

FOGO: Fear of Going Outside
Season 2, Episode 10: "Ivy Kills?"
Transcription

{{Sound Cues}}

—

Ivy Le, addressing the listener:

It's the season finaleeeee! So this is your last content warning for now, dear readers. This episode contains firearms and butchery noises, and cursing, as usual. Let's go.

{{Dramatic plucking music with Southeast Asian pan flute starts}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

If you listened to season one, you know, my parents came to the United States as refugees after the Vietnam War. My mom had about two hours notice to leave her family and her country, possibly forever. Most Vietnamese boat people had less than 10 hours notice. She had been dating my dad for about a month. He picked her up from class on his motorcycle every day, so she wouldn't have to walk home. He was handsome and the ladies loved him, but he was too arrogant for *my* mom's taste. So, obviously, he pursued her relentlessly.

My dad had a bounty on his head by the communist government when they met. He had forged papers, a fake name, and a fake North Vietnamese accent. One way he made money was a smuggling business where he arranged boats and supplies in the black market for people desperate to leave. People were not permitted to leave. My mom's own older brother had tried to sneak out three times, but kept getting apprehended by authorities. When my dad decided it was his time to escape, he picked her up and said, if you wanna leave with me, I'll take you to go pack now. We're going tonight. And you can't tell your family.

My mom said there was no time to think, so she didn't. Once they were clear of Vietnamese waters, my dad dropped his accent and finally told her his real name. That moment— when she chose not to throw him overboard— was basically their wedding vows.

{{Music transitions to funky electronic beats}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

By the time they got to a refugee camp, they registered themselves as married.

{{FOGO Theme Music starts: fun bouncy music with electronics fades in}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

So one could say, I carry on a legacy of Vietnamese women who are like, "Fuck it, let's go."

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

I'm Ivy Le, with one E, and this is *FOGO: Fear of Going Outside*, a nature show by the most reluctant host ever. By hook or by crook, I'm going on one more hunt. Whatever happens, remember my people have survived worse than this.

{{FOGO Theme Music funk intensifies and stops}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

After two failed hunts, I am so frustrated. I promised y'all I would go hunting or die trying, and I've done everything except just go out into the woods, by myself, where I might literally die trying.

{{Action movie training montage music starts}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

I've done everything from trying to go hot air balloon hog hunting, to sitting in a ground blind for 10 hours in grueling Texas heat. Then I sat in a nicer, still boring blind, in the winter with a gun for another five hours. I butchered a pig. I skinned a deer. I cooked both, they're delicious. It has been an entire year since I set out to go hunting, and I still have not had a shot at *anything* besides practice targets!

{{Action movie training montage music stops}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

We have not given up though. I still ask every new person I meet if they have property I can hunt on while searching for the next possible way to hunt. Makes networking very awkward. My cough I had last episode has only gotten worse, even after going to the doctor, so I made an appointment to see a specialist. I don't want my human cough noises to give me away when I try again, whenever that might be. We have no land, no mentors, and no dates.

{{Disappointed electronic notes play}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

In some ways, I feel like I'm right back where I was at the beginning, except I'm obsessed now and armed, with a bow. So many people who keep up with FOGO on social media have asked whether I got anything yet, but I have nothing to report.

{{Energetic rhythmic percussion starts}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

Remember Don Nguyen, the hunting guide who was on *Naked and Afraid*? So much time has passed since I talked to him in episode four, he assumed that I'd gone hunting by now and asked how it went.

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

I tell him I went out, but I haven't gotten anything. Next thing I know, I get an urgent Instagram call. Don has never called me before. I didn't know anyone could call you on Instagram. It happened so quickly, I wasn't able to get a recording of it. But it is Don! He says, "I'm packing right now to go visit my parents and hunt in Oklahoma one last time before deer season ends."

This is on a Wednesday and the last day of deer season is this coming Sunday. He says, "Get to Oklahoma City. By Friday. We're finishing this."

{{Sharp trumpet note}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

Okay, plot twist! Don Nguyen, the professional hunting guide from episode four has unilaterally decided to mentor my hunt.

{{Drumming stops}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

I just have to get to the other side of Texas, which is roughly the size of Western Europe! Don wasn't available to be my mentor in the spring, but so much time has passed that his mountaineering and his hunting guide seasons are done now! He's just out doing the hunts he does for himself at this point. Myrriah and I scramble to make plans, and we even fly Minda, FOGO's story editor, in from LA to help document.

{{FOGO Theme Music starts: fun bouncy music with electronics fades in}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

It's like when I was a kid and my bestie and I would empty our piggy banks on the bed when one of us needed something, but it was with airline miles instead. Friday comes. I see the throat specialist first thing in the morning and hit up the pharmacy. We load up Myrriah's Camry with recording equipment, boots and coats and knives, our big, expensive cooler, more hunting supplies, snacks, breakfast tacos, and coffee, and we run to pick up Minda from the airport. We are embarking on a hunt for an animal I have not been studying, in a state I have never been to, with a man I have only met through Zoom! Because I told y'all I would go hunting or die trying.

{{FOGO Theme Music stops}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

Did you think I was playing?! You don't think I have an army of true crime podcast girlies ready to solve my murder!?

{{Soulful electric bass starts playing}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

Karen and Georgia know my name. It will take eight hours altogether to get to Oklahoma City from Austin, Texas. Here is me, Minda and Myrriah on the road after we picked up Minda at the airport.

You already know Myrriah, but Minda Wei, our story editor, is an outdoor person who claims she's an indoor person. But she wrote an article for Slate titled, "When did Smokey Bear get so hot?"

(Ivy, Myrriah, and Minda laugh)

Ivy Le, in the car to Oklahoma City:

It's like, it's either gonna be sleep— I think the trip there and back is gonna be like sleepover wise, but then once it gets to Don, I was like, it could tip over to just three outdoor people making fun of me for two days. (Ivy laughs.)

Minda Wei, responding:

I- I don't think I'll be in the camp of Myrriah and Don... I can't imagine that I'm outdoorsy enough to hang. I might be with you.

Myrriah Gossett, responding:

I don't- I don't know.

Ivy:

I think you're really outdoors-y.

Minda:

I brought a *fur*.

Ivy:

I brought *two*. (Ivy laugh-wheezes.)

Minda:

Because I couldn't find my fucking, like, Real Tree camo. Because I donated it to Goodwill, 'cause I was like, when am I ever gonna use this?

Myrriah:

Little did you know?

Minda:

Little did I know! Oh, do we have weapons in the car?

Myrriah:

Just- just knives.

Minda:

We don't have the bow?

Myrriah:

Nuh-uh.

Ivy:

No. 'Cause he's brought- he's bringing a gun. He brought me a gun.

Minda:

Oh, you're doing a gun?

Ivy:

Yeah yeah yeah.

Minda:

Oh thank god. I was like, we're not gonna kill anything with the bow. (They laugh)

Ivy:

Okaaay. Thanks. Remember 20 seconds ago? She's like, "I'm not gonna be in the camp of making fun of Ivy."

Minda:

I wasn't making fun of you! I was just concerned (Minda laughs) for the finale. (Myrriah laughs)

Ivy, to camera:

I think we know exactly what this weekend's gonna be. (Ivy laughs)

{{FOGO Transition Music plays: fun electronic tones fade out}}

{{Futuristic action movie music starts playing}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

Below the surface of this girl's trip lie many stressors. I, of course, am worried about "what are we going to eat?" I had no time to research. I don't know if they have food in Oklahoma. Minda is trying to understand what the hell is even happening right now. We just sent her a text that basically said, bring a camera and get on this plane. And poor Myrriah, the only one of us who doesn't let her car tags expire, she is trying to drive safely while swallowing her instinct to stop at every casino.

{{Futuristic action movie music stops}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

Just two days ago, I thought I was gonna go hunting alone in the woods, and now I have a car full of crew on the way to meet up with a professional guide to hunt deer! I'm gonna go hunting with Don Nguyen from Season 6, Episode 14 of Naked and Afraid!

{{Action movie training montage music starts}}

John, the Naked and Afraid narrator, narrating:

Ivy's extensive research will help, but she has failed four online hunting courses and will be pursuing a highly camouflaged animal with impaired nature vision. She is coughing, sleep deprived, eight inches shorter than the average hunter, and is allergic to cold air. Her primitive survival rating, or PSR, has been set at 3.2.

{{Action movie training montage music stops}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

Out of 10!? That feels low. We arrive in front of the address. It turns out to be the house Don grew up in.

Don Nguyen, at Don's house:

Hello. Good to see you. Hi!

Myrriah, responding:

Good to see you! Hugs? Okay, yeah.

Ivy Le, narrating:

Don is making this Oklahoma trip because, for the first time in many years, he wasn't able to bag an elk this season. He had already packed extra equipment before calling me too, in case his brother-in-law or someone wanted to come with. We all pile into the guest house behind Don's parents' place. It didn't take long for Don to notice my cough. I did get medicine, but the doctor said it would take at least another month to clear up.

{{Ivy does a hacking cough}}

Ivy, at Don's place:

I gonna go get some cough drops...

Don, responding:

Oh my god. You- you're never gonna kill a deer, for sure!

Ivy:

Yeah. I was gonna ask you!

Don:

You're... Oh my god. Okay. Well, if you, if you cough, I mean, you know, try to get the cough under control because like, if that happens in the morning, we're done.

{{Rattling percussion starts}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

When we come back, Don and I prepare for the hunt...

Don, at Don's house:

Whitetail are one of the most skittish game animals ever seen.

{{Drum transition that sounds like a gunshot}}

{{Country sitting-on-a-porch guitar starts playing}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

After our eight hour drive and getting the tour of the guest house where we're staying tonight, I need to get an Oklahoma hunting license. Also, Don wants to go over the gun I'll be using and check our gear for the freezing temperatures. Plus, we need to eat dinner and go to Walmart for camping food. And Myrriah, who is driving to the hunt, would like us to do all of this by 9:00 PM so we can get some sleep before getting back on the road.

You'd think for us being Vietnamese Americans, Don and I would have more in common when it comes to camping food, but we don't...

Ivy, at Don's house:

I think we're gonna go get, um, uh, the hunting license. So, I have like miso soup, ramen noodles, um, some really great beef jerky and some spices. Um, we're gonna go for a charcuterie strategy- so I'm gonna- like a no-cook charcuterie.

Don, responding:

I have some bread, peanut butter and jelly, cereal and milk.

Ivy:

That is definitely not a charcuterie board.

Ivy Le, narrating:

Don audits what we're planning to wear tomorrow, just in case we're missing something.

Don, at Don's house:

Tomorrow we're probably gonna wear everything 'cause it's gonna be cold.

Ivy, responding:

Okay. Because if it's like really cold, I brought, like, a real fur. My jacket's like the warmest.

Don:

That's a real fur!?

Ivy:

Yes.

Emily Duncan (Don's girlfriend), impressed:

Okay, wooaahh!

Don:

What is that made of?

Ivy:

I don't know.

Don:

A rabbit?

Ivy:

I mean, it's old tech. It's silent.

{{Electronic drum beat starts}}

Don:

It's better than most stuff.

Ivy:

It's better than—

Don:

It's even better than wool. I wear wool just because it's quiet.

Emily:

Oh yeah.

Don:

Super silent. Yeah. Old school works.

Ivy Le, narrating:

I am elated that Don approves of the fur coat. He was the one who sent me on the fashion journey that got me here in the first place. My runway challenge was to obviously slay while hiding from animals, but also abiding by the Oklahoma law, requiring a high ratio of bright orange so I don't accidentally get shot at. And to protect myself against brutal elements in the outside. I am planning to wear a woodland camo pullover sweatshirt with a white cashmere neck gator and a vintage black fur coat. I made a cape and a head wrap from a length of orange fabric. It's too cold for snakes, so I'll be wearing black rubber faux-quilted rain boots over two layers of leggings, one wool layer, and a digital camo pant with deep pockets where I'll keep hand warmers to save my thighs for better days.

{{Electronic drum beat stops}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

Don said to go get a license at Walmart, but the permit counter is closed because who's buying hunting permits at 8:00 PM on Friday night before the end of hunting season?! I purchase a license on the app, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation app, which Don didn't even know existed. The permit was \$300 because I am not an Oklahoma resident, and I guess that means I must be rich.

By this point. I've spent nearly \$3,000 just to go hunting, and that's *with* people hooking me up. And I still haven't killed a damn thing, but my looks. Myrriah, Minda, and I eat fried catfish by the side of the road and go back to Don's place. He gets right to business, which is good because it's 9:00 PM already, and we have to get up at 3:00 to get on the road by 4:00 AM. There is so much to do, like practice shooting this gun... in this house... full of fleshy people I don't wanna shoot.

Don, at Don's house:

Okay, now go, go to fire. And I want you to dry fire, to make- you just make the gun click. Okay. So what I want you to do, when you pull the trigger, I want you to pull back all the way and pin it back.

Ivy, responding:

What do you mean pin it back?

Don:

Like when you pull it, just pull it, you pulled it all the way back.

Ivy:

Okay.

Don:

It's called follow through. You want to have good follow through. That way you don't have any jerky motions that'll disrupt the aim because, honestly, humans react.

Don (cont.):

Humans can twitch so too- so much that before the bullet even leaves the barrel, your body-body's twitches and movements can actually throw the- the round.

Ivy:
Oh wow.

Don:
It's okay. So I'm gonna recock it here.

Ivy:
Okay.

{{Don cocks the gun}}

Don:
I want you to-

{{Ivy dry-fires the gun}}

Ivy:
That was terrifying firing a gun in off-safe mode. (Ivy laughs)

Don:
I mean, you shot the gun. I saw you- your picture. You shot the gun- rifles before.

Ivy:
Never. Like. I've never pulled a- I've never pulled a trigger on a gun, even if I knew it was empty inside a house.

Don:
Well, we- we've made sure it was empty.

Ivy:
Yeah, right, right.

Don:
It was pointed in a safe direction. It's called *dry* fire practice.

Ivy:
Just living the wild side.

Don:

And so if- is that the wild side? *Dry* fire practice can- if you don't have- if you don't dry fire practice, you don't know how your gun's gonna behave in the field.

Ivy:
Wild side!

Don:
And you're gonna start twitching, you know?

Ivy:
Uh-huh.

Don:
And so that's, that's how you miss and wound the animal. And you're gonna feel terrible if you wounded a deer. It runs off and dies months, you know, months or weeks later.

{{Futuristic metallic hip-hop music starts}}

Don:
So I want you to get back on the gun. Disengage the safety, and I want you to dry fire again. I want you to do that quite a few times.

Ivy Le, narrating:
It is very strange, low-key terrifying, to be pulling the trigger of a gun inside a house. Like I trust that it's not loaded, Don showed me it was unloaded, and I checked it too. But it is still a very strange experience to be sitting on the floor of a living room, practicing shooting a real rifle. Everyone else is worried about my cough, and I'm just trying not to kill somebody.

{{Futuristic metallic hip-hop music starts}}
{{Ivy does a hacking cough}}

Don, at Don's house:
Oh my god, that cough is gonna blow it. We're we're not gonna get any deer if you keep coughing.

{{Ivy does 3 more really concerning sounding coughs}}

Ivy, at Don's house:
Wait, so these, these deer aren't- I've got some medicine, but it only lasts like an hour. But if we're hunting for like three?

Don, responding:

We might be hunting for three. Just bring some pills with you. (Ivy coughs) That cough's gonna get us.

Ivy:

But like, are these deer not used to hearing humans around?

Don:

Whitetail are one of the most skittish game animals I ever seen. Like, that you, you could be, like, sitting there in your blind and get bored and pull your phone out and be on Instagram and then, move your phone just an inch. And they look up, look at you, and be like, okay, that's, that's not normal.

Ivy:

Oh no.

Don:

And you're like, they can see that little one hand movement, just like this, and you're blown. They'll all run off.

Ivy:

Shit. I left my ADHD meds at home. (Don laughs)

Don:

So, like, that's why the blind's important. 'Cause you need to conceal our, like, our bored twitches, and movements, and coughs, and—

Ivy:

Wait. So we're gonna go—

Don:

—scratching our butts.

Ivy:

I'm sorry. We're... Did we decide to go hunt literally the most skittish animal you have ever hunted?

Don:

Yeah. Like more skittish than any other species of deer or elk or moose or anything.

{{Electronic notes start playing}}

Ivy:

Like, of the deer, it's the most scared of all the deer?

Don:

Yeah. This is the most skittish of all the- all the ungulates.

Ivy:

Oh god. I remember now why we started out with the hogs.

Don:

Oh yeah. The hogs are a little bit less skittish, but I mean, the hogs are more intelligent.

(Ivy laughs)

Ivy Le, narrating:

As you know, I've been preparing to hunt down pigs, learning their strengths, weaknesses, and habits. I don't know anything about deer. I've never even seen Bambi, and one of the very first things I find out is that they are extremely anxious and watchful of danger. I respect that. But if I've been scaring off pigs, which is what I suspect has been happening, what are my chances of bagging a deer?

{{Reflective music starts playing}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

Luckily, we have three chances to get it or blow it. Twice tomorrow, and worst case scenario, camp overnight and try again the next morning. He shows us the lay of the land on his phone.

Don, at Don's house:

So here's the plot. North's up. You pull in, drive up to Sean Shack, which is a- it is just a barn with a little space to stay. Two cots, two of us will sleep on the floor. There's no plumbing. I mean there's no like, it's like camp- straight up, camp out. You know, it's, I mean it is, it's like, it's a semi like done-up room with insulation and windows. Tomorrow morning, probably not enough time to set up a blind, but we'll like sneak up, get behind the next to the cedar, you know, try to camouflage ourselves and try to take 'em out- that- any deer out, from that cedar to the platform here.

Ivy:

How many yards is that from this, like literally this cedar tree?

Don:

I couldn't get any specifics, but I suspect like 150 to 200.

Ivy:

Okay.

Don:

You shoot first try to take him down and anything else stays- still stays around- I'm trying to take it out cause I'd like another deer.

Ivy:

Okay, so this is, whose land is this?

Don:

This is my brother-in-law's. My sister's.

Ivy:

Okay. Oh.

Minda:

Are their name's Sean?

Don:

My brother-in-law's name is Sean. And so he built this shack And I go, this is like hardly livable, it's a shack!

Ivy Le, narrating:

I mean, if this outdoorsman is shading the Sean Shack, I don't wanna sleep in it! Don auditioned for the opportunity to be naked in the Namibian desert, and *he* doesn't wanna sleep in the Sean Shack!

{{Antsy electronic tones start playing}}

Myrriah, at Don's house:

What time would you ideally like to be...

Don, responding:

So I'd like to have us there at like 30 minutes before first shooting light. Sunrise is 7:20, so legally we'll probably shoot at 6:50. We won't have a blind this first morning. So build the blind in the afternoon and then hunt that spot again.

Ivy:

Okay. And then Sunday morning...

Don:

Same spot.

Ivy:

Same spot. Okay. So basically we have three chances.

Don:

Yeah.

{{Electronic tones stop}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

Knowing that we have a backup plan to the backup plan makes me feel like this trip will be worth it.

{{Action movie electric guitar riffs start playing}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

But I can't see myself lasting two days in predator mode in the condition I'm in right now.

{{Action movie music fades into dreamy electronic music}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

My cough is getting worse, and it is now past midnight. I crawl into bed. Minda and Myrriah are already asleep. But as tired as I feel, I stay up scrolling on my phone. At some point, Myrriah rolls over and goes, (whispering:) "Stop it. Go to sleep." Also, it's so cold. Even though we're *indoors*, bundled up and covered in blankets, it feels too cold to risk being unconscious. That's how cold it is in winter in Oklahoma.

Cell phone alarms start going off at around 3:00 AM, and I make Vietnamese coffee for everyone because, frankly, I don't trust anyone else to do it right. And we pack up as quickly as possible to get on the road.

Ivy Le, in the car to the final hunt:

It's 4:46 AM, e.t.a. to Weleetka, where we're hunting is 6:09 AM, in an hour and 23 minutes. Uh, it is the middle of the night. Um, in my reckless youth, I used to wake up at this time, err, I used to be going home at this time. And now I'm almost 40, and we're getting up to go hunting in the middle of Oklahoma. All things is considered, I'm in pretty good spirits.

Minda, responding:

I was surprised whenever you were talking to Don last night, going through all the gun stuff, I was like, I haven't gotten to watch you go out hunting at all, but definitely seems like you know your shit, so I feel confident in you that we're gonna hunt and kill a deer today.

Ivy:

Aw, thanks. My crew is, um, trying to keep a positive attitude 'cause they don't wanna sleep in a shack tonight.

Myrriah, swiftly:

Yes.

(They all crack up)

{{Pop-punk guitar and bass music starts}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

We stop close to the plot of land for gas, one last grab of emotional support snacks, and one final indoor bathroom. Myrriah blasts early two thousands indie rock to stay awake. I don't recognize any of the songs, and I don't have the money to pay for the music rights anyway, but I am told by Minda and Myrriah that it was, quote, "Like a 2007 Warped Tour up in this Camry," end quote. We are all running on three hours of sleep. We pull up to the property and there's not even a *dirt* road.

We followed Don's SUV further and further into the inky landscape. I couldn't always tell where the tall grass ended or what was a cloud or a treetop. It is so dark this far away from city lights. There was an alarming amount of visible stars. And the grass... The grass was so tall that it flogs the undercarriage of the car. We stop when Don stops. He rushes out of the car to Myrriah's window to warn us to open and close the doors as quietly as possible, so as to not startle the deer. We turn off the music.

{{Pop-punk music stops}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

The Warped Tour is over. We get out as quietly as we can and start to walk the rest of the way down to the tree we're hoping to blend in with. My eyes adjust, and the sun just starts to come up.

Don, at the hunt (whispering):

Go. Come on, let's go. We're burning daylight.

Ivy, responding (whispering):

I'm, I'm trying to walk quietly, but... are we looking for a special tree? Because they all look like the same tree. There's so much poop.

Don (whispering):

Okay. There's already deer out there.

Ivy (whispering):

What?

Don:

There's deer in front of us. Go ahead and rack one of the gun right now.

Ivy (whispering):

Okay. I'm just gonna back, back off it-

Don (whispering):

Get on the gun right now. Get on the gun.

Ivy Le, narrating:

We're barely out of the car when Don says there's deer in front of us, but I'm so disoriented. I don't know where's the front. I'm trying to move slowly and quietly so the animals don't get sketched out, but also I'm avoiding poop and carrying a loaded gun.

Ivy, at the hunt (whispering):

Oh, I do see them.

Don, responding (whispering):

You see her?

Ivy (whispering):

Yeah. Okay.

Don (whispering):

You see her?

Ivy (whispering):

Yeah.

Don (whispering):

Tighten it now. Okay.

Ivy (whispering):

I don't see them anymore.

Don (whispering):

Did you see her yet?

Ivy (whispering):

I see somebody. Okay, I see her, yeah—

Don (whispering):

Do you see it through the scope yet?

Ivy (whispering):

Yeah.

Don (whispering):

You can? Is the gun centered on her?

Ivy (whispering):

Yeah.

Don (whispering):

Okay. Go ahead and put a- disengage the safety.

Ivy (whispering):

Hold on. No, she's moving.

Don (whispering):

She moved, moved, moved.

Ivy (whispering):

Now I can't see her. She's behind a bush.

Ivy Le, narrating:

The pair of deer moved on before we could get a legal shot off. A few gunshots could be heard in the distance, right after first light. Just like in the city. So someone in the area has maybe finished their hunt already, but not us. I am worried that these deer will warn off all the other animals, like what happened when I went bow hunting with Josh.

Ivy, at the hunt (whispering):

What if she was like the Paul Revere of deer?

Don, responding (whispering):

(Don laughs very quietly) I doubt it. They're pretty selfish.

Ivy (whispering):

I mean there was only one Paul Revere.

Don (whispering):

Yeah, it's true. But there- a lot more deer.

Ivy (whispering):

You know? There was another guy to go out and warn about the British.

Don (whispering):

Yeah.

Ivy (whispering):

I guess he was kind of a dick, so nobody gave a shit.

Don (whispering):

Yeah.

Ivy (whispering):

I'm glad I really didn't shoot. I was too nervous. We had just got here.

Don (whispering):

Yeah.

Ivy (whispering):

The sun's come up. It looks a lot less haunted.

Don (whispering):

Repeat after me. I'm cool, calm, collected. Inhale. Exhale. I'm cool, calm, collected. Inhale. Exhale. Just say that. Repeat that to yourself. And breathe.

Ivy (whispering):

That was a lot of sentences, alright? I think we're gonna have to come out with something shorter. What?

Don (whispering):

I'm cool, calm, collected.

Ivy (whispering):

Cool, calm, collected.

Don (whispering):

And then breathe. Inhale. Exhale.

Ivy (whispering):

I feel like I'm gonna overthink that dramatically.

Don (whispering):

No.

Ivy Le, narrating:

I am worried that deer was Deer Revere, running around the woods. Like "The people are coming! The people are coming!" But I have no way to know yet. We settle in with a tree at our backs. Don sets the gun up on the tripod, and we wait. It's just above 30 degrees Fahrenheit or negative one degrees Celsius. My thighs start breaking out into burning hives, because I am allergic to cold air. Ass frostbite is becoming a real possibility.

{{Dramatic orchestral music start}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

'm shivering, but I have to stay still. Don passes me an extra jacket, and I lay it over my legs as we sit. Every once in a while, I slowly unwrap a cough drop. Cough drop wrappers are loud, so I made little silent sachets out of paper towels. I took every cough medicine known to man around 5:00 AM, which should last until 9:00 AM. Once I figure out how to exist in this temperature range, I slowly stand up, like an Atlanta stripper, the best strippers in the world. Leading with my booty, and then my shoulders, no hands, and start to adjust the gun stand to my height, a tiny movement at a time.

I don't wanna have to get on the gun. When we see deer, I want to already be on the gun, so I don't have to make any sudden movements. Two hours pass from first light, all of us being as still as possible. Our noses ripping from the cold, our bodies filling with urine from all coffee we've had. Then in the distance, the sound of a train started.

{{A trailing train horn passes}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

It's one of my most comforting sounds in the city. I took a deep breath because I figured the train would cover my sound. The train came closer and closer and closer, and Don whispers.

Don, at the hunt (whispering urgently):

Here they are, here they are. Deer! Get ready. Get on the gun now. Get on the gun.

Ivy (whispering):

I don't see them.

Don (whispering):

Shoot the bigger one. Shoot the bigger one. Get ready.

Ivy (whispering):

I don't see it.

Don (whispering):

Right there. The right side. Right there. Use your eyeballs. Get ready to shoot them. Get on the gun now.

Ivy (whispering):

Oh, I see.

Don (whispering):

Disengage the safety. Get ready to shoot. Okay? Get ready to kill it. Ready?

Ivy (whispering to herself):

Belly breathe... belly breathe...

Don (whispering):

Fire when ready. Belly breathe.

{{Ivy fires a single gunshot.}}

Don, at the hunt (not whispering):

It was hit. Reload.

{{Ivy reloads}}

Ivy, responding:

It was a hit?

Don:

Yeah. Took his leg off. He's not quite dead. We gotta go after him.

Ivy:

Okay. With the gun?

Don:

Yeah. You took his leg off. I saw his leg.

Ivy:

Jesus.

Don:

Yeah. You reloaded? We'll sit here for an hour, we'll go after him. Blood sprayed out of him. He's hit bad.

Ivy:

We don't follow him now?

Don (whispering):

No.

Ivy (whispering):

Okay.

Don (whispering):

Wait for an hour.

Ivy (whispering):

An hour?

Don (whispering):

Yeah.

Ivy (whispering):

Aw. It'll be just buggin' for an hour?

Don (whispering):

I promise we need to let him bleed out before we go after him. Because he can still run. I saw him run. He can still go.

Ivy (whispering):

Aw.

Don (whispering):

So we gotta let him bleed a bit, and we'll go after him. Okay?

Ivy (whispering):

Okay.

Don (whispering):

Okay. Let's relax. Sit down. Let us reflect on what we did. Good shot. I saw you take the leg, but gotta finish him off.

Ivy (whispering):

I feel bad we're gonna let him bleed out for an hour.

Don (whispering):

Yeah, it's better. It's better off.

Ivy (whispering):

Because, you know, when you go to the vet and stuff, it's always about, like, they gotta, you know, making a little suffering as possible.

Don (whispering):

He might- he might be dead soon. I saw him take the hit. He saw him tumble, and I saw him limp. I think his leg was taken. He's probably gonna be dead in an hour, se'll sit here one hour from now. The time is- the time is exactly 8:45. Then we'll go after him, sit. It's gonna be hard to sit. Just sit and chill. Stew on it. Did you belly breathe?

Ivy (whispering):

Yeah.

Don (whispering):

Good. You did everything you could. That was 170 yards.

Don (whispering, cont.):

It was dialed in. Hopefully he's dead in the bushes, okay?

{{Somber ringing violin notes play}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

I finally got a shot off. I don't feel good about it. The thing about looking through the sight of a gun is there's such a small area that you are actually using to aim. It looks like a kid's magnifying glass. When I took the shot, the deer had its head looking down. It wasn't looking up, like in the practice targets at the gun range. And when you shoot, the gun kicks up too. So the scope moves with it, and then I can't see anything. I'm just blind. And in that blind moment I remember, oh, I'm supposed to re-rack the gun. It feels like slow motion. I have to take Don's word that we made contact, and now we wait.

I couldn't even see which direction she ran off to. I think about everything that I probably did wrong and worry that he didn't actually hit the deer at all. Or worse. I just wounded it, and it's out there in the most agonizing pain of its life.

Don (whispering):

You did good, okay? Hey, you did good.

{{Ivy sniffles}}

Don (whispering):

I saw blood. You hit him. You hit him hard.

Ivy (whispering):

I hope he's dead.

Don (whispering):

Yeah, me too. (Ivy exhales heavily.) But like I said, like I've hit, we've hit- I've hit 'em really hard, deer, like through both lungs. And they ran like 250 yards.

Ivy (whispering):

Oh, wow.

Don (whispering):

So they- they're survivors. They're strong. They're the strongest animal, I swear. Stronger than mule deer. Stronger than elk. Stronger than antelope. Stronger than anything, the whitetail.

Ivy (whispering):

I guess I- I'm glad I didn't know all its admirable traits before I killed one. (Don laughs)

Don (whispering):

Yeah.

Ivy (whispering):
'Cause I've been studying hog the entire season.

Don (whispering):
Yeah, they're, they're, they're really tough. That's why when humans came to North America, and they wiped out the buffalo and the elk and the bears, the one species they did really good was the whitetail. Because they're so skittish, so smart, so alert, and they're good at camouflage, and they're strong.

Ivy (whispering):
Their camouflage is crazy.

Don (whispering):
Yeah. Like I said, I said, "Look, there they are," and you're like, "I can't see it." I'm like...

Ivy (whispering):
It's literally the white is the white of this grass with light on it. The brown is the shade of the grass in the shadow.

Don (whispering):
Yeah. (Ivy laughs)

Don (whispering):
The only thing that's easy on them is when they run and they go—

Ivy (whispering):
Yeah.

Don (whispering):
The tail it goes up.

Ivy (whispering):
So how did you see it? What were you looking at?

Don (whispering):
I just know what the shapes look like.

Ivy (whispering):
Okay. So why are we keeping the gun stand and everything up? In case another one comes?
'Cause it's not gonna come, right?

Don (whispering):
I'm too lazy to take it down.

Ivy (whispering):

Okay. Can I go pee? Are there any animals in here that can attack me?

Don (whispering):

No.

Ivy (whispering):

It's too cold for snakes.

Don (whispering):

Too cold for snakes. Too cold for ticks.

Ivy (whispering):

Don't have cougars and stuff?

Don (whispering):

Oh, they are here, but they don't attack.

Ivy (whispering):

Okay.

Don (whispering):

And the poison ivy's mostly dead.

Ivy (whispering):

Okay.

Ivy Le, narrating:

One by one, we wander off to take a well-earned piss in the woods, but that would be the only relief for me. We had at least another hour to think about the gravity of shooting an animal and waiting for it to bleed out. At least, now we could talk to each other.

Ivy, at the hunt (whispering):

I feel like there's not, like, a single question I could have for you that you haven't also thought about at length. (Don and Ivy laugh)

Don (whispering):

There's a lot of time to think about hunting while when you're out hunting.

Ivy (whispering):

Makes me- it makes me think you were a really weird kid.

Don (whispering):

Yeah, it's true. It's true.

Ivy (whispering):

But I- only 'cause I- only 'cause I was a really weird kid (Ivy laughs) that I know that.

Don (whispering):

Yeah. And I never, I never grew up hunting either in Oklahoma, I never got to hunt until way later in life.

Ivy (whispering):

That's where, like, our lives diverged.

Don (whispering):

Yeah.

Ivy (whispering):

Cause you wanted to hunt. (Ivy laughs)

Don (whispering):

Yeah, but I mean like, but you- you wanted to hunt. That's why you drove out here across the country.

Ivy (whispering):

No, I wanted to be a comedian. (Don and Ivy laugh)

Don (whispering):

Well, You're using- you're being a comedian to- to make- to go on adventures and stuff.

Ivy (whispering):

Mm-hmm.

Don (whispering):

Like you gotta think about it. You had to have wanted to come to hunt.

Ivy (whispering):

Mm-hmm.

Don (whispering):

Be outdoors, to come on this journey, this far. As if you had-

Ivy (whispering):

Mm-hmm.

Don (whispering):

A lot of people have the ability to change the path of their life to involve hunting, you know, and they don't.

Ivy (whispering):

Yeah.

Don (whispering):

Because most people aren't hunters. Most people can't even stomach thinking about killing something. You know? They'd rather outsource that to someone else than do it.

{{Thoughtful piano music with electronic notes starts}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

I know when Don says most people aren't hunters, he's not talking about me. I hate camping. I hate being in the cold. I hated the boots I had to wear when the rattlesnakes were out in the summer... but I did dramatically alter the course of my life for the past year to be able to go hunting.

A year ago, I was not on a trajectory to cross paths with someone like Don. Don finally says, "It's time to get up". We pack up some of our stuff, but not all of it, in case we have to go for a long time, deep into the woods to find this deer. We take the guns, the recording equipment, and first aid supplies, including— and he stresses— including the gun trauma kit that I carry with me on late night gigs in the city. Don scans the area, and we move *slow*. Almost as slow as walking and stalking with Josh. A huge black vulture starts to circle ahead, and I think it's trying to tell me something, but I don't speak bird!

Don (whispering):

Walk behind me. Walk to my left here. We're gonna walk like five steps, to stop every five steps.

Ivy (whispering):

Okay. You looking at the vulture?

Don (whispering):

He sees something we don't see.

Ivy (whispering):

Yeah.

Don (whispering):

The deer went that way though. Keep an eye on that guy.

Ivy (whispering):

Yeah. Don did you mean literally keep an eye on that vulture?

Don (whispering):

I mean, like eventually.

Ivy (whispering):

Okay. 'Cause I- I definitely don't know where it is anymore. Okay.

Don (whispering):

Here's the feeder at least. That's where they came out of to eat.

Ivy (whispering):

Yeah. Oh, I see it now. Okay. god, you guys have so many leaves in Oklahoma.

{{Leaves rustle underfoot}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

We head to the spot where the deer was when I took the shot.

Ivy, in the field:

I guess this is the way I shot it. We're looking for blood.

Don, responding (whispering):

Yeah, for blood.

Ivy:

I think I shot it closer to here because I was- I had it started by the-

Don (whispering):

He's right here! He fell into the bushes right here.

Ivy:

Feed? Yeah. Okay.

Don (whispering):

He fell into the bushes and he ran out this way.

Ivy:

(Sad:) Oh. Yeah. That's like bone, just pieces of bone.

Don (whispering):

We got cartilage and hair and bone right here. Okay. Here's where he got hit hard. Got bone fragments here. Bone, blood right there. Bit of muscle tissue right there.

Ivy:

Yeah. That's like super fresh muscle tissue.

Don (whispering):

Yeah, muscle tissue, bone, hair. And what they put

Ivy:

Like now I can't unsee it. Now I can't unsee it, but I don't know how you saw it.

Don (whispering):

I'm gonna check on that side and meet you back over here 'cause I think I- (Ivy sniffles.) Now I'm looking for red and white.

Ivy Le, narration:

I'm looking for red and white because that's blood and bone, but I can't scan for droplets and bone fragments in nature as fast as Don can. Isabel, the Girl Scout, didn't teach me this part. It's stressful to look out at a mess of something you don't understand, like falling asleep in math class, and you wake up and the whiteboard is just full of letters for some reason. If following a trail of blood means spending an hour to find each drop of it... Oh my god, it could be all day before we find the deer, in whatever state of distress she's in. I can feel the minutes moving in my veins. But before I get very far at all, Don, who had been whispering the whole time, yells out to me to come.

{{Soaring triumphant cello music plays}}

Don, in the field (whisper-yelling):

Ivy. Now! You killed him. Good shot. Oh, you did it.

Ivy:

What?

Don:

You did it.

Ivy:

Oh my gosh.

Don:

You did it.

Ivy:

I can't believe you found it!

Don:
Gimme a hug!

{{Ivy and Don hug - their microphones squish together}}

Ivy:
He was actually really close! He didn't go far at all!

Don:
He only ran 20 yards. You killed-

Ivy:
That was like really close!

Don:
You did it!

Ivy:
I thought we were gonna be doing this all day!

Don:
No, but you did it. You did it. You got him.

Ivy:
Oh! (Big inhale) Okay. How long do you think it took if he only ran 20 yards?

Don:
Oh my gosh.

Ivy:
It must have happened really— oh, that's a lot of blood.

Don:
He, yeah, you- you got him really bad. Look how much blood he left.

Ivy:
Oh my goodness.

{{Orchestra music swells and stops}}

Ivy Le, narrating:
I saw her, laying on her side in the leaves. The massive guilt I had been holding for the last hour made me hunch. I think it made it hard for me to see things when we were tracking. It made my

voice quiet, it was so heavy. I wasn't prepared to choose to let an animal suffer for at least an hour before I went to go find it.

What does an hour even feel like to an animal like that? Are they so present, they don't feel time passing them, they just move with it? Or are they so anxious because deer are prey animals, that it's interminable, like watching election returns as a closeted teenager. But I am so relieved to verify that I made a good shot.

{{Marching energetic violin music starts}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

Deer bound so far and so fast. This deer maybe took three steps before she died. The best possible outcome happened. The hour weight was only painful for me. I know this sounds crazy, but she almost looked peaceful.

Don, in the field:

So I always have a thing. It's a- it's not a Vietnamese tradition, it's a German tradition, where you give the animal you killed one last bite as he goes to the underworld.

Ivy, responding:

Mm-hmm.

Don:

So you put it in his mouth.

Ivy:

(Whispering:) I'm sorry sweetie. (Gently:) I can't open its mouth.

Don:

I know. It's rigor mortis. Just put it in there. In the corner of his mouth.

Ivy:

In the corner? Okay.

Don:

Open it as best you can and get it in there.

{{Peaceful electronic notes play}}

Don:

Young deer, but still a good deer. It'll be good eating.

Ivy:
Where did I get him? Right there?

Don:
You- you got him right in the heart. (Don laughs)

Ivy:
Oh. Where are you looking?

Don:
That's why so much blood is on the ground right there. Look at that.

Ivy:
Oh wow.

Don:
It's a mess.

Ivy:
I literally hit the heart?!

Don:
Yeah. You shot him in the heart. It's a massive blood bath. Here.

Ivy:
So I hit him exactly in the right spot?

Don:
You hit him exactly why I asked you to.

{{Peaceful electronic notes stop}}

Ivy, in the field:
So do we field dress it, or should we let her rest for a while?

Don, responding:
We'll field dress it now.

Ivy:
Okay. 'Cause we already let her let the body rest for about an hour.

Don:
Yeah. We'll get the guts out.

Ivy:
Glove up?

Don:
Yeah. We need glove up. And-

Ivy:
Should we name her?

Don:
If you want... But that's going pretty far. You just killed her.

Ivy:
Huh? I mean, like, I don't, I don't think I, I've ever even fucked somebody and didn't know their middle name. Less, killed somebody and didn't know their name. You know what I mean?

Myrriah:
What did you name the deer we butchered at, uh, Kevin's place? I think you guys kept calling it Spike 'cause it was a-

Don:
It was a young, young little buck?

Myrriah:
Yeah.

Ivy:
Oh, okay. Oh, she seems like a sweetheart!

Myrriah:
Yeah.

Don:
She was a sweetheart.

Ivy:
Delilah?

Don:
Delilah.

Ivy:
Should we name her Delilah? (Don laughs)

Don:

We're getting pretty personal here with this animal.

{{Punchy percussion track starts}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

It's funny, I think I got personal with this animal when I came into its house, with shoes on, and touched it with a bullet, from my chest to hers. But Don thinks *naming* the animal is too far. Moments later, he has me take these trophy hunter style photos that, like, rich people do when they kill an exotic animal in Africa or something. And let me tell you, that felt too far.

Don carries Delilah, who is in rigor mortis, back to the open grassy area where we first spotted her because it had more light for photos. I didn't help him, because it was stupid. He tries to cover up her wound with foliage, like Delilah was just frolicking in my lap, and we felt cute and took this selfie!

This is what those hunter ed courses tell you to do, to minimize the blood in photos. They don't want distasteful pictures out there turning the public against hunters. That makes sense to teach people manners, but I'm telling you, this whole ritual felt vulgar. I am not someone who can wipe disdain from my face, okay? I know y'all can't see that in audio. I spell my thoughts out to you, dear readers, but in person, I don't have to say much. So just know, I'm grimacing this whole time. I am transfixed, like you gave me Botox, while I was giving bombastic side eye. But I will post the pics on the 'gram.

Don, in the field:

Let's turn her the other way, so you don't show that side when we take a trophy picture, okay?

Ivy, responding:

Yeah, that's what I learned in the hunter ed course.

Don:

'Cause it's super fucked up on this side. I mean, you can put your hand in there. That's- turn 'em this way. Okay. Oh no, I got-

Ivy:

You got blood all over you now.

Don:

It's okay. I'll take a- I'll take a bath.

Ivy:

Okay. My god. You're like trying to pose it like it's, like, a newborn shoot.

Ivy Le, narrating:

After the most awkward photo shoot of my life, we get set up to start field dressing. We don't have a fancy gimbal hook like we had at Kevin's. Don just lays down a tarp, and we're gonna do most of this on the ground. This *is* the first time I've handled warm meat, which just like Jesse said, you definitely notice the first time you do that, and I'm gutting it myself this time. This is where some description of butchery starts, so heads up. But dang, if you made it this far. Slow clap my friends. Slow clap. I think you can handle it.

{{Gutting noises from the field tape start}}

Don, in the field:

You want more guidance or you wanna, you, you feel pretty good about getting the, get her, getting this thing open?

Ivy, responding:

Um, well, you can, how about-

Don:

I can- I can supervise.

Ivy:

Okay. Yeah. You- you smoke your pipe and supervise. You worked hard today. (Don laughs)

Don:

We got up early. That's all we needed to do.

Ivy:

Yeah. Yeah. You worked hard today. Uh, I haven't gutted one yet, but I've skinned one. I skinned a deer, and I butchered a pig, but I haven't, you know, cut out anybody's anus yet.

Don:

I'll walk you through it. It's easy.

Ivy:

Uh-huh. From the hog, what I learned is, like, sternum, down-

Don:

Sternum, down. Correct.

Ivy:

-and then around the asshole.

Don:

Yeah. You can get down to the butt, and we'll kind of deal with it. Yeah.

Ivy:
Okay. Okay.

Don:
So find the sternum and just use your- you can use your sharp knife, and punch a little hole right there with your- it's a lot easier to get the first hole with a pointy one. Oh, if you want-

Ivy:
I don't think this one's gonna get him. It might. Let's give it a try. Yep. Oh. Yep.

Don:
Make a little hole.

Ivy:
All right. I'm down to the pelvic bone.

Don:
Go down.

Ivy:
Keep going?

Don:
Keep going towards the butt hole.

Ivy:
Keep going, okay. Uh-huh.

{{Butchery noise: the deer's skin tears}}

Ivy:
Woah! Careful. Don't tear my meat just yet. Okay. Am I to the butt? That's the butt hole!

Don:
Yeah, that's the butt hole. So you wanna make-

Ivy:
Okay, so now what?

Don:
Get your sharp knife. Okay. And get underneath.

Ivy:
And just literally cut it around?

Don:
Want to cut around-

Ivy:
Uh-huh. But as close as I can?

Don:
And then kind of get in it gently and we'll- we'll deal with it- deal with it more later, but we'll just get the initial cut.

Ivy:
Okay. All right. Got the cut started.

Don:
Yep. Make, go ahead and go around. Pull it around it. Pull around, fully around.

Ivy:
I'm gonna do it on the other side because (screaming:) EW, THERE'S POOP. Ew! There's poop!
Ahh!!

Don:
Poop flying out. When you die, you'll poop too.

Ivy, disgusted:
Ahh! Eugh. (Ivy retches) OH MY GOD!

Don:
I'm surprised you didn't say anything when a squirt of urine shot out when you cut by the-

Ivy:
Oh my god!

Don:
-urethra.

Ivy:
Oh, I'm glad I brought extra gloves. Jesus.

{{Waltzing electronic tones play}}

Ivy Le, narrating:
I have successfully cored a butt hole. I feel like there were a lot of people along my journey who could have given me a heads up about the poop, and I hope they're listening right now. But my

people have survived worse than this. I have to remove the organs carefully so we can see what conditions the things we want to eat are in, like the liver and the heart. Both the pig and the deer I have processed had already been gutted by someone else, and I've never even seen a picture of a deer's insides. So I asked Don for some clues. I don't wanna get all this way, and then accidentally pierce an organ and contaminate the meat.

Ivy, field-processing a deer:
How much space do I have before the organs?

Don, responding:
I feel the organs are your- you feel the organs with your fingertip.

Ivy:
Oh, okay. So really much space at all.

Don:
So keeping it away. Yeah.

Ivy:
Uh-huh.

Don:
Keeping it away.

Ivy, so casually, almost relieved:
Oh, this is like when I got a C-section.

Minda, devastated:
Ivy, is this really what a C-section looks like?

Ivy:
Oh, it's this way. C-section. It's a different direction, the C-section. But yeah, this is what a C-section looks like.

Don:
Oh god.

Ivy:
Oh, now you're grossed out?! (Ivy laughs)

{{Deep electronic bass notes play}}

Ivy Le, narrating:
I am the only parent on this trip, which I would forget until the mention of birth grosses people out more than the actual corpse I had my hands in! And the way Delilah is splayed on the tarp

on the ground reminds Minda too much of how her sweet dog gives her belly to be rubbed. We reassure Minda that she does not need to watch every step, let alone record it on video, because she is going through it y'all. The sun has fully come up at this point, and it's starting to warm up just a couple degrees. It also helps that we're not just sitting anymore. Butchery is really physical work!

Ivy, field-dressing a deer:
Wow. I really did hit the heart!

Don, responding:
You, yeah. Got the lungs right there.

Ivy:
Like, I can hear- I can see the-

Don:
A lot of clotting going on in the heart here.

Ivy:
Uh-huh. Wow.

Don:
And so I'll hold it open, and I want you to cut the diaphragm.

Ivy:
Okay.

Don:
On both- on each side, okay?

Ivy:
Okay.

Don:
So carefully go down, use your hands, and-

Ivy:
Is the diaphragm, this little tissue right here?

Don:
Liver is intact here. It's pretty good.

Myrriah:
How is being, uh, working on a warm animal, Ivy, for the first time?

Ivy:

Smells different, but the warmth is really nice 'cause it's so freaking cold. It smells like the seafood department at the Asian grocery store.

Don:

Yep.

Ivy:

Why does it smell like seafood?

Don:

It's organ. Offal.

Ivy:

Ohh, okay. Because that's just what it smells like when it's not cooked-

Don:

Great. Here's tenderloins.

Ivy:

Okay. So don't touch the tenderloins. So that's-

Don:

Don't touch those-

Ivy:

So we just rip, rip. There's like steam coming off of it.

Don:

So hot.

Ivy Le, narrating:

Everyone's starting to relax a little. Minda takes a lap. Don, I think, is now confident enough in my skills to let me keep going with the deer, as he supervises. His mind turns to the next step in the process.

Don, in the field:

Now it begs the question, where's my whiskey? Because I think we need to have a drink now that everything's settled down.

Ivy: And I didn't cough!

Don:

You didn't cough!

Myrriah:

That was the miracle of the trip!

Don:

That was, that was Herculean for you to suppress those coughs. I saw you do this and I was like, oh my god, she's suppressing a cough. It's purely Herculean to- for her to stop coughing.

Minda:

Ivy, you only took 90 minutes to butcher.

Ivy:

(Ivy sighs) Oh, really? It feels like it's been longer, but that's not too bad.

{{Jazz-y keyboard ditty plays}}

{{Whistling Western music starts}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

Well, there's for sure meat we won't be able to eat because of the blood trauma on it, Don asks us to keep it anyway, because unlike hogs, which you can just shoot and leave in the field, deer are highly regulated game animals. You can get fined for wasting game meat, and Don doesn't want us to have any issues with the game warden. I don't really think the game warden's gonna pull us over in Myrriah's Camry. I've been racially profiled before, but not by the game warden. I don't really fit the profile of a hunter, much less a criminal hunter. But I keep the meat. I don't want Don to worry. Vietnamese people always get stressed when people are about to go on long journeys.

{{Triumphant adventure music plays}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

I tag my "harvest", as hunters call it, by logging Delilah's details in the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation app. So, it's official now! I am a licensed hunter, who used one of my tags for the year. And I never had to pass a hunter ed course! I'm sure I'll be sorry, if I ever have to pick up a musket in the water wars.

{{Music stops}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

We finish field dressing Delilah. We need to put the parts of the animal we won't use, like her head and her hide, back in the woods for other animals. I grabbed the whiskey I brought for my cough and motion for Minda to come back into the woods with me, where we laid Delilah's head. I check real quick if Minda and Don grew up Buddhist or if I have to explain stuff.

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

They're good, so I get down on my knees and do the prayer to help the dead find their way.

Ivy, in the field:

Come on, Minda. Get down. You don't have to shoot this. Pour some in the ground for Delilah. *Nam Mo A Di Da Phuc. Na Mo A Di Da Phuc.* If she were actually related to me, we would put betal leaves on her (Don laughs). But she's not. Here we go. Here's some more whiskey, for our homies who aren't here no more. Thank you for coming.

Minda, responding:

Yeah, thanks for inviting me. I may go full vegetarian after this. (Minda laughs, Ivy snorts)

Don:

Cheers, Delilah.

{{Ivy pours one out for Delilah}}

Ivy, in the field:

To a bunch of drunk Buddhists in the woods. (Don laughs)

Don:

Some Buddhist, I guess

Ivy Le, narrating:

Together, Team FOGO has gotten a deer, but Don hasn't gotten anything, and I learned hunting etiquette from Barbra and Josh. It is unconscionably rude to leave when it's not your turn to hunt. So we turned to Don, ready to support him, on his last hunt of the season.

Myrriah, in the field:

What time do you wanna set up the blind? (Don chuckles)

Don, responding:

I might not kill anymore. I think I've satiated my blood lust.

Ivy:

Have you? Okay.

Don:

I might. I bought a tag, and I was like, man, maybe, maybe we should just go.

{{Dreamy shimmering piano music plays}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

Don feels satisfied with this ending to his hunting season, and I am not one to question getting to leave the outside earlier than expected. It was interesting to see, though, how everyone had

different reactions. Minda really did give up red meat that day. Myrriah, who has seen the whole process recording the quest since episode one, she says this meat was probably more ethical than even the vegetables she eats, when it comes to environmental impact and exploitation of human workers. Don told me later, even though his clients are getting younger– he's getting hired by more millennial and Gen Z hunters– he rarely gets clients who are women or people of color. He saw his own early obstacles in my path. Hunting with me, and Myrriah and Minda, was an adventure for him, so this was as good a get as any to close out his year.

{{Music fades out}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

On our way home, we stop at a small diner for a hot meal and indoor bathrooms. When we get back to Don's parents' house, we start a load of laundry with all our bloody clothes. We found piles of food that we had bought for hunting but had actually forgotten to take out of the fridge at four o'clock this morning.

So we have all of that to eat, and now we have venison. Don stops by his mom's house, in the front, to invite her over for dinner, and apparently she was very invested in my hunt too, even though she had never met me.

Don, at Don's house:

I'm proud of your shot. My mom was like, "How'd she shoot?" "She shot better than most old white guys I take out." "Good. (Ivy laughs) That's Vietnamese for you." (Ivy cracks up)

Ivy:

That's what she said!?

Don:

Yeah! (Ivy laughs)

Ivy:

She's mad! She's mad that we killed a deer, but she is like "atta girl".

Don:

Good. She's good.

Ivy Le, narrating:

Don and I pick out a few choice cuts to cook tonight and top off the cooler with fresh ice.

Ivy, at Don's house:

We're making, like, a grazing platter dinner. To fit everybody's dietary restrictions.

Don:

Okay.

Ivy:

And I was just envisioning just like us being able to hang out and, like-

Don:

Nibble

Ivy:

Nibbles to our heart's content and drink and chat and enjoy and relax.

Ivy Le, narrating:

As we cook and hang out, Don's mom comes by to say hi.

Don's mom, at Don's house:

Hi.

Don, introducing:

This is my mom, everybody!

Don's mom:

Da da.

Myrriah:

Hello!

Ivy:

Da da.

Don's mom:

So, I heard your father smuggler, so I show you the picture.

Don:

Of the refugee camp from Thailand.

Ivy:

That's amazing. That's amazing that you kept the picture.

Don's mom:

Forty years.

Don:

They lost original. They let a media outlet borrow the original, and the media outlet lost it. (Ivy gasps) That's all they have left, is that black and white photocopy.

Ivy:
Wow.

Don's mom:
Laem Sing.

Don:
It was a good day. Mission accomplished.

Ivy:
Yes. Thanks to you. Thank you so much.

Don:
What is the- what is saying like, "Next year, Sean Shack."

Ivy:
Next year at Sean Shack. That's a toast. Next year at Sean Shack.

{{Everyone clinks glasses}}

Ivy Le, narrating:
We stayed up longer than I think any of us thought we could. Talking and eating and relaxing, in this warm house with running water. I never get tired of running water. I talk about it all the time. Even though I'd never met them or been to Oklahoma before, it really did feel like visiting a cousin. I stayed up after everyone went to sleep, like usual, and maybe 2:00 AM I heard ice pelting the house.

{{Ice pelts the house}}
{{Delicate and quiet piano music starts}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):
I am so grateful to Delilah for this warm, perfect indoor night. She saved us from the Sean Shack. When I started this hunting quest, I didn't think it'd be very much fun. And I was right. This has been a year long shit show. But hanging out with Don and his mom, his beloved, and Minda, and Myrriah, it reminded me of how far I've come. How far we've all come.

Our parents had to make so many sacrifices going into the unknown by cover of night, not even knowing what country they were gonna end up in. And now Don and I do exactly what we want to. Don's a hunting and mountaineering guide. I'm a comic, and somehow we found a way to cross paths. On Sunday morning, we load up the Camry.

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):
Before we say goodbye, we all went to brunch at the indigenous restaurant inside the First American Museum in Oklahoma City. You should go. It's called '39' to honor the 39 tribes that

call Oklahoma home. And I do what I normally do at brunch: drink and pretend I'm listening, while I'm actually mentally cataloging all the spices in my mouth.

Once I'm home, I meticulously butcher cuts of venison every night after my kids are in bed for days until Delilah's done. I'm careful to waste nothing. I prepared Delilah crusted with pepitas and sumac. I wanted her to be with the indigenous plants that she was used to. Ingredients indigenous to this continent, handled in ways my family brought from ours.

I had a lot of quiet nights alone with the butchery and menu planning to reflect. My connection to nature has always been through the ingredients that come into my kitchen. This was the first ingredient I personally escorted all the way here.

{{Triumphant melancholic electronic music swells}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

I learned so much about hunting, the good and the bad, (reluctantly:) that I do feel compelled to pass it along. So I guess I'm a hunter now??

{{Triumphant drum and orchestra music starts}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

Not an old school hunter or a new school hunter. 'Cause I'm not a trophy hunter, but also, I still don't like being in nature. I just, I am nature. I am an apex predator. An animal worth no more and no less than the mosquitoes I've killed, or the fish I chose to die, or this deer I shot in the heart.

I'm Buddhist. I could have been any of these animals before, and I may well be again. And I probably will have to be now. It turns out, some of these hunters were right too. I do like hunting more than camping. That bar was very low. Brandon was right. I do belong here. Jesse was right! I do feel more connected. Barbara was right, to be politely suspicious when I told her I wasn't a hunter. Even Jess was right about camo. I've been wearing camo unironically maybe once a week since the hunt. I mean, I paid for it!

Don didn't say it outright, but my cousin doesn't have to say it to me. It's lonely not having people like us out there to hunt together, and I can't imagine having done this without him. This hunting journey took forever, and that's with a modicum of fame and some unbelievable strokes of luck. Hunting is more gatekept than anyone who's not a gatekeeper could have imagined. I know I say, "I go outside, so you don't have to," but if you want to, I am working on organizing some hunts for underrepresented hunters.

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

Go sign up for the newsletter at foggopodcast.com. I can hardly believe I'm doing this, for people who really do wanna go outside and hunt. I don't want you to go through what all I did, or

even what Don did starting out. And I sure as hell don't wanna worry about your safety out there, because I am an Asian mom. But I'll take you to go shoot shit 'cause I'm also the cool, queer auntie, and one day I will be the “aw hell nah” ancestor. Hey, what's my PSR now, bitch?

John, the Naked and Afraid narrator, narrating:

Ivy has proven her proficiency with firearms and ability to endure extreme cold and extreme heat. Ivy's PSR, or primitive survival rating, rises from 3.2 to 5.1. She is formidable with room to improve next season.

{{FOGO End Credits Music starts: fun bouncy music with electronics fades in}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

I'm Ivy Le, with one E. I'm a comic and a hunter, and somehow, I host a critically acclaimed nature show called FOGO: Fear of Going Outside. If you wanna help get underrepresented hunters outside, maybe you have good land and good neighbors or guns and funding, shoot me a note on fogopodcast.com. That contact page really is just me.

And please share the show with your groupchat. Your hot bi mom friends, Tinder matches, mutual aid groups, and game wardens. Literally everyone.

FOGO: Fear of Going Outside is a Spotify Sound Up series and was workshopped as part of the Spotify Sound Up podcast accelerator program.

FOGO is written, produced and hosted by me, Ivy Le. We are produced and edited by Myrriah Gossett. Engineering, mixing, and additional sound design by Robyn Edgar. Our theme song and original music are composed by Michelangelo Rodriguez. Michelangelo's FOGO Season 2 soundtrack can be found on Spotify! This season had additional music from SoundSnap. Story Editing by Minda Wei. Additional writing for this episode by Minda Wei and Myrriah Gossett. Production support by Benjamin Grosse-Siestrup. FOGO's board of advisors is Jeff Zhao and Martin Thomas.

From Spotify, our executive producers are Miguel Contreras, Grace Delia, Jane Zumwalt, and Natalie Tulloch. Spotify production support provided by Shirley Ramos. And thanks to the rest of the Spotify team.

Our guest narrator was voiced by John Rubio. Check out his podcast The Beerists! I'm a guest on Ep. 563.

Special thanks to Don Nguyen, Emily Duncan, Permanent RCRD Studios, and everyone who has helped us this season. We'll link them in the shownotes.

Listen to FOGO: Fear of Going Outside for free on Spotify. Follow @fogopodcast on Instagram, and you can follow me on just about every social media platform, including TikTok, at

@IvyLeWithOneE, that phrase all spelled out. Go to fogopodcast.com for the newsletter, merch, and hilarious transcripts.

Oh my god, that was the season finale... I didn't die!

{{FOGO End Credits Music stop}}

Minda, in the field:

Ivy, would you go hunting again?

Ivy, responding:

I'd go hunting with Don for sure. (Don laughs)

Don:

Next time you gotta get a buck, okay? You gotta play the- you gotta play the whole trophy game.

Ivy:

I don't think I can do that. I couldn't even take the photo.