

Crimes at Cartwell
Episode 9

Written by
Feargus Woods Dunlop

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8 Locks Hill
Frome
SOMERSET
BA11 1NA

Telephone: +44 (0)790 5628 756
Email: feargus@newoldfriends.co.uk

SCENE 1 – INT. CARTWELL MANOR, PENNY'S ROOM

F/X: NOTE TAKING?

PENNY: Cranston Cartwell's arrival has changed my thinking quite a bit to be honest Perry.

PERRY: How?

PENNY: Well before he turned up I was starting to be swayed by Terry that Cranston must be the prime suspect, but now I'm way less sure.

PERRY Me too. His war injury makes him move much more slowly than the apparition which apparently appeared with the appearance of one of the Cartwell twins.

PENNY: Hang on, didn't the idea that the ghost had the face of Brian (or Cranston) come from Charlotte and it'd been backed up by Terry who was hardly a reliable witness?

PERRY: I think you're right.

PENNY: We need to lay aside all the testimony and concentrate on the physical evidence, such as it is. I really want to take a closer look at the murder weapon because of the theory Dr Cartwell offered us.

PERRY: Colgate isn't going to let us do that.

PENNY: No, but we do still have the two clues I found: a small scrap of fabric on a garden fence and some of the sticky glowing goop on a window frame. The window was the one through which Daniel Sessler admitted he had clambered through to commit a crime.

Admittedly the crime to which he had confessed was the relatively minor offense of corporate espionage. He also claimed he had been knocked unconscious by something before he'd been able to go about his plans. Lets have another word with Mr & Mrs Sessler, and see what we can find out.

SCENE 2 – INT. CARTWELL MANOR, ROSIE'S ROOM

F/X: MEDITATION BELLS/WINDCHIMES?

PENNY: I found the Sessler's in The Great Trianta's bedroom. It was in the servant's area, but was comfortable enough. Trianta, Rosie, had clearly brought things with her to decorate it, even for a short weekend stay. There were windchimes, crystals, and other strange ornaments dotted all over. I suppose they were for protection. The couple I'd come to see were sat on the bed, Rosie, in the centre with her legs crossed one over the other, Daniel, slightly more stiffly on the edge. He got up at my knock and offered me the wooden chair in the corner of the room.

DANIEL: How can we help Ms Pink?

ROSIE: Do you want a reassuring Tarot reading? I can put the outfit on?

PENNY: No thank you. I'd like to ask you some more questions if that's OK.

DANIEL: We've already spoken with the police. I'm going to pay a fine –

ROSIE: Which you deserve.

DANIEL: Which I deserve, but if I make a contribution to a children's charity Colgate promises my indiscretion will stay out of the press.

PENNY: That's very generous.

DANIEL: It's a very generous contribution.

ROSIE: Which you're giving willingly.

DANIEL: Yeah. Willingly. But anyway, we'd rather not go over it all again if it's all the same to you.

PENNY: Well I'm afraid it's not all the same to me. And I have friends in the press too.

I gave Daniel a meaningful look, I didn't like what I was doing, but needs must.

DANIEL: Message received. What do you want to know?

PENNY: Tell me about when you got attacked.

DANIEL: I don't really remember anything. I got knocked out. From behind.

PENNY: You didn't hear anyone coming up behind you?

DANIEL: I don't think so. I saw the ghost and next thing I knew I was out cold. But again, I was knocked out. It can affect the memory you know?

PENNY: Fine.

I let it drop and tried a different tack. I pulled out the piece of cloth I'd found and showed it to them.

Do you recognise this?

DANIEL: No, what is it a dishrag?

ROSIE: Hang on, let me see that.

PENNY: Rosie took it from me and looked closely at the faint pattern sewn into the fabric.

ROSIE: I can't be sure, but I think I've seen this fabric before.

PENNY: Really? Where?

ROSIE: At one of my séance's, I think it is part of a ghost costume. Very high-end, probably came from...

PENNY: Hans & Fjit?

ROSIE: Yes!

DANIEL: Well there we go, a new lead for you. I'd say we've done more than enough to keep up our end of the bargain wouldn't you?

PENNY: Yes, thank you for your time.

F/X: DOORS OPENING AND CLOSING, PENNY RUNNING, THEN CAR NOISE

PENNY: I left in a hurry and went to collect Perry, and his car keys, and headed off to Hans & Fjit Novelty Wear.

PERRY: Why so excited Penny girl?

PENNY: If this is part of one of Hans' costumes, he'll have a record of who he rented it to. Whoever that is, is most likely our 'ghost' and probably working with our killer.

PERRY: I see. You don't think he's going to get me to try on any more clothes do you?

PENNY: Of course not. But stop squirming you looked great in some of those costumes.

PERRY: It felt like I was only wearing some of those costumes, everything had holes cut out all over.

PENNY: You'll be fine.

SCENE 3 – INT. HANS & FJIT NOVELTY WEAR

F/X: DOORBELL TINKLE

HANS: Oh! Hallow my little puddy-links! How was the party? Were people jealous of your gorgeous outfits?

PENNY: Someone died.

HANS: Such hyperbole I love it! Tell me everything.

PENNY: No, really somebody was killed.

HANS: Oh. That is not a good wow. Are you two OK?

PERRY: We're fine thank you Hans. We are on a bit of a tight schedule though. We're not really supposed to have left the house, the crime scene. Police orders.

HANS: Oh! An illicit little trip, much naughty. Why have you come to see your bestest of friends Hans then?

PENNY: We wondered if you might be able to recognise this.

I proffered the scrap. Hans whipped his extravagant feather boa over one shoulder and inspected it closely, like a jeweller with a loupe.

HANS: Oh but this is from the ghost costume, it has been damaged. And it's sticky. They will not be getting their deposit back on this.

PERRY: That's what we were hoping you'd say.

HANS: That they will lose their deposit?

PENNY: Well not in as many words, but we hoped you'd recognise it and have a record of who rented it out.

HANS: Oh...

PENNY: The energy visibly drained out of the eccentric little man. He pulled off his boa and swallowed hard.

Hans? Are you OK?

HANS: Ja, ja, ja... Nein!

PENNY: What's wrong?

HANS: The ghost was one of Fjit's creations. Fjit was so talented, so creative, so sexy. But now he is gone, and he has taken all his favourite costumes with him.

PENNY: Gone, gone where?

HANS: I don't know. He met some tanned little thing from St Tropez or somewhere a few months ago and they disappeared together. It's horrible.

PERRY: I'm so sorry Hans, it's much unsexy.

PENNY: Perry!

HANS: He's right! That is the perfect way to describe it. Much unsexy indeed!

PENNY: We stayed with Hans for a little while until he cheered up. Perry gamely tried on a few more outfits for him, including a pair of lederhosen that looked painted on, which had Hans clapping and smiling again. After which we thought we'd drop in on the P.P.D.A office briefly.

SCENE 4 – INT. P.P.D.A OFFICES

F/X: PHONE RINGING

PENNY: When we got to the office our phone was ringing away on the desk. Perry scooped it up.

PERRY: Hello? Hello Inspector Colgate.

 It's Inspector Colgate.

PENNY: Uh huh.

INSPECTOR: What in the devil's name are you doing at your office Pink?

PERRY: I'm talking to you on the phone Inspector.

INSPECTOR: I meant why!

PERRY: Because it rang. Because you called me. I assume. Didn't you call us?

INSPECTOR: Why are you in your offices, on the phone to me and not at Cartwell Manor where you are supposed to be! Are you heading somewhere special so that you can ask-

PERRY: Inspector! Penny is with me, we just wanted to investigate a clue.

INSPECTOR: A clue?!

PERRY: Yes. A clue is sort of like a hint which helps you solve the case.

INSPECTOR: I know that Pink, I'm a ruddy Inspector! I'm the one investigating this case, and I've already solved it. I warned Penny about this, I've been grateful to the PPDA in the past, but you're too close to this one. You should have told me about the knife!

PERRY: The knife?

INSPECTOR: The knife!

PERRY: *(to Penny)* The knife?

PENNY: The knife!

PERRY: Oh the knife! We don't really know anything about it.

INSPECTOR: Well I do, no thanks to you. I spoke with Dr Cranston Cartwell and he asked me how I was getting on with his tip off about the knife. I, of course, had no clue what he was talking about which was most embarrassing. But, on account of the fact that I am a qualified and effective Inspector in good standing, I was able to do some investigating. The knife we found in Charlotte Blakemore's bedroom came from a single army unit in the war. Care to guess which?

PERRY: Oh it wasn't the Gurkha's was it?

PENNY: No Perry, it will have been...

INSPECTOR: A small sub-grouping of the 4th Infantry. Notable in its members were Brian Cartwell and Walter Herbertson-Jones.

PERRY: Oh!

PENNY: I took the receiver from Perry.

That's excellent work Inspector, we're sorry we got carried away.

INSPECTOR: Apology accepted. You've been good colleagues to me in the past, so I'll let it slide this time. But you need to get back to Cartwell immediately. We are arresting Walter Herbertson-Jones as we speak.

PENNY: Arresting him? Couldn't Charlotte have somehow ended up with his knife and just used it?

INSPECTOR: I have testimony from Saffron Herbertson-Jones that the morning after the murder she saw her husband leaving Charlotte Blakemore's bedroom. She initially assumed he was committing infidelity and felt that, given her own indiscretions, she should stay quiet. But upon my further questioning she realised the importance of this moment.

PENNY: I see.

INSPECTOR: I'll see you shortly.

PENNY: Yes Inspector.

F/X: HANGS UP

PERRY: Hang on. If Walter spent the night in Charlotte's room he didn't need mine after all!

PENNY: Not really the point Perry.

PERRY: I suppose you're right.

PENNY: Well we should be heading back to Cartwell. We don't want to lose Colgate as an ally for the future.

PERRY: Quite right.

SCENE 5 – INT. PERRY’S CAR

F/X: CAR NOISES

PENNY: As we drove back to Cartwell I still felt on edge. I should have been satisfied. Walter Herbertson-Jones was a violent man with a reputation for brutality who had just learned his wife was cheating on him with the victim. He fit the bill as an avenging killer perfectly. But the key reason I’d never really warmed to the idea of Charlotte as murderer was; I didn’t see how she could have done it without ending up covered in blood. And the same was true of Walter. More so in fact, because Perry & I had actually seen Walter comatose around the time of the murder. Even if he was pretending to be that drunk, his clothes were immaculately clean because he got changed after being covered in Port.

F/X: CAR SWERVES QUICKLY

PERRY: Penny! What are you doing? The drive is over there, where are you going?

F/X: OFF ROAD CAR NOISES?

PERRY: Penny! Be careful, this car isn’t built for driving off road. It’s not a Land Rover! Where are you going? Watch out for the trees!

PENNY: I just want to see something Perry. It’s been bothering me.

I steered the car as far into the woods as I could then got out and continued into the trees on foot.

F/X: CAR DOORS, WOODLAND WALKING

PERRY: Penny! Penny wait! I’m coming too.

PENNY: Perry leapt from the car and charged through the bracken towards me, his foot must have caught on a root or something because he toppled over quite spectacularly.

F/X: PERRY RUNS, FALLS, LEAPS UP

PERRY: Arrgh! I’m fine, I’m fine.

PENNY: He had dead leaves in his hair and a twig sticking out of his shirt. I walked over and started sorting him out.

PERRY: You’re like a gorilla.

PENNY: Excuse me Perry Pink?!

PERRY: I just meant, the grooming. Like how gorilla's pluck the bugs out of each other's fur. That's all.

PENNY: I see. Have you hurt yourself?

PERRY: No, I'm fine. I just didn't want you rushing off. What are we looking for anyway?

PENNY: I don't know. But I'm convinced that someone wearing Fjit's ghost costume came out of these woods, over the fence and into the manor through the Garden Room window, so I want to have a look. The manor will be over there right?

I pointed off to where I thought the house would be. Perry took my hand and moved it a few degrees further away from the where we'd come.

PERRY: Um... roughly, maybe a bit further down actually.

PENNY: We strode on into the woods. We'd gone a few steps before I realised Perry hadn't let go of my hand. I was enjoying the feeling when he abruptly let go and pointed ahead of us.

PERRY: Penny girl, you were right. Look at that up ahead.

PENNY: What we had stumbled on was a large clearing in the woods, and down the centre were tyre tracks.

PERRY: How did a car get in and out of here but only leave tracks along this central strip Penny?

PENNY: It couldn't. But then maybe it wasn't a car.

PERRY: A bus would have the same problem... two motorbikes which were carried in? But why?

PENNY: A plane Perry, there's just about enough room here for it to be a makeshift runway isn't there?

PERRY: I suppose.

PENNY: And who do we know connected to the case who is a pilot?

PERRY: Dr Cartwell?

PENNY: If he flew his own plane from a private airfield in France and landed here he wouldn't show up on any passport records because he wouldn't have used one.

PERRY: But he can't fly with his injury.

PENNY: So he claims.

PERRY: And besides, he was giving a lecture in France that night.

PENNY: We're going to see about that.

SCENE 6 – EXT. FERRY CROSSINGF/X: FERRY/SEA NOISES

PENNY: It had taken all the faith Inspector Colgate had in us to convince him to let Perry & I, not only leave Cartwell Manor, but to leave the country. He admitted that the tracks in the woods were unusual, but, like Perry, pointed out Cranston's injury history. Not to mention the growing weight of evidence against Walter.

The argument that won him over was he'd not yet had confirmation from any attendees of Dr Cartwell's lecture. So permitted our trip on those grounds. He warned us though, that unless we uncovered conclusive proof that Cranston was involved this would be the end of our involvement with the case. Walter Herbertson-Jones would be standing trial for the murder of Victoria Cartwell.

PERRY: France Penny. So romantic, don't you think? The home of Flaubert, Dumas and Hugo! Are you alright Penny girl? You look a little green?

PENNY: I'm fine Perry, it's just the motion of the ferry. It's making me feel a bit queasy.

PERRY: Right, the up and down, side to side, up and down is it?

PENNY: Emesis incoming!

F/X: PENNY THROWS UP

PERRY: Oh gosh Penny, that's not very pleasant. But I suppose it's food for the fish.

PENNY: The journey took just under 8 hours, and I think I was sick for about half of them. After disembarking we had an hour's taxi ride, which I mostly dozed through, Perry checked us into our hotel and I went straight to bed declining his suggestion of a little walk around the quaint Breton town. The next morning I was feeling revived and we had a breakfast, which my little phrase book tells me is called petit déjeuner, of croissant and coffee. Then headed into town to find the academy where Cranston Cartwell has been giving his lecture the night of the murder. Supposedly.

SCENE 7 – INT. BRETON SALLE ACADAMIE

SERGE: Ah oui madame, Docteur Cartwell was here. He give a grande talk.

PERRY: Do you mean a big lecture or a good lecture? As in 'it was a grand old lecture that'?

SERGE: Pardon?

PERRY: I said: DO YOU MEAN...

PENNY: He heard you Perry, he didn't understand the question. I'm pretty sure he meant grande as in big, or long.

SERGE: Oui c'est vrai.

PERRY: Vray.

SERGE: Quoi?

PERRY: You said say vray so I said vray.

SERGE: C'est vrai.

PERRY: Vray.

SERGE: It is true.

PERRY: What is?

PENNY: I was hurriedly consulting the phrasebook.

C'est vrai, means it is true Perry.

PERRY: Means what is true?

PENNY: That Dr Cartwell gave a long lecture.

PERRY: Aah. Vray...

SERGE: Oui.

PENNY: Oui.

PERRY: Hehehe.

PENNY: Perry are you laughing at wee wee?

PERRY: No. I just remembered something funny, that's all.

PENNY: The rest of our interview with Serge, the custodian of Breton Salle Academie was conducted in similarly pigeon Franglish. To be honest a pigeon could probably have done a better job translating than I was, but eventually we got to the bottom of it. Cranston had definitely been there the night of the murder. He spoke until about 8pm. Serge and many others had seen him. The timings involved meant, even flying, Cranston would have been hard pushed to get to Cartwell Manor by 10pm.

As we were leaving, the craggy faced steward handed us the programme from the evening, it was all in French of course and the language wasn't included in my pocket-size book. We made our way to the 'bibliothèque' in search of a more comprehensive French/English dictionary.

F/X: KNOCKING ON DOOR/RATTLING HANDLE

PERRY: That's funny, it's shut.

PENNY: Maybe they're on lunch?

My stomach was starting to rumble, and the idea of lunch sounded great. Perry brusquely looked at his watch with a puzzled expression.

PERRY: 11.30? Bit early for lunch isn't it? Even for the French.

PENNY: It's not 11.30, it's 12.30 Perry look at the clock on the tower. You haven't put your watch forward to French time.

My stomach was making it clear it was very much on French time and would appreciate some hearty local cuisine before doing anything else thank you very much.

Perry & I had a delicious meal at a small Brasserie and picked over the case as we both cooed over the sumptuous cassoulet. It didn't matter which way we turned the facts, all the evidence pointed toward Walter. But I still couldn't get past the lack of blood on his clothing and was convinced it had to be someone not at the party. Perry saw my point but was more concerned with how Walter had achieved the spectral effect at the séance.

PERRY: You don't think we saw an actual ghost do you Penny? The Great Trianta does seem properly convinced that Cartwell is haunted.

PENNY: I don't Perry, and neither do you if you're honest with yourself.

PERRY: No, I don't. But what was that strange stuff you found if not ectoplasm or whatever Trianta claimed?

PENNY: I don't know.

After lunch we headed back to the library. We were shown to a lovely reading table and provided a large French to English dictionary by a stunning French woman. She had long dark hair down to the small of her back and legs that stretched belief. My eyes were on stalks. Perry didn't seem to notice her at all, diving straight in to the job of cross referencing the language in the programme with the dictionary.

PERRY: Penny!

PENNY: What?

PERRY: Dr Cartwell's lecture was on marine biology!

PENNY: What's so shocking about that? He told us he studied marine wildlife.

PERRY: Specifically algae though.

PENNY: What's algae?

Asking Perry a direct question like that was risky, it could always lead to a very long winded answer that spun off on detailed non-sequiturs. But thankfully today he stayed on track.

PERRY: It's sort of like grass or moss that grows in the sea.

PENNY: Why did that cause such a reaction then?

PERRY: Because the lecture was all about Phosphorescent Algae – sea mosses that when stimulated appear to glow in fantastical ethereal colours! Just like the goo you found on the window frame and which could have been used to make Cranston look like a ghost who looked like Brian who looks like Cranston!

PENNY: We need to call Inspector Colgate!