

HAVANA SYNDROME - EPISODE FIVE: SIGINT

FADE IN:

- The 'cicada-like' Havana Syndrome sound clip

CUT TO: INTRO MUSIC

HAVANA SYNDROME. EPISODE FIVE: SIGINT.

FADE IN:

INT. LUPE'S FARADAY ROOM, VANCOUVER CANADA

We are picking up where we left off, the shocking dual revelations that not only has DEE's old friend NATALIE (NAT) JOHNSON decided to reconnect, but that the surveillance and international incident that their sister JUNI has caused has a much larger scope than expected.

LUPE

What do you mean half the internet? How was this publicized? We never talked to the press or put anything online. Dee?

DEE

Don't look at me! I haven't done anything!

NAT

Don't make this more than it needs to be. Most of these people are true crime nerds. What you should be worried about is the fact that you have your phone number still up on your wedding website...Lupe. It was crazy easy to find, and then, of course, find your house.

LUPE

Are you one of these true crime nerds? Are you on TikTok?

NAT

Pfft. I don't associate with those whitewashed amateurs. But that's not the point. The fact is, it's not just the true crime nerds. There's been a leak from the intelligence agencies, too. Enough

for...determined civilians to pick up on Reddit...and elsewhere.

LUPE

Are you one of these determined civilians, then?

NAT

Hardly.

DEE

Wait, did you actually go into ROTC?

NAT

You remember that? Ha. Yeah. Got the good ol' talking to after junior year. Rebelled enough so that I'm in the reserves now. Enough training to make me dangerous.

LUPE

[cutting in] Where are people talking about this?

NAT

Don't worry, I'm getting there. First it was just Army gossip on my Signal groups about some CIA officer that went AWOL. Lots of people talking about Snowden and Manning. The name Menendez started up in my virtual gossip circles. It caught my eye, I just knew where to look. Honestly, I don't recommend going down that rabbit hole. Most folks think it's connected to, well. The murders.

LUPE

People are *still* talking about that?

DEE

Murders? What murders?!

NAT

As far as I know, y'all are a different set of Menendez Cubans. Don't worry about it. Like I said. Don't go down the rabbit hole.

When I could easily find current activity on the both of you, and none on Juni, I just figured it was the eldest sibling that was the spook that ghosted.

LUPE

So why are you contacting us?

NAT

[bitter] I know what it's like to have a missing sister.

[sighs]

And when I heard your dad was arrested...I don't know. It felt like the government was throwing its weight around at the wrong people.

DEE

[muttering] Is our family drama that much public knowledge?

NAT

I know we weren't friends for long but...I know your family. You were all good people to me when I was an annoying thirteen year old, you know? And then I got this weird voice mail, and I figured I should help where I can.

DEE

A voice mail? From who?

NAT

That's the weird thing...it was you. But not. I am pretty sure it was someone who recorded a recording of you talking to Juni, and then sent that recording to me as a voice memo.

DEE

That's...that was probably Juni. What was the number?

NAT

That's the really weird thing. It...didn't come from anywhere.

There was no heading, no metadata. No phone number. Not even listed as "unknown". It's like it just appeared in my voicemail. I don't have the equipment for any serious backtracking, but I couldn't even tell what kind of device it was sent from. But I agree, I think it was your sister. And I think she wants me to help you guys find her. The clip she sent me? It was Dee talking about...I don't know, about flying three thousand miles and that it was some kind of sign to get you and Lupe to find her.

DEE

[excited] We do know where to find her! Cuba!

LUPE

[hissing] Dee!

NAT

Why Cuba?

DEE

We're thinking that Juni is investigating Havana Syndrome, or something like it.

LUPE

No. That's not what we think. Listen, Nat. I don't think we should be talking about this to anyone, let alone at a time when, you know, there are people surveilling us!

NAT

I mean, this Faraday cage thing you've been working on keeps people from listening in. We're fine. So what's this about Havana Syndrome?

LUPE

We think she has Havana Syndrome and it messed with her brain. It's not a conspiracy, it's a mental health crisis-

NAT

Havana Syndrome? That's...I saw a few posts that the officer who disappeared had something to do with bioweapons—You know what, I bet I could dig deeper for you. There are plenty of forums on Havana Syndrome. Mostly filled with conspiracy theories, but maybe that's how Juni's disappearance leaked to the public?

DEE

Yeah! If you can find out if there's any connection to Cambodia, too, that's where she was stationed. Maybe Juni has already been leaving clues for us on the internet, and that's why she wanted you to get in touch!

NAT

I have a few search engines that can make this a quick review—

LUPE

Hold on. No. Nope. Stop. We are leaving this to the professionals, not two people who are barely past drinking age.

NAT

Oh yeah? You want to leave this to the professionals that are wiretapping you?

LUPE

And thanks for the heads up, seriously. But that's not your problem. It's barely our problem. Except for those of us play-acting detective, there's nothing for us to do.

DEE

You were the one who helped Juni get to Cuba in the first place!

NAT

Wait, she did what?

LUPE

And I DEEPLY regret that. And
Dee...can you NOT divulge
potentially arrest-worthy material
to people?!

DEE

She has information that could
help!

LUPE

This is already a clusterfuck, we
don't need anyone else potentially
committing espionage on the behalf
of the Menendez family. Thanks,
Nat. Have a good life.

LUPE hangs up on NAT.

DEE

HEY!

LUPE

I don't want whoever is in that
white van—if there even is one—to
get any more suspicious than that
whole thing just was.

DEE

Don't you have this...Faraday cage
thing, whatever that is?

LUPE

It's a hobby. And it's not
foolproof, okay? It was something
I've been working on, and that
friend of yours probably learned
about it 'cuz she's stalking my
reddit posts and--

Look. We can't talk to her. We
could easily be picked up on
charges of conspiracy.

DEE

You don't know that! You're not a
lawyer. What are you doing? We
have someone who can help us find
Juni!

LUPE

How many times do I have to tell you, Dee? We are not going to find Juni. It's not our job.

LUPE opens the door and starts back out of the guest room and past the laundry, up the stairs. DEE follows close behind her.

DEE

Nat is right. We can't trust that the government has Juni's best interests at heart. We do though. And we have people who are actually willing to help, not just prosecute us just for sharing the same last name.

LUPE

Maybe I should have taken Mark's, then.

DEE

[roars] Guadalupe Danielle Menendez!

LUPE stops on the basement stairs and sighs.

LUPE

You know that's more effective when Mom says it.

DEE

I can't believe you don't care. Juni is trying everything in her power to connect the dots for you, and you just ignore it. She left that message for you. She basically directed me to fly here to talk with you. She got Nat to find you. Juni wants us to find her.

LUPE

[blowing up] Then why hasn't she contacted me?!

[heaving breaths, a violent grief]

Why didn't Juni tell me what was going on? What she was suffering under? She said she was...harassed.

That's...Did she not trust me? Did she not think I could help?

I wanted to go with her. I didn't tell anyone, not even Mark. I told her to her face that I wanted to go. I told her that she would be better off going into Cuba with someone she trusted. But no. No. She said this was something she had to do alone. She even left early, I think, just to make sure I didn't have the chance to follow her.

Why would she just leave us like this? And if she actually wanted us to find her, why didn't she bring me with her in the first place?

I don't want to play whatever game Juni is playing, Dee. I can't.

LUPE sniffs as DEE absorbs this new information.

DEE

Maybe she was just as much in the dark then as we are now. Hasn't she always been like this? Diving headfirst into a mess without checking how deep? Remember Bryan?

LUPE

[snorting] Of course I remember that asshole. Took her long enough to ditch him.

DEE

Who did she turn to when she needed a time out from him? Who let her crash on their couch while Juni figured herself out?

LUPE doesn't say anything.

We're the ones she turns to, especially when shit hits the fan. Yeah, even when it's self-inflicted.

We're the only ones she can trust.
Can't you see that?

LUPE's phone rings. LUPE lets it. DEE knows
it is Nat. He is pleading for her to answer.

Lupe...

LUPE
Fine. Fine!

LUPE answers the phone.

Alright. Do your hacker thing,
text us when you have something.

NAT
Oh. Okay. Don't twist my arm about
it.

DEE
I'll make a group text! Lupe can
give me your number and-

NAT
Lupe, make sure he uses the same
app I sent you.

LUPE
Yeah. Sure. Whatever. Talk soon.

LUPE hangs up.

DEE
What app was she talking about?

LUPE
SIGINT. It's kinda like Signal, a
little less well known and a
little more secure. According to
some people I've talked to, it's
using quantum computing to manage
its encryption.

DEE
Cool. No idea what that means.

LUPE
Don't worry about it. But if your
pen pal thinks it'll keep the
government from spying on us, all
the better.

DEE

She's not my pen pal. Hasn't been for a while.

LUPE

What happened?

DEE

Nothing really. It was when we moved to Italy, we exchanged a few letters for a while. I still have the little comics she made me in an old bookbag somewhere in mom and dad's house. Or maybe it's still in storage. Anyway. Then, you know, after a while we were in our new life, new house, new school and...

LUPE

[knowing] Ah. Yeah.

DEE

I mean, I'm used to it, right? I don't talk to anyone from our various high schools anymore, either. Well, I see them on social media. But. Yeah. I feel kinda guilty—I was the one who dropped off our pen pal agreement, and here Nat is...jumping right back in to be a friend.

LUPE

Dee...clearly Nat was your friend. I still think we need to be careful. Talking about what's happening with family is one thing, but...let's just be judicious, okay?

DEE

You don't think she is some kind of...mole?

LUPE

I'm not thinking anything. But you know what dad always says.

DEE

It's not paranoia if they really are out to get you.

LUPE

And look who got got. We need to
be careful, Dee. Especially now.

There's a distant sound of the front door opening, and MARK
entering the house with a jangle of keys and a rustle of
paper bags.

MARK

Hello? I'm not walking into a
bloodbath am I? I don't want to
have to eat all this dongpo pork
all by myself.

FADE IN:

INT. LUPE'S GUEST ROOM, NIGHT.

CUT TO: DEE'S VOICE MEMO

Notification sound. DEE has sent a voice memo to JUNI.

DEE

Hey Juni. So I guess it's good
that Nat told us about the
basement. Now I can talk to you
without your colleagues spying on
me. Hopefully.

There really is a van parked down
the block. Been there all day, far
as we can tell. I guess if they
haven't broken down the door, they
haven't picked up on our...extra
communication.

Or maybe they're hoping that we'll
lead them to you?

Jesus, Juni, how did you keep
these spy games straight in your
head? It's maddening.

Huh. I guess it's very possible
that's why we're in this situation
in the first place.

Either way, I think I've finally
convinced Lupe to at least use the
tools at our disposal to figure

out where you've gone. If you actually disappeared in Havana, or somewhere else.

Nat is convinced that you're holed up somewhere, but not enough that you don't receive these messages I'm sending you. So, like, not a faraday cage of any kind. Lupe told her not to sign off on the idea that you're bouncing around the world like some demented Carmen Sandiego.

I think...I don't know what I think. Maybe it's a little of both? That doesn't make sense though.

Lupe told us a little more about who she put you in contact with; some friend of hers owns a boat in the Keys, and that friend knows someone who takes their own unauthorized trips to Cuba. Lupe is trying to get in touch with them again, see if there's a trail to be picked up. At least she didn't tell the feds about that. She thinks that this friend of her friend probably disappeared himself so that he wouldn't be picked up.

It's weird. It's a small enough world for Lupe to know some dude who rubs elbows with smugglers, but it's a big enough world that a schooner can just disappear out on the wide ocean.

Rachelle sent me a picture of my plants. They're doing okay under her guidance, but I could tell Charlotte is less vibrant than usual. She can tell I'm gone every time I leave, I swear! I'll send you pics. Hopefully you get them, and not just the audio.

DEE yawns.

Alright, I should probably go to sleep. Nothing more for me to do today. I've already flown three thousand miles for you. So, if you do need anything else. Let me know.

I miss you Juni. Love you. Night. Well...if it is night, wherever you are.

DEE ends voice memo.

CUT TO: LUPE'S VOICE MEMO

Notification sound. LUPE has sent a voice memo to JUNI.

LUPE

I don't even know what to say to you.

But. If you're still receiving these...fuck it.

Dad's still in questioning. Apparently they have enough of him abusing his security clearance that they can hold him overnight.

I don't know where you are, Juni, or what stakes you're playing at, but if there's something you can do to get him out. Please.

I don't know why I'm treating you like some guardian angel. You sure as hell aren't one.

Mark says that someone called his work, asking about him and his connections to our family.

I don't like what this is doing to me, Juni. I need more than what you've given...Dee and Nat. I need to know that this has something more to do with us than just the fact that you're my blood.

I don't know what that is. I don't know what I'm supposed to do. I told Dee that we need to let the

professionals handle it. And it's not just because I feel he's ill equipped...but because I don't think I am, either.

I'm a jack of all trades, master of none. The only reason I knew to send you to Franklin was because we hung out on his boat after finals. Who am I to throw in with international intrigue? I just...

I was hoping you'd invite me along on this journey with you. It's not like I'm dissatisfied with my life here. I love my house, I love my husband, I love my job.

But, I always wonder, you know...what it would be like, if I chose differently. If I chose like you.

None of this makes sense, and it's been a long day.

If you get this...I do care, I'm just really, really pissed at you. The next time I see you, you're getting hell, okay? So I better see you soon.

I love you. Bye.

CUT TO: NAT'S VOICE MEMO

Notification sound. NAT has sent a voice memo to DEE and LUPE.

NAT

Good evening, team. Well, it's probably early morning for you all right now, so you probably won't get this until you wake up. I may or may not be asleep in time for your replies...we'll see how far this rabbit hole gets me.

I've been digging into Havana Syndrome messaging boards. Open source and my own channels, of course. Since 2016, when it hit

the news more consistently, it seems to have died down a bit. Like you all know, the last bit of relevant news was the health benefits set aside for people who've suffered from Havana Syndrome.

It's mostly fallen off of people's radar since then, but there are a few cadres of passionate truth seekers out there.

From what I gather, it's been almost totally quiet in the military, intelligence, security circles. The general consensus is that the issue has been identified and addressed. Most government officials have some kind of training now to avoid being attacked by whatever energy or sound weapon was being used against them.

Others are mostly convinced it was a bunch of diplomats who had too much rum and wanted to drum up antipathy towards Cuba during a time when we were just reopening relations. Which. Fair.

But that's not why I'm messaging you. That's not what I found. It started by me checking out your average conspiracy theory boards, cross referencing your sister's name, all that.

I don't know why this didn't occur to me sooner, but I think your sister had an alias. And that alias has left tracks.

On one of the infosec boards I looked into, someone responded to a comment left behind about the 'unnamed' intelligence official who went AWOL. Most of the responses were a little too QAnon for my taste, but this one caught my eye.

It was a link to a forum. Just your regular, private Wordpress forum.

And the name of this forum is "Who is Judy Carpenter?"

I'm awaiting acceptance into the forum now.

CUT TO: AGENT CELIA'S VOICE NOTES

CLICK as the voice notes begin.

CELIA

Agent Celia Whittiker, 2317-617

BADGE I.D. #: JTT0331614

Personal case notes. I am currently in Vancouver, Canada. Sitting in a disguised cable company van. My colleague from the RMCP is currently making the rounds around the neighborhood on foot to check for any other suspicious activity. Not sure why, I think all the activity is right here.

Dimitri Menendez arrived at his sister's house this afternoon at around three. As far as we know, he took a carshare directly to the house, no side-quests. He only brought with him a carry-on-sized duffel, so I expect this was a fairly impulsive decision. Our TSA contacts at MCO did not identify any concerning materials.

At around four p.m., Lupe received a call. I was able to trace it to a Boston area code before the call dropped after less than a minute of conversation. The trace faced a

bit of a hiccup, it was a throwaway number, but we were able to get an email.

We were also able to determine that Lupe Menendez is not as forthcoming as she seems. She apparently has some kind of Faraday cage set up in her basement.

Considering her background in electrical engineering, this is not necessarily unusual. From her Instagram page, she has been known to show off similar hobbyist projects.

[wistful] Reminds me of my brother. Burned his fingers more often than not. At least Lupe seems a bit more careful with live wires.

[back to business] However, the fact that they moved inside of it mid-conversation does indicate that the family is likely aware of their surveillance.

I have contacted Agent Foreman to advise on next steps. He has requested relieving my position here so I can brief the home office in Miami. I don't really see the point, it seems like he doesn't take our possible break in cover seriously.

In any case, I've made sure to keep anyone in this house from seeing me. If our cover is blown, at least it's the Mounties who have to worry about it. In the meantime, if we're going to be getting nothing useful from our

mics, I figured it was a good idea to keep going down this email thread.

I know our open-source analysts could have done this for me, but since our mic was dead this evening I did it myself.

It was easy enough to cross-reference the email as a username name. It was certainly unique, and I was able to find a number of Reddit forums with that contributor, including a forum on army intelligence. In fact, there seems to be some chatter about Havana Syndrome that I had not yet been made aware of. There seems to be some links to other forums, other websites, Discord servers. I don't know if it will be a wild goose chase, but perhaps something will link to Juniper.

I am going to spend the rest of tonight seeing if I can follow this NativeBaddie03, my little white rabbit, a little deeper.

My flight to Miami is pending. I'm going to see if I can stick around long enough to see what the Menendez siblings do next.

FADE IN:

- End with the 'cicada-like' Havana Syndrome sound clip

FADE OUT: Outro

Havana Syndrome is written by Lisette Alvarez.

You can join Nat on the forum, now open to all users: whoisjudycarpenter.com. The clues are already there.

Dimitri (Dee) Menendez: Ralph Ruiz
Guadalupe Menendez: Adriene Arce

Natalie "Nat" Johnson: Natalie Campos
Mark Williams: Nic Folson
Special Agent Celia Whittiker: Whitney Johnson

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