

AREA 59
EPISODE: PILOT
DRAFT 2022.07.10

Written by

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CONCEPT:

Area 59 follows F.B.I. Agent Elena Morales as she investigates the strange events unfolding at a private ranch in Utah recently bought by a retired Army Colonel obsessed with supernatural and extraterrestrial activity.

At first, occurrences like mysterious lights, missing cattle, and strange sounds seem to have simple explanations -after all, both the Ute tribe members and the local oil workers have a vested interest in making a buck off the ranch and keeping its kooky employees suitably spooked- but the longer Elena stays, even she is puzzled by the impossibility of what she witnesses despite her pragmatic and skeptical nature. Driven by her anger at the Colonel for the role she believes he played in her mother's dishonorable discharge from the Army and subsequent disappearance only a few years before, Elena digs up more than just dirt on the ranch- As she brings to the surface old feuds, hidden secrets, and questions of science and belief, she must confront the possibility that the Colonel may actually have the answers she's been looking for all along.

Area 59 is a serialized 30-minute investigative sci-fi comedy series. Like the popular reality show *Skinwalker Ranch* or the drama/thriller series *Outer Range*, Area 59 explores the search for the supernatural in the wide open spaces of the West, but shines a light on the humor inherent in mankind's earnest search for little green men... or proof of any religious or mythical beings if we're being honest. Though proving the unprovable proves itself to be a fruitless task, it also somehow brings us together more than it drives us apart. Area 59 seeks to explore belief in all its ridiculousness and as the only thing that grounds us.

EXT. WESTERN UTAH - THE RANCH - NIGHT

TESSA JENSON, late 30's, holds an AR-15 to her Carhartt-clad shoulder on her nightly rounds, the light from the scope shaky from her trembling grip. She listens.

She hears it. A FAINT BUZZING sound. Two small lights appear floating ahead of her. She follows, breathing quickening. They disappear. She frowns.

From the sky a distance behind her, a BEAM OF LIGHT FLASHES, followed by a WET THUD. She runs toward the sound.

She trips over something large and smashes onto the ground, her rifle knocking her in the chin. She groans and shines the light on the culprit, her face going from confusion, to fear, to disgust in a single moment.

She pulls out her walkie-talkie:

TESSA

Colonel, it happened again. Over.

Despite the late hour, a response comes through immediately. The smooth voice of an older man:

THE COLONEL (V.O.)

Something's coming.

TESSA

Ok, um, do you maybe have an idea of what might be coming? Or when? Just so I can--

THE COLONEL (V.O.)

Just keep your eyes open. It will reveal itself. Over.

Tessa sighs.

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C., FBI HEADQUARTERS - ESTABLISHING - DAY

INT. FBI OFFICE FLOOR - DAY

DEREK LIU, late 30's, walks briskly down the hallway. He raps on an office door with an empty name-plate, then opens it.

Inside is ELENA MORALES, early 30's, setting up her new office with a matching desk set and tasteful wall art while finishing a phone call. Her face brightens when she sees him.

ELENA

Perfect timing. That was Kumail--
The number one fell through on the
Georgetown lease and the number two
adopted a geriatric dog that can't
do stairs-- if we come in to sign
first thing on Sunday, it's ours!

DEREK

Wait-- which one is this?

ELENA

The West Wing one.

DEREK

We applied to lease the White
House?

ELENA

No. The one that looks like it
belongs to an old rich white man
who vacations with the Kennedys and
eats cottage cheese with mayonnaise
over pears.

DEREK

More context.

ELENA

The one with the bathroom...

DEREK

Better context.

ELENA

The bay-window-red-brick-vine-
covered-black-shuttered-mansard-
roofed--

DEREK

It doesn't matter. We can't do
Sunday.

ELENA

You don't have anything on Sunday
morning, I already checked--

DEREK

It's not me, it's you.

ELENA

But I don't--

She looks at Derek's apologetic face, already bracing for impact. She realizes.

ELENA (CONT'D)

No. No. You said the Bu wasn't sending me out anymore. You said I'm here for good.

DEREK

One last field investigation.

ELENA

No. I've done my time in the field. I finally have a real office. I already bought a Sodastream.

DEREK

You're not getting transferred. This is a weekend trip at most.

ELENA

Newark. Weekend trip. There for seven months. Mobile. Three day assignment. There for thirteen months. Little Rock--

DEREK

Ok, I get it.

ELENA

Why can't you send Mark or Ruth or--

DEREK

You know the subject better than anyone.

ELENA

Ok, just because I do better work than everyone does not mean I need to be punished for it--

DEREK

Elena. It's the Colonel.

Elena's face freezes.

INT. BALLROOM - EVENING - FLASHBACK

A silver-buzzcut beef of a man in decorated Army dress raises a glass, flashing an unnaturally white smile: THE COLONEL.

BACK TO SCENE:

Derek sits on Elena's desk.

DEREK

We've gotten reports that he's used his retirement to buy a shitty five-thousand acre ranch in middle-of-nowhere Utah and is pumping tons of money into setting up some sort of technological headquarters for... no discernible reason. Given his history, the Bu wants you to swing by and figure out what he's up to.

ELENA

This doesn't sound like a weekend trip.

DEREK

It's not a full investigation, just a friendly check-in.

ELENA

If they want friendly, I'm the last person they should be sending.

INT. BALLROOM - EVENING - FLASHBACK

A fancy retirement dinner with lots of guests applauding. The Colonel stands behind a podium, smiling in gratitude. The guests end their applause and sit, except Elena.

ELENA

I have something to say.

She's holding a tumbler in her hand, clearly drunk. She glares at the Colonel, full of spitting hatred. The crowd keeps talking.

ELENA (CONT'D)

I said-- I have something to say.

The room quiets, all eyes on her.

BACK TO SCENE:

DEREK

If you do this, the Bu will make D.C. your permanent Office of Preference.

ELENA

You have that in writing?

DEREK

It's sitting in my inbox. And hey, if you're quick you could knock it out in a couple hours and catch the afternoon flight home...

ELENA

...And be back in time to sign the lease on Sunday.

Derek leans in and kisses Elena softly. She melts into it. When he pulls away, she's got that look that says, *Fine. I'll do it for you.*

EXT. WESTERN UTAH - THE RANCH ENTRY GATE - DAY

Elena steps out of her rental car in front of a high-security gate at the entrance to... nothing. Just red dirt, ugly brush, sparse grass, and a rocky ridge in the distance. Around 200 inactive oil pumpjacks take up several acres.

Elena is already sweating in her black blazer. She reaches for the call button, but the gate swings open before she presses it. A cloud of dust appears in the distance, taking a ridiculously long time to reach her.

Once the dust settles, it reveals YIP, a splotchy teenage boy with a bowl cut and a homemade Fundamentalist-style shirt, driving a Polaris ATV. He smiles toothily.

YIP

It's a girl!

ELENA

I'm agent Morales, with the F.B-

YIP

What a treat. Hop on in!

EXT. THE RANCH - EN ROUTE - DAY

Yip is a terrible driver, lurching and swerving, hitting every pothole on the dirt road. Elena holds on for dear life.

YIP

We knew something was coming, but we thought it could be a meteor or a plague or inter-planetary warfare, so you're a blessed alternative.

ELENA

Did someone call ahead and tell you I'd be coming?

YIP

God did.

ELENA

Who's God? Oh. Like God-God?

YIP

You got it! Good job. Tessa got a lunch all set up-- chicken salad sandwiches with Fritos- I like Fritos- you gotta try them in the sandwich--one of my brothers' mother says my daddy's toenails look like Fritos, all yellow and crispy and long-- you like Fritos?

ELENA

Not anymore.

YIP

Name's Yip. Know why? Go on- gimmie a hit on the arm--

ELENA

Um. No--

YIP

It's okay. Gimmie a hit.

ELENA

No thanks.

Yip lets go of the wheel to point to his shoulder. The Polaris drifts off the road. Elena panics and lightly hits his shoulder. Yip shrieks like a whistle-pig.

YIP

See?

ELENA

I think you split my brain in half.

YIP

No, that's just the ranch that does that. Sometimes it hurts so bad I pass out and don't wake up till two days later and gotta pick all the ticks off. La-dee-da.

ELENA

Wait- what?

YIP

How's bout a tour? That's the old homestead where the howls come from.

Yip points to a dilapidated farmhouse.

ELENA

Owls?

YIP

No, like -- AHWWOOOOOOOOOOOO!

ELENA

Okay, okay I got it.

YIP

And there's the brimstone cavern--

He points to a cavern up against the ridge. Smoke is spewing from it.

ELENA

When you say brimstone--

YIP

And that's where the goo comes from.

He points to a black, gurgling watering hole.

ELENA

Looks like oil to me.

YIP

Good guess! It's not, but good guess.

ELENA

Are you sure? There's a lot of pumpjacks around here--

YIP

Good eye! We shut em all down when this stuff started comin' up. Real tasty though.

ELENA

How do you know--? Nevermind. What is it that you do here?

YIP

Thank you for asking! I run surveillance and tend to the cattle. And tell the Colonel when they go missing.

ELENA

Do they go missing a lot?

YIP

Almost every day!

ELENA

Seems like a cause for concern.

YIP

Oh, please don't be concerned.

ELENA

I'm not concerned, it just seems like the Colonel might be concerned his cattle are going missing.

YIP

Well, some come back! Just not the same as when they left. *Yip Yip!* Here we are, home sweet home.

EXT. BASECAMP - CONTINUOUS

Yip pulls up to a cluster of dark grey shipping containers connected together.

YIP

Tessa! Tessa! Tessa! Tessa!

Tessa emerges with tired eyes, a messy bun, and a paper plate with a chicken sandwich and Fritos.

TESSA

Please, Yip, I can hear. Who have you got here?

ELENA
Agent Morales. FBI.

Elena shows her badge.

TESSA
Hm. Yip, run and tell the Colonel
the thing has arrived.

Yip takes off at lighting speed, giant feet flapping.

ELENA
Am I "the thing"?

TESSA
I suppose so. Do you like Fritos,
or did Yip ruin them for you?

ELENA
The latter.

TESSA
Figured as much. I'm Tessa. Head of
security. I have a... gun.

ELENA
I see. Why?

TESSA
Well... between you and me, I have
four kids to put through college,
so I told the Colonel I used to be
a guard at a high-security prison
called Azkaban and now I have a
job.

ELENA
You look... right at home with
that... semi-automatic.

TESSA
I named her Ducky.

ELENA
Suits. You ever have to use it?

Tessa looks shifty. Her paper plate shakes in her hand.

TESSA
No...

ELENA
Tessa... if there's anything you
want to talk to me about...

TESSA

Would you pray with me?

ELENA

Oh. Um. I don't... I don't really do that.

TESSA

Why not?

INT. ELENA'S CHILDHOOD HOME - MORNING - FLASHBACK

ELENA as a six-year-old child. She stands on the bathroom counter looking in the mirror, her two mothers behind her: BRUTE, tall and angular in an army uniform, and JABELLE, curvy and soft, lollipop edible in her mouth.

JABELLE

Say your affirmations, lovey.

YOUNG ELENA

My body, my body tells me what feels good. My brain, my brain, tells me what I know. The earth, the earth, tells me what is true. I trust myself but I don't trust you.

BRUTE

Don't ever forget. People will disappoint you and God will fail you, but we will always love you.

BACK TO SCENE:

THE COLONEL

Agent Morales. What an expected surprise.

Elena turns around slowly. The Colonel stands like a proud G.I. Joe in front of his container fortress. That smile.

ELENA

Your staff tells me you've been making cattle disappear. Thought you only did that with people.

THE COLONEL

When a magnet turns the wrong way round it gets repelled, but that's just science, baby.

ELENA

Oh...kay? You know why I'm here.
Let's get this over with.

THE COLONEL

My pleasure. Come on crew, let's
throw the doors open wide and give
the U.S. Federal Government a tour
of Area 59.

ELENA

You can't be serious. Area 59? You
looking for aliens or something?

The Colonel holds the door to the first shipping container.

INT. BASECAMP - CONTINUOUS

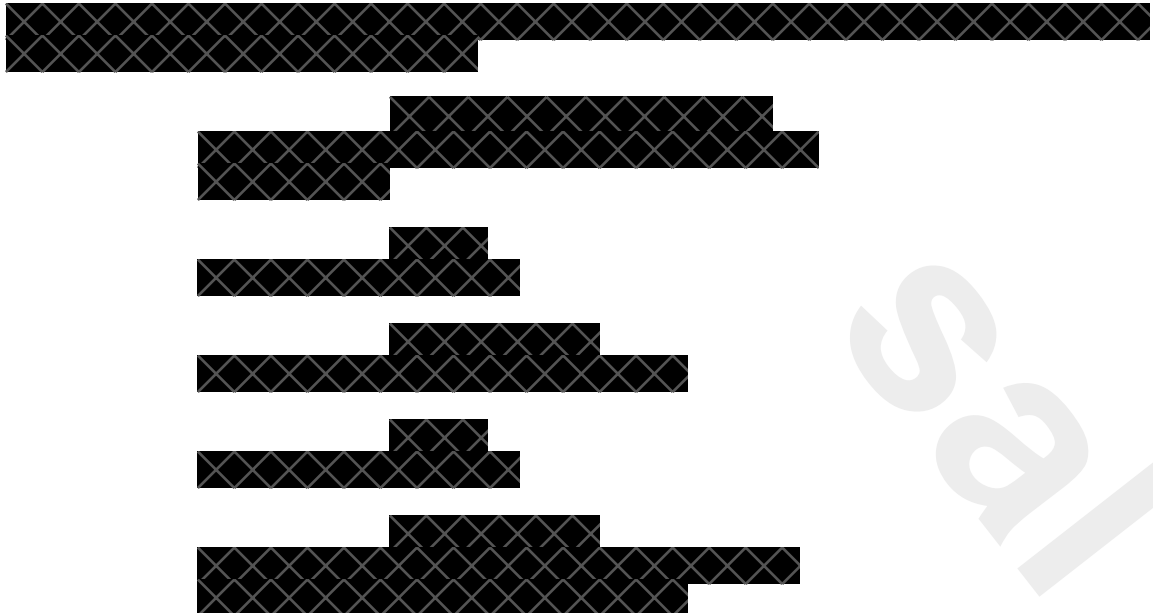
An entire high-tech surveillance system is set up inside.
Giant monitors display live footage from the ranch. A
flightpath radar shows aircraft flying overhead. Several sets
of walkie talkies, a mini armory, and a conference table
provide the perfect mission control. Grainy pictures of UFO's
and blurry extraterrestrial figures fill a bulletin board.

ELENA

Holy shit. You're looking for
aliens.

THE COLONEL

Welcome to Basecamp.



END OF SAMPLE