

HAVANA SYNDROME - EPISODE SIX: WHO IS JUDY CARPENTER?

FADE IN:

- The 'cicada-like' Havana Syndrome sound clip

CUT TO: INTRO MUSIC

HAVANA SYNDROME. EPISODE SIX: WHO IS JUDY CARPENTER?

FADE IN: DEE'S VOICE NOTE

INT. LUPE'S GUEST ROOM, VANCOUVER CANADA

DEE

"Who is Judy Carpenter?"

Apparently this is the question  
that launched a thousand ships.  
And by a thousand ships I mean  
like a handful of random links and  
users from a Discord server  
dedicated to numbers stations and  
other creepypasta audio.

Nat was obviously skeptical at  
first, the forum was mostly  
talking thirdhand about hidden RSS  
feeds that the CIA operates to  
communicate with their spies.

You know how it is with these  
people, they scour the internet  
looking for things to be paranoid  
about. But then she found the post  
that started the whole  
conversation.

And by post, I mean audio. It was  
a mp3 file that was simply labeled  
jcarp1. Supposedly the original  
file was in Spanish, and it took a  
few of these users to find someone  
who could translate it.

I've got the translated file that  
SomeGuy137 uploaded. Hold on...

DEE plays the audio file on his laptop, holding up his  
phone to the speaker.

SOME GUY

Okay, so this is my English  
translation of the JCarp1.mp3  
File.

[bad singing]  
Gone away  
Lover, find me  
Ahhhh

The wind is striking today,  
kicking up dust and holding me  
captive, waiting for my love. I  
have a hankering for a coffee. I  
think I might find it when my true  
love holds it for me.

I hate coffee.

There's a beautiful white flag  
above the balcony where I drink my  
morning tea. I have been hoping to  
see who flies it, who lives in the  
apartment above me. I plan to find  
out if it's someone who  
understands what I've been looking  
for. My true love, on these long  
journeys.

I write poetry to help me think.  
In new lands, there's something  
peaceful about speaking in new  
tongues, in words that change  
meaning when you find the  
translation. If you have any  
trouble finding me, my love, you  
can find me under the white flag.

I bought a new cell phone today,  
mine was stolen on the bus to the  
McDonalds. The prices are too  
high, but at least they have a  
battery that lasts more than a few  
hours. I'm going to go out and get  
some chips, and then maybe some  
coffee at Quantico.

Maybe I'll sing more there. It's  
funny enough to try my hand at it,  
alone in my apartment. I think  
it's time to go public.

{pause}

END RECORDING.

DEE

Pretty dramatic, right? Most of the other users think it is just bad poetry, but a few are trying to interpret it. Some are thinking the mention of Quantico points to Virginia, probably with the Marines.

Nat thinks it's a mistranslation. If we can find the original recording, we might be able to see if it's your voice, not some dude in his basement who believes the earth is flat. Plus the whole reference to singing. It seems like there was a song cut off in the beginning?

It's something, though. Especially if you look at it through the lens of Judy Carpenter being some sort of cover. According to this forum, there's a bunch of scattered breadcrumbs that they all think are connected to this mysterious character on the internet. There's an ongoing challenge to find the next breadcrumb.

This is what we know for right now. Nat is digging in more today.

DEE ends voice memo.

Notification sound. DEE has sent a voice note to NAT.

DEE

I forgot how much like a dog with a bone you can get about a good puzzle. Thanks again, Nat, for helping to connect the dots.

DEE ends voice memo.

Notification sound. NAT has sent a voice note to DEE.

NAT

Remember theater? I just think of it as improv, dots of weird little plot points. I guess that's what makes me a good open source investigator on the internet. Look beyond the obvious answer, tell a good story.

NAT ends voice memo.

Notification sound. DEE has sent a voice note to NAT.

DEE  
Oh yeah, I remember that class.  
Hated those exercises.

[laughs]

Still. It's good to get in touch,  
even under these circumstances.

DEE ends voice memo.

Notification sound. DEE has sent a voice note to NAT.

DEE  
Though I...to be honest I kinda feel bad. I'm glad you can help out, but I'm sure this is bringing up bad memories. How are you doing?

DEE ends voice memo.

Notification sound. DEE has sent a voice note to NAT.

DEE  
I'm sorry, maybe that was an invasive question.

DEE ends voice memo.

Notification sound. NAT has sent a voice note to DEE.

NAT  
No, it's fine. I got distracted. Thanks for asking. I get it. But what happened to my sister happened almost twenty years ago. If anything, this is helping me feel I have a sense of control over it, in a weird way?

NAT ends voice memo.

Notification sound. DEE has sent a voice note to NAT.

DEE

Okay. Good. Well, not good. It's really horrible all around, terrible...and I'm glad the whole situation with murders of Indigenous people and girls in America has gotten more attention recently, too—it sucks that your sister couldn't count on better community consciousness.

[helplessly] Wow. Sorry. That was just word vomit. I'll just...yeah.

DEE ends voice memo.

Notification sound. NAT has sent a voice note to DEE.

NAT

It's okay. Well, it's not. But maybe if we find Juni, you can donate my finder's fee to your local #LandBack initiative.

NAT ends voice memo.

Notification sound. DEE has sent a voice note to NAT.

DEE

Oh, no question.

[pause]

Which one? I guess we could focus on Vancouver? Or California? Or Florida? Is there one in Florida? Or Massachusetts, since that's where you and I met? Or...maybe we'll do all four. Yeah.

DEE ends voice memo.

Notification sound. NAT has sent a voice note to DEE.

NAT

Careful there, settler, that almost sounds like reverse colonization.

[laughs]

I'm going to be radio silent for a bit. I need to focus. Talk soon.

NAT ends voice memo.

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

DEE

Hey Juni. I don't know if you have any of that good government money squirreled away, but I think you should give it to Nat for a finders fee when this is all over. For emotional retriggering. Or something.

DEE ends voice memo.

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

DEE

Juni. You know, I've been thinking about something else. Seeing all these conspiracy theories, the whole paranoia thing that Dad always says. I know I haven't always been the most up to date on politics, or history. I prefer what's going on now. Like, my major in environmental science...we learned inside out about climate change. So I get those things, and I get how policy affects people. But the rest of it, the details, that was always your purview. You know more about that, but I guess I never really listened.

I know why we should be suspicious about big companies and their pollution, their messaging to try to heft the blame of climate change on people who use plastic straws. But I guess I never really saw it clearly until all this. I think before you disappeared, I would have looked at these message boards, these forums and be like—these are just right wing,

anti-government libertarians. Not to be taken seriously.

But now, with everything going on. I can kinda see where they get hooked. Why people should be paranoid about other people. Government conspiracies. But, where does the line lie? Where do you hold the government accountable without sliding into antisemitic talking points?

I wish this was something you'd respond to. You usually had a response to these questions for me.

But, then again, you were the government conspiracy. With a whole fake identity, even. What makes me think I should trust you?

Sorry. Weird thoughts at three AM.

DEE ends voice memo.

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

DEE

The world is not black and white, I think the three of us learned that very early on, seeing it first hand the way we did. The Canadians bag their milk. The Italians treat falling over themselves in soccer as a point of national pride. The Argentines conveniently ignore the reason they have Italian and German inspired cuisine. The CIA gave intelligence to the Ukrainians to push out the Russians, but they also planted crack cocaine in Black neighborhoods. I get it. The world is complicated. Some things are more complicated than others, especially when you throw in abuse of power and all that.

Maybe that's why you joined the CIA. Maybe that's why you left.

Just...It's hard to square my beloved sister into an organization that deserves a lot of the hatred it's been dealt. I'll try to reserve judgment for now, I guess. Until you have something to say for yourself in response.

DEE ends voice memo.

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

NAT  
I found the original recording.  
I'm linking it in the next message. Group video chat?

Notification ringing, and two pings as two phones join the video chat.

NAT  
Hey team. So, any initial thoughts on this particular discovery?

LUPE  
Mostly confused. So there's two audio files that she recorded?

NAT  
At least. I found the original jcarp1 file, and a dead link to a jcarp2. My guess is that the conspiracy theorists had something right—there is a hidden RSS feed somewhere, but I think it's just Juniper.

Thing is, I don't speak Spanish. If there was a mistranslation in the first file, did either of you catch it?

DEE  
Uh, yeah about that...

LUPE  
Juni is the only one of the three of us who can speak Spanish more or less fluently.

NAT

What? Seriously? Your dad...All those countries, and neither of you—

DEE

Hey, I learned French in college! And I know some Spanish. Juni didn't learn Spanish until college either, and she picked up Mandarin. Lupe, you speak, like, German, right?

LUPE

Kinda. It's been a while since I've used it. I've picked up some French though, living in Canada and everything.

NAT

Okay, okay. I get it. You're all very cultured. And...you know what, I shouldn't judge. I didn't pick up Chamteela until high school, and it's an endangered language. We all have our responsibilities, right? Maybe send this to your dad, then?

LUPE

He's currently detained. And more Juni info is probably not going to help him out.

[thoughtful] We have some cousins that still speak Spanish at home, though. We can send it to Hector?

DEE

Ugh. Hector.

LUPE

I'll text him now. Sheesh, one argument about climate change—

DEE

He thinks it's a hoax! Even after his house was flooded three times in the last ten years! We don't have 100 year floods anymore, they're like five year floods!

NAT

I suggest you get it translated from whoever you can that is actually a Spanish speaker. Plus, it begins early. There's a whole song that needs to be translated, or sourced at least. Shazam was useless.

Also, I did catch a couple mistranslations. First, she never mentions McDonalds, she says 'Los Arcos', so 'The arches'. A bit of creative, albeit false, connecting of the dots there. And she doesn't say Quantico, she says Quentin.

LUPE

Does that narrow it down at all?

NAT

Besides the movie director? Not really. I think if it's in Spanish, then she is probably talking about an actual person or place that has a Spanish name.

The second file is what is more interesting to me. It's corrupted, but besides the title jcrap1, I got the year of creation for that, and the other file. They were both created four years ago.

DEE

She was in the CIA at that point.

LUPE

Yeah. Yeah...and, wasn't that the year she was in Mexico City?

NAT begins typing and clicking her mouse "offscreen".

DEE

For her State Department internship, yeah...Wait. Oh, okay. So that was probably a cover.

LUPE

Obviously. But how does this help us with figuring out what she was looking for now?

NAT

Quentin Cafe. It's a coffee shop in Mexico City. That's what she was referring to.

LUPE

Probably as a way to meet with a source? But what for?

NAT

Even if that translation was run five times through Google Translate, she is talking about going to get a new cell phone that was stolen near Los Arcos, and then going to this cafe. Los Arcos? It's a restaurant, not a bus station. But get this...Los Arcos is right beside the Chinese Embassy.

LUPE

[aha!] Juni had a research capstone about Chinese business investments in Latin America.

DEE

Wait, how do you know that?

LUPE

Don't you remember? She wouldn't shut up about it for months. Any time anyone would mention China or Latin America, she'd bring up the U.S. pivot away from the Monroe Doctrine. And how the US is now focusing towards Asia. Or whatever. It was annoying.

DEE

Guess it wasn't annoying enough for me to remember.

LUPE

Come to think of it...hold on, I need to look at some dates. What year did we take that vacation to Italy?

DEE

Six years ago! I was bugging you about it for the past week! That's when you and Juni started saying that weird *Wizard of Oz* version of don't let the bastards get you down. And you still haven't clarified why Juni would say that in her, like, voice note manifesto.

LUPE is not paying attention, she's writing on a scrap piece of paper.

NAT

Oh, I know what you're talking about. It's that illigetimis thing. I did find that comment odd.

DEE

So was it some kind of code? Did she use it to tell you something about what she was working on? [pause] What are you writing?

LUPE

A timeline. Well. What we know so far. Six years ago, Juniper was still in college. She had a research capstone that got her some decent honors, right? We know that she was recruited into the CIA probably around the time she graduated. Probably in the spring. That summer, we go overseas to Britain and Italy, and wasn't there a whole thing about whether or not Juni would go?

DEE

Yeah. But Gramma Pam wasn't in good health, Mom made a huge fuss about making sure everyone could see her before Gramma declined.

LUPE

Right. The CIA is particular about foreign contacts, so maybe they didn't want her going out of the country so close to her training

or whatever. Anyway, Juniper says she's working an internship with the State Department in DC while getting her master's. She's there for two years, and then she's in Mexico City. The pandemic hits, but she gets a job back in the U.S....some kind of tech startup out in Seattle.

NAT

Another cover!

LUPE

Another cover. Then, last year she moves to Cambodia.

DEE

And then in September she comes here and at some point between then and Thanksgiving disappears to Cuba.

LUPE

Yeah, but...all this tells me is that she was probably working some kind of spy thing around China, right? What does that mean about where she is now? Does what she was working on even matter?

DEE and NAT make uncertain noises.

[sighs] Forget it. This audio files stuff is probably just a wild goose chase.

PHONE RINGS.

LUPE

It's Mom. Nat, can we call you back?

NAT

Yeah, sure. I'll keep digging. See if any of this points to where Juniper is now.

Video call ends.

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

DEE

Juni, Dad's been released. Thank god. Mom says that he's fine, and that they still haven't been able to give us any more information about the progress on the search for you. Which sucks. But.

We've decided to keep this under wraps for the most part. Mom and Dad don't need to know what we're looking into. Nat is still looking.

I think Lupe's right, though. What's the point of knowing where you've been, what you've been working on, if it has nothing to do with why you left? I just wish—

DEE is interrupted by a faint knocking from upstairs, the front door. MARK answers, and then closes the door.

MARK

Hey Lupita? Were you expecting a package?

LUPE

No, why?

DEE

[to Juni] I'm going to see what's up. Talk soon.

DEE ends voice memo.

Notification sound. NAT has sent a voice note to GROUP CHAT.

NAT

Hey team. Well, you aren't answering your phones...so I'm guessing you also just received an unmarked package with airplane tickets to Mexico City?

Guys... what the hell is going on?

NAT ends voice memo.

FADE IN: A RUNNING ENGINE.

THE WHITE VAN PARKED DOWN THE BLOCK, VANCOUVER, CANADA

A man is sitting in a surveillance van a few doors down from LUPE and MARK's house. The Canadian MOUNTIE has been tasked with listening in on conversation within the household, but so far nothing too interesting has come up.

AGENT CELIA WHITTIKER, his temporary partner, opens the sliding van door, hops in, and closes the door behind him.

CELIA

Got any more of those donut holes?

MOUNTIE

Timbits. They're called Timbits.  
Put some respect to the name.

CELIA

My bad.

The Timbits box rustles as THE MOUNTIE hands it over.

CELIA

Anything while I was on the phone?

MOUNTIE

Nope. Just the mailman. How about you? Any news from your boss? How much longer are we expected to observe?

CELIA

They just released the father on his own recognizance. And I'm scheduled to report back to D.C. tomorrow.

MOUNTIE

Still no direct contact, eh?

CELIA

Nope. But, then again. My office is only focused on the family. Who knows what rabbit holes Langley has their eyes on.

MOUNTIE

Boy, I don't envy you your job.  
Left hand don't see what the right is doing and all that.

CELIA

Pretty sure that's the way it is everywhere.

MOUNTIE

I suppose. Then again, any spy games we get into are usually caught up with you guys. Figure it's a way for Ottawa to get in on some kind of action every once in a while, eh? Besides the occasional maple syrup heist.

CELIA

That was really a thing?

MOUNTIE

Oh yeah. About ten years ago. Nuts. But, hey, what else are you gonna do in the winter up here but plan a heist?

CELIA

Speaking of, isn't there supposed to be snow in a few days? Can you turn up the radio? I need to see if I'm going to actually get outta here if I do get recalled back to DC.

THE MOUNTIE taps the steering wheel and turns up the radio. It's a weather forecast.

WEATHER MAN

—Bundle up, Vancouver, our unseasonal warm streak is coming to an end. We're hanging around freezing in the Metro area for the next few days, with solid below freezing temps overnight.

Environment and Climate Change Canada says we could see wet flurries, with temperatures close to 2° overnight, and a high of 7°C during the day.

The transmission overlaps from English to Spanish as we move from Vancouver to...

CUT TO: MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

EXT. QUENTIN CAFE. DAY.

WEATHER MAN  
...Cielo mayormente despejado.  
Máxima de 24 C durante el día, 8 C  
esta noche.

Notification sound. THE SUPERVISOR has sent a voice note to JUNI. As he speaks, there's the clatter of a cafe in the background, people speaking Spanish, and a radio playing the weather report.

THE SUPERVISOR  
So, Menendez. You're still insisting on bringing civilians into the game. Your family, no less. Haven't I taught you better than that? This is exactly what I meant when I told you that too many points of contact will unravel the story. Too many details makes the mask brittle. You need to wrap it up in truth's death shroud. Instead, you're...

[laughs] I don't know what you're doing. Maybe you have gone insane.

What do you think is going to happen? Do you think you can just expect they will figure out what is really going on? Six years of lies.

That's a lot of stories wrapped up in truth. Even I wouldn't be able to untangle all of it.

But I'll just start with this little trip down memory lane. It was clever. The RSS feed. I should have known you were using something else to communicate with your assets. DST did love you, you always had all sorts of new ideas, unassuming twists on emerging technology. The Twitter ad campaigns that only ran the length of time you were available in any given city. Shared coffee gift cards that, when used, signal a meeting? No more chalk marks, you developed your own arsenal of

signals. Brilliant. You were willing to share those tactics with the Company, though, weren't you? Not this. You knew that it would be underestimated as an information medium.

Everyone has a podcast these days, after all.

Maybe I'm just getting old.

Or maybe you're just getting messy. An open source message board? Really? I get that you're trying to lay breadcrumbs, but every single one of them are points of contact, Menendez. You have no control about how the information is disseminated at this point.

I'll give you this, though. I did always tell you; have the guts to do the job. Get out into the field. Recruit assets. If you're gonna fall, fall forward. I just expected you knew that you were falling for the Company. Not...

Well. Regardless. We'll see which game piece they find first. And then you can decide if it's worth falling over.

Talk soon. *Judy.*

THE SUPERVISOR ends voice memo.

FADE IN:

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

FADE OUT: Outro

Hello, Lisette Alvarez here. Happy Boxing Day to those who celebrate. The Menendez family, and mine, will be taking a little bit of a mid-season hiatus for the holidays. It's the perfect time to encourage folks to catch up here on the feed, and of course...the forum for additional in-universe digital and in-person puzzles. You know that clip in the beginning? Yeah...someguy137 seems to have stumbled upon the first episode of a hidden podcast feed. Can you help him

find it before the Scooby gang decides whether or not they're about to embark on a trip to Mexico?

Havana Syndrome Season 1 continues on January 9th, 2025.

Dimitri (Dee) Menendez: Ralph Ruiz  
Guadalupe Menendez: Adriene Arce  
Natalie "Nat" Johnson: Natalie Campos  
Someguy137: Bjorn Munson  
Mark Williams: Nic Folson  
Mountie: Tyler Hyrchuk  
Canadian Weatherman: Graham Rowat  
Mexican Weatherman: Nathaly Vasquez  
Special Agent Celia Whittaker: Whitney Johnson  
The Supervisor: Scott Welnosky

Havana Syndrome is written by Lisette Alvarez. This is a Stormfire Productions podcast.