

TASER RANCH

Written by

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C O N T A C T S

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FADE IN:

SUPER: "They tried to bury us; they didn't know we were seeds."-- Mexican Proverb

INT. TAEKWONDO GYM - NIGHT

NORA KARLSSON (early-30s), an attractive, strong-willed immigrant (a decade in the U.S.) in a stunning tight gym suit, tennis shoes, a baseball cap, and sunglasses nervously enters the small gym with two mats and two "heavy bags" for kicking and punching.

The Instructor (30s) a fierce, powerful woman in a Taekwondo uniform (gi) holds up her hand to stop two Black Belt women (also in gis) from sparring with roundhouse kicks.

The experts turn to face Nora, preparing to be bowed to.

Nora takes off her sunglasses with a perplexed look.

The Instructor signals the Black Belts to continue sparring with roundhouse kicks and punches, before confidently walking over to meet Nora.

INSTRUCTOR

Nora Karlsson. You called.

Nora puts her hand out to shake, but the Instructor smiles and bows using the proper etiquette.

Nora pulls her hand back, watches the Instructor's bow, and returns a bow quickly and poorly.

NORA

Sorry. Thanks for including me.

Nora peeks around the Instructor, awed by the excellent moves of the Black Belts.

INSTRUCTOR

We bow to the instructor and anyone with a higher-level belt as we enter. Your cap and sunglasses tell me you want to keep your lessons secret but I won't ask why you're here.

Nora shrugs innocently.

NORA

Wanted to learn basic self-defense.

The Instructor looks suspicious, as she and Nora share a moment.

The Instructor puts up a hand, and the Black Belts stop and face Nora ready to bow.

INSTRUCTOR
Let's begin with proper respect.

Nora bows perfectly the second time, and the Instructor and the Black Belts bow back, then smile at Nora.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)
Good. Let's get you started.

Nora smiles, excited.

NORA
I liked those kicking things.

The Instructor laughs.

INSTRUCTOR
Roundhouse kicks. Follow me.

LATER

The Instructor demonstrates another roundhouse kick on the heavy bag.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)
Turn those hips more.

Nora's kick is weak.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)
Again.

Each of Nora's kicks get stronger.

The Instructor smiles.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)
That was fun, but we have to learn
the basics first!

Nora smiles.

EXT. RANCH - MORNING

At the far edge of a vast ranch where the forest greets a plowed field, Nora in brand outdoor gear, mud boots, and garden gloves, jabs a tree-planting shovel into the loose soil, creates a hole, tosses in a pine seedling, and pushes soil around the seedling with her mud boots, before moving a few feet away and repeating the process. She carries a satchel of a hundred pine seedlings, and smiles at each seedling's opportunity for survival. We don't see Nora's face.

LIAM KARLSSON (50s), an overweight rancher in a leather jacket, jeans, cowboy hat, and boots, races up to her with a muddy open-top jeep crushing a few seedlings before slamming on the brakes. Liam is violently angry and drunk.

LIAM

Talked about this, Nora!

Nora rolls her eyes but doesn't turn around. She continues planting, making Liam angrier.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Losing the ranch as it is. God-damn nonsense turning good range into forests! All your shit about climate change makes it worse!

NORA

You do the things you have to do. I do the things I want to do.

LIAM

Want to ruin our ranch for your delusional principles? Think you're Johnny fuckin' Appleseed? Brainwashed by environmentalists! That's what you been!

NORA

You're selling us out anyway. Let me be.

LIAM

Time you git one last lesson.

Liam staggers toward Nora from ten steps away.

Nora grips the shovel tightly and listens to his footsteps.

Just before Liam reaches her with his arms outstretched ready to grab her, she drops the shovel, and spins with a moderately powerful roundhouse kick landing in Liam's ribs.

Liam, caught off-guard, exhales like a popped balloon and falls to the ground gripping his ribs, struggling for air. Liam's hat is a foot away in the mud. We see his holstered pistol, but Liam doesn't reach for it.

Liam dives at Nora and they push, shove, grunt, and wrestle back and forth like angry bulls, until Liam is too drunk and exhausted to go on, and Nora stands over him with her shovel.

NORA

I said, let me be!

Liam struggles to grab his hat and get up. He glares at Nora, and points at her face.

LIAM

Crazy, ya know that?

Liam dusts off the dirt from his hat and clothes and stomps back to his jeep, as Nora returns to planting.

He starts the jeep and yells.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Be rid of you soon enough!

Nora doesn't turn around.

NORA

Come after me again, and I'll bury you!

Liam puts a hand on his pistol, grunts, and removes his hand.

Liam spins the jeep around and races off, careful to crush a few more newly planted seedlings.

LATER

Nora is still planting, and she's almost out of seedlings. The sun is higher in the sky. As she kicks dirt around another seedling, she hears a wolf HOWL far to the north, and a GUNSHOT in the distance to the south. She turns to the sound, drops her shovel and satchel, and runs toward sound the while pulling out her smartphone.

EXT. PAVED ROAD - DAY

We see Liam's bloody head slumped against the steering wheel. SHERIFF HARRY GLENN (30s), a ruggedly handsome man in uniform, takes photos and notes as an Ambulance and two EMTs stand by with a gurney.

Twenty-feet back, Nora looks on with a blank expression. Her garden gloves stick out of her sweatshirt pockets.

The Sheriff walks slowly toward Nora, studying her face as he approaches.

SHERIFF GLENN

Sorry, Nora. Gotta ask you a few more questions. We can do it here or down at the station.

Nora shrugs.

NORA

Here's fine.

SHERIFF GLENN

Liam always carry a pistol?

NORA

Has a permit.

SHERIFF GLENN

Know that. I signed it. I mean, did he carry it more often recently?

NORA

More recently, I guess.

SHERIFF GLENN

Feel threatened by anyone? Have any enemies?

Nora glares at the Sheriff, then looks into his eyes, perplexed, like they knew each other better than that.

The Sheriff glances away, briefly.

Nora peeks around the Sheriff toward the jeep.

NORA

Didn't you find his pistol in the passenger's seat?

Sheriff turns, glances at the jeep, and yells to the EMTs.

SHERIFF GLENN

Go ahead. Take him to the morgue. Tell Coroner James I need the works.

(turns to Nora)

I know what it looks like, but we gotta treat it as a homicide. Procedure.

NORA
Enemies? Not an easy man to like.
Everybody knows that!

SHERIFF GLENN
Sorry.

NORA
Drank with neighbors, argued with
me and the bank 'bout everything
under the sun, but don't know who'd
want to kill him. Do you?

The Sheriff softens.

SHERIFF GLENN
Know he filed for divorce.

Nora looks away.

NORA
Happy to grant it!
(turns to the sheriff)
Not a nice man, but I didn't kill
him.

SHERIFF GLENN
Said you were planting trees. When
did you see him last, exactly?

NORA
Hour ago, maybe more.

SHERIFF GLENN
Mile north?

NORA
Edge of the ranch, like I said.

SHERIFF GLENN
What kinda mood was he in?

NORA
Angry. Drunk. Like always.

SHERIFF GLENN
Funny, I didn't find him that sort.

NORA
Funny, you didn't live with him.

The sheriff turns to see the ambulance pull away.

SHERIFF GLENN

Like you to stick around case I
need to ask you...

NORA

(interrupts)

More questions. Got it. Got a few
questions myself!

The sheriff looks sadly at Nora as she turns and walks slowly
down the road. He tips his hat.

SHERIFF GLENN

Sorry for your loss, Nora. Got my
promise to keep you informed.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

We see a huge man, CY WATSON (45) who looks like a
refrigerator in overalls, standing one step inside Nora's
modest house. Nora wears a bright sun dress rather than a
black mourning dress. The man holds a giant casserole dish
covered with aluminum foil like it's a tiny cereal bowl, as
Nora paces slowly around the parlor, filled with antique
chairs, small tables, and cabinets centered around a
fireplace with photos. Two larger 8x10 photos of Liam's
parents and Liam with his parents are in silver frames. On
the other side of the mantle is Liam and Nora's wedding photo
in a wooded frame in the same parlor. Nora has slightly
labored breathing.

NORA

Thank your wife for me, Mr. Watson.

CY

Yes, ma'am. She was concerned about
you after Liam's...

NORA

(interrupting)

Suicide.

CY

And me and some of the neighbors
are curious...

Nora is about to interrupt Cy again when there's a knock on
the solid oak front door, and SARAH TREMAIN (40s), a curvy
saleswoman wearing a gray pant suit and blazer with a Home
Security Services emblem steps in, and stands between Nora
and Cy.

SARAH

Sarah Tremain, Mrs. Karlsson, Home Security Services. My cousin, Martin, was with the ambulance...

NORA

(interrupts)

News travels fast.

Sarah pulls a bottle of Brand whiskey from behind her back and hands it to Nora along with her business card as she takes the casserole from Cy and ushers him to the door.

SARAH

Hi, Mr. Watson. Sold your wife a door-cam awhile back. I'm sure, Mrs. Karlsson needs time alone.

Nora yells.

NORA

Thank Mrs. Watson for me.

Sarah spins to Nora and whispers, as she hands her the casserole.

SARAH

Vultures. All of 'em. See you're alone. Smell blood. They want something.

NORA

You sold my husband that pistol.

SARAH

Lost a good customer and a friend is all. All they talk 'bout is the selling out to Chemco...

NORA

Not now Ms. Tremain. I do need time alone, but thanks for the whiskey.

Nora begins to usher Sarah out the door.

Sarah turns, holds Nora by the arms and whispers.

SARAH

They gotta learn! A woman alone isn't a target, she's a threat!

NORA

Good to know.

Nora shuts the door, but Sarah is still talking.

SARAH (O.S.)

You can ask for the pistol back
when the police are done
fingerprinting it. Gotta protect
yourself now!

Nora turns sadly from the door with the casserole and whiskey toward the kitchen. Just inside the kitchen door is a table with three identical casserole dishes next to two color brochures from the "Chemco Corporation" showing a beautiful blonde mom pushing her toddler on a swing at a playground with a small coal bed methane tower in the distance.

She sets down the casserole, keeping the whiskey in her hand.

She pulls an inhaler out of her sweatshirt pocket, takes a huge hit, and breathes deeply.

NORA

Oil bastards! All of them.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - MORNING

Sheriff Glenn rolls up to Nora's house in his squad car soon after sunrise.

He looks around one side of the house, and sees the dirt road going to the back of the house and barn.

He follows the road slowly looking around for clues. Before he reaches the barn, he looks in the field behind the barn and sees a single, small oil well.

He sniffs the air, and shakes his head in disgust.

He walks quietly to the barn and peeks in the door. He sees pine seedlings and potting soil. He looks around the door and spots the planting shovel with a pair of garden gloves resting atop the shovel.

He snaps a photo of the shovel, makes a few notes in his notebook, puts the notebook in his pocket, and reaches for his handcuffs.

He turns and walks back to the front door, and knocks.

No answer.

He knocks louder.

Nora answers the door wearing a sexy short fluffy bathrobe showing her beautiful legs, and holding the unopened bottle of whiskey.

NORA
Sheriff Glenn?

SHERIFF GLENN
Failed to mention you too were
filing for divorce.

NORA
What difference does that make?

SHERIFF GLENN
No note.

NORA
Huh?

SHERIFF GLENN
Most suicide victims leave notes.

Nora looks away.

NORA
Haven't known any suicide victims.
Sorry.

SHERIFF GLENN
You two argued a lot from what I
hear.

NORA
Who told you that?

SHERIFF GLENN
Liam's divorce lawyer claimed Liam
wasn't the suicide type.

NORA
He should know. He stood to gain
from our divorce settlement.

SHERIFF GLENN
What do you mean?

NORA
He was my attorney, too. I wasn't
contesting the divorce. Fifty-
fifty, except for his fees from
both sides.

SHERIFF GLENN
Looks like you're getting a hundred
percent now.

Nora slams the door.

NORA (O.S.)
Asshole!

SHERIFF GLENN
I heard that!

Sheriff Glenn knocks on the door loudly.

No response.

He knocks again, and Nora answers the door angrily.

NORA
What?

SHERIFF GLENN
Coroner said your husband had a
bruised rib. You wouldn't know...

Nora slams the door again. The Sheriff yells.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)
I'll come back later, when the
autopsy is complete.

He shakes his head as he turns around and heads back to his
squad car.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)
Just keeping you informed, Nora.

He speaks into his Brand smartphone.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)
Dispatch, can you patch me into the
neighbor just to the north of the
Karlsson ranch? One with the small
oil well close to the Karlsson
house. I'll wait.

From outside the squad car, we see Sheriff Glenn speaking on
the phone with an alarmed expression.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - EVENING

Three of Nora's neighbors argue on the side of the dirt road
standing by one of the three Brand Pickup Trucks.

Big Cy Watson and an elderly man almost as big as Cy, GRAMPS (70), are holding and yelling DAX GILLIAM (50) a wimpy mixed-ethnicity college professor, who escapes for a moment, but Cy catches him, and drags him back to Gramps, who yells at him more. Two empty beer bottles are on fence posts nearby.

In the distance, way down the road, we see a jogger heading their direction.

Tensions rise and tempers flare. Cy punches Dax in the shoulder to get his attention.

CY

I'm telling you, she won't sell,
and she now owns the head of the
freakin' valley!

DAX

No one in their right mind...

Gramps holds Dax's arms behind him. Gramps turns and spits. The jogger (Nora) gets closer, but she's still a blur.

CY

She got it all, now!

DAX

She can be convinced, I tell ya!

CY

Planting all them trees. Liam had
it up to here with that bullshit.

GRAMPS

All a hoax!

DAX

She knows that line has to go
through her ranch to get to us!

Gramps turns and spits, as Cy delivers another punch.

GRAMPS

Make sure that she does!

CY

Got it?

DAX

I'll talk to her.

Gramps lets go of Dax, and Gramps and Cy get in their separate trucks and speed away.

The jogger gains on them, and Dax turns to see it's Nora in tight-fitting running shorts and sports top. He stands as if nothing has happened.

Nora glances over at Dax to see him trying to hide the fact that he's in pain.

Nora stops, and takes a few breaths, and removes one earbud before speaking.

NORA

You okay?

Dax looks away.

DAX

Fine.

NORA

Guys bothering you?

DAX

Minor issue. No big deal.

Nora takes her smartphone from her jogging belt (with pockets).

NORA

I'll call Sheriff Glenn.

Dax gets defensive and yells.

DAX

No! No sheriff!
(looks away, mumbles)
Personal.

NORA

You're Professor Gilliam. Land behind ours.

DAX

Retired.

NORA

Look too young to be retired.

DAX

Forced out. Long story. Don't worry about it.

NORA

Suit yourself, Professor.

Nora jogs on as Dax, still hurting, steps to his Brand Pickup Truck.

DAX
Call me Dax.

Nora turns to smile.

NORA
Okay, Dax.

Seconds later, the Sheriff's car races by with lights and siren toward Nora, who continues jogging.

Nora turns to glance at the Sheriff's car, then continues on.

The Sheriff skids to a stop in front of Nora. Dust flies. He shuts off the siren and lights and steps out in an angry mood.

SHERIFF GLENN
Mrs. Karlsson, I need you to come down to the station with me.

Nora removes her earbuds.

NORA
It's Mrs. Karlsson now? Can't you ask me your questions here?

Nora's eyes open widely as the Sheriff sadly approaches her with handcuffs.

SHERIFF GLENN
Didn't look right, that's all. Strictly procedure.

NORA
I don't know what...

SHERIFF GLENN
(interrupts)
Liam's prints were on the pistol. Except, no powder burns on the side of his head.

NORA
What?

The Sheriff has a worried look.

SHERIFF GLENN
Autopsy proves it wasn't suicide. Shot from six feet away.
(MORE)

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

And that bruised rib of his looks like he was hit by a thin-blade shovel.

NORA

Harry?

SHERIFF GLENN

(whispers)

Got no choice, Nora. You have the right to remain silent...

Dax drives by in his pickup and drowns out the Sheriff as he cuffs her and guides her to the back of his car.

Dax slows the truck as he drives by and looks sadly at Nora, and she weakly smiles back at him.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The Sheriff sits behind his desk. Nora sits in one of two chairs facing him. There is a chemistry about them, but they both avoid eye contact.

SHERIFF GLENN

Best not to speak 'til your attorney is present.

NORA

Won't. But, told ya I didn't kill him.

SHERIFF GLENN

I believe you, I think, and as Arthur Conan Doyle wrote for Sherlock Holmes, "There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact."

NORA

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

SHERIFF GLENN

Sorry, Sir. Couldn't get enough of Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie as a kid, and can't forget 'em now.

NORA

You don't talk to me anymore at the grocery store Wednesday nights. Don't even look at me.

SHERIFF GLENN
Your husband... I'm so sorry.

NORA
A one-off, I know. And you buy more frozen pizzas these days.

SHERIFF GLENN
(laughs)
You the detective now?

NORA
Sexy blonde of yours must be out of town.

Sheriff Glenn looks away, and Nora sees this.

SHERIFF GLENN
(smiles weakly)
Five weeks ago, Wednesday, wasn't it? Store was closing in ten minutes...

Now it's Nora who looks away.

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

In the back aisle of a dimly lit grocery store, Sheriff Glenn, in uniform, strolls with a cart half-full of chips and beer.

From the other direction, Nora approaches wearing a bright, flowery dress. She pushes a cart filled with wine, bread, and vegetables.

Nora smiles.

NORA
Hi, Harry. Long time no see.
Shopping for poker night tomorrow?

The Sheriff smiles.

SHERIFF GLENN
That obvious, Nora? You shopping for one? Where's Liam?

Nora grabs a container of milk.

NORA
Ranch. Passed out by now. Where's your arm candy?

The Sheriff grabs a bottle of orange juice.

SHERIFF GLENN
Girls night out.

The Sheriff points to the double doors leading to the back of the store.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)
(smirks)
If those doors could talk...

NORA
Told me you worked here a few years
back?

The Sheriff flirts.

SHERIFF GLENN
Through college. Wild times.

NORA
(whispers)
How wild?

The Sheriff is mesmerized by Nora's eyes. They gravitate to each other, pulled into each other's orbit. About to kiss.

They hear a female Clerk's voice over the squeaky PA system.

CLERK (O.S.)
Store closes in ten minutes. Bring
all items to the front. All
checkers to the front.

The Sheriff pulls Nora through the double doors.

SHERIFF GLENN
Follow me.

Nora surprises herself with a giggle.

NORA
No, this is silly. And, dangerous.
Where?

SHERIFF GLENN
Employee break room. Come on!

INT. GROCERY STORE EMPLOYEES BREAK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They burst through the door to see a table and 4 chairs, and a clock on the wall reading 9:50. He locks the door, turns and pulls Nora close.

SHERIFF GLENN

Been wanting to steal a kiss for a month of Wednesdays.

Nora smiles and moves in.

NORA

One kiss.

But one kiss leads to another... and another. Unbridled passionate kisses. Hands roaming.

The Sheriff softly lays Nora down on a table. Passion rules the night, as she slips off her dress and slowly pushes up her bra.

He starts to remove his tie, and shirt, and she loosens his belt.

NORA (CONT'D)

This is crazy.

SHERIFF GLENN

No one has to know.

Months of pent-up frustration give way to intense pleasure. They kiss furiously, explore each other's bodies, and hunger for more.

He's in a hurry, but she slows him down. She sits up to kiss his nipples. He's instantly hard.

The Sheriff pulls Nora to the edge of the table, as her arms pull at his back. He thrusts and enters her. She closes her eyes, moaning. They're like wild teens on prom night.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Pro... tec...

Nora smothers her lips on his, muffling his words.

NORA

Gone this far. Give it...

We hear the same voice over the PA system, as the Sheriff thrusts one last time.

CLERK (V.O.)

Last call. All items to the front.

The Sheriff explodes and clings to Nora as she clings to him.

The Sheriff and Nora rush to dress. Breathing hard.

NORA

No one can know.

SHERIFF GLENN

No one.

NORA & SHERIFF GLENN

He'd kill me.

They catch themselves, and laugh as they run out.

BACK TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The Sheriff stands and RONNY HARRISON (60) a heavy-set attorney-turned-banker dressed in a vintage gray suit, who looks like he's in pain, barges in and takes a seat next to Nora.

Nora and the Sheriff are too embarrassed to speak or make eye contact.

Ronny whines rather than talks.

RONNY

This is why I don't do this anymore. I'm just a banker.

Nora pulls herself together well enough to speak, but she and the Sheriff avoid eye contact.

NORA

You're still a licensed attorney. You were handling Liam's divorce.

RONNY

And yours, no contest, no kids, amiable fifty-fifty cash distribution of proceeds from the sale. Easy.

NORA

This is easy. I didn't do it! I was planting tree seedlings a mile away.

The Sheriff interjects sternly.

SHERIFF GLENN

What was your relationship with
your husband recently?

Nora turns sadly to the Sheriff.

NORA

How recently?

The Sheriff looks away, unable to answer. Ronny sees this.

NORA (CONT'D)

Tolerable, at first. But for the
past four years, it was like
struggling to go to sleep. You
can't lie to yourself like you can
all day long. I would agonize
waiting for sleep to come so I
could escape him.

SHERIFF GLENN

How the hell did ya ever meet?

NORA

Computer matched me to the man he
dreamed of being, not the monster
he'd become with booze and pills.

SHERIFF GLENN

So you couldn't live with him no
more?

Nora turns even sadder. The look of pity grips Ronny's face.

NORA

Live? The time I spent dreaming was
so much better than real life. The
moment I'd wake up, I'd try my
damndest to fall back asleep to get
back into my dream. Whatever I
dreamed, and some were nightmares,
it was better than my awake life.
He meant less to me than the empty
substance of my dreams.

(beat)

It wasn't living! Know what I mean?

The Sheriff stares at her suspiciously.

SHERIFF GLENN

Liam isn't living either, and I got
a murder to solve!

Ronny looks angry and points at himself as he paces in the opposite direction as the Sheriff.

RONNY

Now, the oil rights sale is in jeopardy. No death clause in the proposed sales offer.

Nora turns angry and defensive in Ronny's face.

NORA

I wasn't anywhere near him when I heard the shot. I ran the whole way, and called 9-1-1.

RONNY

Your prints on the gun?

Nora is angrier.

NORA

No. Never touched or fired a gun. Don't believe in them. Having access to a firearm triples one's risk of death by suicide. Sheriff knows that. All our neighbors do.

The Sheriff stops and yells.

SHERIFF GLENN

Could've used gardening gloves!
Then put the gun in his hand!

The Sheriff gets in Ronny's face.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Go back to doing notary work,
foreclosures and wills!

Ronny ignored the sheriff and turns to Nora again.

RONNY

Charge you with a crime, yet?

NORA

No.

SHERIFF GLENN

Waiting on the toxicology report.

NORA

Drunk as usual.
(looks away)
I suspect.

SHERIFF GLENN
Bruised rib too! Like he was hit
him with a shovel.

NORA
(to Ronny)
Ask him if the shovel was at the
scene?

The Sheriff races to Nora ready to strangle her.

SHERIFF GLENN
No.

RONNY
So, Sheriff, you don't have Nora's
prints on the gun, and there's no
shovel at the scene, and she called
9-1-1 twenty minutes later?

SHERIFF GLENN
I don't have everything yet!

RONNY
Then ya gotta let her go.

SHERIFF GLENN
Flight risk.

RONNY
Neighbors are furious.

Nora and the Sheriff stop and stare at Ronny.

RONNY (CONT'D)
They're counting on the sale.
Probably the divorce too.

Nora looks away.

SHERIFF GLENN
Common knowledge. I've done my
research! The gas and oil rights
under the ranches hold all the
value. Chemco's been after the
rights for years. Ranches are worth
nothing without the gas buried a
mile and half deep.

The Sheriff races to Ronny.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)
How much is it worth, banker?

RONNY
Millions per ranch.

SHERIFF GLENN
But can't get to any of it without
a pipe and drilling on Liam and
Nora's...

(beat)
I mean, Nora's ranch.
(snickers)
I don't have to hold you. Let's put
an ankle monitor on you and send
you home.

Ronny protests vigorously, as Nora glares at the Sheriff.

RONNY
Can't do that!

SHERIFF GLENN
Watch me!

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Nora paces in the living room, occasionally peeking out of the front windows. We see she wears a cute skirt and top, and an electronic ankle monitor with a green light. She paces toward the kitchen, when we hear a loud KNOCK on the door.

Nora strides to the front door, and pauses. She takes out her brand smartphone and dials 9-1 (ready to punch in the "1".)

There's a second, louder KNOCK on the door.

Nora yells.

NORA
Who is it?

CY (O.S.)
It's Cy. Cy Watson.

Nora puts her hand on the deadbolt lock. We see a small table by the door has a bowl for keys and the bottle of whiskey and the business card that Sarah Tremain brought.

NORA
What do you want?

CY (O.S.)
Just wanna talk.

Nora grabs the bottle of whiskey like a club.

NORA
Can it wait 'til morning?

CY (O.S.)
Just want to be straight with you.

NORA
I'm listening.

CY (O.S.)
Can I come in?

NORA
Don't think that'd be a good idea.

They HEAR Cy smash a pint whiskey bottle on the porch. Nora is frightened.

CY (O.S.)
Fine! Back in the morning!

Nora puts her ear to the door to hear Cy's big footsteps walking away more than Sarah.

Nora sets down the whiskey bottle, grabs Sarah's business card, and makes a call.

LATER

Nora hears the doorbell ring, followed by a polite knock, and a sweet voice,

SARAH (O.S.)
Nora, it's me, Sarah Tremain.

Nora races to unlock the deadbolt and let Sarah in.

Sarah's voice turns angry. She's carrying three boxes as she barges into the house.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Never, never open the door right away.

NORA
Knew it was you.

SARAH
Did you?

Sarah puts down two of the boxes, and rips the top one open.

NORA
What's that?

SARAH

Doorbell cam. No single woman, my condolences again, should be without one.

Nora stares at the unit inside the box.

Sarah whips out a Phillip's-head screwdriver drill from her back tool belt, and goes right to work.

NORA

What's it cost?

SARAH

How much is your life worth? Give me a few minutes.

Sarah goes to work replacing the doorbell, not looking at Nora as she speaks.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Camera and deadbolt are your friends.

Nora peeks at the other two boxes.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Now, you'll check your phone, and see who's out the door before you unlock it.

NORA

Safer, I like it.

SARAH

See you have a new ankle decoration.

(beat)

Bet your neighbors already know.

Nora is alarmed.

NORA

What? How? What does it matter?

SARAH

You're a sittin' duck!

Nora sees one of the boxes reads, "Stun Gun."

SARAH (CONT'D)

You won't get Liam's pistol back for a few days. If ever!

NORA
(defensive)
I'll never use a gun! Never.

SARAH
That's why I brought the next-best
thing in home security.

Nora takes the Brand Stun Gun out of the box.

NORA
Stun gun?

SARAH
Not any stun gun. That's the
VIPERTEK VTS-989. Packs a hell of
a punch! A jolt from that baby
delivers a high voltage shock
causing loss of balance and muscle
control, confusion, and
disorientation -- bringing that
bastard to his knees.

Nora puts the stun gun back in the box.

NORA
Don't like guns.

SARAH
Call it your light saber!

Sarah tightens the last screw, and turns with a hand out.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Hand it over.
(beat)
Your phone. I'll download the app
and install it.

Nora reluctantly hands Sarah her phone.

NORA
How will it work?

SARAH
Motion detector starts the camera.
Great for catching porch pirates
too.

NORA
Porch pirates?

SARAH

Thieves that steal delivered packages. Can't tell you how many the Sheriff has bagged in the county!

Sarah hands back the phone, and turns her head.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Needs your passcode to download and install.

Nora turns and punches in her passcode numbers and hands the phone back to Sarah.

Sarah pushes a few buttons, and hands the phone back to Nora.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I'll go out to the street, and walk up to the door.

Sarah exits and shuts the door, and Nora stares at the phone.

The phone is off.

The phone buzzes and lights up with a view of Sarah approaching the door.

Sarah rings the doorbell. The phone snaps a photo of her.

Nora smiles and opens the door.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Wrong.

NORA

It worked great.

SARAH

Always ask who it is and what they want. Your phone will record their photo and voice. As your voice recognition files build up, you'll have a second ID test.

Nora stares at the phone.

NORA

Your camera and my deadbolt are my friends.

Sarah yanks the stun gun out of the box.

SARAH

Add the light saber to your list of friends. You can't be too careful.
(points to the whiskey)
And using the whiskey bottle as a club isn't going to do it!

Nora laughs.

NORA

Works in the movies.

SARAH

Only in the movies!

Sarah hands the stun gun to Nora.

NORA

How much do I owe ya?

SARAH

Hundred for the doorbell-cam, and twenty-five for the light saber.
(smiles)
I'll bill you.

Nora hugs Sarah who pauses to enjoy the hug.

NORA

Thanks so much.

SARAH

Glad to help. I take pride in my home security business.

NORA

Thanks, Sarah. I feel safer.

Sarah picks up the third box from the floor, and waves as she begins to exit.

NORA (CONT'D)

What was in the third box?

SARAH

Not ready for the big time.

The door is about to shut.

NORA

What was it?

SARAH

A Taser!

Sarah shuts the door.

Nora stares at the stun gun, and picks up the instruction booklet, and plops down in a comfortable chair.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Sheriff Glenn studies his computer screen. The whiteboard he faces has only two photos: Liam's and Nora.

SHERIFF GLENN

Means?

The Sheriff goes to the whiteboard and writes: "Pistol, gloves?"

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Motive?

He writes: "Abuse, ranch, oil."

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Opportunity?

He writes, "at the scene."

His phone rings, and he answers it on speaker phone so he can take notes.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Ronny, thanks for getting back to me. What'd ya find out?

RONNY (O.S.)

I know this will come out in the trial, but you were right. My client... my living client, had the most to gain financially from Liam's death, but only if she accepts the offer from Chemco.

SHERIFF GLENN

For the oil and gas rights.

RONNY

We were about to foreclose on the ranch, but she didn't want to sell when her husband was forcing her.

SHERIFF GLENN

Forcing her.

RONNY

I shouldn't be telling you this.
(beat)
Or he wouldn't sign the divorce
papers.

The Sheriff stands, paces, looks at the whiteboard.

SHERIFF GLENN

You'll testify that Nora was
extorting her husband's future
financial well-being if he didn't
sign their divorce papers.

Ronny is angry.

RONNY

You're twisting it around. Nora
didn't want the money or the ranch.
She wanted the divorce!

SHERIFF GLENN

I think I have everything I need,
Ronny.

RONNY

But... but...

The Sheriff ends the call.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - DAWN

Nora is in bed when her phone buzzes.

It lights up and she sees Cy Watson stomping up to press the
doorbell.

Nora throws a bathrobe over her small nightshirt, and races
to the front door.

She sees that her stun gun is fully charged, sitting on the
table with the whiskey by the front door.

NORA

Who is it?

Nora stalls as she attaches the brass safety chain on the
front door.

CY (O.S.)

You know damn well who it is. That no-good Sarah Tremain sold my wife one of these goddamn doorbell-cams too.

NORA

What do you want?

Nora checks the deadbolt. It's locked.

CY (O.S.)

Can I come in?

NORA

No. What do you want?

CY (O.S.)

Minute of your time. We're losing our ranches. Can't sell beef or soybeans these days. You know that!

Nora turns sad.

NORA

We know that! I mean, I know that.

Nora unlocks the chain lock and deadbolt and steps out, realizing how big Cy is up close, she glances back at the open door.

Cy paces angrily across the front porch and back.

CY

Your husband and us, we had a deal!

NORA

Don't know nothing about it.

CY

That's why we're here, damnit!

NORA

You said 'we' again. Who are you talking about?

Nora takes her inhaler from the bathrobe pocket and takes a hit.

CY

Me and Gramps.

Nora turns to go back inside.

NORA

Send me a letter and I'll look it
over with my lawyer.

Cy grips her arm like a vice. She sees how big his hand is.

CY

No, we gotta talk.

Nora pauses, and half-turns her face with an innocent smile.

Cy releases his grip and she elbows Cy in the gut, then spins and kicks the side of one of his knees, so that it collides with his other knees. The force of the kick so great, it sends Cy flat on the porch.

He moans and has trouble standing and Nora races in, and fastens the brass safety chain. She opens the door to the length of the chain.

Nora glares at Cy, who limps to the door in pain.

NORA

A letter, Cy. In writing, dated and
signed. That's the only way I'll
consider any offer, after my lawyer
approves.

Cy paces angrily. His temper grows.

NORA (CONT'D)

Remember. You're being recorded.

Cy's hand lunges in the opening of the door and tries to grab Nora's throat.

Nora jumps back, grabs whiskey bottle and sets it back down. She grabs the stun gun and jabs it against Cy's arm.

ZAP!

We see Cy's arm shake uncontrollably before it retracts to the outside part of the door.

NORA (CONT'D)

In writing, Mr. Watson!

Nora puts on the deadbolt and calls 9-1-1.

LATER

Nora hears the siren and looks out the front window.

Cy is gone, and she sees the lights on the sheriff's car turn off with the siren.

She sees Sheriff Glenn exit the squad car, before she steps to the door and checks her phone.

Her phone shows Sheriff Glenn smiling as he comes to the door. As he presses the doorbell, she sees his face turn serious.

The doorbell rings.

NORA (CONT'D)

Who is it?

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)

It's Harry.

Nora opens the door with the safety chain lock, and talks angrily.

NORA

Big Cy Watson came to my door, started yelling at me about some deal my husband made with him. Put his angry arm through the door and tried to strangle me, so I zapped him with my stun gun. Got it all recorded.

SHERIFF GLENN

Thought you never used guns.

Nora turns sarcastic.

NORA

Did I say stun gun? I meant light saber.

SHERIFF GLENN

So if I talk to Cy, he'd tell me the same story?

NORA

Just protecting myself, Sheriff.

SHERIFF GLENN

Not sure I believe that. Let me see the video.

Nora checks her phone. She finds nothing. She checks again. She finds only a still photo of Cy with a sad, non-threatening face near her doorbell. She shakes her phone in disgust.

NORA

Can't find the video right now.

(beat)

Mr. Watson will have two burn marks
on his right forearm. Think you'll
believe the scars?

The Sheriff looks down at Nora's ankle to see the ankle
monitor.

SHERIFF GLENN

I want to believe you. I do. Maybe
I'll go talk to Cy.

NORA

You do that, Sheriff.

The Sheriff pulls out a piece of paper from his pocket, and
shoves it to Nora through the door.

SHERIFF GLENN

After I collect that shovel in your
barn for evidence. This is a
warrant.

NORA

Strictly procedure, Harry! I know.

SHERIFF GLENN

How long you owned that stun gun?
Never mind. I'll ask our local arms
dealer.

The Sheriff ambles off toward the barn.

Nora slams the door, and locks the deadbolt.

Nora watches the front entrance with her phone until Sheriff
Glenn carries the shovel in a large evidence bag to his car,
and drives off.

Nora collapses in a chair to think.

LATER

She sees Ronny Harrison drive up in a Brand sedan.

Ronny approaches the door with two large envelopes filled
with papers. He's calm, but cold.

RONNY (O.S.)

I know you can see me. Wife bought
one last month. Open up.

Nora opens the door, still wearing her short bathrobe.

NORA
How's my defense case coming?

RONNY
(sadly)
Sheriff called. Told me you owned a
stun gun and a shovel, either of
which could have been used to
incapacitate your husband before
you staged his suicide.

Ronny looks away, even sadder.

NORA
That's not why you're here?

RONNY
Ms. Karlsson, it's my duty to drop
off these two envelopes.

Ronny hands the two envelopes to Nora.

NORA
What's in them?

RONNY
Top one is the offer by Chemco to
purchase the mineral rights, and
all the gas and oil under your
ranch. It's a lot of money, and I
think...

Nora tosses the envelope violently to the fireplace.

RONNY (CONT'D)
Thought you'd do that.

NORA
What's in the second one?

RONNY
Foreclosure papers, unless you can
come up with three-months back-
mortgage payments.

Nora is stunned and surprised.

NORA
But Liam...

RONNY
(interrupts)
Counted on the sale of the mineral
rights.

NORA
What did he do with the mortgage
money?

RONNY
You'd have to ask him.

Ronny realizes he misspoke and looks away.

NORA
Right!

RONNY
So you might want to rethink that
mineral rights offer.

Points to the fireplace.

NORA
I suppose you want to be paid for
all your hard efforts handling my
divorce that didn't happen, and my
murder case that's a sham?

Ronny gets defensive.

RONNY
I shouldn't have...

Nora picks up the stun gun and shoots it in the air with a
loud CRACK!

Ronny backs up toward the door in fear.

RONNY (CONT'D)
I can see you're upset.

Nora threatens Ronny with the stun gun.

NORA
You haven't seen upset!

Nora puts down the stun gun on the table, and begins to calm
down.

NORA (CONT'D)
Nobody likes being backed into a
corner!
(calmer)
(MORE)

NORA (CONT'D)

I'll think about my options. We'll talk later!

Ronny exits, and Nora shuts and deadbolts the door.

She stares at the envelopes one at a time, then again. Her chin drops to her chest.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Papers are scattered around the dining room floor. Nora sits at an old wooden desk examining bank papers and receipts. She wears a sexy outfit, hoping the Sheriff will drop by, but she's angry looking at the receipts.

One small desk drawer is locked. She tugs at it and it doesn't budge.

She stands and exits to the kitchen, returning with a big flathead screwdriver and a hammer.

She pounds open the desk drawer to find bank notices warning of foreclosure, and gas and hotel receipts, liquor store receipts, and jewelry receipts, all on their credit card.

She organizes the receipts and takes a large calendar and begins mapping out her late husband's last three months.

Her smartphone rings, and answers the call from Sarah Tremain.

NORA

Sarah, I'm getting still shots of people at the door, but not video like you said.

SARAH (O.S.)

My apologies. You know us gals and technology. Must be a setting.

NORA

Worked when you showed me the first time. Got the video of you testing it at my door, but not this morning when Cy Watson came 'round.

SARAH (O.S.)

It's why I prefer a pistol. Works every time.

NORA

Light saber worked like a charm, but I still won't use a gun.

SARAH (O.S.)
I'll come over and check your
settings.

NORA
Not tonight. Place is a mess.
Tomorrow okay?

SARAH (O.S.)
Don't be silly. My life's a mess,
too. Be there soon.

Sarah ends the call. Nora looks around at the messy room and shrugs.

Nora goes back to filling in the calendar.

Nora's phone lights up as Dax approaches the door sheepishly with a bottle of wine.

Nora strides to the front door as the bell rings. Nora yells.

NORA
Who is it?

DAX (O.S.)
I bought one too. Doorbell-cam.
Same model.

NORA
Does your video recorder work?

DAX (O.S.)
No.

Nora unlocks the two locks and opens the door.

NORA
Mine neither.

They share a moment, before Nora sways her arm, showing him the way in.

Nora double locks the door behind Dax as he speaks.

DAX
No mac and cheese.

NORA
Thank God.

Their eyes meet again, as Dax hands her the wine.

DAX
Just dropping it off. I know you
must be horribly upset.

NORA
I'll be upset if you don't have a
glass with me stat.

Nora exits to the kitchen.

DAX
Stat? Were you a doctor?

NORA (O.S.)
Was an electronics designer.

Nora returns with two wine glasses and wine opener.

DAX
Not much use on a ranch.

NORA
You'd be surprised. Internet goes
out all the time. So did my
husband!

Dax chuckles, then shyly looks away, as Nora opens the wine
and pours two glasses. Nora turns deadly serious.

NORA (CONT'D)
Truth is, I hated my job, hated the
city, and I was looking for a new
start. Met Liam during his sober
days, and I liked him. Insisted I
be a stay-at-home ranch wife.

DAX
That make you happy?

NORA
Happy enough, 'til he started
drinking again.

DAX
Sorry.

NORA
Rumors true?

Dax barely sips the wine, looks away, and speaks softly.

DAX

I fell in love with one of the thousands of students I came in contact with. That was wrong. Didn't mean for it to happen. Friend of hers reported me for sexual misconduct. Suspended without pay. Learned that depression is like a bullet to the... sorry. I'm so sorry.

Nora takes a sip and ponders Dax's last comment.

NORA

And your love interest?

DAX

Graduated. Moved home to India. Never heard from her. I was so ashamed, I couldn't return to the university.

Dax points to the receipts and mail on the desk to change the subject.

DAX (CONT'D)

What's all that?

NORA

Liam insisted on doing all the bills. Men's work. I should have stepped in. Management, I guess.

DAX

(chuckles)
Miss-management?

NORA

Ha-ha! I hated book work, so I let him. Second-biggest mistake I made.

DAX

Second?
(beat)
Oh, marrying him. The divorce.

NORA

Are there any secrets in this town?

DAX

A secret is something you tell one person at a time. Mom used to say that before...

NORA
(interrupting)
Couldn't find other teaching work?

DAX
Who would have me?
(looks into Nora's eyes)
What worse? Never even kissed her.

Dax stares at the gas receipts.

NORA
Your ranch?

DAX
Parents' ranch. Left it to me.

NORA
The one oil well?

DAX
Dad's idea. Last recession. Chemco
got the rights to one section.
Dumbest...

NORA
Put the well as close to Liam's
property to force him to sell after
my constant bitching?

DAX
Then you married him.

NORA
Forced him not to sell or I'd be
gone.

Dax picks up two gas receipts.

DAX
Four gallons one day later.

Nora takes a closer look.

NORA
Four gallons?

DAX
Average M-P-G for his jeep,
thirteen. Destination was twenty-
six miles, then back.

Nora checks the calendar, while Dax filters through more receipts.

NORA
Statistics professor. Right?

DAX
(humbly)
Simple math, really.

NORA
Thursday night? Poker night with
Gramps. Two miles away. Town's only
six miles. What the hell?

Dax shows Nora three sets of receipts.

DAX
Three more Thursdays. Every other
week.

Nora grabs the receipts out of Dax's hands, tosses them on
the desk, and gulps down her wine.

NORA
Tried to cover his tracks by
refilling the tank the next day.

DAX
Might be a perfectly innocent
explanation.

Nora paces in anger.

NORA
Like flirting with a much younger
Indian girl? And a student?!

Nora's phone buzzes and lights up.

DAX
I should be going.

Dax heads to the door with Nora.

NORA
It's Sarah Tremain.

Nora swings open the door before Sarah can ring the doorbell.
Sarah, wearing a baggy sweatshirt atop a low-cut T-shirt
swaggers in then glares at Dax, who stands behind Nora.

NORA (CONT'D)
Won't you come in? You've met
Professor Gilliam.

Sarah pushes her way past Nora, and pushes Dax hard as she enters the living room.

SARAH
What's the pervert doing here?

NORA
Just stopped by...

Dax points to the stun gun on the small table by the door.

DAX
(interrupts)
To express my condolences without
bringing Mac and Cheese or
weaponry.

Sarah turns and glares at Dax.

SARAH
(sarcastic)
You know what the good professor
did?

Dax exits quietly and shuts the door, but stops on the porch to hear Sarah's tirade.

NORA
Sarah...

SARAH
(interrupts)
Nothing short of rape from what I
here!

Nora pulls out her phone trying to change the subject.

NORA
Tell me about the set-up video
options on the doorbell-cam.

Behind Nora, outside, we see Dax walking slowly up the dark dirt road.

SARAH
You wouldn't understand them.

NORA
Try me.

Sarah grabs the phone out of Nora's hands and makes a setting change.

SARAH

Your video record feature musta
shut off accidentally. Have a power
outage?

NORA

Yes.

(points to her ankle
monitor)

Only lasted about twenty minutes
again, so not out long enough to
escape!

Sarah chuckles warmly.

SARAH

Just long enough to have to reset
all the clocks on the microwave or
clock radios...

Nora smiles back.

NORA

Maybe I should hope for an all-
night power-outage and head to
Mexico!

Sarah turns a bit to hide the phone from Nora's watchful
eyes, and Sarah punches a few more keystrokes, then abruptly
hands the phone back to Nora.

SARAH

Sometimes this App reboots without
warning. I'll check for software
updates and get back to you.

NORA

Thanks.

Sarah looks around to see the mess of papers everywhere.

SARAH

Tornado?

Nora shields Sarah from the desk, and the bottle of wine and
wine glasses on top of many bills.

NORA

Bills. Nothing I can't handle.

SARAH

Like Cy Watson?

NORA
You heard?

SARAH
So'd the sheriff. Cy's told him you
kicked him in the side of the knee.
Knocked him over.

NORA
He grabbed my arm.

SARAH
Blindsided he said. Thinkin' 'bout
pressin' charges.

NORA
He assaulted me, and on my
property!

Sarah hands back the phone.

SARAH
Sheriff will say it's his word
against yours.
(beat)
Recording function should be
working again. Look up that
professor of yours up on the
Internet, if it's working that is.
My phone service is. Yours?

Nora checks her phone.

NORA
Out!

Nora has an epiphany.

NORA (CONT'D)
I get it. Bluetooth still works so
the doorbell-cam still works even
if I can't call out.

Sarah smiles and steps closer to Nora.

SARAH
Smart girl. Remember...

NORA
(interrupting)
The dead bolt and camera are my
friends.

SARAH
You got it.

NORA
And the stun gun.

Sarah's smile disappears and she inches closer to Nora.

SARAH
Don't think for a minute that a
roundhouse kick or a temporary jolt
is gonna stop Cy Watson, Gramps, or
that professor from gettin' what
they want outta you!

NORA
No, no, I wasn't... Wait,
roundhouse kick? The only move I
learned watching an online video of
women's self-defense.
(excited)
Worked both times! You know more
self-defense moves?

SARAH
A few. Only need one move now.

Sarah reaches behind the back of her sweatshirt and draws a
0.38 Snub-nosed pistol faster than Billy the Kid. She points
it around the room taking imaginary shots at the wine bottle
and wine glasses, then re-holsters her weapon.

Nora is angry.

NORA
Don't want guns in the house! Ever!

Sarah compassionately approaches Nora.

SARAH
All the self-defense videos in the
world aren't gonna...

NORA
I firmly believe...

SARAH
(interrupting, angry)
They don't care what you believe!
They have the real thing!

Nora's phone rings, shocking Nora and Sarah.

NORA
Cell service again.
(stares at the phone)
It's the sheriff. Gotta take this.

Sarah steps away, but not toward the door.

Nora ushers Sarah toward the door.

NORA (CONT'D)
Just a minute, Sheriff.
(to Sarah)
Think you better go, Sarah. Thanks
for fixing my phone.

Sarah, dejected, trudges to the door, and exits.

SARAH
Just tellin' ya to be more careful
is all.

NORA
Will do. Thanks.

Sarah turns and points to the wine bottle and two glasses.

SARAH
Alcoholic beverages are strictly
forbidden under house arrest.
(smiles, winks)
But I won't tell if you don't.

Nora waves goodbye and locks the door. She races to her desk, sits, and pulls out a fancy new Apple laptop computer from a lower drawer. She plugs her phone into the laptop.

NORA
Go ahead, Harry. Sorry.

Nora tuns on the computer, and plugs her phone into it.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)
See, when that cellphone tower on
Lookout Mountain goes out in a
storm, so does our bargain-basement
radio-wave ankle monitor.

NORA
Real shame. My emergency cell phone
and Wi-Fi go out too.
(sarcastic)
I feel your pain.

Suddenly, a screen flashes: "recent keystrokes, downloads, commands, and cookies." The screen fills with computer code which Nora seems to track and understand.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)

But you're not free to roam. Fact, if the juice comes on up the mountain, and you're not within' fifty-feet of your house, you'll go straight to prison. Got it?

NORA

Got it.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)

Strictly...

Nora pauses the strolling key codes and stares at her phone.

NORA

(interrupting)

Procedure. That why you called, Harry?

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)

Making them pit vipers around you very angry with your violent behavior.

NORA

Tell 'em not to come around. Simple.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)

Free country, Mrs. Karlsson. Or do you prefer Ms.?

Nora pauses.

NORA

What was that, Harry? Or do you prefer Sheriff?

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)

(annoyed)

Said it's a free country, Ms. Karlsson!

(beat)

Toxicology lab results came back.

Nora stares at the computer code again.

NORA

Told ya, he'd been drinking.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)
Three times legal limit. Something
else too.

Nora stares at her laptop screen.

NORA
What?

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)
Tested positive for opioids and
antidepressants.

Nora looks puzzled.

NORA
Antidepressants? No one here
takes...

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)
(interrupts)
Lots of 'em. Ya know who has a
prescription for Oxycodone or
antidepressants.

Nora jumps out her seat, and yells into the phone.

NORA
Shit! Shit! Shit!

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)
Can't believe he didn't fall right
out of his jeep! May explain the
lack of a note.

Nora trudges back to the desk chair, and collapses in it.

NORA
No shape to write one.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)
Don't explain the lack of powder
burns. You feeding him your Oxy? I
know you had a prescription!

NORA
Can't help ya, Sheriff.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)
Says the only suspect with motive,
means, and opportunity!

NORA

Cast a broader net, Sheriff! You on the list?

The Sheriff turns compassionate.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)

Jesus Christ! We made a mistake. One night, okay!

Nora ends the call.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The Sheriff approaches the whiteboard, and writes, "Drugs."

Cy barges into the office, drunk and in a rage, grabbing the Sheriff by the collar. He slurs his words.

CY

I want that murderin' bish tossed in jail!

The Sheriff gives Cy a deadly glare, then uses lightning fast martial arts moves, smashes Cy's face on the desk, and drags him to the door.

SHERIFF GLENN

Damn it, Cy! Hope you didn't drive here drunk to tell me that! Could of killed somebody. Come on! I'll drive ya home.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Nora, still in the sexy outfit, unlocks a door in the hallway, opens the door then sits on the top step for a moment in the dark.

NORA

Can't do this.

(beat)

Maybe I should just run! Mexico? Home? Anywhere but here.

(stares down into the dark)

Anywhere but there!

She pauses, then slaps her knees with resolve.

She stands bravely, flicks on the stairway light switch, and walks down a flight of steps slowly, as if someone may be down there.

It's an empty room, except for the back corner of the basement, where we see a cobweb-covered baby's bassinet. Her chin rests on her chest. She fights back tears.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

We see Gramps laying down in full camouflage staring at Nora's house through night-vision binoculars. He has an open notebook that reads: "Dax 8:21-8:43 PM. Sarah: 8:43-9:02. Phone 9:01. Basement? 2 minutes. Bedroom: 9:03."

Gramps shuts the notebook, but doesn't leave.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - MORNING

Gray skies and swirling winds greet the morning.

Dax drives up in his pickup truck, gets out, and looks around, including the spot where Gramps was spying on Nora the night before.

Satisfied that no one is looking, he pulls a box of food from his truck. We see coffee, eggs, bread, bacon, and corn atop.

Dax sheepishly approaches the house, and knocks on the door.

NORA (O.S.)
Who is it?

DAX
(snickers)
Grocery boy.

Nora opens the door with the chain lock on, and peeks around Dax.

NORA
Alone?

DAX
Brought you some groceries. Storm's coming from the north. Eighty percent chance of heavy...

NORA
(interrupts)
Saw it on the web.

Nora opens the door wearing a bathrobe.

NORA (CONT'D)
Come in. Thanks for the goodies,
put 'em in the kitchen, will ya?

INT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nora turns and sways toward the bathroom. Dax's eyes follow her.

NORA
Need to shower before the hot-water
heater goes out.

DAX
What about your ankle monitor?

Nora spins and smiles.

NORA
(giggles)
Waterproof. Lots of Hollywood movie
stars wear 'em as accessories now.
Start some coffee. Be right out.

Dax is smitten. He enters the kitchen, where he hears the shower.

He hears a knock on the door.

Dax goes to the door and opens it to see Sheriff Glenn holding a search warrant and several plastic evidence bags.

They are surprised to see each other.

DAX
Sheriff?

SHERIFF GLENN
Professor?

Dax is embarrassed and wimpy.

DAX
Just brought Nora... Ms. Karlsson
some groceries before the storm.

The Sheriff barges in the door, and pushes Dax aside, heading to the bathroom.

SHERIFF GLENN

Same warrant. Gonna collect pill bottles, cell phone... know if she has a computer?

DAX

No, I don't.

The Sheriff opens the bathroom door and peeks in. Nora screams.

NORA

Get out of here!

She peeks out from behind the translucent shower curtain, and glares at the Sheriff!

The Sheriff's eyes open widely, and he tries to force himself to look away, but he can't.

SHERIFF GLENN

Sorry. So sorry. Same warrant. Where are the pill bottles?

The Sheriff rummages through the medicine cabinet and drawers and finds nothing, while Nora shuts off the water and grabs a towel.

NORA

Get the hell out of here, pervert!

Dax appears at the bathroom door to see Nora step out of the shower. His eyes open widely.

The Sheriff storms out of the bathroom pushing Dax aside.

SHERIFF GLENN

This is the perv you should be worried about. Where's your bedroom?

NORA

Liam's on the right. Mine's on the left.

The Sheriff is shocked.

SHERIFF GLENN

Separate bedrooms?

Dax, embarrassed, turns around.

NORA

Dax, coffee on yet?

DAX
Er... right away, Nora.

Dax sneaks one last peek at Nora then races to the kitchen.

The Sheriff races out of the bedroom and down the hall to the bathroom door, just in time for Nora to slam it shut and lock it. The Sheriff has only one pill bottle in a clear evidence bag.

SHERIFF GLENN
One pill bottle? That all ya got?

NORA (O.S.)
Probably from his room!

SHERIFF GLENN
How'd ya know? Just hope I don't find your fingerprints all over this bottle.

NORA (O.S.)
I never ordered the pills or touched them, or anything else in his room. Good luck, Sheriff.

SHERIFF GLENN
Need to take your smart phone.

NORA (O.S.)
Need it for emergencies.
(sarcastic)
Ya know, 9-1-1?

The Sheriff stares at the pill bottle and is on edge.

SHERIFF GLENN
I'll have your phone examined and back by this afternoon. Think you can stay out of trouble 'til then? No karate kicks or stun gun?

NORA (O.S.)
Do my best.

SHERIFF GLENN
Sure you will.

The Sheriff turns, takes two steps toward the door, then turns back.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)
Oh, coroner says your shovel didn't cause Liam's bruised ribcage.
(MORE)

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

After talking with Cy Watson, I think we'll take a look at your boots.

Nora exits the bathroom angrily, partly dressed in a white blouse and holding her short jean skirt in her hands. Her hair is wet, and her face is angelic, but she glares at the Sheriff.

NORA

Knock yourself out. I mean that!

The Sheriff is stunned by her beauty, but he holds open an evidence bag, and Nora drops her phone inside the bag.

SHERIFF GLENN

I will... I mean, I won't. But I will take your ninja warrior boots to that coroner to see if there's a match. Got a computer?

Nora begins to put on her capris.

NORA

Liam had a laptop. Haven't sees it for a while.

The Sheriff can't take his eyes off her.

SHERIFF GLENN

I'll be back for it later if I can't get what I need from your phone.

Dax exits the kitchen with two cups of coffee and a smile.

The Sheriff sees Dax swoon as Nora buttons her skirt.

DAX

Can we offer you a cup of coffee, Sheriff?

The sheriff glares at Dax, obviously jealous, as turns and stomps to the front door.

NORA

Worries me that you seem unconcerned about having a real killer on the loose.

The Sheriff turn angrily as he steps out of the door.

SHERIFF GLENN

Damn it! No other suspects on the list, yet. Ankle monitor costs you twenty-five dollars a day.

The Sheriff hops in his car and drives off.

Nora shuts the door calmly, as Dax hands her a cup of coffee.

DAX

You're right. If you didn't do it, the killer is still out there. I don't like this one bit!

Nora looks away, concerned.

NORA

But the killer does. Who was Liam seeing on poker nights?

Dax shrugs, and stares back at the desk with piled up receipts and bills.

LATER

It's almost dusk. Nora is still investigating receipts, and Dax lays back on the couch resting comfortably, almost asleep.

They hear a shotgun BLAST in the field across the road.

They race to the front door.

NORA

Call 9-1-1!

DAX

No phone.

NORA

What?

DAX

Invasion of privacy. My doorbell-cam has it's own monitor. Have a land line at home for 9-1-1.

NORA

Out the back door, cut across to your place and call!

Dax sets down his coffee next to the stun gun, and races toward the backdoor.

Nora peeks out the window to see Gramps holding a shotgun in contrast to the beautiful twilight. He's alone in full hunting gear.

GRAMPS (O.S.)
Get on out here, Mrs. Karlsson!

Nora opens the door with the chain lock on it.

NORA
Can't do it. Ankle monitor. House arrest.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Gramps sees Dax running across the field toward his house, against a gorgeous sunset, and Gramps shoots.

Dax dives to the ground, gets up, and runs faster.

Gramps shoots again, but misses again, and Dax runs faster.

INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nora races to the side window in the parlor and sees Dax running out of range.

GRAMPS (O.S.)
Pick up the perv later.

Nora returns to the front door and is shocked to see Gramps peeking through the chain lock and waving a large yellow envelope.

Nora slams the door, locks the dead bolt, grabs the stun gun, and ducks as Gramps yells.

GRAMPS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I ain't gonna shoot ya. Shotgun's just to get your attention.

Nora yells.

NORA
You got it. What do you want?

GRAMPS (O.S.)
Our banker, and your lawyer swung 'round this morning and dropped off a foreclosure schedule! I was fixin' to kill him, 'cept he said it wouldn't do no good for my kin.

NORA

Take it up with him!

GRAMPS (O.S.)

I would 'cept it's up to you to
sell your oil rights, so we can
sell ours, or...

NORA

We all get foreclosed? Is that it?
It's all my fault?

GRAMPS (O.S.)

Liam was gonna sell. He told me so.
Told us all! But that shyster
lawyer Ronny Harrison says that an
oral contract ain't worth the paper
it ain't written on.

NORA

I got the same foreclosure
schedule, and the next owner might
well be Chemco!

Gramps mood turns sad.

GRAMPS (O.S.)

You got kin?

NORA

Not in this country, and they'd
never come here!

GRAMPS (O.S.)

Why the hell not?

NORA

'Cause healthcare and education
costs are too high, and the place
is run by shyster lawyers, crooked
billionaires, and companies like
Chemco!

Nora hears the flash-spark sound of a stun gun.

NORA (CONT'D)

Gramps? What was that?

Silence.

NORA (CONT'D)

Gramps?

Nora crawls toward the door, and places her ear to it.

Silence.

NORA (CONT'D)
 (yells)
 Gramps?

Nora lays down her stun gun, stands and unlocks the dead bolt. She slowly opens the door with the chain lock on, and she sees Gramps lying unconscious on her porch.

She slams the door, releases the chain lock, throws open the door.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nora feels for a pulse on Gramps.

No pulse. She begins CPR, and hears a siren approaching.

The Sheriff skids to a stop and races to Gramps, pushing Nora aside. He feels for a pulse. Nothing.

SHERIFF GLENN
 He's dead!

NORA
 I told Professor Gilliam to call
 you!

SHERIFF GLENN
 He called 9-1-1. Said Gramps shot
 at him with a shotgun.

The Sheriff looks at Gramps' neck and sees two burn marks from a stun gun.

He looks around Gramps and into the street.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)
 Don't see no shotgun, do you?

Nora looks around in a panic.

NORA
 I saw and heard it, too! And saw
 him fire at Dax!

SHERIFF GLENN
 Dax, is it? I see.

The Sheriff peeks in the door, and sees Nora's stun gun on the floor. Nora is defensive.

NORA

I didn't stun him! Hasn't been fired today at all.

SHERIFF GLENN

No way to tell, is there?

The Sheriff gets on his radio.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Dispatch, we have a DB at the Karlsson home. Gramps Watson. Notify Cy. Send the coroner, and get someone out here for photos and evidence. Looking for Gramps Watson's shotgun or I'll be bringing in Nora Karlsson for questioning, and send another car to pick up Dax Gilliam.

Nora is angry and confused.

NORA

I didn't...

Sheriff Glenn pulls out his cuffs and slaps them on Nora.

SHERIFF GLENN

(interrupts)

You have the right to remain silent...

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Nora, still in her white blouse and short jeans skirt, sits in the interrogation room alone with handcuffs on. Before her is a blank legal-sized yellow tablet and a pen.

Sheriff Glenn bursts in the door with four evidence bags containing a bottle of pills, her boots, her phone, and her stun gun.

He's disappointed seeing the blank tablet before Nora.

SHERIFF GLENN

What the hell is going on here, Nora? Thought the night in the holding cell would protect you.

NORA

Told you everything last night. Sure as hell have nothing to confess.

The Sheriff grabs the seat across from Nora, and glares at her, holding up the pill bag, as Ronny Harrison staggers in the room and takes a seat next to Nora, who glares at Ronny.

NORA (CONT'D)

'Bout time.

RONNY

Got my own pressures at the bank.

NORA

Bet you do.

SHERIFF GLENN

First DB first.

NORA

DB?

SHERIFF GLENN

Dead body. Your husband. The bottle of Oxy? Dangerous drug.

Nora leans to Ronny.

NORA

Ask him if he found my fingerprints on the bottle.

The Sheriff sets the evidence bag with the bottle aside.

Nora turns away.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. FARMHOUSE

Liam comes home drunk knocks Nora (in her short bathrobe) around as she describes it.

NORA (V.O.)

Liam came home one night, drunk, knocked me around, pushed me over a table and wrenched my back.

END FLASHBACK

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

NORA

Ask Doc Woods. I called you too, but so did Liam, and he told you I fell.

(MORE)

NORA (CONT'D)

Liam picked up my prescription and confiscated them.

(uses finger quotes)

"For my own good." Never saw 'em again.

Ronny whispers to the Sheriff.

RONNY

Did you find...?

The Sheriff holds up the boot, and interrupts Ronny.

SHERIFF GLENN

Boot's consistent with Liam's bruised rib.

NORA

But the shovel wasn't, and he could have bruised his rib a dozen other ways, right, Harry?

(elbows Ronny)

Speak up if you have any questions, Ronny.

The Sheriff shoves the boot aside, and picks up Nora's phone, and slides it across the desk with a smirk.

SHERIFF GLENN

Nothing here, I'll admit.

NORA

Ruined my opportunity to use the doorbell cam video to see what happen to Gramps, and my ability to call 9-1-1 afterwards.

The Sheriff looks away in disgust, then turns to Nora in a rage.

SHERIFF GLENN

You knew there'd be no evidence of you using your stun gun on Gramps?

Nora is stunned and angry.

NORA

You confiscated my phone...

SHERIFF GLENN

(interrupted)

You may not have known 'bout his pacemaker, but...

The Sheriff picks up the evidence bag containing Nora's stun gun.

Ronny angrily stands and whips out a stun gun identical to Nora's.

RONNY

Half the town has one of these.
That Sarah Tremain's been selling
'em like hotcakes!

The Sheriff is flustered. He paces and mumbles.

SHERIFF GLENN

Means, motive, and opportunity.
Everybody loved Gramps Watson. His
kin won't be happy, I'll tell you
what! Cy knows 'bout this already.
Don't have enough to hold you here.
House arrest again.

The Sheriff holds Nora's stun gun up with one hand.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Sending you home. Sorry!
(beat)
Made yourself a target this time!

INT. RONNY'S CAR - DAY

Ronny drives an expensive Brand sedan, with Nora in the passenger seat looking out the passenger window.

Silence.

NORA

Thanks for sticking up for me back
there.

Ronny laughs.

RONNY

Heard about Gramps from the
grapevine.

NORA

Sarah?

RONNY

Town gossip.

NORA

Talk you into buying the stun gun?

RONNY
Said I'd lose a fist fight to a
twelve-year-old.

NORA
Ever use it?

RONNY
Never charged it.
(laughs)
Sarah's idea for me to buy it to
show the Sheriff how common they
are. She knew he'd blame you.

Nora looks back out the side window.

NORA
How did she know?

RONNY
Cy threatened her on the phone for
selling one to you. Big angry man
there.

Nora turns to Ronny.

NORA
Thanks again for driving me home.

RONNY
Self-interest, really. From a
business standpoint.
(beat)
Look, your husband was an unstable
drunk and pill freak, no offense.

NORA
None taken.

RONNY
Gust of wind could have come up
when he shot himself, leaving no
powder burns.

Nora pauses to think.

RONNY (CONT'D)
It's what I would have argued, if
you went to trial.

NORA
If?

RONNY

Don't know or care 'bout Gramps.
Been battling cancer for years. Cy
was gonna get his ranch anyway.

NORA

Didn't know.

RONNY

Nobody did, 'cept Doc Woods. Three
of us were fishing buddies. Not
much to talk about when the fish
aren't biting. Sworn to secrecy.

NORA

(sad)

Sorry for him, is all.

RONNY

But Cy's not a thinking man. Just
dumb enough to go back to jail and
miss out on millions of dollars of
oil and gas revenue.

NORA

Back to jail?

RONNY

Prison. Fishing buddies, remember.
And Cy already knows you hold the
key to his now bigger share of the
oil money.

Nora looks out the window.

NORA

And now his father's death.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Ronny skids to a stop in front of Nora's house.

RONNY

Best thing for you to do is sign
those rights over to Chemco, sell
the ranch, and get as far away from
here as you can! I'll expect your
decision by tomorrow morning. Say
eleven AM?

Nora opens the door in silence, with her phone in her hand.

NORA
Thanks for the lift.

RONNY
Dialing 9-1-1 may not help you.
Just sayin'.

NORA
I can take care of myself.

Nora shuts the door, waves and turns toward her front door.

A little green light on her ankle monitor lights up. She sees it and trudges to the door, where 1 medium and 3 large Amazon boxes are waiting on the porch.

Nora unlocks the door and pulls the boxes inside.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Nora pulls the boxes down to the basement. The 3 large boxes contain a section of a Mirafit portable martial arts mat.

She constructs a 12-ft by 8-ft mat with three sections.

She opens up the medium box and pulls out an unfilled boxer's "heavy bag."

She races upstairs to fetch her husband's clothes to fill the heavy bag in the basement.

Lastly, she fetches her computer from upstairs, and gets to work following self-defense instructional videos on YouTube.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

The Sheriff stares at the whiteboard that only has Liam's and Nora's photos and previous notes. He draws a box around the two photos, then a line from Liam's photo to the outside the box and adds a question mark at the end of the line.

SHERIFF GLENN
Outside the box. Think outside the
box. Phone records? Security
cameras? Stores? Gas stations?

He throws down the magic marker, frustrated.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)
Anything?

He turns to his computer to zoom in on photos of the receipts on Nora's desk.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)
Where you been traveling to, Liam?

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Liam is swerving in his open-top Jeep, and just misses the Sheriff's patrol car coming the opposite direction.

The Sheriff skids and turns, with lights and siren, chases Liam in an exciting car chase on a dusty, dark road.

The Sheriff finally pulls over Liam within sight of his ranch house.

As the Sheriff approaches the Jeep, Liam swings open the door knocking the Sheriff down.

Liam hops out and jumps on the Sheriff.

LIAM
Seen the way she looks at you!

They wrestle, but the Sheriff wins.

SHERIFF GLENN
You're drunk!

LIAM
Stay away from her! Hear me?

The Sheriff pulls Liam to his feet.

SHERIFF GLENN
Walk home and sleep it off!

END FLASHBACK

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The Sheriff zooms in on another receipt.

SHERIFF GLENN
Who else ya been seeing lately?

Zooms in on another receipt.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)
Gotta be something here, somewhere!

He pushes the keyboard back in disgust.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)
Anybody else want you dead?

The Sheriff thinks for a moment.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)
As Sherlock says, "When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth."

INT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

She's sweating like crazy in tight workout clothes, kicking and punching the heavy bag while watching a video on her laptop, when her phone buzzes.

She sees Dax at the front door.

Nora races upstairs, shuts the door, and leaps to the front door.

Dax is smitten with Nora's sexy, sweaty look, but he averts his eyes.

NORA
Sorry it took me so long to get to the door. Daily workout.

Dax enters with a folded map of the county.

DAX
Heard about Gramps. Did you...

NORA
(interrupts angrily)
I didn't stun him, if that's what...

DAX
No, no. You wouldn't. I mean, did you have a tough time convincing the sheriff?

NORA
Gramps shot at you, but when the sheriff got here, his shotgun was gone.

DAX

Your interior lights were on while you were in jail. Saw 'em from my place.

NORA

Sheriff probably searched the place.

Dax walks to the desk.

DAX

Probably saw all Liam's receipts.

NORA

Looking for Gramps's shotgun, and any evidence on me, but he didn't mention anything this morning.

DAX

Brought you a county map. Might want to map your husband's receipts.

Dax drops the map down on Nora's desk.

Nora turns to Dax sweetly.

NORA

You know I didn't kill Liam or Gramps. You're trying to help me find out who did.

Dax looks away.

DAX

I know why the Sheriff isn't helping you!

Nora grabs Dax's arms and gets in his face. They speak in rapid fire.

NORA

Tell me! Tell me now!

DAX

Saw three gas receipts from out on Country Road Twenty-Seven. Sheriff's only one who lives way out there.

NORA

So?

DAX
 Poker night for the Sheriff,
 Gramps, Cy, and me, and sometimes
 Liam.

Nora pauses to DAYDREAM "Poker night with the boys."

CUT TO:

INT. CY'S FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Sheriff, Gramps, Cy, Dax, Liam play poker, drink beer,
 and smoke cigars. Liam has the fewest chips.

Liam angrily tosses in his cards.

LIAM
 I fold! Again! That's all for me
 tonight.

Liam gets up and leaves, but the poker game goes on.

BACK TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nora snaps out of her DAYDREAM.

NORA
 You think Liam was seeing Harry's
 gorgeous girlfriend? Ridiculous!
 He'd kill him!

DAX
 The statistics strongly indicate...

Nora interrupts and pushes Dax away.

NORA
 Think it's time for you to go!

Nora ushers Dax to the front door.

DAX
 But it's Cy you gotta worry about.
 He's gone mad! Ran over my mailbox,
 and was shooting his new AK-47 over
 my house. Thinks we're in cahoots.
 He's crazy, I tell ya!

Nora shoves Dax out the door. She's angry.

NORA
We're not in cahoots! I can take
care of myself.

Nora slams the door and locks it.

Her phone rings. It's Sarah Tremain. Nora answers by
screaming.

NORA (CONT'D)
Did you sell Cy Watson a fucking AK-
47?

Silence.

SARAH (O.S.)
Did I get you at a bad time?
Thought I'd drop by tonight to show
you a new Taser gun with...

NORA
(interrupts)
Fucking idiot! You signed my death
warrant!

Nora ends the call, stumbles over to the desk, collapses in
the chair, and stares at the county map and pile of receipts.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Nora eats a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, drinks hot tea,
and continues to map Liam's receipts. Three clusters of
points occur on the map.

Nora's eyes open widely when she sees the pattern.

Suddenly, she hears automatic rifle shots in from of her
house. BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM!

Nora crouches and races to the front door by the table to
grab her wimpy stun gun, she remains crouched as she returns
to the desk to grab her phone, and races to the basement
while dialing 9-1-1.

As she runs down the steps, a Dispatch Officer (female; 30s)
answers.

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)
Emergency.

NORA

This is Nora Karlsson, tell Sheriff Glenn someone is shooting an automatic rifle at my home!

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)

What's the address?

NORA

Tell him to track my ankle monitor!

Nora ends the call.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Nora slams the basement door, and races to stack the martial arts mat against it.

She unties the heavy bag from the ceiling beam, and drags it to the side of the door.

She crouches behind the heavy bag holding her phone and her stun gun.

Her phone rings. It's Sheriff Glenn.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)

Nora? You okay?

Nora screams.

NORA

You know damn well I'm not okay!

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)

Just Cy Watson letting off a little steam.

NORA

Your Thursday night poker buddy is just letting off a little...

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)

Perfectly legal target practice on his own ranch...

NORA

Right outside my goddamn door!

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)

Get video?

NORA
Are you nuts?

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)
Any windows broke?

NORA
No?

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)
Ya see?
(beat)
And don't even think about goin'
anywhere with that monitor.

Nora glares at the green light on the monitor.

NORA
What!?

SHERIFF GLENN
Look bad if you tried to escape.
I'll talk to Cy. We play poker, but
he's not my buddy! Call me if he
hits anything by accident!

NORA
Accident, my ass!
(angrier, Nora stands)
Is this all because my husband was
sleeping with your girlfriend every
Thursday night for the past two
months?

SHERIFF GLENN
Ex-girlfriend. And, neither you or
I can prove that!

The Sheriff ends the call.

Nora slumps to the floor behind the heavy bag.

The overhead basement light blinks before going out.

NORA
Damn it. Not now!

Nora jumps up and pushes the mats away from the door, as she
makes her list

NORA (CONT'D)
Emergency kit. Flashlights,
candles, matches, food, water,
first-aid kit, radio, and blankets.

She switches on her phone flashlight.

NORA (CONT'D)

Quickly. Save the battery. Save the battery.

She takes one step on the stairs, and stops and listens for intruders.

She tiptoes up the stairs, stun gun in one hand, flashlight in the other.

A wooden stair CREAKS. She shuts off her flashlight, turns her head, and listens.

Silence.

She tiptoes on.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

The upper house is pitch dark. Nora peeks out and sees no one. She crawls quietly to her bedroom closet and pulls out a cardboard box that reads "Emergency."

She crawls to her bathroom and tosses in a first-aid kit, toothbrush and toothpaste, and toilet paper. She crawls to the kitchen and grabs crackers and cheese, apples, and bottled waters. She grabs an empty coffee can and tosses the toilet paper in it.

She turns to leave the kitchen, but returns to the refrigerator-freezer to pull out Brand ice-cream. She grabs a spoon from a drawer.

In a moment of fury, Nora races into to the fireplace mantle, grabs her framed wedding photo with Liam, and smashes it on the floor.

She removes the photo and tears it in half, taking Liam's photo with her.

She looks around and listens before crawling to the basement door.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

The mats are against the door again. Nora sits behind the heavy bag cuddled in an emergency blanket. Her phone is in one hand. Her stun gun is in the other. One candle burns before her, as she eats the ice cream and sips her water.

Nora lifts her eyes to the far corner of the basement where the baby cradle is, covered with cobwebs. She talks softly to the cradle.

NORA

Wasn't my fault. Low sperm count!

(sadder)

Wasn't my fault. Fat bastard drank, smoked, and took pills. His sperm couldn't crawl let alone swim.

Nora stares sadly at the cradle in the flickering candlelight. Again, she fights back tears.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The Sheriff patrols a road and spots Cy's brand pickup truck driving slowly in front of him. He flashes his lights and pulls him over.

Sheriff Glenn approaches the truck with caution.

Big Cy steps out of his truck in full camouflage hunting gear, and forms fists in both hands.

SHERIFF GLENN

Don't want trouble, Cy.

CY

Ain't doin' nothin' wrong!

SHERIFF GLENN

Scaring the widow Karlsson half to death ain't nothin'.

CY

Widow, or murderer?

SHERIFF GLENN

Let the law handle it, Cy.

CY

Driven us all to the poor house, she is.

SHERIFF GLENN

Firing that A-K is harassment.

CY

Got the right. Second Amendment.

Cy reaches in his truck and pulls out the AK-47.

Sheriff Glenn remains calm and steps closer to Cy.

SHERIFF GLENN

She's got her rights, too. Life,
liberty and the pursuit of
happiness.

CY

No one's takin' my rights.

Cy steps toward the Sheriff, who looks away, then back,
before using lightning-fast mixed martial arts to take the
rifle out of Cy's hands.

The Sheriff tosses the rifle aside as Cy tackles the Sheriff
and a fight and wrestling match goes on for minutes before Cy
ends up out of breath with his neck under the Sheriff's boot.

SHERIFF GLENN

Cy, don't want to arrest you for
assaulting an officer of the law.
Again! You'd know where they'll
send you.

CY

She's got to learn.

SHERIFF GLENN

You've got to let me handle it! Got
it?

Cy breathes heavily and backs down.

Sheriff Glenn helps him up.

Cy grunts, picks up his rifle, and drives off.

Sheriff Glenn breathes a sigh of relief.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Nora practices self-defense by candlelight and watching
videos. She wears a tight tank top and yoga pants. The heavy
bag now has Liam's part of their wedding photo taped on.

After several kicks and punches to the heavy bag, she stops
and looks fondly at the cradle.

NORA

None of this was my fault, and they
will pay! Believe me. They will all
pay!

She kicks and punches. The "low battery" light flashes on her laptop.

Nora stares at the cradle.

NORA (CONT'D)
 Know what marriage is like with a
 drunk who won't change?
 (beat)
 It's like being the only two people
 in a burning airplane.
 (beat)
 He gives you two choices: stay with
 him and the plane, or jump!

Nora kicks and punches the heavy bag with a greater fury, glaring at Liam's photo on the heavy bag.

NORA (CONT'D)
 I finally jumped!

Her computer battery dies and the screen goes dark.

NORA (CONT'D)
 Falling down isn't hard, if you
 pick yourself up!

She gives one final strongest-ever kick to the bag.

Her phone buzzes. She sees Dax at her front door wearing an upscale brand outdoor jacket and nice pants.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Sarah Tremain's phone buzzes on the nightstand next to her deluxe bed in a nice mobile home. The room is dark, except for the light of the phone.

She turns on the lamp on the nightstand to reveal her pistol, a Taser, and a bottle of Jack Daniels.

She's dressed in a sexy nightgown, and there's a cute blonde female sleeping naked next to her. We see her back.

Sarah stares at her phone to see Dax at Nora's door, and leaps out of bed.

SARAH
 Gotta step out for a minute. Client
 needs me.

The sleeping naked blonde doesn't move.

BACK TO:

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Dax waits patiently outside, as Nora slowly opens the door.

Nora puts her index finger to her lips requesting silence, and pulls Dax into the dark house.

Dax sees Nora's broken wedding frame on the floor, and he sees she's sweating in her workout clothes.

Dax begins to speak, but Nora angrily gives him the "silence sign" and pulls Dax through the house to the basement door.

Dax follows the stairs to the candlelight.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dax's see a makeshift martial arts gym, the emergency box and supplies. He turns to face Nora who is right behind him, and sees she has removed her tank top and sports bra.

Nora puts her finger to her lips again, and begins to remove Dax's jacket.

Dax's eyes open widely and Nora pulls him down to the floor mat.

Nora kisses and fondles Dax that is more athletic than passionate, as if to relieve stress.

Dax is a surprised and overcome with immediate and unwanted anxiety. He fumbles removing his clothes.

Dax doesn't know what to do with his hands as Nora glides over him, kissing his neck, ears, and cheeks.

Dax sweats profusely, eyes wide open in fright, as Nora kisses his chest, and stomach.

Nothing. Dax cringes in embarrassment.

The sex is over. Nora turns away.

Dax mumbles.

DAX

Anxiety. Depression. I take...

NORA
(interrupts)
Doesn't matter. Sorry for springing
it on you like that.

The overhead light comes on with a buzz. Nora hops up and gets dressed.

NORA (CONT'D)
Power's on! Gotta hurry.

Nora runs upstairs.

Dax dresses quickly. He stops momentarily as he sees the cradle in the corner. He finishes dressing, and runs upstairs.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Nora is peeking out the front window in the dark, when Dax joins her. She gives him the silence sign, and whispers.

NORA
Need you to do me a favor.

DAX
That's what this was about?

NORA
They're out there. Waiting for me.
I know it.

DAX
Who's out there?

NORA
Don't know. Maybe Cy. Maybe the
Sheriff. Maybe both!

Nora grabs Dax by the jacket and pulls him close.

NORA (CONT'D)
Need you to sneak out the back door
to the barn, grab the jumper cables
hanging by the door, and short out
the cell phone tower behind us on
Lookout Mountain.

DAX
I can't.

NORA

You have to, or they'll kill me for sure. March in here with their AK-47s and gun me down. I need this ankle monitor turned off.

DAX

You won't have cell service for an emergency!

NORA

(sarcastic)

Who am I gonna call? The Sheriff?

(angry)

Do it!

Dax shakes in fear.

DAX

You won't just escape when the monitor goes out?

NORA

Unsettled business. Can't leave yet!

Nora pulls Dax to the back door, and hands him a small flashlight, and pushes him out the back door.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Cy is watching with Gramps's night-vision binoculars fixed on the front door. He has a shotgun and an AK-47 next to him.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Dax, using the flashlight, sees the jumper cables, Nora's gardening gloves, and unplanted seedlings.

He grabs Nora's gardening gloves and the jumper cables, shuts off the flashlight, and exits the barn quietly.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nora's phone buzzes, and she sees Sarah at the door.

Nora unlocks both locks and peeks out with her index finger presses to her lips.

Sarah looks out into the field toward Cy, then enters the house and whispers.

SARAH
Brought you something more
powerful.

NORA
You picked an odd time to visit!

As Nora double-locks the front door, Sarah pulls out her new
upscale Taser, as she looks around for Dax.

SARAH
You alone?

NORA
Yes, why do you ask?

Sarah tiptoes through the house, with the Taser's flashlight
and dual lasers on.

SARAH
Easy enough for someone to sneak in
a window or the back door.

NORA
No one's here.

Sarah talks in a low voice as she searches.

SARAH
If they're here, they'll get the
shock of their life. This is the
new Taser X2, my conducted
electrical weapon of choice, which
packs 1,400 volts.

NORA
That's a ton compared to a 12-volt
car battery!

SARAH
Baby causes certain cardiac
arrhythmia up to thirty seconds.
They look like fishes flopping on
the shore.

Sarah can't find Dax and walks right past the door to the
basement in the dark house.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Can't we turn on the lights?
Power's back on, ya know.

NORA

Prefer the dark in case someone is
out there with a gun.

Sarah nods her approval, and peeks out the front window.

SARAH

Works up to fifteen feet away! If
they come at ya, give 'em a jolt,
then run like hell!

(turns, smiles)

Twelve-hundred bucks with my
professional discount.

NORA

Can't afford it.

Sarah turns sad.

SARAH

Can't afford to be shot neither!
Talk in town is that if you die,
you'll default on the mortgage, and
the bank will sell your ranch to
Chemco.

NORA

They all win. I lose. Is that it?

Sarah sets the Taser next to the stun gun on the table by the
door.

SARAH

Tell ya what. Test it out for a few
nights.

(laughs)

Free of charge, get it?

NORA

Not funny. They got real guns.

(beat)

Come back in the morning with
Ronny. Tell him to bring his notary
stamp and book.

Nora escorts Sarah out, and looks suspiciously out to the
field.

SARAH

Notary stamp? What the hell for?

Nora closes the door and double locks it. Nora stares at the
Taser and stun gun.

NORA
(mumbles confidently)
You'll see.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN CELL TOWER - NIGHT

Using a flashlight, Dax stares up at a cell phone tower in genuine fear. A chain-link fence surrounds the tower.

He feels the fence without being shocked, so he jumps the fence, and follows wires from the tower to the control box.

He is unable to pull wires from the control box.

He finds a large piece of lumber against a fence, and yanks a wire from the control box.

He connects the red jumper cable lead to the exposed wire and grounds the black cable to the fence.

He sends a text message that reads: "shorting cell tower."

He checks his cell phone nervously, before connecting the other red jumper cable to the fence. His phone is unchanged.

He attaches the other black jumper cable directly to the red cable. It sparks wildly for a few seconds.

Dax sees his phone report, "No Service."

BACK TO:

INT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nora, dressed in all black, sees her ankle monitor light go out.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The Sheriff is asleep on a couch in the office when his radio BLASTS a warning BEEP-BEEP.

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)
Sheriff Glenn?

He answers his radio.

SHERIFF GLENN
Glenn here.

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)
Said to beep when Ms. Karlsson's
ankle monitor goes off-line.

SHERIFF GLENN
How?

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)
Cell tower shorted out.

SHERIFF GLENN
Her last location?

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)
She was home. Hasn't moved.
Probably asleep.

SHERIFF GLENN
I'm headin' on out there to be
sure.

The Sheriff grabs his hat and gun, and begins to run out the door before he realizes he's without boots.

BACK TO:

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nora sneaks around the ranch house, staying low from the back of the house and to the adjacent field to circle around to Cy. It's pitch dark, but we see that Nora is wearing latex gloves and carries the stun gun and the Taser on her belt.

Nora crouches and sneaks up on Cy, who is laying on his stomach and watching Nora's front door with the night-vision binoculars.

Nora sees the shotgun to Cy's right, and the AK-47 to Cy's left, and a bottle of Jack Daniels whiskey between them.

Nora races up from behind, but Cy hears her, and he spins onto his back with the AK-47, but it jams when he tries to fire it.

Nora kicks Cy in the crotch. He groans and bends forward.

Nora immediately follows with a roundhouse kick on Cy's elbow and the AK goes flying out of his arms.

Nora fetches the AK and flings it away in the dark, as Cy struggles to his feet with the shotgun in his hands.

CY
This won't jam!

Nora puts her hands up, about six feet from Cy.

NORA
I didn't kill Gramps!

CY
Hell you didn't! Your porch, same way you stunned me!

NORA
Ask the Sheriff?

CY
Ask him what?

NORA
Ask him if the burn marks were made by my stun gun! They weren't!

Nora takes a step closer.

NORA (CONT'D)
Ask him who removed your dad's shotgun from the scene.

Cy looks away, then back.

CY
We had a deal with Liam about the gas line.

NORA
(angry)
You can't spend your oil money in jail! You kill me, and you get time not money!

Cy points down to Nora's ankle monitor.

CY
I'll be shooting a runaway! A fugitive from justice!

NORA
(sarcastic)
Good, I was thinking you were an old-fashioned peeping Tom instead of a bully and a vigilante!

CY
Sheriff says you won't admit your guilt!

NORA

'Cause I'm innocent! I wasn't
anywhere near Liam when he died. I
was near Gramps, and it was another
type of stun gun, and I sure didn't
take his shotgun!

(yells)

Sorry for your loss, but that means
there's a killer still out there!

CY

Don't believe it!

NORA

What if you're next for being a
Peeping Tom, land-grabber, or card
thief? You better save those shells
for the real killer!

Nora turns her back, careful to remove her Taser from her
back belt, and hide it by her belly as she turns.

CY

Can't let you get away with it.
(charges toward Nora)
Our future...

Nora spins and ducks as Cy swings the shotgun like a club,
the butt of the rifle just missing Nora's head.

Nora fires the Taser and Cy falls back convulsing.

Nora tosses the shotgun away in the dark, and stands over Cy.

NORA

The electric current disrupts
voluntary control of muscles
causing neuromuscular
incapacitation. Won't kill ya! Less
you drank too much, then all bets
are off.

Nora stares at Cy's eyes, rolling in their sockets like
aimless souls. Nora yells!

NORA (CONT'D)

At some point, an eye for an eye
leaves everybody blind!

(beat)

You stay away from me, you hear?

Nora turns toward her house.

NORA (CONT'D)
Gotta get back. Expecting company!

EXT. LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN CELL TOWER - NIGHT

The Sheriff's car skids to a stop, hops out with a flashlight and pistol in hand, and sees jumper cables connecting the control box wires to the fence.

He disconnects them carefully, and tosses them in the back of his seat.

Sheriff calls dispatch on his radio.

SHERIFF GLENN
Dispatch, can I get the current
location of the Karlsson woman?

CUT TO:

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nora runs like a track star to the backdoor of house and dives inside. She grabs and uses her inhaler.

Nora's ankle monitor lights up.

BACK TO:

EXT. LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN CELL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

The Sheriff waits impatiently.

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)
Says here she's still in her house,
Sheriff.

SHERIFF GLENN
Checking up for myself. Over.

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)
You do that, Sheriff!

The Sheriff rolls his eyes in disgust as he heads to his car.

EXT./INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

The Sheriff's car skids to a stop.

He hops out and leaps to the front door.

Nora answers the door in her nightgown and short, sexy bathrobe, with the ankle monitor clearly visible, but she doesn't let him in.

The Sheriff sees the monitor, while Nora yawns.

The Sheriff peeks behind Nora to see the broken wedding photo frame.

NORA

What is it, Sheriff?

The Sheriff pulls the jumper cables from behind his back.

SHERIFF GLENN

Missing a set of jumper cables?

NORA

Lots of things go missing from here: shovels, pills, husband...

SHERIFF GLENN

(annoyed)

You been here all night?

NORA

Where else would I go?

SHERIFF GLENN

Any visitors?

NORA

(angry)

I sleep alone, if that's what you mean! You got any more concrete evidence on me? Fingerprints? Video? Ever find Gramps's shotgun?

SHERIFF GLENN

No, no, and no! That don't mean...

NORA

(interrupts)

Sheriff, unless you have solid evidence, can I request a two-mile range on my ankle monitor, so I can plant the seedlings in my barn? They'll die if I don't get them in the ground, and there's been too much dying 'round here.

The Sheriff paces back and forth angrily on the porch holding up the jumper cables.

NORA (CONT'D)
Could have been kids, Sheriff.

SHERIFF GLENN
But it wasn't kids, was it?

NORA
Just don't know, Sheriff. Lots I
don't know.

The Sheriff is furious as he stomps back to his car.

SHERIFF GLENN
Two-mile range. No farther!

NORA
Let me know if you find out
anything more, Sheriff. I think you
still got a killer out there!

The Sheriff throws down the jumper cables and races away!

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - MORNING

Ronny races up in his brand upscale sedan, with Sarah
following in her brand car.

Ronnie carries his notary stamp kit with a worried look on
his face.

Sarah reluctantly follows Ronny up the steps, like something
big is up.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - MORNING

Nora, in a cute sun dress, waits for the bell to ring.

NORA
Who is it?

RONNY (O.S.)
Ronny? What's this...

SARAH (O.S.)
(interrupts)
Know damn well who it is. Open up!

Nora checks her phone, and unlocks and opens the door.

NORA

Checking to see if my doorbell-cam
video recorder was working. Can't
be too careful these days.

Ronny enters gracefully. Sarah nudges Nora on the way in. We see the Taser gun and the stun gun on the little table by the door.

RONNY

What's this about? What did you
decide? Sell your oil rights or
foreclosure?

NORA

Neither.

(hands Ronny a check)

Here's a cashier's check for the
back mortgage payments and the next
three months in advance from a
donor who would like to remain
anonymous. And, they'll be back!

RONNY

Who'd do such a thing?

SARAH

Is it real?

Nora snaps a photo of Ronny and Sarah staring at the check.

RONNY

Looks legit, but you won't last
three months!

Ronny angrily tosses the check to the floor, and starts to choke Nora.

RONNY (CONT'D)

You'll ruin me! I'm finished!

Sarah reaches to the table and grabs the Taser gun, and zaps Ronny.

Ronny falls to the floor shaking and stunned.

Sarah bends over Ronny to help him.

SARAH

Ronny, so sorry. You'll be okay.

Nora takes the Taser from Sarah, careful to grab it with two fingers by the battery (away from the trigger).

Nora yells at Ronny.

NORA

Snap out of it, Ronny. I want a
notarized receipt for that check.
Sarah will witness.

(glares at Sarah)

Won't you, Sarah?

Sarah sees that Nora is deadly serious.

SARAH

Yeah. I guess so.

NORA

And, Ronny, I'll need you to record
and notarize my last will and
testament.

SARAH

What?

Ronny is sitting up, but still shaken.

NORA

The terms aren't important. Just
wanted to cover myself in case of
an untimely death. Like I said.
Can't be too careful.

Ronny is groggy.

RONNY

Too careful? No, you can never be
too careful.

Nora and Sarah help Ronny up and over to the desk where four
sets of papers await Ronny's notary seal and signatures.

Nora signs first and takes photos of Ronny and Sarah signing.

NORA

I'll have copies handed or mailed
to people I trust.

Nora keeps copies and packs original copies in a business
envelope and guides a wobbly Ronny to the front door.

Ronny is angry upon leaving and doesn't turn around.

RONNY

I'll file the papers right away.

NORA
Oh, and Ronny?

RONNY
What?

NORA
After that, you're fired!

Ronny storms out leaving Sarah and Nora alone. Sarah has her pistol holstered behind her.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Before Ronny gets in his car, he hears Sarah yell, furniture breaking, and glass shattering in the house.

SARAH (O.S.)
Ruined him! Now you're gonna ruin
me? I don't think so, bitch!

Ronny doesn't give it a second thought. He drives away slowly.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

There is a real catfight going on, and the front room is a mess of broken furniture and glass.

Sarah holds the Taser and Nora holds the stun gun.

Sarah aims the Taser at Nora, who does a summer-salt across the room to grab a couch cushion to protect herself, as Sarah fires her first electrodes.

Nora charges Sarah with the cushion and her stun gun and knocks Sarah back.

Sarah kicks the stun gun from Nora's hand, and hops to her feet with ninja-like skill, but Nora uses the energy from Sarah's kick in a twirling roundhouse kick that sends Sarah flying back against the wall, but Sarah's second electrodes don't fire and remain in the Taser.

Sarah reaches back for her pistol, but Nora lands her fists of steel into Sarah's gut, and Sarah, out of wind, collapses to the floor.

Nora turns to pick up the stun gun and holds it above Sarah with a threatening glare.

NORA
Hand over your smartphone! Now!

Sarah reluctantly hands Nora the phone.

SARAH
Won't do you any good. It's locked.

NORA
Known your passcode for days.
(Nora enters the code)
Never enter your passcode in front
of a doorbell-cam with video!

Sarah looks away in anger.

SARAH
Shit!

NORA
Look at all these videos you
collected from my front door!
(beat)
You'll stay right here while I
airdrop these to my laptop, won't
you.

Sarah nods yes.

Nora stuns her with stun gun. Sarah is incapacitated.

NORA (CONT'D)
Sorry. Don't trust ya.

Nora takes Sarah's pistol and the smartphone and runs to her bedroom.

LATER

Nora returns to find Sarah holding the Taser with two charged electrodes ready to fire.

NORA (CONT'D)
Wouldn't do that if I was you?

SARAH
Yeah? Why?

NORA
Because I'll send your videos to
the Sheriff and the D.A.

Sarah's hand holding the Taser begins to shake.

SARAH

I... I...

NORA

You're not a murderer, Sarah.

Nora steps closer to Sarah, grabs her arm with another MMA move and strips Sarah of her Taser.

SARAH

No... I'm not a... murderer

NORA

I learned about your doorbell-cam hack by examining the code you installed on my smartphone. The camera notified you, and me, whenever someone came to my door.

SARAH

Inadmissible evidence.

Nora paces confidently with the Taser.

NORA

What's the Sheriff gonna say about those poker night videos?

Sarah reaches for her pistol but it isn't there!

NORA (CONT'D)

Oh, if I don't punch in a certain passcode on my computer three times in the next 48 hours, they'll automatically be sent to the Sheriff, D.A., and posted on the web automatically. Your career in home security will be over, and you'll face charges of invasion of privacy, espionage, and blackmail.

SARAH

I didn't...

Nora raises her Taser at Sarah.

NORA

You also installed backdoor malware on the phone that turns on the camera and sends you the video. I thought you were just a perv, until I saw the Sheriff's poker videos. You were getting a cut of the action from someone.

Sarah shakes as she stomps to the front door.

NORA (CONT'D)
You were playing him. The Sheriff.

Sarah doesn't turn around.

SARAH
Don't be ridiculous.

NORA
You'd snuggle up to him or do
whatever you needed to do to get
crime reports to sell your home
security products.
(beat)
Must have been a great acting job!

Sarah turns angrily.

SARAH
Can't be serious.

NORA
Said yourself. Sheriff is as dumb
as a rock like every good ol' boy.
Liam had him pegged, too.

SARAH
You're crazy!

NORA
Had to be sure. I secretly checked
Cy's smartphone last night, and saw
the same code on his doorbell-cam
that turned his phone camera on at
your command.

Sara tries to escape, but Nora gives her a roundhouse kick to the knees and sends her into the front door. Nora laughs.

NORA (CONT'D)
Only need a few good moves if they
keep working for ya.

SARAH
I'm calling the Sheriff!

NORA
And tell him his poker buddies
cheated him every week, tipping
each other off who had the better
hand. I saw it all on Gramps's
phone the night he died.

Sarah gets in a fetal position by the door, covering her face.

SARAH
You're crazy!

NORA
That's why you had to shut Gramps
up, before he confessed to me.

Sarah breaks down in tears, staring up at Nora in anguish.

SARAH
Didn't know he had a pacemaker.

NORA
Who removed the shotgun from the
porch?

SARAH
I didn't.

Nora stands over Sarah with the Taser pointed at her heart.

NORA
Who removed the shotgun from the
porch?

SARAH
I didn't, and I don't know! I
swear!

Nora pauses.

Nora tosses Sarah's smartphone back to Sarah.

NORA
You're gonna turn yourself in for
stun-gunning Gramps trying to
protect me, and I'll vouch for you
that it was self-defense.

SARAH
If I don't?

NORA
If you don't, I'll share your
videos on the web, to the D.A., and
the Sheriff will go after you for
manslaughter, and I'll testify
against you.

SARAH
That's blackmail!

NORA

And, I'll keep the Taser. If you ever come around here again, I'll use it!

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sarah struggles out the door in a huff, and turns to see Nora ripping out the doorbell-cam with a claw-hammer.

LATER

A mysterious Brand electric car drives up. A Woman (40s) with a briefcase, and a 13-year-old girl, both dressed in green T-shirts and blue jeans, walk to the door.

They see the torn-out doorbell.

The Woman knocks politely.

Nora answers in a stunning green dress, and signs a few papers, using the Woman's briefcase as a table.

NORA

Thanks for the cashier's check and buying the ranch.

Nora also hands the Woman a USB Memory stick.

Nora keeps one copy, and the Woman and girl retain a copy, and smile as they leave as quietly as they came.

Dax walks up as the electric car drives away.

He sees the doorbell-cam has been ripped out.

NORA (CONT'D)

Remodeling a bit.

Dax smiles uneasily.

DAX

Can I come in?

Nora acts perfectly normal, but hesitates, and Dax notices.

NORA

The house is a bit of a mess. Dust everywhere.

DAX

Wanted to talk about last night.

NORA

Later tonight. A real date perhaps?

DAX

I called Ronny Harrison's office. I needed to talk to him today about my foreclosure schedule. Office said he went fishing. Didn't know when he was coming back.

NORA

All these matters will all be resolved soon.

DAX

What do you mean?

NORA

Cy confronted me last night, out of grief for losing his dad. He wasn't thinking clearly, so I went easy on him.

DAX

What?

NORA

Thanks for shorting the cell tower, or I'd be dead. Cy was in such grief, he would have charged right in and shot up the place. Imagine the mess!

DAX

You knew he was out there?

NORA

Suspected it.

DAX

He's not very bright.

NORA

On the contrary. He knew that if I died, the ranch would be foreclosed before I could sell it. If he made it look like he shot me as an escaped prisoner, the Sheriff would go easy on him. Maybe give him a reward. Then Chemco buys my ranch for a song, and all of you become rich!

Dax pauses, and looks away sheepishly.

DAX
You had them all figured out,
didn't you?

NORA
Not all of them.

Nora holds her new Taser with pride.

NORA (CONT'D)
Know what happens when you're hit
with one of these babies?

DAX
What?

NORA
Involuntary paralysis. Muscles
don't respond to commands. Feel
like a jellyfish!

DAX
What's the range?

NORA
Fifteen feet.

DAX
Geez.

NORA
Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got
a house to dust, a few emails to
send, and tree seedlings to plant,
for future generations.

Nora smiles.

DAX
Future generations?

NORA
Only ones who really matter! Don't
you agree?

Dax looks puzzled.

DAX
Tonight then. It's a date. Stop by
at eight?

NORA
Can't wait, Professor.

Dax looks at Nora sheepishly as he waves and leaves.

After he's gone, Nora pats her tummy with both hands. She smiles.

EXT. RANCH - AFTERNOON

Nora is planting tree seedlings on a bright sunny day. She wears a thick sweatshirt (completely zipped up, and hiding her Taser gun), tight blue jeans, and her work boots. Her back is to the dirt access road.

Cy drives up with Dax in Cy's pick up. Cy steps out of the truck first, wearing the same western clothes, jacket, and cowboy hat as the night before. He has a half-smile and stands in front of the truck.

Nora briefly turns to see them both, then goes back to planting.

CY

Came to apologize 'bout last night.

Nora doesn't turn around.

NORA

Rather you just let me be.

Dax steps out of the truck in western wear, and manly leather/suede jacket with his hands in the pockets. He looks sad and sheepish as he joins Cy in front of the truck.

DAX

Hi, Nora.

Nora doesn't turn around.

NORA

Hi, Dax. Thought I wouldn't see you 'til tonight.

Cy glares at Dax.

DAX

Asked Cy if I could come along, is all.

CY

We know some strangers visited you.

Nora keeps planting, but turns briefly to glare at Dax.

NORA
Boys do talk.

CY
Somethin' you want to tell us that
concerns us?

NORA
Nope.

CY
That concerns the future value of
our ranches?

NORA
Nothin' to say.

DAX
I'm okay with whatever you decide,
Nora. You know that.

Nora turns to stare at Dax with a perplexed look.

NORA
(mumbles)
Huh.

CY
(loud)
Sheriff called me this morning.
Told me to stay away from you.

NORA
Don't listen very well.

Dax looks away.

CY
He was curious 'bout your latest
payment to the bank. Said he's
lookin' into it. Somethin' 'bout an
accomplice?

NORA
None of his business either.

DAX
Cy thinks he wanted to know if you
were keeping the place.
(sad to Nora)
Course, I'd like you to...

CY

(interrupts)

Sheriff said he'd be talkin' out of school but said he didn't have enough evidence to book you for your Liam's murder.

Nora keeps planting.

NORA

That's right.

CY

Said there was new developments on daddy's death, but couldn't talk about 'em.

NORA

Sounds like you should be talkin' to him, not me.

CY

Thing is, I don't know how, but I know you were somehow involved.

Nora finally turns. She's angry.

Cy walks to the back of pickup, and takes out his shotgun.

Dax has a sinister grin on his face.

NORA

This a lynch mob? Is that it? Can't you get it through your thick skulls that if you kill me, you get life in prison! No more oil and gas money! No more ranch?

CY

Don't own it no more. Sold my worthless ranch, and Gramps's worthless ranch to Dax this mornin'!

Nora is stunned and angrier, as Dax looks away.

NORA

Dax's ranch is in foreclosure!

Dax paces like a neurotic and depressed madman.

DAX

None of your business.

CY

Dax says you can't go more than
fifty feet from your ranch house.
Makes you an escaped prisoner.
Leave the valley with my head up.

Nora glares at Dax.

NORA

Sheriff extended my range to two
miles, due to lack of evidence!
Said I wasn't a flight risk!

DAX

She lying. She's outsmarted you
again, Cy! This is your big chance
to be a hero.

Cy aims the shotgun in her direction.

Nora drops the shovel and takes out her phone and raises her
hands.

NORA

I surrender! Call the Sheriff.

DAX

She knows there's no cell service
way out here!

NORA

How do you know that, Dax? Test it
before?

Dax nudges Cy.

Nora lowers the hand without the phone and takes the Taser
out from the back of her sweatshirt.

DAX

Trying to trick you again, Cy! Like
she tricked your dad.

Cy gets nervous. His hands and the shotgun are shaking.

DAX (CONT'D)

Shoot her, you idiot! Now it's self-
defense!

Nora tosses the Taser a few feet in front of her.

NORA

Don't do it, Cy! I warned the Sheriff something like this could happen.

Dax yells to Cy's ears.

DAX

Nobody's that smart, Cy. Shoot her! I'll be your witness. Self-defense!

Cy pauses, then drops the barrel of the shotgun.

Dax takes his hands out of his jacket. He's wearing Latex gloves.

Dax grabs at Cy's shotgun, but Cy clings to it.

Dax suddenly goes into Ninja-mode. He plants a perfect roundhouse kick into Cy's ribs, and punches Cy like a Heavy Bag.

Nora's eyes open widely, and she dives for the Taser.

She turns to see Cy unconscious on the ground, and the shotgun in Dax's hands, pointed at her. Dax's voice is manly and calm.

DAX (CONT'D)

About eighteen-feet away, wouldn't you guess?

Nora stands with the Taser and glares at Dax.

NORA

Called the Sheriff this morning. Told him it was all you.

DAX

Don't think so. We had a date tonight.

NORA

When I heard Liam had alcohol, Oxy, and antidepressants in his bloodstream, I wondered where he got the antidepressants.

DAX

Not from me.

NORA

Common side-effect is lower libido and erectile dysfunction, often prescribed to sex offenders, but I had to find out for myself.

DAX

No pharmaceutical records.

NORA

Mail order, Canada, easy to get. After seeing your roundhouse kick was much stronger than mine, I knew how Liam was incapacitated long enough for you to frame me for murder.

Nora steps closer to Dax.

DAX

You're as looney as everyone said you were.

Dax cocks the shotgun.

DAX (CONT'D)

Hold it right there, fifteen feet!

Nora tosses the Taser to one side (but closer to Dax), and tosses her phone to the other side (also closer to Dax). She takes a step closer.

DAX (CONT'D)

I was right. No service out here.

NORA

Why'd ya do it?

Dax smiles.

DAX

First, wanted you more than any other foreigner I've ever stalked.

Nora smiles wryly.

NORA

The Indian woman?

DAX

Among others. Forbidden fruit.

NORA

Latex gloves?

DAX

Idiot Cy's fingerprints. Only ones on the shotgun.

NORA

Like Liam's pistol. What about Gramps?

DAX

Sent him to your place. Knew about his pacemaker. If you didn't stun him, I would have.

NORA

But Sarah did it.

DAX

Happy accident.

NORA

You took his shotgun.

DAX

Moment of weakness. Never owned a gun. See. We had a lot in common.

NORA

My oil and mineral rights. But things weren't working your way, were they?

DAX

They always work out my way.

Nora shrugs.

NORA

You cut the power to the cell tower for me hoping Cy would finish me off. You'd be rich.

Nora takes a step closer.

DAX

Richer.

He aims the shotgun at her chest. He's angry and eager to shoot.

DAX (CONT'D)

I saw your little make-shift martial arts studio. Probably watched videos.

(MORE)

DAX (CONT'D)

No match for my brown belt after two years of intense professional training.

Nora takes a half-step closer.

They hear a siren in the distance. Dax shakes in fear.

NORA

So what? You gonna shoot me?

The siren gets louder.

We see Dax's cold eyes glance at his Latex gloves.

DAX

No. Cy's gonna shoot you. Then turn the gun on himself.

Nora takes a step closer, and Dax pulls a trigger. BAM! The shot hits Nora squarely in the chest and knocks her back six feet in the mud. A few pellets hit her exposed neck and face. Blood splatters from her face and neck, and she remains lifeless.

Cy begins to gain consciousness hearing the blast. He gets to his feet but is groggy.

Dax races over to him and holds the shotgun barrel under his chin. Cy grabs the shotgun and it goes off. BAM! Cy's head is blown apart.

The Shotgun drops and Cy falls on top of it.

DAX (CONT'D)

Perfect.

The siren is louder.

Dax races to the Taser and stands where Nora was standing and shoots the Taser once, to the left of Cy, so it hits the truck. One shot remains in the Taser.

Dax drops the Taser, and races to get Nora's smartphone. He grabs Nora's shovel and quickly digs a hole.

He tosses the shovel by the last seedling planted, and drops Nora's phone in the hole. He removes his Latex gloves, drops them in the hole and kicks dirt into the hole.

The Sheriff's car is in sight. Dax runs toward it.

The Sheriff races to the site, and slams on his brakes.

Dax is alarmed to see a K-9 (German Shepherd) in the back of the Sheriff's car.

The Sheriff gets out, scans the scene, and uses his radio immediately.

SHERIFF GLENN

Dispatch. Send the coroner to the northwest section of the Karlsson ranch. Suspect in custody.

Dax's eyes open widely.

The Sheriff slaps cuffs on Dax, and races to Nora.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Better hope she's dead!

He feels for a pulse, and he glares at Dax.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

She was right!

Dax is defensive.

The canine is sniffing around the scene.

DAX

Saw it all happen. She tried to Taser Cy, but missed. He shot her in self-defense. Remorse set in and Cy turned the weapon on himself.

The Sheriff carefully examines the scene and takes photos with his phone.

SHERIFF GLENN

Smart lady, she was. But you tipped her off about the patterns in Liam's receipts. He was sleeping with 'bout every female in the county, except my ex-girlfriend and Sarah Tremain.

The Sheriff glares at Dax, then laughs.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Probably 'cause my ex-girlfriend was Sarah's spy, sharing my crime reports with her to sell more security items. I ended it six months ago after I told her I had feelings for someone else, but she was married.

DAX

Nora?

SHERIFF GLENN

Nora figured that out too.

Dog sniffs around.

Dax races to the back of Cy's truck and grabs the AK-47. He fumbles with it because the handcuffs and aims at the Sheriff, but it doesn't fire.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Told Cy this morning that I saw that thing loaded one more time, I'd shoot him myself!

The Sheriff grabs Nora's Taser and races toward Dax.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Nora said this morning she liked to keep her enemies close, and her frenemies closer -- people pretending to be your friends.

Dax tosses the AK-47 down in the mud.

DAX

Wanna talk to my lawyer.

SHERIFF GLENN

(laughs)

Hope it's Ronny Harrison.

Dax looks away in anger.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Agatha Christie taught me, "Evil is not something superhuman, it's something less than human."

Sheriff Glenn sneers at Dax.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Nora was betting I'd find Gramps's shotgun at your house. I've requested a warrant.

The canine stops over the spot where Dax buried his Latex gloves.

The ambulance approaches with a siren and lights, as the Sheriff pulls out Latex gloves and evidence bags. He puts on the gloves and grabs Nora's shovel and digs at the spot.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)
 You know she sold the ranch and gas
 and mineral rights to the
 Conservancy under the stipulation
 it was all to be planted with
 trees. Road and all. You would have
 been cut-off anyway. No oil for Cy
 and his kin ether.

The Sheriff finds Dax's Latex gloves and bags them up.

DAX
 Why'd she do a stupid thing like
 that?

SHERIFF GLENN
 Last words to me were, "They tried
 to bury us; they didn't know we
 were seeds."

The Sheriff finds Nora's phone, and stares at it, and shows
 it to Dax.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)
 Look! It's still on video record.

Dax is too furious to speak.

The ambulance arrives and the same EMTs race to Nora.

DAX
 Thought you called the Coroner.

SHERIFF GLENN
 (angry to Dax)
 Loaned her my vest, but not
 designed for a point-blank shotgun
 blast!
 (to the EMTs)
 Expected a Taser! I didn't know,
 damnit! I just didn't know!

Dax hangs his head, as the Sheriff stomps closer to Dax and
 Tasers him.

Dax collapses in the mud and shakes a little.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)
 You have the right to remain
 silent, asshole!

The EMTs have worried looks as they prepare Nora for
 transport.

ROLL CREDITS

EXT. RANCH - DAY

SUPER: "Two weeks later."

We see a dozen women and girls (various ages and types) happily planting tree seedlings on the ranch. One of them is Nora with a few scars and Band Aids on her neck. She wears new brand outdoor gear, and looks sensationally happy.

The Sheriff drives up with coffee and donuts for the planting team. Nora gives him a hug and a kiss... nothing big, just nice and sweet.

Nora takes her inhaler from her pocket and stares at it. She shrugs like she doesn't need it, and puts it back in her pocket.

A wolf HOWLS in the distance, and they all smile.

FADE OUT.

THE END