

ONLY MURDERS IN THE BUILDING

Pilot Episode: True Crime

Written By:

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OVER A BLACK SCREEN -- WE HEAR SIRENS BLARING AND SMASH TO:

INT. ARCONIA LOBBY - NIGHT (N1)

COPS SWARMING -- BLACK BOOTS POUND marble lobby floors and--

INT. ARCONIA HALLWAY - SAME (N1)

--down long carpeted hallways -- where TENANTS PEEK OUT --
"DOORS CLOSED! STAY INSIDE!" -- DOORS SLAM SHUT -- GUNS ARE
DRAWN -- as COPS APPROACH TWO SEPARATE APARTMENTS -- where a
go-ahead is given -- AND TWO DOORS ARE RAMMED OPEN!

INT. ARCONIA STAIRWELL - SAME (N1)

CHARLES-HADEN SAVAGE and OLIVER PUTNAM (whom we'll come to
know) run down the stairs in terrified, escape-mode.

CHARLES/OLIVER
Ohmygodohmygodohmygodohmygod!!!

THEY RUN OUT OF THE STAIRWELL INTO...

INT. ARCONIA HALLWAY (MABEL'S FLOOR) - CONTINUOUS (N1)

...A LONG HALL WITH NO COPS. THEY CAUTIOUSLY PICK UP SPEED.

CHARLES
We have to get her! I'm not
leaving her here!

OLIVER
Oh, and I would?!

CHARLES
Of course you would!!

OLIVER
OF COURSE I WOULD!!!

They SLAM through swinging doors and eye a door, slightly
ajar -- A QUICK GLANCE OF CONCERN AS THEY RUN AND BURST INTO--

INT. MABEL'S APARTMENT (FOYER/DINING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS (N1)

--where they are soon struck frozen by what they see: a
stylish young woman, MABEL MORA, (whom we'll come to know) IS
ON THE FLOOR, COVERED IN BLOOD, HUNCHED OVER THE BLOODIED
DEAD BODY OF SOMEONE IN A TIE-DYED HOODIE (face unseen).

MABEL

(looking up to the guys)
It's not what you think.

CHARLES AND OLIVER TAKE IN THIS SHOCK -- as the bouncy intro to Jan & Dean's cover of the classic "*Manhattan*" kicks up.

JAN & DEAN (RECORDING)

*We'll have Manhattan! -- the Bronx
and Staten Island, too...*

HARD CUT TO BLACK -- WHERE WORDS APPEAR: **TWO MONTHS EARLIER**

EXT. UPPER WEST SIDE STREET - LATE DAY (D2)

THE FAMED SKYLINE looms on a late fall day as Jan & Dean sing about the isle of joy Manhattan can be -- and CHARLES walks home, holding a paper bag -- happily energized, in hat and shades, amid a diverse throng in a city that's never felt more alive or comfortingly communal. HEAR CHARLES OVER:

CHARLES (V.O.)

Here's a thing I don't get --
people who worry about living in a
big city because of all the crime.
As any true-crime aficionado will
tell you, it's the boondocks you
need to worry about.

He tips his hat to a WOMAN passerby. She pushes her glasses up, using her middle finger. Charles smiles and carries on.

CHARLES (V.O.)

I mean, let's face it: nobody ever
discovered 19 bodies buried in the
backyard of a 14-story apartment
building. Because a backyard here
is a courtyard -- and there's about
200 windows and 400 eyes with a
view of that courtyard.

EXT. THE ARCONIA - CONTINUOUS (D2)

Charles rounds a corner and eyes something big, a block away.

CHARLES (V.O.)

Long way around to say, there's
safety in numbers. Like the
numbers who live... at The Arconia.

REVERSE TO REVEAL... THE ARCONIA, gleaming in the last bit of sun, a stunning 14-story pre-war landmark apartment building.

On the street, a young couple, KEV and ANA, approaches Charles.

KEV
Hey, hold up, are you... ?!

Charles grins and removes his sunglasses with a flourish.

CHARLES
I'm... Brazzos.

KEV
Oh, shit! Dude, I used to watch that show with my dad -- it was his favorite. What was that thing you always said?

Charles leans in, preparing to deliver his signature line, and WE QUICK CUT TO--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM (BRAZZOS EPISODE) - TV FOOTAGE (X1)

A MOMENT FROM "BRAZZOS" (CBS, CIRCA '92) -- WHERE A DARK-HAIRED CHARLES-HADEN SAVAGE (AS BRAZZOS) REMOVES HIS SUNGLASSES AND LEANS INTROSPECTIVELY TO CAMERA.

CHARLES AS "BRAZZOS"
This sends the investigation...

EXT. THE ARCONIA - BACK TO PRESENT (D2)

CHARLES
...into a whole new direction.

KEV
Yes! Damn -- this is so cool.
(then, sad...)
Dad has ALS now. He can't really talk or feed himself anymore.

CHARLES
Oh, I'm sor--

KEV
He's in hospice, but he just won't let go. Honestly, it'd be better for our whole family if he would.

Charles nods, waits... awkward.

CHARLES
Would you like a picture?

KEV

Oh, man -- thanks, that's so nice!

The guy then hands Charles his phone and puts an arm around Ana -- for Charles to take a picture of them. Mortifying.

ANA

Can you do it landscape? No --
turn it -- yeah, sideways.

Charles takes the shot for them.

CHARLES

You tell your dad Brazzos took that
picture.

KEV

I will, but he won't understand.
(so sad)
Not anymore. Thanks again, man!

Charles continues on his way, a little less happily, as WE
NOW HEAR MABEL OVER:

MABEL (V.O.)

New York can be a fuckin' lot...

EXT. ANOTHER NEW YORK STREET - SAME (D2)

MABEL (mid-20's) walks home in a knit hat with yellow pom-
pom, Beats headphones and sunglasses -- to avoid all the eyes
she's catching right now.

MABEL (V.O.)

All the eyes on you, all the time.

GUY ON STREET

Hey baby, where you goin' so tough?

Mabel ignores him.

MABEL (V.O.)

2000 women report assaults here
every year. So it's a place that
makes you binge Dateline to find
out how not to end up on Dateline.
I have this recurring dream...

INT. MABEL'S APARTMENT (BEDROOM) - NIGHT (MABEL'S DREAM) (N2)

FROM ABOVE, we see Mabel, asleep on a mattress on the floor.

MABEL (V.O.)
I'm in bed. I wake up.

WE DROP DOWN AND PUSH IN -- and Mabel's eyes snap open.

MABEL (V.O.)
And there's a man standing over me.

IN REVERSE -- A MASKED MAN stands over her on the mattress.

MABEL (V.O.)
I have no idea what he wants, what
he's gonna do to me -- but I know
it's gonna be bad. So I Megan
Rapinoe him smack in the nuts...

THWAM! She hard-kicks up, and the masked man doubles over
and falls to where Mabel has just lunged out of the way...

MABEL (V.O.)
...and I grab my knitting needle.
Yeah, I knit, what about it?

Mabel climbs atop the man, pins his arms with her knees.

MABEL (V.O.)
And I imagine taking him down to
the bone with that knitting needle.

As she plunges her knitting needle into the masked man's head
-- blood shoots up, splattering her... and we CUT BACK TO:
Mabel in her bed, eyes open, looking at the ceiling.

MABEL (V.O.)
Sometimes, when I can't sleep... I
imagine that dude standing over me.

WE RISE TO SEE MABEL IS ALONE AGAIN. She curls up cozily and
shuts her eyes -- a hint of an at-peace smile.

MABEL (V.O.)
And I'm out like a light. Works
every time.

EXT. ANOTHER NEW YORK STREET - BACK TO PRESENT (D2)

Back on the street, Mabel continues on her way.

MABEL (V.O.)
As I said, it's a lot. Don't be
here if you don't like a lot.

A selection from "Annie" kicks in, and WE HEAR OLIVER OVER:

OLIVER (V.O.)
N. Y. C. What is it about you?

EXT. UPPER WEST SIDE BLOCK - SAME (D2)

OLIVER, in a full-length coat that quietly screams he's on the block, speeds to catch the last seconds of a crosswalk light.

OLIVER (V.O.)
Which, of course, is a line from a big hit show about an orphan. And don't we all feel like orphans here at times, struggling to find our place? I saw this brilliant dance piece on the World Wide Web recently, set to *Clair de Lune*...

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. BLACKBOX STAIRCASE SET - VIDEO FOOTAGE (X2)

FOOTAGE OF A DANCE PIECE TO "*CLAIR DE LUNE*" -- where a male dancer bounces on a trampoline, trying to ascend a staircase.

OLIVER (V.O.)
A simple premise -- of a man trying to reach the top of a staircase and falling -- but always trying to find some new way to bounce back up again. And I thought... isn't that each of us every day in this big burg? That's life in New Yo--

HONK!!!

EXT. NEW YORK CROSSWALK - BACK TO PRESENT (D2)

Oliver is now in the middle of the crosswalk, having almost been hit by a Prius.

OLIVER
(yelling to the driver)
Really? Do you not see this coat?!

As Oliver finishes his narration, WE RISE TO TAKE IN THE BLOCK.

OLIVER (V.O.)
Still, one thing is certain here -- just when it's all starting to feel the same, that's when you get hit by something you never saw coming.

THE CITY SOUNDS ENVELOP -- and we see--

EXT. THE ARCONIA - CONTINUOUS (D2)

Oliver enters place he calls home... The Arconia.

INT. ARCONIA LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER (D2)

Charles enters, clearly in a hurry, with a nod to LESTER the doorman. Charles spots Oliver -- *that* guy... collecting a tall stack of packages off a mail cart managed by URSULA.

OLIVER

...these are all research for new shows I'm developing -- some "Off," some "Off-Off." Stay out of the theater if you want a life, Ursula.

Charles pointedly slips past Oliver and over to the ELEVATORS where one is just opening. Yes! He steps--

INT. ARCONIA ELEVATOR (LOBBY) - CONTINUOUS (D2)

--and hits 14 (because there's no button for unlucky 13).

OLIVER (O.S.)

Hold that, please!

Shit. Charles repeat-hits "Door Close" but Oliver hops on.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Thanks, I have a thing that's--

CHARLES

--yeah, me too.

Oliver manages, despite his boxes, to hit 10. As they wait, Oliver sees it's Charles through an opening in his boxes.

OLIVER

Oh. Hello.
(off Charles's nod)
Filming something today?

CHARLES

I'm sorry?

OLIVER

All the makeup. I just assumed--

CHARLES

I'm not wearing makeup.

OLIVER

Oh. Okay.
(then, with a wink)
Me neither.

Charles hits "Door Close" but the doors are stopped by the arm of Mabel -- who steps in (Beats, shades on) and hits 12. She slips to a back corner to scroll her phone and THEY RIDE UP IN SILENCE. Charles checks the time on his phone: 4:58.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

It's not 5 yet, is it?

CHARLES

MABEL

No.

Nope.

Seems they're all in a rush -- as the elevator stops at 6. 6? Nobody hit 6. The doors open and on steps TIM KONO (late 20's, Asian, Wall Street vibe), holding a half-full plastic garbage bag, while on a call he *continues* at full-voice.

TIM (ON PHONE)

Tim Kono, yeah... do you see anything you got in today's-- ?
(mistakenly hits 8 then 9)
Shoot-- sorry.

Charles and Oliver want to strangle him as the doors close.

TIM (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

You do. Okay. I don't know why this keeps happening... Well, this one is very important to me... Really? I can't get it sooner? Well, how early tomorrow... ?

Finally, Tim gets off on 9. Silence. Oliver looks at Mabel.

OLIVER

Do you like your Beats?

Mabel stares forward, unclear as to ignoring/not hearing.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

I had a red pair. Loved 'em. But I left them on the train one d--

CHARLES

DING!

Oliver turns to Charles, the doors open on the 10TH FLOOR.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Wow, even the elevator wants that story to end.

Oliver gives Charles a pinched look as he heads off with his boxes. We see a tabby cat pass by on Oliver's floor just before the doors close on Mabel and a newly-pleased Charles.

INT. CHARLES'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING (MOMENTS LATER) (N2)

Charles hurries in, checks his phone to find it's 5:00. His new episode of **ALL IS NOT OK IN OKLAHOMA** has just dropped! Charles's bachelor abode is dominated by a poster of himself in *BRAZZOS*, with a kitchen overlooking the Arconia courtyard.

A BASSOON IS HEARD out his courtyard window, which Charles shuts for optimal listening. He hits play on his app and WE HEAR A PODCAST PREAMBLE FROM CINDA CANNING (deep NPR).

CINDA CANNING (V.O.)

You're listening to "All Is Not OK in Oklahoma," from Cinda Canning.

Charles pulls red and yellow peppers from his brown bag and puts them in his fridge (where we see more peppers and eggs).

CINDA CANNING (V.O.)

Funding is provided by our sponsors: The RAND Corporation... The Milton and Miriam Swann Foundation For The Arts and For Dissolving the Federal Reserve...

Charles trots to his living room, unfolds a map of Chickasha, Oklahoma he's marked with key locations in the case, then positions himself on his couch, just so...

CINDA CANNING (V.O.)

...and Trader Joe's.

INT. OLIVER'S APARTMENT (LIVING ROOM) - SAME (N2)

Oliver runs around his "old-school London meets Moulin Rouge" place he shares with his bulldog, WINNIE -- setting up for similar immersion in that same podcast.

CINDA CANNING (V.O.)

With additional support from Royal Crown Cruises, the Royal Crown Prince of Dubai...

Oliver links his laptop to Bose speakers by his baby grand, sits in a lounge, lights up a fake fireplace with one remote and uses another to adjust speaker volume. Here we go...

INT. MABEL'S APARTMENT (HALL/ROOMS/BEDROOM) - CONTINUOUS (N2)

In a completely stripped-bare apartment, Mabel listens to ALL IS NOT OK through her Beats as she heads through the expansive raw space to a bedroom where a chandelier hovers above a mattress on the floor.

CINDA CANNING (V.O.)
... Baroness Margaret Backhouse
Fitzhume, and listeners like you."
And now, here's Cinda Canning...
with Episode Six of All Is Not Ok
In Oklahoma...

BLUEGRASS TINGED WITH SOME MYSTERY PLAYS as Mabel flops and focuses on the best part of her day... in Chickasha.

INTERCUTTING NOW -- WE WATCH OUR THREE LONELY TENANTS GET HAPPILY SWEEPED AWAY TO OKLAHOMA... where farm noises mix with the soothing voice of famed podcast narrator, CINDA CANNING.

CINDA CANNING (PODCAST V.O.)
When Ray Butler walked me into the
woods behind his barn that day in
Chickasha, I was thinking more
about his unorthodox clothing
choice for farm living...

EXT. OKLAHOMA WOODS (CHARLES'S VISION) - FANTASY (X3)

IN CHARLES'S IMAGINATION, CINDA ambles in the woods with a 60-
ish farmer, Ray, wearing a light blue seersucker suit.

CINDA CANNING (PODCAST V.O.)
...and wasn't expecting to find
anything related to the disappearance
of his niece, Becky.

EXT. OKLAHOMA WOODS (MABEL'S VISION) - FANTASY (X3)

IN MABEL'S IMAGINATION, a 30-ish, tatted-up Ray wears black
overalls rolled up to expose Doc Martens.

CINDA CANNING (PODCAST V.O.)
But that all changed because of
what was going on fifty yards deep
in the thicket....

EXT. OKLAHOMA WOODS (OLIVER'S VISION) - FANTASY (X3)

IN OLIVER'S IMAGINATION, Ray wears Oliver's own coat he was wearing five minutes ago -- the one that screams at you.

CINDA CANNING (PODCAST V.O.)
...where Ray's old Lab, Bo, was
digging at something in the dirt.

INTERCUT MORE RAPIDLY BETWEEN OUR THREE, ALL PIQUED, leaning forward -- what the fuck is Bo digging up?

CINDA CANNING (PODCAST V.O.) (CONT'D)
Once he got his dug-up prize, Bo
ran proudly to me with it dangling
in his mouth. It took a moment to
absorb what it was, then it became
all too clear... Bo had found--

INT. ARCONIA APARTMENTS (TRIO) - BACK TO PRESENT (N2)

THWONK THWONK THWONK!! Our three jolt -- WHAT THE FUCK!?!
IT'S THE BUILDING'S FIRE ALARM -- loud and persistent --
which also has CUT OFF ALL MAIN POWER IN THE BUILDING.

OUR INTERCUT CONTINUES... as they all spring up, unable to hear their podcast now. In the dark, Mabel takes a moment, wondering what to do. Oliver puts Winnie in a rolling stroller tote, grabs his laptop and coat. Charles grabs up his map, phone and coat and HEADS TO THE HALL, WHERE SECURITY LIGHTS STROBE.

INT. ARCONIA STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER (STROBE) (N2)

Charles heads down the stairs amid other tenants -- and is bumped by SOMEONE HEADING UP THE STAIRS IN A TIE-DYED HOODIE, which blocks their face. Up? Why is someone going up? Confusing, but Charles continues down... all to that alarm.

EXT. ARCONIA COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER (N2)

Charles exits to the courtyard and goes to the doorman, Lester, on his walkie and ushering tenants from the building.

LESTER
I don't know -- we're finding out.

Charles checks his phone and his paused podcast. An idea!

EXT. BEN & CHARLIE'S BISTRO - EST. SHOT (N2)

This charming place is suddenly bustling due to residents of the Arconia needing a place to hang temporarily.

INT. BEN & CHARLIE'S BISTRO - LATER (N2)

Charles opens and spreads his OK map on a table in a cozy booth all to himself. He presses his phone to his ear -- can't hear, dammit -- then he looks up and JOLTS to find Oliver, right there facing him, with Winnie in his stroller.

OLIVER

Look who got the last booth.
(off Charles's hesitation)
Listen, if I've ever offended you during any of the many times you've auditioned for me--

CHARLES

I've never -- auditioned for you.

OLIVER

(a staring beat)
Are you not Scott Bakula?

CHARLES

I am not.

OLIVER

Oh, you're the *other* one! Got it.
(untangling his ear buds)
I won't say a word. My favorite podcast just dropped a new epis--

He sees Charles's Chickasha map and both realize together...

CHARLES

What does Bo have in his mouth?!

OLIVER

I DON'T KNOW!!

CUT TO LATER:

Charles and Oliver sit before Oliver's laptop sharing Oliver's earbuds, riveted to what they're hearing. Oliver looks up and sees Mabel being told by a hostess the place is packed. Oliver waves her over. Mabel checks to be sure he means her, then heads to their booth. *Okay, elevator guys...*

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Sit! Half the building's in here.
I'm Oliver, by the by, Oliver
Putnam.

CHARLES

Hi, I'm Charles -- Charles-Haden
Savage.

MABEL

Hey... I'm Mabel.

CHARLES

(bursts out laughing)
No, really, what's your...
(off Mabel's stare)
...greaaat "old-school" name!

OLIVER

(to Mabel)
Would you mind -- just for 40
minutes -- not talking?

Mabel looks at the map and podcast graphic on his laptop.

MABEL

Get out.
(holds up her phone to
show she's one of them)
What the fuck is in Bo's mouth?

CHARLES/OLIVER

BECKY'S PANTIES!!!

Mabel's jaw drops. She puts on her Beats and joins them.

CUT TO AN HOUR LATER:

Done listening, and still picking at the last of their meals,
this odd trio is now deep in theorizing.

CHARLES

It is NOT Ray. Too obvious.

MABEL

Exactly.

OLIVER

I'm just relieved SOMETHING of
Becky Butler showed up somewhere --
I almost forgot who went missing.

MABEL

They took too long with it.

CHARLES

Her diary, "*Becky had a smile that lit up the room,*" blah-blah...

OLIVER

I love a good peeling of the onion, but let's pace it up, people!

A good head-nod from all. Then Oliver turns to Mabel...

OLIVER (CONT'D)

To that point -- who are you, you fascinating creature???

(off Mabel, taken aback)

I mean, we got our places thirty years ago when The Arconia was affordable, but you -- do your parents have a place there?

CHARLES

Good god -- you don't have to answer that, Mabel. Unless you want to. Because I'm also curious.

Mabel considers this then, with a squint, she eyes Charles.

MABEL

How do I know you?

OLIVER

Charles was in this old TV show -- what was it, *Bozos*?

CHARLES

Brazzos.

MABEL

Oh. Okay.

Charles waits for more. There is none.

OLIVER

So... that's Charles. Formerly recognizable--

CHARLES

Kinda beloved.

OLIVER

Lifelong bachelor-- ?

CHARLES

By choice.

OLIVER

As for *me*... directing is my day
job, as I'm sure you know.

Mabel stares at him blankly, which Charles loves.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

But my grandchildren... ? They're
my passion. I only wish I had more
time to spend with them. That's
really all we want, isn't it? More
time with the people we love?

CHARLES

(apologetic, to Mabel)
I literally pass him in the elevator
once a month, just so you know.

OLIVER

And those, my dear, are our
proverbial onions. Raw and peeled.
And yours? Care to peel for us?

CHARLES

Really... ?

Mabel considers these two strangers, then:

MABEL

I bet we can get back in the
building now.
(going for the check)
Can I... ?

CHARLES

Absolutely not. We've got it.

OLIVER

Absolutely.
(then, to Charles)
Thanks so much.

Oliver grabs Winnie and exits, leaving Charles with the
check.

EXT. ARCONIA COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER (N2)

The trio arrive back from the bistro to find COP CARS AND AN
AMBULANCE ON ACTIVE ALERT IN THE ARCONIA COURTYARD. Charles
leads the trio to the doorman, Lester.

CHARLES

What the hell... ?

LESTER
Found someone dead.

CHARLES
What?!

LESTER
Sounds like they offed themselves.
9th floor. Can't let anyone in.

Lester goes, and our group eyes each other. Three true-crime obsessives -- and now there's been A DEATH IN THEIR BUILDING?

OLIVER
Did he say the 9th?

CHARLES
I can get us to the freight
elevator.

MABEL
Yeah, but we should take it to 8
then take the stairs.
(off the guys' "why?")
They'll have cops posted on 9.

Charles and Oliver exchange an "ooh, she's good" look as they head off, casual and not sneaky at all, as we... **END ACT ONE.**

INT. ARCONIA HALLWAY (9TH FLOOR)/TIM'S FOYER - LATER (N2)

Riding on big-time adrenaline, our three quietly trot down the hall on 9 -- with Oliver pushing Winnie in his stroller -- til they all peek through the swinging vestibule doors. A COP walks by, and they freeze! He's headed away, though...

This gives our trio a chance to slip into the vestibule to spy police activity in an open apartment and foyer. They tiptoe to the doorway and see a female detective inside the apartment with their back to them, mumbling about "suicide."

The detective steps away, revealing to our group -- A VICTIM ON THE FLOOR -- HIS FACE ANGLED TO THEM, CONTORTED -- HIS SKULL BLOWN TO BITS BY AN AT-POINT FATAL GUNSHOT EXPOSING BRAIN AND MATTER, SOAKING IN A POOL OF BLOOD.

THIS STOPS OUR TRIO COLD. What makes the shock worse is... the victim is TIM, whom they all shared an elevator with only an hour ago. Charles starts to hyperventilate, Oliver looks like he's going to projectile -- so Mabel, in shock, pulls them back. They RUN SILENTLY BACKWARDS AND PANICKED, back--

INT. ARCONIA HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS (N2)

--through those swinging doors to try and collect themselves.

CHARLES/OLIVER
(whispering, breathless)
Ohmygodohmygodohmygodohmygod...

OLIVER
It's that guy!?

CHARLES
His head was-- I've seen "TV dead
bodies," but that-- have you ever?

Oliver is dry-heaving. Clearly, he hasn't.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
He shot himself?

MABEL
(in shock)
No, that's not -- he didn't--

The guys look at her.

MABEL (CONT'D)
We saw him -- what, an hour ago?
Did he seem like he was about to do
something like that?

The guys take that in -- no, he did not -- but before they
can respond THE HALL DOORS PUSH OPEN HARD.

CHARLES/OLIVER
AHH!!!

It's DETECTIVE DENA WILLIAMS (straight out of THE WIRE).

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
You associated with the deceased?

OLIVER
No. We don't, um--

They all vaguely shake their heads "no."

CHARLES
We're neighbors -- in the building.
We live in the building.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
Uh-huh. So you don't know him?

OLIVER
Just in passing.

CHARLES
Not *his* passing.

OLIVER
Yes, no, when we'd pass by him.

CHARLES
Before he passed.

OLIVER
That's right. But are you sure
it's... suicide? Even in passing,
he didn't seem the type.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
(sizing them up further)
Right... but you don't know him.

CHARLES
Look... obviously, you're just
starting your investigation,
looking at all the forensics--

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
Goddammit...! What the fuck
podcast are you all hooked on?

The trio looks appropriately called out.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
I swear to god, if I meet one more
of you true-crime nuts...

She joins them in this part of the hall, closing the door.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
Alright, listen up. THIS... was a
suicide. Textbook. Residue powder on
his hand, evidence of financial
stress, found a note on his laptop
saying he was outta here. Which is
exactly where you all need to be.

CHARLES
But, what if--

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
It's not. Trust me.

BAM! -- everyone jumps as the doors are pushed open by a stretcher carrying Tim in a body bag -- rolling past them. Detective Williams checks them again as she follows off...

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Now go back to your cute little
lives, you "true-crime numb-nuts."
And be glad that you still got one.

She heads off toward the freight elevator down the hall. This has all had an effect on the trio in different ways. Bottom line: Time to regroup -- each on their own.

INT. CHARLES'S APARTMENT (KITCHEN) - LATER (N2)

At his stove, Charles uses those peppers he brought home earlier to make an incredible omelet, displaying a chef's familiarity with this -- but he's clearly in his head.

He looks out his window at the apartments overlooking the courtyard. Is a killer out there? His omelet complete, he routinely slides it... INTO A TRASH CAN. Charles adjusts the garbage bag which has slid off the top of the can -- and Charles seems to have a new thought. Maybe an important one.

INT. OLIVER'S APARTMENT (STUDY) - SAME (N2)

Oliver watches that *Clair de Lune* dance piece on his laptop as he scrolls his "Favorites" -- almost all are "True Crime Podcast Fan-sites." Oliver gets a new thought.

INT. MABEL'S APARTMENT (BEDROOM) - SAME (N2)

Mabel's laptop is on her mattress, her screensaver displaying her photos -- selfies, artsy shots, etc... as Mabel enters to resume checking out a Wikipedia page for CHARLES-HADEN SAVAGE -- with a photo of Charles as "Brazzos" with dark hair.

Mabel sighs, unable to focus after the events of this night. She drifts to a memory from earlier AND WE HEAR -- DING!

QUICK FLASH TO HER EARLIER ELEVATOR RIDE. IN MABEL'S POV, she sees Tim get on the elevator, blocked by Oliver's boxes... SAVE FOR A HALF-FILLED GARBAGE BAG TIM IS HOLDING.

BACK ON MABEL -- who has a new thought. DING!

INT. ARCONIA ELEVATOR/FLOOR 12 - MOMENTS LATER (N2)

The "Basement" button is lit as Charles, in robe and slippers on his way down, sees the doors open on 12 to reveal Mabel.

MABEL

The motherfuckin' garbage bag.

Charles sparks, excited. Mabels steps on. THE DOORS CLOSE.

CHARLES

Why would he get on an elevator with that?! There's a chute on every floor. What was in there?

Mabel nods, DING! -- the doors open on 10 and Oliver.

OLIVER

We all had the same thought?

CHARLES/MABEL

The garbage bag!

OLIVER

Ah... different thought.

The doors close.

INT. ARCONIA BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER (N2)

The three round their way to the garbage pen -- with two chutes holding all of the tenant smelly waste.

OLIVER

We need to do our own podcast!

CHARLES

(first, re: the garbage)
Uch... Why do we need that?

Charles and Mabel start sorting through garbage bags -- yuck.

OLIVER

Are you kidding? These things can become global franchises! And talk about a cool way to reinvent your career -- unless you enjoy being a spokesman for a healthy prostate.

CHARLES

(head whip to Oliver)
I turned that down!

OLIVER
But they did ask?

CHARLES
A few times.

MABEL
(grossed-out by a bag)
Oh god-- people are disgusting.

OLIVER
Y'know, we should get Cinda Canning
to narrate.

MABEL
Okay, I may be in now.

OLIVER
She's right in Brooklyn. We wanted
to use her voice for an Off-
Broadway gig I did last year, but
she was interviewing the Taliban --
so I have a connection.

CHARLES
Oh, yeah? Who do you know in the
Taliban?

MABEL
Harf.
(off their looks)
What? That's how I laugh.

The guys nod, accepting this.

OLIVER
Or you could narrate, Charles. The
podcast. Actually, part of the big
draw would be you.

CHARLES
Go on.

OLIVER
How great would it be to be the
male Cinda Canning? I know it's
early, but don't all true crime
podcasters wish they were on a case
right from the start, and here we--
ooh! -- we should be recording this
right now.

He takes out his phone, hits record, holds it out.

CHARLES

Well... right now, all that matters is if we're right, there's a killer out there -- and they may be living right here in our own building.

Wow. Nice line. But Oliver can't help himself...

OLIVER

Sorry, I'm gonna need another read on that.

(off Charles's confusion)

Take it again for me -- but hit "killer" a little harder.

CHARLES

You're a theater director, not a--
(steps back, actor reflex)
"If we're right, that means there's a KILLER out there somewhere--"

OLIVER

No, sorry -- I want you to really punch "somewhere."

CHARLES

...*"a killer out there SOMEWHERE."*
Mmm, that feels false.

OLIVER

Yeah, no, you're right. Lemme think...

Mabel lets out a small whimper. She's pulled a piece of stationary with handwriting out of a garbage bag.

MABEL

(reading)

"If there's anyone left to care, there's nothing for me anymore..."

OLIVER

Oh, shit...

Oliver lowers his phone. Charles goes to Mabel and takes the bag from her, looks through -- as Mabel reads another note:

MABEL

"I'm so lonely. I don't want to be this lonely anymore."

All three look at each other -- relating, in a way, to the feelings Tim expressed -- though none would admit that fact.

CHARLES

There's mail here -- to Tim Kono.
And other notes. Attempts at
getting his last words right?
(a sigh)
That's our answer. Suicide.

OLIVER

So... that's it? We're done?

Mabel and Charles look at each other. Yeah. This is likely the end of this investigation and whatever it was they were feeling about this newfound connection with each other.

CHARLES

Back to Oklahoma.

They drop the bags they're holding as we... **END ACT TWO.**

EXT. THE ARCONIA - DAY (D3)

It's the next morning at the Arconia.

INT. CHARLES'S APARTMENT (KITCHEN) - SAME (D3)

Charles is back to his routine -- making another red and yellow pepper omelet while on the phone with his agent.

CHARLES (ON PHONE)

I read the script, but my character
has no lines. Not one. And his
name is "GUY IN CORNER WITH DRINK."
(pause, listens)
Wait, so they want someone who
"looks like Brazzos" -- and they
want me to audition for this?
Okay, whatever... fine, I'll go.

He hangs up and dumps his perfect omelet in the trash.

INT. OLIVER'S APARTMENT (LIVING ROOM) - SAME (D3)

Looking particularly depressed, Oliver is now wrapping those boxes of his -- supposedly filled with all that "development research" -- in little boy and girl wrapping paper.

INT. MABEL'S APARTMENT (BATHROOM) - SAME (D3)

Mabel, in a tank top, faces the mirror at her sink -- and we note a distinctive TATTOO OF A WHALE on her shoulder blade.

She tries putting on eyeliner -- but her hands shake and her eyes well with tears. She stops and takes a breath, opens her medicine cabinet -- eyes prescription bottles, which she considers in a resigned way -- but then... she hears her neighbor, BUNNY, through a vent in the top of her wall.

BUNNY (O.S)

I'll have my grocery cart, so you need to ask for a bigger table...

INT. ARCONIA HALLWAY (MABEL'S FLOOR) - SAME (D3)

BUNNY FILLPOT (60's, steeped in NY savvy) exits with her grocery cart, growing annoyed with her friend on the phone.

BUNNY

(into phone)

Because I have shopping to do --
tell them it's Bunny, they know me!

BACK IN MABEL'S BATHROOM -- Mabel seems to have a thought.

INT. ARCONIA ELEVATOR/MABEL'S HALLWAY - LATER (D3)

DING! Charles waits as the doors open and, again, there's Mabel.

CHARLES

We've got to stop meeting like this.

MABEL

I was just coming up to get you.

CHARLES

I've got an audition.

UMA HELLER, the woman who gave Charles the bird on the sidewalk -- who is also his neighbor -- steps on as Charles holds the door open.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Does this have to do with...
(stage whisper)
Suicide?

Mabel nods.

UMA

In or out, soft lips. I got places
to be.

Charles lets the doors close -- but puts his arm out at the last second.

CHARLES

Fuck them. I'm offer only.

Off the elevator, Charles follows Mabel to her apartment as she fills him in on her thinking...

MABEL

So, I know what we found last night, but I know me -- and I can't stop thinking about this.

CHARLES

Neither can I!

MABEL

Okay, so... a week ago, I saw Tim Kono at that apartment, Bunny's.

CHARLES

Ooh, she's head of the Board.

MABEL

Right... and he was asking her for a package she got by mistake.

CHARLES

Makes sense. They're on the A-line. I get mis-delivered packages on my C-line.

MABEL

Do you remember him on the elevator saying "it happened again?"

CHARLES

(light dawning, recalling)
And "it was important -- but he couldn't get it and then he--"

MABEL

(nodding)
I want to know what's in that package. I heard Bunny leave a few minutes ago.

CHARLES

Did you ask her for it?

MABEL

For a dead guy's package? Plus, Bunny's mean. I have a way in.

INT. MABEL'S APARTMENT (FOYER/LIVING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS (D3)

Mabel ushers Charles into her vast, almost empty space.

CHARLES

What the-- ? Who ARE you?

MABEL

I'm re-modeling.

CHARLES

This is a major-- how many rooms are here -- and you're living in this in the middle of renov--

MABEL

Shh... please focus.

She takes him past rooms, into--

INT. MABEL'S APARTMENT (BATHROOM) - CONTINUOUS (D3)

She points to THAT VENT.

MABEL

There, see? Right into Bunny's. I just need a boost.

Charles looks at that small vent up near the ceiling.

CHARLES

Nooo... no-no. Have you forgotten?
I'm Brazzos.

OFF MABEL, wondering how that pertains... ?

EXT. OLIVER'S SON'S HOUSE IN JERSEY - LATER (D3)

Oliver pulls it together to give "happy" as he arrives up the porch stairs of a suburban home, holding those packages -- as the door is opened by WILL (30's, mixed-race, Oliver's son).

OLIVER

Hey, Will. Surprise!
(calling past him)
Grampy's here!

WILL

Dad -- it's Sunday. Mom's got the kids. They're all at the zoo.

OLIVER

Oh. Well, you can give them these.

Oliver hands Will the packages and heads inside.

INT. ARCONIA HALLWAY (MABEL/BUNNY'S FLOOR) - SAME (D3)

Charles and Mabel move furtively across the hall to Bunny's door. He shows her his set of "jimmy keys" which he's about to use to try and unlock it.

CHARLES

Brazzos was the son of a locksmith,
so the crew gave me these "jimmy
keys" for a wrap gift. Season 5.

Mabel takes his key pouch, smiles seeing "We Love You, From The Crew" written on it. Charles pulls two lock picks from the pouch and sets to work. Mabel keeps lookout.

MABEL

I watched a few of those. *Brazzos.*
(off Charles's surprise)
I like early 90's stuff. Sometimes
you get to see Hammer Pants. You
were good. You're a good actor.
Did you ever do any other shows?

CHARLES

I did a few pilots. They didn't
move forward.
(then)
I don't think I test well.

MABEL

(gently)
Mm. Yeah, I can see that.

CHARLES

Thanks. Wait, what?

INT. OLIVER'S SON'S HOUSE (FAMILY ROOM) - SAME (D3)

Oliver looks out to a deck: replete with kids toys, plastic forts, etc... Will steps in with drinks and laundry to fold.

OLIVER

That deck you put on looks great.

WILL

Thanks. The kids *live* out there.

OLIVER

Sorry I missed them. But this is good -- you and I get some Jersey "hang" time.

WILL

(suspicious)

Jersey hang time? So, what's up?

OFF OLIVER -- as he looks back at that deck and drinks.

INT. ARCONIA HALLWAY (OUTSIDE BUNNY'S DOOR) - SAME (D3)

Mabel body-shields Charles, paused in lock-picking, from a potential noise down the hall. But, phew, the coast is clear.

MABEL

We're good.

(Charles works that lock)

How long have you lived here?

CHARLES

Twenty-eight years.

MABEL

But not always by yourself.

Charles considers, then nods "yes."

MABEL (CONT'D)

You've been alone for 28 years?!

CHARLES

Shh! I... *like* alone. Alone isn't so bad.

Mabel doesn't get it. Charles works, thinks, then offers:

CHARLES (CONT'D)

My father was also a Charles. I'm a Junior. It was the most consistent refrain of my childhood: how much I was like him. Aunts and uncles would shout the words in my face: "you're his spitting image!" And I really was. We were both right-handed, but we both used scissors with our left hand. Both of us could pick up about any instrument, play by ear. But ask us to do basic algebra, forget it. He went gray at 47, completely white at 58.

(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)
(pointing at his hair)

Eh?

Mabel smiles.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
People liked him, my father. They meant it as a compliment, when they told me I was like him.

(then)

But he was awful to my mother. Awful. He made her feel small. He seemed to get pleasure out of it. Making her feel silly. Making her feel unsure of herself. And I think, at a certain point, I figured... I use scissors like him, and I play instruments like him -- odds are...

A beat, as he stops working the jimmy keys and stands up.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Alone isn't so bad.

Mabel absorbs that. It's enough for her to divulge...

MABEL
It's my aunt's place. She asked me to re-do it for her. You can see how well that's going. First time I've been alone in like... ever? I tend to make packs wherever I go. Even when I was a kid -- I had my "Hardy Boys" pack.

CHARLES
That's too old a reference for you.

MABEL
We were being "old-school" calling ourselves that. But I did read the original books. That series is way-racist.

CHARLES
That's the beauty of my generation.

MABEL
Anyway, me and my Hardy Boys -- there were four of us, and only two were actual boys, by the way -- we got into solving "mysteries" around the-- *complex* we all lived in.

CHARLES

So, this stuff isn't new to you.

MABEL

Well, those were *made-up* mysteries.
Or, at least, most were...

Another curious glance from Charles, still working that lock.

CHARLES

And your Hardy Boys? Where are
they now?

MABEL

Maybe you've got it right. Maybe
it's better to go it alone...
(then)
You unlock it yet?

CHARLES

(no big deal)
Yeah, I got it two minutes ago.

Charles reaches for the knob -- CLICK!

MABEL

Yes! Good job, *Brazzos*.

She slips inside, but Charles stops at the threshold. Mabel
turns to face him, confused.

MABEL (CONT'D)

Well, what're you waiting for?

CHARLES

This... this is actually breaking
and entering. It just hit me.

MABEL

So?
(proceeding inside)
Old people are so weird.

Charles impulsively steps inside. He's done it now, crossed
a real line. Charles shuts the door.

INT. BUNNY'S FOYER - CONTINUOUS (D3)

On either side of a table with flowers and keys and such --
Charles feels a rush as he plots the plan for him and Mabel.

CHARLES

Okay. Think: where would they put the box. Where would they put the box? This is the A-line three-bedroom... so you check the living-dining-spare. I'll check the kitchen--

MABEL

Um... look at your hand.

Charles looks at his hand, hovering over the table and a foot-square package, addressed to "TIM KONO." Charles looks at Mabel, suddenly celebratory.

CHARLES

We did it!

INT. OLIVER'S SON'S HOUSE (FAMILY ROOM) - SAME (D3)

Oliver is still with his son, Will.

OLIVER

Is Kit with your mom?

WILL

No she's out shopping, for...
Sunday dinner.
(off Oliver's nod)
So, how's work?

OLIVER

Good, fine -- some stuff out there.

WILL

Really? You got your next project?

OLIVER

I... thought I had something. Then it went away.
(adjusting, this is tough)
So, I need to, um...

Will's face drops.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

You know, I never wanted to have this be a regular thing, but I'm in this bind, just strapped like I've--

WILL

Dad--

OLIVER

Just a few grand. To help me get through the next little window, Will. I'm close on a few things--

WILL

That's what you said the last time.

OLIVER

This would be the last time. For sure. And I'd only need half if--

WILL

Dad, I can't give you a check -- not now. I'm sorry. The kids... and we need to put a new roof on the place. I promised Kit I wouldn't-- I just can't.

Will looks away. This kills him.

OLIVER

(emotional)

Obviously, it's mortifying, coming to you like this -- I'm revolted at myself -- but...

(desperate)

Will, I can't get work. It's been years, you know -- and I don't know what else to do. I really just need a little help to get back--

WILL

You have to sell your apartm--

OLIVER

I can't do that.

WILL

You can't keep living like--

OLIVER

It's all I've got. It's who I am.

WILL

(after a beat)

Well, obviously, it makes me very sad to hear that.

OLIVER

I'm sorry -- Will, I'm sorry for so many things -- but I'm just in a rough patch and I need--

WILL

Stop.
(then, resolute)
I can't. Not again.

Oliver nods. Gathers himself.

OLIVER

Well, I certainly appreciate what you've already done for me. And don't worry -- it's just a rocky moment, that's all.

(looking for his coat)

You tell Kit I send love, okay? Best to your mother -- and tell those stinkers Grampy loves them.

WILL

C'mon, stay for Sunday dinner?

OLIVER

No, I should get back -- gotta dig in, nose to the grindstone, right? Can I have my coat, please?

Will looks at him. Fights the urge to bend. Will heads to get the coat, leaving Oliver to absorb this final gut-punch.

EXT. ARCONIA ROOFTOP DECK - LATER (D3)

Mabel now holds that package -- addressed to Tim Kono -- as she and Charles exit to the roof. Charles is buzzing.

CHARLES

We have a clue now! -- and we stole it from a neighbor to get it!

MABEL

Is it stealing? It wasn't Bunny's.
(then, more importantly)
And... is it really a clue?

They arrive at a wall overlooking all of Manhattan -- where Mabel places the package between them.

CHARLES

Oh. Right.

MABEL

You should open it. I can't tell if I want it to be nothing... or something that means something.

Charles starts opening the package. He's got to know if any of this holds a future for himself -- as he carefully removes bubble wrap -- is anything in here? Oh, wait... it's small.

ON MABEL -- who can't see what's in the box, but watches Charles's face as he finds what's inside.

MABEL (CONT'D)

What is it?

Charles looks -- then, with new hope...

CHARLES

What kind of guy kills himself an hour after being desperate to get his hands on this?

He reveals to Mabel a small box, holding AN ENGAGEMENT RING.

OFF MABEL'S EXPRESSION -- looking, with many conflicted feelings, at that ring... WE GO BACK TO...

EXT. OLIVER'S SON'S HOUSE - SAME (D3)

Oliver steps out to the front porch stairs, dazed, the weight of the world on him. Then, he gets a text -- from Charles: "Where are you? We found something. This sends the investigation... into a whole new direction."

THE PLAINTIVE TONES OF "CLAIR DE LUNE" BEGIN -- as Oliver takes that news in. This is all he's really got right now and it brings huge relief -- so much so, that he falls... off to the side of his son's front stairs, completely over...

...WHERE HE BOUNCES BACK UP -- in a surreal moment that harkens to that trampoline/dance video we saw in his opening narration. As soon as he's upright, Oliver heads down the stairs -- back to the city with a new kick in his step.

INT. MABEL'S APARTMENT (LIVING ROOM) - LATE DAY (D3)

"Clair de Lune" continues as Mabel sits on the one piece of furniture in her living room, a 70s striped couch -- as she studies that engagement ring -- holding it up to the light.

She lets the ring drop from her fingers, down to the floor -- THEN IT BOUNCES BACK UP AND HANGS, SUSPENDED IN AIR, RIGHT AT MABEL'S EYE-LINE LEVEL. Mabel, unfazed by this and alive with new purpose, takes her pinkie finger and slips it up and inside the ring -- to study it some more.

INT. CHARLES'S APARTMENT (KITCHEN) - SAME (D3)

Charles cracks an egg for sunny-side-ups -- no more omelet. He lifts the pan from the stove and, instead of dumping the eggs in the trash, he drops the whole pan down to the floor -- where it BOUNCES BACK UP INTO HIS HAND. New life. For all of them. As Charles slides the eggs on a plate, HEAR OVER:

CHARLES (V.O.)

Here's a thing I don't get...
people who worry about living in a
big city because of all the crime.

INT. OLIVER'S APARTMENT (LIVING/RAISED AREA) - NIGHT (N3)

Oliver has set up a little podcast recording session -- and Mabel and Oliver are watching Charles deliver his own written narration opening for their potential first podcast episode.

CHARLES

As any true-crime aficionado will
tell you, it's the boondocks you
need to worry about.

He looks to Oliver to see if he likes that take.

OLIVER

I don't know, it sounds so PBS-y.
Like a Ken Burns documentary on the
history of boredom. Maybe Mabel
should give it a try.

MABEL

Uh-- no, thank you.

CHARLES

He's already giving away my part.

OLIVER

Actually, I have a riff on a piece to
Clair de Lune that could work.

CHARLES

And now my part goes to him.

MABEL

So tomorrow we lay out a timeline?

CHARLES

I've also got maps, full blueprints
of each floor of The Arconia--

MABEL

Ooh, you fancy.

OLIVER

Hey, did you read about that "mysterious death" in the park last night? You know, we could multi-task a bit -- silo out a second investigation, do a second podcast?

CHARLES

Nope! We've got to focus. Only murders in the building.

OLIVER

That... seems limiting.

CHARLES

Not yet! We've got one, who knows how many to come.

MABEL

I could be into that.

Oliver steps up to the mic, re-energized, to test it out.

OLIVER

Only murders in the building...

OFF Mabel and Charles, liking it, we hear DING! -- and go...

INT. ARCONIA HALLWAY (CHARLES'S FLOOR) - LATER (N3)

Charles exits the elevator and heads to his apartment as his neighbor, ARNAV (early 30's), steps out of his own.

ARNAV

Hey, how's it going?

CHARLES

Good. All good.

Charles passes Arnav, who turns before heading down the hall.

ARNAV

Y'know... sometimes I can smell that omelet you make.

CHARLES

Oh -- sorry, I'll turn on a fan next time.

ARNAV

No, I like it. Reminds me of Lucy.
It was her favorite, right?

CHARLES

Uh... I'm not--

ARNAV

Have you heard from her?

CHARLES

Here and there.

ARNAV

Well, say hi next time for me.

Charles nods, heads inside his apartment.

INT. MABEL'S APARTMENT (BATHROOM/BEDROOM) - SAME (N3)

Mabel showers, humming an odd little discordant tune. WE MOVE INTO HER BEDROOM and OVER TO HER IPAD -- which is in screensaver mode and scrolling through her photos. The first photo is a close shot of that TATTOO OF A WHALE on Mabel's shoulder blade, we saw earlier...

...and the second, is a wider shot... outside a beach-side tattoo shop where a late-teens Mabel is standing arm-in-arm with a handsome man who's got the same whale tattoo on his bicep. WE PUSH IN TO DISCOVER THIS MAN... IS TIM KONO.

CUT TO BLACK:

CREDITS ROLL TO DANIEL JOHNSTON'S "DON'T BE SCARED."

END OF EPISODE