

POINT AND SHOOT

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FADE IN:

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

A busted guard rail near an embankment. Cricket chirps echo throughout the ink black night.

A rustling is heard. HELEN GETTY (47), head bleeding, stumbles to the top of the embankment. Out of breath, bewildered, she sits on the guard rail, when --

An EXPLOSION from below. Her car.

Startled, she falls off the rail. Finds her feet, shuffles to the street.

Headlights approach down the winding road.

Helen waves frantically.

The car pulls over. Its door opens.

HELEN

P-Please help... I was in an
accident. I...

The car OCCUPANT slowly advances.

HELEN

Can you drive me to the nearest
hospital..?

The Occupant just stands there. Does nothing, says nothing, then --

Reaches into a coat pocket and pulls out an AUTOMATIC 9MM. Aims it at her head. Occupant's thumb casually flicks the safety to off.

Helen gasps, eyes widen.

HELEN

No... No!

Silently, she cycles through every possible emotion. Fear, shock, loss. Acceptance--

BLAM!

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - DAY

The twisty road yields a grand view of the Pacific. Carved hills give way to white sand, white sand to blue water.

SUPER: Two weeks later.

INT. CAR (DRIVING) - DAY

JESSE CHAMBERS (23) grips the wheel, breathes the salty air. In a college shirt and sunglasses, her long hair blows out the window.

Snoozing in the passenger seat is ALICIA WILLIAMS (24), BFF since childhood.

Jesse spies her sleeping, then checks the out her window.

JESSE
Alicia... Alicia!

ALICIA
What, what?

Jesse points.

JESSE
Look.

Alicia rubs her eyes. Her face glows.

ALICIA
Home sweet home.

JESSE
I'm gonna pull over.

ALICIA
Right now?

Jesse smiles, nods.

EXT. POINT ANNE - MOMENTS LATER

On the hood of the car, Jesse checks the batteries on a pro-level CAMERA. Satisfied, she heads to the lookout.

She lines up shot after spectacular shot.

JESSE

I can remember coming here with my parents when I was a kid. Grilling burgers, swimming in the ocean...

ALICIA

I remember.

JESSE

That water was always so cold.

ALICIA

I know.

JESSE

Back then, I never cared how cold it was. I always just jumped right in.

ALICIA

Some things never change, huh?

Jesse gives her a sly look. Appreciates the analogy. Revels in it.

JESSE

Now, look at us. I thought graduating high school was a big deal.

ALICIA

It was a big deal.

JESSE

Yeah, but not like this. This just... feels so different. Everything suddenly feels so real.

ALICIA

You're nervous?

JESSE

A little bit. So many choices coming at us. It's like, when you come to that fork in the road, how do you know which way to go?

ALICIA

Well, you know what they say when you hit a fork in the road, right?

JESSE

What?

ALICIA

Take it.

They laugh. Jesse shakes her head.

JESSE

College grads.

ALICIA

Almost college grads. Gotta do the internship first.

Jesse groans.

JESSE

Taking photos for a landscaping catalog is not really my idea of fun.

ALICIA

It's work. It's not supposed to be fun. Besides, name a time when you and I were together and didn't have fun?

JESSE

True. Plus, we got the podcast.

ALICIA

We're still doing that?

JESSE

Of course. Our friends back at school are counting on us. Besides, I'm sure we're not the only photography geeks out there. Hey, speaking of geeking out...

Jesse turns the camera on Alicia.

JESSE

Strike a pose.

Alicia "Vogues" it up.

ALICIA

Okay, Madonna.

They tease and laugh. Here's to post-college life.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

Two cop cars parked near the busted guard rail. The area's taped off. Evidence markers placed throughout.

SHERIFF PAUL JOHNSON (48), looks every bit the veteran of the force that he is, peers through binoculars down the embankment.

UNDERSHERIFF MELANIE TAYLOR (38), climbs the ridge, dusts off, removes her gloves.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Anything?

Taylor shakes her head.

TAYLOR

No body, if that's what you mean.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

That's because he killed her up here.

(points)

There's blood over here. Some there. Shell casings.

Johnson looks through the binoculars again.

TAYLOR

I'm thinking they ran her off the road. Somehow - *somehow* - she climbed back up. When they saw she wasn't dead. Bang. Finished the job.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Yep. You run the plates?

TAYLOR

What plates? The car's torched. Even the VIN number's melted off.

Johnson SIGHS. He lowers the binoculars and gazes out across the landscape.

EXT. JESSE'S HOME - DAY

Picture perfect, modern colonial. Sprinklers water the greening grass and bushes. A jogger passes.

Alicia's car pulls up. Jesse gets out with her back pack.

JESSE

So, I figure we can do the podcast
at my place. My parents won't be
back for a couple weeks.

ALICIA

You're all alone?

JESSE

Yep.

ALICIA

Nice! I'll come back later?

JESSE

Sounds good. We'll talk then.

ALICIA

See ya later.

Jesse taps the hood of the car, turns and heads up the walk.
At the door, she reaches under a flower pot, takes a key and
opens the door.

INT. JESSE'S HOME, FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

A sickly, lime green throwback of a rotary phone sits on a
table next to a lamp.

Jesse drops her bag on the floor, kicks off her shoes. She
crosses into the --

KITCHEN

Finds a note. Reads.

INSERT: NOTE

*Jesse -- Congrats, grad! We're so proud of you! Sorry we
couldn't be there, but we left something special for you.
Follow the clues... Mom & Dad.*

Jesse smiles warmly. You get the feeling she's done this sort
of thing before.

She crosses the kitchen, spots a party BLOWOUT HORN on the
counter. Picks it up, blows it, then --

On the kitchen table is a dirty dish. Jesse takes it, places
it in the --

INSERT: DISHWASHER

A clean plate with a fork on it. She takes it.

BACK TO

JESSE

Hmm.

Jesse opens the --

REFRIGERATOR

Inside is a festive CAKE.

Jesse smiles, pulls it out. CONGRATULATIONS written in cursive along the top.

MOMENTS LATER

Jesse finishes her slice of cake. Nothing left but crumbs. She throws the plate in the dishwasher, leaves the room.

JESSE'S BEDROOM

Just like she left it -- airy and clean, photography magazines on the desk. A worn stuffed bear on the bed.

She takes a comforting breath, then collapses on the bed. Out like a light.

INT. DARK ROOM (DREAM SEQUENCE) - NIGHT

A lone lamp sits on an end table with that lime green rotary phone we saw before. The phone rings.

Across the room is Jessie. Uneasiness in her eyes. She shuffles slowly towards the phone.

RING, RING...

Approaches the table. Stares at the phone. Cautiously -- fearfully -- she reaches out to pick it up...

Puts it to her ear, and --

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. JESSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jesse awakens with a GASP. The room is dark, doesn't realize where she is at first. She turns on the light.

The phone downstairs is ringing.

FOYER

Jesse stares at the rotary phone, but won't answer. Won't go near it.

Finally, the rings stop. Her cell phone goes off. She checks the screen --

MOM & DAD CALLING. She answers.

JESSE
(into phone)
Hey, Mom.

BEGIN INTERCUT:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

DARLENE CHAMBERS (56), face aglow when she hears Jesse's voice, sits on the edge of a bed next to an open suitcase.

DOUG, 58, closes a drawer, slips on a watch.

DARLENE
(into phone)
Hey, sweetheart. How are you? You get home okay?

JESSE
Hmm? Yes, got home safely. Hey, why do you keep calling me on the house phone? You know I hate that thing.

DARLENE
I'm sorry. I keep forgetting. Did you get the cake?

JESSE
Thank you, yes. It was delicious.

DARLENE
Baked it myself. You figured out the clues I left?

JESSE
Yes, Mom. Though you might be losing your touch. Your clues are getting easier and easier to figure out.

DOUG
Hi, sweetheart.

JESSE
Hi, Dad.

DARLENE
So sorry we're not there for you,
Jess. We wanted to be.

JESSE
It's okay, Mom. You and dad need to
have fun too, you know. I'll be
fine. I'm a big girl.

DARLENE
I know. My college grad. Does this
mean I can't squeeze your cheeks
anymore?

JESSE
Oh, my god. I'll think about it.

Darlene laughs.

DARLENE
Well, look, anything you need we're
just a phone call away. We'll be
home in a couple weeks.

JESSE
Yes, Mom. Don't have too much fun.

DARLENE
Okay, honey.

DOUG
Bye.

JESSE
Bye.

She hangs up the phone. SIGHS.

THUD! THUD! THUD!

Jesse jumps, checks the front door peephole, unlocks it.

It's Alicia.

JESSE
Why you knocking like that?

ALICIA
I'm sorry. Did I scare you?

JESSE
Just a little.

ALICIA
You sure? You look frazzled.

JESSE
Eh... I had another dream.

Alicia glances to the phone on the table.

ALICIA
The phone again, huh?

JESSE
Yep.

ALICIA
Did you answer it this time?

JESSE
Nope.

ALICIA
You have that dream a lot. Who do you think's on the other end?

JESSE
Couldn't tell you. When I answer it I'll let you know.

ALICIA
If you ever answer it. Freaky.
(Jesse nods)
So, speaking of phones. I thought we'd go live tonight?

JESSE
The podcast? Tonight?

ALICIA
Yeah, why not? It'd be good to hear from the old gang. Order some takeout.

JESSE
Ooh, takeout? Now you're talking!

They head into the other room.

INT. JESSE'S HOME, DINING ROOM - LATER

Boxes of Chinese takeout on the table. On the floor a tri-pod stand, small camera affixed to it.

The girls are live.

JESSE

Sounds like the shutter speed, Seth. Especially if you're shooting a moving subject. But they have software to remove stuff like that. Blur, red eye...

SETH (O.S.)

All right, guys. Thanks. I'll give it a shot. How's everything going with the internship?

ALICIA

We haven't started yet. We'll let you know in a couple days. Okay?

SETH (O.S.)

All right. You guys take care. Miss you already.

JESSE

Bye, Seth. We miss you, too... You've been listening to Point and Shoot. We're live and in your living room. Or dorm room, like Seth.

ALICIA

Wanna take another call?

JESSE

Sure. We have time for one more, I think.

(checks lap top)

And on the line we have... Chad from Laguna Hills.

ALICIA

Wow. That's pretty close.

JESSE

Hi, Chad. You're live. You have a question for us?

EXT. MANSION, BACKYARD - NIGHT

Aquatic mood lighting. Water ripples in a pool surrounded by cultured stone. Real wealth on display here.

At a table, phone in hand, is CHAD GETTY (32), collared shirt rolled up, teal shorts, perfect hair -- the rich kid starter pack.

BEGIN INTERCUT: BACKYARD/JESSE'S HOUSE

CHAD

Actually, yes. How would you like to come work for Sanderson Shore?

Jesse's jaw drops. A surprised smile crosses her lips.

ALICIA

Who's Sanderson Shore?

Chad laughs.

CHAD

You're adorable.

Jesse and Alicia exchange glances.

EXT. MANSION, DRIVEWAY - DAY

Gated property. Perfect landscaping. Beautifully pretentious.

Jesse's car pulls up to the talk box. She presses a button. A chime sounds. A voice comes through --

SANDERSON (V.O.)

Jesse and Alicia? Is that you?

JESSE

(into box)

Yes, it's us.

The gate swings open.

SANDERSON (V.O.)

Well, come on in then.

INT. CAR - DAY

They roll up the cobblestone driveway, gawking as they go. Never seen this kind of wealth up close.

The house is sprawling. A LANDSCAPER trims a hedge.

They exit the car.

ALICIA
Oh, my god. This place...

The front door swings open, and out steps --

SANDERSON SHORE (59), wearing a white robe with an SS crest emblazoned on it. Velvet slippers. A glass of juice in his hand. He lives the part.

SANDERSON
Girls. So nice to meet you.

JESSE
You, too.

He shakes their hands.

SANDERSON
Let me guess... Jesse?

JESSE
Yes, I'm Jesse. This is Alicia.

SANDERSON
The pleasure's all yours.

He guffaws. The girls exchange curious glances.

SANDERSON
Come in.

INT. MANSION, DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jesse, Alicia and Sanderson sit around a table overflowing with fruit, muffins and pastries.

JESSE
How did you find us?

SANDERSON
Well, here's a girl who wants to get right to it.

JESSE
Just curious.

SANDERSON
My step son, Chad, found you. I told him what I wanted, and there you were.

(MORE)

SANDERSON (CONT'D)

He said you told him you're starting an internship tomorrow?

ALICIA

That's right.

SANDERSON

How would you like to come work for me?

JESSE

What do you do?

SANDERSON

What don't I do? Property owner, real estate. A little philanthropy just to give the illusion that I care... That was a joke, by the way.

JESSE

What do you want us to do exactly?

SANDERSON

I'm assuming you have a keen eye for detail?

JESSE

Absolutely.

SANDERSON

I have several real estate dealings in various states of flux. Always. I'm either buying, selling -- selling, buying. What I need are portfolios to show the investors. Pictures that capture the essence. That wow factor. Something that's gonna make them hand over their money and not think twice.

ALICIA

Umm...

SANDERSON

From what Chad tells me, you two are aces at that sort of thing.

JESSE

Well, yeah, I guess so.

SANDERSON

Don't be modest. You both finished top of your class. Stellar grades.

(MORE)

SANDERSON (CONT'D)

You don't want to work at catering halls the rest of your life, do you?

ALICIA

How do you know we worked--?

Sanderson raises his hand.

SANDERSON

You don't think I'd hire someone without doing a thorough background check, do you?

JESSE

But we haven't accepted the position yet.

ALICIA

Plus, we need that internship in order to graduate.

SANDERSON

I'll make sure you get the necessary credits. Scouts honor.

Silence, then --

SANDERSON

(shrugs)

Well?

EXT. MANSION, DRIVEWAY - LATER

Jessie and Alicia head to the car.

ALICIA

He said be here tomorrow at five.

JESSE

And?

ALICIA

I don't know. Strange. Seems a little late, is all.

Jesse's all smiles.

JESSE

This is gonna be great.

Just then, a POLICE CAR cruises up the driveway. Sheriff Johnson and Taylor exit the vehicle. They trod past the girls with no acknowledgement.

JESSE
(whispers)
What's that all about?

Alicia shrugs.

The officers stop at the door. Moments later, Chad answers. They speak for a moment.

Chad places his hands over his head, clearly upset.

The officers enter the house.

Chad follows, but not before he makes hard eye contact with Jesse and Alicia.

He goes inside.

INT. CAR (DRIVING) - LATER

Jesse at the wheel.

ALICIA
What do you think that was all about?

JESSE
No idea. I'm sure we'll find out.

ALICIA
Whoa, whoa... I don't want to find out anything. I just wanna go there, do my job, and leave.

JESSE
Just point and shoot, huh?

ALICIA
(nods)
In a word, yes.

JESSE
That's three words.

ALICIA
I don't care if it's War And Peace.

JESSE

Does anyone tell you that you worry too much.

ALICIA

Yeah. You.

INT. MANSION, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Expressionist paintings line the walls, immaculate mahogany furnishings.

And here's Chad. Frazzled. Confused. His voice a mix of shock and anger.

CHAD

What does that mean, my mom's missing? Is she lost? Is she walking aimlessly down the highway somewhere? Tell me what that means!

Sanderson attempts to put his hand on Chad's shoulder, but Chad forcefully shrugs it away.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

The car was blown apart. No VIN, no plates.

CHAD

Wait. This happened almost two nights ago and you're only telling us now?

SHERIFF JOHNSON

We had to wait for DNA results.

SANDERSON

DNA..? What DNA?

TAYLOR

There was blood on the guard rail. From that we made a positive ID.

CHAD

My god... What are you telling me?

TAYLOR

We're telling you she's missing, Mr. Shore. As of now, just missing.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

How come you never bothered to call and report her missing?

Sanderson clears his throat. SIGHS.

SANDERSON
She does things like this.

TAYLOR
Disappears?

CHAD
(indignant)
Sandy and my mom are separated. She does what she wants. Leaves when she pleases. She doesn't take orders from him.

Sanderson shoots Chad a distasteful look.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
I see. Did she say where she was going? Who she was seeing?

SANDERSON
She never tells me.

CHAD
She doesn't have to tell you anything.

SANDERSON
(forceful)
That's enough.

Johnson SIGHS. He's done. Hands Sanderson his card.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
We'll keep looking on our end. If you think of anything - *anything* - don't hesitate to call.

The officers turn to go. Chad grabs Taylor by the arm.

TAYLOR
Hey!

CHAD
Wait! That's it?

Johnson advances on Chad, who quickly let's her go. The two men are face-to-face.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
For now.

Johnson strides away, turns back.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

By the way, son. Don't ever do that again. Ever.

Sanderson runs a hand through his thinning hair, exhales.

EXT. HARMONY CORNERS, CURBSIDE - AFTERNOON

Picturesque small town. Kept-up, tree-lined sidewalks.

Alicia exits Jesse's car.

JESSE

So, we're on for tomorrow, right?

Alicia looks around.

ALICIA

I don't know.

JESSE

What do you mean, you don't know?

ALICIA

With the cops there and everything. I just... don't get the best feeling about this.

JESSE

Look, just go there with me tomorrow. Let's see what this is all about. If you still feel awkward about it, we don't have to do it. Deal?

Alicia thinks. She looks to the sky, where dark clouds have gathered.

ALICIA

All right. Deal.

JESSE

Awesome. I'll pick you up tomorrow.

ALICIA

Okay. See ya.

JESSE

See ya.

Jesse pulls away.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

Several cars parked out front. Music is heard from inside. Something's going on.

INT. MANSION, KITCHEN - DAY

Food everywhere -- hot dishes, cold dishes. Fruit, appetizers. The works.

Jesse and Alicia take it all in. What is this?

Sanderson enters from outside, where a party is in progress.

SANDERSON

Jesse. Alicia. Thank god you're here.

He reaches on the counter, grabs two black aprons and tosses them to the girls.

JESSE

Wh-- What is this?

SANDERSON

Start with the appetizers. Go from guest-to guest.

(points outside)

Those people by the pool over there? Hit them first.

He rubs his thumb and forefinger together. *Money.*

JESSE

Mr. Shore, this isn't what you told us we'd be doing--

He SIGHS.

SANDERSON

Look, I'm in a bind here. I've got a lot of investors outside. Big money. Three members of my staff just quit.

ALICIA

Why?

He leans in close.

SANDERSON

(quietly)

Just between you and me, my wife went missing. That's why the police were here yesterday.

JESSE

Oh, my god...

SANDERSON

They always come to the husband first. You know how it works. That's why my staff quit... But I'm a man of my word. We can start up on the other thing tomorrow, but right now I need waitresses.

Alicia's face reads "no." Jesse's..?

JESSE

Okay, Mr. Shore. We'll help you out.

Alicia looks at Jesse like she's bugging.

SANDERSON

Great.

(heads back out)

Remember. Appetizers. People by the pool. Big money.

JESSE

Big money.

He leaves.

ALICIA

Are you nuts?

JESSE

No. Why?

ALICIA

Look, I gotta be honest, Jesse. I don't know if I'm feeling this.

JESSE

Oh, come on. You heard him. He's in a bind. We can help.

ALICIA

Or, we could end up missing, too.

Jesse chuckles at that comment, but it did land.

JESSE

Let's just get through this night.
If you still feel the same way
later, I'll understand.

Alicia thinks. Smiles.

ALICIA

Okay.

They slip on their aprons. Jesse grabs a tray of cocktail shrimp.

ALICIA

Hey. If his wife went missing, then
why is he having a party?

Jesse opens the sliding glass door, turns back. Smiling, she rubs her thumb and forefinger together.

JESSE

Big money.

INT. MANSION, KITCHEN - LATER

Alicia heaves an exasperated SIGH as she places crepes on a tray. Looks outside --

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Jesse wipes a table. The party's winding down. Someone hands her a plate. Looks down. On the table is a GREEN BRACELET and a BUSINESS CARD.

She inspects it.

INSERT: BRACELET AND CARD

It's a cheap, wrap-around type with a white leaf outline.

The business card reads: *THE GREEN TEAM -- Protecting Your Environment, Preserving Our Future.*

BACK TO

Jesse slips it in her pocket, goes about her work.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Alicia grabs her tray, goes into the --

LIVING ROOM

CHAD, hair disheveled, sits in a chair, speaking with --

RICK CALLAHAN (33), rail thin, camo-jacket. Streamlined, hawk-like features. Scar on his cheek. Intense.

RICK
Are you ready?

CHAD
I don't know yet.

RICK
You gotta be more sure than that,
padre. If I'm gonna move on this,
then you have to know for sure.
You...

CHAD
I said I don't know!

Alicia GASPS.

Both men turn suddenly. All three just stare at each other.
Finally --

CHAD
How long have you been standing
there?

Beat. Alicia says nothing, then...

ALICIA
C-crepes?

CHAD
Go back outside.

ALICIA
Uh, yeah, okay...

She turns.

Rick stands, snatches her arm forcefully. Alicia shrieks.

He takes a crepe, deliberately stuffs it in his mouth.

RICK
Mmm. Did you make these?

Alicia nods fearfully. Rick grins, stares into her soul.

ALICIA
Y- Yes...

RICK
Yummy.

He releases her arm. She backs into a wall, spills her tray and exits the room.

Rick grins, still chewing, and continues to stare long after she'd gone.

EXT. MANSION, DRIVEWAY - LATER

Alicia strides briskly ahead of Jesse.

ALICIA
I'm done.

JESSE
But what about--?

ALICIA
Don't know. Don't care.

Alicia stops near the car, away from the house.

ALICIA
Look, you said you'd understand.
Remember?

JESSE
I do. I do...

ALICIA
Okay, then.

JESSE
Then what are you gonna do?

ALICIA
I'm gonna go to that nursery first
thing in the morning, and pray that
they're still looking for someone.
It's a lot safer than this, Jess.

Jesse nods.

JESSE
Okay...

Alicia watches her, then it hits.

ALICIA
You're staying here, aren't you?

JESSE
I am.

ALICIA
Jess, I told you what I heard Chad
and that creepy guy talking about.
Sounded like they were plotting a
murder.

JESSE
You didn't catch the whole
conversation. They could've been
talking about anything.

Alicia's incredulous.

ALICIA
Always drawn to the excitement.

JESSE
I gave Mr. Shore my word, Alicia.
I'm not gonna break it.

ALICIA
Not for anything?

Jesse goes to answer, but finds she doesn't have one.

ACT 2

INT. CAR (DRIVING) - DAY

Jesse at the wheel. Music plays as she taps the steering
wheel to the beat. Power bar wrapper on the seat.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

Jesse heads to the front door, rolling along a big camera
equipment bag.

The door opens, Sanderson comes out.

SANDERSON
Right on time.

JESSE
Five minutes early.

SANDERSON
(re: Jesse's bag)
Is all that camera equipment?

JESSE
Most of it. I brought my lunch,
too.

Sanderson smiles. He's liking her more and more.

SANDERSON
Love a person who comes prepared.

INT. CAR (DRIVING) - DAY

Jesse drives, Sanderson shotgun.

SANDERSON
I'm sorry about Chad last night. He
gets like that sometimes.

JESSE
Well, whatever he and that guy were
talking about scared Alicia off.

JESSE
But not you?

She shakes her head defiantly.

JESSE
Nope.

SANDERSON
Good. Unfortunately, I don't choose
Chad's company. He's his own man.
Sometimes to his detriment.

Jesse glances over. Wants to question further, thinks better
of it.

EXT. PARADISE VALLEY - LATER

Sanderson and Jesse stand along a ridge, looking out on a
vast expanse of pretty, but undeveloped land.

SANDERSON
So, here it is. What do you think?

JESSE
Um, what am I looking at exactly?

SANDERSON

Don't you see it?

Jesse continues to look -- greening hills, wildflowers.

JESSE

No.

He steps forward, points.

SANDERSON

Right over there. Hundreds of the prettiest little condos you ever saw, tropical pool right in the center. City lights below. They'll be lining up to rent.

JESSE

You'll build all this?

Sanderson wipes his brow with a handkerchief.

SANDERSON

Me? No. But I know people who will. I'm just gonna buy it and sell it to them. That's what I do.

Jesse nods. Gets it.

A black TOWN CAR pulls up. Sanderson edges away.

JESSE

W-Wait. You're leaving me here?

SANDERSON

Well, yeah. You didn't think I was gonna stay, did you?

She shrugs.

SANDERSON

Take pictures, Miss Chambers. Lots of pictures. Every inch, every angle. Take notes. How does the land look? The soil. Stuff like that. Be thorough.

He heads to the waiting car. Reaches for the handle--

JESSE

Mr. Shore?

SANDERSON

Yes?

JESSE

Any word on your wife?

His face sours.

SANDERSON

Not yet.

He gets in. The car takes off, kicks up dust. Jesse coughs.

EXT. PARADISE VALLEY - LATER

Jesse near the top of a ridge. She wears a safari hat, pencil between her teeth. A camera set atop a tri-pod. Looks through the viewfinder. Focuses.

SNAP, SNAP, SNAP.

Changes the angle. Takes more pictures. Stops, picks up a notebook and writes.

NEW LOCATION

Jesse repeats similar steps. Drinks greedily from a water bottle. Getting hot.

She takes the camera off the tri-pod, checks the battery. Running low.

She moves across the grass and brush. Stops. Raises the camera to her face. Lines up a shot --

CAMERA POV:

The frame is bordered, + sign in center.

(SNAP, SNAP) Then --

A DARK FIGURE, fifty yards away, suddenly darts into frame!

BACK TO

Jesse GASPS. Lowers the camera.

DARK FIGURE stares directly at her. Turns, runs.

JESSE

Hey!

She quickly raises the camera. Finger hits the shutter in rapid fire bursts.

She lowers the camera, turns to run. Stops. Doesn't quite know which way to turn, then --

She gathers her courage and moves forward. Closer and closer.

JESSE
Hello..? Hello?

Nothing. Dead quiet, until --

A rustling behind a bush. Jesse stops cold.

JESSE
I-Is someone there?

Moves forward. Reaches out, pushes the brush away.

Nothing.

She SIGHS in relief. Glances around. Whoever it was is gone.

Jesse turns to head back. She stumbles, almost falls. Looks down --

SHRIEKS. Covers her mouth in fright.

Below is a raised mound of dirt. About six feet long. A dusty hand protrudes from it.

Jesse drops her camera and makes a run for it.

INT. POLICE STATION, JOHNSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Numerous citations and awards on the walls. Sheriff Johnson at his desk doing paperwork.

The phone rings.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
(into phone)
Johnson. Wait, wait. Slow down. Are you sure? Okay, wait, don't hang up.
(grabs a pencil)
Where are you..? Okay. No. Stay there. Stay until we arrive.

He hangs up.

Another Officer, ROGERS (37), walks past, stops.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Where's Taylor?

ROGERS
Not in for another hour.

Johnson grabs a set of keys, puts on his Stetson.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Call her. Tell her to meet me in
Paradise Valley in fifteen minutes.
Call forensics, too. I want 'em all
down there.

ROGERS
What's up, Sheriff?

Johnson hurries past.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Body.

Off Rogers --

EXT. PARADISE VALLEY - LATER

Johnson squats over a body blanket. Taylor removes it. He studies the body, and after a moment --

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Damn it. That's her.

TAYLOR
Helen Getty?

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Yeah.

Taylor covers the body.

TAYLOR
Want me to call next of kin?

Johnson looks over to --

Jesse, sitting in her car with the door open.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Not just yet.

JESSE

Frazzled, drinks water. Mind racing. Nervous.

She looks up to see Johnson and Taylor.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
You found her?

JESSE
Her? It's her, isn't it? Mr.
Shore's wife?

Taylor and Johnson exchange glances.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
What were you doing out here?

JESSE
Working for Mr. Shore. Taking
photos of the land.

TAYLOR
Were you alone?

JESSE
Yes. No! There was someone else...
(points)
Out there. That's how I found Mrs.
Shore. I didn't get a good look.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Did you get a picture of this
someone else?

JESSE
(nods)
Several.

Johnson raises an eyebrow.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
We're gonna need your camera, Miss
Chambers.

Off Jesse --

INT. MANSION, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Chad's voice is heard as we scan the mantle above the fireplace. Photos of Chad and his mom, Helen, in happier times. Photo-ops of Helen holding citations and shaking hands with men in suits.

CHAD (V.O.)
All right... I'll be right down.

Chad's hand white-knuckles the house phone. But he doesn't slam it. Just gingerly places it down. He's stunned. Lost.

He SIGHS.

Sanderson stares at him. Been standing there all along.

CHAD
I have to go ID her.

SANDERSON
Chad, I'm so sorry. I...

Chad holds up his hand.

CHAD
Don't... say anything.

The doorbell rings.

Chad grabs his keys, crosses the room, opens the door.

It's Jesse.

She and Chad lock eyes briefly, but no words spoken. Chad shuffles past, closes the door.

Jesse comes in. This is awkward.

SANDERSON
Jesse.

JESSE
Mr. Shore, I'm so sorry.

SANDERSON
No, I'm sorry. I never should have left you alone.

JESSE
It's all right. How could you have... known?

SANDERSON
I guess you'll be wanting to seek employment elsewhere? Can't say I blame you.

JESSE
What..? You-- You still have work for me? Even with all this going on?

Sanderson steps towards her.

SANDERSON

It's a bad situation, I'll grant you that. But commerce doesn't stop, Jesse. Not as long as there's money to be made.

JESSE

I don't understand. Your wife.

SANDERSON

The love was gone in our relationship a long time ago, Jesse. That's not to say I'm not upset. I am, but...

JESSE

But?

SANDERSON

Quite honestly, with Helen gone, I'm out of options.
(looks around the room)
Where do you think all this came from? Her estate? That's all gonna go to Chad now. She'd never leave it to me.

JESSE

Why are you telling me all this?

SANDERSON

Because I'm good in a room, Jesse. Because I can still get investors to drop their money like it was on fire. It's all I have left. There's other properties to look at. I just... I need someone to help me right now.

Jesse turns away. Paces. Thinking.

SANDERSON

So, I guess the only question left now is -- are you in?

It takes a moment, then...

JESSE

I'm in.

Sanderson smiles. It's genuine. There's sincerity there.

INT. JESSE'S HOME, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Alicia sits at the table as Jesse rummages through the fridge. She pulls out some drinks.

ALICIA

What? Jesse, this is just getting too creepy. You need to get out. Seriously.

JESSE

The police confiscated my camera.

ALICIA

Really?

Jesse sits.

JESSE

It's all right. I have another camera. Not as good as the one they took, but it'll do.

ALICIA

Jess, I don't know about this.

JESSE

Oh, and I also have this.

She holds up a flash drive.

ALICIA

What's that?

JESSE

Before the police arrived, I backed everything up. All the pictures I took are all right here.

ALICIA

Oh, my-- Jesse, that's evidence.

JESSE

(shrugs)

The police have theirs, I have mine. Always back-up your work.

ALICIA

What are you gonna do with it?

A smile creeps upon Jesse's face.

JESSE

Wanna see it?

Alicia's hesitant, then the same smile creeps upon her face.

ALICIA
Hell yeah.

ACT 3

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Rain slicked parking lot. A red neon MOTEL sign flickers.
Vacancy. Always a vacancy at this place.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dim. Sparse. Just the essentials.

Rick Callahan sits upright in a chair, illuminated by the TV
light. He drinks from a sweating bottle of milk.

On a TV tray, his phone sounds. Checks the screen.

RICK
(into phone)
Didn't I tell you not to call me on
this phone?

INT. MANSION, YARD - NIGHT

Crickets chirp, the sound of running water from a yard pond.

Chad paces, phone to his ear.

CHAD
It was her, Rick. It was my mom.

BEGIN INTERCUT: CHAD & RICK

RICK
Tough break.

CHAD
They read me the riot act. Kept me
at the station for two hours asking
questions.

RICK
Oh yeah?

CHAD
They even asked about you.

RICK
Hang up the phone, Chad.

A long pause. Chad stops pacing, anger brews on his face.
Then --

CHAD
(ominous)
Be ready. You hear me? Be read--

CLICK.

Rick ends the call. Slams the phone down. He grits his teeth,
touches his forehead, and inspects his fingers.

He's in a cold sweat.

INT. JESSE'S HOME, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jesse and Alicia stare at images on a lap top.

INSERT: SCREEN

Pictures flash by -- mostly of the landscape. Then, a grainy
image of the DARK FIGURE.

BACK TO

ALICIA
Oh, my god. Who's that?

JESSE
No idea. Scared the living
daylights out of me, though.

Alicia exhales heavily.

ALICIA
Wow, Jess. Just wow.

JESSE
Right.

ALICIA
Is that a man or a woman?

JESSE
Couldn't tell you. Whoever it was
ran off.

Jesse cycles through a few more images, then --

Alicia GASPS. Jesse nearly jumps from her seat.

JESSE
Oh, my god!

ALICIA
Jesse, what is that?!

INSERT: SCREEN

An striking image of the dusty hand protruding from the dirt.

BACK TO

JESSE
I didn't take that one.

ALICIA
What?

JESSE
I don't-- I dropped the camera. It
must have snapped that when it
fell.

ALICIA
Holy-- All right, turn this off.
I've seen enough.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS FOYER - LATER

Alicia about to leave.

ALICIA
You want me to stay with you
tonight?

JESSE
Oh -- no. I'm fine.

ALICIA
You sure?

JESSE
Really. Appreciate you looking out
for me, though.

ALICIA
All right. Hey, just call me if you
need anything. Anything.

JESSE
I gotcha. Thanks.

They share a quick embrace.

ALICIA

Bye.

JESSE

Bye.

Alicia exits. Jesse turns to go into another room, when --
Her phone buzzes. Incoming text.

INSERT: PHONE SCREEN

*MR. SHORE: I have something for you. Be here at 10?**(Jesse pauses, thinks... Responds--)**JESSE: I'll be there.**MR. SHORE: I have a surprise for you.*

BACK TO

Jesse looks up. *Ohh-kayy.*

Now she turns to leave, and --

RING!

She nearly jumps out of her skin. Because it's not her cell.
It's the green rotary phone on the stand.

Stares at it. It seems to take forever before --

RING!

It cuts off mid way through the second ring.

Jesse shudders. She gives the phone a wide berth as she
reaches over and locks the dead bolt on the door.

EXT. MEG'S LUNCHEONETTE - MORNING

A cozy little home town eatery tucked in among the trees.

INT. MEG'S LUNCHEONETTE - MORNING

A few PATRONS. Fresh coffee, breakfast sandwiches. A place
where everyone knows your name.

Jesse is hunched over a deli case near the counter, spying
food through the glass.

An EMPLOYEE waits for her.

JESSE
(points)
I'll take one of those. The
strawberry danish. Thanks.

When Jesse rises she finds herself staring directly into Rick Callahan's eyes.

JESSE
Oh, I am so sorry.

RICK
It's...

First time we're seeing him in daylight. His left eye twitches, creasing a nasty scar that runs down his cheek.

He studies her hard, long enough for it to turn awkward.

Jesse stares back, her face soured.

RICK
I know you.

JESSE
I don't think so.

RICK
Yeah. Yeah, you were at the party
the other night. Sandy Shore's
place.

JESSE
Yeah, I was there.

RICK
Small world, huh?

JESSE
I guess so.

RICK
You were waitressing. You and that
other girl. You know, I never got
her name...

Jesse glances around the place. Nervous.

JESSE
Well, I better be going. I'm gonna
be late.

She goes to move, but Rick blocks her path.

RICK
What's your rush? Stay and talk a while.

JESSE
I really have to go.

She looks down, trying not to avoid eye contact. She brushes past him.

The employee behind the counter holds up a bag.

Rick calls after her.

RICK
Forgot your danish.

But Jesse's gone.

EXT. MEG'S LUNCHEONETTE - MORNING

Jesse fires the car's ignition, but it doesn't start. Tries again. Bingo. She throws it in reverse just as --

Rick steps outside.

Jesse checks back, sees him standing there. Just watching and grinning.

She pulls away, looks over her shoulder a couple times. Officially freaked.

INT. CAR (DRIVING) - LATER

Jesse turns a corner, comes up on Sanderson's home only to be greeted by --

OUTSIDE

-- A GROUP OF PROTESTORS outside the gates. They see Jesse coming and turn their ire on her.

They hold SIGNS that say things like -- *PARADISE LOST! DON'T PAVE PARADISE & PUT UP A PARKING LOT!*

There's even a sign that says: *MURDERER.*

Jesse weaves around them, pulls to the gate. It swings open and she drives in.

As she reaches the mansion, she sees Sanderson standing at the window.

INT. MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

Jesse closes the door.

JESSE

Is that my surprise outside?

SANDERSON

You try and do a little good for the community and this is what you get. Go figure.

JESSE

Who are they?

SANDERSON

The Green Team, I think. They crashed my party. The one you waitressed.

JESSE

How are you?

Sanderson hands her a copy of today's --

INSERT: NEWSPAPER

A photo of Sanderson and Helen in happier times. The headline reads: MURDER IN PARADISE.

BACK TO

SANDERSON

Does that pretty much sum it up?

JESSE

The court of public opinion's tough.

SANDERSON

This is all I need right now.

Shouting wafts in from outside.

JESSE

So, what do you want me to do now? Work security?

Sanderson laughs in spite of himself.

SANDERSON

Not a bad idea. Oh, before I forget.

He hands her an oversized box.

JESSE

What's this?

SANDERSON

Open it.

She opens the box, reaches in and pulls out a new camera. Very high end with all the bells and whistles.

Jesse GASPS.

JESSE

This is an Alpha.

Sanderson smiles proudly.

SANDERSON

I know. There's other things in there, too. Equipment I thought you might need. Software programs. The whole nine.

JESSE

Do you have any idea how much this costs?

SANDERSON

I ought to. I bought it. Well, not me. I sent my assistant to pick it up. I can't even leave the house.

JESSE

Mr. Shore, I can't...

SANDERSON

Yes, you can. It's the least I can do seeing as the Sheriff took yours.

JESSE

You know about that?

SANDERSON

Of course. They already grilled me down at the station. Showed me all your photos... Good work, by the way.

JESSE

Thanks. I don't know what to say.

SANDERSON

Don't say anything. Just... Thanks for staying on.

She nods. She's starting to like this guy, too.

JESSE

So... Where am I off to?

SANDERSON

Somewhere--

Suddenly, someone clears their throat.

Jesse and Sanderson turn. It's Chad, leaning against the doorway. Looks like ten miles of bad road.

He stares both of them down hard. Beat. Then leaves.

SANDERSON

Somewhere a little safer.

ACT 4

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Johnson and Taylor sit at a round table, pouring through crime scene photos.

Johnson studies the one of the dark figure.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Can't make out anything. Not a face. Nothing. I thought this girl was a photographer?

TAYLOR

I don't know. I kinda like 'em. You don't think she's involved in this somehow, do you?

Johnson sips coffee, lowers the photo.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Nah. Bad choice of employers maybe, but I don't think she's involved.

TAYLOR

She is now.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
What about the land itself?

TAYLOR
The Green Team has been trying to
save that land for years.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
The Green Team?

TAYLOR
They're an environmental group.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
What's so special about the valley?
Protected wildlife -- stuff like
that?

Taylor shakes her head.

TAYLOR
Nothing like that. But the
residents aren't happy.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Why's that?

TAYLOR
They're calling gentrification.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Shore doesn't build like that. He
caters to the one percent.

TAYLOR
Shore just buys the land. Who he
sells it to is another matter
entirely. Even his wife was opposed
to it.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
What? Paradise Valley?

Taylor nods.

Johnson picks up the photo again.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Now that's interesting. He never
told me that.

TAYLOR
Why would he? It puts him right in
the cross hairs.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Dead center.

EXT. TOWNHOUSE COMPLEX - DAY

Clean, manicured grounds. Waterfall out front. If you make over 100K, you live here.

Jesse's off to the side, peering through the viewfinder of her new equipment.

Alicia pulls up in her car.

ALICIA
Hey!

Jesse stops what she's doing. Glad to see her friend.

JESSE
Hey you. Didn't know if you'd show.

Alicia approaches.

ALICIA
Of course. Day off. So, what's he got you doing now? Property manager?

JESSE
How'd you guess?

ALICIA
No! Really?

JESSE
Mr. Shore's property manager just quit. Everyone's walking away from him, Alicia.

ALICIA
Can you blame them?

JESSE
I don't think he did it.

ALICIA
Why do you say that?

JESSE
I don't know. Just a feeling I--
(gasps)
Oh, I almost forgot. I think I ran into your friend today?

ALICIA

Who?

JESSE

That creepy guy from the party.

ALICIA

No way.

JESSE

Yeah. I was crouched down, looking at something in the diner. I look up and there he is. Standing over me. Kinda freaked me out.

ALICIA

Told you. Guy gave me the heebie jeebie's.

JESSE

Who is he?

ALICIA

I don't know. Friend of Chad's, I think.

(eyes widen)

Whoa! Is than an Alpha?

Jesse smiles, takes the camera and hands it to Alicia like it's a precious jewel.

JESSE

The one and only. Second to none.

Alicia studies it in awe.

ALICIA

How did you--? Shore. Shore gave it to you, didn't he?

JESSE

He said he felt bad the Sheriff took mine.

Alicia gives it back.

ALICIA

He must really want you to stay on.

For the first time, there's an uneasiness on Jesse's face.

EXT. LAW OFFICES - DAY

Big city, big building. Important things happen here.

INT. LAW OFFICES - DAY

Clean room, polished furniture. The paintings on the walls are fakes, but expensive ones.

At a desk sits probate attorney PETER GREEN (59) -- thinning hair, glasses. Droll.

GREEN

I hear the funeral was well attended.

Sanderson and Chad sit across from him. Sanderson nods.

SANDERSON

Yeah.

They know why they're here, and it's not for pleasantries.

Green clears his throat.

GREEN

On to more pressing matters. The estate of Helen Ann Getty.
(peers thru his glasses)
Are those seats comfortable, gentlemen?

Sanderson and Chad look at each other.

CHAD

What the hell does that matter?

Green almost smiles, but can't quite pull it off.

GREEN

We have a lot to get to. You're gonna be here awhile.

BEGIN SERIES:

- A) Green talking, shuffling papers.
- B) Sanderson tapping the arm of his chair.
- C) Chad's leg bouncing.
- D) Green still talking.

E) The clock hands shift from noon to 2:30PM

BACK TO

GREEN

... and concerning the matter of Mrs. Getty's estate.

Sanderson and Chad spring to attention.

GREEN

As you may or may not know, Mrs. Getty's numerous holdings amount to...

(turns a page)

One hundred thirty-seven million, six hundred twenty-three thousand and sixty-three cents.

Sanderson and Chad's eyes go wide.

Green looks up, slides papers to both men.

GREEN

I'm going to assume you didn't know that... The bulk of which is to be distributed among her many charities, namely the... Green Team. Ha. That's funny. Green.

Shore and Chad are not amused.

SANDERSON

What about the house? The house.

GREEN

The property, 311 Wellwood Lane, and its assets, totaling just under thirty-seven million will transfer directly to Sanderson Lindsey Shore.

Sanderson can't help but grin. Hell. He almost jumps for joy.

CHAD

What about me?

GREEN

Chadworth Ellington Getty. You will receive the amount of fifteen million in holdings from your mother's various ventures.

CHAD

Yes...

GREEN

Payable only, and it clearly states, only upon successful completion at an alcohol treatment center of her choosing.

Chad's jaw drops.

GREEN

Until which time the holdings will be placed in a trust with Mr. Shore, payable at his discretion.

Sanderson slowly turns to Chad, a toady smile on his face.

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

Outside the law office.

Chad unlocks his car, looks pretty happy with how things turned out.

SANDERSON (O.S.)

A leopard can't change it's spots.

He looks up.

CHAD

What did you say?

Sanderson stands by his Town Car.

SANDERSON

I'll said you'll never get that money.

CHAD

I'll get it. Fifteen mil is a lot of inspiration.

SANDERSON

Your treatment plan runs trough me, remember that. If I'm not satisfied, the court's not satisfied. And you know me. I'm a very hard man to please.

Chad's mood sours.

SANDERSON

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have mourning to attend to.

He goes to get in the car, stops --

SANDERSON

By the way.

(cold)

I want you out of my house by noon tomorrow.

He gets in. The car speeds off.

All Chad can do is watch. And seethe.

EXT. MANSION - LATER

Jesse exits her car, duffle bag slung around her shoulder. She passes Chad's car. It's filled with suitcases and personal belongings.

The door to the house is open a crack.

She quietly pushes it in, steps into the --

FOYER

-- and CRASH!

Jesse flinches.

DINING ROOM

Broken china on the floor.

SANDERSON

Go on, Chad. You can break as many plates as you want. It's not going to change a thing.

Chad grabs another plate from inside a cabinet.

SMASH!

CHAD

Shall I keep going? Huh? Maybe I'll find one that actually means something to you.

SANDERSON
Get out of here, Chad. Go dry out.

CHAD
Why don't you just admit it, Sandy?
We all know anyway.

SANDERSON
Admit what?

Chad gets in his face.

CHAD
That you killed my mother.

SANDERSON
How dare you.

CHAD
You killed her for the insurance
money. Or better yet, you had
someone do it for you 'cause you'd
never get your hands dirty, would
you?

SANDERSON
Get out!

CHAD
Or what?

Chad glances back to the cabinet, takes another plate off the
shelf.

SANDERSON
Don't.

CHAD
Oh, did I pick a good one this
time?

SANDERSON
My mother gave that to me.

Chad smashes the plate against a table, leaving him with a
jagged shard.

Sanderson goes for him.

SANDERSON
Why you--!

Chad grabs him by the collar, throws him against a wall and
holds the shard to his neck.

CHAD

What are you gonna do now? Huh?
Tough guy...

They glare at one another. Neither man backs down. Finally --

CHAD

You are going to pay. And I'm not
just talking about the money...

Chad holds eye contact, slowly backs away. He throws the
shard to the floor.

Sanderson blinks.

FOYER

Jesse heard it all. She's terrified, but even more so when
Chad turns the corner and they lock eyes.

Chad's mouth falls open.

For what seems an eternity, Chad holds her gaze as he slowly
walks past her.

He leaves. The door slams shut.

Jesse finally exhales.

Sanderson comes around the corner, sees Jesse.

SANDERSON

Jesse! Are you hurt?

JESSE

No... no.

He leads her into the --

DINING ROOM

And sits her down.

SANDERSON

You sure you're okay?

JESSE

I'm fine.

Sanderson plops down across from her.

SANDERSON

I'm sorry you had to see him like
that, Jesse.

Jesse glances around the room, settles on the broken plate on the floor.

JESSE

That belonged to your mother.

SANDERSON

Yes, it did. Wait-- How much of that did you hear?

JESSE

All of it. The door was open. I came in. I heard him threaten you. He's dangerous, isn't he?

SANDERSON

I know him all too well, Jesse. He doesn't have it in him.

JESSE

You should at least call the sheriff and report this.

Sanderson shakes his head.

SANDERSON

He's a drunk. When he sobers up he'll be mad, but not mad like you saw him.

JESSE

Are you sure?

A long silence hangs before he answers, and when he does it's not convincing.

SANDERSON

Yeah... I'm sure.

ACT 5

INT. JESSE'S HOME, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jesse stands in the center of the room, arms folded.

Alicia sits at a table, watching her.

RING... RING... In the --

FOYER

That sickly lime green rotary phone.

LIVING ROOM

RING...

ALICIA
Are you gonna answer it?

They wait. The ringing ceases.

JESSE
See? It stopped.

ALICIA
Have you given it more thought?

JESSE
I can't disappoint Mr. Shore. I
already told him I'd stay.

ALICIA
So? Disappoint him! Let this all
blow over before you go back, Jess.
You know it's the right thing to
do.

JESSE
Yeah... the right thing.
(she exhales, conflicted)
You feel like going live tonight?

ALICIA
How can you even think about doing
the podcast right now?

JESSE
I don't know. I think a little
distraction would be good. We can
talk about the Alpha.

Alicia goes to speak, stops and starts...

ALICIA
I... Actually, I would kind of like
to see what the Alpha's all about.

Jesse smiles.

The doorbell RINGS.

ALICIA
Expecting anyone?

Jesse shakes her head, crosses into the --

FOYER

Looks through the door hole, opens it.

On the porch is Taylor, rain beats down hard outside.

TAYLOR

You're a hard woman to reach. May I
come in?

Jesse's caught off guard.

JESSE

Um... Sure.

Taylor takes off her hat, wipes her boots on the mat.

TAYLOR

Cats and dogs out there. The rainy
season doesn't start for another
month.

JESSE

Was that you calling before? On the
house phone?

TAYLOR

I believe it was.

JESSE

How come you didn't just call me on
my cell?

TAYLOR

Not too fond of cell phones. I
always call the house phone first.

JESSE

Why's that?

TAYLOR

You never know who you're gonna
get.

They share an awkward laugh.

TAYLOR

There somewhere we can talk?

JESSE

Sure.

They pass Alicia.

JESSE
We'll just be a minute.

Alicia observes curiously. Taylor nods at her as they head into the --

KITCHEN

TAYLOR
Friend of yours?

JESSE
Yeah. What brings you out?

TAYLOR
Oh, just a couple questions.

JESSE
Okay. Shoot.

TAYLOR
How long have you known Sanderson Shore?

JESSE
Um... About a week, I guess.

TAYLOR
Not before that?

JESSE
No. I mean, I've heard his name here and there, but not personally.

TAYLOR
Where have you heard his name before?

JESSE
The newspapers. The internet. He's a pretty big player.

TAYLOR
He is a player, I'll give you that. You get along well with him?

JESSE
I do.

TAYLOR
How well?

Jesse's taken aback by that. Borderline offended.

JESSE

What are you implying?

TAYLOR

I'm not implying anything, Miss Chambers. But there's a murder to investigate. I'm sure you can appreciate that.

JESSE

Chad.

TAYLOR

Excuse me?

JESSE

Chad Getty. He put you up to this, right? He called you, said something...

TAYLOR

I'm not at liberty to discuss--

JESSE

You know he threatened Mr. Shore, don't you? Earlier today. I was standing right there.

TAYLOR

Really? What did he say?

JESSE

Something like, I'm gonna make you pay... You're gonna pay for this.

TAYLOR

Could have been talking about anything.

JESSE

Yeah, well... You weren't there.

TAYLOR

I wish I was. Mr. Shore didn't call it in.

Jesse's getting antsy.

JESSE

He should have. Is there anything else I can do for you, officer?

TAYLOR

Undersheriff.

JESSE

Excuse me?

TAYLOR

I'm not an officer. I'm an undersheriff. It's a little above officer.

Jesse nods. That was strange.

JESSE

Okay. Is there anything else I can do for you... Undersheriff?

Taylor shakes her head.

TAYLOR

No, that's pretty much it. Thank you. If there's anything else you can think of, please don't hesitate to call.

FOYER

Taylor steps through the open door, pulls the collar of her rain coat up along her neck.

JESSE

Undersheriff?

Taylor turns.

JESSE

Were the pictures helpful? From my camera?

TAYLOR

Not really. They were way too grainy. Really wasn't much we could... make out.

JESSE

(takes a shot)

Any chance of me getting my camera back?

TAYLOR

We're gonna need that for a little while longer, I'm afraid.

JESSE

That's okay.

Taylor exhales, a dry smile on her face. She turns to go, then quickly swivels back --

TAYLOR
Besides, I heard you have a new one now.

Taylor heads off into the rain.

Jesse hold her breath, watches curiously. Finally, she closes the door.

LIVING ROOM

Alicia patiently waits.

Jesse steps in, a little pale.

ALICIA
What was that all about? Are you a deputy now?

Jesse shakes her head.

JESSE
No. I think I'm a suspect.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

The same cheesy motel we saw earlier.

At the end of a row of rooms waits Rick. He drinks milk from a glass bottle. Hears something.

A car pulls up. Chad gets out.

RICK
Were you followed?

CHAD
I don't think.

RICK
You don't *think*?

CHAD
No, no. Okay?
(he looks around)
Nice place.

RICK
What do you want?

CHAD
Something's come up--
(re: bottle of milk)
You're drinking milk?

RICK
It does a body good.

Chad shakes his head.

CHAD
Look, we gotta take care of
something.

RICK
I know. Your step father.

CHAD
We'll get to him. That girl.

RICK
What girl?

CHAD
The photographer.

RICK
Which one?

CHAD
I don't know. Jesse's her name.
Long hair, blonde...

Rick thinks, grins.

CHAD
What?

INT. MEG'S LUNCHEONETTE (FLASHBACK) - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS:

A) Jesse rises from the food case to see Rick.

RICK
I know you.

JESSE
I better be going. I'm gonna be
late.

RICK
What's your rush?

B) Jesse heads for the exit.

RICK
Forgot your danish.

BACK TO

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

RICK
She likes strawberry danish.

CHAD
Yeah. Sure. Whatever.

RICK
Price goes up.

CHAD
No, no. Nothing like that. She
heard me arguing with Sandy. I
don't know how much she heard.

RICK
How unfortunate.

CHAD
I just want you to scare her.
That's it.

Rick gulps the last of his milk. Screws the cap back on.

RICK
She's already scared of me.

EXT. JESSE'S HOME - DAY

Pleasant morning after a night of pouring rain.

Jesse, duffle bag in tow, comes out of the house. Cell phone
to her ear, mid conversation.

JESSE
(into phone)
Yeah, Mom. Everything's fine
here... How are you and Dad doing?
That's great. I wish I was there
with you.

She gets to her car, opens the door and throws her stuff in.

JESSE

It's going good. It's more like a real job. Yeah, I-- I know all that. I know... It just doesn't seem right leaving now. I like to finish what I start, you know. I will. Promise. Okay? All right, let me go. I gotta get in. Bye.

She clicks off the call, circles to the driver's side, when --

She stops. Something catches her eye. She crosses onto the lawn, bends down and picks something up.

It's an empty milk bottle.

She looks at it curiously, then --

Glances around the neighborhood. Everything's serene.

She heads to the garage, regards the bottle once more before she throws it in the trash and leaves.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Another one of Sanderson's housing developments. Same picturesque set-up. Same wealth.

Here's Jesse. Alpha in hand. Back at it. Doing what she does. Undeterred.

A car horn BLARES loudly.

Jesse whips around like it was a gun shot. Sees it was a car pulling out of the lot.

She scans the area again. Looks everywhere. Exhales deeply. This is starting to get to her. All of it.

She shakes it off, peers through the viewfinder and lines up her next shot.

EXT. JESSE'S HOME - NIGHT

A camera set atop a tri-pod. A laptop on the desk. Jesse and Alicia wrap up another podcast.

JESSE

We'd like to thank Cooper, Kenzie and Spencer for calling in tonight, and talking about the Alpha XJ-6000.

(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)

Probably one of the best, if not
the best, camera's on the market
today.

ALICIA

Just don't ask her where she got
it.

Jesse rolls her eyes, laughs.

Jesse's phone, connected to the laptop, flashes. Another
caller. The screen reads: ANONYMOUS.

JESSE

We got time for one more call?

ALICIA

Sure, why not? You got somewhere to
be?

JESSE

Sadly, no.

(clicks the call on)

Hello, caller, you're live on Point
and Shoot.

Silence.

JESSE

Caller, are you there?

Finally, the caller's voice comes through. Murky, but casual.
Cool as a cucumber.

CALLER

Point and Shoot.

(cackles)

How appropriate.

Jesse and Alicia exchange glances.

ALICIA

Caller, do you have a question?

CALLER

I do. For Jesse.

Beat. Jesse knows this ain't good.

JESSE

I'm here.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

The TV light dances across Rick Callahan's face. He sits, legs crossed. Effortlessly flips a quarter between his fingers.

BEGIN INTERCUT: JESSE AND RICK

RICK

If you could put a dollar value on your life, what do you think it'd come to?

Jesse shoots a look at Alicia, who slices her hand across her neck. She mouths: Hang up! Hang up!

JESSE

I... I'd have to think about that.

RICK

Off the top of your head. Cool million? Two? Three?

JESSE

Honestly, I don't think you can put a dollar value on something like that.

RICK

No, huh?

JESSE

No.

RICK

I do.

JESSE

Who is this?

RICK

That's a good question. I have an even better one-- Do you really wanna find out?

The girls are stunned into silence.

RICK

I didn't think so. Here's a piece of advice-- Mind your business.

JESSE

What are you talking about?

RICK

You know exactly what I'm talking about. Personally, I rather hope you choose not to take my advice.

JESSE

Why is that?

RICK

Because I would so like to pay you a visit. Have a great night.

CLICK.

Both girls are beyond rattled. Shaken. They stare at one another, but no words come. Not for this.

ACT 6

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Jesse's car parked alongside a police cruiser.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Jesse, concern showing, sits across a desk from Johnson.

JESSE

He said something like-- Take my advice, mind your business. You know what I mean.

Johnson smirks.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Doesn't sound like it constitutes a life or death situation. Hell, that's not even a threat.

JESSE

It was a threat. That's what it felt like.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Just because it felt like a threat doesn't make it one. Sounds more like he was offering advice.

JESSE

Yeah, take my advice or else.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
According to you, that's not what
he said.

Jesse slides a CD across the desk.

JESSE
I have a tape of the conversation.
You can listen to it and decide for
yourself.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Fair enough. Anything else I should
know about?

JESSE
I don't think so-- No, wait.
Something odd did happen that
morning.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
And that would be?

JESSE
Someone threw a milk bottle on my
lawn.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
A milk bottle?

JESSE
Yeah. My friend, Alicia, said
someone at Mr. Shore's party was
drinking milk from a bottle and
talking with Chad. Said he freaked
her out. I think I ran into the
same guy at the diner the other
day.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Oh? This guy at the diner, was he
drinking milk, too?

Jesse can tell she's being mocked.

JESSE
No.

Johnson rises from his seat. He's done.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Well, if I happen to spot a guy drinking milk I'll be sure to fine him for littering. You see what I'm saying?

Jesse rises. Defiant.

JESSE

Not really. You're not taking this seriously, Sheriff.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

(defensive)

Oh, I am taking this seriously.

JESSE

Not seriously enough.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

You want *my* advice, Miss Chambers?

JESSE

I'm all ears.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Stay away from Sanderson Shore. With everything going on, that's not the best place for you to be right now. Now, if you'll excuse me...

Johnson heads to the door, motions with his arm, as if to show her the way out.

JESSE

Did Undersheriff Taylor tell you she stopped by my house the other night?

Johnson stops.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Yeah. I sent her.

JESSE

Am I a suspect?

SHERIFF JOHNSON

We're investigating a murder, Miss Chambers. It's our job to ask questions.

JESSE
Am I a suspect?

SHERIFF JOHNSON
If you were we'd be having a whole
different conversation right now.

Jesse nods. Relieved. Slightly.

EXT. MANSION - LATER

Jesse exits her car to see a police cruiser in the driveway.
The front door opens. Out steps Sheriff Johnson and Taylor.
Sanderson stands in the doorway.

JESSE
What happened?

Johnson and Taylor brush past her.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
I thought I told you to stay away
from here.

JESSE
I...

She looks to Sanderson, who waves her in.

INT. MANSION, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Sanderson hands Jesse a glass of OJ.

JESSE
Thank you. So, what happened here?

Sanderson sits.

SANDERSON
Break in.

JESSE
No way.

SANDERSON
Way.

JESSE
Did they steal anything?

SANDERSON

I don't think they were looking to steal anything, Jesse.

Jesse's silent. Thinking. Then it hits.

JESSE

You? They were here for you. Are you all right?

SANDERSON

(nods, points up)

Yeah. Thank god for the panic room. Don't tell anyone about that, by the way.

Jesse zips her lips.

JESSE

Who do you think it was?

SANDERSON

I have an idea.

JESSE

Chad?

SANDERSON

(shrugs)

Who else knows the layout of this house so well?

Jesse breathes out.

JESSE

This is all so messed up.

SANDERSON

Yes, it is.

(beat)

But... I suppose you're here to talk about something else.

JESSE

I am... I--

Sanderson holds his hand up.

SANDERSON

It's okay. I totally understand if you want to call it quits.

JESSE

I didn't want to.

SANDERSON

I know that, Jesse.

JESSE

I wanted to see it through. Finish what I started.

SANDERSON

You have a lot of gumption, Jesse. I'll be happy to sign all the necessary paper work for your school. Nothing but high praise.

JESSE

I appreciate you saying that, Mr. Shore, I do, but I don't think I have enough time in to get all the credits I need.

SANDERSON

Don't you worry about that. I know people. I'll make some calls.

JESSE

Thanks.

Sanderson approaches, hand extended. They shake.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Serene and peaceful. The laughter of children is heard, as is the creak of swings.

Jesse lays back on a blanket. Exhausted.

Alicia sits next to her.

ALICIA

You upset?

JESSE

A little.

ALICIA

It's for the best. You know that, right?

Jesse sits up.

JESSE

Yeah, I know. So, they still need someone at the nursery?

ALICIA

I had them save you a spot, Jess.
You can start tomorrow if you like.

JESSE

That's awesome. Thank you so much.

ALICIA

Hey, what are friends for, right?
Now, you can put all this past you,
and move on.

Unsettled, Jesse stares ahead, a foreboding look on her face.

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

A hand knocks hard on a door.

The door swings open--

RICK

Who's knocking like the--

It's Johnson and Taylor.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Like the police?

Rick's caught off guard, but only so a moment. He leans his
arm against the door frame.

RICK

To what do I owe this displeasure?

Johnson glances inside the room.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

I see you've updated the place.

RICK

What do you want?

TAYLOR

Can we come in?

RICK

Do you have a warrant?

TAYLOR

It's hot out here, Mr. Callahan.
Just to get out of the sun.

RICK

No.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

We had a break-in last night, Rick.
Wanna know where?

RICK

Can't wait.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Sanderson Shore's place. You know
anything about that?

RICK

That's a little too high end for my
tastes.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Well, the funny thing about it is
they didn't take anything. It's
almost like they were looking for
something else.

TAYLOR

Or someone else.

RICK

Look, are you gonna charge me with
anything? I wasn't there.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Where were you?

RICK

I was at the Fife and Drum, okay?
All night. You can check.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

I'm sure nobody at that dump would
ever cover for you.

TAYLOR

Not a chance.

Rick SIGHS, goes to close the door.

RICK

Look, if you get any leads or
anything, call me. I'd be happy to
help--

Johnson puts his hand out, stops the door.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Oh, one last thing--

As he talks, Johnson looks inside. In the dim light, he spots a lone bottle of milk on the table. Continues --

SHERIFF JOHNSON

If you happen to see Chad Getty,
give us a call. We got some
questions we'd like to ask him.

Rick flashes a half-hearted smile, closes the door.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Rick turns away from the door, stops dead in his tracks. His eyes fixed on --

The bottle of milk on the table.

He looks back to the door, then back again. Sees it was right in Johnson's line of view.

Rick grabs the bottle, shuffles to the couch. Plops down, stares directly at --

Chad, who sits across from him.

CHAD

You don't think they saw me come in here, do you?

RICK

You didn't tell me he had a panic room.

CHAD

I didn't even know that. What did they say?

Rick drains the bottle, his eyes glassed over and angry. He wipes his mouth with a thin forearm

RICK

Get out of here.

CHAD

Wh-- Where am I gonna go?

Rick just glares at him.

EXT. MOTEL, PARKING LOT - DAY

Taylor and Johnson head to the cruiser.

TAYLOR

You think he's telling the truth?

SHERIFF JOHNSON

I don't think if his mother spanked him and put him in a corner, he'd tell the truth.

TAYLOR

What about Chad? You think he was in there?

Johnson leans on the hood of the car, glances to the room.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Oh yeah.

ACT 7

EXT. JESSE'S HOME, FRONT PORCH - DAY

Pleasant morning.

Jesse exits the house, cup of coffee in her hand. She sits down, and rummages through the box of camera equipment that Sanderson gifted her.

Numerous lenses. Filters. Various software programs. She looks through it all.

She sips her coffee. SIGHS. Enjoying the peace. Then, slowly, she lifts out a software program that sits near the top.

INSERT: PROGRAM

FOCUS GENIE: Reduce Blur - Sharpen Images - Incredible Results!

BACK TO

Jesse gazes at the software like it's a revelation.

EXT. NURSERY - DAY

Greenhouses and outdoor patio furniture. Plants everywhere, all shapes, colors and sizes.

Jesse and Alicia stand away from the entrance with their cameras.

ALICIA

I thought you were through with all of this!

JESSE

I was. But this software can give us a much clearer image of those photos from Paradise Valley.

ALICIA

Us?

JESSE

(grins)

Come on. Just have a look with me. See what we can find.

ALICIA

Don't you like it here at the nursery?

JESSE

Sure.

ALICIA

Taking photos for their catalog, earning our credits. Nice and peaceful. You know? No danger.

Jesse gazes around her, then back to Alicia.

JESSE

Peaceful's overrated.

Alicia laughs in spite of herself.

INT. JESSE'S HOME, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The girls sit in front of an open laptop.

ALICIA

This is a pro-level program, Jess. You think the sheriff has something like this?

JESSE

They're not funded by Sanderson Shore.

Jesse points to the --

INSERT: SCREEN

The blurry image of the dark figure.

BACK TO

JESSE

I just drag this down, and this
should sharpen immediately.

They wait...

SCREEN

The image has indeed sharpened. Gone is the blur from a
moment ago.

ALICIA

Whoa.

JESSE

Right?

ALICIA

Whoever it is, they're wearing a
hoodie. All black. You can't make
out a face no matter how clear it
gets.

JESSE

I know. I know, just... Wait a
minute. What's that?

ALICIA

What?

Jesse points to the --

SCREEN

On the dar figure's wrist there appears to be --

JESSE

Is that some kind of bracelet?

ALICIA

I don't know. Looks like something.
Can you make it bigger?

JESSE

I'll try.

SCREEN

A close-up of the figure's wrist, but blurry.

JESSE
Lemme see if I sharpen this...
Fingers crossed.

She taps a key.

Both girls are rapt. Eyes glued to the screen. Anticipating.

Then she sees it. Curious at first. Then confused, then --

Jesse rises.

ALICIA
What is it?

She crosses the room, into the --

FOYER

Jesse goes to the table with the green phone. Opens the drawer below.

LIVING ROOM

Jesse re-enters holding the green bracelet with the leaf.

ALICIA
Where'd you get that?

JESSE
The party at Mr. Shore's. It was on
a table outside. I don't know why,
but I just picked it up. I thought
it was pretty.

Jesse sits, holds her bracelet next to the --

SCREEN

They're identical.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Jesse sits in Johnson's empty office, her arms wrapped around her laptop.

A door opens outside the room. Jesse turns. Sheriff Johnson and Taylor exit another room, and before the door closes --

Jesse sees Chad handcuffed to a desk.

The door closes. Johnson and Taylor come in.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

You again.

JESSE

You picked up Chad Getty?

SHERIFF JOHNSON

We're asking him questions.

JESSE

Not in handcuffs, you're not.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

So, what brings you here? You want your camera back?

JESSE

I have something to show you.

MOMENTS LATER

Johnson, Taylor and Jesse huddled in front of the laptop.

TAYLOR

How did you get these photos?

JESSE

I downloaded them onto a flash drive.

Johnson smirks. Smart girl.

SCREEN

The large, clear image of the bracelet.

TAYLOR

What is that?

Jesse produces her bracelet.

JESSE

I found this at Mr. Shore's party, when I first started working for him.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

What are you doing with it?

Jesse shrugs.

JESSE
I saw it, I took one.

Johnson reads the business card.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
The Green Team. Who are they again?

TAYLOR
They're an environmental company.
They're protesting Shore's
development of Paradise Valley.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
The people in front of his house?

TAYLOR
The very same.

Jesse refers to the screen.

JESSE
That could be your killer right
there.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Whoa, whoa. Hold on, Columbo. First
of all, we're gonna need this
computer.

JESSE
Now you're taking my laptop?

TAYLOR
Smart girl like you, I'm sure you
made copies of your copies.

Jesse shrugs, smiles. She did.

INT. POLICE STATION, JOHNSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Johnson peers through the blinds, watches as Jesse takes off
in her car. He turns.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
You think she's onto something?
This environmental company?

TAYLOR
The Green Team has offices all over
California. There's thousands of
members spread throughout the
state.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
That's not very encouraging.

TAYLOR
All you need is the right one,
sheriff. What about Chad Getty?

SHERIFF JOHNSON
(shrugs)
Let him go.

TAYLOR
Just like that?

SHERIFF JOHNSON
We can't hold him on suspicion
alone. If that were the case I'd
arrest his step father and that
Callahan character.

Taylor hangs a moment, looking like she wants to say more.
She leaves.

Johnson watches her go, lightly raps his knuckles on the
desk. The wheels are turning.

INT. JESSE'S CAR (DRIVING) - LATER

Window rolled down, tunes on. Jesse taps the wheel. Feels
pretty self-satisfied. She's done her civic duty.

She makes a left.

REARVIEW

Another car, late model type, turns with her.

Jesse notices, but doesn't think much of it.

She hangs a right.

REARVIEW

The late model car follows.

Now, she's concerned.

She speeds up slightly on the city street. Can only go so
fast here.

The light ahead turns red. Hits the brakes a little too hard.

REARVIEW

The car idles behind her.

Jesse squints, but can't make out a driver at all. Who is this? *Dammit.*

She looks up. The light is green. Been green, yet no one honked.

She speeds on ahead.

The car keeps pace.

She makes a quick left. Another car sounds it's horn -- going straight -- narrowly misses her!

Jesse continues on. The car right behind.

The tension shows. Worried. Scared.

She's at a dangerous speed here -- Hits the brake -- Swings right into a parking lot -- Leaps out.

JESSE

Hey!

But the late model car passes her by.

Jesse collapses against the door frame. Out of breath.

RING. Her cell phone on the passenger seat. She slowly reaches for it, checks the --

SCREEN

ANONYMOUS CALL

Puts it to her ear.

JESSE

(into phone)

Hello?

SANDERSON (O.S.)

Jesse? You okay? You sound out of breath.

JESSE

Mr. Shore?

EXT. MANSION, BACKYARD - DAY

Sanderson sits at table. Hasn't touched his lunch.

SANDERSON
(into phone)
Yes, it's me. Everything all right?

BEGIN INTERCUT: JESSE AND SANDERSON

JESSE
Yeah, yeah. I'm fine. I just--
Thought I was being followed is
all.

Sanderson SIGHS.

SANDERSON
What were you doing down at the
police station?

JESSE
I... How do you know I was at the
police station?

SANDERSON
I told you I knew people.

JESSE
Yeah, you did.

SANDERSON
Jesse, look... Don't get yourself
too involved in this thing.

JESSE
I-- I was just doing what I thought
was right, Mr. Shore. I came upon
some information I thought the
sheriff should know about is all.

Sanderson picks his head up.

SANDERSON
What information?

JESSE
I found this--

She trails off. The wind blows her hair in front of her face.
She brushes it away.

SANDERSON
What information?

Jesse's never heard this tone from him before. Dead serious.
Cryptic.

She removes the phone from her ear. Stares at it. She hits the END CALL button.

SANDERSON

Jesse!

END INTERCUT

Jesse's shaken. Takes a deep breath, scans her surroundings. Everything appears normal.

Gets in the car.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

The more we see this place, the creepier it gets.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

An organized mess.

KNOCK. KNOCK.

No one answers.

More knocking. Louder. More insistent.

The bathroom door opens.

RICK

I'm coming. I'm coming.

Rick checks the peep hole. Turns the dead bolt, undoes the chain. The door swings open.

A figure stands in the darkness, backlit against the sickly orange glow of the street lamps.

Rick props his hand against the door frame. Smiles a wicked, toothy grin.

RICK

Now, what could I possibly do for you?

ACT 8

EXT. JESSE'S HOME, FRONT PORCH - AFTERNOON

Barely any light left. Magic time as night rises.

Jesse and Alicia on the porch.

ALICIA
 Maybe I should stay with you
 tonight.

JESSE
 Nah. It's okay. I think maybe I'm
 just getting a little paranoid is
 all. I'm fine.

ALICIA
 You sure?

JESSE
 Really. Besides, my parents should
 be getting home soon.
 (checks phone)
 Probably at the airport as we
 speak.

ALICIA
 Okay. I'll see you in the morning
 then, bright and early.

JESSE
 Bright and earl--

Her phone rings. She checks it.

JESSE
 That's them now.

Alicia heads off, opens the door to her car.

ALICIA
 Bye. Stay safe.

Jesse waves, heads --

INT. JESSE'S HOME, FOYER - AFTERNOON

JESSE
 (into phone)
 Hey, mom.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jesse's mom, Darlene, comes in from the patio deck, sits on
 the bed. No suitcases packed. Nothing.

DARLENE
(into phone)
Hey, Jess. How are you?

BEGIN INTERCUT: JESSE AND DARLENE

JESSE
I'm good. Where are you guys? At
the airport?

DARLENE
Well no, that's what I'm calling
about. Our flight got bumped.

JESSE
Oh no. What happened?

DARLENE
Some kind of electrical storm going
on. Cancelled our flight.

Jesse glances around the house. Uneasy. Her eyes settle on
the lime green rotary phone beside her. She moves away.

JESSE
Oh. So, you'll be home tomorrow
then?

DARLENE
Well, you know how your father
loves a deal, right? They offered
us an extra night for free, so,
we'll be home in two days.

JESSE
Oh, well, that's... good for you, I
guess.

DARLENE
Jesse, is everything okay?

JESSE
Yeah, no, I'm fine. It's...

DARLENE
What?

JESSE
I left that job, you know. With Mr.
Shore.

DARLENE
Oh. Okay. Well, I think it's for
the best.

(MORE)

DARLENE (CONT'D)

I didn't want to say anything.
You're your own person, Jesse,
but...

JESSE

I know. You're worried about me.

DARLENE

Of course we are... You sure you're
okay?

JESSE

I'm fine, Mom. Really.

DARLENE

Okay. Well look, your father's
waiting for me downstairs, so...
They have a Macarena contest
tonight.

The hint of a smile crosses Jesse's lips.

JESSE

Oh, boy. You don't wanna miss out
on that.

Darlene laughs.

DARLENE

All right, sweetheart. We'll see
you in two days.

JESSE

Okay, mom. I love you.

DARLENE

Love you, too.

END INTERCUT

Jesse pockets her phone. Exhales deeply.

INT. POLICE STATION, JOHNSON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Johnson sits at his desk under the light of a lone lamp.
Finishes up some paper work, when --

KNOCK, KNOCK. The door to the station.

He looks up, checks his watch.

ENTRANCE

Presses an intercom by the door.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Who is it?

No answer.

Johnson, not one to be intimidated, opens the door.

It's Chad Getty.

JOHNSON'S OFFICE - LATER

Chad sits across from Johnson. Nervous. Fidgety.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Been drinking tonight, Chad? I
smell it on your breath.

Chad looks down. Not proud of it.

CHAD
I didn't kill my mother.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
We never said you did, Chad.

CHAD
But...

He trails off. Johnson raises an eyebrow.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
What?

Chad grimaces. Grits his teeth. The truth doesn't come easy.
Finally --

CHAD
Do you know Rick Callahan?

SHERIFF JOHNSON
I do.

CHAD
I... I was the one who sent him to
Sandy's house.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
The break in?

CHAD
It wasn't supposed to be a break
in.

Johnson's silent. Waits... waits. This is it.

CHAD
(sotto)
I sent him there to...

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Say it, Chad. You only get one shot
at the truth. Let's make sure no
one else gets hurt.

Chad sobs.

CHAD
I wanted to kill him...

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Really?

CHAD
I don't know. I didn't want to. I
mean... I don't know what I mean...

Chad covers his face, breaks down.

Johnson waits it out.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Who killed your mother?

CHAD
I don't know... I don't know. I
thought it was Sandy, but...

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Now you're not so sure?

Silence. Chad pounds his fist on the desk.

CHAD
That money should have been mine!

SHERIFF JOHNSON
What money?

CHAD
My mother's inheritance. Instead,
she gave it all to him and that
damn environmental group...

This catches Johnson's attention.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
What environmental group?

CHAD

I don't know. The Green Team or something. What difference does it make?

Chad trails off. Anger subsides to remorse.

Johnson rises, takes a pair of cuffs off his hip.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Chad Getty... You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say may be used against you in a court of law...

INT. DARK ROOM (DREAM SEQUENCE) - NIGHT

A lone lamp sits on an end table with that green rotary phone we've seen before. The phone rings.

Across the room is Jesse. Uneasiness in her eyes. She shuffles slowly towards the phone.

RING, RING...

Approaches the table. Stares at the phone. Cautiously, fearfully, she reaches out to pick it up...

Puts it to her ear, and --

Struggles to speak. One word is all she needs, but beyond difficult to say. Who, what, is on the other end?

JESSE

Hello!

At last!

There's no answer, though. Nothing. She listens closely...

JESSE

(softly)
Hello..?

CRASH!

She closes her eyes in anguish, drops the receiver.

And this sound, it permeates back into --

(END DREAM SEQUENCE)

INT. JESSE'S HOME, BEDROOM - NIGHT

CRASH!

Jesse wakes with a start, sits up. Instantly alert. Listens.

TINK.

The noise is from downstairs. Like falling glass. Several more tinks.

She leaps out of bed. Someone's here.

HALLWAY

Jesse goes as fast and as quiet as she can.

PARENT'S ROOM

She enters, reaches under the bed and grabs a baseball bat.

HALLWAY

Jesse edges along the side of the wall. Listens --

There's movement downstairs. Footsteps.

She reaches the top of the stairs, white knuckles the bat. So focused. She can't blink. Can't get this wrong.

One foot pads the first step. She takes another. Another.

FOYER

She reaches the bottom.

The front door is several steps away. All she has to do is get out. She knows this. Wants it, but --

She turns the other way, toward the kitchen. A light is on.

A FIGURE emerges from the kitchen into the hall. Dark. Hooded. Takes a few steps forward and stops.

So surreal. This can't really be happening.

Jesse's pale with fear. Her knees buckle.

The figure lowers it's hood.

RICK

Hi, Jesse. It's Jesse, right?

Jesse's paralyzed.

Rick smiles.

RICK

I told you, you didn't want to find out who I was. Tsk, tsk, tsk. You didn't take my advice.

Jesse raises the bat. Shaking visibly.

JESSE

D-- Don't come any closer.

RICK

You are terrified, aren't you? Don't worry. I won't come closer.

He reaches into his coat and produces an AUTOMATIC.

RICK

I won't need to. I have a clear shot from here. Should have went for the door when you had the chance--

Jesse suddenly launches the bat at him.

Rick ducks. The bat bangs loudly off a wall, settles on the floor behind him.

He cackles.

RICK

Strike three.

JESSE

Don't do this.

Rick checks his gun. Shucks a bullet in the chamber. He steps forward.

Jesse moves back.

RICK

How much do you value your life, Jesse?

JESSE

What?

RICK

You see what I'm saying, don't you? If you had it to spend, how much would you pay me to spare your life right now?

(MORE)

RICK (CONT'D)

What kind of dollar value would you
put on that? Cool million? Two?
Three..?

She lowers her head. The call back from their earlier convo,
and this time he's got her.

JESSE

Wait... Just wait!

He shakes his head.

RICK

No. You don't have enough money to
even buy yourself time.

Rick raises the gun. This is it--

RICK

How do you put it again? That
podcast? Just point and shoot--

He levels the gun at her head, when --

CRASH!

The front door splinters open!

Jesse shrieks.

Undersheriff Taylor barges in, gun raised.

TAYLOR

Freeze!

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Johnson stands beside a cruiser. Smacks the hood a couple
times, and it takes off with Chad inside.

Waits there a moment, watches it drive off. He exhales, goes
inside.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Johnson grabs his coat, slips it on.

A lone officer, Rogers, sits at a desk in the bullpen.

ROGERS

Taking off, Sheriff?

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Yeah. You okay?

ROGERS
Quiet night.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
Where's Taylor?

ROGERS
Hmm? Oh, she left a little while ago. Said she had some business to take care of. Whatever that means.

Johnson grunts. He walks past --

TAYLOR'S OFFICE

Stops, and shuts off the light. As he does, he notices her desk drawer open a crack. Puts the light back on, nears the desk.

He goes to close the drawer, stops suddenly. His face goes cold. Eyes scanning, mouth open --

Tries to make sense of what he sees...

INT. POLICE STATION, JOHNSON'S OFFICE (FLASHBACK) - DAY

The day Jesse dropped off the laptop.

VARIOUS SHOTS:

A) Johnson and Taylor

SHERIFF JOHNSON
The Green Team. Who are they again?

TAYLOR
They're an environmental company. They were protesting Sanderson Shore's development of Paradise Valley.

B) Jesse points at the figure on the laptop screen.

JESSE
That could be your killer right there.

C) Johnson and Taylor

SHERIFF JOHNSON
You think she's onto something?

TAYLOR
The Green Team has offices all over California. There's thousands of members spread throughout the state.

SHERIFF JOHNSON
That's not very encouraging.

TAYLOR
All you need is the right one.

The words "*the right one*" echo in Johnson's head.

END FLASHBACK, BACK TO --

INT. POLICE STATION, TAYLOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Johnson races from the room and exits the station in a hot second.

INSERT: TAYLOR'S DRAWER

Pens, pencils, paperclips, and...

Three green bracelets with a leaf outline.

ACT 9

INT. JESSE'S HOME, FOYER - NIGHT

Jesse's huddled on the floor by Taylor's feet.

Taylor's weapon is squared. Eyes steeled. She's has Rick in her sights.

TAYLOR
Don't move!

A smile creases his scar. He lowers his gun, opens his mouth to speak--

RICK
Now, what are you doing--?

BLAM!

Taylor blows him away. Direct shot to the chest.

Jesse shrieks. Covers her ears from the report.

Rick wobbles, drops his gun. Looks at his chest where crimson blossoms like a Rorshach.

He stares at Taylor, gun still smoking. Shock. Surprise. Confusion on his face.

He drops to his knees, collapses face first on the floor.

Taylor holsters her weapon, steps forward and kicks his gun away. Looks back.

TAYLOR
Are you okay?

JESSE
Yeah... I think so.

Taylor goes to Jesse, inspects her face.

TAYLOR
How's your ears?

JESSE
They're ringing.

TAYLOR
That's normal.

Taylor nods, and when she pulls away, Jesse notices her arm -- long sleeved uniform, but...

The cuff rolls up just enough to reveal a green bracelet on her wrist.

That green bracelet.

Jesse's eyes widen.

TAYLOR
Something wrong?

Jesse can't speak.

Taylor follows Jesse's gaze to her wrist. To the bracelet. Glances back.

TAYLOR
It's all so much to take in, Jesse.
You've been through a very
traumatic ordeal.

JESSE
 (softly)
 He was... He was lowering his gun.

TAYLOR
 I suppose he was.

Taylor removes the bracelet, holds it between them. It's almost lovingly when she speaks --

TAYLOR
 I grew up in Paradise Valley. Just like my parents before me, and their parents... It truly is a magical place. It's left quite an impression on me.

JESSE
 Enough to kill for?

Taylor grins, rises, squats next to Rick, puts her fingers to his neck to check for a pulse.

TAYLOR
 The Green Team preserved that land for as long they could. We really tried. But all good things come to an end, right?

JESSE
 This was all about the land?

Taylor slips on a pair of gloves and pulls out a handkerchief. She wipes the bracelet clean, slips it on Rick's wrist.

Jesse watches in horror.

INT. POLICE CRUISER (DRIVING) - NIGHT

Johnson speeds down the dark road. Focused. Determined. He pulls out a phone. Taps a key, puts it to his ear.

INT. JESSE'S HOME, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jesse's phone lights, vibrates on her bed upstairs.

INT. POLICE CRUISER (DRIVING) - NIGHT

Johnson listens. It goes to voicemail.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Dammit!

INT. JESSE'S HOME, FOYER - NIGHT

Taylor retrieves Rick's gun. Checks it.

TAYLOR

I joined up with the Green Team
several years ago. Right around the
time I became a cop. Starting out,
I really had the best intentions.
You know?

JESSE

How'd that work out for you?

TAYLOR

Smart girl, smart mouth.
(then)
Anyway, as it turned out, I was
good at raising money. I mean,
really good. So, you know what they
did? They made me treasurer. In
charge of all the fund raising. All
of it. Me.

Taylor rises with Rick's gun in hand.

Jesse rises also.

TAYLOR

You know who was a big donor of
ours?

Jesse looks all around. Looking for something -- anything --
she can use.

JESSE

I don't know...

TAYLOR

Take a guess.

JESSE

Helen Getty.

Taylor raises the gun, steps forward.

TAYLOR

Bingo. Imagine my surprise when I found out, upon her demise, she was leaving millions -- *millions* -- to the Green Team. And guess who was in charge of funneling all that money?

JESSE

You... You killed her.

TAYLOR

We all gotta die sometime, right? I just expedited the process.

Jesse backs into the end table. The one with the green phone. Nowhere to go.

INT. POLICE CRUISER (DRIVING) - NIGHT

Johnson cuts a corner hard. Has his phone. Taps a key. Gotta get through to her.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Come on...

INT. JESSE'S HOME, FOYER

Taylor cocks her weapon.

TAYLOR

You're a smart girl, Jesse. It's too bad it has to end like this.

Just then, the green phone rings loudly.

Taylor looks down.

Jesse quickly grabs the phone and brains Taylor on the side of the head.

Taylor stumbles back, drops the gun.

Jesse makes a break for it -- She turns, opens the busted front door -- Inadvertantly kicks Taylor's gun outside.

OUTSIDE

Tires SCREECH on the street as Johnson's cruiser comes to an abrupt halt.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Jesse!

Jesse runs to him. He pushes her behind him, raises his gun at the door way.

Taylor stumbles out. Dazed. She scurries forward, but stops when she sees Johnson.

She looks down. The gun is just within arms length.

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Don't pick it up, Taylor!

Jesse can barely watch.

Taylor. The gun. Sheriff Johnson.

An almost remorseful look upon her face. As if to say -- *I have to do this.*

SHERIFF JOHNSON

Don't do it!

Jesse, eyes shut. Teeth gritted. Braces herself.

Taylor reaches for the gun.

Hardened by years on the force, Johnson's eyes don't so much as blink as he...

BLAM!

EXT. MANSION - DAY

Morning sun splashes the manicured lawns. Birds sing as a GROUNDSKEEPER trims a hedge.

INT. MANSION, KITCHEN - DAY

Sanderson sits at the breakfast nook, eating and combing through the morning paper.

The doorbell rings.

FOYER

Sanderson opens the door. His face brightens like he's seen an old friend.

JESSE

Hi, Mr. Shore.

SANDERSON

Jesse! Come in.

She steps in, he closes the door. They head into the --

KITCHEN

JESSE

How are you?

SANDERSON

From the looks of it, only slightly better than you. Quite an ordeal you went through.

JESSE

It's quite an ordeal both of us went through.

He pauses. Reflects.

SANDERSON

Yes, it was. You've emerged none the worse for wear, I see.

JESSE

Well, yeah, I guess so...

SANDERSON

You're very resilient, Jesse. That's a great quality to have. The kind of quality that...

(shrugs)

... a wealthy entrepreneur might find valuable when he's putting together a team.

Jesse's smiles. Humbled. The compliment is not lost on her.

JESSE

Thank you for saying that. I will definitely keep that in mind.

SANDERSON

But..?

JESSE

Well, not just yet. I think I'm gonna spend the rest of the Summer at the nursery. Get the rest of my credits--

SANDERSON

Let me know. All I gotta do is pick up the phone. I'll get you those credits before you can say Walt Disney.

JESSE

Thanks, Mr. Shore, but I'd really rather earn them.

With a fatherly smile on his face --

SANDERSON

You did earn them, Jesse. You did.

He extends his hand. She takes it. They shake on it.

EXT. JESSE'S HOME - LATER

Jesse pulls up to find Alicia waiting on the front porch.

She exits the car, heads to the house.

JESSE

Hey, you.

ALICIA

Hey, yourself. Where you coming from?

JESSE

Mr. Shore's. I wanted to see how he was doing.

ALICIA

How is he doing?

JESSE

I think he's gonna be okay. Even offered me a job.

ALICIA

Oh, really? What's it this time? Catering director?

Jesse laughs.

JESSE

I don't think so. But, I think he'd consider a package deal.

ALICIA

Whoa, whoa-- I'm not sure I'm ready
for that heat.

JESSE

Understood. Just something to
consider.

Jesse gazes around her neighborhood. The trees. The morning
light. She SIGHS. Good to be home.

ALICIA

Everything okay?

JESSE

Yeah. Everything's okay.

ALICIA

Good. Well, I guess I better be
going.

JESSE

Where you off to?

ALICIA

Oh, my parents want me to take a
few portraits of them. Their
anniversary's coming up.

JESSE

Are they paying you?

Alicia shoots her a look.

ALICIA

One of the perks of having a
photographer in the family.

They embrace.

JESSE

Thanks for everything, Alicia.
You're a good friend.

Alicia heads off.

ALICIA

I know. I'll see you Monday
morning?

JESSE

Bright and early.

Jesse watches as Alicia gets in her car and rolls away. She turns back to the house. Her home.

She opens the front door, and just as she steps inside --

INT. JESSE'S HOME, FOYER

The lime green phone rings.

Jesse picks it up without hesitation

JESSE

Hello? Oh, hey, Mom. No, no. It's okay. I, uh, kinda got over my fear of the phone. Yeah, I know. Surprise, surprise.

She laughs.

EXT. JESSE'S HOME - DAY

An ordinary day in suburbia.

JESSE (O.S.)

So, are you and dad at the airport? Great. I'll be there at five..?

Lawn sprinklers sprout up. A jogger passes. A dog barks.

JESSE (O.S.)

Yeah, everything's all right, Mom. I Promise I'll tell you all about it when you get home. Okay? Okay. What? No, I ate all that cake. Why..?

FADE OUT.