

THE HIDDEN PEOPLE

Episode 1.03

"Official Statements"

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23.

SAM

(speaking into recording device)
Detective Mulligan. Audio log. Three days after the Thorne murders. The medical examiner is still completing his investigation, so in the meantime we're going to interview four people to see if they have any information: Their two adult children, Mackenna and Thomas, and Mackenna's co-workers from the local music store. All but Thomas saw the Thornes the night they died. I don't have any other leads yet, so I'm hoping to gather more information through these interviews.

NARRATOR

The sad, pointless investigation continues. This one bores me, and her companion, Officer Ronald Sitwell, reaches Alfie levels of insufferable. As with all agents of the law throughout history, they hear what they want to hear and find what they want to find. Justice is such a self-serving endeavor.

RON

Hey, partner. Sorry, am I interrupting something?

SAM

Hi, Ron. No, I was just, um, recording some thoughts again. How is it looking?

RON

Well everyone's in place. We have Mackenna and Thomas in the two interview rooms. Then I had to get creative and cleared space in the break room for Nissa Sifsdottir and the storage room for Alfred O'Toole.

SAM

The radiator in the storage room is so loud. Is that the best we can do?

RON

Well, while the acoustics in the bathroom are weirdly impressive, I figured you'd rather take loud radiator over loud flushing.

SAM

Fair enough.

RON

Also, I lost a bet over the weekend and had to bring in pastries. Danish?

SAM

No thanks. I crash after sugar, and I need to be on point for these interviews.

RON

Suit yourself. Your way is probably healthier though. I keep losing these bets and bringing in bad food; then I'm the only one who eats it. Pretty soon I won't fit in my uniform.

SAM

You know there's a solution to that, right?

RON

Yeah. You teach me to be a detective, I get promoted, and I don't need to wear the tight uniform.

SAM

Or you could stop betting.

RON

Or I could start winning.

SAM

I'm not sure we'll get the funding to add another detective, but keep at it, I guess.

RON

So what are we aiming for today? You say to always have a purpose. What's our objective?

SAM

We need official statements from everyone. I didn't get much from them the day they found out. Hopefully their shock has worn off enough that their memories are clearer. I've known Thomas for a long time, so I think that will go well. I'm not sure about the others.

RON

That Mackenna character never really seemed shocked in the first place.

SAM

She definitely acted defensive when she was last here. Agitated. I mean, she had just found out that her parents were murdered, but still...it was an odd reaction.

RON

Maybe she just doesn't like cops. I've heard some people don't like cops.

SAM

Could be. I'm going to start with her and then let her sit while I talk to the others. Maybe we'll get a peek at where that agitation comes from.

24. Sam WALKS. Door OPENS and CLOSES.

SAM

Hello, Mackenna. Thanks for coming in again. How are you doing? Can I get you anything?

MACKENNA

I'm fine.

SAM

Seriously, are you warm enough? Can I get you water? Something to eat? We have danishes this morning.

MACKENNA

Lots of hospitality for an interrogation.

SAM

Just an interview, Mackenna. Not an interrogation.

MACKENNA

Potato tomato.

SAM

Does that mean you don't need anything?

MACKENNA

I'm good.

SAM

Okay. So, how are you doing?

MACKENNA

You asked me that.

SAM

You didn't answer.

MACKENNA

I know.

SAM

Well?

MACKENNA

Well, my parents just died.

SAM

I know this must be hard. Have you slept?

MACKENNA

A little.

SAM

Right. Are you--

MACKENNA

Look, I know what you're doing. Being polite and thoughtful to put me at ease. I watch the First 48. Just save yourself some time and ask what you brought me here to ask. I already told you everything I could think of.

SAM

I know this is frustrating, but it's not uncommon to have to go over stories multiple times. New details sometimes emerge, even if you don't think you remember anything else. I just need to confirm a few of the details. What time did your parents leave the house that evening?

MACKENNA

About six.

SAM

You said they went to the show at 8 p.m., and then went out for drinks. Is that correct?

MACKENNA

That was the plan.

SAM

From the ticket stubs and the bar receipts we found in your mother's purse, we estimate they finished the show and went for those drinks at around 10:45.

MACKENNA

Okay.

SAM

Do you remember what you were doing during that time frame?

MACKENNA

Sitting at home.

SAM

Alone?

MACKENNA

No, and yes. Alfie and Nissa were over for a while. You've asked me this before.

SAM

I'm just trying to make sure there aren't any blanks we can fill in. You all were there the entire night?

MACKENNA

Yes. No, wait. Alfie left to get food for us.

SAM

What time did that occur?

MACKENNA

It was probably 7:30. He was only gone for about twenty minutes.

SAM

And what time did they leave approximately? Your friends.

MACKENNA

Around ten.

SAM

When did you realize your parents
hadn't come home?

MACKENNA

I guess...not until Thomas called me
with the news. I don't normally hear
them return.

SAM

Why not?

MACKENNA

I live in the basement with my own
entrance. You can't hear the upstairs
from down there. I like it that way.
They once went on vacation for a week,
and I didn't even notice.

SAM

And you can't think of anything else
unusual about that night?

MACKENNA

Do you have a pen? I'd like to keep
track of how many times you ask me if I
can think of anything else.

SAM

(beat)

I'm going to chat with your friends a
bit. Sit tight. I'll bring you that pen
when I come back.

25. Door OPENS and CLOSES.

RON

How did it go in there? Did you get
anything?

SAM

Not really. Same details as before, mostly. Alfred O'Toole did leave to get food, but it was much earlier than the attack.

RON

Did she give you anything else?

SAM

I'm more concerned by what I haven't seen from her.

RON

What's that?

SAM

Grief.

RON

Is she a suspect?

SAM

I have no evidence that she is. But it's like she's trying to be suspicious. Maybe the others are thinking more clearly and can provide some background on the Thornes. Maybe they had enemies. Why don't you help me with the interviews?

RON

Really? Are you serious?

SAM

Let's go.

NARRATOR

So close, and yet so very far afield.
The Thornes died at the hands of their
own flesh and blood. But you won't
learn about that by talking to Thomas.
Do you think he even knows the real
Mackenna? That she's ever revealed her
true self?

26. Door OPENS and CLOSES.

SAM

Hi, Thomas.

THOMAS

Sam, what is going on? Did you find
anything else?

SAM

I'm sorry. It's protocol that we go
over your story again, to make sure
there weren't any details left out.

THOMAS

I understand. Whatever I can do.

SAM

Thomas, this is Officer Ron Sitwell.
Officer Sitwell is helping me with the
investigation.

RON

I'm really sorry for your loss. We'll
try to keep this brief. Danish?

THOMAS

No, thank you.

RON

So, you're from this area?

THOMAS

Originally. But I currently live in
Eastbrook, about an hour from here.

RON

Oh, I have an ex from Eastbrook. I hope you don't know her. So, did you visit your parents very often?

THOMAS

I come up here to have dinner with them every few weeks.

SAM

Did Mackenna typically join for those dinners?

THOMAS

Not often. She and my parents aren't close. They weren't close. I don't see her around much. She kind of just does her own thing, you know?

SAM

I gathered that. Does she typically follow their schedules pretty closely, though?

THOMAS

I honestly don't know. Maybe to keep track of when she knew she wouldn't be bothered? They have a routine, though. Had...sorry. My dad...he always called it the best rut in his life.

SAM

That's sweet. He was a good man.

THOMAS

The best.

SAM

Do you ever think that Mackenna resents being at home while you were able to move away?

THOMAS

I don't think so? I guess I haven't given it much thought. I don't think she had any reason to seriously resent any of us.

SAM

I'm certainly not suggesting she would. Just trying to get a feel for the family dynamic.

THOMAS

Mackenna didn't ever try to move out. She never even brought up the idea of moving out, at least not around me.

SAM

She told me that she can't remember much about that night.

THOMAS

That's odd. She gave you a lot of information just the other day.

SAM

Does she frequently forget details? Lose track of things?

THOMAS

Not at all. She's much smarter than she lets on, at least to most people.

SAM

Maybe she just doesn't like me.

THOMAS

I'm sure that's not true. Mackenna just doesn't take well to responsibility.

SAM

She's irresponsible?

THOMAS

No, that's not it. It's more the commitment aspect of responsibility. Like she walks or bikes everywhere. Doesn't have a car. Doesn't even have a license. Too much responsibility.

SAM

And you think she just doesn't want to be responsible for this?

THOMAS

I'm sure she doesn't want the investigation to hinge on what she remembers. That's a lot of responsibility.

SAM

I see. I hope that if she does know something, she still tells me. Regardless of the responsibility.

THOMAS

She will. Trust me. At the very least, she'll tell me, and I can tell you.

SAM

That's really helpful, Thomas. Thank you. Sit tight for just a bit longer.

27. Door OPENS and CLOSES.

RON

Why did you lie about Mackenna not remembering?

SAM

Mackenna is holding back. With details and with feelings. We need to know why. And we needed to find out if Thomas would be straight with us or cover for her. He gave us personal information that made her seem immature, so he isn't completely blind to her faults.

RON

And he agreed to tell us things she shares with him, which shows that he trusts us, right?

SAM

Exactly.

RON

Are we looking for the same things with her friends?

SAM

We do need to see if they'll lie for her, yes. But we also need to know how they saw the Thornes.

RON

Are you suspicious of them?

SAM

Not specifically. But someone did this, Ron. Some person or persons. This town has a finite number of persons in it. At least one of them is a killer. When you look at it that way, mathematically, the odds that you're talking to a killer are actually pretty high. Much better than playing the lottery.

RON

Time to scratch off the lies, pick four of the suspects, and double doubler their asses.

SAM

See, there's a line; it's right here. And there's you. Way, way past it. Line. Ron.

RON

Sorry. I will try harder.

SAM

Try so much harder, Ron.

28. Door OPENS and CLOSES.

SAM

Hello, Alfred.

ALFIE

Just Alfie.

SAM

I'm Detective Mulligan, Alfie. We've met before, at the Thornes'. Back in high school? This is Officer Sitwell. We've got some questions for you.

RON

Where were you when the Thornes died?

ALFIE

You mean the exact time they died? How would I know when that was? You shouldn't lead with the trick question. You should lull the suspect into a false sense of safety first. Not that I'm a suspect.

29. RADIATOR running loudly.

NISSA

I'm Nissa Sifsdottir. I remember you.

SAM

Sorry about the radiator being so loud.

NISSA

I'm a fan of white noise.

SAM

So, you were at the Thornes' the night of the crime.

NISSA

Is that a question?

SAM

More setting the stage. We know you were there.

NISSA

Then why ask?

SAM

I didn't.

RON

Did you see the Thornes before they left? How did they seem?

NISSA

Briefly. Small talk about the weather. Mr. Thorne asked me how it was outside. I told him it was mid-50s but the low for the night was 41. So he decided on his long, wool jacket rather than the leather one.

SAM

You remember all of that?

NISSA

I don't forget. Like ever.

30. No RADIATOR.

ALFIE

They were still getting ready when we showed up, but they left pretty quickly. Seemed fine to me.

SAM

How long did you two stay?

ALFIE

Until ten something, I guess. Nissa got sore about losing three rounds in a row, cuz I always dominate three player board games, so we called it an early night.

31. RADIATOR again.

RON

Did any of you leave the house for any reason?

NISSA

Only when Alfie went out for pizza. He drew the short straw.

32. No RADIATOR.

SAM

What can you tell me about Thomas?

ALFIE

Oh, you mean golden boy?

SAM

Why do you call him that?

33. RADIATOR again.

NISSA

Thomas? He's everyone's favorite. Teachers, parents, friends, you name it. He's smart, handsome, successful, charming. People love him. And those who don't only don't because they envy him.

34. No RADIATOR.

RON

What can you tell me about Nissa?

ALFIE

Um, tech genius. She's the world's greatest hacktivist.

SAM

Hacktivist?

ALFIE

Yeah, hacker activist. She's like a two time Hackathon champion or something like that.

SAM

So she's a computer hacker.

ALFIE

I mean, wait, shit, no? She's not a hacker per se...it's more like she...hacks? I mean...but not, like, bad stuff. It's more like, y'know...did I say hacker? I meant slacker. She's so lazy. Like a sloth.

35. RADIATOR again.

SAM

What can you tell me about Alfie?

NISSA

I could tell you his favorite color lightsaber. Could you be more specific?

SAM

Was Alfie fine that night? Nothing unusual?

NISSA

I feel like I should ask for a lawyer.

SAM

Nissa, you know that you're here voluntarily. I'm not forcing you to do anything.

NISSA

And yet you keep asking questions.

SAM

I'm just trying to get insights.

NISSA

But you could be looking for a fall girl. Small town cops are sketchy. Alfie made me watch Texas Chainsaw Massacre. I know stuff.

RON

You think we're sketchy?

NISSA

Have you heard that radiator?

SAM

We are not in Texas. The nearest chainsaw is probably in a hardware store a mile away. But the massacre. That's the thing I'm trying to solve. I need your help.

NISSA

(long beat)

I want to cooperate and give you what you need. It's just, nothing out of the ordinary happened that night. I guess I'm just freaked. I can't believe this happened to my friend.

SAM

It's okay. Take your time with this. It's scary. Do we have your permission to ask a few more questions?

NISSA

Yes.

RON

We all put on the tough guy act every--

NISSA

Girl. Tough girl. Which is not an act.

RON

Sorry. What's your relationship like with Alfie? Are you just friends?

NISSA

Incredibly, a man and a woman can be friends while harboring no romantic feelings for each other. Also: gross.

36. No RADIATOR.

ALFIE

She said what? Rudy McRude-face. You go back there and tell her I told you the fried chicken story.

RON

The what?

ALFIE

Just do it. She'll know what you're talking about. And then wink or something and say "your secret's safe with me."

SAM

We're not going to do that.

RON

Wait, what's the fried chicken story?

SAM

Alfie, does Mack have any other friends? Who else does she see on a regular basis?

ALFIE

Not really. We're a pretty exclusive crew. We did make a new friend the other night, but that was after...you know, after what happened.

37. RADIATOR again.

SAM

Were the Thornes involved in any controversial activities? Anyone they could have made upset?

NISSA

Mrs. Thorne could get loud when she was fired up. She was the "I want to speak to your manager" type, but not in an obnoxious, overprivileged way. She was always nice to me, but I could believe she pissed some people off. She had that little feud with the neighbor over the ash tree.

SAM

Feud?

NISSA

It was years ago. The neighbor moved away in '08.

RON

That's quite a memory.

NISSA

Would you like to know what day of the week it was?

SAM

Did that neighbor have any dogs?

NISSA

A little dachshund mix. Alfie used to say that a little wiener lived next door, and that he had a dachshund. He's really not very funny, but he grows on you.

38. No RADIATOR.

RON

You haven't seen any dogs on the loose, have you?

ALFIE

Like not in someone's yard? I saw a maltese in a woman's purse last week. But I don't go out too much other than for work and to hang out with Nissa and Mack.

RON

Where do you normally hang out?

ALFIE

Usually in Mack's basement.

SAM

When you're in the basement, how well can you hear upstairs?

ALFIE

I mean, not too well, but you could hear stuff. It's not like it's sound-proofed. But it's pretty cozy for a basement.

SAM

While we're on the subject of Mackenna, how's she handling everything?

ALFIE

Seems okay, I guess. All things considered. Mack's preferred way of dealing with things is to not deal with them.

RON

That doesn't seem healthy.

ALFIE

What? I've been trying to emulate her lack of dealing since middle school. Imagine a world like that. Late for work? Whatever. Get dumped? Put on some music. Overwhelmed by paying your taxes? Just ignore them.

SAM

You realize that in all of those scenarios, the consequences happen whether you deal with them or not.

ALFIE

Ah, the bliss of ignorance.

SAM

Does Mackenna have many of those issues? Late for work? Recently dumped? Money problems?

ALFIE

Nissa's our manager, so we're late all the time. We take advantage of her friendship for personal gain. You're not allowed to tell her what I say, right?

RON

We're not your therapists, Alfie.

ALFIE

Well, if it's a crime to call in sick
when you're not sick, then lock me up.

(beat)

Don't...don't actually lock me up.

39. RADIATOR again.

NISSA

Why do you keep asking questions about
Mackenna?

RON

We've asked about a lot of things.

NISSA

The last six questions have been about
her. Don't you want to know if I ever
heard her parents fight or if Mrs.
Thorne had a guy on the side?

SAM

Did you? Did she?

NISSA

I don't like where this is going. You
said I was coming in to clarify the
timeline of events. I've done that. Now
I think you just want to hear negative
things about my friend without asking
anything to the contrary. If I only
provide negative details without any
positive ones, I can make anyone sound
evil. Mother Teresa, Gandhi, Obama.

RON

Would we really put Obama together with
Mother Teresa?

NISSA

Lawyer.

SAM

What?

NISSA
I want a lawyer.

RON
All the questions, and that was the
one?

SAM
Nissa, you know we're not charging you
with anything, right?

NISSA
That's three questions since I asked
for a lawyer. One more and I will own
this entire building. Do you know who
my father is?

40. Door OPENS and CLOSES. No more RADIATOR.

RON
That was intense.

SAM
And revelatory.

RON
Yeah it was!
(beat)
I know what I learned, but what did you
learn?

SAM
We learned that Mackenna lied about not
being able to hear things from the
basement.

RON
That's true. O'Toole said you could.

SAM

More than that, it was what everyone had in common: their defense of Mackenna. Everyone makes excuses for her. Why? What about Mackenna Thorne needs protecting?

RON

Have you changed your mind about her being a suspect?

SAM

We didn't get any new evidence. And maybe this is all a lot of nothing. Maybe she's just a needy slacker who lucked into some good friends. But then again, would a slacker take the time to train attack dogs to murder people?

RON

Are you going to go back and talk to her again?

SAM

Yes. I don't think pissing her off is the way to go, though. It will only turn all the others against me, and we may need them later. If she needs to be protected and coddled, then that's what I'll do.

RON

Do you want me to join this time?

SAM

No. I want you to go review the evidence from the scene. Maybe you'll notice something I missed.

RON

Really?

SAM

Yes, Ron. Really. And some advice? You want to be a detective? Believe that you can actually help. And act you like believe it.

41. Door OPENS and CLOSES.

SAM

Sorry to keep you waiting, Mackenna.

MACKENNA

Did you bring me a pen?

SAM

No, but that's because I don't intend to ask you any more questions beyond seeing how you're doing. I know a good therapist if you need to talk to someone.

MACKENNA

I have a therapist.

SAM

Oh. Okay. Are you feeling safer at home with the officer watching the house? We can keep someone around as long as you need.

MACKENNA

You should probably ask Thomas. He's the one concerned that killers are going to invade.

SAM

You're not?

MACKENNA

If they didn't break in to hurt my parents, why would they do it to hurt me? I leave the house sometimes. If someone wants to kill me, they would have plenty of chances where I'm unguarded.

SAM

Would you like the officer to escort you to and from work?

MACKENNA

You're not getting it. I'm not worried. No reason in the world for someone to kill me.

SAM

There doesn't seem to be a reason someone killed your parents, either.

MACKENNA

Look, are we done?

SAM

Of course. I'm sorry to have wasted so much of your day. If I can do anything to help or you have any--

MACKENNA

I have your card. Thanks.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

42.

MACKENNA

I can't believe you said: "do you know who my father is?" Nissa, you don't even know who your father is.

NISSA

Which makes it a legitimate question.

NARRATOR

I know who your father is, Nissa.

MACKENNA

I'm glad you felt comfortable enough leveraging your nonexistent family fortune to defend me.

ALFIE

She threatened the cops! Nissa, your badassery knows no bounds.

NISSA

The people who enforce the rules still need to follow them.

MACKENNA

That's good, because otherwise, Sam would already have me in jail.

ALFIE

She has no reason to arrest you. For one, you didn't do anything.

MACKENNA

She thinks I did.

NISSA

She has zero evidence to support that. She's just fishing. Don't take the bait.

MACKENNA

Yeah.

ALFIE

Hey, who wants to watch Serpico?

MACKENNA

Today felt more like the Usual Suspects.

NISSA

I would have gone with The Naked Gun.

MACKENNA

The cops aren't that stupid.

ALFIE

They are if they think you're a suspect.

NISSA

Mack, you have nothing to worry about. They don't think you're a suspect.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

43.

RON

So Mackenna's the prime suspect?

SAM

We don't have a suspect yet.

RON

But if you had to choose now--

SAM

This is a murder investigation, Ron. I don't have to choose now. That's how murder investigations work.

RON

Sure, sure.

(beat)

But hypothetically--

SAM

Did you find anything among the evidence?

RON

I'm not sure. Nothing, really. I did think the blood was weird in this photo, though. It was pooled all around her, but it ran in straight lines on her coat.

SAM

What? Where? There's blood everywhere.

RON

No, look, right there. On the coat, near the shoulder. It's the only part that isn't completely red.

SAM

Oh my god.

RON

What?

SAM

Where is the coat?

RUMMAGING through evidence.

SAM (CONT'D)

Here. Holy shit, Ron.

RON

What is it?

SAM

If you just buried a huge blade in someone's torso, you couldn't just slide it right out.

RON

You'd need to pull really hard.

SAM

And you'd need to brace the body so you didn't pull it, too. The killer stepped on the body to hold it down while they pulled out the weapon.

(beat)

This pattern is a shoe print. We have the killer's shoe size, and a tread to match.

NARRATOR

The noose draws ever tighter. One bloody step closer to figuring out the truth. Are you as prepared as you think you are?

THE END