

*ARDEN, Episode 9:*

*“Institutionalized Misogyny and a Culture of Sexist Attitudes Did It”*

*By Christopher Dole, Sara Ghaleb, and Emily VanDerWerff*

*Created by Christopher Dole, Emily VanDerWerff, and Sara Ghaleb*

**NOTE:**

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**INTRO**

**OUTRO**

ANDY: *Arden is a production of Wheyface Industries, the Good People. Especially Gina.*

BRENDA: She knows we're recording, right?

PAMELA: This is the first time Bea's ever been the last one to the studio. Much less late. Usually, you're the one swaggering in two hours past recording time, telling us to re-examine our preconceptions about time.

BRENDA: It doesn't exist!

PAMELA: I'm not having this debate again.

BRENDA: And anyway, we have to cut her some slack. We just won that "best podcast of all time" award, so--

PAMELA: While I appreciate the plaque, I don't know that the Daily Republic of Mitchell, South Dakota, is the world's foremost authority on podcasting. But please continue to rate and subscribe to @ArdenPod on Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, and anywhere else fine podcasts are sold.

BRENDA: I hung the best podcast plaque in my cubicle.

PAMELA: Listen, as your producer I just really want--

[she's cut off by the sound of someone entering the booth]

ROSALIND: Uhhhh... have you seen Bea?

PAMELA: No! She's late for our recording session so I don't know what's going on there.

ROSALIND: Sorry. I wasn't asking where Bea was. I was asking if you had *seen* her. It's finally happened.

BRENDA: What's finally-- ohhhhhhhh... *it*.

ROSALIND: I was at JoAnne Fabrics--

PAMELA: Wait, *you* were at JoAnne Fabrics?

ROSALIND: I can have hobbies. But I was there, and the little old ladies were mad. Somebody had bought out the entire stock. I put two and two together and, well--

[the sound of Rosalind grabbing a microphone]

ROSALIND: Here, we're going mobile. Follow me.

[the sounds of the three moving through the hallways]

PAMELA: Please tell me she didn't--

UNNAMED STUDIO EMPLOYEE: [in passing] Hey, Ms. Pink? Have you gotten a look at the break room? It's uh... not great.

PAMELA: Oh dear Lord.

[the sound of a door opening]

[a long silence]

BRENDA: Holy frijole.

PAMELA: There's yarn everywhere.

BRENDA: Even on the ceiling.

ROSALIND: Who had episode nine in the "Bea makes a crazy conspiracy wall" pool?

PAMELA: [bleep] it, it was Andy.

BRENDA: She's gone full Homeland. I *love* it!

BEA: [from very far away] This is *not* a crazy conspiracy wall. This is an attempt to pin down *the facts*. And like Angela Chase in Homeland, I've learned you can never trust an attractive ginger.

BRENDA: That Damian Lewis has those wee beady eyes anyway.

PAMELA: Bea, you've written the words "SKUNK APE" on a sheet of paper with five question marks, then pinned it to the microwave with duct tape. I'd say this counts as crazy conspiracy wall.

ROSALIND: You know "wall" implies just a singular wall. This is really more of a crazy conspiracy room, and I don't know if Andy--

PAMELA: Andy bought every single slot for "crazy conspiracy room" in the pool.

ROSALIND: Son of a [beep]

BRENDA: Where *are* you anyway, Bea?

[the sounds of furniture being moved]

BEA: Hold on... I'm --

ROSALIND: See, we didn't have anything to worry about. She was behind the fridge the whole time!

BEA: You laugh and mock, but I've been here since last night.

BRENDA: Clearly.

BEA: And I have it all figured out!

BRENDA: Oh, I get it. This is an episode where we switch personalities. Fun.

[theme song plays]

*BEA: On December 25, 2007, somewhere around 11 pm, Julie Capsom ran her car off the road and into a tree, in the middle of northern California's most desolate stretch of major highway, halfway between Eureka and Crescent City, California. One witness saw her pacing outside her car, but by the time the police arrived, she had vanished. While dogs picked up her scent heading into the trees, it disappeared in the middle of a forest clearing. What happened to Julie that Christmas night? How could someone that well-known vanish, in the United States in the 2000s? And why has this case haunted us ever since? Each week, we'll explore a different part of the story and see if we can't untangle this web and find the answers. Join us, won't you, as we unravel the mystery... on Arden.*

[end theme]

PAMELA: Alright, kiddies. We've only got a few episodes left, and Casely's having some sort of psychological episode.

BEA: It's not a psychological episode! I'm really close to figuring this thing out.

BRENDA: Look, if anyone's going to solve this mystery--

PAMELA: I'm heading this off at the pass, before you two eat up another episode with senseless arguing. Let's start in the obvious place: What was in the final pages of the report Robert Capsom commissioned?

BEA: The whereabouts of Julie's remains.

BRENDA: Right. The private detective followed a money trail to Brookings, Oregon. And there, he found the outfit Julie had been wearing all day, drenched in her blood. But he *didn't* find her body -- though if Julie had lost that much blood...

PAMELA: So what does that tell us?

BEA: Well, Brookings is right across the border from Crescent City. Somebody obviously grabbed her, threw her in their car, then--

BRENDA: Grabbed her from a forest clearing? Did a giant claw descend from the sky and grab her by the head, and--

BEA: Say that again.

BRENDA: The giant claw thing? Tell me this isn't the theory of mine that you--

[Brenda stops]

BRENDA: Oh [bleep].

PAMELA: What? What oh--

[Now Pamela stops]

PAMELA: A helicopter.

BEA: Right? It's like Julie is just lifted up into the sky, so what if somebody tracks her down by helicopter? They force her to get in, fly off with her, then fly her to Oregon, where any sort of search is far less likely to be carried out--

BRENDA: You've heard Virginia is for lovers? Well, Oregon is for murderers!

BEA: Besides, the back country outside of Brookings is an absolute mess, but there *is* an airport. You land the helicopter, ditch the body back in the woods, and then it's not found for years.

PAMELA: Except all they found were clothes. Not even bones.

BRENDA: It's not all *that* uncommon. Especially if an animal gets hold of the body and drags it off. Really, it's how God wanted us to go if you think about it -- our corpses dragged off and mauled by an alpha predator or scavenger? Boy, what a thing!

BEA: All that aside... it works? As a theory? Right?

PAMELA: I guess. It's a little disappointing. Sort of a deus ex machina.

BEA: I mean, it's a machine out of the sky, so--

PAMELA: So who killed her? And who's the torso?

BEA: Ralph, almost certainly. Or at least he's the torso. Which would mean he's not the killer.

BRENDA: Score one for Bentley!

BEA: But the killer--

BRENDA: Kail McPherson.

BEA: ...I thought I was supposed to be the crazy one this episode.

BRENDA: No, I'm serious. If any of those Hollywood stories are true we know he's violent, we know he's tied to Julie and Ralph --

BEA: No, that's still a really big stab in the dark. Editors, can you cut --

BRENDA: Not even a little bit. Have you listened to the news today? At all? He's all over it.

BEA: As established, I was engaging in some creative arts and crafts in the break room.

[the sound of typing]

PAMELA: Huh. This LA Times report is... certainly interesting.

BEA: What's it say?

PAMELA: Nearly a dozen women, most of whom spoke to the Times on condition of anonymity, they've confessed that when attending McPherson's famous parties, they would often wake up the next morning in one of his many guest rooms, with no memory of how they had gotten there. Some even insist they had had nothing to drink.

BEA: Oh gross. And to think I liked his--

PAMELA: It goes on from there.

BEA: I can fill in the blanks. Maybe I'll burn my copy of Standing Casual.

BRENDA: So Kail did it.

BEA: It's... I mean, Kail has the money and the opportunity, and we know Julie went to one of his parties. But at the same time, it's a long way from serial sexual assault to coming up with an elaborate scheme to murder two people. Even the story that Kathy told us last time about that fight he got into was a "heat of the moment" attack versus something planned --

BRENDA: Suppose Julie's going to come clean about what happened to her. Say the wild child thing was caused by this older, more powerful man she trusted doing something awful to her.

BEA: Then how is Ralph involved?

PAMELA: He's her witness. He was on set for Guinevera. He was her friend, or maybe even her boyfriend. Remember, it's the 2000s. People are a lot more likely to believe a woman if a dude's backing her up.

BEA: So much has changed.

BRENDA: So that's what's got Julie and Ralph so worried that last weekend. Kail knows they're going to come clean, and he's threatened them. At some point, they go out to meet with him.

PAMELA: Why? If they have proof, why not just go to the press?

BEA: Big name like that, you had to have a lot of courage to take that on at the time. Kail's an Academy Award winner, critical favorite, noted political donor and activist, gives lots of money to...to charities...and...

BRENDA: What?

BEA: It's over here...Ah, crap, I thought it was over here --

PAMELA: You need help?

BEA: No, no, you both keep talking - I swore I saw it -- so why did they meet Kail if they're going to expose him?

BRENDA: Maybe he's going to pay them off.

BEA: Julie doesn't need money.

BRENDA: But Ralph does.

BEA: So he goes alone?

PAMELA: After emptying his bank account?

BRENDA: I mean--

BEA: Or he's rattled. Kail threatens him, so he decides to go on the run. He takes all the money and is headed out of town. He likes Julie, but he's not going to die for her.

BRENDA: Except he does. Somehow, Kail finds out what Ralph's up to and catches up with him. He kills Ralph-- and maybe it's not planned - it just happens in the heat of the moment. Then puts the body in Julie's trunk to intimidate her.

PAMELA: But just the torso?

BEA: Hard to fit a whole body in a trunk.

[a long beat]

BEA: I assume.

PAMELA: It's actually not that difficult.

BRENDA: We have got to get to know each other better.

PAMELA: Relax. You and your friends never pretended to kidnap each other in high school?

[a beat]

BRENDA: ... No.

BEA: It's easy enough to explain away. Maybe rigor mortis has set in. Let's assume Kail is not that great at knowing what to do with his freshly acquired body, the one he means to threaten Julie with. Maybe he's initially panicked and decides to just get rid of Ralph's corpse, but by the time he's chopped it up he realizes he can use it.

BRENDA: There are a lot of leaps of logic there, but sure, let's go with it.

BEA: You're one to complain about leaps of logic.



BRENDA: Remember where we established that we were going to switch personalities this episode? I'm just playing along with--

BEA: That was a thing you said. It wasn't actually the premise of--

PAMELA: Please stop now. We're actually making progress.

BRENDA: So if we assume that Kail isn't smart about stashing bodies in trunks but *is* a criminal mastermind when it comes to cutting them up, Julie finds the body--

BEA: And we know he could've gotten it there because Kail is at the Capsom family compound that weekend.

BRENDA: ...What? That would be a heck of a piece of corroborating evidence, but --

BEA: It's a New York Times style section story on "The Last Party of Julie Capsom"...

BRENDA: That seems horribly gross.

BEA: "Family friends and Hollywood notables...yada yada yada, one guest who raised eyebrows was Kail McPherson, the director of Julie's controversial shelved film *Guinevera*..." Ugh, and there's a photo of him with his arm around Julie.

BRENDA: Let me see that. Look at her eyes. She looks trapped.

BEA: So she freaks the [beep] out. And goes on the run--

BRENDA: And sends an email implicating Ralph?

BEA: Maybe she's so scared of Kail that she hopes to--

[heavy sigh]

BEA: I don't know.

BRENDA: You know what, though?

[sounds of rustling papers]

BRENDA: I have the original email here. Somewhere.

BEA: And?

BRENDA: Right! We always wondered about this, but decided it was just a dumb teenager thing. Or a typo. So it starts, "Oh God, I screwed up, and Ralph knows. HE was yelling at me on the phone," only both letters in "he" are capitalized.

BEA: Not hard to do if you're typing fast.

BRENDA: What if "he" isn't Ralph. What if it's a way to signal Kail without saying Kail.

BEA: Now who's making leaps of logic?

BRENDA: We had a bunch of Julie's other emails in--

BEA: The boxes of evidence--

BRENDA: That got burned up in my truck. Damn you, Kail McPherson!

BEA: But if she spells he with two capitals--

PAMELA: It's a theory.

BEA: So what we need to do is figure out if Kail rented a helicopter or some other sort of aircraft on December 25, 2007, then we need to figure out if he hired someone to fly it, then we need to figure out--

BRENDA: It might even be easier than that.

BEA: Oh?

BRENDA: Brookings' airport is super tiny, but it should have a log of if an aircraft landed there. Even if nobody was on duty, security cameras would have captured footage of a landing, and then someone would have logged it afterward. There are ways to avoid getting logged at any airport, but do you think Kail knows them?

BEA: He seems to know how to cut up a human body--

BRENDA: Tom Cruise chopped up Dermot Mulroney in Standing Casual!

BEA: I thought he just threw the body into a garbage compactor?

BRENDA: Well, he had to chop Dermot into pieces first --

BEA: Man, I can't believe I ever thought that was a modern American classic --

BRENDA: So back in the day, we did actually do some investigation of a helicopter/plane theory. We requisitioned all of the flight logs for airports within a 100-mile radius, just in case somebody had pulled a Robert Durst and holed up nearby just waiting for Julie to pass through. We didn't find anything incriminating, but if we're pretty sure Kail went to Brookings to dump the body--

BEA: Then you could check the aircraft that went in to that airport that night and figure out if any were rented in the Los Angeles area?

BRENDA: It would be easier if I actually had access to a police database, but I have something even better.

BEA: What?

[Brenda makes a whooshing noise with her mouth]

BEA: What was that?

BRENDA: It was, like, a whip pan. Where it's suddenly the future, and my solution has presented itself?

BEA: You know nobody can see us, right?

BRENDA: I want them to imagine the TV version!

BEA: Which is like Scrubs?

BRENDA: Listeners, just imagine the whip pan and-- ah, hell. Editors cut this out.

[the sound of an actual Scrubs-style whip pan]

ROSALIND: I've got what you wanted, boss.

BRENDA: See? And we didn't have to delve into how, exactly, you acquired that information, because we all have suspended our disbelief to understand that you could!

BEA: Or we just want the answers already.

BRENDA: That too.

PAMELA: So did anybody fly into Brookings? For Christ's sake...

ROSALIND: Just one small aircraft. A little Cessna 172 -- that's basically a crop-duster -- registered to, and presumably flown by, one Daniel Lewis Baxter.

BRENDA: Did you find Baxter?

ROSALIND: I didn't realize I was supposed to. I thought--

BEA: We don't need to track him down. We've already spoken to him.

BRENDA: Huh?

BEA: I mean, not on the show. But in general.

BRENDA: Daniel Lewis Baxter?

PAMELA: Oh [bleep].

BEA: That's the name of Natalie Thomas's husband.

[ad music starts]

*ANDY: Do you have a radio station? A podcast? An audiobook? A spoken-word tone poem about the futility of life on Earth? Are you up to your eyeballs in audition tapes from people who are begging -- nay, pleading -- to read your advertisements [pronounced "ad-ver-tiss-ments"] live on air? Can you just not be bothered to listen to all of them?*

*Hi. I'm Andy Wheyface, Time's Man of the Year 2006.*

*PAMELA: [off-mic] Wasn't that the year everybody was person of the year? Because the winner was "you," and they had the mirror, and--*

*ANDY: Time's Man of the Year 2006. I made my fortune the old-fashioned way, by inheriting a truly remarkable sum of money, then hiring a man to turn it into even more money for me. And now, I want to help you make your fortune, by indulging in my true passion: reading ads on podcasts and radio programs.*

*There's no ad too small! Here are just a few selections from some of my biggest hits!*

*[awkward cutting between random clips from ads we will never hear]*

*"Just take it from me: the gorilla man"*

*“What’s new pussycat? A mechanical exoskeleton that will let you crush any dog you like between your jaws!”*

*“Christmas just ain’t Christmas without a high-stakes, life or death game of chance, all played out on your own private island.”*

*“Air-Be-In-Me is -- my God, this is filthy!”*

*“Duck Duck Juice: It’s like Uber, but for duck juice!”*

*So hire me, Andy Wheyface, to read your ads! My rates are eminently reasonable, and I come complete with an entire production team--*

*PAMELA: Okay, we’re not producing your--*

*ANDY: An entire production team! Look me up in the phone book, under “Andy Wheyface, comma fame and fortune opportunities.”. Hire Andy Wheyface today!*

[end ad music]

[the sound of a phone ringing]

NATALIE: [voicemail message] Hey, it’s Natalie! Please leave a message.

BEA: [sigh] She must be screening our calls.

BRENDA: We were getting along so well.

BEA: You have any luck getting in touch with Kail McPherson?

BRENDA: Shyeah, like he’s not hiding behind 50 levels of lawyers.

BEA: Did you even try?

BRENDA: I bought one of those maps to the stars--

BEA: He moved to New York in 2014.

BRENDA: Okay. Then no, I did not try.

BEA: Look, even if we’re only going to speculate that he committed *murder*, it’s important for us to reach out and ask him for comment. Or his legal team. Or whatever.

BRENDA: So let's just say we did that!

BEA: We can't just say we did that.

BRENDA: Well, if the listeners are listening to this, then we did, because it would be deeply unethical to air it without--

[abrupt cut]

BEA: Mr. McPherson's lawyers provided us with this statement: "Mr. McPherson denies all wrongdoing he is accused of thanks to salacious gossip, mostly from unnamed rumor mongers. He especially denies that anything untoward happened with Julie Capsom, who was a minor at the time he knew her. Their relationship was completely professional, and Mr. McPherson regrets the untimely events that surrounded such a promising young actress."

PAMELA: Smells like horse[bleep] to me.

BEA: Maybe we need to take a step back. We're going a mile a minute here.

BRENDA: Because we're so close!

BEA: Okay, how is Natalie involved? Or her now-husband, at least? Rosalind, did you figure out how long Natalie and Daniel have been together?

ROSALIND: Neither would accept my Facebook friend requests, but they filed a wedding license in the Los Angeles County Courthouse in 2011, and their oldest child, a boy, was born in 2014. Their younger child, a girl, was born--

BEA: Got it.

BRENDA: So maybe it's all a weird coincidence?

BEA: The man who just happens to fly into an airport where Julie's personal effects are found the night she disappears also just happens to marry her friend?

BRENDA: Boy, imagine that awkward conversation.

ROSALIND: Hon, now that we've had two kids together, I need to tell you about the time I was involved in a conspiracy to kill your best friend.

BRENDA: Did they give their kids super LA hippie names? They live over in Silver Lake. I'll bet they did.

ROSALIND: Well, their daughter is named Chinestra, and they call her Chi because, and I quote from Natalie's still-public Instagram, "she's realigned the energies of my heart."

PAMELA: Aw.

[awkward pause]

PAMELA: What, none of you have ever held a baby before?

BRENDA: (simultaneous) I try not to.

BEA: (simultaneous) Just my niece.

BRENDA: Casely, all right. High five.

[high five noise]

BEA: At least we can agree kids are the worst.

ROSALIND: Do you want to know what Chi's big brother's name is?

BEA: We should really get back to--

BRENDA: I do. Very much so.

ROSALIND: Tim.

BRENDA: Short for--

ROSALIND: Timothy.

PAMELA: Sometimes they just go where you expect, folks.

[phone ringing again]

BEA: There's one way to figure this out.

NATALIE: [voicemail message] Hey, it's Natalie!

BEA: [huff]

BRENDA: Maybe we're thinking about this all--

[an ultra generic ring tone]

BEA: Oh, good, maybe it's Natalie!

BRENDA: Caller ID says Lorena Christopher. The podcast host?

BEA: Oh! Yes! I should... I should take this!

[she actually laughs slightly... the sound of a door opening and closing]

BRENDA: What was that?

PAMELA: Bea and Lorena are dating. You didn't know?

ROSALIND: They hit it off at PodCon. Really, if you listened to the behind-the-scenes material--

BRENDA: This is the first I'm hearing about it.

PAMELA: Oh, you evidently missed, "Did you hear about the date I went on last night? With [dramatic pause] Lorena Christopher?" day.

ROSALIND: She was insufferable, *but* she was also happy, so she brought bagels.

PAMELA: So we got something out of it at least.

ROSALIND: And now you know what it means every time she brings in bagels.

BRENDA: [gasp] I've *eaten* those bagels. So, Casley's into ... snobs!

PAMELA: ...Well, yes. Every time she brings a new beau by, man or woman, that person is basically "Bea, but moreso." Like they meet at a dating service for pedantics.

BRENDA: And I always thought *opposites* attracted.

ROSALIND: True enough. What do you think she and Lorena do on dates? Correct each other's grammar?

PAMELA: Probably go to movies and call it "the cinema."

ROSALIND: Yuck.

PAMELA: Hey, Brenda. You okay?



ROSALIND: Oh no. You had a crush, didn't you?

BRENDA: Of course not! Everything about Casely drives me up the wall.

PAMELA: Mmhm. Spoken like a true Meg Ryan protagonist. Man, you remember that werewolf film she did, it was like in the 90s--

BRENDA: Whatever. I just thought Casely and I were friends. And when you're friends, you talk about stuff. Like if you have a new relationship you're excited about.

ROSALIND: So if you had a new relationship--

BRENDA: Casely would be the first person I'd tell.

ROSALIND: I'm hurt.

BRENDA: Then you see what I mean!

ROSALIND: I was kidding.

BRENDA: Also, I feel like you'd magically already know somehow.

ROSALIND: Yeah, I totally would. I have a way about me. And I go through all of your trash cans at night.

BRENDA: It's not a big deal! It's not! It's--

[the door opens again]

BEA: Sorry. Just had a couple of things to hash out. Pamela, can I take Friday to--

BRENDA: I'm really glad you're happy, Bea! Really glad!

[the sound of something clattering as Brenda leaves, the door closing]

BEA: What was that?

ROSALIND: It was-- You know what? Don't worry about it.

PAMELA: You can take Friday off. Just, you know, clean the break room.

BEA: Right. On it. And obviously, if we get any closer to breaking this case, I'll rethink my plans.

PAMELA: I honestly think we might be further off than we were when we started this whole podcast.

BEA: You're sure Brenda's okay?

PAMELA: She has weird ideas about friendship.

[cut]

BRENDA: Hey, folks. Your old pal, Brenda Bentley, here, and I just wanted to clarify some things. And this time I know enough about the magic of radio to not broadcast my every thought to the entire station.

Look, I know how this works, right? I'm not dumb. You heard how upset I got back there, and you've concluded that this whole mystery thing is just a ruse to let two crazy kids who seem like they hate each other but, secretly can't live without each other, fall in love. And I also know that the more I deny thinking Casely is the bee's knees, the more you're going to think that I'm lying.

And you know what? I'll admit it. If I had met her in a bar or come across her on WheyDate, sure. I'd have flirted. A little bit. I'm attractive. She's almost as attractive. We're both adults. That's how it goes.

But I didn't meet her in a bar. I didn't find her on some app. We have a whole history. We're coworkers. We're not just randos. And I do think of her as a friend. I guess. Or at least I like talking to her about this case, which is not something I can say for everybody.

Listen, let me tell you a story. There was a reason I was working that Christmas night, even though I'd asked for time off. When I first got to Eureka, it was great. Everybody liked me. They knew I dated women. It was all okay. And then I met her -- Yvonne from the evidence locker. OK, that's not her real name. I just always wanted to date a Yvonne. [hits it again with a strong lean on the French accent.] *Yvonne. Yvonne. Yvonne.* It was a short thing, but boy, it was-- I'm gonna censor myself here. Suffice to say, it was about three weeks, and then it was over, and it wasn't by my choice.

And after that, it was like some switch flipped in everybody. Like the thought that I might date a woman was fine in theory, but when it was someone they knew, someone they gossiped with-- and then I had to wonder if they were gossiping about *me*. If Yvonne had told them anything about who I was when I wasn't on the clock. If I had betrayed myself by falling so hard and so fast for a woman I barely knew.

Like I get that's the risk we always take when we date a coworker, but I learned my lesson. The whole precinct, one by one, they all kinda turned on me. Not in a way you could notice. Just in that way where... people would be talking, and I would come over, and they'd keep laughing at

each other's jokes, and even at mine, but a little more hollowly. And then they'd start making excuses to get back to their desks, and I always wondered... if I had just stayed put and not come over... would they have kept laughing together? Maybe I was just paranoid. Nobody was a jerk to me in any obvious way. They just... looked at me like I was standing a couple inches to the left of where I really was. And I couldn't get them to look at me. No matter how hard I tried.

And I wasn't just paranoid. They made me work that Christmas, even when I wanted the time off. Even when I was owed the time off. When they didn't need an actual detective instead of just a couple of junior officers. And when the whole thing blew up in my face, well, nobody put their necks out for me. So, probably the gay thing. Right?

So, yes, Casely's cute. And yes, I get it. Chemistry. But I have chemistry with everybody, let me tell you. And I don't date coworkers. End of explanation.

[cut]

*[ad music]*

*ROSALIND: Hey, Pamela, have you had this problem?*

*PAMELA: [very stilted] What problem is that, Rosalind?*

*ROSALIND: You're making a little food for yourself in your kitchen, just jamming out to some tunes, but you can barely hear them, because you're playing them in the other room!*

*PAMELA: Wow, that is a problem I have had a number of times. At least five. No more than 12.*

*ROSALIND: Right. Well, I've got a solution! The Wheyface Speaker Now Or Forever Hold Your Jamz system! It's cutting-edge speaker quality, and it will sound like it's right in the room next to you. And even better, you don't have to buy a complicated series of speakers to set up! Because who has the time?*

*PAMELA: I certainly do not have the time.*

*ROSALIND: Let me demonstrate it for you.*

*[the awkward click and feedback of what's obviously a megaphone]*

*ROSALIND: [amplified] Just set the Wheyface Speaker Now system up next to whatever you need to make louder, and it does all the work.*

*PAMELA: Wow, you're so loud!*

*ROSALIND: I know! I'm--*

*PAMELA: No, maybe turn the other direction.*

*ROSALIND: [right into the mic, with some hiss and squeal from feedback] Volume won't be a problem any more!*

*PAMELA: [obviously reading ad copy] And even better, you can buy the Wheyface analog system for just \$35 dollars. Why just listen to me--*

*[rustling]*

*PAMELA: Wait, this really is just a high school cheerleader megaphone with "Wheyface" awkwardly painted on it.*

*ROSALIND: Sure. Go Wheyface Industries and/or Armour Packers!*

*PAMELA: [holding megaphone up] Do I sound louder to you now?*

*ROSALIND: Sure. That's how sound works, right?*

*PAMELA: You sound so lifelike.*

*ROSALIND: I think I'm supposed to say that?*

*PAMELA: Oh, right. Sorry.*

*ROSALIND: You sound so lifelike!*

*PAMELA: Like I'm in the same room?*

*ROSALIND: You bet. So get down to WheyMart today and pick up your very own Speaker Now Or Forever Hold Your Jamz system!*

*[pause]*

*PAMELA: How was that?*

*ANDY: [off-mic] That was... that was good. Yeah. Good. [beat] These are really just megaphones, huh?*

*ROSALIND: Well, you didn't hear it from us.*

*[end ad music]*

[the sound of Bea's ringtone]

BEA: This is Bea Casely.

NATALIE: Bea?

BEA: Natalie! Thank God!

NATALIE: I missed... seven calls from you?

BEA: I have a question. Just a stupid one, but maybe an important one. I'm sure you don't know anything about it.

NATALIE: [sigh] Look, I'm getting really tired of this, Bea. I have told you everything I know.

BEA: I swear it's just for color. Look, can we stop by in a bit? It'll be better if we can record in person.

NATALIE: My husband needs me to join him for a work event tonight. Unless you can babysit--

BEA: It'll just take a couple of minutes. Promise.

NATALIE: Don't get here any later than 6.

[end of call]

[the sound of driving]

BRENDA: So.

BEA: You think she knows something?

BRENDA: I don't know. I wouldn't have pictured her being that good of an actor.

BEA: If Natalie planted the email--

BRENDA: I don't think that's what happened.

BEA: I realize that, but--

BRENDA: You sound like me, you realize.

BEA: Yeah, I kinda do. It's just... fun to go down that rabbit hole. A little, I guess.

BRENDA: Do you ever think that we shouldn't have done this?

BEA: Not really.

BRENDA: I mean, these people had lives, and then we came along--

BEA: If one of them killed Julie, or forced her to run away--

BRENDA: I know. That's the up side. But unless every single person we've talked to was in on it... It's just a lot.

BEA: Sure. But getting to the truth, you make people mad. That's just how it is.

BRENDA: I'm not explaining it very well.

[silence, the sound of driving]

BRENDA: You remember when we argued about the Capsom Case Curse? This feels like that. Like we've forgotten this is something that happened to real people. You know?

BEA: Well, right. We can't lose sight of that. But wouldn't they like to know what happened?

BRENDA: Would you want to know that your daughter, or your best friend, or whatever, had been subject to some terrible man's worst impulses?

BEA: Yes. I would. If it would help her rest in peace.

BRENDA: I just... this is all entertainment to us. And to most of the people listening, I suppose. It's not about justice as much as it is... this weird arbitrary deadline--

BEA: I do care about Julie. It was never supposed to be a deadline.

BRENDA: I get it. That's my fault. We turned it all into a sideshow. But somebody died. Most likely two people.

BEA: Okay. Right. I am sorry we're not more solemn about all of it. But isn't it kind of fun? Closing in on the truth?

BRENDA: It *is* fun. I'm wondering if it should be.

BEA: What is with you today?

BRENDA: Nothing. Let's just do this interview.

BEA: Is it about Lorena and--?

BRENDA: No. God, Casely, it is *not* about-- [calming] I'm glad you're happy.

BEA: Okay.

[silence]

BRENDA: I mean it. You, of all people, deserve someone to help you loosen up.

BEA: I'm going to ignore that. Thank you.

BRENDA: Cool.

[cut]

NATALIE: This better be quick.

BEA: Of course. We respect your time.

NATALIE: Says the woman who drops by every other Tuesday.

BEA: That's not quite--

BRENDA: It's more or less true.

BEA: We just need this one last question answered.

[the sound of paper being handed over]

BEA: This is a flight record in to the Brookings airport on--

NATALIE: This interview is over.

[she starts removing her microphone]

BEA: What? Natalie--

NATALIE: I don't know anything about it.

BEA: About your future *husband* flying in to Brookings on the night of Julie's disappearance? Did he... have something to do with--

NATALIE: Of course not. He didn't even know Julie.

[a pause]

NATALIE: I really should go.

BRENDA: Natalie--

NATALIE: Tim! Chi! Come say good night to mommy!

BRENDA: Natalie, what is this? You know we can go to the police with this.

NATALIE: Kids!

BRENDA: Forget it. I'm calling this in.

BEA: Bentley --

BRENDA: Sorry, Casely, we've had our fun. But this is strong circumstantial evidence that Natalie Thomas Baxter and her husband have been obstructing police investigations, withholding evidence.

NATALIE: Circumstantial evidence.

BRENDA: And I have do have a few friends on the force. People who owe me a favor. Besides, the cop who finally breaks the Julie Capsom murder? Is gonna be a national hero. And you're the lead that'll get us there, Natalie. You've got a nice house here, nice car, nice kids - does not. Mean [beep] To me. I am done playing around. Should I call the police? Or maybe I can get Mr. Wheyface's lawyers on the phone - I'm sure we can get some kind of subpoena to interview Daniel, at least - they'll figure out a way to do it. So you'd better think very, very carefully If you had something to do with Julie's murder --

NATALIE: Did it ever occur to any of you that maybe she didn't want to be found?

BEA: Whoa, hey, we--

BRENDA: Wait. Julie's alive?

NATALIE: I don't know. She was the last time I saw her.



BRENDA: At the Christmas party?

NATALIE: No. On the helicopter.

BEA: The helicop--

NATALIE: I can't believe how behind you are. You still haven't figured it out, have you? You want to know? You want to know what happened? I'll tell you what happened.

BRENDA: It is what we're here for--

NATALIE: My best friend fell in love with a boy when she was 13. 13! Can you imagine that? Meeting the love of your life that young?

BEA: Ralph.

NATALIE: Of course it was Ralph.

BRENDA: Is he the torso?

NATALIE: Who else would it be?

BEA: There are theories and--

NATALIE: [Bleep] your theories.

BEA: Okay--

NATALIE: But everybody wanted Julie. You know that, because you do too. And after Guinevera--

BRENDA: Did Kail... do something to her?

NATALIE: She'd never talk about it with me. But I know that her and Ralph were planning something. Something big. And it involved Kail. And I know that Ralph died, and Julie found out about it somehow, and she thought Kail was involved. And then she asked for my help. And then she ran. I don't know why she sent the email. I don't know why she did half the things she did. But I do know that when your best friend asks you to find a pilot--

BEA: So you just happened to be dating a pilot?

NATALIE: No. It's how we met. Isn't that crazy? This guy I found pretty much at random to help out my friend turns out to be the best guy I've ever met. We spent that whole Christmas, flying up to Brookings, feeling like we were part of something big. And we can never, ever tell anybody how we met.

BRENDA: Until now, I guess.

NATALIE: You can't put this out there. She doesn't want anybody finding her. I don't know where she is. Nobody does.

BEA: But you saw her.

NATALIE: I placed the call from the cabin. You probably figured that out by now.

BRENDA: I hadn't, but--

NATALIE:Ugh. I called Julie. Told her she was in range, so she could ram the car into the trees. We didn't count on Gerald finding her, and I'm so sorry about what happened to him. Really. I am. But you have to understand--

BEA: If Julie came back now, she'd be a legend.

NATALIE: No she wouldn't. They'd find a way to make her look like a scared kid. Because that's what she was. In the end.

BRENDA: So you place the call--

NATALIE: I meet her in the woods, and we meet up with the helicopter. Flown by Dan, of course. He takes us up to Brookings, where I put her on the plane with him. She asks me for one last favor, so I leave her clothes, bloodied, in the woods. Dan flies her to Seattle from there, and that's it. I don't know what happened to her after that. He doesn't know. She... evaporated.

BEA: If we know her fake name--

NATALIE: Bea.

BEA: We could track her and-- and--

NATALIE: She sent me an email two years later. Just to say she was fine and not to come looking. And that's the last of it.

BEA: But all of that blood--

NATALIE: You really didn't get that she staged that? She collected these big bags of her blood. Drawing blood every couple of weeks. I told her she was going to faint. But she needed them to make sure nobody, not even her parents, came to find her. They had to think she was dead. I certainly don't know why.

[from somewhere else in the house, the sound of kids laughing]

KIDS: Mommy! Mommy!

MALE VOICE: [far off] Babe, we gotta get going!

NATALIE: Good night, you two. I'm sorry I kept this from you, but-- she's my oldest friend.

BEA: So much of this doesn't add up. How long was she planning this disappearance?

NATALIE: I don't know. There's so much I never asked and wish I had. But you have your answer now, right? You're happy, right?

[a long pause, the kids bursting into the room, giggling]

NATALIE: Right?

[cut]

[back in studio]

BRENDA: If you know our Bea--

BEA: I think I found her.

BRENDA: Maybe we should leave well enough alone. Let the last three episodes be a series of musical performances by yours truly!

BEA: No. I really think I found her.

BRENDA: [sigh] Fine. I'll bite.

BEA: I had Rosalind pull a few strings, grab the passenger's database from that week out of Seattle--

BRENDA: And?

BEA: One Juliet Montgomery. First class out of Seattle. Final destination:

[there's a curious hitch in the recording here, as if something were pasted in after the fact]

BEA: Verona, Italy.

BRENDA: I do like Italy--

BEA: Good thing I bought us tickets.

BRENDA: Didn't you have a thing this weekend?

BEA: Yeah. I did. But it can wait. I've waited longer for this.

[pause]

BEA: You okay with this?

BRENDA: Yeah. Yeah.

[obviously rousing herself]

BRENDA: Let's do it.

[studio cut]

*PAMELA: Next time on Arden--*

*ROSALIND: We are going to Italy!*

*PAMELA: We're not going. Are we?*

*ROSALIND: I don't buy a thing Natalie said, do you?*

*PAMELA: Hell if I know. But if we're going to Italy, I wouldn't mind a free trip.*

*ROSALIND: Great. I'm flying.*

*PAMELA: Wait what?*

[end music]