

## UNSOLVED MYSTERIES PODCAST | WHERE'S ALICIA?

### S1E20 Transcript

ERIN VERNON: The last time we saw Alicia was February 26th, of 2019. I honestly did not see any signs of her being in despair, or manic, or any of the things that you would think that you would see. Her eyes were bright and happy.

TRESSA MURAI: The night before, we were talking and she was just talking about things. Just about life in general, and stressors. And so, the next day I called her in the morning to check in and she said, "I just made breakfast," and she had FaceTimed with her husband, and she was going to make her way to her psychiatrist appointment.

MARTIN HAUPT: I knew she was edgy but, I mean, when we hang up, she needed to sit into the car and drive to her doctor, which is 15-minute ride, or something, so, I was confident that she will make it to the doctor. That was what I was expecting.

NARRATION: IN 1993, WHILE ON VACATION IN THE UNITED STATES FROM HIS HOME IN SWITZERLAND, 21-YEAR-OLD MARTIN HAUPT MEETS ALICIA GRIFFIN, THE GIRL OF HIS DREAMS. TWO DECADES LATER — LIVING DIFFERENT LIVES ON DIFFERENT CONTINENTS — THEY FIND EACH OTHER AGAIN. IT'S AN EPIC LOVE STORY THAT'S TRAGICALLY CUT SHORT WHEN ALICIA DISAPPEARS ON THE WAY TO A SCHEDULED DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT.

I'M STEVE FRENCH, AND THIS IS UNSOLVED MYSTERIES: "WHERE'S ALICIA?"

MARTIN HAUPT: The first time, when I saw Alicia, I was just amazed how beautiful she was. She has curly hair. Lovely, lovely eyes. She's a little bit curvy. She is mixed race, half black, half white. I had just arrived in San Francisco, completely unprepared. I stayed overnight in a crappy hotel on Mission. And then the next day, I start exploring San Francisco, so, I went to this bar. I sat down there, had a beer, and then, at a certain point, Alicia came in. We started to chat a little bit, and that was our first contact.

NARRATION: THIS CHANCE ENCOUNTER WITH ALICIA IS THE HIGHLIGHT OF MARTIN'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES.

MARTIN HAUPT: To me, it was like a dream. We met the next day again, and then it just continued. We fell pretty much in love immediately.

NARRATION: ALICIA AND MARTIN ARE INSEPARABLE FOR TWO WEEKS UNTIL THE BITTERSWEET MOMENT WHEN MARTIN MUST BOARD HIS FLIGHT HOME TO SWITZERLAND. FOR A FEW MONTHS, THEY WRITE BACK AND FORTH, BUT EVENTUALLY THE LETTERS STOP, AND THEY LOSE TOUCH... UNTIL 20 YEARS LATER, IN 2012.

MARTIN HAUPT: One day, I had a friend request from Alicia Griffin. That was how it started again, and it gets, pretty quick, quite intense again. I went over to San Francisco again to visit

her for two weeks, and it was like there were no 20 years in between. There are not many people which you can see after years and years and it is, like, it just continues like nothing was in between.

NARRATION: NOW IN THEIR 40s, MARTIN AND ALICIA DON'T WANT TO LOSE EACH OTHER AGAIN.

MARTIN HAUPT: It was clear for us both. We want to live together. We want to stay together. And she decided to come, come with me to Zurich and then we married within three months.

NARRATION: FOR MARTIN, IT SEEMS THAT NOTHING COULD POSSIBLY DISTURB THEIR HAPPY NEW LIFE, BUT ALICIA'S KNOWS BETTER. WHEN SHE AND MARTIN RECONNECTED, ALICIA SHARED WITH HIM THAT SHE SUFFERS FROM BIPOLAR DISORDER, AND SHE DREADS THE ONSET OF ANOTHER EPISODE.

MARTIN HAUPT: She told me the first time that she has this bipolar thing, and I was, "what is she talking about?" I had never any experience with a mental illness before in my life. I did not even know what bipolar means. When she told me, so I checked it on the internet and some people are lucky, or they can handle it somehow, and with other people, it turns into a nightmare.

NARRATION: DEEPLY AFRAID OF EVER HURTING SOMEONE CLOSE TO HER, ALICIA HAS ADOPTED EVERY AVAILABLE STRATEGY TO MANAGE HER ILLNESS. SHE TAKES HER MEDICATION ON SCHEDULE. SHE NEVER DRINKS, AND SHE PRACTICES YOGA REGULARLY. BUT DESPITE HER BEST EFFORTS, ALICIA SUFFERS A FRIGHTENING EPISODE IN ZURICH, THREE MONTHS AFTER HER MARRIAGE TO MARTIN.

MARTIN HAUPT: She became manic, and at a certain point, she said she want to go back to the States. She booked the flight tickets and, on this flight back, it was sadly not a direct flight. So, there was a stop-over in Berlin and in Berlin, she got completely lost.

NARRATION: CONFUSED AND ALONE AT AN UNFAMILIAR AIRPORT, ALICIA HAS AN ALTERCATION WITH A MAN ON A TRAIN PLATFORM, AND SHE IMPULSIVELY PUSHES HIM ONTO THE TRACK. NO ONE IS HURT, BUT ALICIA IS ARRESTED AND SENTENCED TO FOUR YEARS IN A BERLIN PRISON. MARTIN VISITS HER THERE EVERY MONTH UNTIL SHE IS RELEASED AND SENT BACK TO THE STATES.

MARTIN HAUPT: Every year she was in there, it got worse. That was a nightmare, what happened there.

NARRATION: THE YEARS IN BERLIN TAKE AN INCREDIBLE TOLL ON ALICIA, BUT IN EARLY 2018, NOW BACK WITH HER FAMILY IN CALIFORNIA, MARTIN STARTS TO SEE A HUGE IMPROVEMENT IN THE WOMAN HE LOVES.

MARTIN HAUPT: Right when she came home to Sacramento, she was like, she recovered very well and became back Alicia, the one I know. She was free again, and she could do her stuff and she had her friends around her. She started to laugh again.

NARRATION: ALICIA'S BROTHER, FRANK, AND SISTER-IN-LAW, ERIN, SEE THE SAME RENEWED SPARKLE IN ALICIA.

ERIN VERNON: When Alicia was staying with us, she and I had the opportunity to connect like we'd never been able to before. I was able to sit with her for hours and just talk and find out what's going on in her life, what's going on with Martin, what she wanted to do in the future. And I was able to start working with her, and assisting her in looking for jobs, and looking for places that she could afford in areas of Sacramento that she would want to live. You know, she had a lot of dreams and hopes for the future. Alicia was in good spirits when she left our house.

NARRATION: ALICIA MOVES IN WITH TRESSA MURAI, A FRIEND OF MORE THAN 20 YEARS. TRESSA, A LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL, IS NOT ONLY ONE OF ALICIA'S BEST FRIENDS, BUT ALSO A PRIMARY SUPPORT FIGURE FOR HER.

TRESSA MURAI: Alicia came to live with myself and my partner, because she just felt like it would be a better location for her. She was planning to stay for a short period of time until she was able to get a place for herself or with her and Martin, her husband.

MARTIN HAUPT: That was our plan for 2018, yes. We were talking daily. We always talk daily. She was looking for jobs again. She had already interviews, doing some administration jobs. That was the plan: Settle down in Sacramento, and then we can live, finally, together. Sadly, it didn't come that far.

ERIN VENRON: She had a plan. She was wanting to be healthy, and wanting a future. And so, that part of this is what makes me so sad.

NARRATION: AS MARTIN AND ALICIA MAKE PLANS FOR HIS MOVE TO SACRAMENTO, THEY SPEAK ON THE PHONE EVERY DAY. IN ONE OF THEIR CONVERSATIONS, ALICIA SEEMS INCREASINGLY ON EDGE, AND MARTIN WORRIES THAT A RECENT CHANGE IN HER MEDICATION IS MAKING HER VULNERABLE TO ANOTHER BIPOLAR EPISODE. ALICIA HAS AN APPOINTMENT WITH HER PSYCHIATRIST IN TWO DAYS, AND ON THE MORNING OF THE APPOINTMENT, THEY TALK AGAIN.

MARTIN HAUPT: The last conversation I had with her was, she was kind of provoking me, and this was the, the sign when she was edgy, and when she needed her medication because that was not her character at all. She wasn't like that. She turned into a different person.

NARRATION: SHORTLY AFTER THAT PHONE CALL, ALICIA LEAVES FOR HER APPOINTMENT, BUT SHE NEVER SHOWS UP.

ERIN VERNON: In the years that I've known Alicia, she's had many episodes. She would go missing for a couple days, and then she would turn back up. And in those times, it is a different Alicia. She seems sheltered. She seems like she wants to protect herself, not open and loving like she normally is. We were concerned, but at the same time felt like well, this is just like the other times, and she'll turn back up.

NARRATION: BUT THIS EPISODE IS DIFFERENT.

TRESSA MURAI: I was concerned immediately when I heard that she did not make it to her doctor's appointment. And so, I immediately made a missing persons report because she didn't go to where she had planned to. So, I knew that that impulsive behavior had to mean that things were not going well, especially because she had spoken with her husband about going to her, her doctor's appointment. The next time I talked to her, she was in a hotel in LA.

ERIN VERNON: We were able to track her to LA because she had charged a large amount on a hotel room by the airport by LAX, and it turned up on her dad's credit card. At that point, we tried to get the LAPD to do a welfare check, and we ran into all kinds of problems with that, and the hotel that she was checked into was not very helpful.

TRESSA MURAI: I have, still saved, my text message to Alicia on March 1st stating, "Can you please call, or go to emergency department as soon as possible? We're concerned, please contact us. Things are, aren't going well, it seems like you're having mania" because she, she appreciated people wanting to let her know if she wasn't well. And she's responded well to that before. And I said, "Please call," and I got a call. Then, I heard a man in the background when I said, "What are you doing?" and he said, "We're getting a hold of the bank." I didn't hear from her after that. And I texted her and said, "I hear a man in the background, what's going on? Please get help. You're not doing well." We never heard back on any of the text messages.

ERIN VERNON: The Sacramento Sheriff's Department basically stated that she was an adult, and has the ability to disappear if they want without there being a big deal made. And I even stated to them that she was bipolar, and that she has a history of this, and it's recorded and that I didn't understand why they wouldn't assist us. And they really didn't have anything for me. They said, "She's in our database and if she comes up, it will generate something for a police officer to contact us, because she is missing and then we would contact you."

NARRATION: ALICIA'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS WAIT ANXIOUSLY FOR AN UPDATE ON WHERE SHE MIGHT BE. THEN, A CALL COMES IN FROM A MAN WHO HAS ACTUALLY SEEN ALICIA, 500 MILES AWAY IN MEXICO.

ERIN VERNON: We received a call from a gentleman who was an owner of this carwash in Tijuana. Alicia had shown up there, acting erratic. They didn't know what was happening with her. But after Alicia had left, the gentleman went through her car and found a medical alert card, and my husband's father was on the card. So, he contacted him to let him know that his daughter was acting erratically, and that she was in Tijuana. So, at that point, Frank's dad

reached out to us and then we came in contact with the gentleman down there and got as much information as we could. We made arrangements to fly out from Sacramento that evening to San Diego. We were going to cross the border and start looking for her. The owner of the carwash had stated that Alicia was acting almost drunk-like and she was attempting to get into other people's cars. And you have to understand, this carwash is not like a normal carwash you would have in your local town, where you drive your car through, it washes it, you come out, you can vacuum it out. You give them your car. It's on a street corner, and then you go and you just sit, wherever you can sit, and wait for them to wash and detail your car. So, Alicia would be sitting on a chair, and then she would get up and attempt to get in a car on the street. They had this little deli that was in the parking lot and they had given her an egg sandwich and a bottle of water to drink, thinking that maybe that would help her. And the next thing you know, she was trying to climb into another person's car. And they pulled her back and said, "Hey, we need you to sit down." The next thing they know, Alicia was gone.

NARRATION: WHERE DID ALICIA GO? DID SHE RETURN TO THE STATES, OR TRAVEL DEEPER INTO MEXICO? OR WORST OF ALL, DID SOMETHING HAPPENED TO HER IN THE HIGH CRIME AREA NEAR THE CAR WASH?

MARTIN HAUPT: I don't want to really think about scenarios, I just don't know. I just don't do that. If you think about scenarios, it just, it makes you desperate. My experiences with this illness, you know, Alicia, if she has no medication, then she's very vulnerable. It's just dangerous.

ERIN VERNON: When we went and crossed the border, we contacted the gentleman from the carwash and he basically told us to not go there at night, because bad things happen in that area. What we decided to do is we drove by the location, and we saw where her car was parked, and then we drove around from there. And we searched people sitting on the streets, just people walking around. We just drove around for hours. And we went to a couple of hospitals, and took a missing poster that we had created before we had crossed the border, and was asking if anyone with her description, or looks like her, had come into the hospital and they said no.

NARRATION: WITH NO SIGN OF ALICIA IN THE AREA, HER FAMILY RETURNS HOME. WEEKS LATER, THEY GET A CALL FROM A LOCAL DETECTIVE WHO HAS SPOTTED ALICIA ON SECURITY CAMERA FOOTAGE IN A CONVENIENCE STORE LOCATED JUST A FEW MILES FROM THE CAR WASH IN TIJUANA.

ERIN VERNON: The video from the convenience store, she looked lost. She looked like she didn't know what she was doing. She walked in the frame of the video, and was standing there, and kind of looked around, and then took a drink of something, like a soda or a water, and then just walked out of the frame. Her look was just blank.

NARRATION: THAT HAUNTING IMAGE OF ALICIA IS THE FAMILY'S LAST CLUE TO HER WHEREABOUTS. AS MONTHS PASS WITH NO UPDATES ON THE CASE, ALICIA'S FRIENDS AND FAMILY FEEL HELPLESS.

ERIN VERNON: We were told to maybe search the Red Cross, and they had nothing for us. They told us maybe to go to the police department, which, in Mexico, is so different than going to a police department in the United States. That was a little scary.

NARRATION: TO KEEP HOPE ALIVE, ALICIA'S COLLEGE FRIENDS AND A FEW FAMILY MEMBERS CHIP IN TO HIRE A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR, SOMEONE WHO IS FAMILIAR WITH DISAPPEARANCE CASES SOUTH OF THE BORDER.

ERIN VERNON: When we got him to help us, that was one of the things that he did. He did go through books of people to see if, you know, any of those people matched Alicia's description, or tattoos, or anything. Alicia has a couple of tattoos. One on her back shoulder, and I'm not sure which side, but she has a couple on her legs, as well. One on the back of her calf, and then there's one on her left ankle that she had surgery on. And so, I provided those tattoo verifications to the different agencies down in Mexico for identification purposes.

NARRATION: THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY IN SWITZERLAND, MARTIN WAITS ANXIOUSLY FOR ANY NEWS ABOUT ALICIA, FRUSTRATED BECAUSE HE'S UNABLE TO HELP WITH THE SEARCH. BUT HE AND ALICIA'S FAMILY REMAIN HOPEFUL THAT SHE WILL BE FOUND.

ERIN VERNON: I have a couple of different Facebook things that I watch, that these are people that go down into Mexico and take pictures of, like, homeless people to try and reconnect them with their families. So, I search through the photographs that they take of people because I, I honestly think that Alicia could fit in. Like, the way she looks, she's got brown skin, brown hair, she could fit in in Mexico, and not stick out like a sore thumb. The most frustrating thing for us is, we're going on two years of her being missing and feeling like nobody cares. We're fighting this fight for her, but the people that we're asking for help aren't assisting us, aren't taking an active role in this. They could've easily provided us with help to get the cell phone carrier to give us locations of where she pinged off of towers, and we couldn't get that.

ERIN VERNON: I went as far as getting into her computer and trying to figure out passwords to get into her phone bill so that I could look, and see phone calls that had been made, or texts that had been made. I even called them pretending I was Alicia so that I could put my name on the account and get information, so that I could try anything to find out information. And any information I got, I would give to, at the time, our private eye, and he would see what he could do with it. There's a lot of things that go through my head, and I don't want to go to a dark place in that scenario. But the only thing I can think of is that she has either found someplace that she is living, or she's living on the streets. I have to think that she's somewhere, because the other option is just too sad. My biggest fear is that she's no longer with us and we won't ever get her back. If she has passed away, we're never going to find her.

MARTIN HAUPT: To me, there are three scenarios I can think of. The happy scenario is she just disappeared, started a new life, and could arrange her life somehow with this illness without too much hassle, and everything, which seems to be pretty unlikely. Other thing is that she has some life, a homeless life. This was her biggest fear. She told me, at the very beginning, when she told me that she has this bipolar thing. We went to San Diego and there were many homeless people around and then she told me, you know, "Martin, this, this is what I'm the most afraid of, of this illness, that I end up like those people." And that could be that she's homeless. Imagine if she's living somewhere on the street, having no home, no, no health care, no nothing. Then probably, by now, she wouldn't be the Alicia I know. The third case is, is the worst case. She's been, I mean, she just got killed by somebody, or I don't know.

ERIN VERNON: I feel hope that Alicia is still with us because she wanted to be here. She wanted the future. She wanted to have her husband come here. She wanted to have a relationship with her nieces. She wanted to just live.

MARTIN HAUPT: When we were together, it was always good. She's inspiring to me, and, I guess I was inspiring her. We were very good match, I think. I miss her company. This is what I, I miss the most. You can be lucky if you meet the person where you have such a match, and I had it, sadly only for a short time. I just continue with my life and, I think every day on her, actually. I just wish that she has peace. No pain, and peace.

NARRATION: ALICIA GRIFFIN WAS 46 YEARS OLD AT THE TIME OF HER DISAPPEARANCE. SHE'S 5'7" AND WEIGHS ABOUT 200 LBS. SHE HAS BROWN HAIR, BROWN EYES, AND HER EARS ARE PIERCED. ALICIA HAS TWO TATTOOS ON HER ANKLE, ONE ON EITHER SIDE, AS WELL AS A TATTOO OF A RED CIRCLE OUTLINED IN BLACK ON THE BACK OF HER CALF, BELOW HER KNEE.

IF YOU HAVE SEEN ALICIA, OR HAVE ANY INFORMATION REGARDING HER DISAPPEARANCE, PLEASE NOTIFY THE SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT AT 916-808-0621, OR SUBMIT YOUR TIP AT [UNSOLVED.COM](https://www.unsigned.com).

NEXT, ON UNSOLVED MYSTERIES...

JENNIFER DAVIS: We started looking at it, and Wayne and I realized that it wasn't a suicide note. And we eventually received the scene photos and saw the gun placement, saw that her hands were under a blanket. And then we were like, "Oh my goodness. We don't think she did this."

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Unsolved Mysteries is a production of Cosgrove Meurer Productions and Cadence 13. It is executive produced by Terry Dunn Meurer and Chris Corcoran. Produced by Lloyd Lochridge, Christine Lenig, Courtney Ennis, Paige Hymson and Paul Yates.

The Story Producer for this episode was Caitlin Cutt, and it was edited by Kyle I. Kelley

From Cadence 13, editing, mixing and mastering by Chris Basil, Andy Jaskiewicz and Bill Schultz.  
Production support by Sean Cherry and Ian Mandt. Artwork and design is by Curt Courtenay.  
Publicity by Josefina Francis and Hillary Schupf.

The original theme music was composed by Gary Malkin and Michael Boyd.

THANKS FOR LISTENING TO EPISODE 20 OF UNSOLVED MYSTERIES.