

Season 3: Episode 7

“Case File 85-12954, Nolan Jones”

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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- March 8, 2020.

**[SCENE TRANSITION]**

**[PAPERS RUSTLE]**

AIMEE

Okay. So, there's a lot in here. When Tim said, "Case File" I thought he meant an actual file folder. I didn't expect a whole box of stuff. Especially because it was ruled an accident.

MICAH

I think we're learning that Mark had a lot more going on than we knew.

AIMEE

Yeah. Seriously. There's some official stuff here, but it's really just a lot of notes. Like, a lot. He was definitely looking into things on his own time.

MICAH

Just to keep it to himself, too. Little suspicious, if you ask me.

AIMEE

But he had to have a reason, so that's what we're going to try to figure out.

[pause]

AIMEE

This is a copy of the accident report he filed. Look, there's a drawing of the road. Uh... this is supposed to be your dad's truck.

MICAH

(reading aloud)

Vehicle traveling east on... River Road. CR 625. Struck a tree on the north side of the road. Tire marks show braking before collision

**[PAGES TURNING]**

AIMEE

Uh... some of these photos are kind of graphic--

MICAH

Just. Let me see them.

**[PAGES TURNING]**

MICAH

Strange, seeing the truck this way. You see those stickers on the dashboard? You know, I put them there. I started adding them and he never got mad, so any time I got a sticker at school, that's where it went. Sort of... everywhere, huh?

[pause]

Yeah. Yeah. You can see them in this photo, too. Look. Look, they're- they're also on the passenger door.

AIMEE

Is this your backpack? You had the Jansport with the leather flap. I think I can see it in the corner of this picture. There's, um, also something that looks like a black case, but I can only see part of it.

MICAH

So it's actually true.

AIMEE

What's true? That you were there?

MICAH

Yeah. Uh. It's not that I don't believe you, it's just... It- it's hard to accept that something like this happened to me. That I have this... I don't know. I experienced something so major, but I have no memory of it. You know, it- it's not like I was a baby or anything. I was almost nine. I should- I should remember this, right?

AIMEE

Well, it was traumatizing. Your brain probably blocked it out to protect you.

MICAH

Yeah, well. This photo just made it real. Wait. That- Like. That black case. I think...

[pause]

I think I remember him picking me up?

AIMEE

Picking you up from where?

MICAH

School? No. It would have been too late for that, given the time on the report. Um...

AIMEE

Wait. Weren't you taking music lessons back then? Guitar or piano or something?

MICAH

Yes! I- You're right. I was. That- I bet you that's my guitar case.

AIMEE

So then he must have picked you up from your lessons. Do you remember where they were?

MICAH

No. No. Uh... I... I vaguely remember my teacher. But I must have stopped going after... after he died.

AIMEE

You could ask your mom.

MICAH

No. I don't want to bring this up to her. She'd be pissed if she knew that we were looking into it. Are there any other photos?

AIMEE

Yeah. A few.

**[PAPERS RUSTLING]**

MICAH

All right. This one is just of the dark road and the truck all smashed up. Um... Is- Is there a photo of my dad?

AIMEE

Micah, maybe I should do this part myself? I mean, I'm not trying to keep anything from you, but--

MICAH

What- What did you find?

AIMEE

There is a photo of him here. In the truck.

MICAH

Just- Just show it to me. Please.

**[PAGES TURNING]**

MICAH

The angle of this photo is horrible. You can barely see him. And- and why didn't they use a flash if it was dark? Who- who takes a photo like this?

AIMEE

Micah, I think they were just trying to see--

MICAH

Yeah. Capture what happened, right? Like, that's what they're supposed to do. Well, they did a terrible job. Like you- you can barely see him. And you can only see how bloody, like, one side of his face is--

AIMEE

Hey. Hey. Let's just take a minute okay--

MICAH

Is that a- a handprint? Or--

AIMEE

I don't know. I- I don't know. Maybe we shouldn't be looking at these--

MICAH

But what- what- what else is there?

**[PAGES TURNING]**

MICAH

I don't... I'm sorry.

(pause)

I keep doing this. I need to know what happened but...

AIMEE

Micah. You've done amazing. You can take a break and come back to this. It does not need to be done all at once.

MICAH

Yeah. I- I guess you're right.

AIMEE

I can even go through the nitty-gritty of it and make notes? And then we can go over them together, so you don't just stumble on something that might be too much for you.

MICAH

(sighs)

Too late. But... That would probably be good. Thanks, Aimee. I do... I do appreciate it. Really.

I... I know that I- I really have avoided talking about this stuff. Or... you know. Or facing it. For a really long time, but it- it's... it's still just... It's hard. I- I feel like it's just never not going to be really hard.

AIMEE

It's fine. Why don't we go get some air, and try to look through more of this stuff when we get back?

MICAH

Yeah. Okay.

**[SCENE TRANSITION]**

AIMEE

So, it's just me right now. The last time I recorded anything was when Micah was over. That was a couple of days ago.

We ended up not going through any more of the case file. After we took a walk, it just seemed like Micah could use a regular hang out. Like, nothing to do with everything that's been going on. We got some food and watched Mallrats. That movie did not age well.

But um.. it was nice, actually. Sort of felt like life was normal for a minute. But now I'm back to working on this.

(pause)

Okay. So. I have everything laid out here. The actual official stuff is pretty minimal. The accident report. The photos we already looked at. It seems like most of the stuff that's in this box was totally separate from that. Like Schrade was working on his own private detective work, or something.

I guess it's also worth mentioning that I've been re-listening to episodes that the three of them put out, and then the ones we made together. I'm just trying to see if we missed anything. I've also been listening a bit to the raw audio, as well, stuff that they edited out. So far, I haven't caught anything, but maybe something of note will turn up.

Anyway, I think I'll start as simple as possible. The accident report says Nolan was traveling east on River Road. And his friend John said that Nolan stopped by his birthday party at that bar, Muggs. Let me Google that.

**[TYPING ON COMPUTER]**

AIMEE



Okay, so it isn't called Muggs anymore. A new bar opened in the same location on Main Street in Raritan. That's where she met John.

If Nolan was traveling east, that means he was headed toward Somerville. I don't get why he'd be on River Road. You can just take Main Street straight into Somerville from there.

I'm also having a hard time placing how Micah ended up in the truck if he was in Raritan. I don't remember the name of the place she took lessons, but maybe it was there? Either way, the site of the crash is, basically, in the opposite direction of their house.

So did he pick her up before he stopped by at the bar? Or after? Was she there? If she was, why didn't John mention that, too?

Where the hell were you going?

**[PAGES RUSTLE]**

AIMEE

There are a few cassettes and flash drives in here. I'll get to those later.

Wait. What's this?

**[PAGES RUSTLE]**

**[ENVELOPE OPENING]**

AIMEE

There are more photos here, but they weren't with the accident report. These were developed at One-Hour Photo, Bridgewater.

Sorry, folks. I know you can't see what I'm seeing right now. Um... I'm not used to doing this on my own. Let me try to describe what I'm seeing.

Um. So, to anyone out there born after, like... 1995, if you had a disposable camera, or your own regular film camera, you could get photos developed at this little building in a parking lot of

a strip mall. They put them in a little branded envelope. That's what I'm holding. It's kind of like how you can still go to CVS now and get them printed? You would drop off your roll of film, and someone did it for you. Can you still get film developed like that? Why am I explaining this? Who cares?

Okay. So. These were developed by someone at a store in Bridgewater. I don't think these photos were part of the official report. The quality isn't the same. Maybe it's the type of film? It's not really my area of expertise. But the whole... like, color of the photo looks different.

And the photos... Well, I'm glad Micah didn't see these. There are a few more photos of Nolan in here. He's slumped over the steering wheel. They're taken from different angles. Um...But... Wait.

That handprint. Micah started to say something about it, but I just realized what she meant. There's a print of a left hand on the door. It's definitely bloody. I can see it in the second photo. The handprint curls around from the outside, like someone grabbed the door through the open window.

Did Nolan get out of the car? Whose handprint is that? It's definitely not Micah's. It belongs to an adult. And if it's not Nolan's, why is it bloody? The angle is so weird. It means he would have gotten out of the car and grabbed the door from the outside? I don't understand.

Oh, my God. There's a photo of Micah here. She's just standing in the middle of the road. It's dark, but she's kind of lit by the headlights. She's looking at the camera, sort of. Or at least in the direction of it. Her eyes... They're so wide, like she's in shock. She looks so small. She has a couple of scratches on her forehead. It's sort of hard to see because she's washed out by the headlights.

I'm glad she didn't see this. I- I don't know if I'll show this to her right away. I mean... I- I'll tell her. She'll hear this recording and know, anyway, but... I don't- I don't know if she should see it.

(pause)

I'm just going to put that away.

**[PAPERS RUSTLE]**

Oh. That's sad.

Sorry. Again, I know you all can't see what I'm seeing. Um... I was going through the box... Like I said, there's a lot of stuff in here, and it's chaos. And there's a condolence card here, addressed to Mark. It was mixed in with some of the photos. It's from his wife's funeral.

The note says, *"Sorry for your loss. Enjoy the flowers. They're from my garden. I think Katherine would have liked them."*

It's dated April 2004. Somehow, seeing that feels weird. Like I crossed a line, somehow.

I didn't put it here. Why am I like this?

Anyway. There are some other night shots here. One is just of the tree line. It looks like it's on the other side of the street from Nolan's truck, the side that goes off into a wooded area, and then fields.

There's another of the tire marks, likely from when Nolan tried to brake.

Um... Some of the photos are during the day. They're of the accident scene without the truck. But I can see the tire tracks, so it has to be the same spot.

This photo is of the woods and the tire marks, except it's facing west, the opposite direction that Nolan was traveling. There's writing on the back of this one. It says, "Possibly two people?" with a question mark.

Did Mark think there was someone else involved? Why the fuck didn't he say something?

There's another photo here of two footprints side by side in the mud. Like, as if someone was standing still in this spot. The back of it says, "One person moving around." What the actual fuck?

What else is in this box?

Okay. My hands are shaking. There's a tiny Ziploc bag here, and inside it is a piece of black fabric, I think. The bag is marked "Nolan" with a piece of masking tape. But Nolan isn't wearing a black shirt in this picture. He's wearing his work shirt, green and brown. I can't really tell what Micah is wearing, but I'm assuming it was light colored because of the way it looks in the headlights.

Oh, no. No. There's dried blood on this... How... I... Okay. No. I'm not touching that.

(deep breath)

Ah, there's so much shit in this box, but none of it is organized. Everything is just tossed in here.

**[PAPERS RUSTLE]**

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

Uh... there are a few scraps of paper, just loose and mixed in with everything else. One of them says, in all caps, "SAY NOTHING". And another says, "THEY?????" in all caps, but with a bunch of question marks.

But um... There's a piece of paper in here with a symbol on it. Like the ones that have been in the boxes. It's not the same kind of paper, and it doesn't look like the same handwriting, but this page is reminiscent of the notepaper with all the symbols drawn on them. I'll have to ask Elia if she recognizes it.

What is going on?

**[CHAIR PULLS OUT]**

**[FOOTSTEPS]**

**[SINK RUNS]**

**[INTERCOM BUZZES]**

AIMEE

(startled)

Fuck!

**[INTERCOM BUZZES]**

AIMEE

Hello?

ELIA

(through intercom)

Hey. It's me. I'm here.

AIMEE

Ah, shit. I forgot you were headed over.

ELIA

Oh. Okay. Well, are you going to buzz me in?

AIMEE

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Sorry.

**[INTERCOM BUZZES]**

**[DOOR OPENS]**

AIMEE

What the hell am I going to say to Micah? I mean, I think we expected to find more information, but seriously. What the hell is going on?

[DOOR OPENS]

ELIA

Hey. Sorry I'm late. I, uh... forgot where I was going, and I got off at Back Bay.

AIMEE

Oh, you didn't.

ELIA

Yeah. And then I had to wait on the frickin platform for like three trains to go by, because they were all so packed, and I have all my shit with me.

AIMEE

I see that. It's sort of a lot for a night, no? You don't have a fish--

ELIA

Eh- Eh- Eh. Listen.

AIMEE

Okay. It's okay. You're here now. Honestly, I'm really happy to see you.

ELIA

Is... everything okay? Oh... did you find something?

AIMEE

Yeah. You could say that. I didn't get through that much of it, but what I did see... There's some seriously messed up stuff in there, Elia. Mark wrote weird notes. Almost shorthand. It was like he was writing them so only he could understand. But... I- I guess that was the point.

And there are photos in that box that I'm really not sure Micah should see. We already stumbled into one of her dad. But it was kind of blurry.

ELIA

Yeah. She, uh... She told me about that.

AIMEE

Yeah. And there are others that are much clearer. There's even one of her.

ELIA

Really?

AIMEE

Yeah. I mean, she needs to know they exist, but... it's a lot. And I just found this.

ELIA

This... was in the case file?

AIMEE

Yeah.

ELIA

But that's... exactly like the symbols we've been getting in all the packages--

AIMEE

Yes. Do you know what it is?

ELIA

Yeah. It's the symbol for Capricorn.

AIMEE

It's fucking astrology?

ELIA

Yeah.

AIMEE

Why would that be in there?

ELIA

Was... was Mark sending the packages?

AIMEE

I hate to be crass, but wasn't... Wasn't he dead already?

ELIA

Mm... Not when we got the first one, no.

AIMEE

But we got most of the packages after we found out he passed away, right?

ELIA

Right. Yeah.

AIMEE

I feel a little sick to my stomach.

ELIA

Maybe... Maybe you need to put this away for the night. This wasn't really our plan, anyway. Right? Please? Please tell me we're doing something that is not this.

AIMEE

No. You're right. I think a break is fine. I told Micah I'd do the heavy lifting, but it doesn't all have to happen today. Let me just clean up.

**[SCENE TRANSITION]**

**[TV PLAYS QUIETLY IN THE BACKGROUND]**

ELIA

Um... I don't know if I've mentioned this before, but I'm very obsessed with this kitchen, and I can't believe you're actually thinking of giving this all up just to, you know, move to PVD with all of us.

AIMEE

Yes, you have mentioned it. Right now, it's just a thought. I mean, I spend almost all my free time in Providence now, as it is. I've been casually looking at rental listings for a while,



just... you know. See what's out there. I have a few saved, but I haven't called anyone yet.

ELIA

I don't know. Saving apartments is a little bit more than just casually looking. But um... What... What neighborhoods have you looked into? Because you know, if you need some recommendations, Fox Point is pretty--

AIMEE

Yes. yes. You've mentioned Fox Point.

ELIA

Yeah.

AIMEE

I wonder why you're so into me moving there?

ELIA

Oh, you know. It's just like a really cool neighborhood, lots of restaurants nearby, stuff to look at when you take walks or go on your stupid runs.

AIMEE

Oh. No other reasons? None?

ELIA

Um... I mean. I live there. But I- I just kind of threw that in the "reasons why it's cool" column.

AIMEE

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

ELIA

Just... For real, though. You know, finding an apartment while you're up here could be a real pain in the ass. So if you're going to be checking out a bunch of places, you can always stay at my house while you... while you do your search.

AIMEE

(feigning shock)

Are you asking me to move in? It's just so soon.

ELIA

No. I mean... I'm offering you a place to crash while you search. I wasn't being like a...

AIMEE

Stereotype?

ELIA

Shut up.

AIMEE

I'm kidding. Honestly, I probably will take you up on that at least once or twice. It's so weird. It isn't like Boston is actually far. But the drive sucks so much that it makes it feel like it is? Having a place to land after talking to people all day about water pressure and closet space might be nice.

ELIA

Yeah. Exactly. That's all I was saying. And you know, you're welcome anytime.

AIMEE

Yeah. Thanks. I could probably stay at Micah's a night or two, as well.

ELIA

Right. Yeah. That's also an option.

AIMEE

But I'll always check with you first, okay?

ELIA

Okay.

Uh, speaking of moving though. I've... I've been sleeping on my couch for the last two nights because of a dumb nightmare I had.

AIMEE

Aw, man. Please don't start. Not you, too. One person having terrifying nightmares on the regular is enough for me.

ELIA

Yeah. I don't know. It was just so weird. Like... I almost never dream, you know? Or at least if I do, I don't remember them. Just like... blissful, stoned-out sleep most of the time. So... This kind of feels like it came out of the blue.

AIMEE

What happened?

ELIA

I know it's kind of annoying to have someone tell you their dream, but I actually have really been wanting to talk about it. Are you sure you don't mind?

AIMEE

(laughing)

Ooh, shady. Don't let Micah hear you say that.

ELIA

(laughing)

No. I'm going to need you to stop putting words in my mouth because you know that's not what I meant.

AIMEE

(laughing)

ELIA

My God.

AIMEE

No, really. I obviously don't mind. Go ahead. We're kind of in the business of dreams, whether we like it or not.

ELIA

Right. So. Like I said, I barely ever dream, and this one was so vivid. If- If I close my eyes, I can still see it clearly in my mind. It just... It felt that real.

(deep breath)

So in the dream, you know, I wake up in my own bed. And- and there's a man standing at the foot of it. I... couldn't see his face because it was covered in shadow, but I just... I don't know. I just knew it was a man and I understood that he... knew me. Like he knew who I was.

And he was speaking in a language I didn't understand. Um... but like... I could only hear it in my head, you know? There was no sound in the room. And I tried to get up, but I- I couldn't. And... and that made me want to scream. And then when I did, just no sound came out.

AIMEE

That could have been sleep paralysis. I think it's called, like the "Night Hag" or something.

ELIA

Yeah. Yeah. I've heard about that. But I don't know. This felt different, somehow.

After a minute, I realized I could move and I started to sit up. And he just flew at me. Like landing on the bed. Gripped my throat. He started to squeeze and... I was choking and my arms are flying at him, just trying to push him off... um... but he was so much stronger than me. And the whole time he's just stone faced and speaking so calmly in this confusing language.

And then... all of a sudden he just stops. And then... he brings his face slowly down to mine, almost so we're like nose-to-nose. And he whispers, "I've done it once. And I'll do it again." Then he just puts his hand on my face like he was going to snap my neck. And- and he went to do it.

And I woke up just like fucking screaming.

AIMEE

Elia.

ELIA

That's not the worst part. When... When I woke up the next morning, my throat hurt. Like, it felt sore. And when I went into the bathroom to get ready, I looked in the mirror and there was like... red marks around my neck, around my throat.

AIMEE

Elia, what the fuck? Do you think you did that to yourself in your sleep?

ELIA

I- I must have. Like. Still. It scared the shit out of me. You know, I dragged my blanket out to the couch, and haven't slept in my bed since. And... the sleep I do get is restless. But no more dreams.

AIMEE

I... don't even know what to say to that.

ELIA

Yeah.

**[PAPER RUSTLING]**

ELIA

Aw, man. They forgot my soy sauce.

AIMEE

Oh. Right. The food. I forgot about it. So we're... we're done. That's just- We're done talking... Okay.

ELIA

(laughing)

I mean. Yeah. I... I don't know. It sucks. It was scary. But it's... It's not a big deal. I'll be fine. I'm sure it's just like... the stress of everything. You know?

AIMEE

Yeah. Sure. Um... Did you get the spicy tuna roll for me?

ELIA

I gotchu.

AIMEE

Aw, yes.

ELIA

Oh, I also meant to ask you before. Um... What are you going to do about clients like when/if you move to Providence?

AIMEE

Yeah. I've been thinking about that, too.

**[CELL PHONE RINGS]**

ELIA

It's... probably just spam. 609 area code? I don't even know where that is.

AIMEE

Oh, that's uh...

ELIA

Sorry. I meant to turn off my ringer after the food came.

**[CELL PHONE GOES SILENT]**

AIMEE

I mean, I don't think I'll stay at this practice once I move down. The commute would just be too much. I'll have to start looking for places around Providence. But um... Once I have concrete plans and have a place lined up, I'll make a transition. I want to say goodbye to my long-term clients. Make sure they're set up with someone else that they feel comfortable with before I go.

ELIA

Aw, you're so thoughtful.

AIMEE

Are you being sarcastic?

ELIA

What? No. What do you- I said you're thoughtful. I mean like...  
Like, you're sweet to do that.

AIMEE

I don't think I've ever heard you say anything that sincere  
before. It's weird.

ELIA

(laughing)  
Whatever.

AIMEE

(laughing)  
Yeah. Here you are saying I'm thoughtful, sweet. Hey. Um.  
Remember when you grilled me at What Cheer?

ELIA

Listen.

AIMEE

I know. I know. I'm kidding. You had your reasons.

ELIA

Yeah. I always do. Uh, hey. Do you have soy sauce in your  
fridge?

AIMEE

(laughing)  
Your guess is as good as mine.

**[FRIDGE DOOR OPENS]**

ELIA

Oh, my God. When was the last time you even opened your fridge?

**[PHONE BUZZES]**

AIMEE

Hey, El? Your phone is ringing again.

ELIA

Is it that unknown number?

AIMEE

No. It says it's Steve. Who's Steve?

ELIA

That's my landlord. Why would he be calling?

AIMEE

You want to take it?

ELIA

Yeah. I guess.

Hello? Woah. Slow down. It... Steve, I- What? What are you saying?

Fuck. Okay. No. I'm in Boston, but... Oh. Okay. Yeah. Bye.

Fucking-fuck. Shit. Goddamn. What the...

AIMEE

Woah, woah, woah. What's going on?

ELIA

Uh. My apartment is on fire. Like, it's totally up in flames, up in smoke. It... I guess it fucking exploded? I don't--

AIMEE

That- That's not funny.

ELIA

I'm not joking. I- I gotta get back down there. I don't... Steve said something about a gas leak? I... I couldn't really understand him in all the commotion. Where are my fucking keys?

Oh. Fuck.



AIMEE

You don't have your keys?

ELIA

No, I do. But I didn't drive here. I took the train, remember?  
Wh- What time is it?

AIMEE

You're not going to take the train back. I'll drive you.

[FOOTSTEPS]

[DOOR OPENS. CLOSSES]

[TV PLAYS QUIETLY]

[SCENE TRANSITION]

[OUTRO MUSIC]

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