

EPISODE 41: That's not who I am.

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[Warning: this episode contains descriptions of kidnapping and murder. It also contains a malicious mischaracterization of certain mental health symptoms. We here at WOE.BEGONE Industries LLC are fully aware that people with mental health issues are far more likely to be victims of violent crime than to be perpetrators. Listener discretion is advised. There are also sudden loud noises. Timestamps are in the episode description at the bottom.]

[OPENING THEME PLAYS.]

[Beep sound.]

[Shuffling papers.] My name is Donny Evans. Donald Evans, but no one calls me that. Everyone calls me Donny. I am 38 years old. Topher... Christopher Evans is my little brother. This is my official prepared statement about the events that occurred on the evening of [REDACTED] in which a police officer was killed by Topher inside of his home. We call him Topher for short. I'm going to call him Topher for this whole statement, so don't get confused.

My relationship with my brothers has always been strained but more with Topher than with my other brother, Brendan Evans, and more recently than ever before. I don't know what set off this chain of events, but Topher was becoming increasingly erratic and secretive. He would say or do things that would indicate that something was extremely off, but it was difficult to say what. It was scary. He would increasingly respond to questions with answers that were tangential or unrelated and disproportionately violent. He seemed preoccupied with violence most of the time. My wife and I worried that one day he might snap and do something to us or to hurt someone else. We were considering cutting him out of our lives, but he started keeping to himself so much that he basically did the job for us. For awhile it was as though he was de facto deceased and the family sort of mourned the loss like we would with a death in the family.

It was some time after his erratic behavior began that he turned up on my doorstep one morning, unannounced. I let him in, since I hadn't decided for sure that I was going to cut him out of my life and he didn't look like he was doing well, so I wanted to see if I could help. I thought that I could offer him some advice or take him to somewhere that a professional could help him. My wife was at work, so I was

alone in the house. I don't remember being scared of being alone with Topher. I thought that we were just going to talk. What's the worst that he could do, right? Ask me for money? I was fully prepared to give him money if he asked for it.

I remember welcoming him in and putting on some coffee. I tried to make small talk but he wasn't making any sense. He kept trying to steer the subject back to this... I think it was a violent dream he had? Something about him getting his arm chopped off or being ripped apart or something. It was disturbing and I remember thinking that I should flat-out ask him to stop talking about that. It wasn't so much the subject matter—I've watched horror movies, that sort of stuff doesn't scare me that much—but rather how much he seemed to believe what he was saying was true, that someone had actually chopped his arm off despite it still being there.

The next thing I know, I'm out like a light. I woke up on the floor of my kitchen being hogtied by Topher. I kept yelling stuff at him. Stuff like "take the money, take whatever you need. We can get you some help. I can help you." You know, anything to convince him that it wasn't too late for him to stop. I did really wanna help him though, even though he was hurting me. He's my brother. I've known him since the day he was born. It's funny what you end up focusing on at times like these. I remember getting mad that he didn't seem to believe me that I wanted to help him. He was assaulting me, taking me hostage, and I was mad that he didn't think I would actually help him. Buh! Nevertheless, he was not convinced by my bargaining. He finished tying me up, used a flat cart I keep in the garage to get me out to his car and dumped me unceremoniously in the back seat.

There was a gun in his car. When we got to his apartment he pointed it at me and told me that he was going to untie my legs and if I tried to make a run for it that he would shoot me in the back. I believed him, why wouldn't I? I remember it being harder than I expected to get out of the back seat of his car with my hands behind my back. He rushed me up the stairs to his apartment. We had to hide from another tenant at one point by getting out of the stairwell so that they wouldn't see that my hands were bound. I think that's why we took the stairs, so that it would be easier to hide if someone else entered the stairwell. It is harder to sneak out of an elevator. I thought about calling out for help but I was scared that Topher was going to kill me if I did. I think I may have had a concussion as well; things were foggy so resisting my captor became even more difficult.

We got inside his apartment undetected. He led me into a back room and told me to sit in a chair. When I complied, he tied me to the chair and left the room. That is the last time that he would speak to me while I was in captivity until it was time to commit the murder. He would only come in to feed me: ramen, chicken nuggets, just the cheapest most processed foods, easy to make, wasting no time on me. I tried to talk to him every time that he brought me food. I wanted to know why he thought that this was something that he wanted to do. If I could understand what he thought that he was doing, then I could try to convince him that he wasn't accomplishing anything, that he wasn't going to get what he wanted out of this. Nothing I said could get him to talk. It was like he was an automaton—mindless, only serving a function. He would let me go to the bathroom, but he was posted up outside the bathroom door the entire time. It was an interior room of the house, no windows, so I couldn't figure out how to escape using the only time that I was alone and unbound. Even if

there were windows, we weren't on the first floor. I entertained the idea of clubbing him with the tank lid from the toilet bowl but my cowardice prevented me from ever trying it. The longer I stayed, the more it broke me, the less I thought of clever ways to escape. Eventually I accepted that I was going to be tied up forever. Nobody knew where to look for me.

It was only the night of the murder that I learned that I was going to be forced to help him with it. I remember him telling me that I was going to help him do something and when I asked what I was supposed to do he said "tell the truth." I didn't know what that meant when he said it because he didn't tell me what we were doing or that we were going to a police officer's house. As he walked me out of the apartment, I saw for the first time how obsessed he was with this person. There were all sorts of files lying about, pictures of this guy, a calendar tracking his daily routine. I think that some of the pictures were even taken from the inside of his house. I'm sure you have all of those for yourself now that you've been through his apartment. I don't know why this guy in particular. Maybe it was because he was a cop. Topher's ex-wife, Kate, thinks that he was involved in organized crime or something like that. I don't know anything about that. I'm only trying to make everything make sense.

He never said the word "murder," but I knew, from the litany of files that Topher had on this guy. He did not have a healthy interest in him. There was really only one thing that could be going on. I was going to be used as a distraction in order for Topher to commit a murder. I guess he was fixated on that guy from before he even kidnapped me. He had a plan for me the whole time. I don't know why me. Why family? Why not a stranger? Why put your own brother through all this? I don't know what I did to deserve this.

Once I saw the squad car in the driveway of the house we were pulling up to, I understood that I was supposed to... tell the truth. I suddenly knew what that meant. He was a police officer. I was supposed to knock on his door, my hands still bound by the way, I had to use my knee... to knock on his door and tell him that my brother had taken me hostage, that I needed help, that he tied me up. I assumed that Topher couldn't just knock on his door for fear of being recognized as the guy who had been lingering around. You don't get that many pictures of someone without tipping them off that you're there, not without special equipment.

I... do I have to describe it? Sorry, I'm feeling overwhelmed. I didn't know this would happen. You have the security footage. Do I have to? [Pause, snuffle.] Okay, fine. I knocked on the door. He opened it. He immediately saw my hands and asked what was going on. I started to tell him. I remember trembling. I couldn't warn him. I was too afraid. I remember saying "My name is Donny. I'm being held hostage. Help me," or something to that effect. I remember he looked confused, like he was trying to understand. I'm sure people don't knock on his door every day and say that they've been kidnapped. I remember I said "help me, help me." I could barely get the words out. I think he was about to usher me inside when Topher leapt at him.

Topher's a big guy. I mean, the officer wasn't small, but Topher came at him like a linebacker. He was on the ground immediately. Topher had a knife and he... [sniffles] he... do I really have to say it? [Pause. Dramatic.] He slit the man's throat right in front of me. Right in the front room of that guy's house. There was so much

blood. I remember getting it all over me when Topher made me help him move the body. I asked him why he didn't shoot him. The only thing he said was "neighbors." I guess he was scared that they would hear it.

That was the only thing that he was afraid of, though. I was terrified. Terrified of what he might do, terrified of what he had just done and what I was helping him do, terrified about what was going to happen to me if we got caught or, maybe worse, if we didn't. If Topher was feeling any of those feelings, he sure didn't look like it. We cleaned up as best we could. I know that there is no way that we cleaned up everything. There was too much blood. I didn't know what to look for—what someone doing forensics would be able to see that I couldn't. I was shaking so badly that I could barely help. I mean, I'm shaking now. You can imagine how much worse it was in the moment. Topher gave me the iciest glare that I have ever seen because I couldn't help fast enough. I wasn't refusing. My body wouldn't let me. Carrying the body out wrapped up in garbage bags was even worse. I dropped my end at one point. I remember trying so hard to hold him up but my body was still reeling from what had just happened. I dropped him. Topher gave me a black eye for dropping him. That's where the black eye came from.

Then we drove off. I didn't know where we were going. I asked him what we were doing and he didn't answer. We drove for hours in one direction. West, I guess, because we ended up in [REDACTED] or right outside of it. We dropped him off in the woods, covered him up, and immediately left. I asked him if that was enough and if we needed to dig a grave and he said "no, it's not worth the time being out in the open." He said we only had to make it for 10 days. I don't know what he thought was going to happen in 10 days. I guess we'll never know. He said we needed to "lay low for awhile." He always said it exactly like that. "Lay low for awhile." I don't know why he thought it would only be for "awhile." I knew that we were going to get caught as soon as we started driving. It was only a matter of time. I thought that we might be on the lam for awhile, probably a lot longer than 10 days, but sooner or later someone would figure out what was going on and how to find us. And I guess that I was right.

We drove in a different direction, not back to my house or Topher's, again for hours. That's where you ended up finding us. We stopped at a gas station and you probably saw the plates on the car. Topher tied me up again once we got to where we were going. It wasn't any different than being in Topher's house. I was still trapped. I don't know where we were. I don't know whose house that was. Maybe it was an abandoned house. I don't know how Topher knew to go there. Maybe he had been staking out a hideout and found a house where nobody lived.

He wouldn't tell me anything at all. "Ten days" was all that I could get from him. I started to wonder if he was going to kill me in 10 days, if he was going to turn himself in in 10 days. I didn't know what we were counting down to. He could have thought that the world was going to end in ten days for all I know. I guess if that's the case we'll find out soon enough. [Sad laugh.]

A few days passed and the police showed up, a bunch of them. Topher seemed surprised that they had found us. I knew that it was going to happen. I don't know why he was so careless with the body. But as soon as the cop cars started to pull up, he bolted out of the back door of the house and towards the woods behind

it. He left me tied up so I didn't even get a chance to run. That's where you found me, untied me, and put me in handcuffs. I know that you guys are the detectives and not me, but in my experience the guy tied to the chair is generally the victim, not the perpetrator—no need for handcuffs. Topher made it past the treeline but there was no way he was ever going to get away. We were totally outnumbered. I figured that you guys would kill one or both of us, so kudos on taking us both in alive, I guess.

And you know the rest, better than I do, I'd assume. I hope that helps. He kept me in the dark about almost everything. I was a prisoner who didn't want to die so I did what I was told. I didn't kill anyone. I couldn't. That's not who I am.

I have no idea what he is going to tell you. I think that he thinks that he is caught up in some sort of elaborate scheme or game and that something extremely important is going to happen in 3 days, since the murder happened a week ago. I don't know what convinced him of this, but I'm just glad that it is all over. I was beginning to think that I would never see the outside world again.

That's my story. That's everything that happened. I am more than willing to testify against my brother and tell this story again in a court of law. I just want this all to be over. I just want to go home to my wife. [Pause.]

Can I go now?

[Beep sound / transition.]

Excuse me? What do you mean I'm not Donny Evans? I showed you my ID. I showed you my social security card. I showed you my passport. What do you mean I'm not Donny Evans? What do you mean that "Donny Evans" is at home and was not "aware of any kidnapping or murder?" I'm right here! In the flesh! I am quite aware of the kidnapping and murder. I was the one who was kidnapped. You're saying there's somebody in my house? Was my wife there? Is my wife okay? Holy shit. You have to get that guy out of my house. I don't know who it is, but that is NOT Donny Evans. He could be holding her hostage, making her say it's me. It could be one of CANNONBALL's guys. It could be one of Topher's guys. [Pause.] She is not safe there.

You have to believe me. I gave you everything to prove that it's me. I don't know what else I can do to prove that I'm me. I mean... I'm me! How could I even prove that any further? That doesn't make any sense. I'm Donny Evans! I don't know what all this is, but I'm Donny Evans. Did you ask that imposter to prove that it was him? That it was me? Did he have a passport? This is bullshit. This is all bullshit. I am the victim here. I was the one who was taken hostage. I had to witness a murder. And you're making accusations about *me*? That's bullshit. I was released. You found me tied to a chair, remember? I am not the one responsible for what happened. Why would you go to my house to begin with? Why are you calling me now while I'm at work? Why are you bothering me at all? I was the victim. I cooperated. I want to get on with my life as fast as possible. I don't understand why you're hounding me.

Why would I lie to you about who I am? You know that I'm innocent. You saw me tied up. Why would I lie? Why wouldn't I cooperate? Being Topher's brother doesn't make me look *more* innocent. If I were the detective here, I would be more

suspicious of family than if it had been some random guy. If I was going to pick a disguise, I would pick something better is all I'm saying.

I'm going to get a lawyer. I'm going to get a lawyer and we are going to prove that this is bullshit. I swear to God. If you aren't going to bring me in for questioning or charge me with a crime, I am out of things to say to you. I have agreed to testify against my own brother in court. My own brother! I have told you every little detail that I remember from that night in excruciating detail. I mean that, excruciating—both the amount of detail and the details themselves are excruciating. They are painful to recollect. I feel worse for having done so. My life is very hard right now and you are making it even harder. I have gone above and beyond what is necessary to cooperate and I want to be left alone. If you want to show up with a warrant, you know where to find me: my house!

[The sound of walking on tile, a door opening and shutting.]

[Under his breath.] Fuck. What am I supposed to do now? I can't show up at his house. What if they find proof and I get arrested? Fuck, I thought it would happen already. The alibis hold out much longer. What am--

[TIME TRAVEL NOISES.]

[Heavy breathing.]

Oh, fuck. Oh, fuck. [Heavy breathing.] I'm... where the fuck am I? I'm... fuck, the hideout? Fuck. CANNONBALL? [Silence.] [Breathing.]

[Scared.] Where is he? [Pause.] Huh? He's not here? [Realizing.] He's not here. I'm untied.

[We hear the sound of running on dirt. Then a car door opens and closes. The sound of the ignition and then the sound of peeling out and driving.]

Fuck. I made it. I made it. Holy shit! I did it! [Laughs.] I see you there! Glad you made it back, douchebag. I was worried that someone would happen and you would still be in jail somehow and I'd have to find a way to kill you in prison. That would have been a predicament. But, I did it. I laid low for awhile, if only by the skin of my teeth. And now I'm done laying low. And you get to see me peel off from the hideout in your car. I can't imagine better timing if it had been done on purpose.

Fuck you, CANNONBALL. Sucks to suck. God, if I hadn't made it back first. Thank God for lag. [Laughs again.]

[Sigh.] I am getting so fucking tired of being Donny Evans. It's okay, Mike. It'll all be over soon. One challenge left. I've never been more pumped to murder someone. I don't think I've ever been pumped to murder someone. I guess it has been all innocent people and friends up until this point, so that makes sense. Let's see: Matt, the police officer, Anne's police officer, Hunter Jeremiah Hartley, a third police officer, and two pigs. Yeah, I don't feel great about that list. Oh, and myself, but that was an accident.

[Some automotive sounds.] Hey, asshole. Let me in. I'm trying to zipper merge. You had this whole time to prepare to let me in. You're going to run me off—

[TIME TRAVEL SOUNDS.]

[Groaning.] Ugh, I hate time travel so much. Why does it have to hurt?

What? No! No, no, no, no, no. Hey, guys? Hello? [Banging on wall.] Hey, Ty? I'm back? What took you so long? It's been months on my end. I did the second challenge. I did the third challenge, too, actually, no thanks to you. Are you going to let me out of this stupid white void? Does that mean that you know how to find me again? Do you know how to find Edgar?

I did everything you wanted! I was held hostage for months for you. CANNONBALL wasn't as cooperative as I hoped he might be but I got some info, I think. I lied to the cops for you. I very nearly ended up in jail and I'm pretty sure that you fail the third challenge if you end up in jail. I could have used some help out there. Is someone going to show up and debrief me? Or give me a medal? It would be nice but I'd settle for a decent meal and a bed that isn't a chair. Do the Flinchites have a doctor on staff? That would be nice, too. I'm in a lot of pain. Seriously. I just escaped so the adrenaline is still wearing off but I can already tell that I'm going to need help.

Wait, I was in a car when you transported me. Like, a moving car. Surely you know that. You had to know that if you were going to transport me. What happened to the car? Is it going to keep going down the road? I was doing like 80 and was about to merge into traffic. Uhhh....!? You should do something about that. Hello? Ty? Are you there? I always assumed there was some sort of surveillance camera hidden in this room. Hello? Can anybody hear me?

[END THEME PLAYS.]