

*ARDEN*

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

*Episode 1: "Aliens Did It"*

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

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**INTRO**

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*ANNOUNCER: Arden is sponsored, as always, by Wheyface Industries. The good people.*

BEA: It might be hard for younger listeners who've only known her as the lost girl to realize this, but for people of a certain age - well, my age - Julie Capsom was someone you knew all too well, someone you maybe even grew up with.

She made her first appearance as a character named, sure enough, Julie on her mother's sitcom. She was just 8, and acting was something fun to try out.

[clip from sitcom]

SITCOM ACTOR: What do we say to strangers, Julie?

CHILD JULIE: Thanks for the candy?

[studio laughter, applause]

BEA: She made her major film debut at the age of 14 in the beloved classic Jane Austen Fight Club. Even then, she was a red carpet favorite.

REPORTER 1: Julie, what do you think of all this craziness? Did your mom prepare you for it?

JULIE: [obviously close to hyperventilating] Kinda! This is really, really, really crazy! I think I'm gonna get a headache from all the cameras flashing.

REPORTER 1: You'd better get used to it. You're *great* in this movie.

JULIE: Thank you! It's such a personal project for me. I think girls my age need to stand up and speak out! And that's what Jane Austen Fight Club is all about.

BEA: Journalists *loved* her. She made talking points sound fresh and fun. She was sort of Jennifer Lawrence before we had a Jennifer Lawrence. Until the inevitable flameout.

Julie's father Robert Capsom sponsored one of those parental watchdog organizations with the money from his epsom salt billions. Her mother Kathleen Weir Capsom was the spokeswoman for it - in between Emmy nominations for her "we're such a happy family!" sitcom - but Julie, the older she got, just seemed to realize how much of it was based on pretty lies. And she thought that was really, really funny.

JULIE: I don't think the crap they're pushing is normal at all! It's not about decency. It's about conformity and control. Like what if everybody could be [robot voice] exactly the same. You know? [applause from audience] Yeah! You know I'm right!

LATE NIGHT SHOW HOST: So we should all be partying every night like--

JULIE: C'mon, Kyle. You know that's an exaggeration. But so what if I was? What if all I did was drink and smoke weed and have sex? We should do what makes us happy. We have too much pent-up, repressed---

BEA: She partied. She drank. Drugs. Sex. Every rumor you could think of, it attached itself to her, while her parents expressed deep concern in the press. She was famous for being famous, and she knew it, and winked at it. Jane Austen Fight Club kinda blew up, and pretty soon it seemed like she was our next big star.

And then came December 25, 2007.

It was just me that night, at 730 The Wave, Eureka. I'd only been interning there a few weeks. Unpaid. But it was the first opportunity I'd gotten to run the station all by myself. I just wanted to see if I could do it. I figured, it'll be a quiet night. I'll play some Bing Crosby, get in some practice with the equipment. What can happen on Christmas night?

Well, the most famous teen in America can vanish.

I won't deny, it was thrilling - taking statements from the police, rousing my station manager, and being the first in the nation to break a story that would dominate the news for weeks: Julie Capsom's car had been found abandoned on the side of the road after it had crashed into a tree in rural Humboldt County, California. There was no sign of her.

And then we started getting details of what precisely the police had found on the scene, and what one eyewitness, who saw a frantic Julie pacing beside her crashed car, had told them. That's when things got weird. And we haven't even gotten to the torso yet.

I can promise you, we'll definitely get to the torso.

[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]

[BRENDA: Yeah, that's not what I would've started with.

BEA: I don't think anyone wants to hear how you would've started --

BRENDA: Don't get me wrong, it was very... professional.

BEA: Because I am the professional here! Listeners, ignore that voice, let's get on with the show.]

CLICK-PLAY

NATALIE: The first thing to know about Julie was that she was fearless, y'know? And impulsive. She didn't have that little voice most of us do, the one that tells you not to do things. But even for her, the way she was acting that morning was... pretty odd.

BEA: This is Natalie Thomas. [switch to interview] Would you say you're Julie's best friend?

NATALIE: I was Julie's best friend. Was. I don't think she's alive anymore. Thanks to Ralph.

BEA: We'll get to Ralph. For now, can you tell me when the last time you saw Julie was?

NATALIE: That morning at the party.

BEA: So Julie is at a Christmas party that morning. Most of her family is there. They've opened gifts. Natalie drops by to give Julie her own package, and right as Natalie arrives...

NATALIE: She gets this phone call. She goes outside to talk on the phone, and then she comes back in a few minutes later, all frantic. She says she needs to get a smoke--

BEA: This has caused some concern. Julie, so far as anybody knows, didn't smoke.

NATALIE: And she pushes right past me, goes outside, closes the door.

[BRENDA: So she goes outside for a phone call, comes back in, announces she's going to get a smoke - when she doesn't smoke - and then goes back out to drive off?

BEA: What's your point?

BRENDA: Doesn't that seem... I dunno, fake-y to you?

BEA: That's... hm. Well... she was an actress. Everything she did was dramatic.

BRENDA: But every witness --

BEA: Yes, let's hear from the witnesses! Great idea!

BEA: Why didn't you go with her?

NATALIE: It was obvious she didn't want anybody around!

BEA: Here's what's important about that moment. Natalie is the last person to see Julie until a man named Gerald Abernathy sees her 11 hours later, crashed on the side of the road.

Oh yeah. And here's another thing. Natalie sees Julie in Beverly Hills, where she lives. Gerald sees her an hour north of Eureka. You can *maybe* make that drive in 11 hours. But most people think it's closer to 12.

NATALIE: That weirdo.

BEA: Weirdo or not, Gerald did see her.

NATALIE: And the way he describes her acting! Julie could get pretty intense, but not violent. I mean, swinging a tire iron at a guy who stopped to see if he could help?

BEA: So you'd say it seemed like-

NATALIE: That wasn't the Julie I knew. Flat-out. It wasn't.

BEA: How long had you known her?

NATALIE: Oh, gosh. Since elementary school? We did everything together. No secrets between us.

BEA: She did have a reputation for being a wild child, so to speak -

NATALIE: But not like that! I

BEA: Natalie...

NATALIE: I know some people tried to suggest the crazy, out-of-control debutante got what was coming to her. But that wasn't the real Julie, y'know? That was just an act to irritate her parents. The Julie I knew? She was kinda... boring.

BEA: So what do you think had her so agitated?

NATALIE: Well, it's obvious, isn't it? It was Ralph.

BEA: Ralph Montgomery, Julie's -

NATALIE: I don't think boyfriend's the right term? It was this weird connection. She was saying he's the one, and then... I don't know. It was like you just. Could not. Mention him. Especially not when her parents or, god forbid, her cousin were there.

BEA: Ralph was a scholarship kid. By all accounts, he came from a happy family. His parents are wonderful people, just the best, according to all who knew him. In high school, he was a good student, bussed in to Julie's stomping grounds of Beverly Hills from Van Nuys - a much less affluent LA community. But he was a science whiz, and a solid football player. The school was only too happy to cover his tuition. He received a full-ride scholarship to UCLA, with an eye toward Stanford for a masters and doctorate. He was the first kid in his family to go to college, and then...

NATALIE: So he meets Julie at a Halloween party. And that was that. Maybe he was a promising kid at one time, but he killed her. It's obvious that's what happened, I don't care what the police say -

BRENDA: Natalie, how could Ralph kill Julie if when she vanished he was already a dismembered torso in the trunk of her car?

CLICK-STOP

BEA: ...So that would be Brenda Bentley. She was one of the first cops on the scene in 2007, a first-year officer who'd drawn the short straw and had to work the holiday shift. Her mishandling of key evidence led to his eventual departure from the police force. She now works as a private investigator, and is one of the leaders of a prominent online community dedicated to solving Julie's disappearance.

BRENDA: Why did you say that?

BEA: Say what?

BRENDA: Mishandling of key evidence. It's untrue, and it's just... it's very rude. And, frankly, damages your credibility.

BEA: Mine! I'm being honest with the listeners.

BRENDA: Yeah, you're so hard up that you would have the gal who mishandles evidence on your show?

BEA: In the interest of truth, the listeners should also know that Brenda believes that aliens kidnapped Julie.

BRENDA: That's my favorite theory. I don't believe it.

BEA: You sure did for awhile.

BRENDA: But not anymore.

BEA: Aliens!

BRENDA: You... can't win an argument by just shouting "Aliens!"

BEA: I can if we're having an argument based in reality.

BRENDA: Reality's boring.

BEA: So are aliens. But that didn't stop you from going all-in on this theory over the years.

BRENDA: I only brought up aliens once,

BEA: Once?

BRENDA: and you're gonna use it against me for-

BEA: Once? Let's look at your threads on the Julie Capsom SubReddit, shall we? Featuring such classics as: "Greys vs. Greens: Which Species is More Likely to Have Taken Julie" --

BRENDA: Greys. Consensus was Greys.

BEA: "Stargates in NorCal - Did Julie Find One?", "Saw an Alien at the Farmer's Market - Same that Took Julie?," "Alien Clues in Julie Capsom Film SKYLESS," and, my personal favorite, "OT: Is Santa Claus an alien?"

BRENDA: Don't tell me you haven't thought about it! Traveling all around the world in one night clearly indicates advanced technology -- otherwise it makes no sense!

BEA: The world makes no sense, Ms. Bentley, or if it did it wouldn't have saddled me with you. But what really makes no sense? Aliens.

BRENDA: What a great way to lead-in to tell them the good news!

BEA (obviously reading from a statement): I am pleased to announce that Ms. Bentley will be joining Arden as my co-host. By popular demand. Of our corporate overlords.

BRENDA: I popped!

BEA: More like your billionaire meal ticket of a boss heard the recordings, panicked that you would damage the sterling brand of Arden Detective Agency -

BRENDA: Don't say anything bad about Andy Wheyface or Wheyface Industries! They're The Good People.

BEA: Listeners, it's important for you to know none of this was my idea. My station manager, Pamela Pink, and I were going to do a thoughtful, serious program on the legacy of this case. And then--

BRENDA: Andy bought the station!

BEA: Andy Wheyface--

BRENDA: Eccentric billionaire!

BEA: It's on his business cards. Seriously. Andy Wheyface bought my perfect, independent station, a vital local voice in the Los Angeles community, a station awarded with--

[OBVIOUS EDIT]

BEA: [obviously reading from a statement again] I'm also honored to announce that we are now a wholly owned subsidiary of Wheyface Industries. [HEAVY SIGH]

BRENDA: Say it.

BEA: I'm not going to--

BRENDA: Say who we are, Casely! You and me! Coworkers!

[silence]

BRENDA: We're the Good--

[silence]

BRENDA: The Good People. You're new. You don't know it yet. But anyway, tell 'em the best part.



BEA: No.

BRENDA: C'mon.

BEA: As a responsible journalist, I refuse to make misleading promises. Since you are not a responsible journalist, however, by all means, Ms. Bentley, go ahead. Be my guest.

BRENDA: We're gonna figure out what happened to Julie!

BEA: Despite the fact that you have spectacularly failed at doing that for ten years.

BRENDA: Everything I do is spectacular. And your pitch was boring.

BEA: Boring?

BRENDA: "A thoughtful, serious program on the legacy of this case"? Pfft.

BEA: It's an important, multi-faceted--

BRENDA: That's not what the people want to hear! They want excitement! Action! Suspense! They want results. You and I, Casely, we're gonna give it to them! We're going to solve this case, and it'll only take us twelve episodes!

BEA: It's not going to "only take us" twelve episodes. We're only budgeted for twelve episodes -

BRENDA: It's a ticking clock!

BEA:...Now that we've handled that business, some of you listeners may not be as familiar with the facts. For a refresher on that, let's transition over to the initial interview with Ms. Bentley, where we discuss his actual discovery of the crime scene.

BRENDA: The interview that --

BEA: Yes. The interview that got you the job.

BRENDA: Oh, good. Listeners, you finally get to hear about the torso!

CLICK-PLAY:

BEA: Can I go over some of the details with you?

BRENDA: Of course.

BEA: So, Gerald Abernathy. He sees Julie outside her car, offers help. She swings a tire iron at him. Gerald, needless to say, leaves well enough alone, though he promises to call the cops once he gets somewhere with a working phone. That takes him a half hour. Then it takes the police an hour to get to the crash site. And by then, Julie's gone.

Lots of people don't buy what Gerald said. But we know that he saw her, because he independently described what she was wearing, something that was corroborated by friends and family who saw her earlier that day. But I see why people are skeptical. Doesn't Gerald think...?

BRENDA: Julie was abducted by the mighty skunk ape.

BEA: Bigfoot?

BRENDA: He insists they're different. [beat] What? It's a theory.

BEA: Is that the kind of thing you tell your clients as a private investigator?

BRENDA: Private eye.

BEA: What?

BRENDA: I've always preferred that. Or private dick.

BEA: I'm gonna stick with investigator.

BRENDA: Suit yourself. Gerald's theory makes about as much sense as anything anybody else came up with. Julie Capsom might as well have been hauled into some hole in the woods by Bigfoot's second cousin for as much as we've been able to find on her.

BEA: So Julie Capsom, heiress, beloved daughter, best friend, leaves a Christmas party. She gets in a car. She drives like a bat out of hell for 11 hours. She crashes her car into a tree. She meets Gerald Abernathy, and then...

BRENDA: [exasperated sigh] Your guess is as good as mine.

BEA: You brought in dogs.

BRENDA: We're not incompetents, unlike what certain big-city press would later say.

BEA: What did they find?

BRENDA: The woods are thick around here, so it's hard to move through them, especially when the weather's so bad. But we caught up quickly enough to have a good scent, and the dogs knew what they were doing.

BEA: They brought you to the clearing, right?

BRENDA: And now it's coming up on dawn, and we're freezing our asses off, and we're hoping to just find her. Not a body hopefully, but, the dogs are getting all excited and just... poof.

BEA: Nothing.

BRENDA: It's like she gets to the middle of this clearing, and turns into a ghost.

BEA: The dogs lose the scent. Police go around to the various vacation homes in the area the next morning, but nobody's staying in them. No one other than Gerald comes forward having seen a girl pacing near her crashed car.

BRENDA: Meanwhile, we open the trunk.

BEA: What's in the trunk continues to puzzle just about everybody who looks into this case.

BRENDA: First thing you notice is blood. Everywhere. And when we send that blood in to be tested, it's Julie Capsom's blood. But it's *only* in the trunk. Nowhere else in the car. And if she lost that much blood, then how did she wander off into the woods.

Next thing is some clothes and a couple of really expensive wigs. Prevailing theory on those is that Julie was really involved in her college drama department. Then a gigantic can of gasoline, about half full. We later saw footage of her filling it when she stopped in Garberville.

But you know how I said the blood was the first thing you noticed? I lied.

BEA: For dramatic effect, I assume.

BRENDA: You got it, Casely. Gotta build up the drama.

BEA: So what else was in the trunk?

BRENDA: Right. The first thing you notice, because it's absolutely what the [bleep] is the human torso.

BEA: And to emphasize for the listeners: There's a full human torso in the trunk. No arms. No head.

BRENDA: No legs. No... other stuff.

BEA: Is that why you were never able to definitively identify the torso as Ralph Montgomery?

BRENDA: The DNA testing was inconclusive. Somehow. But he had a distinctive tattoo on his left shoulder, and his mother identified it. A mother knows these things. Don't you think?

BEA: I suppose so.

BRENDA: You don't have kids of your own?

BEA: Hardly appropriate.

BRENDA: No ring!

BEA: That's not relevant to-- Let's get back to the skunk ape.

CLICK-STOP.

BRENDA: You're stopping it there?

BEA: That was the interview.

BRENDA: But -

BEA: And now, a word from our sponsor.

CLICK-PLAY.

*[Interstitial ad music begins to play]*

*BEA: I love socks. In fact, I don't know where I'd be without them. But there are some mornings when I just don't want to wear the same pair of socks as I did the day before. And on those mornings, Sockity Doo Dah is my number one source for unbelievably warm, undeniably cozy, unspeakably bespoke socks. For a very reasonable fee, Sockity Doo Dah will send you a box of 30 socks, every month, all crafted specifically to your sock profile. What's your sock profile? Step in Sockity Doo Dah's patented "sculpting gel" and take one of their fleet of insightful and amusing personality tests, and you'll be matched up with socks that are just for you in no time at all. Why, my friends and I have sock parties each month, when we bring our boxes over to each other's houses and try on socks--*

*[a long, heavy sigh]*

*BEA: People are supposed to believe that I do this?*

*ANNOUNCER: [just off-mic] Who doesn't love a sock party?*

*BEA: Sockity Doo Dah. Never be sockless again.*

*ANNOUNCER: Sockity Doo Dah. A product of Wheyface Industries. The good people.*

*[ad music ends]*

BRENDA: Hi. This is Brenda Bentley. And I think I'm doing this right. The red light means it's recording, I think.

I mean, right now, the audience is going - who's this lady? Sure the girl was all professional, comin' in like she's the next Terry Gross, but this lady - who knows what's gonna happen? Is she going to screw up on air? Or is she, dare I say it, the next Walter Cronkite!

Yes, he was on TV. I know that. Duh.

Anyways, uh. I'm going to talk a little bit about Ralph Montgomery. Ralph is often painted as the villain on this story. Just listen to this clip from Natalie's interview.

BEA: You don't think the torso belonged to Ralph?

NATALIE: Of course I don't. I am 100 percent sure that she was leaving town because Ralph was coming to kill her.

BRENDA: Natalie's evidence for this is what police call "the Christmas Eve email." Natalie didn't even realize she'd gotten it until after January 1st. She left from the Capsom Christmas party to go on a ski trip with her family. Bea had Natalie read that email.

NATALIE: Nats. Oh God, I screwed up, and Ralph knows. He was yelling at me on the phone, saying that I had better not ever try to talk to him again. It was all a misunderstanding. You know how much I care about him. But I don't think he'll ever want to see me again. Help!

BEA: Do you know what they fought about?

NATALIE: No clue.

BRENDA: And then Natalie has a few theories about whose torso it could have been - a missing kid from Van Nuys, a random homeless person in the wrong place at the wrong time - but it doesn't add up, y'know? It just - I have a few reasons for this, and it doesn't.

Unlike Julie, the beloved and storied paparazzi favorite, on every red carpet and at every Met Gala since she was five, there's not a lot of extant video or audio of Ralph.

VINCE: I keep thinking I'll find a recording, but it was 2007. We weren't recording everything we did yet. If I find one, I'll let you know. Be cool to hear my man's voice again.

BRENDA: That's Vince Volio. Vince was one of Ralph's oldest friends, and one of the only ones who knew him who is still willing to talk to the press.

VINCE: Ralph was all but convicted within two days of the story breaking. The Capsoms had their press people out like a [bleep]ing army, and everyone just went along with blaming him.

BRENDA: But it doesn't add up. For one thing, Ralph goes missing two days before Julie does.

VINCE: The last time I saw him, we were at the diner for a late night snack, and... y'know, things just seemed... normal.

BEA: Normal?

VINCE: Yeah. It was me, him, and Mark, and we were just sitting there, eating chicken fingers and mozzarella sticks and - God, I don't even remember what we talked about. Probably the Lakers or what we thought was gonna happen on Heroes. Y'know, shit like that. And within a year, both of them were gone.

BEA: That's Mark Bolt, right?

VINCE: Yes. Victim of "the curse," Mark Bolt.

BRENDA: We'll get to Mark later. Not this episode, unless - you don't let episodes run for, like, two hours, right? I'm getting a "no" on that.

So Ralph leaves his friends that night, but he doesn't go back home. He goes to a nearby ATM, takes out all the money he has, and then *nothing*. It's like he just evaporated. Until we find the torso.

But Ralph has another problem that turns up as soon as police start seriously looking into him.

VINCE: Ralph dealt a little weed, yeah. Y'know, it was a good way to make money - all these rich white kids he was hanging with now needed a connect.

BRENDA: And as soon as that got out there - well, you can practically smell the "Missing Capsom Boyfriend No Angel" headlines, can't you? Combine that with a superb PR effort on the part of the Capsoms, and there you have it.

So no matter what his true fate was, for the next ten years Ralph Montgomery was drawn and quartered for the crime of viciously kidnapping and murdering Julie Capsom. In addition to, um, y'know, possibly being *actually* drawn and quartered. They don't know how he did it, but he did it. The narrative practically writes itself.

And yet, the thing that's fascinating about Julie's disappearance is that no theory explains everything. Ralph is considered a person of interest, except he's also officially listed as deceased. Because if the body in the trunk isn't Ralph, then who is it? Every question you ask opens up even more questions, and once you examine those questions, you start circling back to other theories entirely.

But what we do know is that a boy loved a girl, something went wrong, and she fled. And when she disappeared, she left far more questions than answers.

But look, no matter what Casely says about me, no matter how much she thinks I suck at police stuff, one thing is true: Nobody came closer to solving this case than I did, and *that's* why I was kicked off the force. Let's go back to that original interview.

[CLICK-PLAY]

BEA: That's not how I remember it at all!

BRENDA: Nobody ever wanted to listen to me, not even you. And that's the real tragedy of Julie Capsom. Everybody got so wrapped up in the salaciousness of the case that they couldn't see what was staring them right in the face.

BEA: You talk like you know some piece of evidence that's going to blow this wide open.

BRENDA: Maybe I do.

BEA: Well?

BRENDA: Why would I tell you? As I recall, you called me a dimwitted public functionary the last go-round.

BEA: That wasn't what I called you.

BRENDA: Yes, but it was a much more polite version of it.

BEA: "Dimwitted public functionary"? Did I talk like some prim 1910s society heiress? Did your monocle fall off when I called you - oh dear heavens - a dimwitted public functionary? Did you get - gasp! - a touch of the vapors?

BRENDA: Words hurt, Casely. Words hurt.

BEA: Just tell me what you know.

BRENDA: Let me help you.

BEA: Help with what?

BRENDA: Investigate.

BEA: This isn't an investigation. It's journalism. Something you wouldn't know the slightest thing about.

BRENDA: Just let me tag along. I'll be my winning self, and you can be the smart one, and we'll have some laughs.

BEA: Why would I possibly want to do that? Do you remember what happened the last time we talked?

BRENDA: Was that the time I threatened to sue you for libel?

BEA: The time after that.

BRENDA: Ohhhh... the date with your *friend*.

BEA: If you think I'm going to work with a vile, contemptuous son of a [bleep] who *believes in aliens*--

BRENDA: Now the alien thing's been greatly overstated--

BEA: And dates my best friend, who's *basically my sister*, just to get my dander up--

BRENDA: Hattie and I had a real connection.

BEA: Well, you've got another think coming!

[pause]

BRENDA: You know, I think it's "you've got another thing coming."

BEA: Just tell me what your evidence is.



[beat]

And it's "think." That makes sense. "Thing" doesn't make any sense in context.

BRENDA: "You've got another think coming?" Who talks like that?

BEA: A 1910 society heiress. It's verbal dexterity. It's something you wouldn't understand if it--

[She lets out an exasperated huff]

BRENDA: Nice to see you still get all worked up over the stupidest [bleep]. And it's "thing." Most people say "thing." Just admit you lost.

BEA: "Think."

BRENDA: I'll tell you what I know if you admit it's "thing."

[a long, long pause]

BRENDA: I can see the little wheels turning. "Can I cut this out of my show? Can I make myself look like the hero?" And I don't blame you. But you'd still know you were wrong. And that is the one thing that Bea Casely cannot do.

[beat]

BEA: It's "think." I'm sorry, but it's "think."

BRENDA: It's all good, Casely.

CLICK-STOP.

BRENDA: So now you can see what I mean, right? Deep down, Bea Casely thinks she can solve this, but only because she's building off the hard work I put into this case 10 years ago and have continued to put into it in the years since. I'm not gonna let some snotty reporter fly into my city, and solve my case. No way, no how.

I know what you're thinking. You're already saying, "Oh, well, we already know Bea. We like Bea. We trust Bea. She's got the smooth radio voice." Well I'll tell you this: Bea Casely is bad news. When she found out about Hattie and I, she--

Oh, boy. Uh, she's outside right now. She looks mad. And she's talking to the station manager Pamela. I don't know what she's saying. Honestly, for all I know, she could be saying anything.

What if she's just saying my name over and over again? God, that would be terrifying. Brenda Bentley. Brenda Bentley. Brenda Bentley. Brenda Bentley.

My parents are bad people. Why is my name so scary?! Oh God!

[door opening sound effect]

BEA: What the [bleep] are you doing?!

BRENDA: Unlike you, I'm not repeating my name over and over again!

BEA: What?

BRENDA: I don't *know*. I'm just trying to get the truth on the record.

BEA: So the audience will trust you over me?! I heard what you were saying about the case out there.

BRENDA: I thought this was soundproof?

BEA: You were broadcasting on the station speakers.

BRENDA: Ooooooh.

BEA: Yeah. "Ooooooh."

BRENDA: I think you had an extra "O" in your "Ooooooh" there.

BEA: How dare you.

BRENDA: Are we still broadcasting?

BEA: I want them to hear this. You get me? I want everyone to hear this. I want Andy Wheyface to hear this in his golden tower.

BRENDA: It's platinum, not -

BEA: I don't care if it's unobtainium! You think you can waltz in here on the back of some billionaire's whims, totally unqualified for the job, and take over my show to broadcast your lunacy?! You think aliens did it!

BRENDA: Quit reducing me to one stupid thing I told you over drinks 10 years ago! Aliens did not take them! I don't know what happened. But Julie's alive.

BEA:...What?

BRENDA: You heard me. Julie's alive.

BEA: Do you know this, or...

BRENDA: I believe it. I have to believe it.

BEA: That's a great way of assuaging your guilt.

BRENDA: It's always been this way. Ever since we met 10 years ago. Always snipe, snipe, sniping at me. You never know when to leave anything alone.

BEA: Which is why I'm a good journalist! Someone who could have found Julie if you hadn't--

BRENDA: Why do you *care*?

BEA: Other than the fact that I don't think anybody should completely vanish from the face of the Earth? Do you know who the last person to interview Julie Capsom was?

BRENDA: Jay Leno?

BEA: Me.

BRENDA: No way. Really?

BEA: The last thing I ever wrote for my college newspaper before I graduated. The last interview she gave before going radio silent for her fall semester. I still have that tape.

BRENDA: Are you gonna play it?

BEA: You know me too well.

[click play; Bea sounds younger]

BEA: Do you think you're defined by what people want to see? Like Hollywood, right? That's all about trying to turn you into a product.

JULIE [sounding exhausted]: I don't know. I keep thinking I'm going to find a place there, like I'll find my people, right? My mom did. I don't know why I can't. They've gotta be around.

BEA: There's this theory I read about in Us Weekly that you try on personas like--

PUBLICIST: That's all the time we have, Miss Casely.

BEA: Just one more--

[phone hangs up]

[back to the studio]

BRENDA: Why didn't you tell me any of that?

BEA: Because you'd start pulling apart that interview looking for clues. I didn't know Julie, but I got it. We were just dumb kids trying to make sense of the world around us. But I'm still here, and she's not, and that's not some... conspiracy theory for you to play with.

BRENDA: You think it doesn't break my heart that I couldn't find those kids? You think I don't see the bloody trunk when I close my eyes at night? Yes. I failed. But I think you and I - if we work together - will find them. We can find her, Bea. We can find both of them.

You want to know what happened to Julie Capsom. So do I. I've got all the information; you're the one who won't get distracted by thoughts of transdimensional beings. [she laughs -- it's a joke!]

BEA: Great. Make the responsible one the killjoy.

BRENDA: Let the record state you called yourself a killjoy long before I did.

BEA: You think we're going to be able to be in the same room for twenty minutes without wanting to add another death to the Capsom Case Curse?

BRENDA: Well, if the feeling's mutual, call it a... mutual... feeling.

[She sighs.]

BEA: I'm not going to--

BRENDA: 2534 Fortuna Drive.

[a long pause]

BEA: What?

BRENDA: I said. 2534 Fortuna Drive.

BEA: And--

BRENDA: You know what that is. I know you know what that is.

BEA: It was the cabin nearby they found unlocked.

BRENDA: Buried way back in the woods. Hard to find, unless you knew where to look.

BEA: Right, which is why the owner so often left it unlocked.

BRENDA: Listen to yourself, Bea. Did you ever really believe that? He would leave it empty for month after month. Why would he leave it unlocked? You know what that part of the northern coast has more of than anywhere else in California?

BEA: Incompetent policemen?

BRENDA: Tweakers.

BEA: Tweakers?

BRENDA: Real serious problem up there, tweakers. Spent most of my time as a cop rousting them. And if there's one thing I know about tweakers, it's that they'll try every door until they find an open one. Even if it's back in the middle of the woods. Just to have somewhere warm to light up.

BEA: So you're saying it wasn't left unlocked.

BRENDA: Nope.

BEA: Julie was there?

BRENDA: Nope.

BEA: Then what--

BRENDA: But somebody was.

BEA: How do you--

BRENDA: Because at 11:17 on Christmas night, somebody picked up the landline in that cabin and made a phone call, to a burner cell phone, it looks like.

BEA: That cabin overlooks--

BRENDA: The road, yep. And whoever was waiting for Julie--

BEA: Was right there. Watching her. Waiting for her to drive by.

BRENDA: What if she didn't crash accidentally?

BEA: What if she was pushed?

BRENDA: Now you're catching on.

BEA: I can't believe I'm about to say this but--

BRENDA: Yeah?

BEA: Maybe there's a story here.

BRENDA: So you're in?

BEA: That's the deal?

BRENDA: Uh-huh.

BEA: ....You realize they're going to use all of this audio we just recorded, right?

BRENDA: Seriously?

BEA Our editors are [sound cut] wonderful people, just the best [sound cut].

BRENDA: Splendid.

BEA: Great. I think that's a good place to stop.

[the sounds of things being done in the studio, headphones being removed, etc.]

BEA: So we really have to name the show Arden?

BRENDA: After my detective agency, yeah.

BEA: Why's it called Arden?

BRENDA: When I know you better, I'll tell you.

BEA: God, you're obnoxious.

BRENDA: Obnoxious?! I prefer mysterious!

BEA: It can be two things.

[wrap up music]

BEA: On the next episode of... [sigh] Arden, we investigate the new evidence of a mysterious phone call.

BRENDA: Coulda hyped it more. [dramatic voice] The new evidence of a mysterious phone call!

BEA: You don't need to do that.

BRENDA: DUN DUN DUN!

BEA: We have sound editors who can add that in.

BRENDA: Please teach me how to do that.

BEA: Absolutely not

BRENDA: C'mon!

BEA: You be quiet now.

*ANNOUNCER: This episode of Arden has been brought to you by Wheyface Industries. Are you a good person? Then you should work for Wheyface Industries. Because we're the good people.*

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[END OF EPISODE 1]