

"ASHES GONE COLD"
The Sheridan Tapes - Season 02, Episode 42
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by

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"Homestead on the Corner"
By Trevor Van Winkle

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1. INT. ISPHA FACILITY - OFFICE - DAY - NOVEMBER 3, 2019

A busy office is heard through an open door for a brief moment, before it closes, cutting the noise off almost completely. Someone crosses the room, sits, and dials the phone.

REN PARK

(into phone)

Dr. Caldwell -- yes, I know you're with the board, but... No this couldn't wait. No, I can't just send an email, either.

(pause, listening as they leave the room)

You're sure they can't hear you? Good. Listen -- we have a situation in Oslow. No, not good. Lieutenant Tyler found site zero.

(listens, increasingly agitated)

Yes. No, I don't know how he managed it -- I believe he followed someone. I'm not sure who.

(listens)

That's a definite possibility. But if they're one of Edgar's associates -- we may have less time than we thought.

CLICK.

2. INT. ABANDONED CABIN - DAY - NOVEMBER 4, 2019

The wind is starting to howl outside as Sam strikes a match and plunges it into a mass of kindling. The woodfire catches and burns, and Sam closes the stove before standing up.

SAM BAILEY

(to himself)

Sam Bailey, Monday, November 4th, 2019. 7:31am. Overcast this morning. Cold too. I don't have my phone or -- well, any way to check the forecast, but... It definitely feels like the snow is finally coming.

SAM BLOWS INTO HIS HANDS, rubbing them and holding them out to the fire. The wind blows against the cabin siding in gusts, almost sounding like someone's thumping on the walls.

After a moment, the wind mingles with *something else* -- closer and quieter, like the muffled noise of a struggle.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

(confused)

That doesn't sound like the wind...
Almost sounds like it's coming from
the cellar?

Sam stands and walks towards the door, slowing as he gets closer. His footsteps creak as he stops in front of it. He gently places one hand on the wood as he leans in.

From behind the door, a faint sound is heard: like the ragged breathing of two people trapped inside. Something thumps against the stairs, quiet but undeniably there.

SAM DRAWS A SHARP BREATH and slowly backs away, then stops. After a moment, he grabs a nearby bookshelf, dragging it in front of the door. Whatever's down below grows louder, but quiets down once the bookshelf is in place.

Sam hesitates, then walks back and sits down next to the fire again.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

(shaking his head)

No clue what that is, but there's
no way I'm going down there to --

He cuts off as the sound of struggle grows louder. After a few moments, the voices grow quiet.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

(confused)

They've stopped. I wonder if --

Static rises on the tape slightly as Sam tries to reach out and sense the figures in the basement. They immediately grow louder, knocking into the door. The static cuts out.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Never mind... Sorry. Whatever they
are, I guess they want their
privacy, which... Hey, I get that.
Wouldn't want someone else snooping
around in my head, trying to feel
my emotions.

(beat, wondering)

Or maybe... Are they just reacting
to me? What I'm doing up here?

After a moment, Sam stands and walks across the room. As he does, the spirits groan and struggle. Sam stops, and they go quiet again. More quietly, he tip-toes back to the couch. Whatever's in the basement doesn't make any noise.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

(whispered)

Well then. I guess it's going to be a quiet morning after all. Good. I had some reading I wanted to finish up. And this log, but -- No use wasting tape if I can't actually talk.

(beat)

I wonder how long they'll stick around?

CLICK.

3. INT. ABANDONED CABIN - LATER

The wind outside has calmed slightly, and the sounds of struggle downstairs are still quiet.

SAM BAILEY

(nearly whispering)

It's about... Mid-day, sometime around noon. I've been sitting next to the fire all morning, reading, staring out the windows, that kind of thing. If I move around too quickly or talk too loudly, then -- they start up again.

(beat)

It sounds like there's two of... Whatever's in the basement. And I haven't tried to feel for them again -- that just seems to piss them off. I don't know quite what to make of it. Sure, I've noticed an odd energy around the cabin over the last six months, and a few of my things seemed to move by themselves now and then, but... I don't know. It hasn't been enough to notice, not with everything else going on around here. Not until this morning, that is.

(beat, listening)

I've been trying to remember everything that Bill told me about this place -- which isn't much, to be honest.

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

He really didn't want to answer any of my questions about the cabin when I got here, and I didn't press the issue. I seem to remember there was a case involving a cabin in the woods when I first joined Oslow PD, but I was still getting settled in and I wasn't -- Well, I was being a bit of a prick, to be honest. I was still grieving Allen, but -- I wasn't handling it well. Taking it out on other people. Especially Bill.

(beat)

I guess I'm paying for it now -- I would at least have a little bit of trickle-down information about this place if I'd actually been willing to engage. People can't really keep secrets in a department that small... at least, not from other officers. But I actively avoided any situation where I might have heard something useful about this place.

(beat)

I do remember there was a double homicide -- a cold case from years back that had just been solved. The scene was somewhere up in the mountains, a few hours outside of Oslow. They tried to keep things pretty hush hush, I think... The cabin was well outside our jurisdiction, maybe even across state lines. It wouldn't be too much of a stretch to guess that's where I am now, if it's been abandoned and scrubbed clean. That would explain Bill's hesitation to tell me anything -- especially if the bodies were only found last year.

(SHUDDERS)

I wonder how much of the "old cabin smell" in here is just the decay they couldn't scrub out of the woodwork.

(beat)

Maybe that's why I'm hearing those things down in the basement now, though. If I'm right about this place, it's almost exactly a year since those bodies were discovered.

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

"The veil" is probably even thinner that usual right now, between that anniversary and my being here, messing around with the supernatural. That's probably why they're angry with me -- I didn't bother to get them anything.

(beat)

I guess all I can do is stay quiet and just -- hope they go away again. Or I could try pushing them away, but -- that just doesn't feel right. If they were killed in this cabin, then they have more right to be here than I do, honestly.

Sam sits in the quiet for a moment, thinking.

SAM BAILEY

(musing slightly, still quiet)

It's odd -- there's something about this that feels... I don't know.

(beat)

I've been here for six months now. I've spent that time resting, hiking, and hiding away from the rest of the world. Just taking care of what I've needed in the moment. I haven't thought about the future or the news or... Well, anything else in months. When I first got here, I was terrified, worried about how I was going to keep busy, keep myself from going in circles. And now... I don't even think about it. It's kind of nice to know what I can accomplish when everything else is taken away. I've finally figured out how to meditate. Sort of. Physically, I feel better than I ever have. I could have done with better food, sure, but it's not like I would've known what to do with it when I got here.

The spirits stir slightly as Sam gets louder. He pauses, then continues, trying to be quieter.

SAM BAILEY

(thoughtful, whispering)

I've never been able to recognize birds before, but now I do.

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

Not species -- I can't look anything up, and there isn't a book on Ornithology in the cabin. But individual birds. I recognize them when they come around, or I see them on one of my hikes. I've seen the weather shift, and the forest along with it. And it does change, each and every day, just a little bit. I didn't think it was possible to know a place this way -- to feel the rhythm of it, like a heartbeat beneath my feet. Even this high up, in the thin, dry air... There is so much life.

(beat)

But even so... It feels like I've done what I came here to do. There's a certainty, a finality to what happened the other day with Allen and the ladders and that other place. And now? Now it just feels like I'm trapped here. I still need to find out what happened to Anna, I know that much -- and I'm positive I can't do that from here. So somehow... I need to leave.

(beat, considering options)

The clouds outside are dark and heavy, and it feels like it might start snowing any minute now. I don't have a vehicle, and I have no idea how to get off this mountain even if I did. I know that civilization is miles away, and I wouldn't last long hiking in this cold. And even if I did somehow make it to a town or city nearby, that's no assurance that I'm safe. I have a terrible feeling Morrison would know I was there before I had a chance to escape.

(beat)

That leaves me with -- the basement. Again. And trust me, I'm in no rush to try my luck down there. If try to calm down those... Spirits... Well, there's no guarantee it'll go well for me. I might be getting more comfortable with this stuff, but that doesn't make me... Well, Anna Sheridan.

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

(SCOFFS)

She'd probably know what to do. Too bad I didn't listen to all of her tapes. She probably has one for "things that go bump in the night."

(CHUCKLES, slightly embarrassed)

I moved the heaviest bookshelf in the cabin in front of the basement door, and so far it seems to be holding. I guess I just have to hope it's enough.

As he says this, there's a creaking, wooden sound. Sam whips around, and the noise stops immediately.

SAM BAILEY

(confused)

That sounded like the rocking chair. But there's...

SAM SIGHS and turns back around. The noise starts again. He turns to look, and it stops just as suddenly. Sam stands up, turning to keep his eyes on the chair.

SAM BAILEY

Well -- I guess that's something else I need to keep my eye on. Great.

Sam grabs the recorder, walking over to the window. In the background, the struggling noises start up again in the basement, then die down as Sam becomes still.

SAM LETS OUT A BREATH, creeping the rest of the way to the window. The rocking chair begins to creak before Sam turns again, and it stops. Sam glances out the window.

SAM BAILEY

Shit. Well, there it is -- first snow of the season. It's already starting to stick further up the mountain, so it's only a matter of time before I'm trapped in here. With the unquiet spirits and the haunted rocking chair. You know, this cabin is starting to feel a bit crowded.

(notices something)

Wait, is that --

(beat, looking out window)

Huh. Never mind. I thought I saw something out there in the trees, but... No.

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

Only saw it for a second. Probably just a... deer...

(SHOCKED BREATH)

No... How?

(half beat)

It's the trees. They're all... Weeping. Weeping blood through their bark. And it's... I can feel the pain and fear radiating from them. Not from the trees, but from something inside them, something beyond them...

The rocking chair starts up again. SAM GROANS IN FEAR AND FRUSTRATION, turning to walk over to it. As he does, the spirits in the basement grow more agitated, rushing upon the basement door and banging against it, MOANING and shaking the bookshelf. Sam jumps back, freezing in his step.

SAM BAILEY

(suppressing a scream as his own fear feeds back on the fear outside)

Oh shit...

SAM TAKES SEVERAL DEEP BREATHS, collecting his thoughts.

SAM BAILEY

(quiet, to himself)

Calm... Calm... All is well... All is well...

Static rises slightly on the tape, his last word distorting slightly. The spirits grow quiet, MOANING SOFTLY behind the door.

SAM SIGHS IN RELIEF -- then cuts off sharply. There's an engine running outside. As quietly as he can, Sam sneaks back to the front window.

SAM BAILEY

(uncertain, nervous)

Uh...

(beat)

There's an -- An unmarked black van outside.

(beat)

That's not Bill's car. Who else could...?

(beat)

Oh shit. *Oh Shit.*

Sam backs off, heart hammering, BREATHING FAST. The spirits begin to grow louder, the rocking chair creaking faster.

Sam turns and bolts for his room. The spirits respond, thrashing against the door. Sam throws the recorder on his bed, grabs a backpack, and zips it open, throwing items inside as he puts on every item of warm clothing he can find.

SAM BAILEY

(breathless, panicked)

I don't know how Morrison found me,
but I need to get out of here, now.
The snow's falling faster, but I
should be able to get away...
There's a cave just a few miles
southeast that I might be able to
shelter in if I just --

The door of the van slams shut outside, footsteps approaching.

SAM BAILEY

(terrified)

Shit shit shit shit...

Sam runs to the back door, the spirits slamming against the bookshelf and rattling it slightly. The rocking chair continues to accelerate its creaking.

SAM BAILEY

(quietly, talking himself
through his plan)

Those spirits are about to bust
right through that door. I see
anyone but Bill out there, I make a
run for it out the back. Hopefully
the spirits will keep whoever it is
occupied long enough for me to get
away.

The person outside knocks urgently -- far more aggressively than Bill ever did.

SAM BAILEY

(nervous whisper)

Come on -- show yourself.

Knocking again, and the bookshelf rocks forward, almost toppling. The rocking chair grows faster, then finally topples over in a noisy heap.

SAM BAILEY

(desperate)

Come on.

MARIA SOL
 (through the door,
 worried)
 Sam! Open the door, now!

SAM SCOFFS in disbelief, then rushes back to the front door, opening it wide.

SAM BAILEY
 (surprised and genuinely
 excited)
 Maria!?

MARIA SOL
 (cautious, worried)
 Uh, Sam... What's going on in --
 OOF!

Sam unexpectedly embraces her in a hug before he realizes what he's doing, then suddenly steps back.

SAM BAILEY
 (mortified)
 Oh god -- I'm sorry Maria, it's
 just --

MARIA SOL
 (taken aback)
 It's, uh... It's fine, I'm just --

The spirits slam into the door again, making both of them jump.

MARIA SOL
 (back in the present)
 Sam, what the hell is going on in
 there? And why are the trees
bleeding out here?

SAM BAILEY
 There are, uh... Two very unhappy
 spirits trapped in the basement.
 Probably not for much longer, by
 the sound of it.
 (beat)
 Never mind that -- how did you find
 me? What are you doing here?

MARIA SOL
 (surprised)
 Wait... You don't know what this
 place is?

SAM BAILEY
 (slight dread)
 Uh... No, not really.

MARIA SOL
 (incredulous)
 How can you not know? You were
 working for Oslow PD when it
 happened!

SAM BAILEY
 (defensive, then back to
 the point)
 I was a little bit... No, that
 doesn't matter. What is this place?
 Why are you here?

There's a rush of wind as the spirits throw themselves into
 the door, knocking the bookshelf over. The SPIRITS'S WAILING
 fills the cabin, shattering every window.

SAM JUMPS, GASPING. Maria recovers quickly, grabbing Sam by
 the arm and pulling him outside.

SAM BAILEY
 (alarmed, confused)
 What are you doing?

MARIA SOL
 (commanding)
 Duck!

Sam and Maria hit the deck, and the spirits fly out the front
 door. Their wailing retreats into the forest, eventually
 vanishing into the peaceful quiet of the snow.

MARIA SOL
 (RELEASING A BREATH)
 Okay... You can get up now.

SAM BAILEY
 (disbelieving)
 Wait... They just wanted to leave?
 All I had to do was... What, open
 the door for them?

MARIA SOL
 I guess so. You okay?

SAM BAILEY
 Yeah... I think so. You?

MARIA SOL

Same. Good thing I got here in time to save your ass.

SAM BAILEY

How did you find this place? I thought Bill didn't tell anyone?

MARIA SOL

He only told me about it yesterday -
- probably because he knew I'd give him an earful about putting you up here.

SAM BAILEY

(worried)

Why? What is this place?

MARIA SOL

You seriously don't know?
(beat as Sam shakes head,
EXASPERATED SIGH)
Those two spirits -- I'm guessing they used to be the two backpackers who went missing up here in 1991. They found this cabin in the middle of the woods, and then... John Martin Westmoreland found them.

SAM BAILEY

(stunned)

Westmoreland? Not the --

MARIA SOL

(nodding)

The serial killer, yeah. He forced them into the basement, then locked the door behind them. Let them starve to death down there.

SAM BAILEY

But -- I thought his MO was hiding victims in hollowed out trees, not...

(sees the bleeding trunks again)

Oh. Well, at least that explains the blood.

MARIA SOL

Yeah. But those two came too close to his hideaway.

(MORE)

MARIA SOL (CONT'D)

He couldn't risk someone finding their bodies, and since it took nearly 27 years for the police to track them down, I guess...

(quick beat)

What the hell am I saying -- *Sam*, we need to go, now. We'll talk on the way.

Maria rushes to the back of the van, opening the doors and rummaging around.

SAM BAILEY

(trying to get her attention)

On the way? On the way *where*?
What's going on?

MARIA SOL

(exasperated)

Sam...

(beat, stops, faces Sam)

De Witt is back. And he's working with Morrison.

SAM BAILEY

(stunned)

What?

MARIA SOL

(going back to searching the van)

Bill followed his new partner out into the desert the other night. He was acting strange, and Bill was worried he might be in trouble, but it turns out -- De Witt has a new face. And he and Morrison are planning something. Something big.

SAM BAILEY

(nervous)

What kind of something?

MARIA SOL

Bill wasn't sure -- all he knows is they've been capturing creatures in Oslow and using them to power some kind of machine. He overheard them talking about closing a door and getting rid of monsters, but I don't know how they --

SAM BAILEY
(putting it together)
Holy shit.

MARIA SOL
(looking up, concerned)
What is it?

SAM BAILEY
I... I'm not sure, but I've been --
working on a theory. Testing my
connection to the lake and what I
can do with it. From what I can
tell, everything we've been dealing
with comes from a place outside the
material universe. One that
occasionally pushes through to
create objects and creatures and
places that are normally
impossible... But if that
connection is severed, they cease
to exist. That's what happened to
the Echo, when I went back into the
lake.

MARIA SOL
(putting it together)
So if Morrison and De Witt are
trying to close it off completely --
?

SAM BAILEY
Then I'm dead. Without the lake, I
wouldn't exist. I'll just vanish
into nothing... Not to mention what
might happen if something goes
wrong with their experiment. It
could destroy the veil
completely... Set uncountable
horrors free on this world.

MARIA SOL
(stunned)
Shit.

SAM BAILEY
(SCOFFS)
Yeah.

MARIA SOL
(more urgent, turning back
to the van)
Go get your stuff -- we need to get
moving.

Sam turns and walks back into the house, his boots crunching over powdered glass. He grabs his backpack and walks towards the front door, then pauses, pulling a thin book from the toppled bookshelf. He flips to a certain page and rips it out, dropping the rest of the book.

He turns and walks towards the front door, seeing Maria walking across the porch. A plastic gas can sloshes slightly at her side.

SAM BAILEY

I'm ready.

MARIA SOL

(skeptical)

Taking souvenirs from the haunted cabin?

SAM BAILEY

(slightly embarrassed)

It's just a story that...

(beat, resolved)

Yeah, I am.

(beat)

What's with the gasoline?

MARIA SOL

(slightly ignoring the question)

You've got everything you need out of there?

SAM BAILEY

Yeah, I kind of -- I freaked out a little when I saw the van coming and packed all my stuff. I wasn't sure if it was...

(CLEARS THROAT)

MARIA SOL

Ah. That would explain why you're wearing seventeen different jackets right now. Planning to make a run for it?

SAM BAILEY

(sheepish)

Figured it was worth a shot. So... Gasoline?

MARIA SOL

We need to torch the cabin before we go.

SAM BAILEY
(taken aback)
We need to *what*?

MARIA SOL
(exasperated)
Sam, your DNA is all over this place. The snow should be enough to keep the fire from spreading... Especially since all the nearby trees are soaked with blood.

SAM BAILEY
(accepting, but not happy about it)
I guess you're right. It's still a shame to --

MARIA SOL
(brusque)
Sam, this was a serial killer's murder cabin for three decades. I know you probably have some fond memories here, but it's time to say goodbye.

SAM BAILEY
(muttered aside)
Not sure if "fond" is the right word for it...
(beat, to Maria)
No, you're right. It's time. You have enough to get it started?

MARIA SOL
Probably. I've got some more in the van if we need it.

The two walk out the front door. The snow is starting to fall faster, and their footsteps crunch beneath them.

MARIA SOL
I'll fill you in on what's been happening on the way down the mountain. Then we need to find somewhere to hide until we're ready to move.

SAM BAILEY
What about your van?

Maria offers a deadly silence.

SAM BAILEY
(a little squeaky)
Or not?

MARIA SOL
Unless you feel like sleeping on
the roof -- no, probably not.

SAM BAILEY
Right. I'll, uh... I'll think about
a new hiding spot on the way.

MARIA SOL
You do that. And while you're at
it, could you try thinking of a way
to deal with De Witt and --

SAM BAILEY
(bolt of lightning)
Agate Shore.

They both stop.

MARIA SOL
(confused)
Why would we...
(nervous)
Sam?

SAM BAILEY
De Witt's lived for more than a
thousand years. We can't kill him,
and there's nothing we could offer
him that would make him change his
mind. If there's a way of stopping
him for good -- it's in that lake.

MARIA SOL
How do you know that will work?

SAM BAILEY
(SCOFFS)
I don't. But there aren't a whole
lot of other options.

CLACK. The recording ends.

ROLL END THEME
AND CREDITS