

PAPARAZZO

Story by
Lesley Manuel

Screenplay by
Tania Meneguzzi

Contact: Lesley Manuel
Phone: (817) 235-4278
Email: leddycala@yahoo.com
WGA Reg: 2078230

FADE IN

ON THE SUN SETTING

It shines through a blue sky filled with capering clouds and as we start pulling back, we HEAR the casual VOICE of --

JEREMY (V.O.)
I'm going crazy -- fucking crazy.

PANNING DOWN

Passing a MANSION that is the centerpiece of this New York City neighborhood -- gloriously bright in all its whiteness.

JEREMY (V.O.)
What am I doing here?

PANNING FURTHER DOWN UNTIL

The tree-lined street and we start moving past RESIDENTS walking dogs on the sidewalk and stop across the street.

A BLUE TOYOTA TUNDRA WITH A RUSTY HOOD

Parked at the curb with a puddle of dirty water forming under the right tire, the engine running. We push into --

THE WINDSHIELD AND SEE

JEREMY WRIGHT (30s) in the driver's seat -- eyeing the mansion across the street. He sports disheveled hair and wears a Yankees hoodie. Cute Jeremy looks very out of place.

JEREMY
Sick bastard's probably sitting in
his office inhaling bourbon...

The AC is blowing full blast but sweat is dripping down Jeremy's brow, his eyes darting --

JEREMY'S POV

The mansion with its beautifully cut lawn and flower beds lining a paved walkway and lit up like a Christmas tree.

BACK

Jeremy staring at the mansion. Wheels turning in his head.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
...worrying about fuck all.

The truck engine SPUTTERS --

JEREMY (CONT'D)

What?

It takes one last gasp before conking out. Jeremy tries to restart the engine but it's dead.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Dammit.

He pounds the steering wheel and then frantically tries to start it again. He gives up and looks at the mansion. A beat.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

You've come this far.

Without wasted motion Jeremy reaches into his briefcase on the passenger seat and retrieves an impressive Glock 9mm gun.

Despite trembling hands he manages to rack the slide and chambers a round before hastily getting out of the car.

EXT. STREET, MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy bolting across the street and hopping over the flowerbed on the walkway. He reaches the front entrance.

Jeremy KNOCKS and hides the gun behind his back.

The sound of CAMERAS CLICKING CARRIES OVER TO:

EXT. WEBSTER HOTEL, NEW YORK - DAY

A crowd of ruffled PAPARAZZI swarming the front entryway to the luxurious hotel. Some with food and coffee stains on their shirts and looking shitty from sleeping in their cars.

SUPERIMPOSE: "TWO MONTHS EARLIER."

A traditional hotel lobby attendant in uniform holds his arms out and screams toward the crowd. This is BOBBY (40s) and it sure isn't his first rodeo working at a high-profile hotel.

BOBBY

Guys...guys...seriously, step back a little.

An OLDER PAP looking fed up of being shoved by the others.

OLDER PAP

Where is she?

BOBBY

Who?

OLDER PAP

Come on, man. You always do a good job of keeping us guessing, but this time we got the jump on you.

BOBBY

I got nothing for ya, Teddy. Are you sure you have the right hotel?

Another paparazzo shouts back -- it's Jeremy.

JEREMY

You're bullshitting us, Bobby. We know she's shooting a new drama--

He stops, because at that moment, a woman walks out of the hotel that we do not yet see. And as the frenzy of CAMERA CLICKS SOARS INTO MUSICAL HEIGHTS, the camera surges with him, through the crowd, trying to glimpse DINAH DURANT (27).

Dinah's red hair is comfortably pulled back into a ponytail, and she's wearing a vintage Rolling Stones t-shirt and distressed jeans with heels.

But as soon as Dinah crosses the threshold of the hotel's sliding glass doors, her signature pink limo pulls up on the cobblestone circle drive and blocks the view.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Dinah, look over here!

OLDER PAP

Hey, Dinah - remember your pal!

Dinah ignores Jeremy but directs a smile to the older pap.

More paps follow in tow as Dinah's team of bodyguards escort her into the limo. The door closes and she's gone in a flash.

BOBBY

Better luck next time, fellas.

Exhaust smoke fills the air as several paps bark in unison.

PAPARAZZI

Fuck you, Bobby! / Asshole!

BOBBY

Party's over! Now get outta here.

Bobby walks inside the hotel leaving the crowd of cameramen who dissipate with great disdain. Jeremy turns to the older pap looking defeated.

JEREMY

Damn it, I didn't get shit. My boss is going to kill me. Did you get anything?

The older pap packing up his gear looks up with a smile.

OLDER PAP

Yeah...a bunch, actually. Wanna see?

He replays the pictures for Jeremy on his digital camera.

OLDER PAP (CONT'D)

About time, too. I needed these.

JEREMY

But...how?! I was right next to you.

OLDER PAP

I saw. You got starstruck.

He slings his bag over his shoulder ready to hit the road.

OLDER PAP (CONT'D)

And why do you have a boss? We are paparazzi. We don't have bosses.

JEREMY

I'm a journalist for NewsNow.

Off the older pap's blank look.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

It's a relatively small New York City newspaper company.

OLDER PAP

Uh-huh.

JEREMY

I want my own column, but I can never seem to get to that next level. Last year, I began taking photography jobs on the side, you know?

The older pap pats Jeremy's shoulder now losing all interest.

OLDER PAP

Nice meeting you. Better luck next time.

JEREMY

How about lunch together...maybe share a few pointers?

OLDER PAP

Nope, I'm good. Gotta run.

And keeps walking. Jeremy isn't necessarily surprised.

JEREMY

Fucking New Yorkers. Fuck you, too.

EXT. STUCKY'S DINER - DAY

A bustling joint where Jeremy sits in the window at a bench.

INT. DINER - DAY

Jeremy on his cell phone between bites of his tuna on rye.

JEREMY

(on the phone)

No, babe. I didn't get it. It was crazy; like she was on the run or something.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. LIVING ROOM, JEREMY'S HOUSE - SAME

The attractive woman on the other end winces, her phone tucked between her ear and shoulder while folding towels.

This is Jeremy's supportive and loving wife JENNIFER (30s) who we now see is expecting their second child.

Her good-natured mother HELEN (60) is nearby watching over Jennifer's and Jeremy's daughter named OLIVIA (6). Olivia is dressed in Minnie Mouse PJs and totally engrossed watching the Disney channel on the TV. She's sweet and confident.

JENNIFER

I thought that was the big one. What now?

JEREMY

Not sure, honey. I'm sorry.

JENNIFER

It's OK. We'll figure it out... somehow. Maybe I should increase my substitute hours at the school?

JEREMY

Hon, don't worry about it. With the baby on the way, I don't want you to have to worry about working at all.

Jennifer shakes her head like Jeremy's head is in the clouds.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

And we are still taking Olivia to Disney World. I can't live with myself if we back out or push it off another year. I will get more pictures. Please, don't worry.

JENNIFER

Okay, honey.

JEREMY

I will get it done.

Then, something catches Jeremy's eye on the street. Sees...

The older pap leaving The New York Times building and transferring the wad of cash in his hand into the inside pocket of his jacket.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I need to go for now, but I can't wait to see you and Olivia later. I love you.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy catches up to the older pap waiting to cross at the lights. The pap looks sideways at him and rolls his eyes.

OLDER PAP

You again. What now?

Jeremy grins and accompanies him across the street.

JEREMY

Come on, man. Just a few tips?

The pap just shakes his head.

OLDER PAP
You're competition.

JEREMY
Look, I have been married for 13 years. Two years ago, I moved my wife and kid here from Pennsylvania hoping that there would be more opportunities. I'm struggling, dude. And we're pregnant again.

OLDER PAP
I don't know what to tell you. It's about being in the right place at the right time because you're basically a spy. You have to understand the way celebs think, how they work, which way they're going to go.

JEREMY
But how?

OLDER PAP
The relationships between celebs and paps varies from person-to-person, but generally, the celebs want to work with us. If you can make them smile, you're golden.

Jeremy's just looking at him still not getting it.

OLDER PAP (CONT'D)
Geez. Could you be more amateur?!

And as he gets in his car and slams the door we return to...

INT. LIVING ROOM, JEREMY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Where Helen notes Jennifer looking stressed after the phone call with Jeremy. She wanders over and they talk quietly.

HELEN
Everything all right, darling?

JENNIFER
You know I love Jeremy, and I know he would never intentionally disappoint me or Olivia.

Off Helen's curious look.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

But I'm not sold on his promise. He has bounced around for years trying to figure out which job he can truly excel at. At first, he was a journalist, and, technically, he still is. But does being a paparazzo seem batshit crazy and totally fruitless when you're going to be a father of two or is it just me?

Helen agrees but she's not going to make her feel worse.

HELEN

Give it a little more time and then there's no harm in having a little talk, right?

She smiles and squeezes her hand. Jennifer just nods. Then --

JENNIFER

And, you know --

Helen startles as obviously Jennifer's not done yet.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

-- we have been promising you know who --

She gestures toward Olivia.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

-- a visit to you know where even before he uprooted us. We have been saving up the entire time. But now, everything seems to be in jeopardy.

And as Jennifer looks toward Olivia, still engrossed in the TV show, we HOLD ON her helpless look and move to...

EXT. NEWSNOW BUILDING - DAY

Jeremy enters the tall building made of glass and steel.

DALE (O.S. PRE-LAP)

Shit, Wright. Of course she did.

INT. DALE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Awards hanging on almost every inch of the news office wall.

Meet DALE BRAUN (50s). He's the perpetually angry chief editor for the paper who is shouting his disappointment in Jeremy. He's nicely dressed and looks expensively groomed.

DALE

She's a celebrity, and you're the fucking paparazzi. It's your job to bother her, and it's hers to avoid you. I bet all the other papers succeeded.

Dale places his hands on the armrests of his chair and looks out the glass partition toward the rest of his staff.

DALE (CONT'D)

You know, Jeremy... I may not have the largest newspaper, but I have always been blessed with great reporters.

Jeremy looks up, surprised. Then --

DALE (CONT'D)

Wright. I don't think this is your field. You need to be fucking ruthless and persistent and have a knack for finding stories no one else has thought of or is willing to try. You are a great writer, but tabloid journalism is not your thing. You should be a novel writer.

Dale crosses his arms ignoring Jeremy's beaten expression.

DALE (CONT'D)

Look, Jeremy. I have some really good, young interns who need full-time jobs. I need to fill your position with someone with some drive and ambition, but...you still have time.

JEREMY

What do you mean 'time,' Dale?

DALE

You know, to prove yourself until the interns are ready.

JEREMY

I have always done what you've asked of me.

(MORE)

JEREMY (CONT'D)

And you said it yourself- I can write a novel. So that means I'm a good writer.

DALE

Look, I know you're experienced.

Off Jeremy's look -- *so what's the problem?*

DALE (CONT'D)

I'm not firing you, Jeremy. I am merely explaining the situation that we are *both* in. I do have a job for you. It will be a tough one, but if you get me something good before the other newspapers print, then I will consider keeping you on. Plus, you will get the payment and bonus from the job. This is a big deal. I'm a sucker for you, Jeremy. I like you. But you must make this happen. Otherwise, you will leave me with no choice.

JEREMY

I guess I don't have much choice, do I? What is it?

Jeremy grabs his reporter's notepad from his back pocket.

DALE

The Senator is up for re-election, and no one has been able to come up with any dirt. Winston Long is like a saint, but I know there's more beneath the surface. He's just too good to be real. He's married and has one kid...a son. He and his wife, Sasha, are big supporters of the homeless movement and have been trying to clean up the streets since his inauguration. One of the issues on his political platform is prostitution and providing more shelter for homeless women. His political party is also courting Long for a future presidential run.

JEREMY

So he's getting a medal?

DALE

There has got to be something about this guy that we can find and use. Everyone has a skeleton in the closet. I just get the feeling this guy has more than most. It would be a huge story and payout if you can get it.

JEREMY

I want the exclusive and any interviews that come with it on the writing side. You can do that for me, right?

Dale stands and shakes Jeremy's hand.

DALE

Ok, just get me something good. Here's the file.

Off Jeremy taking the precious file into his hands.

CUT TO:

INT. BULLPEN OFFICE, NEWSNOW - SUNSET

Jeremy researching on his computer. The view of the skyline is spectacular through the big windows but it looks gloomy, cold, and looming.

Younger staff also remain working late and sipping on coffee at their messy desks.

The sound of a PHONE RINGING...

Jeremy answers swiftly --

JEREMY

(on the phone)

Hey, honey.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JENNIFER'S CAR - SAME

Jennifer driving, Olivia in the passenger seat. Her phone is connected to Bluetooth. Olivia sees the screen: "JEREMY."

She sweetly leans forward and yells into the speaker.

OLIVIA

Daddy!

Jeremy smiles wide, recoiling from his phone.

JEREMY

Hi, baby girl!

OLIVIA

Did you make friends with Dinah?

JEREMY

Not yet, sweetheart. But I saw her big, fancy pink car. Just like Barbie.

OLIVIA

WOW.

Jennifer is amused, taking over on the call.

JENNIFER

Hey, honey. I'm on my way to pick up dinner.

JEREMY

Well...hold that thought, if you don't mind? I am going to be late tonight. I have a new assignment, and I need to do some more research.

JENNIFER

Oh. Well, okay. I'll just get something for Olivia and I.

JEREMY

Perfect. And I'll be back for bedtime.

OLIVIA

You know, Daddy?

JEREMY

What's that, sweetie?

OLIVIA

My friend's mommy was saying they have this special ceremony at Disney World where all the princesses come together and do a hair and makeup party with three lucky girls!

(MORE)

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
 And Daddy ... she said they do it
 INSIDE the castle! Can we do that?

JEREMY
 Of course, honey. You and all the
 princesses are going to be best
 friends.

Jeremy takes a deep breath.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
 We...we will go soon, baby. An eight-
 day trip to see every park.

OLIVIA
 You promise?

JEREMY
 Baby girl...when has your Daddy ever
 let you down?

OLIVIA
 NEVER!

JEREMY
 That's right! I will see you later.
 I love you.

OLIVIA
 I love you, too, Daddy.

JENNIFER
 Bye, honey. See you later.

JEREMY
 Bye, baby.

Jeremy hangs up the phone. He resumes pole position at the computer, scanning the various documents in the 'Senator Winston Long' file. Sees...

- Pictures of the senator, his wife, and their son Sam.
- The senator's home address and frequently visited places.
- Members of his political team and campaign crew.

Jeremy enters the first name into the Google search bar, leaning forward as he scrolls through the numerous search results.

INT. BANQUET HALL, HOTEL - DAY

A PRESS CONFERENCE. REPORTERS and news crew are gathered to hear the man perched behind the podium who is speaking with gusto.

This is SENATOR WINSTON LONG (40s). A boy-next-door type and breath of fresh air in this haughty environment -- positive, encouraging, nice even. The hair and the suit are a winner.

His stunning wife SASHA (30s) stands right beside him, seemingly proud. Looks like the perfect 'First Lady.'

SENATOR

Numbers don't lie. You've seen the evidence for yourselves that the crime rate has dropped significantly during my term.

We FIND Jeremy sporting a press pass and discreetly observing the crowd.

SENATOR (CONT'D)

I hope the citizens of New York feel safer when they walk the streets, go for a jog in Central Park, or head out to the movies with their families. With another term, we can continue our work and eradicate crime, prostitution, sex trafficking, and all the other crimes that come along with them.

The crowd responds with CHEERS of adulation.

Except for one journalist rolling her eyes. This is sassy MADDIE (30s). A small town girl come good in a nice suit.

MADDIE

He's such a hot mess.

Jeremy laughs and leans forward into her view.

JEREMY

A natural crowd-pleaser, isn't he?

Maddie is equally shocked and excited to see Jeremy.

MADDIE

Jeremy! What are you doing here?

JEREMY

Good to see you too, sis.

MADDIE

You know what I mean! Come here.

They both hug each other tightly and she gives him a kiss on the cheek.

JEREMY

Look at you, boss lady.

Maddie amusingly strikes a pose with her notebook and GOLD PEN that she holds between her French-manicured fingers.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Fancy pen and all. Is that gold?

MADDIE

Yep. How are Jennifer and Olivia?

JEREMY

They're fine.

Maddie noting his shift in mood.

MADDIE

What's with the face?

JEREMY

Things just aren't clicking for me at work right now. I thought things were going to turn around, but Dale is really putting the pressure on me with this big story that I'm not even sure I can get. I can't win, and honestly, I don't even blame him. I blame myself.

Jeremy glances over at the senator and his wife -- they're speaking with a smartly dressed woman sporting a BOB HAIRCUT.

MADDIE

Is this your story? This political function? What do you know about politics?

JEREMY

Well...yes and no.

Off Maddie's puzzled look.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I'm covering a high-profile figure who happens to be here, and Dale swore me to secrecy.

Now Maddie's looking intrigued.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I can't tell you much more than that, and it really doesn't matter who it is at this point. The point is I need to land this story.

Maddie looks around at the dissipating crowd. Sees...

Several heavy hitters interacting and shaking iron fists.

MADDIE

Well, anyone who is anyone is here.

Back to Jeremy for the inquisition.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Big screen or music celebrity or politician?

Off Jeremy zipping his lips.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Ok. Ok. No more questions about your subject.

Jeremy motions toward the senator.

JEREMY

So, what do you make of this tool? He seems too perfect.

MADDIE

I don't know about perfect, but he sure is hot.

Jeremy laughs aloud.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

What?

JEREMY

I'm guessing you voted for him?

MADDIE

(nodding yes)

And I will again. Senator Long has earned big support from the women of New York because of his work with the women's shelters for the battered and abused.

JEREMY

Gotcha. He sounds like a dream.

Maddie glances at Long across the room. Without looking --

MADDIE

What do you really think? Are you going to vote for him?

JEREMY

Sure, I think I will.

Maddie turns back to Jeremy.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

So, when do we get to meet your boyfriend? Maybe dinner next week out on the town with Jennifer? I'll get the folks to babysit.

MADDIE

No. He is crazy busy, and so am I since the Senate race is in full force.

JEREMY

Ok. But soon? Gotta make sure my sis is with someone worth a fucking damn.

Off her laugh.

MADDIE

Awe, thanks, love. Are you saying that because I was a Valedictorian?

JEREMY

Among other things. But I really gotta go. See you soon, Ok?

MADDIE

Totally. Love you.

JEREMY

Same.

Jeremy walks away.

Maddie turns to the platform to take a picture -- it's of the Senator with his arm around his wife. They look like the ultimate loving power couple, despite the ten-year age gap.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Maddie sitting with smartly-dressed CHRISTIE (30s). She's an African American beauty, talking with excitement and hand gestures to match. We see she's wearing a 'Press Badge' for The New York Times.

CHRISTIE

Winston Long just might be your ticket to the White House.

Maddie almost spits her coffee out of her mouth.

MADDIE

I don't need him. I am going to get there on my own.

CHRISTIE

Okay, girl. Get it!

MADDIE

Ha. You know I will. So, what's up with you?

CHRISTIE

Well, us dems aren't as stiff as you guys. We had a nice party today with a free lunch and great live music.

MADDIE

You are not honestly going to vote for Gayle Alonso, are you?

CHRISTIE

Honey, I am covering her campaign.

Off Maddie's disapproving look.

CHRISTIE (CONT'D)

I like what Senator Long stands for and his passionate speeches, but there is something about him that gives me the creeps. And honestly, how much did he fork out for that hot wife?

MADDIE

He's handsome and successful. Why wouldn't a catch like Sasha fall for him?

Christie laughs and sips her coffee.

CHRISTIE
I think those long nights covering
Long has blurred your vision.

MADDIE
Maybe.

And as the girl share a laugh we move to...

EXT. JEREMY'S HOUSE - DAY

Jeremy's car pulls into the driveway where Jennifer and Olivia are playing catch in the yard.

Olivia runs to the car as Jeremy hops out, retrieving his briefcase from the front seat.

JENNIFER
You're home early.

Jennifer kisses his cheek.

JEREMY
Yeah.

Jeremy lifts Olivia and looks back to Jennifer.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
We need to talk.

His attention back to Olivia as they head to the house.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
Did you have a good day, honey?

OLIVIA
I caught every ball mommy threw.

JEREMY
I am so proud of you.

Jennifer follows and closes the door behind the family.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Jennifer scans the fridge while Jeremy sets the table.

He glances through the doorway to see Olivia is watching TV.

JENNIFER
I'm assuming this has something to
do with Dale Braun and your job?

JEREMY

He gave me this assignment.

Jennifer glances at him but he doesn't look back.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

(distracted)

But I am starting to think of it as a no-win assignment. It's going to be impossible. He must really want me gone.

JENNIFER

Honey, any time you're ready to stop speaking in code I'm all ears.

Jeremy looks up, realizing --

JEREMY

Sorry. Essentially, I need to follow this senator around and get some dirt on him.

JENNIFER

Senator Winston Long?

Off Jeremy's shocked look.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

It's hard not to know who he is and everyone is crazy over him. Like, he's a celebrity or something. I've never seen a politician with such a high approval rating.

JEREMY

Ha. Listen to you with the lingo- and you're not even the political type.

JENNIFER

Well ... neither are you.

JEREMY

Noted. But my job is to unveil a skeleton in his closet. Dale expects something. And he said I need to be assertive.

JENNIFER

Assertive? Dale said that? Okay...

JEREMY

I know, right? Like he wants me to break into his mansion and rifle through his underwear drawer.

JENNIFER

I don't get this. Dale likes you. You have so many years invested as a legit writer, even before you came to his paper.

Off Jeremy's look of agreement.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

I guess just keep the job until they let you go. What about unemployment? Maybe call Human Resources tomorrow and see what they have available?

JEREMY

All I know is this gig is almost impossible. Even Maddie thinks the senator is a saint. But I will do my best.

JENNIFER

If only you could just quit to become a novelist. You have so many stories and with more time on your hands, you would be able to finish your manuscripts and get published.

JEREMY

Well, you going back to full-time and me being a stay-at-home dad isn't an option with us being pregnant now.

JENNIFER

I don't know the answer, honey. But we must figure something out. Like you said, this feels like a no-win situation with your job. I'm scared for you.

Jeremy is taken aback by the tears forming in her eyes.

JEREMY

(sheepishly)

You don't think I can do it?

JENNIFER

That's not it at all, baby. I am your biggest supporter. I just think there's only so much one person can do.

Jennifer takes his face in her hands and gives him a kiss.

INT. BEDROOM, JEREMY'S HOUSE - DAY

Light pours in through a crack in the curtains. Jeremy stands in the mirror wearing a light sweater and old jeans with a hole in the left knee. He completes the look with a ball cap.

JENNIFER (O.C.)

Honey, what time is it?

Jeremy turns to find Jennifer stirring in the bed.

JEREMY

Early bird catches the worm.

He kisses her on the forehead and walks toward the door.

JENNIFER

You're wearing your lucky jeans.

Jeremy turns back smiling wide.

JEREMY

You never miss a beat.

JENNIFER

I always see you, baby.

Off Jeremy departing with an extra boost.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANSION - FRONT - DAY

Jeremy approaching in his Tundra -- we PUSH IN to a CLOSE UP of Jeremy finally seeing what he's seeing. We boom up to HIGH AND WIDE - revealing a massive mansion- like OZ on the hill.

Jeremy contemplates the mansion HUMILIATED and ASHAMED, takes a deep breath, holds his head up high and parks for an old-fashioned stakeout just outside the gated home surrounding approximately 5,000 square feet of prime NYC real estate.

There's a Lexus and Mercedes parked in the circular driveway.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy gets settled with his water bottle and notebook beside him. He opens to the page where he left off and starts writing... Then, something catches his eye. Stops. Sees...

The senator and his wife emerging from the front door of the house dressed nicely and climbing into the four-door Lexus.

Jeremy closes the notebook and hastily takes a chug of water.

JEREMY

Time to make the big bucks.

Jeremy trails them while keeping a discreet distance.

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

POV - THROUGH WINDSHIELD GLASS

The Lexus pulls up and the couple enter the revolving door.

BACK

A few hundred feet away, Jeremy watches from his Tundra.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - DAY

CLOSE ON a pen writing in the notebook, then Jeremy's hand turning the page. Starts writing again...

Jeremy looks up at the building. Nothing. Keeps writing...

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

Senator Long emerges without his wife.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy looks up from his notebook, spotting the senator.

JEREMY

Leaving Sasha behind, are we?

He watches the senator disappear around the corner.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Or she sent your ass to get coffee.

The sound of his PHONE RINGING startles Jeremy. He answers --

JEREMY (CONT'D)
(on the phone)
Hey, you.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. KITCHEN, JEREMY'S HOUSE - SAME

Jennifer is cutting up a sandwich... ready to take a bite.

JENNIFER
What's the scoop?

JEREMY
Nothing exciting yet.

Off Jennifer taking a bite.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
But I'm on a roll with my writing.

JENNIFER
Oh good!

JEREMY
He just left the campaign
headquarters but I'm waiting for
Mrs. Long. If the senator can't
provide any good leads, then maybe
she will.

JENNIFER
Politics and clean living usually
don't go together. Just be patient,
Jeremy. Something is bound to be up
with these two.

Then, something catches Jeremy's eye and he closes the notebook. Sees...

Mrs. Long with the same woman that was at the event with the bob haircut. This is AVERY REED (30). She's sexy and smart.

JEREMY
Sasha just came out with a woman
who was at the last event and
hopped into her car. Probably off
to get manicures or something. Ugh.

JENNIFER
Or not. You know what they say...

JEREMY

Behind every great man is a woman?

JENNIFER

Behind every great man stands no woman.

JEREMY

Huh?

JENNIFER

There is no greater man than he who acknowledges the woman standing right next to him. Get moving!

Jeremy starts the car.

JEREMY

Talk soon.

Jennifer hangs up amusingly shaking her head.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

Jeremy pulls up at the traffic light behind Avery's car. He jots the time in his notebook and the campaign headquarters location.

EXT. HOUSING COMMUNITY - DAY

Jeremy tailing Mrs. Long and Avery to a small house where they park in the driveway and exit the car.

Jeremy hangs back half a block and turns off the engine.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy grabs his binoculars to watch the ladies. Sees...

AVERY GRABBING SASHA'S ASS BEFORE THEY HOLD HANDS

Jeremy pulls back the binoculars looking stunned.

JEREMY

Holy shit.

He scrambles for his camera and knocks over the bottle in the console, spilling water all over his notebook. Through the windshield we continue to see what he's sadly missing...

Avery and Sasha start sharing a kiss by the front door.

Jeremy cleans the mess and looks through the camera. Sees...
NOTHING!

Jeremy hits the steering wheel.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Fuck me.

He sits there for a beat leaning against the headrest. Then --

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Fuck it.

Jeremy grabs his phone and camera and exits the car.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Jeremy tiptoeing around the house to the back. He opens the unlocked backyard gate and looks for signs of a dog. None.

Jeremy making his way to a bedroom window.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Avery and Mrs. Long standing by the bed kissing. Behind them, sheer drapes reveal Jeremy's silhouette holding the camera.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy taking pictures with his mouth agape when a shirt hits the window, moving the curtain for a clearer view. Sees...

The women on the bed starting to have passionate sex.

Jeremy notes his arousal but manages to take some pictures.

Then, a DOG BARKING makes him drop his camera -- it lands in a puddle of water near the garden hose. He quickly picks it up and wipes it with his shirt scanning around for the dog.

MALE VOICE (O.C.)

Come on, Max, come on.

Jeremy looks to the fence, realizing the dog is still barking AT HIM from the neighbor's side. He exhales a deep breath.

MALE VOICE (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Ma'am, are you over there? Sorry! I guess Max is excited to see you.

Jeremy hears the man's footsteps approaching the low fence.

JEREMY

Oh shit.

He grabs his gear and quickly bolts through the back gate.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - DAY

Jeremy enters the car and hurriedly shuts the door. He looks to the heavens as he turns on the camera to see if it's okay.

JEREMY

Please...please...please--

The pictures that he took swipe across the screen.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

Jeremy gunning it down the street with a look of vindication.

JEREMY

Oh my God. I got it. Fuck them.

As his shitbox car SWERVES around the corner.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN, JEREMY'S HOUSE - DAY

Jeremy enters with an extra pep in his step.

Jennifer looks up from where she's perusing the newspaper standing at the bench.

JENNIFER

Hey, honey--

But before she can finish Jeremy is dipping her over for a long, deep kiss. He holds her in that position and smiles.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Wow.

Jeremy hoists her up as Olivia scrambles in to join the fun.

OLIVIA

Daddy!

JEREMY

Guess who's going to Disney World?

He picks her up as she starts SQUEALING and looks at Jen.

JENNIFER

Honey, let Olivia go so she can
finish her birthday invitations.

Jeremy obeys and taps Olivia's butt before she scoots away.

OLIVIA

I'm gonna be a princess!

Jennifer turns to Jeremy with an expectant look.

He opens the cabinet to retrieve some vodka and two glasses.

JEREMY

Let's sit.

They huddle close at the table and Jeremy gives the scoop.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

The senator's wife is a lesbian...or
bi...or...well, she's hooking up with
another chick called Avery Reed.

He gulps the vodka in one fell swoop. Jennifer follows suit --

JENNIFER

That explains your attack.

Jeremy laughs as she motions for him to dish the details.

JEREMY

I trailed them and got a peek while
standing in the woman's yard. This
is huge, Jen. This is so, so huge.

JENNIFER

You sound like real paparazzi. But
if you would have gotten caught, I
would be bailing you out of jail
right now.

JEREMY

I know. I know. This was it,
though. I should be done. All I
need to do is get the pictures to
Dale, and I should be set. We
should be set!

JENNIFER

I love everything that you're
saying...

(MORE)

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
and there's a full-time job at the
school for me if you agree?

JEREMY
You don't need to work more.

JENNIFER
Look, nothing is complete yet with
your job. Let's just wait and see,
and I will apply in the meantime
until we know about your position.
Don't jump to conclusions yet.

JEREMY
All right, sounds good.

Off Jennifer's excited look.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
Now, how about a steak dinner for
my two favorite ladies?

But before she can reply he leans in and kisses her again.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jeremy sits on the bed with his digital camera and begins
going through the images. Then, his face turns ashen.

JEREMY
No, no, no, fuck.

Jennifer appears in the bathroom doorway brushing her hair.

JENNIFER
What's wrong?

Now Jeremy is sitting with his hands over his face.

JEREMY
I lost everything. The camera won't
stay on. It is destroyed.

Off Jennifer's incredulous look.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
I dropped it in a puddle but I was
able to pick it up quickly. It was
working a few hours ago when I
checked it in the car. Fuuuuccckk!

JENNIFER

Baby. I am so sorry. Is there anything I can do? Is there anyone I can call?

She sits down next to him and rubs his back to keep him calm.

JEREMY

(frantic)

No! I mean, I don't think so. Shit!

JENNIFER

OK...settle down. Is there anyone you can take the camera to and see if they can retrieve the images?

JEREMY

Maybe. But not at this hour. I can hear sloshing inside the camera. The SD card is ruined. I don't think there is anything that anyone can do and I have exhausted all resources at the newspaper trying to find something incriminating. It's those photos.

JENNIFER

Well, I'd give it a try.

JEREMY

I will. In the meantime, I have to come up with a Plan B.

JENNIFER

Okay, baby. But I need to get some sleep.

Jennifer climbs into bed as Jeremy sets the camera on the nightstand and hurries over to Jennifer's desk by the window, the moonlight illuminating his laptop. He starts typing...

INSERT - GOOGLE SEARCH BAR, which reads:

"Avery Reed."

BACK

Jeremy scanning the results seeing the usual links.

- LinkedIn: Intern working on the Long campaign

- Facebook: Age 30, Single Status, Politics & Music

- Public Criminal Record: No convictions

Jeremy SIGHS and returns his cursor to the search bar.

INSERT - GOOGLE SEARCH BAR, which reads:

"Sasha Long."

He repeats the process and then leans back defeated.

JEREMY
I feel like such a moron.

JENNIFER (O.C.)
(half asleep)
You're not.

Jeremy smirks as he turns to see her under the covers.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Have you checked her background?

Jeremy's face lights up and he swivels back to the laptop.

JEREMY
Oh my God. Yes. Let me search for
past articles. I love you so much.

No reply. Jeremy swivels back to Jennifer but she's out cold.

EXT. JEREMY'S HOUSE - SUNRISE

The street is dead quiet. Jeremy exits the house in the same clothes from the previous night and quietly shuts the door.

INT. DALE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dale sitting in his signature position with his hands placed on the armrests of his chair. He still looks dissatisfied.

DALE
Is that it?

Dale looks up from the notes and web pictures on his desk.

JEREMY

This affair is huge, Dale. I mean, Long's wife who is in an extreme position of power fucking the campaign intern. I mean... it's hot. And it's also front-page news. I can't believe you're not impressed.

DALE

So write an erotic novel. Who do you think is going to believe you?

JEREMY

Duly noted. But what about Sasha's background! She was arrested and booked for prostitution when she was barely out of college.

DALE

So what? Student loans are a bitch.

JEREMY

It was the senator who posted bail.

DALE

He wasn't the senator yet, Jeremy!

JEREMY

I know. He was a corporate lawyer working for one of the largest tech companies in the world, Orion Tech.

Off Dale's annoyed look -- *and?*

JEREMY (CONT'D)

He must have been in Russia on business when he hooked up with Sasha; the fact that he was a good 10 years older than her apparently didn't matter to him at the time.

Dale rounds up the printouts into a pile on his desk.

DALE

You know what this is, Jeremy?

Off Jeremy's desperate look.

DALE (CONT'D)

Speculation.

JEREMY

But--

DALE

It also plays right into Long's hands. He sees a girl in trouble, helps her out, and eventually marries her. It's a great rags-to-riches story...even if she was a whore. This helps his campaign and stand on prostitution and homeless reform. This is no good, man. This isn't going to fly. I'm sorry.

Jeremy stares at the floor looking dejected.

DALE (CONT'D)

Get me something on Winston Long like I fucking asked. If you don't, this will be your last paycheck.

JEREMY

I can't believe you right now.

DALE

Me?

Dale shoos him and swivels his chair to look at the bullpen.

Jeremy takes his briefcase and leaves the office.

Dale watches through the glass as Jeremy walks past his desk towards the elevators where he vanishes behind the doors.

INT. CARPARK, NEWSNOW BUILDING - DAY

Jeremy drags himself toward his car in the ominous basement.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy turns the key but the truck makes an AWKWARD NOISE and then nothing. He shakes his head and takes a deep breath.

A beat. He tries the key again and this time the engine kicks over and starts up. He blinks his eyes and finally exhales.

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

Jeremy parks behind Long's Lexus outside the campaign office.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

He leans his head back on the headrest and shuts his eyes.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Senator Long exits the building and retrieves his cell phone from his pocket. He hits a button and holds it to his ear.

SENATOR
(on the phone)
Hey, honey. I'm going to be late.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy's eyes snap open at the sound of TALKING on the street. He sits upright and wipes away his drool. Sees...

Long standing beside Jeremy's passenger door.

JEREMY
Oh, shit.

SENATOR
(on the phone)
I will see you later. I love you.

Long hangs up and gets into his car. Takes off in a hurry...

Jeremy clasps his hands together in prayer position and looks to the heavens above.

JEREMY
Please start... I'm begging.

Jeremy car starts the first try.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
Yesssss.

He follows Long onto a highway slapping himself awake.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The two cars drive under the overhead sign: "NEW JERSEY."

The senator merges toward the exit and Jeremy follows...

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Jeremy drops back while Long turns into a dirt road. Sees...

Long pulling up outside a BARN and getting out of his car.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy uses his binoculars to closely watch Long. Sees...

Long unlocking a padlock on the barn doors that he opens to reveal an old Honda. He drives the Honda out of the barn.

Then he parks the Lexus in the barn and leaves in the Honda.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - SUNSET

Jeremy continues following Long in the Honda while trying to set up his smartphone to record.

They enter a sketchy-looking neighborhood where Long pulls the Honda over to the curb near some young prostitutes.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy starts taking pictures like crazy but so far all he's capturing is Long being friendly with the chatty girl-gang.

JEREMY

Come on, baby. Pick her up!

A scantily clad blonde trans leans into Long's window and continues to exchange banter. Finally, she walks around the car and gets in the passenger seat. The senator drives off.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

And we're off.

Jeremy follows the Honda as Long expertly handles the bends.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Long drives his car into the bowels of a congested forest that is desolate and stops the car in a highly wooded area.

Jeremy appears behind a tree with his camera and smartphone trying to record Long without use of a flash in the dark.

POV -- THROUGH THE ZOOM LENS

The prostitute straddles Long in his seat. She removes her shirt and bra and he feels her up while moving up and down.

JEREMY (O.C.)

Please let there be enough light.

Without warning or wasted motion Long grabs the prostitute by the neck. She begins to struggle and fight but he's stronger.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

What the--

She slowly stops moving and becomes limp. A beat. Then Long opens the door and pushes her out of the car onto the dirt.

BACK

Jeremy lowers the camera from his face in utter shock.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

He quickly scrambles back to the car and gets in quietly.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy frantically retrieves his cell phone and accidentally hits the wheel.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

The LOUD HONK startles Long and he turns toward the sound.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy sees Long leave the body and make his way briskly towards Jeremy's car. He starts the engine and backs up but Long picks up his pace now charging toward the car. Jeremy turns his lights on bright --

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Long GROANS and shields his eyes from the bright lights.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy hits the gas and swipes trees while making his escape.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy's car swerves from around the corner onto the road.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy's knuckles clasp the wheel as sweat forms on his brow.

JEREMY

Call Dale, call my wife, call
Maddie, call the cops, what the
hell?

He hits a button on his cell phone and puts it on speaker.

JENNIFER (V.O.)

(over phone, filtered)
Hey, babe--

JEREMY

I've just witnessed something...I
think it might get me killed.

Jeremy trying to catch his breath but he's panicky.

JENNIFER (V.O.)

What?! What's going on, Jeremy?

JEREMY

The senator...he picked up a
prostitute on the street and just
killed her in the woods.

JENNIFER

Where are you?

JEREMY

I don't fucking know! I was tailing
him and he drove out to the middle
of nowhere. He switched cars and
then picked her up. They drove into
the forest and after fucking her he
choked her to death and then pushed
her out of the car.

JENNIFER

Oh my God. Call the police.

Jeremy approaches the highway and drives onto the ramp.

JEREMY

I'm on my way to the nearest
station now. I'll call you as soon
as I can. I love you.

JENNIFER

I love you too. Please be careful.

Jeremy hangs up and dials another contact: "DALE BRAUN."

INT. DALE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Dale's pouring a drink from the enclosed liquor cabinet.

DALE

(on the phone)

I knew there was something wrong
with him. He's been hiding too
long. Bring me what you recorded.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - SAME

Jeremy is taken aback. A car overtakes him at high speed.

JEREMY

What? Not now, I'm going to the
cops.

DALE

No fool! They will confiscate
everything. We will get nothing
here at NewsNow.

JEREMY

No way, Dale. My wife and I agreed
that this is the right thing to do.

Dale starts laughing and polishes off his drink.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

That is exactly your problem,
Wright. You're not ruthless enough
for this job. If you don't get me
something, then you are fucking
gone boy.

Dale ends the call and smiles as he pours another drink.

DALE

I finally have you, Long. You sick
fuck.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Jeremy sitting at a neat desk opposite a female and male
detective. They are PRESLEY HEANEY (40) and JOE MOSBY (30).

HEANEY

Is that it, Mr. Wright?

They are looking at the dark footage on the camera.

HEANEY (CONT'D)

I know you have explained everything, but this is nothing. We can't see anything. There is no evidence here.

JEREMY

I know, I know, but I saw it happen. I was following him. He killed the prostitute.

The detectives exchange a look and roll their eyes.

MOSBY

What you did is against the law. It is considered stalking and can be a criminal offense.

JEREMY

What?! I am a paparazzo, and I was just trying to find a story. I have to. My family is counting on me.

The officers exchange another glance and wait a long beat.

HEANEY

Senator Long is a big financial contributor to the department as well as a supporter for reducing crime, most specifically prostitution and domestic violence. I can't believe the senator would do something this heinous.

JEREMY

(yells)

But I saw him murder that girl.

Jeremy gets up from his seat.

MOSBY

Now wait just a second, Mr. Wright. We will formally investigate, but we cannot use this supposed evidence you delivered. Ok, sir?

Jeremy begrudgingly nods his head and walks toward the exit.

JEREMY
Fucking idiots.

They heard him but Heaney stops Mosby from standing up.

EXT. JEREMY'S HOUSE - DAY

Jeremy's car pulls into the driveway and illuminates the house. Jennifer exits and rushes over to Jeremy for a hug.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer pours a drink as Jeremy paces and talks rapidly.

JEREMY
(growing angrier)
If they are not going to do
anything, then I will.

JENNIFER
This is nuts, Jeremy. You need to
let the police handle this. Just
give Dale everything and quit.
Don't give him the satisfaction of
firing you.

Off Jeremy's defiant look.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
This is too dangerous, and you
could go to jail for harassment.
You're lucky Long didn't see you
and kill you, too. Just quit and
get out and let someone else do
this. You are accusing the senator
of murder. This is a huge
accusation.

JEREMY
I know, honey. But this is way
above just a job. A woman died.

Jeremy's eyes well as he finally sits down and puts his head
in his hands. Jennifer rubs Jeremy's shoulders in silence.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
Even my own wife doesn't believe me
or believe in me.

He shrugs his shoulders to release her hands and walks out.

JENNIFER

Baby...wait just a minute, honey. You know I believe in you.

The sound of Jeremy's office DOOR SLAMMING makes her wince.

INT. JEREMY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy starts rechecking his phone and camera. The phone pics are blurry and the images on the digital camera are pathetic.

Jeremy throws the camera with full force against the wall.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A POLICE CREW checking out the reported scene of the crime along with the forensics unit. They can see the tire marks.

INT. SENATOR LONG'S OFFICE - DAY

The same detectives Mosby and Heaney questioning Long. He is seated at his desk looking calm, collected, and in control.

LONG

(laughing)

Wow, that is absurd. So, when did this take place? And I guess the body is in my car?

Mosby laughs. Heaney shoots a scolding look for the outburst.

HEANEY

Where were you last night? And I hope you don't mind if we examine your car and check out your alibi?

LONG

Yes, detective. I was with my wife. Right now, she is at our campaign office, and you can reach her there. My car is right outside, and here are the keys.

Long drops them into her outstretched hand with a smile.

LONG (CONT'D)

I will do whatever you need and answer any questions to help you find this animal. You guys know me. This is what I try to eradicate. I loathe violence and prostitution.

He leans back comfortably in his chair.

HEANEY

Again, we apologize, senator. Just doing our jobs, as they say. We will be in touch. Thank you for your time.

Everyone rises from their seats. Heaney shakes his hand first, followed by Mosby. Long catches Mosby's eye.

LONG

I don't want you to be a tattletale, but who was this person that reported this heinous act?

MOSBY

I'm sorry, sir. We cannot divulge that information.

LONG

(laughs)

Of course, I understand - no retaliation here detective. I just don't like being followed or accused of doing something I didn't do. I get tailed by the paparazzi all the time. I'm assuming this person is ... a member of the paparazzi? Do police officers even take their words seriously? They need to know their place. I will prosecute if this happens again. We all like our privacy, don't we detectives?

MOSBY

Yes, sir.

Long nods affirmatively and aptly waits for them to leave.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Heaney and Mosby look to one another with confusion.

MOSBY

The fact that he was so quick to surrender the keys to his car and is so laid back about the conversation makes me believe that Long is 100% innocent.

HEANEY

Not to mention his biggest push is eradicating violence and prostitution. He's done so much already and has been a valuable partner to the police department.

MOSBY

He couldn't have possibly committed murder, right?

HEANEY

I've been doing this for a decade longer than you, and that guy right there was as cool as they come when it comes to being interrogated. Most people give off some sort of hint, maybe some sweaty palms or acting defensive.

MOSBY

I guess we'll see.

And as the elevator makes a PING SOUND we move to...

INT. SENATOR LONG'S OFFICE - DAY

Now the senator is pacing nervously... He grinds his teeth and picks up his phone to dial the contact: "SASHA LONG."

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CAMPAIGN OFFICE - SAME

Sasha stands at a table where a swarm of young campaigners are folding envelopes and sorting through polls. She answers her RINGING PHONE as she moves away to a quieter corner.

SASHA

Hi, handsome.

LONG

Sasha, some detectives will likely visit you and ask you my whereabouts last night. Please tell them I was with you at home. I will explain later, just please do this.

SASHA

All right, but I need to know what's going on if I need to have Avery prepared for negative publicity.

LONG

I know, dear. I will do the same with Bryson. Thank you. I will see you later tonight. Bye.

Sasha hang up and turns around to find Avery looking right at her from across the room. Sasha gestures for her to follow --

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Sasha enters the room and closes the door behind Avery. As per the usual precautionary measures Avery closes the blinds.

AVERY

What is it?

She moves close to Sasha and gently strokes her hair.

SASHA

We need to talk about Winston.

Off Avery's concerned look.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPAIGN OFFICE - DAY

Sasha leaving the building as Mosby and Heaney are arriving.

HEANEY

Mrs. Long?

SASHA

Yes. Whom may I ask are you?

The detectives show their badges.

HEANEY

I'm detective Heaney, and this is detective Mosby, with the NYPD.

Off her surprised look.

MOSBY

Mind if we ask you a few questions?

Sasha nods and looks in his eye. Mosby shifts nervously --

MOSBY (CONT'D)

Where were you last night between
the hours of 6 p.m. and 11 p.m.?

SASHA

At home with my husband.

The 'undynamic duo' exchange a look.

MOSBY

Thank you for your time.

Heaney gives her a card.

HEANEY

Here is my card should you recall
otherwise.

And as Sasha takes the card, looking at it, we move to...

EXT. COMMUNITY HALL - DAY

News vans arriving. Police officers standing outside their
patrol cars, keeping watch. IT'S A POLICE PRESS CONFERENCE.

PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS relentlessly try to snap photos.

A sign hanging from the bridge: "NOT LONG FOR LONG."

A CROWD of people on the bridge -- LONG HATERS. BIG BANGING
DRUMS that echo. Using a bullhorn, the ORGANIZER hollers:

ORGANIZER

We're here to support the arrest of
a killer senator left to roam free.

The POLICE COMMISSIONER addresses the crowd of reporters.

COMMISSIONER

After a three day formal
investigation Mr. Winston Long has
been pronounced innocent by the New
York police department due to a
lack of evidence. The senator is
hereby exonerated.

INT. CAMPAIGN OFFICE - SAME

CLOSE ON A TV broadcasting the press conference. We pull back
to REVEAL the campaigners watching along with Long and Sasha.

SASHA

Thank God. What rubbish.

The campaigners CHEER and HOLLER their joy at the news.

LONG

I know my reputation took a hit during the ridiculous investigation so I would like to thank you all for working around the clock to drum up positive feedback. I realize that we are not out of the woods yet and will continue to see and hear tabloid-type negativity until the election is over. To that end, please enjoy dinner on me.

And as he flashes that famous smile, the campaigners sucking it all up, we follow the power couple to the elevator.

CUT TO:

INT. LONG'S LEXUS - NIGHT

Long driving quietly while Sasha looks ready to implode.

SASHA

So, do you have time now to tell me what this was all about and why I had to lie? I mean, I've kept a smile on my face, stood by your side, and didn't ask any questions for three days. You never keep secrets from me this long.

LONG

Lie? Sasha, what do you mean? Do you think I killed that young lady?

SASHA

No, Winston. I don't. But I know your weaknesses. You are not perfect.

LONG

Neither are you, Sasha, are you?

Long smirks as he turns back to look straight ahead. Sasha just looks out the window and closes her eyes. A long beat.

INT. FOYER, LONG MANSION - NIGHT

The door opens and the couple enter and remove their coats.

SASHA

I am going to take a long, hot
bath.

Off his disinterested look.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Do you want to join me?

But now she's ascending the staircase and removing her
clothes... dropping them into a seductive trail...

Without saying a word he follows Sasha's bare ass up the
marble steps and onto the landing of the mezzanine.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sasha bends over the tap to turn on the water with Long
watching every move of her naked body as he also disrobes.

Then he grabs her by the neck and enters her hard, thrusting
away while squeezing his hand tighter around her throat. His
head rolls backwards as she grunts and grimaces at the pain.

SASHA

Harder, Winston. Like when we first
met. I know how you like it rough.

Long continues with a mean and irritated facial expression.

EXT. JEREMY'S HOUSE - DAY

The sun setting over the modest house on a tree-lined street.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE ON A BANNER that reads: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY OLIVIA!"

We pull back to REVEAL a nice dinner party with Jennifer's
mother Helen and JEREMY'S PARENTS and his sister Maddie.

JEREMY

Happy birthday, baby!

Olivia blows out a '7' candle and excitedly claps her hands.

OLIVIA
I wished for--

JENNIFER
You're not supposed to say!

Helen and Jennifer laugh hysterically along with the others.

OLIVIA
Can we have your chicken and
dumplings now, auntie Maddie?

MADDIE
Of course! Your favorite.

Maddie gets up and Jeremy follows her out of the room.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maddie starts uncovering the serving dish as Jeremy enters
and retrieves a beer from the fridge. He pops it open --

JEREMY
Hey, sis, why the cold shoulder?
Haven't heard from you in a week
and you haven't said anything to me
directly all night.

Maddie keeps looking straight ahead at the dumplings dish.

MADDIE
Long? Really, Jeremy? That's why
you were at the rally asking me all
those questions. You don't accuse
someone of murder and think it will
just go away.

Now she's staring right at him and they both look angry.

JEREMY
Why do you even care? Why are you
defending him? And why do you think
it was me? I didn't say anything.

MADDIE
Oh, come on, Jeremy. I have friends
everywhere. I can find shit out,
especially if it has anything to do
with a family member. You're such a
dumbass going after a fucking
senator...and for it to be Long?
Really? He basically walks on water
in New York.

(MORE)

MADDIE (CONT'D)

No one has done that...ever. He is innocent. There's no evidence against him.

JEREMY

I saw him, Maddie. What should I do?

MADDIE

Paparazzi, huh? I knew this was not the job for you. Lies, all lies. I know Winston. I have worked with him many times. He has helped so many women, Jeremy.

JEREMY

Money, politics, power...it's all fucked up. I just don't know why you won't believe me. When have I ever lied?

A beat. Maddie puts her arm on his shoulder to show support.

MADDIE

Jeremy, I know you saw someone or something, but you have no proof that it was Long. That's irresponsible. Get some proof, then your boss and the cops and all of us will listen. And then you will have your story. If you continue with this, Senator Long can have you arrested for assault and sue you for defamation. And you don't want that for your family. You're so incredibly lucky he has no idea it was you.

Jeremy realizes that his sister doesn't believe him one bit.

JEREMY

All right, it's cool. I really appreciate you coming tonight. Olivia just adores you.

She hugs Jeremy tightly and he remorsefully closes his eyes.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jennifer brushes her hair while Jeremy converses from bed.

JENNIFER

I just don't understand why Maddie isn't supporting you. She's your sister. She should be giving you the benefit of the doubt - no matter what the situation looks like.

JEREMY

I understand, Jennifer. She's a true journalist and doesn't write about something unless she has proof. It's complicated, though.

JENNIFER

No. No, I don't think it is. I realize that working with and following public figures can be stressful, but I think she may be too trusting of Senator Long in this instance. She's got her career to think about, but you are family.

Jeremy leans back on the pillow and pulls up the covers.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

So...I guess that's the end of this conversation, huh? Look...I'm sorry. I...I just love you. And I love Maddie. I do. I'm scared, though.

JEREMY

I will find a way to work this out.

And as Jennifer climbs into bed, nestling close to his torso, he turns off the lamp and we move to...

EXT. LONG MANSION - DAY

Jeremy's car parked outside the gates of the property.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy's back to writing his manuscript in his notebook while waiting for any unusual activity. He's scribbling with gusto.

Long exits the house dressed in casual clothes and a ball cap. He gets into his Lexus and takes off down the street.

Jeremy follows at a medium distance seeing the senator frantically looking in his side and rear-view mirrors.

EXT. PUBLIC PARKING AREA - HALF-HOUR LATER

Long parks in a space with a meter. He gets out of his car wearing sunglasses and retrieves a duffle bag from the seat.

Jeremy parks far enough away to avoid being seen by Long.

Jeremy also puts on a cap and follows Long around the corner to a really nice hotel. He hangs back and then enters too.

INT. LUNDY INN & SUITES - CONTINUOUS

Long passes the receptionist and continues to the elevator.

JEREMY

Fuck me.

Jeremy runs to stand in front of Long to stop him from entering the elevator. Jeremy quickly flashes his pass.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I am sorry, sir, but this elevator
is broken. You can take the stairs.

Off Long's puzzled look Jeremy points to the stairwell door.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Thank you, sir.

Long opens the door while holding his gaze on Jeremy. He pushes some buttons and pretends to talk on his cell phone.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

(on the phone)

Yes, sir. I am working on it now.

Long vanishes behind the door as it swings shut with a thud.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Long emerges from the stairwell door and heads down the hallway. Behind him, we see Jeremy quietly following...

Long stops outside a room and uses a card key to go inside.

JEREMY

Shit.

Jeremy hears the DING of the elevator and scrambles for his phone, facing one of the rooms a few doors down from Long.

A young lady walks past and approaches Long's door. She KNOCKS and waits. Jeremy can tell that she sure ain't Sasha.

LONG (O.C.)

It's nice to see you, Maddie.

Jeremy's head twists around to see his sister kiss Long and walk into his hotel room. The door automatically swings shut.

Jeremy blinks in disbelief with his mouth wide open. A beat.

JEREMY

What...

He walks over and stands with his ear to the door. He recoils at hearing the couple MOANING and PANTING. Jeremy recoils and rushes over to the planted pot by the elevator and throws up.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Long and Maddie in bed together, her head nestled in his neck as she strokes his chest. Long lays there resting his eyes.

MADDIE

Winston, I have something very important to ask you, and please tell me the truth. These rumors about you, are they true?

LONG

I was waiting for you to ask. I was there. I was going through the neighborhood as I always do. I stopped to talk to a young woman, the one that was killed. I was just asking her for her opinion and ideas, and for her vote. Then, the next thing I know, she was dead, and I was accused. This is why I want to help these ladies. To keep those dangerous men away from them. The paparazzi were there when we were talking. They are always there. I hate them. I hate them so much. So that's it; there's nothing else...that's the story. There's no story, Maddie.

MADDIE

I knew my brother was full of it. He probably saw the real killer and didn't know it.

LONG
Your brother?

Long moves her hand off his chest. Maddie shuts her eyes and cringes for revealing Jeremy. Then, she looks right at Long.

MADDIE
It's ok. I shouldn't have said anything. Don't worry.

LONG
Don't worry? Are you fucking kidding me? Look,...You better tell me what you're talking about.

Long sits up and looks right at Maddie. Her voice is shaky --

MADDIE
My brother...he went to the police about a murder...the prostitute. He's the one who brought the allegations against you. But...I swear...he's clearly got the wrong person. He's been going through so much at work. I love him, but he really sucks at his job. No one is go-ing to believe him.

LONG
I am a fucking New York senator. You've seen all the craziness this has caused. The police...the media...all the bullets I've had to dodge to keep my campaign on track.

MADDIE
Honey, I know. I'm sorry.

LONG
Sorry? We are fucking each other. Is that all you care about?

He grabs her by the arms and squeezes tight.

MADDIE
Winston, you're hurting me!

LONG
You tell that asshole to stay away from my family and me. I don't care if he is your brother, he deserves everything bad that's coming to him.

MADDIE

Your family, huh? And what about me? I thought you are going to divorce your wife, and now you are saying you are a family. Maybe this is it Winston, no more secret meetings.

Maddie breaks free of his clutches and gets out of the bed.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

I don't want to be your mistress, and then someone finds out about me. I don't want to be on the news.

Now Long gets up and walks over to Maddie where he embraces her. He kisses her neck and moves her head to the side...

LONG

It's ok, Maddie. I just really wish we could have discussed this sooner; we can talk about this later. Everything is going to work out.

She lets her head go limp and relishes the touch.

LONG (CONT'D)

Just one more time – one more good night together. We can have a private dinner and then some alone time. I promise it will be a night you won't forget.

Long turns her around and kissing her some more.

MADDIE

All right. One more night.

Maddie hugs him back.

Off Long looking furious over her shoulder.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Jeremy sitting at the bar looking shit-faced. He signals to the BARTENDER for another but he takes his glass instead.

BARTENDER

Time for an Uber, buddy.

Jeremy squints back at him and holds up his cell phone.

JEREMY

Will you help a brother out?

The sound of a JOYFUL DOORBELL CARRIES OVER:

INT. FOYER, JEREMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jennifer opens the door to find Jeremy leaning against the column on the porch. He's swaying and looking at the ground.

JENNIFER

What's going on?

JEREMY

I am drunk. Can't you tell?

He stumbles past her and nearly trips entering the house.

JENNIFER

I get that. But why? Where's your car and your keys?

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer follows him into the room where he flops on the bed.

JEREMY

Jeremy?

JEREMY (CONT'D)

What? Can we talk tomorrow?

JENNIFER

Fine, we can talk tomorrow, but I am sleeping in the guest room.

Jeremy doesn't answer, closes his eyes, and passes out on the bed with his arms and legs sprawled out.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Jeremy is awakened with the sound of DOORS OPENING and CLOSETS CLOSING as Jennifer is getting ready for the day.

He waits for her to exit and stumbles into the bathroom.

INT. SHOWER - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy stands there frozen under the stream of hot water.

EXT. PORCH, BACKYARD - DAY

OLIVIA'S BIRTHDAY PARTY is in full-swing with her FRIENDS and THREE PRINCESSES who are acting out a play by a jumpy castle.

Jeremy emerges from the back door looking better with a clean-shaven face and fresh shirt. He kisses Jennifer on the cheek.

JEREMY

Sorry. We can talk after the party.

Jennifer just nods staring straight ahead watching Olivia.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

So, who is that boy playing tag with Olivia?

MALE VOICE (O.C.)

He's my son. Sam.

Both Jeremy and Jennifer turn their heads toward the voice and see the senator standing on their porch. He smiles wide.

LONG

Hi, I am Winston Long.

He reaches out for a handshake and Jeremy obliges.

JEREMY

Jeremy.

FLASHBACK -- LUNDY INN & SUITES

Jeremy dressed in his cap and jeans telling Long the elevator is out of service and pointing him toward the staircase.

END FLASHBACK

Long's eyes fixed on Jeremy, realizing he knows about Maddie.

JEREMY

And this is my wife, Jen.

Long flashes his bright smile as he shakes Jennifer's hand.

LONG

Pleasure to meet you both. Sadly we need to leave...

(MORE)

LONG (CONT'D)
 Sam has guitar lessons on
 Saturdays. Thanks so much again for
 your hospitality.

JENNIFER
 You're very welcome.

Long turns to SAM (7) and Olivia dancing on the grass.

LONG
 Sam, let's get going. Thank Olivia
 for the invitation. Maybe we can do
 it again sometime.

Olivia hugs Sam and continues dancing with the other kids. He
 rushes up to his dad as the couple keenly watch them leave.

JEREMY
 What the fuck was that?

Off Jennifer's sheepish look.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
 Honey. Why was he here?

JENNIFER
 I don't know how he knew about the
 party; he showed up uninvited.

Off Jeremy's paranoid look.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
 He came to the door with his kid
 and told me that he saw his
 campaign sign on our front lawn
 while he was making rounds and
 campaigning in the area.

JEREMY
 There's no damn sign?

JENNIFER
 Yes, there is...since today.

Jeremy's growing more agitated.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
 I don't know who placed it in the
 yard. With the party going on, some
 parents and neighbors recognized
 him and told him to join the
 festivities. I didn't know what to
 do.

(MORE)

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

The kids started playing, and the next thing you know Senator Long was mingling on the lawn.

JEREMY

He fucking knows it was me. He did this on purpose. Fuck you, Maddie!

Jennifer notes a few of the parents are looking their way.

JENNIFER

Calm down and lower your voice.

She gestures for him to sit beside her on the bench.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Maddie? What are you talking about?

JEREMY

Oh my God. Maddie told him I was the paparazzi and probably about this party and where we live.

JENNIFER

Why would she do that? Either I'm completely missing something or you've completely lost your mind?

JEREMY

Jennifer...they are having an affair.

JENNIFER

Are you fucking--

Olivia appears on the steps with a sickly-looking party goer.

OLIVIA

Mom! Hannah said she's not feeling well and wants you to call her mom.

Jennifer rises with an incredulous look on her face as she takes the young girl by the hand. Olivia gives Jeremy a hug.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Love you, daddy. Wanna dance?

JEREMY

Do I ever? Let's go...

And as Jeremy picks up Olivia, spotting Jennifer looking back at him with a sympathetic look, we move to...

INT. OLIVIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jennifer tucks an exhausted Olivia in bed while Jeremy looks out the window, and checks that it's locked. Then he joins them and kisses Olivia on the forehead. She closes her eyes.

JEREMY
Sweet dreams.

OLIVIA
Love you, mommy, and daddy.

JENNIFER / JEREMY
We love you too.

They turn off her lamp and quietly exit the room together.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy turns to Jennifer as soon as he closes Olivia's door.

JEREMY
I need to talk to Maddie. Will you help me?

JENNIFER
Of course. But why don't we give it two days? I will be off work, and we can both sit down with her?

Off his hesitant look.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
You can work on your manuscript and we can think of a plan together.

Jeremy doesn't look agreeable to her idea.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Trust me.

She's holding her comforting smile. So Jeremy just nods.

EXT. LONG'S MANSION - NIGHT

The Lexus parked in the driveway and lights on in the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Long is playing video games with Sam and his friend when Sasha enters wearing gym gear and opens a bottle of wine.

SASHA

Hi guys.

Alex just ogles Sasha and barely manages a wave.

LONG

Good workout, darling?

SASHA

Yep. How was your day, Sam?

SAM

Well, we got some signs from the campaign office to stick in people's lawns and then went to a fun birthday party.

SASHA

Whose birthday party?

SAM

I don't know, some girl.

Sasha looks up from pouring her glass of wine.

SASHA

Winston? What girl?

Long turns from the sofa and carefully chooses his words.

LONG

The identity of the person who thought he saw something that he didn't see came to light. So... knowing that he is a concerned voter, I visited his home to see if I might be able to answer any questions about the campaign.

SASHA

A surprise visit. And did you?

LONG

Yes, I believe everything is clear between us now.

Off Sasha smiling wide and Long smiling right back.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight illuminates the spacious room through a gap in the curtains. The boys are awake in the bunk bed talking softly.

FRIEND

Dude, your mom is so pretty. She looks like a model.

SAM

She's not my mom. My mom is awesome, but she lives in Catskill.

FRIEND

Oh. When did your parents split up?

SAM

Like, two years ago. They told me that they weren't in love anymore.

FRIEND

My mom said she left my dad coz' he was sick in the head and dangerous.

SAM

Geez. She sounds badass. I like her way better than my fake mom even though she always tries to be nice.

FRIEND

Yeah. My mom called her a fake too.

Off the boys' giggling and hearing footsteps.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, AVERY'S HOUSE - DAY

Avery opens the front door to find Sasha in disguise wearing sunglasses and a wig. She smiles as Sasha heads to the couch.

AVERY

Are we trying something new?

SASHA

May I have a drink?

Avery opens the cabinet and retrieves Scotch and two glasses.

AVERY

What is it?

She sits down on the sofa as Sasha removes her sunglasses to reveal red, puffy eyes. Sasha holds her face in her hands.

SASHA
I'm scared.

AVERY
What? Why?

Sasha lets go of her and leans forward, taking the drink in her hand. A long beat. She downs it and starts talking --

SASHA
During my teens years and into my twenties I was exploited in a sex trafficking ring.

Off Avery's shocked look.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Then Winston came along and paid for sex with me. I told him my story and he took me back to America to have me for himself and essentially saved my life.

Avery's listening intently with tears in her eyes.

SASHA (CONT'D)
He was married to Mallory, Sam's mom, and had multiple infidelities with others until he got caught with me. She asked for a divorce and a hefty sum of money to keep her quiet, but it was worth it.

AVERY
Was it?

Off Sasha's look.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Long and Maddie sitting at the table by the window, his hand stroking her hand. Maddie stares into his striking eyes...

LONG
We hardly talk when we are together. Tell me about you. I know this is our last date, but I would like to know more...

MADDIE

I can tell you that I really care about you, Winston.

LONG

That I know. I care about you, too, but things are just not going to work out. I am so sorry, Maddie.

MADDIE

What do you want to know? I am going to miss you so much.

LONG

Me too, sweetheart. Do you wish to have a family of your own?

MADDIE

Well, I am an auntie. So, I guess that feels like I have a family.

LONG

Yes, I can tell you adore her.

MADDIE

Olivia is the cutest thing. Jeremy and Jennifer...that's his wife...they plan on taking her to Disney soon. But I can't help but think that's not going to happen. I love Jeremy so much, but he makes the most boneheaded decisions.

Off Long's curious look.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Moving to New York just wasn't the right move. I knew it before they came and tried to tell him. I even had a heart-to-heart with Jennifer...you know, just girl talk. But she believed in him. I guess I should have, too.

LONG

Why didn't you?

MADDIE

It's just so hard to believe in Jeremy. Again, he's great. But...I don't know. It's like this whole thing with you. He truly believes you killed that hooker.

(MORE)

MADDIE (CONT'D)

But everyone and their mom knows it couldn't have been you. You have it made.

LONG

(laughs)

Made?

MADDIE

Yeah. You're pretty much perfect-people truly believe you can walk on water. This is New York, for God's sakes. People don't just jump on a bandwagon like that...especially for a senator. But you...you're different.

LONG

Do you believe Jeremy?

MADDIE

No, I don't.

Maddie fills her glass of champagne. She takes a sip --

MADDIE (CONT'D)

You want me, don't you?

LONG

Yes. I do, Maddie. How bad do you want me?

MADDIE

I want you more than ever.

Long puts her glass down and slides his hand up her arm.

LONG

Such beautiful skin.

He takes her hand and leads her to the bed. He turns her around and bends her over the edge and lifts her dress.

LONG (CONT'D)

Everything about you is beautiful.

Long runs his fingers down her back and then moves down to penetrate her with his fingers, pushing her panties aside.

MADDIE

I want you to fuck me.

She is moaning and moving her body about.

LONG

I can't.

He continues with one hand and grabs her neck with the other.

LONG (CONT'D)

Too much evidence.

Long leans over and kisses her neck.

MADDIE

Evidence?

But before she can register Long pushes her down and puts both hands around her throat. She struggles but he's strong.

He uses his knee as a lever on her back to choke her harder, and after a few moments, Maddie's body falls limp on the bed.

Long stares at her for a beat when the sound of a PHONE RINGING startles him. It's coming from Maddie's purse.

He gets up and looks at the phone: "JEREMY CALLING..."

And waits until it goes to voicemail. He plays it back --

JEREMY (V.O.)

(over phone)

Hey, sis. I just wanted you to know that I am glad you are coming over tonight. We really need to talk. I am worried about you, Maddie. I just wanted to make sure you are coming. We are going to have a bottle of your favorite Riesling. Well, all right then, see you soon.

Long reaches into his coat pocket for latex gloves and Clorox wipes. He cleans the phone and the other surfaces that he touched in the room.

Then, he takes a letter from his pocket and sits it on the dresser. The envelope reads "HER."

INT. DINING ROOM, JEREMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jeremy and Jennifer eating steak at the table with Olivia.

OLIVIA

Where's aunt Maddie? She's really late. Call her, mommy.

JENNIFER

Jeremy?

He gives Maddie another call and it goes to voicemail.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

It's ok. She is probably working late, Olivia. We will see her soon.

Off Jeremy forcing himself to take a bite of his steak, smiling at olivia as though nothing is wrong.

CUT TO:

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

Jeremy anxiously dials a number on his cell phone.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CHRISTIE'S OFFICE - SAME

Christie answers her RINGING PHONE immediately. She's Maddie's journalist friend who we met earlier in the cafe.

CHRISTIE

Hey, Jeremy. What a surprise?

JEREMY

Yeah. Hey. I'm calling to ask if you've heard from Maddie? She was supposed to come over for dinner the other night and I haven't been able to reach her since. Kinda unlike her...

CHRISTIE

Yeah, totally. But no, I haven't. I know she's got a lot on at work though, so maybe she's caught up.

JEREMY

You're probably right. Thanks.

CHRISTIE

Of course. I'll keep you posted.

Off Christie's curious look.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Jeremy parks and feeds the meter before heading inside.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

He passes the mailboxes and notes Maddie's is overflowing.

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy enters and cautiously closes the door behind him.

JEREMY

Maddie? You home?

Although it's fancy, it's only a one-bedroom apartment, so it doesn't take him long to look around...

Nothing looks unusual or out of place.

Off Jeremy leaving the apartment looking beyond concerned.

CUT TO:

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

Jeremy on the phone waiting for someone to answer his call.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

(over phone, filtered)

New York Times, how can I help you?

JEREMY

My name is Jeremy Wright and I haven't been able to reach my sister Maddie for a few days.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

We haven't see her since last Friday I'm afraid. We left a message with her emergency contact.

JEREMY

Who's that?

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

Mr. Jason Wright.

JEREMY

Yes. My father. Except he's on holiday with my mom so I doubt they are glued to the phone.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

If I hear anything I will call you.

JEREMY

Thank you. I really appreciate it.

Jeremy takes off fast when the traffic light turns green.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

The sign out front: "WOMEN'S SAFE HOUSE." Jeremy's car pulls up and he hops out and enters the two-story brick building.

INT. COMMON AREA - CONTINUOUS

Senator Long talking to a group of women. Jeremy beelines toward him erratically pushing some of them to the side.

LONG

And with that promise, comes great responsibility, but I can assure--

Jeremy punches him in the left jaw and he stumbles back.

JEREMY

Where is she you sick fucking psycho?! What did you do with my sister?

Long stands up straight and holds his jaw.

LONG

What are you talking about, Mr. Wright? Is your family in trouble?

But before Jeremy can respond the security team restrain him.

JEREMY

Don't you ever talk about my family again.

He breaks free from security just enough to shove the senator one more time.

The women are SCREAMING and trying to leave.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Where is Maddie, you asshole?

LONG

Maddie? Maddie Wright? She was just on the news. Didn't you see it? So awful. They found her body in a hotel with a note. It said it was an extreme sexual encounter with a woman. Officers...let him go. He is distraught and I don't blame him.

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

I am so sorry, Jeremy.

Jeremy turns his head to see Sasha. A beat. Then, he grabs his face in despair. He begins crying in front of everyone.

LONG

I'm sorry, too.

Long gently puts his hand on Jeremy's shoulder for the crowd.

Jeremy uses his last piece of strength to push his hand away.

JEREMY

I know you did it. I will prove it.

And as Jeremy is escorted out the police, Long holding his intense look, we see Sasha now looking remorseful.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY, POLICE STATION - DAY

Jeremy shakily picking up the phone to make his one call.

JEREMY

(on the phone)

It's me. I'm in jail. I need you to talk to Dale. My little sister is gone. Long killed her. I know he did. This is all my fault. Please...just do what I ask. I know it may not make sense.

Jeremy hangs up and is escorted by an officer down the hall.

INT. KITCHEN, JEREMY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer sitting at the table with her phone in tears.

INT. CELL, POLICE STATION - NIGHT

An officer appears and taps his key on the bar to get Jeremy's attention. He's sitting with his head in his hands.

OFFICER
You have a visitor.

Jeremy looks up to see Jennifer looking distraught.

JENNIFER
I posted bail. You should be out within the hour.

JEREMY
Where's Olivia?

JENNIFER
Seriously, Jeremy? I am not going to bring her in here and see you like this. She is with our neighbor, Kim. I wanted to give you this.

Jeremy sees an envelope in her trembling hand.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Dale was able to get a copy. I already read it. I don't believe any of it. I believe Senator Long killed her. I believe you, Jeremy.

Jennifer hands Jeremy the letter from the hotel.

He looks down at it and she kisses his forehead between the bars.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
I'll be waiting for you outside.

Jennifer leaves and Jeremy unfolds the copy of the note.

INSERT - THE LETTER, which reads:

"To whom it may concern.

This is my confession. Maddie was my partner of four months but no one knew because we were ashamed. We loved each other very much and planned to live together. Sometimes we practiced EA, and today it got out of hand. I did not kill her.

(MORE)

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

I WOULD NEVER. She passed out and I tried to revive her, and after knowing she had died, I tried to kill myself. But I couldn't. Please don't blame me I loved her very much. I am so sorry, Mads.

Love, Her."

He crumbles the letter and throws it across the cell.

MALE VOICE (O.C.)

Heartfelt, really.

Jeremy turns back to find Senator Long standing there.

JEREMY

What are you doing here?

LONG

I came to file my assault charge against you. Paps will be extinct when I get done. You went too far.

JEREMY

You're wrong. Sick guys like you don't deserve to live and need to be exposed. Did your wife write that note? After all, Sasha is an expert on girl on girl action.

Off Long's baffled look.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

You didn't know?

LONG

Know what?

JEREMY

About Sasha's affair with Avery.

Long starts laughing and shakes his head.

LONG

Avery Reed?

Jeremy slowly steps closer to Long who's outside the gate.

JEREMY

Yes, sir. Your campaign assistant is giving your trophy wife multiple orgasms. I saw them together, and it was fucking hot. I have video.

Long's face is twitching with anger as Jeremy smiles wide.

LONG

Well, aren't you just an invaluable source of information today, Mr. Wright. Thank you. I will add trespassing and stalking to the list of charges. The defamation lawsuit is up next.

JEREMY

I'll kill you when I'm out of here.

LONG

And now threats.

Jeremy looks straight at him, Long looking right back. Then --

LONG (CONT'D)

I have intel on you too, Jeremy Wright. You're broke, you're getting fired, your wife is back at work, and you've been fighting with your sister. Did you kill Maddie?

Jeremy lunges through the bars at Long but he steps back.

LONG (CONT'D)

It doesn't look good for you.

Long aims his gaze toward the surveillance camera on the wall.

LONG (CONT'D)

But, on the other hand, I am going to be re-elected. Good evening.

And with that he walks away as guards rush down the hallway towards Jeremy's cell.

INT. KICHEN, LONG MANSION - NIGHT

Sasha serving the dishes of salmon with vegetables, along with wine and French bread.

She sits opposite Long at the table by the window, the view of the city skyline beyond.

LONG

I visited Mr. Wright in jail when I filed my report earlier. He had a lot of interesting things to say.

Sasha pours the wine and replies without looking at Long.

SASHA
Such as?

LONG
That he saw you and Avery Reed
having sex. Is that true?

She doesn't even flinch as she offers the glass to Long.

SASHA
Does he have proof?

Long SLAMS his hand on the table.

LONG
Is it true?

Sasha remains in the same position holding out the glass.

SASHA
He doesn't, does he?

LONG
He said he did.

He looks remorseful and gently takes the glass.

SASHA
Yes. We were together. I thought it
odd when her neighbor's dog was
barking. That fucking paparazzi.

LONG
We can't have this, Sasha. It's
careless. She needs to go away.

SASHA
I have already handled Avery.

LONG
I mean it.

SASHA
And I mean stay away from her,
Winston. If you hurt her in any
way, I will expose you.

Long laughs and casually sips his glass of wine.

LONG
Expose what, whore? Did you forget
where you're from? Want to go back?

He's holding her look, intense. Sasha just shakes her head.

INT. CAMPAIGN OFFICE - DAY

The team is swarming around as usual and monitoring the TV.

CAMPAIGNER

The campaign is going great ever
since the rumors were debunked.

LONG

Good to hear. But keep going hard.

CAMPAIGNER

Yes, sir.

Sasha walks past Avery into her office without even a nod.

LONG

I'll be back in a few hours.

Avery watches him leave and then enters Sasha's office.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Sasha looks up from her desk to see Avery in the doorway.

AVERY

What's going on?

SASHA

Close the door and sit down.

Avery perches on the chair in front of her huge desk.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Winston knows about us and so does
the paparazzi guy.

Off Avery's shocked look.

SASHA (CONT'D)

I will explain everything later,
but can I stay with you tonight? I
am afraid of him right now. And I
am afraid of what I might do to
him.

AVERY

He's no good to you dead. Sam would
get everything. We have a plan.

SASHA

I know.

Off Sasha looking at her knowingly.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM, JEREMY'S HOUSE - DAY

Jeremy dressed in a black suit adjusting his tie in the mirror. He looks depressed but has at least managed to shave today.

Jennifer is sitting on the edge of the bed dressed in a simple black dress, putting on her black heels. It's eerily quiet.

Olivia appears in the doorway looking distraught. The NANNY arrives behind her, looking helpless like she tried to keep her occupied but failed miserably.

OLIVIA

Please let me say goodbye to Maddie. I miss her so much.

JENNIFER

I don't know, honey.

OLIVIA

Please?

JEREMY

This is grownup stuff, baby girl.

Olivia starts crying and rushes over to hug Jeremy. He looks over her head to Jennifer and she resigns to nodding 'yes.'

EXT. FUNERAL SITE - DAY

The memorial service has concluded with family, Christie, and colleagues in attendance. Jennifer is comforting Olivia when Dale sees Jeremy standing alone by a tree and heads over...

DALE

Maddie was a great gal, Jeremy. So smart, beautiful, and a hell of a Riesling drinker.

Jeremy manages a half smile while staring at the mourners.

DALE (CONT'D)

I remember when you asked me to hire her for her first job. You told me I wouldn't regret it. She was so young and vibrant. You were both so good. She had different aspirations. And she made it.

JEREMY

She was a lot better than me.

DALE

I wouldn't say that. You lost your column because you got lazy. You lost your fucking edge. What happened?

JEREMY

What the fuck, Dale? Just beat me down even more.

DALE

Sorry, Wright. But it's true. I gave you the paparazzi job because you fucked up the column, and it was all I could offer you. But I'm still waiting for results.

JEREMY

I know. I am doing my best.

He looks down ashamed.

DALE

Get Long and get him good.

Jeremy looks up confused.

DALE (CONT'D)

I have always had my suspicions about the senator, which is why I gave him to you. Take the asshole down.

Dale puts his hand on his shoulder and then walks away.

INT. LIVING ROOM, JEREMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Olivia cuddled up in between her parents on the sofa. She's eating popcorn and watching a movie. They talk over her head.

JENNIFER

I saw you and Dale talking. How did that go?

JEREMY

It was awkward. He was supportive and wants me to go after Long.

JENNIFER

So what now?

JEREMY

Avenge my sister.

Jeremy looks back to the TV. Wheels turning in his head.

Off Jennifer's concerned look.

CUT TO:

EXT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY

Jennifer exits with Olivia wearing a tutu. Something catches her eye. Sees... Avery walking into the gay bar next door.

INT. GAY BAR - CONTINUOUS

Dale staring at a football game on the TV while drinking bourbon at happy hour. The BARTENDER tidies up nearby.

BARTENDER

How's the bourbon, Dale?

DALE

Perfect. Thanks, Pete.

He smiles back and Dale checks out his ass as he walks away.

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

Can I get one of those?

Dale turns to see Avery Reed taking the next bar seat. He rolls his eyes and turns his focus back to the game.

BARTENDER

Coming right up.

Avery swivels to face Dale.

AVERY

So, Dale, crazy times, right?

DALE

Senator Long is doing great. He should get re-elected.

AVERY

Oh, I am not worried about that. Our puppet is right on course.

Other lesbians are staring at Avery in her hot skirt suit.

DALE

What do you want, Avery? I know you're not here to pick up.

Dale downs his drink and gestures to Peter for another.

AVERY

Jeremy knows about Sasha and me. He took pictures for fuck's sake.

JEREMY

He dropped his camera in a puddle of water. He's a fucking idiot.

AVERY

You knew and didn't tell us?

JEREMY

Relax. The guy is harmless. He'll do whatever I say- he's broke.

AVERY

Fine. Keep him away from us and that asshole Long will get his.

Dale shrugs and looks to the TV.

Avery downs her drink, leaves a \$20 bill on the bar, and winks at her female admirers on the way out.

EXT. GAY BAR - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer looking in the window having seen Avery with Dale.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - STATIONARY - DAY

Jeremy's cell phone ringing on the seat: "JENNIFER CALLING."

EXT. BARN, NEW JERSEY - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy using all his might to sling a sledgehammer to break the lock. The doors are freed, and Jeremy enters the barn.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy puts on latex gloves to search the Honda. Nothing. He gets out and slams the door, his foot catching on something.

Jeremy gets on his knees and wipes away the hay. Sees...

An entire wood flooring that has a door with a latch.

He opens the door to find a 4x6 wooden box that contains cash wads, jewelry, photos, and 'trinkets' including Maddie's pen.

He takes the GOLD PEN in his hand and tears drop freely.

Jeremy puts it back and sees the other trinkets belong to other girls, namely an engraved gold necklace: "Rebecca."

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - DAY

Jeremy sees the missed calls from Jennifer on his phone but frantically hits a different contact button: "DALE BRAUN."

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. DALE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dale closing the door while he's talking on his phone.

DALE

(on the phone)

Look, Jeremy, let us get out there first to get pictures and film everything we can before the cops get a hold of it. Let's get the story, and then I will call the cops, okay?

JEREMY

OK. I'll text you the address. And then I'm gonna pay Long a visit.

CLICK! Dale recoils at Jeremy ending the call.

Jeremy dials Jennifer's number.

Dale sits at his desk and makes a call.

INT. JEREMY'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

Jeremy speeding on the highway heading back to Manhattan.

EXT. CAMPAIGN OFFICE - DAY

Jeremy slows and sees that Long's Lexus isn't there today.

EXT. MANSION - SUNSET

Jeremy's car parked at the curb with a puddle of dirty water under the right tire, the engine running. We push into --

THE WINDSHIELD AND SEE

Jeremy with disheveled hair looking completely unhinged.

JEREMY

Sick fuck's probably sitting in his office inhaling bourbon.

Now we've caught up to the OPENING SCENE and continue...

The AC is full blast but Jeremy's sweating profusely, his eyes darting left and right --

JEREMY'S POV

The mansion with its beautifully cut lawn and flower beds lining a paved walkway and lit up like a Christmas tree.

BACK

Jeremy staring at the mansion with a disgusted look.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Worrying about fuck all.

The truck engine SPUTTERS --

JEREMY (CONT'D)

What? Fuck me...

It takes one last gasp before conking out. Jeremy tries to restart the engine but it's dead.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Fuuucck.

He pounds the steering wheel and then frantically tries to start it again. He gives up and looks at the mansion. A beat.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

You've come this far.

Without wasted motion Jeremy reaches into his briefcase on the passenger seat and retrieves an impressive Glock 9mm gun.

Despite trembling hands he manages to rack the slide and chambers a round before hastily getting out of the car.

EXT. STREET, MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy bolting across the street and hopping over the flowerbed on the walkway. He reaches the front entrance.

Jeremy KNOCKS and hides the gun behind his back.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Sasha emerges from the living room and opens the front door.

JEREMY

I am here to see Winston.

SASHA

Jeremy! You shouldn't be here.

JEREMY

I know. Please get him.

SASHA

You need to leave. I mean it. I will call the police.

Sasha tries to close the door but Jeremy uses his hand to force it open and step inside. He points the gun at Sasha and shuts the door. She SCREAMS and is frozen in her tracks.

Long comes around the corner of a wall fast and sees Jeremy holding Sasha with one arm and the gun to her head with the other.

Sasha starts crying hysterically.

LONG

Come on, Jeremy. Let Sasha go. She has nothing to do with this. Then we can talk.

Long puts his hands up in the air.

Jeremy inches back to the front door with Sasha and opens it a crack.

JEREMY

Get out of here, Sasha. Now.

Sasha does just that and he pulls the door shut.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I found your barn in New Jersey where you keep your everyman's car to troll the streets looking for prostitutes that you can murder.

LONG

You've really lost your mind, haven't you? I feel sorry for you, Jeremy.

Off Jeremy's indignant look.

LONG (CONT'D)

What would Maddie think knowing that you would make up such heinous lies just to get a story? Then again, she did mention how disappointed she was that you weren't further ahead in life for the sake of your wife and daughter.

Jeremy charges Long knocking him through the doorway and onto the ground in the living room. The gun leaves his hands --

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They begin fighting and both struggle to get away from one another to get the gun nearby in the doorway. They're throwing punches, choking, biting, smashing antique vases and overturning large family heirlooms all over the living room.

Jeremy picks up a standing lamp, turning it horizontally in his hands to pin Long against the wall.

CLOSE ON the way Jeremy now looks at Long -- a mix of disgust and rage -- makes this grown man cower. Jeremy is right in his face pressing on his chest.

LONG

You don't have to do this, Jeremy. We can work something out. Money. A job. Respect. All the things you're lacking in your sad, pitiful life.

And now Jeremy's looking right through him.

JEREMY

I also found the wooden box hidden under the floorboards that holds pictures of my sister and her pen.

Long is horrified.

Jeremy is livid, spitting it all out.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

You killed her and took her pen as a trophy along with all the others.

LONG

You really should be a novelist.

JEREMY

How old was Rebecca?

Off Long's look.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

How many other women, Senator Long?

And now he just waits for Long to answer the question in his grip. But Long just looks straight at Jeremy, him looking right back at Long. It's a stand off. Finally Long answers.

LONG

Five.

JEREMY

You say it like it's nothing. Five women taken away from their families including my sister, you fucking sick monster.

LONG

Yes. And just so you know, Maddie was the one that put out the most.

Deep down he's thinking Jeremy doesn't have any guts.

LONG (CONT'D)

So eager to please. As it were.

Jeremy hurls his forehead into Long's face, CRACKING HIS NOSE so hard that BLOOD SPURTS across the wall and the floor.

Long regains his footing and knocks the bookshelf over to block Jeremy's way.

Long manages to get the GUN from the floor.

Now Long's standing there pointing the gun at Jeremy's head as Jeremy lays on his back, breathing hard and grunting in pain.

LONG (CONT'D)

The police will never know about me. You are the bad guy here.

JEREMY

And you're the murderer. So do it--

THE FRONT DOOR CRASHES OPEN

Detectives Mosby and Heaney lead an armed team into the foyer instantly assessing the situation.

Long with a smashed face holding the gun -- Jeremy looking like the crazy perp who forced his way into the mansion.

Sasha appears in the doorway behind the police.

Long looks to her with astonishment as she mouths the words behind the police so that only he can see: "I LOVE YOU."

LONG

(to the officers)

I'm grateful that you got here so fast. I need to get to a hospital.

A VOICE RECORDING STARTS PLAYING ON SPEAKER ON JEREMY'S CELL

RECORDING (V.O.)

(on phone, filtered)

Jeremy: I also found the wooden box hidden under the floorboards that holds pictures of my sister and her pen. You killed her and took her pen as a trophy along with all the others. Long: You really should be a novelist. Jeremy: How many other women, Senator Long?

In the pause the officers exchange a sickened look.

RECORDING (V.O.)

Long: Five. Jeremy: You say it like it's nothing. Five women taken away from their families including my sister, you fucking sick monster. Long: Yes. And just so you know, Maddie was the one that put out the most. So eager to please. As it were.

Sasha is dumbfounded as they hear the NOSE CRACK and SCUFFLE.

RECORDING (V.O.)

Long: The police will never know
about me. You are the bad guy here.

JEREMY

And you're the murderer.

Jeremy stops the recording and rests his head on the floor.

Long stands there frozen and totally stunned as we pull back through the destruction in the foyer and out the door, passing a white-faced Sasha, and up to the dark sky...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. BARN, SOMEWHERE - NIGHT

Dale and his minion paparazzi and journalists getting out of their cars and a camera van in front of a dilapidated barn.

Except it's NOT THE BARN that belongs to Senator Long.

Dale glances around before opening the barn doors, looking very pleased with himself, and excitedly enters...

DALE

Wait here until I say when.

EXT. LONG'S BARN - SAME

POLICE CARS and the FORENSICS TEAM arriving at the right barn... They are ordered by the lead chief to seal the area.

INT. BARN, SOMEWHERE - SAME

Dale frantically sweeping away the hay getting frustrated by the second at not finding any floorboards or a wooden box.

DALE

Motherfucker!

INT. FOYER, MANSION - NIGHT

Long being escorted out of the house in handcuffs behind his back. He turns to the officers with a pleading last look.

LONG

May I say goodbye to my wife?

The officers exchange a look, seeing Sasha is distraught, and reluctantly nod their permission for Long to have a moment.

SASHA

I can't, Winston.

Long steps toward her and leans in to briefly whisper something into her ear that we do not hear.

Off Sasha's look, her face betraying nothing, we move to...

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

SEVERAL COP CARS and an AMBULANCE in the driveway. The road has been blocked off to prevent any press or nosy neighbors.

As Jeremy is being wheeled out on a gurney and loaded into the ambulance we see his blue Tundra parked right outside.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Light beaming through the windows... A nurse adjusting the fluid bag as Long sleeps in the bed, his face bandaged.

Sasha appears smiling with flowers and a bottle of wine.

SASHA

Looks like he's out cold.

NURSE

I'm sure he'll appreciate seeing those presents when he wakes up.

Sasha sets the gifts down on the nightstand and exits with the nurse. A beat. Then -- Long's eyes snap open.

EXT. HALLWAY, HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

The door opens and Long steps out dressed in casual gear and a cap, obviously trying to escape. Then, he stops. Sees...

Detectives Mosby and Heaney staring right back at him.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS -- A.M. DELIVERY

- Bundles of newspapers delivered to a newsstand.
- Deliveries made to office buildings.
- An individual newspaper left on a porch.

We move in closer and see WINSTON LONG on the front page.

THE HEADLINE: "SERIAL KILLER SENATOR."

The door opens and two male feet in house slippers enter the frame followed by a hand reaching down to pick up the newspaper.

The sudden sound of CAMERAS CLICKING and PAPS YELLING --

Jeremy stands there dumbfounded with the newspaper in his hand taking in the CHAOS that is happening in his front yard.

There are NEWS CREWS and PAPARAZZI and REPORTERS everywhere.

REPORTER #1

How does it feel to catch a killer?

REPORTER #2

Can you give us a statement Mr. Wright?

PAPARAZZI #1

Over here, Jeremy!

PAPARAZZI #2

How about one with the family?

Just as Jeremy's feeling like a superstar, eyes darting all over the place, something catches his eye. Stops. Sees...

A TOW TRUCK WITH JEREMY'S SHITBOX TUNDRA ON THE FLATBED

The reporters follow Jeremy's amused gaze at the sight.

Behind the truck is a police escort -- it's Mosby and Heaney.

They exit the car and push their way through the throng of reporters and neighbors.

JEREMY

Morning, detectives.

HEANEY

Good to see you, Jeremy.

She extends her hand to give Jeremy a handshake.

MOSBY

Well done.

And also shakes his hand.

MOSBY (CONT'D)

We're sorry that we weren't more helpful when you first came to us.

Jeremy looks indifferent.

HEANEY

Thank you for bravely risking your life for those of other vulnerable women.

JEREMY

I'm happy to see justice served.

The tow truck is lowering the beat up Tundra into the driveway in front of where Jeremy is standing with the officers.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

And my shitbox truck.

They share a laugh as the paparazzi relish the photo opportunity to capture the hero underdog.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Now, if you'll excuse me...

He opens the door of the Tundra and retrieves Olivia's cartoon backpack.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

My daughter is a little behind on her homework.

More laughs as Jeremy slings it over his shoulder.

And as Jeremy smiles, giving a general wave before vanishing inside the house, we move to...

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer appears in her robe looking half asleep as she approaches Jeremy.

JENNIFER

What's going on out there, hun?

Jeremy shrugs, smiling wide.

JEREMY

Oh. Just the paparazzi.

Off Jennifer's equally shocked and amused look.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

And they delivered my Rolls.

He playfully rolls his eyes.

JENNIFER

Olivia will be pleased to have her school bag back. Minus the old sandwich.

JEREMY

Not as pleased as I am.

Jeremy opens the bag and holds it open for her to see...

JENNIFER

Jeremy?

Off Jennifer covering her mouth with surprise.

CUT TO:

THE SUN

Shining through a blue sky filled with capering clouds.

PANNING DOWN

Passing the DISNEY WORLD SIGN perched in the sky -- gloriously bright in all its whiteness.

PANNING FURTHER DOWN UNTIL

We stop at the front of the climbing roller coaster named 'Space Mountain' where Olivia sits excitedly between Jeremy and Jennifer.

Then, the DROP --

THE FAMILY SCREAMING AND LAUGHING WITH THEIR HANDS UP

We FREEZE FRAME on the fun snapshot that becomes a polaroid.

INT. GAY BAR - DAY

Dale looks shit-faced and miserable. He looks up to find Sasha standing right there. She doesn't look impressed.

SASHA
So, let's go get the money, shall we?

DALE
What money?

Sasha's head tilts, not in the mood for games.

SASHA
The money you stole from the trinkets box before the police showed up.

Dale shakes his head and picks up his drink.

DALE
I don't know what you're talking about. Once again that fucking idiot Wright couldn't even get an address right.

Off Sasha's incredulous look. Then --

SASHA
Idiot? Or genius?

Off Dale's look.

CUT TO:

EXT. THEME PARK - DAY

Jeremy, Jennifer, and Olivia getting off the roller coaster looking a little shell-shocked.

OLIVIA
I think we should do that again.

As her parents exchange a nervous glance someone's phone starts RINGING in their pocket. It's Jeremy's phone...

Jennifer frowns as he retrieves it from his pocket.

JEREMY
Just a sec...might be important.

Jeremy looks curiously at the caller ID: "UNKNOWN."

JENNIFER
Who is it?

JEREMY
Not sure.

He answers the call.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
Hello?

Jeremy listening intently... then hanging up white-faced.

JENNIFER
Who was it?

JEREMY
The CEO of The New York Times.

Jennifer excitedly flaps at him to share the news.

JENNIFER
Really? Wow. What did he want?

JEREMY
To offer me my own column --

Jennifer's mouth drops open.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
Effective immediately.

Jennifer smiles and practically jumps onto Jeremy. Olivia joins in the group hug and they share an excited laugh.

Off the trio heading off linking arms toward the next ride.

FADE OUT.