

TFEO Wandering with the Dead Transcript

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SPEAKERS

Narrator, Christian, Bear Man, Native, Cody Signore, Mama, Riley, W. Keith Tims

W. Keith Tims 00:11

Hello, and welcome to The First Episode Of, a podcast about audio drama and the creative process. I'm W Keith Tims, writer and podcaster, creator of The Book of Constellations. In this show, I listen to the first episode of an audio drama, then have a discussion with the creators about the show their methods, struggles and successes. Today, we're discussing the first episode of Wandering with the Dead.

Narrator 00:39

[Begin clip from Wandering with the Dead trailer.] (Bleak winter wind, somber Western music, horses hooves and whinneys) They say there's a man out there carrying a dead body through the West. Say the body is worth one hell pretty penny.

Native 00:51

You are haunting this land.

Christian 00:55

I'm just passing through.

Bear Man 00:56

What's in the bag friend?

Christian 01:01

Nothin' worth talkin' over. (Sounds of struggle, Bear Man laughing.)

W. Keith Tims 01:07

Created by Cody Signore. Wandering with the Dead is a horror Western. In it, Christian, a bounty hunter, carries his dead bounty across the Old West, trying desperately to cash in on it before it deteriorates to nothing. Along the way, he encounters the worst of humanity, while living with the inhuman things that he's had to do in the lawless frontier. The first episode "Mama and the Animals"

finds Christian with his prize corpse, attempting to navigate desolate mountains in a snowstorm before being captured by cannibals. Listeners are advised that our discussion of the subject matter of this story can be grim. I spoke to Cody remotely from his home near Boston.

W. Keith Tims 01:53

Tell us a little bit about yourself as an artist, your background,

Cody Signore 01:56

I come from a very film based background. From a very early age, I loved films, and I think our whole family did. We moved a lot when I was a kid. So we, are one constant was always a movie theater, that we'd always go and sneak away and, and, you know, find the escapism of cinema and, and then you know, it turns into something more and you start learning about the process, you start learning about everything else. And from a really young age, I knew I wanted to do something in storytelling, and specifically, film based storytelling. From high school on my main goal was to try to find a film school and get to film school as quickly as I possibly could. It was a satellite school at Boston University called the Center for Digital Imaging Arts, almost like a trade school, you know, the first day we had our hands on the camera, and it was just about learning the process. And, you know, we really kind of formed a lot of friendships and, and made a lot of terrible short films together (laughter) and terrible projects, graduated from there in 2007, basically just just started trying to find work in film in any way that we could. And it was such an interesting time in in Boston in the Boston area for that because it was, I started the school when the department came out. And Boston film production was exploding at that time, you know, which was awesome, because it gave you know, there was almost a level up that happened in the Boston area where everyone that was working on these documentaries and and working on the commercials and you know, the indie films, were now jumping up to the bigger films and kind of made room for for guys and gals like us to do the documentaries and do the other stuff and work our way up, which was awesome. And, you know, we've formed like a really close bond with everyone that we went to school with, they really wanted to push the fact that it was a Center, you know, and the hope was that you would just meet people and bounce ideas off of and work on their projects, they would work on your projects. And yeah, I still work with them all today, you know, 15 years later, I'm still working with so many of them. My goal is always to direct and be in control, I guess, for lack of a better term of the storytelling aspect of it, and trying to enact a vision. And it's such a goal oriented sport, trying to get everybody to go the same direction that you think it should go and, and pivot when people have much better ideas. And you don't come out of film school and someone shows up at your door and it's like, okay, I need you to direct this Avengers film. (laughter) Or, you know, I've got this, you know, a Scorsese script that he doesn't want to do, and I need you to do it ASAP. So it's a lot of trying to you know, find these short films that you believe in that you think you could get you seen and we've gone through a lot of that process and so much of that putting a lot of our money if not all of our money into into trying to create some of these projects.

W. Keith Tims 04:23

You make you make a body of work and you make it as honestly as you can and you hope that that process will lead to something else which will lead to something else and that sort of thing. So then tell me how did Wandering with the Dead come about?

Cody Signore 04:36

We all have our day jobs in in the film production you know, a lot of us working in production companies and and working with clients and a lot of us freelance still, we're all luckily enough to have stable jobs to take care of ourselves and to chase our our dreams on top of it as well, which which kind of keeps us moving and and grounded at the same time. We had done a short film, which at the time, this was part two as a minor. So it was the biggest thing that I had produced. And it was for a very close friend of mine, who, who wrote it, and he directed it. And, you know, he really believed that, and I really believed in it as well as him. And so we took this really big undertaking for us, which was really kind of, I guess, shooting for the stars. And we've done this production, we'd filmed it in New Hampshire, he really swung for the fences. And I think he did something really, really cool. coming fresh off of that I was very much like, I feel good about what we tried to do, I really want to direct myself now. And so I had a short that I'd kind of been sitting on, it was, it was five pages, and it was Western, I really wanted to do it. And I felt like I really understood what I wanted to do with it. I wanted to challenge myself at the time, it was basically the story of a bounty hunter making his kill on these open plains. You know, what was so great about our group at the time was we would just bounce ideas off of each other. And one of our friends was like, Oh, I think you know, I used to live in Colorado, I used to live in Boulder, I really think you should swing for the fences, too. I think you should go out there and location scout, I think you should film this out there. I was like, you know, it's crazy. But I think we need to be crazy. (laughter) To try to get ourselves seen. So I, I had just started working in a production company, I was saving up all of my money to fly us out there and try to do some location scouting. And we and we drove around the Rockies off a lot of dirt roads, to basically just camp out and location scout these ghost towns in the Rockies. So beautiful and gorgeous. And seeing some of these towns in real life, you know, I've been thinking about Western so much. And at the time, it was it was my it was inspiring me. So I was trying to ride that wave. And we basically went out there. And I was such a young filmmaker, and I couldn't find anything I liked. For for what I had in the vision in my head with. And so we came back, I basically had just wasted all of my money on three of us, we just driving around looking at beautiful locations in Colorado. And I and I never did anything with it. The idea was always there. And I riffed on the idea some more. And I was like, Oh, that was different stories here that I think we could tell you know, what if it doesn't end there? What if the story too dissimilar from Old Man in the Sea, where he's now carrying this body across the Old West, and he's running into these situations, and it's deteriorating? And he has to get it back to where he's gonna get it back to before it rots away and nothing. You know, there's there's themes, I thought that we could play on there for sure. And, and I just never did anything with it. (laughter)

W. Keith Tims 07:21

You were being a perfectionist? Is that it?

Cody Signore 07:23

Yeah, yeah, totally. I was so young in the process of being able to take a challenge and be like, Okay, here's how we can work around that challenge. I had this feeling that I needed to be so unrelenting with how my vision, you know, came across for it all. And you know, it just it just ended up being a huge learning lesson, which I'm so thankful for.

W. Keith Tims 07:42

Yeah, I think that's a lesson, you know, a lot of creative people struggle with, do I hold out for the perfect version of my idea? And then maybe never make it at all? Or do I learn how to take what I've got? And just make the best out of what, what's available? Yeah. So how did this end up in audio drama?

Cody Signore 08:00

fast forward? Many years, I had put all the scripts away, we're working in the same place together, our group, you know, a lot of us are working on the same production company together, where everyone just kind of starts writing, we basically started sharing scripts with each other all the time, you know, feature-length scripts, and we're passing them back and forth, and just trying to create and fine tune our skills and our muscles. And it was happening so much so that one of us jokingly was like, Oh, my gosh, you know, we should just record us reading our scripts. So that so that we so you know, we can listen to it in the car, you know, we're running out of time. I kind of started thinking about that a little bit. And like thinking back on it. Now, maybe this is hopefully a big change from the person I was when I was unable to do anything. But I was like, I just want to create content. And I really want to get things out there. And I feel better when I can make something and share it with people. And I was itching to just do something. And I uncovered one of our oldest short stories that we had written. It's actually the opening five minutes of the first episode, I recorded a voiceover for it. I was like, I got an idea. Like, you know, what, if I put audio tracks down, you create an emotion, or try to create atmosphere, I'm so big on atmosphere, which is probably a flaw of mine as well, because I lean so heavily on it. But I started laying the tracks down sort of putting it down and I had sent it to our group and I was like, hey, guys what do you think this and and they were like, Oh, this is this is a really cool, this is really interesting. You know, it's kind of a neat way to do it. And one of our friends was like, Oh, what if your voice actors to do it? And it kind of just snowballed from there.

W. Keith Tims 09:26

Yeah. So you hadn't really listened to audio dramas much previous to this.

Cody Signore 09:31

I think I had mentioned before that when I was young, we would move so much. I have such distinct memories. I was born on the Cape here up in Massachusetts, and then we had moved to Florida. And then we moved from Florida to Texas A few years later, and I remember on that ride to Texas, I remember stopping in the South had plenty of Cracker Barrels. (laughter) But specifically stopping and I remember my mother being like, Oh, this, you know, and it was The Shadow audio tapes.

W. Keith Tims 09:56

Right, old time radio stuff.

Cody Signore 09:58

Yeah, yeah. And she was like, ah, you You still listen to this all the time. And we spent almost all the trip just listening to The Shadow, which was awesome. So much fun. I, you know, I think my mother has a

huge influence on things like that, you know, we watched Dark Shadows when I was kid. And these old, older meditative kind of horror tinged, horror themed thrillers.

W. Keith Tims 10:18

What attracts you to the Western?

Cody Signore 10:20

It's such an interesting time period in my head. And I think I've always loved history, I had done a lot of traveling. And I just remember being in these places like St. Louis and Seattle and everywhere, and I would just dive deep into the history of Seattle, and the deeper history of St. Louis. And, you know, I think it was probably very much inspired by just going out to Colorado and seeing these places and knowing that there's history here. For me Western specifically, even before that, of being interested in that, in that genre was, I mean, you know, Sergio Leone's Man With No Name trilogy of his grime in this brutality, and this toughness, you know, that that has honestly faded away so much from what I'm interested in now. But at the time, it was, you know, this lawless nature of our country, you know, that's home that was really just trying to figure itself out that was, unfortunately, every man and woman for themselves at the time.

W. Keith Tims 11:13

Clearly, your series has very disturbing and grim and violent themes within it. What is your aim in bringing these themes to life?

Cody Signore 11:23

It is such a brutal time in our past history. And it's so raw and honest, and almost cathartic, I think in a lot of ways to dip into these horrors. And these monsters of men that are really challenging, I think myself, as a writer, as a creative to kind of dip into these, these visions of these versions of the world. It scares me a bit. And I think, in my hope of finding art that challenges not only myself, but hopefully listeners as well, I think it was something that for lack of a better term, I guess, felt honest, that wouldn't be shying away from the darkest reaches, unfortunately, of our own psychology, I guess.

W. Keith Tims 12:02

Yeah, you mentioned that humanity has a dark side. And then we often do terrible things to each other. I was struck by the fact that in the chapter one Mama and the Animals, the the cannibals that we encounter, they're living in one of the most unforgiving parts of the West, right? They even talk about that there's nothing out here but wolves and spiders. And it struck me that it's this environment that they're living in that may have forced them to turn to violence and despicable acts just to survive. That's a very interesting, thematic perspective about environment and how it affects the way we behave as human beings.

Cody Signore 12:42

Yeah, no, that that's, that's, that's a brilliant point. And I think, for myself, nature is such a driver in in my own inspiration, we just traveled to the mountains. In New Hampshire, a few weekends ago, all of us, we try to do it once a year, being out there and being surrounded by these mountains. It's It's such I feel

so alive and doing it, you know, and I think so much of that really inspires, I think a lot of my work and I'm specifically Wandering with the Dead and imagining these landscapes and these places that they do shape the people, and they do shape how you operate in that world, and how you come to terms with who you are. Also, just seeing characters live with that side of themselves. You know, to me is such an interesting thing to dig into. We all try to live our lives as best we can, and probably why it's become such an interesting idea to me of the things you've had to do out there to survive.

W. Keith Tims 13:33

Let's talk about the first episode Mama and the Animals. The story follows Christian who is a bounty hunter, and he's carrying a dead body across the West to turn in a bounty. Now, we meet him in the first episode, and there's really almost two stories in the first episode. The first is sort of introducing Christian and his encounter with Native Americans. And it's very short, but it demonstrates a lot of who he is as a person. And then the second story is about a Christian who encounters a group of cannibals who capture him and some others and his fight to escape them. At the end, of course, he rescues a young girl. It's the first story with the Native Americans. Is that like a prologue? What was your aim with that?

Cody Signore 14:17

That was the short story that I went back to originally. I guess from that moment, I really had this idea in my head that I was like, Oh, this could be the prologue of the introduction of the character Christian, kind of, I guess, you know, in the middle of his journey now, it felt like an interesting introduction to the character that I hope was intriguing.

Narrator 14:33

[Begin Clip] A crunch of twigs, they all turn. At the edge of the thicket, one of their own half crouched with her eyes in shock remains perfectly still. A tarnished glint of steel burrows its way through her hair, leading up to the gloved hand of the rider. The rider steps out from behind the watcher revealing himself to the others. He lowers his pistol that he keeps a tight grasp. They all wait silent, the writer speaks first. Well When he does they flinch and surprise and accented gets strangely fluent version of their own tongue.

Christian 15:05

You followed me for three days

Native 15:09

You are haunting this land.

Christian 15:13

I'm just passing through.

Native 15:16

You brought the devil here. Burn this body, its spirit is prisoner.

Christian 15:26

Its spirit is my prisoner. Leave the body and I will let you all live. If I catch your eyes in the trees again, I will return to burn your home. [End clip.]

W. Keith Tims 15:41

When we get into the story of Mama and the Animals and Christian is dealing with these terrible people dressed an animal fur you don't pull any punches. You really give us some grisly detail. I guess I'm curious as to why you went and said, Let's let's really sink our teeth. So to speak into this.

Cody Signore 16:01

Whether it was right or wrong. I certainly, you know, (laughter) I I certainly had had so many discussions about it was like, oh gosh, you know, I don't know if this is going to be the first episode of anything anyone is gonna want to hear. (laughter) And, but to me, it just felt honest. I felt like if I was gonna go in that direction, if I was gonna lean into cannibals that I felt like I had to pull no punches with that for me to feel honest about about creating it or going after it. But you know, at the same point it's I there was there was many, many mullings over of of I was like oh my gosh, is a tough first episode of an audio drama and have an audio fiction and I hope people I hope someone can can can latch on to it but if not, I'm just gonna kind of go for it and then hopefully it doesn't come off too. Ill willed or too gratuitous for gratuitous sake.

W. Keith Tims 16:52

No, I don't-- I agree. I don't think it's gratuitous. I mean, I think it's, it's entirely appropriate in terms of the subject matter. Right. And if you're going to tell a story about the depths of human evil, you want to show the evil right?

Narrator 17:06

[Begin clip.] (inside a remote cabin. Fire in the fireplace. Snowstorm howling outside.) Mama emerges from the center at her walk turns into a crawl as she moves to Riley.

Mama 17:14

It is cold out here. No room for anything but wolves and spiders.

Riley 17:21

(drugged) Where's Bill?

Narrator 17:29

Moose leans into the new kettle hanging over the fire and pulls out a steaming piece of meat and hands it to her.

Mama 17:34

You must be very hungry.

Narrator 17:37

Mama raises the meat to Riley's face. Riley drifts his head away as he refuses to take it. Mama places it against his cheek.

Mama 17:45

Why don't you won't this?

Riley 17:48

I don't know. I am hungry.

Mama 17:55

Eat it. [End clip.]

W. Keith Tims 17:57

There is a little bit of I guess I could call it hope. Although the imagination makes you think about other horrors. But Christian rescues a little girl at the end. And this is a chance I think for Christian to show some of his-- he comes off at first of course is a very hard, dangerous and violent man. But the presence of the girl gives him a chance to show that he is not like Mama and the Animals. He still has humanity left in him. He even talks about the fact that he has young children at home and he hasn't seen them in a while.

Cody Signore 18:26

That was certainly the hope with with with her character, the little girl Hannah, to find a way to be able to have a humanizing element to this terrible character that will continue to descend into these terrible depths.

W. Keith Tims 18:38

You do the voice of the narrator?

Cody Signore 18:40

Yes. I do.

W. Keith Tims 18:41

You rely heavily on narration in your storytelling. At least in the first episode. Talk to me about that choice.

Cody Signore 18:48

It was certainly not my first choice (laughter) to have, to have myself narrate it, for lack of a better term to be blunt, I hate my own voice, which I'm sure many of us struggle with, with said things as well. I was met with kind of an impasse. I started casting for the first episode in casting and I think as I started getting into it, I was realizing I was having a lot of trouble with my budget. Didn't think about how do I have somebody you know, really esteem quality, be able to, to do this for 30 minutes and to do it for multiple chapters. Brian, our lead who plays Christian and he please Bear Man as well, actually. I had sent him over, I was like, Hey, here's what I'm trying to do with it. You know, I sent them over the first

meeting of Bear Man and Christian on that on that hill there on the mountain. When I sent that with my narration over to Brian. Oh, this is I so apologize for my narration. I was like, I'm sorry. He was like, Oh, I love the narration. So I just leaned into it. I couldn't see it at the time when doing it. But now looking back on it, I think. I hope it works. But I think it works. At least from my aesthetic. It's getting so many narrations back that had the Western slang and Western accent you know, and I was like, You know what I think with me and just being a Plain Jane Narrator with no accent and just kind of being honest, you know, I think it works for what I like, aesthetically, I think one of the biggest struggles that I had with this first episode was, it was my first jump into it. I looked on this first episode, and I'm like, you should have done everything better. But specifically, I think this first episode is an audio book more than it is an audio fiction podcast. You know, I've always been a proponent of trying to like understand the medium. I think I figured it out on the third episode of Wandering with the Dead. But it took me a while to figure out how to play in the medium of audio fiction properly.

W. Keith Tims 20:33

It's tough, right? Especially if you're used to a visual, medium like film. That's one of the things that I've done is I would sometimes write and write a scene and I'm like, wait a minute, you need to see this in order for him to make sense. How do I, what do I do? You know? So I totally get that. One of the things that I think I really think you do effectively to create this atmosphere that you love, is the use of music. Talk to me about your musical choices and how you selected them and what you use. How do you use music in your work?

Cody Signore 21:01

Music and movies, it's always stuck out to me for so for so long, and I've always loved it and it's inclusion. And the certain inclusion of of a musical note, you know, score is being one thing which are brilliant, but you know, a simple inclusion of a song at the end of the film, while the credits roll, I feel it can have so much to say about the film as a whole that will linger with you now that you've seen the whole picture you've seen, you know, an hour and a half to two hour worth of film. This is the song I'm leaving you with what you can think about everything you just saw. I think what was most different for me about Wandering with the Dead than the other stuff I might have done is I really just wanted to make something that as dark as it gets. I hope there's some bombastic emotion, or also cathartic feelings that others can get. I was always cutting things out to fit the budget that we had, or having to pivot because something was unavailable to us. And the audio drama world is just a world where you can you can write what you wanted to write. And the only thing keeping you from doing it is your own imagination at that point. I wanted to kind of go big and bombastic. And so, you know, I hope the music aligns with some of that too.

W. Keith Tims 22:03

You do that at the end of the first episode that you give us this really mournful powerful balade to sort of think about things and that's the like the last five minutes of the episode.

Narrator 22:13

[Begin clip] (from the song "Carry Me Home" by The Sweepings.

Narrator 22:14

Carry me home when the light in my eyes does fade. Carry me home when the shadow comes to take me away. Lay down my bones knowing I'll be in a better place. Release my soul, carry me home. Carry me home there's no sorrow down in the ground. Carry me home don't you weep for I am freedom bound. Lay down my bones there is peace within the light I've found... [End clip.]

Cody Signore 23:02

It's so funny because that song I had listened to by The Sweepings, who are a brilliant duo. I listened to that song for so long. And it's so funny. I was always like, Ah, I'm gonna put this song at the end of this feature that I've written. (laughter) I'm gonna put this song, you know, I want to do a fake music video for the song. I was like, ah!, I really loved the song. Recently, the past couple of years, this licensing website called Musicbed.com has popped up. And I found this song on there. Like that is that is exactly for me the mood that I would love that I want to end this on.

W. Keith Tims 23:34

What do you struggle with?

Cody Signore 23:35

I think the hardest part for sure, is just getting just getting the first draft out for me of the story that's in my head. And I think it's such a, you know, I mean, it's great when you hear everyone also talk about struggling with this, you know, I mean, you do the first draft, I mean, the process of just getting the first thing there, and you just question your own existence (laughter) throughout the process, and you're like, What are you doing? This is madness and bananas. You're the worst writer, you're the worst editor, you're the worst storyteller that's ever existed, you should probably just quit. But that's the moment where you get to the end. And you can see clearly, you know, you force yourself to go to the end of the story. I've I've gotten better at being able to step back and be like, Okay, that's terrible. I'm okay with that. I'm not going to question myself my own creative existence anymore. Here is how I think I can I can fix that and make that something that I think is, is really strong, but I think it's definitely just getting through the first the first pass of anything.

W. Keith Tims 24:33

Yeah. How do you measure success?

Cody Signore 24:36

I've spoken hopefully pretty highly of the audio drama community and people that have fallen into Wondering with the Dead and I'm pretty critical I think of this first episode and even the second episode, you know, I-- both were really challenging and good ways. The second one was really challenging in the subject matter that I was writing about. I received a lot of emails and a lot of messages. It's really awesome. You know, seeing some of the reviews that have popped up on iTunes or other places. My goal is always just wanting to be able to put stories out there for people to listen to, and to be able to connect to hearing those positive things that people like it even even as I see the flaws and missteps here and there, which will be anything I guess, art, hearing those has really been a lot of fun. And I think for me measuring the success is is just hearing from people that that you know, they felt

something there's a really interesting interview that I think about often that I read with Trent Reznor from Nine Inch Nails that he had said something that the journalist had asked him who do you think tech giants and entrepreneurs and the tech world Facebook and social media-- Is that the new rockstars now you know, we came back with an emphatic no and he was like, I love that I can get groceries delivered to my apartment. That's awesome. I'm happy with that. But it was like if I come into a piece of art that I love or listen to a song that I like, it becomes a part of my soul. And I kind of carry that with me from from here on. All of that. I think it's a really long winded way to say if someone enjoyed something that I've put out there I think that makes me feel feel really good about where where I've gone or or where the art's gone.

W. Keith Tims 26:06

Yeah, there are currently three chapters about Christian out and you've got more on the way

Cody Signore 26:11

Yes, yeah. Yeah. The closing chapters which which, which I think are really cool.

W. Keith Tims 26:18

What keeps you wanting tell the story what keeps you motivated? What keeps you coming back to this project?

Cody Signore 26:24

Yeah, I think for me, it's it's where where the story is going and where it ends. What keeps me going is wanting to share that ending with people and hoping that that they feel a sense of fulfillment with that journey. You know, it's kind of a it is kind of a daunting task because I hope that it sets it up in such an interesting way that I hope people where are, want to know how we how we find ourselves at the end. The third episode of this chapter three is something I'm actually I'm I-- it's flawed. But it's actually something I'm really proud of is the third episode of the project and I think after feeling like I understand the audio fiction world, and really what Wandering what the Dead can be after that episode, I'm really excited to finish up these last chapters and put it out there for people to listen to and and hopefully enjoy.

W. Keith Tims 27:09

What lessons have you learned about creating audio drama that you can share with people who might want to create their own?

Cody Signore 27:16

Finding something, obviously, in a story that speaks to you so well, that you can really visualize, I guess, and get behind which it sounds so funny to say, visualize while we're talking about the the Audio Drama first, but it's been such an interesting path to go through creating the audio dramas, I feel like I'm seeing the images in my head of what's happening, you know, on the screen. That's not there, you know?

W. Keith Tims 27:39

Theatre of the mind right?

Cody Signore 27:42

Yeah totally. Yeah, yeah, no, definitely. It's, it's really something so different from filmmaking. But in filmmaking, it's almost more cut and dry, what you're giving the audience and I think there's many times where you can be wrong. And you can dilute, I think, a story with your choice of a film, you know, that doesn't speak for some people, and the audio world and the audio dramas, you know, I guess, in talking about the auteur theory, and who's the author of, of *Wandering with the Dead* or, or a film or anything you're watching, I feel like it's so much belongs to the listener, you know, and I think that's what's such an interesting thing about audio dramas is that I see the world in my head when I listen to it. But somebody else next to me sees a completely different world, as much as I could describe a sunset, or describe, you know, how the sand kicks up in the Cowboys face, somebody else is seeing something completely different than what I'm seeing.

W. Keith Tims 28:31

I totally agree with you. There are certainly things that film can do better than audio drama, or live theater, for example. But for me, audio drama is intimate, because it's right in your ears, the listener has to create the reality themselves, because you take away sight, and you all you're giving them is sound. And that means there's a lot of gaps in information which are left, and the listener is going to fill in those gaps with what they expect and what they think should be there. As you said, it definitely makes it their experience, which I think can have a much more profound impact. It'll be a personal story to them. And for me, I think that's, I think audio drama needs to embrace that.

Cody Signore 29:14

Yeah, you're completely right. It's it's trusting. It's trusting the audience or allowing the audience to to visualize and participate in their own world and create that tension themselves.

Narrator 29:23

[Begin clip.] He looks to the little girl. For weeks, he has never had the heart to ask her what happened to her up there alone with Mama and the Animals. You could only imagine. He would never ask.

Christian 29:36

I don't know what you want. I'll keep you with me. Until you find something you're comfortable with. I have to get to Missouri with this. I have small children. They've been alone for weeks waiting for me. [End clip.]

W. Keith Tims 30:02

Signore describes *Wandering with the Dead* as the *Old Man in the Sea* meets *The Shining*. But there are echoes of films like *The Revenant* and *Unforgiven* here as well. At the heart of the grisly themes of this tale is the question of human morality. Away from civilization, how far into evil will people go? And is it possible to retain humanity in such a place with such people in it? You can listen to *Wandering with the Dead* on most major podcast platforms, or see our show notes for more details. The First Episode Of is written and produced by W Keith Tims. All the opinions expressed in this show belong to the

people who expressed them and not necessarily to anyone else. The theme song is Mockingbird by David Mumford. If you want more information, want to sign up for our newsletter, or if you're an audio drama creator and we'd like to be on the show, visit our webpage at thefirstepisodeof.com. If you like down to earth, sci fi audio drama, check out my show The Book of Constellations wherever you get your podcasts. Keep telling stories. It's the only way we're gonna get out of this mess. Until next time.

W. Keith Tims 31:15

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