

Thinking Sideways Podcast
Episode 2: Taman Shud
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[**Theme song plays**]

Devin: Hey, do you guys want to hear a story?

Steve: Yeah.

Joe: Only if there's a car chase.

Devin: There is not a car chase.

Joe: Ah, well. Eh, what the hell.

Devin: There is a murder though.

Joe: Oh, that's good enough! Yeah, that works. I'll like that.

Steve: Sweet! Let's hear it.

Devin: All right, you ready?

Steve: Yeah.

[**Somber music begins**]

Devin: The victim was found dead at 6:30 AM, December 1st, 1948 under a street lamp in Australia. [**Long pause**] That is all we know about this man.

[**Music ends**]

Joe: Hmm.

Steve: That- There's...

Joe: That's all?

Steve: ...nothing else?

Joe: That was a short story, I've got to say!

Devin: It's a short story!

[Joe laughs]

Steve: Wow! That was great!

Devin: It's great, right?

Steve: Yeah!

Joe: Well anyway, everybody, thank you for listening to our...

Devin: Yeah!

[Joe laughs]

Devin: I have more information, but we should introduce ourselves first.

Joe: Oh.

Steve: Oh yeah, yeah, that would be good.

Devin: I'm Devin.

Steve: I'm Steve.

Joe: I'm Joe.

Devin: So, we want to hear more?

Steve: Yeah. Yeah.

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: So that's all we know, really – about him, the man – is that he was found dead. That's it.

Steve: Those are the only facts about him?

Devin: About him.

Steve: Oh, okay. Okay.

Devin: So there's this mystery surrounding his death. So the first thing that was a little weird was that - somebody called the authorities obviously - they came and they took him away to do an

autopsy and the first thing they noticed that was weird was that all of the clothing identification marks, tags, etc., had been removed...

Steve: Mhm.

Devin: ...from his suit, shirt and tie and all that stuff.

Joe: Mhm.

Devin: And that's a little weird.

Joe: Yeah.

Steve: So, not a single label? Anywhere?

Devin: Not a single label.

Joe: What about his underwear?

Devin: Not a single label.

Joe: Really?

Devin: Any of his underwear? Any of his underwear.

Joe: Any of his underwear.

Devin: Or any of his clothes, for that matter! So then they did the autopsy...

Steve: Okay...

Devin: ...which revealed that this guy was in exceptional health. He had a half digested pastry in his stomach. There was congestion to his brain and stomach that would have been consistent with poisoning except that they tested his blood and there was no poison in his system at all.

Steve: So he just mysteriously died.

Devin: Yes. And his spleen was three times too big.

Joe: Huh...

Steve: Okay.

Devin: But that won't kill a man.

Joe: Yeah, what causes spleen enlargement?

Devin: And brain and stomach congestion?

Joe: Yeah, what causes that?

Devin: I don't know. Nor do they! They eventually placed the jacket that he was wearing to America but it was weird because when they sent the dental records and fingerprints, it didn't match anyone who had lived there ever.

Steve: And where was he found again?

Devin: Australia.

Joe: Mmm.

Steve: Where in Australia?

Devin: The Coach... Uh, the Somerton Beach?

Joe: Where the heck is that?

Steve: Is it in Adelaide?

Joe: Mhm.

Devin: Yes.

Joe: So, when they traced his clothes to America, does that mean they traced it to an American manufacturer, to an American tailor, or what?

Devin: American manufacturer.

Joe: So they were store-bought clothes, they weren't tailored.

Devin: Yes.

Joe: Okay.

Devin: Upon further examination of his clothes, they found a secret pocket in his pants which contained a little tiny scrap of paper with the words, "Taman Shud" printed on it, which in - I think it's Arabic - means "Finished" or "ended".

Steve: Okay.

Devin: They figured out that this was a last page from a book, a very rare translation of this book, called *The Rubaiyat... Rubaiyat...*

Joe: *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*? That one?

Devin: Yes.

Joe: Okay.

Devin: That one. Because I know how to say words. It was an extremely rare translation of that. So they, of course, did the logical thing and started an Australia-wide search of any and all of these translations of this book.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: Some guy, just some random guy, mentioned just after a couple months of this search going on, he said, "Oh, you know, I found an exact copy of that book in the backseat of my car that was parked two blocks away from where you guys found this guy." Weird, right?

Joe: So they arrested him?

Devin: No.

Joe: Oh, damn.

Devin: So, he brought his book. They said, "We'll look into it." And the back page had been torn out, which was consistent because he had the back page in his little secret pocket, and they found this code written on the next back page.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: Now this is a code that has been proven to be an actual code, they had decided it is an actual coded message, but has never been solved.

Steve: So they don't know what kind of cypher it is.

Devin: They don't know the cypher.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: As far as anyone can tell, he made this cypher up himself.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: But it's not long enough for them to get any patterns, to establish any patterns to be able to break this code.

Joe: So, yeah, how many letters are in the message? You know, is it ten or is it fifty or a couple hundred, or what?

Devin: It's four lines.

Joe: Four lines, okay.

Steve: Four lines of text...

Joe: Four lines of text, yeah.

Steve: ...it's a really simple cypher.

Devin: Mhm.

Joe: Yeah.

Steve: I think the problem is that there is not enough of it?

Devin: There's not enough.

Steve: There's not enough of it to figure out what the key to the cypher is.

Joe: Mhm.

Steve: They don't know if it's a substitution or some crazy cypher.

Devin: Sure.

Joe: Yeah. You could probably figure it out if - a substitution, say, for a message, you probably old but it's probably a one-time pad which is why they can't break it.

Devin: Yeah.

Steve: What is a one-time pad, Joe?

Joe: Oh, yeah, a one-time pad. Yeah, for those of you who don't know what that is, a one-time pad is when you either generate a sequence of random numbers or you use a book or a newspaper article and assign numbers to all of those and then say for every number in your message, or every letter in your message is converted to a number so A is 1, B is 2... And then if you're using, say, a book as a one-time pad, you convert that into the same kind of numbers, add those to your characters and then if somebody else has that same pad to translate it with, then it's

not a substitution cypher - it is a substitution cypher but it's not like you're substituting a letter for another letter consistently.

Steve: Yeah, not A for B, it's...

Joe: Yeah, yeah exactly. And so those are impossible to break, at least as far as I know. Maybe with modern super computers and Google and everything like that, maybe you can.

Steve: No.

Devin: Uhh...

Joe: No, but one-time pads are impossible to break.

Devin: People as recently as 2012 have tried to decipher this and it can't be done.

Joe: Yeah, and so it's a one-time pad obviously, *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* is probably not the key.

[**Steve laughs**]

Devin: Probably not.

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: Also in the back of this book, there was a telephone number. It was an unlisted telephone number belonging to a nurse who lived 400 meters north - er, sorry - 1,300 feet north of where the body was found.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: So of course the police go to investigate...

[**Romantic music begins**]

Devin: ...and she says, "Oh yeah, I owned a copy of that book but in 1945 at the Clifton Gardens Hotel in Sydney, I gave it to a lieutenant named Alfred Boxall because we were in love." Weird. Okay.

Joe: Mhm.

Devin: Why is an unlisted number of yours in the back of this – okay, so maybe this is Alfred Boxer! Boxler! ...Boxall! It's one of those three things. She said that they were in love but late 1948, a mystery man had asked her next door neighbor about her and nobody really knows who that was and that was just before this guy showed up, obviously.

Joe: So the mystery man, was that guy identified as being our dead body?

Devin: No.

Joe: Oh.

Devin: So, they showed her a picture of him on the slab.

Steve: Mhm.

Devin: It wasn't gruesome, you can find this picture online easily...

Joe: Mhm.

Devin: ...it just looks like he's sleeping, and she said, "No, I don't know who that person is," but according to the detective, she was completely taken aback to the point of giving the appearance that she was about to faint.

Steve: Ooh...

Joe: Uh huh.

Steve: So she's lying, possibly.

Devin: They start thinking, "All right, Boxall's the dead man. This is his copy, it all makes sense, that's why he's here." He was lieutenant in the army. He was probably doing something kind of clandestine, until Boxall shows up.

Steve: Just out of the blue?

Devin: No, he's working maintenance in the Randwick Bus Depot, which is I think not even in Australia...

Steve: I don't think so.

Joe: So he showed or they tracked him down?

Devin: They tracked him down.

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: And he still has his copy.

Steve: Ohh!

Devin: Of the *Rubaiyat*.

Steve: So the plot thickens. Okay.

Devin: The plot thickens. He still has his copy and it's the same edition, obviously, and the last pages, obviously still there.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: But, she had handwritten a verse out. It was verse 70 on the front cover; it was the same thing...

Joe: What's with these people who do stuff like that?

Devin: That's a good question.

Joe: It's an extremely rare, probably valuable copy of this edition of this book and you just write all over it, you know?

Devin: Yeah.

Joe: I mean, you know? Is that a smart thing to do?

Devin: No. It was beautiful, the verse that she wrote. But why would you deface a book like that?

Joe: Mhm.

Steve: Librarians everywhere are cringing right now.

Devin: Cringing right now.

Joe: Yeah, sorry for our librarian audience. I'm sure there's billions of you out there.

[**Devin and Steve laugh**]

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: So in March of 2009, a team led by a professor decided that they would crack the code by testing the body for DNA.

Steve: Oh! Yeah! That makes sense.

Devin: Smart, right?

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: Except for that none of the DNA of his body survived.

Joe: Oh, really.

Steve: Why?

Devin: They had buried him.

Joe: They actually exhumed the body?

Devin: They exhumed the body and it was just, you know, he had been buried...

Joe: Mhm.

Devin: ...and decomposing...

Steve: Oh, they embalmed him, didn't they?

Devin: Yeah.

Joe: Yeah.

Steve: Oh of course!

Joe: Yeah, that makes it hard.

Devin: Because that's what they do.

Joe: You would think they'd be able to find a little DNA somewhere, wouldn't they?

Devin: You would think that.

Joe: You would think.

Devin: They apparently couldn't.

Joe: But they were going to use DNA to identify who he was?

Devin: Yes.

Joe: Oh.

Devin: They were going to try, at least. Not that there were DNA records then, but they could maybe trace it to someone who was living now...

Joe and Steve: Mhm.

Devin: You know. Whatever. Additionally, the same investigative team said that police had found that the packet of cigarettes that he had had s different brand of cigarettes inside of the pack. And the police had originally said, "Oh well this is a common army thing, you buy the one pack of expensive ones and then you buy a bunch of cheap ones and you just keep filling your expensive box with your cheap cigarettes so it looks like you're smoking more expensive cigarettes.

Steve: Oh, yeah yeah!

Devin: Except for that the cigarettes that were in his box were more expensive than the box...

Joe: Mmm.

Steve: Oh!

Devin: ...cigarettes.

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: So they thought maybe ether had been some poison administered that way though again, they never found any poison in his system.

Joe: Mhm.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: It was 1948, obviously...

Steve: Techniques not as refined as we have today...

Devin: Yeah, there's the potential that they just missed it. In 2011, a woman contacted some really sad cold case detective who's still assigned this case because it's never been closed and said that she found an identification card of an H.C. Reynolds that she had found in her father's possession. It was a document from the United States to foreign seamen given during World War I and they compared the photograph to the man who died and it was almost identical. They said it was a very good match. They shared a few unique identifiers within their face and then their ears were the same.

Joe: Their ears?

Devin: Their ears. If you look closely at these pictures, he had a genetic defect in that it made part of his ear larger than other parts of his ear.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: Not like a normal ear, which is a genetic mutation found in 2% of the population or something like that.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: It's incredibly uncommon.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: So that along with the fact that his face looked alike...

Steve: Okay, that makes more sense. I got it. Okay.

Devin: Sure. No, just random - his ears.

Joe: It might be a great way to find relatives of his.

Devin: They thought that, yeah. So they said "Oh, okay, this is probably this guy." The ID card was issued on February 28th, 1918 to H.C. Reynolds. It gave his nationality as British and his age as 18. They did searches in the US national archives, the UK national archives, and the Australian War Memorial Research Center, and they have failed to come up with any actual records of an H.C. Reynolds.

Steve: So it's... a fake name? Or fake ID? Or...

Devin: They're not sure.

Steve: Okay...

Devin: But it is this man's ID.

Steve: So he looks... this story, he died in '48, right?

Devin: Mhm.

Steve: And the ID was issued in 1918, did you say?

Devin: Mhm.

Steve: So it's 30 years later.

Devin: Uh huh. He could have been in the picture. It's hard to tell.

Steve: Yeah. I mean, it's all black and white photos, so...

Devin: You know, he's dead, it's all black and white, it's kind of bad quality. He could have been of that age. He also could have lied about his age...

Joe: Mhm.

Devin: ...to get into the military. Although, he was obviously lying about other things too given that there's no record of him ever existing prior to this.

Joe: 1918.

Steve: What else did he lie about?

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: Everything.

[**Steve laughs**]

Joe: Yeah. Lots. Lots. So again...

Devin: So the case is still open.

Joe: So again, that ID was issued in 1918?

Devin: Mhm.

Joe: By the Brits.

Devin: By the United States.

Joe: Oh, okay... But he was of British nationality?

Devin: It was one of those IDs they gave out during World War I when people who lived other places would come and say, "I want to fight for the USA!" and they would be like, "Okay, great. Here's your ID."

Joe: Okay, so in other words, it was never documented that he was actually a Brit?

Devin: No.

Joe: Okay.

Devin: I mean, you kind of assume that they would have done some research into that but... Records weren't great then.

Joe: Maybe not. Yeah.

Steve: It was a time of war and things were kind of... slim shot?

Joe: Things were kind of... yeah, yeah. So, okay.

Devin: So that's all I know.

Joe: So the guy gets an ... But where was this ID issued?

Devin: The US.

Joe: In the US?

Devin: Yep.

Joe: Mmm. So he shows up at our doorstep and we give him an ID. Hmm. Okay. It's not like today.

Devin: Mmm. No.

Joe: It's kind of similar like that.

Steve: So how do we know that the stuff that he wrote on the page that they found in his pocket - it was just in his pants pocket, right?

Devin: No, the last page of the book was in his pants pocket.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: He had written the cypher in the back of this book.

Steve: Okay. Okay.

Joe: Oh.

Devin: So ostensibly, what happened is he had a copy of this book. He wrote his cypher out, tore out the last page, and threw it into the guy's car - I assume the guy just left his window open.

Steve: Something, yeah.

Devin: Something, because he didn't know, it wasn't his copy.

Joe: So he obviously...

Devin: He just found it in the back of his car.

Joe: Obviously, he threw his coded message in the back of the wrong car.

Devin: I guess.

[Joe laughs]

Steve: And how do we know that it's a cypher and not just gibberish that somebody wrote down?

Devin: There's been a lot of analysis about it by real, live code breakers.

Steve: Mhm.

Devin: People have spent a lot of time...

Steve: Okay...

Devin: ...decoding it and there are patterns but not enough patterns to establish what letter it might be. There's repetition that's indicative of it being English words.

Steve: Okay. so it's based on the English language in some way.

Devin: It's based on - they're assuming it's based on English. It may not be. It is entirely possible that he was just like, a Russian who was bored and deranged...

Steve: Mhm.

Devin: ...wrote random gibberish down.

Joe: Mhm. Entirely possible that he was just like, "I'm going to mess with somebody's head. I'm going to write this coded message and put it in the back of somebody's car and then they'll have this eternal mystery about it."

Devin: "Yeah, and then I'll just die."

Joe: Yeah.

Steve: I don't think he planned on that part. [laughs]

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: I don't think he did either.

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: No.

Joe: Yeah. Yeah. So the clues all point to that this guy was either, say, Russian royalty...

Steve: He's the missing Princess Anastasia.

Devin and Joe: Yeah!

Devin: He is!

Joe: Something like that.

[**Steve laughs**]

Devin: He looks pretty enough to be.

Joe: Yeah. I mean, I don't know, has anybody checked out the Russian royal family to find out - like, the tsars - to find out if any of them have that genetic anomaly?

Devin: None of them did.

Joe: Oh, okay.

Devin: Yeah. So they're pretty sure that it is this guy H.C. Reynolds, but...

Joe: Mhm. Yeah. Well the other possibility is that he could have been just infiltrated into America by another foreign intelligence service...

Devin: Yeah.

Joe: ...with a bunch of money to pay agents and he absconded with it.

Devin: Sure.

Joe: Which would explain why he was trying to hide his wealth by taking the labels out of his jackets and putting expensive cigarettes in a cheap container, you know? Just keeping a low profile that way.

Steve: But why did somebody kill him?

Joe: You know, probably - let's see - let's say he's a Soviet and let's say they eventually caught up with him, because if you double cross those guys, eventually they'll find you. Probably.

Steve: Mhm. Yeah.

Joe: You know? [laughs]

Steve: Yeah, it's something they do...

Joe: Yeah.

Steve: ...and in every Hollywood movie, they get found out.

Devin and Joe: Yeah. Yeah.

Steve: Somewhere.

Joe: Yeah, so I mean that's entirely a possible. I don't know. It's just speculation. I don't know.

Steve: Maybe!

Devin: Good speculation.

Joe: Yeah.

Steve: So, I did find... I don't know if you came across this when you were doing your research but when I was brushing up on this...

Devin: Mhm.

Steve: ...I did find one thing of somebody saying they might have figured out the cause of death. I don't know if you'd ever come across that.

Devin: I have not ever come across that.

Steve: Okay. So I did find - let's see - this is 1994, it came out: a guy by the name of John Phillips who is the chairman of the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine and he is saying that based on the details, it's likely that he died of digitalis.

Devin: Oh.

Joe: Hmm?

Steve: Digitalis is known for engorging the organs prior to death.

Joe: And digitalis - you're talking about the plant, right?

Steve: Right, it's a member of the foxglove family...

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: Sure.

Steve: ...so it's poison that people used to use as kind of an herbal remedy.

Joe: Mhm.

Steve: They didn't know how it was supposed to be used so they used it for heart issues or epilepsy or stuff like that, but they didn't understand the dosage so they would typically end up killing people...

Joe: Uh huh.

Devin: Sure.

Steve: ...unintentionally.

Joe: And does it enlarge the spleen?

Steve: It enlarges all of the organs.

Joe: Ahh.

Devin: Well, but then the question is: why was only his spleen? Because your spleen is not the most sensitive of organs.

Steve: True.

Devin: Why was his spleen the only one that was enlarged?

Steve: So his spleen was the only...?

Devin: His spleen was three times enlarged.

Steve: I thought I had seen something that said more than just his spleen was enlarged.

Devin: No. He had congestion of the heart and brain.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: But that's not enlargement.

Steve: No, that's not engorgement or enlargement at all - well, congestion is. I don't know, this is just something I came across and I found interesting.

Devin: It's very interesting.

Steve: Now, it's fifty years later...

Devin: Yeah...

Steve: ...and some guy is saying, "Well, I just looked at the autopsy report and this is what I say it is." So who knows?

Devin: Sure.

Steve: It could have been just somebody surprise attacked him in an interview and he threw out, "Here's the answer to the Taman Shud."

Joe: Mmm.

Devin: Yeah, and I guess you assume that in a time when a lot of people are dying from an overdose of a thing, you as a...

Joe: Coroner.

Devin: ...as a coroner...

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: ...you might know what that looks like, generally.

Steve: You would think.

Devin: You would think. Maybe not.

Joe: By the way, when they found the body, how long had he been dead?

Devin: Just a couple - they said he died in the middle of the night.

Joe: Mhm. They found him at 6:30 in the morning?

Devin: Yeah.

Joe: Ah, so the question is, the coded message, the book, why? It seems to me that he was taking a message somewhere to drop it off..

Devin: Mhm.

Joe: ...with somebody and he discovered he was being followed, he probably wanted to ditch that message.

Devin: Sure.

Joe: So, the nearest car with an open window, he dropped it in.

Steve: Yeah, well, that's typical spy behavior...

Joe: Yeah. Yeah.

Steve: ...is, get rid of all incriminating evidence.

Joe: Ah, yeah. So.

Devin: So, the other kind of interesting thing about this is that there are two cases that people talk about them maybe being linked.

[Mysterious music plays]

Steve: Really?

Devin: Yes.

Steve: Because it seems like a weird one-off.

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: It does, doesn't it?

Joe: So you're saying there are two other cases?

Devin: Yes.

Joe: All right.

Devin: So the first one...

Steve: Because there's so few details.

Devin: The first one is the Marshall case that happened in June, 1945...

Steve: Okay...

Devin: ...where a thirty-four year-old Singapore man - he wasn't a mystery man, his name was Joseph Saul Haim Marshall was found dead in...

Steve: Wait, how many names did he have?

Devin: A lot.

Steve: Okay. [laughs]

Joe: Uh huh.

Devin: Joseph Saul Haim Marshall.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: He was found dead in Ashton Park in Sydney with an open copy of *The Rubaiyat* on his chest.

Joe: Really? The same edition?

Devin: Same edition.

Joe: Found dead?

Devin: His death was believed to be suicide by poisoning. His was the edition right before the edition that was involved in this case but...

Joe: No pages missing?

Devin: No pages missing or anything like that.

Joe: Hmm.

Steve: But he died of poisoning, did they say what he died of? It said he committed suicide, but what did he use, did it say?

Devin: They thought that it was self-inflicted but they didn't say...

Steve: Okay.

Devin: ...who, what.

Steve: I'm guessing that one doesn't get as much notoriety.

Devin: It doesn't, yeah.

Joe: And what year did this happen?

Devin: '45. 1945.

Joe: Ah.

Devin: An inquest was held. Gwenneth Dorothy Graham testified at this inquest that they had.

Joe: And why does she testify?

Devin: She was a witness? I'm not sure.

Joe: Okay.

Devin: There's not really details on that. But she testified and was found dead thirteen days later, face down, naked in a bath with her wrists slit.

Joe: Hmm.

Steve: Do they think that was suicide or do we know?

Devin: They think it's suicide like they think his death was a suicide.

Steve: Okay...

Joe: In other words, it was the KGB.

Devin: You say it's a suicide, right?

Steve: Until you figure out what really happened and then change the story...

Devin: But maybe not...

Steve: ...but if you never figure it out?

Devin: Sure. The next one happened in June again, but this one in 1949 where the body of a two year-old Clive was found in a sack in some sand hills. About twelve miles down the coast from where they found the H.C. Reynolds - for purposes, we're just going to call him H.C. Reynolds, the guy from the first case.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: So, very close. Lying next to him was his unconscious father. The father was tank to the hospital and was treated for exposure and then they transferred him to a mental hospital.

Steve: So he went crazy?

Devin: I think so.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: Yeah, because his son died while he was right next to him, in a bag or something.

Steve: Had they been out and about that day?

Devin: They'd been missing for four days.

Steve: Okay. Okay.

Devin: They never were able to tell what killed Clive, so it was another mystery death. They said it wasn't natural causes but they don't know what killed him.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: The contents of his stomach was sent to the government for analysis but never came back with anything solid, similar to H.C. The mother said that she was threatened by a masked man a couple days before her son died. She said, quote: "The car stopped and a man with khaki kerchief over his face told her to keep away from the police, or else." Additionally a similar looking man had recently been seen lurking around the house.

Steve: So somebody was stalking them while the other two were missing.

Devin: Yep.

Steve: But we don't know who they were.

Devin: Nope.

Steve: Weird...

Joe: So what would be the tie-in to H.C. Reynolds, exactly?

Devin: Well, they were found very close to where he was found...

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: And very weird circumstances surrounding their death.

Joe: That is weird but they weren't that close.

Devin: No.

Joe: I mean, they were miles rather than feet away, right?

Devin: Twelve miles.

Joe: Yeah, okay.

Devin: But, you know.

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: On the coast of Sydney or on the coast of Australia...

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: So...

Steve: Not that many weird things happen.

Devin and Joe: Yeah.

Steve: Except in this one little area.

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: Except for this one tiny little area so... yeah.

Steve: So did they ever find any of his possessions? Or anything else that he had left around?

Devin: They found a brown suitcase.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: It had been left in the railway station. It had been checked into the station coat room, you know they do that sometimes. You come in on a train, you have a little layover...

Steve: Yeah.

Joe: So how did they find it? That would be an interesting story in and of itself.

Devin: They found it a month later.

Joe: Mmm.

Devin: So it had just been there for a month so they had decided to report it to the police...

Steve: Mhm.

Devin: ...because that's what you do...

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: ...after a month. Nobody's come back for it, and it had been checked on November 30th, which was two days before... two days? How many days are in November?

Joe and Steve: Thirty.

Devin: One day before...

[**Steve laughs**]

Joe: Okay. All right. So, I assume they completely went through everything. Were all the tags missing from all the clothes?

Devin: They were.

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: Yeah. They found a red checked dressing gown that was size 7, red felt slippers...

Joe: Thirty copies of the *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*... sorry.

Devin: Four pairs of underwear, pajamas, shaving items, a light brown pair of trousers with sand in the cuffs, an electrician's screwdriver, a table knife cut down into a short, sharp instrument, a pair of scissors with sharpened points, and a stenciling brush that was used by third officers of merchant ships for stenciling cargo.

Steve: Oh, okay.

Devin: Also in the suitcase was a thread card of Barbour brand orange waxed thread of an unusual type not available in Australia that had been the same kind that was used to repair the lining of his secret pocket.

Steve: His secret pocket.

Devin: The secret pocket of his pants they had found the little piece of paper in.

Steve: Oh, okay!

Devin: So it was used on his pants. Then again, all of the identification marks had been removed from the clothing except for they did find the name T. Keane on a tie and Keane on a laundry bag and Keane on a singlet along with some dry-cleaning marks.

Steve: So the name that was found on the card that they think links him isn't the same name that was on some of clothes that they found.

Devin: Yes. They think that the clothes with the tags left on had been left on on purpose to be misleading.

Steve: Oh!

Devin: Because they knew that Keane was not the dead man's name, somehow.

Joe: Mmm...

Steve: He's a sneaky spy.

Devin: Sneaky spy.

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: I think he might be a spy!

Joe: Yeah, it could be.

Steve: Very, very weird.

Joe: Yeah, it kind of fits with my theory, though, that the guy was a spy who absconded with a bunch of funds.

Steve: Is there anything that they can still use today to analyze? Any of his clothes or the briefcase, or any of that? Can't that all be taken out of cold storage and gone over with modern forensics?

Devin: What would you gain from that?

Steve: Well, they might find that piece of DNA or something that they couldn't see before when they just searched through it, imaging technology or anything like that. I don't know, it seems like it's a cold case that's got enough... what's the word I'm looking for?

Devin: Media attraction?

Steve: Yeah, it's got enough interest. It's got enough traction that people would want to say, "Well, let's use the latest technology and see what we can see inside of things, or analyze from it."

Joe: Mhm.

Steve: So it's just curious. Do we know what happened to any of the stuff that they took off of him?

Devin: I don't...

Steve: Okay.

Devin: ...know what happened to any of that stuff.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: Since it's a still-open cold case, I would assume that they did not get rid of it but that could be a false assumption.

Steve: Okay.

Devin: I don't know how things work in Australia.

[**Steve laughs**]

Joe: Mhm.

Steve: It's all the fosters, who knows.

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: Yeah, who knows.

Joe: I would think that the best way to find out is to just ask the major intelligence services of the world. I'm still guessing that he was a spy. Either that or escaped royalty, but probably a spy. Probably the Russians or the Brits or even the Americans actually know who this guy is.

Steve: Maybe. I don't know, this one's just weird.

Joe: Yeah.

Steve: There's just so many odd missing pieces...

Devin and Joe: Mhm.

Steve: ...to it, this weird cypher that there's no answer to... I mean, it could have been his grocery list for all we know.

Devin: It could have been...

Joe: Mhm.

Steve: It's just so strange...

Joe: It could have just been entirely a ruse. Who the hell knows?

Steve: Yeah. Yeah, it's very odd.

Joe: Yeah. So last question: where he was found, were there any rare bookstores near by?

Devin: Ha. No.

Joe: No? Okay. [laughs]

Steve: Nice try.

Devin: Nice try...

Joe: Yeah!

Devin: Nice try.

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: There you go!

Joe: Ah, well, a mystery. But again, I think probably the Russians or somebody can solve this mystery pretty handily.

Devin: You think it's their spy?

Joe: It's somebody's spy, probably.

Devin: I'm pro-spy...

Joe: I'm pro-spy.

Devin: ...idea.

Joe: Yeah...

Steve: Aliens.

Devin: You think aliens?

Steve: It's the aliens.

Devin: You think aliens are everything.

Steve: Aliens are my easy answer because I watch a lot of TV. I watch a lot of the History Channel and the ancient aliens are the ones that are responsible.

Devin: Well, on that note...

Joe: Okay. There we go. I think if somebody really seriously wanted to solve the mystery, a lot of the KGB's past files of stuff have been... and a lot of our intercepts of a lot of their coded stuff has been declassified. If you wanted to go dig through all that, you might be able to actually find out who this guy is. I'm not going to do it because that would be a lot of work.

Steve: Yeah... [laughs]

Joe: But you know, if you're motivated...

Steve: You're lazy.

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: Well, if you decide to do that, you should send us what you find...

Joe: Yeah.

Steve: Yeah!

Devin: ...via email.

Joe: Yeah.

Devin: Our email is thinkingsidewayspodcast@gmail.com.

Joe: Mhm.

Devin: All of the information on this story plus probably some fun pictures of his face and the handwriting are on thinkingsidewayspodcast.com, which is our website. So, yeah! I guess we'll talk to you next week.

Joe: Okay! Well.

Steve: Too-de-loo!

Joe: Yeah, see ya, everybody.

[**Outro music plays**]