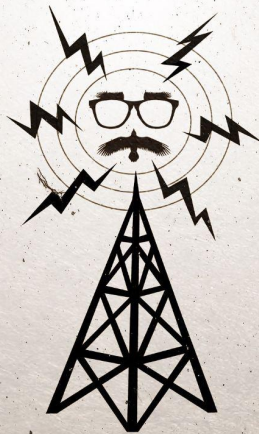


— THE CASE OF —
THE GREATER GATSBY
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THE CASE OF THE GREATER GATSBY
EPISODE 14 - KARMA POLICE
TRANSCRIPT

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

Announcer: Now presenting Fig and Ford in The Case of the Greater Gatsby. Episode 14: Karma Police. Written and created by Sean Persaud and Sinéad Persaud. This episode is brought to you by Hunt A Killer.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): The next day, I walked up to the office to meet Ford just before noon to talk over the baffling bevy of information we'd uncovered while listening to what amounted to F. Scott Fitzgerald's diary. The last 24 hours had dropped a Pandora's Box on our heads and when it shattered into a thousand pieces, it spilled out a cornucopia of lies, deceit, mixed metaphors, and now an ominous disappearance. It was all I could do to keep from faking my own death and moving to a villa in France, renaming myself Figçois and taking up watercolor painting. I've given all I can, but we're still on the payroll. While my brain simmered in a warm bath of existential dread, I opened the door and walked into the office, only to find the place completely empty!

[Fig GASPS.]

Ford Phillips: You're late.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): I spun around to see Ford reading a newspaper on the floor, unbothered. What on earth was going on here?

Fig Wineshine: What on earth is going on here?

Ford Phillips: What do you mean?

Fig Wineshine: All our stuff! It's disappeared! Is this the work of the dastardly letter threatener?? Hmm, I gotta work on a catchier name - Message Menace, nope that's bad too! Dispatch Dispatcher, no, too clever-

Ford Phillips: Fig, calm down -

Fig Wineshine: Perhaps the hinge highwaymen are leveling up their operation to include furniture and bottles of cheap scotch-

Ford Phillips: Fig, listen-

Fig Wineshine: Is F. Scott Fitzgerald's murderer trying to insinuate that he'll remove us from this plane of existence like our own office supplies if we continue to unravel the mystery behind-

Ford Phillips: FIG! The movers came this morning. Did you not get Wilhelmina's message last night?

Fig Wineshine: Message?

Ford Phillips: She found us an office. We're moving today.

Fig Wineshine: Wow. Maintaining two full time jobs really saps your ability to keep up on major life events.

Ford Phillips: Well you better gather your wits. We've got a long list of suspects to work through after listening to those tapes. I'm going to track down Vivian, and I want you to go grill Barnaby. He clearly knew about the affair and lied to us.

Fig Wineshine: Grill Barnaby? My god, are we that angry at him that we want to set him on fire?

Ford Phillips: What are you talking about?

Fig Wineshine: I thought we were trying to get the truth from people, not season them and roast them over a flame. I didn't know you were a cannibal-

Ford Phillips: No, it's just a saying, it means "to interview" or "interrogate."

Fig Wineshine: Well there's two way better things you could have said, rather than make up a whole new meaning for an existing word. Language has rules, Ford, and I'm a caretaker of those-

Ford Phillips: It's not a - UGH, fine, just go interview Barnaby.

Fig Wineshine: Well, I would, it's just that I'm filming my big tap number today.

Ford Phillips: Oh for the love of Noah.

Fig Wineshine: Yeah, that's what it's called. "For The Love of Noah" - Noah's the eldest Joad son. Kinda strange, loves to farm-

Ford Phillips: Alright, forget it. I'll try to track down Barnaby and Vivian. Have fun jitterbugging with your actor pals.

Fig Wineshine: It's tap dancing. And I've worked really hard on it.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): I needed to calm down once I hit the studio lot so I grabbed a cup of tea from crafty before heading into wardrobe. As I stirred in some honey, the sound of a particularly violent sneeze startled me.

[TD SNEEZES.]

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): I turned to see TD Hammermeister walking with purpose down the corridor. Wherever he was headed in such a hurry would have to wait. I ran to catch up with him.

Fig Wineshine: TD! Good morning!

TD Hammermeister: Ms. Wineshine, I wish I could say it was. But we have to replace Lex Punchwhistle by the end of the day and I need to get these headshots to Mel's office pronto!

[He SNEEZES.]

Fig Wineshine: Gesundheit.

TD Hammermeister: Danke, mein lieber.

Fig Wineshine: Must be a bum deal to be allergic to chamomile tea. Why don't you ask your wife to keep it off the lot?

TD Hammermeister: Oh, I've asked. She said no. In fact, she started having craft services order more! Her audacity and disregard for silly things like human health are some of the reasons why I married her.

Fig Wineshine: I'd love to know what your mother was like. Another time.

TD Hammermeister: Hey, how'd you know I was allergic to tea?

Fig Wineshine: Just listened to some very interesting evidence in the Fitzgerald case. His tapes. Recorded live from the man's office. You featured heavily in a few of them.

TD Hammermeister: Oh dear.

Fig Wineshine: Oh dear indeed. You can see why I might want to pin you down after hearing how Fitzgerald banned you from the social club now known as Bixby's Brigade.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): TD froze. Sweat beaded at his temples and I feared I'd have to shout for the set medic... who I assumed would be Penny.

Fig Wineshine: Take it easy Theo Deo. Unless you killed the man. Then don't take it so easy.

TD Hammermeister: You know the sight of other people's blood makes me faint. In fact, you'll remember that the sight of my own blood can make me faint. I could never. No matter how humiliated I was. Sometimes I faint just thinking about blo---bloooo---

[TD faints with a THUD.]

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): TD passed out onto the ground. Headshots flying all over the place. I collected them and stuck one on top of the pile. Gal named Juniper Wetblossom. I'd seen her in Willy's Sufferin' Safari last year playing a safari tour guide who was afraid of animals. Hilarious! After a minute, TD came to and I helped him up.

Fig Wineshine: Alright, up you get. Just to let you know, there was no blood involved in Fitzgerald's murder.

TD Hammermeister: Oh. Well, how would I know that? Since, you know, I didn't do it.

Fig Wineshine: Uh huh. Here, take your headshots back. Where were you that night? Just for my notes.

TD Hammermeister: The wife was hosting her annual Christmas party. I was part of the catering staff.

Fig Wineshine: Oh brother.

TD Hammermeister: And once the party wrapped up, Mel, Sheilah, and I chatted. It was late. I went to bed around 3am after cleaning up.

Fig Wineshine: Can you get me an invitation list to that party?

TD Hammermeister: Of course!

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): For an awkward moment, TD stood there grinning at me.

Fig Wineshine: What is it?

TD Hammermeister: Mel usually dismisses me when I'm supposed to leave.

Fig Wineshine: You're dismissed, buddy.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): TD saluted me, then continued his trek to Mel's office.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): While Fig shirked her duties as an underpaid junior private investigator to go work a different job that would certainly help support her fancy hat habit, I went to find Barnaby to confront him about his lies.

[The bustling sounds of the newspaper office. A phone RINGS and RINGS.]

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): Barnaby's assistant Grace was half hidden behind stacks of paperwork. The phone was ringing off the hook, but she seemed too frazzled to be able to add it to her immediate to-do list.

Grace Beckons: If you're here for the editor-in-chief, he isn't in at the moment. And before you try it, he has no secret daughters.

Ford Phillips: And where might the editor-in-chief be in the middle of the day?

Grace Beckons: It's personal. I can take a message.

Ford Phillips: I need to grill him about a few things. If you could tell me where-

Grace Beckons: Why would you *grill* him? Are you a cannibal?

Ford Phillips: What?? No, "to grill someone" is a saying. It's a thing people say.

Grace Beckons: Yeah, when they want to eat them.

Ford Phillips: No, not when - look, I don't want to eat anyone!!

[The newsroom quiets to a hush. A NEWSPAPER PERSON is heard VERY QUIETLY whispering to someone else.]

Newspaper Person: Oh my god, that guy wants to eat someone.

Ford Phillips: Uh, hello. No, I... I don't want to eat anyone. Actually. So... Thank you. You're all doing great work. Even George.

[GEORGE calls out from a distance.]

George: Thanks but I'm definitely not!

[The newsroom goes back to business.]

Ford Phillips: Look. I just want to interview Barnaby, that's what "grill" means.

Grace Beckons: No one says that. Anyways, Mr. Nightingale didn't tell me where he was going. It's THAT personal.

[Ford SIGHS.]

Ford Phillips: Coffee pot is overflowing in the kitchen. Saw it on my way in.

Grace Beckons: (angry) GEORGE! Did you press the button twice again?

[Grace storms off to the kitchen.]

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): As Grace stormed off to attend to a non-existent coffee mishap, I rifled through her rolodex and found Barnaby Nightingale's card. I clocked the address and was out of there before George could even apologize for something he didn't do.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Willy and I had rehearsed the big tap number with Penny at least 100 times since lunch. I felt like my feet had melted into putty in my shoes, but I was determined to get it one take so I could continue my investigating.

Whitley Trufflehaus: All right, all right, we have five minutes to get this dance number before we're supposed to wrap and if we go into overtime again, I'm going to lose my mind. Camera is rolling! Sound?

Sound Guy: Rolling!

Whitley Trufflehaus: Dancers?

Fig Wineshine/Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: Ready!

Penny Nickelpenny: Remember, keep those steps bouncy! The film is... you know what, I don't know anymore. Do whatever you want.

Whitley Trufflehaus: And... action!

[We hear the tapdancing in the background.]

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): As I danced with a great big dust bowl era smile on my face, I surveyed the people on the other side of the camera. TD had slipped the Christmas party invite list under the door to my dressing room only moments ago and nearly everyone here was on it. Darby we knew had left the party with her father early in the evening. Long before the murder. Willy and Cliff told me they left together around 1:30 am, after the murder. No motives and they were each other's alibis. Mel, Sheilah, and TD apparently stayed at the party until early in the morning. Whitley, Penny, and Leery were also there, along with half the studio employees. Someone at that party saw Fitzgerald leave and knew that he'd be alone in his apartment since Sheilah was still at Mel's. I just needed a way to -

[Tap dancing finishes.]

Whitley Trufflehaus: And CUT!

Penny Nickelpenny: Did we get it?!

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: That was amazing, Fig!

Fig Wineshine: Oh my grapes. I hope we got it because I don't think I have another one in me.

Whitley Trufflehaus: Camera looks good. Sound? HEY, sound Guy! SOUND!! Did we get it?

Sound Guy: Nope! Sorry. Wasn't actually rolling. Thought I was. But turns out... I wasn't.

Whitley Trufflehaus: (shaking with rage) CONFOUND IT!

Penny Nickelpenny: I'm gonna get you, sound guy! I'm gonna just sign you up for all sorts of junk mail and brochures for super niche novelty items that no man would ever want!

Leery O'Shaughnessy: Dang it, those were some of my best reaction faces!

Fig Wineshine: Oh God... I'm going down!

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: Fig!

[Fig FALLS TO THE GROUND.]

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski (Voice Over): Fig fell to the ground with a thud. Ooh! Voice over is fun!

Sound Guy: Wait... I was wrong! I *was* recording. Got it! I thought I was and then I thought I wasn't and then... it turns out I was.

Whitley Trufflehaus: Oh thank Cassiopeia above! We did it! We made our day! For the first time in *Grapes of Wrath* history... we finished on time!

[Cheers and applause from cast and crew in the soundstage.]

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: Congratulations, everyone!

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Willy helped me back onto my feet and a surge of pride coursed through me. For a moment, I forgot I was in the middle of a murder investigation.

Whitley Trufflehaus: Celebration at Bixby's! First round's on Mel. Yeah, yeah! It's on Mel. You thought it'd be on me. Nope!

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: Oh, this is just so much fun!

[Another round of cheers.]

Whitley Trufflehaus: And TD, please fire that sound man. Penny, you can hold a boom, right? Oh, it's not hard. You just hold it.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): The cab driver dropped me off high in the Hollywood Hills, outside a massive mansion perched amidst a large, well manicured lawn. A wrought iron gate keeping the riff raff out of the Nightingale estate stretched high with tendrils of ivy snaking around each bar. I rang the doorbell and soon an older woman traipsed down to the gate, suspicion lining her brow.

Housekeeper: Can I help you?

Ford Phillips: Ford Phillips, P.I. Here to grill the Nightingales.

Housekeeper: Grill? The Nightingales?? I am their housekeeper and I won't have any grilling here, human or otherwise. It's a fire hazard around this much vegetation. The HOA would not approve.

Ford Phillips: No, not grill like -

Housekeeper: Well that's what you said. Don't words have meanings anymore?

Ford Phillips: Where are they?

Housekeeper: Out on a personal errand.

Ford Phillips: This is important.

Housekeeper: So are personal errands.

Ford Phillips: I'm beginning to think these phonies skipped town.

Housekeeper: If that will be all from the very rude and pushy cannibal? Humph!

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): The housekeeper turned on her heel and headed back to the mansion. I found it hard to believe that no one knew where a big shot newsman was during a business day in the middle of multiple important investigations after having his life threatened. Or what the phrase "to grill someone" meant. Next stop: Bixby's. On the offchance I could catch Vivian.

[The Club music cue.]

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): I got to Bixby's just after 5:30. It's amazing how much of your day just gets eaten up by being in traffic here in Los Angeles. I'm sure they'll figure out a better system in the future, but for now, I'd drown the spirits of a mostly wasted day by getting mostly wasted on spirits.

Ford Phillips: Bix, Dark and Stormy, extra dark.

Bixby Crane: One full glass of rum, coming up.

Ford Phillips: Is Vivian in? Or did she quit and flee town?

Bixby Crane: Quit? Vivian just signed a brand new contract. Had some weird clauses about "cannot be voided even in the event of a change in ownership." Very odd, but I do like signing my name, so I agreed to it. Anyways, she should be in in a few minutes.

Ford Phillips: Great. Also, do you know that "to grill someone" means "to interview or interrogate them?" Please tell me you-

Donald Ogden Stewart: Excuse me. Are you Ford Phillips?

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): I turned to see a nebbishy, bald, bespectacled man in a sweater vest, fingers delicately balancing a glass of wine. I didn't recognize him, but the voice rang a bell.

Ford Phillips: Depends on who's asking.

Donald Ogden Stewart: Donald Ogden Stewart. I'm a -

Ford Phillips: I know who you are. Former member of the Algonquin Round Table and Bixby's Brigade. Screenwriter, mostly recently of *The Philadelphia Story*. Frenemy to one F. Scott Fitzgerald. And noted Communist. I miss anything?

Donald Ogden Stewart: It seems you've done your research.

Ford Phillips: What brings you to Bixby's, Mr. Stewart? Let me guess - with Fitzgerald and his *Greater Gatsby* script out of the way, your path to rejoin the Brigade is clear.

Donald Ogden Stewart: Well, that's one way to frame it. I am devastated at Scott's death. We've known each other since we were young. We worked together and yes, we worked against each other. We had a falling out while writing *The Women*, George Cukor's film from last year. All of that durm and strang for naught - none of our work even ended up in the picture. He was a frustrating fellow, to be sure. And maybe it's the years of friendship tinting these otherwise clear glasses, but I loved him dearly, warts and all. That said, I am indeed here to rejoin my comrades, to provide them comfort, to selfishly provide myself some distraction. And yes, I am fully aware of the target that puts on my back with regards to your investigation. Dorothy told me everything.

Ford Phillips: Well after that admission, and the recording I just heard of you and Fitzzy's final falling out, I'm gonna need to know where you were on December 20th.

Donald Ogden Stewart: I figured as much. But first, I thought you might find some interest in this.

Ford Phillips: He handed me a very familiar looking piece of paper with cut out letters. It read "Parodies, Adaptations and Remakes. Give us something original or the only Red Scare you'll be a part of is the one discovered by the cops in your bathtub."

Donald Ogden Stewart: I'm not the biggest fan of the police in this town. So when I saw you sitting here, I thought it best to alert you. Perhaps I'm wrong. But I think not.

Ford Phillips: Yeah well, we'll see. Mind if I hang on to this?

Donald Ogden Stewart: By all means.

[Ford POKETS the letter.]

Ford Phillips: You notice anything strange lately? Anyone following you? Anyone listening to your phone calls?

Donald Ogden Stewart: With my political proclivities, that sort of thing is unfortunately quite standard.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): I didn't have time to push any further - just then, one of my elusive targets from the day emerged from a side door, backlit in a mesmerizing haze. Everyone in the bar seemed to watch as Vivian Nightingale made her way towards us.

Vivian Nightingale: Well well, if it isn't my favorite employee. Strange how I keep running into you on your off hours. I assume you're not billing me while you drink that... is that just a full glass of rum?

Ford Phillips: Listen toots, you got a lot of nerve waltzing in here and acting like my boss. We got you on tape with F. Scott Fitzgerald at his apartment the night of his murder. I've been trying to track you and your lying no-good husband down all day. None of your errand boys wanted to give you up. Looking into fake passports and villas in Argentina?

Vivian Nightingale: Mm, let me guess, did they say it was personal?

Ford Phillips: Yeah.

Vivian Nightingale: Yes well, we were at our marriage counselor. Barnaby would hate it if anyone knew. Hence the secrecy.

Ford Phillips: If you want me to believe a word-

[As Vivian pulls them from her purse:]

Vivian Nightingale: Here. A receipt for today's session. And here's our therapist's card. Please do call. Or just to be certain, go down to the office and grill everyone there.

Ford Phillips: Grill??

Vivian Nightingale: Oh please, it means to interview or interrogate. Calm down. I'm not a cannibal.

Ford Phillips: No, it's just-

Vivian Nightingale: And as for the tape I'm guessing you found. Well congrats, I guess that means you're doing your job. Yes, I lied about being home. Wouldn't you? That tape makes me quite suspicious. But I left. And I saw my husband's car outside.

Ford Phillips: Why didn't you tell us-

Vivian Nightingale: Because that would have placed me at the scene of the crime, come now, Mr. Phillips, I thought you were smarter than all this. A girl's gotta do what a girl's gotta do. Now I'd love to continue this little chat but I need to get stage ready. Can't wear this frumpy number up there, can I?

Donald Ogden Stewart: Red always looked best on you, Vivian.

Vivian Nightingale: Donald! So good to see you back here. You've picked a good one, you're gonna love tonight's show. See you boys later.

[Vivian slinks off. Donald sighs.]

Donald Ogden Stewart: Now that's one nightingale I wouldn't mind birdwatching.

Ford Phillips: Sure. As long as you could also keep an eye on your own back.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): As Donald and I followed Vivian's lazy slink backstage, I wondered just how true Vivian's claim of not being a cannibal really was. She seemed the very definition of a maneater. Damn! That's good, I should have said that earlier. I was about to relay this clever bon mot to Don Stewart when a boisterous group entered from the other side of the bar. It was Fig and her merry band of players, looking pretty happy for a group that had just endured multiple death threats and a mysterious disappearance. They - actually, she's probably doing a voice over right now. You should just go listen to her.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): If you're just joining this voice over already in progress, the cast and crew of *The Grapes of Wrath* were entering Bixby's like a sports team entering the... Arena? Field? Pitch? I didn't play sports in high school. High fives and good cheer all around. Well, except for Rex, who sullenly brought up the rear, looking at what I imagined were pictures of his missing siblings in a locket.

Whitley Trufflehaus: Bixby! A round of shots for everyone! Put it on Mel's tab.

Bixby Crane: Coming right up! What's the occasion?

[Bixby pours shots.]

Penny Nickelpenny: We finished our shoot day on schedule for the first time!

Bixby Crane: I'm happy for you! But concerned that professional filmmakers such as yourselves have been thusfar unable to do that.

Whitley Trufflehaus: You and me both, buddy! Cheers everyone!

[Glasses CLINK. GULPS!]

Whitley Trufflehaus: *(sputtering)* Ugh! What is this, straight ginger ale?

Bixby Crane: I had some stormy left over from an earlier dark and stormy that went heavy on the dark.

[Rex SNIFFLES.]

Rex Punchwhistle: Feels wrong to celebrate when my sister could be in a ditch somewhere. Cheers.

Darby Farnsworth: *(whispering to Fig and Willy)* I don't know if he's heard yet, but they've already recast Lex!

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: Oh! Who is it, Darby?

Darby Farnsworth: Juniper Wetblossom. Up and comer.

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: I worked with her on Sufferin' Safari! This is going to be so great!

[Rex SOBS.]

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: Oh. Except for the part where she's getting a role because of another actress vanishing under strange circumstances and possibly being dead.

[Rex sobs LOUDER.]

Leery O'Shaughnessy: Hey, Darby, is Sheilah coming to the meeting tonight?

Darby Farnsworth: I'm not sure. But look over there, it's Donald Stewart! It'll be great to have him back, I really missed him.

Leery O'Shaughnessy: Say, that's wonderful! You know, he asked me to write a song for *The Philadelphia Story* but getting anything to rhyme with Philadelphia was trickier than corralling a Jersey Bull with half a bola. I asked if he could change the city to Tallahassee - lots of fun you can have with that one. For instance -

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): But before Leery could introduce us to some of his favorite rhymes, the front door burst open and a mob of LAPD foot soldiers poured into the bar. At the center of them all, with a pair of handcuffs dangling from his fingers, was Mo Beats. I locked eyes with Ford across the bar. Behind him, Vivian Nightingale slid out from backstage, a smug smile on her face.

Mo Beats: Alright, alright, everyone just calm down. We're here to arrest Bixby Crane for the harboring of anti-American activists.

[A MURMUR from the patrons.]

Mo Beats: Bixby's Lounge is under new management. And that management....is me.

[Mo Beats LAUGHS EVILLY. The Case of the Greater Gatsby closing theme begins.]

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

Sean Persaud as Ford Phillips

Blake Silver as TD Hammermeister

Mary Kate Wiles as Grace Beckons and Vivian Nightingale

Joey Richter as Newspaper Person

Dylan Saunders as George and Donald Ogden Stuart

Parvesh Cheena as Whitley Trufflehaus

Tommy Hobson as Sound Guy

Sarah Grace Hart as Wilhelmina Vanderjetski

Lauren Lopez as Penny Nickelpenny and Housekeeper

Calros Alazraqui as Leery O'Shaughnessy

Dante Swain as Bixby Crane

Brian Rosenthal as Rex Punchwhistle

Ginny Di as Darby Farnsworth

And Matthew Mercer as Mo Beats

Original music by Dylan Glatthorn

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.

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The Case of the Greater Gatsby will return in 2024 after a brief hiatus. Be sure to follow us on Instagram at instagram.com/shipwreckedcomedy to get updates on all things Shipwrecked Comedy and Fig and Ford.