

TROOPER

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TEASER

START ON: A SCUFFED VOLLEYBALL. Held in a GIRL'S HAND with LAVENDER NAIL POLISH. Fingers GRASPING leather.

WE HEAR: A BRASSY SCHOOL BAND. CROWD CHEERING. FEET STOMPING ON METALLIC BLEACHERS. Adrenaline. Rushing. Pull out to:

1 INT. GYM - CENTRAL SYRACUSE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

1

A Girls Volleyball Game. Shoes SQUEAK. Light bulb FILAMENTS glow on the scoreboard. The Central Syracuse Mighty Dragons vs St. Abraham Panthers. Close game. Tense. Intense.

We favor the MIGHTY DRAGONS BLEACHERS, packed with STUDENTS, PARENTS, THE BAND -- but we're immediately drawn to:

KJ FLAXTON (often pronounced CAGE.) 30s. A beacon. Partially because she's a NY STATE TROOPER. IN UNIFORM. Badge gleaming in tungsten. More so because of her bright SMILE. Open-hearted. Charismatic. TOTALLY INVESTED AS:

A DRAGON, number 23 -- DIVES for the ball. MISSES. Flesh against floor. Everyone CRINGES. But KJ claps encouragement:

KJ

Good dig, 23. Raspberries add character --

KJ turns to the man next to her, typical SYRACUSE DAD -- Flannel shirt. Bills hat brimmed down at the corners.

KJ (CONT'D)

23's my oldest. Olivia. Olive. Calling herself Olive these days. Olive's a garnish. Kids? Right?

KJ makes you feel like OLD FRIENDS, even though you just met. She flags over a BOOSTER MOM selling HOMEMADE POPCORN --

KJ (CONT'D)

Hey Addie, can I get a large --
(smelling, delightful)
Is that parmesan and what...?

BOOSTER MOM

Paprika.

KJ

When are we gonna get your talents on our PTA? Have you met Kenny Yost? PTA president? Bit of a Helicopter Parent. Hovers. Also means he's got a great big heart. Give him a hello --

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

KJ points out a BEEFY GUY, KENNY YOST, a few rows over. As Booster Mom moves off, KJ turns back to Syracuse --

KJ (CONT'D)

Love these game, but the true sport is in the stands -- trying to pick the different parents in the crowd --

KJ profiles a MAN in the FRONT ROW. Sweaty. Balled. Fists.

KJ (CONT'D)

That's Tyrannosaurus Dad. He'd wear his Letterman jacket if it weren't 5 sizes too small. Reliving his glory days through his daughter's win column --

KJ points out a WOMAN standing under the green glow of the EXIT SIGN. BLACKBERRY to one ear. FINGER in the other.

KJ (CONT'D)

Ilene's a Ghost Mom. Can't cut the umbilical chord to her desk. Trying to be here for her kid, but not really.

SYRACUSE

Yeah...? So, what does that make you?

KJ

Pessimistic Optimist. In my line, I see the evil men do. And women. Sin is an equal opportunity employer. Can't protect my kids from everything, but Lord knows I try. Arming them --

SYRACUSE

You make it sound like guns.

KJ

Weapons for living, friend. Languages expand their universe. Sports breed a desire to compete. We lose more than we win. They oughta fail -- gracefully --

Dragons win the ball. Olive's SERVE. KJ SHOUTS:

KJ (CONT'D)

GET IT DONE, 23! I LOVE YOU!

(then to Syracuse)

I embarrass her to distract her from the pressure. It's a thing --

Olive lobs the ball. And as it comes back to earth -- she SLAMS IT! ACE! The crowd cheers. KJ WOLF WHISTLES.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

But then. KJ notices. SYRACUSE ISN'T CHEERING. QUIET.

KJ (CONT'D)

Didn't figure you for a Panther fan?

He's not. Syracuse raises his hands into frame to reveal --
HIS WRISTS ARE HANDCUFFED. Not a Dad. KJ'S SUSPECT.

SYRACUSE

What am I doing here?

THE PANTHERS CALL TIME OUT. KJ huddles up with Syracuse --

KJ

Home invasion in Solvay. The Hammonds.
Jon. Diana. Even pig-tailed Becky.
Blindfolded with dish rags and duct
tape. Robbed... I know you did it --
Got a name for you too. Bread Burglar.
Stealing for your boys. Charlie. Samuel --

SYRACUSE

Sam.

KJ

Downright Les Miserablian.

SYRACUSE

That a play?

KJ

It's a book -- and thick. Plenty of
time to read it where you're going.

SYRACUSE

If that were true, I'd be in a cell.
Not at your girl's volleyball game --

KJ

You're about to confess everything to
me. Wanna know why...? Oysters --

Did KJ say... oysters? Uhhhm. Okay? KJ offers Syracuse a
bite of popcorn. He declines. More for her -- as she eats:

KJ (CONT'D)

You thought the Hammonds were at dinner.
Plenty of time to nab the 70 inch LED.
Jewelry. Copper wire in that twin AC.
You didn't know Diana would down a rotten
apalachicola? That's an oyster --

He's silent. KJ knows she's beating down the right path...

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (3)

1

KJ (CONT'D)

They come home. You panic and decide, stupidly, to tie them up. Towels. Tape. Grabbing what was under the sink. Improvised. Not premeditated. You're a thief, not a sociopath. I think --

THE WHISTLE BLOWS. GAME ON. MATCH POINT. Olive steps to the line. Ball in hand. KJ's earnest with Syracuse:

KJ (CONT'D)

Tyrannosaurus. Ghost. Me. We want the absolute best for our kids. What kind of Dad are you? What lesson will you teach your boys? Regret? Honesty?

Olive serves. KJ whispers -- pressing her point -- focused:

KJ (CONT'D)

You confess. A judge may be lenient. Robbery instead of kidnapping. 15 years instead of 50. Out in 5 or 4 to see your Charlie and Sam at their ball games --

It's a relentless rally. Neither Dragon nor Panther conceding. Dig. Set. Bump. Olive rushes the net. SPIKES the ball. GAME OVER. DRAGONS WIN! THE CROWD ERUPTS!

KJ BEAMS. WHISTLING TO OLIVE. HER PRIDE IS INFECTIOUS.

SYRACUSE

You guarantee that? Out in 4 years?

KJ

Can't guarantee anything --

Syracuse thinks. Then. Nods. OKAY. He'll confess.

KJ (CONT'D)

Well... there you go.

KJ catches Olive's eye. Blowing a kiss. Great mom. Great cop. For KJ this is win win as WE SMASH TO:

**TITLE SEQUENCE -- I'M THINKING WHITE STRIPES, AREN'T YOU?
WORKING CLASS ROCK & ROLL -- THE MUSIC CARRIES US ACROSS:**

2 EXT. AROUND SYRACUSE AT THE UNGODLY CRACK OF DAWN

2

Upstate New York sleeps. The sky clings to its blanket of darkness, barely giving way to the pinks and oranges and blues of sunrise and a new day:

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

A PAPER BOY BIKES down the street, tossing the SYRACUSE POST on dewy lawns. A GAS STATION ATTENDANT uses a POLE to change the price of UNLEADED -- going up. A STOCK BOY loads GALLONS OF MILK on shelves, beads of water condensing on the plastic.

Simple. American. Life. Gorgeous country. Cities and suburbs nestled against nature and forests and:

3 EXT. ONEIDA LAKE - NEW YORK - THE UNGODLY CRACK OF DAWN

3

Huge evergreens are mirrored in the serene lake as we find -- KJ. Staring through a RIFLE SCOPE. Pretty. Badass. Pretty badass. (NOTE -- KJ doesn't wear SUNGLASSES. Eyes. Always.)

KJ (IN HER WALKIE)
Cayuga 440, this is X-Ray-12 -- I've spotted the 10-34 outside Brewerton.

DISPATCH
10-4, Animal services en-route, KJ --

THROUGH KJ'S SCOPE WE SEE: A WOLF -- DRINKING FROM THE LAKE. 10-34. Animal danger. KJ loads a TRANQUILIZER DART. Fingers the TRIGGER. As KJ's about to FIRE -- THE ANIMAL LOOKS UP:

NOT A WOLF. A DOG. KJ sighs relief -- then with a smile:

KJ (IN HER WALKIE)
Cancel that. It's a husky. Canadian sled dog. Gotta mend those porous borders --

DISPATCH
I'll get right on that.

4 EXT. ONEIDA LAKE - MOMENTS LATER

4

KJ holds a CRACKER for the HUSKY. Making kissy faces. Trying to lure the dog over -- but he's not coming --

KJ
Picky picky -- okay beautiful --

KJ digs through a bag of snacks she keeps for her kids. Fruit Leather. Puffs. Opting for a TUPPERWARE OF EDAMAME. KJ scoops a handful. Offering it. The Husky "benjis" KJ. Wondering... Can I trust her? AS WE CUT TO:

5 INT. THE FLAXTON HOME - KITCHEN - MORNING

5

THE HUSKY EATS A BOWL OF EDAMAME. We join the Flaxton Family Mid-Breakfast. Controlled chaotic conversations. THE HOUSE IS SMALL. EVERYONE ON TOP OF EACH OTHER. The Husky's being adored by Olive and KJ'S SISTER -- DAKOTA (late 20s).

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

DAKOTA

Come on, KJ... AM patrol? You make
the President look like a couch potato --

KJ

He does that all by himself.

OLIVE

Edamame? Fancy mutt. We get charcoal
for breakfast, Aunt Dakota?

Olive looks to where Dakota's BURNING OATMEAL on the STOVE.

DAKOTA

Dammit!

RUBY

Swear jar.

RUBY (11). Sits on her VIOLIN CASE so she can reach the
TABLE. Nose in a BOOK. Prodigious prodigy. WE NOTICE --
several of Ruby's FINGERTIPS have BAND-AIDS. Both hands.

Dakota puts a DOLLAR in the SWEAR JAR as she sees -- breakfast
is indeed ruined. As Dakota runs the pot under the sink:

DAKOTA

Domesticity fits me like spanx.

KJ

You're trying, that's what counts.

RUBY

What's spanx?

DAKOTA

May you never know.

(as she opens cabinets)

I still don't know where the pots are...

OLIVE

We moved in 8 months ago --

RUBY

I read it takes 2 years to adjust to a
new house --

KJ helps Dakota -- getting cereal for the kids --

VOICE (O.S.)

WHAT'D YOU DO TO MY BIKE?

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

5

LEE (15) ENTERS. The rebel with a cause. A BMX BIKE hoisted on his wiry shoulder, missing the FRONT WHEEL --

LEE

You threw away my tire? You're insane --

KJ

I hid it and you'll get it back when you clean the rain gutters.

LEE

This isn't Little House in the Suburbs.

OLIVE

It's minuscule --

KJ

There's no room for your own room, hon.

RUBY

I'll tell you where your tire is for 20 bucks --

LEE

You don't know --

RUBY

30 bucks --

KJ

Ruby, don't toy with your brother. He has to do his chores. And please don't waste band-aids, dearest.

Ruby wriggles the BAND-AIDS on her fingertips.

RUBY

Violin blisters.

OLIVE

On your bow hand?

RUBY

I wanna make 1st chair.

LEE

Nerche.

RUBY

Swear jar.

LEE

You don't even know what a nerche is.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (3)

5

KJ
Doesn't sound kind --

*

LEE
How am I supposed to get to school?

KJ
Carpool with your Aunt Dakota.

LEE
Can't Olive take me?

OLIVE
I've got SAT prep --

DAKOTA
What's wrong with me? I'm cool --

LEE
You and Ruby sing Katy Perry, badly --

RUBY
We sing Adele badly too --

KJ
(off Lee's exasperation)
Clean the gutter and you can ride --

KJ finishes packing LUNCHES. Moves onto the CALENDAR --

KJ (CONT'D)
Ruby's orchestra plays Friday night.
Lee's got model UN Sunday...

OLIVE
Vive le France, Nerche?

LEE
I'm Spain, moron.

KJ
Swear jar. And I know it's your dad's weekend. But he's gotta cancel --we'll flop this with weekend after next, 'kay?

Ruby's sparkle fades. As she realizes --

RUBY
No. He's gonna miss my concert... He knows that, right?

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (4)

5

KJ

We'll all be right up front.

Small consolation. Ruby's stung. KJ sees her daughter's pain. Wishes she could do something more. But then --

RUBY

Can Edamame sleep in my room tonight?

(off KJ's ?)

Our dog. Edamame. I named him so now you have to let us keep him.

OLIVE & LEE & RUBY

Can we? Mom? Can we? Please?

Eyes pleading. You'd cave in a sec. But, KJ's unmoved --

KJ

Sorry. A dog is a distraction. You need to focus on your studies and chores and sports and music. Non-starter.

DAKOTA

You couldn't think up a better excuse?

KJ

Not an excuse. Wheels up, everyone or you're gonna be late --

KJ's strict. Not cruel. Part of you wishes your ship were this shape. Homework done. Lunches packed. Smiles. LOVE.

KJ (CONT'D)

Dakota...? Forgetting something?

Dakota reaches into her purse, gives KJ a URINE SAMPLE in a MEDICAL TEST JAR. They share a look. KJ's firm, but kind.

6 INT. TROOP HQ - NORTH SYRACUSE BARRACKS - DAY

6

NY STATE POLICE. TROOPERS. They're not just driving up and down the highway handing out speeding tickets. Troopers handle Homicides. Narcotics. ELITE. TOUGH. INTIMIDATING.

KJ walks Ed (the dog) through the hive. 24 hours of work to do in a 16 hour day. No seconds to waste. Dropping off her REPORT and a CUPCAKE to the VET DESK SERGEANT --

KJ

Happy birthday, handsome. Don't you get any frosting on my arrest report --

KJ'S DUTIFUL. Never BRUSQUE. Life is too important --

7 INT. TROOP HQ - TOXICOLOGY LAB - DAY

7

KJ hands Dakota's URINE SAMPLE to a FORENSIC TECH. KJ takes an active role in her sisters life -- everyone's life:

KJ

We're all praying for your mom, Kass.
You'll let me know when I can bring
over a casserole, something hot --

KJ knows everything about everyone. Invested. Manners. And everyone loves KJ. She's good people. Kind. Warm.

8 INT. TROOP HQ - BULLPEN - DAY

8

KJ with ILENE KATZ-KLAUSNER (dog by her feet.) We recognize Ilene from the Volleyball Game. GHOST MOM. Ilene holds a REAL ESTATE SIGN with her smiling face. But she's fuming:

ILENE

6 of my signs stolen. Stolen!

KJ has the patience of a saint, listening without demeaning:

KJ

It's not exactly a Trooper case.

ILENE

Punk boys. Imagine someone took the sign when I sold your old place, KJ --

KJ sighs. Obviously a sore subject. KJ deflects --

KJ

Your Deb looked sharp at the game.
(then off Ilene)

I'll keep an eye out. Best offer. And Bunko is at my place next week --

KJ's not just a vigilant trooper and caring mom. But a compassionate neighbor. Rock of the community.

9 EXT. TROOP HQ - K9 KENNELS - DAY

9

A GERMAN SHEPHERD ATTACKS A COP IN A PADDED SUIT. BLOODHOUNDS TRAIN. SGT. HOLLIS BRUENER inspects EDAMAME as KJ looks on --

HOLLIS BRUENER

Fine teeth. Strong. Once I test for worms I can screen him for rotation --

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

KJ
You're a peach, Hollis.

HOLLIS BRUENER
I know a good thing when I see it --

Hollis eyes KJ, she catches his not so subtle entendre.

HOLLIS BRUENER (CONT'D)
I have a \$25 gift certificate for
Applebees burning a hole in my pocket --

KJ's PAGER GOES OFF. Duty calls. Sorry --

10 INT. TROOP HQ - BULLPEN - MOMENTS LATER

10

As KJ walks through the crowd -- pulling aside a UNI --

KJ
Hey, Jerry -- you seen my partner?

Partner? We could swear KJ worked solo. The UNI points to:

TROOPER CARLOS COTO (30s). Cuban-American. Intimidating in his UNIFORM. SUNGLASSES. Handsome. Talking to AGENT MIKE MCELROY, a plain-clothes FBI liaison.

As KJ hustles, she sees: McElroy GABS ON. Coto LAUGHS. MORE A CHUCKLE. DISINGENUOUS. KJ NOTES. CURIOUS. She interrupts Coto, urgent --

KJ (CONT'D)
Hey, Coto -- Niagara Falls PD has a
crime scene to turn over to Troop. We
got point --

11 EXT. INTERSTATE 90 - DAY

11

KJ's Interceptor ROARS down the road. Lights blaring. The car thinks it's a tank. A BEAST. The other cars giving way. Respectful of the Interceptor's AUTHORITY.

12 INT. KJ'S PROWLER - CONTINUOUS

12

KJ drives. Coto's shotgun. They drive. Silent.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

KJ

You know people drive 5 miles slower
when a Trooper is on the road. Slowing
the flow. I call it the big blue tampon.

KJ checks Coto -- he should be smiling -- he's not.

KJ (CONT'D)

What's up your nut? At the station you
were all laughs with FBI liaison McElroy --

A beat. Then. Without mincing a word:

COTO

The Volleyball game -- I don't appreciate
being told to wait in the car --

Ah, there's the rub --

KJ

That guy wouldn't confess at barracks.
You don't get these people like I do --

*
*

COTO

I've been here a month --

KJ

I know. And it's a good life. Our
office is 2 tons of US steel intimidation
keeping 53,000 square miles of New York
State free from vile. Homicides. Narco.
Kidnapping. Any curve-ball. All we
need is this Prowler -- you'll see --

*
*

COTO

You've been a Trooper, what? 4, 5 years?
Miami PD was my life. RHD. Vice.
Trenches. 82% solve rate in interrogation --

KJ

Interrogation rooms are intimidating.

COTO

Suspects should be intimidated.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

KJ clocks Coto. He liked being a homicide detective. Hard boiled. Hardened. A very different perspective than KJ's:

KJ

People talk at Starbucks. In kitchens. Bleachers. That's where people talk --

COTO

82%.

KJ

It's a B.
(then can't hold her tongue)
Minus.

As they continue driving down the I-90. Total. Silence.

13 EXT. MOTOR LODGE - NIAGARA FALLS - DAY

13

NIAGARA PD OFFICER GREENE (22, fresh faced) walks KJ and Coto through a posse of Niagara PD and yellow tape --

OFFICER GREENE

That's some drive out from Syracuse --

KJ

Cutbacks expanding our region. No big. I love a quiet drive on the thruway.

Was that a dig at Coto? KJ can't help her tongue --

Officer Greene leads KJ and Coto to a CLOSED MOTEL ROOM DOOR --

OFFICER GREENE

Troopers Flaxton. Coto. This is Aubrey Jensen -- manager here -- called in the report -- he can fill in gaps...

Officer Greene intros a dude named AUBREY. 40s. Heavy. Aubrey's stubby, buffalo-wing-colored fingers seem nervous:

AUBREY

What're Troopers doing here?

KJ

It's not all handing out tickets to jerks in Jaguars. That's icing on the jurisdictional cake --

*
*

COTO

We have run of all crime in state --

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

KJ

Liasing with all your favorite acronyms.
NYPD. DHS. FBI. Or taking lead when
local doesn't have the expertise, like
our brothers here in the Niagara PD --

OFFICER GREENE

Definitely out of our league on this --

14 INT. MOTEL ROOM - MOTOR LODGE - CONTINUOUS

14

OUR CRIME SCENE. AN EXTENDED STAY MOTEL ROOM. KITCHENETTE.
COUCH. A BOUQUET OF ROSES. 4 EMPTY CHAMPAGNE BOTTLES.
GARTER BELT. WEDDING NIGHT gone horribly awry --

OFFICER GREENE

Room is registered to Don Rankin.
Married Eloise Bass last night --

AN ANGRY, OXIDIZED RUST-TINGED BLOOD STAIN ON THE MATTRESS.
BLOODY DRAG MARKS ON THE SHAG CARPET LEADING OUT THE DOOR.

OFFICER GREENE (CONT'D)

Mess of blood. No bodies. Attacked?
Maybe injured...? Abducted...?

COTO

Homicide. 3 gun shots. Drag marks --

Coto counts EVIDENCE MARKERS. 3 SHELL CASINGS. 1 SLUG.

COTO (CONT'D)

This much blood. At least one person
is dead. Eloise? Don? Maybe both?

KJ eyes DON'S WALLET. Driver's license. Big. 220. Smiling.
The man seemed happy, even at the DMV.

KJ

Don's from Kansas?

AUBREY

It's a company address. R8-Consulting --

OFFICER GREENE

Travels tons. Lawrence, Kansas. Dallas,
Texas. Plattsburgh, New York. No home
address, Don lives in motels for work.
That's how he met Eloise --

AUBREY

She's our concierge --

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

COTO

This place has a concierge?

AUBREY

Corporate way of saying she gave out coupons to the Ferry. TGIFridays.

COTO

Anyone report the gunshots?

AUBREY

That'd be the no tell part of motel.

COTO

Officer Greene. Why don't you assist Mr. Jensen and get us a guest registry --

Greene exits with Aubrey. KJ eyes Coto. Was he professional or dismissive of Officer Greene? A signal to KJ, Coto's not a people person -- but a detective itching to scratch facts:

COTO (CONT'D)

No forced entry or fight. Wallet left behind. Phone. Purse. Not a robbery.

Then to the bloody drag marks on the floor...

COTO (CONT'D)

No comforter. Probably used it to move the body. Bodies? Could be Don killed Eloise? Eloise killed Don? 3rd assailant executed them both...?

KJ looks at Coto. HER TONGUE. CLICKING. She does that when she thinks. Looking at Coto. Clicking:

KJ

Fondling forensics is useful as a fortune teller turning tarot. By the book.

*

*

COTO

It's a good book -- you read it? This is the evidence.

*

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

14

KJ

It is. Only. Not so complicated.
People commit crime, just gotta
understand people --

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (3)

14

KJ nods to the nightstand --

KJ (CONT'D)
Plenty of story here. Wrapped
prophylactics. Marriage wasn't
consummated, Don had, performance issues --

KJ points out the 4 EMPTY BOTTLES OF CHAMPAGNE on the bureau.

KJ (CONT'D)
Either a lot of people got a little
tipsy or 2 people got loaded. Even men
with the strongest countenance succumb
to the softening caress of alcohol --

COTO
So they were too drunk to screw --

KJ
Too drunk to open wedding presents --

KJ eyes ELOISE'S PURSE. A WRAPPED WEDDING PRESENT. KJ reads
the card, "TO MY HUSBAND." Unwraps the gift. GOLD. Well,
GOLDEN. LUGGAGE TAGS. ENGRAVED. "DON AND ELOISE RANKIN."

KJ (CONT'D)
Luggage tags...?

KJ bags the tags. As if they were the most valuable evidence
she could find. Coto's baffled by KJ. KJ turns to Coto:

KJ (CONT'D)
Eloise's car is missing --

And just as KJ finishes her sentence, Aubrey returns --

AUBREY
Don't know if this helps but -- Eloise's
car is gone from staff parking --

Coto eyes KJ -- what was that bit about the fortune teller?

15 EXT. NIAGARA FALLS/INT. PROWLER - DAY

15

KJ and Coto drive through town. Eyes vigilantly search every
parking lot. Drive ways. Alleys.

COTO
Cayuga 440, APB for a 99 Grey Honda
Civic. Adam Charlie Tango 3650 --
(a beat, then)
How'd you know Eloise's car was missing?

*
*

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

KJ

No keys in her purse. *

COTO

We should spiral search out from the motel -- protocol -- thorough.

KJ turns the wheel. Grid search. She sees the city. Niagara is beautiful -- and not. Scenic and sordid.

KJ

This town is anathema. Wedding chapels next to strip clubs. Nature next to neon. Why does anyone get married?

COTO

Most people'd say love --

KJ

What's love gotta do with cake? A dress? 50% divorce. 60% cheat. The only upside is registering for steak knives.

(another beat, then)

Nothing better than new steak knives...

KJ's attitude is clocked by Coto. Interesting. Coto spots --

COTO

There --

16 EXT. NIAGARA FALLS - PARKING LOT - DAY

16

START ON: ELOISE'S HONDA CIVIC. KJ and Coto approach in the reflection on the windshield. NIAGARA FALLS behind them. LOUD. They look inside the car -- noticing -- *

COTO

Blood. On the steering wheel --

Only one place anyone could go from here. We see the car is parked at a tourist attraction -- JOURNEY BEHIND THE FALLS.

17 INT. TUNNELS - JOURNEY BEHIND THE FALLS - MOMENTS LATER

17

THE WATER RUSHING OVER THE FALLS IS DEAFENING. MUTING ALL OTHER SOUND. THROBBING IN OUR CHESTS. KJ and Coto head down the tunnel. Tense. Guns drawn. Coto takes point. Checking. Every. Nook. By. The. Book. KJ SIGHS. What a waste. She points to a TRAIL OF BLOOD DROPS ON THE FLOOR. Like bread crumbs. All they have to do is follow:

Yes, Coto sees the blood. But, that's not procedure. Secure the location FIRST. Then. Proceed. Standard protocol.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

KJ is hardly standard. Not when there's a lead right in front of them. She moves past Coto -- following the trail of blood -- deeper into the tunnel -- alone if she has to --

These PARTNERS aren't on the same page. Coto dogs KJ --

Turning the corner to see -- NIAGARA FALLS. Intense. The falls kick up an EERIE MIST. And thick. Hard to see. Scary. Guns leading the way as they turn a corner to find:

ELOISE BASS (21). Alive. Standing on the observation deck. Drenched from the falls, like a damp dog. Mascara infused tears dried on her cheeks. Worse:

HER TAFFETA WEDDING DRESS IS SPATTERED WITH DROPS OF BLOOD.

Eloise stares at KJ and Coto -- down the barrel of their guns -- blood crusted hands raised -- struggling --

ELOISE

Help -- please --

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE18 EXT. NIAGARA FALLS - DAY

18

THE FALLS ARE BEAUTIFUL. But KJ's neither awed nor inspired. PONCHO protecting her from the wet. Thinking. Profiling --

ELOISE BASS. IN BLOODY WEDDING DRESS. Sitting inside a VISITORS CENTER. A once beautiful bride now -- BROKEN. STAINED. DEFEATED. Gravity slumping her frame. And soul. Eloise gives a statement to COTO. He listens. Writes. Folds up his notebook. Joining KJ outside --

COTO

Eloise Bass. Concierge at the Motor Lodge. Married Don Rankin last night. Got drunk. Blacked out. Woke up. Don was gone and all that blood -- she thought he was hurt, went looking for him --

Coto waits for KJ to respond. She doesn't. Listening --

COTO (CONT'D)

Eloise's dad, Gary, has late-stage Parkinson's. She's drowning in medical bills and student loans and --

*

Coto closes his book -- peering at KJ through the mist --

COTO (CONT'D)

I think Eloise married Don to become his beneficiary. Killed him for his cash. Dumped his body in the falls. Motive, means, opportunity and why am I talking when you already decided she's innocent --

*

*

*

KJ takes out the LUGGAGE TAGS. ELOISE'S WEDDING PRESENT --

KJ

If Eloise ideated on murder, she'd buy a gun, not engrave luggage tags. Dreaming of traveling with her husband --

COTO

To Plattsburgh?

KJ

Away from that crap motel.

*

COTO

She didn't call the cops --

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

KJ

She left her purse, cell at the motel.
Would you stay where you dumped a body?

COTO

I think it's a possible cover story to
tug at heart strings. I think it could
be a crime of passion with all that
alcohol. And I think you gravely,
gravely underestimate what people are
capable of -- because of luggage tags --

*
*

KJ checks Eloise... Tongue... Clicking...

KJ

Nope. I like my answer better --

As KJ heads off, we stay with Coto.

COTO

Of course you do --

19 INT. VISITORS CENTER - LATER

19

Eloise is guarded by 2 Troopers. Men. They think she's
guilty. KJ enters. BAG IN HAND. She whispers to the
Troopers. They exit. Leaving KJ and Eloise alone --

KJ

Eloise, I'm Trooper Flaxton. KJ. I'd
like to help you --

A20 INT. VISITORS CENTER - BATHROOM - LATER

A20

KJ hands Eloise her Gym Bag --

KJ

We need your dress for evidence. You
can wear my gym clothes, time being --

ELOISE

Mind untying my bustle?

KJ gloves up as she helps Eloise. TENDER.

*

KJ

Haven't seen this much taffeta since 92 --

ELOISE

It's my Mom's. She died when I was 12.
I wanted to honor her and my Dad -- Don
proposed now so Dad could walk me down
the aisle while he could still walk --

*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

A20 CONTINUED:

A20

*

(CONTINUED)

A20 CONTINUED: (2)

A20

KJ

You take care of your dad by yourself?

*

*

ELOISE

Can't afford otherwise.

*

*

KJ

What happened last night?

*

ELOISE

Not my Barbie dream wedding. Karaoke
and brews. Don sang Welcome to the
Jungle. I sang Crimson & Clover. Danced
with Dad. Twinkies for cake. Awful
and perfect. Don and I stumbled to the
motel. His company sent this basket of
champagne. So we drank and drank --

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

KJ

-- you can step out --

As Eloise steps out of the dress, KJ bags it for evidence.
Eloise changes into KJ's gym clothes.

KJ (CONT'D)

Do you have any idea who'd kill Don?

ELOISE

Is he...? Dead?

*

But no, KJ shakes her head. She's sure. KJ's sorry but:

KJ

I have to swab your fingers for gun
shot residue...

*

Oh. Eloise offers her hands. As KJ circles Eloise's
METICULOUS MANICURE and RING -- it's made out of TINFOIL.

*

KJ (CONT'D)

Beautiful color. Nice ring --

*

*

ELOISE

Don made it from the to-go box at Bucca.
Charmer. Got married here. I thought
he may've come back --

*

*

*

*

As KJ continues swabbing Eloise's fingers. Eloise is struck
by the inhumanity of being evidence.

*

(CONTINUED)

A20 CONTINUED: (3)

A20

KJ

A Trooper will drive you home. Shower.
Change. It won't make you feel better,
but it'll help some. Trooper will stay
right outside, if you remember anything --

*

But, Eloise knows that's not the only reason why --

ELOISE

I didn't kill my husband --

KJ's compassionate. A good quality. But is it rational?

20

INT. VISITORS CENTER - DAY - LATER

20

KJ watches as ELOISE sits in the back of a PROWLER. Head
against the window. The window FOGGING from her sighs.
KJ's mind wanders. She takes out her phone. Dialing. Then:

ROBERT'S VOICEMAIL

*Hi this is Robert with Kroft Insurance.
Leave me a message.*

KJ

It's KJ, Ruby's down that you're not
gonna make her concert. Give us a call --

*

*

KJ hangs up. Thinks. THEN DIALS ANOTHER NUMBER. Phone
ringing. And then a familiar voice answers:

RUBY (ON PHONE)

Hey mommy --

KJ

Hey, I thought you'd be in orchestra --

RUBY (ON PHONE)

...stepped out --

*

KJ makes brief eye contact with Eloise. Eloise looks away,
just as the Prowler drives off. KJ sighs --

KJ

It's gonna be a late one and -- how
about a date this weekend. Picnic at
the Everson. Round of putt-putt. Just
you, me and pork chops from Minnie's?

*

*

*

*

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

RUBY (ON PHONE)

Sounds fun. *

KJ = great mom. She can practically hear Ruby's SMILE. But then, KJ hears CARS -- ROARING past -- so PERCEPTIVE --

KJ

Where are you, exactly?

RUBY (ON PHONE)

Outside the auditorium. I better go back --

KJ

Don't sass Lee tonight. Love you --

RUBY (ON PHONE)

Love you more.

As KJ hangs up... there's something... OFF... about Ruby. So QUICK to get off the phone... KJ's... Concerned.

21 EXT. NIAGARA FALLS - DUSK

21

THE BLUE LIGHTS OF POLICE CARS ILLUMINATE THE MIST AS THE HARBOR PATROL USE A NPPS HART HELICOPTER TO RAPPEL, SEARCHING FOR DON'S CORPSE. KJ brings Coto a cup of hot COFFEE --

KJ

Cream and a splenda, yeah?

Coto tastes. Perfect. KJ notices everything. Is this an olive branch? If so, Coto's about to turn it into olive oil --

COTO

River Patrol's dredging for Don's body.
Eloise tested positive for GSR --

KJ understands it's incriminating -- processing -- but still:

KJ

GSR can be false positive cause of
proximity. Eloise didn't fire a gun --

Coto sighs audibly through his nose. Exasperated --

KJ (CONT'D)

Have you fired a .45 without chipping a
fleck of nail polish? It's a high degree
of difficulty to stick the landing --

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

COTO

Nail polish and luggage tags aren't
evidence -- not hard evidence --

KJ

Right. Let's go find some.

22 INT. PROWLER - NIGHT

22

KJ and Coto drive back to the motel. Slurping coffee. The
quiet is obvious. Coto has to ask:

COTO

What's your problem with me?

KJ considers. Maybe she shouldn't answer. Sleeping dogs
and all that. But then again, that's not in her wheel-house:

KJ

Your buckles are filthy...

Coto looks down at his belt. A little dirty -- but then --
he looks at KJ's buckle. It's polished. Perfect. Glimmer --

KJ (CONT'D)

Do you know the first thing people look
at on a Trooper?

COTO

The gun.

KJ

Do you know the second?

COTO

Buckles?

KJ

Then shoes. Then eyes. Eyes last. No
one looks in the eyes anymore. The art
of conversing dumbed down by smart phones --

KJ notes -- Coto's not looking at her -- eyes averted --

KJ (CONT'D)

Subconsciously, you're telling me, the
world, you don't care about the uniform.
The gig. The state. The people --

COTO

Smudge happens. It's an imperfect world --

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

KJ

You're laughing up FBI liaison McElroy because you wanna get promoted out of the greys and back into a suit. You miss Miami. Uniform must make you feel like Halloween. Like Cops & Robbers --

COTO

You can't judge a book by the cover.

KJ

Of course I can. That's why they put the darn picture there --

(a beat, then)

You want back in plain clothes? I'll drive you to Brooks Brothers. I won't stand in your way. But don't stand in mine. I love my job. I love my uniform.

COTO

I understand.

KJ

No, you don't. A mother of 3 making the force past what some call my prime -- is improbable. But, I did it. Earned every thread. This uniform symbolizes respect. Authority... Accomplishment.

(then off Coto)

You think Eloise is guilty. Fine. Prove it. I'll do the same on my end --

23 INT. MOTOR LODGE - CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

23

KJ and Coto reexamine the crime scene --

COTO

Got calls in to Texas, Kansas, looking for Don's next of kin -- family, but this place is picked clean --

KJ

Surface scratching. To get why Don was murdered, we gotta know who he really was --

COTO

This is luggage and underwear --

KJ

What more do you want?

KJ holds up a WHITE BUTTON DOWN SHIRT...

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

KJ (CONT'D)

Cuff linked. Dry clean only.
Professional. Devoted to his work --
even though his company was cheap --

KJ notches the EMPTY CHAMPAGNE BOTTLES --

KJ (CONT'D)

They sent budget bubbly. 2 for 1.
It's best buy of the week at National
Wholesale --

COTO

It was good enough to finish --

KJ

Wedding night jitters. His relationship
with Eloise was new...ish -- hand me
his cellular, wouldja --

Coto takes DON'S PHONE out of evidence, handing it to KJ --
as she checks it out --

KJ (CONT'D)

Only voice mails from work, not his
girl. No pics of Eloise. They hadn't
even made it into the Bovine Stage.

COTO

That's something you made up --

KJ

It's a thing -- how women buy men bright
colored shirts. Pink. Orange. We're
branding our cattle. Marking territory.
It's better than urinating on ya.

KJ goes back to the WHITE SHIRT --

KJ (CONT'D)

Don has all white shirts... Working...
Texas, Kansas, Plattsburgh.... only
just now letting someone into his life.
The sad map of a traveling businessman.

Sad. Interesting word choice. Not lost on Coto --

COTO

You know you're making my case.
Desperate girl lures lonely man -- not
like there's another suspect...

KJ avoids Coto's glare. Coto turns. Spots:

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (2)

23

COTO (CONT'D)

Why's Cupid facing the wall? You'd think it'd be turned toward the room.

KJ looks at a SMALL, KITSCH CUPID FIGURINE. It's cherubic butt mooning KJ and Coto. Definitely out of place.

Coto turns Cupid around to see: A WIRE. A LENS.

KJ

What'd we got here now...? Camera?

24 EXT. MOTOR LODGE - NIGHT

24

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. Coto pounds on a door marked "MANAGER."
KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. Again. No answer. KJ sees --

AUBREY. THE MANAGER. RUNNING THROUGH THE PARKING LOT.

KJ

Guilty ones always run.

As Coto's about to dig in to chase, KJ stop him. TAKING OUT HER SIDEARM. Coto's stunned --

COTO

Put it away, Flaxton. Seriously --

She doesn't. Waiting until Aubrey runs across a patch of uneven sidewalk. And then --

BAM! KJ FIRES INTO A TRASH CAN -- STARTLED -- AUBREY FALLS FLAT ON HIS FACE. BREAKING HIS NOSE. Coto turns back to KJ --

COTO (CONT'D)

That's a mountain of paperwork for discharging your sidearm... *

KJ

Worth it.

25 INT. MOTOR LODGE - MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

25

A COMPUTER SCREEN IS SPLIT INTO 4 SECTIONS. EACH A ROTATION OF SPY CAMS IN DIFFERENT MOTEL ROOMS. KJ hands Aubrey a COLD COKE from the Vending Machine for his BLOODY NOSE --

KJ

See, this is a proper suspect --

AUBREY

Dude, I didn't kill anyone --

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

KJ

And the spy cams make sure no one steals
the ice buckets?

Caught. Aubrey has to say something --

AUBREY

Away from their families businessmen
will, how do I put this -- bone hookers.

COTO

You, what...? Blackmail? Extortion?
(then off Aubrey)
But that's not all we're gonna find --

AUBREY

(a beat, then)
I've got this web site. Thing. Going.

COTO

Course you do. Course he does.
(off KJ's ?)
Guy thing.

AUBREY

10 bucks a month. Adultry-Inn-Niagara-
dot-you-know. Inn like motel --

KJ

That passes for clever?

COTO

He's scum.

AUBREY

Agreed. But not a killer.

KJ

How do I know that... Camera didn't
record the murder...

AUBREY

I didn't turn it around --

COTO

(gets it)
Eloise did. She knew it was there --

KJ processes. Wait? What? Eloise?

AUBREY

Come on. I didn't hire her because of
her ability to hand out coupons --

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (2)

25

Coto HANDCUFFS Aubrey. Off KJ, the truth settling --

KJ

Eloise was a prostitute?

*

*

26 EXT. ELOISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

26 *

A PROWLER DRIVES OFF -- CROSSING FRAME AS -- KJ AND COTO
WALK UP THE PATH. Ringing the doorbell.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

The door opens to reveal, Eloise's father -- GARY BASS (50s). His Parkinson's is severe. Hand trembling. Tics.

Eloise rushes to her father's side...

ELOISE

Dad... please sit. You remember what Doctor Aller said...

GARY

I can answer the damned door....

Eloise helps her dad to a handicap rail. This once strong man and father is now weak and feeble. It crushes Eloise. Eloise returns... handing KJ her GYM CLOTHES back.

ELOISE

Thanks for this. Sorry about dad, he's... Have you found anything? Don?

Coto coldly takes out a piece of paper --

KJ

We have a warrant for your arrest --

ELOISE

What? Why?

COTO

Prostitution, extortion and suspect in the murder investigation of Don Rankin.

KJ removes her HANDCUFFS. Waiting for Eloise to offer her wrists. Seeing if she'll go willingly. KJ wants Eloise to put up a fight. Deny the charges. But. She doesn't.

Eloise raises her hands -- then looks at her Dad --

ELOISE

I have a cousin in Olean. Please don't let social services take my dad to county.

Is that care? Or confession? Either way -- it breaks KJ's heart. As KJ CUFFS Eloise, she throws a glance to Coto -- a concession. Looks like he was right. She was wrong.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

27 INT. THE FLAXTON HOME - LIVING ROOM - MORNING 27

KJ sorts through old VINYL. New York Girl, so that means, NIGHT RANGER. STYX. BON JOVI. KJ finds JOAN JETT. And as she puts the record on an ancient turntable -- needle dropping --

KJ can't shake Eloise from her thoughts. So, to focus -- KJ shines her BUCKLES. True to her word. Thinking...

28 INT. THE FLAXTON HOUSE - BATHROOM - MORNING 28

CRIMSON AND CLOVER PLAYS AS KJ and Dakota get ready. Muscling for mirror. Dakota applying lipstick. KJ brushing her hair.

DAKOTA

Loving the nostalgia. Us sharing a bathroom. Just missing the smell of Mom's stale Sanka... I used to think you looked so pretty in braces --

KJ

I shoulda known you were trouble when you stole my retainer. So gross. You cutie-pie. Another lifetime --

So very different now. 3 kids. Job. Responsibilities...

KJ (CONT'D)

I got your drug test back. It's clean. I'm proud --

Dakota knew her URINE SAMPLE was clean. No news to her. She pins her BALLY'S NAME TAG near her cleavage.

DAKOTA

Up-selling gym memberships to people who can't afford it? Good on me.

KJ

We all got debts to pay.

DAKOTA

Dog eat edamame world...

KJ

We're not getting a dog.

DAKOTA

How can you say no to Ruby's sweet face?

Sweet face indeed. But then again:

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

KJ

Did you notice anything off about Ruby when you picked her up yesterday?

DAKOTA

I didn't pick her up. Ruby told me orchestra was canceled. She got a ride home from that Layla's mom --

KJ

Ruby lied to me.

29 INT. RUBY & OLIVE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

29

KJ SCANS the bedroom. Just like the MOTOR LODGE CRIME SCENE. Work mixing with home. *

QUICK CUTS: KJ SEARCHES THE ROOM. RUBY'S CLOSET. DRESSER DRAWERS. UNDER THE BED. Typical hiding spaces. But no. Nothing. But as KJ is on the ground she spots:

The carpet DIMPLES from the feet of Ruby's bed are off kilter. Ruby's bed was moved. And recent. KJ HEAVES the bed -- and there, obscured by blankets and stuffed animals, KJ discovers:

A STACK OF ILENE KATZ-KLAUSNER'S REAL ESTATE SIGNS. OH CRAP! RUBY'S THE THIEF. RUBY?

Ruby enters -- seeing the signs. KJ's stunned consternation.

RUBY

Oh. Ooops.

KJ

Ooops? This is stealing. Ruby. This is serious -- *

RUBY

It's a prank. Are you gonna arrest me?

30 INT. TROOP HQ - HOLDING CELL

30

KJ has Ruby locked up. So. There. Gives new meaning to take your daughter to work day. KJ's pissed:

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

KJ

You're too damned smart to be stupid.
What could possess you to do this...?

Ruby shrugs. Her lips pressed together. Color drained. As if to tell KJ -- she has nothing else to say. Fine then --

KJ walks off. Ruby hears a door open. And slam closed. Oh. My. God. KJ just left Ruby. Alone. And It looks like KJ's not coming back. A. Long. Beat. Of. Silence.

Then: The DOOR opens. But it's not KJ returning. It's DAKOTA. Entering with a TROOPER.

DAKOTA

Your mom paid your quote unquote bail.
Come on. Let's get you to school --

RUBY

How much do I owe her?

DAKOTA

She said 3 hundred --

RUBY

3? To pay in chores?

DAKOTA

Starters, kiddo. Starters. She took Lee's tire for not cleaning a gutter.
Your pain is to come --

As the Trooper unlocks the cell door with a SQUEAK.

31 INT. TROOP HQ - BULLPEN - DAY

31

KJ's on the phone. We hear:

ROBERT'S VOICEMAIL

*Hi this is Robert with Kroft Insurance.
Leave me a message.*

KJ

So, our Ruby stole Ilene Katz-Klausner's real estate signs. What's the equivalent of making Ruby smoke a pack of cigarettes? Make her sell a house in this economy...?

*
*

A moment of frustration. More. Pressure. Doubt.

KJ (CONT'D)

I dunno why...? I dunno -- Call me back so we can figure this out --

*

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

KJ hangs up. Then dials another number. Waiting for the other end to pick up. Her eyes FRUSTRATED. Voice CHEERY.

KJ (CONT'D)

Hi, Ilene. Funny story --

32 INT. TROOP HQ - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

32

KJ sits across from Eloise (in Orange Prison Jumper.) KJ's grief about Ruby displaced on Eloise. Mama grizzly -- claws bared -- determined to get answers:

KJ

I'm usually a keen judge of character.
A razor. I believed you. I want to...
(off Eloise)

But here we are -- Prostitution.
Blackmail. Is murder that improbable?
To take care of your Dad...?

ELOISE

You know what I wanted most...? For my
Dad to not worry about me. I put myself
through college. Gonna be a nurse --
(off KJ)

Do you know what jobs a college grad
can find in Niagara? Stripper and hooker --
I worked for Aubrey once. Once.

KJ

But you stayed on as Concierge?

ELOISE

There's no jobs. My dad is --
(sick. dying.)
Couple years ago, Don had this fiancée.
Mimi. He told me she got sick. Died.
Like my Dad. Don got me. We needed
to be loved... I loved him...

KJ

(off Eloise's pain)
I got word to your cousin in Olean.
She's staying with your Dad --

Eloise nods a thank you. KJ squares Eloise. Very. Motherly.

KJ (CONT'D)

I hate this room. It's not a room for
people... If you're guilty, confess --
But, if you tell me you didn't kill Don --
I will fight -- I'll figure it out --

ELOISE

I didn't do it --

KJ stares at Eloise. Thinking... And stalks off -- into:

33 INT. TROOP HQ - OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

33

FINDING COTO. He was watching? KJ walks to Coto. High noon. Is KJ gonna chew him out? Or deck him? Or both? But then: She puts her SHOULDER up under his gut. And LIFTS.

COTO

What're you doing? Stop!

But she doesn't. Feet digging against the linoleum for a foothold. Straining. Arms wrapped around Coto. HEAVING.

IN INTERROGATION -- Eloise hears KJ'S GROANS coming from the other side of the mirrored glass. What the what...?

IN OBSERVATION -- KJ tries to lift Coto off the ground. But. She can't. KJ lets go. Breathing through her nose --

KJ

I'm in the best shape of my life and you weigh 20 pounds less than Don... No way Eloise moved his body --

KJ shoulders sweat from her eyes -- checking Eloise --

KJ (CONT'D)

She didn't do it -- least not by herself --

34 INT. THE FLAXTON HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

34

WE HEAR BEETHOVEN'S ODE TO JOY. Beautiful, but weird in the bathroom. LEE enters -- pulling aside the SHOWER to reveal -- RUBY. PLAYING VIOLIN. Strange. But okay...

LEE

Okay, 5 bucks. Where's my tire...?

RUBY

Just do your dumb chores.

OLIVE crosses in, SWEATY from practice, pushing past Lee:

OLIVE

Get the hell out, Lee.

LEE

Where's my tire?!?! Seriously?!?!

Olive pushes Lee out of the bathroom --

OLIVE

You too Ruby, I need to shower.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

RUBY

My concert is Friday --- I'm practicing.

OLIVE

You're lucky mom's even letting you go.
Now get or I'm turning on the water --

RUBY

It's the only room with good acoustics.

OLIVE

Brat, flee --

RUBY

No! It's not my fault there's only one
shower. And we have to share a room.
I hate this house. Stupid stupid house --

Ruby chokes on her words. Tears. Olive pulls Ruby into a
hug. A great big sister. Comforting. WE SEE. THROUGH THE
CRACK IN THE DOOR. DAKOTA WATCHING THE HEART-RENDING MOMENT.

35 INT. PROWLER/EXT. MOTOR LODGE PARKING LOT - DAY

35

KJ and Coto sit in the car. KJ's eyeing the motel and street,
tongue clicking, recreating a profile of the crime --

KJ puts the car in gear and pulls out of the lot --

KJ

So let's say 2 people killed Don --

COTO

Or 1 strong person --

KJ

2 people. I wanna see what they saw
when they moved his body -- did they
stop for coffee? A potty? I'd wanna
dump it and fast, where no one'd see it --

COTO

In the falls.

KJ

(eyes, searching, then)

My son, Lee, won't clean the rain gutters --
so I hid his bicycle tire.

COTO

Amazingly, that doesn't surprise me.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

KJ
Lee will find it when he finishes his
job. Put the tire on the roof.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED: (2)

35

KJ (CONT'D)

I want my kids to be honest and yeah --
honest --

KJ's thinking more of Ruby than Lee at the moment, but Coto realizes something even more profound:

COTO

First time you ever talked to me about
your family.

*
*

KJ

(sticking to business)

The point of hiding something is so it
won't be found. Any killer knows we'd
check the falls. Body's somewhere else --

COTO

For someone who knows everything about
everyone, you don't share. 5 partners in
2 years. Prefer working alone. Volleyball
game. Morning patrol. Why's that...?

KJ doesn't like being profiled... tongue clicking. Then --

KJ

-- That's where I'd dump Don...

KJ points to a billboard HYDE CEMETERY. A GRAVEYARD. TWO
BLOCKS AWAY. Cheesy slogan. Caring for life after life.

KJ (CONT'D)

Most bodies are dumped inside 2 miles.
Cemetery is 6 blocks from the motel --
No lights. Pitch black. What's one
more corpse in a graveyard?

COTO

Seriously? Hyde Cemetery? Hide?

KJ

Do you know why Hellman's changed it's
name to Best Foods?

COTO

People aren't that susceptible.

KJ

Says the man with the polished buckles --

KJ eyes down to Coto's belt. It is indeed -- sparkly.

36

EXT. HYDE CEMETERY - NIAGARA FALLS - LATER

36

THE K9 UNIT CADAVER DOGS search through the headstones.
Noses to the ground -- hunting. KJ and Coto follow --

KJ

Don wasn't embalmed. So he'll stink
worse than the Dolphins on a Sunday --

COTO

Tough talk from a Bills fan... let's
see if the body's even here --

KJ hears a BARK. It's EDAMAME. HOLLIS is training Ed for
the K9 unit. Ed practically leaps on KJ --

HOLLIS BRUENER

He misses you --

KJ

Naw, he just thinks I have lunch. Sorry,
Edamame. How's he training up?

Hollis "benjis" KJ. Trainer acts like his dogs. Sad eyes:

HOLLIS BRUENER

He doesn't play well with the pack. I
don't think it's a good fit. Probably
have to send him to the pound. Sorry --

KJ rubs Ed's thick coat. Poor guy... And then:

UNI (O.S.)

Over here!

KJ and Coto come to a grave... Dogs going wild. KJ's not
waiting for an invitation -- as she grabs a SHOVEL WE TIME
CUT THOUGH KJ, COTO and other TROOPERS digging. Dirt piling.
While the others get tired. KJ SOLDIERS ON. Coto refuses
to let her go it alone. Working together.

KJ

2 person job...

Until they hit... SOMETHING. Sifting away dirt to find.
THE BLOODY COMFORTER FROM THE MOTEL. AND INSIDE --

DON'S CORPSE. KJ's filthy face beaming accomplishment:

KJ (CONT'D)

Well, there you go.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE37 INT. TROOP HQ - HOLDING CELLS - NIGHT

37

KJ finds Eloise sitting behind bars -- stark.

KJ

Found Don's body. Inching closer to the truth.

ELOISE

(but is it?)

The public defender told me to take a plea. He didn't even ask. They destroyed my wedding ring. The guards thought it was just tin foil. Trash.

KJ's the only one looking out for Eloise. It's all on her --

38 INT. TROOP HQ - BULLPEN - NIGHT

38

KJ and Coto wait on Don's autopsy. KJ's tongue. Clicking. KJ's VOICE-MAIL BEEPS. A MESSAGE CAME IN.

COTO

Medical Examiner? Results on Don's autopsy...? *

KJ

(checking)

Nope...

Caller ID says it's ROBERT. KJ GROWLS. Dialing frustrated --

ROBERT'S VOICEMAIL

*Hi this is Robert with Kroft Insurance.
Leave a message.*

KJ

Don't know how I missed your call. Really need to talk about Ruby... *

KJ HANGS UP. Sitting. Clicking. Doubting. Then...

COTO

Hard raising kids... My son, Emilio. Punishing me for moving. Only eats pasta with butter -- speaks in shrugs --

Coto's making an effort. KJ should reciprocate -- engage --

KJ

How old is Emilio?

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

COTO

11. I had to get out of Miami. Homicide was a shark tank. Politics. Solve rates. So here we are... state trooper --

A touch of SADNESS in Coto's voice. Affected. Then shifting --

COTO (CONT'D)

How come you don't wear sunglasses? It is part of the uniform? Makes us look authoritative. And cool. I mean --

Coto puts on his SUNGLASSES. Modern Erik Estrada. Yeow!

KJ

They're cold, distancing. I want people to look me in the eye --

Coto squares KJ -- what's the real story? She sighs:

KJ (CONT'D)

My head is abnormally small. Cantaloupes are bigger. Glasses just fall off --

Coto smiles. KJ is -- unique. No denying that.

COTO

That was good. How you found Don's body. You're one of a kind --

KJ

(actually blushing)

I'm nothing special. Upstate girl. My hair is damaged from too much aqua net. I spend Sundays praying, for the Bills -- And I always carry my kids in my heart.

KJ looks over at Eloise's BLOODY WEDDING DRESS in evidence --

KJ (CONT'D)

Kids make mistakes. Mistakes don't make Eloise a sociopath --

Maybe. Or not. But. End of the day, these two aren't just Troopers working a case. THEY'RE PARENTS. A BEAT, THEN -- KJ'S DESK PHONE RINGS -- WE SMASH TO:

39 INT. TROOP HQ - MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE - LATER

39

KJ and Coto stand over DON'S CORPSE. THE MEDICAL EXAMINER, DR. REITZ (60s), morbidly skinny, goes over his AUTOPSY --

DR. REITZ

2 shots to the chest. 3rd grazed his hand. Defensive wound. Slow reflexes. Tox has his B.A.C. at 1.6 --

KJ

Don's an alcoholic. Jaundice. Rhinoceros nose. 4 empty champagne bottles -- Don can't have one drink. It's a disease --

Coto checks Dr. Reitz. He nods. KJ's right.

KJ (CONT'D)

I was a rehab social worker. Got into it because my sister's an addict. Clean now. Thank God for 2nd 2nd 2nd chances --

And just when we think we know KJ. SHE CHECKS A UNIQUE, CIRCULAR MARK ON DON'S BACK. DOUBLE RIMMED WITH DIVOTS.

KJ (CONT'D)

What's this lividity mark here?

DR. REITZ

Post-mortem, Don's body was lying on something as the blood settled --

COTO

Wasn't anything in the grave. Maybe in the the car that dumped his body?

KJ

Nothing matching it in Eloise's Honda.

*

COTO

Just means his body wasn't moved in her car. Or she tossed it.

KJ

So what is it?

Dr. Reitz SHRUGS his shoulders.

KJ (CONT'D)

This could help find a killer -- what do you mean...?

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

KJ SHRUGS. Aping. Irked by Dr. Reitz's complacency.

DR. REITZ

Tech said it's not in the database. It could be anything.

KJ

Can it be a piano? A microwave? No. It's a 6 inch circle with 5 divots. What's in your car trunk looks like this...?

Dr. Reitz SHRUGS. APATHETIC. KJ's eyes flair. Really??? As KJ opens her mouth to lay into Dr. Reitz -- WE SMASH TO:

40 INT. THE FLAXTON HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

40

THE SWEAR JAR. KJ deposits a TWENTY. She chewed out Dr. Reitz something fierce. KJ takes a SKETCH of the CIRCULAR MARK. Searching through her PANTRY for a match when:

LEE PASSES IN -- BICYCLE TIRE IN HAND -- HE FOUND IT.

LEE

You think you're so clever, but I still didn't clean the gutter. So there --

LEE EXITS. KJ seems, unfazed. Weird. Right? And then:

LEE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

WHERE'S MY CHAIN!?!? YOU SADIST!

KJ smirks. Always one step ahead. She looks back through the pantry. They're out of CEREAL. CRACKERS. FRUIT.

KJ

Weren't you gonna go shopping, Dakota?

She closes the pantry door to see Dakota --

DAKOTA

It's know it's not my place, but -- grounding your kids with fines? Hiding bikes? On top of music and sports and maybe...? Ruby's devastated, crying --

KJ

Right. Ruby is 11. And guilty and --

DAKOTA

Maybe you could ease up a skosh --

KJ's punishing herself enough over what to do about Ruby. She doesn't need Dakota's salt.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

KJ

You'd prefer I was what...? Like Mom?
Because that worked out so well for you --

DAKOTA

This is just about Ruby. *

KJ

You're right. It's not your place... *
(but, then) *

Ruby hun, grab your parka. We're getting *
groceries -- *

41 INT. NATIONAL WHOLESALE - NIGHT

41

KJ INTERROGATES Ruby like all her suspects - normal places (kitchens, volleyball games.) In this case SHOPPING. It's the first time we've seen KJ in regular clothes. No uniform. Just. Mom.

AISLE 5. Beverages. Soda/Juice/Beer/Alcohol. KJ grabs two small cartons of CHOCOLATE MILK. KJ FOLDS OPEN Ruby's carton. They share a drink. Nothing like chocolate milk to loosen an 11-year-old's lips. The comfort of sugar:

KJ

I just don't get why you stole the signs?

RUBY

I said I'm sorry.

KJ

Sorry doesn't answer the question. Why
Ilene Katz-Klausner? What'd she do?

A beat. Ruby's feet shuffling on linoleum. Slurping milk.

RUBY

She baked cookies at the open house. *

KJ

So...?

RUBY

Our house never smells like cookies. *
She tricked people. She's such a liar. *

KJ

You miss our old place?

Ruby shrugs. She guesses. Yeah. Doesn't have the words.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

KJ (CONT'D)

You know it's not Ilene's fault Dad and
I split up -- you know that, right...?

She understands. And doesn't. Another shrug.

KJ (CONT'D)

Don't shrug me, hun.

*

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (2)

41

RUBY

Maybe if the house didn't sell, you and
dad would've figured some stuff out --

And there it is. With Ruby's Dad canceling his weekend.
Missing her concert. It's about their broken family --

This is the innocence that can only come from a child. Ruby
drinks. Chocolate milk mustache. Sweet. Young.

KJ wipes away Ruby's milk mustache (invoking the imagery of
KJ swabbing Eloise -- mothers caring for daughters).

KJ

It's not easy -- dad and I splitting --
especially on you. And you are so
special, sometimes I forget you're only
just 11. I'm sorry it's been tough. *

But KJ's sorry doesn't exactly heal all wounds --

KJ (CONT'D)

Grab us some juice boxes for lunch -- *

Ruby goes to grab some JUICE BOXES, when KJ notices right
across the aisle:

CHAMPAGNE. THE SAME BRAND FROM DON AND ELOISE'S MOTEL ROOM.
ON SALE. 2 FOR 1. BEST BUY OF THE WEEK. JUST LIKE KJ SAID.

KJ has a thought. As Ruby returns with the juice boxes --
KJ takes out the LIVIDITY MARK SKETCH FROM DON'S BACK --

KJ (CONT'D)

I need your help with something --

RUBY

Does this count toward my chores?

KJ

It counts as sometimes you're too smart
for your own good. You need a
distraction. A game. Scavenger hunt --

WE JUMP CUT: AS KJ'S SHOPPING CART FILLS WITH GROCERIES --
THEY LOOK FOR A MATCH TO THE CIRCULAR MARK. CHECKING OUT
JAR LIDS. Peanut Butter. Jelly. Pickles.

Rubbing it into their SKIN. Trying to RECREATE the mark.
But no luck -- not match. You'd never imagine there could
be so many 6 inch circles. HOME WARES. Colanders. Pots.
SPORTING GOODS. Frisbees. Soccer Pylons. And then into:

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (3)

41

HARDWARE. UNTIL THEY REACH PAINT... PAINT CANS. 6 INCH CIRCULAR LIDS. DAMNED CLOSE, BUT NO MATCH --

Ruby scans down the aisle. Rows of rainbow colors of paint. All smiles and excitement. Bringing KJ:

A CAN OF PAINT. INTERIORS. AN OVERLY DESIGNED LABEL. KJ compares it to the sketch. 6 inch. Double rimmed. 5 divots. AN EXACT MATCH. KJ gives Ruby a big old kiss. Her brilliant daughter. Ruby glows. Accomplished. Off KJ -- knowing that one can of paint won't solve Ruby's larger problem.

42 OMIT

42

43 EXT. TROOP HQ - MOTOR POOL - DAY

43

ROWS AND ROWS OF PROWLERS. KJ stares at the PAINT CAN on the hood of her Cruiser. Coto joins her. Paint LID in one hand. A CROISSANT in the other -- eating --

*

COTO

Got your email about the paint can --

*

KJ

Whoever had this paint in their car, dumped, may've killed Don --

*

*

COTO

We gotta find who --

*

KJ

Sisyphusian.

COTO

Just takes dedication. Emilio's mom, Anna, was the parent. I was dedicated. 82%. Might be a B. Minus. Still 2nd highest in my unit...

*

Coto takes a bite of his croissant. Making KJ wait.

KJ

Consider my breath bated.

Coto takes out a U.S. MAP -- unfolding it onto the hood --

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED:

43

COTO

Don had four work hubs, right? We
eliminate Kansas and Texas. Too far --

*
*

Coto folds the MAP to NEW YORK -- 5 RED Xs dot NIAGARA --

COTO (CONT'D)

But in Niagara. 5 sales of paint in 8
months. It's no top seller --

KJ

Noticed that. Fancy label and pricey.
Contractors use it to turn profit --

COTO

The sales in Niagara aren't connected.
Alibis check -- so Plattsburgh -- 45
purchases in the same time --

*
*

Coto folds the map to EASTERN NEW YORK. A LOT MORE Xs --

COTO (CONT'D)

Of those, 9 fueled on I-90 to Niagara
on the day of Don's murder. Doesn't
mean someone didn't pay in cash --

*

KJ

Everyone uses credit cards these days
what with reward points? Any connection
to Eloise -- the prostitution ring...
Don's life -- His dead fiancée --

*

COTO

-- Mimi, yeah no -- Not his company, R8
Consulting. Gotta dig deeper. These
may just be 9 paint enthusiasts --

KJ

May be our killer. Guess we're going
to Plattsburgh to find out. That's
some dazzling pavement poundery...

COTO

And by the book...

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (2)

43

As Coto finishes his breakfast. Off KJ. Maybe she judged too quickly --

44 EXT. I-90/INT. PROWLER - DAY

44

KJ and Coto enjoy the drive. KJ CHECKS HER CELL --

COTO

Robert still hasn't called back?

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

KJ shakes her head, NO. Not yet. But it weirds KJ out --
Coto talking about KJ's ex --

COTO (CONT'D)

You ever talk to anyone about it? The
divorce. Department shrink? A friend?

KJ

A shrink?

*
*

COTO

Might help. Sharing. Why you wanna
work alone... Your trust issue...

*

KJ

My trust what...?

COTO

I'm right, right?

*

Coto took a step too far. He knows. KJ's tongue -- clicks...

KJ

We're partners you and I. Not friends.
Barely colleagues until you get yourself
a promotion and --

*

Leave. But she doesn't say that. She turns it back on Coto:

KJ (CONT'D)

Is this why your wife divorced you?
Too much detecting. I see the tan on
your ring finger... Why you moved...

Coto's quiet. Putting on his SUNGLASSES. COLD. DISTANT.

COTO

Anna, uh-hm, went for a run and had a
brain aneurysm. Died. So... Yeah...

(a beat then)

Judging a book by the cover? You only
had to read the first page of my file --

A big lump in KJ's throat makes it difficult to say:

KJ

I'm so sorry.

COTO

Well, there you go --

*

And just as bridges were being built.

45 EXT. IN AND AROUND PLATTSBURGH, NEW YORK - DAY

45

KJ and Coto drive around the town. Going to every name on their list. Old. Fashioned. Police work.

Investigating. Asking questions of: Neighbors. Co-workers. Showing photos of Don. Eloise. Trying to find some connection. Heads shaking no. Then heading to the next lead. Plenty of paint cans. Plenty of dead ends.

46 EXT. DESMOND AVENUE - PLATTSBURGH, NY - DAY

46

KJ and Coto walk up the path to one more HOUSE. Number 8 --

COTO

Owen Stanhope. Fueled in Batavia day of the murder and Whitesboro the next --

KJ notes: Sidewalk chalk. Drawings. Hopscotch board. Signs of kids. Family.

KJ

Time line checks... What do we know about this guy?

COTO

Sub-contractor. Painter. Single. Changed his address 6 months ago --

They reach the door. DING DONG. No answer. No one's home. No car in the driveway. KJ considers what to do next when she spots a WHITE VAN driving toward the house...

KJ

What's Stanhope's license plate? 14492?

*

COTO

-- JI. That's him --

*

KJ and Coto spot OWEN STANHOPE behind the wheel. Stares are exchanged. Ready for him to pull in the driveway. But then. He just keeps going down the street... KJ sighs --

KJ

Guilty ones always run.

KJ and Coto dash to the Prowler. Engine ROARING like a beast. Peeling out. Sirens blaring. THE CHASE IS ON!

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR47 EXT. I-87/INT. PROWLER - DAY

47

THE CRUISER HAULS ASS. SIREN SCREAMING. BLUE LIGHTS PULSATING -- STANHOPE'S WHITE VAN IS FIRMLY SET IN KJ'S SITES. SHE'S NOT GIVING AN INCH. RELENTLESS. DOGGED. PURSUIT.

COTO
(on walkie)
10-12 suspect Owen Stanhope, passing
Bear Swamp Road at 85 -- send EMS --

DISPATCH
10-4, EMS and Airborne en route.
Restrictive pursuit policy is in effect --

COTO
Are you current on policy? *

Of course she is. But her eye's on the prize. When:

KJ's phone RINGS. ROBERT. Seriously? Now? Work and life crossing at the worst possible moment. Stanhope's Van. Just in reach. And stunningly, KJ answers (VIA BLUETOOTH) --

KJ
Hi, Robert --

COTO
Seriously...? *

Coto checks KJ, is she insane? Well. Yes. But she promises with a look, this will only take a sec --

ROBERT (ON PHONE)
Sorry about the phone tag.

KJ
You're busy. We all have our things --

KJ almost sideswipes into a SEMI -- nearly becoming ROAD KILL -- then steering back into safety --

ROBERT (ON PHONE)
Is that a siren? Is this a bad time?

COTO
Uhhh, yeah -- *

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

KJ

It's fine -- we need to talk -- I can
wear a lot of hats here, but I can't be
Ruby's dad. She needs you too --

*

*

ROBERT (ON PHONE)

And I'm tearing myself up about her
concert --

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

KJ

We need to decide how to punish this stealing... And I'm doing everything here. Games and bake sales and essays and... I can't decide this myself --

Family. Job. They're all high speed pursuits. Even for KJ Flaxton. IT PILES UP. DIFFICULT.

ROBERT (ON PHONE)

You never listened to my opinion before --

KJ

Please don't make this about us.

KJ feels like she's airing dirty laundry. Coto pays no heed -- he has a plan to stop Stanhope... motioning for KJ to drive past Stanhope. FASTER. Good plan. AS KJ REVS THE ENGINE:

ROBERT (ON PHONE)

You're uncompromising. It's your best quality. And worst. I'm not surprised Ruby stole those signs, are you?

KJ MANEUVERS the Prowler in FRONT of Stanhope's Van --

KJ

I've only ever been myself. If I teach my children that, then good for me --

-- Locking bumpers with a JOLT. Nearly running off the road --

ROBERT (ON PHONE)

KJ? I think you're breaking up --

KJ pumps the brakes. DECELERATING. Forcing Stanhope to a STOP. Mission. Accomplished. KJ and Coto are out of the Prowler in a flash -- cuffing and arresting Stanhope --

WE STILL HEAR THE CAR'S BLUETOOTH --

ROBERT (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

You sure this is a good time? KJ? KJ?

48 INT. STANHOPE HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

48

KJ and Coto have OWEN STANHOPE. Handcuffed. Confused.

OWEN

Shouldn't I be at a precinct?

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

COTO

Got a warrant to search your home. I
could break you in interrogation, but
that's not where people talk, right KJ?

*
*

It's the first time Coto's called her KJ. KJ notes it.
Touched even by Coto's effort to get on the same page. KJ
looks around the KITCHEN -- taking it all in -- particularly:

TOYS. Legos. Batman. Probably belonging to a BOY. AND
THE FOOD. JUICE BOXES. Same brand KJ bought at Walmart.
Fruit leather. Edamame. Like KJ's pantry.

KJ

This isn't your kitchen, is it?

THE BILLS. Organized. Post-it notes with DUE DATES. KJ
scans the phone bill. Curiously looking down the numbers.
Then, stunned to see the name on the bill -- MIMI STANHOPE.

A WOMAN ENTERS. 30s. GROCERY BAGS IN HER HANDS.

KJ (CONT'D)

Mimi... Mimi? You're supposed to be
dead, girl.

*
*

COTO

Don's fiancée, Mimi?

*

KJ

More than that --

*

KJ eyes a BLOCK OF STEAK KNIVES on the counter.

KJ (CONT'D)

Nice knives. You register for those?
Don's wife. Wife, but didn't take his
name. Where's your son, Mimi?

*

MIMI

He's on a play date.

KJ eyes Mimi. Tongue. Clicking. Looking at the groceries.
Toys. Phone bill. Light bulb.

KJ

I understand, Mimi. Not so complicated.
Don cheated on you. You killed him.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (3)

48

OWEN

Don't talk without a lawyer --

*

*

COTO

And you're what? Same last name --
brother? Protective brother --

*

*

KJ

Hard to raise a kid with Don away. You
need help. Help disposing a body...

*

*

OWEN

You have no proof.

KJ

I have juice boxes --

*

Uhm, juice boxes -- seriously? Juice? Boxes?

KJ (CONT'D)

Hard to make a house a home. School.
Sports. Chores. Commitment in every lunch
you pack. Shopping. Juice boxes. Across
from the champagne. On sale. 2 for 1 --

*

*

*

*

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (4)

48

COTO

They gave Don the champagne -- an
alcoholic. You knew he'd get wasted --

*
*

KJ

Waited on Eloise to pass out. All they had
to do was knock... Don let you in and --
(they all know the rest)
Can I borrow some tin foil?

*
*
*

KJ takes out the tinfoil from Mimi's drawers -- Coto's
wondering (and so are we): What the hell is KJ doing now?

*

KJ (CONT'D)

We're so much the same, Mimi. Only
difference is I never married --

*
*

But what? Coto thought KJ was divorced (and so did we).

KJ (CONT'D)

Didn't see the point. Didn't need a
ring or dress to know I was in love --

*
*

As KJ talks, she rips off a small piece of the tinfoil. KJ
TWISTS the foil. Turning.

KJ (CONT'D)

And like your Don, my Robert commuted
to work. Akron. That's where he met
Joyce -- cheated on me -- Joyce

*
*
*

Still hurts to even say her name...

KJ (CONT'D)

So now he lives in Ohio and I armored
up. I could do it all. My job. My
kids. All myself. But there is rage.
A whole mess of rage --

*
*
*

The confession is more for Coto. KJ's truth. We see now --
KJ's shaped the FOIL into a RING. Like Eloise's...

*

KJ (CONT'D)

I'm sorry Don did this to you, your boy --
He broke a promise, didn't he?

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (5)

48

Mimi considers for a moment -- and then --

*

She reaches into her purse -- Coto's hand immediately goes to his SIDEARM. In case. But Mimi pulls out A FOIL RING. Same as Eloise's. KJ was right. A silent admission --

MIMI

It wasn't just because of Eloise --

*

Mimi pulls out -- A PHOTO. CHEESY. SEARS. Don with ANOTHER FAMILY. Wife. Kid. And then -- MIMI TAKES OUT ANOTHER PHOTO. Don with ANOTHER FAMILY.

MIMI (CONT'D)

Texas. Kansas. Bastard had 3 families --
Couldn't let him do it again. I had to
stop him -- had to save that poor girl --

HOLY CRAP! KJ STARES AT THE PHOTOS. DON WITH 3 OTHER FAMILIES. A HORRIFIC PERVERSION OF EVERYTHING KJ HOLDS DEAR.

KJ

Well... There you go.

49 EXT. ELOISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

49

KJ and Coto's prowler pulls up. Eloise is free. Kind of:

COTO

State's Attorney's giving you probation
in exchange for your full cooperation
in the Motor Lodge investigation --

Eloise nods, fine. Then. As she's about to head out the door --

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

KJ

You're not wrong wanting to be loved --
you know -- it's not wrong.

Eloise manages a smile -- but even more appropriately:

ELOISE

Thank you --

KJ watches as Eloise walks up to her house. Eloise's father,
GARY answers the door. As Eloise is about to give him crap
for standing up -- he HUGS his daughter. Unconditional love.

50 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - SYRACUSE - DAY

50

WE START ON: ILENE KATZ-KLAUSNER'S REAL ESTATE SIGN. We
adjust to find: KJ and RUBY. In the process of going house
to house -- REHANGING the signs Ruby stole.

KJ

After we hang the signs, you're gonna
put Ilene's postcard in every mailbox --

KJ checks Ruby -- as they work --

KJ (CONT'D)

You can get mad at us, Dad and I. Not a
realtor. Not stealing. You tell me how
you feel. That's the beauty part of
family. We're so lucky --

*
*
*

Ruby looks up at KJ. Eyes full. Raw innocence.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

50

RUBY

I hate that you and dad broke our home --

KJ

Me too... But silver lining? I hear it only takes 2 years to get used to a new house --

51 INT. THE FLAXTON HOME - KITCHEN - DUSK

51

DINNER. Like breakfast. Chaotic. Dakota and Olive cook. Ruby does homework. LEE BAND AIDS HIS KNUCKLE. Fingernails filthy. KJ joins Lee --

LEE

Cut it cleaning the gutter. Happy?

KJ

I know it's hard being the only bud in a house filled with women. But, you're so capable of greatness. So I'm gonna push. That's me. That's my job, right?

KJ gives Lee his BIKE CHAIN.

LEE

Please don't say bud...

KJ smiles content. THE DOORBELL RINGS. *

KJ

Someone get it -- it's a surprise --

Ruby runs to the door, excited -- opening it to find -- COTO. Ruby deflates...

RUBY

Mom, we have to adjust your definition of surprise -- it's just some guy --

COTO

You must be Ruby...?

But we know this isn't just some trooper. KJ's inviting Coto into her home. To eat with her family. That's major --

And then they hear it -- A DOG -- BARKING -- AS:

COTO'S SON, EMILIO (11) COMES IN WITH EDAMAME! THE HUSKY ITCHING TO BE REUNITED WITH THE FLAXTONS! RUBY GLOWS!

RUBY

We can keep him?

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: 51

KJ nods, yeah. As Ruby beams --

52 EXT. FLAXTON HOME - BACKYARD - DUSK 52

Coto watches as the Emilio plays with Ruby, Lee and Olive -- running around with EDAMAME. KJ joins Coto. Bringing him a beer. As they watch the kids playing, Coto remembers --

COTO

Thanks for having us --

Coto reaches into his jacket. Hands KJ a PRESENT. KJ's touched. Opens it to find: SUNGLASSES. YELLOW FRAMES.

COTO (CONT'D)

So they can see your eyes. Spring loaded sides should fit even your tiny melon --

KJ tries them on. Pretty. Badass. Pretty badass.

KJ

If I was distant -- it's because I thought you were angling for advancement -- so why get attached?

COTO

I was. Angling. I hate the uniform.

(off KJ)

I'm trying to hate it less.

KJ smiles -- checks Coto -- fair enough. Dakota sticks her head out --

DAKOTA

Dinner's ready in five. I didn't burn it. Much.

KJ and Coto watch, content parents -- as their children run around with Edamame. All smiles and laughs and fun. *

KJ *

Thanks for getting Edamame. He's a good dog -- *

As the kids squeeze in the last minutes of daylight, playing before the sun sets and they all gather to eat -- *

END OF PILOT