**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**00:08**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=8.5)**)**

I'm Corey Andrew Powell. And I am joined today by Steph Watts, executive producer and development executive specializing in crime and justice programming and creating compelling fiction and non-fiction content across all platforms. Now Steph launched his career at court TV, producing live and taped national trial coverage, managing all aspects of media logistics, overseeing editorial accuracy and producing larger format documentaries. He currently appears in a six part documentary on the Discovery Plus channel, and he co-hosts a new investigative crime podcast called Case by Case. Steph Watts, welcome to Motivational Mondays.

**Steph Watts: (**[**00:45**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=45.35)**)**

Thank you. That introduction was motivational.

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**00:48**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=48.86)**)**

Appreciate it. Yes. Well,

**Steph Watts: (**[**00:50**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=50.659)**)**

So much for it. Thank you. You

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**00:51**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=51.5)**)**

You are very busy, sir. Yes, indeed.

**Steph Watts: (**[**00:53**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=53.3)**)**

Thanks.

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**00:53**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=53.97)**)**

Well, you're very welcome.

**Steph Watts: (**[**00:54**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=54.98)**)**

In this new world order we exist in, I guess, right?

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**00:57**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=57.85)**)**

Yeah. I mean, well, look, you were always busy even before that happened clearly, but I want to know though when it comes to that line of work, first and foremost, I'm really curious about, you know, there is a distinction between being a TV journalist and then being a TV journalist working in the, the crime segment of the, of the business. So what inspired you to work in that particular area of TV journalism?

**Steph Watts: (**[**01:20**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=80.08)**)**

Well, when I, you know, you know, originally from Canada, when I first moved here a hundred years ago, my very first job was interning at the village voice. And I had a chance to do some really investigative stuff with great journalists like Frank Owens comes to mind. And Frank and I had done a whole investigative into like New York nightclubs drug use. And it was just really fascinating for me to like, you know, be in these kind of darker worlds and asking questions. And then from there, I actually, my first real job was with Brills Content Magazine, which was Steve Brill, who at the time had actually started court TV. And it was a, a really interesting magazine, was, eventually went online, really all about sort of inside the media. It was a little bit inside baseball, a little bit ahead of its time.

**Steph Watts: (**[**02:06**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=126.92)**)**

But when the magazine folded, I had an opportunity to go over to Court TV. And basically I remember Bonnie, hired me, this woman. She was exasperated and I needed somebody to start right away. She's like, can you start tomorrow? Like literally like one of those movie scenes. And I was like, can I start tomorrow? Sure. So I started in documentaries and just, you know, really, you know, being personable and asking the right questions. And I think intuitively when you wonder about something or something doesn't feel right, that's really at the core of kind of what I do essentially, you know, I've had had the luxury of building a reputation and establishing myself with law enforcement and judges and courts and networks all across the country. It's been a really great, interesting and learning journey.

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**02:52**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=172.19)**)**

Well, two things come to mind when you tell me that story - one is it makes perfect sense why, since you did that original work at the Village Voice with that whole, like the, the club scene and the, the drugs, it makes perfect sense why you would later go on to do that piece on Michael Alig and the party monster thing. Yeah,

**Steph Watts: (**[**03:11**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=191.68)**)**

Because that, that was, that was part of my series for ID Channel on sort of inside cults and inside darker worlds or worlds we didn't know that much about. And I felt like as I, you know, get hired to do these project and pitched, I was like, that's an interesting, you know, cult club world. And yeah, I had the opportunity. I think, you know, I did one of the last interviews with Michael cause as you know, he died this year mm-hmm on Christmas. And that's another whole topic, but like for somebody to still have the opportunity to get on with their life and come out and destroy their life, you know, the same way that they, you know, close to how they destroyed the person who they murdered, you know, they were high on drugs and, you know, admittedly and for him, him to come out and continue that behavior. It's just, what did he learn in there? What a waste of money, what a waste of time, was sad, but yeah, that was called Deadly Devotions, that series mm-hmm , you know, it was, that was an interesting fit, but thank you for that connection. I forgot about that.

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**04:14**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=254.41)**)**

Yes. And, and, and for me too, I was a young teenager hanging out in New York city during the time when that actually happened. Or maybe I was like my late teens, early twenties. And so I can remember actually still, and I think I told you this once before, I can remember actually seeing the flyers on phone booth of, "Have you seen Angel?" Like I was there when that happened. So you know, to be in New York city when something that crazy happened and for those of you who don't know, just Google Michael Alig and you'll get the story - but you started...

**Steph Watts: (**[**04:43**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=283.07)**)**

There was a movie about it, right?

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**04:44**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=284.27)**)**

Oh Right. There was a movie Macaulay Culkin,

**Steph Watts: (**[**04:45**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=285.67)**)**

Macaulay Culkin, played in it, Party Monster

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**04:46**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=286.86)**)**

Party Monster

**Steph Watts: (**[**04:47**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=287.76)**)**

Right. Right. And then I did the actual documentary on, which you watched, which I appreciated. Yeah. That was, it was interesting. You know, it was one of my, one of my jailhouse interviews was with him.

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**04:57**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=297.7)**)**

Yeah,

**Steph Watts: (**[**04:58**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=298.42)**)**

..and Angel's brother. It was a really emotional story. Yeah. They all, they all are, but that one, you know,

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**05:04**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=304.66)**)**

That kind of hits you a bit, bit harder. That one? Yeah. Mm. Well, you know, with court TV, having that, being that you started there, it makes me think in a way, because that was like, I think when I first remember Court TV, that's going back to like 2004, maybe 2003, a long while back. And there were not many shows like that, really. So Court TV to me seems like it was one that sparked this genre. Now there's such an overabundance on cable of all those sorts of, you know, ID Investigative and forensic. Do you feel in a way that show was a catalyst for those other programs?

**Steph Watts: (**[**05:38**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=338.97)**)**

Yeah, I believe so. I think from my personal experiences, I learned, you know, very, you know, I was forced to quickly learn about the judicial system in this country. Yeah. And its strengths and its weaknesses. You know, we were really schooled on editorial accuracy. We were in courts every day covering trials. There was really no margin for error, but we were also airing the trials live or taped. So, you know, the stories played out themselves. But what I really started to notice early on Corey was that there was a very big, it was a big what's the word disparity and the coverage of, of white people versus black people and the portrayal of people of color within the judicial system. I remember a lot of times we'd wait if it's a big court case. Like, you know, I don't know, like Casey Anthony or something we were waiting for, the judge still had other matters of business prior to those.

**Steph Watts: (**[**06:36**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=396.45)**)**

And I remember that the inmates would come in, chained, dressed in orange. And I was always where like 95% of those people are black. Mm. Why? And, and, you know, a lot of them were not violent offenders. They were drug offenses, you know, robberies. And, and it always struck me as, you know, they would come in and remind me of slavery. I mean, I'm gonna be honest with you. Yeah. And it's, those images always stuck with me and I'm like, why are there so many people of color? You know, this is early on. Okay. Just, you know, I know can, people can say, wow, did you not know that I'm talking? This was 20 years ago.

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**07:10**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=430.43)**)**

And also you were not from here. You're not from this country. Right.

**Steph Watts: (**[**07:13**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=433.01)**)**

I'm from Canada. So my lens on racism and my lens on that whole ...is different. Mm-Hmm thankfully. So, that always stuck with me. So even early on, I remember that it was important for us to tell stories of color. And I remember one of the first ones I did was Ray Cruerth. And it was a horrific story. He paid for the Carolina Panthers and hired a hit man to kill his girlfriend. And it was a terrible story, but it was one of the first ones that we told where, you know a person of color, you know, everybody was equal in this story. You know, it wasn't like, you know, stranger, danger, black guy. I mean, the nation saw it with OJ, but OJ was famous. Yeah. So, yeah. Was a different, you know, celebrities get treated differently. So mm-hmm.

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**08:02**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=482.5)**)**

yeah. You know what I found fascinating about the OJ trial and since you brought that up and it was disturbing at the same time was because there was a sense in the African American community that there were always two justice systems where white people, especially affluent white people were more likely to get away with crimes and even heinous crimes. There was a sense within the black community as well, that OJ, I think for the most part, at some point we all were like, yeah, he probably did this. Right. But there was also still cheering and victory a sense of victory when he was acquitted, because it was almost like this weird of like playing chess where it's like, you know, Wow, well, we finally got one that didn't, it was a very strange sort of way to watch that trial unfold and cheer for someone who we thought was probably guilty.

**Steph Watts: (**[**08:51**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=531.66)**)**

I did, I covered the OJ civil case, but for that trial, I was still in Canada. And I remember that moment. It was pivotal for me because I remember I was in a mall and I was like, why are people cheering? You know, two people are dead.

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**09:06**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=546.57)**)**

Right? Right.

**Steph Watts: (**[**09:07**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=547.35)**)**

Many people believe that this person, regardless of the color of his skin committed this crime, and yet there's cheers and bars, like it's a sporting event and it just didn't make sense to me. And that really triggered for me. And that was a, a moment for me that like, I, I really wanna, you know, explore how this happened. And, that, was a, that was a really turning point for me. I remember that. It's kind of like, I don't remember a lot of things in my life, like 9/11, where you were like, OG Simpson. It was one of those things. Like for me personally, I just, I remember where I was. I remember that moment. I remember how disturbing, upsetting it was to see people react that way. But the jury rule, however, they ruled. And I respect that. But, you know, still they, that was, that was you know the decline of American culture that moment.

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**09:56**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=596.65)**)**

Really, yeah, I was working in a restaurant at the time. So I remember like that moment, everyone was like waiting and watching whatever they could to see it. And then I, I heard the entire mall erupt and like, you know, various stores and restaurants and yeah, it was very strange, but you know, the bigger point of the story though, that I love that you're sharing, especially with this being a leadership podcast, is that you're using your platform to equal out some of that disparity in those stories that are being told, you know, and you've shared that, you know, for example while the media is covering the story of like a missing one missing white girl, there's like 20 to 30 black women who you've never heard of, or native American or Hispanic who are also missing and they're not in the media. Why do you think? Well, I mean, well, I wouldn't say why, but I mean, because it's a loaded question, but I mean, right on its, you know, on the surface, is it, is it just, is it racism or like what would call it that makes that happen?

**Steph Watts: (**[**10:58**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=658.74)**)**

It's, it's a couple of things. I mean, I have a theory, I call it "pretty missing white girl syndrome." And I think it's, it's what the world suffers from, at some point, the media suffers from at some point, a narrative became, came to the surface within the me, in the meetings at of that I would be in, and it was like stories of people of color don't rate to the white people. Essentially, they would say white people aren't interested in the stories of people of color. Hmm. And if you, if you hear that enough, you buy into it. But I always questioned it. I was always like, wait, who said that? Where's the statistics showing me the spreadsheets on this false narrative that was created? And finally, you know, being a little bit of a badass, I guess, an outsider, like I took a stand against it, cuz I was like, wait, I'm a storyteller.

**Steph Watts: (**[**11:53**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=713.1)**)**

And there's a whole plethora of interesting and compelling stories that have dramatically affected people. And regardless of the fact that their skin color is different, I don't see why we can't tell these stories. And I got to the point where the networks where I was, I would say to them, you know, they'd say things to me like, you know, I'd pitch a story. This is, I'm gonna take you right inside. And they'd say to me, you know, Steph, this story's just too sad upon sad for us. And I'd be like, you do crime. We just did Ted Bundy. He murdered a million people. Like we just like, how is this story ever sadder? Let's take sad and replace it with "black upon black" and have a real conversation. I took it a step further. And I said to, you know, in, in an article that I wrote that the stories of white killers, women killers, Casey Anthony, Jody Arias, you know, Eileen Warnous, the list goes on and on, took precedence over victims of color.

**Steph Watts: (**[**12:52**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=772.57)**)**

That was more important to tell these sensationalistic stories. That's changed now though, that, you know, I think with, you know, there was a quick turnaround, I think with, you know, an Brianna Taylor and George Floyd and all these cases, you know the systemic racism and historic racism within the media and within the justice systems been put on trial mm-hmm . And I think that it's being questioned. I think people are, are, be, are, are beginning to make an effort. And I mean, I hate to be the one to be like I told you also, but yeah, you know, there's been compelling stories. And, for me, like one of the big pivotal moments was a story that we did for a and E on Rodney Reed lot of people might know that recently because Kim Kardashian jumped on board, which I respect her to help save Rodney from execution.

**Steph Watts: (**[**13:38**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=818.29)**)**

But prior to that years ago, I did a story for A & E when he was a black man he's on death row for crime. He did not commit a murder of Stacy Stietz. Stacy was murdered probably by her white police officer boyfriend. You know, they said, well, we tried him. He was convicted. He was sentenced to death. I, out in the town, Bastrop, Texas- 50 miles outside of Austin, and a hundred years back in time I call it, where the N-word is prevalent there. And I finally had to say to them, can you guys stop talking like that, or I will report that you, you speak like that in rooms, full of people who look like me. But further, the more we, you know, within a week Corey, of being there, I found, you know, witnesses who were like, oh yeah, Rodney would come in here all the time to see Stacy at work.

**Steph Watts: (**[**14:19**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=859.19)**)**

But when her boyfriend would come in, she'd run and hide in the back. They said they couldn't find witnesses. How am I just this young budding journalist finding witnesses in a small town? And finally we presented this story on A&E and they stayed his execution cuz it was so glaringly embarrassing for them that they said that they couldn't, they, he was stranger danger and didn't they, their whole case, Corey, was that he didn't even know Stacy. I went to his bail bonds lady, this old German white woman who he would go and pay money to cuz he had done minor crimes, nothing major. And she would tell me, oh yeah, Stacy came with him all the time. Mm

**Steph Watts: (**[**14:55**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=895.14)**)**

Wow. It's like, so my point is because they didn't wanna do the work because it was easier to pin a crime on and close the case and put it on somebody of color. Yeah. And that's still prevalent to this day, that's still happening. But we've got, we've got prosecutors' offices all across the country now that are forming task forces that are reexamining every single case in their office for these exact examples that I give you of, of mistakes that happen. So I commend all the prosecutors' offices across the country that are doing these task forces that they've created.

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**15:27**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=927.58)**)**

Yeah. Well I commend you, sir, because that is powerful as well. I mean, you know, that's why I asked early on like, you know, there's TV, journalism, and then there's like, you know, potentially what, what you just shared was that some work you produced actually helped change the minds of people who are in charge of the execution of someone mm-hmm and had them go back and reevaluate because they could no longer deny it because that's how good the investigative reporting was. And so far, I wanna make sure that anyone who's listening, who really is thinking about a career in investigative reporting, that's a bigger picture for you to think about, like really making a difference, right? Not just going out cuz it's a job, but there's a chance to change lives. And with that said, I was curious to know Steph, when you decide to do a project or feature a story, is it something that you do because it's based on pop culture, pop, you know, the, the, it's it's captivating the global audience. So, you know, it'll be, you know, good for ratings and do a good piece or is it something that it sparks some sort of emotive response in you and you like, you know, I gotta get in there and figure out what happened. Something's not right. Which one? Or are they both?

**Steph Watts: (**[**16:42**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1002.09)**)**

That's a very good question, Mr. Corey. that's a very good question. I think, I think to answer that question, in the past, it's been doing the pop culture stories. So, you know, for example, when I was working with a particular production company, when I did my series of American Murder Mysteries, I did Casey Anthony. You know, I did the sit-down with George and Cindy. It was a big deal. Yeah. At the same time for the series, then we did, you know, Scott Peterson and Drew Peterson. Mm. Then, you know, that aired on, on ID, which is then oxygen wanted me to do Scott Peterson and Drew Peterson for them. Okay. You know, I got bills to pay. These are stories, still compelling.I'm emotionally involved in these stories then, you know A&E wants to do Casey Anthony's Parents Speak. So, finally I get to the point where I'm like, we keep telling these same stories yet over here. I have a plethora of compelling stories that happen to be of people of color. And I want to tell these stories. So, to answer your question, yes, I was, I think previously, motivated by that. And ever I think since the pandemic hit and I locked down, you know, and we all had the sort of our, our moments of, of clarity or, or what, what are we doing with our lives?

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**17:55**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1075.32)**)**

Yeah. Right.

**Steph Watts: (**[**17:55**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1075.84)**)**

Yeah. I, you know, I spent a lot of that time on the phone with people like Nico Jenkins, who's, you know, a Tik Tok sensation right now because they say, if you look in his eyes, you die. Nico is a young man at 17 years old, the young man of color severely, mentally ill. There's no question about that. He was incarcerated for 20 years for carjackings, three carjackings. Never got treated for his mental illness. Did five years in solitary confinement leading up to his release. He wrote letters to everybody saying, please don't release me, I'm going to kill people. Within 10 days of being released went on a killing spree and murdered four people and then was able to defend himself in a death penalty trial while he is mentally ill. He now awaits, sitting on death row. And I'm like, here's a failure of the system.

**Steph Watts: (**[**18:42**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1122.92)**)**

And you know, the victim's families tried to sue, Nico tried to sue the facility. He left four people shot and still alive that the police never connected to the case cuz they were victims of color. He writes a letter to the newspaper saying, by the way I shot those people too. I screwed up that day and missed, you know, they're alive. And you know, they throw all the lawsuits out. And then I, this is in Omaha, Nebraska, by the way, for anybody who cares, I find this document where all these senators and, and majority Republicans and no offense to my Republican friends, but were meeting behind doors with paperwork that said, let's discuss reform on the release of Nico Jenkins, but you're over here telling these people, well, your lawsuits are frivolous. We had nothing to do with it. So these are the kind of stories that I wanna tell.

**Steph Watts: (**[**19:28**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1168.77)**)**

And I'm currently involved in telling that one and I have to put my foot down and be like, I don't wanna do Casey Anthony anymore. You know? Yes. That was an injustice. Yes. She killed her daughter and then she got off. I don't wanna really like, let's move the conversation forward and start telling compelling stories of injustice. Let's be transparent about our mistakes within the judicial system. And then we can fix it, but we can't fix it if we don't talk about it. Stop sweeping it under the rug. And within that arena, there's compelling stories. So people are starting to come around to that. And, and so it's making my work more interesting.

**Corey Andrew Powell: (**[**20:04**](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1204.76)**)**

That reminds me of a conversation. I just had with an amazing remarkable woman who I'm sure you've heard of Donna Hylton mm-hmm and Donna Hylton of course went to prison for 27 years. And is now one of the most amazing women's rights advocates and prison reform advocates in the country and just completely transformed her life because of the experience. But one of the things that she discusses is the fact that she had come from a long history of trauma, beginning as a child and many women in prison have had such a similar story of abuse and it led them down a path that, you know, through some criminal activity got them in trouble. But you just said something very, very similar to what she said, which is that society is failing people before something happens, right? So we have to care more before they become criminals and identify things that we need to help them with before they harm themselves or others. And I think that is why your work is so important because it sheds light on that too.

Steph Watts: ([21:09](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1269.77))

I mean, you know, I, one thing that I'm trying to do as a white American, cuz I can never separate myself from the problem, is I think that white people need to understand our role, our major role in the trauma of the black community. Once we start to understand our responsibility for the trauma that the black community suffers and start to have conversations about the trauma, then we can begin to figure out how to heal, begin to figure out how to heal, you know, and because I don't think that the black community can heal alone. If the white community isn't willing to accept the responsibility and the culpability of the historic systemic racism that we created. And I say, we, because again, I can't separate myself from the problem. You know, me telling people, oh, I grew up in Canada. It's different for me. That doesn't, that narrative is, is not helpful to, to the overall conversation.

Steph Watts: ([22:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1330.17))

My role. My, you know, as I grow is to say what stories can I tell through my genre cuz that's all I know. And, how can I make, how can I make a difference? I think, you know, for one example, I'm flying to, to Chicago next week to do the compelling story of the murder of Yolanda Holmes. And I know the investigating officers very well. Michelle is my podcast partner now because I admire her work. She worked tirelessly, tirelessly to solve Yolanda's murder, took her a year when the backlash was, you know, the officers didn't care about the murder of their family member. It's not true. They just couldn't talk about the work that they were doing. Mm-Hmm I remember Michelle would call me up at night and be like, Steph, I was looking at these crime scene photos. She had the same shoes as me. She had the same knife holder. She bought this scarf hanging on the door at target. I know she bought it there cuz I have the same one. Like her personality, you know? And, and I'm like, okay. So how do I take those moments and tell those stories and show people that there are police officers that care. I know there's bad police officers and we see it and it's terrible. Yeah. But there's a million good things that happen that don't get talked about as well. Corey.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([23:27](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1407.08))

Oh, I love that.

Steph Watts: ([23:27](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1407.76))

You know, I mean, and, and I'm all about highlighting the terrible police officers. Drew Peterson's a horrible human being, a horrible police officer. Or, the things that happened to George Floyd or any of these large cases. Let's shine a spotlight on that to see how we can move the conversation forward and begin to heal and fix. So that's really kind of where I'm at. I mean, I wanna tell compelling stories. Mm-Hmm , you know, and, and there's a pool of untold compelling stories that, I feel like a responsibility to tell

Corey Andrew Powell: ([24:00](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/EsDDTsATL4Nzhf7gRkd1ioXNZQhi4vw41jk6eja86Y3SrLWxWIHOvYQ_dKAddqcotIyMM8jWCPM1O3ZCU-KQul1v-u8?loadFrom=PastedDeeplink&ts=1440.84))

Steph Watts, thank you so much for your time today. And we really appreciate all the words of wisdom here you should share with us on Motivational Mondays. It's been an absolute pleasure. Thank you.