

Executive Producer: Peter Traugott
Executive Producer: Rachel Kaplan
Executive Producer: Berna Levin
Executive Producer: Anni Faurbye
Executive Producer: Charles Randolph
Executive Producer: Patty Jenkins
Written by: Charles Randolph
Directed by: Patty Jenkins
Based on: Annika Bengtzon: Crime Reporter by Liza Marklund

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EXPOSED

“Pilot”

Written by

Charles Randolph

Production Draft

01/17/14	Prelim Draft – White
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3 INT. SMALL APARTMENT - TELEGRAPH HILL - SAN FRAN - NIGHT 3 *

Dark. Silent.

The view out bay windows is a rolling jumble of row houses, apartment blocks, telephone poles, forties buildings.

We hold a few peaceful seconds...

...then there's an ungodly ALARM, grating and unfamiliar.

A WOMAN IN UNDERWEAR and a T-shirt staggers in, ripped from sleep, groggy, terrified, clutching a wooden hanger.

This is ANNA BENGTON (30). *

She realizes the alarm comes from her CELL. Finds it on the sofa. Hits buttons. Silences it. Notices the alarm continues a few places in the distance. Odd. Scary. Totalitarian.

Appalled, Anna checks the screen. It's an AMBER ALERT.

END OF TEASER:

ACT ONE

4 INT. "BANGS MAGAZINE" - HALL OF COVERS - THE NEXT DAY 4

Long. The walls are lined with COVER PHOTOS of every great band since 1969. Late, Anna hurries down it -- flanked by icons of cool -- and flips off Gene Simmons as she passes.

5 INT. MAIN FLOOR - DAY 5

An excited intern, TALI, 23, is waiting for her. Anna is wary of all forms of enthusiasm, and easily mortified for others.

ANNA

What?

TALI

They gave you a cover byline!

Tali holds up the latest issue.

The COVER PHOTO is a woman in scary high-tech SWAT gear, AK-47 pointed straight at the camera. *

OVERKILL: WHEN COPS PLAY SOLDIER
By Anna Bengton *

Anna smiles despite herself. She likes being a teller of hard truths -- as long as those truths aren't about her.

She sees Tali holds a cup of coffee.

ANNA

Is that for me?

TALI

Don't be sexist.

The office has 25 EMPLOYEES, a willfully casual lot of cool nerds, ethnic in ways hard to define. This is ground zero of pop culture. Each cubicle has posters, tchotchkes, attitude.

A few desks sit in an open cluster, the BULLPEN. Anna's desk is beside one with two men reading something off a monitor.

ANNA

Hey.

THE MEN (IN UNISON)

Hey.

Tali hands the coffee to ELVIS GIROUX (46), black, British, a once great rock critic, now West Coast Political Editor. He's with OSCAR CASTRO VARGAS (33), laconic, famous, been to war, punched a general, smuggled orphans out of bad places.

They're absorbed by a SLATE STORY (we see Weisberg's photo).

ANNA

You guys get the amber alert at two AM?

OSCAR

(not looking over)

Yeah.

ANNA

Who could go back to sleep after that?

Anna sits at her desk, sets up, pulls electronics from a bag.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Part of me hates amber alerts, but...the rest of me is embarrassed by that part. Am I bad person because I don't wanna be woken at two AM to be reminded of the depth of human depravity? Especially when there's nothing I can do about it. And I'm alone. In the dark. In my underwear.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Why can't we send alerts just to people who are actually driving?

Anna runs a web search, fingers flying, does so throughout.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Maybe peg them to cell-tower transfers?
(nothing)
Anyone?

ELVIS

(distracted)
Sounds good.

OSCAR

(distracted)
Sure.

ANNA (CONT'D)

And I'm talking to myself.

A big, emotional man approaches, DAVE STRAND (51), suburban, their token boomer, perpetually put upon.

DAVE

The IRS is reading our email!

ELVIS

We know.

ANNA

We do?

ELVIS

Jacob Weisberg got a leak from inside the national intelligence director's office. Apparently, the NSA has a client program to gather Americans' financial data.

DAVE

For the IRS! It tracks all our on-line purchases and credit card bills to see if we're under reporting income!

OSCAR

I'm skeptical. They may have developed a protocol, no way it's been activated.

DAVE

Dude, your government is spying on you!

The managing editor, JILL HWANG-JOFFE, 41, hurries up to Elvis, touches her GLASSES, tells her phone to mute.

JILL

Is this new whistleblower real?

ELVIS

Stoya. They call this one Stoya. Real enough to run. The man had keys to the whole kingdom. Slate says he has more.

OSCAR

He better run. After Snowden? I promise you, they will shoot to kill.

ANNA

Okay, this is insane...only 20% of amber alerts are actual stranger abductions.

All eyes go to Anna, who has pulled up a PHOTO of the AMBER ALERT GIRL, 16, Caucasian, geeky in that way parents adore.

OSCAR

You obsessing on this girl, or are you looking for a reason not to?

ANNA

Not sure.

JILL

(peevd, trying)

Okay. Let's get someone on Stoya. His type loves our brand. Lean in on that.

ELVIS

Anna, you wanna try tracking him down? Your brother may know somebody.

Anna shakes her head.

ELVIS (CONT'D)

Why not?

ANNA

I'm compulsively law abiding.

JILL

And?

ANNA

I don't hate the surveillance thing. If government spying means this girl gets to walk down any street, safely, any time, it's a deal I'd take. Let them watch us. No tax cheats. No crime. No amber alerts at two in the morning. If you can take away everything I'm afraid of, and all I have to do is give up my anonymity, then, please, put a camera in my shower.

Jill gives Elvis an exasperated look, and walks away.

ELVIS
(after Jill)
We're gonna water board her!

JILL
Don't bother.

An awkward beat.

OSCAR
I'll look into him.

Elvis nods. Oscar finds Anna sneaking him an unhappy look.

6

INT. ETHNIC EATERY - SOUTH OF MARKET - DAY

6

ANNA
Just don't cover for me! If Jill wants to
force me, make her force me.

OSCAR
I wasn't covering for you.

Anna and Oscar have lunch in the sort of place you eat out of
a plastic basket and drink out of a mason jar.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
The DNI's office is heavy military, I
have field cred with those people.

ANNA
Yeah, I've seen the bullet hole.
(whispers)
There are 10 minute stretches where it's
all I get to look at.

He smiles, adores her. TWO GUYS in Apple shirts walk past,
flash Oscar a hipster-appropriated gang greeting.

APPLE GUY
Love what you do, Bro.

Oscar thanks them with a power fist.

ANNA
I can't come Saturday.

OSCAR
Don't do that.

ANNA

She doesn't want me there. She hates me.

OSCAR

No, she doesn't.

ANNA

Why do all your photos have a Dora the Explorer sticker over my face?

OSCAR

She's five. You're afraid of a 5-year-old.

ANNA

Yes. Yes, I am.

OSCAR

Then be there for her. Hang out more. Think about, you know, getting real.

ANNA

What does that even mean?

OSCAR

You like things coming to you. Fine. Now it's coming. Let's see if you're ready. Move in with us. Make this work.

*

A long, tense beat.

The WAITRESS brings the check.

WAITRESS

Thanks, guys.

OSCAR

Thanks.

Anna's looking at her water, feeling the urge to simply run.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

You okay?

ANNA

Yeah.

7

EXT. RITUAL COFFEE - PATRICIA'S GREEN - DAY

7

*

A cargo container turned into a coffee stand. Anna and her hipster brother, JEREMY (28), take their cups.

ANNA

Oscar wants me to move in.

JEREMY

Good.

ANNA

I don't know. I like my apartment.

He stops for "locally grown" stevia.

ANNA (CONT'D)

We didn't pay.

JEREMY

It comes automatically off my phone. But,
hey, tell me again how Twitter's a fad.
(they cross the street)
Can I say something no one else will?

ANNA

That's why I'm here.

A muscular man in sunglasses follows them. JEREMY'S BODYGUARD is always ten feet behind him outdoors. And never mentioned.

JEREMY

You won't like it.

ANNA

Horrify me.

JEREMY

Success for women is a sexual liability. You limit the pool of men who want you, and, more profoundly, the pool of men you want. Half of all new doctors are female. What's their chief complaint on residency completion? Their male colleagues won't date them. The guys want young nurses. Why? Because they're doctors now. Wanna see an angry female physician? Suggest she date a male nurse.

ANNA

How you get away with being such an ass?

JEREMY

Everyone I know works for me. That, and, sexually, I view myself as a gourmet food truck: I'll serve you but you can't sit.

ANNA

What's your point?

JEREMY

If Oscar Castro Vargas isn't worthy of cohabitation, just who will be?

It's very good question.

8 EXT. HAYS STREET - DAY

8

They walk past yoga studios and organic furniture shops.

ANNA

I don't want to move in! I like things as they are! I go over. We have great sex. I leave before we fall asleep...so I never wake up and find my shoes in the toilet.

(Jeremy chuckles)

It's good! We're kind. We're sooo kind. I can't be kind every day. Every instinct I have says move in and it'll end badly.

He stops outside a huge and expensively converted WAREHOUSE.

JEREMY

Don't trust your instincts.

ANNA

What?

JEREMY

Seriously?

9 INT. "OPEN" - JEREMY'S CORPORATION - DAY

9

A high-tech dream. Feels like the future. Feels like money. Jeremy leads Anna thru a quiet sea of SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS.

ANNA

I'm not that stunted!

JEREMY

This is your MO -- you find some insane reason it won't work and cling to it like grim death. Remember how you let Tunney's DVR convince you he was gay.

10 INT. JEREMY'S HUGE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

10

Immaculate. He goes to a desk; she goes to one of the sofas.

JEREMY

You dumped Cole because he put super unleaded in a rental car--

ANNA

--while I was supporting him--

JEREMY

--and poor Scott Bandweek--

ANNA

--he dumped me--

JEREMY

--you complained about his penis!

ANNA

It was never really...enthusiastic. Which is ironic, cause he was a womanizer.

JEREMY

That's not irony.

She notices all his windows have round devices wired to them.

ANNA

What are those round things?

JEREMY

They make the panes vibrate so no one can bounce a laser off them. To eavesdrop.

ANNA

Oh, is the NSA mining our financial data?

JEREMY

Nooo. It'd be political suicide. If they are, we sure didn't design it.

ANNA

(stands to go)

You're only making my point. I can't live a lie. I don't want routine and forced affection and Sunday brunch. The second it feels false, I'll create some drama, and blame him for it. So, what do I do?

JEREMY

Listen to that small, still voice deep in your heart...and do the opposite.

ANNA

(going)

Thanks, this was almost helpful.

JEREMY
 (after her)
 Don't quote me!

11 EXT. FERRY BUILDING - DAY 11 *

Cranky, Anna peers into traffic, checks her phone, then sees a MINIVAN pull up with a huge pig snout over the grill.

12 INT. OLD MINIVAN - DAY 12 *

Opening the front door, Anna sees her PIGGYBACK DRIVER, a mom whose cheery face doesn't quite match her hushed voice.

PIGGYBACK DRIVER
 Oink, oink, you must be Anna.

Anna sees a TODDLER in the back with headphones and Ipad. *

13 I/E. OLD MINIVAN - TRAVELING - DAY 13 *

The minivan chugs up California street, the city behind it.

The Driver glances at Anna, who tries to appear unavailable for conversation. An ELECTRONIC SIGN with the alert passes.

PIGGYBACK DRIVER
 They found Hailey.

ANNA
 Sorry?

PIGGYBACK DRIVER
 That amber alert girl. Down in Fresno.
 They found a B-O-D-Y. In a grove. *

For reasons she couldn't explain, Anna feels it like a punch.

PIGGYBACK DRIVER (CONT'D)
 Horrible. A 16-year-old. She was in the
 Drama Club. And Environmental Club. And
 Robotics. They even said robotics.
 (Anna looks away)
 This happens to robotics nerds, now.

14 EXT. ANNA'S LOFT - TELEGRAPH HILL - DUSK 14 *

Through her bay windows, we see Anna at her computer, jacket still on. Her fingers aggressively hit keys, focused, practical, on the hunt. Serious ROCK MUSIC rattles windows.

15 INT. ANNA'S LOFT - DUSK 15 *

In well-practiced strokes, Anna kills the music and starts a RAW VIDEO FEED from FRESNO: The national media have descended on HAILEY'S HOUSE. Tragedy is in the air as the FRESNO POLICE CHIEF, an empathetic woman, steps to a mic. Cameras flash.

POLICE CHIEF

Okay, everybody. Okay. Good evening. I have good news: it's not our girl.

CLOSE on Anna, arching a brow.

POLICE CHIEF (CONT'D)

The body discovered in the Orchard Avenue grove is not Hailey Wright-Deacon.

There's a smattering of AWKWARD CHEERS.

16 INT. KITCHEN - ELVIS'S HOUSE - DUSK 16 *

In his underwear, Elvis gives his TWO-MONTH-OLD DAUGHTER the late bottle. His wife, ADINA, 35, Ethiopian, a law professor, * sleeps on the sofa. Elvis is ON THE PHONE. *

ELVIS

She called a dead girl "it"?

INTERCUT:

17 INT. ANNA'S LOFT - DUSK 17 *

Anna's pacing, pushing it a bit for effect.

ANNA (ON THE PHONE)

"It's not our girl"?! Who says that? It's somebody's girl! Are they watching?! That pack of hyenas is down there celebrating. "Thank God, it wasn't the cute white girl with two last names! In robotics!"

ELVIS

What's the story?

ANNA

The other girl. Who was she? How did she die? Why doesn't she get to be our girl?

ELVIS

Because she's probably a meth addict.

ANNA

She's fifteen! How responsible can you be for your own drug use at fifteen? C'mon, you know she's black or Hispanic.

ELVIS

That won't help.

ANNA

I contrast the resources spent on Hailey. All the homeland security money spent on lock downs in big media cases versus, what, three detectives on a local murder? Two girls, dead in different Americas.

ELVIS

Hailey's not dead. Yet. For this to make print, you'd need to be done by the time she's found. Which could be any day.

ANNA

Fine.

A calming beat.

ELVIS

Why do you care about this girl?

ANNA

I don't know. Maybe because no one else does. Trust me, Elvis. She has a story to tell. I can feel it. Let me find it.

Elvis considers his own daughter, drifting, bottle in mouth.

ELVIS

How much of this is you wanting to drive away from your problems? So you don't have to come in tomorrow and face Oscar?

Anna grimaces. *Elvis knows?! Of course, Elvis knows.*

ANNA

Forty-nine percent.

ELVIS

Okay. Three days.

Anna drives, sleepy, inexperienced. She squints a glare from lights behind her. Yanks the Hertz card from the mirror.

19

EXT. HAILEY'S HOUSE - FRESNO - DAY

19

Anna walks down a line of camera stands pointed at the house. The atmosphere is mostly that of a tail-gate party. Two crews have a water-gun battle. A Harried PA passes with Starbucks.

Anna finds the Police Chief pulling away from TV JOURNALISTS.

AN ANDERSON COOPER TYPE

Could this be in any way gang related?

POLICE CHIEF

I don't see how.

A NANCY GRACE TYPE

Are you investigating the stepfather?

POLICE CHIEF

Why would I do that?

ANNA

Cause it would really help her ratings.

The Nancy Grace Type gives Anna a hard look. The Chief smirks and goes. Anna trails after her, hand her a BUSINESS CARD.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Chief, can I ask about the other girl?

POLICE CHIEF

Nothing to do with Hailey. She's from a very different zip code.

ANNA

We don't just report on white kids.

POLICE CHIEF

(stops, sighs)

Forgive me. The victim's name was Npaim Davis. She's half-white, half-Hmong.

ANNA

Any progress in her case?

POLICE CHIEF

We have one of our best detectives on it.

ANNA

Just one?

Anna glances to the absurd police presence around them.

POLICE CHIEF

I got one dead girl. And one, hopefully,
still alive. Where would you focus?

ANNA

I wouldn't know where to start.

POLICE CHIEF

(smiles indulgently)

I'll make sure you get victim details.

20 INT. RENTAL CAR - TRAVELING - DUSK 20 *

Rain. Anna pulls up to a CONFERENCE HOTEL. A SWAT TEAM guards
the place, playing assault force for out-of-town reporters. *

An Officer self-importantly waves her through a barricade so
she can pull up to a hotel portico. Anna rolls her eyes.

21 INT. ANNA'S ROOM - NIGHT 21

Anna can't sleep. Stares up at the ceiling. Her PHONE RINGS.
It's Oscar. She sighs, doesn't answer. Continues staring.

22 INT. BREAKFAST BUFFET - THE NEXT MORNING 22

Anna eats. The Nancy Grace Type passes to sit with Friends.

ANNA

Nancy.

The greeting is ignored.

A LIMPING STRANGER (30's), bandage over his nose, circles
under his eyes, now sits at a table next to her.

He grimaces as he lowers himself into the chair.

ANNA (CONT'D)

My god, what happened to you?

STRANGER

You wouldn't believe it.

ANNA

Try me.

STRANGER

I got hit by a drone.

ANNA

I don't believe it.

STRANGER

I fly a UAV, over at Creech Air Force Base. Never text on an active tarmac.

ANNA

I thought being a fighter pilot was safe these days. Maybe not as patriotic. Minus the whole risk of death and all.

PILOT

Nobody claps in the Vegas airport, that's for sure. But that could be the slots.

ANNA

Yet you still risk tendonitis for us...

He smiles but says nothing. A SERVER brings her check. She signs it. Hands it back. Notices he's given up the banter.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Bet you say it's more than a video game.

PILOT

It's no game. And zero fun, in fact. We watch these guys for months, really get to know them. I watch a man visit his parents every Sunday...then one day I can send a missile out of a clear blue sky and there's nothing left of him. I get to watch his family run out, try to find something to do, some piece to grab up and bury. But there's just a big hole. They tear their clothes. I always thought that was a myth, but it's what people do.

*

*

He eats, these are simple facts.

ANNA

Sorry. I shouldn't have belittled it.
(she stands)
My name's Anna, by the way.

PILOT

Nice to meet you.

ANNA

What's yours?

PILOT

I should maybe be a little discrete.

ANNA

Got it. Well, thank you for your service.

He nods politely. Anna moves off, unsettled, and attracted.

23

I/E. RENTAL CAR - DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

23

Anna's lost in a bad area. Cars in yards. Fenced yards. One garage has been painted: "I don't cook meth here no more!"

She comes down a street where a GANG PARTY spills onto the pavement from a GANG HOUSE. Their orange and black tells us these are Pitbulls, young Hispanics, tats, shaved heads. A BIG PITBULL in basketball shorts even wears an ANKLE MONITOR.

A VW GTI does donuts to entertain the rowdy crowd. The white smoke drifts over the rental car, where a nervous Anna waits.

Finally, slowly, she drives through the drunken throng...then stops not five houses down...and finds her address.

24

INT. LIVING ROOM - NPAIM'S HOUSE - DAY

24

NPAIM'S MOTHER, 38, Hmong, elegant, grieves in the dark. Anna sits with her. The house is poor but neat, a candle shrine to Npaim burns in a corner. *

ANNA

Ms. Davis, are you alone here?

NPAIM'S MOTHER

My son. He move to China. To make money. He is coming. Friday. For funeral.

ANNA

Good. May I ask if Napim did drugs?

NPAIM'S MOM

A lie. She never touch it. Never! Not once! She have school. She have job. At fast food. Npaim working very hard.

ANNA

So, why do you think she was shot?

NPAIM'S MOTHER

This place. These gang. No reason. To be fun. In China, no gun. Npiam want to leave. She said, "Momma, please to go."

(then)

No one buy my house. I make us to stay. For my house. My money. I make us stay.

Uncomfortable, Anna steps over to the shrine. With her photos are also a Hmong Boys Band, Song Zuying, Justin Bieber.

ANNA

Who around here wanted to hurt her?

(no response)

Who do you think killed Npaim?

The Mother looks at photos, it's almost like she didn't hear.

NPAIM'S MOTHER

(quietly)

Me.

25 EXT. HAZELNUT GROVE - DUSK

25 *

Anna trudges through the trees, looking for the crime scene.

She finds a tiny cluster of flowers. Cheap. Sad. There's only one CARD. From a boy named Derek. She looks around. Distant palm trees. Billboards. Traffic. Her PHONE RINGS. It's Oscar.

Hating herself, Anna considers...and declines the call. She's now miserable, grabs Derek's card and trudges for her car.

And we move up. Up through the trees, clouds. The image of Anna walking to her car grows granular, three dimensional, as if she's not in our world but a perfect simulation of it.

And we hear the roar of drone rotors get louder and louder.

FREEZE. Silence.

26 INT. TERMINAL - ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE - DUSK

26 *

Quigg watches the Director of National Intelligence being briefed on the tarmac by his BOSS. It's not pretty. QUIGG'S COLLEAGUE, the Texting Suit, comes up carrying a file.

QUIGG'S COLLEAGUE

Maybe got something. A reporter. He had three of her articles cached.

He hands Quigg a PRESS PHOTO of ANNNA.

QUIGG'S COLLEAGUE (CONT'D)

There's something else...

Quigg glances over -- desperate for any lead -- but their BOSS comes back in, interrupts, shoots Quigg a brutal look.

END OF ACT ONE:

PILOT
I meant your phone.

29 INT. POOL PATIO - HOTEL - STILL LATER NIGHT 29 *

Anna and the Pilot sit on the rocks, drink wine. *

PILOT
After it rains here, this time of year,
there's a fog. The Tule Fog. Brutal.

Her CELL BUZZES, he snatches it off the table, hits silent mode. She considers protesting, but realizes it is time.

ANNA
Thank you.

PILOT
You know this is like carrying every
secret you have in a plastic bag. And it
could be recording everything you say.

ANNA
It's off now.

PILOT
Maybe. Maybe not.
(picks it up again)
There's a program called FinFisher. It
lets governments activate your mic and
mask the transmit. You never know.

ANNA
I only plot sedition by e-mail.

PILOT
Worse. By law, the government owns emails
left on any domestic server longer than
180 days. They're considered "abandoned".

ANNA
By law? What law?

PILOT
The 1989 Electronic Communications Act.

Anna considers this man -- confident, engaging, passionate.

He turns on her VIDEO FUNCTION. Records her.

PILOT (CONT'D)
And the camera, send any naked selfies?

ANNA

We use an anonymizing network.

PILOT

NSA's mission is to store as much data as possible. All you're doing is telling them where to look for the good stuff.

ANNA

You're not scaring me.

PILOT

You understand sixty years from now your grandkids will pay a digital archivist to dig up your old emails, texts, videos, all the selfies you took. All of them. The more provocative, the more you tried to hide them, the more copies will exist.

He keeps the CAMERA trained on her, tries to make her squirm.

PILOT (CONT'D)

Including this one. Hello, Grandkids.

ANNA

Are they mine or yours?

PILOT

Maybe both.
(a beat)
You're blushing.

ANNA

I don't blush.

30

INT. LOBBY - HOTEL - THE WEE HOURS

30

Empty. Quiet. Dark. ON HER CELL, Anna stands by the windows.

ANNA

I hear you breathing. Our voices drop.

She's not talking to Oscar. The Pilot's at a PAY PHONE across the lobby. They're speaking softly with each other.

PILOT

You're right. This feels more intimate.

ANNA

My father's in radio. He taught me that.
"We learn facts with our eyes but we feel emotions with our ears."

33A EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - DOWNTOWN HOTEL - MORNING 33A *

Moving quickly, steps through a dense fog to her car. *

34 INT. RENTAL CAR - MORNING 34 *

Anna slams the door shut, entombed, stares at nothing. After a moment, she mumbles something self-loathing, gets her cell. Oscar called nine times but left only one MESSAGE. His voice -- low, quiet, tired -- soon plays on speaker.

OSCAR (ON THE PHONE)

Hey. I know your torturing yourself, and I should probably let you. You sell us short, Anna. You're fearless about every thing but your own life. And you won't let me help. I tried. And I want you to know I'm done trying. Okay. Be careful.

Anna panics a bit: caught by the sudden sense of being alone.

She pulls up Oscar's number, puts the phone down. Glances up. Considers the ethics of calling, her compromised position.

Cursing, she starts the car.

35 INT. ANNA'S ROOM - MORNING 35

The bed's empty. The shower runs. *

CLOSE on the DOOR. The BOLT turns slowly. The CHAIN moves of its own volition. The knob slides silently to the opening. Pops out. Sticks to the door almost immediately. It slowly moves down until the slack is gone, then it dangles freely.

A BALD MAN and ELEGANT WOMAN enter silently, pistols drawn. *

35A INT. BATHROOM - MORNING 35A

The Bald Man trains his gun on the shower curtain. He notes watery footsteps. The Woman joins him holding men's shoes.

ELEGANT WOMAN (IN HEBREW)

Hoo lo Po.

(subtitled)

He's not here.

The Bald Man calmly opens the curtain, turns off the water.

END OF ACT TWO:

ACT THREE

*

36 EXT. LARGE HIGH SCHOOL - SUBURBAN FRESNO - DAY 36 *

Anna walks thru a fog-shrouded parking lot packed with cars. *

ANNA (ON THE PHONE) *

I need him to let me talk to this
Derek kid. Anything personal. *

*

36A INT. MAIN FLOOR - "BANGS MAGAZINE" - DAY 36A

Tali's at a table, scanning Facebook, talking on her cell.

TALI

His favorite director is Cameron Crow-ee. *

He's in a band, The Original Slackers. *

Anna smiles. *I got this.* *

*

37 EXT. SCHOOL QUAD - DAY 37 *

Fog. THE PRINCIPAL, 46, laughs and flirts as he escorts Anna.

THE PRINCIPAL

They'll get jiggy right here! Fog days,
we can only let students out for PE.

ANNA

That's wacked. Was Npaim a good student?

THE PRINCIPAL

Yeah. And never trouble. Well, not til we
found crystal meth in her purse. The FPD
got a tip, came out, searched her locker,
and boom goes the dynamite.

A figure appears, a TEACHER MONITOR, unhappily on quad duty.

THE PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

Darryl.

TEACHER MONITOR

Heather and Tonya are out here, but damn
it I if still don't smell weed.

THE PRINCIPAL

Nooo. Really?

AN UNSEEN HEATHER

I smell it, too.

AN UNSEEN TONYA

Me, too.

PRINCIPAL

Not cool, people!

Anna gestures to the athletics field to say she can go alone.

38

EXT. RUNNING TRACK - DAY

38

A FEMALE COACH helps a Student pretending to have a cramp.

FEMALE COACH

He's out there pretending to run laps.

She points Anna down a running track. She marches off into the fog. Forms lurk. Whispers. A girl giggles.

It's hard not to feel vulnerable out here.

ANNA

Derek? Derek?

Kids scurry away like deer. Finally, she sees a scared black boy sitting on a berm, waiting, wary. This is DEREK (16).

ANNA (CONT'D)

Derek?

(he barely nods)

Hey. I'm Anna Bengtson. I'm a reporter. I want to ask you about Npaim. I won't use your name.

(no response)

Should we go inside?

*
*

39

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

39

Huge. Emptied. Derek's PE clothes in the bright light make him seem awkward, vulnerable. Anna sits across a table.

She's bought him a Snapple.

DEREK

Npaim didn't tweak. I swear on a Bible. Somebody put that ice on her.

ANNA

Who would do that?

DEREK

Somebody. It's not like a personal thing. They just got nabbed is all.

ANNA

How do you mean?

DEREK

This is Fresno. Cops catch you, they make you rat somebody out or go to jail. You gotta give 'em somebody who won't shoot you, cause they're gonna find out.

He's outlining a common police program of forced informing.

ANNA

Npaim was a police informant?

DEREK

Why you think she got killed? She didn't know the game, gave 'em the wrong dudes.

ANNA

Why didn't she just face a judge?

DEREK

They dump like five things on you! They get you for dealin', housin', transport, school zone penalty. You own part of it, or you eat all of it.

ANNA

But Npaim did none of it?

DEREK

System don't care!

ANNA

Derek, do you know who killed her?

DEREK

Everybody does.

His voice grows quiet, but newly determined, a touch angry.

DEREK (CONT'D)

They even told her it was comin'.

FLASH TO:

40

INT. BAND ROOM - DAY

40

Upset, frightened, her face tear-streaked, NPAIM (15) signs a contract while Two Male Detectives loom over her.

She's too nervous to read it.

41 INT. CARPORT - GANG HOUSE - NIGHT 41

Gang Members loiter in the garage. *

On a van seat sofa, cash in her hand, Npaim waits as the Big Pitbull cuts up, indifferently hands her a lot of meth. *

42 EXT. NPAIM'S HOUSE - NIGHT 42

Distant police lights.

Head down, Npaim comes home in a fast-food uniform, careful not to look...the Big Pitbull is being led to a squad car.

43 INT. CAFETERIA - HIGH SCHOOL - DAY 43

Npaim, Derek and a Friend giggle at lunch. She turns to see a table led by a TEENAGE PITBULL stare at her, cold, murderous.

Someone passing behind her BARKS. Npaim jumps. Snickers.

BACK TO:

44 INT. CAFETERIA - DAY 44

Anna and Derek as before.

DEREK

She told the police, asked them to put a car out front, but they never did.

Anna is absolutely livid.

ANNA

Hold on. The police create this situation where a 15-year-old is framed. Without a lawyer or teacher in the room, they make her agree to work for them. Make her sign a contract. Send her into a gang house with known felons. On her own block. Then, when she reports the gang has told her they're after her, they won't help?!

Derek just shrugs.

45 EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY 45

Anna and Derek can't find her car in the fog. She pulls out a KEY FOB, points it in all directions, listens for a beep.

DEREK

I can get the bus, Mrs. Bengtson. *

ANNA

Don't be crazy.

They hear something. Low. Tires creeping along pavement.

Behind them, the eerie outlines of a huge SUV emerge like a leviathan. It stops. The beast just sits there. Defiant, Anna starts walking toward it. The Xenon lights pop on, bright, aggressive. She keeps moving, right for it. The SUV starts to back up. Anna moves faster. It backs up faster. Anna runs. *

46 OMITTED

46 *

47 EXT. ENTRY ROAD - DAY

47

The SUV flies backward out of the lot, does a reverse 180 and fishtails away. Winded, Anna slows as the SUV is enveloped in mist, running a red light...and gets T-boned by a pick-up.

Anna runs toward the crash, now smoking in the INTERSECTION, shockingly quiet. Suddenly, a SEDAN barrels toward her, comes on fast, right at her, swerves, stops. There are TWO SUITS in it. The driver holds up an FBI badge and barks...

FBI DRIVER *

Stay in the lot! Go to your car! Go!

The other man we recognize as Quigg's Colleague. They speed off to the wreck. She sees the Truck Driver get out, yell. *

Avoiding the mess, Anna walks back to a freaked-out Derek.

Quigg's Colleague hurries to the SUV's passenger side. Quigg clutches an arm, covered in shattered glass. Quigg painfully turns to check if Anna could have seen him. She's moved away.

48 INT. SUBURBAN MALL - NIGHT

48

Anna hurries inside...and up an inoperative escalator. *

ANNA (ON THE PHONE)

The Feds are following us now?!

ELVIS (O.S.)
Of course not. High school parking lots
are ground zero in the drug war.

INTERCUT:

49

INT. ELVIS'S OFFICE - "BANG MAGAZINE" - NIGHT

49

Elvis goes through WAR PHOTOS. A Layout Editor is with him. *

ELVIS (ON THE PHONE)
You wandered into some kind of sting.

ANNA
What about Npaim? These kids are being
forced to act as informants.
(indignant)
No training. No choice. Given our drug
laws, this could happen anywhere.

ELVIS
Yeah, that's a story.
(a beat)
Okay. Three more days.

She pumps the air.

ELVIS (CONT'D)
Still want you to connect it to the amber
girl though. And before she's found.
(realizing)
What's that music?

ANNA
I'm at their mall.

ELVIS
Why?

ANNA
I'm looking for the homicide detective on
her case, he moonlights in retail.

ELVIS
Don't make enemies, Anna. If this gang
didn't murder her, you don't have story.
We need proof. We need an arrest.

Anna grimaces, this hadn't really occurred to her.

ANNA
(lying)
I'll behave.

50

INT. CLOTHING STORE - NIGHT

50

*

Detective STEVE PIPKIN (33) folds clothes, a jock gone soft.

ANNA

Hi, there.

Anna appears beside him, close, smiling a bit too intensely.

STEVE

How you doing tonight?

ANNA

Good. I'm Anna Bengtzon. I'm with Bangs.
I wanted to ask you about Npaim Davis.

*

STEVE

(reeling, defensive)

Right. Sure. But I'm not allowed to do
police work on store time. Sorry.

He glances over to where his TEENAGE MANAGER half eyes them
from a counter. Anna picks up a shirt, plays customer.

ANNA

I just wanna know if your colleagues in
narcotics feel you killed her.

STEVE

Are you kidding me?

ANNA

No.

STEVE

This isn't how you do an interview.

ANNA

It's how I do it.

STEVE

Yeah, well, it sucks. Call the office.

ANNA

I do. I mean I feel like you killed her.
And I'm mad enough to make stuff up.

STEVE

That can't be legal.

ANNA

Ever read a magazine in a checkout line?

STEVE

This is harassment.

ANNA

Harassment is my job description.

She's unnerved him just enough to try to defend himself.

STEVE

You have any idea what gangs have done to Fresno? We use anyone we can get.

ANNA

Even if they're underage?!

STEVE

Most dealers are underage!

Their hushed conflict has to wait while Customers mosey pass.

STEVE (CONT'D)

All drug busts are from informants. It's not "The Wire" here. There's no money for taps, control rooms. You know how many officers I need to put one suspect under surveillance? Twelve. More for weekends.

His frustration is palpable.

ANNA

Her friend Derek says it was Pitbulls.

STEVE

Derek say which Pit pulled the trigger? There are 10,000 in Fresno county.

Anna lets him win the moment.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Nobody's killed by strangers. Unsolved murders aren't about a lack of suspects they're about a lack of evidence.

ANNA

So, you do have a suspect?

STEVE

Yeah, I have suspects.

ANNA

Someone close to the man she informed on?

He gives her a sarcastic look. *Wow. Really?*

ANNA (CONT'D)

Okay, one more. Entirely off the record.

(he just waits)

The fact Npaim died working for you guys,
that have anything to do with why there's
not another detective on her case?

She can feel he has an opinion here, one he can't share.

STEVE

There'd be a lot more than that if the
circus would leave town.

He goes.

ANNA

Who told you to search her purse?

The detective stops, turns, considers her.

STEVE

Ask Derek.

51

INT. LOBBY - HOTEL - NIGHT

51

Anna's moving through, tired, depressed.

*

The Bartender from the previous evening sees her, he's now
dressed in a server's tunic. He comes over.

*

*

BARTENDER

*

Hey. Mrs. Loach, right? Your friend
left this for you.

*

*

An ENVELOPE. Inside's an unsigned LETTER on hotel stationary:

*

Going to look at old planes tomorrow.

She turns the letter over. On the back is a printer scan of
an infrared AERIAL IMAGE, tech data, two CLOSE-UP INSERTS.

The texture of the images is familiar to us.

The INSERTS are of young Hispanic men, Pitbulls. A small one
exits the driver's side of a station wagon and the big one is
caught mid-sneeze, surveillance images of a 3D world.

Then Anna registers the aerial image: the boys carry a sheet
with a body from their Rover into the HAZELNUT GROVE.

*

These are Npaim's murderers.

END OF ACT THREE:

ACT FOUR

*

52 EXT. PLANE YARD - LOCAL AIR MUSEUM - DAY 52

A museum is on a junky stretch of highway. Anna tries a front gate, locked. She moves cautiously along the fence until she finds a side gate, and sees a figure standing inside a DC3.

53 INT. PLANE - DAY 53

Anna enters, nervous. The Pilot waits. They say hi. She sits across the aisle. A weird beat. She gets the letter.

ANNA

So, what is this?

PILOT

Your perps. And a story, a good one. Just promise it won't come back to me.

(she nods)

After Boston, we started doing training runs over civilian population centers. Somehow they never stopped. It was soon clear we were up there waiting.

ANNA

Waiting? For what?

PILOT

A terrorist event.

ANNA

Drones monitor cities inside the US?

PILOT

A single Predator can watch an area four clicks by four clicks. About the size of Fresno. All that data...it's archived. No one tells local law enforcement. Me, I think maybe they should. I pulled images from the night of your girl's murder.

ANNA

How many drones? How many cities?

PILOT

Most.

ANNA

Can you prove this is on-going?

Her double-checking seems to wound him, ever-so-slightly.

PILOT

Hailey's in Disneyland. She's with her 31-year-old boyfriend. Thousands of people see her every day, never give it a second thought. We see what we're looking for.

(then)

Don't talk about this on a cell phone.

There's something else, he peers out into the drifting mist.

ANNA

Is one up there? Right now?

PILOT

Usually. Any weather. All night. But fog refracts. It's hard to see into a fog.

(then)

It was fantastic being with you.

ANNA

Sorry I left. I'm not good at real life.

(he nods)

It's time to tell me your name.

PILOT

No.

ANNA

How do I find you?

PILOT

You don't.

He stands, smiles a sad smile, warm, already longing for her.

PILOT (CONT'D)

Try to forget me.

ANNA

Is that advice or a challenge?

PILOT

Both.

He leaves. He's no longer limping.

54

INT. TRUCK STOP - INTERSTATE 5 - HOURS FROM FRESNO - DAY 54

Anna waits by a window, sees Jeremy drive up with Body Guard. *
He comes in, not happy to be here. Sits. Stews. *

ANNA

Look, this is an emergency. Hear me out.

JEREMY

Just don't tell me anything illegal.

ANNA

I need you to identify a photo.

She unfolds the LETTER. He recognizes the image immediately.

JEREMY

Fold it back up.

(she does so)

It's not a photo. It's a lidar-enhanced infrared composite. From a drone.

ANNA

What's lidar?

JEREMY

Laser scans. Radar with light. Li-dar.

She waits, watches him decide to tell her classified details.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

We use drones to create 3D simulations of Arab cities. In real time. And a thousand times more useful than any camera. They let us see behind buildings, under trees. A man walks through the bazaar over there and we can follow him here. In 3D.

He leans closer, lowers his voice.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

We can click on any figure, know right away who he is, where he lives, worships, works, pull up e-mail intercepts, phone, browser history. That's the boring part.

(still closer)

We can map his last 180 days of movement. Everywhere he's gone, everyone one he's met, talked to, walked past. An entire life...(snaps his fingers)...like that.

Anna reels at the unreal implications.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

If something bad happens, we know who did it, who planned it, who helped.

ANNA

What's the program called?

JEREMY

The Eye of God.

ANNA

Is it fully active?

JEREMY

Yeah. And optics are just the beginning. Lasers can target individual molecules. We can ID people who've touched certain chemicals. People carrying metals. A gun goes off, we can track the bullet, origin to impact. Want everybody in Islamabad who wears Old Spice? Give me six seconds.
(a beat)
That's not Islamabad, Anna.

ANNA

It's Fresno.

Jeremy winces, he was afraid of just that. He considers his sister, asks the question he shouldn't.

JEREMY

Why's a lidar-equipped surveillance drone over an American city?

ANNA

My pilot claims they're over a lot of cities. Every second. Every day. Just up there, waiting for a terrorist attack.

Jeremy glances to the sky, realizes their exposure.

JEREMY

Go to the bathroom. Now.

Before she can respond, he's up and moving.

55

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

55

Jeremy's pacing, visibly shaken. Anna locks the door.

JEREMY

I knew it...I knew it!
(hardening)
You can't write about this. You can't talk about this. Don't even think it.

ANNA

It's a huge story!

JEREMY

Too bad.

ANNA

The men in that image shot a 15-year-old girl. That's them dumping her body!

JEREMY

I don't care! One murder? Are you insane? This stuff only works if no one knows about it. They have tools to keep it that way. Tools that don't involve courts!

Anna smirks. *You're going to try to scare me?*

He looks her right in the eye.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

You'll drive into a tree. The car will explode. No one will see it happen.

She can't quite believe she's hearing this so baldly, like something out of a Crichton thriller.

ANNA

Never run from greedy people, Jeremy.

JEREMY

They're not greedy! They're afraid!

(then)

That's worse. So. Much. Worse. You can't show it to anyone. Not now. Not ever.

ANNA

What if no one knew where it came from?

Jeremy groans, literally pulls at his hair.

JEREMY

Okay. Okay. Listen. Just listen. These PED systems have immutable logs. Whoever accessed that image left a trace. One that can't be erased. Ever. If they know what he took, it's easy to find him.

ANNA

Maybe he has a back door.

JEREMY

The program's impenetrable.

ANNA

How do you know that?

JEREMY

I wrote it! We designed the protocols.

This is hard to argue with.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

There's a lot of traffic in the system. Four million people have a top secret clearance. Your friend has one tiny hope of staying alive...if this stops here.

CLOSE on Anna. And if her expression is not the definition of torn, it's hard to imagine what would be.

56 INT. RENTAL CAR - MASSIVE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

56

Anna considers the LETTER, its unusable truth. Looks up.

Students go home. Anna watches. There's a desperation in her eyes. She sees Derek, squinting, smiling at the sun.

Then he sees her waiting for him.

57 INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY

57

Anna has pulled behind the school, a lacrosse practice off in the distance. She's strangely cold. He knows to be nervous.

ANNA

The Pitbulls on Npaim's street. What are their names?

DEREK

Chapa brothers. The big one's Dreamer.

ANNA

Do they have a pimped-out wagon?

DEREK

Yeah.

ANNA

Did Detective Pipkin ask about them?
(he nods)
He mention anybody else?

Derek shakes his head.

ANNA (CONT'D)

What'd you tell him?

DEREK

Nothing.

ANNA

Derek, no one's come forward. You need to say you saw their Rover at the grove.

Derek takes a moment to register she's entirely serious.

DEREK

No way. That's crazy. They'll shoot me. I didn't rat them out! I didn't tell you!

ANNA

I can make the cops protect you.

DEREK

No, you can't!

ANNA

You've lied before, Derek.

He realizes she knows he put meth in Npaim's purse.

ANNA (CONT'D)

You started this. Your lie started this.

DEREK

I just...I had no choice! Okay? If I get arrested, it's over! My whole life! Over! No record is all I got! It's all I got!
(then)
Why are you doing this to me?!

Suddenly, he's a little boy. Terrified. Emotional. The truth of it overcomes her ambivalence, her toughness.

ANNA

Okay. Okay.
(angry at herself)
Stop crying, Derek.

58

EXT. TELEGRAPH HILL - GREENWICH STREET - DAY

58

Elvis has stopped running to talk to Anna.

ANNA (O.S.)

Everyone knows who did it! It's maddening!

ELVIS (ON THE PHONE)

Why won't the Fresno PD arrest them?

INTERCUT:

59 INT. RENTAL CAR - POOR NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

59 *

Anna drives, yells at her cell sitting in the cup-holder.

ANNA (ON THE PHONE)

And admit they killed her?! Won't happen.
An arrest is in nobody's interest.

(then)

I need to interview the gang. I need them
to say they were at the grove.

ELVIS

You wanna ask murderous thugs to say they
were at the scene of their own crime?

ANNA

On tape, yes.

ELVIS

Enough.

ANNA

Elvis, if we prove this happens here, we
stop it from happening elsewhere.

ELVIS

No!

A tense beat.

ANNA

Fine.

She hangs up...and we see she's parked just down from the...

60 EXT. CARPORT - CHAPA HOUSE - DAY

60

DREAMER (23) and FLACO (20) CHAPA cut powdered meth with baby
formula. The TEENAGE PITBULL (17) from school stands outside,
more-or-less as a lookout. He plays a game on his cell, looks
up to see a white woman coming through the cyclone gate.

TEENAGE

Yo, Dreamer, Flaco, somebody here, ma'an!

The brothers grab guns. Behind them, an actual PIT BULL barks
wildly. Anna Bengtson walks right toward them....

*

END OF ACT FOUR:

*

ACT FIVE61 EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

61

Anna stands nervously on the front walk.

A FEMALE PITBULL (17) strains to hold back the dog. Flaco, Dreamer and Teenage Pitbull step outside, unwelcoming. The brothers go to her, scan up and down the street.

ANNA

Hi. Anna Beach. I'm doing a story on Pits.
I was told to ask for the Chapa brothers.

She hands Dreamer her CARD. The dog is rabid behind them. *

DREAMER

Bangs be takin' our picture?

ANNA

Yeah, I can arrange that.

The boys suddenly grin.

62 EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

62

Anna interviews Dreamer and Flaco, sitting in lawn chairs and feeling their oats -- being gangster is playing gangster.

ANNA

So everyone you know's in the life?

DREAMER

(Fresno references)
Ma'n, you in The No. Methland, ma'n. It
all we do in the five-five-nine.

FLACO

Every fool out here think he Scarface.

She checks on her PHONE RECORDER.

ANNA

You guys see a lot of Meth?

DREAMER

Crank everywhere, ma'n.

ANNA

You sell it?

They snicker, laugh, egging each other on. She just waits.

DREAMER

Yeah, we deal. What if? It the life,
ma'n. Beefin' and paper. *Cholo* ain't got
no money, he ain't got no gun. He gonna
get...(shot to the head)...wet.

FLACO

Don't make no money, don't make no sense.

Anna nods to the ANKLE MONITOR around Dreamer's ankle.

ANNA

You recently got arrested for it?

DREAMER

Everybody get cuffed n' stuffed.

FLACO

We ain't no studio gangstas.

DREAMER

We bark, we bite.

ANNA

How about that girl down the block, from
the grove. Npaim. Who bit her?

The atmosphere goes dead cold.

DREAMER

Don't be laying that *chorradas* off on us.

ANNA

I only asked because of the witness.

FLACO

What witness?

ANNA

The one that says you two were there.

She casually checks her notes, as if merely fact checking.

ANNA (CONT'D)

You drove a station wagon. Backed into a
spot on North First. Around one AM.

A long beat.

DREAMER

Yeah, we was up there. We smoke up in
there. Didn't see no dead bitch.

ANNA

Well, that explains that.
(pockets phone)
Alright, then. Thank you.

Anna stands. Flaco nods to the Teenage Pitbull to go stand by the gate, blocking her exit. Dreamer flashes gun metal.

FLACO

What witness you talk to?

ANNA

I can't tell you.

FLACO

Yeah. You can.

He stands, close, much too close.

DREAMER

You long way from home, little *Hyna*.

ANNA

I need a bucket of water.

DREAMER

What?

ANNA

A bucket of water. A big one. Full.

Flaco nods to the Female. She gets a bucket from the carport, fills it at a faucet, brings it, drops it at Anna's feet.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Put your ankle inside.

Dreamer stares hard as he takes off his right hightop and puts his monitor ankle in the water, immersing it.

ANNA (CONT'D)

There's a secret government program.

She hesitates. They wait. She searches their unyielding eyes.

ANNA (CONT'D)

That bracelet has a recording device...it sends audio to a State Parolee Monitoring Office. Where I have a source.

FLACO

What kinda audio?

ANNA

Talk. You driving. Dreamer sneezing as he got out of the Rover.

The Brothers exchange a panicked look.

ANNA (CONT'D)

It'll take the FPD about eight more hours to compare the audio to the GPS record of his movements. Then they'll be here.

(stands)

Next time, do what Martha Stewart does: just wrap the damn thing in tinfoil.

(goes)

And don't be stupid, don't cut it.

Everyone watches silently as Anna waits for the Pitbull to move out her way, goes to her car, climbs inside.

On the door SLAM we're outside...

63 EXT. NPAIM'S HOUSE - DAY

63

The rental car sits out front.

One second. Two. Three. Four.

The Station Wagon blows past.

64 INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY

64

Anna watches the Station Wagon disappear, clearly relieved.

ANNA (ON THE PHONE)

The Chapa Brothers are running.

INTERCUT:

65 INT. DETECTIVE OFFICE - FPD BUILDING - DAY

65

Detective Steve Pipkin works at his desk, eating a salad. *

STEVE (ON THE PHONE)

Why is that?

ANNA

I have them on tape admitting they were in the grove the night Npaim died.

She pulls the phone from ear to work her screen, speaks a bit more loudly at the mic, as people often do.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I'm emailing you.

We hear her send it. We hear him receive it.

STEVE

Dreamer's on a tether. We'll get a tamper alert if he takes it off.

ANNA

He won't remove it. You can track him.

STEVE

How would you know?

ANNA

He thinks a monitor wrapped in tinfoil won't emit location coordinates.

STEVE

And how'd he get that idea?

ANNA

The media.

Anna hangs up and gets out of the car.

66 EXT. NPAIM'S HOUSE - DAY

66

Anna starts to knock, sees a FUNERAL NOTICE on the door in a strange language, save the name/address of a funeral home.

67 INT. FUNERARIA (HISPANIC FUNERAL HOME) - DAY

67

A large hall in a bad part of town. Empty. A casket up front. A Hmong Lady wails ritually in the front row. Two rows back, her Husband eats from a bowl with his hands. A stereo on the carpet plays reed pipe (Qeej) music. The buffet's untouched.

Out in the FOYER, NPAIM'S BROTHER (24) interprets for Anna to his Mother, who dressed up to receive guests.

ANNA

The police know she didn't use meth. They were wrong to make her work for them. I will say so in my article. Npaim's death will make a difference. Here. I promise.

Anna watches the Mother receive the news. The release in her face is visceral and moving. She mutters a ritual in Hmong.

*

NPAIM'S BROTHER

My mom asks to honor you with our thanks.

The Mother bows before her, chanting, arms dangling and hands cupped in supplication. She chants an ancient ritual.

NPAIM'S BROTHER (CONT'D)

Thank you, Anna Beach, for attending our funeral...Thank you for thinking of us, our relative, our culture...You are a gift to our family...You are a gift to our family...You are a gift to our....

ANNA (O.S.)

The funeral lasts three days.

68

INT. BULLPEN - "BANGS MAGAZINE" - DAY

68

Elvis stands at Anna's desk, speaking ON HER PHONE. All the others watch, save Oscar who's staring at his computer.

ANNA (O.S.)

The family wants to be photographed at the parlor. They put a lot into it.

69

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY AND ELEVATOR - DAY

69

Anna comes down ON THE PHONE, carrying her bag, and gets on the elevator, we follow her as she does so.

ELVIS

How's the mood at your hotel?

ANNA

Less humiliated than it should be.
(gets on elevator)
How's Oscar?

ELVIS

Stoya's blowing up.

ANNA

Does he want my help?

ELVIS

I seriously doubt it.

Anna flinches. Elvis's tone is cold. The office dynamic has shifted. This affects her in a way his message didn't.

*

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ANNA

Hold on.

*
*70 INT. LOBBY - HOTEL - DUSK 70

Anna comes off the elevator to din of the National Media checking out. All at once. Save a group around the Nancy Grace Type, who's busy making herself the story.

*
*

A NANCY GRACE TYPE

How can the subject of a statewide Amber Alert hide in Disneyland?! For a week?!

She looks up to see a hand flipping her off above the crowd.

70A EXT. HOTEL - DUSK 70A

Anna walks out the door, makes a decision and breathes deep.

*
*

ANNA (ON THE PHONE)

I have something. It's big, Elvis. Huge.

71 INT. RENTAL CAR - LONELY ROAD - TRAVELING - NIGHT 71

*

Late. Anna drives, depressed, and tries not think about her PHONE, which beckons from the passenger seat. When she can't stand it any longer, she picks it up...and calls Oscar.

One ring. Two. Three. *Will he answer?*

Anna looks up to see...a darkened police car blocks the road.

72 EXT. LONELY ROAD - NIGHT 72

The rental screeches to stop. A NERVOUS COP has been waving a weak flashlight. She hangs up and lowers her window.

NERVOUS COP

God, sorry. Sorry. Car battery died on me. Hit your hazards, Ma'am.

ANNA

What's going on?

NERVOUS COP

Helicopter in the road ahead. Migrant worker had a heart attack. Should get an all clear any minute. Stay in your car.

He touches his hat to thank her, then walks to the back of her car. She watches him in the mirror as he stands facing the other way, waving an impotent light down a dark road.

It's eerie silent. Still. Strange.

She sees distant copter lights rise, grins at her paranoia. Then she notices...the Cop has disappeared. She spins. Looks. He's vanished. *What the fuck?!* The helicopter comes her way. *

Her doors unlock. Her windows go down. Her engine dies.

Anna knows to panic. She scrambles for the LETTER, finds it, rips off the image half, stuffs it into her mouth, eats it. Bright lights pop on behind berms flanking the road.

FOUR HUMVEES come over the hillocks, all track lights trained on the car. They surround her. The Copter spot blinds her as it hovers, angry. Laser aim-dots dance over her as she chews.

A LOUDSPEAKER

Get out! Out of the car! Lie down!

The trunk pops open. She swallows.

Anna opens the door, steps into down wash that whips her hair and skirt mercilessly. She raises her hands best she can. She drops, lies on the pavement, arms and legs apart. We can see the SOLDIERS now. One searches her, roughly. A thumbs up.

Quigg emerges from darkness, his arm now in a sling, kneels beside Anna, out of patience and forced paternal.

QUIGG

(yells over the copter)

Where is he, Ms. Beach?!

She has no idea who he means. He holds up an PHONE, there is a picture of her PILOT in a suit he could never afford. He's clearly no drone pilot. *

QUIGG (CONT'D)

This man?! Where is "Stoya"?!

Anna grins to herself -- she's surprised, and not displeased.

QUIGG (CONT'D)

No one wants to hurt you!

A threat. Anna looks up into the night, up past the glare and circling copter, up where the Eye of God must surely watch.

She squints back at the Fed.

ANNA
Go to hell.

SMASH CUT: *

CREDITS.