

"BY IMPERCEPTIBLE APPROACHES"
The Sheridan Tapes, Season 3, Episode 55
Recording Draft - April 29, 2021

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

1. INT. PMKCTS FACILITY - TUNNELS - NIGHT - 11/14/19

The still crumbling ruins of Morrison's facility -- howling wind, the occasional fall of rubble, and the sounds of furtive animal movement as nature retake the underground.

Suddenly, a metal door flings open, crashing against the opposite wall. A frightened mouse squeaks and flees out of the room as Morrison stands in the doorway, PANTING HEAVILY.

After a moment, HE SNARLS -- a barely-human sound of rage as he flies across the room, yanking a nearby filing cabinet open and tearing out handfuls of old paper. HE GROWLS, tearing them in two.

He's not done though -- crossing to a long-dead computer, he pries open the casing and grabs handfuls of magnetic tape, ripping it from the spools in crackling plastic handfuls.

Finally, he grabs a set of hard-drives -- outdated, but still usable -- and without a moment's hesitation HURLS THEM AT THE GROUND, GRUNTING WITH EFFORT.

After a long moment, MORRISON FINALLY CATCHES HIS BREATH -- then seems to come to himself, realizing what he's doing.

EDGAR MORRISON
(confused, slightly lost)
What is... Why did I --

Edgar cuts off suddenly, as though hearing something. A low, pulsing noise rises slightly in the background, unrecognizable.

After a moment, he stands up slightly taller -- and when he speaks, his voice is different: powerful, purposeful, certain.

EDGAR MORRISON (CONT'D)
(as if something else is
speaking through him)
Burn it out. Let it all burn...
(beat)
The serpent still endures.

OPENING CREDITS

2. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - REN'S OFFICE - DAY - 11/14/2019

CLICK. Ren leans over and starts a tape rolling.

REN PARK
(slightly distracted, just
a formality)
I hope you don't mind if I record
this? For internal use only, of
course.

PETER SLATE
(slightly off balance)
Yeah... sure thing, Ren.

REN PARK
(a little more at ease)
So you do remember me... I was
worried you'd forgotten.

PETER SLATE
(trying to make a joke)
Honestly, you're kind of hard to
forget.

REN PARK
(CHUCKLES, getting down to
business)
I get that a lot. Shall we begin?

PETER SLATE
(a little surprised)
Uh... yeah, great.

REN PARK
(on autopilot)
Right: Doctor Ren Park of the
Institute for Stellar Propulsion,
Heuristics, and Aeronautics,
conducting Meriwether clearance
interview for Mr. Peter Slate of
Des Moines, Iowa. Interview begins.
(beat)
Can you confirm your name, please?

PETER SLATE
(not sure what to make of
that)
Uh, yes, that's correct.

REN PARK
Date of birth?

PETER SLATE
(automatic response)
April 9th, 1981.

REN PARK
(continuing down the list)
Occupation?

PETER SLATE
(not embarrassed, stating
facts)
Stay at home father, formerly
general contractor.

REN PARK
(carrying on)
Any allergies?

PETER SLATE
(suddenly having a
thought)
Amoxicilin... but Andrew does have
a nut allergy. Do you have that
written down/somewh--

REN PARK
(trying to reassure Peter)
Don't worry Peter -- Kate already
told us. Several times.

PETER SLATE
(SIGHS, audibly relaxes)
Of course she did.

REN PARK
(moving on to next item)
Any medical history we should be
aware of? Histories of certain
cancers in your family, major
surgeries, that sort of thing?

PETER SLATE
(slightly embarrassed)
I've got a plate in my right arm --
football injury.

REN PARK
(immediately interested)
Really?

PETER SLATE
(trying to move on)
That makes it sound cooler than it
is... I slipped on a patch of ice
junior year and never played again.

REN PARK
 (shrugging, self-depreciating)
 At least you had athletic ability at some point... Some of us weren't so lucky. Just stay away from F-Wing, and you should be fine.

PETER SLATE
 (slightly concerned)
 What's F-Wing?

REN PARK
 Magnetic imaging and radiology... It's all shielded, but you might get your arm stuck to the wall if something breaks.

PETER SLATE
 (uneasy)
 I'll... Keep that in mind.

REN PARK
 (moving swiftly along)
 To your knowledge, have you or anyone in your family had previous contact with Chief Edgar Morrison of the Oslow County Police Department?

PETER SLATE
 (a little thrown by the question)
 Should I know who that is?

There's a sound of movement as Ren glances up from his paper, studying Peter's face. After a moment -- he nods.

REN PARK
 (convinced)
 No, I don't think you should.
 (beat, closing words)
 That's all I need Peter... Thank you for your time. Could you please ask Robert to come in?

Peter nods, standing up and beginning to walk towards the door. He stops just as he opens it, something clearly on his mind.

REN PARK (CONT'D)
 (confused, slightly formal)
 Is there something else?

PETER SLATE
(hesitant, but forceful --
concerned)
Is Kate going to be safe here?
Working with you?

REN PARK
Peter, our staff is fully trained
to handle any medical/emergency--

PETER SLATE
(cutting them off)
That's not what I mean.
(beat, DEEP BREATH)
Is what you're asking Kate to do
safe? Is she in danger?

There's a moment of silence -- THEN REN SIGHS, standing up.

REN PARK
(stating facts)
Mr. Slate... When I found Kate, she
was infiltrating an abandoned
underground facility to confront a
very dangerous man. She was trying
to rescue a friend he'd taken
captive... Trying, and succeeding,
I might add. With my help, but
still -- she chose to go down
there. She knew the danger. And I
think she'd do it again, under the
same circumstances. I can't promise
you that Kate will be safe... But I
don't think anyone can decide that
besides Kate.

(beat)
What I can promise you is that Kate
is better off working with us than
on her own, even if it doesn't feel
like it. And I swear that I will do
whatever I can to keep all of you
safe... within ISPHA's mission
parameters, of course.

(beat)
Is that all?

CLICK.

3. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - MARIA'S QUARTERS - DAY -
11/14/2019

A crackly, distorted audio source -- muffled and distant,
like we're listening through a wall.

It's just clear enough to make out the sound of the electronic lock disengaging and the door swinging open.

MARIA SOL
(exhausted, angry)
Home sweet *fucking* home.

Maria throws her bags on the floor, then flops down on the small bed in the corner WITH A HEAVY SIGH. After a long moment, she shifts, pulling her phone out of her pocket.

MARIA SOL (CONT'D)
(after a moment trying)
Still no signal.
(beat, annoyed)
No, I don't want to join
"isphaPublic," thank you.
(SCOFFS, more amused)
God, what's the world coming to
when secret research facilities
have free wifi?

Switching the phone off, she sets it on her night stand -- then GROANS LOUDLY, utterly drained.

MARIA SOL (CONT'D)
(venting)
"Nice easy mission," Ren said --
"Little softball to get you
started," they said... Yeah, tell
that to the zombie cultists chasing
us through the woods. And the fact
they expected me to just carry on
carving shivs to fight them off...

MARIA SCOFFS, a mix of disgust and amusement at the disturbing irony of her situation. After a moment...

MARIA SOL (CONT'D)
(more tired)
So much for living my own life, huh
Anna?

BEEP.

4. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - SAM'S QUARTERS - DAY -
11/14/2019

CLICK. Sam starts his recorder, settling back into a creaky office chair at his small desk.

SAM BAILEY

(exhausted, preamble to bellyaching)

Samuel Isaac Bailey, recording for ISPHA internal records - daily log, November 14th, 2019 at 2:21pm Mountain Standard Time.

(LONG SIGH)

God, I'm still sore. You'd think it would've worn off now were out of that tree, but no -- still feels like I've got a knot in back. And about twelve new scrapes and bruises from all the test they were doing. I don't know how many vials of blood they took before they were convinced I wasn't exposed to the fungus.

(trails off, then gets back on track)

Anyway, I was the last one to clear quarantine, so I'm guessing everyone else is already back in their rooms. They aren't actually too bad... at least, compared to where we spent last night. It looks more like a cheap hotel room than anything else -- except for the windows. Or... lack thereof. Guess I shouldn't be surprised with how far underground we are, but still... after the cabin, it feels more claustrophobic than normal. Even if it is a little bigger than my apartment in Oslo. Swings and roundabouts, I guess.

Sam pauses, then reaches down and picks up a small leather case off the floor.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

(happier)

With all that in mind, there is one silver lining to all this. After Jerry and Rob arrived, Ren decided to give me all the recording Anna made while she was working here at Meriwether, in addition to her old tapes. Maybe he thinks it's some kind of peace offering for what he put us through in Pennsylvania.

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

Add that to the fact that Maria finally agreed to lend me Anna's old copy of *Udolpho*, and I have the key text *and* all of the tapes for the first time. Which means...

(Sam pulls a single cassette out of the case)

I can focus on the relevant recordings instead of picking them out at random. Hopefully that'll save me a few grey hairs this time.

With that, Sam feeds the tape into a second player, rewinds a bit, then presses play.

CLICK.

5. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - ANNA'S QUARTERS - DAY -
09/29/17

The familiar hiss of static, fading out to a room that doesn't sound too different from Sam's -- just a little quieter, without the sounds of distant machinery.

ANNA SHERIDAN

(just as tired as Sam)

And here we are at last... the Meriwether Facility, somewhere in Northwestern New Mexico. I'd be more specific than that, but it wouldn't help -- it's one of those out-of-the-way places so far from the nearest town that you have to find it by coordinates rather than an address. From what Ren's told me, it used to be old industrial metalworks that boomed during World War II and went bust soon afterwards, built on the cheapest land developers could turn around quickly... which turned out to be the middle of the New Mexico desert. When ISPHA bought the place in the 80's, they pretty much gutted the interior before tunneling ten stories down into the rock, making halls, labs, and living quarters out of concrete, stone, and steel as quickly as they could. All of that means my room's a bit Spartan, but since I live most of my life out of a van, I can't really complain.

(MORE)

ANNA SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

(beat, then slightly
sheepish)

I mean, I guess I'm kind of complaining anyways. I really don't think I should be here. Ever since I told Ren about my dreams, he's been obsessed with finding a way of testing them, and he finally forced the issue by inviting me to stay here in exchange for his help with the Beechwood monster. I might have found another way to deal with it, but... well, they had a rather elegant solution, and there's no way I could get access to that kind of tech without them. So here I am: a guest of the Experimental Projects division of the Institute for Stellar Propulsion, Heuristics, and Aeronautics... of Ren and his boss, essentially. You'd think the fact that I'm friends with him would make that easier to accept, but... It doesn't.

(beat, hushed and
secretive)

I don't know -- Maybe it's just the fact that I don't like being cooped up or told where to go, but... I can't help feeling trapped in here. The facility is mostly abandoned, but I feel like I keep seeing things at the end of the corridors that vanish just before I round the corner. And much as I try to ignore it... I'm sure that there are too many shadows in my room when I try to count them.

CLICK.

6. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - REN'S OFFICE - DAY - 11/14/19

Ren starts the recorder again. Across the room, someone fidgets in their chair, obviously anxious to get this over with.

REN PARK

(double checking)

Alright, that... looks like it's rolling. Can you please confirm your full legal name?

ROBERT QUINCY
(distracted)
Huh? Oh, uh -- Robert Alexander
Quincy.

REN PARK
(nodding, giving his
notation)
Dr. Ren Park, ISPHA Experimental
Projects division, conducting
entrance interview for Mr. Robert
Quincy. I know you've been through
a lot, so we'll try and get this
over with quickly, alright?

ROBERT QUINCY
(not sure what to make of
this)
Alright.

REN PARK
Date of birth?

ROBERT QUINCY
(trying to play along and
get this over with)
29 April, 1988.

REN PARK
Occupation?

ROBERT QUINCY
Uh... Unemployed, currently. Before
that --

REN PARK
(not wanting to open that
can of worms yet)
We'll get to that later. Allergies?

ROBERT QUINCY
(wracking his brain
slightly)
Uh... latex and seasonal allergies,
but they're both pretty mild.

REN PARK
(moving on)
Anything in your medical history
our doctors should be aware of?

ROBERT QUINCY
(trying to think)
Not that I can think of...
(MORE)

ROBERT QUINCY (CONT'D)
I think Bill's family has a history
of lung cancer, but --

REN PARK
(trying to keep on topic)
I already asked Bill, and we have
that on file. Now...
(beat, reading)
To your knowledge, have you or
anyone in your family had previous
contact with Chief Edgar Morrison
of the Oslow County Police
Department?

ROBERT QUINCY
(beat, taken aback)
Why would you need to ask me that?

REN PARK
(can't say)
I need an unbiased answer, Rob.

There's a moment's silence, THEN ROB SIGHS, frustrated.

ROBERT QUINCY
(measured response)
I worked for Chief Edgar Morrison
for nearly ten years. Oslow PD was
just about the only department
outside Vegas willing to hire a gay
couple with little to no experience
in law enforcement, and he went to
bat for both of us more than once.
I trusted him. I respected him. But
there were a lot of things I had to
overlook to make that work... And
then one day...

(beat, struggling
slightly)
One day, Bill told me that Morrison
ordered him to make Sam disappear.
One of his own officers. Someone I
knew. Morrison broke that trust.
All the respect I had for him was
gone the moment I saw past that
facade. If I never see him again,
it won't be soon enough.

REN PARK
(slightly surprised)
While I certainly appreciate the
sentiment...

(MORE)

REN PARK (CONT'D)

I need to know where your loyalties lie with regards to the entire department, not just Morrison. If you were confronted by a fellow dispatcher or an old co-worker about your activities here, do you believe you'd be able to uphold our non-disclosure agreement? If they appealed to you personally?

ROBERT QUINCY

(stalling slightly)

Are you asking if I'd lie to them?

REN PARK

(keeping this close to his chest)

Not in so many words.

ROBERT QUINCY

(hesitates, uncertain)

I would... certainly try to.

(beat, not happy with this answer)

Yes, I... I think I could. If it meant keeping Bill safe, then... yes. I could lie to them.

CLICK.

7. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - KATE'S QUARTERS - DAY -
11/14/19

Crackly, distorted audio. The sound of someone unpacking a suitcase is faintly heard as the electronic lock opens across the room. Faint sound of movement as someone turns.

PETER SLATE

(quiet, pained, but full of love)

Hiya Katey.

KATE SHERIDAN

(noting his volume)

Is Andrew asleep?

PETER SLATE

(staying quiet)

Yeah... He's wiped out from the drive.

KATE SHERIDAN
 (quiet, tired humor)
 I know the feeling.

PETER SLATE
 (checking in)
 You okay?

KATE SHERIDAN
 (trying to reassure him)
 Yeah... I mean, decontamination
 took way longer than they said it
 would, and they had to run a whole
 other set of tests after they saw
 Sam's bloodwork, so --

PETER SLATE
 (gently correcting)
 No, I mean -- are you okay?

Kate hesitates -- THEN SIGHS HEAVILY, sinking onto the bed
 beside the half-unpacked suitcases.

KATE SHERIDAN
 (finally letting this out
 of the bottle)
 I don't know. It's... I thought I
 had a handle on Anna's world, but
 this? Cults and mushroom zombies
 and... telepathic warfare? It's all
 just...
 (beat, struggling)
 I don't know if I can do this.

Peter doesn't say anything for a while -- then he sits down
 on the bed next to Kate and takes her hand.

PETER SLATE
 (soft, intimate)
 If there's anyone who can handle
 this -- I know it's you. If you
 still feel like you have to do
 this... then you can. I know you
 can. Just -- don't feel like you
 have to bottle it up anymore.
 Whenever you need someone to talk
 to... I'll be here.

KATE SHERIDAN
 (relieved, feeling the
 weight of the world slip
 off her shoulders)
 And if what I have to tell you
 about sounds... impossible?

PETER SLATE
 (fondly, reassuring)
 Then I guess we'll just have to
 deal with it the same way we deal
 with everything -- together.

BEEP.

8. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - ANNA'S QUARTERS - NIGHT -
 9/29/17

Close to midnight -- the facility is almost silent, and
 ANNA'S BREATHING IS HUSHED AS SHE STARTS TO SPEAK.

ANNA SHERIDAN
 (trying not to be heard,
 paranoid)
 I don't know if it's loud enough to
 be picked up on the recorder,
 but... I just heard something move
 out in the hall. It's almost
 midnight, and I'm supposed to have
 this wing to myself -- so there
 shouldn't be anyone else out there.
 I haven't been able to get to
 sleep, but I was just starting to
 doze off when I heard...
 (trails off, realizing,
 slightly embarrassed)
 Saying it out loud... it may be
 possible that I just -- imagined
 it. That I was dreaming and scared
 myself awake. If I'm actually awake
 right now. Guess I'll just have to
 check the tape in the morning to
 see if this is still--

A faint sound of hissing movement comes from the other side
 of the door: like rough fabric being dragged along the floor.

ANNA SHERIDAN (CONT'D)
 (more paranoid, hushed)
 Okay, I definitely didn't dream
 that. There's someone out in the
 hall -- or *something*.

Anna stands up from her bed and crosses the room, picking up
 a small plastic key-card from the night stand. She slides it
 through a magnetic card reader next to the door, then grabs
 the handle. The door rattles... but it doesn't open.

ANNA SHERIDAN (CONT'D)
 (quiet, growing concern)
 What the hell?

She swipes the card and tries the door again. Still nothing.

ANNA SHERIDAN (CONT'D)
 (growing claustrophobia)
 Okay... my key card isn't working.
 I'm locked in. Ren said they
 wouldn't...
 (trails off, realizing
 something)
 Goddamnit, Ren.

Anna moves over to the small wall-mounted intercom, typing in a number on a small keypad before pressing the talk button.

ANNA SHERIDAN (CONT'D)
 (irritated, into intercom)
 Ren? Ren, are you still awake? Is
 this you?

Anna waits a moment, but there's no reply. Confused, she presses the talk button several times... but the unit doesn't make a sound.

Growing more worried by the second, Anna tries turning on the lights in her room, but that switch just clicks uselessly as well.

ANNA SHERIDAN (CONT'D)
 (growing worry)
 The power's out. That's... not
 great. But I'm sure they'll turn it
 back on before--

The sound of movement out in the hall cuts her off -- closer and louder, almost sounding like a hissing creature.

ANNA SHERIDAN (CONT'D)
 (whispered, suppressing
 fear)
 Shit.

Moving as quietly as she can, Anna crosses back to her night stand and grabs her cell phone, switching it on with a click. She taps a few times and begins to dial a number. It rings for a moment before...

REN PARK (O.S.)
 (through phone, sleepy)
 Anna? What time is it?

ANNA SHERIDAN

(into phone, still quiet)
Ren, listen -- I'm locked in my
room, and I think there's something
outside.

REN PARK (O.S.)

(worried, waking suddenly)
What?
(realizing something)
How are you calling me? Cell phones
aren't supposed to work down here.

ANNA SHERIDAN

(hushed, urgent)
Ren, nothing's working the way its
supposed to right now.

REN PARK (O.S.)

(that got his attention)
What?

ANNA SHERIDAN

The power's out in my room. The
lights, the intercom, the door...
they're all broken.

REN PARK (O.S.)

(falling back on
scientific objectivism)
That... Anna, that isn't possible.
The facility has three redundant
power systems and battery storage
for two days minimum. It can't just
go out.

ANNA SHERIDAN

(exasperated)
Well then you try it!

On the other side of the phone call, the faint sounds of
movement and footsteps can be heard as Ren crosses to his
intercom.

REN PARK (O.S.)

(to intercom)
Engineering?
(beat, listening)
Ren Park to engineering, come in.
Reggie, are you there?
(click button a few more
times, to Anna)
You're right... it's dead here too.

ANNA SHERIDAN
 (growing worry)
 So you're locked in?

REN PARK (O.S.)
 (not worried)
 No, thankfully... the lock on my
 door broke last week, and
 maintenance hasn't gotten around to
 fixing it.

ANNA SHERIDAN
 (glimmer of hope)
 Can you get down to engineering
 from where you are?

REN PARK (O.S.)
 (trying to remember
 facility floor plan)
 I believe so... I don't think there
 are any locked doors between here
 and the server room, if I take the
 access tunnel. I should be able to
 cycle the power from there.

The sound behind Anna's door grows louder, as if whatever's
 out there can hear her. She goes absolutely still for a
 moment -- then whispers...

ANNA SHERIDAN
 (quiet, nervous)
 Ren -- please hurry.

Ren doesn't reply, but his footsteps can be faintly heard
 over the open phone line. They echo in the long, empty
 corridors, then clatter down a snort metal ladder as he makes
 his way down to the lower levels of the building.

Finally...

REN PARK (O.S.)
 (hushed, clearly freaked
 out by the quiet
 emptiness of the place)
 Alright... I'm at the door to the
 server room.

ANNA SHERIDAN
 (sudden horrible
 realization)
 It doesn't need a key card, does
 it?

REN PARK (O.S.)
 (reassuring her)
 Thankfully not... just a good old
 fashioned tumbler lock.

ANNA SHERIDAN
 (surprised)
 Really?

REN PARK (O.S.)
 (somewhat amused)
 Didn't used to be, but last year
 the server went down, and we all
 realized how stupid it was to keep
 the command terminals behind a door
 that needed a network connection to
 open. Ended up having to cut our
 way in with a blowtorch.

On the other side of the phone call, we hear Ren fit the key
 into the lock, then push the door open.

REN PARK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (calling out into the
 server room)
 Reggie? Are you in here -- Huh.
 That's weird.

ANNA SHERIDAN
 (concerned)
 What is?

REN PARK (O.S.)
 (confusion and concern)
 The server's still powered on. I
 guess the backup power is working --
 just, only in here.

ANNA SHERIDAN
 (trying to move this
 along)
 Can you get it working out here?
 It's getting seriously paranoid
 where I'm at.

REN PARK (O.S.)
 (remembering why they're
 here)
 Right... just a mo.

Ren crosses to the main computer terminal and types in a few
 lines of commands. The sound outside Anna's room grows louder
 as he does, like it's pacing right outside her door.

ANNA SHERIDAN
(just about to scream)
Ren...

Ren hits enter, and there's a sudden pop and buzz as the lights in Anna's room switch on.

REN PARK (O.S.)
(sounding rather pleased
with himself)
Alright -- power restored and
systems rebooting from last saved
state. "You are now free to move
about the cabin."

Anna doesn't reply, instead swiping her key card and rushing out into the hall, ready for a fight.

9. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

The wind whistles slightly in the empty passage... but the sound of movement is gone. Anna is alone.

ANNA SHERIDAN
(confused)
There's... there's nothing here.

A moment later, the facility intercom crackles to life, and Ren's voice echoes through the hall.

REN PARK (O.S.)
(official)
Reginald Smith, Reginald Smith,
please report to server room alpha
for your scheduled shift --
Reginald Smith, please report to
server room alpha.

The announcement echoes for a few seconds... But there's no sound of a reply. After a moment of waiting...

REN PARK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(badly masked worry)
Technician first class Reginald
Smith, please respond.

No answer but the echoes, and a cold draft from down the hall.

CLICK.

10. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - REN'S OFFICE - DAY - 11/14/19

Ren starts his recorder a third time as he settles back into his chair.

REN PARK

(obviously a little off-
balance from something)
Uh... Right. Okay. Let's get
started then: Dr. Ren Park,
conducting Meriwether entrance
interview for Jerry Price of Oslow,
Nevada. Interview begins.

JERRY PRICE

(short, tense)
About time.

REN PARK

(trying not to snap back)
Yes -- sorry about the wait. Again.
Can you please confirm your name,
for the record?

JERRY PRICE

Last time I checked.

REN PARK

(trying to rush through
this)
Great. Date of birth?

JERRY PRICE

October the 23rd, 1985.

REN PARK

(taking a note)
Occupation?

JERRY PRICE

(brusque)
Sole proprietor of Oslow City Auto
Repair and Towing.

REN PARK

(pushing on)
Allergies?

JERRY PRICE

No.

REN PARK

(almost pushes for more
detail, doesn't)
(MORE)

REN PARK (CONT'D)
Anything in your medical history we
should know about?

JERRY PRICE
Nothing I want to tell you about.

REN PARK
(tries to move past that,
can't)
Mr. Price, I understand why you
might be hesitant to trust us --

JERRY PRICE
(undisguised contempt)
This isn't hesitation. I don't
trust you.

REN PARK
(trying to undermine that)
And yet you went with our
operatives when they collected you.

JERRY PRICE
(holding firm)
I went with Rob. He was in no state
to go off anywhere with anyone, but
he refused to stay when they told
him you had Bill.

REN PARK
(deflating slightly)
Ah. Right. Still, I'm sure you can
see you're both safer here than
in/Oslo--

JERRY PRICE
I really don't see how you can come
to that conclusion. At least in
Oslo, there are people who would
notice if we went missing.

REN PARK
(trying to get back on
topic)
On that subject -- just one last
question. To your knowledge, have
you or anyone in your family had
previous contact with Chief Edgar
Morrison of the Oslo County Police
Department?

JERRY PRICE
(no hesitation)
Yes. You already know that.

REN PARK

(hesitant)

Can you be a bit more... specific?

JERRY PRICE

(gruff)

Yes. My livelihood largely depends on income from towing and impounding vehicles for OCPD. I'm not proud of it, but for now, that's how it is. Before that, I worked for Sheriff Carson of the Agate Shore Police Department. He worked under Morrison. I met him several times at department functions, though he was never all that friendly to me. After Sam's escape from Oslow, I was arrested and interrogated by Morrison for aiding and abetting. And more recently, I housed a group of individuals working to undermine Morrison's extra-legal activities.

REN PARK

(hesitant, not wanting to figure out what happens if the answer's no)

And will any of that affect your ability to keep what happens here secret from members of the police department? Are there any feelings of loyalty that might/cause you to--

JERRY PRICE

(SCOFFS, bitter)

Listen, Park -- I might not trust you. I might not trust this "ISPHA" organization you claim to work for. But the last time I saw Morrison, he threatened me with jail time for doing what I assumed was my job. Eight years I worked for Agate Shore PD, and he treated me like I was some punk he picked up off the street. He let me go with a warning, but believe you me: if he asks me where to find this place -- he can go to hell before I tell him anything.

REN PARK

(slightly taken aback)

Right. Well...

(MORE)

REN PARK (CONT'D)

I guess that answers our questions.
Thank you, Mr. Price... I'll have
someone take you to your room so
you can get settled in. Will you
need any assistance?

JERRY PRICE

(annoyed)
No, I'm...
(notices something on
Ren's desk, suspicious)
What's that?

REN PARK

What? Oh... *Robin's Run* by Thurgood
Vice -- you heard of it? I'm not
normally one for thrillers, but
it's actually pretty good.

JERRY PRICE

(somewhat distracted)
Yeah... I've heard of it. Could
I... uh, borrow it once you're
done?

REN PARK

(curious at this change of
temperament)
Uh... sure. Fair warning though,
I'm a pretty slow reader when it
comes to fiction -- not enough
hours in the day, you know?

JERRY PRICE

(putting his facade back
up)
Yeah... tell me about it.

With that, Jerry stands and walks to the door, closing it
behind him.

CLICK.

11. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - BILL'S QUARTERS - DAY -
11/14/19

Crackly, distorted audio, but almost completely silent --
before the electronic lock opens across the room.

BILL TYLER

(hesitant, nervous joking)
Hey love. Told you I'd be right --

ROBERT QUINCY
 (angry outburst)
 What the hell is wrong with you?

BILL TYLER
 (stunned, defensive)
 Rob, I --

ROBERT QUINCY
 (finally letting this out)
 Why did you think going to Morrison
 would help anything? Did you really
 think he'd let you leave after you
 told him what you know? What the
 hell is wrong with you, you stupid,
 stupid, stupid...

Rob hits Bill's chest on each repeated word, but his voice grows fainter with each repetition before fading out entirely.

WITH A SHUDDERING SOB, Rob wraps his arms around Bill and holds him tight. BILL GRUNTS IN SLIGHT PAIN, but doesn't resist... they just hold each other for a moment.

BILL TYLER
 (quiet whisper, intimate)
 I wasn't thinking. I just wanted to yell at him. I was angry. I'd been hiding it for so long, and I... I couldn't stop myself.
 (beat)
 You're right... It was stupid. Selfish.

ROBERT QUINCY
 (recovering slightly)
 No, it's... it's okay. I get it.

The two just stand there together for a long moment -- then a faint, hissing swish is heard from somewhere nearby.

BILL TYLER
 (confused, concerned)
 Do you hear that?

ROBERT QUINCY
 (still shaken)
 Hear what?

BILL TYLER
 That noise -- sounds like some kind of static?

From this audio source, it's clear that's what it is... some kind of electronic noise, rising and falling in volume and pitch.

ROBERT QUINCY
Is it coming from the intercom?

BILL TYLER
(growing concern)
Not unless you turned it on.

Bill crosses the room, his footsteps getting louder as he nears the recording source.

ROBERT QUINCY
I don't think I did... Not unless I bumped it on the way in earlier --

As he speaks, Bill flicks a switch back and forth, resetting the intercom.

BEEP.

12. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - ANNA'S QUARTERS - MORNING -
9/30/17

Morning in Anna's room: the sound of footsteps and voices in the corridor outside, as technicians examine the electronics after last night's outage.

ANNA SHERIDAN
(tired and worn out)
Well... I didn't get any sleep after all. That's not too unusual for me, but... still. It's never a welcome occurrence.
(beat, down to business)
I'm still not sure what happened last night, and even Ren's being more secretive than usual about it. As far as I can work out, the power failed almost immediately after lights out... 11pm, when the labs were closed and most everyone was already in bed. That in and of itself is fairly unusual -- like Ren said, the facility runs on solar and geothermal power, or a backup generator if those two fail, and the battery reserves were basically full when the power went out. The only system that didn't go out was the server...

(MORE)

ANNA SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

which is a lucky break according to Ren, because that would've wiped out a whole lot of very expensive research data. But the question remains: why did the servers still have power, and not the rest of the facility?

(beat)

I probably shouldn't worry about it. Like Ren said, it takes a lot of very complicated equipment to manage a power system like this, and there was probably just a glitch in the code. I mean, the technician on duty -- Reggie -- should have noticed the problem and fixed it before the power went out. Only problem is, nobody's seen him since his shift started last night. And what remains of the security footage doesn't show him leaving the server room. Ever. I might be tempted to chalk it up to industrial espionage and say Reggie was some kind of saboteur... but I caught a glimpse of the crash log when I got to the server room. It was mostly gibberish -- and I don't just mean code, I mean a complete mess of random characters that Ren couldn't make heads or tails of. But when I looked closer, I noticed a few English words mixed in. "Where." "Help." "Lost."

(beat, trying to be objective)

If it was truly random, then there is a small chance those words could have shown up accidentally... a very small chance, but not impossible. But further down the page, I noticed something else... A name. "Reginald Smith." I couldn't shake the feeling that the characters pressing in around it were burying it... suffocating it in code.

(longer beat, coming to her conclusion)

The odds of that name appearing in that file randomly are so astronomically low, I'd need Ren's help to put it into words.

(MORE)

ANNA SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

So either this is all some kind of
sick joke... or Reggie Smith -- and
whatever took him -- still haven't
left that room.

CLACK. The recording ends.

ROLL END THEME
AND CREDITS