

THE CALL OF THE VOID - 101

"THE TOURIST TRAP ON BOURBON STREET"

Written by

Michael Alan Herman
& Josie Eli Herman

EPISODE ONE - THE TOURIST TRAP ON BOURBON STREET

SCENE ONE

EXT. KENTUCKY FOREST - DAY

SFX: Wind. Then crunching footsteps through a forest.

VICTOR

It is...approximately four thirty-seven and.... I am approximately two miles west of Crofton. 38.86 degrees North, -83.81 degrees West.

SFX: Recording device cuts.

VICTOR

It's quiet. Temperature is 63 degrees. Looking into the area, this seems... to be normal for this time of year...

SFX: Whispers of the unknown. Victor breaths heavily. Recording device cuts.

VICTOR

(Suddenly terrified) My name is Victor Sommers... I am a professor at NOLA University in New Orleans. My address is... 411 Coliseum. I'm...

SFX: Victor falls and gasps. The Recording device cuts to the sound of an empty tape. Then, a phone rings...and rings.

VICTOR

(Voicemail recording) You've reached Victor Sommers, please leave your name and message after the beep.

SIMONE

(On phone) Hey dad, it's Simone. I've sent you a few texts but you obviously don't look at your phone. My thesis is that you should learn how to text. Anyway, Mae is over. Let me know when you're close.

SFX: Phone rings.

SIMONE

(On phone) It's me again. Mae and I are just going to grab an Uber, so I won't need the car for the rest of the night. (Beat) We'll be back in a few hours. Text me when you get in.

SFX: Phone rings.

SIMONE

(On phone) Dad. Hey. Um. I'm getting a little worried. Call me back when you can.

TITLE SEQUENCE

SCENE TWO

INT. NEW ORLEANS PHARMACY MUSEUM - DAY

SFX: New Orleans street jazz plays distantly.

TOPHER

Doctors in the 19th century had little to no understanding of a little thing called bacteria. So when they injected their patients with medicine, they didn't clean the syringe after the previous injection. Or probably ever. Not to mention, the syringes were typically made of....anyone got a guess?

GUEST

Lead?

TOPHER

LEAD! That is right. These syringes were made with quality....all toxic, lead. But those were the simple operations. If you were hoping to have your arm or leg removed...you would be looking at something like this...

SFX: Gasps from the crowd.

TOPHER

Typically, the bone was broken, by whatever means possible. Then a serrated saw like this would be used to cut into the flesh. Once the flesh was broken, these larger pinchers, would be used to pull the flesh back to expose the area. Fun times for everyone involved. Then the bone was detached and removed.

SFX: Disgusted groans from the crowd.

TOPHER

Which is why I have no sympathy for people that entertain time traveling fantasies. So, thank you folks. That fortunately for many of you, ends our tour for today. But you can stick around and ask any questions you want. I know too much about all of this stuff. My name is Topher Sommers, thank you.

SFX: The crowd applauds.

SFX: Topher's cell phone rings with a quirky ring tune.

TOPHER

Simone. Hey. What's up?

SIMONE

(On phone) Hey, are you at work?

TOPHER

Yeah.

SIMONE

(On phone) Have you seen dad?

TOPHER

Not at work.

SIMONE

(On phone) He was supposed to be home last night. He wasn't going anywhere was he? Like on a trip.

TOPHER

I don't think so.

SIMONE

(On phone) Mae and I were going to borrow the car, but he never came home.

TOPHER

That's weird.

SIMONE

(On phone) Yeah. I know.

TOPHER

You called him, right?

SIMONE

(On phone) (Obviously) Yes.

TOPHER

Did he leave a note or anything?

SIMONE

(On phone) Not that I saw, I've been looking through the house.

TOPHER

You looked on the counter and everything.

SIMONE

(On phone) It's been 38 hours, Topher. He hasn't responded to my texts in 38 hours.

TOPHER

Okay....Uh. Okay, I'm on my way.

SCENE THREE

INT. VICTOR'S HOUSE - LATER

SFX: Rustling of paper.

SIMONE

I'm been going through his things.

TOPHER

It looks like it.

SIMONE

He's not even halfway through grading these midterms. Marcie Evans. That's an E. They're in alphabetical order. (Beat) If he was going on a trip, he would have taken these with him.

SFX: Simone begins to lose her breath and pants for air.

TOPHER

Let's just breathe. Do you need your inhaler?

SIMONE

I think there's one over here.

TOPHER

When was the last time you saw him? Talk me through this.

SIMONE

Wednesday. We had dinner together.

TOPHER

Two days ago.

SIMONE

One and a half, but yeah.

TOPHER

And he seemed normal?

SIMONE

He seemed fine. He cooked. I did the dishes. He watched two episodes of Fraser on Netflix.

TOPHER

Okay. He wasn't, like unusually quiet or anything?

SIMONE

I mean...it's dad.

TOPHER

Right.

SIMONE

When I woke up for school he was already gone. He has the early classes on Tuesday/Thursdays.

TOPHER

And the house looked fine? There wasn't like...like A break-in or anything?

SIMONE

No, there wasn't... It looked like it does right now.

TOPHER

Okay.

SFX: Topher types on his cellphone.

SIMONE

(Beat) I already called him.

TOPHER

I'm trying again.

SFX: Phone dials and rings. It goes to voicemail.

VICTOR

You've reached Victor Sommers, please leave your name and message after the beep.

TOPHER

Hey, dad....

AUTOMATIC VOICE

We're sorry, this mailbox is full and cannot accept messages at this time. Goodbye.

SIMONE

(Beat) I filled up the voice mail.

TOPHER

At least he knows we're worried. We should go to the police.

SCENE FOUR

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

SFX: Office sounds. Ringing of phones, people talking. A door opens.

OFFICER MASON

Thank you for your patience. It's been a day.

TOPHER

I'm sure.

OFFICER MASON

So. Missing person's report.

TOPHER

That's what we're here for.

OFFICER MASON

You said your father has been missing for 38 hours.

SIMONE

40. We brought a picture. He has new glasses, but that's what his beard looks like.

OFFICER MASON

That's very helpful. The first thing to remember is not to panic. He might have just lost his phone. You'll need to reach out to friends and family to see if anyone knows about his location.

TOPHER

We can do that.

OFFICER MASON

Officially, I have to begin this conversation by saying that it's not illegal for an adult to voluntarily go missing. Meaning...if your dad wanted to go missing, he has the right to do so.

TOPHER

Okay.

OFFICER MASON

What was the last thing you remember him wearing?

SIMONE

A sweater vest. He wears them a lot. I think it was maroon, but it might have been brown. He usually wears a tie, but sometimes he takes it off.

OFFICER MASON

Do you know what color the tie was?

SIMONE

Blue?

OFFICER MASON

Any distinct physical traits you want us to know about?

SIMONE

Um, he has a space in one of his eyebrows. Like a really small gap.

OFFICER MASON

(Beat) Great.

TOPHER

He's also thin for his age.

OFFICER MASON

And where is Mrs. Sommers? (Beat) I'm sorry is that conversation difficult?

TOPHER

She died when we were kids.

OFFICER MASON

I see. Lived in New Orleans his whole life? Or does he have relatives elsewhere?

SIMONE

We're originally from Ohio, but we've been here for the last ten years. He doesn't have any other family out that way anymore.

OFFICER MASON

I see. Well, you guys are doing all the right things. (Beat) We've got a couple more questions for you, so I'm going to turn you over to Agnes up front.

TOPHER

Sure.

OFFICER MASON

We'll be in touch.

SCENE FIVE

INT. STREETS OF NOLA - LATER

SFX: Rush of cars

SIMONE

They said they'd be in touch?

TOPHER

I'm sure they are working as fast as they can.

SIMONE

(Beat) It's been 41 hours. The odds of finding someone after the first 48 hours are basically zero.

TOPHER

I don't know about that...

SIMONE

It's true, Topher.

TOPHER

Is there any reasons why dad would be going out of town?

SIMONE

Well, there's essentially 18 different reasons a person goes missing. A lot of them don't really apply to dad, so I've narrowed it down to 4: seizure by government officials, being kidnapped, leaving home to live somewhere else under a new identity, or being murdered.

TOPHER

Okay. We can start by contacting his friends. (Beat) The last place he would have been was the school, right?

SIMONE

I think so. (Beat) Something is wrong about this, Topher. I just think something is really wrong about this.

TOPHER

I'll check with the school. And maybe you should stay off Wikipedia.

SCENE SIX

INT. NOLA UNIVERSITY - LATER

SFX: Street jazz plays. Door opens.

TOPHER

Professor Navarro?

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

Topher.

TOPHER

Hi. Sorry. Thank you for agreeing to see me on such short notice.

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

Not at all. I'm just trying to... We get a new administration system every couple years. It's maddening. Sorry.

SFX: Chair spins.

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

What can I do for you?

TOPHER

Did my dad come into work yesterday?

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

As far as I know.

TOPHER

Are you absolutely sure?

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

You could check with administration, they should have a record of his hours. How come?

TOPHER

We haven't seen him in a couple days. My sister and I.

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

Oh. I don't think he had anything planned.

TOPHER

We don't either.

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

That's odd. (Beat) We could go to his office, adjuncts share a common space.

TOPHER

That would be great.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS. STUDENTS in the halls

TOPHER

Are you two still doing lunches on Tuesdays?

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

Not this semester. He's been doing more research.

TOPHER

What kind?

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

I don't really know. I assume something to do with physics, haha. That was a joke. He's a physics professor.

TOPHER

He is.

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

(Beat) Maybe he just misplaced his phone.

TOPHER

He color coordinates his lecture notes.

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

Sometimes people forget things.

TOPHER

Not Victor Sommers.

SFX: Another door opens.

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

Okay. He's the space on the left there.

TOPHER

Does it always look this clean?

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

I think so. I don't come back here very often. The Wifi's better on the other side of the building.

TOPHER

Can I look through this?

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

I don't see why not.

SFX: Flipping through a calendar.

TOPHER

He had a eye doctor appointment on Monday morning.

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

It looks like it.

TOPHER

That might be the last place he was seen. When was the last time you remember talking with him?

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

Uh, let's see. We were in a division meeting this Monday.

TOPHER

A normal meeting?

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

Yeah, we have them every Monday. It's just sort of a joke.

TOPHER

And he seemed...

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

Fine. He seemed happy.

TOPHER

Unusually happy?

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

Not unusually happy. Just... I don't know, he seemed pretty normal. Have you talked to the police about this at all?

TOPHER

We have.

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

They're the professionals.

TOPHER

I just want to get them the best information that I can. Not unusually happy?

PROFESSOR NAVARRO

Not that I could tell. Uh, we gossiped about the students and then we all went back to work. It was quick.

TOPHER

Okay. I guess the eye doctor is the only thing to go on from here. Well, if you hear anything about...anything, let me know.

SCENE SEVEN
INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

SFX: Quirky office music plays. Door opens.

TOPHER

Doctor Wilkhart?

DOCTOR WILKHART

Hi there! You're my 5:20?

TOPHER

I'm not. My name's Topher Sommers. My father comes here for appointments.

DOCTOR WILKHART

Oh. Alright.

TOPHER

He was here a few days ago. Monday. How was that appointment?

DOCTOR WILKHART

Um. It was...I...I think it was fine.

TOPHER

He's missing now. You're just one of the last people that saw him, so...

DOCTOR WILKHART

Oh. Are you...you're not a cop, are you?

TOPHER

I'm not.

DOCTOR WILKHART

Oh good, haha. (Beat) I mean, it would have been fine if you were, just....

TOPHER

(Beat) I'm his son.

DOCTOR WILKHART

Great.

TOPHER

(Beat) I just want to know if anything unusual happened while he was here.

DOCTOR WILKHART

Hm. Victor...Sommers?

TOPHER

That's right. About my size. Hair is a little lighter.

DOCTOR WILKHART

And he was in on Monday?

SFX: Papers shuffling.

TOPHER

I think so. He has thin-rimmed glasses.

DOCTOR WILKHART

Oh. Thin-rims. Oh, Victor. Yes, the NOLA professor!

TOPHER

He was here?

DOCTOR WILKHART

Yes. He's a good guy. I only see him once a year, but... You know, it's funny, the nice thing about it is when you get patients you hate, you only have to see them every like six months. Sometimes I try to extend that, haha. 'You're eyes are doing great! Come back in twelve years!' (Beat) Um. But your dad is one of the good ones.

TOPHER

(Beat) He is. Do you know why he came in for an appointment?

DOCTOR WILKHART

I'm an optometrist.

TOPHER

Right.

DOCTOR WILKHART

Just a usual check-up. His eyes were getting a little worse, but that happens with 94% of patients at his age. Gotta eat your carrots when you're young, haha. I made a little adjustment to his prescription. -3.25 to -3.50. Oh. Which reminds me, the new lenses should be in. Did you want to pick them up for him now? It says he's already paid.

TOPHER

Sure. I can do that.

DOCTOR WEIKHART

If your dad wants to keep his other appointment in November, just have him give me a ring. It's still on my calendar, but I wasn't sure if he was keeping it.

TOPHER

He scheduled another appointment in November?

DOCTOR WEIKHART

Hm? Oh! Oh. Sorry, no, I meant his original appointment. This was a special appointment he came in for.

TOPHER

(Beat) Do you know why?

DOCTOR WEIKHART

I don't know. He actually seemed more interested in other people's persecutions than his own.

TOPHER

Meaning?

DOCTOR WEIKHART

He kept asking if I had any patients that recently went blind. Or whose eyes were rapidly deteriorating.

TOPHER

Huh. Do you have any patients like that?

DOCTOR WEIKHART

I don't. I told him the same thing. I think he just wanted to know what was normal for his age group.

TOPHER

Sure.

DOCTOR WEIKHART

Sometimes people get obsessed with 20/20 vision. But there was nothing wrong on this chart. His eyes were healthy.

TOPHER

Okay. Well. I can take his glasses at least. Thank you.

SCENE EIGHT
EXT. STREETS OF NOLA - LATER

SFX: Footsteps. Topher's ringtone.

TOPHER

Hey.

SIMONE

(On phone) Anything?

TOPHER

Not yet. How are you doing?

SIMONE

(On phone) Fine. I found an appointment dad had down in the French Quarter.

TOPHER

The eye doctor. Yeah, I was just there...

SIMONE

(On phone) No. It was at a Voodoo shop. Zola's on Bourbon Street.

TOPHER

Bourbon?

SIMONE

(On phone) Yeah. It was scheduled for this afternoon.

TOPHER

Wait. A Voodoo shop?

SIMONE

(On phone) Yeah.

TOPHER

That's... Dad at a Voodoo shop? That's kind of weird.

SIMONE

(On phone) I have the note right here.

TOPHER

What does it say?

SIMONE

(On phone) Literally just, “Zola’s House of Voodoo. Bourbon Street. Meeting Friday, 8:15 “. (Beat) Do you think it’s something?

TOPHER

I think it’s weird.

SIMONE

(On phone) Add it to the list.

TOPHER

Yeah. (Beat) I’ll check it out.

SCENE NINE

INT. VOODOO SHOP - DAY

SFX: Lazy jazz music plays. Footsteps over wood. Door chimes jingle as Topher enters the shop.

TOPHER

Hi. Um. I’m here for the 18...uh, the 8:15... meeting.

ETSY

(Beat) Okay.

SFX: A page flip from a binder.

ETSY

Victor?

TOPHER

Uh, yes.

ETSY

Palm? (Beat) You’re getting your palm read?

TOPHER

I am, yes. That’s what I scheduled it for?

ETSY

(Beat) Yes.

TOPHER

Okay. Uh....Cool. I can't remember, was there anyone specific that I asked for, or...?

ETSY

No. But I'm the only one who reads palms here.

TOPHER

Okay.

ETSY

Were you looking for someone else?

TOPHER

I don't... think so.

ETSY

Okay. So do you still want your palm read?

TOPHER

Uh, yeah.... yes.

ETSY

Okay. So, you can follow me to the back room.

SFX: Footsteps A bead curtain is pushed aside as Etsy takes Topher to the back room.

TOPHER

Did I happen to tell you why I wanted this palm reading?

ETSY

I don't think so. Was there a specific reason?

TOPHER

Not really.

ETSY

The money goes in the box over there.

TOPHER

How much did we agree on?

ETSY

65.

(Pained) Great.

TOPHER

SFX: We hear bills being fanned out and deposited into the box.

I sit?

TOPHER

ETSY

Unless you want to stand, but that would be kind of awkward.

SFX: They sit.

(Beat) You're looking at me.

TOPHER

ETSY

Yup.

TOPHER

(Beat) Did it start, or...?

ETSY

I'm getting something... There's a stage. Mostly empty. A boy standing alone. A crowd of people in front of him. They're young. High school, probably. There's something.... There's a song. It's a terrible song...Wonderwall.

TOPHER

How do you know that?

ETSY

I'm psychic.

TOPHER

(Beat) Wait. Do I...

ETSY

Starts with an E.

TOPHER

Wait. Um. Eevee? Elaine?...Ethel.

ETSY

Wow. Ethel?

TOPHER

No...it's...

ETSY

Ethel is like the name of my great-grandmother's...governess.

TOPHER

No, I remember. Um. We had...Creative Writing together.

ETSY

We had six classes together. And did two shows.

TOPHER

You were on costume crew.

ETSY

Props.

TOPHER

Right. Eee...

ETSY

Etsy.

TOPHER

Etsy!

ETSY

Delmen.

TOPHER

I was close.

ETSY

Mm.

TOPHER

You were at that talent show?

ETSY

I was. Also, your name is not Victor.

TOPHER

Topher.

Yeah, I know. ETSY

You remembered it? TOPHER

Nah, I'm just psychic. ETSY

Ah. Well, you...you work here now. TOPHER

Yup. It's the worst. ETSY

I mean, if it pays the bills. TOPHER

How about you? ETSY

Oh, went on to study history. I work over at the Victorian Apothecary shop. But this place makes sense for you... TOPHER

Wow. ETSY

I mean, if there was anyone from high school I'd guess would be...um...You know, would go into...um... TOPHER

Oh, you mean, not go onto college and become a cheap tourist trap on Bourbon street? ETSY

No, no, I mean.... it's very cool. Like, you always had sort of a um... a vibe of... TOPHER

Weirdness? ETSY

(Beat) No. TOPHER

Nah, it's fine, man, I get it. ETSY

TOPHER

It's very cool.

ETSY

So you want your palm read or what?

TOPHER

Oh, uh...Sure.

ETSY

Great.

TOPHER

Yeah, which hand do you...

ETSY

Generally the right.

TOPHER

Great.

ETSY

So, I'm going to feel your hand first...

SFX: A cosmic shift. We hear parts of previous Topher moments with Simone, Officer Mason. Victor's voice, and the voice of an unknown woman. A car crash.

TOPHER

(Echoing back in) Are you okay? Etsy?

ETSY

(Startled) Sorry. I couldn't see anything.

TOPHER

Do you need some water or something?

ETSY

You can take your money back.

TOPHER

Okay.

ETSY

This stuff is mostly just a trap for tourist. I wouldn't want to scam you.

TOPHER

No, you're totally fine. Um. Good catching up.

ETSY

Yeah.

TOPHER

(Beat) See you around.

SCENE TEN

INT. VICTOR'S HOUSE - LATER

SFX: Keys drop on a table. Footsteps down a hall.

TOPHER

I met with the Voodoo girl. It was Etsy Delmen, do you remember her? I think you were a freshmen when we were seniors. Kind of a weirdo. (Beat) Simone. What's going on? Are you okay?

SFX: Simone breathes heavily.

TOPHER

Hey, hey, hey. Simone, breathe. You okay? What's wrong?

SIMONE

I'm okay. We just got a call.

TOPHER

Okay.

SIMONE

From the station.

TOPHER

What's going on?

SIMONE

They found dad. He's in Kentucky at a hospital.

TOPHER

Why is he at a hospital?

SIMONE

He's hurt, they found him, I don't know. They said a lot of stuff.

TOPHER

Kentucky?

SIMONE

Yeah.

TOPHER

Do you have an address?

SIMONE

I have an address.

TOPHER

Okay, um. It's too late to get a flight today. We could drive. Do you want to drive?

SIMONE

Okay.

SFX: Car starts.

SCENE ELEVEN

INT. KENTUCKY HOSPITAL - LATER

*SFX: Hospital Noises. Phone ringing, quick footsteps.
Murmurs.*

NURSE ABIGAIL

Topher and Simone Sommers?

TOPHER

That's us.

SIMONE

How is he?

NURSE ABIGAIL

Your father has had a bit of an accident. He's experienced some sort of trauma.

SIMONE

What kind of trauma?

NURSE ABIGAIL

We're not sure yet. He's very...disorientated right now. Clammy skin, enlarged pupils. He's even been talking to himself. But his pulse is perfectly normal, it's actually a little low. That's very unusual for a patient in this state.

SIMONE

Do you know why this is happening?

NURSE ABIGAIL

At the moment, we don't. But we're working as fast as we can. I just wanted to warn you before you step in there.

TOPHER

Sure.

SFX: Footsteps down the hallway.

NURSE ABIGAIL

Has he always been visually handicapped?

SIMONE

Visually handicapped?

NURSE ABIGAIL

He was blind when we found him.

TOPHER

He was never blind.

NURSE ABIGAIL

He's this way.

SFX: Heart monitor beeps.

NURSE ABIGAIL

Hi, Victor. You're children are here.

SIMONE

Hey, dad.

VICTOR

In state...ment.

How you doing? TOPHER

It's temperature it's quiet. VICTOR

What? TOPHER

Very quiet, forty-seven Victor. VICTOR

Dad? SIMONE

Try to focus on breathing normal, Mr. Sommers. NURSE ABIGAIL

How long as he been like this? TOPHER

Since we found him. A few hours ago. NURSE ABIGAIL

Where did you find him? TOPHER

In a forest outside of Crofton. NURSE ABIGAIL

83.8. 83.8. 83.8. It's...temperature VICTOR

Why does he keep saying that? SIMONE

I'm not sure. Does any of this make sense to you? NURSE ABIGAIL

No. TOPHER

83! 83! 83!! VICTOR

NURSE ABIGAIL

He's going into shock. We're going to have to ask you both to step out.

SFX: Footsteps.

TOPHER

Are you okay?

SIMONE

No.

TOPHER

We're going to figure this out.

SIMONE

We don't even know what that was.

TOPHER

We're going to figure it out. And he's going to get better. (Beat) We're going to make him better.

CREDIT SEQUENCE