

ARDEN

Season 2, Episode 3

“The True Crime Podcast’s The Thing...”

By Allison Solano and Emily VanDerWerff

Created by Emily VanDerWerff, Christopher Dole, and Sara Ghaleb

REGULAR CAST:

BEA CASELY: Michelle Agresti
BRENDA BENTLEY: Tracey Sayed
ROSALIND URSULA: Shannon Estabrook
PAMELA PINK: Charlita Gaston
ANDY WHEYFACE: Benjamin Watts
LORENA CHRISTOPHER: Mia Drake
DANA HAMILL: Libby Woodbridge

GUEST CAST:

CLYDE HAMILL: Zach Grenier
TRUDY HAMILL: Rebecca Metz
JAKE WUNDER: Mike Bash
PAUL BRECKENRIDGE: Oscar Jordan
JANITOR YORICK: Emily VanDerWerff
CALLER 1: Jennifer Liao.
CALLER 2: Grant Patrizio
NEWS ANCHOR & CALLER 3: Katie Wright
THE GHOST: The Ghost

CONTENT WARNING: This episode contains adult language, drinking, loud noises, intense family situations, discussions and depiction of mental illness, discussions of familial abuse - both physical and emotional, descriptions of a suicide attempt, and discussions of alcoholism.

GLOSSARY:

RED = STUDIO

GREEN = FLASHBACK

PURPLE = FIELD AUDIO

BLUE = ADVERTISEMENTS

BEA: Last time on Arden...

BEA: What about Brenda?

PAMELA: She's stood in your way for most of the show. Anybody can see that.

Eight years ago, Dan Hamill was found dead on his ranch, Hamill Hills. His death rocked his small town of Elsinore, Montana.

DANA: He was murdered. Somebody-- somebody *did* this to him.

ROSALIND: She was wronged. Over and over and over again, and--

BEA: I get that you've been researching this for the past 10 months or whatever--

ROSALIND: Yes! I have! And-- We should just mention Dana's name. Is all. It's her story.

LORENA: I'll come and visit. Often. But my life is here.

ANDY: Well, that time I was visiting the moon mine!

JULIE: Good luck to whoever's lives you're going to ruin this--

BRENDA: And I'm ready. To come back.

ANDY: Arden is still brought to you by Wheyface Industries. We missed you guys. We don't talk enough. You look great. Me too? You're too kind. My secret is Wheyface brand Pilates. The good pilates.

[click play]

[the studio, very professional; eerie music]

BEA: Dan Hamill didn't have to die.

NEWS ANCHOR: [archival audio] A gruesome death on a ranch near Elsinore has raised questions for his family -- but not for authorities.

BEA: Accident or murder, Dan Hamill stepped into a grain bin to fix a piece of clogged machinery, and never stepped out again.

[the music cuts out on Brenda's line]

BRENDA: Whoa, this is thorough...

BEA: I told you Rosalind prepared a 54 page document. *And* that you should look it over last night.

BRENDA: Who wants to dive right back into work after a vacation, right?

BEA: A vacation?! [sigh] Well, skim it while I talk, I guess. [music resumes] For listeners unfamiliar with farm country--

BRENDA: Most of you, presumably--

BEA: Let me set the scene. A grain bin is a tall, wide cylinder. Corrugated metal sides. Cement floor. It tapers to a point at the top, creating a massive, echoing room. It's used to store grain. Hence the name. Dan Hamill used the bin where he died to store corn to feed his cattle when they weren't grazing in a pasture.

BRENDA: Maybe the cows did it. [beat] Hey, good episode title, right? "The Cows Did It."

BEA: [ignoring her] Inside this bin was something called an auger. Again, let me explain.

[SFX: An auger whirring]

BEA: A long, central shaft, around which is wrapped a blade -- a screw as tall as a man. When it's turned on, the blade turns viciously, funneling corn out of the bin to where it

needs to go next. No one knows why Dan emptied the bin that day. But it was in that bin that he--.

[music cuts out]

BRENDA: [sound of pages rustling] Oh my God, his whole *scalp* came off?

BEA: I am painting *word pictures*, Brenda.

BRENDA: Just... yeeeeeeeeeeesh. Woof. I mean-- yeah. Bad.

BEA: Yes, it's generally considered good to keep your scalp attached to your--

BRENDA: Boy, I wish I'd read this last night!

BEA: Too bad someone didn't bring that up!

BRENDA: [to Bea, genuine] I missed this.

BEA: [genuine] Me too.

[music resumes]

BEA: Dan stepped in to fix the auger, it caught his foot, dragging him down into its maw, then snapping his leg, then his back, before his hair got caught and... well...

BRENDA: I didn't know scalps popped off! Like a Pringles can!

[music out]

BEA: Pringles cans don't pop open.

BRENDA: Turns you off from buzz cuts, am I right??

[a beat]

BEA: A man has *died*.

[music resumes]

BEA: Officially, the police ruled the death an accident. They said Dan forgot to turn off the auger before stepping in the bin. But his daughter Dana never bought that explanation. His daughter says... Dan's death was the perfect murder.

BRENDA: Are we... *sure* this isn't just an accident? If you want to murder somebody, this seems way too elaborate. You know what I always say -- "Sock 'em in the jaw!"

BEA: What you always say about *murder* is... "Sock 'em in the jaw"?

BRENDA: I know we've talked about this before!

BEA: Dana Hamill called Team Arden. And on that phone call, she said--

DANA: [on the phone] My uncle has a guilty conscience. I want you to catch him in a lie.

[back to studio]

BEA: And, yes. At first blush, this seems like a simple accident. But then we kept digging. And we found out this is a story of small town corruption. Of familial strife. Of the hollowing out of--

BRENDA: Oh, hey, Rosalind's report has a whole page of illustrations! [beat] Oh, that's very graphic.

BEA: The blood spatter diagrams are pretty cool, right? Even for MS Paint...

BRENDA: Rosalind's an MS Paint whiz, for sure. But... I want to know this is more than a sad story. That it's worthy of season two of America's finest true crime podcast.

BEA: Mr. Murder Man has a copyright on the phrase "America's finest true crime podcast."

BRENDA: God, I hate that guy. I'll show *him* who won't follow back on Twuzzer!

BEA: But, yes, this is a good story. It's got murder and betrayal and the *real* true crime--

BRENDA: Oh boy.

BEA: The gutting of rural America, a place where everyone hangs by a thread, a place that will shower you with unconditional love, but only if you conform to its standards. A place that--

BRENDA: Wow, you went there, huh!

BEA: I really, really, really want this story to be about more than crime, you know? After Julie Capsom, I want something that makes people think about *real* issues.

BRENDA: The “twisted tendrils of abuse and patriarchy” in the entertainment industry weren’t enough?

BEA: Is it bad if I say no?

BRENDA: I guess we’re going to Montana then.

BEA: Wait...”twisted tendrils”...do you read my blog?!

[click stop]

[Arden theme begins]

BRENDA: Shortly before Easter in 2011, a Montana rancher stepped into a grain bin to fix a mechanical error. He wouldn’t step out again. The local police ruled it an accident, but his daughter has spent the last eight lonely, quixotic years trying to prove that he was murdered. So was this the perfect murder? And what does Dan Hamill’s death tell us about the decline of the American small town... and the American dream? Join us, won’t you, as we unravel this mystery... on Arden.

[theme ends]

[Dana is outside, “on the scene,” as it were; Bea’s narration is in studio]

DANA: Everybody loved him. You know? Friends in every corner of town. But he was *my* dad. I never realized how lucky that made me. Not until he was gone.

BEA: This is Dana Hamill. She’s 29. And when she turns 30 in December, she expects to inherit Hamill Hills, the ranch that was her father’s life’s work, the ranch that has been in her family for generations. And even there, her plans have been foiled. Dan Hamill’s ambiguous will and testament has caused heated litigation.

DANA: [in the field] The will said I would inherit the ranch when I was “ready.” What does “ready” mean? That’s exactly what we’ve been arguing about in court for almost 10 years.

ROSALIND: [in the field] Do you want to tell us what it’s like living on the same ranch as people you’ve been suing for nearly a decade?

DANA: I mean... bad? [Dana and Rosalind both laugh at this]

BEA: [in studio] Dana has already struggled so much for someone her age. Her father's death, legal battles with her mother and uncle -- and the dissolution of her marriage at 24.

DANA: They say you really get it together in your 30s. [bitter laugh] I hope so.

BEA: But despite these setbacks, Dana is well-liked both in the town and among the ranch hands. She's even known for performing original songs at open mics. I'd call her indomitable. You, Brenda?

BRENDA: I mean, I haven't met her yet, but let's say... "plucky"?

BEA: I'm going with indomitably plucky! [Beat] The fact remains: Dana was supposed to inherit Hamill Hills, and some combination of legal machinations and small-town sexism means she won't. Instead, it will remain under the control of her uncle, Clyde Hamill, her father's brother. And to make matters worse--

DANA: Since he married my mom... technically he's my stepfather. *Technically.*

BEA: There's no love lost between the two. Dana plans to mount another legal challenge as soon as she can scrape up the money. Most of the money she stood to inherit from her father has also been tied up in court.

BRENDA: You're not going to read a GoFundMe address now, are you?

[pause]

BEA: I'm not *now*.

BRENDA: Just sayin'.

BEA: Rosalind wrote the script.

BRENDA: I could literally write anything on a piece of paper, and you'd read it if you were "in the zone," huh?

BEA: *No*. I got carried away. I'll have to have a chat with Rosalind about not seeming like we're too much in Dana's corner--

[the sound of something being scratched out]

BEA: There. [back to narration] But for now, Dana Hamill sits and waits. [beat] A few days ago, she took me up into the foothills around the ranch, around sunrise. It was early

spring, still frost on the grass. Our breaths hung in the air. The lights on the ranch below still twinkled.

DANA: God, this place looks beautiful this time of day.

BEA: She carried a rifle over her shoulder. She said it was in case we met cougars, but... I think she was trying to show off. Not that she needs to. She's got targets set up all over the ranch, and she can hit them from 100 yards away, almost without having to line up the shot.

BEA: [in the field this time] I see why they call it Big Sky Country.

DANA: Hard to explain how big it is on the radio, huh? Big and open and... like if you just knew where to look, you'd see something bigger than yourself and *get it*. You know?

BEA: Right. Like looking at the ocean. Feeling your own insignificance.

DANA: If you say so, pal. Okay. Okay okay. Here. Let me try telling your listeners... [beat] Listeners... it's *cold* right now. Flirting with freezing. But the sky's starting to turn purple, and we can hear the cattle calling in the distance. Pretty soon, the first little flecks of orange sunlight will start to glint off the snowcap, and somewhere... somewhere... [she laughs, embarrassed] I was right the first time. No way you can explain it on the radio.

BEA: No. That was lovely.

DANA: [fake scared] Oh hell, a cougar!

BEA: [shrieks]

DANA: [laughs] God, you should see your face! Cougar's aren't out at 6 am! What a city gal!

BRENDA: [back in studio] Look, anybody who plays animal-related pranks is cool with me. But...

BEA: You're still skeptical her dad was murdered? Brenda, we've looked into this! Trust me.

BRENDA: I do trust you! [beat] I still think killing somebody in a farming accident is a little over the top.

BEA: Well, that's not what the sheriff of Elsinore thinks. He's reopened the case.

[click play]

SHERIFF JAKE: [on tape] I know the family well. Who doesn't around here? But I'm not reopening this case as a favor to anyone. In fact, it's gotten me a lot of guff.

BEA: [studio] You're hearing Rosalind's initial interview with Sheriff Jake Wunder.

BRENDA: *Wonder??*

BEA: With a U. But. Yes. Wunder.

BRENDA: [imitating a Dick Tracy type] This is Sheriff Wunder. Come out with your hands up, and we don't have to play nasty.

BEA: Sheriff Wunder has the squarest jaw imaginable. Like if you fell on it you could cut open your head. Like, *serious* head trauma.

BRENDA: That's... sexy?

BEA: Thick, wavy hair. A little stubble. A physique that more than displays his military training.

BRENDA: So you like cops now?

BEA: No! But, come on, he's a midwestern Captain America.

BRENDA: Pamela, make sure to cut out any dreamy sighs!

PAMELA: [studio mic] I've got my finger on the "eliminate dreamy sigh" button.

BRENDA: There's a button?

BEA: Anyway, junior reporter Rosalind Ursula talked to Sheriff Wunder a couple of weeks ago.

BRENDA: [chuckles to herself] Sheriff Wunder. Jesus.

ROSALIND: [back to tape] Gossip is that you're doing this as a favor to Dana Hamill.

SHERIFF JAKE: I'm actually closer to the mother. Trudy Hamill. We did some community college courses together right when I moved back to town after the Marines.

ROSALIND: Well, she can't be happy about that.

BEA: [in studio] Trudy Hamill is Dana's mother -- but also Clyde Hamill's wife.

BRENDA: You know, this whole set of twisted family dynamics is just like that one movie...

BEA: Akira Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well*?

BRENDA: No...

BEA: The spaghetti Western *The Wild and the Dirty*?

BRENDA: Nah. Keep going. I'll think of it.

SHERIFF JAKE: [on tape] No. Trudy isn't happy. And neither is Clyde. But Dan... his reputation precedes him around here. And we have to find some way to let his spirit be at peace.

ROSALIND: So what evidence prompted you to re-open the case?

SHERIFF JAKE: There were some persuasive pieces of evidence that still haven't been released to the public. But what really got to me were the 38 hours.

ROSALIND: And you can discuss these details with the press?

SHERIFF JAKE: Maybe I shouldn't, but my mother was a journalist. I believe in the freedom of the press. Also, the 38 hours were already in the public record. Hard to keep *that* a secret.

BEA: [in studio] The 38 hours refer to a period in early 2012 when Clyde Hamill was briefly arrested in connection with the murder of Dan Hamill. He was in a local jail for 38 hours. For 20 of those hours, he was questioned, sometimes with a lawyer present. Sometimes without. He was released and never charged.

SHERIFF JAKE: [on tape] So we have a complete record of those hours, except for the 37th hour... we don't have that. I can't tell you exactly how that last recording ends, but... it strongly suggests something untoward. And then one hour later, he was released. Smells fishy to me.

BEA: [in studio] And Sheriff Jake Wunder has good reason to dig into police misconduct on this case. He was swept into office in the 2018 midterms on an anti-corruption platform.

BRENDA: *The Lion King!*

BEA: Huh?

BRENDA: This whole story is a lot like *The Lion King!*

BEA: The Lion... what?

BRENDA: You haven't seen the--

PAMELA: [eagerly bursting in on mic] You haven't seen *The Lion King*?!

BEA: Is that the one where Melanie Griffith nearly died because a lion mauled her?

BRENDA: No! The cartoon! [James Earl Jones] Siiimmmmba. I am your father.

PAMELA: That's Empire. It's more, like, "Simmmba. Rememberrrr meeeee."

BEA: Never heard of it.

BRENDA: Oh we're having a movie night.

ROSALIND: [on tape] So can I see those transcripts? Or the evidence?

SHERIFF JAKE: [chuckles] Believe me. I support freedom of the press. But I'm not jeopardizing this investigation. Tell you what. Once those files are public, you'll be the first person I call.

[back in the studio]

BEA: So what's in those files? That's what we're here to find out.

BRENDA: Personally, I think you would love Zazu.

[click play]

[Bea, Brenda, Dana are in the field, walking]

BEA: We're back at Hamill Hills, the ranch where Dana is most at home, her eyes clear, and--

BRENDA: The listeners *get it*, Bea. Rural America got the shaft. Boo, capitalism! There. I summarized it.

DANA: I have to say -- hearing the two of you argue in person... it's like getting to see Springsteen live, you know? Something that can't be captured on recording.

[a horse whinnies]

BEA: [barely restrained excitement] Ohmig-- [throat clears] Oh. Fascinating. You have a horse?

DANA: Yeah, sorry. Just one. Chrysanthemum makes a helluva racket around strangers. Clyde got her for me when--

[Chrysanthemum whinnies].

DANA: I'll go calm her down. It's a quick walk to her stable.

BEA: Actually, it's great ambient noise. Do you mind if I go record her close up?

DANA: Why not? Do you want me to...

[the sound of Bea's power walking footsteps]

DANA: I guess when a girl sees a horse...

BRENDA: I ever tell you about my "tiny horses" theory in re: Julie Capsom?

DANA: I *did* listen to the show. I kept hoping it would be aliens, at least.

BRENDA: I know, right?! What we found was so much more depressing!

DANA: Well. Some great night skies here. For star gazing. Or... whatever else might be in the night sky. [chuckle] By the way... will I get to meet Andy? That guy seems like a hoot.

BRENDA: Oh boy *is* he...

[horse noises]

BEA: Shhh. Shhh, Chrysanthemum. I love your stable. And I have sugar cubes. Don't you want a sugar cube?

[more horse noises, Lorena's approaching footsteps]

BEA: Let me love you.

LORENA: Okay.

BEA: Gah!

[the sound of Chrysanthemum whinnying and running away]

BEA: Lorena! What are you doing here? I mean! Hi! It's great to see you!

LORENA: [amused] You're still looking at the horse.

BEA: Sorry.

LORENA: I found out *the* Jerry Cooper got his start at a haunted community theatre near by. I heard in town that this ranch is also haunted, but I doubt it will fit into my larger narrative.

BEA: Haunted? And do you mean Gary Cooper?

LORENA: That hack? God no. Jerry Cooper is a hidden gem. Also...I'm here because of a certain gorgeous podcaster. I know you and your crew have a lot to do, but tonight I'd love to have dinner with everyone. There's this adorable pub--

BEA: Tonight?

LORENA: Bea.

BEA: It's a new case, and-

LORENA: Bea.

BEA: --I have all this stuff to go over and--

LORENA: *Bea.*

BEA: What?

LORENA: It's important. Please.

[a beat]

BEA: I'll be there. Work just--

LORENA: I understand. We both love our jobs.

BEA: I don't deserve you.

LORENA: Of course you do. But I have to ask...why do you have sugar cubes?

ROSALIND: [from a distance] I told her there might be a horse!

LORENA: How did she hear us?

BEA: She hears everything. Why is *everybody* here?

LORENA: Oh, Pamela and Rosalind gave me a ride. And Andy came along when he heard there would be cowboys.

BEA: It's a working ranch. There aren't literal--

[click play]

[the sound of a mooing calf]

ANDY: Hooray! Hooray! Another loop-de-loop!

ROSALIND: Andy. It's called a lasso.

ANDY: Then loop-de-loop isn't yet trademarked!

[the sound of the calf trotting off... Dana is winded]

DANA: Phew. Didn't think I could still do that!

ROSALIND: Dana won the state high school rodeo girls lasso competition three straight years.

DANA: Oh, it's not that impressive. Only a few girls entered. [beat, she's been dining out on this a while] I was *a/so* the 2009 rodeo queen.

ANDY: Ah, my island had a similar tradition, involving a sheep, the ocean, and an ancient curse. Before leaving, I was named the Duke of Sheep twice. That was when I was but a boy, of course. [beat] I should really get back for Sheepfest.

DANA: [laughs] God, this guy. Is he for real?

PAMELA: He has enough money to create his own reality. It's interesting working with him.

ANDY: Pamela. You can say we're friends.

PAMELA: I'd go so far as "workplace acquaintances."

ANDY: I sent you a Flag Day card!

PAMELA: Yeah, about that--

ANDY: Never mind, never mind. I'm solving a mystery of my own. Now, rodeo is the one they have every four years that loses all the money?

DANA: Not quite. It's kind of a... cowboy stunt show.

ANDY: My God! And you didn't go *pro*?! You could be the most famous woman alive!

DANA: Eh. Thought about it. But I had a lot on my mind back then.

[the sound of Brenda's approaching footsteps]

BRENDA: What's up with the chain and padlock around that rusty grain bin?

[a beat]

DANA: Right. That. [heavy sigh] I guess we... have to talk about that.

[click play]

[ad music]

ANDY: Who's got problems?

BEA: I've got problems.

ROSALIND: I've got problems.

JANITOR YORICK: I've definitely got problems.

ANDY: And who's got answers?

EVERYONE AT WHEYFACE RADIO: Pamela!

ANDY: The lady with the answers you need!

EVERYONE AT WHEYFACE RADIO: Pamela!

ANDY: Yes, folks, Wheyface Radio super producer Pamela Pink has a talent for cutting to the quick, for any problem you could think of. And that's why we're launching her new show, every week day, a show called...

EVERYONE AT WHEYFACE RADIO: Pamela!

ANDY: Let's hear a clip.

CALLER 1: I caught my fiancé cheating on me.

PAMELA: Leave him.

CALLER 1: No, no, no. That's not my problem. My problem is that he was dressed as a swan.

PAMELA: And my answer. Is. To leave him.

CALLER 1: Yeah okay.

ANDY: She diagnoses professional problems!

CALLER 2: So I work as a seer--

PAMELA: No such thing.

CALLER 2: I see the future, lady. That's the job. The problem is that I'm blind, and all anybody wants to talk about is the dramatic irony. How do I get people to take me more seriously in my work environment?

PAMELA: Have you tried dire portents of doom?

CALLER 2: No! I've really been focusing on birthdays, christenings, weddings... that sort of thing.

PAMELA: Nope. Death and destruction all the way. It's a fear-based business. Next!

ANDY: And she'll rend heart-breaking familial rifts.

CALLER 3: He was gone for *ten years*, and then he comes back and expects me to... pick up where we left off? When all these guys are hanging around in my courtyard... by Marriott?

PAMELA: Let me take this out to all the men listening right now. [beat] What's wrong with you? What the hell? Hanging out in courtyards? Honestly. [beat] Lady, here's the Pamela Special: Turn the hose on them. Your husband too. Focus on yourself.

CALLER 3: I do have a weaving business. Been meaning to get my loom out of storage...

PAMELA: Hell yeah. You know what I always say: You don't need a man to loom.

ANDY: Listen to Pamela! Every weekday from 2 to 4 pm, or any time in podcast form!

[click play]

BEA [in studio]: I joined the others by the rusty bin, a stark contrast to the others, sleek, silver, gleaming like brand new. Dana's hands shook as she unlocked the padlock and chains.

[the clink of unlocking padlock and chains]

DANA: It's...I just. I knew the... police didn't...I...

ROSALIND [kindly]: Show them.

[a door opening]

BRENDA: Is this...?

BEA: Oh my god.

BEA [in studio]: Dana never bought her father a gravestone. For her, a gravesite represents peace. Dana does not want peace.

DANA [awkwardly]: So...this is where my father died.

BEA [in studio]: Dana has perfectly preserved the bin as it was when her father died. It is an echoing church, a religion, founded upon -

PAMELA [in studio]: Too many metaphors, Bea.

BEA [in studio]: Sorry. I'm just...really excited. I mean, a preserved crime scene? So human! So raw! Such a metaphor!

[a beat]

PAMELA [in studio]: It's generally more effective if you *don't* say, "Look! A metaphor!"

BEA [in studio]: Tell it to Herman Melville!

BRENDA [in the field]: Have you...moved anything?

DANA [in the field]: Just some corn. It started to rot. I left some with the... blood on it. Sorry about the smell.

BEA [in studio]: The bloodstained auger lies at a broken angle, piercing the center of the room.

ROSALIND [in the field]: We know this looks...extreme, but the only forensic examination was garbage. That workman's jacket caught in the auger? Never dusted for prints!

BRENDA: Could they even get prints off of the jacket?

DANA: The police had problems with Dad.

BRENDA: Wasn't your father well loved?

DANA: Yes, but you know small town cops!

BRENDA: Uh huh. [beat] How often do you come in here?

[a beat]

DANA: Do you all want tea? I'll get tea.

[the sound of grain silo doors opening and closing]

ROSALIND: Maybe take it easy on the dead guy's daughter?

BEA: Yes! This place is amazing! Look! There is still blood! Right there! You hear the echoes in here? So eerie!

BRENDA: Is Dana okay? Are we exploiting--

ROSALIND: She came to *us*, Brenda. She wants this.

BEA: A woman teetering on the edge, clinging to a monument of her father's death! A ranch slipping through her dirt covered hands...I gotta write this down.

ROSALIND: Dana is single-minded, yeah, but she's not *wrong*. And the story isn't just about her. It's about her father, too. About catching his killer.

BRENDA: [clearly skeptical] Right...

ROSALIND: We're not dropping this case just because you came back.

BEA: Rosalind, I'm very excited about this story, truly. I have so many angles.

ROSALIND: Thank you, *Bea*.

BEA: But we should address something. Lorena...mentioned the ranch is haunted?

ROSALIND: Oh

[the sound of water filling a glass in Dana's ranch kitchen]

BEA [in studio]: Dana pours us iced tea with dried apples in it. It's too sweet. I like it. Through the kitchen window, we can see the rusted silo. Dana glances at it while we talk. Grief flickers in the corner of her eye.

BEA [in the field]: This is delicious, thank you.

PAMELA: Yeah, thanks.

ROSALIND: I told you, no one makes iced tea like Dana! You sure you don't want some Brenda?

BRENDA: It's getting late.

DANA: I get you. I'm really sensitive to caffeine. Water?

BEA: Dana, I don't mean to push but, we want to know more about the...apparition.

DANA: Ha! That was...a joke between me and Rosalind.

BRENDA: Weird joke.

DANA: I meant metaphor.

ROSALIND: Dana. It's okay. This is a safe space.

DANA: That's what they always call the press. A "safe space."

BEA: Dana, why did you tell Rosalind about the ghost?

DANA: I told you it's a metaphor.

[Brenda snorts]

BEA: We won't judge you. We promise. We just want to understand.

PAMELA: After all, Brenda believes in aliens.

BRENDA: Look I never said... okay, I'm *open* to their existence. And cryptids.

[Dana LAUGHS]

DANA: The skunk ape! Thought I saw one of those one night, but it was Paul the foreman.

BEA: The point is... we know what it is to feel like you're alone in believing something odd. So tell us your story, Dana. We want to hear it.

DANA: Okay.

[a beat]

DANA: My father was the first person I lost. I didn't know how to grieve. I could only feel when I drank. So I drank. A lot. One night, I needed to be near him. I went into the bin. For the first time, I saw the blood and the smell and...I couldn't. I ran out. I climbed on its roof. I thought, if I jump, even if I just break a leg, I'll feel something besides grief. So I closed my eyes and braced myself and... I felt something wash over me. I felt safe. I felt *him*. I opened my eyes. And... and... they say it was a trick of the light ... but I saw him there, hovering in front of me in midair. An outline. It was him. I know it.

[a beat]

BRENDA: [incredulous] I... I gotta get out of here.

[a screen door OPENING and CLOSING]

ROSALIND: Brenda needs her steps.

PAMELA: I'll talk to her.

[ambient ranch noises]

PAMELA: Do you want to be here?

BRENDA: A ghost? A *ghost*? Pamela, do you buy *any* of this?

PAMELA: I buy that we have a preserved crime scene that sheds light on a legal dispute that affects the town's economy, all hinging on an hour of lost police records.

BRENDA: I think there's something off about this case.

PAMELA: Everything that happens, you second guess. I appreciate the skepticism. Maybe we need it. But there's being skeptical, and there's not trusting your colleagues.

BRENDA: It's not a good case, Pamela. There's no smoking gun.

PAMELA: God, you don't trust us to pick a case without you.

BRENDA: Okay, fine, maybe I don't.

PAMELA: Poke holes in the case. But don't poke holes in the show.

BRENDA: My name's on the dang show, Pam. Rosalind's too green for it, and Bea is distracted by whatever rural tragedy porn she's cooked up in her head. And, okay, yeah. I was gone, so I don't know what's going on. So we're all out of it.

PAMELA: Honestly, I think you're jealous.

BRENDA: Of what?

PAMELA: You already said it. The show was named after your detective agency, but now it's barely yours. Now, it's just another Andy Wheyface money-making scheme. And when a bunch of people do their best to make it without you -- and *succeed* -- you can't settle in and be okay with that. Am I even close to right?

BRENDA: Do you wish I'd stayed gone?

PAMELA: No. But if you don't want to be here, you should leave. [beat] We don't have to like each other. We just have to work together.

BRENDA: I like you! And until Italy, I thought you liked me...

PAMELA: Oh, come on. Are you still mad about the things I said to Bea about you in Verona?

BRENDA: You *did* say she was carrying me and It wasn't *fun* to hear.

PAMELA: I didn't mean it personally.

BRENDA [laughs]: Yeah, I didn't take "Brenda is bad at her job" as a personal insult. Not in the slightest.

PAMELA: Look. We tried to do the show without you. It didn't go great. I will admit Arden is better with you on it. But only if you're actually on it.

BRENDA: Wow, are we becoming friends?

PAMELA: [phone buzz] My husband. Gotta go.

BRENDA: Wait, you're married?

PAMELA: Yeah, why do you think I'm so happy?

[exiting noises]

BRENDA: Wait, you're married!?

[Ad music]

ANDY: What do you miss about the year two thousand and five? Less social media despondency? A Nazi free news cycle? Your forgotten youth? No! You're wrong and depressing! You missed flash mobs! An improv show you did not sign up for and cannot escape. On demand! That's right! It's an app!

FLASHED! Locate your closest flash mob organizer and embrace a simpler time. Gather with others! Be absurd! Have a laugh! Eat a banana!

FLASHED! Download "FLASHED" today! What *Wired* magazine called "The Uber of Flash Mobs?," *The New Yorker* called "problematically named," and Martha Stewart called "a weird thing to yell at about in an elevator."

Let's put this in action, friends! Let's find a flash mob organizer!

[a ping!]

ANDY: They're close! Very close!

LORENA: Hello, Andy.

ANDY: Lorena!? *You're* the flash mob organizer? We're all about to be...FLASHED!

LORENA: Andy, maybe you should run the name by legal?

ANDY: How you jest!

LORENA [desperate]: How about HR?

ANDY: FLASHED!

[Ad music ends]

[BAR NOISES]

ANDY: My goodness!

PAUL: Can I help you, sir?

ANDY: Haha! Can anyone really help anyone?

PAUL: Yes?

ANDY: Correct! Now, can you tell me do you pay for those?

PAUL: The peanuts? No.

ANDY: But you pay for the beer?

PAUL: Yes.

ANDY: [in wonder] Such chaos.

PAUL: Sir, have you been to a bar before?

ANDY: Ooh! Antlers! Did you kill that animal?

PAUL: No.

ANDY: Did someone? Silly me! Of course someone did!

PAUL: Those are plastic.

ANDY: Fascinating! What whimsy a podcast mogul encounters in the field!

PAUL: Wait. You're with that Arden podcast? I've meaning to talk to someone about--

ANDY: I am certain you have important, crucial, and mind-blowing facts to reveal about this case, which will rivet myself, your pod catcher of choice, and then... the world.

PAUL: Sir, you are very close to my face.

ANDY: I am! And I have something even more important than your mindblowing reveal.

PAUL: I never said--

ANDY: A favor. A request. Something bigger than my pinched front cowboy hat and authentic ranch slippers. Will you. Help me....move some tables?

PAUL: ...sure?

[the sound of a car driving]

BRENDA: I know you're meeting Lorena, but if you could drop me at the hotel--

BEA: She wants everyone there for dinner. You're coming. And we've got 30 minutes. I wanna follow a lead.

BRENDA: Lead? What lead?

[car shuts off]

BEA: Follow me.

[cut to-- sheriff's office]

BRENDA: The sheriff's office? Why?

BEA: I haven't met Sheriff Jake yet. I'd like to. Establish a rapport.

[from just across the room, but moving toward the mic]

SHERIFF JAKE: Oh, hey, you must be Bea Casely. And Detective Bentley! Another small-town cop! We have *got* to compare notes!

BRENDA: [flattered] Mine are composed in a tight but unmistakably feminine scrawl--

SHERIFF JAKE: I noticed. I taught myself to write in a serif.

BRENDA: Oooooh--

BEA: The bins out at Hamill Hills -- are they on a separate power node from the house?

SHERIFF JAKE: Well, sure. Lots of folks have that kind of setup.

BEA: I'm sure.

BRENDA: You're... sure. How are you--

BEA: So on the night Dan Hamill died, there must have been a record of the power usage to the bins. And we'll know if the auger was on or off before he entered the bin.

BRENDA: I don't get it.

BEA [in studio]: Let's recap folks. There are multiple electrical nodes on a standard ranch. One for the house, one for the out buildings, and so on and so on. And Hamill Hills has one just for the grain bins. That means we can track the electrical usage for the auger that killed Dan Hamill by the minute. If it's on before Dan enters the bin, he's made a fatal mistake. If it turns on *while* he's in the silo that means...

SHERIFF JAKE: It's murder. [beat] I wish it were that simple.

BEA: [groans]

SHERIFF JAKE: But it's a good thought. [beat] When is this podcast going out?

BEA: Not until we've completed our investigation. We're not having another Julie Capsom situation.

SHERIFF JAKE: Right. So. [his voice drops, leaning in close] When Dan Hamill entered that bin, so far as we can guess, the auger was on. He probably forgot to turn it off.

BRENDA: Probably?

SHERIFF JAKE: We just have records of raw power usage. When he enters the bin, the power level is consistent with the auger being on.

BEA: Even if it's clogged, the grid is still trying to power it.

BRENDA: How do you know when he entered?

SHERIFF JAKE: I wouldn't call this a lucky break, but... his watch -- real fancy watch -- gets broken at some point in the accident. So we can guess when he gets caught in the auger within about 10 minutes. Okay. So he walks in... gets his foot or something caught...

BRENDA: So... just an accident. We're wasting our time.

SHERIFF JAKE: I wouldn't say that... a couple of minutes later, the power level *drops*.

BEA: The auger turned off?

BRENDA: So someone saw what happened and tried to help.

SHERIFF JAKE: That makes sense, right? And back in 2011, the investigation stopped there. But I looked a little further along. There's a short gap of a few minutes, and then--

BEA: The power level rises again.

SHERIFF JAKE: We can't prove it 100 percent, but... that auger turns back on. With Dan Hamill caught in it.

BRENDA: So the auger was on when Dan Hamill was in the bin, turned off, and then turned back on? What are you saying?

SHERIFF: I'm saying someone saw an opportunity.

BEA: Accident turned murder! Maccident!

[a beat]

BEA: Thank you very much for your time.

[click play -- Rosalind and Dana in Dana's trailer]

DANA: So this is the trailer. A little cramped, admittedly, but--

ROSALIND: I like it! Except for the plastic taped up over the windows.

DANA: Yeah. Been meaning to replace them, but only got as far as the plastic.

ROSALIND: It's home-y. Real... nice.

DANA: My ex and I bought it. Right after we got. Well. You know.

[a beat]

ROSALIND: Are you okay? Today was a lot. This whole case--

DANA: It's reminding me of a lot of things, yeah, but--

ROSALIND: You didn't have to be there the whole time we were recording today. We're all podcast pros. We can handle it!

DANA: No, no. I know. I'm fine. Promise. It's-- [beat] *everything* in my life changed because of that night. And to have you folks here... trying to help me set it right, well-- [trails off]

ROSALIND: And we're going to set it right, Dana. We are. I promise you.

DANA: Is that really a promise you can make?

ROSALIND: We found Julie Capsom. This will be a piece of cake.

DANA: And what about you? Are *you* okay? I thought you were gonna be the host--

ROSALIND: That? That was... I didn't really care. No big deal. Brenda's back! Amazing!

DANA: [skeptical] Sure. [beat, sound of guitar being picked up] But, listen, long day for both of us. We should hang! Do you wanna hear another song I've been working on?

ROSALIND: Ah, I got this work thing. I'm sorry. Next time?

DANA: Sure. Next time.

[Rosalind leaves, but we stay with Dana, who sings a short section of "Show 'Em I Mean Business"]

DANA:
Everywhere I go
Everything I see
What I've gotta do
Is staring back at me
All the time I wait
All the time I stall
In my mind I'm making progress
But I've done nothing at all
Gotta show 'em I mean business

Sleep and eat and then repeat
A human life is incomplete
If we don't use our minds to beat
The troubles that we have
But thought alone is not enough
Our lives are made of stronger stuff
Am I afraid? Why do I just
Do nothing?

[The song continues to play under the scene, see end of script for full lyrics]
[at Bea and Brenda's car]

BRENDA: Power nodes? How in the hell--

BEA: A girl can't be an electrical engineering enthusiast?

BRENDA: Uh... huh. [beat] Listen...I'll admit there's more there than I thought to this case, but it's still a little thin on the ground.

BEA: I gave you hard evidence, Brenda. What is this really about?

BRENDA: ...it's Dana. I said it before, I'll say it again. Something is off.

BEA: And isn't that great? It's not just a mystery. It's a character piece. Like *S-Town*.

BRENDA: Are we gonna out some dead people, because I'm not down for that.

BEA: After Julie--

BRENDA: Right. We all wanted something different. But--

[the sound of another car pulling up. The door closes.]

CLYDE: You the radio folks?

BEA: I mean, we're *some* radio folks.

BRENDA: Take some credit, Bea. You're definitely one of *the* radio folks.

BEA: Thank you.

CLYDE: Clyde Hamill.

BEA: Clyde-- oh. Clyde Hamill. *The* Clyde Hamill.

CLYDE: There's another one in Belgium, so I'm, alas, only a Clyde Hamill. And this is my wife Trudy.

TRUDY: Ladies.

BEA: Can we-- help you?

CLYDE: Well, we heard you were poking around the ranch today. Making something about my dearly departed brother?

BEA: We're looking into his death, yes.

CLYDE: Good. A lot of people hated my brother, maybe wanted him dead.

BRENDA: A lot of people? Like who?

CLYDE: Unionizing workers, the Fortinbras Corporation, animal rights activists. I gave the police all the evidence I had, but they sat on it. [bitter] Weren't interested in finding out who killed Dan.

BRENDA: Can you expand on those leads?

TRUDY: We can provide you with all the information you need. But, really, there's no need. Clyde and I agree on plenty, but we don't agree on this. Dan made a stupid mistake. A tragically stupid mistake. Just because my former husband had enemies--

BEA: Dana said Dan was beloved around town.

TRUDY: Look, Dana is a sweet girl, but she has no idea when it comes to her father.

CLYDE: She tell you she thinks she sees his ghost?

BEA: It's not uncommon for people who've lost someone to feel their presence. Especially where that person died.

CLYDE: No. She says... she says she sees *his ghost*.

BRENDA: We know. But still, a shadowy outline... even she knows it's her eyes playing tricks--

TRUDY: She sent us whatever this is.

BRENDA: Oh, an orb photo? Yeah, there's an easy explanation for--

BEA: [hissing] Brenda!

TRUDY: She's lost all perspective. On her father, and on what happened to him.

BEA: So you think he was murdered--

TRUDY: [hesitates] I think a lot of people wanted him dead.

CLYDE: Like I said: I do think he was murdered. I knew him, and I loved him, and I miss him. But I can still tell you he probably was asking for it when someone trapped him in that bin. [sigh] We're late for dinner.

BRENDA: So is she.

CLYDE: That tip line on your website still work?

BEA: I think so.

CLYDE: We'll be sending you something. Dana's a great kid, but I wouldn't trust her as far as I could throw this pickup truck. Evening, ladies.

[the sound of his boots walking off]

[bar sounds]

BRENDA: Can't I go to the hotel?

BEA: How many times do I have to tell you, Lorena wants everyone here. Come on. Stay for me?

ROSALIND: And me!

BRENDA: I don't want to be the third wheel.

ROSALIND: I'm right here.

BEA: You're not a third wheel!

ROSALIND: Because I am also here.

BEA: I hear they have a great mushroom burger.

BRENDA: Where are we supposed to eat? All the tables are against the wall. Are they doing line dancing? I'm not doing line dancing.

[Generic pop music plays.]

ROSALIND: [unconvincingly] Oh no! Community theatre actors dancing into this very bar with hats and sunglasses?! Who could have known?

BEA: Rosalind, what do you know about this?

ROSALIND: Know about this? [whispering] I am this!

[The sound of a hard yet graceful landing]

BEA: And...Rosalind can do backflips. Of course.

BRENDA: Where was she keeping that hat?

BEA: Is that Andy dancing over there?

BRENDA: Very on brand.

BEA: And there's Pamela. But she's not dancing. Just sort of...bobbing judgmentally.

BRENDA: Half on brand. Are we the only sane people on this podcast?

BEA: Where's... oh... Lorena?

BRENDA: Wow, she looks great. Does she always travel with vintage ball gowns?

BEA: Not before Labor Day....

BRENDA: She should not stand on that table. Not in those heels.

LORENA: Bea Casely! My love!

[pop music stops, romantic music begins]

LORENA: When I first met you, I made a living in the past. And I still do. You can check out my historical podcast “Remembering Forgotten Memories of--“

[Pamela clears her throat]

LORENA: Sorry. Bea, I’m...I wasn’t a happy kid. I lived in history books. I remember sitting at my graduation, wondering how anyone could be excited about the future. The best things were in the past. Preferably in black and white.

Years later, I made a living telling stories of old Hollywood. Though finally happy in the present, I still couldn’t imagine my future. Then...I saw you. And I knew you. Your tenacity, your ideals, your wit, your passion...your eyes. The way you crinkle your nose when someone incorrectly uses “less” instead of “fewer.” The way your eyebrows lift when you’ve found *the* story. The way you blast Mozart on the freeway and belt Abba in the shower. My love, you are technicolor.

I don’t want the past. I want the future. I want what I see in you.

BRENDA [whispering to Bea]: She’s off the table. She’s down on one knee.

BEA [whispering to Brenda]: Stop narrating!

LORENA: Beatrice Burberry Casely, will you make me the happiest woman in all of history? Will you marry me?

[applause]

BEA: Uh... Uhhhhhhhh.

LORENA: Bea?

BEA:maaaaaybe?

[beat]

ANDY: [jubilant] It's a maybe!

[cheers erupt]

[cicadas, the sound of someone knocking at a door]

BRENDA: Rosalind, open up! We gotta talk about whatever *that* was!

[knock knock knock]

BRENDA: C'mon. I got beer!

[sound of door opening]

ROSALIND: I'm getting ready for bed.

BRENDA: Oh. I haven't really seen you since I got back and--

ROSALIND: Yeah. I know. You didn't--

BRENDA: I just... we gotta talk about the proposal. Right? We gotta talk about it.

ROSALIND: [sighs] Come in.

[later]

ROSALIND: So: Bea and Lorena update. Bea bought all of the Skittles in the vending machine and Lorena keeps staring into the pool in her ball gown.

BRENDA: Oh geez. You see this tip line email?

ROSALIND: They don't let me play with the tip line. Not since I responded to everyone with, "Rethink your preconceptions!!"

BRENDA: It's from Clyde.

ROSALIND: Why are you talking to Clyde?

BRENDA: Because we don't conduct investigations relying on only one source? And anyway, read this.

ROSALIND: So she thinks she saw a ghost. We know that. She's still grieving. There are worse things than--

BRENDA: She thinks she *recorded* a ghost. Talking to her.

ROSALIND: So you have the audio file? Play it.

BRENDA: I draw the line at paranormal phenomena--

ROSALIND: Since when?

BRENDA: Aliens or a Skunk Ape I can touch. A ghost -- imagine your whole afterlife spent hanging out around the grain bin where you died.

ROSALIND: I guess I'll try not to die in a grain bin.

BRENDA: Fine. Let's listen.

[the squawk of audio, fuzzy and staticy, but... is that a human voice?]

ROSALIND: Let me sit. I'm gonna boost this and--

[Again... this time a little more clear. There's definitely a voice in there.]

ROSALIND: Just a little more--

BRENDA: Our brains recognize patterns, Rosalind. We're looking for a voice saying--

[Rosalind clicks play]

THE GHOST: Rememmmmmmberrrrrrrrrrr meeeeee.

BRENDA: Holy sh--

ROSALIND: It's him. It's Dan Hamill. It's *him*.

BRENDA: It's a plant. It's--

[ROSALIND clicks play again]

THE GHOST: Rememmmmmmberrrrrrrrr meeeeee.

BRENDA: Fine. Call Pamela. Tell her we've got us a Lion King.

[end episode]

Show 'Em I Mean Business lyrics:

Everywhere I go
Everything I see
What I've gotta do
Is staring back at me
All the time I wait
All the time I stall
In my mind I'm making progress
But I've done nothing at all
Gotta show 'em I mean business

Sleep and eat and then repeat
A human life is incomplete
If we don't use our minds to beat
The troubles that we have
But thought alone is not enough
Our lives are made of stronger stuff
Am I afraid? Why do I just
Do nothing?

Everywhere I go
Everything I see
What I've gotta do
Is staring back at me
All the time I wait
All the time I stall
In my mind I'm making progress
But I've done nothing at all
Gotta show 'em I mean business

People scream and fight and die
For reasons so much less that I have
Hell, I never even cry
There's something wrong inside me
No more questions, just the facts
I've cause enough, it's time to act
At this point there's no goin' back
The case is cracked

Hurry up, hurry up, hurry up, hurry up
Hurry up, hurry up, hurry up, hurry up
Hurry up, hurry up, hurry up, hurry up

Hurry up, hurry up--

Everywhere I go
Everything I see
What I've gotta do
Is staring back at me
All the time I wait
All the time I stall
In my mind I'm making progress
But I've done nothing at all
Gotta show 'em I mean business
Gotta show 'em I mean business
Gotta show 'em I mean business