

"AND TREMBLING STARS BELOW THE WAVES"
The Sheridan Tapes - Season 01, Episode 26
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By Trevor Van Winkle

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SILENCE

ANNA SHERIDAN

So -- here's a question. A very old one, actually... And honestly a bit of a cliché at this point. But bear with me on this. Say you have a broom, and at some point you have to replace the brush. Maybe it's old, or broken, or you just don't like the color. Whatever it is, you get a new one, attach it to the old handle, and call it a day. But then, a few months later, the handle breaks. You curse your bad luck and wish you'd just bought a whole new broom to begin with, but since you already paid for the new brush, you go ahead and buy a new handle. Now -- putting aside the fact that I don't even know where you'd go to buy a broom handle just by itself -- is that the same broom you started with?

(beat, then SCOFFS)

Well, obviously not: it's completely new at that point. Not one atom of that broom came from the original, and it was probably manufactured in a completely different factory by a completely different brand. It probably doesn't even look the same. If people come around and happen to notice it for some reason, they'll probably ask if that's a new broom. And, chances are, you'd tell them that yes, it is. Easier than giving them the whole story.

(beat)

But on the other hand, it feels odd to say it's a completely new broom. For a time, it shared parts with the old one -- maybe not for very long, but there's a continuum there... A direct connection between them. The old broom slowly became the new broom. It didn't replace the old one, it was the old one for a bit... Just the old one with a new brush. And if it was the old broom for a while... Isn't it still the old broom, in a way?

(beat)

(MORE)

ANNA SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

So. The new broom both is, and isn't, the old one. And of course, we're not really talking about brooms here. There's a reason this little thought experiment became a cliché, after all. It's a question about ontology... About being and existence and the true, immutable nature of things, not the cleaning supply industry. It's a question about people. Because we're constantly changing too. Growing. Evolving and learning and dying all at once.

(beat)

You could say the same about all living things... After all, how much of the oak tree is in the acorn? And how much of the acorn is in the tree? Not much physically, but without the acorn, there wouldn't be a tree. They're two states of a single entity, separated only by the passage of time... Which, as I've begun to suspect, might not be as solid and immutable as we think.

(beat, moves on to new point)

It's estimated that the human body completely regenerates itself every seven to ten years. By the end of this decade, every one of my cells will have come into existence, performed their function, and died, only to be replaced by new, virtually identical copies. I don't share a single cell with the Anna Sheridan who first looked down that well in Iowa... In fact, I don't even share a single cell with the person who replaced her, or the person who replaced *her*. So... Am I still Anna Sheridan? Am I still the same person, or am I only a doppelganger of myself? A copy of a copy of a copy, forever growing and changing and losing bits of who I am with each iteration? Or am I growing into something new -- something different? Am I the old broom, or the new one?

As she's spoken, the faint sounds of highway traffic fade in behind her. With that last question, the back door of her van slides open, and someone climbs in.

MARIA SOL
 (noticing the tape recorder)
 Oh, sorry... I didn't realize you were recording.

ANNA SHERIDAN
 That's okay... I was just about to wrap up.

MARIA SOL
 Are you sure? I can wait if you're not...

ANNA SHERIDAN
 (determined)
 No. Come on -- let's get going. We've got a job to do.

Anna turns, puts the key in the ignition, and starts the engine, pulling out of the rest area parking lot.

CLICK

EXT. AGATE SHORE - MAIN STREET - MIDNIGHT

Two sets of footsteps run down the street, splashing occasionally in the puddles. Bill suddenly stops.

BILL TYLER
 (PANTING)
 Wait... Chief, slow down... I'm getting a stitch over here...

CHIEF MORRISON
 (annoyed)
 We're hours behind Sam at best. We can't afford to give him any more of a lead.

BILL TYLER
 (PANTING)
 I mean, we probably can...

CHIEF MORRISON
 (snapping slightly)
 What was that, Tyler?

BILL TYLER

(COUGHS)

I mean, did you see the van? It looks like he barely managed to drag himself out of there. He's probably not moving too quickly.

CHIEF MORRISON

I'm not leaving that up to chance. Keep up, or I'm leaving you behind.

With that, Morrison turns and starts running down the road again.

BILL TYLER

(muttered)

Dick.

BILL TAKES A DEEP BREATH, then starts running again. Before he gets too far...

CHIEF MORRISON

(calling back, urgent)

Tyler! Get over here! We've got a body!

BILL TYLER

(dread, thinking it's sam)

Oh, god no...

Bill runs faster.

EXT. AGATE SHORE LAKE - SHORE LINE - CONTINUOUS

The waves lap quietly on the shore, sounding mockingly serene.

CHIEF MORRISON

Hurry, Tyler!

BILL TYLER

Is it...

(sees who it is,
surprised)

Holy shit, that's...

Suddenly, the radio on the chief's belt squelches to life.

DISPATCH

(breaking up slightly,
urgent, fearful)

...dispatch to Greyhound, dispatch to Greyhound, come in Greyhound...

CHIEF MORRISON
 (into radio)
 10-9 dispatch, signal poor.

DISPATCH
 (starts formal, then
 slips)
 Dispatch to Greyhound... Chief,
 what the hell is going on? It's a
 shitshow back here.

CHIEF MORRISON
 (command)
 Dispatch, please refrain from
 swearing on an open channel.

DISPATCH
 (rambling a little,
 terrified)
 Chief, I'm sorry, but that's what
 it is... they're dropping like
 flies, and I don't know what to...

CHIEF MORRISON
 (intimidating)
 Dispatch, you will get a grip right
 now, or I will have you relieved.
 Understood?

DISPATCH
 (beat, then BREATHES, and
 calms down)
 Sir, we're getting calls from all
 over the county. People dropping
 dead in the middle of the street,
 in their houses, on the bus...

CHIEF MORRISON
 (alarmed)
 What? How?

DISPATCH
 (not wanting to say it)
 Sir, they... They seem to be
 drowning.

BILL TYLER
 (realizing, to himself)
 God. It's happening again.

CHIEF MORRISON
 (to himself)
 He did it... The son of a bitch
 actually did it...

DISPATCH

(confused)

Sir? Who are you talking about?

CHIEF MORRISON

(realizing he's still on
an open channel, back to
radio)

Try to contain as much of the chaos
as possible. We'll be able to
assist soon.

DISPATCH

(still uneasy)

Uh... 10-4, sir. Over and out.

BEEP. The chief lowers his radio... THEN CHUCKLES TO HIMSELF -
- a dark, unnerving sound of victory.

BILL TYLER

(nervous)

Sir... What's going on?

CHIEF MORRISON

(smug)

Nothing you need to worry about.
Keep an eye on Sheridan's body... I
need to check the water.

BILL TYLER

(completely thrown off)

Uh... Yes, sir.

Chief walks off. Bill stares at the body a moment before...

BILL TYLER (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Jesus, Sam, what did you do to her?
God, what did you do, period? Those
have to be her duplicates in Oslow,
but...

Suddenly, a pulsing, rising static fills the tape, and Bill
leaps back a few feet.

BILL TYLER (CONT'D)

(freaked out)

Shit... Chief! Chief, get back
here, the body's....!

The static rises to a crescendo, then seems to disperse...
Disintegrating and almost sounding like sand being blown away
on the wind.

BILL TYLER (CONT'D)
(disbelieving)
It's... Gone.
(beat, then confused,
frustrated)
What the hell is...

Suddenly, a loud splash is heard in the distance, along with
SAM GASPING FOR AIR.

CHIEF MORRISON
(urgent yelling)
Tyler!! Get over here, it's Sam!

BILL TYLER
(terrified)
Oh god...

Bill turns, running towards the lake. Chief is already in the
water, pulling Sam out.

CHIEF MORRISON
(straining with effort)
Don't just stand there Tyler, give
me a hand!

BILL TYLER
(lifting sam)
I've got him, I've got him... Shit,
is he...

CHIEF MORRISON
(still straining)
No, he's still breathing. Just in
shock. Come on, get him away from
the water.

Bill and chief drag him fully out of the lake, setting him
down.

BILL TYLER
(PANTING SLIGHTLY)
How did you know he'd be there?

CHIEF MORRISON
(PANTING SLIGHTLY, lying)
Just... A hunch. A theory.

BILL TYLER
(PANTING)
But how did...

SAM BAILEY
 (muttering)
What would you do... Would you do...

BILL TYLER
 (concerned)
 Sam? Sam, are you okay? Come on, talk to me...

SAM BAILEY
 (haunted whisper)
What would you do... To save yourself...?

Sam trails off on the last word.

BILL TYLER
 Sam? Sam, can you hear me?

CHIEF MORRISON
 (cold statement of fact)
 He's out.
 (to radio)
 Dispatch, we need a paramedic unit in Agate Shore. Now.

CLICK

INT. OSLOW GENERAL - HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

A heart rate monitor beeps, and muffled conversation can be heard through the wall. After a moment, SAM GROANS, trying to sit up.

SAM BAILEY
 Oh, god my...
 (suddenly realizes, sits bolt upright)
 The echo! She's...!

BILL TYLER
 (jumping up)
 Whoa, easy Sam! You're okay.

SAM BAILEY
 (confused)
 Bill? Is that... Really you?

BILL TYLER
 (confused)
 Yeah. Who else would it be?

SAM BAILEY

The echo, she...
 (suddenly realizes)
 Where am I?

BILL TYLER

You're in Oslow General. Paramedics brought you here after you passed out.

(beat)
 How... How are you feeling?

SAM BAILEY

(SCOFFS)
 How do you think I...
 (stops, realizing)
 I feel... Fine.
 (suddenly concerned)
 God, what kind of painkillers do they have me on?

BILL TYLER

(shrugs)
 None, surprisingly. Seems like you walked away from that crash pretty much unscathed.

SAM BAILEY

(confused)
 What? No, I... I broke my leg.

BILL TYLER

(confused)
 No... You didn't. Pretty sure we'd notice if you had.

SAM BAILEY

(growing concerned)
 No, it was...

Sam pulls back the sheet and cuts off when he sees his own, fully intact leg. He moves it around experimentally, accidentally rattling a manacle attached to the gurney.

BILL TYLER

(uneasy humor)
 See... Not broken.

SAM BAILEY

(putting the pieces together)
 Oh. Oh, of course. Sure. I guess that makes sense.

BILL TYLER

(pause, hesitant)

What... What happened out there? In the lake?

SAM BAILEY

(unsure)

I'm... Not really sure. It's all kind of... Hazy. Like the last time I...

(beat as he thinks)

I know I went into the water... I know I heard the voice, but... I can't remember most of what it said.

(beat, then SCOFFS)

Well, except the questions, of course. I can always remember the questions.

BILL TYLER

(uneasy)

So... What did you tell it?

SAM BAILEY

(struggling to remember)

It... It asked me who... Who I'd give to save myself. And I told it... The Echo. Thought that might finally be enough to stop it. Was I right?

BILL TYLER

I guess you were. At least two dozen people in Oslo were found drowned, before their bodies just... Evaporated, I guess. Fizzled away into static.

SAM BAILEY

And... The one pretending to be Anna?

BILL TYLER

Yeah. Same thing. Actually saw it happen with her.

SAM BAILEY

(uncertain)

Well... That's some comfort, I guess.

(notices the manacle)

So... Am I under arrest now?

CHIEF MORRISON
 (from the corner of the
 room)
 That depends.

Sam jumps slightly.

SAM BAILEY
 (startled)
 Chief! I didn't realize you were...

CHIEF MORRISON
 (darkly)
 That's the idea.
 (to bill)
 You're dismissed, Tyler.

BILL TYLER
 (hesitant, not wanting to
 leave sam alone with him)
 Uh... Yes... Sir.

Bill slowly retreats from the room, opening the door into the busy hallway beyond and closing it behind him.

CHIEF MORRISON
 (unreadable)
 Sam...

SAM BAILEY
 Sir, I take full responsibility for
 my actions -- I made a poor
 decision and it...

CHIEF MORRISON
 (warm, almost parental
 tone)
 I am so, so proud of you.

SAM BAILEY
 (confused)
 I... Sir?

CHIEF MORRISON
 (LAUGHING WARMLY)
 I was expecting a lot from you, but
 my god! I was worried you were
 going off the rails a bit there at
 the end, but now...

SAM BAILEY
 (almost angry, confused)
 Sir, what are you talking about?
 (MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

I... I stole an impounded vehicle
and violated probation...

CHIEF MORRISON

(waving it off)

Ah, details, details! Means to an
end, and nothing we can't find a
way to sweep under the rug.

SAM BAILEY

(completely lost)

What... End? What are you talking
about?

CHIEF MORRISON

(only too happy to
explain)

The Echo, Sam! God, not even
Sheridan was able to take care of
that thing, and she was trying for
years...

SAM BAILEY

(growing anger)

So it's true then. You knew about
the Echo. Before all this.

CHIEF MORRISON

(rolling his eyes, still
in good spirits)

I had a team working the case for
months before I gave it to you Sam.
You think I didn't have them
listening to the exact same tapes
you had? You think you're the only
one who could've figured it all
out?

SAM BAILEY

So you knew who she was? When I
brought her into the station?

CHIEF MORRISON

(slightly embarrassed)

Well... Yes. We were actually
pretty well acquainted at that
point. And I'm sorry about that,
but... I couldn't let you know that
I knew. Not at that point, anyway.

SAM BAILEY

(growing outrage)

Then why would you...
(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

Why did you fire me? Why did you let me think I was...

CHIEF MORRISON

(patronizing)

Because you needed to figure this out on your own. Find your own way to the truth. That's the way its always been, with people like you: no one can tell you what you are.

SAM BAILEY

(annoyed)

I could have used a hint.

CHIEF MORRISON

(LAUGHS)

And would you have believed me? You'd just barely accepted the existence of the supernatural when you blundered into that halfway house... Do you really think you'd believe me if I said you weren't human?

There's a moment of silence before...

SAM BAILEY

(defeated)

So. I'm really not human. She was telling the truth.

CHIEF MORRISON

(trying to soften the blow slightly)

The truth, as she knew it... And only in the way she thought would hurt you the most.

SAM BAILEY

(accusation)

But you knew, right? About all of it. God, that's why you were in such a rush to hire me in the first place.

CHIEF MORRISON

Exactly.

SAM BAILEY

(demanding an answer)

Why?

CHIEF MORRISON

(closing off a bit)

I have my own reasons. And you don't need to know them in order to...

SAM BAILEY

(SCOFFS angrily)

Are you fucking kidding me? After everything you've put me through? You owe me an explanation, Morrison.

CHIEF MORRISON

(edge of anger)

I don't owe you a think, Bailey.

(softening slightly)

But, I guess you have earned some answers, at least.

(beat as he thinks how to put this)

I've always know Agate Shore was an... Unusual place, let's say. Even more so than small towns usually are. It was built on the banks of a lake that was never *quite* what it seemed. Anna discovered the same thing when she passed through, through you cut her exploration a bit short when you... Well.

SAM BAILEY

(confused)

Wait, wait... You knew that I blew up the dam?

CHIEF MORRISON

(rolling his eyes)

Sam, I didn't just have Sheridan's tapes all those months... I had yours. So yes, I knew that you blew up the dam. But I made sure the commission board didn't figure out that little detail. I actually covered some of your tracks to make sure no one else found them... You were a bit sloppy, to be honest.

(beat)

In any case... I knew exactly what you did. That's what convinced me to hire you the most.

SAM BAILEY

(confused)

What? You... You hired me *because*
I...

CHIEF MORRISON

(with conviction)

Because you were willing to do
whatever it took to destroy that
threat. You saw the danger,
recognized it for what it was, and
took drastic steps to remove it.

SAM BAILEY

(concerned)

I... Sir, I broke the law. I must
have destroyed... Millions of
dollars in...

CHIEF MORRISON

(dismissive, then dead
serious)

Of course you broke the law.
Because you understand what so many
people can't accept... That there's
a natural order to things. One
that's higher than any law. And
when the creatures and monsters
rise up out of the dark to threaten
it -- they need to be put back in
their place, by any means
necessary. Without people like you
and me -- people who will act
swiftly, and without mercy or
hesitation -- our entire
civilization will dissolve into
ruin, and chaos.

SAM BAILEY

(beat, then uncertain)

What about Sheridan? Was she like
you too?

CHIEF MORRISON

(SCOFFS)

Don't get me started on Sheridan.
She's even worse than the monsters,
in my book. We wouldn't have had to
deal with the Echo at all, if she'd
just let it be. God knows how many
other monsters she let loose on
this world because of her
stupidity. I'm glad she's gone.

SAM BAILEY

(beat, more questioning)
And what about me? Where do I fit
in to all this?

Morrison pauses, formulating his answer.

CHIEF MORRISON

(with gravity, almost a
threat)
You walk a very, very thin line,
Bailey.

(beat)
Are you human? Not entirely. You
have your memories, your identity
from before you went into that
water. Physically, biologically,
you're a human being... Just as
much as the Echo was. But what you
really are?

(beat, then shrugs)
I don't know. When the Echoes died,
their bodies just -- completely
disintegrated. These entities --
forces, powers, whatever you want
to call them -- can create things
that seem indistinguishable from
reality. The Beechwood monster. De
Witt. Golems. Hell-hounds. All as
real and dangerous as they seem.
But take away that power, that
force of will that created them,
and what's left? Nothing. Less than
nothing.

(beat, then more direct to
sam)
You're a memory of the Sam Bailey
that was -- an idea of what that
Sam Bailey might have become. You
have free will... Or at least, you
believe you do. I can't say for
sure. You're still a person, but...
Are you really human? Well... Could
a human have done what you did to
the Echo?

A long silence as Sam processes... Then...

SAM BAILEY

(oddly distant)
So what do you want from me?

CHIEF MORRISON
 (CHUCKLES TO HIMSELF)
 Hmm... You know the funny thing
 about sheepdogs?

SAM BAILEY
 (confused)
 Sheepdogs?

CHIEF MORRISON
 Yeah. Sheepdogs. They protect their
 flocks from all kinds of dangers...
 Bears, mountain lions, thieves...
 But most of all, they keep away the
 wolves. The funny thing is,
 though...
 (beat)
 They used to be wolves themselves,
 not so long ago.

A tense silence fills the room.

SAM BAILEY
 (barely contained anger)
 Sir... If I'm not injured, and I'm
 not under arrest... Then I'd like
 to go now. If that's alright with
 you.

CHIEF MORRISON
 (sensing his hesitance,
 growing tense)
 Bailey, if you're not with me on
 this...

SAM BAILEY
 (lying)
 I need to sleep on it. On *all* of
 it.

Another tense silence, then...

CHIEF MORRISON
 (false kindness)
 Of course you do. I actually think
 you just need to sleep, *period*.
 Here, let me get the handcuffs...

He walks over and unshackles Sam from the gurney. Sam stands,
 a little slowly and unsteadily, but quickly realizes his leg
 isn't broken and crosses the room.

CHIEF MORRISON (CONT'D)
 (not to be questioned)
 But I expect to hear back from you
 by tomorrow morning. Understood?

Sam pauses as he opens the door.

SAM BAILEY
 (almost an accusation)
 Whose body was that?

CHIEF MORRISON
 (confused)
 Excuse me?

SAM BAILEY
 (hesitates, then pushes)
 Whose body was that, in De Witt's
 freezer? Down in the morgue?

CHIEF MORRISON
 (irritated)
 Nobody important.

SAM BAILEY
 (demanding)
 Who?

A tense moment of silence.

CHIEF MORRISON
 (angered edge)
 I don't know his name. Somebody no
 one will miss.

SAM BAILEY
 (almost to himself)
 Hmm. Means to an end.

Sam exits, walking off into the hallway. After a moment, Bill enters the hospital room.

BILL TYLER
 (concerned)
 Sir, is... Is he okay to leave
 right now?

CHIEF MORRISON
 (slightly bitter)
 A little too okay, actually.

BILL TYLER
 (worried)
 Sir... Is everything okay?

CHIEF MORRISON
 (beat, then authoritative)
 I think we might have a problem,
 Bill. A very big problem.
 (beat, notices something)
 Wait, was this recording the
 whole...

CLICK

INT. SAM BAILEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In the next room, someone is pounding on the door.

SAM BAILEY
 (annoyed, slightly
 fearful)
 Dammit... Couldn't even let me have
 one good night's sleep before
 they...

CHIEF MORRISON
 (shouting through the
 door)
 Bailey? Bailey, open this door,
 right now! You hear me?

SAM BAILEY
 (yelling back)
 You'd better keep it down! You're
 going to wake the landlord!

CHIEF MORRISON
 (slightly lower)
 He's already getting the spare key
 for us! This will go a lot easier
 for you if you just open the door,
 Bailey.

Sam pulls out the drawer on his night stand, retrieving his
 pistol as quietly as he can.

SAM BAILEY
 How'd you convince him to let you
 in? No way you have a warrant
 already.

CHIEF MORRISON
 (faked compassion)
 We're here for your own good,
 Bailey -- we know what you're
 planning to do, and we're not going
 to let you kill yourself!

SAM BAILEY
 (CHUCKLES MOROSELY, aside)
 Oh, of course he's worried about me
 now...
 (yelling back)
 No way that's going to hold up,
 Morrison!

CHIEF MORRISON
 (dark, threat)
 It doesn't have to... It just has
 to get us through this door...

LANDLORD
 (slightly muffled,
 concerned tone)
 I'm sorry officers, I can't seem to
 find his key anywhere. I'm sure if
 you...

CHIEF MORRISON
 (annoyed)
 Stand aside. Tyler: knock it down.

LANDLORD
 Sir! This is my building you're...

CHIEF MORRISON
 We'll reimburse you for the
 damages. Do it, Tyler.

Bill rocks back and kicks the door... Once, twice, then --
 BANG! The door flies open.

Across the room, Sam cocks his gun.

CHIEF MORRISON (CONT'D)
 Bailey! We're coming in!

SAM BAILEY
 Don't move! I'm armed!

CHIEF MORRISON
 That is a phenomenally stupid move,
 Bailey! It's two against one, and I
 have more officers downstairs if
 you try to run!

SAM BAILEY
 Well given everything you just told
 me... I like my odds.

BILL TYLER
 (pleading with him)
 Sam, just... Just drop it, okay?
 We're not here to hurt you, but...
 Look, there's no good way out of
 this. Trust me.

Sam hesitates, then drops the gun, stepping out into the living room.

SAM BAILEY
 (annoyed)
 Alright, alright... What are you...
 OOF!

Sam doubles over as the chief drives a first into his solar plexus.

CHIEF MORRISON
 (demanding)
 Where are the tapes, Bailey?

SAM BAILEY
 (pained confusion)
 The... The what?

CHIEF MORRISON
 We just got through searching the mess you made of Sheridan's van. And turning your parent's house upside down looking for them. Where did you hide them?

SAM BAILEY
 (LAUGHS, pained)
 Nowhere.

Chief hits him again, and SAM GRUNTS IN PAIN.

LANDLORD
 (worried)
 Hey, hey, take it easy on him... I thought you were here to...

CHIEF MORRISON
 (calling back to landlord)
 It's nothing to worry about!
 (aside to bill)
 Bill, keep an eye on Sam -- I need to get rid of the landlord.
 (talking to the landlord as he walks over)
 (MORE)

CHIEF MORRISON (CONT'D)

We're fine here, it's just a matter
of making sure he can't hurt
himself. Come with me, and we'll
get you the paperwork to...

His voice retreats down the stairs. As soon as it fades, Bill
rushes over to Sam.

BILL TYLER

(worried)

Sam? Are you okay?

SAM BAILEY

(PAINED GROANING)

What do you care?

BILL TYLER

(irritated)

Oh, shut up you idiot -- I'm trying
to save your life. Listen, Morrison
is...

CHIEF MORRISON

(calling up the stairs)

Get anything more from him?

BILL TYLER

Shit...

Bill stands, turning to face Morrison.

BILL TYLER (CONT'D)

(feigned disappointment)

Sir, he -- he destroyed the tapes.
Dumped them out the window on his
way to Agate Shore.

CHIEF MORRISON

(ANGRY GROAN)

God damn it, Bailey.

SAM BAILEY

(realizing what's
happening)

It... It seemed like a good idea at
the time.

CHIEF MORRISON

(angry muttering)

Of course it did.

(to bill)

Tyler.

BILL TYLER

Sir?

CHIEF MORRISON

(cold anger)

Get this piece of shit out of my sight. Now.

BILL TYLER

Uh... Yes, Sir. Where should I...

CHIEF MORRISON

(exploding a little)

I don't care! Just get rid of him, now. Do you understand?

BILL TYLER

(thrown off)

Oh. Yes sir -- I understand.

SAM BAILEY

(pretending)

Bill, don't do this...

Bill winds back and kicks Sam, WHO GRUNTS.

BILL TYLER

(faked cruelty)

Shut up and get up... We're going.

Bill lifts Sam to his feet.

SAM BAILEY

(whispered, pained)

Was the kick really necessary...

BILL TYLER

(whispered)

Gotta sell it to Morrison.

(full volume)

This might take a bit, sir... I should be back to the station by...

CHIEF MORRISON

(done with this)

Just get it done, Tyler.

SAM BAILEY

(mutter aside)

So much for a sheepdog, huh?

CHIEF MORRISON
(CHUCKLES DARKLY)
Maybe I was wrong about you,
Bailey. Wrong from the start.
(to bill)
Get him out of here.

Bill pushes Sam out of the room and down the stairs towards the parking lot.

CLICK

INT. MARIA SOL'S VAN - HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The sound of a van's engine rumbles in the background as we cut in on a telephone call already in progress.

MARIA SOL
(worried edge)
You're sure he doesn't suspect anything?

BILL TYLER
(slightly nervous)
No, he's got no idea where the tapes are. He's pissed about it, though. And I doubt he's going to stop looking for answers anytime soon.

MARIA SOL
(hesitant)
And Sam... Is he...

BILL TYLER
He's okay. I've got him tucked away somewhere chief will never find him. He's safe.

MARIA SOL
Where?

BILL TYLER
I can't say it now... I'm taking enough of a risk just calling you, even from a pay phone.

MARIA SOL
Got it. Should we keep our old rendezvous, or...

BILL TYLER

No, no -- it won't work anymore. Chief will be watching me like a hawk from here on. I'll figure out a way to get back in touch with you if I need to. Toss your burner phone as soon as you hang up.

MARIA SOL

Got it.
(beat)
Good luck, Bill.

BILL TYLER

Yeah... Same to you Maria. Hope I see you again.

MARIA SOL

(unsure what to say)
Yeah. Sure.

BEEP BEEP. Bill hangs up. Maria rolls down the window, then GRUNTS SLIGHTLY as she tosses the phone through before rolling it back up.

MARIA SOL (CONT'D)

(to recorder)
Well... I guess it turned out okay. More or less. Not like we planned, but... It worked. It almost worked better than we expected it to. I can't believe Sam managed to finally beat that thing... Even if he did wreck Anna's van in the process. Can't win them all, I guess.

(beat, then more serious)
I hope he's going to be alright. Going back to Agate Shore like that... It probably messed with his head even more than everything else. Wherever Bill's taken him... I hope he'll finally be able to rest.

Maria leans over, opening the case with Anna's recordings. She rummages through them for a moment.

MARIA SOL (CONT'D)

Well, I've got a long drive ahead of me, so I figured I could listen to some of Anna's tapes on the way.
(MORE)

MARIA SOL (CONT'D)

I was actually flipping through her old copy of *Udolpho* and noticed a tape from that last night before... Well. You know.

(beat)

Let's see... Tape number 2-7-31-1-2... Ah! There it is.

Maria pulls the cassette out and slips it into the van's old tape player.

CLICK

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The same scene from the opening of episode 23... Anna reading "O Me! O Life" by Walt Whitman.

ANNA SHERIDAN

Oh me! Oh life! of the questions of these recurring,

Of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities fill'd with the foolish,

Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I, and who more faithless?)

Of eyes that vainly crave the light, of the objects mean, of the struggle ever renew'd,

Of the poor results of all, of the plodding and sordid crowds I see around me,

Of the empty and useless years of the rest, with the rest me intertwined,

The question, O me! so sad, recurring—What good amid these, O me, O life?

Anna grows quiet, then repeats.

ANNA SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

(slower, almost at a whisper)

What good amid these, O me, O life?

Anna pauses, as though considering whether she actually believes the final lines of the poem... Then shifts, sitting up straight.

ANNA SHERIDAN (CONT'D)
 (with conviction, a direct
 address to Maria in the
 future)

Answer: That you are here -- that
 life exists and identity. That the
 powerful play goes on... and you
 may contribute a verse.

Behind her, the shower that's been running since episode 6
 shuts off, and after a moment, someone steps out into the
 main room.

MARIA SOL
 (confused)
 What, are you recording again?

ANNA SHERIDAN
 (concealing slightly)
 Just... Getting some thoughts down.
 Clearing my head, before... Well,
 you know.

MARIA SOL
 (mildly annoyed)
 Actually, I kind of don't.

ANNA SHERIDAN
 (regretful)
 Maria, I already told you I
 can't...

MARIA SOL
 Yeah, yeah. It's... It's fine. I
 just wish you'd trust me a little
 more after all we've been through.

ANNA SHERIDAN
 I do! It's just...
 (beat)
 There's more on the line here than
 you know. Maybe even than *I* know.
 And I'm sorry, but... It's better
 this way.

MARIA SOL
 Better for who?

There's a moment of silence... Then ANNA SIGHS.

ANNA SHERIDAN

(tired)

I really don't want to fight about
this, Maria. Not tonight.

MARIA SOL

(grudging acceptance)

Fine. Come on, scoot over.

Anna shuffles over on the bed, and Maria lays down next to
her. They sit together in silence for a moment, before...

MARIA SOL (CONT'D)

(gently prying)

Can you at least tell me what's
going to happen tomorrow?

ANNA SHERIDAN

(melancholy)

I don't know. Not really.

(with a bit of a smile)

But I know you'll be there with me.
That's enough.

MARIA SOL

(sarcastic)

Aw, shucks, you're making me blush.

ANNA SHERIDAN

(LAUGHS, knocks her on the
shoulder)

Oh, shut up. I mean it.

MARIA SOL

(smiling)

You always were a bit cheesy.

ANNA SHERIDAN

(annoyed)

And you're a total brat!

MARIA SOL

Takes one to know one.

THEY BOTH LAUGH AT ONE ANOTHER, then fall quiet. A train
rolls past in the distance, horn wailing.

ANNA SHERIDAN

(tender)

I love you.

MARIA SOL
(smirking, but genuine
underneath it)
You'd better.

CLACK.

INT. MARIA SOL'S VAN - HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Maria sits back in her seat. She doesn't say anything... Just listens to the sound of the road under her tires as she drives into the unknown.

ROLL SEASON END
THEME AND
CREDITS