BLAKE (VO): Hi. My name is Blake, and I have just a quick note before we get started. Actually, it's more like a recommendation because this podcast is an immersive audio storytelling experience, part fact, part fantasy, so it's best that you listen with headphones on, imagination on, and everything else turned off.

Welcome to *abandoned: The All-American Ruins Podcast.*

[SFX, fade in: vintage social guidance film]

VINTAGE TRAVEL GUIDE ANNOUNCER: Truly a colorful state. Not just for the people who live there, but for the people who come there from all over the world. We know you're going to enjoy our story as we take you to Colorado!

It was the cry of gold and the lust for wealth which brought people to the State of Colorado. Here, 40 miles east of Denver, once a thriving community, now, it's truly a ghost town… ***(echoed fade out)***

[SFX, crossfade: inside abandoned Colorado Motorsports]

BLAKE (VO): I stand very still, one ear facing the plains, the other leaning into the darkness of the stadium. A red bucket, strung up by a short rope, basks in the Colorado October sun, swinging back and forth ever so gently, in tempo with the emboldened wind as it strokes the fields of soil and wheat, stretching as far as I can see through the broken glass surrounding the abandoned grandstand.

BLAKE (TAPE): … I think I should leave now…

BLAKE (VO): It's the first visit to abandoned space where I feel genuinely fearful.

[MUSIC, fade in: "On the Surface of Things," Hanna Lindgren]

BLAKE (TAPE): And now it's time to go!

BLAKE (VO): *I know I heard something.*

BLAKE (TAPE): 'cause the *last* thing I want is to get in trouble.

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[SFX: fade in, Peoria, CO, under I-25, prepared to explore the abandoned space in the car]

BLAKE (TAPE): I think it's a-- I think it's an abandoned race track, which is par for the course…

BLAKE (VO): The road leading up to the mysterious blue structure is appealing to me, aesthetically-speaking, anyway.

BLAKE (TAPE): … parked on the opposite side of the highway…

BLAKE (VO): I have an affinity for long, dusty county highways, empty miles of gravel that soak up more sunlight in a year than I will in my lifetime. They ignite curiosity in me.

Where does this long, dusty county highway go?

BLAKE (TAPE): It's gonna be interesting to hear this windscreen, uh, to see if it actually works. Ya know, 'cause we're out on the plains now, and I don't know exactly how much that's gonna be possible, um…

BLAKE (VO): I leave the car on the opposite side of the interstate exit. I'm en route to Last Chance, an abandoned ghost town, but this unexpected, mysterious blue structure requested my attendance. There are times when I don't have a say in the matter. If an abandoned space wants to make itself known to me, it will. I can't ignore it.

BLAKE (TAPE): Walking underneath…

BLAKE (VO): I cross underneath the interstate and make a sharp left onto the train tracks.

BLAKE (TAPE): This train track runs right along this side of the road…

BLAKE (VO): They're in a straight line and pass behind the property. It may be too far back, but it's my first line of offense, and I have to investigate. It's exceedingly likely that plan A won't work out, the further down the tracks I get, but who says you can't detour a detour?

BLAKE (TAPE): Whoa-- huge cicada body. I'm gonna get a picture of that.

BLAKE (VO): I discover an orange bucket and a grasshopper carcass — or maybe it's a cicada. They're loud today, anyway. Them, and the crickets.

[MUSIC: fade out]
[SFX: wind, birds]

BLAKE (TAPE): I love the sound of the birds, all the way out here…

BLAKE (VO): I backtrack to the long, dusty county highway. I notice a blue pickup truck, fresh off I-70, start to parade down the road.

[SFX: pickup truck approach and depart]

I hold very still and watch it head towards, then away from the vacant, unexpected, mysterious blue structure. I exhale and pick up the pace. They're not unclear about trespassing, but they're also not doing much to enforce it. I do decide, however, not to try and enter the adjoining house. It feels like a bad idea.

ANNOUNCER: If you look hard enough, you can always find it. Parked on a lonely road, just looking for trouble, and trouble is there alright. Especially if you're the sharp one, the guy or gal who doesn't have to listen to your parents' good sense or follow the rules because you're smart enough to beat the game and take care of yourself. Men like this make a practice of lurking and to pray on young people who don't know any better than to be there. Sometimes, the victims are lucky, but not this time…

[SFX: fade out]
[MUSIC: dreamy]

[MUSIC: fade in, "To Be Still," By Lotus
[SFX: Blake approaching Colorado Motorsports on gravel road]

BLAKE (TAPE): … the fuck. I was born and raised here. Why am I afraid to walk around? Because! Everyone has a fuckin' gun, that's why. There's *reason* to be afraid. I mean, there's *every* reason to be afraid…

BLAKE (VO): I pass between two concrete road blocks and a swivel desk chair drunkenly hanging outside the gates of the overgrown parking lot. I quicken my pace to round the side of the building, out of sight from cars. In front of me stands a long, outdoor hallway, blue doors, the sounds of the wind off the plains, and the bent and unseemly blinds hanging by a thread in one of the doorways harmonizing with one another.

[SFX: Blake walking down open-air hallway]

There's something about the noise of open space that pleases my ear considerably. It incites instant ecstasy of body, a spine-tingling, coma-inducing, sonic experience that melds my skin and muscles and eardrums together, pulsating electricity through one another, providing a

feeling of weightlessness, the closest I ever get to legitimate relaxation, outside of actual sleep.
I stare out across the overgrown greyhound race track, once imbedded into the cultural narrative of this particular region in Colorado, now a symbol of human evolution, of breaking outdated traditions in the name of animal rights, of another capitalistic venture come and gone, in the blink of an eye.

NEWS ANCHOR: … in Washington, the Greyhound Protection Act. It would ban greyhound racing, which is still happening in three states, and gambling in the US on greyhound tracks anywhere…

[SFX: Colorado Motorsports crowds]

BLAKE (VO): From 1971 to 2010, the race track operated out of Byers, CO in Arapahoe County, in many different forms, including Colorado Motorsports at the end of its tenure. For nearly forty years, thousands of visitors sat in the green, yellow, and orange stadium seats, sweeping down towards a once manicured track, now just dirt and dust and the echoes of greyhound dogs stampeding and ATVs racing ‘round and around the track. And now, it’s empty.

At least, I think it is.

BLAKE (TAPE): Because next to this big building in the middle of nowhere there is a house, ranch style, and there are two campers out in front of it which always potentially means that trouble could be coming your way…

VINTAGE ALARM COMPANY PSA: Learn the ways to discourage the intruder. ***(alarm sounds, fades)*** Noise is the intruder’s greatest enemy.

[MUSIC: fade out]
[SFX: crossfade, empty Colorado Motorsports grand stand]

[MUSIC, fade in: "Ostara," Broad Sky]
[SFX: hanging bucket, clanging]

BLAKE (VO): As I gaze into the miraging plains, a sound from above startles me. The wind is so strong I almost didn't notice. I crick my neck up to look into the rafters, just behind me, and I see a red slop bucket dangling from the ceiling, clanging next to an old light fixture and a tire. The slants of breeze that sneak into the room through cracks in the walls and shattered windows control the swinging objects.

I stand very still, and every few seconds, I think I hear footsteps, but each time, they're drowned out by the raging wind outside.

BLAKE (TAPE): I think I should leave now…

BLAKE (VO): I look down and see someone's chalk left behind for other explorers to enjoy. I think this is thoughtful.

BLAKE (TAPE): … and it's time to go.

[SFX: chalk]

BLAKE (VO): I leave my signature on some steps in the stadium. As I finish up my tag, I look up at the ceiling and notice a catwalk that crosses overhead. I sort out my path up and begin my ascent.

[SFX: walking up to catwalk]

Every step I take instills more fear. I don't know if I'm alone or not. And even if I'm not, this space contains spirits, and it's not just in my imagination. Someone's been here. Recently. I can almost feel them breathing down my neck. It feels like the wind is taking a slow, slow inhale, the kind your yoga teacher asks you to practice at home.

— in through the nose, 1, 2, 3, 4, hold, hold, hold, and out, through the mouth, 1, 2, 3, 4, rest. Again…
I approach the catwalk. It's much slimmer than I realized. I work my way across, glancing down to see the sea of stadium seats below, empty, but filled with the echoes of stories across space and time. I reach a concrete overlook at the end of the catwalk and walk right up to the glass.

The plains.

[SFX: camera shutter and winding film]

BLAKE (TAPE): Alright.

[SFX: small noise]

BLAKE (VO): I hear another noise down below. I freeze.

[MUSIC, fade in: "Ear to the Ground," Hanna Lindgren]

Wind. *Hold still — (whispered) — in through the nose, 1, 2, 3, 4.*

BLAKE (TAPE): Really time to leave now.

[SFX: walking through Colorado Motorsports]

BLAKE (VO: I scurry back downstairs, passing a tipped over shopping cart, a "NOT OPEN" sign, a podium, and a blue ticket booth shoved underneath a concrete and metal staircase, and for a moment, I think I see a ghost, of me, working at a box office in Times Square before I decided to leave New York City for good, back in 2017 — but it's only my own muddled shadow.

[SFX: fade out]

This was a shorter visit than I'd hoped for, but something feels off. I have to listen to my gut these days. It's the only method of survival.
ANCHOR: … the two gunmen who went on a rampage booby-trapped the building…

ANCHOR 2: … claims that he met the shooter as he was exiting the supermarket the day before the shooting…

ANCHOR 3: Matt, what's the-- what's the latest you're hearing?

ANCHOR 4: Basically what you guys are. Uh, from the hospitals, we're hearing that there are at least 20 casualties that were brought in and that number is apparently growing…

ANCHOR 5: … 2 people are now dead after a church shooting in the Dallas-Fort Worth region of North Texas, according to police…

ANCHOR 6: … after a gunman opened fire in two separate locations in Downtown Orlando, FL on Friday morning…

DJT: … and to get me, somebody would have to shoot through the fake news, and I don't mind that so much… ***(crowd laughs and cheers)***

BLAKE (VO): I've never felt more unsafe living in the United States than I do now. I remind myself that I'm in an open-carry state with the flimsiest of firearm safety laws, the state that sparked a decades-long battle between the NRA and the rest of the country, 61% of whom, according to Pew Research, want common-sense gun laws.

I could get shot here. ***(echoed fade out)***

[MUSIC, fade out]
[SFX: fade in, leaving Colorado Motorsports]

I poke my head around the final landing of office space and make sure the coast of the county highway is clear.
I quickly make my exit, stopping briefly to photograph a bulldozer sitting off to the side of the parking lot entrance. It's small, has the number 463 pasted on the side, and I like it. I wonder who left it here.

BLAKE (TAPE): The building is pretty big, considering that we're in the middle of nowhere.

BLAKE (VO: I glare up at the sun, shielding my face from the fierce rays that tumble down onto my face. As I pass back between two concrete road blocks, I exchange glances with the drunken swivel desk chair, still hanging around the gates of the overgrown parking lot. I look back at the sky and imagine how big it is, which makes me feel a little too close to god so I back off.

[MUSIC, fade in: "Lucid Space," Joseph Beg]

I close my eyes as the sound of the plains carries me up and over the blockade and back onto the long, dusty county highway where I keep my back turned to the space, like Sodom and Gomorrah, passing a sign that says JCT CO 40 / JCT INTERSTATE 70. Even if I wanted to, I couldn't look back. My eyes have been captured by the sight of the plains stretching north, up, and away, towards the other side of the world.

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If you're just tuning in, welcome to the third season of *abandoned: The All-American Ruins Podcast.* Join me every other week as I take you on an immersive sonic journey, recounting my expeditions of abandoned spaces across the United States which I transform into fantastical audio experiences that allow you, dear listener, to dive into my imagination with me-- or maybe inspire you to go out and use your own. If you don't want to

miss it, please subscribe on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts, and blah blah blah, rate, subscribe, review-- I'm just glad you're here.

Also, if you like to read or enjoy amateur photography, just know that each episode this season is adapted from the original All-American Ruins blog where you can catch up on more of my adventures. Just visit: allamericanruins.com, or follow me on Instagram at @allamericanruins.

abandoned: The All-American Ruins Podcast is hosted, written, edited, and produced by me, Blake Pfeil, with studio space courtesy of Radio Kingston, WKNY, AM 1490, FM 1079 in Kingston, NY. Also, a huge shoutout to my big brother Ryan who provided very valuable feedback on every script for every episode this season. And thanks to you, my friend, for taking time to explore these abandoned spaces with me.

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