

TURN A BLIND EYE

BLACK SCREEN

SUPER:

"Those who are taken to the
slaughter, hold them back."

FADE IN:

INT. HOME OFFICE - DESK - DAY

Wearing latex gloves, a person's hands snip a verse from the Bible with scissors.

It shows a scripture verse: "The dragon stood in front of a woman about to give birth, so that he may devour the child the moment he is born. Revelation 12. 4."

The verse is tucked inside a hand written, birthday card and slipped into an oversized, pink envelope.

Red colored wax is applied as a seal, and it's stamped with a silver signet ring in an image of a skull.

EXT. COUNTRY - TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A wrecker is parked in front of a white, Ford Taurus on the side of the road. No other cars are on the highway.

In grease-stained coveralls and work gloves, LOGAN CANTRELL (24) leans into the open window of the Taurus and smiles.

At just over six feet, his unruly light brown hair protrudes from a checkered racing cap. He has luminous green eyes and a pronounced scar above his upper lip from cleft lip repair.

CANTRELL

Car trouble, little princess?
You've gotta' be careful. Never
know who might be stoppin' this
time a night on this deserted road.

With a button nose, hazel eyes, scattered freckles, and auburn, shoulder-length hair spilling over her pull-over shirt, MELISSA BARKLEY (15), gasp and burst into tears.

MELISSA

Augh... augh... augh.

CANTRELL

Now, now. It can't be that bad.

Melissa sniffles repeatedly.

MELISSA
I... I couldn't stand the fighting
and cussing any longer. Stole my
mom's car and got out of there.

CANTRELL
I've been there more than you can
imagine. Needin' gas?

Melissa pleads with her eyes.

MELISSA
Forgot my wallet.

CANTRELL
No bother. That's what a pit stop
is for.

Cantrell turns back toward his wrecker. He grabs a gas can
from a compartment on his wrecker, returns to the Taurus, and
empties the gas into the fuel tank.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
Try it now.

Melissa attempts to start the car. There's a CLICK-CLICK
sound each time she turns the ignition key.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
Your starter. Afraid you're gonna
need a tow.

Melissa rolls up her window, locks the doors.

MELISSA
(muffled through glass)
What brings you out at this hour?

Cantrell steps back, holds up his arms in surrender.

CANTRELL
Whoa! I'm not the big bad wolf
here. I came to help. Tell you
what, I'll call the cops, have them
pick you up.

Cantrell meanders toward his wrecker. Melissa rolls her
window down enough to lean her head out.

MELISSA
No, not the cops. I guess it would
be okay. My mom's probably worried.

Cantrell moves chains and levers on the bed of his wrecker.
He glances skyward and raises his lean, muscular arms covered
in tattoos. On one hand he wears a ring with a skull.

CANTRELL
 Thank the stars you have a mom.
 I'll have this old Ford hooked up
 in no time and get you home soon.

MELISSA
 Can I stay in the car?

Cantrell spits on the ground, shakes his head.

CANTRELL
 Afraid not. Company policy.
 Insurance.

Melissa brushes off her wet cheeks with a sleeve and climbs out of the car. She notices Cantrell's focus as he checks out her figure. Melissa backs away with her hands on her hips.

MELISSA
 Your first.

Melissa lags behind Cantrell toward the cab. He opens the passenger door. She hops in and slams the door. Cantrell scampers to the driver's side, slides in, starts the engine.

CANTRELL
 Sit tight, sweetie. You'll be home
 soon. Yellow flag is comin' out.

Cantrell aligns the back wheels of his wrecker to the front of the Taurus, hops out to hook the Ford up for a tow.

FADE TO BLACK:

Sounds of emergency vehicle sirens HOWL in the distance.

EXT. MOTEL - INNER COURTYARD - POOL SIDE DECK - DAY

Two uniformed police officers, AUTUMN JEFFRIES (40) and TONY ALONZO VAZQUEZ (35) bolt toward CONNER WILSON (11) who surfaces from the deep end of the pool.

Conner's face is red; he's frantic and out of breath.

CONNER
 My brother's trapped in the drain.

AUTUMN
 Vazquez. Take the kid and get this
 damn drain turned off!

VAZQUEZ
 On it.

Vazquez, a stocky Latino, grabs Conner by the elbow. They dash away. Autumn quickly sheds her weapon and police gear.

Autumn kicks off her shoes, hops in the pool, and slips below the surface toward the boy then pops up gasping for air. She stares unflinching and zones out for a moment.

QUICK FLASHES - DOCK ON LAKE - WOODED AREA - DAY

-- TEEN AUTUMN (15) sits on a wooden dock. Blood trickles from a cut on her neck. She's soaking wet.

-- She sobs into her hands covering her flushed face. Her bare feet dangle in the water. Her cotton top's torn with her bra showing; she wears panties.

-- A MAN with his back turned away throws a dry pair of jeans into the water out of reach of Autumn.

MAN

Take another swim. Tell anyone and I'll kill you.

BACK TO PRESENT

With a jolt, Autumn shakes her head, refocuses, fills her cheeks with air, and dives toward the BROTHER (9) who isn't moving. His lips are blue.

Autumn tugs on his leg but cannot extricate him. She opens the boy's lips, exhales her air into him, and resurfaces for more air.

She plunges below, continues mouth-to-mouth breathing. Another tug. Autumn feels the young lad's release, and swims him to the surface as TWO EMTs arrive with a stretcher and gear.

AUTUMN

Not sure how long he's been under.

In unison, the emts lift the boy from the pool onto the stretcher, and strap him in place. They dry off his torso.

EMT 1

Any neck injury?

Autumn shakes her head and climbs out of the pool.

EMT 2

We've got it from here, officer.

The emts hook the boy up with oxygen and an EKG machine. The machine WHIRLS to life in a CRESCENDO as the emts push the stretcher along the deck, and race away out of view.

Autumn's soft caramel complexion is now pallor. Her hands shake as she struggles to slide her belt through the loops on her uniform's wet trousers.

She collapses on the deck. Uncontrollable shaking moves to her upper body. Vazquez arrives puts a hand on her shoulder.

VAZQUEZ
You alright, partner?

Autumn turns, starts to speak but instead tears stream down her face. Vazquez sits on the deck beside her and wraps his arm around her shoulders.

VAZQUEZ (CONT'D)
It's okay. I know. Post-traumatic stress. Take all the time you need.

EXT. AUTO BODY AND REPAIR SHOP - FENCED BACK LOT - DAY

The overhead security lamp is out. A gray sky; it's overcast and foggy. A closed sign hangs from inside the office door.

Cantrell parks a wrecker in the lot and scrambles out. He lifts Melissa, who's unconscious, and quickly transfers her from the wrecker to a Ford van.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - SPLIT LEVEL HOUSE - DAY

Cantrell drives the van onto an asphalt driveway leading to his secluded house hidden among tall spruce trees.

Nearing the house, one of the garage doors slips open. He parks the the van inside and the door closes behind him.

INT. CANTRELL'S SPLIT-LEVEL HOUSE - BASEMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Cantrell carries a limp Melissa and drops her onto a grungy mattress in one of four tiny bedrooms along the back wall and padlocks the door as he leaves.

INT. MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - ICU - FAMILY WAITING AREA - DAY

Modern art canvases with splashes of color hang on the walls of the cramped room.

Conner sits across from TERESA WILSON (32) on two well-worn love seats. Autumn and Vazquez enter. Teresa stands and hugs them both.

TERESA
Other than complaining of a sore throat, Tucker's doing well. Doesn't remember a thing though.

Autumn gently pats her hand across her heart.

AUTUMN

That's wonderful. It warms my heart to know I played a part in his rescue. Kid's rebound so quickly.

Teresa breathes deeply, dabs her moistened eyes with a tissue. She struggles to speak between tears.

TERESA

There's no way I'll... ever... be able to thank you two enough.

Autumn clasp Teresa's hands and glances with recognition toward Vazquez.

AUTUMN

Tucker's doing well. That's all the gratitude we'll ever need.

Autumn shifts her attention to Conner.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

You're not to blame, little man. You helped get the suction turned off in time. Don't ever forget that.

Autumn and Vazquez stand to leave. Autumn gives Conner a hug.

EXT. CITY - GRAVEYARD - DAY

Dawn. A wrought iron fence surrounds rows of graves and markers. Autumn places a white rose onto the marble slab at a grave and a bouquet of red roses on the marker beside it.

AUTUMN

"Uncle Frank... you'd be proud. I saved a boy from drowning today. It came with a cost, though."

Autumn tucks a strand of midnight-black hair into place beneath her police cap. She wipes moisture from her eyes.

AUTUMN

"It reminded me of the time you rescued two children from a burning car when you were a detective."

She turns toward the opposite grave, looks up at the sky.

AUTUMN

"God only knows how many times you retold that story, mom. I miss you two so much."

Autumn stands erect, snaps a salute toward both markers.

Autumn lumbers toward her police cruiser near the gate.

INT. POLICE STATION - CONFERENCE BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

A simple podium sets in front of twenty-some moveable chairs.

SERGEANT RICK WALTERS (40's) with gray hair at his temples bordering his brown hair, swerves through A CROWD of POLICE OFFICERS as they sludge toward the exit.

Rick steps in front of Autumn and Vazquez.

RICK
Vazquez. Autumn. Captain needs you
both in his office before patrol.

Both Autumn and Vazquez have a look of dread on their faces.

VAZQUEZ
Can't be good.

Sergeant Walters shrugs, raises both palms outward.

RICK
You know as much as I do. Maybe a
medal's in the works for saving the
kid.

AUTUMN
Yeah, right.

VAZQUEZ
Let's get this over with.

INT. CANTRELL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Melissa sits on the floor with her ankle chained to a thick metal bracket. Her eyes are glazed over, her pupils pinpoint.

Cantrell enters with a smirk on his face. He wears a taser holstered to his belt with a mini-whip curled beside it. He holds a fantasy red lingerie outfit in one hand.

Melissa shakes her head, dazed. She slurs her words.

MELISSA
What the? Where am I? I'm feeling
so ...weird.

CANTRELL
The drugs. You'll get used to
them... eventually.

He lifts the lingerie by the straps to show Melissa. She spits toward him but misses by a long shot.

Cantrell grabs Melissa's cheeks and squeezes. She moans. Tears stream down her face. Cantrell kisses her forehead and releases her as if nothing's amiss.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
It's gonna look great on you for
your first web posting.

He softly folds the lingerie, sets it on her lap, turns toward the door, and looks back revealing a wicked grin.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
Behave yourself and we might do
away with that chain.

EXT./INT. CITY - STREET - TRACKING POLICE CRUISER - DAY

Businesses, office buildings, restaurants, and a park. Traffic is moderate. PEDESTRIANS wait at traffic signals. A bus roars past; black smoke pours from the exhaust.

Vazquez drives the police cruiser; Autumn's in shotgun.

VAZQUEZ
I'm up for sergeant and you're
shooting even higher.

AUTUMN
We've been partners over a year,
why didn't we tell one another?

Autumn chuckles, hits Vazquez playfully on his shoulder.

VAZQUEZ
Guess it's hard to imagine we may
be breaking up our team.

Vazquez holds out his fist. She complies with a fist bump.

AUTUMN
That's got to be it.

VAZQUEZ
You do realize there's never been a
female in the division. Right?

Autumn nods.

AUTUMN
I never dreamed I'd have a shot
but I've wanted this a long time.
Following my uncle's footsteps.

VAZQUEZ
Wasn't he the one who found you
after... you... were... ?

AUTUMN

Raped. Yeah. I was only fifteen, and my mom died soon after that. It still hurts. Obviously, right? The nurses and doctor never told me if I has a boy or a girl.

VAZQUEZ

You've got to be kidding. So you never knew? It must have been hard.

Autumn nods, stares out the window, and trembles. Vazquez reaches over, squeezes Autumn's hand.

VAZQUEZ (CONT'D)

Autumn... Autumn. What wrong?

Autumn takes a deep breath. Beads of sweat form on her forehead.

AUTUMN

Whoa! Flashback... when I signed away my parental rights... a long time ago. I thought I was over all that.

VAZQUEZ

You're human. We've all had our share of mistakes that haunt us.

AUTUMN

I hoped my son or daughter would try to contact me through an adoption agency at eighteen. It didn't happen.

VAZQUEZ

That's bound to hurt. You still seeing that shrink about it?

Autumn nods.

AUTUMN

She's helped so much. I searched for my child for years. No luck. It put a strain on my relationship with my daughter.

Vazquez pats Autumn's left shoulder.

VAZQUEZ

I am so sorry. Hey, maybe there's a spark of hope still left in there.

AUTUMN

I know there is.

Autumn nods. Vazquez pulls over to the curb, parks.

VAZQUEZ
Nothing from dispatch. How 'bout we
stop for coffee?

They open the doors, start to climb out.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
(dispatch)
Car sixteen. Over.

They hop in their seats, slam the doors. Autumn grabs the walkie-talkie with a green light glowing on the console.

AUTUMN
(into walkie)
Sixteen. Officer Jeffries.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
We have a 10-13 on 28th and
Crossman. Apartment 10-B.

AUTUMN
(into walkie)
Responding. In route, 28th and
Crossman, 10-B.

Vazquez flips on the rotating blue lights, speeds into the lane. He expertly weaves through the slower moving vehicles that yield the right-of-way.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
Copy. Time out, 10:08.

INT. CANTRELL'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - BEDROOM - DAY

Near the door sets professional photographic equipment and a backdrop showing an exquisite interior cabin of a yacht with a comfy couch, champagne on ice, and an ocean view.

In a chair, Melissa wears the lingerie with facial make-up, eyeliner, and lipstick. Standing behind her, Cantrell meticulously weaves several links of chain into her hair.

CANTRELL
These chains serve a useful purpose
around here in more ways than one.

A brush, a hand-held mirror, and detangler lay on the card table beside them. Melissa reaches for the mirror but Cantrell forces her shoulders back facing away from him.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
Almost finished. On your last lap.

He spritzes her hair, folds together several more links and braids then snaps on an elastic band. He lifts the mirror for Melissa to view her braided ponytail.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
Gorgeous. No ordinary ponytail, eh?

Melissa sighs. Cantrell scoots the table aside and positions her seat to align with the scenic backdrop. He strolls behind the camera, adjust the lighting, and zooms in.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
Ready? Oh, I can't help it. Say
cheese.

Melissa forces a smile. Cantrell snaps several photos in rapid succession.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
Love the freckles. Turn your face
at a slight angle to one side
darlin'. Next, lose the top.

As Cantrell peeks through the viewfinder, Melissa grabs the light stand, heaves it at him. He spills onto the floor.

She kicks the chair his way and dashes to the exit. Cantrell trips her, reaches for the links woven in her hair. He misses but grabs Melissa's elbow.

She scratches Cantrell's face with her long nails, kicks him in the shin. He shoves Melissa against the wall.

The scuffle knocks the screen backdrop onto Cantrell's back. Melissa kicks again and connects between his legs. Cantrell bends over, grabs his groin, and moans.

Melissa scoots through the door. Cantrell scrambles to his feet, draws his taser, and races after her.

INT. CANTRELL'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Melissa bounds down the steps onto the foyer and reaches for the door handle. Cantrell draws a bead at her with his taser.

CANTRELL
Stop Melissa!

Cantrell squeezes the trigger as Melissa opens the door.

INT. TOWNHOUSE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Open concept living area. Dated mix-match furnishing. Autumn sits on a sofa beside ROBIN BARKLEY (mid 40's) who has short auburn hair with gray roots.

Robin dabs her red cheeks with a tissue. Her right eye is puffy and bruised.

Vazquez stands. He holds a metal clipboard and writes a report. Robin hands him a photo of her teen daughter's face which he tucks beneath the clip.

ROBIN

My no good boyfriend drunk again.
Woke us up around midnight before
cussing a blue streak.

Robin points to a large hole crushed in the dry-wall beside the bathroom door. A second hole is nearby.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

His doing along with my eye. The
smaller hole... my boot trying to
nail his ass.

AUTUMN

And Melissa?

ROBIN

I managed to kick Preston's butt
out around two. Went back to bed
with Melissa still in her room.

VAZQUEZ

And your daughter took your car but
never showed at school. How long
has she been missing?

Autumn glances toward Vazquez with her eyebrows raised.

ROBIN

Since yesterday morning. She ain't
supposed to be driving. No license.

Robin stands, moves toward the kitchen, out of view. Sounds of a refrigerator door OPEN and CLOSE.

AUTUMN

We'll put a bolo for her and the
Taurus and check with the staff and
classmates at Roosevelt High.

Robin returns in view, holds a bottle of beer over her eye.

VAZQUEZ

Any other relatives your daughter
could be staying with?

Robin unscrews the bottle top, takes several chugs. Vazquez flips to the first page of his report, pen in hand.

ROBIN

Got a brother out west. Haven't seen him in years. Reminds me. Melissa's black carry on bag wasn't in her room.

Robin gulps another swig of beer, screws on the lid, presses the bottle to her right eye. She shakes her head.

AUTUMN

If your boyfriend returns, don't open the door.

ROBIN

I ain't that stupid. Just want my daughter back safe.

Robin downs her beer as both officers slip toward the door.

EXT./INT. ROADSIDE HIGHWAY - EMBANKMENT - TRUCK - DAY

A cream-colored TDOT truck with yellow lights flashing is parked behind an abandoned white, two-door Ford Taurus.

A MAN (30) in an employee jumpsuit places an orange sticker on the Taurus and returns inside his truck. He records the tag and a carry on bag from the back seat on his I-pad.

The employee picks up his walkie-talkie.

TDOT EMPLOYEE

(into walkie)

Susan. I'm on Highway 11, just beyond mile marker 24 reporting an abandoned white Ford Taurus. Over.

SUSAN (V.O.)

(dispatch)

Tag Number?

TDOT EMPLOYEE

Truman. Roger. Leader. Seven, four, five. State tags. A black carry on is in the back seat.

SUSAN (V.O.)

Wait... that's on our hot sheet, a missing teen. Bill, stay put until I can get a patrol car on site.

BILL

Roger that.

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - ROADSIDE - DAY

Blue lights flash from a police cruiser parked behind the Ford Taurus.

Using a lock pick, Autumn unlocks the front door. CLICK. She snaps on latex gloves, opens the door, unlocks the other doors, then pops the trunk.

AUTUMN

I'll check the bag in the back seat. You take the trunk.

She unzips the carry on, searches it, and leaves the bag in place.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

Clothes, make-up, no wallet. Definitely our troubled teen.

Autumn rummages through the glove compartment, finds a Swiss army knife and striker waterproof matches.

In gloves, Vazquez searches the trunk.

VAZQUEZ

Autumn. Camping gear. Come look.

Autumn hurries to see what he's uncovered. She rummages through the camping gear.

AUTUMN

A mountainsmith bear creek tent... .. a fleece lined sleeping bag... a campfire swing grill. Nice. Melissa may have had plans to stay away awhile. I found a Swiss army knife in the glove compartment and waterproof matches.

VAZQUEZ

Put me up in a motel any day.

AUTUMN

The great outdoors. Nothing like it... if you can find the time. When I was younger, I camped every chance I'd get.

An unmarked brown car pulls in behind their police cruiser.

Wearing gray trousers, a wrinkled dress shirt, and a loose-fit tie stained with a streak of mustard, DETECTIVE PHIL HANSEN (36) steps from the car. He chomps on gum.

Phil flashes his badge and yanks up his trousers to hide his overweight midsection. His feet angle outward as he walks.

PHIL
Tell me you didn't touch anything?

Vazquez chuckles, faces Phil, snaps off his left hand glove.

VAZQUEZ
Unlocked the door, popped the
trunk. Waiting on the big dogs.

Phil strides past them five yards, runs his finger along the ground, rubs two fingers together and takes a whiff.

PHIL
Motor oil.

Phil points toward the grass and weeds.

PHIL (CONT'D)
The grass... flat. Gravel's
displaced. Large double tread marks
from a wrecker by the looks of it.
Odd. The car's still here?

AUTUMN
All yours, detective. We'll notify
her mother.

Phil stands, waddles to his car to open the trunk. He gathers gloves, specimen bags, q-tips, and a blood test kit.

PHIL
I'll take care of it. You two get
on back to serving the people.

Vazquez and Autumn climb in their cruiser. Vazquez pulls onto the highway, tires SQUEALING.

INT. POLICE STATION - CONFERENCE BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

A banner is draped above Vazquez and Autumn. The banner reads, "Congrats - Sergeant Vazquez and Detective Jeffries."

A PHOTOGRAPHER snaps several photos of Autumn and Vazquez with expressive smiles.

LANNY ZIGLER, "ZIG" (early 50's), in a well-fitted, pin-stripped suit moves beside Autumn and shakes her hand.

ZIG
Nice work, sergeant. And Autumn...
... Welcome to my division,
detective. It's long overdue.

Over six-feet, Zig has short gray hair and deep-set crystal blue eyes. He swipes two fingers through his distinctive gray and white mustache.

Autumn nods appreciatively.

AUTUMN
Thank you, chief Zigler. I look
forward to working with you.

ZIG
Zig will do just fine. You'll start
tomorrow. Show us what you're made
of.

INT. COUNTRY ROAD - INTERSECTION WITH HIGHWAY - DAY

The final glimmer of sunset reflects off a late model car parked on the roadside with a flat front tire. The trunk is open. A flat spare tire and tire iron lie on the ground.

SKY JEFFRIES (18) leans on the fender. Wavy, shoulder length hair frames her lovely face. She's petite with golden brown eyes and long lashes that enhance her light caramel skin.

A wrecker pulls up and stops behind her car. Cantrell hops out, approaches Sky. He glances at the front tire and spare.

CANTRELL
Double trouble, eh?

SKY
Yep. Got any fix-a-flat?

Cantrell kneels, inspects both flat tires while his gaze lingers upon Sky's lean muscular calves.

CANTRELL
Dry rot. You're definitely in need
of a pit. Can I give ya' a tow?

Sky cocks her head to the side with a look of caution in her eyes. She holds up her cell phone. A bolo bracelet sparkles from her wrist.

SKY
No signal. I've been trying to
reach a friend.

Cantrell pulls a cell phone from his pocket, opens it, puts it to his ear, then hands it to Sky.

CANTRELL
Good to ride. Three bars. Messages
only.

Sky rapidly pecks out a message using both thumbs.

SKY

(message on phone)

Hey. KyAnna. I'm having a bit of car trouble. I'm near the first overpass on highway 58. My phone's out. Message this number. Please. Please. See u.

Sky hands the phone back to Cantrell who shrugs.

CANTRELL

The offer still stands. A gas station is three laps away.

SKY

Can I try someone else?

Cantrell reluctantly returns the phone, wipes oil off his fingers with a rag, as Sky enters another message.

CANTRELL

You're gonna need a hook-up anyway you figure.

The phone buzzes once. Sky reads the message with a huge smile and quickly pecks a reply.

SKY

KyAnna's on her way. Fifteen minutes.

She hands Cantrell his phone, leans on her car.

SKY (CONT'D)

Would you tow it to the gas station?

CANTRELL

I'll need some information.

Cantrell retreats to his wrecker, grabs a pen and clipboard, returns, and gives it to Sky. She fills in the blanks and signs it.

EXT. SUBURB - APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

A two-story apartment with poor lighting. A car pulls up.

Sky hops out of the passenger seat, leans in the window. KYANNA LEWIS (18) is at the wheel. She has cute button nose, freckles, blonde hair, and wears glasses.

SKY

Thanks for the rescue, KyAnna.

KYANNA

What are friends for.

SKY

Spring break is finally here. The beach bum life for a whole week.

Sky's phone buzzes. She quickly glances at the message from her mom and erases it. KyAnna grins, pushes back her hair into a high ponytail.

KYANNA

I can't wait. Oh, did I mention? Cassanda's coming, too. Her parents finally caved.

Sky smiles and does a hand slap with KyAnna.

SKY

Less expense for us.

EXT. SKY'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Cantrell's wrecker is parked along a side street.

He watches KyAnna wave to Sky as she drives away. Sky returns the wave and strolls casually toward her apartment. She opens her purse, searches for her keys.

Cantrell climbs out of the wrecker carrying something wrapped in a small cotton towel. He races toward the back entrance door to Sky's apartment.

EXT./INT. SKY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A light goes on inside the foyer in Sky's apartment.

Cantrell reaches the rear entrance, checks the handle. Unlocked. He's inside in an instant and kneels just as Sky enters her kitchen and flips a light switch on.

CANTRELL

Surprise.

Cantrell fires his taser from beneath the towel.

Sky crumbles in shock, convulses from the electrical discharge. Her eyes bulge out as she attempts a scream. Cantrell quickly covers her mouth with the towel.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)

Should of taken my first offer.

Cantrell turns on a flashlight. He flips the kitchen light off, removes a roll of duct-tape from his pocket.

Cantrell quickly wraps Sky's wrists, knees, ankles, and mouth with the duct-tape.

EXT./INT. SUBURB - AUTUMN'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Houses are lined along a street on a sloped hillside with amber street lights and a crime stopper sign on the corner.

Autumn's strolls from her mailbox, and gasp upon noticing an oversized pink envelope sealed with a skull using red wax.

She rips open the envelope, pulls out the hand-made card. The cover of the card reads, "Mother's day is one of the most celebrated of all holidays."

More cautious now, Autumn slowly opens the card.

The card reads, "I'll celebrate with you in hell. Christopher J. Albert, Athens."

Autumn unfolds a small piece of paper inside the card. The paper is cut from a Bible, the book of Matthew 25. 45-46.

AUTUMN (V.O.)

"Wherever you failed to do one of these things to someone who was being overlooked or ignored, that was me - you failed to do it to me. Then those goats will be herded to their eternal doom."

Autumn grits her teeth, stomps, throws the card in the air, and runs her fingers through her hair with a look of disgust.

She leaves the letter on the lawn. Her phone rings as she approaches the porch. Autumn hesitates then answers it.

PHONE (V.O)

Surprise. Hope you liked your card. Pick it up, bitch. Smells like rain is in the wind. Have I got a big surprise for you.

Immediately alert, Autumn crouches down, her hand across her holster. She retrieves her flashlight, pivots to view the landscape with the high beam. She sees no movement.

AUTUMN

Dammit.

Autumn grabs the card and scampers in a zigzag pattern toward the porch. She unlocks the front door and escapes inside.

The porch light comes on, along with other lights in her house, one by one.

INT. AUTUMN'S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Matching rooms-to-go furnishing. Stylish and comfortable.

Sprawled out on her bed in pajamas, Autumn scans Google and Facebook on her smart phone for Christopher Albert. She plops her phone on a nightstand and pounds her fist into a pillow.

Autumn sighs, opens the nightstand's drawer, drops the card among a few other cards with identical pink envelopes.

She removes a tablet from a prescription Ativan bottle, slips on her house shoes and shuffles toward her bathroom.

INT. AUTUMN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Facing a sink and mirror, Autumn downs her Ativan tablet with a small sip of water from a cup.

She brushes her teeth and rinses her mouth with mouthwash. She accidentally knocks the lid beside a small wastebasket.

Autumn retrieves the lid and notices a blue pregnancy test strip inside the basket. She picks it up.

The test strips shows rose-pink colored bands that line both the test and control windows. It represents pregnancy.

AUTUMN (V.O.)

"Uh-oh! I can't believe this."

Color drains from her face. Autumn crumbles to her knees.

INT. CANTRELL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

A tiny room with no windows. A plastic bucket lies in the corner.

Covered by a stained blanket, Sky lies on a paper thin mattress.

Sky slowly open her eyes and moans. She lifts her jersey top, runs her finger along a burn mark on her tummy, and gasp.

Sky yanks away the blanket, tries to stand to discover one ankle is shackled to a short chain linked to the wall.

She claws her fingernails through her hair and pleads.

SKY

Oh my God! Help! Help! Someone help me!

RATTLE. CLICK. The padlocked door CREAKS open.

INT. AUTUMN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Autumn strolls back and forth beside her dresser. She punches in a number in her smart phone and pleads.

AUTUMN
Pick up Sky. Please pick up.

The phone BEEPS. Autumn speaks into her smart phone.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
Sky, honey, I found it. Believe me,
I've been there. We'll get through
this.

Autumn clinches her jaw, holds back her tears.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
Day or night, please call or text
me. I love you, baby.

Autumn pecks Sky a text message, plops down on the bed, stares at the ceiling, and screams.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
Whhhhhyyy!

INT. CANTRELL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

With his hands behind his back, Cantrell leans against the wall just out of reach of Sky. He snickers.

CANTRELL
Rough night?

Sky lays out flat, attempts to kick him. Her shackled leg pulls taut. He's out of reach.

SKY
You bastard. You'll pay for this.
My mom's a cop.

Cantrell shakes his head back and forth.

CANTRELL
My, my, my, my, my. Feisty.

Cantrell pulls a whip out from behind his back, and expertly snaps it against the back wall. WHACK. Sky jumps in alarm.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
You're in my pit crew now, darlin'.
You'll pay with your body and soul.

Cantrell curls up his whip and hooks it onto a clasp at his belt.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
 Try and behave yourself. I don't
 intend to damage the merchandise
 unless it's necessary.

Sky scowls at Cantrell who scoots to open the door.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
 Play nice and I'll bring you
 something to eat in a day or two.

INT. POLICE STATION - CONFERENCE ROOM - HALLWAY - DAY

Autumn nudges through POLICE OFFICERS flooding toward the
 exit. She wears a one-button pantsuit and soft loafers.

Autumn's hair has a French braid with a deep side part. She
 reaches the door and waves to get Sergeant Vazquez's
 attention. Vazquez strolls over to her and snickers.

VAZQUEZ
 Lose your way, detective?

AUTUMN
 I need you to do something for me.

Autumn SNAPS open her pocketbook, reveals the pink envelope.

VAZQUEZ
 Another card? Didn't Zig strike out
 on that investigation?

She nods, hands a slip of paper from the envelope to Vazquez.

AUTUMN
 He did. Care to take another look?
 A mother's day card. The name's in
 block letters probably using blood
 along with another new address.

VAZQUEZ
 Blood maybe. But not his. More
 night terrors?

Autumn nods. Vazquez unfolds the paper, silently reads the
 verse.

VAZQUEZ (CONT'D)
 You're the goat. Did you get
 another harassing phone call?

Autumn shakes her head.

AUTUMN
 Far from it. It was creepy. He was
 there.

Vazquez raises his eyebrows, his mouth open.

VAZQUEZ

What?

AUTUMN

He called or someone did after I tossed the card in the air on my lawn. Demanded I pick it up. Also, he told me he had a surprise.

VAZQUEZ

He's tracking you.

AUTUMN

Indeed. Timing maybe? Your new rank. Me... a detective. Can you look into it?

Vazquez pulls out his wallet, tucks the slip of paper inside.

VAZQUEZ

Once a partner, always a partner.

AUTUMN

I owe you. The writer's name... it doesn't exist. Nothing new but Athens could be anywhere.

VAZQUEZ

I'm going to try out a new angle on this one. Got a minute?

Autumn glances at her watch, shakes her head. She dashes to the exit, her thumb to her ear, her pinky to her mouth.

AUTUMN

First day.

INT. POLICE STATION - WOMEN'S RESTROOM - DAY

Autumn stands primping in front of the vanity mirrors. No other women are there. Her cell phone BUZZES. She retrieves it from her purse.

The cell phone reads: "Tri-state Behavioral Health."

AUTUMN

(into phone)

Hello. Autumn Jeffries speaking.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Hi Autumn. Your date of birth?

AUTUMN

February second, nineteen eighty.
I'm having trouble sleeping and
needed a refill on my Ativan.
Can she call it in?

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Dr. Abrams needs a review of all
your meds. We have a five o'clock
opening next Thursday?

AUTUMN

Nothing sooner?

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

No but I'll let you know if
something comes up.

AUTUMN

Okay, I better take it.

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE OFFICES - DAY

The area is arranged in a cluster of spacious eye level
cubicles with MALE DETECTIVES at work at their desk.

With her head held high and her shoulders back, Autumn
strolls around casually in the BUZZ of activity. No one
appears to notice her.

She spots a folded card with "Welcome Autumn" printed on it
setting on an empty desk. She ambers to the desk which is
back-to-back with another that appears to be a junk yard.

Files are stacked one upon another. Papers everywhere.
There's a dated calendar, ballpoint pens in a makeshift
holder, and a phone book with a torn cover on top of it.

In a stylish, striped tie, a soft yellow shirt, and dress
slacks, Zig approaches her. He carries a cardboard box and
slides it across Autumn's desk.

ZIG

Good morning, detective. Your
partner's at the range. His
semi-annual handgun re-cert.

Zig smiles, removes a Smith and Wesson revolver and holster,
a set of keys, and a clipboard from the box and lays them on
her desk.

ZIG

Standard issue. Sign on the dotted
line.

Autumn grabs a pen from her pocket and signs the form.

AUTUMN

Not exactly what I expected... or
maybe it's... just different.

Autumn handles the revolver, gets a feel for the weight,
places it in the holster.

ZIG

A good different I hope. My office
is here... in the thick of things,
the way I like it.

Zig plops two manilla folders on her desk.

ZIG (CONT'D)

Your first assignment and a
requisition form for a new
calendar, phone book, pens, etc.

Autumn opens a folder, glances at the case file. She raises
her eyebrows in surprise with a slight blush on her cheeks.

AUTUMN

Whoa. A sex trafficking sting?

ZIG

I just got a call from special
agent Britt Johansen. She wanted to
know if any of our female agents
can help them out this weekend.

AUTUMN

Short notice... and I'm the only...

Zig grins.

ZIG

... woman in our department.

Autumn quickly regains her composure.

AUTUMN

Sure. I'm ready to get started.
What do they need me to do?

ZIG

Coordinate local assets, counselors
and rehab professionals who'll be
assisting in recovery of the
victims.

AUTUMN

As a cop, the hookers we'd arrest
would be back on the street the
next night. I'm excited... I've
never been involved at this level.

ZIG

Learn what you can. A word of caution, Autumn. Many of these victims are younger than your daughter.

AUTUMN

The very reason to stop this in our city.

ZIG

Bring Phil up to speed.

Autumn nods.

AUTUMN

You bet.

INT./EXT. AUTO BODY AND REPAIR SHOP - GARAGE AND LOT - DAY

Cantrell replaces the Ford van's license plate with a different state plate and number. He hides the old plate in the bottom drawer of a mechanic's metal tool cabinet.

Cantrell hops in the van and drives it from the garage to the parking lot.

He climbs out with keys in hand and enters a large open-bay door into the garage, out of view.

INT. CHIP'S AUTO BODY AND REPAIR SHOP - OFFICE - DAY

A small office. Two stools below a formica counter, a cash register and auto-repair catalogs lie on a the countertop. A soft drink machine sets in the corner. A bell RINGS.

ANDY RUNYON (10) enters through the front door. He's overweight for his short frame.

A mop of light blonde hair covers Andy's ears. His teeth are noticeably crooked. He wears stained jeans and a faded shirt.

ANDY

Gettin' a cool one, Mr. Knox.

With huge hands and broad shoulders bulging from his tank top, CHIP KNOX (48) enters through a hallway. He's bald, has emerald green eyes, and wears a thick gold necklace.

KNOX

Hadn't seen you in a few days.

Andy rubs a dollar bill along the corner of the counter.

KNOX (CONT'D)
Cantrell's detailing a van in the shop.

Andy slides the bill into a slot on the soft drink machine.

A twelve ounce can BANGS its way through the chute. Andy POPS the top and takes a sip.

Cantrell enters into view from the garage door, raises his hand, gets a high-five SLAP from Andy. He flips a set of keys to Knox who hangs them on a hook behind the counter.

CANTRELL
Van's purrin' like a kitten.

Knox pulls an insurance estimate from a stack of papers. He shows the estimate to Cantrell.

KNOX
Work it right, we'll own that CRX.

CANTRELL
She's next in the pit. Speaking of the pit, came across another stray kitten last evenin'... a real scrapper.

Knox gives Cantrell a wry smile.

KNOX
Warm milk only for while, eh?

Cantrell nods. Knox retreats to his tiny office, out of view. Cantrell grabs a buck from the register, hands it to Andy.

CANTRELL
Got a sec?

Andy tucks away the bill, nods. Cantrell dashes down the hallway, out of view, to return moments later. He sets a new racing cap on the counter and unfurls a rolled-up poster of stock cars on a dirt track.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
I know. It ain't NASCAR.

Cantrell hands Andy the poster. Andy's eyes pop out, his grin a mile wide. Andy takes a sip of soda.

ANDY
Wow! Thanks, Mr. Cantrell. I've got the perfect spot for it on my bedroom wall in my trailer.

Cantrell ruffles up Andy's hair. He grabs the racing cap, creases the lid, and plops it down on Andy's head.

CANTRELL
Time you wore one. Hang around here
long enough you'll be fixin one a
those stock cars.

ANDY
Mind if I go back and watch you
work? I've got all afternoon.

Cantrell leads Andy to the garage door with his arm on his
shoulder.

CANTRELL
Keep track of my tools and I'll
teach you a few things. I'm working
on a 2012 Honda. Needs a radiator,
hoses, and a bumper. A sweet ride.

INT. CANTRELL'S BASEMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Sky struggles to squeeze her foot through the shackle to no
avail. Her ankle is blistered and bruised. She sighs and
pounds her hand against a wall. BAM! Frustrated. She wails.

SKY
A-a-a-h!

BAM! BAM! BAM! Muted sounds come through one wall.

SKY (CONT'D)
(yells)
Hey. Is someone there?

Sky presses her ear against the wall. BAM! She yells louder.

SKY (CONT'D)
Can you hear me?

BAM! A faint voice follows.

MELISSA (O.S.)
Barely. I'm Melissa.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - DAY

Single and double wide trailers follow a gravel road of
potholes. Scraggly trees provide little shade or beauty.

Cantrell stands on a concrete block doorstep at an algae
stained double wide. He raps the door with a solid KNOCK.

Wearing tight shorts and a halter top, EMILY RODGERS (17)
opens the door, holds a slice of pizza in her hand.

EMILY

Yeah?

High cheekbones accentuate her hazel eyes highlighted with dark eye-shadow, long lashes, and thick blonde eyebrows.

CANTRELL

Looking for Andy.

Leaving the door open, Emily meanders away, out of view.

EMILY (O.S.)

Andy... some dude's at the door.

Andy scampers into view, both surprised and delighted.

ANDY

You came.

Cantrell holds up two tickets, glances at his watch.

CANTRELL

Second row if we get there in thirty. Nothing like a chase on a dirt track. Engines' roaring, mud flying, car crashes.

ANDY

(yells inside trailer)
Mom... I'm gone.

Andy scoots out, slams the door. He practically knocks Cantrell from the steps as he scampers away.

ANDY (CONT'D)

You finished it!

CANTRELL

We'll burn some rubber on the way.

INT. DETECTIVE OFFICES - AUTUMN'S CUBICLE - DAY

A colorful calendar, pen and holder, and a metal tray are neatly arranged on Autumn's desk. She's on the phone.

AUTUMN

(into phone)
Yes, indeed. I can't thank you enough for your staff's involvement. Uh-hu. I plan on...

In a dated, corduroy jacket with leather patches at the sleeves, Phil meanders quietly into the cubicle. Autumn's back is turned away from Phil. He blurts out.

PHIL
Another fine morning at the range.

Autumn jumps, startled. Phil tosses his certificate nonchalantly in a folder in a desk drawer.

AUTUMN
(into phone)
Counselor, something's come up. Can I get back to you?
(beat)
Good. I'll be in touch soon.
Thanks. Bye.

Autumn hangs up, does an about face toward Phil.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
Do you always sneak up like that?

He scoots out his chair and plops down. The chair RATTLES from his weight. He offers his hand. Autumn shakes it somewhat reluctantly.

PHIL
Isn't that what we do, partner? Go about our business investigating crime quietly behind the scenes.

Phil grabs an ink pen, TAPS a drum-like rhythm on his desk phone.

AUTUMN
Recert go okay?

PHIL
Let's just say I've got your six for the next year. You do know what that means, right? A clock's hands?

Phil's drumbeat TAP continues.

AUTUMN
Of course. You've got my back. Can you stop that, please?

Phil does one last TAP and tosses the pen aside.

PHIL
Afghanistan. Long story. Tell me detective, what's in your deck?

Phil pulls some gum from his top pocket, offers Autumn a piece. She refuses.

AUTUMN
Zig has asked me to coordinate a sting this weekend with TBI.

Phil slips a piece of gum in his mouth, chews.

PHIL
 Leading a sting. Well, well, well.
 That's a pretty big assignment for
 your first case. Zig must have a
 lot of confidence in your ability.

Phil chews and smacks the gum with a POPPING sound.

AUTUMN
 Coordinating... not leading, but
 I'm ready for the challenge.

Phil holds up his hands like a ref giving a time out.

PHIL
 What exactly will you be doing?

Autumn's cheeks turn red, partly menopausal, mostly
 embarrassment. She clears her throat, runs her fingers
 through her hair.

AUTUMN
 You'll be a part of it, of course.

PHIL
 And?

Autumn folds her hands together, leans toward Phil.

AUTUMN
 I'm asking professionals to
 volunteer their services to help
 the teen victims. We may pose as
 motel employees during the sting.

PHIL
 Leave it to Zig to pitch you a
 softball, something you can handle.

Phil glances at his watch. It's noon.

PHIL (CONT'D)
 Straight up. I'll fill you in on
 our case with Melissa over lunch.

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - DINING ROOM - DAY

Rhythmic ranchera music plays in the background. A small
 CROWD dine at both booths and tables.

Phil and Autumn sit in a booth, munch on Tortilla chips and
 salsa.

PHIL

Melissa's tank was full. All it needed was a jump. Found a partial boot print, size ten or eleven, about three grains deep at the site. Sent the casting to the FBI data base to identify the brand. Nothing yet.

AUTUMN

Did anything come of the oil?

Phil shakes his head.

PHIL

Standard 15W-40. Not one of the tow-truck dealers within forty miles reported a pick-up that night. We may need to expand our search radius.

AUTUMN

Whoever took her, she must have known them or trusted them.

A WAITRESS brings two plates of steaming hot Mexican cuisine.

PHIL

In any event, she's vanished.

EXT./INT. TRAILER PARK - DOUBLE WIDE TRAILER - DAY

Emily opens the door to the trailer. Cantrell moves off the steps, lets himself inside. He holds an unopened beer can.

EMILY

Andy hangs with a friend every Tuesday after archery practice.

CANTRELL

Mom and dad?

EMILY

Both working an odd late shift.

Cantrell meanders into the kitchen. Dirty dishes are piled on the counter. He opens the fridge, places a beer on a rack.

CANTRELL

Andy's near beer. Non-alcoholic but you'll swear it's the real thing.

EMILY

Got anything real?

CANTRELL
A six-pack in my truck... on ice.

Emily pleads with her eyes, smiles revealing her dimples.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
Your betcha. Just one before I hit
the road.

Emily follows Cantrell outside, meanders out of view.

EXT./INT. TRAILER PARK - DOUBLE WIDE - DAY

Andy races down the lane, chases Cantrell's Toyota. The truck
ROARS away in a cloud of dust to turn a corner, out of view.
Andy scoots inside the trailer.

ANDY
Emily. Hey Emily. You here?

EMILY (O.S.)
You just missed him. Left you a
cool one... in the fridge.

Andy opens the refrigerator, grabs the near-beer from the
shelf. He stares at the label.

ANDY
A beer?

EMILY (O.S.)
Near beer. No alcohol.

ANDY
I'll take it.

Andy pops it open, takes a swig.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Yuck. How do people drink this
stuff?

Emily glides down the narrow hall, into view. A towel covers
her wet hair. She wears a clean outfit. Her face is flushed.

EMILY
A sip? Come on. I wanna try it.

Andy hands Emily the can.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Can't tell no difference.

Andy sneezes several times.

ANDY
Did you take a bath in that perfume
of yours?

EMILY
Since when is that any of your
damn biz?

Emily snickers, bops Andy on top of his head with her palm.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Drink up, squirt.

INT. ROADHOUSE RESTAURANT - BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

In dark gray shirts, WAITERS and WAITRESSES (20'S) collect
empty dessert plates, mugs, glasses, and silverware.

POLICE OFFICES and DETECTIVES push back their seats, stand,
and disperse toward the exit. Zig stops at Autumn's table.

ZIG
Detective Jeffries... a word?

Dressed in a turquoise ladies pencil dress, Autumn's
appearance is stunning with a touch of make-up. She picks
over her apple cobbler; the vanilla ice cream is liquid.

AUTUMN
Chief.

Zig pulls out a chair and sits.

ZIG
Everything lined up for the
weekend?

Autumn nods.

AUTUMN
Some volunteers needed to shift
their schedules. Nothing major.

ZIG
Great. I noticed your cobbler has
turned to soup. Everything good
with you and Phil?

Autumn drops her spoon in the cobbler and smiles.

AUTUMN
Unlike Phil, I'm not much for
sweets. He has great instincts,
that's for sure. I like that. I
just have to get used to a few of
his quirks.

Zig chuckles and stands.

ZIG

The closer he gets to solving a case, the tighter his strings. He was a marine. Keep me in the loop.

AUTUMN

Always.

INT. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BUILDING - PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Plush carpeting, mahogany desk, and comfortable chairs. Soft, relaxing music PLAYS from overhead speakers. Vivid color images of Tuscany Italy decorate the space.

DR. KATE ABRAMS, MD (45) in a woman's business suite sits at her desk and types notes on a keyboard into a computer file on a desktop. Kate turns to face Autumn and smiles warmly.

KATE

A new career and partner, your teen daughter's pregnant, you received another card predicting your doom, and you're striving to impress your new boss. A lot on one's plate.

AUTUMN

Also, I'm having hot flashes. Menopause?

Kate nods. She records notes on her tablet.

KATE

You've reached that age. Any recurring PTSD symptoms?

Autumn nods, looks down, and hesitates before answering.

SILENCE.

AUTUMN

Mostly anxiety and I can't sleep. Have had two flashbacks. One following my rape, the other signing away parental rights.

KATE

I see. Which one of the things you mentioned is upsetting you most?

Autumn takes a deep breath, lets it out slowly.

AUTUMN

Definitely my daughter.

KATE

And the false statements you're telling yourself?

Autumn's voice level rises.

AUTUMN

She's irresponsible. Whoever the father is, he's probably a loser. Pregnant... she won't be able to finish her schooling. Or maybe I'm not the mom I thought I was?

KATE

Wow! I felt that from here. That's quite a list, none of which are fully grounded in truth. Do you blame yourself most or your daughter?

AUTUMN

Both.

Kate raises one finger and then all ten fingers together.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

I'm angry. Maybe a nine her way. At least an eight.

KATE

In her shoes?

Autumn runs her fingers through her hair.

AUTUMN

She's knows I'll be furious and doesn't want to have to face me.

KATE

What does she need right now?

Autumn sighs in relief.

AUTUMN

Understanding... my support.

Kate nods.

KATE

She opened the first door, hoping to diffuse some of your anger.

AUTUMN

Yeah, the pregnancy kit. But I've reached out pleading for her to return my calls.

KATE
It's her spring break. I'd turn off
my phone, too if I was soaking in
the sun lying on the beach.

Kate glances at the clock.

KATE (CONT'D)
Autumn, time's about up. This month
keep a record of your self-talk.

AUTUMN
Right. Question any false
predictions to reduce my anxiety.

Kate nods.

KATE
Drop by Sky's apartment upon her
return. She'll need you like your
uncle was there to support you
after your pregnancy.

Kate types on her tablet. A prescription page slides out of
her printer. She reviews it, hands it to Autumn.

KATE (CONT'D)
Ativan's the same dose. If you're
waking up drowsy, take half a
tablet. We'll schedule an hour next
month.

INT. DETECTIVE OFFICES - BREAK ROOM - DAY

The cramped space has a few chairs, a tiny table, two coffee
makers, a mini-fridge, and a water dispenser near the door. A
coffee maker GURGLES water into a canister.

Autumn leans against the wall, holds an insulated cup with a
tea bag hanging from the lip. There's a box of muffins on the
table.

Sergeant Vazquez in police blues knocks on the open door,
scoots inside.

VAZQUEZ
I've got a lead on the card. You
free for a visit to bulldog
country?

Autumn shakes her head.

AUTUMN
Working Saturday... the first of
next week?

VAZQUEZ

For sure. I'll check my schedule.

Vazquez cleans out a mug, pours himself a cup of coffee.

AUTUMN

What broke?

Vazquez opens a creamer packet and adds it to his coffee.

VAZQUEZ

Several things. One... a reversal of the name. It's John Albert Christopher, who's now a resident in a nursing home in Georgia.

AUTUMN

Is he... how old? Has he had a stroke? Alzheimer's? Sundowners?

Vazquez extends his hands, pumps them in a stop motion.

VAZQUEZ

Slow down. He's in rehab for a knee replacement. Upstairs is intact.

AUTUMN

He couldn't have been at my house that night. What's the connection?

Vazquez blows across his coffee cup, takes a sip.

VAZQUEZ

Foster kids. The last teen he cared for did some crazy, weird things.

AUTUMN

Like what?

VAZQUEZ

He wouldn't elaborate over the phone.

AUTUMN

Sounds promising.

VAZQUEZ

Once a partner...

AUTUMN

... always a partner.

VAZQUEZ

Your water's boiling.

Autumn turns and pours steaming water into her cup.

INT. CANTRELL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cantrell opens the door and drops a plastic bag filled with various tops and several pair of jeans at Melissa's feet. She wears a man's oversized t-shirt covering her panties.

CANTRELL

Pick out a pair. Your performance last night... tasty. We're going for a diff'rent kinda' ride.

Melissa's countenance is downcast, her lower eyelids dark. She hesitates, bites her lower lip then complies. Her hands tremble while rummaging through the clothing.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)

Get used to it. You ain't going back to whatever life you knew.

When Cantrell turns away, Melissa gives him the middle finger and mouths the words, go to hell.

EXT. CITY - GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A MALE EMPLOYEE helps PASSENGERS gather luggage from the bus's storage compartment. OTHERS remain inside the bus.

A TEEN GIRL steps from the bus, into view.

The teen girl wears glasses, jeans, worn tennis shoes, and an open midriff blouse. Dirty blonde hair spills down her back.

She unfolds her rolling suitcase and scampers across the parking lot with a cell phone to her mouth.

TEEN GIRL

No longer in service... come on!

The teen kicks her suitcase then ambles onto a sidewalk.

INT./EXT. CITY BLOCK - NEAR BUS TERMINAL - STREET - NIGHT

Cantrell and Melissa are parked two blocks away on a side street in a Nissan Murano. The car's running. Lights off.

The teen girl casually strolls past. Cantrell flips the headlights on, turns onto the road, and rolls alongside her.

CANTRELL

Screw this up and your old lady's dead.

Melissa rolls down the window, hangs her head out, and whistles at the girl.

MELISSA
Need a lift?

The girl shakes her head, continues along the sidewalk. Cantrell edges the vehicle forward, pacing the teen.

MELISSA (CONT'D)
I'm Melissa. Hey, your top's cute.
Where'd you get it?

TEEN GIRL
Some hand-me-down.

MELISSA
There's a burger joint a little
ways down the road. Hop in and
we'll talk. I'm buying.

TEEN GIRL
Not that hungry.

Cantrell starts to slowly drive away. The teen waves her arms at the car. Cantrell stops the Murano, backs up.

TEEN GIRL (CONT'D)
I'm Tina. Do you happen to know how
to get to the ridge cut?

MELISSA
Sure. I live close to there.

TINA HANCOCK (16) shrugs, closes the handle on her rolling suitcase, opens the back door of the Nissan, and hops in.

INT./EXT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT - DRIVE-THRU - NIGHT

At the window, a FEMALE EMPLOYEE hands Cantrell a food sack and two drinks with straws and lids. He passes the sack to Melissa in the back seat.

Cantrell lifts the lid of the cola, spikes it with a small tablet, swirls it a bit, and snaps the lid back on the cup.

CANTRELL
(to Tina)
Cola for you.
(to Melissa)
Orange soda.

He passes straws to Tina, who in turn gives one to Melissa, who devours her burger. In the rear-view mirror, Cantrell views Melissa sharing her fries with Tina.

He smiles as Tina takes a big sip through the straw.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
 Everybody good?

Cantrell pulls the Nissan forward and exits onto the road.

EXT. CITY - FOUR-STAR MOTEL - HALLWAY - DAY

Upbeat music PLAYS SOFTLY in the background.

Of Norwegian descent, TBI special agent BRITT JOHANSEN (35) in leisurely attire with light complexion, blonde hair, and blue eyes escorts Autumn through a carpeted hallway.

AUTUMN
 I never imagined traffickers would use such a posh motel.

Britt nods.

BRITT
 The new normal. Like you, most people expect a sleazy, run down joint in the slums.

AUTUMN
 It's so different. On the beat...
 ... prostitutes selling their wares on the street. Easily recognized.

BRITT
 A cell phone and browser is all the buyer needs. A few clicks to make the arrangements... the motel, date, time, or price. Even an array of teens and what they're buying.

AUTUMN
 Let me guess. Credit card payments accepted?

Britt nods. They turn the corner and continue strolling.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
 So you set up these stings based upon website tracking?

BRITT
 Sounds easy, doesn't it? However, the data is routed across multiple sites and scrambled worldwide.

AUTUMN
 And then the website vanishes.

BRITT
 Exactly. The sad part is that fifteen thousand teens are terrorized this way in the U.S. every year. We only make a dent.

AUTUMN
 How many do you carry out a year?

BRITT
 Four. Sometimes five. The reason for your short notice.

They pass several rooms to stop at room 104. Britt enters four digits in the electronic entry. CLICK.

BRITT (CONT'D)
 We'll bring the rescued teens here for debriefing and begin therapy.

INT. - FOUR-STAR MOTEL - ROOM 104 - DAY

Chairs and a sofa surround a circular table. Three computer laptops set on the table. A small fridge is in the corner.

Britt opens a laptop, scrolls to an app, and opens it. Autumn leans in behind her. A green light blinks on the laptop.

BRITT
 Julie, say hello to Autumn.

INT. FOUR-STAR MOTEL - ROOM 128 - DAY

A room with a king size bed, mini-fridge, and microwave.

JULIE CHANDLER (30) waves. She's attractive, and her smile reveals cute dimples from the laptop's video feed.

Julie wears a navy blue windbreaker and sips on a bottle of water. She shifts her earbud nearly hidden by her short auburn hair and has a seat.

JULIE
 Hi Autumn. What's going on?

INTERCUT - LAPTOP VIDEO FEED

AUTUMN
 Britt's giving me an insider's look at what you're doing. Nice to meet you, Julie.

JULIE
 You, too. Britt... what's the status on the third bedroom?

BRITT
Room 106 is wired and ready.

JULIE
Good deal. Autumn we'll talk later.

Julie gives a thumbs up. Britt ends the video feed.

INT. FOUR-STAR MOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - SUITE C - DAY

A cozy room with lights off and curtains drawn. A few POLICE OFFICERS, MEN, AND WOMEN in business attire sit at tables.

Autumn sits beside Julie at a table in the back of the room. Britt stands in the center of the room. She taps a controller to advance a slide projected onto a screen.

The slide shows a young teen girl a unisex hoodie. She's thin with a look of despair on her face. She sits alone at a bridge with a city landscape in the background.

BRITT
As horrific as the abuse was for this young teen girl, she became a survivor.

A hand is raised in the AUDIENCE.

WOMAN
How many victims can we expect on Saturday?

BRITT
We're never certain. Sometimes all of the buyers and victims show up, but on other occasions...

Britt's VOICE fades softly into the background.

INT. BACK OF CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

AUTUMN
So the buyers finally get the felony charge they deserve rather than a slap on the wrist.

Julie nods with a serious look in her eyes.

JULIE
No. It's often involves the arrest numbers needed for re-election.

Autumn shakes her head in dismay.

AUTUMN

What will it take to realize who the real victims are if we continue to turn a blind eye?

JULIE

Involvement, honest reporting, and word of mouth of what happens here. It's changing but ever so slowly.

Autumn nods and sighs.

JULIE (CONT'D)

A third room has come available. You interested? Our other agent's in labor in the hospital.

AUTUMN

How wonderful. Boy or a girl?

JULIE

Boy.

Autumn takes a deep breath and tilts her head to one side with one eyebrow raised.

AUTUMN

I'd be thrilled.

INT. CANTRELL HOUSE - BASEMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Sky sits with her back against the wall with one foot shackled. Her skin is flushed, her pupils dilated, her hair is in a tattered mess... drugged.

Cantrell towers above her and cackles.

CANTRELL

I posted you having sex with Emily. What will KyAnna think? And your mom... she deserves to know the truth, don't you agree? I turned off your phone but didn't ditch it for now. How convenient.

He leans down, yanks Sky's head back by her hair. Her chin snaps up. Cantrell yells in her ear.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)

Answer me.

Sky closes her eyes. Her voice is barely audible.

SKY

Slut.

CANTRELL
I can't hear you.

Sky glances up in a daze. She mutters slightly louder.

SKY
Slut.

CANTRELL
That's who your are now. I own you.

Cantrell grabs Sky's chin, turns her face from side to side. Her skin is pale, her cheek bones sunken.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
You're in need of a pit. After
another tryst in the sack tonight,
I'll slop the hogs.

EXT./INT. AUTO BODY AND REPAIR SHOP - GARAGE - DAY

Sounds echo in RUMBLES from a motorcycle. Knox pulls into the lot, cuts the engine, hops off, secures the cycle. Cantrell greets Knox in the garage with a locked-finger grip.

CANTRELL
Finally, that hunk of antique parts
is burnin' rubber. Sweet.

Knox nods. Cantrell looks the cycle up and down, and hops on.

KNOX
Thanks to your friend, Landon, I
tracked down the engine parts,
original rims, and fenders.

CANTRELL
Toss over the keys.

KNOX
Later. He also passed on the latest
word on the street.

CANTRELL
Really?

Knox nods, pulls a business card of an area four star motel from his pocket and hands it to Cantrell.

KNOX
Back side.

Cantrell flips over the card. It reads, "No Vacancy!"

CANTRELL
A task force raid.

KNOX
TBI. Not uncommon to hit our area
again. How's our collection coming?

CANTRELL
Nowhere near the checkered flag.
Three in the pit but that's fixin'
to change.

KNOX
I thought as much. Another internet
address and server is in order.

CANTRELL
Always. Consider it done.

INT. FOUR-STAR MOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

At the check-in desk, Zig wears a hotel employee uniform.

A haggard looking TEEN GIRL (16) drags her feet through the door, comes into view. She carries a make-up kit and a shopping bag. She goes down the hall toward a restroom.

Zig catches a quick glance at her. Intentionally, he drops a brochure to bring a hand-held, mini-microphone to his lips.

ZIG
(into mic)
Autumn, she's on her way.

INT. MOTEL LOBBY - WOMEN'S RESTROOM - STALL - NIGHT

The teen girl enters and reaches behind a toilet tank.

She pulls out a piece of paper, reads it, flushes it in the toilet, and exits.

INT. MOTEL SUITE - ROOM 16 - NIGHT

Autumn hears the BEEPS from the electronic entry signature, The lock CLICKS. She readies herself near the bathroom door.

The teen enters into view, closes the door. She stumbles around the bed, drops her bag on the bedspread, and zigzags toward the bathroom.

Wired with a mic, Autumn dashes from the bathroom. The girl, in a daze, bumps into Autumn.

TEEN GIRL

What the...

AUTUMN

It's okay, sweetheart. You're safe now. I'm detective Jeffries, special agent temporarily assigned with TBI.

The teen turns and stumbles. Autumn helps her to her feet. Autumn escorts the teen girl quickly inside the bathroom.

INT. MOTEL SUITE - ROOM 16 - BATHROOM - NIGHT

The teen girl sighs deeply, crumbles into Autumn's embrace.

AUTUMN

We're here to help. We have a counselor waiting. What's your name?

Autumn kisses the girl on her forehead.

TEEN GIRL

Carol.

CAROL shudders as tears flood down her cheeks.

AUTUMN

Carol, I'm very sorry. It's going to get better from here. Let it go, darling.

Autumn gives Carol a long and warm embrace.

BRITT'S VOICE (O.S.)

Good work detective. We'll come get her.

EXT./INT. MOTEL SUITE - ROOM 16 - NIGHT

A MALE BUYER, (40's) wearing a gray sport's coat and navy slacks, halts at the door and taps the four-digit entry code into the pad.

Four BEEPS sound in differing TONES. The buyer turns the handle; CLICK. He enters the room.

A night-light from the bathroom beams through the darkness; the bathroom door's barely open.

BUYER

Get on out here, babe. Let's see if you're as hot as your internet posting. Hopefully naked.

The buyer lays a fifty dollar bill on the table and flips on the light switch inside the door.

Six feet away and still wired, Autumn has her revolver drawn and aimed at his midsection. She gasps at her recognition of the buyer then gives him a command.

AUTUMN

On your knees. Do it! Now. Flat on your stomach. Hands behind your back.

The buyer complies. Autumn approaches with caution. She reaches for her handcuffs at her belt.

The buyer suddenly twist and rolls, kicks Autumn's legs out from under her. She falls and her weapon discharges. BANG.

INT. MOTEL SUITE - ROOM 124 - NIGHT

Britt sits at a circular table wearing a headset and a mic clipped to her blouse's collar.

BRITT

Shots fired. All units. Shots fired. Room 16.

Britt throws off her headset, leaps from her seat, grabs her revolver, yells.

BRITT (CONT'D)

Phil. Get your ass out here. Shots fired. Autumn's room.

A toilet FLUSHES O.S. Phil exits the bathroom, buckles his belt, and places a hand at his holster. He follows Britt as they dash outside.

INT. MOTEL SUITE - ROOM 16 - NIGHT

The buyer pounds Autumn's right wrist which holds her revolver. She moans, maintains her grip as the weapon discharges twice more. BANG. BANG.

Autumn turns the gun slightly and fires again. BANG. The bullet ricochets from a metal relay attached to the ceiling.

BUYER

Give it up, lady! Let go.

The buyer forcefully kicks Autumn's weapon away. The gun slides behind a dresser, hidden from view. He kicks Autumn in her side as she attempts to stand.

A punch connects to Autumn's forehead.

Autumn's dazed and bleeding from a laceration above her eye caused by the buyer's ring. The buyer shuffles toward the door. Autumn's in chase.

AUTUMN

Not so fast.

Autumn tackles him. He crashes hard against a chair. It overturns.

EXT. MOTEL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Britt and Phil race past closed doors of patrons' rooms. A MAN opens his door partially, glances toward the approaching officers.

BRITT

Stay inside.

The GUEST returns inside. The door CLICKS. Locked.

INT. MOTEL SUITE - ROOM 16 - NIGHT

The buyer's on the floor gasping for air. The chair's knocked the wind from him. Autumn gives him a brisk kick to his side.

AUTUMN

Payback. Turd ball.

She grabs a ceramic lamp, aims it at his head. He blocks it with his elbow. The lamp SMASHES in pieces across the table.

Autumn searches in desperation to locate her revolver.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

Where the hell is it?

The buyer rights himself, overturns the table to partially block Autumn's exit. Autumn reaches beneath the dresser and snatches up her Smith and Wesson.

She aims her gun with both hands but the buyer has already escaped through the open door.

EXT. FOUR-STAR MOTEL - HALLWAY AND PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The buyer weaves through shrubs, hops over a railing, and dashes onto the lot. Autumn's in chase and not far behind.

AUTUMN

Stop! Police! I'll shoot!

The buyer swerves between parked cars and heads toward the cover of a sixteen wheeler.

Autumn aims at the ground near his position and fires. BANG. The buyer ducks and hides. He slowly stands with his arms raised.

Autumn catches up to him, a bit out of breath, keeps her distance, and points her weapon at his chest.

BUYER

The thousand k. Cash. It will help pay for Sky's education. Let me go, and all's square. A win-win.

AUTUMN

Move an inch... You're a dead man.

Britt and Phil arrive. Autumn maintains her position. Phil holsters his weapon, shoves the buyers to his knees, and cuffs him.

Julie, Zig, and SEVERAL POLICE OFFICERS arrive with weapons drawn. They encircle the buyer. Autumn holsters her revolver.

PHIL

You okay, partner?

After a long, deep breath, Autumn swipes her finger across her forehead. It's bloodied. She rubs her right wrist and flexes her fingers.

Phil hands Autumn a hanky. She dabs her wound.

AUTUMN

I'll live.

Phil tightens the cuffs another link and attaches a flex-cuff to the buyer's ankles.

PHIL

Do you recognize this wise-ass?

Autumn nods, faces the buyer, stares him down.

AUTUMN

Dr. so-and-so. One of Sky's haughty college professors I met during her registration.

EXT. FOUR-STAR MOTEL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Phil and Zig complete an arrest report in the front seat of a police cruiser with the buyer in cuffs in the back.

Autumn has a steri-strip across the laceration above her eye. She leans against the fender with a jacket over her shoulder.

Britt approaches, hands a cup of steaming coffee to Autumn.

AUTUMN
Thanks. Just what I needed.

Autumn blows across the cup, takes a sip.

BRITT
What happened in there?

Autumn unconsciously bites gently on her bottom lip.

AUTUMN
All hell broke loose as I was
cuffing him.

BRITT
Glad it didn't end in a tragedy.

Autumn nods, takes another sip. With a puzzled look, Britt glances through the back window of the cruiser at the buyer.

BRITT (CONT'D)
I wonder what's this perp's story?

AUTUMN
Who knows? He was certainly
desperate to not get caught.

BRITT
We'll review the video feed
together, but you'll need to file
an incident report asap while it's
fresh.

Autumn nods. She and Britt stroll back toward the motel.

EXT.\INT. FORD F-150 - DAY

Cantrell's truck is parked outside Andy's trailer.

Andy SLAMS the trailer door, dashes toward the truck, and climbs inside the passenger side. He tosses several empty beer cans onto the floorboard before taking a seat.

CANTRELL
Hit any bull's eyes today?

Andy has a sneezing fit, covers his nose with his sleeve.

ANDY
A few.

CANTRELL
Allergic?

Andy sneezes again. He sniffs the air.

ANDY
Smells exactly like my sister's
high priced perfume.

Cantrell spins the air freshener hanging from the mirror.

CANTRELL
Ever ridden a jacked up go-cart?

Cantrell backs out the truck, swings it around. Andy shakes his head, gives Cantrell a queer look.

ANDY
Have you seen Emily?

Cantrell pulls onto the road with potholes and gravel.

CANTRELL
Not since the other day.

ANDY
Just wondering. She's usually home
when I get back from practice.

INT. TATTOO PARLOR - LOBBY - NIGHT

Framed photo images of patterns and designs fill the walls. Two comfy, lay-back tattoo chairs are opposite one another.

White towels, containers of ink colors, pens, and tattoo equipment are arranged neatly on countertops and shelves.

Emily is sprawled out on one chair. Her eyes are glazed over. She tries to lift her head, but can't do so. Cantrell has her elbow woven around his arm to keep her from falling.

CANTRELL
You're gonna love them, Emily.

Cantrell hands a pattern book to KARLA CHU (40's) standing nearby. She's a petite black haired, Asian woman wearing a silk top and jeans. Her arms are covered in tats.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
Ink the large one below her
breasts, the small one behind her
ear.

Karla nods and scoots up on a stool at Emily's side.

KARLA
Okay, sugar.

Karla lifts Emily's shirt below her bra, and begins marking her abdomen above her navel with a marker.

INT. AUTUMN'S RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Autumn sits, faces a laptop on her dining room table. She has a bruise and small abrasion across her forehead.

Two colorful Zebra finches CHIRP in a cage in the background. Special TBI agent Julie is on the screen.

AUTUMN

My ribs are still a little sore but
much better.

INT. NASHVILLE - TBI CENTRAL OFFICE - DESK - DAY

At her desk, Julie blows across the lip of a cup of steaming hot coffee.

JULIE

How's your wrist?

INTERCUT - SKYPE VIDEO CONFERENCE

Autumn lifts up her forearm, shows an elastic support around her wrist.

AUTUMN

It's getting there. Hey, Julie,
I've been meaning to ask you... how
do these teens stay trapped?

JULIE

Shame. Drugs. Forced sexual
encounters and viewing their own
porn on the web.

Autumn wrinkles her brow, confusion in her eyes.

AUTUMN

They don't try to escape?

Julie shakes her head.

JULIE

Occasionally but geography becomes
a major deterrent. The pimps
usually move the girls far away
soon after they're abducted.

Julie sips her coffee.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Alone and in despair with no one to
confide in, they can't see a way
out.

A phone RINGS on Julie's desk. She glances at the number.

JULIE (CONT'D)
I've got to answer this. Stay in
touch Autumn. Later.

A SPECIAL BEEP indicates the video-chat has ended. The screen
turns a blank gray.

INT. AUTUMN'S RESIDENCE - DEN - DAY

Furniture suggests comfort and style. Two finches flutter in
a bird cage in the background.

Autumn snacks on a bagel. Dressed casually, Autumn has no
make-up; her hair's not brushed.

"Mobile Up-beat" a human interest program is showing on a
flat screen. The volume is on mute.

On the screen: It shows a LIFE GUARD in orange swim trunks
pointing out several large, expertly created sand castles on
display. Waves of surf roll upon the beach in the distance.

BEACH COMBERS surround the castles, pointing here and there.

A beach ball caught in the wind flies into view. A cute TEEN
GIRL in a swim suit hustles to catch it as the ball bounces
off an umbrella.

Autumn grabs her smart phone, calls.

AUTUMN
(into phone)
Sky... hope you get this message
and you're enjoying the beach. See
you first thing when you get home.
Love you.

Autumn closes her cell, turns her attention to the TV.
Autumn's phone BUZZES. She answers immediately.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Sky. Home early?

VAZQUEZ (V.O.)
"I'm pulling in your driveway."

AUTUMN
Vazquez. Oh my gosh. I thought it
was my daughter. You won't believe
what I just saw on mobile up-beat.
Exquisite sand castles.

VAZQUEZ (V.O.)
"Mobile what? Never seen it. Tell
me about it on the way."

INT. LONG TERM CARE FACILITY - REHABILITATION ROOM - DAY

SUPER: "Athens, Georgia."

Physical therapy tables and rehab equipment fill the room.

A WOMAN (20's) in scrubs, strolls through the open door as Autumn and Vazquez peek around the corner, mosey into view.

In a knee brace, ALBERT CHRISTOPHER (60's) walks on a treadmill using hand holds. A walker is nearby.

VAZQUEZ

John... John Albert Christopher?

Albert stops the treadmill, steps off, and uses his walker to edge forward. Albert chuckles.

ALBERT

Depends on who's asking?

Autumn and Phil reveal their badges. Albert scoots his walker and sits. Autumn leans against a therapy bed. Phil stands.

VAZQUEZ

We're here to find out more about one of the boys you cared for.

ALBERT

Yes. We talked over the phone. Logan Cantrell. After you hear this you'll not forget it. All was going well at first. He had a knack for working on cars, hot rods, cycles. He could fix anything with a motor.

Albert fidgets nervously with his brace.

AUTUMN

What changed?

ALBERT

While cleaning his room, my wife found a poster under his bed. It had verses cut from a bible glued to it. The thing is...

Albert massages his thigh.

ALBERT (CONT'D)

... the verses involved babies or children offered as sacrifices to a fertility god... I think it was Baal. In one case, a woman had eaten her own infant to prevent starvation. Sick, right?

Autumn and Phil gaze at one another a bit stunned.

ALBERT (CONT'D)

We were about to confront him but he up and ran off. Logan was nearly eighteen by then and children's services followed up. Never found him.

VAZQUEZ

Did you happen to have a photo?

Albert shakes his head.

ALBERT

I do remember him getting his photo done for his senior class yearbook.

VAZQUEZ

Which is... ?

ALBERT

James Madison High.

Vazquez meets Autumn's eye with a subtle nod.

AUTUMN

Thanks for your help, Albert. Hope the knee improves quickly.

MONTAGE - SEARCH FOR CANTRELL'S IDENTITY - DAY

HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY -- Autumn copies pages from a James Madison High school yearbook. Vazquez scans his cell phone.

COURTHOUSE -- At the motor vehicle division, a FEMALE CLERK (25) behind a counter, hands Vazquez a copy of Logan's driver's license records. Autumn sips on bottled water.

HISTORICAL LIBRARY -- Vazquez and Autumn search through archived records.

Three large cardboard boxes, labeled Memorial Children's Home, set on their table.

LIBRARY COPY ROOM -- Vazquez scrutinizes a manilla folder labeled Cantrell, L. while Autumn feeds a copy machine.

END MONTAGE

INT. HOSPITAL - RECORDS DESK - DAY

A FEMALE (55) sits behind a computer terminal with a name tag of SHELBY. She searches in surgical records.

The screen faces away from Autumn and Vazquez who lean forward on her desk in an attempt to view the screen.

SHELBY

A cleft lip procedure was done here by a... Dr. Matlan Kirkpatrick in nineteen, ninety-seven, and no, I won't print you a copy.

AUTUMN

Hippa violations. We get it.

Vazquez searches his cell phone, a confused look on his face.

VAZQUEZ

Is Kirkpatrick still in practice?

Shelby shrugs her shoulders.

SHELBY

Try one of the walk in clinics.

INT. WALK IN CLINIC - INNER OFFICE - DAY

Medical books fill the shelves behind an office desk and chair. Diplomas and certifications cover the walls.

Autumn and Vazquez stand before DR. MATLAN KIRKPATRICK, MD with gray hair and glasses wearing a lab coat.

DR. KIRKPATRICK

How can I help you?

AUTUMN

We're searching for information years ago... a involving a boy your may have performed surgery on somago... a cleft lip repair. His name was Logan Cantrell.

DR. KIRKPATRICK

Twenty years ago? That's a long shot. Normally I'd say no.

(beat)

One unusual case I recall involved a toddler brought to the ER who was extremely emaciated. He needed cleft lip surgery which is always performed well before the child reaches his first birthday.

VAZQUEZ
 Can you help us with the names of
 his parents, or even better, find
 records of his blood work or DNA?

DR. KIRKPATRICK
 Unlikely. But you're in luck.

Autumn and Vazquez glance at one another with a glimmer of
 hope on their faces.

DR. KIRKPATRICK (CONT'D)
 The state requires a complete
 genetic profile for all cleft lip
 and palate repairs for their
 records. I'll see what I can find.

Autumn gives Dr. Kirkpatrick her card.

AUTUMN
 Thanks doc. Anything you come up
 with will be helpful in our
 investigation.

INT. CAR - FRONT SEAT - NIGHT

Vazquez drives. Autumn reviews her notes.

AUTUMN
 Where do you suppose he's hiding?

VAZQUEZ
 We're getting closer. We'll find
 him.

AUTUMN
 What then? Is this really worth it?

Vazquez chuckles.

VAZQUEZ
 A mystery solved and your peace of
 mind. Just think. No more stalking.

Autumn nods, laughs.

AUTUMN
 True enough. Any more pink
 envelopes, go in the trash.
 Unopened.

Vazquez snickers.

VAZQUEZ
 I've heard that before.

INT. CANTRELL'S HOUSE - OFFICE - DAY

Wearing gloves, Cantrell reads from a hand-printed note on the inside of a large card.

CANTRELL

The candles on your cake caught
fire, and so will you.

He prints his initials in block letters, places a scripture verse inside the card, and slips it inside a pink envelope.

He drips wax from a candle as a seal, and presses his ring into the soft wax. Cantrell turns over the envelope, and prints Autumn's address using a fine point sharpie.

INT. DETECTIVE OFFICES - AUTUMN'S CUBICLE - DAY

The phone RINGS. Phil answers. Autumn's at her desk.

PHIL

(into phone)

Go figure. I know. Yeah. Got it.
Spell that for me.

Phil scribbles on anything he can grab. He hangs up. Autumn gives him an inquisitive look.

AUTUMN

Well?

PHIL

Vazquez. A drug bust gone bad. He
thinks it may have some bearing on
our missing teen.

Phil TAPS the tips of his fingers across the table. Autumn ignores the distraction.

AUTUMN

How so?

PHIL

Some low-life drug dealer.
Overdose. One drug in his system...
... a pharmacy's inventory.

Phil struggles to decipher his handwritten note.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Zolpidem tar...

AUTUMN

Tartrate. Ambien. A common date
rape drug. He felt no pain, believe
me... slept right through it.

PHIL
 You won't believe this. The dealer
 left a package behind... in his
 apartment... filled with bottles of
 this stuff. It has a label and
 address.

Autumn's countenance lightens up.

AUTUMN
 Really? Where's it going?

Phil shrugs. Picks up his paper, reads the scribble.

PHIL
 An area post-office box.

EXT. U.S. POST OFFICE - PARKING LOT - DAY

LANDON WESTMORE (20's) over six feet, in a cowboy hat and
 boots, exits the post-office. He carries a small package, and
 strolls toward a rusted, older model truck.

Phil pulls his car behind Landon's truck to block his exit.
 He and Autumn hop out. A patrol car drives up, tires
 SQUEALLING. A MALE COP scampers out, his hand near his taser.

Phil and Autumn approach Landon from opposite directions and
 show him their detective shields.

PHIL
 Sir, you are under arrest. Set down
 the package, put your hands on the
 fender, and spread your legs.

Landon complies. Phil frisk him. Autumn recovers the package.

LANDON
 What? What's this about?

A FEW ONLOOKERS gather around as Phil cuffs Landon.

AUTUMN
 What's in the package, Landon?

LANDON
 That's personal property. You don't
 have a right to...

AUTUMN
 Ambien. We already know. You have
 the right to remain silent, you
 have the right of an attorney. If
 you cannot afford an...

Autumn's voice fades as she escort Landon to the police car.

INT./EXT. DETECTIVE OFFICES - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

A two-way mirror. Landon sits with his wrist cuffed to a metal table by a short chain. Phil interrogates.

Public defender, SCOT BIGGS (40's) sits beside Landon. He's partly bald, wears a sport coat, and no tie.

A tape recorder's on the table.

SCOTT
My client had no knowledge of the contents of the package.

Phil slides a highlighted record of phone calls made by Landon to the deceased drug dealer.

PHIL
Care to explain these?

Landon whispers into Scott's ear, shakes his head.

SCOTT
An acquaintance only.

Phil presses a button on the tape recorder.

MESSAGE
Hey bro. Kickin' some ass, man.
Cash received. Landon. Package on it's way. Unload at your own risk.
Bang, bang!

Phil stops the recording.

SCOTT
He believed he was paying for fireworks.

Phil removes two bank statement from the folder, displays them side by side with the dates highlighted.

PHIL
Firecrackers? Not much bang for the buck.
(laughs)
They'd have to be wrapped in gold foil and filled with diamonds.

SCOTT
Circumstantial. It proves nothing.

Phil opens a folder, slides several color photos of a dead BLACK MAN with his throat cut.

PHIL
Here's your acquaintance. Did you
hope to make his death appear as a
suicide?

Landon's color drains from his face. He shakes his head.

LANDON
Had nothing to do with that.

SCOTT
Landon, keep your mouth shut.

PHIL
Along with federal charges for drug
distribution, you're now our prime
suspect for first degree homicide.

SCOTT
Give us a moment.

Phil exits the interrogation room. Autumn and Zig view Scott
and Landon talking through the glass.

ZIG
Landon's prints weren't found at
the scene. Press him on the
distribution charges and see what
they're willing to offer.

PHIL
Got it.

Phil returns inside the interrogation room moments later.

SCOTT
Arguably, we believe you don't have
a strong case on any of the charges
of my client.

PHIL
The last time I looked, using the
post office for drug distribution
with intent to sell carries a
felony sentence of one to three
years in the federal pen.

Landon shakes his head, whispers in Scott's ear.

SCOTT
The federal charges go away, and
we'll see if we can't reach a deal.
No jail time, house arrest only.
Community service, no more than six
months tacked on.

Autumn enters with a look of determination.

Autumn unlocks Landon's cuffs and slides a pen and pad across the table.

AUTUMN

Agreed. Your client's a link to a much larger food chain. We need names of his buyers?

Scott whisper's in Landon's ear. Landon nods his agreement.

SCOTT

Multiple buyers that he doesn't even know. Only one person is a regular.

AUTUMN

Name?

Landon scribbles Logan in large letters on the pad, slides it across the table.

PHIL

Logan? Gotta' give us more than that or the deals off.

Landon and Scott both nod. Scott motions the go-ahead.

LANDON

Uses a burner for all arrangements and the pick-up. A real redneck for sure... every other sentence is laced with racing lingo.

AUTUMN

Description?

Landon grins. He leans over and whisper's in Scott's ear. Scott nods agreement.

LANDON

About six feet or so. Always wears a cap. Seen him a few times up close without him knowing.

Phil and Autumn gaze at one another.

PHIL

Enough for a sketch artist?

LANDON

No problem.

INT. DETECTIVE OFFICES - ZIG'S OFFICE - DAY

A black and white sketched drawing and colored enhancement of a man's face is tacked to a large white board along one wall.

The sketch is a fair resemblance of Logan Cantrell.

Zig and Autumn gather around Phil. Phil tacks a photo of Melissa's face and adds a line to Cantrell's sketch.

As Phil speaks, he writes the key identifying words below Cantrell's sketch.

PHIL

Light brown hair, green eyes, a noticeable scar above his lip. He's about six feet, has a southern drawl, and often wears a ball cap.

AUTUMN

Racing cap. A dirt track emblem.

Phil smiles, recognizes Autumn with a pointed index finger. He tacks up a tow-truck image, connects a line to it, and sketches a cap with the words dirt track beside it.

In bold letters, Phil adds SEXUAL PREDATOR to his list.

PHIL

He abducts stranded teens using a wrecker, so he must work for a legitimate business likely in the area. What else do we know?

ZIG

He relies on a supply of date rape drugs to do his dirty work, and he may be running low on his supply.

Phil writes the word AMBIEN in capital letters on the board.

AUTUMN

He's a risk taker. Is he also cocky?

PHIL

Point noted.

ZIG

I'll contact Britt. She may know of other teens abducted in our area.

Phil scribbles risk taker and cocky on the board. Autumn leans back, stretches, takes a deep breath.

AUTUMN

Phil, what do you think? It may be relevant. We've talked about it. Shall we get Vazquez in here?

Phil nods his head as he looks toward Zig.

PHIL
Zig... Autumn has started receiving those accursed messages mailed to her house.

ZIG
Again... damn. Pink envelopes?

Phil nods, directs everyone's attention to Autumn.

PHIL
What's worse, he may be tracking her movement. Go ahead Autumn.

AUTUMN
The last card I got, he called and knew exactly where I was... what I was doing. Vazquez and I have been investigating... on our dime, mind you. The bottom line? This sleaze may be one and the same.

ZIG
As I recall, the messages he sent were all from a bible. Evil stuff... totally out of context.

AUTUMN
Exactly. Warped. Narcissist at the very least.

Zig and Phil both nod. Phil marks the words NARCISSIST and WARPED in all caps below SEXUAL PREDATOR.

ZIG
Which means he was likely abused as a child and probably raped.

AUTUMN
A foster care merry-go-round?

Phil adds FOSTER CARE and ABUSE below RAPED with several question marks behind the words.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
It fits what Vazquez and I discovered. There's evidence the scar came from a cleft lip repair performed unusually late.

ZIG
Good job. Our profiler will be able to add even more. Let's get this bastard, what do you say?

PHIL
On it.

AUTUMN
Not soon enough.

INT. CANTRELL'S WRECKER - NIGHT

Country music blares on the radio.

Cantrell flips through a hot-rod magazine. His cell phone rings. He opens the phone screen. An unidentified caller.

UNIDENTIFIED CALLER
Engine's blown. Watch yourself.

The phone call ends.

INT. AUTUMN'S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

All the lights are on. A hammer, screwdriver, and a packet of screws and nails sit on a corner table beside a sofa. Finches CHIRP inside a cage in the background.

On a step-stool, Autumn hangs a framed photo on the wall. She taps on the frame of another photo to align both.

She hangs a photo of her and Vazquez in police uniforms between Captain Styles with a congrats banner behind them.

The aligned photo shows a uniformed police captain who shakes hands with a police officer along with a congratulation sign.

Autumn hops off the stool, admires her work. Her cell phone BUZZES. She races to locate her phone and punches the speaker phone to answer it without viewing the number.

AUTUMN
Sky?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
(electronically altered)
Detective... the trail you're following will get you or your daughter killed. Back off.

The connection ends. She stares at her cell, trembles. Autumn punches in Sky's number and the speaker button. The phone BUZZES once.

PHONE MESSAGE
(automated)
The number you have reached is no longer in service.

Autumn gasp.

AUTUMN
Oh my God.

She hangs up and calls Phil. The speaker remains on.

PHIL (V.O.)
Autumn? What's on your mind?

AUTUMN
Death threats. My daughter and myself. Electronic signature.

PHIL (V.O.)
On my way. Chief needs to be brought up to speed on this.

AUTUMN
My next call.

INT. AUTUMN'S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Phil reaches inside an a/c duct, removes a tiny Ethernet listening device, hands it to Zig. Autumn stands nearby.

ZIG
Numero tres. Appears to be more sophisticated than the others.

Zig gives the cover of the a/c duct to Phil who slips it back in place. Zig shows the bug to Autumn.

ZIG (CONT'D)
Did your phone's security camera identify anyone casing your apartment?

Autumn shrugs, takes a deep breath.

AUTUMN
The back door's camera has been on the blink. The repairman was supposed to fix it for four or five days ago but never showed.

PHIL
There's his opening whoever it is. I'll contact the security company.

ZIG
In the meantime, have Vazquez set up surveillance front and back and at Sky's apartment. Just in case.

AUTUMN
I'm beyond worried. I can't even get in touch with her. No service.

PHIL
I'll check into that, too. Write down her number for me.

Autumn writes down Sky's number and hands the paper to Phil. He slips it into his pocket and waddles toward the door.

PHIL (CONT'D)

A tech team will be here first thing in the morning. I'll have them dust for prints.

INT. DETECTIVE OFFICES - AUTUMN AND PHIL'S CUBICLE - DAY

Phil scoots around the corner, comes into view. Autumn sits on the top of her desk.

AUTUMN

Well?

PHIL

No useable prints. No other bugs. Sky's phone bill is up to date. She may have lost her charger or broke her phone. Who knows?

Vazquez strides into the room, pats Autumn's shoulder.

VAZQUEZ

Hey partner. Zig sent me your way. We've posted several deputies to randomly patrol your neighborhood.

PHIL

The tech gurus located the signal tower pinged by the private caller. Kennesaw Georgia near Lake Alatoona.

AUTUMN

Odd. I've camped in that area. Once with Sky.

PHIL

The bugs? Probably purchased on the web. Nothing promising.

Autumn's countenance is downcast and her shoulders droop.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Who went with her to the beach?

AUTUMN

A college friend. Why didn't I think of that. I'll go by her parent's house right now. And Sky's apartment.

Phil pulls JIGGLES his keys from his pocket.

PHIL
We'll both go.

Vazquez nods his agreement. Autumn stands, grabs her purse. Phil scoots along beside her.

INT. SKY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Autumn opens Sky's suitcase and dumps out shorts, tops, several bathing suits, make-up, and underwear onto Sky's bed.

AUTUMN
I can't believe this. He's got her.
Along with Melissa. That was his
surprise... the reason why he was
at my home.

Phil shrugs.

PHIL
Speculation. You don't know that.

AUTUMN
How the hell would you know? You're
not a mother.

Autumn pounds her fist into the mattress. She sighs, stomps around, launches a pillow Phil's way. Phil ducks. He holds up his hands like a stop sign.

PHIL
Whoa. I get it. And yeah, I
probably deserved that, too.

Autumn's eyes grow moist. She reaches out to Phil.

AUTUMN
How could I have missed the signs.
She's pregnant and didn't feel she
could face me. What's wrong with me
that I can't get a grip on this?
I'm really starting to believe I
was never the parent Sky needed me
to be for her.

Phil nods, gives Autumn a brief hug and a pat on her back.

PHIL
Don't beat yourself up, Autumn. You
have every right to be worried.

Phil removes a piece of gum from his pocket, slips off the wrapper, and plops it in his mouth.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Let's follow the clues.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - PORCH - DAY

Autumn and Phil stand at the front door and speak with KyAnna. Kyanna wears shorts revealing skin with a dark tan.

KYANNA
She wasn't home when we went to get her. Never responded to our calls or texts so my cousin and I headed out for Tybee Island without her.

AUTUMN
Have you heard from her at all?

KYANNA
The last time we spoke was when I gave her a lift to her apartment after she had car problems.

Phil responds in a startle, his voice on edge.

PHIL
What happened to her car?

KYANNA
Two flat tires. Some dude in a tow truck was supposed to haul it to a gas station.

Autumn gasp, her anger evident as she stares at Phil as if her eyes could kill. Her fists are clinched.

AUTUMN
Damn. See! Told you.

Autumn's face is red with anger.

PHIL
Did you get a good look at his face or remember the name of the wrecker service? It's extremely important.

KyAnna shakes her head.

KYANNA
Sorry. Already gone when I arrived.

Phil sighs, attempts to pat Autumn on her back. Autumn pulls away, sneers.

KYANNA (CONT'D)
Oh my gosh. Something's happened to Sky. Can I help?

PHIL
 You already have, KyAnna. Thank
 you.

INT. PARKING LOT - PHIL'S CAR - DAY

The engine idles. Phil's chomping on gum. Autumn rides
 shotgun.

Autumn views the bolo print out of an artist rendering of
 Cantrell and an estimated age, race, height, and weight.
 Armed and dangerous appear in bold letters at the bottom of
 the rendering.

AUTUMN
 They left out... scumbag.

PHIL
 Every squad car in the city has a
 copy. Given what we know, someone's
 bound to locate him. Soon.

Autumn types in WRECKER SERVICES on her smart phone.

AUTUMN
 It seems they're one and the same?
 The cards and the trafficker, both
 with last name of Cantrell.

PHIL
 It appears that way.

AUTUMN
 Why not revisit all the wrecker
 services you've already checked?

She opens the first wrecker service's info on the list.

PHIL
 You're starting to read my mind.

Autumn pumps her fist with a determined look on her face.

AUTUMN
 Al's Wrecker Service. One-thirty
 six McCallie Boulevard.

Phil puts his car in gear, drives out onto the street.

INT. AL'S WRECKER SERVICE - FRONT OFFICE - DAY

Behind the counter, an overweight MAN (50's) with a goatee
 picks up the bolo print, shakes his head.

MAN
 Never seen the dude. I reckon it's
 a good thing, seeing he's a
 dangerous fugitive.

Autumn hands him a card with Zig's office phone number.

AUTUMN
 If you come in contact with him,
 call us or the police.

MAN
 Sure thing, detectives.

EXT. ABC TOWING BUILDING - PARKING LOT - DAY

Phil's in the driver's seat. Autumn is beside him.

PHIL
 Strike two. What's next?

Autumn reads from her phone.

AUTUMN
 Chip's auto repair and towing, 701
 twentieth street.

PHIL
 On our way.

Phil starts the car and pulls out into traffic.

INT. CHIP'S AUTO BODY AND REPAIR - OFFICE - DAY

Racing banners and a racing caps hang on the wall. Phil sits
 at a counter, chews gum, flips through a cycle magazine.
 Autumn stands resolute beside him, views a racing poster.

AUTUMN
 Pay dirt. What you wanna bet?

Phil nods his head.

PHIL
 Fits the profile.

JEFF KIRKLAND (20's) a mechanic in coveralls and long hair
 enters from the garage. He snuffs out his cigarette in an
 empty cola can.

Phil and Autumn show him their badges.

JEFF
 Detectives. Car trouble?

AUTUMN
I spoke with Chip Knox over the
phone. Is he available?

Jeff shakes his head, wipes grease from his hands with a rag.

JEFF
Whitfield county. Picking up a
wreck. Be back after dark.

Autumn slides Cantrell's bolo onto the counter. Jeff takes a
brief glance, dismisses it with a wave of his hand.

JEFF
It ain't Knox for sure.

Undeterred, Autumn picks up the bolo, shoves Cantrell's
rendering practically in front of the Jeff's nose.

AUTUMN
Take another look. Ever seen him?

JEFF
Nope. Just a temp, filling in. Like
I told you, you'll have to check
back with the owner.

Autumn takes one of her detective cards, pins it forcefully
to a dirt track racing banner hanging on the wall.

AUTUMN
The minute Knox returns. Call us.

JEFF
Sure thing, detectives.

Jeff scampers out the door into the garage. Muffled sounds of
mechanical equipment WHIRL into the office. Changing tires.

PHIL
Let's go get a cup of coffee and
hang close for a bit. Eyes on.

Autumn nods. They turn to leave.

RING, RING. Andy enters through the front door. He wears a
royal blue shirt with a racing logo on the pocket.

Andy goes straight to the drink machine and buys a soda.

PHIL (CONT'D)
You a racing fan?

ANDY
Dirt track. Crazy wild.

PHIL
Me too. Can you buy those jerseys
off the rack?

ANDY
This one's a gift from a friend a
mine. He's teaching me how to build
an engine.

Andy sips on his soda.

AUTUMN
That sounds exciting. Do you mind
if we ask you a few questions?

Autumn and Phil reveal their badges.

ANDY
Did you find my sister?

AUTUMN
Your sister?

Andy shrugs his shoulders and raises his palms to the side.
He looks perplexed.

ANDY
Emily. Missing since yesterday. My
mom called the cops but no one has
showed up yet.

Autumn raises her eyebrows and glares at Phil.

AUTUMN
We'll be sure to follow up on that
Andy. We're here on another matter.

Autumn shows Andy the bolo of Cantrell.

ANDY
Holy moly. I'd say it's a spitt'in
image of my friend, Logan. Logan
Cantrell. He don't seem dangerous.

AUTUMN
I'm Autumn. My partner, Phil. Your
his friend, Andy, and around you,
he may never show his true side.

PHIL
When's the last time you've seen
him?

ANDY
A few days ago.

AUTUMN
 Andy, would you mind if we drive
 you home and speak with your
 parents about this. It's serious.

Andy sips on his soda.

ANDY
 Am I in trouble?

AUTUMN
 No. Not in the least.

ANDY
 Okay then. I've never been in a cop
 car before. Could you put me in
 cuffs, just for the fun of it, mind
 you?

Phil and Autumn glance at one another and shake their head.

PHIL
 How about we talk with your parents
 first.

Andy looks disappointed, his shoulders droop.

ANDY
 Okay. Maybe turn on the flashing
 lights? Just for a sec?

AUTUMN
 We'll let you flip the switch.
 How's that sound?

ANDY
 Cool.

INT. ANDY'S TRAILER - LIVING AREA - DAY

Andy sits beside Autumn on a worn leather couch. Phil stands
 near a formica kitchen counter top.

Andy's mom, BEATRICE (BEA) WHITE (late 30's) fills up a chair
 across from them. She wears yellow scrubs.

AUTUMN
 How long has Emily been gone?

Bea glances at her watch.

BEA
 Just past twenty-four hours. The
 woman cop said she'd file a report.

AUTUMN

So she came here? Did she take a recent photo of Emily with her?

Bea nods.

BEA

Uh-hu. Several. That and more. It was quite detailed.

PHIL

Good. We'll follow up with her and let you know something as soon as we can. Definitely today.

Bea sighs her relief.

BEA

I work odd hours and come and go at different times. So does my hubby. I'm embarrassed to say it but our daughter often ends up taking care of Andy.

Autumn reaches out, holds Bea's hands.

AUTUMN

No need to apologize. Believe me. I've been there with my daughter.

BEA

I've been a nervous wreck ever since Emily's disappearance.

Autumn glares at Phil. She squeezes Bea's hands tenderly.

AUTUMN

I know exactly how you feel.

Bea motions for Andy to come beside her.

BEA

Andy. Come over here.

Andy scoots toward Bea who has a serious frown on her face.

BEA (CONT'D)

You won't be going back over there, you understand? This man's dangerous. It's their job.

ANDY

Yes ma'am.

BEA

Promise?

ANDY
 Promise. I know where he lives.

BEA
 And just how do you know that young man?

ANDY
 When he took me to the dirt track race, we passed by his driveway.

Phil taps his fingers on the counter top a bit too forcefully. Autumn gives him a quick frown.

BEA
 Oh. Alright then. Never again.

Autumn pulls up a map from her smart phone, shows it to Andy.

AUTUMN
 Here's the dirt track. Do you remember where you were when you passed by Logan's driveway?

Andy enlarges the image, follows the highway with his finger.

ANDY
 I think it was right about here. There was a barn nearby with a few cows. Ten or so. All black I think.

AUTUMN
 Wow! That's good Andy. We'll find it.

Autumn stands and offers her hand to Andy. They shake hands.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
 Thanks, Andy.
 (to Phil)
 Phil, do you have any of those detective badges in the car?

PHIL
 I've believe I've got one on me.

Phil pulls a small plastic badge from a pocket. He pins the badge on Andy's shirt.

PHIL (CONT'D)
 You earned it, son.

Andy's face lights up, joyful.

AUTUMN
 We'll be in contact about Emily.

PHIL
Thank you for your time and help.
We know you just got off work.

Phil strolls to the door, exits. Autumn lags behind.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - ANDY'S TRAILER - DAY

Phil pecks in a number on his cell phone as he strolls toward his car. He leans against the fender.

PHIL
Definitely a positive match with a
solid location. Don't know about
that but the residence is hidden
surrounded by dense woods.

A person drives past in a car with it's muffler RUMBLING.
Phil changes the phone to his other ear.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Two drones? Sounds good. Tonight if
possible. Sheriff's deputies need
to gear up, asap. Yeah. Don't wanna
lose this piece of trash. Okay.
We're heading your way. Bye.

Phil ends the phone call. Autumn exits the trailer with a
look of determination and strides toward the car.

INT. TRAILER PARK - PHIL'S CAR - DAY

The engine is HUMMING but the car's stationary. Autumn sits
beside Phil who occupies the driver's seat

AUTUMN
Not just opportunity but
convenience and familiarity.

PHIL
Emily's a prime target.

Autumn pounds her hand on the dash.

AUTUMN
No doubt. Another unsuspecting
victim.

PHIL
The net is being set as we speak.
I'll fill you in.

Phil puts the car in gear, pulls out.

AUTUMN
 Finally. We're closing in.

INT./EXT. CANTRELL'S SPLIT-LEVEL - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

A motor home with a trailer is parked in the driveway. On the trailer is an antique motorcycle. Cantrell exits the garage door, comes into view. He carries Tina on his shoulder.

Tina barely stirs. Her ponytail is braided with interloping chain links. Tina's wrists are shackled with nylon flex-cuffs. The side door of the motor home opens.

Cantrell drops Tina inside the motor home.

CANTRELL
 Three babes in toyland.

KNOX (O.S.)
 Where's the prize... the fifteen year old?

CANTRELL
 Melissa's used to working with me. I'll need her a bit longer. Training. It takes a good while.

Knox exits the motor home.

KNOX
 You'll find another. At Melissa's age and with her sexual prowess, she'll bring in a host of wealthy clients. You've been paid well, with benefits, so get her butt out here!

Cantrell scurries alongside the motor home, exits inside the garage, out of view.

INT. DETECTIVE OFFICES - ZIG'S OFFICE - DAY

Phil sits across from Zig who leans back in a desk chair with his hands behind his head.

ZIG
 You're her partner. You'll be the one to tell her. In the meantime, I want cops and deputies camped out in the woods at Cantrell's house twenty-four, seven.

PHIL
 Ooh rah. Knowing Vazquez, he'll call in the marines.

INT. DETECTIVE OFFICES - DAY

Phil exits Zig's office. Autumn paces the floor in front of her desk. Phil scoots out Autumn's chair.

PHIL
Have a seat.

Autumn stops pacing, stands tall with her arms across her chest, stares Phil down with a scowl.

PHIL (CONT'D)
I believe you already know what I have to say.

Autumn nods repeatedly, remains standing.

AUTUMN
So I just march home and watch the seconds tick off the clock while he's still out there.
(a long beat)
Sky's all I've got. He doesn't know that we're on to him.

Autumn sweeps her hands through her hair. She pleads were her eyes.

PHIL
The closest you, and I, can get is monitoring his workplace.

AUTUMN
I can't believe this.

Autumn stomps out, bangs the door behind her. BAM.

INT. PHIL'S CAR - NEAR AUTO BODY AND REPAIR SHOP - DAY

The sun peaks it's orange globe through cotton clouds. The car is parked on a side street with a clear view of the shop.

No activity.

Phil taps his fingers on the dash. Autumn yawns, sits up, rubs the muscles on the back of her neck, stretches her shoulders.

Discarded coffee cups and wrappers clutter the back seat.

PHIL
Glad you're here. Really.

Autumn reaches out and gently pats Phil's shoulder in poster of regret.

AUTUMN
I'm no girl scout. I acted like an
ass with you. My bad. My apology.

Phil lifts the lid of the bakery box and grabs the last
eclair. He offers it to Autumn. She shakes her head.

PHIL
No problem. You're good to me, you
know that?

AUTUMN
I've given up on you losing weight.

Phil is about to bite into the éclair and his phone BUZZES.
He hands the éclair to Autumn, answers.

PHIL
Hansen. Copy that. His residence.
When? Uh-huh.

Phil hangs up, stomps his feet, does a jig in his seat. His
excitement is palpable.

PHIL (CONT'D)
We got him. His residence.

Phil starts the car.

AUTUMN
Sky?

PHIL
No other details.

Phil starts the car, squeals his tires as he drives away.

EXT. CANTRELL'S SPLIT-LEVEL HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

With blue lights flashing, five deputy sheriff's cruisers and
three police cars are parked. Several block the garage.
Others are scattered haphazardly on the grass and driveway.

COPS and DEPUTY SHERIFFS roll out crime scene tape and
meander about.

Phil pulls in, parks. He and Autumn scramble from cop cars to
sheriff's cruisers in search of Cantrell. They find him in
the back seat of a cruiser in cuffs.

Autumn spits on the back window toward Cantrell's face.

Vazquez approaches wearing camouflage police gear and his
face smeared with camouflage paint.

VAZQUEZ
We got the son of a bitch.

Phil gives Vazquez a hand slap.

PHIL
Ooh rah... 'bout damn time.

Vazquez gives Autumn a hug.

VAZQUEZ
Unfortunately, Sky and Emily
weren't with him. I'm so sorry.

Autumn slaps the side of her leg. She points toward
Cantrell's house with a scowl on her face.

AUTUMN
The clues are there.

VAZQUEZ
In abundance.

In the front seat, a DEPUTY with thick shoulders and a full
beard starts to open the door. He also wears camouflage gear.

INT. - CRUISER'S BACK SEAT - DAY

As the door opens, Cantrell bangs his head against the back
window and yells to get Autumn's attention.

CANTRELL
Still don't know who I am, do you
Autumn? Some detective you are.

The deputy sheriff climbs out and slams the door. BAM.

EXT. CANTRELL'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

With a defiant look on her face, Autumn focuses on the
movement of Cantrell's lips. She turns to face the deputy.

AUTUMN
What's his story?

DEPUTY
Spewing garbage, detective. I'd gag
him if I could. He definitely
didn't know we were coming.

AUTUMN
He's fortunate I wasn't the first
one the scene.

A C.S.I. van pulls in behind Phil's car.

A MAN and WOMAN pile out as the side door slides open. Both members of the C.S.I. team wear full length medical gowns covering their clothing.

The man lifts out a large cart with wheels from the back. The woman gathers a hefty tool box and an evidence tote and arranges them on the cart.

The man approaches Vazquez, Phil, and Autumn.

C.S.I. MAN
Hi Sergeant. What have you
collected so far?

The C.S.I. woman scampers toward Cantell's porch pushing the loaded cart.

VAZQUEZ
Hi Tom. Drugs, two revolvers, ammo,
a whip, and a taser. Some smaller
items as well. All bagged and
tagged in a box on the porch.

TOM
No dead bodies?

Vazquez shakes his head.

VAZQUEZ
Stains of bodily fluids including
what appears to be blood. Fancy
dresses and a variety of lingerie
hang in a closet downstairs.

TOM
Well done. We'll take it from here.

EXT. CANTRELL'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

An evidence tot and box of PPE lie on the porch.

Vazquez lifts a cigarette lighter from the tote and shows Phil and Autumn the pills inside, balled up in foil. Autumn shakes one of the pills into her hand.

AUTUMN
Ambien most likely.

VAZQUEZ
The tip of the iceberg.

Vazquez returns the lighter and pills to the tote. He lifts out a signet ring and hands it Phil.

The ring has a skull emblem in the center. Phil passes it on to Autumn.

AUTUMN
Definitely our seal.

Autumn tosses the ring back into the tote. She picks up an electronic bug and shows it to Phil. He smirks.

PHIL
Now where do you suppose we've seen these little buggers before?

Vazquez points out a holstered taser and a leather whip in the bottom of the tote.

AUTUMN
It's all about control, isn't it?

VAZQUEZ
Even his immediate request for an attorney.

Autumn, Phil, and Vazquez put on protective gloves, masks, and booties. Vazquez opens the door.

VAZQUEZ (CONT'D)
Brace yourself.

INT. CANTRELL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Autumn and Phil step slowly inside a cramped bedroom. Vazquez looks inside just beyond the door. Filthy linens, a bra, and undergarments are piled in one corner, a pot in the other.

Autumn kneels, lifts a corner of a thin mattress covered with stains. A roach scatters across the floor.

AUTUMN
What a sleaze. No surprises here.

Phil tugs a chain attached to the wall. The chain doesn't budge.

VAZQUEZ
The good news... the evidence of trafficking is abundant.

PHIL
The bad news... our department will need TBI's help to process it all.

With a look of disgust, Autumn slips from the room,

AUTUMN
I've seen enough.

EXT. CANTRELL'S HOUSE - GARAGE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Vazquez, Phil, and Autumn toss their protective gear into a red receptacle and gather on the driveway. Autumn's cheeks are red, her face moist with sweat. Hot flashes.

AUTUMN

This is one time I'm glad I'm not collecting evidence.

VAZQUEZ

Exactly the reason why we both didn't sign up for more CSI training.

Autumn looks forlorn. Phil gives her a bottle of water and a moist hanky. Autumn dabs her face then sips on the water.

AUTUMN

You're good to me, too, partner. Thanks for letting me tag along.

Phil nods.

PHIL

You good to ride? We're following the deputy and Vazquez downtown to central booking.

AUTUMN

I'll need a piece of your gum to keep the monster inside me at bay. Maybe two.

Phil hands her a pack of gum. She follows him to their car.

PHIL

You're growing on me Autumn. When you first started, I had my doubts.

AUTUMN

Headstrong... just like my uncle.

INT. POLICE STATION - JAIL - CENTRAL BOOKING - LOBBY - DAY

A tiled, sterile floor. Four well-worn metal chairs are centered between the lone table with a haggard lamp upon it. Civil rights posters with tiny lettering fill up the walls.

Vazquez glances at his watch. Phil and Autumn enter.

VAZQUEZ

His lawyer's already arrived.

Phil and Autumn both nod.

AUTUMN
So? Can we at least see him?

VAZQUEZ
Not going to happen.

Resolute, Autumn takes a deep breath. Phil tugs on her sleeve.

PHIL
Figures. Let's go.

INT. DETECTIVE OFFICES - ZIG'S OFFICE - DAY

Zig sits atop Autumn's desk. Autumn sits in a chair around him. She's chomping madly on gum. Phil stands with one leg propped on a chair. He taps a soft DRUMBEAT on the armrest.

ZIG
Four bedrooms. Eight victims if they share a room.

Phil stands, stretches his back.

PHIL
Is the warrant ready for the auto shop?

With a look of disgust, Zig shakes his head.

ZIG
Denied. Some ridiculous legal technicality. We think we've found another judge, but he's in court all day. It's fifty-fifty.

AUTUMN
Opens at eight. Bring in the owner and anyone else who works there.

ZIG
You two go along. Have Vazquez join you if he's available. Shake them up a bit, see what falls.

AUTUMN
Damn right. One step closer to Sky.

ZIG
In the mean time, contact Emily's parents. Update them.

PHIL
Will do.

She and Phil shuffle toward the door.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - ANDY'S TRAILER - DAY

As Autumn and Phil approach their car to leave, Andy opens the door, bounds over the steps, and races to Autumn's side.

Andy opens and extends his arms wide for a hug. Autumn bends down, wraps him up in her arms, and kisses him softly on his cheek. They both break out in tears.

AUTUMN
Don't give up. We'll find Emily
whatever it takes.

Andy nods and wipes his face with his sleeve. He holds out a pinky finger.

ANDY
Promise?

Autumn holds back more tears. She links her pinky with his.

AUTUMN
With all my heart.

Andy smiles, leaps away to return inside his trailer. Phil helps Autumn up. She hugs him firmly. He returns her hug.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
We left them with hope, didn't we?

They stroll to the car. Phil opens Autumn's door for her.

PHIL
That's what we're counting on along
with exceptional detective work.

Phil breaths deeply with a childlike expression on his face.

PHIL (CONT'D)
You know? Andy reminds me of me, as
a kid, to be perfectly honest. I
was a trailer brat.

Autumn nods.

AUTUMN
Oh? You haven't changed all that
much.

Phil nods, pulls out a pack of gum, slips a piece in his mouth.

PHIL
You're probably right.

INT./EXT. AUTO BODY AND REPAIR SHOP - NIGHT

No lights are on. No one's there except Autumn in an all black jumpsuit. She has on latex gloves, wears a backpack, and holds a mini-flashlight by her teeth.

Autumn places her hand over her heart.

AUTUMN (V.O.)
 "My promise now guides my way."

Autumn kneels, shimmies the lock with a pick, and turns the handle. The door opens. She enters with the focused beam guiding her path.

INT. AUTO BODY AND REPAIR SHOP - OFFICE - NIGHT

Autumn opens several drawers in a filing cabinet and shuffles through papers. She pulls out several manilla folders, scans them visually. Personnel files. Names. Addresses. Photos.

She quickly stuffs the folders into her back pack, turns, and scampers back through the shop.

EXT. AUTO BODY AND REPAIR SHOP - NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Three fire trucks and a rescue vehicle are on scene. Streams of water pour from hoses held by FIREFIGHTERS at the shop.

Other FIREFIGHTERS douse water on tires and wrecked autos which are ablaze. Black smoke spills into the air high above.

POLICE OFFICERS surround the area with crime scene tape. OTHER OFFICERS route traffic away from the area.

At a distance, CAMERA CREWS take videos of the action and interview BYSTANDERS in the CROWD. Autumn and Phil are among the crowd.

AUTUMN
 Torched. Wasn't expecting this.

PHIL
 I'm wondering what else they needed covered up so badly?

AUTUMN
 Money laundering. Drug trafficking. Evidence. You name it.

PHIL
 Back to work. Track down this Knox character or whoever the owner is.

They weave through the crowd and return to their car.

EXT./INT. PHIL'S CAR - DAY

Phil and Autumn climb into the front seat, buckle up.

Autumn flips through a pocket folder and locates a telephone number. She pulls out her phone, taps in the number.

PHIL
Who you calling?

AUTUMN
Chip Knox.

Phil looks perplexed.

PHIL
How'd you get his number?

Autumn holds out her hand like a stop sign and speaks into the phone.

AUTUMN
This is detective Jeffries. We need to speak to you. Call back as soon as you can. It's urgent.

Autumn hangs up with a sly look in her eyes.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
A good detective never discloses her sources.

Phil scratches his head and chews his gum a little faster.

PHIL
You're sharp, Autumn. Let's head downtown. The show's about to start.

Phil starts the car, pulls out along the rocky road.

EXT. CITY - TOWERING OFFICE BUILDING - ROOF - DAY

A door opens onto the flat asphalt roof, and Knox climbs out. He carries a toolbox and wears a utility worker's short-sleeve coverall and a hardhat.

The sound of A/C units HUMMING stifle the SLAM of the door and any racket he inadvertently makes.

Knox unlatches the toolbox and removes various pieces of a sniper rifle. He assembles the rifle quickly, loads multiple cartridges, and adjust the sites of the scope.

He moves to the edge of the roof facing the courthouse square and kneels in a firing position with the rifle in his hands.

EXT. CITY - COURTHOUSE SQUARE - DAY

Standing on the top steps of the courthouse, Autumn and Phil watch the scene unfold as two police cruises drive up, lights flashing, and block one of the four traffic lanes.

AUTUMN

A media cirque du soleil.

PHIL

Imagine the charade at the trial.

Vazquez climbs out of the one cruiser. Zig steps out of the other.

AUTUMN

Can we skip the trial and go straight to lethal injection? No. Firing squad.

Vazquez pulls Cantrell from the back seat. Cantrell wears an orange jump suit, his wrists in cuffs. Zig joins the pair.

PHIL

I'm with you partner.

Vazquez makes room for Zig to escort Cantrell through the CROWD of PEOPLE. In a dark suit, Scott emerges from the crowd, and walks beside his client.

AUTUMN

Honestly? I'd wave a death penalty only if he tells me where my daughter is. Emily, too. And his accomplice.

Phil offers gum to Autumn.

PHIL

Gum?

Autumn accepts. A feeding frenzy of REPORTERS scramble alongside with microphones and cameras, hoping for a story.

AUTUMN

Shall we?

Autumn and Phil join Vazquez and Zig as they escort Cantrell and Scott to an expansive middle platform. Cantrell struggles forward to gain Autumn's attention.

CANTRELL

Mom, we finally meet face to face. Did you enjoy your cards?

He swipes his finger above his top lip.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
 The scar... your fault, but it adds
 character, don't you think?

Zig yanks the links on Cantrell's cuffs, reigns him in.
 Autumn is aghast.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
 Sky, what a sweetheart. She's
 flyin' the big blue by now on her
 way to Taiwan, or Laos, or some
 tiny hamlet in the Philippines.

Cantrell cackles like a witch at Halloween and pretends to be
 riding a broom.

CANTRELL (CONT'D)
 If you must know, three more...

POP! POP! POP! Three successive rifle sounds ECHO on the wind
 in the plaza. POP! Another shot.

SLOW MOTION SEQUENCE

A quarter size hole of red spills from between Cantrell's
 eyes. The bullet shatters the back of his skull.

Cantrell's dead. His brain tissue splatters across Autumn's
 face.

Splintered metal fragments from the bullet graze Autumn's
 temple and puncture her left ear.

Phil takes a bullet to his right chest, collapses, gasps for
 air. Another bullet shatters Scott's hand at his wrist. The
 last shot just misses Vazquez to pierce a concrete step.

Fear! EVERYONE momentarily ducks for cover.

Shock! Multiple SCREAMS.

Panic! PEOPLE are on their knees; they crawl, scoot, and race
 away, distancing themselves from the DEAD OR WOUNDED VICTIMS.

Pandemonium! A mad dash in all directions.

A FEW PEOPLE are nearly trampled.

END SLOW MOTION SEQUENCE

VAZQUEZ
 (into portable hand mic)
 Shots fired, shots fired. Active
 shooter. Sniper. Multiple victims.
 Courthouse plaza.

On their knees, Vazquez and Zig briefly scan the upper windows and roofs of high-rise buildings in an attempt to spot the shooter's location.

Vazquez turns, applies pressure on Phil's chest, tries to stop the bleeding. Phil color is pale. His lips turn blue.

VAZQUEZ (CONT'D)
Come on! Stay with me Phil.

Vazquez begins mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Two breaths. He follows with chest compressions.

Blood pumps from Scott's wound. He trembles, sweats, and the color drains from his face. Zig whips off his belt, creates a tourniquet above Scott's chattered wrist. He turns to Autumn.

Zig lifts Autumn's head, wraps her scarf around her wounds. Autumn's eyes roll back in their sockets. She's unconscious.

The steps are covered in blood. Ambulance and police sirens BLARE in the distance and rise in PITCH.

EXT. HOSPITAL - ER - ENTRANCE - DAY

Three ambulances are stacked behind one another at the pull through entrance. In a police cruiser, Vazquez and Zig drive up and park behind the ambulances.

Vazquez wears a jacket, partially covering in blood stains. They race and enter as the bay doors slide open.

INT. HOSPITAL - ER - ADMITTING DESK - DAY

Zig and Vazquez stand at the counter. A FEMALE RECEPTIONIST (40's) stops typing, looks up. Zig has his badge ready.

RECEPTIONIST
How can I help?

Zig flashes his badge. The receptionist straightens up a bit.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
Detective.

ZIG
What's the status of our two
detectives, Autumn Jeffies and Phil
Hansen.

RECEPTIONIST
One moment.

With little expression, the receptionist returns to her keyboard and enters data.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
 Phil is still in surgery. Autumn's
 in recovery. Most likely she'll
 soon be moved to a floor but I
 don't have the room number.

Zig hands the receptionist his card.

ZIG
 Thanks. Call as soon as you know.

The receptionist nods. Zig and Vazquez exit the ER.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - LANDON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Carrying a guitar case, Knox raps on the door. A dog BARKS
 from inside. The dead bolt lock CLICKS. The door opens a
 crack revealing a security chain.

Landon peeks out the door. He's wears a loose fitting,
 wrinkled jump suit.

LANDON
 What now? I'm no longer dealing.

Landon sticks out his ankle to reveal a lock down bracelet
 around it. He's in a pair of house shoes.

LANDON (CONT'D)
 Try sleeping with one of these
 contraptions.

Knox pulls out a wad of cash from his breast pocket and waves
 it in the air.

KNOX
 A sweet guitar and extra cash for
 what you've been through. Also, you
 helped locate some rare cycle parts
 I simply couldn't find.

LANDON
 I guess I could use the company.

The chain RATTLES. Knox follows Landon inside, the door
 closes.

INT. LANDON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A small room with cheap furniture and a desk. A mixed lab
 sniffs Knox and lies down on a tattered rug. Knox coughs.

KNOX
 Can you get me a drink of water?

Landon drags himself to the kitchen. The pooch follows. Ice CLANGS into a glass from an ice machine. Sounds of water POUR from a facet.

LANDON (O.S.)

You enjoying the ride? As old as it is, it seemed to shift well when I drove it.

Knox opens the guitar case, withdraws a .99 mm Colt 911 revolver with a silencer. He SNAPS on gloves.

Landon meanders from the kitchen, holds a glass of water.

Knox grabs him, jerks him in a chair, points his gun in Landon's face. The glass tumbles onto the floor.

POP!

Landon slumps over dead. The dog scampers down the hallway, out of view. Knox swipes his gloved hand across Landon's face and right hand.

Knox snaps on more gloves and presses Landon's grip and index finger into the revolver's handle and trigger.

Knox lays the gun on the floor by the chair. He removes his gloves and throws them inside the guitar case.

A third set of gloves comes on. He assembles the rifle and scope located inside the guitar case.

Knox sets the rifle and a partial box of ammunition inside a coat closet in the hallway.

He opens the curtain slightly, takes a quick peek outside.

The lab mix cowers into view, sniffs Knox. He scratches the dog's head between his ears.

KNOX

Poor fellow. Out you go.

He opens the back door, coaxes the dog outside, and casually strolls away.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Wearing scrubs, Vazquez sleeps in a recliner, snores.

With her head and left ear bandaged and wrapped in gauze and her eyes closed, Autumn lies with the head of her bed raised. Two IV bags pump medication into her lower arm.

Her left eye twitches, is swollen, and bloodshot. Her cheeks are covered in small scabs. Autumn eyelids move side to side.

AUTUMN

No stop. No. No. Please. Don't. I
can't. Help me. Help me.

Vazquez leaps to her bedside. He holds Autumn's shoulders and
attempts to comfort her.

VAZQUEZ

Autumn. Wake up. You're dreaming.

Autumn violently rips Vazquez's hands from her shoulders. She
pounds her fist in his direction. Her eyes remain closed.

AUTUMN

Get away. No. Don't do this.

Vazquez backs away and presses the call light button.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

(filtered)

Can I help you?

VAZQUEZ

She's doing it again.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

On my way.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Vazquez leans against the wall. He carries a clear plastic
bag filled with his blood-stained uniform.

A nurse, GLENDA COLEMAN (20's), in green colored scrubs with
a stethoscope over her shoulders, faces him.

GLENDA

I know you have to leave. Thanks
for staying as long as you did.

VAZQUEZ

She calmed down shortly after her
last medication dose.

GLENDA

The sedative helps... but your
familiar face and reassurance has
made a huge difference.

VAZQUEZ

How long?

GLENDA

She's making progress. She's no
longer pulling out her IV.

A BEEPER sounds down the hall and gets the nurse's attention.

GLEENDA (CONT'D)
Until next time.

The nurse scurries away. Vazquez dashes toward the exit sign.

INT. AUTUMN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Kate Abrams sits on the corner of Autumn's bed.

Autumn has steri-strips along her temple, hairline, and jaw. A gauze bandage covers her left ear. Her left eye remains bloodshot and swollen.

Autumn opens her eyes and shudders. Her golden complexion is pale. She sits up, leans her head against Kate's shoulders, and stares into space.

Suddenly Autumn covers her face in a pillow and bawls as if her heart is broken. It's a cry of fear and tension release.

KATE
That's it Autumn, come back to us.
Let it out.

Autumn's crying slackens. Kate grabs a clump of tissues, wipes Autumn's face, whispers into her ear.

KATE (CONT'D)
Girl... you're a warrior. You've
battled through a lot worse.

Autumn lifts her head, snuffles, and looks around the room.

AUTUMN
Vazquez was here, wasn't he?

KATE
He's a good man... someone you can
lean on.

AUTUMN
Thank God for that. You, too.

Kate opens her laptop and then closes it immediately.

KATE
Let's just talk, girl to girl, what
do you say?

AUTUMN
I'd like that.

EXT. GEORGIA MOUNTAINS - SECLUDED ESTATE - NIGHT

SUPER:

"Acworth, Georgia, Red Top
Mountain."

A clear moonless night. Amber street lamps provide limited sight line along the curved road surrounded in mature pines.

A motor home is parked in a circular drive overlooking Lake Allatoona in the background. A four bedroom house and a smaller guest house is nearby.

Melissa, Tina, Emily, and Sky exit the guest house. They wear tight, skimpy outfits with jewel tattoos showing through their bodices. A lightweight chain's braided into their hair.

Duct tape covers the mouth of each girl. Sky's last in line. Knox slips up behind Sky. He snaps a leather whip. CRACK! All four teens jump, startled.

KNOX

Chop. Chop.

The girls scamper in the side door of the motor home, out of view. Knox slams the door. BAM. He padlocks the handle. He circles around, climbs in the driver's side door.

INT. MOTOR HOME - NIGHT

Melissa, Sky, Tina, and Emily sit around a bench of a tiny, circular kitchen table. They have nylon flex-cuffs on their wrist linked to a central post with a strong climbing rope.

Knox sneers, leans back against a small fridge. He has a whip at his belt and a .99 mm colt 1911 handgun with a silencer in a shoulder holster.

KNOX

Ladies. Ladies. Party night. You
know the drill. Another get
together with wealthy friends.

Knox pulls a coin from his pocket, places it on his thumb.

KNOX (CONT'D)

I'll call. Tails.

He flips the coin, plops it down on the table. It's a tail.

KNOX (CONT'D)

It's your lucky night.

Knox peels back a small portion of the duct tape from Emily's mouth, enough for her to speak.

KNOX (CONT'D)
As long as you whisper, darlin' it stays off.

He leans over and gives Emily slobber for a kiss.

KNOX (CONT'D)
As they say in the military or TV cop shows, let's roll.

Knox exits through a door to enter the cab, out of view. Emily takes a full, deep breath and speaks in whispers.

EMILY
Nod and head turns. Any of you still feeling drugged?

Tina and Melissa nod, yes. Sky shakes her head. Emily faces Sky first, then the others.

EMILY (CONT'D)
I'm like you, Sky. Okay. Bad? Nod vigorously. Not so bad, mildly.

Tina and Melissa shake their head just a bit.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Okay. Fingers. One... worst option. Ten, best. Got it?

The three girls nod. They hold out their hands and fingers.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Topics. Ways to escape. Agree.

All nod.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Good. Good. Fight or flight, sneak maybe? Fight first.

Melissa holds out four fingers. Tina, six. Sky, nine.

EMILY (CONT'D)
I'm at eight. This is good. We're pretty much agreed. So how? Fight topics. First one. Noise. Use voices, screams, pleads, yells, and distractions. Second. Bodily attack. Punch, kick, bite, gouge with fingernails, etc. Third. Weapons. Steal knife, gun, taser, broken glass, a sharpened toothbrush handle, a razor blade, a poker. That kind of thing. Got it?

Everyone nods. Emily raises her eyes, animated.

EMILY (CONT'D)

The main thing we're fighting back,
together. Right? If we can, we do
all three things.

Sky and Tina nod. Melissa shakes her head. A tear rolls from
her eyes. Emily focuses on Melissa.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Melissa. Listen. You're the
youngest. I get it. We're all
scared. But... we've got to do
something. Think of what we've
suffered already. I'd rather die
than live this way. We fight. Now!

All three girls nod a vigorous yes.

INT. HOSPITAL - AUTUMN'S ROOM - DAY

The area around Autumn's left eye has turned multiple colors,
blue, purple, and yellow. Kate sits in a chair facing her.

AUTUMN

I can't come to terms with what
Logan told me.

Kate types on her laptop which sets on a bedside table.

KATE

You can't or you don't want to?

AUTUMN

I suspected as much after my trip
to Athens with Vazquez.

Kate stops typing and glances up at Autumn.

KATE

Raped at fifteen and pregnant, you
did your very best for your baby.

AUTUMN

Could I have done better? If only I
had raised him despite the advice
from others. And all the time I
spent searching for him. Sky
resented it. She resented me.

KATE

Your uncle was in that mix. You're
not responsible for what Cantrell
became or even what your daughter
felt at the time. You're playing
the blame game. It's a lose, lose.

Autumn points a finger at her head then covers her chest with her hand.

AUTUMN

It's head knowledge but it's not true where it counts... my heart. I do know this... I've seen Cantrell's piercing blue-green eyes in someone else.

Suddenly Autumn jerks and her upper torso shakes. She gasp. Kate kneels down beside Autumn to grasp her hands.

KATE

Breathe Autumn. You're safe.

Autumn takes a deep breath. Tension in her shoulders gradually releases. She stops trembling, opens her eyes, snuffles. The corners of her eyes are moist.

AUTUMN

At a picnic. One of my uncle's friends. He helped me reel in my first fish... even put the worm on my hook.

She pounds the mattress.

KATE

The person who raped you?

AUTUMN

Why the hell did it take this long to remember?

KATE

Trauma. Repressed memories are like a tangled web. It takes a spider bite to bring them to the surface.

Autumn nods. Her countenance changes to anger. She scowls and grits her teeth.

AUTUMN

That bastard. I may know where he lives from records I gathered from his shop. Cantrell's employer.

KATE

Careful Autumn. I know what you're thinking. You can't confront him alone.

AUTUMN

Face your fears. Isn't that what you have tried to instill in me?

KNOCK. KNOCK. Glenda, in her nursing uniform, rolls a wheelchair into the room.

GLEENDA

Hello. Sorry to interrupt. I need to change the dressing on Autumn's ear then take her to audiology for her follow-up hearing exam.

Kate is inflamed. She staunchly pleads her case.

KATE

We've come to break through in therapy. Can't it wait? Imagine being in Autumn's shoes.

GLEENDA

In sorry, Dr. Abrams. Perhaps you can come back later?

With a despairing appeal, she pleads her case.

KATE

I can't. Not today. My office schedule's full. Come on. Please.

The nurse refuses with a stern look and shake of her head.

KATE (CONT'D)

Autumn. I'll try to make time for a call from my office later today. We'll work through this together.

Kate stands, strolls toward the door, stops, and turns back.

KATE (CONT'D)

By the way... almost forgot. Phil's out of ICU. He's been moved to cardiac stepdown.

INT. HOSPITAL - PHIL'S ROOM - DAY

Phil has a chest tube coming from his side, two IV pumps with fluids dripping into his arm, and a monitor registering his heart rate, blood pressure, and oxygen saturation levels.

Autumn holds out a new pack of juicy fruit gum. She sits in a wheelchair at his bedside.

AUTUMN

I know... not your favorite. I can't chew it. Both my jaws are still sore.

Phil's eyes and mouth open wide. He opens the pack and pops a piece of gum in his mouth. He wipes a tear from his face.

PHIL

It's joy... all joy. It's so good to see you partner even with your shiner that looks like you took a left jab from Mike Tyson.

(laughs)

These machines are driving me nuts.

Autumn leans down, hugs Phil's face, turns toward one of the machines monitoring his vital signs. She snickers.

AUTUMN

They do seem a bit out of rhythm. Lean forward just a bit.

Phil complies. Autumn massages his back and shoulders.

PHIL

Ah. I've been needing this.

Autumn kneads the muscles along Phil's neck. Phil's shoulders relax. After a deep breath, his entire countenance improves.

AUTUMN

We're even then?

PHIL

Just don't stop. An éclair at discharge and it's all square.

EXT. AUTUMN'S RESIDENCE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

The hatch is open on a Buick Enclave which is mostly full of camping gear. Autumn exits her garage. She wears hiking boots and shorts. The bruising around her eye is barely visible.

Autumn carries a rod and reel and a tackle box. She slips the tackle box between a sleeping bag and a tent and slides the rod between the seats.

Vazquez drives a police cruiser into her driveway, hops out, and peeks inside the Enclave.

VAZQUEZ

Camping?

AUTUMN

You've got plenty of sick days accumulated. Climb in.

VAZQUEZ

Does your tent have a/c?

Autumn smiles and softly giggles.

VAZQUEZ (CONT'D)
Nice to hear you laugh again.

Vazquez gives her a warm hug.

AUTUMN
So what brings you my way?

VAZQUEZ
Zig has cleared you via Dr. Abrams.
Just not Sky's case.

AUTUMN
What I expected. Any leads on the
sniper?

Vazquez nods.

VAZQUEZ
That too. Landon. An anonymous tip.
The murder weapon... a scoped rifle
and ammo were found in his
apartment. Shot himself in the
face. Suicide.

AUTUMN
Funny. A wimp maybe... but didn't
take him for a sharp shooter.

A MAIL CARRIER stops to deliver a card in Autumn's mail box
then lumbers his vehicle to the next mailbox down the street,
out of view.

VAZQUEZ
The DNA report came in from Dr.
Kirkpatrick.

AUTUMN
Let me guess. Logan's a match.

VAZQUEZ
Ninety-four percent. C.S.I. worked
up the comparison.

Autumn strides to her mailbox. Inside the box there's an
oversized pink envelope attached to a small package. She
checks the postmark and location.

She meanders back and hands Vazquez the envelope.

AUTUMN
It's local. You open it.

Vazquez glances at the skull imprint on the seal. He rips
open the pink envelope, pulls out another hand made card.

The front of the card reads: Happy birthday.

On the inside of the card, it reads: The candles on your cake caught fire, and so will you. Signed, C. J. Logan.

VAZQUEZ

(reads the slip of paper)
The dragon stood in front of a woman about to give birth, so that he may devour the child the moment he is born. Revelation 12. 4.

Autumn shrugs, nonchalant and rips open the package. She removes a diamond-paw, bolo bracelet. She's appalled.

AUTUMN

A gift I gave Sky on her sixteenth birthday.

VAZQUEZ

He's still trying to haunt you even from the grave.

Autumn sighs followed by a disgusting appearance on her face.

AUTUMN

The reality is... I may never see my daughter again.

VAZQUEZ

We can't turn back the clock.

AUTUMN

That, I finally realize.

Autumn loops the bracelet over her rear-view mirror. She closes her eyes and lifts her head toward the heavens.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

I love you Sky and pray for your safe return.

VAZQUEZ

There's hope. We're still searching for her and other missing girls.

AUTUMN

Her memory and hope is all I have left to cling to.

Autumn reaches across the seat and lifts out a photo album. She flips through the album and shows Vazquez a photo. It's a photo of Autumn and Sky stoking a campfire beside a tent.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

Over a year ago after graduation. Seems like ages. We were just starting to bond together.

Autumn returns the album to her front seat.

VAZQUEZ
Where are you camping?

AUTUMN
Red top mountain state park.

Vazquez strolls to his police cruiser and chuckles.

VAZQUEZ
Watch out for bears.

AUTUMN
Bears are not what I'm after.

VAZQUEZ
Enjoy yourself. Get some much
needed rest.

Vazquez climbs in his cruiser and drives away, out of view.

EXT. RED TOP MOUNTAIN - CAMPSITE - DAY

Kindling wood is loosely stacked in front of a tent. Autumn's Enclave is parked in a space nearby. A visitor's center is in the background.

Autumn struggles to fasten the rope of a hammock near her tent between two large shade trees. The knot keeps slipping.

A bearded, gray haired MAN (60's) hiking in shorts and wearing a backpack casually strolls by on a leaf strewn path. He's headed for a small, cabin-like restroom facility.

MAN
Need some help with that?

Autumn looks up with an appreciative smile and chuckles.

AUTUMN
It's the slip knot.

MAN
Always a bit tricky.

The man adjust the slack in the rope and shows Autumn how to tighten the knot for the hammock's support and easy release.

AUTUMN
I've got it. Thanks a bunch.

MAN
My pleasure.

The man turns to leave.

AUTUMN
Sir, could you help me with
something else?

MAN
I'll do what I can.

AUTUMN
Give me a second.

Autumn retrieves a brochure from her backpack and unfolds the map inside. She points to a section on the map.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
Do you know if there's a house on
top of this ridge? About here?

The man looks carefully at the spot she pointed out. He nods.

MAN
Yes. It's gaited. A steep climb.
The trail passes nearby and is
clearly marked if you plan on
tackling the challenge.

AUTUMN
Maybe... not sure yet.

MAN
Have a great day. It's always quiet
and peaceful here.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PEAK - DEEP WOODS - DAY

Autumn's car is parked in an overlook area among the mature mountain forest. She views the sunshine as it glistens off the water of Allatoona Lake.

The loud RUMBLE of a motorcycle invades the quiet. Autumn turns as an antique cycle races by. She closely follows it as it scoots in and out of view along a steep paved road.

A home is nestled in a heavily wooded haven. Autumn takes a long deep sigh as she places her hand over her heart.

AUTUMN (V.O.)
"Whad'ya know. It's now or go
home."

Autumn climbs in her car and drives up the mountainside road.

EXT. PRIVATE ROAD - WOODS - DAY

Autumn's car is parked in a cul-de-sac. She's presses an intercom button at a locked gate.

A 'NO TRESPASSING' sign in bold letters hangs from the ten foot fence surrounding the area.

Beyond the gate is an entrance road with a sign indicating 'Private Drive.' The roof of a house is all that's visible.

AUTUMN
 (into speaker)
 Hello. Can you hear me? Anyone
 home? Hello.

She pushes the button several more times. It doesn't appear to be working. She raises her volume into the speaker.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
 Mr. Knox. I know you're there. The
 motorcycle. Open the gate. It's
 time you face up to what you did.

The gate doesn't budge. Autumn rattles the gate then paces back and forth. She notices a drainage ditch with an open patch of ground beneath the fence carved out by rainfall.

Autumn dashes to the ditch, lays flat, and scoots under it.

INT. ESTATE - GUEST HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Four bunk beds with a dresser between them and a closet. Two carry-on bags set by the open door. They're stuffed.

Melissa crams a pair of jeans and tennis shoes inside her canvas bag. She unzips a side panel, drops in a make-up kit.

Tina enters and rolls in a suitcase. She empties the closet of hangers, sexy lingerie, sparkling shoes, and skimpy bras.

TINA
 You 'bout ready?
 (whispers)
 Tonight's the night. Our last
 chance. Keep it together.

Melissa raises her chin toward the ceiling, salutes.

MELISSA
 It's either goodbye or goodbye
 America.

EXT. ESTATE - MAIN RESIDENCE - NIGHT

A motor-home and a heavy duty truck are parked in a brick driveway at a well landscaped two story home with a large front porch and a three car garage.

All the lights are out on both levels.

Autumn approaches cautiously due to the darkness of the area.

AUTUMN (V.O.)
 "What have we here?"

Autumn steps up to the front door and rings the doorbell repeatedly. No sound. It doesn't appear to be working.

She knocks repeatedly. Waits. No one answers. She scrambles down the steps and strolls toward the back of the residence.

EXT. GUEST HOUSE - BACK ENTRANCE AREA - NIGHT

The lights are on behind closed curtains. Autumn sneaks up and crouches under a window. A sliver of light escapes from a partially opened curtain.

She lifts her head, quickly glances inside. Autumn spies two teen girls with carry-on bags strapped over their shoulders.

She draws her revolver from the small of her back, clicks off the safety, aims upward. She counts softly.

AUTUMN
 One... two...

Suddenly the back door SLAMS open. Sky darts out and vomits into shrubs. Sky turns to go back inside aghast as she notices her mom.

SKY
 What in the...

Autumn steps out in front of her, motions for Sky to kneel and stay quiet. She keeps her revolver pointed skyward. They embrace and wipe one another's tears. They softly whisper.

SKY (CONT'D)
 Mom, it's not safe for you to be here.

AUTUMN
 How many more girls?

SKY
 Three. Knox is a snake. If he catches us, we're ready to fight back or die trying.

INT. GUEST HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

Two recliners face a flatscreen TV. Books and stereo equipment are on a bookshelf. A fireplace is on one wall. Fire-logs and a set of fireplace tools set on the hearth.

Knox enters with a whip in his hand and a taser at his belt. Airplane tickets for an oversea's flight hang from his top pocket.

Holding carry-on bags, Tina, Melissa, and Emily face the back door, all lined up in a row. A suitcase leans against a wall.

KNOX
Where the hell's Sky?

Knox snaps his whip. CRACK! Airline tickets fall to the floor. All three girls cringe. Tina points toward the back door.

TINA
She's sick again.

KNOX
Tina. Pick it up!

Tina complies and gives the tickets to Knox. He grabs his taser, releases the safety, glances toward Melissa.

KNOX (CONT'D)
A lesson not forgotten, right
Melissa?

EXT. GUEST HOUSE - BACK ENTRANCE AREA - NIGHT

Knox races through the door, his taser ready. Autumn faces away from the door but sees the horror on Sky's face.

As Autumn turns with her gun drawn, Knox fires his taser.

KNOX
Surprise.

Jolts of electricity ark into Autumn's body. She shakes uncontrollably, is incapacitated, and tumbles to the ground.

Her gun is discharged into the air. POP! It falls free.

Knox grabs her weapon and heaves it over a cliff far into the woods then yanks Sky up by her ponytail.

KNOX (CONT'D)
You planning to escape?

Like a rag-doll, he tosses Sky inside the den, out of view, then returns, grabs Autumn by her feet, and drags her inside.

INT. GUEST HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

Autumn rolls around on the floor, bumps the wall. Slobber forms on her lips and spills from her mouth. She yells.

AUTUMN

No! No! Stop! Not that! No! Get off, you pig! Please. I can't, I can't! Oh God! No! Oh God! Help me!

Tina, Melissa, Sky, and Emily are on their knees, facing the wall. With her hands on her hips, Sky stands up, faces Knox.

SKY

You want me puking on the carpet? I didn't have a clue she was there.

Knox raises a hand, starts to slap Sky but stops. Sky turns her cheek to one side in defiance.

KNOX

What the hell's wrong with her?

SKY

How the hell should I know.

Knox kicks Autumn in the side. She flinches but continues her spew. Knox yanks Emily and Tina to their feet by their ponytails. They whimper.

KNOX

Drag her in the bedroom. Sky help them. Wrap her wrists and legs in flex cuffs then gag her.

Knox tosses two sets of cuffs and a bandana to Sky. The three girls make slow progress awkwardly dragging Autumn away.

Knox's cell phone BUZZES.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Melissa help them out, damn it. I'll be right back.

Melissa grabs Autumn's leg in assistance. Knox puts the phone to his ear, exits through the back door, out of view.

INT. GUEST HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The four teens carry Autumn into the bedroom from the hallway and drop her onto a lower bunk bed. Melissa, Emily, and Tina scamper to the den, out of view.

Sky lifts Autumn's feet and starts to wrap Autumn's ankles in flex cuffs. Autumn raises her head, opens her eyes, and winks. Sky gasp in surprise.

AUTUMN

(whispers)

Wrap them around but don't fasten them.

Autumn raises her feet. Sky wraps the cuffs around her ankles but leaves them loose. Sky does the same to Autumn's wrists.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
Find me a weapon of some sort.
Anything. Hurry.

Sky rummages through a drawer, pulls out a pair of trimming scissors. Autumn tucks it beneath her thigh.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
That'll have to do.

Sky kisses Autumn on her cheek then gags her mom. Autumn continues her charade. She thrashes about and mumbles.

Knox practically runs over Sky as they meet in the doorway. Sky blushes, startled.

KNOX
Get everyone in line. This won't
take long. I'll kill you with my
bare hands if you go outside.

Sky moves into the hallway. With glee in his eyes, Knox sits on the mattress and starts removing his shoes and socks.

INT. GUEST HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

The teens gather in a group near the back door. They whisper.

SKY
My mom's got a plan. We stay and
fight. It's what we agreed on.

MELISSA
No. We run... split up. He can't
catch us all.

TINA
I don't want to be the one he
catches, do you?

EMILY
This may be our only chance. We're
dead anyway... servicing buyers in
Taiwan.

Emily tiptoes toward the bedroom, peeks in, returns.

EMILY (CONT'D)
That's it. Knox has his shirt off
and is unbuckling his pants. Let's
get out of here.

SKY

Follow me. There's a boat dock down on the shore. It's steep but not far.

The four teens race out the door.

INT. GUEST HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Knox leans forward to unbuckle his pants.

Autumn grabs the bed frame, swings, and propels her feet into his face.

CRUNCH. Blood squirts from Knox's broken nose. He falls back, hits his head on the metal bed frame.

Knox is dazed, his pants fall to his ankles. Autumn jerks the bandana from her mouth.

AUTUMN

This is payback.

She rips a drawer from a dresser, smashes it over his head.

Autumn kicks at his groin, but Knox manages to raise one knee to barely block her boot.

She drives the point of the scissors deep into his left thigh and gives it a twist. Blood oozes from Knox's wound.

KNOX

Aaah!

Autumn attempts another strike with her improvised weapon. Knox shoves her wrist several times against the bed's side rail. The bloodied scissors fly from her grip.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Where you think your going?

His upper punch connects with Autumn's jaw. Her head snaps back. Her lip is bloodied with an immediate bruise to her jaw.

Knox lunges. Autumn blocks it, ducks under his arm, and jams an elbow into his ribs. He gasps for air and slips onto his knees but quickly recovers and pulls up his pants.

Blood oozes from his thigh. His femoral artery has been nicked. His pant's leg is red. Autumn leaps from the room.

Knox wraps his shirt around his thigh to staunch the flow of blood. He grabs the scissors and shuffles out in chase.

INT. GUEST HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

Autumn races into the den from the hallway. Peripherally, she notices Knox scramble close behind her.

Autumn grabs the handle of a carry on bag and heaves the bag toward Knox. He moves aside, simply steps over it. Autumn tracks toward the back door.

KNOX

Not so fast, bitch.

Knox cuts off the angle, blocks her escape. He lunges at her. Autumn ducks, circles away from him like a caged animal.

She yanks speakers off a bookshelf, pushes over a recliner, and sends a lamp CRASHING to slow Knox's charge.

Knox ducks the lamp and kicks the speakers aside. He weaves around the recliner while holding the scissors like a knife.

KNOX (CONT'D)

The scissors. Didn't see that coming. I'll carve your eyes out.

Autumn picks up a hickory log from the mantle and throws it awkwardly at Knox. It misses the mark.

KNOX (CONT'D)

You won't stop me.

She heaves another log at his thigh. It hits the mark. Knox winces. His wound gushes open. Knox tightens his shirt around his leg. His pant leg is saturated in blood.

AUTUMN

Oh yeah?

Knox reaches for a pillow on the floor and presses it to his leg to staunch his blood loss. Autumn quickly lifts a fireplace poker from the hearth and hides it behind her leg.

Knox inches forward with scissors drawn like an ice pick. His face is red and enraged.

KNOX

After I kill you, I'll cut open your daughter like a watermelon.

Autumn waits. He edges closer. He's within range.

AUTUMN

Aaaaaah!

She spins, holds the poker with both hands, and wields it like she's swinging a baseball bat for the fences.

BAM! The poker's iron hook pierces Knox through the side of his neck. Autumn yanks the poker and rips it out.

All color drains from Knox's face as blood erupts from a lacerated artery. His eyes bulge out, he reaches toward his neck, takes one final breath, and crumbles dead on the floor.

Autumn collapses to her knees, emotionally drained. Her clothes are splattered in blood, her lip bruised and swollen, and she has a laceration on the side of her face.

She scoots toward Knox and searches his pockets. Autumn locates a cell phone and punches in a number.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
 Nine, one, one. What is the nature
 of your emergency.

EXT. LAKE ALLATOONA - DOCK - NIGHT

A rusty houseboat in need of repair is fastened to a dock by a frayed rope. Muddy water and debris float across the deck. It's barely afloat.

In a panic, Melissa and Tina leap aboard and scramble to find cover. The houseboat tilts to one side.

Tina loses her balance and falls into the water. Sky watches Emily help Tina to shore. Both girls are soaking wet.

SKY
 Melissa, what the hell are you
 doing?

Hiding behind a deck chair, Melissa peeks her head out.

MELISSA
 What does it look like?

SKY
 It's sinking. Keep moving.

Sky suddenly stops and perks up her ear.

SKY (CONT'D)
 Hear that?

The SHRILL pitch of wailing sirens reverberate in the distance. The sounds ECHO through the mountains.

SKY (CONT'D)
 An ambulance. Yes! You did it mom.

Sky pumps her fist. The girls hug one another and leap for joy.

EXT. ESTATE - MAIN RESIDENCE - FRONT ENTRANCE AREA - NIGHT

An ambulance and two police cars are parked in the driveway. Red and blue lights from all three vehicles reflect off the side of the house and trees.

A stocky, MALE POLICE OFFICER restrains Autumn as she is attended to by a FEMALE EMT. Autumn lies on a stretcher.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Ma'am, I assure you, officers are combing the area for the missing girls. You're not going anywhere.

AUTUMN

I'm a detective. Why haven't you contacted my department?

POLICE OFFICER 1

We're kind of busy right now.

The emt scoots her body between the officer and Autumn.

EMT

Officer, let me do my job.

The officer scoots aside. The emt cleans the laceration across Autumn's forehead and holds a cold pack to her chin.

The HIGH PITCH SHRILL sounds of more sirens get LOUDER. Three police cruisers pull into the driveway.

More flashing lights. FIVE COPS pile out. The OFFICERS dash toward the ambulance.

POLICE OFFICER 2

What's the status?

POLICE OFFICER 1

One dead inside. Older male. Two officers are searching the area for others. Teens. Supposedly victims.

Autumn hops up from the stretcher, pushes the emt out of her way, pounces toward the officers, enraged. She's in his face.

AUTUMN

Hell. I've told you they're sex slaves. Hopefully escaped... who knows? Find them. The dead scumbag... he's their trafficker.

Police officer 1 grabs Autumn's wrist, rotates her, and wrestles her to the turf. The second officer draws his weapon. Autumn's cuffed. She's yelling in disbelief.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
 You've got to be kidding me?
 Rookies. I'm a detective. Yes, I
 killed that bastard inside in his
 attempt to rape and murder me.

Both officers lift Autumn onto the stretcher.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
 What... are... you... doing?

POLICE OFFICER 1
 Strap her down.

The laceration on Autumn's face is open again and drips blood mixed with sweat and mud down her cheek.

The emt hesitates before she applies restraints. She removes a bandage and tape from her med kit instead.

AUTUMN
 Are you both crazy? Find my
 daughter and the other girls.

POLICE OFFICER 2
 You have the right to remain...

Bursting from the woods, Sky races toward Autumn. She's escorted by an OFFICER with Tina, Emily, and Melissa not far behind.

SKY
 Mooooom! What the...

Sky shoves one officer aside, leaps onto the stretcher with outstretched arms, and kisses her mom again and again. Tears of joy flood from both their eyes. She glares at the officer.

SKY (CONT'D)
 Get her cuffs off. Now!

Police officer 1 removes Autumn's cuffs and steps aside. The three other teen girls approach Sky and Autumn.

AUTUMN
 Which one of you is Emily? And
 who's Melissa?

Emily steps forward then Melissa. Autumn reaches out and holds their hands. Autumn makes eye contact with Tina.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
 And what's your name, precious?

TINA
 Tina.

The flood gate opens. Tears gush from their eyes in sobs.

AUTUMN

Let it out. The nightmare's over.
It's time we all begin to heal.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - CUL DE SAC - DAY

A creative children's playground, picnic tables, and a dog trail is nestled among a well landscaped park tucked beside a community development with numerous quaint homes.

TWO CHILDREN delight in riding bikes in a circle on the pavement around the cul de sac in front of several houses.

Autumn pulls her Buick Enclave into a driveway, parks, gets out, waves at the children, and strolls to the front porch.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - COMMON AREA - DAY

Soft murals and comfortable colors fill the space. The room includes a small kitchen and a circular dining table with chairs.

Recessed ceiling lights create an ambient glow in the space.

Autumn sits in a chair across from Emily and Melissa on one couch with Tina and Sky on another.

Emily and Sky both hug a stuffed animal, while Tina and Melissa have one beside them.

SKY

It's the nightmares that haunts me.
All of us.

Emily, Sky, and Melissa nod their agreement.

TINA

For real. We're like zombies. Among
other things.

Tina stands with her arms held out in front of her, drags her feet a few steps, then plops back onto the couch.

TINA (CONT'D)

We're up half the night talking,
crying, screaming. You name it.

AUTUMN

The good thing... you're safe here,
your physical needs are met, and
you have all the time you need to
recover.

MELISSA

For real. Our counselors remind us of that at every session. Maybe soon it'll stick.

Emily creates a parenthesis with two fingers on both hands as she speaks.

EMILY

They get us. Really. Nothing surprises them.

Sky lifts up her stuffed panda bear. She rolls her shoulders.

SKY

Not to mention this.

The other three teens follow suit holding up their stuffed animals.

EMILY

Yeah. I've got two more in my bedroom.

(breaks out in a song)

We've only just begun.

MELISSA

It's gonna be a while, for sure.

Autumn nods, looks at each girl one by one, and smiles.

AUTUMN

It's a journey. You've all been traumatized. It's not easy, but you can do it. Your emotional and psychological well-being are at stake.

Sky's cell phone buzzes. She opens her purse, glances at the number, and answers it.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

Hello. That's great. You bet. I'll be there shortly. Bye.

Autumn returns her cell phone to her purse. She rummages through her purse and holds up a pack of gum.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

Phil's ready and can't wait to be picked up from the hospital. Knowing him, he's driving the nurses crazy with his quirks.

SKY

Say hello for us. We're all eager to meet him.

AUTUMN
Come on. Group hug.

All four girls set their stuffed animals aside and stand in a circle with arms linked with each other in a hug.

EXT. HOSPITAL - ENTRANCE AND EXIT AREA - DAY

Autumn rolls Phil in a wheelchair toward her Buick Enclave parked in the drive through. The passenger door is open.

AUTUMN
If I had a guess, you've lost a little weight?

Phil nods, points toward the hospital, and chuckles.

PHIL
Diet food and there are no seconds.

INT. BAKERY SHOP - DAY

A pastry box and a cup of steaming hot coffee set on a table. Autumn sips on iced-tea. She sits across from Phil.

PHIL
Two eclairs... my limit.

Phil licks pastry cream from his lips and sips his coffee.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Seriously? No back up. What the hell were you thinking?

AUTUMN
If Sky hadn't trusted me, no telling where I'd be.

Phil raises one eyelid and speaks soberly.

PHIL
Six feet under most likely.

Autumn finishes her tea. Phil snaps a lid on his cup.

AUTUMN
The risk we take in the job we do.

Phil grabs the pastry box and sighs in relief.

PHIL
We'll soon be back doing what we love.

EXT. CITY - GRAVE YARD - DAY

Autumn, wearing trousers and a V-neck rumpie blouse, sets yellow flowers and a small American flag between her uncle's and mother's grave markers.

As Autumn stands, Julie helps her into a navy blue windbreaker with gold TBI lettering on the back.

JULIE

Nice fit. Britt and I both believe
you've found your calling.

AUTUMN

Yes, me too and I can't wait to
join your team.

Waiting outside the gate, Vazquez and Phil embrace Autumn as she exits with Julie.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END.