

Arden Ep. 112 -- "Bea and Brenda Did It"
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Created by Todd VanDerWerff, Chris Dole, and Sara Ghaleb

NOTE:

ADVERTISEMENT

IN-STUDIO

ARCHIVAL AUDIO

FIELD INTERVIEW

INTRO

OUTRO

[the sounds of a busy city plaza or street... voices, vehicles, music, etc.]

WAITER [in Italian]: More coffee, ma'am?

BEA: No! Gracias. I'm... bueno. Full. Bueno!

BRENDA: I thought you said you spoke the language.

BEA: I said I spoke Spanish, not Italian, and you said, "Close enough."

BRENDA: Everybody understands you!

BEA: Because they take pity on the idiot American.

BRENDA: And you're unusually good at mime. You should never have gone into radio.

ROSALIND: [on a radio] Still no sign of her.

BRENDA: Do you actually think she's going to come?

BEA: She has more to lose by ditching us than by showing up. I know where she lives. I know what she looks like. Her best bet is to talk to us. She knows I could turn her in in a second.

BRENDA: Would you?

BEA: Give her a bit.

BRENDA: She was supposed to be here almost an hour ago.

BEA: She'll come. I know she'll come.

BRENDA: You don't have a phone number for her, an email address, even a Snapchat follow. She and Ralph could be skipping the country right now.

BEA: She and Ralph *and* their daughter? It's too much. She's coming.

BRENDA: Based on what?

BEA: She came to see things my way. She came to understand that telling her story is the best thing she could do right now. It just took a little bit.

BRENDA: You mean she screamed at you.

BEA: She said she listens to the podcast!

BRENDA: Does she like it?

BEA: She listens to it to make sure we don't find her.

BRENDA: Wow, what a twist for her then!

BEA: Listeners, as we're recording this, you're just downloading episode six, learning how Brenda slowly realized she couldn't do the show without me.

BRENDA: I wouldn't be surprised if a few of you have tears in your eyes!

BEA: But we're here, waiting for a very real, very living, very breathing Julie Capsom. Who has been residing here under an assumed name for the past 10 years, with Ralph, her husband. They have a daughter, even.

BRENDA: She's not coming.

BEA: She's coming.

BRENDA: I've seen this happen a million times. A witness or a suspect gets this look in their eyes, when they realize they've been made. And they're always one step ahead of you. You should have just gotten the story out of her while you were talking to her.

BEA: Ralph wouldn't let me in the house.

BRENDA: You *talked to Ralph*?

BEA: More like listened to a lecture from him about privacy rights. Which, considering all the laws he violated faking his own death, was rich. But yes. And then Julie said she would meet us here for morning coffee, after she dropped the kid off at preschool.

BRENDA: Which was supposed to be an hour ago.

BEA: I didn't get played. I know Julie. I didn't get played.

BRENDA: [tenderly] Casely--

BEA: I *said I didn't get played*.

BRENDA: Okay. Sure. Fine.

[beat]

BRENDA: It's just that--

[the crackle of a radio]

ROSALIND: She's incoming. Just entering the plaza now.

BEA: I told you.

BRENDA: Wow. Wow. That's really her. That's really--

[theme song plays]

BEA: On December 25, 2007, somewhere around 11 pm, Julie Capsom ran her car off the road and into a tree, in the middle of northern California's most desolate stretch of major highway, halfway between Eureka and Crescent City, California. One witness saw her pacing outside her car, but by the time the police arrived, she had vanished. While dogs picked up her scent heading into the trees, it disappeared in the middle of a forest clearing. What happened to Julie that Christmas night? How could someone that well-known vanish, in the United States in the 2000s? And why has this case haunted us ever since? Each week, we'll explore a different part of the story and see if we can't untangle this web and find the answers. Join us, won't you, as we unravel the mystery... on Arden.

[end theme]

[the sound of a microphone being attached]

JULIE: Is this really necessary?

BEA: It's better this way. Less conspicuous. Isn't that what you want?

JULIE: I want this off the record.

BEA: That wasn't our deal. Like I said, people deserve to hear your story, and--

JULIE: I know we have a deal, Bea. That's why I'm here. I'm just saying, if I could get what I *wanted*, it would involve this damn production never happening in the first place.

BEA: Right. I just--

JULIE: You have 30 minutes. I'll answer whatever you want, and then I'm leaving.

BEA: To what? Skip the country?

[a pause]

BEA: Listeners, Julie Capsom just shrugged at me.

[a long pause]

BRENDA: I got you this coffee an hour ago. So it's probably cold, but they have free refills, and--

JULIE: It's fine.

BEA: So who's the torso?

[Julie laughs, a good, long laugh]

JULIE: *That's* where you start?

BEA: Well, it's the one thing nobody's figured out yet!

JULIE: The torso is a homeless teenager who died of an overdose in December of 2007. He was roughly the same build as Ralph, and Ralph's friend, Mark, was great at tattoos. We planted some of the corpse's hairs around Ralph's dorm room and car, so the DNA would match, then sent everything non-torso related to the bottom of the Pacific, and stashed the torso in my trunk. Which seems to have worked. But he was nobody.

BRENDA: Well, not *nobody*.

JULIE: You're right. Sorry. But... he's not some missing link. He was... a list of statistics we left for Dr. Padilla --

BRENDA: Wait, hold the phone. Dr. Padilla? That... pompous --

JULIE: And an old family friend. He had been the coroner for, gosh, so many of us over the years. I think he was happy that for once, he'd get to help one of us Capsoms live. So when a body fitting those specifications came in to the county morgue, we had everything else ready to go.

BEA: That's... a little ghoulish. Sorry.

JULIE: Yeah. It was. If I had to fake my and my husband's deaths all over again, I would have found a different way to do it.

[she snorts]

JULIE: Sorry. It's just... hmmm...

[a moment]

JULIE: Look, you were both probably pretty smart teenagers, smart enough to know when you'd done something where you were just lucky to be alive the next morning. Driving drunk, or walking down the wrong dark alley, or whatever. And now that you're adults, you probably look back on stuff like that and think, "Was I really that stupid?"

BRENDA: Listen, let me tell you about a cliff diving incident--

BEA: Brenda, we don't want to waste Julie's time.

JULIE: [soft laugh] Been a while since anybody called me that. Assumed name and all.

BEA: You were saying?

JULIE: Right. So this stupid thing I did as a teenager -- I mean, I'm grateful for it. It's given me everything. Ralph and I never would have survived the spotlight, but as anonymous American expatriates one and two, we have a life. Work. A child. But my choices also destroyed everything. I couldn't be there when my mother died, even though I had no love lost for her. I had to watch as my father built this monstrous legal monument to my memory. Friends I would have loved to go to the weddings of, Ralph's parents--

[she sniffs, tearing up]

JULIE: God, those poor people. He told them we were all right, after the dust had settled. But I don't know if they even believed it. It was just an email.

[beat]

JULIE: You must think I'm a monster.

[the long pause is all the answer she needs]

JULIE: I just... had to go. Had to get out of there.

BEA: Why?

JULIE: [trying to change the subject] I'm sure you've seen the news about Kail Mc--

BEA: Did he threaten you?

JULIE: No. He taunted me, and he used me, and made me feel like a discarded tissue. But he didn't threaten me. He didn't have to.

BRENDA: I don't get it. Why not just go to the press?

JULIE: I tried. Nobody wanted that story, not even the tabloids. They were more interested in the outward evidence of my spiral than what might have been causing it. They were more interested in pointing and laughing at my obvious pain than at searching for its source. Even Natalie... she didn't quite hear what I was trying to tell her. Only Ralph got it. Only Ralph understood. And that's how I knew I needed him with me, no matter what.

BEA: So when your parents said no way--

JULIE: My mom knew about Kail. She said it was the cost of doing business, and when I wanted to leave acting behind, she was quite insistent I *not* do that. And they saw Ralph as bad news. Riff raff. They threatened him to try to get us to break up. And eventually I realized that being Julie Capsom was the only thing keeping me from leading the life I *wanted*. So I stopped being her. It was easy. And terrible.

I always wanted a way to come clean, to tell the world about Kail and my parents and all the bullshit. To correct the record on Ralph. God, my family trying to convict Ralph after the fact didn't help matters. We really thought the torso would exonerate him. Can't believe how stupid we were. If there's one thing I wish I'd better foreseen, it would be that Aaron Poins would be there, covering everything up, as quick as could be.

BEA: So what went wrong?

JULIE: Gerald showing up really messed up the timeline. Originally, I was going to set the car on fire. Make everyone think we were *really* dead.

BEA: The cans of gas!

JULIE: It was a stupid, stupid plan, but it might have worked. But for Gerald. Who saw me all alone, getting everything ready, spilling blood all over myself.

BEA: They've arrested Kail.

JULIE: What?!

BEA: Because of the podcast, the movie came out. Because the movie came out, women came forward to the LA Times. Not a lot of them. And not anyone by name. But they came forward.

BRENDA: And then Kail went to jail!

BEA: Well. Uh. They've arrested him for your murder, actually. Not any of the accusations he's actually guilty of. So this is going to--

JULIE: You can't broadcast this then.

BEA: What?

JULIE: Everybody has to think I'm dead. What Kail did to me was, ultimately, nothing. But others *did* suffer. I'm sure of it. But he was always smart enough to cover his tracks. If this is the only way he is punished--

BRENDA: Whoa, hey. That's pretty frickin' unethical.

JULIE: Kail's ruined lives. He's hurt people way worse than he hurt me. I at least got out of there before anything... happened.

BEA: But he's innocent of murder.

JULIE: Natalie and her husband. Dr. Padilla. Vince. Ralph's parents. All these people who withheld so much from the press and the police for all these years. They're all going to be in the spotlight, or even worse, and believe me, it's not fun there.

BEA: Julie, we can't. You know we can't. Our responsibility is to the truth.

JULIE: So what's the better truth? A man -- a whole *system of men* -- tried to turn a little girl into their plaything, and when she got fed up, they turned her into a laughing stock? And then her parents told her it was just the way things were? Told her that continuing to make money for them was the most important thing? Took her away from her friends? Threatened the love of her life? Made her think, "Oh, hey, I should *fake my own death* and move to another continent, so I can finally be myself?" Or: Maybe this guy did some bad sex stuff, but at least he didn't murder anybody!

BEA: They can both be true.

JULIE: You know how this goes, Bea. You know they can't.

BEA: People can handle complexity. They don't need everything dumbed down for them. They can handle the idea that you were scared, but now you're strong. Your voice can still matter. Heck, that you ran away makes your story *more* powerful. Not less.

JULIE: To you.

BRENDA: I'm legally bound to the commissioners of this investigation to reveal my full and truthful findings.

JULIE: Don't you ever lie?

BRENDA: I try not to. And even if I wanted to -- and believe me, I get why I maybe should -- the guy who commissioned this investigation is in the hotel down the street.

JULIE: And you told him about me.

BRENDA: And several of our coworkers.

BEA: The story is going to get out. Andy Wheyface knows a ratings bonanza when he sees one.

BRENDA: We even caught up with you in episode 12!

BEA: Tell your story, Julie. Here and now. You can be the one who tells the truth about Kail, under your name, on your terms. And others will come forward. I *know* it.

[A long pause, the sounds of the plaza]

JULIE: Okay. I'll tell you the story. On one condition.

BEA: Name it.

JULIE: Give me time to get away.

BEA: From Verona? You won't have that much time. This news tends to leak. And it's not as if the police can't check flight records, can't see where we went.

JULIE: I know. But at least this gives me a head start in leaving.

BEA: Fair enough. Let's begin.

JULIE: Not here. Somewhere quieter.

[audio cut to a quiet space]

JULIE: My name is Julie Capsom. Or it was. I'm sitting in a hotel room in Verona, Italy. Back home, my husband is just putting lunch on the stove, before he leaves to teach his afternoon classes. My daughter is at preschool, probably drawing butterflies. She's been on a kick. And she's good. Neither of us knows where she got artistic talent. Certainly not from us.

Before we got married, before we were even a couple, when we were just friends, my husband and I found a little dollar-bill amusement machine on the Santa Monica Pier. It purported to show you what your kids would look like, and on a dare from Natalie, we tried it out. I think it was obvious to her that the two of us would, someday, be getting a very real answer to that question. But it wasn't obvious to us yet. We were embarrassed to be sitting so close to each other, but also keyed in to how it felt to be in that space and alive and together, to feel his leg jittering next to my leg, his warmth, my own stomach twisting around inside of me.

The picture we got didn't look at all like a human being. We dubbed her "robot girl" because she barely cracked the uncanny valley. We would laugh at what she looked like and show her to friends, and they would be, like, frightened of her. It was like someone laid tracing paper over each of our faces, then tried to blend them together into one person. But seeing it, I also had this feeling that... maybe... just maybe... things didn't have to turn out like I'd been told they would turn out.

She's wonderful, my daughter. And not at all like a traced over version of me or of him. You can see where she got our genes, obviously, but she's also becoming her own person. She has her own interests. Her own preferences. Her own desires. She thinks the world will play fair with her, for the most part. Treat her with kindness and generosity. And I hope I can preserve that as long as possible, because I get it now. I get why my own mother told me just to try to live in the world as it was, no matter how awful that could be. "Women don't change the current," she told me once. "We float atop it." I want so much for my daughter, and I know... I'm not going to get all of that. She is going to realize the world isn't fair and I've betrayed her all at once. Ain't that a kick in the teeth?

I was luckier than Kail's other victims. When I felt myself growing woozy, when I felt him push me against the wall and run his hands down my back, when I felt his lips close over mine, some part of me was still there to say, "Go to the bathroom, girl. Say you're having your period. Do something." I did. I pushed away. Said I had to take out my tampon. Said it like I was really into whatever he was selling. And somehow, thank God, I had my phone. And somehow, thank God, Ralph was ready and willing to come get me. And somehow, thank God, I only sprained my ankle when I jumped out of a second-story bathroom window. All that stunt training for Belle and Bisclavret came in handy, I guess. I limped off the property and on up the road. And Ralph was waiting for me, and I never wanted to be in a place where he wasn't waiting for me, or where I wasn't waiting for him.

The horrible thing about Kail is that I found it all kind of queasily funny until I was in that room. This powerful, dominating, Oscar-winning director, who could have anything he wanted, who *had* dated women on the A-list. Who had a daughter of his own! And then he turns the charm offensive on me. I'm a teenager. I barely have my braces off. And maybe it would have worked if he was less obvious about it. But he got this weird, whiny voice when he tried to tell me how hot I was, and I used to imitate it for Natalie, and we'd laugh and laugh. He was funny with that stupid, whiny voice, but I knew, too, that he was worse. That he could hurt me badly. I *knew* it. Deep down. The part of me that knew kept me safe. It also made me run far, far away.

But the worst thing about Kail isn't anything he did. It was what everyone else did. The way they expected me to just be Julie again. To just go right back to acting. To love it so much that I would shove all of those feelings down. And I did for a while. My friends did this, yes, but they were teenagers. I don't blame them. But my parents? At some point, they stopped seeing me and started seeing dollar signs. I don't think they saw themselves as villains. I think they saw themselves as my protectors, saw themselves as keeping me from making a horrible mistake in giving up acting. For a boy they didn't like. But you can get so addicted to what you think is right that you miss how much evil you do in its name. I'd like to think my parents saw the light at some point, but I hear Julie's Law is coming up for another vote this year, so I'm not holding my breath.

Ralph, though. Ralph let me be who I needed to be. Feel what I needed to feel. Gave me the space and security to do it. And then my parents threatened his freedom, his legal record, and even his mother. But they didn't understand they were making me choose between them and him. And I chose him. I chose him every time, and I did what I needed to do to choose him again and again and again. It was the worst, most evil thing I've ever done. But it was the best thing I've ever done, too. And now it's finally caught up with me.

I've thought a lot about what I wish my mother had told me, so someday, when my daughter realizes the world is a mess, I can give her slightly more guidance. But I don't know. The world is cruel. It is heartless. It is built by those who are powerful and evil to sustain those who are powerful and evil. To change the current isn't the work of just one lifetime, but many. But the world is also where I met her father, and it's where I first saw her face, smiling up at me, pinched and screaming. And that is what I want to tell her. To be braver than me. To plant herself so firmly in the water that it has no choice but to turn back. I know, bone-deep, this is no guarantee of anything, that hoping she won't have to face the same horrors I did is just me being naive, as all parents are at one point or another. But boy, do I hope she doesn't have to.

There are whole months where I don't think about my life as Julie Capsom, when I can watch my daughter sit in the sun and draw her butterflies, feel his hand on my shoulder, and almost believe this is who I and we have always been, that I didn't just leave an old life behind but completely shed that skin. I know I've hurt so many people, and I'm sorry, and I hope this is an explanation. I know it's not, but I hope. That's all I have.

I'm done.

[the sound of a microphone being removed]

[the sound of a crowd murmuring, and then Andy's voice rises above it]

ANDY: Now, now hold on! They're almost here! This is a surprise!

[the crowd quiets]

[the sound of a key turning in a lock, a door easing open when--]

ANDY: Here's to our amazing hosts! Bea Casely and Brenda Bentley!

[the crowd members cheer, various ad libs, etc.]

PAMELA: The women who cracked the Julie Capsom case!

[more cheers]

PAMELA: I saw her in the elevator, by the way. Girl's looking good.

ANDY: Especially for having had a baby.

PAMELA: Are you saying women who've had children are sexually undesirable?

ANDY: Well, not to *me*... That's why I personally added the single mothers category on WheyDate.

PAMELA: That's weird.

BEA: Can you all just get out of my room? I need... I don't know what I need. Sleep, I suppose.

PAMELA: Bea, you did it. This is the kind of story that makes careers.

BEA: Yeah.

BRENDA: I think we're just dealing with a lot right now, and--

ANDY: Well... all right then. Everybody out. Pip pip.

[a moment]

ANDY: I called a few friends at CNN...

BEA: You *what*?

ANDY: I told them Julie Capsom is alive and well and living in Verona. What's the problem? It's a happy ending!

BEA: Why didn't you consult with me? Why did you just call and--

ANDY: I thought the story was ours. We broke it, we should--

BEA: I cut. A deal. I was going to give her the time to escape, and--

ANDY: [genuinely regretful] Oh. Ohhh, dear. Where's my phone?

BEA: And now, *everybody's* going to--

ANDY: I can get them to hold off -- someone get me my phone --

BRENDA: Bea--

BEA: Stop carrying his water, Brenda!

ANDY: I just wanted to show off what you'd done. I was proud. We all were.

PAMELA: Were you really not planning on telling people that Julie was alive?

BEA: No, I... I was going to protect her. Give her time to get away.

PAMELA: And what? Let her get away with all of it? Do you have any idea how many laws she broke just pulling off this stupid scheme?

[in the background - ANDY: Hello. You damn well know who this is - stand down, you can't run with the story yet - no, what do you mean, it's out of your hands? You owe me --]

BEA: I mean a couple, I suppose, but--

PAMELA: This is your job.

BEA: She was a dumb teenager, dealing with too much. You never did anything stupid when you were in college?

PAMELA: Of course I did. But I didn't run away to Italy

BEA: It's not too late. The story's not out. Can we just say we were mistaken? That it wasn't her? Just give her some time!

BRENDA: Yeah. Give her a chance to live her life. We'll clear Kail, sure, but--

ANDY: It's too late.

[a TV's volume slowly turns up]

NEWS ANCHOR: Remarkably, there's breaking news in the Julie Capsom case. The hosts of the radio program and podcast Arden--

PAMELA: My God, we're on CNN.

[the door opens]

ROSALIND: There's a bunch of news vans down there. What's--

[on the TV]

REPORTER: Julie! Julie! What's--

JULIE: I have no comment.

REPORTER: How did--

JULIE: I SAID NO COMMENT.

ROSALIND: Oh. I see.

BEA: Yeah.

ANDY: She does look really good.

BRENDA: The platinum coloring really works for her. I shoulda told her. Boy, never meet your heroes, right?

BEA: We need to get home.

PAMELA: Right. So we can do interviews and other press. Easier when we're all in the right time zone.

BEA: Before Julie hunts me down with a sniper rifle.

BRENDA: She'd do it too.

ROSALIND: I can go get us a plane.

PAMELA: Tickets?

ROSALIND: I mean, sure, if that's how you want to play it.

ANDY: You know what? Yes. Let's go buy a plane. I wouldn't mind getting out of here. Immediately.

BRENDA: I think I should go... pack.

[the door opens and closes]

[a moment]

PAMELA: Are you seriously sulking?

BEA: No.

PAMELA: The last time you acted like this was when Andy insisted you bring Brenda on the show.

BEA: I'm just tired.

PAMELA: Bea. You won. You *won*.

BEA: Okay.

PAMELA: You solved an unsolvable case. You tracked down the most famous missing woman in the world. And her husband, whom everybody thought was dead. You know what this means, right? This means whatever you want. TV. Newspapers. Radio. Your own BuzzFeed vertical where you interview famous animals, if that's your thing. You're going to be huge.

BEA: What about Brenda?

PAMELA: What about her?

BEA: This is half hers. I mean, I can't believe I'm the one to say that, but--

PAMELA: She stood in your way for most of the show. Anybody can see that.

BEA: I told Julie... I don't even know.

PAMELA: You couldn't protect her. You get that, right? When she left that Christmas party, hell, probably before that, she was already digging herself in too deep.

BEA: I get it. I just--

PAMELA: What?

BEA: It was just supposed to be a good story.

PAMELA: And now it's a great one.

BEA: And Julie Capsom will go to jail, and Kail McPherson will go free, and--

PAMELA: It's unfair.

BEA: Yeah.

PAMELA: Did you expect anything else?

[Bea sighs]

PAMELA: C'mon, superstar. Pack your bags. You won.

[an abrupt cut to spooky opening music... Lorena Christopher can be heard]

LORENA: Hello and welcome to Remembering Forgotten Memories of Hollywood. I'm your host, Lorena Christopher, telling the long-lost, cobweb-covered tales of Hollywood's tawdriest, most heartbreaking moments.

This week, we're pausing our 17-part oral history of Dog Cop: The Cop Who Was a Dog for a special exclusive. I'm joined, in studio, by Bea Casely and Brenda Bentley, the co-hosts of the podcast Arden, who recently tracked down someone near and dear to the hearts of all RFMOH [pronounced Riff-moh] listeners: Julie Capsom.

Bea. Brenda. Good day.

BRENDA: How do we know the listeners are listening during the day?

LORENA: I merely mean it's day when we're recording.

BRENDA: Is it?

BEA: Sorry. Jet lag.

LORENA: So tell us a little bit about your adventures in Verona?

BRENDA: It wasn't supposed to end like that.

BEA: Right.

LORENA: I don't understand.

BRENDA: We made a deal, and then, through circumstances beyond our control--

BEA: I think what Brenda is trying to say--

BRENDA: I can speak for myself!

BEA: What I'm trying to say, then, is that while we understand that there are numerous legal questions surrounding Julie's actions, we do, truly, believe that she did everything she did to protect herself.

BRENDA: And protect Ralph.

BEA: And honestly, doesn't the time and attention we've given to this one case prove she was under too big a microscope to survive? A girl runs her car into a tree and walks into the woods and there's a 12-part podcast on it 10 years later? Who could live like that?

LORENA: So you believe it's justified that the police wasted so many resources for all that time, looking for a woman who had faked her own death?

BEA: It's more complicated than that. That's all we're trying to say.

LORENA: These stories always are. In next week's episode, "Dog Cop on the Run"--

BRENDA: Did you *meet* Dog Cop?

LORENA: First off, there were three Dog Cops: Binky, Michael J. Dog, and Tater Tot Pupperton III. And since the show was made in 1984, all Dog Cops are dead.

BRENDA: Damn.

LORENA: Well, let me try this a different way: How did Julie seem to you? We've all been waiting to hear from her for so long. Did she have stories? Did she answer any burning questions? And she married Ralph? How exciting!

BEA: She seemed...

BRENDA: Good?

BEA: She *looked* good.

BRENDA: The platinum really suits her.

LORENA: [exasperated sigh] So who was the torso? At least tell us that!

[a long pause]

LORENA: [to a producer] Caitlin, can you stop recording for a second? [to Bea and Brenda] Hon, you said you'd be willing to talk about this on the podcast. I had Caitlin come in on a Sunday for this.

BRENDA: It's fresh with us, Lorena. We just got back last night, and--

BEA: No, you know what? She's right. She's right, Brenda. This is our story to tell, too.

BRENDA: I don't--

BEA: It is.

[a beat]

BEA: It *is*.

LORENA: We're great, Caitlin! [returns to her podcast voice] So. Who was the torso?

BEA: The torso... no one knows. He was a homeless teenager who matched the specifications Julie and Ralph needed to fake Ralph's--

[clatter as Brenda stands up]

BEA: Brenda?

BRENDA: [distant from microphone] You know the other day, I came back to your room at the hotel to tell you I had your back, to try to help you put the Julie genie back in the bottle, and I overheard what Pamela said about me just standing in your way.

BEA: Which *she* said. Not *me*.

BRENDA: But did you say anything to contradict her? [long pause] You know what? She's right. I'm done. It's your show, Casely.

BEA: But--

BRENDA: I don't want it any more. I just... don't... want it. Any more. Nothing to do with you. Or with you, Lorena. You make a cute couple.

[door opens and closes]

[long pause]

LORENA: Bea? Bea? You okay?

BEA: Huh? Oh. Yeah. Sorry. Brenda's... volatile.

LORENA: Understood.

BEA: Can we try that again?

LORENA: Caitlin, we can cut all of that out, right?

CAITLIN: [who is just Rosalind] Oh yeah, boss. Totally. In fact, why don't we just start over? Just pick up from "special exclusive."

LORENA: Great. I'm joined, in studio, by Bea Casely, the host of the podcast Arden, who recently tracked down someone near and dear to the hearts of all RFMOH: Julie Capsom.

Bea. Good day.

BEA: It's good to be here, Lorena.

LORENA: So. Italy.

BEA: I know, right? Certainly not where I would have expected to find Julie Capsom! But, I suppose, I just got lucky.

LORENA: [chuckles] Did you ever!

[cut]

PAMELA: [on phone] No. No no no. Bea's going on vacation. She's earned a-- Hold on. [to Bea] Can you do one of the late shows on Monday?

BEA: I've put off this trip long enough, Pamela.

PAMELA: [back on phone] Look, Bea can't do the show. But I can send you someone almost as good. [pause] No, no one knows where Brenda is. [pause] Trust me, I've got just the girl for you. You're gonna love her. She has anecdotes for days.

[hangs up]

ANDY: Are you sending Rosalind?

PAMELA: Well I'm certainly not going.

BEA: And I'm going to Santa Fe. And then maybe I'll just go out into the desert and wander around for a while.

PAMELA: After your--

BEA: Yes. After my interviews. Promise.

ANDY: I think it's great. Take a break, Bea. Take as much time as you need. Spend time with your girlfriend. Oooh, would you two like a marmoset to take along on--

BEA: Don't even start.

ANDY: Marmosets are--

BEA: *Don't.*

ANDY: Fine. Just remember: thumbs of an equal.

PAMELA: You and Lorena have fun, okay? Come back when you're ready, and we'll talk about season two.

BEA: Season--

ANDY: We'll find another cold case we can solve via an irresponsible mishmash of tones! It'll be fun.

BEA: I don't know if we can do season two. Especially with Brenda missing. I just don't--

PAMELA: Shhh. Of course. Have fun. We'll be here when you get back.

[door opens and closes]

ROSALIND: Hey, guys.

PAMELA: You wanna go on a late night show?

ROSALIND: Ooh, I'll need some anecdotes, but sure.

PAMELA: You're a walking anecdote.

ROSALIND: Right. And I found that thing you asked for.

ANDY: Oh good!

ROSALIND: So there's this rancher, see, and he was murdered. His brother married his wife, and his *daughter* is pretty sure the brother killed the rancher. But she can't prove it, and--

ANDY: Season two here we come!

PAMELA: Unless literally nobody else involved in this podcast comes back from their walkabout.

ROSALIND: Look, I know you don't want to hear this, but I'm ready to carry the show.

ANDY: Ahhhh--

ROSALIND: I am!

ANDY: We'll run some tests.

[Bea is on the phone with Lorena]

BEA: So I have a few more interviews to do tomorrow, and I think I can do most of them from the hotel.

LORENA: You're saying--

BEA: We could make it to Santa Fe by midnight if we left right now.

LORENA: I'm already packed.

BEA: Great. So am I. I'm--

[she stops, then laughs]

BEA: I'm really looking forward to this.

LORENA: Me too.

BEA: Just drive for a while. Out in the middle of nowhere.

LORENA: Now you know how Julie Capsom felt.

[a pause]

BEA: I guess I do.

LORENA: I didn't get a chance to say this to you on the show, but... I'm so proud of you. When I saw the news reports--

BEA: Thanks. But could we... not talk about it? For this trip?

LORENA: Of course.

BEA: I'll see you in a bit.

[beat]

BEA: Love you.

[and she hangs up before Lorena can say anything in response]

[Bea gets into her car, the sound of jangling keys, and then she hums a little as she drives somewhere]

[her phone rings...]

BEA: Unknown number? I'm driving.

[and rings...]

BEA: Fine.

[pulls over]

[she picks up]

BEA: *What?*

BRENDA: [on phone] I realized I never told you why I named the detective agency Arden.

BEA: There's a plot thread I completely forgot about.

BRENDA: So I'm going to do that now. Because I know you. I daresay we're friends.

BEA: Where *are* you?

BRENDA: I'm outside.

BEA: Yeah, but where?

BRENDA: Does it matter?

BEA: Yes. It does. You abandoned me to this... onslaught. Press and late-night shows and--

BRENDA: You got this, Casely.

BEA: I'd be better with my co-host.

BRENDA: Aw, you miss me.

BEA: I don't miss you. You're the only other person who was there with me. Who saw her tell that story. Who heard everything that happened to her. Who... who *knows* that we did the right thing, which was exactly the wrong thing to do.

BRENDA: So I named the detective agency Arden--

BEA: That doesn't matter, Brenda. That doesn't matter right now, because we ruined two people's lives.

BRENDA: Hence the part where I left.

BEA: Left me to clean up the mess.

BRENDA: You wanted this, right?

BEA: I didn't want any of this.

BRENDA: All I wanted were answers, Casely. I didn't need to see Julie, dead or alive. I just needed to know. And once I knew, I was out. But you kept going.

BEA: Because that's the job. That's *what we do*.

BRENDA: Sure. It was your show. So I went along with--

BEA: Don't *rewrite history*. You barged in and took over and--

BRENDA: Can I just do the detective thing, and then we can hang up?

BEA: [angry] Fine.

BRENDA: So after I got kicked off the force for royally fucking up the Julie Capsom investigation, I went to England. To solve a mystery.

BEA: Oh boy, did you?

BRENDA: Sort of. I was looking for the Arden forest. It's this famous forest mentioned in a lot of English literature, but nobody knows where it is now.

BEA: They lost a forest.

BRENDA: Something like that. It's more like... years and years of cutting down trees and replanting them... things shift and change. Anyway, I spent weeks tromping around these old woods, looking for an answer, and then I found it.

BEA: You missed the forest for the trees, I assume.

BRENDA: No, I forgot that the forest *is* the trees. And the trees are the forest.

BEA: [sarcastic] Wow. Profound.

BRENDA: That's what I thought at the time. I had been looking for a reason for why this had happened to me, and I realized there wasn't one.

BEA: You were framed by an elaborate criminal conspiracy run by a very rich man.

BRENDA: I mean, I know that *now*--

BEA: So that's a reason.

BRENDA: *The point is*, every case is Arden. Every *thing* is Arden. It's all a collection of things that don't seem like they matter, until they do. You can lose a forest, but you can't lose a tree. You gotta cut that motherfucker down.

BEA: I don't get it.

BRENDA: I don't either. But someday I will.

BEA: Sure. [beat] Look. I'm sorry I yelled. Where are you?

BRENDA: I'm outside.

BEA: I'm going to Santa Fe with Lorena. I hope you're back when I get back.

BRENDA: I'll see you again, Casely. Count on it.

BEA: You're known for being dependable.

BRENDA: Have fun in the desert.

BEA: Have fun outside.

[hang up]

ROSALIND: So that's the show! What did we learn? Not a lot, I suppose. We ruined some lives. We had some laughs. And I'm left here to turn out the lights.

PAMELA: I mean, I could turn out the lights.

ROSALIND: If there's a season two--

PAMELA: *If*--

ROSALIND: I'd better get some keys to the building. Crawling in through the back office window is good exercise, but it gets old.

PAMELA: We should say something profound to wrap this all up.

ROSALIND: Okay. What do you have?

PAMELA: I'll tell you what I learned. I learned that rich people are horrible.

ROSALIND: And I learned that if you have enough money, you can basically do whatever you want, up to and including faking your own death.

ANDY: The most valuable lesson of all!

PAMELA: Perfect. Thanks for listening, everybody!

ANDY: Good night.

[a beat]

ANDY: I hope you were listening to this at night.

[the sounds of equipment being shut off]

[BABY TO BED by LOVE AXE begins to play - rock/guitar song]

**I'm beginning to feel responsible
For my own half of this mess
That doesn't make me accountable
For the rest**

**Yeah there's something that needs to be talked about
I'm just getting it off my chest
I just want to put this baby to bed**

NEWS ANCHOR: Julie Capsom, now perhaps better known as Natasha Montague, returned to the United States today, as part of a deal with authorities designed, she hopes, to clear her name. Her husband, Ralph Montgomery, remained with the couple's daughter in Verona, Italy.

**And I don't wanna get in an argument
I would rather walk away
That won't accomplish anything
So I'll stay**

HOST: In your opinion, as a lawyer, should Julie Capsom and Ralph Montgomery go to jail?

LAWYER: My God, yes! Think of the laws they broke! The evidence they falsified! The ways they misled the police!

HOST: The California attorney general says she has no stomach for--

LAWYER: Well, that's unfortunate. This country needs more respect for the law. Why I remember a time when--

**And at least we'll be trying to work out
Though that horse is fucking dead
I just wanna put this baby to bed**

I just wanna put this baby to bed

LATE NIGHT HOST [who is obviously, and bafflingly, Johnny Carson]: So this is... this Arden show... this is a big deal, huh? And now tell me this: You're... you're the star?

ROSALIND: I wouldn't say *star*, but...

LATE NIGHT HOST: Now, see, my kids got into this thing, and they said, "Dad... dad, you gotta hear this Rosalind character."

ROSALIND: Listen, our demos suggest I'm *very* popular with dads.

LATE NIGHT HOST/AUDIENCE ROAR WITH LAUGHTER

**It's easy to have sympathy
When you're in somebody's shoes
Some people don't have sympathy
They don't win unless you lose**

**They'll fight till you're blue about
Day or night, or 2 + 2**

**There's always a different
There's always a different
There's always a different point of view**

There's always a different point of view

[phone rings]

VINCE: Yeah.

RALPH: Hey. It's - It's Ralph. Ralph Montgomery. I dunno if you've seen the news, if you haven't, the headline is... I'm alive. ...Yay. Vince, I wanted to call so many times, but I couldn't because --

VINCE: No, no, I get it. You've been on the run with the movie star you've been secretly dating your whole life.

RALPH: Ah, yeah, right, sounds kinda, kinda nuts when you put it that way --

VINCE: Ralph... go fuck yourself. [hangs up]

**Don't you ever get tired of lingering
Always ready to pass the buck
My patience is totally dwindling
And it sucks**

**So until you just tell me what you want
I'll be over here getting drunk
And I'll keep it up until this baby is sunk**

ROBERT CAPSOM: My daughter has authorized me to read this statement: "Ralph and I have agreed to return to California to stand trial for our crimes. In return, we will receive reduced sentences, and no others will be charged, given how much time has passed, and that our friends' ultimate crimes mostly amounted to keeping our secret." And now, from my perspective... it's so, so good when a prodigal returns home, when all that hope isn't for nothing. Julie, your mom would be so happy, smiling down on us from Heaven. [he wells up] Finally. We can be a family again.

**Please remind me of what I'm doing here
I keep getting in my own way
Tell me there's nothing to worry about
So I'll stay**

**There's just so many ways you can color it
Feelin' blue but seein' red
I just wanna put this baby to bed
I just wanna put this baby to bed**

**There's nothing uncommittable
If your aim is to commit
It's not the only option
Hangin' on to a sinking ship**

I'd rather just let go of it
Then stop my losing my grip
There's always a reason
There's always a reason
There's always a reason to forget

There's always a reason to forget

There's always a reason to forget

ANDY: How big should we make the sign?

PAMELA: The sign?

ANDY: Look at this sketch. WheyFace Radio: Home of Arden.

PAMELA: In the sketch... are you... are you beaming that onto the surface of the moon?

ANDY: Just an idea I had.

[GUITAR MUSIC - INSTRUMENTAL VERSION OF BABY TO BED]

NEWS ANCHOR: Academy Award winner Kail McPherson is claiming vindication today, after being released from prison.

KAIL: Well, I wasn't a murderer, right? You see how these stories start to spread. Have I slept with women I shouldn't have? Of course. But it was completely consensual, and now we have proof I'm a man of my word. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned, right? [he laughs with far too much self-satisfaction and is regrettably not hit in the face] Ugh, can we wrap this up?

NEWS ANCHOR: McPherson's victory may be short-lived. In the wake of Julie Capsom's emotional story of her own encounter with the director, many more women have stepped forward with similar allegations, and the studio has removed him from the director's chair on the *Detective Chimp* sequel...

[GUITAR MUSIC CONTINUES]

NATALIE: How much trouble are you in?

JULIE: I don't know. A lot. How about you?

NATALIE: I don't know. A lot.

[she laughs]

NATALIE: Well. Shit. Look at us.

JULIE: You *had* to talk to the journalists?

[MORE GUITAR MUSIC]

ARDEN CREDITS, read by Emily VanDerWerff:

Arden Was Created by Emily VanDerWerff, Christopher Dole, and Sara Ghaleb, and this episode was written by those three people

This episode was recorded by Elizabeth Aubert and edited by Bridge Geene

Music by Chris Hatfield, and the song "Baby to Bed" is by Love Axe, now available on iTunes

CAST:

MICHELLE AGRESTI as BEA CASELY
TRACEY SAYED as BRENDA BENTLEY
SHANNON ESTABROOK as ROSALIND URSULA
CHARLITA GASTON as PAMELA PINK
BENJAMIN WATTS as ANDY WHEYFACE

LINDSAY ZANA as JULIE CAPSOM
JAY LEE as RALPH MONTGOMERY
MIA DRAKE as LORENA CHRISTOPHER
ROBERT FLEET as ROBERT CAPSOM/NEWS ANCHOR
GRANT PATRIZIO as KAIL MCPHERSON/LATE NIGHT HOST
JOHN RAEL as VINCE VOLIO/LAWYER
LINDSAY SEIM as NATALIE

[more music]

[more music]

[and then it cuts out]

[the sounds of the outdoors, birds chirping, etc.]

BRENDA: [winded] Well, wow. Look at that view. That's the good--

[the sounds of crunching underbrush, of twigs snapping, etc.]

BRENDA: Uh... hello? Are you--

[a low, strange growl]

BRENDA: Oh my holy hell--

**Don't you ever get tired of lingering
Always ready to pass the buck
My patience is totally dwindling
And it sucks**

BEA: --No, I don't know what's next.

REPORTER: Do you know where your co-host went?

BEA: Brenda? She's... she's just outside.

**So until you just tell me what you want
I'll be over here getting drunk
And I'll keep it up until this baby is sunk**

BRENDA: C'mon, c'mon, c'mon. Pick up, Casely.

**Please remind me of what I'm doing here
I keep getting in my own way
Tell me there's nothing to worry about
So I'll stay**

**There's just so many ways you can color it
Feelin' blue but seein' red
I just wanna put this baby to bed
I just wanna put this baby to bed**

**There's nothing uncommittable
If your aim is to commit
It's not the only option
Hangin' on to a sinking ship**

LORENA: Was that the last interview you had?

BEA: Yes. God, I could sleep for--

[a phone alert]

BEA: Huh.

LORENA: That's your Brenda "huh." What did she do this time?

BEA: Take a look at this picture she sent me.

LORENA: Looks like a bear to me. Hard to see. Kinda shadowy.

BEA: A bear?

LORENA: What else would it be?

BEA: Don't you think it's kind of... primate... y?

LORENA: Don't say that's a skunk ape, Bea. Don't say it.

BEA: I'm just asking the questions no one else will.

LORENA: Oh my God, come to bed.

BEA: In a minute. I just gotta text Brenda quick.

[click-stop]

**I'd rather just let go of it
Then stop my losing my grip
There's always a reason
There's always a reason
There's always a reason to forget
There's always a reason to forget**

There's always a reason to forget

[END OF SEASON]