

"BODY OF EVIDENCE"

Pilot

By

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Gross Entertainment

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER, PHILADELPHIA, PA. - MORNING

Early morning light blazes across the water and heats up the west side of the river. We hear FOOTFALLS on gravel. Heavy but controlled BREATHING. And then ANGELA SWANSON races by.

At age 36, she's attractive, fit and driven. No mere jogger. Six minute miles? No problem. She sips from a bottle of GATORADE as the gravel path she's running on angles towards Strawberry Mansion Bridge. *

EXT. FAIRMONT PARK - MORNING

On the hill overlooking the river A MAN LOITERS, white, mid 30's, wearing a hoodie, watching joggers run along the banks of the river below. We get the feeling he's on the lookout for someone. And then Angela appears in the distance. He starts for Strawberry Mansion Bridge.

EXT. STRAWBERRY MANSION BRIDGE - MORNING

Shadows gather under the bridge. Angela kicks it into high gear. Into darkness she goes. And suddenly --

ANGELA'S POV -

The CAMERA VEERS WILDLY as we are suddenly sent careening off the path and plunging into the river.

IN THE WATER

BLOOD PLUMES AROUND ANGELA'S HEAD. Her eyes roll. She struggles for breath, and chokes on the water pouring into her mouth instead. She's drowning. She fights it. But slowly, inexorably, the river claims her....

EXT. STRAWBERRY MANSION BRIDGE - MORNING

All is still and quiet as Angela's inert body floats out from under the bridge and rides the current towards Center City and the Delaware River beyond.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL - MORNING

CLOSE UP ON A WOMAN'S FACE. Her eyes are closed, but not in repose. A thin red horizontal beam of light passes over her face, accompanied by the mechanical sound of something moving overhead. The magnetic ring of a CT scanner, to be exact.

We PULL BACK to take in a woman in her mid 30's, wearing a hospital gown, lying on her back in the bed of the scanner. She is DR. MEGAN HUNT. Just old enough to be on her second medical career, brilliant enough to have done both in half the time. We hear a BEEP. Her eyes open. And frown as a cheery, sing-song female voice comes over a loudspeaker.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Okay dokey, Dr. Hunt, one more pass
and we'll have you out of there in
a jiffy.

MEGAN

(miserable)
Super duper.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MORNING

Megan stands at a mirror reattaching an earring and otherwise checking her appearance for flaws. Of which there are none. Her beauty, like everything else about her, is intimidating. She wears the latest fashion and wears it well. Her style, clothes and accessories will always be a cut above everyone else's.

MEGAN

A whole hour listening to that ding
dong technician. Since when does a
CT take that long?

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

I told them to scan you twice.

Megan turns to regard her neurologist, DR. SIMON BRUCE, age 43. He studies two sets of pictures laid out on his desk. He looks up to meet Megan's gaze.

DR. BRUCE

To save you from making me do it
again when we didn't find anything.

Megan walks over and takes a look for herself.

DR. BRUCE

No damage to the cervical
vertebrae. Just like last year.

MEGAN

What about another nerve conduction
study?

DR. BRUCE

No thanks. You punched me during
the last one.

She gives a little 'Who me?' smile. He takes her hands and inspects them.

DR. BRUCE
No change in symptoms?

MEGAN
Occasional numbness. Same as usual.

DR. BRUCE
Well, your circulation's good, you're not diabetic or malnourished. And every test we've done has come up negative. It's been four years since your car accident yet there's been no improvement in your paresthesia. Even if you could get reinstated there's not an insurance company in the world that would cover you stepping into an OR again.
(beat)
Your career as a neurosurgeon is over, Megan. Maybe it's time you accepted that.

She gives him a look as she pulls her hands back.

MEGAN
You think I'm trying to get back into the OR?

DR. BRUCE
Well aren't you?

A beat. Is she?

DR. BRUCE
You've got a whole new career -- most people would count their blessings.

MEGAN
I'm not most people.

From inside Megan's Gucci handbag a cell phone starts to ring. She digs it out, checks the number, and answers --

MEGAN
(into phone)
Megan Hunt, Medical Examiner's Office.

EXT. THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER - BOAT HOUSE ROW - MORNING

Philadelphia's iconic Boat House Row sits on the east side of the river. In the middle of the row is the U of Penn Boat House with its big blue "P" painted on the landing dock. Lying on that "P" is A BODY COVERED BY A SHEET.

Among the patrol cops and the Penn rowers being questioned we pick out Medical Investigator PETER MAXWELL, age 36, an employee of the Medical Examiner's Office. He's tall with rough good looks and still maintains the body of the professional football player he once was. He looks up from his notes as Megan emerges from the Boat House. They meet over the body.

PETER

Thought you had a doctor's appointment.

MEGAN

Waste of time. What do we have?

*

Peter consults his notes as Megan pulls the sheet off the body and beholds --

PETER

Angela Swanson, 36. Bumped into the Penn Heavyweight Eight as they were pushing off the dock. She's got trauma to the back of the head and traces of foam in her mouth. CSU is up river searching for where she went in. Liver temp 93.2.

MEGAN

Water temp?

PETER

64.

She makes a quick calculation in her head.

MEGAN

Two hours.

Two more new arrivals emerge from the Boat House, gold shields clipped to their lapels. Detectives BUD MORRIS, age 42, and SAMANTHA BAKER, age 37. Morris is the senior of the two and among the details we won't draw attention to until later is a fresh shaving cut on his chin and an impression on his ring finger where a wedding band used to be. Samantha is eager and bright but used to taking the back seat.

DET. MORRIS
Hey, Pete.

PETER
Bud.

DET. MORRIS
Who do you like on Sunday?

PETER
Not the Eagles.

DET. MORRIS
Traitor.

They're clearly familiar with Peter. And not with Megan.

PETER
Detective Morris, this is Dr. Megan
Hunt. I take it you haven't pulled
her on a case before.

Detectives Morris and Baker both react to the name. Not in a
good way.

DET. MORRIS
It must be our lucky day.

Megan just smiles.

*

MEGAN
Look at that. Already we agree on
something.

Det. Morris blinks like someone whose sarcasm has just
boomeranged on him --

MEGAN
Our victim has blunt force trauma
to the back of the head and
preliminary indications of
drowning. No scrapes or abrasions
that indicate she tried to break
her fall. She went into the river
clean after being hit on the back
of the head. I'm calling it a
presumed homicide. Liver temp puts
it about two hours ago.

DET. MORRIS
That's it? You mean you haven't
caught the murderer yet?

There, Det. Morris thinks, that ought to ruffle her feathers.
But Megan just smiles again. *

MEGAN

No, Detective, have you? By the way, you can tell CSU whoever attacked her did it on the west side of the river. *

A beat. This is news even to Peter.

DET. BAKER

How do you know that?

MEGAN

She got some sun this morning.

They all look at Angela's face.

DET. MORRIS

So?

Peter gets it.

PETER

So two hours ago the east side of the river was in shadow.

As Detectives Morris and Baker chew on this --

MEGAN

Autopsy in two hours. See you there, Detectives.

Megan turns and starts back towards the boat house. She feels their eyes on her. She stops and looks back at Det. Morris.

MEGAN

One more thing. Don't believe everything you've heard about me. The truth is much worse.

With what might be called a "mischievous smile" she resumes her exit through the Boat House. *

INT. MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE - MORNING

The Medical Examiner's Office of a major metropolitan city is a world unto itself, with departments and staff to handle the hundreds of autopsies of homicides, suicides and John Does, as well as the more mundane functions like issuing death certificates and the many other matters involved in processing the dead.

The directory at the front desk lists Intake & Processing, IT, Records, Storage, Examination Rooms and Laboratory, to name a few, as well as the names and office numbers of the Chief and Deputy MEs and a dozen other MEs and Assistant MEs.

This is the directory Megan blows right by as she returns to the office. Administrative staff hustle and bustle but at the sight of Megan they part like the Red Sea. Deferential nods and mumbled "hello's" follow her down the hall towards the Bullpen, a long row of ME offices....

....from out of which various MEs jump out and follow for a few paces bending Megan's ear. We get immediately that Megan is their go-to diagnostician.

ASSISTANT ME #1

Five year old boy choked to death during a seizure but had no hippocampal lesions.

MEGAN

Check for Alexander disease.

Assistant ME #1 peels off and is replaced by --

ASSISTANT ME #2

Twenty three year old man, jaundiced, anemia and liver failure but no cirrhosis or history of Hepatitis B or C.

MEGAN

What are his copper levels?

A blank look. Assistant ME #2 has no idea. He peels off and is replaced by --

DR. ELLIOT GROSS, age 33. He's boyish, geeky in an endearing way, and utterly non-threatening. Even Megan lightens up around him, not in word so much as tone, like giving your little brother a hard time. They walk side by side until -- *

MEGAN

What do you want?

ELLIOT

Nothing.

MEGAN

Oh.

A few more steps --

ELLIOT

But since you're asking, I got a female, age 32, died in a sauna of apparent heat stroke, but urine came back normal for hydration.

MEGAN

What are her electrolytes?

ELLIOT

Um, they're these things in the body that contain free ions --

Off her look --

ELLIOT

Wait. I know. You're thinking hyponatremia? *

MEGAN

I'm thinking you should go now.

He does so. She watches him go with mild amusement, then walks into her office. *

INT. MEGAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Megan walks in and closes the door. She drops her handbag, sits down at her desk and takes a moment to decompress. Or rather, try to. She holds her hands out in front of her, inspecting them like they belonged to someone else, like they were once trusted friends who have since betrayed her.

We take in the office. Multiple degrees and certifications. Photographs of Megan with various dignitaries. These take a back seat, however, to photographs of her daughter LACEY, age 12, as well as a photograph of Megan as a girl POSING WITH HER FATHER IN FRONT OF A TOOL SHED IN THEIR BACKYARD.

When we return to Megan she is consulting Lacey's class schedule. It's pinned up on the wall with all the free periods highlighted. Megan checks her watch, picks up the phone and dials.

INT. OFFICE OF MIKE FLEMING - MORNING

MIKE FLEMING, age 42, stands at the window of his law office dictating into a recorder when the pink, sequined cell phone in his briefcase starts buzzing. He grabs it, reads the number and picks up the call. We INTERCUT --

MIKE

I thought I told you not to call Lacey at school.

MEGAN

What are YOU doing at Lacey's school?

MIKE

I'm not at her school, I'm at the office. I had to confiscate her cell phone.

MEGAN

Why?

MIKE

She's not supposed to be on the phone at school, that's why.

MEGAN

Like I have any other option? You screen my calls to the house.

*
*

MIKE

She's not a crutch for you to lean on whenever you want to feel better.

MEGAN

That's not why I call and you know it.

MIKE

Megan, I have work to do.

MEGAN

I want to come to Lacey's birthday party.

MIKE

We've been over this. You're not invited.

MEGAN

Mike, please let me talk to her.

MIKE

You know how many times she tried to call you and you palmed her off on some assistant?

*
*
*

MEGAN

I haven't had an assistant in four years.

*
*

MIKE

And maybe she still hasn't gotten
over it. I'm sorry, Megan, but I
have to go now.

*
*
*

He hangs up the phone. On his face we glimpse an old wound
opened once again. Briefly. He picks up his recorder and
resumes his dictation.

INT. MEGAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Megan stares at her phone. The wound is deeper on her face.
And it lingers. She hangs up the phone and stares at a
picture of her daughter.

*

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM #1 - LATER THAT MORNING

*

Angela Swanson's body lies on the examination table.
Detectives Morris and Baker stand off to one side, observing.
Megan and Peter are in scrubs and smocks, wearing latex
gloves. A microphone hangs overhead recording everything.

MEGAN

This is Dr. Megan Hunt, Medical
Examiner, assisted by Peter
Maxwell, Medical Investigator,
Philadelphia Medical Examiner's
Office, performing an autopsy on
Angela Swanson, age 36, Open
Homicide Case File Number -- Peter,
you'll fill in the number along
with the date and time. Observing
are Detectives Morris and Baker.
Say hello, Detectives.

Detectives Morris and Baker mumble "hello's" as Megan begins
her visual inspection of Angela's body.

MEGAN

You find her entry point into the
river?

DET. MORRIS

Strawberry Mansion Bridge.

She waits for it --

DET. MORRIS

West side.

-- and smiles in inverse proportion to Det. Morris' frown.

MEGAN

So what do we know about this girl?

DET. BAKER

She's local. Grew up in Fishtown. Central High, scholarship to Brown, senior associate at Whitney, Howell & Walker. Apartment in Mount Airy, single no boyfriend. Colleagues say she was a workaholic who pretty much lived at the office.

Det. Morris shoots a look at his partner. Det. Baker shoots a 'What's the big deal?' look back. *

MEGAN

She's obviously in excellent physical condition. Callouses on her feet, a few minor scars here and there, healed puncture marks on the left forearm both anterior and posterior, made by an animal's incisors, probably canine. Fingernails are trimmed short, chewed in places --

DET. MORRIS

Any DNA under them?

MEGAN

All in good time, Detective.
(continuing to the head and mouth)
Looks like she ground her teeth. Another stress indicator. Was she up for partner?

The Detectives exchange another look.

DET. BAKER

That's right.

Like everything else, Megan files this away --

MEGAN

Scarring on the skull above the hairline. Peter, check for any prior head injuries in her medical files.

(continuing)

Now this is interesting.

DET. MORRIS

What?

MEGAN

A small growth at the base of her neck. Some kind of nodule or neoplasm. Peter, make sure you get a sample to the lab --

An impatient sigh escapes Det. Morris' mouth.

MEGAN

Yes, Detective Morris?

DET. MORRIS

She got her head bashed in. Can we get to the murder weapon already?

Megan pauses from her examination to look at him.

MEGAN

There are over 100 trillion cells in the human body, 60,000 miles of arteries, veins and capillaries, 208 bones, 40 plus organs and dozens of life sustaining systems from cardiovascular to respiratory and at any given moment anything can go wrong with any one of them. When the range of possibilities is infinite I abide by one rule and one rule only: the body is the evidence. It will tell us everything we need to know, if we have the patience to look.

DET. MORRIS

You could have told us that before you called us in here.

MEGAN

If it's going to be good for you it has to be good for me too, okay Detective?

Det. Morris' jaw drops.

DET. MORRIS

You're something else.

MEGAN

I know.

DET. MORRIS

I'm gonna get some coffee.

Det. Morris heads for the door. Megan turns Angela's head around to inspect the wound. As she speaks, Det. Morris slows to a stop.

*
*
*

MEGAN

The skull has collapsed into the occipital lobe in a V-shaped depression. Extensive tissue and hair loss and flecks of rust throughout. The murder weapon was something heavy, maybe cast iron, and square with a dull edge, possibly a large plumber's wrench or some kind of mallet. And Detective?

DET. MORRIS

Yeah?

MEGAN

I take mine with cream, no sugar.

A beat. Det. Morris shakes his head and pushes his way out the door. All of which Det. Baker has secretly enjoyed. No one, we get the feeling, talks to her partner this way, including her.

*
*
*

DET. BAKER

I heard you were some big neurosurgeon a few years back.

Megan heads to a work table and a tray of instruments. She picks up a scalpel. For just a moment, she stares at it. It used to feel like an extension of her hand. But no more.

MEGAN

That's right.

DET. BAKER

So why are you working here?

Megan turns back to the examination table. She positions the scalpel at Angela's right shoulder, angled towards the base of the sternum --

MEGAN

You can't kill someone when they're already dead.

-- and begins to cut.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. MEGAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Megan leans against her desk staring at her computer screen as she talks on the phone --

MEGAN
(into phone)
This is Dr. Hunt. Calling about
the Crystal Ball. Is it in yet?
(pause)
Great. I'll be by later.

She hangs up. And finds Peter staring at her from the doorway.

PETER
I always knew you were a witch.

Unlike Elliot, Peter is a man's man. On whom Megan must have the upper hand, lest he have it on her.

MEGAN
Then you should watch yourself,
shouldn't you.

He shrugs this off with a smile as he enters. He peers at her computer screen.

MEGAN
It's a handbag.

PETER
Does it come with a broom?

MEGAN
Are you here just to annoy me?

PETER
I put Angela's stomach contents in
storage. That liquid we found was
Gatorade. And the tissue sample
from her neck is at the lab.

MEGAN
So is her diaphragm, right?

PETER
Yeah, that too.
(beat)
About that....

MEGAN

Yes?

PETER

Why does a woman wear a diaphragm on her morning run?

MEGAN

Either she had or was planning on having sex this morning, or...?

She waits. He has no idea.

MEGAN

The diaphragm was stained with old blood. Some women use them as a menstrual barrier before getting their period.

PETER

I didn't know that.

MEGAN

Clearly. You find out about that scar above her hairline?

PETER

I've got calls in to her primary physician and two specialists we know about, but it'll take time.

MEGAN

Then let's find out for ourselves.

Megan heads for the door. Peter knows what this means.

PETER

Brain dissection. Cool.

INT. ME'S OFFICE - MORNING

As Megan and Peter head down the hallway Megan is intercepted by Deputy Chief Medical Examiner DR. SEMO SOLOMONA, age 41. Semo is a Samoan man whose girth brings new meaning to 'throwing his weight around the office.'

SEMO

Dr. Hunt.

MEGAN

Semo.

SEMO

I'm a doctor too, you know.

MEGAN

And yet no one calls you that.
Strange.

He bristles.

SEMO

You ordered an ANA panel on a
suicide?

MEGAN

So?

SEMO

So he blew his brains out. What
are you doing ordering a thousand
dollar autoimmune test?

MEGAN

Do you know why he committed
suicide?

SEMO

No.

MEGAN

Neither do I. But now we both know
it had nothing to do with his
immune system.

SEMO

Cause of death. That's our job.
The what, when and how, not the
why.

MEGAN

Semo, have you ever heard of "going
the extra mile"?

She throws a look at his waistline. Apparently not. Semo
bristles some more.

SEMO

I'm the Deputy Chief Medical
Examiner. The entire budget of
this office is on my shoulders.
You keep pulling this crap I don't
care how many friends you have.

MEGAN

What makes you think I have
friends?

Peter pipes up.

PETER

It's true. She doesn't have any.

Semo turns. He glares at Peter, then marches back down the hallway. Peter smiles at Megan. She gives him a look.

PETER

What? You do have friends?

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM #2 - MORNING

Elliot walks into Examination Room #2 with a LAB TECH trailing behind him. He flips through a lab file, searching for a particular result -- *

ELLIOT

Tox screen negative for drugs and alcohol. And -- here we are -- her electrolytes are...

(deflated)

...within the normal range. So much for hyponatremia.

He walks to the examination table where A WOMAN'S BODY lies covered by a sheet. He pulls it down to reveal the face. A woman around Elliot's age. They both stare at her.

ELLIOT

(beat)

You know, I never stop expecting their eyes to pop open right about now.

A beat. They both wait for it.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM #1 - MORNING

Peter carries a cross-section of brain to a work table where it joins a series of others laid out in a row. Megan walks the length of the table studying them with a magnifying glass.

MEGAN

Mild depression and hemosiderin staining in the frontal lobe...

(moving to the next cross-section)

...and the classic coup-contrecoup pattern of prior brain trauma...

(moving to the next cross-section)

...causing a unilateral lesion of the amygdala. *

PETER

What does all that mean?

MEGAN

It means our girl's been hit on the head before. And I have friends, thank you very much.

PETER

Yeah, like who?

She ignores the question --

MEGAN

The amygdala regulates emotional learning and fear conditioning and plays a significant role in sexual arousal. A lesion like this would throw normal activity on its head. I've seen at least one study showing a lesioned amygdala can result in loss of fear or hyperemotionality or even hypersexuality....

*
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Her voice trails off as she processes what this might mean. Peter meanwhile still thinks they're having a conversation.

*
*

PETER

Seriously, name one friend.

MEGAN

Call the lab. Tell them to rush those diaphragm results.

He looks at her. She looks at him. So much for conversation. He heads for the wall-mounted phone but before he gets there it starts ringing.

*
*
*

PETER

(answering)

Room 1, this is Maxwell...?

INT. CAR - MORNING

Megan flips through various pages of a file stamped "Thomas Jefferson Hospital" as Peter drives.

MEGAN

She was admitted two years ago with severe head trauma and spent twelve days in a coma. Thrown down a flight of stairs by her boyfriend.

PETER

The guy's name is Tom Burris. Det. Morris pulled his jacket. He was paroled three weeks ago and lives in a halfway house in Overbrook. Morris says we can only come if we keep quiet.

MEGAN

Like that's going to happen.

INT. HALFWAY HOUSE - MORNING

TOM BURRIS sits on a cot facing Detectives Morris and Baker as Megan and Peter hang back by the door. Burris is white, mid 30's, and we should recognize him. He's the man in our opening scene loitering by the river, wearing a hoodie.

BURRIS

I was picking up trash around City Hall this morning. It's part of my work release.

DET. MORRIS

City Hall's a two minute cab ride from the Park.

BURRIS

I've known Angela since high school, okay? I didn't kill her, I loved her. I would never hurt her.

DET. BAKER

What do you call throwing her down a flight of stairs?

BURRIS

I didn't do that either. We got into a fight. The neighbors heard us yelling at each other but they didn't see her fall all by herself. I got screwed, man.

DET. MORRIS

Then why didn't Angela back up your story?

MEGAN

She couldn't. Post coma memory loss.

BURRIS

Yeah, that's right.

*

Det. Morris stares at Megan. She smiles helpfully.

MEGAN

It's consistent with the autopsy.

Then, to Burris --

MEGAN

I don't suppose you two had sex
this morning, did you?

EXT. HALFWAY HOUSE - MORNING

Detectives Morris and Baker, Megan and Peter.

DET. MORRIS

Here's how this is supposed to
work. We ask the questions, you
tell us what you know, and WE catch
the bad guy, okay?

MEGAN

So this morning you weren't
serious, you were just mocking me.

Det. Morris takes another verbal jab to the chin. Once again *
we catch Det. Baker admiring Megan's pluck. *

DET. MORRIS

Even if Angela fell down the stairs
accidentally, that's all the more
reason for Burris to hold a grudge
against Angela when he got out of
prison.

MEGAN

Okay. Let's say he did hold a
grudge. Angela was hit on the back
of the head as she ran under the
bridge. If Burris killed her,
don't you think he'd want her to
see him, to know it was him paying
her back for sending him to prison?
But there were no defensive wounds
on Angela. She didn't put up a
fight because she never saw it
coming. Burris didn't do it.

DET. MORRIS

So what's your theory? She calls
him up for some ex-con sex? Under
a bridge on her morning run?
Here's a real theory. He bashed
her over the head and killed her.

Det. Morris turns his unhappy gaze to Peter.

DET. MORRIS
Next time you want to come along,
forget it.

Detectives Morris heads for the car. Det. Baker trails
after. Peter looks at Megan. She is serenely unfazed.

*
*

MEGAN
We need to know more about Angela.

EXT. SWANSON HOUSE - DAY

Fishtown. The docklands at the eastern edge of the city.
Narrow row houses inhabited by white working class poor. In
front of one row house a WHITE SEDAN with the Philadelphia ME
Office logo pulls up. Peter and Megan emerge.

INT. SWANSON HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Megan stands at the mantle looking at photographs several
rows deep. Everything from Angela's baby pictures to her law
school graduation. Many of Angela on cross country teams.
Many of her posing with a black Labrador Retriever.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
We've already spoken to the police.

Megan turns. Behind her stand MR. AND MRS. SWANSON, early
60's. They're clearly in the midst of the worst day of their
lives. Peter hangs by the door.

MEGAN
I know, and I know this is
difficult for you but it helps me
fill in the picture of your
daughter. So if it's okay, when
did you last talk to her?

MRS. SWANSON
About a week ago. She'd just
finished a trial.

MEGAN
What did you talk about?

MRS. SWANSON
Just a hello. She was going to
bed. She had a sore throat.

That's news to Megan. She cocks an eyebrow at Peter.

PETER

It was strep.

MEGAN

And you were planning on telling me when?

PETER

(oops)
Now?

MEGAN

What was she taking for it?

A blank look. He whips out his cell phone and steps out the front door. Megan returns to the photographs.

MEGAN

Did Angela's dog ever bite her?

MR. SWANSON

You mean the scars on her arm? No. Buddy was killed by a pit bull. Angela tried to stop it.

Another piece of information filed away.

MEGAN

I see a lot of pictures of Angela alone. Did she have any friends?

MR. SWANSON

Not many. Angela was all about her grades in school, all about her career thereafter.

Megan can relate. The door opens again. Peter returns with the answer --

PETER

She was taking Erythromycin.

This too Megan files away. She takes a final look at Angela's photographs.

MEGAN

How did Tom Burris fit in?

MR. SWANSON

He didn't. Angela didn't have time for a real relationship. Tom's only virtue was she was in no danger of falling in love with him. We always knew he was no good.

*

MEGAN

And there was no one else? No one she was seeing recently?

MR. SWANSON

No. No one.

MEGAN

One last question. After the coma, did you notice any change in Angela's behavior?

At this, Mrs. Swanson stifles a sob. She exits the room, leaving her husband to explain --

MR. SWANSON

Understand we've always loved our daughter, but in her teens Angela became a hard, driven girl. All she wanted was to get out of Fishtown, and when she did there were times we wouldn't hear from her for months. After the coma, it was like she came back to us. Our little girl. She'd drop in once a week. She'd call just to say hello.

Mr. Swanson stifles a sob of his own. *

EXT. SWANSON HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Peter leads Megan back to the car, shaking his head.

PETER

I've heard of someone getting some sense knocked into them, but feelings? That's a new one.

MEGAN

I'd throw my ex down the stairs if I thought it'd get the same result.

Peter gives her a look, but Megan is already on to her next thought.

MEGAN

Let's swing by midtown on our way back.

PETER

But midtown's in the opposite direction.

MEGAN

(a look)

It was a figure of speech.

INT. HANDBAG SHOP - DAY

A high end boutique. Peter follows Megan inside. The female OWNER disappears into the back and returns with a box which she sets before Megan on the counter.

OWNER

I haven't let anyone else see it,
much less touch it.

Off comes the top. Megan beholds a handbag about the size and shape of a flattened softball, covered in blue sequins.

OWNER

The Devi Kroell Crystal Disco Ball
Handbag. Isn't it stunning?

PETER

It looks like a kindergarten
project gone wrong.

Megan and the Owner exchange a 'What a Neanderthal' look.

MEGAN

My daughter turns twelve tomorrow
and I want to get her something
nice, okay?

Peter meanwhile moves on to the price tag.

PETER

Yeah? For eleven hundred dollars?

Megan stares at him. Then at the price tag. Apparently this is a problem.

OWNER

You wanted the limited edition,
didn't you?

MEGAN

Yes, but... I don't want her to
think I'm buying her affection.

PETER

You don't want her to think you're
insane. Which is what anybody is
who pays that much for a handbag.

OWNER

You don't know much about handbags,
do you.

Peter takes Megan by the arm and steers her out of earshot of
the Owner.

PETER

Getting your daughter that bag is a
bad idea.

MEGAN

And what could you possibly know
about my daughter?

That stops him cold.

PETER

You know something? You're
absolutely right. How could I know
anything about your daughter?

He heads for the door. She watches him go.

INT. CAR - DAY

All is quiet as they head back to the office. Megan glances
over at Peter. He stares straight ahead. Finally --

MEGAN

Lacey lives with her dad. We
divorced five years ago. He got
sole custody.

*
*

Peter glances over at her.

*

MEGAN

He got it because a woman who works
18 hours a day is an absentee
mother but a man who works the same
hours is a provider. Do you have
any idea what it takes to be a
practicing neurosurgeon at 28 and
run your own department at 33?

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

PETER

I spent my entire 20's in a weight
room.

*
*

She stares at him.

*

MEGAN

Did you really just compare
neurosurgery to football?

*
*

PETER

Um....

MEGAN

I saved lives. And I was damn good at it. And yes I missed play dates and phone calls and for that I'm sorry. But I was under the bizarre impression my husband had my back. Instead he was building a case against me. I can still hear the judge. "I find it in the best interests of the child...."

Megan takes a moment to stare down at her hands.

MEGAN

I lost my daughter to my career. And then I lost my career. All because of that god damn car accident. My hands still go numb.

Silence.

PETER

I still don't get the handbag.

MEGAN

What else am I supposed to do? Hire a sky writer? "Lacey, I'm sorry?" I pay for summer camp and dance classes and everything else, but no matter what I do Mike tells her I'm just trying to make myself feel better.

PETER

Which... you're not...?

MEGAN

I'm trying to have a relationship with my daughter, okay? For all the good it's done.

PETER

Maybe you should just try having some fun with her.

She looks at him, then stares out the window.

MEGAN

Forget we had this conversation.

INT. ME'S OFFICE - DAY

Megan and Peter come through the entrance and sail past the front desk. The RECEPTIONIST does his best to flag Megan down --

RECEPTIONIST
Dr. Hunt, the Chief wants to see you.

They disappear down the hallway. The Receptionist stares after her. Did she hear him? Does she give a damn?

PETER
That would be the Chief as in our boss.

MEGAN
I'm still not talking to you.

PETER
Or the Chief, apparently. A career strategy that always works for me.

MEGAN
I'll handle the Chief. You light a fire under somebody's ass. I want those diaphragm results.

He peels off and heads for the lab. Megan turns down the hall and practically bumps into Elliot. They walk side by side until --

MEGAN
What do you want now?

ELLIOT
Nothing.

MEGAN
Elliot, I'm really not in the mood.

ELLIOT
You know that female heat stroke victim I mentioned? Her electrolytes were normal. Negative tox for drugs and alcohol too.

MEGAN
Any psychological problems? Depression, paranoia?

ELLIOT
Um..., why?

*
*
*
*
*
*

Off her look --

*

ELLIOT
I'll find out. But what do I do if
there were?

*

*

MEGAN
Order an ANA panel.

Megan heads for the Examination Rooms. Elliot stares after her.

ELLIOT
Isn't that the test that got you in
trouble with Semo?

She throws a look back with that same mischievous smile.

*

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM #1 - DAY TO NIGHT

Megan walks her magnifying glass over to Angela's body and begins a CLOSEUP inspection. AT SKIN LEVEL. WE WATCH VARIOUS CROSS FADES OVER TIME as Megan covers the entire body and comes, at last, to a discovery. At the side of Angela's head, on her scalp hidden by hair and the edges of Angela's head wound, a faint BRUISE IN THE SHAPE OF A FINGER.

*

*

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM #1 - NIGHT

Megan has by now mapped the bruises on Angela's scalp onto a piece of paper. They are unmistakably the fingerprints of a man's hand. Megan now stands behind Angela combing out strands of hair against a piece of white cardboard. What she sees among the other hairs are a few that appear clipped short, standing out against the rest.

*

*

Megan cuts one off and walks it to the Examination Room's microscope. That's when she notices Peter standing inside the door.

*

MEGAN
Do you want something or are you
just skulking?

PETER
I didn't know if you were talking
to me again.

Peter enters. He notes the fingerprints mapped out on Megan's piece of paper.

*

MEGAN

Vascular density of the scalp is greater than any other part of the body by several orders of magnitude. Add to that compression against the skull is almost instantaneous and all it takes is a passionate embrace to leave those. Finger marks that were obscured by her head wound.

PETER

Made by who?

MEGAN

Someone Angela couldn't tell her parents about.

Megan peers into her microscope at the magnified tip of a hair shaft.

*
*

MEGAN

I found damaged hair shafts in the same location. If they were torn as a result of her head wound the edges would be rough and fractured. These are uniform and intact. But they're also compressed. So either this strand of hair was cut with a dull pair of scissors or it got caught in something and clipped. A watchband, or bracelet, or maybe one of those interlocking wedding rings. Have a look.

PETER

Don't need to.

She looks at him. And she sees the folder in his hand --

MEGAN

You got the diaphragm results?

PETER

They found trace amounts of semen. DNA tests will take a while but one thing's for sure. There were no spermatozoa. The guy had a vasectomy.

She grabs the results and studies them for herself.

MEGAN

Do you know any bachelors who'd get
their tubes snipped instead of
using a condom?

PETER

Not one.

Megan looks back at Angela's body, now more sure than ever.

MEGAN

She was sleeping with a married
man.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL RESTAURANT - MORNING (DAY 2) *

Megan sits across from DR. HOWARD KARASUNIS, age 52. They converse over coffee.

MEGAN

The police say she pretty much lived at the office. If she was having an affair, then someone at Whitney, Howell & Walker would be a natural candidate.

DR. KARASUNIS

So why ask me?

MEGAN

He had a vasectomy. And you're the number one ball cutter in all of Philadelphia.

DR. KARASUNIS

I thought you held that title.

They exchange the smile of old colleagues. *

DR. KARASUNIS

We go way back, Megan. But now you're asking me to betray doctor-patient privilege, and you know I won't do that. *

MEGAN

I'm not asking for me, I'm asking for a woman who was murdered. *

He ponders this. And his old colleague. *

DR. KARASUNIS

Tell me something. This new you -- Megan Hunt, M.E. -- who raced through forensic pathology faster than she did a neurosurgery residency, and who seems to care more about dead people than she ever did about her patients -- is she for real, or just working off her guilt after killing a patient on the operating table? *

Megan stares at him for a beat. *

MEGAN

Both.

He ponders this. Then fishes out his Blackberry and enters a few keystrokes.

DR. KARASUNIS

Have you seen the new Blackberry?
I find it indispensable.

He sets it on the table and rises to his feet.

DR. KARASUNIS

If you'll excuse me, I need to use
the rest room.

He leaves the dining room. As soon as he's gone Megan picks up the Blackberry and looks at the screen.

INSERT - BLACKBERRY SCREEN

The work and home addresses for Raymond Whitney, Managing Partner, Whitney, Howell & Walker.

INT. MEGAN'S OFFICE - MORNING (DAY 2)

*

Detectives Morris and Baker turn as Megan walks in.

DET. MORRIS

You never heard of the phone?

MEGAN

I missed your piquant blend of
irritation and after shave.

Det. Baker hides a smile. But Det. Morris isn't flustered.

*

DET. MORRIS

Burris was picking up garbage
yesterday morning -- until he went
AWOL for half an hour. And you
know what they use on the job? A
stick with a squared-off handle
reinforced with cast iron L-
brackets.

*

MEGAN

Attached with bolts?

DET. MORRIS

That's right.

MEGAN

No bolt impressions on the head wound. But I am curious. When you spoke to Angela's colleagues, was one of them Raymond Whitney?

Det. Morris is still adjusting to Megan's shut down of his L-bracket theory --

DET. BAKER

The head of the firm? No, why?

MEGAN

Because Angela was having an affair with him.

Det. Baker looks at Det. Morris. Off their mutual surprise -- *

INT. LAW FIRM - MORNING (DAY 2) *

RAYMOND WHITNEY, age 54, the silver haired Managing Partner of Whitney, Howell & Walker, greets his three visitors -- Detectives Morris and Baker, and Megan.

WHITNEY

Raymond Whitney. Please come in.

DET. MORRIS

Detective Morris, my partner Det. Baker, and this is Dr. Hunt from the Medical Examiner's Office.

As Whitney shakes their hands, Megan casually notes his TWO RING INTERLOCKING WEDDING BAND. From this she abruptly turns away and starts inspecting Whitney's office as if she has no interest in the conversation that unfolds in the background. *

DET. MORRIS

Can you tell us where you were around 7 a.m. yesterday morning?

WHITNEY

Why?

Like Megan's own office there are the requisite plaques, awards, certificates, etc. on the walls --

DET. MORRIS

Just accounting for everybody's whereabouts.

There are also photos. Whitney posing with his smiling wife. Whitney's two pre-adolescent sons on various sports teams, etc. --

WHITNEY

I was at home. Working out in our gym.

And finally Megan studies a wall of photos taken at various charity events. The Philadelphia AIDS walk. An inner city vaccination drive sponsored by the boys' middle school. We see WHITNEY'S WIFE JILL in a school nurse's uniform administering vaccinations to the city's great unwashed.

DET. MORRIS

Can anyone back that up?

WHITNEY

No. My wife Jill takes our sons in early to school. She's the school nurse.

Megan has finally satisfied her curiosity. She turns back to the conversation in progress --

WHITNEY

Detective, I don't mean to tell you your business but it's preposterous that you would think --

MEGAN

You're head of the Partnership Committee, aren't you?

Det. Morris shoots Megan a look. What is she doing?

WHITNEY

Yes?

MEGAN

Angela was a seventh year associate. That's the cut off year. If you don't make partner you never will.

WHITNEY

So?

MEGAN

So how long were you sleeping with her?

Whitney, startled --

WHITNEY

What?

MEGAN

She had sex yesterday morning with a man who had a vasectomy. Despite the lack of spermatozoa we can still match for DNA. Care to give me a swab?

She holds up a Q-tip in a plastic tube. Whitney recoils.

MEGAN

Didn't think so. That's okay, there's plenty of time for that later. And it'll only tell me what I already know anyway. She was sleeping with you to make partner --

WHITNEY

No --

MEGAN

-- or you were sexually harassing her. Whichever it was, --

WHITNEY

That's not true!

MEGAN

-- she was in a position to end your marriage and sue your firm if she didn't get what she wanted. But you couldn't make her partner without violating your own ethics rules which would have really had you over a barrel, --

WHITNEY

I refuse to listen to this --!

MEGAN

-- so you followed her from your house, waited for her under Strawberry Mansion Bridge, bashed her over the head and threw her in the river!

Megan watches him closely, something calculated behind her heated accusations --

WHITNEY

Get out of my office!

DET. MORRIS

Okay, that's it! Megan, wait outside!

EXT. STREET - MORNING (DAY 2)

*

Megan stands on the sidewalk outside the office building she just exited. If the previous scene affected her in any way you wouldn't know it. She looks bored. She checks her reflection in the front windows. And notices a pair of UNIFORMED SCHOOL GIRLS pass by behind her. She takes out her cell phone and dials a number.

MEGAN

(into phone)

I just wanted to remind you it's
Lacey's birthday today. You're
going to call her, right?

INT. PHILADELPHIA COMMON PLEAS COURT - CONTINUOUS (DAY 2)

*

JUDGE JEAN HUNT, age 62, sits at her desk scanning a document for her signature as an Assistant District Attorney waits impatiently. We INTERCUT --

JUDGE JEAN

I already did. First thing this
morning.

MEGAN

Oh. Did she say anything?

JUDGE JEAN

You mean about you?

MEGAN

Well?

JUDGE JEAN

No.

Megan's face falls.

MEGAN

What did you get her?

JUDGE JEAN

The same thing I always get her. A
contribution to her college fund.
What did you get her?

MEGAN

I haven't decided.

JUDGE JEAN

That doesn't sound like you.

MEGAN

No? Why not?

JUDGE JEAN

My daughter Megan? Who had her whole life planned out by the time she was ten?

MEGAN

YOU had my whole life planned out by the time I was ten.

JUDGE JEAN

And look how well you turned out.

EXT. STREET - MORNING (DAY 2)

*

Megan stares at her reflection in the window glass. How well indeed. Detectives Morris and Baker exit the building. She shakes off the thought with a quick --

MEGAN

Goodbye, Mother.

-- as Detectives Morris and Baker walk up.

DET. MORRIS

You want to tell me what the hell you were doing up there?

MEGAN

A little good cop bad cop. I riled him up, you calmed him down. So what else did he tell you?

Det. Morris can't believe it --

DET. MORRIS

You know what the problem with that is? You're not a cop! And you know what else? You're off this case! I know plenty of ME's and none of them are as big a pain in the ass as you are!

*

*

MEGAN

They're also not as good as I am.

DET. MORRIS

You like to think that, don't you.

MEGAN

How long ago did she kick you out, Detective?

Morris stares at her.

MEGAN

You have an impression on your ring finger where a wedding band was recently removed. And that cut on your chin? It's from a double bladed razor, probably disposable. What happened? When your wife kicked you out she didn't let you take your own razor?

Det. Morris' hand goes involuntarily to the cut on his chin. He stares at Megan in astonishment. So does Det. Baker.

MEGAN

Every body tells a story. Bring me in or don't. But I want justice for Angela just as much as you do.

A long beat as Det. Morris decides what to do.

DET. MORRIS

Okay. You want in? Whitney denied everything. The last time he saw Angela was at the firm's Annual Dinner Sunday night. Angela was at his table but she didn't stay long. She had a sore throat.

MEGAN

He's lying.

DET. MORRIS

About the sex, maybe. But that doesn't make him a murderer. And Burris had motive.

MEGAN

So did Whitney if she was blackmailing him to make partner.

Det. Morris just grins. He lets his partner explain. Det. Baker is almost apologetic in doing so. *

*
*

DET. BAKER

Angela didn't have to. She already made partner. She was at Whitney's table as a reward. She won a big lawsuit last week. It wasn't public yet but the Partnership Committee had already voted.

DET. MORRIS

And there goes your theory.

Det. Morris savors the sight of Megan having to swallow her blown theory. But Megan is nothing if not resilient.

MEGAN

What was the lawsuit about?

DET. BAKER

A boy mauled by a dog in Fairmont Park.

This rings a bell in Megan's head.

MEGAN

Angela was mauled by a dog when she was a teenager.

DET. MORRIS

So?

MEGAN

So what's she doing defending a case like that?

DET. MORRIS

(re: Det. Baker)

Didn't you hear her? She was making partner.

DET. BAKER

The dog was owned by the Roberts family. Old Philadelphia money. One of the firm's biggest clients.

Megan takes out her cell phone and speed dials --

MEGAN

(into phone)

Peter, got a pen? I want you to run down an address for me.

As she waits, Det. Morris looms in front of her.

DET. MORRIS

Where do you think you're going?

MEGAN

Why? You don't think I'll actually catch the killer, do you?

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. NORTH PHILADELPHIA - DAY (DAY 2) *

Blocks of tattered apartment buildings, bulldozed lots, graffitied walls and weeds growing chest high out of the pavement. They call this area the "Badlands."

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY (DAY 2) *

Peter leans against the hood of his car outside an apartment building. He watches as another car pulls up and Megan and Detectives Morris and Baker emerge. Peter hides a smile as they approach.

PETER

Hey, Bud. How's it going?

Det. Morris just scowls at him.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY (DAY 2) *

Det. Morris knocks. The door opens on a chain. Staring out at them is CARL RIVERS, age 38. Det. Morris shows his badge.

DET. MORRIS

Carl Rivers, I'm Detective Morris.
We need to talk to you, Sir.

INT. CARL RIVERS' APARTMENT - DAY (DAY 2) *

Rivers sits at the kitchen table with Detectives Morris and Baker standing before him, Megan and Peter hanging by the door. Rivers' ADOLESCENT SON plays a video game on the tv in the living room. His back is to them.

DET. MORRIS

You filed a lawsuit a year and a half ago after a dog attacked your son in Fairmont park.

RIVERS

So what?

DET. MORRIS

You lost. And Angela Swanson was murdered yesterday morning.

Rivers stares at him, then notices Megan. She's staring into the living room at his son.

RIVERS

He hasn't said a word since the trial. Bad enough getting attacked by a dog. But attacked by a human being? That bitch put him on the stand and blamed him for everything.

DET. MORRIS

And how did that make you feel?

RIVERS

Like killing her, how would it make you feel?

DET. MORRIS

Where were you yesterday morning at 7 a.m.?

RIVERS

At work. Alone. I'm a janitor at Community College of Philadelphia.

DET. BAKER

Did anyone see you there? *

RIVERS

I said I was alone, didn't I?

DET. MORRIS

(beat)

Where was your son?

Rivers' face darkens. He rises to his feet.

RIVERS

Get the hell out of my house.

Before Det. Morris can respond, Megan interjects --

MEGAN

Mr. Rivers, did you know Angela was attacked by a pit bull when she was a teenager?

Rivers stares at her. So do the others. What does that matter?

MEGAN

I'm sure the trial was hard. I'm sure you hated Angela for how she treated your son. But what I don't understand is how she wound up on the other side of your lawsuit.

(MORE)

MEGAN (CONT'D)

(beat)

Unless she wasn't on the other side.

More confused looks all around. Except for Rivers and Megan. They are locked in a stare. Rivers breaks it off with a nervous glance at the Detectives -- *

MEGAN

Don't worry about them, they're Homicide. They won't care.

DET. MORRIS

Care about what? What are you talking about?

Rivers stares at Megan for another beat. And his whole demeanor changes. Like she's broken through. He heads to a cabinet -- *

RIVERS

Angela came here the day after the trial. She told me about her dog. Showed me her scars. She said that's why she wanted on the case. Not to win it but to convince the Roberts family to settle out of court. Only she was overruled. If she wanted to make partner she had to win and that meant going after my kid. That's why she came. To apologize. And to give me this. *

He removes an 8 x 12 envelope and hands it to Megan. She pulls out various documents.

DET. MORRIS

What are those?

RIVERS

My grounds for appeal. Information withheld by the firm. The dog that mauled my son was an attack dog trained to do exactly that.

MEGAN

Mr. Rivers, do you know who overruled Angela over settling out of court?

RIVERS

The lead counsel. Raymond Whitney.

Megan throws a look at Det. Morris.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER (DAY 2) *

Megan, Peter and Detectives Morris and Baker huddle up outside Rivers' building.

DET. MORRIS
So you think Whitney found out she betrayed him?

Megan looks at him. A breakthrough. He's taking her seriously.

MEGAN
It's a theory.

DET. BAKER
I don't get it. She takes a case to settle it and when that backfires she hands over privileged information that will reverse the case she just won?

PETER
You're forgetting her unilaterally lesioned amygdala.

Blank looks from the Detectives. And a rather amused one from Megan.

DET. BAKER
You want to try English, please? *

MEGAN
He means Angela's old head injury. *
After her coma she went back to *
work and four things happened: she *
took a case for ulterior motives, *
she had an affair, she violated *
attorney-client privilege, and she *
started calling her mother just to *
say hello. Four things I guarantee *
you pre-head injury she wouldn't *
have done.

DET. MORRIS
Well, it looks like we'll be *
talking to Whitney again. Without *
you, if you don't mind.

Said to Megan not with his usual scorn, but rather with deference. Another breakthrough.

MEGAN
I don't mind at all.

INT. ME'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON (DAY 2) *

Megan cruises past the front desk. Once again the RECEPTIONIST does his best to flag her down --

RECEPTIONIST
Dr. Hunt, the Chief really needs to see you.

Once again, Megan ignores him. Until, that is, Philadelphia's first female Chief Medical Examiner, DR. PADMA KRISHNAMURTHY NOORI, age 47, cuts her off in the hallway. Megan paints on a smile.

MEGAN
Hello, Chief.

PADMA
Let's have a talk, shall we?

INT. PADMA'S OFFICE - DAY (DAY 2) *

Elliot sits on the couch practically hidden from view by Semo standing in front of him. They both watch Megan follow Padma in. Padma closes the door and circles to her desk where all the offending paperwork awaits. She addresses Megan --

PADMA
Elliot tells me he ordered an ANA panel on your recommendation.

Elliot meekly mouths "Sorry" at Megan. But Megan isn't mad at him. On the contrary, she invited this confrontation. *

MEGAN
So?

PADMA
So you've been rather profligate with our lab budget lately. An ANA panel on a suicide. And now an ANA panel on a heat stroke victim?

MEGAN
The suicide left no note. And he had a family history of Lou Gehrig's disease. If he thought he was symptomatic it would explain why he took his own life. *

PADMA
We're not interested in the why.

MEGAN

Maybe you're not. Maybe no one else around here is. But I am, and if I'm going to understand what happened to my patients I need the latitude to order any test I deem necessary. If you don't like it, fire me.

*

*

A stare down.

*

PADMA

What about the heat stroke victim?

MEGAN

She didn't die of heat stroke.

A double take from Elliot.

ELLIOT

What?

MEGAN

She exhibited psychological symptoms like depression, paranoia?

ELLIOT

Yeah. Just like you said.

MEGAN

Then given normal hydration and electrolytes her ANA panel in all likelihood shows elevated anticardiolipin immunoglobulin G levels.

Padma can't help herself. She glances at the lab sheet.

MEGAN

Which if it does, means she died of multiple microinfarcts that were mistaken for heat stroke but were in fact due to her being hypercoaguable. Combine that with depression and paranoia and we have a diagnosis of what, Semo?

Semo shifts uncomfortably. He has no clue.

ELLIOT

Can I see that?

Elliot approaches Padma's desk. She hands over the lab sheet. He studies it for a beat. And his eyes light up.

ELLIOT

Lupus!

He lowers the sheet to find Padma, Semo and Megan all staring at him.

ELLIOT

I would've gotten that eventually.

Megan gives him a droll look.

MEGAN

Really?

ELLIOT

Eventually.

Elliot takes his cue from the room and leaves. Megan looks back at Padma. *

MEGAN

If there's nothing else, I have my own case to attend to.

A beat. Padma nods for her to go. Megan exits the office. Semo stares at the empty doorway. *

SEMO

That's it? That's all you're going to do?

PADMA

I'll deal with Dr. Hunt in my own way. Anything else? *

SEMO

Yeah. You could tell people to start calling me "Doctor" around here. *

She gives him a look --

PADMA

That will be all, Semo.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM #1 - AFTERNOON (DAY 2) *

Megan stands at the microscope. We see what she sees. A purple-hued slide containing the tissue removed from the base of Angela's neck. One of several waiting to be examined. Peter looks on from a few paces away.

PETER

Detective Morris says Whitney was shocked. Had no idea Angela went behind his back to Rivers.

Megan's attention never wavers from her slides.

MEGAN

Did you expect anything different?

PETER

The point is Bud's zeroed in on Whitney now. That's what you wanted, isn't it?

MEGAN

What I want is to know what happened and why. Like this slide. It's a Geisma stain of the tissue from Angela's neck. The purple cells are mast cells. They're degranulated. Degranulation happens with physical trauma but this tissue didn't come from her head wound. So why would the mast cells of a benign neoplasm be degranulated?

As she pauses to ponder her own question --

PETER

How about a bicycle?

A beat. She looks at him.

MEGAN

What?

PETER

For your daughter.

MEGAN

I don't think so.

PETER

Nothing says fun like a bicycle.

*

MEGAN

Do you see me working here?

PETER

I see you all right. I see someone who reminds me an awful lot of Angela Swanson.

That finally gets Megan's full attention.

PETER

Workaholic. No friends. Just her career to keep her company. But then a miracle happens. She falls down a flight of stairs and discovers emotion. And empathy. Enough to risk everything for a kid screwed out of a settlement she thought he deserved. You had this high-flying life, and now you're here, and you're still pissed at the car accident that made it happen. But maybe that car accident was your own fall down the stairs. And you're just too scared to let the benefits kick in.

*

MEGAN

What the hell are you talking about?

PETER

You talk about your daughter like you're stuck with only one card to play, but you're not stuck at all. You're scared of being hurt. But if you really want to connect with her you'll forget about handbags and give her something that comes from your heart. Because nobody gives a shit about a handbag.

*
*
*
*
*

Megan is, for once, at a loss for words. Then the wall phone goes off. Peter walks over and grabs it.

PETER

(answering)

Room 1, this is Maxwell...?

He listens for a beat, then hangs up.

PETER

The police just made an arrest.

MEGAN

Whitney?

PETER

No. Tom Burris.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - AFTERNOON (DAY 2) *

Detectives Morris and Baker give Burris the third degree.

BURRIS

I already told you I had nothing to do with it!

DET. MORRIS

We have the records from the pay phone in front of your halfway house. You've been trying to call her since you got out. And now we have a witness who puts you in the park at 6:45 a.m. heading for Strawberry Mansion Bridge!

INT. OUTER CORRIDOR - AFTERNOON (DAY 2) *

Megan and Peter watch the interview through the two-way mirror.

BURRIS

Okay, yes, I was there. That doesn't make me a murderer.

DET. MORRIS

It makes you a liar.

BURRIS

I did two years for something I didn't do, and she won't even answer my calls? I went there to talk to her, not to kill her.

DET. BAKER

Then what did happen?

BURRIS

Nothing. I swear. By the time I got to the bridge she was gone.

An answer that invites more verbal abuse from Det. Morris....

PETER

You believe him?

MEGAN

Yeah, I do.

INT. DETECTIVES SQUAD ROOM - AFTERNOON (DAY 2)

*

Detectives Morris and Baker emerge from their interview to find Megan and Peter waiting.

DET. MORRIS

Whatever it is, I don't want to hear it. We got our guy.

MEGAN

I thought you were zeroed in on Whitney.

DET. MORRIS

Yeah. Until we got our guy.

MEGAN

I told you Burris didn't do it.

Det. Morris gives Megan a long look.

DET. MORRIS

What is it with you? You can't just be a regular ME, you have to be the Smocked Crusader? Why don't you do us all a favor and go back to being whatever it was you were before.

MEGAN

I can't. I killed someone.

Megan turns and walks out the door. Detectives Morris and Baker both stare after her.

*

*

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON (DAY 2)

*

Another quiet ride as they head back to the ME's office. This time it's Peter who breaks the silence.

PETER

Hasn't every surgeon lost a patient?

MEGAN

Not every surgeon loses control of her hands in the middle of an operation.

PETER

Would you go back if you could?

MEGAN

What are you, my shrink now?

PETER

You just told Morris you killed
somebody but I don't get an answer? *

A beat. She stares at her hands.

MEGAN

There was an autopsy as part of the
inquest. It was the first one I'd
seen since med school. All those
hours I'd spent rehearsing the
operation, studying the scans and
reviewing my patient's medical
history, and I never knew she had a
broken heart tattoo on her ankle
because of an old boyfriend, or
that she fractured her arm
horseback riding when she was a
kid, or a dozen other things her
body revealed in a way our consults
never had.

Silence.

PETER

That still doesn't answer my
question.

She looks over at him.

MEGAN

Yes it does.

INT. ME'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON (DAY 2) *

Megan and Peter return to the office. Approaching the
Bullpen they come upon the tail end of one of those impromptu
office birthday parties for one of the secretaries. Peter
and Megan take note as they circle around --

PETER

Don't you have a birthday party to
go to?

MEGAN

I still don't have a present. And
don't you dare say bicycle.

PETER

I don't believe you. Are you
seriously telling me you can't
think of one thing that was
important to you as a kid that
you'd want your daughter to have? *

She stops in her tracks. She stares at him. A look of revelation on her face.

PETER

Aha. Finally. So what is it?

Meanwhile, a group of MEs and Assistant MEs pick over what's left of a chocolate cake with crushed walnuts packed around the base.

ASSISTANT ME #1

Hey Peter, want a piece?

He glances over --

PETER

No thanks.

MEGAN

When I was a kid -- Lacey's age, in fact -- my father had this tool shed --

*
*

ASSISTANT ME #2

Come on, it's going to waste.

PETER

Sorry, nut allergy. One bite and --

*

He clutches his throat and MAKES A CHOKING SOUND. His point made, he looks back at Megan --

*
*

PETER

Yeah? Your father had a tool shed...?

*
*

She's stopped talking, however. She stares at him with eyes as big as silver dollars.

*
*

PETER

What?

*
*

MEGAN

An allergic reaction. Of course.

*

And she rushes down the hall.

*

INT. STORAGE ROOM - AFTERNOON (DAY 2)

*

A dozen storage refrigerators stand side by side. Megan pulls out a tray from one and retrieves a bag marked with Angela's name, case number and the words "stomach contents."

Peter enters the room as Megan loads a syringe with the liquid Peter previously identified as Gatorade.

MEGAN

Get this to the lab and have them run a tox screen for prescription drugs.

*
*

PETER

That'll take a couple hours.

MEGAN

Tell them they have one.

PETER

Oh-kay. Can I tell them why?

MEGAN

The degranulation in her tissue sample. It wasn't caused by trauma, it was caused by anaphylaxis.

And back out the door she goes. He stares after her.

EXT. MIKE FLEMING'S HOUSE - EARLY EVENING (DAY 2)

*

Megan comes up the walk approaching the front door. She can see and hear a birthday party going on inside. She's about to ring the bell, then catches a glimpse of her daughter LACEY in the window.

ON MEGAN

She circles around the back of the house, straddling bushes and soiling her shoes as she does so, following Lacey through the windows. Finally Lacey is close enough to the kitchen door for Megan to tap on the window.

The door opens. Lacey steps out. Mother and daughter regard each other. Lacey presents as a twelve year old going on twenty. Mature, sophisticated, and just as emotionally on guard as her mother.

MEGAN

Happy birthday.

LACEY

Dad said you couldn't come.

MEGAN

Dad says a lot of things.

LACEY

You mean that aren't true?

Megan has been here all of ten seconds and already she's in dangerous territory.

MEGAN

That maybe tell only his side of the story.

LACEY

What would be your side?

MEGAN

I'm here, aren't I?

Megan smiles, trying to diffuse the tension.

MEGAN

How's the party?

LACEY

It's okay.

MEGAN

Did I miss the cake?

LACEY

Like you'd ever eat cake.

MEGAN

Try me sometime.

A flicker of a smile on Lacey's face.

MEGAN

I got you a present. I hope you like it. *

She hands Lacey a blue Tiffany jewelry box. Lacey opens it and pulls out a key on a silver chain. She stares at it, then at Megan, curious. *

MEGAN

You remember that picture of me and grandpa in front of his tool shed?

LACEY

Yeah?

MEGAN

That shed was his sanctuary. The one place he could hide from the world. Nobody got in there. *

(MORE)

MEGAN (CONT'D)

And I mean nobody. For years and years I tried. And then one day, when I was about your age, he gave me the key.

(re: Lacey's present)

That's the key to my apartment. Where you'll always be welcome. A sanctuary. An escape whenever you need one. Whatever you want it to be.

Megan smiles nervously. This is new territory for her. And for Lacey too. She looks at her mother, processing this gesture, not sure she fully understands it --

*
*
*

INT. ME'S OFFICE - EVENING (DAY 2)

*

Megan walks down the hallway and sees Peter coming from the opposite direction, lab test in his hand.

PETER

There's something wrong here. Your test came back positive for Amoxicillin.

Megan scans the results herself.

MEGAN

Why would you think something was wrong?

PETER

Angela wasn't taking Amoxicillin, she was taking Erythromycin.

MEGAN

Exactly. Call Detective Morris. Tell him to get a search warrant for Whitney's house and meet us there as soon as he can.

EXT. WHITNEY HOUSE - EVENING (DAY 2)

*

Megan and Peter stand on the doorstep. Megan has already rung the bell. The door opens and Whitney looks out. He's none too happy to see Megan again.

WHITNEY

What do you want?

MEGAN

Did you love Angela?

Whitney has no time to react. It's dinner time. His wife Jill calls out to him from inside the house.

JILL (O.S.)
Raymond, who is it?

WHITNEY
In a minute!

MEGAN
Did you love her? Because if you did, then help me find her killer and tell me the truth. She was here yesterday morning, wasn't she.

WHITNEY
Yes, all right?

MEGAN
And you didn't know she slipped privileged information to Carl Rivers.

WHITNEY
Like I told the Detectives, no.

JILL (O.S.)
Raymond? Who's out there?

WHITNEY
Just a second!

He closes the door behind him.

WHITNEY
Look, I'll tell you everything you want to know. But just don't let my wife find out, okay?

MEGAN
Mr. Whitney, I owe you an apology. I thought you had more than one reason to kill Angela, but it turns out all you're guilty of is falling in love with her.

The door opens and JILL WHITNEY, age 45, looks out at her guests.

JILL
What's going on?

WHITNEY

This is Dr. Hunt from the Medical Examiner's Office. She's looking into Angela's death.

MEGAN

Mrs. Whitney, Sunday night at the firm's annual dinner, did Angela mention she had strep throat?

JILL

Yes.

MEGAN

And what she was taking for it?

Jill goes cautiously silent.

MEGAN

I'm guessing she did. In fact I'm positive she told you she was taking Erythromycin for an infection of Beta Streptococcus Group A.

Now Jill looks downright worried. Megan turns to Whitney.

MEGAN

Have your sons had strep throat recently?

JILL

Don't answer that, Raymond.

MEGAN

I'll consider that a yes. The interesting thing about Beta Group A is that it's rare in adults UNLESS they contract it from their children. You didn't know it, Mr. Whitney, but you got it from your sons and passed it on to Angela. And that's how your wife knew the two of you were having an affair.

Whitney cringes. But his concerns about his affair being revealed are trumped by the arrival of Detectives Morris and Baker in a sedan, and two UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS in a SQUAD CAR. All four approach the house.

WHITNEY

What are they doing here?

Det. Morris answers this question by producing a piece of paper.

DET. MORRIS

Mr. Whitney, this is a warrant to search your house. Officers?

The two Uniforms proceed inside as Whitney scans the document.

WHITNEY

You're looking for drugs?

MEGAN

Amoxicillin, to be exact.

At the word, Jill sags. As if she knew the gig was up.

MEGAN

Not only did your wife know you gave Angela strep throat, she also knew Erythromycin is prescribed for strep throat to people severely allergic to penicillin and its derivatives, the most common of which is Amoxicillin. She dropped your sons off at school yesterday morning, then came back here and found you and Angela having sex. Instead of confronting you she spiked Angela's Gatorade with, I'm willing to bet, the same Amoxicillin your sons were prescribed for their strep throat.

*

CUT TO:

EXT. STRAWBERRY MANSION BRIDGE - MORNING - **FLASHBACK**

We're back to Angela's morning run at the beginning of our story. She sips from a bottle of GATORADE as the gravel path she's running on angles towards Strawberry Mansion Bridge.

MEGAN (V.O.)

Angela left your house around 6:45 a.m. yesterday morning. She made it all the way to the river before she went into anaphylactic shock -- a fatal allergic reaction affecting every system in her body.

Angela kicks it into high gear as she goes under the bridge. We HOLD ON ANGELA as, suddenly, she staggers to a stop AND CLUTCHES HER THROAT CHOKING --

*

*

MEGAN (V.O.)

She became dizzy. Her airways stopped working due to bronchoconstriction. And then she lost her balance.

ANGELA FALLS INTO THE RIVER. AND CRACKS HER HEAD ON AN IRON BEAM -- HEAVY, METAL AND SQUARE WITH A DULL EDGE -- DUMPED IN THE RIVER LONG AGO AND LYING JUST BELOW THE SURFACE.

MEGAN (V.O.)

Foam in the mouth is often seen in drowning cases but is also a product of anaphylaxis. Angela wasn't hit by her killer on the back of the head. The back of her head hit something when she fell into the water.

Blood plumes around Angela's head. Her eyes roll. She struggles for breath. We watched it before, we watch it again, as slowly, inexorably, the river claims her....

BACK TO:

EXT. WHITNEY HOUSE - EVENING (DAY 2)

*

The two Uniforms return. One holds up a prescription bottle in an evidence bag. Megan takes it and shows the label to Jill. It reads all too clearly: "Liquid Amoxicillin."

MEGAN

Liquid Amoxicillin. When this matches the formulation we found in Angela's stomach, that will be all for you. Anything you want to say?

*

*

Whitney stares at his wife in horror. She looks back at him, then at Megan, Peter and Detectives Morris and Baker --

JILL

I want a lawyer.

Megan smiles with grim satisfaction as Det. Morris brings out the cuffs.

DET. MORRIS

Jill Whitney, you're under arrest for the murder of Angela Swanson. You have the right to remain silent....

EXT. WHITNEY HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER (DAY 2) *

Jill sits in the back of the Detectives' car. Det. Baker shuts her in. Det. Morris meanwhile is having trouble finding words for Megan.

DET. MORRIS
I guess I'll see you at trial.

MEGAN
Yes you will.

DET. MORRIS
Well then, thanks. Doctor.

MEGAN
You're welcome. Detective.

Det. Morris returns to his car. Det. Baker throws a respectful nod at Megan before she too climbs in and the car pulls away. *

Megan turns to find Peter regarding her with a smile. *

MEGAN
What are you smiling at?

PETER
It's not like you not to rub it in. *

MEGAN
Get in the car.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM #1 - NIGHT (DAY 2) *

Megan stands at the examination table looking down at Angela's body covered in a sheet up to her neck. Megan doesn't notice Padma slip through the door behind her. Until, that is -- *

PADMA
I got a lot of calls about you before I hired you. She's brilliant and driven. She throws elbows but gets results. I didn't think it was possible they were underselling you but they were. In one year you've managed to get even City Hall to notice us. *

MEGAN
You're welcome.

PADMA

But the knives will come out the
minute you screw up, and even I
won't be able to help you.

*
*

As Megan ponders this --

*

PADMA

I may never have a resume like
yours but I do know something you
don't. You let this job get too
personal and you'll burn yourself
out.

*
*
*
*

MEGAN

You let me worry about that, okay?

*

Padma ponders her brilliant, driven, puzzle of a Medical
Examiner.

*

PADMA

Do you have any friends?

MEGAN

Why?

PADMA

Get some. You can't fight
everybody, everywhere, all the
time, alone.

And with that, Padma leaves. Megan looks at Angela for the
last time, and pulls the sheet up over her head.

INT. MEGAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Megan walks in. Her expression is heavy, as if Padma's words
had somehow weighed her down. She drops her keys, carries
her handbag into the kitchen and sets it on the kitchen
island. And then she freezes.

There's something else waiting for her on the island. A
PIECE OF BIRTHDAY CAKE. And a note in her daughter's
handwriting. "Happy My Birthday, Lacey."

Megan's whole demeanor lifts. As if sun had broken through
clouds. As if she weren't alone after all. She reaches for
a fork and takes a bite as we....

FADE OUT.

END OF PILOT