

"LAISSEZ LES BON TEMPS ROULER"
The Sheridan Tapes, Season 3, Episode 61
Recording Draft - June 3, 2022

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

1. INT. OCPD HQ - HALLWAY/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY - 12/16/19

Heavy, running footsteps and HARD BREATHING as Ned runs down the echoing corridor.

NED LEROUX
(PANTING, muttered)
Next time -- I pick a body -- I'm
adding wings.

Ned slows as he rounds the corner, CATCHES HIS BREATH, then opens the door into the conference room. He pads across the thin carpet, pulls out a chair, and sits.

NED LEROUX (CONT'D)
(as charming as he can
fake)
Morning, Commissioner. Apologies
for my late entrance.

COMMISSIONER MICHAELS
(unimpressed)
Trouble finding the room?

NED LEROUX
Just lost track of time, sir.

COMMISSIONER MICHAELS
(doesn't believe it)
Right. Well, let's get started
then. Please state your name and
rank for the record.

NED LEROUX
Ned Leroux, Deputy Chief -- Oslow
County Police Department, State of
Nevada.

COMMISSIONER MICHAELS
(flipping through papers,
confused)
Is there a... do you have a middle
name, Mister Leroux?

NED LEROUX
No sir.

COMMISSIONER MICHAELS
(examining paperwork,
frowning)
Ah... no, I see you don't. Hmm.
Very well.
(down to business)
(MORE)

COMMISSIONER MICHAELS (CONT'D)

Mister Leroux, I would like to state for the record that the purpose of this meeting is to address the Board's concerns with the behavior of Chief Edgar Morrison, specifically his large number of unauthorized absences and unusual behavior during the last few months. I understand that he's entrusted you with overseeing a number of high-profile cases during this time, along with promoting you to the rank of Deputy Chief. I believe this was soon after he returned following his injury in Reno.

NED LEROUX

(smiling)

That is correct, sir.

COMMISSIONER MICHAELS

(challenging him slightly)

And how do you find your new position?

NED LEROUX

(nonchalant)

Oh, just fine and dandy, commissioner.

COMMISSIONER MICHAELS

(a little confused at his attitude)

...I'm sorry?

NED LEROUX

(trying to sound more serious)

I mean, it's taken some adjustment to be sure, but... Morrison and I have our own way of working things out.

COMMISSIONER MICHAELS

(skeptical)

...your own way...?

NED LEROUX

(hyping up Morrison (and himself))

(MORE)

NED LEROUX (CONT'D)

Well, we're in contact almost constantly, you know -- I'm around the precinct more than he is, sure, but he's the one doing most of the... you know, the *mental* work. I don't think he ever takes a break... just one of those guys who always takes his work home with him. *Relentless*, is what he is. Someone should make a documentary about him.

COMMISSIONER MICHAELS

(grave)

Mister Leroux, I would hate to think you're not taking this inquest seriously.

NED LEROUX

(hand on his heart, over-sincere)

Serious as a heart attack, Commissioner Gordon.

COMMISSIONER MICHAELS

(almost losing his cool)

Is that a joke, Leroux?

NED LEROUX

(backing down, faked apology)

Slip of the tongue, Commissioner Michaels.

COMMISSIONER MICHAELS

(sees through him)

Mister Leroux, you should also know that we've had a number of complaints regarding you.

NED LEROUX

(genuinely surprised, interested for the first time)

Really? How, uh -- how many?

COMMISSIONER MICHAELS

(intentionally vague)

Several.

NED LEROUX

...I see.

COMMISSIONER MICHAELS
(trying to get him to take
this seriously)
Mister Leroux, it is the duty of
this board to maintain a certain
level of integrity within the
department from all officers, top
to bottom. If the integrity fails
at the top, it will fail everywhere
else. Do you understand?

NED LEROUX
(a little shaken)
I... uh...

COMMISSIONER MICHAELS
I will circle back to the issue at
hand, Mister Leroux: if you don't
answer our questions to a
satisfactory level, we will be
forced to reevaluate the position
Chief Morrison has placed you in.
And if we discover you've held
anything back from us...

NED LEROUX
(serious)
Understood, sir.

COMMISSIONER MICHAELS
(relieved, but still
grave)
Now, tell me: is there a reasonable
explanation for Morrison's behavior
since his injury?

CLICK.

2. EXT. FRENCH QUARTER, NOLA - NIGHT - 12/16/19

Energetic blues and jazz drifts on the heavy, damp air from a
distant bar, with the sound of whooping and laughing people.

SAM BAILEY
(a little out of it,
overstimulated)
Samuel Isaac Bailey, recording for
ISPHA internal records -- mission
log, December 16th, 2019 at 8:45pm
Central Standard Time. Location:
New Orleans, Louisiana.
(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

Somewhere in the French Quarter -- I don't know the area well enough to say where, exactly. And hopefully I never will.

(beat, backtracking)

That didn't come out the way I wanted it to. It's just... there are so many people here. Basically all of them drunk. There's this feeling to this place -- dark, indulgent... beautiful... alluring. Like a Siren's song. The number of spirits that must walk these streets... I've never felt anything like it outside Oslo, and at least there the physical world wasn't also--

A DRUNK WOMAN STUMBLES PAST SAM, LAUGHING.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

(recovering slightly)

Anyway -- back to the point. I don't have much time, I've just stepped away from the Vampire Tour to make my log. And yes, I am choosing to breeze past that. I haven't had a moment to myself since we got here, and I'm just going to enjoy the fact that nobody's talking my ear off at this moment.

(beat)

At least we're visiting in December. The air is already so humid that I... I mean, I'm still not entirely sure how it works, but I know my physical body is connected to water. I just feel... overwhelmed in this environment. It's so much easier to feel where I end and the world begins in the desert or up in the mountains. But here...

(beat, thinking)

I guess that's kind of the point of this place, isn't it? The permeability of boundaries. Get drunk, dance with a stranger, speak to the spirits beyond in a dark and curtained corner, or even... disappear. Carried off by some strange, invisible force -- human, or otherwise.

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

(beat, more serious)

That's what we're here to investigate. On our flight from New Mexico, Ren informed us that the number of disappearances in the city has spiked in the last few weeks. Just a couple of weeks ago, 15 people went missing in the NOLA metro area in the span of a few days. That's far higher than the average rate for the entire state, and since then, the trend hasn't slowed. The police tried to ignore it at first... they don't really care about a single disappearance -- I mean, unless you're Anna Sheridan and the chief needs to cover up his attempted murder. But when it involves tourists... affluent white influencers with influential parents... then the alarm is raised.

(beat, pulls out newspaper)

I picked up a copy of the Times-Picayune at MSY, just to try and get a feel for the city's mood. There were some... unusual comments from one Jon Broussard, the owner of the Shrimp Barrel Family Restaurant chain and, of course, Louisiana State Senator. Someone leaked a speech he made at a private dinner party, where he said, and I quote: If there's anything to be worried about in New Orleans, it's the rampant drug use, casual sex..." etcetera, etcetera... he goes on for a while.

(beat)

"...the culture of death and destruction -- those vampires -- they're the ones who represent that. Sure, they might look enticing, but that makes the youth follow their example, not knowing or caring about the real evil they create. Putting our beautiful city in danger."

(beat, SCOFFS)

Of course, a state senator talking about vampires had been meme'd to death long before it reached the papers. But what interests me is...

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

his statement doesn't seem as metaphorical as the press is making it out to be. I've told Ren we should keep an eye out for Mister Broussard, or others like him. I've suspected that Morrison might not be the only person in power trying to use the supernatural to their own ends for a while now.

(beat, a little self-conscious)

That's not to say that I... actually believe we're dealing with vampires. God, even saying that out loud feels ridiculous. I know, I know, we've dealt with weirder, stranger things, but... the idea that there's just a secret society of bloodsucking immortals living in the shadows is just -- it just feels like a step too far. This city is full of legends about all kinds of cryptids and ghouls and monsters. That doesn't mean they're all true. There's something here -- but whatever the truth is, I intend to let it speak for itself.

3. EXT. CONTINUOUS

At that moment, Bill rounds the corner and SIGHS WITH RELIEF.

BILL TYLER

There you are... come on Sam, the tour guide's already on the last stop.

SAM BAILEY

(surprised)

What? Oh... right! Sure, I'll just...

BILL TYLER

(CHUCKLES)

Come on Sam -- I know it's a little goofy, but Ren already paid for the tour. Let's at least finish it out.

SAM BAILEY

(SIGHS, follows Bill)

Fine. Anything good from the last stop?

BILL TYLER

(shrugs, disinterested)
 Some filming location from
 "Interview with a Vampire." Kate
 kinda freaked out, apparently she's
 a big fan. Maria picked the guide's
 brain about people who... live in
 "vampire covens" and drink each
 other's blood. I guess it's a bit
 of local lore she researched. And
 the guide started talking about
 some "vampire speakeasy" in the
 French Quarter, which really
 doesn't sound like my kind of
 place./I mean, we're in New
 Orleans, I want to party, not drink
 in the atmosphere, you know?

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE

(dramatic, well-practiced)
 ...And now, I have just one more
 story to tell. This next location
 is the pinnacle of our tour, the
 juiciest and darkest of the French
 Quarter's legends. Turn up your
 collars and keep your eyes open --
 you never know who might be
 dwelling in the shadows.

SAM BAILEY

(under his breath)
 Dramatic much?

BILL TYLER

(under his breath, SCOFF)
 You're one to talk.

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE

(didn't hear)
 This way!

Bill, Sam, Kate, Maria, and Ren follow the guide down the
 sidewalk and across the cobblestone street.

KATE SHERIDAN

(noticing, worried)
 Whoa Sam -- are you alright? You're
 sweating a lot.

MARIA SOL

How? It's like... 60 degrees and
 cloudy.

SAM BAILEY

(annoyed)

We really don't need to keep going over this, you know.

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE

So, where did you all meet?

REN PARK

I'm sorry?

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE

I just can't quite figure you out. I thought you might be old school friends, but you're all clearly -- uh, different ages. Are you coworkers?

SAM BAILEY

Uh... sort of.

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE

Must be a cool company, if they're paying for a vampire tour in the middle of the week. Where do y'all work?

MARIA SOL

Uh...

REN PARK

(jumping in)

Microsoft.

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE

(surprised, not quite believing it)

...Microsoft!

(considering)

I guess I can see it. Well, my cool ghouls and goblins -- I'm pleased to announce that we... have...

They round the final corner.

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)

...arrived, at our final location.

KATE SUPPRESSES A SQUEAL.

MARIA SOL

(amazed)

Oooh!

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE

Folks, what you see before you is one of the most infamous and adored buildings in all of New Orleans. This impressive 3-story estate on the edge of the French Quarter has undergone transformation after transformation in the course of its lifetime: a tale of promise, haunting, and ruin. Our story begins in 1830, when an ingenious but mysterious architect named David Whitmore commissioned its construction as a grand family home. As you can see, Whitmore drew great inspiration from the Italianate style, with posts supporting a 2-story gallery, arched brackets, and a deep horizontal overhang.

SAM BAILEY

(excited, special-interest mode)

Fantastic... I thought the Italianate style wasn't popular in this area until the 1840's?

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE

(impressed)

You know your architecture! You're right, of course -- Whitmore was always ahead of the curve. And given his fate, that might have been true for more than his stylings.

A cold breeze runs through the street, as if on cue.

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)

(quieter)

Folks, come in closer, if you would -- I wouldn't want to dark to creep in on us.

4. EXT. CONTINUOUS

The group obliges, squeezing in closer together.

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE

(quieter, ratcheting up the tension)

(MORE)

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)

As construction began in earnest on the Whitmore estate, the builders hit one delay after another. Missing materials. Sick laborers. Torrential rains. And Whitmore himself -- the grand visionary for this project -- kept changing his mind. A staircase on the plans would be four feet wide one day, then six feet the next. A solid wall in the blueprint would be scribbled out, replaced with a moveable panel. Construction stretched on for months. Then years. Whitmore began to find it more and more difficult to stay in control of the project. And his final request?

(gesturing to the third floor)

The estate's third story, if you haven't noticed, only has one small, single window. Barely big enough for a person to stick their head through. And the shudders on that window? Well, they happen to be open tonight. As they are every night. But between the second and third story, there isn't a staircase, or a ladder, or even a gap in the walls. And if you were to return to this spot during the daytime... you would find that window closed.

(beat, ominous)

So why build a third story that no living person could use? Well... some say, it was to hide a terrible experiment. An awful alliance. Who with? The only name that's ever reached these streets, whispered in the moments when people forget themselves, forget the danger... is "the Ancient Ones." Whitmore, they say, was aligned with something or someone... powerful. Something beyond us. And perhaps something he did not fully understand.

(beat)

For you see, the third floor is not entirely empty. The interior, from floor to ceiling, is completely encased in a one-foot-thick barrier of heavy brickwork.

(MORE)

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)

Think about the heat in there, in the summer. The radiating, unimaginable, burning heat. Even at night, there would be no relief, no escape -- except that tiny window. And that begs the question: what was Whitmore so afraid of that he tried to hide it in a room like that?

(beat)

Legend says that the day after the third story was finally complete, David Whitmore *disappeared*. But there are some eyewitness accounts... strange rumors that Whitmore was seen on that final night, standing pale-faced at the third story window, mouth open in a silent scream no living soul ever heard.

(beat)

Almost 200 years have passed since that night, and in that time the Whitmore estate has been many things to many people. In 1837, it was purchased by Claude Colton the First. He purchased it as a family home, but chose to move away after only 3 years. Then, like all good haunted houses, it became a small jail in 1840, then a private academy which operated until 1952, when a horrible fire broke out in the corner of the second level. Eight boys are said to have died, but their bodies were never found. The Colton family still owned the building, but they decided to keep it empty for some time. Then, in the mid-80's, Claude Colton the Fifth moved back in, using it as his private estate once more. Unfortunately, the estate's troubled past caught up with him on Valentine's day, 1998. It was a bloody mess... a Valentine's Gala gone horribly wrong. More than a dozen party-goers were found dead at the estate, either partially or fully drained of blood. Colton himself was found unconscious in a guest bedroom, apparently unaware of the night's events.

(MORE)

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)

He's remained tight-lipped about the massacre ever since, and no arrests were ever made.

(beat)

It's not surprising that people say Vampires live up there. They'd be completely protected from the sunlight during the day, and their bloodless bodies might be able to withstand the heat better than we could. But if they are vampires, then there's something different about them. Whenever brave or stupid souls dare to look up and gaze into that window late at night, they all swear to see the same thing -- pale, tiny lights zipping out in the darkness after midnight, returning just before the dawn. Some people claim to see those same lights in the darkened corners of the city, trying to draw in unsuspecting travelers. Maybe not. Maybe they're just watching. But if you see what looks two pale eyes staring at you from a dark and narrow street... I'd recommend you run.

(beat)

But whenever we speak of the dead, we must be careful... for the dead are often listening. Watch your step -- wander too close, and you might find out *exactly* what dwells in that third story room. For in the shadows of New Orleans, there will always be something waiting to ferry you across the veil.

CLICK.

5. INT. SMALL BAR - FRENCH QUARTER - LATER

One of the more low-key drinking establishments in NOLA -- relaxed rock and the clink of glasses in the background. Sam and Bill approach the Tour Guide.

SAM BAILEY

(awkward)

Excuse me, uh -- hi there. I know the tour is over, but I was wondering if you could answer a couple of questions for us?

BILL TYLER
 (charming, apologizing for
 Sam)
 Buy you a drink?

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE
 (hesitant, then shrugging)
 Well... hell, why not. I was
 thinking about grabbing one
 anyways.
 (to bartender)
 Vodka cranberry, please.

BILL TYLER
 (to bartender)
 Make it three.

SAM BAILEY
 I really don't want/anything--

BILL TYLER
 ("play along, Sam")
 Yes, you do.

In the background, the bartender prepares their drinks.

BILL TYLER (CONT'D)
 (turning back to tour
 guide)
 This city really is beautiful.

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE
 (smiling)
 I'm glad you're enjoying yourself.
 First time?

BILL TYLER
 (twinkle in his eyes)
 Won't be the last.

SAM BAILEY
 (butting in, all business)
 Have you had any troubles with your
 tours, lately? With all the
 disappearances?

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE
 (taken aback)
 Oh... well, not directly. Things
 are a little tense, but... you
 know, these things can happen in
 any city.

BILL TYLER

(more sympathetic)

Of course. I'm sure it hits closer to home for you than most though, right?

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE

(NERVOUS LAUGHTER)

What, because of the vampire memes?

Maria approaches with a drink in hand.

MARIA SOL

(overly friendly)

Hey, you're still here! Could I pick your brain about something? I was doing some research, and I found some interesting stuff about Colton. Did you know he and John Broussard used to be in business together?

SAM BAILEY

(playing along with the ruse)

Really?

MARIA SOL

Yep! Wasn't Broussard in the news recently about some offhand comments about vampires? I love your earrings, by the way.

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE

(head spinning slightly)

Oh -- thank you!

(takes a drink, trying to recover)

Well, yes and no. Colton was one of Broussard's first investors when he started his business. Have y'all gone out there yet? The Shrimp /Barrel--

BILL TYLER

(cheesy, trying to move this along)

--Barrel Family place, yeah... we haven't been there. Sounds like a barrel of laughs.

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE

Or shrimp!

BILL AND THE TOUR GUIDE LAUGH awkwardly. MARIA COUGHS.

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)

(getting back to the
point, more serious)

But really -- I know what you're getting at, but I can't say any more. I really wish I could, you're all lovely people, but... we've gotten in trouble before, for talking about Broussard and the Coltons. They're very touchy about their history, and things have a way of getting back to them.

BILL TYLER

(confused)

But all that stuff about the Whitmore estate...

VAMPIRE TOUR GUIDE

(waving it off)

Ancient history to them. Everyone in town knows it, and the way we talk about it -- well, it's just a story. Entertainment. Not to mention, the Whitmore doesn't even belong to Colton anymore. It was bought last year by some anonymous shell company or other. They don't really seem to know or care what goes on in there.

(beat, annoyed)

I've already said too much.

(stands, taking her drink)

I'm sorry, you've all been... really quite nice, but I have to go. Thanks for the drink!

Before anyone can reply, she downs her drink, slams the glass down, and rushes out.

CLICK.

6. INT. MERIWETHER FACILITY - DORM HALLWAY - 12/16/19

Almost silent this far underground. On the surveillance feed, Caldwell knocks on a thin door, and it opens just a crack.

DANA CALDWELL

(trying to be friendly)

Good morning Jerry. I hope you're having a nice week?

JERRY PRICE
(confused, suspicious)
It's, uh... it's been good. No
complaints.

DANA CALDWELL
(right down to business)
Wonderful. Listen, I came by to
tell you that we're planning to
test-fire one of our new rocket
prototypes later today. I wanted to
see if you're interested in joining
us?

JERRY PRICE
(trying to be polite)
That's... kind of you.

DANA CALDWELL
I thought that -- working with cars
like you do -- you might be
interested. Mechanical work, and
all that.

JERRY PRICE
I run an impound lot. Not a lot of
call for mechanics there,
unfortunately.

DANA CALDWELL
(disappointed, but poised)
Right. Of course. Well, the offer
stands if you/change your--

JERRY PRICE
I was actually about to grab a
snack. If you'd excuse me...

Jerry squeezes out, shuts the door behind him, and starts off
towards the atrium. Caldwell follows.

DANA CALDWELL
(not making a request)
What an idea. I'll join you.

JERRY PRICE
(frustrated)
Of course.

DANA CALDWELL
So how are you enjoying your stay,
otherwise?

JERRY PRICE

(awkward)

Well... of course I appreciate the, uh... protection that ISPHA has offered, but -- there's no place like home.

DANA CALDWELL

(unreadable)

I see.

JERRY PRICE

(stops, then cautious)

Is there any chance we get to leave here anytime before the world blows up?

DANA CALDWELL

(offended but hiding it)

That's a... major simplification of the situation. But you're under no obligation to stay here -- not if you have something more important to do. I just have to wonder what that could be.

JERRY PRICE

(growing nervous)

It's not about what's more important, it's/just that I have...

DANA CALDWELL

If it's about your safety, I have to wonder if you remember the situation we extracted you from. Edgar Morrison hasn't been seen in nearly a month, but I don't think that means Oslow is any less dangerous for you. If you return now,/you'll be--

JERRY PRICE

(exasperated)

Doctor, please -- I don't want to argue about this.

DANA CALDWELL

I would think that you'd want to keep the little home you've made for yourself safe. Your own little world.

Jerry freezes.

JERRY PRICE
 (oddly threatened tone)
 What did you say?

DANA CALDWELL
 (backtracking, seeing she
 hit a nerve)
 I didn't mean that as a threat,
 Mister Price. It's just that...
 (CLEARS THROAT)
 ISPHA is paying you a very generous
 stipend while you're away from
 work. Up until now, we haven't
 require your participation, but I
 believe our situation has
 escalated, and we could really use
 all hands on deck. You're a smart,
 resourceful man. I believe you
 would be an invaluable asset to our
 team.

JERRY PRICE
 (growing anger)
 And if I don't want to be an
 "asset" for anyone anymore?

DANA CALDWELL
 (frustration creeping in)
 Well then maybe you should just
 leave. Just... *run on home.*

JERRY PRICE
 (odd pause, suspicious)
 You wouldn't happen to be a
 Thurgood Vice fan, would you?

DANA CALDWELL
 (bluffing, no idea what
 he's talking about)
 And if I was.

JERRY PRICE
 (reconsidering, backing
 down)
 Good evening, Doctor Caldwell.

Jerry hurries off to the cafeteria without her. A moment
 later...

DANA CALDWELL
 (confused)
 What the hell was that about?

BEEP.

7. EXT. SMALL BOAT - NOLA SWAMPS - NIGHT - 12/19/19

The team is huddled in a small motorized boat as Ren captains them through the wetland outside Colton's estate.

SAM BAILEY

Samuel Isaac Bailey, recording for ISPHA internal records -- Mission log, December 19th, 2019 at 10:20pm Central Standard Time. We've rented a small boat, and Ren is currently trying to find a way onto Colton's new estate, but it's uh... it's slow going.

BILL TYLER

(curious)

Where did you learn to do this, Ren?

REN PARK

(shrugs, simple)

Florida.

MARIA SOL

(nervous)

Are you sure this is safe to do without any lights?

REN PARK

(a little petty)

Certainly safer than trying to sneak down Colton's driveway, looking for vampires.

BILL TYLER

(CHUCKLES)

Ooh boy...

SAM BAILEY

(to recorder)

Speaking of which... last night, Bill and I attempted to enter Colton's estate on foot. We managed to get right to the edge of the property line before we saw a small, hovering light out in the swampland beyond. We tried to follow it, but it kept moving off until it was lost in the fog. Eventually, we realized we were too close to the main house to keep going and had to circle back. But it's odd...

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

it almost felt like it wanted us to follow. And I'm pretty sure it was the same kind of light that the tour guide described at the Whitmore.

(beat)

So we've come back, this time approaching from the water about a half-mile east of the property, so we have a pretty good chance of getting closer without being seen. *If* our luck holds out.

Ren switches off the engine, and the boat glides onto the low shore. Hopping out, he ties the front of the boat off to a nearby tree as everyone else cautiously disembarks.

REN PARK

(cautious)

Watch your step, everyone...

(beat)

Alright -- rules of engagement. No flashlights unless absolutely necessary. We're too close to Colton's property to use them without being seen. Do *not* step anywhere you can't see moonlight. If you can't see solid ground, turn back. Stay close to the group. And last but most important, keep your cedar stakes in your hands, but pointed down -- I don't want to get caught unawares, but I also don't want anyone getting stabbed because they tripped over their feet. Everyone ready?

KATE SHERIDAN

Ready.

MARIA SOL

Ready.

BILL TYLER

Might as well.

SAM BAILEY

Lead the way, Ren.

Five sets of slightly squishy footsteps move through the swamp, with the sounds of crickets, wind, and toads beneath.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

(hushed)

I did look up some details of this estate before we left -- it's a recent purchase... brand-new build, bought a few months before the sale of the Whitmore estate, everything top of the line.

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

The value of this new place? Nine million. The selling price of the Whitmore estate? Only two million. Add that to the fact that Colton has apparently pulled out of all of his business ventures in the past decade, and it begs the question... where'd he get the money from?

(beat)

Possible solution: these disappearances are due to vampires - - either casualties of their feeding habits, or transformed into vampires themselves. I had my hesitations at first, but building on our working theory -- we believe that Colton is working with these vampires, like Morrison worked with Ned. And whoever was backing Morrison is also lining Colton's pockets.

(beat)

We don't really have any proof of that... his public image is almost suspiciously tidy. He's well connected, though -- friends in high places, worked on the board of several successful companies, the usual. But normally with figures like this, you can find something: pending lawsuits, hush money, maybe some links to shell companies and overseas ventures. But, no. His friendship with John Broussard, notable loud mouth and generally gross human being, is the only hint that he's hiding dirt, somewhere.

KATE SHERIDAN

(accountant fact)

Well that, and people with that much money always have something to hide.

REN PARK

(noticing something)

I can see the lights from the property. Keep your voices down, we're close.

MARIA SOL

(squinting)

Those reflections bothering anyone else?

KATE SHERIDAN

I'm having a harder time finding my way too. We might need to slow down a bit.

REN PARK

We'll take a break on that bank up ahead... should be able to plot a course from up there.

The group turns, but Bill steps in something that's simultaneously wet and crunchy.

BILL TYLER

(SUPPRESSING A DISGUSTED SOUND)

Oh god, I don't even want to know what I just stepped in.

KATE SHERIDAN

Maria, you still doing--
(stops, turns around)
Maria?

Everyone stops and looks behind them. Maria is gone. They try to remain quiet, despite the panic.

SAM BAILEY

(calling as loudly as he dares)

Shit. Maria?

REN PARK

Maria, where are you?

The silence drags on.

BILL TYLER

(deeply worried)

Where the hell did she go?

The team snaps into action, moving as quickly as they can through the thick foliage.

REN PARK

(sees something)

This way! There's some kind of clearing and a pond up ahead.

KATE SHERIDAN

(whisper-yell)

Maria!

SAM BAILEY
(static rises, invocation)
Maria. Hear me.

The static fades.

KATE SHERIDAN
(faintly hopeful)
Anything?

SAM BAILEY
(worried, unsure)
No. But there's something...
something else.

Everyone stops moving.

REN PARK
(with dread)
And by something, you mean...?

SAM BAILEY
(pause, eyes wide)
Oh, no.

8. EXT. CONTINUOUS

Trees rustle as Maria steps out from beneath the canopy, her footsteps stiff and nervous. Someone stands behind her, not quite leaving the shadows.

PHILIPPE
(level, unreadable)
You lost one.

BILL TYLER
(long pause, trying to
sound friendly)
Thanks, we were worried she'd
gotten lost. We'll just... keep
going on our way...

PHILIPPE
Wait.

Bill freezes, unable to move.

BILL TYLER
(edge of nervousness)
Uh... Sam. I can't move.

SAM BAILEY
 (slightly shaking)
 We don't want any trouble.

PHILIPPE
 Bold claim. You were making so much
 noise, I'm surprised the rest of
 them haven't found you already.

SAM BAILEY
 (more firm)
 What do you want?

PHILIPPE
 (pause, considering)
 You're on private property, if you
 didn't know. I'd recommend that you
 leave. But something tells me
 you're too stubborn to listen.

Sam approaches Maria.

SAM BAILEY
 Come on Maria, /let's--

PHILIPPE
 (hiding nervousness)
 Don't come any closer.

Sam stops, weighing his options.

SAM BAILEY
 (slight use of his powers)
 Alright. Maria... you've got to
 move. Come this way.

Slowly, Maria moves back towards the group, stiff and
 nervous.

MARIA SOL
 (terror turning her
 stomach)
 I'm gonna be sick.

SAM BAILEY
 Ren... let's go.

KATE SHERIDAN
 (standing her ground)
 Not yet.

BILL TYLER
 (nervous warning)
 Kate?

KATE SHERIDAN
 (setting her feet)
 I don't know who you are, but we've
 come a long way to help. We're not
 leaving until we try.

PHILIPPE
 (slightly amused)
 Help? What could you five possibly
 do to help.

KATE SHERIDAN
 (trying to explain)
 We know there have been
 disappearances. And... pain.

PHILIPPE
 (skeptical)
 That's what you know, is it?

KATE SHERIDAN
 (trying to connect)
 My name's Kate. What's yours?

SAM BAILEY
 Kate, this isn't/a good idea--

KATE SHERIDAN
 Sam. Please.

PHILIPPE
 (considers, hesitant)
 Philippe.

KATE SHERIDAN
 (SIGHS, relieved)
 Nice to meet you, Philippe.

MARIA SOL
 (finally able to see him,
 relieved)
 Oh my god... you're trying to help
 too, aren't you?

SAM BAILEY
 (worried, hushed)
 Everyone, we need to *leave*. We're
 talking to a *vampire*--

PHILIPPE
 You're right. Both of you.
 (beat, more vulnerable)
 But I am... not a danger. Not to
 you.

(MORE)

PHILIPPE (CONT'D)

(beat)

There is truth in what you say. If you're here to help... maybe you can help me.

BILL TYLER

(connecting the dots)

Do you know something about the disappearances?

PHILIPPE

(emotional, terrified)

I...

MARIA SOL

(realizing)

You were trying to sneak into the estate too... weren't you?

PHILIPPE

(SIGHS, cover blown)

I've been following you five for the last few days. I know what you're after.

(beat)

I was sneaking in, yes. But this isn't my first time. I've been doing this for months now. Within those walls, there are... there are dozens of untrained, scared vampires, being held against their will by Claude Colton. He used to care about our numbers. Spent time working with us. Taught us things... things that I have no idea how he knows. But now he's stopped caring what happens to us. He stopped controlling their feedings, let them run wild. They don't want to be doing what they're doing, but they don't know how to stop...

REN PARK

(stunned)

Wait... so this is an out-of-control vampire infestation?

PHILIPPE

(knows how it sounds)

Please -- listen. I'm not a threat to you. Any of you. And I'm trying to teach the rest of them how this life is to be lived.

KATE SHERIDAN

(reassuring)

I believe you, Phillipe... it's okay. You said he stopped caring about...?

PHILIPPE

I heard your theories about Colton. You have a far more charitable view of him than he deserves. It's not just that he's letting them run rampant. He's selling them. To any high-profile buyer who wants their own personal monster.

KATE SHERIDAN

(horrified)

Wait... he's trafficking them?

PHILIPPE

(deep hurt)

Yes.

BILL TYLER

(sickened)

How long has he been doing this.

PHILIPPE

Only a few years, now. It used to be a hobby for him... creating vampires amused him, somehow. Gave him a sense of power. But when he inherited the Whitmore, he soon realized the power the third story held. It's been a conduit for transformation and terror for so long, the frame of the building itself is imbued with power... with the mark of...

KATE SHERIDAN

(offering a name)

The ancient ones?

PHILIPPE

(HISSES, vehement)

Do. Not. SPEAK. Their. Names.

(long pause)

I'm telling you all, right now: there are dangers in this universe that would swallow you in a heartbeat. Even you, Sam Bailey.

SAM BAILEY

So what changed with Colton?

PHILIPPE

He grew obsessed with the audacity of Whitmore's alliance with... *them*. Whitmore allowed them to conduct whatever experiments they desired on the third floor. They came to him in his dreams, promising him riches, power, even immortality. Instead, he was their first guinea pig.

(smiling, sick irony)

For all that, he ended up impaled by a piece of broken wood on a construction site. Freak accident, if you can believe it. He never could resist a promising build.

(beat)

But Colton... Colton is even worse. Eventually, the rush of power he got from manipulating us wasn't enough. He decided it would be a waste not to use our power for his own benefit.

(beat)

He started small. At first, he just used us for his personal business. Treated us like entertainers, like party decorations for his guests... an enticing edge of danger with the reassuring sense of control. But his methods were...

(trails off, shakes head)

After the Valentine's massacre, he didn't try it again.

KATE SHERIDAN

(realizing, sickened)

Oh my god...

PHILIPPE

After that, he started assembling his lists of buyers. Only those willing to accept the risk. Only those who had enough money that they felt untouchable. Those who were willing to pay anything, put their families in any kind of danger, just to feel something.

(beat)

I escaped last year, just before the sale of the Whitmore.

(MORE)

PHILIPPE (CONT'D)

I've been around a long time... I know more about Colton than some of his own children. Which is why I've risked everything to save the ones I can.

(beat)

You see, the energy of the Whitmore... it's not just darkness. Colton doesn't realize this. It's not just danger... it's potential. And if you're unprepared to handle it, if you've never had to live with that same power trying to tear its way out of you -- it can all too easily go wrong. But for those of us who've been turned? We can use that power. At least... as long as we know the possibility exists. Which is why I've been taking as many of us back to the Whitmore as I can. It's the perfect training ground, now Colton and his ilk have abandoned it.

(beat)

But something's gone wrong. I don't know what, but Colton must have gotten complacent... comfortable. His vampires are young. They're hungrier than usual. And as they feed, they make more of themselves. I'm trying to help them... but I've never felt so lost.

The team stands in stunned silence.

SAM BAILEY

(completely come around to him)

What do you need? How can we help you?

KATE SHERIDAN

(hesitant, unsure)

Sam, we may be out of our depth here... this sounds/like--

MARIA SOL

Can't you do something about this, Ren?

REN PARK

(pause, considering)

Philippe... I want to offer you something.

(MORE)

REN PARK (CONT'D)

The organization I work for... we can give you a new identity. All the documents you need, whatever name you want.

BILL TYLER

(surprised)

Wait... you can do that?

REN PARK

(continuing)

We'll track down the owners of the Whitmore. Negotiate a lease in your name. Make the house yours.

PHILIPPE

(unsure if he can trust him)

I don't know if/that's--

REN PARK

My organization will pay for everything: rent, bills, food... uh, I guess however you take your, uh--

PHILIPPE

Animal blood. It's distasteful, but it's better than the alternative.

REN PARK

(nods, reassured)

We can arrange that.

PHILIPPE

And if Colton realizes who I am and comes after me?

REN PARK

He won't. We'll hire security for the building, keep any watchful eyes away.

Philippe considers, letting the silence fill the air.

PHILIPPE

It is very generous -- but you have to understand, I've been around long enough to earn my skepticism about handouts. What does your... organization get out of this arrangement.

REN PARK

We learn from you. About vampires. That's what we do now -- we study the supernatural. And if we can do that while saving lives and cutting off Colton's supply... well, that's more than worth the cost.

(beat)

Could we meet tomorrow to discuss the details?

PHILIPPE

(hesitant)

I have many... many conditions. But I'm willing to hear you out. Where should I meet you?

CLICK.

9. EXT. FRENCH QUARTER, NOLA - NIGHT - 12/20/19

Late night in New Orleans, and the party's just getting started a few streets away. Sam stands in a small, quiet alley.

SAM BAILEY

(tired, but satisfied)

Samuel Issac Bailey, recording for ISPHA internal records -- final mission report, December 20th, 2019 at 11:45 pm Central Standard Time.

(beat)

We've just wrapped up our meeting with Philippe. The deal is done. While the situation is still unstable, this at least introduces some level of stability and safety for the vampires of New Orleans. Philippe has agreed to Ren's plan, and everything is underway. Ren didn't sleep at all last night, he was on the phone with all kinds of people arranging documents and contracts for Philippe and those in his care. It's amazing how fast ISPHA can move when it needs to...

(beat, shakes head)

Anyway, Ren took his own recording of the meeting, so I don't need to bore you with the details. All I've got to contend with is the prospect of the clock striking midnight.

(SIGHS)

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
 Never thought I'd spend a birthday
 in New Orleans... not a chance/in
 hell--

BILL TYLER
 (just rounding the corner,
 smiling wide)
 Please tell me that I just heard
 what I thought I heard.

SAM BAILEY
 (nervous)
 Uh...

BILL TYLER
 Your BIRTHDAY! It's your BIRTHDAY,
 and we're in NEW ORLEANS?!?

SAM BAILEY
 (dreading)
 You'd like to get me drunk,
 wouldn't/you--

BILL TYLER
 Yes, I would like to get you drunk!

Before Sam can reply, Bill grabs him by the arm and pulls him
 back to the rest of the team.

BILL TYLER (CONT'D)
 You guys are not going to believe
 this -- Sam, tell the class how old
 you're going to be at midnight.

SAM BAILEY
 (hesitant, unable to
 wriggle out of this)
 29...

KATE GASPS, REN LAUGHS.

MARIA SOL
 (ready to party)
 I'm designated driver!

SAM BAILEY
 (deeply uncomfortable)
 I really don't...
 (beat)
 Isn't that a bit... disrespectful?
 To go out partying, with everything
 that just happened?

There's along silence -- then Kate steps forward.

KATE SHERIDAN
(serious, reassuring)
You're right. We stumbled onto
something horrifying...

MARIA SOL
(counterpoint)
...and we figured out how to keep a
bunch of vampires from being sold
to rich assholes.

BILL TYLER
(adding to her argument)
AND prevented a bunch of people
from being turned into vampires
themselves.

REN PARK
(nodding in agreement)
All told, this is about the most
positive outcome we've had yet. Not
just for the research.

SAM BAILEY
(one last try)
But people have still/died because
of--

KATE SHERIDAN
(smiling hand on shoulder)
Sam. Horrors don't stop being
horrors just because we hold
ourselves back from joy. You need
to let the light in.

BILL TYLER
(stunned)
...shit.

SAM BAILEY
(realizing she's right)
Shit.

MARIA SOL
(smiling)
Come on, Bailey... we've got work
to do.

10. INT. FRENCH QUARTER - NOLA - MONTAGE - LATER

Wild laughter, conversation, and raucous jazz carry us
through.

TEAM
CHEERS!!

Multiple glasses clink.

SAM BAILEY
(unsure)
Oh, this doesn't look like my kind
of--
(gulps it down, surprised)
Hey, that's good!

The scene shifts.

KATE SHERIDAN
(pushing Sam forward)
Go dance with him, Sam!

SAM BAILEY
(alarmed)
What!?

KATE SHERIDAN
Go! Dance! With--! Oh, forget this--

Kate pushes Sam into the path of a handsome stranger.

SAM BAILEY
(terrified, trying to be
heard over the music)
HI, WHAT DO YOU DO FOR WORK?

The scene shifts outside, as people laugh and walk the
cobblestones.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
(very drunk)
I love New Orleans! The big Jazz!

BILL TYLER
(very drunk, LOSING IT)
I'm sorry, what!?

SAM BAILEY
(miming trumpet)
Big! Jazz!

REN PARK
(THROUGH GASPING LAUGHTER)
It's the Big EASY, Sam!

SAM BAILEY
(enthusiastic and VERY
drunk)
(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
 Laissez les bon temps rouler!
 (unsteady)
 Oh, what happened to the ground?

Sam falls WITH A GRUNT. Bill tries to catch him, but stumbles himself.

MARIA SOL
 (LAUGHING AT BOTH OF THEM)
 Whoop! Time to go home!

The scene shifts to the hotel room. REN IS SNORING LOUDLY ON THE BED.

SAM BAILEY
 (still drunk)
 We should take a road trip home!

KATE SHERIDAN
 (GASPS, clapping)
 Road trip! Road trip!

BILL TYLER
 (LAUGHING)
 Maria, drive us! Please!?

MARIA SOL
 (smiling mischievously)
 That does sound fun, doesn't it...

KATE SHERIDAN
 (disappointed)
 Aw, Ren's passed out...

MARIA SOL
 (stage whisper)
 Ren, we're road tripping back to Meriwether.

REN PARK
 (bleary, waking slightly)
 Have fun... I'll catch... plane...
 home...

MARIA SOL
 Aww, come on, Ren?

BILL TYLER
 (clapping)
 Nope, you heard the guy -- let's
 GO!

REN PARK
(falling back asleep)
Don't forget the... road snacks...

Hours pass in a moment -- van tires squeal slightly outside before night fades to early morning. The birds chirp as the jazz music fades away.

REN GROANS as he wakes, looking around the mess of his hotel room.

REN PARK (CONT'D)
(very hungover)
Hey... where did they...
(remembers, dread)
Ohhhh, shit...

CLACK. The recording ends.

ROLL END THEME
AND CREDITS