

BONEFISH - Abridged Sample
by Mark S. Meritt

[To provide complete understanding of this sample episode, for both production and promotional purposes, descriptions of unscripted scenes appear in brackets and italics, like this note. In general, Act III "Life" sections will consist of varied material, while this episode uses only interviews. Because the expert's input is required, interviews will always be somewhat improvisational in nature and therefore cannot be completely scripted. Both scenes in the sample are outlined - pick whichever you would prefer to produce.]

PROLOGUE

EXT. FOREST CAMPSITE - DUSK

Below the tree canopy, a pup tent sits in a small clearing. Smoke rises from a smoldered fire. Army surplus food trays sit on a tree stump, only scraps remaining.

DR. WILEY BONEFISH'S rear end sticks out of the tent. Clothes and pots are jumbled as he searches for something.

BONEFISH

Eureka!

He crawls backward, gradually revealing his unconventional idea of outdoor fatigue. Once out of the tent, we see he carefully carries a pie.

BONEFISH (Cont.)

Nothing like a lemon meringue pie
to cap off a day in the great
outdoors.

He kicks the trays and other items off the tree stump then delicately places the pie down.

BONEFISH (Cont.)

Aw, now that's really something
special. Alrighty - pie slicer.

Bonefish falls to all fours again to rummage through the tent, leaving the pie behind him, scrumptious as can be.

As gadgets clank, a shadowy figure approaches the pie, then snatches it away in an instant. Bonefish pops out of the tent with his pie server. He sees the bare stump.

BONEFISH (Cont.)

Whoa, no, that's not happy.

He quickly grabs a flashlight to search the camp site. A

blur in the distance catches his eye. He tries to catch up, but it's no use. The beam falls on the ground, revealing a large footprint.

Bonefish drops to all fours, curious.

BONEFISH (Cont.)
Gosh, that's a really... big foot.

He gives it a whiff, scrunches his face.

BONEFISH (Cont.)
And it stinks, too.

CREDITS ROLL WITH THEME MUSIC

ACT I - LIBRARY

[There is an introductory scene in the Bonefish laboratory, where he discusses his experience with the Mismatches, bringing up the possibility of a Bigfoot. Interest piqued, in particular out of a desire to find his pie, he decides this is the perfect topic to study this week.]

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

[He enters the library, where the subject is met with typical skepticism from librarian PAIGE DESCARTES. As usual, though, she agrees to illuminate in standard form, combining both voice-over documentary and dialogue with Bonefish.]

Descartes leads Bonefish into the stacks.

DESCARTES
Almost anywhere you could go around the world, you might hear ancient legends about mysterious creatures, similar to humans in shape, hiding in the woods.

BONEFISH
Well, this thing wasn't hiding too much, 'cause it came right up and stole my lemon meringue pie.

She stops walking and Bonefish almost bumps into her.

DESCARTES
Do you want to learn about Bigfoot?

BONEFISH
You betcha!

She sizes him up, then speaks like a movie commercial.

DESCARTES
This time it's personal.

BONEFISH
Oh, yeah.

She starts walking back to her desk.

DESCARTES
Then I think you'd better find a
different topic.

BONEFISH
Whoa, now hang on just one second,
there, Paige.

DESCARTES
It's Ms. Descartes, Dr. Bonefish.
And you know the rules in here.

Bonefish settles down.

BONEFISH
Be open to everything?

DESCARTES
Yet at the same time-

BONEFISH
Be skeptical about everything?

DESCARTES
And finally?

BONEFISH
Never lose your objectivity.

DESCARTES
Only when you forget about the pie
will you be able to learn what you
need to find it.

BONEFISH
Thanks, Yoda.

DESCARTES
Do you have the willpower to let me
do my job?

Through a series of sighs, Bonefish goes from resignation to
resolve.

BONEFISH

"Almost anywhere you could go
around the world..."

She starts leading him back into the stacks.

DESCARTES

-You might hear ancient legends
about mysterious creatures, similar
to humans in shape, hiding in the
woods.

[Descartes describes the legends, naming the Sasquatch in the northwest U.S. and Canada, the Sisimite of Guatemala, the Yeti of Nepal and dozens of others. She voices over pictures and drawings from history books, newspaper clippings, amateur film and video, as well as clips of Harry (as in the Hendersons), Bigfoot from "The Six Million Dollar Man" series and the Warner Bros. cartoon Abominable Snowman. She points out that creatures' sizes range anywhere from 2 to 8 feet and that common traits among several legends include long brown hair and backwards-pointing feet.

She provides some theories. 1) Bigfoot exists and, like thousands of other species, has simply not been captured for study. It may or may not be an evolutionary missing link between lower primates and humans. 2) Given the size differences among legends, people may be misidentifying various other creatures. 3) Given the global pervasiveness of these similar but often different stories, there may simply be some common cultural threads in the development of "near-human" creature legends, as with devices like devils, monsters, gods and dark-clad figures.]

ACT II - LABORATORY

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

On a worktable, Bonefish prepares to remove a plaster cast from its mold. The Mismatches are nowhere in sight.

BONEFISH

It takes a very steady hand...

The cast is of the bottom half of a large foot. He places it gently down, then claps his hands clean.

BONEFISH (Cont.)

Okeydokey. Guys! Come on out,
wouldja?

The Mismatches don't appear right away, so he searches for them. Suddenly a cabinet explodes open with a puff of smoke. He finds SIGMUND the Drog, TALLULAH the Paracat and GUS the Monkle inside.

BONEFISH (Cont.)
Okay, whatcha doing in there?

Gus tries to shake the dust off.

GUS
Just passing time.

BONEFISH
Sigmund, how couldja let Gus do that?

SIGMUND
I instructed him to use only inert chemicals.

BONEFISH
Well, come on out, fellas.

TALLULAH
Who you calling "fella"?

BONEFISH
Pardone moi, madam Tallulah. I'm just anxious to get on with this.

The Mismatches all head out to the lab.

GUS
Didja find the Bigfoot?

BONEFISH
No. Well, actually, yes.

Bonefish picks up the cast.

BONEFISH (Cont.)
Found the big foot, not the Bigfoot.

TALLULAH
Well, you know what they say. Big foot, big foot cast.

Bonefish bring a large, deep tray from behind the worktable. It is the section of ground from the forest which contains the footprint.

SIGMUND
And what do you intend to do with these?

Gus starts playing curiously with the cast.

BONEFISH

We're going to do a little bit o'
comparative anatomy and some soil
content and pressure studies.

TALLULAH

In other words?

SIGMUND

I believe he intends first to
compare the shape and size of the
foot to those of other animals.
Second, he will study the ground in
which in the footprint was made,
checking for substances that may
serve as clues and looking at the
depth of the print to determine the
weight of the creature that made
it.

BONEFISH

Right on the button. So we can see
if it's an animal we know about,
and if it isn't, then at least
we'll have some solid information
about it.

Gus accidentally sends the cast crashing to the floor.

GUS

Irk!

TALLULAH

So much for solid.

Bonefish reaches under the table and brings up another cast.

BONEFISH

Well, unlike what your creator did
with you guys, when I made this, I
kept the mold.

(to Gus)

Now you.

He hands Gus a dustpan and brush.

GUS

I'll just go down here...

Gus disappears below to clean the mess.

[Bonefish proceeds with his studies. The Mismatches assist
in measurements. He compares his results with drawings and

other information stored in his computer encyclopedia. The soil studies also incorporate some chemistry and microscope study, with Bonefish making a strong point of the stink. Narrowing the possibilities, Bonefish comes up with a list of candidate animals. He decides he must consult with people who know more about animals.]

ACT III - LIFE

EXT. ZOO - DAY

[Bonefish consults with a zoologist, comparing notes on different animals and whether they were likely to have made the footprint. As candidates come up, they wander the zoo to observe and learn more. A key question that recurs is whether or not the animal might have been interested in a lemon meringue pie. The presence of a primate in the woods where he was camping seems unlikely, but this is the best choice they come up with, though the zoologist cannot point out a specific species. They approach the zoologist's best guess, and Bonefish decides to test the ape by offering a pie. The pie gets thrown in his face. Bonefish then points out that it may be an still undiscovered species. The scientist suggests Bonefish consult with an expert.]

INT. COLLEGE OFFICE - DAY

[Bonefish introduces a professor, whose specialty is evolutionary biology. He asks the professor about the chances of the existence of a primate or other animal that humans have never seen before. The professor discusses the amazing diversity of life and the estimated number of species that humans have never seen and will never encounter. He offers his angle on the Bigfoot legend, trying to be as objective as possible.

Bonefish brings up the notion of the missing link. The professor describes the often mistaken notion that there even needs to be a missing link. He explains that evolution works in such a way that steps in the process are not always in existence at the same time. We don't look for missing links between horses and zebras, because their common ancestor died out long ago. The same is true of humans and other primates. What we have in common is something in the past. There doesn't need to be a missing link. And even if Bigfoot did exist, it would not be a missing link of any kind, but a completely separate creature that successfully survived to this day just as many others have. It may be similar and related to other creatures, maybe even humans, but it probably wouldn't provide a mystical explanation for anything.]

EPILOGUE

EXT. ZOO - DAY

Bonefish wanders down the paths of the zoo, creatures great and small appearing around him.

BONEFISH

So we didn't solve the mystery of Bigfoot. Does Bigfoot exist? Don't know. Is it the same thing in all those different stories around the world? Don't know. Is Bigfoot the missing link? Well, probably not. But it's okay not to know. I mean, nobody used to know why the sky was blue, but we got that covered.

Now, we also didn't solve the mystery of the missing lemon meringue pie. I suppose there's maybe even a chance that whatever took my pie may have been something completely different than whatever made that footprint. Now it is definitely not okay that I don't know what happened to my pie! Well, I mean, I really I wish I knew. But from a really big, deep philosophical standpoint, I suppose it's okay that I don't know. In principle. I want my pie! But in principle, well, yeah, fine.

Bonefish grumbles, embodying the conflict between his subjectivity and his need for objectivity.

Anyways, if I find any more clues on this stuff, I'll let you know. Meantime, we'll just move on, I guess. I can even get myself a new lemon meringue pie. Or maybe even a whole new kind of pie.

He passes a vendor selling, among other things, Eskimo Pie. He buys one and unwraps it.

I'll bet the Sasquatch up in Canada and Alaska would just love to get their hands on this baby!

He protects his new acquisition, quickly taking big bites, ice cream getting all over his face.

CREDITS ROLL