

MAD CITY

"Pilot"

Written by

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CLOSE ON: A woman's stern face, her eyes glazed and staring straight ahead. A dull BUZZ surrounds her, building steadily.

She could be anyone, this could be anywhere.

As we PULL BACK slowly from this woman, a single sound distinguishes itself from the white noise --

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Tor-ya...

As we slowly pull back further, we see that we're in --

INT. MADISON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - SANCTUARY - DAY

A church. Though it's 2019, this sanctuary looks straight out of 1978, with faded pink carpeting and upholstered pews.

Standing near the altar is VICTORIA WITT (32). With her designer heels and sharp black pencil skirt, she's distinctly out of place in this musty Midwestern chapel.

CHYRON: MADISON, WI

The voice tries yet again to pull Victoria from her reverie --

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Tor-ya!

The white noise cuts out, and we sharply PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

CASEY WITT (28), who's so short and petite that the top of her head didn't even make it into the frame. She wears a brightly colored babydoll dress, and smudged glasses are pushed up on her forehead and tangled in her hair.

She could easily be mistaken for twelve, and you can probably tell already -- Casey has developmental disabilities.

And we don't realize it yet (Casey's pronunciation can be choppy and sometimes she skips words), but she's saying her older sister's name. Victoria. *Tor-ya.*

Victoria snaps out of it, and turns to look at Casey.

CASEY

I - getting tired.

VICTORIA

(whispered)

You're doing great. This part only takes like half an hour.

CASEY

Ugh, come on...

Victoria and Casey are standing before a table of flowers and framed photos of a woman who looks to be an older version of Victoria, but with higher cheekbones and a brighter smile. This is RUTH WITT -- their late mother.

A queue of MOURNERS wait their turn to greet the sisters, so Victoria continues whispering --

VICTORIA

Casey, *shhh*. You're fine.

(then)

Oh hell, do you remember her name?

I always forget--

A LOUD LADY in a bulky power chair zips up to Casey and Victoria, swiveling to face them.

LOUD LADY

It's just not fair! I can't believe we've lost the community's best disability advocate. And it was so unexpected! Only a week ago your mom and I were out to happy hour together. Oh, we had such a time. I had to talk my way out of a DUI for cruising my chair down the sidewalk afterward.

CASEY

That's *bad* --

Casey has zero filter. Like, literally. (But hey, this lady doesn't have much of a filter either, and she doesn't have any intellectual disabilities like Casey.)

Victoria diverts, cutting across her sister's accusation --

VICTORIA

I'm sure it would mean a lot to Mom that you're here.

LOUD LADY

Well I could say the same about you! Ruth told me a while ago that she didn't think you'd make it back home even if she dropped dead one day. Now it's her funeral and here you are, Victoria! Maybe the only time Ruth was ever wrong, huh? How long had you been away now?

CASEY

Five years.

Victoria opens her mouth defensively, but Casey is the one talking over her sister this time --

CASEY (CONT'D)

Thank you - coming, Ab-gail.

On Victoria: *Oh, yeah. Her name is Abigail.* Casey looks smug.

INTERCUT more greetings with guests:

-- A SOBBING PARENT, shaking her head and unable to form words, ignores Victoria but SMOTHERS Casey with hugs --

CASEY (CONT'D)

(muffled)

Thanks for... coming.

-- A HIGH SCHOOL CLASSMATE offers stilted condolences --

CLASSMATE

I actually knew your mom better than I ever knew you, Victoria.

VICTORIA

I'm sure. She knew everyone.

CLASSMATE

Ruth was such a mentor to me, you're so lucky to have had her as a mother. We became so close when I was volunteering in her office. I think she needed a sort of surrogate daughter after you left.

VICTORIA

(snide)

You know she had another daughter here too, right?

CLASSMATE

Well of *course*, back in high school I was Casey's freshman advisor!

CASEY

Second period, Mondays and Fridays!

Casey hugs her. The classmate then makes an awkward half-step toward Victoria, but moves along without hugging her.

-- Casey and Victoria's GREAT AUNT (70's) steps forward --

GREAT AUNT

(only to Victoria)

Look at you two! I almost didn't recognize you both. So grown up.

(still only to Victoria)

Casey's development is really so much further along than I ever expected, and it's all thanks to my niece's hard work. I cannot imagine what the good Lord was thinking, taking her before her old aunt...

Casey and Victoria exchange looks -- *We can't imagine either.*

-- A YOUNG MAN finishes his greeting, walks with the support of his wrist braces to find a seat among pews --

CASEY

Tor-ya, I need my gab.

VICTORIA

Hey, I promise we'll figure it out after the service. But for now --

CASEY

No, Tor-ya! I need --

VICTORIA

Casey. I get that this sucks, but you've been really fixating and --

Victoria's phone BUZZES from her purse. She checks the ID.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Hey, can you greet by yourself for a sec?

Suddenly, we hear a piercing noise off screen, almost like a crow -- *CAW!* They both look toward the source of the sound.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Oh good, Diamond can hang with you. I'll be right back.

As Victoria rushes off to answer her phone, DIAMOND WRIGHT (20) steps into frame next to Casey. She's black, lanky, has a direct manner. She'll proudly tell you -- whether you asked or not -- that she is on the Autism Spectrum.

DIAMOND

I've decided to sit back in the Mother's Room for the service. Members of your congregation are already staring at -- *CAW!*

You can probably guess without her telling you that Diamond also has Tourette's Syndrome.

CASEY

You is... anxious?

DIAMOND

No, not particularly. I mean, it's not *my* mother's funeral. But the staring is rather uncomfortable. Everyone shouts at my church.

A young man cuts the line of waiting guests and walks right up to Casey and Diamond. This is JOSHUA REED (25). He has Down Syndrome and speaks with a bit of a lisp. Joshua somberly takes Casey's hand in both of his.

JOSHUA

Casey Witt. I am so sorry for your loss.

Casey SNATCHES her hand out of his with a huff.

CASEY

What you *doing*, Josh-wa?

Joshua breaks into a grin, CACKLING. His default is actually to talk in UPSPEAK, as if every word he says gives him joy.

JOSHUA

I'm offering my condolences!

DIAMOND

That is not funny, Joshua.

CASEY

Not funny!

JOSHUA

Sorry, but... it's a little funny!

Casey can't help but LAUGH with Joshua. Her laughter is always a little too loud, but it's never fake. Diamond smiles in spite of her indignation, then tics again -- CAW!

The churchgoers still in the greeting queue look scandalized.

INT. MADISON PRESBYTERIAN - SANCTUARY - DAY - LATER

The ORGANIST has begun to play an ironically UPBEAT TUNE. Attendees take their seats. Every pew is packed full.

Victoria finally comes back into the sanctuary. Her face is a little red, her gaze unfocused, and she's stumbling slightly.

Victoria's eyes find Casey seated at the front, the colorful dress sticking out easily in the mass of black. Victoria squeezes in next to her, with Joshua on Casey's other side.

The PASTOR (50's, Scennie accent) steps up to the pulpit.

PASTOR

The peace of Christ be with you.

The church members in attendance mumble back --

CONGREGATION

(in unison)

And also with you.

PASTOR

We're gathered today to celebrate the extraordinary life of Ruth Witt, whose departure earlier this week came as a great shock to our community. Ruth was a tireless activist in Madison and beyond. Many of you here have benefitted firsthand from her advocacy. She truly was a mother to everyone.

(turning stony)

Including her eldest daughter Victoria, who will now speak...

Victoria clocks the critical tone and avoids the pastor's gaze. As she gets to her feet, the sanctuary door SWINGS OPEN dramatically to Victoria's right. SCOTT (60) -- balding, wild eyes, entirely under-dressed for a funeral -- BURSTS IN.

Scott scans the sanctuary, gaze landing on Victoria and Casey. His voice booms across the large room --

SCOTT

So! Did you girls forget to send my invite?

VICTORIA / CASEY

(in unison)

Dad.

MAIN TITLE:

MAD CITY

OVER BLACK:

VICTORIA (O.S.)
I want to tell you a story.

EXT. CHARLIE PALMER STEAKHOUSE - ROOFTOP - DAY

A private party is in full swing, an elite gathering of Washington's most aristocratic constituents. The low sun bathes a sweeping view of Capitol Hill in golden light.

CHYRON: WASHINGTON, D.C. A week ago.

At the center of it all is Victoria, engaging SENATOR KAREN SPINNER (50s).

VICTORIA
As kids, my sister and I would go on hikes with our mom at this gorgeous peninsula near our house. Beautiful lake views, but rocky trails. And my sister's always had bad balance. One day, she tripped and fell flat on her face. Split her head open. Blood everywhere.

SENATOR SPINNER
How awful. Was she alright?

VICTORIA
She was, thank you. Her hospital bills were all covered by AbleCare, and I never forgot that. It's the reason I'm so proud to be working with the company now.

Just broom out any fancy euphemisms -- Victoria is a corporate health insurance lobbyist.

The cell phone in Victoria's hand suddenly lights up with a call from -- **CASEY**. She sends it straight to voicemail.

SENATOR SPINNER
Do you need to get that, Victoria?

VICTORIA
No, no. Sorry about that.

SENATOR SPINNER
Well, AbleCare is very fortunate to have you in their corner.

VICTORIA

I'm just very personally motivated.
But that's why I'm so concerned
about this upcoming bill, Senator.
Karen. May I call you Karen?

Victoria touches the Senator's arm, milking it. *Definitely*
flirting with her -- and it's working.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

This bill's restrictions would make
it so much harder for AbleCare to
offer quality treatment to families
who need it, like mine did.

SENATOR SPINNER

It's lovely that you're so close to
you family. Do you see them often?

This briefly throws Victoria off her game. After a beat --

VICTORIA

Not often enough. But the work
we're doing is worth trading in
some personal time.

SENATOR SPINNER

Well, I'll certainly keep your
selfless dedication to the company -
and your sister's story - in mind
during next week's vote.

VICTORIA

That's all I can ask, Karen. Now
let's get you back to your donors.

Victoria gives a final coy smile. She leaves the Senator to
mingle, and weaves to the party's periphery. Job well done.

BRENDAN MILLS (29), Victoria's assistant, slides up with two
drinks in hand. He offers Victoria a glass, and she raises
her eyebrows at him.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Really?

BRENDAN

It's soda.

She takes it with a small nod, and they clink glasses.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
 "Make lobbying a breeze again."
 You're unstoppable under this
 administration. I can't believe you
 didn't even vote for him.

VICTORIA
 Shut it, Brendan.

BRENDAN
 Relax, no one can hear us.
 (proving his point)
 I love watching you work. You and
 Karen would be so hot together.

His palm slides down her backside, out of view from the party
 guests. Victoria pushes his hand away discretely.

VICTORIA
 Not here. Jesus.

BRENDAN
 C'mon boss, everyone's sloshed.

Victoria's phone LIGHTS UP again. Same name as before: CASEY.
 Brendan is back in business mode --

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
 Should I get that for you?

VICTORIA
 It's just my sister. She won't stop
 calling.

BRENDAN
 Doesn't she always do that?

VICTORIA
 Not lately... But hey, everyone's
 sloshed right?

She steps away and answers the call. As she does, we see her
 face fall...

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE - BUSINESS CLASS - SEVERAL DAYS LATER - DAWN

Victoria sits in a wide window seat, wearing a crisp pantsuit
 and heels and drinking coffee from a styrofoam cup. All the
 other passengers on this redeye flight are still asleep.

Victoria is turning an airline-sized bottle of whiskey over in her hand, staring at it intently. It's still unopened.

The snoring guy next to Victoria GRUNTS AWAKE as the lights in the cabin flicker on.

PILOT (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, we are about to begin our descent into Madison.

Victoria lifts the window shade, and pale light streams in. Bright green farmland stretches below for miles. The guy rousing next to Victoria turns to face her. From the moment he speaks, you can tell he's a total DOUCHECANOE.

DOUCHECANOE

Wow! I slept through that whole flight, huh?

If you fly often, you probably know the type. If you're a woman and fly often, you *definitely* know the type.

DOUCHECANOE (CONT'D)

I hope I didn't snore too loud! So, you in town for the party?

She shakes her head. The subtext: *I'd rather shit my pants and sit in it for a whole flight than talk to you right now.*

DOUCHECANOE (CONT'D)

Please don't tell me you live here?

VICTORIA

I don't.

DOUCHECANOE

Smart girl. It's called the mad city for reason. Such a shithole.

He laughs surprisingly loud for someone who was asleep twelve seconds ago. Victoria unscrews the small whiskey bottle.

DOUCHECANOE (CONT'D)

What're you here for then? Business or pleasure?

VICTORIA

Neither.

DOUCHECANOE

Ah, you're visiting family too, huh? Believe me, I get it. My family's all a bunch of libtards.

Victoria dumps the bottle of whiskey into her styrofoam cup of coffee, then takes a big gulp.

VICTORIA
(fuck off)
My mother died two days ago.

He fucks off.

INT. LAKEVIEW CONDO LIVING/DINING ROOM - MORNING

A four-bedroom condo with white walls and garish flair: a lava lamp, potted flowers, colorful abstract paintings, a framed poster that reads: "*SPREAD THE WORD TO END THE WORD!*"

Casey is on the couch -- red-rimmed eyes, runny nose. Joshua sits next to her, a mirror image of distress, as if his mother just died too.

Diamond hovers over them, tissue box in hand. She passes them along at odd times, but it's a genuine attempt at support.

A sharp KNOCK, and Victoria enters the condo. Her eyes find Casey's -- for the first time, Victoria looks *vulnerable*.

VICTORIA
...Hey.

Casey starts CRYING instantly, leaps up, rushes to the door.

CASEY
Tor-ya.

She stumbles in her hurry, almost falls. Victoria GRABS Casey in one swift, stabilizing move that becomes an awkward HUG.

JOSHUA
Hi, Victoria!

Victoria and Casey hold each other another beat, then break apart. Victoria swipes at her own eyes impatiently to compose herself. She calls across the room over Casey's head --

VICTORIA
Hey, it's the Dream Team. Thanks for being here for Casey, guys.

DIAMOND
(literal)
Well, yes. We *do* live here. But you're welcome anyway, Vic -- *CAW!*

VICTORIA
 (re: the tic)
 Is that a new one?

Diamond avoids Victoria's gaze. It's not personal; eye contact just isn't her thing. She's chatty all the same.

DIAMOND
 Relatively. I started saying "caw"
 on February sixteenth of this year.

JOSHUA
 No more "me-ow!"

VICTORIA
 Oh bummer, I really liked that one.

Victoria looks back at Casey, who in spite of her tears, still LAUGHS in her big awkward way.

CASEY
 "Me-ow," like Cooper!

DIAMOND
 Well, sometimes old tics come back.
 It may not be gone permanently.

As they talk, a YOUNG WOMAN has emerges from the hallway, lingering in the periphery. Casey notices her first.

CASEY
 Tor-ya, this Nancy.

VICTORIA
 New girl, right? Wow, I didn't even
 get your name on the phone.

Victoria moves forward to shake hands with NANCY MOUA (28). She's Hmong-American, neurotypical, and has a kind face.

NANCY
 I'm just sorry this is how we're
 meeting. Ever since my first day
 living with these guys, it's been
 Victoria this, Victoria that...

Nancy smiles at Casey, gives her a soft ELBOW NUDGE. Victoria frowns at this sisterly exchange as Nancy turns back to her --

NANCY (CONT'D)
 So I kind of feel like I know you
 already!

Victoria can't say the same. She hadn't even heard of this chick until a day ago. Victoria deflects --

VICTORIA
 Sorry to rush out, but I paid the driver to wait. I think we just need to and go rest. Eat something.

CASEY
 I made for us... breakfast.

VICTORIA
 Great. And do you have the keys?

NANCY
 Oh, I do --

Nancy grabs the keys from a kitchen drawer, hands them over along with a brown paper bags holding their breakfast.

VICTORIA
 (to Casey)
 You all packed?

CASEY
 Where - we going?

VICTORIA
 Mom's house.

INT. LAKEVIEW CONDO LOBBY - DAY

Victoria strides briskly up the hall, Casey's overnight bag in one hand, her open phone in the other. Behind her --

CASEY (O.S.)
 Wait... Tor-ya!

Victoria TURNS, sees her sister a dozen paces behind her.

VICTORIA
 Shit. Sorry.

Victoria walks back, offers an elbow. They link arms so Casey can stay balanced and keep up with her sister's pace.

CASEY
 Tor-ya, where - we going?

VICTORIA
 Mom's house.

EXT. MADISON STREETS / INT. SUBCOMPACT - DAY

Victoria and Casey sit in the backseat of a ride-share.
Victoria furiously types a work email.

CASEY

Where - we going, Tor-ya?

VICTORIA

Mom's house.

The car slows as they pass a thunderous political PROTEST.
It's not even for any particular cause.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Madison hasn't changed much, huh?

Victoria sees one sign that reads: "*WHAT WOULD RUTH WITT DO?*"

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Seriously?

(to driver)

Can we go any faster, please?

The tension sets off Casey's anxiety again --

CASEY

Where - we going?

VICTORIA

Casey. Where did we say?

Casey looks down, ashamed. As if she hadn't even realized
until this moment how many times she's actually asked.

CASEY

...Mom's house.

EXT. MOM'S HOUSE - DAY - LATER

The sisters stand at the front door of a modest post-war
ranch-style house -- *Mom's house*. The HUM of cicadas filters
down from leafy maple trees. It feels nostalgic even if you
aren't from the Midwest.

The front steps are nearly buried under sympathy bouquets.
Victoria brushes them aside brusquely with her foot.

VICTORIA

What are we even supposed to do
with all these? Food or something
would've actually been useful...

CASEY
I like flowers.

Victoria impulsively scrolls more work emails on her phone as she WIGGLES the key in its lock. It doesn't budge.

CASEY (CONT'D)
Other way, Tor-ya.

VICTORIA
(not listening)
Other what?

CASEY
Turn it the other --

VICTORIA
Got it!

She opens the door.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
I was just turning the wrong way.

Casey SIGHS, just as a BLACK CAT DARTS out the door.

CASEY
Coop!

Victoria rushes after the cat, scoops him up.

VICTORIA
Hey, asshole.

The three of them proceed in to --

INT. MOM'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

-- Where they are confronted with... a goddamn mess.

An ocean of shoes by the door. Piles of mail on every surface. Boxes of Christmas decorations stacked along one wall, still not returned to storage.

Victoria lets Cooper drop to the floor.

VICTORIA
Jesus. She got worse as an empty nester. When were you here last?

Casey SHRUGS. She does better with yes-or-no questions.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
 Okay, do over -- have you been here recently?

CASEY
 No.

VICTORIA
 So Mom's been just coming over to your place?

CASEY
 Yeah.

Victoria is already pulling up her phone.

VICTORIA
 Okay, I'm gonna book a room at the Grand. Because I won't get any work done here. And I just can't sleep at your place, not with --

She imitates Diamond's newest tic --

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
 -- CAW! All night long...

But Casey is already in the kitchen. Victoria follows her --

INT. MOM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A tower of dirty dishes still teeter in the sink. Paperwork and typewritten projects cover the table in stacks.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
 Christ.

Casey clumsily YANKS the stained tablecloth out from beneath the papers, sending them flying. Several dirty dishes that were hidden in the stacks fall to the floor and SHATTER.

Casey looks to Victoria, who SHRUGS -- *who cares*.

EXT. MOM'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Victoria and Casey settle into a picnic on the overgrown lawn. They dig into the brown bag that Casey packed.

CASEY
 Hey Tor-ya, what time - it?

VICTORIA
Ten-forty. Why?

Casey SHRUGS and huffs a frustrated sigh. She always knows what she wants to say, but sometimes struggles to put the right words together. Victoria is used to filling in blanks --

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Oh, did you have work today? I
already called your job coach.
You're off the hook this week.

Casey opens her mouth to respond, but she's distracted by the BUZZ of Victoria's phone.

CASEY
Who - that?

VICTORIA
Dad. Did he text you?

Casey takes a second to locate her phone. Unlike her sister, it's always an afterthought. She checks her texts.

CASEY
Yeah. Dinner?

VICTORIA
He asked me too, yeah.

CASEY
Three of us?

VICTORIA
I'm not planning to see him, so no.

CASEY
Tor-ya!

VICTORIA
Ca-sey!
(then)
Look, I just can't deal with him
right now.

CASEY
Dad is fam-ly --

Victoria continues looking at her phone and diverts the conversation. It's a dick move.

VICTORIA
Looks like *all* the hotels are
booked up right now, what's up with
that? I hate this city.

CASEY
Tor-ya --

VICTORIA
I'm not even gonna have time to see
Dad between planning a funeral and
cleaning out this house, okay?

Casey is not happy about it, but can't quite put together her
argument. She scowls as Victoria looks back toward the house.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Yeah, this is all going to suck
enough as it is.

CUT TO:

INT. MOM'S HOUSE - VICTORIA'S ROOM - LATER

Victoria and Casey open the door to find a pristine space.
It's nearly bare -- just a twin bed, a dresser, a wobbly
nightstand with a lamp.

VICTORIA
Wait. Where's all *my* shit?

CASEY
Rummage sale.

VICTORIA
Mom sold all of it? But she kept
everything else? Unbelievable.

CASEY
What time - it?

VICTORIA
At least it's fit to sleep in...

CASEY
Tor-ya. What time - it?

Victoria checks the closet, preoccupied. Also empty.

VICTORIA
Hmm? It's twelve-ten.

CASEY

Noon?

VICTORIA

A little after, yeah.

CASEY

Noon. I need my gab.

VICTORIA

Gab? Who's that?

CASEY

No -- *gab*. My gab's at noon.

VICTORIA

I don't know what that means.
Someone you were meeting at noon?

CASEY

No! Gab, Tor-ya!

VICTORIA

Look I'm sorry, but Mom didn't
leave me a handbook here. Can you
try to think of some other words to
explain what you're saying?

Victoria's phone PINGS -- she flops onto the bed, distracted
once again by emails. Casey stomps out, SLAMS the door.

CASEY (O.S.)

FUCK!

VICTORIA

Hey, that's another word!

INT. MOM'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY - LATER

Casey sits on the floor, phone in hand, resting her back
against some unopened Amazon delivery boxes.

Casey is FACETIMING with Joshua and Diamond. They appear on
the screen, together in the living room of the condo. Joshua
is in the foreground, with Diamond hovering behind him.

(Meanwhile, Casey's forehead is the only part of her that's
in frame on their end. She's not great at gauging distance.)

CASEY

Tor-ya doesn't want - see Dad.

DIAMOND

I think it's understandable, Casey.
Your dad typically makes situations
more uncomfortable.

JOSHUA

But he always has food!

CASEY

He just... he - my dad.

DIAMOND

So just go see him yourself. Make
your own plan.

JOSHUA

Yeah, like a secret agent!

DIAMOND

No, not like --

CASEY

(quickly)

Thanks, I got - go. Bye.

She ENDS the facetime call before they can respond. This strange etiquette is standard operating procedure with them. Casey immediately dials another number, this time a regular phone call. We only hear one side of the conversation.

CASEY (CONT'D)

Dad? It - Casey.

(beat)

Yes, you pick us up for dinner?

(beat)

Mom's house.

A CRASH booms from back in the bedroom Victoria is cleaning.

VICTORIA (O.S.)

FUCK!

CASEY

(shouts back)

MY WORD!

(then, in phone)

Yes. Six - clock.

CUT TO:

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Victoria and Casey sit across from their father, Scott (to whom we were memorably introduced in the teaser).

Casey's secret-agenting worked. Victoria is *not* pleased.

Scott's arm rests on the back of the chair next to him, where CARMEN VELÁSQUEZ (45) is seated. Carmen is Honduran, has a youthful face but tired eyes, and is self-conscious about speaking English. She rarely gets an opening anyway though --

SCOTT

All my favorite girls finally
together! Victoria, how long now
have I wanted you to meet Carmen?

Scott's never been to a therapist, which is pretty unfortunate for all parties involved. His mood is always cranked to the most damaging extreme.

Today, he's manic. Doesn't wait for an answer.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Hey Vickie, Casey -- remember when
I would bring you both here as
little girls?

CASEY

Yeah.

An awkward beat on Victoria, then --

VICTORIA

I don't, sorry.

SCOTT

Well, it was so long ago. I'd
almost forgotten too. But it came
back to me when Carmen was talking
about missing home. Right, *mi amor*?

CARMEN

Yes, I --

SCOTT

And I remembered, the food here was
just superb. I think it's gotten
even better in recent years. Now
it's our favorite dinner spot.
Authentic. Mexican. Cuisine.

VICTORIA

Carmen, aren't you from Honduras?

CARMEN

I am, yes, but --

SCOTT

She had to stay in Mexico several years in order to get here, Vickie.

(to Carmen)

And I'm so glad, because you walked into my life at the perfect time.

Scott raises his soda in a bizarre TOAST. He nods to Carmen and Casey, who raise theirs too. Victoria has a real drink, but she now pointedly sets it back down on the table.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Arriba, abajo, al centro, adentro.

He SWIGS his soda deeply. Wipes his mustache, makes an almost obscene noise of satisfaction -- *ahh!* He looks at Victoria's abandoned cocktail.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Not gonna join us?

VICTORIA

I'm not really in a celebratory frame of mind, Dad.

An awkward beat as Scott processes what should be obvious. He suddenly becomes very interested in cutting up his burrito.

CARMEN

I was so sorry to hear about your mother, ladies. I never met her.

SCOTT

Not as if I didn't try! Must've asked Casey and your mother ten times to have a friendly dinner, isn't that right Casey?

CASEY

...Don't remember.

CARMEN

Would you excuse me? Restroom.

Carmen all but evaporates from the table. Victoria drinks now, half her glass gone in one swig. Scott collects himself.

SCOTT

Still though girls, your mother was... a great lady. In many ways.
(almost jealous)

(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)
I'm sure half the city will turn up
for her service. Have you set a
date yet?

VICTORIA
(she has)
Not yet.

Casey opens her mouth to dissent, but Victoria carefully
KICKS her under the table.

SCOTT
Well, let me know, will you?

VICTORIA
(she won't)
We will.

SCOTT
Great. Good. Listen, Victoria, I'm
embarrassed to even ask, but... Do
you think you could cover dinner?

CASEY
I can --

VICTORIA
(to Casey)
No.
(to Scott)
Sure, I got it.

SCOTT
Madison's cost of living has really
skyrocketed, actually. I'd leave
tomorrow, but Carmen loves it here.

VICTORIA
Right.

SCOTTS
And she doesn't want to make Oscar
move schools, it's his senior year.

Carmen returns from the bathroom, takes her seat.

CARMEN
Oscar? What has my son done now?

VICTORIA
We were just wishing he could have
joined us tonight.

Victoria forces a smile, then downs the rest of her drink as she glares at Casey -- *this was a terrible idea.*

EXT. MOM'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT - LATER

Victoria slips out the back door. Fireflies flicker through the dark. She lights a CIGARETTE. Sucks in, closes her eyes.

A warm MALE VOICE cuts through the still night.

RYAN (O.S.)
(re: her cigarette)
Back on your bullshit, I see.

She doesn't open her eyes. Doesn't need to. Might even betray the hint of a smile. Nicotine vs THC is their oldest fight --

VICTORIA
I was never off it.

RYAN (O.S.)
I guess I should cut you some slack
for now though, huh?

Victoria opens her eyes. In the neighboring yard, RYAN HARRIS (32) smokes a joint. The boy next door. Still charming. Still giving her shit.

He takes his cue, strides over to her. As they EMBRACE --

RYAN (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry about your mom.

VICTORIA
(deflecting)
I just like the nicotine, Ryan.
Time to make peace with that.

They separate, but remain locked in each other's space. Their bodies are almost magnetic. Old habits.

RYAN
Is Casey here?

VICTORIA
Asleep, yeah. She tricked me into
dinner with Dad and it was...

RYAN
A disaster?

VICTORIA
Of course.

He laughs at the thought, but sobers up quickly.

RYAN
When's the funeral?

VICTORIA
In two days. I was just gonna text
you the info.

RYAN
Yeah, no worries Tori. I'll be
there.

VICTORIA
I know you will.

Victoria's phone BUZZES. She checks it automatically.

RYAN
(re: her phone)
You seeing someone now?

VICTORIA
What? It's just work stuff.

RYAN
Guy or girl this time?

VICTORIA
Quit it.

He grins playfully at her. She can't help but smile back.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Hey, has your mom been feeding
Cooper the last few days?

RYAN
Nah, that was me.

VICTORIA
So you've seen the mess in there.

RYAN
Yeah. Pretty next level, even for
Ruth. Remember the time she forgot
she'd left half a pizza under the
couch?

VICTORIA
Oh, God! What was that, junior
year? We were so sure Cooper had
killed a rat and left it somewhere.

RYAN

Your mom was *convinced* it was his fault. Poor Coop. But hey... I could lend a hand, help you guys get the house back in shape.

VICTORIA

I've called a service, but thanks.

RYAN

Guess it's been years since I could really help you with anything.

He's fond, wistful, bitter -- all at once. But even so, the space between them has only lessened further.

VICTORIA

It's not about you. We're selling the house. And I need it in good shape so it'll go fast. I could only get away for a few days.

RYAN

Is Casey gonna be okay? With just your dad left here...

Victoria takes a long DRAG. Braces to drop the bomb --

VICTORIA

She's coming with me.

RYAN

What, she's really cool with that? She loves her job, and the condo.

VICTORIA

Yeah well, she'll love my loft in Georgetown just as much, I'm sure.

Something clicks, and Ryan's face hardens. He steps back, putting a physicality to their sudden emotional distance.

RYAN

You haven't told her.

VICTORIA

We always wait to the last minute to tell her big news. It helps her anxiety.

RYAN

I know, but you *actually* think she wouldn't want to know you've decided that she's moving away?

VICTORIA

You said it yourself! Just her and Dad left here would be a disaster. And I can't exactly fly back to run interference every two days. I have a real job, Ryan.

Ouch. Jesus.

RYAN

Your mom had a real job for you here! You and Ruth could've done so much important work together --

VICTORIA

My work in D.C. *is* important, I help a lot of people --

RYAN

-- But you *chose* to leave home. Now Casey doesn't get a choice of her own? That's so fucked up, Victoria.

A beat. Maybe he got through to her? But then --

VICTORIA

See you at the service, Ryan.

She tosses her cigarette to the ground, turns away from him, and walks back inside.

INT. MADISON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - SANCTUARY - DAY

We're back to Ruth's funeral from the cold open, two days later. We replay Casey and Victoria greeting funeral guests --

CASEY

Tor-ya, I need my gab.

VICTORIA

Hey, I promise we'll figure it out after the service. But for now --

CASEY

No, Tor-ya! I need --

VICTORIA

Casey, this is *Mom's funeral*. I get that it sucks, but you're really fixating and --

Victoria's phone BUZZES.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
 Hey, can you greet by yourself for
 a sec? I'll be right back.

Casey SIGHS, and we --

CUT TO:

INT. MADISON PRESBYTERIAN - STAIRWELL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Victoria enters the stairwell from the sanctuary as she answers the call briskly. Her voice is well above a Presbyterian-appropriate decibel --

VICTORIA
 Brendan, was I unclear? I said
 there would be exactly *one* four-
 hour window when I'd be offline.

She continues down the stairs, past an appalled CHURCH ELDER,
 and into --

INT. MADISON PRESBYTERIAN - KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

-- Where Victoria shuts the door, and finally fully RAISES
 HER VOICE --

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
 So the sky had better literally be
 falling and smothering you right
 now, or --

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. LOBBYIST FIRM OFFICE - DAY - SAME

Brendan had called on his cell rather than the office phone
 right in front of him. He cuts her off in a hushed voice --

BRENDAN
 Victoria, you need to get back here
 asap. They're talking about you.

Victoria stops short, and her tone changes instantly.

VICTORIA
 They? Who's they? Talking about
 what?

BRENDAN

The partners. They didn't realize I was still dialed into a conference call, and I overheard them say you left at a critical juncture.

VICTORIA

I have weeks of paid leave saved up. They *do* realize my mom just died, right?

BRENDAN

Well sure. But remember when Peyton's dad died last month? He's planned the funeral remotely and was gone for like, four hours tops.

Victoria mutes her phone, SCREAMS into a dish towel. Unmutes.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

Victoria?

VICTORIA

Set a call for me with the partners. For tomorrow morning.

BRENDAN

Seriously?

VICTORIA

I talk my way into things all the time. Now I just have to talk my way out of something instead. It's all just bullshit.

BRENDAN

Okay yeah, you got it.

(beat)

Vic, you're one bad bitch.

VICTORIA

Men can't say that.

BRENDAN

Right, sorr--

She ENDS the call, cutting him off. Remains frozen a beat. Then strides across to the cabinets, opening them one by one, until -- *bingo*. She pulls out --

VICTORIA

The Blood of Christ.

-- Or a half-empty bottle of five-dollar red. Whichever. She tugs the cork and starts SWIGGING.

CUT TO:

INT. MADISON PRESBYTERIAN - SANCTUARY - DAY - LATER

The middle of our cold open's cliffhanger.

Victoria, red-faced and tipsy, is frozen halfway to the lectern while facing her furious, gate-crashing father.

She calls back to him as several hundred people look on --

VICTORIA

Hey Dad, can you take a seat?

SCOTT

Don't think so, Vickie! Ruth and I were married twenty-four years --

LOUD LADY

(from the pews)

And divorced for the last ten!

SCOTT

-- So I knew her better than anyone here! And who wouldn't appreciate a little authentic insight, right?

People TITTER. The pastor TUTS. We now notice Ryan and Nancy are sitting near Casey and Josh, and all of them look aghast. It's a full-blown spectacle.

As Scott marches up to the pulpit, we see Carmen reluctantly enter the sanctuary behind him, hovering to the side.

CASEY

Dad...

SCOTT

Well hey, Casey! You want me here at least, right?

His passive aggressive cheeriness is truly frightening. He ascends the podium.

VICTORIA

Dad, why don't we just have lunch together after the service?

Scott won't be pacified. He pulls index cards from his pocket, barrels forward as if he can't hear her.

SCOTT

I just have a few words prepared...

Victoria can either let him speak or attempt to physically drag him out. She sits back down, vibrating with rage.

CASEY

Tor-ya, why - Dad?

VICTORIA

Million dollar fucking question.

Carmen and Oscar hover at the end of the front pew -- nothing but the empty bench separates them from Casey and Victoria.

SCOTT

The year after we were married, Ruthie gave me a list of quotes to include in her eulogy, if she went first. And she wanted her service to end with her favorite Sting song. Unfortunately I didn't have time to set up the song, since I only learned about the service today. But that's just as well -- I think Ruthie was the only person who ever actually liked Sting!

He CHUCKLES. Carmen mutters under her breath --

CARMEN

No seas maje...

Victoria's gaze snaps to Carmen, as if acknowledging the phrase. Their eyes lock briefly.

Agitated, Casey stands and makes her way to the back of the sanctuary. Victoria, consumed with fury, doesn't see her go.

SCOTT

I did have time to dig up a few of those quotes, though. Let's see...

(off an index card)

"Believe you can and you're halfway there." Well, Theodore Roosevelt's kind of a trite choice, but that was Ruthie for you!

We follow Casey as she quietly exits a rear door to --

INT. MADISON PRESBYTERIAN - MOTHER'S ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

We follow Casey into the quiet room off the sanctuary, reserved for mothers to nurse fussy babies during services.

Diamond is sitting at the front observation window, watching the service intently. She turns to Casey.

DIAMOND

Are you anxious, Casey?

CASEY

Yep.

Casey finds a comfy armchair toward the back of the room, and plops down into it. She closes her eyes and begins a soothing, familiar mantra --

CASEY (CONT'D)

Sa... Ta... Na... Ma...

INT. MADISON PRESBYTERIAN - SANCTUARY - DAY - SAME

Casey escaped at the right time -- things are escalating.

Observant viewers may notice Joshua and Ryan in the deep background, slowly making their way to follow Casey.

SCOTT

-- Now I'd be lying if I said I hadn't imagined this moment once or twice in the last few years!

(chuckling)

But I mean, what man doesn't picture his ex-wife's death once in a while, right?

Attendees GASP. Victoria springs to her feet.

VICTORIA

That's enough, Dad.

SCOTT

C'mon Vickie, it was a *joke*. You've gotta keep a sense of humor in times of sorrow.

INT. MADISON PRESBYTERIAN - MOTHER'S ROOM - DAY - SAME

Casey remains planted in the same chair, meditating --

CASEY
Sa... Ta... Na... Ma...

The door opens and Joshua enters, followed by Ryan.

RYAN
Hey. Kinda tense out there, huh?

CASEY
Yeah.

Joshua sits on the floor by Casey's chair, curls into a pose.

RYAN
Are we meditating?

JOSH
Sa-Ta-Na-Ma!

RYAN
Cool.

Ryan plops down next to Josh, follows his and Casey's lead in breathing exercises -- *inhale deeply in, exhale heavily out.*

INT. MADISON PRESBYTERIAN - SANCTUARY - DAY - SAME

Here, things are less zen.

VICTORIA
Why can't you just *be normal*? None
of us need this today --

SCOTT
Your mother never did anything
normal, Victoria. Why should I?

INT. MADISON PRESBYTERIAN - MOTHER'S ROOM - DAY - SAME

The more Casey tries to control her breathing, the shakier it becomes. Ryan opens his eyes at the sound of it.

RYAN
Hey, Casey -- ?

INT. MADISON PRESBYTERIAN - SANCTUARY - DAY - SAME

VICTORIA
She wouldn't want you here now.

SCOTT
Well she didn't want me around
then, either.

The crowd is really BUZZING now.

VICTORIA
We don't want you here.

But Casey is no longer even there. As they both realize this,
looking at her empty seat --

RYAN (O.S.)
VICTORIA!

The entire church congregation swivel their heads as one
toward the back of the sanctuary, as we CUT TO --

INT. MADISON PRESBYTERIAN - MOTHER'S ROOM - DAY - SAME

-- Ryan and Joshua crouched over Casey. She lies on the floor
CONVULSING. Her eyes are rolled back, her mouth frothing.

She's having a SEIZURE, and it's fucking scary.

Victoria FLIES into the room, Scott on her heels. She drops
to her knees, brushes Ryan and Joshua aside, grabs Casey's
head to keep it from thrashing and banging against the floor.

VICTORIA
Dad -- you get her feet. Ryan --
call 911!

Ryan leaps up, pulls out his cell phone, crosses the room
while dialing. Scott rushes to Casey's other side and grabs
her ankles and hips. Victoria secures her shoulders.

SCOTT
Ready! We'll go to her left.

VICTORIA
Yep. Three. Two. One --

Together, they ROLL Casey -- still spasming violently -- onto
her left side. Scott grabs a needlework pillow from the
chair, hands it to Victoria. She puts it under Casey's head.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
That's it, sis. Just work through
it...

Nancy flings open the door -- hushed MURMURS in the sanctuary can briefly be heard off screen. Ryan rejoins the crew from the back of the room.

RYAN
Ambulance is on the way.

DIAMOND
Is she having a seizure?

NANCY
Yeah, let's give them space.

Diamond nervously TICS.

JOSH
Casey, it's okay, it's okay...

Her convulsions subside. She goes limp, unresponsive, as we --

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. MADISON HOSPITAL - CASEY'S ROOM - DAY

Victoria stands next to the bed -- Casey is tucked in, hooked up to several monitors. She BLINKS AWAKE, woozy. GROANS.

CASEY
...Hospital?

VICTORIA
Yup.

CASEY
I hate... here.

VICTORIA
Yeah, I know you do. Pretty terrible fucking day, huh?

CASEY
Yeah.

Victoria takes a deep, nervous breath in the awkward silence.

VICTORIA
Listen, Casey. I've been thinking... This kind of thing is why I think you need to move to D.C. with me.

CASEY

What? No Tor-ya, I - not --

VICTORIA

Do you really want *Dad* in charge of things? Because that's the option if you stay here.

CASEY

Josh-wa and Diamond - here. And Nancy. And my job. And --

The door opens, interrupting her. DR. PEREZ -- harried and overworked, fast talker -- strides in. Casey is already looking groggy again after her brief exchange with Victoria.

DR. PEREZ

Ah, excellent -- we're awake!

VICTORIA

She just woke up now.

DR. PEREZ

And let's see, you're her mother?

Casey really *does* look twelve. She interjects to explain --

CASEY

Sis...ter.

And with that, Casey nods off again. Dr. Perez rifles through the chart on her clipboard.

DR. PEREZ

Oh, I see. Victoria. Why don't we step outside, let Casey rest more.

Dr. Perez heads into the hallway. Victoria pats Casey's leg, then follows the doctor into --

INT. MADISON HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Perez launches right in --

DR. PEREZ

It says here that Casey's legal guardian is her mother --

VICTORIA

(correcting)

Power of attorney. Casey didn't want a guardian, so our mom was power of attorney for her.

DR. PEREZ
Fine. Great. But where is your mom?

VICTORIA
She's... She died four days ago.

DR. PEREZ
(realizing)
Oh, of course -- *Ruth Witt*. My sympathies to you both.

VICTORIA
We're still in the process of transferring power of attorney, but we always planned for me to take over once Mom was gone. I can track down the paperwork.

DR. PEREZ
You're next of kin at any rate, so let's just go over this. I pulled records from her cardiologist and her neurologist.

VICTORIA
She hasn't had a seizure like that in years.

DR. PEREZ
Well it doesn't look like she's missed a dose of her medication in years, either. Her blood work showed no trace of gabaprexol.
(off her blank stare)
Her daily medication. It treats and prevents seizures.

This hits Victoria like a ton of bricks --

VICTORIA
Her *gab*.

Dr. Perez raises her eyebrows, judgmental.

DR. PEREZ
You said you're taking over as power of attorney?

Victoria nods, feeling a little shame for the first time.

DR. PEREZ (CONT'D)
You need to set a meeting with her regular team right away. Get up to speed on her treatments.
(MORE)

DR. PEREZ (CONT'D)

She hasn't been taking her anxiety med either. We'll keep her another night. She's stable, but we want to monitor her.

VICTORIA

And we can check out tomorrow?

DR. PEREZ

You have somewhere to be?

VICTORIA

Yeah, back home to Capitol Hill. I was only in town for the funeral.

DR. PEREZ

You plan to act as her permanent power of attorney from across the country?

Victoria doesn't answer -- it's a rhetorical question.

INT. MADISON HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - SAME DAY

Victoria sits in a hard plastic chair. She's answering emails on her phone, which is plugged into a wall outlet.

Joshua, Diamond, and Nancy appear at the doorway. They drop into the empty seats surrounding Victoria.

JOSHUA

Where's Casey?

No upspeak from him this time.

VICTORIA

Sleeping.

JOSHUA

That was scary.

VICTORIA

Yeah, it was. But they said she'll be okay.

DIAMOND

I used to have seizures like that. Six years ago I had one so bad that I fell at the bus stop and hit my head. I was in the hospital for three days. That's when I was prescribed gabaprexol. I take thirty milligrams, twice a day.

VICTORIA
So does Casey. I just found out.

NANCY
Her meds aren't working?

Victoria suddenly FLARES, accusatory --

VICTORIA
No, I just didn't *know* about them.
Why didn't you tell me what she
needed to be taking when I picked
her up?

NANCY
I'm not your sister's keeper. I
just room with these guys.

VICTORIA
Isn't covering their blind spots
part of the whole free-rent deal?

NANCY
It's more of a discounted-rent-and-
I'm-a-part-time-chauffeur deal.

Victoria SNAPS --

VICTORIA
Why didn't you tell me?

JOSH	DIAMOND
Don't yell at Nancy, Victoria!	(tic) CAW!

Nancy suddenly STANDS, and pulls her wallet out of her bag.
She addresses Joshua and Diamond --

NANCY
Hey, could you guys get me some
snacks from the canteen?

JOSHUA
You're trying to get rid of us!

DIAMOND
You are, Nancy?

NANCY
Nothing personal, guys. I think
Victoria just wants to have a
private conversation. So -- Sprite,
Corn Nuts, and...

(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)
 (to Victoria)
 You want anything?

She's momentarily speechless. A BEAT, then --

VICTORIA
 Doritos.

NANCY
 Sprite, Corn Nuts, and Doritos. You
 guys got all that?

DIAMOND Yes. JOSH Sprite, Corn Nuts, Doritos!

Nancy hands them some dollar bills.

NANCY
 Awesome. There's extra if you guys
 are hungry and don't have cash on
 you. You can pay me back later.

Diamond snatches the money, not at all sorry to leave. She charges out of the waiting room without waiting for Joshua. He moves slower, exits the room several beats after her.

Nancy sits back down, answers Victoria's question --

NANCY (CONT'D)
 When I first moved in, your mom
 said that Casey's been in charge of
 her own meds for a couple years
 now. I know the names of what she
 takes in case of an emergency, but
 I don't even know what they're for.
 I just drive her to the pharmacy,
 and she handles her own shit.

Victoria's anger softens.

VICTORIA
 So you're just Queen Cool, huh?
 Casey must love you. She hates
 micro-managers.

NANCY
 Like you?

There's no bite in the comeback. But she isn't wrong, so --

VICTORIA
 ...Yeah.

They share a small smile.

INT. MADISON HOSPITAL - CANTEEN - DAY

Ryan stands at a vending machine, surveying his options. He moves to make a choice, then reconsiders. Repeats the cycle a second time, still undecided. Yeah, he's a little stoned.

Finally, Ryan feeds a crinkly dollar into the slot, but it gets spit right back out. Then, off screen he hears -- *CAW!*

Ryan looks up to see Diamond approaching, trailed by Joshua. A few HOSPITAL VISITORS try and fail to keep from staring.

RYAN

Hey, guys.

He gives the machine another go. The bill spits out again. Diamond grabs it from the slot, expertly smooths it against the corner of the machine. She feeds it back -- *success.*

RYAN (CONT'D)

Hey, thanks.

DIAMOND

You're very welcome.

He makes his selection.

RYAN

You guys seen Casey yet?

JOSHUA

No, she's sleeping!

Ryan steps aside so Joshua and Diamond can make their purchases.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

(sotto)

Sprite, Corn Nuts, Doritos!

RYAN

She's okay though?

DIAMOND

I won't lie, Ryan -- I'm a bit perturbed by the whole situation.

JOSH

(sotto)

Sprite, Corn Nuts, Doritos!

RYAN

Well shit, me too.

(to Joshua)

How 'bout you?

JOSHUA
 Sprite, Corn Nuts... I'm worried.

Diamond TICS again. A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN at the soda machine looks over in alarm, stares at them without shame. Ryan dips his head to her eyeline, forcing the woman to meet his gaze --

RYAN
 (sardonic)
 Boo!

Joshua LAUGHS, emboldened. He turns to the woman, copies --

JOSHUA
 Boo!

The woman looks away in embarrassment, then hurries out of the canteen. Diamond makes rare eye contact with Ryan, and they share a smile.

INT. MADISON HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Victoria and Nancy are mid-conversation, and much friendlier.

NANCY
 So all you have to do is flatter?

VICTORIA
 And flirt. And manipulate. And triangulate. Psychology was actually a pretty useful major.

Nancy reaches for her phone, pulls up a social media page.

NANCY
 Alright, say I wanted sell my soul too. Look at my profile and give me your first impression. Would I make a good lobbyist?

Victoria takes the phone, sees her dorky headshot above the header: *Nancy Drew Moua, LCSW*.

VICTORIA
 Your middle name is Drew?

Nancy grins, used to this joke.

NANCY
 My parents wanted me to become a detective.

VICTORIA

No kidding. *Nancy Drew*. Wow, I'm sorry. And here you became a social worker. They must be so thrilled.

NANCY

They are, actually. They don't care about law and order, it's all about justice with them. Social workers are another kind of civil advocate, so they're happy.

VICTORIA

Sounds like they'd have gotten along great with my mother.

NANCY

Yeah, they loved her.

Victoria rolls her eyes, nearly groans.

VICTORIA

Of course they did.

INT. MADISON HOSPITAL - HALL / WAITING ROOM - DAY

Joshua and Diamond lead Ryan back to the waiting room, snacks in hand. Through the doorway he sees: Victoria and Nancy --

VICTORIA

I can't believe you gave that ammo to a complete stranger, basically. *Nancy Drew*. No one knows my middle name and it isn't half as bad --

Ryan stops short. He clocks Victoria and Nancy's warm body language and flirtatious ribbing. They've already clicked.

Diamond is already halfway to her seat in the waiting room, but Joshua remains in the hall, waiting for Ryan.

JOSHUA

Ryan, come on!

Ryan still watches Victoria and Nancy, jealousy in his eyes.

RYAN

Hey Josh, I actually have to step out. If you see Casey, can you just tell her I was here?

JOSHUA

Okay!

Ryan turns, heads back down the hall. As he disappears around one corner -- SCOTT barrels into frame from around another. He catches sight of Joshua, about to enter the waiting room.

SCOTT

Josh!

INT. MADISON HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY - SAME

Victoria and Nancy look up at the sound of Scott's shout from the hallway. They see Diamond walking toward them, as Scott approaches Joshua in the background.

NANCY

Shit.

VICTORIA

I didn't think it would take him this long, actually.

They both quickly STAND. Diamond joins them, hands the snacks to Nancy. As Diamond passes the Doritos to Victoria --

DIAMOND

Your dad has been causing me a lot of stress today.

VICTORIA

Hard same.

Scott charges into the room, LIVID. Joshua escapes to his seat, as Victoria hurries to head him off --

SCOTT

It took an hour before they let me back here! Did you not get my calls and texts?

VICTORIA

It's been a whirlwind, Dad. I've been talking to doctors nonstop.

SCOTT

They wouldn't tell me a thing! I've been telling them we need to make family decisions about her care. Did you tell them not to let me in?

VICTORIA

(yes)

No.

SCOTT

Listen to me, Victoria. I. Am. The parent. You are not her mother!

VICTORIA

She doesn't need a parent, she needs a power of attorney. And that's me now.

SCOTT

I want to see her.

VICTORIA

Okay. She's stable, just sleeping right now. The doctor ordered us out for awhile. Do you want to stay here and wait with us?

Scott looks past her to Nancy, Diamond, and Joshua -- all watching the drama. Scott's eyes flash sudden panic. Self-conscious shame hits him at last. After a beat --

SCOTT

She should sleep. I'll come back tomorrow. But you need to *text me updates*. Got it?

VICTORIA

Yeah. Got it.

He marches back out. Victoria closes her eyes, takes a deep, shaky breath.

EXT. MADISON HOSPITAL - SMOKING PATIO - DAY

Victoria bursts through a door, unlit cigarette already in her mouth, lighter in one hand and Doritos in the other. She's looking down to light her cigarette, doesn't notice --

RYAN (O.S.)

Seriously?

-- RYAN, sitting on a bench, finishing a small joint.

VICTORIA

Dude. I've got a dead mom, a sick sister, and a crazy dad -- who just showed up and made another scene, by the way. What was that about cutting me some slack?

He sighs, holds up his hands -- *I surrender*. She lights the cigarette, inhales. Walks to the bench, sits next to him. She hands him the bag of Doritos as a peace offering. He digs in.

RYAN

How is she?

VICTORIA

Asleep. She has to stay overnight,
but she'll be fine.

RYAN

And how are you?

He slings a casual arm behind her, rests it on the bench. She leans into him slightly, answers into his shirt after a beat.

VICTORIA

It was my fault.

RYAN

What? C'mon, a seizure is just
another Saturday with Casey. I know
it was a pretty bad one, but --

VICTORIA

She's been taking new meds to treat
them. She's been trying to tell me
since I got here. I didn't listen.

RYAN

Well... you didn't know that. Now
you do.

She nods into his chest. Then sits up, reclaiming some distance from him. She takes another drag.

RYAN (CONT'D)

It's a good reminder though, right?
Her whole medical team is here.
Another reason she should get to
choose if she stays or goes.

VICTORIA

I heard you, Ryan.

She pulls out her phone, deflecting him with work emails. He snags the cigarette from her lips, brings it to his own, and expertly inhales. Wins back her attention.

RYAN

You know what? We all need a break
sometimes. You said Casey's going
to be here for the night?

VICTORIA

Yeah?

RYAN

Well, today just so happens to be
the first Saturday of May.

(off her blank stare)

C'mon, Tori... *it's the Mifflin
Street Block Party.*

Oh, right -- *that*. He grins mischievously -- *how 'bout it?*
She hesitates a moment, but then smiles back -- *you win.*

EXT. MIFFLIN STREET - LAWN - DUSK

A downtown stretch packed with THOUSANDS OF PARTIERS. Mostly
students. All drunk, raucous, half-dressed. It's wild.
Suddenly all the hotels with no vacancy make perfect sense.

Run-down three-story houses line the street, with CROWDS
gathered on every yard, porch, and balcony. Bass music
THUMPS. On the nearest lawn -- a STUDENT catches a stream of
beer in his mouth, poured from a top-floor window.

The University of Wisconsin is officially known as the "#1
Party School in America". These are people who go hard.

Ryan and Victoria meander through the crowd, out of place in
their black funeral attire. Victoria still wears heels.

VICTORIA

Some things never change, huh?

RYAN

You're joking, right? I feel like I
live on another planet these days.

He makes toward a nearby folding table, set out with handles
and six-packs free for the taking. Victoria picks up a beer.

VICTORIA

Fuck. I always forget they don't
make Spotted Cow anymore.

RYAN

Don't remind me, please. My
depression is already bad enough.

He SNATCHES the bottle out of her hands.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Doesn't matter anyway. It's hard
alcohol only for us tonight.

She's game. They pour matching shots, toss them back. Repeat.

VICTORIA
Better already.

RYAN
Glad you came?

That just might be innuendo. She grins.

VICTORIA
Always.

On the balcony above them, someone shouts --

PARTIER (O.S.)
Look what we stole!

From above, several people unfurl a HUGE BANNER that drops to the ground, 3 stories tall, revealing --

WELCOME TO THE MAD CITY!

Gaudy illustrations of farms, lakes, and cheese surround the gigantic block lettering.

The drunken revelers around them UPROARIOUSLY CHEER, Ryan included. He doesn't hear Victoria say --

VICTORIA
(sotto)
Always knew I'd get stuck in this
fucking place.

INT. MADISON HOSPITAL - CASEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Diamond sits next to Casey's bed, reading a thick biography. Casey blinks awake, looks around groggily.

CASEY
Diamond?

Diamond carefully marks her spot with a bookmark, looks up.

DIAMOND
Hello, Casey. Are you feeling
better now?

CASEY
No... Bad.

DIAMOND
Oh. I'm sorry to hear that.

CASEY
Where Tor-ya?

DIAMOND
Victoria left three and a half
hours ago. She said she would be
back in the morning.

CASEY
Where she go?

DIAMOND
She didn't specify.

CASEY
Where Tor-ya --

DIAMOND
I'll go look for Nancy and Joshua.
Maybe Victoria told them where she
was going.

Diamond stands, leaves the room. Casey looks disoriented.
Lost. She reaches to the bedside table for her phone, and
starts dialing.

EXT. MIFFLIN STREET - LAWN - NIGHT

Victoria and Ryan stare up at the gaudy Madison banner. A
twelve-foot dairy cow stares back at them.

Victoria sways on the spot, STUMBLING into Ryan --

RYAN
Whoa, when did you become such a
lightweight?

VICTORIA
I don't party anymore. I work.

Her phone BUZZES.

RYAN
(re: the call)
Please don't tell me *that's* work.

She looks to the screen --

VICTORIA
Shit. No, it's Casey.

Victoria picks up the call.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MADISON HOSPITAL - CASEY'S ROOM - NIGHT - SAME

Casey lies in bed, alone in the dim room, phone to her ear. She's never looked more vulnerable.

CASEY

Tor-ya? Where - you?

Victoria's REPLY hums through the phone, but she isn't understandable over the thump of music and buzz of the crowd.

CASEY (CONT'D)

Tor-ya? I don't want... move.

Victoria turns away from Ryan, finger in her ear. She's missed her sister's firm declaration.

VICTORIA

Hey! You sound good. But you gotta get some more sleep. Text if you need anything, but I'll be there first thing in the morning. Okay?

Casey reflexively answers the question before asking again --

CASEY

Okay.

(beat)

Tor-ya, I really don't want --

Victoria is overwhelmed by the sea of drunken revelers.

VICTORIA

Casey? I can't really hear you. But hey -- I love you. Get some rest.

EXT. MIFFLIN STREET - NIGHT - SAME

Victoria hangs up, turns back to Ryan. She takes the opportunity of having her phone out to check some emails.

RYAN

Should we go back?

VICTORIA
 (re: her emails)
 What if they emailed a termination notice? I'm too drunk, I shouldn't even look at my inbox...

RYAN
 Victoria. Hey. Does Casey need us to go back to the hospital?

VICTORIA
 Oh -- nah, she was in and out all afternoon. I'm sure she's already asleep again.

Victoria finally looks up, back on the defensive, but their earlier fight has been punctured and deflated like a balloon.

RYAN
 So we're rallying?

She considers for a beat. Then -- she strips down to her camisole, ties her blouse around her waist. Kicks off the heels, leaving her a head shorter than Ryan in her bare feet.

They're rallying.

INT. MIFFLIN STREET HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ryan and Victoria (shoes in hand) squeeze into the house.

Ryan nods to a HIPPIE BRO (30's) across the room, pushes through the crowd to greet him with a dude-hug. Victoria spots the nearest table of booze in the other direction, and makes her way over to it.

CUT TO:

INT. MIFFLIN STREET HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Victoria and Ryan stand near the staircase -- both PLASTERED. Victoria's shoes and blouse have long since disappeared. Hippie Bro chats with them both. An UPBEAT SONG plays.

RYAN
 No - no - Victoria, listen. I swear you've been here before!
 (to his friend)
 Hasn't she?

HIPPIE BRO
 Yeah, I think it was my birthday.

VICTORIA
Guys, I wouldn't just *forget a whole night* --

Victoria brings a RED CUP to her lips as the song playing changes to "I'm Yours" by Jason Mraz. She makes an EXCITED GESTURE mid-gulp.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Ryan, *Ryan!* This is our song!

HIPPIE BRO
Yeah, you def said that at my birthday too.

Victoria SEIZES Ryan hand, drags him to the middle of the living room. She throws her arms around his neck, begins to sway. Ryan half-hesitates, then starts to moves his body in time with her.

RYAN
I don't think this was our song.

VICTORIA
What?!

RYAN
Well, maybe it was yours. But my song for us was by Slipknot.

She pulls back, aghast.

VICTORIA
Are you *shitting* me?

RYAN
(grinning)
Yes.

She laughs, leans back into him. They resume SWAYING. Like they're the only people in the room. Ryan dips his face into Victoria's hair.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Don't go.

Victoria looks up. He meets her gaze, then -- she lurches forward. Kisses him. He grabs her face automatically -- it's just so *familiar*. It could be 2009 again for both of them.

Ryan breaks the kiss, her face still in his hands.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Tori. Don't go back.

VICTORIA

I have to. There's nothing for me here anymore.

RYAN

Your family is here!

He drops his hands, pulls away. Doesn't add -- I'm here.

VICTORIA

What would even I do here? There are no lobbyists in this hippie town.

RYAN

What do you mean, what would you do? Madison just lost its only real disability activist! No one else could fill your mom's shoes but you. Lobbying is the same kind of work Ruth did -- you're just doing it for the devil.

VICTORIA

The devil pays. Do you know how much debt my mom left us with her hoarding bullshit? And how much my dad spends on Carmen every day to keep her around? Who do you think will have to pay all that back? I'm not being fucking selfish here.

RYAN

You sure?

That stings. She reflexively bites back a retort --

VICTORIA

And it's totally selfless of you to still be living with your mom, right? That's all for her benefit.

RYAN

Yeah it is, actually.

She rolls her eyes. Sways a bit without him to steady her.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Never takes more than a day to remember why I shouldn't miss you.

VICTORIA

I BURIED MY MOM TODAY, RYAN!

The partygoers turn to STARE. Ryan says nothing.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Whatever, dude.

She stumbles away from him, heads to the door. Grabs another SHOT, downs it on her way out. Ryan doesn't follow her.

CUT TO:

EXT. MIFFLIN STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Victoria staggers down the street, still barefoot. The area has thinned out. Everyone left in the streets is the type of person who always goes too hard -- the alcoholic friend you always have to watch at the club. Victoria fits right in.

She stumbles up to -- THE MAD CITY BANNER.

Victoria stares it down like an enemy. The *Kill Bill* sirens might as well be playing. She reaches into her pocket, pulls out a cigarette and lights it. After a puff, she holds the lit cigarette up and --

SHE SETS THE BANNER ON FIRE.

Victoria steps back, still pulling on the cigarette. Watches with satisfaction as the bold letters curl in the flames.

As the fire grows taller, the realization of her drunken impulse hits her with comical abruptness. She FUMBLES for her phone, shakily dials 911. Off the flames, we --

CUT TO BLACK.

Several beats, still over black, as we hear a RHYTHMIC BUZZ.

EXT. MIFFLIN STREET - DAWN - NEXT DAY

Victoria's POV: She blinks awake to a SLICE OF BLUE above.

The buzzing carries over as we PULL OUT:

Victoria is SPRAWLED out on trampled yellow grass.

She turns her head to see -- the Madison banner SMOLDERING two houses over. A single firetruck is still parked outside. The house shines with water, but appears unharmed. A few GAWKERS interrupt their walk of shame to survey the damage.

The buzzing stops. Victoria sits up, grabs her head. Looks around -- plenty of other PASSED-OUT PARTIERS decorate lawns and porches along the street. No one seems to suspect her.

Victoria digs out her phone, sees --

17 MISSED CALLS.

All from a 608 number. The phone BUZZES in her hand -- same number. Victoria answers, her voice hoarse --

VICTORIA

Yeah?

NANCY (O.S.)

Victoria, where are you?? It's Nancy.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. MADISON HOSPITAL - HALL - DAY - SAME

Nancy paces the hall anxiously, cell phone to her ear.

NANCY

I'm at the hospital, they're saying Casey checked herself out.

Victoria clambers to her feet, wobbling. Steadies herself.

VICTORIA

And they just let her?

NANCY

Independent adult and all that, remember? Joshua and Diamond say she's not at the condo, and Ryan's already checked your mom's house.

Victoria's face flashes shame at Ryan's name, events of the previous night returning. She shakes it off -- *priorities*.

VICTORIA

Maybe our dad picked her up.

NANCY

I don't think so. Scott was texting with Ryan an hour ago, asking how she's doing.

VICTORIA

Did Ryan tell him she's missing?

NANCY

I think so.

VICTORIA

That dumbass... Okay, when did Casey check out?

NANCY

Like two hours ago. Can you think of anywhere else she'd go?

VICTORIA

Just one, but --

The phone suddenly BUZZES in Victoria's hand.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Hang on, I'm getting another call. Might be her.

EXT. MIFFLIN STREET - FRONT LAWN - DAY - SAME

Victoria whips to her screen, but sees the caller is **BRENDAN**. She pinches the bridge of her nose, head spinning -- *shit*.

After a beat, Victoria sends him to voicemail.

EXT. PICNIC POINT - LOOKOUT - DAY

The Picnic Point peninsula juts a full mile out into the largest lake in the city. At the end of it, a network of trails converge at a shady vista above the sparkling water.

CLOSE ON -- A BABY TOAD the size of a dime HOPPING across the pebbly earth. A gentle PAIR OF HANDS, massive by comparison, reach into frame, cup around the toad. PULL OUT to reveal --

CASEY, crouched in the middle of the trail. She scoops up the tiny creature, brings it level with her face.

CASEY

Hey buddy.

The toad BOUNCES in her hands. She takes it to the side of the trail, releases it deep in the safety of the tall grass.

Casey makes for a nearby bench. She sits, reaches into the bag for her phone, opens the music app. Makes a selection, which plays from the phone's tinny speaker --

"Why Should I Cry For You?" by Sting. It's evocative, mournful. The song Ruth wanted played at her own funeral.

Casey doesn't cry, though. She just looks out at the water, enjoying the peaceful quiet. Grieving in her own way. Until --

VICTORIA (O.S.)

I almost didn't look for you here.

Casey turns, sees Victoria standing a few yards away -- a hung over, strung-out mess wearing gas station flip-flops.

Casey doesn't answer, and looks back toward the water. Victoria comes over, sits on the bench next to her.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I haven't heard this song in like... ten years, probably.

CASEY

Mom's favorite.

VICTORIA

I remember.

CASEY

Mom's dead.

VICTORIA

Yeah, she is. I'm sorry.

What exactly she's sorry for, Victoria doesn't say. They sit quietly for a moment, both still in their wrinkled, opposite-colored funeral clothes from the previous day.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Did you call a car to get here?

CASEY

Walked.

VICTORIA

(laughing)

C'mon, don't lie to me. You won't even walk down the hall to check your mail without a fight.

CASEY

I *did*, Tor-ya!

VICTORIA

Casey Witt, you walked all four miles here of your own volition?

CASEY

(shrugging)

It's Mom's spot.

VICTORIA

And I thought checking this place was a long-shot. Maybe I don't know you at all anymore.

Victoria playfully NUDGES SHOULDERS with Casey. A beat.

CASEY

Tor-ya, I don't want --

VICTORIA

I'm not gonna make you move to D.C.

CASEY

Oh. Good. But you... leaving?

VICTORIA

I have a whole career in D.C. If I can save it. So yeah, I have to go.

CASEY

What about... power-attorney? Dad?

VICTORIA

Sorry, I just -- I don't think I'm cut out for this. I promise Dad won't be your power of attorney either, but we'll have to find someone else. I mean, look at me. I'm only responsible enough to take care of one of us.

As Victoria's harsh words land, she and Casey listen to the final notes of the Sting song in silence.

INT. LAKEVIEW CONDO LOBBY - DAY

Victoria and Casey walk into Casey's building, arms linked. They've been to Mom's house, are now showered and dressed.

OFFSCREEN, a HAND grabs at Victoria's shoulder. They spin to face -- CARMEN, waiting for them. She speaks low and quick.

VICTORIA

Carmen?

CARMEN

Ladies. I came to tell you that I am very sorry. I do not think your father behaved well at your mother's funeral.

Victoria and Casey trade glances -- *What's there to even say?*

VICTORIA
Oh. Well. Thank you.

CARMEN
I know you are leaving soon,
Victoria. But Casey -- I hope we
can become friends.

An awkward silence. Casey is more confused than sarcastic --

CASEY
...'Kay.

CARMEN
Oscar and I could not stay in the
country without your father. And we
are not safe back in Honduras. A
mother does anything for her child.
A father... maybe not. You
understand?

VICTORIA
Sí, Carmen. Yo te entiendo.

Victoria's Spanish is stilted and awkward, not nearly as good
as Carmen's English. But Carmen nods, and almost smiles.

CARMEN
See you soon, Casey.

She hurries out of the building, almost as if afraid of being
caught by someone. A beat, then --

CASEY
Weird.

VICTORIA
Yeah.

They continue down the hall, round the corner to see --
SCOTT, standing outside Casey's door.

SCOTT
Girls! I've been waiting almost
three hours.

VICTORIA
You've just been camped out by the
door? Is that what you did for
Mom's memorial -- stalked the
church for hours 'til we showed?

It is, but Scott ignores the question.

CASEY

Dad. Why - you at my condo?

SCOTT

Well Casey, I heard you went missing. Your sister may not care about looking after you, but I do. I'm filing for guardianship.

CASEY

No, Dad!

VICTORIA

You can try. I'm power of attorney.

SCOTT

And you're leaving, Vickie. Won't be hard to make the case you're not fit when you're living across the country.

Victoria's phone BUZZES. Wary eyes on Scott, she answers --

VICTORIA

It's Vic.

BRENDAN (O.S.)

Vic, where the hell were you? I tried getting you back about twenty times for the conference call you wanted. Listen, the partners want you gone. You need to get on the next flight and get back here now.

Victoria looks from a smug Scott to a distressed Casey.

BRENDAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Victoria? Are you coming back?

Before Victoria makes her choice, we --

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF PILOT