

AGENTS

by Robert Arnold

EPISODE FIVE:

STAGE ELEVEN

CHARACTERS

VINCE	A depressed poet
ELAINE	A doctor
BURKE	A reporter
MADGE	An office manager
ENGINEER	A radio transmission engineer
CRANDALL	An actor
JOHN DOE	An assassin
OFFICER	Head of security
MADELEINE	A politician
MRS. MARSHALL	

1 MUSIC: THEME MUSIC. FADES.

2 SOUND: HOSPITAL AMBIENCE. A PRIVATE ROOM. DISTANT
3 VOICES, BEEPING, ETC.

4 ELAINE: (MUSING) All right, you bastard. Time to
5 wake up and fess up. Who sent you?

6 SOUND: DOOR OPENS.

7 BURKE: (DISTANT) Dr. Margulies?

8 ELAINE: Yes?

9 BURKE: (APPROACHING) Hi. I'm Clare Burke. I'm with
10 the New Midwest Herald?

11 ELAINE: Ms. Burke. This room is off limits. How did
12 you get past the guard?

13 BURKE: Oh -- your guard seems to take a lot of
14 bathroom breaks. He must keep himself pretty
15 hydrated.

16 ELAINE: Well, I'm sorry, but you'll have to leave.

17 BURKE: Is this the man? The one who shot up KNMW
18 last night? Who is he?

1 **ELAINE:** Ms. Burke, all I can say is that we have a
2 John Doe who is fighting to recover from
3 three gunshot wounds. If there's a story
4 here, he is the only one who can tell it.
5 And as you can see, he's in no condition.

6 **BURKE:** Right. Well, in that case... how about I ask
7 you a few questions?

8 **ELAINE:** I just told you literally everything I know
9 about this man.

10 **BURKE:** We'll talk about other things, then. Your
11 work here. Your background.

12 **ELAINE:** Is that newsworthy?

13 **BURKE:** Could be. Sometimes you go looking for a scoop
14 and find a human-interest story instead.

15 **ELAINE:** (SIGHS) How are you around blood and guts?

16 **BURKE:** A... little queasy, maybe.

17 **ELAINE:** Well, I'm due for a visit to the trauma ward.
18 You're welcome to keep up as long as you can.

19 **MUSIC:** **TRANSITION.**

1 SOUND: DOOR CLOSES.

2 VINCE: Wow. So this was Radio's office? What a mess.
3 How did he ever get any work done? (PAUSE)
4 Sorry. I'm not speaking ill. I just --

5 MADGE: What did you want to ask me about, Mr. Harris?

6 VINCE: Right. Uh... "Stage Eleven"?

7 MADGE: Which is?

8 VINCE: Something Radio asked me to remember. Seemed
9 important. Does it mean anything to you?

10 MADGE: Hmm. Coming from him? Maybe. (PAUSE) The
11 KNMW transmitting station runs our broadcast
12 signal through ten amplifier stages to get
13 it up to strength. But as far as I know,
14 there is no Stage Eleven.

15 VINCE: Weird. Where is the transmitting station?

16 MADGE: Way out in the countryside. Radio was in
17 charge of the guys out there. Want me to get
18 one of them on the phone?

19 VINCE: Sure. That would be great.

1 SOUND: PHONE LIFTED, DIALED. IT RINGS.

2 MADGE: Ringing. Here you go. Just to warn you, they
3 can be a little...

4 VINCE: What?

5 ENGINEER: (PHONE) (GRUFF) Hello?

6 VINCE: (FLUSTERED) Hello, yes, uh -- this is
7 Vincent Harris. I know you don't know me,
8 but Claude Fellows gave me some information
9 that I need to ask you about.

10 ENGINEER: (PHONE) Uh huh?

11 VINCE: Um... what can you tell me about Stage Eleven?

12 ENGINEER: (PHONE) (PAUSE) Who did you say this was?

13 VINCE: I'm Vincent Harris. I'm here at KNMW with
14 Madge Preston.

15 ENGINEER: (PHONE) Sorry, pal. Unless Claude tells me
16 otherwise, Stage Eleven's got nothing to do
17 with you.

18 SOUND: PHONE HUNG UP.

1 VINCE: But -- (PAUSE) He hung up.

2 MADGE: I'm not surprised. It's kind of like a
3 lighthouse out there, and the guys who run
4 it are the crazy keepers.

5 VINCE: He said he wouldn't talk to anybody but Radio.
6 But he knew what I meant. I'm sure of it.

7 MADGE: Wait. What did he say exactly?

8 VINCE: He said unless Claude tells him otherwise,
9 Stage Eleven's got nothing to do with me.

10 MADGE: Unless Claude "tells" him? Huh. (THINKING)
11 You know... those guys really are isolated
12 out there. And the station hasn't put out a
13 statement yet about the shooting. It's
14 possible the transmission engineers haven't
15 gotten wind of it.

16 VINCE: So?

17 MADGE: So they may not realize Radio's been killed.
18 They may still be expecting to hear from him.

1 **VINCE:** Okay. But does that help us? It's not like
2 we have another Claude for them to talk to.

3 **MADGE:** Sure we do.

4 **MUSIC:** **TRANSITION.**

5

1 ELAINE: (TO PATIENT) And can you squeeze my hand,
2 please, Mr. Wallace? Good. That's good.

3 BURKE: So you got your degree at NMU...

4 ELAINE: ...and I've been working here ever since.

5 BURKE: That's an awfully quick biography, doctor.
6 How about any particularly memorable cases?
7 Any patients that stand out?

8 ELAINE: None I can think of. (TO PATIENT) You're
9 making good progress, Mr. Wallace. Keep it
10 up. The nurse will be by to check on you.

11 SOUND: FOOTSTEPS.

12 BURKE: No special cases in ten years? Come on,
13 Doctor. I'm interested in your story. Why
14 are you being so tight lipped?

15 ELAINE: Officially? Because it's against hospital
16 policy to talk to the press about our
17 patients, current or past.

18 BURKE: And unofficially?

1 ELAINE: Unofficially -- and with all due respect,
2 Ms. Burke -- at this point, the Herald isn't
3 much more than an outlet for the Party. It
4 reports their truth, not the truth. Why
5 would I tell you anything that risks shining
6 a spotlight on me, for good or for ill?

7 BURKE: I'm not out to get you, Doctor.

8 ELAINE: Great. Then leave me alone.

9 SOUND: FOOTSTEPS.

10 BURKE: (DISTANT) Dr. Margulies! One more thing.
11 What can you tell me about a "Mr. Jonas?"

12 SOUND: FOOTSTEPS STOP.

13 ELAINE: (PAUSE) Excuse me?

14 SOUND: BURKE'S FOOTSTEPS CATCHING UP.

15 BURKE: (APPROACHING) Does that name ring a bell?

16 ELAINE: I -- believe he's some kind of radio character.

17 BURKE: Have you ever met someone who calls himself
18 that in real life?

1 ELAINE: Then what exactly do you want?

2 BURKE: Just the truth. The truth. Some of us still
3 care about it. What do you say?

4 ELAINE: (SIGHS) (PAUSE) Where's the guard?

5 BURKE: What?

6 ELAINE: The guard. The guard outside John Doe's
7 room! Where is he?

8 BURKE: Probably just took another -- hey!

9 SOUND: ELAINE RUSHES DOWN THE HALL. BURKE FOLLOWS.

10 BURKE: Dr. Margulies --

11 SOUND: DOOR THROWN OPEN.

12 ELAINE: Damn it. He's gone.

13 BURKE: The guard?

14 ELAINE: The patient. John Doe. He's gone. (CALLING)
15 April! Call security. We need to lock down
16 this building now.

17 MUSIC: TRANSITION.

18

1 CRANDALL: You were smart to call me for this.

2 MADGE: You don't even know what we're doing, Lawrence.

3 CRANDALL: No, but I know you were smart to call me.
4 Good morning, Mr. Harris. Terrible about our
5 friend Claude, isn't it?

6 VINCE: Yeah. Sure is.

7 MADGE: We're hoping the news hasn't made it out to
8 the transmission station just yet. Those
9 guys are sitting on something that Claude
10 wanted Vince here to know.

11 VINCE: So Madge thinks you can call them as Radio --

12 CRANDALL: Ah. Say no more.

13 VINCE: Well... I'd like to say a little more.

14 MADGE: Play it off like you're him, okay? And ask
15 about "Stage Eleven."

16 CRANDALL: On it.

17 SOUND: PHONE DIALED, RINGS.

18 VINCE: Should we -- ?

1 **MADGE:** Shh. Just listen.

2 **ENGINEER:** (PHONE) Hello?

3 **CRANDALL:** (AS RADIO) Gene?

4 **ENGINEER:** (PHONE) Yeah, it's me.

5 **CRANDALL:** Heya, chump. Just checking in.

6 **ENGINEER:** (PHONE) All quiet on the Western front, boss.

7 **CRANDALL:** Those high-pressure systems aren't
8 scrambling my signal, are they?

9 **ENGINEER:** (PHONE) (CHUCKLES) Nah, we're all right.

10 **CRANDALL:** Good deal. Hey, Gene, need to talk to you
11 about something. Stage Eleven.

12 **ENGINEER:** (PHONE) Yeah, some guy just called up here
13 asking about it. You put him up to it?

14 **CRANDALL:** Sure did, chump. That was a test. Good thing
15 you passed, or you'd be out on your butt
16 right now.

17 **ENGINEER:** (PHONE) If there's one thing I'm smart enough
18 to do, boss, it's follow your directions.

1 CRANDALL: Alright, so. Tell me.

2 ENGINEER: (PHONE) What for? You forget or something?

3 CRANDALL: Naw, chump. I need to make sure you didn't

4 forget.

5 ENGINEER: (PHONE) What's with all the tests today,

6 boss? (SIGHS) All right. You ready?

7 CRANDALL: Yep.

8 ENGINEER: (PHONE) Fourteen. Twenty-Six. Three. Thirty-

9 eight. Seventeen. Zero.

10 SOUND: PENCIL SCRIBBLING.

11 CRANDALL: (AS RADIO) You did it, Gene. All right, take

12 care now. Don't believe any of the lousy

13 things they say about you.

14 ENGINEER: (PHONE) (CHUCKLES) I'll see ya, Claude.

15 SOUND: PHONE HUNG UP.

16 CRANDALL: Just like that.

17 VINCE: That was incredible!

1 MADGE: I guess we were smart to call you.

2 CRANDALL: Well, congratulations -- you now have what
3 appears to be a list of random numbers. I
4 hope you know what to do with it.

5 VINCE: I don't have the first idea.

6 CRANDALL: Maybe it's some kind of code?

7 MADGE: Or a password? A combination?

8 VINCE: A combination. Is there a safe in here? And
9 if there was, could we possibly find it in
10 all this junk?

11 MADGE: Well, anyway, we should look around for some
12 kind of clue. At least until we have a
13 better idea. I'll start digging over here.
14 Lawrence, why don't you --

15 CRANDALL: Ooh, sorry, my dear Madge, but that's it for
16 me. I've got two shows coming up this
17 afternoon. First one goes on in an hour.

18 MADGE: And?

19 SOUND: DOOR OPENS.

1 CRANDALL: And I need to spend some time getting myself
2 centered. An actor has his process, you
3 know! (FADING) Good luck, you two.

4 SOUND: DOOR CLOSES.

5 VINCE: (PAUSE) I'll start over here.

6 MUSIC: TRANSITION.

7

1 ELAINE: (FADES IN) ...still recovering from his
2 wounds, but don't be fooled. You should
3 consider him extremely dangerous. Got it?

4 OFFICER: Got it, Doctor. All right, everyone, listen
5 up. Here's the situation... (FADES)

6 BURKE: (APPROACHING) Have they found the guard?

7 ELAINE: Not yet. Which either means he's been hurt,
8 or else he was in on it.

9 BURKE: And you really think John Doe is still
10 somewhere in the hospital?

11 ELAINE: He's wounded. And the whole staff was briefed
12 on him, so they know what he looks like. I
13 don't see how he could have slipped out
14 without being spotted.

15 BURKE: So what happens now?

16 ELAINE: Well, the Police Force is on the way to
17 sweep the building. Until then, hospital
18 security is implementing a lockdown. No one
19 in or out. So it looks like you're stuck
20 here a while longer, Ms. Burke.

1 **BURKE:** (ANXIOUS) Oh. Uh... what are you going to do?

2 **ELAINE:** I still have patients to take care of. So
3 I'm going to take care of them.

4 **BURKE:** Right. Um -- mind if I keep tagging along?

5 **ELAINE:** I thought for sure I'd proven myself a lousy
6 interview subject.

7 **BURKE:** We can skip the interview if you want. In
8 fact, you don't have to say a word.

9 **ELAINE:** Then what's the point of shadowing me?

10 **BURKE:** Are you really gonna make me...? Fine.
11 There's a murderer loose in the building,
12 Doctor. I'm a little freaked out, and I'd
13 rather not be on my own. Okay?

14 **ELAINE:** (AMUSED) Faintheartedness is a strange trait
15 in a news reporter, Ms. Burke. All right,
16 then. Let's get going.

17 **MUSIC:** TRANSITION.

18

1 ELAINE: Until tomorrow, Mr. Schwartz.

2 SOUND: DOOR CLOSSES. FOOTSTEPS ON TILE.

3 BURKE: I don't think that guy's gonna make it.

4 ELAINE: He'll make it. He's in good hands, and
5 improving every day. Are you enjoying your
6 time in the trauma ward, Ms. Burke?

7 BURKE: It's... a little less gross than I imagined.
8 (PAUSE) I still don't see the police.

9 ELAINE: They should be here any minute. Who's next
10 on our list?

11 BURKE: Uh... Mrs. Marshall? Four-twelve.

12 ELAINE: Right here.

13 SOUND: KNOCKING. DOOR OPENS.

14 ELAINE: Mrs. Marshall? (PAUSE) Hello?

15 BURKE: Looks like nobody's home.

16 ELAINE: I don't know where else she could be. She
17 can barely get around. Let me check the
18 bathroom. She may have fallen.

1 SOUND: KNOCKING.

2 ELAINE: Mrs. Marshall? It's Dr. Margulies. Are you
3 in there? (PAUSE) I'm coming in, okay?

4 SOUND: HANDLE TURNED. DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

5 ELAINE: Mrs. Marshall? Are you --

6 MRS. MARSHALL: (MUFFLED CRIES, STRUGGLING) (CONTINUES UNDER)

7 JOHN DOE: (WHISPERING) Hey there, Doc. Look what I
8 picked up. Seems like a real sharp scalpel.
9 Send your pal away or the old lady here
10 helps me dull it. Understand?

11 ELAINE: (PAUSE) (CALLING) Nurse... Mrs. Marshall is
12 fine. Will you head back down the hall and
13 see to Mr. Schwartz?

14 BURKE: (DISTANT) "Nurse?" What, did you forget --

15 ELAINE: Don't argue with me, please, Nurse. Just go.

16 BURKE: (DISTANT) Sure... sure.

17 SOUND: DOOR OPENS, CLOSES.

18 ELAINE: You've got no reason to hurt her.

1 JOHN DOE: No. But I got a reason to hurt you. Imagine
2 that, waking up here and realizing -- I know
3 you. You're the one who broke up our little
4 party last night, aren't you? What exactly
5 were you doing at that radio station, Doc?

6 ELAINE: We can talk about this in a reasonable --

7 JOHN DOE: We can. Or else I can just finish what I
8 started last night. Finish it right here.

9 ELAINE: I guess that all depends on what you want.
10 You've got a far better chance of getting out
11 of this hospital with me than without me.

12 JOHN DOE: Hmm. You may have a point. (PAUSE) Okay. The
13 old lady can stay here. Let's you and me see
14 about making a quiet getaway.

15 SOUND: FOOTSTEPS.

16 MRS. MARSHALL: (WHIMPERING FADES)

17 JOHN DOE: Good. Now open the door. Just a little! Look
18 out and tell me what you see. And remember,
19 this knife is not moving from your throat.
20 So don't do anything stupid.

1 SOUND: DOOR CRACKED OPEN.

2 OFFICER: (DISTANT) ...have him report in when they
3 get to the entrance. Tom, where are we...?

4 JOHN DOE: Well?

5 ELAINE: Hospital security officers.

6 JOHN DOE: Looking for me?

7 ELAINE: Who do you think? They've got the whole
8 building on lockdown. The Police Force will
9 be here any second to conduct a sweep.

10 JOHN DOE: Then maybe you and me need to find a back
11 way out of here.

12 ELAINE: There's an elevator --

13 JOHN DOE: Hold still.

14 ELAINE: (PAUSE) There's an elevator from this floor
15 that opens directly into the parking garage.
16 You need my badge to access it. (PAUSE) We
17 should go quickly -- this room isn't safe.

18 JOHN DOE: What do you mean?

1 ELAINE: Mrs. Marshall was being treated for
2 botulism. It's deadly, and it's highly
3 transmissible. If you come into contact with
4 anything that has her blood on it -- like,
5 say, that I.V. you pulled out of her arm...

6 JOHN DOE: Now why in the world would I --

7 BURKE: (SUDDENLY) Yaaah!

8 SOUND: BLADE CLATTERS TO THE FLOOR.

9 JOHN DOE: Ahh -- ahh! She stuck me! She stuck me with
10 that dirty needle! You're crazy!

11 ELAINE: Listen to me. The bacteria is already
12 coursing through your veins. Within minutes,
13 your insides will start to liquefy. We may
14 still be able to save you. But we have to
15 act now.

16 JOHN DOE: Argh -- fine! Go! Go!

17 SOUND: DOOR OPENED.

18 ELAINE: Johnston! We've got him. He's in here.

1 OFFICER: Don't move, you! Good work, Doc. (FADING)
2 Eastman! We got him...

3 JOHN DOE: Oh God! God! I can feel it! Help me! Help me!
4 (FADING)

5 ELAINE: (EXHALES) Turns out you're pretty brave
6 after all, Ms. Burke. Thank you for not
7 leaving me alone with him.

8 BURKE: I got the message. What was really in that
9 I.V., Doc?

10 ELAINE: Vitamins. Honestly? You did him a favor.

11 MUSIC: TRANSITION.

12

1 SOUND: RUMMAGING.

2 VINCE: Anything?

3 MADGE: Sure, I found the answer ten minutes ago. I
4 just didn't tell you.

5 VINCE: (SIGHS) We've been looking for hours. I
6 think we may be on the wrong track.

7 MADGE: Well, we can't just quit.

8 VINCE: You can. What's your stake in all this,
9 Madge? You must have other things to do.

10 MADGE: My stake? Claude was my friend.

11 VINCE: Of course. Sorry. Okay, I'll start sifting
12 through this next precarious tower of junk --

13 SOUND: DOOR BURSTS OPEN.

14 CRANDALL: (APPROACHING) Well, I've done it again!

15 VINCE: Crandall?

16 MADGE: I thought you were centering yourself.

1 CRANDALL: That's exactly what I was doing, Madge, old
2 friend. I centered, I gave one amazing
3 performance as Dr. Crusher, then I began re-
4 centering myself to take on the mantle of
5 the mysterious Mr. Jonas. And in the
6 calmness of my mind, something came to me.
7 Is that computer on? Great. Watch this.

8 SOUND: TYPING.

9 CRANDALL: "The Adventures of Mr. Jonas," Season four,
10 episode seventeen. Jonas intercepts a code
11 that appears -- appears! -- to be nothing
12 more than a string of random numbers.

13 VINCE: And?

14 CRANDALL: And of course they weren't random at all.
15 They were coordinates. He entered them into
16 the official New Midwest Territory mapping
17 system -- as I am doing with your numbers
18 right now -- and...

19 SOUND: TYPING STOPS WITH A FLOURISH.

20 CRANDALL: Voila!

1 VINCE: Wait a minute. That's a different phone than
2 the one we used to call the transmission
3 station.

4 MADGE: Right. This one is a dedicated line to our
5 two production studios.

6 CRANDALL: Kind of an emergency hotline for tech issues.

7 VINCE: Okay, so, regular phone, studio phone...
8 what's that one?

9 MADGE: (PAUSE) You know, I don't know.

10 SOUND: RECEIVER LIFTED, CRADLE PRESSED.

11 MADGE: No dial tone. Let me see those numbers.

12 SOUND: DIALING.

13 MADGE: (TO HERSELF) One. Four. Two. Six. Three.
14 Three. Eight. One. Seven. Zero.

15 SOUND: CLICK AS THE PHONE POPS OPEN.

16 CRANDALL: Well how about that!

17 MADGE: It opened.

1 **VINCE:** **Is there anything inside?**

2 **SOUND:** **KEY JINGLES.**

3 **MADGE:** **Yep.**

4 **MUSIC:** **TRANSITION.**

5

1 SOUND: OUTDOOR AMBIENCE.

2 SOUND: FOOTSTEPS ON SIDEWALK.

3 ELAINE: The prison has some limited hospital
4 facilities, so they moved him there. Of
5 course he's not talking.

6 VINCE: I can't believe all that. I'm just glad
7 you're all right.

8 ELAINE: Thanks. Why don't we celebrate by walking
9 into another dangerous situation?

10 VINCE: I'm sorry. I told Madge and Lawrence they
11 should steer clear. I don't want to involve
12 them any more than they already are. But
13 they made me promise not to come alone.

14 ELAINE: I'm teasing. We're trusting each other,
15 remember? If you're here, I'm here. (PAUSE)
16 All right, this is the house. What do you
17 want to do?

18 VINCE: I guess... we should knock first?

19 SOUND: KNOCKING ON DOOR. PAUSE. AGAIN.

1 VINCE: (CALLING) Hello? Anybody home?

2 SOUND: HANDLE RATTLES.

3 ELAINE: It's locked. Should we try the key you found
4 hidden in the phone?

5 VINCE: All right.

6 SOUND: KEY JINGLES. LOCK OPENS.

7 VINCE: It works.

8 SOUND: DOOR CREAKS OPEN. OUTDOOR SOUNDS FADE.

9 VINCE: Hello? (PAUSE) Hello?

10 ELAINE: It's dark. Hang on.

11 SOUND: LIGHT SWITCH CLICKED.

12 MADELEINE: (AN ATTACK) Aaaah!

13 SOUND: A SMASH OF GLASS.

14 VINCE: Whoa!

15 MADELEINE: Stay back! Stay back or I'll beat your
16 brains out! I swear I will!

1 **VINCE:** Hey, lady, relax, we just --

2 **MADELEINE:** I mean it! I'll hurt you! I --

3 **ELAINE:** Hang on! Hang on -- I know you. (PAUSE)

4 You're Madeleine Stevenson.

5 **MUSIC:** CLOSING.

6

7 **END OF EPISODE FIVE**