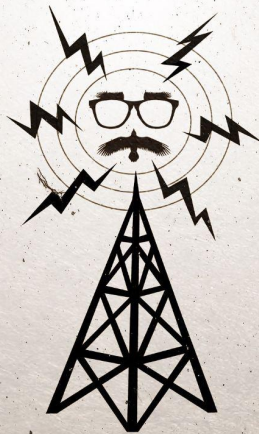


— THE CASE OF —  
THE GREATER GATSBY  
— (T) —



THE CASE OF THE GREATER GATSBY  
EPISODE 4 - RUMOR HAS IT  
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 4: Rumor Has It. Written and created by Sean Persaud and Sinéad Persaud. This episode is brought to you by Hunt A Killer.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): The case was only a few episodes old and already we were bouncing between glamorous persons of interest faster than a wishy-washy casting director. As Fig and I walked up to our next suspect's apartment, we tried to decide on an approach. This town's so small a whisper can be heard a mile away. And people here will gossip when there's nothing else to say. That's why I opted for something straightforward. Fig... disagreed.

*[Fig and Ford walk down the sidewalk. BIRDS CHIRP, an old auto WHEEZES BY.]*

Fig Wineshine: Ok, well, we didn't get far with "No Daughter 1 Daughter" at Barnaby's, so I figured we could mix it up. This time, let's go with Zoo-Bee-Zoo-Bee-Zoo, it's where we pretend to be tourists and we're trying to get to the zoo but you're allergic to bees and-

Ford Phillips: We're not doing anything strange, okay? We knock on her door, ask her a few questions, then go home and drink. Same as always.

Fig Wineshine: I really think you're missing an opportunity to explore some new ways of privately investigating people.

Ford Phillips: Why change what works?

Fig Wineshine: Sure, but if you don't innovate, you're doomed to the scrap heap of history. We did this improvisation exercise the other day on set and I gotta say, it really opened up -

*[Ford KNOCKS on the door.]*

Fig Wineshine: - my mind to some things. I think my parents' relationship really affected how I -

Ford Phillips: Look, the last thing I need is some Hollywood acting gobbledygook getting in the way of my nightly imbibing.

*[The DOOR OPENS, revealing Sheila Graham, prim and put together. Sharp and cool, she sizes them up.]*

Ford Phillips: Sheila Graham, I'm Ford-

Sheilah Graham: - Phillips. Oh, I know. And Fig Wineshine, what a pleasure to see you again. Please, come on in.

*[Sheilah, Fig, and Ford sit together in the small living room.]*

Ford Phillips: Thanks for meeting with us, Miss Graham. We can go somewhere else if the memories are too intense.

Sheilah Graham: No no, it's fine. It's my apartment, after all. I have to live here. I had just put on some water. Would you care for some tea?

Ford Phillips: That'll be fine.

Fig Wineshine: Tea me, toots.

Sheilah Graham: Mm. Wonderful. I'll be right back.

*[SFX: TEA KETTLE WHISTLES]*

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): Sheilah Graham and F. Scott Fitzgerald lived together in a quaint corner of West Hollywood. From the look of the place now, you'd never know that a brutal crime took place just last week.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): What, were you expecting her to just go about her business with a chalk outline of her boyfriend on the ground?

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): Fig, I was setting the scene.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): It is awfully clean in here. Almost as if someone tried to-

Sheilah Graham: Sorry to interrupt what I can only assume was a dual internal monologue but all I have is green. Hope you're OK with that.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Green tea always tasted like hot pond scum to me, but I was just going to warm my hands with the mug anyhow.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): You know you don't have to say every thought that comes to you in your voice over.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): But the details are what make things interesting!

Ford Phillips: Sheilah, there's no easy way to put this. We're here to ask if you knew about F. Scott Fitzgerald's affairs outside of your relationship.

Sheilah Graham: (laughing) I'm a gossip columnist. It's my job to know what sordid secrets everyone is hiding. Of course, I knew about Vivian. Did YOU know that Francis is... was still married while we were living together?

Ford Phillips: Yeah, Zelda Fitzgerald. Where's she at these days?

Sheilah Graham: She lives with her mother on the east coast. Francis and her wrote to each other often but hadn't seen each other in nearly 18 months. He started writing scripts to pay for frequent hospitalizations. He's a good man. There was a part of me that hoped that-

*[Sheilah laughs, embarrassed.]*

Fig Wineshine: You hoped he might finally divorce her and marry you?

Sheilah Graham: Perhaps. It's not that I'm dying to marry again. Didn't work out so well the first time, though I do like the last name that I picked up.

Fig Wineshine: Graham's good. Like the cracker. Oh, can we get s'mores after this?

Ford Phillips: Quiet...Yes. (To Sheilah) Why did you wanna get hitched then? Hefty tax break?

Sheilah Graham: I'm tired of living in shadows. Dodging in and out of rooms as though a gunshot might hit me and take me out for good. This town is puritanical. The idea of an unmarried woman living with a married man? And that's not to mention-

*[Sheilah catches herself. A beat.]*

Ford Phillips: You're really not gonna mention it.

Sheilah Graham: (to Fig) It's nothing. Being a woman is awfully demeaning sometimes isn't it?

Fig Wineshine: Sure, sometimes. My trick is just to ignore the jibes and bulldoze through the parade of mediocre men and wear a hat with a brim so big I can't see their stupid faces. Also, the clothes are way better for us. I mean look at this suit. Clark Gable could never.

Ford Phillips: Here's the part where we ask if you knew anyone else who had a grudge against F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Sheilah Graham: If only you knew what was in *The Greater Gatsby*, then you might understand. Everyone in town was about to have a reason to take him down. Someone must have found out about the contents of that script and figured they'd silence him before it could all get out.

Ford Phillips: And how did he come to obtain all these sordid secrets? Could it have been from his gossip columnist lover?

Sheilah Graham: Sure could have been. Look. I'm doing just fine. Francis, however, needed a bit more money in the bank. I thought that giving him the fodder for this tell all might bring in the right kind of money.

Fig Wineshine: So who else knew about the script?

Sheilah Graham: That's the thing. Could be so many people. Francis was what we politely refer to as a souse. Rare were the days I'd come home to a sober man. And boy, when he drinks does he like to talk. There's no knowing all the people he might have blabbed to. But if we're putting money on who killed him, I'd place a bucket of chips on that Vivian Nightingale.

Fig Wineshine: Color me intrigued. Why's that?

Sheilah Graham: Fig, how often were your hunches wrong back on the beat?

Fig Wineshine: Not very.

Ford Phillips: You know, Vivian's the one who hired us. Everyone believed this was a heart attack. She could have gotten away with it scott free. Doesn't add up.

Sheilahy Graham: But people like Vivian are opportunists. I'm willing to bet she saw dollar signs in this situation and is wrapping you both around her little finger.

Fig Wineshine: Me? I'm unwrappable. Ford? Well.

Ford Phillips: I'll be honest, I'm wrappable.

Fig Wineshine: Well, Sheilah, pretending to sip this tea in your presence has been a pleasure. I gotta go, I've acquired a job as an actor on a film set. Getting into costume takes an alarming amount of time. Plus did you know on sets they just have a table of food out that anyone can eat? No wonder everyone wants to be in this biz.

Sheilah Graham: Congrats. You've been lassoed by the glittering noose of the film industry. What's the picture?

Fig Wineshine: Acting along my starlet gal pal Wilhelmina Vanderjetski in a prohibition era tap dancing Western adaption of Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Sheilah Graham: Ah yes. Have fun on that sinking ship.

Fig Wineshine: I will. And I won't ask what you mean just now because I want to go to work with a positive attitude.

*[The same outdoor area we were in before. Ford LIGHTS A CIGARETTE.]*

Fig Wineshine: What did you make of all that?

Ford Phillips: I can usually get a read on people pretty easily. Sheilah Graham? She's simultaneously forthcoming and as closed off as a Swiss bank vault.

Fig Wineshine: Yeah, not sure I believe that she's all la-dee-da about F. Scott sleeping around. She could have killed him and left the body for Vivian to find. Trying to frame her.

Ford Phillips: Or perhaps Vivian was the target and F. Scott was an accident.

Fig Wineshine: I love when we're in the pie-in-the-sky phase of solving a crime. Anything goes! Maybe it was President Roosevelt! Maybe it was YOU! ME even!

Ford Phillips: No, I don't think that would be satisfying.

Fig Wineshine: True. We've got skeletons for sure, but they're not worth murdering over.

Ford Phillips: You've got skeletons?

Fig Wineshine: Sure I do! You just never ask me about 'em. Come to think of it. You never ask me anything about myself. Do you even know where I live? My middle name?

Ford Phillips: We're coworkers, not friends. You even got me that bracelet to remind me.

Fig Wineshine: I live at 1441 North Vermont Street right across from this little deli with the best smoked pastrami. And my middle name is-

Ford Phillips: I don't need to know!

Fig Wineshine: But you're my emergency contact!

Ford Phillips: Why!?

Fig Wineshine: Figdalena Harriet Wineshine the 3rd.

Ford Phillips: Honestly, I thought it would be weirder. Wait, there are three of you?

Fig Wineshine: Five, but my family is very bad at math.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): As I learned more about my partner against my will, we were approached by a man holding a watering can.

Citizen Jasper Fox: (wheezing) Excuse me? Excuse me.

Fig Wineshine: Hi, are you from the neighborhood watch? Thank you for your service.

Citizen Jasper Fox: Oh no. My name is Citizen Jasper Fox. I live right over there.

Fig Wineshine: You call yourself citizen? Why?

Citizen Jasper Fox: Well, I'm not wrong. You could call yourself "Citizen" too, you know.

Fig Wineshine: No kidding. Maybe I will.

Citizen Jasper Fox: Listen, I wondered if you might smoke elsewhere? My begonias will be be-gone-ias if that poison keeps wafting over here. (coughs)

Fig Wineshine: Nice wordplay. We'll be moving right along.

Ford Phillips: So you're Sheilah Graham's neighbor? We're investigating the death of F. Scott Fitzgerald right here in this building only days ago.

Citizen Jasper Fox: Oh yes. Terrible business. Heart attack, right? Yes, that's what I heard. But I don't like to involve myself in the tribulations of those Hollywood types. I'm the anti-Sheilah Graham, I guess you could say. They're all having affairs and double-crossing each other and the pictures nowadays are average at best. Too much (coughs) talking. Too many sequels. Too many adaptations.

Ford Phillips: What *do* you concern yourself with then?

Citizen Jasper Fox: Well, I've got my garden and my cars. That's enough for me.

Fig Wineshine: That mighty fine Chevrolet out front belong to you? Mint green? That's my third favorite green.

Citizen Jasper Fox: Good detective work. Isn't she a beauty? Part of the new Fleetline series. Not available to the public until June.

Ford Phillips: Sure, great car. You recall where you were on the night of December 20th?

Citizen Jasper Fox: Oh sure. \*laughs\* I remember that night well. Stayed up late reading my manuals. It was nice and quiet. I recall Sheilah and Fitzgerald leaving all dolled up around (wheezes) 9 pm. I was overjoyed that they weren't hosting people as it tended to get very boisterous when they did.

Ford Phillips: Did you see them come back?

Citizen Jasper Fox: (coughs) He came back around midnight. Saw him walk by the window. I stayed up another hour or so. Nothing else.

Fig Wineshine: No strange noises? No struggle?

Citizen Jasper Fox: Not a single peep. Heart attacks are the silent killer.

Ford Phillips: Thanks for the info.

Citizen Jasper Fox: Anytime. And you might try quitting those toba–(wheezes) tobac–(wheezes) tobacco sticks. Rumor has it they aren't good for you.

Ford Phillips: Lotta things aren't good for me.

Fig Wineshine: He's right, you know, ever since I quit I've been way quicker on my feet. Which I need to be for this second-act dance number. Oh for Chevy's sake, I'm late!

*[Hammermeister studios. A tap dancing number is in full swing. TAP TAP TAP - we hear a complicated dance routine to jazzy music.]*

Penny Nickelpenny: Faster! Faster! Think of all the grapes you have to harvest! Dance like your family's well-being depends on it! At least...I think that's what we're going for. Haven't read the book.

Whitley Trufflehaus: CUT! Cut! Cut!! That's a cut on rehearsal. Penny! Can I talk to you about this? It isn't working. I'm not getting dust bowl vibes.

Penny Nickelpenny: What's a dust bowl? Hey Wilhelmina, Fig, keep practicing!

*[They walk off. Fig calls after her.]*

Fig Wineshine: That's Citizen Fig now.

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: Fig! I didn't know you got married! Oh, would you accompany me to the little girl's room while Whitley and Penny duke it out? I'd go alone, but someone is threatening to kill me and I'd hate to hold up the production if that happens.

Fig Wineshine: Course, Willy. That is the deal after all.

*[Willy and Fig walk down the hallways.]*

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: Roger's really made his jail cell his own. I couldn't believe that they wouldn't let him keep the bonsai garden I brought him...

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Since taking the gig as Willy's bodyguard, nothing unseemly had occurred. No one had even looked at Willy in the wrong way. Except for the janitor who saw her put a cheese straw in her water cup and try to drink from it. Part of me hoped that that note was a one time thing... a false alarm.

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: ...with a chopped-up hot dog and jello for dessert. But sometimes the jello is a good macaroni mix-in as well. Or the raw chicken.



*[Fig hears a man YELLING from behind a closed door.]*

Cliff Calloway (muffled): Last time I had no quarrel with her, but THIS time? Ho ho ho ho, this time things are different.

Fig Wineshine: Interesting. Willy, stay back.

*[Fig leans up against a door.]*

Cliff Calloway (muffled): She'll never make it out of here alive! I'll drive her mad! See? MAD! She'll be looking over her shoulder and behind every corner until the worry lines on her forehead are deeper than a Kafka novel!

*[Fig KNOCKS on the door. Cliff answers.]*

Cliff Calloway: (totally chipper) If it isn't Fig Wineshine! Come here dollface -

*[As they HUG...]*

Cliff Calloway: I heard you're a big-time movie star now! We even have some scenes together in the picture! Sorry, it's been a bit of a gaggle pie around here. Creative differences all around. It's a miracle anything gets made anymore!

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Cliff Calloway was the bee's knees of the silver screen. Folks and bees alike swooned at the sight of him. With a thick head of auburn hair and a jawline that could cut through the H in the Hollywoodland sign, he was Mel Hammermeister's go-to heartthrob. He didn't really do it for me. But then again he wasn't circular with crispy edges and gooey middle.

Fig Wineshine: But none of our scenes involve driving a young lady mad.

Cliff Calloway: Oh, that? Ha ha! I'm rehearsing for a play. Here's the script from Samuel French.

*[He tosses a book at Fig.]*

Cliff Calloway: It's a sequel to *The Actors Who Hate Each Other*. It's called the *Actors Who Still Hate Each Other, Very Much*. Theater is really where my heart lies. The energy, you know?

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: And the programs! It's exciting to see all the advertisements in the back.

Fig Wineshine: So you don't know anything about these threatening notes Willy's been sent?

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Cliff's face went dark when I mentioned the notes. His eyes flickered down the hallway. He beckoned us into his dressing room and closed the door.

*[The DOOR SHUTS. Cliff RIFLES THROUGH PAPERS on his desk.]*

Cliff Calloway: I got it yesterday. Here.

*[Fig OPENS an envelope and UNFOLDS a note.]*

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): There it was, just like Willy's note. Letters cut from newspapers and magazines, glued together haphazardly.

Fig Wineshine: "Quit the movie or your next big hit will take you out." Does that mean the movie will be a hit?

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: It's very confusing. Is the hit taking you out on a date?

Cliff Calloway: No, I think the 'hit' is supposed to kill me. Like a hit man.

Fig Wineshine: Why not just say "I'll kill you if you keep making this movie?"

Cliff Calloway: Oh please. Everyone thinks they're a writer.

Fig Wineshine: You tell anyone about this?

Cliff Calloway: No one! My whole persona is 'strong virile man.' If I started wailing about scary notes, my reputation will be ruined! Willy, would you be a peach and hand me that bottle of nail oil over there? My cuticles are wrecked.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Cliff was right. He had a lot to lose if he didn't play the Hollywood game right. Willy and Cliff bonded years ago over their secrets. Willy feared that her real name, Lily Thomas, would leak to the press and Cliff had to keep his same-sex proclivities to himself. I'd make sure to keep his double life out of the case.

Fig Wineshine: And this is the only note you've received so far?

*[A KNOCK at the door. Penny opens the door, WHEELING in a mail cart. She HANDS Cliff a pile of mail.]*

Penny Nickelpenny: Here's your fan mail from today.

Fig Wineshine: Penny? You deliver the mail as well?

Penny Nickelpenny: Like I said, I don't do it, it gets did wrong. The last mail courier we hired had the audacity to deliver Mel Hammermeister her mail while she was on a personal call. Rumor has it he still hasn't stopped peeing.

*[Door SHUTS. Cliff GASPS!]*

Cliff Calloway: Oh, larb!

Fig Wineshine: What is it? Another threat?

Cliff Wineshine: Oh, sorry no, it's a menu for an Asian fusion restaurant that just opened on Cahuenga. I've been craving spring rolls. Holy tonkatsu!

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: Ooh, they have ramen?!

Cliff Calloway: No! It's another note!

Fig Wineshine: OK, this is getting confusing. Give it to me. "We're closer than you think. Those red socks make your ankles look chunky."

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: I'm sorry Cliff. People can be so mean about ankle girth.

Fig Wineshine: Those socks of yours sure do look crimson to me. This ain't good. Our culprit is close by, probably someone on the lot if they're close enough to be checking out your foot fare.

*[Fig opens the door and peeks down the hallway.]*

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: What are you doing?

Fig Wineshine: Just making sure no one's eavesdropping on us.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Though I didn't see anyone in the hall outside Cliff's door, I thought I clocked a shadowy figure swish discreetly around the corner. Hmmm.

*[Fig shuts the door.]*

Cliff Calloway: What do I do?! I can't die! I haven't even been to Ibiza yet! Or told my contractor that I love him! I just keep hiring him to put additions onto my house. The place has 48 bathrooms now! The charade is tiring! I bet Leery doesn't have to deal with this nonsense! Can't wait till I'm old and no one cares about me anymore.

Fig Wineshine: No one's gettin' dispatched on my watch.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): That night, Fig caught me up on her studio escapades over some pretty decent spring rolls from that new place on Cahuenga. It was alarming to hear that the plague of minacious telegrams was spreading faster than a raucous rumor in a middle school.

Fig Wineshine: So, whaddya think?

Ford Phillips: Mel Hammermeister seems to have taken a shine to you. Get a meeting with her and convince her to lock down the studio, and hire more security.

Fig Wineshine: Might be prudent to see what Mel knows about our Fitzgerald while I'm at it.

Ford Phillips: Couldn't hurt. Seems she has bigger fish to fry than a down on his luck screenwriter though.

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: I highly doubt Mel Hammermeister fries her own fish. She's far too busy and also, I think, a vegan!

Ford Phillips: Not going to lie Willy, I forgot you were here.

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: Me too!

*[A KNOCK at the door.]*

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: I'll get it! Oh how fun, I can answer your calls and schedule your meetings, it's like I'm your cemetery!

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): I didn't have time to tell her the word she meant to use was "executive assistant" - the door had already opened and a cemetery is exactly where I wanted to be.

*[Fig and Willy GASP.]*

Fig Wineshine and Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: Mel Hammermeister?!

Mel Hammermeister: Hey, if it isn't my two lovely leads. And Ford Phillips. Long time no see, kid.

*[The Case of the Greater Gatsby closing theme begins]*

Sean 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:

Sean Persaud as Ford Phillips

Sinead Persaud as Fig Wineshine

Julia Cho as Sheilah Graham

Parvesh Cheena as Citizen Jasper Fox and Whitley Trufflehaus

Lauren Lopez as Penny Nickelpenny

Sarah Grace Hart as Wilhelmina Vanderjetski  
Tom DeTrinis as Cliff Calloway  
And Lesli Margherita as Mel Hammermeister

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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