

Episode 8

(Bertolio and Banquist's living room)

Bertolio: Do you believe that? A farewell special...(crestfallen) It's going away for good...

Banquist: (distracted) Oh, a farewell special! That's great, really fitting. Goddamn it where are they?

Bertolio: Were you even listening to what they were saying?

Banquist: Unfortunately, Bertolio, I'm quite distracted. They're...twenty minutes late. Twenty minutes! I could have already eaten dinner in the time we've been waiting.

Bertolio: I can't get my head around this. Wolfwhistle might go away forever after tonight.

Banquist: Yes, yes, that's very sad. Can you just ask someone at work tomorrow about it?

Bertolio: I don't know, Banquist. This is a big one. I might have to skip out on our little date so I can catch it.

Banquist: I'm sure Mr. Whitmore would be very glad of that, Mr. Bertolio. After all, he does drive a small car. (Laughing) Three passengers would allow for more leg room than four.

Bertolio: I'm sure, I'm sure. I was only kidding, of course. I would hate to miss out on an important event in your life.

Banquist: I guess it would be best for you if he simply never came at all then, huh? Well if so you may get your wish. He should have been here so long time ago.

Bertolio: You know, that was strange when the announcer said that this was going to be the last episode of Wolfwhistle. He said something about contractual conflicts, among other things. What does that

mean? How could Wolfwhistle be going off air? This isn't a matinee like The Phantom Pharaoh, or Magician of the Moon. It's the most popular show on radio! How can they just...ax it like this...

Banquist: (annoyed) The world's more complex than that. These stupid show biz types screw each other over all the time. The very second you think a show will last forever, it'll be announced it's crashing and burning.

Bertolio: I never said I did.

Banquist: It was implied.

Bertolio: Well I'm sorry I implied it. But come on, Banquist...there's something not right here! Wolfwhistle's too big for this! If they were gonna can it just like that I would have to have heard about it sometime before. It've been all over the news!

Banquist: Not necessarily, Mr. Bertolio.

Bertolio: Yes necessarily!

Banquist: Oh for God's sakes! I might be missing out on the opportunity of a lifetime here and you're more concerned about the fate of two fictitious blabbermouths! This is probably just another stupid publicity stunt they're putting on because they know they can get people asking all these questions without stopping to think about how worthless the whole thing really is!

Bertolio: It's not worthless! This is an important political show!

Banquist: Oh please! They're all important political shows! If they kill this important political show two more important political shows will sprout up in its place like weeds.

Bertolio: They have important things to say. And often they're the only ones brave enough to say them.

Banquist: Oh no they're not!

Bertolio: Yes they are!

Banquist: No they're not! Every time I turn that stupid box on all I hear are people with important things to say! Telling me what to buy, who to vote for, what to see, what to do. 24 hours, 7 days a week. I come from work and hear it, I go to bed and it's still screaming at me like a child needing to be heard. If you're gonna try to convince me this one show, this one pair of voices is somehow more important than all the others, you're gonna have to do a lot better than that!

Bertolio: (pauses. In a defeated voice) Okay. Maybe for now we should just agree to disagree (pauses). You know, I thought you liked this show.

Banquist: Occasionally, yes, but when I listen I only listen to relax after a long day's work. I don't want to get all worked up by some crazy special episode. The Whitmores already have me worked up as it is.

Bertolio: All right. But you don't mind if I listen, do you? At least until the Whitmores come.

Banquist: Fine with me. (sighs) It's not like we're going anywhere. At least not for a while...

(The Wolfwhistle studio once again)

Eliza: Are we back? Are we back on the air?

Jacob: Were we ever off?

Eliza: I don't know. If this was a normal show, the broadcast would've switched over. But I don't know about now. I have no way of telling, either.

Jacob: Everything looks the same as it did before. Sounds the same, too.

Eliza: You know, for a practical joke, this sure is turning out to be a complex one.

Jacob: We've been over this before.

Eliza: Over what?

Jacob: The joke.

Eliza: And?

Jacob: It's not a joke.

Eliza: Don't be silly, of course it is. I'm not gonna have you drag me down with your moping.

Jacob: It'd be nice if we at least had some light. Then we can find out what that awful stench is.

Eliza: I know. What do you think happened to them, anyway?

Jacob: If I had to guess I'd say the wires were cut. But I guess I could go see.

Eliza: Where?

Jacob: The fusebox, on the other side of the room. Do you know where it's at?

Eliza: Afraid not.

Jacob: It's fine. I'll look at it. In the mean time, are you gonna continue the show?

Eliza: Are we still on?

Jacob: We're always on now. (Walks off to inspect the lights)

Eliza: Well, ladies and gentlemen, sorry if we've been on air this entire time. My co-host and I are still baffled as to what's going on and why. Right now we're trying to fix the lights. Hopefully once everything's running here the way it should be we can keep the show going and wait it out until help arrives. Until then...

Jacob: Good news! Nothing's damaged. They just turned the breakers off.

Eliza: Well that makes sense. If this is just a practical joke they wouldn't damage anything. That's a little drastic, don't you think?

Jacob: You never know. Here, let me just...(suddenly, there is a high pitched feedback sound)

Eliza: Jacob!

Jacob: I know, I know! Just give me a second!

Eliza: Do you even know what you're doing?

Jacob: Just give me a second!

(The feedback stops)

Jacob: Whew. All right, I think I found it. Let there be....light!

(He flips the switch. Eliza immediately screams as the lights turn on)

Eliza: Oh my god!

Jacob: What is going on here?

Eliza: Oh my god...there...hanging from the rafters, what is that...

Jacob: Give me that chair, I'll cut him down.

Eliza: Who is that?

Jacob: Grotius...host of Grotius the Great.

Eliza: How do you know? How do you know what he looks like?

Jacob: I've seen him in the commissary before.

Eliza: My god my god my god my god...Please tell me that's just a wax dummy or something. Tell me that's not real.

Jacob: Oh no, it's real, all right. Flesh and blood. No pulse.

Eliza: Are...are you sure?

Jacob: WANNA COME SEE FOR YOURSELF? HE'S DEAD, GODDAMN IT!

Eliza: No! Oh god no....

Jacob: (bolts to the door, where he begins to frantically pound and scream) HELP! SOMEONE OPEN UP! WE'VE GOT A DEAD MAN IN HERE! (pounds for a few moments before finally ceasing, exhausted and defeated. Then he begins to pace around the room, muttering to himself)

Eliza: What does this mean...

Jacob: It means it's not a joke.

Eliza: What if it...

Jacob: IT MEANS IT'S NOT A JOKE!

Eliza: How do you know that? It could be suicide for all we know.

Jacob: If Grotius decided to off himself, how did he manage to tie his own hands up? It's murder, all right. Every damn word that bird told us is true.

Eliza: How can you make that conclusion...

Jacob: How do we happen to get locked into a room with a bird that tells us we're gonna die that also happens to have a murdered man swinging from its rafters? Huh? Get your head out of the sand! (begins pacing around the room again) Goddamn it, goddamn it...(runs over to the door again and begins pounding again) SOMEBODY OPEN THIS DOOR! THIS ISN'T A JOKE! (turns to Eliza) Well what? You just gonna stand there and do nothing? (begins pounding yet again)

Eliza: (runs over to the console desk, where she hurriedly grabs a microphone) Hello? Hello? Anybody out there? My co-host and I have just discovered something terrible. We managed to get the lights back on but in doing so we found the body of Grotius the Great, a fellow radio host, dangling from the rafters by a noose. There's a dead man in here...whatever's going on is serious. Please, whoever's listening...call for help. Tell them to get to 104 WPR's station at 750 Houston St as fast as they can and get us the hell out of here. Hurry! We don't have time! Call the police at once!

(The sound of Jacob's pounding can be heard for a few more moments until it too suddenly stops)

(Suddenly, a telephone's ringing cuts through the silence)

Banquist: (picks up the phone) Hello? Oh, yes, thank you. Have you heard anything? Well, I know, but...they should have been here a half hour ago! All right, all right. I'll keep calling around, see if anyone knows. Okay...thank you, Eleanor (hangs up).

Bertolio: Well?

Banquist: (trying to maintain composure) I called their neighbors, their co-workers, even the ladies from their church...and NONE of them know where they're at. Did something terrible come up? Did they skip town all of a sudden? Oh heavens no, Miss Banquist. I'm sure that's not the case. Just be patient and they'll eventually come around. You're going crazy in the mean time, you say? Well then up yours! Nobody cares. I need a drink (opens up the bottom of a cabinet near the radio, and retrieves a bottle of whiskey and a shot glass).

Bertolio: Are you sure you wanna start with that now? They could be here soon.

Banquist: Let's not kid ourselves, Mr. Bertolio. Something tells me this rye's gonna be my only friend tonight (pours herself a glass and downs it immediately). Ah! Much better. I feel better already. (In a friendly tone) So how is the show going?

Bertolio: They said they discovered the body of a dead radio host in the studio with them.

Banquist: A dead radio host? Who was it?

Bertolio: Grotius the Great.

Banquist: From that show that's always on later?

Bertolio: Yeah.

Banquist: So, he was, killed by the same people who are going after them?

Bertolio: I assume so.

Banquist: Wow. Well that's very dramatic.

Bertolio: I wouldn't say that.

Banquist: It's not bad per se, but they're definitely raising the stakes with a dead body. Seems like most of the good shows do that.

Bertolio: You're right...that is somewhat unrealistic.

Banquist: Exactly. So not to rub it in, Mr. Bertolio, but I think this means I'm right.

Bertolio: Wait, what?

Banquist: Earlier you thought something was amiss. I said it was just a stunt for attention. I think this goes to prove that point.

Bertolio: (nods) Yeah, I suppose you're right. But still...that doesn't mean this isn't something worth listening to.

Banquist: If you insist.

Bertolio: You really don't care, do you?

Banquist: (Deep sigh) I'll be in the kitchen if you need me...

Bertolio: Wait wait wait...no, you really shouldn't go in there with that. You don't want the Whitmores to find you sopping drunk on the kitchen floor.

Banquist: How old am I, sixteen? I'm not an idiot Bertolio. I'm not gonna drink that much.

Bertolio: They always say that. Here, just let me have it. Trust me, it's better this way.

Banquist: (sighs deeply) The worst part about it is that you're right. Here, let me say goodbye to it for now (pours and drinks another shot. She then hands the bottle to Bertolio, who immediately returns it to its original location inside the cabinet). You know, maybe I should stop worrying about this.

Bertolio: You know, I think you're right. Remember what the doctor said? The breathing trick?

Banquist: You're quite right (a series of deep breaths).

Bertolio: Are you feeling better?

Banquist: Much better.

Bertolio: Perfect. Just try not to think about it. The radio can help with that, believe me! There was this one serial about a British soldier who learned an ancient Punjab technique to shut down all fear when hunting tigers...

Banquist: Thank you, Bertolio. That is quite lovely. How about some music to go along with this?

Bertolio: Of course!

Banquist: Splendid. All right, let's see here...oh, this is a good one. (Banquist puts on a record) May I have this dance, sir?

Bertolio: Why, I'd be delighted, milady. (a pause, as the two slowly dance) We keep missing the beat (they both laugh) I'm hopeless at this. Two left feet.

Banquist: Remember those balls they had at the college?

Bertolio: I don't. Never went, never had anyone to go with.

Banquist: It's just as well. They were dreadful. I might as well have been a circus clown, how garish and graceless I was.

Bertolio: You are lying.

Banquist: Well, I'm glad someone thinks that.

Bertolio: What's the legal term? That is defamation. You are committing defamation. (Banquist laughs)

Banquist: Thank you, Mr. Bertolio. We can't have self-defamation here, that would merit a fine from the district court. (They continue to dance. Tenderly...) What would you want to do if I got a raise and a big bonus? Go on a ship, see London or Paris?

Bertolio: That'd be lovely. I've heard so many stories set there. They keep saying that you haven't seen the world until you've been there.

Banquist: I can't wait...(suddenly upset) unless I don't get a raise or bonus, unless they're actually laying me off...

Bertolio: No no no, it's not that. They wouldn't do that. They're professional. They'd let you know, they wouldn't just disappear on you.

Banquist: (calms down) You're right. They must have a good reason for being late.

Bertolio: Maybe they have a flat tire.

Banquist: Or maybe they were so eager to come get me that they got pulled over for speeding.

Bertolio: Just tell yourself that.

Banquist: I will. And when they do get here, which they will, it'll all be all right. Maybe it's just the whiskey kicking in but right now I feel pretty good about the whole thing.

Bertolio: That's all that matters.

Banquist: Yeah. I think I'm gonna go lie down.

Bertolio: (naughtily) Mind if I join?

Banquist: Well...that would be nice. But the Whitmores could still show up any minute. Now's not the best time.

Bertolio: (disappointedly) All right. I'll be in here.

Banquist: And I'll be in there. Come get me when they show up. What are you gonna do? Just keep listening to that show?

Bertolio: Yeah. I wanna see what happens. (Beat) Don't you want to listen to it with me? Like we used to, all those years ago when we first met? Hands held in that great big chair...listening as tales of horror and heroism unfolded...safe against the darkest and coldest of nights..

Banquist: I do. What a time that was...

Bertolio: Don't you want to go back to those times? They were so simple for us...

Banquist: I do want to go back....but also..... (Beat) Well, I won't harp on you any more. Listen to that show to your heart's content. Just don't be disappointed if it ends up being a dud. I'm gonna take my leave. I'll see you soon, Mr. Bertolio (walks off).

Bertolio: (breaths deep) Whew. Ok, with her gone...I can turn this up a little....(adjusts the volume) Now, let's see if anyone comes to rescue them...