 01:20:28:14

Guinevere

That you don't need to give someone drugs or, you know, starve them or deprive them of sleep to have them just want it maybe need to believe in something and and follow it. And that's the kind of person that I feel is kind of heartbreaking. Like people who are really open to beliefs and truth and new ways of living are the most vulnerable people to these abusive, coercive people.

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Guinevere

And that that to me is heartbreaking, that those might as well be children. Yeah. With you in terms of their openness and their vulnerability. I mean, it's so far from who I am because I because of how I was raised, I think if anything even smacks a little bit of doctrine, I'm just like, nope, I come by and like, so I can't even put myself in the shoes of someone who would be susceptible to a cult because their upbringing.

01:20:51:23 - 01:21:09:07

Guinevere

Yes, but I try to to really keep that empathy, because I know because we all know people who are passionate about something, even if it's a really small thing that is in a big spiritual thing. Being passionate about stuff is what keeps us what gets us out of bed in the morning. You know.

01:21:09:09 - 01:21:32:14

Heather

I remember the thing that made me the most cynical about people's actions was when we were

brought to a Baptist church and the kids who brought us got to spin a wheel and get a prize. And then I was like, Bullshit, if I'm coming here to be like two, to come to this organization to talk about love and whatever, then, but you are like coercing people with prizes, then I don't think this is a real deal.

01:21:32:14 - 01:21:34:08

Heather

So and I was probably ten.

01:21:34:12 - 01:21:35:21

Guinevere

I was like, No.

01:21:35:23 - 01:21:42:03

Heather

Logic. Brain says no, this is a bad idea. And so have been as such since then.

01:21:42:05 - 01:22:08:11

Sarah

Which I appreciated. My sister because there's moments where I like in my twenties, I was definitely a searcher. Now I know that I was dealing with generalized anxiety disorder, but as a young 20 year old person, I just needed an answer to feel better. And so I totally was could have fallen into paths and even did some like personal development courses that now I look back and I'm like, Whew, I'm glad I didn't continue down that path because it was kind of like Nexium style stuff.

01:22:08:11 - 01:22:27:05

Sarah

It wasn't Nexium, but but I remember having calls with Heather and her being like, Are you sure Sarah Like Landmark. It was like it was a landmark style. It was called Choices that I was in. But yeah, it's like you're in a room full of people. You have these coaches who have no training in psychology whatsoever and you're baring your deepest, darkest secrets.

01:22:27:05 - 01:22:42:02

Sarah

And it was wild. But at the time I was like, Yeah, look, everybody's so happy and my auntie did it and she's in such a good spot now. And it was like it just kind of rippled through her family and this thing of will bring somebody with you, but don't tell them what happens because they need to do it on their own journey.

01:22:42:02 - 01:22:43:18

Sarah

And so is the secret ness.

01:22:43:20 - 01:22:48:14

Guinevere

This red flags every so many red flags.

01:22:48:15 - 01:22:49:16

Sarah

I was like, Girl, Heather.

01:22:49:16 - 01:22:51:14

Heather

When you come home, I was like, No.

01:22:51:15 - 01:23:06:14

Sarah

And she was very adamant about it. It's that love bombing aspect of it too. And just you make these new friends. But it was bizarre. I look back, I was put into a like you go to a hotel and I was like roomed with some random person. Like it was just insane.

01:23:06:16 - 01:23:25:12

Guinevere

Right? A few years ago, a good friend of mine, he got invited by people he met at a conference or something to do a landmark thing, and it was free. And we spent the whole day there. And he and he was like, Wow, that was exhausting. But it was really cool. And he's like, But they gave me this whole contract to sign to go to the next one.

01:23:25:12 - 01:23:44:08

Guinevere

I'm like, You're going to Another one is like, Yeah, I met these really cool people and they said they would sponsor me. And I was like, Okay, I'm like, Let me see that. It was like a contract signing away liability. This is one part that says if you ever have suffered from anxiety, depression, had suicidal thoughts like you know, we're not responsible for triggering those things.

01:23:44:08 - 01:24:04:01

Guinevere

And I was like, Bro, you've had all these things like, I'm not going to see the C-word. Like, just don't go. And he was like, Oh, all right. And he's like, I'm going to go. Do I need to say that? It's like it's a cult, but it's like it's like an MLM cult, you know, because like, because, you know, the first one's free and then someone's going to sell to you.

01:24:04:01 - 01:24:44:12

Guinevere

And then he's like, I cried for a while. These people are like, Yes and no. That is not a breakthrough. That is a breakdown. Yes, I am watching the show Painkiller, which is about Oxy, contin and the rise of it. And I just I knew all this because I'd read about it, but seeing it the way that his sort of stroke of genius was to create these pharmaceutical reps who were just these young, attractive women who were just motivated to sell, sell, sell, and they brought on new little proteges that then, you know, that created this whole sort of army of hotties, you know, who were just browbeating doctors into prescribing more oxy.

01:24:44:14 - 01:24:50:19

Guinevere

I was like, Cool, Yeah, super cool to me. But like many. But yeah.

01:24:50:21 - 01:25:06:09

Heather

The idea of like future shows about cults, about, you know, really capturing the personal side of of it. But is there anything else that you think that is kind of missing? I mean, obviously get rid of the we don't need to have human sacrifice.

01:25:06:11 - 01:25:28:20

Guinevere

Yeah it's funny. So in my film, Charlie says my project was really to humanize, especially these three women, Manson girls. I'm putting that in air quotes for listeners and, you know, just sort of seen as one like woo woo, stupid girl, like murderer or fun like cartoon character. So it was really in that movie trying to show the journey.

01:25:28:22 - 01:25:55:20

Guinevere

Yeah, trying to make the journey empathetic or to create empathy for the journey and make them individuals and not just interchangeable people, which they were all very different people. But what was funny is that I had written in the script tons of kids and scenes with kids because that's how I grew up, and that is often a hallmark of these kinds of groups because the way it's going to keep on is by making more of us.

01:25:55:22 - 01:26:13:02

Guinevere

And at some point we just had a big budget slash and they were like, We can't we can't have all these kids. Can you can you rewrite and write around it? I get so upset and they don't really know why. At first I was like, kids, whatever. The kids are the heart of the story. They know kids are really hard to work with and expensive.

01:26:13:02 - 01:26:31:15

Guinevere

And then I was like, Oh, because it's me and my because I was in erasure of like my experience

and where I come from in this story, which was fine. But I do also what I have not seen, and I'm writing an adaptation of my own book, which is a lot of kids in a go is kids. Yeah.

01:26:31:17 - 01:27:05:19

Guinevere

People who are raised in in any of these kinds of groups, how they deal, what they really believe, where those cracks start to show if, if at all, and what it means to not have chosen a belief system. And because you're a kid, as was the case with me, not ever really have it explained to you. Yeah. I mean for people who grew up you know in in the sort of extreme forms of any religion and all of them have extreme forms that could be called could can be considered cults at least there's a Bible.

01:27:06:01 - 01:27:08:03

Sarah

Mhm. Yeah. There's a book to read.

01:27:08:05 - 01:27:29:02

Guinevere

A guitar or the Koran or whatever. But you know, for a lot of it it's just like whatever gibberish comes out of some adult's mouth and I would love to see that represented it kind of, I mean I guess my book is going to kind of be like that because I don't. Because you don't ever. I never we never I didn't realize until writing this book and having people ask me, what did this cult believe in that I don't really know.

01:27:29:06 - 01:27:32:01

Heather

Yeah. Why would you at that age?

01:27:32:03 - 01:27:36:04

Guinevere

Yeah, they were just like, do what you're told and to think about. Yeah, No.

01:27:36:06 - 01:27:36:10

Heather

No.

01:27:36:10 - 01:27:51:19

Sarah

Exactly. I am curious, since you did you know you were born into the Lyman family, what was your process of realizing that it was a cult? And then how did you ultimately. Well, I know because I read your book, but how did you ultimately leave?

01:27:51:21 - 01:28:14:14

Guinevere

That is two separate answers. So ultimately, how I left was that my mother left with the man that she was with in the in the middle of the night escape style. And they sent me to live with her, which I did not want to do because I, you know, was raised in a community where most people didn't live with their biological parents.

01:28:14:14 - 01:28:33:11

Guinevere

So I didn't really know my mother very well. And my mother wasn't that cool. She didn't have much sense. And I kind of had more status than my mother through the people that I was friends with, etc.. I'm a light at this point, to be clear, but it was extremely hierarchical and it did not take a genius to see where the power was.

01:28:33:13 - 01:28:53:03

Guinevere

But I was forced to leave and it was very, very, very, very sad about that. And so I make a perhaps dark joke that can I really call myself a cult survivor if I beg to stay, which I literally said, yes, I can. I know I can. But it's kind of funny because we were like, How did you escape?

01:28:53:03 - 01:29:00:08

Guinevere

But I'm like, I beg to stay. And they wouldn't let me. It's not the same story, but that's.

01:29:00:08 - 01:29:04:15

Sarah

All you knew. So, like, make sense. Like that. Was your family all you knew? Yeah.

01:29:04:17 - 01:29:21:20

Guinevere

And then in terms of when I realized that it was a cult, so it completely erased it. Once I realized that it was just too crazy for most people, too, it just made me too weird. I was already so weird, you know, just from being growing up this way, like the way address music. I knew the way I made eye contact.

01:29:21:20 - 01:29:34:06

Guinevere

The everything about me was so weird. It took a lot of, like, studying and, like, figuring out how to look normal and past basically. Look at me now. Yeah, I look like someone who grew up in a cult.

01:29:34:08 - 01:29:36:13

Sarah

I would never guess it.

01:29:36:15 - 01:29:37:03

Heather

You've done very.

01:29:37:03 - 01:29:56:16

Guinevere

Well. So all through high school, I just didn't talk about it. And then when I went to college, all of a sudden it was, you know, the who had the most fucked up childhood Olympics. And I was winning once I realized that, you know, I was just there. Lawrence Where there's, like, rich kids who were like, you know, my therapist was fucking my mom.

01:29:56:16 - 01:30:19:08

Guinevere

And I'm like, You want a therapist? And like, everybody, this was investigated. And so kind of like, I don't know, she stole my mom's car and crashed it into blah, blah, blah. You know, I'm like, you know how to drive around. But then I had this story and it was it was really, you know, it got a lot of traction, but I was still calling it a commune.

01:30:19:10 - 01:30:49:12

Guinevere

And that's not what we called it growing up. We just called it the communities. The word cult was not it was on my radar. I mean, but I thought Jim Jones was a cult, right? I know that any different from now. And more people. And we didn't all die and it wasn't in Guyana. So I finally at 22, I went to therapy for the first time and I was just kind of giving her like my back story on what I how I grew up.

01:30:49:14 - 01:31:10:19

Guinevere

And she listened and then she said, that's that's not a commune. You're describing a cult. And I was literally in my head anyway. I was like, rude. That is like, how dare you call the family? I grew up in a cult, and she gave me this newsletter from the Cult Awareness Network, and I read that and I was like, These people are so they don't even know what they're talking about.

01:31:10:19 - 01:31:29:10

Guinevere

They're just against any group of people who aren't living like, you know, like normal people do. But then I g she kept giving it to me and I kept reading it and I'm just like, Oh, okay, well, if a cult is, then that is what I grew up in. And so but it took me until I was 22.

01:31:29:10 - 01:31:58:19

Guinevere

So I had been out for 11 years to, to realize it was a cult. And even then I was like, Oh, that

seems so mean now. And even now when I see that word, I know that some of them, some of my generation, some of the older generation are hearing me talk or do you know and I'm sure pissing them off, you know, and I feel that all these years later, I feel that like it doesn't feel right yet.

01:31:58:19 - 01:32:04:16

Guinevere

It's like my child self is I don't see them and I don't like call it what it is, you know.

01:32:04:18 - 01:32:27:21

Sarah

Well, you mentioning your child self, like I found in your book that there was like a, a fondness of living on the farm. That was something that I found in the, the way that you were describing some of the choices you got to do and the things that you did living on the farm. And then there was this was it called the list God's List of Lords of the Lords list of films that you all had to watch.

01:32:27:23 - 01:32:38:03

Sarah

And I found it really interesting that then you are now a filmmaker. So I was curious like, did some of that, you know, lead you to the career you chose?

01:32:38:05 - 01:32:59:13

Guinevere

I never thought about that until recently, until I went public with the idea that I was raised with this Lords list. But probably or it's chicken egg, because I, I loved those movies. I loved other old movie stars. But it was more that I thought, you know, I want to be Katharine Hepburn, I want to be Lauren Bacall.

01:32:59:13 - 01:33:17:11

Guinevere

Like, I want more. I think maybe want to be an actor more than maybe a filmmaker. And certainly I'm loving those movies. As a kid, I didn't really understand what a screenwriter was. I think I thought actors wrote movies. I don't know. I think a lot of adult people still think that. I really think there's a whole bunch of us.

01:33:17:11 - 01:33:43:07

Guinevere

SCHMO So it's I think it made me into a critic, cause similarly with the music that he issued, we had to write to him, him being the leader of the call. We had to write to him what we thought and it had to be original and it had to be, you know, And so it also it just turned me it changed my brain at a young age to have something to say about what I was absorbing.

01:33:43:09 - 01:34:00:07

Guinevere

And I think despite a kind of spotty home schooling, education, that's a really good thing to train a young brain to do. I mean, to wake us up in the middle of the night a bit much to like have to write these letters every time a new music collection was was issued, because it was a lot of pressure.

01:34:00:09 - 01:34:06:04

Guinevere

But it also turned me into a critical thinker. I'm at nine now.

01:34:06:07 - 01:34:07:23

Sarah

It's like your writing skills at.

01:34:07:23 - 01:34:08:07

Heather

Nine.

01:34:08:12 - 01:34:15:02

Sarah

Early at nine. Analyzing a film at nine is just I was watching the characters, so.

01:34:15:04 - 01:34:16:04

Heather

It was so different.

01:34:16:07 - 01:34:18:15

Sarah

Little different, Very different.

01:34:18:17 - 01:34:41:14

Guinevere

Yeah, We were watching, you know, to have and Have Not and Casablanca and all of Katharine Hepburn movies, Jimmy Cagney movies and everything. Cary Grant is in everything. Betty Davis is in. Like, that was my whole constellation. Those are my characters, different categories for sure. And recently, how I learned to read because I don't remember it and I don't remember anything formal.

01:34:41:16 - 01:34:47:04

Guinevere

And I remember that we were allowed to watch Sesame Street. I feel like Sesame Street also raised me.

01:34:47:06 - 01:34:48:02

Sarah

I was raised.

01:34:48:07 - 01:34:56:03

Heather

I was raised by. Yeah, we both raised by Sesame Street. So. Wow. Welcome. Welcome to the club. You go on, everyone fund public television.

01:34:56:03 - 01:35:12:19

Guinevere

Please raise us and give me because they would do those segments that were partially in Spanish or teaching, you know, a Spanish word. It also kind of trained my young brain to think like, oh, there's more than one language to speak. And just Sesame Street is amazing.

01:35:12:19 - 01:35:32:07

Heather

Yes. You know, you talk about that. You went to a psychologist for the first time or therapist for the first time when you were 22. You know, when you started to realize, oh, maybe this is a cult. How was your recovery process then once you started to kind of name it for what it was and then like, how did that have an impact on your mental health?

01:35:32:09 - 01:35:53:04

Guinevere

Well, I hate therapy, and I'm very grateful to that woman. But I only lasted a few more sessions. And then, you know, every few years I'd be in a relationship where she would say, you know, not not like a full on ultimatum, but like, you need to be in therapy or it's going to be hard for me to be in a relationship with you.

01:35:53:04 - 01:36:16:02

Guinevere

So it sort of mandated therapy and globetrotting over the years was a hard thing is and this makes me want to quit what I do and become a therapist who is sensitive to these issues. I have so much to explain. Yes, for a therapist, can you kind of even their head around how I grew up and even when I have gotten there, I swear I wrote a book just so I could give it to a therapist.

01:36:16:06 - 01:36:50:18

Guinevere

Like you read this book, this book time. But anyway, would it have gotten there? People still don't understand this really basic fact. It's even hard for me to articulate. But the average therapist will always kind of target my relationship with my with my mother as a thing that needs

healing. Hmm. And I seem to impress upon anyone that if you're raised in a culture where that relationship, does it matter that much like, yes, she did me a lot of harm outside of that.

01:36:50:23 - 01:37:11:06

Guinevere

But there's not a primal thing in me, and I don't think anyone wants to accept it that it's possible if we do not reach out with their biological mother, that there will not be necessarily be a connection. Maybe people who are not their birth parents are like, Well, that's just a person. Yeah. Yeah. You know, there's not like we look alike in some ways, but it's not that's not the person that gives me those feelings.

01:37:11:08 - 01:37:30:13

Guinevere

And and so that part is always hard to examine. I don't want to talk about my mother like that is not the most important thing to to recover from. I think that to be honest, the thing that helped me the most and has been the most healing is is relatively recent, which is going to these discussion groups that are organized by the LALICH Center.

01:37:30:15 - 01:37:50:14

Guinevere

I don't know if it's familiar with you on your language, but if you watch any documentaries, you'll see her and every other one she's she's like a cult expert epithet in quotes. Just because it's a weird thing to be is a lot more than that. She's a sociology professor and, you know, an amazing person, and she has this place called the Center for Coercion and Control.

01:37:50:19 - 01:38:06:06

Guinevere

And they have support groups and they have workshops for people. You know, I'm in the one where people are raised like me, which is great, because at first I was like, I don't want to be in a support group with a bunch of people who joined cults and got out of them, like bless them, as they say in the South.

01:38:06:08 - 01:38:32:00

Guinevere

But like, those are the people that people like me are mad, you know? And so then and I'm not. And of course, you know, but I know a lot of those people, too. But it was such a relief to be like, I get to be in a group of people who who come from exactly my space. And even though it's all everything from children of God to Scientology to things you've never heard of like mine, and, you know, offshoots of Christian fundamentalism or Orthodox Judaism, the two by twos.

01:38:32:00 - 01:38:54:10

Guinevere

Anyway, it's like a, you know, a constellation, different kinds of cults. But we have so much in

common. It's amazing. And so that has been incredible. Yeah. And that I was like, wow, I haven't looked. I have been looking for this for my whole adult life. There's a whole baseline of understanding. And then it just it's a group.

01:38:54:10 - 01:39:17:20

Guinevere

It's not one on one therapy and it maybe it will get me as far as what I want therapy would. But it's the first time that I feel moved, I feel healed, I feel like I can see things and I've learned so much. And one of the things I've learned that I didn't know is that for a lot of people who are raised in cults, they they're extra vulnerable and they go right into another one without realizing it.

01:39:17:22 - 01:39:39:22

Guinevere

And that is often in the form of a quote unquote, life coach. Oh, yes. Yeah. And how insidious is that to be a person who preys on people who are just like, okay, I was raised to not have any ideas of my own and to be given an exact plan of exactly how to go throughout my day. And so now you're just going to prey on that person and just, you know, manipulate them and control them.

01:39:40:00 - 01:39:41:22

Guinevere

Shaking my head.

01:39:42:00 - 01:39:43:13

Sarah

I'm right there with you.

01:39:43:15 - 01:40:05:19

Guinevere

When I came across the Ledge Center, I was like, We'll see another cult disguised as a cult recovery space. I'm going to be pissed. But it's really, really not. And I can't recommend it enough. You know, just the trust I have in Jonah and the people who work for her. I actually now lead a writing workshop for some of the women, and the legacy of it is going to be so exciting.

01:40:05:19 - 01:40:34:00

Guinevere

So the recovery journey is a really tricky one for people who've been in cults, had called experiences, whether, you know, joined as adults or born in because there's not a lot of training in the mental health space. For example, one woman that is in one of the groups with me, actually two of them said this, that the therapist said something like, You need to keep a gratitude journal or a dream journal, or like, write down, write, write something every day as part of your healing process.

01:40:34:01 - 01:40:55:04

Guinevere

And in both of their cases, writing something every day to the leader of their home was part of the process. And so having to write something every day was very triggering for them, but they didn't quite know how to say that. And so I'm like, That should just be that's number one. Just check in with people about what the things they had in their in their code and make sure that you're not replicating it.

01:40:55:04 - 01:41:07:15

Guinevere

You know what I mean? And that's like so I mean it really sometimes I'm just going to quit, I'm going to go to school, I'm going to become a therapist. I have a therapist who knows all this stuff. I'm going to heal everybody. I'm busy.

01:41:07:17 - 01:41:14:14

Sarah

You got a lot going on. In your opinion, what would you suggest people do if they suspect that someone they love is in a cult?

01:41:14:16 - 01:41:46:07

Guinevere

I think the number one thing they're it's kind of like having an addict in your life is to not shut them out, to keep them, but especially for people in a cult, because they're going to need it if they're ever going to figure it out on their own, they're going to need someone to go to. And if you say, I can't, like you're in a cult and it's crazy and like, you need to get your shit together and buy, they're going to it's just going to further push them in and make them feel like they have nowhere to go.

01:41:46:09 - 01:42:02:03

Guinevere

So that's just one thing I would say is just be present and be in touch. And there's kind of I mean, that's the other thing about cults in the law that's really tricky is that, you know, if you're over 18, you're an adult and you can make your choices. And so that's another thing that Joanna's really working on.

01:42:02:08 - 01:42:25:00

Guinevere

And a few people I know in the cult space is changing coercion laws and changing law enforcement understanding of what that is, which domestic violence laws and especially law enforcement training has come really far with that. You know, just recognizing that if a woman, usually women seems like if their Nicole was me, but then when you get there, the woman's like, no, everything's fine.

01:42:25:02 - 01:42:52:00

Guinevere

Maybe it's not, you know, and and but in the case of coercion, it's in process of coercion. Laws need to be connected with human trafficking laws like cults and coercion. And that kind of manual labor can be considered human trafficking. And if it was, then we could actually we use those laws to get people out of things and to make some of these things a crime, because working for someone for free is not a crime.

01:42:52:01 - 01:42:53:20

Guinevere

And you know, it's created to write.

01:42:53:21 - 01:42:54:15

Heather

It's screenwriting.

01:42:54:19 - 01:43:14:21

Guinevere

Yeah. And I think the most important thing is if someone, you know, you think is in a cult, is it just like, well, like you were saying, even when Sarah was was doing this thing that you think is inadvisable, you can't just be like, don't do that. It's stupid. It'd be like, I'll be here.

01:43:15:00 - 01:43:23:14

Heather

Yeah, but it's but it's hard because I think your inclination is to be like, What are you doing? That's stupid. Don't do that. I'm probably did say those words.

01:43:23:15 - 01:43:24:17

Guinevere

I probably did.

01:43:24:19 - 01:43:25:19

Sarah

But you did.

01:43:25:19 - 01:43:34:14

Heather

I did. I can't help myself. I mean, because at the time, I'm just like, this seems odd and I don't think this is a good idea. And it's a lot of money. Like.

01:43:34:16 - 01:43:35:15

Sarah

You know. Yeah, there's money to have.

01:43:35:16 - 01:43:43:11

Heather

And so I just really I was into me like, I'm very cheap, so I'm like, I would never do that anyway because it's too much money.

01:43:43:13 - 01:43:46:14

Guinevere

But you're like, you're not comfortable for that reason. You're empty.

01:43:46:16 - 01:44:02:20

Heather

I'm like, now very cheap. So I'm like, I won't do that. But I think, like, you're right. Like if like your friend, you gave that example of your friends, like, I'm going to sign this contract, but like, you're, you're like, maybe, like, look at the things in this.

01:44:02:22 - 01:44:10:08

Guinevere

But like, you're literally the kind of person that even they're admitting it maybe might not be able to handle this image.

01:44:10:08 - 01:44:30:00

Heather

Yeah. And so I think, you know, being that support and also being like just like be critical of this could be maybe approach like rather than shutting it down or shutting them down because, you know, people then sometimes double down then are like, well, if you think that I can't do this, I'm going to do it and do it really good, Right.

01:44:30:02 - 01:44:47:20

Guinevere

Right, right. And that's the danger, especially with someone you love, especially if it's a sibling. Like for those of us who have siblings and I have many, I learned at an early age that my younger sisters, I had to be very careful what I told them to do or not do, because then I thought it was a bad idea, would guarantee that they would do it.

01:44:48:00 - 01:45:15:15

Guinevere

I had to really learn how to be like, okay, well here's a little thought, but like no judges and, you know, and really kind of basically manipulate them into seeing things my way probably closely, depending on the kind of person you are, I can just push them further in. Another thing I learned from my support and discussion groups is that surprised me is that for a lot of people who are newly out of court, the thing that got them there, the switch flipped, was a got documentary.

01:45:15:20 - 01:45:33:10

Guinevere

Mm hmm. And especially during COVID, like COVID got a lot of people out of court because they were suddenly not able to be kept super busy and have all this doctrine in their ears all the time. But then this one guy actually said he was watching wild, wild country. And it was like, Oh, I think I'm in a cult.

01:45:33:10 - 01:45:50:13

Guinevere

And somebody else said the same thing about one of the Nexium documentaries. And I'm really out here railing against all these cult documentaries as kind of exploitive and, you know, human misery for entertainment. And why are they to crime? It's a whole different thing. And then I'm like, well, there's a small population of people who's actually saving their lives.

01:45:50:18 - 01:46:00:05

Guinevere

And so to bring it back to your question, if you think that someone you know is in a cult or getting sucked into a cult, show them a cult documentary. Hmm.

01:46:00:07 - 01:46:19:18

Sarah

That's how I realized that choices was cultish or or a cult because I watched the Nexium docs and I was like, That looks like the rooms that I was in. And obviously I wasn't in it anymore, but it gave me that, oh, interesting. And that's when I got interested in learning more about cults because I saw how I almost was in something that could have been really detrimental to my life.

01:46:19:19 - 01:46:40:12

Guinevere

Right. And could have gotten away darker than what it seemed like, which is kind of a scam to get your money in and you spend it yourself. So that actually watching cult documentaries, if you if the person's getting sucked into something and you still have access to let them watch something, it's really, I think, eye opening. And it's great because Nexium looks like so many sort of corporate retreats, right.

01:46:40:12 - 01:46:47:00

Guinevere

And and, and while our country looks like I don't know where how they started, but.

01:46:47:02 - 01:46:48:16

Sarah

Some sort of yoga thing or something like that.

01:46:48:16 - 01:46:49:01

Guinevere

Was yoga.

01:46:49:06 - 01:46:51:15

Sarah

Meditation retreat or something, right? Yeah.

01:46:51:17 - 01:47:19:22

Guinevere

You'll learn meditation, I think is you turning into this dangerous space. If it had, it maybe always has been just you know, if there weren't gurus in your life. Mm mm. Yeah. Maybe examine that, you know. Exactly. And in the life coach space, a couple of the things that come out recently is the acting coach that turned into a life coach that turned into just the person who controls your life and you're working for them for free.

01:47:19:22 - 01:47:35:18

Guinevere

Like I have a friend who, you know, like so many people, moved to L.A. to be an actress when she was 19 or 20, started working with this acting teacher who then sort of became a life coach. And then there was this kind of hierarchy, and then all of a sudden she's like, It's five years later. I had made no money.

01:47:35:18 - 01:47:57:08

Guinevere

I had spent all my credit card money on my trips to India. I was working for her for free, and that was an acting teacher. So I think and that was a woman. And that's another thing that I think is really interesting that's happening is that women are really empowered now to be cult leaders to, oh dear, you want to do an equal opportunity.

01:47:57:08 - 01:47:59:15

Heather

Everyone can be a cult leader.

01:47:59:17 - 01:48:05:14

Guinevere

Safe just because it's not. It's a is a woman like, you know, they're fighting their evil powers, too.

01:48:05:16 - 01:48:13:13

Heather

Before we wrap up, I just I don't know. I have this question. Why you think people are so obsessed with cults.

01:48:13:18 - 01:48:40:12

Guinevere

It's a question that I write about and think about all the time. I think that it's hard for me to wrap my head around why people are so obsessed with cults. Because my experience of it has been so intense, which is that I just stopped talking about it at some point because people are either weirded out or they're just like so curious that it's it's dehumanizing because of the way it's been represented in documentaries and in in film and TV.

01:48:40:14 - 01:49:03:18

Guinevere

It feels like the same way people watch True Crime, which is like, Well, my life may have these problems and have this fucked up ness about, but like, I'm not like those weirdos and it's just the extreme of that. Or like, you know, all the true crime things about all the murders and blah, blah, blah and saying, okay, so like my relationship isn't that great right now, but like, nobody's thrown anyone down a staircase and then disposing of their body in the river, you know?

01:49:03:23 - 01:49:28:04

Guinevere

So I do think it's just that it's like the human need to take solace in the suffering of others. And I think it has a lot to do with representation. And I think it has everything to do with Charles Manson, because the people weren't even talking about that word cult or they had him become something to be feared until Charles Manson and the way that the media ran with that and the way that people still talk about it.

01:49:28:05 - 01:49:50:00

Guinevere

Yeah, Anyway, the people still care about this thing that happened so long ago. I think it just like it just went into our into our cultural understanding and we've never recovered what's do really bad things. Yeah. Yeah. I mean that's the ones we know about. This is what I want to see. I want to see a documentary about a cult that's just fine and hasn't committed any crimes.

01:49:50:00 - 01:50:07:12

Guinevere

They're just interesting people living their lives because you know they exist. It's just that we don't know about them because they didn't do anything bad. And they're going to be keeping a private life, you know, They mean. Yeah, I mean, would anyone watch that or be like, what? They don't do anything creepy. Like, forget it. They're just like people living an alternative life that's really working and has been for decades.

01:50:07:12 - 01:50:10:18

Guinevere

That's boring. I'm like, No, that's fascinating.

01:50:10:19 - 01:50:32:06

Heather

But but it's also like you said, like I think with that, but also with Jim Jones and this idea of like the drinking the Kool-Aid becomes something that like words enter our vocabulary, that we don't link back to something that actually was really that was a really horrible thing that happened because so many people died. But this obsession with cult but also this idea of like these words just start to become part of our vernacular.

01:50:32:06 - 01:50:35:02

Heather

We don't even realize we're actually talking about cults, even on our day to.

01:50:35:02 - 01:50:53:14

Guinevere

Day become this person. It just happened to me a couple weeks ago. I was in a group of people that I had just met, and we were just having a casual conversation waiting for something. And two women in the course of a 15 minute conversation used drank the Kool-Aid in two totally different ways. And I this is the kind of person I've become.

01:50:53:14 - 01:51:15:13

Guinevere

I'm like, I just I can't I can't help but mention that that that the term drank the Kool-Aid refers to a time when 970 people committed suicide, 250 of which were children. And it was a huge human tragedy. And they were both like really like they had no idea. One of them was like in your twenties, One was like in our thirties.

01:51:15:15 - 01:51:27:10

Guinevere

I had no idea the one woman said, Oh, I thought it was just like when you go to a party and like everybody's drinking the Kool-Aid that has the same amount of gin in it. So like everybody is on the same wavelength.

01:51:27:12 - 01:51:29:06

Sarah

Wow.

01:51:29:08 - 01:51:50:04

Guinevere

Mass murder, suicide. Mass suicide. 973 people on the well in Guyana. She was like. And they were both. And then the other one said something else about where she thought it was. And they were both like, I'm so sorry. And I'm like, I just lost my job to, like, point out to be about how this kind of stuff just seeps into our society.

01:51:50:04 - 01:51:53:19

Guinevere

There's a documentary out right now called How to Become a Cult Leader.

01:51:53:21 - 01:51:55:04

Sarah

I've watched a little bit of it.

01:51:55:04 - 01:52:14:06

Guinevere

Yeah, I see no way unto the is completely camp satire. How to become a cult leader has like five or six episodes where it's a narrator who's like, You should do this. And then it's about, you know, Heaven's Gate, or You should do that. And it's about Jim Jones. And it's so glib and so like tongue cheek and it's narrated by Peter Dinklage.

01:52:14:07 - 01:52:30:19

Guinevere

We love And I look at that and I'm like, no, this is the this is actually I can't believe it's coming out now. This is this is like cartoonish example of how how poorly cults and how seriously cults can be taken. So I encourage everyone to be mad at that. Okay.

01:52:30:21 - 01:52:32:00

Sarah

I won't continue.

01:52:32:02 - 01:52:49:10

Guinevere

I don't know why people are obsessed with cult. I don't have a good answer. I wish I understood and I wish I understood how to for myself be more than that. I mean, I know I'm with it, but but I, I feel like for a lot of people, that's what I am. That is, again, it's just kind of like reductive.

01:52:49:10 - 01:53:03:14

Guinevere

Totally at this moment where I feel like I'm talking to someone and somebody told them, like I always, when they see a look in their eye, like, I'm fascinating. I'm like, I'm not that fascinating. I mean, I am. But like somebody going to you're just like.

01:53:03:18 - 01:53:04:14

Sarah

Waiting for you to.

01:53:04:14 - 01:53:05:06

Guinevere

That.

01:53:05:08 - 01:53:05:18

Sarah
Yeah.

01:53:06:00 - 01:53:13:15

Guinevere

Or they're obsessed with my film, American Psycho. Either way, they're just, like, waiting for me to shut up so they can. But that's.

01:53:13:17 - 01:53:27:12

Sarah

Oh, I love it. Well, you've given us a wealth of information about cults and your. Your view and your world. Is there any other resources that you feel like people should investigate if they maybe are called Survivor or know somebody who is?

01:53:27:14 - 01:53:59:17

Guinevere

I highly recommend several cult podcasts. There are so many and they're not all they're not all high quality, but as a connoisseur now, because I've been on so many of them, I recommend ones like this one that's from this Australian woman called Let's talk about sex as a see this dubious pun and I did tell her that I thought that, but she just she's she's just really insightful and knows a lot and she has a different guest on every week.

01:53:59:19 - 01:54:18:06

Guinevere

And I feel like for people who are recovering it, it it's, it's like people who are a little further along on the journey who can talk about. And I feel like there's a lot of that. You know, those podcasts I think can be really helpful for people and finding people like you. And that's my that's my church.

01:54:18:07 - 01:54:22:06

Sarah

Any last things that you feel like we might have missed that you want to say.

01:54:22:08 - 01:54:28:01

Guinevere

I wish I grew up wearing white, flowy. Yeah, everyone wears white.

01:54:28:03 - 01:54:31:02

Heather

I'm like, so impractical. I mean, that's my my.

01:54:31:05 - 01:54:33:00

Sarah

You wore overalls, right?

01:54:33:02 - 01:54:49:18

Guinevere

Like when I think of, like, you know, the following and the path and, like, all these, like, down culture, there's always just this. Like, there's a uniform that's like, ooh. And I'm like, We didn't have fancy things like that. We were just down overalls trying to, like, get through the mud, you know?

01:54:49:19 - 01:54:54:01

Sarah

So it's not as, as ethereal as we all see. I feel intelligent.

01:54:54:01 - 01:55:10:15

Guinevere

So that's something it's just it's just yeah, it's not as fancy and organized when you have a lot of people living together, there's just a lot of drudgery. And that's another thing that I would love to see. I made this joke the other day. I'm like trying to adapt my book and I'm like, You know what? I'm just going to make a movie.

01:55:10:15 - 01:55:29:01

Guinevere

Like, there's this famous Belgian movie called Jean Diamond where she it's just this housewife, you know, for almost 2 hours just doing her mundane tasks. And I was like, I'm going to give the people what they're going to what movie? It's just me or me as a kid doing laundry for 20 minutes on screen. Yes.

01:55:29:03 - 01:55:34:08

Heather

One very last question. Where can people find out more about you and your book and follow you online?

01:55:34:09 - 01:55:51:13

Guinevere

I must present social media wise is Instagram. I'm working on Tik Tok, but that's only because I have a younger sister. I have been on a lot of podcasts in the last couple months. All really different, all really interesting. This one has a totally different POV than the other ones I've been on. Some of them are 2 hours long.

01:55:51:13 - 01:56:01:14

Guinevere

I did one with Sarah. Anybody who come from Alexia, I'm like, Some of them are with people who have been in Cult, Some of them are with like therapists do it podcasts. Like there's a whole lot of me talking out there. If you're interested.

01:56:01:16 - 01:56:23:19

Heather

We'll make sure people can find you for sure. Anyways, thank you so much for joining us today. I'm Brains. It was a pleasure and thank you so much for sharing your story with us. I'm so happy that Sarah is actually the person who heard Gwen appear on another podcast and then said she must come on this podcast. And I was like, You're never going to get her.

01:56:23:21 - 01:56:53:11

Heather

And then she just returned it. And I'm so grateful because I think this is a really good conversation not just because, you know, deep dive into film and TV and like how we'd want better representation. But really just there are things about the experience of going through being born into a cult and how different that is, and then the impact of that and like what you knew, like even that the conversation about, well, therapy is harder because they don't understand where I came from or the values that I was given is just so fascinating.

01:56:53:11 - 01:57:18:11

Sarah

Or they make me do the things that I had to do in the cult. So that was my recovery and that is the opposite of what I need. I found one of your fascinating and not in a like, Oh my God, tell me about how so weird that you're in a cult. But just like I like how she talked about it in the podcast, I listen to her, so I immediately got her book and it was a totally unique way of seeing into the life of somebody who grew up in a cult as a kid.

01:57:18:11 - 01:57:32:09

Sarah

And I thought her perspective of like the language we use now about things and how to like, be mindful, like saying things like, I drank the Kool-Aid, came from an awful place. And I've often lots of things we, we say in our lexicon is.

01:57:32:12 - 01:57:33:15

Heather

Yeah, from places.

01:57:33:15 - 01:57:35:16

Sarah

That are terrible and you don't know.

01:57:35:18 - 01:57:40:23

Heather

And the connection of like how much we've connected cults to true crime.

01:57:41:00 - 01:57:42:07

Sarah

Yes. Yes.

01:57:42:11 - 01:58:03:16

Heather

And we've kind of lumped everything together. Not really. Again, like really seeing like, well, these are people and we're like dehumanizing everyone. And I'm like, yeah, we often do that and not thinking about like I was I'm working on a pitch for something true crime that's done in a way that's really talking about mental health, which, you know, I'm hopeful, very hopeful that it's something I get made.

01:58:03:18 - 01:58:22:18

Heather

I have a brilliant producer and I wrote this opening scene and he's like, We just have to always remember that the people in the story have families and loved ones. MM And we've be careful about how we portray them. And I think a lot of times in these true crime stories and in these cults stories, we don't see the human there.

01:58:22:19 - 01:58:30:11

Heather

And it's almost it's just for the sensationalism. And I'm like, I think we have to be more mindful of what we're putting out in the world.

01:58:30:13 - 01:58:33:13

Sarah

Yeah, Anything you want to highlight that's really exciting for you right now.

01:58:33:15 - 01:58:37:11

Heather

Just excited that the writers strike is over.

01:58:37:13 - 01:58:43:07

Sarah

Heather's blessing tied to the desk to step in writing them stories.

01:58:43:09 - 01:58:54:05

Heather

Yeah, it's been. I am very tired right now and yes, I'm not treating my brain well, but I am going

to get the things done because the things are needed to be done right now.

01:58:54:09 - 01:59:05:12

Sarah

Well, I'm excited just that it's fall and I've been getting to pull out my cozy fall sweaters and jackets and it's such a beautiful time of the year. So my daughter asked the other day, What's your favorite season? Um, I think it's all.

01:59:05:14 - 01:59:10:07

Guinevere

Like, Yeah, that's a good one. That's all.

01:59:10:09 - 01:59:12:05

Sarah

Oh, I love it. Anyway.

01:59:12:07 - 01:59:27:23

Heather

So I'm going to wrap this up for us. Thank you for listening to today's episode of Brains. Brains is hosted and produced by Heather and Sara Taylor and Mixed and Mastered by Tony Basil. Our theme song is by our little brother Darvish, and our graphics were created by perpetual motion.

01:59:28:02 - 01:59:43:14

Sarah

If you like what you hear, please rate and review us and tell your friends to tune in. You can reach us on all social platforms at Breen's podcast called VR, triple-A and its podcast. You can also go to our website Friends podcast dot com where you can contact us, subscribe and find out a little bit more about who we are and what we do.

01:59:43:18 - 01:59:45:12

Sarah

Until next time. I'm your host Sarah.

01:59:45:12 - 01:59:46:05

Heather

And I'm your host.

01:59:46:05 - 01:59:49:05

Guinevere

Heather Fine, You.