

Season 3: Episode 6

“Hot Club”

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how it ends



NETWORK INTRO

Rusty Quill Presents...

STEPHANIE [Voiceover]

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[INTRO MUSIC FADE IN]

MICAH [Voiceover]

That feeling when you hear someone call your name and you turn, but no one's there, and shiver runs down your spine. When something moves just out of vision and it sets in. The sense that someone, or something is watching you. Do you know that feeling? Good. It means you're paying attention.

I'm Micah Jones. My friends and I started this podcast to explore my dreams and nightmares and to help me finally deal with my dad's death, even after all this time. Instead, we stumbled onto something much darker, something we were never meant to find out. My dreams aren't just dreams. They're memories. Warnings. I should have paid closer attention. And my dad? He's at the center of it all.

The How it Ends Podcast is no longer releasing in real time. We can't. It isn't safe. But if you're just finding us, start at the beginning. Thank you for listening.

[INTRO MUSIC FADE OUT]

[Voiceover]

The events that are about to unfold occurred during the week of March 1 through March 8, 2020.

[SCENE TRANSITION]

[PHONE DIALING]

[PHONE RINGS FOUR TIMES]

AIMEE

Hey, Devon. Are you heading up this way soon?

DEVON

Actually, that's why I'm calling. I think I'm going to bail.

AIMEE

Oh. Really? Is everything okay?

DEVON

I... I think I just need to step away for a bit.

AIMEE

Well, we can postpone tonight if you want.

DEVON

Nah. I mean... I think I need a little more time than that. Aimee, you know... We've been nonstop for months, and I'm kind of overwhelmed, especially with the latest developments. Plus... Yeah, I haven't had much time with anyone other than y'all. I mean, I'm not complaining, but... It's a bit heavy.

AIMEE

No. I- I get that. Really. Um. Do... Do what you need to do.

How's everything else? How's work? Even asking you that just now made me realize how little we talk about anything else. It's always just about... figuring stuff out. I just... I want to say, I'm sorry. It shouldn't be that way.

DEVON

Nah. It shouldn't. And I know no one... no one intends for it to be, but we've been doing this for a while and... I know that isn't something Micah can just put down. But I have to. At least for tonight, you know?

AIMEE

Yeah.

DEVON

Yeah. Anyway. Work is good. Thanks for asking. Um... We're working on the annual report so that's taking up a big chunk of my time. A lot of back and forth with revisions and different... uh... different design and all that sort of thing. Everyone's got an opinion, you know?

AIMEE

Yeah. For sure. What goes in the annual report?

DEVON

You really want to know?

AIMEE

[laughs]

DEVON

Well, our organization reports out on all the work we did last year. Highlights about programming, financial statements, donor recognition. It's a huge effort each year. But, um... I'm kind of like the de facto project manager for it because, uh... I take point on the design so... But uh... It's about wrangling information and data from like six different departments and making it look pretty, you know?

AIMEE

That's cool. I don't think you've ever mentioned that you do that.

DEVON

I probably wouldn't. Who'd want to know? But... and it's only one part of my job anyway. But we do it around this time every year, so I'm basically on autopilot right now.

AIMEE

Nice. Well, if you can sign me up, mail one to me.

DEVON

Sure. Okay. I'll do that. Eh... But other than day job stuff, I've been working on a few screen printing projects in my limited spare time.

AIMEE

Oh.

DEVON

I'm kidding. But for real, it's been good. I've had a few ideas rattling around in my brain and uh... I'm finally making some progress.

AIMEE

Oh, what are you working on?

DEVON

Ooh. Well. Not ready to share that just yet. But, um... soon. I promise.

AIMEE

Awesome. Yeah. Whenever you're ready I'd love to hear about it, or even see what you're working on. Is that what you're going to do with your night off?

DEVON

Nah. Actually, tonight I'm going out with a co-worker, this guy Felix. He's been on me about going out like forever. But with everything, you know... It just...

AIMEE

Yeah. Right. That's great, though. Where are you guys going?

DEVON

He mentioned Hot Club. But uh... we didn't really nail anything down yet.

AIMEE

Huh. Isn't that more of a summer bar?

DEVON

Yeah. It kind of is. But um... most of the real estate is outdoors and we'll see. You know... How about you? How's work going for you?

AIMEE

Pretty good, overall.

DEVON

That sounds convincing.

AIMEE

No, I mean... Things are good, in general. I'm just kind of bummed because one of my favorite clients canceled all of her future appointments today. And it was just kind of like... strange, the way it went down.

DEVON

What happened?

AIMEE

Well, there were a few things. Like for one, she called my office and talked to the receptionist. And she hasn't done that in years. I've been working with her since before I even joined this practice. We'd gotten to the point where she would just text me. And she had a standing appointment every week, but if she needed to cancel or change the time, she just always reached out to me directly.

DEVON

Yeah. That's odd. Could be an insurance thing, maybe?

AIMEE

Yeah, I thought the same thing. But I checked her policy and it's still active. Plus, even if that was the case, why wouldn't she just tell me?

DEVON

Yeah. Wow. Well, are you going to reach out to her?

AIMEE

I don't know. I'm sure she has her reasons and I don't want to harass her, or make her feel guilty, you know? It's just strange. And it's sad. I really liked her.

DEVON

Hmm. Well, I'm sorry you're dealing with that. Seems like a crappy situation.

AIMEE

Yeah. Here you are, trying to have a chill night, and I just dump this downer of a story on you.

DEVON

[laughs]

Ha, no. It's all good. It's all good. I mean, we've all got stuff. And I think that's the point I was trying to make, you know? It's actually nice to hear about your work. I mean... Eh, not that your situation is nice, but it's good to hear about it.

AIMEE

Yeah. I know what you mean. It is nice. Uh... I know we do that sometimes, but it does feel kind of like... in the background of other things.

DEVON

Yeah. And that's fine. I mean, I know that's what we signed up for but... today I'm taking a break. I'm getting some beers.

AIMEE

Okay. Have a good time. I'll talk to you soon.

[SCENE TRANSITION]

[MUSIC, LAUGHTER. OUTDOOR BAR SOUNDS]

DEVON

I haven't been to Hot Club in forever.

FELIX

What? Everyone loves Hot Club.

DEVON

Nah, no. It's great. I didn't say I didn't love it. It's just been a while. Wow. Glad they have the heat lamps out tonight, though. It's chilly.

FELIX

I'm just excited you finally came out.

DEVON

Yeah. Me, too. I'm taking the night off from... everything, you know? So. Anyway. What's good with you? We've barely had time to get coffee lately.

FELIX

I've been just... renovating my house, really. I told you I bought a house, right?

DEVON

No! Congrats, man. I had no idea.

FELIX

Thanks, man. I just closed a couple months ago.

DEVON

Ah! So... fill me in on everything. What have you been working on?

FELIX

Right now, I'm knocking down the walls between the two bedrooms. They're both really small. One barely has a closet. So I'm turning that into a suite for me. And... Yeah. I guess I'm also gutting the upstairs bathroom, too.

DEVON

You guess?

FELIX

Well, it wasn't really my intention. I just wanted to do some minor things in there, for now. But the walls are covered in old tile. And, uh... I guess, long story short, the whole thing came crashing down.

[laughs]

DEVON

The whole... the whole wall?

FELIX

Yep. Honestly, I have no idea how it happened. It was so fast. Like dominoes. All the tiles just slid off the wall.

DEVON

[laughs]

Oh, man! I mean, I'm sorry. It's not funny.

FELIX

It's funny.

DEVON

[laughs]

FELIX

I guess my next thing is a security system.

DEVON

I got one for our place a while back. I actually got it because Micah's apartment was broken into. Twice.

FELIX

Oh, shit. That's scary.

DEVON

Yeah. After that, our landlord put in a basic system and changed her locks and... I- I didn't think it was enough, so I installed a couple cameras. High res. Night mode. 24-7 recording. The whole bit. It was really great for a while, but... I guess I messed something up.

FELIX

What do you mean?

DEVON

I don't know. I mean... maybe I installed them wrong. So, the second time they tried to get in, we were both home and awake. She said someone was about to walk into her apartment. But by the time I got down there, whoever it was, was gone. When I checked the feed, it's like the cameras stopped working right when I needed them to. They should have caught the person. You know, they were pointing right at her door. But it's like they shorted out, or something.

FELIX

Did they work before that?

DEVON

Yeah. Yeah, that's what I'm saying.

FELIX

What about after?

DEVON

Well, yeah. I mean, I rebooted them.

FELIX

And? Anything?

DEVON

Well... they worked fine.

FELIX

It really didn't capture anything, huh?

DEVON

Nah. Just... black screen. I- I don't know what I did wrong.

FELIX

Well, it sounds like you did everything you could to keep your friend safe. You should stop blaming yourself. Technology fails all the time.

DEVON

Eh. I know. You're right.

FELIX

So you had two break-ins. And then... nothing else?

DEVON

Hmm... not exactly. So the two break-ins happened about three months apart. But a few months after the second time, I started getting these cryptic packages. I don't think they were related. But it still goes in the "weird shit" column.

FELIX

Packages?

DEVON

Yeah. Just... I don't know, man. They come from different towns, filled with random objects. Some of them seem more connected to the towns they were postmarked from, but... It's more confusing than anything. Really, I just want to know who it is that's sending them. And why.

[pause]

Well, we don't even know if these boxes are meant to help us or... if they're a threat. Did I tell you I actually went to Wyoming? This is why I need a break. I- I get way too sucked in.

FELIX

Was that when you took that last-minute PTO a while back?

DEVON

Yeah. Look. I didn't even mean to bring any of this up. I- I'm sorry. It- It's a lot. It- It's just been all-consuming. I came out tonight to take a break from the madness and here I am, just rambling about it. I didn't mean to throw all this on you.

FELIX

You can't just drop all that on me and not explain.

DEVON

Maybe another time.

[laughs nervously]

I really shouldn't have brought it up. So. Sorry about my... little rant, there.

FELIX

It's all good. I get it. You know, I'm here if you need it. You know?

DEVON

I do. Thanks, man.

FELIX

Hey, I think a table might be opening up over there.

DEVON

Oh, where?

Oh! My fault! Oh, I'm sorry.

MAN

No, no, no, no. My fault. My fault. Not paying attention. All good.

[pause]

FELIX

[laughs]

Maybe this is the reason you don't come to the Hot Club anymore? Want to go somewhere else?

DEVON

Yeah. It's getting pretty packed in here, anyhow. I think, let's try somewhere more low-key.

FELIX

I know a place. Wild Colonial.

DEVON

Ah. Now you're talking.

[SCENE TRANSITION]

DEVON

Ugh. It's after 3:00am. Felix dropped me off around 1:00. I don't usually stay out that late. Or... drink that much. So... felt like I was ready to knock out. But as soon as my head hit the pillow, my mind just started spinning. Not the room. Just my brain. You know, I wanted a night off from all of this, but... Just, nope.

Hell, I even recorded my night with Felix, just out of pure habit. What the fuck, right?

Hmm. Keep coming back around to those packages. And as I was lying here, I just had a thought. I felt like I should document it. What... What if the locations aren't literal? Micah started to touch on this when we were all... When we were all at Aimee's, but never really elaborated. What if it's not just the contents of the boxes that are the clues? But also the return addresses on them?

They aren't boring, no-name places. They all have something really special about them, something noteworthy. What if their uniqueness ties into the whole mystery of all this? Elia has most of the boxes right now, so I can't go through them. But from memory, everything within the boxes had a connection to the location they were sent from. What if the items aren't just pointing us to the location? But are also telling us something about the location?

It's so late and I'm rambling. I don't even know if any of this makes sense. I should take some melatonin and actually get some proper sleep.

[pause]

Hold on.

[LAPTOP CASE UNZIPS]

[TYPING ON A LAPTOP]

DEVON

Um... I... This is... Okay. I just remembered that website, eatatjims.com. The one that redirects to the Tumblr page. I opened it up to see if anything... if any of these images connect to those locations and... whether we might have missed something. And they do. I think they do.

But also... there are more pictures here. Ones that weren't there before. A bear. Goblet. Snake. A starry forest sky, like at night. Some waterfall. A link to a website-

Wait, this is all new. All posted, like, last week. Just a few days after we were all looking at it at Aimee's house.

The starry night photo, that's taken in Lake Tahoe. I don't even think we've gotten any mail from there. The image with the goblet and the snake says, "Chalice of Saint John the Evangelist." That seems out of place, but... there must be some reason it's here.

Then there's the bear with the salmon in its mouth. And the picture of the cup right after it. I'm- I'm going to Google that.

Salmon. Cup. Nothing. Hmm. Wait. Wait. Oh, duh. It's the chalice of whoever that guy is. Salmon. Chalice. Oh! Okay. Well, the first result is Salmon-Challis national forest. Hmm.

Then the other photo here is of Lake Tahoe at night. And the sky mirrored in the lake... does that mean something? I need to write this down.

All right. I'm going to list out all the locations that I know. Centralia. Devil's Tower. Yellowstone. Cape Disappointment. The rest came from the website. After those four places, we also have... Salmon-Challis, maybe. Lake Tahoe. Devil's Kettle, Minnesota. Hmm. That's where the waterfall picture on eatatjims is from. Or so the caption says.

Okay. So what stands out about each of these locations? Or, what stands out about the Tumblr posts? Or, the box items? Hmm.

Centralia is probably the most obvious. Centralia's on fire, so... Centralia, burning.

All right, next. Devil Tower. The most famous thing in that town is the tower itself. Yeah. I already made my Close Encounters/mashed potatoes joke, so... Hmm. But. Really, the actual tower has to be it, right? Okay. So let's say it's something about the tower.

I did this whole thing a while back. Nothing new came up. Maybe it's not something so obvious. Hmm.

This box had a crystal in it. I think Elia said it was quartz. I'll Google that.

[TYPING]

Quartz. Crystals.

Wait. Elia used a website when we were in Salem. It was like The Crystal Encyclopedia or something? I remember teasing her about it. Ah! Found it. Okay. So it says here that quartz is valued for its focus properties, and for its ability to amplify energies, or to promote transformation.

Well. Maybe the shape is unique. Crystal shape is called... a... fixed point, or tower. Fixed point? Devil's Tower sort of looks like this. Though the top of the butte is... well, it's flat. Well, I'm going to write that anyway.

Okay. Devil's Tower. Fixed.

So the next place is Yellowstone. We almost missed this one, because- But Micah caught it because it was the wolf toy. That keyed her off to it. But other than the wolf toy, then the Yogi Bear/Jellystone picture, there really isn't much else pointing to Yellowstone, here. Maybe there wasn't anything more concrete they could point to, but... Yellowstone has a volcano. This one could also be burning. Hmm.

[sighs]

What am I doing? I truly do not know what seems like a logical connection and what's just... grasping at straws.

Cape Disappointment was next. We searched that the other night. And the info we found said that it was the foggiest place in the continental US. Yep. Here it is. It has nearly 3 ½ months of thick fog cover every year. That box came from Ilwaco, Washington. I remember. But we Googled and found it was close to Cape Disappointment. And Aimee got a postcard from her brother at the same location, like a year ago. Which could be a coincidence? But... At this point, I don't know.

Anyway. Fog is the theme here. What's significant about fog? What's interesting about it? Well, the burning in Centralia is significant because of the story. I mean... and the uniqueness. But fog isn't unique to Cape Disappointment. It's foggy in a lot of places. So why are they pointing us here? Question mark, question mark.

Let's look at Tahoe. The only thing I know about Lake Tahoe is that it's a tourist destination for a bunch of rich folks with boats and skiing and whatnot. It's freshwater lake. Borders California and Nevada. Ne-VA-da. On the southwest shore is a Nordic style mansion, and on the northeast side is a state park. I don't know. Besides the Wikipedia listing, all the results are for tourism. Which follows.

Oh. This might be... something. Lake Tahoe is one of the purest water lakes in the world. With water coming in at 99.994% pure. Shit. Okay.

Well. The thing that grabs me most about the image from Lake Tahoe is that it's basically, like... mirrored? I don't know if it's because the water is so clear, or if this is just some really great editing. But the stars in the sky reflect... you know, the water, like a perfect mirror image. It's like the sky is being projected onto the lake, itself. I'd like to see that someday.

I'm running out of steam, but... this is driving me crazy. What's the damn connection between these places? Why'd they send this shit to me? Did they know I'd be the one trying to figure this out? Staying up all night? I don't know.

I need to talk to someone about this. It's almost 4am. Who could I even call right now? Is Elia still awake? Or is Micah already awake? This might be the one hour that... they're actually both asleep at the same time. Amazing. I love that for me. Maybe I should just try to get some sleep, too.

Nope. I'm gonna call one of them.

[SCENE TRANSITION]

[OUTRO MUSIC]

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Transcribed by [Evelyn Archer](#)