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The Town That Dreaded Sundown

By Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa

In the spring of 1946,
in the small town of Texarkana,
on the Texas-Arkansas border,
a series of horrific murders
were committed
by a masked assailant known
only as "The Phantom Killer."
For three harrowing months, the Phantom
stalked the back roads of Texarkana,
following young couples
looking for privacy to isolated areas,
where their screams for help
would go unanswered.
Though several arrests were made
in connection with the brutal slayings,
which ended as suddenly as they began,
the killer's identity
was never confirmed.
Indeed, many people who lived
through that nightmare time
believed the Phantom
spent the rest of his days free,
walking the streets of Texarkana
quietly, anonymously,
until his assumed death.
In 1976, a film inspired by the infamous
Moonlight Murders was released.
Every year, on Halloween,
The Town That Dreaded Sundown
is screened somewhere in Texarkana,
in tribute to the Phantom's legacy
of death and blood.
Today, Texarkana
is a place haunted by its past,
defined by a mystery
that was never solved,
and a tragedy
that could never be forgotten.
The following happened
in Texarkana last year.
Sammy! Sammy!
You're not enjoying this, are you?
Oh, I just don't like
these kinds of films so much.

Why didn't you say so?

We can go.

Really? Do you mean it?

Stop it!

I mean, man, the last time I saw
this movie was when I was, like, 12.

God bless you and the Texarkana
Fellowship Church invites you
to stop the Devil with gospel.

Hello, sister.

You take a look at this now.

This is a godless film
that you're watching here.

And I want you to listen
to my broadcast on Friday
and come to church on Sunday.

I'll tell you all about it.

Welcome back.

This is KYGL, Oldies on the Border.

It's Halloween night,
so if you're sitting at home,
waiting for the trick-or-treaters to come by,
we'll keep you company with our usual...

Real people died, you know, young man.

Real people died.

That's right. That's right.

It's a godless film and I want to see you
on Sunday. We welcome you.

That's good. You leave.

This is a godless film.

It's good that you're leavin'.

What?

I'm just having a good time
with you, Jami.

The only reason I play football
is to get a scholarship and go to SMU.

Yeah?

And how about you? Where'd you apply?

You did apply, right?

You're, like, super smart.

Yeah. Yeah, I did.

I applied to UT Austin,
NYU, and Cal State.

Wow. That's impressive.

Oh, I probably won't get in,
but, you know, aim high.

You should.

My dad used to write
for the Gazette, actually.

My grandma says it's in my blood, so...

Even though no one reads it,
I like writing for the paper.

I could do that from here
and stay close to my grandma.

- If I don't get in.

- Right.

Well, I'm glad you finally said yes.

Me, too.

- Wait.

- What?

Did I... did I do something wrong?

No.

What the hell is he doing?

He's just a Peeping Tom.

He's not gonna do anything.

Corey, we don't know that.

But look.

See?

He just wanted a show.

He's just some asshole
from the drive-in.

Let's just go, though. Is that okay?

Yeah.

- Get out of the car.

- Don't, Jami. Stay in the car.

Get out of the fucking car
or I'll shoot her in the face.

Do your momma and daddy know
where you were tonight, boy?

The movie. Yes.

Well, what about yours?

They're dead.

Take your pants off.

- What?

- Take off your fucking pants.

Corey, just do it.

Okay, all right.

- Come on, man.

- Get down on the fuckin' ground.

- Corey.

- Okay. All right, I am.

I'm not gonna run anywhere.

Now... Now, please, can...

can you just let her go?

No.

Please don't kill him.

You.

Turn around. Do not look back.

All right, if you want money,

I can get you money.

- I don't want money.

- What do you want?

I said don't look back.

What are you doing?

What are... What are you...

- Shut the fuck up!

- What are you doin'?

- Shut the fuck up. Shut the fuck up!

- What are you doing?

- What the fuck are you doin'...

- Corey!

- Please, no! No, please!

- No!

Please.

No.

You looked.

This is for Mary.

Make them remember.

What are you doing?

No, please, don't hurt me.

- Who is that?

- What?

Oh, no. Please don't hurt me.

This is Texarkana 911.

What is your emergency?

We're at the Twin Star Drive-In.

We need an ambulance and the police.

Is someone injured?

Yes. A girl and maybe her boyfriend,

I don't know. She is hysterical.

All right. All right.

He was on top of me.

He could have killed me, but he didn't.
You say the Phantom told you something?
I don't know why, but he said
he was doin' it for someone named Mary.
- Were you drinkin'? Doin' any drugs?
- No.
Did the doctors find any drugs in her?
Well, as a precaution, we're gonna
have someone in front of your house.
I... I can do that.
- Thank you.
- Until we get some more information,
Jami, we'd like to ask you not to discuss
any of this with the press.
They've been all over this story,
as you can imagine.
Once again, for those just joining us,
24 hours after the shocking
Phantom-inspired murder
of a 17-year-old high school student,
no arrests have been made.
It is unreasonable to try and find meaning
in this grotesque and godless crime,
but that is exactly
what we must do as a community.
Like a lost reel
from The Town That Dreaded Sundown,
the attack on Halloween night took place
in a secluded, wooded cul-de-sac,
just off Highway 6, an area
that used to be called Lovers' Lane.
Grandma, do you remember
anything about the murders?
Oh, dear girl, barely.
Just what I heard later.
You know, your... great-grandpa
and your great-grandma
lived in this house when it happened.
I remember my momma once said
that it was like the town was being tested
and nobody knew why.
Even the grown-ups were scared.
He was the bogeyman, they said.
Can't catch the bogeyman.

Can't kill the bogeyman.
His father is the devil
and his mother is a whore.
You know, before that summer,
everybody would leave
their doors unlocked.
And after the summer,
you saw a stranger,
you wouldn't wave hello.
You'd just cross the street.
And what about when they made the movie?
- What about it?
- Were people still afraid?
The Phantom? No, that faded.
Nobody knew exactly
who he was or what he did,
just that... he'd lived in this town
and attacked some teenagers
on Lovers' Lane.
And then the movie brought it all back.
This is for Mary.
Humility, devotion, sacrifice.
Mr. Holland...
I just wanted you to know
that he was so brave.
You left my baby boy!
- Margaret.
- You slut!
- Margaret.
- You slut! You left him!
It won't bring him back.
- You left my baby boy!
- It won't...
I want my baby!
Given what you've been through,
I'd like to prescribe a mild
anti-anxiety medication to help you...
No, ma'am. No, thank you.
I've spent the last seven years
on all different kinds of medication
after my parents passed away.
I'm not interested in anything like that.
In your file I read
that you applied to colleges.

- To study...

- Creative writing.

I'm not sure it's something

I'm ready for, or made for that,

and leaving town... I...

I don't want to. Especially not now.

What about these dreams

you've been having?

- What do you think they're about?

- About Corey.

Well,

Corey asked me out and I was flattered.

I don't get asked out all that much.

So I just wanted to show him that...

I...

That I was...

- Grateful?

- Yeah.

So...

when he suggested

that we leave the movie,

I thought we could go someplace.

And even if we just kissed

for a little while, he would like me more.

You didn't do anything wrong, Jami.

He was just a really good person.

He was just a really good person

and he didn't deserve that.

He tried to protect me.

Jami.

Try writing about this.

It might help you find a way through it.

Baby!

Glad you made it home safe, baby!

Yes!

Oh, baby. I'm sore. I need a break.

...four in a row for you on KYGL.

There's a machine by the stairs.

If they got cookies,

get me some cookies.

I need the sugar.

I love you, baby.

I love you, baby.

Hey, knock when you come back.

So I know it's you.

Help me! Help!

Help!

No!

Hello?

I'm going to do it again and again
until you make them remember.

I think I need to tell someone.

Well, you just did. Me.

I mean, like a reporter
at the news or something.

He said he was gonna do it again,
and if he has a message
and he's using me to get it out,
I have to say something. It's...

And he's using you why?

'Cause he likes you?

I don't know.

Miss Lerner, I promise you...

we will investigate this. I will personally
make sure that it's investigated.

Thank you.

I just don't understand
why he thinks we deserve this.

Well...

I'll tell you what,
I wasn't born in Texarkana,
but I've been around here
long enough to know one thing...

And that's that just about everyone
around here

has got some kind of blood
on their hands.

Three weeks after the shocking death
of high school senior Corey Holland,
the town of Texarkana has awoken yet again
to another gruesome act of violence.

This time, two people were found dead.

Corporal Daniel Torrens was coming home
to spend Thanksgiving

with his girlfriend, Kendra Collins,
when they checked into this motel...

At a few minutes past midnight,
the couple was attacked and killed,

their bodies mutilated
almost beyond recognition.
A heart full of hate, that'll do it.
A soul consumed by vengeance. Sin.
The Sheriff's office has been in contact
with the Texas Rangers
to help with the investigation.
But in the meantime,
a Town Hall meeting has been scheduled.
Reverend Cartwright,
will you lead us in a word of prayer?
Our Dear Heavenly Father, we ask you
to deliver us through this trial,
shield us during this time
of fire and blood,
of confusion and despair.
We ask you to lend us
some of your strength
and give it to these fine young men
and women that they may help guide us
through this forest
of fear and darkness...
This town, where I was born,
where I grew up,
- is the only place I've ever known.
- Amen.

The Mayor's asked us to hold
this forum to give you an update
- and hear your concerns.
- Well, an update would be great!
People are saying the Phantom is back.
That after 60 some years he's come back
and that we need to be ready.
Ma'am, he'd be 100 years old.
Every time we show that GD movie,
there's a GD party out there!
The Phantom is our dirty secret.
That movie will never be shown
in Texarkana again.
- Not on the Texas side.
- And not on the Arkansas side, either.
And while you're at it, why don't you
tear down that statue of Jim Bowie?
Isn't he holding one of them GD knives?

Why don't you rip that down?
Everyone knows some piece
of the story, but...
- the whole truth has been all but buried.
- Oh, We're all so surprised
that the Phantom's back?
Of course he is.
You can't leave a candle
burning in a window for someone
and then be surprised
when he finally shows up!
Amen. Amen, sister, Amen.
Most of the people alive back then
are no longer with us.
Or they just don't want to remember.
- Then you shutter the bars.
- But everything comes back.
The past is alive, all around us.
Order!
"Disciples of Evil."
That's what my daddy said.
Hi.
The library's paper archives
only go back for 10 years.
They said I should come here if I was
looking for articles in the Gazette
- from the '40s and '50s.
- Stuff about the Phantom?
Yes.
All the best stuff is upstairs.
In the jail.
Listen up!
As of this moment,
the Texas Rangers are in charge
of this investigation. Specifically, I am.
They moved everything in here
when they decommissioned the prison.
Now we just use it for storage.
All of our archives and files.
It's in here.
Trust me,
I understand how you feel right now.
I once had a Texas Ranger
come into my house, and it wasn't easy.

Sparkplug, give us the room.
Now, let's get down to business.
I want open, clear lines of communication
between Texas and Arkansas.
One person from each side
reporting directly to me.
So are you just casually
interested, or...
I don't think we'll figure out
who the Phantom is now
unless we figure out
who he was back then.
- Cool.
- We have two jobs, friends.
To capture this bastard
and to keep the good people of Texarkana
from killing each other out of fear.
We are not huntin' a ghost.
We are after a flesh and blood,
cold-blooded killer,
who, up to this point,
has not made one mistake.
- Due respect, Ranger Morales...
- Call me Lone Wolf.
I think very highly of myself,
and I've also earned it.
Due respect, Lone Wolf,
he was videotaped.
I'd like to see that footage.
Oh, and the movie.
Believe it or not, I've never had
the pleasure of seeing it.
Everything from 1945 to 1952
is gonna be in here.
You know how that works? The microfiche?
They were gonna throw it out,
and I said, "Hey, why?
"You know, it works. Bring it here."
Well...
Well, thanks.
Yeah. Good luck.
Oh, shit, sorry.
You're Jami Lerner, aren't you?
I'm Nick.

I went to Evans High with you.
We were in the same chem class.
We were?
Yeah, you sat in the front to the side.
I sat in the back to the other side.
And when I recognized you, I thought...
"Holy shit, that's her,
and I hope she's okay."
That's all. I just wanted
to see if you're okay.
Yeah, I am.
And... give you this.
It's the greatest hits the Gazette
published back when it was happening.
And then they did a retrospective.
It's usually \$12 for xeroxing,
but you can...
Don't worry about it. Just go ahead.
Thanks.
Well, I'll just be downstairs,
manning the desk, if you need anything.
From the KYGL on the Border family
to your family, stay safe out there.
If you do go out, go out
in a group, and don't play hero.
You see someone that looks suspicious
comin' your way,
cross to the other side
of the street, will you?
Oh, my God.
"They couldn't catch me 66 years ago
and they never will.
"I come and go as I please.
I kill when I please.
"You may think I'm a horrible,
sick murderer,
"but I'm not, I love my neighbors.
"I wish they would stop
and let my soul rest in peace."
"For you see, I am the soul of Texarkana.
I am the reckoning foretold."
Look, I can understand
how this can be upsetting,
but it's also most likely a fake.

Well, the Zodiac, he sent
a manifesto to the press and...
Yes. And so did the Son of Sam,
and the Axeman of New Orleans,
but to reporters, not teenagers.
We all realize it could be
a hoax, Deputy.

But until it's 100% confirmed, we will
take it and this young lady seriously.
I want my entire team to hear
what you have to say.
If you think it's important,
we think it's important.

Well...

I've been researching the original case,
and going through the court transcripts.
Do you know who Benjamin Sewell is?
He was a car thief, arrested
in 1946 in Texarkana
for possession of a stolen automobile.
A lot of people think
that he was the Phantom because...

Well, the killing stopped
once he was arrested.

- How long was he in for?
- Thirty years.

And then Benjamin Sewell died,
Ms. Lerner.

Yes, sir. He died last summer.
In a hospital in Fort Worth.

I spoke to a nurse that worked at the
hospital, since before Benjamin died...

- Come on, we don't have time for this.
- Hold on.

She said a young man used to visit him.
His son, they thought.

What if it's him? That the passing
of his father set him off
and he came back here
to finish his father's work?

Benjamin Sewell did have a son, Ms. Lerner,
but he died in a bar fight two years ago.

He did?

It's all right, Jami.

We went down that same rabbit hole.
This is KYGL, Oldies on the Border,
and if you've got us on,
you're probably getting ready
for the big football game this weekend.

The Texas High Tigers versus
the Arkansas High Razorbacks.
It's gonna be a blood match, folks.
But as always...

He said he'd shoot me
if I got any closer.
Well, that's his job.

How'd it go at the station?

- Not so well.
- It's no surprise.
- Grandma, this is...
- Nick Strain.

I went to the same high school as Jami.

- And now?
 - I work at the archives. Researcher.
- I found you some really cool stuff
from back when they were making the movie.
You know, some of those people
are still around.

- No college?
- Just making some money first.
- Family?
- Grandma.

My parents moved to Denton last year,
so I'm living with some buddies.

- I'll be in in a minute, okay?
- All right.

Sorry about that. You want to sit down?

You know, they did tons
of research for the movie.

The director and his son.

Thanks for bringing me this stuff.

Yeah.

Can I ask why
you're helping me with all this?

I always wanted to talk to you.

Why didn't you?

Didn't think I'd get very far.

I never saw you with a...

boyfriend or friends or...
I asked around and...
I was like, "What's her story?"
- Then someone told me about...
- About my parents?
Or...
that for the last seven years
I've been totally out of it and...
Both.
My parents didn't really move to Denton.
I just said that 'cause...
I didn't want your grandma
to think I was this... you know,
basket case.
Which, of course,
now I really seem like one.
Where are they?
Well, my dad killed himself last year.
He was an... an alcoholic, and...
my mom... kinda...
She just got lost after that.
She's at Trans-Allegheny.
Well, it's a loony bin.
Oh, hey...
they're having a vigil
tonight at the school. For...
the soldier and his girlfriend.
And for Corey.
You wanna go?
You don't mean that fellow
they call the Lone Wolf
- of the Texas Rangers?
- That's right.
Since I'm in charge of this investigation,
things are gonna have to be handled my way.
We got a cold-blooded killer here.
A man who nobody sees.
A Phantom who... so far
hasn't made any mistakes.
What are you doing?
No, please, don't hurt me.
Please.
I guess it was crazy of me to think
I could help the police,

but I'm gonna keep researching.

Keep writing.

Their stories need to be told, so...

- Arrest him.

- On the ground!

He killed Danny.

But I got him. I got his ass!

- Jami.

- No! No, Nick...

Wait! No! I need to know!

Excuse me. May I, please?

Ladies and gentlemen,

Sheriff Underwood has just informed me that the man who killed Corey Holland, the man who killed, viciously, that couple, that man has been shot, I'm told.

And I don't know what his condition is, but I do know that no one else was hurt.

And that that, finally, is something that we can give thanks for.

Reverend Cartwright,

would you please lead us in a brief prayer of gratitude?

Sweet Heavenly Father, we have been delivered.

We praise the men and women who have led us through this darkness. Sweet Jesus, thank you for your mercy.

- Amen.

- Amen.

Now, we've had a quiet night here.

But I do believe that it would be appropriate for us to have a little music that we could dance to, so, gentlemen, I'm gonna lead you off.

One, two... One, two, three, four.

- What was she doing?

- "A one..."

The worst dance moves ever.

- Straight home now.

- Yes, sir.

It's right here.

Remember when we used to come over here

and smoke cigarettes?
Thought we were such hot shit.
So...
So how does this work?
I don't know.
I thought maybe you could...
You know.
What?
You know.
Go down there,
and suck it.
Suck it?
I don't know. Maybe a little?
What, is it hard?
- Yeah. Isn't yours?
- Yeah.
You first.
And then I'll do you.
Maybe we could...
jerk off together.
Dude, drive! Come on! Hurry up, come on!
Run, Johnny! Run!
No! No!
Hi.
- Who was that guy at the vigil?
- Name's Paul Mason.
A freshman over at Texarkana College.
He's a messed up kid but...
- He's not the Phantom?
- No.
Some stupid teenager
went out looking to get shot.
Left a suicide note in his dorm room.
But just because he wanted to die
doesn't necessarily mean
- he's not the Phantom, right?
- Hell, Jami...
I... I did not want
to tell you this but you're...
There was another murder last night.
It was two boys.
We're checking
security cameras at the scene,
but it does look like it happened

after Paul Mason was shot.
It was Sunday, March 3rd, 1946.
The beginning of a reign of terror
for the people of Texarkana
and surrounding areas
of Arkansas and Texas.
Well, that's the most god-awful thing
I've done in a long while.
They asked me if their...
their sons...
were dead before
he mutilated their bodies.
I lied.
I... told 'em as far as I could tell,
they had passed before the worst of it.
Maybe they had.
They cried.
These two grown men, I've known 'em...
all their lives.
Since they were boys.
We catch him, we kill him,
that'll make it better.
- That'll at least bring them peace.
- I agree.
To that end,
after our friend kills those kids
with the trombone,
who does he go after next?
In the movie, after the trombone killin',
there's a double homicide at the farmhouse.
Every damn house out here
is a farmhouse.
Texarkana looked normal
in the daylight hours
but everyone dreaded sundown.
Maybe I was wrong, Nick.
Maybe there is no connection to the past
and the Phantom is just the bogeyman.
Like my grandma says.
The first time I heard about the Phantom,
I was eight years old.
I was at a sleepover
at my friend Chrissie's house.
I called my parents to come pick me up.

And that was the night of the crash.
That night in the woods,
he was on top of me
and I thought, "This is it."
You know, it should have happened
when I was eight years old.
It's finally caught up to me now.
Death.
It's following me
and it's only a matter of time.
- I guess I'm a little messed up.
- I don't think you are.
- Yeah, that's just 'cause you are, too.
- Good.
- Nick, what are you doing?
- It's okay.
No, it's not okay!
- I thought that...
- I can't believe you just did that.
Look, I'm sorry,
I just thought that we had this...
I need you to get out
of the car right now.
Nick, I mean it! Get out of the car!
Are you serious?
Oh, that looks just fine.
That's very nice.
You got everything now, the scallops?
The potatoes and the ham?
Ranger. Hank.
Well, Merry Christmas.
- Merry Christmas, Reverend.
- Merry Christmas, Joe.
Well, what can I do for you gentlemen?
Is there a place the three of us
can go and talk, Joe?
I didn't send this e-mail.
Well, the FBI traced it
back to you, Joe, so...
Why'd you send it to the girl?
To muddy up the waters?
I don't know what to tell you.
Here's what I think,
I don't think you killed anybody.

But I do believe you sent this message.
See, I hear you at night, preachin'.
Nothin' much for me to do
in my hotel room, so...
I wonder, "Are you doing this
for publicity, or..."
He chose that girl to be his herald.
His messenger.
He is doing the Lord's work.
He's killin' our kids, Joe.
My church is more full
than it has been in years.
People are coming to me
asking for redemption, for salvation.
They're scared, Hank.
They want to walk
on the righteous path again.
Now, I want to call the Mayor.
And then I want to call my lawyer.
- Merry Christmas, ma'am.
- Merry Christmas.
I was wondering if Jami's around.
He's kidding, right?
I'm sorry about what I did.
No, I'm sorry. I can't believe
I made you walk home.
I took the bus.
Hey, I wanted to tell you.
I found out Charles Pierce, Jr.
is alive.
- He's the son of the director of The Town...
- The Town That Dreaded Sundown?
Look, I know it's a long shot, but...
I mean, the movie defined Texarkana
just as much as the murders did.
Anyway, he lives here, in Texarkana.
Near here, out by the dredge.
- You talked to him?
- No, I've been asking around about him.
He does odd jobs for the city,
doesn't even have a cell phone.
But worth a try. Right?
- If I can get in touch with him?
- Yeah, definitely.

- Thanks.

- All right.

This is for you.

Nick.

Thank you.

This one's for all the brave men and women
who are out there each and every night
patrolling the streets,
doing everything they can...

We do not, and I repeat, we do not believe
that Reverend Cartwright is the Phantom.

We have taken Reverend
Joseph Cartwright...

Get me started, Elmer.

Every Christmas, Ardele.

They don't have you working tonight?

Well, I just arrested one of Texarkana's
most prominent citizens
for sending an e-mail, so...

That's enough for tonight.

Hank. Hank!

Mark it.

Action, Bud.

My daddy was a genius visionary.
Could have been the next Orson Welles
if he'd gone to Hollywood,
but he wanted to stay in Texas
and tell our stories.

You know, Texas stories.

Not all that Hollywood bullshit.

Oh, that. Yeah, that's pretty cool.

Yep. That's the original.

Go ahead and touch it if you want.

- No, thank you, sir.

- Go ahead.

- That's okay. I don't... I don't want to.

- Okay.

Mr. Pierce, I'm writing something
about the Phantom,

- about his legacy in our town and...

- Well, I can tell you who the killer is.

Would that be interesting to you?

- Sure, yeah.

- Well, all right.

Well, my father, when he was doing his research, he talked to everyone. Most people believe that Benjamin Sewell was the Phantom. No, he wasn't. No, no, no, no. Sewell was not the killer. No, they railroaded that poor son of a bitch. No, the police just wanted someone to be the killer.

- How do you know that for sure?
- How do I know? I don't know. You can't know. You know, I'll tell you a story that my father...
- told me about Hank McCreedy.
- Hank McCreedy?

A few days after the last murder at the Stark farm, the police on the Arkansas side, they found a body... all in pieces. It'd been run over by a train. Now, this is the Arkansas police who say, "Oh, it's the Phantom. "He committed suicide." No more Phantom.

- Based on what?
- Nothin'. It was based on nothin'. But Hank McCreedy's pregnant wife, she demands an autopsy. And then it come out. He wasn't run over. He was stabbed more than two dozen times, right next to the tracks. My daddy, he had a theory about that. He said that the Phantom killed McCreedy, you know, his last victim, his final goodbye. And then he hopped a train to California. Mr. Pierce, I've read everything there is to read on this.

I've never even heard
of this Hank McCreedy.
It should have been front-page news.
But while the Arkansas police
were findin' McCreedy,
the Texas police,
they were arresting Sewell
and so you got two different camps
each saying they got the Phantom.
And what neither of them
is piecing together
is that Sewell was in custody
when McCreedy was killed,
proving that neither one
was the Phantom.
So Sewell was in jail,
and then, did anything
ever come from McCreedy?
Oh, he's dead.
Yep, and dead men don't complain much.
But his pregnant wife, Mary,
she's pissed as shit.
- Her name was Mary?
- My daddy tracked her down in 1974.
And, oh, she was still bitter.
She said that Texarkana had done
worse than killed her husband.
It had shat on his memory.
And in the process,
it was shitting on her life.
It was shitting on her son's life.
Who... you think is the Phantom?
No! No!
Sorry.
Hank McCreedy's dead.
His son is dead. His grandson...
is still alive.
That's your Phantom, right there.
- You're making this shit up.
- No! Boy, listen to me.
I am telling you what I know to be true.
That Mary McCreedy did pour poison
about Texarkana into Hank Jr.'s ear.
Hank did the same thing to his son!

They did, consciously or unconsciously,
they bred themselves a killer!

Mr. Pierce, do you have
any proof of this being true,
or is this just something
that your father told you?

My daddy asked me
to make a sequel to Town,
to finish the story he started and to set
the record straight about the McCreedys.

He was my best friend.

Now he's deceased.

I tracked down Mary McCreedy in 1986.

I found that scary old bitch
on her deathbed,
and she warned me.

She said that her grandson would do
what her son didn't have the balls to do.
Make Texarkana pay for its sins.

Yeah. And no one else
has thought of this?

Not like the police, or the FBI,
or the goddamn fucking Texas Rangers?

Do you believe his story?

Are you kidding me?

The man lives on a boat.

Wait, do you believe him?

I don't know.

Hey, I'm just saying,
if McCreedy did have a grandson,
he'd probably be in his 20s
or his 30s, at least. Nick.

Come on.

As far as we know, fucking Charles
B. Pierce, Jr. could be the killer.

He doesn't have a reason to be.

His story was told,
his father's story was told.

- Yeah, up until the sequel.

- But they're a part of the legend.

They're in the movie.

They're there somewhere.

- All of them except for...

- McCreedy.

Now, his name wasn't even mentioned in the papers. He doesn't have a plaque anywhere. He's not even in the movie that they show every damn year. It's...
- It'd be upsetting.
- It's an injustice, Nick.
Hank McCreedy's grandson would see it as an injustice. Now, this is a very sad day for us all. It always is when you lose an officer of the law in the line of duty. Now, I did not work with Deputy Tillman long, but you all know him a lot better than...
How many of these have you gotten? This is the second notice of acceptance. Grandma, I just met somebody and I think...
I am not gonna let this mess be the most important thing in your life. Grandma, it already is. I have talked to your uncle in California and he said that we can stay with him as long as need be. Pack up. We'll leave before daybreak. Tomorrow for sure? I'm already packed. You couldn't wait a day?
- I'm not gonna see you.
- I hate that. I could come visit, though. Yeah, of course. Are you okay? Yeah.
- Grandma. I'll just be a second.
- Okay.
So, I'm not sure if anyone told you, but my grandma and I are gonna take off for a little while.

Yeah, she mentioned that.
Can I show you something?
It could be nothing, but I just think
it should be investigated by someone.
- Who's he?
- His name's Hank McCreedy.
He was the original Phantom's last victim
but he's sort of forgotten about.
I heard a story about him,
so I did some research,
and he's got a grandson somewhere.
I've been writing an article.
I'm gonna try and finish it
when I get to California.
I'll look into it for you, I promise.
Jami. Come on, hon.
Drive safe.
Never left Texas my whole life.
Isn't that somethin'?
Do you want anything else?
Just a coffee?
A Danish. And... get some water.
Good morning.
It's New Year's Day here at KYGL,
and for you early birds,
here's a classic.
Grandma?
Grandma.
Grandma, no! No!
No! No! Don't...
Help me, please, somebody!
The Phantom, he's...
Like a dog with a bone, ain't ya?
What?
Oh, my God. Oh, God,
oh, God. Oh, no, no. No.
The fuck...
Foster.
Go on, show her, boy.
- No!
- Hey, Jami.
No!
No!
No! I saw him die!

- I watched you die! I know...
- If you remember,
you actually missed most of it.
They found his body.
They found his body.
No, I found his body.
The poor runaway kid.
Cut up his face, knocked out
his teeth, left two of mine.
Are you Hank McCreedy's grandson?
One of you is Hank McCreedy's grandson.
I am.
And now,
thanks to you,
they're gonna remember my granddaddy.
Corey.
All those people died. My grandma.
Why did you do it?
Born in Texarkana,
buried in Texarkana.
Well, not me, God damn it.
But I knew we were the same, you and me.
Both of us trapped.
No. We are not the same.
Didn't this town decide who you were?
The crazy girl, with the...
the dead parents?
Oh, it was the same with me.
I was the golden boy. A football star.
I'd go to college like my dad
and I'd come back like my dad.
Well, fuck that!
I wanted to be a part
of something special.
I wanted to be remembered!
Like the Phantom.
When people talk about
what happened in Texarkana,
about how the Phantom
came back, oh, I'll know!
I'll know that I, I made that...
They're gonna keep looking for you.
- They're gonna keep looking for the...
- Jami!

Why would they?

- No!

- When I tell 'em...

that I caught the two kids who did it.

Who were so obsessed with the Phantom,

that one faked his own death.

She killed her own grandma.

- No! No, fuck you!

- And you know what?

They'll believe me. Only because...

everybody in this town just wants

to believe this whole thing is over.

It is over.

This story is about Texarkana.

A town that is really two towns.

Two sheriffs. Two mayors.

And in the end, two Phantoms.

After I came out

of the Redwater Bayous that night,

Ranger Morales and his men went back in.

They wanted to close the most

terrible chapter in our town's history.

Some people say

the swamp took Deputy Foster,

that the swamp gave him

the only burial he deserved.

Others believed I hadn't killed

the Phantom 'cause he was something

that couldn't be killed...

a demon or a spirit.

People believe

what they need to believe.

They make up whatever story

they need to keep living sanely.

...I did the Bootleggers,

and The Legend of Boggy Creek

and this is my third one, Winterhawk.

The hardest thing for my town

has been the wrestling to understand

how Clayborn Foster

and Corey found each other

and put on those masks

and did those inhuman things.

Their lives were investigated

and there was nothing linking them.
They had nothing in common
except the darkness in their souls.
And I swear, that will keep the Phantom
alive as much as anything else.
As for me,
I did what my grandma always wanted.
I left Texas.
I moved away.
To a new life,
to a place where no one knows
who I am, or what I survived.
Where I'm the only person that knows
that as quickly and as senselessly
as death came to Texarkana in 1946,
and then again late last year,
it could come back
the next time the sun goes down.