

DIRT - AN AUDIO DRAMA
Chapter 18 Part 2 Transcript
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****Warning****

This is a complete written transcript of the entire Chapter 18 Part 2 audio file and is full of spoilers from start to finish. To avoid ruining surprises, read along as you listen—but don't read ahead!

Link to audio files: <https://www.dirtaudiodrama.com/#listen>

(Fade in sound of being inside café in Wilson Creek, Washington)

JOSEPH:

You know, I would like to buy something, actually. How much for the accordion?

CAFÉ OWNER:

Ah. I have it listed for...thirty dollars.

JOSEPH:

Thirty? You sure that's enough? For something your grandmother gave to you?

CAFÉ OWNER:

Well, that's nice of you to consider but...I don't have any real attachment to it. So, thirty is fine.

JOSEPH:

Okay. I'll take it. Can you add it to my breakfast bill?

CAFÉ OWNER:

I can do that. Just sign right there on the screen.

JOSEPH:

There you go.

CAFÉ OWNER:

You know, you're the second person to look closely at that photo today.

JOSEPH:

Oh yeah?

CAFÉ OWNER:

An older man was here a bit ago, doing the same thing.

JOSEPH:

Is that right? Would you mind if I take a picture of the photo?

CAFÉ OWNER:

If it was for sale, I'd say yes. But since it's not, feel free.

(Sound of taking picture using smartphone)

JOSEPH:

Alright! Thanks again. For everything.

CAFÉ OWNER:

Nice talking with ya.

JOSEPH:

Yeah, you too.

(Sound of leaving café and getting in car)

(Sound of being inside car and handling accordion)

JOSEPH:

(Laughs) I have...Ernesto's...accordion!

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I look all over the old accordion, studying it for any clue that might reveal itself.

JOSEPH:

This thing must have *something* to do with why I'm here. But what is it?

(Sound of turning on detector)

JOSEPH:

Is there something about the accordion that I need to figure out?

(Sound of accordion making clicks and pulses)

JOSEPH:

G

A

F

C

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I listen long enough to determine that the detector is repeating the same four letters.

(Sound of turning off detector)

JOSEPH:

GAFC. What is that supposed to mean?

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I ask the detector the same question, a couple of times. And each time the detector spells out the same answer.

JOSEPH:

GAFC...is that an acronym? Wait. Oh. (Laughs) Keep practicing your piano. (Laughs) Aimo.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I've never played an accordion before, but I've seen people do it. So I clumsily place my hands on either end of the instrument, with my left hand in a leather strap and my right hand on the keyboard.

JOSEPH:

Okay...there...

(Sound of bellows making breathing noise and music noise)

JOSEPH:

Op... (Laughs)

(Sound of bellows making breathing noise and music noise)

JOSEPH:

G...

(Sound of bellows making breathing noise and music noise)

JOSEPH:

A...

(Sound of bellows making breathing noise only)

JOSEPH:

Op...

(Sound of bellows making breathing noise and music noise)

JOSEPH:

F... Sounds out of tune...

(Sound of bellows making breathing noise and music noise)

JOSEPH:

C...

(Sound of accordion making three clicking noises)

(Sound of piece of paper falling out)

JOSEPH:

Woah!

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

One end of the bellows comes apart from the instrument...

JOSEPH:

Ho ho!

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

And as it does, a small piece of thick paper, like a business card, drops in my lap.

JOSEPH:

What does that say...

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

There are words typed on it, in courier font.

JOSEPH:

(Reading note) Search where the photo was taken.

(Sound of incoming text alert)

JOSEPH:

(Groan) Hold on! Where the photo was taken... Maybe the guy in the café will know.

(Sound of getting out of car)

(Sound of walking back to café)

(Sound of trying to turn locked door handle)

JOSEPH:
Ugh. Shoot.

(Sound of knocking on the door two different times)

(Sound of walking back to car and getting inside)

(Sound of being inside car)

JOSEPH:
Dang it. Hang on. Maybe there's something *in* the photo.

(Sound of tapping on phone screen)

JOSEPH:
Hoo man, that is super washed out.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):
I quickly use different photo filters to try to bring out the details better.

(Sound of tapping on phone screen)

JOSEPH:
Hmm. Oh! There.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):
Positioned above and behind Aimo, who is holding a violin, and Ernesto, who is holding the accordion, and the two other men—one of whom is holding a guitar and the other, a banjo—is a barely visible sign showing the intersection of two streets.

JOSEPH:
Hoo! Okay. Sixth Street and...Railroad Street. Yes!

(Sound of tapping on phone screen)

JOSEPH:
Where is that...

(Sound of tapping on phone screen)

JOSEPH:
Nice.

(Sound of starting car engine)

JOSEPH:

Just a few blocks from here.

(Sound of driving slowly down the street)

(Sound of smartphone assistant engaging)

JOSEPH:

Call Mel. Finally.

(Sound of smartphone assistant disengaging)

(Sound of phone dialing on car speakers)

MEL:

(On phone) I need fifteen seconds.

(Sound of three beeps of call ending)

JOSEPH:

(Laughs) Okay.

(Sound of slowing down and stopping car)

(Sound of putting car in park and engine idling)

JOSEPH:

Sixth and Railroad. (Exhales)

(Sound of being inside car with engine idling)

(Sound of phone ringing on car speakers)

(Sound of answering phone)

MEL:

(On phone) (Exhales)

JOSEPH:

So, which conference room did you snag?

MEL:

Ice Lounge. Near the kitchen.

JOSEPH:

Hmph.

MEL:

But you don't get to do small talk right now.

JOSEPH:

(Exhales) How do you know I had anything to do with you getting questioned?

MEL:

Do you realize who you're talking to?

JOSEPH:

(Scoffs) Well, it's true, I've never known anyone with your kind of intuition. But to answer your question...no, I'm not sure who I'm talking to anymore.

MEL:

What changed? Yesterday morning we were texting niceties to each other. Then in the afternoon you have me *followed*?

JOSEPH:

So you did know. The whole time?

MEL:

Are you *really* that interested in what groceries I buy?

JOSEPH:

How did you make the connection?

MEL:

When I do a background check, I pay for the best. It was *very* comprehensive. I have photos of the whole family.

JOSEPH:

(Exhale) Look, Antonia was just doing *me* a favor.

MEL:

You know...I was going to let it go. Or bring it up some other time. But I decided against that when your detective friends showed up at work today asking to see *me*.

JOSEPH:

Woah. What the...

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

As Mel says this, I see an RV pass by slowly, about three blocks away.

JOSEPH:

Hmm. That's interesting.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

An RV that looks exactly the same as the one I saw earlier, near Pinto Dam. It stops just beyond an intersection, where it has a clear view of me, and me of it.

JOSEPH:

Mel, prove to me that you're in the office right now....and not in some RV!

MEL:

(Scoffs) What is this, some little test?

JOSEPH:

Walk to the front desk, while I'm on the phone. I want to speak with Lauren. I assume you got the flowers I asked her to send to you...

MEL:

I'm allergic to lilies.

JOSEPH:

I didn't know that.

MEL:

(Exhales) Whatever. Fine.

(Sound on phone of Mel opening conference room door and walking through office)

MEL:

(Talking to someone else) Hi! Yes, I got them. That was very kind of you and Joseph to do that.
(Laughs) Actually, he wants to talk to you real quick. He's right here on the phone. Do you have a sec?

LAUREN:

(On phone, in background) Aww. Oh my gosh!

JOSEPH:

Huh.

LAUREN:

(On phone, to Joseph) How are you doing?

JOSEPH:

(Chuckles) Hey Lauren. I'm good. I just want to say how much I appreciate you ordering those flowers yesterday.

LAUREN:

Oh, no problem. That's what I'm here for!

JOSEPH:

Ha. Well, you do a lot more around there than just that.

LAUREN:

That's nice of you to say. You left in such a hurry on Friday. But I hear you're coming back now?

JOSEPH:

(Scoffs) You did?

LAUREN:

Don't worry, we're keeping everything ready for you. So does it feel like you'll be back later this week?

JOSEPH:

Uhh, I'm not sure just yet.

LAUREN:

(Chuckles) Well don't be away for *too* long.

JOSEPH:

Heh, okay. Would you mind handing the phone back to Mel?

LAUREN:

Okay. See you soon! Bye Joseph!

JOSEPH:

See you Lauren.

MEL:

(To Lauren) (Laughs) Okay. (To Joseph) Convinced now?

JOSEPH:

(Exhales) Please walk to my desk. There's something in a drawer I want you to tell me that you see.

MEL:

Wow. Overly thorough, much?

JOSEPH:

It's the second drawer down in my filing cabinet. The one I keep locked. Even from you.

MEL:

(Scoff) Whatever. I'm here.

JOSEPH:

Okay.

MEL:

(Talking to someone nearby) No, not back yet. I have him here on the phone though. He—sure!

(To Joseph) DeShawn says hi.

JOSEPH:

Ah, please tell him hello.

MEL:

(To Deshawn) He says hi back!

DESHAWN:

(In background) Dude, so glad you're coming back!

JOSEPH:

(Scoffs) Geez!

MEL:

(Laughs)

JOSEPH:

(Sighs) Okay, the code is 0403.

MEL:

(To Joseph) Seriously?

JOSEPH:

That way I never forget your birthday.

(Sound of Mel tapping electronic keys in background)

MEL:

(Exhales) Okay, your little locked drawer is now...

(Sound of opening drawer)

MEL:

(Scoffs) *This* is what you keep in here?

JOSEPH:

You can have some if you want.

MEL:

Ummmm, no thanks. I didn't know Twix came in cookies and cream.

JOSEPH:

Now you do.

MEL:

Satisfied?

JOSEPH:

That's a different candy bar.

MEL:

(Exhale) I don't understand you.

JOSEPH:

(Exhale) Mel. Were you at the crosswalk when I almost got hit?

MEL:

Why don't you ask the detectives. They know my answer.

JOSEPH:

I might just do that.

MEL:

By the way, I *know* you downloaded all the traffic camera footage. Ana told me you called and requested it.

JOSEPH:

(Exhales)

MEL:

Why didn't you just ask *me*? And what was it you were trying to accomplish yesterday with your little stakeout stunt, anyway?

JOSEPH:
(Inhales) I had to see if you were—

MEL:
No. No!

JOSEPH:
No, what?

MEL:
No you can't just follow me! Or question me! Not after everything I've done for you! You're really weird now, after all this Wapato stuff!

JOSEPH:
Woah...

MEL:
What.

JOSEPH:
Hey, Mel...

(Sound of putting car in drive)

JOSEPH:
Hold on, one sec...

(Sound of driving slowly)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):
In the distance I see the parked RV's tail lights come on, as if it might be leaving.

MEL:
Oh! Of course you're in your car! Where, pray tell, this time?

JOSEPH:
Come on, don't leave yet...

MEL:
Helloooo.

JOSEPH:
Just a second...

(Sound of stopping car and putting in park)

JOSEPH:
Who are you...

(Sound of car idling)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):
When I get about a block from the RV...

JOSEPH:
Oh crap!

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):
It starts to drive away.

(Sound of fumbling with phone)

JOSEPH:
Come on camera, focus!

MEL:
Hellooo?

JOSEPH:
Get the license plate...

(Sound of smartphone camera taking photo)

(Sound of pounding steering wheel)

JOSEPH:
Yes! (Breathes) Mel. Would you be able to look something up for me?

MEL:
W-what?

JOSEPH:
What?

MEL:
(Scoffs) Just like that? When you need something? Suddenly you *trust* me again?

JOSEPH:

(Reacts) Never mind. Forget it.

MEL:

Whatever. Have a nice life.

(Sound of three beeps of phone call ending)

(Sound of car idling)

JOSEPH:

(Reacting)

(Sound of pounding on steering wheel)

(Sound of slapping hands on pants)

JOSEPH:

(Exhales) I deserved that. What am I doing?

(Sound of car idling)

JOSEPH:

(Exhales) Wait.

(Sound of smartphone assistant engaging)

JOSEPH:

Text Carl.

(Sound of smartphone assistant disengaging)

JOSEPH:

Hey Carl, it's...Ralph. (Chuckles) Hey, I'm wondering if you might be able to do something for me. I need to know who owns a black RV. I can send you a picture of the lice—

(Sound of hitting steering wheel)

JOSEPH:

(Scoffs) No! What am I doing. Man. Cancel text.

(Sound of smartphone disengaging)

JOSEPH:

Geez. (Exhales)

(Sound of putting car in drive and driving short distance)

(Sound of text arriving)

(Sound of another text arriving)

JOSEPH:

Maybe that's Antonia finally texting...

(Sound of stopping car, putting car in park, and turning off engine)

JOSEPH:

Detective Peterson... (Reading text) Questioned your former assistant today. Alibi checks out. Three co-workers attest to her being in office during entire timeframe of the crosswalk incident. (To self) Wow! (Exhales) (Reading text) There's more that's unrelated to her. Call at your convenience. (To self) You're kidding. How could I be so wrong? Ah, Mel. I am such a jerk.

(Sound of opening car door and getting out)

(Sound of closing car door)

(Sound of being outside in Wilson Creek)

(Sound of getting metal detector and bag out of car)

(Sound of closing car door)

(Sound of walking short distance on pavement, then grass)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Looking around, the significance of this location isn't at all obvious. It's basically a vacant lot with tumbleweeds and patches of overgrown grass, along the main road in town.

(Sound of turning on metal detector)

(Sound of walking around grassy field)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

But in my mind, I can picture structures being here. Structures of plywood and canvas, to house workers and their families. Structures with just enough space between them for comfortable evening strolls in the desert air, or for tossing ragged baseballs to stray dogs.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

And a common area at the center, large enough for groups to dine or talk together. And a kitchen, where cooks prepare soup and meat pies and fresh sourdough bread, and on Fridays and Saturdays, fresh corn on the cob and giant sockeye fillets caught and trucked in from the lower Columbia.

And among it all, couples and families—some young, some older; some well off, some very poor; some with children and some without—sitting on picnic benches or wooden chairs next to cloth doors that flap in the breeze, waving hello to each other through the dust and mosquitos, all marveling at the strange landscape that they find themselves living among, in this tiny outpost on the scablands of Washington’s north-central interior.

(Sound of detector buzzing suddenly getting louder)

JOSEPH:

Ah.

(Sound of turning off detector)

JOSEPH:

There you are.

(Sound of getting shovel out of duffel bag and digging in dirt)

(Sound of the shovel clanking on something metal)

(Sound of pulling box out of the ground)

(Sound of blowing dirt off box)

(Sound of setting down box)

(Sound of taking phone out pocket)

(Sound of phone dialing someone)

(Sound of someone answering phone)

JOSEPH:

Mel.

MEL:
(On phone) What.

JOSEPH:
I'm...very sorry.

MEL:
Sorry for what.

JOSEPH:
I'm sorry for doubting you. And for following you. And for making you pass tests. I was wrong.
And...you were right.

MEL:
Right about what, exactly?

JOSEPH:
I am different. Something has changed.

MEL:
Well, it's good to hear you acknowledge it. So now what.

JOSEPH:
Does everyone really expect me to be back at work in a few days?

MEL:
Almost everyone.

JOSEPH:
(Chuckles) (Inhales/Exhales) Mel, I need your help. I...I want your help. Would you please be willing to help me again?

MEL:
Maybe.

JOSEPH:
Oh. Okay.

MEL:
On one condition.

JOSEPH:
What's that?

MEL:

That you properly introduce me to Antonia some time. She seems kind of badass.

JOSEPH:

(Laughs) She is. And I will. That is, if she ever talks to me again.

(End chapter)

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