

# PHOTOGRAPHS

## working title

**Pilot**

Written By

Karla Nappi

Karla Nappi  
201-232-1504 Mobile  
knappi@gmail.com  
[www.karlanappi.com](http://www.karlanappi.com)

TEASER

EXT. STREET - CITY - DAY

The aftermath of a BOMB seen through the viewfinder of a photographer's camera.

Ash fills the air. People stumble around. Blood-covered and in shock. Clothes torn. Frantically digging for family and friends in what's left of the surrounding buildings.

A close-up of a toy bunny in the hand of a child. It's stuffing spilling out.

CLICK.

HARPER (O.S.)  
Joanna, we have to go. There's  
another air strike on the way.

Another close-up. The child's other hand holding onto what appears to be an adult's hand.

CLICK.

HARPER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Joanna!

Joanna takes a wider shot. The child. Ash-covered. But otherwise uninjured. Seated on the ground. And we can finally see the entire horrible picture. The child is holding onto the hand of her mother. Who is partially buried. The child's blank eyes, unable to process the enormity of her loss, bore into us.

CLICK.

HARPER (CONT'D)  
We have to find shelter.

JOANNA shakes off HARPER'S insistence tugging. A conflict photographer, Joanna's calm and focused despite the insanity of the moment. The empathy for what she's witnessing jumping off her features.

She walks up to the child, reaching out for her. The sound of the incoming air strike roaring in their ears.

HARPER (CONT'D)  
Come on!

Joanna hoists the child up, the toy bunny dropping as she takes off at a jog. The child reaching desperately for it.

INT. SHELTER - CITY - DAY

Joanna safely inside with her charge snuggled on her lap.

JOANNA  
It's okay, little one.

LITTLE GIRL  
(in Russian)  
Bunny.

JOANNA  
Shhh, we'll find you a new bunny.

Not understanding, the little girl is inconsolable.

LITTLE GIRL  
(in Russian)  
Bunny.

Harper, in her army gear, is watching Joanna closely. She's her protector out here in the war zone, and takes her job seriously. The fact she has a crush on Joanna only makes her that much more insistent on keeping her safe.

HARPER  
Don't even think about it.

Joanna eyes say it all.

HARPER (CONT'D)  
No, not happening.

Joanna gets up and places the child in Harper's arms.

JOANNA  
The last bomb fell over two hours ago. I'll be fine. Grab the bunny. Be back lickety split.

Harper hands the child off to another soldier, chasing after Joanna.

HARPER  
Joanna, get back here.

Joanna steps outside. Looks up at the sky. Clear. Empty. Silent.

HARPER (CONT'D)  
Joanna, wait!

But it's too late.

BOOOOOOM!

Joanna's thrown backwards. Debris scattering everywhere.  
The remnants of a landmine falling to the ground.

HARPER (CONT'D)  
I need a medic!

Joanna flat on her back. The air knocked out of her.  
Despite gaping like a fish, she pulls her camera up. Shoots  
off a couple snaps of her own brutalized body.

HARPER (CONT'D)  
Joanna, I need you to not move.

Harper uses her belt as a tourniquet on what remains of  
Joanna's left leg. The right leg only a smidgen better.

HARPER (CONT'D)  
Where's that fucking medic?

The MEDIC runs out. Blanches at the sight of Joanna.

HARPER (CONT'D)  
(to medic)  
Get to work.

Harper turns back to Joanna.

HARPER (CONT'D)  
Stubborn freaking woman. Now who's  
gonna get that kid's bunny?

Joanna zeroes in on Harper's eyes.

JOANNA  
(smiles)  
You are.

And then she passes out, still clutching her camera.

**END OF TEASER**

ACT ONE

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE on Joanna's eyes as they POP open. It'll take us a minute to realize we're no longer in the war zone.

RYAN  
Breathe, Joanna.

Joanna's hands grip the couch. The first thing we'll notice is she still has both legs. Was this all a dream?

JOANNA  
I'm not sure this is working.

Ryan sits across from her. The picture of patience.

RYAN  
It takes time to adjust to a guided hypnotic state. Once you learn to recognize this is only an echo of what happened, you'll be able to...  
(searches for the right words)  
...control the environment.

JOANNA  
Control the environment.

RYAN  
The pace at which everything is happening. Say the moment before you stepped on the landmine. You can stop time, in a manner of speaking. Move around and look at everyone and everything around you.

JOANNA  
I still don't see the point.

RYAN  
It'll help you gain power over your memory of the event so you can make peace with it.  
(pause)  
And move on.

JOANNA  
What happened is not something you 'move on' from, Ryan.

RYAN

Yes, but --

JOANNA

(interrupting)

I was blown to bits, and you got me off my ass, and back out there taking photos. I say that means I'm good.

RYAN

Your nightmares beg to differ.

JOANNA

My nightmares can go fuck themselves, and this hypnotic bullshit isn't going to make that any better. It's just par for the course after being in a war zone.

RYAN

It's called PTSD.

JOANNA

I'm functioning. Isn't that more than a lot of people can say?

RYAN

You're deflecting.

JOANNA

What are you really after?

RYAN

The truth.

JOANNA

About...?

RYAN

What you're up to at night.

Joanna's momentarily caught off-guard by the question.

JOANNA

Knitting for orphans.

RYAN

Another deflection.

JOANNA

I'm not up to anything.

RYAN

I hope that's true.

The timer for their session DINGS. None too soon for Joanna.

JOANNA

As always, it's been real.

Off Ryan, frustrated and worried about Joanna.

**INT. PHOTO GALLERY - DAY**

CLOSE ON

A WOMAN screaming in pain. Primal. Silent. Black & white.

PULL OUT

It's a photo in Joanna's exhibit. "A Raw Expose of Abused Women in NYC" Joanna surveys the photos with the gallery manager, FRANKLIN. Each photo more visceral than the next.

FRANKLIN

What's the verdict?

Franklin lives for art, but his true passion is making those who create the art happy.

JOANNA

I still hate it.

FRANKLIN

After everything we went through?

JOANNA

The title sucks and you know it.

FRANKLIN

Yes, but this was the compromise.

JOANNA

Compromises are for losers.

FRANKLIN

Or those who need a place to show their photos.

JOANNA

Just open your own gallery, and this BS goes away.

Franklin kisses her on the cheek.

FRANKLIN

You are my favorite artist.

JOANNA

Sure, sure.

But she's blushing nonetheless.

FRANKLIN

Looks like your guests arrived.

Franklin gestures to a woman and her daughter outside.

**EXT. GALLERY - DAY**

Joanna steps out to NICOLE and VIOLET. We'll recognize Nicole because she's the SCREAMING WOMAN from the photo. The fear she carried in that photo is still hanging over her. Violet, her daughter, is shy, but lights up around Joanna.

JOANNA

Nicole.

They hug. A hug full of history.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Miss Violet.

Joanna gets down on one knee. Violet comes over and cuddles into Joanna's arms.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Did you know you give the absolute,  
one hundred percent, best cuddles  
in the entire world?

Violet shakes her head.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

It's true. Right, Nicole?

NICOLE

It sure is, sweetheart.

Violet beams.

VIOLET

(whispers to her Mom)  
Can I ask her?

NICOLE

Violet, I don't know --

VIOLET  
Please, Mommy.

No Mother can say no to that face and so...

NICOLE  
Okay, but if she says no, don't  
push, okay?

Violet indicates for Joanna to lean down. She whispers in her ear. A smile breaks across Joanna's face.

NICOLE (CONT'D)  
(to Joanna)  
Not too high.

JOANNA  
Never.

She scoops Violet up. Violet wraps her arms and legs around Joanna who holds Violet tightly to her.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
Here we go!

And then Joanna JUMPS. Not so far up that you'd wonder why a mother would allow her child to do this, but significantly higher than a human can normally go. Violet giggles as kids do when they're on the best ride of their life. Her hair flying up past her face. They safely land back down.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
Only perk of the war.

Joanna knocks her legs which give off a METALLIC clang.

**INT. GALLERY - DAY - MOMENTS LATER**

Violet, Nicole and Joanna enter the gallery.

JOANNA  
(to Nicole)  
Let me show you around.

NICOLE  
Violet, stay with Uncle Franklin.

FRANKLIN  
Come on, doll. I have some  
coloring books over here.

Nicole and Joanna stand by the photos of Nicole.

NICOLE

This is --

JOANNA

Not who you are anymore.

(pause)

It's not. Ben isn't allowed near you or Violet ever again.

NICOLE

That doesn't mean he won't figure out a way.

Joanna clocks the fear in Nicole's face.

JOANNA

I have something to brighten your spirits. I was going to wait till the opening, but today's as good a day as any. You have some time now?

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ESTABLISHING**

Joanna, Nicole and Violet enter a brick-faced building.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY/APARTMENT - DAY**

Joanna stands outside the door to an apartment.

NICOLE

Whose place is this?

JOANNA

Patience, my friend.

(kneels down to Violet)

Miss Violet, lemme have your hand.

Violet holds out her hand. Joanna puts Violet's hand against a biometric door lock. The screen SCANS Violet's palm.

DOOR VOICE

Scan complete.

JOANNA

(to Nicole)

You're next.

NICOLE

Joanna, what is this?

JOANNA  
You trust me, yeah?

NICOLE  
Yes, but --

JOANNA  
Uh, uh, there's no buts in trust.

Joanna gestures for Nicole to put her hand against the lock.

DOOR VOICE  
Scan complete.

Joanna opens the door.

JOANNA  
Welcome to your new home.

They step into a loft-like space. Big airy windows. Lovely view. The place is even furnished. Totally cozy. It looks like home.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
Ben cannot get in here. Only you and Violet have access. Same with the doors outside. Your handprint is the only key you need.

Violet runs around checking out every nook and cranny. Nicole, in shock, stands in the middle of the room.

NICOLE  
Joanna...

JOANNA  
You're welcome.

NICOLE  
I can't possibly accept --

JOANNA  
You absolutely can. This is freedom. Your own place. No more shelters.

Still stunned, Nicole walks to the kitchen. Opens a cabinet. Examines the contents.

NICOLE  
It's uncanny.

JOANNA  
What is?

NICOLE

This entire place. Everything about it. Even down to these plates. It's exactly what I've always wanted to have. It's almost like you read my mind.

Joanna laughs, but something about what Nicole said seems to make her uneasy.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

Violet and Nicole outside with Joanna. A cab idling nearby.

NICOLE

I will pay you back for this.

JOANNA

You promise to take care of yourself and Violet?

NICOLE

Yes.

JOANNA

Then we're square.

Nicole hugs Joanna.

NICOLE

Thank you.

JOANNA

You are so welcome.

The heartfelt moment is broken by Violet's SCREAMS.

Across the street is BEN, Nicole's husband. A confident prick, he crosses in front of traffic. Taking his time because why wouldn't the cars stop for him?

Nicole puts Violet behind her.

BEN

So this is the new digs. Think I'll like living here.

NICOLE

Ben, please.

Joanna's appearance of calm belies her boiling rage.

BEN  
(re: Joanna)  
If it isn't the cunt.

JOANNA  
My name's Joanna.

BEN  
Your fucking photos put me in jail.

JOANNA  
This building's security footage  
will help put you back there.

BEN  
(laughs)  
Might as well give them a good  
show, taking down the cripple then.

Ben lunges for Joanna. But Joanna easily sidesteps him. Remember those robotic legs, they also give her a bit of an edge in the speed department. Nothing superpowered, just that slight boost over someone like Ben who tends to lumber and is arrogant about his strength.

His momentum carries him head first into the brick wall. He falls. Before he can get up, Joanna's on top of him. Kicking him upside the head, knocking him unconscious.

JOANNA  
Can't wait to see what the jury  
thinks of your performance.

Joanna may seem confident, but her hands are shaking. She steadies them by checking on Nicole and Violet.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
You guys okay?

NICOLE  
Yes, thank you.

Violet keeps her head buried in her Mom's shoulder.

JOANNA  
I'm gonna stay just a little while  
longer, if that's alright.

Violet reaches out and holds onto Joanna's hand.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
I'll take that as a yes.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Joanna is tucking Violet in for the night.

JOANNA  
Rest well, Miss Violet.

Joanna heads for the door when --

VIOLET  
Joanna? Can you come live with us?

JOANNA  
Is this because of your Dad?

Violet nods her head. Joanna snuggles her into a hug.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
This place. This is your safety  
zone. Nothing bad can get in here.  
In fact it's so safe, there's  
nothing hiding in the walls...

Joanna and Violet knock on the walls. No response.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
Or creeping along the ceiling!

Violet giggles as they both look up. Nothing.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
Or even hanging outside the window.

They peer out at the sparkling nighttime skyline.

VIOLET  
Pretty.

JOANNA  
Just like you. Now come on, it's  
bedtime for you. Hop on up.

Violet cuddles back under her covers.

VIOLET  
Thanks Joanna.

JOANNA  
Anytime, kiddo.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Nicole's unpacking their few belongings as Joanna heads out.

JOANNA

Anything happens, you hit this  
button, notifies the cops and me.

NICOLE

He's never going to stop.

JOANNA

And neither will I.

**INT. JOANNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Joanna lays in bed staring at the ceiling. Restless. Still worked up from the day's events, and unable to sleep. She heads to the kitchen for a beer.

Turns back towards her bed. On it is a stuffed toy. Joanna instinctively backs away.

JOANNA

What the --

It's a toy bunny. The same bunny the girl from the teaser had. Torn. Blood stained. It turns its head towards her.

Startled, Joanna drops her beer. Not believing what she's seeing, she rubs her eyes. Opens them.

The bunny is gone.

Shaken, Joanna grabs her keys, and gets the hell outta there.

**INT. RAVE - NIGHT - MONTAGE**

Bright lights. Loud music. Sweaty bodies. Joanna in the crowd. Dancing her ass off. Tossing all the crazy shit that's been going on away with every bead of sweat that flies off her body.

Snorting coke.

Grinding against a willing blonde.

Tossing back shots.

Shoving her tongue down a redhead's receptive mouth.

And dancing, and dancing, and dancing.

A whirling, swirling blur until...

**INT. JOANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Joanna going down on a brunette. The brunette arches her back as Joanna makes her cum. Her moans of pleasure the only sound on this silent night.

**INT. JOANNA'S BATHROOM - LATER**

Joanna in front of the mirror. Freshly showered. Wipes the steam off the mirror. The reflection staring back at her is NOT her own. It's HARPER (her army friend from the teaser).

JOANNA

Harper...?

Joanna wipes the mirror again. The face is GONE.

Frightened and overwhelmed, Joanna slams her fist into the mirror, shattering the glass.

**INT. HOUSE - NIGHT**

Joanna exits her bathroom. Still preoccupied with the face in the mirror, and her bandaged bleeding hand. She doesn't notice the SMOKE until she starts to involuntarily cough.

JOANNA

Oh my God.

Flames lick the walls up ahead.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Fire!!

She runs for the bedroom to get the brunette when...

LAUREN (O.S.)

Joanna!

Joanna stops dead in her tracks.

JOANNA

Mom?

Confused, Joanna rushes towards her mother's voice. (Note: This entire sequence should feel visually fuzzy. It shouldn't be clear if this is real or not.)

LAUREN (O.S.)

Joanna, help me!

Joanna searches for her Mom.

JOANNA

Mom? Where are you?

The flames getting more intense. Joann's coughs becoming more intense. She covers her mouth but it's no good.

LAUREN (O.S.)

Joanna!

JOANNA

Mom! I can't find you! Keep calling my name.

LAUREN (O.S.)

Joanna, hurry!

Joanna runs in the direction of her Mom's voice. Opens a door. Inside is her MOM engulfed in FLAMES.

JOANNA

MOM!!!

**END OF ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO**

**INT. JOANNA'S BATHROOM - MORNING**

The brunette opens the bathroom door. Finds Joanna prone on the floor. Shaking. Mumbling.

(Note: The bathroom mirror is still in tact.)

BRUNETTE

Shit.

**INT. JOANNA'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

EMT's wrapping up their care of Joanna.

JOANNA

Thanks boys.

They head out. The brunette sits down next to her.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

You don't have to stay.

BRUNETTE

I don't mind --

JOANNA

But I do. Thank you, but please go.

Insulted, the brunette hustles out. Joanna attempts to stand. Weak, her robotic legs kick in to stabilize her even as her upper body flails.

**INT. JOANNA'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM**

Her robotic legs propped up outside, Joanna sits on a small stool in the shower. She looks small and fragile. Not the confident powerhouse we're used to seeing. She gently washes what's left of her actual legs. Wincing as the soap hits the areas that are sore from wearing her prosthetics.

She FLASHES to seeing Harper earlier. Shakes it off, continues washing. But as we pull out, we see Harper in the mirror. She turns and walks deeper into the reflection till she disappears.

**INT. PHOTO GALLERY - NIGHT**

Opening night. The gallery is packed. Everyone admiring Joanna's work. Only...

The walls aren't filled with the photos of abused women we saw earlier. They're photos from the war conflict we saw in the teaser. The little girl with the bunny. The aftermath Joanna captured of her injuries. Her army friend Harper.

Joanna can't believe her eyes. She hustles over to Franklin, grabs him by the arm and violently pulls him aside.

JOANNA

What the fuck is this, Franklin?

FRANKLIN

Joanna, sweetie, this is called success.

JOANNA

The photos, Franklin. The photos.

FRANKLIN

They're selling like hotcakes.

JOANNA

How did you get these?

Concerned, Franklin takes a minute to observe Joanna.

FRANKLIN

Joanna, you gave them to me.

JOANNA

That's not possible. I haven't shared these with anyone.

Franklin leads Joanna farther away from the gallery floor. Sits her down. Crouches down next to her.

FRANKLIN

You shared them with me. That's why they're here.

JOANNA

But the women...

FRANKLIN

What women?

JOANNA

The abused women I photoed this past year.

FRANKLIN

Darling, you haven't taken any photos since you returned from the war.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

Joanna paces the room. Ryan sits patiently.

JOANNA

This can't be real.

RYAN

The show was how you made peace with what happened to you.

JOANNA

That's what the guided hypnotic states were for.

RYAN

The what?

JOANNA

The guided hypnotic states you put me in. Jesus, Ryan. Don't you remember?

RYAN

No, Joanna, I don't.

JOANNA

I don't understand what's going on.

RYAN

Please sit down.

(beat)

Please.

Joanna reluctantly sits.

RYAN (CONT'D)

This show was the first step in getting you to pick up your camera again. Even looking at those photos from the war took months of work. To show them to the public was huge.

JOANNA

I've been documenting abused women for the past year.

(MORE)

JOANNA (CONT'D)

That's what the show was about.  
Nicole and Violet...

RYAN

Who are Nicole and Violet?

JOANNA

My photos put Nicole's abusive  
husband behind bars. I helped them  
find a new place to live. A safe  
place where no one could hurt them.

RYAN

That would be wonderful if a  
project like that could help  
people. It's a good goal to have.

JOANNA

This isn't -- Dammit Ryan, this is  
something I've already done.

RYAN

Joanna, you haven't. Your cameras  
are here. You had me hold onto  
them until you were ready.

Ryan gets up and opens a wall safe. Inside are Joanna's  
cameras. Still covered in the grime from the war zone.

JOANNA

No, I don't believe you.

Joanna grabs her cameras away from Ryan.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

I'd never hand over my cameras.

RYAN

I need you to sit down, and take a  
deep breath.

JOANNA

Stop it.

(beat)

Nicole and Violet are real.

RYAN

I believe you.

JOANNA

Don't you think I know when someone  
is humoring me?

RYAN

I believe they're real to you.

JOANNA

You know what? Fuck this. I'll prove they exist.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

Joanna walks up to the door of Nicole and Violet's apartment. The biometric scanner isn't there. The hallway no longer appears clean. Paint crumbling on the walls. Garbage in the hallways. Joanna knocks on the door, and it swings open.

JOANNA

Nicole? Violet?

Joanna steps inside. The place is empty. It looks as though it hasn't been lived in for years.

**INT. POLICE STATION - DAY**

Joanna at the front desk.

JOANNA

Ben Williams.

OFFICER

Nope. No one by that name.

JOANNA

You brought him in last night. He violated his parole. Broke a restraining order.

OFFICER

No such man. Are you sure you have the right precinct?

JOANNA

Yes, I'm sure.

OFFICER

Well, if he exists he doesn't have a police record.

**INT. WOMEN'S SHELTER - OFFICE - DAY**

Joanna talks with the shelter's head liaison CINDY.

JOANNA

You really don't know me.

CINDY

I'm sorry, I don't. And this woman and her child you mentioned, we don't have any record of them ever staying here.

JOANNA

I don't understand.

CINDY

I wish I could be of more help, but if you do decide to go through with your project on abused women, please come see me again.

**INT. JOANNA'S APARTMENT - MONTAGE - DAY**

Joanna checks her computer files. The most recent photos are from the war. There's not a single photo dated from the last year on her laptop.

Joanna searches for Nicole and Violet on the internet. No trace of them.

She closes the lid, shoving the computer away.

Calls Nicole's cell for the fifteenth time that day.

VOICE

We're sorry, but the number you are trying to call has been disconnected or is no longer in service.

Joanna throws her phone, and then heads out of the apartment.

**INT. COUNTY RECORDS DEPARTMENT - DAY**

Joanna slogs through the filing system for any trace of Nicole or Violet.

JOANNA

Finally! Nicole, I knew I could find proof of you.

Relieved, she pulls the paperwork, and scans what it says. Her face falling as she reads.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Nicole's mom died without any children. But that can't be...

(beat)

Ben. I swear if he exists.

Joanna digs back in. Finds a record for Ben.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Motherfucker.

On it lists a current address.

**EXT. BEN'S HOME - DAY**

Joanna bangs on the door.

JOANNA

Ben, you asshole, open the goddamn door up now before I kick it down.

The door opens. Ben stands there. Imposing as ever in height, but overall he seems gentle. Calm. In the background is a woman with a young child. A boy.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

This your new family? You did a good job erasing all traces of your old one. How'd you do it? What did you do with them? Tell me!

BEN

(to his family)

Stay inside. It'll be okay.

Ben closes the door and steps onto the porch.

BEN (CONT'D)

Ma'am. I don't know who you are, but you have the wrong man.

JOANNA

Nicole and Violet. Your wife and daughter? Are you really going to stand there and tell me you don't know them?

BEN

My wife is Marie and my son is Henry. I don't know your Nicole or Violet. I'm sorry.

Joanna slaps Ben's face.

JOANNA

What did you do to them?

Joanna reaches up to slap him again, when he grabs her hand, firmly but gently.

BEN

You need help. Let me call someone for you. Please.

Joanna pulls her arm back.

JOANNA

I'm going to find out what you did. Nicole and Violet don't deserve to be erased.

Joanna storms off, leaving a confused Ben in her wake.

**INT. RAVE - NIGHT**

Back again. Even more out of control than the night before. She's practically having sex on the dance floor with a raven haired woman when SECURITY walks up.

SECURITY

Ma'am.

JOANNA

Fuck off.

SECURITY

Ma'am, we have to ask you to leave.

JOANNA

I said FUCK OFF.

The security guard grabs Joanna. Joanna plants her legs down, and breaks free. She makes a run for it, but the guard grabs her. Pulling her down.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Get off me!

And at that moment, something in Joanna finally breaks. And it breaks on the security guard who gets the beating of his life. Cops storm in. It takes a few to pull Joanna off. They have to pile on top of her to keep her down. She SCREAMS in a primal rage.

**END OF ACT TWO**

ACT THREE

INT. LAUREN'S HOME - MORNING

Fresh from a shower, Joanna sits across from her mother who slides a cup of Joe across.

LAUREN  
Ready to talk?

JOANNA  
About what? How I got arrested?  
Or how I'm stuck with you till the  
trial?  
(beat)  
Not that I don't love you.

LAUREN  
Dealer's choice.

JOANNA  
Just... give me a minute.

LAUREN  
Do you remember what you were like  
after the war?

JOANNA  
(knocks her robotic legs)  
Can't say that I do.

LAUREN  
Until I got you help, you were out  
of control. You came home, drugged  
out, covered in all sorts of wounds  
from God knows what, every night  
for months.

JOANNA  
This isn't the same thing.

LAUREN  
Then tell me what it is.

JOANNA  
Ryan told you about Nicole and  
Violet?

LAUREN  
He did.

JOANNA

I couldn't find them. It's like  
they've been erased. But I know  
they're real. I know it.

(beat)

I feel like I'm losing my mind.

Joanna tears up. Her mother reaches out to hold her hand.

LAUREN

Maybe this was all too much too  
soon. The show. The move to your  
own place. You're still adjusting  
to this new reality.

(pause)

The attorney says it's unlikely  
you'll serve any jail time. So  
stay. Here with me. The real  
world can wait a while. Okay?

Off Joanna considering her Mom's offer.

**EXT. LAUREN'S HOME - WOODS - DAY**

Joanna out for a walk. Trying desperately to clear her head.  
She takes photos with her camera of the forest surrounding  
her mother's property.

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

The stress Joanna's been carrying seeming to melt away for a  
moment when...

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)

(in Russian)

Tag you're it!

Joanna feels a tap on her shoulder. Turns and sees the  
little girl from the teaser duck behind a tree. Joanna  
chases after her.

JOANNA

Wait!

She hears the girl GIGGLING.

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)

(in Russian)

Catch me if you can!

HARPER (O.S.)

Oh, I'm going to catch you!

Joanna sees Harper chase after the little girl. She watches them play. Caught up in the moment.

They duck behind some bushes. Joanna creeps closer to them. Her camera at the ready.

But there's no one there. Just the toy bunny again. Laying prone on its side. Blood pooling underneath it.

Startled, Joanna lifts her camera.

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

Then she sprints back to the house.

**INT. LAUREN'S HOME - JOANNA'S OLD BEDROOM - DAY**

Joanna uploads her photos to her laptop. Photos of trees, the sky, flowers, but the last few frames. The ones that should be of the toy bunny... are PITCH BLACK.

Frustrated, Joanna unplugs and re-plugs her camera. But it's the same result.

Still hoping, she tries restarting the computer, but the photos don't change. There is no bunny.

Joanna covers her mouth with her hand, shaking her head, unable to make sense of what's real and what isn't anymore.

**INT. LAUREN'S HOME - BATHROOM**

Joanna splashes water on her face, overwhelmed at what's happening to her, when she hears through the vents...

**INT. LAUREN'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY - INTERCUT**

Her mom on the phone.

LAUREN

What do you suggest we do?

(pause, listening)

Commitment instead of jail? But I thought she wouldn't serve any time.

(pause)

I know she's having delusions but -- Yes, I agree she's not taking care of herself, but I don't think she'd deliberately hurt herself.

(beat)

(MORE)

LAUREN (CONT'D)

No, I'm not forgetting about the security guard or that man Ben.

(pause)

I understand. Yes, yes I think that's best. Okay, I'll see you tomorrow. Thanks Ryan.

**INT. LAUREN'S HOME - BATHROOM**

Joanna sinks to the floor. Concerned about what Ryan's visit could mean for her, and feeling like everything is spinning out of her control.

**INT. LAUREN'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Joanna and her Mom on the couch.

LAUREN

Okay, I've reached my limit. Don't get caught up binge watching some cooking show till morning.

Joanna hesitantly smiles.

JOANNA

I won't.

Lauren kisses Joanna on the head.

LAUREN

I love you.

JOANNA

Love you too, Mom.

Lauren exits.

**INT. LAUREN'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER**

Joanna flips the channels, trying to find something, anything to watch to help turn her mind off when she smells something BURNING.

JOANNA

Mom, are you in the kitchen? I think you left the toast in too long again.

Joanna gets up. Following the smell. The kitchen is empty, but now she sees smoke seeping into the room.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Mom?

Joanna bounds up the stairs. The smoke becoming more and more thick. She busts into her mother's room.

Inside is her mom and NICOLE. The room is engulfed in flames, and BOTH of them on fire.

NICOLE

Help me!

The door SLAMS on Joanna as she tries to enter the room. She bangs on the door. SCREAMING in panic.

HARPER (O.S.)

You can't help them.

Joanna reaches for Harper to see if she's real.

HARPER (CONT'D)

You can't help them, but you can help yourself. Wake up!

**INT. LAUREN'S HOME - JOANNA'S OLD BEDROOM - MORNING**

Joanna wakes with a start. She's on the floor. The bedding knotted all around her. She untangles herself and heads for her mom's room.

It's empty. No sign of a fire.

JOANNA

Fuck me.

Joanna leans against the doorway.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

I survived a fucking landmine. And this bullshit is tearing me down. Pull it together, Joanna, before you lose it all.

**INT. LAUREN'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY**

Joanna enters to find Ryan and Lauren waiting for her.

JOANNA

Is it interrogation time already?

LAUREN

We're worried about you.

JOANNA

Well don't be. I made it all up.  
Nicole. Violet. The abused women  
photography project. All of it.

RYAN

All of it. You're sure?

JOANNA

Yes, Ryan, I'm sure. See this  
bottle? It's still full because I  
haven't been taking my meds.

Pops a pill in her mouth. Swallows. Sticks out her tongue  
to show she took it.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

You were right, the stress of the  
photography show was too much too  
soon. And I wasn't taking my meds  
so my mind went off on its own  
little adventure. But fuck it, I  
need to move forward, right? So  
I'm back on my meds, I'll double up  
on therapy, this shit won't happen  
again. Cool?

Lauren seems convinced and nods at Ryan.

RYAN

It's a good first step. The judge  
will be pleased to hear it.

Lauren goes over and hugs Joanna. We pull it out and find  
ourselves watching this scene on a monitor...

**INT. ROOM - DAY**

... on a floating holographic screen in a nondescript room.  
We could be anywhere, and that's the point. This place needs  
to be deliberately vague. No discernible windows or doors to  
be seen.

The person watching Joanna is SAM. In his 50's, Sam never  
smiles. There's no joy in his life, but we should get a  
sense of emotion running underneath his every word.

He watches what's happening. Not moving. Not even blinking.  
Arms at his side as though he could stand all day like this.

Harper enters a moment later from a panel in the wall. Anger  
informs her every move, and most of that anger is directed at  
Sam. She swipes the holographic screen away.

HARPER

I told you it was too soon.

SAM

I heard your concerns.

HARPER

Well that's a relief. Because if I didn't know any better, I'd say you didn't care about Joanna.

SAM

Joanna is the key to everything.

HARPER

Exactly why we can't push this. We're going too fast.

SAM

People will die if we don't move forward.

HARPER

She's not strong enough.

SAM

That's a risk we have to take.

HARPER

Maybe you're forgetting, but you're the reason we're in this situation, and if it wasn't for my cooperation, this mission wouldn't be possible. When I say stop pushing, I'm not asking for permission, I'm telling you.

Sam swipes the holographic screen back on. Joanna's in the bathroom, putting back her pill bottle.

SAM

The world can't wait.

HARPER

No one's more aware of the stakes than I am. Trust me. I will get the job done.

**INT. LAUREN'S HOME - BATHROOM - DAY**

Joanna closes the cabinet. Goes to the toilet. Sticks her fingers down her throat. Tossing up the pills she took before. Wipes her face. Flushes.

Exits the bathroom, but sees a flash of something in the mirror. Is it Harper again? But there's nothing there. Only Joanna's pensive reflection.

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**

**INT. JOANNA'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Joanna back at her apartment. She's tidying everything up. Tossing out the illicit drugs and alcohol. Meticulously cleaning all her photography gear.

RYAN (V.O.)

The judge granted you supervised probation. You can stay at home, but you have to check in with me twice a week.

JOANNA (V.O.)

And wear an ankle monitor. I know the drill.

RYAN (V.O.)

You can't blame Ben for wanting to protect his family after what happened.

**INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY**

It's clear from Joanna's face she absolutely can and does blame Ben, but instead she says...

JOANNA

Of course not.

RYAN

Good. Now, how are you filling your days?

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

JOANNA (O.S.)

The refugee project I pitched was picked up.

RYAN (O.S.)

I'm pleased to hear that.

Joanna photographing a young displaced family. MOM, DAD and TWO CHILDREN (boy and girl). She hands the kids presents which they happily rip open.

MOTHER

How do you know?

JOANNA

Know what?

MOTHER

The toys. Ones they left behind.  
We didn't tell you.

**EXT. STREET - PAST**

And we're seeing, Joanna's POV of meeting the two children for the first time.

JOANNA (O.S.)

It just popped into my head the first time I met them.

An image of each child playing happily in their village with their favorite toys pops in front of Joanna's eyes.

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

Guess it's kinda like a sixth sense.

**EXT. STREET - PRESENT**

The Mother hugs Joanna.

JOANNA

I'm glad they enjoy them.

MOTHER

You bring them joy. Thank you.

RYAN (O.S.)

And your Mom?

**INT. LAUREN'S HOME - KITCHEN**

Lauren is video chatting with Joanna.

**INT. JOANNA'S APARTMENT - INTERCUT**

Joanna's giving her a tour of the apartment.

JOANNA

See, I'm alright, Mom. You don't have to worry. More than you do normally.

LAUREN  
Well, that's a relief.

JOANNA  
You're still worried.

LAUREN  
I wouldn't be a good mother if I  
didn't.

JOANNA  
I promise. I'm stable this time.  
No drugs. No partying.

LAUREN  
That's good to hear.  
(beat)  
Are you happy?

JOANNA  
Come on, Mom.

LAUREN  
It's a valid question.

JOANNA  
In what world?

LAUREN  
This one we're living in.

JOANNA  
Happy isn't who I am.

LAUREN  
It was.

JOANNA  
Never.

LAUREN  
I remember a time.

JOANNA  
Happiness as a baby doesn't count.

LAUREN  
Before the war.

JOANNA  
Before the war was another life.

LAUREN  
It was your life.

JOANNA  
It doesn't exist anymore.

LAUREN  
Then make this one better.

JOANNA  
Mom --

LAUREN  
Joanna --

JOANNA  
I gotta go, Mom.

LAUREN  
Joanna, wait.

JOANNA  
Love you.

Joanna hangs up.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
(scoffs)  
Happy.

**EXT. BEN'S HOME - NIGHT**

Joanna staking out Ben's home. She can see inside. Ben's playing with his son Henry. It's clear he's a good Dad. This is NOT the same Ben that beat up Nicole. Conflicted, Joanna drives off.

**INT. JOANNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Joanna opens the door. She's on crutches. She gets inside, grabs her leg with the ankle monitor on it from next to the bed. Puts it on.

HARPER (O.S.)  
You can't ever follow the rules,  
can you, Joanna.

Joanna stumbles and falls.

JOANNA  
You are not real. They told me you  
died. You can't be here.

Harper reaches out and touches her. Joanna melts at her touch. Clearly, they were more than just colleagues.

HARPER  
Come with me.

She helps Joanna to her feet.

JOANNA  
Where are we going?

HARPER  
Do you trust me?

JOANNA  
I trust this is all an elaborate  
dream, and I'll stay in it as long  
as we're together.

Harper smiles. They walk and the room morphs into her  
mother's house.

**INT. LAUREN'S HOME - NIGHT**

Harper and Joanna walk through the house.

JOANNA  
We can't be here.

Joanna smells something burning.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
No, not again.

She instinctively runs upstairs. In the same room as before,  
her Mom is on fire.

LAUREN  
Joanna, help me!

Harper comes up next to her.

HARPER  
This isn't real.

JOANNA  
Call 911!

Joanna tries to enter the room, but the flames rise every  
time she steps forward, pushing her backwards.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
Mom!  
(to Harper)  
What are you waiting for, call 911!

HARPER

This isn't real. Stop the fire,  
Joanna.

JOANNA

What are you talking about?

HARPER

Put the fire out.

JOANNA

I can't.

HARPER

You can. Concentrate.

LAUREN

Help me!

HARPER

Look at me, Joanna. This isn't  
real. Put the fire out. Do it.

LAUREN

Joanna!

Harper slaps Joanna. HARD.

HARPER

Do it now!

Joanna concentrates.

JOANNA

This isn't real. This isn't real.  
This isn't real.

The fire dies down. Her mother disappears. Joanna relieved  
hugs Harper.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Thank fucking God for that.

(beat)

Wait, why are you still here? Why  
am I still here? If this isn't  
real, shouldn't I have woken up  
when I stopped the fire?

Harper hands Joanna a photo. It's of Nicole and Violet.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

How do you have this?

HARPER

Because they were real.

JOANNA

If that's true, why can't I find them?

HARPER

Have you given up?

JOANNA

No, never.

HARPER

Then trust me. They were real.  
Just as I'm real.

Harper's image starts to distort and pixilate.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Joanna, listen to me.

JOANNA

What's happening?

Joanna reaches forward. She's able to put her hand through Harper's image.

HARPER

Nicole and Violet were real.

Harper disappears. And the flames crop up again around Joanna who's still clutching the photo of Nicole and Violet.

**INT. LAB - DAY**

Harper wakes up. She has an elaborate device connected to her head with wires connecting her to a computer. She tries to pull it off. Sam steps forward, and patiently disconnects her from the system.

SAM

Were you successful?

HARPER

No, they must have found out. I was cut off before I could finish.

**INT. MEDICAL FACILITY - DAY**

SAM (O.S.)

We can't leave her there.

HARPER (O.S.)

We won't.

The room is filled with stasis chambers. All of them empty. Save for one that has an ALARM beeping. A TECH turns the alarm off. Checks on the patient inside.

It's JOANNA.

Her legs are missing. The stumps covered in bandages along with the rest of her body. Despite the bandages, it's clear she's covered in horrific burns.

Ryan rushes into the room, panicked.

RYAN

How is she?

TECH

Don't worry. We're fine. And she's fine.

RYAN

Good. That's good. Anything changes --

TECH

-- I notify you immediately.

Off Joanna, her eyes moving quickly under her closed eyelids.

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE**

**INT. STREET - BOMBED OUT CITY - DAY**

We find ourselves back in the scenes from the Teaser and Act One. Joanna photographing the young girl with the bunny. But is this reality? We're not sure, because while it seems the same, we have a sense that everything is slightly off.

HARPER

Joanna, we can't stay.

This time Joanna hesitates before grabbing the girl, the bunny falling next to her mother's dead body.

LITTLE GIRL

(in Russian)

My bunny!

**INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY**

Joanna "waking up" from her guided hypnotic state. Gasping for air. Panicked and out of sorts.

RYAN

Take a deep breath, Joanna. That's it. Slow and steady.

(beat)

The first time in a guided hypnotic state is always the hardest, but you'll learn to adjust.

Joanna nods, but it's clear she's confused by Ryan claiming this is the first time she's done this.

**INT. PHOTO GALLERY - DAY**

Still feeling unsettled, Joanna enters the gallery. Instead of Franklin, she sees only Lauren, who was decidedly not here originally.

JOANNA

Mom?

LAUREN

What's wrong? You look like you just saw a ghost.

JOANNA

Nothing, I --

LAUREN

Isn't this when we were supposed to meet?

JOANNA

Yea it is, I just, I thought someone else would be here --

LAUREN

Like who...?

JOANNA

I... don't know.

(beat)

Therapy was rough this morning. Maybe my head's still back there.

LAUREN

Well, you're here now with me. So tell me, what's the verdict?

Lauren gestures at the banner hanging in the gallery.

Our growing sense of dread increases as we reveal the title is "A Raw Expose of War." On the wall are all of Joanna's war photos. No Nicole. No Violet. No sense that they're even missing.

JOANNA

Still sucks, but what can we do?

LAUREN

Not worry about it because your brilliant photos are what will draw people in.

JOANNA

Thanks Mom. I'm glad you could make it.

LAUREN

I'm glad I could too.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Ryan across from the gallery. Watching Joanna and Lauren hug. Smiling, he takes out his cell, makes a call.

RYAN

It worked. Everything's back on track.

He hangs up, and moves on.

**INT. JOANNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Joanna in bed, staring at the ceiling. Restless. She gets up to grab a beer. Turns back to the bed. Is this the moment with the creepy bunny?

But no. There's nothing there.

Joanna stares at the bed for a moment as though she was expecting to see something. Concern etched on her face.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

Joanna outside the building from Act One. A sign says "LOFT SPACE FOR RENT" Joanna tries the front door, but it's locked. She peers inside. Empty.

**INT. RAVE - NIGHT**

Joanna in the rave. Not dancing. Standing. Staring at everyone moving around her. Utterly alone despite being surrounded by people.

**INT. RAVE - LATER**

Joanna heads for the exit, pushes the door open, and steps into...

**INT. LAUREN'S HOME - NIGHT**

Her fire nightmare. Instead of being freaked out. She seems strangely calm. Relieved even. She goes directly to her mother's room. Lauren inside on fire.

LAUREN  
Joanna, help me!

This time, Joanna doesn't even seem scared by the fire. She quickly puts out the flames, and her mom disappears.

On a mission, she heads downstairs...

**EXT. LAUREN'S HOME - NIGHT**

...And outside the house, walking into the woods, and towards the tallest tree. Climbs up. Hidden in its branches is a tree house.

**INT. TREE HOUSE - NIGHT**

Joanna enters the tree house, and heads to a small chest in the corner. She unlocks it, and pulls out its contents.

It's the photo of Nicole and Violet that Harper gave her. She goes to the mirror on the wall, clutching the photo. The only reflection her own.

JOANNA

Harper, are you there? Can you  
hear me? I remember...

**END OF ACT FIVE**

TAG

INT. MEDICAL FACILITY - NIGHT

Ryan wheeling a body through hallways of the facility.

RYAN (V.O.)

This person is very special. They had a loved one who was the light of their life. But a few years ago, that loved one was killed, and this person fell into drugs. Became homeless.

Ryan enters the basement. Walks towards a door that says CREMATORIUM.

RYAN (V.O.)

And then we stepped in to help them. We showed them a world where their loved one was still alive. Where they had friends and a good home. Where they were safe from harm.

Ryan preparing the body. He gently places the body into the crematory.

RYAN (V.O.)

It was a mercy we showed them. Giving them everything they ever wanted. One less mouth for our overburdened system to feed. And one woman made it all possible. She's going to make it possible for anyone who needs our help.

He presses the button for the body to be taken into the crematory. And we finally see whose body it is.

It's NICOLE.

RYAN

Be in peace.

END OF EPISODE