

Crimes at Cartwell
Episode 10

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Draft Script (31/05/21)

Final Edits 15/06/21

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SCENE 1 – INT. FRENCH HOTEL, PENNY’S ROOM

PENNY: I thought the fact Cranston had literally written the book on Phosphorescent Algae (My Aquatic Adventures with Mystical Moss by Dr Cranston Cartwell, available in only a handful of very specialised bookshops), which is very likely the substance I found on the window frame at Cartwell Manor, would change Inspector Colgate’s thinking. But over a crackly line from France, he told me I was wrong and he would still be pressing ahead with charging Walter Herberston-Jones.

F/X: CRACKLY PHONELINE

COLGATE: I’m sorry hen, but Walter had motive; his wife was having an affair with Victoria, he had opportunity; he was first out of the room and was alone for at least half an hour, he had a recognised temper and was a trained killer, and finally the murder weapon could only have come from Walter’s small unit in the war. He’s our man.

PENNY: But what about the ghost?! How do you explain that?

COLGATE: I don’t need to explain that. I just need to find enough evidence as to who killed Victoria Cartwell to convince a judge, and I think I’ve done that with Walter.

PENNY: Aren’t you the least bit interested?

COLGATE: As far as I can tell from all the testimonies everyone had been enjoying a good amount of the hard stuff most of the evening, the place was dressed up real nice and then throw in all the noise and confusion and for all I know it was just a light show by The Sessler woman. I’ve got to go, we’re charging Walter and this call is costing a fortune.

PENNY: He rang off and I was filled with impotent fury. Why wasn’t he listening to me?! I needed more, so was impatient to get back home. But Perry & I couldn’t get on a crossing that day so had to spend the afternoon and evening there.

PERRY: Cheer up Penny girl, it’s lovely here. We can take a walk around the local vineyard, drink some wine, eat some cheese. It’ll be fun.

PENNY: Despite myself it was fun, I had a lovely evening with Perry. He was attentive and kept my mind occupied so my thoughts didn’t stray back to the case and my failure to avenge my friend’s murder. By the time we made it back to our rooms I was feeling much calmer. The afternoon sun had caught Perry’s nose giving it a slightly salmon colour. He was rubbing it distractedly as we stood in the corridor outside my room.

PERRY: Well, all in all quite a nice day really.

PENNY: Yes. Thank you Perry. I needed that. There'll still be time to investigate when we get back tomorrow.

PERRY: Absolutely. But that's for tomorrow. Don't think about it tonight eh Penny? Just get some rest and sleep well. You need to look after yourself. You're important.

PENNY: He stopped toying with his sunburn and looked me right in the eyes. Then he leaned in and gave me a peck on the cheek before dashing into his room on the other side of the hall.

PERRY: Goodnight.

F/X: DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES

PENNY: I stood there for a second, my hand to my cheek where he'd kissed me before I turned in myself. I slept wonderfully, and didn't think of the case once.

SCENE TWO – EXT. FERRY

F/X: FERRY NOISES

PENNY: My alarm woke me early and Perry and I hustled into a French taxi to get to the docks for the first crossing. I eschewed breakfast given what I'd suffered on the trip over. Perry grabbed a croissant as we left the hotel and was chomping away merrily, flakes of pastry flying away in the breeze as the boat cut through the early morning swell.

PERRY: Sure you don't want some Penny girl?

PENNY: No, no thank you Perry. I'm just keeping my eyes on the horizon and my mind focussed on what we're going to do when we get back.

PERRY: What are we going to do when we get back?

PENNY: We're going to speak with Rosie Sessler and find out how much of the séance was her doing, and then figure out who was responsible for the rest. Damn!

I'd made the mistake of looking at Perry while I spoke to him and now felt my stomach rising in my chest.

Out of the way!

F/X: PENNY VOMITS

SCENE THREE – INT. P.P.D.A OFFICES

F/X: OFFICE NOISES, PERRY PULLS OUT A SEAT FOR ROSIE

PERRY: Take a seat.

ROSIE: Thank you.

PENNY: Would you mind telling me a little bit about what you had planned that night?

ROSIE: How do you mean?

PENNY: The show you were going to put on.

ROSIE: Do you mean the séance? I don't really think of them as shows.

PERRY: But they're not real are they Mrs Sessler?

PENNY: Perry.

PERRY: They're not.

ROSIE: You're entitled to your beliefs just as I am mine Mr Pink.

PERRY: But we already know about the gramophone under the table, the mist and flames is all just stage tricks. You said so yourself. What we want to know is what other tricks did you have up your sleeve?

ROSIE: I don't like calling them tricks. What I do requires the right sort of energy in the room and there are little things I can do to help create that, that's all.

PENNY: What sorts of things?

ROSIE: Well what Mr Pink said really. I make sure there are the right sort of sounds around, I sort the lighting, maybe get one of the staff to start some knocking to convince sceptics. Spirits can sense sceptical thought, it's why these things never work under laboratory conditions.

PERRY: Handy.

PENNY: Perry!

PERRY: Sorry.

PENNY: What about the radios, what do they do?

ROSIE: Radios?

PENNY: After the thing appeared all the radios came on, Minnie the maid said that was part of her instructions.

ROSIE: Really? Not from me.

PENNY: We're not going to tell anyone about it, you're secrets will stay safe with us.

ROSIE: I swear I don't know anything about the radios Ms Pink.

PERRY: What about Daniel? Didn't he say he'd bribed the maid to leave the window open?

ROSIE: You'd have to ask him yourself, he's waiting in the car outside I can call him up if you'd like?

PENNY: Yes, please do.

F/X: ROSIE LEAVES

PENNY: She got up and left the office. I rounded on Perry.

What's wrong with you Perry? You're not normally rude like that, she doesn't have to speak to us at all. We need to tread lightly.

PERRY: Sorry, but I don't like all this hocus pocus. She takes people's money and she's lying to them. She can't contact the dead.

PENNY: I think she thinks she can. Is it any different than when we can't solve a case? We still get paid.

PERRY: Of course it's different.

PENNY: How?

PERRY: Well for a start, we've demonstrably solved cases before.

PENNY: There was a first time though, you hadn't solved a case before your first case had you?

PERRY: Well...

PENNY: Had you solved a case before your first case? Because in that case wouldn't that case be your first case?

PERRY: What if I assisted someone else who had previously solved other cases?

PENNY: Ah, good point. But what about their first case?

PERRY: Same situation.

PENNY: All that way back to Cain & Abel?

PERRY: What?

PENNY: The first murder. Who solved that one?

PERRY: I don't know actually.

PENNY: That was always my issue with the bible, loads of death but no detectives.

PERRY: Ha! Your mind is brilliant Penny Pink.

PENNY: Thank you Perry Pink, yours isn't too bad either.

PERRY: So do you believe all this stuff then?

PENNY: Of course not, I just like to niggle you.

F/X: DOOR OPENS AND DANIEL WALKS IN

DANIEL: Rosie said you wanted to see me? I thought we were even?

PENNY: You don't have to talk to us if you don't want to Daniel, our deal still stands.

PERRY: Deal?

PENNY: Don't worry about it Perry.

Daniel Sessler was much more confident than when I'd first spoken to him. He was in a sharp, pinstripe suit, and his hair was finished with geometric precision.

It would still be very helpful if you wouldn't mind answering a few more questions.

DANIEL: Right. But you're not going to try and pin this on me are you? I heard it was that shouty posh bloke Herbert.

PENNY: Walter Herbertson-Jones. That's what the police believe.

DANIEL: But you ain't sure?

PENNY: I just want to know exactly what happened to my friend.

The reminder that Victoria was my friend softened Daniel.

DANIEL: Right. Yeah. Sorry. Course. What do you want to know?

PENNY: Why did you ask Minnie to turn on the radios?

DANIEL: What?

PENNY: The radios. Minnie the maid was told to turn all of the radios on at the culmination of the séance.

DANIEL: You'll have to ask Rosie about that.

PENNY: We did, she says she had nothing to do with it.

DANIEL: Neither did I. Why would I have?

PENNY: That's what I'm asking. You did pay the maid to open the window.

DANIEL: Never spoke to any maid, I paid the Butler £50 mind.

PENNY: Grenville was helping you break into Cartwell Manor for fifty pounds?

DANIEL: Fifty pounds is a lot of money.

PENNY: Grenville has served at Cartwell most of his life as far as I know, I would have thought it would have taken more than £50 to turn his head.

PERRY: Just to confirm you don't know anything about the radios?

DANIEL: Not a bean. I snuck in, as agreed, and was making my way to the study when I got conked from behind and next thing I knew I was chatting to you in the cellar.

PERRY: Thank you Mr Sessler, you've been very helpful. You can go now.

DANIEL: Pleased I could help. Good luck with it. I am sorry about your friend Ms Pink.

F/X: DOOR GOES

PERRY: Are you alright Penny?

PENNY: I'm just thinking Perry. It doesn't make any sense, Grenville wouldn't betray Cartwell Haircare, he loves that company, the manor, and the family name.

PERRY: I've got a bit of theory Penny.

PENNY: A bit of a theory?

PERRY: A bit of a theory.

PENNY: Which bit?

PERRY: We're going to have to wait and see. It's a bit of a risk.

PENNY: Perry explained his plan to me. It sort of made sense but it had some pretty large holes in it and more than one leap of faith.

PERRY: So, what do you think?

PENNY: I looked at him. If he was wrong about this, he & I would have a hell of a time convincing Inspector Colgate not to charge us with wasting police time, obstruction of justice or worse.

PERRY: Do you trust me?

PENNY: I do.

There wasn't a doubt in my mind. I trusted Perry completely, I can't honestly say I thought his plan was watertight though.

SCENE FOUR – INT. CARTWELL MANOR

F/X: PERRY'S CAR ARRIVES AT CARTWELL

PENNY: We pulled up outside Cartwell Manor and I turned off the engine.

You sure about this Perry? If you're right it's quite a risk, and if you're wrong you are going to be in some serious trouble.

PERRY: I'm sure Penny girl. Stick to the plan.

PENNY: He threw open his door and marched up to the big front door of the manor house. Meanwhile I snuck off to hide in the bushes.

F/X: KNOCKING

GRENVILLE: Hello sir. What is all the commotion about?

PERRY: Grenville! I know, I know!

GRENVILLE: Know what sir?

PERRY: You know Grenville! But I'm ahead of them I can cover for you, but I want in.

PENNY: Perry was putting on quite the show, he was panting and gesticulating wildly with his hands. I was worried he might have been laying it on too thick, but then Cranston appeared behind Grenville.

CRANSTON: Grenville what on earth is going on?

GRENVILLE: Mr Pink has paid us a visit sir, but I think somethings wrong with him. He's acting barmy!

PENNY: Perry redoubled his efforts at the appearance of Cranston.

PERRY: Dr Cartwell! Dr Cartwell! Quickly get in my car, I can get you to safety.

CRANSTON: What on earth are you barking about?

PERRY: I know Dr Cartwell. I know you killed Victoria, and I know how. But I won't tell if you give me 25% of Cartwell Haircare. I'll be a silent partner, just sign my cheques and you'll never hear from me.

GRENVILLE: We're not giving you 25%!

PENNY: I couldn't believe what I was hearing, had Grenville just confessed? Cranston had a rather cooler head.

CRANSTON: Of course, I'm not going to give over a quarter of company. I didn't touch Victoria. I was in France!

PERRY: I know! Giving a lecture on phosphorescent algae which you smeared all over yourself so you glowed like the ghost of your brother. The light it gives off in a dark room makes you glow, and by stopping six inches from the ground it made you look like you were floating. We found some, I'm sure when they test it, it will be the same variety you used in your lecture.

CRANSTON: What of it? It doesn't change the fact that I was in France giving that lecture in front of hundreds of witnesses.

PERRY: All due respect sir, I've been to the Salle de Breton and seen the box office records there were only about 25 people there for your lecture. Marine moss isn't exactly a crowd-pleaser.

CRANSTON: Be that as it may, it proves I was in France until at least 8pm.

PERRY: I thought the same, far too late to get across. But then I remembered the time difference. It would only have been 7pm! Plenty of time for a short flight across the channel.

CRANSTON: I didn't take a flight. The police have checked all the airstrips and ports within miles on either side!

PERRY: But you flew yourself! You're a pilot!

PENNY: Perry had reached the climax of his performance and thrust his hand in the air triumphantly. Cranston looked at Grenville whose face was a mask of disbelief. There was absolute silence. Had Perry done it? Were they about to confess to the whole thing?

CRANSTON: Well, well, well Mr Pink.

PENNY: Cranston broke out into a wide toothy grin as he turned back to Perry. I didn't like the way his face had changed.

CRANSTON: If you are correct you've taken quite the risk coming here. If you hope to blackmail me, you can't have told the police yet can you?

PERRY: No of course not, but I've Penny at the office. If she doesn't hear from me within half an hour she's to call Colgate and tell him everything. He'll be here with the specials to lock you up pronto.

CRANSTON: Of course, there isn't any actual evidence is there? What if Grenville & I somehow made you and your car disappear?

- PENNY: Cranston's hand had reached back behind the door frame. My heart was pounding, I knew that Brian had always kept his shotgun there. For security. Vicky had left it as a reminder of him. But had she kept it loaded? Cranston whipped out his hand, but there was no gun. In it he had the same gnarled stick he'd arrived with. He hobbled toward Perry, red in the face with fury.
- CRANSTON: I've half a mind to murder you Mr Pink! Coming here! To my home, which I've only just returned to after years of exile to accuse me of the murder of my brother's wife! How would I have flown the damn plane? I can't fly, can I? Look at the humbling way I have to make my way in this world! Do you really think I could control a plane like this?
- PENNY: This was the crucial moment, Perry's whole plan hinged on what happened next. A calmness washed over Perry.
- PERRY: Ah. I thought you might say something like that. I just need to grab something from my car.
- GRENVILLE: Don't move anywhere. I'll get it for you, and then I'm calling the police.
- PERRY: It's a book on the passenger seat.
- F/X: GRENVILLE GOES TO CAR, OPENS & CLOSSES DOOR, RETURNS
- GRENVILLE: What is so special about this? It's a book about coral reefs. It's not even one of Dr Cartwell's.
- PERRY: No. He's not the author, but when I contacted a friend of mine who runs a little shop filled with fascinating academic books to see if he had My Aquatic Adventures with Mystical Moss by Dr Cranston Cartwell, he told me he didn't but that perhaps I might like this one which Dr Cartwell contributed to.
- PENNY: Perry was playing his trump card, but Cranston didn't seem perturbed.
- CRANSTON: I contribute writings to a lot of academic work, what of it?
- PERRY: Ah, you see. In this book you didn't contribute any text, but rather photographs. Including a rather excellent one of you taking an aerial photograph of a coral in bloom whilst simultaneously flying your Mosquito!
- PENNY: Now the penny dropped, as did Cranston's face and his grip on his gnarled walking stick.
- CRANSTON: Fine, you're right I did it. Grenville helped of course. We intended Daniel Sessler to be the fall guy, two birds with one stone.

PERRY: Grenville knew he was breaking in and knocked him out so he'd have no alibi.

CRANSTON: Right. He'd have been ideal, but Walter had it coming too. We'll cut you in, but you'll have to settle for 20%. Deal?

PENNY: That was my cue. I burst from my hiding spot waving a long-handled microphone. Or at least something that looked like a long-handled microphone. It was actually a broom handle with some foam on the end painted black. We were relying on the shock factor and the distance to sell the illusion.

There is no deal Cranston! Perry just needed to get you talking so I could get your confession on tape! We didn't have any hard evidence you see, but now we do!

As I was talking I could hear the sirens of Colgate and his men arriving from a distance.

GRENVILLE: Sir! The woods!

CRANSTON: Go, go, go!

PENNY: Both the butler and Cranston set off at a sprint, his limp had all been a lie. Perry tried to restrain Grenville, but the old retainer punched him square on the nose. Realising I'd never be able to stop them both I ran to Perry to check he was OK. The villains had disappeared into the treeline when Colgate pulled up.

INSPECTOR: What on earth is going on here? I thought you said an armed robbery was in action Penny. Did one of them attack Perry?

PERRY: I'm fine.

PENNY: There's no robbery. I lied inspector, but we needed you to make a big entrance.

INSPECTOR: What?

PENNY: Cranston Cartwell murdered Victoria, aided by Grenville. Without question.

INSPECTOR: I told you to stay well away. There is no evidence, how would he have got here for one thing?

F/X: OLD PLANE NOISE

PENNY: In that!

Cranston's de Havilland Mosquito roared up out of the woods. That was what the radios were for! To mask the sound of his getaway. We didn't hear thunder, we heard a plane taking off.

COLGATE: No! What about the knife?

PENNY: Cranston told us he had a friend in the same unit as Brian & Walter keeping tabs on them. My bet is the knife is his.

COLGATE: Well what do we do now? They could be heading anywhere.

PERRY: I'm sorry inspector, that's my fault. I tried to stop them physically, but, well...

PENNY: Perry gestured at his nose which was streaming blood.

Don't worry. I don't think they'll be getting too far.

F/X: PLANE ENGINES SPUTTERING

PENNY: Almost as soon as I said it, the plane which had been getting smaller in the sky, turned and began heading back towards the woods. Colgate and his men hurried to the makeshift landing strip, and found a grinning Terry Warner.

TERRY: I thought they might be back. Drained the fuel tank didn't I? Penny's orders.

PERRY: Penny?

PENNY: I called him just before we left the office. Just in case.

PERRY: You are brilliant Penny Pink. Brilliant.

SCENE FIVE – INT. P.P.D.A OFFICES

PENNY: That was the end of the case. Cranston and Grenville were immediately arrested when the sputtering plane came in for a landing. It gave me a modicum of satisfaction to have fulfilled the promise I'd made myself to catch my friends' killer.

Terry parlayed his part in the action into a rip-roaring anecdote with himself as the hero which finally won the heart of Charlotte Blakemore. They now live in America together, even though Terry inherited Cartwell Manor with no other Cartwells around. He gave the place to Saffron to run as an artists' retreat for women. She's very happy. Colgate tried to be angry with us for misleading him, but ultimately he was happy justice was served.

As for Perry and me... it turns out I'd missed some clues; Perry talking about ring sizes, getting jumpy when Colgate was going to search his luggage, and his insistence on a 'romantic' time in France? Perry Pink had been planning to ask me a question.

PERRY: Penny, I think you are just the most fascinating thing in the entire universe. Will you marry me?

PENNY: Of course I said yes. We married in a small ceremony last year, I didn't change my name. But we might have to change the name of the business to the P. Pink & Sons Detective Agency if little Percy who was born a few weeks ago follows in his parents' footsteps.