

1 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE MANOR HOUSE - DAWN 1

The grounds of a New England manor. Pre-dawn misty.

2 INT. MANOR - PANTRY - LIVING ROOM - FOYER - HALLWAY - DAWN 2

INSIDE THE MANOR

Unlit and still. Gothic with a theme of antique games, arcane puzzles and decorative weapons.

First floor: A drawing room, living room, kitchen. The detritus of a party. Stray champagne flutes.

3 INT. THROMBEY ESTATE - 2ND FLOOR - DAWN 3

Follow one housekeeper named FRAN carrying a tray of coffee up a flight of stairs.

Second floor: a hallway, doors all closed. The house has not woken up, and Fran steps lightly. Up a much narrower creaky flight of steep stairs.

4 INT. THROMBEY ESTATE - 3RD FLOOR MASTER BEDROOM - DAWN 4

Third floor: the master bedroom suite.

FRAN
Morning Mr Thrombey

But the bed is empty, unslept in. A robe thrown across it.

Fran heads out onto the landing and UP an EVEN NARROWER half flight of stairs, which leads to a single door.

FRAN
Mr Thrombey you up there? Mr
Thrombey I'm coming in

5 INT. HARLAN THROMBEY'S STUDY - DAWN 5

A cramped attic study, every shelf crammed with curios.

The door swings open and Fran sees:

HARLAN THROMBEY himself. 85 years old. Slung across a white leather day bed.

Throat slit. Drenched in blood. Very much dead.
 Fran's tray slips out of her hands for a second.

FRAN

Shit.

CUT TO: Title card, on black.

THEN TO:

6 INT. MARTA'S BEDROOM - MORNING 6

MARTA CABRERA wakes with a cry.

Plain, modern, cramped. Marta, in her late twenties, takes a moment to catch her breath. Opens a window.

7 EXT. SOUTH BOSTON HOUSING PROJECT - MORNING 7

A tiny window in a cheap apartment building opens, Marta's face appears breathing deep.

SUPER: "ONE WEEK - after Harlan Thrombey's demise"

8 INT. CABRERA KITCHEN - MORNING 8

Marta sits in front of a laptop. Her MOM is at the table with her, her sister ALICE watches CSI on an iPad on the counter top. Murder related dialog from the show.

Marta scroll through a jobs site, tired, eyes dead. Her mom watches, concerned.

MOM

Alice, turn that off now.

ALICE

Why it's almost over, what - they're finding out who did it and the wifi sucks in my room so it doesn't play it's like two minutes left what there isn't even anything bad on it, it's just normal tv and they're just talking ok ok goddddd whatever ok whatever.

MOM

Now please just turn it off. Turn it off. Now. Alice. Off. They're talking about murder on it, your

sister just had a friend she loves
slit his throat open she doesn't
need to be hearing that right now
let's be sensitive!

Mom standing yelling, Alice slams the iPad cover closed.

Marta puts her head in her hand. Looks at her mom, who looks back at her with protective sympathy. Marta starts laughing at the absurdity of it, but the laugh turns into crying.

MARTA

Alice you can keep watching your
show it's alright.

ALICE

No, I guessed who did it anyway. I'm
sorry Marta.

Alice hugs her sister. Marta's phone rings. WALT THROMBEY.

MARTA

It's Harlan's son.
(answers)
Hi, Walt.
(listens)
Uh huh.

Her face shifts in confusion.

MARTA

What?

9 EXT. PRIVATE ROAD - LATE MORNING

9

A long narrow private road leading to the Thrombey estate.
Marta's shitty SUBCOMPACT car buzzes by, towards the house.

10 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE FRONT DRIVE

10

Several cars, including a police cruiser with a few uniformed officers by it. Marta pulls up. An officer eyes her, approaches.

COP

Hey! Excuse me ma'am. Are you with
the help?

MEG, Thrombey's college aged granddaughter, trots out.

MEG

Hey! Her name is Marta, she was granddad's nurse, she's with us. "The help?".

MARTA
(to the cop)
It's ok, sorry.

MEG
(mutters)
No. It's not ok. What the hell?

They hug, and are both instantly crying. They laugh.

MARTA
Not very good. Alone, lots of just, this
(the crying)
and not knowing what to do next.

MEG
Anything you need, you're part of this family Marta.

MARTA
Thank you.

11 INT. FOYER

11

Thrombey's eldest daughter Linda opens the door for Marta.

LINDA
How you doing kiddo.

Linda is 60ish, well put together, sharp and steely eyed.

She dresses and speaks with just a little more sharpness than any situation she's in requires.

MARTA
Hi Linda. How are you?

LINDA
Ueuh. The funeral helped. I guess. Just seeing him. I thought you should have been there. I was out voted.

Linda's husband Richard walks in, on the phone. Same age as Linda, gruff and confident, will put his feet up on anything.

RICHARD (ON PHONE)

I'm not the cop so I don't know.
Alright fine, don't come, get
arrested. Die up your own ass all I
care.

(hangs up)
He's not coming.

RICHARD (ON PHONE)
(to Marta)
Ransom. Little shit. Missed the
funeral.

STATE TROOPER WAGNER, fresh faced in his 30s, pokes his head
in through a door.

TROOPER WAGNER
Excuse me, we're ready for you now,
we'd like to see you one at a time.

LINDA
Alright I'll go first. I'm assuming
this will all be wrapped up before
the memorial tonight.

TROOPER WAGNER
We'll do our best ma'am.

Linda exits with Wagner, leaving Richard and Marta.

RICHARD
So. How you doing kiddo.

12 INT. LIBRARY

12

Mystery and horror memorabilia scattered on the shelves.

Linda sits opposite three men: LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT, in his
30s, in a working suit. Very good at his job. The young
Trooper Wagner stands behind him.

Sitting back behind both of them, almost blending into the
background, is a slight man in a linen suit. Legs and arms
fold sharply, like a paper crane. Silent, listening.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
We are just going to reintroduce
ourselves as a formality, I'm
Detective Lieutenant Elliott, and
this is Trooper Wagner. Now, I'm
going to record, just makes it
easier.
(squints at his phone)

Alright, we're with Linda Drysdale, nee Thrombey, Harlan Thrombey's eldest daughter, in discussing the events the night of his demise, one week ago, November 8th.

TROOPER WAGNER
We're sorry for your loss.

LINDA
(dry as chalk)
Thank you that means a lot.

Elliott checks his notes.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
So we understand that night the family had gathered to celebrate your father's eighty fifth birthday.

LINDA
Yes.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
How was that?

LINDA
The party? Pre my dad's death? It was great.

13 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT OF THE PARTY - FLASHBACK

13

Warmly lit, classic rock playing, food laid out. Linda and Richard mingle happily with the rest of the family (who we'll meet shortly.)

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT (V.O.)
Did anyone besides the family show face?

LINDA (V.O.)
Uh. There was Fran, the housekeeper. Marta, Harlan's caregiver, good girl, hard worker. Family's from Ecuador. And Wanetta - Greatnana, Harlan's mom.

At the snack table wearing a dozen coats, a woman who might be three hundred years old. She pounds down chips and dip like a machine.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT (V.O.)
(wow)

His mom? How old is she?

LINDA (V.O.)
We have no idea.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT (V.O.)
Okay, Your son Ransom, was he there
as well?

LINDA (V.O.)
Yes but he left early.

RANSOM DRYSDALE, roguishly handsome in his early 30s, breezes
out the side door, past Greatnana.

GREATNANA
Ransom, are you leaving?

14 INT. LIBRARY

14

The strange man in the linen suit taps a piano key, as if
reminding to ask him something.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
Right, did all three of you show up
at around the same time?

LINDA
N...o, Richard came early to help
the caterers set up.

She raises a questioning finger to ask about the man but

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
Okay and you and your husband
Richard work for a real estate firm
in Boston?

LINDA
(sharp)
It's my company.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
(checks notes)
Sorry. Right.

LINDA
I built my business from the ground
up.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
Just like your dad. You two were
very close?

LINDA

We had our own secret way of communicating. You had to find that with dad. You had to find a game to play with him. And if you did that, and played by his rules...

CUT TO: Richard in the chair Linda was in, giving his statement.

RICHARD

Everyone idolizes their dad, right?

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

I don't know, do they?

RICHARD

Very much not, don't know why I said that. But Linda does.

15 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT OF THE PARTY

15

Harlan Thrombey, surrounded by his family, Richard and Linda flanking him, a birthday cake with candles. All smiles.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Harlan started with a rusty Smith-Corona, built himself into one of the bestselling mystery writers of all time.

16 INT. LIBRARY

16

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Seems like all his kids are self made overachievers.

Richard makes a "...sure" face.

RICHARD

Sure.

CUT TO:

WALT THROMBEY now sits in the questioning chair. Late 40s, softly obsequious in a sweater and loafers. His leg is in a cast.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

For the record, I'm speaking to Walt Thrombey, Harlan Thrombey's youngest son.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

So you run your father's publishing company?

WALT

Yeah. It's my - it's our, it's the family's publishing company, dad trusts me to run it. 30 languages, over 80 million copies sold. A real legacy. You guys fans?

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

I don't do much fiction -

TROOPER WAGNER

BIG fan. Big.

TROOPER WAGNER

His plots, like something like "A Thousand Knives," with the - I don't want to spoil it but - the cow and the shotgun, like where do you come up with that?

WALT

Dad said the plots just popped into his head fully formed, that was the easy part for him -

TAP from the linen suit man's finger.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

You live in town, right? You guys probably arrived at around the same time?

Walt looks at Linen suit, thrown.

WALT

Uh. We all got here around 8.

17 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT OF THE PARTY

17

Walt laughing and mingling with his nervous wife DONNA.

WALT (V.O.)

My wife Donna, she's my rock.

Richard backs up into Donna, who YELPS in fear and throws her martini in the air. Richard jumps, but Walt doesn't even register it.

RICHARD

Jeeesus! Donna, you alright?

WALT (V.O.)

And my son Jacob, he's sixteen. Very politically active.

His angry looking son JACOB, who is always on his phone.

18 INT. LIBRARY

18

Quick cuts, each in the chair:

RICHARD

The boy's literally a Nazi

MEG

He's an alt-right troll dipshit

WALT

Kids today, with the internet, amazing.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

So the night went well?

19 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT OF THE PARTY

19

The exact same moment we saw with Richard and Linda of Harlan in front of the birthday cake - but now it's Walt, Donna and Jacob next to Harlan.

WALT (V.O.)

I mean. We're all gutted but I'm happy we got that night with him. To be by his side, to think about our books and what we've accomplished with them, it's like I can still feel his hand on my shoulder.

20 INT. LIBRARY

20

WALT

Passing the torch.

Cut to: JONI THROMBEY in the chair. A striking woman, tall and boho chic in chunky jewelry and a flowy dress.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

So we are with Joni Thrombey, Harlan Thrombey's... daughter in law?

JONI

Mm. I was married to his son Neil,
We had one daughter, Meg, and then
Neil passed on fifteen years ago.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

And you remained close to the
Thrombeys.

21 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT OF THE PARTY

21

Joni dances with various family members, free and flowing.

JONI (V.O.)

Oh they're my family. I feel
simultaneously freed by and
supported by them, that balance of
opposites is the nugget of Flam.

22 INT. LIBRARY - PRESENT

22

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Sorry, the Nugget of?

JONI

Flam.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Ah! Yeah Flam, right, your skin care
company. Sorry.

JONI

I forgive you, yes, it's skin care
but it promotes a total lifestyle.
Self sufficiency with an
acknowledgment of human need. That's
Flam, but it's also Harlan. He got
me and Meg through some tough times.

Meg in the chair.

MEG

Granddad gives my mom a yearly
allowance, and he's never missed
wiring a tuition payment to my
schools. He's a genuinely selfless
man.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

You left his party early?

MEG

To see some friends at Smith.

23 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT OF THE PARTY

23

Meg trots out. Linda, pissed, to Richard so Joni can hear:

LINDA
you know, Dad's paying for her
crypto-Marxist postdeconstructual
feminist poetry theory whatever
major, she could have stuck around
for the cake.

24 INT. LIBRARY

24

JONI
I think Linda was upset. But Harlan
understood.

Tap.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
Right. You two arrived together to
the party at the same time?

Joni looks at the linen suit man.

JONI
If I could - pause - because I, who
is that guy? And why are we doing
all this? Again?

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
Just some follow up questions, just
being thorough, in order to
determine the manner of death.

Cut back to Walt in the chair.

WALT
(almost laughing)
So by "manner of death" you mean if
he was killed. If one of us killed
him. One of his family?

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
None of us think that, this is pro
forma, all of it.

CUT TO: Richard in the chair. He doesn't buy it.

RICHARD

Ok. So who the fuck is that?

He points at linen suit. Elliott takes a breath.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
This is Benoit Blanc.

RICHARD
(the hell?)
Benoit Blanc?

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
Yes. Mr. Blanc is a private
investigator of great renown.

Joni in the chair.

JONI
Wait a minute - I read a tweet about
a New Yorker article about you. The
last of the gentlemen sleuths? You
solved that case with the tennis
champ - you're famous!

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
Mr. Blanc is not with the police
department, he is not officially
involved with the case but he has
offered to consult. I happily
obliged and I can vouch for him.

Linda in the chair.

LINDA
Mr. Blanc, I know who you are, I
read your New Yorker profile. It was
delightful. I just buried my eighty
five year old father who committed
suicide. Why are you here?

Elliott and Wagner turn back to Blanc, who leans forward
slightly and speaks in the gentlest southern lilt you have
ever heard in your life.

BLANC
I am here at the behest of a client.

LINDA
Who?

BLANC
I cannot say, but let me assure you
this: my presence will be
ornamental.

BLANC

You will find me a respectful,
quiet, passive observer. Of the
truth.

Elliott and Wagner turn nervously back to Linda. She doesn't
look thrilled. Cut to Richard.

RICHARD

Fine. Are we getting there?

BLANC

Nearly. Harlan's nurse. She was at
the party in a professional
capacity?

Blanc begins idly playing with a silver dollar.

RICHARD

Marta?

25 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT OF THE PARTY

25

The family is engaged in an animated discussion, Marta
standing on the outskirts.

RICHARD (V.O.)

I guess. Harlan hired her to be
around, take care of whatever
medical needs pop up, but really
she's like part of the family.

Richard beckons with his cake, calls Marta into the
discussion, into the circle of the family.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Good kid, been a good friend to
Harlan. Her family's from Paraguay.
Linda really likes her work ethic.

26 INT. LIBRARY

26

RICHARD

"Immigrants - we get the job done."
From Hamilton.

Wagner gives him a smile to show he got the reference.

TROOPER WAGNER

Oh Hamilton!

RICHARD

I saw it at the public.

Cut to Linda back in the chair.

BLANC

May I just - and then I'll recede,
but as a self made man myself I have
to express my admiration for how
you've followed in your father's
footsteps.

LINDA

Thank you.

BLANC

Just marvelous. The whole family
too. Joni with her things, Walt with
his publishing empire.

LINDA

Well.

Blanc pauses. Doesn't push anything. Just waits a moment.

LINDA

Yes. I mean. Walt, yeah. He's done
well with what dad's given him. Walt
- not like it matters but he was
sort of adrift, dad gave him the
job, but really dad hands him a book
twice a year and Walt publishes it,
I mean... it's just not the same.

BLANC

But surely Walt runs the
merchandising, adaptations, film and
television rights...

Linda squints, narrowing her eyes on Blanc. Softly:

LINDA

Are you baiting me, Detective? You
know he doesn't, and you think I'm
dumb enough to be baited into
talking family business, into shit
talking my brother in front of a
police detective and a state trooper

-

Richard in the chair.

RICHARD

Walt doesn't run shit! There are no
film or TV rights, Harlan's never

allowed any adaptations of his books. Hates the idea.

BLANC

No!

RICHARD

Oh yeah! Drives Walt nuts, cause that's where the real money's at. When he gets a little Irish courage in him he'll get into it with Harlan.

BLANC

Did he get "into it" at the party?

RICHARD

Oh my god.

27 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT OF THE PARTY

27

Walt with a drink in his hand has cornered Harlan. Richard watches across the room as Walt goes from arguing to pleading.

RICHARD (V.O.)

He wouldn't leave him alone, poor guy. Harlan had to give him the hook.

Harlan has had enough, he takes Walt's arm and leads him into the drawing room for a private talk.

RICHARD (V.O.)

I didn't hear what he said but he must have really handed him his lunch, Walt was like a wounded puppy the rest of the night.

28 INT. LIBRARY

28

Walt in the chair, indignant.

WALT

What? Richard said what? Jesus. No, we didn't get "into it."

BLANC

I'm just trying to get an accurate impression - Harlan took you aside at the party, when you returned you

were chastened, what did Harlan say to you?

Walt starts to open his mouth, hesitates. Off his frightened face we FLASH BACK:

29 INT. DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT OF THE PARTY

29

Walt, drunk, Harlan guiding him firmly into the shadows.

WALT

The Netflix guys, their business affairs guy sent over something, hard numbers this time, and I think - this is a window, it's not Walt. going to last and you should just look at these numbers

HARLAN

Walt. Walt.

WALT

Dad you put me in charge of our books let me be in charge, let me do this! Please.

HARLAN

They're not our books, son. They're my books. And this is not how I wanted to have this conversation but, you're right, it's unfair of me to keep you tethered to something that isn't yours to control.

WALT

What?

HARLAN

I've done you a grave disservice all these years, I've kept you from building something of your own, that's yours. You're not going to run the publishing house anymore. You are free of it.

WALT

Dad. Are you firing me?

HARLAN

We'll talk about details tomorrow. But my mind's made up. Good boy.

Harlan pats his face, then leaves him shell shocked.

30 INT. LIBRARY**30**

Back to Walt's hesitating face. The briefest of moments has passed. Walt lies:

WALT

We talked, we had a business discussion, about e-books, Jesus, it was nothing. You want to talk about an argument, hell Ransom had an argument with him.

BLANC

Ransom, Richard and Linda's son?

WALT

Look we love Ransom, he is a good kid, we love him.

BLANC

...but

WALT

But he's always been the black sheep of the family, and I'm not, I, I keep stuff like this in the family, but with Ransom, he's never had a job. But dad for some unknown reason has always supported him, they've got this love hate bond. They fight. But that night, god. They had a blow out.

BLANC

About what?

31 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT OF THE PARTY**31**

The family having a conversation, everyone but Harlan, Jacob and Ransom. It grinds to a halt as through the door to Harlan's study indistinct shouting booms.

WALT (V.O.)

We couldn't make it out, but it was huge. And it was strange they went in another room to do it - they usually love stoking up drama in front of the whole family.

Ransom bursts out of the doors and storms out of the party, past Greatnana.

GREATNANA

Ransom are you leaving?

32 INT. LIBRARY

32

Richard in the chair.

BLANC

Speaking of getting into it, you were at the house early to help the caterer set up. Did you converse with Harlan at that time?

RICHARD

He was there, we must have spoke.

BLANC

In his study?

RICHARD

I don't think so.

BLANC

You see, I spoke with the caterer this morning. She didn't see you helping her staff, but she did hear Harlan in a screaming match with someone that afternoon. In his study.

RICHARD

I don't, a screaming match? No. Joni was here too, she was early, maybe it was her, ask her.

BLANC

These were two male voices.

33 INT. HALLWAY - DAY OF PARTY

33

A CATERER walks through with a platter. Pauses, hears shouting through the wall.

BLANC (V.O.)

Harlan shouted the phrase

HARLAN (O.S.)

...you tell her or I will!

34 INT. LIBRARY

34

BLANC

You tell her. Or I will. Bells ringing?

For a just a split second, Richard considers what he is going to say. In the second, we FLASH BACK:

35 INT. SMALL STUDY - DAY OF PARTY

35

Harlan showing Richard photos on a laptop. Long lens photos, of Richard kissing a woman who is not Linda.

Richard glares at it, Harlan turns an old baseball over in his hands.

RICHARD

That's none of your business, Harlan. Stay out of my marriage.

Harlan holds up a sealed small envelope with flowery embroidery, "L" written on the front.

HARLAN

I know my daughter. She'd want to know. I've put it all in this letter to her, tomorrow she gets it.

RICHARD

I'm warning you once, don't do this like hell -

HARLAN

She deserves to know, you're going to tell her!

Harlan slams the baseball down on the desk.

HARLAN

You tell her or I will!

36 INT. LIBRARY

36

Back to Richard. He grins, snaps his fingers.

RICHARD

Yes. I know - yes, ha. So. Harlan decided to finally put his mom in a nursing home. Which Linda always opposed. And I was going to wait till we were back home in Boston to tell her, so there wouldn't be a whole scene, but Harlan wanted me to

tell her then. That was it. Sorry.
Forgot.

Joni in the chair.

JONI
The house?

BLANC
Early. Richard said you were there.

JONI
I was. At the house early.

BLANC
To see Harlan?

JONI
To see Harlan. Yes.

Joni stops, smelling something in the air. She's about to ask about it but -

BLANC
What were you seeing Harlan about?

JONI
It was just a mix up with the
payment for Meg's tuition.

BLANC
I'm sorry to press, what kind of mix
up?

Joni hesitates, we FLASH BACK:

37 INT. SMALL STUDY - DAY OF PARTY

37

Harlan at his desk, toying with the same old baseball. This is a thing he does at his desk. Joni standing, arms crossed.

JONI
The school hasn't got the check yet,
I don't know why Alan didn't mail it

HARLAN
Alan didn't mail it because he
caught a discrepancy. Alan's office
has been wiring tuition directly to
the school, as per your request. But
Phyllis's office that handles your
yearly allowance has been wiring the
tuition money directly to you as

well. As per your request. You've been double dipping Meg's tuition, stealing from me. A hundred thousand dollars a year. For the past four years.

Harlan shows Joni a letter from his business manager, with transaction receipts attached.

JONI

Harlan. I don't know how this mix up happened but

Harlan opens his ledger, hand writes a check.

HARLAN

I'm writing this tuition check, then that is the last money you or Meg will get from me.

JONI

Please you don't understand

HARLAN

I know it'll hurt but it's for the best.

Joni's speechless, her face frozen. Harlan puts the baseball down and detaches the check, holds it out to her.

HARLAN

My mind's made up.

38 INT. LIBRARY

38

Back to Joni. She shakes her head.

JONI

Just a money wiring issue. With the office at the school. So I had to ask Harlan to cut a check for this semester. No big deal.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Why don't we take a breather.

39 INT. FOYER - DAY

39

Joni comes out into the foyer from the library, obviously rattled. She pulls it together quick when Linda comes down the stairs.

LINDA

Joni. You haven't seen Richard have you?

JONI

No, I was just in with the - no.

40 INT. SMALL STUDY

40

LINDA (O.S.)

Richard!

Alone, Richard waits very still for Linda's footsteps to walk away, then when he knows she's not coming in he furtively rifles through desk drawers, finding various ridiculous ephemera. He finds a small locked drawer, jimmies it open with a letter opener.

Inside - the small pink envelope Harlan threatened him with in his flashback. He rips it open, pulls out the card inside.

It is blank.

Richard almost laughs. Drops it onto the desk.

RICHARD

Son of a bitch.

He spots Harlan's old baseball. Grabs it, spitefully chucks it out the open window.

41 EXT. SIDE OF HOUSE - DAY

41

Blanc, Elliott and Wagner stroll long the wide lawn beside the house. Blanc ignites a long thin cigar.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Maybe I'm a victim of my own expectations. But when the great Benoit Blanc knocks on my door, I expect it's going to be for something... if not extraordinary, at least interesting. This is an open and shut case of suicide.

(checks watch)

And Benny we're at the point where I need to know what we're doing here.

Blanc notices the OLD BASEBALL lying in the grass. He picks it up idly.

BLANC

The method, throat slit. Typical of a suicide?

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Dramatic. But look around. The guy practically lives in a CLUE board.

42 INT. FOYER

42

Marta sits alone, across from a portrait of Harlan. Muffled voices out on the patio. Cigar smoke drifts by outside.

She creeps over to the glass door. Puts her ear to it.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT (O.S.)

You ask me to drag all these good people back for questioning, go over it all again, I don't get it. This is a pleasant family with the usual quarrels but no possible motives for murder - where are you going?

At that moment, BLANC's face appears right next to Marta's staring right at her through the distorted glass. She yelps and falls back.

43 EXT. PATIO

43

Blanc opens the glass door. Marta steps back sheepishly, but with a warm nod Blanc beckons for her to join them.

BLANC

Harlan Thrombey's nurse, Marta...

MARTA

...Cabrerera

BLANC

Marta Cabrera.

TROOPER WAGNER

Miss Cabrera, you can just wait inside - we'll be with you soon.

BLANC

Miss Cabrera, I been doing a little poking, you're hired on a part time basis as a registered nurse, yes?

MARTA

Yeah, I don't work for a VNA. Harlan hired me directly.

BLANC

You're paid a flat rate for how many hours a week?

MARTA

I started at 15, but slowly he... needed more help.

BLANC

Medical help?

MARTA

He needed a friend.

Blanc smiles at the girl, genuinely touched.

BLANC

Does having a kind heart make you a good nurse?

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Blanc.

BLANC

Yes. Marta we were just discussing possible motives in the family. I suspect Harlan has told you much unfiltered truth about each of them, and a little bird has told me, how shall I put this delicately? You have a regurgitative reaction to mistruthin'.

MARTA

Who told you that?

BLANC

Is it true?

MARTA

Yes. It's something that I have had as a kid. It's a physically thing that I - I - Just the thought of lying, yeah, it makes me puke.

BLANC

Really? Is Richard having an affair?

Marta is stunned. She FLASHES BACK TO:

44 EXT. PATIO - DAY - FLASHBACK

44

She reads, Harlan sits at his laptop, heavy with sadness.

HARLAN

Why do men instinctively pull at
loose threads on their parachutes?

MARTA

What?

Harlan spins his laptop towards her - the Richard photos.

45 EXT. PATIO - DAY

45

Back to our scene. Marta looks queasy, tries to stall.

MARTA

Heh - Richard? - affair? Heh.

BLANC

A yes or no will do.

She struggles, her jaw clenched, face working hard, then
attempts -

MARTA

.....no

And immediately VOMITS into a nearby planter.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Whoa!

TROOPER WAGNER

Oh my god!

They all rush to her, Blanc brings water, awfully concerned.

BLANC

Dear girl I'm sorry. I assumed you
were speaking figuratively.

Blanc takes the shortest acceptable beat of concern before
turning to Elliott.

BLANC

Quite something. But I was obviously
right, Richard is having an affair,
his father in law found out and
confronted him. "You tell her. Or I
will."

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Even if it's true... you ok?

Marta gives a weak thumbs up, recovering

ELLIOTT

Even if that was right, protecting his marriage is weak sauce as a motive.

BLANC

Well. And then there is... Joni.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Joni?

TROOPER WAGNER

Joni?!

TROOPER WAGNER

Lifestyle guru Joni? No. Harlan was supporting her and her daughter, she had the opposite of a motive.

Marta tries to quietly slip back into the house

BLANC

And if that support was threatened? Miss Cabrera one moment please

MARTA

I'm just going to go get some Scope

BLANC

Miss Cabrera, was Harlan planning on cutting off Joni's allowance?

Off Marta's "oh god no" face:

46 INT. STUDY - DAY - FLASHBACK

46

Harlan looking at the letter from his business manager, with the transaction receipts. He sighs heavily.

HARLAN

Oh, Joni.

MARTA

What's up?

He hands her the letter.

47 EXT. PATIO - DAY

47

Marta's face works against impending nausea.

MARTA

I...

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Ok don't answer that if you're going to puke. Please.

But Blanc presses.

BLANC

Meg said Harlan pays the school directly, Joni says he sends the money to her. Both were true, she was pocketing the double payment, Harlan found out and cut her off without a cent. Yes?

Marta starts to shake her head no, but her throat convulses.

She nods. Blanc hands her a glass of water.

TROOPER WAGNER

And she bumps him off for the inheritance? Come. On! Have you seen her insta? She's an influencer.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

An allowance as a motive, Blanc. She has her business. More weak sauce.

Blanc idly scratches a spot on the side of his neck.

BLANC

Granted. But she lied. To me. All three of them did.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Three?

BLANC

Walter.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

I see where you are going with this.

BLANC

But there was something else. Harlan had turned Walter down before regarding film rights, but that night something Harlan said shook him. We look at the pattern, Harlan was cleaning house. I wonder...

(to Marta)

did he plan to fire Walter?

MARTA

(honest & relieved)

Can I wait inside? I don't feel like I should be here.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Yes, please just wait inside but stay close.

She steps back in, grateful. Blanc to Elliott:

BLANC

You've been very patient my friend, and you are right, none of these weak alibis and domestic squibbles answer your question: why is Benoit Blanc here? But now I will tell you why.

(beat)

I am here because this morning someone dodged one very important question.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Who?

BLANC

Me. Linda asked who hired me.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

So who hired you?

BLANC

I. Do. Not. Know. An envelope of cash showed up at my apartment yesterday, with the news clipping of Thrombey's death.

TROOPER WAGNER

An envelope? That worked?

BLANC

An envelope of cash.

Blanc indicates with his fingers - several inches thick.

BLANC

So somebody suspects foul play, but goes through this ha cha dance of hiring me, of staying anonymous. It makes no damn sense. Compels me though.

BLANC

(beat)
Walk me through everyone's
whereabouts at the time of death.

Elliott hesitates, but Blanc's got him hooked. He flips open his notebook. Blanc leans back, closes his eyes.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
We know, the party broke up at
11:30.

48 INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT OF PARTY

48

Marta and Harlan vanish up the stairs towards the third floor, while Richard and Linda head into the bedroom right next to the stairs. Down the hallway Joni waves, and ducks into another bedroom.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT (V.O.)
Marta took Harlan upstairs to give him his meds, Richard and Linda and Joni went right to bed. Now we do have this: the stairs leading up to Harlan's bedroom and his attic office creak horribly.

49 INT. RICHARD AND LINDA'S GUEST ROOM - NIGHT OF THE PARTY

49

Richard sleeps deep, Linda sleeps lightly.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT (V.O.)
And Linda is a light sleeper. So we know every time someone took the stairs that night.

50 INT. JONI AND MEG'S GUEST ROOM - NIGHT OF PARTY

50

Joni has decorated the room with colorful silks and candles. She is in lotus position on her bed, meditating.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT (V.O.)
The first was when Joni heard a ka-THUNK from somewhere above her in the house.

Ka-THUNK! Joni looks up at the ceiling.

51 INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT OF PARTY

51

Joni trots down the hall and up the creaky stairs.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT (V.O.)
She's concerned about Harlan, she
went up to investigate. Waking
Linda.

52 INT. RICHARD AND LINDA'S GUEST ROOM - NIGHT OF PARTY 52

CREAK CREAK CREAK! From outside. Linda's eyes pop open.

53 INT. THIRD FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT OF PARTY 53

Joni knocks on the door of Harlan's attic office. It opens,
and Harlan answers. In the room behind him we see Marta, her
back turned, preparing a hypo needle.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT (V.O.)
Harlan was in his attic office with
Marta. He explained that they had
just knocked the GO board over -
that game with the grid and stones,
they play it every night, and he was
fine, go to bed. So she does.

The spilled GO board on the floor. Joni kisses Harlan on the
cheek, goes. He shuts the door.

54 INT. RICHARD AND LINDA'S GUEST ROOM - NIGHT OF PARTY 54

Linda has just gotten back to sleep.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT (V.O.)
Ten minutes later, Linda is woken a
second time, by Marta leaving.

CREAK CREAK CREAK! Linda wakes, supremely annoyed.

MARTA (O.S.)
Walt! I'm leaving!

55 EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT OF PARTY 55

Walt and Jacob sit on the porch, Walt with a cigar, Jacob
with his phone. Marta trots through, saying goodbye.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT (V.O.)
Walt was smoking a cigar on the
porch with his son. He saw her leave

and drive off, and noted the time -
midnight.

Walt glances at his watch. Midnight.

56 INT. RICHARD AND LINDA'S GUEST ROOM - NIGHT OF PARTY 56

Linda with a pillow over her head.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT (V.O.)
Fifteen minutes later, Linda is
woken for the third and final time.
By someone coming down the stairs.

CREAK CREAK CREAK! Linda wakes. You've gotta be kidding me.

57 EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT OF PARTY 57

Walt, still smoking with Jacob, spots Harlan through the
glazed glass, coming down the stairs in the foyer.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT (V.O.)
Harlan. Who came down for midnight
snacks, which Walt tried to
discourage.

WALT
Dad, go to bed!

Through the glazed glass, Harlan goes back up the stairs.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT (V.O.)
Based on this, the medical examiner
determined time of death to be
between 12:15 and 2am. As Walt was
finishing his cigar, about 12:30,
Meg came home. She went straight to
bed. Walt and Jacob turned in
shortly after that.

Meg pulls up, trots past Walt and Jacob and inside.

58 INT. JONI AND MEG'S GUEST ROOM - NIGHT OF PARTY 58

Meg stirs, wakes. Joni is asleep.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT (V.O.)
Sometime later that night,
undetermined but possibly near 3am,
Meg woke up because the dogs were

barking outside. She used the bathroom and went back to bed.

59 EXT. PATIO - DAY

59

Elliott snaps the notebook closed.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

And that's it. Everyone's stories matched, every movement accounted for.

BLANC

There is no other staircase up to Harlan's room?

Blanc scratches that same spot on the side of his neck.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

No. Just the creaky one.

Blanc seems intrigued by this.

BLANC

Interesting.

TROOPER WAGNER

So I guess we can rule out Ransom, he wasn't there. And Marta, Harlan was alive after she left. But Meg got home during the time of death window.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Except it was a suicide. Harlan hit both carotids, we saw from the blood blood splat patterns that they were uninterrupted. Meaning, It's almost impossible for anyone to have been around him at the time. He's the one that cut his own throat. I don't know why we keep going over this.

BLANC

Physical evidence can tell a clear story with a forked tongue.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

What?

BLANC

And as we've seen this morning, everyone can lie. Well. Almost

everyone.

60 INT. LIBRARY - LATE AFTERNOON

60

Marta in the chair. She shifts, uncomfortable.

Blanc, Elliott and Wagner in their normal places.

BLANC

Ms. Cabrera, we've kept you waiting all afternoon because I wanted to hear from you last. I wanted to have the entire picture of the evening in my head. Your piece of it is at its very center. So please, take your time. You took Mr. Thrombey upstairs at 11:30. And left at midnight. Think very carefully. And with as much detail as possible, tell us what happened in that half hour.

Marta is very still. A moment of silence. Blanc flips his silver dollar into the air.

She does not say a word, but in that moment while the coin hangs in the air we FLASH BACK with her to:

61 INT. HARLAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

61

The night of the party. A clock on a nightstand: 11:32.

Off screen we hear Marta leading Harlan up the creaky stairs.

MARTA

Up up up up - you got it?

HARLAN

I got it. Up up up I got it.

Marta enters the room, and behind her we see Harlan keep climbing up the narrow stairs to his office.

MARTA

Up up nooooo no not tonight, no straight to bed tonight it is soooo late c'mon. Harlan. Harlan!

She grabs a med kit from the bedroom and follows him, exasperated.

62 INT. HARLAN THROMBEY'S STUDY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**62**

Harlan sits, setting up a GO board. Marta enters.

MARTA

It's late, I had champagne no no no

HARLAN

It's my birthday, we are - You had one glass - we're not breaking tradition on my birthday.

Marta puts two vials and a pill box on the GO board. She pulls out two plastic wrapped hypodermics.

MARTA

Take your goddamn medicine and go to bed.

HARLAN

If you're going to put that vile shit in me you will have to earn it. On my birthday.

(playing it up)

Eighty fifth. So old. Soo olddd

MARTA

Alright old man. 8x8 game. You ready?

She sits and they start clacking white and black stones on the board.

HARLAN

Why can't I beat you at this game? Oh uh huh.

MEG

Because I'm not playing to beat you, I'm playing to build a beautiful pattern.

They play fast, and Marta is obviously winning.

HARLAN

Elder abuse. I'm calling the AARP.

MARTA

Don't make me get the belt.

HARLAN

It's basically over. My only hope is that an earthquake will strike. But what are the chances -

Harlan starts shaking the table with his knee. He looks around, startled. Marta just stares at him, deadpan.

HARLAN

Get under a door frame!

He tips the whole table and the GO board and med vials and syringe and med kit fall to the soft rug. Things spill out of the kit. A mess. Marta just shakes her head.

MARTA

Meds then beds.

HARLAN

Fair.

She retrieves the vials and loads a syringe from one of them. Harlan rolls up his sleeve revealing a pre-inserted catheter. He crosses to close the room's only small window.

HARLAN

Ugh, Walt's smoking a cigar on the porch. Nasty things.

MARTA

How was tonight?

She hooks the syringe up to the catheter and slowly injects him bit by bit while he talks.

HARLAN

Tonight was... good.

MARTA

Because I know you weren't looking forward to it.

HARLAN

No. But I did it. Cut the line on all four of them. It was not easy. This goddamn fortune. Sometimes I think, everything I've given my family, I've done, maybe without knowing it, maybe, to keep them beneath me. I should have what... maybe, I don't know. Encouraged Walt to write his own stories, not just be a caretaker of mine. Like you said I should. Been a father, not just a provider, to Joni. Like you've also said. I should have been kinder to Linda. And Ransom.

Harlan takes a curved ornamental dagger from a display mount, turns it over in his hands.

HARLAN

Jesus there's so much me in that kid. Confident, stupid, I dunno.

HARLAN

Protected. Playing life like a game without consequence, till you can't tell the difference between a stage prop and a real knife.

He stabs it into the desk, sharp and real. Leaves it there.

HARLAN

I don't fear death. But god I'd like to fix some of this before I go. Close the book with a flourish. I guess we'll see.

MARTA

I guess we will. Hey. Old man. You've had a long day. Wanna do drugs.

She loads the second syringe from the second vial.

HARLAN

you mean the good stuff?

MARTA

Yeah but just a tiny bit.

HARLAN

Send me to lala land. Why did I wait till my mid eighties to become a morphine user, what a schmuck, what a nud-nig, this stuff's the best.

She pulls the needle from the second vial... then sees the label. Freezes. Blinks at it.

MARTA

Oh my god.

She snatches up the first vial she just injected him from.

Compares the label to the one she just picked up. They're similar but not the same.

HARLAN

Is there a problem?

MARTA

This is what I just gave you 100 milligrams of. But I messed up.

HARLAN

You gave me 100 milligrams of the good stuff.

She immediately pulls an EMERGENCY KIT from a nearby shelf, starts calmly but quickly going through its contents.

HARLAN

What's the good stuff dosage supposed to be?

MARTA

Lets not call it that right now - three milligrams.

HARLAN

That's much less. So what happens?

MARTA

I give you an emergency shot of Naloxone, so that you don't die in ten minutes.

HARLAN

Well no pressure. You know that's an interesting, efficient method for murder, I need to write that down.

He gets a little notebook and scribbles while she checks and rechecks the kit contents with increasing urgency.

HARLAN

So if someone switched the meds on purpose I'd be dead in ten minutes, like stone cold dead?

MARTA

You'll feel symptoms in five. Sweats, disorientation. Then yeah, that big a dose, injected, within ten your respiratory - your - yes ten minutes.

HARLAN

From the time of injection, so eightish now. And even if the victim called an ambulance when he first felt symptoms, if he was at a country home like this one... where the ambulance takes fifteen minutes

to arrive, it would be too late. If the victim didn't have this emergency Naxostuff.

He watches her. She's now digging around the carpet, looking under the couch. She dumps the entire contents of the kit out and is now frantically going through it. A bead of sweat rolls down Harlan's brow.

HARLAN

Marta. Do you have Naxostuff?

MARTA

Yes! Naloxone yes it comes with the emergency kit - it should be here, it's - fuck. No Harlan it's not here. It's not. Oh my god.

They look at each other for a second. She's panicked. He's thinking.

MARTA

Where's my phone? Shit -

She picks up a landline phone on the table, dials 911 with shaking hands -

Before it can even ring, the line goes dead.

She looks, unbelieving: Harlan's finger is on the cradle.

His eyes are locked with hers, serious and certain.

MARTA

Harlan what are you doing?

HARLAN

Marta, listen to me.

She goes for her cell phone across the room and Harlan stops her - they trip and fall to the ground with a KA-THUNK.

He actually puts his hand over her mouth.

HARLAN

Listen. If what you said is true I am gone, there's no saving me, we have six minutes. There is one last thing I need to do in this world, and only you can help me do it. But you need to trust me and do everything I say.

MARTA

What do you want to do?

HARLAN

Get you out of this. Think of your mom - please trust me, we have to make this look ironclad like it can't have been your fault. You. Can't. Have done this.

MARTA

My mom...?

CREAK on the stairs outside.

HARLAN

Get up.

A knock on the door.

JONI (O.S.)

Harlan? Marta? Everything alright?

Harlan and Marta stand. She's dazed, deer in the headlights, but he's focused and sharp. He turns her away from the door.

HARLAN

Stand here, keep your back to me, don't say a word.

Harlan opens the door. While he gets rid of Joni we stick with Marta, who stands stock still, tears running down her face, eyes wild - what does she do?

HARLAN

Joni.

JONI

I - hi - I heard something, is everything ok?

HARLAN

Oh yes we just, I just knocked over the GO board, sorry about that.

JONI

Everything's alright?

HARLAN

Yes yes all fine, go to bed Joni.

JONI

Ok. And maybe we can talk tomorrow about the, uh, the thing with

HARLAN
Yes. Tomorrow.

JONI
Love you, Night.

HARLAN
Night night.

Harlan shuts the door. Looks at the knife still sticking in the desk. Then takes Marta's shoulders, looks in her eyes.

HARLAN
Pay attention now, your mom is still undocumented, if this is your fault she'll be found out and at best deported, your family will be broken.

A new kind of fear in Marta's eyes.

MARTA
Oh god

HARLAN
But we're not going to let that happen. I have a plan, it's not going to be easy but you have to do exactly what I tell you. Will you do this Marta? This last thing. For me, and for your family.

She's terrified. But she nods.

MARTA
What do you want me to do?

63 EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT OF THE PARTY - FLASHBACK

63

Walt smoking and Jacob.

HARLAN (V.O.)
Go downstairs as noisily as you can, say goodbye loudly.

MARTA (O.S.)
Walt! I'm leaving!

Marta exits quickly, down to her car.

HARLAN (V.O.)
Call attention to the time if you can.

MARTA
God it's midnight already.

Walt checks his watch.

64 INT. MARTA'S CAR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

64

She drives out the guard gate and down the private road.

HARLAN (V.O.)
Drive out the gate, then to avoid
the security cameras, pull off the
road BEFORE the carved elephant.

Up ahead - a weathered wood carved elephant statue.

MARTA
Wait... was it before or after?

HARLAN (V.O.)
AFTER the carved elephant.

MARTA
No, he said - before? Was it?

HARLAN (V.O.)
BEAFTERFORE the carved elephant.

MARTA
Shit...

She yanks the wheel and pulls off BEFORE the statue.

65 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

65

Marta trudges away from the parked car, tree branches catching her hair.

HARLAN (V.O.)
Park and come back on foot up to the
house,

66 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE SIDE GATE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

66

A waist-high stone wall with a little pedestrian gate. The house up ahead. Marta goes through the gate and up towards the house.

HARLAN (V.O.)
Take the side yard path, through
that little gate.

The DOGS sprint down the moonlit yard from the house towards Marta.

HARLAN (V.O.)
The dogs will know you, they
shouldn't bark.

The dogs stop at Marta and lick her hand.

67 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE SIDE YARD - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

67

Marta looks up the side of the looming house. A sturdy trellis on the wall, and high above a third story window.

HARLAN (V.O.)
You've got to get up to the third
floor without being seen, and the
only way is to climb the side
trellis and come in through the
trick hall window.

MARTA
You've gotta be kidding me.

HARLAN (V.O.)
I am not. Do it.

Cut to: moments later, Marta climbing the trellis. It's easy going until a piece BREAKS under her foot, and she swings for a second by one hand.

HARLAN (V.O.)
And for godssakes don't make any
noise.

68 INT. THIRD FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

68

What appears to be a dead end hallway, with a painting at the end. BUT suddenly the end wall swings away like a door, revealing a WINDOW behind it. Marta heaves her way in through it, and steps lightly into Harlan's bedroom.

HARLAN (V.O.)
Once you're inside, this is the
tricky part.

MARTA (V.O.)
THIS is the tricky part?

69 INT. HARLAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

69

HARLAN (V.O.)

Get my robe and cap from my bedroom.
And put them on.

She picks them up from the bed. Stops. A moment of doubt.

70 INT. HARLAN THROMBEY'S STUDY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK 70

Back to the scene with Harlan. Marta stops him.

MARTA

Harlan this is - I - this is crazy -

HARLAN

We need to make this so airtight
your average cop will entirely
dismiss you as a suspect. This seems
crazy but it will work.

71 INT. HARLAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK 71

Marta in the robe, pulling the cap on, tucking her hair under it.

72 INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT OF PARTY - FLASHBACK 72

Marta, in Harlan's robe and cap, creeps down the creaky stairs, then keeps going down.

HARLAN (V.O.)

Walt and Jacob are smoking outside.
They'll see you...

73 INT. FOYER - NIGHT OF PARTY - FLASHBACK 73

Marta come down the stairs, and sees the outline of Walt and Jacob outside through the glazed window windows.

HARLAN (V.O.)

...through the glazed window.

She holds her breath, a deer in the headlights.

WALT

Dad, go to bed.

Marta heads right back up the stairs.

HARLAN (V.O.)

You were seen leaving, the security cameras show you driving off, and twenty minutes later I am seen alive and well by my son.

74 INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT 74

Marta climbs the creaky stairs.

HARLAN (V.O.)
You've gone from suspect number one to an impossibility.

75 INT. HARLAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 75

Marta ducks in, ditching the robe and cap on the bed.

76 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE SIDE YARD - NIGHT 76

Marta shimmies down the last of the trellis.

HARLAN (V.O.)
Leave the way you came. And don't.
Be. Seen.

She hops to the ground, then FREEZES and almost shouts.

She's facing a darkened first floor window. Wide open. And inside it, staring RIGHT AT her, is Greatnana.

Marta is frozen. Greatnana isn't moving either. Just has her eyes locked on Marta.

After what seems like forever, Greatnana cocks her head slightly and asks...

GREATNANA
Ransom? Are you back again already?

Marta breathes. And backs away. Then turns and goes, quickly, down across the lawn.

HARLAN (V.O.)
Drive home. Sometime in the next few days the police will question you.

77 INT. HARLAN THROMBEY'S STUDY - NIGHT 77

Back to Harlan and Marta.

MARTA

Harlan I can't lie I'll puke

HARLAN

Don't lie. Tell fragments of the truth. In this exact order:

78 INT. LIBRARY - LATE AFTERNOON

78

Blanc catches his coin. Lieutenant Elliott and Trooper Wagner look up at Marta, expectant. Just a brief moment has passed since we left them.

MARTA

I took him upstairs. We played our nightly game of GO, at some point he knocked the board over and Joni came up to check on us. Then I gave him pain medication, he pulled his shoulder last week, and left him in his study. At midnight. Said bye to Walt, went home.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

What medication did he get?

Marta chooses her words very carefully:

MARTA

Since his injury I've been giving him a 100 milligram IV push of Toradol, a non narcotic analgesic. And to help him sleep, 3 milligrams of morphine.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Anything unusual about his demeanor?

Uh oh. Marta keeps it solid. Superhuman effort.

MARTA

No.

The three men nod. Blanc holds Marta's gaze. She holds it right back. Then he smiles.

BLANC

Well that sounds about right. Thank you Ms. Cabrera.

79 INT. FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

79

Marta walks calmly out of the library. Then across the foyer into a small door.

80 INT. HALF BATH**80**

Marta walks in, closes the door behind her, locks it, turns on both the taps, and PUKES into the toilet.

81 INT. LINDA'S ROOM**81**

Linda stands in her childhood room, by the window in the ebbing light. From a shelf she pulls a stack of PINK NOTECARDS, identical to the one Harlan showed Richard in his office. But these are covered in writing, sweet little notes, a father to his daughter.

WALT (O.S.)

Hey sis. People are going to start getting here for the memorial pretty soon. Are you- Are you alright?

She looks up. Walt in the doorway. She wipes her eyes, indicates the notes.

LINDA

I was just thinking about Dad's games. This all feels like one, it feels like something he'd write, not do. I keep waiting for a big reveal, where it all makes sense. How nice would that be?

Her little brother hugs her. His eyes tired and dark.

82 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**82**

HARLAN THROMBEY - his portrait, with an ambiguous look on his face.

Marta. Soda water in hand at the reception that night.

Staring shell shocked at Harlan.

The reception for friends of the family. Tables of food.

Twenty or thirty people milling, in dark tasteful clothes, with the whole Thrombey family.

A tearful Fran has cornered Marta, talks through sobs:

FRAN

I don't think he killed himself I don't. I don't. There's this Hallmark movie Deadly By Surprise where Danica McKellar plays a wife who gets poisoned by her husband but bit by bit so she thinks she's going crazy and she ends up killing herself, and my cousin who's the receptionist at the medical examiners office says that kind of thing can totally happen, she says it's not even like 3% as crazy as stuff she's seen come through the -

As Fran's talking, Marta looks at the room of family members, gathered around talking.

She FLASHES BACK to:

83 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT OF PARTY - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

83

NIGHT OF THE PARTY

Harlan and Ransom go off together to have a private talk, leaving the family having a heated conversation in the living room.

RICHARD

I don't like him no he's an asshole but maybe an asshole's what we needed oh uh huh yeah there you go

JONI

Oh god. Yeah an asshole's what Germany needed in nineteen thirty ever

Marta stays on the outskirts. Fran, with a tray of champagne flutes:

FRAN

Jesus. I'm gonna disappear until the politics talk is done. You want some champers?

MARTA

No I'm technically working. Thanks.

Marta checks her watch. Meanwhile Donna, who's had a few, is tearing into the family fight.

DONNA

We're losing our way of life and our culture, there's millions of Mexicans coming and this isn't Joni don't make this a race thing, I'd say the same thing if they were European immigrants - we allow them in and they think they own what's ours

JONI

Oh god really - yeah it's not a race thing yeah Oh yeah, if the Swiss were clogging in the streets - They're putting. Children. In cages. I mean these are camps.

RICHARD

Nobody's saying that isn't bad, but I blame the parents

JONI

For wanting a better life for their kids, isn't that what America

RICHARD

For breaking the law. You're going to hate hearing this but it's true, America is for Americans. Marta, come here.

Richard beckons her over, waving his cake plate. We've seen this moment before, silent, during Richard's questioning.

LINDA

Oh god don't.

Marta is drawn over next to Richard, very uncomfortable.

RICHARD

No, Marta your family came from Uruguay but you did it right, she did it legally, I'm saying. You work hard, and you'll earn your share from the ground up just like dad and all of us did - Marta I bet you agree with me.

LINDA

Leave the poor girl alone.

RICHARD

No Marta do you agree, I'd like you to answer - you wanna become an American, there are legal ways to do

it, but if you break the law it
doesn't matter if you have a good
heart, you gotta face the
consequences.

At that moment booming shouts begin behind the study door -
Harlan and Ransom going at it. Ransom bursts out.

Marta takes the opportunity to slip into the hallway, alone.

She breathes hard. Takes a champagne flute from the tray.

Drinks it in one gulp.

84 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

84

END FLASHBACK. Marta in the same spot, Fran still talking her
ear off. The room sways. Marta sucks in breath, sways, and
braces herself against the wall.

FRAN

Oh my god Marta, what?

Meg runs over, rubs her back.

MEG

Whoa hey, c'mere, hey. What do you,
you want water? Breathe. Hey. Fran
have you still got your stash?

85 INT. DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

85

Empty and dark, fireplace blazing. Above the fireplace is an
ornate mantle clock. Fran uses a key to unlock one of several
tiny drawers hidden in its face, takes out a joint and hands
it to Meg.

FRAN

Take em whenever you need em -
they're just drying out since you
gave me that Juul.

MEG

Thanks Fran.

Fran leaves them alone.

MARTA

I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry

MEG

Stop saying you're sorry Jesus

Meg lights the joint.

MARTA

God my heart won't stop, I can't -
it's just everything, no, thank you

she refuses the joint, then realizes where it came from.

MARTA

That's where Fran keeps her stash?

MEG

Who's going to open a clock?

86 INT. LIVING ROOM

86

Walt yells at a non responsive, bored Greatnana.

WALT

DO YOU WANT DINNER, NANA? DINNER? TO
EAT? EAT?

LINDA

Walt she's fine, she ate the whole
salmon spread already.

Meg grabs Walt, pulls him to Marta.

MEG

Did you tell Marta yet? What we all
talked about?

WALT

No, not yet, is now a good time?

MEG

Yes a very good time. Right now.

WALT

Marta. We've talked it over, and
(wait)
Have you been smoking grass?

MEG

No.

WALT

We talked it over and the whole
family, we want to take care of you.

MARTA

What does that mean?

MEG

We all think you deserve something.

WALT

Financially, we want to help you out. You were never anything but good to dad. Because of that, you can count on us.

Walt embraces her, Meg puts a hand on her back.

Over Walt's shoulder, Marta sees Harlan's portrait again.

Has its expression changed? It looks like it has a slight conspiratorial smile. Marta breathes - maybe this is all going to be ok.

WALT

I thought you should have been at the funeral, by the way. I was outvoted.

87 EXT. SIDE PORCH - NIGHT

87

Later. Marta comes out to get some air. Exhales deeply.

And then jumps - she's not alone. Benoit Blanc sits in a wicker chair in the dark, smoking a long thin cigar.

MARTA

Wah ha. Detective. You're still here?

BLANC

Mm.

Silence. Blanc smokes and stares at Marta. Marta shifts.

MARTA

Did you know Harlan?

BLANC

He knew my father who was a police detective. Years ago. My father respected Harlan. That says quite a lot.

MARTA

So that's why you're here?

BLANC

Here now here? No. I stayed hoping to speak to you a little more.

MARTA

Uh?

BLANC

Something is afoot with this whole affair. I know it, and I believe you know it.

MARTA

So you're... going to keep digging.

BLANC

Harlan's detectives they dig, they rifle and root, truffle pigs. I anticipate the terminus of gravity's rainbow.

MARTA

Gravity's Rainbow.

BLANC

It's a novel.

MARTA

I know. I haven't read it.

BLANC

Neither have I. Nobody has. But I like the title. It describes the path of a projectile, determined by natural law. Voila, my method. I observe the facts without biases of the head or heart, I determine the arc's path, stroll leisurely to its terminus, and the truth falls at my feet.

(beat)

The medical examiner was ready to rule this a suicide, but Elliott agreed to keep it pending for forty eight hours. Tomorrow morning I search the grounds and the house, begin my investigation. I want you to be by my side for it. My confidant, my eyes and ears.

MARTA

What but - why me?

BLANC

I trust your kind heart. Also you are the only one who had nothing to gain from Harlan's death. So. Watson.

Blank puts out his cigar, stands.

MARTA

You want my insight into this family? None of them are murderers. That's my insight.

BLANC

And yet. Be it cruel or comforting, this machine unerringly arrives at the truth. That's what it does.

MARTA

Always?

He does a little bow.

BLANC

Tomorrow at eight.

Marta watches him go.

88 INT. CABRERA LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

88

Marta gets home. Her mom is on the couch, zoning out in front of the TV, still in a cleaning uniform. Without a word Marta sits next to her. Stares at the TV.

Off her eyes, we FLASH BACK with her:

89 INT. HARLAN THROMBEY'S STUDY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

89

HARLAN

I know I missed something... there's going to be something I missed. But I know you can beat it. Without losing your soul you have to do what you have to do to beat this, and win.

MARTA

I can't.

HARLAN

You can and you have to. For me. Right now.

She's out the door and he shuts it.

90 INT. OUTSIDE HARLAN'S ATTIC OFFICE DOOR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

90

Marta stands frozen. Soft voices of Walt and Jacob float up from downstairs. She turns back to the door.

Silence. Moments going by. Shit. Can she do this? Shit.

No. She turns and pushes back into the office -

91 INT. HARLAN THROMBEY'S STUDY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

91

MARTA

Harlan I have to get you help -

Harlan reclines on the couch in the middle of the room, ornate dagger against his throat. Marta's eyes go wide.

HARLAN

Do what I say and everything's going to be ok, Marta. I promise.

She makes a move to stop him and with one quick motion he DRAWS THE DAGGER across his throat. Blood sprays.

She leaps back, hands to her mouth, spins and leaves the room, closing the door behind her.

92 EXT. THIRD FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

92

Breathing hard, silent crying. Then her breathing slows.

Her brain taking over. Resolve settling. The dice are thrown. She wipes her eyes. Then bounds down the stairs, out of frame.

93 INT. CABRERA LIVING ROOM

93

Back to Marta and her mom on the couch. She puts her hand on Mom's knee.

MARTA

Everything's going to be ok. I promise.

MOM

(of course)

I know.

They go back to watching TV. But Marta's mind is buzzing.

On her white sneaker, we see but she does not - one single drop of blood.

94 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE GUARD GATE - MORNING**94**

The gate is open, Marta's car pulls up just inside it. The small Guard house next to the gate, Blanc, Elliott and Wagner outside it. Blanc waves to her.

95 INT. GUARD HOUSE**95**

Thrombey's security man, MR PROOFROC, guides them into the cramped dusty space. Proofroc is old and salty. He shows them old photos of the house, stuck to a steel fridge with big brightly colored fruit magnets.

MR PROOFROC

Fifty years I worked this estate, you know security back then meant making the rounds with a 94, keeping your ears open. Before all this modern technology.

Nothing in the room is newer than 1988. An 8 inch CRT monitor shows a phosphorescent live feed of the road outside the gate, and a top loaded VHS VCR sits next to it.

MR PROOFROC

Well the video here, I saved the tape from that night, usually I erase 'em with the magnetic degausser, but I thought better save that one. Cause, security. That's the live feed there.

Marta notices something with alarm - the video feed shows the road outside, and at the top edge you can just barely see the carved elephant that marks the gardener's utility road. She realizes Harlan said

HARLAN (V.O.)

...to avoid the security cameras, pull off the road AFTER the carved elephant.

Marta keeps a poker face, but.. shit.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

(to Proofroc)

Can we see the actual TAPE?

MR PROOFROC

Oh sure.

CLACK! The tape loads into the mechanical VCR. An impossibly grainy, smeared night vision view of the road outside the

gate. Time stamp: 10:02pm.

TROOPER WAGNER
It's like a Japanese horror movie.

MR PROOFROC
(proud)
I record it SSLP, gets eight hours
per tape. Nine pm to five am.

BLANC
Can we -
(to Marta)
Can we scan forward?

MARTA
(to Proofroc)
Can we scan forward?

MR PROOFROC
Hold the play button down and press
the FF down halfway till you feel it
grind.

Wagner does, the machine makes horrible noises and the
picture frizzles and frazzles. Then stops and ejects.

MR PROOFROC
And hold the tape down or it'll
eject.

BLANC
Can your guys digitize it so we can
scan it properly?

TROOPER WAGNER
I'm sure we can.

MARTA
I got it.

Marta grabs the tape from the VCR.

96 EXT. WOODS - DAY

96

They all hack through the overgrown gardener's path.

TROOPER WAGNER
You know all these statues that you
see around here - they are all
straight out of his series the
"menagerie tragedy series", pretty
cool.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

(dry)

Awesome. Blanc the grounds are lovely but you think what, someone broke into the house? To kill Harlan? Is that why we're out here?

BLANC

I think it's an unlikely but if they did, there will be traces.

TROOPER WAGNER

I'll take that, thanks ma'am.

Marta hands Wagner the VHS tape. Then she discretely pockets something she had held in her hand next to it - a few of the bright fruit MAGNETS from Proofroc's fridge.

97 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE SIDE YARD

97

The group hikes up out of the woods, towards the low wall with a small pedestrian gate that leads to the east lawn.

Marta is out in front. During the following, she notices something: The earth around and under the gate is soft and bare. And clear as day: HER FOOTPRINTS from the other night, the only ones from women's shoes. The same ones she has on now. Her breath catches. SHIT.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Any luck with - whatshisname?

TROOPER WAGNER

Ransom. No, but we have an address. Ten Kenoak street.

BLANC

Ten Kenoak. That's a pleasant thing to say. kenoak. I awoke amid Kenoak.

TROOPER WAGNER

Ugh this mud, my boots are going to stink.

BLANC

Mud - has it rained the past week?
No - Nobody move! Freeze! Everyone!
These footprints must not be disturbed!

(sees)

Marta!

Marta has already walked through the pedestrian gate and up onto the lawn, stepping in her pre-existing prints. She turns back, playing dumb.

MARTA

What?

BLANC

Don't - stop there, don't -

MARTA

I can't hear you, what?

She trots back to them through the gate, stepping into her returning prints.

BLANC

No no no no don't - don't step on the, ok, alright. Aughhhhh ok.

MARTA

What?

Blanc sidesteps up to the gate, not stepping in the mud.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Alright, Wagner let's get the boys on it, check the prints, tape off this area, keep it clear.

The dogs come running down the lawn, barking at the men.

They tear through the gate, further messing up the mud.

MARTA

Hey boys, easy. Hey. Hey.

She pets them and they quiet down.

BLANC

Best judge of character is a dog. I've found that to be true.

The dogs start BARKING and bolt towards the house, where Richard and Linda are pulling up in their lux SUV.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

They're doing the will reading at ten, whole family will be here soon.

Elliott heads up towards the house. Blanc meanders up the lawn, and Marta follows.

MARTA

I've never been to a will reading.

BLANC

You think it'll be like a game show.
No. Imagine a community theater
performance of a tax return.

They approach the side of the house. Blanc does a gentle, meandering study of the layout.

Marta steals a look at the trellis she climbed.

Oh no. A piece of the white lattice trellis that broke off when she was climbing - about eight inches long - lies in the grass beneath it. Her eyes dart up - yup, there's the broken spot. Shit.

BLANC

SWEET BEANS

Marta starts - did he spot it? No - he's come face to face with Greatnana, standing stock still on the porch. She stares at him like a bird.

BLANC

Good morning Mrs. Thrombey.

He approaches her, slowly. When his back is fully turned Marta takes her shot and KICKS the piece of trellis under some thick bushes at the base of the house.

Blanc and Greatnana stare at each other. Blanc gets very close to her, great sympathy in his eyes. Greatnana stares back. It's almost like they're communicating. This goes on for a little too long. Then Blanc breaks from the trance, and turns to Marta.

BLANC

Do you think you could handle the
study?

98 INT. HARLAN THROMBEY'S STUDY

98

The blood is now only a subtle dark stain, but other than that the room has been left intact from the night of the party. Marta and Wagner observe as Blanc paces the room.

BLANC

(to Marta)

Where's your medical bag?

MARTA

I... don't know - I left it here, I always leave it with Harlan at night.

TROOPER WAGNER

They must have taken it in as evidence. I'll check on it.

Blanc picks up the GO board and sets it on the table.

Examines its grid idly.

BLANC

How'd the GO board get knocked over?

MARTA

We were just goofing around.

(beat)

What are you thinking?

Blanc sighs gently, turns the baseball over in his hands.

Looks like this was a bust.

Blanc tips the GO board over, and it lands on the carpet with a nearly inaudible WHOMPH. He stares at it.

But his concentration is broken by sharp barking outside.

They go to the tiny window and look out. A DASHING MAN in his early 30s climbs out of a vintage Porsche. The dogs go NUTS, biting at his pant legs.

BLANC

Let me guess.

99 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE FRONT DRIVE

99

The man kicks off the dogs and limps toward the house, cursing. Lieutenant Elliott and Trooper Wagner step out onto the porch.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Hugh Drysdale?

RANSOM

Ransom. Call me Ransom, my middle name. The help call me Hugh.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

I'm Lieutenant Elliott, this is officer Wagner, we'd like to ask you a few questions about the night of

RANSOM

Uh huh.

He blows past them and into the house.

100 INT. LIVING ROOM

100

Walt, Donna and Jacob (nose in his phone) sit around the room. Linda and Richard stand, on their phones. Ransom breezes in, bumping Donna who YELPS, startled.

Elliott and Wagner follow.

TROOPER WAGNER

Sir excuse me, we are officers of the law.

RANSOM

You gonna run me in? I don't feel like talking. I'm distraught.

Ransom disappears into the kitchen, comes out eating a sleeve of pinwheel cookies.

Blanc and Marta slip in. Elliott nods to Blanc.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Blanc, anything you need to ask him?

RANSOM

The hell anyway is this arrangement?

BLANC

Mr. Drysdale

Ransom sizes up Blanc with a grin.

RANSOM

CSI KFC?

Ransom grabs Fran the housekeeper's sleeve as she walks by.

RANSOM

Hey Frannie can you get me a glass of cold milk?

Meg and Joni have just entered, and Meg heard this.

MEG

Hey asshole. Not her name, not her job.

Fran walks off with a scorching look at Ransom.

RANSOM

Meg. How's your SJW degree coming?

ALAN STEVENS, the family's attorney, knocks and enters with an assistant, SALLY, who juggles several attache cases.

ALAN

Hey everyone. Hey. I'm just going to set up in the other room, be ready in ten minutes.

They go off to the library, leaving the family all together in tense silence.

WALT

Funny Ransom, you skipped the funeral but you're early for the will reading.

JONI

Ok, people grieve in different ways, let's not

WALT

(to Ransom)

It's funny you're here at all. Why are you even bothering, that's what I want to know.

RICHARD

What's that supposed to mean?

WALT

He knows what it means.

LINDA

Walt, what?

WALT

Jacob was in that bathroom the night of the party.

JONI

Is that where you were all night?

RICHARD

The hell were you doing in the bathroom all night?

JACOB

Nothing.

MEG

Swatting Syrian refugees.

JACOB

No.

MEG

Alt right troll.

JACOB

Liberal snowflake.

WALT

I don't know what any of that means

RICHARD

It means your son's a little creep.

WALT

Oh MY son's a creep?

JONI

Guys! Walt he was in the bathroom...

WALT

He was in the bathroom

RICHARD

Joylessly masturbating to pictures
of dead deer.

WALT

Ok you wanna go?

They go at each other and do some half-hearted slap-fighting
before Linda and Joni break them apart. Ransom's loving this.

RANSOM

We gotta do this more often.

LINDA

Alright! Enough. Jacob, we get where
this is going. The bathroom's next
to Harlan's office, where he had the
big fight with Ransom. You heard
something. Spill it.

JACOB

I just heard two things.

101 INT. HALF BATH - NIGHT OF PARTY - FLASHBACK

101

Jacob on the toilet, hearing non distinct yelling through a
vent high in the wall. But two words poke through:

HARLAN (O.S.)

...my will!

102 INT. LIVING ROOM

102

JACOB

And then there was more shouting,
but I also heard Ransom say "I'm
warning you."

Walt raises his arms, triumphant.

LINDA

Ransom? What's this mean?

He just eats cookies, silent.

WALT

It means dad finally came to his
senses and cut this worthless lazy
brat out of the will.

(to Ransom)

And you better sell your little
Beamer and you better give your
notice at that country club and kick
whatever fashion drugs you're on
cause if you think after the bridges
you've burned, the shit you've said
and what you've put this family
through for the past ten years that
any of us are going to support you,
are going to give you like dad used
to say a single red dime you're
nuts.

Ransom looks around the room. Cold faces.

RICHARD

Son.

RANSOM

(mock gravity)
Father?

RICHARD

Did Harlan tell you he was cutting
you out of the will?

RANSOM

Yes.

RICHARD

Then he's done what we weren't
strong enough to do - this might

finally make you grow up.

Ransom is really slapped by this but he doesn't let it show.

LINDA

I think it might be the best thing
that could happen to you.

RANSOM

Thanks - my mother, folks.

JONI

It won't be easy for you but it'll
be good. Nothing good is ever easy.

RANSOM

Up your ass Joni, you've got your
teeth bit into this family tit so
hard

MEG

Oh 'up your ass' very nice you
homophobic privileged -

RANSOM

(going down the line)
As a matter of fact - Eat shit, how's
that? In fact eat shit, eat shit -
eat shit - Definitely eat shit. Eat
shit.

And now everyone is shouting at each other.

Blanc has heard enough. He sets the baseball down on a side
table, and drifts out. Marta follows him.

103 EXT. FRONT PORCH

103

Blanc breathes in the air. Marta joins him. From inside the
house, the shouting continues.

MARTA

What was that about will readings
being boring?

BLANC

Exception that proves the rule.

Fran bursts out of the living room, muttering

FRAN

Asshole.

She storms off around the house. A beat of thought. Then:

BLANC
I'm warning you. Ransom said. I'm
warning you.

One of the dogs bounds up the steps to Blanc.

MARTA
You heard Ransom in there, it's the
kind of thing he says.

When Blanc goes to pet him, the dog drops something to his feet with a clatter. Marta freezes.

MARTA
What's he got there? Hey boy. You
find a stick? He's always bringing
junk into the house -

It's the piece of broken trellis. Blanc picks it up, examines it, and suddenly his eyes go sharp.

104 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE SIDE YARD

104

Holding the piece up as he studies the trellis that runs up the side of the house. Marta runs up beside him.

BLANC
This looks like a relatively fresh
break - yes. Right there.

He's spotted the broken spot on the trellis. Just up from it, what looks like a boarded window.

BLANC
Wait - that doesn't make sense,
where's that window?

105 INT. LIVING ROOM

105

The whole family in a screaming match, but Blanc and Marta walk through and up the stairs. Three people notice: Elliott and Wagner (who follow) and Ransom (who doesn't.)

106 INT. THIRD FLOOR LANDING

106

Blanc looks down the "dead end" hallway. Marta joins him, out of breath.

BLANC

Show me, but don't step on the carpet.

It's a runner rug, and Marta delicately steps on the wood siding as she goes to the wall with the painting. And swings it open, revealing the window.

TROOPER WAGNER

It's the trick window! From "A Kill For All Seasons!"

Elliott and Wagner at the top of the stairs, and Blanc motions them not to approach.

BLANC

Off the carpet!

He drops down to his knees, removes a loupe from his jacket, and holds it in his eye. Then, his face inches from the carpet, he scans it. All the way to the window. Then stops.

BLANC

Traces of dried mud. I suspect they go the length of the hallway.

MARTA

Footprints?

BLANC

No, just traces.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Depending on when it was last cleaned, it could be from anytime

BLANC

But that would not explain this.

He motions to the base of the window sill - obvious scuffs of dried mud. Marta winces.

Blanc tosses the piece of trellis to Elliott.

BLANC

Analyze this mud. It will match these traces, and you will find similar samples leading up the trellis on the side of the house.

(beat)

On the night of the party, somebody who did not want to be heard climbing the steps went to a great deal of trouble to break into Harlan

Thrombey's rooms. The game is afoot,
eh Watson?

107 INT. LIBRARY - MINUTES LATER**107**

The whole family assembled. Marta stands in the back, with Blanc, Elliott and Trooper Wagner.

Alan Stevens, Harlan's attorney, sits at a table with papers in front of him, assistant Sally beside him.

ALAN

Well. Thank you all for getting together like this, it isn't legally necessary but I thought because you're all in town and some of you are leaving soon, it would be best -

BLANC

Excuse me Mr. Stevens. As to that, ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to gently request you all remain in town until the investigation is completed. Shouldn't be more than two days.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

He's gently requesting, I'm ordering. Nobody move until we figure this out.

Nobody likes this.

LINDA

What?

JONI

Can we ask why? Has something changed?

BLANC

No.

JONI

No it hasn't changed or no we can't ask?

BLANC

Mr. Stevens, please continue.

ALAN

Right. Well the other reason I thought this gathering would be, uh,

beneficial is that as I told Walt, Harlan altered his will one week ago. He sealed it and asked me not to submit it to the courts for probate until after his death. So in case there's any confusion about anything we're all together, we can talk. I can't imagine any of it will be that complicated, Harlan's assets included um

SALLY

...the house

ALAN

the house which he owned outright, um

SALLY

sixty million

ALAN

right in various cash accounts and investments, yes and of course the real assets are sole ownership of um

SALLY

Blood Like Wine

ALAN

Blood Like Wine publishing, his publishing company. Ok.

Walt's wife puts her hand on his knee. He squeezes it, smiled tightly.

ALAN

Um, he did write up a statement when he made the recent changes, he wanted it read first, so:

(reads)

"Some of you may be surprised by the choice I've made here. No pleasure was taken in the exclusion, and its purpose was not to sow greater discord in the family, quite the opposite. Please accept it with grace and without bitterness. But do accept it. It's for the best."

Gently condescending eyes shift to Ransom. Linda sees this, puts her hand on her son's hand, and he immediately gets up and moves to a chair in the corner.

Alan's assistant hands him an envelope and he removes a single sheet of paper with one short typed paragraph.

ALAN

Ok. So - oh wow, yeah, not complex at all. This'll be quick. "I Harlan Thrombey, being of sound mind and body, yada yada, my assets both liquid and otherwise, I leave in their entirety to Marta Cabrera. My entire ownership of Blood Like Wine publishing I leave in its entirety to Marta Cabrera. The copyright of its catalog likewise I leave in its entirety to Marta Cabrera.

The air around Marta's head goes away. The room spins She's not sure what's happening. Blanc is looking at her.

The whole family is looking at her.

Walt bursts out of his chair and grabs the will

WALT

No.

LINDA

No.

WALT

No. What?

(beat)

That can't be - that can't be right

RICHARD

What the genuine shit

WALT

That can't be right it's right

ALAN

It's right

Donna begins to hyperventilate. She puts her head between her knees, breathes deep.

LINDA

No no no no Alan this can't be legal, there are, we're his family

WALT

We're his family, Alan he obviously wasn't, something - I don't know what but something wasn't right here

RICHARD

Are there safeguards against this?

And from the back of the room, slowly rising above the din of confusion and cursing, slowly drawing even Marta's deer in the headlights attention... Ransom. LAUGHING. Loud and weirdly sincerely, tears down his cheeks, laughing his head off.

JONI

Alan there's a mistake

MEG

Mom if it's what granddad wanted

JONI

No this is a mistake, this is ours.

LINDA

Alan take that piece of paper and shove it up your ass and get out. And you cops, out!

They don't but Ransom slips out, his child-like laughter trailing after him.

RICHARD

Linda -

LINDA

No, we need to talk and we need to fight this thing and we're not going anywhere. GET OUT! We're the Thrombeys goddammit! This is still our house!

A beat of silence. Then all eyes go to Alan. Who looks down at the will. His assistant Sally points helpfully.

ALAN

Sorry, there's, uh. "Likewise the house at two Deerborn Drive and all belongings therein I leave to Marta Cabrera.

Linda goes for Marta.

LINDA

You little bitch. Did you know about this? What did you do to him to make this happen, were you two what were you boinking my father?

Marta recoils, stumbles back.

MEG

'Boinking?'

RICHARD

Linda!

JACOB

Anchor baby.

WALT

Marta! Jacob! And Linda - please!

JONI

Linda please - Marta, you need to tell us though,

WALT

Yes Marta, did dad discuss this with you?

JONI

You need to tell us everything you know about this and we need to talk about this,

WALT

This isn't what dad wanted, this isn't fair but we can work this out

RICHARD

Jesus don't mob the girl, let's talk about this

The whole family is coming towards her like zombies. Blanc takes her by the arm and steers her towards the door.

BLANC

I think heads have to cool a little, and in the meanwhile I'd maybe run.

108 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE FRONT DRIVE**108**

Marta stumbles out of the house in a daze. Behind her, the entirety of the family floods out after her, shouting reassurances and questions and accusations and a general din of confusion.

MARTA

I - I have no idea why he - I just need to think - I'll call you or have him call me or do something I don't know

She gets in her car and slams the door, and it's instantly like A Hard Day's Night - the family gathered around trying to talk through the window and rapping to get her attention.

Marta keys the ignition - chug chug chug. Nothing. Oh god, not now - chug chug chug. It won't turn over.

Richard opens the door, she pulls it closed again and locks it, this is like a horror movie. Blanc is trying to get the family to back off but no dice.

Marta puts her head in her hands, all of it swirling and echoing and horrifying, she has no idea what to do.

HONK!

She turns - a honking car pulls up right beside her and through the family crowd she sees Ransom in his Porsche, waving "get in." With no other options she pushes out of her car and through the family and JUMPS IN with him.

As he GUNS IT and careens out of the driveway he shouts back at the family with a wave

RANSOM

I think this could be the best thing
to happen to all of you!

And they're gone. The family keeps shouting at each other.

Blanc watches the Porsche recede, his expression unreadable.

DING! His phone buzzing. He checks it. His expression darkens.

109 INT. RANSOM'S PORSCHE

109

Tearing down the private road, away from the house. He's still laughing, she's still shell shocked. Slowly, his laughter eases to a stop. A moment of silence.

RANSOM

Ok seriously though, what the hell?

She shakes her head, looks at him. What the hell indeed.

110 EXT. ROADSIDE FAMILY RESTAURANT - LATER

110

The Porsche parked out front.

111 INT. RESTAURANT - CORNER BOOTH

111

Tucked into a dark corner, Marta is miserable. Ransom is bemused, but regards her closely.

They sit in silence. A waitress sets a sausage plate down.

RANSOM
(to the waitress)
Could we get an extra bowl please?
(to Marta)
You look like you're gonna pass out.
Have you eaten all day? Eat.

She joylessly shovels food in her mouth, starving.

MARTA
This is a nightmare.

RANSOM
Uh huh. So why.

MARTA
Why

RANSOM
Why. Hey, this is everything. There has to be a bigger reason why and you know it.

MARTA
Well Ransom how about it had more to do with you guys than with me.

RANSOM
(agrees)
Yeah.
(beat)
Yeah that's the only thing that makes sense.

Marta is unexpectedly effected by this. The waitress breezes by, sets an empty bowl on the table.

MARTA
Did he tell you anything?

RANSOM
Just I wasn't getting a cent.

MARTA
He wanted you to build something from the ground up, like your parents

RANSOM

something from the ground up, like
my parents

RANSOM

yeah. My mom built her business from
the ground up with a million dollar
loan from granddad. My dad owns none
of it, and mom made him sign a
prenup. He lives in fear. I know
that's what granddad wanted to
protect me from by doing this, and I
know I shouldn't say this out loud
but when he told me, Jesus Christ I
coulda killed him.

(beat)

After I left the party, though. I
was driving fast, nowhere, just in
the night. And I got this weird...
clarity. That from here on I was
going to have to do for myself. And
that felt... good. The old bastard.

(beat)

Marta I know three things. One: I
know he didn't commit suicide.

MARTA

What makes you think that

RANSOM

I don't think it. I know it. Cause I
knew my granddad. So you're not
going to bullshit me. Because two: I
know lying makes you puke. Cause of
that mafia game last fourth of July.

Marta sinks back, suddenly nervous.

RANSOM

And three. I know that you just ate
a full plate of sausage and baked
beans.

She looks down at her empty plate. Oh no. He pushes the large
empty bowl in front of her.

RANSOM

So look me in the eye. And tell me
what really happened to my granddad.

Her lip quivers. She looks like she might attempt it. But
then tears drop from her eyes.

MARTA

You bastard.

Ransom pull the bowl away, and puts his hand on hers.

RANSOM
Marta. Tell me everything.

112 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE - EVENING

112

Dusk settles heavy. Warm light from the windows.

WALT (O.S.)
There have to be options here.

ALAN (O.S.)
No. I don't know how many times I
can repeat the same two simple
pieces of information.

113 INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

113

Lit by a fire in the fireplace, the whole family pacing around, Alan the lawyer looking very tired seated at a table in the center of the room.

ALAN
If Harlan was of sound mind when he
made the changes, and we've all
confirmed he was

RICHARD
Would a sound person do this! Sound
how?

LINDA
The very action speaks to
unsoundness!

ALAN
not legally no, you not liking what
they did does not speak to
testamentary capacity.

JACOB
What about undue influence?

WALT
Yes! Undue influence!

ALAN
(weary)
Did you just google that?

WALT

If Marta was manipulating dad somehow, if we found out that she had

LINDA
Gotten her hooks into him

WALT
Somehow or something

ALAN
You need a strong case for that. You've got nothing. "She endeared herself to him through hard work and good humor" won't cut the salami.

JONI
What about the slayer rule?

All eyes turn to her. Her face is lit by her phone.

JONI
I did just google that.

ALAN
The slayer rule obviously does not apply here.

RICHARD
What the hell is the slayer rule?

JONI
It's if someone is convicted of killing the person they can't get their inheritance.

ALAN
Not even convicted, even if they're held responsible for their death in civil court

WALT
Like OJ

ALAN
Like OJ, yes. But Harlan committed suicide.

All eyes turn to Blanc, who this whole time has been sitting in a chair by the fire, lost in thought.

JONI
Detective Blank. You said that the investigation is continuing. You

made a point of that. Do you suspect foul play?

BLANC

Mister Blanc. If you please.

(beat)

There is much that remains unclear.
But yes. I suspect foul play.

The eruption you would expect breaks out.

RICHARD

Marta?

BLANC

I have eliminated no suspects.

RICHARD

You're full of shit, I don't trust this guy in the tweed suit, and Alan god bless you you're useless.

ALAN

Thank you.

Alan takes that as an excuse to leave.

RICHARD

There's one answer to this: she can renounce the inheritance.

WALT

She knows it's what she should do, it's the right thing to do.

LINDA

We've gotta make her do the right thing.

Meg rounds on her mom, speaks quietly, in tears.

MEG

Mom. If Granddad wanted Marta to have everything, that's what he wanted.

JONI

No, this was not him. He loved us, he wanted us taken care of. He wanted you to have an education.

JONI

Meg. You think I can pay for your school?

This leaves Meg shaken.

114 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

114

Beer bottles now stacked up in front of Ransom. Marta has just told Ransom everything. He stares into space, and makes the slightest hint of a laugh which I'll write as:

RANSOM

Heuh.

MARTA

I know, just saying it it sounds insane but it's all true. I think Blanc's been on to me from the start - I don't care if I go to jail, but my mom... my sister, we can't -

Nothing but silence from Ransom. Maybe he's deep in thought. A strange glint in his eye.

MARTA

You going to say something?

RANSOM

I always thought I was the only one who could beat Granddad at GO. I always thought that meant something.

MARTA

I know you did.

RANSOM

At the party, that night, my last conversation with him, our last fight, that's what he told me, about you. That you beat him nearly every time. More than me. And I thought what a strange thing to tell me. But I think I get it now. I think it did mean something.

(beat)

I'm not telling the family shit. You're not going to jail. That detective is not going to catch you. And you're not giving up the family fortune.

RANSOM

Think about what Granddad did to see this through, this was what he wanted not just for you but for his family, and for him. And yes for

you. You've come this far. Let me help you go all the way.

Marta looks at him hard.

MARTA

This isn't you. You could turn me in right now and get your cut of the inheritance. Why?

RANSOM

Because fuck my family. They don't deserve any of this. I can help you and we can fool them all and get away with it... and then you will give me my cut of the inheritance. The perfect ending, we all win. You, me and Harlan. Deal?

Silence. Broken by Marta's phone ringing. On the phone ID - "MEG T"

Marta takes a breath, looks at Ransom. And picks it up.

MARTA

Meg

MEG (ON PHONE)

Marta. Oh that was nuts.

MARTA

I know

MEG (ON PHONE)

Are you ok?

MARTA

Yeah are you?

MEG (ON PHONE)

I'm fine, I mean everyone's nuts, they're all going, I don't know, they've lost it. No one knows I'm calling you, I wanted to - I don't know what I wanted, I wanted to say sorry for how everyone was.

MARTA

No...

MEG (ON PHONE)

And... I guess I wanted to ask...

(beat)

What are you going to do?

MARTA

What do you mean?

MEG (ON PHONE)

Well the... with the, will. What are you going to do?

Marta looks at Ransom. What indeed.

MARTA

What do you think I should do?

MEG (ON PHONE)

You should do what you think is... right. I think you should give it back to us. Granddad always took care of us, we're his family, I know he was like family to you but we're his actual family. Marta you know this isn't fair, we've always been good to you and we're going to take care of you, everyone loves you and you're like family and we'll take care of you but you have to make things right, you know what's right.

Marta, keeping eye contact with Ransom. Then, her voice quavering, Meg drops what is for her the big bomb:

MEG (ON PHONE)

Marta, mom's broke, she says I'll have to drop out of school.

MARTA

No, no. I won't let that happen.
(beat)

Whatever money you need Meg, I'll help you. I don't want you to worry.

115 INT. DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

115

Meg on the phone. Her face horrified, mortified, barely comprehending what she's just heard.

MARTA (ON PHONE)

I'll take care of you. I promise.

MEG

Thanks.

MARTA (ON PHONE)

And once I get the -

Meg hangs up, lets the phone drop from her ear. Tears in her eyes. She turns to her whole family gathered behind her, silent and expectant.

116 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT**116**

Marta realizes the connection's dead, holds the phone in her hand like something delicate she just broke.

RANSOM

Ok then. Did the detective find anything suspicious at the house?

MARTA

(in a daze)

Mud. Tracks upstairs - where I broke in through the window.

Ransom winces.

RANSOM

Identifiable prints?

MARTA

No.

RANSOM

Good. Ok. Good. Hey. You've just gotta ride the next few days out until the investigation putters out, cause it will, cause no matter how sharp this Blanc guy is he's got nothing. Relax.

117 INT. MARTA'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING**117**

She wakes to a sharp rapping at her door. Her sister Alice pokes her head in, flustered.

ALICE

Marta get your ass up, what the hell is happening? There's a guy here and a bunch of stuff, everything's going crazy, are we rich??

Marta lifts her head from her hands.

MARTA

Maybe, I dunno.

ALICE

I don't even know what that means
but you better get your ass up.

Marta looks at her phone - 28 missed calls.

118 INT. CABRERA LIVING ROOM

118

Marta stumbles in - Alice in front of the TV, mom pacing.

MOM
(subtitled Spanish)
Oh my god Marta what is all this,
what did you do?

The TV is tuned to local news - an anchor stands outside
THEIR APARTMENT BUILDING.

LOCAL NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)
...we again we don't know much about
Marta Cabrera or the exact
relationship she had to Harlan
Thrombey, beyond being his home
nurse, and the Thrombey family has
yet to release a statement...

MARTA
Is that here?

ALICE
Oh yeah it is. Wait so is that true?
Are we rich?

Marta looks out the blinds - several local reporters down in
the streets with their vans and cameras.

MARTA
Oh my god.

119 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE FRONT DRIVE - DAY

119

Wagner's prowler pulls up. Blanc gets out of the passenger
side.

Blanc nods to the Wagner and the officer.

120 INT. GREATNANA'S ROOM

120

Dim. By an open window stands GREATNANA. Blanc enters, she
turns. They look into each others eyes.

BLANC

Good Morning Mrs. Thrombey.

A long pause as he thinks of exactly the right word.

BLANC

Why is grief the providence of youth? I don't know. But I'd imagine that age deepens all feelings. Including grief. This was a long walk to offering condolences for the loss of your son. And asking you if it isn't presumptuous of me to not think too harshly of your family, if I am as I suspect the first to console you. They're young aren't they.

Blanc sits.

BLANC

One thing I do assume of age is weariness. Damned if I don't get more tired every day. Tired of what I do. Following arcs, like lobbed rocks. The inevitability of truth. But the complexity and the gray lies not in the truth but what you do with the truth once you have it.

Greatnana's eyes move slightly.

BLANC

I think you have something you want to tell me. I think you're very perceptive and very capable of telling me what you saw the night of your son's party. But I'll happily wait. I'm in no rush. I find it quite pleasant. Sitting here with you.

He reclines, not particularly looking at her. She looks back at him. Every now and then a breeze stirs the window sheers.

121 INT. CABRERA LIVING ROOM

121

MOM

Lawyers were here, very big lawyers it looked like, and some other guys I didn't know, they left all this for you and business cards, so many business cards, and there was a pile of other stuff when I got home -

Mom shovels some official looking legal letter and courier envelopes into Marta's arms.

MOM
(subtitled Spanish)
Hey. I don't like this.

MARTA
(subtitled Spanish)
I don't like it either mom. I'm slipping out the back - I'll be back later, don't talk to anyone.

122 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY

122

Dim and dingy. Marta comes out of their apartment door, then jump, startled - at the end of the hall, lurking: Walt.

MARTA
Hey.

Walt's eyes are rimmed red. His heavy cane taps.

WALT
Hey.

They're not sure what to do so they awkwardly hug. Marta still has the envelopes in her hands.

WALT
How you doing?

MARTA
Well. Walt I want you to know I didn't know about any of this. This is

WALT
I know you didn't, we all went kinda crazy yesterday

MARTA
Understandable

WALT
You're still very important to all of us, I want you to know that.

MARTA
I haven't even looked at all this yet, this legal stuff, is this from you guys?

Marta flips through the envelopes, squinting.

WALT

it isn't from us. Maybe just local lawyers and accountants who saw the news and want to jump on it, I'd be careful of it all.

One envelope sticks out - a blank plain letter sized envelope, no postage, no return address.

WALT

Marta. Is it your intention to renounce the inheritance?

MARTA

This is what Harlan wanted.

WALT

Well. Harlan has put you in a very hard position here. It was unfair of him.

Walt's hand on his cane. Gripping tight.

WALT

You see what this kicks up with the press and the scrutiny, and we know... with your mother...

MARTA

...with my mother.

Marta's spine straightens.

MARTA

What did Meg tell you.

WALT

This isn't about who - you're missing the point, we're not attacking you with this.

WALT

Marta if your mom came here illegally, criminally, if you come into this inheritance with the scrutiny that entails I'd be afraid that could come to light. That's what we're all trying to avoid here. We can protect you from that happening, or if it happens.

MARTA

You're saying even if it came to light, with the family's resources you could help me fix it.

WALT

Yes. The right lawyers, none of those local guys but New York lawyers, DC lawyers, enough resources put towards it, yes. But there's no need it should ever even come up. But yes.

MARTA

Ok. Good.

WALT

Ok?

MARTA

Cause Harlan gave me all your resources. So that means with my resources I'll be able to fix it. So I guess I'm going to go find the right lawyers.

WALT

Marta.

He shuffles towards her. For the first time she feels a hint of physical threat, and backs up quick into her apartment.

WALT

You better be sure you want to -

She slams the door

123 INT. CABRERA KITCHEN

123

and leans against it, breathing hard. But angry and focused. She dumps the legal envelopes in the trash but keeps the mysterious envelope, opens it and pulls out:

Half a sheet of paper, roughly torn. A photocopy of the header of some sort of medical document, "OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER" Under that, a photocopy of a tag with her name on it. And hand written in block letters at the top: "I KNOW WHAT YOU DID."

Marta's phone BUZZES, and she jumps. Caller ID: "maybe B BLANC". She hesitates, then sends it voicemail. Looks at the mysterious letter in her hands.

124 INT. RANSOM'S LIVING ROOM**124**

Ransom studies the mysterious letter. Marta pushes aside a stack of New Yorkers and sits on the couch.

RANSOM

Well I don't know what this is from

Indicating the tag photocopy with her name.

MARTA

It's my medical bag tag. They have my medical bag. For some reason.

RANSOM

OK, but this is just a photocopy of the header of a blood toxicology report, from the local crime lab. On Harlan. Marta, it would show the morphine overdose.

MARTA

So I'm screwed! How do you know all this stuff?

RANSOM

I was Harlan's research assistant. For a summer.

He sips his morning coffee.

RANSOM

But what kind of blackmail scheme is this? I mean the actual evidence is sitting up the street at the crime lab. What was the point of sending you this?

125 EXT. NORFOLK ROADS**125**

Siren blazing, the cop car SPEEDS into town.

126 EXT. MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE**126**

The cop car pulls past an identifying sign into the parking lot of a one story stand alone building, joining several other cop cars, and fire trucks. Journalists kept at bay.

The building is a charred brick husk. Black smoke, debris.

It's been gutted with an explosion and a blazing fire.

Blanc steps out of the cop car and finds Lieutenant Elliott.

BLANC
What's the cheese?

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
Five AM, security systems here was all triggered. It went up quick. Blood stores, records, all gone. No employees around, thank god.

BLANC
Any surveillance cams?

Elliott gestures wearily to the charred remains of a security camera on the smoking shell of an awning.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
And speaking of security, the security tape from the Thrombey residence was scrambled. For some reason.

Blanc unsurprised. He motions back to the building.

BLANC
What was still pending from the autopsy?

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
The report on the blood work.

BLANC
Blood work?

Blanc chews on this.

Across the street, Marta and Ransom pull up in her car.

127 INT. MARTA'S CAR

127

MARTA
Holy shit. This is insane.

Ransom looks at her - yeah it's likely. They both instinctively duck down in case the cops look over.

MARTA
Who would blow up a whole real official building just to blackmail me?

RANSOM

Marta this means that the blackmailer has the only paper copy of the thing that can prove your guilt. You didn't get any other instructions, no phone call no email, no nothing?

Marta looks stunned. She stabs at her phone, quick swipes.

MARTA

...nothing...I didn't check my email.

She shows him an email from 092832@shushmail.com. No subject line, simple text: 1209 Columbus Rd 10AM

RANSOM

That's it. 1209 Columbus Road, 10am.

Marta looks at Ransom, then at the clock on her dashboard - 9:32, then at the charred building.

128 EXT. MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

128

Blanc looks around, deep in thought. He spots Marta's car.

129 INT. MARTA'S CAR

129

Marta peeking up through the window.

Blanc sees her. She sees him. Ducks back down. Shit.

RANSOM

You know what this means right? If you destroy that copy you are totally within the clear.

Blanc begins to walk straight towards Marta. Quickly and with purpose. Shouts something, Lieutenant Elliott follows.

RANSOM

Marta. Did you hear me.

Marta peeks again - Blanc coming at them full speed. Twenty paces from the car. Closing in fast.

MARTA

Yeah.

She sits up, throws the car in gear and FLOORS IT.

130 EXT. MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE 130

Her subcompact PEELS OUT and buzzes off down the road.

Blanc, crestfallen, runs back towards the cop cars in the parking lot, shouting at Elliott, who flags a cop.

131 INT. MARTA'S CAR 131

The whine of the engine, Ransom puts on his seat belt. In the rear view, siren lights as cop cars pour out of the parking lot in pursuit.

MARTA

You regret helping me yet?

RANSOM

I regret not taking the beamer.

Her phone buzzes - Blanc calling. IGNORE.

132 EXT. NORFOLK ROADS 132

Marta buzzing down the road, cop cars a quarter mile back.

133 INT. COP CAR 133

Blanc in back, Elliott in front, Trooper Wagner driving.

TROOPER WAGNER (ON RADIO)

Vehicles in pursuit in Washington
Street

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

(into radio)

No force - repeat that. Possible
murder suspect.

Their speedometer creeping up on 85

134 INT. MARTA'S CAR 134

Marta's speedometer creeping up on 55.

MARTA

Oh my god oh my god oh my god I am
literally flooring it

RANSOM

Are you flooring it?

Her phone rings - Blanc again. She looks over - cop cars are RIGHT ALONGSIDE them. Blank holds his phone up, looks at her quizzically. Points to the phone.

RANSOM

This is going well.

MARTA

This is stupid, I'm pulling over

RANSOM

If you miss your shot at getting that tox report it's all over...

MARTA

Aaauuuuuawwwaaagghhhh

She hits the brakes.

135 EXT. NORFOLK ROADS

135

Marta's car PEELS TO A STOP and the two COP CARS on either side blaze by, hitting their brakes.

She pulls off onto a SIDE STREET and into narrower city streets, down narrow alleys, using her small car to nimbly dart through small spaces.

The cops can't follow, and she loses them.

She pulls to a stop in a secluded little back lot.

136 INT. MARTA'S CAR

136

Marta, breathing hard. Ransom is shocked.

MARTA

Ok. I'm all just pure adrenaline now it's like I swallowed bees. What's the the whatsitcalled address ok. And I just - I mean whatever they want, I just say yes right, just to get that report back. And destroy it. Ransom. Thank you. I couldn't do this without you.

RANSOM

1209 Columbus road. And destroy it.

He smiles slightly. A quick moment of silence between them.

Then: RAP RAP RAP on Ransom's car window.

Blanc. Standing right outside. Marta looks in her rear view - the cop car has pulled up silently behind them.

Another pulls up in front.

137 EXT. PARKING LOT**137**

Ransom and Marta step out of the car, hands raised for some reason.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

That was the dumbest car chase of all time. Put your hands down.

BLANC

(to Marta)

I spoke to Wanetta Thrombey, Greatnana. The night of the party she saw someone climb the trellis to the third floor.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Mr. Drysdale, come with us please.

Elliott leads Ransom off by the elbow. Ransom throws a look back at Marta - he has no idea what's going on.

MARTA

What's going on?

BLANC

"Ransom came back" she said. I don't know what he came back to do, but we'll find out.

Marta looks at Ransom - oh no. Senile Greatnana thought she was him. This is a mistake. But... she glances at her watch - 9:51.

BLANC

Did he ask you to drive when he saw me coming?

Ransom's being led to the police car. Marta decides:

MARTA

Yes.

Marta gets back in her car. She pretends to take a sip from an empty soda cup, but actually SPITS UP a little into it.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT (O.S.)

Blanc. Coming with us?

BLANC (O.S.)
(to Elliott)
I'll drive with Marta.

To Marta's horror Blanc opens her passenger door.

BLANC
Let's go to the police station, I
want a full run down of everything
he said to you, and I can catch you
up on where we're at.

138 EXT. NORFOLK ROADS

138

Cop cars coast through town, Marta's bringing up the rear.

139 INT. MARTA'S CAR

139

Marta glances at the dashboard clock - 9:55. Blanc, casual:

BLANC
Strange case from the start. A case
with a hole in the middle. A donut.
I'm just talking through my process
here, let me know if this is boring.

Marta's arms are locked, her eyes steal a glance at the clock
- 9:58.

BLANC
I feel the noose tightening - the
family are truly desperate.

BLANC
Desperate motives, the mystery of
who hired me, the impossibility of
the crime, and yet -

Up ahead, a street sign - "Columbus Road." Marta tenses.

BLANC
A donut! One central piece, and if
it reveals itself the fog would
lift, the arc would resolve, the
slinky become unkinked

MARTA
Do you mind if I stop for a second.
I need to pick something up. It will
be very quick.

BLANC

Sure.

140 EXT. NORFOLK ROADS 140

Marta's car makes a sharp turn, leaving the cop caravan.

141 EXT. 1209 COLUMBUS ROAD 141

A row of storefronts - 1209 is vacant. Marta's car pulls a few stores past it. She gets out of the car.

MARTA

I'll just be a few minutes.

Marta runs into a bustling hair salon.

142 EXT. BACK ALLEY 142

Marta ducks out the back door of the salon, goes two doors down to 1209, and slips into the back door.

143 INT. 1209 COLUMBUS ROAD 143

Dark, empty retail space. Lit only by the painted-over front windows. Marta edges her way in, her eyes still adjusting from the sun.

MARTA

Hello?

Her foot hits something on the dirty concrete floor.

HER MEDICAL BAG.

She kneels, picks it up gently.

Next to where it was lying, she finds something else curious - the burned remnants of a piece of paper. Only a charred corner remains.

She turns her attention back to the room. Creeps forward.

MARTA

Hello?

Ahead - a silhouette. A person. Seated in a chair, in the center of the room. Silent, facing her.

MARTA

Listen I don't know what you want.
Whatever you want we can work it
out, but we have to figure it out
right here, right now, and I'm
leaving with that report.

A beat of silence. Nothing. Something's not right here.

MARTA

Hello?

Marta takes a step closer, lifts her phone, and turns on its
flashlight.

Illuminating the ghostly face of FRAN, the housekeeper.

Marta, barely breathing:

MARTA

Fran?

A SPIDER crawls across Fran's face. Marta STIFLES A SCREAM
and leaps back, sucking in air.

A moment of stillness. Her phone BUZZES - Blanc calling.

Marta ignores the call, frozen.

Her eyes go to: A white letter sized ENVELOPE in Fran's hand,
resting on her lap.

Marta swallows. Leans in, carefully and quietly for some
reason, and SLIPS the envelope from the lifeless fingers.

Unsealed. She opens it.

It is empty.

Before this can even sink in, a rattling, grating DRAW OF
BREATH - from Fran.

Marta starts - oh my god - and goes to her, checking a pulse,
checking her eyes, lays her on her back. Fran sucks in thin
breath, her eyes finding Marta in the glare of the dropped
phone flashlight.

MARTA

Fran! Fran! Can you hear me? Fran,
give me a sign if you can hear me!

FRAN

You

MARTA

Me? Fran it's Marta, you called me here, you sent me the email, I'm here. I'm going to call an ambulance and you're going to be ok but can you tell me what happened, did you take something, what's happened to you -

Weak, Fran grabs Marta's wrist, and Marta focuses on her.

FRAN
...copy... copy

MARTA
What?

FRAN
...stashed...

These words are barely given breath:

FRAN
you... did this... won't... get away.. with this

Her eyes seize. Her breath gets ragged. Marta is paralyzed with shock and fear. Fran is dying.

Marta looks at the medical bag in her hand. Then at Fran, struggling with her final breaths, eyes wide with fear.

She takes a step back from the dying Fran. Fingers tight around the medical bag. Letting her die.

But then, a decision: no. Marta dials 911 on speaker, drops to her knees and starts administering mouth to mouth.

PHONE
911, what is your emergency?

144 EXT. 1209 COLUMBUS ROAD

144

Blanc sitting in the car, singing softly to himself.

BLANC
Sometimes I stand in the middle of the room... not going left... not going right...

He looks at the hair salon - what's taking so long? And then sirens, as an AMBULANCE pulls up two doors down, and EMT's run into the abandoned storefront.

BLANC

Oh lord.

HARD CUT TO:

145 INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - LATER

145

Marta and Blanc sitting silently in the fluorescent-lit waiting room. Marta with her face in her hands. Blanc is on his phone, mostly listening.

BLANC

(listens)

Alright my friend, thank you for the update. No I'm here with her. No need for that, I'll bring her in once we get word that the housekeeper is stable. It's still touch and go.

(listens)

Alright.

He hangs up. Marta looks at him.

MARTA

This is over. People are getting hurt. I'm going to tell you the truth.

BLANC

Young Ransom just told Lieutenant Elliott everything. Who just told me everything.

MARTA

Good. Wait god I hope he didn't cover for me, did he tell the real truth, about me switching theAnd the disguise and all theAnd the blackmail with the

BLANC

Yeah Yes Mm.

MARTA

But why did Fran take my morphine? Obviously she had swiped my bag from the house, but she didn't seem like a user to me, unless that's why she needed money...

(beat)

I dunno, doesn't matter. I should tell the Thrombeys myself, I feel

like I owe that to them.

BLANC

I don't think that's a good idea

MARTA

No, I need to do it. I won't do any of this if I can't do that. I really need to. I gave the doctors my number, they'll call if anything changes with Fran.

BLANC

We'll round up the Thrombeys at the house, along with a police escort.

MARTA

For the arrest after.

BLANC

You can tell me your whole story on the drive over. I want no more surprises.

Marta stands, a dead man walking, resigned.

146 EXT. NORFOLK ROADS

146

Marta's car drives through the scenic countryside. Inside we see but don't hear her telling a long story to Blanc, who looks at the passing countryside, brow knit.

147 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE FRONT DRIVE - AFTERNOON

147

All the family cars there, along with two police cruisers.

Marta's pulls up.

148 INT. MARTA'S CAR

148

MARTA

...said it was stashed, the copy, and then she told me "you did this, you won't get away with it" and then I called the ambulance. And that's it.

She turns the engine off. Looks up at the house. Breathes.

BLANC

Alright. Are you ready?

149 INT. FOYER**149**

Marta and Blanc enter. This really feels like a walk towards the gallows. Richard, Walt and Meg are there. Meg avoids eye contact with Marta.

RICHARD

Ah. Ok, has she come to her senses?

WALT

She's standing right there Richard she can speak for herself -

BLANC

Is the rest of the family here?

WALT

In the living room.

BLANC

I think maybe, if we could...

Blanc beckons, and Richard and Walt file out. On her way out Meg hugs Marta, weeping.

MEG

I'm sorry, I'm so sorry I told them about your mom. I was angry and scared, I'm sorry

MARTA

It's ok, Meg. I understand. Believe me. It's alright.

Meg sniffs, dries her eyes.

MEG

God I am so raiding Fran's stash after this.

They hug one more time. Then when Meg walks off towards the living room, Marta realizes something. Blanc walks back.

BLANC

I still think this is a bad idea, but the family is assembled.

MARTA

(to Blanc)

I know where the tox report is.

150 INT. DRAWING ROOM**150**

Marta jimmies the clock drawer open with a letter opener.

She pulls a FOLDED PIECE OF PAPER from inside, blows loose pot leaves off it. She hands it to Blanc.

MARTA

She practically told me where it was. Anyway this'll tie everything up. And I just handed it to you, god you're you're not much of a detective are you?

BLANC

To be fair you're a pretty lousy murderer. Perhaps we deserve each other.

151 INT. LIVING ROOM

151

The family gathered, impatient. Lieutenant Elliott and Trooper Wagner are there too, with another uniformed officer. Ransom sits in the corner, his face passive.

Marta gulps. Blanc is a few steps behind her. As she speaks, he unfolds and reads the tox report.

MARTA

Um. You guys have always been good to me. And what I'm about to say isn't going to be easy, and you're going to be upset, but especially after everything you've gone through the past few days, I thought you deserved to hear it from me.

Walt smiles at her, "you're doing the right thing." Marta takes a deep breath.

Blanc has finished reading the report. He refolds it carefully.

MARTA

I -

BLANC

Excuse me. You have not been good to her. You have all treated her like shit to steal back a fortune that you lost and she deserves. You're a pack of bloody vultures at the feast, but you're not getting bailed out, not this time.

(beat)

Ms. Cabrera has decided definitively not to renounce the inheritance.

WALT

What?

MARTA

What?

BLANC

Furthermore it will be my professional recommendation to the local authorities that the manner of death in the case of Harlan Thrombey is ruled as suicide, and the case is closed.

RANSOM

What?

MARTA

What? No, Blanc -

BLANC

Thank you all for coming goodbye.

He firmly guides Marta out by the elbow. A beat of silence.

RICHARD

Is anybody else confused?

As the family breaks out in hubub, Linda notices her dad's OLD BASEBALL on the side table where Blanc left it. What's that doing here? She picks it up.

152 INT. LIBRARY

152

Blanc steers Marta into the library, as sounds of hubub and shouting come from the other room.

MARTA

What the hell? I want to come clean, this is over -

BLANC

Almost.

Elliott bursts in, motions to the living room, then Marta, then Blanc.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

What - with - what?

BLANC
I'm sorry - officer Wagner!

Wagner enters.

BLANC
Please keep the family out of this room and get them out of the house if you can. But stand by with your additional officer.

TROOPER WAGNER
Get the family out?

BLANC
Yes but not all of them.

Blanc whispers something to Wagner, who nods and exits.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
Blanc c'mon, what's all this Drama.

BLANC
Indulge me.

Marta sits. Elliott remains standing.

MARTA
Blanc. I told Ransom, Ransom told you, I'm telling you now - it is an immovable fact that I killed Harlan.

BLANC
Yes you did, yes he did, yes you are, but. But.

BLANC
I spoke in the car about the hole at the center of this donut. And yes, what you and Harlan did that fateful night seems at first glance to fill that hole perfectly. A donut hole in the donut's hole. But we must look a little closer. And when we do, we see that the donut hole has a hole in its center - it is not a donut hole at all but a smaller donut with its own hole, and our donut is not whole at all!

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
Blanc I understand that this is amusing for you -

BLANC

Why. Was. I. Hired? Why would someone hire me?

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Someone fishing for any crime that could help reverse the will.

BLANC

I was hired before the sealed will was read. Yes, the person must have known the contents of the will. But one step further - that same person must have known a crime was committed, and further, if the intent was to reverse Marta's inheritance, they must have known that Marta was responsible.

(beat)

An intriguing combination of factors. Someone who knew what Marta did, wanted to expose it, but could not reveal how they knew.

MARTA

Fran? She was blackmailing me, she knew what I did

BLANC

But Fran wanted money, ergo she did not want the crime exposed.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Did someone in the family see Marta doing something suspicious?

BLANC

They would have had no reason to not speak up. No. The answer is not so simple.

Blanc sits, suddenly weary.

BLANC

Now with the entire solution in my field of view, the arc of this case is a tragedy of errors. And Marta, it will not be easy to hear. But there is at least one truly guilty party behind it all, guilty in the true sense of acting with malice, and committing a heinous crime with selfish intent.

(calls)

Trooper Wagner.

MARTA
(stunned)
Trooper Wagner??

Blanc squints at her. No.

A moment later Wagner leads Ransom in. Ransom looks at Marta softly, sadly.

RANSOM
Marta I'm sorry. I told them
everything, I figured it was all up.
I'm sorry.

MARTA
It's alright Ransom, I'm glad you
did.

BLANC
Not exactly everything though.

MARTA
Is this about what Greatnana told
you? She saw me that night, she
mistook me for Ransom

BLANC
We'll get to that. But first, Mr.
Hugh Ransom Drysdale, you might tell
us all why you hired me.

RANSOM
Why I hired you?

BLANC
You're right, let's back up. To the
night of the party. Your argument
with Harlan. What were the overheard
words by the Nazi child masturbating
in the bathroom - "my will" and "I'm
warning you." You and Harlan were
"drama mamas," you shared a love of
twisting the knife into one another.
I don't believe he would have
slipped it in halfway - no, I submit
that Harlan told you everything.

Ransom and Harlan face each other.

RANSOM

You can't be serious.

HARLAN

Not a red dime or word of my work to a single one of them, you included.

154 INT. LIBRARY

154

BLANC

Marta, remind me what Ransom said his conversation with Harlan ended with.

MARTA

Harlan told him that I could beat him in GO.

BLANC

And I asked myself - Marta? Why would the topic of the will have steered around to Marta? There is one obvious explanation...

155 INT. SMALL STUDY - NIGHT OF PARTY

155

RANSOM

You are not this crazy. You would not just throw your fortune away

HARLAN

No. I'm giving it to Marta. All of it.

RANSOM

Ha. To your Brazilian nurse are you goddamn insane.

HARLAN

I'm sane for the first time in my life and I've done it I've made the change to my will it's done

RANSOM

I'm going to stop this Harlan, I -

RANSOM

I'm warning you!

Push into a vent in the wall.

156 INT. LIBRARY**156**

RANSOM

That is some heavy duty conjecture.

BLANC

Granted. But it's the only way what comes next makes sense. So you storm out, you drive off into the night. You tell Marta later of what was it, feeling an overwhelming sense of...

MARTA

Clarity. That he has to make do for himself from here on out.

BLANC

Exactly.

157 EXT. NORFOLK ROADS - NIGHT OF PARTY**157**

Ransom's Porsche SKIDS TO A STOP on the side of the empty road. Sits idling.

BLANC (V.O.)

Marta. The will. Harlan. "You won't get away with this." Do for yourself. And a plan forms.

A beat. Then the Porsche roars into a skidding U-TURN and drives back the way it came.

158 EXT. PRIVATE ROAD - NIGHT OF PARTY**158**

Ransom's Porsche kills its lights and drives slowly down the private road, hooking a left at the CARVED ELEPHANT that marks the utility road.

BLANC (V.O.)

You return, careful to avoid the gate's security camera range.

159 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT OF PARTY**159**

The Porsche parked, Ransom hacks his way through the woods.

BLANC (V.O.)

Then on foot up towards the house,

160 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE SIDE YARD - NIGHT OF PARTY**160**

The party is still going on inside. Ransom slips through the side gate, up towards the house, and up the trellis.

BLANC (V.O.)

You sneak in, up the trellis so as not to be seen by the rest of the family, who are still having their party downstairs.

161 INT. THIRD FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT OF PARTY

161

The painting wall swings aside, and Ransom climbs through, leaving mud traces on the sill and the carpet. He heads straight down the narrow hall and into Harlan's bedroom.

The party din from downstairs.

BLANC (V.O.)

What you need to do will take moments. But it is essential you are alone, and undetected.

Ransom disappears into the darkened doorway.

BLANC (V.O.)

You knew the medications Harlan took. You knew what Marta would be injecting him with that night.

BLANC (V.O.)

And you knew if Marta was responsible for his death, even unintentionally, the slayer rule would nullify the changed will, and you would get your share back.

162 INT. HARLAN'S BEDROOM

162

Dark and still. Marta's medical bag, open. Ransom has unwrapped two syringes and has the two vials out - the Toradol and the morphine (the "good stuff.")

Using the syringes he extracts the liquid from both vials... and then injects the liquids back into the opposite vials.

He SWITCHES THE MEDICATIONS.

BLANC (V.O.)

You use the syringes in the kit to switch the liquids in the two medication vials. And as a final

precaution, you take the Naloxone,
the life saving antidote.

Replacing the vials he takes an injection pen, closes the bag
up and leaves.

163 INT. LIBRARY**163**

Marta is stunned, she can't even process this.

MARTA

No, no that's impossible.

BLANC

It is the truth. Hand me that vial
of morphine, I'll show you.

Blanc has placed two identical vials on the table behind
Marta. Her mind is still spinning, she glances at them, takes
one and absently hands it to him.

MARTA

If he did that, if the meds were
switched, then when I got them mixed
up...

(oh my god)

I accidentally switched them back.
But then I gave Harlan

BLANC

The correct doses. Yes. But not
accidentally. I taped over the
labels of these two vials.

Blanc shows white tape over the one she just handed him.

Picks up the other vial, shows the same.

BLANC

The vials themselves are identical.
How did you know that this was the
morphine?

MARTA

I... just knew

BLANC

You knew because there is the
slightest, almost imperceptible
difference of tincture and viscosity
between the liquids. You knew
because you had done it a hundred
times. You gave him the correct

medication. Because you are a good nurse.

MARTA
Then Harlan was...

BLANC
I'm sorry Marta. But yes. Harlan was perfectly fine.

He unfolds the tox report and hands it to her.

BLANC
His blood was normal. The cause of death was truly, solely suicide, and you are guilty of nothing but some damage to the trellis and a few amateur theatrics. In fact if he had listened to you, he would be alive today.

Marta is white as a ghost. She shudders, buckles over.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT
Hot damn.

BLANC
A twisted web, and we are not finished untangling it. Not yet.

BLANC
Marta when Greatnana spotted you climbing down the trellis she said

164 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE SIDE YARD - NIGHT OF PARTY

164

Marta facing Greatnana, who says:

GREATNANA
Ransom? Are you back again already?

BLANC (V.O.)
Are you back again already, because earlier that night -

CUT TO: the exact same scene but RANSOM hops down off the trellis, and is startled by Greatnana staring at him.

GREATNANA
Ransom, you're back!

He puts his finger to his lips - shhh, and blows a kiss as he walks off into the night.

165 INT. LIBRARY**165**

Marta with her fingers on her temples, still unbelieving.

RANSOM

Marta c'mon.

(to Blanc)

This is stoopid with two o's and you don't have a shred of evidence, you're just spinning a fairy tale.

BLANC

Not a shred no, just as we have no real proof of Marta's mixing up the vials so it's your word against -

RANSOM

You have her confession!

The sharpness of this makes Marta look at Ransom for the first time.

BLANC

Ah right, we do have that. If you'll indulge me, I'd like to spin a little further.

166 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE SIDE YARD - NIGHT OF PARTY - FLASHBACK 166

Moonlit, silent.

BLANC (V.O.)

Much later that night you would have to come back to the house, to break back in and retrieve the incriminating tampered vials.

A dark figure, Ransom, approaches the side gate. But when he opens it, the two dogs come bounding across the lawn, barking loudly.

BLANC (V.O.)

However, this time the dogs were outside. They barked. Waking Meg.

A light goes on upstairs. The dogs keep barking, paws on the gate. Ransom backs off.

BLANC (V.O.)

No matter. You'll get the vials tomorrow.

167 INT. LIBRARY**167**

BLANC

But tomorrow brings news not of a
medical error and guilty nurse, but
of a slit throat and suicide!?

168 INT. RANSOM'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY**168**

A nervous Ransom tears a clipping from the local newspaper about Harlan's death, stuffs in it an envelope with a huge fold of cash, and addresses it to Blanc. The New Yorker profile open on the couch.

BLANC (V.O.)

Now the circumstances are perfect
for the anonymous hiring of a me:
you know a crime has been committed
by Marta, you need her to be caught
for it, you cannot reveal how you
know.

169 INT. LIBRARY**169**

BLANC

Enter Benoit Blanc.

Elliott can't help but roll his eyes.

LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT

Benny look I hear what you are
saying

Trooper Wagner quickly shushes Elliott, enthralled by every word Blanc says.

BLANC

The body was discovered early the
next morning. The police, the
medical examiners, the family,
everyone swarms in,
(to Ransom)
and there is no possible way you can
get to Marta's medical bag to remove
the vials. You must wait for your
moment, when the investigation is
over and you know the house will be
empty. And that is why you missed
the funeral.

170 INT. THIRD FLOOR LANDING - AFTERNOON - FLASHBACK**170**

Ransom bounds up the stairs, climbs under the POLICE TAPE blocking Harlan's study, and enters.

BLANC (V.O.)
there is no one home to wonder why
you're going into Harlan's study. Or
so you think.

Fran comes around the corner, spots Ransom and is about to say something, but doesn't.

BLANC (V.O.)
Poor Fran. She witnessed you
tampering with Harlan's medication
in the medical bag. She did not know
what you were doing. But she knew
you were up to no good. And so her
mind begins to turn.

Ransom pockets the two incriminating vials from the medical bag and replaces the Naloxone pen. When he stands to go she retreats.

171 INT. LIBRARY**171**

MARTA
Oh god that movie she told me about,
with Danica McKellar, that's what
she was talking about -

TROOPER WAGNER
Deadly by Surprise.

BLANC
She loved Harlan. She hates Ransom.
So the poor girl decides to test her
theory and make this asshole pay.
She gets a copy of the toxicology
report, I will be honest I have no
idea how

MARTA
She has a cousin - she told me, she
has a cousin who works as a
receptionist at the examiners
office!

BLANC
Well voila. The numbers mean nothing
to her, but if Ransom is guilty its
existence is a threat, so she
photocopies the header and makes her
blackmail note.

MARTA

So why did she send it to me?

BLANC

She did not. She sent it to Ransom.

172 INT. RANSOM'S LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

172

Ransom walks in sorting mail - finds the blank envelope, reads the blackmail note inside, and slowly grins.

BLANC (V.O.)

And when Ransom first gets it, what is his reaction? Elation! He still thinks Marta gave Harlan the tampered drugs! A blood tox report will prove Marta's guilt!

173 INT. LIBRARY - DAY - FLASHBACK

173

The will reading, the family assembled. Ransom sits in back, a sly smile on his face as the will is read.

BLANC (V.O.)

He goes to the will reading in high spirits, ready to see the family tear themselves apart, secure in the knowledge that it will all be undone when the tox report comes to light. And then...

174 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

174

Beers stacked up. Marta has just confessed. Ransom's face is unreadable.

BLANC (V.O.)

Marta's confession. And everything turns on its head. Now he realizes that Marta has committed no crime, and the tox report will prove her innocence. The changed will is going to stand. He has lost. Unless.

175 INT. LIBRARY

175

Blanc rounds on Ransom.

BLANC

Unless you decide.

176 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK 176

Ransom giving Marta his pep talk -

RANSOM

...you're not going to give up the money.

177 INT. LIBRARY 177

BLANC

You are not going to give up the money.

178 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK 178

RANSOM

You've come this far!

179 INT. LIBRARY 179

BLANC

You have come this far. Just one step further. Just one last act, in for a penny, in for a pound. You decide. You are in.

CLOSE ON: A lighter ignites a rag stuffed in a tin gas can.

THE CAN: Being thrown through a window in a brick wall.

180 INT. MEDICAL EXAMINERS OFFICE MORGUE - FLASHBACK 180

Empty, dark. The flaming can falls in slow motion from the high window. Hits the floor, ignites.

BLANC (V.O.)

Step one: destroy all evidence of Marta's innocence.

The flames dance in the reflection of a glass case of refrigerated BLOOD SAMPLES.

BLANC (V.O.)

Step two:

181 INT. RANSOM'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT / DAY? 181

CLOSE ON: The BLACKMAIL NOTE - at the bottom is written "1209 COLUMBUS ROAD 8AM" A hand TEARS this bottom part off, then puts the top half in an envelope.

BLANC (V.O.)

Send Marta the anonymous email with
a late morning rendezvous time,

CLOSE ON: An email addressed to Marta being typed on a phone,
"1209 COLUMBUS ROAD 10AM"

182 INT. APARTMENT BACK HALLWAY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK 182

Ransom creeps down the hall, slips the ENVELOPE into the letter slot of Marta's door.

BLANC (V.O.)

and deliver her the blackmail note.

183 EXT. 1209 COLUMBUS ROAD - MORNING - FLASHBACK 183

Ransom's Porsche pulls up. He gets out, pulling on gloves.

BLANC (V.O.)

Step three: keep your appointment
with Fran.

184 INT. 1209 COLUMBUS ROAD - 8AM - FLASHBACK 184

Fran standing in the middle of the room, nervous. She turns as Ransom walks in and strides towards her.

FRAN

I knew it. I knew you were a no good
son of a bitch, I knew Harlan
wouldn't have just killed himself.

RANSOM

Yes, you were right Fran.

Ransom sees the medical bag on the floor, kneels and pulls something out of it.

FRAN

I knew you were guilty as shit. Now
you're gonna pay for it don't come
near me I'm warning you I -

But he's upon her, hand over her mouth, stifling her scream as he pushes the syringe into her neck and PUSHES THE PLUNGER.

MINUTES LATER - her inert body in the chair. He fishes through her pockets, finds the envelope, and takes the TOX REPORT from it, leaves the empty envelope in her hands.

On his way out: lights the tox report on fire, drops it burning next to Marta's bag. We stay with it as it burns away.

BLANC (V.O.)

Now the board is set. Marta will get the blackmail note. You will put the pieces together for her - the tox report, her one chance at getting away with it all. You'll guide her to the rendezvous.

BLANC (V.O.)

You'll make an anonymous call to the police, they will catch her there with the body and the burned evidence. Marta will be arrested for killing Fran... and Harlan.

185 INT. LIBRARY

185

MARTA

She said -

186 INT. 1209 COLUMBUS ROAD - FLASHBACK

186

Marta holding Fran on the floor, her dying words -

FRAN

you... did this...

187 INT. LIBRARY

187

MARTA

She didn't say "you did this," she wasn't talking about me, she said

188 INT. 1209 COLUMBUS ROAD - FLASHBACK

188

Exact same moment but this time we hear -

FRAN

Hugh... did this...

189 INT. LIBRARY

189

MARTA

Hugh did this. Cause you made the help call you Hugh. Cause you're an asshole.

BLANC

(to Ransom)

It would have worked. If we hadn't brought you in for questioning, so you could not make your anonymous call. And if Fran had not stashed a safety copy of the tox report.

190 INT. 1209 COLUMBUS ROAD - FLASHBACK

190

Marta turns away from the dying Fran.

BLANC (V.O.)

And if Marta had not outplayed you once again.

Marta turns back, calls 911, gives mouth to mouth to Fran.

BLANC (V.O.)

By having a kind heart. By saving Fran's life, though it meant her losing the inheritance and going to jail. She didn't play your game, she saved Fran's life.

191 INT. LIBRARY

191

For the first time, Ransom looks afraid.

RANSOM

Fran's alive?

Marta's phone starts to ring. They all see the caller id - it's the hospital.

BLANC

(to Marta)

Oh yes. Fran, who will confirm this fairy story or something close to it.

(to Ransom)

And will send you, Hugh, to jail.

She answers the call, puts the phone to her ear.

MARTA

Yes.

A long beat, then her face breaks in relief.

MARTA

Yes. Thank you doctor, that's great news, we'll be there soon.

She hangs up. And smiles with radiant joy.

MARTA

She's okay.
(to Blanc)
She's ready to talk.

Ransom stares at Marta, his face a mask.

BLANC

Trooper Wagner, if you would keep Mr. Drysdale in custody while Lieutenant Elliott, Ms. Cabrera and myself go to the hospital to take Fran's statement.

Ransom stands. Steps to Marta, who's frozen, looking in his eyes. His poker face breaks. And he grins.

RANSOM

I want to say this just to you, not to a courtroom of cameras, just to you because you know it's the truth: we allowed you into our home. We allowed you to take care of granddad, to be part of our family and now you think you can steal it from us? You think I'm not going to fight for our birthright, our home, our ancestral family home?

BLANC

Harlan bought this house in the eighties. From a Pakistani real estate baron.

RANSOM

Oh shut up Blanc, shut up! Shut up with that Kentucky fried fog horn rag-horn drawl. Yeah I killed Fran but I guess I didn't, so what do you have on me. Nothing What? attempted murder -

(to Blanc)

I get arson for the bombing, maybe a few other charges, with a good lawyer I'll be out before you know it.

Face to face, Ransom's face hateful, Marta's strong and set.

RANSOM
(to Marta)
And then you'll see just how much
hell I can wreak on your life, you
vicious little bitch.

But then... Marta's face starts to do things. Odd things.
Convulses. Her jaw clenches. Her cheeks bulge.
And the PROJECTILE VOMITS into Ransom's face.

RANSOM
AUGH! WHAT THE SHIT!

He falls back cursing, she drops to her knees, spitting.
Wagner, inappropriately excited:

TROOPER WAGNER
That means she was lying!

MARTA
That's right, Fran's dead.
(to Ransom)
And you just confessed to her
murder.

Ransom takes this in. Then he smirks.

RANSOM
Well. In for a penny...

In one fluid motion he spins to the ornamental WALL OF
KNIVES, grabs one -

BLANC
No!

and TACKLES MARTA...

Time slows as Blanc and Elliott lunge to stop him but it's
too late -

Ransom and Marta fall together, his arm arcing down

And as they hit the ground his arm comes down PLUNGING
THE KNIFE UP TO THE HILT IN HER CHEST.

They lie still, breathing hard. Her eyes wide with pain and
horror. His cold and wild.

But then she blinks. Squints.

And he cocks his head. Realizing something.

Withdraws the knife from her chest.

Its fake blade had retracted into the handle. It's a theatrical prop.

He pumps it up and down a few times, the spring making a pathetic toy noise.

Ransom smirks.

RANSOM

Shit

And is VIOLENTLY TACKLED out of frame by Trooper Wagner.

Leaving Marta lying on her back. Blanc shouting if she's alright, Elliott and Wagner wrestling Ransom into cuffs, it all fades into the background as she holds the knife and stares at the ceiling.

192 INT. SMALL STUDY

192

CLOSE ON: Harlan's old baseball being set carefully back in place.

By Linda. She's about to leave, but she notices the pink envelope on the desk. Picks it up, takes out the blank note. Seems to recognize it, and smiles sadly.

193 EXT. THROMBEY ESTATE FRONT DRIVE - LATER

193

Linda comes outside and joins the family.

Several more police cars, and an ambulance. Ransom is loaded into the cop car. His family are held at bay by officers, but they react in different ways -

Richard yelling at the cops. Walt sobbing, Donna collapsed against him, Jacob on his phone.

Joni staring into space, ruined. Meg talking to Lieutenant Elliott, crying. She's just learned about Fran.

Linda watches the circus, strangely disconnected, going to light a cigarette. With a strange smirk, she uses the flame to warm the blank note from the office, and HIDDEN WRITING starts to appear - a note from her father. Their secret communication. As the letters appear, her face changes.

194 INT. LIVING ROOM**194**

Marta sits, a blanket over her shoulders. An officer who's just taken her statement walks away. Blanc approaches.

MARTA

Can I ask. At what point did you suspect I had something to do with Harlan's death?

BLANC

From the moment you first set foot in front of me.

Taps her shoe. The tiny, faded spot of blood.

MARTA

Oh my god.

BLANC

I want you to remember something very important: you won not by playing the game Harlan's way, but yours.

Through the window she sees the family outside.

MARTA

I should help them. Right?

BLANC

I have my own opinion. But I have a feeling you'll follow your heart.

He gives her a wink, and strolls off.

195 INT. FOYER - LATER**195**

Marta shuffles to the front doorway. One last glance at Harlan's portrait, its grin now gentle and content.

196 EXT. FRONT PORCH - BALCONY**196**

She stands on the threshold. Sees Blanc get into the front door of a cruiser, and it drives off - Ransom in the back.

He looks back at her through the window.

The family out on the lawn. Not sure where to go or what to do. They all turn to see: Marta standing very small, but somehow not, in the doorway of her house.