

"THE LEAGUE UNDISCLOSED"

by

Renee Joynson

Renee Joynson

reenebrooks2@optusnet.com.au

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FADE IN:

EXT. JETTY - NIGHT

Gentle waves collapse along the bay.

NICOLE (V.O)
Sometimes we hurt the ones we love
in the hopes that we're saving
them from something worse.

Party goers dressed in formal attire dance to club music on the bottom deck of a luxury private charter boat.

NICOLE (V.O)
But when everything backfires and
we realize we've done the wrong
thing, it's usually too late.

NICOLE, 22, blonde hair, her temperament usually fresh and cheeky, stands enraged and exigent on the top deck, face to face with JUZZY, 24, a competitive, underhanded, pro football player, always sexually on the prowl.

Nicole slaps him across the face. She begins to walk away, but Juzzy grabs her arm and flings her backwards with force.

She trips on the edge of her dress and reaches to grab the railing, but misses and falls off the side of the boat.

Juzzy watches. Shocked. Unable to move.

Nicole SCREAMS as her body plunges towards the water and hits with a hard SPLASH!

ERIC, 24, handsome, playful and kind natured, runs across the top deck. He looks over the rail.

ERIC
Nicole?!

Her body drifts into darkness below the water's surface.

EXT. JETTY - LATER

A police boat roams the water. Two POLICE OFFICERS stand on either side.

NICOLE (V.O)

When I lost my family in an accident back home I didn't think anything worse could ever happen to me. But I was wrong.

POLICE OFFICER #1

See anything?

POLICE OFFICER #2

No.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: 1 YEAR EARLIER

Blue skies. Teenagers sunbathe. Adults watch their children play in the water.

Nicole sits halfway down the sand. She soaks up the sun.

Eric practices a football game with TEAMMATES at the waters edge.

He catches the ball and gets tackled to the ground with a THUD!

Nicole looks over at the group and locks eyes with Eric as he pulls himself up to stand. They share a flirtatious smile.

Juzzy rests his hands on his knees beside Eric. He looks over to see what has Eric's attention then smiles and waves at Nicole.

She waves back, a little embarrassed then grabs her belongings and leaves the beach.

Eric throws the football into the group and turns to see Juzzy gawking after Nicole.

ERIC

Don't even think about it. I saw her first.

Juzzy stands in Eric's face.

JUZZY

You're not gonna make a move
anyway. Pussy.

ERIC

What're you playing at? The first
girl I might like, you've got to
interfere?

JUZZY

Who do you think she was waving
at, huh?

Juzzy shoves Eric. A scuffle ensues.

DAVE, 26, dedicated, broad built captain of the team, shakes
his head and marches over. He pulls them apart.

CODY, 23, bad-boy attitude, sincere at heart, holds Eric back
while Dave refrains Juzzy.

DAVE

Settle down! This is not the time
for your shit!

They settle.

DAVE

You two wanna go a round, do it
back home. In your own time.

Eric and Juzzy glare at each other.

DAVE

C'mon, we're only here for another
week. Let's keep the fun alive,
alright?

The rest of the team get back to the game.

Dave gestures to a cut on Eric's lip.

DAVE

Go get some ice for that.

Eric touches his lip. Sees blood on his finger then heads towards the footpath.

Nicole stands against a bench at the entrance to the beach. Ice-cream in one hand, icy pole in the other.

NICOLE

Thought you might need this.

She holds the icy pole out to Eric. He gives her a odd look.

NICOLE

You copped a nice elbow to the lip.

Eric takes the icy pole.

ERIC

Thanks.

NICOLE

Anytime.

She smiles and walks away.

ERIC

Wait a minute. Ah...Did you want to get a drink later? Or something?

NICOLE

Sorry. I don't accept drinks from aggressive football players.

ERIC

Aggressive? I'm not aggressive. And who said I was buying?

Nicole stops. Gives him a dirty look.

ERIC

Kidding. C'mon, I didn't even start the fight. Juzzy's the aggressive one. Promise.

NICOLE

How about...if you can find me
tonight, I might, and I mean
might, buy you a drink.

ERIC

You're on.

Nicole licks her ice-cream and keeps walking.

CODY

Eric? You coming?

Eric returns to the beach, giddy smile on his face.

INT. "COCONUT ALLEY" BAR - NIGHT

An exotically decorated place. A small CROWD dances to R'N'B
music.

Eric sits down beside Nicole at the bar. She turns to face
him. Surprised.

NICOLE

Wow. I didn't think you'd be into
this kind of music.

ERIC

Why? What type did you think I'd
be into? Or were you just hoping I
wouldn't find you?

NICOLE

I would've pictured you to be the
'live band' type. And to the
second part...maybe.

ERIC

Honestly, yeah, the pub would have
been my choice, but instead I had
to miss out to check every place
in town for you. And to the second
part, that's not nice. I told you
I didn't start that fight.

Nicole chuckles.

NICOLE

I suppose, after all your hard
work, that I owe you that drink.

She hails the bartender over.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) Alcoholic shots line the bar. Eric and Nicole compete over who can drink the most the quickest. Eric wins.
- B) Eric assists Nicole with throwing a dart. It rebounds off the edge of the dartboard and hits the floor.
- C) Eric and Nicole bump and grind on the dance floor.
- D) Nicole pulls Eric into the ladies bathroom and pushes him against the wall. They kiss. Hard and fast.

EXT. "COCONUT ALLEY" BAR - LATER

Quiet and barren.

ROB, 24, brash and assertive, escorts a drunk GIRL down the street.

She drops her cell phone and mumbles gibberish as Rob drags her along.

ROB

Leave it.

Juzzy follows with GIRL #2 out-cold in his arms.

Rob glances back at him and shakes his head.

JUZZY

She'll be fine.

ROB

If she OD's, you're cleaning up
your own mess this time.

JUZZY

I know that.

ROB

And don't bring it up around Cody.
I'm sick of his shit. Or Eric. I
don't trust him.

JUZZY

You seriously think I'd bring it
up around Eric?

ROB

Just don't slip up, alright?

JUZZY

I'm not gonna.

INT/EXT. HOLIDAY VILLA - DAY

The kitchen opens to an outside verandah that overlooks a
secluded beach.

Nicole, smoothie in-hand, walks out to the verandah where
Eric relaxes on a daybed.

Eric's cell phone vibrates on a table beside him. He checks
it then puts it back.

ERIC

Reminder about my flight.

Nicole straddles Eric, face to face with him.

NICOLE

I can't believe it's been a week
already. I don't know where time's
gone?

ERIC

I know where it's gone.

He squeezes both sides of her buttocks.

NICOLE

Watch it or this will be all over
you.

ERIC

Might be a good thing. You could
lick it off.

NICOLE

You wish.

Eric runs his hands up the sides of her hips. She clenches her elbows in.

NICOLE

Stop it!

She sips the smoothie and rubs her thumb over his healed lip.

NICOLE

So what's the go between you and this Juzzy guy?

ERIC

He, ah, he kind of hates me for something that happened years ago between our parents.

NICOLE

Sounds scandalous.

ERIC

It was. His mom and my dad ran off with each other. Our town's real small, gossip gets around fast, so mom and I left. But after Juzzy's junkie, abusive mom left, his dad, the hard ass chief of police, didn't know what to do with him.

NICOLE

Really?

ERIC

Or so I've heard. I just came back and joined the team recently. And I don't usually listen to gossip but with this my ears pricked. Juzzy thinks my life's perfect because my parents ended up working things out while his mom hasn't been seen since. Apparently she won't even talk to him.

NICOLE

That's really sad. I kind of feel bad for him.

ERIC

Stuff him. He can take care of himself.

NICOLE

If you're gonna be mean, no smoothie for you.

She holds the smoothie away from him.

He leans forward to grab it and some of the smoothie drops over his chest. He shudders with the cold.

Nicole grins. She puts the smoothie on the table then licks the mess off. He enjoys every moment.

NICOLE

I guess that's wish granted.

He grabs her head and pulls her in for a kiss.

KITCHEN

A local NEWSPAPER sits on the bench.

An ARTICLE on the front page reads:

"Girl drugged, raped then dumped in ocean. Body found near city harbor. Police have no leads."

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Nicole stands alone. She puts a hand on the terminal window as she watches a plane take off down the runway.

INT. HOLIDAY VILLA - DAY

Nicole enters, drained and cheerless. She puts her handbag on the bench then lies on the couch with her cell phone.

She finds a photo on the cell phone of Eric and herself pulling a silly face.

ERIC (V.O)

No hotel fees and you'd be free to come and go whenever you wanted?

NICOLE (V.O)

It's a really nice offer, but--

ERIC (V.O)

C'mon. I'll stay and we can catch the next flight together.

NICOLE (V.O)

I can't. Not without thinking everything through first.

She bangs her head against a cushion.

NICOLE

What am I doing?

She jumps off the couch to gather her belongings.

EXT. ERIC'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A long gravel driveway leads to the large sandstone structure.

A taxi stops out the front. Nicole gets out, pulls her suitcase off the back seat and shuts the door.

She looks up and down the dark and desolate street.

NICOLE

Maybe I should stay at a hotel for the night?

She turns around as the taxi drives away.

She sighs and drags her suitcase up the driveway to the front door.

She knocks. An eerie silence lingers.

She sits down next to her suitcase and rests her head on it.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/KITCHEN

Eric, wearing a lightweight tracksuit, fills a water bottle and puts it on the bench.

He puts his sneakers on at the back door and exits, leaving the WATER BOTTLE behind.

EXT. ERIC'S HOUSE - DAY

Eric jogs down the driveway then suddenly stops.

ERIC

Damn it!

He turns around and sees Nicole asleep on her suitcase at the front door.

He picks an open white rose from a bush against the fence.

He squats beside Nicole and tickles her nose with it. She pushes the rose away before she opens her eyes.

ERIC

Hey there. Knew my address'd come in handy. Have to admit that I didn't expect to see you this soon though.

NICOLE

Thought I'd surprise you.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE - DAY

Eric carries Nicole's suitcase through the back door and puts it down against the wall.

ERIC

So what made you change your mind?

He walks into the kitchen.

Nicole looks around the lavish open plan house.

NICOLE

I finally decided that some
direction in life was better than
none.

She looks in awe through glass bi-folds to the rumpus with
cases full of trophies and a large pool table in the centre.

NICOLE

This place is amazing.

Eric turns the kettle on and takes two cups from an overhead
cupboard.

ERIC

Last coach took care of me. Here
the pay's a little less, but it's
where I spent most of my
childhood. So it feels more like
home. You know?

He looks up at Nicole. She shrugs her shoulders.

ERIC

Do you ever think you'll go back?

NICOLE

Maybe. One day. I think I just
need to get my head in the right
place before I do.

ERIC

It's got to be tough.

She looks down to the floor.

NICOLE

Especially when my best quality
right now is running away. It's
something I'm really good at it.
And my writing career would
definitely agree.

ERIC

Stop being hard on yourself.
You've been through a lot.

He brings her a coffee.

ERIC

On a lighter note, there's a barbeque at Dave's later. If you're up for meeting the rest of the team?

NICOLE

Could be interesting.

ERIC

Our barbeques always are. Plus, you're gonna need a bikini. The hot pink one.

NICOLE

Look at you. I've been here, what...five minutes, and you're already telling me what to wear.

ERIC

Hey, naked would be my choice. That's how I've been picturing you since the doorstep.

She gawks at him.

NICOLE

So is that how you picture every girl you barely know whenever you see them?

He moves closer to her.

ERIC

I can't help myself. You're just so damn beautiful.

NICOLE

Trying to save yourself at this point is futile.

She sips her coffee.

ERIC

Well, look at you, five minutes through the door and you're already telling me what I can and can't say?

Nicole grins.

NICOLE

Smart ass.

EXT. DAVE'S HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

Nicole sits at an inbuilt pool bar with MARISSA, Dave's wife, mid 20's, and two other WOMEN in their early 20's.

Eric sits beside a barbeque on the far side of the pool with Rob, Cody and MICK, mid 20's, laid-back, humorous.

CODY

Nicole seems like a good chick.
You did well.

ERIC

She's awesome. Smart. Funny. I
feel great when I'm around her.

ROB

Sure it's not her hot body that's
making you feel great?

ERIC

That too.

DAVE (O.S.)

Found them.

Dave comes out the back door with a large pair of tongs.

PETE, 24, impetuous, farm boy, skids his 4x4 to a halt down the driveway, merely missing a large shed at the end.

PETE

Woohoo!

Juzzy hops out of the passenger side.

DAVE

Pete? What the hell?!

Pete and Juzzy join the others.

JUZZY

I dared him.

Juzzy takes two beers from a cooler beside the barbeque. He throws one to Pete.

DAVE

Still.

PETE

Who's the cute blonde?

CODY

Eric's new hottie, Nicole.

JUZZY

(mumbles)

I'm surprised she came back with you.

ERIC

What was that Juzzy? Got something to say?

DAVE

Don't start now.

Juzzy turns an evil eye. Takes a swig of his beer.

PETE

So this is the girl that kept you busy all week long?

MICK

Can only imagine what they were getting up to.

Mick picks up a football from the ground and thrusts his hips at it then throws it to Rob.

CODY

Nice visual Mick. Thanks.

PETE

Why can't I find me a girl like that?

ROB

Cause you're too ugly.

He biffs the football at Pete.

Pete catches it and aims it back in a menacing manner.

DAVE

Sit down.

Rob puts his hands up, taunting Pete.

EXT. DAVE'S HOUSE - LATER

Everyone sits and enjoys the night around a blazing bonfire.

MONTAGE

-- EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY. Nicole sits in the middle of a crowd on the bleachers. Eric's team scores a goal. Nicole stands and cheers.

-- INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT. Eric, Cody, Dave and Marissa sit at a table. Nicole bowls a strike and throws her hands up, excited. Eric wolf whistles.

-- INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/LOUNGE ROOM - DAY. Eric and Nicole sit on the couch. They watch a movie. Nicole starts a popcorn fight. Popcorn flies everywhere.

END MONTAGE

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Nicole removes a mug from a top cupboard and places it on the bench.

She opens a coffee canister to find it empty.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Nicole picks a coffee jar off a top shelf. She turns around, startled to see Juzzy behind her.

NICOLE

Jeepers! Sorry. You scared me.

JUZZY

Didn't mean to.

He reaches up and grabs a jar of the same coffee.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Nicole and Juzzy walk across a large parking lot.

NICOLE

Aren't you supposed to be at practice?

JUZZY

Got the afternoon off.

NICOLE

What makes you so special?

He behaves like he has a disability.

JUZZY

I'm a better player than the others, you see.

Nicole laughs. She gives him a playful slap across the chest.

NICOLE

That's nasty.

Juzzy stops at a red Jeep with leather interior and dark tinted windows.

JUZZY

So did you want a lift or not?

NICOLE

I don't know.

JUZZY

Why? Cause Eric told you not to?

He unlocks the Jeep.

NICOLE

No...I just...well...ok. But only cause I haven't had a coffee yet and I'm feeling too lazy to walk.

EXT. ERIC'S HOUSE - DAY

Juzzy winds down the passenger side window as Nicole gets out of the Jeep.

JUZZY

See, I'm not all that bad.

NICOLE

You're alright.

JUZZY

Well, if you need a lift again,
just ring me.

NICOLE

If Eric's unavailable, I might.

She heads toward the front door as Juzzy backs out the driveway.

EXT. POND - DAY

Nicole and Eric sit on a picnic blanket. A sun sets in the background.

NICOLE

It's beautiful.

ERIC

Had to do something special for
our one year anniversary.

She leans into him.

NICOLE

If I confessed to the rest of the
team how sweet you really are
would you hate me?

ERIC

Yes.

She gives him a playful push.

ERIC

But...I...ah, I did also bring you
here for another reason.

He takes a little black box from the picnic basket.

NICOLE

Are you kidding me?

He opens the box to reveal a tear cut diamond ring.

NICOLE

Yes!

ERIC

I've practiced this speech. I at least want to make it, alright?

She giggles.

NICOLE

Ok. Sorry.

ERIC

Nicole...I never used to believe in love at first sight, but with you it hit me like lightening and when I'm around you...you always bring out the best in me. That's why, Nicole, I'd be honored if you'd marry me.

NICOLE

You already know my answer.

He takes the ring and puts it on her finger.

She holds her hand up to admire it.

EXT. JEWELLERS - DAY

Nicole strides along the footpath. She stops to look at a men's ROLEX in the window.

She writes the price on her palm.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Nicole puts a large wad of cash into an envelope with writing on the front that says "Eric's B'day".

NICOLE

I'm saving you from town gossip.

She stashes it in a shoe box in the top of the closet.

EXT. ERIC'S HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

Nicole swims laps in the large pool. She wears a black and white sparkly stripped bikini.

Juzzy carries a large toolbox to the door. He puts it down then watches Nicole.

She sees him then swims to the edge.

NICOLE

Hey. What you up to?

He grabs her towel and holds it up for her.

JUZZY

Mick just asked me to drop off a toolbox on my way past.

She grabs the towel and dries herself off.

JUZZY

I like that bikini better than the pink one. Shows off your curves better.

She gives him an odd glance.

NICOLE

Eric's just helping Cody with his boat. He shouldn't be too much longer.

Juzzy follows her into the house. His cell phone rings.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Nicole puts the towel on a stool then walks to the fridge and takes out a beer.

Juzzy stands at the bench.

JUZZY

(into phone)

Yep. Alright. I'll drop in soon.

He puts the phone in his pocket.

NICOLE
Do you want one?

He checks his watch.

JUZZY
Sure, I'll have a quick one.

NICOLE
A quickie hey?

Nicole takes another beer out and shuts the fridge.

JUZZY
You wanna head to the bedroom?

NICOLE
No!

She pops the caps on the beers then hands one to Juzzy.

JUZZY
So I heard you and Eric are tying
the knot.

NICOLE
You heard right.

JUZZY
What for?

NICOLE
I know this might be hard for you
to understand, but I love him.

JUZZY
As I said. What for?

He takes a swig of his beer.

NICOLE
Don't make me the meat in the
sandwich.

She gets an orange from the pantry.

JUZZY
Maybe if he wasn't such a douche
bag, I'd love him too.

She frowns at him.

NICOLE

Hey!

JUZZY

Sorry, didn't mean to rock the boat. So listen, I'm having a little get together tonight. You want to come?

He ogles Nicole's body as she reaches into a cupboard for a plate.

NICOLE

I know that invitation doesn't include Eric, so I'm gonna have to pass.

JUZZY

Your loss.

She puts the plate on the bench then turns to look at him.

NICOLE

Juzzy?!

JUZZY

What?

He stares at her boobs.

NICOLE

Juzzy?!

JUZZY

You know, you're too hot to be with him.

NICOLE

I ah...I don't know what I'm supposed to say to that. So I think I'm gonna tell you to get out of here before Eric gets back.

JUZZY

You could come with me.

She grins and shakes her head then points at the back door.

NICOLE

Go. Get. Now.

He puts the beer down.

JUZZY

Fine.

He looks over his shoulder at her on his way out.

Nicole runs her fingers through her hair and exhales.

INT. JUZZY'S JEEP - DAY

Juzzy waits in his car while Rob walks out the front of a large weatherboard house.

Rob hands Juzzy a small box filled with vials containing a clear substance.

JUZZY

Thanks man.

He hands rob an open envelope with cash inside.

ROB

Go easy this time. No fuckin up.
Just enjoy.

INT. "RODNEY'S" BAR - NIGHT

An old, rustic setting. The place is packed. A BAND plays on a stage at the rear.

Nicole and Eric join the rest of the football group at a large corner table. Cody stands to welcome them.

ERIC

Cody, you old man.

Eric hands him an envelope.

CODY

You're older than I am. Don't
forget that.

Nicole leans in and pecks him on the cheek.

NICOLE
Happy Birthday.

CODY
Let's party!

A waitress brings a tray of alcoholic shots over.

ROB
Thanks darl.

Rob kisses the waitress and stuffs a twenty into her cleavage. She gives him a cheeky smile then walks back to the bar.

CODY
Bottoms up!

They all grab a shot, clink them together then down them.

INT. "RODNEY'S" BAR - LATER

Everyone's on the crowded dance floor. All drunk. The boys pull stupid "lawnmower" and "sprinkler" dance moves.

A wave of sickness overwhelms Nicole. She removes herself from the dance floor to sit at the corner table. Eric, oblivious, keeps dancing.

Juzzy appears.

JUZZY
Hey miss thing. What's going on?

Nicole lays her head on the table.

NICOLE
I'm not feeling too good.

A SECURITY GUARD looks over.

SECURITY GUARD
No sleeping.

Nicole sits upright.

JUZZY
I'll take you home.

NICOLE

No. It's fine. I'll catch a cab.

JUZZY

I haven't had too much to drink.
Look--

He walks backward in a straight line.

NICOLE

Ok. You've made your point.

She looks at Eric.

NICOLE

But Eric'll have a fit if I tell
him you're taking me.

JUZZY

So message him in the car and tell
him you got a cab. Promise I won't
tell.

She contemplates the situation.

INT. JUZZY'S CAR - NIGHT (TRAVELING)

Nicole rests her head on the passenger side window as Juzzy
pulls into a petrol station.

JUZZY

Do you want a water? You look like
you need it.

NICOLE

Yeah. That would be great.

He gets out and fills the Jeep then walks into the store.

Nicole takes out her cell phone and types a message.

Juzzy gets back in and hands her a bottle of water.

NICOLE

Thanks.

He starts the Jeep and smiles as Nicole opens the water and
begins to drink.

EXT. ERIC'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nicole staggers out of the Jeep.

Juzzy runs to her aide. He helps her to the front door.

NICOLE

I feel really weird. I don't know
what's wrong with me.

She drops her keys.

JUZZY

I've got it.

Juzzy picks them up and opens the door.

Nicole slowly stumbles forward.

JUZZY

Time to have some fun.

NICOLE

(slurred)

What?

Juzzy catches Nicole mid fall as she passes out. He lifts her into his arms and carries her inside.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

NICOLE'S P.O.V. - IN BED

SCENES FLASH: Juzzy naked on top of her. He thrusts his body against hers. He moans then stops. He lies on her chest.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Nicole sleeps unsettled. She jolts awake.

NICOLE

No!

She breathes heavy.

ERIC (O.S.)

Everything alright?

She settles herself.

NICOLE

Yeah, it was nothing.

Eric enters. He holds a tray with some toast and two coffees.

ERIC

You sure?

She nods.

NICOLE

Bad dream.

He puts the tray on his bedside table then sits next to her.

ERIC

The car accident again?

NICOLE

Ah...yeah.

He hands her a coffee.

ERIC

I thought I had a bigger night than you, but obviously not.

NICOLE

I know. I'm so tired. I don't know what happened. I remember walking to the front door and then nothing.

ERIC

Hey, did you get a lift with Juzzy last night?

NICOLE

What? No. Why?

ERIC

Someone said they saw you leave with him.

NICOLE

They must've been confused.

She sips her coffee.

Eric shrugs it off. He grabs a slice of toast.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nicole jolts awake in a cold sweat.

Eric, half asleep, puts his hand on her shoulder.

ERIC
Everything alright?

NICOLE
Yeah, nothing to worry about.

Eric goes back to sleep.

Nicole, visibly shaken, stares at the ceiling.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

Nicole sits on the couch. Laptop rested on her knees.

She stares intensely at the screen.

INSERT - LAPTOP SCREEN

Internet search:

"Date rape drugs. Ruffies. GHB."

BACK TO SCENE

She looks up, dismayed. Realization setting in.

INT. FOOTBALL STADIUM/LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Juzzy packs his gym bag. Rob storms in and pushes him against the lockers.

JUZZY
Hey!

ROB
What the fuck are you doing?

JUZZY

What?

ROB

What have I told you about the chicks we know? Specially someone else's chick. Rumors are spreading like wildfire. You're lucky Eric supposedly never listens to that shit. But if I end up going down for this, I don't care how high up your dad is, I'll sure as hell take you with me. And just think how pissed Dave's gonna be.

JUZZY

Stop your stressing. I've got us covered.

ROB

No, you've got yourself covered. I'm the one with the stash. And the contacts who'll stop giving me the goods if there's trouble about.

JUZZY

Trust me. She won't say anything. She doesn't have a leg to stand on.

Rob leans into him.

ROB

You better hope so, 'cause if things go south, so will you.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM/PARKING LOT - DAY

Nicole stands by Juzzy's Jeep.

Juzzy walks across the field. Head held high. Gym bag hung over his shoulder.

JUZZY

Eric's in a meeting. Won't be out till late.

NICOLE

I'm here to see you actually.

JUZZY

About what?

NICOLE

The night of Cody's birthday. What was in the water you gave me?

JUZZY

I don't know what you're talking about.

He gets in the Jeep and throws the gym bag over to the back.

Nicole quickly jumps into the passenger side.

NICOLE

I'm not leaving until you tell me the truth.

JUZZY

As I said, I don't know what you're talking about.

NICOLE

Cut the shit Juzzy. I didn't realize it then, but after racking my brain for answers I suddenly remembered that the cap on the bottle you gave me was already open.

JUZZY

Sure you've got your facts straight? You were pretty out of it before you hopped in the car.

NICOLE

I know you drugged me. Past that, yeah, the details are a little sketchy, but I'm sure I'll remember in time.

JUZZY

You have no idea what you're getting yourself into.

NICOLE

Eric was right, you're not the type of person I thought you were. I'm guessing, to you, this is all some kind of sick game. Is it? You know what, don't answer that. I just thought I'd let you know that I'm telling Eric everything. Tonight.

JUZZY

Did you really think you could come here with your little speech and follow through it all? Especially when the evidence points to something else going on between us?

NICOLE

What are you talking about?

JUZZY

Hmmm...our little rendezvous' like me dropping you home. I'm sure there are witnesses to that. Plus our special interludes at Eric's when he hasn't been around. I could get witnesses for that. And who could forget our night of hot sex after Cody's party. For which I have photos by the way.

He shows her graphic PHOTOS of the night on his cell phone.

JUZZY

And you told Eric you caught a cab. Why create such a lie?

Nicole grits her teeth and looks out window.

JUZZY

Who do you think he's going to believe? I mean, he might hear what you're saying, but with past issues between his parents, do you think he'll ever really trust you again? With all those thoughts ticking over and over in his head?

NICOLE
You're sick Juzzy.

She opens the door. He grabs her arm.

JUZZY
Don't go doing anything stupid
now.

He lets go. She hurries out and slams the door.

She watches him screech out of the parking lot and down the street.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eric flicks the light on and dumps his bag at the back door.

He reads a note on the bench:

"Was really tired. Pizza's in the
fridge. xx"

BEDROOM

Eric stands in the doorway. He watches Nicole sleep for a moment then walks down the hallway.

Nicole opens her eyes. She pulls a pillow from under her head and clutches it tight.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Nicole paces the room. She stops. Looks down at her cell phone on the bench.

INT. FOOTBALL STADIUM/LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Rob, bare chest, towel wrapped around his waist, walks to his locker and opens the door.

Eric's cell phone RINGS.

Rob listens for a moment then opens Eric's locker and answers the phone.

ROB
(into phone)
Eric's phone.

INTERCUT BETWEEN NICOLE and ROB

NICOLE
(into phone)
Who's this?

ROB
Rob. What can I do for you Nicole?

He gets dressed.

NICOLE
Would Eric be heading home soon?

ROB
I couldn't tell you.
(beat)
Why?

NICOLE
I...ah...I just really need to
speak with him. That's all.

ROB
I'll pass on the message.
(beat)
But if this is about Juzzy, then I
suggest you let it go.

NICOLE
Excuse me?

ROB
Seems like you two had yourselves
a good time and now he says you're
trying to start trouble.

NICOLE
That's not what happened. I didn't
willingly do anything with Juzzy.

ROB
I've heard there's a lot more to
it. And you two look pretty cozy
in the pic's he showed me.

NICOLE

Those photos are a lie!

ROB

Listen. No little outsider is going to come along and break this team apart. So whatever your thinking of doing, drop it!

Nicole abruptly ends the call.

MONTAGE

-- INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT. Nicole sits on the couch with her laptop. She stares at a blank page.

-- EXT. BAKERY - DAY. Nicole walks along the footpath holding a small bag of groceries. She slows her pace to look at TOWNSFOLK who point and snigger at her.

-- EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY. Nicole sits on the bleachers. She watches Eric's team play. She greasily eyes off Juzzy.

-- EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - DAY. Nicole sits on a hill that overlooks the town. She holds her knees in close. Perplexed.

END MONTAGE

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Nicole sits at the bench with her laptop. She TYPES:

"Mom. When you passed away I felt so lost. I didn't know what to do."

She looks out the kitchen window for a moment then continues to type.

"Years later, I find myself as lost and insecure as back then. I miss you and I wish you were here."

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Nicole stands at a flight of steps before the front doors. She stares up at the police station.

She begins to walk up the front steps then stops when she sees Dave walking to the front doors with the CHIEF OF POLICE, 50's, stocky, brash and overconfident.

She panics and runs to the side of the building to hide.

She waits for Dave to leave, then looks at the police station and changes her mind. She walks away.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Nicole walks along the street, arms wrapped around herself.

She stops and turns to look behind.

A Jeep like Juzzy's is parked behind another car at the end of the street. She eyes it off before she continues on.

She turns a corner. Eric's house is close.

(O.S.): The sound of a CAR ENGINE creeps closer.

Nicole stops. She turns to look again.

Juzzy's Jeep drives around the corner and speeds up.

Nicole bolts down the footpath and across Eric's lawn, to the front door.

The Jeep screeches to a halt down the driveway.

She rushes to get her keys out of her handbag.

Juzzy winds down the passenger window on the Jeep and leans over the seat.

JUZZY

As I said; I wouldn't go doing
anything stupid if I were you,
Nicole!

Nicole opens the door and hurries inside.

Juzzy winds up the window.

INT. FOOTBALL STADIUM/LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Half naked bodies everywhere.

Eric towel dries his hair on his way to his locker. He grabs his gym bag and opens it.

Cody gets dressed beside him.

CODY

You going to Dave's this weekend?

ERIC

Not sure yet. Have to see how Nicole is.

CODY

What's up?

ERIC

I don't know man. She's just been really off lately. Distance, argumentative...I mean...I love her but...I don't know what it is. Don't know what I've done wrong.

CODY

Didn't you say her parents died on the way to a wedding?

ERIC

Yeah, but we've talked about all that.

CODY

Might still be freaking her out a bit. Planning her own wedding? Just give her some time.

ERIC

Yeah, you're probably right.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eric cuddles next Nicole in bed. He begins to move his hands over her body. She pushes them away.

NICOLE

Could we not do that tonight?

Eric rolls over. Upset.

ERIC

What's with you lately?

NICOLE

I'm not in the mood right now.

ERIC

You're never in the mood. Is it something I've done?

NICOLE

No. It's just me. And I can't explain it to you right now. I'm sorry.

She sighs and cuddles into him then moves her hand down his body. He pushes her hand away.

ERIC

Forget about it.

He gets up and walks out to the hallway.

Nicole rolls onto her back and closes her eyes.

INT. ERIC'S UTE - DAY (TRAVELING)

Nicole stares out the passenger window.

ERIC

I'm sorry.

NICOLE

Don't apologize. You're right. There is actually something--

His cell phone vibrates.

ERIC

Hold that thought.

Eric pulls into his driveway and checks his cell phone.

ERIC

Shit. We're gonna have to head off soon. They're already running out of beer. Which means somebody started early.

Nicole rolls her eyes and gets out of the Ute.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Nicole sits at the bench. She plays a game on her laptop.

ERIC (O.S.)

I heard there might be an opening at the local today?

NICOLE

Honestly, I'm not sure whether I want to get back into writing yet.

ERIC (O.S.)

You've got to get back on that horse sooner or later.

NICOLE

What if I want to do something different? Like art? Or baking?

ERIC (O.S.)

I thought you wanted to be writer?

NICOLE

I did. I mean...I do. I suppose I'll look into it.

He enters from the hallway, hair gelled, looking good.

ERIC

Geez, only if you want to, no pressure or anything.

His cell phone buzzes in his pocket. He ignores it. Gives Nicole an odd look.

ERIC

You gonna get ready?

She shakes her head.

NICOLE

I don't feel like partying
tonight.

ERIC

Why not? You could knock a few
back. Relax. Might help rid any
tension you're holding onto?

She stops playing the game and looks at him.

NICOLE

What's that supposed to mean?

ERIC

It means I'd like you come. Spend
the night with me. Enjoy yourself.

His cell phone buzzes again. He ignores it.

NICOLE

Look, I know I've been a little
hard to be around--

ERIC

A little? I'm actually starting to
doubt whether you want to be here,
Nicole. I understand you have
issues, so does everybody, but
normal people deal with them then
move on to live a better life. In
the present.

She stands up to meet his eye line.

NICOLE

You think I haven't tried to deal
with my past. I have. But that's
beside the point. You want to know
what my issues are? Cause you're
not going to like what I have to
say. And it includes your 'so
called' friends--

ERIC

Stop! This has nothing to do with
anybody else but you and me. This
is about us.

NICOLE

There's a lot more to it than what
you think.

ERIC

No! You know what--

His cell phone buzzes again. He sighs.

ERIC

We can talk later. I've got to go.

NICOLE

Eric?

He gives her a peck on the cheek and leaves.

Nicole looks down at her laptop. Disappointed.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nicole sits at the bench. She types on the laptop.

"A prestigious football team
caught up in a scandalous drug
deal, blackmail and rape."

She deletes it.

"When I met Eric he was so kind
and caring. However when I met the
team, underneath their smooth
exterior was a lot more to be
seen."

(O.S.): A CAR ENGINE pulls up the drive.

Nicole shuts the laptop and walks over to the lounge window.

She pulls back the curtain to reveal Juzzy getting out of his
Jeep. She takes a step back. Scared.

She rushes to lock the doors and turn the lights off.

She sits on the floor beside the kitchen bench. Silent.

Juzzy BANGS on the back window.

JUZZY (O.S.)
I know you're there Nicole.

He shakes the door handle.

JUZZY (O.S.)
Don't you want to play? C'mon now.
I know Eric's not gonna be back
tonight. He's gonna be so out of
it he can hardly walk.

Nicole gets up and grabs a butcher's knife from a block in
the cupboard.

She walks to the door and draws back the curtain to face him.

NICOLE
Sure. I'll play.

JUZZY
That knife's not too big for you?

She holds it up.

NICOLE
Give me a chance. All I need is
one knick.

JUZZY
Unlock the door. We'll see how
close you can get.

NICOLE
You're an asshole and I wouldn't
let you have the satisfaction.

JUZZY
And you're a bitch, so let's move
on and have some fun with it.

NICOLE
Haven't you found yourself a new
bitch to fuck yet?

He licks the glass.

JUZZY
I don't want any bitch. I want
you.

NICOLE
Goodbye Juzzy.

She shuts the curtain.

Juzzy BANGS hard on the glass. Nicole flinches.

JUZZY
Thought I'd drop something past
for you. You'll like it. I know I
did.

Nicole listens as Juzzy backs his Jeep out the drive.

She opens the curtain and turns the backyard light on.

She looks around then unlocks the door to grab an A4 envelope
from the ground.

As she shuts the door Juzzy reaches his hand through and
grabs her arm.

Nicole jams his wrist in the door. He moans and pulls it
back.

She shuts and locks the door.

Juzzy rests his head against the glass and glares at her.

JUZZY
We'll be alone again soon. You
can't hide from me forever.

Nicole shuts the curtain. She listens to Juzzy's footsteps as
he leaves.

She grabs the phone from the wall and dials a number.

ERIC
(over phone, filtered)
Heeeey Babe.

EXT. DAVE'S HOUSE/BACKYARD - NIGHT

The yard is a mess. Beer cans. Bourbon bottles. Plastic
plates with barbeque scraps.

Sexy GIRLS splash about in the pool while boys from the team muck around.

NICOLE
(over phone, filtered)
You're plastered already, aren't you?

ERIC
Nah. I'm cool. What's up?

Mick runs past and tries to pants Eric, but to no avail.

ERIC
(to Mick)
Hey man. Not cool.

INTERCUT BETWEEN NICOLE and ERIC

NICOLE
(into phone)
I should have known. I can't talk to you when you're shit faced.

ERIC
Nah baby, c'mon, you can tell me anything. Anytime.

Pete runs up from behind and yanks Eric into the pool. The CELL PHONE drops to the pavement.

NICOLE
(over phone, filtered)
Eric? Eric?

Nicole's eyes well.

She smashes the phone on the bench continually until it's completely broken.

She slides her back down the cupboards to sit on the floor and cry.

EXT. JUZZY'S HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

Juzzy stands. Unhinged smile. Gun in hand. He stares at his target: A WOODEN STAND that holds a row of three 'Barbie' dolls and three 'Ken's'.

Mick sits nearby. He sips from a bottle of Bourbon.

Juzzy aims and then fires. He hits five out of the six dolls.

JUZZY

Fuck it!

MICK

You're a sick bastard.

Juzzy aims at the remaining doll. BANG!

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/LOUNGE - DAY

Nicole sits on the couch. She holds an A4 size picture of herself and Juzzy.

She scrunches it up and puts it in the kitchen sink.

She takes a lighter from the cutlery drawer and sets the photo alight.

INT. APPLIANCE STORE - DAY

Nicole pays an ATTENDANT for a new phone.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Nicole stands at the bottom of the steps.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

OFFICERS busily take calls and haul CROOKS to the cells.

Nicole walks up to a CLERK at the service desk.

NICOLE

I need to talk to one of the
constables, please?

CLERK

Do you need immediate assistance
for an emergency?

NICOLE

No.

CLERK

We're very busy at the moment. Can I take your name and number and have someone contact you?

NICOLE

It's really important.

The Clerk looks around the police station.

CLERK

I can't guarantee anything but I'll see what I can do. Take a seat.

Nicole sits on a seat against the wall. She hangs her head when the Chief of Police comes her way.

CHIEF OF POLICE

Nicole, isn't it?

Nicole looks up.

NICOLE

Yes.

CHIEF OF POLICE

Come through.

NICOLE

It's ok. I'm already waiting to see somebody else.

CHIEF OF POLICE

Nonsense. Come through.

Nicole reluctantly gets up and follows him.

OFFICE

He shuts the door behind her then sits at his desk.

Nicole stands in the middle of the room. Lost for words.

CHIEF OF POLICE

C'mon now, take a seat. I don't bite.

She sits down across from him.

NICOLE

What would happen if I made a complaint about a football player being in possession of illegal drugs and then giving them to unsuspecting victims?

He gives her a peculiar look.

CHIEF OF POLICE

I'd ask you how you came to that conclusion.

NICOLE

I think it needs to be looked into. Searches done. Or something like that. Just to make sure.

He leans forward and clenches his fists on the desk.

CHIEF OF POLICE

I don't intend on wasting valuable police time. So to clarify everything for you right here and now, I know these boys well and I'm certain that none of them are in possession of any type of illegal drugs, let alone using them on unsuspecting victims.

NICOLE

So you wouldn't even be willing to look into it?

CHIEF OF POLICE

If there's a problem then I'll investigate it, but for now it would be best if you stayed away from things that shouldn't be your concern.

NICOLE

So you can waste money on paying dodgy football players, but not protecting the public?

CHIEF OF POLICE

I believe it would be a waste of resources and we can't afford that right now.

NICOLE

You believe? That would be right. Have you ever thought that maybe not everyone is as clean as you think, including your own son?

CHIEF OF POLICE

You're playing on very thin ice, Miss Stanford. You see I've done a little investigating myself and we wouldn't want any rumors going around about a cry for attention from a young erratic woman, who after being in a car accident that caused the death of her parents, is now slowly becoming delusional and losing grip on her sanity, would we?

She stands.

NICOLE

You can't twist things like that.

CHIEF OF POLICE

Oh, I assure I can and will do whatever it takes to protect my family.

He signals to an OFFICER out in the main area.

CHIEF OF POLICE

And I know every officer from here to the next county. So don't push your luck or I'll have you thrown in the asylum so fast you won't know what hit you.

The officer enters.

CHIEF OF POLICE

I believe Miss Stanford would like an escort out.

NICOLE

Don't bother. I've got two legs. I know how to use them.

She storms out.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Nicole sits at the bench with her laptop. She types:

"I feel so confused. I want to tell Eric everything, but I can't. Why?"

Nicole puts a hand on her forehead.

NICOLE

Because I'm too chicken shit!

She continues to type:

"Sometimes I wish I could escape."

EXT. JETTY - NIGHT

Gentle waves collapse along the bay.

The football team, all in formal attire, dance to music on the bottom deck of a luxury private charter boat.

Nicole stands alone on the top deck. She holds the rail and looks out to sea. A deep loneliness within her eyes.

Eric joins her.

ERIC

What are you hiding for?

NICOLE

I just needed some time alone to think.

He leans against the rail beside her.

ERIC

We're on holidays soon and we can sort everything out then. Alright?

She nods.

Pete, Dave, Mick and Rob, drunk and obnoxious, follow each other up to the top deck.

Mick, Rob and Dave stumble to a seated area in the corner.

PETE

Eric...

Pete stumbles over to Eric and pulls him away from Nicole.

PETE

...What are you two doing up here?

ERIC

How you going there Pete?

PETE

I haven't seen you with a drink.

ERIC

I'm not drinking tonight or you'll have to fish me out of the water.

MICK

I think I'm already a little drunk.

DAVE

I think we're all a little drunk.

MICK

Yep.

DAVE

So how about we get another beer?

MICK

Yep.

DAVE

Then what did we come up here for?

MICK

Don't know.

Mick and Dave make their way to the bottom deck.

PETE

You've got to have at least one at
the end of season party.

Pete drags Eric along.

ERIC

(To Nicole)

I'll be back in a minute.

PETE

(Mocking)

Yeah baby, I'll be back in a
minute.

Rob gives Nicole a dirty look on his way past. She turns back
to face the water.

Juzzy makes his way up the side steps. Beer in hand.

JUZZY

Told you'd we'd be alone again
soon.

She turns to face him.

NICOLE

What the hell do you want?

JUZZY

No need to get all defensive. Not
like I can do anything here
anyway.

He moves closer to her. She stands her ground.

JUZZY

Although, if I could caress that
body again, I'd be a happy man.

He goes to touch her. She slaps his hand away.

NICOLE

Don't.

JUZZY

What? I know you secretly like me.

She slaps him across the cheek and begins to walk away.

He grabs her arm and flings her backwards. She trips and falls off the side of the boat.

She SCREAMS on her way down then SPLASH!

Eric runs up to the top deck and past Juzzy. He looks over the edge of the railing.

ERIC

Nicole?!

Cody runs up and grabs Juzzy by the shoulders.

CODY

What the hell happened?

Eric frantically removes his shoes and jacket then jumps off the side of the boat.

JUZZY

She tripped and fell.

Cody runs down to the lower deck.

EXT. JETTY - LATER

Eric stands at the edge, blanket wrapped around him. He watches police boats roam the water.

Cody joins him.

CODY

Everyone else's gone.

Eric nods.

A police boat returns to the Jetty with the Chief of Police. He walks over to Eric and pats him on the back.

CHIEF OF POLICE

I'm sorry son, but we're going to have to call the search off for tonight.

ERIC

That's not good enough.

CHIEF OF POLICE

As soon as dawn breaks we'll be straight back out. And, I know this isn't what you want to hear, but I need to make you completely aware of the situation and things aren't looking good. We should have found something by now and the rips are heavy, if something else hasn't gotten to her first--

CODY

Chief!

ERIC

You're right. I really don't want to hear that right now.

CHIEF OF POLICE

Alright. Just doing my job. All you can really do is go home and get some sleep.

ERIC

I'm not gonna be able to sleep.

He looks at the moon's reflection on the water.

EXT. FISHING BOAT - DAY

Eric stands against the rail of the beat-up boat.

Cody peers his head out the captain's cabin.

CODY

See anything?

No answer. Eric remains fixated on looking out to sea.

EXT. FISHING BOAT - NIGHT

Wind blows a gale. Rain pours.

Eric stands at the front of the boat. Determined.

EXT. FISHING BOAT - DAY

Cody watches Eric and the CAPTAIN, late 50's, point at destinations on a map.

CAPTAIN

I'm sorry, but we've been
everywhere we can go.

Eric brushes past Cody. He walks to the back of the boat and hangs his head. Exhausted. Close to tears.

CODY

You need to let her go.

ERIC

I can't give up.

CODY

You have to. You need to face the
fact that she's gone.

Eric closes his eyes. Breathes deep.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

Eric stands in front of the football team before a PRIEST at a gravesite with an empty coffin. Dark sunglasses hide his weary eyes.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) The priest finishes a service.
- B) Everyone puts a rose into the coffin.
- C) The football members say goodbye to Eric as they leave.
- D) Eric stands alone. He watches the coffin being lowered. A tear runs down his cheek.

NICOLE (V.O)

I never wanted to hurt Eric like
that.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. JETTY - NIGHT

The luxury private charter sits in the distance.

Eric searches the water for Nicole.

ERIC

Nicole?!

He dives below the water then resurfaces.

NICOLE (V.O)

Sometimes the worst ideas come to you at the most vulnerable moments. Whether they're right or wrong, you just accept the consequences of the moment and plan to deal with everything later, somehow hoping that it's all going to work out.

ERIC

Nicole?!

Nicole stands in darkness underneath the Jetty.

NICOLE (V.O)

I knew it was wrong, but at the time I couldn't think straight. There was no time to question my motives.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nicole, dripping wet, bare footed, slides the back door open. She enters and walks down the hallway.

BEDROOM

She grabs some baggy old paint ridden clothes and a pair of comfortable shoes from a box at the back of the closet.

She takes the envelope reading "Eric's B'day" from the shoe box.

NICOLE
I'm sorry Eric.

KITCHEN

Wearing the baggy old clothes with her hair concealed under a cap and dark make-up to boot, she uses a towel to dry a couple of wet spots on the floor.

She puts the towel and her wet dress in a black plastic bag.

She looks around the room then leaves.

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

Nicole stuffs the plastic bag into the bottom of a bin.

INT. BUS STOP/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nicole rubs brown hair dye through her hair.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Nicole looks out the window as hills pass in the distance.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Not too shabby with basic amenities.

Nicole stirs. She wakes in a cold sweat.

NICOLE (V.O)
As much as I seemed free, I knew
that I wasn't. When someone
violates your body and you have no
control over what's going on, the
feeling stays with you. You can't
shake it. It doesn't just go away.

INT. COMPUTER STORE - DAY

Nicole browses at laptops.

A male SHOP ATTENDANT, mid 20's approaches.

SHOP ATTENDANT

Do you need a hand?

She points to a small laptop on the shelf.

NICOLE

I'll take that one.

SHOP ATTENDANT

A girl who knows what she wants.

He grabs a box from a shelf and heads to the counter.

NICOLE

Believe me when I say that's odd.
Most of the time I'm so in doubt I
have no idea.

SHOP ATTENDANT

You're new around here, aren't
you?

NICOLE

Just passing through.

She hands him a wad of cash from the envelope.

SHOP ATTENDANT

You should stick around. See the
sights. Enjoy the local cafés.

She picks the laptop up.

NICOLE

I'll see how I go.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Nicole sits in bed. Laptop on her knees. Typing.

"Leaving was the hardest decision
I'd ever made. I loved Eric with
all my heart, but I couldn't marry
him without telling him the
truth."

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Nicole boards a bus.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Nicole sips coffee and watches two TEENAGERS lovingly chase each other down the street.

She counts the low stash of cash in the envelope.

A WAITRESS comes from behind.

WAITRESS
Your change, Miss.

She hands her a few notes and some small change.

Nicole hands her back the small change.

NICOLE
Sorry. It's all I can tip right now.

The waitress grimaces and walks away.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Nicole sits on a bench looking through the envelope.

INT. BAKERY - DAY

Old fashioned. Eat in or take away.

Nicole pleads for work with a MANAGER, mid 40's.

MANAGER
Do I have a sign in the window?

NICOLE
No. But I'll work hard I promise.
I really need something. Anything.

MANAGER
So does every Tom, Dick and Harry.
You're not special.

She turns to leave. Deflated.

EXT. BAKERY - DAY

Nicole walks out. An OLD LADY, 70's, stops her.

OLD LADY

You're not going to give up that
easy, are you?

NICOLE

If he doesn't have any work then
there's nothing I can do about it.

OLD LADY

I wouldn't be so sure. Do you have
any experience?

NICOLE

Some.

OLD LADY

You know what, don't ask me why,
maybe I'm going senile, but I like
you. Something about you just
makes me want to help.

She calls out to the manager.

OLD LADY

Frank!

He walks out and stands to attention.

FRANK (MANAGER)

What can I do for you Ms. Martin?

OLD LADY

What is it that you don't like
about this young lady?

FRANK

There's nothing wrong with her
ma'am. We just don't have any
positions available right now.

OLD LADY

Well, why don't you go and fire that young phon-o-holic supposedly on her break over there? Like I told you to do yesterday.

She points to a TEEN fumbling with her cell phone at a table.

FRANK

But she's--

OLD LADY

I don't care who she is. She's lazy and you know it. Enough is enough.

He gives her a disapproving look and sighs--

FRANK

Yes Ms. Martin.

OLD LADY

Off you go then.

Frank fires the young girl. She throws her apron at him and marches off.

OLD LADY

(to Nicole)

You're hired.

Nicole looks at her. Astounded.

NICOLE

Are you sure?

OLD LADY

Weren't you just pleading for a job?

NICOLE

Yes. Sorry. Thank you. Ms. Martin, was it?

OLD LADY

Give an old bat a break and call me Lucy. Frank has a stick up his ass about being formal around me.

NICOLE

Wow. Ok, Lucy. Thank you so much.

LUCY

Well off you go. And remember; I don't like to give too many chances.

Nicole nods and walks back inside. Frank hands her the apron.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Dark and dingy. A VACANCY light flickers on and off.

Nicole walks towards Reception.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Nicole tosses and turns in bed. She wakes abruptly. Breathes heavy.

She looks at her laptop on the bedside table. She sits up and grabs it.

INT. BAKERY - DAY

Nicole cleans tables while Frank closes up for the day. She puts her apron on a hook at the back.

Frank hands her a pay packet.

FRANK

Don't spend it all at once.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Nicole empties a basket at the register.

A TV in the background catches her eye with PICTURES of football teams amidst practice streaming across it.

A NEWSREPORTER makes an announcement--

NEWSREPORTER

Football is all the talk as the new season begins. Hopes high as teams get to work, practicing hard to accomplish the reigning title of winners this year.

CASHIER

That'll be fifteen dollars.

Nicole, mesmerized by the TV, hands over a few notes.

EXT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

Nicole stands at the window. She stares at a beautiful gown on a mannequin behind the glass.

The SHOPKEEPER comes outside to pick up a blown over sign.

SHOPKEEPER

That's one of our best sellers.
Did you want to try it on?

NICOLE

No.

Nicole briskly walks away.

EXT. MOTEL RECEPTION - NIGHT

Nicole stands at a payphone. She listens to RINGING--

ERIC

(over phone, filtered)
Hello?

Silence.

ERIC

(over phone, filtered)
Hello?

Nicole hangs up.

INT. MOTEL/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nicole sits on the floor. Knees in tight. Tears streaming down her face.

EXT. BAKERY/BACK COURTYARD - DAY

Nicole sits on the back step. She drinks a cappuccino.

Lucy joins her.

LUCY

What troubles you, love?

NICOLE

I've just...made a lot of mistakes in my past. Really, really stupid mistakes.

LUCY

I know you've probably heard this a thousand times, as I'm sure everyone has, but we all have baggage. Things we should have done differently. You need to rise above it all. See what you've done wrong then go and fix it.

NICOLE

I don't know how to fix it, Lucy. I...I don't think I can.

LUCY

Everything broken can be fixed.

NICOLE

Including someone's heart?

LUCY

Of course it can. It's just going to take a little more time and gentler handling, but it can be done.

Lucy tugs on her arm.

LUCY

Come on now. Break's over.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Nicole sits on the sand. She watches the sunset.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Nicole lies in bed. She looks at the pillow beside her.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eric lies in bed looking at Nicole's pillow. He turns to face the ceiling.

INT. FOOTBALL STADIUM/COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

A small crisp office.

Eric holds the back of a chair in front of the coach's desk.

COACH, a firm man in his late 40's, sits forward in a leather chair. He rests his elbows on the desk.

COACH

This has been going on for a while now.

ERIC

I know.

COACH

Do you need take some time off to get your head in the right place?

ERIC

No.

COACH

Cause we've been over this before. On the field it's game time.

ERIC

I know.

Coach leans back in the chair.

COACH

Eric, you can't keep letting your emotions get to you out there. That's how teams plunder and I'm sorry to say, but if you don't pull your shit together soon then I'm going to have to bench you.

Eric nods.

INT. FOOTBALL STADIUM/LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Eric, upset, walks to his locker and punches a dint in it.

Dave and the rest of the boys sprawl in and walk to their lockers.

Juzzy walks over to Eric.

JUZZY

What was your ass doing out there today?

Eric turns to stand within an inch of him.

ERIC

Better than your sorry ass has ever done out there.

JUZZY

Want to say that again?

Juzzy pushes him against the lockers. Eric pushes back then slugs him one across the cheek.

A full out brawl begins between them. A few of the boys move forward to step in.

DAVE

Leave them at it. Bout time they get it out of their system.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM/PARKING LOT - DAY

Eric gets into his Ute. Fat lip. Bruised eye. He drives away.

Juzzy walks across to his Jeep. Worse for wear. Battle lost.

EXT. JUZZY'S HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

Juzzy aligns five 'Ken' dolls as his targets.

He shoots them down, one by one.

EXT. JETTY - DAY

The sun shines vibrantly over iridescent blue waves.

Eric leans on the rail at the end of the jetty. He holds an open white rose.

He closes his eyes and smells the rose then throws it into the water.

ERIC
I'll never forget you.

He watches it drift away.

INT. "RODNEY'S" BAR - NIGHT

The bar is closing.

Eric sits alone. Drunk.

A WAITRESS, late 20's, puts a shot of bourbon on the bar.

WAITRESS
Last one. And you're getting a cab
right?

Eric downs it and hands her a fifty dollar note.

ERIC
Yep.

She puts the fifty in the till and offers him change.

ERIC
Keep it.

EXT. "RODNEY'S" BAR - NIGHT

Eric stumbles onto the quiet street. He gets his keys out and makes his way across the road.

SMASH! A car slams into Eric and drives away.
Eric lies in the gutter. Bleeding and unconscious.
The waitress runs out.

WAITRESS

Oh my god! Eric!

She runs towards him.

INT. MOTEL ROOM/BATHROOM - DAY

Nicole washes blonde dye from her hair.
She looks into the mirror and smiles.

INT. BAKERY - DAY

Nicole hands Lucy her apron.

NICOLE

Thanks again.

LUCY

It was my pleasure, dear.

Lucy gives her a warm hug.

LUCY

You're a strong woman. Remember that.

NICOLE

I will.

Nicole leaves, head held high.

INT. BUS STATION - DAY

Nicole walks to the ticket booth.

As she pays for a ticket, a picture of Eric pops up on the TV behind the LADY in the booth.

NICOLE

Could you turn that up please?

LADY

Sure.

NEWSREPORTER

After his injuries it's not clear yet as to whether he will play on for the rest of the season.

Nicole sits on a nearby bench. Worried.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

(O.S.): Thunder BOOMS.

Cody holds the front door open while Eric hobbles in. Knee bandaged. Healing cuts on his face.

CODY

You gonna be alright?

ERIC

Yeah, I'll be fine.

Cody begins to pull the door shut.

ERIC

And hey, thanks.

CODY

Not a problem.

Cody shuts the door.

Eric puts his keys on the bench then walks down the hallway.

BEDROOM

Nicole sits on the bed.

Eric walks in and stops. He stares at her.

ERIC

Nicole?

He shakes it off and walks to the closet.

ERIC
(to himself)
My heads that fucked up it's
playing tricks on me.

NICOLE
Eric, are you alright?

He stops. Slowly turns.

NICOLE
I'm here.

He limps towards her at first overjoyed then upset.

ERIC
How?

NICOLE
I didn't drown.

He stands in front of her.

ERIC
What? That's all you have to say
is I didn't drown.

NICOLE
I'm so sorry Eric, I--

RAIN begins to pour outside.

ERIC
How could you do this to me?

Nicole looks at the wall. Bites her lip.

ERIC
I...I can't deal with this.

NICOLE
What?

ERIC
Get out.

NICOLE
Eric?

He grabs a photo of them from his bedside table and hurls it at the wall. The glass SMASHES to smithereens.

ERIC

Leave!

She gets up and walks towards the hallway. Tears welling. She looks back at him.

EXT. ERIC'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nicole walks out into the rain.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eric sits with his head in his hands.

KITCHEN

He grabs his keys and hurries the best he can towards the front door.

He opens it to see Nicole. She faces him. Drenched.

NICOLE

I have nowhere else to go.

ERIC

Why did you do it?

NICOLE

Because in some idiotic way I thought I was protecting you.

ERIC

From what? What have you been doing while I've been mourning you?!

NICOLE

Juzzy raped me, Eric!

ERIC

What?!

NICOLE

I lied. The night of Cody's birthday I let him take me home and he put drugs in my drink then he raped me. And there was nothing I could do about it.

ERIC

Why didn't you tell me?!

NICOLE

Because I wanted to confront him first. To make sure my vivid dreams weren't just dreams, but he had all of his so called evidence and I had nothing.

ERIC

What are you talking about?

NICOLE

He had pictures of me and him and the drugs were out of my system by then and he said all this stuff about how he could prove there was more going on between us. And I fell for it. In the end I felt so trapped. By everyone. Eyes on me wherever I went.

ERIC

I could have protected you!

NICOLE

I know. It seems so stupid now.

She takes a step back.

NICOLE

I...I shouldn't have come. I understand why you wouldn't want me around after what I've done.

She begins to walk away. Eric limps after her. Grabs her arm.

ERIC

Running away is not the answer!

She hangs her head.

ERIC

Why weren't you honest with me? If you'd have told the truth in the first place it would never have gotten this far. You broke my heart. I thought you were dead. It felt like I'd lost the only thing worth living for. Do you get that?

NICOLE

Yes.

ERIC

How can I forgive you?

She sobs.

NICOLE

I'm so sorry Eric. I'd literally go to the ends of the earth if I could do it all differently, but I can't. I don't expect you to forgive me and I don't know what else to say, but I'm sorry and I love you.

He looks at her for a moment then moves forward to cuddle her.

ERIC

I thought I'd lost you forever. I don't want to lose you again.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/LOUNGE - LATER

Nicole sits on the couch, blanket wrapped around her, across from Eric.

ERIC

What are we gonna do?

NICOLE

I don't know. Not even his dad was willing to see what his son is capable of.

Someone KNOCKS on the door.

Eric and Nicole look at each other.

ERIC
(yells)
Who is it?

The waitress from Rodney's Bar answers.

WAITRESS (O.S.)
Eric, it's April. You know, from
Rodney's. I helped you after the
accident.

Nicole hides down the hallway.

Eric answers the door.

APRIL
Can I come in?

ERIC
This really isn't a good time.

APRIL
I know who hit you.

She looks up and down the street. Nervous.

APRIL
Can I come in? Please?

He lets her in. She walks over to the couch.

APRIL
I was warned not to say anything
at the time.

ERIC
Was it Juzzy?

She looks to the floor. Ashamed.

APRIL
Yes.

Eric puts his hands on his hips. Contemplating. Anger
growing.

Nicole comes out of hiding. April looks at her, flabbergasted.

APRIL

You're supposed to be dead?

Nicole sits across from her on the couch.

NICOLE

Yeah but I'm not and I'm guessing you may be in a similar situation to what I was, so I won't tell if you won't.

ERIC

When I get a hold of Juzzy I'm gonna rip his fucking head off. It's the least he deserves.

APRIL

Wait. You can't. I'm telling you this in confidence. If you say anything, he'll know.

ERIC

So why come?

APRIL

Because you's need to know there's more under the surface than you think. What happened to you, Nicole, shouldn't have. Juzzy was stupid and vengeful. But underneath the rest of the football members' façades there's more than meets the eye. With drugs and everything. Nothing's as it seems and in the end they all think they're some kind of gods. And in this town they are, so they think they can do anything and get away it. The only reason you haven't been included is because you're new and they weren't sure on you. Plus apparently Juzzy pleaded for you not to be included.

Eric walks to the kitchen.

ERIC

And Cody?

APRIL

He knows about everything but he never gets involved.

He punches a hole in the wall.

NICOLE

How does a small town football league hold so much power? How do they keep getting away with this?

APRIL

It may be hard for you to understand. But we don't have much here. We never will and nobody in town wants bad publicity. The football team is the only good thing we have and they'll do anything to protect it.

April's cell phone rings. She looks down at her handbag.

APRIL

Shit. I've gotta go. I'm not even supposed to be here.

ERIC

What are you expecting from me, if I'm not supposed to do anything about it?

She heads to the front door then looks back.

APRIL

Just...get out town. Ask for a transfer. You're not like them. You don't deserve to be caught up in this.

NICOLE

Nobody does.

April leaves.

NICOLE

We have to do something.

ERIC

I know.

INT. ERIC'S HOUSE/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nicole stands in front of the vanity, towel wrapped around her body, hair wet. She looks into the mirror.

NICOLE

(to herself)

I can do this.

She looks at the basin then closes her eyes. She opens them then looks at the mirror, more determined.

NICOLE

I can do this.

INT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

Disco lights flash in the large decked out room. Walls decorated with streamers. A DJ plays loud music.

Football players and their partners are scattered around the room. All in masquerade outfits. All enjoying the night.

Mick, Rob and Juzzy stand next to a stage at the rear.

MICK

Let's not let the women choose a party theme next year.

ROB

Agreed

JUZZY

Agreed.

Nicole enters, barely recognizable, wearing a period style dress with an extravagant mask and a large brown wig, escorted by Eric, who looks just as dashing.

ERIC

And I've told you how much I hate this idea?

NICOLE

Only about a million times.

ERIC

Good. Just checking.

Pete walks up from behind and places his hand on Eric's shoulder.

PETE

You made it. And with a date too.

ERIC

Ah, yep. Pete this is--

NICOLE

(English accent)

Angela.

Nicole reaches a hand out to shake his.

PETE

What a stunning mask.

NICOLE

Thank you.

PETE

I'm supposed to be getting another round of drinks. Do you's want one?

ERIC

No. I'm alright.

PETE

Sure? You seem a little tense there.

ERIC

Nah, I'm fine.

PETE

Angela?

NICOLE

No, but thanks anyway.

PETE

Well, I'd better go get them.
Pleased to meet you Angela.

Pete wanders off towards the bar.

ERIC

All I want to do is beat the
absolute shit out them.

NICOLE

Hold it together. Just for one
night.

Eric clenches his fists.

NICOLE

C'mon.

She drags him to the dance floor.

Marissa and Dave dance beside them.

Dave nudges Eric.

DAVE

So, who's the lovely lady?

ERIC

This is Angela.

Nicole shakes Dave's hand.

DAVE

How you doing?

She flashes him a cheesy grin.

NICOLE

Fine, thank you.

Dave puts a hand on Eric's chest.

DAVE

(to Nicole)

It's great to see this one finally
move on. I mean after what
happened to--

MARISSA

Dave! You don't need to bring that up right now.

(to Nicole)

I'm Marissa, Dave's wife. It's nice to meet you.

(to Dave)

Now let's leave these two alone to get more acquainted.

DAVE

Yes ma'am.

Marissa pulls Dave away.

Nicole looks around the hall until she sees Juzzy by the stage.

He looks at her, puts his beer down then walks down a small hallway that leads to toilets and meeting rooms at the back.

Nicole whispers in Eric's ear--

NICOLE

It's time.

He grabs her arm. Looks into her eyes.

ERIC

Sure you wanna do this by yourself? Cause I'm more than ready to come with you.

NICOLE

You two will end up brawling and we won't get a clear confession. I need to finish this. By myself.

She walks towards the toilets.

Eric joins Mick, Pete and Rob by the stage.

ERIC

Where's Cody?

MICK

Stomach bug or something like that.

MALE TOILETS

Nicole pokes her head in the door.

Dave stands, alone, at the basin. He washes his hands.

DAVE

Ladies next door.

NICOLE

Sorry.

She shuts the door.

HALLWAY

Nicole checks different meeting rooms until she reaches one at the end.

MEETING ROOM

Juzzy faces a whiteboard at the back wall. His mask lies on the table.

Nicole enters and shuts the door.

JUZZY

Eric doesn't usually go for brunettes.

He turns around and walks towards her.

JUZZY

But you're not a brunette. Are you Nicole?

He corners her against the wall. Pulls off her mask and wig.

NICOLE

How did you know?

JUZZY

What? Did you think we couldn't bust that bitch, April? Dirty little slag doesn't know what's good for her.

NICOLE

What have you done to her?

JUZZY

That's none of your concern.

He removes a hand pistol from his inner jacket pocket and runs it down her cheek.

JUZZY

Stupid little tramps, that's all women truly are. I'm just revealing your true colors, before you screw with some other poor guy's life.

NICOLE

You think drugging and raping women is revealing our true colors?

JUZZY

You, I have to say, were a personal pleasure. I wanted a piece of you from the first time I saw you. Getting to Eric was an added bonus.

He runs the gun down the curves of her body and stops when he hits a bump in her dress.

JUZZY

What's this, huh?

She tries to stop him as he pulls a wire out from the top of her dress.

He takes a step back. Holds the gun towards her.

JUZZY

We can't have that now, can we?

She watches the device as he drops it then stomps on it.

Nicole rushes towards him and knees his in the groin.

He falls over and drops the gun.

JUZZY

Bitch!

She runs towards the door as he lies in pain.

HALLWAY

NICOLE (O.S.)

Eric!

She runs out to see everyone looking her way.

JUZZY (O.S.)

Get her!

Pete and Rob suddenly run towards her.

Before Eric can stop them, Mick gives him a hard uppercut to the stomach.

ERIC

Run!

Mick pushes Eric to the floor.

MICK

Sorry man.

Nicole flees out an emergency exit beside her.

EXT. TOWN HALL/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Nicole bolts towards the right side of the main street. She just makes it around the corner as the boys exit the hall.

She hides behind the fence and quickly takes her shoes off before running down the street.

Juzzy and the others look towards a small alley at the back of the parking lot then towards the main street.

PETE

Is the gun really necessary?
Weren't we just gonna scare them?

ROB

Didn't work last time, did it?

Juzzy points to Rob.

JUZZY
Take the alley.

He points to Mick and Pete then to the left side of the main street.

JUZZY
You two go that way.

Mick and Pete head towards the main street.

Rob points at Juzzy.

ROB
You'd better hope we find her.

He runs off down the alley.

Juzzy grits his teeth. He runs towards the right side of the main street.

Eric, hunched over, comes out of the emergency exit in time to see Juzzy turn at the end of the parking lot.

He takes out his cell phone and calls Nicole.

ERIC
(into phone)
Where are you?

He makes his way to his Ute.

NICOLE (V.O)
(over phone, filtered)
On the corner of Tripet Street and
Rose. I'm heading towards
Williams.

ERIC
Shit! Juzzy's headed your way. Do
you remember the alley between the
supermarket and the butchers?

He gets in the Ute and starts the engine.

NICOLE (V.O)
Yeah.

ERIC

Hide there. I'll try to catch up
with Juzzy before he reaches you.

He drives out of the parking lot.

EXT. WILLIAMS STREET - NIGHT

Street lights flicker.

Nicole runs across the street.

She stops and leans on a shop window to catch her breath.

Juzzy runs down Rose Street into Williams.

He sees Nicole and she ducks as he aims the gun towards her.

BANG! BANG! One bullet SMASHES the window. The other hits
Nicole in the hip.

Adrenaline pushes Nicole on as she runs down the street and
turns at the corner to see the supermarket.

With Juzzy close behind she bolts towards an alley to the
left side of the supermarket and hides in darkness against
the building.

She grabs her hip, only now realizing she's been shot. Blood
slowly trickles from the wound. She sighs and looks to the
sky.

Juzzy wanders around the parking lot in front of the
supermarket. He looks to an alley on the right then the one
on the left.

Crazed, he shoves a trolley across the road.

JUZZY

I'm gonna find you Nicole! It's
only a matter of time!

Nicole looks down the alley. Broken glass shimmers on the
pavement.

NICOLE

Shit.

She puts her shoes back on.

Juzzy sees a blood trail leading towards Nicole.

Nicole hears his footsteps coming and takes off down the alley. Heels clacking.

She limps down a row of steps and turns to see Juzzy in hot pursuit.

She trips and tumbles down to the pavement below.

INT. ERIC'S UTE - NIGHT (TRAVELING)

Eric drives past the supermarket and slows when he catches a glimpse of Juzzy down the alley.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Juzzy smirks as he makes his way down the steps.

Nicole moans as she pushes herself up, dress torn, knees and elbows grazed.

She limps forward, but Juzzy grabs her hair and pulls her back.

NICOLE

Ahh!

Juzzy turns her around to face him.

He pushes her against the wall then moves in close to pin her there.

JUZZY

You know, you're all the same.
Even the girl I used to love fell
for, would you believe it, Eric.
Before him and his mom moved away.
Like father like son, hey?

NICOLE

Your whole reason for doing this
is absolute bullshit!

JUZZY

Not to me it isn't!

He pushes the gun against her wound. She leans forward.

NICOLE

Ahh!

She stands straight. Tries to show confidence.

NICOLE

Killing me will only ensure that
you get a longer sentence.

JUZZY

I don't think so. See, all I have
to do is dig up your grave and put
your body in your coffin. Right
where it should be.

Nicole slowly moves her knee towards his groin. Juzzy spins
her around and slams her into the wall. He stands close.

JUZZY

Do you think I'm stupid?

NICOLE

I think you're insane.

She quickly shoves her heel into his shin and runs it
downward.

JUZZY

Ahh!

He topples back and grabs his shin.

Nicole makes a break for it around a corner of the alley.

Juzzy aims the gun and runs after her.

BAMN! A chunk of wood slams into Juzzy's face. He drops the
gun and falls backwards.

He sits on the ground, shaken, nose bleeding. He touches the
blood under his nose then looks down at his hand.

Eric stands in front of him. He holds the chunk of wood.

JUZZY

Eric. What the fuck?

Juzzy, unsteady, pushes himself up to stand.

ERIC

You're pathetic.

Eric smacks the chunk of wood into Juzzy's stomach.

ERIC

And you're never touching Nicole
again.

Juzzy curls forward and groans.

Nicole picks up the gun and aims it at Juzzy.

Juzzy looks at her and laughs.

JUZZY

What are you gonna do, huh?

Wobbly on his feet.

JUZZY

You don't have the guts.

NICOLE

You made me feel cheap, disgusting
and alone. Which is exactly how
you're going to feel in prison. So
no, Juzzy, I'm not going to shoot
you. I'm just making sure you stay
put until the proper authorities
get here. And I don't mean your
dad.

Eric takes out his cell phone and makes a call.

ERIC

(into phone)

I'd like to speak with Detective
Laurence please.

JUZZY

I can't let you do that.

He lunges at Nicole. Startled, she pulls the trigger.

BANG! The bullet hits Juzzy in the shoulder.

He falls back down. Cries out in pain.

Nicole suddenly falls in a heap.

Eric runs to her aid. Shocked and panicked by the blood seeping from her wound. He puts pressure on it.

ERIC
Nicole? Stay with me.

Nicole makes no movement. No response.

MALE VOICE
(over phone, filtered)
Hello?

ERIC
(into phone)
I need an ambulance!

EXT. NICOLE'S GRAVESITE - DAY

A bunch of withered roses sit on the dirt in front of the tombstone.

Black SHOES stand at the front of the grave. They belong to a serious looking DETECTIVE, late 40's, in a flashy suit.

NICOLE (V.O)
April was right. In a crazed town
run by mad men, who was going to
listen? On whose authority would
justice be served? Unless you have
the proper evidence.

A small crane lifts the tombstone from the ground.

NICOLE (V.O)
Lucky for me, even without the
wired confession, we now had an
overwhelming amount against Juzzy.

The detective walks to his car.

A HEADLINE on a folded newspaper under his arm reads:

“Local girl found bound to chair
in Chief of Police’s sons
basement.”

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Eric helps Nicole into his Ute.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

The boys are at Practice.

Nicole looks out the passenger window of the Ute as Eric drives past.

NICOLE (V.O)

Even though the others got a heads
up and came out clean, there was a
certain satisfaction knowing that
at least Juzzy was behind bars.

Cody stops to watch Eric’s car drive down the street.

INT. PRISON HALL - DAY

Juzzy is escorted in handcuffs, orange prison overalls on, by
a PRISON GUARD to a small cell.

The prison guard opens the door and removes the handcuffs.

Juzzy walks into the cell and sits on the bed.

INT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Nicole kneels in front of a joint tombstone.

It reads:

“Here lies Michael and Hilary
Stanford. Beloved parents to
Nicole. ”

NICOLE

I love you.

She places two roses on the gravesite.

INT. ERIC AND NICOLE'S NEW HOUSE - DAY.

Nicole sits on a couch, surrounded by cardboard boxes, and types on her laptop.

"Time had allowed me to reflect.
Realize that I am strong enough to
face anything that comes my way.
And with Eric by my side I had
everything I ever wanted. I once
again had a family."

EXT. ERIC AND NICOLE'S NEW HOUSE - DAY

A fresh painted family home.

Nicole walks outside. Pregnant belly showing.

NICOLE (V.O)

But this is only my story and I'm
sure there are many different
stories out there involving date
rape. So speak up. We need to
stick together.

Eric grabs a heavy cardboard box from his Ute.

NICOLE

Guess what?

ERIC

You have bricks in this box?

NICOLE

I'm finished.

He puts one arm around her.

ERIC

Really?

NICOLE

Really.

They walk towards the house.

ERIC

Now all you have to do is find a publisher.

NICOLE

I know some contacts. I'm sure they'll help me out.

(beat)

Are you gonna miss playing?

ERIC

Hey, I'll still get to play. Just with little people where I actually have an influence over how they turn out.

They enter the house.

Children play jovially along the suburban street.

FADE OUT

THE END