TEASER/ACT ONE

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - DAY

We open on LUSH GREEN TREETOPS swaying in a light breeze. Pink Martini’s haunting version of “Que Sera Sera” plays as we pan down to an old-fashioned ROADSIDE SIGN that reads:

“WELCOME TO SHERWOOD - THE SMALL TOWN WITH A BIG HEART!”

We push in on the sign and bend around behind it to reveal its rickety and rotting wooden structure - cobwebs, a bird’s nest, an improbably placed beer can. A little bird flits into frame and lands in the nest just as a MAN’S BODY DROPS INTO FRAME, A NOOSE AROUND HIS NECK. HE’S HANGING FROM THE SIGN. WE CANNOT SEE HIS FACE. His dead body sways in the breeze.

Title card: HEATHERS

As the title fades, a chyron appears: “TWO WEEKS EARLIER.”

THE SOUND shifts from score to source - a crappy car radio plays Johnny Thunders’ punk version of “Que Sera Sera.”

VERONICA (V.O.)
They say only an idiot returns to the scene of the crime.

CLOSE ON: A ruled notebook page. A lovely manicured hand writes the words “returns to the scene of the crime.”

THE NOTEBOOK IS THE SOURCE OF THE V.O.

VERONICA (V.O.) (CONT’D)
I guess I’m an idiot.

Pull back to reveal...

INT. U-HAUL TRUCK - DUSK

VERONICA SAWYER (38), the owner of that lovely hand and savvy voice, scribbles in the notebook as her daughter BECKY SAWYER (16) drives. They are a pair of “sullen beauties,” their dark hair and dark eyes glimmering with intelligence and wit. They ride in the kind of comfortable silence that can only be cultivated over thousands of shared miles.

They pass the “WELCOME TO SHERWOOD” sign. Becky notes it with a smirk.

BECKY
Well, we made it to Cowtown. I can feel my pulse quickening already.

(MORE)
BECKY (CONT'D)
(then)
What are you going to report on here? “Bribery Scandal in Local Chili Cook-off?”

VERONICA
It’s Sherwood, Becky, not Mayberry. Every place has its dirt. Just gotta know where to look.

Veronica takes a sip of her Slurpee. What follows is a favorite old routine from the Sawyer Family vaudeville.

VERONICA (CONT’D)
Goddamn. Will somebody please tell me why I drink these things?

BECKY
(almost cracking up)
Because you’re an idiot.

VERONICA
Oh, yeah. That’s right.

Veronica smiles, takes another slurp and returns to her writing. Push in on THE NOTEBOOK. We see her begin a sentence with the word “Secrets” as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. SAWYER HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DUSK

Veronica and Becky have just parked the U-Haul. Veronica unloads a box as Becky stares up at the big stone house.

BECKY
It looks haunted.

VERONICA
Easy on the drama, little mama. It’s not haunted, it’s inherited. Your grandmother and grandfather left us this place and it’s gonna be our port in the storm.

BECKY
Our little house on the prairie?

Veronica puts down the box she’s holding.

VERONICA
Okay Becks, I’m calling a sarcasm moratorium. Reality check: we’re broke. Beyond broke.

(MORE)
VERONICA (CONT'D)
Sherwood is the only place where I
could pull off getting a job and
living rent free. Silver lining?
You could fit our last apartment
into the living room of this place,
okay? It’s the Midwest, the
heartland - learn it, live it, love
it!

BECKY
Om shanti, mommy. It’s okay, I
know you’re doing the best you can.
But...
(she can’t resist)
...if it’s so great here, why did
you leave after high school, never
come back and never bring me here,
ever? Hmm?

She’s got Veronica on that one.

VERONICA
Just give it a chance, Beck.

BECKY
I always do.

Becky smiles gamely, picks up a box and heads toward the
house. Veronica takes in the sight of her daughter heading
toward the old house and LOOKS A LITTLE HAUNTED HERSELF.

INT. SAWYER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER
A smattering of old furniture remains from Veronica’s parents.
Veronica and Becky enter with the last of the boxes.

BECKY
Hey, mom, can I have that in my
room?

She points to a beautiful old CEDAR CHEST. Veronica walks
briskly to the chest and dusts it off with her hand, but we
can also see her discreetly CHECK TO SEE IF IT’S LOCKED.

VERONICA
This old thing? Sure.

Becky grabs an end and tries to lift it - no way.

BECKY
Jesu! Feels like there’s a body in
there.

Veronica makes a show of trying to open the cedar chest.
VERONICA
Locked. Bodies will have to stay buried for awhile.

BECKY
We could try to find the key.

VERONICA
Or we could make microwave popcorn.

Becky nods - “Much better idea” - and heads into the kitchen. Veronica looks like she just dodged a bullet.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR/EXT. WESTERBURG HIGH SCHOOL - NEXT MORNING

Veronica and Becky are idling in front of Westerburg High.

VERONICA
Say it with me now.

BECKY
We’re really still doing this?

VERONICA
Hell, yes. And...

BECKY (over it) VERONICA (ritually)
...don’t be a clone. It’s ...don’t be a clone. It’s more important to be smart more important to be smart than to be popular. than to be popular.

BECKY
Bye!

WE STAY ON BECKY as she exits the car and watches Veronica drive away. Becky sighs heavily and leans against a tree, watching from a distance as students file into the building.

BECKY (CONT’D)
Okay. Focus, Becky. Focus.

She reaches into her purse and pulls out a pill bottle and empties its contents into her open palm – two pills left.

BECKY (CONT’D)
Craptastic.

She downs a pill, takes a breath and heads toward school. We push in on her hand STUFFING THE PILL BOTTLE INTO HER PURSE.

CUT TO:
INT. SHERWOOD UNION OFFICE - DAY

Veronica’s hand PULLING A PACK OF TIC TACS OUT OF HER PURSE. She sits with her editor, TOM THATCHER (40). Tom possesses * Kennedy good looks and Clooney-esque cool. *

VERONICA
Tom, I really appreciate this opportunity, but I want to be straight with you --

TOM
I know, resumes out everywhere, you’re gone as soon as one of the biggies comes calling. I get it. * I’ll be happy to have you as long as I can. If the Boston Globes of * the world are shedding talent like * you, I’d be an idiot not to take * advantage. Who knows? Maybe * you’ll like it here.

They hold eye contact for a beat - is he flirting? Tom’s phone starts ringing, breaking the mood.

TOM (CONT’D)
So, I’m putting you right to work. City Hall. Mayor Jolly, profile for the Sunday edition, okay?

VERONICA
Okay, boss.

Tom steps into his office to answer the phone. Veronica smiles - she likes this guy. She gets up and WALKS BRISKLY OUT THE DOOR as we...

CUT TO:

INT. WESTERBURG HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

BECKY WALKING BRISKLY THROUGH THE CLASSROOM DOOR. She puts her books down on a desk in the front row just as another pile of books hits the same desk.

LITTLE MISS PERFECT
I’m sorry. This is my seat.

Pan up to reveal LITTLE MISS PERFECT (16) - perfect blonde coif, perfectly crisp white blouse and perfectly pleated tartan skirt. She’s smiling at Becky, but it’s hostile.

BECKY
All yours. Enjoy.
More amused than offended, Becky turns, takes the next desk.

HEATHER McNAMARA
Welcome to Beginning Spanish. Me llamo Senorita McNamara.

HEATHER McNAMARA (38) struts in, blonde, sexy and wearing a cheerleader’s uniform. Becky raises an eyebrow at her garb.

*HEATHER McNAMARA (CONT’D)
Sorry, just had practice. No time to change.

Heather begins passing out worksheets. A LATINO BOY (16) raises his hand and speaks in fluent Spanish (subtitled).

LATINO BOY
(Excuse me, but I think I’m in the wrong class.)

Becky raises her hand and speaks in fluent Spanish, too.

BECKY
(Me, too. I think I’m supposed to be in Spanish 3.)

HEATHER McNAMARA
(flustered)
I’m sorry. Que?

Little Miss Perfect speaks to Becky in fluent Spanish.

LITTLE MISS PERFECT
(You speak Spanish - big deal. Just know this: I was the valedictorian in middle school and I will be the valedictorian here, so take your fat little brain and back off, Becky.)

Becky’s eyes go wide - who IS this psycho?

HEATHER McNAMARA
(panicked)
Can we all just speak English, please? Ingles, por favor!

BECKY
How do you know my name?

Little Miss Perfect just smiles smugly. We push in on Miss Perfect’s desk and see a folder there – “Becky Sawyer – official transcript.” How the hell did she get THAT?
INT. WESTERBURG HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Becky wanders the empty halls and stumbles upon a very sexy boy-girl couple making out. It’s hot. She stops and stares for a beat. The boy, REED (17), opens his eyes mid-kiss, spots Becky and stares back at her, checking her out. The girl - let’s call her ALT GIRL (16) - opens her eyes, sees Becky and breaks away from the kiss.

ALT GIRL
(casual, sincere)
Care to join us?

Now we get a good look at Alt Girl. She radiates sex and confidence, has blunt-cut black hair to match her black wardrobe that is accessorized with tattoos and piercings.

BECKY
(flustered)
Oh, I’m sorry...

ALT GIRL
Don’t be. I like to watch, too.
(to boy)
We’re done here, Reed. Go.

She pushes Reed aside and he obeys, smiling at Becky as he walks away. Becky and Alt Girl stare each other down. It’s electric. Are they going to fight? Make out? Make friends?

ALT GIRL (CONT’D)
So. Are you lost, little girl?

Becky senses that she’s being challenged in some way and she stands her ground confidently, casually.

BECKY
Not lost, confused. I’m pretty sure I just got kicked out of Spanish class for speaking Spanish.

Alt Girl smiles - this one’s cool.

ALT GIRL
Senorita McNamara?

BECKY
Si. Correcto.

ALT GIRL
Cheerleading coach - permanent brain damage.
(extends her hand)
I’m Ashley.
Becky smiles. Friends it is.

INT. CITY HALL - MAYOR’S OFFICE - DAY

Veronica arrives at the reception desk.

RECEPTIONIST
Miss Sawyer? The mayor’s expecting you. Go right in.

Veronica opens the door and stops short, shocked.

VERONICA
Oh my god!

WOMAN’S VOICE (O.C.)
You flatter, Veronica. I’m not god, just the mayor.

Reverse to reveal HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY (38) sitting behind a big oak desk and smiling.

VERONICA (V.O.)
It’s alive. The Frankenbitch.

Heather approaches Veronica slowly, Jaws-like. Her look is very Sarah Palin – the up-do, the Kawasaki glasses, red jacket, tight skirt and Naughty Monkey heels.

VERONICA (V.O.) (CONT’D)
The sadistic beast that ruled the school now runs the whole damn town.

Now they’re face to face. It’s tense for a beat, then...

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
VERONICA
Oh my god, you look great! Oh my god, you look great!

They half-hug and air kiss. Veronica is still trying to get her bearings back.

VERONICA (CONT’D)
Wow! So! How did Heather Duke become Mayor Jolly?

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY (correcting)
Duke-Jolly. Married and hyphenating – the polling data said is was the strongest choice. But Heather Duke-Jolly is such a mouthful.

(MORE)
HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY (CONT'D)
I’m trying to get everyone to call me HDJ. Like JFK, but cuter. *

VERONICA
Totally.

She gives Veronica a quick once-over.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
Praise god, Veronica, the years have treated you well!

VERONICA
(ironically)
Yeah, praise the lord!

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
(nodding, sincerely)
Blessed be his name. Have a seat.

Veronica does, relieved that her sarcasm didn’t register.

VERONICA
I’m actually here on business. *

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
I know. Your editor called me.

She reaches across her desk, hands Veronica a manila folder.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY (CONT’D)
I had my communications department type up a transcript of our interview.

VERONICA
Transcript? I’m sorry, we haven’t done the interview yet.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
(rolling her eyes)
We could do the dance if you want, Veronica, but I thought I’d save you the trouble. I had my official photographer take some glam shots, too.

Veronica flips through the folder to find several glossy photos of Heather in rather kittenish poses.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY (CONT’D)
I wouldn’t give you anything but quotes in a can, anyway.
VERONICA
Journalism as dictation. That’s beautiful.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
Don’t pout, Veronica. It’s called message discipline — hello.

Heather dials her phone, heads toward the door.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY (CONT’D)
Gives us more time to catch up.
Heather’s still in town, too. I’m calling her right now. We’re all having lunch.

Off Veronica’s rueful smile we...

CUT TO:

EXT. WESTERBURG HIGH SCHOOL — FRONT STEPS — DAY

Becky and Ashley (Alt Girl) cut class and smoke.

ASHLEY/ALT GIRL
Let me be your Welcome Wagon.
There’s a back-to-school party Thursday night in the field behind Home Depot.

Becky gives her a look — “A field? Really?” Ashley gets it.

ASHLEY/ALT GIRL (CONT’D)
I know, tragic. All I can promise you is bad beer and hot boys. Meet me there?

BECKY
I’ve been looking for an excuse to wear that ball gown. Sure, why not?

LITTLE MISS PERFECT (O.C.)
Nasty little habit, girls.

Becky sees Little Miss Perfect and blanches.

ASHLEY/ALT GIRL
Ashley. This is Becky.

Little Miss Perfect takes a cigarette from Ashley/Alt Girl.

BECKY
We’ve met.
LITTLE MISS PERFECT
Yeah, sorry about the dust-up in Espanol.

ASHLEY/ALT GIRL
(laughing)
Wait, did she threaten you not to get better grades than her?

BECKY
In fluent Spanish. Too fluent for Spanish 1, I’d say.

LITTLE MISS PERFECT
(shrugs)
It’s a guaranteed A. School is a blood sport, slackers. I’ll text your asses from Harvard someday.

ASHLEY/ALT GIRL
Nerd!

LITTLE MISS PERFECT
Slut!

They make faces at each other and crack up.

BECKY
Hold up...you two are friends?

ASHLEY/ALT GIRL
Yep.

LITTLE MISS PERFECT
Yep.

BECKY (CONT’D)
And you’re both named Ashley?

ASHLEY/ALT GIRL
Affirmative.

BECKY
Wow, that is...

LITTLE MISS PERFECT/ASHLEY
Ridiculous? We know.

And they crack up again. BECKY BREAKS INTO A SMILE as we...

CUT TO:

INT. SHERWOOD MALL - FOOD COURT - DAY

VERONICA, MISERABLE, sits at a table with Heather Duke-Jolly as a waiter drops off two Diet Cokes.
HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
This is the VIP section. My idea.

VERONICA
Brilliant.

We pull back to reveal that they sit in an area circumscribed by red velvet ropes in the midst of a typical food court.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
So! Veronica! Twenty years! Give me the vitals: Married? Kids?

She whips out a BlackBerry and begins to peck away.

VERONICA
It’s just me and my daughter.

HDJ looks up from her BlackBerry with disapproval.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
Oh. So you’re a single mom.

VERONICA
God, don’t say it like that, Heather. It’s not a disease.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
It is. It’s a social disease.

HEATHER MCNAMARA (O.C.)
Sorry I’m late!

Heather McNamara - the Beginning Spanish Teacher/Cheerleading Coach - hustles in and interrupts the rising tension. She sees Veronica and gasps. A beat of recognition, then...

HEATHER MCNAMARA (CONT’D) VERONICA
Oh my god, you look great! Oh my god, you look great!

They half-hug and air kiss. Heather McNamara takes a seat and they begin to catch up. The Heathers are excited, but Veronica looks thoughtful as she sips her Diet Coke.

VERONICA (V.O.)
It was my nightmare high school reunion in the flesh.

HEATHER MCNAMARA
...so, I’m divorced, but dating a TON. So that’s good.

HDJ rolls her eyes. The waiter arrives.
HEATHER MCNAMARA (CONT’D)
Hi! I’ll have the cheeseburger.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
Heather. A cheeseburger? Really?

HEATHER MCNAMARA
(defensive, pathetic)
Without the bun. No fries.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
They’re your hips.

VERONICA
Heather!
(to Heather McNamara)
You look great, Heather.

VERONICA (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Being that close to the past felt dangerous. And it was.

A LOUD POP rings out in the food court. A BEEFY GUY in a bad suit comes out of nowhere and TACKLES HDJ LIKE THE SECRET SERVICE protecting the president. Veronica and Heather McNamara hit the deck. Another BEEFY GUY runs toward the source of the POP and we see that it was the result of a huge glass jar of pickles falling from the Bain’s Deli shelf and shattering all over the faux-marble floor.

BEEFY GUY #1
All clear.

BEEFY GUY #1 helps HDJ to her feet and they step aside to confer for a moment. Veronica and Heather McNamara get up from under the table.

VERONICA
Who the hell were those guys?

HEATHER MCNAMARA
Heather’s bodyguards.

VERONICA
Are you serious?

HEATHER MCNAMARA
Oh, yeah. They’ve been with her since she got elected mayor. 24/7.

Heather McNamara bites her lip and makes sure that HDJ is out of earshot. She leans in toward Veronica.
HEATHER MCNAMARA (CONT’D)
I hate to gossip, but Heather thinks someone wants to kill her.

Veronica’s eyes go wide. Before she can respond, HDJ returns.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
Sorry about that, girls. Politics.

She flags down the waiter.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY (CONT’D)
We’ll have three fruit salads with cottage cheese and three Diet Cokes.

She takes a seat as if nothing has happened and smiles at Veronica. Veronica smiles back awkwardly as we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

EXT. FINN-CLEMENS HOUSE - NIGHT

Veronica and Becky make their way through the front yard toward the porch steps.

BECKY
So, dinner with the Cleavers tonight. Won’t be an epic, will it?

VERONICA
I doubt it. Big plans?

BECKY
Don’t sound so surprised. As a matter of fact, I’ve managed to make some friends and get invited to a party later. All without damaging my academic standing.

Veronica can see that Becky is happy and it warms her. They reach the porch and Veronica rings the doorbell as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FINN-CLEMENS HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

Dinner is finished. Veronica and Becky sit with THE FINN-CLEMENS FAMILY - BETTY (38), all Midwestern sweetness and light; her husband, JIM (40), a tweedy, bearded African-American man and their son, SID (16), a skinny, nerdy kid rocking a fairly hip half-fro.

VERONICA
That was great, Betty. Thank you.

BETTY
(modest)
I just followed the recipe.

(then, cheery)
Dessert is raw date balls. No sugar added, just agave nectar.

Sid catches Becky’s eye and makes a subtle face a la “this is my life, kill me now.” Becky stifles a laugh.

JIM
You cooked it, we clean it. C’mon, Sid.

Jim and Sid begin to clear the table as Betty pulls a HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOK from a nearby shelf.
Hey, Becky! Your mom ever show you our yearbook?

No!

Good god, no!

Becky and Betty begin to page through the yearbook. Veronica, VISIBLY UNCOMFORTABLE, hovers behind them.

There’s your mom!

CLOSE ON: A photograph of YOUNG VERONICA and three trendily-attired women with classic ’80s hair.

Oh my god, these were your friends?


Becky studies the caption: “Veronica Sawyer, Heather Chandler, Heather Duke and Heather McNamara - too cool for school!”

And they were all named Heather? Okay, that is ridiculous!

Oh, you don’t know the half of it.

Becky flips to another page and her smile fades.

Oh my god, that’s a Heather!

CLOSE ON: A “memorial page” dedicated to Heather Chandler and two other students who committed suicide.

Your friend killed herself? Why didn’t you ever tell me that?

Becky touches Veronica’s hand - it’s a sweet, loving gesture.

“One rule: no secrets.” Quoting you.

My bad, Becks.
Veronica continues to stare at the memorial page, inert. Becky turns the page, tries to lighten the mood.

BECKY
Where are the pictures of you two?

BETTY
We were more middle-school friends.

Veronica looks to Betty who just continues to stare at the yearbook – there’s some uncomfortable history here.

BECKY
(off the page)
Who’s this little hottie?

VERONICA SHUDDERS. We see that Becky is pointing to a photograph of a darkly handsome boy with a rebellious smirk and a raised eyebrow – JASON DEAN.

VERONICA
Just some guy who thought he was cool.

SHE Closes THE YEARBOOK ABRUPTLY and hands it back to Betty. They exchange a knowing look. Sid and Jim re-enter with dessert.

BETTY
Sid, why don’t you and Becky take your dessert downstairs?

VERONICA
Yeah, you can get Becky up to speed on all things Westerburg.

JIM
Uh, oh. They’re clearing the area for girl talk.

BETTY
Guilty! Go grade some papers or something, you.

Jim smiles, takes his dessert and goes into the study. Sid leads Becky toward the stairs. Becky looks over her shoulder at Veronica – “not too late.” Veronica nods – “understood.”

INT. FINN-CLEMENS HOUSE – SID’S ROOM – MOMENTS LATER

A nerd’s lair – lots of comic books and action figures. Sid reaches into his mini-fridge and pulls out two Cokes.
SID
Beverage?

BECKY
Sure, thanks.

Becky opens the can, takes a sip and spits it out.

BECKY (CONT’D)
Uh, this is beer, bud!

SID
(smiling)
Belgian. Made by Trappist monks.
You like?

Becky looks at Sid, surprised and impressed. She takes another sip.

BECKY
Now that I know what to expect, yes. Where did you get Belgian beer in a Coke can?

SID
Are you familiar with the World Wide Web?

Sid nods toward his state-of-the-art computer setup.

INT. FINN-CLEMENS HOUSE - DINING ROOM - SAME TIME

Veronica and Betty sip coffee at the table.

BETTY
Bodyguards? Really?

VERONICA
Two big ones. She’s either totally paranoid or corrupt enough to have some serious enemies. Heather Mac seems to know more than she should and, bless her heart, she still has a motor on her mouth. There’s a story there and if I’m going to get it I need to stay close.

BETTY
So you’re going to follow them?

VERONICA
No. I’m going to hold my nose and pretend to re-friend them.
BETTY
Oh, I don’t know, Ronnie. Be careful. You know those girls. They’re evil.

VERONICA
Betty, please. I’ve exposed mob kingpins and drug cartels. I think
I can handle a couple of ex-cheerleaders. It’ll be like going undercover, just with a lot of mall time.

Veronica pops a date ball in her mouth and wiggles her eyebrows. Betty frowns.

BETTY
(a touch pathetic)
Okay, just don’t forget about little ol’ me.

VERONICA
Betty! C’mon! I won’t blow you off again. I’ve changed.

BETTY
(joking, kind of)
No one changes. We’re all doomed to be our 17-year-old selves forever.

Veronica shakes her head – “don’t be ridiculous.”

INT. FINN-CLEMENS HOUSE – SID’S ROOM – SAME TIME

Sid and Becky are on to their second “Coke” each and are much more relaxed.

BECKY
Let’s see, some of them I’m too young to remember properly, but...Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Philly, Sacramento, Denver...Austin was cool...Minneapolis was freezing...

SID
So you guys are like a rock band.

BECKY
Traveling circus is more like it.

THEN
And then we were in Boston for 3 years, which is an eternity for us.

(MORE)
And so I spent the first two years in my typical mode.

SID
Which is?

BECKY
Oh, you know, hang out with my mom - which isn’t terrible, by the way - study my ass off, avoid making friends because I’ll be gone by prom. But year 3 rolls around and I let my guard down, make some friends, have some fun. And then BAM, my mom gets downsized.

SID
Corporate bastards. Well, maybe you and The Ringmaster will settle down here for awhile.

BECKY
Doubtful. Sherwood’s a stopgap. My mom’s too ambitious to be here long.

Becky’s sadness fills a brief silence – it’s a flicker of intimacy. Sid is cool with it, but Becky breaks the mood.

BECKY (CONT’D)
So, Webmaster, any chance you could get me some Ritalin on the Internet?

VERONICA (O.C.)
Time to motorola, Becks.

Betty and Veronica appear in the doorway.

BETTY
(re: Coke cans)
All that sugar. You’ll be up all night, Sid.

SID
I’ll manage, mom.

VERONICA
Did you invite Sid to the party?

Becky shoots Veronica a look - “you didn’t just say that.”
BECKY
(sputtering)
I, uh, I don’t know if I’m allowed
to bring people, mom.

SID
(bailing Becky out)
It’s okay. I don’t really do the
whole high school thing.

VERONICA
Smart kid.

Veronica smiles – she likes Sid. Becky gives him a sheepish
grin as she heads out. Sid watches her leave with a touch of
longing. The door closes and we...

CUE MUSIC: “Kiss Off” by the Violent Femmes.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD BEHIND HOME DEPOT – LATER

It’s a shitkicker’s ball. About a hundred kids party in the
clearing. A bonfire lights the action. THE KEG sits in
front of a RUSTED-OUT TRACTOR that serves as the centerpiece
and the social divide. To the right are the pretty and the
popular, the jocks and the cheerleaders. To the left are the
alts, Goths, stoners and skaters.

REVERSE ON: BECKY taking in the scene from a distance. She
breathes in the crisp, smoky air, steels herself with a wry
smile and heads toward...

THE KEG - Becky pours herself a beer, turns to her left and
sees a SHY GOTH GIRL.

BECKY
(warm, complimentary)
Look at you, Siouxsie Sioux. Man,
if I had the stones, I’d totally
wear a corset like that. Where did
you get it?

Shy Goth Girl’s face breaks into a smile.

GOTH GIRL
I had to go into Cleveland.

BECKY
You deserve a beer for that.

Becky hands her the beer and turns to pour herself another,
but a TALL JOCK in a LeBron James jersey is holding the tap.
BECKY (CONT’D)
Hey, don’t Bogart the tap, Big Man.

The Tall Jock can’t help but laugh at Becky’s spunk.

ANGLE ON: Little Miss Perfect/Ashley, Alt Girl/Ashley and Reed watch Becky from a distance. THEY’RE STUDYING HER.

ALT GIRL/ASHLEY
Our girl is mixing species.

ANGLE ON: Becky, still at the keg, HOLDING COURT with the Shy Goth Girl, the Tall Jock and a few other kids, too.

TALL JOCK
Alright, nice to meet you guys. Becky and Ingrid, right?

BECKY
Right on, Josh. Thanks for the expert tap work.

TALL JOCK (JOSH) hands Becky a beer and heads off.

SHY GOTH GIRL (INGRID)
Wow. I’ve never talked to anyone from the other side of the tractor before.

Becky surveys the scene, registers the “tractor divide” and shakes her head in disgust.

BECKY
Are you serious? What is this, Selma 1965? I’m surprised there aren’t separate-but-equal kegs. *This town is weak.

Reed taps Becky on the shoulder.

REED
Hey, Becky. I’m Reed.

BECKY
Ah, yes – the one attached to Ashley’s face. Where is she, by the way? I’m supposed to meet her.

REED
Ashley sent me over to get you. We’re hanging in the VIP section. Wanna come?
BECKY
This place has a champagne room?
This I gotta see.

She follows him through the crowd.

INT. SAWYER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Veronica unpacks a cardboard box marked “Veronica - office stuff.” She pulls out a small metal lockbox. She opens the lockbox, removes some PAPERS AND PHOTOGRAPHS.

VERONICA (V.O.)
Betty’s wrong. People change.
I’ve changed. Hell, I want no part of my 17-year-old self.

Veronica looks at an old candid PHOTO OF HER WITH THE HEATHERS holding croquet mallets and smiling.

VERONICA (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Any good memories I have of 17 are eclipsed by two facts.

Now she examines a yellowed newspaper clipping - AN OBITUARY FOR HEATHER CHANDLER: “PROM QUEEN, 17, COMMITS SUICIDE.”

VERONICA (V.O.) (CONT’D)
My best friend became my enemy and I watched her die.

She pulls out another clipping - AN OBITUARY FOR JASON DEAN THE HEADLINE READS “WESTERBURG BOY, 18, TAKES HIS OWN LIFE.”

VERONICA (V.O.) (CONT’D)
And my boyfriend turned out to be a psycho killer. Qu’est que c’est.

She abruptly puts the photos and papers back in the lockbox, pulls out a key and OPENS THE CEDAR CHEST. She places the lockbox in the cedar chest, shuts it and LOCKS IT.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Becky and Reed have been walking awhile.

BECKY
Uh, where is this VIP room, Reed? Iowa?

REED
Relax. We’re here.
A SMALL CLEARING behind a cluster of trees. There’s an old mattress and a six-pack of Bud next to it.

BECKY
Where’s Ashley?

REED
She’s around.

BECKY
There’s no one around. Let’s get back to the party.

Reed steps toward Becky with a sly smile.

REED
You’re the party.

He moves in to kiss Becky who starts to walk away.

BECKY
Oh, I don’t think so, chief.

He grabs her wrist and pulls her toward the mattress.

REED
Whoa, hold up. C’mon, I saw the way you looked at me in the hall when I was with Ashley. I saw you.

Becky stops struggling, turns to Reed, smiles coquettishly.

BECKY
Yeah, we did kind of have a moment there, didn’t we?

They smile at each other - it’s getting kind of hot. Reed pulls Becky in close, whispers in her ear.

REED
Yeah. Now, relax. I don’t bite.

BECKY
(whispering in his ear)
I do.

SHE BITES HIS EAR, KNEES HIM IN THE BALLS and takes off. Reed writhes on the ground in pain as Becky sprints toward the lights in the parking lot and we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO
HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
Hey, stalker.
(re: mochas)
No you didn’t.

VERONICA
Fat-free, sugar-free.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
Love it! What’s up? I’m at work.

VERONICA
Me, too. That transcript your people put together was aces, but I just wanted to hang out and get some more texture for the story.

A RUGGEDLY HANDSOME MAN in jeans and a flannel shirt approaches HDJ from behind and KISSES HER on the cheek.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
Oooh! Well, here’s a little texture for ya. Veronica, meet my husband, the talented Mr. Jolly.

BILL JOLLY (40) smiles and extends his hand to Veronica.

BILL JOLLY
Bill Jolly, nice to meet you.
(to HDJ)
I actually have to run. Greg and I are doing an overnight at the cabin.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
What are you boys killing this time?

BILL JOLLY
Quail. Just wanted to kiss you before I go.

Bill and HDJ kiss - there’s clearly a lot of affection there. Bill walks away and HDJ CHECKS OUT HIS ASS AS HE GOES.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
I’m so blessed.
VERONICA
He seems like a really nice guy.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
He’s a very successful contractor.
Met him in church, FYI. Come with
some Sunday and I’ll hook you up.
(then)
Ooh, gotta roll – showtime.

A group of PEOPLE IN WHEELCHAIRS have assembled for the photo-
op.

VERONICA
(needling)
Wow, Heather. If I’m not mistaken,
you used to call handicapped people
“Darwin’s roadkill.” To their
faces. Now you’re doing a photo-op
with them? I’m impressed.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
(pissed)
People change, Veronica.
(then, sly)
They can’t walk, but they
definitely vote.

Veronica shakes her head as HDJ heads toward the crowd,
greeting them with genuine grace and charm.

TOM (O.C.)
She’s good, right?

Tom Thatcher sidles up behind Veronica holding a camera.

TOM (CONT’D)
What are you doing here?

VERONICA
Following a lead. You?

TOM
(holds up camera)
Budget limitations. I’m your
editor-in-chief and staff
photographer. What lead?

VERONICA
Don’t you find it suspicious that
your mayor requires a round-the-
clock security detail?
TOM
I do indeed. I knew if I put you in a room with Queen Heather you’d start raking the muck. With a good reporter there’s no such thing as a puff piece.

VERONICA
So the fashion spread was-

TOM
A gambit, a Trojan horse.

VERONICA
You know she’s dirty.

TOM
I should. I ran against her last year and she beat me like a drum.

VERONICA
Really? You tried changing teams?

TOM
Temporary insanity, excess of idealism. I blame Obama. Anyway, I’m back where I belong, fighting the good fight. But I can’t go after Heather myself or I just look like a sore loser – which I am, by the way. So, good – you keep digging and we’ll compare notes later. Dinner tonight.

Veronica smiles and hesitates – “where’s this going?”

TOM (CONT’D)
Working dinner. It’ll be terrible, I promise.

VERONICA
Fine.

TOM
It’s a date.
(off her look)
An appointment. Okay, I’ve got eyes on Heather. You go do some legwork, exhume the bodies, bring me the bones.

Tom heads off and Veronica watches him go, smitten. Tom turns back and Veronica quickly turns to leave, hoping he didn’t catch her looking.
EXT. MUSEUM PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Veronica is about to get into her car as a van comes to a screeching halt. Veronica observes a man get out of the van, open the side door and pull out a wheelchair. HE GETS INTO THE WHEELCHAIR AND HURRIEDLY WHEELS TOWARD THE MUSEUM.

VERONICA
Hey! Stop!

PHONY WHEELCHAIR MAN sees Veronica and starts wheeling faster. She runs after him - a brief, absurd chase.

VERONICA (CONT’D)
Stop! Police!

Now the guy stops and Veronica confronts him, quickly flashing an old press pass that passes for a badge. Veronica plays the hard-ass cop to the hilt.

VERONICA (CONT’D)
I couldn’t help but notice your condition came on rather suddenly. What’s the story, bud?

(off his silence)
Fine. We’ll just take your statement down at headquarters and figure it all out there.

She reaches into her bag with purpose. She’s bluffing. What’s she going to pull out? A gun? Handcuffs? Lipstick?

PHONY WHEELCHAIR MAN
Gimme a break officer. I’m late.

VERONICA
Getting later. Talk. Late for what?

PHONY WHEELCHAIR MAN
The picture. If I’m not in it I don’t get paid. You heard about the recession?

VERONICA
Plenty. Anything for a buck, huh? Who’s paying?

(off his hesitation)
Take your time. My partner’s on his way and he’ll be happy to make the wheelchair a necessity for you.
PHONY WHEELCHAIR MAN
Alright, okay. I’m supposed to go see a guy at BBD Construction.

VERONICA
Thanks, pal. Smile pretty for the picture.

Phony wheels off in a rush. Veronica pulls her phone out and heads to her car.

VERONICA (CONT’D)
(to herself)
Totally should have been a cop.

We push in on her phone – she Googles “BBD Construction.”

INT. WESTERBURG HIGH SCHOOL – CAFETERIA – DAY

Becky eats alone. Sid slides in next to her.

SID
May I?

BECKY
Please do. About the other night--

SID
Don’t mention it. Can I get your e-mail? I’ve got a lead on that thing you asked about.

BECKY
Oh, brilliant. Yes, my cupboard is bare and PSATs are right around the corner. Thank you.

Becky scribbles her e-mail on one of Sid’s notebooks as a HIPSTER KID puts his tray down next to her.

HIPSTER KID
(lewd)
So, do you think you can fit me in? (then)
To your busy schedule.

Becky looks at him like he has two heads.

BECKY
Very funny. I mean “pathetic.” Don’t quit your day job, kid.
HIPSTER KID
Don’t play coy. I hear you’re quite the snake charmer.

BECKY
You’re a pig.

HIPSTER KID
And you’re a ho. Made for each other. Just sayin’.

He walks away, leaving Becky stunned - WTF?!

BECKY
Wow, that was aggressively lame.

Sid grimaces, sighs and pulls out his phone.

SID
I’d brace myself for more of the same. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but you’re viral.

He hands her his phone and as she reads the screen, Becky’s face goes hot with anger and humiliation.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Veronica walks up to a trailer marked “BBD Construction” and knocks on the door.

VERONICA (V.O.)
It’s always the little things that crack open the big stories. A bungled break-in led to Watergate. Getting to the bottom of that phony photo-op might lead me to Heathergate. First step always - follow the money.

The door opens revealing the imposing frame of BIG BUD DEAN (60). Veronica recognizes him. Her heart skips a beat.

BIG BUD DEAN
You the reporter?

VERONICA
Yes, uh. Mr. Dean, right?

BIG BUD DEAN
You can call me Big Bud. My foreman said you wanted to talk about the Dial-a-Ride program.
VERONICA
Yes-

BIG BUD DEAN
Well, we’re proud to be in partnership with the mayor’s office to provide this vital service to our differently-abled fellow citizens. How’s that? We done?

He starts to move back into the trailer.

VERONICA
I’m Veronica Sawyer, Mr. Dean. I dated your son in high school.

That stops him. Big Bud narrows his eyes, scrutinizing Veronica’s face. She meets his gaze, her composure regained.

BIG BUD DEAN
Veronica, right. I remember you. Terrible influence on JD.

VERONICA
I seem to remember it being the other way around. Nevertheless, can you tell me why you’re paying people to pretend to be in wheelchairs?

BIG BUD DEAN
(smiles, amused)
I have no idea what you’re talking about. Stay out of my business, Veronica Sawyer.
(leaning in, quietly)
It’s the healthy choice.

VERONICA
Did you just threaten me?

BIG BUD DEAN
Just offering some friendly advice.

VERONICA
Well, thanks for that.

Veronica turns to leave and we see that her composure was all an act – she’s spooked.

INT. WESTERBURG HIGH SCHOOL – HALLWAY – DAY

Reed, one ear bandaged, stands near his locker when he’s struck in the back with a flying iPhone. It’s Becky’s.
BECKY
So attempted date rape wasn’t enough, huh? You had to spread around your bullshit bravado about what a tasty lay I am?! And on your pathetic Twitter account?

Becky begins to punch him. She’s losing it. A MALE TEACHER (30s) walks by and sees the altercation. He’s about to intervene when he sees THE ASHLEYs rolling up from the other end of the hall. THEY WAVE HIM OFF AND HE OBEYS. The Ashleys then grab Becky and FORCEFULLY PULL HER OFF OF REED.

ASHLEY/ALT GIRL
Dial it down, Tyson.

She holds Becky back as Reed stands up, dusts himself off.

REED
You should have just hooked up with me. Would’ve been a good time.

ASHLEY/ALT GIRL
You’re pretty, but you talk way too much. Come along, Reed.

SHE GRABS HIM BY HIS BANDAGED EAR, pulls him around the corner. Little Miss Perfect glares at Becky.

ASHLEY/LITTLE MISS PERFECT
You try to hook a sister up...

BECKY
That wasn’t a hook up. That was a pimp out.

ASHLEY/LITTLE MISS PERFECT
Drama queen.

She shakes her head and leaves Becky quivering with anger.

INT. WESTERBURG HIGH SCHOOL - ANOTHER HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Ashley/Alt Girl takes Reed’s phone and starts typing.

REED
I don’t get it. First you guys hijack my Twitter and say I nailed her. Now you’re Tweeting that I didn’t nail her. I’m confused.

ASHLEY/ALT GIRL
That’s how we like you. Just do as your told and keep your mouth shut.
REED
Well, I want my money back. Your little ho didn’t put out. And she really messed up my ear.

ASHLEY/ALT GIRL
No refunds, but I’ll give you store credit. Pick out a cheerleader.

She finishes typing and flips the phone back to Reed.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

It’s a cozy little spot. Veronica and Tom sit at a table tucked away in the corner, bottle of red wine halfway gone.

TOM
So you’ve discovered the unholy alliance between HDJ and BBD. He bankrolled Heather’s campaign.

VERONICA
By funneling 250 grand in donations through his employees.

TOM
Somebody’s been doing some research.

VERONICA
It’s the oldest story in the book - kickbacks and quid pro quo. HDJ steers all development of city-owned land to Big Bud. He gets rich.

TOM
How does Heather get rich?

VERONICA
Guess who Big Bud subcontracts all of the carpentry to?

TOM
("of course")
Bill Jolly. Perfect.

(then)
Okay, I want some documentation and at least one on-the-record source before we publish anything.

VERONICA
I’ll get it. But that’s only half of the story. Why the bodyguards?

(MORE)
VERONICA (CONT'D)
We know who her friends are, but what about her enemies?

TOM
You’re the star reporter.

VERONICA
I’ll keep digging.

TOM
Great. So are we done? I thought this was a date.

Veronica cracks up – he totally caught her off guard.

VERONICA
Is this why you hired me? To sexually harass me?

TOM
Yes.

Tom gives her a smile that’s like a dare. Veronica smiles back, “double-dare”, as we...

SMASH CUT TO:

27
INT. TOM THATCHER’S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – LATER
The camera follows a trail of hastily tossed clothing and undergarments until we find TOM AND VERONICA VIGOROUSLY COPULATING ON THE SOFA.

28
INT. TOM THATCHER’S HOUSE – KITCHEN – MOMENTS LATER
Veronica and Tom sit a little less than half-dressed at his kitchen table and eat pie directly from the tin.

VERONICA
This is so reckless.

TOM
It’s just pie.

VERONICA

TOM
I’m not going to fire you. I’m barely paying you.

VERONICA
I have a daughter, Tom.
Veronica considers the question for a beat, then...

Veronica

My story is, I’ve got a corrupt small town mayor with her own JC Penney Secret Service. She’s paranoid, she’s mixed up with a shady guy named “Big Bud” and they’re paying people to pretend to be in wheelchairs. I’ll publish it here first, but I’ve got to believe that I’m sitting on the greatest Vanity Fair article ever.

Tom nods – he gets it.

Tom

Heathergate is your ticket out. Fair enough, not a problem.

Veronica

We should just –

Tom

–continue to have a lot of sex while we can.

Veronica

With no strings attached.

Tom

With no strings attached.

They look at each other – “Okay, this could be a lot of fun.”

Tom (CONT’D)

For the record, I feel used, both professionally and sexually.

Veronica

Poor, poor, Tom.

She leans in and starts to make out with Tom as we...

Fade out.

End of Act Three
ACT FOUR

EXT. SAWYER HOUSE - LAWN - DAY

Becky sets out trays of food as Veronica pounds croquet wickets into the ground with a mallet.

BECKY
Mom, why are we throwing a party for the Heathers? I thought you hated them.

Veronica looks at the mallet in her hand, wishing she could tell Becky the real reason. Instead, she bullshits.

VERONICA
I don’t hate them. I just wouldn’t choose them as friends now. It’ll be fun. Or, at the very least, interesting. Like a really good nature documentary.

BECKY
The Heathers in their natural habitat. Nice.
(then, insinuating)
By the way, what time did you get in last night, starlet?

VERONICA
(evasive)
Late. I had a work thing.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY (O.C.)
You can start the party now.

Becky and Veronica turn and spot THE HEATHERS AND THE ASHLEYS STRUTTING UP THE LAWN TOGETHER. Veronica goes to greet them as Becky hangs back, frozen in shock and anger.

VERONICA
Hey! Croquet and pate anyone?

HEATHER McNAMARA  HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
No way! Love it!

Half-hugs, air kisses. Then...

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
Veronica, this is my daughter, Ashley.

Little Miss Perfect – hereafter known as ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY or ADJ – gives Veronica an aggressively fake smile.
HEATHER MCNAMARA
And this is my daughter, Ashley.

Alt Girl – hereafter known as ASHLEY MCNAMARA or AshMac – smiles ironically and nods.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
They’re besties.

Veronica nods, taking this in.

VERONICA
That’s beautiful. This is Becky.

Veronica turns and sees that BECKY IS STILL IN THE SAME SPOT.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
(to Veronica, hushed)
Is she slow?

Veronica shoots HDJ a look – “Did you really just say that?” *
Becky snaps to and approaches the Ashleys, simmering. *

BECKY
We’ve met. *

ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY
Quel surprise, right? *

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
Fast friends. Of course. *

HEATHER MCNAMARA
Oh my god, look! It’s like mini us! *

VERONICA
Yeah. Deja voodoo. *

Veronica looks a little nauseous – this might just be her worst nightmare. She takes a deep breath and forcibly perks up. *

VERONICA (CONT’D)
Alright people, refine your strokes and I’ll be right back. Becky, host. *

She hands out mallets, takes the women’s bags and heads into the house. HDJ heads for the wickets.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
I’m red!

Becky offers Heather McNamara a drink.
BECKY
Perrier?

HEATHER MCNAMARA
Thank you. Wait, you were in my class, weren’t you?

BECKY
Briefly. I’m in Spanish 3 now.

HEATHER MCNAMARA
Right! Honest to goodness, sweetie, I thought you were a Mexican.

AshMac glides by and whispers in Becky’s ear.

ASHLEY MCNAMARA
Like I said, permanent brain damage.

The Heathers practice croquet as Becky follows the Ashleys to a table off to the side where they’re sampling the pate.

BECKY
Listen, bitches-

ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY
The gracious hostess! Simmer down - we come in peace.

She hands Becky her phone to read.

ASHLEY MCNAMARA
We beat the gory details out of Reed. Totally unacceptable behavior. So we pulled down his punk-ass Tweet and made him put out this retraction/apology. And, for good measure, we just Tweeted this about him.

She shows Becky her phone. Becky starts to laugh.

BECKY
Oh, that is harsh.

ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY
Harsh is what we do. Everybody in school follows us. Your reputation will be sterling by Monday.

BECKY
Thank you. Really.
ASHLEY/LITTLE MISS PERFECT
(shrugging)
It’s what friends do for each other.
(then, to AshMac)
Shall we school her now?

ASHLEY MCNAMARA
Let’s do.

INT. SAWYER HOUSE - DEN - SAME TIME

Veronica pulls HDJ’s BlackBerry out of her purse. She clicks on her “Inbox” and types in a search for “Big Bud Dean.” The search yields “No matches found for ‘Big Bud Dean.’”

VERONICA
Dammit.

She begins rifling HDJ’s purse, pulls out Kleenex, a compact and a HOLY BIBLE. She opens the Bible and finds that IT’S A HOLLOW BOOK FILLED WITH A LARGE STACK OF CASH.

VERONICA (CONT’D)
Praise the Lord.

EXT. SAWYER HOUSE - LAWN - SAME TIME

The Ashleys casually nibble pate as they school Becky.

ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY
We’ve consolidated the cliques at Westerburg into two mega-cliques.
I’ve got The Insiders - the pretty, the popular, the jocks, the cheerleaders and the overachievers.

ASHLEY MCNAMARA
I’ve got the alts, Goths, skaters and stoners. The Outsiders.

ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY
I’m Coke. She’s Pepsi. It’s a corporate model.

BECKY
What about the people who don’t fall into one of your little categories?

ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY
The Stragglers? Who cares?
ASHLEY MCNAMARA
(to ADJ)
Now, I know she’s a smarty-pants, but Becky feels more alt-ish to me. And I could use a solid #2.

ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY
No way. She’s honors and AP across the board. She belongs to me.

BECKY
Excuse me?

HDJ approaches, croquet mallet in hand and taps Becky.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
Hey, where’s your mom? I’m ready to kick her ass back to the 80s.

INT. SAWYER HOUSE - DEN - SAME TIME

Veronica is about to place the Bible back in the purse when she notices gold lettering embossed on its back cover - "CHURCH OF THE HOLY PROPHET, 1229 COUNTY LINE ROAD, SHERWOOD, OH." She whips out her notebook and copies down the address when she hears footsteps approaching - SHIT! Panicked, she stuffs her notebook into HDJ’s purse and grips the Bible. She quickly realizes her mistake and swaps the Bible for her notebook just as BECKY APPEARS.

BECKY
Again with the notebook. You’re getting compulsive, mom.

VERONICA
Could be. What’s up?

BECKY
Natives are getting restless. They want to play croquet and they’re out for blood.

VERONICA
Let the games begin.

EXT. SAWYER HOUSE - LAWN - DAY

MONTAGE: The Croquet Game

Veronica and Heather McNamara play for fun. Becky and AshMac play ironically. HDJ and ADJ play for blood. Bill Jolly arrives on the scene as the brief montage ends.
BILL JOLLY
Sorry I’m late. Who’s winning?

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY
I am. I am. *

Veronica notices HDJ’s BODYGUARDS eating pate as their eyes scan the horizon.

VERONICA *
So, Bill, those guys ever get a day off? You do Christmas with them?

BILL JOLLY *(laughing)*
I know, I know.

VERONICA *
Seriously, who are they protecting her from?

BILL JOLLY *
Honestly? No one. But they make her feel safe and important, so I don’t say anything. *(sighs, then)* We’ve got a big anniversary trip to Cleveland next weekend. Got her tickets to Wicked, fancy hotel, the whole deal. And I put my foot down – they’re not coming. I told her, I’ll be the bodyguard.

HDJ wraps her arms around Bill’s waist from behind and laughs. *

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY *
You? Bodyguard? Don’t kid yourself, Billy boy. Huntin’ don’t make you a man. The animals don’t got guns.

Bill is clearly embarrassed and emasculated. *

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY (CONT’D) *(abruptly)*
Oooh! Gotta go. Killing time.

She steps up to her ball and carefully lines up a shot.

ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY *
Don’t choke, mother.
HDJ is the image of concentration as she strikes the ball. It caroms off ADJ’s ball and improbably passes through the wicket. HDJ walks up to ADJ and looks her square in the eye.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
I am immune to mind games, Ashley.
Now congratulate me.

She holds out her hand to shake. ADJ slaps it. HDJ quickly grabs her wrist and forces her to shake hands.

ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY
("fuck you")
Congratulations.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
("fuck you harder")
Thank you.

Awkward silence. Bill steps into the breach, the peacemaker.

BILL JOLLY
We should get going, right girls? *

VERONICA
(eagerly) *
Beautiful. I’ll grab your bags.

Veronica heads toward the house. The Ashleys step to Becky. *

ASHLEY MCNAMARA
So think about which way you want *
to go - Insider or Outsider. *

BECKY *
Oh, I get a choice? I think I’ll *
put in with the Stragglers, thanks. *

ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY *
Don’t get it twisted. You’re not *
being recruited, you’re being *
drafted. We rule the school, *
kiddie pool. And you owe us now. *

The adults are now within earshot, so the Ashleys abruptly turn on their fake charm.

ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY (CONT’D) *
So, bye! See you on Monday! *

Veronica arrives with the handbags and hugs the Heathers and *
Bill goodbye.
HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
Great pate. But work on your game, Veronica. I expect more of a challenge next time.

VERONICA
It’s on, champ.

As their guests walk away Veronica puts her arm around Becky.

VERONICA (CONT’D)
Well, that was fun.

Becky looks up at her mom – “You cannot be serious.”
Veronica returns the gaze – “I’m not.

INT. SAWYER HOUSE - BECKY’S ROOM - LATER
ON COMPUTER SCREEN: Sid’s e-mail to Becky contains only a link. Becky clicks it and lands on a Craigslist ad for “Ritalin - no scrip necessary.”

VERONICA (O.C.)
Knock knock.

Becky quickly pulls up a homework document on her screen.

VERONICA (CONT’D)
I spy makeup. Where you headed?

BECKY
Out with my friends.

VERONICA
The Ashleys?

BECKY
I’ve fulfilled my Ashley quota for the day.

Veronica wants to jump for joy, but keeps it together.

VERONICA
Okay, babe. Don’t stay out too long. I have to work late tonight.

Veronica kisses her on the cheek and leaves. Becky pulls the Ritalin info back up on her screen.

CUT TO:
EXT. RAMSHACKLE VICTORIAN HOUSE - NIGHT

A car idles across the street. Push in to reveal ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY PEERING OUT THE WINDOW. Reverse to reveal BECKY WALKING UP THE FRONT STEPS. Becky double-checks her iPhone to see if she’s in the right place and knocks.

INT. RAMSHACKLE VICTORIAN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Becky stands nervously in the foyer as a cute, scruffy COLLEGE GUY shuts the door and begins to climb the staircase.

COLLEGE GUY
Ritalin, right? Come on up. We’re just finishing up with these other dudes.

Becky follows him to the second floor where she sees BILL JOLLY AND ANOTHER MAN EMERGING FROM A ROOM WITH A BAGGIE OF WHITE CRYSTALS. Bill sees Becky and panics.

BILL JOLLY
(menacing)
Listen to me. You will not tell a soul about this. Because if you do, I will make things very, very bad for you.

A hand pats Bill on the arm, momentarily startling him. The hand belongs to SID FINN-CLEMENS - HE’S THE DEALER.

SID
(calming)
Stop it. You’re afraid and you don’t have to be. Everything will be cool because Becky is very cool. And we can trust her. Right, Becky?

He turns to Becky and locks eyes with her. It’s electric - there’s both a seduction and a threat embedded in the question. Becky nods, a little scared, a little turned on.

BECKY
I’m cool.

SID
I knew it.
(then)
Good night, gents.

It’s a command to leave. Bill and his cohort comply wordlessly - this kid has some serious juice. Sid turns back to Becky and smiles mischievously.
SID (CONT'D)
Welcome to my world. Now let's get you some performance enhancers. PSATs are right around the corner.

He politely gestures for her to “step into his office.” Becky studies his face for a moment and then breaks into a smile - this guy is a little bit dangerous and she likes it.

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EXT. 1229 COUNTY LINE ROAD - LATER

It’s a small storefront in a NEAR ABANDONED STRIP MALL. The only sign of the “Church of the Holy Prophet” is a worn cross, hanging slightly askew. Veronica parks and heads to the door - it’s locked.

VERONICA (V.O.)
Sorry, god.

She uses a small tool to pick the lock and enters...

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INT. 1229 COUNTY LINE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

It’s more bunker than church. The glow of Veronica’s iPhone reveals a desk, filing cabinets and a cot. The last remaining vestige of the church is a small BOOKCASE OF BIBLES. Veronica begins to pull them off the shelf - THEY’RE ALL HOLLOW. She goes to the desk and finds construction blueprints labeled “BBD CONSTRUCTION.”

VERONICA
Paydirt. This is where the bodies are buried.

Just as Veronica is about to search the filing cabinets, she hears THE SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS, KEYS RATTLING, VOICES - SHIT! Veronica shuts the drawer and ducks into the bathroom as BIG BUD DEAN ENTERS WITH BILL JOLLY.

BIG BUD DEAN
What’s the goddamn emergency, Bill?

BILL JOLLY
I want to do it tonight. I’ll kill Heather myself. Let’s just do it.

ON VERONICA cowering next to the toilet, heart racing. Her eyes cast about, looking for an exit that isn’t there as we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR
ACT FIVE

INT. 1229 COUNTY LINE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Big Bud sits behind his desk. Bill paces the room, agitated.

BIG BUD DEAN
This is not the kind of job you rush, Billy boy. And, trust me, you want it handled by professionals.

BILL JOLLY
I don’t care. Just move it up. Have them come here and do it this week. I can’t live like this anymore.

BIG BUD DEAN
You’re high. Sit your ass down and listen to me.

Bill does.

BIG BUD DEAN (CONT’D)
We do this right. In Cleveland. No bodyguards to deal with, my friend is gonna make it look like an accident. I’ve worked with him before and he’s an artist. You’ll be a widower before you know it.

Bill nods, struggling to contain his fidgeting.

BIG BUD DEAN (CONT’D)
We have a nice solution. Don’t become part of the problem, Billy. (then) Are we done?

BILL JOLLY
We’re done.

Big Bud gets up to leave and Bill follows him out.

ON VERONICA biting her lip, holding her breath. We hear the door shut. Veronica exhales and we...

CUT TO:
INT. SAWYER HOUSE - FOYER - LATER

Becky has her iPod earplugs in as she takes off her coat and hangs it up in the closet. She doesn’t hear Veronica enter right behind her and they bump into each other.

VERONICA
Oh my god!

BECKY
Oh my god!

They’re both clearly on edge, but trying to hide it. Becky takes out her earplugs.

BECKY
How was your night out?

VERONICA
Boring. You?

BECKY
Snoring. Get me out of this sleepy little town.

VERONICA
Workin’ on it, sweetie.

(then)
Wanna stay up too late and watch a random Sandra Bullock movie?

BECKY
I’m too tired. Good night, mom.

She kisses Veronica on the cheek and heads upstairs.

VERONICA
(calling after her)
You’re right. We’d just hate ourselves in the morning.

But Becky is already in her room, door shut. Veronica looks up the staircase, concerned and a little bit hurt.

INT. WESTERBURG HIGH SCHOOL - LADIES ROOM - MORNING

Becky pops a Ritalin in a stall, flushes the toilet to cover her tracks and exits the stall. She catches a glimpse of herself in the mirror, likes what she sees, exits, and...

INT. WESTERBURG HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

...she practically plows into Sid.

BECKY
Hey.
SID
Hey.

An electric beat. Their shared secret hangs in the air.

SID (CONT’D)
So, can I buy you lunch in the caf later?
(off her hesitation)
It’s got a Michelin star.

Becky smiles - looks like it’s on between them, but...

PA ANNOUNCEMENT
Becky Sawyer, please come to the main office. Becky Sawyer.

SID
(teasing)
So you’re the one who TP’d the principal’s car.

BECKY
(flirty)
Busted.

She rolls her eyes playfully and heads toward the office.

INT. SHERWOOD UNION OFFICE – DAY

Veronica walks into Tom’s office. He’s on the phone.

VERONICA
Breaking news.

Tom holds up a finger - “Wait one second” - then gestures for Veronica to come closer. She does and he cops a subtle feel on her leg. Veronica smiles and glances down at Tom’s desk where SHE SEES A CHURCH OF THE HOLY PROPHET BIBLE - WTF? Tom hangs up the phone.

TOM
Okay, lay it on me.

Veronica is at a loss. Should she hold out on Tom?

VERONICA
So, Heather. Making progress.

Her phone rings, bailing her out. She answers quickly.

VERONICA (CONT’D)
Hello? Yes, this is she.
She listens for a beat and her face goes white.

VERONICA (CONT’D)
Okay, thank you. I’ll be right there.

She hangs up and starts out the door in a hurry.

* TOM
What’s wrong?

VERONICA
It’s my daughter.

She slams the door behind her as we....

CUT TO:

INT. SHERWOOD POLICE HEADQUARTERS – RECEPTION AREA – DAY

Veronica, agitated, blows through the front door in a rush and is surprised to find...

VERONICA
Heather?

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
I came down as soon as I heard.

VERONICA
(cagey)
Heard what?

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
About Becky. C’mon, Veronica, I’m the mayor. I’m in the loop, hello.

VERONICA
Dammit Heather, can you please just stay out of my shit?

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
What’s your damage, Veronica? I came to help. I told the cops to treat her like family or heads roll. And she’s fine, by the way.

Veronica sighs, chastened. No use hiding.

VERONICA
They told me it was prescription drugs.
HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
(nodding)
Possession. She was busted on an anonymous tip verified by a craigslist exchange. But it’s taken care of.

She hands Veronica a slip of paper.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY (CONT’D)
I had my doctor cook this up on the fly. Hang on to it. Her record is clean and no one has to know.

Veronica looks at the paper – it’s a BACK-DATED PRESCRIPTION FOR RITALIN made out to Becky Sawyer.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY (CONT’D)
This will be between us.
(then)
You know how to keep a secret, don’t you, Veronica?

Veronica holds her gaze for a beat.

VERONICA
Yes.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
Good. Just get her back to school before people start asking questions.

HDJ starts to leave.

VERONICA
Heather, wait –

HDJ turns and Veronica weighs whether or not to tell her about the assassination plot, but before she can speak...

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
Don’t mention it. It’s what friends do for each other.

HDJ exits as a POLICEMAN escorts Becky into the room.

POLICEMAN
Mrs. Sawyer? Sorry about the mix-up. You have a good day.

Becky looks at her mom, mortified. Veronica shakes her head.
INT. CAR - DAY

Veronica drives, beside herself with anger. Becky stares straight ahead.

VERONICA
Drugs? My god, Becky, do not make me get all afterschool special on your ass.

BECKY
It’s just Ritalin.

VERONICA
Purchased from a drug dealer. Hello, you got arrested. When did this start?

BECKY
Since Boston Latin, the B in Bio last year. And it helped. It helps me with school.

VERONICA
First off, it’s illegal. Second, you don’t have ADD. You don’t need brain steroids. You’re too smart to cheat.

Becky is tired of being told she’s smart. Something snaps and she goes to war.

BECKY
Oh, please do not lecture me on integrity. You’re the one who bitches about how horrible your friends are and then you throw them a frickin’ garden party!

VERONICA
At least I’m honest with you about it, I talk about it. You’ve been a vault since we got here. You say you’re going out with friends - friends I’ve never met, by the way - and you buy drugs?! One rule, Beck - no secrets!

BECKY
No secrets? That’s hilarious! What about you? What are you always writing about in that notebook? “Dear Diary, tonight I screwed my boss again.” Awesome!
VERONICA
(thunderstruck)
Becky!

BECKY
Oh my god, it’s so obvious. You’re “working late” here in sleepy Sherwood. On what? Being bored and horny? Please, just don’t give me the no secrets crap. Only someone with a truckload of secrets has to compulsively write in a diary.

VERONICA
(pushing back)
It’s not a diary. It’s a notebook. It’s my work. I need to take notes. And trust me, my life is a lot more boring than you seem to imagine.

Becky senses she’s struck a nerve, decides to call her bluff.

BECKY
Then let me read them. I want to read your notebooks. No secrets, right?

It’s a punch to Veronica’s gut. A silence hangs in the air as Veronica pulls up in front of Westerburg and parks.

VERONICA
(quietly)
Becky, some things are just...personal.

BECKY
Yeah, that’s what I thought. Well I have a bunch of stuff that I’m going to keep “personal”, okay? Let’s just add that to our list of bullshit rules - “some things are just personal.”

Becky gets out of the car and slams the door. Veronica’s face says it all - “Fuck, I’m losing her.”

INT. SAWYER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Veronica enters in a rush holding her notebook. She heads straight to the cedar chest and unlocks it.
VERONICA (V.O.)
Becky can never read this. Some things are personal.

VERONICA’S POV: She looks into the cedar chest and we see PILES AND PILES OF IDENTICAL BLACK NOTEBOOKS. Veronica tosses her notebook onto the pile next to that SMALL METAL LOCKBOX.

VERONICA (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Some things are criminal.

Veronica opens up the lockbox and places the PHONY RITALIN SCRIP inside. Then she pulls out A PHOTO AND PIECE OF PARCHMENT.

VERONICA (V.O.) (CONT’D)
And some secrets are worth taking to the grave.

CLOSE ON: The parchment - it’s BECKY’S BIRTH CERTIFICATE. THE FATHER IS LISTED AS JASON DEAN. Veronica flips to the photograph. IT’S A SHOT OF HER AND JD ON A COLLEGE CAMPUS, TIME-STAMPED 7/19/94 - HE’S STILL ALIVE.

CUT TO:

INT. WESTERBURG HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Becky stands at her locker when...

ASHLEY MCNAMARA
Knock, knock.

It’s the Ashleys - great.

ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY
Welcome back from genpop. I told my mom to make sure nobody shivved you.

BECKY
(stunned)
What are you talking about?

ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY
Ritalin is so 2009. I’m all about Adderall. Taste the difference.

She hands Becky a small, pink, heart-shaped PILL BOX.

ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY (CONT’D)
Next time you buy your study aids from me - friends and family rate.

(MORE)
ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY (CONT’D)
And tell Sid the Squid to stick to
the college crowd and I’ll continue
to service the under-18
demographic. Or we go to war.

ASHLEY MCNAMARA
And then tell him goodbye. You’re done with him.

BECKY
Don’t tell me what to do. You don’t control me.

ASHLEY DUKE-JOLLY
Yes, we do. You just don’t know it yet. Look, we can totally be friends. We’ll have your back and we’ll make you a star. You just need to know how things run here.

They walk away, leaving Becky reeling. She takes a breath to gather herself, turns and SID IS STANDING THERE.

SID
I see you’ve made acquaintance with the Ash-holes.
(then)
So, what did the lords of discipline want with you? Corporal punishment? Anything kinky?

Becky is overwhelmed. She needs to buy herself some time.

BECKY
No, it was my mom. She wants to have lunch with me today. I’ll catch you later.

She closes her locker and walks away. Sid watches her go. He can tell something’s wrong and he’s not happy about it.

INT. CITY HALL - MAYOR’S OFFICE - DAY

Veronica approaches HDJ’s door carrying two iced mochas.

VERONICA (V.O.)
Phony friend or real friend, corrupt or clean, Heather did me a solid and I owed her a sincere thank you. Plus, I had to find a way to tell her to bring those bodyguards to Cleveland.

The reception desk is empty. Veronica pushes open the door.
VERONICA (CONT’D)
Madame Mayor, I thought you might enjoy a fat-free fake shake to enhance your afternoon.

VERONICA’S POV: HDJ sits at her desk, CRYING HYSTERICALLY as the receptionist and bodyguards try to console her.

HEATHER DUKE-JOLLY
(through tears)
Oh, thank god you’re here. It’s Bill. He’s dead. He...hung himself.

Veronica drops the mochas and runs to hug Heather. We hear the opening strains of Sly & the Family Stone’s plaintive version of “Que Sera Sera” as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - ROADSIDE SIGN - SAME TIME

Sirens now illuminate the HANGING BODY we saw in the opening. A policeman climbs a ladder and turns the body, revealing BILL JOLLY’S LIFELESS FACE.

VERONICA (V.O.)
She was crying for a man who wanted her dead, but I’d have to be a real hard-hearted bee-otch not to feel for her right now.

The policeman slices the rope and THE BODY FALLS OUT OF FRAME as we..

CUT TO:

INT. CITY HALL - MAYOR’S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Veronica holds a sobbing Heather close.

VERONICA (V.O.)
There’s a story here. I need to write it. I’m just afraid to find out how it ends.

We push in on Veronica’s conflicted countenance, hold, and...

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE