



**CW: Foul Language, Homophobia, Violence against Transgender People, Child**

**Abduction**



**Witchever Path Narrator**

The scarred intruder promised to lead you to Cole. Whether you believed them or not didn't matter. Before you could make a decision the police stormed your home and cuffed your wife.

Taken to the ground by panicked officers, Holt arrived and asked if you had something to confess before he went down into the basement where you had left the intruder. This was it.

You'd never find your boy.

But Holt came upstairs, filled with rage. He hadn't found anyone in the cellar. Nor did he find the body of Myron Fells, which he expected to. Kicking you in the ribs, he began to lose control, before you were saved by Agent Temple of the FBI. After placing you in his car, he revealed he was a friend of Tom's, your lawyer. The two of you review security footage and find that Holt was looking for Fells in your basement, because Holt killed him there. But the body was missing. In its place was a mound of earth and an improbable amount of mushrooms.

As the FBI works to arrest Holt, you know you have hours before the trail on Cole grows too cold. You discuss your plan with Jaime in private, and the two of you agree to carry it out. YOU decided to trust in Agent Temple.

And now, Witchever Path presents SENTRY, Part Eight - Untouchable

**YOU**

[calm]

Back when you were over there, there were moments where you got bored. Downtime at the base was filled with video games, music, DVDs. A couple of guys read. You drew comics. Stupid, three panel jokes of dark, disturbing humor, usually based in a nightmare version of what was back home. You'd draw them in a big sketch pad, write out the text in a separate notebook over and over until it was the funniest you could make it, and then ink it onto the finished strip.

The guys liked your comics, and they'd hang them up on bulletin boards or on doors. Nobody said that you made them, which was a good thing. A couple of the more religious guys complained about their language and casual blasphemy, so only the really funny or dark ones would be put up. The rest were just to make the guys laugh. You'd mail some of them to Jaime.

There was one recurring character, Lyle, whom would address the reader saying the most fucked up shit. His wild, jet black eyes would stare off the page, and his eyebrows would move only slightly between panels to accentuate the joke. Lyle's most popular strip read like this:





*My neighbor, Clarence, showed me his toy collection, but got all mad at me when I tried to play with 'em.*

*He tells me, "Dang, Lyle, don't open 'em up, they're mint-in-box. They'll lose their value!"*

*I say, "Clarence, I'm a tell you what I told my boss at the funeral parlor, leaving 'em in the box is a waste of a good time."*

*God damn mint in box. Get outta here.*

Marcus loved that one. You remember reading it to a pregnant Jaime, who just didn't get it. Or maybe the shit that you used to laugh at was only to hide from just how fucking terrible what you had been seeing day in and day out was. Because you think about Lyle's joke, and you think about all the closed caskets Holt caused. And you're not laughing tonight.

The hotel room that they've given the two of you is clean, and quiet. The white noise of the air conditioning is a steady drone. Your mom has been calling over and over. You spoke with her in the car ride over to the hotel, letting her know about Cole, about the intruder and Holt.

She offered to fly up from Florida. You told her to wait.

You know she'll be up here in days.

It's seven in the morning.

The FBI is currently scouring the woods behind your home with dogs. Temple promised they would check in with you immediately if he or his team found anything. What else could you have done? The police weren't to be trusted, Holt is somehow involved. You shared the video of him in your basement, and that footage, and your busted ribs, led to his arrest.

Temple checked you into this place, because your home is an active scene.

Jaime comes out of the bathroom in a towel. The smell of cocoa butter is in the air. It's comforting, not because of how it smells, but because your wife has a ritual. Moisturizing is big. You learned that when you started dating a black woman. The ritual gave her something to do. You're idle, and that lack of action is a problem. What you would usually do is check your phone and scroll. You want to check your phone.

**JAIME**

[concern]

Did we do the right thing?

**YOU**

[conflicted]

I don't know.

Tom trusts Agent Temple. And I know we can trust Tom.



Were it not for them, I'd be in jail right now.  
Holt would be out here, in the open, maybe even coming after you.  
But I don't know.  
I saved us. But finding Cole?

**JAIME**

[trying to console while feeling the same]  
We didn't have many options.  
Telling Tom everything kept you with me and out of jail.  
Now we got to trust that his contacts can bring Cole back to us.

**YOU**

[humorless laugh]  
*You're telling me* to trust a cop?

**JAIME**

I'm telling you to trust the call you made until we find out we can't.  
It's just. What the hell did they find in our basement?

**YOU**

No body. No intruder. Justt fucking mushrooms. Fungus, mold.  
It doesn't make any sense.

**JAIME**

What did the guy say again?

**YOU**

That they "took care of the thing in the basement." That's what they said.  
But I would've seen movement if they had left the basement on the video. The body Holt was  
looking for was gone. It doesn't make sense.

**JAIME**

[thinking]  
Mushrooms.

**YOU**

Yeah.

**JAIME**

Reminds me of the burial suits one of my friends was talking about.  
It's made of spores and cotton. You get buried in it and mushrooms feed off the body.  
It's just... weird what you think about.

**YOU**

Mint in box.



**JAIME**

What?

**YOU**

Nothing.

Hey, do you have a charger?

**JAIME**

No, I didn't have time to pack one.

**YOU**

[groan, slapping cheeks to stay present]

Okay. There's a pharmacy nearby.

I'll go grab one.

**JAIME**

I'll come with you.

**YOU**

No, baby. Don't.

I need a minute.

I love you.

**YOU**

[narrate]

The morning traffic has started. Manchester is the biggest city in the state. But it's still only New Hampshire. After decades away, you still can't get over the relative quiet. You haven't slept, it hurts to breathe, but you weren't going to tell your wife. Through the haze of fatigue and pain, the morning sky looks dreamlike. The low rattle and hiss of cars as they go past you. The small murmur of people on the sidewalk. You're not here.

The CVS has been open for only five minutes. You have to wait for one of the employees to come from the back to sell you a charger. The cashier is about thirty, thin mustache over equally thin lips. He never looks at you. He doesn't talk or thank you. The look on his face says it all.

He's pissed you're there that early, that he has to be there at all. Everything about this guy screams "go fuck yourself for making me have to interact with you."

It's such a relief.

It's in the hotel lobby that you see the news on the big, flat screen. And there, in high definition, is the front of your house.

**NEWS**



Law enforcement has been searching the home of the missing boy after an anonymous call reporting a suspicious person breaking into the house. The parents of the missing trans teen are currently speaking with the Federal Bureau of Investigations while

**YOU**

Anonymous call?  
Bull shit.

**YOU**

[narrate]

The other guests and the front desk workers look up at you. Fuck this. You don't bother waiting for the elevator. Get back to the room, charge your phone. Don't stick around long enough. Don't keep their attention, don't wait to see them put a picture up of Cole. You and Jaime gave Temple the photo they should use for the missing person's report. That's the one you're certain they'll put up on the screen You don't want to have see it on the television.

You race up the stairs to Jaime.

Six hours pass. The two of you go out and eat, you talk with friends and family. You call Agent Temple's line three times. Your clothes smell terrible. Taking a shower was fine, but you're still wearing the same shit you had on when running through the neighborhoods looking for Cole. But you can't go back to the house yet. You don't have a gun. You don't have your truck.

The sun goes down before you get a call. It's from Tom. You put him on speaker.

**TOM**

Do you and Jaime need anything?

**YOU**

Clean shirt and my truck to start.

**JAIME**

Are you all right?

**TOM**

I'm beat up pretty bad, but I'm going to be heading home in a couple of days. Listen, I have an update that I'm worried about. But I wanted to tell you this before you heard it from Temple. Holt's getting out on bail tonight.

**JAIME**

What?! How is that possible?



**TOM**

NHFOP lawyers. They got him out on bail, and he's suspended. He's home.  
He might go back in, but that's going to be hard to do.

**YOU**

Holt said you ID'd him as the guy running you off of the road.

**TOM**

I didn't know who it was until Mason came to see me in the hospital. My ID doesn't mean shit until the FBI can get their hands on the highway footage. Even then, though, there's no guarantee we'll get much.

**YOU**

He beat the hell out of me and told me that Fells was in my basement. He all but confessed to the crime.

**TOM**

It's your assault that's got him suspended. That's the best thing that we have. He has to stay away from you and Jaime if he wants to await a hearing outside of a cell. Mason said that he's got people surveilling him left and right. They're going to find something.

**JAIME**

Tom, are they looking for Cole.

**TOM**

Jaime, he promised me that's the biggest priority. But there's been a snag.

**YOU**

What is it?

**TOM**

Holt's a hero to his troop. They've let the bureau know they don't have the manpower to look. Right now the Feds are looking with the help of Concord PD, in that city, but when they went to search out back by your house in Rowe, well...

**YOU**

Rowe PD thinks I'm trouble.

**TOM**

Yeah. And the fight between you and Holt's being spun. They're claiming you assaulted him, which is why he was kicking you. Given that he was your biggest advocate before that, they see you as a loose cannon, and you're a person of interest in your son's disappearance.

It's a mess.

I do have a question for you though.



**YOU**

Yeah.

**TOM**

What was with all of the mushrooms in your basement? What were you growing down there?  
Three of the cops that searched it were hospitalized with respiratory issues from inhaling spores.

**JAIME**

We weren't growing anything down there.

**YOU**

I think it was the person we found in our basement. The scarred intruder.

**TOM**

Cute name.

**YOU**

You mean like Mason Temple?

**TOM**

I... never made that connection until now.

I can reach out to Agent Temple on your behalf and get him to check in with you. We'll also get you some clothes and a rental. If you get pulled in for questioning, call me immediately, dude. I'll get one of my partners to represent you in my place.

**YOU**

Only Cole matters. We got to find him.

**TOM**

We will.

**YOU**

[narrate]

Agent Temple doesn't call you that night. Jaime falls asleep with her head on your chest. You spend the night looking through every local neighborhood group on social media. You gaze into the hellscape of the threads and find out a lot about your neighbors, and you make a list of the names of people on your street. Three of them claim you're crazy. One, Laurel Paul, actually warns people not to say anything too much, as you're not in jail yet and "he could be back."

Right you are, Laurel, you think.





There are people whose calls for people to stop commenting mean shit because a child is missing. But there is something you did see. A guy on your street, Jim Biller, who is offering free Blue Lives Matter flags for everyone on the street to put up “in support of the cops who were hurt searching that house.”

You put him on the top of the list.

The next day, your boss at the VA tells you not to come in. You’re not fired, but calls have been coming in complaining about a man arrested for assaulting an officer has been working with disabled vets. He wants you to watch yourself, and to let him know if you need anything. He obviously doesn’t mean money.

Temple has you come into the bureau office in Manchester that afternoon. You both go in. You text Tom you’re doing so. When you meet with Agent Temple, he looks tired. He doesn’t shy from your gaze. You’re in a conference room. He connects a laptop to a big screen on the wall, and the first thing you see is your basement. A few people are in the shot wearing gas masks and clean suits. They’re crouching over a mound of wet earth. Out of the black dirt there are several mushrooms growing. You recognize a few of them. Puffballs, Destroying Angels. It’s mesmerizing.

**TEMPLE**

So, I wanted the two of you to know that we’re doing everything we can to find Cole.

**YOU**

But we’re in an office, why aren’t you out there right now?

**TEMPLE**

I want you to hear me out. I’m giving you as much as I can right now. We’ve had two teams scouring Concord, near the disappearance, and also the woods behind your property where you think the intruder had likely run off in.

But what I’m showing you right now is important.

You see these mushrooms?

Almost all of them are poisonous, save one patch.

[click of the mouse]

That is Psilocybe Semilanceata

Aka the liberty cap. Magic mushrooms.

They’re just sprouted in what we thought was some sort of compost.

**JAIME**

We didn’t grow any mushrooms.

**TEMPLE**

It’s not the mushrooms that are worrying me, folks.



It's the compost.  
We've found traces of blood and animal matter underneath.  
Human.

**YOU**

What?

**TEMPLE**

It's going to sound weird, but the pile of dirt and sludge isn't that. Let me show you a different angle.

**YOU**

[narrate]

He clicks to a different picture, taken from the stairs. There are still spores in the air and they are visible from the flash. The mushroom pile on the ground has an odd, long shape to it. You let your eyes unfocus a bit and then you study its outline.

**YOU**

It was a body.

**TEMPLE**

There is a second patch of fungi that we found closer to your bulkhead.

[click]

You can see here in the gaps between the doors and on the concrete stairs. Whatever agent that was used to decompose the body, it's got an organic component.

**JAIME**

What does that mean?

**TEMPLE**

The lab is going to have to analyze it, but there's a good chance that this may be Fells.  
We do have his DNA on file.

**YOU**

How?

**TEMPLE**

Myron was acquitted in another case years ago. His DNA is what got him exonerated.  
We still have it.

**YOU**

So that would tie Holt to a body in the basement.  
With the footage, he'd be facing murder



**TEMPLE**

Right.

But that type of research is expensive and slow.

**JAIME**

What about Cole?

**TEMPLE**

The leads didn't turn up much in Concord. People in the neighborhood say they saw Jaime and the family outside the house, and watched Cole enter, but nothing after that.

But there were similar mushrooms by the river in Rowe that were in your basement.

[click]

As you can see here, there's a big outcropping of rocks near the railroad bridge. Here we found a patch of caps growing in a weird spot. We dug, and found a sneaker.

**YOU**

[narrate]

Jaime gasps.

The black leather converse is covered in mud, soaking wet... and it's definitely Cole's. You bought them for him on his birthday. Temple reads the reaction and he puts his hands on the table.

**TEMPLE**

If you believe that's Cole's shoe, we'll see that as a sign we'll need to keep combing that area by the river. But that's miles from where he was taken.

**YOU**

It's downstream from where he was taken. He's somewhere in those woods. Get people out there, I'll go out with you.

**TEMPLE**

They're out there now, I promise you.

What I need to ask of you is really tough, but I need you to just sit back and not get involved. We need you to stay calm and sit tight. We'll do what we can.

**JAIME**

He's already been told he's suspended from work, Agent Temple.

We can't go home yet. Holt is out of jail.

What the hell are we supposed to do until you find my son?



**TEMPLE**

Stay in the hotel for another day. We'll get the last of what we need from the scene and then you can go back. I will find him.

**YOU**

[narrate]

There is no way you will shake his hand. You get up and leave and head out with Jaime to the hotel. You call out for pizza. You spend most of the night talking to family. Temple has someone to call you. They're checking the riverbank.

The image of your son, face down in the river, without a shoe won't leave your mind.  
The intruder told you they could bring you to Cole.

You drive home on 3A, with one eye on the road and the other on the Merrimack. Driving into your neighborhood, you count the new thin blue line flags. Thirteen. Some of your neighbors are outside as you pass, watching you go. Laurel comes outside in a baggy purple shirt and crocs and starts unashamedly filming you driving by. You hit the brakes and get ready to confront her.

**JAIME**

Don't. Don't give them what they want.

**YOU**

The yard is a mess, torn to shit by tire treads. You pull the police tape off of your front door, which doesn't even close all the way. The smell of rotten fruit is in the air. There are holes in your walls. Furniture is smashed, cushions cut to shit with their stuffing spilling out like guts. Those family photos still hanging on the wall are all cracked. While you were away, Temple didn't mention how much the police had tossed your home.

**JAIME**

Thney really wanted to send the message, didn't they?

**YOU**

I'll check the garage for a respirator and then go to the basement.  
Can you check the bedrooms? .

**YOU**

You find a painter's mask and filters in your garage. They slashed the tires of your SUV. You can smell motor oil. Looking at your tools, your best vice grips are missing. All shit that they could deny. Things that you know Agent Temple would apologize for but avoid promising to look into outside of recommending an Internal Affairs investigation. He's only promised one thing: to find your boy.



And God only knows if you can trust them with that.

In the cold of the cellar, you find things disheveled, but not as bad as upstairs. Down here, they were looking for Myron's body. They've taken your gun safe. The spot where the fungus was, where Temple believed Holt left Myron, is a dark, damp blotch on the concrete. They'd taken the mushrooms out at least. You kneel next to it and touch the spot with your fingers. There's a filmy grit on the surface. You're about to wipe it onto your pants before remembering just what it might be and your stomach turns. Finding a towel, you wipe off your hand. As you think about Myron, you look over at the bulkhead steps and see another stain on the concrete wall. Unlike the blotch, it looks like something had been drawn and wiped away.

Walking closer, you see the outlines of insectoid wings. You get within inches of the wall. In the cracks, you see that wet, mulchy substance. Something snaps under your boot. You look down and see a sharpie whose cap you've just pulverized. Kneeling down to retrieve it, you see something written on the wall, just behind a coffee can filled with bolts.

Moving the can, you see the words.

"Eat.

See.

Follow."

Over here, there's a musty scent. You use your cellphone as a flashlight and under the wooden steps that lead to the bulkhead doors, you tiny, thin mushrooms with pale caps reaching upward. You remember what the scarred intruder said.

### **VOICE**

I'll get us out. We need to get to him. She can come, too.

### **YOU**

[narrate]

You check your phone, there's an email from Temple. He says he'll call in the morning to set up a new plan. You read the wall again. "Eat. See. Follow."

Standing back up is murder on your chest.

They tossed your house good, but how well?

Still sore, you walk slowly over to the old oil tank that still stands where it's been since you were a kid. Your mom had switched to Natural Gas the moment it became available in Rowe, so this tank's been empty since before you bought the house. It was more expensive to tear it out of the cement than just leave it yhere. But there was another good reason to keep it. You feel along the bottom of the tank and find the hole you cut when you first moved in. And you reach inside, grimacing when your fucking rib threatens to start stabbing things inside of you. Your hands find the canvas bag which you slide out of the hole slowly.

They hadn't found it. The unassembled AK you'd bought in Lynn off a collector in 2004. It was a private sale, and completely illegal. It'd been in storage for years until you came North. You still





take it out on occasion, clean the parts, assemble it, take it to your cousin's toe test, then take it apart and stow it again.

You think about Cole's bare foot, missing a sneaker. Of Holt. Of the dozens of cops out there waiting for you to do something stupid like speed through town, or scream at your neighbors.

Assemble a hidden AK47 in your basement.

What did you think Temple would find?  
The mushy puddle in your basement doesn't make sense.  
This whole fucking thing doesn't make sense.

**JAIME**

They tore up his room and took his laptop. Your computer's gone, too.

**YOU**

I got nothing to hide, except a really boring bit of porn.  
But they'll release anything weird to the press anyway, if they think it'll make us look bad.

**JAIME**

Temple wouldn't do that.

**YOU**

Not him. Holt's buddies. They'll do what they can to make him look good. Make us look bad.  
He'll walk if Temple can't get him. And I think that's really what Temple's going to focus on now instead of ...

[getting upset, near tears]  
Instead of finding Cole.

**JAIME**

We will find him. We will find him, baby.

**YOU**

[narrate]

She crouches down next to you and puts her hand on your shoulder.  
You feel her drag the bag away from your feet.

**YOU**

Okay. OKay.

[taking a breath and grunting away tears]

So. About that.

Have you ever tried magic mushrooms?

**JAIME**

What?



This is the last choice you can make:

EAT. SEE. FOLLOW.  
Sit tight and wait for word.

Only one will get you to Cole. Only one.  
You have a week to decide.  
Go to [witheverpath.com/vote](https://witheverpath.com/vote).

Vote closes on Wednesday, April 20.

This episode was written and produced by Witchever Path.

Starring:

Tyler Bell as You  
Journée LaFond as Jaime  
Steven as Tom  
Mike Gagne as Agent Temple

The Witchever Path Theme is performed by RYDR.

Foley by Witchever Path and Audio Hero.

Music featured in this episode comes from Epidemic Sound.com

Nearing a Meltdown and Stitches by Bill Ferngren  
Eris by Lennon Hutton  
Night Landing by Cobby Costa  
We could try again - Trabant 33  
Don't Look Under Your Bed - Luella Gren

We've been in the midst of the biggest move of our lives, to our first home. That means we can finally have a permanent place to record for the first time in three years. Thank you to everyone who has continued to sort us at [Patreon.com/witheverpath](https://Patreon.com/witheverpath). Your donations are allowing us to pay our actors and keep the podcast going!

Thank you for keeping the faith! Until next time, sleep with a clear consequence.  
Choose the Path!