

HAVANA SYNDROME - EPISODE THREE: THE CODE

FADE IN:

- The 'cicada-like' Havana Syndrome sound clip

CUT TO: INTRO MUSIC

HAVANA SYNDROME. EPISODE THREE: THE CODE.

CUT TO: DEE'S VOICE MEMO

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

INT. BACK ROOM OF A MEXICAN RESTAURANT. Standard Tex-Mex noise, including muffled music, chatter, dishes and kitchen sounds, Spanish by the workers.

DEE

Hey Juni. I'm at work so I'll try to keep this quick. I've been learning more about Havana Syndrome. One of those late night specials, the boring ones, have the actual sound they think causes it. It sounds like cicadas. Which is probably why so many people think it's fake.

Unfortunately most of the lines of googling inquiries lead me right to conspiracy theory land instead. And no one needs antisemitism in their media diet, so-

A door bangs open.

HOSTESS

Dude! What are you doing?!

DEE

Taking my legally deserved fifteen minutes!

HOSTESS

Don't do this to me at rush hour. We've got like, four reservations waiting to be seated. Help me out!

DEE

Okay, okay. Sor-.

DEE ends voice note.

INT. DEE'S CAR.

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

DEE

Michael chewed me out again for not cleaning the menus properly. As if patrons to this fine, whitewashed establishment don't expect a little salsa stain on the corner of their menus. Doesn't wear and tear indicate that this place is well-trafficked?

Asshole.

[laughs] Now I feel like I'm treating you like a diary. Well, it's what you deserve, acting all aloof and quiet as a book.

I'll get back to going all Liam Neeson on you after I get all my capitalist woes off my chest.

[pause]

Before you sent that whole treatise and turned the Menendez world upside down, I told Mom and Dad that I applied for that part-time job at the Grove co-op out in Jonesville. You know how they get. They smile all supportive like, but you see it in Dad's face...he thinks that kind of work is below us. Isn't that what our grandparents came over here to keep us from having to do, manual labor?

It's just...it shouldn't be below us. Feeding people, it's a noble pursuit. Isn't it? I mean, the pay isn't great, and it's only seasonal, but Holly told me that they are the only Black family farm in the state that survived the pandemic. I don't think you ever met Holly. She was in my

Environmental Ethics class, now she and her girlfriend are my roommates, after I moved out of the dorms last year. She reminds me of Natalie a bit. You remember Natalie, right? My old penpal back in middle school? Man. You know, I haven't thought about her in a while. We lost touch after we moved to Buenos Aires.

We always lose touch, don't we?

None of that matters, though. Dad is still worried I'll be on their dole for another decade.

I know what you'd say. Follow your dreams!

I don't know. Maybe they're right. Service industry sucks. And I'm not exactly in shape for lugging barrels of oranges around, either. Holly was a little worried about it. Maybe they won't even bother calling me for an interview.

Okay, you're not my therapist. I'll stop now. It's late. I should go to bed before I get any more maudlin.

Love you, Juni. I hope you're okay, wherever you are.

DEE ends voice note.

INT. MENENDEZ HOUSEHOLD.

Notification sound. PEDRO MENENDEZ (DAD) has sent a voice note to a GROUP CHAT.

PETER

I'm texting you both phone numbers for lawyers that are near you. In case anyone tries to ask you any more questions about Juni. Please let me know when you get this voice note.

DAD ends voice note.

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

LUPE
Got it.

LUPE ends voice note.

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

PETER
Dee, please respond. Did you get
the message?

DAD ends voice note.

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

LUPE
Probably still asleep, you know
Dee Dee. Do you have any idea if
the FBI even has jurisdiction
here?

LUPE ends voice note.

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

PETER
Dee, it's ten in the morning. Wake
up, please.

Lupe, I wouldn't worry about
jurisdiction. They are just trying
to find Juni, so if you have
something to share, just talk to a
lawyer.

DAD ends voice note.

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

DEE
Sorry, I just got this. You all
realize I work at a Mexican
restaurant that is open past
midnight on weekends, right?

DEE ends voice note.

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

DEE
[bitterly] By the way, why do I
need a lawyer? I don't know jack
shit.

DEE ends voice note.

Two notification sounds. MOM and LUPE have sent voice memos to a GROUP CHAT.

MOM
Language! And I know you know
better, weren't you the one who
taught us all about that...that ACAB
movement?

LUPE
Don't swear at us, Dee. It's a
good thing you don't know
anything. Makes your lawyer's job
easier.

Two more notification sounds, but then a phone call. DEE's phone begins to buzz.

FADE IN: DEE'S ROOM.

The sheets on DEE's bed rustle as he gets up. He answers the call.

PETER
Hey, Dee. Your mom wanted me to
talk to you.

DEE
I'm sorry for swearing.

PETER
We're all upset. But you can have
a little more self control.

DEE
It seems like I'm the only one who
wants to talk about this...this
whole thing as a family, though!

PETER

We have been talking about it, a lot. It's all we are talking about.

DEE

But none of you are answering my questions. I'm not a kid anymore, and my sister has gone AWOL from the CIA! I deserve to know what the hell is going on? Does she have Havana Syndrome? Do we know where anyone last saw her?

PETER

There are a lot of unknowns, and the nature of Juni's job—

DEE

Don't give me that, Dad! You always joked about knowing people who kill people, and being able to track down anyone anywhere in the world. I know you are in touch with people who know a hell of a lot more than *nothing!*

And don't get me started on Lupe...

PETER

Lupe doesn't know anything more than anyone else right now.

DEE

She knows more than me!

PETER

Dee. I love you. I know you want answers—we all do. All I can tell you right now is we need to leave it to the professionals and protect ourselves in the meantime. I...I am very worried about Juniper. I haven't been sleeping a lot, either. You know that. This is really complicated, and with Cuba being involved now...trust me...a lot of people are talking about this and about what to do. Right now I am doing what I can to protect you and Lupe and your mother. But every piece of information shared is information compromised.

DEE

Loose lips sinks ships, even with
your own child? What are we, back
in the Cold War?

PETER

No. We're grieving.

Silence.

I love you, Dee. We'll get through
this, and we'll get Juni back. We
just have to stay strong. There
are a whole lot of very skilled
people looking into this.

DEE

[quietly] Is that a good thing,
though?

PETER

What was that?

DEE

Nothing. I'll...just let me know
when you hear something.

PETER

Okay, niño lindo. I love you.
We'll try to share what we can
when we can, okay?

DEE

Okay. Love you too. Bye.

PETER

Bye.

DEE hangs up and drops his phone with a clatter on his
bedside table. There is a soft KNOCK on his door, RACHELLE
BHATIA, Dee's roommate.

DEE

Just a sec!

DEE sits up off the couch and pulls on his robe.

RACHELLE

[on the other side of the door]
Are you decent?

DEE

Yeah, yeah. You can come in now.

RACHELLE

Sorry, I just heard yelling. You okay?

DEE

I'm fine. It's...you know. Nothing new yet.

RACHELLE

I'm sorry. Seriously. This really has to suck. How is the rest of the fam holding up?

DEE

Not great? I don't know.

RACHELLE

Do you have something to post yet?

DEE

What do you mean?

RACHELLE

You know, a missing person's notice or whatever. I'd be happy to share it on TikTok and stuff.

DEE

Nah, I don't think this is the kind of thing you post on social media. She was...out of the country, last we know, anyway. I probably shouldn't tell you all this. Sorry. This is a whole thing.

RACHELLE

I can't imagine any of this is easy. All of the silence. Can't even say what you feel because the cops probably wiretapped your phone.

DEE

[laughs] Allegedly.

RACHELLE

Allegedly.

RACHELLE turns to leave, then pauses.

Listen, your plants are in good hands if you need to bounce again, okay? For...whatever reason.

DEE

What, trying to kick me out already for bringing the feds to our doorstep?

RACHELLE

Holly has been eyeing your window nook for months now. But seriously. If you need to meet up with your parents for something. Or if you need to, like, flee the country because the CIA is after your family.

DEE

[dry] I'm apparently surrounded by spies.

RACHELLE

You're surrounded by thin walls. I don't wanna know anything more than what I just heard, okay?

But, listen, I know family stuff—secret spy stuff or no—can get out of hand quick. Give us a heads up if you have to abscond in the middle of the night without your plants.

DEE

[laughs] I don't think I have the gas money for another trip any time soon. But thanks.

RACHELLE hits the doorframe twice in goodbye.

RACHELLE

Text me once you're out of this Bourne Ultimatum shit, y'hear?

RACHELLE closes the door behind her.

DEE

[mutters] That movie sucks.

FADE IN: Transition music, tense. Tapping type beat.

CUT TO: VOICE NOTES, AGENT CELIA WHITTAKER. INT. FBI MIAMI FIELD OFFICE.

CELIA

This is Agent Celia Whittaker,
2317-617

BADGE I.D. #: JTT0331614

Case Evidence Attached: Juniper
Menendez, intercepted Voice Memo.

Source: CIA liaison, Joint
Terrorism Task Force

Metadata: Not applicable.

Full voice note attached.

[beep]

These are my personal case notes
on the Juniper Menendez
disappearance and process of the
Joint Terrorism Task Force
investigation.

I'm hitting a dead end with the
voicemail...sorry, voice note.

Of course, there are a few points
that warrant followup, things that
only the family could understand.
The message to her sister, for
example, explicitly telling her to
offer up information to the CIA.
The "illegitimus non carborundum"
quote, being the part that seems
most apparent. But shouldn't a
trained operations officer be a
little bit better at hiding code?
I mean, the three thousand miles
note to the youngest sibling
seemed pretty obvious.

I don't think the family will
answer us if we ask directly, so
I'm fully in the camp of wait and
see how this message triggers the
family, towards certain actions.
Don't get me wrong, I know what

makes more sense to build a
conspiracy case. It's just...

The CIA also would not give us the
original file. Nothing about how
they picked it up. Not even a
warrant to search the family's
phones to cross reference their
file with ours. Only this...*thing*
that's been sanitized and picked
clean. A message in a bottle is
useless. Actually, it's more
useless than a message in a
bottle. At least the bottle has
identifying features. I don't even
know if she used a VPN! If I had
metadata, headers,
packets...something, I could at
least peel back this mystery to
something a little more real.

Let's just hope Juniper tries to
contact them again. I was very
clear to my superiors that the
messages need, well, to have as
little interference as possible.

The running rumor in the office is
that Juniper is playing victim of
this Havana Syndrome weapon, and
has in fact identified what it is.
Bets are circulating about whether
it is actually CIA tech or a
double agent type situation rather
than a Russian-sourced weapon.

As for me? I'm more concerned with
the fact that her entire family
has been roped into this. It would
be one thing if Juniper absconded
without a trace. Now, I am not as
familiar with the CIA and its
impact on family dynamics, but I
think it is...strange.

While I wait for the analyst to
intercept something useful,
Foreman tells me I can't just sit
on my hands.

But I think I need to trust my gut
on this one. I need to watch, and

wait for the family to make the
next move.

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

INT. DEE'S ROOM.

DEE

Hey Juni. I don't know if me
telling you things helps you come
back or keeps you hidden. Maybe
it's both. I'm still running on
little more than nothing here. But
it makes me feel better to talk to
someone about this. So here we
are.

[silence]

All my voice memos to you have
disappeared. All of them except
for the first one you sent.

I kept them all on KEEP. You
deleted them, didn't you? I don't
know how, that's not how I thought
voice memos worked. But...but this
means you have been listening.

I don't know why, but I have a gut
feeling, Juni. I have a feeling
there's something else in there. A
clue? A code? I bet that's what
the feds are looking for. And you
don't want them to find it. It was
just for us—for your family.

I love you, Juni. Talk soon.

DEE ends voice note.

CUT TO: JUNI'S VOICE NOTE CLIPS

INT. DEE'S ROOM - EVENING

JUNI

Hi Mom. Dad. Dee, Lupe. I am
sorry, I'm so, so sorry but...I
don't think I'm going to make it
for Thanks—

Cut to next clip.

-fragments for other people. A few friends here, there. Only you four have seen me from beginning to...well. Now.

Cut to next clip.

-who I was for six years. I lied to you all for six years.

Rewind.

I lied to you all for six years.

Rewind.

-six years.

DEE pauses playback, then scribbles something in a notebook. DEE presses PLAY again, listening to where he left off.

I am not sorry. I don't think I'm sorry.

I'm just sorry I'm missing Thanksgiving.

(deep breath)

Okay. Here it goes. The truth sets you free, right?

Cut to next clip.

Who would have thought, after all this, that it wasn't a dirty bomb or...or fucking sexual harassment at the Farm that got me out.

Illegitimus non carborundum, and your little dogs, too.

I need to find the source. The tr-

DEE pauses playback. Rewinds. Starts again.

-me out.

Illegitimis non carborundum, and
your little dogs, too.

DEE pauses playback and sits back in his chair.

DEE
[quietly] Why that?

Hey Siri, send a voice note to
Juni.

SIRI
GO AHEAD.

DEE
I'm listening to your voice note
again, Juni. Yeah. I've done it
like a billion times already.

Lying to us for six years. You
were, what, my age then? That's
probably when you were recruited,
right out of college. But it got
me thinking. That's also when you
and Lupe started saying that thing
all the time, it was so
annoying..."illegitimis non
carborundum, and your little dogs,
too."

It was on that summer trip in
Italy, right before we went to
Bristol to see Gramma Pam. I
remember that you were really
reserved the whole time, except
when Mom yelled at you for saying
fuck at a restaurant. You were so
combative about it, talking about
how it's your mouth now, you are
an adult, it surprised me. You
were always such a good kid,
respected mom and dad all the
time. The golden child who didn't
swear or sneak out of the house.

I mean, looking back, it was a
latin phrase. Maybe you and Lupe
picked it up at a museum or
something in Rome. Dad let you get
away with it because it was an
army thing, I guess. I don't know
why you added that last bit about

the dogs, though. Or, I can't remember. It was years ago.

Or maybe it was because you and Lupe had something that only the two of you knew. So this brings me to the next thing...

DEE plays the last clip.

JUNI

Lupe, if you see the Company, you know what to tell them.

DEE stops clip.

DEE

The Company is the CIA. I just read that in an article. So what did you want Lupe to tell them? "Illegitimus non carborundum, and your little dogs, too?" That would be weird though, right?

That Latin bit you and Lupe say—it means don't let the bastards get you down.

But why attach it to 'and your little dogs, too'? What's the bastards got to do with the *Wizard of Oz*?

DEE groans.

Am I crazy? Is this even a clue at all? Or are you crazy and just driving us all the same? I texted Lupe about it like five times in the last hour and I've been blowing up her phone in between, but she's got a nerve of steel apparently and has internalized Dad's harping about INFOSEC and she has three thousand miles between us and it's not like I can hop on a plane and bang on the door until Mark is nice enough to intervene...

PAUSE.

Or...Wait.

DEE leans over and plays the last bit of the JUNI's voice note.

JUNI

Dee. I love you. I hope you find your own truth soon. Don't give up. Walk three thousand miles if you have to. Maybe I'll be back in time to hear it for myself.

DEE pauses the voice note. He is quiet for a few beats. Then he ENDS the voice note.

FADE IN: Chatter and official sounding calls for boarding.

INT. ORLANDO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TERMINAL

Notification sound. DEE has sent a voice note to JUNI. There's a call over the intercom.

INTERCOM

Welcome to MCO, the Orlando International Airport.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

We are now boarding American Airlines flight 2677 to Dallas, Fort Worth.

[pause]

Hello, sir. May I see your passport? [pause] Thank you. And what is your final destination?

DEE

Vancouver. Canada.

Pause for effect.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Have a great flight!

Pause as DEE rolls a suitcase into the jet bridge. He brings his phone up to his mouth.

DEE

[laughs a little hysterically, quietly into his phone] Oh man, Juni. Lupe is going to be pissed.

DEE ends the voice note.

FADE IN:

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

FADE OUT: Outro

Havana Syndrome is written and directed by Lisette Alvarez.

Dimitri (Dee) Menendez: Ralph Ruiz

Charlotte the Restaurant Hostess: Cherie Hendrie

Guadalupe Menendez: Adriene Arce

Claire Menendez: Emily Buza

Peter Menendez: Andrew Dos Santos

Rachelle Bhatia: Jasmine Lynn

American Flight Attendant: Anna Jay

Juniper Menendez: Lisette Alvarez

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Those who can't see, hear. Those who choose to find the
alternative, know.