

[Transcript] Stolen Hearts / Listen Now - Over My Dead Body: Gone Hunting

Wondery's shocking true crime podcast Over My Dead Body is back for its fourth season, Gone Hunting, with a twisted story about a relationship built on a dark secret and what happens when that secret begins to destroy everything.

It was Mike Williams' sixth wedding anniversary when he set off on a hunting trip into the gator infested swamps of North Florida.

He figured he'd be back in time to take his wife Denise out to celebrate, but he never came back.

Friends and loved ones feared he met his fate through bad luck and a group of hungry alligators, leaving his wife Denise and their young daughter behind.

Except, that's not what happened at all.

And only one person, his mother, wanted to keep the case alive.

She knew the real answer to Mike's disappearance had to be much closer to home.

After 17 years, a kidnapping, a betrayal, and finally the discovery of her son's body, she would be right.

I'm about to play a clip from Over My Dead Body, Gone Hunting.

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It was a freezing December morning in North Florida.

It was a peak duck hunting season, but no one was hunting that day on the west corner of Lake Seminole.

The mist that shrouded the normally serene shoreline was lifting.

As a crowd of game wardens, sheriff's deputies and locals gathered near a boat ramp.

A sense of urgency hung heavy in the air.

More boats were showing up, more officers were showing up.

Scott Dungey stood at the lake's edge looking out into the murky waters.

And he spotted a helicopter clear the tree line.

So it landed a hundred yards away from where everybody was gathered on the side of the lake.

The rotor blades slowed to a standstill.

The door swung open and a man in a green flight suit stepped out.

Pilot came over and introduced himself.

I just told the pilot, I'm going in the helicopter with you.

Scott wasn't a policeman or an emergency worker.

He was out there looking for his friend.

Mike hadn't come home yet from duck hunt.

It had been over 24 hours since anyone had heard from Mike.

Something was definitely wrong.

And in these freezing temperatures, Scott knew they had to act fast.

I was kind of excited how that we're in the helicopter, we're going to find them and everything's going to be fine.

I'm going to be the one to find my buddy, I'm going to be a hero.

The chopper lifted up into the pale blue sky and Lake Seminole stretched out below.

Such boat zigzagged between patches of thick weeds covering the surface.

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Scott had spent his life in North Florida swamps just like this, hunting ducks and pulling fish out of the water.

But this corner of the lake was different.

It was an old flooded pecan orchard that was probably 600 yards long and maybe 200 yards wide.

Stumps of sunken trees rose up from the water like tombstones.

And just as many trees that were standing above the water, there was just that many stumps underneath the water, hundreds of tree stumps that you can't see from the boat.

And they were slowing down the search.

We had people falling out of the boats just because they'd hit a stomp and you didn't know it was there.

And that gave Scott a hunch about what had happened to his friend Mike.

I said, okay, if he's gone out and he fell overboard, you know, the water's super cold now, the weather's cold.

It didn't look good.

Looking out over the lake, Scott spotted an island.

It was nothing more than a patch of mud covered in gray dead grass.

Maybe that's where Mike was.

You know, hopefully he got his waders off and he was able to swim to the other side and maybe had a concussion and was knocked out somewhere on their island.

Scott told the pilot to hover above it.

It was overgrown.

So it was hard to see.

I couldn't see much.

Then Scott spotted something.

Not far from the island, there was something moving just beneath the surface of the water.

The water was very clear because it was in the winter.

So you'd see the full body.

A dark shadow.

And there were six or eight of them, you know, just swimming all around the boats.

Eight, 10, 12 foot alligators.

The people in the boat had no idea that there was a gator eating remotely close to them.

That's when he realized, I thought, okay, if he, he did fall out somewhere, time was running out, we got to get him before the alligators get him.

As the helicopter turned back, Scott looked at the dark waters below him.

He knew it was going to take more than a helicopter ride to find his buddy.

But what Scott didn't know as the chopper landed that freezing floor today, there were other unseen forces at hand, other figures in the shadows lurking close by who did know where Mike was.

And they were more vicious than any alligator.

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