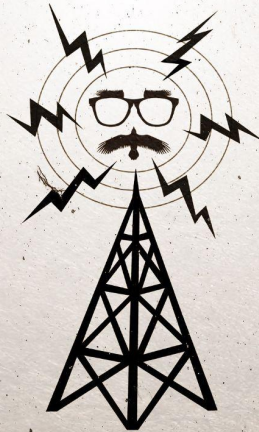


— THE CASE OF —  
THE GREATER GATSBY  
— (T) —



THE CASE OF THE GREATER GATSBY  
EPISODE 11 - WHAT'S UP  
TRANSCRIPT

*[The Case of the Greater Gatsby opening credits music plays]*

Announcer: Now presenting Fig and Ford in The Case of the Greater Gatsby. Episode 11: What's Up. Written and created by Sean Persaud and Sinéad Persaud. This episode is brought to you by Hunt A Killer.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): The fake play within an audio drama was by far the strangest thing that had happened as of yet in my short career as a P.I. But by the end of the fiery affair, we got what we needed and then some. And by that, I mean Zelda's airtight alibi and the location of F. Scott Fitzgerald's elusive tapes. Despite this victory, I'd woken up in the morning and stepped outside and screamed at the top of my lungs, "WHAT'S GOING ON!?" So my partner and I decided to split up and tackle things separately to try and make some sense of our increasingly complicated client list. Ford would go to Bixby's and ask Vivian a few things while I would shimmy over to Sheilah Graham's and look for the tapes. Despite all the tribulations on *The Grapes of Wrath* set, pandering to Sheilah would be the hardest acting I'd done yet.

[SFX: KNOCK KNOCK. The door OPENS.]

Sheilah Graham: Fig? Didn't think I'd see you back here so soon. You do know that Ford was here just the other day?

Fig Wineshine: I do know that. We like to question people several times. Keep 'em on their toes. But the Fitzgerald stuff? That's not why I'm here.

Sheilah Graham: Oh, is it about how to do your hair? I've been wondering when you were going to invest in a smoothing product. I actually have some of Fitzzy's Brylcreem lotion if you want. Looks like you need the heavy duty stuff.

Fig Wineshine: I like to keep my hair nice and big. That way people can see me coming and brace themselves. No, no, Graham Cracker, what I'm here for is much more embarrassing. I'm uh, looking for a way back into the newspaper business.

Sheilah Graham: (surprised) You don't say?

Fig Wineshine: This PI stuff is fulfilling to my psyche but not my bank account. Wanted to try my hand at the odd column again to rake in some chips. Seems that you're the gal I need to grease up in order to make this happen.

Sheilah Graham: Why don't you come in and I'll make some tea?

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Did this woman do anything other than make - or spill - tea? I stepped inside and wondered how Ford was doing. And if he could hear my internal monologue from across town. Anything? Ford, come in. Come in Ford. Ahh. I guess not.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): I could hear Fig, but chose to ignore her. While she pretended to need Sheilah Graham's help, and also tried to test the geographical limits of voiceover narration, I made my way down to Bixby's to talk to one of our many clients, Vivian Nightingale. The sheer number of cases and possible intertwining suspects and motives was becoming overwhelming, and even though the lounge singer had hired us to find out who murdered her lover, F. Scott Fitzgerald, something was bugging me.

Bixby Crane: How's my favorite Los Angeles private eye with two first names doing?

Ford Phillips: Wow, I've beaten out Leonardo Elizabeth?

Bixby Crane: No, but he just moved to Reno.

Ford Phillips: Well, I'll take it. I'll also take a scotch, neat.

*[As Bixby makes the drink...]*

Bixby Crane: And what brings you in tonight?

Ford Phillips: Can't an alcoholic go to a bar for a drink without an ulterior motive?

Bixby Crane: Oh, all the time. But with you, there's usually a plot-related reason you're here.

Ford Phillips: Good point. Wanted to talk to Vivian, ask her about a couple things that have been gnawing at me.

Bixby Crane: Not sure she's qualified to give an opinion on that. You might need a doctor. Or an exterminator.

Ford Phillips: It's just an expression.

Bixby Crane: Ah! This is about the threatening letters rocking Hollywood?

Ford Phillips: No.

Bixby Crane: Mo Beats' suspicious threats?

Ford Phillips: No.

Bixby Crane: The secret club meeting in my backroom?

Ford Phillips: Nope.

Bixby Crane: Dash Gunfire's incessant lurking?

Ford Phillips: Nope.

Bixby Crane: The secret about you that Mel Hammermeister is holding over your head in order to get you to work for her?

Ford Phillips: Unimportant and no one needs to know but also, no.

Bixby Crane: The missing Punchwhistle triplet?

Ford Phillips: The what?

Bixby Crane: Damn Ford. That's a lot to keep track of. You could use a cemetery.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): I didn't have the time to tell him the phrase he wanted to use was "another glass of scotch," before the lights dimmed and a spotlight came up on stage.

*[Drumroll.]*

Emcee: And now, the mistress of Malibu, the enchantress of Encino, the temptress of Tahoe, which is where her mother and stepdad vacationed after the divorce... Miss Vivian Nightingale!

*[A jazzy piano tune plays.]*

Vivian Nightingale (singing): *Fedora hats and bolo ties*

*Girls now can dress like guys*

*Satin gloves and smokey eyes*

*Are every femme fatale's disguise*

*Tweed suits with shoulder pads*

*French cuffs and pleated plaids*

*We're sportin' all the fads*

*There's too many threads...Too many threads.*

*[Over the piano after the second verse...]*

Bixby Crane: Vivian is on break after this song.

Ford Phillips: Well, I suppose I can wait a couple minutes.

*[Back at Sheilah's, Fig and Sheilah sit in the living room.]*

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): A swirl of pastels situated within a baroque gold frame. A dark haired man leans on his elbow to whisper something illicit into the ear of his female companion. I had to hand it to Ford, his skills of deduction were on point. Zelda had said that she was always Fitzgerald's ear, his confidante, the one he'd tell his innermost thoughts to. This slightly askew watercolor by the woman herself was actually a clue in plain sight. I just had to get Sheilah to leave the room long enough for me to grab the tapes I was sure lay behind the frame.

Sheilah Graham: Chamomile or green?

Fig Wineshine: Whatever you're having!

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Sheilah sauntered to the kitchen to procure our drinks. Unfortunately there was a clear view of the living room from the kitchen so I couldn't make a beeline to the tapes without her seeing me. I'd have to think of something else.

Fig Wineshine: So, I was thinking a PI beat might be just the thing to pitch to the rags. "Ramblings of a gumshoe." Whattaya think?

Sheilah Graham: Kind of defeats the whole 'private' part of being a Private Eye?

Fig Wineshine: The "Private" doesn't mean that things are private, it just means that we're independent contractors.

Sheilah Graham: Yes, but people might not be as likely to hire you if they think you'll go airing their dirty laundry in a column.

Fig Wineshine: Then it'll be anonymous ramblings! The juicy details of the sordid life of an unraveler of mysteries.

Sheilah Graham: (not impressed) Maybe. Here you go.

Fig Wineshine: Mmm. Leaf water. Delicious. Say, you have any of your old work lying around? I wanna see how they're formatting gossip articles these days.

Sheilah Graham: Oh yes, I keep everything in the office. But it's such a mess. Maybe next time, after I organize it all a bit.

Fig Wineshine: (disappointed) Uh, all right.

Sheilah Graham: What else can I help you with?

Fig Wineshine: Let's see, uh... contacts! Have anyone you think you could set me up with for an interview? Maybe you could go lookin' through your office rolodex.

Sheilah Graham: (laughing wryly) Wineshine, you know how cutthroat the business is. If I give you my contacts, that means more competition for me. It's a perilous line of work we're in! Can't have you scooping me on the latest scandal at Hammermeister studio. Plus, weren't you fired from the Tinseltown Times for talking too much?

Fig Wineshine: I like to think I was fired for having too much gumption and refusing to take advantage of those in dire straits.

Sheilah Graham: Either way... not a great reputation.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Sheilah Graham was a cool cucumber. A collected coaster of crudite. A calm cerulean Chevrolet. Wait! Chevrolet! Citizen Jasper Fox! Nice thinking Fig. With a sudden cry, I pointed out the window.

Fig Wineshine: Why hey! It looks like that neighbor of yours is letting his dog urinate on your beautiful display of lilacs out front! Citizen Jasper Fox, have you no shame?!

Sheilah Graham: What!

*[Sheilah RUSHES TO THE WINDOW AND SLAMS IT OPEN. Fig gets up too, trying to run to the painting.]*

Sheilah Graham: Jasper! You get away from here right... where did he go?!

Fig Wineshine: Ran away! You best go after him and give him a piece of your mind.

Sheilah Graham: (sighing) No.

*[Sheilah SHUTS THE WINDOW and turns around.]*

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): I froze, halfway across the room, hands outstretched to move the painting aside. As Sheilah turned back to me, I pretended to be doing calisthenics.

Sheilah Graham: Getting into it with him is always more trouble than it's worth. Plus, the dog pee is probably good for the flowers. What are you doing? Calisthenics? Here, in my living room? Well, that's fine, but your form is all off, you need to bend your knees slightly.

Fig Wineshine: Great, good note, Sheilah Tequila. Say, all this stretching is releasing a lot of lactic acid. Just need to use the little girl's room real quick.

Sheilah Graham: Through the kitchen to the right.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): I excused myself and lamented the fact that distraction strategies usually worked best with two people. I hoped that extracting alibis from a less than forthcoming femme fatale was proving easier for Ford.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): It wasn't. Five minutes later, Vivian was still going, with no signs of slowing down. It turns out a list song about fashion trends was fertile ground for lyrics. More time to drink scotch.

Bixby Crane: This is one of my favorites. I like the verse about hats. I have some of those hats, you know. It makes me feel like the song was written for me.

*[The second verse of TOO MANY THREADS:]*

Vivian Nightingale (singing): *Put on your best drop waist  
The one with the finest lace  
Show some skin, make his heart race  
Not too much, this is in good taste.  
A wool hat and a velvet gown  
Silk crepe's the rage downtown  
Flapper dress if you're a clown  
There's too many threads... Too many threads.*

Ford Phillips: So Bixby, how's the backroom business going? They meeting tonight? I'd love to sit in.

Bixby Crane: Ah yes, the...(quieter, to avoid interloping ears) Bixby's Brigade. They haven't convened since the night you met Dorothy. I suppose with Mo Beats sniffing around, they're trying to be careful.

Ford Phillips: Doesn't add up. Sure, Mo Beats seems like he's painted with a streak of fascism, but the idea of him actively going after communists makes about as much sense as a priest at Mardi Gras. Unless someone is paying him. He's not a man driven by ideals.

Bixby Crane: An ideal? Driving a man? How'd it get its license?

Ford Phillips: We need to follow the money.

Bixby Crane: Thanks for including me in your thought process, but I won't lie to you, I don't really know what you're talking about.

Ford Phillips: (sighs) Me neither, Bixby. Me neither.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Meanwhile, in Sheilah's bathroom, I stared at myself in the mirror and wondered how often Fitzgerald had done the same. If he'd been in here moments before his murder mulling over the plot lines of *The Greater Gatsby* like I was now mulling over how to get Sheilah out of her own living room. I considered just telling her the truth. But no. If she decided the tapes were her property, I'd need to get a warrant. And a warrant would mean the LAPD. And the LAPD almost certainly meant Mo Beats would know what we were up to. I reached into my coat pocket to retrieve my lipstick for a touch up and my hand brushed against something else. A packet of Nabisco cookies I'd swiped from set the other day. The plan clicked into place. I rolled up my sleeve and shoved the cookies into the toilet, flushing furiously.

[SFX: FLUSHING, WATER BACKING UP, GLOOPY GROSS NOISES. Then: A KNOCK.]

Sheilah Graham: (muffled) You all right in there?

Fig Wineshine: (bursting through the door) Oh gosh! I'm mighty embarrassed. Seems like I've caused a catastrophic clog! You better take a long look and decide whether a plumber should be consulted! And I best get home before I strike again!

*[Fig RUNS from the bathroom and into the living room.]*

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Sheilah, as expected, remained behind in the bathroom, valiantly taking a plunger to the jammed john. I made a run for the painting, taking it down off the mount gingerly and only pausing for a moment to revel in Ford's stroke of genius. Sure enough, there was a square foot of space behind the artwork carved out with rudimentary tools. There were reels of tapes stacked high within. I grabbed them and put the painting back before bolting out the front door.

Sheilah Graham: Fig! Fig!? What did you do?!

Fig Wineshine: I think it was all the tea! We can continue this another time!

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): I kicked the door to Sheilah's apartment closed behind me and jogged down the lawn, nodding cordially to Citizen Jasper Fox who was pulling into the driveway in his mint green Chevy at that very moment. Success!

*[Back at Bixby's, "Too Many Threads" piano STILL plays.]*

Ford Phillips: Jesus Bixby, this song has been going on for 15 minutes.

Bixby Crane: Sorry, Ford. This one's a real crowd pleaser.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): He wasn't lying. It was another packed night at the lounge and the entire audience, men and women alike, were entranced by Vivian, smiling like idiots at the sultry vixen just... listing types of clothes.

Ford Phillips: Bixby, I wanted to ask. Business is great, but you're really putting a target on your back by hosting the Brigade. Why?

Bixby Crane: Well, I'm happy to help the cause in any way I can. Plus, they pay me quite well. And I could use the money.

Ford Phillips: But this place is busier than a church the Sunday after Mardi Gras.

Bixby Crane: What's with you and Mardi Gras?

Ford Phillips: I just really want to go.



Bixby Crane: It's my landlord, Old Bob. He's been raising the rent here on a monthly basis. I can barely keep up. And he won't tell me why. Say, there's another thread for you.

*[The FINAL VERSE of TOO MANY THREADS:]*

Vivian Nightingale, singing: *Sometimes, when someone dies  
You gotta sort through the who/what/whys  
To catch the guilty guys  
But there are too many threads*

*[A BEAT, then WILD APPLAUSE.]*

Ford Phillips: Huh. That last verse seemed pretty pointed.

Bixby Crane: It's like I said! Art can be universal yet so specific.

Vivian Nightingale: Thank you. You've been a wonderful audience. I'll be at the bar if any brooding PIs would like to buy me a drink.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): I looked around to see if Leonardo Elizabeth was in the vicinity before remembering he'd moved to Reno. Vivian clearly meant me. She descended from the stage seemingly in slow motion and floated over to the bar.

Vivian Nightingale: Mr. Phillips. Are you here for business or pleasure? Or... both?

Ford Phillips: Remains to be seen.

Vivian Nightingale: Buy me a drink?

Ford Phillips: Sure. But I'm expensing you for it. Bixby, a sidecar for the lady.

Bixby Crane: Coming right up.

*[As Bixby makes the drink...]*

Ford Phillips: So Miss Nightingale. Where were you the night of December 20th?

Vivian Nightingale: Business it is. My my, get to know a girl a little before you accuse her of murder.

Ford Phillips: In case you've forgotten, your husband is the one being accused of murder. By you. Figures we might want to know a little bit more about the circumstances. Just doing my due diligence.

Vivian Nightingale: Mmm, you do seem like the type to cross all your Ts, dot your Is, and do whatever it is to Qs that needs doing. I was at home. Had the night off.

Ford Phillips: A dame like you, with a man in every state, alone at home on a Friday night? You expect me to buy that?

Vivian Nightingale: I don't expect you to buy anything. But that doesn't mean it's not true. Sometimes a girl needs a little alone time. To tend to her needs.

*[Sexy saxophone music starts...]*

Ford Phillips: Her needs?

Vivian Nightingale: Sure. You know... water her plants.

Ford Phillips: I didn't know venus fly traps needed water.

Vivian Nightingale: Oh, but they do. They need water. And they need... love.

*[Sexy music stops as:]*

Bixby Crane: And they need flies. Or spiders or beetles. Anything that's around really. Takes them three to five days to digest a meal and then they can go up to five months before needing to feed again. My grandmother had one. Fascinating.

*[Ford CLEARS HIS THROAT. Sexy music starts back up.]*

Ford Phillips: So, December 20th. You were all alone? No husband at home to help?

Vivian Nightingale: No husband to be found. Sometimes... it's better that way, don't you think?

Bixby Crane: Yeah, I feel like I shouldn't be hearing this. I'll be in the back.

*[Bixby EXITS.]*

Ford Phillips: So where exactly was your husband that night?

Vivian Nightingale: Well if I knew that for sure, he'd be under arrest. But I don't. So I guess I need to find another use for these handcuffs, wouldn't you say?

Ford Phillips: Sure. You can trade them in for a better alibi. Where was Barnaby the night of December 20th?

Vivian Nightingale: All I know is that he never came home. And it was a Friday night. He wasn't one to stay late at work on a Friday night.

Ford Phillips: So he left work and went somewhere, leaving his poor wife all alone with no one to corroborate her story? How convenient.

Vivian Nightingale: Well, that's not exactly true.

*[Footsteps approach the bar.]*

Mo Beats: What's that I hear? Someone needs an alibi combobulated?

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): Mo Beats. The last person I'd want vouching for anyone. Hard to keep track of whose payroll he was on and why. I guess he was at Bixby's poking around to see if any Brigade members were here.

Ford Phillips: Maurice. Fancy meeting you here.

Mo Beats: Where's your friend? I got some questions for him. Want to check out that back room of his. Heard he's got a vermin problem in there.

Vivian Nightingale: Officer Beats, how lovely to see you. I was just filling Mr. Phillips in on the eventful evening I had on December 20th. You remember, don't you? When I was home, by myself, simply worried sick for my husband's safety? So worried that I called the police station?

Mo Beats: Yeah, rings a bell. And if I recall correctly, I'm the one that fielded that call. 'Bout midnight. Told you we'd put out an alert for him and send a car by to watch out for you.

Ford Phillips: Why all the trouble for a lonely housewife?

Mo Beats: Barnaby Nightingale's the head of one of the biggest papers in town. Makes a lot of enemies, see? In fact, seems like he just made a real big one.

Vivian Nightingale: That's right. Someone delivered a life threatening letter to our house just days ago. So you see, Mr. Phillips, perhaps my fear was warranted.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): Questioning Vivian was always going to be like navigating a serpentine and slinky road, but the presence of Mo Beats had turned tonight's assignment into a dead end. I figured it was time to head back to the office to see if Fig had had any more luck than me.

*[Music cue. Fig and Ford regroup after their day. Ford drinks whiskey while Fig sets up the tape recorder.]*

Ford Phillips: So how did you distract Sheilah?

Fig Wineshine: I'm calling it the "Clogged Chute, Gotta Scoot." But you don't need the details. Vivian played ball?

Ford Phillips: Vivian's playing batter, catcher, and all three outfield spots.

Fig Wineshine: I didn't need the sports metaphor to go any further really.

Ford Phillips: Soon we'll be in the seventh inning stretch without a shred of real evidence.

Fig Wineshine: Again, I'm not interested in making this a thing.

Ford Phillips: But there's a chance that within these tapes, we'll hit a grand slam.

Fig Wineshine: I'll kill you.

Ford Phillips: Fair enough.

Fig Wineshine: All right, we ready to hear what F. Scott Fitzgerald has to say for himself?

Ford Phillips: It's not often the dead get to speak. Roll the tapes.

*[Fig presses PLAY. The magnetic strips begin to wind through the system.]*

*[The Case of the Greater Gatsby Closing theme plays]*

Sinead Persaud: Shipwrecked Comedy presents The Case of the Greater Gatsby

Written and created by Sean Persaud and Sinead Persaud

Directed by William Joseph Stribling

Featuring:

Sinead Persaud as Fig Wineshine

Julia Cho as Sheilah Graham

Sean Persaud as Ford Phillips

Dante Swain as Bixby Crane

Christopher Higgins as the Emcee

Mary Kate Wiles as Vivian Nightingale

And Matthew Mercer as Mo Beats

Original music by Dylan Glatthorn

“Too Many Threads” music by Dylan Glatthorn; lyrics by Dylan Glatthorn, Sean Persaud, and Sinead Persaud; performed by Mary Kate Wiles

Audio recording by Noah Hunt Audio

Mixing and Sound Design by Lizzie Goldsmith

Executive Producers Paul Komoroski & Michael Walsh

Produced by Sean Persaud, Sinead Persaud, and Mary Kate Wiles

Special thanks to Kickstarter backers Katie Adamczyk, Ally Brown, Zainab Khan, Shao Chih Kuo, Jane Leach, Avalee Long, Lisel Perrine, Halsea Root, The Rude Mechanicals, Heather Tennant, and Justin Waterman.

Please rate and review the show wherever you listen. Join us on Patreon at [patreon.com/shipwreckedcomedy](https://patreon.com/shipwreckedcomedy) to receive early access to new episodes and other bonus content, and to support us making this show.

Visit Shipwrecked Comedy on YouTube to view the prequel film for this series, *The Case of the Gilded Lily*, or many of our other projects, like *American Whoopee*, a trailer for a silent film that never was.