

ARDEN, Episode 7:

“The Skunk Ape Did It”

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NOTE:

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ANDY: *Arden - still brought to you by Wheyface Industries. The Good People. I mean, it's seven episodes in, you should know this by now.*

BEA: And we're back! Exciting news: we actually do have something this week.

BRENDA: Yes! Thank you for enduring last week - it was, uh, it was a thing. But I like to think we came through stronger, better, faster --

BEA: Wheyface Industries hasn't turned you into the Six Million Dollar Man, Ms. Bentley. ...They haven't, have they?

BRENDA: If they had, I wouldn't say. But yes! A plucky listener sent in a tip, we followed it up, and by gum it paid out!

BEA: We love our listeners, by the way. We don't say that enough but you guys rock. Cheers to you, listeners! Those folks who rate, review, subscribe, leave theories, etc., you guys are the best! You're like family.

BRENDA: Bringin' it on a little strong, we're not going to invite them over to hang out.

BEA: Don't diss the listeners.

BRENDA: Thank you, listeners! Anyway, we are in Oregon!

BEA: Following up a lead. Technically, we shouldn't be here because we need to be prepping for the premiere of Julie's unreleased film *Guinevera*, but - well, we had to follow this lead.

BRENDA: And it's just the two of us. A fun-filled camping trip into the remote woods. The open sky. The warm fire. The soft hooting of an owl. "What's that, Bentley?" you say, sliding closer. "Just an owl!" I say, because I've been memorizing bird calls for a moment just like this. "Are you sure?" you say. "Why yes," I--

BEA: *It's just the two of us* because Rosalind has to clean up one of your cases.

BRENDA: She's good at the PI stuff!

BEA: She did not sign up for this. Especially not with [bleep bleep bleep] two guns at once and [bleep bleep] and using a turkey baster as a [bleeeeeeeep].

BRENDA:.. Should we talk about the Rainbow Family?

BEA: Yes. The Rainbow Family is a group of, essentially, counter-culture individuals who live off the grid in national forests.

BRENDA: Kinda like the weird clowns that kept showing up a while back. Probably not related.

BEA: What was that about?

BRENDA: I have my theories. Three, to be specific.

BEA: Please say alien clowns. Please say alien clowns--

BRENDA: Suburbanites.

BEA: Suburbanites?

BRENDA: Across the country, suburbanites are feeling existential angst. Their country is divided. The economy is in shambles. No one understands how Instagram Stories work. The American Dream they were promised sucks. So they put on clown makeup! I saw it in American Horror Story: Cult.

BEA: Your theory is American Beauty meets Juggalos?

BRENDA: What are Juggalos?

BEA: LET'S GET OFF THIS TOPIC, WHAT IS THEORY #2?

BRENDA: Theory #2 is clown frats.

BEA: Clown frats?

BRENDA: There are clown colleges. Therefore, there must be clown frats. Nationwide clown frat hazing and pranks. General hijink-ery.

BEA: And #3?

BRENDA: ...Yeah, #3 is alien clowns.

BEA: I KNEW IT!

[theme song plays]

BEA: On December 25, 2007, somewhere around 11 pm, Julie Capsom ran her car off the road and into a tree halfway between Eureka and Crescent City, California, in the middle of northern California's most desolate stretch of major highway. A handful of witnesses 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 abruptly stopped 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 try to step through a different part of the story and see if we can't unravel this web and find the answers. Join us, won't you, as we unravel the mystery... on Arden.

[theme song ends]

[sound cut; walking in woods]

BRENDA: So what would you do if we ran into a bunch of clowns out here?

BEA: Push you at them and run?

BRENDA: Really?

BEA: Aren't PIs trained in... like, stuff? Y'know. Fightin'.

BRENDA: It's not a requirement or anything. Very little PI work involves fighting.

BEA: But see, you were a cop, you had training. You could handle yourself.

BRENDA: My strategy would be to ask them for a handkerchief and by the time they've finished pulling it out we would be long gone.

BEA: The kind of quick thinking one expects from a PI.

BRENDA: You realize we're totally foreshadowing clowns showing up now.

BEA: Well, it's easy to have clowns on an audio show - no one even has to put on make-up. You ever been camping?

BRENDA: Huh?

BEA: Change of subject.

BRENDA: Ah. Gotcha.

BEA: Have you?

BRENDA: Yes.

BEA: And?

BRENDA: And what? Not everything has to be a story.

BEA: Really? From you?

BRENDA: Sometimes things just happen, nothing's particularly memorable, you just spend a nice weekend out in the woods. 90 percent of the things that happen in your life aren't stories. They just are.

BEA: Oh, great, there's your big philosophical soundbite of the week.

BRENDA: And I bet the editors include it.

BEA: And they're gonna include *that* too.

BRENDA: Dammit.

BEA: I could swear I've seen that tree before. Don't give me that look, I recognize that particular tree from- Just give me that map!

BRENDA: Oh, great, now you're gonna say I was holding it upside down --

BEA: No, no, you weren't holding it upside down. ...You were holding it sideways.

BRENDA: There's no way our listeners will know if you're telling the truth or not.

[more walking]

[rustling noise; voices in distance]

BRENDA: Is that them?

BEA: Yeah, sounds like we're getting close. So, the Rainbow Family!

BRENDA: Not a literal family. Metaphorical.

BEA: A loosely-affiliated organization of hippies living off the land in National Parks and Forests.

BRENDA: Kind of a quasi-legal drifter life.

BEA: You deal with them in your cop days?

BRENDA: Occasionally. There've been a couple of stabbings at gatherings, park employees aren't always too fond of them - some groups are better than others about cleaning up.

BEA: Some people think a Rainbow Family group kidnapped Julie. Or she joined them.

BRENDA: Possible, though unless she climbed out of that clearing on an actual rainbow, that theory still doesn't answer everything.

BEA: Think they're friendly?

BRENDA: They're hippies. Why wouldn't they be friendly?

BEA: All right. Let's go talk to them.

[more voices, friendly laughter]

BEA: Hi there, everyone, I - HOLY [BLEEP] CLOWNS!

[voices shut up; sound of shoving/running]

SPRINKLES: We're not clowns, this is just sun festival. Sun festival make-up.

BRENDA: Great. Mind if I go get my friend?

SPRINKLES: Who runs when they see clowns?

BRENDA: A lot of people. Uh, you guys are the local branch of the Rainbow Family, right?

SPRINKLES: Yeah, man. Livin' off the land here in Crater Lake. Who're you?

BRENDA: My friend and I are here to interview you guys - local story for the radio station, hence the equipment, with the way the world is, a lotta people looking to maybe, y'know, live off the land like you do.

SPRINKLES: Cool beans, my man. Meet me at the chief's tent in five?

BRENDA: Ten. She got quite a head start.

[sound cut]

BEA: So. You're not clowns.

SPRINKLES: No, we are not.

BEA: All right. I'm here with...

SPRINKLES: Sprinkles.

BEA: Sprinkles?

SPRINKLES: This is goin' out to the public, right? Don't want The Man knowin' my name, and I like sprinkles, so --

PASSING RAINBOW FAMILY MEMBER: Hey, Wilhemina.

SPRINKLES: ...Dammit.

BEA: Sprinkles.

SPRINKLES: Yes.

BEA: So you're... in charge of this family?

SPRINKLES: No one's in charge. We work together, sure. *Somebody* has to pick up the trash, share their mushrooms, or scare the raccoon pissin' in the medical tent. But no one's in charge.

BRENDA: This group is about, what, 20 people?

SPRINKLES: Right now, yes, but that's because it's gettin' colder. In the summers there's more. Back in 2002, there must've been at least a hundred of us livin' out in the woods. Lotta scared folks. Scared folks wanna go back to basics, y'know?

BRENDA: There's a particular fellow we'd like to interview - here --

[sound of photo being handed over]

SPRINKLES: Yeah, he's over there. Hey, man --

GERALD: BENTLEY?! No - nonoNO!

BRENDA: Wait - [bleep], he's running --

BEA: I've got him!

[running]

[tackling]

BRENDA: ...My god, Casely. Do you train?

BEA: I did track in college. I try.

BRENDA: Full contact track?

BEA: You'll never understand my east coast ways.

GERALD: C'mon, lady --

BEA: Gerald Abernathy? I'm Bea Casley. It's nice to finally meet you.

GERALD: You're leaning on my pancreas.

BRENDA: Gee, it'd be great to have a Boom of Doom right now.

[BOOM OF DOOM]

[ad music]

BEA: Do you want to meet celebrities? Of course you do! I want to meet celebrities too! That's why I got into reporting, to meet celebrities - Andy, this is not why I got into reporting --

ANDY: Sure it is! And hey, you achieved your dream! Congrats!

BEA: What?

ANDY: I'm a celebrity! You achieved your dream by meeting me. Isn't it great?

BEA: ...And now you too can achieve your dream by submitting an application to the Wheyface Meet-A-Celeb Flight to the Stars! If you win, you - and a person of your choosing - will fly on a plane to an exotic location with two mystery stars! Who will they be? Will it be your favorite superhero? Your favorite musician? Your soon-to-be-favorite TV stars of the TV show about that lovable sheep-loving tractor-eating hillbilly Grunty McMurtry - are you serious?

ANDY: He's the gruntiest of the McMurtrys!

BEA: You're actually making this bat[bleep] dumb show?

ANDY: Sure am!

BEA: I thought you pitched it all over town and --

ANDY: Know what I discovered Hollywood respects? Money! It's wonderful! For the first time, I feel like people finally understand me, y'know? So, hey, I may have bought a couple of production companies here and there --

BEA: How much money have you put into this show?!

ANDY: Just read the rest of the copy.

BEA: Wheyface Industries cannot guarantee the quality of the celebrities you will meet. Please submit your reasons for why you're a good person who should fly on a plane with a celebrity to Wheyface Industries.Com. Brought to you by Wheyface Industries. The Good People.

BRENDA: It's been a long time, Gerald.

GERALD: Not -

BRENDA: Please don't say "not long enough". It's cliché.

GERALD: It actually isn't long enough. I didn't want to see you ever again.

BRENDA: C'mon, man. I was the only one in the department who believed you.

GERALD: Miss --

BEA: You can call me Bea.

GERALD: Bea. You seem like a nice young woman. Did you know this gal's police department pulled strings so I was portrayed as the murderer in that episode of Cops and Lawyers?

BEA: Are you serious?

GERALD: Oh, yes. You have any idea what that does to a man?

BEA: I can't imagine.

GERALD: I had kids egging my trailer. My friends joking about it. It wears on a fellow after awhile - everyone being familiar with a version of you that's a killer. That's what they're gonna think of you. That's what this gal and her cop friends did! 'Cause they didn't believe me!

BRENDA: Gerald, you were drunk and you said "the skunk ape" took Julie Capsom.

BEA: You know, I've never been quite clear on this - what exactly is a "skunk ape"?

GERALD: It is what it sounds like.

BEA: Uh huh.

GERALD: I saw one once. I was fifteen years old, in 1968.

BEA: Really. Do tell.

GERALD: This is serious, now. I don't want to be laughed at.

BEA: Sir, believe me, we have had far more far-fetched theories on this show than a skunk ape.

GERALD: I've just had enough of being laughed at.

BEA: Sir - Gerald. I have been looking forward to meeting you for a very, very long time, OK? I can promise you, we are going to treat everything you have to say with exactly the respect it deserves.

GERALD: That sounds good. I like that. So I'm hikin' in the backwoods of Sarasota, my pappy's gone ahead to make up the campsite, and through the shadows of the trees, I can see something. Then it stops. Skunk ape's psychic, y'know. But not in the way we think of psychics.

BEA: I see.

GERALD: It turns to me. Gives me - for all the world - as fancy a nod as you'd get from the Queen of England. And then off into the trees - leaving behind a scent I will not soon forget.

BRENDA: But that was in Florida -

GERALD: Skunk Apes don't just live in Florida, Bentley. That sort of close-mindedness - exactly what I'd expect from someone who thinks it was aliens.

BEA: I know, right?

GERALD: Y'know, I met the actor who played me on that Cops & Lawyers show. He came by the trailer park to do "research". Bought me a cup of coffee though, which was decent. But y'know what he said?

BRENDA: Do tell.

GERALD: He said that in the first draft of the script, you were the killer, Bentley.

BRENDA: Wait, what?

BEA: Yes, please, do tell.

GERALD: He said that both of the kids were mixed up in a drug ring run by the cops. The boy was killed by LA cops... and that poor, terrified girl was run off the road and killed by your stand-in, Bentley. Easy enough for a cop to cover up a murderer. But your department got wind of the script and came in with a bunch of lawyers, and now in the minds of everyone who watches that show, I'm a murderer. And a lotta people watch that show!

BRENDA: I didn't know that.

GERALD: You were written out after that. Erased. No one wanted to have anything to do with you.

BEA: Is that why you went missing? Cops & Lawyers?

GERALD: I didn't go missing, I just left.

BEA: You've been listed as a missing person for the last eight years - people thought you had been killed by the Capsom Case Curse.

GERALD What kinda horse puckey is that?

BEA: Well, a lotta people involved in this case tend to die.

GERALD: I didn't die. Bentley didn't die. You miss, you're involved in this case?

BEA: Yeah.

GERALD: You dead?

BEA: Only inside.

GERALD: People die. It happens.

BEA: You hung around for several years after Julie went missing. Why'd you choose that moment to leave it all behind? You watch the Inauguration of President Obama, and then you just fall off the map. Why?

GERALD: Hope and change.

BRENDA: You've gotta be kiddin' me.

GERALD: Seriously! I thought that, y'know, he was preachin' that, seemed like the world was spinnin' that way. I'd had a rough few years. Even before meetin' that poor girl, I was on a downward spiral.

BRENDA: You did have a reputation.

GERALD: [beep] that, I was in a bad way. And it only got worse. But then I thought... why not just... go? I didn't have anything tying me down, not really. I could leave it all behind.

BEA: Sure.

GERALD: For awhile, I didn't even go by my name - people still knew it, you see. I'd get questions. Suspicion. I'd had enough suspicion.

BEA: Of course. I think we can both understand that.

GERALD: I don't need you to. It was my choice. And now, Bentley, you had to come wandering back in --

BRENDA: We need to talk about that night, Gerald.

GERALD: Oh ho. Oh ho ho ho. That night.

BRENDA: Yes.

GERALD: You know I tried to have a restraining order taken out on this gal?

BRENDA: And failed. I never went and saw you after you were freed anyway, never tried to contact you, so the judge said you didn't need one.

GERALD: But I knew you'd come crawling back one day.

BRENDA: I need you, right here, right now, to go on the record of what happened that night. The night you were the last person to see Julie Capsom alive.

GERALD: It won't get out there. It'll be censored.

BRENDA: No. We have someone on our side. Someone very powerful, who'll ensure that it gets out there. The truth, Gerald.

BEA: Is it in your contract to make Andy sound like frickin' Moses?

BRENDA: No! but Andy will protect you from the people who want the truth censored.

BEA: Just like Moses!

GERALD: And if I say no?

[sound of photo being taken]

BRENDA: In that case, I go to the local police, give them that photo, and take your missing persons case off the books. Word gets around that you're alive. Maybe even word to the Capsoms. Maybe even Mr. Pains.

GERALD: You're the worst monster of all, Bentley: a cop.

BEA: Mmhmm.

BRENDA: Tell us the truth, Gerald. Tell us, and be protected. Or you can just run again. If it were me, I'd be tired of running.

GERALD: Hmmm. You know how old I am, Bentley?

BRENDA: You said you were fifteen in 1968, so you were born in 1953, which makes you 64.

BEA: Nice number-munchin', Bentley.

GERALD: 63. Going to turn 64. I'm getting too old to run.

BEA: So why don't you walk us through that night. Leave out nothing.

GERALD: I don't trust Bentley. But I might trust you. You seem like a woman of your word. Is this Andy guy gonna keep me safe?

BEA: I genuinely have no idea. But I will.

GERALD: OK. OK. Christmas night. It's a... sad time of year, y'know? If you're alone. The wife and I had broken up a while back. Made it even more lonesome.

BRENDA: You've got friends, though.

GERALD: Oh, yeah. There's, uh, Ace Bobby, and Jim - where are they now?

BRENDA: Ace Bobby died in a meth lab explosion back in 2012. Don't know about Jim.

GERALD: Well, can't be too broken up about that. That's how Ace Bobby wanted to go. And maybe I'll see Jim one of these days. Even being out here hiding doesn't seem to keep the old days away.

BRENDA: In your statement at the time, you and your pals got together at around 4, at Ace Bobby's place.

GERALD: Yeah. Yeah, we did.

BRENDA: Bit of a drive for you, wasn't it? That's down in Eureka.

GERALD: Well, Ace Bobby was a good host.

BRENDA: He'd have a lot of drugs, you mean.

GERALD: Dude can be a drug dealer and still be a good host. He and I - we saw some [beep] together, man.

BEA: How many people were at the party?

GERALD: 15? No, 20.

BRENDA: That part we were able to verify.

BEA: I hate to have to ask this, but... did you use... anything... illegal at the party?

GERALD: Nah.

BEA: That... uh, unusual?

GERALD: I had a long drive back home.

BEA: Fair enough.

GERALD: Bentley can tell you that.

BRENDA: Gerald's tox screen did come back negative for any illegal substances.

BEA: But you did drink. Pretty heavily.

GERALD: That I did.

BEA: What'd you have to drink?

GERALD: Definitely started with a few beers. Whiskey, probably. Little gin. Definitely hit the peach schnapps, whoa boy.

BRENDA: Gerald was pretty lucky we weren't scraping him off the road.

GERALD: Hey, I was well-practiced in the arts of driving while intoxicated. I didn't have anywhere to be the next day, so why not have some fun that night, y'know?

BEA: So what happens next?

GERALD: Well... well, part of the evening's foggy. I remember a pretty good game of pool, then Belinda gets real mad at Jim because Jim made a pass at her husband... you probably don't need to hear about that.

BRENDA: Yeah... that's not really relevant.

GERALD: Evening wears on. Party goes on. I have some decent bratwurst - not really a Christmas food, I know, but it's what Ace Bobby has.

BEA: When I said I wanted every detail--

GERALD: They were deer brats! Freshly made. Ace'd shot it himself.

BRENDA: Ace's hands were way too shaky to ever hold a gun, Gerald. You ate roadkill deer brats.

GERALD: ...They were still pretty good.

BEA: So when did you leave the party?

GERALD: A bit after 10.

BEA: Were you still drunk?

GERALD: Drunkenness does not affect me behind the wheel.

BEA: But you were drunk.

GERALD: I didn't hit her. Bentley knows that.

BEA: Did you swerve to miss her?

GERALD: No.

BEA: So what happened?

GERALD: Right. So I'm driving back - I'm drunk, but I'm not stupid. Roads are slippery, so I'm taking it nice and easy, nice and easy, wiggling a little, but keepin' it right on course, driving ahead. You know like - [sound cut to an AURAL EMOJI of something likely obscene] - like that, nice and easy.

BEA: OK... we're probably going to need to cut that... colorful metaphor out.

GERALD: Your listeners' loss. I think they could all learn from something like that.

BEA: So, you're driving slowly -

GERALD: Takin' it nice and easy.

BEA: When you see --

GERALD: Well, snow's comin' down. I can't see too clearly, but I can kinda hear another engine out there, goin' hard? I've slowed way down now - two cars goin' by each other on the road like that's a killer. But she never even made it that far. Just fishtails off the road.

BEA: How fast is she going?

GERALD: Hard to say - I mean, all of you reported she was drivin' out of LA like a regular speed demon, but.... I don't think it was quite that fast.

BEA: So you saw the crash.

GERALD: Heard it much more than I saw it.

BRENDA: A fact he failed to mention to us when he called 911.

GERALD: Guy like me? I'm not stupid, even though you cops all think I am. I knew you'd pin it on me if you could.

BEA: So she just slid off the road?

GERALD: Just fishtails it. One moment she's on the road, that car's roaring, next there's a big screech of metal and a crunch and she's off.

BEA: What's going through your mind at that moment?

GERALD: Basically, just “oh, [beep]”.

BEA: Did you think about just driving on by?

GERALD: Of course I didn't. It's Christmas.

BEA: How long does it take you to get to her?

GERALD: I slow down. Way, way down. Visibility's like nothing, so I have to be sure I can see her. Somehow I can feel it's a her. Don't know why. Just feel it in my bones, it's a girl in trouble. It takes me a few minutes. I'm worried she's gone into a ditch or something and I won't be able to see her. But there she is, right by the side of the road.

BEA: What do you see?

GERALD: Well, it's a girl all right - real pretty young girl. She's leaning over the trunk, which is open, car's front's up against a tree. Looks smashed.

BEA: Did you recognize Julie Capsom? Had you seen any of her movies, anything like that?

GERALD: Nope. I didn't go to movies that often, certainly didn't read all that tabloid trash I found out about later. I certainly knew who her mother was. At first, I don't get out of the car. I just pull up nearby, ask if she needs a lift or anything. I figure I can get her to Eureka, drop her by a phone, she'll be OK. She ignores me.

I figure she might be in shock or something, or maybe her ears are ringing, she doesn't hear me. So I pull over. It is cold as the bottom level of hell - really not a good condition for her to be out in - she's not dressed for this weather at all. She's got a little jacket over a party dress.

BRENDA: You describing that party dress meant we were able to verify it was Julie you saw that night.

GERALD: I mean... it's a pretty memorable dress. It's like a... sexy Christmas dress, all patterned with mistletoe and such. It looks real good on her.

BEA: ...You noticed that? She's just been in a crash, you've pulled over to help her, she's obviously in distress, and that's what you --

GERALD: I'm not proud of it. But you put a dress like that on a girl like that and it's real hard not to notice. That's the point, y'know?

BEA: Hoo, boy. There's a lot I have to say to that --

BRENDA: Just tell the rest of the story, Gerald.

GERALD: I get out of the car, walk over to her. She's bent over the trunk, like she's doing something. Not sure what. I ask her if she needs help. She ignores me. I ask again. She glances over her shoulder at me, mumbles something like "get away".

At this point, I figure she's disoriented from the crash - I could see a bruise on her eye, she's hit her head, I'm thinking that there's no way this girl is going to last if she stays out here, so somehow I have to get her in the car and to the hospital.

So I reach out to grab her shoulder.

BEA: That's probably not the best thing you could have done.

GERALD: Well, I know that now. I'm drunk and, honestly, a little panicked. And it's cold and I wanted to go home, but I don't want to just leave her out there, OK? It's Christmas.

She just screeches at me to get away, she turns, grabs a tire iron out of the trunk and swings it at me -- something hits me, I catch it, she's waving this tire iron around, clumsy as hell, and she's yelling - not really coherently, just about how I should get away from her.

BEA: And at this point, you figure --

GERALD: Christmas be damned. If she's going to be that crazy, I'll just drive to a phone and hope for the best. I don't realize how far away the nearest phone is. I drive until I can get a phone call out --

BRENDA: By this time, an hour has passed.

GERALD: And I call it in. And that's pretty much it. I find the wig in the car, panic, try to hide it. That's it. Are we done, Bentley? Can I go now?

BRENDA: No. No, you cannot.

GERALD: Aw, man...

BRENDA: Because we both know that's not the whole story.

[BOOM OF DOOM]

[commercial music plays]

BRENDA: Let's talk about comfort. Comfort is good. Comfort is crucial. Comfort is crucial to being a Good Person. And being a Good Person is crucial-

Andy, this is getting ominous.

ANDY: Just go with it! It's repetitive reinforcement!

BRENDA: OK. So what you want, in your daily life, is to be comfortable. And you know what's the most important thing that can make you comfortable? Your bed. Most specifically, your mattress.

So many mattress companies try to do complicated things. Massaging mattresses. Water-beds. Sleep numbers --

ANDY: You know I don't like numbers telling me how to sleep. I'm not a number, I'm a free man!

BRENDA: But what Wheyface Industries has discovered is far more simple. A solution so obvious it deserved to hit us in the face and steal our wallets. The Wheyface Industries Pillow Mattress.

ANDY: It is what it sounds like!

BRENDA: Replace your old stiff mattress with a soft... pillowy pillow mattress. Then lie down and sleep your cares away.

Disclaimer: If you're unable to get up from the pillow mattress due to its extreme comfort and enviable fluffiness... uh, buy a Wheyface Industries Floor Landing Pillow set and simply roll out of bed into more comfort! Or simply live out your life in comfort in the Wheyface Pillow Mattress like one of the more degenerate Roman Emperors!

ANDY: Not Good People, but they were very comfortable!

BRENDA: The Wheyface Pillow Mattress. Good Sleep for Good People. Brought to you by Wheyface Industries. The Good People.

GERALD: Well, maybe I don't trust you to do the right thing.

BEA: What is the right thing?

GERALD: The right thing would've been to leave me alone in the first place. I left. You - you're a detective. And... I'm sorry, I'm not 100 percent on what job it is you do?

BEA: I'm a reporter.

GERALD: OK. Between the two of you, couldn't you put two brain cells together and figure out I wanted to get away from all of this? Why can't you two just walk away?

BRENDA: I have to know.

BEA: **We** have to know.

GERALD: It was so long ago.

BEA: Gerald... people have died over this. Other people are still grieving. And you've seen what it's done to this poor shmuck here.

BRENDA: Hey!

BEA: Just roll with me.

BRENDA: Fine.

BEA: So many people have been consumed by this case, and it's happened because no one knows what really went down. But you're a key. If there's something you're not telling that can help us finally put this case to bed.... Please. Please, help us.

GERALD: And if I do that, you'll let me go?

BEA: You'll never see me or Ms. Bentley again.

BRENDA: Unless you want to.

BEA: Hey!

BRENDA: Just leaving the option open.

GERALD: OK. Fine.

BRENDA: Tell us what you told me that night.

GERALD: Well mostly, what happened that night was you yelling at me, trying to get me to confess.

BRENDA: I knew you weren't guilty.

GERALD: Then why were you trying to get me to confess?

BRENDA: Because I knew you were hiding something. I thought it was the phone call.

BEA: The phone call from the cabin? Gerald, did you get that phone call?

GERALD: 'Course I didn't. My cell service in that area is [beep].

BRENDA: No. Gerald didn't get the phone call. Gerald got a visitor.

BEA: Who? Wait - Brenda threatened you with... Poins? Was it Aaron Poins?

GERALD: The Capsom lawyer. He visited me when I was in holding.

BRENDA: And his name wasn't on the visitor's roster, was it?

GERALD: You'd know that part.

BRENDA: I was being rhetorical.

GERALD: He asked me what happened that night. Offered me a big payout if I said that Julie said she was scared of some kid.

BEA: Was it Ralph?

GERALD: He was there for what felt like days, trying to drag every single detail out of me, asking if I touched her, what exactly she said, if I saw the blood, how could I leave her, asking if I was sure that she didn't mention she was running away from Ralph, how much neater it would be without the torso...

BEA: And this is what you wanted on the record?

GERALD: Huh?

BEA: I was talking to my partner here.

BRENDA: Yes. We needed to have Gerald testify, on record, that the Capsom's personal fixer and attorney tried to bribe him to cast suspicion on Ralph.

GERALD: And threaten me!

BRENDA: Yes, that too.

BEA: And that's all you wanted on record?

BRENDA: ...Yes?

BEA: Because it strikes me that Gerald here is glossing over something.

GERALD: What? You're trying to get blood from a stone here, lady!

BEA: You said earlier Julie is screaming at you to get away. Why was Poins so interested in what she said?

GERALD: He wanted to hear if she mentioned Ralph!

BEA: So what *did* Julie say? Did she say anything else?

[deep breath]

GERALD: I haven't told this to anyone. Ever.

But amidst her yelling at me to get away, she says something like "I am awaited".

BRENDA: What?

GERALD: I think that's it. It's not clear. But "wait" is definitely in there.

BEA: Is that all?

GERALD: No. As I get in the car, I say something like "I'll call the police, tell 'em you're here, OK?" Trying to reassure her that I didn't mean any harm, that help would be on the way.

But that just makes her more upset. And as I drive off, I see her run after me, screaming not to call the police. Telling me not to call anyone. Pleading.

And that's why I didn't call right away.

BEA: Why'd you change the time? Claim it was a half-hour when it was an hour?

GERALD: Guilt. I felt bad that I'd waited.

But at the same time... I could see it in her eyes. Even with all her pretty, ridiculous clothes and her fancy, fancy car, this was a desperate girl on the run. She wasn't disoriented. She knew exactly where she was all along. And she did not want to be found.

I knew what that felt like. I definitely know it now. And part of me... wanted to give her a head start. I hope she's alive. I hope she knows I did that, and is grateful. I really did want to help her.

BEA: Do you really think the skunk ape took her?

GERALD: Oh, yeah. I could feel it out there in the night. It's been hunting me all my life, y'know. It comes out of the woods every so often, to remind me it's out there. And it was there. I could smell it, even amid the wet snow. You don't forget a scent like that. They don't leave tracks, y'know, the skunk ape. It chased her into that clearing and took her.

BEA: Well.

GERALD: That's why I'm out here, y'know. The real reason I'm out here. To try to find it.

BEA: The skunk ape?

GERALD: It was after me, and it took her. I'm gonna find it and trade me for her. One of these days.

One of these days.

[car door slam]

[car interior ambient sounds; key starting up]

BRENDA: So. Pains goes to see Gerald. Tries to get him to finger Ralph. He won't do it.

BEA: You think the Capsom family then tries to finger Gerald?

BRENDA: He was the best option. But we can't make it stick.

BEA: Because of you.

BRENDA: Yeah.

BEA: And we don't know who the phone call was to, or if it was important.

BRENDA: Nope. All we know is that it wasn't to Gerald - because he's right, he had terrible service, he couldn't get a call or make one, but that phone call seems to have connected. With whom, we don't know.

BEA: Let's not forget her last words. There's something there. "I am awaited." That can't be right, can it? She's not the chosen one in a fantasy novel, she's a scared kid.

BRENDA: I don't know. What I know is... Aaron Poins knows who burnt my truck.

BEA: Oh, for the love of - we are closer to solving this than anyone in the last ten years, and you're thinking about your stupid truck! Let's just get back to California. We've got a long drive ahead, and a lot to think about. Thanks for listening, remember to rate, review, subscribe --

BRENDA: We really should've been saying that all along, right?

BEA: Wait - I'm getting a call from Pamela --

PAMELA: Where the heck are you?!

BEA: We're in Oregon! And we're breaking the case --

PAMELA: You're supposed to be interviewing Kail McPherson tomorrow! At the premiere of Guinevera!

BRENDA: Aw, cra--

[BOOM OF DOOM]

BRENDA: And we are in California! Through the magic of editing!

BEA: And a stupidly long drive.

KAIL:... I thought you were supposed to be interviewing me.

BEA: That is our guest today, Kail McPherson, director of the long-lost Julie Capsom film Guinevera.

KAIL: I have two Oscars, y'know.

BEA: Yes, and may I say that Standing Casual is a modern American classic.

BRENDA: Didn't you just win one Oscar for that?

BEA: He also won animated short film for 1992's The Dolorous Trials of Steven Adams. And, congratulations on that.

KAIL: Thank you! You know, I feel like the artistic mode of short film is one that's often deeply underrated.

BRENDA: Nifty.

BEA: Kail. Tell us about your film.

KAIL: Guinevera is the tale of Jenny, played by your missing Ms. Capsom, a high school senior who feels different from her sad, plastic schoolmates.

BRENDA: ...Uh huh.

KAIL: She feels like no one could understand her, until a school bus crashes!

BRENDA: ...Is she on the bus?

KAIL: No. The only survivor is a teacher, played by Matthew McConaughey. But he's crippled! In a wheelchair. And then --

BEA: They have an affair, right?

KAIL: Ah, I see you read the script when it was up on The Black List... 's honorary mentions. So it's a love triangle! Between Jenny. This teacher. And Artie, a foreign exchange student played by... Dev Patel! We would've discovered Dev Patel!

BEA: That's incredible. Speaking of your cast, I was hoping you could talk to us about Julie. How would you describe her?

KAIL: She was an actress. And like a good little actress, she did exactly what I told her to do in creating my vision. Because the film, you see, was a very emotional one for me, it was about --

BRENDA: 9/11, right?

KAIL: You're very perceptive, Ms. Bentley!

BRENDA: It was 2006, every American film was about 9/11.

BEA: Bentley, we're not here for your hot film takes.

KAIL: But it was 9/11 filtered through a feminist take on Arthurian mythology, hence the title! McConaughey was a crippled Fisher King, much like America itself!

BEA: Getting back to the lead actress in your movie....

KAIL: Which she was great in! And I'm sure you want lurid stories about her, but there aren't

any. She did her work, didn't socialize with anyone on the set, and that was that. And she was absolutely no help in getting it released. Well, now she is, may she rest in peace.

BEA: Why did the studio sit on it?

KAIL: It was an artistic dispute. Over my vision. And the length. That and McConaughey's contract didn't extend to all the reshoots we did. Though I think the impersonator we got does almost a better job.

[people sitting down in a movie theater]

BRENDA: The length thing?

BEA: The studio wanted ninety minutes. He wanted three and a half hours.

BRENDA: Tell me the studio won.

BEA: Nope.

BRENDA: Aw, man.

[movie sounds - a classroom]

MCCONAUGHEY IMPRESSION: I see her comin' in every day, Jenny.

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot --

BEA: STOP THE [BLEEP]ING MOVIE!

[sounds of running]

BRENDA: What the --?!

[sound cuts - babble]

SECURITY GUARD: She's just waiting in front of the projector room for two hours--

KAIL: Well, she nearly ruined my premiere!

BRENDA: Shame, too. It's a really, really.... Deep film, y'know? It has so much to say about how American imperialism treats other countries.

KAIL: Oh, you got that! I'm so pleased -- uh, you talk to her!

BRENDA: Bea?

BEA: The poem scene. When Julie's walking into school. You saw it, right?

BRENDA: I saw a good solid piece of indie cinema.

BEA: Wait, you liked that self-indulgent male gaze-y - No, not important right now -- we have to see it. Buddy, buddy!

[knocking on the door]

PROJECTOR GUY: Leave me alone!

BEA: I will seriously give you -- [ruffling through her purse] seventy - Seventy bucks if you play the poem scene! Then I'll leave you alone.

[door opening]

PROJECTOR GUY: Fiiiiine. But it'll have to be quick, OK?

MCCONAUGHEY VOICE: On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky --

BEA: PAUSE IT! RIGHT THERE! Brenda, do you see it?

BRENDA: Uh.... it's Julie. She's turning and looking --

BEA: Play the next seconds. In slow motion.

PROJECTOR GUY: Do you think this is CSI? This isn't CSI.

BEA: Right there. Do you see it?

BRENDA: I don't know what you're --

BEA: The upper. Right. Corner. He walks on. Do. You. See. It?

BRENDA: Oh my god. Oh my god.

BEA: She turns to look, and she smiles, and that smile -- she's looking at --

BRENDA: *That's Ralph Montgomery.*

BEA: 2005, right?

BRENDA: What?

BEA: This film was shot in 2005. Julie and Ralph didn't meet until Halloween 2006. But that's him. Right there. And the way she's looking at him - she knows him.

BRENDA: That's not possible.

BEA: It has to be. Because I'm looking at it right now.

ANDY: Next week on Arden. Uh... Holy cow, you guys. Holy cow.

ROSALIND: You don't have to be a hype man, y'know.

ANDY: I'm just excited! Aren't you?

ROSALIND: Thanks, Andy. Good night, everybody!