Good Cop, Bad Cop?

An Analysis of the Evaluative Language used by the Hosts of the True Crime Podcast *Crime Junkie* when Discussing Law Enforcement

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Åbo Akademi
2020

Åbo Akademi University – The Faculty of Arts, Psychology and Theology
Master's thesis abstract

Subject: English Language and Literature
Author: Ellen Seppälä
Title: Good Cop, Bad Cop? – An Analysis of the Evaluative Language used by the Hosts of the True Crime Podcast *Crime Junkie* when Discussing Law Enforcement
Supervisor: Brita Wårvik
During the twentieth century, podcasting was introduced as a new medium for keeping people informed as it was less restricted by time and place than e.g. radio. From the beginning, true crime, already a popular topic in other media, has been covered in podcasts. Podcast hosts can be seen to influence their audience in much the same manner as other media hosts do. As linguists Martin and White present, the way speakers evaluate behavior may lead their listeners to evaluate in a similar manner. The aim of this thesis is to study the way podcast hosts evaluate the behavior of law enforcement, i.e. either positively or negatively. Two analyses were conducted on seven transcribed episodes of the American true crime podcast *Crime Junkie*. Corpus linguistics was used to find frequencies of lexical items for law enforcement used by the podcast hosts. The corpus analysis was used as the starting point for the analysis of evaluative language, which was conducted using appraisal theory with a focus on the subcomponent judgement, exploring how law enforcement's behavior was judged by the podcast hosts in relation to polarity, keywords and prosodic features. The most frequently used terms for law enforcement include *police* and *sheriff*, which suggests that there is a difference of terms chosen by the hosts depending on the branch of law enforcement that was discussed in the podcast episode. The hypothesis that the podcast hosts would evaluate American law enforcement in a more negative than positive manner proved accurate. Mainly, law enforcement was described as *unreliable*, *dishonest* and *unjust*, although, interestingly, they were still seen as *competent* in some respects. The podcast hosts seem to show distrust in law enforcement. Media coverage on crime has been shown to influence public perception and opinion on crime and law enforcement, and this can be the case for podcasts as well. The language and vocabulary used by podcast hosts can be studied from various perspectives. In linguistics and media research, more studies need to be conducted on evaluative language by podcast hosts to determine whether they influence their audience like other media hosts tend to do, and whether or not this influence might affect how their listeners perceive, in this case, law enforcement. The abundance of 'fake news' around the globe signifies a clear need to be able to distinguish between reality and fiction and being aware of the media's influence.
Keywords: appraisal theory, podcast, true crime, American law enforcement, corpus linguistics, *Crime Junkie*

Date: 22.4.2020	Number of pages: 122

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1. Introduction

The twenty-first century saw the introduction of a new medium of providing information and reaching people around the globe, namely the podcast. Since its establishment in late 2004, podcasting has steadily been growing in popularity in recent years. One of the more popular topics featured in podcasts, according to statistics (see section 1.3.), is true crime. Having been a popular genre for decades, if not centuries, and a popular topic of numerous non-fiction books, documentaries, television series, and radio shows, it should come as no surprise that the genre transitions into podcasting as the medium grow in popularity. However, with the new medium comes a new approach to crime reporting, as podcasts' coverage of crime differs from other media in that it is freer, unrestricted, and often produced by non-law enforcement professionals. This dynamic raises questions about the way true crime is reported in podcasts and if the nature of the discussion can have an influence on podcast audiences.

In this thesis, I will analyze episodes from the American true crime podcast *Crime Junkie* in an attempt to find out how law enforcement is discussed by the podcast hosts. The focus will be on the vocabulary used to refer to law enforcement. This will then be situated in the context of the discussion of the podcast hosts and whether or not this discussion can be perceived as judgmental, either positively or negatively. Furthermore, this study functions as a trial for finding out whether podcasts can be researched from a linguistic perspective in a constructive way. This study will focus on two main aspects (1) the vocabulary used in the podcast to refer to law enforcement, and (2) the evaluative language used by the podcast hosts in their discussion in regard to law enforcement. Hence the study attempts to formulate answers to two main research questions:

(i) What are the main lexical items used to refer to law enforcement in the podcast *Crime Junkie* and which lexical items are the most prominent?
(ii) In what way is law enforcement discussed in the podcast using evaluative language? Is the evaluation more positive or negative?

Based on my experience and interest in listening to true crime podcasts, my hypothesis is that there will be more negative evaluation of law enforcement than positive evaluation. In addition to the answers to these two questions, an answer to a third question will be formulated in the discussion section, namely (iii) To what extent is law enforcement discussed that might have

an influence on the audience of the podcast? In relation to this question, I will also briefly discuss how there is a need for researching podcasts' influence on their audiences.

This study will apply corpus linguistics to investigate the vocabulary used in the podcast and appraisal analysis to study the kinds of positive and/or negative attitudes and statements in the discussion. Appraisal theory is applied in the analysis of the speakers' attitudes (in this study the focus is on *judgement*) towards the subject of law enforcement in regard to ethics and morality of human behavior.

The next sections in this study will detail background on American law enforcement structures and a discussion of research on the media's influence on the public; but before this, a definition and brief overview of true crime, podcasts, and true crime podcasts is in order to highlight the main topic of this study.

1.1. True crime

There is no simple definition of the true crime genre. Content which defines itself as true crime often takes a real crime and "bases the subsequent content around reconstructing that crime and engaging in sense-making around it" (Yardley et al. 2018). However, the format and style in which this is accomplished varies considerably. Yet, true crime is not a new genre. Even before true crime narratives appeared in film and television, the true crime genre had been steadily increasing in popularity for decades or centuries. Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1965) is seen by many as an antecedent to the modern true crime genre (Burger 2016), as it details the 1959 gory murder of a Kansas family. However, the fascination with true crime can be traced back to way before the 1960s.

Crime has been a fascination of the public since at least the Ancient Roman and Greek period. Dramatists of those periods depicted crimes such as murder and adultery in their plays, but the tragedy was not a whodunit story as much as it focused on "the nature of the crime and in what way […] the character [was] guilty" (Tetlow 2005: 140). Hence an interest in means and motive was apparent already then. With the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century, the true crime genre evolved to include publications such as pamphlets that detailed crimes that had been committed as a way of moralizing the public (Burger 2016). Interestingly, it is believed that the pamphlets had the adverse effect as people grew more interested in what in a person causes them to commit a crime than seeing their criminal actions as a moral lesson of wrong (Burger 2016). This, again, showed people's fascination with the sociology behind criminal deviance.

Almost five hundred years after these pamphlets introduced the public to crime narratives, the true crime genre has developed to include non-fiction books, films and documentaries, television series, and most recently, podcasts. Popular examples of true crime works include the Netflix documentary series *Making a Murderer* (2015), the non-fiction book *I'll Be Gone In the Dark* by Michelle McNamara (2018) and the film *Zodiac* (2007), and countless more examples.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, true crime is sometimes described as trashy or distasteful, indicating that the genre is morally repugnant and insensitive to the victims of crimes and their families as the genre turns their tragedies into entertainment (Hughes 2016). Similarly, according to Yardley et al. (2018: 6), existing research on the true crime genre suggests that "*what* it tells us about crime is distorted, overemphasizing violent crimes like homicide […]. [It] draws distinct lines between 'us' and 'them' – the law abiding and the criminal other." Seltzer (2007: 16) further states that modern true crime turns crime fact into crime fiction, and thus, true crime has become more entertainment than actual reality. In turn, true crime author Bill James states in an interview that "certainly there is something distasteful about [true crime]" (Hughes 2016); yet, he juxtaposes the distastefulness of discussing crime with the abhorrence of the crime itself, i.e. is it not distasteful to put the victim in that circumstance in the first place? And if we draw the line at distasteful, it would mean not investigating any crime at all because that in itself would be tasteless. James goes on to say that "[w]hat I find most offensive, honestly, is […] the assumption of moral superiority. […] people refuse to look at what really happens because 'well, you know, we are not the kind of people who take an interest in that kind of thing'" (Ibid.). There are then at least two sides to opinions on true crime; one that sees it as abhorrent and morally wrong to be interested in crime, and the other that sees disdain towards crime as synonymous with being blind to the cruelties of the world. No matter which opinion one favors, if any one of them, true crime narratives make for interesting research material because of their nature.

1.2. The podcast

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED* s.v. *podcast* 2019) defines 'podcast' as "[a] digital audio file of speech, music, broadcast material, etc., made available on the Internet for downloading." It is widely accepted that Adam Curry and Dave Winer invented podcasting when they recorded the first known podcast in 2004 (International Podcast Day 2016). The name *podcast* was in turn invented by *Guardian* reporter Ben Hammersley by combining *pod* from 'iPod' – the newest and most popular MP3 player at the time – with *-cast* from 'to broadcast'

(International Podcast Day 2016; Hammersley 2004). First created as self-help guides or a new way of providing information, the podcast has since evolved to include many more forms, including stories, know-hows, discussions, comedy, education, and more. Furthermore, since podcasts are not subject to the same temporal and spatial constraints as live broadcasts are, they can attract a widespread and more diverse audience than radio might (McClung and Johnson 2010; Madsen and Potts 2010). Depending on the subscription details, most podcasts are free to download or listen to on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or other channels. Podcasts are mostly funded by advertisements, sponsors or listener donations. According to AdvertiseCast, the industry average cost per 1,000 listeners for a 30 second ad is $18 (IAPAR 2020). Furthermore, many podcasts lead listeners to their Patreon pages whereby making a small donation to the podcast, one can get access to more material and bonus episodes. Today there are podcasts available in multiple topics, from education, sports, and film to technology, religion, and science, and in multiple languages around the world.

Despite being created in 2004, it is often stated that it was not until 2014 that podcasting went from being a niche activity to a mainstream media platform (Yardley et al. 2018: 2). The catalyst for this is often seen as the true crime podcast *Serial*. Presented by investigative journalist Sarah Koenig, *Serial* reinvestigated the 1999 murder of 18-year-old high school student Hae Min Lee and the subsequent conviction of her ex-boyfriend, Adnan Syed, for the crime (Ibid.). In *Serial,* Koenig set out to reinvestigate the case because Syed has always protested his innocence. The podcast became instantaneously popular when it reached five million downloads in record time (Ibid.), and even after a year after its release, in 2015, the podcast was reportedly downloaded 500,000 times a day (Berry 2015: 170). *Serial* can also be seen as a trailblazer for the true crime genre's introduction into podcasting.

In February 2019, *Podcast Insights* stated that there are over 660,000 podcasts on iTunes (Winn 2019) and in January 2020 this had risen to 850,000 (Winn 2020). These numbers indicate that over a span of eleven months, if counted as 30 days per month, 575 new podcasts were started each day. Moreover, if *Podcast Insights*' calculations are to be believed, it would indicate that there has been a 29% increase in new podcasts in about a year. These numbers alone point to a massive increase in popularity of podcasts. In a survey by Edison Research, it was reported that in the United States, as of 2019, 51% of the country's population reported having listened to a podcast. This is the first time since podcasting was introduced in 2004 that over half the American population are aware of podcasting and listening to at least one. Compared to 2018, there was an increase of an estimated 17 million people being aware of podcasting in 2019, with an estimated 20 million more listening to a podcast in 2019. On

average, more men than women reported having listened to a podcast in the last month when the survey was taken, with 36% versus 29%. Interestingly, 40% of listeners report being between ages 12-24 and 39% of listeners between 25and 54. Only 17% report being over the age of 55, signifying that podcasting is still a medium for the younger generation. The presented statistics are from "The Infinite Dial 2019 Survey" by Edison Research.

1.3. True crime podcasts

As stated, one popular topic for podcasts is true crime. Of "Apple's Top 25 Most Downloaded Podcasts of 2018", two or 8% were true crime podcasts. Similarly, of Apple's Best Podcasts of the Year of 2018, which looks at charting along with Apple's editors' best picks, four of 15 or 27% were true crime podcasts ("Apple" 2018). Despite searching, no clear number of how many true crime podcasts there currently are could be found from a reliable source; however, a file with thousands of English-language shows listed as true crime-themed was found online (True Crime Podcast Database 2020). According to the Database, there exist over 2,800 English-language true crime podcasts around the world. Because the database's reliability is uncertain, and discounting that there might be shows that have since publication gone inactive or there are duplicate shows, there is no way of knowing the credibility of this estimation. However, one could still imagine that hundreds if not thousands more true crime podcasts in various other languages exist today.

Like films and books have different approaches on how to tackle a topic, so do podcasts. There are different kinds of true crime podcasts, with differences between the cases discussed, the hosts and discussion methods, the length of the episodes, the structuring of episodes or a series, and so on. The earlier mentioned podcast *Serial'*s first season is structured as a series of twelve episodes all discussing and reinvestigating the murder of Hae Min Lee and conviction of Adnan Syed. In contrast, there are podcasts that deal with a different case in every episode. Some podcasts focus solely on serial killers and their crimes, while others deal with all kinds of crimes, from arson to white collar crime. A number of podcasts relay the story from the victim's perspective, detailing their life before becoming a victim of a crime, and others focus on the killer's life and what led him or her to murder.

There are also differences between hosts; if there are one or several and how they interact with each other and their listeners. A few podcasts only feature one person talking about the case, while others have multiple people engaging in a discussion about a case and its victim(s) and/or killer(s). Hosts either do not address the listeners at all or very little, or they ask questions of the listeners and urge them to help solve the case in various ways.

Interestingly, there are podcasts that also feature other elements than discussion of crime. For example, drinking is a popular element to add to the podcast. Podcasts like this include *Wine & Crime*, *True Crime Garage* and *Martinis & Murder*. In for example the podcast *Martinis & Murder*, they always have a special martini for every episode that the hosts drink while discussing a case and that the listeners are encouraged to replicate and enjoy themselves. In *True Crime Garage*, a new beer is introduced with every new episode.

Podcasts also differ in tone, which is to be expected with a topic such as true crime as the topic can be tackled in multiple ways. There seems to be a recent rise of true crime podcasts where humor is a main feature. The podcast *Small Town Murder* is a comedy true crime podcast where in every new episode, the hosts introduce a small town in the United States, including demographics and background of the town, and then discuss a murder that happened there. They laugh at the small town and its resources, as well as often conservative nature. However, they also ridicule the murderer, for example his or her efforts to not get caught. They have branded themselves: "we're assholes, not scumbags," probably hinting that they are aware of the questionable mixing of murder and comedy. However, these humor podcasts are immensely popular on Apple Podcasts, perhaps because they bridge the massive gap between humor and murder by making the crimes less frightening as one learns to laugh alongside them. Humor hence becomes a safe and effective defense mechanism.

Furthermore, there are podcasts mainly aimed at women, who might be more afraid of becoming a victim of a crime in today's world than men. These podcasts try to help women navigate the world in order to *not* get murdered by showing them how to arm themselves with knowledge about what has happened to others in the past. The very popular *My Favorite Murder* podcast features comedienne Karen Kilgariff and writer Georgia Hardstark discussing crimes while bringing up issues affecting women, like how women are expected to be polite even in dire circumstances. The hosts have coined multiple catchphrases for listeners to keep in mind, including "Fuck Politeness." The podcast has an avid fan base online with its Facebook page having over 400,000 likes and followers and its Reddit group over 100,000 members (My Favorite Murder 2020; r/myfavoritemurder 2020).

Lastly, there are true crime podcasts that focus on different geographical areas; *Nordic True Crime* features murders in Scandinavia and Finland and *Hanzai* focuses on crimes committed in Japan. Then, like for all podcasts, there are true crime podcasts from different cultures and in different languages, e.g. the Finnish *Jäljillä*, Swedish *Mordpodden* or Spanish *Policiales Argentinos*. It is apparent that crime, being a global phenomenon, also has a global fan base.

There are, of course, more ways to distinguish between true crime podcasts, but this brief overview has presented a few major variations that is of value when navigating this field of research. When discussing my material in a later section, I will detail why I chose the podcast *Crime Junkie* for my research.

Perhaps building on what was discussed previously on the opinion of true crime, there have been studies conducted on the allure of true crime podcasts, or true crime in general. A study by Boling and Hull (2018: 104) found that among their 308 research participants, the strongest motivators for listening to true crime podcasts were entertainment, convenience, voyeurism and boredom. The same study found that women listened to true crime podcasts more than men, 73% to 56%, which is a straight contradiction with statistics on podcast listening in general (Infinite Dial 2019). In Boling and Hull (2018), women reported listening to true crime podcasts as a way to escape or for social interaction, as they were more involved in the online fan communities than men (Ibid). It has also been speculated that fear could play a role in the popularity of true crime podcasts. As true crime podcasts often recount horrific crimes, they have an "addictive quality because of the release of adrenaline in human bodies when they feel fear – and binge-listening to true crime podcasts can cause this adrenaline rush to repeat itself in quick bursts" (Stahl 2018). In a study by Bailey (2017: 94), she found that participants who had listened regularly and frequently to a true crime podcast showed significantly lowered levels of fear of crime than before they started listening, signifying that listeners might feel less threatened after listening to a true crime podcast.

2. Background

2.1. Law Enforcement in the United States

The idea behind my choice of topic for this thesis comes from my interest in true crime podcasts and the perception that people in the United States and outside of the country seem to have an issue with American law enforcement and are vocal about it in many media channels. As my research in this thesis will focus on how law enforcement is discussed and viewed in relation to the cases reviewed by the podcast *Crime Junkie*, it is important to discuss the various branches and agencies of law enforcement that exist in the United States in order to grasp the terminology used in the podcast and in this research. The discussion in the present study will not only involve the umbrella term *law enforcement*, but rather many more, specific terms, as will become apparent in the section dealing with materials and methods used in this study. In order for the reader to understand the material, analysis and subsequent discussion it is crucial to understand the origin of the various terms. Therefore, an introduction of the forms of law enforcement is presented below. Additionally, this section presents research that details public opinion about the police, as it provides a picture of the current situation in the United States as well as how the situation and opinions have developed over time.

2.1.1. Different branches of law enforcement

Firstly, the Bureau of Justice Statistics defines 'law enforcement' as follows: "the individuals and agencies responsible for enforcing laws and maintaining public order and public safety. Law enforcement includes the prevention, detection, and investigation of crime, and the apprehension and detention of individuals suspected of law violation" ("Law Enforcement" 2019a)

One of the components of the United States criminal justice system is law enforcement, which is an umbrella term for the policing agencies in the country. There are different branches and agencies of law enforcement, and it is important to understand the distinction between these. To begin with, law enforcement agencies are based on the United States fragmented political structure of having federal, state and local levels of government (Horne 2004: 435). Additionally, the local level is divided into county and municipality. With these in mind, the main types of law enforcement are local law enforcement, i.e. municipal and county, state law enforcement, and federal law enforcement. Apart from these, there are specialist police departments with limited and varying jurisdictions who often serve special districts. These

include campus police, airport police, school district police, park police, and more, and they often serve as security police in their respective districts.

Municipal law enforcement is operated by a local government in a municipality, for example, a city, town or village (Diamond 2004: 296). The names and sizes of a municipal law enforcement agency vary from municipality to municipality. Most agencies take the name Municipality name followed by Police Department, e.g. New York City Police Department (NYPD), while smaller municipalities, like towns or villages, might have one-officer departments going by town marshal. Their jurisdiction is often limited by the local government to the city, town, or village they are in, though some police departments have countywide jurisdiction. The head of a police department is a chief of police, who is appointed by an entity of the local government, such as a mayor (Ibid.). The police departments are made up of trained officers entrusted with "maintenance of public peace and order, enforcement of laws, and prevention and detection of crime" (Ibid.). In 2008, there were 12,501 local police departments in the United States employing over 500,000 people (CSLLEA 2011: 4).

County law enforcement is most often made up of sheriff's offices or departments or county police. Some municipal police departments have countywide jurisdiction rather than simply serving one municipality and are therefore also county police. As of 2008, there are over 3,000 sheriff's offices operating in the United States with over 300,000 full-time employees (CSLLEA 2011: 5). Most sheriff's offices serve small and sparsely populated jurisdictions; about 50% of all offices serve populations under 25,000. Therefore, they, in general, have less personnel as well (McKee 2004: 432). The median level for personnel in sheriff's offices was 18 full-time employees in 2008 (CSLLEA 2011: 6). Though sheriff's offices serve smaller jurisdictions, the geographical size can be larger than a city jurisdiction, and therefore, the small personnel size might be an issue.

Sheriff's offices are empowered by the state to serve counties and cities and a sheriff is an elected official by the people of a county (McKee 2004: 423). Sheriffs are also not simply police, as they can be in charge of all three aspects of the criminal justice system: law enforcement, courts, and corrections, depending on state decisions on their services. That means that the law enforcement duties of sheriff's offices can include "response to criminal incidents and calls for service, patrolling, crime investigation, traffic enforcement, direction and control" (Ibid.). Most sheriff's offices also have countywide jurisdiction in jail operation, prisoner transportation, processing prisoners, enforcement of court orders, executing warrants, and court security. More than 90% of all sheriff's offices operate at least one jail (McKee 2004:

433). So, the sheriff's office can have more duties in number and diversity than a local police department, which can also limit their capabilities to handle certain cases.

State law enforcement includes state police agencies, also known as state highway patrols or public safety departments depending on the state (O'Rourke 2004: 440). State police, e.g. the Texas Rangers, provide law enforcement services throughout the state while county law enforcement is constrained to one county and municipal law enforcement is constrained to one municipality. State police also focuses on traffic offenses along state and inter-state highways. Some state police also have investigative powers, often exercised through agencies, like the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (Ibid). The degree of authority the state police has is decided by every individual state, and, for example, Florida, North Carolina, Nevada, and Ohio state police only have authority in traffic activities, i.e. highway patrols, while New York, Texas, Rhode Island, etc. have state police departments with statewide jurisdiction and investigative authority (Ibid.). State law enforcement employs almost 10% of the United States' law enforcement officers (Johnson and Olschansky 2010: 119). In 2008, there were 50 primary state law enforcement agencies in the United States, one for each state except Hawaii (CSLLEA 2011: 2).

Nationwide, there was about one sworn officer for every 400 residents in 2008 for local, county and state police (CSLLEA 2011: 3).

Lastly, federal law enforcement refers to the federal special jurisdiction agencies that exist in the United States, because the country does not have a national, general-purpose police force (Horne 2004: 435). A federal law enforcement agency is under the federal government with the functions of preventing, detecting, and investigating crime and apprehending alleged offenders ("Federal Law Enforcement" 2019). The agencies under federal law enforcement include the well-known Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Secret Service; however, the federal branch also includes the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the Postal Inspection Service, United States Park Police, Bureau of Engraving and Printing Police, etc. Each agency has its own duties and investigative authority under federal law, and all agencies have various forms of federal jurisdiction in their area of expertise. This means, if a person is suspected of violating federal law, they may be arrested by one of the federal agencies empowered to make arrests but also by state or local authorities. When an arrest is made, federal suspects are most often transferred to the custody of the U.S. Marshals for booking, processing, and detention ("Law enforcement" 2019b). In 2008, federal agencies employed about 120,000 full-time law enforcement officers in the United States (FLEO 2012: 1).

2.1.2. Trust and confidence in American law enforcement

In order to understand what is meant with *trust* and *confidence*, a brief definition of the two terms most often featured in surveys on police satisfaction is warranted. Both trust and confidence are crucial parts of police legitimacy, meaning that the public views the police as a legitimate actor in charge of public security (Liqun 2015). Without legitimacy, the police have no authority, and without authority they have effectively failed. Similarly, questions about trust or confidence involve evaluating the public's willingness to engage, cooperate with and turn to the police as a symbolic institution of power and authority (Ibid.: 245). Liqun further distinguishes between the two terms as such: "trust in the police implies a certain level of risk involved both at the individual level and at the institutional level, whereas confidence in the police underscores the systemic nature of trust and it is more likely to be associated with an evaluation of institutions rather than an evaluation of any individual incumbents" (Ibid.). The term *trust* then becomes more personal than the term *confidence* in research on public perception of the police. Participants are hence perhaps more likely to base opinions on personal experiences with individual officers rather than the whole institution when asked about trust, and vice versa.

Overall, data on the public's perception of law enforcement and the criminal justice system shows positive results, although there are differences between studies. In a survey conducted in June 2018 with 1,520 random American citizens, confidence in the criminal justice system proved to be low; only 22% reported having a "Great deal/Quite a lot" of confidence in the system, while 41% stated they had "Some" confidence and 36% reported having "Very little/None" (Saad 2018). In contrast, the majority of Americans have more trust and confidence in the police than they have in other institutions according to Gallup's survey in 2017; 57% with "Great Deal/Quite a lot" of confidence (Norman 2017). This is up since the record-low 52% in 2015 following the Black Lives Matter movement's formation, when American law enforcement was put under scrutiny because of their treatment of African Americans. The last time the percentage was as low was in 1993, when the question of trust and confidence in the police was first asked (Norman 2017). As a third comparison, a study conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) that surveyed over 13,000 people in 12 cities found that almost 80 percent of the public in each city was satisfied with the police in their neighborhood (O'Connor Shelley et al. 2013: 528).

Though the overall results are mostly positive on public trust and confidence in law enforcement, one might ask the important question if any individual factors influence the

public's trust and confidence. Studies on what determines the public's opinion of the police have considered many dimensions and branches of law enforcement, including the role of police, satisfaction with police services or procedures, assessments of police's efforts in preventing crime, and general feelings about the police (Cihan and Wells 2010: 348). As was seen in the earlier section on branches of law enforcement, the complexity that surrounds police, e.g. the variety of duties they have, their differing jurisdictions, and how they carry out these duties, makes it difficult to concretely establish what the public bases their trust and confidence in and therefore how opinions differ. In order to understand the public's assessment, studies have attempted to distinguish between factors that influence perceptions positively or negatively, as well as factors that do not seem to influence public opinion at all or minimally (Ibid.). This study adopts the same scope except that the focus is on the opinions of podcast hosts rather than the public.

There are some individual factors that seem to have an impact on public perceptions of the police. Most studies reveal that older persons have more confidence in the police than younger persons (O'Connor 2008; Walker and Katz 2008; Brown and Benedict 2002; Worrall 1999). However, interestingly, a majority of studies indicate that there is no significant difference between genders and public perception of police (Walker and Katz 2008; Brown and Benedict 2002; Worrall 1999). In general, this study deals with fairly young podcast hosts.

Studies have also found that though racial and ethnic minorities in the United States tend to have positive perceptions of police, their ratings are lower than that of Whites (Walker and Katz 2008; Brown and Benedict 2002). African Americans tend to view the police more negatively than other minorities, but some studies present the idea that this has little to do with racial background and more to do with previous contact with the police and the condition of their neighborhood, e.g. high rates of crime and social disorder versus low (Walker and Katz 2008). In regard to this, Sherman (2002: 2) refers to inequality in the United States based on area. Neighborhood conditions affect opinion and areas with higher levels of crime also have lower levels of trust and confidence in the police. According to Sherman, in 2002, more than 50 percent of homicides occurred in areas where less than 5 percent of the population lived. In such areas, it was reported that as few as one in four adults had a job, while the arrest and incarceration rates exceeded the national average, which might explain how such an area's residents experience crime and social justice in a much different way than their suburban counterparts.

Some research suggests that people with higher education levels are more satisfied with the police, while other studies find no correlation between education and satisfaction (Walker

and Katz 2008; Brown and Benedict 2002). However, a study by Eschholz et al. (2002) found that White males without a college degree were more positive of the police after having watched police television programs. This will be discussed further in the next chapter on the media's influence on people's perception of law enforcement.

There exists an idea that having had contact with the police in the past has a great impact on a person's trust in police (Brown and Benedict 2002). Persons who had had contact with the police tended to be less satisfied than those without contact. Other factors that contributed to this were whether the contact had been voluntary or involuntary or in which capacity the contact was, assistance or crime related (Brown and Benedict 2002). Perhaps not surprisingly, those who initiated the contact with police themselves were more satisfied than those who had involuntary contact (O'Connor Shelley 2012: 530).

People who feel safe in their neighborhoods and feel that the police are controlling crime are more satisfied with police (Walker and Katz 2008), which is to be expected since the police are in charge of preventing crime. Here one could also mention Sherman's statement (2002), which was mentioned above, that neighborhood conditions and the racial divide between neighborhoods in the United States have an influence on people's opinions of police. People in neighborhoods with higher crime rates tend to have lower opinions of police despite what the general consensus is (Sherman 2002). Since the United States is predominantly White, survey data can be biased towards Whites, showing results about neighborhood safety as higher overall but disregarding potential racial and socio-economic differences.

Prior victimization and fear of crime tend to correlate with lower satisfaction with police (Sampson and Bartusch 1998). This is interesting because it might signify that people who have been victims of a crime feel that police are not doing their job, i.e. catching the perpetrators. If victims had confidence in the police, it would perhaps signify the opposite.

As detailed, although public opinion of the police has generally been positive, there are a number of demographical and contextual variables that influence these views. However, Bradford and Jackson (2009: 192) observe, and caution, that the way different surveys ask different kinds of questions around trust and confidence has a major impact on the results. Some refer to basic concepts and measures while others see opinions as multi-faceted with concerns and judgements about various topics. There is a difference in asking "how much confidence do you have in the police" on a four-point scale from a great deal to very little, or agreement or disagreement with statements such as "the police are doing a good job in dealing with problems that really concern people in this neighborhood." The difference in how each study presents its questions is of importance when thinking about the results. It is apparent that

questions with more detail elicit specific answers to specific cases, while with broad questions the researcher has no way of knowing what the subject was thinking of when answering; 'the police' can refer to many different entities and persons for a subject. Then there is the idea that subjects' opinions of the police can be comprised of different elements or concerns which are distinct from one another, although still related, and that these elements may be in conflict with each other (Bradford & Jackson 2009: 194). For example, there can be different degrees of fairness; a subject may think that there is unfairness in criminal procedures but not in the distribution of offences. Therefore, a simple question such as "Do you think the justice system is fair?" carries little meaning without specification.

To conclude, Sherman (2002) states that "on issues of trust and confidence in the criminal justice system [law enforcement included], there is evidence of at least two nations: one that is comfortable with the status quo and one that is not." As with the Black Lives Matter movement and the so-called Ferguson effect, which will be discussed in the next chapter, inequality in the United States between ethnic, racial and socio-economic groups is apparent. Such differences sharply influence public trust and confidence in the criminal justice system and law enforcement. Furthermore, there has been a rise in recent years of the topic of police brutality and use of excessive force in the United States. Using *The Guardian*'s The Counted database, which counts how many people in the United States have been killed by police, it was calculated that whereas there have been 55 fatal police shootings in the last 24 years in England and Wales, there were 59 fatal police shootings within 24 days in January 2015 in the United States only (Lartey 2015). That equaled 2.5 people killed by police per day. It was also shown that there were 188% more people killed in the state of California alone in 2015 than on average in the whole of Canada yearly: 72 shootings as opposed to 25 shootings. And California is only 10% more populous than Canada (Ibid).

With figures and databases like the ones discussed above, the media can also influence how people subjectively and collectively view the police. As podcasts can influence in much the same way as media, in the next chapter, I will discuss how the media can be seen to influence public perception of crime and law enforcement.

2.2. The Influence of Media

This section reviews research about the media's influence on the public, specifically, research on the public's perception of crime, and their trust and confidence in law enforcement or the justice system. Furthermore, research on podcasts' influence on their listeners is also presented in this section. The section will also act as a justification for this thesis, because the research might allude to how true crime podcasts could potentially influence its audience's opinions. Podcasts featuring discussion of criminal investigations and law enforcement might have an influence on their fan club members' trust and confidence in the police as a consequence of listening to said podcasts.

However, while this section is going to present research that states that the media influence the public, as is the common belief in the research community, it will not state that media is the only and sole influencer of people's opinions. Criticism of the idea that media influence public opinion states that media do nothing but reflect on and reproduce general public opinion that is already apparent from values and convictions (Boda & Szabó 2011: 338). This argument implies that media do not influence people, but vice versa. Similarly, Rafter (2000: 7) states that crime films draw from reality and in turn shape social thought about crime. Therefore, one should see media not as a direct influencer, but as an agent that shapes society in conjunction with what it portrays.

However, if the media only mirror the public, it would mean that they have no agenda of their own. This is against both the findings of media research and broader public opinion on the media's role in society. Boda & Szabó (2011: 338) found that though their research participants firmly believed that media influence the public, they perceived themselves to be exempt from the influence. This is interesting, as people might want to believe that they are immune to the media's influence, when actually they are inadvertently affected by it.

2.2.1. Media's influence on public perception of crime in the US

Before discussing research on public perception of crime, it is relevant to present some recent statistics on the crime rates in the United Stated. Examining crime rates as a whole in the United States and how the rates have increased or decreased over decades provides an insight into if the public's perception of crime today is reasonable. According to Brennan Center for Justice's "Crime Trends" overview from 1991-2016, the national crime rate decreased for the fourteenth year in a row in 2015 and though there was a slight increase again in 2016, the crime rate is still less than half of what it was in 1991 (Friedman et al. 2017). This fact that crime is at a historical low in the United States is corroborated by many researchers (Gramlich 2019; James

2018; CIUS 2017). Though there was a slight increase in violent crimes and murder in 2016 from the years before, it can be explained by local factors (Friedman et al. 2017). Major cities like Chicago stood for 43.7% of the increase in murder in the nation in 2016. Crime rates then vary majorly between cities in the US, with urban metropolitan areas having higher rates than rural areas. This indicates that urban cities have their own local problems and that the increase is because of this urban violence and not evidence of a national crime wave (Friedman et al. 2017).

Gramlich (2019) goes on to state that public perception of crime in the United States does not match the data on crimes. Americans generally believe that there is a national increase in crime. According to Gallup's poll data from 1989 to 2018, apart from two years the majority of the people surveyed answered that there was "More" crime in the United States that year than the year before. Responses ranged between 89% to 53% of people surveyed (Gallup 2019). One might then ask where this fear of crime that the public is apparently feeling comes from? Which factors contribute to the feeling that crime has been increasing when data says otherwise?

The argument that crime is heavily covered by the media and that this coverage has effects on public perception about crime is widely accepted by the scientific community (Potter and Kappeler 2006; Mason 2003). Research linking television media and attitudes about crime began with Gerbner's cultivation studies. He hypothesized that watching television distorted the viewer's perception of social problems, often creating a feeling of the world as a dangerous place (Gerbner & Gross 1976). The content itself did not matter as such, but the exposure to television in general was believed to influence the viewer. Similarly, recent research shows that media create a picture of a society where crime is frequent and steadily increasing, despite what data shows. Also, it is further believed that media misrepresent the nature of crime, i.e. violent crimes are presented more often in media than other crimes, thus showing the public on a daily basis stories of murder and rape despite the fact that violent crimes are rarer than other forms of crime, e.g. property crime (Friedman et al. 2017). However, it is unclear just how much the media affect peoples' opinions and if and in what respect the effect has consequences for criminal justice.

Research shows that the media's reporting of crime has an influence on the public's panic, the so-called *moral panic tradition* (Cohen 1972). The suggestion is that exposure to crime stories in the media is related to heightened fear of crime. Fox (2012: 162) observes that the English-language newspaper media's increase in usage of the term "sex offender" from 1989 to 2009 had an effect on the public's moral panic on the subject. This despite the fact that

sexual offending against children declined by 53% from 1990-2007 (Ibid: 166). Though the crime rates did not increase, coverage on the matter did, leading to increases in fear and outrage as the public were led to believe, by the media, that there was a larger risk of becoming a victim of sexual predators (Ibid: 172). Fox (2012) ascertains that the media's intensive coverage, dubbed "tabloid crime stories," served to tell the public how to think about the issue. This led to a panic that distorted their understanding of the problem but not their willingness for justice (Critcher 2003: 117).

It had been assumed that one of the strongest media effects is on behavior, dubbed the *crimogenic media tradition* (Surette 2007). It argues that because media's focus is on reporting crime and deviant behavior, it will lead the audience down a path of deviance. This assumption can still be seen today in rallies against violence in for example video games. Parents are led to believe that their children playing violent games will lead to the child expressing violent behavior. However, no correlation of this kind has been found (see for example Ferguson 2011). Furthermore, on the topic of modern media, Doyle (2006: 868) states that anxieties about crime have passed into popular culture, e.g. films and television featuring crime and violence. This has further fueled the debate on violent media leading to violent behavior. Specifically conservative and right-wing politicians tend to blame media for social ills and moral decay.

Despite there being a difference between crime news and crime fiction, both forms of media offer the same qualities of drama and thus have the same opportunity to influence the public (Ericson et al. 1991). There have been cases where entertainment media can be seen to have influenced its audience and transferred into the justice systems. The so-called CSI effect, whereby jurors have been perceived to be influenced by the popular 2000-2015 television series *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and tainted by the show's wrongful depictions of forensic science. The abundance of forensic evidence and dismissal of circumstantial evidence in the show is believed to have given a wrongful picture of a legal case. The implications of this "effect" lie in the fact that jurors wrongly believe that cases in the legal system are built on forensic evidence alone and swift and easy justice happens (Cole & Dioso-Villa 2007: 442). Also, it has been noted that the news media furthered the worry about the CSI effect by increasing the alarm and anxiety about what this effect meant for the criminal justice system (Cole & Dioso-Villa 2007: 445-6). The drama that is crime television hence transitioned into crime news (for more research on the CSI effect, see Watkins (2004) and Hayes and Levett (2012)). The idea of entertainment media having a negative effect on the criminal justice system will be further discussed in the section on true crime podcasts' influence.

At this time, it might be interesting to introduce Stucky's (2005: 140) study that shows that a perceived increase in crime often leads to citizen demand for action, which often results in an increased presence of police. Therefore, crime and police go hand in hand. However, public demand is often unequal because power amongst groups is unequal. It is assumed that crime control will focus on the interest of the economically powerful because they have more political influence over the state, and most police budgets are politically determined (Ibid.). Thus, economy and politics enter the same realm as crime and police, which might allude to a problem. Boda and Szabó (2011: 337) also state that the belief that there is a steady rise in crime despite data stating the opposite, might indicate that the public's trust and confidence in the police is low, as will be discussed in the next section.

2.2.2. Media's influence on public perception of law enforcement

As was already discussed in the previous chapter on the public's trust and confidence in law enforcement, general opinions towards the police are favorable and have not been declining in recent years. However, there were some demographical differences between opinions.

When researching why crime rates fluctuate nationally and locally, there are many hypotheses brought forward; however recently, the discussion of a "Ferguson effect" has been gaining interest (James 2018: 15). The Ferguson effect refers to an idea that after the shooting of 18-year-old, African American Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, by a police officer, the increased scrutiny that police faced led to so-called "de-policing." This means that police officers became aware of the scrutiny their profession faced and grew unwilling to do work because of fear of being publicly accused of racial discrimination or use of excessive force (Wolfe & Nix 2016: 1). According to some scholars (Wolfe & Nix 2016; Pyrooz et al. 2016) de-policing serves as an explanation to the increases in violent crime in some cities. Furthermore, the Ferguson effect and subsequent police shootings of African Americans may have led the public to view justice as something which is not fairly administered between social groups in the United States (James 2018: 15). According to James (2018: 15) this might consecutively "empower some individuals to engage in behaviors that directly challenge the legitimacy of law enforcement and others not to turn to law enforcement for help when crime occurs." This idea is corroborated by the Bureau of Justice Statistics' survey on crime victimization, where in 2017 only 45% of all violent crimes and 36% of all property crimes were reported to police (NCVS 2018). There might be different reasons for this, although there might be a correlation with distrust as well.

Furthermore, according to Sherman (2002: 28), recent research has found that changes in culture, like the interest in showcasing racial and ethnic discrimination, has shifted the focus of trust from results to procedures. This effectively means that police conduct has become more important than a decrease in crime, which is often seen as the main result of policing. Eschholz et al. (2002: 336) found a racial difference between their research participants and police programs' influence on levels of confidence in law enforcement. The group influenced positively by such programs was White males without a college education, as they showed increased levels of confidence. In contrast, African American males' confidence levels were not affected by the programs, which Eschholz et al. (2002) attribute to the fact that the police depicted in the shows were predominantly White while the criminals were African American.

As was introduced before, with modern media such as television – and nowadays podcasts as well – the public may be influenced by how law enforcement and the criminal justice system are portrayed in entertainment as well as news media. They might base their trust in portrayals rather than realities (Sherman 2002: 28), as can be seen from the discussion of the CSI effect. Rafter (2000: 3) states that crime films' portraying corrupt police and police brutality often end with triumph, offering the viewer solace and justice. This she means shows us both what we fear to be true – police corruption – and the fantasy of how we want it to be. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that by seeing these triumphs in the media, the public might, as James (2018: 15) states, be empowered to challenge the legitimacy of law enforcement.

Similarly, in Kort-Butler & Sittner Hartshorn's study (2011:48) their subjects who reported viewing non-fictional crime programs were more likely to be less supportive of the justice system. This was thought to indicate that viewing non-fiction crime programs served as infotainment, i.e. information and entertainment. Such shows provide information about criminal events but can make it seem like crime in the United States is out of control, as was discussed in the earlier section. Moreover, these shows present the challenges the criminal justice system faces in dealing with crime swiftly and fairly, further amplifying the public's fear by dramatic effect (Ibid.).

However, there is another side to the coin. Gerbner and Gross (1976) found, in accordance with their cultivation hypothesis, that people who watched "reality" police programs had a higher confidence in law enforcement. This was corroborated in Eschholz et al.'s study (2002). "Reality" police programs, Eschholz et al. (2002: 331) explain, refer to programs that present actual footage of police activities, but footage that is limited to brief action-filled moments that give the viewer a distorted picture of policing, hence "reality." A

reason for such programs resulting in higher confidence in law enforcement might be that the police is seen as the de facto "good guy" whereas the criminals are the "bad guys."

There is no uniform opinion if and how much the media affect public perception and trust and confidence in law enforcement. Competing studies reveal either that media have positive or negative influence on the public. However, in recent years there seems to be an increase in seeing police procedures and conduct as an important factor in establishing trust and confidence. More recent studies have found that their participants view police's treatment of people as at least equally important as providing results (James 2018; Boda & Szabó 2011; Sherman 2002). In most respects, one could conclude that though the media have been found to influence people's opinions on law enforcement, a consensus on whether it is mostly positive or negative influence cannot be reached. There are multiple historical and individual factors that manipulate the results, i.e. personal experiences, gender, education level, race and ethnicity, to name a few. However, the aim of this section was to demonstrate that the various forms of media do affect the public's perception of law enforcement. The next section will focus solely on podcasts as a medium and if and how they can be seen to contribute to the influence.

2.2.3. True crime podcasts' influence on their audience

When discussing true crime podcasts, one has to consider the impact such podcasts can have on their audiences. Interestingly, and as has been seen with media influence on the public when it comes to crime, the impact of true crime podcasts can already be seen in the courthouse. Inmates claiming innocence are using the media to tell their story (D'Addario 2016), as can be seen from Netflix's *Making a Murderer* documentary. The documentary led to 180,000 people signing a petition to have the convicted man Steven Avery acquitted (Ibid.). Similarly, cases like Adnan Syed's attracted a national following after the podcast *Serial*, which some believe helped in granting Syed a new trial in 2016 (Syed v. Maryland). Simpson (2017) also points out that true crime narratives of cases, famous or not, might bring failings in the justice system to people's attention. Rabia Chaudry, Adnan Syed's public advocate states in Simpson (2017): "True crime has always captured the imagination. What's different now is the awareness of how often the system gets it wrong, so the popularity [in true crime] is really around wrongful convictions" (Simpson 2017). And often one assumes that at the base of a wrongful conviction is an investigation that has gone wrong or an injustice towards a person, and hence, the true crime podcasts that take a new look at criminal cases also let people hear about the failings by the police.

Furthermore, there is an idea that true crime podcasts can bring back unsolved cases to the public's attention (Simpson 2017). Because of the sheer size of the United States, many cases receive only local news reporting and never reach the wider public, and therefore, there might be important facts that police are never made aware of because people who know something about a case, do not know that there is a case to begin with. With podcasts you can listen almost wherever you are as they are not demographically restricted like radio, meaning that more people can hear about cases and actually be able to help in providing useful information. Then, as has been speculated about the podcast *The Teacher's Pet*, there is a possibility that podcasts acquire information or clues that the police have missed that lead to new developments (Dury 2016). This might go hand in hand with people being more comfortable coming forward to investigative journalists than the police, according to BBC journalist Fiona Walker, who received tips about a cold case from a person who was afraid of coming forward to the police (Dury 2016). However, this is just speculation, and the social and political consequences of true crime podcasts' influence remain to be seen, as it is a very new medium which is still scarcely researched.

Available research has found the true crime genre to reinforce the status quo, i.e. social and cultural anxieties are explored only to be appeased in the end when the criminal is caught and punished, justice is served and order in society is maintained (Durham et al. 1995; Jermyn 2007). However, Yardley et al. (2018: 9) state that true crime podcast differs from other media depicting the genre. Instead of providing the audience with resolution in the end, there are a lot of questions and a lot of "'uns' – uncertain, unsolved, unresolved, unfinished, untrusted" (Yardley et al. 2018: 11). They suggest that stories told by other media and the court were often found to be inconclusive and unfinished when reviewed in true crime podcasts. Furthermore, and of importance for my study, Yardley et al. (2018: 10) posit that podcasts' portrayals of investigations and the criminal justice system are often concerned with trust and characterized by doubt with key questions being "Can we trust the police?". Hence, the audience of a true crime podcasts are, according to Yardley et al., more likely to be exposed to questions about the validity of convictions and the so-called 'uns' of criminal cases and the criminal justice system. Therefore, one might assume that the audience grows more critical in conjunction with the podcast hosts' retelling of a story or case.

Yardley et al. (2018: 11) also posit that podcast audiences grow tired with the crime narratives of mainstream media and instead engage in online communities as so-called citizen detectives, investigating and discussing crimes themselves. This is corroborated in another study, one that states a characteristic of the true crime podcast audience is that they are

engaging. According to Boling and Hull (2018: 105) the true crime podcast audience is an active consumer, with 63% of their participants reporting being active in an online podcast-specific community. This signifies that a true crime podcast listener is participatory in nature and goes hand in hand with the finding that a strong motivation for listening to true crime is entertainment. Their participants reported discussing true crime with others either Often (17%) or Sometimes (49%) (Boling & Hull 2018: 102).

On another spectrum, research has found that listeners of the popular *My Favorite Murder* (*MFM*) podcast have found a way to critique violent and oppressive patriarchal culture (Stjerneby 2018; Sacks 2017). There is further research that argues that women take interest in true crime because it provides ideas and tactics on how to deal with dangerous situations (Vicary & Fraley 2010). In these studies, it was found that online community fan clubs for *MFM* functioned as a support group for women. As the hosts discussed patriarchal culture, amongst other things, the audience was strengthened by feelings of solidarity with the hosts and other listeners. Thus, podcasts have the power to lift people up, not just bring them down. One might assume that with a topic such as crime one might have a difficult time trying to turn the conversation positive, but *MFM* and other comedy true crime podcasts certainly succeed in turning anxieties of even the bleakest of crimes around.

In an article in the New Yorker, Mead (2018) states that the real innovation in *Serial* was host Sarah Koenig's psychological process, namely her inner struggle to decide whether Syed was guilty or not. This made the podcast interesting to the audience, as it deals with the question of right and wrong. Listeners tuned in to the end to find out what Koenig decided, maybe to see if it mirrored their own decisions. Most true crime podcasts deal with just that, the question of guilty or not guilty. However, the question is neither easily asked nor easily answered. While most true crime podcasts claim to relay the important facts about a criminal case, there is no way of knowing where the information comes from. *Crime Junkie* host Ashley Flowers often cites news articles or true crime documentaries about cases. She sometimes points out that the articles she has read give many different pictures of the same incidents. It is therefore important that listeners realize that true crime is not inherently crime fact. A critique of the influence true crime podcasts has on their audience is that it might lead to even more wrongful convictions and worse, releasing murderers back on the streets. Deutsch (2006) states that "[c]rime-show junkies […] could end up deciding guilt or innocence in real trials" as jurors. As can be seen from the discussion of the CSI effect, crime fiction is not the same as crime fact and not realizing the difference between entertainment and reality can have dire consequences on the justice system. This was also said in relation to true crime, as Seltzer

(2007: 16) explained that true crime is entertainment more than reality, which is something the audience needs to be aware of.

3. Theoretical Framework

According to van Dijk (2008: 2), there is no fixed method for doing discourse studies. Factors that influence the choice of method can for instance be: "the aim of the investigation, the nature of the data studied, the interests and the qualifications of the researcher and other parameters of the research context" (Van Dijk 2008: 2). Hence, choosing a methodology for my study proved challenging.

As I am interested in analyzing how the podcast hosts discuss law enforcement on a level that encompasses their opinions and values of law enforcement as well as general discussion of their practices and actions, the importance of choosing a theoretical framework that allows for both is crucial. However, as my material includes a lot of discussion where law enforcement is not present, I also need to be able to identify the important instances within my material that should be analyzed.

For my research, I chose two different approaches, whose combination appeared to be the best way to analyze my material. Firstly, I used corpus linguistics to identify the instances in the material where law enforcement was discussed, as well as to get general quantitative data about my material for reference. Then, for my analysis of the discussion of law enforcement, I chose appraisal theory analysis as it provided the means to qualitatively analyze the material in a way that evaluates the podcast hosts' discussion including opinions and values. I will present the theoretical background of both approaches in this section, before going further into the gathering of my material and methods with which these approaches were used to analyze the material of each in the next chapter.

3.1. Corpus Linguistics

According to Hunston (2006), corpus linguistics (henceforth CL) can be used to add a quantitative dimension to studies of linguistics. Furthermore, one reason for choosing CL as one of the methodologies for my study was the fact that the method allowed for finding linguistic features, like vocabulary, in podcast transcripts easily and unbiasedly. Using a corpus-based approach allowed for computerized analysis of my material, which eliminated

the possibility of human error in the gathering of quantitative data of my material. Thus I chose to use a corpus-based approach for the quantitative part of my analysis of the podcast episodes, i.e. to both find terms used for law enforcement as well as identify the frequency with which they occur in the material. It should be noted that corpus linguistics encompasses both quantitative and qualitative approaches to discourse analysis, and therefore despite referring to the corpus-based approach as mainly quantitative, it did require a certain amount of qualitative analysis in order to know which lexical items to search in the corpus.

With CL, a researcher is able to find and analyze word frequencies, word clusters, collocates, and keywords. Such features can show how words are used and what their relative importance is for the meaning of the text. However, frequency of a particular word does not immediately signify that the word is of importance for the text's meaning. For example, function words such as *the*, *and*, and *or* will most often be high in frequency in both spoken and written communication despite not carrying much importance themselves. Thus, a quantitative analysis on its own would not be able to distinguish between words of commonality and words of importance, meaning that another method was required to analyze the vocabulary that was found in my material, as will be detailed in the next section.

3.2. Appraisal Model

Appraisal theory is a psychological research theory that concerns itself with how evaluations – i.e. appraisals – of events and situations elicit emotions out of us humans. Appraisal theorists tend to see thought and emotion as largely inseparable, meaning that emotions arise from our perceptions, i.e. our appraisals, of changes in our environment. It can be said that our appraisals of an event are influenced by our temperament, culture, physiology, current goals, and our past experiences. Appraisal theory also accounts for individual variability in our reactions, i.e. that similar events can raise different emotions in different people, or in the same person at different times (Smith & Lazarus 1990; Ellsworth 2013).

Appraisal in discourse analysis is a separate but related field of study to the psychological research theory, although their inherent principles are similar. Essentially, appraisal concerns our experiences influencing our evaluation or approval / disapproval of things and ideas presented to us. In linguistics, appraisal is similar to stance-taking as both are to an extent concerned with *evaluation* (Du Bois 2007: 142). Appraisal theory in discourse analysis has been studied most notably by J. R. Martin and P. R. R. White in their book *The Language of Evaluation* (2005). Together, Martin and White have created a model or system by which to analyze evaluation in text or how a writer or speaker expresses their opinion or

stance in relation to certain ideas or things. For the researchers, meaning is seen as construed in context and dependent on a social relationship between the speaker and idea / thing rather than being an individual, psychological, or self-made form of language (Martin & White: 2005: 94.) Language of evaluation is described by Martin and White as being concerned with

> The interpersonal in language, with the subjective presence of writers/speakers in texts as they adopt stances towards both the material they present and those with whom they communicate. It is concerned with how writers/speakers approve and disapprove, enthuse and abhor, applaud and criticise [sic], and with how they position their readers/listeners to do likewise.
>
> (2005: 1)

Appraisal is grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and is presented as a set of alternatives that are available to every writer. Between these alternatives of expression, the writer makes a choice that shapes his or her text in evaluative terms. The development of this new model was initiated by Martin and White with the discovery that other analytical tools provided by SFL would not suffice when researching the semantic resources that speakers use for evaluation (Hommerberg 2011: 60).

It needs to be mentioned that White (2001; 2002: 4) states that appraisal should be seen as an on-going research project and that the framework can be seen as a draft or grossly generalized set of categories which can still be narrowed down further. It should also be noted that the appraisal model does not contain strict guidelines and wordlists that instantly show whether a sentence belongs to a system of appraisal. Rather, the model is meant to help the researcher by explaining the process behind evaluation, how certain words can be seen as belonging to a certain system rather than another. The interpretation of a text or texts in regard to the appraisal model is entirely dependent on the researcher and on the text sample's composition.

The appraisal model includes three main systems: *attitude*, *engagement* and *graduation*. Each of these main systems is then divided into subsystems that include different subcomponents (please see Figure 1 below). I will not be referring to all of the systems in my analysis of the podcast episodes, but a short description of the whole appraisal model is in order to demonstrate the possibilities it presents for language study. In order to keep this section as clear as possible, each system and its various subcomponents will be presented briefly, explaining their relevance as part of the appraisal model. Subsequently, in the materials and

methods section of this study, a more detailed discussion will be presented for the systems crucial to the present study.

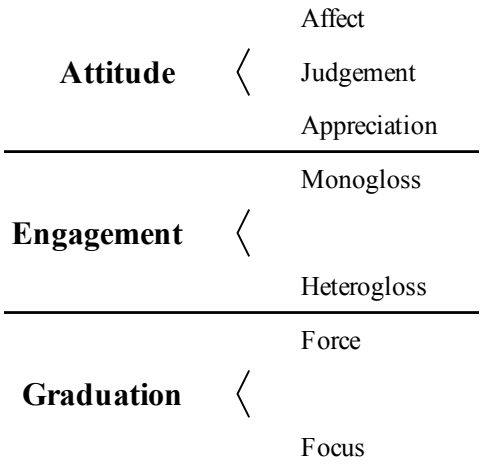

Figure 1: A systems network depicting the structure of appraisal resources

(Adapted from Read & Carroll 2012: 424.)

3.2.1. Attitude

Within the appraisal model, the system of *attitude* refers to the expression of personal feelings in relation to a given situation and covers three semantic regions of emotion, ethics and aesthetics (Martin & White 2005: 42). Attitude is further divided into three subcomponents: *affect* (emotional reactions), *appreciation* (of objects), and *judgement* (of people) (see Figure 2 below for clarification of the subsystem). Affect refers to evaluation by the appraiser experiencing a reaction or emotion, either positive or negative, directed toward or elicited by the idea or thing that is appraised by the speaker. Words of affect include *love* and *hate* and can be directed towards any kind of entity. Appreciation and judgement, however, are directed towards different kinds of entities. Appreciation is appraisal of "products, performances and naturally occurring phenomena" (Martin 2000: 159) or aesthetic assessments, while judgement deals with appraisal of human behavior or ethical assessments. There is also the distinction between the two as appraisal of the non-human versus appraisal of the human.

Each of these subsystems include their own subcomponents, encompassing both positive and negative words of evaluation in all levels. Affect may be *realis* or *irrealis* or an evaluation belonging to either *inclination*, *happiness*, *security* and *satisfaction*. Appreciation includes subcomponents of *reaction*, *composition*, and *valuation*. Judgement involves either *social esteem* or *social sanction*, which will be explained in more detail in another section.

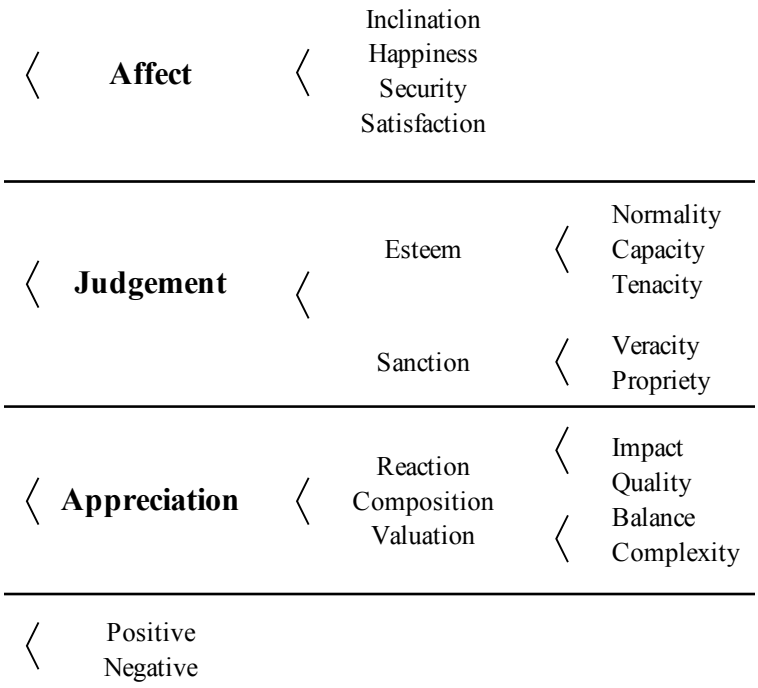

Figure 2: The attitude subsystem

(Adapted from Read & Carroll 2012: 425.)

When thinking of emotions and feelings, what most often comes to mind might be happiness or unhappiness of a situation; the mood of *happy* or *sad*. Affect also includes feelings of (in)security, (dis)satisfaction and (dis)inclination. These encompass words of opposites like *anxious* vs. *assured*, *displeasure* vs. *pleasure* and *yearn for* vs. *wary*.

Appreciation is concerned with our evaluation of things and phenomena: our reactions to them, their composition and their value to us. Words that signify appreciation include *exciting* vs. *boring* (reaction; impact), *beautiful* vs. *ugly* (reaction; quality), *logical* vs. *contradictory* (composition: balance), *intricate* vs. *plain* (composition: complexity), *deep* vs. *shallow* (valuation). These can be elucidated by questions such as "did it grab me?" (reaction), "did it hang together?" (composition) and "was it worthwhile?" (valuation). According to Martin and White (2005: 57), appreciation can be seen as the way we look at things; reaction is affection, composition is perception and valuation is cognition. There is also a difference between affect and appreciation even though they might seem similar to some extent. Affect is the emotion that a person feels, "I am sad", while appreciation is the explanation of an emotional thing, "it was a sad film."

Judgement refers to our attitudes and emotions towards people and how they behave (Martin & White 2005: 52). The subcomponent is further divided into *judgements of esteem*

and *judgements of sanction*. Judgements of esteem deal with people's normality, capacity and tenacity, while judgements of sanction are oriented towards people's veracity and propriety. When it comes to positive and negative evaluation within social esteem, one can distinguish them by saying that positive evaluation of people is related to admiring, while negative evaluation of people is criticizing. Similarly, within social sanction, positive evaluation refers to praising someone, while negative evaluation refers to condemning someone. Examples of judgements of esteem and sanction include *normal* vs. *odd* (normality), *healthy* vs. *sick* (capacity), *brave* vs. *cowardly* (tenacity), *honest* vs. *deceitful* (veracity) and *caring* vs. *cruel* (propriety). Questions that might elucidate judgement include, in order of normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity and propriety: "how special / capable / dependable / honest or how far beyond reproach someone is?"

3.2.2. Engagement and Graduation

In short, engagement refers to how a writer or speaker construes their point of view and adopts stances towards others' perspectives. Engagement is therefore concerned with opinions, i.e. that text or speech conveys opinions or responds to other's opinions. Engagement is divided into monoglossic or heteroglossic utterances. Monoglossic refers to the speaker not allowing for other opinions than their own and includes no sublevels as such. Heteroglossic, on the other hand, is the opposite and includes two sublevels that explain the ways in which a writer or speaker acknowledges their viewpoint and other's. Heteroglossic utterances can either contract or expand dialogue. See Figure 3 below for clarification of the engagement heteroglossic subsystem.

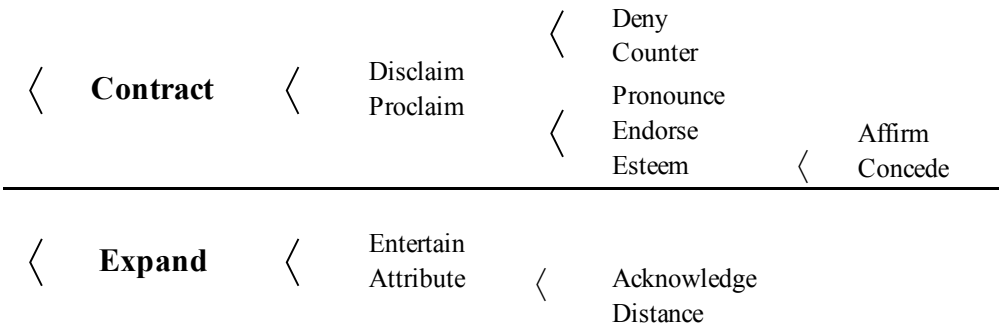

Figure 3: The engagement subsystem

(Adapted from Read & Carroll 2012: 426.)

As can be seen in Figure 3 above, the subsystem includes several subcomponents under both the *contract* and *expand* systems. As these are not relevant to the present study and will not be used as a method of analysis, I have decided to not describe them further. For detailed information on the engagement subsystem, please see Martin & White (2005) or Read and Carroll (2012).

In the appraisal model, graduation refers to how writers and speakers alter the strength of their utterances and it can be seen as an addition to both attitude and engagement. Namely, graduation in attitude allows the speaker to appear more or less negative or positive depending on the words chosen in relation to expressions of emotion. Similarly, with engagement, graduation escalates a speaker's conviction in their propositions (Read & Carroll 2012: 428).

Furthermore, the appraisal model suggests two ways of graduating attitude, or "two axes of scalability": *focus* and *force* (Martin & White 2005: 137). (See Figure 4 below for clarification of the graduation subsystem.)

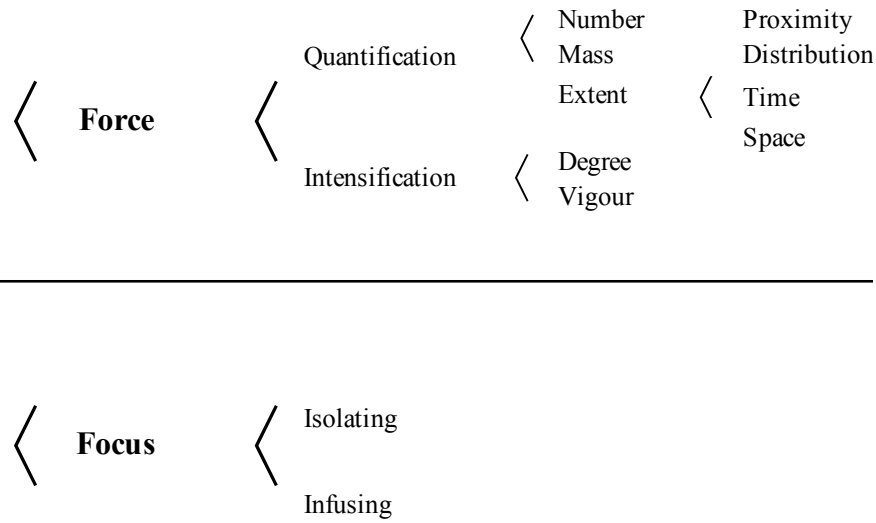

Figure 4: The graduation subsystem

(Adapted from Read & Carroll 2012: 428.)

Focus aims to redefine categories that are otherwise bound, or so-called either-or categories. This refers to something either being or not being, and depends on predetermined conditions. For example, the two sentences "They don't play *real* jazz" and "They play jazz, *sort of*" show that while jazz music would be an either-or category – music is either jazz music or it is some other kind of music – the sentences have been redefined so that there is scalability of what jazz

music is. It has become a matter of degree rather than either-or category (Martin & White 2005: 138).

4. Materials & Methods

4.1. Material: The Podcast

For my material I chose the true crime podcast *Crime Junkie*. *Crime Junkie* is a weekly podcast hosted by Ashley Flowers and Brit Prawat. The podcast is recorded in Indianapolis, United States. The first podcast episode aired in December 2017 and new episodes are released at least every Monday, but by subscribing to their online fan club, one gains access to more episodes depending on your subscription. As of May 2019, the podcast enjoys a seventh position on Apple iTunes Top Shows chart. It needs to be stated that neither host has a background in law enforcement.

In a typical episode, Ashley dives into one crime that she has been researching, and she tells the listeners everything related to the case, from the victim's background, to their disappearance or murder and to the police investigation and what it uncovers. During the storytelling, Brit often chimes in with exclamations, questions and the occasional "full body chills!"-comment, which has become something of a trademark for the podcast. A majority of the crimes covered in the podcast remain unsolved, which adds to the suspense for the listener. The crimes covered are most often ones that have happened in the United States, with the date of the crime ranging from the 1970s to the present day and the investigations often spanning decades. On their website, they describe their storytelling as "straightforward and free of rabbit holes so the cases stay suspenseful and are easy to follow" (Crime Junkie Podcast 2019), which I can attest to be the case. The podcast and its episodes can be found on iTunes, Spotify, Patreon, or podcast sites.

I chose this particular podcast for a number of reasons. Mainly, the storytelling is straightforward and focuses on the crime at hand, with little to no interruptions about matters not concerning the crime. For my research, I viewed this trait to be of utter importance so that my material was not tainted with anecdotes and comments about the hosts' personal lives. However, since there are two hosts, Ashley and Brit, there is an element of conversation to the podcast, which is important as it provides the material with depth and emotions. While not wanting the podcast to be full of personal anecdotes, the hosts professing their opinions on the crime and investigation was necessary for my study. While Ashley tells the story, Brit's

questions and exclamations act as instigators for Ashley to initiate a conversation about what was just stated, which allows the hosts to briefly discuss the case. A third reason was that the podcast is released from the United States and mainly features crimes that have occurred in the country, which is of importance as I am researching the United States' law enforcement. Furthermore, in order to have the storytelling involve the police as much as possible, I decided that it would be preferred to focus on cases that focused on the victims rather than the killers, as one can assume that it is often in these cases that the police are discussed in a more critical manner, i.e. if a case remains unsolved after years or decades. Lastly, *Crime Junkie* featured episodes that were not too lengthy, as many other podcasts release episodes that are closer to two hours long, which would have been too long for me to include multiple episodes from for my analysis. In conclusion, *Crime Junkie* filled my criteria and therefore suited as material for my current research.

Through the podcast's life, the hosts have referred to their listeners, and themselves, as 'crime junkies.' On their website, they describe the typical crime junkie:

> You are obsessed with all things crime related. It started out as a general interest but now you have this true-crime-shaped-hole in your life that no amount of radio segments, podcasts, or documentaries can fill. And the more true crime media you consume the more you crave it. […] You're the one telling your friends "fun facts" about the most notorious murder that took place in the city you're visiting when all they want to talk about is where they're getting dinner. […] And you're pretty sure you missed your true life's calling to be a detective.
> (Crime Junkie Podcast 2019)

A crime *junkie* hence refers to a person who gets a thrill out of hearing, reading, or seeing anything true crime related. And, as the description says, they feel they should have chosen law enforcement as a career. This interest, to say the least, in crime and law enforcement is something I draw upon in this study.

As of April 1st, 2019, the podcast has released 75 free episodes. Most episodes are full episodes covering one crime, and some episodes are updates on crimes already covered, for example, if the police uncover new evidence, make an arrest, or if the hosts are joined by an interview subject who has a connection to an already covered case. These episodes are often much shorter than full episodes and have not been used as material for the present study because of their length and subject matter.

The podcast titles always feature the name of a victim or killer, and then a term that I refer to as a theme for the episode. These themes act as a general description of what the case

covered is about and the ones featured on the podcast are: “Missing”, “Murdered,” “Serial Killer,” “Captured,” “Wanted,” “Conspiracy,” “Update,” and “Infamous.” All of these themes have been featured more than once. Themes that have only been featured once include: “Mysterious Death Of,” “If I Go Missing,” “Expert On,” and “Adnan.” For my study, I only chose episodes with the theme “Missing” or “Murdered,” as these are the most common themes in the podcast with 52% of all episodes belonging to either theme; 16 “Missing” episodes and 23 “Murdered” episodes. Also, because of the nature of the themes, i.e. dealing with a missing or a murdered person, I believe these themes to be the ones where the police’s presence is most prevalent and therefore thought to provide the most material. That is to say, these episodes feature the most detail as to who, what, where and when, and the investigation surrounding the disappearance or murder.

The episode lengths vary considerably in the podcast. The shortest episode is episode “35: Captured: Monster in Fort Wayne”, which is only 4:36 minutes long. The episode is the hosts’ comment on the capturing of a killer of a 30-year-old unsolved murder that they had covered earlier and is as such not a full-length episode but simply an update. These shorter episodes, usually under the theme “Captured” or “Update,” are often released outside of the show’s weekly schedule or simultaneously with another full-length episode. In contrast, the longest episode is episode “70: Update: Angela Mischelle Lawless,” which is 1 hour and 46 minutes long. The episode is an update on the murder of Angela ‘Mischelle’ Lawless, where the hosts first air their original episode from when they had covered the murder earlier (“34: Angela ‘Mischelle’ Lawless”) followed by an interview with the man who was wrongfully convicted of her murder. The average episode length is 39:27 for the 75 episodes released as of April 1st, 2019, however, this does include the shorter “Captured” or “Update” episodes as well as the longer interview episodes. Therefore, only looking at the “Missing” and “Murdered” themed episodes, which were chosen for this study, the average episode length is 38:05 for the 39 episodes on those themes.

In order to narrow down the number of episodes chosen for this study further, as 39 episodes totaling about 40 minutes each would have been too large of a data pool, I decided to filter the podcast on iTunes according to the most downloaded episodes as of April 1st. The three top ones then were “1: Missing: Niqui McCown,” “2: Murdered: Laci Peterson,” and “75: Missing: Rachel Cooke.” Incidentally, the top three included the first episode and the latest episode. Therefore, to get a wider view of the podcast, four episodes in the themes “Missing” or “Murdered” were chosen at random from the middle of the podcast’s timeline for my material to span from the first to the middle to the most recent episode. Of my final seven

episodes, five belonged to the "Missing" theme and two belonged to the "Murdered" theme. The average length for my episodes were 38:58, which is close to the average length for all "Missing" and "Murdered" episodes. Table 1 includes information about the seven episodes.

Table 1: Information about episodes chosen for analysis

Episode number	Theme	Case name	Date of epsiode release	Conviction in case	Running time	Words in transcription
1	Missing	Niqui McCown	18/12/2017	*	30.25.00	4548
2	Murdered	Laci Peterson	18/12/2017	x*	45.39.00	7069
15	Missing	Katelin Akens	12/03/2018		32.22.00	6337
27	Missing	Misty Copsey	21/05/2018		44.03.00	7532
34	Murdered	Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless	09/07/2018	x*	54.20.00	9827
40	Missing	Leah Roberts	13/08/2018		33.14.00	5533
75	Missing	Rachel Cooke	01/04/2019		32.43.00	4856

Though there have been convictions in the cases of Laci Peterson and Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless, both convictions have been speculated upon. In the case of Lawless, the person convicted was later released upon being proven innocent. Furthermore, for the case of Niqui McCown, an arrest was going to be made when the perpetrator committed suicide, therefore a conviction never happened, and even though his guilt is assumed, her remains have never been found and her case remains open, as with all other missing person cases despite their being significant leads and suspects in most cases.

4.2. Methods: Analyzing the podcast episodes

Two different methods were applied to analyze the material. First, a quantitative analysis was conducted using corpus linguistics to gather the frequencies and distributions of lexical items concerning law enforcement. Secondly, with help of the data from the corpus analysis, a qualitative analysis was conducted on the material using appraisal theory. Using both a quantitative and qualitative method of analysis enabled a more extensive and objective research than if only one analysis would have been conducted. Where a quantitative method can provide insight of frequencies and distribution, a qualitative method can provide insight into social interaction, better answering questions of how and why. Together, these two methods built on each other to provide strong and corroborating results.

4.2.1. Transcription of episodes

In order to be able to gather the seven episodes from the podcasts into a corpus, I listened to and transcribed each of the episodes as they were only available in audio format. First, I listened to each episode once without transcribing to get an overview of what was said and how. Then

I chose to use the free transcription program IBM Watson Speech to Text service (2019), which allows you to upload audio files and the program transcribes them for you. However, the program is not faultless, and so after receiving the rough transcriptions from it, I listened to every episode again and corrected the transcriptions manually. This way I corrected any misspelling or miswording the program had found or added words that it had completely missed. I also manually added turn-taking markers for the hosts for my own benefit as the IBM Watson program's "Detect multiple speakers" function proved unsuccessful. The program also failed to add correct punctuation, which I corrected for my own benefit, as well as interjections and exclamations, such as "What!" and "Oh my god!" so I added both in brackets for the purpose of being able to capture the emotions of the hosts when the story was being told. I attach one transcript for reference in Appendix A of this thesis.

As can be seen in table 1, the average episode length in number of words – excluding interjections, exclamations, and the hosts' turn-taking markers – was 6,244 words. The longest transcription with 9,827 words had over double the number of words as the shortest episode with 4,548 words, which I expect will affect the results and it will be taken into account in the discussion. The total number of words for my material was 45,702 words. It also needs to be said that my corpus consisted of small and specialized samples of text and therefore my results would not be as generalizable as results from a million-word corpus. However, using seven episodes from different months and years allowed for looking at changes over a longer period of time. Furthermore, having listened to all the "Missing" and "Murdered"-themed episodes of the *Crime Junkie* podcast, I could attest to the fact that the findings were generalizable to this podcast and these themes, as the way the hosts spoke and discussed was found to be similar in the majority of the episodes for those two themes.

4.2.2. A note on analyzing audio recordings

Before continuing to the results of my analyses, it is important to briefly discuss the use of audio material and its significance for this study. As podcasting is a way of making digital recordings available for download, the emphasis is, naturally, on the spoken word. Despite the fact that many podcasts may be scripted, the scripts are intended to be spoken rather than read and podcast scripts are not readily available online for the listener. Furthermore, it is unknown to the listener if, and when, a podcast host goes off script.

For my study I chose to transcribe the podcast episodes in order to create a corpus of the material, for which the episodes need to be in written form. As one of my focuses was on the terms used to discuss law enforcement, this was most easily studied using corpus

linguistics, hence my choice to do so. However, as appraisal theory was chosen as the qualitative approach in my study, it is vital to note that the original audio recordings bear an importance on the interpretation of the utterances in regard to appraisal or evaluation. When studying appraisal, one cannot merely focus on written transcriptions as there might be certain prosodic features that are only apparent in the original recordings that are vital to the interpretation of the utterances. One of the key beliefs is that a speaker can express his or her personal feelings and assessments on the topic in a different way in spoken discourse than written discourse, and this includes personal attitudes as well (Biber & Staples 2014: 273). Such feelings and assessments can be realized through prosodic features such as intonation and stress. Furthermore, Wichmann (2005: 229) notes that speech does not only reveal a speaker's emotions but can also convey "complex interpersonal meanings" such as if the utterance is intended to be, for example, friendly, rude, or condescending. This is similar to Martin's (1995: 32) idea that evoked judgement is more difficult to interpret as it cannot be easily ascribed according to particular lexical items. A speaker's attitude towards the subject as such is generated by what is said, how it is said and within which context it is said.

In order to keep the scope of this study as clear as possible, prosodic features will not be taken into account in the quantitative analysis using corpus linguistics. In the quantitative analysis the focus is mainly on the terms used for law enforcement and any meaning conveyed with prosody was deemed as not of importance for that part of the study. However, for the appraisal analysis of judgement, prosodic features, mainly tone of voice and stress, can be of importance as they can highlight the speakers' feelings and assessments of the topic of law enforcement in more detail than what might be apparent from the written transcriptions. This is most importantly the case for implicit judgement, whereby the judgement might not be as obvious to the reader as it is dependent on the ideational position of the writer/speaker (Martin 1995: 32).

In the scope of this thesis, I have decided to focus on the written material in the appraisal analysis but also keeping the original audio recordings as a secondary material in order to include any intonation and stress that is deemed as important in the appraisal of the utterance. If such is the case, this will be recorded in the Results chapter as follows: where falling intonation was noticed this was marked with \ and where rising intonation was noted this was marked with /. If certain word stress contributing to judgement was found it was marked with capital letters.

4.3. Wordsmith analysis

For my corpus analysis, I used the software Wordsmith Tools version 5.0 to acquire information on frequencies of different words for law enforcement in my material. The program produces occurrences of the items in such a way that they may be assessed and examined qualitatively within the program itself to find important semantic patterns and identifying discourse functions (Mautner 2009).

Before searching the corpus, the lexical items to be searched needed to be specified. The aim was to include synonyms, near-synonyms and hyponyms of *law enforcement*. As I listened to all the episodes multiple times when transcribing the material, I had heard the discussions and was able to pick out the terms the podcast hosts preferred to use when talking of law enforcement. Therefore, the terms *police*, *investigator*, *detective*, *sheriff*, *officer* and *deputy* were immediately chosen as terms to search with. Below is a definition of each included term to show why these in particular were included in the analysis as terms for law enforcement in my analysis.

> *Police* (*n*.) – "the department of government concerned primarily with maintenance of public order, safety, and health and enforcement of laws and possessing executive, judicial, and legislative powers" (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. *police*). Thus, police is a general name for the force that is in charge of "enforcing the law" and "detecting crime," which includes the responsibility to investigate when it is suspected that a crime has been committed.
>
> *Investigator* (*n*.) – "One who investigates something" (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. *investigator*). As mentioned above, the need to investigate becomes apparent when something questionable happens, hence, the word investigator alludes to the person doing the investigating. However, the word is not synonymous to *police*, as one can investigate other instances than crimes, but in the circumstances of my material being true crime, I conclude that the hosts' use of the word refers to the investigation of a crime.
>
> *Detective* (*n*.) – "One whose occupation it is to discover matters artfully concealed; particularly […] a member of the police force employed to investigate specific cases, or to watch particular suspected individuals or classes of offenders" (*OED*, s.v. *detective (n.)*). This word being chosen as a word that signifies law enforcement is obvious from the definition. Detective implies someone who is part of the police force and investigates a criminal case, therefore the use of the word in a true crime podcast's episodes is expected.
>
> *Sheriff* (*n*.) – "The primary function of the modern sheriff's department is law enforcement […] 93% of sheriffs' offices routinely investigate crimes" (McKee 2004: 2). As mentioned in the introduction of the different types of law enforcement, sheriffs' offices differ from police departments in many ways,

although both investigate crimes in their jurisdictions. As sheriffs mostly serve small and sparsely populated jurisdictions, the word's existence in some of the podcast episodes only signifies that those cases happened in the jurisdiction of a sheriffs' office rather than a police department. Therefore, the word *sheriff* is included in my analysis because it is the representative of law enforcement and the main investigative force in those cases.

Officer (*n.*) – "A person who holds a particular office, post, or place" (*OED*, s.v. *officer* (*n.*)). On its own, the word *officer* does not warrant a place in my analysis, but in connection with the attribute *police* the word becomes important. The definition of police officer is "a member of a police force" (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. *police officer*) and it is hence an important word to include in my analysis.

Deputy (*n.*) – "A person appointed or nominated to act for another or others, esp. to hold office or exercise authority instead of another" (*OED*, s.v. *deputy* (*n.*)). Often a name for an employee of a sheriffs' office and a subordinate to the sheriff in a county, town, or village. Synonymous to a police officer.

After having read through the transcripts multiple times, I identified a few more terms to include based on how they were used by the podcast hosts. These are *law enforcement*, *cop*, *P.D.*, *sergeant*, *agent* and *P.I.* The term *law enforcement* warrants no explanation, as it is effectively the heading for all other terms described above, but definitions of the other terms are given below.

Cop (*n.*) – "A policeman […] (orig. U.S.)" (*OED*, s.v. *cop* (*n.*5)) or "police officer" (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. *cop*), a slang word for policeman/officer used mainly in the United States, and since the podcast and the criminal cases discussed are from the United States, the inclusion of this slang term in my analysis is justified.

P.D. – In the case of the podcast's topic being true crime and the words in connection to this term in the transcripts (see Appendix A), one can conclude that *P.D.* is an abbreviation for *police department*, as defined in Urban Dictionary (*UD*, s.v. *pd*)

Sergeant (*n.*) – "An officer in a police force ranking in the U.S. just below a captain or sometimes lieutenant" (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. *sergeant*). Often paired with the attribute *police* to distinguish the word from the military term of the same name. The term's significance in law enforcement and thus to my analysis is apparent by the definition.

Agent (*n.*) – "One who is authorized to act for or in the place of another: such as […] a representative, emissary or official of a government" (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. *agent*). In itself, the word carries no connection to law enforcement, but when compounded with an attibute like *FBI* or *CIA*, which

> are known law enforcement agencies in the United States, it becomes apparent that the word is a term for a person who acts on behalf of an agency of this kind. Granted, there are many agencies that are not in the law enforcement business who refer to their employees as agents, but in the context of my material being true crime oriented, one can assume that any mention of an agent will be in in reference to a law enforcement agency.
>
> *P.I.* (*n*) – an abbreviation of *private investigator*, "a person not a member of a police force who is licensed to do detective work" (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. *private investigator*).

The twelve terms presented above were searched with the Wordsmith Concord program. Also, using the Keyword column in Wordsmith, the frequency of the terms in relation to all words in the corpus were recorded. However, there was the issue of *how* to search for the terms, i.e. which forms of the nouns to search for in order to get the correct results. The following table (2) shows the search terms used to search in the program and an explanation of the words this search term included. The forms chosen included the singular and plural alternatives of each noun.

Table 2: Lexical items search in Wordsmith

Terms searched	Notes
Police*	to include *police, polices, police's, polices'* and exclude *policing*
Investigato*	to include *investigator, investigators, investigator's, investigators'* and exclude *investigation* and *investigate*
Detectiv*	to include *detective, detectives, detective's, detectives'*
Sheriff*	to include *sheriff, sheriffs, sheriff's, sheriffs'*
Officer*	to include *officer, officers, officer's, officers'*
Deput*	to include *deputy, deputies, deputy's, deputies'*
Cop*	to include *cop, cops, cop's, cops'*
Law enforcement*	to include *law enforcement, - enforcement's* and exclude *law enforcing*
PD	*
Sergeant*	to include *sergeant, sergeants, sergeant's, sergeants'*
Agent*	to include *agent, agents, agent's, agents'*
P.I*	to include *P.I, P.I's*

*Since I manually read through the transcripts I knew when the word PD came up and that it stood for 'police department' and would be included in my analysis, I hence decided to write it as PD in my transcripts rather than P.D. to make it easier for myself when I searched with the term in Wordsmith.

One important element to note was that when searching for some of these terms, including *officer* and *sergeant*, there was the possibility of overlap with another word, e.g. *police sergeant* and *police officer*. Because many say *police officer* or *police sergeant* rather than simply *officer* or *sergeant*, a manual analysis of the occurrences of the term *police* was done to exclude the occurrences where the term was a modifier to either *officer* or *sergeant*. This was simple to accomplish with Wordsmith's function of showing the most common collocates for the

occurrences. In the results section, I mention how many, if any, occurrences were excluded from the *police* search in order to be counted in another term's search.

4.4. Appraisal analysis

For this study, as mentioned, a qualitative research approach needed to be chosen in order for the analysis of the podcast episodes to be further developed to not only include what vocabulary was used to refer to law enforcement. It was decided that a deeper analysis was required that would encompass the transcripts as a whole within which law enforcement is discussed to analyze the podcast hosts' evaluation and appraisal of law enforcement. As detailed in the chapter on the theoretical framework, the appraisal model (Marin & White 2005) was chosen for this analysis. However, as the model is broad and encompasses multiple systems and subcomponents, the scope of the analysis had to be narrowed down.

Upon studying the appraisal model, it was decided that the subcomponent most relevant to my study was judgement. Judgement focuses on evaluation of human behavior, whether negative or positive, and the focus of my study was the discussion of law enforcement in the podcast episodes. Since law enforcement, essentially, refers to the *people* that enforce the law, assessing evaluation of human behavior in this sense was deemed fitting. Since judgement is concerned with language that praises or criticizes either actions, sayings, beliefs, etc. of individuals or groups, concentrating on how the podcast hosts appraise and evaluate law enforcement in regard to Martin and White's (2005) subcomponent of judgement seemed like the perfect fit for my study.

It is however important to note that this analysis aimed at finding appraisals of judgement, but it did not presuppose that every statement in the podcast episodes where law enforcement was mentioned would be an appraisal of judgement, either negative or positive. My hypothesis was that there would be more negative values of judgement than positive ones in relation to law enforcement, but this hypothesis did allow for the fact that there would be cases where neither judgement value was found.

Since the section on judgement within the theoretical framework chapter was brief, what follows in the next section is a more in-depth explanation of the subcomponent of Attitude. Subsequently, a section on the methods with which my material was analyzed in regard to judgement will follow.

4.4.1. Judgement

To further explain the appraisal of judgement, the five types to which an evaluation of judgement can belong to can be explained as follows (Martin & White 2005: 52; Martin 2000: 156):

- Normality – how *special* someone is (social esteem)
- Capacity – how *capable* someone is (social esteem)
- Tenacity – how *resolute* someone is (social esteem)
- Veracity – how *truthful* someone is (social sanction)
- Propriety – how *ethical* someone is (social sanction)

As mentioned in the theoretical framework chapter, judgement can be divided into two different groups, judgements of social esteem and judgements of social sanction. Social esteem tends to be observed in oral culture whereas social sanction is more solidified in writing (Martin & White 2005: 53). This refers to the fact that people tend to discuss people in regard to normality, capacity and tenacity with other people, often blending it with humor and using such discussions to form social networks. The social sanction of veracity and propriety can be said to be codified in rules, regulations and laws about how to behave. Appraising someone within these parameters can be said to evaluate a person's ethics and civic duty (Martin & White 2005: 53).

The most obvious examples of judgement might be evaluations by reference to systems of legality vs. illegality, morality vs. immorality, or politeness vs. impoliteness. As can be seen in the contrasts above, it is important to note that there are both negative and positive evaluations of judgement. This should not come as a surprise, as human behavior can be either negative or positive. For social esteem positive versus negative evaluation refers to traits that we admire versus ones we criticize, while for social sanction it is seen as behavior we praise versus behavior we condemn (Martin 2000: 156). These groups can be explained as two sides of who can help someone who is evaluated to be too negative of either esteem or sanction; too much negative esteem might require the help of a therapist while too much negative sanction might require the help of a lawyer (Martin & White 2005: 53; Martin 2000: 156; Martin 1995: 30).

Furthermore, judgement can be distinguished in two ways: *inscribed* (or explicit) or *invoked/evoked* (or implicit) judgement. Explicit judgement can be seen to be judgement carried out by the means of a lexical item on its own, e.g. *horribly, badly, powerfully* etc. Implicit judgement, on the other hand, refers to certain capabilities to evoke judgement with

the help of simply stating 'facts' or providing information, often referred to as 'tokens of judgement'. These are not in themselves values of judgement; yet they rely on the speaker and listener sharing values such as social, cultural or ideological positions in order for the listener to be able to assess the statement as the speaker intended (Thompson 2008: 171; Martin 1995: 32). As such, evoked statements of judgement can also be used to assert group membership, because if the listener understands the value behind a statement and accepts it, he or she displays that they are a part of that same group as the speaker.

Take for example the statement "he wears socks with sandals". It might seem like a statement simply providing information about someone's footwear, although many listeners – especially in the Western world – would recognize the statement as a negative judgement of someone's fashion sense in pairing socks with open-toed sandals and unawareness of social norms in regard to that particular combination. The statement thus belongs to the normality judgement type. Similarly, in Finland, calling someone "Jonne" whose name is not Jonne, could to an outsider simply be a nickname for a person, but for the Finnish younger generation, it signifies a negative value of someone who is an annoying and loud male teenager aged between 12 and 18 driving around on his moped and drinking energy drinks. In this case, the requirement for assessing the statement as containing a negative value is to have an insight into the Finnish cultural and social norms of high school.

4.4.2. Analyzing judgement

Firstly, it needs to be noted that appraisal analysis contains certain dilemmas, according to Martin (1995). Most importantly, when analyzing judgement, researchers should be aware of not judging the ideational tokens in the text on their own terms. Whereas it might be easier to read inscribed judgement, as this should be clearer from the writer's intensions, it is more difficult to notice evoked judgement as the writer wants it to be interpreted (Martin 1995: 32). Martin (1995: 33) further emphasizes that it is possible to read any text judgmentally, whether this was the intention of the writer or not. How it is judged and how much of it is judged is a matter of interpretation done by the reader based on his or her social and ideological position. That being said, the reader should keep the intention of the writer in mind while analyzing a powerful text, in order for the analysis to be as unbiased as possible. This has been the aim for my analysis.

In this section I will detail the methods used for my analysis of the podcast episodes for appraisals of judgement. Below I include two tables (3 and 4) adapted from Martin and White

(2005: 53) that illustrate some of the lexical items that were used when deducing judgement. These were used as the starting point for my analysis.

Table 3: Illustrative realizations for social esteem

	SOCIAL ESTEEM		
	Normality "how special?"	**Capacity** "how capable?"	**Tenacity** "how dependable?"
Positive (admire)	lucky, fortunate, charmed… normal, natural, familiar… cool, stable, predicatble… in, fashionable, avant garde… celebrated, unsung…	powerful, vigourous, robust… sound, healthy, fit… adult, mature, experienced… insightful, clever, gifted… balanced, together, sane… literate, educated, learned… competent, accomplished… successful, productive…	brave, heroic… cautious, wary, patient… careful, thorough, meticulous… tireless, resolute… reliable, dependable… faithful, loyal, constant… felxible, adaptable…
Negative (criticise)	unlucky, hapless… odd, peculiar, eccentric… erratic, unpredicatble… dated, daggy, retrogade… obscure…	mild, weak… unsound, sick… immature, childish, helpless… slow, stupid, thick… flaky, insane… naïve, inexpert, foolish… illiterate, uneducated, ignorant… incompetent, unaccomplished… unsuccessful, unproductive…	timid, cowardly, gutless… rash, impatient… hasty, reckless… weak, distracted, despondent… unreliable, undependable… unfaithful, disloyal… stubborn, obstinate…

(Adapted from Martin & White 2005: 53.)

Table 4: Illustrative realizations for social sanction

	SOCIAL SANCTION	
	Veracity "how honest?"	**Propriety** "how far beyond reproach?"
Positive (praise)	truthful, honest, credible… frank, candid, direct… discrete, tactful…	good, moral, ethical… law abiding, fair, just… sensitive, kind, caring… unassuming, modest, humble… polite, respectful, reverent… altruistic, generous, charitable…
Negative (condemn)	dishonest, deceitful, lying… deceptive, manipulative… blunt, blabbermouth…	bad, immoral, evil… corrupt, unfair, unjust… insensitive, mean, cruel… vain, snobby, arrogant… rude, discourteous… selfish, greedy…

(Adapted from Martin & White 2005: 53.)

However, Martin and White (2005: 52) note that attitudinal meaning is dependent on the context, which means that one cannot evaluate discourse simply based on lexical items, as was also seen in the distinction between inscribed and invoked appraisal above. A lexical item can be either negative or positive depending on the whole sentence or paragraph in which it is located and in regard to someone's values and experiences. White (2001b) further points out that judgement can be realized as adverbials (*honestly, stupidly*), attributes or epithets (*he's very brave, a corrupt official*), nominals (*a hero, a brutal man*) or verbs (*to cheat, to sin*).

Having already used Wordsmith to find the lexical items in the episodes where law enforcement was mentioned, I had the groundwork for the second analysis completed as these were to be my focus points for the second analysis as well. However, as Martin and White (2005: 52) stated, the lexical items surrounding the term are not solely able to signify values of judgement, and therefore I expanded my area of analysis to the sentence within which the term was located. This allowed for the vocabulary and tone of the sentence as a whole to influence the analysis. In certain cases, multiple mentions of law enforcement existed within a short paragraph or dialogue between the podcast hosts. In such cases, the entire paragraph or

dialogue was analyzed together as a whole rather than analyzing the terms as separate statements.

My analysis was done as follows. First, I read through each sentence containing a mention of law enforcement and coded if I found any cases of inscribed judgement in an Excel-file. Having found a judgement, it was coded using one of the five types of judgement introduced earlier in this study, i.e. normality (norm), capacity (cap), tenacity (ten), veracity (ver), and propriety (prop). It should be noted that a sentence could contain multiple types of judgement, but in this case and in order to keep the scope of study as narrow as possible, it was decided to only code one type for all occurrences. In cases such as these, I chose to code the type that was most obvious in the context.

It was also further acknowledged whether the judgement was positive or negative using the symbols + and –. These were also recorded in the Excel-file which contained the *appraising items*: i.e. the lexical items within which judgement was found; the *appraiser:* who uttered the judgement; as well as the *appraised*: who the judgement was focused on. Since my analysis was focused on the hosts' appraisal of law enforcement, if any occurrences were found where either the appraiser or appraised did not match my focus, these were eliminated from the analysis.

I first conducted one analysis for inscribed judgement, being of the clearer kind of the types of judgement to find, as mentioned above (Martin 1995: 32). After this, the material was reviewed again to analyze for ideational tokens which could contribute to evoked judgement. In this second analysis, clear attention was paid to the original podcast recordings in order to not ascribe judgement according to my own social and ideological position, but rather the positions of the podcast hosts. This was done by listening to the paragraph were a presumed token of judgement was found in order to take into account possible prosodic features, i.e. intonation and stress, used by the speaker(s). Having completed the analysis of evoked judgement, the material was reviewed once more for the third time and each judgement evaluated and interpreted again, in order for the analysis to be comprehensive and exhaustive. The results of both the appraisal analysis and the Wordsmith analysis are presented in the next chapter.

5. Results

5.1. Wordsmith analysis

As mentioned in section 4.2.2., the terms for law enforcement searched for in the corpus material, i.e. the podcast transcripts, were: *police, investigator, detective, sheriff, officer, deputy, cop, law enforcement, PD, sergeant, agent* and *P.I.* The terms were also searched for in their plural forms. I will now detail my results from the Wordsmith analysis.

In total, there were 307 occurrences of the terms for law enforcement, i.e. the hosts mentioned law enforcement a total of 307 times across the seven podcast episodes. Of the total number of words in the seven episodes, words pertaining to law enforcement accounted for 0.67% of all words.

Table 5 below shows the occurrences per term and their percentage of the total 307 occurrences and table 6 shows the occurrences for the "Other" category, which includes terms with fewer than under 10 occurrences each. The term most often used to refer to law enforcement was *police* with a total of 163 occurrences in all seven episodes. This term accounted for 53% of all terms for law enforcement. The term with the least number of occurrences was *agent* with one occurrence in episode 27: Misty Copsey.

Table 5: Total occurrences of the terms for law enforcement

Term	Occurrences	Percentage
Police*	163	53 %
Investigato*	23	7 %
Detectiv*	17	6 %
Sheriff*	43	14 %
Officer*	21	7 %
Deput*	11	4 %
Other (cop*, PD, law enforc*, sergeant*, agent*, P.I*)	29	9 %

Table 6: Total occurrences of terms for law enforcement in the "Other" category

Term	Occurrences
Cop*	6
PD* (including police department*)	8
Law enforc*	3
Sergeant*	6
Agent*	1
P.I* (including private investigator*)	5

Figure 5 below shows the total number of occurrences per episode and episode length. The episode with the largest number of occurrences of law enforcement terms was episode 34: Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless with 91 occurrences, which accounted for 30% of total occurrences of the terms and 0.93% of total words in the episode. The episode with the fewest number of occurrences was episode 40: Leah Roberts with 25 occurrences of the terms, accounting for 8% of total occurrences and 0.45% of total words in the episode.

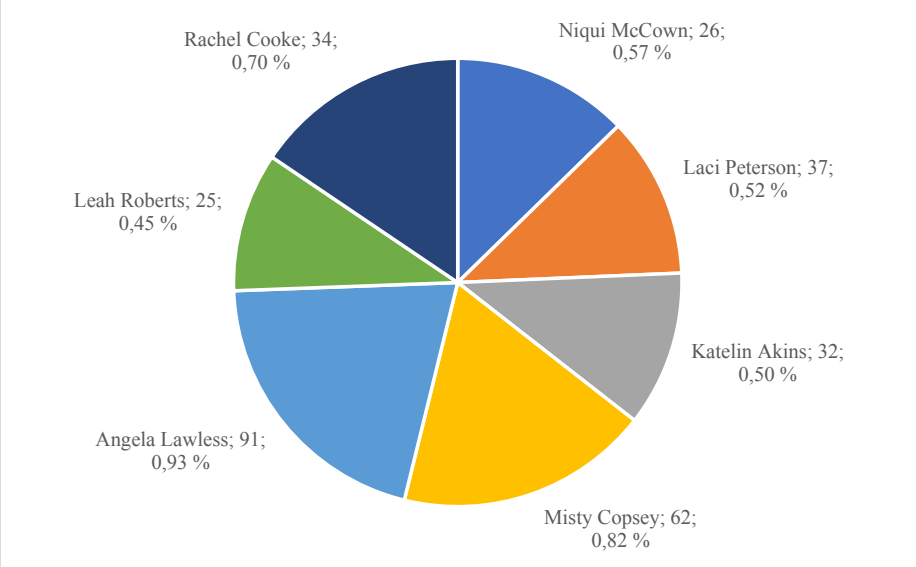

Figure 5: Total occurrences of law enforcement terms in relation to episode length

The percentage of total words in the episodes that were terms used to discuss law enforcement per episode was as follows: Niqui McCown 0.57%, Laci Peterson 0.52%, Katelin Akins 0.50%, Misty Copsey 0.82%, Angela Lawless 0.93%, Leah Roberts 0.45% and Rachel Cooke 0.70%. (As counted from the total word counts for the episodes that can be found in Table 1 in section

4.1.). The figure shows that despite there being differences in episode lengths, the total occurrences of law enforcement terms in relation to episode length is similar across the episodes, always accounting for under 1% of total words.

Figure 6 below details the number of occurrences for each term per episode. The term *police* was used most in episode 2: Laci Peterson, *investigator* was used most in episode 34: Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless and episode 27: Misty Copsey, *detective* was used most in episode 15: Katelin Akens, and *sheriff*, *officer* and *deputy* were used most in episode 34: Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless. The episode with most occurrences of the 'Other' category terms was episode 27: Misty Copsey.

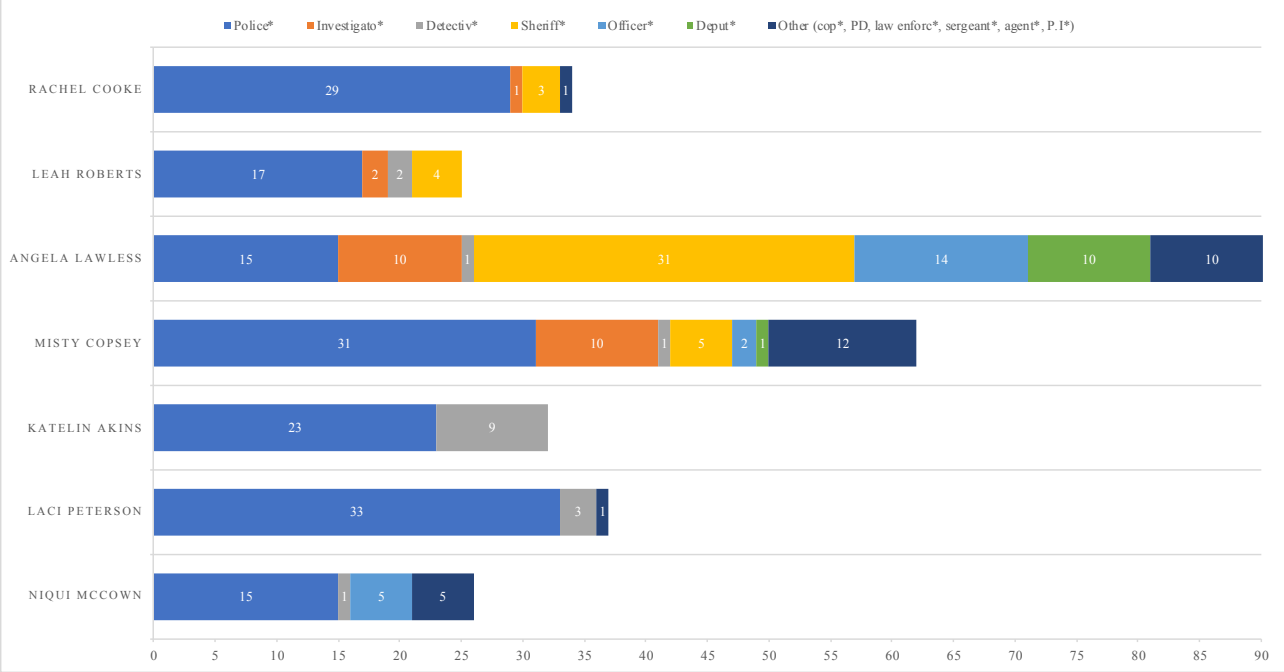

Figure 6: Number of occurrences of law enforcement terms per episode

5.2. Appraisal analysis

The appraisal analysis according to the method described in 4.2.3 resulted in the following findings. Of the 307 mentions of law enforcement lexical items that the Wordsmith analysis found, 63 occurrences were found to be judgements of law enforcement by the podcast hosts. This accounts for 21% of all law enforcement terms containing judgement. As explained previously the research was only interested in appraisals of judgements where the appraiser was the podcast host and the appraised was law enforcement. As such, 244 occurrences were found to not contain judgement of this kind, but it should be noted that this does not mean that there was no other form of judgement in these other occurrences, i.e. where the appraised was

someone else. The podcast hosts sometimes evaluate the suspects or bystanders in the episodes, as this example from episode 34: Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless where the host is referring to a suspect named Mark:

> *He said he gave police that name just ten days following the crime, but this man's name was never released, so I have to assume, that he was cleared or more likely, never existed, because Mark is bananas.*

Or another example where the hosts are evaluating a bystander in episode 27: Misty Copsey. This Cory person was not known to the victim or her family, according to the podcast hosts, before her disappearance, but he was convinced he knew who the murderer was:

> *Still, Cory didn't care, he was totally obsessed. He made threats to carry out like vigilante justice and he would even send people undercover to record conversations with Randy.*

All the data collected in the appraisal analysis where the podcast hosts evaluated law enforcement is included in Appendix B.

Table 7: Total occurrences of judgement by type and polarity

Type	Occurrences	Negative (–)	Positive (+)
normality	0	0	0
capacity	28	12	16
tenacity	18	10	8
veracity	8	6	2
propriety	9	8	1
Total	**63**	**36**	**27**

Table 7 shows the total number of occurrences (63) of judgement by the podcast hosts of the total 307 occurrences of law enforcement terms in the episodes. Furthermore, the table shows how the occurrences were divided between the five types of evaluation of judgement. In addition to this, table 7 also shows the total occurrences by polarity, i.e. if judgement was positive or negative. The overall division into polarity types is fairly equal, with there only being slightly more negative than positive judgement; 57% negative to 43% positive. As can be seen from the table, almost all types of evaluation included marginally more negative occurrences than positive ones, except capacity.

There are however differences in the results between types. As can be seen, the most frequent type used was that of capacity, relating to the capability or competence of law enforcement. This is also the only type with more positive occurrences than negative, which suggests that the hosts are fairly likely to think that law enforcement is more capable than uncapable. Example sentences 1 to 6 from the podcast that were found to include judgements of capacity are shown below. After the example sentences, a note about whether the judgement is seen as positive or negative is added. Furthermore, lexical items from table 3 (see chapter 4.2.3.2, Martin and White's 2005: 53) for the corresponding judgement type are added as a means of illustrating how the judgement was deduced. The episode within which this sentence was uttered by the podcast hosts is also given. A lexical item is given for how the sentence can be seen to include judgement according to table 3. However, since the podcast episodes are audio recordings, analyzing for evoked judgement meant including prosodic features, if these were of importance to the judgement in the utterances. Therefore, some examples include a note on prosody found in the utterances.

1. *Richmond PD hear about this and they're like "oh hell no"*
   Positive judgement: *powerful*
   Prosody: \ OH / HELL NO
   Episode 1: Niqui McCown

2. *Police have no leads but again even in this time where they aren't moving the case forward, they still aren't tracking down other leads. To me this would have been a good time if the Scott angle wasn't panning out, or you at least weren't getting anything new and it wasn't enough to convict him, it wasn't up to take him to trial. At least spend your time looking at the other angles*
   Negative judgement: *incompetent, unproductive*
   Prosody: NEW; AT LEAST spend your time / looking
   Episode 2: Laci Peterson

3. *Now police, like you and I, and like I'm sure everyone listening, are super confused by James*
   Positive judgement: *insightful*
   Prosody: SUPER CONFUSED
   Episode 15: Katelin Akens

4. *But there really is still nothing being done. Police are finally considering Misty a missing and endangered person, but they're dragging their feet and still haven't done any real investigative work.*
   Negative judgement: *incompetent, unproductive*
   Episode 27: Misty Copsey

5. *Deputies still had not a single idea on what the motive would be, or why she would have pulled over her car. I mean, they had more questions than answers, and even a month into the investigation, they didn't have a single prime suspect*

   Negative judgement: *unaccomplished*

   Episode 34: Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless

6. *So police have this sketch, but something isn't sitting right with them, and because guy number one didn't say anything about her leaving with some guy named Barry, in fact some guy named Barry never came up. Now all that police will tell us is they think that this Barry character is completely fabricated.*

   Positive judgement: *sensible, competent*

   Episode 40: Leah Roberts

The second most frequent type found in the episodes was tenacity, relating to how resolute or bold someone is. This is interesting in regard to the topic of law enforcement in the podcast as it alludes to the importance of law enforcement agents' dependability and thoroughness. People need to be able to trust that law enforcement are taking their cases seriously and evaluating their tenacity questions that trust. The type of tenacity had more negative evaluation than positive, signifying a lack of trust. Examples 7 to 11 illustrate sentences of tenacity in the podcast.

7. *And at this point I think police are even getting concerned as well …*

   Positive judgement: *persevering, adaptable*

   Episode 1: Niqui McCown

8. *I know, but again, it's not like police weren't just investigating this lead, they really weren't investigating anything. Not talking to her friends, not talking to Rheuben, and not talking to this guy who got convicted of picking up a girl, almost exactly where Misty was last seen, raping her and attempting to murder her.*

   Negative judgement: *unreliable, undependable*

   Episode 27: Misty Copsey

9. *This is huge for the investigators and prosecutors, so they put together a photo line-up and they go back to Mark Abbott, who's clearly like the most reliable witness, wink, wink, sarcasm, no he's not.*

   Negative judgement: rash, unreliable

   Prosody: CLEARLY; / most reliable \ witness

   Episode 34: Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless

10. *Even the investigators that were first on the scene thought that she pulled over for someone she knew, and she did not know Josh. But in the sheriff's mind, this was a, but a minute detail. In the sheriff's mind, Josh fit the profile of a killer.*

    Negative judgement: *reckless, willful*

    Prosody: a / minute detail

    Episode 34: Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless

11. *But for every like bad prosecutor and bad investigator, it is so heart-warming to know that there are a couple of good guys out there.*

    Positive judgement: *loyal*

    Episode 34: Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless

There were 10 occurrences of the type of veracity, which relates to honesty and credibility. Sadly, there were more negative occurrences than positive ones implying that the podcast hosts found law enforcement slightly more dishonest than honest, which is unsettling since law enforcement is tasked with upholding law and order. Therefore, being seen as dishonest could, on a deeper level, mean that they themselves are not following the law. These findings can also directly be seen to correlate with people's trust and confidence in the police, because if police are seen as dishonest that can mean they are seen as untrustworthy. Examples 12 to 15 are sentences with judgements of veracity.

12. *So once police like, and, and obviously police know more than the public does, they ruled this out a couple of days in.*

    Positive judgement: *credible*

    Prosody: know \ MORE

    Episode 15: Katelin Akens

13. *Because growing up you think, or at least, some of us think that police are honest, and you think that the whole reason we have this justice system and proven innocent 'til guilty is because that's how it actually works.*

    Negative judgement: *dishonest*

    Prosody: / you think; HONEST

    Episode 34: Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless

14. *If one thing I've learned the more I've done this podcast, looked into wrongful convictions, a lot of times if you don't have honest prosecutors and you don't have honest detectives, they will actually choose not to test evidence if they think there's any chance that it's not going to point to their suspect.*
    Negative judgement: *dishonest*
    Episode 34: Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless

15. *The police knew aaaa loot more than they were letting on. I am shocked at how much they were able to keep quiet in this case.*
    Negative judgement: *deceitful, deceptive*
    Prosody: / a \ LOT
    Episode 75: Rachel Cooke

The last type that had any occurrences in the podcast episodes was propriety, i.e. relating to morality and correctness. The type of judgement that was not found at all in the podcast episodes, is normality, relating to how unusual someone is. This can be taken to suggest that the podcast hosts do not discuss whether law enforcement are behaving normally or unusually, not evaluating the norms of the occupation. But the discussion of propriety or how moral and ethical law enforcement is, is interesting. Law enforcement is tasked with upholding the law and can therefore also be seen as being tasked with "making the world a better place", law enforcement agents should be inherently good and righteous. Showing compassion and empathy can be said to be the driving force for being a good police officer (Scherman 2019). Thus, the podcast hosts evaluating law enforcement's morality more negatively is worrying. Sentences from the podcast episodes that were found to include the type of propriety are illustrated by examples 16-19.

16. *So all of this went to the police, the family would say "Hey, you know detective Allen Brocchini, to whoever, that go talk to these people, they said they've seen Laci, maybe this will help find her. They're assuming that the police are vetting all of this, what we learned later is, I don't think they did a great job of that even, early on they really have their sights set on Scott.*
    Negative judgement: *unjust, bad*
    Episode 2: Laci Peterson

17. *The police decide like okay we can't let Laci's family find out this way, we have to tell them.*
    Positive judgement: *kind*, *caring*
    Episode 2: Laci Peterson

18. *The deputy basically tells him, even if we found her, we wouldn't tell you or her mother where she is.*

    Negative judgement: *evil*

    Prosody: YOU; MOTHER

    Episode 27: Misty Copsey

19. *So the sheriff and the prosecutor charged him with the murder, they say, you know, we can't prove you were here, but we can't prove you were away, so that's really not a hang up for us.*

    Negative judgement: *unjust*

    Episode 34: Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless

Table 8 shows the division of the occurrences of judgement per episode. The episode with the most occurrences of judgement from the podcast hosts towards law enforcement was episode 27: Misty Copsey with 27 occurrences or 27% of the total 63 occurrences. The episode with the least occurrences of judgement was episode 40: Leah Roberts with 2 or 3% of total occurrences followed closely by episode 75: Rachel Cooke with 3 or 5% of total occurrences.

Table 8: Occurrences per episode

Episode	Niqui	Laci	Katelin	Misty	Angela	Leah	Rachel	Total
normality	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
capacity	6	6	5	7	2	2	0	28
tenacity	1	2	2	5	7	0	1	18
veracity	0	0	2	0	4	0	2	8
propriety	0	3	0	5	1	0	0	9
Total	**7**	**11**	**9**	**17**	**14**	**2**	**3**	**63**
Percentage	11 %	17 %	14 %	27 %	22 %	3 %	5 %	-
Negative (–)	2	6	0	14	10	1	3	36
Positive (+)	5	5	9	3	4	1	0	27
Epsiode word count	**4548**	**7069**	**6337**	**7532**	**9827**	**5533**	**4856**	**45702**

Table 8 also shows the occurrences by type per episode. Most judgements of capacity and propriety were found in episode 27: Misty Copsey with 7 occurrences for capacity (25% of total occurrences for capacity) and 5 occurrences (56%). Most judgements of tenacity and veracity were found in episode 34: Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless with 7 occurrences (39%) for tenacity and 4 occurrences (50%) for veracity. Episode 40: Leah Roberts was the only episode to have occurrences of only one type with 2 occurrences of capacity. All other episodes had at least two judgement types present. The table (8) also shows the polarity by episode, whereby only one episode, episode 1: Niqui McCown, had more occurrences of positive judgement than

negative judgement, 5 occurrences to 2 occurrences. The episode with most negative judgement was episode 27: Misty Copsey with 14 occurrences or 39% of all negative judgements, and the episode with most positive judgement was episode 15: Katelin Akens with 9 occurrences or 34% of all positive judgement. Episode 15: Katelin Akens was the only episode to have only positive judgement and no negative judgement (9+ to 0–), whereas episode 75: Rachel Cooke was the only episode to only have negative judgement and no positive judgement (0+ to 3–). All other episodes had occurrences of both negative and positive judgement. Furthermore, the table highlights the total word count per episode and the percentage of judgements in each episode in regard to total word count. This is depicted in order to show that though episode length has an effect on the number of occurrences, it does not affect the proportions of types and polarity of the evaluations. Episode length will be further discussed in the next section.

Figure 7 below details the occurrences of law enforcement terms in each episode next to the judgements found for each episode. This shows that the podcast hosts mentioned law enforcement multiple times, but evaluations of judgement were not found as frequently. The longest episode with the most occurrences of law enforcement terms, episode 34: Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless, had the second most occurrences of judgement. Of all the times the podcasts hosts mentioned law enforcement in the episode, only 15% of those mentions were evaluations of judgement. However, in episode 27: Misty Copsey 27% of occurrences of law enforcement terms were found to be evaluations of judgements. This shows a clear difference between episodes. The rest of the episodes had the following percentages of judgement in relation to the terms of law enforcements:

- Episode 1: Niqui McCown: 26%
- Episode 2: Laci Peterson: 30%
- Episode 15: Katelin Akens: 28%
- Episode 40: Leah Roberts: 8%
- Episode 75: Rachel Cooke: 9%

These figures show that the majority of episodes (4) had around 30% of evaluations of judgement of all law enforcement terms in their respective episodes.

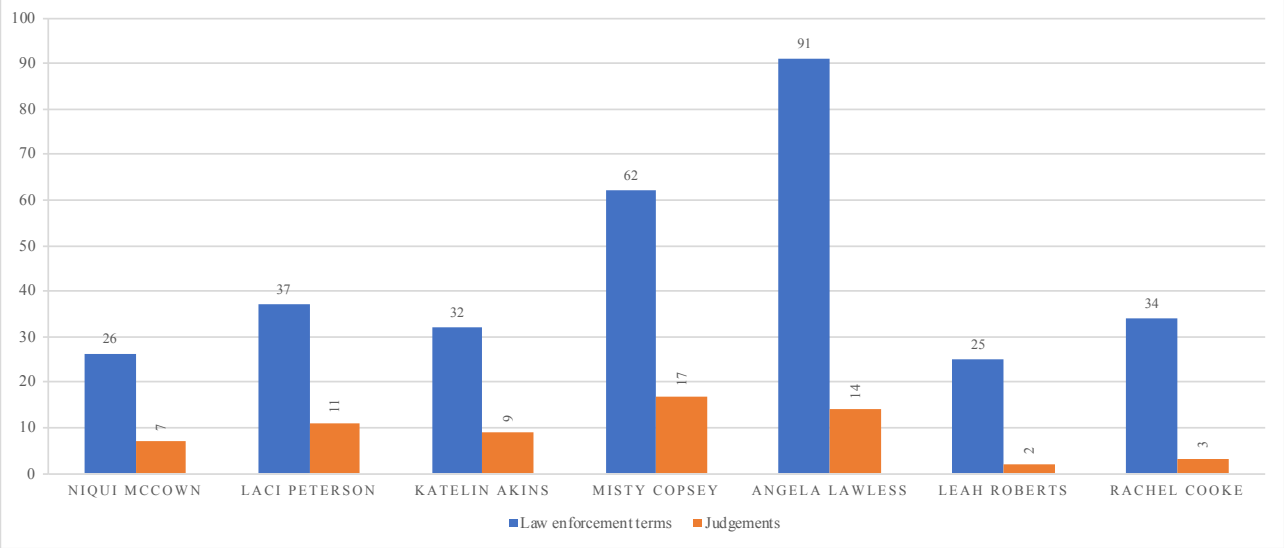

Figure 7: Occurrences of law enforcement terms and judgements per episode

The next section will discuss the results presented in this section and relate them to the background and the topics that have been discussed throughout this thesis.

6. Discussion

This section will examine the results presented in the previous chapter in relation to the research questions and topics introduced in the background. This will be done in two parts; separately for the corpus linguistics analysis and for the appraisal analysis. Furthermore, I will discuss the implications of the findings of the appraisal analysis for podcasts' influence on its audience. This section will also discuss limitations of the present study and suggestions for future research.

6.1. Law enforcement vocabulary

The aim of the corpus analysis was to discover what vocabulary the hosts used in their podcast when discussing law enforcement and which lexical items for law enforcement were the most prominently used. The findings from the corpus analysis where then used to assist in the appraisal analysis. Reading the podcasts to find the lexical items for law enforcement used in the podcast showed that there are multiple different terms for law enforcement in American English. As was noted in the background chapters, there are multiple different branches and agencies of law enforcement and this can also be seen by the abundance of different terms used to describe law enforcement in the podcast. Terms used to describe law enforcement professionals from all three main types of law enforcement – local (municipal and county), state and federal – were mentioned in the seven studied podcast episodes. Most terms can be attributed to multiple types of law enforcement, but some terms are often associated with one specific type. For example, *PD* is associated with municipal law enforcement, *sheriff* and *deputy* are associated with county law enforcement and *agent* is often attributed to federal law enforcement.

It should come as no surprise that the most prominently used term for law enforcement was *police,* which accounted for 53% of all occurrences (see Table 4). The term is derived from the medieval Latin term *politia* 'state, government' (*Oxford English Dictionary* s.v. *police (n.)*) and multiple different languages around the world use a variation of the same term i.e. Swedish *polis*, Spanish *policía*, Swahili *polisi,* Turkish *polis* and more. The term is thus universally well-known, which might explain why the podcast hosts use it so frequently. Furthermore, *police* is also a verb used often to describe the action that law enforcement professionals undertake when working, i.e. policing.

There is also a relatively high percentage of the term *sheriff* used in the episodes. This suggests that multiple cases covered by the podcast hosts happened in places in the United States that were under a county sheriff's jurisdiction. As was observed previously most sheriff's offices are small, serve large and sparsely populated rural areas, and have less personnel than their urban counterparts (McKee 2004: 432). This may mean that they have limited resources to investigate larger crimes. In their study Senjo and Heward (2007: 218) found that of their participants, every three out of four sheriff's deputies had a second job in addition to working full-time as a law enforcement officer. They explain the reason for this as relating to the insufficient amount of work and low salary. Rural sheriff's deputies spend less energy patrolling sparsely populated areas with little crime than their urban counterparts, and thus they have leftover energy to have a second job to earn an extra salary. Thus, one might think that when faced with a situation requiring a lot of resources and investigative work, some rural sheriff's offices might not have the capacity to handle such cases. However, I have found no research indicating that sheriff's offices had higher unsolved cases than urban police departments.

It is important to note that 50% of all occurrences of law enforcement terms were found in two episodes. This indicates that there is a clear influence of the length of episode as these two episodes were also the longest episodes (see Table 1). It can be concluded that the longer the episode, the more the podcast hosts mentioned law enforcement. This pattern almost continued through my material as the third and fourth longest episodes also feature the third and fourth most mentions of law enforcement. Although, all episodes had under 1% of law enforcement terms (see Figure 5), suggesting that despite there being more terms for law enforcement in the longer episodes, the difference is proportionally marginal.

However, the third shortest episode had the least number of occurrences of law enforcement terms. Since my material only consists of seven episodes, it is difficult to say if this is a pattern throughout the podcast and for what reason. One could argue that because the podcast focuses on crime it is understandable that law enforcement plays a central role and the longer the episode is, the longer the discussion of the crime is, and hence also the discussion of the law enforcement agency in charge of solving the crime. Since the topic of this study is a true crime podcast and the way law enforcement is portrayed in the podcast, it should be apparent that law enforcement is discussed frequently. Furthermore, interestingly, the themes of the episodes might have had an influence on frequency. The two episodes convering murders, namely episode 2: Laci Peterson and episode 34: Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless, featured the third and second most occurrences of law enforcement terms. This indicates that

law enforcement was discussed more in the episodes where a clear murder had been committed, as opposed to the missing person episodes where bodies had never been found.

Of the seven podcast episodes, several episodes featured multiple different terms used for law enforcement (see Figure 6), which indicates that there was different vocabulary used in the sources to what the podcast hosts used when discussing the case. This also shows that there is a lot of variation between which terms to use for law enforcement and that other factors apart from simply the type of law enforcement might have an influence on the choice of vocabulary. Something that could be further studied within the medium of podcasting in general is which term for law enforcement is chosen based on which factors. It should furthermore be stated that each episode has its own term that is used the most. In six of the episodes – i.e. in all except one episode – the most frequently used term is *police*, as it did account for 53% of all occurrences. In the seventh episode the most frequently used term is *sheriff*, again signifying that the type of law enforcement being county law enforcement had an effect on the vocabulary.

6.2. Judgement of law enforcement

The results of the appraisal analysis show that law enforcement (Table 7) was judged in a slightly more negative light by the podcast hosts in the episodes, as my hypothesis stated. However, the difference between negative and positive judgement in the episodes was not as distinct as suspected. As the analysis focused solely on the podcast hosts' own attitude to law enforcement, this excluded all terms of law enforcement where judgement was not realized. These included when the podcast hosts read out statements given by police, depictions of suspects, listing evidence, and more. The results in Figure 7 do show that of all the terms of law enforcement found in the episodes, only about 30% or in some cases under 10% of all occurrences were found to be evaluations of judgement.

Of the types of judgement, either belonging to social esteem or social sanction, the type with most occurrences was that of capacity. This was to be expected as capacity deals with a person's capability or competence, and law enforcement is a profession. It is self-evident that a law enforcement professional's capability of performing his or her duties should be mentioned in regard to judgement. Therefore, it is not surprising that with this type of judgement, there was more positive judgement than negative judgement. This suggests that although the podcast hosts are more negative of law enforcement in general, they deem law enforcement officers as slightly more capable than not in performing their duties.

It is also not surprising that normality, that is how normal a person seems to be, was not found at all in the podcast episodes. One might say that the topic of normality in relation to law enforcement is seldom present in a murder or missing person investigation, and that if it were a topic, it would certainly not be a very relevant one. In all other types of judgement there was more negative than positive judgement. Propriety, i.e. how ethical or good someone is, received the most negative judgement in relation to positive judgement, which can be interpreted as signifying that the podcast hosts judged law enforcement as inherently evil and unmoral. Although there were only 8 negative judgements of propriety, it can still be said that discussing law enforcement as an unmoral or corrupt entity is worrying, despite the low number of occurrences in regard to the total word count per episode. Since law enforcement is an entity meant to enforce the law, it is troubling when law enforcement is discussed in relation to corruption, which is against the law.

What is also interesting in the findings in Table 7 is that there are more occurrences of judgements of social esteem than of social sanction. In section 4.2.3.1 it was noted that judgements of social esteem are more apparent in oral cultures – as the podcast might be seen to represent – as people discuss human behavior as a way of building social networks, but judgements of social sanction are more codified in rules and laws of how to behave. One might think that discussing law enforcement would involve more judgements of social sanction as the profession is literally focused on rules, laws and punishment, and there are strict moral rules on how to behave in this profession. As was seen in the section on trust and confidence in policing, public perception of law enforcement decreased after the maltreatment of African Americans by American law enforcement came to light by the Black Lives Matter movement (Norman 2017). This one could say shows that people do not take the mistreatment of other people lightly, and that law enforcement is expected to be at a higher standard than the wider public in regard to behavior.

Looking at the findings in Table 8, it becomes apparent that episode length had an effect on the occurrences of judgement found in the episodes. Similarly to what was noticed in the previous section on terms of law enforcement, in the appraisal analysis longer episodes featured more occurrences of judgement. This was the case for the majority of the episodes included in the analysis. The comparison between terms of law enforcement found in the episodes with the number of judgements recorded seen in Figure 7, shows that the episodes with the most occurrences of law enforcement terms also have the most occurrences of judgement. And as Table 8 shows, they are also the longest episodes. Hence one can draw the conclusion that a longer episode equaled more occurrences of law enforcement terms, which in turn equaled

more judgement. So, by looking at the longest episodes of the podcast there might be more judgement apparent. It can be concluded that the longer a case drags on, the more opportunity for judgement alluding to wrongdoings appear. It is understandable that when an episode is longer, it means that the podcast hosts have more to say, which could indicate that the case is more complex or involves more details compared to other shorter episodes as it takes longer to explain or there is more to discuss. If a criminal case is complex to explain, it might mean that the investigation has in turn has been difficult. This might allude to the fact why longer episodes have more judgement. This might not be simply because the episodes are longer, but because the criminal cases covered are more complicated and the podcast hosts might have issue with some of the details of the case.

It is also important to note that not all episodes featured both positive and negative evaluation of judgement. One episode featured only positive judgement whereas another featured only negative judgement. This suggests that despite there being more negative judgement overall in all the episodes combined, it is not abundant in all cases. The evaluation of judgement of law enforcement is clearly dependent upon the circumstances of the case, as in episode 34: Angela 'Mischelle' Lawless. A man was convicted of her murder in 1994 but was acquitted in 2010 after serving 16 years in prison for a murder he did not commit (Weinberg 2019). This acquittal definitely has a bearing on the way law enforcement is evaluated by the podcast hosts in the episode and is also most likely the reason there is so much negative judgement in this specific episode. My material shows that the podcast hosts do not have only one specific way of evaluating law enforcement as there is such variation between the episodes.

It is important to consider if the themes of the episodes might have had an influence on the results of my analysis. My material features two themes: two episodes covered murders and the remaining five covered missing persons. The distinction between the two being that in the two 'Murdered' episodes, the bodies of the victims were found, whereas in the other five 'Missing' episodes, no body had been recovered when the episodes aired. The two episodes with the most judgement were not of the same theme; one covered a murder and the other a missing person. However, the other 'Murdered' episode featured the third most occurrences of judgement, indicating that there was more judgement in relation to 'Murdered' episodes. Consequently, both 'Murdered' episodes contained more negative judgement than positive judgement.

The complete results of the appraisal analysis of evaluations of judgement are included in Appendix B. The appendix has all data from the appraisal analysis and can be referred to for

the extensive results. The analysis concludes that 34 occurrences were found to be inscribed/explicit judgement that is deducible from lexical items on their own (Martin & White 2005: 53). However, it needs to be said that when it comes to language use in context, as this case is about, a lexical item's attitudinal meaning will vary according to the context within which it is (Ibid.: 52). Not surprisingly then, the context of law enforcement and crime in relation to the keywords found in the analysis is interesting. Many cases featured the same keywords of judgement, namely *competent/incompetent*, *unreliable*, *dishonest*, and *unjust*. Looking at these keywords, it becomes clear that in relation to law enforcement, they are very negative. The podcast hosts' discussion of law enforcement hence seems to circle around issues of competency, reliability, honesty, and justness. It might not come as a surprise that a law enforcement professional is judged in regard to these terms, but it is worrisome when the evaluation is negative. As previously stated, law enforcers might be held to a higher standard than the wider public, and one might assume that if any issues arise, judgement would be given 'close to home,' so to speak, referring to adjectives that would undermine their professionalism. Since law enforcement is a part of the justice system, it might not be surprising that law enforcement professionals' competency, reliability, honesty and justness at enforcing the law would be questioned.

As was observed in section 2.1.2., questions asked in surveys garnering public opinion of law enforcement often use the words *trust* and *confidence* (Liqun 2015). Trust and confidence deal with police legitimacy as they refer to seeing the police as a legitimate actor in charge of police security. Similarly, one could argue that competency, reliability, honesty and justness could be seen as equally important terms to deduce legitimacy. The podcast hosts' discussion clearly shows that law enforcement is seen, by the hosts at least, as flawed in very important aspects. The pattern of negative judgement found in the analysis shows that the hosts are questioning the trustworthiness of law enforcement by showcasing the flaws in the profession in relation to the cases they cover in their podcast. Discussing law enforcement's behavior in regard to their tenacity, veracity and propriety can be seen as the podcast hosts' way of bringing forth the issues in the system of dishonest and immoral police.

In total, 29 occurrences out of the total 63 included prosodic features marked as having an effect on the perceived judgement. These can also be seen as evoked/implicit judgement, as their meaning cannot be deduced merely from the sentences. As Wichmann (2005: 229) states, a speaker's emotions can be revealed in their speech and, furthermore, any interpersonal feelings can have an influence on how the utterance is perceived by an audience. The context within which the utterance is produced affects the meaning of the utterance as much as what is

actually said. Therefore, prosodic features like tone of voice and stress play a part in interpreting the podcast hosts' evaluations of law enforcement. The hosts stress various words in their sentences and raise or lower their tone of voice in order to emphasize certain topics or words.

Weinstein et al. (2018: 899) state that there are three main attributes to prosody: "pitch (i.e., as how low or high a voice is perceived), amplitude (i.e., how loud a sound is perceived), and speech rate (i.e., how fast an utterance is produced)." These have all contributed to the perception of tone of voice in the podcast. Most occurrences feature a rise or decline in pitch that was found to influence the meaning of the sentence. In these cases the context played a part in the interpretation alongside the prosody. For example, take the sentence "[…] they go back to Mark Abbott, who's clearly like the most reliable witness" (Flowers 2018a). Without the rise in pitch before *most reliable* and decline after, before *witness*, the sentence could be construed to be a positive judgement of law enforcement. Within the context of law enforcement and crime, it could have been deduced that they had chosen a reliable witness. However, the rise in pitch signaled that this was a negative judgement. The judgement was further strengthened by the stressing and amplitude of the word *clearly* and because of the context surrounding the witness discussed earlier in the episode.

As can be seen from the results of the analysis and example given above, the podcast hosts prefer to stress one or two words in their discussion of a case. It can be said that the stressed words are chosen to signify for the listener that what came before culminated in the dramatic end that is the stressed word. That is, it is meant to make the listener stop and realize what was said earlier that makes the stressed word dramatic in its context. For example, the sentence "[t]he deputy basically tells him, even if we found her, we wouldn't tell you or her mother where she is" (Flowers 2018b). The stressed words *you* and *mother* also stress for the listener that law enforcement is treating a missing person's relatives and close ones rudely. By stressing the words, especially *mother*, listeners understand that the podcast hosts judge this decision since important information could be withheld from 'you' and 'mother' of the missing person, which to the hosts seems questionable and hence the listener is made aware of it.

6.3. Podcast hosts' influence on its audience

The example above brings us to another topic that was discussed earlier in this study, namely the influence media has on the public. The research question raised in relation to this was: to what extent is law enforcement discussed in a way that might have an influence on the audience of the podcast? Section 2.2 presented research on media's influence on the public, both

discussing perception of crime and law enforcement as influenced by media as well as true crime podcasts' impact on public opinion.

One could say that the podcast hosts discuss law enforcement in ambiguous ways. As in explicit judgement, the attitudinal meaning of the podcast hosts' discussion could be deduced by simply reading their original transcripts, as they do not always hide their feelings when they are presenting a case. However, there are also occurrences where the judgement cannot be realized by lexical items alone, in which case prosody in the original recordings is vital to the understanding of the discussion. As the results have shown, there was only slightly more negative judgement found in the podcast hosts' discussion of law enforcement. Consequently, and slightly contradicting my hypothesis, the difference in evaluations of negative and positive judgement is not substantial in the podcast episodes. How come this insignificant difference? I assumed that there would be more negative judgement because I had listened to *Crime Junkie* prior to researching this podcast. I had at that point noticed the podcast's portrayal of law enforcement, hence the interest in exploring this issue. Despite the results showing marginally more negative judgement, I noticed as a podcast listener the apparent negativity before beginning this study. Therefore, I believe that this has also been noticed by others. Additionally, since the podcast focuses mainly on American crime, I wondered how the Finnish law enforcement would be dealt with in a similar podcast – would I detect less or more negativity as a listener than when listening to an American true crime podcast? Is the impact on the audience a question of cultural differences affecting our perceptions of the podcast or what?

This being said, as studies have shown (see Potter & Kappeler 2006; Mason 2003; Gerbner & Gross 1976), media coverage of crime is believed to affect public perception, meaning that the way the podcasts hosts discuss crime and law enforcement can affect the audience. Furthermore, as Kort-Butler & Sittner Hartshorn's study (2011:48) suggests, non-fictional programs have been shown to have a negative effect on audiences especially in relation to public opinion and prior understanding of the justice system. *Crime Junkie* markets itself as a true crime podcast, which defines it as non-fictional, since it deals with real crime stories. Effectively, one could deduce that there is a risk of the podcast's audience being influenced in a negative way by the discussion of law enforcement, and in a greater scope, the justice system. The use of keywords such as *incompetent, unreliable, dishonest* and *unjust* in relation to law enforcement raises thoughts of legitimacy and capability of maintaining public security and safety. As Simpson (2017) noted, true crime raises awareness of the justice system and its wrongdoings, bringing the wrongful conviction fight to the forefront of discussion,

affecting the emotions of the audience in a judgmental way. Of the podcast episodes, or cases, featured in this study, one contained a wrongful conviction and another a speculated conviction (see Table 1). Furthermore, in a couple of the episodes, the podcast hosts discussed who in their mind was the culprit despite no arrest being made, which in itself could be seen as a passive judgement about the criminal investigation, which they might see as having failed to adequately consider the eligible suspect.

However, it is not merely the audience that can be influenced by the podcast, but vice versa the podcast hosts by their perceived audience. As Yardley et al. (2018: 11) observed, audiences grow tired of media's coverage of crime and begin engaging in online communities as citizen detectives. One could then posit that true crime podcast hosts are doing the same and bringing the investigation away from the online forums and chat-groups to the popular medium of podcasting. Listeners can indulge their interests while driving, cooking, doing laundry, working out, and other mundane tasks. Gone are the days when one had to lurk on websites like Murderpedia.org for information. Also, true crime podcast hosts have become well-known and some earn enough money with their podcasts to quit their normal jobs and pursue podcasting fulltime (see podcast RedHanded, for example ("Redhanded" 2020)). This realization also brings Seltzer's (2007: 16) argument of podcasts being more entertainment than reality to the forefront, as podcast hosts being identified as celebrities indicates that there might be a fine line between what is true and what is speculation, as if reality is not always "juicy" enough.

All of this being said and as indicated by research presented here or in section 2.2, there is further need of researching the impact of podcasts and if and to what extent they influence their audiences which will be further developed in the next section.

6.4. Limitations and future research

As with all studies, there are certain limitations to my study. One limitation which was already touched upon is the size of the material. For the scope of this study, the selection of episodes had to be relatively small in number. However, despite only including seven episodes from the podcast, the material consisted of about 45,000 words in total, which was considered a sufficient amount for the present study. As the material consisted of a limited number of podcast episodes, no generalizations could be made for the whole podcast material. In total, the podcast featured 75 episodes at the beginning of the study. In order to generalize about any of the results found in this present study, future research would have to include all or a more substantial number of episodes from the podcast.

Using corpus linguistic methods to find occurrences of terms of law enforcement helped this research immensely, and this method in addition to appraisal theory allowed for a more extensive analysis than the podcast material seemed to permit. However, there are also some issues arising from the methodology of appraisal theory and corpus linguistics which need to be considered. According to Martin & White (2005: 69) "work on paralanguage (gesture, facial expression, laughter, voice quality, loudness, etc.) and attendant modalities of communication (image, music, movement, etc.) are central arenas for further research on the realization of attitude." In the scope of the present study, focus on paralanguage and modalities was not possible as the podcasts were transcribed and treated as texts. The decision to focus on prosody, namely tone of voice and stress in the audio recordings of the podcasts, was done in the appraisal analysis to include information that was apparent in the audio recordings but not as clearly evident in the transcripts alone. Future research could focus in more detail on all aspects that contribute to the attitudinal meaning of podcasts in general.

Despite the original material being audio recordings, the transcripts have been the main focus in this study, because a corpus analysis of the material was needed to find analytical keywords using corpus linguistic methods. In the appraisal analysis that followed, it was decided to keep the focus on the transcript while taking prosody into consideration when necessary. While a qualitative analysis gives depth to the study, it can be problematic as it is largely based on the researcher's individual interpretation of the material, which can always be argued to be subjective. For example, identifying evaluations of judgement in the audio recordings, whether positive or negative, could give different results depending on the researcher. I have aimed at objectivity when possible and the analyses were restricted to a certain material and its background as presented in the podcasts of this study. In addition to this, despite being observant, there is always a risk for human error and discrepancies in the results. To account for this, the analyses have been double-checked. Transcribing and double-checking the analyses has been my way of ensuring objectivity in this study.

Podcasting being a fairly new and scarcely researched medium means that there is still a lot of study to be done on the medium as research material. Furthermore, as this study has shown, it is possible to do a linguistic analysis using podcasts as research material. Podcasts should be studied linguistically in more detail in the future, as podcasting is a medium used by different kinds of people around the world and for various purposes. It therefore presents an interesting material for research in its diversity as well as in its impact on the audience. As noted in the introduction, podcasts exist for various types of reasons from education to entertainment. Since podcasts are not geographically constricted in the same sense as

conventional media, they can be downloaded around the world and are hence accessible by people from different cultures and backgrounds. In this sense, the major point for future research would be to explicitly study podcasts' influence on its audiences, as has been a main interest also in this study. In recent years podcasting has become a mainstream medium and is growing in popularity also in higher education as an aid for learning and teaching (Salmon 2008). The rise of using technology in the classroom can be seen as predicting that podcasting can become a generally used tool also in other channels. Businesses have started creating their own podcasts as a means of marketing their services as so-called branded podcasts. Examples include podcasts started by Slack, Microsoft and McDonald's (*Backtracks* 2019). The more podcasting rises in popularity across multiple spectrums, the more important it becomes to start academic researching on the medium as well. Furthermore, and in line with the present study, true crime podcasts bring a new approach to crime reporting but their impact – both positive and/or negative – can have unexpected effects on criminal investigations and the justice system as a whole, which should not be taken lightly. As civil rights activist Malcolm X famously stated in 1963 in the US:

> The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses.

Whether this is the case also for podcasting remains to be seen by further research.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this study has been to analyze episodes from the American true crime podcast *Crime Junkie* using corpus linguistics and appraisal theory to determine what vocabulary for law enforcement the podcasts hosts use and how they evaluate law enforcement in relation to judgement in their discussion. The findings were then related to previous research on media's influence on the public in order to be able to discuss the tricky question of how podcast hosts might affect the audience's views on law enforcement and judgement, and vice versa how perceived popular opinions might steer podcast hosts' opinions. Furthermore, the study was used as an exploration if podcasts could be analyzed from a linguistic perspective.

The corpus analysis found that there were 12 different lexical items used by the podcast hosts to refer to law enforcement in the seven episodes that were analyzed. The most common term was *police* across most of the episodes, as *police* is a generic term for law enforcement and independent of the US's different branches of law enforcement across cities, counties, states and the federation. It was therefore suggested in this thesis that further studies should be conducted on the particular choices of vocabulary used in podcasts for different kinds of themes, as this study did for law enforcement.

The vocabulary found in the corpus analysis was further utilized when analyzing the discussion of law enforcement for evaluations of judgement by the podcast hosts. The analysis was conducted on the episode transcripts but prosody was also taken into account as the transcribed material was originally audio recordings. It was hypothesized that the evaluations would be more negative than positive, and this was found to be true in the findings, although the podcast hosts judged law enforcement only slightly more negatively than positively across the episodes. There was however variation between all episodes, and some had only positive or negative evaluation which indicates that there can be no uncontested and generalizable results. Further research should therefore be conducted on all the episodes of *Crime Junkie* in order to draw firmer conclusions.

As has been observed in earlier research and noted throughout this thesis, media can be seen to influence the public, and despite podcasting being a new medium, it should also be seen as bearing an influence on its audiences. However, the scope of this study does not permit closer research on audience influence. Nevertheless, due to the discussion in this thesis it represents an important area for future research into the new medium of podcasting. Podcasting became a mainstream medium as late as 2014 with the true crime podcast *Serial,* but not much research has been conducted on the influence this particular medium has on its audience. This is so, despite earlier research into many other kinds of media impacts on the audience that concludes in general a clear correlation between media and public opinion, as was presented in beginning of this thesis.

I acknowledge that this study is exploratory under specific limitations to both the methodology and the generalization of the findings. In order to narrow the scope of the study to the present one, it was decided to not analyze the podcast's audience and any influence the evaluation of judgement the appraisal analysis might construe. Furthermore, this study has shown that analyzing podcasts from a linguistic perspective is not only possible. In fact, it would serve as a way of looking at vocabulary used in different circumstances, by different people and various audiences around the world. This study has shown that podcasts are not

only interesting research material, but a relevant addition to media research even though the number of studies conducted on the medium at present is limited.

A main question raised by this study is if the medium can influence its audience and in what ways. Since podcasting is seen as the new mainstream medium, there is a need for further research on podcast influence on public opinion, especially when it comes to podcasts dealing with societally important issues like crime and crime prevention, or politics. Notably, despite what media seem to stress, there has not been a rise in crime in recent years in the US but rather the contrary, crime rates are falling and are historically low. There is therefore a need for people to be vigilant when it comes to what media report. In the present world, an abundance of 'fake news' is a constant threat that can radically shape public opinion. One might believe that one could spot the news that is not true from what is; however this might not always be the case. As Boda & Szabó (2011: 337) found, the public firmly believes that media influence the public, although the wider public tend to perceive themselves as exempt from such influence. Do not believe to be immune to the media as they are all around you; like the flu you will most likely catch its influence without knowing how and from where you were infected. Most worryingly, you can be influenced before you even know that you have been.

Swedish Summary – Svensk sammanfattning

Good Cop, Bad Cop?

En analys över bedömningar om det amerikanska polisväsendet i programledarnas diskussioner i verkliga brottspodden *Crime Junkie*

Inledning och syfte

Under det tjugoförsta århundradet introducerades ett nytt massmedium som enkelt och lätt når människor runtom i världen. Detta medium är den så kallade podcasten, även kallat poddutsändning eller bara podd. Podcaster är ljudfiler som kan höras på internet eller laddas ner till en dator, mobil eller surfplatta och fördelen med podcaster i förhållande till andra massmedium är att man i princip kan lyssna på dem var man vill. Man behöver inte vänta till ett visst klockslag eller befinna sig på en viss plats för att höra en podcast, så länge det finns en nätförbindelse eller ifall poddavsnittet har laddats ner och kan höras utan nätförbindelse. Podcasternas lättillgänglighet framom till exempel radiosändningar har bidragit till deras växande popularitet.

Podcaster anses ha uppkommit runt år 2004, men det var först tio år senare som poddar blev ett populärt medium för spridning av information, åsikter och tankar till lyssnarna genom podcasten *Serial* som lanserades 2014. Det påstås att podden Serial var en slags katalysator för ett uppdämt behov av podcaster då den rekordsnabbt uppnådde fem miljoner nedladdningar (Yardley et al. 2018: 2). Närmare sex år senare, i februari 2020, fanns det uppskattningsvis 850 000 poddar runtom i världen (Winn 2020), men det finns ännu mycket litet forskning om podcasters påverkan på sin publik.

Det finns en mångfald av podcaster och de skiljer sig från varandra bland annat genom mängden programledare och ämnet som diskuteras i podden. Ett populärt ämne för podcaster sedan begynnelsen är verkliga brott (eng. *true crime*), som behandlar olika slags brott eller vissa specifika typer av brott som skett i verkligheten. Verkliga brott är en icke-fiktiv genre inom litteratur, film, radio och tv där producenten eller författaren utreder och diskuterar ett begånget brott med fokus på omständigheterna och handlingarna runt brottet eller kring offren och gärningsmännen. Genren är inte ny, utan den har sina rötter i antikens Rom och Grekland, där begångna brott användes i dramatik för att uppfostra folk till laglydighet. Många dåtida tragedier hämtade sitt tema ur äktenskapsbrott och mord (Tetlow 2005). Populariteten med

genren visar att folket är intresserade av de brott som begås och vem som begår dem. Människan verkar fascineras av det makabra av olika skäl.

Syftet med denna avhandling är att analysera hur företrädare för lag och ordning (eng. *law enforcement)*, framöver enbart polisväsendet eller polisen, presenteras och bedöms av de två programledarna i sju avsnitt av den amerikanska verkliga brottspodden *Crime Junkie*. Två analyser har utförts, varav den ena analysen fokuserar på programledarnas vokabulär, medan den andra granskar deras bedömningar av det amerikanska polisväsendet. Utifrån analyserna diskuterar studien massmedias inflytande på allmänheten med fokus på hur podcaster influerar sina lyssnare. Målet med avhandlingen är således mångfacetterat. Avhandlingen syftar till att redogöra för de olika termerna som används av programledarna om det amerikanska polisväsendet, men också hur de bedömer och värderar polisens beteende i förhållande till de brott som beskrivs i poddavsnitten. Hypotesen är att bedömningen av polisväsendet generellt sett är mera negativ än positiv. Som en biprodukt visar avhandlingen att podcaster kan undersökas också ur ett lingvistiskt perspektiv.

Bakgrund

Förenta staterna är en parlamentarisk demokrati med lagstiftande, verkställande och dömande organ där polisväsendet faller under den dömande makten med uppgift att upprätthålla lag och ordning. Inom det amerikanska polisväsendet finns det tre separata polismyndigheter med olika jurisdiktioner: federala, statliga, och kommunala polismyndigheter (Horne 2004: 435). En annan faktor som skiljer dessa myndigheter åt är deras olika geografiska verksamhetsområden. De federala polismyndigheterna har ansvar för landsomfattande brottsbekämpning och arbetar direkt under både det amerikanska justitiedepartementet och inrikessäkerhetsdepartementet. De statliga polismyndigheterna har befogenheter som gäller en hel delstat, men uppgifterna överlappar ibland de kommunala polismyndigheternas verksamhetsområde. Till de kommunala polismyndigheterna räknas stadspolisen och sheriffmyndigheten på landsorterna.

Forskningen om det amerikanska folkets förtroende för polisväsendet visar i allmänhet ett förhållandevis högt förtroende för polisen oberoende av polismyndighet (Saad 2018; Norman 2017), men det finns vissa skillnader beroende på individens etnicitet, socioekonomiska ställning, ålder och utbildningsnivå. Forskare är ändå inte eniga om hur dessa faktorer påverkar förtroendet i praktiken. Överlag påstås kaukasier i USA ha större förtroende för polisen än olika etniska minoriteter. Dessutom beror skillnader i tilliten till polisen på individernas tidigare erfarenheter av sina kontakter med polisen i de områden där de bor (Walter & Katz 2008). Till exempel så har äldre personer ett större förtroende för polisväsendet

än yngre. Högre utbildade har en större tillit till polisen än lägre utbildade (Walter & Katz 2008; Brown & Benedict 2002). Tidigare forskning visar också att de som fallit offer för brott i USA har mindre förtroende för polisväsendet än andra, vilket kan tyda på att brottsoffer inte upplever att polisen gör ett tillräckligt bra arbete i att gripa gärningsmän (Sampson & Bartusch 1998).

Enligt Boda och Szabó (2011: 337) är informanter av den åsikten att media påverkar stort det amerikanska folket, något som är allmänt accepterat inom vetenskapen om folkopinioner. Enligt statistiken har brottsligheten i USA årligen minskat de senaste 14 åren, men forskningen om folkopinion och brottslighet visar att folk tror det motsatta (Gallup 2019; Friedman et al. 2017). Medias rapportering om brott har en tendens att skapa allmän oro över kriminaliteten, något som Cohen (1972) kallar för *moralpanik*. Det påstås att frekventa beskrivningar av brott i media ökar folks rädsla för att bli utsatta för brott. Dessutom sägs det att även skönlitterära brottshistorier påverkar allmänheten på samma sätt. Ett exempel på detta är hur rättsutövningen i USA har påverkats av den populära amerikanska TV-serien *CSI,* som handlar om hur kriminaltekniker bidrar till brottsutredningen. Serien har kritiserats för att ge allmänheten en alltför orealistisk bild av hur poliser löser brott. Serien lade så stor vikt vid fysiska bevis att jurymedlemmar nu förväntar sig starka fysiska bevis i olika rättsfall och vägrar döma enbart på indicier. Fenomenet kallas CSI-effekten (Hayes and Levett 2012; Watkins 2004).

Det är relevant för denna undersökning att också beakta hur verklighetsbaserade brottsprogram på TV påverkar allmänhetens förtroende för polisväsendet, eftersom podcaster brukar uppfattas som en variant av modern massmedia. Dessvärre fattas en enhetlig vetenskaplig åsikt om i vilken grad massmedia kan tänkas påverka allmänheten. Vissa studier visar att verklighetsbaserade brottsprogram på TV har en negativ inverkan på förtroendet för polisen, medan andra studier inte har hittat något samband mellan media och tilliten till polisen (Kort-Butler & Sittner Hartshorn 2011; Eschholz et al. 2002). I och med den växande popularitet för verkliga brottspoddar får folk veta om olösta fall och justitiemord som aldrig förr, vilket kan sänka förtroendet för polisen i allmänhet. Yardley et al. (2018) hävdar att poddarna ofta kritiserar hur olika brottsmål hanteras i media, vid domstolen och av polisen. Därför kan man anta att lyssnarna påverkas negativt av programledarnas sätt att diskutera olika brott i podcasten. Dessutom hävdar Yardley et al. (2018) att publiken ofta tröttnar på tråkiga brottsbeskrivningar i traditionell media. De engagerar sig hellre i onlinemiljöer som så kallade *medborgardetektiver*. I Boling och Hulls (2018) studie rapporteras 63 procent av informanterna vara aktiva medlemmar i åtminstone en podcasts onlinemiljö.

Metod och material

Materialet för denna studie valdes slumpmässigt utifrån *Crime Junkie*-poddens olika avsnitt. I slutet av mars 2019 hade 75 avsnitt sänts. Av dessa granskas sju i denna undersökning. De valda avsnitten berör mord och olika försvinnanden i USA som tyder på att ett brott kan ha skett. Avsnitten är i medeltal 40 minuter långa. Mer detaljerad information om de enskilda fallen presenteras närmare i tabell 1 i kapitel 4.1. Avsnitten analyserades på två sätt. En lingvistisk analys gjordes med hjälp av korpuslingvistik då frekvensen av de termer programledarna använde om polisväsendet i sin diskussion granskades. För att kunna utföra den lingvistiska frekvensanalysen transkriberades ljudfilerna av de olika poddavsnitten till en korpus på 46 000 ord. De tolv termer för polisväsendet som studerades i korpusen presenteras i tabell 2 i kapitel 4.3.

Den andra analysen tillämpade en metod som grundar sig på *appraisalteorin*. Appraisalteorin är en teoretisk infallsvinkel inom systemisk-funktionell lingvistik med vilket man försöker hantera analyser av evaluering och värdering (Martin & White 2005). Appraisalteorin gör det möjligt att analysera de dolda attityder och känslor som en skribent framför i sin text, men likväl hur läsare förhåller sig till texten.

Appraisalmodellen indelas i tre huvudgrupper: *attityd*, *engagemang* och *gradering*. Dessa indelas i sin tur i underkategorier av vilka jag för denna studie har valt att fokusera på underkategorin *bedömning* (eng. *judgement*) under huvudgruppen attityd. Bedömande yttranden definieras som skribentens, eller i detta fall programledarnas, uttalade värderingar av mänskliga beteenden ur normativa principer eller uppfattningar om rätt och fel eller bra och dåligt. Bedömningar kan uttryckas i antingen positiva eller negativa ordalag. I appraisalteorin indelas bedömning ytterligare i yttranden gällande social karaktär (eng. *social esteem*) eller socialt godkännande (eng. *social sanction*). Social karaktär omfattar *normalitet*, *kapacitet* och *beslutsamhet*, alltså bedömningar av någons beteende som normalt/onormalt, kunnigt/okunnigt och beslutsamt/obeslutsamt. Socialt godkännande omfattar *trovärdighet* och *anständighet,* det vill säga om någons beteende uppfattas som pålitligt eller opålitligt och anständigt eller oanständigt. Enligt Martin och White (2005: 52) uttrycks bedömning inom social karaktär främst i muntliga sammanhang, till exempel genom skvaller och berättande. Socialt godkännande definieras i appraisalteorin som skrivna lagar och regler, det vill säga beteenden som allmänt betraktas som acceptabla. Dessutom kan bedömande yttranden uttryckas implicit eller explicit. Det innebär att det är viktigt för denna studie att analysera yttrandena i sin helhet och kontext.

Appraisalanalysen utfördes i denna studie genom att läsa igenom och analysera alla meningar och paragrafer där programledarna i podcasten diskuterade polisväsendet. Ifall yttrandet kunde uppfattas som en bedömning, kodades den enligt de ovannämnda undergrupperna för social karaktär och socialt godkännande, det vill säga normalitet, kapacitet, beslutsamhet, trovärdighet eller anständighet, och enligt vare sig bedömningen uppfattades som positiv eller negativ. Som hjälp i analysen användes ordlistorna i tabell 3 och 4 i kapitel 4.4.2. Eftersom det ursprungliga undersökningsmaterialet består av ljudfiler som har transkriberats till texter, har även prosodiska egenskaper såsom satsaccent och tonfall beaktats i analysen av bedömande yttranden.

Resultat

Resultaten från den korpuslingvistiska analysen visar att programledarna i podcastens sju studerade avsnitt nämner det amerikanska polisväsendet hela 307 gånger. Mest användes termen *police* i 163 uttalanden, men variationen av termer är stor mellan avsnitten. I alla avsnitt används de facto flera olika termer för det amerikanska polisväsendet som reflekterar det att det finns tre separata polismyndigheter i USA. Ordet *sheriff* är den mest använda termen i bara ett avsnitt. Termerna och deras frekvenser behandlas närmare i tabell 4 i kapitel 5.1. Det förekommer också en viss variation mellan de olika avsnitten, speciellt gällande frekvensen av olika termer för polisväsendet. De facto står två avsnitt för 50 procent av alla uttalanden för polisväsendet i undersökningsmaterialet. Dessa två avsnitt var också de längsta avsnitten i undersökningsmaterialet.

Det förekommer 63 bedömande yttranden om polisväsendet i programledarnas diskussion. Av dem är 36 negativa och 27 positiva. De flesta yttranden tillhör undergruppen kapacitet, som inkluderar 28 yttranden. Dylika yttranden handlar om polisens förmåga att hantera brottet, till exempel, om polisen har agerat kunnigt eller okunnigt och allting där emellan. Det förekommer inga bedömande yttranden om undergruppen normalitet, det vill säga programledarna diskuterar inte om polisen beter sig normalt eller onormalt. Olika yttranden har definierats i förhållandet till polisens trovärdighet och anständighet, alltså hur polisens beteende anses vara trovärdigt eller icke-trovärdigt och moraliskt eller omoraliskt. Resultaten pekar mot mera negativa än positiva yttranden kring polisens trovärdighet och anständighet, medan yttranden som tyder på polisens kapacitet och beslutsamhet är mera jämnt fördelade som positiva eller negativa. Detta antyder att programledarna anser att polisen är kunnig men ändå inte trovärdig.

Frekvensen av bedömningar om polisväsendet i de sju avsnitten varierar stort. En annan iakttagelse är att några avsnitt är klart mer negativa än andra. I likhet med den korpuslingvistiska analysen, förekommer de flesta bedömande yttranden i de två längsta poddavsnitten. Båda innehåller även mer negativ än positiv bedömning. Däremot innehåller ett avsnitt i undersökningsmaterialet bara positiva bedömningar om polisväsendet. Noteras bör att alla undergrupper som beskriver bedömande yttranden inte förekommer i alla avsnitt. I appendix B finns hela appraisalanalysens resultat fördelat enligt undergrupperna för bedömande yttranden av social karaktär eller socialt godkännande, de centrala nyckelorden och olika prosodiska egenskaper som har påverkat tolkningen och kategoriseringen av yttrandena.

Diskussion

Undersökningens resultat visar att programledarna använder många olika termer för det amerikanska polisväsendet och att det finns variation mellan olika termer beroende på i vilka sammanhang de används. *Police* var den mest använda termen i majoriteten av avsnitten. Detta var väntat, eftersom termen *polis* är ett allmänt ord för att beskriva polisväsendet i gemen i engelskan och i många andra språk. Resultatet innebär att framtida studier borde forska närmare i de sammanhang som de olika termerna används i podcaster och i programledarnas vokabulär. Figur 5 visar att 50 procent av alla termer om polisväsendet förekommer i de längsta poddavsnitten. Detta visar självfallet att ju längre ett poddavsnitt är, desto mer diskuteras polisen av programledarna.

Resultaten av appraisalanalysen bekräftar att hypotesen om att programledarnas diskussion innehåller fler negativa än positiva bedömningar stämmer. De flesta bedömande yttrandena gällde polisens kapacitet. Polisens kapacitet diskuterades mer positivt än negativt, vilket är intressant eftersom det antyder att programledarna anser att polisen är kapabel att utföra sitt arbete. Däremot diskuterades polisens beslutsamhet, trovärdighet och anständighet i mera negativ än positiv bemärkelse. Det innebär att programledarna varken anser att polisen är pålitlig eller anständig i sitt beteende. Detta strider mot att det är väldigt viktigt för polisen att ha allmänhetens förtroende i sitt arbete för samhällets bästa. Följaktligen anser Schermann (2019) att ett av de viktigaste karaktärsdragen för poliser är empati och medlidande för allmänheten. Det är oroväckande att programledarna verkar se så negativt på polisens rättskänsla. Det förklarar varför de mest förekommande nyckelorden för bedömande yttranden i poddavsnitten var *kompetent*, *inkompetent*, *opålitlig*, *oärlig* och *orättvis*.

Undersökningsmaterialet är inte tillräckligt stort för att dra generaliserande slutsatser om *Crime Junkie*-podcasten i allmänhet. För att se om användningen av olika termer och

negativiteten i programledarnas bedömningar gäller, måste fler avsnitt ur podcasten analyseras. Ur figur 7 framgår att frekvensen bedömande yttranden om polisväsendet trots allt är marginellt i förhållande till frekvensen av termer som programledarna använde då de diskuterade polisen. Detta är viktigt eftersom det innebär att även om polisväsendet diskuteras mycket i poddavsnitten så består de inte enbart av bedömningar av polisens beteende.

Ett syfte med denna avhandling har också varit att diskutera huruvida podcaster kan anses ha samma inverkan på sin publik som vanlig massmedia. Eftersom jag själv har lyssnat på podcasten *Crime Junkie,* lade jag tidigt märke till den negativa tonen i poddens avsnitt och utgick därför ifrån att den studerade podden dominerades av negativ bedömning av polisen. Användningen av nyckelord som inkompetent, orättvis, oärlig och opålitlig är oroväckande beskrivningar av polisväsendet och kan påverka allmänhetens uppfattningar negativt. Som Kort-Butler och Sittner Harthorn (2014) påpekar brukar verklighetsbaserade program rent allmänt ha en negativ effekt på allmänheten och folkopinionen. *Crime Junkie* är en slags verklighetsbaserad podcast och kan därför ha samma negativa effekt på sina lyssnare. Eftersom podcaster är ett relativt nytt massmedium finns det få studier om programledares inflytande på sina lyssnare. Följaktligen borde det forskas mycket mera i podcaster i framtiden.

En begränsning för denna studie är undersökningsmaterialets småskalighet. Framtida studier borde analysera samtliga avsnitt eller en klar majoritet av avsnitten i podcasten *Crime Junkie* för att slutsatserna skulle bli mera allmängiltiga. Denna avhandling visar att podcaster de facto kan analyseras ur ett lingvistiskt perspektiv. Framtida studier inom lingvistik borde använda podcaster som undersökningsmaterial och kunde då fokusera på programledares ordval och talesätt. Eftersom podcaster är ljudfiler borde framtida studier ta uttalandens prosodiska egenskaper och paralingvistisk fonetik i beaktande.

Slutsats

Denna avhandling undersökte hur programledarna i podcasten *Crime Junkie* diskuterade det amerikanska polisväsendet och hur de bedömde polisens beteende i de sju studerande poddavsnitten. Hypotesen för avhandlingen var att poddavsnitten innehåller fler negativa bedömande yttranden än positiva, vilket bekräftades av resultaten. Teorierna som tillämpades i avhandlingen var korpuslingvistik och appraisalteori i de två analyser som gjordes. Den första fokuserade på termer och deras frekvens som programledarna använde då de diskuterade det amerikanska polisväsendet. Med hjälp av resultaten från den korpuslingvistiska analysen studerades programledarnas diskussion för bedömningar av polisen beteende.

Dessutom presenterade avhandlingen tidigare studier om massmedias påverkan på allmänheten och förtroende för polisväsendet i USA. Resultaten i appraisalanalysen diskuterades i relation till dessa studier i syfte att granska idéen om att podcaster kan anses ha ett inflytande på sina lyssnare. Eftersom podcaster är ett relativt nytt massmedium finns det inte tillräckligt tidigare forskning om och hur de påverkar sin publik. Poddar är varken geografiskt eller tidsmässigt begränsade på samma sätt som till exempel radio. Man kan lyssna på dem på nätet oberoende var man befinner sig eller vad klockan är. Det betyder att poddens räckvidd är betydligt större än för andra medier. Eftersom fejknyheter är ett aktuellt problem och samtalsämne i världen, är det viktigt för var och en av oss att inse massmediernas roll för oss som lyssnare och läsare. Podcaster kan inte uteslutas ur detta. Faktum är att massmedia finns överallt och vi påverkas utan att ens veta om det.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Transcript of *Crime Junkie* podcast episode "1: Missing: Niqui McCown"
Flowers, Ashley. December 18, 2017. "Missing: Niqui McCown" [Transcript]. Available: *Spotify.com* [27 April, 2019]

Ashley:

This week I thought nothing was more appropriate than to actually talk about a local case. So I'm gonna give you guys a story of a missing woman here in Indiana. Niqui McCown is a 28-year-old female who lives in Richmond, Indiana. And for everyone not listening from Indiana, Richmond is about an hour east of Indianapolis and about fifty minutes west of Dayton, Ohio. Niqui was actually engaged at the time she went missing to Bobby Webster. He was her fiancé, they were uh said to be married on August 18th and they actually had a history. Bobby and Niqui dated in high school and they only broke up because in 1991 he moved to California and they just kind of have this natural separation and, and started living different lives and Niqui would, you know, dated other people, she actually had a child with someone else, and in 1998 is when Bobby move back, they realize that they did love each other, wanted to spend their lives together and they got engaged. So the story really starts on July 22 of 2001, just a couple of weeks before they were scheduled to get married and by all accounts this is a super average day, it is a Sunday and they are just running around doing errands, they are doing some chores so, Bobby takes his cousin to the mall to get his tux fitted and Niqui borrows his, uh, Bobby's car, his car, to go to the laundromat so that she can do some laundry.

And she drops of her daughter at her parents' house heads to the laundry mat and a few hours later she drops back by her parents' house while her clothes are in the dryer and she comes over to her mom's house because she said "I just felt super uncomfortable at the laundry mat, these guys are just giving me a hard time they were harassing me and like I just needed to get out of there" and her mom said will you know you can feel free to like come do your laundry at my house, you don't need to put up with that, and she said "you know don't even worry about at this point like my clothes are drying I'm almost done I'm just gonna wait it out here when I think the clothes are done I'm gonna go pick them up and then I'm gonna leave."

So she leaves her mother's house, eh, to go pick up her clothes and a few more hours pass by and she doesn't come back to pick up her daughter Payton and Bobby actually returned home from the mall with his cousin. And there's no Nicki, there's no laundry, but her purse and her ID are still at the house so he thinks okay she's probably still just at the laundromat took a little bit longer maybe she's running an errand, and he waits and he waits and he waits.

Brit: Oh no.

Ashley:

And finally around like six or seven at night, he starts calling around and asking people, okay is she with you and he starts learning that nobody's seen her for a while and she hasn't picked up her daughter and so by ten PM, he's done calling people he's like I'm getting in the car and I'm gonna go look for her so he kind of drives around town, drives by the laundromat and then he actually makes the drive to Dayton, Ohio because. Nicki actually works in Dayton stil, she was at work at a correctional facility and she started there a long time ago as a CO, correctional officer, and now she's their head of accounting, so he's like you know maybe something came up at work that like I don't know about where she had to pick something up

Brit: Right.

Ashley:

I'm gonna drive, I'm gonna drive the whole way, maybe she got an accident and I need to keep an eye out for her. So he goes all the way there and there's just *no* sign of Niqui *anywhere*. Her family fills out a missing person report that next morning because everyone is concerned for her at this point. And they decide on their own after they fill out this missing person report, they're going to go to the last place they knew she was and start asking around. And next to the laundry mat where she was doing her laundry is a village pantry, which I'm pretty sure is like a convenience store, right?

Brit: I'd said I think it's like a maybe like a grocery store or maybe a kindle? like a Kroger? [6:32]

Ashley:

Okay. So she goes to the village pantry and they actually let the family see the security footage from there. And it's totally normal, like she does not look stressed, she looks fine, she walks in

[**Brit**: Just shopping around]

Ashley:

Right, she walks in, she buys a coke, leaves, you can see her car in the front of the store and you can actually see her drive away, there appears to be no one that followed her, and this video footage was actually taken before she went and stopped back at her mother's house, so they know that nothing happened to her after that, but they were kind of looking to see, you know, what she with anyone, did she look upset, they were looking for

[Brit: Was she being followed [**Ashley**: yeah any clues] all that stuff. [**Ashley**: at this point]

Ashley:

After they go to the village pantry, they decide to go back to the laundry mat because her mother remembers her being distressed and talking about these guys that were harassing her, so they go talk to people who would have been at the laundry mat people that were working at the laundry mat. And the thing is nobody even remembers her, not that she wasn't there, but nothing of note was, happened to the point where anyone else

[Brit: nothing out of the ordinary]

Ashley:

Right, no one else took notice so, someone might have been giving her a hard time or making her uneasy, but no one was actually like confronting her or being physical with her, and no one made a scene to the point where anyone else would actually be aware of it. [7:57]

Now at this point, police are just saying, you know, she probably left voluntarily, she had the car, you know, she's a grown woman, she doesn't look like she's distressed in these videos, but her family knows there's no way she's leaving her daughter, there's no way she's leaving with her wedding three weeks away, she was so excited to get married, and she loves her job and so the one thing they're waiting for is they're like okay, let's wait until Niqui's next shift and if she doesn't show up then all hell is breaking loose 'cause we know something is wrong and sure enough she doesn't show up to work.

Police can't find anything on her cards, like her bank cards or her phone records and at this point I think police are even getting concerned as well they're, they're not brushing the family off anymore and they actually do helicopter search between Richmond, Indiana and Dayton, Ohio, looking for her car because everyone's thinking that, okay if we find a car like that is going to have all of our answers were gonna be able to find Niqui. Police in the meantime, they don't find the car and so, you know, there's only one person police look at first when

[Brit: of course.]

A, a wife or a fiancé goes missing so they look at her fiancé, Bobby. And Bobby did not do himself any favors [laugh]. [**Brit**: ugh] So one day after she goes missing, Bobby calls the community college where Nicky is taking classes, and he, according to the lady who spoke to him, he was basically trying to collect her unused tuition.
Which, like isn't,

Brit: It's not a thing.

Ashley:

It's not a thing, like she's been gone, like a date like you think that you're gonna like okay she's not coming back for classes, like he automatically goes right there. And [**Brit**: yeaaah [skeptical]] he didn't know that her college is being paid by her employer so it's not even like there were funds sitting in her account like, if, if you cancel your classes by a certain day you can get money back and I don't know if that's what he was thinking but it doesn't even matter because her, um

Brit: It wouldn't have gone back to him.

Ashley:

Exactly. By Wednesday, again she went missing on Sunday, he actually went to the jeweler where Nicky bought his wedding ring and tried to return the wedding ring,

Brit: [exclamation] no!

For money. And by midweek Bobby has totally canceled the wedding and demanded their deposit back. [**Brit**: what?] We're talking like three or four days, so when I said this guy didn't do himself any favors like, no exaggeration.

Brit: That's honestly kind of an understatement, he did like *everything* he could possibly DO, to look suspicious.

Ashley:

Right, so you know cops looked at him right away but for very good reason, and if you hear his side of the story, obviously there's, there's always two sides, and he denies ever canceling the wedding, he just said that he made remarks that the wedding doesn't matter, that all he's focused on is finding her and the wedding didn't even cross his mind. He doesn't really reference a deposit though, so I don't know if money was ever given back to him, he kind of just brushes that aside. And he said that he was calling the school not to demand money back, but to make sure she didn't have like an outstanding loan that she would be defaulting on now that she's not there, which again seems like, it seems kind of noble but the last thing I'd be thinking about if my fiancé was gone for like what twelve hours, twenty hours. Like I'm not like I wonder like if I need to call like his credit card or his school and that's, you're not thinking about that, right?

Brit: No, no, definitely not, it, it just doesn't make sense.

Ashley:

Yeah, and he finally he said that he did go to sell the ring but he only sold it because at the time they didn't have a cell phone, and he thought he wanted to trade in the ring to

buy a cell phone because it was super important he thought to like keep the family connected, everyone is really participating in search efforts and they're trying to keep connected and, and see if anyone knows Niqui, he wanted a way for people to reach out to him if he was out searching, so that, that's kind of on the up and up it, it seems legit but again, who knows, I don't know, there's no evidence that he actually bought the cell phone, so I don't know what's what it's just stories at this point.

Brit: Yeah, I, I could speculate a lot but I'm just going to stop. [laugh]

Ashley:

Police asked Bobby to take a polygraph and he does agree, and the question, the most important question, is they ask him did you have something to do or did you know where Nicky went, and his response was "no." But the polygrapher said that that was a *huge lie*. Bobby said, that, that that's not how they asked him, he said that they said, do you feel responsible for her going missing and he said how would any man not feel partially responsible for not being there, when something happens to your fiancé, your woman. So again two sides of the coin, you have detectives saying one thing, Bobby saying another, who do you believe at this point and especially when there is no evidence of anything to point to him other than the statements, there's really nothing to go off of and he's not labeled a suspect, he's labeled a person of interest, which I actually learned something new, I think I know everything about true crime and, and every once in a while I learn something I didn't know, I know they label people person of interest and suspect but I didn't, I guess I didn't really know what the actual definition of the difference was I know person interest is like a level below a suspect. [**Brit**: right]

But they say that, eh, what I learned is a person of interest doesn't necessarily mean they had anything to do with the crime or that, that a person of interest necessarily could elevate to a suspect, it's possible, but really if someone's a person of interest it just means that the police believe that they have significant information, that they need to further the case. So it makes total sense, [**Brit**: interesting] right, it might be something everyone knows but I thought it was a little fun

Brit: Definitely.

Ashley:

Family members go rogue at this point because it, the case is kind of going cold and Niqui has nine brothers and sisters, and her brothers are like pounding pavement and literally to the point where they're getting arrested because, I don't, they don't say exactly I don't know if they were harassing people or just getting too you know confrontational with people, I have no idea but they're trying to solve the case on their own, and even they aren't getting anywhere and really they're just getting themselves in trouble. And the family totally shuts Bobby out at this point, they think everything that he's doing is super suspicious, so he really has no interaction with the investigation or with the search for Niqui at this point.

And the case goes pretty cold for about three and a half months until November 3rd of 2001 when her car is finally found [**Brit**: gasp] in Dayton, Ohio, and the car is about 40 miles from her home and it's found in an apartment complex, and I've heard rumors that she actually used to live in that apartment complex a long time ago but I couldn't really substantiate, it's just I'd see every once in a while when I was reading articles. They find her car and in the backseat of her car, it's like she was there minutes ago.

Brit: Oh my god

Ashley:

There is still the laundry basket with folded laundry [**Brit**: gasp], and nothing else. They tow the car back to Indiana and completely process it, looking for blood, fibers, hair, prints, and they find absolutely nothing [**Brit**: nothing, oh my god!]

The one thing that this car it does do, is it gets them focusing on Ohio rather than Indiana, they think that she was most likely abducted from the laundry mat but, they're thinking okay at least we know now at some point her car was in Ohio, maybe she was as well and, she works in Ohio so she does have connections there and one of these connections is a man named Tommy Swint and he lived about a quarter mile away from where the car was found, and he was a coworker of Niqui's, and I've heard in some places that he wanted a relationship with her but she saw him more as a brother, and I read that in all of the articles, in all the documentaries, up until there was a really recent article from 2017 written at one of the local newspapers in Indiana, and it states that the reporter said she talked to Nicky sister, and Niqui's sister actually admits that at some point she had a relationship with Tommy. There's zero information behind that I have no idea when it was, was she having an affair with Tommy, [**Brit**: woah]

Was this forever ago and Tommy wanted to continue it and she's like, no I'm moving on, I have a fiancé now, I have a life now. But possibly there was some romantic history other than him wanting something and she not. Now Tommy does have a violent streak, the one thing that her sister had said from way, way back was that one time she had actually gone to visit her sister at her apartment and as she's walking down the hallway toward her door, she start hearing screams so she immediately barges into her apartment and she says her sister is like sitting on a chair with Tommy over her and she's got her legs like her knees are up by her own chest and she has one of her feet into Tommy's chest like trying to push him off of her, and when her sister walks in she screams and says that he was trying to rape her, and this it never gets reported but her sister says she's convinced that if she wouldn't have been there or something would have happened that night.
So another piece of information that I found out in this 2017 article, but again I can't substantiate through anything else, is the day that Niqui went missing she called a female friend and said that after she was doing her laundry she was going to stop by a pharmacy. This female friend that she called also had a relationship with Tommy, at some point, so if we're believing all this new information in this article, it's possible that Niqui had a relationship with Tommy at some point, this other woman had a relationship with Tommy at some point, we have no timeline for when this happened all we have on this phone call is this other woman's statement of what Niqui told her, now Nicky didn't have her purse or anything and there's no record for going to a pharmacy so she might have had a plan to but, also this might have been a lie that this

woman told because she didn't want to say what they're really talking about, but it just kind of muddies the waters so many years later

Brit: Yeah definitely adds a different layer to consider at least.

Ashley:

Right, right. Tommy won't talk to the police and so obviously this puts him also in that person of interest category, they think that he's definitely got some information that would lend to answers in this case but they can't get anything out of him and again this is where things just stall out.

Police and the family get a call from a psychic that says Niqui died the same day that she was at the laundry mat and that they would find her body in a trench near the laundry [**Brit**: whoa] and law, right, and law enforcement actually at takes this pretty seriously and they do a full search and they're searching the trenches along, around the laundromat but unfortunately find absolutely nothing, and they really upped the ante and they offer a hundred thousand dollar reward if someone can bring home Niqui.

Brit: That's a really high amount, I mean you work with crime stoppers, they give out awards [Ashley: crime stop] right?

Ashley:

A, a thousand dollars [laugh].

Brit: Right,

Ashley:

One of those

Brit: That's a lot of money.

Ashley:

Yeah, and especially I mean again we're talking like what two thousand, somewhere between two, two thousand and one [2001], two thousand two [2002] maybe at the time, um, so ten years ago, it's even more money [**Brit**: right.] But this doesn't lead anything, like they, the family thought for sure like someone could've, would've, who was scared before it but for a hundred thousand dollars people are going to come forward, but absolutely nothing, the five year anniversary rolls around, they hold a candlelight vigil at the laundromat, begging for answers, and again just absolutely nothing happens.

The next time there's any kind of movement or flicker in this case is August 30th of 2007**.** Tommy Swint gets hired as a police officer in Trotwood, Ohio, which is near Dayton. And Richmond PD hear about this and they're like "oh hell no", so they reach out to the Trotwood PD and say Hey I don't know if you know who you hired. But he obviously didn't disclose to you that he's a person of interest in our case, they laid it all out for them and basically what Trotwood told Tommy was okay you can resign, or we're gonna start taking steps to have you terminated and he resigns, but immediately turns around and sues them basically saying he was forced out. Tommy's lawsuit ends up going nowhere he doesn't get anything from it, nothing good anyways, but this lands

Tommy all over the news, and shortly after he is featured on the front page, a [*sic*] anonymous tip comes into the Dayton police. On November 29th 2007, and there's very limited information but the tip basically says "Hey, you need to look at this guy for an unsolved murder back in 1991 of Tina Marie Ivory." This is 16 prior and so the pro, uh, the police decide okay I mean, why he's, he's already a person of interest [**Brit**: right] in this other case we at least need to follow up on this lead and they didn't have, they had DNA from the crime scene of Tina Ivory 16 years ago but there was nothing in the system linked to anyone else, and basically the only way they're going to solve this case is if they had a suspect that they could compare the DNA to, and lucky for them

Brit: Oh my word

Ashley:

Richmond police actually had his DNA during this whole trial where Tommy was trying to sue the police and saying you know I never even knew I was a person of interest, they had, they never even told me they wanted to talk to me, or look into me, and so at the time police were trying to call his bluff and they said okay if you're willing to cooperate, we'd love to take DNA from you and he said sure go ahead and, they didn't enter into any kind of database at the time because you know they really only thought they were going to connect him to Niqui's disappearance and they didn't have anything to compare that to, so they just held on to the sample.

But when they got this new lead they actually sent that sample out to Dayton's crime lab, and sure enough he is a match for this 16 old murder. Now they try and reexamine the evidence because okay to me, if there's a DNA match, like apparently it was on the, cloth, that she was wrapped in

Brit: Oh weird

Ashley:

That would be perfectly enough for a pro, for the prosecution and to send this guy in jail but it wasn't enough for them so they go back and reexamine all of the evidence, and they actually get a palm print off of the tarp that she was wrapped in and they say okay if we can match this palm print to him and the DNA to him that shows that not only was he near her body, but then he was the person that wrapped in this tarp and there's really no way out of that.

Brit: Right.

Ashley:

So November 17th of 2009, Tommy had recently moved to Alabama and they track him down, interview him, get his prints and, in the interview, um it what, I can't find this addressed directly anywhere in documentaries or in any of the articles I read, but in the video I saw of him being interrogated, dude is wearing another police uniform.

Brit: No!

Ashley:

Yes, and I've seen it referenced that, that he was an officer at the time but I can't figure out where he was an officer, or how the hell he like passed all these screenings again

and nobody caught it, but yeah he was in Alabama as a police officer. [**Brit**: uurh] When they questioned him the only question him about Tina. And not at all about Nicki they're really focusing on the case that they have evidence on and they're not trying to get side tracked, they want to get this guy in prison and then see where they can go from there. So they get his palm print before they leave Alabama, so they collect his palm print, take it back to Dayton, Ohio and sure enough, it is a match and they take all of this evidence together and go to a grand jury and on February 3rd 2010 the grand jury indicts him for Tina's murder.

The police in Dayton, Ohio immediately call the Alabama PD and ask them to go arrest him and at 1PM that same day February 3rd, they go to his house and attempt to make an arrest but, when the drive up to the house, they have their full team, they're surrounding the house. They get to the front door and right as they approach the front door, they hear a gunshot. [**Brit**: gasp] Once they get into the house, they see that Tommy is laying in the middle of the floor, gun in hand, he took his own life.

Brit: No! [28:18]

Ashley:

Yes. So now there'll never be answers in Niqui's case, and they assume, I mean, they had *so* much evidence in Tina's case that it's pretty obvious, and I, they've pretty much closed that, but they didn't even get the chance to question him, about Niqui's case so. I know he was a person of interest, I know it's it kind of seemed like a good lead but I thought her fiancé seems like a really good lead too, so what if he had nothing to do with, I mean really now he is, his name has been forever tied with Niqui McCown's case, but what if it wasn't him.

Brit: And no one's ever gonna look for anybody else.

Ashley:

Right, right. So, I keep wondering, you know, if there's any more women, you know, there's this woman 16 years ago, what are the odds he killed this woman 16 years ago, gets away with it and then decides to kill again so many years later. And the woman he killed 16 years ago, she was a woman who is down on her luck, she was a prostitute, Niqui seem to have her life together, she was getting married, had a child, she had a job, like they're two totally different profiles. I just think it's super unlikely that in all of that time

Brit: He didn't kill again.

Ashley:

Right, and, I also think it's super weird that the first time, I guess maybe not, the first time he killed they found the body almost right away, even though they couldn't tie it to him. The body was found and still in 2017, we haven't a single clue where Nicky is, so where would he have dumped the body, how would he have learned to dispose of a body in such a better way, unless, of course, he did

Brit: On his second try.

Ashley:

Yeah, right, you know, I mean, he could have gotten better, but I just think it's crazy, I mean, he's a, he seemed to be a normal guy with a normal job and now I'll always wonder, if, Niqui isn't the only person we should be asking questions about.

Appendix B: Complete Data of Appraisal Analysis

SENTENCE CONTAINING JUDGEMENT	EPISODE	JUDGEMENT TYPE	POLARITY	APPRAISER	APPRAISED	PROSODY
and at this point I think police are even getting concerned as well …	Niqui	ten	+	Host	Police	
… they're, they're not brushing the family off anymore.	Niqui	cap	–	Host	Police	
Tommy won't talk to the police and so obviously this puts him also in that person of interest category, they think that he's definitely got some information that would lend to answers in this case…	Niqui	cap	+	Host	Police	
... but they can't get anything out of him and again this is where things just stall out.	Niqui	cap	–	Host	Police	
Law enforcement actually takes this pretty seriously and they do a full search and they're searching the trenches along, around the laundromat but unfortunately find absolutely nothing.	Niqui	cap	+	Host	Police	
Richmond PD hear about this and they're like "oh hell no"	Niqui	cap	+	Host	Police	\ OH / HELL NO
The police decide Okay I mean why he's, he's already a person of interest in this other case we at least need to follow up on this lead.	Niqui	cap	+	Host	Police	

By 6:50, that's about an hour later, Modesto police arrive.	Laci	ten	–	Host	Police	an / hour
And the first detective on the scene is Allen Brocchini and he looks around at the house, Scott lets him in without a warrant and says Yes absolutely look around, everything looks undisturbed. And there's nothing really to go off of but Allen Brocchini says like right from the get go, Scott's demeanor is wrong.	Laci	cap	+	Host	Police	WRONG
Warning flags for the police like just go flying.	Laci	cap	+	Host	Police	just / go flying
so all of this went to the police, the family would say "Hey, you know detective Allen Brocchini, to whoever, that go talk to these people, they said they've seen Laci, maybe this will help find her. they're assuming that the police are vetting all of this, what we learned later is, I don't think they did a great job of that even, early on they really have their sights set on Scott.	Laci	prop	–	Host	Police	
and the police just got restless and said well, you know, we are basically just asking to see what you would say, we have a warrant anyway	Laci	ten	+	Host	Police	
And the police actually within a couple of days actually apprehend the guys who are resoponsible for the, this robbery.	Laci	cap	+	Host	Police	couple of / days

the police whether intentional or unintentional are really keeping them totally separate cases	Laci	cap	–	Host	Police	
so this is also something though that Allen Brocchini the lead detective actually gets in some trouble for later in the trial, is dude flat out like altered his reports and kind of lied because he didn't like, like, he, on his mind Scott did it and he was trying to hide this whole life from Laci so what he writes in his report is that you know Laci had never been to the marina, she'd never been to his work bench.	Laci	prop	–	Host	Police	ALTERED; LIED
the police have nothing, all they have are these phone calls to Amber but the more phone calls they get, the less they were like even try and look at anything else, I mean the more they're focused on Scott	Laci	cap	–	Host	Police	TRY
the police decide like okay we can't let Laci's family find out this way, we have to tell them.	Laci	prop	+	Host	Police	
police have no leads but again even in this time where they aren't moving the case forward, they still aren't tracking down other leads. To me this would have been a good time if the Scott angle wasn't panning out, or you at least weren't getting anything new and it wasn't enough to convict him, it wasn't up to take him to trial. At least spend your time	Laci	cap	–	Host	Police	NEW; AT LEAST spend your time / looking

looking at the other angles						
there are cases when police like just make assumptions but literally all of her messages were like "I just need some time"	Katelin	ten	+	Host	Police	make \ assumptions
even police begin to worry at this point, and they do a helicopter search with infrared looking for her	Katelin	cap	+	Host	Police	WORRY
so once police like, and, and obviously police know more than the public does, they ruled this out a couple of days in	Katelin	ver	+	Host	Police	know \ MORE
detective Marshall goes back to square one and retraces Katelin's movements, while she was at home.	Katelin	cap	+	Host	Police	BACK
So police go back and then they get that security footage they requested because they're like WTF at this point	Katelin	cap	+	Host	Police	
now police, like you and I, and like I'm sure everyone listening, are super confused by James	Katelin	cap	+	Host	Police	SUPER CONFUSED
really police aren't really considering him a suspect yet, they just know that what he's saying isn't totally making sense, or they can't put the pieces together	Katelin	ten	+	Host	Police	

detective Marshall's like "whoa dude, like no one called you a suspect, we're just trying to move past you and put the pieces together so we can like figure out where we need to start	Katelin	ver	+	Host	Police	NO ONE
because police find that he's lying even more than they initially thought	Katelin	cap	+	Host	Police	
she never told the police that she had found Misty. And it's a little concerning that they weren't actually doing any follow up, like the police never came back and asked her if they found her	Misty	cap	–	Host	Police	FOLLOW / UP
Police officers left the school and told Diana that they're planning on removing Misty from the missing person's database and labeling her a runaway.	Misty	prop	–	Host	Police	
the next day the sergeant who decided that Misty wasn't missing, gave an interview… "nope this girl is not missing, she's just a runaway and actually I think her mom knows exactly where she's at". [Brit: what? How could he say that?] … to do, tell the whole public not to look for her doesn't seem fair, and then to say, "you know her mom knows where she is", ... is I think wrong	Misty	prop	–	Host	Police	not / MISSING; he say / THAT; \ wrong
A. I'm sure police thought this guy was a lunatic and ignored everything he said…	Misty	prop	–	Host	Police	\ lunatic

..., and if he did say something and somehow he was right, it wouldn't look great that the police ignored him even if he did seem crazy	Misty	cap	–	Host	Police	
the deputy basically tells him, even if we found her, we wouldn't tell you or her mother where she is	Misty	prop	–	Host	Police	YOU; MOTHER
At this point, it's now been more than 30 days since Misty, quote ran away, so they put her down as missing instead of a runaway, …	Misty	cap	+	Host	Police	/ ran away
...but them just changing her status didn't really change their eagerness to actually do the leg work into investigating her case.	Misty	prop	–	Host	Police	
But something shifts in investigators minds because in early December, the sheriff's office changes Misty's official file once again and list her as missing under suspicious circumstances. [Brit: Finally, it's about time.] I know.	Misty	ten	+	Host	Police	FINALLY
But there really is still nothing being done. Police are finally considering Misty a missing and endangered person, but they're dragging their feet and still haven't done any real investigative work	Misty	cap	–	Host	Police	
but police never even listed him as a suspect, even though he attacked another girl when he was released … [brit: aargh that's so frustrating!]	Misty	cap	–	Host	Police	

I know, but again, it's not like police weren't just investigating this lead, they really weren't investigating anything. Not talking to her friends, not talking to Rheuben, and not talking to this guy who got convicted of picking up a girl, almost exactly where Misty was last seen, raping her and attempting to murder her.	Misty	ten	–	Host	Police	
Police were now taking the case seriously that he's kind of out of the way. …	Misty	cap	+	Host	Police	
...[Brit: I feel like you said that they're taking it seriously like 20 times but, all 20 times they weren't really.] Ye, yeah I guess you're right, like they're taking it more seriously? Each time they get a little bit more involved in the investigation. [Brit: Which is a weird thing to say since they're supposed to own the investigation.] I know but they didn't.	Misty	ten	–	Host	Police	
investigators have to start from square one, and mind you, this is 6 months after Misty went missing and they just now start interviewing witnesses.	Misty	ten	–	Host	Police	/ mind you; / now starting; \ interviewing
so after this police let him go and they do no more investigating into him. [Brit: what?] Yup, they list him as a person of interest but that is it. They tell Diana that he passed the polygraph with flying colors.[Brit: But there was no way he	Misty	ten	–	Host	Police	

did, those results had to be inconclusive at best.] I would have to think so						
Diana was done with the police, either they were lying to her or they were incompetent, but either way, she didn't trust them anymore	Misty	cap	–	Host	Police	
deputies still had not a single idea on what the motive would be, or why she would have pulled over her car. I mean, they had more questions that answers, and even a month into the investigation, they didn't have a single prime suspect	Angela	cap	–	Host	Police	
This is huge for the investigators and prosecutors, so they put together a photo line-up and they go back to Mark Abbott, who's clearly like the most reliable witness, wink, wink, sarcasm, no he's not.	Angela	ten	–	Host	Police	CLEARLY; / most reliable \ witness
And this is the beginning of a lot that goes wrong in the case against Josh. First, I mean, the fact that they're going to Mark at all when he's changed his story so much to me is crazy, but when they put this photo lineup together, they basically do one sheet and they tell Mark that the person they think did it is in this lineup...	Angela	ten	–	Host	Police	CRAZY

even the investigators that were first on the scene thought that she pulled over for someone she knew, and she did not know Josh. But in the sheriff's mind, this was a, but a minute detail. In the sheriff's mind, Josh fit the profile of a killer	Angela	ten	–	Host	Police	a / minute detail
so the sheriff and the prosecutor charged him with the murder, they say, you know, we can't prove you were here, but we can't prove you were away, so that's really not a hang up for us	Angela	prop	–	Host	Police	
because growing up you think, or at least, some of us think that police are honest, and you think that the whole reason we have this justice system and proven inncocent til guilty is because that's how it actually works.	Angela	ver	–	Host	Police	/ you think; HONEST
if one thing I've learned the more I've done this podcast, looked into wrongful convictions, a lot of times if you don't have honest prosecutors and you don't have honest detectives, they will actually choose not to test evidence if they think there's any chance that it's not going to point to their suspect	Angela	ver	–	Host	Police	
this case was slowly eating away at the private investigator. He said it bothered him more than almost any other case he had worked, …	Angela	cap	+	Host	Police	

...because he couldn't make any kind of connection and he couldn't figure out why the sheriff would have focused in on this guy with no motive and no connection to the crime	Angela	ten	–	Host	Police	
he asked Josh if he trusts law enforcement, and Josh basically says "Listen, all I know is I don't trust the Scott County sheriffs"	Angela	ver	–	Host	Police	
Sheriff Walter drops a bombshell. He says "listen, I'm on your side, I have never believed that you are guilty, and now that I am in charge, I promise you, I'm going to find the truth. [Brit: You guys.] I know. [Brit: I got like really happy full body chills, like this is so magical]. It's so rare.	Angela	ten	+	Host	Police	BOMBSHELL; RARE
but for every like bad prosecutor and bad investigator, it is so heart-warming to know that there are a couple of good guys out there.	Angela	ten	+	Host	Police	
the narcotics officer who was working with Mark on this drug case, went to the sheriff's office who investigated Mischelle's murder and says "Hey, I have this new story, like you might want to hear this", they basically were like nah, we , we don't need that, we already got a conviction, like you can just keep your stories. [Brit: ugh this is so frustrating. They're literally just saying, we have our	Angela	ver	–	Host	Police	

conviction and now the guy is saying it's someone else. We don't really care. Our statistics look better without this information]						
this case was so hard because there are so many bad guys, but it was encouraging to see a couple of good guys, fighting the good fight, doing the job that I would hope that sheriffs, officers, and police officers, and prosecutors should be doing.	Angela	ten	+	Host	Police	
so police have this sketch, but something isn't sitting right with them, and because guy number one didn't say anything about her leaving with some guy named Barry, in fact some guy named Barry never came up. Now all that police will tell us is they think that this Barry character is completely fabricated.	Leah	cap	+	Host	Police	
now when he looks at the case file, like really looks at it, there is a key part of the car that was never processed [Brit: what?] And that part is under the hood. Which to me is fricking crazy, like you have this mystery of how is this car accelerating but you never actually look at the	Leah	cap	–	Host	Police	CRAZY; / mechanics \ of the / car

mechanics of the car? [Brit: laugh] Like what yahoo was in charge that day? [Brit: Right, definitely]						
which I can totally see how they thought that, how many stories have we covered where people have been told by the police that you have to wait a certain amount of time.	Rachel	ten	–	Host	Police	/ told \ by the / police
We know police hold things back, I'm almost certain [Brit: right] that in the years of their investigation, they must have had a strong idea of what happened to Rachel, or like a tipster came forward	Rachel	ver	–	Host	Police	
The police knew aaaa loot more than they were letting on. I am shocked at how much they were able to keep quiet in this case.	Rachel	ver	–	Host	Police	/ a \ LOT

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and at this point I think police are even getting concerned as well …	Niqui	ten	+	Host	Police	
… they're, they're not brushing the family off anymore.	Niqui	cap	–	Host	Police	
Tommy won't talk to the police and so obviously this puts him also in that person of interest	Niqui	cap	+	Host	Police	

category, they think that he's definitely got some information that would lend to answers in this case…						
... but they can't get anything out of him and again this is where things just stall out.	Niqui	cap	–	Host	Police	
Law enforcement actually takes this pretty seriously and they do a full search and they're searching the trenches along, around the laundromat but unfortunately find absolutely nothing.	Niqui	cap	+	Host	Police	
Richmond PD hear about this and they're like "oh hell no"	Niqui	cap	+	Host	Police	\ OH / HELL NO
The police decide Okay I mean why he's, he's already a person of interest in this other case we at least need to follow up on this lead.	Niqui	cap	+	Host	Police	
By 6:50, that's about an hour later, Modesto police arrive.	Laci	ten	–	Host	Police	an / hour
And the first detective on the scene is Allen Brocchini and he looks around at the house, Scott lets him in without a warrant and says Yes absolutely look around, everything	Laci	cap	+	Host	Police	WRONG

looks undisturbed. And there's nothing really to go off of but Allen Brocchini says like right from the get go, Scott's demeanor is wrong.						
Warning flags for the police like just go flying.	Laci	cap	+	Host	Police	just / go flying
so all of this went to the police, the family would say "Hey, you know detective Allen Brocchini, to whoever, that go talk to these people, they said they've seen Laci, maybe this will help find her. they're assuming that the police are vetting all of this, what we learned later is, I don't think they did a great job of that even, early on they really have their sights set on Scott.	Laci	prop	–	Host	Police	
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And the police actually within a couple of days actually apprehend the guys who are resoponsible for	Laci	cap	+	Host	Police	couple of / days

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the police have nothing, all they have are these phone calls to Amber but the more phone calls they get, the less they were like even try and look at anything else, I mean the more they're focused on Scott	Laci	cap	–	Host	Police	TRY
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there are cases when police like just make assumptions but literally all of her messages were like "I just need some time"	Katelin	ten	+	Host	Police	make \ assumptions
even police begin to worry at this point, and they do a helicopter search with infrared looking for her	Katelin	cap	+	Host	Police	WORRY
so once police like, and, and obviously police know more than the public does, they ruled this out a couple of days in	Katelin	ver	+	Host	Police	know \ MORE
detective Marshall goes back to square one and retraces Katelin's movements,	Katelin	cap	+	Host	Police	BACK

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So police go back and then they get that security footage they requested because they're like WTF at this point	Katelin	cap	+	Host	Police	
now police, like you and I, and like I'm sure everyone listening, are super confused by James	Katelin	cap	+	Host	Police	SUPER CONFUSED
really police aren't really considering him a suspect yet, they just know that what he's saying isn't totally making sense, or they can't put the pieces together	Katelin	ten	+	Host	Police	
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she never told the police that she had found Misty. And it's a little concerning that they weren't actually doing any follow up, like the police never came back and asked	Misty	cap	–	Host	Police	FOLLOW / UP

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the deputy basically tells him, even if we found her, we wouldn't tell you or her mother where she is	Misty	prop	–	Host	Police	YOU; MOTHER
At this point, it's now been more than 30 days since Misty, quote ran away, so they put her down as missing instead of a runaway, …	Misty	cap	+	Host	Police	/ ran away
...but them just changing her status didn't really change their eagerness to actually do the leg work into investigating her case.	Misty	prop	–	Host	Police	
But something shifts in investigators minds because in early December, the sheriff's office changes Misty's official file once again and list her as missing under suspicious circumstances. [Brit: Finally, it's about time.] I know.	Misty	ten	+	Host	Police	FINALLY
But there really is still nothing being done. Police are finally considering Misty a missing and endangered person, but they're dragging their feet and still haven't done any real investigative work	Misty	cap	–	Host	Police	

but police never even listed him as a suspect, even though he attacked another girl when he was released … [brit: aargh that's so frustrating!]	Misty	cap	–	Host	Police	
I know, but again, it's not like police weren't just investigating this lead, they really weren't investigating anything. Not talking to her friends, not talking to Rheuben, and not talking to this guy who got convicted of picking up a girl, almost exactly where Misty was last seen, raping her and attempting to murder her.	Misty	ten	–	Host	Police	
Police were now taking the case seriously that he's kind of out of the way. …	Misty	cap	+	Host	Police	
...[Brit: I feel like you said that they're taking it seriously like 20 times but, all 20 times they weren't really.] Ye, yeah I guess you're right, like they're taking it more seriously? Each time they get a little bit more involved in the investigation. [Brit: Which is a weird thing to say since they're supposed to	Misty	ten	–	Host	Police	

own the investigation.] I know but they didn't.						
investigators have to start from square one, and mind you, this is 6 months after Misty went missing and they just now start interviewing witnesses.	Misty	ten	–	Host	Police	/ mind you; / now starting; \ interviewing
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Diana was done with the police, either they were lying to her or they were incompetent, but either way, she didn't trust them anymore	Misty	cap	–	Host	Police	

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