

*Transcript:*

TWO DEAD GIRLS IN JUBELIENE

EPISODE 2: "MANNERS OF SUFFOCATION"

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PODCAST SPOKESPERSON

"Two Dead Girls in Jubeliene"  
contains material that may be  
upsetting to some audiences,  
including sudden loud noises, adult  
language, and depictions of murder  
and suicide. For more information,  
please find us on Instagram:  
@2deadgirlspod. That's the number  
"2" dead girls pod.

FROM SILENCE:

An analog button CLICK-LATCHES. Playheads spin backwards,  
rewinding double-time. We CLICK stop. Then CLICK... *play.*

ED ABERNATHY

(cassette)

Hi Myra. It's me. Pa.

(then)

I've got a lot of things to say to  
you. But I'm out of time, and I  
haven't found the words. So I leave  
you just the facts-- and I pray you  
find the truth between 'em.

(as if reading from notes)

Fact one: since last we spoke--  
three... four years I guess-- I've  
been consumed with the hunt for  
Annie's killer.

(then)

Fact two: I haven't solved it. But  
I know I'm close. Because fact  
three-- *fact three...* is he just  
tore this place apart. He didn't  
find my notes, thank God. But he  
knows. So I need you to listen to  
me Myra. Even if you hate what  
you're about to hear.

(then)

I've spent thousands of hours  
pouring over case files, talking to  
suspects, verifying alibis. I've  
been to the end of every dead  
end... and beyond. I've done it all  
in secret-- at least as much as  
anything's a secret, in a town  
small as this. Not because I was  
afraid of being called crazy.  
Although I'm sure I will be.

(MORE)

ED ABERNATHY (CONT'D)

It was because I believed the person who hurt Annie, and Jessie, was still here. Still living in Jubeliene.

(then)

I've left you everything I know. Some is here, in my notebook. The rest is hidden-- a precaution in case this message is intercepted. To protect the people who helped me. And in some cases, to protect you from them. To spare all of you my fate. Whatever that turned out to be.

(then)

Myra... I know it's not fair, leaving this to you. And if I believed there was anyone else, I--

(he breaks off. sighs.)

If there's anything left of you that doesn't hate me, this will surely do the trick. But my hope...

(summoning resolve)

... my hope, is that you'll decide to finish what I started.

(deadly earnest)

Be careful Myra. Jubeliene is watching.

Myra clicks the "stop" button. We're in--

INT. PA'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Myra springs to her feet.

MYRA

(upset)

I have to go.

She pushes rapidly through clutter towards the door.

LIAM

Myra! Wait!

Liam hurries after her, catches her arm.

MYRA

Don't-- don't touch me.

LIAM

Sorry. Sorry.

(then, low)

(MORE)

LIAM (CONT'D)

I... I can't imagine what this must be like for you--

MYRA

You're right, you can't.

Myra sighs. Not really back under control, but trying to redirect her emotions at a more deserving target.

MYRA (CONT'D)

He just doesn't-- he can't... I don't owe him this. He doesn't get to just... die... and saddle me with...

(bitterly, to herself)

I should never have come here.

The door swings open, the muffled sound of rain swells and sharpens to a deluge. Myra's footsteps march into the rain.

Over Myra's receding footfalls our theme swells. A melancholic, true-crimey tune that oscillates just off balance-- a melody unsolved.

Over the top, an audio montage-- sensationalist news clips and interviews from the era of the murders.

LOCAL NEWSCASTER

Tonight's top story: a deadly storm. A missing girl. And in Jubeliene, Indiana... *a homicide investigation.*

With school children playing in the background--

TEACHER

Annabelle was this beautiful, innocent little girl--

A different clip, camera jostling, slightly off mic--

ASSHOLE

--well beautiful is a stretch. Hang on, are you recording this?

A news segment--

LOCAL NEWSCASTER 2

But we're learning a second girl, Jessica Kaplan, has been found dead in Jubeliene--

A press scrum, camera shutters... voices yelling "Sheriff!" or "Sheriff Donnelly!" One reporter cuts through the rest:

REPORTER

Sheriff! Sheriff Donnelly, sir? Do you plan to make an apology!?

SHERIFF DONNELLY

We acted on the information available. I'm not going to apologize for that.

Snippets of different news programs--

BYSTANDER 1

It's a conspiracy-- that's what I say. God. Damn. *Conspiracy*. Truth is--

CABLE NEWS PUNDIT

--33% of murders in this country are never solved. Any reasonable person can see--

BYSTANDER 2

--this here's a small town. Them girls wa' killed by a grass cuttin' hymn singin' Jubeliener. *That's* why he ain't been stopped.

OLD WOMAN

(heated)

No. The murder of Jessie Kaplan could've been stopped. 'Cept nobody cared about Annie. Nobody did nothing until a second girl died.

ED ABERNATHY

(cassette)

Be careful Myra. Jubeliene is watching.

The voices fade away and the music resolves.

MYRA

This... is "Two Dead Girls In Jubeliene." Chapter Two: Manners of Suffocation.

REVERSE WIND crescendoes, sucking us into--

INT. ABERNATHY FARM HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - JULY 19, 1997

Distant, garbled talking-- the other end of a phone.

BRENDA  
 (answers)  
 Mhm. Mhm.

More talking on the other end of the phone. Then--

BRENDA (CONT'D)  
 ... yes, well...  
 (sounding unsure)  
 I'm sure she'll turn up.

We hear the click of a 90s cordless phone latching to the charger.

MYRA  
 (narration)  
 10pm. July 19th, 1997. Annabelle  
 has been missing for 8 hours.

Brenda pads downstairs--

INT. ABERNATHY FARM HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DONNELLY  
 (clears throat)  
 Brenda. Hi.

SHERIFF CRAIG DONNELLY, 48. He speaks in a nervy, plodding manner-- often clearing his throat-- sometimes flipping pages in his notepad, as if hoping to find a script therein.

BRENDA  
 Sheriff Donnelly. There's coffee  
 on. And cupcakes in the fridge?  
 Myra, get the Sheriff a cupcake.

YOUNG MYRA  
 Okay.

In 1997, Myra is 11 years old.

DONNELLY  
 Oh no-- no need. I helped myself.  
 Ed here pointed the way.

Pa/Ed, nearby, grunts affirmation.

DONNELLY (CONT'D)  
 That was Mrs. Newsome, on the  
 phone?

BRENDA

She teaches Annabelle and Myra's piano. She's along the route Annie would've walked, and we thought...

Brenda trails off emptily. Sighs.

DONNELLY

Mm. I see.

BRENDA

What can we do to help?

DONNELLY

Well. I... I was hoping to ask Ms. Myra a few questions.

ED

I told you to get on with it.

DONNELLY

It's actually procedure to conduct the interview in private--

ED

She's been missing eight hours, Sheriff. Get on with it.

Donnelly clears his throat. Sounds of shuffling his notepad.

DONNELLY

Myra... I'd like to go over what happened today... up 'til your sister... went missing. Please don't leave anything out. We're looking for a hidden clue, and it could seem like something ordinary. Do you understand?

YOUNG MYRA

Okay.

ED

Speak up.

YOUNG MYRA

Yes sir.

DONNELLY

Good. How did the day begin?

YOUNG MYRA  
 Uh... Ma works Saturdays. At  
 Ernie's diner? Annie and I stay  
 home with Pa. We watch cartoons.

Whenever Myra talks, Donnelly's pencil SCRIBBLES.

DONNELLY  
 Do you like that? I mean, staying  
 home with your father?

YOUNG MYRA  
 I-- yes sir.

DONNELLY  
 Does Annie?

ED  
 Is that relevant?

BRENDA  
*Ed. Shh.*

YOUNG MYRA  
 She... likes it alright.

DONNELLY  
 Okay. Did anything unusual happen?

YOUNG MYRA  
 (considers)  
 We got a call from a stranger.

DONNELLY	BRENDA
A stranger?	A stranger?

ED  
 It was a prank call. Been getting  
 them for weeks.

DONNELLY  
 It's more useful in her words Ed.

ED  
 I just don't want to waste--

BRENDA  
*Ed.*

Ed shuts up.

DONNELLY  
 Uh... did you talk to this person,  
 Myra? A man, was it?



YOUNG MYRA

No. Yes. I mean-- Annie said "he"--  
said *he* asked to speak to Pa.

DONNELLY

Did he?

YOUNG MYRA

No. He uh... hung up, I think.

DONNELLY

Okay. What next?

YOUNG MYRA

Well... Pa sent Annie and I down to  
the Jenkins store. To get milk.

CRACK.

DONNELLY

*Crap.*

BRENDA

Are you alright?

DONNELLY

Yeah... broke my pencil. What, um--  
(finds another, clears  
throat)  
... What kind of milk?

YOUNG MYRA

The one with the blue cap.

DONNELLY

Why didn't your father come along?

ED

Because I was covered in mud and  
bleedin' out of three fingers!

BRENDA

Ed--

ED

For the love of god.  
(rushing ahead)  
A flood washed out a telephone pole  
at the back of the farm, and took a  
piece of our fence with it. I was  
trying all afternoon to reset the  
posts. That's how I sliced my hand  
here. That's why I sent the girls  
alone.

(MORE)

ED (CONT'D)

But it ain't where Annie is, and it ain't how or why she ain't here.

Uncomfortable silence. Tick tock.

DONNELLY

Is uh... is all that true Myra?

ED

Now hang on--

BRENDA

*Edward. Shut. Up.*

Silence.

DONNELLY

Is it true?

YOUNG MYRA

... Yes sir.

DONNELLY

Did Annie take anything unusual with her on your trip? A backpack, maybe? Money from her piggy bank?

MYRA

All we took was three dollars and a house key.

BRENDA

It's on a red lanyard. The key. We should put that in the description.

DONNELLY

Okay. Good.

(then)

Uh... did you notice any cars on your walk? Anyone... following you?

YOUNG MYRA

The road was empty.

DONNELLY

*Completely empty?*

YOUNG MYRA

Yeah. I remember, because-- well, we stopped halfway. There were kittens-- strays, I guess-- they were caught in a storm drain. We tried to rescue them with a tree branch.

(MORE)

YOUNG MYRA (CONT'D)

Until eventually one of those big trucks-- the ones with the bucket? One of those drove by and scared them out of sight.

DONNELLY

Okay. And then the store?

YOUNG MYRA

Yes sir.

DONNELLY

And then?

Myra doesn't answer.

BRENDA

... Myra?

YOUNG MYRA

...I sent Annie home with the milk. Alone.

Score. Ominous and sad.

MYRA

(narration)

As I look back, I'm struck that Donnelly spares me the last question. We don't trace my steps any further-- not past the Gas-n-Sip Slushie Machine, not the long way around a park which didn't used to be haunted-- not on to Ernie's diner-- to beg Ma for a ride home in the oncoming rain.

(self-judging)

Donnelly doesn't ask *why, why on earth*, I ran off with schoolmate Denson McDougal-- you remember, from Pa's wake? No one makes me say that at the same time an unknown murderous pervert was choking the life from my little sister, I was utterly pre-occupied... with a boy.

(grave)

I've spent much of the rest of my life grappling with how much an eleven year old can, or can't, be responsible for such a thing.

Back in the scene--

DONNELLY

Thank you Ms. Myra. You've been very helpful.

YOUNG MYRA

Am I in trouble?

BRENDA

(sighs)

Of course not. Right Ed?

Ed grunts and storms out.

Sucking wind as we pre-lap a car. It dopplers past us.

INT. MYRA'S CAR - PRESENT DAY

We're humming along a county road. Berto is on speaker phone. We pick up mid-conversation.

BERTO

I'm confused. If that's true, then why the coffin?

MYRA

(narration)

Berto, from work. I just told him everything-- my train-wreck eulogy, the trashed workshop, Pa's tape-- and I broke an additional bit of bad news. It's going to be impossible to do any further investigation of Pa's death via autopsy. Turns out he was cremated.

Now in the scene, Myra replies--

MYRA (CONT'D)

The coffin thing goes back to Jessie Kaplan.

BERTO

The second murder victim?

MYRA

Mhm. Because of the condition of the bodies, both girls were cremated. Annie was first of course, and she was put in this awful cookie-jar urn.

(MORE)

MYRA (CONT'D)

But when Jessie's funeral came around, her parents sealed her ashes up in a child-sized box-- let people wonder if the killer's handiwork was still right there, beneath the lid.

Berto sighs. Somewhere between impressed and disgusted.

MYRA (CONT'D)

Yeah. Well. It left one heck of an impression on Ma. You can't kneel at the side of a cookie jar, and sob and blubber with your hand on the lid. If you want people to pray to the corpse of your kid-- or your husband, for that matter... the big box is the way to go.

BERTO

(bad signal)

What di-- sh --ink of --ape?

MYRA

Sorry? Signal's bad.

BERTO

--at does your mothe-- think of the tape?

MYRA

Oh... I didn't tell her.

BERTO

What?

MYRA

(enunciating)

I didn't tell her about the tape--

BERTO

No I heard you. I mean... *why not?*

Myra sighs.

MYRA

Because it's upsetting and... honestly kind of embarrassing.

BERTO

*Embarrassing?*

MYRA

He's obsessed. Paranoid. He wasn't *murdered* Berto, this whole thing is... a gross fantasy. And keeping it from Ma is just me preserving a shred of his posthumous dignity. Which is a favor he doesn't deserve, by the way.

BERTO

You don't know that.

MYRA

Know what?

BERTO

That he wasn't murdered.

MYRA

You didn't hear the tape. He's off his rocker.

BERTO

Well she had to have known he was working on the case.

MYRA

Unhappily married people living very separate lives? At this point nothing would surprise me.

(considering that settled)

I'm hanging up. I'll be in the office at eleven if you wanna start with the Rodriguez stuff.

BERTO

(genuinely bewildered)

You're... coming back to Chicago?

MYRA

I'm not staying. I'm not playing his game.

BERTO

If he really was murdered--

MYRA

(flippant, annoyed)

If he really was murdered then doing what he says is just... begging to be the next little pile of ashes in a box the size of a corpse. And if he wasn't-- which... *he wasn't...*

(MORE)

MYRA (CONT'D)

then the best I could do is chase the ghosts of Jubeliene in circles for years-- just like he did-- and find nothing just like he did, and then one day snap, record a delusional suicide tape, and throw myself in a hay baler *just like he did*.

Berto lets the rant hang, before replying coolly:

BERTO

Suppose the killer is out there, and nobody catches him. Can you live with that?

MYRA

I already do live with that.

We hear a distant siren.

BERTO

Myra, let me... What's that?

Siren closer now.

MYRA

I gotta go.

Sound of a phone call hanging up, the CLICK-CLICK of a turn signal.

MYRA (CONT'D)

(narration)

As a tinted cruiser rolls to a stop behind me, I feel a squeeze in my throat. Anticipation. Dread. It recalls the sensation of July 20th, 1997... a pre-dawn conversation I wish I hadn't overheard... and a police siren I wish I could forget.

INT. ABERNATHY FARM HOUSE - KITCHEN - JULY 20 1997 - 5AM

Sounds of Ma putting on more coffee. Both voices whisper.

ED

(agitated)

She's been gone 15 hours. Donnelly's checking train stations and bus depots. I told him-- how many times? She wouldn't run away.

BRENDA  
He's checking everywhere he can  
think of.

ED  
I want to go back out there.

BRENDA  
No, *no*. If someone finds her, he  
needs to be able to find us.

ED  
I can't just sit on my hands while  
she's out there alone.

BRENDA  
(almost to herself)  
Well you sent her.

ED  
Excuse me?

BRENDA  
Forget it. We're exhausted. We  
should try sleeping in shifts. If  
this goes on all day--

ED  
I didn't send her alone.

BRENDA  
... no.

ED  
Okay.

BRENDA  
Okay.  
(then)  
But... you did send her with Myra.  
Who is eleven years old.

ED  
My father sent me on an overnight  
bus to Dallas when I was eleven.

BRENDA  
That's different.

ED  
How?



BRENDA

She's not... I know how you think of Myra. But she's not your son.

ED

What difference does that make?

BRENDA

Your father wouldn't have sent two girls on that overnight bus.

ED

Maybe not. But he would've sent them up the road to the store. And up until now so would I. So would anybody in this town. So would you.

ED (CONT'D)

I... sorry. I'm sorry.

(low)

I'm just-- she's been gone too long. And I can't shake this feeling that something terrible has happened.

A note of score.

MYRA

(narration)

After I found out what happened to Annie, I did some reading. Turns out when a person is suffocated by strangulation, the only immediate discomfort is in the airway. Annie would've felt a pinch in her esophagus-- a 3, on the Wong-Baker scale. But as CO2-rich blood cells enter the spinal cord, falling PH levels signal the brain that suddenly-- simultaneously-- every single life sustaining function of the body is imperiled. That pain is a ten-- and it's *everywhere*. The brain bulges as blood vessels malfunction under increased pressure. The diaphragm and lungs spasm wildly in search of oxygen. In the tips of the fingers and toes, pain animates involuntary flailing. The medulla believes you're underwater-- it's trying to force you to swim. In fact, pretty much the only body part that isn't screaming is your larynx.

(MORE)

MYRA (CONT'D)

At the moment Annie needs to scream most desperately in all her life-- she can't manage a sound.

(then)

I wasn't suffocating. Not really. I guess I'm just trying to say... standing outside the kitchen, realizing Annie might not ever come home... I sympathized.

We hear a choked snuffle, A SCRAPE and a CLATTER, then Myra's footsteps racing urgently away.

ED

What's that?

BRENDA

*Myra?*

YOUNG MYRA

I-- I-- I-- can't-- breathe--

BRENDA

Ed! She's having a panic attack. Myra!

ED

Myra. Stop it. Myra. Just breathe.

Myra SLIPS away from Ma, DODGES Pa, CAREENS through the front door, screen banging behind her-- Ed and Brenda race behind--

ED (CONT'D)

Myra!

EXT. ABERNATHY FARM HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

As the cool morning wind hits our ears-- *all goes quiet.*  
All... *except the drone of distant sirens.*

BRENDA

Do you hear that?

MYRA

(narration)

I may only be eleven, but I know what that means. *They call when they find your sister. They come in person when they find her body.*

SIRENS build until they overwhelm us.

Cutting through the din, prelap-- TAP TAP TAP. TAP TAP--

INT. MYRA'S CAR - DAY - PRESENT

--TAP.

MYRA  
(narration)  
I'm back in the Prius. An officer  
in a wide-brimmed hat raps on my  
window.

CLICK BZZZZZZZZZZZ. The window rolls down.

MYRA (CONT'D)  
... *Liam?*

LIAM  
Yep. Sorry I uh... I look absurd in  
this hat--

MYRA  
What's happening? Is Ma-- did  
something--?

LIAM  
Oh! Oh no. She's...  
(Clears throat)  
Everything's fine. Just...  
something I need to show you.

We hear heavy sheriff boots trod away. They stop.

LIAM (CONT'D)  
... Are you coming?

MYRA  
... yeah.

The car door opens-- chiming because the key is still in the  
ignition. Myra yanks out the key, climbs out, shuts the door.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD SHOULDER - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Wind and countryside ambiance. An occasional passing car. A  
trunk latch springs and swings open in the foreground.

LIAM  
I guess I knew you were upset.  
Still I... didn't figure you were  
gonna skip town at first light.

A leather-bound book drops on a car panel, pages flapping.

MYRA  
 (a slight edge)  
 Is that... Pa's notebook?

LIAM  
 Yeah.  
 (then, defensive)  
 What?

MYRA  
 Sirens were a bit much, don't you think?

LIAM  
 Well I didn't start with the siren. I went out to your mom's house looking for you. And I don't have your cell number. Turns out she doesn't either by the way--

MYRA  
 (weakly defensive)  
 It's a new number. I've got work stuff in Chicago and...  
 (then, exasperated)  
 Forget it. Do you want to show me or not?

We hear Liam unfold the alibi grid. He taps with his finger.

LIAM  
 Right here. What do you think?

A note of score.

MYRA  
 (narration)  
 When it comes to my sister, conspiracy theories abound. And they usually have one thing in common: the name at the end of Liam's finger. *Former Sheriff Craig Donnelly.*  
 (then)  
 I think these sorts of stories-- that say cops were working for the illuminati, or for government pedophiles-- or covering a murder by one of their own-- they're just over-complications of a case bungled by small town cops... in this case, well-meaning folks who never investigated anything worse than marijuana cigarettes...  
 (MORE)

MYRA (CONT'D)

least not until they found Annie.

(then)

Craig Donnelly? In my book he's just a guy in over his head. An incompetent. Not a killer.

A car-by sucks us back into the real world.

LIAM

... well?

MYRA

Uh, July 20th, '97... that's--

LIAM

(rushing ahead)

--you sister. "Donnelly has late lunch, Lynnville. Alone." Convenient but... we can come back to it. I'm talking about this.

MYRA

August 8th. Jessie Kaplan was abducted around 3pm...

LIAM

Your dad says Donnelly is...

MYRA

(puzzled)

... huh.

Sound of pages turning.

LIAM

... does that...?

MYRA

I... no. I dunno.

(then)

What were you hoping for? Unscramble the letters and it spells the name of the killer?

LIAM

No. I just thought... he left all this for you. Maybe it was meant to lead you to the next clue.

MYRA

(reading to herself)

*"Cruising Texarkana, chasing Cadillacs."*

(then)

(MORE)

MYRA (CONT'D)

No. This is the whole thing with Donnelly-- he actually *does* have a good alibi for Jessie. I mean, not good *for him*, it makes him look like an idiot.

(bitter, almost mocking)

August 8th, 3pm... he's at the county jail. Interrogating his only suspect in the murder of my sister.

LIAM

Are you saying he didn't realize... until Jessie died...

MYRA

That the guy he'd humiliated, investigated... arrested-- was innocent? No. Jessie sent us all back to the beginning. To the hours after Annie. To the second in a series of wrongs that could never be taken back.

Score and a swell of police sirens sweep us to--

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. ABERNATHY FARM HOUSE - JULY 20 1997 - 5:30AM

In close perspective, tires stop on a dirt driveway. A car door opens. Bootsteps.

DONNELLY

(uneasy)

Ed. Brenda.

BRENDA

Sheriff. Did you find something?  
Did you find Annie?

MYRA

(narration, quiet)

We're back to the morning of July 20th, 1997. Donnelly stands at the foot of our porch, flanked by four deputies. They're familiar boys, born and raised in Jubeliene. Two of them, I see, are soaked to mid-chest, and shivering in the pre-dawn chill. Another, Dave Hightower, is newly married to my Sunday school teacher Ms. Cindy...

(MORE)

MYRA (CONT'D)

and I realize with a sort of detached sympathy it'll be her who has to scrub the slowly crusting vomit off the front of Dave's uniform.

(then)

He's barely 23 years old, and pale as death. They all are.

Donnelly clears his throat, searching for words.

DONNELLY

I uh... came to tell you... I went up to the greyhound depot, to see if I could shake loose any tips. While I was up there... uh... a big rig trucker, stopped out on CR-19... got on our police channel to report something strange floating in the Old Town Quarry. Uh... the boys here met me down there and uh-- ah hell, Brenda. I've never had to do this before, and I'm no good at it.

(then)

She's dead. Annabelle is dead.

A whip-snap-ring, combined with the sound of being plunged into deep, black water. The scene continues, but muffled, distant. Close perspective over everything is Myra's rapid, shallow breathing. In-out-in-out...

ED

What are you...? She... drowned?

BRENDA

(breaks down)

Oh god. Oh... oh, Ed...

DONNELLY

Brenda...

ED

No no no not bus stops. She would never run away--

DONNELLY

Maybe we could send Myra inside--

BRENDA

How did it happen?

DONNELLY

Brenda, please. Take Myra inside, and then we can talk this over--

ED

*You told me to stay home. I was sitting on my hands, and she drowned because--*

DONNELLY

*She didn't drown, goddamnit.*

We SNAP back to the scene, the muffling gone and the ring fading to nothing.

ED

... what did you say?

DONNELLY

(low)

She didn't drown.

(then)

Ed... we need you to come down to the station with us.

ED

(genuinely dumbfounded)

For... for what?

BRENDA

(manic hope)

Maybe it's a mistake. Some other girl drowned, and the body is--

Donnelly speaks through clenched teeth.

DONNELLY

It's not a mistake. And for the last time, nobody drowned.

(low)

Annabelle was strangled.

(pushing through Brenda's choked sobs)

She was already dead when she was thrown in that quarry. Stripped-half naked. We think it's likely the killer-- that he...

(begging)

Please Ed. We've known each other a long time. Come get in the car.

Don't make me cuff you in front of Myra.

A sting from the score. Brenda's sobs cut off abruptly.

ED

(incredulity to outrage)

Are you accusing me of *murder*?



BRENDA

(overlap)

Craig... we... we go to church together. You don't think...?

ED

(fury)

If I kill anybody it's gonna be you. If you hadn't been wasting time on the *damn* bus stops--

Ed takes two heavy steps down the creaky porch stairs-- but freezes when the move is met with the sound of a gun drawn and cocked.

DONNELLY

Jesus Christ, Hightower. I said no guns!

YOUNG MYRA

Pa!

BRENDA

Oh god. Myra stay back! Ed!

ED

You're gonna shoot a grieving father on his own porch!?

DONNELLY

He's just scared, he doesn't--  
Stop! Stop it! EVERYBODY STOP!

Donnelly's last exclamation cuts through the din. For a moment, uneasy quiet restored. A crow caws.

DONNELLY (CONT'D)

Nobody is going to shoot anybody.  
(hoping)  
Ed is gonna walk real slow to the back of the cruiser and--

ED

If you think I'm gonna just go quietly without some kind of explanation--

DONNELLY

OKAY. Okay.  
(then)

The utility truck. The one Myra saw on the way to the store yesterday? That was Bill Burton. He was headed out to State Road 270 North to fix that telephone pole behind y'all's farm.

(MORE)

## DONNELLY (CONT'D)

Says he was out there 3 or 4 hours-- from when your girls walked out to Jenkins shop, until the rain started dumpin'.

(somber confidence)

He never saw you, Ed. Said that fence been righted two days or more. So. Nobody is accusing anybody of anything at this juncture. We'd just like you to come down to the station, to help us figure out why *Bill Burton* would lie about a thing like that. Because the alternative... that'd be you lyin'... about where you were... about what you were doin' when your daughter disappeared.

## MYRA

(narration)

In the next 48 hours, Donnelly will delve into every aspect of our private lives. He'll separately interrogate us... asking questions about the cut on Pa's hand, and what he was really doing the afternoon of July 19th. Questions about a dishonorable discharge from the Air Force... about why and for how long he and Ma have slept in separate rooms, in separate beds. He'll ask questions I don't quite understand: about if Pa has ever brought me into that room. If Pa has ever brought Annie into that bed.

(then)

Donnelly's deputies will toss our house twice, on two separate warrants-- although they'll never find anything more consequential than the thing Donnelly already spotted seven hours previous, in the midst of retrieving his cupcake. The item which, as much as Annie's disappearance itself, set in motion the Rube Golberg machine that destroyed my family. An unopened gallon of two percent milk.

We hear shuffling feet on gravel. A car door opens.

MYRA (CONT'D)

(narration)

As Pa sits into the back of the cruiser, his eyes meet mine. And I know, instantly, that Donnelly is wrong. That no killer could manage such deep and earnest bewilderment-- such righteous indignation-- such bottomless despair. But what about Donnelly? Meaning-- was he the head of a conspiracy to frame Pa, a plan that fell apart in the face of a badly-timed second murder? Or was he just a bumbling bully of a cop... scared out of his wits by the sight of a murdered child? I guess I've never been one-hundred percent sure.

LIAM

(pre-lap)

... Myra? Myra? Hey.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD SHOULDER - DAY - PRESENT

Sound of a passing car snaps us back.

MYRA

Sorry, there's... read it to me one more time?

LIAM

"Cruising Texarkana, chasing cadillacs."

MYRA

(realizing)

*It's a Wayne Hancock song.*

MYRA (CONT'D)

(narration)

Liam stares at me expectantly. He's guessing at something I already know... that Pa owned "Johnny Law" ... on a cassette.

(enjoying the idea:)

In my minds eye I give him a shrug and a smile-- I wish him good luck, and I walk away.

(then)

But then I hear Berto.

(MORE)

MYRA (CONT'D)

"Can you live with it, if he's out there, and he goes free?" I do live with it... don't I?

(then)

Or is the truth that my life has been on hold, all these years? Is my entire lonely existence a defense against how badly I want... maybe need... to ask "who killed Annabelle Abernathy?" And be able to name someone who isn't me.

(resigning)

In the silence, I notice the slow turning drone of race cars in far-off Kent, their drivers circling one of a thousand cemeteries for Brickyard dreams. Like me they race and race and race... and yet with every turn find themselves hurtling back towards the place it all began.

We return to the scene.

MYRA (CONT'D)

Okay. I'll look.

LIAM

What about those... work things?

MYRA

I can put them off. You'll have the whole town in a twist if you go out to the farm and start going through Pa's stuff.

LIAM

Okay. Of course. I'll talk to you soon... I guess.

MYRA

You got a pen?

The click of a pen. The sound of scratching on paper.

LIAM

What's that?

MYRA

(isn't it obvious?)

My cell number. Don't chase me around with those sirens. It gives me the creeps.

We hear Myra walking away. He shouts after her--

LIAM

Hey what do you think we're going to find on that tape?

MYRA

Proof that Pa was going senile. And nobody killed him.

MYRA (CONT'D)

(narration)

I say it more for myself, than for Liam. Because the alternative... that it may lead to the identity of a man who killed my sister... who killed Jessie Kaplan... and then killed my father to cover it up? I'm not sure if that's something to hope for... or something to be afraid of.

(then)

I feel a familiar tightness in my windpipe... the slipknot of the past tickling gently at my throat.

(then)

It's a far cry from strangulation. But a manner of suffocation, just the same.

Score swells, carrying us out of the scene. Crows caw in the distance.

The song "One Eye Open" by Andrea Parés and Payden Widner begins to play.

PODCAST SPOKESPERSON

"Two Dead Girls in Jubeliene" was written, directed, and produced by Ethan Wellin. It stars Emily Goss as Myra. Zachary Cantrell as Liam. Susan Harmon as Brenda. Michael McShane as Ed. Marcelo Tubert as Berto. John Allee as Donnelly. Kerry Gutierrez as Young Myra. Original Score by Kevin Hutchens Associate Producer Emily Goss. Associate Producer Zachary Cantrell. "One Eye Open" was written and recorded by Andrea Parés and Payden Widner. Thanks to Cat, Ron, the Evans, Monisha, Jack, David, and Tyler— without whom there could be no Jubeliene.

(MORE)

## PODCAST SPOKESPERSON (CONT'D)

(then)

If you enjoyed listening, please rate and review on Apple Podcasts. Or tell a friend. For cast bios, episode transcripts, and more, find our little town on Instagram. @2deadgirlspod. That's "at" the number "2" dead girls pod. Thanks.

(then)

"Two Dead Girls in Jubeliene" is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to real events, or to persons living or dead, is purely coincidental.

END OF EPISODE