

TRANSCRIPT: ANOMALY PODCAST PILOT (13:36 minutes)

INT. BUS - DAY

FX: The sound of a bus bumping along a country road. The bus has a few passengers on board. Some crates of supplies are piled up in the back, clink and rattle as the bus takes each bump. Country music plays over the tinny speakers.

Kory puts on headphones and the sounds of the bus become faint. There's a beep as she presses play on a recording.

INT. APARTMENT, QUEENS - NIGHT

FX: A voice memo listened to through headphones. The message recorded in an apartment with a whirling fan, other apartment sounds. Random spatters of gunfire in the distance.

ISA: Ready.

LUNA (off): Mateo. Come leave your daughter a message.

MATEO (off): I'm just gassing up the generator. We need to be ready when the power cuts out again - I'm not messing around with this New York heat.

LUNA: Fine. (Into mic) Kory. We love you so much, cariño. We just want you to be safe. We'll send for you as soon as we can. I miss you already.

ISA: And don't get too country on us or we'll have to disown you.

LUNA: Isa!

ISA: Kidding. You know I love you -- even if you come back to Queens with a pet chicken. Actually, please do. I miss eggs.

FX: Footsteps of someone walking toward the phone.

MATEO (off): OK, I'm ready.

FX: Scuffle of the phone being passed. Hands bumping the microphone on the phone. Footsteps. More random spatters of gunfire in the distance.

MATEO: (choking up) I love you, mijita. We'll be waiting for you, Kory.

FX: Click of the fan turning off, the sigh of electricity cutting out.

ISA (off): So that's blackout number what for the week? 4?

LUNA (off): At least we have a generator. Turn it on, mija.

FX: The grumbling of a generator coming to life

MATEO: I bet that's one thing you won't miss. Try to enjoy it out there if you can.

GEORGE (Pre-lap): (MUFFLED, OUTSIDE HEADPHONES) Hey, Kory. (no answer)
Kory. (no answer)

FX: The sound of headphones being removed -- the recording fades away as the sound of a bus rushes in...

INT. BUS - DAY

FX: The same sounds as before. Music, the bump of the road...

BUS DRIVER: (OVER INTERCOM): Keensboro, next stop.

GEORGE: They were calling your name. Kory, right?

KORY: Yeah. Thanks. (Sarcastic) Wouldn't want to miss my stop.

GEORGE: Keensboro has a nice ring to it. I got assigned to a couple out in Patoka.

KORY: You know the area?

GEORGE: Nope. But there's food and fresh air, and most of the houses have phones. Oh! And I heard there's cell service in some towns...

BUS DRIVER: (OVER INTERCOM) Keensboro!

GEORGE: ...even though it's not supposed to be back up for years.

FX: The hiss and screech of the bus stopping.

BUS DRIVER: Kory Hernandez, this is your stop.

FX: Kory grabs her bag and pulls it down the aisle. The bus doors open. She walks down the steps at the front of the bus.

KORY: Thanks.

EXT. FARMLAND - DAY

FX: Kory steps off onto a dirt road. She's surrounded by farmland. It sounds almost peaceful -- the lazy buzz of flies, birds chirping overhead, a gentle moo.

KORY: Wait, no one's here. Where am I supposed to go?

FX: The bus doors close. The bus takes off.

KORY: Hey! You're leaving me in the middle of nowhere!

FX: Kory jogs after the bus for a few steps then stops when it's clear the bus isn't going to stop. A few seconds of silence, just Kory, the birds, and the flies. Then she sighs.

KORY: You've got to be kidding me.

FX: She walks back to her roller bag, and rolls it across the rough pavement. Pulls it up a set of wooden stairs.

KORY: Closed?

FX: She knocks on the glass door.

KORY: Hello? Is anybody there?

FX: A bicycle rides up, a rickety cart pulled behind it. It stops.

MARIGOLD (off): Hey. Are you Kory?

KORY: Yeah. Who's asking?

MARIGOLD: (as she walks toward Kory) I'm Marigold. Miller. Janis and Frank's daughter? I'm here to pick you up. My mom was going to come but she got held up at the farm.

KORY: I thought they dropped me off in a ghost town. Know when this store opens up? I was hoping they'd have a phone.

MARIGOLD: Everything has limited hours to save electricity -- we should get going. You can put your suitcase in the cart.

KORY: Oh, right. I could just call from your house.

MARIGOLD: Our house? There's only one phone -- it's here.

KORY: Then I'll wait. I gotta get a message out to my parents.

MARIGOLD: You can't. There's a rotating schedule for the phone -- our turn isn't for three days.

KORY: My family's gonna be worried. I'm sure they'll make an exception.

MARIGOLD: There are no exceptions. Keeps the peace if we're not fighting over phones.

KORY: I'll chance it. Just tell me how to get back, you don't have to wait.

MARIGOLD: No way. My mom'll kill me if I leave you here, especially with those storm clouds closing in. I have to get you back, then get to AgriClub.

KORY: That's that club with cows and stuff. For country kids, right?

MARIGOLD: Yup. We country kids can't go a night without milking some cows.

KORY: Not much to do out here, is there?

MARIGOLD: Welcome to Keensboro.

KORY: Maybe I can come back later? Tonight? Just in case it opens.

MARIGOLD: Maybe. Just ask my mom. Here, hand me your bag.

FX: Kory pulls the bag down the steps and Marigold throws the bag in the cart behind the bike.

Marigold and Kory walk down the road on the rough pavement. Marigold pushes the bike/wagon beside them. Through this scene as they get closer to the farm, we hear more horses, cows, chickens, and the increasingly loud buzzing of a generator.

KORY: Are there any other transplants like me in Keensboro?

MARIGOLD: My parents are the only do-gooders who'd sign up for something like this. Most of the town told them not to be a host family, but here we are. So, you're the only one.

KORY: Host family...Makes it sound like a foreign exchange program. Like being out here is a good thing.

MARIGOLD: Well, you're welcome to take the next bus back out of here if you miss living with riots and gunfights.

KORY: Sorry, I didn't mean it like that.

MARIGOLD: It's OK.

FX: Marigold and Kory turn onto a gravel road. They walk together in silence - steps on gravel.

KORY: So...this is where you grew up.

MARIGOLD: Yup.

KORY: Peaceful, I guess.

MARIGOLD: Quiet. Not peaceful. Don't expect this to be a vacation.

KORY: Believe me, this is not my idea of a vacation.

MARIGOLD: No, I bet you'd like something a bit more upscale. Maybe something all-inclusive?

KORY: Who do you think I am? Some spoiled city kid?

MARIGOLD: Can you drive a pickup?

KORY: No.

MARIGOLD: Do you know how to feed pigs?

KORY: No.

MARIGOLD: Ever sterilize a lab full of petri dishes?

KORY: What does that have to do with farming?

MARIGOLD: See. You don't know anything. Just like I thought.

FX: The rolling grumble of thunder in the distance.

MARIGOLD: Ugh, we're still a mile out. There's no way we'll make it back before it starts to pour.

KORY: I can run.

MARIGOLD: C'mon then.

FX: Footsteps running along the gravel road, a bike bumping along beside them, cart clinking against the bike frame. Rain - first a few drops, then a downpour. The sound transitions to the sound of rain on a greenhouse roof.

INT. GREENHOUSE LAB - DAY

FX: The low hum of a generator. The steam and hiss of bioreactors. Classical music in the background. Heavy rain on the glass panes of the greenhouse. The clink and clatter of high-tech lab equipment, the buzz of a generator. A woman (JANIS) hums along to the radio as she types on a keyboard, then presses enter.

JANIS: (Frustrated) Argh. The protein content is still at 18%.

FRANK: We're getting closer, Janis. I'm going to adjust the concentration of the culture solution and see if it helps.

FX: The door opens. The rain gets louder. Kory enters, pulling her wheeled bag behind her.. The door closes, the rain quiets again.

KORY: Mr. and Mrs. Miller?

JANIS: You must be Kory! You finally made it. I'm Janis. This is Frank. And -- oh you're soaked. Didn't they give you a rain poncho? It's all rain out here these days. Where's Marigold?

KORY: (overwhelmed) She went to AgriClub? She said she didn't want to miss milking the cows.

FX: Frank guffaws and Janis breaks into a belly laugh.

KORY: What's so funny?

JANIS: Marigold was just teasing you. AgriClub is working

on a survey of the town's resources. We don't get together and milk cows for fun.

KORY: Seemed weird, but...

FRANK: Can't believe everything you hear. Thought most teenagers didn't believe anyone -- If you have any questions, you can always come to us.

JANIS: But really...Marigold could have skipped tonight. We have a guest, and she goes off, 'til God knows when. Breaking curfew no doubt.

FRANK: Like mother, like daughter.

JANIS: Hush, you. Now Kory. What should we do with you?

KORY: Can we go back to town -- I wanted to call--

JANIS: Everything's shut up til tomorrow. We should get you settled in -- or food? Did they feed you? We should get you something to eat. Frank -- we should take a break. Eat something.

FRANK: If this sequencing would work, we could have fresh meat.

KORY: That's meat? In the petri dishes?

JANIS: It's cultured meat, grown from animal cells.

KORY: Now you're messing with me, too.

JANIS: No -- not one bit. We take animal fat and muscle cells -- what you eat when you eat meat -- and create an environment in which they can replicate exponentially. . Those few chickens and pigs and cows out there are helping us make food to feed the masses. Tastes just like the real deal.

FRANK: Because it IS the real deal.

KORY: I'm...not hungry.

JANIS: OK. Let's get you dried off. I'll show you to your room. You must be tired.

FX: The door opens, bringing in more sounds of the rain but it's dissipating. Kory follows Janis outside, first rolling then carrying her bag.

EXT - FARMLAND - NIGHT

FX: The rain is now light, almost non-existent. Kory and Janis's shoes squelch through the mud.

KORY: I can't get over this quiet. There's constant noise back home.

JANIS: It can take some getting used to.

KORY: Makes the city seem so far away.

JANIS: It is. I'm not from here either. It's been ages since I've been back home.

KORY: Did you know they carved the whole east coast up into territories? I didn't realize until we had to drive through 'em all. It's not on the news or anything.

JANIS: I've heard it's pretty bad in the cities. Did you have any trouble?

KORY: No. Every time we passed through a new territory, they switched out the picture on the front of the bus. Like, to show their loyalty to the ruling faction. So we pretty much got left alone. And once we hit Pennsylvania, they just took back roads. They said there was some trouble in Pittsburg, so they wanted to avoid it.

JANIS: There wasn't much in Pittsburg even before the Anomaly, so I'm sure you didn't miss anything.

KORY: I hope it's easier to get back when I go home.

JANIS: I'm sure things will get better. They usually do.

FX: Door opens

INT. BARN - NIGHT

FX: Janis and Kory walk across a wooden floor, the bag rolling behind Kory.

JANIS: Sorry, it's not glamorous, but we thought you'd like the privacy.

KORY: Thanks.

JANIS: If it gets too quiet, there's a radio in the corner. It's a 2-way -- you can pick up transmissions, or Frank and I are tuned to 9500, if you need anything. You know how to use it, right?

KORY: We have one at home, but we just use it as a radio. We talk on walkies or the landline. How far can this transmit?

JANIS: In theory, a 2-way like this can broadcast thousands of miles, but not this one. It needs some work. If you want to play with it, go ahead.

KORY: Cool, thanks.

JANIS: Just be careful — you don't know who's out there listening.

KORY: Right.

JANIS: Anyway...I'll give you a chance to settle in. Need anything before I go?

KORY: Is there a place to plug in my phone?

JANIS: Your phone? There hasn't been cell service in over a year.

KORY: My family made me some recordings, so I could hear their voices. I

just wanted to --

JANIS: Hear a little bit of home?

KORY: Yeah.

JANIS: Most of our electricity is routed to the lab -- everything is solar-powered out here, unless we have some diesel to fuel the generator. But we'll get you charged up tomorrow. Promise.

KORY: Ok, thanks.

JANIS: Night, Kory. Holler if you need us.

FX: Janis walks to the door. The rain starts to patter on the roof overhead. As soon as the door opens and closes, Kory walks to the shortwave radio.

KORY: (to the radio) Thousands of miles, huh?

FX: Kory turns the crank really fast for a short time. Then tries the dials. Throughout the following, Kory turns the dial through static until she hits a clear spot, then speaks.

KORY: Hello? Anyone there? Hola? ¿Alguien allí? I'm trying to reach the Hernandez family. (to herself) God, there's probably thousands of Hernandezes, aren't there? (into the radio receiver) I'm looking for Luna and Mateo Hernandez. Or Isa Hernandez. If anyone can get them a message, I'll....(to herself) I don't even know what I can offer. (into the radio receiver) Is anyone out there? ¿Alguien allí? (to herself) Cool. No answer.

FX: Clicking and static. Almost a whisper coming from the radio. This voice will become Skipper, but it will cut in and out, like he's almost out of range at times.

KORY: Hello!? Can you hear me? Hola? ¿Alguien allí?

SKIPPER: (Bad Spanish) Hola. Estoy aquí. Sorry. High school Spanish.

KORY: It's OK. I speak English. I'm Kory.

SKIPPER: I'm Skipper. Haven't heard you before.

KORY: I just got here. From the city.

SKIPPER: I'm from the city, too. I've been here for a while, but it's where I came from. You Philly? Chicago?

KORY: New York.

SKIPPER: Niiiiice.

KORY: Yeah. My family's still there. I was hoping they might be in range.

SKIPPER: Hm. Have you tried relaying a message? I have friends in New York, I could pass something along.

KORY: I don't know...I don't even know who you are.

SKIPPER: I get it. I wouldn't trust me either. It's cool. Just trying to help. If you want to give me their names, I can ask around. But you can wait it out. Send a letter or something.

KORY: No. I need to let them know I'm OK. (With hesitation) It's Luna and Mateo Hernandez. Astoria.

FX: TITLE MUSIC -- It's upbeat with driving violins.

NARRATOR: You've been listening to Anomaly, a scripted podcast set in the not-so-distant future. Anomaly is produced as a partnership between Cereal Made and Red Hook Media Lab.

END

TRANSCRIPT: ANOMALY TRAILER (2 min)

FX: Sound of white noise as a dial turns through stations and lands on:

FX: A bus going over bumpy terrain. Tinny country music plays through the ancient speakers.

BUS DRIVER: (OVER INTERCOM) Keensboro!

FX: The hiss and screech of the bus stopping.

BUS DRIVER: Kory Hernandez, this is your stop.

FX: Sound of white noise as a dial turns through stations and lands on:

FX: Farmland. It's almost peaceful -- the lazy buzz of flies, birds chirping overhead, a gentle moo.

MARIGOLD (off): Are you Kory?

KORY: Yeah. Who's asking?

MARIGOLD: (as she walks toward Kory) I'm Marigold. Miller. Janis and Frank's daughter? I'm here to pick you up...

KORY: Are there any other transplants like me...?

MARIGOLD: My parents are the only do-gooders who'd sign up for something like this. Most of the town told them not to be a host family, but here we are.

KORY: Host family...Makes it sound like a foreign exchange program. Like being out here is a good thing.

MARIGOLD: Well, you're welcome to take the next bus back out of here if you miss living with riots and gunfights.

KORY: Sorry, I didn't mean it that way.

FX: Sound of white noise as a dial turns through stations and lands on:

JANIS: If it gets too quiet, there's a radio in the corner. It's a 2-way. Just be careful — you don't know who's out there listening.

FX: Sound of white noise as a dial turns through stations and lands on our final station. There is static between all of this conversation.

KORY: Hello? Anyone there? Hola? ¿Alguien allí? I'm trying to reach the Hernandez family...

SKIPPER: (Bad Spanish) Hola. Estoy aquí. Sorry. High school Spanish.

KORY: It's OK. I speak English. I'm Kory.

SKIPPER: Have you tried relaying a message? ...I could pass something along.

KORY: ...I don't even know who you are.

SKIPPER: I get it. I wouldn't trust me either.

KORY: No. I need to let them know I'm OK. (With hesitation) It's Luna and Mateo Hernandez. Astoria.

FX: TITLE MUSIC -- It's upbeat with driving violins.

NARRATOR: Cereal Made and Red Hook Media Lab presents ANOMALY, a scripted podcast set in the not-so-distant future. Written by Heather Taylor and Hillary Nussbaum, Anomaly is an official selection of the 2021 Tribeca Film Festival and was made with support from The Gotham.