

THE QUICKENING

A Pilot

by

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EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD, LOS ANGELES - DUSK

MAGGIE BIRD, 32 and naked but for a black plastic garbage bag worn as a dress, runs for her life through this middle-class, residential neighborhood. Her terror is palpable. We are RIGHT WITH HER, close on her dirty, dishevelled face, so close we hear her quickened breath along with the sound of pursuing helicopters, sirens, men shouting after her, their shadows -- long and menacing -- seem to be closing in. She is focussed; her body is taut, her eyes bright and alert, like a tiger on the plains of Africa. In addition to the sounds of her pursuers, a terrible clicking noise grows louder.

WIDER, we see the neighborhood is preparing for Christmas, every other house has some decor. Maggie spots a house with a life-sized, benevolent Santa and elves. An ELDERLY MAN is securing them on the lawn.

MAGGIE'S POV: lights seem to beckon and sparkle. HEAR celestial Christmas music from inside. ZOOM IN on the front door: it has been left open. The door appears to widen, inviting her in. Without hesitation she runs inside...

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Maggie leans against the door, locking it behind her, feeling somewhat safer in here. Her eyes land on:

A huge platter of Christmas cookies, the SPARKLES on the cookies seem EXTRA BRIGHT.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As the front door slams behind her, the street is suddenly ordinary and harmless. The elderly man stands staring at the front door, frightened.

INT. HOUSE - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

CLOSE ON: THE COOKIE PLATTER - only red cookies left.

Maggie is trembling, hyperventilating as two uniform cops, FALCHUK and JABLON, walk in the front door, the elderly man looking nervously on.

MAGGIE

Call Swan! Please! Just call Swan!

Falchuk moves towards her.

FALCHUK

Calm down, lady, nobody's gonna hurt you...

Quick as lightening, Maggie ducks under the table and from there, in a very authoritative voice:

MAGGIE

I am not coming out until you call
Detective Swan at the Northeast
Division and tell him the Masons
are trying to kill me.

EXT. HOUSE - LATER

An unmarked police car screeches up, jumping out is DETECTIVE BILLY SWAN. He's in his 20's, black, with a soft, easy charm that masks a darker, more conflicted soul. He starts towards the house.

INT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE on Swan, crouching by the table as Maggie stares at him, wanting to cry with relief at the sight of him.

MAGGIE

(as if he'd know about it)
They put a poison virus in my
computer, it got into everything --
tell the man I'm sorry I ate all
his green cookies, but the red ones
were poisoned, he should throw them
away...

It's clear from his face he knows her well. He's barely able to mask his shock and horror at seeing her like this...

SWAN

What the hell's goin' on here,
baby? What happened to you?

EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie has a blanket around her as Swan leads her to his car. A helicopter circles above, she looks up, then attaches herself to him, clinging like a frightened baby animal.

He pulls her gently off.

SWAN

Come on, baby, I gotta do this.

See the look of betrayal on Maggie's face....steel clamps over her flesh, the handcuffs lock in place....Maggie's mouth comes down on Swan's arm, he screams in pain.

INT. SWAN'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie sits in the back completely terrified as the car pulls out and Swan's voice is overheard:

SWAN'S VOICE

I'm here at 353 Pacific Terrace,
subject is subdued, seems to be
suffering delusions, somethin'
about the Masons, we're headed to
County now. Subject, is, uh...

(hesitates, then)

Detective Maggie Bird from the
Northeast Division.

He looks down at his bite. She left a pretty good impression.

SMASH TO TITLES

ACT ONE

In the black hear:

MALE VOICE

What month is it?

MAGGIE'S VOICE

December.

INT. PSYCH WARD - MAGGIE'S ROOM - DAY

We slowly fade in as if coming back to life from the dead. Maggie -- in a hospital gown and paper scuffies -- sits on the edge of a bed. She's been medicated, she's no longer hallucinating but she's a bit woozy and has a serious case of cotton mouth. A ROOMMATE is curled up in a fetal position in the other bed.

Sitting in a chair across from Maggie is DR. NOAH BRACHMAN, in his late 20's; he is at the beginning of his healing journey -- full of intelligence and hope. He continues his evaluation of Maggie.

BRACHMAN

And who is the president?

MAGGIE

Hilary.

He looks up for a moment, realizes she knows full well that she's made a joke. See the beginnings of a smile, then:

BRACHMAN

Good. Now I'd like to ask you about the days leading up to this episode.

MAGGIE

I was working a case, this hockey player for the L.A. Kings was shot at a club in Silverlake, turned out it was a case of mistaken identity, his brother ran a meth lab out in Palmdale...

BRACHMAN

So you're a...

MAGGIE

A homicide detective. The Judas who brought me in didn't tell you that?

Brachman scans his notes. He's surprised and a little impressed in spite of himself.

BRACHMAN

You're right, he did.

(looking back up)

I'm going to list some symptoms and I'd like you to say yes or no, elaborate if you like.

(off her nod)

In the last few days, have you been extra talkative, talking faster -- have others asked her to slow down or explain yourself? Have you felt more agitated, irritable, were your thoughts moving too quickly to keep track of? Were you more sexually active? How about spending money in a reckless fashion...?

Maggie nods yes to all of it.

BRACHMAN (CONT'D)

What about strange sounds or visions that other people probably didn't hear or see?

MAGGIE

(there is some humor here)

Well I was handcuffed and driven to a lock-down facility, rendered unconscious with something you wouldn't mistake for fairy-dust and told I couldn't get out for 72 hours. Somebody must think I'm crazy...

INT. SARAH'S CAR - SILVERLAKE - FOUR DAYS LATER

Maggie's best friend, SARAH McCLUSKY, rounds a hairpin curve in the hills of Silverlake. Maggie's in the passenger seat.

SARAH

I think everyone in the world feels insane these days, everyone I know is on some kind of anti-crazy drug.

MAGGIE

You aren't.

SARAH

Sweetheart, Al's on Lexapro. And they'll probably want to put Cody on Ritalin for ADD when he gets to first grade.

She pulls up in front of Maggie's house, a tiny A-frame that hangs precipitously off a hill.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You've always been a little ahead of the curve...

INT. PSYCH WARD - MAGGIE'S ROOM - DAY - EARLIER

MAGGIE

Bipolar one disorder...?

She repeats his words as if a waiter had suggested a special which she was free to turn down. It's not for her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

That's over-dramatic. I was under a lot of stress on this last case, I didn't sleep for four nights, there was a high speed chase on the 14 that ended in gunfire -- I think it'd make more sense to call it a nervous breakdown.

Dr. Brachman pauses, then with great compassion:

BRACHMAN

A nervous breakdown doesn't normally involve delusions about saving the world from the evil cult of Masons who want to kill you by poisoning your clothing.

It's shocking to hear it repeated to her in this context.

MAGGIE

A day ago that seemed very real.

(beat)

Speaking of clothing. This standard-issue psych-ward fashion is seriously counter-intuitive. Okay it's not *poisonous*, but the minute I put it on, I right away felt crazier. Someone should do a study on that.

BRACHMAN

(smiling slightly)

Might I remind you that when you arrived here, you weren't wearing any clothing at all...

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

A bachelorette pad revealing Maggie's interest in just about everything. Minimalism is not in play here. As Maggie and Sarah come through the door, they are greeted with the evidence of a massive shopping spree. Boxes from Amazon.com, department store shopping bags, clothing in garment bags, half opened boxes of shoes and fancy underwear, a random sculpture, a new saddle...

RUBY, the Abyssinian, lies perched on the table, sharing space with Coke cans, Starbucks containers, empty wine bottles, empty Twizzler boxes, filled writing pads, magazines and eight or ten open books -- from physics to building-your-own-dome to horse-training to a number of detective novels.

SARAH

(gently, surveying)

So did he put you on medication?

INT. PSYCH WARD - MAGGIE'S ROOM - DAY - EARLIER

MAGGIE

Indefinitely? What if I take it for now, till I learn how to eliminate stress. What are all the stress causing things?

BRACHMAN

Sugar, alcohol, drugs, caffeine, too little sleep, too little food, too much sugar, too much drama -- it all feeds into your brain chemistry.

(beat)

But you're also just hard-wired for stress.

INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - SUNSET

An early winter sunset in the canyon. Maggie, in pajamas, puts cat food in Ruby's bowl. Sarah finishes putting fresh sheets on Maggie's bed.

SARAH

You know if we're getting serious about stress, how about a moratorium on Swan? Just for today?

She picks up her coat. Maggie crawls under the covers.

MAGGIE
He's got a new girlfriend, anyway.

SARAH
Good.

MAGGIE
Thank you Sally Mac....

SARAH
(kissing her head)
I'll check in tomorrow.

And she leaves. As the door shuts, Maggie reaches for the phone, dials. After the beep:

MAGGIE
God's honest truth, I'm glad you never showed. The bin is not for sissies, you're way too big a wimp.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. SWAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

REGINA, a black beauty, makes dinner for Swan.

MAGGIE'S VOICE
Here's something amazing. According to boy-wonder shrink, when you're under stress your body produces *adrenaline*. And one of the by-products of adrenaline is called *adrenochrome* and it is, get this -- *hallucinogenic!*

It's like Maggie's in the room. Regina looks over at Swan, who channel surfs as if this isn't happening.

MAGGIE'S VOICE (CONT'D)
So there's a theory that crazy people are simply missing the enzyme which neutralizes adrenochrome. That means everyone's just an enzyme away from being crazy! Is that insane? Anyway, a call would be nice -- not mandatory but nice. Did I bite you by the way?

Maggie hangs up wishing she hadn't said all that. Crawls under the covers. Remembers her meds, which are bedside; she downs one with water.

REGINA
(as casually as possible)
How long were you two married?

SWAN
I told you. I do not consider seven weeks a marriage. It was a, you know -- baby, we'd been workin' this case, we were *loaded*, we drove to Vegas -- the whole thing was a serious *mistake*.

REGINA
But what I don't get is, why was it a mistake?
(she wants to know)
Why aren't you two together? You obviously have a genuine connection.

SWAN
Sugar, I am not exactly a domesticated animal, and she... well, the girl's clueless about bein' a wife. It was pitiful, like the blind leadin' the blind.
(beat)
I need someone like you, not some crazy fool like her. Come over here...

It's hard to know whom he's trying to convince, himself or Regina...

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Curtains are closed. Ruby sleeps curled above Maggie's head on the pillow. Maggie opens her eyes and tries to orient herself. She sits up slowly. She reaches over and takes a pill with a glass of water.

After a beat she rises and walks to the drapes and throws them open. Light pours in the sliding glass doors like an assault.

She walks to the front door and picks up four newspapers.

MAGGIE
(looking at the papers)
We missed Christmas, Ruby.

LATER

Still in pajamas, Maggie's in a chair on the phone.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

But it *is* a medical issue.
 'Engaging in unrestrained spending
 sprees' is in the formal diagnostic
 text of bipolar symptomatology....I
 don't want a Neiman Marcus store
 credit, I need a refund -- would a
 note from my shrink help?....Thank
 you, *Camilla*.

She clicks off in defeat. Sits there, still holding the phone
 in an emotional and physical paralysis, staring out...

IN THE SHOWER

Maggie stand still as the water pours over her and revives
 her...

IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR

She's dressed, staring at herself. She looks like she feels:
 tired, pale, not herself.

LATER

She unzips a Neiman Marcus garment bag, and pulls out a
 fabulous LEATHER TRENCH COAT from her shopping spree.

MAGGIE

If you can't lose it, use it.

She looks at the price tag and winces, then puts it on
 anyway.

EXT. CRIME SCENE, PARKING LOT - DAY

Maggie, dressed for success and looking like a million bucks,
 carries a huge shopping bag as she steps past the yellow tape
 with all the bravado she can muster.

It's a bloody crime scene. Maggie watches, nonplussed by the
 gore as they lift the dead guy out of the car and onto a
 stretcher -- most of his brains are still inside the car.
 Even as they work, people greet her. It's clear they're fond
 of her.

COP

Looking good, Bird...

FEMALE EMT

Nice to see you back sister...

MAGGIE

You seen the boss?

The FEMALE EMT nods "over there," Maggie's eyes follow the direction...

LIEUTENANT ED ERLICH is chatting with some female lookie-loos. In his 40's, he's hard-working and, in his own mind, seriously under-appreciated. Maggie approaches...

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

How's it going, boss...

He looks up. He was enjoying the female attention, Maggie's arrival causes a flicker of irritation.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Hey your tech over there is using one of those crappy cheap brushes, he oughta use the fiberglass kind so he doesn't cut the prints...

(holds out the bag)

Merry Christmas, there's a book on dinosaurs for little Eddie, that ice cream maker Josie was talking about and something for you too.

He takes the bag, it's awkward for him.

ERLICH

You look good, Bird...

(re: the gift)

Thanks, by the way...

MAGGIE

So I know I'm a pain in the ass, showing up at a crime scene, but if Mohammed won't come to the mountain then --

He instinctively guides her away from the action.

ERLICH

It's been busy. We've had three new homicides -- it's the holiday crime spike...

MAGGIE

I'm just anxious to get back to work.

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Got my issues under control, the shrink's signed off, everyone agrees, the best thing for me is to be back on the job...

He looks everywhere but at her, trying to find the words.
Finally:

ERLICH

I'm sure it is. But it's not about that, it's about what's good for everyone else...

MAGGIE

What does that mean?

(beat)

I am a great goddamn detective.
You can't tell me...

(off his silence)

I don't believe this -- look me in the eye and tell me I'm a lousy detective!

ERLICH

You're a brilliant detective. But the thing that makes you brilliant is the same thing that makes you a lousy officer of the peace -- you're obsessed. A cop needs to be detached, risk averse, procedure-oriented. You're the opposite, Maggie, you put everyone around you at risk. It's not healthy for my men.

MAGGIE

It was a bad month. Critical mass. I didn't realize what the stress was doing to me--

ERLICH

You never know what the stress is doing to you! You know why? Cause you're so stressed out you can't hear anything anyone says. You can't listen.

(beat)

You'll work R & I.

MAGGIE

No!

ERLICH

Then you're on the rubber gun
squad.

MAGGIE

I'm a homicide detective, I can't
work a desk!

He takes a deep breath, then with the heaviest of hearts:

ERLICH

How're you gonna work a homicide
case when your gun is missing? *You*
think I'm gonna issue you a new
one?

(off her humiliation)

Take some time off. Take a month.
Decide what you want to do.

Devastated, she pulls herself together, turns and walks away.

INT. STRIPPER BAR IN KOREATOWN - DAY

Happy hour. When lonely guys stop by on their way home from work looking for happiness in a foul-smelling establishment with a bad sound system and girls on the pole who don't even pretend to care. GABE DESIDERIO sits at the bar, nursing his Scotch, facing the door. Gabe is an ex-cop in his 40's who has committed to keeping his life trouble free since he dodged a bullet five years ago. He squints as he looks up...

Someone is walking right at him, unrecognizable in the dark, back-lit from the tiny bit of light from the outside.

It's Maggie. She slides in on the stool next to him.

MAGGIE

You and Sandy hook up or is she
somewhere out there cheating on
you?

Gabe doesn't bite. She takes her sunglasses off, squints into the dark cave that is this place.

A stripper, SANDY, is giving some guy a lap dance at a table several yards away.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Aw, don't worry. She loves you
best.

GABE

What's up, Maggie?

MAGGIE

Hey, there's something we've never discussed. What does Buddha say about strip clubs?

GABE

He says that everything is divine, it's all in the perception of the perceiver.

MAGGIE

You have no idea how comforting it is that some things never change. If it's five on Friday, Gabe's got his Johnny Walker neat and he's waiting on the divine Miss Sandy to throw him a bone. So to speak.

GABE

After all you been through you still want to come in here and bust my balls...?

MAX the bartender moves in...

MAX

Hey detective, whatcha drinkin'?

MAGGIE

Nothing today, Max.

He moves off. She's working up the courage to say something.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Thanks for checking on Ruby...

GABE

Glad to be of help.

MAGGIE

(out of the blue)

So Gabe. I've never asked you, when you left the job, you never looked back, did you? Never regretted it?

To say Gabe does not enjoy touchy-feely conversations is an understatement, but he recognizes an urgency.

GABE

Maybe most guys would've felt lucky to have their partner take a bullet for them. Me, I just couldn't get past it.

MAGGIE

Why? I was fine. Wanna see my scar?

GABE

No I do not. Quit asking.

(beat)

You just sailed right on like nothing ever happened. I never got over thinking I'd cheated death.

(beat)

Probably would've been easier if the bloody thing had hit me.

MAGGIE

I can't believe you never told me this.

He turns to his Scotch, takes a nice big sip.

GABE

I don't want to defend the peace. I just want to live in peace. And hopefully die in peace.

Maggie needs to talk. She is about to say something when Sandy approaches...

GABE (CONT'D)

(his face lighting up)

How you doin', beautiful?

SANDY

My allergies are wicked.

(sees Maggie)

Hey lady...

MAGGIE

Hey Sandy -- I just need one more minute with him, then he's all yours...

(finally she gets it out)

So Erlich said it was the rubber gun squad or nothing. Can you believe that?

This lands for Gabe. He knows how she feels about her work.

GABE

What're you gonna do?

MAGGIE

Can I work for you? I'll get a lawyer and fight this...

GABE

I can lend you a few grand...

MAGGIE

It's gotta be a job, I can't stand being bored, I'll end up back in the bin.

GABE

Yeah, but that's what it'd be -- boring. Background checks, process serving, spying on cheaters. Not for you, Maggie.

MAGGIE

I'll find a way to make it interesting...

GABE

(frustrated)

I don't want it interesting --

Sandy's getting antsy.

SANDY

She's been screwed over by 'the man.' She was your partner. Give her a job.

(off Gabe's look)

Okay, I'll butt out...

Sandy walks away. Gabe is feeling cornered by Maggie and it's threatening his time with Sandy. He blurts it out.

GABE

It'd be like the job all over again!

MAGGIE

What the hell's so bad about that?

GABE

I just... I put my time in, now I like things the way I like 'em.

Maggie just wants to lay down and cry.

MAGGIE

You know what that bullet did? *The bullet that missed you?* Turned you into an old man.

She turns and walks away.

EXT. VASQUEZ ROCKS - DAY

High desert. Three horses gallop up a hill. Clumps of dirt fly under racing hooves. Maggie, Sarah and her husband, AL are the riders. Maggie's horse Stormy is acting up, rearing, shaking her head, she's out of control.

MAGGIE
Settle down! Stormy!
(yelling)
Can we stop a second...?

MOMENTS LATER

They have all dismounted. Maggie is upset.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
She's totally testing me!

AL
Take a break, check out the view...

Which is beautiful. Red rocks, sagebrush, a virgin landscape.

SARAH
Are you okay?

MAGGIE
No. I'm uncoordinated from these
meds. Stormy's pissed, she's like
'what the hell happened to you???'

Al passes the flask.

AL
Take the edge off...

MAGGIE
Can't.

Sarah notices Maggie fighting tears of frustration...

SARAH
It's gonna be okay, it takes time.

MAGGIE
Easy for you to say.

STORMY stomps her feet, shakes her head, impatient, gorgeous....

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Settle down! She's just like me --
can't stand it any way but hers.

SARAH

She's more like your illness. Gotta show her who's boss or she'll kill you.

MAGGIE

Is that your subtle way of saying take my meds even if I hate them?

SARAH

(smiling and nodding)
Wasn't meant to be subtle.

Maggie's cell phone rings. She reaches into her pocket.

MAGGIE

Hello?...Hi Gabe....I'm on the top of a mountain.

A 360 degree panorama as we HEAR:

GABE'S VOICE

Her name's Delilah Leondis.

INT. GABE DESIDERIO'S HOME/OFFICE - KOREATOWN - DAY

A classic bungalow with a Zen aesthetic, no clutter. He works out of the front two rooms. He has Maggie on speakerphone.

GABE

She's had several break-ins which she reported to the authorities -- which, just to remind you, we are not. We've been hired to secure her doors and windows and if she doesn't answer then just come on back to the office.

As he talks he studies an old photo. CLOSE ON PHOTO of Gabe and Maggie, back when they were partners: they're posed in front of their squad car in uniform, young and cocky.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. DELILAH LEONDIS' APARTMENT - FAIRFAX DISTRICT - DAY

Maggie is on her cell at the front door of a lower unit in a shabby six-plex.

MAGGIE

Well she isn't answering. What's her name again? -- my memory's a sieve with these meds.

Impatient, Maggie peers in the front window to see if she can see anything. Blinds are drawn, she can't quite see in.

GABE
Delilah Leondis.

His 40-ish secretary, THERESA, puts down a Japanese teapot and cup, mouthing to him that it's hot.

MAGGIE
Delilah? Isn't she that cop groupie? Yeah, Delilah Leondis! She's a badge bunny.

Maggie walks around to a side window, *it is in her blood*.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
She hung around the Beef & Ale. Did you fool around with her back when you had a badge?

GABE
No, but I knew her. Honestly she seemed like a paranoid nut in the consultation.

MAGGIE
Paranoiac is a noun. Someone who is paranoid.

Gabe shakes his head, remembering how she can get.

GABE
That's what I said.

MAGGIE'S POV: a chair has been turned over.

MAGGIE
(peering in)
No, you called her a paranoiac nut. She's either a nutty paranoiac or a paranoid nut.
(then)
Looks like there's been some excitement inside.

He hears that really intense curiosity in her tone.

GABE
That's none of our business.

In the meantime, she's found the key under a POTTED CACTUS and she's moving slowly inside...

INT. DELILAH'S STUDIO APARTMENT

She stops in the service porch, deciding which way to go...

GABE

Maggie?

He hears a small gasp.

GABE (CONT'D)

What? What's going on, Maggie?

Maggie's standing into the bathroom, staring at the partially-dressed body of DELILAH in the tub. She is covered in stab wounds, the water is bloody. Her eyes stare up at Maggie, a horrific and haunting sight, even to a homicide detective.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. DELILAH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Maggie leans in the tub, inspecting the body. She uses her cellphone to take photos of the dead girl. Her face, her stab wounds. She lifts the arms and takes a picture of the broken acrylic nails...

INT. GABE DESIDERIO'S HOME/OFFICE

Gabe dials, listens, he's upset.

GABE

Now I can't get her...

He hangs up, see him dial 911.

INT. DELILAH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Maggie now moves around apartment, looking closely at everything, she talks into her cellphone. In between comments she takes it away from her ear, we see she is using as a recording device.

MAGGIE

I'm at the Leondis home, victim has been stabbed thirteen times. Murder was fuelled by rage, nothing cold-blooded about it. Must've been a struggle...

She arrives at the desk. She spots a flyer, pinned to the bulletin board which is decorated in...

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Rainbows and kittens suggest what?
Adolescent outlook? Girlish
optimism?

(reading the list)

'To do: mani-pedi, 40-watt bulbs, e-mail Yolanda re Ladies Who Love Lawmen calender idea: Badgebunny@aol.com.'

There is a loud knock.

COP'S VOICE

Open up, it's the police...

She looks up, busted...

EXT. DELILAH'S APARTMENT COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Gabe comes racing up the walk as the cops bang on the front door.

GABE
Hey fellas...

COP
Open up or we'll...

Maggie opens the front door and walks out.

MAGGIE
Easy guys, easy. Don't get your
Sean Jeans in a twist, your crime
scene is pristine and beautiful...

COP
Detective Bird? You workin'
Hollywood now?

MAGGIE
Nope, I'm working for him.

The cop looks at Gabe.

COP
She's working for you?

Before Gabe can speak:

MAGGIE
I was here at the client's request,
checking vulnerable points of entry
when I discovered the body...

COP
Who let you in?

MAGGIE
(looking at Gabe, forcing
him to support the lie)
She told us where the key was -- in
case she wasn't home.
(like the cop's stupid)
I was here *checking the vulnerable
points of entry*, remember?

She steps past them and glances at Gabe, who is aggravated,
and we hear a sweet, breathy voice:

FEMALE VOICE

Men have forgotten how to be men,
it's common knowledge.

CLOSE ON DELILAH

Talking to the video camera. She is an attractive 30-ish woman who assumes men are crazy for her -- it gives her a strange, childlike quality that seems tragically misguided in light of her murder.

DELILAH

You guys're the only real men left -
- I still consider you a lawman,
Gabe. Making a woman feel safe is
the sexiest thing a man can do.

We are...

INT. GABE'S FRONT ROOM - NEW YEAR'S EVE NIGHT

Maggie watches Delilah on the TV, her video consultation.

DELILAH (CONT'D)

Must be some kinda karma on my
part, I guess. I've balled over 200
cops and I'm the one who's scared
for my life --

GABE'S VOICE (O.C.)

What's been making you scared?

Maggie is soaking her in. Theresa walks up, watches from a distance.

DELILAH

Someone's been breaking in and
doing weird things, like they
ripped up a bouquet of roses my
detective brought over, he grew
them, he's such a little gem -- I
think we're getting serious, in
fact. Although there's *so many*
hotties...

MAGGIE

She just lays it out. No apology. I
am who I am. I like that.

Theresa hasn't embraced the idea of Maggie working here, and she certainly hasn't embraced Delilah as a role model.

THERESA

They call that a sociopath, someone who can't distinguish right from wrong.

MAGGIE

Harsh, Theresa. Slut, maybe, but sociopath?

She can't resist busting Theresa.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I say raise a glass to the bad girls, they keep the world honest. I mean, without them, how would all the virtuous folk measure their virtue?

Theresa gives her an icy look.

THERESA

Don't forget to put the video consult back in the client file.

MAGGIE

Gabe loves his files.

THERESA

He's very thorough, I'd advise you to embrace it...

Theresa leaves, passing Gabe as he enters from the back. He's freshly showered and shaved, he's putting on his jacket, checking his keys.

GABE

Happy New Year, Theresa...

As she leaves, we sense there's been an upset in Theresa's universe with the advent of Maggie.

THERESA

Enjoy yourselves...

Unconscious of this, he turns to Maggie.

GABE

Ready?

Maggie is taking the video out of the VCR.

GABE (CONT'D)

Don't forget to put the video consult back in the client file.

Maggie's had it with the "put the video consult back in the client file" routine.

MAGGIE

What's with you guys, I'm not ten!

GABE

I'll be in the car.

Gabe leaves. Maggie thinks, then puts the video in her bag.

Hear a group chant: "Eight, seven, six..."

CUT TO:

EXT. MARTINEZ HOUSE - SANTA CLARITA - NIGHT

ON A TV SCREEN: THE BALL IN TIMES SQUARE DROPS. It's New Year's Eve around the firepit in the mostly concrete backyard of a tract house: a party mostly made up of a dozen or so Northeast Division cops and their wives. The TV has been wheeled outside. Everyone is bundled up.

CAMERA moves with the host, SGT. JOE MARTINEZ and his wife GLORIA as they fill everyone's plastic Champagne flutes: we see DET. PETE MURPHY, a good-looking kid, and his GIRLFRIEND; chubby DET. BOBBY FLECK and his wife HONEY, Lt. Erlich and his wife JOSIE, Det. Billy Swan and Regina; Gabe, adding wood to the fire...

Maggie declines Champagne as the ball hits the gong and the guests blow noisemakers, toss some confetti. The kissing of couples begins. Her eyes meet Swan's across the fire...

As the festivities are dying down, Maggie takes her Perrier and hits it with a stick.

MAGGIE

Everyone? Can I take one second of your time before we eat? I'd like to say something.

Everyone looks to her, they want to hear what she's got on her mind. These people have known her a long time.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

(raising her Perrier bottle)

Some of you have been very sweet and called, some of you have been maybe a little uncomfortable, not sure what was expected, so I wanted to make it official.

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I am o-kay -- maybe just a little jet-lagged, it's a long trip to the moon and back...

(as people laugh)

The future's a little undecided at the moment, but, uh...,

Glancing nervously at a stern-visaged Erlich...

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Our Gabe here's been kind enough to give me a job to tide me over, and in the meantime, I'm just grateful to be alive and well and celebrating with you guys, you're like my family.

(beat)

Here's to a great year!

There is plenty of affection for her in the group as they toast her. Regina looks over at Swan to check his reaction.

TIME CUT TO:

BOBBY FLECK comes up with a plate of tamales for himself and Honey, with two forks. Maggie and Honey are next to each other, talking.

FLECK

Gloria made some new kinda sauce this year.

Maggie looks up.

MAGGIE

Hey Bobby, have you heard anything about this badge bunny case over in Hollywood? Delilah Leondis? Do they like anyone?

FLECK

Oh yeah, you were the one who found the body. Nah.

MAGGIE

Some cases just get to you --

Honey reaches up to the plate and takes one of the forks.

FLECK

Jesus, woman, where's your gloves?

Honey looks up at him, guilty. He hands the plate to Maggie to hold, takes out a pair from his jacket.

FLECK (CONT'D)
Put these on.

Honey does what Bobby says. Bobby hands the plate to Maggie.

FLECK (CONT'D)
Take that, I'll get more.

He leaves.

MAGGIE
I never knew Bobby was such a gentleman.

HONEY
He's coming around.

MAGGIE
What's your secret, lady?

HONEY
Don't laugh...

MAGGIE
Never.

HONEY
Everything changed when we started going to mass and praying together.

MAGGIE
Why would I laugh? Whatever works.
(then)
I envy you that faith.

HONEY
I wish it for you, Maggie. If you ever want to come to church with me and Bobby...

MAGGIE
It's weird, Honey. When I was full on crazy, god seemed very close by. I think we even spoke. But now... he seems to have lost interest in me. Or vice versa.

HONEY
You know my first cousin's a bipolar. I always thought she was the most interesting one in the family.

Honey means well, but Maggie is hit with a wave of loneliness.

INT. MARTINEZ HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

ON A PHOTO OR SEVERAL: The gang here tonight, without spouses, when they were younger, around a squad car. Maggie, Swan, Erlich, Fleck, Martinez, et al.

Reveal Maggie at the sink, rifling for her pills. As she pulls them out, a soft knock, then the door opens, it's Swan. She puts the pills back in her purse.

He locks the door. He's guilty.

SWAN

I didn't think you'd be here tonight or I woulda warned you she was coming.

MAGGIE

I'm okay.

SWAN

She moved in, that's why I've been out of touch.

MAGGIE

It was you and me last New Year's. Remember out behind the shed?

SWAN

Don't do that.

MAGGIE

I get it. Everyone's trying to be good. Bobby and Honey, you and Regina...

(sorry she said that)

You're doing the right thing. You need someone like Regina.

(breaking down)

Oh man, I swore I wouldn't do this.

Swan can't deal with tears. He holds out toilet tissue.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

It's hard. Losing everything at once, the job, my mind, you for real. Why can't it all go back to the way it was a year ago? Remember standing in Cupid's Chapel, laughing and crying? I felt so invincible...

SWAN

Don't go there, baby...

To distract her as much as anything else, he begins kissing her tears. He kisses her face, he kisses her mouth. He lifts her onto the sink. His hand reaches between her legs. Maggie tries to get into it but she can't. She pulls back a bit.

MAGGIE

You know, it's these meds, I'm not too sexy right now...

He pulls away frustrated, not sure what to do next.

SWAN

Prob'ly for the best...

MAGGIE

I'm going to call the doctor, maybe there's a different kind...

He doesn't know what to say...

SWAN

Yeah, maybe you wanna ask him about that...

The encounter seems to be fizzling...

SWAN (CONT'D)

Y'okay?

MAGGIE

I'm fine.

SWAN

I better get back...

Swan opens the door, leaving her sitting on the sink at an all-time low. She reaches around for her pills, looks at them. Puts them back in her purse.

INT. GABE'S CAR - NIGHT

Maggie stares out into the blackness. Gabe wants to say something. Finally he speaks.

GABE

I was proud of you tonight. Took a lot of guts to show up and keep your head up.

She turns around and looks at him.

MAGGIE

Well thank you.

GABE

Couldn't have been easy.

MAGGIE

'Course I had to go and wreck it all by sobbing and making out with Swan in the bathroom. I have no sex drive anymore, it's so weird.

We see her words slice him. Maggie has no idea.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

So Murphy told me homicide in Hollywood likes a guy for Delilah's murder. Some neighbor who worked on her car.

GABE

You spend the evening trying to solve Hollywood's case?

MAGGIE

It just makes no sense, she was in the tub, how would he get in -- I can't imagine she'd give him a key.

(beat)

You know, honestly, I don't trust those guys in Hollywood homicide, they're a badly run division, and not a brain in the bunch. Know what I mean?

(off Gabe's taciturn face)

It's just conversation.

GABE

I'd rather converse about something else. Better yet, how about a little silence.

As the car races into the night...

EXT. GABE'S HOUSE - SAME NIGHT

The car pulls up, it's clear they haven't spoken. Gabe turns off the ignition. As Maggie starts out, he stops her.

GABE

Hang on, Joan of Arc, Now I've got something to say.

She sits back, dreading it.

GABE (CONT'D)

I owe you for the rest of this lifetime. You saved my life, that's the unwritten code and you know I'm good for it. I saved your ass when the 'brilliant war correspondent' nearly bashed your face in, I drove to Thousand Oaks when you had the hang-gliding accident, I also bailed you out of that Mexican jail when you were driving on the wrong side of the street being chased by the drug lord, -- remember that?

MAGGIE

(beginning to realize some of these things)

I think he was a hallucination...

GABE

Didn't make my job any easier.

(beat)

If I don't have a good relationship with the cops, I don't have a business. Your very first day you put that in jeopardy.

She looks at him -- he is serious.

GABE (CONT'D)

That's not gonna work, Maggie.

MAGGIE'S VOICE

Hi, Dr. Brachman, Happy New Year...

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

ON MAGGIE'S HAIR upside-down over her head -- she stands up and tosses it back so it looks like a wild mane; we see she's in a sexy outfit. QUICK CUTS as she applies smoky eyes, vampish lipstick, it doesn't seem characteristic of her.

MAGGIE'S VOICE (CONT'D)

I'm calling because I, ah, well, long story short I can't deal with the meds -- I was hoping we could talk about different ones or a lower dose. It's been two days without them and I'm totally fine, let's discuss at my next appointment.

INT. YOLANDA'S CONDO - VALLEY - NIGHT

Enya-type music, we are CLOSE on YOLANDA REBOSO, in her 30's.

YOLANDA

She wouldn't even tolerate the term
'badge bunny.' She called us
"Ladies Who Love Lawmen."

There is a blown-up photo of DELILAH, enshrined with flowers and candles. People sit in a circle, women and men of the badge. Maggie is there, dolled up as in the previous scene.

YOLANDA (CONT'D)

Delilah taught me about choosing
who you love, not being chosen. She
taught me pride in who I am and I
will never forget her. I hope
whoever did this fries.

(weeping, she turns to
Maggie)

Debbie, you knew her in back in
Scottsdale, why don't you share a
memory?

Maggie holds a glass of merlot in her hand; she's got a little buzz, she'll wing it. As she talks, red-headed PATTI, another guest, stares at her, suspicious.

MAGGIE/DEBBIE

Thank you Yolanda for answering my
e-mail and asking me to join you.
(getting into the spirit)
My favorite memory of Delilah was
this one Saturday night, we were on
our way to a club in town and she
spotted this CHPS hottie on his
motorcycle. She looked over and
said 'fasten your seat belt, Sally
Mac,' and she just floored it. He
chased us till she pulled over, and
I swear, before I knew what had
happened, he was following us down
the Via Princessa off-ramp to a
Taco Bell parking lot. I played
look-out while they hooked up.

Everyone laughs, that's so Delilah. MOVE IN CLOSE on Maggie. She's telling this story on herself.

MAGGIE

She was wild and a little crazy,
and she drove a lot of other people
crazy. But I loved her.

LATER

Maggie helps clear the cheese and wine buffet, tossing back the dregs of wine glasses as she goes. Yolanda comes up...

YOLANDA

We're so glad to have someone from her past.

MAGGIE

I wanted to ask you, she mentioned someone she was seeing? A married guy?

YOLANDA

Notice he hasn't shown up today. She's a dreamer.

(sad, realizing)

Was.

MAGGIE

You don't know his name?

Patti walks up.

YOLANDA

What's the name of the guy she was seeing, Patti?

PATTI

Where'd you and Delilah go to high school, Debbie? I mean Sally Mac?

MAGGIE

Sally Mac?

(realizing)

That was a nickname. We went to school in Scottsdale.

PATTI

So there's a Via Princessa off-ramp in Scottsdale? What a coincidence, there's one right off the 14.

Maggie has been made.

PATTI (CONT'D)

I totally recognize you. You're a cop, you married Billy Swan. I've seen you at the Beef & Ale...

The way she looks at Maggie, we know she's been with Swan.

YOLANDA

A cop? You aren't her friend from high school?

MAGGIE

I'm trying to find out who killed your friend.

YOLANDA

Not today. You don't pull something like that today -- I invited you here in good faith.

MAGGIE

Have the cops questioned you?

YOLANDA

Me? No.

MAGGIE

(to Patti)

You?

Patti just stares at her.

PATTI

You've got a lotta nerve. But then, you're kinda cuckoo for coco puffs, right?

Maggie's brain is always at least two steps ahead.

MAGGIE

Come on, don't you think it's weird? If they were doing their job, why didn't they talk to you guys, her best friends.

YOLANDA

Patti's not her best friend, they had a big falling out.

If Patti's look was a gun, Yolanda'd be dead. She turns and walks away. Maggie watches her go, intrigued by the information and response she just got.

YOLANDA (CONT'D)

I suggest you walk out that door now, before I ask one of these *real* cops to throw you out...

EXT. YOLANDA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Maggie exits the building, she's on her cell. Hear:

VOICE

Janice Kreuger, Hollywood Crime
Lab.

As she's on the phone, Maggie sees A MAN GETTING OUT OF A CAR heading into Delilah's building.

MAGGIE

Hey girl, it's Maggie Bird. How about lunch tomorrow in exchange for whatever you've got on the Leondis murder? And if you can cop me any interviews...

Before she can answer, Maggie squints, recognizing the man.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Lieutenant Erlich?

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

IN THE BLACK:

BRACHMAN'S VOICE

Maggie, this is Dr. Brachman. I got your message. I'm not comfortable with you skipping any days on the medication.

INT. MAGGIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Maggie lies in a bath. In a quiet, dream-like state.

BRACHMAN'S VOICE

This is an extremely vulnerable period, so close to the 'episode.' Please call me as soon as you get this message...

The water in Maggie's tub slowly begins to swirl with red blood, Maggie seems almost trance-like as she submerges herself and we are inside her imagination:

INT. DELILAH'S BATHROOM

In the OVER-SATURATED COLORS AND HEIGHTENED SOUND of Maggie's mind: Delilah's lifeless, bloody body is dragged into the bathroom. Fresh water runs in the tub. Feet scrape the carpet as an unseen male hefts her into the tub, submerges her...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MAGGIE'S BATHROOM

Maggie's submerged face. She sits up suddenly, gasping, knowing something.

INT. NORTHEAST DIVISION - ERLICH'S OFFICE - DAY

Maggie knocks, enters with a mug of coffee, hands it to him.

MAGGIE

How you doing?
(beat, awkward)
I put in a splash of that sugar-free hazelnut creamer...

Sounds awful to him. He's also uneasy with her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

So I've had some time off, had a lot of lovely sleep, spent time with my horse, visited with my mom, ate lots of vegetables and I'm ready to come back.

ERLICH

It hasn't even been a week, Bird.

MAGGIE

Just tell me which desk you want me at.

(then)

Coffee okay? Maybe that creamer's too sweet for you.

ERLICH

Take Pyong's desk for now, he's still out on medical leave.

MAGGIE

You won't be sorry.

He sips the coffee. Winces a tiny bit. She watches closely.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Lemme get you another cup. Least I can do, right -- black with Splenda?

ERLICH

You don't need to kiss my ass, just keep your shit together.

She takes his cup and walks out with it...

INT. NORTHEAST DIVISION -- SQUAD ROOM -- DAY

Swan sits at his desk eating and reading the paper. His Blackberry buzzes. He looks at it.

CLOSE, it reads: DID YOU SLEEP WITH DELILAH?

He looks over to see Maggie. She's at Pyong's desk, with a huge stack of files. Not as mellow as she'd promised, she is looking at him, begging him to engage. Then she furiously begins texting again. She's super-fast.

He shakes his head, trying to ignore her. His phone buzzes again. IF YOU MURDERED HER, WHAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU'D DO?

He texts on his Blackberry: U R INSANE.

Maggie looks up from the message. She smilingly agrees, then types: YOU'D PUT HER IN A BATHTUB AND WASH AWAY THE EVIDENCE, RIGHT?

At which point, Pete Murphy is running out, he just took a call:

MURPHY

We got a homicide-suicide north end
of Echo Park...

Swan rises, following Murphy out. He passes Maggie's desk. She rises, following him outside where no one hears.

EXT. NORTHEAST DIVISION - PARKING AREA - MOMENTS LATER

MAGGIE

Listen to me, you arrogant prick! A
cop would know to put a body in the
tub. I think your badge bunny was
murdered by a cop.

(then, the bomb)

I have reason to believe it was
Erlich.

SWAN

They oughta lock you back up.

He shakes her off and heads towards the car. She watches him go, frustrated.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie comes back in. Follow her to Erlich's office, where she sticks her head in.

MAGGIE

I'm taking lunch orders, what do
you want? Beef & Ale's got corned
beef today...

He looks up.

ERLICH

I don't wanna hear you showed up in
the north end of Echo Park.

INT. BEEF & ALE - DAY

The cop hang-out. A LARGE MANILA ENVELOPE slides across the table. Janice, a hip, pink-haired CRIME LAB TECH, in a lab coat, has a crush on Maggie.

JANICE

Lab reports. There are no matches with anyone in the system.

MAGGIE

What about the kid they were looking at?

JANICE

They had to let him go, they've got nothing.

Maggie pulls a glassine bag from her purse, in it ERLICH'S MUG. She pushes it across the table.

MAGGIE

I'm looking to match the DNA on this cup with whatever you've got at the scene.

JANICE

Done. You look good, by the way.

MAGGIE

They've got *nothing*?

JANICE

Not much. I hate to say it, but this one could fall through the cracks -- we've got that eighties sitcom star and the rapper still open, plus two big Russian mob hits -- it's the worst holiday spike ever. Downtown is all over us, the press is up our butt.

MAGGIE

Basically, she's not really on anyone's radar screen...

JANICE

She's old news -- they've done her. They're dogs, homicide cops are just dogs. Including your ex. When are you gonna come play on my team?

Maggie smiles. Janice is always trying. Maggie opens the lab reports.

JANICE (CONT'D)

Come on, now that we know you're crazy, we know you've got some healthy Sapphic curiosity...

MAGGIE

Janice, I left curiosity in the
dust back in summer camp...

A moment of sweet electricity between them as a waitress
comes up with two big shopping bags...

WAITRESS

Three club sandwiches, two burgers
with fries, two corned beef
specials and a dozen red velvet
cupcakes...

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - SUNSET

Maggie's car winds up the hill from work, finishing off the
cupcakes. Her garage door creaks open, she pulls inside.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Maggie steps out of her car as the door goes down. She
turns, suddenly, sensing something. As the door hit the
halfway mark, SEE a shadow moving, a rustling noise. Maggie
pushes the remote and the door goes back up. She walks
upside, looks up and down the darkening street...

It's empty. Then she sees something fluttering from under
the up-turned flag on her mailbox. She goes to it, picks it
up. It's a note, it reads: MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, WHACKO.

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie is taking off her jacket.

MAGGIE

Ruby...

As she moves into the room, we see it looks crazy again. It
is littered with print-outs of photos from Delilah's crime
scene. The video that belongs in Gabe's file is paused on
Delilah's face on the TV screen. There are coffee containers
and candy wrappers around.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Rube...?

A sudden, loud KNOCK. She hesitates, frightened. Reaches
for her gun, but of course it's not there. She walks to the
door cautiously, looks through a hole.

She opens it. It's Gabe.

GABE

Where the hell have you been?

He pushes his way into the place.

GABE (CONT'D)

Jesus.

(looking around)

You're not supposed to drink coffee.

(then)

You're fired.

She looks at him for the first time.

MAGGIE

Oh, I'm sorry I forgot to call you. I'm back on the job. I think Erlich's the one who killed her, so I'm keeping an eye on him from a desk.

She's vibrating at a very high frequency now.

GABE

Damn, you sucked me into the vortex again! One of these days I'm gonna learn--

MAGGIE

--Delilah was murdered by a police detective and it's not being investigated because there are too many murders and they've all done her so nobody cares -- *but I'm crazy...?*

GABE

You're probably right, but I ain't goin' there...

MAGGIE

Gabe, I read the lab report, the person who dragged her into the tub is the person she was seeing, there were traces of NPK in the carpet, that's a mixture of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, my dad used it four times a year on his roses -- Delilah told you her detective grew roses.

GABE

Listen to me! I'm here because your psychiatrist called me, you're not returning his calls and he's very worried.

Maggie pushes the remote, Delilah unfreezes, begins speaking.

DELILAH

...and doing weird things, like
they ripped up a bouquet of roses
my detective brought over, he grew
them, he's such a little gem --
(freezes again)

MAGGIE

Who's the 'little gem,' Gabe?

Her cell rings.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Yeah?....Thanks....Girl Bar? I take
it that's a bar for girls?....Not
tonight, Janice.

(flips it off)

It's not Lieutenant Erlich. And I
have to say, that didn't feel
right. If he killed someone it'd be
colder, less messy...

She suddenly turns, distracted by something.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Where's Ruby?

(calling)

Ruby?

GABE

Maggie...?

(shakes his head, he's got
nothing)

Go see your shrink.

He walks out. Maggie begins looking everywhere, under the
bed, the closets. She's beginning to panic.

MAGGIE

Where are you, Ruby?

She stands very still. Hear a meowing. She follows the sound
to the kitchen. She gets to a cabinet above the refrigerator.
She pulls over a footstool, reaches up and opens it.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

How'd you get up here? I didn't put
you up here.

Ruby jumps out and runs away as Maggie ponders, fairly
spooked.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Did I?

EXT. STREET IN CULVER CITY - NIGHT

Maggie's car cruises the street. She slows down almost in front of a house. She takes out a large flashlight, shines it on the front fence, which is covered in roses. They are WHITE ICEBERG ROSES. She moves the light over, the mailbox has THE ERLICH'S painted on it in red, white and blue. Over which:

SARAH'S VOICE

Maybe it's the meds. You said they make you spacey. Maybe you were cleaning and she jumped in...

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - DAY

Maggie is on her cell. She's moved on to the next obsession.

MAGGIE

They've got iceberg roses.

SARAH'S VOICE

Who has iceberg roses?

Josie Erlich comes out the front door, puts on the light and stands in the front porch. The light casts unpleasant shadows on her already tough, weathered face.

MAGGIE

Jesus, I wouldn't want to be on her bad side.

SARAH'S VOICE

Who?

MAGGIE

(staring at Josie)
I can see her in a jealous rage...

SARAH'S VOICE

What are you talking about???

Josie looks out. It feels as if she's looking right at Maggie. Maggie flips the phone off and drives off...

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie turns a corner. She glances in the mirror, another car is turning the same corner. She makes the next right sharply. The car appears a few moments later.

Maggie gets a look on her face. Fear mixed with 'don't fuck with me.' She makes a sharp turn across a divider and takes off...

Looking in her rear view mirror, there is no one following.

MAGGIE

Ha!

EXT. DELILAH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CLOSE ON the potted cactus as a hand reaches in and takes out the key. Inserts it in the lock, opens the door...

It's Maggie. She enters the eerie place. She stands in the kitchen and looks around, trying to feel where she should move next. In the dead silence, her CELLPHONE RINGS. Scares her for a moment, then she checks the caller ID and picks up.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

It could be Josie. And I'm pretty sure someone's following me.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BRACHMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brachman is at his desk, worried.

BRACHMAN

It's Noah Brachman.

MAGGIE

I thought you were Swan.

BRACHMAN

Where are you?

Maggie studies the items under refrigerator magnet.

MAGGIE

In her apartment. I believe I know who it is and I'm sure I can find the evidence if I look hard enough.

BRACHMAN

You said someone is following you?

She moves into the main room, to the closet, begins rifling through everything.

MAGGIE

I think so.

BRACHMAN
Is it possible you imagined it?

MAGGIE
I doubt it...

BRACHMAN
Are you aware that you missed our
three p.m. appointment?

She goes to the desk, opens the drawer, searches...

MAGGIE
They never even bothered to secure
the crime scene. I just walked
right in.

BRACHMAN
I want you to come over right now.

MAGGIE
I'll come tomorrow.

She picks up the mattress, looks under it. She's got the
strength of a bear...

BRACHMAN
I know you believe you have to
solve this, but --

MAGGIE
You should've seen her fingernails,
all broken off. She fought like
hell for her life -- do you
understand?

In OVER-SATURATED COLORS, see Maggie, LOOKING LIKE DELILAH,
begging for her life, scratching and clawing at an enraged
nondescript figure who plunges a knife into her...

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Imagine what she felt as she begged
for her life! All that trust she
had and look where it got her...!

BRACHMAN
You sound manic.

She drops the mattress suddenly, and walks back to the
kitchen. She opens the fridge, examines the contents.

MAGGIE
'My fundamental duty is to serve
mankind;

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

to safeguard lives and property;
to protect the innocent against
deception; the weak against
oppression or intimidation; and the
peaceful against violence...' You
know what that is? That is the *law
enforcement code of ethics.*

She closes the door, looks to the right, something catches
her eye: THE KITCHEN KNIFE WOODEN BLOCK filled with BLACK-
HANDLED knives but for ONE EMPTY SLOT...

BRACHMAN

I understand what you're feeling --
but it's all moot if you don't pull
yourself away...

Hanging out of the slot is a tiny metal loop. She reaches
over and plucks it out with a toothpick. It's a little METAL
CHARM WHICH SHE HOLDS UP AS IT DANGLES FROM HER PHONE...

MAGGIE

St. Jude. The patron saint of lost
causes...

Everything she says seems to convince him further that the
situation is heading towards disaster.

BRACHMAN

Listen to me. You don't have the
authority to investigate this case.
You have to do something bold and
difficult. Ignore the forces
inside you. Walk out now --

CLOSE ON Maggie's face. She understands something.

MAGGIE

It's not Josie.

BRACHMAN

Maggie? Maggie?

The kitchen's empty as we...

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE - NIGHT

Maggie is driving the darkened road, the lights from San Fernando Valley stretch out forever. No one else is on the road. All of a sudden, someone comes around a curve behind her, their brights on. She squints in her mirror. The car gets closer. Then suddenly pulls out around her, way too close on her left. Maggie swerves to the right, hits the brakes, she's thrown forward then back.

She takes a breath then gets out to look. She's at the edge of the cliff. *Was someone trying to run her off the road?*

INT. HONEY AND BOBBY FLECK'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

ON A VASE OF HOMEGROWN ROSES. Deep blood reds and pinks. Everything is aimed at pleasing, the decor, the neatness shows it. Honey leads Maggie into the kitchen, she has just arrived. Maggie's a force of nature now.

MAGGIE

Where's Bobby?

HONEY

He's at the gym.

MAGGIE

How long ago did he leave?

HONEY

He went straight from work.

Maggie's eyes move to the window. Her POV: a car cruises slowly by.

HONEY (CONT'D)

(nervous)

What is it? Can I offer you a cup of coffee?

Is it cruising her or just driving by?

Maggie decides to focus on Honey till Bobby returns. Honey pours some coffee, then goes to a Bundt cake and picks up a knife on the plate to cut a piece.

MAGGIE

Sure. I want to hear more about your newfound happiness in the marriage. Bobby's conversion to loving husband.

As she interacts with Honey, Maggie's eyes dart around like heat-seeking missiles, searching for information. They miss nothing. They go from Honey to the counter. CLOSE ON the knife as Honey slices. It has a BLACK HANDLE like the knives in Delilah's house.

HONEY

Are you being sarcastic?

MAGGIE

Not at all! I still love Swan, do you know what a failure I feel like?

Her eyes land on Honey's different, more elaborate knife block. It's filled with every type of kitchen cutlery one could ever want. They all have BONE HANDLES. There are no empty slots.

Honey puts the cake slice on a plate.

HONEY

I hope you don't take offense if I say I don't believe Swan is someone to put your faith in...

As an afterthought, Honey opens a drawer to take out a cloth napkin. Maggie's eyes zero in on a SMALL HANDGUN partially visible among the linens.

MAGGIE

And Bobby is. You believe he'd do anything for this marriage.

Honey hands her the cake, napkin and coffee.

HONEY

Yes he would. Anything.

Maggie's eyes zoom in on Honey's fingers. Her knuckles are RED AND SCABBED.

QUICK FLASHBACK:

EXT. MARTINEZ'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Honey reaches out for the fork on the plate of tamales. ZOOM IN CLOSER: Honey's right knuckles are covered in RED GASHES. PAN to BOBBY'S FACE, distorted in rage. [Note: angles are different than the original scene, closer, hand-held, dynamic like Maggie's mind.]

FLECK

Jesus, woman, where's your gloves?

BACK TO PRESENT

Maggie looks at Honey, begins a new tack.

MAGGIE

Sometimes I wonder if cops should get married at all.

HONEY

Why would you say that?

MAGGIE

Because I am one. Most cops who are really invested in the job don't want to come home and pretend to be normal when their adrenaline's pumping and they think they're Superman.

Is that a shadow in the living room? Her head turns to see, the room is empty. Honey begins emptying the dishwasher.

HONEY

My husband does not think he is Superman. That is not his problem.

MAGGIE

If he's like Swan and all the cops I know he wants alcohol, cocaine and sex, usually nasty sex. And most married cops don't want to bring that home to their wives cause wives want it tender and sweet -- they don't know he's Superman. That's why cops gravitate towards badge bunnies. Badge bunnies get it. They like it nasty too.

Honey is shaking with anger, she can barely manage her task.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

But you've worked through all that. You just told me how happy you two are. All that praying and --

HONEY

(in an unmitigated rage)
What does happy have to do with the price of apples? Who the hell is happy -- you make a promise in front of God, you *do what you have to do to keep that promise!*

Honey hurls a dish, it hits the fridge and shatters in pieces all over the floor. Maggie kneels, helps her pick up the pieces.

HONEY (CONT'D)

You know what I hate about you?
You think you're the only one who
feels things!

MAGGIE

I didn't mean to press your
buttons.

She takes Honey's hand, gently touches the cuts.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

What'd you do to yourself, Honey?

Honey pulls her hand away. Begins sobbing.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

My god, you love him so much. Was
he cheating on you, Honey?

Honey nods. She is lost in her pain, she can't stop crying.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

How'd you find out?

(beat)

We know, don't we? I knew, with
Swan. Did you follow him?

HONEY

She didn't even bother to hide her
key, she probably left it for
Bobby... I found the roses Bobby
gave her... Our roses...

MAGGIE

That must've been so painful...

HONEY

I went to talk to her, I rang her
bell. I begged her to leave him
alone, I begged and begged. I told
her how I'd been praying for God to
give Bobby the wisdom to know when
a woman was preying on him. I told
her I prayed for her as well and
she just laughed at me!

Maggie holds out the St. Jude medal.

MAGGIE

Did you leave this in her kitchen?
Delilah didn't pray...

Honey stares at St. Jude dangling from the chain, taunting.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Bobby was a lost cause, wasn't he?
He was like a moth to the flame. He
didn't have a chance with her.

Honey nods her head, she can't deny it. She doesn't even want to. She turns and looks at Maggie.

HONEY

She said she and Bobby were
soulmates! That he told her I was
nuts but she didn't believe it till
I showed up.

MAGGIE

I would have killed her. I
would've.

HONEY

I picked up a knife and plunged it
into her back. But then she didn't
die, so I had to stab her over and
over and she kept clawing at me,
begging me...

MAGGIE

(after a long pause)
So you called Bobby and he came
back and the two of you cleaned up.
Bobby put her in the bathtub.

QUICK FLASHBACK:

INT. DELILAH'S BATHROOM

SATURATED COLORS, HEIGHTENED SOUND: a totally devastated
Bobby stands SOBBING over Delilah's body in the tub, water
running.

BACK TO PRESENT

Honey raises her head, realizing suddenly that Maggie has
played her from start to finish. Then:

MALE VOICE

Go in the bedroom, Honey.

It's Fleck, he's come in the back door. He's dark and angry. Startled, suddenly in a new configuration and not sure what how it plays, Maggie instinctively reaches for her gun. *There is no gun.*

FLECK

I said GO IN THE BEDROOM HONEY.

Maggie knows to appear calm, not inflame things.

MAGGIE

Hey, Bobby...

FLECK

She's like you, my wife. She's a whackjob.

HONEY

(screaming)

I'm not a whackjob!

FLECK

DID YOU HEAR ME? GO IN THE BEDROOM BEFORE IT GETS UGLY.

Maggie's teetering. Then a thought at the edge of her brain: her eyes dart to the drawer, it's open, Honey's just grabbed the gun and as Maggie lunges...

MAGGIE

Honey...!

It goes off. Fleck screams in pain. It's his knee.

HONEY

That can't hurt any worse than I do!

She fires several another shot, this time somewhere near his groin.

FLECK

Aaghhhhh!

HONEY

How's that feel, Bobby?

Her insane focus on Bobby gives Maggie an opening; she dives at Honey, the gun falls, slides away...

Bobby grabs it. Lying on his side, bleeding, he trains it on his wife. He would love to kill her.

MAGGIE
Hey Bobby. Easy...

Honey has crumbled into shaking sobs.

HONEY
Kill me, go on, kill me!

MAGGIE
Bobby you're a good guy, everyone
knows you're a decent guy...

FLECK
She leaves suicide notes on my
pillow so I'll find them when I
come home! You leave those kinda
notes for Swan? There is nothing
more dangerous in this world than a
whacked out woman --

MAGGIE
She's not your problem anymore,
Bobby... You're not gonna get
Delilah back. Don't make it
worse...

Bobby closes his eyes in pain and sorrow, lies back and lets
the gun drop.

HONEY
I'm sorry Bobby..

Maggie picks up the gun, staring at this unholy mess as her
mind is exploding.

SMASH TO BLACK.

In the black we hear Brachman's voice:

BRACHMAN
I don't know if she was bipolar.

We are...

INT. BRACHMAN'S OFFICE - A DAY LATER

Dr. Brachman looks as if this near-disaster with Maggie has
taken a toll on him as well.

BRACHMAN

But I know that you are. And if you think you can bargain and make deals with your illness, there is a good chance you'll end up someplace you don't want to be. Just like Honey.

Maggie's facing him. Sobered herself.

EXT. HONEY AND BOBBY FLECK'S HOUSE - NIGHT (A DAY EARLIER)

Helicopters circle noisily. Maggie stares up at them, then back down as Bobby is carried out by the EMT's on a gurney. Crime scene workers, cops, Erlich and Swan are circling, busy. She turns to see...

Swan, leading an utterly destroyed, cuffed Honey Fleck out to the car. CLOSE on steel on flesh. Swan pushes her head down and into the back seat, exactly as he pushed Maggie's down in the beginning. Honey looks up. Hers and Maggie's eyes meet. Hear:

MAGGIE

Is there a pill that helps me accept that I have to take pills?

INT. BRACHMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brachman understands the question, he knows how hard it is.

BRACHMAN

Here's my problem. Say we're living at zero, us supposedly normal folk. You're used to living at plus one. There's a quickening at plus one -- your world has more color, your mind is more brilliant, your feelings are deeper.

Maggie nods. She knows it so well.

BRACHMAN (CONT'D)

The trouble is, plus one turns very quickly into plus three and then five and then you're running naked from your demons and maybe this time no one brings you in in time.

MAGGIE

The quickening is kinda pricey, is what you're saying.

BRACHMAN

And the best I can do, medically speaking, is keep you at minus one.

MAGGIE

That sucks.

Brachman nods, feeling for her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

So who'll save France?

Off Maggie, trying to feel light about this deeply serious loss.

INT. NORTHEAST DIVISION - ERLICH'S OFFICE - DAY

Maggie sits across from Erlich. She feels a lot of shame.

ERLICH

You did everything wrong. You interfered in a police investigation, you illegally entered a crime scene, corrupted it, stole the evidence -- apparently you even had my DNA tested.

MAGGIE

How'd you find that out?

He slams his hand down on the desk in 'gotcha!' mode.

ERLICH

I knew it! I guessed when you never came back with fresh coffee.

(beat)

I heard you were at Yolanda's, I figured you must've seen me. I wasn't sleeping with anyone by the way. Delilah's brother was in my firearms class at the Academy, I kind of took him under my wing.

Maggie feels really humiliated, this is hard for her.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry, boss -- should I call you Ed now? -- I'm really sorry, Ed.

(she rises)

I'd give you my badge but I already gave to a tall black man who called himself a Messenger of God.

She starts to leave.

ERLICH

Come on, how do I fire you now?
You solved a case no one else
wanted to solve. You had the steel
to look at something no one else
wanted to see.

(then)

I'll be watching you. One year at
that desk. If you make one move
that scares me, you're outta here
faster than shit goes through a
goose. Got it?

She is moved by his compliment and his very real threat.

INT. STRIPPER CLUB - NIGHT

Sandy dances on Gabe, watch the play between them, it's
familiar, almost sexy. He suddenly looks off, as if looking
towards something...

EXT. BARN - DAY

The ranch where Maggie keeps her horse. She walks towards
Gabe, leading a horse...

Maggie throws a saddle on him. CLOSE as she cinches. Gabe
watches.

GABE

I wanna see the scar.

Maggie smiles, pulls her T-shirt up, revealing a funky-
looking scar that is awfully close to her heart. He stares.

GABE (CONT'D)

Can I --

MAGGIE

Yeah, touch it. It doesn't hurt...

Gabe touches it very tenderly. Studies it with deep feeling.
She is quiet as she watches him. He looks back at Maggie,
thinking of something. They are very close, we sense he might
kiss her, but...

GABE

Where's the exit wound?

MAGGIE

There isn't one.

GABE
They had to cut it out?

She shakes her head. This is such a revelation for Gabe.

GABE (CONT'D)
It's still in there?

MAGGIE
Yeah. And I'm fine. As fine as any
of us -- we're all gonna die, Gabe,
I like my little reminder --
 (seeing something in his
 face)
What?

GABE
I don't want to be an old man.

She laughs, mounts Stormy. He mounts his horse.

MAGGIE
Put your reins in your left hand.
 (as he does)
Give him a little kick...
 (he does, and then)
Let's move out...

They start off on the horses...

Allison Krause's haunting lullaby "Slumber My Darling" sneaks
on the track...

EXT. DESERT MOUNTAINS - DAY (MOS)

Under the music, Maggie runs and runs bareback on Stormy,
she's free and in control. It seems dangerous and we don't
quite understand what's going on.

EXT. NORTHEAST DIVISION - NIGHT (MOS)

Under the same music, Swan steps into the night, he pulls out
his Blackberry, punches auto-dial. The word MAGGIE comes up
on the screen. He looks up, sees Regina coming towards him.
He cancels the call, puts the phone back in his pocket. She
takes his arm and they walk into the night.

EXT. DESERT MOUNTAINS - DAY (MOS)

Maggie's still running, she comes up over the ridge and

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

She opens her eyes. Ruby sleeps over her head on the beautiful leather trenchcoat, which has now become a cat bed. She was dreaming. The music continues...

MAGGIE'S MIRROR

Maggie stands in front of the mirror and looks at herself. She holds up a pill, looks at it, then as if in a ritual she puts it on her tongue and swallows it. Hold on her in this silence as she stares at herself...

After several seconds...

SMASH TO BLACK

The music continues as end credits roll...