

AGENTS

by Robert Arnold

EPISODE TWO:

FRIENDS OF MR. JONAS

CHARACTERS

VINCE	A depressed poet
RADIO	An electronics expert
OVERSTREET	A Human Resources Manager
ELAINE	A doctor
HOCKSTEAD	A politician
BURKE	A reporter
MR. JONAS	An intercessor
NEWSCASTER	
MADGE	An office manager
CRANDALL	An actor
BLUE EYES	An operative
BULL	His bodyguard
FLOWERS	Mr. Jonas's muscle
DOCTOR	
ANNOUNCER	

1 MUSIC: THEME MUSIC. FADES.

2 SOUND: SILVERWARE. SOUNDS OF ONE PERSON EATING.

3 HOCKSTEAD: Remember peanut butter? I love peanut
4 butter. Have since I was a boy. I don't know
5 what it is. There's just something about it
6 for me. It tastes... decadent. Even though I
7 know it isn't. Not really.

8 A while back, the regrettable tensions with
9 our southern neighbors meant that peanuts
10 could no longer be imported into the New
11 Midwest Territory. There was very little to
12 be done about it. It's not a crop that grows
13 particularly well in these climes.

14 Technically, peanuts are not nuts, did you
15 know that? Technically they are legumes.

16 Anyway, that was years ago, and relations
17 have steadied a bit since then. But did you
18 notice? Peanut butter never came back. It
19 has remained quietly... unavailable. You
20 won't find it for sale anywhere inside the
21 Territory. Now. Take a look in that tin.

1 SOUND: TIN LID LIFTED.

2 HOCKSTEAD: Ha! See there? I have a bite with every
3 meal. On a cracker, or just straight from
4 the spoon. Tastes as good as ever. Better,
5 maybe, because now it's rare.

6 What do I mean by all this? Well, it's just
7 an illustration. Just one little example.
8 You've made some powerful friends. By coming
9 through on this delivery. By your discretion.
10 Your efficiency.

11 SOUND: DUFFEL BAG UNZIPPED.

12 HOCKSTEAD: (SATISFIED) Hmm. And yes, I know, you've
13 been handsomely compensated already. But
14 there are other forms of compensation ahead
15 for you, my friend, now that you're... in.
16 Let's just say that whatever your "peanut
17 butter" is -- you'll have it.

18 SOUND: CHAIR SCRAPES AS SOMEONE GETS UP.

19 HOCKSTEAD: Wait! Where are you rushing off to? Aren't
20 you enjoying your meal?

1 MR. JONAS: It is exceedingly delicious. But I'm afraid
2 I must leave you to introduce yourself.

3 HOCKSTEAD: Introduce myself? What are you -- ?

4 SOUND: DOUBLE DOORS THROWN OPEN.

5 SOUND: COMMOTION OF REPORTERS ENTERING.

6 REPORTERS: (CHATTER)

7 BURKE: Secretary Hockstead! Secretary Hockstead,
8 how do you respond to allegations that
9 you've been using your position to smuggle
10 illegal contraband into the Territory?
11 Secretary Hockstead...? (FADES)

12 MUSIC: TRANSITION.

13

1 SOUND: CAR ENGINE.

2 NEWSCASTER: (RADIO) ...A bombshell report today, as
3 Secretary of Agriculture Miles Hockstead is
4 found with evidence of drug running and
5 other illegal trafficking. Mr. Hockstead
6 denies the allegations, but Territory
7 President William Readick has accepted his
8 resignation. Hockstead joins a string of
9 disgraced Party officials whose misdeeds
10 have come to light in the past year. A Party
11 spokeswoman tells the press that, quote, "We
12 are committed to rooting out corruption no
13 matter where it may hide."

14 It's another seismic upheaval for the
15 President's Cabinet, still reeling from the
16 disappearance of Secretary of State and
17 Presidential candidate Madeleine Stevenson.
18 With the election mere weeks away --

19 SOUND: RADIO CLICKED OFF.

20 SOUND: CAR STOPS.

21 FLOWERS: Out.

1 VINCE: What am I doing here?

2 FLOWERS: Get out and shut the door.

3 VINCE: (MUTTERING) A please would be nice.

4 SOUND: CAR DOOR SHUTS. CAR ROARS AWAY.

5 SOUND: PARKING LOT AMBIENCE.

6 OVERSTREET: Good morning, Mr. Harris!

7 VINCE: Who are you?

8 OVERSTREET: My name is Overstreet. And this handsome
9 gentleman is Claude, but we refer to him as
10 "Radio."

11 RADIO: Hey.

12 VINCE: Cute. Are you two... you know? His guys?

13 OVERSTREET: I believe you mean to ask whether we are
14 friends of Mr. Jonas.

15 VINCE: Okay, are you friends of Mr. Jonas?

16 OVERSTREET: We are acquainted, but I would not consider
17 us friends.

1 VINCE: I'm sure he'd be very hurt to hear that.

2 OVERSTREET: (AMUSED) That particular question and
3 response is our code, Mr. Harris. You may
4 use it to identify other agents in the
5 field. Remember it, please. (PAUSE) Now --
6 are you ready for your first assignment?

7 VINCE: I guess so. What do you need me to do?

8 OVERSTREET: Nothing much. You and Mr. Radio must deliver
9 this briefcase.

10 VINCE: Okay. Where?

11 OVERSTREET: Right there.

12 VINCE: The hospital?

13 OVERSTREET: Correct.

14 VINCE: Who does it go to?

15 OVERSTREET: It is to be left in a particular storage
16 closet on the building's third floor. Mr.
17 Radio knows the location. It will reach its
18 intended recipient from there.

1 VINCE: You want us to sneak a briefcase into a
2 hospital storage room?

3 OVERSTREET: Is that a problem for you?

4 VINCE: No. No, it's just... You know my wife works
5 here, right? She's a doctor.

6 OVERSTREET: Then it will be all the more imperative to
7 avoid detection. Besides, I was given to
8 understand that you have been declared dead,
9 Mr. Harris.

10 VINCE: Well, yeah, but --

11 OVERSTREET: In that case, let me remind you that you no
12 longer have a wife. 'Til death do you part,
13 remember? Take this.

14 SOUND: BRIEFCASE HANDED OFF.

15 OVERSTREET: I will wait here for your return. If you are
16 apprehended, identified, or otherwise
17 caught, you will not hear from us again. Mr.
18 Radio, I will of course look to you for a
19 full report on Mr. Harris's usefulness to
20 this mission.

1 RADIO: Yessir.

2 VINCE: Can I at least ask why --

3 OVERSTREET: You cannot. Well then, Mr. Harris! Best of
4 luck.

5 MUSIC: TRANSITION.

6

1 SOUND: HOSPITAL AMBIENCE. VOICES, BEEPING,
2 INTERCOM, ETC.

3 SOUND: FOOTSTEPS ON TILE.

4 VINCE: So. How long have you been... involved?

5 RADIO: With what?

6 VINCE: You know. All this.

7 RADIO: Don't know what you're talking about.

8 VINCE: Of course.

9 RADIO: Third floor's restricted. We'll need a badge
10 to get up there.

11 VINCE: A badge? How do we get one?

12 SOUND: FOOTSTEPS STOP.

13 RADIO: You're gonna have to lift one. See that
14 doctor? He's wearing his on a clip. Easy
15 enough to grab.

16 VINCE: Grab? How? When?

17 RADIO: I'll distract him. Here we go.

1 VINCE: Hang on --

2 SOUND: BODY FALLS.

3 RADIO: (SHOUTING) Oww! My hip!

4 VINCE: Damn it!

5 CROWD: (REACTION, GENERAL COMMOTION)

6 SOUND: FOOTSTEPS.

7 DOCTOR: Sir? Sir, are you all -- oof!

8 SOUND: COLLISION. CLIP CLICKS (SOFTLY).

9 VINCE: Sorry! Sorry. Let me get out of your way.

10 RADIO: (DISTANT) I'm fine! Get your damn hands off
11 me. I don't need any help.

12 CROWD: (CALMS, DISPERSSES)

13 RADIO: (APPROACHING) Get it?

14 VINCE: You're crazy, you know that?

15 RADIO: Uh huh. Come on. Elevator's down here.

16 SOUND: FOOTSTEPS ON TILE. THEY STOP.

1 SOUND: ELEVATOR BUTTON PRESSED URGENTLY, REPEATEDLY.

2 RADIO: What are you doing?

3 VINCE: Hide me. Quick. Get in front of me.

4 SOUND: SHUFFLING.

5 SOUND: ELEVATOR DOOR BEGINS CLOSING.

6 ELAINE: Hold the elevator, please!

7 VINCE: (DISGUIISING HIS VOICE) Sorry -- emergency!

8 SOUND: ELEVATOR DOORS SHUT. ELEVATOR MOVES.

9 VINCE: (RELIEVED SIGH)

10 RADIO: You wanna tell me what that was about?

11 VINCE: That was my wife. Former wife. Elaine. I

12 told you she works here.

13 RADIO: Huh. Quick thinking, then.

14 VINCE: We'll have to find a different path to the

15 storage room.

16 RADIO: There's another elevator on the far side of

17 the parking garage that --

1 VINCE: -- that goes up to three. I know. I've been
2 here before too. Come on.

3 SOUND: ELEVATOR DINGS, DOOR OPENS.

4 SOUND: ECHOING FOOTSTEPS IN A PARKING GARAGE.

5 RADIO: (PAUSE) (AMUSED) So they recruited a poet.
6 What, are you gonna write a mean limerick
7 about the bad guys and -- oof!

8 SOUND: A SCUFFLE. VINCE PUSHES HIM AGAINST A WALL.

9 RADIO: Hey! What are you doing?

10 VINCE: What's in the briefcase?

11 RADIO: Get off me!

12 VINCE: The briefcase! What's in it?

13 RADIO: Don't do this, Poet.

14 VINCE: Why are they sending me with an electronics
15 expert to hide a briefcase in a hospital? Huh?

16 RADIO: I'm warning you --

17 VINCE: Is it -- is it a bomb? You have to tell me!

1 RADIO: Why would we bomb a hospital?

2 VINCE: I don't know, why would we sneak a suspicious
3 package into a random storage room in a
4 hospital?

5 RADIO: You're questioning the assignments? Already?

6 VINCE: You're damn right I am.

7 RADIO: Don't you realize who these people are?
8 There's no reason for them not to kill you.

9 VINCE: Then they kill me. But I'm not helping them
10 kill anyone else. (PAUSE) Fine. Let's just
11 open it up and take a look, shall we?

12 RADIO: I wouldn't do that.

13 VINCE: I would. But not here. Come on. We need to
14 get clear of the garage.

15 SOUND: SHOVE. FOOTSTEPS. ECHO FADES.

16 RADIO: I hope you know what you're doing, pal.

1 VINCE: I don't have a clue. I'm just trying to do
2 what's right. Here. This is fine. Nothing to
3 hurt out here but a few parked cars.

4 RADIO: Last chance.

5 VINCE: Why? Afraid I'll trip it by opening the
6 case? Hey, I've already had one close call
7 with death recently. I'm kinda getting used
8 to it. (DEEP BREATH) Okay.

9 SOUND: BRIEFCASE LATCHES OPENED. PAUSE.

10 SOUND: BRIEFCASE OPENED. PAUSE. THEN THE SCRAPE OF
11 BRICKS BEING LIFTED.

12 VINCE: It's... bricks. Just a couple of old bricks.
13 What is this?

14 RADIO: It's a test, moron. Of loyalty. And you just
15 earned yourself an F minus.

16 VINCE: What... what will they do to me?

17 RADIO: What do you think? Come on. Time to report
18 back.

19 MUSIC: TRANSITION.

1 SOUND: PARKING LOT AMBIENCE.

2 SOUND: FOOTSTEPS ON ASPHALT.

3 OVERSTREET: (FADING IN) Ah, Mr. Radio! Mr. Harris. You
4 were not quite as efficient as I expected.

5 RADIO: Yeah, we ran into... a couple snags.

6 OVERSTREET: No matter. How did Mr. Harris acquit himself
7 on his first assignment, Mr. Radio?

8 RADIO: (PAUSE) Fine. He did just fine.

9 OVERSTREET: Excellent. The briefcase has been delivered,
10 then?

11 RADIO: Sure has.

12 OVERSTREET: Well, Mr. Harris! Allow me to congratulate you
13 on a job well done. I may also now confess
14 that this little exercise was merely that. The
15 briefcase contained no special contents -- we
16 simply needed to know whether we could trust
17 you in a difficult situation, even with the
18 presence of a former loved one nearby.

19 VINCE: (FAKING IT) Wow... You guys are crazy.

1 SOUND: CAR UNLOCKED. CAR DOOR OPENED.

2 OVERSTREET: Perhaps. But with this firm evidence of your
3 commitment, we may now share with you some
4 additional details of our operations. Come
5 along.

6 MUSIC: TRANSITION.

7

1 **SOUND:** A BUSTLING OFFICE.

2 **MADGE:** Good morning, Mr. Overstreet.

3 **OVERSTREET:** Ms. Preston. Allow me to introduce Mr.
4 Vincent Harris. He'll be joining us. Ms.
5 Preston is the Traffic Manager here at the
6 station.

7 **VINCE:** Traffic?

8 **MADGE:** I make sure all the different departments
9 play nice with one another. Welcome, Mr.
10 Harris. You can call me Madge.

11 **RADIO:** How's my signal strength today, Madge?

12 **MADGE:** A little up and down, Radio.

13 **VINCE:** Wait, you work here?

14 **RADIO:** Why? You thought I got my name by having a
15 face for radio? (FADES) Probably just some
16 weather coming in, Madge. I'll call the boys
17 at Transmission to check in.

18 **OVERSTREET:** This way, Mr. Harris.

1 VINCE: This is incredible. Are all these people...
2 "friends of Mr. Jonas"?

3 OVERSTREET: They are acquainted with him, but I wouldn't
4 consider them friends.

5 VINCE: Right. Of course.

6 OVERSTREET: Beyond that, this is a fully functioning
7 broadcast station, Mr. Harris. KNMW, 98.7
8 FM. The voice of the New Midwest.

9 VINCE: Sure. I listen to you guys sometimes.

10 OVERSTREET: Is that so? Well! Always nice to meet a fan.
11 And speaking of someone who enjoys his fans --
12 here is Mr. Crandall! Mr. Lawrence Crandall,
13 I'd like you to meet Mr. Vincent Harris.

14 CRANDALL: How do you do, Mr. Harris.

15 VINCE: (REALIZING) You play Mr. Jonas on the radio.
16

1 CRANDALL: (DELIGHTED) That's right! "Crime is a
2 riddle... and justice, the answer!" Do some
3 of the voices on Baby Bart, too. Dr.
4 Crusher, Mailman Tim, some of those. Are
5 you, uh... are you friends with Mr. Jonas?

6 VINCE: We're... acquainted, but I wouldn't consider
7 us friends.

8 CRANDALL: (CHUCKLES) That's what I assumed, seeing you
9 strolling around with this fella here.
10 That's great. (FADES) I'll look forward to
11 working with you.

12 OVERSTREET: The station broadcasts news, sports,
13 classical music, and a handful of original
14 dramas, including "The Adventures of Mr.
15 Jonas," "Bad Baby Bart," and my personal
16 favorite, "The Cave of Whispers."

17 VINCE: All produced here in this studio?

18

1 OVERSTREET: Where else? In addition to entertaining the
2 masses, of course, we use the station's
3 broadcast equipment to communicate with our
4 various allies, and the broadcasts
5 themselves to transmit messages to our
6 agents in the field.

7 VINCE: That's nuts. And this is all in service
8 of... what, exactly?

9 OVERSTREET: Step into my office, won't you?

10 SOUND: DOOR OPENS, CLOSES. COMMOTION STOPS.

11 OVERSTREET: Have a seat, Mr. Harris.

12 SOUND: SITTING.

13 OVERSTREET: As I'm sure you are aware, our world is
14 divided. The Territorial governments are
15 riven with corruption. They maintain their
16 power through deceit, obfuscation, and fear.
17 The people I work with -- we work with -- are
18 regular people, emboldened by the idea that
19 things need not continue as they are.

1 VINCE: So you guys fight the powers that be, huh?
2 What, like, organizing, espionage, exposing
3 crimes, that sort of thing?

4 OVERSTREET: All that and more. Whatever is required.

5 VINCE: But -- to what end?

6 OVERSTREET: Betterment, Mr. Harris.

7 VINCE: Okay. And what's your role in all this, Mr.
8 Overstreet?

9 OVERSTREET: Talent acquisition and onboarding.

10 VINCE: Right.

11 OVERSTREET: Of course, here at the station, it is more
12 formally referred to as Human Resources.

13 VINCE: Uh huh. And who decides what to do with
14 those resources?

15 OVERSTREET: Who? Come now, Mr. Harris. You've met him.

16 MUSIC: TRANSITION.

17

1 SOUND: AMBIENCE. THE COMMOTION OF A TRAIN STATION.

2 ANNOUNCER: (PA SYSTEM) All railway passengers are subject
3 to randomized security checks. Remember never
4 to leave your baggage unattended. Immediately
5 report any suspicious activity, especially
6 from passengers entering from outside the New
7 Midwest Territory... (FADES TO BG)

8 SOUND: QUICK FOOTSTEPS.

9 BLUE EYES: (APPROACHING) Better hurry, Mr. Secretary.
10 Two minutes till departure.

11 HOCKSTEAD: You! What -- what are you doing here?

12 BLUE EYES: Just making sure you catch your train,
13 Hockstead. Now, legally, of course, you
14 aren't permitted to leave the Territory while
15 you're under investigation. But given what's
16 come to light recently, it seems like the
17 best course of action for all concerned.
18 Wouldn't you agree?

19 HOCKSTEAD: I don't want -- I wasn't --

20

1 BLUE EYES: In fact, it's such a good idea that I think
2 I'm going to send Bull here along with you.
3 Just to be safe. What do you say, Bull? Up
4 for a little train trip? See the countryside?

5 BULL: Sounds like fun, sir.

6 BLUE EYES: I'm sure it will be. Is that your ticket,
7 Hockstead? May I? (PAUSE) Well! The
8 Secretary has a sleeper car. I don't know
9 about you, Bull, but I can never sleep on
10 trains. Not really.

11 BULL: Me either, sir.

12 BLUE EYES: In that case, why don't you help make sure
13 that the Secretary enjoys a nice, long rest?

14 HOCKSTEAD: Please. You wouldn't.

15 BLUE EYES: You're right, Hockstead. Normally I
16 wouldn't. But you crossed the Party. So you
17 didn't leave us much choice. Bull, I'll see
18 you when you return. Mr. Secretary...
19 (FADING) travel well!

20 MUSIC: TRANSITION.

1 SOUND: OUTDOOR AMBIENCE. NIGHT.

2 SOUND: FOOTSTEPS ON SIDEWALK.

3 VINCE: (NARRATING) Dear Elaine.

4 I realize it's pointless to keep writing,
5 but frankly I don't know what else to do.
6 I'm not quite sure what I've gotten myself
7 involved with here. And the only thing I
8 want is to talk to you about it. To see you.

9 SOUND: KNOCKING ON DOOR. PAUSE. AGAIN.

10 VINCE: I wish I could do either, but I can't. Not
11 anymore -- not without putting you at risk.
12 But sitting alone in that hotel room is
13 driving me crazy. So I'm taking a chance.

14 SOUND: KEYS JINGLE. DOOR UNLOCKED, OPENED.

15 VINCE: Who are these people, Elaine? This network?
16 Are they for real?

17 SOUND: OUTDOOR NOISES FADE. DOOR CLOSED.

18 VINCE: And if they are... what the hell do they
19 want with a suicidal poet?

1 SOUND: DOG YIPS, PANTS.

2 VINCE: (IN SCENE) Hey Charlie! Hey buddy. Hey. It's
3 good to see you too.

4 SOUND: MORE YIPPING.

5 VINCE: This is just a quick visit, okay? Just a
6 pop-in. You can't tell anyone I was here.
7 Come on, let's get you some treats.

8 SOUND: PANTRY DOOR OPENED.

9 SOUND: DOG YIPS.

10 VINCE: Yeah, I know. It's good to be back. If only --

11 SOUND: KEY IN LOCK (DISTANT).

12 VINCE: (GASPS)

13 SOUND: DOOR OPENED, CLOSED.

14 SOUND: BAG SLUNG DOWN.

15 ELAINE: (CALLING) Charlie! Charlie. Here, boy.

16 SOUND: PANTRY DOOR SQUEAKS LIGHTLY.

17 SOUND: DOG PANTING.

1 VINCE: (BREATHING)

2 ELAINE: Charlie?

3 SOUND: DOG YIPS.

4 ELAINE: (PAUSE, COLDER) Hello? Is... is someone
5 there?

6 VINCE: (BREATHING)

7 ELAINE: That pantry door was closed when I left this
8 morning. I'm sure of it. Is someone in
9 there? What are you doing with my dog?

10 SOUND: CLINK OF A FIREPLACE POKER.

11 ELAINE: Better speak up before I decide to defend
12 myself. Come on now, who's here? (PAUSE) Are
13 you a friend of Mr. Jonas?

14 MUSIC: CLOSING.

15

16 END OF EPISODE TWO