

LOST & FOUNDTEASER

EXT. SKYWAY HOTEL - DAY

Twelve blocks from LAX a taxi pulls to the curb. Out steps **TESSA COOPER**, hovers around 30, aware of her good looks but doesn't bank on them. Some would say bullheaded, she would say she's just a girl with opinions. Either way she's got pluck. Tessa pays the fare and carries her one small suitcase into --

INT. SKYWAY HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

-- an empty lobby. Place was decorated so long ago it's hip again. Tessa passes a plastic ficus tree in a pot bearing the slogan: "I Love LA", steps up to the front desk and rings the bell. A guy whose name tag tells us he's DWIGHT walks out from the back, gives Tessa the once over. She gets that a lot.

DWIGHT

Same room?

TESSA

Same room.

CUT TO:

INT. SKYWAY HOTEL - HALLWAY - DAY

The elevator doors slide open and Tessa steps out into a hallway that's seen better decades.

TESSA'S VO

Why did I pick a dump?

She takes note of an Exit Sign hanging over the stairs, finds her room and pushes inside to find --

INT. ROOM #1321 - CONTINUOUS

-- the basics: king sized bed, paisley spread, pay per view. Tessa makes a point of unlocking the door, then checks her watch.

TESSA'S VO

OK. Let's do this.

CONTINUED

She unzips her suitcase and pulls out three scented candles, a silk robe and kiwi bubble bath.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

The tub fills with bubbles. One of the candles flickers over by the sink. Tessa unbuttons her shirt, slips out of her skirt... then does what all girls do, eyes herself in the bathroom mirror. Front. Sideways.

TESSA'S VO

When is fluorescent ever a good idea?

She checks her watch again.

TESSA'S VO (CONT'D)

Here we go.

Then walks out of the bathroom --

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- past the mini fridge and the bed. In one move she flings open the curtains, tugs on the sliding glass door and steps out onto --

EXT. BALCONY - BRIGHT SUNNY DAY

Without missing a beat, Tessa (in only her skivvies) climbs over the balcony rail and balances precariously thirteen stories above the pavement. Cool as a cucumber, she checks her watch again, then looks up at the sky just as an American Airlines flight cruises overhead.

TESSA'S VO

I'd like to welcome flight 704 to Los Angeles, where the local time is nine forty-three and the weather?

(surveys)

Nipply.

Below Tessa, a garbage truck comes to a stop beside the hotel's trash cans. Out on the street morning rush hour is in full swing. People with places to go. Routines. Appointments. Lives.

GO TIGHT ON TESSA and get the first glimpse of something we'll come to know well - Tessa at work. Her gaze is fixed. Her breathing, slow...

CONTINUED

SOUND FALLS AWAY

Thirteen stories above pavement Tessa asks herself the million dollar question:

TESSA'S VO (CONT'D)

*I'm a twenty-two year old Asian
American pharmaceutical rep. I drive a
Ford Focus and have two cats. Why do I
jump?*

A high pitched SHRIEK cuts through the quiet. Tessa looks down to spot a PORTLY WOMAN on the sidewalk below. The Woman was taking her YipYip dog for a walk, now she's flailing her arms in the air and screaming bloody murder.

CUT FROM:

PORTLY WOMAN

(looking up)

Don't jump!

TO:

TESSA

(looking down)

Your dog!

TO:

LITTLE YIP YIP

Yip! Yip!

Tessa watches, horrified, as little YipYip runs directly into traffic. Tires SKID, horns BLARE, a pick-up FISHTAILS and when all is said and done, little YipYip sits, wagging his tail, in the center of a three car pile up.

From the balcony Tessa looks down on the carnage:

TESSA'S VO

Now that's not good.

END TEASER

CONTINUED

ACT ONE

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

Cops in cubicles. Tessa, now wearing pants - oh yeah, and a badge and a gun - weaves through the squad. Head down. A male DETECTIVE spots her, a shit eating grin spreading across his face. He stands and starts to clap sarcastically.

DETECTIVE

Cooper, way to screw the pooch..Again.

One by one others stand, joining in. It builds in speed and volume ending in a mock standing O.

TESSA'S VO

I should have jumped.

At her desk, a Post-It is stuck to Tessa's computer screen:

"Lt. Hobbs -- NOW!"

The applause dies out, Tessa rips the Post-It off the screen.

SMASH CUT TO:

GAYLE

She's suing, you know. The Dog Lady?

The Lieutenant's secretary, GAYLE DIXON, African American. Gayle's appropriated her boss' authority. Add a hefty dose of attitude and you're looking at Tessa's worst nightmare.

TESSA

The Lieutenant wanted to see me?

Gayle stands and Tessa follows her into --

INT. LIEUTENANT HOBBS' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

-- Lieutenant Hobbs' empty office.

TESSA

He's not here.

GAYLE

You're the detective.

(explains)

The Lieutenant's on his way back from an MS breakfast in the valley.

TESSA

I'll come back later.

CONTINUED

GAYLE

He's singing the National Anthem at the Mayor's son's little league game. Then he's being profiled by *Muscle & Fitness Magazine*. There is no later.

Gayle hits a button on a speaker phone box.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

You have Detective Cooper.

LIEUTENANT HOBBS' baritone rings out:

LIEUTENANT HOBBS

Right.

(clueless)

What am I saying?

GAYLE

I texted you the talking points.

LIEUTENANT HOBBS

OK. Put her on.

TESSA

I'm right here, Lieutenant, and I know what you're going to say but hear me out first... Julie Quan didn't commit suicide, she was pushed.

LIEUTENANT HOBBS

Not according to the file. You can find it with the other closed cases.

TESSA

She lit candles, drew a bubble bath. Come on, the woman was wearing LaPerla.

LIEUTENANT HOBBS

I'm well aware you have an active imagination, Detective. But here at the LAPD we deal in facts. The girl was nuts. She jumped. End of story.

TESSA

Come on! An eighty pound donkey with a pea for a brain would know she was meeting someone.

(off Gayle's look)

What? It's why she got a room by the stairs - so he could slip up unnoticed. And what better way to end an affair than tossing your mistress down 13 flights without an elevator?

CONTINUED (2)

Crickets. The line is dead.

TESSA (CONT'D)
Lieutenant?

GAYLE
We lost him in the canyon.

Gayle dials again. Lt. Hobbs picks up where they left off:

LIEUTENANT HOBBS
Which leaves me with three cars, a lawsuit and a Pomeranian in need of therapy...

TESSA
Exactly! If Julie Quan had been out on that balcony in her undies, people would have seen her. She was murdered!

LIEUTENANT HOBBS
And you're grounded! Something I should have done when you tried to stop a MetroRail train with a steamroller.

TESSA
(corrects him)
It was a backhoe.

LIEUTENANT HOBBS
Or when you talked your way into assisting in a witness' breast augmentation surgery. You're a risk, a liability --

TESSA
Each of those cases went from red to black on the board and might I add she was very happy with the results.

The Lt. starts to cut in and out - we get every other word.

LIEUTENANT HOBBS
I've run out of excuses, Cooper. The boys upstairs #^@#*^! tried to kill yourself today @&*\$% hands are tied. As of this moment you're...

Static. Silence. Tessa looks to Gayle.

TESSA
Just tell me.

CONTINUED (3)

GAYLE

You're rubber gunned. Effective immediately. You must surrender your weapon and seek psychological counseling until you're deemed stable enough to go back on the job.

The phone rings. Gayle hits speaker.

LIEUTENANT HOBBS

...and don't think you're getting a paid vacation. I'm throwing you in the basement.

TESSA'S VO

We have a basement?

INT. PRECINCT - ELEVATOR - DAY

Tessa stands in the middle of a packed elevator, eyes ahead. A foot shorter than the rest and the only one with XX chromosomes. As usual, the only girl in the room. The elevator descends stopping once, twice - until Tessa stands alone. She hits bottom and the doors open onto --

INT. PRECINCT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

-- a hallway with no windows and no doors. She steps out and the elevator doors close behind her with a THUD of finality.

TESSA'S VO

Hello?

(echoes)

Hello...hello...hello...

Tessa starts to walk the hall.

TESSA

I am so screwed.

TESSA'S VO

Screwed...screwed...screwed...

She comes to a door marked "Down". Inside - stairs that disappear into darkness. Hesitantly, Tessa descends.

INT. STAIRWAY - MINUTES LATER

Tessa reaches bottom to find -- a door ringed with colored Christmas lights. At her feet a doormat reads: GO AWAY. Tessa opens the door and gets her first good look at --

INT. BASEMENT - LOST & FOUND - DAY

It's a pit. Three desks sit at awkward angles. Against the wall - an overstuffed and torn leather couch that's been slept on recently. One computer (first generation Pentium), one phone (rotary). The ceiling is a maze of exposed plumbing pipes. The smell? Let's call it mold and not ask any probing questions.

TESSA

You've got to be kidding me.

Tessa is about to turn and run with her hands in the air when she hears a flush and BURTONMACEY, 55, walks out of the bathroom and utters his version of an introduction:

BURT

Don't go in there.

Burt's an institution. Does things the old fashioned way - with blunt force and a foul mouth (portions of his dialogue will literally be BLEEPED). But his bigoted rants are spewed with a gleam in his eye. He's a provocateur.

TESSA

There's obviously been a mistake.

BURT

You (fuck) up recently?

(yes)

Then you're in the right place.

Burt walks to the couch, picks up an LAPD sweatshirt from the floor. Smells the pits then pulls it over his head.

TESSA

And you are?

BURT

Detective Burton Macey.

TESSA

I've heard of you.

TESSA'S VO

I heard you were dead.

BURT

Most people have.

TESSA

I'm Detective --

CONTINUED

BURT

Tessa Cooper. This morning you checked into the hotel room of a jumper and shimmied in your skivvies.

TESSA

That's not what I was --

BURT

Don't want to know. Don't care. I'm not your buddy, I'm not your preacher, and unless you took pictures, I'm not interested.

(then)

You familiar with UID's?

TESSA

Unidentified Persons.

BURT

Homicide won't brew a pot of coffee until a victim has a name.

TESSA

That's all you do down here, find the names of John and Jane Does?

BURT

That's what we do down here.

TESSA

So I've just got to pass a few names upstairs and I'm back on my desk? Piece of cake.

BURT

My ass. There's a reason no one wants these cases. You can't beg, barter or blackmail your way into getting an assist. We're on our own down here.

TESSA

Come on, how hard can it be? How many UID's have you identified?

BURT

Three.

TESSA

See?

BURT

In seven years. This is the belly of the beast. The bastard step-child of the LAPD.

(MORE)

CONTINUED (2)

BURT (CONT'D)
 (a la Mr. Rourke on *Fantasy Island*)
 Welcome to Lost & Found.

Like a sign from God, no sooner have the words left Burt's mouth than THE GROUND STARTS TO SHAKE. Actually, the whole room starts to shake. Tessa DIVES under a desk screaming:

TESSA
 Earthquake!

Once the basement stops shifting, Tessa peeks out from under the desk to find Burt hasn't moved an inch.

BURT
 We're under the parking garage.

Tessa's spunk fades.

EXPRESSIVE SHRINK (OVERLAP)
 Tell me why you think you're here.

INTERCUT BETWEEN A SERIES OF SHRINK OFFICES where Tessa sits on various couches. First up, an EXPRESSIVE SHRINK - big beads, big hair, big ideas.

TESSA
 I don't have a choice.

EXPRESSIVE SHRINK
 It says here in your file that you have a tendency to get too involved in your cases.

TESSA
 Really? Let me see that.

EXPRESSIVE SHRINK
 It's confidential.

TESSA
 How can it be confidential if it's about me? It's my life!

Tessa grabs one end of the file.

EXPRESSIVE SHRINK
 It's my file!

The Shrink grabs the other and atug-o-war ensues. The Shrink loses her grip, and falls ass over tea kettle to the floor.

New Couch. JUNGIAN SHRINK. Beige abounds - rug, drapes, book bindings, dead-pan delivery:

JUNGIAN SHRINK
 Tell me about your parents.

CONTINUED (3)

TESSA

I don't see what that has to do --

JUNGIAN SHRINK

The sooner we get to the root of your behavior, the sooner I can sign off on your clean bill of health.

Beat.

TESSA

When I was fourteen, my parents died in a car accident. A semi ran a red light.

NEW AGE SHRINK (OVER-LAP)

Now take a deep breath and imagine the loving embrace of the amniotic sack.

CUT TO:

New Couch. A NEW AGE SHRINK coaches Tessa through the re-birthing process. Tessa thrashes on the floor wrapped in blankets, pillows and straps.

TESSA

This really isn't working for me.

BACK TO:

THE JUNGIAN SHRINK's come unraveled. Sits on the couch in Tessa's arms, weeping.

TESSA (CONT'D)

It's OK. Let it out.

TESSA'S VO

I need a drink.

INT. ABIGAIL NEZHUKUMATATHIL-GRANT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

TIGHT ON a neat row of juice boxes.

TESSA

I would kill or die for amargarita.

Tessa shuts the fridge door. On it - forensic sketches hang next to kids' drawings of flowers and house pets.

ABIGAIL

If I have to wait, so do you.

CONTINUED

ABIGAIL NEZHUKUMATATHIL-GRANT, 30ish, Indian, mother of three with another one on the way (she's 6 months pregnant). The Martha Stewart of Medical Examiners, and Tessa's best friend. She's the sister Tessa never wanted.

TESSA

This shrink thing's a colossal waste of time.

Abigail's having trouble dicing onions - knife's not sharp enough. Without a word, Tessa takes the knife from Abigail's hand, sharpens it on a steel and hands it back.

ABIGAIL

You want your gun and your job back?
(yes)
Then find something to talk about.

TESSA

What do you suggest?

ABIGAIL

I don't know. Your issues.

Abigail pours cubed sweet potatoes into aCuisinart and hits pulse... nothing. She starts shaking the machine. Tessa calmly goes to the outlet. Hits reset.

TESSA

The GFI was tripped.
(then)
What issues?

Tessa nonchalantly picks up abaster and heads for the roast in the oven.

ABIGAIL

Come on, Tessa. They threw you in the basement and put you on name-that-body duty. Just because you don't have a case to solve doesn't mean you have to solve my dinner problems. Now give me back my baster.

Tessa does as she's told.

TESSA

I'm good at my job, right?

ABIGAIL

Very good.

TESSA

So why keep me from doing it? It's like those bastards want me to fail.

CONTINUED (2)

ABIGAIL

Then don't.

TESSA

It's just, I'm used to working cases where there's a loved one, family, *someone* standing there weeping, looking to me for closure. For justice.

ABIGAIL

(reality check)

Someone out there is weeping over every one of these unnamed human beings, Tess. You just haven't met them yet.

Off Tessa --

INT. BASEMENT - LOST & FOUND - NEXT DAY

TIGHT ON BURT'S FACE.

BURT

I passed a stone faster than it's taking you to make up your (goddamned) mind!

REVEAL Burt in Bermuda shorts and a HawaiianT hosting his weekly poker game. Around the table sit a motley crew: a Maintenance Guy (SAL), an Ex-con (CLIVE) and a Retired Homicide Detective who's legally blind (HIGHTOWER).

SAL

Someone's crashing on the couch again.

CLIVE

That explains his sunny disposition. I call your five and raise you five.

Clive tosses five nuts on the pile. They're playing for peanuts. Literally.

HIGHTOWER

He's bluffing.

BURT

You can't see to wipe, how would you know?

Tessa sits at her desk spraying everything with Lysol. Drawers, computer keyboard. Picks up the phone receiver to give it a little lemon fresh love... no dial tone.

TESSA

What's with the phone? No dial tone.

CONTINUED

BURT

Only gets incoming calls.

Unbelievable. Tessa reaches into her bag and pulls out her cell. Burt tosses five peanuts on the pile, then:

BURT (CONT'D)

We're underground, Einstein. No reception.

TESSA'S VO

Even Hell gets reception.

When Tessa turns back to her desk, she finds ^{A FILE RESTING} IN HER IN BOX. It wasn't there a minute ago.

TESSA

Hey. We got a case file.

BURT

Alert the masses.

TESSA

I'm serious. How did it get here?

The boys shake their heads at the newbie.

HIGHTOWER

She always like this with the questions?

BURT

You're so hot to get out of the basement, why do you care where it came from?

Tessa flips open her first UID file to find... not a whole hell of a lot. Reads:

TESSA

Male. African American. 18 to 35.
Body was discovered by the UCLA rowing team in Ballona Creek three months ago.
Bullet to the head.

Tessa shakes the file hoping something will fall out, some piece of the puzzle she missed.

TESSA'S VO

That's it? That can't be it.

BURT

(eyes on his cards)
We'll take a look at the Vic's personal property when this game's over.

CONTINUED (2)

Tessa's not a waiter. In one move she's up, out of her chair and standing over Burt. She surveys his cards.

TESSA

Look at that. Almost a straight.

BURT

Well I'll be a (goddamned) son of a
(cocksucker)!

The boys erupt in laughter. Tessa's already on her way out.

TESSA

Save your breath for the stairs.

INT. PERSONAL PROPERTY STORAGE - DAY

A dingy reception area with a counter. Behind it, rows and rows of boxes. Burt walks up to a speaker and barks:

BURT

File number 8677549.

SASHA BIRNBAUM, 28, appears carrying a cardboard box. The king of storage and the hours don't conflict with his stand up career.

SASHA

So I just got out of the hospital.
While I was there I had an epidural and
decided to pleasure myself to see what
I felt like.

(a measured beat)

Does that make me gay?

TESSA

Excuse me?

BURT

Not bad.

SASHA

Set up still needs work.

BURT

(patting the box)

This our guy?

SASHA

8677549. What's left of him.

Sasha pulls out items while checking them against a list.

CONTINUED

SASHA (CONT'D)

One track suit. Extra large. One pair Nike running shoes in excellent condition. One pair white socks with red discoloration.

BURT

Blood?

TESSA

Could be.

SASHA

One Jefferson High School ring on 14 karat gold chain. And...
(holds it aloft)
A Viking helmet.

EXT. BALLONA CREEK - LATE DAY

Tessa and Burt climb down into the dry creek bed.

TESSA

This is where they found the body?

No longer a crime scene, now it's just a place. NdUni's, no tape, no chalk outline of the victim. Just a place.

BURT

What were you expecting, a crime scene?

TESSA

(yes)

No.

Nothing but scattered take out containers, a broken bottle of malt liquor, a mattress and a trickle of water.

TESSA (CONT'D)

UCLA crew team called it in. Either they spotted him on their way to practice or they use very small boats.

BURT

Three months back the creek was full.

TESSA

Even so, our guy wasn't dressed for water sports.

BURT

Our guy was a gang banger.

CONTINUED

TESSA

Oh. Is now the part when you tell me you talk to dead people?

BURT

A black kid gets shot and dumped in a neighborhood known for gang activity?

TESSA

I get it. You're not psychic, you're just a bigot.

BURT

I'm a realist. Why look for his given name when the only people who still used it were his mother and his parole officer?

Burt starts to climb back out of the creek. Tessa's not moving. We see that look again -- she's in it.

TESSA

Wrong shoes.

BURT

What?

TESSA

No self respecting gangbanger wears Nike Air Maxes. This guy was jogging. And judging from his body shape and the lack of tread wear, he was new to it. We could start by reaching out to the local shoe stores.

BURT

Of all the screw ups I get handed Harriet the (fucking) Spy? Just because the body was found here doesn't mean this is where he went in. Our Vic could have entered the creek anywhere between here and 7 miles up.

TESSA

(undaunted)

Don't you just love a challenge?

EXT. STREET - LATE DAY

Tessa and Burt walk to a beat toshit Crown Vic - another reminder that Lost & Found is at the bottom of the LAPD heap.

TESSA

We should re-canvass the neighborhood.

CONTINUED

BURT

Not tonight. I've got a date.

TESSA'S VO

With what, your hand?

Tessa hears something. Someone SHOUTING. She turns to see A MAN across the creek jumping up and down, waving his arms over his head and shouting Burt's name. Guy's in his 20's and sports a mullet under a *Tennessee Smokies* baseball hat.

BURT

Ignore him.

MAN

Burt?! Hey, Burt! You working something?

TESSA

You know that guy?

BURT

What guy?

MAN

I talked to the Coxswain!
(no response)
From the crew team?!

TESSA

How the hell does he know about --

But Burt's already climbed into the Crown Vic. Tessa glances over at the Man one last time, gets in beside Burt and they drive away.

INT. TESSA'S DOWNTOWN LOFT - NIGHT

Tessa pushes in carrying Popeye's chicken in a box, steps over two weeks worth of mail and a stack of empty take-out containers. The place could use a woman's touch. Tessa's just not that woman.

TESSA

Hey, babe. You hungry?

A rustling and out walks Tessa's own hot date... an eleven-year-old bulldog. If an ugly mutt kicked the shit out of an equally ugly mutt, then they mated, you'd have DOG.

TESSA (CONT'D)

So, Dog, how was your day?

TIME CUT TO:

CONTINUED

Tessa and Dog sit on the floor sharing cold fried chicken, potatoes and beer. Tessa spews:

TESSA (CONT'D)

I could find out more about a stranger on the street in two minutes than I got from a case file Homicide had months to put together. That's it. Tomorrow I'm talking to the Lieutenant. Parking tickets would be a step up from Lost & Found.

(notices)

You barely touched your potatoes.

(can't let it go)

I mean, I get handed a high school ring and a Viking helmet and what? I'm supposed to pull a name out of thin air?

Tessa stands, walks into the kitchen. A beat. She comes back:

TESSA (CONT'D)

...which doesn't explain why no one's come forward to claim him. A person doesn't just wake up one day and decide to drop off the face of the Earth. Someone had to have seen him.

(bee in her bonnet)

Wanna get some air?

EXT. BALLONA CREEK - NIGHT

Tessa and Dog run up the dry creek bed. Nothing but the sound of feet and paws hitting pavement and the occasional puddle.

TESSA'S VO

I'm a big black man, 18 to 35 years old. I have a class ring on a chain around my neck and a Viking helmet.

(the million dollar question)

Who am I?

Tessa's hooked. As they run off into the night...

END ACT ONE

CONTINUED

ACT TWO

INT. PRECINCT - NEXT DAY

8 a.m. and Tessa's sweaty. She makes a bee line through the squad wearing a track suit not unlike the victim's. Secretary Gayle falls into step beside her. They talk on the move.

GAYLE

Since when do you run to work?

TESSA

Since this morning.

GAYLE

Lieutenant Hobbs would like to know if you've settled on a psychiatrist.

TESSA

Have him swing by the basement and I'll tell him in person.

GAYLE

That's a 'no'.

Gayle types NO into her blackberry.

TESSA

What are you doing?

GAYLE

Holding up your end of the conversation. The Lieutenant's at the dedication of a new freeway on-ramp.

TESSA

Media whore.

(Gayle starts to type)

Don't type that!

GAYLE

We'll need a decision by the end of the day, Detective.

Gayle peels off and Tessa walks on, passing what was her desk. Now it's occupied by one DETECTIVE CHARLES 'CHUCK' PERRY. Tessa stops and Perry's eyes linger where they shouldn't.

TESSA

Get your feet off my desk.

PERRY

What're you going to do, shoot me? Oh right, they took your gun. My bad.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

PERRY (CONT'D)

(pushes it)

Hey, Coops. Next time you plan on running around half naked in a hotel room I'd be happy to provide back up.

TESSA

Don't get too comfortable.

INT. CROWN VIC - DAY

Burt behind the wheel. Tessa rides shotgun.

TESSA

The track suit was basic label. You can find it in any sporting goods store in Los Angeles.

BURT

Peachy.

TESSA

Then there's the class ring. It wouldn't have fit a guy that big. And whose to say it even belongs to Marathon Man?

BURT

Marathon Man? You *named* the victim?

TESSA

Not to mention there are over 400 Jefferson High's in the United States.

(off Burt)

I couldn't sleep.

Burt makes a hard left.

TESSA (CONT'D)

Where are you going? We agreed we'd target shoe stores in the neighborhood where the body was found.

BURT

I lied. Tell me, out of all the Vic's personal items, which one is not like the others?

TESSA

The Viking helmet.

BURT

Minnesota Vikings.

(Tessa's drawing blanks)

Were you raised in a cave? *Football.*

CONTINUED

TESSA

Growing up, if either of my parents found the other watching a sporting event it was grounds for divorce.

BURT

Let me guess - they didn't own a TV. Instead you read to each other from the great works of literature. Bet you all get together for the holidays, drink mulled wine and go caroling.

Too soon to share personal details like her parents' death, Tessa just smiles.

TESSA

Something like that.

Burt pulls to the curb across the street from a dive bar called the Foxhead. A purple banner declares HOME OF THE VIKINGS.

BURT

It's the only bar in the vicinity of Ballona creek whose home team wears Viking helmets. And today's game day.

Burt reaches for the door handle.

TESSA

Wait in the car.

BURT

Why is it that every time you open your mouth I want to hurt you?

TESSA

That is a bar full of men and they are men full of beer.

BURT

I have a gun.

TESSA

I have (tits).

BURT

You win.

Tessa climbs out and heads across the street alone --

INT. FOXHEAD BAR - DAY

Dark. When Tessa's eyes adjust she finds herself facing a room full of MINNESOTA GOOBERS. Men in Dockers.

CONTINUED

And every one of them is wearing a well worn, beat up Viking Helmet like the one they found with Marathon Man. All except one. His helmet is brand-spanking new. Tessa points at him:

TESSA

I want to buy you a beer.

TIME CUT TO:

The bar. Tessa and ERIC have put away three or four too many.

ERIC

January 9th. I'll never forget that day. And they said it would never happen. It was Vikings 31 Packers 17 and Phil stocked the bar with those little cheese sticks I like so much.

TESSA

Eric. Stay with me.

ERIC

After the game I was jumped by a gang of rabid Packers fans. They stole my helmet so the guys all chipped in to buy me this new one.

Eric won't meet Tessa's eyes. He climbs to unsteady feet - in a rush to end the conversation.

ERIC (CONT'D)

So there you go, it's mine. But no worries, you can keep it. Hope that helps. I gotta hit the boys' room.

Eric disappears into the Men's Room. Tessa sits at the bar with her doubts. A beat. Another beat.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. MEN'S ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Tessa pushes in. Finds a stunned Eric at a urinal.

TESSA

So they jumped you outside the bar?

ERIC

Um, I'm kind of in the middle of something.

TESSA

Helmet seems important to you. Must have roughed you up pretty bad to get it. I assume you filed a report.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

ERIC

No, I uh --

TESSA

Then I'm going to need to talk to witnesses. Why don't we go back out there and you can tell me which of your buddies saw it go down.

ERIC

(caves)

OK! It was the playoffs! I was reliving one of Randy Moss' two touchdown passes and I threw the darn thing in the air. It landed in the creek. There's like a six foot high fence around that thing. No way I was getting my helmet back. Please don't tell the guys.

Tessa leans against a stall door.

TESSA

Marathon Man was never here.

ERIC

I don't get it. How does a person get lost like that? I mean, everybody's connected to somebody, right?

Look on Tessa's face speaks volumes but Eric's too busy zipping up to notice. He goes to wash his hands.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Then again, who really knows a person? We're all so busy trying to be seen the way we want to be. I think the only people who really get us are the ones who met us when we were kids. Back before we knew any better than to just be ourselves.

Lightbulb. Tessa kisses Eric.

TESSA

You're wonderful!

ERIC

I didn't help you find your guy.

TESSA

No, but you might have just saved my ass.

Eric shrugs and hits the hand-dryer. Tessa ducks out --

INT. FOXHEAD BAR - CONTINUOUS

-- and finds a quiet corner. Pulls out her cell and dials.

TESSA

In Los Angeles. The number for a Max Burroughs?

(waits)

Max? Hey, it's Tessa Cooper. How have you been for the past ten years? I read in the High School alum rag that you became a psychiatrist. Enough about you -- I have a favor to ask...

EXT. FOXHEAD BAR - LATE DAY

Tessa pours out of the Foxhead and winces in the sunshine. Across the street - Burt talks to the Man from Ballona Creek. The one who was shouting. The one with the mullet. They don't see her before the Man takes off and Tessa makes her way over.

TESSA

Who was that guy?

BURT

Are you (shit) faced?

TESSA

Neither of those questions are going to get answered, are they?

BURT

Nope.

INT. MORGUE - NEXT DAY

Abigail's home away from home. She's conducting an autopsy wearing a gingham apron. Tessa's perched on an empty gurney.

ABIGAIL

You drunk dialed a shrink?

TESSA

Not just a shrink, Max Burroughs. What's that smell?

Abigail runs her wrist under Tessa's nose.

ABIGAIL

Pleasures. You like? The Chanel wasn't cutting through the putrefaction and you're avoiding my question.

CONTINUED

TESSA

From high school. Max was a sweetgeek who had a raging crush on me. I figure one visit is all it will take to get him to sign my Get Out Of Jail Free card.

ABIGAIL

Again. You drunk dialed a shrink?

TESSA

Have I told you lately that you're a --

ABIGAIL

(holding up a file)

I got my hands on your victim's original autopsy report.

TESSA

-- phenomenal friend. Talk to me.

ABIGAIL

Tox report came back negative so there were no drugs in his system. Dental work was good - no crunk teeth - meaning he had money. But because he spent time in the water there was serious bloat and --

TESSA

-- no decent prints. What else?

ABIGAIL

Scar on his upper right thigh - judging by tissue patterns he got it when he was a kid. No signs of a struggle. No skin, hair or fibers under his nails.

(knowingly)

Men. It's not always about what's under the nails... Take a look at this.

TIGHT ON a picture of Marathon Man's hand from the file.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Your victim had a manicure.

TESSA

So he's definitely not homeless. Not a gang banger. If it weren't for the fact that no one's come looking for him, I'd say we're dealing with your average, run of the mill tax payer.

ABIGAIL

Now don't go getting used to this kind of most-favored-nations status.

(MORE)

CONTINUED (2)

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

If my boss knew I was wasting time on a
Lost & Found case...

Abigail hands Tessa a FORENSIC SKETCH of the victim. Tessa
finally has a face to attach to the name:

TESSA'S VO

Hello there, Marathon Man.

CUT FROM the sketch in Tessa's hands to --

INT. CROWN VIC - SEASIDE CAR WASH - DAY

-- the sketch in Burt's hands. PULL BACK to find Burt and
Tessa riding the Crown Vic THROUGH A CAR WASH

BURT

Who'd you say did this for you?

TESSA

I didn't.

(impatient)

Come on, Macey. Why am I here?

BURT

The body was found three months ago,
right? He had been in the water a few
days. I checked reports of shots fired
anywhere in the Ballona Creek corridor
during that time frame.

(peering at windshield)

This bird (shit's) not coming off!

TESSA

We'll point that out. Keep talking.

BURT

Of the five reports, one was
firecrackers, one was an unrelated
murder, another was a domestic dispute
leaving us with two unresolved.

Burt leans over Tessa, she pulls away from his 'advance'.

BURT (CONT'D)

Keep dreaming.

He pops the glove compartment, pulls out the Thomas Guide, flips
to a section of Culver City and points to two spots by the creek:

BURT (CONT'D)

We've got shots fired here and here.
This is where we should be looking.

Burt circles a neighborhood near the second shooting.

CONTINUED

TESSA

You're kidding me, right? How do you know he wasn't shot at the other location, or for that matter Valencia or Waukesha, Wisconsin? The only way we're going to find his name is by focusing on who he was. This entire conversation's been a complete waste of time.

BURT

It's getting the car washed.

TESSA

(unbelievable)

Were you neglected as a child?

BURT

Six months ago a guy named RandyEpps plowed his Pontiac Sunfire through a section of the fence on the South side of the creek. City only got around to fixing it a month ago. When our Vic was shot, it was the only opening for miles. This is where he went in.

Burt points firmly to a specific spot of the creek on the map.

TESSA

Why didn't you say that to begin with?

BURT

Where's the fun in that?

(remembering)

Oh, guy named Max called for you. Said he's good to meet for coffee at three.

Tessa's eyes go wide. She looks at the dash - ten till.

TESSA

Why didn't you -- ? Is it so hard to -- ? Can't you make this thing go any faster?

BURT

Contrary to popular belief, I am not God.

Furious, Tessa does what she does best - leaps before she looks. She throws open the car door and STEPS OUT INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE CAR WASH. She's up to her knees in suds.

BURT (CONT'D)

You could have at least waited until the dryer.

TESSA

I'm a shark. If I stop moving I die.

CONTINUED (2)

Tessa slams the door and jogs up the car wash tunnel -- sopping wet with bubbles in her hair -- and she's gone.

INT. CORA'S COFFEE SHOP - DAY

TIGHT ON a pair of brand spanking new Nike Air Maxes... dripping water. PAN UP a leg to find a damp Tessa sitting in a booth doing her thing -- getting into the Victim's shoes. In front of her sits an empty dessert plate. A WAITRESS picks it up.

WAITRESS

You running off the dessert or eating so you have something to run off?

TESSA

That's what I'm trying to figure out. Can I try the cheesecake?

Puzzled, the Waitress walks away passing a tall, dark and delicious Guy who's smiling at Tessa.

TESSA'S VO

Too cute to be straight.

His eyes on Tessa, the Guy cuts too close to the Waitress, trips her and sends the dishes in her arms CRASHING to the floor.

GUY

I am so sorry! Here let me...

The Guy bends down to help only they both stand at the same time - SMACKING heads.

TESSA

Max Burroughs?

The geek has grown into a God. Best part is he doesn't seem to know it.

TESSA (CONT'D)

Wow. Max, you...

TESSA'S VO

Got hot.

MAX

I'm a klutz. I know.

Max dabs at a stain on his shirt. The Waitress cuts a wide berth around him to deliver Tessa's cheesecake.

MAX (CONT'D)

You gonna share that?

CONTINUED

Tessa and Max play catch up in a series of TIME CUTS. Now they sit across from each other, drinking coffee:

TESSA

...and I didn't want to leave LA.

MAX

But a Homicide detective?

TESSA

I know, right? At the core all it really is is a puzzle. Someone did something to someone for some reason and I get to figure it out. I guess I always had trouble with --

MAX

(knowingly)

Unanswered questions.

TIME CUT TO:

TESSA

Married? I can't keep a houseplant alive let alone maintain a relationship.

MAX

How's Dog?

TESSA

You remembered. He's fat. Fat as an --

TIME CUT TO:

MAX

-- art appraiser. We met when I was at school in Boston.

TESSA

That's code for Harvard. What's your fiancée's name?

TIME CUT TO:

MAX

Fred Baum? Mike Wood? Karen Braverman? You lost touch with everyone?

Tessa dodges the question, pushes the cheesecake away.

TESSA

Max, I'm in a bind.

MAX

You want some milk? It usually helps.

CONTINUED (2)

TESSA

No. At work. I got rubber gunned. Now I'm stuck on Unidentified Persons cases and I need a clinical psychiatrist who'll say I'm ready to go back on the job.

MAX

Does your Lieutenant know we have history?

TESSA

I won't tell if you won't.

Could those be sparks?

MAX

Tessa, I -- I want to help but I'll only do it if it's legit.

TESSA

Sorry to hear it. I've gotta go... research. It was really good to see you, Max Burroughs.

Tessa drops a \$20 on the table and Max watches her go.

ABIGAIL (OVER-LAP)

I love your research.

INT. HOLLYWOOD NAILS - DAY

TIGHT ON two feet in a tub. REVEAL Tessa and Abigail getting mani/pedi's at a Vietnamese hole-in-the-wall salon.

TESSA

I can't believe Max won't bail me out.

ABIGAIL

You don't talk for ten years, then ask the man to bend his professional ethics and he has the gall to say no? Unbelievable.

TESSA

Whatever. I'll find someone else.

ABIGAIL

Good. You don't want a hot shrink. You'd have to get another shrink just to deal with the fantasies.

Tessa's manicurist hits a tender spot. She flinches.

CONTINUED

TESSA

Ow! I've got no cuticles left to prune!
 Burt swore this was the neighborhood
 where Marathon Man was murdered, and we
 know he'd just gotten a manicure. Well
 I've been to six of these chop shops
 today and no one recognizes him.

Tessa pulls out the forensic sketch of Marathon Man. SANDRA,
 the Vietnamese woman rubbing Abigail's toes, giggles.

TESSA (CONT'D)

You know this guy?

SANDRA

Mr. Big Boy. Ticklish feet. Terrible
 nail. He biter. We also wax...
 (points at her back)
 But the picture, it not right. His hair...

Sandra holds her hands away from her head.

TESSA

A fro?

ABIGAIL

You know who to look for, Burt knows
 where to look... Hate to say it, Tess,
 but you two might be a perfect pair.

Off Tessa, lost in thought --

INT. BASEMENT - LOST & FOUND - NIGHT

Alone at her desk, Tessa holds up the Jefferson High School
 ring on the gold chain they found around Marathon Man's neck.

TESSA

*A hair cut, manicure, back wax, and the
 jogging? Talk to me Marathon Man.
 What were you getting ready for?*

And then, in a blatant mockery of other procedurals that bank
 on emotional scenes in the rain, one of the pipes above Tessa's
 head BURSTS. Torrents of water come POURING down.

TESSA'S VO

*And while you're at it can you get me a
 towel?*

END ACT TWO

CONTINUED

ACT THREE

EXT. SANDOLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MORNING

Kids pour out of carpool and tear-ass past Tessa who stands with MARGARET, an overprotectivebobo mom. You know the type - first to have a Bugaboo stroller (with attachments), sent her son to the 'right' Mommy & Me class.

MARGARET

'That man' was here. It's why I called the number on the flyer. I saw him at least three times and he's not a parent.

TESSA

Big school. How can you know for sure?

MARGARET

I make it a point to know everyone with a child here at Sandolin. We send Conner to public school for the diversity.

TESSA'S VO

Big of you.

MARGARET

But you can never be too careful. Especially with the 'element' in this neighborhood.

TESSA

Where did you see the man from the sketch?

MARGARET

On the corner, over there. I knew something wasn't right. I told them so.

TESSA

Who?

MARGARET

The school. They did nothing - as usual. Is he a wanted felon? What did he do?

TESSA

He was murdered.

MARGARET

Oh. What a relief.

Off Tessa, holding back her opinion with a forced smile --

INT. BASEMENT - LOST & FOUND - DAY

Tessa pushes into the basement looking for --

TESSA

Macey, I followed up on the tip from...

-- what she finds is YOLANADELGATO, 28. A breathtaking Latina woman rearranging paper on Burt's desk.

TESSA (CONT'D)

Oh. Sorry. I thought you were...I'm Detective Cooper.

YOLANDA

Yolanda Delgado.

TESSA

That was fast. I just called maintenance last night to come clean up the mess from the pipes. Since you're here, think you could take a pass at the bathroom?

Yolanda puts her hands on her hips and hits Tessa with her preferred form of speech: the run-on sentence.

YOLANDA

Girl, if I go unidentified I sincerely hope that you are not the Detective who catches the case because I am not, for your information, maintenance and I'm not your cleaning lady, I happen to manage not one, not two, but three successful downtown restaurants thank you very much and the only stuff I touch is Burt's because I may love the man but he is a first class, grade A slob.

Yolanda may not need to catch her breath but Tessa's head spins.

TESSA

You and Burt? Detective Burt Macey?

YOLANDA

What's got you trippin', the age or the race thing?

TESSA'S VO

How about the fact that you're human?

TESSA

I just assumed when Burt said he had a date he was full of...

(horrified)

(MORE)

CONTINUED

TESSA (CONT'D)

I think I'll stop talking now.
(can't)
It's just that Burt's a --

YOLANDA

Racist, foul mouthed self-centered pig?
He's just pushing your buttons.

THE PHONE ON BURT'S DESKRINGS. Yolanda picks up the receiver, then drops it back in the cradle without missing a beat.

YOLANDA (CONT'D)

You gotta think of him like anM&M - the hard shell keeps his soft inside from melting.

TESSA

So where is the big bag of candy now?

Burt's phone RINGS again. Yolanda nods at it.

YOLANDA

Forensics. He needed a break from Anthony's phone calls.

TESSA

(lightbulb)
Southern guy? Baseball hat...mullet?

Yolanda nods, the phone RINGS again. Tessa grabs it.

TESSA (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

Anthony, I presume?

INT. ANTHONY'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

Three computers, book shelves stacked with tomes on the missing, the found...and DVD's of classic TV detective shows. Welcome to the lair of ANTHONYECKEL, mysterious mullet man.

ANTHONY

Mom called me Anthony for a reason.
He's the Patron Saint of lost things
and turns out so am I.

Anthony's wide-eyed and bushy tailed enthusiasm is topped off with a Tennessee drawl.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Think of me as a match maker.

TESSA

OK.

(then)

I have no idea what that means.

CONTINUED

ANTHONY

There's over 6,000 unidentified in the NCIC database. And those are just the ones they bother to input. So I scour the internet for matches between the bodies in the LA morgue and families searching for missing loved ones clear across the country.

TESSA

And you do this... for fun?

ANTHONY

The first thing we're given when we come into this great world is our name, and these people deserve to get theirs back.

SHOUTS from outside.

BURT (O.S.)

I don't care if he's blowing the Sultan of Brunei, I'm going in there!

ANTHONY

Sounds like Burt's arrived.

The door flies open.

BURT

Cooper! What the (fuck) do you think you're doing here?

TESSA

What you're too stubborn to do - asking for help. Anthony's got the time, the experience and the contacts. His computers are actually *connected* to the internet. Why keep him out of the loop?

BURT

You see a badge on the (motherfucker)?

TESSA

I see a valuable resource. Look, I'm willing to do whatever it takes to put a name to our guy. Are you?

Off Burt, for once, speechless --

EXT. PALISADES BOWL MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY

Tessa, Burt and Anthony sit at a picnic table. Anthony's wife LANIE brings out lemonade.

CONTINUED

ANTHONY

For awhile I was a 411 operator, then I did a stint on a trout farm.

LANIE

That was after he was a notary public. Lemonade?

While she pours we PULL BACK TO REVEAL Anthony's computerized headquarters are in a mobile home overlooking the Pacific Ocean

LANIE (CONT'D)

Only way I agreed to let Anthony drag me away from Tennessee was if we got to live by the beach.

ANTHONY

Just like *The Rockford Files*.

Lanie ducks back inside. Tessa turns to Burt.

TESSA

I heard you paid Forensics a visit.

Burt looks from Tessa to Anthony and back. Reluctantly:

BURT

Had a friend run a chemical analysis on the Vic's socks. The red discoloration's not blood. It's dirt. And ... it turns out there's a red clay track a few blocks from the nail salon. You talk to the eyewitness at the school?

ANTHONY

(over-eager)

Had she seen Marathon Man?

Burt turns on Tessa. Can't believe what he's hearing.

BURT

He knows the victim's temporary name?

TESSA

(plows ahead)

She puts him outside Sandolin Elementary on multiple occasions.

BURT

Wait a...Our guy's a perv?! We're killing ourselves to pin a name on a (goddamn) fruit with a thing for kids?!

TESSA

Show a little respect.

CONTINUED (2)

BURT

Just calling it like I see it.

TESSA

Oh, I'm sorry, did you talk to someone who actually knew him? He had ticklish feet and a thing for self help books. He always left a great tip. He was a decent guy.

BURT

So was Ted Bundy according to some. You're only seeing what you want to see.

ANTHONY

(trying to help)

Could be he was mixed up with drugs. Fits the neighborhood. And the tracksuit.

Burt busts up laughing. Can't help himself. Tessa's stung.

TESSA

You know what? You were right about coming here. I've got better ways to waste my time.

Tessa turns and walks away.

INT. ABIGAIL NEZHUKUMATATHIL-GRANT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAYS LATER

The old forensic sketch of Marathon Man is stuck to the fridge with a magnet shaped like a garlic clove. Tessa sits at the breakfast table looking at the new sketch. Abigail makes tea.

ABIGAIL

I gave him back his fro. And considering he had enough back hair to wax - I aged him a bit.

(gets nothing)

You're right, I don't have the time. But for you? Anything.

TESSA

Sorry.

ABIGAIL

For what? Locking yourself up your apartment and not answering your phone for almost a week? Or for not telling me why?

TESSA

(spews)

I thought Burt was a sick, pathetic slob who lied about having a sex life.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

TESSA (CONT'D)

Then I meet his robo hot girlfriend and assume she's the cleaning lady.

ABIGAIL

Look on the bright side - you could ask him for dating advice seeing as you can't manage to stay in a relationship for more than two weeks.

TESSA

Way to hit me while I'm down. I am seriously starting to doubt my powers of perception. I mean, maybe Burt's right. Maybe Marathon Man was a pervert. I can't argue with the fact he was hanging around outside an elementary school.

ABIGAIL

Burt's all surfaces. If it were up to him Marathon Man would have been written off as a gangbanger. Even I'm all about the outside of things. All I can do is draw the exterior. Your gift is getting under people's skin.

TESSA

Gift or a curse?

ABIGAIL

This - you doubting yourself? It's not the friend I know and love. Whatever it takes to get the old Tessa back? Do it.

Abigail comes and sits down across from Tessa. She slides the sketch of Marathon Man across the table.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

He's counting on you.

Shouts from her daughters upstairs, Abigail stands and goes.

TESSA

Thanks for the advice, Mom.

ABIGAIL (O.S.)

I'm two weeks older than you, bitch!

A beat. Tessa picks up her cell and dials. Into phone:

TESSA

I think I found a way to make this work.

EXT. TRACK - NEXT DAY

Tessa, Max and Dog run the red clay track.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

MAX

This is highly unusual.

TESSA

You said to make it legit so I told the Lieutenant we have history. I'm doing the best that I can here.

MAX

Yeah. A four minute mile. Can we slow it down?

Dog wimpers in agreement and they slow it to a walk.

MAX (CONT'D)

Thank you.

(catches his breath)

So why me? You could talk your way around any shrink assigned to you and we both know it.

TESSA

Because if it's going to be anyone it shouldn't be a stranger.

(admits)

And something you said the other day...How you were surprised I'd lost touch with everyone. You know, from back when we were kids? I guess I hadn't really thought about it.

MAX

Glad to hear I stuck with you.

Tessa. Max. A moment. Then:

TESSA

I feel really disconnected from it... my past. What could make a person feel like that?

MAX

You may have outgrown who you were back then. That's healthy. On the other hand if you're distancing an entire part of your life, it would be helpful to examine why.

TESSA

Confront it.

MAX

Exactly. Question is, where to start?

CONTINUED (2)

TESSA

Donuts!

MAX

That wouldn't be my first suggestion...

She points to a Donut Shop that just came into view up the street

TESSA

Marathon Man was a big boy trying to lose weight. But come on, that's like a beacon of temptation. If he caved, even once, they might know his name!

MAX

OK. When did we stop talking about you and start talking about the John Doe?

But Tessa's already jogging off towards the donut shop.

INT. HAPPY TIME DONUTS - DAY

Tessa talks to ASHOK, the pock-marked teen behind the counter. He looks at the new sketch of Marathon Man.

ASHOK

Nice guy. Came in three, four times a week.

TESSA

No wonder he was always jogging.

ASHOK

He never ate anything, just came in and looked at the case. He'd take a deep breath and mumble something about courage and wisdom and then buy a cup of coffee.

TESSA

Did you happen to get his name?

ASHOK

Sorry.

TESSA V.O.

Yeah. So am I.

A deflated Tessa turns to find Max standing behind her.

TESSA

So I wasn't completely up-front with you. But I'd hit a wall, and if I'd told you why I was asking, you wouldn't have shown up.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

TESSA (CONT'D)

(with confidence)

My John Doe, he was a decent guy. He bought coffee, he was fighting the magnetic pull of carbs and he was nice enough for the kid behind the counter to remember him. Now all that's left of him fits in a box and that bothers me.

MAX

You used the possessive. You called him 'my John Doe'.

TESSA

OK. I get it. Now's when you tell me I hide behind my work to avoid my own issues, right? That everything I do is because of what happened to my parents.

MAX

Nice try, Tess, but I knew you before your parents died.

TESSA

What's that supposed to mean?

MAX

(challenges her)

You've been this stubborn since you were five. But even you've got to admit - no matter how many times you save the day, it won't make up for not being able to save your parents.

TESSA

I thought you'd be different. Turns out you're just like everyone else.

MAX

I bet nobody else knows that you were in the back seat.

(without flinching)

What you do - solve puzzles, answer questions - it will never answer yours. Why them and not you?

Like the wind's been knocked out of her.

TESSA

Go to Hell!

Furious and hurt, Tessa heads for the door.

MAX

It's the *Serenity Prayer*.

She wheels back around.

CONTINUED (2)

TESSA

What?

MAX

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, *courage* to change the things I can and the *wisdom* to know the difference." It's a twelve step thing. You said your guy was trying to lose weight.

TESSA

Overeaters Anonymous.

Tessa looks at Max. Max looks at Tessa. An understanding. One broken by the CHIRP of his cell. His tone says it's his fiancée.

MAX

Hey. Yeah, I'm just finishing up.

Tessa heads out. Alone.

A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS - OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS - DAY/NIGHT

Tessa walks into the middle of an OA meeting, holds up her shield in one hand, the sketch of Marathon Man in the other.

Tessa is escorted out.

Petite Tessa sits in a circle of 'large' folk.

TESSA

Hi. I'm Tessa and I'm an Overeater.

Tessa is escorted out.

Tessa stands outside a meeting. Everyone drinks coffee, chews gum or smokes. She talks to a woman in a sensible skirt named TAWNY.

TAWNY

I thought he dropped out. You can't do this sorta thing in a hurry, you know. It's a life change. One day at a time.

TESSA

You didn't happen to catch his name.

Tessa holds her breath.

TAWNY

Yeah. Aubrey. Aubrey Williams.

TESSA'S VO

Aubrey Williams. You have a name.

END ACT THREE

CONTINUED

CONTINUED (3)

ACT FOUR

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT - DAY

Burt finds Tessa standing in the middle of the empty apartment.

TESSA

Aubrey's Landlord had nothing but good things to say. He was courteous, prompt with his rent.

BURT

Where's his stuff?

TESSA

Goodwill. New tenant's moving in this weekend.

BURT

You get a line on family?

TESSA

He never mentioned a wife or girlfriend, but the emergency contact information on his rent paperwork lists a Dale Williams and an address in Eugene, Oregon.

BURT

You're thinking it's his mother?

TESSA

(yes)
Not bad, huh?

BURT

What do you want, a gold star?

(then)

We'll alert the authorities in Eugene, they'll take it from here.

TESSA

But what if she has questions? They didn't work the case. They don't know. We should be the ones to tell her.

BURT

Allow me to point out the problems with that scenario. A, you're rubber gunned, meaning you don't conduct police business solo. Number two, LAPD doesn't cover our gas and I've got sciatica so I sure as hell am not gonna drive you. Looks to me like you're (shit) out of luck.

CONTINUED

TESSA

Could you at least pretend to care?
(recalls Abigail's words)
Someone out there is weeping over every
one of these unidentified people.

BURT

(ice)
If you think I don't know that, you
don't know me at all.

Saved by the persistent guy with the mullet. In walks:

ANTHONY

Sorry I'm late to the tea party.

BURT

Did you tell him we were...?

Tessa shakes 'no'.

ANTHONY

When are we leaving for Eugene? We
really should carpool what with gas
prices and all. Don't you think?

BURT

You wanna know what I think?

TESSA

What Burt's trying to say is that while
we appreciate your enthusiasm, this is
a homicide investigation and you're a
civilian volunteer. A mother is about
to find out that her son is dead. I
need to do this right.

BURT

He's not yours, Cooper.

Once again, Tessa's made it personal. She back-pedals.

TESSA

I didn't say that. Did I say that?

BURT

It's unprofessional.

TESSA

Oh really? Remind me again how many
names you've found in the last seven
years?

Anthony steps into the fray:

CONTINUED (2)

ANTHONY

You've got the wrong address.

Tessa and Burt trade a look.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Aubrey's father died and his mom moved into a condo three months ago.

TESSA

How do you do that?

ANTHONY

I'm the guy who knows things.

(excited)

Like the fact that Aubrey's mother just started taking tango lessons, attends St. Albans services every Sunday, makes a mean vegetarian lasagna and --

TESSA

Just the address!

BURT

Just the address!

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Only trying to help.

Anthony's cell rings. It's the theme to *Murder She Wrote*.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

I've gotta take this. Tomorrow morning. Seven a.m.

Anthony starts out, stops.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Did you know the dead outnumber the living by fourteen to one? See you all tomorrow.

Wisdom dropped, Anthony turns and goes. Burt turns to Tessa.

BURT

If you're not careful, that could be you.

Off Tessa, less than amused --

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Crack of dawn. Tessa stands on the curb outside her loft. Up pulls a black GMC van with a red stripe. The door slides open and Tessa climbs in. Anthony, clearly a morning person, cheerfully offers Tessa some --

CONTINUED

ANTHONY

Hot cocoa? It's even got those little mini marshmallows. That's redundant, isn't it? Little. Mini.

He pours a thermos cup full, hands it to Tessa who looks around.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

You guessed it.

TESSA

What?

ANTHONY

You're sitting in an exact replica of the *A Team* van. It was a gift from a guy in Memphis. I helped find his brother who'd been dead and missing for eight years. She's a beauty ain't she?

As the unlikely duo heads off:

TESSA'S VO

It's a rolling freak-fest.

EXT. BURT'S BUNGALOW - MORNING

Anthony's in the van on his cell. Tessa paces outside.

ANTHONY

It just keeps on ringing.

TESSA

Unbelievable.

Tessa marches up to the front door of a classic California bungalow, knocks. Nothing. She walks around the side.

TESSA'S VO

Please let him have his pants on.

Finds the back door open a crack. Inside, a heated argument in full swing. Burt vs. a very upset Yolanda. A dish FLIES across the room and CRASHES behind Burt's head.

BURT

What do you want me to say?

YOLANDA

What's the point? It's always the same!

Yolanda dissolves in tears. Softer now:

CONTINUED

YOLANDA (CONT'D)

How can I compete with a dead person?

Burt takes Yolanda in his arms.

BURT

I just need to know what happened to her.

TESSA'S VO

Her?

Tessa's not the only one with secrets. As Burt rocks Yolanda in his arms, Tessa ducks away unnoticed.

BURT (OVER-LAP)

I've gotta squirt. Find me a john or I'll piss in your thermos.

EXT. LAKE SHASTA - DAY

The van pulls up at a rest stop and the team piles out - Burt, Anthony then Tessa who walks to a vista point, Lake Shasta stretching out in front of her. She pulls out her cell and dials.

TESSA

Am I interrupting?

INTERCUT WITH Max who steps out of a cafe leaving a pretty blonde (his Fiancee) alone at the table.

MAX

No. Actually, I was going to call you.

TESSA

To apologize?

MAX

Tell me I'm wrong and I'll apologize.

(she can't)

I hear you found your name.

TESSA

How --

MAX

Lieutenant Hobbs told me when we met to discuss my taking you on as a client.

TESSA

You actually saw Hobbs? In the flesh?

CONTINUED

MAX

Yeah. Why?

TESSA

Nevermind.

(awkward)

You know what? This was stupid. I don't even know why I called.

MAX

You never do anything without a reason.

TESSA

It's just...I'm about to tell someone their child is dead and I'm having a hard time finding the right words.

MAX

And you called me.

TESSA

Well, I figured...you're the shrink.

Truce.

MAX

That night in the hospital, when they told you that your parents were gone...

TESSA

Nobody told me. I overheard a nurse saying she wasn't going to be the one to tell 'the kid' her parents were dead.

MAX

I know. I remember.

(then)

You want to know what to say to a woman who just lost someone she loves? Tell her what you wish someone had told you.

Off Tessa --

EXT. DALE WILLIAMS' CONDO - DOORWAY - DAY

Tessa and Burt stand face to face with DALE WILLIAMS, early 50's. Tessa has already told her the news, now she gets the chance to make things right.

CONTINUED

TESSA

We broke with procedure, drove all the way from LA to be here today, to have the chance to tell you ourselves because solving this, giving your son back his name -- it matters to us. Every person Aubrey came in contact with had nothing but good things to say and in today's world when people would rather slam a door in your face than hold it open...that's saying a lot.

(then)

I only wish I'd gotten the chance to know him myself.

Tessa waits expecting tears, gratitude, possibly even a hug. Instead Dale holds up the forensic sketch in denial.

DALE

This isn't my son. It's not Aubrey.

Tessa looks to Burt for an assist.

BURT

Ma'am, did your son have a scar on his leg. Right about here?

Dale watches as Burt draws a line down his thigh. The sketch in her hands starts to tremble. She knows.

DALE

He was seven. His father was teaching him to ride a bicycle.

TESSA

(gently)

Aubrey was making positive changes. He moved to LA, he was losing weight... I believe he was getting ready for something. The question is what.

DALE

Please tell me he found her. Tell me he found Brooke.

INT. DALE WILLIAM'S CONDO - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Dale sits across from Tessa and Burt. In front of them are photo albums open to pages of Aubrey as a newborn, as an awkward high schooler, graduating from college. Dale talks in the shocked calm that comes before the pain sets in.

CONTINUED

DALE

The house was getting to be too much for me so I decided to move. Thirty-five years of life fills a lot of boxes. Aubrey was helping me pack.

(then)

I don't know why I didn't throw it away. Maybe I wanted him to find it.

BURT

Find what?

DALE

When Aubrey was sixteen, he fell in love with Brooke Salinger - a white girl with an abusive father who wasn't happy his daughter was dating a black man.

(after a beat)

One night, I found Brooke on our doorstep. She'd been beaten again. I told her we'd drive to the police station, file a report against her father. She wouldn't do it. I can't blame her, she was just a child.

(explains)

All Brooke wanted was for me to give something to Aubrey. A letter. After she left...

TESSA

You read it.

DALE

(yes)

Brooke was running away. She wrote Aubrey what time her bus was leaving that night and that she'd be saving a seat for him. She also said that if he couldn't be there, she'd understand.

(then)

I found his class ring in the envelope.

Tessa reaches for a gold chain around her neck. She's WEARING AUBREY'S NECKLACE And on it - the class ring.

BURT

You thought if Aubrey saw the letter he would go?

DALE

You remember your first love?

Look on Burt's face says he remembers all too well.

CONTINUED (2)

DALE (CONT'D)

So to keep him from making a mistake, I broke his heart. I didn't give him the letter and he never heard from Brooke again.

TESSA

But Aubrey found the letter when you were packing up to move?

DALE

It was the only time I ever lied to my son. He was so angry, he said he was going to find Brooke and not to try and contact him. After what I'd done... I respected his wishes.

(the tears come)

He left so angry.

Dale turns to Burt.

DALE (CONT'D)

Who did this? Who murdered my son?

BURT

I'm sorry ma'am. Our job is to find a name, not solve the crime. Homicide detectives will take it from here.

DALE

But they don't know Aubrey like you do.

Off Tessa --

INT. BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Tessa BALANCES ABOVE THE FLOOR - one foot on the edge of a bathtub, the other on the toilet - leaning her head OUT THE OPEN BATHROOM WINDOW on her cell phone. Water runs in the sink to drown out the sound.

TESSA

Can you hear me now?

LIEUTENANT HOBBS (ON PHONE)

Where the hell are you, Niagara Falls?

TESSA

I want the Aubrey Williams Homicide.

LIEUTENANT HOBBS (ON PHONE)

It's not on the table. You found the name, kudos to you. Solving the crime's not part of the deal.

CONTINUED

TESSA'S POV: a Neighbor Kid stares up at her from his backyard.

TESSA

Can a girl get a little privacy here?

(back into the phone)

No one's ever solved a Lost & FoundUID
as fast as I did and you know it. I
earned this.

LIEUTENANT HOBBS (ON PHONE)

You're in no position to call in favors.

Tessa teeters precariously in an old lady's bathroom.

TESSA'S VO

If you only knew.

TESSA

Then meet me half way. Give me a week
with the case. After that it kicks
back upstairs.

(silence)

Come on! It's been an open file for
three months, what's a few more days?

Tessa holds her breath.

LIEUTENANT HOBBS (ON PHONE)

You've got 48 hours.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

TESSA'S VO

*12 hours from Eugene back to LA, locate
Brooke, find out what she knows - if
anything - and solve a three month old
homicide by the day after tomorrow.
Not a chance in hell.*

Tessa sits beside Anthony who drives them through the dark
back to LA. Behind them, Burt sleeps.

ANTHONY

Makes you wonder what would have
happened if Aubrey had gotten the
letter. Then again, they say things
happen for a reason.

TESSA

I don't believe in fate.

ANTHONY

That on account of what happened to
your parents?

CONTINUED

TESSA

How...?

(catches herself)

Right. You're the guy who knows things.

ANTHONY

Sure do. Like how you got yourself rubber gunned for making a case too personal. That your superiors think you're suicidal.

TESSA

They're wrong.

ANTHONY

So what if they're not? I mean, it takes a certain kinda twisted mind to work with the unidentified.

TESSA

I'm not like you. I didn't choose to be here.

ANTHONY

Could have fooled me.

He's nailed her and she knows it. Tessa looks back at the sleeping Burt.

TESSA

What about him? He could retire. He doesn't have to be stuck in Lost & Found. Why's he down there?

ANTHONY

(smiling)

That's for him to tell you.

Anthony nods to a PICTURE in Tessa's hands. Aubrey and Brooke at 16. Homecoming Dance.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

What're you gonna do when you find her?

TESSA

Improvise.

More questions than answers, Tessa looks out into the dark.

INT. LOS ANGELES ZOO - MAIN OFFICES - NEXT DAY

Tessa faces off against by-the-book administrator, FELIX.

CONTINUED

TESSA

You're either deaf, dumb, stupid or I got lucky and hit a trifecta. I said it was urgent. I'm running out of time.

FELIX

Brooke's in with the pandas. You have no idea how much Chinese butt we're going to have to kiss if anything happens to baby Pei Pei.

TESSA

OK, so she should be out in what, twenty minutes?

FELIX

Try overnight. She's teaching Ming Ling to nurse. It's a delicate process.

Off Tessa, screwed --

EXT. ZOO - PANDA HABITAT - DAY

Crowds peer down 30 feet into the panda habitat. Tessa's smack in the middle craning her neck to get a glimpse of Brooke.

MOM

They must be behind the trees.

WHINING LITTLE BOY

I don't see anything. Buy me a balloon!

TESSA'S VO

How about a muzzle?

Tessa paces back and forth. Looks at her watch. Looks down into the panda pit. Her cell rings.

INTERCUT BETWEEN TESSA AND BURT BACK IN LOST & FOUND.

TESSA (INTO PHONE)

Now's not a good time.

BURT

Lieutenant Hobbs just came down to throw wood on the fire under our asses.

TESSA

You actually *saw* the Lieutenant?

BURT

He wanted me to remind you - case is closed by tomorrow or you hand it off.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

BURT (CONT'D)

Tell me you talked to Brooke Salinger
... Cooper?

END INTERCUT. Tessa's hung up her cell and she's staring down into the panda pit with that look we know so well - she's in it.

TESSA'S VO

This is for you, Aubrey Williams.

TIGHT ON The Whining Little Boy.

WHINING LITTLE BOY

I want a churro!

CUT BACK TO where Tessa was standing. SHE'S GONE.

EXT. PANDA HABITAT - MINUTES LATER

Tessa SHIMMIES 30 FEET DOWN A PALM TREE

TESSA'S VO

Ow. Ow. Ow.

Tessa lands in the habitat on her ass with a THUD. Stands and cautiously starts to walk through the dense brush. Can't see more than the leaf in front of her. There's a RUSTLING and she turns to find -- DADDY PANDA. All 6 feet and 278 pounds of him.

TESSA

Hey there big guy. Nice place.

He REARS BACK onto his hind legs. The boy is one massive, hairy beast. Tessa rolls into a ball, arms covering her head.

TESSA'S VO

Death by panda. Terrific.

Then... nothing. Tessa peeks to find the guy was actually reaching up for a bamboo breakfast. He chews contentedly.

TESSA

Food before bloodshed. A man after my own heart.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Ma'am. What are you doing here?

Tessa turns to find herself face to face with BROOKESALINGER.

TESSA'S VO

Where do I start?

END ACT FOUR

CONTINUED

ACT FIVE

INT. BASEMENT - LOST & FOUND - DAY

BURT

You violated a panda habitat to get to Brooke Salinger and you didn't even mention our case?

TESSA

Didn't have to.

BURT

Why can't you be like every other (goddamed) detective and ask the substantive questions? Like "Hey, I'm Detective Cooper and I'm investigating the murder of your Ex boyfriend Aubrey Williams. Happen to know anything - like who did it?"

TESSA

Brooke didn't know Aubrey was in town. Think about it - he told the donut guy he was looking to lose more weight.

Tessa throws down the Homecoming picture of Aubrey and Brooke.

TESSA (CONT'D)

Obviously he was trying to get back to his high school pants size before contacting Brooke. He wanted to impress her.

BURT

You like telling stories? Write a book. Lesson number one, a Detective works with facts - of which you have none. You want my advice? Hand this off to the boys upstairs like you were supposed to.

TESSA

News flash. Brooke's wearing an engagement ring. Could be her fiance got wind of Aubrey and decided to get rid of the competition.

Impressed, but would die before showing it, Burt shuffles through paperwork at his desk. Nonchalant:

BURT

You happen to get a name?

CONTINUED

TESSA

I didn't want to tip Brooke off, send her running to the fiance so... I checked wedding registries online. Brooke Salinger popped up on Williams Sonoma. Her fiance's a guy named Paul Manning.
(saved the best for last)
He teaches second grade at Sandolin Elementary.

BURT

(interest piqued)
The school where our eyewitness put Aubrey Williams.

Tessa stands, grabs her things. Knows she's hooked him.

TESSA

I'll let you know how it goes.

BURT

(Fuck) that. I'm coming with.

Tessa smiles as Burt follows her out.

EXT. SANDOLIN ELEMENTARY - PLAYGROUND - DAY

Paul MANNING, 30's, answers Tessa and Burt's questions as kids run wild on the playground. Burt goes in for the by-the-book attack:

BURT

You own a gun?

PAUL

Excuse me?

TESSA

We're investigating a homicide that occurred in the neighborhood a few months back.

PAUL

Homicide? Who got murdered?

BURT

We ask the questions and you haven't answered mine.

PAUL

But I don't understand. Why would you think I had anything to do with it?

CONTINUED

BURT

You tell me.

PAUL

What? This is crazy. I've never touched a gun in my life. And I'd never own one - not with my daughter in the house.

TESSA

Daughter?

PAUL

I'm getting married next month but I consider my fiancée's daughter my own. I've known her since she was five.

Paul points to a beautiful ten-year-old girl playing handball. ELLA. She smiles, waves back.

PAUL (CONT'D)

That's Ella.

TESSA'S VO

Brooke ran away because she was pregnant. Aubrey, you have a daughter.

BURT

You've got a way of changing the subject. You wanna play games with me boy? Because I'll drag your lily white -

TESSA

We're done here.

Tessa turns and walks away. Off a flustered Burt --

INT. BASEMENT - LOST & FOUND - DAY

Tessa and Burt push into the basement.

BURT

I've heard of Good Cop, Bad Cop but that was the first time I ever saw Cop who leaves in the middle of questioning the one and only suspect.

TESSA

Paul Manning didn't do it.

BURT

How the hell would you know? We didn't even get an alibi.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

TESSA

It's a gut thing.

BURT

Your gut should be in the Smithsonian.

Tessa walks in circles. Looks behind a file cabinet, a desk.

TESSA

Where's the white board?

BURT

Don't have one.

*TESSA'S VO**Does no one watch television?*

In one move Tessa grabs a marker, walks to the wall and starts WRITING A LIST DIRECTLY ON IT

TESSA

Aubrey Williams was not a perv. Not a gang banger. Not a dealer.

BURT

You're disrespecting the basement.

TESSA

He wasn't killed for the money -- there were no pockets in his track suit meaning no wallet and they left the class ring and chain on the body. He was shot point blank. It was personal.

BURT

Like I said. Paul Manning.

TESSA

Tick Tock, Macey. We've got less than a day before the boys upstairs take this away from us and I'm not going to waste my time interviewing someone I believe is innocent!

BURT

OK. So maybe he owed money. Pissed the wrong people off.

TESSA

That's not like Aubrey. You're thinking linearly.

BURT

(blows)

Because that's how crimes get solved!

CONTINUED (2)

TESSA

(matches him)

Aubrey came to LA looking for Brooke.
What he found was a daughter he never
knew he had. The nail salon, the
track, Overeaters Anonymous, his
apartment...all of them are in a two
mile radius of Sandolin Elementary.

(finally)

This was about Ella.

INT. DENNY'S - NIGHT

Tessa sits across from Brooke Salinger. Dinner rush hums
around them but a bomb could go off in the next booth and
Brooke wouldn't flinch. She's numb.

BROOKE

Oh my God...not Aubrey.

*TESSA'S VO**When does this get easier?*

TESSA

You didn't know he was in town?

Brooke shakes her head slowly.

BROOKE

That's why you were at the zoo.

(yes)

It's funny. I think about Aubrey just
about every day. But when you called...
I assumed it was about Frankie.

TESSA

Frankie?

BROOKE

He's a friend of my daughter's. He was
expelled last week. Got caught buying
drugs a block from school.

TESSA

Was Ella with him?

BROOKE

Thank God no. I walked her home that day.

TESSA

You walk her home every day?

Off Brooke --

EXT. STREET - NEXT DAY - AFTERNOON

A block from Sandolin Elementary, Burt and Tessa talk on the move.

TESSA

Two days a week Brooke works the lunch shift and Ella walks home with friends.

BURT

Riveting. But we still don't have a (fucking) clue who capped our Vic!

Tessa stops, bends down and holds up a spent drug vial.

TESSA

Yeyo's not a one time thing. If Ella's friends were buying, chances are someone had a habit.

BURT

You think Ella was present for a buy?

TESSA

Aubrey was watching over her. He would have seen it go down. We need to find out who owns these corners.

BURT

Don't have to find out what I already know. 2243 Dayton Avenue's where they hang. But we can't call it in. They'll be serving snow cones in Hell before ESU shows up for a Lost & Found case.

Undaunted, Tessa surveys the street. Her eyes land on a GUY, 40's, walking toward them. Tessa smiles. The Guy smiles back. Tessa turns on the charm.

TESSA

(flirtatious)

Hey. I feel really silly but my cell phone ran out of juice. Could I borrow yours for just a sec? It's kinda important.

The Guy hands the phone to her. Tessa takes it and dials.

TESSA (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

(screams)

2243 Dayton Avenue!

(screams again)

Guns!

(MORE)

CONTINUED

TESSA (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
(screams again)

Help!

Tessa hangs up and hands the cell back to the speechless Guy with a smile that's pure honey.

TESSA (CONT'D)
Thanks. You're a lifesaver.

EXT. SKID ROW FLOP HOUSE - LATE DAY

Squad cars block the main entrance to a deserted building. Tessa and Burt watch as ESU, in full tac gear, rush inside.

BURT
Makes me madder than a (motherfucking)
hen to be stuck here on the sidelines.

ESU drags three young KIDS to waiting squad cars. Two look at their feet, but one looks up at Tessa Lost. Then looks away.

TESSA
Sometimes a little distance makes
things clearer.

INT. PRECINCT - INTEROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Tessa sits across the table from the kid she locked eyes with at the bust, SHIRAD, 17.

TESSA
My partner's next door talking to your
friends. They've got rap sheets longer
than the producer credits on *Law & Order*
-- armed robbery, rape, possession.
Your record's clean, you've got good
grades and a job... Tell me, Shirad.
How'd you get linked to such scum?

Nothing.

TESSA (CONT'D)
Here's where we play Let's Make A Deal.

Tessa slides Aubrey Williams' forensic sketch in front of Shirad.

TESSA (CONT'D)
His name was Aubrey Williams. He's got
a family who deserves to know what
happened to him. We checked, you've
got an alibi for the night he was
murdered. If you tell me what you
know, you walk out of here and into
your mother's arms. No harm, no foul.

CONTINUED

SHIRAD

My mom's here?

TESSA

Tell me what happened to Aubrey.

A long beat.

SHIRAD

They warned him.

TESSA

Who?

SHIRAD

T Bone and Shank.

(re: sketch)

He kept getting in their face, telling them to move on. T Bone said he was bad for business.

TESSA

So they took care of the problem?

SHIRAD

He went jogging every night at this track. They followed him home, capped him and dumped him in the creek.

TESSA

It's not enough. Just hearsay.

Shirad weighs his options. Finally:

SHIRAD

The gun's in T Bone's apartment. Check the grate in the kitchen.

(scared)

They can't know I was the one who told.

TESSA

Search warrant's standard procedure. I check the apartment and find out you did right by this, there's no reason for them to ever find out.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

The gravestone finally has a name -- AUBREY WILLIAMS, 1981-2007. A group has gathered including Aubrey's mother, Dale. A small hand reaches up and tugs on her skirt. Dale looks down to find Ella. Her granddaughter. Behind Ella stands Brooke.

CONTINUED

BROOKE

Say hello to your grandmother.

DALE

You must be Ella.

ELLA

Mom says I have my daddy's eyes.

Dale can't hold back the tears.

BROOKE

They said he'd stand outside of Ella's school. I can't believe he was so close and I didn't know...

Dale takes something from her purse and hands it to Brooke.
AUBREY'S CLASS RING

DALE

This belongs to you.
(waited years to say it)
Brooke, I never meant to --

BROOKE

You were protecting your child. I would have done the same thing.

Brooke takes Dale's hand.

Removed from the group, Tessa stands with Burt and Anthony. They watch as Dale, Brooke, and Ella stand. Together.

TESSA

Aubrey never got to meet his daughter.

BURT

Hell the guy was 26, there are a lot of things he never got to do.

ANTHONY

Most people would have found his name and left it at that. You did good by Marathon Man.

BURT

Let's face it campers, in life there are Dealers and there are Dwellers.

TESSA

Really. Which one are you?

BURT

A drinker.

CONTINUED (2)

Tessa's cell rings. She check her caller ID.

TESSA
Lieutenant Hobbs.

BURT
It's been something working with you
Detective Cooper.

TESSA
(touched)
Ah, Burt...

BURT
Didn't say what I meant by something.

Emotion averted, Burt heads back to the Crown Vic. Anthony follows. Tessa takes a deep breath.

TESSA'S VO
*Be gracious. Thank him for the opportunity
in Lost & Found. Say how you won't forget
what you learned now that you're back
upstairs. Yadda, yadda, yadda.*

TESSA
(into phone)
Detective Cooper.

LIEUTENANT HOBBS (ON PHONE)
Damn, I missed my exit.

TESSA
That's one hell of a welcome back.

LIEUTENANT HOBBS (ON PHONE)
You didn't think I'd bring you back
upstairs for this? Your investigative
skills were never in question - your
methods were. Still are. Besides, I
just spoke with your shrink, Max
Burroughs. Smart guy. He's not ready
to sign off on you yet.

TESSA'S VO
Bastard.

LIEUTENANT HOBBS (ON PHONE)
Says he's going to need to see a lot
more of you.

TESSA'S VO
Oh...really?

CONTINUED (3)

LIEUTENANT HOBBS (ON PHONE)

I'm about to turn into a parking garage
and we might get --

Line goes dead.

TESSA'S VO (OVER-LAP)

So I'm stuck in the basement.

INT. BASEMENT - LOST & FOUND - DAY

Tessa at her desk. Dog asleep at her feet. In the background,
Burt plays poker with the boys. In a blatant mockery of every
bad television voice over Tessa brings us home:

TESSA'S VO

*I'm not going to lie, I was pissed at
first. Then I realized Anthony was
right. I am good at this. I guess
sometimes the thing you need the most
is the thing you...*

Tessa drops her pen.

TESSA'S VO (CONT'D)

Damn it!

She bends over, grabs the pen from the floor, then sits back
up to find... A BRAND SPANKING NEW UID FILE IN HER IN BOX.

TESSA

OK. Who put this here?

The boys don't bother looking up, just shake their heads at the
new girl. And Tessa? What do you expect, she opens the file --

TESSA'S VO

OK...

(as always)

Who am I?

CUT TO BLACK.

END PILOT