

TAKE CARE

Written by

Erica B. Peterson

BRANT ROSE AGENCY

T. 323-460-6464

Brant Rose - brose@brantroseagency.com

Toochis Morin Rose - trose@brantroseagency.com

TEASER

EXT. GALVESTON, TX - ESTABLISHING - EARLY MORNING

We cruise past a littered GULF COAST BEACH, brown ocean water, and a blazing, hot-ass sun.

EXT. BAYOU AVE - EARLY MORNING

A small CROWD is gathered around a grey PIT BULL, lying in the street, beat up and barely breathing.

A set of tires SCREECH to a stop.

A WOMAN runs up, pushes through the crowd. Kneels down by the pit bull, sees she's severely injured.

MAN IN CROWD

That dog ain't doing good.

WOMAN

My lucky day. I'm in the presence of a goddamn genius. Now help get her in my truck.

They lift the dog up and over to a 1963 CHEVROLET TRUCK. Ease her into the back seat. The Woman hops in, cranks the engine.

MAN IN CROWD

Lady, you know what yer doin? I should probably go with ya.

The Woman lights up a Marlboro Red, squints at the Man.

WOMAN

Well, if you feel like getting neutered then hop the fuck on in.

This is TESS JACKSON, 30s, not the one to fuck with. Tess blows her smoke in the Man's face and peels out, dust and debris spraying behind.

INT. LAFITTE ANIMAL HOSPITAL - SURGERY ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Tess bursts in, cradling the pit, adrenaline at 11. MARK, the vet, is working on a CAT with VET TECH. Mark sees Tess.

MARK

(to Vet Tech)

Finish up the stitches then get him crated and comfortable.

Tess places the pit on an exam table and Mark looks her over.

MARK (CONT'D)
Dog fighting?

TESS
Shoe sale at Barney's.

MARK
Tess... I have to notify the cops
this time.

TESS
No. I always get first crack.

Tess checks the time - **8:46am**. Shit. Heads to the exit.

TESS (CONT'D)
I'll be back. Please, just...

Mark nods. He'll make sure to take good care of the pit.

INT. TESS'S TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Tess's phone RINGS. It's Regina. Tess, annoyed, picks up.

REGINA (O.S.)
Where are you??

TESS (ON PHONE)
I'm on a flight to Rome. Did you
know they have fresh baked cookies
in first class?

REGINA
9:30. You miss this then you betta
start plannin' ya funeral.

TESS
Not having one. I just want to be
shot out of a cannon into the sun.

REGINA
That big mouth of yers is gon--

Tess hangs up. Checks the time - **8:58am**. Shit. Again.

EXT. LINDIE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Tess paces at the front door of this "Town and Country
magazine" FARMHOUSE. She frantically KNOCKS.

LINDIE (O.S.)
I'm coming! Hold your horses.

The door opens, it's LINDIE RAWLS, 40s, sweet as cherry pie.

LINDIE (CONT'D)
Well, you look like shit.

If the cherries were laced with arsenic and Jesus.

INT. LINDIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Lindie slides some documents over to Tess who signs.

TESS
I'm meeting a client at 9:30 to get his final payment to use my rescue for his fundraising venue... when do the sellers need the money?

LINDIE
Thursday.

TESS
Two days??

LINDIE
Tess. As your business broker, and dear friend, I need you to keep your shit together right now.

TESS
It's together. Just... going from running one rescue to twelve is kinda a big deal, you know?

LINDIE
Won't have twelve if you can't--

All SOUND stops. Tess looks past Lindie, who keeps talking, out into the backyard where we see OLIVER, 13, in a wheelchair and BILL, 50s, with a douchey mustache.

Tess's eyes narrow. She sees the white where Bill's squeezing Oliver's arm tight. Oliver's yellow lab growls at Bill.

LINDIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Tess? Are you even listening?

Tess snaps out of it. All SOUND back to normal.

TESS
Yeah. Gotta run. Want to say hi to Ollie first. I'll swing by later.

As Tess walks out the back door...

LINDIE
Dear Lord, please help her dumb ass. Amen.

EXT. LINDIE'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Tess beelines for Bill. She reaches for his hand to shake it.

TESS
Hey Bill!

They shake hands. Tess doesn't let go. She squeezes. Hard.

TESS (CONT'D)
Hey Ollie, you doing all right?

Tess squeezes harder. We hear a CRUNCH. Bill yelps.

OLIVER
... Yeah. I'm cool.

TESS
Good.

BILL
You bitch.

TESS
Catchphrase could use a tune up.
And it's only fractured. You'll
live. So... No more heart to hearts
with Ollie?

Bill nods. Tess lets go of his hand. She gives Buttercup a head scratch, Ollie a fist bump and heads out.

EXT. TESS'S ANIMAL RESCUE - FRONT YARD - LATER

Tess's truck pulls in front of a modest ranch house. A sign over the front door reads: **TESS'S ANIMAL RESCUE.**

INT. TESS'S ANIMAL RESCUE - MOMENTS LATER

Tess enters. Crates are being hosed down. EVA, 20s, British and optimistic, hops in for a quick walk n' talk with Tess.

EVA
Morning! You're running a wee late.

Eva and Tess continue walking through, past the play area where cats and dogs meet potential forever families.

TESS
Eva, I need the package for my 9:30
client. You got it?

EVA
Of course.

Tess and Eva stop at RECEPTION where Eva digs in a drawer for Tess's package. As she digs:

EVA (CONT'D)
You nervous?

TESS
Nope. Just get the package.

EVA
I feel like we should celebrate.
This is a milestone.

Tess checks the time - **9:25am**. Super shit.

TESS
Eva, seriously...

Tess's phone RINGS. It's Regina. Tess silents it. Eva tosses Tess the package. Tess looks at Eva, "WTF?" Tess shakes her head and leaves out back. Eva calls after.

EVA
Sorry! Just, so excited.

INT. TESS'S TRUCK / EXT. CRAWFISH SHACK - LATER

Tess walks over to a run down CRAWFISH STAND. She looks at the time - **9:38am**. Knocks on the side door. Nothing. Finally:

ZEKE (O.S.)
Yo! Who's there?

TESS
Tess.

The door opens to reveal ZEKE, 20s, smug ass-hat. Inside the shack Tess clocks a VARIETY OF DRUGS in mass quantity.

ZEKE
Ya twelve minutes late. And quit
bein' nosey. Jus gimme my shit.

Tess hands him the envelope and as Zeke reaches to take it -- THWIP THWIP -- Zeke falls to the ground, dead.

TESS
I was only eight minutes late.

Tess quickly pulls a gun out of the envelope, unscrews the silencer, and tosses them in a nearby DUMPSTER.

INT. TESS'S TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Tess hops in the front seat, grabs her phone and dials.

TESS (ON PHONE)

It's done.

Tess hangs up and sits in silence, taking it all in. Tess's eyes well up but then she breaks into laughter.

TESS (CONT'D)

The last one. Fuck yes!

Suddenly a WIRE is pulled tightly around Tess's throat!

ASSAILANT

Hi, Tess.

Tess strains, reaches for something under her seat. Suddenly her chair slides back, throwing her ASSAILANT off. The wire loosens enough for Tess to slam her head back and CRACK! CRUNCH! The Assailant's nose gushes with blood.

She jumps in the back seat, grabs a Kong from her dog toy bag, and shoves it into the Assailant's mouth.

He spits it out and cold cocks her. She quickly shakes it off, takes the Assailant's head and slams it into her gear shift over and over as bits of his eye-socket splatter out.

Tess grabs a DOGGIE POOP BAG, wraps it around the Assailant's face, puts her foot in his back and tightens the bag.

The Assailant gasps for air that isn't coming. He tries to fight but his body slowly gives up until he stops moving.

TESS

Bye, Patrick.

Tess gets her bearings. Finds Patrick's phone, looks through his texts. She finds text messages from a blocked number.

BLOCKED TEXT: "411 Edenvale Road 9:30" then "Are we clear?"

Tess texts back. **TESS AS PATRICK: "All clear"**

We stare at the phone as the "... " bubble appears. Finally:

BLOCKED TEXT: "Rendezvous at bowling alley"

Tess's eyes narrow in a creepy, calm rage. She kicks Patrick's body out, lights a smoke and takes off.

As we're all left wondering, *what the fuck just happened...*

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. ARMADILLA LANES - PARKING LOT - MORNING

Flickering NEON BOWLING PINS bowled over by a curled up NEON ARMADILLO. A GUY is getting a blowjob on the side of the building. TWO TEENS huff paint out front.

Tess's truck whips in.

INT. ARMADILLA LANES - MOMENTS LATER

The sound of BALLS HITTING PINS. Oddly satisfying. At the front desk, LARRY sneaks a quick sniff of returned shoes.

Tess storms in. In stride:

TESS
Regina in?

LARRY
Uh, in her office.
(then)
You gonna hang out and bowl this time? I got a size 7 just for you.

TESS
Maybe next time, Larry.

Tess walks off.

LARRY
(sotto)
Stitched your name in them myself.
(sniffs, hopeful)
One day.

INT. ARMADILLA LANES - REGINA'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Big hair, leopard print, and stiletto nails. This is REGINA THIBODEAUX, 50s, by way of 'Nawlins, living her best life.

Tess barges in.

REGINA
Beb! How does it feel?

TESS
What the ever loving fuck, Regina?

REGINA
You mad? I thought you wanted out... and I somewhat supported that decision.

TESS

So you're not surprised to see me
alive and well in your office?

REGINA

You actually seem *unwell*.

TESS

Oh, I'm very unwell because after
my supposed last hit, Patrick tried
and failed to kill me.

REGINA

Patrick... Belgium Patrick?

TESS

Just because you're a member of the
Tiki Island Theatre Company doesn't
mean you can act.

REGINA

Okay now I'm startin' to steam.
What the hell is goin' on?

TESS

So Patrick, Belgium Patrick, YOUR
Patrick, knew exactly where I would
be and at what time. Saw all the
info on his phone. Idiot didn't
even lock it.

REGINA

(still clueless)
Tess, sweetie--

TESS

Don't.

REGINA

I haven't spoken to Patrick since
he blew up my nephew's pontoon
boat. That was... 7 years ago.
(light bulb)
You think I hired him to kill you?
(angry, then)
Don't flatta yaself.

Tess doesn't know what to believe. She glances at a photo on
Regina's desk. The photo is of Regina and Tess 20 years ago.

For a moment Tess's angry veneer starts to crack then she
pulls her .45 and points it at Regina who doesn't flinch.

REGINA (CONT'D)

That's how this gonbe?

TESS

Your gumbo is flavorless and you really suck at lying. You can't talk your way out of this.

Suddenly, without warning, BULLETS spray Regina's office from the outside. Regina dives over her desk, on top of Tess, knocking her to the ground. Bullets continue flying until the entire office looks like a gun nut's target practice.

The shooting stops. SCREAMS heard from the lanes. Regina rolls off of Tess. Regina's hit in her shoulder.

REGINA

Lemme guess, I ordered the hit on myself.

TESS

(knows she messed up)
Fuck. I'm sorry...

Tess grabs a small towel from a box on the floor, presses it against Regina's shoulder. Regina groans in pain.

TESS (CONT'D)

So, Patrick isn't on your pay roll.

REGINA

Not a dime, baby doll.

TESS

What the hell is going on?

REGINA

You tell me.

TESS

It has to be whoever hired me to take out Zeke.

REGINA

Then we're fucked.

TESS

Who is it?

REGINA

(hesitates, then)
... Ian Cortez.

TESS

(incredulous)
Ian Cort-- The Galveston Cortez mob hired us?

Regina nods. The severity of this dawns on both of them.

TESS (CONT'D)

He could of had any of his people take Zeke out. That's what mobs are fucking for. Did that not ring an alarm for you?

REGINA

Clearly my alarm was snoozed.
(then)
I assumed he didn't want it traced directly back to him.

TESS

So he tried to kill you and me to tie up lose ends? It doesn't make any sense. Why did he do this?

REGINA

You're asking the wrong person.

Tess takes a peek at Regina's wound.

TESS

The bullet went clean through.

REGINA

Aren't I a lucky girl.

TESS

We gotta get you patched up.

REGINA

I can handle that. But you need to leave. The cops'll be here soon. We can't have you anywhere near this.

TESS

I'm not leaving you.

REGINA

Save the sentimental shit for later. Two minutes ago you were ready to paint the office with my brains.

TESS

I'm a complete asshole.

REGINA

Take care of Ian.

Off Tess, ready to rip Ian apart...

EXT. ARMADILLA LANES - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

...SIRENS approach. People hug each other, crying. Tess beelines for her truck, phone to her ear.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. TESS'S ANIMAL RESCUE - BATHROOM - SAME TIME

Eva and a large SHEEP DOG sit in a bathtub filled with bubble bath. And yes, Eva is in her birthday suit. Eva answers.

EVA (ON PHONE)
Hey superstar! How does it feel to finally be free.

TESS (ON PHONE)
I'm very much not free.

EVA
Oh god, did I send you off with the wrong package?

TESS
(annoyed)
What? No--

EVA
Thank god. Well if you find an envelope with some naughty photos then kindly give it back.

TESS
Sure.
(moving on)
So, I'll fill you in on all the details later but right now I need you to do some recon on Ian Cortez.

EVA
Copy that, Boss.

Eva shifts causing a very distinct BUTT TO BATHTUB sound. Eva's eyes go wide. It's silent for an uncomfortable beat.

TESS
Hello?

EVA
(safe to move on)
Hi. Um, one more thing. Mark called. He said you should get to the vet straight away.

TESS
Oh shit. Alright. Gotta go.
(then)
And please stop taking baths with
the dogs during business hours.

Off Tess, stressed the fuck out...

INT. LAFITTE ANIMAL HOSPITAL - LATER

Tess squats next to a crate where the pit bull lays on her side with a feeding tube and an IV pumping her with drugs and fluids. Mark kneels down next to Tess.

MARK
She has a few fractured ribs and
hasn't eaten in a week. It's put an
incredible strain on her heart.

TESS
(freaked out)
Is she gonna be okay?

MARK
Not sure. We need to keep her here
for a couple days. I'll know more
tomorrow.
(hesitant, then)
She's microchipped.

TESS
Really.

MARK
Yeah and... her owner is waiting in
the lobby.
(then)
Don't be a dick just yet, okay? We
don't have all the information.

Off Tess, ready to strangle whoever this person is...

INT. LAFITTE ANIMAL HOSPITAL - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Mark has just finished explaining the situation. Tess stares, puzzled, at SASHA, 40s, the pit's owner.

SASHA
I'm just so glad you found her.

TESS
Are you sure she's your dog?
(explaining)
I just... I expected you to be...
like a big, hairy fat guy.

SASHA
Excuse me?

TESS
Cause she's a pit bull I thought--

SASHA
She has a name, ya know.

TESS
Sorry. What's her name?

SASHA
Karen.

TESS
Karen? Jesus. I hope she's named
after somebody who died.

MARK
Tess.

TESS
What?

Sasha tears up. Tess isn't buying it.

SASHA
Karen ran away months ago and I
thought I had lost her forever.

MARK
Well, like I told Tess, Karen's not
out of the woods just yet.

TESS
When did you say... *Karen* ran away?

SASHA
(I already said this)
A few months ago.

TESS
A few months ago?

SASHA
(wtf)
Yes.

TESS
Did you go looking for her?

SASHA
Of course.

TESS

I own a rescue nearby and you never checked there. That would be the first place I would look. Most people check with us when they've lost a pet. Just seems odd you didn't even call us.

SASHA

Is there a problem?

MARK

(covering)

Tess is just concerned.

TESS

Yeah. Concerned.

Sasha stares at Tess in disgust.

TESS (CONT'D)

What's your problem?

SASHA

You've got... What is that? In your hair.

MARK

(inspects)

It's like a small meaty bit.

Tess pulls part of PATRICK'S EYE SOCKET out of her hair. Realizes what it is. Shit. She plays it off.

TESS

Old taco meat.

Tess puts it in her pocket. Off Mark's and Sasha's look...

TESS (CONT'D)

If I get hungry later.

(then)

It's been a crazy morning.

(then)

I gotta make a quick call.

Tess walks off, pulls out her phone and dials...

TESS (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

I need you to meet me somewhere.

INT. TESS'S TRUCK / EXT. PELICAN BOAT BARN - LATER

Tess, in baseball hat and sun glasses, sits slouched in her truck. She's parked down the street from PELICAN BOAT BARN - a seedy boat storage facility on the water.

Eva pops up outside of the truck window, scaring Tess. Eva giggles then climbs into the passenger seat.

TESS
You're lucky I didn't just shoot
you in the face.

EVA
Aww, that would have made me sad.

TESS
You bring the intel on Ian?

EVA
Yes. Quite handsome for a mobster.

TESS
Noted.

EVA
So whose boat are we watching?

TESS
It's not a boat we're watching but
the entire facility. I followed
Karen's owner here.

EVA
Karen?

TESS
I know.

EVA
What an asshole.

TESS
I know that woman is lying about
Dolly running away.

EVA
Didn't you say her name was Karen?

TESS
Yeah. I just changed it.

Eva takes out her phone. ON SCREEN we can see she's pulled up Tess's off shore account. It shows 1.495 million. Eva delicately changes the subject.

EVA

So... by the looks of your account,
I'm guessing Ian didn't pay you?

TESS

He tried to have me killed.

EVA

So you're still short on money for
the rescues then.

TESS

Good job, Murder She Wrote.

(then)

And if I don't have all 1.625 mil
by Thursday then I lose the
properties to someone else.

EVA

That's barely 48 hours. I wish you
could just tell them what happened.

TESS

"Hi, I was supposed to get paid a
lot of money after I killed this
guy but I didn't. Can I still buy
your animal rescues?"

EVA

Seems reasonable to me.

TESS

I'd love to just take a loan out
like a normal person. But when your
bank is your mattress people tend
to not want to loan you money.

EVA

I'm sorry, pickle.

TESS

Eva, I can not let it go down like
this. Those are *my* rescues.

Tess stares out the window.

TESS (CONT'D)

When is this lady coming out?

Eva treads lightly.

EVA

So, since you only have 48 hours to
procure the money you need perhaps
we take care of Ian first.

TESS

Oh, I'm taking care of Ian.

EVA

The look on his face when he sees you. Surprise! I'm not dead. Yes you are! Bang bang! Dead face.

TESS

Dead face?

EVA

Just improvising.

(then)

Okay so we'll put a pin in dog fighting lady.

TESS

No. That's why I called you here. You're keeping an eye on her.

EVA

Fun! A proper stake out. You know what's also fun in these situations? Calling the cops.

TESS

We're not calling the cops.

EVA

Right. But I think we should.

TESS

No.

EVA

Yes.

TESS

That's a big, fat, sweaty no.

EVA

Medium sized and a very dry yes.

TESS

I will break your knee caps.

EVA

Fair point. But... just a thought, if I'm doing the stake out then perhaps it should be my call.

Tess thinks about it. She caves.

TESS
Fine. But do it anonymously.

EVA
Of course.

TESS
Don't get involved. You call the
cops and observe. Then you call me.

EVA
That was my plan all along.

TESS
Okay. Get out.

EVA
Can I borrow your hat?

Tess tosses her baseball hat to Eva who then puts it on.

EVA (CONT'D)
(American accent)
I like french fries and ranch
dressing.

TESS
Please get out.

EVA
I love you.

Eva boops Tess's nose then hops out of the truck.

INT. LINDIE'S HOUSE - LATER

Tess sits at the kitchen island as Lindie decorates a cake.

TESS
So the sellers won't budge on the
date?

LINDIE
I tried but they've got other
offers so you're stuck.
(then)
Jesus. You smell like an ash tray.
Ya know smoking gives you wrinkles.
(then)
Hand me the rose tip.

As Tess does...

TESS
And apparently cancer.

LINDIE
So what happened with your fundraiser guy? I thought that was a sure thing.

TESS
It was but then he hired someone else to -- have the fundraiser at their venue.

LINDIE
I'm sorry, hun. That's why I always get things in writing. I even had Bill sign a sex contract.

TESS
I don't need to know any--

LINDIE
I will do it twice a week. I choose the day, time and my make up will not be smudged.

TESS
--details.

LINDIE
Hand me the blue-- in the bag.

Tess does. As Lindie makes blue roses around the cake...

TESS
You wouldn't by chance want to loan me 130 grand, would you?

LINDIE
I would if I could but I've already taken a 3rd mortgage out on this house. Besides, Bill would kill me.

TESS
Fuck him.

LINDIE
Excuse me?

TESS
(covering)
Not Bill. Still thinking about the fundraiser guy.

Oliver wheels into the room. Tess brightens.

TESS (CONT'D)
Well hello good sir.

OLIVER
Me lady. You still coming to my D&D
tourney next week?

TESS
I wouldn't miss it. I don't have to
dress weird, do I?

OLIVER
You already dress weird.

TESS
Low hanging fruit.

OLIVER
I eat what I am served.

LINDIE
Are you two even speaking English?

TESS
(to Oliver)
Where's Princess Buttercup?

Oliver looks at Lindie then back at Tess.

LINDIE
She's with Bill until this one can
learn a little more responsibility.

OLIVER
I am responsible.

LINDIE
Bill said Buttercup used the
bathroom all over the garage.

OLIVER
He's lying!

LINDIE
Do not take that tone with me, son.
You hear me?

OLIVER
Yes ma'am.

Oliver gives Tess a knowing look. *Fuck that guy.* Yes, Bill.

TESS
Where is Bill anyway?

OLIVER
With Buttercup. Out front.

TESS
Cool, cool. Well, I hate to run...

Tess and Ollie do their elaborate handshake.

TESS (CONT'D)
But I gotta find some ca-sheesh.

LINDIE
Okay, sugar. Now don't you go
robbin' a bank or anything crazy
like that.

TESS
I promise I won't rob a bank.

EXT. LINDIE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

As soon as Tess walks out front she sees Bill dragging Princess Buttercup by the leash, practically strangling her.

TESS
Hey! Don't do that.

BILL
Excuse me?

TESS
You're choking her.

BILL
She's a dumb ass dog that needs to
learn her lesson.
(clearly about Tess)
You know what I mean. How females
need to obey or they'll get choked.

Tess walks over to Bill. Her face close to his.

TESS
It's gonna be a lot harder for you
to drag Princess Buttercup around
with two broken legs.

Bill inches closer. He looks her over. It's creepy af.

BILL
(dark)
You're a very pretty girl, Tess.
Beautiful smile... It'd be a shame
if it got ruined.

Tess sees Bill isn't fucking around. Before she can speak...

LINDIE (O.S.)
Is everything okay?

The two turn to see Lindie in the doorway.

TESS
(super sweet)
Yeah. I was just teaching Bill the
best way to handle bad behavior.

BILL
I had some tips for her too.

LINDIE
Look at you two, helping each
other. That's what I like to see.
(then, serious)
Bill, honey, I'm ready for our "day
two."

Lindie winks at Tess. Tess whimpers.

TESS
Yeah, I gotta go...
(sotto)
...not eat lunch.

LINDIE
Bye, girl!

Tess lights a cigarette, walks to her truck. Bill leers,
watching her go.

LINDIE (CONT'D)
Bill! Now!

INT. EVA'S MINI-COOPER / EXT. PELICAN BOAT BARN - LATER

Eva, heels on the dash, tosses jelly beans into her mouth.

EVA
(chewing, disgusted)
Whatever happened to normal fruit
flavors.

As she spits the jelly bean out, a COP CAR parks in front of
the Pelican Boat Barn. Eva sits up.

EVA (CONT'D)
Yessss. *Bad boys bad boys watcha
gonna do when they come for you.*

Two COPS are now at the entrance. A LARGE MAN greets them.

EVA (CONT'D)
Time for the money shot. Wait...
that's not right.

Eva watches as the LARGE MAN hands them an envelope of cash.
They shake the man's hand and then head back to their car.

EVA (CONT'D)
What the bloody hell? You guys were
supposed to arrest that hairy twat.
(pulls out her phone)
Tess is going to rip you a proper
new arsehole.

Off Eva, pissed off...

INT. TESS'S ANIMAL RESCUE - TESS'S OFFICE - LATER

Tess packs a duffle bag with her weapons of choice: A Ruger
Mark IV Hunter, a Smith & Wesson M&P 40C, her personal
favorite - a Glock 26 Gen Four 9 mm with silencer and...

...Organic Eucalyptus lip balm.

Tess zips up her duffel and heads out into...

INT. TESS'S ANIMAL RESCUE - MAIN AREA - CONTINUOUS

...the main area where BRANDON, 30s, charming with a dash of
ruggedness, is waiting.

TESS
(flustered)
Hi.

BRANDON
Hey.

Tess realizes she's staring and not speaking. Finally:

TESS
Hi. Again. Sorry, can I help you?

BRANDON
Yeah. We spoke the other day. I'm
Brandon Wilson. I called looking
for a big, kinda--

TESS
(remembering)
--floopy dog. I remember. Did we
have an appointment?

BRANDON

No. This was just the only time I could slip away from work.

TESS

No problem. I think Eva set aside Sam, our lab-mix, for you.

BRANDON

Great. Thank you, Tess.

TESS

That's my name.

Tess can't believe how taken she is by Brandon. The two shake hands a little longer than normal. They finally let go.

BRANDON

Sorry. Working in construction you forget that skin is actually supposed to be soft.

(then)

And then you hear what you just said and realize just how creepy that must have been for you. I am so incredibly sorry.

TESS

It's cool. I'm wearing someone else's skin anyway.

BRANDON

Good. We're both super creepy.

The two make it over to the play area where mom, LINA, and her 5-year-old son, JAY, are playing with Sam.

Brandon kneels down, eye level with Jay.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Looks like you've got yourself a pretty cute pooch, huh.

Jay nods his head.

LINA

We've never had a dog so this is all very new to me.

JAY

I'm gonna name him Charlie after my Daddy.

LINA

Jay, we're just looking, remember?

BRANDON

(to Jay)

I think Charlie is a great name.

LINA

Since Charlie, um...

(still can't say it)

Jay has been a little obsessed with getting a dog and naming him after his dad.

TESS

I don't know if anyone told you but today we're actually waiving all adoption fees and new owners get a free year's supply of food.

Lina gets choked up but holds it together.

LINA

Really? I guess then maybe Charlie's coming home with us.

(then, concerned)

Unless this is your dog.

BRANDON

No he's not. I've got my eye on something else.

TESS

(to Lina and Jay)

Charlie is all yours.

Jay bear hugs his mom then hugs all over Charlie. Brandon leans into Tess and whispers:

BRANDON

We make a great team.

Off Tess, smitten by her rugged respite...

EXT. RUDY + NOLA RESTAURANT - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

Rudy + Nola is hidden amongst a jungle of greenery. Resort-like grounds with breathtaking views of the Gulf of Mexico.

INT. RUDY + NOLA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The clientele is all Galveston new money - a lot of plastic surgeons and A LOT of plastic surgery.

On the second floor is a luxury private dining room where we find none other than IAN CORTEZ, 50s, imposing and reserved.

Ian is having dinner with his wife, SAVANNAH, 30s, the rock of the family, DANTE, early 20s, handsome and Ian's eldest, and ISABELLE, 6, daddy's little girl.

Standing directly behind Ian is LANA LACHAPELLE, late 20s, Ian's right hand and cold as ice.

IAN
Isabelle, my love, elbows off the table.

ISABELLE
Yes, Daddy.

IAN
That's my girl.

TESS (O.S.)
I thought I was your girl.

WHIP PAN to reveal Tess, in dusty jeans, tank top, shit kicker boots, and her duffel swung over her shoulder, standing at the top of the staircase.

Ian is stunned to see Tess. He keeps his cool.

TESS (CONT'D)
Well howdy, Ian.
(then)
I take Venmo, PayPal and cash. It's pay day and I've come to collect.

Off Tess, *check mate, fucker...*

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. RUDY + NOLA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Right where we left off...

TESS

I'm Tess but you already knew that.

SAVANNAH

So confident. I'd like you if you weren't ruining my birthday dinner.

IAN

(not now)

Savannah.

SAVANNAH

(fuck you)

It's lovely to meet you, Tess.

TESS

(fuck you too)

Happy Birthday, Savannah. Sorry I didn't bring you a gift.

ISABELLE

I'm Isabelle.

TESS

Well aren't you the cutest little nugget.

Isabelle giggles.

IAN

(cool, collected)

Savannah, my love. Tess is an associate of mine.

TESS

Associate. Interesting.

ISABELLE

What's a a-sos-ite?

TESS

According to your father an associate is someone he hires for a job and then when that job is done he tries to have that person--

IAN

Hired again.

TESS
Your dad's funny.
(then, to Ian)
Maybe you'd like to excuse yourself
so we can talk?

DANTE
This one's got balls, Dad.
(then, to Tess)
Maybe you and I can go have a chat.

TESS
Sorry, Squirt. Not here for you.

Dante laughs.

LANA
I'd rather the family dinner not be
interrupted. I'll escort Tess out.

TESS
I'd love to see you try.

Lana and Tess lock eyes for a moment, then:

IAN
That's alright, Lana. This won't
take but a minute.

SAVANNAH
(over it)
Christ, Ian.

TESS
Maybe two minutes.
(then)
First of all: pay me. Second, as
you may have guessed by now,
Patrick had to retire. And finally,
anyone else you send my way,
including the lovely Lana, will
also be forced into retirement.

Tess grabs a shrimp off of Ian's plate. Pops it in her mouth.

TESS (CONT'D)
(mid-chew, to Ian)
Oh and if you don't pay me, I'm
definitely throwing you the biggest
retirement party of them all.

ISABELLE
I love parties!

TESS
Aren't they the best.

DANTE
Tess, you like to party?

IAN
Dante. Enough.

SAVANNAH
I'm ready to have my birthday cake
now so perhaps you two make a deal
so no one else has to "retire."

TESS
We already had a deal. I followed
through on my end.

IAN
You did but your payment, and
whoever sent Patrick, are sadly
above my pay grade.

TESS
That's a weird way to apologize.

IAN
My boss won't pay for the original
job. If I ask him to... then that
would be not so good for me.
(then)
But I will pay you out of my pocket
if you do one more tiny job for me.

TESS
You ever been throat-punched, Ian?

Tess moves to unzip her duffel but Lana grabs her wrist.

IAN
It's okay, Lana.

Ian reaches in his jacket pocket. Pulls out a fat wad of
cash. He quickly leafs through it then tosses it to Tess.

IAN (CONT'D)
Give or take, that's about 20
grand.

TESS
Not really a math guy are you. You
owe me 130.

IAN

Think of that as a down payment.
You'll get what you're owed and
then some once the job is done.

Tess was not expecting that. She's conflicted. Finally:

TESS

So what do you need me to do. I'll
let you know up front, I can't help
you with that bald spot. I don't
know if anyone can.

Dante chuckles. Ian shoots him a look.

IAN

I need a piece of paper and pen.

Lana reaches in her coat pocket, pulls out a small notebook,
rips out a sheet, along with a pen and hands it over to Ian.

TESS

The suspense is killing me.

Ian scribbles on the paper, folds it up and hands it over to
Tess. She opens it, surprised, then puts it in her pocket.

IAN

Can you take care of that?
Discreetly.

TESS

You love early retirement...

IAN

Once that's done you'll have the
remainder wired to you.

TESS

Well that wasn't so bad, was it.
Have a delightful rest of your
evening. Those diamond encrusted
chickens look absolutely delish.

ISABELLA

They don't have diamonds, silly.

TESS

Nothing gets past you, does it.

ISABELLA

Nope!

TESS
Hey Lana. Last one to the car has
to polish all the guns.

ISABELLE
Guns?

Off Tess, ready to get paid...

INT. TESS'S ANIMAL RESCUE - LATER

Rescue is closed. Eva and Tess eat Chinese at the front desk.

EVA
I've never seen such a large hairy
man before. Oh! And Sasha is large
hairy man's sister.
(then)
She was yelling at him so I don't
think she's actually involved.

TESS
(mind elsewhere)
I don't trust this guy, Eva.

EVA
I never trust hairy men.

TESS
No, Ian. Who's quite hairless.
(then)
There's no way it's not a set up.

EVA
Not much you can do about that. I
say just go and get it done. Worst
case, you kill Ian too. I mean,
you've killed a lot of people. So,
what are two more?

TESS
Look at you, casual about murder.

EVA
(proud)
Thank you.

TESS
I wish I felt that casual about it.

EVA
What's wrong?

TESS

I just... I thought I was done.
You know? After Zeke I was ready to
be in full rescue mode. I don't
want to do this anymore.

EVA

But you're so good at it.

TESS

(hates it)
Yeah... I know.

EVA

So what are you going to do?

Tess thinks for a long moment, finally:

TESS

You know what? This *is* a set up.
(almost giddy)
And I know exactly how to use it.

EVA

You're so mysterious right now.
(then)
So we should postpone our little
dog fighting rescue mission, right?

TESS

NO. No. That's still happening.

EVA

Okay, well, then we need at least a
dozen, maybe more, leashes.

TESS

Where are the dogs locked up?

EVA

They're all crammed into an empty
storage unit.
(then)
I don't understand people like
this. It's like they have no soul.

TESS

And that's why I'm gonna beat them
into hamburger meat.

EVA

So what's your plan with Ian then?

Off Tess, revved up...

EXT. TESS'S ANIMAL RESCUE - NIGHT

Tess walks to her truck. She's about to open the door when a black bag is quickly put over her head and a needle injected into her neck. Tess tries to fight but the drug is too strong. Tess slumps down and is dragged away.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. SUV - NIGHT

Tess, bag still over her head, starts to come to. A hand reaches back and snatches the bag off.

It takes Tess a moment to realize she's zip-tied in the backseat of an SUV. She's oddly calm.

WOMAN'S VOICE

You seriously need to start watching your six. I thought that was gonna be a lot harder.

TESS

I guess I'm having an off day.

Tess looks in the rearview mirror and sees the driver is non other than Lana LaChapelle.

TESS (CONT'D)

Oh man, am I happy to see you.

LANA

I don't think the drugs have quite worn off yet.

TESS

I am clear as a bell, LaChapelle.

(then)

So how long did it take for Ian to tell you to go after me.

LANA

He text me under the table while you were still there.

TESS

Ian is such a scrote. How do you work for that dude? Seriously.

Lana doesn't answer.

TESS (CONT'D)

Well, for me, money was definitely the motivator... and If I'd said no I would've been bludgeoned to death in the parking lot with a bucket of crab legs.

Lana remains silent.

TESS (CONT'D)

The name on the note pushed me over the edge to agree and helped me figure out my new plan.

LANA

That name must be pretty serious.

TESS

It's definitely serious and honestly, sad.

LANA

So who is it?

TESS

Wanna guess?

LANA

No. Just tell me.

TESS

You're not gonna believe me.

LANA

Are you always this annoying?

TESS

You're reading it all wrong.

(then)

Look, just reach into my pocket and read the note for yourself. Satisfy that morbid curiosity.

Lana reaches back, pulls the note from Tess's front pocket.

It reads: **Lana LaChapelle**

LANA

Fuck off. You wrote this.

TESS

With your pen and paper?

Lana can't stop staring at the note. Her face shifts from confused to shocked to furious in a matter of seconds.

LANA

How di-- You knew he would send me after you.

TESS

It was the only way I could get you alone.

LANA

So you're gonna kill me now? Did you not factor in that you'd be the one tied up.

TESS

No, I expected as much. That doesn't matter anyway cause I was never going to kill you.

LANA

(confused)

I really don't get you.

TESS

I don't get you. I literally went through this exact same thing yesterday - though turns out it was a misunderstanding - but I was seconds away from blowing my boss's brains out. And she's cool.

It hits Lana all at once.

LANA

Fuck. He is a scrote.

TESS

I bet he even promised you a more prestigious position and now you're realizing that he never had any intention of giving it to you.

Tess catches Lana's eyes in the rearview. Tess laughs.

TESS (CONT'D)

Breathe into it cause it's a doozy.

LANA

(embarrassed)

I can still kill you, you know.

TESS

Sure. You can kill me and then he'll just have someone else kill you. That seems to be his M.O.

(then)

Your dude--

LANA

He's not my dude.

TESS

Right. Sorry. Not your dude seems to want to kill a lot of people without any rhyme or reason.

LANA

I know why he wanted to kill you and Regina.

TESS

I assume it's a frame job.

LANA

Yeah. Tie you and Regina to Zeke and a half a dozen others he had killed to keep the cartel and the Feds off his back.

TESS

Not surprising.

(then)

I know why he wants you dead... because you know all of his dirty little secrets.

(then)

Put us together -- two birds, one stone. In theory.

LANA

Clearly he underestimated us.

TESS

Don't they always.

(then)

Lemme tell you. Yesterday morning I thought I had the dream last kill.

LANA

Wouldn't that be nice. Be done with all this shit.

TESS

I was done... until Ian the scrote fucked that up. In 24 hours I'm either gonna get my dream or die chasing it.

LANA

That's why it's a dream. That's all that it will ever be.

TESS

What's yours?

LANA
My what?

TESS
Your dream.

LANA
My dream? I don't have one.

TESS
Bullshit. Don't be lame.

LANA
Fine.
(a beat, then)
A bakery. A small one. Enough to be
free. I'd also like to gain 30
pounds from a strictly donut diet.

TESS
Man, now I'm hungry.

Tess rubs her stomach with her hand. Lana clocks this.

LANA
When the hell did you untie
yourself?

TESS
Like, right after I woke up.

LANA
So what about you?

TESS
What about me?

LANA
Your dream.

TESS
Right. Well... after what I thought
was my last job, I was about to
take that money, and all the money
I have saved, and purchase my own
animal rescue franchise. That's
still the plan.

LANA
Animal rescues... that's pretty
good. Noble, even.

A moment, then:

LANA (CONT'D)

So now what?

TESS

I'm so happy you asked.

Off Tess, plan in full swing...

INT. LINDIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bill and his good ol' boys, PARKER, TIM and RUSTY - all 40s with small town mentality - sit in the kitchen at a makeshift poker table. Bill's a bit more lubricated than the others.

BILL

This bitch had the audacity to talk shit to me on *my* property?

PARKER

Doesn't Lindie pay for the house?

BILL

And? Lindie's my property ergo everything in this house is my property. I should whoop your ass for even sayin' that, Parker.

RUSTY

Can't really do that with your busted hand, man.

PARKER

That's hilarious!

TIM

That shit is embarrassing.

BILL

Pssh. I'm not embarrassed. She's lucky Lindie came out when she did or I would have punched her right in the pussy.

PARKER

Sure, man.

BILL

Fuck you! I'll go punch her in the pussy right now.

TIM

You gotta put her in her place.

RUSTY

She's one of those feminists,
right? So if she wants to be equal
to a man then you gotta treat her
like a man.

BILL

(at an eleven)

God damn right. That stupid slut
needs her jaw wired shut. I'm gonna
smack her so hard she's gonna have
to get one of them titanium jaws.

TIM

Yeah! Punch her terminator ass.

BILL

(eyes glazed over)

I gotta do something...

(then)

And I don't want to just hurt
her... I want to scare her. Like,
really scare her. I want her to
have PTSD because of me.

PARKER

This shit got dark.

RUSTY

Shut up, Parker.

(to Bill)

I'm fuckin' down. Just tell us what
you wanna do.

Off Bill, licking his chops...

EXT./INT. BRANDON'S HOUSE - NEXT DAY

Tess barely rings the DOORBELL when Brandon immediately
swings the door open. He's beyond distressed.

BRANDON

Thank god you're here.

TESS

Sorry it took me so long. Things
are kinda hectic right now.

(re: Brandon face,
concerned)

Jesus. Are you okay?

BRANDON

I don't know, is cat scratch fever
still a thing?

TESS

Please tell me you didn't 911 text me something you could Google.

BRANDON

No. I don't think. I don't even know what I would Google for this.

(then)

I shouldn't have let you talk me into getting two cats.

TESS

You can handle two cats, okay. So what's the actual problem?

Brandon ushers Tess into...

INT. BRANDON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

...the living room where she immediately covers her nose.

TESS

Oh. Okay. Yeah. I can very much smell the problem.

BRANDON

What is that smell and why won't the smell stop?

TESS

They're marking their territory. It's actually a good sign that they're making your place theirs.

BRANDON

So I have to live in this smell? I can't live in this smell. No one is going to come over with this smell. You have to help me.

TESS

Hey, I'm here. I'm in this smell.

BRANDON

That's because you have to be here.

TESS

I absolutely do not. Here's a twist, I made a choice to come over here and I actually should be somewhere else.

BRANDON

But now that you've been hit with the smell would that keep you from coming back over?

TESS

Back over for... cat stuff?

BRANDON

Cat stuff, non-cat stuff. Food. There's a high probability food would be involved.

TESS

Just so you know the smell would never keep me away.

(then)

It would be because of that trash on your couch.

On Brandon's couch is a DALLAS COWBOYS BLANKET.

BRANDON

Pearl clutch. Don't talk about America's team like that.

TESS

But they suck. You see my dilemma.

BRANDON

Just so I'm clear, you're saying that this blanket would keep you from coming back to my place.

TESS

(deadpan)

I'm afraid so, Brandon. I'm sorry.

Brandon immediately tosses the blanket into the trash. Tess laughs but Brandon is serious. Tess is surprised. Their eyes linger on one another for a moment. Finally:

TESS (CONT'D)

... I guess I'm coming back then.

BRANDON

Great.

(then)

Now please, for the love of all things Cowboys, help me with that smell. It's making my eyes water.

Off Tess, charmed...

INT./EXT. PELICAN BOAT BARN - MAIN WAREHOUSE - EVENING

Seedy and smoke-laden. Decrepit BOAT PARTS litter the warehouse. The GARAGE DOOR in the back is pulled up allowing us to see a few STORAGE UNITS outside.

In one of the UNITS we see DOGS, mainly pit bulls, crammed into cages. WHIMPERING, GROWLING and in horrid condition.

TWO MEN sit at a makeshift bar, VIC and KAPNER, mid-40s, Russian thugs, dressed in TRACK SUITS no matter how hot.

Large Man, from earlier, who we will now call NIKOLAI, tosses a stack of CASH in front of Vic. Vic puts the cash through a money counting machine.

Nikolai pulls a dusty box of SMALL VIALS from the shelf on the wall. He sifts through the vials, annoyed.

NIKOLAI

Vic, you were supposed to order more of the anabolic.

VIC

I did. Look harder.

NIKOLAI

Ten fights this week and no anabolic. Piece of shit.

As Vic and Nikolai start to squabble, through the front entrance to the warehouse comes Eva, all dolled up.

KAPNER

Both of you shut up! We have guest so play nice.

Nikolai, uninterested in Eva's appearance, walks up to her.

NIKOLAI

What do you want?

EVA

I was hoping to rent some storage space for my father's boat but I'm not sure exactly what to get.

Nikolai glares at Eva.

NIKOLAI

Come with me to front.

As Nikolai and Eva exit, Vic and Kapner get back to their money. As they count cash, we see Tess - in BLACK ASSAILANT GARB - quietly rise up behind them.

She rears back an enormous 20LB CHAIN and swings it into Vic's head knocking him on the ground.

Kapner jumps back. Tess swings the chain at him but he ducks then he lands a ferocious right hook to Tess's jaw. Tess stumbles, disoriented.

Kapner then reaches for his GUN but Tess surprises him with an OLD BOAT STEERING WHEEL that she slams down over his head.

Tess uses the wheel to spin Kapner around until finally swinging him, face first, into the brick wall.

Both men on the ground groaning when Eva runs in.

TESS
Where's your guy?

EVA
I roofied him.

TESS
What? That wasn't part of the plan.

EVA
He really didn't want to help me find storage and I didn't want him to come back here, so...

TESS
Okay, later we are definitely going to have a talk about why you have roofies readily available.
(thinks about it, then)
Do you have two more?

EXT. PELICAN BOAT BARN - MOMENTS LATER

Vic, Nikolai and Kapner are all tied together with heavy duty chains, knocked completely unconscious.

Behind them we see Eva and Tess herding all the dogs into two LARGE TRANSIT VANS. Tess cups her jaw in pain.

TESS
Next time, if you have something that will prevent me from getting my jaw busted, let me know.

Off Tess and Eva, saving the day...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR**INT. TESS'S TRUCK / EXT. "BLISS" NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT**

Tess is parked in an alley by THE STRAND. Neon burns into the dark sky. Reflected club lights dance along the ocean water.

Tess pulls out her phone. Quickly types in some information.

ON SCREEN: The portal to Tess's account. Tess types in her user name and password. Her account pops up. We watch the account as it goes from 1.495 million to 1.7 million.

A smile spreads across Tess's face. The rescues are hers.

Suddenly, Tess's attention is taken by something else...

A 10-foot ALLIGATOR, out of place, crossing this booze-filled street. Almost as if it wants to blend in but knows it can't so it quickly slithers back into the murky waters.

Tess snaps back to what she came here to do. She puts her phone away, hops out of her truck and heads over to...

EXT. "BLISS" NIGHTCLUB - BACK DOOR - NIGHT

Chaotic valet parking with Teslas and a Limited Edition Bugatti Veyron in select spots.

Tess slips through the party-till-dawn crowd up to an ENORMOUS BOUNCER blocking the back door.

TESS
(to Bouncer)
Tell me, do you just eat cows
whole? Like in one big swallow.

The Bouncer takes Tess in, then:

BOUNCER
You must be Lana's friend.

TESS
You got it, Redwood.

The Bouncer opens up a DIFFERENT DOOR for Tess. She makes her way through the door and down a poorly lit set of STAIRS.

INT. "BLISS" NIGHTCLUB - SECRET FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Tess creeps down the hall of this part luxury spa/part Best Little Whorehouse in Texas.

She walks past a series of doors then under a GLASS ATRIUM to the final door where THREE BODYGUARDS, completely strapped, stand in what looks like a small, private strip club.

A DANCER swings around the pole doing what appears to not be physically possible as the Three Bodyguards post up against a MINI BAR watching. They've left the door slightly vulnerable.

TESS (O.S.)

Hey guys.

The Bodyguards turn around to see Tess now at the door.

TESS (CONT'D)

Do you have a key to this thing?

(then)

I've had to pee since I passed the guy getting fisted in room three.

The men look at each other, *"what the fuck?"* Then Tess's next moves hurl defiance at the laws of physics.

There is no form or technique. It's not refined or flashy. Just gloriously merciless.

This is Tess's sweet spot.

Tess grabs TWO MARTINI GLASSES, breaks them both on the bar... the jagged stems hiss through the First Bodyguard's neck. A criss-cross spray of blood paints the air...

Tess, already across the room, slides past the terrified dancer, grabs her shoe and plants the STILETTO heel into the heart of the Second Bodyguard...

The Third Bodyguard is coming in hot when Tess grabs a melon-baller and, in a flash, scoops out the Third Bodyguard's eye.

As he cries out, Tess kicks a BARSTOOL LEG in half and jams the jagged edge through his femoral artery... he slumps in a pool of his own blood, quivering like a small, wet bird...

First Bodyguard is halfway on his feet, holding his neck. He reaches for his .45...

Tess spins him around, grabs the .45 and pulls the trigger TWICE into the back of his head...

INT. "BLISS" NIGHTCLUB - PRIVATE SUITE - SAME TIME

We're with Ian, face down on a massage table, awaiting his rub down. He sings a familiar tune by Juice Newton.

IAN
*Just call me angel in the morning
angel. Just touch my cheek before
you leave me baby.*

We hear a THWIP THWIP followed by a THUD right outside.

IAN (CONT'D)
Lana? Is that you?

TESS (O.S.)
(Russian accent)
Everything okay Mr. Cortez. You
just relax and let my hands do
gross things to your penis.

IAN
What?

IAN'S POV

...through the massage table donut hole. Tess flips Ian off.
Ian immediately jumps off of the table.

IAN (CONT'D)
How the fuck did you get in here?
Lana. Lana!

TESS
(looking down)
Oof. I hope you're a grower.

Lana enters, gun drawn. Tess puts her hands in the air. Ian
hides behind Lana.

Tess then puts her hands down and locks the door. Lana turns,
trains her gun on Ian.

IAN
(to Lana)
What are you doing?

TESS
(whispers)
Plot twist.

Lana throws Ian a towel.

LANA
Sir, cover yourself.

IAN
What the fuck is going on?

LANA

That's a great question. What is going on because last we spoke you told me to kill Tess.

TESS

Samesies. You told me to kill Lana.

IAN

I did no such thing.

Lana tosses the "Lana" note in front of Ian.

IAN (CONT'D)

This is bullshit. You know that, Lana.

TESS

Which part? The part where you fucked yourself? Or the part where you fucked yourself?

LANA

I think it's the first one.

TESS

I totally agree.

IAN

What do you want? Just say it and I'll get it for you. Anything. Money is no object.

TESS

That's weird because it was when you couldn't pay me.

IAN

Lana, please don't do this. You know me. I knew Tess would never be able to kill you.

TESS

Really, dude.

IAN

(ignoring her)

Trust me. I had to get her out of my hair. You don't want to kill me. We're family. We don't do that to each other.

LANA

I know that.

Ian breathes a sigh of relief.

IAN
Gracias a Dios.

LANA
Which is why Tess is gonna do it.
I've already transferred the money
you owed her and a little extra.

TESS
I have to thank you, Ian. If you
would have just paid me I never
would have met Lana.

LANA
Yeah. None of this would have
happened. It's all because of you.

Ian knows his number's up.

IAN
Go to hell. Both of you.

TESS
Save me a spot.

Before Tess can shoot Ian--

LANA
Just one more thing...
(to Tess)
I have one more person I need you
to take care of. And I'll make sure
all of your expenses for the next
year are completely covered.

TESS
(damn)
I'm listening.

LANA
Dante. Ian's son.

IAN
You fucking bitch. You leave Dante
out of this.

LANA
No can do, sir. I'm not working for
that little shit stain. I'm in
charge now.

TESS
I'll handle Dante.

IAN

You will pay for this. You think
you're getting away--

THWIP! Tess puts a bullet right between his eyes. Ian's body
drops to the floor.

TESS

Sorry. I felt a monologue coming on
and who has the time, ya know.

Lana stares at Ian. Emotional but stoic.

TESS (CONT'D)

You okay?

LANA

(nods)
Couldn't be better.

Off Tess and Lana, bonded for life...

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. TESS'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD / BACK YARD - NIGHT

Tess pulls into the driveway of this MODEST FARMHOUSE. She hops out of her truck accompanied by Dolly!

The two move around to the back of the house not noticing the RED MINI-VAN creeping to a halt a few houses down.

Tess and Dolly enter through the backdoor...

INT. TESS'S HOUSE - KITCHEN / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

...into the living room. The TV is on -- Family Feud plays. Tess, after the couple days she's had, is thrilled to come home to this familiar tableau. She's safe, Dolly's safe.

Tess grabs the remote off the kitchen table, turns off the TV.

GREG (O.S.)
I'm watching that.

Reveal GREG JACKSON, 70's, no filter, Tess's Dad, just waking up in his recliner.

Tess gives her dad a giant hug. This is the first time we've seen Tess give anyone affection that isn't on four legs.

They hold the hug for a moment and that's when Greg sees Dolly over Tess's shoulder. Dolly's tail wags like crazy.

GREG (CONT'D)
Who is that gorgeous girl?

TESS
Dolly, Dad. Dad, Dolly

GREG
(to Dolly)
Are you the most amazing pooch that's ever pooched? Are you?

Dolly immediately jumps in Greg's lap.

TESS
Wow. I barely got a wet nose in my crotch.

GREG
It's love at first sight.

TESS
You hungry?

TIME CUT TO:

INT. TESS'S HOUSE - KITCHEN AREA - LATER

Tess pulls a lasagna out of the oven as Greg sets the table for three. As Greg serves each plate, Tess grabs Greg's pill container and empties out Thursday.

GREG
So all the paperwork is done and it's just a matter of transferring the dough?

TESS
Yes, Whitey Bulger. But I'll handle that after we get you two in bed. Then tomorrow you will be looking at the proud owner of twelve somewhat brand new Animal rescues.

GREG
That's great, sweetie.
(then)
I guess dropping you on your head didn't do too much damage.

Now we know where Tess's smart ass mouth comes from.

TIME JUMP TO:

INT. TESS'S HOUSE - GREG'S BEDROOM - LATER

It's quiet as Tess pulls off her Dad's socks. Tess finally breaks the silence:

TESS
You given any thought to what I said the other day?

GREG
I'm not joining AA. I'm not a quitter, dammit.

TESS
That's not what I'm talking about.

GREG
I know. Answer's still the same.

TESS
I just think if you reached out--

GREG
Your brother is a murderer and
until that changes...

TESS
He didn't have a choice.

Clearly Greg does not know about Tess's other life.

GREG
Peanut, I love you but stop
sticking your nose so lovingly in
my business.

Tess knows not to push any further.

TESS
I'm gonna take Dolly for a brief
house tour and then I'll bring her
back to guard your feet.

GREG
You better.

TESS
And remember you can press
(points to nightstand)
that button if--

GREG
--I need anything at all. I'm old
but my mind is like a steel trap.

TESS
Love you.

GREG
Love you more.

Tess flips off the lights.

GREG (CONT'D)
Oh no! Where am I? Davey Crockett
is that you??

TESS
Funny.
(then)
Just so you know, if you go senile
I'm putting you in a home. Like the
one we saw on Dateline.

GREG
Go away you weirdo, I'm sleeping.

Off Tess, she couldn't be happier...

INT. TESS'S HOUSE - ATTIC / OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Tess and Dolly make their way up into the attic where we enter a makeshift office. Tess flips open her laptop and takes a seat at her desk.

Tess is pumped. This is it. The moment she's been waiting for. She quickly logs into her offshore portal to transfer her 1.625 million to secure her new rescue franchise. When her personal page pops up her account is... **empty**.

TESS
What the fuck?

All of her money. GONE.

EXT. TESS'S HOUSE / INT. RED MINI VAN - NIGHT

Meanwhile, outside of Tess's house, Bill looks out the window to see a single light on in the attic.

BILL
That's it boys. Looks like our
little potty mouth is still awake.

PARKER
Has anyone seen my sweater?

BILL
(pissed)
No one needs a god damn sweater.

Bill leads Rusty, Parker and Tim into the backyard.

We PULL BACK and reveal these guys are being watched by...

INT./EXT. GREY SEDAN - SAME TIME

...Brandon?!

Brandon watches as Bill and the good ol' boys sneak into the back. Brandon pulls out a gun, checks it for ammo then secures his DETECTIVE'S BADGE.

Oh shit - Brandon's a cop?! He said he was in construction.
As Brandon hops out of his car we're back with...

INT. TESS'S HOUSE - ATTIC/OFFICE - SAME TIME

...Tess refreshing her page over and over...

TESS
Are you fucking kidding me. I am
going to murder somebody. Where is
my god damn money?!

Dolly GROWLS.

TESS (CONT'D)
Not now, Dolly.

Suddenly, Tess's screen goes blank. Tess frantically pushes
buttons to no avail. *Seriously what the fuck is going on???*

TESS (CONT'D)
No no no no no no no.

Suddenly a MESSAGE BOX appears on her once dark screen.

It reads: Do you want it back? ...YES or NO...

Tess stares at the screen, livid.

Tess quickly moves her cursor over the **YES** button but she
hesitates. She doesn't know what to do. Finally:

TESS (CONT'D)
Fuck it.

As Tess is about to click **YES**...

...the POWER cuts out, as we...

END OF PILOT