

"THE SHADOWS OF A MOMENT"
The Sheridan Tapes - Season 01, Episode 16
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By Trevor Van Winkle

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Homestead on the Corner

INT. POULTICE PRESS OFFICES - DAY

A quiet corner office in a small publishing company. A tiny desk fan is running, and someone is packing up for the day.

ANTHONY PERDUE
(muttering to himself)
Now where did I put that...

The door pops open suddenly, startling Anthony.

ANTHONY PERDUE (CONT'D)
(surprised and a little
alarmed)
Anna! I didn't think you were
coming in today.

ANNA SHERIDAN
(flustered, a bit rushed)
I'm not. Listen Anthony, I need to
ask you a favor...

ANTHONY PERDUE
(slightly concerned)
Whoa whoa whoa... Slow it down,
alright? You feeling okay? You look
a little...

ANNA SHERIDAN
(direct)
Please, Anthony just... Listen.
Okay?

ANTHONY PERDUE
(pause)
Could you at least sit down? You
know standing and talking makes me
nervous.

ANNA SHERIDAN
(grudgingly)
Fine. Anthony...

ANTHONY PERDUE
And I'm going to get you a glass of
water, okay? You need to take care
of...

ANNA SHERIDAN
(curt)
Anthony! Any other day I'd really
appreciate it, but right now, just
stop and...

ANTHONY PERDUE
(mom-friend mode)

Anna, I know how you get when
you've got a fire under you, so I'm
not giving you a choice. Drink
this, take a deep breath, and then
start over. Okay?

ANNA GRUMBLES, but takes the glass and chugs it down. As soon
as she's done...

ANTHONY PERDUE (CONT'D)
(genuinely checking)
Better?

ANNA SHERIDAN
(a little bit calmer)
Okay fine, yes. Better.

ANTHONY PERDUE
Glad to hear it. So: tell me what's
on your mind?

ANNA SHERIDAN
(cautiously)
I'm... I'm not sure how much I can
tell you. I don't know how much of
it you'd understand...

ANTHONY PERDUE
(a little smug)
Anna, remind me how long I've been
your agent? I don't think there's
much you can tell me I won't
understand.

ANNA SHERIDAN
(hesitant)
I need to... Go away for a while.
Quite a long while, actually.

ANTHONY PERDUE
(a bit relieved)
What like, another writing trip?
Well, I can't imagine Poultice
would have any trouble with that,
so long as you don't burn anyone's
house this time...

ANNA SHERIDAN
(trying to be gentle)
No Anthony... No. Not like that. I
need to go away. I need to
disappear.

ANTHONY PERDUE
(NERVOUS CHUCKLE)

Well, we all need to do that now
and then. Get away from it all
and...

ANNA SHERIDAN

(frustrated)

No! Anthony, listen to what I'm
saying right now: I'm going away.
I'm not looking for inspiration,
I'm not writing another book, I'm
not going on vacation or taking a
break. I'm disappearing.

ANTHONY PERDUE

(pause)

For how long?

ANNA SHERIDAN

(suddenly drained)

I don't know.

Suddenly, the glass slips from Anna's hand and smashes into
the floor.

ANTHONY PERDUE

(alarmed)

Whoa! Anna, are you alright?

ANNA SHERIDAN

(almost whispered)

Goodbye, Anthony.

ANTHONY PERDUE

(distracted, trying to

pick up the broken glass)

Bye? You just got here... Anna?

Anna?

Anna's already walked out. Anthony pauses, then goes to his
desk, dialing.

SECURITY GUARD

(through speakerphone)

Security.

ANTHONY PERDUE

(nervous)

Yes, this is Anthony Perdue on
level 4, Anna Sheridan just left my
office. Could you send someone to
the front lobby to... To...

SECURITY GUARD
Sir?

Anthony pauses, thinking, then...

ANTHONY PERDUE
(finally deciding what to
do)
Just make sure she makes it out of
the building safely, alright?

SECURITY GUARD
(a little confused)
Um... Yes, of course sir. Anything
else?

ANTHONY PERDUE
(hesitant)
No, thank you.

Anthony hangs up, then SIGHS HEAVILY, leaning on his desk for support.

ANTHONY PERDUE (CONT'D)
(almost a prayer)
Please Anna... Don't do anything
stupid.

INT. MARVIN'S BAR AND GRILL - EVENING

CLICK. The tape starts. Repetitive electronic music blares in the background, and Bill is midway through a toast.

BILL TYLER
(bragging on Sam, trying
to embarrass him)
...Even though we all thought it
was impossible, this son of a bitch
right here not only managed to
figure out what happened to Anna
Sheridan, but went one step further
and brought her back from the dead
to top it all off! And I know he
hates being bragged on, but damn
Sam -- that's one hell of a first
case.

A round of gruff cheers, claps, and table pounding goes around the room.

BILL TYLER (CONT'D)
(master of ceremony-ing)
Keep it down, keep it down you
animals! Now, I'll be the first to
admit, I didn't think much of Sam
when he first showed up. I mean,
look at the guy! Small town cop
without an ounce of small town
charm, exclusively wears the
world's most boring ties... And
Sam, I'm just being honest here,
but you have the charisma and
emotional range of a piece of wet
cardboard. I mean, seriously, you
sound like a...

SAM BAILEY
(annoyed)
Bill.

BILL TYLER
But still, even with all that
against him -- you're a damn good
cop, Sam, and I'm proud to serve
alongside you.

(raises a glass)
Detective Sam Bailey everyone!

EVERYONE
Here here!

Glasses clink, and everyone drinks.

BILL TYLER
Now, everyone go have some fun,
alright! This is a party, isn't it?

Cheers of affirmation go up, and a general hubbub of activity
fills the bar. After a moment, Sam wanders off to the bar.

SAM BAILEY
(tired, curt)
Uh... Excuse me? Coffee, black.

BILL TYLER
(wandering up behind him)
Seriously? Coffee? I think you
missed the part where I said this
was a party.

SAM BAILEY
(annoyed)
And I think you must have missed
the...
(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
(to bartender, delivering
coffee)

Thank you.

(back to Bill)
And I think you missed the part
where I said I didn't want a party.

BILL TYLER
(cherry)
Well, you definitely earned one,
and I wasn't about to let you skip
out on us this time.

SAM BAILEY
(matter of factly)
I didn't earn it.

BILL TYLER
(rolling his eyes)
Oh come on, this again? Sam, you
found Anna, even when she didn't
want to be found. I mean, I still
have no idea how you did it, but..

SAM BAILEY
(angry)
It was luck. Just stupid, dumb
luck. I could've missed it just as
easily.

BILL TYLER
(tired of having this
argument)
But you didn't. That's the point.
Look, I don't see what the big deal
is. You found her! She's alive!
Case closed!

SAM BAILEY
(muttering)
I don't know if it is.

BILL TYLER
(confused)
What do you mean?

SAM BAILEY
(SIGHS)
There are still too many questions.
Too many unknowns.

BILL TYLER

(annoyed)

What "unknowns?" She wanted to disappear for a while. It's not the first time someone's done that. Not even the first time a writer's done it. And if she was trying to break her pot habit, then...

SAM BAILEY

(irritated)

I know, I know! It all fits, right? It all has a nice, simple explanation. None of the stuff on the tapes was real, she was just high the whole time. Everything just -- makes sense in the end, and they all lived happily ever after, forever and ever, amen!

BILL TYLER

(confused)

O -- kay. What's gotten into you, Sam? Two weeks ago you were fighting with the chief over being assigned her case. Now, what -- you think it was all true? Ghosts and monsters and -- whatever else was on her tapes?

SAM BAILEY

(lost)

I -- I don't know what I think.

(beat)

Geez, is it getting warmer in here, or it just me.

Sam loosens his jacket, pulling out the recorder and setting it on the bar as he takes it off.

BILL TYLER

(confused)

Is that your recorder?

SAM BAILEY

(doesn't think anything of it)

What? Oh, Anna's old one, actually. But yeah, it's the one I'm using.

BILL TYLER

(sarcastic)

Why are you recording right now?

(MORE)

BILL TYLER (CONT'D)
Expecting some big developments in
the case?

SAM BAILEY
No, it's just kind of -- becoming a
habit, I guess.
(beat)
Plus, I've had a hard time keeping
track of things this week.
Recording helps, I think.

BILL TYLER
(concerned)
Have you been sleeping any better
lately?

SAM BAILEY
(SCOFFS)
No. Worse, actually.

BILL TYLER
Why?

Sam pauses, wondering if he should tell him.

SAM BAILEY
(hesitant)
I've been having -- bad dreams
again. Nightmares. Pretty much
every time I try to go to sleep.

BILL TYLER
What do you mean, "again?"

SAM BAILEY
I don't know. I think -- I mean, I
can't remember anything when I wake
up, but I think that -- maybe --
They're the same ones I used to
have as a kid. At least... Some of
them.

BILL TYLER
(belittling)
Is that all it is? Nightmares? Just
take some ambien and...

SAM BAILEY
It's not just nightmares, Bill --
It's memories.

BILL TYLER
(a little uncertain)
What memories?

SAM BAILEY

(pause)

Anna's last tape. It was... She was
in Agate Shore just after I left.
Right before the dam broke.

BILL TYLER

(realizing)

Oh Jesus.

SAM BAILEY

(SIGHS, exhausted)

Yeah. She told the whole, sad story
all over again: the day the lake
evaporated, the day they found Pat
drowned, and then every death after
that.

(turns to face Bill)

You have any idea what it's like to
hear someone tell you all the ways
you've ever been hurt? Someone who
has no idea you'll be listening,
but tells your story anyway? You
know what that does to you when
you've spent months trying to
forget it and move on?

BILL TYLER

(not sure what to say)

No.

SAM BAILEY

(turning away)

No. Of course you don't. So stop
trying telling me to eat, drink,
and be merry, because it isn't
going to work.

There's a long moment of silence between them -- then:

BILL TYLER

(calling to the bartender)

Hey Mark? Virgin Mai Tai for the
man of the hour, would you?

SAM BAILEY

(confused)

What are you...?

BILL TYLER

I know you don't drink, but by god
I need to get you something more
fun than a cup of black coffee.

SAM BAILEY
(exasperated)
Bill, I just said...

BILL TYLER
And I'm saying, *hell no* am I going to let you stew in your self-pity any longer. We've all lost shit, Sam, and you don't see any of us acting like the world's come to an end. We eat. We drink. We make merry, and we forget. That's what *moving on* means.

(bartender hands him a drink, passes it to Sam)
Here we go: a cure for what ails ya.

SAM BAILEY
(trying to weasel out of this)
I really am fine with just the coffee...

BILL TYLER
(comical, but still a threat)
Sam, I don't want to, but I will drag you kicking and screaming towards enjoying yourself if I have to.
(holds out glass)
Drink.

After a moment's hesitation, Sam takes the glass. He takes a small, almost experimental sip.

BILL TYLER (CONT'D)
Good, right?

SAM BAILEY
(COUGHS SLIGHTLY)
It's a bit sweet.

BILL TYLER
(CHUCKLES)
That's kind of the point. Whereas I think the point of black coffee is to punish ourselves for some unspeakable sin in humanity's past.

SAM BAILEY
I like black coffee.

BILL TYLER
(shrugs)
Suit yourself. The world must need
masochists for a reason.

Sam takes another experimental sip.

BILL TYLER (CONT'D)
(trying to get him to open
up)
So these... Dreams of yours. You
want to talk about them?

SAM BAILEY
(shutting him down)
Not really, no.

BILL TYLER
(trying not to sound
disappointed)
Suit yourself. Probably not the
right time for it anyways. But hey,
I told you I'd get you out to
karaoke one of these days, didn't
I!

SAM BAILEY
(bitterly)
I don't see anyone singing.

BILL TYLER
Oh, well that's because it's your
party. Be a bit of a faux pas not
to let the man of the hour go
first.

SAM BAILEY
(terrified)
Oh god, they're not expecting me
to... Are they?

BILL TYLER
(smirking)
'fraid so.

SAM BAILEY
(standing up to leave)
Shit. I -- I need to get going...

BILL TYLER
(getting in his way)
Oh, no you don't. Either you sit
down and drink, or you stand up and
sing.

SAM BAILEY
(lying)
I... I can't sing.

BILL TYLER
(LAUGHS)
Well shit, neither can I. No one's asking you to join the choir -- just belt something out that sounds vaguely like a song. Think of it like singing in the shower... Just, in front of a bunch of people.

SAM BAILEY
(wincing)
I really don't need that image in my head, Bill.

BILL TYLER
Okay, fine. But you get what I'm saying, right?

SAM BAILEY
Not really.

BILL TYLER
It doesn't have to be good -- you just need to have fun with it.

SAM BAILEY
(flat)
Fun.

BILL TYLER
Yeah, you know the feeling you crush down inside every time you go to work? Just -- let it out for a change.

SAM BAILEY
(realizing he can't get out of this)
What should I... What do you think I should sing?

BILL TYLER
(dismissive)
I don't care, just pick a song you know and go for it.

SAM BAILEY
(a little embarrassed)
I don't think most of the songs I know are on there.

BILL TYLER
Sure they are! What do you listen
to on the road?

SAM BAILEY
(flatly)
NPR.

BILL TYLER
Seriously?

SAM BAILEY
What?

BILL TYLER
(SIGHs)
Only you Sam, only you.
(beat)
Okay -- what about songs from your
childhood? I can't believe everyone
in your family was as boring as
you.

SAM BAILEY
(suddenly retreating)
I... I don't know. I can't remember
much...
(beat)
Well -- there is one song. My
parents used to sing it with their
friends, when they had them over
for drinks. It's been a while,
but...

BILL TYLER
(really trying now)
Well there you go, sing that!

SAM BAILEY
Do you think they'll have it?

BILL TYLER
Well, check the machine and see! Go
ahead, I'll keep your drink warm
for you.

Sam gets up, leaving the recorder running. After a moment,
Bill takes a sip of Sam's drink.

BILL TYLER (CONT'D)
(disgusted)
Ugh. Hey Mark? Give me a refresh,
don't spare the rum.

Across the room, the speakers crackle to life. SAM COUGHS SLIGHTLY into the microphone.

BILL TYLER (CONT'D)
(CLAPPING)
Yeah Sam!

A smattering of applause runs through the bar, and SAM COUGHS AGAIN, trying to clear his throat.

After a moment, a slightly tinny, synthesized version of "The Parting Glass" comes on.

SAM BAILEY
(singing quietly, but with
quite a bit of emotion
attached to the words)
Of all the money that e'er I had

I spent it in good company
And all the harm I've ever done
Alas it was to none but me
And all I've done for want of wit
To mem'ry now I can't recall
So fill to me the parting glass
Good night and joy be to you all.

(beat)
Oh, all the comrades e'er I had,
They're sorry for my going away,
And all the sweethearts e'er I had,
They'd wish me one more day to
stay,
But since it falls unto my lot,
That I should rise and you should
not,
I gently rise and softly call,
Good night and joy be with you all.
A man may drink and not be drunk
(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

A man may fight and not be slain
A man may court a pretty girl
And perhaps be welcomed back again
But since it has so ought to be
By a time to rise and a time to
sleep
Come fill to me the parting glass
Good night and joy be with you all
Good night and joy be with you all.

The music ends, and an even quieter applause greets him.

BILL TYLER
(SIGHS, exasperated)
God, only he could make karaoke
depressing.

Sam rushes over, BREATHING A LITTLE SHAKY.

BILL TYLER (CONT'D)
(concerned)
You alright, Sam?

SAM BAILEY
(harrowed)
Never make me do that again.

BILL TYLER
(CHUCKLING)
Trust me: I won't.
(holds up glass)
Cheers.

SAM BAILEY
Wait, that's my...

BILL COUGHS AND SPASMS, CRYING OUT IN PAIN.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
Bill! What's wrong?

BILL TYLER
(pained, almost inaudible)
My throat, it's burning, it's...

SAM BAILEY
(to bartender)
Get him some water, now! He's...

BILL TYLER
(choked cry of pain)
Ahhh!

Bill swings his arm as he falls, accidentally knocking over the glass. As soon as he does -- WHOOSH. The drink ignites like napalm across the bar.

SAM BAILEY
Jesus! Where's the fire
extinguisher?

The bartender grabs it off the wall and shoots it at the fire -- but it just roars louder.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
(taking command)
Shit... Everyone out! Everyone out,
now! Quick, someone help me with
Bill before he...

CLICK.

A few minutes later, out in the parking lot. The bar is in flames as the fire department tries to get the blaze under control.

After a moment's silence...

BILL TYLER
(COUGHING)
What the... Where... Why...

SAM BAILEY
Easy, easy... Try to keep still.
The EMT said you might still have
some trouble breathing.

BILL TYLER
(tries to stand up)
Trouble...

BILL COUGHS VIOLENTLY, then falls back onto the stretcher.

SAM BAILEY
Yeah. Whatever was in that drink
looks like it damaged your lungs
pretty badly.

BILL TYLER
(angry)
Oh, I'm going to kill Mark for
that...

SAM BAILEY
(trying to calm him down)
They've already taken him in for
questioning. Though by the look of
him, he's just as confused about
the whole thing as everyone else.

BILL TYLER
(slightly disoriented)
What happened? I think I passed
out.

SAM BAILEY
(hesitant)
Well... When you knocked the Mai
Tai over, it... It ignited. Went up
like napalm the moment it touched
the bar.

BILL TYLER
(CHUCKLING PAINFULLY)
Sure. And someone replaced the fire
extinguishers with gummy bears too,
I bet...

SAM BAILEY
(trying to convince him)
I'm serious. I've never seen a
reactive agent go up like that. I
don't know what got into that
drink, but -- well, I guess you'll
need to find a new karaoke spot
from now on.

BILL TYLER
(concerned)
Did everyone make it out okay?

SAM BAILEY
(grateful)
Yeah. A few pretty serious burns,
but -- everyone's okay. Shaken, but
okay.

BILL TYLER
(trying to joke through
the pain)
Well...
(MORE)

BILL TYLER (CONT'D)
That's the last time I go out
drinking with you, that's for sure.

SAM BAILEY
(CHUCKLES)
Trust me, the feeling's mutual.
(beat)
I think Robert wanted to talk to
you, if you're up to it...

BILL TYLER
Yeah yeah, send him over. Probably
wants to know what I was doing
drinking a Mai Tai in the first
place.
(beat, then genuine)
Thanks Sam.

Sam stands up and walks off a little ways from the noise and commotion, then stops.

SAM BAILEY
(to himself, back in
detective mode)
First De Witt, and now this -- a
fire that starts out of nowhere and
can't be stopped. Sound familiar?
(beat, SIGHS)
The things Anna talked about on her
tapes... Monsters, ghosts, forces
from -- somewhere else. Two weeks
ago, I would've dismissed them
outright the moment someone
suggested them. Now... Now they
seem to be seeping into real life
even when I'm not listening to the
tapes.
(beat)
When I found Anna, I thought that
someone might have been keeping her
there in the halfway house against
her will, but she shut that train
of thought down pretty quickly.
She'd tried to get sober before,
and that place was apparently doing
her more good than anywhere else
she's ever tried. And because of
that, she asked to be left alone,
for us to keep it a secret. So --
we agreed. The law around a
person's right to disappear is a
little fuzzy, but... There's no law
against it, and we still haven't
officially declared her dead.
(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

Nothing says we have to announce her survival to the world before she's ready. But of course, that wasn't enough to stop Bill from celebrating... Or to keep me from having doubts.

(beat)

I wanted to ask her about the tapes, but... Something tells me she'd just say the same thing I always thought: that they were the product of a drug-adled mind and an overly-active imagination, and nothing more. Two weeks ago I would have accepted that explanation without question. Now...

A small sound of movement comes from somewhere nearby, and Sam cuts off.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

(calling out)

Hello? Is someone there?

No response. Sam pulls out his flashlight and switches it on.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

It's all right -- come out where I can see you.

A sudden scuffling, and someone bolts off.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

Hey! Stop!

Sam runs after the fleeing figure.

After a few seconds, he stops, draws his gun, and cocks it loudly.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

Oslow County PD! Freeze, or I will open fire!

The figure ahead stops. Sam takes a few steps forward.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

Hands on your head. Turn around, *slowly*.

After a moment, the figure does. Sam lowers his pistol.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
(confused)
Miss... Sol?

MARIA SOL
(annoyed)
I wish it wasn't.

SAM BAILEY
(lost)
What -- What are you doing here?

MARIA SOL
(exasperated)
What do you think I'm doing here?

SAM BAILEY
(confused)
I... I really don't know.

MARIA SOL
Well maybe if you put away that
gun, I can tell you.

SAM BAILEY
(suspicious)
I don't suppose you had anything to
do with...
(nods to fire)
That, did you?

MARIA SOL
(LAUGHS)
What, do I look like an arsonist?

SAM BAILEY
Um...

MARIA SOL
(annoyed)
Don't answer that.
(beat, SIGHS)
No, I didn't have anything to do
with the fire.

SAM BAILEY
(demanding an answer)
Then what are you doing here?

MARIA SOL
(rolling her eyes)
Same thing you are, detective:
trying to find some answers.

SAM BAILEY
About what?

MARIA SOL
About Anna. What else would I be
looking for?

SAM BAILEY
(hesitant, not sure if he
should tell her)
Miss Sol, there are some...
Developments in the case I think
you should be made aware of.

MARIA SOL
(cynical)
What? You mean finding her in the
halfway house?

SAM BAILEY
(taken aback)
How... How did you know about that?

MARIA SOL
(dismissive)
Oh, please. You called it in on an
unencrypted police radio. I was
listening in from my phone on the
way to Oslow.

SAM BAILEY
(not buying her story)
Well if you know we found her, then
why are you...

MARIA SOL
(dead serious)
I know you found *something* in that
house. Something that looked and
sounded an awful lot like Anna.

SAM BAILEY
(suddenly nervous)
What do you -- what are you trying
to say?

MARIA SOL
I know you've been listening to
Anna's tapes, detective. I don't
know how much you've heard, but...
(beat as she considers how
to put this)
Anna and I found a lot of strange
things over the years, okay.
(MORE)

MARIA SOL (CONT'D)
And a lot of them looked human, but
definitely weren't.

SAM BAILEY
(scrambling to put the
pieces together)
So do you think that... Are you
saying you think the person I found
isn't really Anna?

MARIA SOL
(fearful certainty)
I'm saying, I know that it isn't.

CLICK. The recording ends.

ROLL END THEME
AND CREDITS