BIRD DOG

Pilot Episode
"Whopper"

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"BIRD DOG"
Pilot

EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - DAY

A venerable inn rests on the apron of an Oregon lake. My God, we could be looking at a post card for the Cascades. In a boat on the shimmering water, rugged lodge owner LYLE SIMMS, 42, casts a line.

INT. GREAT ROOM - LODGE - DAY

The lobby of the family-run resort. Office, reception desk, lounge -- overlooking a dock and, just beyond, the L.L. Bean tableau of Lyle’s expert haul cast.

MARSHA
A sixty pound trout? That’s unheard of.

MARSHA HOOVER, 30, is peering at Lyle between machine gun taps on her iPhone. Rapacious, a little too put together, Marsha is a journalist.

JUNE
These reports on the ‘net, I know they’re sprouting like weeds...but we don’t know who’s posting them. Honest.

JUNE SIMMS, Lyle’s wife, labors over reservation forms. Homespun, she seems both sincere and beleaguered.

MARSHA
Hey, I’m thrilled to cover the story...but seriously, no one’s seen a fish that big since Jonah...

LYLE (O.S.)
WHOOP!

Marsha’s eyes pop to...

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Lyle Simms has hooked a fish. His rod bends like a pretzel. Line HISSES from his reel. He WHOOPS again.
EXT. LAKE - DAY/INTERCUT LODGE

Lyle's boat wobbles. He manages to grab his hand-held recreational radio and YELP...

LYLE
It's a whopper!

June snatches her own radio, ups the volume. Boggled, Marsha jerks a camera from her Chloe handbag, darts onto the deck, begins madly to snap photos. Around her form a half-dozen Guests, drawn by the excitement.

Suddenly, whatever's on the other end of the fisherman's line makes a major league run. Lyle Simms is yanked from the boat! And dragged recklessly across the lake until he disappears! That is some GIANT fish.

Marsha is shocked. June rushes onto the deck.

MARSHA
Call 911!

EXT. LAKE SHORE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

A hundred yards from the Lodge, now hidden behind conifers, a rainbow trout JUMPS -- though it's hardly a monster. CAMERA FINDS the shoreline. A shadow walks away quickly. There, sticking from behind boulders, are the lifeless legs of the once virile Lyle Simms...

EXT. GAIL'S COTTAGE - DAY

Different legs -- alive and shapely -- protrude from beneath a hybrid Ford Escape. A cell phone SOUNDS.

GAIL McGRATH, 30, rises. J. Crew face smudged with grease, a body toned by running, her burgeoning ability one step ahead of confidence -- Gail lifts her phone off a box labeled “Motor Oil.” Checks the Caller ID.

GAIL
I know, softball at six.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
Tim called in. He needs you.
GAIL
(altering)
Yeah?

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
Crystal Lake Lodge. Some sort of strange fishing accident.

GAIL
On it.

She instinctively swipes at her smudges, reaches into the motor oil box. To her surprise, it’s empty. GROANING, she hurries toward her house, a picturesque cottage in the woods bordering a small town.

INT. GAIL’S COTTAGE – DAY

Gail speeds past a stone fireplace, Steinway baby grand -- she pulls off her T-shirt and, in a sports bra, alights in the laundry room. She jerks from the dryer an inside-out khaki shirt. Abruptly Gail HEARS A KNOCK. Buh?

GAIL’S FRONT DOOR

She throws open the portal, faces:

SAM, a rumpled 55-year-old in a Yankees cap and heirloom Bermuda shorts. Holding a Samsonite suitcase last advertised in 1974. Sporting a quirky, matter-of-fact look that is, with no obvious justification, assured.

SAM
Miss me?

Off-guard, then surprisingly cold, Gail charges back to her bedroom, shuts the door to a sliver.

Sam is unfazed. He wanders into the house. His eyes find a portrait on the mantle -- a woman in her forties -- inviting, elegant. Karen. Sam now is fazed. He can only stare, taken with the image.

GAIL (O.S.)
(from her bedroom)
What are you doing in Oregon?

SAM
Missed a left turn in Kansas.
GAIL (O.S.)
You staying?

SAM
Thought I might.

Gail reappears, now in jeans and buckling a belt, on which hang a radio and a service-issued Glock. For the first time on her khaki shirt, we can SEE stenciled: “SHERIFF.”

GAIL
Try the Evergreen Motel.

Sam flickers disappointment -- as Gail marches out.

EXT. STREET - HIDDEN PINES - DAY

Gail strides past quaint homes with Sunset landscapes, aimed toward the Capra-esque town square of Hidden Pines. In his garden, a MAN holds up a lush beefsteak tomato.

MAN
I’ll leave a dozen on your step, Gail!

Gail nods gratefully, even as she strains at her RADIO...

GAIL
Because. I was changing my oil. And I ran out. Can’t Russell pick me up?

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
Sure. In maybe three hours.

Gail GRIMACES...

ANOTHER VOICE
You remember Hill Street Blues?

Gail pivots. Creeping up is Sam -- behind the wheel of an ‘86 Mustang with New York plates.

GAIL
Ghawd, you and your sixties bands.

SAM
It was a cop show. Saw one once, the whole point was...the key to resolving a case, is getting there fast.
EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - DAY

ON Gail, a reluctant passenger in Sam's car as it speeds under the gate post of the Lodge.

The Mustang lands at a Sheriff's 4-wheel, stationed at the front steps of the inn. Gail spots on the deck, June Simms -- her cheek smeared with dried blood -- distraught. Being both comforted and grilled by Marsha Hoover. Seeing Marsha, Gail glooms. A DEPUTY walks up, looks at the Mustang like it's a rotary phone.

DEPUTY
Hey Gail. Victim is Lyle Simms, believe that? He always said he wanted to be out on his lake, when he checked out.

Sam is staring O.S. At a parking sign marked "Owner." There is no vehicle in the space, only tire tracks.

GAIL
Where's the body?

DEPUTY
'Bout a hundred yards east, on the shore. He was killed by a fish.

SAM
A fish. Armed?

GAIL
Just drive, okay.

EXT. LAKE SHORE - DAY

The crime scene. Taped off. A dark van holds next to a a Sheriff's SUV. Stooped over the bloodied form of Lyle Simms is a Chinese-American woman, Dr. JOANNE SEE, 44. Her flattering silk blouse and tight skirt seem wrong, but then she's an Internist doubling as County Coroner.

Slumped on a rock is a shapely woman of 33, GINGER REESE, normally a free-spirit, now etched in grief. Her polo shirt marks her a Crystal Lodge employee.

TIM
Where were you, when you heard the ruckus?
Ginger’s interrogator wears the gold badge of “McKENZIE COUNTY SHERIFF.” Boyishly handsome, more at ease in the field than behind a desk, he is TIM BURKE, 36.

**GINGER**
At our incinerator, burning trash. I’ve been trying to get Lyle to replace the damn thing...horrible for the environment...he said he’d find the money, he really cared...he...
(stumbles with emotion)

Sam’s Mustang wheels up. Gail steps out. Sam hangs behind the yellow tape. Examining a head wound on the victim, Joanne spots Sam and, oddly, seems to recognize him. Tim eyes Gail, sees she’s circling the scene.

**TIM**
(back to Ginger)
So you heard cries, you came running. And you found Lyle’s body?

**GINGER**
June was already here. She was holding him.

**TIM**
Anyone else?

**GINGER**
There was a guest out hiking. She got here before me too, but June was first.

**RUSSELL (O.S.)**
Sheriff, shall I call Fish & Wildlife?

A Deputy in a “SHERIFF” windbreaker, tape measure drooping from a pocket, steps up. He is 48, buzz cut hair, reed skinny. RUSSELL GITZ, Detective Sergeant -- community legend, everyone’s favorite birthday party magician, perennial Deputy of the Year right up to 1989.

**TIM**
To...?

**RUSSELL**
Get ‘em out here with sonar. That big boy oughta light up like JAWS.
JOANNE
For the record, C.O.D looks more like head trauma than drowning.

RUSSELL
Either way, we’re talkin’ dangerous predator. Enough dynamite, we’ll blow that bruise all the way to Portland.

HEAR a CHUCKLE. Heads turn. It’s Sam.

SAM
Fish drags a guy on shore feet first? Ripley’s know about this?

Tim studies the position of the body, looks back at a mortified Gail, then Sam. The guy has a point.

TIM
Who’s he?

GAIL
(tight)
Distant relative.

Gail edges into the tall weeds above the victim.

GAIL (CONT’D)
Joanne, back at the Lodge, I noticed blood on June Simms’ face...

JOANNE
She cut herself, running through the brush to get to her husband.

GAIL
So the blood on Lyle’s cheek is from...?

JOANNE
June, I think. Smear when she embraced him. His skull is crushed, but that wound’s on the back of his head.

Joanne has knelt over a small log, covered with wet moss. There is tissue and blood on one end.

JOANNE (CONT’D)
Speaking of head wounds...

Gail has paused in the knee-high growth above the scene. She scans the ground closer.
GAIL

Hmm...

TIM

Find something?

SAM

Tire tracks.

Tim alerts. How could “the relative” know that? Sam’s standing 60 feet away.

MARSHA (O.S.)

Tim!

Pushing past Sam is Marsha Hoover, camera in hand. She ignores the crime scene tape.

MARSHA (CONT’D)

Could you move closer to the body?!

Already Marsha is snapping photos with impunity. Gail stiffens, looks for a rebuke from a suddenly uneasy Tim.

TIM

Uh, Marsha. We’re still processing the scene...

MARSHA

Go ahead, don’t mind me...

Gail, on egg shells but determined, moves toward Marsha.

GAIL

I swear, Marsha, you could still be in high school.

MARSHA

(is that an insult?)

What?

GAIL

Same scrappy reporter. But see, now, by law you can’t take pictures until we finish the CSI.

Marsha smiles thinly. Are those hackles rising?

MARSHA

I’m sorry, you’re so right, Gail. Unless Tim doesn’t mind.
Tim’s suddenly head counselor at Camp Cat Fight.

TIM
You know what? Could you drive me back to town, Marsha? Lions Club’s having both me and Bixby give our campaign talks. Russell’s going to need the kit in the SUV to make casts of the tracks...

Marsha snaps one more pic of Tim. Victorious.

MARSHA
Sure! Eye on the prize, you’re so right.

Tim eyes Gail, a little self-conscious, sotto voce.

TIM
You got this?

Gail nods. He peers once more at Sam before leaving...

TIM (CONT’D)
Who’s this guy, again?

GAIL
(beat)
My father.

EXT. LODGE – FRONT DECK – DAY

Sam drives up, Gail exits. Time has passed.

GAIL
I’ve got witnesses to interview. Go.

SAM
Go where?

GAIL
I’ll call you when I’m finished.

SAM
But it’s beautiful here, Central Park without the flashers.

GAIL
Then stay outside. (walks away)
I mean it.
INT. LODGE - GREAT ROOM - DAY

START ON a worn family Bible, in the lap of June Simms. PAN UP her still soiled torso, to her grief-striken expression -- the blood smear prominent on her cheek. She is finishing a phone call.

JUNE
Your father was so proud of you. Take tomorrow’s flight, don’t worry about me. Eva and Billy are here. I love you, too.

EVA BANKS, 38, a pretty if anxious Latina who speaks with an accent, takes the phone from June. She embraces June’s shoulders, crosses to hang up -- revealing Gail, note pad in hand.

GAIL
That’s Eva Banks...with an “e?”

EVA
Yes.

GAIL
When did you arrive at the Lodge?

EVA
Thursday.

GAIL
How is it you know the Simms?

JUNE
From our Navy days, in San Diego.

EVA
My husband and I were invited here by Lyle...5 years, we haven’t seem them...

GAIL
And you were hiking this morning?

EVA
Like every morning. I heard June screaming. I ran to her. Horrible... (trembling, dials her cell) Why can’t I reach Billy? He took Lyle’s truck this morning, said he’s going to town...
GAIL
Billy’s your husband?

EVA
And Lyle’s best friend...he’ll go crazy when he hears...

Now both Eva and June are WEEPING.

EXT. LODGE - DAY

Sam leans against his car -- eavesdropping, we realize, through open windows. Inside, from a separate entrance, Joanne See leads in Ginger Reese.

Suddenly a sedan barrels up to the Lodge. On its door is magnetic sign: “Sweely Realty.” Out jumps a plow horse of a man -- NATE SWEELY. He hurries into the Lodge.

INT. LODGE - GREAT ROOM - DAY

Nate angles past Joanne, who is passing a xanax to the still-raw Ginger. Nate heads straight to June. They embrace. Until self-consciously June pulls back...

JUNE
Eva, this is Nate. Nate Sweely. We grew up together.

EXT. LODGE - DECK - DAY

With Sam glued to the inside -- A HORN TAPS. The van from the crime scene rolls up. Sam glimpses a body bag in the rear. From the Lodge comes Joanne See, about to board. But she diverts momentarily to Sam...

JOANNE
Karen was my patient. And my friend. I’m sorry for your loss.

SAM
You know me?

JOANNE
Well, lots of pictures of you, in Karen’s house.
SAM
I didn’t see any.

JOANNE
I think...Gail took them down.

Sam winces, and yet -- a communion with Joanne See hangs there. She climbs in the van, it starts away.

A cell phone SOUNDS. Sam can see through the open window Nate SWEELY absentmindedly pawing in his jacket. When in fact, his blinking phone is on the seat of his own car. Sam notes the Caller ID on the handset: “ADAM SINCLAIR, GLEN EDEN RESORT.” Then the missed call screen on the phone resets with a text: “GOOD JOB.”

EXT. LAKE SHORE CRIME SCENE - DAY

Deputy Russell Gitz, a gypsum smear on his nose, looks like a kid in mud puddle as he tries to cast the tire tracks leading from the lake. Sam’s Mustang pulls up. Gail, embarrassed by the sight, avoids Sam’s eyes.

SAM
None of my business, but I’ve seen those tire tracks...

GAIL
Correct, it’s not your business. And yes, they match the tire pattern in Lyle Simms’ parking spot.

Whoa. The girl’s got chops. Sam is impressed.

GAIL (CONT’D)
(deferential)
Russell...you’re all over this...you want me to head back, jump on the paperwork?

RUSSELL
Right!
(to Sam good-naturedly)
Kid’s got promise. Me, I love investigations. All except the details.

EXT. LODGE - FRONT DECK - DAY

Sam’s Mustang swings back from the crime scene. The “Sweely Realty” car still rests at the Lodge.
Eva Banks is sitting on the steps to the deck, dabbing at her muddy pants with cleaning fluid. She looks up. From the passenger window, Gail extends her card.

GAIL
Mrs. Banks, when your husband contacts you, please have him call me.

EVA
You want to see my husband?

GAIL
Yes, and the vehicle he’s driving too.

EVA
Vee...veeheek...

SAM
(translating)
Camion. You from...where? Columbia?

EVA
Si. Tumaco.

Gail glances at Sam. Her turn to be impressed.

EXT. FOREST HIGHWAY - SAM’S MUSTANG - DAY

The Mustang powers through the gate; Gail’s on her radio.

GAIL
Nadine, could you please run a check on Lyle Simms’ pickup...put a search on the truck and the possible driver, William Banks. Oh, and remind the Sheriff, he promised to play shortstop at six.

Sam has locked to a passing billboard -- calling for the election of “Clyde Bixby” as McKenzie County Sheriff. “Experience You Can Trust. For a Change.” Sam notes the image of the candidate -- Bixby is a portly sixty.

SAM
What’s the story on Bixby?

GAIL
Sheriff before Tim. Til he termed out, now he wants his throne back.
SAM
Nice guy, your Sheriff. You interested?

GAIL
(red-faced)
What? No! We’re both new, he’s giving me a chance...

SAM
He with the reporter?

GAIL
They date. A lot.

SAM
She strikes me as competitive.

GAIL
We were both up for Homecoming Queen. I won. She hacked her hair to spikes.

SAM
Hey, she could pass for a queen in the Bronx. How about you, you got a love life?

GAIL
(changing the subject)
You can tell a *Columbian* Spanish accent?

SAM
Thirty years in three different boroughs, you turn into a citizen of the world.

GAIL
Well, except for Oregon.

It’s there. Between them. Sam fumbles with a CD, stuffs it in an after-market player. “COWBOYS AND ANGELS.”

SAM
Looka this. Found it in a drawer. It was yours, remember? George Michael. I took you to his concert back when. You and your friends. In Jersey.

GAIL
(almost drawn in, then...)
Guy turned out to be a perv. Be careful who you trust.
A ROAR as the “Sweely Realty” sedan guns past them and, ahead, turns into a luxurious drive. Stone pillars proclaim: “GLEN EDEN RESORT.” Sam slows.

    GAIL (CONT’D)
    Keep going. What are you doing?

    SAM
    Your local real estate baron got a call, then a text, while he was in the Lodge. From the “Glen Eden Resort.”

    GAIL
    You were reading his phone?!

Sam suddenly wheels into the resort.

    GAIL (CONT’D)
    Would you please butt out!

    SAM
    The message said, “Good job.” Of what?

Gail starts to protest. But something has kicked in, just as with Sam. A scent. The tingle of the hunt.

INT. GLEN EDEN RESORT – DAY

Gail and Sam enter the lobby -- as opulent as the Lodge was rustic. Closest thing to fishing this crowd gets, is caviar. Gail glances at the office suite on the second level. Spies Nate Sweely. Just as she starts there...

    ARMANDO’S VOICE
    Gail?

Near the exit, a man carrying a mat, ARMANDO, has spotted Gail, comes back to her. Pony tail, garbed in linen, he reeks intimacy. As much as she’d like to shield from Sam what follows -- doesn’t work.

    ARMANDO
    I miss you.

    GAIL
    Kind of busy, Armando.

    ARMANDO
    Find your shanti, we can talk about this.
GAIL
I never lost my shanti. Just the three months we spent together.

She marches to the elevator. Sam falls in stride.

SAM
You were doing a number with that gumba?

GAIL
"Doing a number?" You know Miami Vice has been cancelled, right?

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE - GLEN EDEN RESORT - DAY

START ON a digital camera. In Nate Sweely's hands. He and a Hugo Boss Suit are scanning photos we cannot see -- as Gail and Sam enter through the door marked: ADAM SINCLAIR, President. Surprised, Sweely snaps off his camera. The suit, ADAM SINCLAIR, 50, calmly steps to his desk.

SINCLAIR

GAIL
We're trying to figure out what happened.

SINCLAIR
Funny, I drove by the Lodge this morning, on my way back from Portland. Who knew fish could be so dangerous?

Gail has noticed a big landscape blueprint on Sinclair's wall. "Phase Two." Lots of lines and arrows.

GAIL
What's with the photos, Nate? You two doing a project together?

SINCLAIR
(answering for a wary Nate)
You know how it is...grow or die. We're always looking for investments.

GAIL
Like lake front property?
SAM
Geez, you’re right, that big pond
there...kind of shaped like Crystal Lake.

Sam points to the wall. A second map taped to the first
shows Crystal Lake on the boundary of Glen Eden's land.

SINCLAIR
Who’re you?

SAM
Sam McGrath. Bronx, New York. What’s
poppin’?

SINCLAIR
(to Gail)
Related?

GAIL
Only by blood.

Gail has moved to study the markings on the maps.
Sinclair and Sweely edge toward the diagrams, a
protective reflex. Sam, on the other hand, begins to
fiddle with Sweely’s momentarily abandoned camera.

SINCLAIR
Look, our business is our own, but I can
say this...we’ve been looking to develop
a championship golf course. Good for us
and good for McKenzie County...why not?
It’s no secret the fishing lodge has been
struggling financially.

Sam scrolls two pictures on Sweely’s camera. INSERT:
PICS of the Crystal Lake Lodge and its dock. Impressed,
Sam flips open a tiny panel on the camera...

SAM
Looka this thing. Records on this little
square, huh? Retired guy like me, I
gotta get one of these...I can shoot the
mountains, the mooses...

Riveted to Gail, Nate now moves to reclaim his camera.

SINCLAIR
Nate has been helping Glen Eden prepare a
bid for Crystal Lake. That’s why I was
in Portland, meeting with bankers.
(MORE)
SINCLAIR (CONT’D)
Of course, we had no idea Lyle Simms was
going to die in a boating accident.
(then)
By the way, you have no appointment. Why
are you here?

For an instant Gail is caught off-guard. Not Sam.

SAM
I’m a tourist. Looking for a hotel.
What’s a room cost?

SINCLAIR
Five hundred dollars.

SAM
That include the deed?

Gail nudges Sam toward the door.

GAIL
Sorry, Mr. Sinclair. I’ll be sure to
make an appointment next time. That
could be soon. There was nothing
“accidental” about Lyle Simms’ death.

EXT. GAIL’S COTTAGE – DAY

Sam’s car arcs into the homestead. Gail jumps out. Her
boots and pants are caked in mud from the lake.

GAIL
You should get to the motel before it
fills up.

SAM
Right. You’re busy, huh?

GAIL
Yes. I’ve got to change. I’ve been
called everything from a Water Girl to
Deputy Doll...people see me working like
this, I fully expect Dirty Harriet.
The Evergreen Motel’s on the south end of
Summit Street, you can’t miss it.
(Sam hasn’t moved)
Like, leave.

He doesn’t budge. Gail glares.
SAM
I left my suitcase in the house.

INT. COTTAGE - DAY

Sam follows the rankled Gail into her front room. She spies his bag in the corner.

GAIL
There. Ghawd, you’re days on the road with one suitcase?

SAM
What can I say, I’m a clothes horse.

This, from a guy dressed like Oscar Madison. Gail frowns, shoots into her bedroom.

Sam scans the living room, drifts to a family scrapbook on the piano. INSERT a picture of a younger Karen and Sam, on a blanket in Central Park. Sam holds baby Gail lovingly. Sam flips pages. INSERT a second photo: A posed souvenir from the “St. Barnabas Father-Daughter Dance, 1990.” A ruddy Irishman in his fifties has his arm around 10-year-old Gail. Sam’s eyes glisten.

Gail reappears, in a dark suit. Badge now added to her belt. In time to SEE Sam swipe at his eyes. Gail feels a stab of emotion. But again she hardens -- takes the scrapbook and sticks it in the piano bench.

SAM (CONT’D)
I forgot. Uncle Ryan used to fill in for me now and then. You hear from him?

GAIL
Yeah, every tax season. But I’ll say this. He was here for Mom’s service.

SAM
I’m sorry.

GAIL
Me too. Couldn’t even make her funeral? Why are you here now, Sam?

SAM
“Sam?” What ever happened to “Dad?”
GAIL
My question exactly. For 20 years.

The moment is snapped by Gail’s RADIO.

dispatcher (V.O.)
Four-oh-nine.

GAIL
Nine.

dispatcher (V.O.)
Gail, better get here quick. Your case just broke wide open...

INT. SHERIFF’S STATION - DAY

Modern, but crafted from logs to appeal to the tourists. Deputy Russell Gitz leads Gail and Sam down a hallway.

GAIL
You got a positive ID?

RUSSELL
The California DMV record squares, he’s who he says he is...William Eugene Banks.

Russell leads Gail and Sam into the colorful bull pen -- where sleek computers compete with antiquated taxidermy. A figure sits with his back to the door.

RUSSELL (CONT’D)
Want to tell Detective McGrath what you told me, Mr. Banks?

The man turns. Eyes red. BILLY BANKS may be linebacker tough, but he’s on the verge of a cracking...

BILLY
I killed Lyle Simms.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

INT. SHERIFF’S STATION - BULL PEN - DAY

Russell grins like a Cheshire as he pours coffee for Sam.

RUSSELL
Just for you...our New York blend.

SAM
Yeah, what’s that?

RUSSELL
Eight dollars a cup.

Russell loves his own joke. Behind them, Gail and Sheriff Tim Burke hover over Billy Banks.

BILLY
When Lyle invited us up, I thought it was just for old time’s sake...

GAIL
It was more than that?

BILLY
He wanted...to stage a publicity stunt. Lyle was gonzo. What better way to rescue a dying business than to make people think his lake was full of jumbo trout?

TIM
So Lyle recruited you.

BILLY
(nodding)
He figured the local reporter was ambition-on-a-stick, she’d jump at anything.

Tim glances uncomfortably at Gail. Sam misses nothing.

BILLY (CONT’D)
So we worked out the whole gag. Rigged a line, underwater guides, cable hooked to his truck. The second I heard “whopper” on the radio, I jammed the gas, just like we planned. I drive like a bullet over the hill.
GAIL
But something went wrong.

BILLY
We measured three times! Six hundred, twenty-two feet. We used to lay mines for the Navy, for godssake...

SAM
Yeah? Me too. What ship?

Tim turns to Sam, then Gail. What’s going on here?

BILLY
U.S.S. Curts. Drug interdiction, for the DEA.

SAM
Columbia?

BILLY
(Sam knows his stuff)
Yes sir.

SAM
That where you met Eva?
(Billy’s nodding)

GAIL
Do you mind if we ask the questions?

Sam shrugs innocently, reaches for sugar. Gail turns back to Billy...

GAIL(CONT’D)
Who knew about your stunt?

BILLY
Just me and Lyle...and June, so’s she could steer the reporter.

GAIL
No one else?

BILLY
We’re ex-military, man, need-to-know only. Two tours together, best years of my life. We were blood brothers.
(emotional)
I met Eva on our second liberty. Lyle helped me smuggle her out of Columbia.
(MORE)
BILLY (CONT'D)
Eva was being forced to marry some drug lord. Lyle said, if you love her, man, save her!
   (he pokes at tears)
We got her out, I married her...me, Eva, Lyle, June...we were inseparable.

GAIL
In San Diego. The eighties?

BILLY
We had quarters on Coronado. June was a small town girl, I think Eva helped her survive all that time we were off to sea. Raising hell and taking names.
   (in agony)
Lyle Simms was the best I ever knew.

GAIL
If this was just a prank gone bad, Mr. Banks, why’d you run?

BILLY
I didn’t run! It was our plan. Soon as I reeled in the cable, circle back to town. Make sure the truck was seen. None of the yokels could add it up.
   (raw)
You gotta believe me, it was an accident!

INT. TIM BURKE’S OFFICE – TIME CUT – DAY

Tim leads Gail and Russell into his glassed cubicle.

TIM
   (eyeing Gail)
Russell, book Mr. Banks on...?

GAIL
The act was reckless. Manslaughter two.

TIM
Manslaughter two. For now.

RUSSELL
Man-two. You and me think alike, Sheriff.

That seems to depress Tim as Russell exits. Tim reaches his desk, is quickly checking messages, confirms Russell is out of range.
TIM
Sometimes I’m amazed the people of McKenzie County let me out of a patrol car. You ought to be Sheriff.

GAIL
I don’t have your command presence.

TIM
Just don’t take another job any time soon. You’re coming to my re-election party, right? Friday night?

GAIL
If I get my cleaning back on time...I got one dress that works.

TIM
(an admiring mutter)
You kidding? They all work.

GAIL
(did she hear that?)
What?

Something happens to Gail. Her cheeks color. Her eyes drop. Tim fidgets too. Sexual tension, is what it is.

TIM
(she’s nonplussed)
I need you.
(her heart’s racing)
To answer questions from...
(the message in his hand)
Adam Sinclair. My major campaign donor and the guy still makes me nervous.

GAIL
He uses money like a club.

TIM
See, you deal with that better than I do.

GAIL
You’ve just got to stand up to him.

TIM
(reading the message)
Like you we’re doing? This morning? You were “badgering” Adam Sinclair?
GAIL

(thrown)
My dad was looking for lodging...

Tim is drawn to their view of the bull pen: Sam’s still engaged with Billy Banks. Tim punches his INTERCOM. Now they can HEAR Sam and Billy.

SAM (ON THE BOX)
You said you measured the cable run.
How’d you know where to stop?

BILLY (ON THE BOX)
We spray-painted a tree. Orange.

Tim’s intrigued with Sam. Even as the info piques Gail.

TIM
What’s your Dad do?

GAIL
He’s retired.

TIM
What did he do?

GAIL
(difficult beat)
He was a cop.
(then quickly)
Listen, I’m going to run back out to Crystal Lake. Tie up some loose ends. Okay?

TIM
Sure, but you know what else you might do?

GAIL
What?

TIM
Take your father.

On the brink of protest, Gail wills acceptance.
EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE - LATE DAY

One pine, in a sea of pines, sprayed orange. CAMERA BOOMS higher to SEE in the distance, at the scene of the crime, Sam's car headed this way. Gail, a passenger.

GAIL
You were not in the Navy, by the way.

SAM
Uncle Grady was. Remember him? Always brought Bushmills to your birthdays...

GAIL
No. Where is he now? Jail?

SAM
Of course not. Rehab.

GAIL
Ah. He's the white sheep.

They reach the impossible-to-miss tree. Gail and Sam step from the car. Sam notices Gail carries a metallic case, pulls from it a small electronic device. Sam ignores it -- instead, glances back to the lake shore. It's now hidden by the hill in between.

SAM
Lake's disappeared. No way Banks could have seen Lyle from here.

GAIL
Billy had to assume, based on this pre-measured stop-point, Lyle was idled in the shallows.

SAM
Hidden from the Lodge, free to disconnect himself from the cable.

GAIL
Except. Billy had pulled Lyle straight into the rocks on shore. (eyeing her device) But. We're not 622-feet from the lake. It's 800 feet.

Sam realizes Gail's little black box is a GPS.
SAM
I had a gut-feeling we might be further away.

GAIL
Yeah well, gut’s are fallible.
   (the GPS)
Not this.

Suddenly she’s pacing back toward the lake, eyes on the readout. Sam trails.

Gail scans the pines along the rutted off-road. Abruptly she finds her target, a small, freshly cut pine stump.

Gail kneels at the stub, now takes from her case an ultra-violet light. She uses the case to shade the stump, lights it up. INSERT: There is paint residue on the stump. Orange paint. Gail rises, eye to eye with Sam, Holmes & Watson.

GAIL (CONT’D)
Someone changed the stop point.

SAM
Someone wanted Lyle Simms dead.

SHOUTS abruptly ring out. From the lake. Gail and Sam hustle to their car...

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - DOCK - LATE DAY

Gail and Sam speed toward the Lodge’s boat dock -- SEE: a livid Ginger Reese chasing Nate Sweely to his car.

GINGER
You missed your calling, asshole! Find an ambulance to chase!

NATE
An ambulance wouldn’t make as much noise as you!

Nate drives off hard in his “Sweely Realty” sedan. Just as Gail and Sam pull up. Sam gets out, peers at Ginger.

SAM
Sounds just like my neighborhood.

GINGER
I found him measuring the dock, taking a water sample. I tried to throw him off the property. It’s what Lyle would have done...he’s done it before.

GAIL
Lyle had problems with Nate?

GINGER
Nate Sweely is a vulture. Lyle would give this land to the Conservancy before he’d see it developed. He swore to me.

SAM
In blood, or over danish? Mind telling me, what exactly’s your job title here, Ms. Reese?

GAIL
Assistant Manager. Ginger, what do you mean, you “tried” to throw Nate off the property?

GINGER
He said he had permission.

GAIL
From...?
GINGER
June Simms.

SAM
Maybe June’s got her own idea of “going green.”

GINGER
Maybe June’s gone soft. God knows she’s got a soft spot for Sweely.

GAIL
What’s that mean?

GINGER
(beat, pulling back) Maybe you should ask her. I’m going swimming.

Ginger is already walking toward the end of the dock, unbuttoning her shirt.

SAM
Where’s your suit?

GINGER
No use for them.

SAM
Yeah? Can I go to the Lodge, get you a towel...

GAIL
Dad!

Sam turns. Happy, of all things. Gail called him “Dad.”

INT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE – RECEPTION DESK – LATE DAY

JUNE
Nate Sweely was just finalizing an appraisal of the Crystal Lake Lodge. In case I need a loan.

Behind the desk, June is swamped, frayed. Gail interrogates, as Sam nibbles berries from a bowl.

GAIL
So this is not about selling?
JUNE
I don’t know yet. We’re in debt. I’ve
got two children in college. Family is
everything.

SAM
Mrs. Simms, how long you had your
relationship with Mr. Sweely?

JUNE
(surprised)
What’s going on here? Lyle died in an
accident...

GAIL
The cause of death is still open. June,
what is your relationship with Nate?

June flusters -- a reticent woman now in the spotlight.

JUNE
He’s a realtor. And. My friend.

GAIL
Good friends?

JUNE
It’s no secret in Hidden Pines, growing
up we used to date. As much as a
preacher’s daughter could date.

SAM
So, just for the record...who inherits
this land?

JUNE
(with assurance)
Unless Lyle changed his will, I do.

Gail absorbs this, nods, pulls Sam toward the door.

GAIL
Alright. I’ll be in touch.
(to Sam)
Come on. If we don’t get moving, the
Evergreen Motel will sell out.

JUNE
The Evergreen just called. They’re full
already...trying to place overflow.
Sam is staring toward the dock, and the lithe figure of Ginger cutting through the water. Which Gail sees.

S A M
I could always stay here...I'm into water sports...

G A I L
(propped smile)
Don't be silly...

E X T. G A I L'S COTTAGE -- DETACHED GARAGE -- NIGHT

Sam's headlights sweep Gail's still idled Ford and strike the detached garage studio behind her cottage...

G A I L
Just tonight.

S A M
You see this mick complaining? You saved me 500-dollars.

Through a doggy-door in the garage pops an ungainly bloodhound. He wags his tail, BARKS -- though he seems to be barking not at the car, but at a tree.

G A I L
Atta boy, Chekhov. Don't let that birch make a move. Bloodhound. No direction.

S A M
Chekhov?

Now the dog is ambling toward them as they exit the car, tail wagging.

G A I L
Mom was directing "Cherry Orchard" at the college when she rescued him. She loved his melancholy...Chekhov it was.

Sam laughs softly, heads alone for his garage room. Stoops once to pet the hound.

S A M
I'm not surprised. Your Mom had a thing for strays.

The remark strikes Gail -- sinks in.
GAIL
You should eat. Come to the house.

INT. GAIL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gail enters, eyes the cookware like she's never seen it before, locates a skillet. As Sam follows in...

SAM
You cook! Your Mother was a great chef. She used to make these biscuits...

Gail turns. Saved by the bell.

GAIL
You want biscuits?

INT. "UGLY ELK CAFE" - NIGHT

Sam and Gail down the last of their perfect baking soda biscuits. The space is an eccentric mix of greasy-spoon, "Northern Exposure" kitsch and Mediterranean color.

Closing nears. Three men brush past their table -- by their garb, Smoke Jumpers. The last Hunk is ripped, cocky, tattoos prominent. He leans into Gail.

SMOKE JUMPER
Call me.

GAIL
I would, but I lost your number. Right after I hit delete.

The Jumper and his buddies CACKLE, leave -- Sam glowers.

GAIL (CONT'D)
(explaining herself)
He had a sensitive side.

SAM
Front or back?

From the counter with more coffee comes a jovial man in an apron, the suave Greek owner NIKOS, 50.

NIKOS
You like the biscuits?
SAM
Like? I’d wrestle a sumo for these.

GAIL
Really? ’Cause, they’re Mom’s.

NIKOS
Karen was the first person to welcome me to Hidden Pines. She gave me her recipe.

SAM
(turns to Gail)
You see? The “stray” thing.

GAIL
Stray? How long did you and Mom date, Nikos?

NIKOS
Two incredible years.

SAM
Okay, I don’t need to hear this.

GAIL
Like two teenagers on the back row...

Sam’s pointing to a “FOR SALE” sign in the window.

SAM
So! You’re hanging up your apron? What’s that about?

NIKOS
I’m selling “The Ugly Elk.” I’m retiring. To Crete. Eventually everyone must go home, don’t you think?

SAM
Yeah. I’m retiring too. Can’t wait for the good life.

NIKOS
Where will you retire, Mr. McGrath?

Sam glances at Gail. Careful.

SAM
I’m looking.
EXT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

Sam’s Mustang pulls in. From the CD player, once more George Michael SINGS. Which no longer angers Gail.

GAIL
Okay, George Michael was hot. I was the envy of my school, after you took us to his concert.

SAM
I remember, you hit me up for ten bucks the next day, just to buy his new album.

GAIL
The Father-Daughter Dinner Dance was coming, we wanted to make sure we had just the right music.
(reliving it)
Bunch of 10-year-old Catholic school girls. So excited. My best friend wanted me to be sure and dance with her father, so she could dance with you. I told her “no.” You were all mine.

SAM
(quiet beat)
And I was a no-show.

GAIL
Yep.

SAM
I was working a multiple homicide. Don’t remember the perp. The M.O. All I remember, is your voice...on the phone...when I told you I couldn’t make it. You know what you said?

GAIL
No.

SAM
You said, “That’s all right, Daddy.” Like you knew when I called, what it would be.
(them)
I should have done better, Gail. In a million ways. You deserved more.
Gail reels. Uncertain how to handle this.

SAM (CONT'D)
Sorry. I don't know when to shut up.
It's a Bronx thing.

He steps out -- SEES Chekhov staring at an implement.

SAM (CONT'D)
Chekhov. Not that you couldn't whip its ass. But it's a lawn mower.

The dog follows Sam to the garage. Gail is warming.

INT. COTTAGE - MORNING

Gail comes into the kitchen from her bedroom, reaches for a coffee cup. She SEES outside -- Sam, in an ancient "Knicks" tank top, changing the oil in her Ford. Gail beams, locates another coffee cup. The PHONE RINGS.

GAIL
McGrath residence.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Good morning, Sam McGrath there?

GAIL
You're looking for Sam McGrath?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Right, this is Sergeant Jimmie Lopez, NYPD. He's not picking up his cell, but he left this number.

GAIL
He's kind of tied up, I can ask him to call you.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Please do. We expect him back from his disability leave next week. He needs to call in.

ON Gail. Floored.

END OF ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

EXT. COTTAGE - MORNING

Gail marches to the Ford. Sam is crawling from beneath the car. We now can SEE a scar on his chest.

GAIL
Disability leave?

Sam is gut-punched. His eyes drop to the scar.

SAM
I picked up a slug. Some mook with a snout full of blow.
(then)
It’s why I couldn’t come to Karen’s service. I was laid up in the hospital.

GAIL
You couldn’t frigging call?

SAM
I should’ve...the news about Karen, it...hit hard. I always thought...we’d end up together.

GAIL
You are so full of...you are not “retired.” You’re on leave. You’re a New York cop. You’ll die on Avenue A.

She storms back to the house. Sam tries to follow.

SAM
Look, I didn’t know how you’d take my visit...I was keeping the door open...

GAIL
You always kept the door open! And every time you had to make a choice, you went right back to where you wanted to be.

Her cell phone SOUNDS. She jerks it from her pocket, doesn’t even check the ID.

GAIL (CONT’D)

What?!
GINGER
It’s Ginger Reese. I’m with one of our maids. From Salvador. You need to hear what she just told me....

INT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - MAIDS’ CLOSET - MORNING

A young maid, FELIPA, cowards before Gail, Sam and Ginger.

GAIL
Understand, we don’t care about your immigration status.

GINGER
Felipa, just tell them...about the night before Senor Lyle died.

FELIPA
I hear Senora Eva and her huss-ban...

GAIL
Billy.

FELIPA
Si. Fighting. En espanol.

GINGER
Which they didn’t think anyone else would understand.

GAIL
Fighting about what?

FELIPA
About Senora Eva’s lover.

GAIL
And who was that?

FELIPA
Senor Lyle.

EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - DOCK - DAY

Eva Banks is scared. Gail and Sam question her on the dock, as a baffled June observes from her distant office.
EVA
Ever since San Diego...Lyle pushed me, to have sex. In secret. Said he might tell the Lozados where I live, if I didn’t...

GAIL
The Lozados?

SAM
Drug cartel, family of the guy Eva left at the altar.

EVA
Billy, he was a hothead, even then. I lived in fear he’d find out...

GAIL
Did Lyle Simms come to you for sex, here at Crystal Lake?

EVA
The day before he died. I thought he was working, on the lake with Billy. He came to my room. He forced me to bed.

SAM
Did you try to fight him?

EVA
I was ashamed. Angry! After so many years! I told Billy that night.

GAIL
And Billy blew up? At you? Why would he be mad at you?

EVA
With my husband, it’s always my fault.

SAM
So you argued. Did he strike you?

EVA
No. He went looking for Lyle.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

BILLY
You bet, we had a fight that night. Eva accused my best friend of hitting on her.
GAIL
Not “hitting on her,” Mr. Banks. The accusation amounts to rape.

Gail, Sam and Tim Burke surround Billy Banks.

BILLY
Look, me and Lyle were working on the underwater pulleys. He went back to the Lodge for more beer.
(shrugs)
Lyle gets a buzz on, he gets affectionate. A lot of women find that attractive. Some women misunderstand.

SAM
Your wife says after you had words, Billy, you went looking for your best friend. In a fit of anger.

BILLY
Yeah, I found him. Lyle said he never had, never would, do anything with Eva. That was good enough for me.

INT. TIM BURKE’S OFFICE – DAY

Tim, Gail, Sam angle into Tim’s office.

GAIL
One of them’s lying.

TIM
But which?
(thinking)
Russell was shooting snooker with Judge Cole’s bailiff, found out the Judge has gone mountain biking, due back tomorrow. We’ve only got a day before Billy Banks is arraigned and out on bail.

GAIL
Can we get a warrant, to search the Banks’ room?
(off their look)
It’s a fishing lodge. The bedding’s changed weekly. If Lyle Simms had sex with Eva Banks, may be DNA evidence.
TIM
Slippery grounds. One procedural screw up and Bixby will have me out of a job.

SAM
Fortune favors the bold, my friend.

GAIL
Where'd you get that?

SAM
A racing form at Aqueduct, but still, it's a life lesson.

Beat. Tim steps to his desk, produces a paper.

TIM
Mr. McGrath, I'd like you to sign this, makes you a special deputy. By the book. "I's" dotted, "T's" crossed.

GAIL
Oh please, Tim...

TIM
Just...work together...the two of you. Your radio code can be "Bird Dog." Let's everyone know it's official.

GAIL
Bird Dog?

TIM
You're the Bird, he's the Dog.
(Gail's coming unglued)
It's one case.

EXT. COTTAGE - DAY

In a huff, Gail slams the door to her finally-in-service Ford. As Sam steps from the car, she grabs a dress covered in plastic and scurries to the house.

GAIL
Bird Dog!

SAM
Hey, you don't hear me complaining.
GAIL
Why would you complain?

SAM
I got second billing.

GAIL
It's embarrassing.

SAM
It's not like you're gonna hear "Bird Dog" every five minutes...

Her radio SOUNDS...

TIM'S VOICE (RADIO)
Bird Dog, this is four-oh-one.

INT. COTTAGE - DAY
Gail crosses to a closet to hang the dress. Sam trails.

TIM'S VOICE (RADIO)
Nate Sweely just phoned. He claims you stole the SD chip from his camera.

GAIL
What?
Gail drills Sam with a look. He shrugs, wholly innocent.

GAIL (CONT'D)
No idea what Nate's talking about.

TIM'S VOICE (RADIO)
Alright, I'll deal with it. Ten-four.

Gail stares hard at Sam. Sam stares back. All of the sudden he pulls something from his pocket. An SD chip.

SAM
Oh, look what I found in my cuff.

GAIL
(horrified)
You had no warrant.

SAM
I wasn't the cop, you were.
GAIL
What were you going to do with it?

SAM
Tried all night. Couldn’t figure out how to play it.

GAIL
Play it? You don’t play it. You read it. If you don’t know what it is, why steal it?!

SAM
You notice Sweely was pink?
(beat, Gail’s lost)
In Sinclair’s office. Cool mountain air, but the guy’s flushed. Did you catch how he stared a hole in you, never blinked?

GAIL
(chagrined)
No. What’s your point? It’s the shifty-eyed person who’s lying.

SAM
Unless that person’s a black belt in deceit. Like say, a guy who sells vacation real estate? What’s he hiding?

She stares at her father. Suddenly she snatches the chip, sticks it in a reader linked to her PowerBook. **INSERT:** Photos upload on the screen. The Crystal Lake Lodge at sunset. The dock. The lake itself.

SAM (CONT’D)
“Play.” What a putz, I am. You don’t play a picture, huh?

GAIL
No. But you play...this.

She is staring at a section of the lake. The border of the picture is lined in red. Gail clicks on it.

The picture comes to life; it’s a VIDEO. Shot from behind trees. Showing two people in the lake, entwined. Naked and in lust. **Lyle Simms** and **Ginger Reese**.
EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - INCINERATOR - DAY

BIG EYES well, stare a Gail’s PowerBook screen. Ginger’s eyes. She moves away from the image, pokes at blackened mess of debris around the incinerator.

GINGER
Gotta get rid of this relic. Something blew up, this morning. An aerosol can, I think. Hair spray maybe.

SAM
Or orange paint?

Sam has Ginger in his gaze like a big game target.

GAIL
About the video, Ginger...

Ginger squares her shoulders.

GINGER
I fell in love with Lyle. He promised me he would leave June...and leave Crystal Lake to the Nature Conservancy.

SAM
Yeah well, you wanna bag a tree-hugger, ply her with trees.

GINGER
(murderous glare)
Isn’t it against the law to take movies of people on private property?

INT. SWEELY REALTY - DAY

A storefront on Main. Sam hands the SD chip to Nate...

SAM
My bad, Mr. Sweely. I accidently dropped this widget in my cuff.

NATE
(miffed)
Unbelievable...
SAM
Then I accidentally discovered your sex tape.

Just before Nate’s shock can turn bellicose...

GAIL
Never mind the moral outrage, Mr. Sweely. If we checked Lyle Simms' email account, would we find one from you? With this video file attached?

NATE
What are you implying? That I was trying to blackmail Lyle Simms?

SAM
No, no. It’s a direct accusation.

Nate glares at Gail -- no way she’s backing off.

NATE
I sent Lyle the video. Along with a cash offer from Adam Sinclair...for the Crystal Lake property.

GAIL
What was in it for you?
(Nate hesitates)
The county attorney can subpoena Glen Eden’s records.

NATE
A finder’s fee. One million.

GAIL
And what was Lyle Simms’ response?

NATE
He was defiant.

GAIL
Did you call his bluff, show the video to June Simms?

NATE
I did. She told me marrying Lyle Simms was the biggest mistake of her life.
INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY

ON a court document marked "WARRANT," carried by Gail as she and Sam hurry toward the exit.

SAM
I'm impressed, you got the search warrant. In New York we'd call that a fishing license.

Suddenly Russell Gitz flags them.

RUSSELL
Guess who just paid a jailhouse visit to Billy Banks, on the way to their lawyer for a reading of the will?
(a regular Billy Bush)
June Simms.

GAIL
Overhear anything?

RUSSELL
(eyeing Sam)
That would be a breach of professional conduct, spying on...

GAIL
Russell.

RUSSELL
Billy Banks threatened to kill his wife.

EXT. MAIN STREET - HIDDEN PINES - DAY

With purpose, warrant in hand, Gail briskly crosses an intersection, Sam and Russell in tow.

PASSING PHARMACIST    PASSING MATRON
Beautiful day, huh Gail?    Vi's back, we'll call!

On a mission, Gail still acknowledges each.

SAM
Who are these people?

GAIL
We call them "neigh-bors."
Cub Scouts on a field trip enthusiastically circle Russell. He pulls a quarter from one boy’s ear. Sam takes in all this, holds it up to his own life...

**SAM**

Yeah well. I got a neighbor. I must have, I hear his TV at night.

**EXT. LAWYER’S OFFICE – DAY**

Etched on the glass door: *Earnest Gillstrap, Attorney at Law.* Reflected over the writing, Gail and Sam rapidly near. But then -- a man steps through carrying a manila envelope. MAX, 42. Professorial, shaggy, ivory tower type. SEEING Gail, Max lights up.

**MAX**

Gail. My divorce. It’s final. The wall is fallen.

**GAIL**

(carefully)

I’m happy for you, Max. Good luck with the rest of your life.

Max deflates, moves off. Sam is abashed. Gail bridles.

**GAIL (CONT’D)**

It’s not Manhattan, okay? Mom used to say, you have to kiss a lot of frogs.

**SAM**

Do you keep, like, a frog scorecard?

**GAIL**

No!

**SAM**

Shall I start one?

But Gail already is walking after another who is exiting the lawyer’s office. June Simms.

**GAIL**

June. Just curious, did your husband leave anything to the Nature Conservancy?

**JUNE**

(turns, surprised)

No. Why would he?
SAM
Well, might be good for a lifetime of water therapy with Ginger Reese.

June opens her car door, slides behind the wheel.

GAIL
Did you tell Nate Sweely, marrying Lyle was the worst mistake of your life?

JUNE
I learned long ago, my husband wasn’t capable of fidelity.

SAM
What about you, Ms. Simms? Ever tempted to retaliate? Eye for an eye? Say, with Banks?

June, for a beat, looks startled. Before she speeds off.

INT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - CORRIDOR - DAY

Gail, Sam and two County Deputies are being led by the maid, Felipa, toward a guest room -- just as from that room bursts Eva. Cell phone in hand, Eva looks not just surprised to see the investigators, but terrified.

EVA
He’s getting out!
(off their confusion)
June called me. Billy has hired her attorney, they’re going to release him!

GAIL
Not until tomorrow, Mrs. Banks.

EVA
He will hurt me!

GAIL
Just...step aside please.

INT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - EVA’S AND BILLY’S ROOM - DAY

Gail, Sam and a Deputy comb the room. Bed sheets, glasses, nothing escapes scrutiny. From the window, Gail SEES the other Deputy sifting the incinerator for evidence. Something clicks. She drifts to the closet.
EXT. CITY LIMITS - HIDDEN PINES - DAY

Gail’s Ford flies back to town, she and Sam within.

GAIL
The State Police in Springfield are supposed to handle our forensics. They take forever. Joanne lets us use a space at the hospital.

SAM
Could you drop me at the house? I’m supposed to do this conference call. From the NYPD. They’re pissed about my “non-responsiveness.”

All it takes. Gail’s defenses spike. She spins the car.

EXT. COTTAGE - DAY

The Ford stops in front of the cottage. Sam exits.

GAIL
Take all the time you want. I can do this on my own...Mom was an epic lesson in self-reliance. She picked Hidden Pines, packed us up. Never looked back.

SAM
But. It’s not like we left each other’s lives. There was always you. Besides, Karen didn’t want to leave. Gangbangers shot up a police picnic in Battery Park, you were nearly hit. She took the first small-town teaching job she could get.

GAIL
Doesn’t change how it turned out. She didn’t need anyone. I don’t either.

SAM
Do I have this all wrong? You want to do this on your own?

She clouds. Sam watches her speed off, shaken.

END OF ACT FOUR
ACT FIVE

INT. MCKENZIE COUNTY REGIONAL HOSPITAL - LATE DAY

HUGE CLOSE-UP: A swirl of snake shapes, coated with beads of liquid, slides INTO FRAME. Gail’s view through a microscope, we realize. Behind her, Joanne See enters through a door marked “AUXILIARY PATHOLOGY LABORATORY.” The improvised work space is budget CSI. Joanne plops a microwaved sandwich in front of Gail.

JOANNE
Eat. Where’s your father, he want something?

GAIL
I don’t know what he wants. I don’t know why he’s in Hidden Pines. Who asked him?

Joanne studies this bitterness, makes a decision.

JOANNE
Your mother. The week before she died.
    (stunned, Gail looks up)
She swore me to secrecy.
    (then)
What the hell, we swore secrecy more times than the CIA. I held the phone for her. She said to your dad, “Gail will miss me. But she’ll need you.”

PAGE (INTERCOM)
Doctor See, front desk please.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECEPTION - LATE DAY

Waiting, Sam scans the wall behind the Receptionist, SEES: Photo of Dr. Joanne See, Chief of Staff. Another picture, Joanne in a charity hoops game, leaping. Another, Joanne covered in pie at a Kiwanis contest.

JOANNE
Mr. McGrath. This way.

INT. HOSPITAL - TILED CORRIDOR - LATE DAY

Joanne leads Sam -- who is admiring the figure she cuts.
SAM
You do it all, I’m impressed. What’s next, going on the road with Lady Gag-me?

JOANNE
I credit Karen. After my ex took off to marry his heiress, Karen was relentless, she got me out of my shell.

SAM
Out of your shell. Nice. No one’s got a shell in the Bronx.

JOANNE
(with a smile he can’t see)
I finished the autopsy. The tissue snipped from Simms head trauma matches the tissue on the log we found at the scene. After he hit the rocks, Lyle wasn’t dead yet.

SAM
Someone finished him off.

JOANNE
Gail’s been sweating over a microscope the last two hours. She didn’t find semen on the Banks’ bedsheets, but she’s isolated something else. Pubic hair.

Sam, led to the door of the Lab, suddenly realizes...

SAM
Wait. Gail does the heavy lifting at a crime scene, then does the labs herself?

JOANNE
She double majored in Criminal Justice and Forensic Science. You didn’t know?

SAM
No.

JOANNE
A shame.

SAM
I blew it, Joanne. A chance staring me in the chops 20 years ago, and I was too selfish to see it. I coulda been her father.
JOANNE
Seems to me she needs an anchor.

SAM
I’ve never been an anchor to her. Just dead weight.

JOANNE
So why do you suppose, as her life’s work...she chose this?

INT. AUXILIARY LAB - NIGHT

Joanne, Sam, enter. Gail is mounting a slide -- next to a pair of pants on the bench, a swatch cut from a knee.

GAIL
(cool)
How’d your call go?

SAM
I said, “I’m retiring.” They said, “Wonderful. We wanna make you a Lieutenant.”

GAIL
And what did you say?

SAM
“No thanks.”

GAIL
So it’s done?

SAM
Morons. They insisted I sleep on it.

So it’s not done. Gail smothers her dismay, dives onto the microscope. Sam fingers the garment Gail has cut up.

SAM (CONT’D)
Wait a second. I think I’ve seen these before.

GAIL
You have.

Gail rises, suddenly rocked by the image in her scope.
GAIL (CONT'D)
Oh m'God.

RUSSELL (V.O., RADIO)
Bird Dog...Bird Dog...

JOANNE
That's so cute.

Exasperated, Gail snatches up her portable radio.

GAIL
Yes, Russell?

RUSSELL (V.O., RADIO)
FYI, Billy Banks has been released.

GAIL
What?!

RUSSELL
Judge Cole got rained out on his ride, he's back. Ernie Gillstrap popped Billy out on bail.

(LAUGHING)
That'll teach Ernie.

GAIL
What do you mean?

RUSSELL (V.O., RADIO)
Banks stole his car. Tore out of here like a buck in Spring. Probably in Reno by now.

Gail and Sam need no words, they bolt.

EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - DAY

Gail and Sam race up to the Lodge in her Ford. In front are the Sweely Real Estate car, and a Lexus -- driver's door wide open. From the Lodge come PANICKED SHOUTS.

INT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - GREAT ROOM - DAY

Gail and Sam scale Lodge steps, rush in. Nate Sweely is holding June protectively, behind the reception desk.
Ginger is on the floor, blood draining from her nose. Billy has his wife Eva by the throat.

     BILLY
     You dreamed up the whole story and you
     know it! To set me up for murder!

     GAIL
     (pulling her Glock)
     Stop! Now! Let her go!

Billy glares at Gail, chest heaving. Sam braces, ready to intervene. Gail is fearless...

     BILLY
     She knew you’d think I killed Lyle
     because I believed he was screwing my
     wife. She’s trying to frame me!

     EVA
     (hysterical)
     Lyle made me have sex, in our room, while
     you were working... I swear...

     BILLY
     Liar!

     GAIL
     Actually, Mr. Banks, we know your wife
     was in your bed having sex... but it
     wasn’t with Lyle Simms. Was it, June?

June Simms looks shocked. Nate Sweely double-takes.

     GAIL (CONT’D)
     There’s evidence of sex in Eva Banks’
     bedsheets, no question. Pubic hair.
     Female.

     (Billy is agape)
     We crossed matched the DNA of the hair,
     with blood taken from the streak on Lyle
     Simms’ cheek. That was your blood, June,
     left when you embraced your husband. It
     was you, sharing Eva’s bed.

June is shattered, tries to speak. Eva steels...

     EVA
     Don’t say anything, June!

A moment on the brink of explosion, and then...
SAM
This is better than The L-Word. When did it start, Ms. Simms? Back in San Diego? All those nights, your husbands off to sea?

(Billy turns angrily to Eva, Gail re-aims her weapon)
Once you and Billy got here to the lake...didn’t take long for the old tapes to start playing, huh?

INT./EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - FLASHBACK - DAY

SEE Lyle and Billy in a boat on the lake, laboring. FIND June alone, sorting reservations at her desk -- until a woman’s hand brushes the nape of her neck. It is Eva. June can’t help it, she’s stirred.

BACK TO SCENE - PRESENT

Gail is gesturing to Billy, calm down and sit. He does.

GAIL
Stands to reason, Eva, while the boys were out rigging their stunt that day, you lured June to your bed.

INT. LODGE CORRIDOR - FLASHBACK - DAY

June comes nervously down the hall, KNOCKS on Eva’s door. Eva answers, draws June into the room.

BACK TO SCENE - PRESENT

GAIL
That when you told Eva about the publicity stunt, June? How it would work? Pillow talk?

Ginger Reese, blotting with tissue her bleeding nose, rises in rage -- scowls at Eva and June.

GINGER
They were in this together!
JUNE
No! Eva, what did you do...?

SAM
Want me to tell her, Eva? You waited 'til dark, stole the can of paint and maybe some tools from Lyle's truck, and you changed the stop mark.

EXT. LAKE ROAD - FLASHBACK - NIGHT
Eva makes a last saw-stroke through a 7-foot pine painted orange, the tree falls. Eva drags it away.

EXT. LODGE - INCINERATOR - FLASHBACK - NIGHT
Shining with sweat, Eva slinks out of the darkness and throws into the incinerator a can of orange spray paint.

SAM (V.O.)
'Course, you probably realized your fingerprints were on the can of paint, so you trashed it.

BACK TO SCENE - PRESENT
Sam's on a roll, circles Eva.

SAM
All that was left, was to take your morning hike, hide in the trees, and let Billy hit his mark.

EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE SHORE - FLASHBACK - DAY
Eva peers through alder leaves. Across the lake RINGS Lyle's CRY...

LYLE (O.S.)
It's a whopper!

Somewhere, an ENGINE REVES, TIRES SPIN. Along the rocky shore below Eva, the water boils to life. HEAVY SPLASH. Lyle Simms is dragged across the lake surface. Skipping like God's mad stone-toss.
His jubilant expression suddenly CONTORTS, his eyes bulge. Boulders loom. Lyle Simms is pulled violently on shore, to his doom.

BACK TO SCENE – PRESENT

June Simms is horrified. Billy, rocked. Sam ratchets up.

SAM
When did you realize Lyle wasn’t yet dead, Eva? When you slogged through the mud and unhooked the rig?

EXT. LAKE SHORE – FLASHBACK – DAY

Eva tracks through mud to reach Lyle. She pulls a hook on his hidden harness. Lyle GROANS. Eva is startled. HEAR a winch GRIND in the distance. The cable abruptly slithers uphill, dragging the harness as well.

Lyle MOANS again, is trying to rise! Eva is near panic. She spies the slimy moss-covered log next to Lyle. Grabs it. Raises it high. Eyes blazing. Strikes downward.

BACK TO SCENE – PRESENT

SAM
Left you just enough time to finish him off. And hide, until June came running from the Lodge and found her husband.

A WAIL escapes June. Billy lunges at Eva. Sam grabs Billy, pins him to the wall. Eva now desperately tries to regroup, snarls at Gail...

EVA
You can prove I love June, but you can prove nothing else! It’s your story!

GAIL
Except, I remember you cleaning your pants, that day on the deck of the Lodge.

EXT. LODGE DECK – FLASHBACK – DAY

Just as Gail saw her before, Eva dabs at her muddy pants with solvent.
GAIL (V.O.)
You used cleaning fluid? On plain mud?
Who does that?

INT. LODGE - BANKS ROOM - FLASHBACK - DAY

Searching the room, as Sam pours through drawers in the
b.g., Gail has moved to the closet -- eyes Eva’s
distinctive pants -- takes them from the closet.

GAIL (V.O.)
I tested those pants, Mrs. Banks. We
found traces of orange paint.

BACK TO SCENE - PRESENT


JUNE
Eva, my family, my church...I told you it
was over!

EVA
(at Gail)
Maybe I scraped against that tree by
accident. On my hike.
    (glaring at Ginger)
Maybe she killed Lyle! You don’t
know...!

For a blink, Gail hesitates. Not Sam.

SAM
We haven't even finished the analysis of
the log we found at the murder scene.
Whose finger prints will we find on that
murder weapon, Ms. Banks?

Eva’s last shred of resistance snaps. She breaks down.

EVA
I have been a prisoner. All my life. In
Columbia. In my marriage.
    (to June)
What we had, in San Diego...the only
happiness I’ve ever known. I
thought...with Lyle gone, Billy in
jail...we had a chance. A chance.
EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - DECK - DAY

Deputies take Eva from the Lodge in handcuffs. Gail and Sam emerge, she leans toward his ear...

GAIL
We were never going to get fingerprints off that log, it’s covered with slime.

SAM
You knew that. I knew that. Perp didn’t know that.

She looks at her father with surprise and -- wonder.

GAIL
I would’ve never thought of that.

SAM
Yeah you would’ve. It’s in the genes.

INT. HUCKLEBERRY HOTEL - BALL ROOM - NIGHT

The re-election fund-raiser for Sheriff Tim Burke. DJ, full bar, Northwestern Chic. Gail enters with Joanne See, awkwardly sheds her coat. Wow, we haven’t seen Gail like this. Artful makeup & hair, come-hither little black dress with noteworthy décolletage.

Tim approaches -- clearly awed. Joanne, almost conspiratorially, takes leave.

TIM
Congratulations on the Banks arrest...
(looks about)
Couldn’t come at a better time.
(looks at her)
Congratulations on that dress, by the way.
(covering his attraction)
Where’s your father?

Gail searches the room, Sam’s absent. Gail flashes disappointment.

GAIL
Off doing his own thing, I guess. He does that a lot.
TIM
You really do look amazing.
(she blushes)
You... want to dance?
(she hesitates)
Nothing in the book against it, I swear.

Just as Gail steps forward, Marsha Hoover looms up --
looking over-cooked Hollywood Red Carpet. Gail and Tim
barely have time to react before Marsha is pulling Tim
away toward -- the wealthy Adam Sinclair.

MARSHA
To work, Mr. Sheriff. Gail understands.
Tonight’s not about play, we’re in a war.

Marsha slings that last phrase straight at Gail. Gail is
abandoned. Feels lost.

A new tune spins from the DJ. Wait a second, that’s
George Michael’s “ONE MORE TRY.” Suddenly Sam is there.

GAIL
You made it. I’m shocked.

SAM
I had some business to take care of.

GAIL
Business?

Sam takes from his dated herringbone sports jacket...

GAIL (CONT’D)
A bill of sale?

SAM
For the Ugly Elk Cafe. I intend to
operate it. As a bar.

GAIL
What do you know about running a bar?

SAM
Years of research.

GAIL
Did you...?
SAM
Slip a Lincoln to the guy playing the music?

(shrug of admission)
The Bronx thing.

(then)
At the risk of bodily harm...may I have this dance?

Gail wavers. She takes his arm, stiffly they begin to circle the floor. Maybe it’s the music, maybe it’s her father’s steady gaze -- Gail begins to mist.


SAM (CONT’D)
I want you to know...not only are you the most beautiful woman in the room...you’re the best detective in the room.

Gail blooms. Until their feet tangle.

SAM (CONT’D)
Sorry. I got all Travolta’s moves, I just need a little practice.

GAIL
Such a crock.

SAM
I get better.

GAIL
We’ll see.

END OF PILOT