

Empty Highways (S2, E35)

SFX:

INTRO MUSIC

Rev: So I was getting groceries the other day and I came around the corner and there was like a young kid working and they were like, "Hey, do you need anything? Can I -- can I help you find anything?" I was like, "No, I'm good." But then I kind of, like, took in the rest of the scene, and he was shoulder-deep in a fish tank full of fish with a paper towel in his hand, just cleaning the glass. But like not wearing a glove, his shoulder of his shirt was wet, just carrying on normal conversation with me. And I thought, this can't be the way that you clean a fish tank, is it?

Teej: [Laughs]

Tass: No, that is not.

Rev: Like he was just knocking gravel around and fish were freaking out. It was just weird that he didn't acknowledge what was happening. He's like, "Can I help you with anything?" Yeah, explain what I'm looking at.

Jake: Explain yourself.

Teej: Also, if he tries to help you, he's going to have this big wet arm.

Jake: I feel like one of his coworkers was on the other side of the counter, crouched down, trying not to laugh his ass off.

Rev: That's kind of what I was wondering! Because he was so deadpan when he asked me if he could help me that I thought, oh, this is -- they're having a gag. But then I watched him continue on to the next one.

Tass: I've always wanted a really nice aquarium, but just, I've never really lived anywhere that would be good for that.

Rev: I've been looking at houses and we saw one the other day that had one built in.

Tass: Nice!

Rev: I was like, is it though?

Tass: I think so. I think it's cool.

Jake: Because if you don't like fish ...

Rev: Yeah!

Jake: What are you supposed to do now?

Rev: And it's built into the wall. So like that is part of the living room layout.

Jake: It's a load-bearing fish tank.

Rev: Yeah.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Whatever you wanna display, I guess you could put in there.

Tass: Yeah. Maybe like reptiles, or ...

Jake: Or like batarangs.

Tass: Batarangs would be good on display.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Time to let the recap roll.

Rev: The other thing that happened actually that we have talked about but we haven't really talked about on air is that, you know, we're going to be at Gen Con, we're going to be running games ... And we're going to be running a lot of games, we're gonna be running a lot of Monster of the Week. And part of that is that Evil Hat is sponsoring us to Gen Con. So we are brought to you at Gen Con by Evil Hat this year, which is very cool. So we will be there running hours and hours of Monster of the Week with many, many seats at tables, and we will let you know as soon as those become available to grab at the Gen Con website.

Jake: We will all be wearing our most sinister hats.

Rev: Yes.

Jake: It was part of the agreement. We have to.

Rev: Yep. Tass has a very, very angry looking chef's hat.

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: Jake has got a fedora.

Jake: That's it.

Rev: Yeah, that's --

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: That's evil enough.

Teej: It looks like Jonny Fedora from like the Disney cartoon. Except just like really pissed off, because he couldn't find Bluebonnet.

Jake: Now, what is this reference?

Rev: Yeah.

Teej: Oh my gosh. What? You guys don't know Johnny Fedora?

Tass: No.

Jake: No.

Teej: It was a ... It was like a little Silly Symphony that they did where a fedora sort of has its own personality and it interacts with this bonnet in a hat shop. She gets sold off. He, like, is sold to like a drunk or something like that and gets all messed up. And he's like in the gutter. And then some guy finds him, cuts a couple of holes into him and like puts him on this horse's head only to come find out that the horse that's next to him is where the bonnet is as well. And so they like came together at the end, and it's cute.

Jake: I don't know if I could suspend my disbelief enough to enjoy that program.

Teej: Well, it's got singing and everything, too. That goes along with it. It's beautiful.

Rev: It's like the hatband is its mouth. So you can see it smile and frown and stuff

Teej: Yeah.

Rev: I remember that now. I remember at all. Oh, God. Oh no.

Jake: Oh no. You've been activated, Manchurian Candidate-style. Johnny Fedora -- who do I kill?

Rev: I think with that, it's time to hit the recap roll.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Teej: I do notice that there are these Jake-shaped holes in the walls that could probably be either fixed ...

Tass: That's a real good point.

Teej: Is there any way for me to do this? To illusion these holes away to where this place looks intact?

Rev: The problematic side effect with this gun being the magical power source for this illusion is that instead of your fire based magic, you put into it your necrotic magic. And so this gun will power the spell and it doesn't have to stay here at the location, but it now has this dark, pulsing aura to it. And as this aura fades, you have to use the gun to kill something to keep the gun's magic charged. And if the gun runs out of charge, out of magic, the spell here will end.

Tass: Oh my god ...

Rev: So as you're cutting down these back roads in Chicago, trying to make your way to the Indiana border so you can start to head towards Indianapolis, you take a turn down an alley. And as you do, something slams into the ground a dozen feet in front of you, hard enough to shatter the pavement and rock the van. And in the glow from the headlights, you can make out a form in the settling dust and debris. It rises and strides forward. And there, illuminated in the alley, is Ori wearing the spiked brass knuckles, his eyes glowing red, teeth bared. And he shouts ...

Rev: ORI: You let my friend go right fuckin' now.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Rev: So here you all are in this small alley in Chicago. Ori has just slammed the ground in front of the van, wearing these menacing brass knuckles with spikes, and he is staring at you, Tass, through the windshield.

Tass: "Uh Jake, do you want to take this one?"

Jake: "OK ..."

Rev: In this hesitation, he has started to walk towards the front of the van.

Jake: OK. So I will slide my door open. And as I do, be like, "Hey. Hey Ori, it's me." And then step out.

Rev: ORI: The hell's going on?

Jake: "Boy. Buddy, a lot is going on. I'm sorry. I didn't want to have to like, involve you. I figured it'd be easier for you if I didn't. But the first thing I can promise you is that they're not going to hurt me and they're not going to hurt you. A lot of shit's going on, man. And well, we're going to go try to stop the Soul Bat." That might have been too big of a lead. Let me reel this back a little bit. Well, no, the other lead is even bigger.

Rev: ORI: What does that even mean? Like, this is something we've been fighting for years. You and some dude who tries to kill you all the time go stop the Soul Bat?

Jake: "Yeah. OK, so this is going to get weirder before it makes more sense, but bear with me. I am me, from a different world where we did beat the Soul Bat. And I have been thrown here -- all of us have -- to do it again. To ... I don't want to say save this world, but make it less shitty for sure. Does that, does that track? Are you with me still?"

Rev: Jake, roll Manipulate Someone.

Jake: OK. Five.

Rev: As you're walking forward after having said this, Ori puts his hand out. You seem to be frozen in place.

Rev: ORI: Don't worry, man. I'll break you free of whatever shit they got going on.

Rev: And he starts charging at the front of the van. What are you two doing?

Jake: "I just promised him you wouldn't hurt him. Don't fuck this up!"

Tass: I just have my hands up where he can see them. There are no weapons. And I'm just kind -- of I'm almost sputtering, I think, "Ori! We are legitimately your friends in our world. I do not want to hurt you. We are not here for that."

Rev: Tass, roll Against the Grain. You are letting a threatening vampire run up on you with no weapons drawn.

Tass: Yep. That's a seven.

Rev: So you are able to keep this peaceful pose, but you're going to have a -1 forward again.

Tass: All right.

Rev: T.J., what are you doing?

Teej: I'm going to Use Magic to trap a person, minion, or creature in place.

Rev: All right, roll Use Magic.

Teej: That's an eleven.

Rev: Describe to me how you do this.

Teej: I think the little consumable that I pull out is like a piece of yarn.

Jake: [Laughs]

Teej: And it goes in the ring of course, and I do a little hand gesture out the window, and the yarn basically turns into a rope. And it wraps around his legs, his arms, everything. And he is just immobilized.

Rev: Yeah. This rope hits him and wraps around and he falls to the ground in front of the van. And when he hits the ground, Jake, you are free to move again.

Tass: "I mean, if we're not going to hurt him -- which I want on record: we do not want to do, Ori -- we gotta go."

Jake: I'm gonna walk over to Ori laying on the ground, and I'm going to say, "T.J., kill the magic."

Teej: "Are you sure?"

Jake: "Yeah, I'm sure."

Teej: "OK." And I'm going to release the rope.

Jake: And I'm going to hold a hand out to help him up.

Rev: He looks at you from the ground, and you can tell he looks hurt.

Jake: Does he take my hand?

Rev: He doesn't yet.

Jake: "I'm trying to show you we are not here to hurt you. We're not here to mess with you in any capacity. You know, where we're from, not only are you and I good friends, we are actually all good friends."

Tass: "It's true. We helped you save your sister when she was in a bad spot. We got you out of a bad situation. We got you to safety. We're not here for this, man. I'll put it blunt and kind of mean -- we just had you dead to rights, and we never want to see you like that. Not hurt, not trapped. We just ... We have something we gotta do, man."

Rev: Tass, roll Manipulate Someone.

Tass: Hoo boy. A ten, with a -1 forward. So, nine.

Rev: He gets up and looks at the three of you and starts to take a couple steps backwards.

Rev: ORI: If I don't see you tomorrow at 1:00 p.m., I'll find all of you and I won't be alone.

Rev: And he takes off into the sky.

Tass: [Sighs] "Well, cat's out of the bag."

Jake: "Then we've got nothing to do but hurry."

Tass: "Load back up. Let's get the hell out of here."

Teej: "OK."

Rev: So as you head to Indianapolis, where are you going?

Tass: I guess at least through part of this trip, I'm kind of going through communicating with myself and trying to convey any of that to these guys about, like, what I do know. I know that I have my own space somewhere in Indy, so I'm trying to gauge what I know about this situation. Like, how chaotic is this city? Yeah. You know, just the kind of the basic details, at least. I'm sure I don't know the ins and outs of the Halifax, but ...

Rev: Having your hideout, you're kind of on the outskirts of the city, and it's mostly untraversed through ... Basically, inside of 465. You kind of skirt your way along the edges of the city looking for people to save, to free, to kill -- if there are Soul Bats roaming around. Really, just trying to keep it from spreading. And it is a losing battle, but it is one that you are insistent on fighting. Like, you are this kind of man in an area making sure nothing else passes. But there's hundreds of miles where it's going past you in other spots, but you know, this is your spot.

Tass: So I've been going through, I've been killing Soul Bats. I've been doing this. Like, with the way that this is manifested, what does that entail? Like what I'm trying to get at is I know people are taken by it.

Rev: Mmhmm.

Tass: So is there the idea that if the big one was killed, the people that were taken are released? Or are they like literally they have become monster?

Rev: Yeah. After twenty four hours, the one on them bonds with them.

Tass: OK. So I think I'm trying to gauge that to be like, Jesus, is this version of myself killing people that could potentially be saved? Or is it just taking out monsters at this point?

Rev: Yeah, from his point of view, it's just taking out monsters. He does not believe they can be saved.

Tass: Would I have reason to think that they could be? That that might be part of it?

Rev: No, not from anything that you've encountered in your experience. He's had a lot more encounter with them than you have.

Tass: Right. OK.

Rev: That's not a no, but you don't have any reason to think he's wrong.

Tass: Yeah. I'll just explain this to the guys. Like, "I think we need to obviously find a way to get close, undetected, and see what's going on with the theater. I have a safe spot. But Jake, you're not going to be able to exactly get into it comfortably. Like I could, in theory, take out the protection spells and it'll at least be a solid place to be, but monsters would be able to get in. But that might even just be a place to stop for the moment and just kind of restock and figure out what we want to do from there."

Jake: "Tight, I'll take a nap in the van, I guess. Does the van go into the hideout?"

Tass: "Yeah ..."

Jake: "Tight. I'll take a nap in the alley or something."

Tass: "I just mean, you know, we don't necessarily even have to go in and spend a lot of time. I just don't know where else to hit first, you know what I mean?"

Jake: "Sure. What is our next step? Are we going to the Halifax and trying to sneak in and look around and see if the script is still there? Or are we trying to pick up a trail somewhere else?"

Teej: "Well, the source of it, the script that we found in our world, isn't there in this world. Like, it got moved somehow."

Jake: "OK. So then is that still the place we pick up the trail? Or are we just trying to -- it's a needle in a haystack, then."

Tass: "That's a really good question. We had the pretty good idea that IPT was destroyed. So I don't know that there's really any other reason now that we're together to want to go, unless we just hope to find clues as to what happened there."

Teej: Mmhmm.

Jake: "I don't think that what happened there is a priority right now."

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "Like because broadly speaking, we can assume the answer is Soul Bat."

Tass: "Yeah. So then I think more what I had in mind was what happened there as far as who survived, what was taken, is there a way to figure out who went down? Is there a way for us to reasonably connect with Margaret?"

Teej: "I could probably use a spell to look through time and space to see if I could find her."

Tass: "Does that -- does that work with the idea of see another place?"

Rev: Yeah. So it's either you can see another time or see another place.

Teej: "Gotcha. Well then place, I think, is what we're looking for. Like where Margaret possibly is."

Rev: Yeah. And you've seen this done before. So you would have to have something of hers to basically see through the portal to see where she was.

Tass: Since I was the one that at that point actually worked there, would it be reasonable that like any of the gear that they issued -- like would that work? Or like literally a paystub or a ... [Laughs] A pink slip, probably, after all of this.

Rev: I don't think it's unreasonable that you would have something. Either a note or a gift, something that, in the years before things went really bad, that you had gotten from her when you worked there. Like, I don't think that's unreasonable.

Tass: That's fair. Because I do literally, two rooms over from us right now ...

Rev: Yeah.

Tass: Have like a Christmas card with her signature on it.

Rev: Yeah, that's very true. [Intensely] Bring it to me.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: So yeah, if you were to go back to your hideout, you would have something there.

Tass: "OK. So that's at least one lead to see if there are still connections out there. If Margaret is alive, we reasonably think that we can find her. I mean, otherwise it's just going to the Halifax, right? Like trying to sneak in and see what we can see?"

Jake: "And I mean, with that same magic, if you can view another time, then if we can get to the place we know it used to be, we can find out when it was moved."

Teej: "Right."

Jake: "And that might give us a good lead on where it was moved to."

Tass: "Yeah, OK. So we're under the impression that it isn't there, we need to find where it was moved to. But the big boy probably is still there, or is at least there often."

Jake: "I mean, Nash told us that it was there."

Tass: "All right. Well, straight to the hideout then first."

Rev: Where is your hideout at? Describe it to me, in vivid detail.

Teej: So we can map it out and then have all of our friends go there and meet us one dark night.

Jake: [Laughs]

Rev: Shit.

Jake: That got I kind of like I Know What You Did Last Summer pretty quick.

Tass: [Laughs] Yeah, it did. You know, my initial thought was something like an old storage unit or something, that would be kind of easy to go in and break down walls and

stuff and might be overlooked. But I think monsters in this world are a little smarter than that. I think those are the holes that they're expecting to crash through and find.

Rev: Yeah. Like now that they've been established for a while, those are the places they're raiding.

Tass: Yeah, exactly. So instead what I have chosen is the shell of the old Cheeseburger in Paradise in Southport.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: Because nobody's looking there.

Rev: Yeah. And it is outside of 465.

Tass: Yup.

Teej: Today, tomorrow, or ever.

Rev: That's not true. I've seen all three of you look at it in sadness when we when we drive by.

Jake: Yep.

Rev: Longing in your heart.

Tass: I worked at a CiP for a short stint and yeah, I do. I miss it.

Rev: All right. So you head around Indianapolis and you go to this Cheeseburger in Paradise. Described to me, like ...

Jake: [Laughs] How is it different?

Rev: Yeah. How is it different? Because I assume, like, your van hides somewhere, or ...

Tass: You know, it looks like it's broken down. There's still the glass windows and stuff, so that you're going by and you glance in and you can kind of see the shell inside of, you know, the room. But they're just elaborate paintings set up against the glass.

Teej: [Laughs]

Tass: And so just inside, it's just everything has been gutted and just made very simple. There are runes and stuff that are set up. And that could even be part of it -- the protection spells could reasonably make it seem like an actual empty building.

Jake: Don't forget that the doors to the outdoor seating are literal overhead garage doors.

Tass: Yes, they are.

Jake: So ...

Tass: yeah. And so just the -- yeah, interior is pretty basic. It's just set up as a living space and a place to be able to hide and be comfortable.

Rev: If you had picked Planet Hollywood, you could have just parked the van in the side of the wall.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Where is your panic room in this building?

Tass: I think it stands to reason that the coolers have been retrofitted for that.

Teej: Aww man, I was thinking the water tower.

All: [Laugh].

Teej: On the outside façade.

Tass: That's what I said.

All: [Laugh]

Tass: T.J., just listen when I talk, OK?

Teej: Yeah. Sorry.

Jake: We have to climb a fucking ladder. In case of emergency, climb the ladder to water tower.

Teej: And then the water tower just shoots off like a rocket.

Tass: Into outer space!

Rev: Nice. So Jake, what are you going to do here? His building is protected by magical wards to keep out things exactly like you, I assume. I don't. You tell me, Tass. What are you warding against? \

Jake: It's OK.

Tass: I mean, where I am ... Honestly, now that I'm I'm thinking this out, my initial thought was, yeah. Just kind of a general monster thing. But knowing this world, it seems like other monsters aren't coming to Indianapolis. It doesn't seem like there's a lot of vampires and stuff hanging out and stuff. I don't know. I almost feel like I'm going to, if I was going to set this up, it would be Soul Bat specific.

Jake: Yeah, but if you had the option. If this Tass had the option, wouldn't he ward it against just monsters in general?

Tass: I will ask this as a serious question to everybody. Is there a difference mechanically, story-wise, whatever, any reason at all that focusing on one would make it stronger towards that one, as opposed to a general "meh" protection against everything?

Rev: Yes.

Tass: Then I think I would lean into Soul Bat.

Jake: Well then never mind. I'm going inside and I'm getting me some onion strings.

All: [Laugh]

Teej: Some sweet potato chips, you mean. Because they are delightful.

Jake: I don't like sweet potato. I like the onion strings.

Teej: Then eat the onion strings and be done with it.

Jake: And you eat the sweet potato chips, and we've reached a perfect balance for the table.

Teej: And we've eaten his entire supplies of food.

Jake: [Laughs] That's all the food he's got! Just old Cheeseburger in Paradise rations.

Rev: And that's why his panic room has to be in the water tower, because the freezer is still holding all of the old freezer burned fries and onion strings.

Tass: Yup.

Rev: Yeah, so the three of you are inside of Tass's hideaway. You go back to your panic room. What's -- what do you have of hers?

Tass: I think it's her signature on like a holiday card.

Rev: Yeah. And you give it over to T.J.

Teej: And I'm going to draw out like a circle in the middle of the bar area, and I'm going to put her signature in the middle of it.

Rev: OK. Roll Use Magic.

Teej: Easy peasy. That's like fourteen.

Jake: Nice.

Rev: A vision appears inside of the chalk circle that you have drawn. You're seeing from someone's point of view, and they are walking around inside a pretty dusty basement, and they're shining a flashlight around. And they hold up their wrist. It seems like they're checking the time. And you recognize the watch, actually. It is the watch that you saw Margaret wear every day that you saw her. But the arm it's on doesn't look like hers. The skin is a little darker, and the nails are very short -- almost look chewed. And as you continue to watch, your vision is moved down a hallway. And at some point, whoever's eyes you're seeing out of turns and looks through a door, and you can see just a little bit of a reflection. And it looks like Margaret -- there's something about the nose and the eyes that look very similar. But this person is in their mid 20s, very sculpted chin and blue eyes, and she's wearing some kind of goggles. And you can see that she has got some protective gear over her chest. And she opens the door that she is looking through and scopes around. It seems like she is scavenging, looking for things. Because you actually see at some point she finds like old MREs and starts throwing them into a backpack. You

continue to watch, and eventually this figure moves up a set of stairs and outside, and you can see that they are just slightly downtown. You recognize a couple of the buildings as they scan around. It seems like they're making sure no one is watching where they have just come out of. And they turn back around and close the door, and you can see there's like camouflage painted on the door. It looks like an army surplus store. And she turns and runs down the street and uncovers a small motorcycle from a tarp, and gets on it and fires it up and starts to ride down the road. How long are you all going to watch this?

Tass: Just her driving?

Rev: Yeah. For at least the next 30 seconds that you watch is just her driving a motorcycle, headed north on 31 out of Indianapolis.

Tass: Huh. Yeah, I mean, if she's just on the highway and cruising at high speed, I don't know.

Teej: "I mean, I think it would behoove us to see where she ends up at, and maybe we can find her there later."

Jake: "So it's not Margaret. So we don't know what she knows. If she's going out of the city, which is where we need to be, then this kind of seems like a waste of time again."

Tass: "Yeah. She sure knows how to traverse the city. But I guess technically I do, too."

Jake: "If we're going to follow her, then I think we might as well get back in the car and start doing it physically now. Or else we're just going to watch her get further and further away and waste more time, gaining no ground."

Tass: "OK. So what do we do? I mean, jump in and get a good ways and then try again and see where she is? Because we can't watch her and drive."

Teej: "Not unless I put the circle in the van."

Tass: [Laughs] Just on the windshield.

Jake: You can't see the actual road.

Rev: Huh. Can you put, like, a viewing circle in something mobile? I think that you could probably put something together if the back of the van was cleared out. Like, it's going to radiate with magic. And if the Use Magic goes poorly, the van will be linked to that.

Teej: Oh, right.

Rev: But yeah, I mean if it is really just the requirement of a flat surface and the right runes and some drawings on the floor, I don't see why you couldn't do it inside of a moving vehicle, as long as it had a large enough surface area.

Teej: "Tass, can you clear out the back of your van?"

Tass: "Yeah. I mean, if I just have the gear on me that I'm going to use, I don't know why not."

Jake: "I am leaving this up to the two of you. Because to me, this doesn't seem worth the hassle. But if you guys think it is, and you seem to think it is, then ..."

Teej: "She might have some information. We don't know. Like I mean, going to the Halifax -- sure, we could probably find out where the source is. But the big guy's there, so we could end up going in without being prepared.

Tass: "This is really bizarre, to hear you speak about preparedness, T.J. I am both impressed and terrified."

Teej: "Don't ... Don't let it get your head." And I hit him on the shoulder, like haha.

All: [Laugh]

Teej: Because I don't know what to say to that.

Tass: I think I'm going to have to roll Against the Grain to not hit him back much harder. "I mean, I want ... I want to know what she knows in general. But also priority one is finding out where that script went." I guess we haven't even asked. Does other me know this woman?

Rev: Not at first glance. But once you put that thought into the ether, you think it's Margaret's daughter, Sherri. But that she's five or six years older than the last time you saw her.

Tass: "OK, yeah. I definitely think it's her daughter. He seems to recognize her, at least a little. She just -- it's been a while." Um, man ... And I guess I haven't outright asked this either. Does he have any more intimate knowledge about the Halifax? Or like the state of the situation downtown?

Rev: Yeah. Specifically with the Halifax, you know, you have not been in it again in a long time, but it is being heavily protected the same way that IPT is. Like, those are the two places that you know that you have not been in again. That there is ... There is heavy -- for lack of a better term, security -- on those buildings. There is a lot of movement around there.

Tass: Wow. Even IPT now?

Rev: Yep.

Tass: OK. All right. "Well, what do you guys think about this? Even IPT is still being patrolled heavily. My guess is if we're going to go downtown first, it's mostly going to be to see what we see. I'm not sure that ... I mean yeah sure, we might find an opening or something. But yeah, I'm really -- I'm really getting that feeling that they're heavily protected at the moment. I'm not sure that us just charging in, you know, we're not going to walk down the alley and bust in the side door like we did last time. Or the front door, like some of us did. I think we need to find her. I think we need to talk to her and just get any more on the ground information that we possibly can."

Teej: "I agree."

Jake: "OK. Let's get moving, then."

Rev: All right. So you all pile back into the van. T.J. helps Tass clear out the back seat so that you've got an open space. You draw out the components you need for this circle. Roll Use Magic.

Teej: That's a ten.

Rev: Yeah, no problem. You are able to create this window in the back of the van, and you see her still on the motorcycle. She is headed north on 31.

Teej: OK. I will convey that to the driver.

Rev: Tass, I don't think that there is an Act Under Pressure for this. You have made it into Indianapolis safely. You've gone in and out a lot. It's not like where the the vampires were out kind of on high alert because of the event going on. So you're able to follow her. So as T.J. is in the back scrying, Jake and Tass, you're really just driving down this long state road. Is there anything that the two of you want to be doing during this time? You know that she's a good distance ahead of you, so you've got a while.

Tass: I guess just trying a little more to, like, gauge how I can communicate better.

Rev: I think the first thing is to figure out, like, your love language. Is it ...

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Is it gifts?

Rev: Yeah. So yeah, that's actually -- that's a good point. So, you know, we're kind of in a weird situation, here. You guys have someone who's riding shotgun in your head. I don't want to just feed you information. I also don't want it to seem like they're withholding anything. So I think at any time when you guys are talking about something, when you're dealing with something, you can essentially ask me a question from the Investigate a Mystery list, and that will prompt them to tell you what they know. So that way it feels like we both kind of have a weight in this. They'll always answer honestly. And if for some reason they're not, I'll give you some kind of a roll to know that. But I also don't just want to kind of feed information to you, so.

Tass: Sure.

Rev: So, yeah. As you guys are going, is there anything you want to know from your other you?

Tass: I think one of the big ones that we just haven't talked about is what in the world happened to Rev?

Rev: The night of the Halifax, you saw in the vision already of you grabbing him from behind the snack counter. That's where he spent most of his time in his life. Just ... God, I love snacks. Anyway. But yeah, you grabbed him from behind the snack counter and carried him outside and put him in the car. And you saw in the rear view mirror that he seemed to be catatonic. He lasted maybe another hour before he just shut down. His systems just turned off and he died. And it was at that point that this Tass really kind of gotten to the place where the group that you know broke up, because you wanted to go

back. You wanted revenge in that moment, and they wouldn't let you go back in blindly. And that night, while everyone slept and planned, you went out anyway. And that was really the last time the group was together on good terms.

Tass: Oof.

Jake: I guess what I kind of want to know is what was the rate at which this happened? Like from when we failed to the state it is now, how fast did it progress? How severe was this infection?

Rev: Yeah, that's a good question. When you all failed this night at the Halifax, you know, there's a reason that you still went on your current trajectory for a while. You guys ended up in Hawaii. Because it seemed like more time was needed, but that it wasn't is urgent as it actually was. And that was actually the first ramification of the Soul Bats being able to turn invisible: that you did not realize how much it had spread in the city until it was too late, because people were Soul Bat and you just couldn't tell. So the timeline of it is fairly unknown. But you do know that like a month later is when this kind of combat broke out between local authorities and the military and just these people, which at first that they thought were kind of rabid, that there may have been a disease or something that were causing people to act this way. But Margaret and the IPT and your team at the time knew the truth. And I think with that knowledge, you do know how to ... How to see someone wearing a Soul Bat. There is a particular type of light you can hit them with that will bounce off of that invisibility.

Jake: Oh, what is it?

Rev: Infrared light. They have a heat signature to them.

Jake: OK.

Teej: It's a good thing I brought my -- [Disappointed] goggles ...

Rev: [Sad trombone]

Tass: Does this thing take animals, too?

Rev: This is a great question for you. I don't know who you have told, but we'll say three, four days ago before the events of this, when you were gathering some things to help with the summoning of Jake, you were in a wooded area along 70, and for a brief moment, you think you saw a black bear that had the same heat signature around its

eyes and its nose and its mouth as the Soul Bat puts off. You weren't able to track it down, but you think you saw it.

Tass: Oh, my god. I think I jerk the wheel for a second. "Guys, I think there are Soul Bat bears!"

Jake: "Like a ... Like a bear, bear?"

Tass: "Like a black bear!"

Jake: I think I spend probably a good chunk of the remainder of this drive on my phone searching for predator animals in and around Indiana that might have had the opportunity to move inwards since then. So we have an idea of what to be afraid of.

Tass: I tell him to Google the zoo, too.

Jake: [Laughs] Oh, no!

Teej: Oh, shit. Indianapolis Zoo. Oh, shit.

Tass: I know they have Kodiak bears there.

Teej: And snow leopards.

Rev: I actually have a list for just such an occasion. Here are the animals that are listed on the Indiana.gov Indiana Department of Nature Resources. Do you guys want just the predators? Or ...

Tass: Well if you put it like that, I want all of the answers!

Rev: [Laughs]

Teej: Everybody knows that the butterflies in Indiana are out to get us.

Tass: I mean, I grew up out in the country. I know that a white tailed deer can mess you up. So yeah, I want the list.

Rev: OK. Black bear, coyote, mountain lion, wolf, wood rat, badger, beaver, bobcat, chipmunk, rabbit, mole, fox squirrel, grey squirrel, grey fox ...

Teej: [Laughs] Why'd you say "mole" like, [Exaggerated emphasis] "mooole?"

Rev: I was trying to decide if I should say its full name. It is the eastern mole.

Tass: Oh.

Rev: And the cottontail rabbit. Indiana bats.

Tass: [Gasps]

Rev: Feral --

Tass: Oh, no hold up. Soul Bat bats?

Teej: Soul Bat bats.

Tass: Oh, god ...

Rev: Soul Bat bats. Feral/wild hogs -- so Tim Allen is loose here, somewhere.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Mink, muskrat ... There are muskrats that live, actually, at the pond behind my house. Possums, raccoons, red fox, river otter, striped skunk, weasel, and white tailed deer.

Teej: We have river otter? That is adorable. I want all the river otters.

Tass: Now imagine it covered in Soul Bat, and trying to eat your face.

Rev: Boy, I didn't think I was going to go through this whole list, but there's some interesting stuff on here. So, boy, if lists of animals of Indiana aren't your thing, I apologize for this episode.

Jake: Skip ahead forty minutes.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Bald eagle, barn owl, quail, Canada geese, cardinal, a shrike, osprey, peregrine falcon, grouse, sandhill cranes, turkey, whooping cranes.

Jake: You don't want to mess with a whoopin' crane.

Tass: No.

Jake: Because you know what it's going to do.

Tass: Luckily, you know it's coming, though. Because they just are flying and going whoop! Whoop! Whoop!

Rev: I'm gonna skip the fish.

All: [Laugh]

Teej: Fish are immune to Soul Bats?

Tass: Give me -- give me like a three highlight of the fish.

Rev: I mean, we already did our water portion of season two. Um ... The American Eel.

Tass: Oh!

Jake: That's my favorite clothing store.

Tass: [Laughs] Yeah, right?

Rev: What's another good one? The cisco, and the shovel nosed sturgeon.

Tass: Ooh ...

Jake: That's just a dangerous fish. There's no joke here.

Rev: But the reason I kept going on this list is because I had to get to this: freshwater jellyfish.

Tass: Really?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: Where? In what freshwater bodies in Indiana? So I know what to avoid for the rest of my life.

Tass: Yeah, no kidding.

Teej: Right.

Rev: In over forty three different bodies of water in Indiana.

Teej: Oh, god.

Rev: Yeah. So that is the list of animals. Again, you only saw it on this bear -- or you think you saw it, you weren't able to confirm, but you did ... Boy, we come a long way from that question.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: That's been a minute.

Tass: Well, what's everybody -- what struck the most fear?

Teej: I think maybe a peregrine falcon, because those things are fast as AF

Tass: They are. Fastest birds on the planet.

Teej: Fastest animals on the planet.

Tass: Are they really?

Teej: Yeah.

Tass: Yeah. Technically speaking.

Teej: They can dive over 120 miles per hour.

Jake: I think it's birds. I agree. I think one or more of the birds are probably the scariest thing to imagine.

Teej: Mmhmm.

Tass: Ooh boy. All right.

Teej: Or something that swarms, at least. Maybe like bees or, you know, bats. Soul Bat bats.

Tass: [Sighs]

Jake: Soul Bat bat.

Rev: So this drive does take about forty five minutes. But T.J., as this comes to a conclusion, you see her pulling off of the road. And when she does, she pulls past a large broken sign. You can just see the very bottom of it and like one wooden leg, and then a spot where another one should be. And there's an old fence -- chain link -- and she starts driving through all of these old airplanes. There are bombers, there are fighter jets. And she's cutting between them and ducking under some, and she finally comes to a stop in front of an old Chinook helicopter. She wheels this motorcycle into the back, and she turns and pushes a button and the back hatch starts to go up. And as soon as it closes, your vision cuts out.

Teej: "Oh. I lost the vision, guys. I think her helicopter is protected."

Tass: "Oh, well, that certainly makes sense."

Teej: "Yeah."

Rev: And I'm not sure if any of you recognize this. I'm going to ask you, the players. Have any of you been to the Grissom Air Museum?

Tass: Been by it.

Jake: Yeah, I've driven past it a number of times.

Rev: That is where she's at.

Teej: "Well, we know where she's at."

Tass: "All right. Well, off we go." And I'm just stepping on it.

Rev: So the three of you continue on your way. Now you know where you're going. The roads are completely empty, so you have no problem making it there. So it is about 2:15

in the morning, 1:15 in the morning Chicago time, if anyone happens to be keeping track of that for any particular reason. But you are on the road right out in front of Grissom Air Museum.

Tass: "All right. Should we just drive on up and make our presence very known?"

Jake: "Sure. I think I'm the last person to approach, though. What with the teeth and all."

Tass: "Oh, yeah."

Rev: Yeah. So you will be able to drive into the museum, but you won't be able to drive back to where this helicopter is.

Tass: Sure.

Rev: Yeah, where you want to stash the van at?

Tass: I just think maybe on the far side from the entrance or like the road of some big plane, just so that it's at least a little bit harder to spot at a glance. Lock it up, leave it there, and start walking towards we know where the Chinook would be.

Jake: I'm trailing a significant distance behind now.

Rev: OK.

Jake: Before we start heading that direction, I'm going to actually leave my phone here in the van. Just so that if they check my location, they can't see exactly where we've ended up, and I won't ruin their hiding place.

Rev: OK. So the three of you start to head that direction, and it comes into view very quickly. And as you get about 50 feet away, some lights kick on, and you hear a voice.

Rev: SHERRI: Tass?

Tass: "Hey Sherri, how's it going?"

Rev: SHERRI: I thought you were dead.

Rev: And you hear that sound of a hammer being put back into the uncocked position.

Tass: "Yeah, I think a lot of people think I'm dead, but surprise."

Rev: And there is a heavy silence.

Rev: SHERRI: What's the matter with you?

Tass: "Um ... I'm kind of only half the guy you remember. There's a lot going on here."

Rev: You hear the hammer cock again.

Teej: Oh, shit.

Tass: "That's fair. And I respect that. I don't know where to start besides with the full craziness, here. But my friends and I here? Our minds are from a different version of reality. And in that version of reality, we killed the Soul Bat. And long story short, we're helping someone. He sent us through to try to help. So we're kind of sitting shotgun here with our other selves. So when I say I know you, it's because he knows you, and he's kind of feeding me this information. In my world, your mom and I were close. I worked for her kind of like I did here. But, you know, I still do, actually. So we tried to find Margaret, and instead we found you."

Rev: SHERRI: In your world, who was my mom married to?

Tass: "Well, she's not anymore, but she was with Everett. Who is also a very good friend."

Rev: EVERETT: Yeah, that sounds about right. We had a couple of rough goes that I wasn't sure we were going to make it through.

Tass: "Oh, thank God."

Rev: EVERETT: So if you boys are who you say you are, then you come inside with no problem, I suppose.

Tass: "Potentially one of us -- don't panic -- is a vampire. But he's cool."

Jake: You just hear my voice from behind a plane. [Distant] "Hey, Everett."

Rev: EVERETT: That you, Jake?

Jake: [Distant] "Yeah. I'm half a vampire now, but can I come too?"

Rev: EVERETT: Oh, yeah. I heard that you got turned a while back.

Jake: "Yeah."

Rev: EVERETT: We might have to do some reconfiguring here, but we could probably make it so you get inside.

Jake: "Sweet. I'm going to step forward now."

Rev: EVERETT: Ayup.

Tass: OK. I'll kind of motion the rest up and we'll approach.

Rev: Yeah. As you do, the back of this helicopter opens up. And walking down the ramp, you see the woman you saw in the vision. She has removed a lot of the gear she was wearing. She's got short blondish hair with darker roots and she is holding a big peacemaker. And she smiles when she sees all of you.

Tass: Yeah, like, I think I'm smiling too, but I have my hands still up.

Rev: And just at the top of the ramp is Everett, and he is making some marks with what looks like a very ornate wooden dowel. And you can see that as he's doing this, some of the symbols around the exterior of the door are changing.

Tass: "It's, uh ... It's real good to see y'all right now."

Rev: EVERETT: Yeah. You should be good to come on in here now, Jake.

Jake: All right, I will.

Rev: The three of you enter into this old helicopter and there are half a dozen people in here. They all look a little confused. But Sherri, after closing the door, steps up next to you.

Rev: SHERRI: It's all right, everyone. These are old friends, and it seems like old friends with the slightly new perspective on things? That was kind of a weird explanation, but I don't doubt the existence of other worlds, so ...

Tass: "Well, that's good. That skips a lot of steps, here. This is, um, I think you can understand or appreciate a strange, awkward, and largely unbelievable situation. But here we are."

Rev: SHERRI: Everyone, this is Tass, T.J., and Jake. They were actually the first field team to have contact with the Soul Bat.

Rev: And she turns and points to the other four sitting in various chairs around the room.

Rev: SHERRI: This is Susannah, Eric, Scott, and Alex. So what are you doing here? Why did you come here?

Teej: "We need some information on the Halifax Theatre."

Rev: SHERRI: What about it?

Jake: "Well I mean, broadly, we're here to take down the Soul Bat. And from what we understand, its kind heart or anchor, whatever, that used to be there isn't any more. So for one, we need to figure out where that thing went. And for two, we need any information that might help us kill the actual Soul Bat in the end."

Rev: And she sits down and looks at her hands.

Rev: SHERRI: I don't know where the piece went. I know what you're talking about -- a Soul Bat has a tether. Mom figured that out, and we thought it would be at the Halifax. And when she started to get a feeling that whatever was in there was going to move on us, she tried to move on them first. And she had a plan, a good one, and the right people to execute it. But more than that, she knew the secret the Halifax was hiding. The Soul Bat wasn't guarding one item of power there. It was guarding two.

Rev: And she starts to tear up a little bit.

Rev: SHERRI: It should have worked. One of them should have been able to use it. One of them should have been worthy.

Rev: And Everett puts a hand on her shoulder and gives it a gentle squeeze. And she lays her hand over his and takes a deep breath.

Rev: SHERRI: But nobody who went in made it out.

Jake: "What do you mean by be worthy?"

Rev: SHERRI: That was the secret mom knew, Jake. No one knows how it got there or why. But the other item being guarded at the Halifax is your old hammer.

SFX: OUTRO MUSIC

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