

DIRT - AN AUDIO DRAMA  
Chapter 21 Transcript  
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**\*\*Warning\*\***

**This is a complete written transcript of the entire Chapter 21 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 outside at campground with campfire)

JOSEPH:  
Antonia!

ANTONIA:  
Pssst. Joseph.

JOSEPH:  
(Gasps) What are you doing over there?

(Sound of walking through campground)

JOSEPH:  
Woah, why do you have your gun out?

ANTONIA:  
Did you hear the coyote?

JOSEPH:  
Yeah. Sounded like it was close.

ANTONIA:  
Yeah it was close. It walked right into our campsite!

JOSEPH:  
I guess that explains why you're hiding behind a tree. I didn't think coyotes liked being that close to people.

ANTONIA:

They're pretty easy to scare away on the farm. This one was persistent. But then a moment later, someone else wandered into the campsite!

JOSEPH:

What?

ANTONIA:

Just after I heard you open the bathroom door.

JOSEPH:

Did he have a beard?

ANTONIA:

Yeah.

JOSEPH:

And a hat? Like the kind Sean Connery wears?

ANTONIA:

What kind of hat does Sean Connery wear?

JOSEPH:

You know, those Scottish hats. Like, plaid with a short bill? His character always had one on in *The Untouchables*.

ANTONIA:

Yeah, it looked kind of like that. Do you know him?

JOSEPH:

No. At least, I don't think so. But there's an RV parked several sites away from us, over by the bathroom. It must have pulled in and parked after we got here, without us noticing it.

ANTONIA:

Okay...

JOSEPH:

Antonia, it's the same RV that I saw in Wilson Creek, just yesterday.

ANTONIA:

You know for sure?

JOSEPH:

Yeah. The license plate is the same and everything. And it's registered to Hartson Rotors.

(Sound of RV starting in distance)

JOSEPH:

Crap! And now it's leaving! I should go stop it.

ANTONIA:

Wait!

JOSEPH:

What?

ANTONIA:

So, the coyote ran off as soon as the guy walked into our campsite.

JOSEPH:

Okay...

ANTONIA:

But I stayed right here and watched. He must not have known that I was here with you and hiding.

JOSEPH:

Why?

ANTONIA:

Because I saw him grab something from under your car, and then quickly replace it with something just like it.

JOSEPH:

What?

ANTONIA:

And then, he looked in the back seat of your car and opened the door and took out the detector!

JOSEPH:

What did he do with it? Did he take it?

ANTONIA:

No! He just looked it over and kind of smiled, and then put it back in the car!

(Sound of coyote yelping in distance)

JOSEPH:  
(Reacting) It's still here!

(Sound of coyote yelping)

JOSEPH:  
Antonia, we need to follow the coyote!

ANTONIA:  
What? Joseph, we can still go confront the RV driver!

JOSEPH:  
Yeah, but—

(Sound of RV driving away and fading away)

ANTONIA:  
Don't you want to know who he is?

JOSEPH:  
Of course I do! But we need to follow the coyote! Look, last week when I stopped at Cumberland to find the third box, I was out in the woods when the batteries went dead.

ANTONIA:  
Wait, the batteries that I gave you? I just bought those at Costco.

JOSEPH:  
No no. The old batteries. I accidentally left your batteries in the car. I didn't know what to do when it happened, but then... (Scoffs) I know this is going to sound weird. But a coyote led me to the spot where the treasure box was. You don't have to believe me. I just know we have to—

ANTONIA:  
I believe you. I mean, it's on par with everything else this past week.

JOSEPH:  
Yeah.

(Sound of coyote yelping in distance)

JOSEPH:  
(Gasp)

ANTONIA:  
So, we're just gonna follow it around?

JOSEPH:

Well, with the detector.

ANTONIA:

The detector that talks to you.

JOSEPH:

Yeah.

ANTONIA:

Alright...

JOSEPH:

Okay. Let's go get everything we need.

(Sound of walking through campsite)

(Sound of opening car door)

(Sound of grabbing things in car)

JOSEPH:

There's a flashlight there on the console. Would you mind grabbing it?

ANTONIA:

Sure.

(Sound of grabbing metal detector)

(Sound of closing car door)

ANTONIA:

We should put the fire out, just in case.

JOSEPH:

Oh. Yeah. Good idea.

(Sound of opening water bottle)

(Sound of pouring water on fire)

(Sound of closing water bottle)

JOSEPH:

Okay.

ANTONIA:

(Whistling loudly)

JOSEPH:

(Laughs) Woah. Did you learn that from your dad?

(Sound of coyote yelping in distance)

JOSEPH:

(Gasps)

ANTONIA:

Sounds like it's coming from that direction.

JOSEPH:

Yeah, I agree. Okay, here we go.

(Sound of walking off trail, on top of plants)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I switch on my headlamp, and Antonia carries the flashlight. It's fully dark now, and overcast. Without the light of the moon or a nearby city, it's hard to see anything except for whatever our lights shine on.

JOSEPH:

Oops, watch out for that branch.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

And there's no trail where we're walking, just leaves and brown needles and grassy plants as ground cover, beneath twisted and weathered-looking tall trees.

ANTONIA:

Doesn't it seem like Aimo was leaving a lot to chance, if a coyote has to lead you to the boxes?

JOSEPH:

So you're saying the coyote was sent by Aimo.

ANTONIA:

I'm not saying anything. But it makes about as much sense as anything else.

JOSEPH:

Actually, getting to this point involved figuring a lot of stuff out. Studying silent home moves, reading stories, even some artificial intelligence. Ow. (Chuckles)

ANTONIA:

(Chuckles) And yet, here we are, getting lost in the woods.

JOSEPH:

(Chuckles) Fair point.

(Sound of stopping walking)

ANTONIA:

(Whistles loudly)

(Sound of waves in distance only, no coyote)

ANTONIA:

Did we lose it?

JOSEPH:

I don't know. Okay, this is gonna get even weirder.

(Sound of turning on metal detector)

(Sound of adjusting buzzing volume)

ANTONIA:

Okay...

JOSEPH:

(To detector) Which direction should we walk in, to find the treasure box?

(Sound of walking a few steps)

(Sound of volume of detector staying consistent)

JOSEPH:

Hmm. (To detector) Okay, How about this way?

(Sound of walking a few steps)

(Sound of volume of detector staying consistent)

(Sound of stopping walking)

JOSEPH:

No change. That's odd.

ANTONIA:

Who are you talking to?

JOSEPH:

Hang on. (To detector) What compass direction should we walk in to find the treasure box?

(Sound of detector buzzing staying consistent)

JOSEPH:

Man. Why is it not answering?

ANTONIA:

Maybe it's malfunctioning. I mean, the old guy back at the campsite *did* handle it.

JOSEPH:

But you said he only looked at it, right? Did he open it up or anything like that?

ANTONIA:

No, nothing like that.

JOSEPH:

Hmph. Maybe whistle again.

ANTONIA:

(Whistles loudly)

(Sound of waves in distance only, no coyote)

ANTONIA:

Doesn't seem like your coyote friend stuck around.

JOSEPH:

Yeah.

(Sound of turning off metal detector)



JOSEPH:

Shoot. Okay. If we bushwhack back the way we came, we should eventually walk into the campground again. Or at least wind up at the trail that heads to the beach from the campground, and then we can walk back to camp from there—

ANTONIA:

Joseph...

JOSEPH:

Yeah? Woah.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I look in the direction Antonia is shining her flashlight.

JOSEPH:

Is that...

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

About thirty feet away, standing there among the tall grasses and plants, is a gray wooden pole, maybe ten feet tall. And carved into the wood near the top of the pole is a Nordic-looking face, with long, flowing hair.

JOSEPH:

Lemminkäinen.

ANTONIA:

Lemmi—what?

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I aim my headlamp down near the base of the wooden pole and I can see that the pole is actually set within a large round object, that's nearly flush with the ground.

JOSEPH:

Huh.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

When I get closer, I realize that the large round object is actually what's left of a very, very wide tree stump, cut low and flat, probably with a chainsaw.

JOSEPH:

(Laughs) It's Lemminkäinen.

ANTONIA:

What does that mean?

JOSEPH:  
I think it means...

(Sound of turning on metal detector)

JOSEPH:  
...that we're right where we should be!

(Sound of walking on plants)

(Sound of metal detector suddenly getting louder)

JOSEPH:  
(Chuckles)

(Sound of turning off metal detector)

(Sound of setting down metal detector and getting shovel out of duffel bag)

ANTONIA:  
Please, just don't fall down into anything.

(Sound of digging with shovel)

JOSEPH:  
(Laughs) Right.

(Sound of shovel making clank noise)

JOSEPH:  
Yes! Found another box.

(Sound of Joseph pulling box out of the ground)

ANTONIA:  
It looks like there are some letters carved into the wood pole.

JOSEPH:  
Oh yeah? What do they say?

ANTONIA:  
W... O... E.

JOSEPH:  
(Laughs)

ANTONIA:  
All capital letters, with periods after each letter.

JOSEPH:  
Yeah. That sounds like my dad. Walter Omar Elo. He was named after people on both sides of my grandparents' families. It was always kind of a joke that his initials were 'WOE.'

ANTONIA:  
Maybe he knew all about this too, then.

(Sound of handling plastic bag)

JOSEPH:  
Hmm. Yeah. Maybe.

JOSEPH:  
Here, have a look. This time it's a silver dollar. From...wow. 1884.

ANTONIA:  
Huh. You've got quite a collection now.

JOSEPH:  
Yeah.

ANTONIA:  
Any idea how much they're worth?

JOSEPH:  
I have a rough idea, yeah.

(Sound of unfolding paper note)

JOSEPH:  
(Reading note) Congratulations, Joey. You found another one. You're getting closer to the end.

ANTONIA:  
To the end. Sounds so ominous.

JOSEPH:  
(Chuckles) Yeah. Oh and, of course, there's a capital letter H this time.

ANTONIA:

Isn't that the letter in the note from Maryhill, too?

JOSEPH:

Yeah. Good memory.

ANTONIA:

(Shivers) Okay it's getting cold now that we're just standing here.

JOSEPH:

Yeah, okay. Let's get back. Hey, how about I get a quick picture of you next to Lemminkäinen?

ANTONIA:

I still don't know what that is, but sure.

(Sound of Antonia walking on plants, getting farther away)

JOSEPH:

He's kind of like a Finnish folklore hero, from the old days. Okay, that's good. Actually, a little to your left. Okay great. Say "Kalevala!"

ANTONIA:

Kal-e-va—wait, what?

(Sound of Joseph taking picture)

JOSEPH:

Awesome! Okay! I think we should head over...

(Sound of commotion where Antonia is)

ANTONIA:

Oh! Ah!

(Sound of commotion ending)

JOSEPH:

Antonia?

(Sound of running to where Antonia is)

JOSEPH:

Holy crap. Antonia? Antonia!

(Sound of waves in background)

JOSEPH:  
Wha?? where??

(Sound of plants rustling)

ANTONIA:  
BOO!

JOSEPH:  
Ah!! (Breathes heavily)

ANTONIA:  
Hahaha. Got you. (Laughs)

JOSEPH:  
Antonia!

ANTONIA:  
(Laughs)

JOSEPH:  
(Breathes heavily) Dude! That was not funny!

ANTONIA:  
Oh, come on, it seemed too perfect not to.

JOSEPH:  
(Breathes more calmly)

ANTONIA:  
(Laughs)

JOSEPH:  
(Laughs) Oh geez.

ANTONIA:  
Okay, let's head back and build another fire, as long as creepy RV dude is still gone. And you can tell me about this lemon kite man thing.

JOSEPH:  
(Laughs) Whew! Okay. It really wasn't that funny though.

ANTONIA:  
(Laughs)

JOSEPH:  
It wasn't!

ANTONIA:  
(Laughs)

JOSEPH:  
Ah, maybe it was.

ANTONIA:  
(Laughs)

(Fade out all sounds)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Despite it being a chilly night, Antonia and I stay up late talking more about our families, the things we've done in our lives, my previous relationships, what we each of us do for fun, why I was talking to the detector and expecting it to answer me, Lemminkäinen and the Kalevala, what it takes to run a farm and a digital agency, Antonia's nieces and nephews, and, of course, as we eat our grocery store sandwiches, Maria's amazing cooking.

We also remove the device that was placed under my car. It's easy to tell that it's a tracking device of some kind. We open it up and remove the small battery. And sure enough, stamped on the inside of the tracking device's plastic housing we see the words, "Hartson Rotors, Inc., an R.A. Hastings company."

I also send an email to Ingrid, at Molecular, from my phone, with neither a yes or no response. Instead, I counter with several questions about specific items within the offer. Items that I'm not particular picky about, but that I know will buy me a little more time as she, or her people, research the answers.

When we're finally tired, I go to set up both tents. But at Antonia's suggestion, I end up putting one of them back in the car.

In the morning, I realize that for the first time since I received Aimo's letter in the mail a few weeks ago, I didn't have a strange dream.

Not long after we arrive back at my house in Seattle, Antonia departs for Wapato. Our goodbye is awkward in that should we make a big deal out of this or not kind of way. We'll likely see each other soon anyway, as the sixth and final clue in "The Places I've Been" will take me east

again, this time to the Palouse, an area of rolling farmland east of Wapato and south of Spokane.

(Sound of being inside garage)

I place the contents of the Oyhut box in my safe, along with all the other items already in there. Then I put the box on the shelf in my garage, labeled with a sticky note that says...

JOSEPH:

Oyhut. Okay. That's five down.

(Sound of walking into house and sitting at desk)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I know Kim is booked up with routine meetings on Wednesday mornings. So instead of calling, I just send her a text that reads...

JOSEPH:

Antonia and I are good again. Still need to connect with Salvador. Hoping to do that later this week, if he's willing. Oh, I also found the Oyhut box. Call when you can if you want details.

(Sound of whoosh of text being sent)

(Sound of typing on keyboard)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I then add more notes to my ongoing journal about what's been happening over the past week. I write that I now have five boxes, and that the fifth box contained a silver dollar, and that the note had another capital letter H in it.

JOSEPH:

Another repeat letter. Hmph.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I also jot down what I learned from Antonia—that Marlon Mason has supplied tech gadgets to Flores Farms for years, and that Marlon and Salvador have known each other since childhood.

JOSEPH:

That's crazy.

(Sound of typing on keyboard)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I also add that it was the land trust that reached out to Salvador about selling the property, and not the other way around, according to Antonia. And that Salvador is considering the offer, but moving cautiously.

I also note that the RV that is registered to Hartson Motors, Marlon Mason's company, was present at the same empty campground that we were at. And based on Antonia's account of what she saw, it was driven by the same older guy that I bumped into in Wilson Creek.

JOSEPH:

(Breathes)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

And then after the RV left, Antonia and I discovered a tracking device attached to the underside of my car that the older guy had placed there, just after he removed a different one from the same spot.

JOSEPH:

So, tracking devices and drones. It's starting to feel like invasion of privacy. Maybe somebody really wants these coins.

(Sound of typing on keyboard)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

And finally, I write down that for the second time in less than a week, a coyote was involved in helping me find a treasure box. And that a coyote was also present in Wapato, when I was up by the tractor, in the middle of the night.

JOSEPH:

(Inhales) Oh!

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

And, when we were at Oyhut, that for the first time, the detector didn't answer a question that I asked it.

(Sound of tapping pen on desk)

JOSEPH:

Maybe it didn't answer because we were already at the right spot. Or, because Antonia was there. Kind of like the singing frog from the Looney Tunes cartoon.

(Sound of phone ringing)



JOSEPH:  
(Answering phone) Hey! I was just thinking about you.

ANTONIA:  
Hey!

JOSEPH:  
So, you either miss me. (Yawns) Or you forgot something.

ANTONIA:  
Mmm, mostly the second part.

JOSEPH:  
(Chuckles) What's up?

ANTONIA:  
Uh, how much do you know about drones?

(Ad break)

ANTONIA:  
How much do you know about drones?

JOSEPH:  
Hmm. Uh, not a lot. Why?

ANTONIA:  
I can't believe I didn't think of this until now, but most drones record their video on a micro-SD card.

JOSEPH:  
Okay...

(Sound of tapping pen on desk)

JOSEPH:  
(Gasps) Oh.

ANTONIA:  
Yeah. So if the SD card is still in the drone that you have, you might be able to see...

ANTONIA/JOSEPH:  
...what's on it.

JOSEPH:

Woah. I didn't even think about that.

(Sound of getting up from chair)

JOSEPH:

I'll go check right now.

(Sound of walking through house)

JOSEPH:

Putting you on speaker again. Where are you at in the drive?

ANTONIA:

Uh, going over Snoqualmie Pass.

JOSEPH:

Oh.

(Sound of opening door to garage and turning on light)

ANTONIA:

There's some new snow higher up in the peaks.

JOSEPH:

Nice.

(Sound of being inside garage)

(Sound of handling drone)

JOSEPH:

Okay. Is the SD card in an obvious spot?

ANTONIA:

If it's the same as our prototype, it'll be on the right side of the main body, near the back rotor arm.

JOSEPH:

Ah, yep.

(Sound of opening SD card slot)

JOSEPH:  
There it is. Hmm.

ANTONIA:  
What.

JOSEPH:  
It's just weird that it's still here. Why wouldn't it have been removed when the sticker was removed?

ANTONIA:  
Hmm. Good question.

JOSEPH:  
(Lip sounds while thinking)

ANTONIA:  
You still there?

JOSEPH:  
Yeah, just thinking. I mean, technically this isn't my property. One might even reason that I stole it. I'm just not sure have the right to see what's on here.

ANTONIA:  
I mean, one could reason you were being followed and filmed without your consent.

JOSEPH:  
(Chuckles) Yeah.

ANTONIA:  
It's up to you, obviously. I'm just sorry I didn't think of it sooner.

JOSEPH:  
No, this is amazing. Thank you. Uh, how about I give you a call after I check it out?

ANTONIA:  
Call me back. You mean like last time?

JOSEPH:  
(Chuckles) Different this time. Just drive safely. And I'll give you a call soon.

ANTONIA:  
Okay, bye.

JOSEPH: Bye.

(Sound of three beeps of phone call ending)

JOSEPH:

Well this all feels a little familiar.

(Sound of walking back into the house and sitting down at desk)

(Sound of typing on keyboard)

(Sound of inserting SD card in laptop)

JOSEPH:

Okay. Let's see what's saved on here.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I see right away that there are three folders, simply named Hartson 100, Hartson 101, and Hartson 102. I open Hartson 102 first.

JOSEPH:

Hmm.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Inside the folder are two large video files.

JOSEPH:

Let's try the first one. Wow.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Unlike the traffic cam footage, which is grainy and blurry, the drone video footage is extremely clear and professional looking, like something you'd see in a movie. The video opens with footage of what appears to be a convenience store or gas station parking lot. After a few seconds, the drone rises straight into the sky, with the camera revealing a wide-angle view of the surroundings. And it doesn't take me long to realize I'm looking at Biggs, the tiny town on the Columbia River across the bridge from Maryhill.

The camera then pans cinematically as the drone smoothly positions itself above the bridge and starts to track at the same speed as the northbound car traffic below. As it does, it slowly zooms in on one vehicle in particular...

JOSEPH:

Hm hmm.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

...which I quickly realize is my car. I advance the video forward 30 seconds at a time. Soon I see my car turn into Maryhill State Park, and then stop in the parking lot. I can see Antonia's white truck there.

JOSEPH:

(Laughs) We look so tiny from up here.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

And then I see us both get out of our vehicles and start to talk to each other, and then start to walk on the grass, near the river.

JOSEPH:

Oh, woah!

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

The drone then suddenly and swiftly crosses back over the river, and hovers over the parking lot where it started its flight. I can see its operator coming into view as the drone starts to land.

JOSEPH:

Hello Marlon.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Once it's on the pavement, the video ends.

JOSEPH:

Hmph. Alright.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

The second video in the folder begins on the ground in a grassy field, with trees in the distance. After a few seconds, the drone again rises swiftly, revealing picnic shelters and other structures in and around Maryhill, as well as the wide Columbia River beyond them and my car in the parking lot. The drone then moves up and over some orchards and vineyards and then up along a rocky brown hillside, eventually settling in the sky high above the left side of the cemetery, away from where Antonia's truck is parked.

Soon I can see myself on the phone with Mel, while Antonia wanders around among the gravestones. A few moments later she quickly walks to her truck, and I can see her getting her rifle from behind the seat, and a moment later...

JOSEPH:

Ha ha!

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):  
...the screen goes totally dark.

JOSEPH:  
Gotcha. (Laughs) Okay, what other videos are on here.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):  
I open the Hartson 101 folder next. There's only one video file in it.

JOSEPH:  
Oh. Well, we're not in Biggs anymore.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):  
This video starts on what appears to be a rooftop of a building in a city, maybe six floors high, on a rainy day.

JOSEPH:  
I think I know what this is.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):  
After a few seconds, the drone rises and begins to slowly move over a bustling crowd that is walking on the sidewalks below. The camera zooms in slightly...

JOSEPH:  
Oh. There you are.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):  
...and it doesn't take long for me to spot Becky and her red headphones walking among the lunchtime crowd. And then I see myself in my beard, moustache, and eyebrows walking forty or so feet ahead of her. The camera basically stays fixed on me as the drone moves forward, matching my walking pace. After a few of blocks, I see myself walk into the noodle shop.

JOSEPH:  
Ha! Oops. Sorry Mel.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):  
When I do, the drone stops moving and hovers in place. I skip ahead 30 seconds at a time until I see myself walking out of the shop, and then the drone continues moving forward at my pace towards the crosswalk. After a minute or so, it stops moving again.

I see all the familiar things, only from a higher vantage, and in crisp high definition.

JOSEPH:  
(Laughs) It did turn to walk. Right as I stepped into the street.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

The guy in the blue jacket, standing near someone who even in HD footage looks just like Mel, runs over to help me. Then I see myself walking away quickly up the street, towards Roasted. After about a minute, the drone slowly descends to the street and I see the tall figure of Marlon Mason coming into the frame as it lands.

JOSEPH:

Hmm, yep.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

He looks over his shoulder as if talking to someone and gives a thumbs up, and then the screen goes dark.

JOSEPH:

Welp, at least I've seen it for myself now. Okay Hartson 100. What do you have for me to see.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

There's only one video in this folder, too.

JOSEPH:

Hmph. What?

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

This video opens on a close-up shot of a cardboard sign, that has a handwritten message on it.

JOSEPH:

What does that say? For...the Bedfellows! (Reacts)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Beneath the words are squiggly hand drawings of a violin, an accordion, a banjo, and a guitar.

JOSEPH:

Huh! Well, this should be interesting.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

The camera then zooms upward, revealing the same rooftop and outdoor scene as the previous video.

JOSEPH:

Hmm.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

The crowd is walking down both sidewalks of Westlake Avenue as before, and the drone begins to track along at a walking pace, hovering at a safe distance overhead.

JOSEPH:

Wait.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

Only this time there are no red headphones. And, I don't see myself anywhere in the crowd.

JOSEPH:

Huh. Oh!

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I notice that the street is dry and the sky is partly sunny. The camera continues for a few minutes until it gets to an intersection, where the drone stops and hovers briefly, and then it continues at a walking pace to the next intersection, where it again stops and hovers briefly.

It then moves on to the intersection where the crosswalk incident occurred, and here the drone pauses overhead for more than a minute. Cars come and go in both directions on the street below, and, knowing it well by now, I see the old Datsun pass beneath the drone, only this time it isn't speeding or screeching to a halt. It casually drives with other cars through the intersection, and soon exits the camera frame.

JOSEPH:

Hmm.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

The drone then slowly begins to descend. As it does, the faces of the people in the crowd become clearer. The drone continues to descend and moves slightly to the side of the street until it hovers about 15 feet above one small group in particular.

JOSEPH:

Hmph. Who do we have here?

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I count four people, with their backs turned to the camera. One of them is talking on their phone. The person on the phone then suddenly turns and looks up at the camera...

JOSEPH:

(Scoffs)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

...with a smile, and waves.

JOSEPH:

You're kidding!



NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

The other three people do the same.

JOSEPH:

What? Come on.

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I right-click on the video file in the folder, to check its file properties.

JOSEPH:

Created on October 22nd. That was the Thursday before the weekend that I went down to Santa Monica. Four days before I almost got clobbered in the crosswalk. They did a dress rehearsal! (Scoffs)

(Sound of tapping on phone screen)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

On my phone, I pull up the photo of the old picture of the Bedfellows that I took in Wilson Creek.

JOSEPH:

(Reacts)

(Sound of tapping on phone screen)

NARRATOR (JOSEPH):

I zoom in on the face on Aimo, and then on Ernesto. Then I zoom in and take a closer look at the two other men in the picture.

JOSEPH:

Who are you guys?

(Sound of getting up and walking)

(Sound of opening door to garage and turning on light)

(Sound of switching on the detector and adjusting volume)

JOSEPH:

(To detector) Is finishing this treasure hunt going to be good or bad for me?

(Sound of detector clicks and pulses)

JOSEPH:

Y

E

(Sound of turning off detector)

JOSEPH:

Yes? (Laughs) What is that supposed to mean?

(Sound of turning detector back on)

JOSEPH:

What are you?

(Sound of detector clicks and pulses)

JOSEPH:

(Gasps)

N

(Sound of turning off detector)

JOSEPH:

No. (Laughs)

(Fade out all sounds)

(Fade in sounds of being inside restaurant)

(Sound of person arriving at table and taking seat)

MEL:

I heard you still haven't officially accepted with Molecular.

JOSEPH:

(Chuckles) No, not yet. I had some follow-up questions for them.

MEL:

Are you trying to make people miserable? Or mad at you?

JOSEPH:

Oh I'm definitely not. But I didn't invite you to lunch to talk about that.

MEL:

Oh? What. I don't like that look on your face.

JOSEPH:

I have something on my phone I want to show you.

MEL:

Okay...

(Sound of starting video)

MEL:

(Inhales) (Exhales)

(Sound of stopping video)

JOSEPH:

Anything to say? Mel, that's you right there at the end, waving at the camera. You obviously forgot to remove the SD card from the drone, when you removed the sticker. Marlon would know, or ask you, to take the card out before anything else. (Pause) Maybe you got distracted, or forgot? Or ran out of time? You're really not going to say anything?

I was supposed to go for a walk that day, wasn't I? It was all set up, and you played me perfectly. And look, I'm not mad that you lied to me about not being at the crosswalk. I'm sure you had a good reason.

MEL:

I didn't lie to you.

JOSEPH:

Okay, fine, you lied to the detectives. Is it any different?

MEL:

I was in the office the whole time you went for the walk. Everyone was just expecting to see someone who looked like me.

JOSEPH:

Mel. Are you caught up in something? Something that has its grip on you? Maybe I can help you out of it, whatever it is.

Look, if I come back to work, I'm going to need an assistant that I can trust.

MEL:

I'm not your assistant anymore, remember? I'm a project manager.

JOSEPH:

Okay! Whatever! I mean, not whatever. Your promotion was earned and deserved. But I need to know I can trust every employee who takes that elevator up to Motorpool every day.

MEL:

You don't trust me? Fine! I quit!

JOSEPH:

You can't quit! Are you in any kind of trouble?

MEL:

I'm not doing anything I don't want to be doing.

JOSEPH:

Okay. Why is all this happening? Why am I being followed? And filmed? Why?

(Sound of footsteps arriving)

RESTAURANT SERVER:

Mr. Elo, I'm so sorry. We need to ask you to please keep your voice down.

JOSEPH:

Yes, of course. Sorry about that.

RESTAURANT SERVER:

It's alright. Please enjoy your meal.

(Sound of footsteps leaving)

JOSEPH:

Mel. Why?

MEL:

Nobody thought you'd take it this seriously.

JOSEPH:

Take what seriously? And who's 'nobody'?

MEL:

All I can say is, don't make it bigger than it is.

JOSEPH:

Don't make what bigger? And how can I not do that, when so many weird things are happening all around me?

MEL:

Maybe things aren't what they seem to you. Or as bad as they seem to you.

JOSEPH:

That's really *all* you can say?

MEL:

Yep.

JOSEPH:

But if you're working for Marlon, or whoever is behind all of this...why are you helping me out? With information about the land trust, or someone in red headphones following me? Or the RV license plate. All of that.

MEL:

Because I'm rooting for you.

JOSEPH:

Rooting for me. Rooting for me to do what? What does that mean?

(Sound of footsteps arriving)

RESTAURANT SERVER:

I'm so sorry Mr. Elo. But if you can't keep your voice down, we may need to ask you to leave.

JOSEPH:

Dominic. I'm so sorry, Again. (Breathes out)

(Sound of footsteps leaving)

MEL:

Joseph, you have good people in your life, all around you. I'm one of them.

JOSEPH:

And I'm supposed to just believe that? About everyone who's at the end of the video we just watched. People who are apparently in on all of this? Mel, who is that older bearded guy who is next to you, with the Sean Connery hat? And the other guy next to you, in the blue jacket?

MEL:

Well, you saw who else was there with us, right?

JOSEPH:  
(Exhales) Yeah!

MEL:  
Well then, maybe you should go ask your sister.

(End of episode)

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