

M&B Paranormal Investigations
Episode 6
'Catching Flies'
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INT. A&E

BERNARD

(hushed) Hello listeners. Bernard here. It's almost 5am, and Magenta and I are sitting in the waiting area of A&E - that's 'ER' for our American listeners - because Lindsay fell out of a tree and broke her arm. She's just getting a cast put on it now. Poor baby. She was so brave, wasn't she, dear?

MAGENTA

She's a tough cookie!

BERNARD

Didn't even scream on her way down.

MAGENTA

No. Just stood up with her arm on backwards and used her good hand to call an ambulance!

BERNARD

Absolute trooper.

MAGENTA

Well, you know, the women in our family are incapable of feeling much pain, so...

BERNARD

What a gift. A genetic boon, if ever there was one.

MAGENTA

Natural selection par excellence, Bernard. When everyone else is busy screaming and writhing around, we can keep throwing punches.

BERNARD

Yes! Ooh ooh! Like when you were trying to get your powers back a few years ago and that warlock had taken me and your mother hostage and you'd come to rescue us and the warlock stabbed you in the shoulder! With a spork! And it went all the way through.

MAGENTA

Oh yes, I forgot about that.

BERNARD

And you just yanked that spork out and stabbed him right back!

MAGENTA

I did!

BERNARD

You did! It was, if I may say so, extremely bad arse.

MAGENTA

I suppose it was rather bad arse.

BERNARD

Yes! Very upsetting to watch. But very bad arse, nevertheless.

MAGENTA

Thank you, my dear. I have my moments.
Isn't it odd, though, I'd forgotten about the spork. In fact, just a few days ago, I was in the bath and I was looking at that scar on my shoulder, and I couldn't for the life of me remember where it'd come from. I was wracking my brain and... nothing.

BERNARD

Yes, I know what you mean. That whole chunk of time - those weeks between you losing your powers and getting them back - it's just a blank. Or rather, it was a blank. Since your mother's been staying with us, it's been coming back, bit by bit. I know we can both be a little absent-minded sometimes, but isn't that rather...

MAGENTA
...suspicious?

BERNARD / MAGENTA
Hmmm.

Lindsay arrives.

LINDSAY
Alright dweebs. What are you looking
so frowny-faced about?

MAGENTA / BERNARD
Lindsay! Brave girl, how are you!
What did the doctor say?

LINDSAY
Yeah, nothing to worry about. They
said it's a clean break. Should heal
in 6 to 8 weeks. No more climbing
trees for a while.

MAGENTA
Well, luckily you brought a branch
down with you when you fell; we'll
just use that.

LINDSAY
The doctor wanted to know why I was
falling out of oak trees at midnight.

BERNARD
What did you say?

LINDSAY
I said I was cutting a sacred branch
with a sickle of gold for a
transdimensional ritual. She didn't
ask any more questions.

MAGENTA
That's my girl. Confound them with
truth.

BERNARD
I feel terrible; you wouldn't have
hurt yourself if it wasn't for us.

LINDSAY
Dad, it's fine.

BERNARD
How are you feeling now?

LINDSAY
Fine, stop fussing.

BERNARD
Are you sure you're fine?

LINDSAY
Yes! I mean... it was a bit scary.
Long way to fall.

MAGENTA
We didn't expect you to climb so
high!

LINDSAY
Yeah, I wasn't going to. (haunted)
But the oak tree told me to. I could
hear it inside my head. It's like
granny said; it guided me.

MAGENTA
Guided you to a branch that broke as
soon as you put any weight on it.

LINDSAY
Oh my God. Do you think the oak tree
was trying to hurt me?

BERNARD
Why would it do that?

MAGENTA
Might be holding a grudge. Not
against Lindsay specifically, of
course. Humans in general.

LINDSAY
Can't blame it, really. We haven't
been very nice to the trees.

MAGENTA
True. And very compassionate of you
to recognise that, my dear.

BERNARD
It is.
(choking up) We're so proud of you.

LINDSAY
Dad! Stop it!

BERNARD
(sniffs) I'm fine, I'm fine! Bloody
hayfever again.

(MORE)

BERNARD (cont'd)
(clears throat for a
long time)

MAGENTA
You alright dear?

BERNARD
Yes, I'll be fine.
Tell you what: I'll make your
favourite meal for breakfast.
Dinosaur nugs and beans!

LINDSAY
Dad. I haven't eaten dinosaur nugs in
years.

BERNARD
Then today's your lucky day!

MAGENTA
Oooh, nugs and beans brekkie! Let's
go home and get that started.

LINDSAY
Wait mum. Not yet. Can we...
(sighs)... can we do something about
all these ghosts first?

BEEP. BEEP.

INT. MORGUE

ELEVATOR TINGS, DOORS OPEN.

ELEVATOR VOICE
Level: basement. The morgue.

BERNARD
(whispers) Oh, I don't like this. Why
did we have to come *down here*?

LINDSAY
I told you; we're following the
ghosts.

ELEVATOR VOICE
Going up.

DOORS CLOSE.

MAGENTA

Probably good you can't see them,
Bernie. There's a long, shuffling
line of the buggers.

BERNARD

Ohhh. I wish you hadn't said that.

MAGENTA

There were six of them in the
elevator just now. You were nose-to-
nose with one of them.

BERNARD

Ohhhhhh!
Why are there so many? Is this a very
bad hospital?

LINDSAY

I don't think they're all from here.
Most of them are in street clothes. I
think they're coming from all over.

BERNARD

Maybe you should talk to them,
Magenta? Find out why they're *here* of
all places?

MAGENTA

It'd be a waste of breath, my dear.
There's no point trying to engage
with this lot. The look on their
faces... my God, if you could see
it--

BERNARD

I'd rather not.
(beat)
Is it horrible?

LINDSAY

Oh yeah. Blank, unseeing eyes. Mouths
hanging open, as if in a silent,
endless scream.

MAGENTA

If it's any consolation, that's the
typical facial expression for a great
many ghostly entities.

BERNARD

That's not much of a consolation, no.

MAGENTA

But I've never seen them behave like this before... like pack animals. Like a herd of cows on viagra.

BERNARD

Do you mean vicodin?

LINDSAY

But *why* are they so vacant? It's like their souls are missing.

MAGENTA

Oh, it's nothing like that. They're still in there, somewhere. They're just not paying attention to us anymore. For them, the world of the living has become distant... out of focus. Their eyes are fixed on things we cannot see or understand. I'm not sure we can help them cross over. My usual tricks don't work on this type of ghost.

LINDSAY

We have to try. We can't leave them like this. Look, mum; they're passing through those double doors at the end of the corridor.

BERNARD

(scared) Ohhh God, are we really going to follow them in there??

PATHOLOGIST

Excuse me!

BERNARD **SCREAMS**, which makes the other two scream.

BERNARD

Oh it's alright! You're just a man!

PATHOLOGIST

You cannot be--

MAGENTA

Bernie! You screaming made me scream!

PATHOLOGIST

This is a restricted--

LINDSAY

Me too! I screamed cos you both
screamed! I wasn't scared or
anything!

BERNARD

Sorry! I thought I was suddenly able
to see ghosts! But it's just a human
man in a lab coat and a funny little
bow tie! That was really scary for a
moment there! Maybe I'm not ready to
be a fully-fledged ghost-hun--

PATHOLOGIST

EXCUSE ME! What are you doing here?
This is a restricted area.

BERNARD

Oh. Erm. Well--

MAGENTA

I'll handle this, Bernie.
Hello there. You must be the
pathologist.

PATHOLOGIST

Yes unt and I am--

MAGENTA

Shhshhhhhshhshsbbbbuhbuhbuh.
I'm talking.

PATHOLOGIST

Sorry.

MAGENTA

That's alright. Now, we're here
from... the department of
sanitation... to inspect the
facilities, of which we... understand
you have... some. Facilities. For us
to inspect.

PATHOLOGIST

...what?

LINDSAY

We're mediums. Right now, you have a
conga-line of ghosts heading for that
room over there. We're here to find
out what they're doing and help them
cross over.

MAGENTA

Lindsay!

LINDSAY

Well, radical honesty worked before.

MAGENTA

It's not effective in EVERY scenario.

PATHOLOGIST

Do you have some way of proving you are who you say you are?

MAGENTA

You mean, department of sanitation employees?

PATHOLOGIST

Exorcists.

MAGENTA

Oh! So do you want us to be exorcists?

BERNARD

Ooh oh, oh, here we go - this is our business card.

PATHOLOGIST

'M&B Paranormal Investigations'. What a coincidence, I was just about to call Coven Co. We're having issues down here.

LINDSAY

Coven Co? Who's that?

MAGENTA

Fraudsters. Imposters. Shifty bastards. By gad I hope we never have the ill fortune to meet them.

PATHOLOGIST

Fraudsters, you say? Oh no, that's no good at all.

BERNARD

Well, lucky for you, Mr Dicky Bow - sorry, Doctor Dicky Bow - lucky for you, we're here now and we're the real deal, and we're very cheap... so how can we help?

PATHOLOGIST

The cadaver room - the one through the double doors just over there - has been terribly uncomfortable the last few days. Far too crowded. Though of course, completely devoid of life.

LINDSAY

I imagine that's because of all the ghosts. There's a lot of ghosts here. Like a lot.

BERNARD

So you must be sensitive to that sort of thing, doctor? Me too! Only as of very recently, though. When did yours start? Have you always been able to sense things or..?

PATHOLOGIST

Always. Since I was a child.

MAGENTA

I bet you were a really creepy child.

PATHOLOGIST

My mother certainly thought so. It's why she sent me to live alone in the woods.

MAGENTA

How did you get a medical degree if you grew up in the woods?

PATHOLOGIST

I commuted. Any more questions before I leave you to exorcise the cadaver room?

BERNARD

Yes, I've got one. Isn't every room a cadaver room in a morgue?

Beat.

PATHOLOGIST

No. Goodbye.

He WALKS off. DOOR.

BERNARD

Gosh. That's exactly what TV made me think a pathologist would be like.

MAGENTA

Who knew it was such a realistic depiction. Now - to the cadaver room!

BERNARD

I... I think it's 'cadaver'.

BEEP. BEEP.

ADVERT

INT. CADAVER ROOM

BEEP

DOOR OPENS, SHUTS

BERNARD

Wow. It DOES feel crowded in here. Like being on a London tube at rush hour, but more formaldehydey.

MAGENTA

They ARE just standing around avoiding eye contact, so you're not far off.

LINDSAY

Do you think they look a bit... confused?

MAGENTA

There is a glimmer of befuddlement in those blank, unseeing eyes, yes.

LINDSAY

Are they waiting for something?

MAGENTA

I think so. But what? What happens here that would attract so many ghosts?

LINDSAY

(scared) Mum... mum. Over there. The old lady...

MAGENTA

Hmm?

LINDSAY

The ghost... the old lady ghost... the one... walking towards you...

MAGENTA

Oh! Oh look at her. Oooh, she's making eye contact!

OLD LADY

(shouts) YOU!

LINDSAY

(quiet scream) Ahhhhhh. Ahhh!

BERNARD

Oh crikey, what's happening!

OLD LADY

You can see us?

MAGENTA

We can! And you can see us!

OLD LADY

Yeah, not like these other ones. Look at 'em. Creepy little bastards. What's wrong with 'em?
(shouts) Close your mouths, what are you all doing, catching flies??

MAGENTA

Oh, they're actually closing their mouths now, look. They heard you.

OLD LADY

Yeah. Good. They were giving me the creeps.

LINDSAY

Um. Hello. Hi. Sorry I screamed just now. I'm Lindsay.

OLD LADY

You can see me too, can you?

LINDSAY

Yes. Wow. Can't believe I'm talking to a ghost! I mean, I've talked to one before, but he was a wolf. Why is this so much scarier?

OLD LADY

What about this one? Can he see me?

MAGENTA

No, he can't.

BERNARD

What's going on please?

OLD LADY

What about if I stick my finger up
his nose. Like this.

Bernard SNEEZES

MAGENTA

Oh don't do that! That's not nice.
Would you like it if some stranger
stuck their finger up your nose?

OLD LADY

I wouldn't mind.

BERNARD

Did a ghost just put their finger up
my... good Lord.

LINDSAY

So, um, so why are you all here? If
you don't mind me asking. Sorry.
Sorry if that's a bit personal.

OLD LADY

Can't speak for the rest of 'em, but
I was compelled. A few days ago I
woke up in me bed - dead! - and I
left the house and just started
walking. It was like my feet knew
where they was going. And I knew when
I got to wherever they took me, that
I'd find the help I needed to leave.
Y'know; leave leave. But now I'm here
and we're all just waiting.

MAGENTA

How fascinating!

BERNARD

What is?

MAGENTA

They've come here to cross over,
Bernie. But it doesn't look like
that's happening.

BERNARD

Oh right. Why not?

FUSTY MAN

I can answer that.

LINDSAY

(quiet scream) Ahhh! Oh my God!

BERNARD

What's the matter??

LINDSAY

Old man! Old man ghost! Just came from above! Straight down! Through the ceiling! Oh my God, that was so scary.

FUSTY MAN

I was just up in the cafeteria staring at an iced bun. Oh God. Iced buns. (sad sigh). Hello Mabel.

OLD LADY

Hello Gerald. Did you just say you know why we're all standing around like a bunch of cows--

MAGENTA

--on viagra--

FUSTY MAN

Viagra?

OLD LADY

Why didn't you tell me you knew something?

FUSTY MAN

You've only been here five minutes, Mabel. Give me a chance.

OLD LADY

Well, tell us then!

FUSTY MAN

I'm just about to!
So I heard there used to be a doula in this room, well, she was a ghost too of course, but she was a doula in life and she must've loved her job because she kept being a doula after she died, y'see, but for ghosts who were struggling to get to the other side, y'see, like the proverbial chicken crossing t'road, except the road is the veil between life and death. Anyway, she's gone now and let's just say, the coop is getting very crowded.

LINDSAY

A doula? What's a doula?

BERNARD

A doula? Oh, oh, I know what a doula is! I read an article once. Birth doulas help women give birth, but you also get death doulas and they help people die.

MAGENTA

What, like... hit them over the head with a frying pan sort-of-thing?

BERNARD

I think it's less Looney Tunes than that. I believe they help the patient by providing emotional support and guidance for their passage into the next stage of being, as it were.

FUSTY MAN

Aye, that's what she was doing. Passage to the next stage of being.

MAGENTA

Ohhhh I see, this ghost-doula was helping people cross over. And where is she now?

FUSTY MAN

She retired.

LINDSAY

How does a ghost retire?

MAGENTA

I imagine he means; she completed her unfinished business and crossed over.

LINDSAY

Doesn't look like she completed it. Look at them all.

MAGENTA

Well, maybe she worked until it felt right for her to stop. I dunno, she couldn't keep doing it forever, could she. She wasn't getting paid.

LINDSAY

Oh yeah. No holiday or sick leave either. No weekends. No sleep even. Just non-stop work.

MAGENTA

No unions for the dead.

LINDSAY

Yeah, this lot don't look like the
'collective action' type.

OLD LADY

'ere, you two must be mediums. That's
how come you're talking to us, isn't
it.

MAGENTA

Hmm? Oh, yes.

LINDSAY

I'm just a hobbyist, really.

FUSTY MAN

Witches, eh? Oh I don't hold with
that sort of thing. Messing around
with things beyond our ken.

OLD LADY

But they can help us, Gerald.

FUSTY MAN

Oh yes, I suppose they can. Good!
Because *someone* needs to sort this
mess out. Look at the backlog!

LINDSAY

Well yes, we were just trying to do
actually--

OLD LADY

--It's a disgrace it was allowed to
happen in the first place!

FUSTY MAN

So what are you going to do about it,
young lady?

OLD LADY

Yes, what are you going to do about
it?

LINDSAY

Oh, you're looking at me? Erm, er--

OLD LADY

Oh for goodness sake, don't tell me
you don't know!

LINDSAY

(stuttering) I mean, I'm new at this, and I, I haven't had a chance to find my feet or anything...

FUSTY MAN

They've sent a bloody amateur!

OLD LADY

A 'hobbyist', she said. No-one has a proper job nowadays.

LINDSAY

Well, maybe you're being a little entitled if you just expect--

OLD LADY

Entitled?? You're the one swanning in here, asking impertinent questions!

FUSTY MAN

As an interloper and active member of the living, the least you can do is help!

LINDSAY

(angry) I'm not sure I want to now!

OLD LADY

Oh that's nice, isn't it.

FUSTY MAN

Unacceptable, I'm afraid!

MAGENTA

Alright! Mabel, Gerald, calm down and back off! We will help, but not if you continue to take that tone. Capiche?

They GRUMBLE

OLD LADY

Well, don't appreciate being spoken to like that...

MAGENTA

Lindsay. Bernard. Over here.

BERNARD

Oh! Where are we going? Oh, just here? By the... erm... corpse with a sheet over it.

(MORE)

BERNARD (cont'd)
 (low voice) Is there a reason we
 moved five steps?

MAGENTA
 (whispers) To get away from some very
 annoying ghosts.

LINDSAY
 (lowered voice) What a couple of
 arseholes.

MAGENTA
 (sighs) Unfortunately, the price of
 helping people is you're not gonna
 like half of them.
 And of course, the price of esoteric
 talent is everyone assuming you can
 pull a foolproof plan out of your
 arse at a moment's notice and execute
 it with a wave of the hand.
 Sorry.

LINDSAY
 Y'know, this is exactly the sort of
 invisible labour that women always
 have to do.

BERNARD
 Literally invisible, in this case!
 Haha! Because, y'know... ghosts.

MAGENTA
 Oh, yes haha! Bernard, if this lot
 were a band, they'd be... the
 'Ungrateful Dead'! Hah!

They LAUGH

LINDSAY
 What?

BERNARD
 Your mother is referencing the
 psychedelic rock band, the Grateful
 Dead. Good pun, darling!

MAGENTA
 Thank you sweetie.

They FLIRT

LINDSAY
 Ugh, get a room.
 So what ARE we gonna do?

MAGENTA

I could probably guide Mabel and Gerald through the veil - if they deign to follow my instructions of course, BIG IF - but as for the others... I really don't know how I'd get through to them. Their sort simply do not, cannot, listen to the living.

BERNARD

You could ask the dead to talk to them.

MAGENTA

You mean... get the spirits to talk to the spirits?

BERNARD

Yes. Would that work? I imagine they're more on each other's level. Maybe you could *train* one of the annoying ghosts to be a ghost-doula? Or you could train both of them! Because if there's *two* ghost-doulas, they can take shifts and have breaks and stuff. What did you say the annoying ghosts were called? Minkie and Gar?

MAGENTA

(mutters) Minkie and Gar?

LINDSAY

Could that work, mum? Could you train them up as doulas?

MAGENTA

Yes. I think I could. But if I tell Mabel and Gerald how to cross over, they might just - poof - off they go.

LINDSAY

Yeah, they don't seem the type to help others.

MAGENTA

Unless... maybe if I frame it to appeal to their nature... Gerald strikes me as one of those 'oh looks like I'm the only adult in the room again,' types. Do you know what I mean?

(MORE)

MAGENTA (cont'd)

'Looks like I'll have to take charge and sort things out, yet again'. You know the type.

BERNARD

It's a definite type! Is he one of those?

MAGENTA

They act put-upon, but really, they love it. And Mabel, is she a bit of a martyr too? I think she is. Loves to complain? Being a ghost-doula in a morgue would give her plenty of reasons to complain.

LINDSAY

And if they get bored, they can train others to replace them.

BERNARD

That sounds like it'd work.

MAGENTA

It really might. Bravo Bernie. I think you cracked it! Considering you can't see or hear spirits, you really pick up on things.

BERNARD

I'm paying close attention! I wish to do my share of the invisible labour!

MAGENTA

Oh darling, big kiss. Kissee kissee.

BIG KISS.

LINDSAY

Guys! We're in a actual over-crowded meat-locker, can you not?

MAGENTA

Alright, alright!
Follow me, Lindsay, and take note of what I tell them. You can learn at the same time as Minkie and Gar!

BERNARD

Minkie and Gar!

BEEP.

INT. MAGENTA'S PHONE

ANSWERPHONE LADY

Welcome to the EE messaging service.
I'm sorry but the person you called
is not available. Please leave your
message after the tone.

BEEEEEP.

SERAPHINA

Magenta, it's me, your mother. I
assume your phone is off because
you're still at the hospital. Or
maybe you don't want to talk to me.
Certainly hope that's not the reason.
I know our relationship has had its
challenges, my girl, but I must
admit, it has done my heart good to
see you. To work with you again on
esoteric matters is not something I
thought would happen again.
Why am I even saying all this?
Perhaps it is easier when we can't
see each other, and read our mutual
history in each other's eyes.
Anyway, I'm calling because a large
man with a gun came to the house and
tried to kidnap me. I believe he
works for the BLEEEEEEP casino. Mr Baby
tried to defend me, but he is seven
kittens bound by a chalk circle, so
he couldn't do much. Fortunately, his
help was not in fact needed, as the
large man with the gun was eaten by
an entity that crawled through the
transdimensional portal. Entirely
gobbled up! Quite the surprise for
all of us, as you can imagine. Mr
Baby believes that the man's
malevolent intent is what attracted
the entity through the portal, so
that was rather lucky. Unfortunately,
the entity is still here. It is
currently in the catacombs under the
house. And it might now have a taste
for human flesh. So... thought I
should warn you before you all get
home. And in case it finds me before
you get here. In which case, this is
goodbye.
Alright! Hope you're well. Hope
Lindsay's arm has been seen to.

(MORE)

SERAPHINA (cont'd)

Good job none of us feel much
physical pain, eh! Good job indeed.
Ha. Yes. Goodby--