Episode 9

25 / Telling

Saundra scrambled to a sitting position and glared at him warily, her finger still trembling from the impact of the bullet against the phone

Michael clipped the handgun back into his belt.

she had been holding. She glanced at the twisted and shattered device lying on the other side of Henry McAllen's dead body. She wondered how long it had been since he had lain there on the cold, concrete floor, his arms limp, his head leaning awkwardly to one side. She shuddered to think that she might join him. "As I was trying to get you to understand," Michael said, "I am not out to hurt you." He leaned against a stack of dusty, aged boxes. Other stacks of boxes of varying heights were scattered throughout the

small basement room. "I guess kidnapping me, dragging me down here, and taking away my only form of communication with anyone besides you doesn't qualify as trying to hurt me," Saundra said. "Not to mention the fact that there's a dead body down here."

"I didn't drag you down here," Michael said in an exasperated tone. "What I'm trying to tell you is that what you're involved in is far bigger than you just getting a book published." He paused and scratched the scar on his face. Saundra sighed. At least it doesn't seem like he wants to kill me right

now."Okay, so clue me in," she said. "What exactly am I involved in?" Michael shook his head stilly. "It's like a puzzle," he said. "There are many pieces. The more you know -- or the more others think you know -- the more dangerous it gets for you. And right now there are

some people who think he -- " (he motioned to Henry's body) " -- and

you know a lot." "But I don't know anything," Saundra said. "You only think that," said Michael. "All that research that Henry had done, the book he wrote, the book you are about to publish -- it's way more than mere speculation. It's a big piece of the puzzle, and

when that puzzle is put together, it will have nation-shaking consequences."

Saundra shook her head. She had no doubt that Henry's research was

authentic -- maybe far-fetched, but still grounded in facts. "I don't see why it's all a big deal...why some people are willing to...kill for it." "People were willing to kill to see America made, and people are willing to kill to see it remade," Michael said thoughtfully. "That doesn't really explain much," Saundra said. She discreetly slid away from Henry's body. Can't you get sick or something from being

"No, I guess it doesn't," said Michael. "Perhaps, if we put together what you and I know -- and what he knew -- we can come up with a better idea of the big picture." Saundra yawned. She hadn't realized that she was so tired. "We need to call the police to take care of his body," she said. "If you're not the

one who murdered him," she muttered quickly.

too close to a corpse3he thought. But Michael didn't seem worried.

Saundra held up her hands. "Back to what you were saying: comparing notes would take a long time, and I don't have any of mine with me. Besides, it sounds like something we should do over tea in more comfortable conditions a er this long, eventful day." Saundra stared up at the ceiling. "We're inviting ourselves to said tea party."

That wasn't Michael's voiceSaundra jerked her head around to the

door her heart suddenly beating faster. Another rush of adrenaline

Michael glared at her. "Another suggestion like that...," he warned.

zipped through her veins. A man, blue-eyed with choppy waves of black hair, stood in the doorway, his gun drawn and leveled at Michael. 26 / Intervention Michael reacted just as fast when he heard the voice from the

doorway. He spun around, his gun drawn, and stopped. Both men

There was movement behind the man in the doorway and a woman

"Well, don't just stand there," Saundra's mother said to the man in

The man with the gun turned his head and looked at her for the first

time. Then he noticed Henry McAllen's body a few feet away. His eyes

riveted back on Michael who was staring at him with an expression of

stared at each other and Saundra noticed that Michael flinched.

stepped into view, her face framed with strands of gray hair that hung down from the messy bun on her head. Mom.

the doorway. "Shoot him."

"Mom, no!" Saundra said.

said.

was so worried."

"Nehemiah Dunn," he said.

her hair and the wrinkles in her dress.

appeared to be uncomfortable.

between him and the doorway.

"No handcu s today, O icer Dunn?" Michael said.

"That is what I was suggesting," Michael said.

"Oh dear, we can't talk down here," Ginny said with a start.

"I'll get the local police to handle it," Nehemiah said.

jurisdiction and out of uniform?" Michael asked.

"I didn't kill him," Michael said.

"Is the only time you do police work when you're out of your

pleasant meeting."

surprise. "You again, doctor?" he said. Michael was still holding his gun, but didn't look like he was going to shoot. Without warning, the man in the doorway stepped inside, lunged toward Michael and knocked the gun out of his hand. It spun in the air and landed by his foot. The man stepped on it and motioned to

Saundra and the dead body. "You have a lot of explaining to do," he

Saundra stood up as her mother rushed to her. "Thank God, you're

okay," she said. "I tried calling you back but you never picked up. I

"Some police o icer who came to visit me. Showed up at the right time," Ginny said breaking their embrace. "You two have something in common."

Suddenly feeling self-conscious, Saundra absent-mindedly smoothed

"I'm fine. Thanks for coming so quickly," Saundra said as she hugged

her mother. "Somebody owes me a new phone. Who's he?"

The man stuck out his hand but kept a wary eye on Michael.

"Stop it," Ginny said in an annoyed but amused tone. "Now is not the time for that." Ignoring her mother, Saundra nodded toward Michael. "I take it you two know each other." "We've met once before," Nehemiah said. "I put that scar on his face."

Saundra raised her eyebrows and looked at Michael who suddenly

"Yeah, we met before," he said nervously. "It wasn't exactly a

"What did you say we have in common?" Saundra whispered to her mother. "You'll find out," Ginny said. "We all need to talk right now."

"For you," Nehemiah said gripping the man's arm and stepping back

we're all here." "My research -- ," Saundra started. "There's a dead body in here, people," Ginny said. "Get out. I assume you know what to do about dead bodies, Nehemiah."

"Why not?" said Michael shrugging. "No better time than now since

"I'll also make sure you get safely into a local jail cell." "What? Why?" Michael said as Nehemiah marched him back down the basement hall to the elevator. "I didn't do anything." "There's a dead man in there lying on the ground and an unarmed

"He didn't," Saundra said surprising herself that she was defending

Nehemiah looked back and forth between Michael and Saundra,

until we figure out everything that's going on here. Okay?"

Nehemiah released Michael's arm. "Don't run o ," he said.

"Fine with me," Michael said. Saundra nodded.

27 / Comparing Notes

library entrance.

go down there."

topic," he said.

Michael. Nehemiah stared at her. "At least that's what he said. I mean,

woman sitting next to him. When I walked in, you had a gun."

Henry was already dead when we got down there."

Nehemiah spun around pulling Michael with him toward the door.

obviously thinking that something wasn't adding up. "Tell you what," Ginny said as she pressed the button beside the elevator door. "Let's just report the dead body anonymously. We won't say anything about him -- " she pointed at Michael " -- for now

At the cafe across the street, Nehemiah watched as a police car pulled

in to the library parking lot, followed by another police car, and then

a white crime scene unit truck. Soon, yellow tape went up around the

At the table, Saundra ate a ham and lettuce bagel sandwich with

melted cheese. "How did you know to look for us in the basement?"

she asked around a mouthful. "When we got there, I described you to the librarian. She said you went into the elevator with him," Ginny said. "She assumed you were on one of the upper floors. We looked all over up there, but didn't find you, so we came back down. That was when Nehemiah suggested we check the basement."

"But you can't just go down there," Saundra said. "He had a key."

"I wish you would stop referring to me in the third person," Michael

said. "I'm sitting right here." He squirted a packet of ranch dressing

Ginny went on. "We asked the librarian if we could take a look down

there. Of course, she said it was o limits. But Nehemiah showed her

missing and likely in danger. It took some convincing, but she let us

Nehemiah turned his gaze from the window. "Okay, let's get back on

"Yes, let's," said Ginny. "Like I was telling Saundra here, you both

his badge and told her we were looking for someone who was

"You were never in danger with me," Michael said.

onto his salad and stirred it with his fork.

have something in common." She motioned toward Nehemiah and her daughter. "Oh, I feel le out," said Michael.

"Oh, that book," said Michael. "The one you almost killed me for." "Shut up," said Nehemiah. Ginny briefly related to Saundra everything that Nehemiah had told her about how he had come into possession of the Ellsworth journal. "So it appears there are still some things that Henry didn't know

original Thirteen. (Unless they declined to tell me so, which I am sure you would understand if they did.) I had gotten my hopes up that I would be able to attend your Sunrise

I have taken a thorough second look at my research and I am pretty

sure that I did not meet any others who are descendants of the

"November 11th in Philadelphia," Nehemiah said. He scrunched his forehead as he mentally checked his schedule. "Yeah, I can be there." He smiled as he tapped the paper with the e-mail printed on it. He felt a sense of relief that he hadn't been chasing the wind. "This is something concrete," he said almost to himself. "I could also take the Kids?Saundra was wondering if Nehemiah was single. "So, that's settled. Where is this gathering going to be held at?" asked

"There are other ways of accessing the school's e-mail system," Michael said. "I can do that -- get all of the communication between Henry and Templeton." "Or, maybe, Nehemiah," Ginny interjected, "you can just e-mail Templeton and tell him what you told me." "I think that's a long shot," said Michael. "He's going to wonder how

"Unless he was smart enough to delete e-mails to and from Dr. Templeton," said Michael. Nehemiah shook his head. "It's likely police are already crawling all over Henry's o ice looking for evidence. No use going back up there," he said. "Unless you want to turn yourself in," he added for Michael's benefit.

you knew to contact him at all."

Ginny pinned him to his seat with a glare. "Saundra, you called while I was talking to Nehemiah. You asked me to send you everything I could dig up about the Sunrise Society." Saundra nodded. "Well, just a few minutes before we talked, Nehemiah also mentioned the Sunrise Society. That's what I meant. So, I can only assume that you both are working on something that is at least remotely related. You for your book by the now deceased Henry McAllen and you for a

book you received from your father, also now deceased."

same obscure thing at the same time?" Saundra asked.

Ginny shrugged. "Serendipity," she said.

of disapproval from one of the waitresses.

the table.

mail though."

The e-mail read:

Dr. Templeton:

"What are the chances we would both be talking to you about the

"Or divine providence," said Michael. He balled up his sandwich

wrapper and tossed into the trash can a few feet away earning a look

"Speaking of which, where is the book?" said Nehemiah suddenly.

"The one you showed me?" said Ginny. "I have it right here." She

pulled her worn-looking handbag from underneath her seat and set

the book -- the journal -- that had belonged to Wolcott Ellsworth on

about the Correction," Saundra said. "Which proves me right once again," Michael said. "It's just like I was telling you. Now two or three of the puzzle pieces are coming

"Well, I have another piece to add to the puzzle," Saundra said. She

opened her purse and pulled out the paper with the dra e-mail that

the paper out on the table. Those very well may have been the last

words Henry had written. "This is where I heard about the Sunrise

Society. Henry was e-mailing someone about it. He never sent this e-

Henry McAllen had been writing. Her hand trembled as she smoothed

together." He nodded at Saundra and Nehemiah.

I, too, was surprised when you contacted me.

Society gathering on November 11th in Philadelphia. As you can imagine, that would have been the crowning moment of all the work that I have done these past few years. Alas, I cannot. But I understand why it is only open to actual members of the society. Nothing about this journey has been...

The e-mail ended abruptly. It was a dra a er all. Michael picked up

"Nehemiah can. He comes from one of the Thirteen families," said

the paper and turned it over anyway as if the rest of it would

"Too bad we can't go to this meeting," Saundra said.

magically appear on the other side.

Nehemiah's mind spun.

"Or so he says," said Michael.

"Can you make it?" asked Saundra.

Ginny.

kids to see Philadelphia. History lesson and all that." Ginny. "I mean we need an address." Everyone sat in silence for a moment. "Maybe he -- Dr. Templeton -- mentioned it in a previous e-mail to Henry," said Saundra. "We could search his e-mail again. This message is a reply, so there has to be an e-mail chain."

Nehemiah got up from the table. "Let's do both," he said. "I'll e-mail this Templeton guy. You search for the rest of the communication between him and Henry. We have ten days until the eleventh. Something should work out." "So, that settles things for now, gentlemen," said Ginny as she tossed

waitress.

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her eating utensils in the trash can and put a tip on the table for the