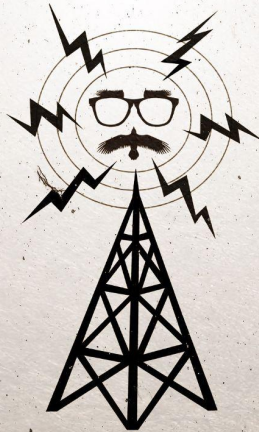


THE CASE OF THE GREATER GATSBY



THE CASE OF THE GREATER GATSBY
EPISODE 3 - SUNDAY TIMES
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 3: Sunday Times. Written and created by Sean Persaud and Sinéad Persaud. This episode is brought to you by Hunt A Killer.

[The sounds of a BUSY NEWS OFFICE. TYPING. COFFEE MAKER. ETC. Fig and Ford enter.]

Fig Wineshine: Can't say I don't miss the rush of a weekday morning in the newspaper industry. Ink-stained hands, running to beat the stringers to the kitchen before they got all the good yogurt flavors. Wondering what sort of red letter would be riling up the rag that day. Check out these cats - they're tracking the stock market. No thanks. I guess some guys dig Section Three, but business bored the pants offa me.

Ford (Voice Over): Sometimes I just let her talk so she'll tire herself out. Fig and I had made our way downtown to the kingdom of our number one suspect: Barnaby Nightingale. Vivian's husband and newspaper magnate. If there was one industry that could rival Hollywood in terms of ruthlessness... it would be The Fourth Estate. I turned to hash out a strategy with my partner but found her yammering at a poor copy editor.

Fig Wineshine: What's the Top Head today Copy cat? Above the Fold on Eleanor Rosy's first cousin? Sounds like a goat choker if I've ever heard of one. I see we're slinging witha swizzle script instead of a simple serif. I'd go with Fairfield Light if you want the EIC to Stet this dummy.

Ford Phillips: We get it, Wineshine, you know a lot of newspaper terms. Let's go.

Fig Wineshine: All right, which tactic should we use on him?

Ford Phillips: Tactic?

Fig Wineshine: Yeah, you know. "Good Cop Bad Cop," "Leading and Loaded," "1 Cop 2 Cop" etc. I thought we could go with "Floor Cop Drop Cop" for Barnaby.

Ford Phillips: What's that? Actually, I don't want to -

Fig Wineshine: It's where they THINK there's one cop coming in to question them and then all of a sudden, BOOM! I've been on the ceiling fan the whole time and I jump down and he's so confused that he tells us the truth.

Ford Phillips: How about the 'be normal and ask questions' tactic?

Fig Wineshine: Sounds new. How do we do it?

Ford Phillips: We go in and calmly ask what we need to ask like adults.

Fig Wineshine: Seems boring and unlikely to work.

[They approach the RECEPTIONIST, GRACE BECKONS (20).]

Grace Beckons: Hi, can I help you?

Ford Phillips: Yes. We need to speak with Mr. Nightingale.

Grace Beckons: Do you have an appointment?

Ford Phillips: No -

Fig Wineshine: I'm his long-lost daughter. I'm not here for money, just want to get to know my father.

Grace Beckons: Oh golly gee, wow! You better get in there right away!

[Grace scoots back her chair.]

Fig Wineshine: (to Ford) That's what I like to call "No Daughter, 1 Daughter."

[A door opens...]

[BARNABY NIGHTINGALE (40) sits on the edge of his desk, on the phone.]

Barnaby Nightingale: ...Well, I went ahead and knitted sweaters for the whole litter. Didn't want any of those little kittens to feel left out. Oh hold that thought, mom, I have visitors.

Grace Beckons: Mista Nightingale! Boy do I have something to tell ya! This here is your long lost daughter!

Barnaby Nightingale: Grace, I -

Fig Wineshine: Barnaby Nightingale, good to meet ya. This here's my partner Phillips, Ford Phillips, former child star and current PI about town.

Ford Phillips: And this is Fig Wineshine, former reporter and current pain in my ass.

Barnaby Nightingale: So, not my long lost daughter? Katie, this is the third time this month you've fallen for that! How many illegitimate daughters do you think I have?

Grace Beckons: Sorry! I'll write that down.

[She leaves. The DOOR SHUTS behind her.]

Barnaby Nightingale: Private Eyes, huh? What can I help you with? Oh, can I get you anything? Coffee? Pressed Juice?

Ford Phillips: Sure, I'll have beetroot with ginger.

Barnaby Nightingale: Man after my own heart.

[Barnaby pours Ford a juice.]

Ford Phillips: We're here about the murder of F. Scott Fitzgerald. Author, screenwriter, and alleged womanizer.

Barnaby Nightingale: Shame about that isn't it? Although... murder? I thought it was a heart attack.

Fig Wineshine: That's what the press is saying, including your Gazette.

Barnaby Nightingale: Yes well, it's terrible! Just terrible! I loved that Gatsby fellow. Feel like I have a lot in common with him.

Ford Phillips: How so?

Barnaby Nightingale: Spend a lot of my time trying to impress a woman who doesn't seem to care much about me. Love to host extravagant parties. Also I'm trying out my version of "old sport."

Ford Phillips: What's that?

Barnaby Nightingale: Buckedeedoo! Cute, right?

Fig Wineshine: I'd workshop that one before you get punched.

Barnaby Nightingale: Note taken. Now, what can I do for you?

Ford Phillips: Unfortunately, we've discovered that Fitzgerald didn't die of a heart attack.

Barnaby Nightingale: I see. Are you hoping for us to issue a retraction of our obituary? I've been looking for a reason to fire George in that department, but he also does the crosswords. You know, he misspelled the name of Fitzgerald's live-in girlfriend, Sheilah Graham. That I can't blame him for. It's weird to have an extra 'H' at the end. But still, he's the crossword guy.

Fig Wineshine: Sheilah Graham the gossip columnist? I lost a few scoops to her in my days as a scribe.

Ford Phillips: No firings necessary. It isn't George's fault that the obit was wrong. The cops are in on the cover-up of this whole ordeal and they're the ones that fed the press that story about the heart attack.

Fig Wineshine: Right now we're just trying to get a lay of the land. See who knew Fitzy and what we can figure out about his final days.

Barnaby Nightingale: Well, I barely knew the man! Met him once at a shindig Mel Hammermeister invited me and the wife to. Vivian's my wife, she's a singer and actress, just terribly talented, a real Bubba Gillespie - that's another nickname I'm trying out.

Fig Wineshine & Ford Phillips: Don't care for it./Absolutely not.

Barnaby Nightingale: Well, that's fair. Anyways, she's the one who introduced us actually, she met him at Bixby's Lounge downtown where she sings. You might ask her about him in fact, she'd know better than I would.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Whaddya think boss? This act working for ya?

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): You just call me boss?

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Your name is still on the lease.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): What? I don't want all the liability!

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Come on! Before he starts to get suspicious, what do you think?

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): Well, I don't get the sense that he knows about the affair or had anything to do with the murder. He's carefree. Amiable. Not defensive.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): So was Roger Haircremé.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): That was blackmail, this is murder.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): So what's the move?

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): We're on his radar now. He knows he's part of this. We leave now and if we learn later that he did know about Vivian's wayward eye, we'll make a return visit.

Barnaby Nightingale: You Bubba Gillespies ok? You're just sitting there staring at each other.

Ford Phillips: Yeah, we're great. Thanks for your time Barnaby, and thanks for the juice. It's very....earthy.

Barnaby Nightingale: Your skin looks clearer already!

Fig Wineshine: You might be hearing from us again, so don't go anywhere!

Barnaby Nightingale: Nowhere to go but here and home. The life of a workaholic, am I right? No wonder the wife is so mad all the time.

Fig Wineshine: Nah, don't blame yourself. Vivian seems like she was born that way. Kind of just a permanent stink face.

Barnaby Nightingale: But the most beautiful stink face in town. Hey, so you've met her?

Ford Phillips: We're regulars at Bixby's. Might head that way later tonight and ask the Missus what she's heard.

Barnaby Nightingale: Tell that angel I say hi and I'll be dreaming of her voice all night while I undoubtedly am still here fixing up George's mistakes.

Fig Wineshine: Will do.

Barnaby Nightingale: On that note, you know a four-letter word for "stark cookie"?

Fig Wineshine: Oreo. I'm your cookie gal.

Barnaby Nightingale: That's great. See you around ya hot garlics!

Fig Wineshine & Ford Phillips: Nope! It isn't working./Please don't!

[Bixby's lounge theme plays]

Bixby Crane: Sorry, I have to charge extra for olives today. Business is slower than usual and rent's gone up again since you were last here.

Fig Wineshine: That's OK, Bixby, the dirty martini is doubling as my lunch today. Busy busy.

Bixby Crane: Old Bob, my landlord, is really trying to squeeze every cent out of me.

Fig Wineshine: Well, as soon as we get paid for this new case, I'll bring all my friends around and we'll order the fanciest drinks you can muster. I'm talkin' tip-top shelf.

Ford Phillips: You only have one friend, Fig.

Bixby Crane: How *is* the luminous Miss Vanderjetski these days? She seemed in good spirits last time she was in, but that does always seem to be the case.

Fig Wineshine: She's great. We're coworkers now. Both starring in the *Grapes of Wrath* picture at Hammermeister's studio. Check this out.

Bixby Crane: Wow, a bracelet that says "coworkers". I should get some for my employees. They're always forgetting.

Fig Wineshine: I was dubious at first, but it's come in handy.

[The DOOR OPENS and a bunch of people walk in.]

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): For the second time in as many days, a gaggle of well-to-do industry folks made a beeline for Bixby's backroom. There was the young gal who couldn't be more than fifteen years old chattering on about screenplay format. An older fellow I recognized from a western film my dad had taken me to as a kid. And sneaking in behind the gregarious Harpo Marx was a small blonde woman with her face set in a grimace.

Fig Wineshine: Hey, speaking of, that dame that just walked in - I think I saw her on set yesterday.

Darby Farnsworth: ...the first page and he yelled at me. At me! So I asked him, "Do you know who my father is?"...

Ford Phillips: She looks mighty young to be muckin' about in a cocktail lounge. Aren't you worried you'll lose your license?

Bixby Crane: You know, we do serve some of Hollywood's finest non-alcoholic... cookies.

Fig Wineshine: Yeah you do!

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): As Fig and Bixby cheered each other, I got up and slyly eavesdropped as they made their way to the back.

Leery O'Shaughnessy: I'm glad Mel took a chance on you, kid.

Darby Farnsworth: Thanks Leery. Opportunities for female screenwriters are few and far between these days! If only I could have been born seventy years from now. Freeze my body and bring me back to life then!

Leery O'Shaughnessy: Quiet, now Darby, don't cause a scene. Sheilah? Are you coming?

Sheilah Graham: I'll, uh, be there in a moment.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): The others disappeared into the back as the one named Sheilah stood to the side while the Bixby's Lounge Emcee took the stage. I made my way back to the bar.

The Emcee: And now, the songstress of SoCal, the diva of downtown, the icon of the I-5 freeway, which is something I made up in my dream last night and really need to talk to a city planner about, Miss Vivian Nightingale!

[Vivian walks onto the stage to tepid applause. She begins singing The Benefits of Being My Man.]

Vivian: (singing) You hold the title of my biggest fan...

Fig Wineshine: Feel like I've heard this one before.

Ford Phillips: So what's going on there, Bixby?

Bixby Crane: Oh there? That's a singer I hired. To entertain and inspire and create the aesthetic of a buzzing and successful speakeasy harkening back to the days of prohibition.

Ford Phillips: No, not up THERE. I mean that coterie of famous friends you're stashing in the back room?

Bixby Crane: (uncomfortable) Like I said, making ends meet is hard these days. I'm renting out the back space to actors who need to rehearse.

Ford Phillips: Yesterday it was a book club and now it's a rehearsal space. Aren't you an enterprising business owner?

[Bixby chuckles nervously.]

Fig Wineshine: Hey Ford - Check out blondie at 6 o'clock, staring down Vivian. That's Sheila Graham, Fitzgerald's gal. I'd recognize that story-thieving bob anywhere.

Ford Phillips: It seems Fitz's love life is about to collide in on itself.

Fig Wineshine: Oh yeah. I doubt she's ogling that dress. Even in this early Hollywood black and white, I can tell that color clashes with her hair.

Ford Phillips: And it's even harder in audio. Oh, here she comes. Act natural.

[Sheilah walks over to the bar.]

Sheilah Graham: I need a shot of something, Bixby, anything.

Bixby Crane: Coming right up. Everything OK, Miss Graham?

Sheilah Graham: Having a bit of a rotten week actually. I have a feeling things might turn out all right though.

Bixby Crane: Sorry to hear that. But then, happy to hear the next part. Sentences can be such whirlwinds. Language is beautiful.

[He pours the drink.]

Bixby Crane: That'll be seven dollars.

Sheilah Graham: Seven? In 1940? You're lucky I like you.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): Sheilah Graham sighed the sigh of a woman who'd reached the end of her rope. She poured the shot of liquor down her gullet and went to join her group doing who knows what in the back room of Bixby's. I do believe we've found ourselves another suspect.

[Vivian Nightingale wails the last line of the song.]

Vivian Nightingale: Thank you. Thank you everyone. And let's hear it for the Emcee on the piano. Hey, over at the bar! Bixby, watch that Fig Wineshine, she smuggled her own cookies in here and that's not allowed.

[She PUTS THE MIC BACK ON THE STAND in the stand and WALKS OFF.]

[SFX: Cookie munching.]

Bixby Crane: She's right, Fig. There's an unboxing fee here nowadays.

Fig Wineshine: You're really nickel and diming us here, B!

Ford Phillips: We'll pay up if you hook us up with Sheilah's address.

Bixby Crane: I thought you had a thing for Vivian?

Fig Wineshine: I'm the one with a thing for Vivian. And that thing is a suspicious eye and a left hook if necessary. The addy, Bixby?

Bixby Crane: OK, but don't tell her this came from me.

[Bixby scribbles the number on a napkin.]

Ford Phillips: We're discreet. Appreciate it, my friend.

[FOOTSTEPS as Vivian walks over to the bar.]

Vivian Nightingale: Well, well, if it isn't the Detectives to the Stars.

Fig Wineshine: Trademark Pending!

Ford Phillips: We haven't decided on that yet.

Fig Wineshine: Sorry, I ordered the stationary already.

Vivian Nightingale: Bixby, I'll have what he's having.

Ford Phillips: Well Miss Nightingale, we've done a little digging and... as much as it pains me to say this, I think we're going to accept the case.

Vivian Nightingale: I knew you'd come around. But that means you're drinking on the job.

Ford Phillips: It sure does. It'll be 25 a day plus expenses.

Vivian Nightingale: You drive a hard bargain. Deal. So how is my case coming along?

Fig Wineshine: It's coming along slower than an uphill molasses river. Slower than a stone tortoise in a snowstorm. Slower than-

Ford Phillips: We paid a visit to your better half today. Seems like a nice fella. Shame about his wife.

Vivian Nightingale: (with a snort) I suppose he's a real jolly sport right up until he throttles you in cold blood.

Fig Wineshine: You friends with Fitzzy's girl Sheilah?

Vivian Nightingale: Friends? With Sheilah? No one is friends with that woman. She's a vicious gossip. To befriend her is like befriending a wild animal. Could turn on you at any time. Like I'm going to do now. But with my body.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): And with that she made good on her promise. She turned on her heel and sauntered out of the bar back to her dressing room.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Presumably to brush her hair in the mirror and ask it who's the fairest of them all. Then eat a feast of ingenue hearts over a bed of iceberg lettuce.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): OK, we get it. You don't like her.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Iceberg lettuce, Ford. Not even the good kind, like romaine or butter, the kind with some nutritional value. That's what she is, Ford, iceberg lettuce...

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): As Fig rattled on about Vivian and lettuce and, eventually I assume bleu cheese (Fig: "bleu cheese!", I glanced over to the back room, where I saw Sheilah Graham standing, staring daggers at me. She smiled, then disappeared behind the drapes. Something was up.

Fig Wineshine: ...Dad was doing the work of 3 different people on account of a small but brief outbreak of the bubonic plague that hit our town that winter. So he had to bring his work home with him that weekend. And so he rolled in with 5 vats of creamy, tangy, chunky bleu-bleu just as I wound up to whack my bean shaped pinata, and boy oh boy, Ford, that was a messy bean explosion, let me tell ya.

[The Case of the Greater Gatsby closing theme begins]

Mary Kate Wiles: 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

Sean Persaud as Ford Phillips

Mary Kate Wiles as Grace Beckons and Vivian Nightingale

Tommy Hobson as Barnaby Nightingale

Dante Swain as Bixby Crane

Carlos Alazraqui as Leery O'Shaughnessy

Ginny Di as Darby Farnsworth

Julia Cho as Sheilah Graham

And Christopher Higgins as the Emcee

Original music by Dylan Glatthorn

Audio recording by Ears Up Studio and 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

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Please rate and review the show wherever you listen.

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 Little Women: a fake movie trailer that mashes up Louisa May Alcott's beloved classic with The VVitch. Join Shipwrecked Comedy on Patreon to get early access to Greater Gatsby episodes and exclusive behind the scenes content.

[END OF EPISODE]