Mystery audiobook scripts

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The Wrong Door

Procedural · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 1 minute

I was forty minutes into the interrogation when she said the thing that stopped me cold. Not a confession — the opposite. A detail so specific, so verifiable, so completely incompatible with the timeline I'd spent three weeks building that I had to set my pen down and stare at the wall.

"The pharmacy," I said. "You said you were at the pharmacy on Renner Street at nine-fifteen." "I was. Ask them. I knocked over a display of reading glasses. They'll remember." She wasn't nervous. People who are lying get nervous when you go quiet. She just looked tired.

"Sit tight," I told her, and walked out into the hall. My partner was leaning on the wall with a coffee and the particular look he reserves for when I've walked us both off a cliff. "Well?" he said. I rubbed my face. "We've got the wrong person." "How wrong?" "Start-over wrong," I said. "All the way back to the beginning."

The Calver House

Cosy, country house · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

The body was in the library. Of course it was in the library. Thirty years on the job and I still get the ones with bodies in libraries.

I crouched beside him. Mid-sixties, well-dressed, one shoe off. That last part bothered me most — people don't lose a shoe falling. They lose it running, or struggling, or being dragged. "Who found him?" I called over my shoulder. "The housekeeper," said my deputy. "She says she heard nothing." "Of course she did."

"The family's in the east wing. Twelve of them. Snowed in since yesterday." He paused. "Nobody can leave." I looked at the dead man's one bare foot. "Nobody's going anywhere," I said.

Still Water

Amateur sleuth, suspense · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 1 minute

Nora had narrowed it to three people, then two, then one — and now she was sitting across a dinner table from that one, passing the bread basket, listening to him talk about the weather on the night Margaret Hale died.

"Terrible rain," he said pleasantly. "I remember because I had to cancel my evening walk." He met her eyes. Held them just a half-second too long. Smiled. "You've gone quiet, Nora."

"Just thinking," she said. Her phone was in her pocket. DS Callum was twelve minutes away — she'd checked before sitting down. She reached for her wine glass with a steady hand, because the one thing she could not do right now, the one thing she absolutely could not afford, was let him see that she knew. "Tell me more about the rain," she said.

The Follow

Suspense, journalist · Adult (30-45) · Neutral British · 1 minute

She had spotted the grey coat twice. Once outside the archive. Once on the platform at Farringdon. That could be coincidence. The third time — reflected in the window of a coffee shop on a street she'd only turned down because she'd taken a wrong exit — was not.

Mira kept walking. Didn't change speed, didn't look back. She'd been a journalist for eleven years and the first thing you learned was: don't run until you know where you're running to.

She turned into a busy pub, ordered a tonic water she didn't want, found a stool facing the door and waited. The grey coat did not appear. Which meant whoever it was had made her first — and was good enough to know when to vanish. That was somehow worse.

Everything She Kept

Cold case · Adult (40-55) · Southern US · 1 minute

"I was there," she said. Just like that. No preamble, no lawyer, no breaking down. She said it like she'd been holding it in her mouth for twenty years and had finally just gotten tired of the weight.

I kept my face neutral. "At the house." "Yes." "The night Raymond died." "Yes." "And you didn't come forward because—" "Because I thought I'd done it," she said. "I had the gun. I remember the sound. I woke up and he was dead and I assumed." Her hands were folded on the table like she was in church. "Assumed for twenty years."

"Mrs. Callahan." I leaned forward. "Raymond was poisoned. Not shot." She blinked. The silence stretched out like taffy. "Then whose gun—" she started. "That," I said carefully, "is exactly what I'm trying to find out."

Below the Line

Procedural, corruption · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

My captain shut the door, which was never a good sign. When she leaves it open, you're getting a talking-to. When she shuts it, someone above her has made a phone call. "The Mercer case," she said. "You're off it." "I'm close." "I know you're close. That's why you're off it." She held my gaze. She wasn't happy about this either — that much I could read. "Lena." Using my name. Worse. "There are people involved who—" "Who what?" A long pause. "Who you don't want to be the one to find." She slid a folder across the desk. Reassignment. Effective immediately. I looked at it. I looked at her. I picked it up and left. I did not stop working the Mercer case. I just stopped doing it here.

What Vera Remembers

Psychological · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 1 minute

Vera tells the story the same way every time, which the detective finds either reassuring or suspicious depending on his mood. She was in the garden. She heard a sound — not a shout, more of a thud, the word she uses is always thud. She went inside. She found him.

What changes, very slightly, each time she tells it: where she was standing in the garden. What she was doing there. Whether the back door was already open or whether she opened it herself.

Small things. The kind of thing memory genuinely blurs. The detective writes it all down without comment. At night, in his car, he reads back through his notes and circles the parts that move. There are more of them each time.

Seventeen Years Cold

Cold case · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 1 minute

The envelope had no return address and my name written in handwriting I didn't recognize. Inside: a photograph, a date, and four words.

You missed one thing.

The photograph was from the Dellen case. Seventeen years ago. The case that made my career and, if I'm honest about it — which I try not to be — the case that's never fully left. A man went to prison. I believed he was guilty. I still believe it.

I looked at the photograph for a long time. It was a street corner, the night of the murder. In the background, half-obscured by shadow, was a figure I had never noticed in any of the evidence files. And they were looking directly at the camera. "Okay," I said to the empty room. "Show me."

Frame by Frame

Psychological, identity · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

The detective showed me the footage and I watched myself walk into the Meridian Hotel at 9:47 p.m. on Thursday. Coat I owned. Bag I owned. My gait, my build, the way I tilt my head slightly right when I'm thinking.

"That's not me," I said. "Mr. Aiken—" "I was in Portland on Thursday. I have a boarding pass, a hotel receipt, a dinner tab with three witnesses." I watched the figure on the screen push the elevator button. Fourth floor. Room where the body was found.

"Someone studied me," I said.

"Or someone who knows you very well," the detective said. I looked at her. She looked at me. We were thinking the same thing and neither of us wanted to be the one to say the name first.

The Harwick Divide

Procedural, partners · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 1 minute

"It's the brother," said Marsh. "It's always the brother." "It's not the brother," said Fen, without looking up from the file. "The brother was in Manchester." "People leave Manchester." "His wife was in labour." "People leave during—" "Marsh."

He sat down. The incident board between them had eighteen photographs, forty-two sticky notes, and one large red question mark that Fen had drawn at two in the morning and not yet taken down.

"Then who?" he said. She finally looked up. "Someone who needed it to look like the brother." A pause. "Someone who knew the wife was in labour." Marsh stared at the board. Then he pulled out his chair and sat down properly, the way he only did when he'd stopped arguing and started thinking. "Right," he said quietly. "Start again."

Person of Interest

Psychological, suspect · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Here is what I know about being a suspect: everyone looks guilty when they're scared, and everyone gets scared when someone they know turns up dead, and the detectives across this table have decided that my particular flavour of scared looks like guilt.

"You were the last person to see her," the older one said. "That we know of," I said. "As far as you know," he said back. We went around like that for a while. "I want a lawyer," I said finally. Not because I killed her. Because I know something — something I haven't told them — and I need to figure out if telling it will help or bury me.

The lawyer took forty minutes. I spent them thinking about what Dana said to me the night before she died. Four words I hadn't understood then. I understood them now.

Murder at the Autumn Fair

Cosy, village · Mature (55+) · Neutral British · 1 minute

I had entered my chutney in the preserves competition for the ninth consecutive year, and for the ninth consecutive year, Phyllis Morrow had won. I was considering this injustice very calmly — really, very calmly — when I found her face-down in the apple bobbing barrel.

The constable took one look at me standing over her and said, "Mrs. Pemberton, why are you always at these things?" "I live here, Derek," I said. "I'm always at everything." He called it in. I looked around at the assembled fair-goers and counted, out of habit, who was and was not surprised.

Eleven people looked shocked. Four looked relieved. One — and this is what caught me — looked disappointed. Not that she was dead. That she hadn't been found sooner. I filed that away and went to fetch the constable a biscuit. He always thinks better with a biscuit.

Recant

Procedural, witness · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 1 minute

"I need to change my statement," she said. She'd called me directly, not the precinct, which meant she didn't want this on record yet. I drove to her apartment and she opened the door before I knocked.

"What did you actually see that night?" "What I said I saw. Mostly." I waited. People always fill silence if you give them enough of it. "I saw him leaving," she said. "I didn't see him go in." She was looking at the floor. "That's a significant difference, Ms. Osei." "I know that." "People have built a case on—" "I know." Her voice cracked. "I know what I did."

I sat down across from her and thought about the man who had been in county lockup for fourteen months waiting for trial. "Tell me everything," I said. "From the beginning. The true beginning." She took a shaking breath and started talking.

The Guest Room

Psychological, domestic · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

The guest room had been locked since Claire moved in six weeks ago. She had assumed storage. She had assumed privacy. On the fourteenth night, when her host was out, she found the key on the kitchen hook and told herself she was just curious.

The room was ordinary. A bed, a dresser, a window overlooking the back garden. What stopped her was the dresser mirror — covered with a sheet, which was unusual — and the photographs tucked into its frame. Twelve of them. All of the same woman. All taken without her knowledge.

Claire recognised the woman on the third look. It was the woman who had lived in this house before her. The woman the landlord had said simply moved on. She put the sheet back exactly as she'd found it and walked out of the room and sat very quietly in the kitchen, thinking about whether to call someone and, if so, who.

Dirty Glass

Noir, private eye · Any · Neutral American · 1 minute

She offered me double my rate to stop looking. That's always the tell — not the lies they tell you at the start, but the money they throw at you in the middle when you're getting warm.

"Your husband hired me to find what happened to your sister," I said. "I know what happened to my sister," she said. She was perfectly composed. The kind of composed that takes practice. "Then you understand why I can't stop."

"What I understand, Mr. Voss, is that some answers don't help anyone." She picked up her bag. "The people who want this found — they won't be happy with what it is." "They rarely are," I said. She walked out. I poured two fingers of something bad and thought about her hands, which had been shaking the whole time she sat across from me, steady voice and all.

The Last Room on Vane Street

Procedural, confession · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 1 minute

"You worked it out," he said. Not a question. He was standing by the window and he didn't look frightened, which told me everything about how he thought this was going to end.

"Most of it," I said. "I'd like to hear the rest from you." "Would you." He turned to look at me. Old friend's face. Eyes I'd known for twenty years doing something I didn't recognise. "And if I don't feel like talking?" "Then we stand here until my sergeant comes through that door in—" I checked my watch. "Four minutes."

Something passed through his expression. Not guilt. Something more complicated — almost like relief. He pulled out a chair and sat down heavily. "It started with the money," he said. "It always starts with the money." "Tell me," I said. And he did. All of it. Like he'd been waiting for someone to ask properly.

Under the Skin

Procedural, forensic · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Dr. Yuen set down her instrument and said, simply: "This isn't the first one." Detective Soares looked up from his notepad. "Excuse me?" "The scarring. Here, and here." She indicated without touching. "Old. Years old. Same method, same location. Someone practised."

The room went very quiet in the particular way autopsy rooms go quiet when what's on the table stops being a singular tragedy and starts being a pattern. "How many times?" "At least twice before this," she said. "That I can confirm."

Soares looked at the body of a woman everyone had agreed died of natural causes until this morning. He thought about the case file — thin, untroubled, closed. "I need you to write all of that up," he said. "Now." She was already typing.

The Accidental Sleuth

Cosy, comic · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

I want to be very clear that I did not intend to break into the accountant's office. I intended to use the bathroom on the third floor of the Whitmore Building, which I had been told was accessible via the stairwell, and the stairwell door I opened was simply — incorrectly labelled.

The point is, I was in the office, the filing cabinet was open, and the folder labelled DO NOT OPEN — LEGAL was sitting right there. I am a curious person. This is a personality trait, not a character flaw. I opened it.

Inside was a list of twelve names, three of which I recognised, one of which was mine. I stood in the dark office of a dead man and thought: this is why you take the stairs. I photographed every page and left. I was in the bathroom in under four minutes. The hand dryer, I feel, was unnecessarily loud.

The Hours I Can't Account For

Psychological, missing time · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

I remember leaving the party at eleven. I remember the cab, the cold, my key in the lock. What I don't remember — what I cannot, no matter how many times I run it back — is the three hours in between.

The police are very interested in those three hours. So am I. We just want them for different reasons. "Is it possible," the detective asked carefully, "that you were somewhere you've forgotten?" "I didn't forget," I said. "It's gone. There's a difference." She wrote something down.

That night I found mud on my shoes that wasn't there when I left. I found a receipt in my coat pocket for a petrol station forty miles from the city. And I found, in my phone's camera roll, a photograph I did not take — of a house I did not recognize — timestamped at 1:17 a.m. I sat on my bathroom floor and tried to decide what I was more afraid of: that someone had done this to me, or that I had done it myself.

What Broke in Millhaven

Small town, procedural · Adult (40–55) · Neutral American · 1 minute

By the third week, Millhaven had stopped being a town in any meaningful sense. It was a collection of people who had once trusted each other, arranged into smaller and smaller groups, each one eyeing the others across church parking lots and grocery store aisles. Sheriff Ames had grown up here. Had assumed she would die here — peacefully, eventually, in the house her grandmother built. Now she sat in her cruiser outside the diner and watched two families who had shared Thanksgiving for forty years cross the street to avoid each other.

"We need to close this," said her deputy, from the passenger seat. "I know." "Before there's nothing left to come back to." She started the engine. There was one person she hadn't spoken to yet. One person everyone in town had quietly, carefully, consistently failed to mention. She drove toward the old Fenwick property and did not let herself think too hard about why she'd waited this long.

The Whitechapel Ledger

Historical, Victorian · Any · Neutral British · 1 minute

The ledger listed names, dates, and amounts paid — nothing more. But the dates corresponded exactly to the deaths, and the names were men of considerable standing, which explained rather neatly why nobody had looked very hard.

"If I take this to the inspector," I said, "it disappears." My companion — a woman who had more cause than anyone to see this through — didn't hesitate. "Then we don't take it to the inspector." "That leaves us considerably short of the law." "The law," she said, with a precision that cut, "has been considerably short of us for some time."

I folded the ledger into my coat. Outside, the city moved on as it always did — indifferent, relentless, entirely unaware that two women in a borrowed room had just decided to do something quite inadvisable. I found, to my surprise, that I was not afraid. I was, if anything, rather determined.

When It's Over

Procedural, aftermath · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 1 minute

They asked me afterward if it felt like closure. I said yes because that's what people need to hear, and because the truth — that it felt like finally being able to look at something you'd been turning away from for four years — doesn't translate well into a press statement.

The case is closed. The right person is going to prison. I am told this is a good outcome. I believe that it is. I also believe that good outcomes and clean endings are not the same thing, and I've stopped confusing the two.

I went back to the office the following Monday. There was a new case on my desk — there always is. I made coffee. I sat down. I read the file. And somewhere in the back of my mind, quiet and patient as it always is, the work began again.

Beneath the Surface

Procedural · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 30 seconds

Detective Nora Keane stared at the body floating in the dark water, the ripples distorting the lifeless face. "There's more to this than meets the eye," she said.

Her partner, Sam, shone his flashlight over the scene. "What do you think happened?"

"Whatever it was," Nora replied, "it didn't end here. We need to find out where it all began."

She turned and walked back to the car, the weight of the mystery pressing down on her shoulders.

The Last Clue

Historical, Victorian detective · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 30 seconds

Holmes examined the strange object under the magnifying glass, his eyes narrowing in concentration. "This," he said, tapping it gently, "is the final piece of the puzzle."
Watson leaned in, his curiosity piqued. "What does it mean, Holmes?"
"It means," Holmes replied, "that our suspect isn't who we thought. We must act quickly, Watson, before they realize we're onto them."
With a swift motion, Holmes pocketed the evidence and grabbed his coat, ready to make their move.

The Bookshop on Kirk Wynd

Cosy, bookshop · Mature (55+) · Scottish · 1 minute

The body in the travel section was not, strictly speaking, my fault, though you would not know it from the way Sergeant Laird looked at me.

"Morag," he said. "Why is there a man in your shop?"

"Because I open at nine, Iain, and he was waiting on the step."

"He is dead."

"He was not dead at nine. At nine he wanted a map of the Hebrides and a receipt."

I have run this shop for thirty-one years. I know what people buy when they are happy and what they buy when they are running. A man who wants a map and a receipt is a man who needs to prove he was somewhere else.

So while Iain phoned Inverness, I did what any bookseller would do. I checked what he had been reading.

It was a tide table. Tuesday's. Folded at four in the morning.

The Ninth Caller

Procedural · Adult (30-45) · Irish · 90 seconds

Nine people rang the station about the fire on Quay Street, and I have listened to every one of them twice.

Eight of them say the same things in slightly different orders. Smoke. A bang, maybe. A man in a dark jacket, maybe. One of them is fairly sure it was a woman. One of them rings mostly to complain about the parking.

The ninth caller is different, and it has taken me until half past two in the morning to work out why.

She is calm. That is not the strange part. Some people go very calm in an emergency, and God bless them, they are the ones who give us addresses. The strange part is the timing. She rings at eleven forty-four. The first flames anyone else saw were at eleven forty-nine.

Five minutes. She reported a fire five minutes before it existed.

Cathal is asleep at the next desk with his face on a statement. I do not wake him. I play the recording a third time with the volume right up, and under her voice I hear something none of the other eight have got. Church bells. St. Finbar's, ringing the quarter.

St. Finbar's is two miles from Quay Street. You cannot see the fire from there. You cannot see anything from there but the river.

So she was not watching it. She already knew.

I wake Cathal.

The Photograph on the Desk

Noir, private eye · Mature (55+) · Neutral American · 1 minute

She came in out of the rain at ten past midnight, which is late for a client and early for trouble.

I have been doing this for thirty years. I know the walk of a woman who wants her husband followed, and the walk of a woman who already knows and wants a witness. This was neither. This was the walk of someone checking the exits.

"You find people," she said.

"Sometimes. Mostly I find out why they left."

She put a photograph on my desk. A young man, twenty-five maybe, squinting into a summer that looked a long way off.

"My son," she said. "Gone six days."

"Police?"

"The police sent me to you."

That is never good. The police send people to me the way a doctor sends you to a priest.

I turned the photograph over. On the back, in pencil, someone had written my address.

It was not her handwriting.

The Switchboard Girl

Historical, 1930s · Young adult (18-25) · Australian · 90 seconds

In nineteen thirty-two, if you wanted to ring anyone on the north side of the harbour, you went through me. Or through one of the other eleven girls on the exchange, but I was the fastest, and I will not pretend to be modest about it now.

We were not meant to listen. There was a rule about it, printed on a card above the board, and Mrs. Hollis read it aloud to new girls like scripture. Connect the call. Close the key. Mind your own business.

Everybody listened. You could not help it. A line goes quiet for half a second before it connects, and in that half second you hear the room at the other end. Dishes. A wireless. A baby.

On the fourteenth of March, at four minutes past ten at night, a man on a Kirribilli line asked for a number in Balmain, and in that half second I heard a woman say, very clearly, "Please don't."

Then the call went through, and a man said to another man, "It's done."

I closed the key. That was the rule.

The next morning the paper said a woman in Kirribilli had fallen down her own stairs.

I read it on the tram, twice, and got off three stops early, and walked to the police station on my own.

Chain of Custody

Procedural, forensic · Adult (25-40) · Southern US · 45 seconds

Evidence bag four-one-seven came back to my bench on Monday with the seal cut and taped over.

Tape happens. People are human. Somebody opens a bag for the lab, forgets to seal it proper, fixes it with whatever is in the drawer. I have seen it a hundred times.

But every one of those hundred times, somebody signed the log.

I ran my finger down the chain of custody. Collected Friday. Logged Friday. Lab Saturday. Back to me Monday. Four signatures.

And a gap on Sunday where nobody signed at all.

I said nothing. I photographed the tape and the log, locked both in my own drawer, and went to find out who had the keys on Sundays.

Minutes of the Allotment Committee

Cosy, comic · Mature (55+) · Neutral British · 90 seconds

Minutes of the Thornbury Lane Allotment Committee. Extraordinary meeting, held in the shed. Present: the chair, Mrs. Okonjo. The treasurer, Mr. Pell. Myself, as secretary. Apologies from Mr. Dunmore, who is dead.

Item one. The death of Mr. Dunmore.

The chair noted that Mr. Dunmore was found on Saturday in plot nineteen, face down in his own rhubarb, which he would have hated, as he always said rhubarb was overrated.

The treasurer asked whether this affected the marrow competition. The chair said, Gerald, honestly.

Item two. The police.

The secretary reported that a detective constable had asked him who had keys to the shed. The secretary replied that everyone has keys to the shed, as the lock has been broken since the Jubilee.

The detective constable asked whether anyone had a grudge against Mr. Dunmore. The secretary asked him to be more specific.

Item three. Any other business.

The secretary wishes it minuted that Mr. Dunmore's marrow, favourite for this year's prize, is missing.

The secretary further wishes it minuted that Mr. Pell has gone rather quiet.

The chair asked whether the secretary was accusing the treasurer of murder over a

vegetable.

The secretary said he was simply taking the minutes.

Meeting closed at eight fifteen. Biscuits were not provided.

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