

ARDEN, Episode 2:

“Horses Did It”

By Christopher Dole, Sara Ghaleb, and Emily VanDerWerff

Created by Christopher Dole, Emily VanDerWerff, and Sara Ghaleb

NOTE:

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INTRO

OUTRO

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

BEA: Last time on: Arden.

[previously on package begins]

BEA: Do you remember where you were when you found out Julie Capsom was gone?

[and stops]

BRENDA: Get to the cabin!

[BEA sighs]

[and restarts]

NEWSCASTER 2: Julie Capsom, sole heir to the Capsom Epsom Salt fortune, has disappeared.

BRENDA: Come on, they listened to the last episode. Go listen to the last episode, we don't have much time for this. If you refuse to listen to the previous episode just wiki "Julie Capsom." Pretty much everything we said is on that page.

BEA: Hello, listeners.

BRENDA: Casely, did you know Julie had a pet horse named "Thundercat?" That's a confusing name for a horse, don't you think? I wonder if it bothers the horse to be called a cat?

BEA: You are listening to Brenda Bentley, the host of a show whose premise she does not understand.

BRENDA: Stop the fake introductions bit. They're not going to use any of this. The show hasn't even started yet.

[Bea makes an exasperated sound]

BEA: Yes, yes, it has.

BRENDA: Are horses pets? Feels weird to call them that since they can't live in the house with you. A long distance pet. A filly on the side. You come home and your dog is like [dog panting] "Where have you been? You smell like her." Am I right, Pamela?

PAMELA (muffled): The show is recording.

BRENDA: Seriously? Why didn't anyone say anything? Wait! Start recording.

BEA: Brenda. [beat] Okay, we're recording.

BRENDA: What if Julie ran away on horseback! She knows how to ride. She has access to horses. What do you think?

BEA: I think the trip from Beverly Hills to Eureka is much longer than 12 hours on horseback.

BRENDA: No, no. That's how she got out of the clearing. That's why the dogs couldn't track her.

BEA: Dogs could track horses though. They're big smelly animals.

BRENDA: Small horses then!

BEA: Yes, I think we all remember where we were when Julie Capsom was dragged off by tiny horses.

BRENDA: Like that song?

BEA: What song?

BRENDA [to the tune of 'tiny dancer'] Tiny horses [losing the tune] couldn't drag me away.

BEA: You're thinking of "Tiny Dancer" and "Wild Horses."

PAMELA: Tiny horses are called ponies and we should start the show.

BEA: I think tiny horses and ponies are different.

PAMELA: Bea, please.

BRENDA: Thank you, Pamela!

BEA: So how did a horse get there? She drive with it?

BRENDA: Maybe she had a horse guy in Eureka!

BEA: Okay, so your top theories are aliens or "Horse guy in Eureka?" I'm so glad we didn't waste any time summarizing the last episode. Hello. Let's table that horse theory for now before we beat it to death. Brenda. Welcome to the episode. Which is recording.

BRENDA: Now we can pick up right where we left off. No loss in energy! Do you remember where we left off? Did we get to the cabin bit yet? Where were we?

BEA: If this is your first time tuning in to Arden, save yourselves.

[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]

BEA: Welcome back.

BRENDA: Thank you.

BEA: Yes, let's all give a warm welcome to Brenda, who is returning from getting a coffee in the next room. Now that you've had your coffee, why don't you walk us through last episode's intriguing discovery?

BRENDA: Sorry, can't.

BEA: You can't?

BRENDA: I can't. Andy texted. He wants to milk that revelation for intrigue. And since he owns the station and, thus, the show...

BEA: You just rolled over for your boss?

BRENDA: *Our* boss. And I wouldn't say--

BEA: You know what? This is fine. This is fine. This is A-O-K. Instead of going off on a classic Bentley wild goose chase, we can instead do the scholarly, professional look at Ralph and Julie's backstories that I had planned before -- OK. We're doing that. Good?

BRENDA: Sure. Hit me.

BEA: You wouldn't believe how tempted I am. [serious presenter voice] One thing most theorists believe is that Julie Capsom and Ralph Montgomery's relationship turned from a crush to murder. But opinions vary on who murdered whom?

BRENDA: Or there could be a third option!

BEA: Julie Capsom was last seen by Gerald Abernathy and her behavior indicated someone scared for her life.

BRENDA: Or on the run!

BEA: Ralph Montgomery was last seen shortly after midnight on December 23rd, just under three days earlier, withdrawing money from an ATM. Behavior that indicates someone preparing to go on the run.

BRENDA: Or fearing for his life! Because while December 23rd is the last time anyone saw his face, his torso was found in the trunk of Julie's car on Christmas.

BEA: Maybe it was his torso.

BRENDA: C'mon, you can't even concede the torso?

BEA: So there are a lot of details in this story to question. But before we get to Christmas 2007, let's set the scene. Julie and Ralph met in their first semester at UCLA, in 2006. They both grew up in California, but while Ralph went to the big public high school in Van Nuys, Julie went to Le Livre Academy in France. While Ralph was the first one in his family to go to college Julie's decision to go to UCLA instead of focusing on her acting was a bit of a middle finger to her parents. At least if you believe the tabloids.

Julie's mother, Kathleen Weir Capsom, was a very well-regarded actress. She was Oscar nominated for her role in *Sweetest Milk*, but she's best known for playing the Mom in *Mom & Dad & Me & You & Also That Guy* - the beloved long-running family sitcom.

BRENDA: Did not like when they spun off *That Guy* into his own show, though.

BEA: For once, you're right. *That Guy* just doesn't work on his own.

Kathleen Weir Capsom was nominated for five Emmys for the role, but had trouble escaping type-casting once the show was done. She was briefly attached to play Rebecca in Paul Haggis's *Overkill*. The role, instead, went to Marisa Tomei, and earned her a Golden Globe nomination. Officially the deal fell through because Kathleen didn't want to film in Iceland, but unofficially? The blame lies with Julie.

The director was a big fan of Julie's and wanted her to play the lead, only asking her real life mother to play her mother in the film for the publicity push of having two Capsoms. Rumor has it that Julie refused to take a gap year for filming and this caused a lot of tension between her and her mother.

BRENDA: What about that one movie she made?

BEA: Which?

BRENDA: You know the one I mean. The unreleased one.

BEA: *Guinevera*?

BRENDA: I don't know what it's *called*. The 9/11 one.

BEA: I thought it was about high school, not 9/11.

BRENDA: It was 2005, every American movie was about 9/11.

BEA: Now, Julie was always very dedicated to her education, she even worked things out with her private school in France so she wouldn't miss classes while filming what was said to be her first major, artistically challenging role in the French horror romance "Belle and Bisclavret." But the school was horrified when the film was released and they realized the project they had been accommodating Julie's schedule for was... well, "Belle and Bisclavret." Did you ever see that, Brenda?

BRENDA: I'm not much of a French film buff.

BEA: Pamela?

PAMELA: Sure, I'll watch anything with a werewolf in it.

BEA: It's a bit of a cult classic for the scandal surrounding it. While the then 15-year-old Julie never appears in any, uh, untoward scenes the movie takes some sharp veers into "can they show that?" Including a wolf orgy. Even without the sexual undertones, the movie ends with, Spoiler Alert, Julie's character's face getting eaten off of ...well, her face. My stomach still churns when I think about it.

Anyway, the school released a statement damning the film. They thought they were accommodating Julie's schedule to make an artistic triumph, not a glorified slasher picture. They even expelled Julie under suspicious circumstances for a quarter of her junior year, until the Capsoms made a generous donation. Julie, to her credit, didn't let the two missed months of school set back her grades at all.

This story both shows Julie's commitment to her education, and that she had taken a break from school before. It raises the question of if she had felt a little less committed to college, or a little less rebellious against her mother, maybe she'd have spent Christmas 2007 alive and well in Iceland, filming *Overkill*. Was that night unavoidable, or bad luck?

[pre recorded interview]

NATALIE: It wasn't THAT random.

BEA: That's Natalie Thomas, Julie's best friend.

NATALIE: Julie was dying to go to UCLA for some reason. She had a rep as a jet-setter, but she was almost always trying to get on a jet back home. She flew home for every break she could get. Being in Los Angeles with normal kids her own age was always when Julie was happiest. We went to elementary together. Kristof's. It was a private school but not a super exclusive one - which means, in LA, you only have to golf with one member of the admissions board. I know she missed the regular-ness of it all, and she knew she wanted to attend a big, normal college where she could sorta disappear from the very start of her years in France. Hence, UCLA. She even sold me on going. I, uh, transferred to Stanford after Julie's disappearance.

BEA: Natalie, can you talk about how Julie settled in at UCLA?

NATALIE: On the one hand, it was a big deal. *The Julie Capsom*. But people got over it. Teenagers are pretty self involved, to be honest. They can get obsessive for a bit about like "Oh my god! It's the girl from *Scotch and Soda!* Or that weird French werewolf film!" But in the end it just furthers the narrative in their own heads that they're this close to greatness. See, they all secretly thought they were Julie Capsom. Julie liked the anonymity. [bitterly] Jokes on her though, we're still talking about *The Julie Capsom*.

BEA: If you're uncomfortable-

NATALIE: No, it's fine. It's just, they didn't really know her. Like I said, she was a big deal but she also wasn't. She didn't make many friends in college. She had her cousin, and she had me, obviously, but she didn't really get to know anybody else. That Halloween party she threw? She only did that because she wasn't invited to any other parties, if you can believe it.

And if she didn't throw that party then.... yeah.

BEA: Yeah.

BEA: For those of you at home who haven't read the wikipedia page, or seen the Lifetime Original Movie, let me fill you in. The 2006 Halloween Party is where Julie and Ralph first collided.

NATALIE: It's where Ralph became obsessed with her.

VINCE: From that night on, Ralph was in love.

BEA: That's Vince Volio, one of Ralph's close friends from high school.

VINCE: Look, Ralph was a great guy and-

BRENDA: Oh man! Vinny!

VINCE: Bentley? No way. You doing radio now?

BEA: Not well.

BRENDA: Casely is jealous because I know people outside of radio.

BEA: He's literally on our radio program right now.

VINCE: Wait, are you recording?

BRENDA: Don't worry, they'll edit around this.

BEA: [sigh]

BEA: So how do you know each other?

BRENDA: We met at a Wheyface Industries function. I wanna say the 5th of July cookout?

BEA: 5th of July?

BRENDA: Yeah, everyone's so busy on the 4th.

BEA: Of course. For the sake of full disclosure, are you a Wheyface employee, Vince? That might seem biased.

VINCE: No, my brother is. Malcolm never even met Ralph. I'm a legit objective third party.

BRENDA: Perfect. We need some of those. This show has had a real anti-Ralph vibe.

BEA: Don't tell him-

VINCE: No, no. I mean, that's not cool. My man Ralph was a good guy. He was into Julie, no question. No one's denying that. But so was like, everyone. If everyone who had a crush on Julie Capsom was guilty, half of America would be locked up. Ralph wasn't a violent guy. Maybe if he was a bit more violent whoever the real killer was would be in that trunk and not him.

BEA: So Vince, you subscribe to the theory of a third killer?

BRENDA: He's got a good point, Casely.

BEA: Have you even interviewed someone before?

BRENDA: Of course, I'm a detective.

VINCE: Oh yeah! How's that going?

BRENDA: Great! I'm co-hosting this radio show on the Julie Capsom disappearance.

VINCE: That's awesome.

BRENDA: How did Ralph and Julie meet?

VINCE: I was right there, man. We arrived at the party together. It was actually my idea because I got the flyer from some hot girl on the quad. We roll up, the party's thumping, everyone is having a good time except for Julie who is being sort of a wallflower. It's this big friggin' Halloween thing. You've got, like, a hundred people there, at least half of whom are dressed either as Jack Sparrow or Borat -

BEA: As what?

VINCE: It was 2006. What'd you dress as?

BEA: Well, for one thing, I was an adult --

BRENDA: Five bucks says you went as yourself. As a statement.

BEA: I was *trying* to be my own hero. For once.

BRENDA: I could be your hero, Casely.

BEA: *Anyway.*

VINCE: Right. Julie kept moving from thing to thing like people do at parties when they don't actually have anything to do at parties. You know what I mean. And Ralph and Julie lock eyes and she smiles. A bit! I'm not trying to oversell this. Maybe she was just happy to see a cute dude who wasn't dressed as a pirate for once. But it's enough that I say "hey man, you should ask her to dance." Of course he's all "No, no no." And I tell him it would be rude not to. Plus if she was ever going to be in his league it was going to be that night she was dressed like a dude. No shade though, she still looked hot.

BRENDA: For our listeners' sake, which dude was that?

VINCE: Willy Wonka, the good one - even then, she knew Depp was bad. Full purple suit, hair pinned back. Way more effort than most of us. Though doing the whole cane-fall routine when she went to the dance floor was a bit much.

I just borrowed a suit from my bro and wore a fake mustache to be Borat.

BEA: [scoff]

VINCE: And Ralph, Oh, you wouldn't believe what his costume was?

BEA: Also Borat?

BRENDA: An oompa loompa?

VINCE: No, but that would have been perfect. He was dressed up as a convict. Like one of those old chain gang convicts. Really eerie with how things played out the next year.

[beat]

BEA: So they danced?

VINCE: Yeah, total instant chemistry. They only danced the once but when the song ended Julie kept touching his arm way longer than she needed to. And she looked back! She walked away, but she did the look back.

NATALIE: After that dance Julie was scared of Ralph.

BEA: That early?

NATALIE: Yeah. Well, not scared-scared. Not as scared as she should have been, I guess. But she told me she had gotten a weird vibe from him.

BRENDA: That's it? A "weird" vibe?

NATALIE: Yeah. You know. A weird guy vibe. A too eager vibe.

BEA: It's a thing.

BRENDA: Yeah, I've inspired more than a few weird guy vibes at parties. It's no fun. But did she say anything else about him?

NATALIE: No. She probably wouldn't have even said that if I didn't ask who I'd seen her dancing with. We sort of forgot about it at the time, because that party was also where she met Deepak.

BEA: Who is Deepak?

NATALIE: Julie's boyfriend.

BEA: And on that stunning twist, a word from our sponsor.

CLICK-PLAY.

[Interstitial ad music begins to play]

BEA: If you're like me you hate cooking. You hate it more than parallel parking, or raisins, or listening to advertisements. You hate cooking so much, but if you don't eat you'll die...If you're like me... "if you don't eat you'll die?"

ANNONCER: [just off-mic] It's true.

BEA: Thank goodness there's a better way! With Real Deal Meals, the cooking is practically done for you. The box arrives with all the ingredients ready to go, and you just have to add water! This is Real Deal food! And for \$30 a month it's a hell of a deal!

It's not like other dehydrated meals that are technically not legally food. This is Real Deal food. It's... the Real Deal tm. Do I literally have to say the 'TM'? I mean, c'mon --

ANNONCER: (coughs) Real Deal Meals may not technically exist. Real Deal Meals. A product of Wheyface Industries. The good people.

[ad music ends]

BEA: Okay, forgive me listeners, but I lied about that cliffhanger.

BRENDA: Never apologize for showmanship!

BEA: Who is Deepak?

NATALIE: Julie's boyfriend. At least that week.

BEA: See, Julie had trouble making friends, but she had no problem finding interested boyfriends. She had quite a few that year, most of whom were willing to comment on the record for this show and ALL of which were cleared by the police. Deepak was Julie's most serious of these boyfriends, dating on and off until mid December. Before you ask, he went home to Chicago for winter break, placing him a lengthy round-trip flight away from Julie the entire week of the incident. Plus, no one has suggested any bad blood between them. Or, it should be said, any of her ex boyfriends.

DEEPAK: Julie? She was a sweetheart.

THEO: She was a little cold.

PATRICK: She was kind of...boring? [laughs] sorry. I mean I was kind of expecting this larger than life person and she was so... normal. We talked about bio 101 and what we were reading in Intro to Drama and...nothing really. All that bite she had in front of the camera sort of evaporated.

SEAN [British accent, over the phone]: Julie loved to argue. What was George Bush doing? What was wrong with music today? What was the best froyo topping?

BEA: That's of course is the voice of Sean Stone, iconic frontman of the British pop group Itchy Feet.

SEAN: you flatter me!

BEA: [flustered] Oh, I can't believe you even took this call!

SEAN: Anything for my pal Andy Wheyface.

BEA: Is there anything else you can add?

SEAN: Julie, if you're still out there: we all miss you. You know I wrote my song "Clearing" about her.

BRENDA: Because she disappeared in a clearing?

SEAN: Exactly, it has a double meaning.

BRENDA: So listeners, as you can tell, plenty of guys liked Julie, and Julie danced with plenty of guys. Doesn't mean one of them murdered her.

BEA: Hmm. Let's go back to Deepak.

DEEPAK: Julie, I don't want this to come off the wrong way, because she was honestly so lovely. She liked to sort of try on guys. She'd date a movie star to look glamorous, she'd date a regular high school boy to seem down to Earth, she'd date a member of a boy band to seem like she would toss desperately uncool guys a bone. You know? It was like her wigs. Or her accents. She never got serious with anyone at the school. You were just lucky to get to be part of the Julie Capsom experience. I figured we all knew the score, but I guess guys like Ralph can't take a hint.

BRENDA: So you don't think any of the other guys could have turned on Julie?

DEEPAK: It's hard to imagine. I mean Julie and I dated "the longest" with our on-and-off dance, and I can tell you now, that was purely for show. I think Julie liked having a guy on her arm just so other guys wouldn't hound her. She was more interested in herself. In her independence. In learning and doing and being whatever she wanted, because it was what *she* wanted and not what people wanted from her. She knew which public compromises to make. And dating a series of cute boys was how she did that. I knew that, and she knew I wasn't even interested in girls. I hadn't told anyone yet, but she *knew*. I sort of hit the jackpot. My family wasn't going to hassle me over Thanksgiving

about who I was dating if I was seen with a girl on the pages of In Touch. I was going to ride that all through college.

[solemn] That backfired pretty badly when Julie went from my beard to my missing, presumed dead girlfriend. Julie deserved a chance to date as many guys as she wanted if it helped her figure herself out. She deserved to do that without being afraid or unsafe. Ralph took that from her.

BRENDA: But how can you believe Ralph's involved when he disappeared first?

DEEPAK: You're not exactly the first person to work this case.

BRENDA: I kind of am. But, if you know the case you know how many unanswered questions there are.

DEEPAK: Look, I don't question the assumed narrative. Even with the missing details. Ralph was the only guy I ever saw Julie avoid. That's something I know for sure.

[CLICK-STOP]

BRENDA: So.

BEA: I know what you're thinking.

BRENDA: That last coffee wasn't strong enough?

BEA: No. Well, yes. But if Ralph killed Julie, why was his torso in her trunk before she disappeared?

BRENDA: Yes! My point exactly.

BEA: My personal theory, and I don't want to bias listeners too much. This is just a theory. Ralph's dangerous obsession with Julie landed him in the trunk of that car, and Julie got caught up in the fallout.

BRENDA: Working on the back cover copy for your true crime novel? And what do you mean fallout? The fallout of her covering up a murder?

BEA: The fallout of Ralph's drug dealing.

BRENDA: Oh here we go! He dealt a little weed on the side in college. That's basically legal now. It doesn't show a history of "criminal behavior," or at least no more than Julie driving her car into that Abercrombie.

BEA: Jesus, that was an accident.

BRENDA: We have to have that news clip!

[news clip]

TMZ type reporter #1: We just got news that teen starlet Julie Capsom has driven into an Abercrombie & Fitch!

[LOUD CRASH AND CHAOS]

TMZ type reporter #2: Julie! Julie!

JULIE, drunk: What do you want?

TMZ type reporter #2: Are you okay?

JULIE: Don't I look okay?

TMZ type reporter #2: Are you drunk?

JULIE: What are you my *mom*? Who cares! No one watches your dumb gossip show.

TMZ type reporter #2: Actually a lot of people are watching right now if you want to say something for yourself.

JULIE: I do yeah. Boys and girls. Especially the impressionable ones. [Bleep] corporations. Burn them all down! Be like me!

[Julie laughs]

[end news recording]

BEA: There was no one in that store, it was after midnight.

BRENDA: What! Burn down all corporations! That's so much worse --

BEA: You think burning down all corporations is bad?

BRENDA: That's not what I--

BEA: No, actually, it does make sense. Ever since Andy Wheyface bought you out to be one of his "Good People" --

BRENDA: Whoa, OK. Let's not get personal, Miss "I Pretended To Like The End of Fight Club To Impress My College Boyfriend".

BEA: I never liked the end of *Fight Club*. It's a terrible movie! *Jane Austen Fight Club* owns it 100 percent.

BRENDA: It's a knock-off and you know it.

BEA: You seriously like that hyper-masculine--

BRENDA: I didn't say that. I just said a movie with the words "Fight Club" in its title was a knockoff of *Fight Club*. Which makes. Sense. [beat] Also, c'mon, when "Where Is My Mind" kicks in, the buildings going down, you don't love that?

BEA: [heavy sigh]

BRENDA: All I'm saying is that smashing your car into a store is worse than selling some pot to pay for school.

BEA: "To pay for school!" Now who's editorializing? There was never any proof of what Ralph was saving up money for because Ralph took his money out before disappearing! There's no money trail because it's gone.

BRENDA: Sure, but a poor college kid saving money is most likely saving money for college. Assuming everything he's ever done is part of an elaborate plan to abduct Julie Capsom is the delusional, eccentric theory.

BEA: You're one to talk about eccentric theories. And, oh, I've got plenty of ammo to disagree with you. This idea that Ralph, someone everyone close to Julie has

characterized as a stalker, is just a sweet homegrown kid who got in over his head is part of a larger, incredibly bullshit American obsession with a refusal to hold men responsible for their actions.

BRENDA: You honestly think anyone would care about this case if Julie wasn't a pretty white millionaire?

BEA: It didn't save her though, did it?

BRENDA: Maybe Ralph was a stalker. *Maybe*. But I've worked cases like this. And I know when rich people are trying to spin--

BEA: Just because you're best pals with Vince Volio--

SOUND CUT-OUT.

PAMELA: We're going to take a quick break.

Let's talk about Wheyface Industries. The Good People. They're pretty good. I'd also like to promote the show after this, "Sunset Vibes", a calm cool meditation talk show that I for one will be listening to after this episode is over. Thank you for tuning in.

Back to the studio, later.

BRENDA: Welcome back from the break. We've heard about Julie's story leading up to that party. But now, in the interest of fairness, we remember that there were two victims here, not one. So, yes. Let's hear a little about where Ralph Montgomery came from, and get his side of the story.

Ralph grew up in Van Nuys and went to the public high school with his best friend Mark Bolt and the equally mysteriously dead Tyrell Capsom.

BEA: Capsom Case Curse!

BRENDA: ... Do you just shout that anytime the name of someone who died --

BEA: Are you saying that what happened to Tyrell - and Mark, for that matter - wasn't gruesomely messed-up? That crap made the whole torso thing look mild --

BRENDA: OK, that's fair. I seriously can't look at a warehouse without thinking about them and shuddering --

BEA: How often do you look at warehouses?

BRENDA: You'd be surprised how many private dick cases take you to warehouses.

BEA: Actually, that's not really that surprising. Anyway, Ralph. Mark. Tyrell. They were actually all on the football team together. It's possible that Tyrell put in a good word for Ralph with Julie after the dance. That's purely speculation since no one involved can confirm.

BRENDA: Being as they're all either missing or dead. In the case of Tyrell, very, very dead. Like, *extra*-dead.

BEA: And Tyrell was a bit of a... combative sort.

BRENDA: That's why he was in public high school instead of some hoity-toity rich camp like Julie.

BEA: Yes, Tyrell had been expelled from several more exclusive schools by that point, and was just riding out his high school years before he, like Mark and Ralph, went to UCLA.

Ralph, though, was popular in high school. By all accounts there was nothing not to like. He was athletic, smart, polite. He won the regional science fair with his project demonstrating how to dispose of petroleum based products, which earned him a partial scholarship to UCLA. But to hear kids from his school talk, he could have gotten a full ride from football if the rest of the team had been any better.

[interviews with various high school friends:]

JESSE: Ralph was a legend on the field! He was always thinking one step ahead! I didn't even know he did that nerd shit.

LINUS: There were signs of dishonesty going way back, but people always want to take the side of a guy like Ralph.

BEA: Was there a specific incident that makes you-

LINUS: Well I don't want to tell tales out of school, so to speak, but the same year Ralph won the regional science fair, my project, turning grapefruit juice into a power source suffered a mysterious failure.

BEA: Are you implying Ralph sabotaged you?

LINUS: Those were my suspicions. But alas they were never confirmed.

BRENDA: That's incredible though! Can I see your grapefruit juice battery now?

LINUS: It's uh, still theoretical. I shouldn't even be talking about it.

RITA: We went out a bit, actually. In 9th grade. It was so high school romance. He walked me home from school for a few weeks.

BEA: Did you keep in touch after high school?

RITA: We barely kept in touch while we dated. He had his after-school job at the carwash and he was always studying. All the girls were nuts about him, and you could tell he liked the attention, but none of us were worth the time. No one was ever good enough for Ralph Montgomery.

BEA: It is, for many reasons, a shame Mark Bolt isn't still alive to help give us a more complete picture of who Ralph was before whatever happened to him at UCLA. What we have from classmates is frustratingly incomplete. Ralph was a nerd, but a jock. He was popular, but no one knew him well. Nice, but extremely driven.

Now I am willing to concede that part of what makes Julie so much more sympathetic is that there's so much more information about her out there.

[some rustling]

BRENDA: What did I miss?

BEA: I'm recording! The light says recording!

BRENDA: Well I've got a hot lead.

BEA: More hot leads on this ten year old case?

BRENDA: Yeah. American public, let me introduce you to my incredible assistant Rosalind Ursula, and Rosalind Ursula, let me introduce you to America. You're on the air.

ROSALIND: I'm floating on air, you?

BRENDA: I'm good. You have that picture from my files?

BEA: You called your assistant to describe a picture?

ROSALIND: No picture. Your case files are messier than your life but without your charm.

BRENDA: Then why'd you text me "Huge if true"?

ROSALIND: I found a news clipping of you with the most amazing beard of bees.

BRENDA: Ah, 2004. The year I tried to set a Guinness World Record.

ROSALIND: Did you?

BRENDA: Those Guinness jerks said I was 50 bees short. 50!

ROSALIND: How can they tell?

BRENDA: So they weigh you without the bee beard, then they weigh the average bee. And *then--*

BEA: *Thank you* Rosalind Ursula. This was an important and necessary addition to the show. Some people could take note.

BRENDA: Call me when you actually find it.

ROSALIND: 10-4.

[phone clicks off]

BEA: Getting back to the matter at hand. What do you know about Ralph before UCLA?

BRENDA: Hell of a tight end. Not a euphemism. Real science whiz, also not a euphemism. Ron and Kathy are lovely.

BEA: His parents?

BRENDA: Yes, Ronald and Katherine Montgomery.

BEA: You know them?

BRENDA: Yes. I worked the case. At some point, you talk to the parents.

BEA: Yes, but they were driven out of town. Very unfairly, I'll add.

BRENDA: I'm sure they'd appreciate that aside.

BEA: No one's seen them in years, where are they?

BRENDA: Well I'm certainly not going to blurt it out on radio!

BEA: Can we get an interview?

BRENDA: Have some shame. Their son's torso was found in the trunk of a car.

BEA: Their son's alleged torso.

BRENDA: Really. With this again?

BEA: We don't know what happened! and now I find out you're off, what, swapping Christmas cards with every single person involved in the case.

BRENDA: First of all I think it would be in very poor taste if I sent them a *Christmas* card.

BEA: That's not what I-

BRENDA: Second, we're co-hosting this! You should be happy I have connections.

BEA: Can we talk to them?

BRENDA: Of course not.

BEA: Then it's not a connection! This isn't poker, you're not supposed to hide all the cards until the end. We're doing an investigation. We're making things clear for the audience so the story can be fully understood. You and your boss withholding-

BRENDA: Oh, I'm the withholding one? You won't even share air time with me!

BEA: I shouldn't even have to share airtime with you!

BRENDA: You know what you're being-

PAMELA: Talk about the drug dealing!

BRENDA: I don't think you want to get us started on the drugs again.

PAMELA: I want you to get started on the actual show we're recording.

BEA: Right. Of course.

PAMELA: We're going to cut all this, obviously.

BRENDA: We're here now with Vince Volio, whom you might remember from earlier as being an awesome source.

BEA: We don't rank sources.

BRENDA: But if we did, Vince would win. Vince, what can you tell us about the drug thing?

VINCE: Man.

BRENDA: I know, I know, but people are so quick to use it to discredit Ralph, and that's not fair. It's not like he was smuggling huge amounts.

VINCE: Right! It was just dime bags, and a little bit of X at parties. But he never took them out of the country or dealt to kids.

BEA: Just college students.

VINCE: Yeah, dumb kids with money. UCLA was expensive man. I'm still ducking Sallie Mae. They're not listening, are they?

BEA: Sallie Mae's always listening.

VINCE: That's the truth.

BRENDA: He get good money hanging out in Beverly Hills?

VINCE: You know it. Not only are those kids loaded, and love to get loaded, they all bought their way into school so they couldn't count for shit. I bet a smart guy like Ralph was cleaning up on them.

BRENDA: He ever throw that money around?

VINCE: Never! He was also fronting like he was strapped for cash. Last day I saw him, we went to get food, and he asked for me to cover him. He was like "come on, man, it's Christmas!" He was always pulling that, but he'd been so flakey lately that I didn't want to ruin the vibe, and I just bought him the damn mozzarella sticks. I'm glad I did, you know. If I'd missed my last chance to buy my man some sticks? That shit would haunt me.

BRENDA: I can't imagine. He must have really been scared to pull out all his cash then, if he was so protective of it.

VINCE: He must have been terrified of something!

BRENDA: You don't think it was Frankie?

VINCE: (scoff) Frankie was a punk. I don't care if she hears that, she's got like kids and an insurance job now.

BEA: And Frankie was... the source?

VINCE: Yeah. Real tough girl, had some connects - some pretty nasty ones, actually. But she cleaned up! Congrats to Frankie.

BRENDA: Then who? Frankie's connects?

VINCE: Beats me. You know Ralph: he was unknowable.

BEA: Deep.

[recording stops. Recording returns later]

BRENDA: So, there you have it, confirmed by our BEST source. Ralph was dealing weed and ecstasy to college students, but he wasn't a hardened criminal. He wasn't the type to spend his money on nonessentials. He did seem scared, and of something way bigger than just a fellow student. And he was dealing in Beverly Hills, which means many of the accounts of him "lurking" around Julie's side of town might have had bupkis to do with her at all. Because not everything revolves around Julie Capsom.

What did you get from your interviews, Casely? An exclusive on the double meanings in "Clearing?"

BEA: Did you just "good cop" that guy?

BRENDA: No! I don't need to be a "good cop."

BEA: You heard it here first, folks. Brenda Bentley's not a good cop.

BRENDA: That's not-

BEA: Don't worry. They're going to cut that out.

BRENDA: Oh good. Thanks guys!

BEA: So the question is: did Ralph and Julie actually go on a date?

BRENDA: The answer is: Yes.

BEA: A little anticlimactic, but yes. On November 5th, 2006, Ralph and Julie went to dinner at a nice little ramen shop downtown - a bit ahead of the curve, as ramen didn't really take hold until about ten years later.

BRENDA: I still don't get it.

BEA: You have no taste.

They spent two hours there with noodles and sake. Even though they were both underage, Julie still got them drinks. And by all accounts, it was a pleasant night. And then...

BRENDA: And then, for a few months, they occasionally get drinks. Do karaoke. Normal teenager stuff. Then they stop doing it.

VINCE: I dunno why. Thoughts things were going real well, but one day Ralph comes back from karaoke and he and Julie are no longer seeing each other. Real dark look on his face.

NATALIE: She said Ralph wasn't for her. It was kid stuff - things just don't work out, y'know?

BEA: And then what?

DEEPAK: Julie and I get back together - well, as together as we're going to be. But I see him around sometimes.

SEAN: I'd get a glimpse of this guy Ralph, outta the corner of my eye at parties and things. Just... there. Felt like he was keepin' an eye on me, aight? 'S weird.

NATALIE: I asked Julie about it, she blew it off. Said she was fine with him being there. Not that they ever really talked to each other. But she said, if he wanted to hang out at her parties, she wasn't gonna stop him.

BEA: And for awhile, things just stayed like that. Julie dated other guys, Ralph stayed in her orbit, but not close by. They separate for the summer, start their sophomore year, everything seems normal.

BRENDA: Until November 14, 2007, when out of nowhere Tyrell Capsom barges into one of Ralph's classes and just beats the [bleep] out of him.

VINCE: It was crazy! Tyrell just had these real wild bloodshot berserker eyes - Ralph got in some good blows, but Tyrell was like a viking, man - you did not mess with him.

BRENDA: Do you think Tyrell could've done it?

VINCE: I'd thought he had some kind of alibi.

BRENDA: He did, but we could see if it holds up.

BEA: But yes, Tyrell attacks Ralph, screaming at him to get away from Julie. And at this point - everyone agrees that both Julie and Ralph's attendance drops precipitously.

NATALIE: Julie - she'd been staying at home a lot - like, since early November-ish? Maybe a week before the fight? It was weird. Yeah, she was kind of a homebody, but this was different. It was like her parents were holding her prisoner.

DEEPAK: She'd still come out on dates with me, but honestly, I felt like we were being watched.

BEA: By whom?

DEEPAK: Her family? Maybe Ralph?

BEA: Because yes, Ralph is seen in Beverly Hills a lot --

BRENDA: Possibly selling drugs!

BEA: And less so at his classes. Many think he was stalking her.

BRENDA: I see why people think that. But I trust Vince. And Vince says--

VINCE: My man wasn't a stalker.

BEA: But all agree - both were behaving wildly out of character in the final days leading up to the disappearance. And that is what we will cover... next time, on Arden.

BRENDA: Phew! I think that does it, right?

BEA: Can we please get to that cabin now?

BRENDA: Why Casely...

BEA: I'm trying to share air time with you. Don't make me regret it.

BRENDA: I probably will.

BEA: Thank you for your honesty.

BRENDA: Next stop, the cabin!

[theme music plays]

[theme music is cut off]

[sound of someone bursting in the door]

POINS: Stop this immediately --

BEA: The hell is this?!

POINS: Shut it down now.

BEA: Pamela!

BRENDA: Listen, pal --

POINS: No, you listen to me. My name is Aaron Poins, and I represent the family of the late Julie Capsom. And this is a mockery of her memory - demeaning to the family, dragging up old wounds --

BRENDA: Oh, right. You're the bagman!

POINS: I am an attorney, and here!

BEA: What's this?

POINS: I am officially serving you a cease-and-desist.

BEA: Do you not see that we're recording.

POINS: Shut the damn recording off!

BRENDA: Don't shut it down -- Poins, buddy, you don't want to do this.

POINS: Please, Ms. Bentley, you trying to sweet-talk me or threaten me is a pointless endeavor. I have the full weight of the Capsom family behind me, and if you try to fight this, we will bury you.

BRENDA: Then I'm gonna have to do something stupid.

[sound cut]

BEA: On the next episode of Arden, Brenda does something stupid.

BRENDA: I'm going to call Andy Wheyface.

BEA: I just wanted to go to the stupid cabin already.

ANNONCER: 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.

Wheyface Industries. The good people.

[END OF EPISODE 2]