

[Transcript] Strangeland / Updates + Alphabet Boys

Hey everyone, it's Ben. I wanted to give y'all a quick update on a few things that have happened since the season 2 finale came out, and also to let you know about an amazing new show that you don't want to miss called Alphabet Boys. Okay, first off, the updates. We've been getting a ton of messages via our website, StrangelandPodcast.com, and on our Instagram, at StrangelandPod. And it's been amazing to see how many people have connected with this case and with Sassy and Anisha's story. If you're sitting there thinking, what can I do to help, here are two ideas, and they're both important. First, share the story, tell your friends, tell your family, keep Sassy and Anisha's memory alive. Then, if you're up for it, give the Burlington County Prosecutor's Office a call. We put their contact info up on the Strangeland website and Instagram. Let them know that we need justice for Sassy and Anish. As criminologist Wendy Reggetsy told us in the season finale, keeping the pressure on can get results. If you have a case that's high profile or you have families that are demanding justice and keeping stories about the homicide in the public domain, that can certainly exercise an impact on police practices or procedures to be able to solve that crime. We've received numerous emails from listeners who have reached out to the Maple Shade Police Department and the Burlington County Prosecutor's Office. And unfortunately, authorities still do not seem to be taking our investigation or this case very seriously. Wenshorts told us that the Prosecutor's Office is still using the open and active investigation line. Another source informed us that the Prosecutor's Office said the Strangeland podcast is not reliable because, quote, the podcast includes interviews with a bunch of homeless people, unquote. That's what they said. Interviews with a bunch of homeless people. Please voice your support for Sassy and Anish by continuing to put pressure on authorities to solve this case. Those numbers again are at Strangelandpodcast.com and on our Instagram at Strangelandpod. And just in case you have a pen and paper handy, you can call 609-265-5035. Okay, also, the sixth anniversary of Sassy and Anish's murder is coming up in one week. And some listeners in the Maple Shade area are organizing a vigil at Anish's Memorial Garden this Saturday, March 18th at 11am. If you're interested in participating, hit up our Instagram for more info and get connected to the organizers. Again, that's Instagram at Strangelandpod. I wish I could be there. We all do. Please do send pics and we'll definitely put them up on Insta. Okay, here's one last thing. A podcast recommendation. Since you've finished Strangeland, and no doubt already binged the deck investigates, shout out to Ashley Flowers, it's an amazing show. We got your next binge all lined up, Alphabet Boys. Have you ever wanted to go deep undercover with law enforcement and see what happens when they target people for arrest? Alphabet Boys is a new show that immerses you in secret underground investigations from the alphabet agencies, CIA, FBI, ATF, DEA, ETC. What you'll find is that for every James Bond slash Jason Bourne, there's a very heavy dose of Reno 911. It's a great show. Season one of Alphabet Boys is called Trojan Hearse. You'll hear why in the first episode. It tells the story of a man named Mickey Windecker, who the FBI hired to infiltrate the Black Lives Matter movement in the summer of 2020. It's a wild story. How wild? Well, here's a short excerpt of Alphabet Boys. Okay, it is August, August 28, 2020, at approximately 402 p.m. Special Agent Scott Dahlstrom with Special Agent Byron Mitchell, CHS, for Meet with Zebedias Hall. It's late afternoon on a warm day in Denver, Colorado. It's drizzling outside and Michael Adam Windecker, the second, or Mickey, as he prefers, is sitting in the backseat of an FBI car. Two federal agents

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are with him. And one of them, FBI Special Agent Scott Dahlstrom, has just handed Mickey a small hidden camera. Mickey turns the camera to his face, shooting from an unflattering angle below his chin. You can see Mickey's thin red mustache and scraggly goatee that's turning gray. He's propped his large sunglasses on his forehead, and he's looking straight down into the tiny camera lens. Mickey is not ready for his close-up. The FBI agents tell him to remember his instructions,

which were given to him before the camera started recording. Mickey then walks to his car, the silver hearse, and places the FBI's camera on the passenger seat. Mickey looks down toward the camera and addresses the FBI agents, who are watching the live feed remotely. Mickey has good reason to feel patriotic in this moment. The FBI has signed him up as an informant, or, in the FBI's term of art, a confidential human source. And Mickey's getting paid thousands of dollars every few weeks. Cash. And Mickey, he's got a very specific assignment from his employers at the FBI. Go after

his new friend, the young black activist, Zeb Hall, and find a way to bring federal charges against him. As the song ends, Mickey again looks down toward the FBI camera. America. I'm Trevor Aaronson. This is Alphabet Boys. So, to come right out and say it, Mickey Windecker wasn't a badass and Tifa warrior after all, as activists like Zeb Hall had thought. He was an informant, a snitch, working for the FBI. Which seems to go against everything Mickey claims to be, right? Remember his little life rule? Fuck the three peas. Yeah. Turns out, that's bullshit. Fuck the two peas. Maybe. Because this Mickey guy, he's in bed with the police. And the cops are not only helping him, they're paying him. Today, the FBI has more than 15,000 registered informants. And in the summer of 2020, Mickey is one of them. That conversation you heard in the last episode, when Mickey and Zeb were talking about training at Zeb's apartment, Mickey, on his own initiative, had secretly recorded the whole thing and delivered it to the FBI, apparently in the hopes of getting hired on as an informant. I need your help in doing this stuff. I'll leave you alone. I'm fine. Well, here's the thing. You have, and that's where I'm coming around to is, you have to decide where and what you're going to do. You know, I can't seem to tell you, oh yeah, you should totally like blow up rich neighborhoods and shoot the white people and burn the federal courthouse down. This recording ended up being Mickey's audition tape for the FBI. The official explanation for how Mickey Windecker became an informant can be found in FBI reports. Internal investigation reports focused on racial justice demonstrators in Denver. These reports aren't public. And the FBI didn't intend to have them out there. Maybe not ever. They were provided to me along with Mickey's undercover recordings by someone who was deeply concerned about the FBI surveillance

and infiltration of black activist groups. According to the FBI's reports, Mickey had returned to Denver after being a volunteer fighter with the Peshmerga, the Kurdish military force in Iraq that was fighting the Islamic State or ISIS. Mickey told the FBI, and I'm quoting here from the report, that he found a sense of purpose and honor there and made an oath to always fight against threats both foreign and domestic.

War with ISIS. Kurdish troops in a frontline battle with an enemy that took their land. Mickey was among dozens of Americans who volunteered to fight for the Peshmerga. With them, a half dozen Americans, veterans of the war in Iraq, back as volunteers. Once back in Denver, Mickey

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started participating in the protests following George Floyd's death. And he saw what was, in his view, a new domestic threat. Mickey said he witnessed protesters damaging property and threatening violence. So Mickey started providing information to police in the Denver area. Local police there then introduced him to the FBI as part of something known as the Joint Terrorism Task Force, which is a partnership between local cops and the FBI. Every major metropolitan region in the United States has a Joint Terrorism Task Force, or JTTF. Mickey's motivation for being an informant was, and again, I'm quoting from an internal FBI report, to fight terrorists. And Mickey believed that, quote, people who participate in violent civil unrest are terrorists. So Mickey, the big bad ISIS hunter just back from Iraq, now has a new target, racial justice protesters whom he considers terrorists. But for him, there appears to be an even deeper psychological impulse. Mickey saw himself as an antihero, someone who operates in the gray areas of the law, delivering his own brand of justice. Mickey wore a chain around his neck and hanging from that chain was a medallion of the logo for the Punisher, a vigilante from the Marvel Comics universe who fights crime with an obscene level of violence. He literally thought he was the Punisher, anything you see. The Punisher logo was on it. And he would always wear the Punisher necklace. Even when he took a shower or a bath, never came off. Just like a big kid, in the worst way, in the worst way. It's awful. This is Trojan Hearse, season one of Alphabet Boys.

Okay, right? Go check out Alphabet Boys right now. It really is one of the funniest, wildest, and also scariest shows you'll ever hear. Again, it's Alphabet Boys. Just search up Alphabet Boys and then click on the red cover art with the gray FBI Hearse. And I'll be back when we have more to update you on for our season of Strangeland. Again, thank you so much for sharing Sassy and Anisha's story. Let's keep the faith and keep pushing for justice.