

VERMONT AUDIO DRAMA PODCASTING
presents

OPEN SEASON: EPISODE 1

By Archer Mayor
Adapted for Audio by Fred Greenhalgh
Edited by Archer Mayor

January 26, 2010
Frederick Greenhalgh
(207) 650-6198
P.O. Box 51
Alfred, ME 04002
fred@finalrune.com
<http://www.finalrune.com>

CAST:

OPEN SEASON - EPISODE 1

GUNTHER	Detective in Vermont, wise & avuncular
PATROL OFFICER	On-duty police officer
KATZ	Pushy local reporter
PATROLMAN	Another on-duty police officer
SERGEANT	Sergeant in charge of a murder scene
J. P.	Forensics photographer on the scene
GOULD	Vermont state medical examiner
REITZ	Terrified old woman turned murderer
MRS. PHILIPS	Widow of the murdered James Philips

25 GUNTHER: (CONT.) Which is how I found myself in a
26 cruiser in a snowstorm the week after
27 Christmas, riding with a patrol officer
28 who'd just moved up from Florida and was
29 afraid of going more than fifteen miles an
30 hour in the snow.

31 SFX: WINDSHIELD WIPERS IN THE SNOW, BLOWER MOTOR
32 GOING, OCCASIONAL SOUND OF SNOW EQUIPMENT
33 (DISTANT)

34 GUNTHER: Slippery?

35 OFFICER: I think so. You wouldn't. I haven't gotten
36 used to this stuff yet.

37 GUNTHER: Floor it a little at the foot of the hill -
38 it'll give you more traction.

39 OFFICER: Sure.

40 SFX: SHORT SURGE OF CAR ENGINE - SPATTER OF SNOW
41 AND GRAVEL.

42 GUNTHER: Don't worry, we're not in a hurry anyways.
43 From what I hear, everyone who's going to
44 die is already dead.

45 OFFICER: So I heard. What did she use?

46 GUNTHER: A shotgun.

47 OFFICER: Messy.

48 GUNTHER: Yup.

49 SFX: A MOMENT OF SILENCE. WINDSHIELD WIPERS SLAP

50 METHODICALLY.

51 DEPUTY: You have a good Christmas, Lieutenant?

52 GUNTHER: Not bad.

53 DEPUTY: Me too. I went back home. Expensive, but

54 the wife and I thought it would feel strange

55 having Christmas here.

56 GUNTHER: (NARRATES) That made me laugh. Nothing

57 seems stranger to me than Christmas in

58 Florida.

59 GUNTHER: (DIALOGUE) Turn left here - Clark Avenue.

60 DEPUTY: You got it.

61 SFX: CAR PULLS UP TO A STOP.

62 GUNTHER: Thanks for the ride, Ron.

63 DEPUTY: Any time Lieutenant, have a good evening.

64 GUNTHER: I'll do my best.

65 SFX: GETTING OUT OF CAR, IMMEDIATE BURST OF COLD

66 WIND, LOUD SCENE OF COMMOTION - PEOPLE

67 SHOUTING, SQUAWKING OF RADIOS, ETC.

68 GUNTHER: (NARRATES) I found myself before a

69 dilapidated house, sway-backed and peeling.

70 It was 2:48 AM. The day, despite the
71 darkness, had begun.

72 KATZ: Hi, Joe.

73 GUNTHER: (WALKING THROUGH SNOW) Stan, Stan the
74 newspaper man. Hot on the trail?

75 KATZ: I just heard it on the scanner. What
76 happened?

77 GUNTHER: You tell me. I was asleep ten minutes ago.

78 KATZ: Can I tag along?

79 GUNTHER: Nope.

80 SFX: GUNTHER CRUNCHES UP SNOW AND THEN ONTO A
81 WOODEN PORCH, CONTINUES WALKING...

82 GUNTHER: Morning, Paul.

83 PATROLMAN: Lieutenant.

84 SFX: PUSHES DOOR OPEN - AMBIENCE CHANGES - STILL
85 QUITE A BIT OF COMMOTION, BUT NOW IN HOLLOW,
86 ECHOING HOUSE. GUNTHER'S FOOTSTEPS STOP.

87 GUNTHER: (WHISTLES - IN RESPONSE TO SEEING A GRISLY
88 SCENE) .

89 SERGEANT: Hi Joe. Sorry to get you out of bed.

90 GUNTHER: That's okay. What happened?

91 **SFX:** THE TWO OF THEM START TO TAKE SLOW
92 FOOTSTEPS, AS IF WALKING THROUGH THE CRIME
93 SCENE

94 **SERGEANT:** Old lady kept getting obscene phone calls
95 over the last few days. The guy finally
96 said he'd visit tonight and do to her what
97 he'd done to the cat. She waited for him in
98 that chair and blew him away when he opened
99 the back door.

100 **GUNTHER:** (BEAT) What did he do to the cat?

101 **SERGEANT:** I'll show you.

102 **SFX:** FOOTSTEPS MANEUVER THROUGH THE CRIME SCENE,
103 PUSH A CREAKY DOOR OPEN.

104 **SERGEANT:** On the bed.

105 **GUNTHER:** (WALKING ACROSS THE ROOM) What, over here?
106 **SERGEANT:** Under the quilt.

107 **SFX:** RUSTLING OF FABRIC

108 **GUNTHER:** Ah! Christ, George, you could have told me!
109 **SERGEANT:** Gross, huh?
110 **GUNTHER:** More like weird. Who slices up a cat like
111 that?
112 **SERGEANT:** Someone who needs therapy?

113 GUNTHER: Did anyone call the State's Attorney?

114 SERGEANT: Do unto him like I did unto you?

115 GUNTHER: Spare me. And spare him, too. He doesn't
116 have my sense of humor. Is J.P. here?

117 SERGEANT: Yeah, and I already called the SA. He
118 should have been here by now. J.P.'s out
119 back taking pictures.

120 GUNTHER: (WALKING BACK INTO THE HALLWAY) Did you
121 respond first?

122 SERGEANT: About two-twenty. She called it in herself.
123 The neighbors claim they didn't hear a
124 thing. That's bull, of course. She let
125 loose with both barrels at once. Must have
126 made the whole block jump.

127 GUNTHER: Who's the body?

128 SERGEANT: Don't know, haven't searched him yet.
129 (BEAT) To be honest, I didn't get too close.
130 He makes the cat look good.

131 GUNTHER: And - (LOOKING AROUND) - Where's the woman?

132 SERGEANT: (AS IF POINTING) In the kitchen. A
133 paramedic's with her.

134 GUNTHER: She all right?

135 SERGEANT: Yeah. A little shaky.

136 GUNTHER: Okay. I'll see her last.

137 SERGEANT: Alright. Let me show you the scene.

138 SFX: FOOTSTEPS WALK, PUSH THROUGH SPLINTERED

139 DOOR, OUTSIDE AMBIENCE AGAIN - A TOUCH

140 QUIETER.

141 GUNTHER: Hi, J.P.?

142 SFX: SNAP! A PHOTO FLASH GOING OFF.

143 J.P: (OVER HIS SHOULDER, DISTANT) Check out the

144 shoe.

145 GUNTHER: (NARRATING) On the top step, lying on its

146 side, was a loafer. Expensive glove

147 leather, designer leather. Not your average

148 terrorist apparel.

149 GUNTHER: And that's the guy? Jesus.

150 GUNTHER: (NARRATING) Six feet from the foot of the

151 steps, surrounded by a dazzling circle of

152 flood lamps, lay the body, flat on its back,

153 arms and legs outstretched. For a second I

154 thought of when I used to lie like that in

155 the snow, as a kid, making snow angels. But

156 here the gentle arc formed by the arms was

157 uninterrupted by a head.

158 GUNTHER: (CONT.) A tall man in a pea jacket rose from
159 his crouch by the body. Alfred Gould, the
160 regional medical examiner.

161 GOULD: Hi, Joe.

162 SFX: FOOTSTEPS APPROACH IN THE SNOW.

163 GUNTHER: Hi, Al. Anything to add to the obvious?

164 GOULD: Nope. I would like to talk to the old lady,
165 if that's all right.

166 GUNTHER: Sure, be my guest.

167 SFX: GOULD WALKS OFF.

168 GUNTHER: J.P.!

169 J.P.: (STILL OFF, CRANKING CAMERA) Yep?

170 GUNTHER: Were there any footprints before all this
171 happened?

172 J.P.: Nope, just his. I got shots of it all. I'm
173 wrapping up out here. I still have to check
174 out the gun. Hit the lights when you're
175 through, okay?

176 GUNTHER: You got it.

177 J.P.: Alright. Catch up with you at the station.

178 SFX: J.P. WALKS OFF.

179 SERGEANT: The head's over there.

180 GUNTHER: (SICKENED BUT NOT LETTING IT SHOW) You're
181 getting a kick out of this, aren't you?

182 SERGEANT: You're the one who saw combat in the
183 service.

184 GUNTHER: Give me your flashlight so I can get a
185 better look.

186 SFX: BELT JANGLES, FLASHLIGHT TURNED ON. TWO
187 FOOTSTEPS CRUNCH ONTO SNOW (ON A WOOD
188 PLATFORM - THEY ARE STILL ON PORCH)

189 SERGEANT: (LEANS IN CLOSE TO MIC) Al said the blast
190 'atomized' the guy's neck - his word, not
191 mine. He said it was kind of like pulling a
192 tablecloth out from under a bunch of plates
193 - it just sort of fell off when the body
194 went sailing into the wild blue yonder.

195 GUNTHER: (LEANING BACK) Got it -

196 SFX: CLICKS OFF FLASHLIGHT

197 GUNTHER: Now I'd like a look at the body.

198 SFX: STEPS DOWN FROM PORCH AND INTO THE SNOW.

199 MUSIC: A LOW SUSPENSEFUL BED COMES UNDER THE
200 NARRATIVE...
201

201 GUNTHER: (NARRATING) There wasn't much blood visible.
202 The ragged chunk between the man's shoulders
203 lay at the edge of a small black hole of
204 melted snow. The whole thing had an almost
205 tidy air about it. I realized then I was
206 probably standing over an aquifer of blood
207 spread out between the snow and the earth
208 below. I crouched so I could get a better
209 look.

210
211 Whoever this had been, he was no pauper.
212 The blood-spattered scarf was cashmere, the
213 long coat camel hair, the pants fine wool.
214 Layer by layer, his clothes never dropped
215 below fifty dollars per item. Inside his
216 jacket was a fine leather wallet which had,
217 besides the usual documents, ten crisp
218 hundred-dollar bills.

219 MUSIC: SUSPENSE BED OUT

220 I was just getting the driver's license when
221 a shadow dropped across the body.

222 GUNTHER: (DIALOGUE) Jim, how're you doing?

223

223 GUNTHER: (NARRATIVE) Jim - never James - Dunn was the
224 State's Attorney, and as usual he didn't
225 reply but silently nodded. Vermont's
226 state's attorneys have to be at the scene of
227 any "unattended" death, and while he had two
228 deputies on call to assist him, Jim never
229 missed the opportunity to show up personally
230 for the dramatic ones. He did his job and
231 stayed out of the way, which was good, but I
232 still didn't like him. Too cold.

233 GUNTHER: (READING) James Philips - Orchard Heights.
234 Ring any bells with anybody?

235 SERGEANT: (DISTANT) From the address, I'd say we
236 didn't travel in the same circles.

237 SFX: FUMBLING, THEN RATTLING OF A METAL DOG LEASH

238 GUNTHER: Now this is an interesting tool for a break-
239 in.

240 SERGEANT: (APPROACHING) What is it?

241 GUNTHER: A dog leash. Here's something else.

242 SFX: RUMMAGES SOME MORE

243

243 GUNTHER: (LAUGHS) It's a little album - look -
244 they're all of a prissy little poodle.
245 (FLIPPING THROUGH BOOK) Some of them're just
246 the poodle, a couple look like this guy AND
247 the poodle, and... this must be their house
248 - and his wife. She doesn't look happy to
249 be there.

250 SERGEANT: Weird. You ever had an album of your pet?
251 ...In your wallet?

252 GUNTHER: (GRUNTS AS HE GETS UP) I wonder what our Mr.
253 Philips was up to? (BEAT) What's the old
254 lady's name?

255 SERGEANT: Thelma Reitz.

256 GUNTHER: Thelma Reitz. Let's see what she has to
257 say.

258 MUSIC: QUICK SUSPENSEFUL STING

259 REITZ: (SOBS LOW IN BACKGROUND WHILE GUNTHER
260 NARRATES)

261 GUNTHER: (NARRATING) She was sitting in the kitchen,
262 thin, frail, and beaten, her white head
263 bowed and shimmering under the harsh
264 fluorescent glare. The paramedic from
265 Rescue, Inc. was making notes at the table.
266

266 GUNTHER: (CONT.) I took a chair like the one lying in
267 the hallway and sat facing her, elbows on my
268 knees. Out of the corner of my eye I
269 noticed the state's attorney enter the room
270 and lean against the wall.

271 GUNTHER: Mrs. Reitz?

272 REITZ: (TRIES TO REIN IN HER SOBBING)

273 GUNTHER: My name is Gunther. I'm another policeman.
274 I know you've explained what happened, and I
275 know you must be tired, but I was wondering
276 if you could go over it again. Just for me.
277 (BEAT) Do you have somewhere you can stay,
278 by the way? A son or daughter, maybe?

279 REITZ: (BLOWS HER NOSE) My daughter doesn't like
280 me.

281 GUNTHER: Hey George?

282 SERGEANT: Yeah?

283 GUNTHER: Call Susan Henderson at the Retreat and ask
284 her if Mrs. Reitz can spend a few days there
285 until she gets her feet back on the ground.

286 SERGEANT: You got it.

287 SFX: SERGEANT WALKS OFF

288 REITZ: Thank you.

289 GUNTHER: No problem. I'm sorry about your daughter.

290 REITZ: (SNIFFS) I lost her a long time ago. I
291 don't know why. I called her when all this
292 started - I was so frightened - but she told
293 me phone calls like that happen all the
294 time. She said I should be flattered.

295 GUNTHER: What were the calls like?

296 REITZ: I, I couldn't repeat them. They were dirty.
297 Very dirty. He also, um, left those index
298 cards - see? On the counter?

299 GUNTHER: Yeah.

300 SFX: GUNTHER REACHES OVER TO GRAB THE CARDS,
301 FLIPS THROUGH THEM.

302 GUNTHER: (UNDER HIS BREATH) God, these things are bad
303 enough to embarrass an Elks meeting.

304 SFX: STOPS SHUFFLING THROUGH CARDS

305 GUNTHER: Why didn't you call us?

306 REITZ: (SIGHS) I did.

307 GUNTHER: Did you tell them the notes had been left
308 inside the house?

309 REITZ: They weren't. They were phone calls.

310 (GROANS TO SELF) I'm sorry, I'm not making sense.

311 GUNTHER: My fault. You mean the notes didn't start
312 until after you called us?

313 REITZ: Right.

314 GUNTHER: And when you explained about the calls, you
315 were told there was nothing we could do
316 about them?

317 REITZ: Yes.

318 GUNTHER: I'm sorry about that. (BEAT) So. Then he
319 attacked your cat?

320 REITZ: (CLOSE TO CRYING AGAIN) Yes. Poor Albert...
321 What had he done? What had I done? Poor
322 kitty. He was all I had.

323 GUNTHER: When did you find him?

324 REITZ: Tonight. I'd stayed out all day. I knew
325 the notes would be there - a new one showed
326 up every day... I couldn't stay inside, I
327 was so scared. I went to the library, I
328 went to the movies, to the store. I tried
329 to stay out as long as I could, but it was
330 cold, and places kept closing and then it
331 snowed. I had to come home.

332

332 REITZ: (CONTINUED) I had nowhere else to go.
333 That's when I found Albert. And that's when
334 he called - right at the same time - as if
335 he were standing there seeing everything I
336 did. He said I wasn't home when he'd
337 visited, and that's why Albert died. And
338 then he said he's come back later - tonight
339 - to do the same thing to me. And when I
340 didn't say anything, he said, "What's wrong
341 Thelma - the cat got your tongue?"

342
343 (GROWING ANGRY) It made me mad - so mad. I
344 told him, "You come. I'll be here," and I
345 got my husband's shotgun out of its box and
346 I waited - a long, long time. And then I
347 killed him, that... bastard.

348 (CRUMPLES INTO HEAVY SOBS)

349 GUNTHER: It's okay. Let it out.

350 REITZ: (SOBS BEGIN TO SLOWLY SUBSIDE)

351 GUNTHER: He was carrying these photos. Do you
352 recognize him?

353 REITZ: (BLOWS NOSE, RECOVERS, THEN STARTLED) Mr.
354 Philips? That's Mr. Philips.

355 GUNTHER: You knew him?

356 REITZ: Yes. I don't understand.

357 GUNTHER: From where?

358 REITZ: Jury duty. We served together. He used to
359 pass that very picture around. He loved
360 that dog like I loved Albert... I, I don't.
361 He was nice. He was the last one to vote
362 guilty. He said he couldn't condemn another
363 man, no matter how horrible it was what he
364 did.

365 GUNTHER: It's not your fault. You know that, don't
366 you?

367 REITZ: (LONG PAUSE) No.

368 GUNTHER: (NARRATING) And she wasn't the only one.

369 MUSIC: SUSPENSEFUL STING, THEN TWINKLING BRIDGE -
370 NIGHT TO DAY
371

371 SCENE 2 - WIDOW'S HOUSE, BRATTLEBORO SUBURBS, DAY

372 MUSIC: BRIDGE RESOLVES - LOW

373 GUNTHER: (NARRATING) Orchard Heights is an exclusive
374 developer's dream come true. Once a
375 farmer's rolling field off Orchard Street,
376 west of Brattleboro, it sits high enough to
377 "afford" a view and to overlook but not
378 actually see Interstate 91, which cuts
379 between it and downtown. The field consists
380 of five low hills, each crowned with a
381 ranch-style house perched above a narrow,
382 winding street, with token trees planted
383 tastefully here and there. The effect is so
384 carefully manicured that even the mountains,
385 the snow, and the distant woods look
386 artificial, as if some low-key, expensive
387 Hollywood set were awaiting the arrival of
388 the camera crew.

389 SFX: DRIVING THROUGH A NEIGHBORHOOD

390 GUNTHER: (NARRATING) I turned off Orchard Street into
391 the Heights. I didn't need to check the
392 house number, I recognized it from the photo
393 in Mr. Philips's puppy album.

394

394 GUNTHER: (CONT.) It would have been hard to miss in
395 any event. It was the only one lit up like
396 a bonfire, complete with strings of
397 Christmas lights. A tan brick, one-story
398 affair with columns in front and a carport
399 on the side - as unique to Vermont as to
400 Pasadena, California.

401 SFX: CAR PULLS UP, ENGINE STOPS. GUNTHER GETS
402 OUT, AND WALKS ACROSS ASPHALT AND ONTO THE
403 STEPS. DAYTIME SUBURBAN AMBIENCE.

404 SFX: RINGING OF DOORBELL. BEAT, THEN DOOR OPENS

405 MRS. PHILIPS: Yes?

406 GUNTHER: (NARRATING) It was her. The woman from the
407 dog photo. She looked from me to my cruiser.

408 MRS. PHILIPS: Oh, damn! (REALIZING) Oh! I knew it!

409 (NARRATING) She turned on her heel and
410 disappeared into the house, leaving me to
411 step inside alone and close the door

412 SFX: MRS. PHILIPS (HEELS) CLICKS INSIDE HOUSE,
413 GUNTHER WALKS IN BEHIND, AMBIENCE CHANGES TO
414 WELL FURNISHED HOUSE. CLASSIC CHRISTMAS
415 CAROLS PLAY SOFTLY IN BACK. MRS. PHILIPS
416 PACES NERVOUSLY BEHIND NARRATION

417

417 GUNTHER: (NARRATING) The festiveness of the living
418 room struck and incongruous note. The fire
419 was burning, the tree lit up, poinsettias
420 and evergreen boughs abounded, strings of
421 cranberries and popcorn laced back and forth
422 in front of the mantelpiece. Christmas was
423 already a week gone, but it was preserved
424 here like a museum of American culture.

425 SFX: MRS. PHILIPS' FRANTIC PACING STOPS.

426 MRS. PHILIPS: He's dead, isn't he?

427 GUNTHER: I'm afraid he is.

428 MRS. PHILIPS: That stupid dog.

429 GUNTHER: (NARRATING) I couldn't tell if she meant her
430 husband or the poodle in the pictures, but I
431 wasn't sure how to ask.

432 GUNTHER: (AFTER LONG PAUSE) Mrs. Philips?

433 MRS. PHILIPS: What?

434 GUNTHER: What was your husband doing out there?

435 MRS. PHILIPS: Getting the dog.

436 GUNTHER: (NARRATING) I waited for more to come. None
437 did. I decided to change my approach.

438 GUNTHER: Could I have a glass of milk?

439 MRS. PHILIPS: Milk? Yes! Of course. I should have
440 offered.

441 SFX: PHILIPS TROTS OFF. GUNTHER SLOWLY FOLLOWS -
442 THROUGH A SET OF SWINGING DOORS. CHRISTMAS
443 MUSIC FADES. REPLACED WITH A TICK-TOCK
444 CLOCK.

445 GUNTHER: (NARRATING) It was a dazzling kitchen.
446 Industrial grade appliances, every pot and
447 pan with a copper bottom or a French-made
448 high-gloss paint job. Knives worthy of a
449 Swiss packing plant gleamed along magnetic
450 wall strips, yards of thick unscratched
451 cutting-board counter space stretched in all
452 directions. If the living room was Family
453 Circle, we were now in Gourmet magazine.

454
455 By chance, I'd hit upon the perfect therapy
456 for her, and I wasn't about to screw up what
457 dumb luck had delivered. But I was starting
458 to regret I hadn't ordered breakfast.

459 GUNTHER: Mrs. Philips?

460 SFX: KITCHEN CLANKING SOUNDS AS SHE WORKS

461 MRS. PHILIPS: Now, now, it will just be a moment.

462 GUNTHER: (NARRATES) I watched as she butchered a
463 lemon with a butter knife, overflowed a
464 carafe of milk and loaded up a tray without
465 any of it, which she then carried 3 feet and
466 almost dropped before me.

467 MRS. PHILIPS: Sugar?

468 GUNTHER: No thank you. Just the milk.

469 MRS. PHILIPS: (NERVOUS GIGGLE) Of course. How silly, I
470 forgot.

471 GUNTHER: Do you feel you can talk a little?

472 MRS. PHILIPS: Yes. I'm sorry about the mess.

473 GUNTHER: Don't worry. You should see where I usually
474 go for breakfast. (BEAT) Why was your
475 husband out there tonight?

476 MRS. PHILIPS: He went to pay the ransom for our dog,
477 Junior. Jamie was very attached to him. He
478 even carried around pictures.

479 GUNTHER: I saw those. How long had the dog been
480 missing?

481 MRS. PHILIPS: Several days - long enough to make Jamie
482 really frantic. It was my fault, I guess.
483 He didn't say that, but it wouldn't have
484 happened with him.

485 GUNTHER: What wouldn't?

486 MRS. PHILIPS: Junior wouldn't have been stolen. Jamie
487 always took him for walks, you know? On a
488 leash. It always seemed so stupid to me - I
489 mean we're almost out in the country. I
490 used to just let him out when Jamie wasn't
491 around and call for him after he'd done his
492 business. He always came back. (SIGHS)
493 When he didn't the last time, I had to tell
494 Jamie what I'd been doing.

495 GUNTHER: Was he upset?

496 MRS. PHILIPS: He was stunned. Not angry with me though.
497 He never was. (BEAT) But that dog was like...
498 We don't have any children, and Jamie didn't
499 have any by his first wife. We haven't been
500 married very long, you know - just four
501 years.

502 GUNTHER: And the kidnapper called?

503 MRS. PHILIPS: Yes - yesterday. He told Jamie to deliver a
504 thousand dollars to a certain address or
505 he'd kill Junior.
506

506 GUNTHER: Was there anything more specific about those
507 instructions? A time to go or a certain
508 door to be used, or some special clothing
509 Jamie should wear?

510 MRS. PHILIPS: I don't remember the address, but he had to
511 go to the back door at two in the morning
512 and just walk in. He wasn't supposed to
513 knock. There was no mention of clothing.

514 GUNTHER: The thousand dollars didn't have to be in
515 mixed bills, or old currency, or anything
516 like that?

517 MRS. PHILIPS. No. (BEAT) How did he die?

518 GUNTHER: He was shot. The house he went to belonged
519 to an old lady who'd been terrorized by
520 threatening phone calls. She fired before
521 she even saw him.

522 MRS. PHILIPS: (LETS OUT A VERY LOW, WHIMPERING GASP) Don't
523 tell me he went to the wrong house.

524 GUNTHER: No, I'm afraid he didn't.

525 MRS. PHILIPS: Then what are you saying? What happened?

526

526 GUNTHER: (SIGHS) My guess is that the old lady was
527 used to kill your husband - I can't say for
528 sure, though. Like I told you, it's only a
529 guess. This just happened. I'll need more
530 time to nail it down, but you asked, so I
531 told you. I would appreciate your not
532 sharing that with anyone, okay?

533 MRS. PHILIPS: Oh. Of course not.

534 GUNTHER: Did Jamie ever mention the name Thelma
535 Reitz?

536 MRS. PHILIPS: Is that the woman who shot him?

537 GUNTHER: Yes.

538 MRS. PHILIPS: (BEAT WHILE SHE THINKS) He may have - I
539 don't remember it.

540 GUNTHER: They served on a jury together.

541 MRS. PHILIPS: (ANOTHER GASP) Oh, no. That was the worst
542 experience of his life. He couldn't sleep,
543 he almost stopped eating, he had to be
544 treated for stomach troubles. I thought he
545 was getting an ulcer. That trial nearly did
546 him in.

547 GUNTHER: What trial was it?

548 MRS. PHILIPS: You don't know? The Kimberly Harris murder.
549 My God. I heard about the case until I was
550 blue in the face. Every single thing he
551 heard in that courtroom he brought home to
552 me. He went over it again and again, as if
553 he were judge and jury wrapped into one. I
554 remember Thelma - he never told me her last
555 name. I never thought I'd forget any of
556 them. She was the one he accused of going
557 with the crowd - of not having a mind of her
558 own. First he persuaded her to vote his
559 way, then when the majority voted against
560 him, she switched without a second thought.
561 For months after the trial, it was all he
562 could talk about.

563 GUNTHER: You mean Thelma?

564 MRS. PHILIPS: No, all of it. Thelma was just a piece. He
565 didn't have it in for her - he pitied her.
566 He said she'd been following men's orders
567 for so many years that she was totally
568 incapable of original thought. It was just
569 the whole thing. And the guilt.

570 GUNTHER: Guilt?

571 MRS. PHILIPS: Well, he voted with the majority too, in the
572 end, didn't he? He caved in just like
573 Thelma, after all that anguish. He hated
574 himself for it. He said he should have
575 stuck by his guns and caused a mistrial, or
576 whatever it's called - you know, when the
577 jury can't make up its mind?

578 GUNTHER: Was this trial still an obsession with him?

579 MRS. PHILIPS: Hmmm (CONTEMPLATIVE SILENCE, WHEN SHE
580 RESUMES, MORE CONFIDENT) You didn't know
581 Jamie. I guess it used to be. But that
582 word isn't right - it's too negative for
583 him. I mean, the trial was a negative
584 thing, but that was the exception. Jamie
585 went from enthusiasm to enthusiasm - even
586 the trial was kind of like that. He got
587 totally involved in things - to where you'd
588 think he was becoming a little nutty - and
589 then he'd focus on something else. Most of
590 the time, they were harmless enough - the
591 dog, this kitchen... Christmases were big.
592 I think even I was one of them.

593 MRS. PHILIPS: (CONT.) All of them - or I should say, all
594 of us - were possessions. We weren't

595 discarded after our time - he treated me at
596 least as well as he treated Junior, and
597 that's saying a lot - but we just weren't
598 the latest acquisitions. Jamie gave his
599 love to me, and to Junior, and to building
600 projects, and even to that dumb trial. If
601 things had turned out the way he wanted,
602 he'd have turned the hearts of every person
603 on that jury, just like Henry Fonda did in
604 Twelve Angry Men. The fact that he couldn't
605 do it really bothered him a lot. He ended
606 up betraying his own convictions. Why
607 didn't he force a mistrial?

608 GUNTER: (BEAT) Well -

609 MRS. PHILIPS: (CUTS HIM OFF) He was a social creature. If
610 he couldn't change someone's mind after a
611 good argument, he'd quit, and he wouldn't
612 bear a grudge.

613 GUNTHER: (MUTTERED) A man's future hung on that good
614 argument.

615 MRS. PHILIPS: Was the man innocent?

616 GUNTHER: Good point, I suppose not.

617 MRS. PHILIPS: (HESITANT) Where is Jamie now?

618 GUNTHER: He's been taken to Burlington for an
619 autopsy. They have to do that by law.
620 They'll bring him back, probably by the end
621 of the day, or tomorrow at the latest.

622 MRS. PHILIPS: Will I be able to see him?

623 GUNTHER: Yes. In fact, someone will want you to,
624 just to make sure. (BEAT) Mrs. Philips, he
625 was pretty badly hit. His face is okay, but
626 I think you should realize that you won't be
627 seeing someone who just looks asleep. It's
628 not like the movies.

629 MRS. PHILIPS: Of course, Mr... Did you tell me your name?
630 I probably forgot.

631 GUNTHER: Lieutenant Gunther - Joe Gunther.

632 MRS. PHILIPS: Thank you, Mr. Gunther.

633 SFX: BOTH WALK DOWN A HALLWAY, CHRISTMAS CAROLS
634 HEARD FAINTLY AGAIN, DOOR OPENS.

635 GUNTHER: Mrs. Philips, is there someone I can call to
636 come stay with you? Even someone from the
637 police department, just for a while? You
638 might want somebody to talk to, about the
639 weather, if nothing else.

640 MRS. PHILIPS: (COMFORTING) Thank you, Lieutenant, I'll be
641 fine. There are people I can call if I need
642 them.

643 GUNTHER: Okay, good luck Mrs. Philips.

644 SFX: CAR ENGINE STARTS OFF, CAR PUT IN GEAR AND
645 STARTS TO DRIVE OUT OF THE DRIVEWAY AND THEN
646 GOES ONTO THE STREET.

647 GUNTHER: (NARRATING) I had been bringing bad news to
648 people my whole professional life, and had
649 pretty much run the gamut of reactions. Mrs.
650 Philips was a stand-out – Jamie Philips had
651 been a wise and lucky man to have made her
652 one of his enthusiasms.

653 MUSIC: GUNTHER EXIT THEME BEGINS TO RISE UP

654 GUNTHER: It had been a hell of a morning so far. A
655 dead man, a slaughtered cat, an old woman
656 and a widow. And it wasn't 9 o'clock yet.
657 I headed home to get the pajamas from under
658 my clothing. Then I'd worry about the rest
659 of the day.

660 MUSIC: GUNTHER EXIT THEME UP, ESTABLISH

661 ANNOUNCER: Credits.