



**CW: Foul Language, Homophobia, Violence against Transgender People, Violence,
Sounds of Warfare (Guns, bombs)**



Witchever Path Narrator

When we last saw YOU, you had found a mysterious cell phone on your property. Worried that someone may be stalking your family, you had to decide what to do with this piece of evidence. Instead of calling your friend Karl, or leaving it here to see who would come for it. You decided to bring the phone in and charge it.

Witchever Path presents SENTRY, episode Two - Charge.

YOU

[looking through a cluttered ass shelf for a charger]

“All right, which one.”

YOU

[narrate]

Jaime hates your workbench shelves.

Every time she goes to the basement, she comes up with whatever she needs and begs you to clean off the shelf next to your workbench. And you laugh it off, every time because one day, you knew you’d need something from that little tech graveyard. Today’s that day. Your fingers fumble through the mass of knotted USB chargers and wires as you work to find one end that will fit into the bottom of this phone. You like Androids, you don’t want to fucking be in the Apple cult. But at least they have the same goddamn charger. You try a couple and finally find one for the phone.

YOU

[under your breath like untangling wires]

“Come on, fucker”

YOU



You manage to untangle the wire from the rest and you plug the phone into your power strip. Thirty seconds go by, and the screen doesn't so much as flicker. You hear the garage door opening. You look at that cracked screen. The thing's just reflecting the cellar lights. It's fucking maddening. You want to throw it against the wall.

Instead you head upstairs to meet your family.

They come in through the side door, Cole first. He doesn't even look up from his phone as he walks past you and then up to his room.

"How did it go?"

JAIME

"Definitely going to need two teeth pulled before the braces go on."

YOU

"Fuck."

JAIME

"Right? What's wrong?"

YOU

"There was a fucking phone in our backyard."

YOU

[narrate]

You just spat it out. But you don't lie to Jaime. Not anymore. Relationships like yours are built on trust. Saying "nothing" every time someone asks you what's wrong is a bullshit move.

JAIME



“What’s a phone doing out there?”

YOU

“I’m gonna find out.”

YOU

[narrate]

She frowns, but then kisses you. It’s a small, tender kiss and it helps you calm down a bit. You look through the back window in the kitchen at your fence. It’s afternoon. You got maybe two hours until sundown. You grab your keys off their hook. It’s time to go to Best Buy. You ask Jaime if she wants to go, but she declines. You shout up to Cole, but he’s “in the Matrix” as Jaime calls it. You get another kiss as you say goodbye and then you make it a point to knock on the cabinet where the hidden compartment for the family shotgun’s hidden. She shakes her head at you.

YOU

“Just keep your eyes peeled.”

JAIME

“Get me a coffee while you’re out.”

YOU

[narrate]

You pull out of the driveway and take the longer way out of the neighborhood so you can see the woods behind the house. You thought about turning around, getting the phone and plugging it into the outlet in the truck, but your old therapist told you to fight that type of



obsession. It could lead you to work more on instinct. And some of those reflexive actions could lead you somewhere you don't want to be.

Best Buy is a fucking tomb. You wouldn't even be here if Amazon could have delivered a new camera the same day. You slide through the aisles of gadgets and sound equipment, past the phones and desperate workers trying to make eye contact. You don't need help. In the camera aisle, you find they got exactly one Argus left. You're not about to get another brand. You bring it up front, slap it onto the counter and pay with your card. You grunt out a thanks when you're handed the receipt.

You get Jaime a Nitro Brew at a drive-thru place by the mall. The cashier is a trans woman. You feel like garbage when she catches your eyes. You were looking at her a half-second too long. You want to tell her about Cole, about how you're not a bigot, but who the fuck is that for? Instead, you smile and throw a ten in the tip jar.

"Have the best day you can at work" you say. "Don't take any shit."

You get back home, and bring in the coffee. Cole's in the kitchen, staring down at his phone. He didn't hear you come in, you can hear his music from here. You drop your shopping bag onto the island, but he doesn't look up. You wave at him. Nothing. So you slap your hand on the granite countertop. He looks up, annoyed, but you jut out your chin, and giving yourself a pronounced underbite, "the bulldog" face you've made at him since he was a baby. And you get a laugh. He pulls out one of his ear buds.

Cole

What's up?

YOU



You seen your your mom?

Cole

Basement, I think.

YOU

Wait, dude. Don't plug back in yet.

Cole

[annoyed]

Yeah?

YOU

You been good?

Cole

Fine, dad.

You

You nod and he looks at you like you're the one who isn't all right and then goes back to his phone. He's right, and that fucks with you. You head to the basement, expecting to hear your wife by the washer. But she's not down there. Neither is the phone. You go upstairs, back through the kitchen, to the hallway and up the stairs. She's in your room, sitting in front of the computer, the phone on the desk, next to the mouse. She turns to look at you and points to the door. You close it.

Jaime

This is fucked up.

YOU

What is it?

Jaime



I checked the calls. There haven't been any in years.

The last text was July of 2019 from some number that says, "are you ready to go?"

YOU

Okay...

Jaime

She took so many selfies... All the photos are from around town or in Manchester at clubs. So I checked her apps. She had facebook, and I looked her up.

YOU

[narrate]

You look at the computer screen and see the face of a young woman. *Kaylee Rourke*. She's got jet-black hair, two lip rings. Big neck tattoo of a locust. Her gray eyes had a fire in them that was undeniable. Her cover photo was her wailing into a microphone at some club. The profile photo, though, was her in scrubs holding up an acceptance letter to med school.

The timeline of her profile is filled with sad, mourning friends, wishing she'd come home, or that someone would find her. Two years of people wanting to know where she had gone, or if someone had taken her from them. Scrolling through earlier posts, your stomach churns. You see that her timeline shares a story about police looking for her, aged 23, after she'd disappeared from her home in Rowe.

Jaime

[grief ridden]

The fucking article...it's just rough. They mention her achievements but then talk about her secret "double-life."

YOU

Stripper?

Jaime

Yeah, online. I mean... who fucking cares? This is someone's baby.



[disgusted with the Union Leader]

I fucking hate the local news up here.

YOU

[narrate]

You picked up the phone, and swiped your finger across the cracked screen and it came to life. You look at the last photo Kaylee ever took. It's her out in the woods on a deerpath. She's blowing a kiss to the camera. You take out your own phone and take a picture of the screen.

You'd send the picture to yourself, but you're not fucking stupid.

Jaime is talking and you're nodding, but all you can hear is your heart pounding. You don't know why you do it, but you check the Notes App. What you find makes you stand up. It's

a series of sentences that read like a conversation:

It's not as scary as you think.

But what's out there?

It's what you dreamed of. The real world, beyond all of this. Where we can be what we're meant to be.

My parents though. They love me, they'd look for me.



But if you stay, you won't see it. I had the same choice. We all did.

I don't know.

Think about it. When you're ready, just write your reply right here.

YOU

[dialogue]

Jaime, did you see this shit?

YOU

[Narrate]

She reads it to herself while you look over her shoulder at the computer. She touches your hand. You think about Kaylee, this fucking missing woman. You go over to your bedroom window and find the right angle from your vantage point to install the camera. There's probably an hour left of good daylight. From where you're standing, you can see beyond the fence.

You could set up a deer blind, maybe put the phone back out there. Cole's walking in the backyard. He gets in the hammock slowly, never taking his eyes off of his phone. Your plan to install the camera isn't going to change, but when you start to articulate it, Jaime cuts you off.

Jaime

[compassion and horror]

We have to call the cops.

YOU

[dialogue]



What are they going to do to look out for us? I can handle it.

Jaime

[calmly]

I wouldn't want to wait to find out what happened to Cole if it were him.

You

[narrate]

You install the camera on the side of the house, next to your bedroom window. Your high school pal, Karl, is a Statie now. You called him rather than Rowe's local police. He came over, along with some local cops. You tell them all what you know, just the facts, and walk them around the property. Cole stays in his room while they're here. Karl's being cool about it. The two cops from Rowe keep asking when was the last time you had been on that side of the fence. Why did you charge the phone? You're matter of fact, you give them simple answers. You don't volunteer the fact you took screenshots. They don't need to know that. One of them points to the new camera and asks to see its footage. You produce your receipt and let him know you don't have any yet. But if anything comes up, you'll contact Karl. That seems to piss them off a bit, and the two local guys start a pissing match with Karl over who has jurisdiction over the case right in front of you.

Phone calls to superiors are made, the three of them go into your driveway to hash it out. You're annoyed. The sun's gone down since they got here. Finally, Cole comes down from his room and asks what's going on.

Jaime

Your dad found something that belonged to a missing person today.

Cole

Do I have to talk to them?

YOU



No. Why would you?

[kid is looking down at his phone and typing]

Cole. Put down your phone, kid.

Did you see anything?

Cole

[calm]

No.

YOU

[narrate]

Karl comes back in and lets you know that the Troopers and local cops will be cooperating together, with him taking the lead. Apparently, nobody knew exactly where Kaylee went missing, so while the phone was found on your property, the Staties were the ones who initially closed the case. In the meantime, he tells you to call him if you think of anything.

You thank him. You get Chinese for the family because it's too fucking late to cook. You get it delivered, because even though you hate the extra 15 dollar fee, you're not going to leave the house.

You lay awake in your bed, Jaime snuggled up to you. You've set the notifications for your cameras to ping your phone, loudly, should anything trigger them. For three weeks, there's nothing to report. Ten days go by, and you're finally sleeping normally. Cole's first days of high school are boring. The kids have left him alone, Jaime thinks.

You turn down a chance to be interviewed by the local news about Kaylee's phone, directing them to the cops. Work is easier to focus on, though you keep checking your phone even during client visits because you want to make sure your cameras are working. Karl tells you that there are no new leads.



It's the last day of September. You have a dream about the desert. You're taking fire. You can smell that eggy-stink in the air. You're shooting back, and you run over to a downed marine. You flip them over to assess their wounds, and there's Kaylee. She grabs you by the jacket, coughing up blood. She says to you

"You aren't supposed to tell."

You wake up with the taste of blood in your mouth. You slide out of bed, and make your way to the bathroom. You've had a nosebleed. Getting cleaned up, you walk back and get your phone, setting it down by the sink. Mid piss, your camera app causes your phone to vibrate so hard, your phone falls into the sink. The camera app's live feed is running and recording, but you don't see anything. Fuck this. You've got your Sig out of your safe and you're by the window in three seconds. You look down into the yard. The hammock is swinging.

You're down the stairs before you even hear Jaime call out to you. You make it out back, gun at the ready, the early autumn air waking you up even more. Your feet wet from the late night dew. There's no one back here.

But then you hear from over the fence the snap of twigs and something darting for the woods. The gate is on the opposite side of the yard. You sprint, unlock and then advance with your back against the fence as fast as you can, preparing to face what's making the noise.

As you round the corner, you crash into something, hard. You hear the thud of another body hitting the ground as you fall down onto the grass. You're being kicked. You grab onto your attacker with one arm.

Your gun goes off. The deer twists itself free from you and bounds into the woods. Its hooves leave scratches on your arms and you start to laugh a bit, relieved. But then, just beyond the line of trees, you see something- *someone* trying to stay out of sight, but the floodlights from your neighbor's garage have lit up the woods just enough that you can make out their silhouette. Whoever it is slinks back into the darkness.

You fired your gun once. There's a fifty-fifty chance that someone has called the cops.



Witchever Path Narrator

What do you do?

Chase the mysterious figure

Get back inside.

You have until November 24 to decide.

Go to WitcheverPath.com/vote to make your choice.

Thank you, Tyler Bell for starring as YOU.

Cole was played by Mars

Jaime by Journee.

This episode was written and produced by Steven and Journee.

Our theme song is by Rydr.

Foley by Witchever Path and Audio Hero.

The following artists appear courtesy of EpidemicSound.com

Sector B by Piper Ezz

Brainwash by Dissidence

Oh What a Life by Spring Gang

Full House Dusk by River Foxcroft

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