

## Bluff City 34: To Be Young Near the Shore Pt. 03

Transcriber: robotchangeling

**Austin (as Bryan):** Angie. [sighs] Yeah, hey. Are you...do you have any time? I got some...some... [sighs] There's some kids here with some photos of what they say might be a missing person.

**Jack (as Frankie):** [whispering] It's a ghost.

**Austin (as Bryan):** And that's— [to Frankie] shh. And that's why I thought maybe you would be interested. Should I send them up? [pause] I would say they're like nine, ten. They're little. They're like little children. [Keith laughs loudly]

**Sylvia (as CC):** [outraged] I'm twelve!

**Austin (as Bryan):** One of them says—

**Keith (as Nolan):** I'm ten.

**Austin (as Bryan):** Ten, yeah.

**Jack (as Frankie):** I'm eleven.

**Austin (as Bryan):** They're ten. [pause] Yeah, they seem...they watch the news is what I'll say, so.

[music begins: [“To Be Young Near the Shore”](#) by Jack de Quidt]

**Keith (as Nolan):** We found a ghost.

**Austin (as Angie):** You found a ghost. He said it was a missing person.

**Dre (as Robbie):** Well, it's a ghost, but it's of a missing person.

**Austin (as Angie):** A ghost of a missing person. Okay. Well, let me see here.

**Sylvia (as CC):** You wouldn't have heard if somebody reported someone around our age missing or something?

**Austin (as Angie):** Someone *your* age missing?

**Sylvia (as CC):** Like the girl in the picture. Like have you heard anything about Britney Namor?

**Austin (as Angie):** I don't know anything about your friend, but I do have to make a quick call, and I will let you know if I hear anything, and I'd like for you to just stay here, if that's okay.

**Austin:** The folders are weird. It's weird stuff folders. It's—

**Keith:** Oh, these are weird stuff folders?

**Austin:** A blurry folder of a UFO.

**Keith:** Nice.

**Austin:** It is a sketch of some sort of creature. It is a photo of a lion. But like, nothing new. These are the notes of a resigned conspiracy theorist who still believes but doesn't believe that pursuing any of it will get anywhere. You find a letter here from Blossom Investigations with the same logo, and it has an address. If you share this information later with Ronnie, he would recognize it as the airfield that his aunt works at. And it says: "Need to go for a little while. We were wrong about who it is. -H." And you see a photo of a fifteen-year-old girl that says "Ollie McGowan," and it says underneath it, "If you see any sign, call OSR," but then underneath, it says, "Detain anyone who has seen her."

**Dre (as Robbie):** We gotta go.

**Sylvia (as CC):** Yeah, we got...

**Dre (as Robbie):** She called somebody. They're coming to get us. We gotta go.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Yeah, we gotta go. They're gonna detain us.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Uh, excuse me, Cam.

**Austin (as Cam):** Yeah, what can I do for you?

**Keith (as Nolan):** I don't mean to...there's some adults that have been bothering us, and I think they're following us. Could you just maybe give 'em the slip?

**Austin (as Cam):** That's a little risky.

**Keith (as Nolan):** There's an extra 20 in it for ya if you give 'em the slip.

**Austin (as Cam):** Here's the school. Give me my money. [Jack laughs]

**Keith (as Nolan):** Okay.

**Austin:** It's like \$13. It's not a far ride, so he's very happy he made that \$25 tip, so.

**Keith:** Okay, well, we'll give another 25, total for 50.

**Austin (as Cam):** Oh, I love it. Thank you.

**Austin:** And lets you all off at the middle school. Alright, so you're back at the middle school. What are you getting up to here? What's the plan?

**[music ends]**

**Keith:** Well, I just wanted to come here in case...

**Austin:** Was this just a hiding spot? Yeah.

**Keith:** This was in case we couldn't get...

**Austin:** All the way home.

**Keith:** Right, well, in case we couldn't get—

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** —away from the town car, I didn't want to lead them back to our houses.

**Austin:** Yeah, I got you.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** I got you.

**Dre:** But...

**Jack:** We need to do a normal scene, right?

**Austin:** We need to do, at this point, whatever scene makes sense to you at this point.

**Dre:** I was gonna say, if we're at the school after hours, maybe we could try to find student records for Britney.

**Jack:** Ooh, shit!

**Austin:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I like that idea.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And we're close to the airport, so we can swing by the airport afterwards, maybe.

**Austin:** You can also do that. Yeah. This is why I was like...the momentum we have now is why I was trying to see if we wanted to do a slow everyday scene at the beginning, because I knew once we were on the hunt, it would be hard to pump those brakes. [Jack laughs] But it's hard to see us pumping the brakes at this particular moment, so yeah, middle school. What is the...you all go to the front door. The door's still open. There's still some after school activities. It hasn't been shut down yet, right? You know, there's a sports field nearby.

**Jack:** What activities?

**Austin:** It's a school, so.

**Jack:** A wind band.

**Austin:** And it's next to a high school, so it's like...

**Keith:** Mock trial.

**Austin:** Yeah, mock...like, junior mock trial. Actually, I would say for middle school, probably just debate club.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Austin:** The high school definitely has a mock trial. You know, there's probably a few different sports. They probably share facilities with the high school sports, but the high school sports get priority for most of it, so they have slightly...you're kind of stuck in the corner of the football field running smaller drills or whatever. Yeah, there's a band. I mean, you're in the band, so probably not band practice right now?

**Keith:** Robotics club.

**Jack:** Oh, robotics club.

**Austin:** Probably a robotics club that has some...I mean, here's the thing. I think a bunch of these clubs are corporate sponsored.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Jack:** Acura.

**Austin:** Because all of the direct— [laughter] yeah, Acura.

**Dre:** Fuck.

**Austin:** Acura's robotics club. Mm-hmm. That's not gonna make sense to anyone until they hear a future clapcast. [Dre sighs]

**Keith:** [laughs] And by the time they hear the Clapcast, they'll have totally forgotten!

**Austin:** Right, what the fuck is...yeah, a hundred percent. There's also...the point here is these are not well-funded schools. These are not...the public school system here has been shot through at this point, and so the only way you're getting anything—

**Jack:** Right.

**Austin:** —is through corporate sponsorship or legacy funding or whatever. But like, the money is draining out of this town. And so yeah, you find your way back inside, and you know, you see some students and friends of yours who are packing up their things or some professors—not professors, teachers—talking to students after school or detention is still in session. You know, that's the vibe. But the sun is setting, because we said it was 4:00, almost 5:00, and it's the winter. So it's gonna get dark soon, and that'll be the time that they lock everything up, and so you have this little window of opportunity. What do you do?

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Austin:** Where do you go for these records?

**Dre:** I guess the main office?

**Austin:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I guess if there's...I know some schools have bigger archival rooms, but I think those are usually connected to the main office anyway.

**Austin:** Yeah. This school does have a main office with...I mean, you have to imagine this is not deep archival stuff that you're looking for. You're looking for an in-session student, you know? A student from now.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** So you're not gonna need to dig through some old files or whatever. I mean, the thing is the main offices are, I would say, you know, maybe there's four or five people who work in there on a given day, and two of them are probably still here. I bet the principal is still in the office, and then there is some sort of additional office worker, support staff person, like an administrator of some sort. I don't know enough about school admin jobs to know what that would be. Does anyone know about school jobs?

**Dre:** I mean, yeah, there's probably...depending on how big the school is, there's principal, maybe one or two vice principals.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** And then yeah, there's probably a handful of, like you said, office support people. I feel like usually there's a specific secretary or something who's like the principal or the principal and vice principal's secretary, and there's a general secretary.

**Austin:** Yeah. I bet the general secretary is still here along with the principal, and the general secretary is in the large— there's the principal's office, and then in front of that office is the open floor of the secretaries and other support staff people. And the general secretary is there, unless there's another character that we've already established who I'm forgetting as a major NPC, but I don't think there is. I don't think the librarian is here. Though, I guess maybe we should—

**Keith:** Mr. Garrett's not here.

**Austin:** Garrett's not— I mean, Garrett might be...maybe Garrett is doing high school band today. Maybe there's an alternating day thing.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Austin:** Right? So he's across the street at the high school. Yeah, you know what? Let's just say the librarian is actually in this office at this point. The library's closed at this point. We're now after hours. And she is on her computer, which is this very fun '90s big desktop. It's one of those long and flat desktops, not a tower but like a tower on its side, you know?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And it has the big screen that's just curved a little bit in its design. You know, we haven't gone all the way to iMac yet, but we're getting there.

**Dre:** Right.

**Austin:** So yeah, she's right there, if you come in that room. Let's rewind a little bit and say you can see her through the blinds going into the offices, so you know that she's in there, and that's where we can come in. Miss Maxwell is her name.

**Keith:** So we're trying to sneak these records, right? This isn't...we're not just gonna ask, "Hey, can we have the records for Britney..."

**[Timestamp: 0:10:05]**

**Austin:** Britney Namor.

**Keith:** Britney Namor?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Hey, Nolan. You get in trouble a lot, right? [Sylvia laughs] Like, you've been to the principal's office?

**Keith (as Nolan):** Not *a lot* a lot.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** But you've been in there, right?

**Keith (as Nolan):** Yeah, I've been in there.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** So you know how they say like "this is going on your permanent record," so you've probably seen where the permanent record is, right?

**Keith (as Nolan):** They don't say that.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Oh.

**Keith (as Nolan):** That's TV.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Okay. I just figured they had probably marked on your permanent record, and you would know where they keep that stuff.

**Keith (as Nolan):** [disappointed] No. They never mark anything in front of you.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Well, is there...

**Keith (as Nolan):** And my mom said permanent record's not real.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Okay, but do you know if there's a...like, where they keep...like is there a room back there where there's lots of paperwork? Didn't you say one time you got in trouble and they made you make like 300 copies or something after school?

**Keith (as Nolan):** Yeah, they made me make a bunch of copies for quizzes and stuff for teachers.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Okay, so was the copier by any records or anything?

**Keith (as Nolan):** Hmmmm, it's mostly by a recycling. There's cabinets, but...

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Hmm.

**Keith (as Nolan):** The only person I ever see signing anything is the secretary.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Hmm. They probably keep them...they're probably not cabinets. They probably keep 'em in a filing cabinet or something.

**Keith (as Nolan):** That's a kind of cabinet. I didn't say what kind of cabinet I was talking about. It's not filing cabinets though, you're right.

**Austin:** Mmm. [Dre laughs]

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Okay. Well, it sounds like we're gonna have to look around. I don't know, Frankie, can you keep the librarian busy?

**Jack (as Frankie):** I'm...

**Jack:** Frankie just, without missing a beat, just walks in.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Miss...

**Jack:** What was her name?

**Dre:** Maxwell?

**Austin:** Maxwell.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** One of you has a bond with her.

**Jack:** I have a max— I have a Maxwell with her.

**Dre:** It is Frankie, right? Yeah.

**Austin:** It's you, yeah, mm-hmm. The inter-library loans.



**Jack (as Frankie):** Miss Maxwell, I have a question.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Oh, uh...Miss Already. How can I help you?

**Jack:** [sighs] I'm just—

**Austin:** Frizzy hair, sweater, you know, dress shirt under the sweater.

**Jack:** I mean, I think...this isn't the focus of the scene, I'm just trying to distract her.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** So I think she probably just says something like:

**Jack (as Frankie):** Miss Maxwell, have you ever seen a ghost?

**Jack:** Just like, precocious child trying to talk to teacher person who likes them or whatever.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. And she says:

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Of course I've seen a ghost.

**Jack (as Frankie):** [gasps]

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Ghost are everywhere, Miss Already, and you have to be very careful around them, or else they'll get you.

**Jack (as Frankie):** You're messing with me.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** I am absolutely not messing with you.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Okay, then you're talking about like a metaphor or something. You're gonna be like [mocking] "ghosts are books" or something.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** [overlapping] No, I'm talking about... [laughter] I mean, of course there are haunted books, but that's different, or that's a subset—if you've learned what subsets are—of ghosts. There are lots of different types of ghosts. All of them will get you. [Jack and Keith laugh]

**Keith:** Holy shit.

**Jack (as Frankie):** What do you mean get me?

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** They will—

**Jack:** This is the greatest woman we've ever met.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** If you run afoul of a spirit, it will consume your soul and eradicate you. [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** What's that haunted noise? Did anyone else hear that haunted noise?

**Jack:** Yes!

**Austin:** That's a train passing by.

**Dre:** Can you hear that?

**Keith:** Trains are inherently haunted.

**Austin:** Yeah, we can hear that.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Dang.

**Keith:** It's a shorter list to name the trains that aren't haunted.

**Austin:** [laughs] Uh huh, it's true.

**Jack:** Sangfielle!

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Available now! [Austin laughs]

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Do you have any other questions, Miss Maxwell? Or, Miss Already? [Sylvia laughs]

**Jack:** You're Miss Maxwell. She's terrifying.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Yes, I'm Miss Maxwell.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** Do I have any questions for me? Hmm. [Austin laughs]

**Jack (as Frankie):** [concerned] Do you know anybody who got erad— did you say eradicated?

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** [matter-of-factly] Of course. [Dre laughs]

**Sylvia:** What?

**Keith:** [laughs] It is like...Frankie's so surprised by this, so I can only assume up to this point, this librarian that she has a pretty good relationship has been a hundred percent normal librarian, [Jack and Sylvia laugh] and then all of a sudden is like, "Oh yeah, ghosts? They'll kill ya. Better watch out. Better not cry."

**Austin:** Yeah. 'Cause you never asked about ghosts before. Mostly—

**Dre:** "And I saw it happen six times!"

**Austin:** Uh huh, yeah.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [hushed] CC, I don't want to break into the school anymore. [Sylvia laughs]

**Sylvia (as CC):** There's not ghosts. She's just saying that so people don't look at her weird books. [Keith laughs]

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [hushed] There are ghosts! We saw two of them! [Austin laughs softly] We were that close to getting—

**Sylvia (as CC):** Well, one of those was Britney. Britney's not a ghost.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Well, they could've eradicated us. Maybe that's what happened to Britney.

**Sylvia (as CC):** I don't want to get eradicated.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Especially not my soul. I need that. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Is there anything else, Miss Already?

**Jack (as Frankie):** When you've...so, hypothetically. [Sylvia laughs] When you...

**Jack:** 'Cause it's one thing to talk to an adult who doesn't believe you. [laughter]

**Jack (as Frankie):** So if you...if you think you've been...do ghosts like mark you? Or if I see one and it doesn't see me, am I fine? Like, how would I sort of [deep breath] protect—

**Austin:** She stands up to do something very mundane like move a paper to the copier or something, but as she does, she stands up and puts her hands down on the table, and says:

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Of course they can mark you, Miss Already. And if they do, there's no escaping them.

**Austin:** And goes over to make a copy.

**Sylvia:** Oh my god! [Dre laughs]

**Jack:** Frankie is now on the verge of some sort of panic attack.

**Jack (as Frankie):** [panicked] How do you know if they've marked you?

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Oh, you can't tell. [Sylvia and Dre laugh loudly]

**Jack (as Frankie):** Is there a spell you can do? Is there like a book? How do— are you being hunted by a ghost?

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Not now.

**Sylvia:** What?!

**Jack (as Frankie):** So, did you get rid of it?

**Austin:** Sits down.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Miss Already, please use your indoor voice. [laughter]

**Keith:** [hushed] Ask her if she's a ghost.

**Jack (as Frankie):** You're not...do you talk to the other teachers about this?

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** [taken aback for the first time] About ghosts? No! None of them are interested. Frankly, I'm not either. They're one thing in a million. Why waste your time on ghosts when there's—

**Sylvia:** What?

**Keith:** Books.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** —good music or books or any other thing to spend your time with?

**Jack (as Frankie):** ‘Cause they might be hunting you, Miss Maxwell. And then they’ll eradicate your soul!

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Wolves might be hunting you.

**Jack (as Frankie):** No, they won’t. We live in Atlantic City. [all laugh]

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Miss Already, I’m afraid to tell you, there are wolves here too. Be careful in the woods.

**Jack:** Just utter shock and bemusement on Frankie’s face. I mean, do you want me to roll to distract her, or...

**Austin:** Yeah, I...this, uh huh.

**Keith:** No, this is the game now, is talking to Miss Maxwell.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** [laughs] Uh huh, yeah.

**Jack:** [laughs] We’ve found the character.

**Austin:** There’s a very important...Miss Maxwell is...yep, mm-hmm. Give me a roll. What are you rolling? Charm? What’s up?

**Dre:** If you don’t want to distract her, I think it...I was also wondering at some point, at what point does Ronnie just bust in and be like:

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [rushed, panicked] “Okay, we saw two ghosts, and one of ‘em was a student who used to live here, and I think she got her soul eradicated, and we don’t want to get our soul eradicated. You’ve gotta help us.”

**Jack:** Okay, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Oh, that’s really good.

**Jack:** I think...oh man. I think Frankie takes a breath to say this, and then Ronnie arrives.

**Austin:** And Ronnie, what do you do?

**Dre:** [laughs] I say what I just said in a very panicked voice.

**Austin:** Gotcha, yeah.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Show her the picture, Frankie. Show her the picture.

**Jack:** Frankie gets the picture out, drops it, picks it up again.

**Austin:** You don't have the picture. You sold the picture.

**Keith:** No, it's a copy.

**Jack:** We sold a copy of the picture.

**Austin:** Oh, I didn't know that you still had other copies with you. I thought you had those at home or something.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Austin:** But no, that makes sense.

**Jack:** I assume I'm carrying it around.

**Austin:** Yeah. She takes a look at it, and she says:

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** I could see where these could be ghosts.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Wait, so...

**Austin:** Hands it back to you.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** You don't think they're ghosts?

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** I could see that they could be.

**Keith (as Nolan):** That student goes here.

**Austin:** Looks closer.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** No.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Yeah, they made you forget.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** The ghost made me forget?

**Keith (as Nolan):** Check the files.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Something did.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Okay, um. What is the student's name?

**Sylvia (as CC):** Britney Namor.

**Austin:** Pulls up...

**Sylvia (as CC):** I went to her birthday party last year.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Britney Namor.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** How many of there are you?

**Sylvia (as CC):** Don't worry about it.

**Keith:** [laughs] We just keep popping out from the side. [laughter]

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** All of you come out. And be quiet, the principal is working.

**Keith:** There's a hundred more where we came from.

**Austin:** Yeah. And opens the records on the computer and types in the name Namor. A name comes up. It is Britney's older sister, who I think was named Jessica? I think it was Jessica. Jessica or Jenny. It's a J name.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** No Britney.

**Jack (as Frankie):** If a ghost eradicate— [quieter] Sorry. I'm sorry. Sorry.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Please.

**Jack (as Frankie):** If a ghost eradicated you, would it not just make you disappear? Could it not just make you disappear? Could it make you disappear from people's memories of you, from the records, from everything like that?

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** That seems beyond a ghost's ken.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Okay, but who could do that?

**Keith (as Nolan):** Who's Ken? [Sylvia and Austin laugh]

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** [hesitates] Well, that's a more complicated question, children. And I don't think I know that you're ready to hear about—

**Sylvia (as CC):** You know a lot about ghosts, though!

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** I do.

**Sylvia (as CC):** Okay. I'm just saying, you might know.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Mmm. The sort of...

**[Timestamp: 0:20:00]**

**Austin:** Looks back at the picture and says:

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** This is a student who went here is what you're saying.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Yes.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** I can see the uniform matches. Probably played with her in band.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Yeah.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Yeah.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Because three of you are in band. I know this about you.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Oh, yeah.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** It's simple deduction. The sort of thing that could do what you're saying is not the sort of thing you should be involved with. I advise that you go back to your homes and focus on your studies and live very boring lives.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** But if it's marked us, then you said we can't get away.

**Sylvia (as CC):** Also like, wait, what type of thing? That makes it sound like you know what type of thing it is.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** I know what *type* of thing it could be. I don't know what thing it is.



**Keith (as Nolan):** What's the type? What's the subset? We learned about that. [Dre and Austin laugh]

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** [sighs] There are things in this world that are much scarier than ghosts.

**Jack (as Frankie):** What?

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** And...

**Keith (as Nolan):** Taxes. That's what my mom says.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** [sighs] You know? She isn't wrong. In some ways, I do think that it might be the case that taxes doomed your friend Britney here.

**Jack (as Frankie):** [baffled, alarmed] What? [Keith laughs]

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** In any case, I have quite a bit more to do today, so if there's any other basic questions, if you need me to get you a book, I can get you anything from interlibrary loan, otherwise I'll have to ask you to leave.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [hushed] Should we read about taxes?

**Keith (as Nolan):** Would reading about taxes help or would that be a waste of time?

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Please, I am telling you the best advice I can give you. Go home. Watch your favorite television show. Spend time with your loved ones. Let this exit your mind. And move on. The world already has.

**Sylvia (as CC):** This is why nobody goes to the library!

**Sylvia:** And then CC leaves. [Keith laughs, Austin chuckles]

**Jack (as Frankie):** She doesn't mean that.

**Keith:** This is also why the people that come to the library come to the library. [Austin laughs softly]

**Jack (as Frankie):** Okay, look. We're gonna go, and we're gonna...we're not gonna look into this. But, if something happens or if something finds us or if it starts getting dangerous, is there any...can you do anything for us? Is there a number we can call?

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** You seem to have me confused for emergency services. That's not...

**Jack (as Frankie):** You're the only person who I have ever spoken to who has believed us when we talk about this stuff, and you have just told me that there is something extremely dangerous out here that we're involved with, you know, whether we like it or not.

**Keith (as Nolan):** You're also an adult teacher, and you're supposed to be a helper.  
[Austin laughs softly]

**Jack (as Frankie):** I'm asking you to help us.

**Jack:** I'll make a Charm check.

**Austin:** Go for it. What are you rolling? And you take plus one from Nolan's "you're supposed to be a helper." [Keith laughs]

**Jack:** I'm gonna roll Charm, so that is Heart three.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Charm one, four, five.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. No. No sixes. You gonna Luck?

**Jack:** Uh...ooh.

**Austin:** You gonna Pride?

**Jack:** Which is more narratively interesting? Is it more narratively interesting to have a brief door of understanding with an adult close?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Or is it more interesting to put up a flag to keep this incredible NPC in the story? [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** Up to you.

**Keith:** Yeah, I think those are both good.

**Jack:** Honestly, I'm gonna reroll it, because if it doesn't come up again...

**Austin:** Then that's the world telling us...

**Jack:** Also, you can...

**Keith:** We also did just have an adult who believed us have an opportunity with them close.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And you can color her response with that as well, if needs be, right?

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah, totally.

**Jack:** Five d6. Yeah, okay, that's one six.

**Austin:** That's a six. So that's Charming, right?

**Jack:** And this is just panic.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** But it's earnestness. I'm not trying to be charming. I'm genuinely frightened.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, right.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Here is my advice. If you want to ensure that you remain safe, stay in Atlantic City. Don't go through the tunnel again. My suspicion is that your friend—who I presumably would have remembered if not for whatever forces did this—was left behind, maybe during a field trip or a visit out of town.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** The band concert.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Band show.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** The band concert, sure. And...the safest thing you could do is stay here. If... [sighs]

**Austin:** The sort of thing she can offer is so much more...you're just children, you know?

**Keith:** You're saying that she has practical facts about...

**Austin:** She could like get you out of town, do you know what I mean? She could safely get you to another place.

**Jack:** She'd almost certainly own a gun or something.

**Austin:** Mmm, she could *get* you a gun. [laughs]

**Dre:** Jesus.

**Jack:** Right, it's also like—

**Austin:** But that's not what she would offer you, do you know what I mean? So, what specific thing are you looking for? You're looking for someone to help crack the case, right? But that's just not...

**Jack:** Or looking for a number to call, or a...in the event of like...if we were being pursued by...

**Austin:** Yeah, she gives you her number, but the thing that is hard is that like...

**Dre:** Well...

**Austin:** Go ahead.

**Dre:** Maybe she just gave us something by saying that, you know, she was left behind.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Jack:** Yep.

**Dre:** And so maybe our next thing is to go back to where we had the band concert.

**Jack:** I wanna check out the airport, but...

**Austin:** She's advising you not to go through the tunnel.

**Jack:** Yes.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Is most...also, she said left behind, but that felt like conjecture.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Austin:** That was not her giving you information she definitely knew.

**Dre:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** To speak in plain terms, she is someone who understands that there is weird shit in these cities and that the tunnel has fucked that up even more than it already was, and don't fuck with it, because...because. Maybe she'll just give you this. Maybe the best way to get here is for her to just say.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** You know, when I was quite a bit younger, I used to go between here and Bluff City and Blough City all the time. And now, a lot of people do that. The way I did it was very difficult. It's a long trip, you needed to bring a lot of snacks, and you couldn't really take any rest stops, so it was not a very comfortable trip. Today, people go back and forth, and sometimes...

**Austin:** She says:

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** People go back and forth, and it's much more convenient. You don't have to talk to a person like me at all. But...for all of it's convenience, it requires a great deal of, let's just say, technological...a great deal of technology. And sometimes that technology breaks. It's like a copy machine, right? A copy machine that has the proper toner...

**Austin:** And she goes over to it, right? and puts down a piece of paper with some words on it, and says:

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** With the right amount of toner and a properly calibrated camera and a clean surface, will make a copy as good and clean as the original work.

**Austin:** And hits the button, and a copy comes out.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** But if the settings are wrong...

**Austin:** And she hits some buttons on this copy machine.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Or if the camera isn't aligned right...

**Austin:** And she does a little tilt, a bump as if she's playing a pinball machine, and then hits the button again, and she says:

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Things come out wrong.

**Austin:** And the paper starts to come out, and then it doesn't even, it get stuck, and she says:

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Sometimes, there's a jam.

**Austin:** And she rips the paper out with her hands, and it tears, and you can see the ink has kind of spilled out and there's too much of it and all of that, right? And she says:

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** The old way was less convenient, but it was more reliable.

**Keith (as Nolan):** So when the copy machine is out of toner, sometimes it takes Britney?

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Yeah.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** It tears her in half?

**Keith (as Nolan):** It makes her play sax with a ghost?

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** No, it couldn't do that. If she was playing saxophone, if she was doing anything, she might be a ghost, but that sounds like a thing she would choose to do. Maybe she would be compelled to do something *like* play an instrument, but the particulars are left up to the ghost normally. A ghost might hunger for souls, but whose soul they choose or how they go about a haunting, who they mark, tends to be up to them. It's like hunger, you know. The hunger is in you, certainly, and it could compel you to make dinner or make a sandwich, but what's on that sandwich is up to you.

**[Timestamp: 0:30:17]**

**Jack:** She got frightening again towards the end of that.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** 'Cause she's talking about ghosts again. Ghosts sound scary.

**Jack:** Her specialist subject is... [laughs]

**Austin:** Mm-hmm! [chuckles]

**Keith (as Nolan):** But you don't think these are real ghosts. You think this is something else.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** I didn't say that.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Oh.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** I said that the threat might not be the ghosts.

**Keith (as Nolan):** But something else.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Not that these ghosts aren't threatening.

**Austin:** And looks back at the photo you handed her. She says:

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** I would steer clear. Seems unpredictable.

**Keith (as Nolan):** [clears throat] 50 bucks in it if you can tell me more. [laughter]

**Austin:** She shakes her head and says:

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Money isn't valuable. [Jack laughs]

**Keith (as Nolan):** Candy bar?

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** There is nothing you can give me.

**Jack:** I'm not gonna ask, but earlier, I think Dre was like, "ask her if she's a ghost." I didn't think she was back then. I'm starting to come back around. [Austin laughs] I don't think I have anything else that I want to do in the library. I would be up for claiming to Miss Maxwell that we're gonna go home but starting to make an effort into looking into the airfield. Or we go home and have a little scene at night and try and sneak out to look at the airfield at night, if we want to get back to home.

**Austin:** I will say, your parents are probably worried about where you are.

**Keith:** We—

**Jack:** Yeah, it might be worth checking in with them.

**Austin:** Especially for Nolan, who is grounded currently. [Keith and Jack laugh]

**Keith (as Nolan):** Two things—

**Austin:** In fact, I— yeah, go ahead.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Two things, Miss Maxwell. Are you a ghost?

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Of course not.

**Jack (as Frankie):** [sighs in relief]

**Keith (as Nolan):** And can you write me a note saying that I was here studying?

**Austin:** She squints at you and says:

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Were you studying?

**Keith (as Nolan):** I was in trouble with a ghost, and that seems like I can't tell my parents that.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** You should tell your parents about any trouble that you get into.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Mmm...they'll make me more in trouble if I say that it was because of a ghost, and I don't think that's fair.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Sometimes getting more in trouble is the safest thing you can do.

**Keith (as Nolan):** I understand why you would say that. Thank you anyway.

**Austin:** [chuckles] Alright. So yeah, do you head home for now for dinner?

**Jack:** Yeah, I'd be up for heading home for dinner, and then we can try and sneak out or...

**Austin:** Get a ride home from one of Theo's friends or whatever.

**Sylvia:** CC was making the phone call after she left.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Alright, so you head home. Let's have little dinner scenes. Does anyone go to their own home tonight? No one says like, "Oh, I'm going over so-and-so's house for dinner." We can just do individual stuff. I'm curious what the home life is like this next night.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Who wants to go first?

**Jack:** I think my family, I get in, and they were worried about where I was, but they're not massively worried.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** You know, I was able to say "I was off playing with my friends!" and they're like, "Oh, okay."

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And I think that, you know, we have dinner on our laps on trays—



**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** —watching game shows.

**Austin:** Yeah. In the middle of dinner, everyone's talking, TV trays are on and you're watching the TV, and some commercial comes on that gets everyone talking and shouting across— you know, you have brothers and sisters, you have siblings rather, right?

**Jack:** Oh, yeah, yeah. I have like four.

**Austin:** They're yelling about something or another, and then in the middle of all that, the commercial that you're in comes on, but no one notices it, because they're caught up in eating and talking and arguing about what the best taste of Pepsi is, what the best Pepsi taste is, 'cause there was a commercial that was just on that was like "What's your favorite Pepsi?" It's part of the new Your Favorite Pepsi campaign. [Jack laughs] And there's a big debate about what the best Pepsi was.

**Keith:** There's a new mango Pepsi. Have you seen this?

**Austin:** Yeah, see, this is what's happening at the table. [Keith laughs] But while that argument is happening, the TV commercial with you in it comes on. What was that for again?

**Jack:** I mean, I said it was for Hungry Hungry Hippos.

**Austin:** Yeah, okay, so that comes on. It's Hungry Hungry Hippos. It's a new edition of Hungry Hungry Hippos.

**Jack:** Hungrier hippos.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Ghost hippos.

**Austin:** And she looks right at you, and just is hitting the Hungry Hungry Hippo button, [slaps table repeatedly] you know, as the hippo is eating, but her eyes aren't on the game. All the other kids are looking at the game, but she's just looking right back at you, as the hippo—

**Keith:** Who is?

**Austin:** Frank is.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** On the TV, in the advertisement that she did not film.

**Jack:** I've never been on TV as far as I— no, I've been on TV once.

**Austin:** You've been on TV.

**Jack:** I shook Alex Trebek's hand.

**Austin:** Correct.

**Jack:** Just an absolute chill.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Just you know, like cold sweat.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** There is something very hostile in the look from the Frankie on the television.

**Austin:** Yeah, mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And I think Frankie I just immediately thinking of "they'll get you, and they'll eradicate your soul."

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** You can be marked without even knowing you've been marked.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm! Who's up next?

**Sylvia:** I kind of have one?

**Austin:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** I think that when CC gets home her parents only just notice that she wasn't home.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Because they've been busy with the move like usual, but also when CC comes home from school these days, she kind of just goes up to her room and ignores everything.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** So it's like, "Oh, you're home late." It's like:

**Sylvia (as CC):** [half-hearted] Yeah, I was at the library...

**Sylvia:** It's like, "Okay, we got takeout again," and it's like...I don't think it's the pizza again, I think it's Chinese food or something. Theo complained enough to Dad about it.

**Austin:** Uh huh. Theo does not stay and eat with you. The food comes in, and as the food comes in, Theo slips out the door, and you can hear the sound of a car starting up and Theo driving away. Theo doesn't say goodbye to anybody and just leaves. After...and the dinner is just very...it's one of those things like no one's talking about that that happened.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You know?

**Sylvia:** A lot of like, "We've been looking at new schools in the neighborhood that we're gonna be moving to, and I think..."

**Austin:** Yes, uh huh. Exactly. "They seem really good. They have a good band program."

**Sylvia:** Yeah, that's exactly where I went to.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. A hundred percent. Cool. Ronnie or Nolan?

**Dre:** I think when Ronnie gets home...I think the only person who could be home would be his aunt.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** I think his mom and his dad are at the hospital.

**Austin:** I was gonna say, I think your dad probably...yeah, that makes sense to me. Is your dad at the hospital for a scheduled treatment, or—

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Okay. Yeah, okay.

**Jack:** This is the airport aunt as well, right?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** This is the airport aunt, and I think she is like—

**Jack:** What's her name? Jane? Joan?

**Austin:** Jozy, Jozy.

**Jack:** Jozy.

**Austin:** Yeah, J-O-Z-Y I wanna say? And she's like:

**Austin (as Jozy):** Little Ronnie, how you doing today?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [sighs] Just alright.

**Austin (as Jozy):** Mm-hmm. Well, look, I got some mac and cheese going in the pot. And I...you know, I have to head off to work soon. You gonna be alright tonight?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Yeah. Um...hey, do you believe in ghost?

**Austin (as Jozy):** Do I believe in ghost or ghosts?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Wait, like...what's the difference?

**Austin (as Jozy):** Did you say ghost or ghosts?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Ghosts.

**Austin (as Jozy):** I believe in the holy ghost.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** No, but like the ghost of a person.

**Austin (as Jozy):** I believe there could be a ghost. You know, yeah, of course, there are hauntings and spirits and all sorts of dangerous things. You don't want to get messed up with any of that. You playing those games again?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** No. No. I have a friend, and she thinks she might be haunted.

**Austin (as Jozy):** Well, she should call the pastor.

**Austin:** Whose name I've already forgotten.

**Jack:** Hest, I think.

**Austin (as Jozy):** Pastor Hest and talk to the priest about that. I think spirits and spooks and things of that nature are best left to folks of the cloth to deal with.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Yeah.

**Austin (as Jozy):** Anyway, do you...I hate to do this. You remember that tape recorder I got you? For your birthday.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Yeah, what about it?

**Austin (as Jozy):** I left a note, but you know, I have to... [sighs] It turns out that I gave you the wrong one. [laughs] I had to get two of 'em, one for the office and one for here, for you. You know, I was buying the one for the office, and I thought, "Well, that would be a great gift for lil Ronnie," and so I got two of 'em, but it was the wrong one. There was one that has to go to the office, and that's the one that I gave you, so if you could give me that one back, I got the other one in my room. I can go grab it for you, give it to you over, and fix that right up.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Oh, um, I would, but I leant it to my friend CC.

**Austin:** Sounds like a lie to me.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** No, she's really into music and... [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** No, no, no, that was Austin talking.

**Dre:** Okay. [laughs]

**Austin:** That was Austin talking, saying...

**Jack:** [laughs] She got really antagonistic.

**Dre:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Austin:** Uh huh. Whew, let me tell you something, Ronnie.

**[Timestamp: 0:40:01]**

**Keith:** [laughing] I thought that was in character. I also heard it that way. It was so funny. [laughter]

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. Uh, Ronnie.

**Dre:** Oh, I'm bad at this.

**Austin:** [laughs harder] You're like the worst at this. You have a zero in Charm.

**Dre:** [laughs] Uh huh.

**Austin:** And a one in Heart.

**Dre:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** Oh dear.

**Austin:** It's a one die situation. You could use your Pride, "I ain't stupid." [laughs] But you could roll this one die, and see how it goes.

**Dre:** Yeah, let's see. Ah, close.

**Austin:** Ah! Five, so close. You could Luck, you could Pride, you could let it roll.

**Dre:** Nah, I'll let it roll.

**Austin:** You could also take a condition to reroll, but don't reroll one d6.

**Dre:** Yeah, no, no, no. No.

**Austin:** Don't do that. She says:

**Austin (as Jozy):** Don't lie to me, Ronnie. You're staying in my house.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Yeah.

**Austin (as Jozy):** Maybe you could lie under your own roof. Maybe your parents let you do that. I don't let anybody lie to me under my roof.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Okay, I just...

**Austin (as Jozy):** You're supposed to be an honorable man, Ronnie. Your father is sick.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [meekly] Okay, okay.

**Austin (as Jozy):** You want me to go tell him you're lying to me?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** No, let me go...

**Austin (as Jozy):** You know that would disappoint him.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** I know, let me...I was just worried that there was a difference between the two or something.

**Austin (as Jozy):** The one that you have will be just the same.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** How do you know which one's the office one?

**Austin (as Jozy):** Ronnie.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** No, I'm not— I'm just asking. You know, I like this kind of stuff. I like messing with stuff.

**Austin (as Jozy):** Uh huh.

**Austin:** You're gonna have to...she's not gonna give you more here.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** She says:

**Austin (as Jozy):** Ronnie, maybe if you'd come to me and asked me that before lyin' to me, then we coulda had a conversation. When a liar reveals themselves, I rebuke them, and it is only that you are family that I forgive you. Otherwise, I separate myself from them.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Okay.

**Jack:** God, we got some real doozies in this episode.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [meekly] Yeah, okay, let me...I'll go get it.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** What I want to do is go to the bathroom. [Sylvia laughs softly]

**Austin:** Mm-hmm?

**Dre:** And try to tinker with this tape recorder and figure out what's different about it.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Dre:** See if there's anything inside or whatever.

**Austin:** Yeah, totally. Tinker is what? Is Tinker Mind?

**Dre:** It's Tech. I think, right?

**Austin:** Oh right, Tech is a skill, right, is an attribute.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Tech Tinker, three plus two. Five. Let's see.

**Dre:** That's better.

**Austin:** There's a six. Alright. So yeah, you pop this thing open. I'm imagining it as just like an old big cassette player, right?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** A Walkman-style thing. And there is a second microphone kind of underneath the first, basically, or next to the first, sharing the microphone slot so to speak. You know how on the outside of something like this there are the little perforations on the shell—

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** —that would let the microphone pick up sound through it? It's like there's two little microphones there, and one of them goes into a...they both go to the tape deck part, but one of them has a...how do we differentiate these wires in a fun way? Is it the material or is it the color that they are? Maybe there's a like a bright blue, a light bright blue from the second microphone that just feels out of place compared to the rest of the cables and cords in here. There's a second electronics board, and it looks way more advanced than anything you've seen before.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Austin:** And on that device is...I don't think there's any branding on it. But yeah, you just see that there's this second microphone that seems like it's designed to pick up something else, right?

**Dre:** Can I take that out?

**Austin:** Sure. Totally, you've succeeded at this roll.

**Dre:** Okay.



**Austin:** So yeah, you can totally swap that out and then go back and give it to her with the—

**Dre:** I also want to make sure I keep the tape that had the band performance on it.

**Austin:** Oh yeah, oh yeah, totally, totally.

**Keith:** She's gonna get in trouble at work.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. [Keith laughs]

**Dre:** Shouldn't have been so mean!

**Austin:** You go back over and hand her the thing, and she says:

**Austin (as Jozy):** That's a good boy, Ronnie. You know what? It takes...I'm glad you did this, and your father doesn't have to hear about it. Your mother doesn't have to hear about it. Now eat your macaroni and cheese, and I'm gonna head out to work. If you need anything, you have my number.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Okay.

**Austin:** You see her put on her jacket, and for the first time...you know what? She doesn't— no, she's just gonna go at this point. And she heads off. You know, she's putting on a— her jacket is like a field tarmac jacket, you know what I mean? for the airfield.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** For the Atlantic City Airfield. And, you know, heads off. You hear the deadbolt closing. She says:

**Austin (as Jozy):** Put the chain on!

**Dre (as Ronnie):** I will!

**Austin:** Okay. And she leaves. Nolan.

**Keith:** Hello.

**Austin:** You're grounded.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** How do you get back in without getting in trouble?

**Keith:** [sighs] Well, I assume...I guess I'm...okay. Here's what I'm thinking is that— this is my reasoning here.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** I don't come home, she's gonna know.

**Austin:** Oh yeah.

**Keith:** There's no way that I can just show up in my room and be like, "I was here the whole time, Mom. I don't know what you're talking about." I've just gotta— and on the off chance that that's possible—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** —the risk being that she would then figure out that I'm getting in and out of my room—

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** —without using the front door. I've just gotta walk in through the front door.

**Austin:** And just take your lumps.

**Keith:** Well, we'll see.

**Austin:** Uh huh. You come in—

**Keith:** I will still give it my best shot.

**Austin:** Uh huh. You come in, and your mom is like:

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** Ronnie, where have you been?

**Austin:** Not Ronnie. That's a different kid.

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** Nolan, where have you been?

**Keith (as Nolan):** [sighs] Hi Mom. Uh...

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** I was getting worried about you.

**Keith (as Nolan):** I know. I'm s—

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** You know that you're grounded.

**Keith (as Nolan):** I know.

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** You're not allowed to hang out with other kids right now except for at school, and I know it's not band day, so I know your friends weren't even there late.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Okay. Mom, I know that you know that I'm in trouble and that I would...  
[Austin and Keith laugh]

**Dre:** Great opening.

**Keith (as Nolan):** I know you know I'm in trouble, and because I'm in trouble in general, I would never want to risk getting in even more trouble with you. I would like to repair the trouble that I'm already in. But I just...I totally forgot I was grounded. It just totally slipped! Frankie— I'm gonna be totally honest with you, Frank found a ghost and took a picture of a ghost, and we were very excited about this, and I just lost track of time. We were in the library. You can call.

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** Looks at you. [sighs] You just forgot that you were grounded? That you were in trouble?

**Keith (as Nolan):** [innocently] I'm only ten years old. [Sylvia and Jack laugh]

**Dre:** I'm only this many. [Dre and Austin laugh]

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** It's very convenient, Nolan... [Keith laughs] that you have such a good memory some days and such a bad memory other days. You think your memory and my memory are different? We're both...whatever our last name is. What's our last name?

**Keith:** Pearson.

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** We're both Pearsons. We both have the Pearson vault.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Mom, you just forgot your last name! [Austin and Jack laugh]

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** It's an exception. [Austin laughing] You know Pearsons are so focused on details that we sometimes forget our names.

**Keith (as Nolan):** This is exactly what I'm talking about with the ghost! I saw the picture of the ghost, so focused on the details of the picture of the ghost, that I forgot about being grounded.

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** Well, listen. This is the last time. If you hang out with your friends again while you're grounded... *pffff, kuh.*

**Keith (as Nolan):** Big trouble.

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** Big trouble, mister.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Yeah, I agree. I cannot be allowed to—

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** Don't try to do one of these fliparounds with me. You can't shit a shitter, Nolan. Yeah, that's right. I used a bad word. Because this moment called for it. Which you're not allowed to do, because you're not an adult, and you don't know what moments call for it, but this is one of them. And only for me. Don't you use one of those words right now.

**Keith:** Nolan is both very...is anxious because he's being scolded but is also about to laugh because of his mom saying "shitter."

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** Now, go to your room and stay there.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Okay.

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** You know, I'm gonna have to call your friends' parents and let them know you're not allowed to...that you're grounded. I'm gonna have to. I'm sorry. That way they know you can't go over there for dinner or games. No more Monopoly nights.

**Keith (as Nolan):** I haven't done any games, promise.

**Austin:** That's not true. That's a lie.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Keith:** Well, I haven't done...I haven't gone to my friends' houses to do games at all.

**Austin:** [laughs] That...okay.

**[Timestamp: 0:50:00]**

**Austin:** She says.

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** Alright, your room, now. Spaghetti time soon, your room now.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Spaghetti spaghetti or other spaghetti?

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** We'll have to see.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Okay.

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** It was gonna be real spaghetti tonight, but now I'm not so sure.

**Keith (as Nolan):** I could go for pizza spaghetti.

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** *You* can go to your room.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Okay.

**Austin:** Alright.

**Jack:** Intense Brendon's mom energy. [laughter] What's her name?

**Austin:** Paula. Paula Small.

**Keith:** Oh yeah.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** Absolute classic television mom.

**Austin:** Alright. So is the plan to sneak out that night?

**Jack:** Yep! [Keith and Jack laugh]

**Austin:** How do you sneak out and how do you get across town? Or where are you going?

**Keith:** What is the plan right now? What are we doing as the...what is the next step?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Gotta go to the fuckin' airport, right?

**Austin:** Mmm.

**Jack:** There was the letter...so, there was the letter in the thing—

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** —that had the Blossom thing on it.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** There was all that shit that we overheard with...you know, we don't know what the Concern is, but we know there's some real business going on. There was the "if anybody comes to you with information about Olivia, detain them." All of that is pulling us towards the airport, especially along with, you know, potentially corroborating stuff from Ronnie, right?

**Austin:** The nametags also. The nametags were the first thing.

**Jack:** The nametags, yeah, right.

**Austin:** Yeah. That was the first.

**Jack:** I would be up for...hmm. What is a good way to cross an entire city quickly when [laughs] you're ten?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. When you're ten.

**Jack:** Well, it would be Theo, but Theo's not here. You know, he...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** He left.

**Keith:** Is using your Pride, is that once per mystery or once per...

**Austin:** It's once per mystery, once per mystery.

**Keith:** Okay. I have already used knowing the fastest way to all the best spots in the neighborhood.

**Austin:** Ah, hmm.

**Jack:** And that's the neighborhood. We need to, you know.

**Keith:** I think it still would have worked.

**Jack:** God, I mean, is one way of doing this that you just make us do a bunch of rolls, Austin, and we have a genuinely intrepid adventure?

**Austin:** I don't think that that's a particularly interesting way of doing it, because that's not the mystery.

**Jack:** No.

**Austin:** You know what I mean?

**Jack:** No, we'd just be rolling for like...to cross the street, you know.

**Austin:** Right, exactly. And it's a...we can...what I think would be interesting there would be a roll to do it. Maybe that is a leadership roll from someone.

**Jack:** Oh, I meant a bunch of rolls like when we were trying to evade Flores.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, totally. Yeah, I get it, but I'm saying...wait, do you mean one roll per person? Or do you mean a series of rolls?

**Jack:** One roll per person.

**Austin:** Yeah, okay, maybe it's that. And the cost really is a condition, right? Yeah, maybe it is something like that about getting there, because then there is that risk that yeah, just getting there was scary enough—

**Jack:** A sort of absurd nighttime adventure.

**Austin:** —that by the time you get there, yeah, exactly. And that nighttime adventure could be like taking the bus, getting— oh, here's something you do have, is money. [laughs]

**Jack:** Oh shit! Oh, we could call the—

**Austin:** You do have that cab.

**Jack:** We call him!

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. [all laugh]

**Sylvia:** Oh hell yeah.

**Austin:** God, what was his name? I've already forgotten.

**Dre:** Cameron Castle, yeah.

**Keith:** Cam Castle.

**Austin:** Cameron Castle. Cam Castle. I have to write him down, one second.

**Jack:** So, what was the name of his taxi company?

**Austin:** Uh...yeah, what was...

**Keith:** Castle's Cars.

**Austin:** Castle's Cars. Castle's Cars [starts laughing] and Coffee. [Keith and Jack laugh]

**Keith:** Does he deliver coffee to you?

**Austin:** Yeah, he has a coffee machine in the car. He didn't— no one—

**Dre:** It's hooked up to the car phone. Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Is it drip? What is it?

**Austin:** It's a secret! [laughs] That's what it says!

**Jack:** Beep beep beep beep beep beep.

**Keith:** A secret.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Keith:** How does it work? You'll never know!

**Austin:** How does it work? Delicious coffee!

**Dre:** God. I hope it's just a miniaturized one of those vending machines where it drops the cup in. [laughs]

**Austin:** Almost certainly, yeah, uh huh.

**Keith:** Can I tell you that I love those? I love those.

**Austin:** Ugh, I'm not surprised.



**Jack:** Oh, those are great. They make absolutely horrifying...the single worst coffee machine I've ever encountered was in the English building of the University Victoria.

**Keith:** But you know what they make okay?

**Jack:** What do they make okay?

**Keith:** They make an okay hot chocolate.

**Dre:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Austin:** Chocolate. Hot chocolate's good.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's actually pretty good. I would go for one of those right this second.

**Keith:** I wanna just go hang out in a Progressive Insurance office where I can get a hot chocolate for free out of those machines. [laughter]

**Austin:** Good.

**Keith:** They'll say, "Do you have an appointment?" I'll say, "Oh, I'm waiting for someone."

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. And you wait for the receptionist to change shifts.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And then you go like, "ope, yeah, bye," and you leave.

**Keith:** Yeah, just waiting for someone.

**Austin:** Just waiting, bye, gotta go.

**Keith:** Bye.

**Austin:** Those exist. The Greysand Paranormal has one of those machines, if I remember back.

**Jack:** Oh, it's haunted.

**Austin:** Yeah, it's haunted. Remember, ghosts can haunt anything.

**Jack:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** They can mark you, with their coffee or their hot chocolate.

**Jack:** They'll eradicate.

**Austin:** Anyway, yeah, so yeah, I think you call up Castle Cars & Coffee. Not since Chip Directly, I think...

**Jack (as Frankie):** Am I speaking to Cam?

**Austin (as Cam):** This is Mr. Castle.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Hi.

**Austin:** We don't need to do this. We need to get to the...

**Jack:** Oh. [laughs]

**Austin:** We have been going for over three hours.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** That was you saying we don't need to do this.

**Austin:** Yeah, no.

**Keith:** What if we just—

**Austin:** [laughs] Actually, it's very funny if Cameron, yeah, was just like:

**Austin (as Cam):** We don't need to do this. Tell me the address. You're those kids from before.

**Keith:** [laughs] Yeah, I remember you.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Jack:** Give us the slip.

**Keith:** Yeah, I don't have any other ten year old customers.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Into the car, across the city.

**Austin (as Cam):** Your parents okay with this?

**Jack (as Frankie):** Nope! [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin (as Cam):** That's...

**Keith (as Nolan):** Yeah, nope.

**Austin (as Cam):** Eh, that's gonna be double.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Fair enough.

**Keith (as Nolan):** We're just kidding, of course yes.

**Sylvia (as CC):** My parents are fine with it. Does that help?

**Sylvia:** It's a very blatant lie.

**Austin (as Cam):** Uhh...

**Keith (as Nolan):** Hey, we already gave you double last time, just out of niceness.

**Austin (as Cam):** No, that was 'cause of the slip.

**Keith (as Nolan):** No, I gave you a hundred percent tip!

**Austin (as Cam):** Yeah, well if I hadn't done the slip, you probably wouldn't've given me the tip. So, in some ways it was the slip.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Alright.

**Austin (as Cam):** See? I'm not asking for a bonus, I'm asking for just the fee. It's different than the bonus. This is the potential upset parents fee.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Okay, fair.

**Austin (as Cam):** Anyway.

**Keith (as Nolan):** The last time I'm honest for fun.

**Austin:** [laughs] Takes you to an off ramp that takes you to the airfield here. I should probably just draw that on here, because it's silly that the way this is currently set up looks like you have to go through the middle school to get to the place, you know? [laughter]

**Jack:** Fuckin' Sims City ass layout.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. There we go, that way and then similarly, you know. That's kind of a long one, but that's fine. Boom. So yeah, drives you up to the airfield, drops you off. Again, this is like a rinky dink little tiny place, no big airliners move out of this place, you know? This is all Cessnas and similar.

**Keith:** There's a little airport on the Cape that its only job is to take people on the like four minute flight to Martha's Vineyard.

**Jack:** Huh.

**Austin:** Right, totally. Is that...is Nantucket...no, Nantucket's off the Cape, right?

**Keith:** Those are both islands.

**Austin:** Okay, gotcha.

**Keith:** Yeah, separate islands.

**Austin:** 'Cause I was thinking about Wings. Do you know Wings, the 1990 TV series? [laughs softly]

**Keith:** Yes, yes, I know Wings.

**Austin:** I think it's that style of again super tiny nothing little, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah. Kylie worked at the Wings airport.

**Austin:** Ah, that's incredible.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Shoutouts to Kylie. I really liked Wings. I really liked staying home sick and watching Wings on USA.

**Keith:** Yeah. I also watched Wings on...um, maybe not on USA, maybe on the WB.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Austin:** Sure, yeah, that makes sense, yeah. Anyway, so yeah. And that means that it's dark in there, right? I'm imagining again as you walk, I think that Cam calls out and says:

**Austin (as Cam):** Uh, give me a ring if you need to get picked back up. I'm working all night. I got a couple other customers lined up, but I should be free in about 45 minutes.

**Keith (as Nolan):** How much?

**Austin (as Cam):** Same.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Okay.

**Keith:** I give him—

**Austin (as Cam):** Uh— you know what, I already said same. You get the same rate. Lock me in. Lock me in, same rate, even if there's another slip situation.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Oh.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Okay.

**Austin (as Cam):** Open my fat mouth, I swear. [sighs]

**Keith (as Nolan):** [laughs] Hey, you know, no one would ever say you're not fair, Cam.

**Austin (as Cam):** You know, that's what I prize above everything else. Fairness, good coffee, and reliability.

**Keith (as Nolan):** In that order.

**Austin (as Cam):** That's the order.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Can I get a coffee, by the way?

**Austin (as Cam):** No. You're a kid. [all laugh for an extended period]

**Jack:** We've known this—

**Austin:** Drives away, vroom. Drives away! [laughter continues] Ahh.

**Jack:** Cold overhead lights of the airport. Four children standing next to a chain link fence.

**Austin:** Uh huh!

**Keith:** This guy's moral boundaries are extremely diagonal. [laughter continues]

**Sylvia:** It's so good.

**Austin:** Ah, he's good! Nice, I like him.

**Dre:** Man's gotta have a code, you know?

**Austin:** A man's gotta have a code! [more laughter]

**Keith:** Even if that code starts and stops with kids are not allowed to have coffee.

**Austin:** Yeah, a hundred percent, yeah. So, you go into the front of the airport lobby here. I keep saying airfield because it does not have the capacity of an airport, which is to say, you know, there's a TSA agent leaned against a metal detector, but there's *no one* else here. There are not incoming or outgoing flights this hour, you know? Sees you all come in, but is mostly half napping by the scanners. There is a...you know, a couple of reception desks. Most of them are closed, 'cause there's just not any incoming or outgoing flights. You know, one of them is open maybe, and that's like, you know...I almost just said Sandpiper Airways, but that's just because that's the name of the one from...

[Timestamp: 1:00:45]

**Jack:** Better Call Saul?

**Austin:** From Wings, no.

**Jack:** Oh.

**Austin:** Oh, is it from Better...is that what it's called in...

**Jack:** Sandpiper is the retirement home in Better Call Saul.

**Austin:** I gotcha, I gotcha. That's very funny. Yeah, you know, let's say that this is Cranberry Airways, right? And it's really just like...what it is is it's an airline owned by someone whose family made a bunch of money in cranberries, and now as a pet project he started his own little mini airline, and he is the one manning the reception area, and he is also just staring at a screen. No, he's looking at his phone. No, he's looking at a little TV on the desk, and he's watching like the football game or the baseball game, or I guess, what is it? It's winter, so it's a basketball game probably, right? this time of year. And is just kind of zoned out at this point and does not even notice you all come in.

**Keith:** This is—

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [whispers] Listen, we can't—

**Keith:** The sort of airport this is, because I know about Kylie working at the Wings airport—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** This is the job where she used to bring in her WiiU to plug into the wall and play games on the WiiU.

**Austin:** Oh, yes! A hundred percent, this is that place, yes.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And yeah, there are some offices and stuff. I actually imagine there is a second floor here that has office spaces that you can...I mean, in this case they're office spaces to rent, and most of them are empty. You find a sign that says like, you know, "Upstairs offices: vacant, vacant, vacant, vacant." One of them is tied to one of the...it is the Cranberry Airways private offices, one of them is the Atlantic City Airfield office, and then one of them does say Blossom Investigations.

**Jack:** Hmm.

**Austin:** Actually, it doesn't say the word, it just has the logo. It just has that cherry blossom blossom. Which is...you know, for people listening, I didn't describe what it was, I just dropped it into our private chat. It's just this bright red and gold five-petal design. And it could be any—the fact that it's a cherry blossom is not important to me so much as just this very iconic look. Five petals, gold in the middle, et cetera.

**Keith:** I mean, there is a famous Bluff-related character with that name.

**Austin:** There sure is.

**Keith:** Have we seen this exact thing before and I'm just not remembering?

**Austin:** No, you've never seen this before. Whether this is connected to Blake Blossom or not...

**Keith:** Is this a Friends of Blake Blossom petal organization?

**Austin:** That is what it is.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Out of character, yes. I mean, the fact that this place is called Blossom Investigations. The people who named it that are absolutely nodding to their old friend Blake Blossom, yes. But you don't know that. You're ten.

**Keith:** Oh, Nolan's a movie buff.

**Austin:** Yeah. That's the funniest thing about all this, is like...with the tri-city tunnel now, there are movies that exist in this world that didn't before, and those just filter into existence, and everyone remembers there used to be an actor who looked a lot like James Gandolfini named Blake Blossom. And that's just part of...that's just a thing, do you know what I mean? It's like oh yeah, those two actors look a lot alike.

**Sylvia:** The version of Kangaroo Jack where he talks exists in this universe now.

**Austin:** Yes. Yes, that exists now. [Dre and Austin laugh] So yeah, what do you do?

**Dre:** I think before we go in, Ronnie just says:

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Listen, I can't...my aunt can't know I'm here. She's already like really mad at me.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Okay. We won't be long. We'll get out in good time. No one's gonna find out. Are you still grounded, Nolan?

**Keith (as Nolan):** Oh yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. [Austin laughs softly]

**Jack (as Frankie):** Okay. [sighs]

**Austin:** And you go in. And I'm guessing you're heading...are you heading up to the Blossom Investigations office?

**Jack:** Yeah, I think so, right?

**Austin:** Yeah, sure. It's a wooden door. Upstairs, the walls are wood paneled with this kind of...again, this is decrepit by '90s standards, do you know what I mean? This is a place that has been now doubly uninvested in, and so it is just stylistically out of touch. And the front door of this place is glass window, frosted glass door, you know? that says Blossom Investigations. It has that sort of gold door handle on it. The lights inside are off. You know, you can hear the sound somewhere of someone waxing a floor, but that's it. There's no one around. You come up to this door. What do you do?

**Keith:** Kick it down! No, I don't do that.

**Austin:** Okay, I was worried.

**Keith:** I'm ten.

**Austin:** You're ten.



**Jack:** Ha! I'm gonna try and I guess just knock gently.

**Austin:** You knock gently. Nothing.

**Jack:** And then I'm gonna try the handle.

**Austin:** It is locked.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Crap.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Can anyone pick locks?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** I might be able to.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Have you tried before?

**Austin:** You got that leatherman multitool.

**Dre:** Yeah, I got my leatherman multitool.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And you're good at tinkering, right?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** That's true.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Yeah, here, let me...let me try.

**Austin:** Three plus two is five, plus the thing is seven, right?

**Dre:** Yeah. Whoof!

**Sylvia:** Damn!

**Austin:** Two successes.

**Keith:** Ooh, nice.

**Jack:** The answer is yes, you can.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Yeah, the answer is yes you can. And you got an extra success, which means you get a little extra something if you want it.

**Dre:** A little somethin' somethin'. [laughs]

**Austin:** A little somethin' somethin'.

**Dre:** You pin your enemy. [Dre and Jack laugh]

**Austin:** That's it. No.

**Dre:** This door will never move again.

**Austin:** Not building. Duh duh duh, ah, manipulate. Here we go: Give success to another kid; you don't need to roll to overcome this exact same trouble in the future, so you could get in and out of here anytime you want to. That's a fun one.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** You do it quickly; you do it quietly; you show off.

**Dre:** Ooh, quietly sounds very good here.

**Austin:** Quietly sounds good, yeah, uh huh. In fact, let's pay that off, which is you are doing it, and then at some point you hear the sound of a flushing toilet as one of the public bathrooms up here, the door opens, and Aunt Jozy comes out—

**Jack:** Whoa!

**Austin:** —and just walks right down the stairs, did not hear you, did not look your direction, but for a split second you're like, "Oh my god, I fucked up." And she leaves the bathroom and heads downstairs and says like, you know:

**Austin (as Jozy):** Hey Jerry, how you doing today? Yep. No flights, huh? Yeah, well, I'm gonna go check in on the guys.

**Austin:** And walks past to the rear entrance or whatever to go check out something on the field, the airfield. And you keep going. And you get the door open. Inside are...again, this is kind of a cramped space. One of the stories of this whole game definitely or one of the recurring things is just places that are too small for how many people need to be in there. [Dre laughs] And stuff that is a little more disused than it ought to be, because it should be a place where there's important stuff happening. There are corkboards up. There are a bunch of desks here. Old computers, again. But there are also three...let's say there are three...mmm, you know what, actually here's what I'll give you. There are six desks in here. Three of them are empty, just

completely washed down empty. One of them is clearly has been used today. You know that because there's a heavy overcoat maybe. Eh, there's not an overcoat. I know there's not an overcoat. There is, you know, it's just pulled out of place. Maybe there's a coffee cup out that clearly had coffee in it today or maybe still has coffee in it, and there's...you know, the screen is on, right? The other two, the remaining two, clearly are the opposite. No one's sat here in quite some time, but no one's cleared them out either. So it's like, there are still personal effects on them, but they're dusty as hell. So yeah, that's what this room is. And again, there's files and file cabinets and overhead fans and a big set of windows on one side of the room that look out onto the tarmac, and you can see your Aunt Jozy through the window. You can look down and see her walking out to one of the hangars. What do y'all do?

**Jack:** I would like to begin investigating.

**Austin:** Mmm. You're good at that.

**[Timestamp: 1:10:01]**

**Jack:** I am alright at it. So, let me just recap. The things that have brought us to this place are the letterhead with the blossom.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** We basically know that this place exists and there was some correspondence that Ms. Flores had.

**Austin:** Correct.

**Jack:** There was...

**Austin:** The tape recorder.

**Jack:** There was the tape recorder. There was Aunt Jozy.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** There were the badges, and there was also the picture on the wall in Ms. Flores's office that was like a younger version of Ollie, right?

**Austin:** Yeah, but I don't know if that ties to this place at all.

**Jack:** Okay, but yeah, that's true. I mean, she was wearing a blossom pin, wasn't she?

**Austin:** She was not— oh, the person wearing the blossom pin was—

**Jack:** Was Flores.

**Austin:** Was Flores, was Angie.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Yes.

**Jack:** Okay. So, I think what I'm gonna...ooh. [Austin chuckles] Yeah, I'm gonna just...it's so good.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I'm gonna start looking in the filing cabinets, just quickly opening them up, trying to get a sense of what is going on here.

**Austin:** Totally.

**Jack:** This seems to be a private investigators place. Do they have files? Do they have files with names we recognize on them?

**Austin:** Totally. Give me an Investigate, then. That's what it's called, right?

**Jack:** Yeah, I think so. I'm going to roll—

**Austin:** Is anyone helping?

**Dre:** I can help.

**Austin:** Yeah. Just same thing, going through files and such?

**Dre:** Yeah, like I'll start with the...I don't know, gosh, what is the last name of our two people?

**Jack:** It's Namor and...

**Austin:** And McGowan.

**Dre:** Yeah, like I'll check the N's and you check the M's.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right next to each other. Love it. [Keith laugh]

**Jack:** Crouched next to a filing cabinet. Alright, so I'm gonna roll eight d6.

**Austin:** Yep. Did you bring your dog, by the way? [Sylvia laughs]

**Jack:** Yes, absolutely.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Jack:** Flashback to the car ride with Castle.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Just dog, [imitating shrill dog barking] *rah rah rah rah rah rah rah!*

**Austin (as Cam):** It'll be \$5 extra for a dog fee.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Good joke.

**Jack:** [laughs] "There's biscuits for him in the central console."

**Austin:** [laughs] Yeah, exactly, yeah.

**Sylvia:** You press a button, and it shoots out.

**Austin:** You hit the biscuit button.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** [laughs] Exactly that, yes!

**Jack:** Tiny loves this guy, you know.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Sitting in his lap while he drives.

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly, yeah, uh huh.

**Jack:** [laughing] Eight d6.

**Austin:** Eight d6.

**Jack:** That's one six!

**Austin:** Hey, there's a six. Phew.

**Jack:** So I get two questions.

**Austin:** You get two questions.

**Sylvia:** I missed that six at first. I was like damn, another...

**Jack:** "How the hell did that happen?"

**Austin:** [chuckles] So yeah, same list as before. You got it in front of you?

**Jack:** Yep.

**Austin:** Yeah, it's on the sheet, right? Yeah.

**Jack:** Austin, how do you interpret the difference between "What is hidden here and where is it?" and "Where is it?"

**Austin:** That could be just if you know what you're looking for already, right?

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I would imagine. Or it's like...hey...the difference between the two is let's say the former is "I'm investigating this place, and what's hidden here and what is it?" And I could say like, "Oh, there's secretly a gold bar in the safe, [Jack laughs] and you get it." But the other thing you could say is like "I want to use the clues here available to me to find out where our fugitive is."

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I'm gonna look over the crime scene to try...so "Where is it?" is that, you know?

**Jack:** Yeah, totally.

**Austin:** So it's almost like the one is about what is hidden here and the other is clues to find something elsewhere.

**Jack:** Okay, so I'm gonna do the former then, since I think that what we're probably looking for is here.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** What is hidden here and where is it?

**Austin:** You know, I think between the two of you, as you start looking over these files, you learn that there's a story behind the Blossom Investigations, which is it had always been a private investigation firm that kept the lights on by doing private investigation shit, right? Cheating spouses, personal finances, looking into fraudulence between business partners, classic shit. But with that funding, they were able to...they were working with people like Angie to look into citywide corruption but also other weird shit that we the players know is tied to the Blough City/Bluff City/Bluffington weird relationship. The tunnel project, the devils, all of that shit is stuff that these people were investigating, right? This is the organization that Hector Hu came and set up after the finale of the last season. It doesn't seem like any of those people are around anymore. It's been that many years. Some stuff happened. You don't know. All you know is over time it looked like they stopped investigating bigfoots and weird shit and increasingly were stuck investigating, you know, the cheating spouses sort of detective work. And you get the sense that along the way it seemed as if their project didn't come to fruition. One of the big...you find the Ollie McGowan— McGowan, right? Is that right? Ollie McGowan? Yeah. Olivia McGowan. You find the Ollie McGowan file, and it maps so cleanly to the Britney Namor case, which they don't have a file for. There is no Namor case, because this just happened, right? But the McGowan stuff is very clear or very clearly the same type of thing. Olivia and her friend Elle went to a...went into the tunnel through some side entrance—through some overland entrance, not through a car or whatever—and only Elle came out. Olivia seemed to vanish. There's lots of notes about who Ollie was in terms of the person that she was. She was very quiet and very reserved but loved surrounding herself with very boisterous loud friends. She was like the bookworm in the group and was very much pulled into the direction of adventure because friends like Elle—who was very boisterous, big nerd, always believed in weird magical conspiracy theories and strange shit—eventually led her into this adventure that eventually lost her. And no one believed Elle except for this group of people. People didn't even remember who Ollie was. Everyone thought that Elle was making up an imaginary friend. There were no records of Ollie anywhere. And so they spent years trying to find Ollie, and eventually you find a photo of Ollie, about 10 years younger, and based on the dates, this would have only been taken a few years ago, so the dates don't match up. Right now, remember, she looks like 45 is how I described her. But based on the dates you're looking at, she disappeared 10 years ago when she and Elle were both 15, so it seems like she's aged 30 years in the last ten years, which is bad. Which, I don't know if ghosts age quicker or what, but that seems to be the case. There is a theory...I guess, seeing if there's anything else that...oh! Oh, oh, oh. Here's an important one. As part of this investigation, they developed some sort of...they basically put something out. They built a machine that they put out near the tunnel that would basically be like a passive tagging system that would tag anything weird or supernatural. I think you see lots of sketches of this machine. It's just like a classic Simon Stålenhag machine. I think it's sort of conical in general shape, but then it comes to a harder cylindrical top. I'm just gonna draw it really quick in my mind. It's almost like a nuclear powerplant shape, if you know what I mean?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, like the towers, the chimney tower type thing that they have, right?

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, the chimney tower type things, exactly. But they're small, and there's just like a bunch of them? And the effect is that they...if weird shit gets caught there, they wear a

nametag. They get a nametag. These things literally tag whatever's there, and the project onto them whatever the name is that they give themselves, basically. And so those nametags come from here, and the model of the nametag...like you see what the...there's a bunch of sketches like "What nametag should we give them? We don't want anything coming too close to us, but we want to make sure it's us," so they use the airport design, basically. And this was supposed to be a big breakthrough. And then you get photos. They're just like your photos of Ollie, and it's like, "Well, we can take photos of her, but we can't get her unstuck. We can't get her out." And that's kind of the sad arc. Something happened in there. There's a bunch of theories that you see written down about what could it be, a lot of shit that's just way over your head, right? A lot of shit that's just you don't know enough about weird conspiracy shit. The thing that you end up seeing is finally a note attached to this that says "If only we had fixed the tracking sooner. I think we had about a week. If we'd gotten to her in the first week, we could have saved her."

**[Timestamp: 1:20:15]**

**Jack:** And they're talking all about Ollie here. There's...

**Austin:** Yeah. There's nothing about Britney, because this just happened.

**Jack:** Right. The implication is whatever has happened to Ollie has now more recently happened to Britney.

**Austin:** Correct. And you know, maybe I'll just lay it out as clear as possible, which is just they went into the tunnel. The tunnel sometimes— it's what Miss Maxwell said before. The tunnel sometimes brings you out of time, it destabilizes you, it ghosts you. Based on what you've just read here, it's like when the tracking breaks in your VHS player, in your VCR. It un-aligns you from your reality, and you're just...they don't know. There's no phenomenological first person experience. They've never brought anyone back from this. They think maybe that there's something in the tunnel facility where you could go in and try to recover someone, you know? But by the time they tried anything it was too late. They also note that the area is defended, that trying to break into the tunnel project place is dangerous because there's so many people there, which you know is not true anymore, because you've been in that place and it seems deserted based on your dips in there when you were investigating the areas around your place. We talked about this in character creation, that you'd gone into that secret entrance, the secret tunnel entrance, and there was just like an old office space in there. You didn't go too deep, because it's too creepy, but you know. They're talking about it like there are hundreds of people working there at the time, and that just—

**Jack:** Armed guards.

**Austin:** Yeah, and that's just...you didn't see any armed guards. Maybe there are still armed guards. You didn't see any, you know? So that's part of the mystery. How you get Britney out is a different question. Does anyone else want to look around here for anything?



**Dre:** Are there any names on that file of who the people were that worked this the most or...you know, is there like a...can we tell who wrote the—

**Austin:** Sure.

**Dre:** —like, “if we had only got it in the first week.”

**Austin:** Uh, sure. Requires me to look at a big list of characters. [Dre laughs] You know, I mean...I mean, I could just ask Keith. Is it Agent Heard?

**Keith:** [deadpan] Yes.

**Austin:** [chuckles] Thank you, Keith. That feels like an Agent Heard thing to me, doesn't it? Of like...getting obsessed with this idea of trying to help this person, because part of taking the risk of setting up this whole new group was how can we help people and prevent bad shit from happening to them?

**Keith:** Right. It feels like a...you know, if someone came to you with this, you would go “This is exactly what we are here for.”

**Austin:** Yes, exactly that, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes, exactly.

**Keith:** So we have to do this, so that we can prove that we can do this.

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly. And this was probably a pretty early case, right? And I imagine that's the situation where Hector is working on some of the bigger stuff, the bigger tunnel stuff, still believed you could stop the tunnel, even though at this point it was already built, you know?

**Keith:** Poor Hector.

**Austin:** Yeah. We'll get around to Hector at some point. Again, it's not the focus of this, right? For me, the more interesting thing of this game is can you...I mean, the two more interesting things here is one, it's the decay of the real Atlantic City as it connects to these two vaguely supernatural places, because I'm from Atlantic City, and the vaguely supernatural place it kept trying to connect to and ruined it was, uh, America. [Keith laughs softly] And then the other part of it is just you're a bunch of kids getting in over your heads, and so I don't want you to get too lost in the big picture meta conspiracy, because it's not as exciting to me as: can you save your friend? And also what happens if you have to go through the tunnel again? Uh oh. So. You know, I'm gonna give you—

**Keith:** Well, one of us has the TV that is already mad, so.

**Austin:** Oh yeah, uh huh, that's already trying to scoop you away.

**Keith:** Who, no offense, sounds a lot like Olivia McGowan.

**Austin:** What's that? The...

**Keith:** Like, a bookwormy type that got sucked into investigation?

**Austin:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yes. A hundred percent, yes. Yes, that is exactly right, yeah. And then, you know, here's the last thing I'll give you, is when there's a five year on update, like break this case out one more time after having closed it after the first couple of years. So this is now, you know, a couple of years ago is the update. And this update, here's one, is filed by someone named Josephine Highsmith, so your Aunt Jozy, Ronnie, filed the followup on this, and it says basically, oh, no movement on this. Reports of figures in the dark suggest that McGowan is still haunting the grove in the nature reserve. Elle— her friend, Elle K. Castor—took a job with the tri-city tunnel authority to do some sort of maintenance out there and just moved into a boathouse near the tunnel and near all of the tunnel maintenance entrances.

**Keith:** Damn.

**Austin:** And you see a photo, and yeah, that's Elle. That's the person who yelled at you and chased you away from her house. She looks younger in this photo, and it was only a couple years ago, so for real, these last few years have just been heavy on her. You get the picture here of hey, these two friends went in here, only one of them came out, and it really ate Elle up for years.

**Keith:** Though it didn't seem like being a ghost was any easier.

**Austin:** [laughs] No, no. The aging there also...but who knows how that time is experienced?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You know, maybe that ghost has lived 30 years.

**Keith:** It's not one of the typical ghost stereotypes—

**Austin:** No.

**Keith:** —is that like, oh you haunt people, and you start aging really fast.

**Austin:** No, yeah.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [sighs] I can't believe my aunt told me I was lying to her when she was lying to me.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Aunts.

**Keith (as Nolan):** [sighs]

**Jack (as Frankie):** They'll do that to you.

**Austin:** Adults, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I think I have one more question.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm?

**Jack:** Hmm, okay. How can I get into the tunnel safely?

**Austin:** I mean, you should save that question. You still have a question, right? You should save that question, because you know that you have that entrance that's up near your hideout in the nature reserve.

**Jack:** But we've been told that if we go into the tunnel there's a chance of it eating us up.

**Austin:** Mmm.

**Jack:** What I think I'm looking for is is there...do the Blossom company have a technique for moving safely in the tunnel that is not available to us?

**Austin:** [overlapping] Yeah. That's fun. They must, right? Yeah, you know what it is?

**Jack:** Yeah, because they've gotta set all this equipment up and everything.

**Austin:** It's the tape recorder you have. There's a...you find a tape that is 60 minutes long.

**Jack:** Huh.

**Austin:** And you play it out loud through the speakers of a properly modified tape cassette player like the one that Ronnie has, and it serves as a counter to the tracking problem of the tunnel project. It keeps you grounded in Bluffington, right?

**Jack:** Oh, that's great.

**Austin:** And prevents you from...yeah. And it plays something, right? It has to play something, Jack.

**Jack:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Austin:** We don't have to hear it, but you know.

**Jack:** This is a problem for me to work out. Yeah.

**Austin:** [laughs] But I imagine it's something not unlike...which intro was it? Is that the final intro? What intro am I thinking of?

**Jack:** The Clair de Lune that gets completely screwed up?

**Austin:** Yeah, I think it's probably like that Clair de Lune, yeah.

**Jack:** Oh, it's...I know what it is. It's like a...there's a...I'll find the exact thing, and we can put it in the description or something. There's an aria from an opera where three young men are going off to war—

**Austin:** Mmm.

**Jack:** And their three young wives are basically singing to them like, "We love you, we'll miss you," and the young men are basically singing like, "We're gonna die, this sucks." [Austin laughs] "We're saying goodbye to you, but we know we're never gonna see each other again."

**Austin:** Ohh.

**Jack:** No, they say, "I'm gonna be brave, I'm gonna be strong, and I'm gonna return to you," and then these three older men come in, and they sing "War brings death to youth." Except it's this beautiful aria where there are three voices singing in harmony, and they're all singing different lyrics about how they're interpreting the situation.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah, so it says "put this cassette in," and you hit play, and you hear that, but messed up in some way, presumably?

**Jack:** It's sung by nonprofessional singers. It's sung by the Blossom members.

**Austin:** Mmm. Oh, it's just sung by them! I love that. So just flat and off-tempo?

**Jack:** Well, it's sung because...they sung it in the tunnel originally.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** That was the original method of keeping yourself safe, was to sing this aria, and so it's like the reverb of the tunnel.

**[Timestamp: 1:30:04]**

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Jack:** But they got to a point where they were just like, “Can we just record it? Will that work? Because this is exhausting,” [Austin ] and they recorded it and it worked, and they've used that ever since.

**Austin:** It works. Yeah, uh huh. I love it. It's so good. Great.

**Jack:** Wait, do we have the tape recorder anymore?

**Austin:** Yep.

**Jack:** I thought Ronnie just took out the...

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well—

**Jack:** Ronnie took out the plate, the central...

**Dre:** Put it back together, yeah.

**Austin:** Well, you switched the...she did give...yeah, yeah. She did give him the other regular one.

**Dre:** Should I add that as an item?

**Austin:** The tape recorder? Yeah.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** Add the tape recorder. Plus one to rolls using the tape recorder.

**Jack:** We've basically just given...we've built a new tape recorder. Ronnie's built a new tape recorder that...

**Austin:** Yes, yes.

**Jack:** Right.

**Austin:** Totally. Totally.

**Keith:** I hope no one tries to use the tape recorder that they think works.

**Austin:** Yeah, sure. It'd be bad, wouldn't it? So yeah, that's that. As you leave, I want to introduce a threat here, which is...you know, you've called Cam to come pick you up, but in the sky, as you begin to drive away, there is a circular almost donut-shaped machine with a big smiling face on it that is—

**Keith:** Donut car?

**Austin:** No, it's like a UAV? It's like a...you remember when the word drone didn't conjure just the plane-shaped ones that drop bombs?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Or the word UAV again didn't just do that? It wasn't just like, oh that's a jet, but was the sort of...the ones that come to mind for me forever are these ones from Metal Gear Solid.

**Keith:** Prosumer quad copters?

**Austin:** No, no, no. Predate those.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Predate those by like a decade or whatever. The ones that show up in Metal Gear Solid 2, these big floating...I guess these are called Sikorsky Cyphers. These are a real thing by the Sikorsky aircraft company.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Austin:** And it's like these, except instead of just being white or whatever—

**Dre:** Oh yeah, okay.

**Austin:** It has a big smiling face on it, because that's the world that we're in. [Jack laughs] Everything is hyper branded.

**Keith:** I don't know if I've ever seen one of these.

**Austin:** Oh, really? They're cool. They're like...I mean, you know, they're cool for military surveillance hardware. [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** Right. They have a look, you're saying.

**Austin:** They have a distinct look, and they're big. The thing that's not coming through here is that these are...let me see if I can find a picture of one next to a human.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Because I think that'll help communicate...here we go. Let's get a picture of these guys holding one. Boom.

**Keith:** Oh, those are big.

**Austin:** They're big. They're, you know, big enough to...

**Keith:** They're as tall as a person.

**Dre:** Ooh!

**Austin:** Yeah, they're as tall as...you're children, they're as tall as you.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You know, if you put it upright, you know?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** And there's one of these things looking down at you as you get in your car to drive away. Clearly this place and you are all under observation at this point. This is...I have a name for this thing. This is called the AutoMate—M-A-T-E, which is like a brand—SAARA, S-A-A-R-A, the Sea and Air Reconnaissance Automaton.

**Jack:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** Her name is SAARA. I think all of AutoMate's weird drone robots have human names that make them very creepy and bad faces drawn onto them.

**Keith:** Same company that makes Papermate pens?

**Austin:** Probably the same company. Probably part of the same...3M owns them both. [laughs softly]

**Jack:** Do we know what organization this is?

**Austin:** Yeah, I'm just gonna...the camera then follows down from there into a town car, where inside we have two people in black suits with black ties and white shirts. A kind of young Vietnamese woman named Agent Bailey and a middle aged white dude named Agent Clark,

who are sitting here looking again at a similar device as Cam's, the rearview mirror turns into a camera or turns into a screen and they can see through the drone. And it's the two of them sipping bad coffee in those little paper cups, just extremely workaday spy shit here as they watch you, and I think she says:

**Austin (as Bailey):** They're just a bunch of kids.

**Austin:** And he goes—

**Keith:** Is Cam ex-Concern? Is that what you're...

**Austin:** Who could say? Why not?

**Keith:** They're drinking the same weird coffee.

**Austin:** Uh huh! Yup!

**Keith:** And they've got the same screen in their thing.

**Austin:** Uh huh. He's retired. Don't worry about him. [laughs softly] But yeah, they're watching you, and we've got some G-men here. We've got some classic E.T. run away from the fucking people in suits who want to steal your shit.

**Keith:** Which Concern is this?

**Austin:** Who could say? Who could say what the Concern even is at this point, right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** Oh my god.

**Keith:** Who knows? Maybe there's only one Concern. Maybe there's nine Concerns.

**Austin:** What I'll say is I have a very definitive answer here, [Sylvia laughs] which is a fun thing to say, but like...again, I don't know that it's the point of this particular mystery. I mean, this is the thing about this whole season, is that I made a decision coming into this season, which is none of these games are ever going to be about stopping the tunnel project. [Jack laughs] It's gonna be about learning about the tunnel project, but like—

**Jack:** They're gonna build the fuckin' thing.

**Austin:** They're gonna build the fuckin' thing!

**Keith:** They already did!



**Austin:** They already did!

**Keith:** It's canon.

**Austin:** I mean, here's a thing that...we've known for a long time that one of these games...

**Jack:** Yeah, uh huh?

**Austin:** A year and a half ago, two years ago, we started playing...

**Jack:** No Dice No Masters, um...

**Austin:** Dream Askew. Dream Askew, in what at the time we thought was a future Bluff City but which I've slowly realized is the future of Bluffington. Like dilapidated post-apocalyptic semi-cyberpunk future where the apocalypse has arrived early for some people. And this world that you're in now is at the very edge of it becoming that. And so we'll get there maybe one day, but I'm way more interested in how the world changes because they built this fucking thing. And then maybe in a future season we wrap around to what happens after that, and is there a way to undo it or is there a way to...what are the metaphysical, blah blah blah, but none of this shit this season's gonna be "can you stop it?" It's all going to be little snapshot vignettes of the world around this infrastructure project.

[music begins: ["To Be Young Near the Shore"](#) by Jack de Quidt]

**Austin:** They built a fucking highway to heaven and hell. [Jack laughs] What's that do to the people in between, right? And for y'all, it's your friend disappeared, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Can you get her back? And we'll find out, I guess, on the next episode.