

"BEGIN"

*The Sheridan Tapes - B-Side 08*  
*Recording Draft - April 20, 2022*

by

Virginia Spotts

Based on story and characters from  
"Homestead on the Corner"  
By Trevor Van Winkle

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Homestead on the Corner

1. INT? UNKNOWN - DREAM

In his dream, Sam stands alone in a dark and lonely place. Or perhaps not so lonely... something moves in the shadows, rustling against scattered paper and stones as it grows closer and closer, louder and louder until...

Silence.

CLICK.

2. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - DAY - 11/11/19

A quiet room in an underground facility, several stories below the surface. In the far distance, some sounds of industrial equipment can be heard, almost imperceptible.

SAM BAILEY

(he's tried to record this  
several times)

I'm starting over.

(beat, thoughtful)

When I first started this investigation seven months ago, I thought it would be just like any other case. I'd catalogue evidence, interview witnesses, cross-reference testimonies with people who knew the victim... and then I'd close it. One way or another. Anna was either alive, and I'd eventually find her tucked away somewhere quiet... or more likely, she was dead, and I'd find a corpse in a back alley or shallow grave somewhere outside Oslo.

(beat)

The only problem is, I knew the world wasn't that simple, that cut and dry. I knew, deep down in my gut, that there was so much more... beneath the surface. But I couldn't admit that to myself. Not after what I'd done. Not after what I'd lost. So I actively closed myself off to the things I knew -- about myself, about the true nature of my existence... about what lingered in the dark when I wasn't looking. I thought I could ignore those memories...

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

memories of the voice in the lake,  
the one that took my parents, took  
my home, took Allen -- and in  
return, gave me... power. A power  
that connected me to the Anna's  
story in intensely personal ways.

(beat)

But it's time to start again. If  
nothing else, I have to... refocus.  
I need to keep a record of this --  
all of this. If I'm going to figure  
out what happened to Anna Sheridan --  
- if she's alive, and how, and what  
she was doing here, with ISPHA --  
then I need to look at this from  
the beginning. I only have a few  
minutes before we're all meeting  
with Ren, and I need to get my head  
on straight. So...

(DEEP BREATH, collecting  
thoughts)

Samuel Isaac Bailey, recording from  
the Meriwether Facility, ISPHA --  
Northern New Mexico, exact location  
unknown. November 11th, 2019 at  
8:14 am, Mountain Standard Time.  
Myself, Bill Tyler, Maria Sol, and  
Kate Sheridan were brought here by  
Doctor Ren Park following the near-  
catastrophe at the underground  
bunker outside Oslow, Nevada. We  
arrived late in the day yesterday,  
November 10th. The status of Chief  
Edgar Morrison is currently  
unknown, but he was last seen  
trying to prevent the escape of a  
half-dozen minus-one supernatural  
entities... any of whom could have  
killed him faster than he could  
escape. To the best of our  
knowledge, Ned Leroux is no longer  
immobilized, but Ren assured me  
that he will be unable to track us  
here. Robert Quincy, Jerry Price,  
and Russel have been collected from  
Oslow and should be arriving in the  
next few days, along with Anna's  
tapes, which Jerry held for  
safekeeping when we left to rescue  
Bill. As Ren would have it, we'll  
all be staying here at the facility  
for the foreseeable future -- for  
our own safety, supposedly.

(beat, refocusing)

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Here are the facts I know for certain about Anna and her life prior to her disappearance, based on my initial investigation, the more recent revelations from Kate and Maria, and... well, I'll admit I've done a few quick internet searches to help connect the dots. A full review of the tapes will have to wait until the collection arrives with Jerry, but for now...

(beat)

Anna Sheridan: New York Times bestselling author of supernatural horror, as well as... paranormal investigator, for lack of a better term. Born to parents Andrew Sheridan, a high school physics teacher and former Department of Defense contractor, and Deborah Sheridan née Fielding, in Des Moines, Iowa, March 30th, 1983. She was raised by both parents in a small suburban home just outside the city, along with her older sister, Kate. She enjoyed what was, for all intents and purposes, a mostly normal childhood -- that is, until sometime after her tenth birthday, when she and her best friend Amy Sterling went to investigate an abandoned well on the grounds of their elementary school. For reasons that are still not entirely clear, Amy began to fade in and out of existence from that point onwards, vanishing from history completely by the end of high school. Despite this, Anna seemed to retain memories of two opposing timelines: one with Amy, and one without. And with that, we can only assume... Anna's fascination with the supernatural became a full-on obsession.

(beat)

She dropped out of college in 2001 after a few months of trying to make it work, just after her 18th birthday. It seems the college life -- or indeed, life within any institution -- didn't suit her.

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

So instead, she spent the next few years living out of her van, traveling the country and hunting down stories... hauntings, bewitchings, unsolved mysteries -- anything weird, hidden and dark. The things most people try to ignore. The things I chose to ignore.

(beat)

About four years later, her debut novel *Anathema* was published by Poultrice Press, collecting and reprinting a number of short stories from "The Anna Sheridan Files" -- a successful blog she started just before dropping out. With the help of her agent Anthony Perdue, the book was a breakaway success, and her life was never the same. Within a year, however, she began to encounter more... dangerous spectres. The Beechwood monster for one, along with... whatever lives -- or lived -- inside The Mirror House. Immediately after that encounter -- or days later, the timelines disagree -- she was in a highly publicized car accident on I-5, where she collided with a semi-truck near the California-Oregon border. Thankfully no one was killed, though Anna's injuries were severe enough to require hospitalization and an extensive recovery period. During this time, she stayed at a friend's home in Lake Isabella, where she would later come to reside when they sold the property in 2015. It was also during this period that she began using audio recordings to draft her novels, as the accident severely reduced the dexterity in her hands -- first with a digital recorder, which she lost in 2008 following her first encounter with the Echo, then with a cassette recorder gifted to her by her father.

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

She soon realized that cassettes had a distinct advantage over digital recordings for her work, as the paradoxical nature of most supernatural beings -- both dead and alive, impossible and yet persisting -- tends to distort or corrupt digital recordings beyond the point of usability. Tapes, however, could weather far more interference... and hence, she began using them to record her investigations directly.

(beat, somewhat sheepish)

I have to admit that I tried to make this easier on myself and record using my phone, only to run into that very same issue. Seeing that I'm... what I am, I guess that's no surprise. I have to wonder if that's why I had so many technical issues back at OCPD, trying to digitize the tapes.

(beat, CLEARS THROAT)

Anyway -- back to Sheridan. It's important to note that after the accident, her life seems to take on a new trajectory. Of course, she'd only been in the public eye as a writer for about a year at that point, but there's a considerable gap between *The Endless Sky* and the release of her third book. Perhaps due to difficulties with her hands, or perhaps due to personal issues, it takes her four years to submit another manuscript to Poultrice Press. During these years, she met Maria Sol, who quickly became her go-to editor and media specialist, and later, off-and-on romantic partner. As they grew closer, they began to take up adventures together -- though more often than not, Anna went out alone. They both maintained that their relationship worked best with a healthy dose of independence.

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

Then, from 2008 to 2009 she experienced, in rapid succession: her first encounter with the Echo, her father's death, and a close call with a supernatural forest fire that burned down a cabin in Langlois, Oregon -- a fire for which she was subsequently arrested. In spite of all of this, *Inferno Within* appeared in bookstores within the year. It's easy to see why some people assumed the cabin fire was an ill-conceived publicity stunt, but Anna insisted that the fire was an attack from a malevolent force that sought to harm her. Given the recent incidents of unnatural fires in the lives of both myself and Bill... I'm more inclined to believe her than I was at first.

(beat)

From that point on, Anna's work become more regular, and within two years she released *Falling West*, a paranormal western that was notably less successful than her previous novels, though it gained a cult following as time went on. In the three years preceding her next release, she met Doctor Ren Park and became friends, at some point starting to work together on a handful of investigations. That eventually led to her working more closely with ISPHA -- a period of her life that, I'm told, we'll be filled in on soon.

(beat)

The years between 2015 and October 31st, 2018 are, I believe, the most relevant to this case... and the ones I know the least about. Anna began having strange, predictive dreams during this time -- not only about her father's past, but a future apocalypse ISPHA is now trying to prevent.

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

I must also bring up that during this period, Anna was in and out of rehab programs and psychiatric counseling -- this is fairly common knowledge amongst her readers, and a matter of public record following her arrest in Langlois. She was supposedly trying to break a marijuana habit, though to my ears... that sounds off. She never seemed to suffer any adverse side effects or express any distaste for it, and I now know for certain that her mental state was not to blame for her visions of the supernatural. More likely, there was an underlying psychological element that I am not in a position to speculate on... but it was not to blame for her paranoia. Something else was chasing her, all her life... and it may have more to do with Morrison than I realized.

(beat)

On the night of her disappearance, Anna and Maria left the motel they were staying at and drove out into the desert outside Oslow. Anna was in the midst of an investigation that took her to Agate Shore just before it flooded, then to the bunker her father used to work at. She asked Maria to accompany her during the final stages of that investigation. However, despite the apparent gravity of her request, she refused to tell Maria what they were looking for or why she'd asked her to come. One detail that stood out to me from Anna's discussions of her dreams, though, is a note she discovered, pinned under her windshield several years before her disappearance: "the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children." Morrison is most likely the author... but I intend to follow up on that particular breadcrumb as soon as I'm able.

(beat)

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

Upon arriving at the location we now know all-too-well as the entrance to the abandoned DOD research facility Morrison was using, the couple began to argue over the fact that Maria was still being kept in the dark. Frustrated and angry, Maria walked off into the desert to get some space. It appears that Anna went down into the bunker without her, as once Maria had walked for about a half-mile, she heard a gunshot, echoing through the reinforced exterior of the bunker. By the time she returned, Anna was gone, and she heard a menacing laugh, the beep of a police radio, and a voice later identified as Edgar Morrison's from within the tunnel. That was more than enough to convince Maria of Anna's fate and the threat to her own life. In a choice that still haunts her to this day, Maria took Anna's van and fled, wiped it clean of any fingerprint or DNA evidence, and abandoned it outside Oslow, where it was found by Highway Patrol officers several days later.

(beat)

Maria only realized the identity of the man in the bunker a few days ago, when she noted the few words she heard. Bill and I confirmed that it could only have been Morrison. We initially assumed he'd killed Anna because of some long-running feud with her father and that we'd all been chasing ghosts... but then, when Bill confronted Morrison about Anna's death, he reacted strangely. After Bill was captured and taken to that very same bunker, I began reviewing my old tapes to see if I could find anything that might help us... only to discover something that the Echo told me before its... before I -- destroyed it. That it only echoed the voices of the living, not the dead. A fact she told me in Anna's voice. All this seems to indicate that Morrison didn't actually kill Anna in that bunker.

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

Something happened before he could shoot her... something that's still unclear. Our best guess is that she escaped into the tunnels and hid... the same tunnels I dreamed about last night. Although... in my dream... there was nothing but the sound of rustling, and utter darkness.

(beat, gathers self)

But if she just -- hid, or retreated down the tunnels, surely Morrison would have chased her down. According to Maria, he had a pretty extensive surveillance system down there -- he would have found her by now. He knows the tunnels better than she ever could, and there's no way he would have let her go after trying to shoot her. It doesn't make any sense. And so the biggest unknown in this case reemerges, as it has so many times: What happened to Anna Sheridan? She isn't dead, but she isn't here. So where is she? And why hasn't she been found yet?

(deadpan joke)

Someone with a more vivid imagination might decide she'd... pierced the veil, so to speak. I believe those were my words when I was first assigned the case. But... to go where? To do what? And what does that mean, exactly? And why have all these disparate strands -- the malevolent fires, the run-ins with the Echo, the voice in the water, Ned, Morrison -- why have they all intersected with my life in the last seven months?

(beat, more frustrated)

And what the hell does Doctor Park have to do with all of this? Until I know more, I have to assume I can't trust them... them, or anyone else who works at ISPHA. Even if I am forced to stay here, along with my fellow "guests."

(beat, frustrated)

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

I can't help but feel that I wasted valuable time, staying in the mountains for so long: hiding from Morrison and tinkering with my powers in that haunted... murder shed. At least, that's what Maria calls it. Everyone else was at least doing *something* active. Kate was looking for her sister, Maria was following up on Anna's old stories, and Bill was...

(pause, SIGHS)

Bill was lied to. Constantly. Egregiously. He was manipulated, and he made some huge mistakes that he has... paid for. Dearly. In ways I don't think we've fully realized yet. But if he hadn't been so close to Ned and Morrison, we never would have learned about that bunker in the first place. Never would have found out that Anna's late father and Morrison worked together back in the 70's, and that... *something* tore through into our universe and killed people in that very same bunker. If ISPHA contracted with the DOD during that period... this might just be the perfect place to find out more about it.

(beat, then guilty)

Even so... I remember, when Bill first told me that Kate was trying to find me. I could have left then. Maybe things would have turned out different if I had.

(moment to think, unsure)

I'm not satisfied that I've made the right choices. And I don't know what the right choice is now. I don't know where we're being led. But that dream last night -- the one about the tunnels. It felt like...

(beat)

I don't want to get into pure speculation, but I have to be honest about what my gut is telling me. It felt like Morrison was in that dream with me. Like he's still out there. Kate, Maria, and Bill all said they heard gunshots on their way out of the bunker, but... as we all know...

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

that doesn't mean anything for sure. When we arrived at the facility, we were all so worn out we could barely think straight, and when Ren announced that they were trying to prevent the "end of the world..." yeah, that backfired. The room more or less descended into total chaos, and Ren had to have us all ushered out into these, uh... simple, dorm-style rooms as quickly as they could. We don't know what we're dealing with, and now we've dragged Robert and Jerry into it. God, he didn't even want to be involved, he was trying to stay out of it before--

(cuts off, restarts, more controlled)

It doesn't matter. Ren will be collecting us soon. We asked for more time, a few days to clear our heads, but he insisted that we need to get started today. So today it is.

(beat)

I should be more grateful. I've been given a second chance with this case... a second or third chance, I can't really say which it is. Another path towards solving a mystery that might just impact everyone and everything on this planet. That doesn't sit right with me, or even sound possible, but... I don't know why Ren would lie to us, and he seems to believe it. Fervently.

(beat)

I can't stop thinking about what Ned told me in the desert, either. The things he said about my abilities, about the power I have. In my experience, whatever this power is... it only brings destruction. When the lake asked me what I would give to save myself... I said anything. And that's what my powers affect now. They can, and they do, affect anything and everything I touch. Everyone I come into contact with. Everything I care about.

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

My few conscious attempts at controlling it have only led me and others into danger... and that has me wondering.

(beat)

Ren claims that Anna's dreams were reliable enough to cause the entirety of ISPHA to buy into her premonitions. He's yet to explain how or why, but... since I returned to Agate Shore, it seems like my presence... *complicates* things. Ren said Anna wrote about us, so -- I wonder if she ever dreamt about me. I have to wonder what she saw in my future. I'm afraid my presence doesn't bode well for our mission... for the survival of the whole world, if that's really what's at stake. I'm just... afraid.

A faint knock at the door before Kate pushes it open, poking her head in.

KATE SHERIDAN

(serious, tired)

Ren's ready for us.

SAM BAILEY

(DEEP BREATH, uncertain  
and quiet)

Let's get started.

CLACK. The recording ends.

ROLL END THEME  
AND CREDITS