

# Ninety Degrees South

## EPISODE NINE: Second Looks.

Brian M Bradley

INTRO MUSIC

OVERHEAD STATION HUM IN BACKGROUND. CROWD IN HALLWAY LOW  
DUE TO CLOSED DOOR. PHONE CALL IN PROGRESS. FADE IN  
CELL TONE DIALING, DIALING AND THEN PICKUP

CHUCK:  
(over phone)  
Bass, that you?

BASS:

(over phone)

It's me, Charlie, just got the Iridium phone; sound quality is incredible!

CHUCK:

(over phone)

Hell's bells, Bass, I can hear you just as if you were in the next room. That Iridium phone is amazing!

BASS:

(over phone)

I can see now why it's such a popular commodity down here.

CHUCK:

(over phone)

Bass, everything I'm about to tell you is to be considered need-to-know only. Don't reference it in any of the official reports and have ...Honolulu scrub it out of the body camera feeds.

BASS:

(over phone)

I understand Charlie, what's the situation?

CHUCK:

(over phone)

In the past decade or so, there's been lots of internal US interest in the South Pole Station. We've managed to keep most of the more...exotic items contained within the US intelligence community. However, word started leaking out after they uninstalled their old dome and added the new elevated station.

BASS:  
(over phone)  
and by 'exotic,' are you trying to insinuate that the alternate realities, demons; and so forth are...

CHUCK:  
(over phone)  
No! by exotic, I'm talking about neutrino experiments, geological samples found in ice cores, all the sciency stuff. Probably looking for some way to weaponize it. As far as the gremlins and goblins, it's all hooey. Lose them donkey-brains, boy!

BASS:  
(over phone)  
So, do we know who any of the players are yet? I'm assuming Beauregard-Lowing is in the mix?

CHUCK:  
(over phone)  
They're pitching this ballgame. In addition to the National Science Foundation, it appears the Defense Intelligence Agency is in the mix.

BASS:  
(over phone) (Sigh)  
The D.I.A.? You know that means Jocelyn is involved.

CHUCK:  
(over phone)  
Hold your horses! We don't know she's involved in this just yet. The D.I.A. is a large outfit; it could be anybody.

BASS:  
(over phone)  
I'm sticking to my hunch.

CHUCK:

(over phone)

The N.S.F. is aware of the interest and have been trying to keep everybody at bay. However in the last couple of years internal rifts have been forming.

BASS:

(over phone)

Rifts?

CHUCK:

(over phone)

There are portions of the N.S.F. executive leadership who are fighting hard to keep the intelligence agencies out of their business and stop any attempts at meddling. Others in the leadership are content to look the other way.

2SP

CHUCK:

(over phone)

Either way, it's a sore point within the Science Foundation. There is also a fourth payer. More elusive and nobody in the know can really put their finger on it.

BASS:

(over phone)(ponders)

So then the communication to the Chinese embassy could have a lot more to do with our homicide than we suspected?

CHUCK:

(over phone)

Sounds like a distinct possibility, Bass. In any event it's why there is so much pressure to get you to clear suspects, get

them off the station and find the killer. You being there is interfering with whatever political chess game these people have going on.

BASS:  
(over phone) (Curious)  
So what do I need to do?

CHUCK:  
(over phone)  
The homicide investigation is still our primary concern and we need to stay focused on that. However...

BASS:  
(over phone)  
Keep my eyes open and head on a swivel

CHUCK:  
(over phone)  
That's my boy! We'll check in again in 36 hours.

PHONE BEEP DISCONNECT.

2SP

BACKGROUND STATION HUM, HALLWAY SOUNDS AND PEOPLE MILLING AROUND. KENDRA AND BASS WALKING PAST PEOPLE AS THEY 'MALL-WALK' THE COMPLEX

KENDRA:  
(low voice)  
It was nice for you to take a break and...and have lunch with me.

BASS:  
(Sincere)

Well, if we're being honest here, it was also an excuse to make sure everything was still going well. With the baby steps.

KENDRA:

(low voice)

It's still...challenging for sure. Most days are nerve racking...but lately, it hasn't been so bad.

Rando 1:

Afternoon Deputy Marshal.

BASS:

Afternoon.

1SP

BASS:

I've seen how much effort you've been putting into it. It's impressive the difference in just a month.

KENDRA:

(low voice)

Thank you. This... this was not a bad idea. Walking around the station, just getting use to having... to people being around me.

BASS:

Its not too overwhelming I hope.

KENDRA:

(low voice)

It's not overly comfortable, but I'm not having that...um, flight instinct.

BASS:

I'll need to get back to my work in a bit, but in the mean time; if this gets to be too much, let me know.

Rando 2:  
Hey Mr. Marlow!

BASS:  
Good Afternoon.

KENDRA:  
(Curious)(Low voice)  
How \*is\* your investigation going?

BASS:  
(nonchalant)  
Slowly but good strides are being made. I'm sorry I can't go ...

KENDRA:  
(finishes for him) (low voice)  
into details on an active investigation...I remember. (chuckles) I  
guess... it's...that's probably prudent since I have no alibi.

THOMAS:  
Hey guys!

BASS:  
Mr. Kelley.

KENDRA:  
(low voice)  
Yet another way this anxiety...negatively affects me.

BASS:  
(reassuring)  
Half of the winterovers didn't have any alibi around the time of  
the murder. Even those who did, almost everybody had some

reason to not like Dr. Rodney. There is no shortage of motives to go around.

KENDRA:

(low voice)

Still, I've never been a suspect before.

BASS:

(Correcting)

Person of interest, not a suspect.

KENDRA:

(low voice)

What's...how are they different?

BASS:

Suspects typically are closely connected or indirectly connected to the crime. A person of interest may have information about that same case. However there is no evidence or factors that exist which would indicate direct involvement.

KENDRA:

(low voice)(playful)

Well then...I guess between the um...two I like being interesting better than being a suspect.

BASS:

(chuckle)

Rando 3:

Hi Deputy Marshal.

BASS:

Doctor Gannan, good day.

KENDRA:

(curious)(low voice)



Bass, why are...everybody seems to be very friendly today.

BASS:

(feign surprise)

Are they? ...Huh.

KENDRA:

(confronting)(Low voice)

Bass! What do you know?

BASS:

(hesitant)

I'm guessing that; well most likely people weren't expecting to see you out and about talking to... well anybody.

KENDRA:

(low voice)

You mean you?

BASS:

I mean, anybody. Umm, they probably think...

### HAPPY GIRL SQUEAL

CHERYL-LYNN:

(happy, exuberant)

Oh my word! Now aren't you two just as cute as dimples on a baby's butt!

BASS:

(finishing his sentence)

...that, they probably think... that! (clears throat) Hi Miss June. Doctor Jennings and I are on an after-lunch walk. Helps with the digestion and getting the meal to settle.

CHERYL-LYNN:

(playing along)

Oh of course! Digestion!...Well, just so happens I'm heading to the gally myself for a late lunch. Maybe I'll try walking afterwards too. Ya'll have fun now, but remember your manners Deputy, or eveybody else will! Too-da-loo.

CHERYL LYNN WALKS AWAY HUMMING DOWN THE HALL.

KENDRA:

(Low Voice)(Embarrassed)

People think we're...we're...?

BASS:

Friends on an afternoon walk. I don't know what they're thinking Kendra. What I do know is that people notice change, notice when things are different. You. In public. That's different. That's wonderful and I bet, in time when you're ready, they'd like to get to know you as well.

KENDRA:

(low voice)

Maybe, I don't know. Maybe.

BASS:

(reassuring)

Like I said...when \*you\* are ready!

KENDRA:

(low voice)

What is your intention with....this?

BASS:

(Confirming)

You and I...this?

KENDRA:

(Low voice)

Yes.

BASS:

(Ponders for a second; deep breath and then exhale)

Right now, in this exact moment, I am talking with a friend. A very intelligent, inquisitive, dedicated on improving herself and yes I will admit...attractive friend.

PAUSE

BASS:

(continues)

That said, I've only known this friend for a short while. I don't know where things are going, I don't know if more...complex feelings would arise. For situations like this, and it \*has\* been a while. I seem to remember taking things one day at a time worked quite well. So to answer your question...my intention is to continue being a friend, and we'll see where that takes us.

PAUSE

KENDRA:

(cautious)

Pretty good answer Bass. Honest?

BASS:

(joking)

Hey, I've been nothing but honest with you and will always be. I have nothing to hide, you're seeing the true me...I mean literally; you've seen me naked, doesn't get much truer than that! ...*(quipping)* and also in my defense, it was 100 below zero, freezing and we're in Antarctica, so...no judging!

KENDRA:

(low voice)(slight laugh, catches herself)

...Look, I have no...I'm not sure why, but you...you're very easy to talk to. I don't have to struggle to have a conversation.  
(Two beat) I think that's what...I'm trying to say.

BASS:

Give it time, remember. Baby-steps. Don't rush, \*you\* set the pace you are comfortable with.

RADIO ON BELT BEEPS

MALE VOICE:

Deputy Marshal?

PUSH TO TALK SOUND

BASS:

Go ahead

MALE VOICE:

Sir, they're ready for you in the B1 Berths sir.

BASS:

I'm on my way

STATIC THEN SILENT

BASS:

Duty calls. Have to go but I enjoyed catching up. Maybe next time; coffee in the galley?

KENDRA:

(low voice)

I'd like that.

BASS:

See you later.

KENDRA:

Bass?

BASS:

Yeah?

KENDRA:

(low voice) (Playful)

That night, the three hundred club. Things... didn't look all that cold...to me!

LONE FOOTSTEPS WALKING DOWN THE HALL. THREE SECOND PAUSE AND BASS DROPS HIS RADIO, SOUND OF HARD PLASTIC HITTING THE TILE

BASS:

Son of a bitch!

SOUND OF PEOPLE TALKING FADES OUT AND FADE INTO STATION HUM IN B-1 BERTH COORDOOR.

ELECTRONIC BEEP

BASS:

(VO FORMAL)

This is Deputy Marshall Bass Marlow, Rodney Homicide investigation. Today is 12 November 2021. 13:30 hrs. With me are station Chief of Facilities, Ezekiel Bustamante and Doctor Karl Jovac, Head Scientist and Doctor Rodney's supervisor.

## SOUND OF DOOR OPENING

BASS:

(VO FORMAL)

Today Doctor Rodney's personal belongings are being collected for delivery to his next of Kin. It has taken some time, but a distant aunt in Missoula, Montana was finally located. Doctor Rodney had no closer living relatives we could locate. His wife has decided the belongings as she and he...had issues.

BASS:

(VO FORMAL)

Although the room was photographed the same day the body was found, as well as having been processed initially upon the first days of my arrival, I want to take a second look.

BASS:

(VO INFORMAL)

Gentlemen, if you will please put on the purple gloves I provided.

2SP

## SOUND OF LATEX GLOVES GOING ON

BASS:

(VO FORMAL)

Room has been sealed since I last searched, my personal seal on the door was intact and not tampered with. Room itself is slightly larger than your standard Amundsen-Scott berth. Designed specifically for long-term inhabitants, all contractors occupy floor one while science and medical staff occupy floor two.

BASS:

(VO FORMAL)

In opposition to its former occupant, the room is very basic and uncomplicated. Absence of any familiar photos or nick-knacks. No personal decoration or any item with perceived intrinsic value.

BASS:

(VO INFORMAL)

Doctor Jovac, I'll start handing you items to pack while Zeke keeps a running log for inventory.

ZEKE:

(VO somber)

I'm ready, lawman.

BASS:

(VO)

Doctor Jovac?

KARL:

(VO) (Distracted)

...Hmmm? Oh yes, of course.

BASS:

(VO FORMAL)

Diane, beginning audio manifest, to be accompanied and cross verified by independent station personal, specifically the aforementioned Mister Bustamonte.

SOUND OF BOOKS LIFTED OFF COUNTER

BASS

(VO FORMAL)

Text books. Two. 'Advanced Astrophysics by Neb Duric and Dark Matter in Astro- and Particle Physics. Dark 2002.

WRITING

ZEKE:

(VO)

Got it

BASS:

(VO FORMAL)

One Stapler, black and one clear tape dispenser.

ZEKE:

(VO)

Got it.

BASS:

(VO FORMAL)

One desk lamp. Black, LED bulb. Brand name has been worn off. It's; still plugged in. Give me a second.

CHAIR SCOOTING OUT, CLIMBING UNDERNEATH DESK.

BASS:

(VO INFORMAL)

We'll helloooooo. How did you get there?

KARL:

(VO)

What, what is it?

BASS:

(VO INFORMAL)



Diane, I've just discovered what appears to be a thumb drive, tapped to the bottom of the sliding desk drawer with electrical tape. Am moving to get my phone and ...

SOUND OF PHOTO TAKEN ON IPHONE

BASS:  
(VO INFORMAL)  
...photograph for evidence. I think .....if...

SOUND OF STANDING UP FROM FLOOR. 2SP AND THEN DRAWER SLIDING OUT

BASS:  
(VO INFORMAL)  
Let's clear this out first. Inside of the drawer we have ...6 ball point pens, 6 pencils, paper clips, staples, staple remover and whiteout.

DUMPING CONTENTS IN BOX

KARL:  
(VO INFORMAL)  
Should we see what's on it? He was still getting hate mail from Neil DeGrass Tyson. . .

BASS:  
(VO INFORMAL)  
Not yet Doctor. I want to dust the bottom of this drawer, tape and thumbdrive for prints. I'll set this off to the side while we finish clearing the room.

FILE CABINETS OPENING AND CLOSING (2)

BASS:

(VO FORMAL)  
Nothing in the desk filing cabinets

BEGIN FADE OUT PROCESS

BASS:  
(VO FORMAL)  
Beginning with clothing dresser. Seven T-shirts, white cotton.  
Seven pairs of socks. Seven pairs of trousers, various colors  
and styles...

2SP

ELECTRONIC BEEP. SUBDUED BACKGROUND HALLWAY CHATTER FROM  
BEHIND CLOSED DOOR.

BASS:  
(VO Formal)  
Deputy Marshal Bass Marlow, Rodney Homicide investigation;  
continuance. (*breath*) Re-examination of private living quarters  
resulted in discover of a small external thumb drive. Eight  
gigabytes. Much smaller in capacity than the missing drive  
from Doctor Rodney's office.

DRINKING WATER

BASS:  
(VO Formal)  
Examination of the cabinet underside revealed only one set of  
finger prints, match was able to be established with Doctor  
Rodney. Similar results with partial prints found on electrical  
tape as well as thumb drive.

BASS:

(VO Formal)

Thumbdrive contents were not encrypted nor password protected. (*exhale*) If not for the security seal I placed on the door and frame to the berth, I would suspect this item had been planted after the fact. To not have this drive protected almost suggests Doctor Rodney wanted to have it discovered.

2SP

BASS:

(VO Formal)

Contents of the drive held a dozen individual email correspondences. I'm considering sending this off to Honolulu for Fiona's cyber crime eggheads to exam for any potential hidden or masked files.

2SP

BASS:

(VO Informal)

Okay Diane, everything here on out is O.T.R. The twelve emails were all between Waynewright and somebody in Colorado with a 'Bolo' email address. MDantes. Waynewright is providing technical updates and status of something called 'Project: Atlas'. He mentions Doctor Jovac, Doctor Van Zandt as well as Doctor Rodney in two separate emails. Also interesting he mentioned the Ice Caves and new security precautions.

DRINK WATER

BASS:

Whatever this 'Atlas' is. As far as I can discern, only 4 station occupants were familiar with it and one of them was murdered. Doctor Waynewright just got bumped to the top of my suspect list with Jovac, Van Zandt and Reno Dave right behind.

FINGERS TAPPING ON DESK

BASS:

(VO Informal)

I'm debating telling Waynewright about the contents of the drive. I think I may have actually come up with a much better use for it. Something a wise Janitor once told me about hunting prey through the forest...

BASE HUM FADES OUT

ROBOTIC VOICE: RECORDING STARTED. LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM, MANY VOICES WITHIN CHATTING AMONGST THEMSELVES.

BASS:

(raised voice to gather attention)

Let's get started, please!

CONVERSATIONS COME TO A CLOSE

BASS:

(Professional voice)

Ladies, gentlemen & those beyond the binary; thank you for gathering so quickly today. I know there is a lot of information swirling around in regard to my investigation. I know, especially for the ten of you who should have departed already, a lot has been asked of you.

JOSH:

(from back of room)

Too much!

SLIGHT MURMURING FROM CROWD

BASS:

(calming)

I know, I know Mr. Nichols and I am not oblivious to this. It's in part why I asked all remaining thirty winterovers & Ms. Derecha to attend today. So I can provide you with updates and while I may not be able to go into specifics, it was suggested that providing some insight may help the overall process.

MALE VOICE:

(frustrated)

Am I leaving soon or what?

BASS:

(calming)

I'm working with an incredible number of resources and assistance from the Marshal's service, FBI as well as NSF personal to expedite the search for Doctor Rodney's killer.

LARRY:

(sarcastic)

What a wonderful idea **DEPUTY** Marshal, I'm glad it just came to you!

BASS:

(irked)

ermm! (*deep breath, holding his anger in*). Recently, during a review of Doctor Rodney's berth and person affects as they were being packaged for return to his family, we came upon an item which had been hidden.

#### SLIGHT CROWD MURMER

SONDRA:

(Curious)

What was it (distorted) that you found?(End distortion)

LARRY:

(stern curiosity)

What item?

BASS:

(cautious)

I can't really go into specifics on what was discovered. What I can tell you is that if this item provides the answers I think it can, I may be able to use that information to swiftly zero in on our killer.

CHERYL-LYNN:

Is this about the purple thumbdrive?

CROWD MURMUR

THOMAS:

wellll I heard that too!

MALE VOICE:

Me too.

BASS

I'm sorry but I can't confirm nor deny....

NIC

Was it in the cabinet, or taped underneath, cause I heard both?

BASS

I can't really go into details at....

FEMALE VOICE:

Keenan said it had hidden video footage, is that true Deputy Marshal?

MALE VOICE

Keenan also thinks Tupac faked his own death.

SANDRA

Wait...Tupac's dead? (distortion) When did this happen?  
(distortion)

2SP

BASS:

(frustrated)

Seriously; guys?

ZEKE:

(apologetic)

Awwww my bad lawman, didn't know you wanted that kept on  
the low-low.

MURMUR STOPS

BASS:

(needing to regain control of the meeting)

Regardless, I can't \*officially\* confirm what was discovered,  
but I can say I'm extremely optimistic on it's value to my  
investigation.

FRED:

(Anxious)

Then come on already! If this thing here is the smoking gun or  
whatever; do your Sherlock Homes thing and cuff the  
murdering punk so I can get back to Boston and what not! Fuck  
already!

BASS:

Mister Fergerson, my life, all our lives would be much simpler if it were that easy. Unfortunately I need to send this item to Honolulu for professional analysis. The next Hercules LC-130 set to drop supplies and head back to McMurdo is set for; when again Ms. June?

CHERLYN-LYNN:

On Thursday, darlin.

BASS:

On Thursday the...eighteenth. It should be in Honolulu two days after and with the confidence I have with our forensic teams in the Hawaii office, I'm willing to bet that by this time next week, I'll have that data and, with luck, a prime suspect should be easily identifiable.

#### CROWD MURMUR GOES ON IN BACKGROUND

THOMAS:

(excited)

Oh boy, this is fantastic news.

LARRY:

(smug)

Let's not get too overly excited people. **DEPUTY** Marshal Marlow said his entire process will take a week. We all need to stay focused on our work and research responsibilities and not let this...endeavor distract us.

#### MURMUR DIES DOWN

BASS:

(feigned politeness)

Doctor Waynewright, for the first time you and I are in agreement upon something. I'm glad people are excited and if it helps reduce your understandable frustrations then my intention worked, but as Doctor Waynewright points out, it's



best to keep to your normal routines for now. Thank you for coming here and as soon as I'm able, I'll provide more updates.

LARRY:

(formal)

Alright everybody. Thank you for attending. Now that we have this information to digest, I suggest we go back and continue on with our days.

CHAIRS SCOOTING BACK, PEOPLE CHATTING AS THEY EXIT THE ROOM.

BASS:

(curious)

What's up Zeke?

ZEKE:

(Lowered voice)

How come you told me to make sure Ms. June knew exactly what we found, and then say I didn't know not to tell nobody?

BASS:

Cause I knew, once this got to Cherlyn-Lynn that it only be a matter of hours before the rumor made its way across the station. She's a gossip tabloid on her own.

ZEKE:

(serious)

You know lawman, if'n I'm the killer, and if'n I just heard that you had something that was about to fry my fish, I'm going to be doing anything I can to get that evidence.

BASS:

Zeke, I'm counting on it.

Outro and endcredits