

**AGENTS**

by Robert Arnold

EPISODE ONE:

A DEATH ON THE BRIDGE

## CHARACTERS

VINCE	A depressed poet
MR. JONAS	An intercessor
FLOWERS	Mr. Jonas's muscle
OMNI	A hotel desk clerk
MADELEINE	A politician
DEVON	Her campaign manager
SECURITY	Chief of Security
ARCHIE	A gunman
ANNOUNCER	A radio announcer
CRANDALL	An actor
GANGSTER	A radio drama character
SOLDIER	Stationed at a checkpoint
BLUE EYES	An operative
BULL	His bodyguard
PROTESTOR	
RECEPTIONIST	
ASSISTANT	
SOLDIER 2	

1 SOUND: DOUBLE DOORS OPEN.

2 SECURITY: Just a moment, Madame Secretary. We need to  
3 clear these rooms.

4 MADELEINE: Of course. I know the drill.

5 SECURITY: (FADING) Simmons on two, Marston, you take  
6 the hall.

7 SOUND: COMMOTION OF SECURITY OFFICERS. FADES.

8 DEVON: (FADING IN) That sounds perfect, sir. The  
9 Secretary and I will see you then.

10 SOUND: CELL PHONE HUNG UP.

11 DEVON: Solid crowd tonight, Madeleine!

12 MADELEINE: It was a good one. I don't know, Devon... The  
13 energy out there, the feeling I'm getting in  
14 the cities and the towns, it's... different  
15 somehow. More urgent than it used to be.

16 DEVON: Sure. People are tired of division. They  
17 miss having a federal government, miss  
18 states that are actually united...

1   **MADELEINE:**           (SIGHS) I'm old enough to remember what it  
2                               was like. It wasn't perfect -- not by a long  
3                               shot. But it looks awfully rosy compared to  
4                               what we're living with now.

5   **DEVON:**                Right. And, so long as the voters agree,  
6                               maybe you'll be the one to put us back on  
7                               the path.

8   **SECURITY:**            (RETURNING) Suite is clear, ma'am. We'll  
9                               keep two men posted outside.

10   **MADELEINE:**         Thank you, Harold. I appreciate you worrying  
11                              about me.

12   **DEVON:**               Someone's got to. (TO SECURITY) We're wheels  
13                              up at 6:30, okay?

14   **SECURITY:**            Yes, sir. Goodnight.

15   **SOUND:**                **SECURITY TEAM EXITS.**

16   **SOUND:**                **DOUBLE DOORS CLOSE.**

17   **DEVON:**                Want to go over some of these new polls?

18   **MADELEINE:**         I'm a little beat. What if we just have a  
19                              drink and call it a day?

1   DEVON:                   Works for me. What can I pour you?

2   MADELEINE:               Whiskey, please.

3   SOUND:                   CLINK OF GLASSWARE.

4   DEVON:                   You got it. I'll spare you the details until  
5                               we're on the road, but just so you know, we're  
6                               seeing something of a groundswell in support.  
7                               Even in the rural parts of the Territory --

8   MADELEINE:               Wait. Shh.

9   SECURITY:                 (MUFFLED CALLS FROM THE HALLWAY)

10  MADELEINE:               Did you hear that?

11  SECURITY:                 (CALLS GROW LOUDER)

12  SOUND:                   SOFT THUMP OF SILENCED BULLETS.

13  SOUND:                   BODIES RATTLE AGAINST DOOR, SLIDE.

14  DEVON:                    What is that? What's happening?

15  MADELEINE:                Devon. We need to get out of here. We --

16  SOUND:                   DOUBLE DOORS THROWN OPEN.

17  ARCHIE:                    Good evening, Madame Secretary!

1   DEVON:                    Hey, what is this? What are you doing? You  
2                                can't just barge in here! You --

3   SOUND:                    SILENCED GUNSHOTS.

4   MADELEINE:                No -- !

5   DEVON:                    Uhh!

6   SOUND:                    BODY FALLS.

7   MADELEINE:                You bastard. Who are you men? What do you  
8                                want?

9   ARCHIE:                    Aw, don't be upset, lady. We're just two  
10                              fellas working a job. The bad news is -- our  
11                              job is you.

12   SOUND:                    SILENCED GUNSHOTS.

13   SOUND:                    BODY FALLS.

14   MUSIC:                    THEME MUSIC.

15

1     **ANNOUNCER:**           Time once again for the mind-bending adventures  
2                               of... Mr. Jonas! The mysterious mastermind who  
3                               outsmarts criminals at every turn.

4     **CRANDALL:**            **(AS JONAS)** Crime is a riddle... and justice,  
5                               the answer!

6     **ANNOUNCER:**           **(FADES INTO A RADIO FILTER)** No one knows his  
7                               true identity, or what drives him. But all  
8                               know that this gentleman puzzle master --  
9                               along with his secret network of agents --  
10                              fights on the side of law and order. Tonight's  
11                              tantalizing tale... The Murder Cypher!

12    **MUSIC:**                 RADIO PROGRAM THEME MUSIC.

13    **SOUND:**                 (RADIO PROGRAM FADES TO BG, CONTINUES UNDER)

14    **SOUND:**                 CAR ENGINE. FADES IN.

15    **SOUND:**                 LIGHT RAIN ON A WINDSHIELD. WIPERS THUMP.

16    **VINCE:**                **(NARRATING)** Dear Elaine. **(PAUSE)** There  
17                              really are no words for this. But words are  
18                              what I'm supposed to be good at, so here  
19                              goes. **(PAUSE)** By the time you read this,  
20                              I'll be gone.

1 SOUND: ENGINE SLOWS, IDLES.

2 SOUND: KNOCK ON WINDSHIELD.

3 SOLDIER: (MUFFLED) Put your window down, please, sir.

4 SOUND: CAR WINDOW LOWERED. LIGHT RAIN OUTSIDE.

5 VINCE: (IN SCENE) How are you tonight, soldier?

6 SOLDIER: Turn off the radio, please.

7 SOUND: RADIO CLICKED OFF.

8 SOLDIER: Going to need to see your papers, sir.

9 VINCE: Sure. Here you go.

10 SOUND: GLOVE BOX OPENED, PAPERS RETRIEVED AND  
11 HANDED OVER.

12 VINCE: (NARRATING) The reasons are unsurprising and  
13 embarrassingly... prosaic. But they're real,  
14 Elaine, and I feel them as deeply I've felt  
15 anything lately.

16 SOLDIER: (READING) Mr. Vincent H. Harris of  
17 Stonecutter Lane?



1 VINCE: (IN SCENE) The one and only.

2 SOLDIER: Mr. Harris, you realize that this is the  
3 final checkpoint in the New Midwest  
4 Territory? Past here it's ten miles of  
5 neutral zone until you get to the border of  
6 the Appalachian Territory --

7 VINCE: I realize.

8 SOLDIER: Sir, beyond this point, the New Midwest  
9 Security Force can no longer guarantee your  
10 safety. Will you verify for me that you  
11 understand the risk?

12 VINCE: I understand.

13 SOLDIER: All right, sir. In that case, let me run a  
14 quick check, and you can be on your way.

15 SOUND: TYPING ON A COMPUTER, BEEPS.

16 VINCE: (NARRATING) With everything that's going  
17 on... with the way things are now. I want to  
18 do something. To help. But I don't know how.

19 SOUND: PAPERS SHUFFLING.

1   SOLDIER:                   All clear, sir. Here you -- hang on. One  
2                                   more thing.

3   VINCE:                     What is it?

4   SOLDIER:                   This lists your occupation as "Poet"?

5   VINCE:                     So?

6   SOLDIER:                   Sir, "Poet" is not an occupation that is  
7                                   recognized by the New Midwest Territory's  
8                                   Labor and Productivity Bureau --

9   VINCE:                     (ANNOYED) Just... give me my papers, please.

10  SOUND:                     PAPERS HANDED OVER.

11  SOLDIER:                   Be safe out there, sir.

12  SOUND:                     WINDOW ROLLED BACK UP.

13  VINCE:                     (SIGHS)

14  SOUND:                     CAR RESUMES DRIVING.

15

1 VINCE: (NARRATING) In short, Elaine, I want what you  
2 have. I see you going into battle every day.  
3 Fighting hard to make the world better. I  
4 know the toll it's taken. On you. On us. But  
5 the work you're doing -- it matters. You're  
6 out there in the trenches, Elaine. I admire  
7 that so much, and I want it for myself.

8 SOUND: RADIO CLICKED ON. PLAYS UNDER.

9 VINCE: (NARRATING) But... what can I do? What can I  
10 offer that's even worth a damn? Authorization  
11 to teach a few community college courses, a  
12 couple lines of bad verse, and... what?

13 GANGSTER: (RADIO) Well, well -- looks like I finally  
14 got the drop on you, Jonas!

15 CRANDALL: (RADIO) Have you? Or was I able to replace  
16 the bullets in your gun with harmless blanks?

17 GANGSTER: Yer bluffin'!

18 CRANDALL: Perhaps. Why don't you pull the trigger and  
19 find out? Of course, if you take a shot at  
20 me, then Deadeye, my sniper, will be more  
21 than justified in returning the favor...

1 SOUND: BROADCAST AND ENGINE SOUNDS FADE.

2 VINCE: (NARRATING) No. It's hopeless. I'm hopeless.  
3 So I've decided. If I can't be what the world  
4 needs -- or even what you need -- I'm better  
5 off getting out of the way.

6 SOUND: DINGING OF AN OPEN CAR DOOR. FADES IN.

7 VINCE: (NARRATING) I'm sorry, Elaine. I once wrote,  
8 "May the trees raise their spindled arms to  
9 the sky, and may the winter sun describe the  
10 blazing arc of our love." When you think  
11 about me, I hope you'll think about that.  
12 Not this. And... know that I love you. I  
13 really do. And I'm sorry. Yours, Vince.

14 SOUND: PAPER FOLDED, STUFFED INTO AN ENVELOPE.

15 ENVELOPE TOSSED ONTO DASHBOARD.

16 VINCE: (SIGHS)

17 SOUND: CAR DOOR SHUT.

18 SOUND: NIGHT NOISES: CRICKETS, WIND IN TREES.

19 SOUND: A RIVER RUSHES BY BELOW.

1 VINCE: (DEEP BREATH) Okay. Nice and quick. Just --

2 SOUND: A CAR PASSES.

3 VINCE: Damn it. (WAITS) Okay. That's okay. Here we  
4 go. Three. Two... (PAUSE, FIRMER) Three...

5 MR. JONAS: (DISTANT) Excuse me!

6 VINCE: God! What... (CALLING OUT) Hello?

7 MR. JONAS: (DISTANT) Yes, hello! I wonder if you might  
8 take a step back, my good man!

9 VINCE: What?

10 MR. JONAS: (DISTANT) A step back. From the railing. We  
11 must maintain a safe distance! Why, where  
12 you're standing, a strong gust of wind might  
13 be enough to send you over into the river.

14 VINCE: Yeah... sure. I didn't think anybody else  
15 was out here.

16 MR. JONAS: (DISTANT) What's that?

17 VINCE: (LOUDER) I said I didn't think anybody else  
18 was out here.



1 VINCE: Not another step until you tell me who you  
2 are.

3 MR. JONAS: Haven't you guessed? The gentleman puzzle  
4 master? The brainiac bane of the underworld?

5 VINCE: From... from the radio program?

6 MR. JONAS: (GIGGLES) A little bit of public relations.

7 VINCE: But... that's just a story!

8 MR. JONAS: And yet here we are. Now, enough about me. I  
9 wonder -- what exactly did Mr. Harris come  
10 to this bridge to accomplish?

11 VINCE: That's none of your --

12 MR. JONAS: Hmm -- let's see. A dark night, neutral  
13 territory. A rushing river below. A note  
14 left on the dashboard of a car. A general  
15 disheveled appearance. Could it be that Mr.  
16 Harris intends to... do something drastic?

17 VINCE: No! (SIGHS) Maybe. To be honest, I'm not  
18 really sure myself. It's... not the first  
19 time I've driven out to this bridge.

1 MR. JONAS: How terribly tragic. And yet how fortunate  
2 that I am here, and that I have perhaps some  
3 chance of altering the course of this line  
4 of events.

5 VINCE: Look, pal, I don't know you, and I don't  
6 have to listen to you, all right? I might  
7 still --

8 MR. JONAS: You very well might, Mr. Harris. And that  
9 will be your decision. But first, please --  
10 allow us to make a counter-offer.

11 VINCE: Us? Who is -- urk!

12 FLOWERS: Got 'im, boss.

13 MR. JONAS: Mr. Harris, I am pleased to introduce you to  
14 one of my associates, Mr. Flowers.

15 FLOWERS: Nice t'meet ya.

16 VINCE: (STRUGGLING) Gah! L'go! L'me go!

17 MR. JONAS: Mr. Flowers, what is Mr. Harris saying?

18 FLOWERS: Wants me to let him go.



1 MR. JONAS: (APOLOGETICALLY) Understandably. You see,  
2 Mr. Flowers, at this point in his evening,  
3 Mr. Harris already intended to be over the  
4 railing of this bridge. We have delayed him.  
5 Why don't we rectify that?

6 FLOWERS: (GRUNTS)

7 SOUND: RIVER NOISES GROW LOUDER.

8 VINCE: Uhh... ahh!

9 MR. JONAS: Now, Mr. Harris. Would you still like Mr.  
10 Flowers to let you go?

11 VINCE: (CALMS) No, 'm good.

12 MR. JONAS: Wonderful. Please do not be alarmed -- I only  
13 wish to talk. Mr. Harris, if your life is  
14 worth so little to you, perhaps you will  
15 allow me to see what I can make from it. As I  
16 suspect you know, I operate a network of  
17 trusted agents who assist me in my efforts.  
18 Together we chip away at the foundations of  
19 power -- at the safety and security of those  
20 who would exploit the common person for their  
21 own gain. I am inviting you to join us.

1 VINCE: Why should I?

2 MR. JONAS: The choice is entirely yours. Regardless,  
3 you came here to accomplish a task, Mr.  
4 Harris, and I am happy to say that you have  
5 succeeded. Congratulations -- you are now  
6 dead. Your car will be found, your note will  
7 be found, your wife will be notified,  
8 official papers will be drawn up and filed.

9 Given this, it is perhaps a bit odd that  
10 your heart continues to beat, your synapses  
11 to fire. But that is simply a matter of  
12 timing. Those functions will cease one day.  
13 Whether that day is today, or many years  
14 from now, is of no particular consequence.  
15 As far as the wider world is concerned, you  
16 are dead.

17 As for your unusually animate corpse, then,  
18 Mr. Harris, it has two options. Mr. Flowers  
19 can simply let go, and it can be whisked  
20 away by the river, as you intended.

21 VINCE: What's... th' other option?

1 MR. JONAS: It may be whisked away by me. Put to use in  
2 a life of danger and intrigue. That life may  
3 not last long either, who knows? But I can  
4 promise you that any time you have remaining  
5 will be lived... with purpose. (PAUSE) Well?  
6 Which will it be?

7 MUSIC: TRANSITION.

8

1 SOUND: CAR ENGINE.

2 VINCE: (PAUSE) Where are you taking me?

3 MR. JONAS: Somewhere comfortable.

4 VINCE: To do what?

5 MR. JONAS: To begin your afterlife, Mr. Harris.

6 (GIGGLES)

7 MUSIC: TRANSITION.

8

1 SOUND: A REVOLVING DOOR.

2 SOUND: A BUSY HOTEL LOBBY. CONVERSATION, COMMOTION.

3 SOUND: FOOTSTEPS ON TILE.

4 MR. JONAS: Good evening, Mr. Omni.

5 OMNI: (FADING IN) Mr. Jonas, sir! What an honor. I  
6 didn't expect you here in person.

7 MR. JONAS: We have a new colleague, Mr. Omni. I am  
8 pleased to introduce you to Mr. Vincent  
9 Harris.

10 OMNI: It's a pleasure, Mr. Harris. Welcome aboard.

11 VINCE: Thanks. Your name is... what, again?

12 OMNI: It's Gerald. But they call me Omni. Welcome  
13 to the Columbia Hotel, Mr. Harris.

14 VINCE: Thanks... "Omni."

15 MR. JONAS: Have you secured a room for our guest?

16 OMNI: Yes, sir. Just like you requested.

1 MR. JONAS: Excellent. Mr. Harris, you are in the best  
2 of hands here. You will remain at the  
3 Columbia until you receive further  
4 instructions. Please try to stay indoors --  
5 at least until we see whether the press  
6 carries word of your recent demise.

7 VINCE: So I'm just supposed to hang out in this  
8 hotel and... what?

9 OMNI: We have a fitness room. Oh, and an omelet  
10 bar on Sundays!

11 MR. JONAS: The hotel will provide all the necessary  
12 creature comforts. Your first assignment is  
13 to wait here until your services are needed.

14 VINCE: And when will that be?

15 MR. JONAS: Mr. Omni will let you know. For now, please  
16 -- rest and enjoy. (FADES) Good night, Mr.  
17 Harris. And welcome.

18 SOUND: FOOTSTEPS AS HE WALKS AWAY.

19

1 **OMNI:** (PAUSE) I don't guess you have any bags to  
2 carry up, do you?

3 **MUSIC:** **TRANSITION.**

4

1 SOUND: A PROTEST.

2 CROWD: (CHANTING) Fair elections now! Fair  
3 elections now! (CONTINUES UNDER)

4 SOUND: DRESS SHOES CLICK ON THE SIDEWALK.

5 PROTESTOR: (APPROACHING) Hey man, you work here? You  
6 one of these bureaucrats? You may have a lot  
7 of people fooled, man, but not us! The same  
8 party wins every single election? It's not  
9 possible, man! Why can't we see the counts?

10 BLUE EYES: Bull, if you don't mind.

11 BULL: Yessir.

12 PROTESTOR: Whoa, hey! Hey, you can't just -- oof!

13 SOUND: PROTESTOR SPRAWLS ON THE GROUND.

14 CROWD: (REACTS)

15 SOUND: FOOTSTEPS CONTINUE.

16 SOUND: AUTOMATIC LOBBY DOOR SLIDES OPEN, SHUT.

17 SOUND: PROTEST AMBIENCE FADES.



1 SOUND: FOOTSTEPS ON TILE.

2 RECEPTIONIST: (NERVOUS) Good morning, sir! I'll let Mr.  
3 Readick's office know you're --

4 BLUE EYES: Open the door. Do it.

5 RECEPTIONIST: Of course, sir.

6 SOUND: A BUZZ. A DOOR UNLATCHES, OPENS.

7 SOUND: FOOTSTEPS CONTINUE.

8 ASSISTANT: Sir! What a surprise. He's, uh, on the phone  
9 at the moment, but --

10 BLUE EYES: He'll get off. Bull, wait for me here. Stand  
11 aside, soldier.

12 SOLDIER 2: Sir.

13 SOUND: DOORS SWUNG OPEN.

14 PRESIDENT: (FADES IN) ...take care of that in the  
15 morning meeting, and then we can... (PAUSE)  
16 I'll have to call you back.

17 SOUND: PHONE HUNG UP.

1 **BLUE EYES:**                   **Mr. President. We have a problem.**

2 **MUSIC:**                   **TRANSITION.**

3

1 SOUND: WRITING. CONTINUES UNDER.

2 VINCE: (NARRATING) Dear Elaine. (PAUSE) This is a  
3 very different letter than the last one I  
4 wrote you. I imagine you've read that letter  
5 by now. This one, you will never read.

6 I've been at the Columbia Hotel for three  
7 weeks. Eating in the restaurants, swimming  
8 in the pool, watching TV. Thankfully it's a  
9 pretty big place, and people come and go all  
10 the time. So no one pays me much attention.

11 Except... someone does. A whole closet full  
12 of clothes showed up at my door that first  
13 morning. Nicer than anything I've ever  
14 owned, and the fit was perfect. Everything  
15 else I've needed, I've just called down to  
16 Omni at the front desk, and... voila.

17 As you can imagine, I've had a lot of time  
18 to think. Elaine, I promise, I didn't do any  
19 of this to deceive you. To hurt you. I never  
20 thought I'd be here. Here, in this hotel,  
21 or... here. In general. But I do feel I've  
22 been given --

1 SOUND: PHONE RINGS.

2 SOUND: WRITING STOPS.

3 SOUND: RECEIVER LIFTED.

4 VINCE: Yes?

5 OMNI: (PHONE) Good morning, Mr. Harris. It's time.

6 MUSIC: CLOSING.

7

8 END OF EPISODE ONE