

THE RISE

Written

By

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FADE IN:

TEASER:

EXT. MACCARTHY POND - DAY

A TEEN BOY (13) plunges into the murky water. He shrieks. It's freezing. He swims -- looks back at TEEN GIRL (14) who's up to her knees into the pond.

TEEN GIRL
Wait up!

TEEN BOY
Hurry.

She jumps in -- swims to Teen Boy. They tread water.

TEEN GIRL
Okay, go!

She strokes ahead --

TEEN BOY
Wait.

She stops.

TEEN GIRL
What?

TEEN BOY
You really gonna kiss me if I win?

TEEN GIRL
You ain't gonna win.

She swims. He smiles, glides after her. They advance -- Teen Girl takes the lead.

Both get farther away from land -- their point of view: the other side of the pond, it's within reach.

Teen Boy swims ahead of Teen Girl.

TEEN GIRL
You cheat.

She dives into the pond -- comes back up. Treads. Browses her surroundings, in the distance -- WHOOSH! Teen Boy is sucked into the water.

He's gone for a BEAT. He rises from the water, chokes -- gasping for air. His head bobbing in and out of the water.

TEEN GIRL
(calls out)
HELP. HELP.

His arms flail in the air. Water rushing into his mouth. He submerges deep into the water.

Teen Girl strokes towards him. Dives into the water.

UNDERWATER

She sees that Teen Boy's foot is stuck. A rope lodged on his foot. The rope is attached to a large brick. She gets closer. Tugs on the rope. Frees him.

BACK TO SCENE

They come up gasping for air -- a DECOMPOSED DEAD BODY pops up too.

Their SCREAMS fill the pond.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. REINA'S APARTMENT - DAY

We're in Worcester, Massachusetts -- a city with a small-town kind of mind.

On a three-story apartment building (triple-decker), a loud representation of Massachusetts. The reminders of winter surround the emasculated building.

INT. REINA'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

REINA (30s) massages the right foot of sleeping seven-year-old ESTHER. Esther wears a butterfly costume while she sleeps on a sofa that doesn't have much life left in it. A secondhand space heater buzzes nearby.

Reina's accent is a rare combination of the Massachusetts accent with her own Dominican spark. She's also visibly pregnant.

REINA
Levantate, mariposa. C'mon.

Esther squirms a little, not wakey wakey for her.

ESTHER
Fuck away, Susana.

A pinch of sadness hits Reina.

REINA
It's me, Mommy.

Esther realizes it, jumps to envelop her mom in her arms -- suddenly, the tough talk disappears.

ESTHER
Mommy!

They hug as if they haven't seen each other in days.

ESTHER
What are you doing here?

Esther kisses Reina on her left cheek.

REINA
I'm going into work late.

ESTHER
Why?

Esther breaks the hug, her butt lands on Reina's lap.

REINA
They're fumigating.

ESTHER
What's that?

Reina cups Esther's face in her hand.

REINA
It's when they get rid of kids who
say "fuck away"

Esther registers fear.

INT. REINA'S APARTMENT, SMALL KITCHEN - DAY

Reina spoons a blob of mashed green plantains on a plate,
places a fried egg on top.

She deposits the plate in front of STARLING (10), who sits at
the table. He doesn't like plantains, still remains an
innocent boy.

STARLING
What kind of bugs are they killing?

REINA
I'm going in a few hours, so must
be the kind that dies too fast.

Starling separates the egg from the plantains. Takes a bite
of the eggs.

ESTHER
What kind is that?

Esther devours her breakfast, still wears her butterfly
outfit.

SUSANA, a fourteen-year-old who's always on the verge of
melodrama, plods in. Her plucked brows grow curious at the
sight of her mother.

SUSANA
You're here?

REINA
I live here. Remember me?

Susana shifts her attention to Esther's butterfly attire.

SUSANA

You can't go to school in that,
Esther, we talked about it. Take it
off.

Esther looks to her mother.

ESTHER

Mommy said it was okay.

REINA

Si, está bien.

Susana gives Esther the stare of death. Esther begins to
remove her costume.

Susana sits at the table next to Starling. Reina swallows;
she's lost some ground in her household. Beat.

REINA

Susana, there's a hundred dollars
on the counter. Pay the gas bill.

SUSANA

The bill's three fifty.

REINA

You think I don't know that?

SUSANA

Maybe you forgot.

REINA

I didn't forget.

SUSANA

Daddy called.

Beat. Starling chews a little slower, lowers his head. Esther
(now in her underwear) looks to Reina.

REINA

You took the call?

SUSANA

He says he's coming back soon.

Esther smiles.

REINA

We can't afford those calls.

Silence clouds the breakfast table.

EXT. REINA'S APARTMENT - DAY (LATER)

It's a cold morning. Reina and her three children stroll toward her run-down car.

MRS. DIAZ (O.S.)
You got till Thursday.

Reina looks up at the third floor balcony. MRS. DIAZ (50s), her landlord, stands there with wet hair and a towel around her body.

REINA
I'll have rent before that.

It's so cold, steam billows from Reina's mouth.

MRS. DIAZ
It's your second notice.

REINA
(sotto)
Yeah, yeah.

Reina takes a breath, opens the back door of her car. Esther minces in.

EXT. MACCARTHY POND - DAY

On the dead body of a man, his mouth wide open. A white gooey substance oozes out of it. Decomposition overpowers his human qualities. He's unrecognizable.

A gloved hand pulls a baggy of crack cocaine out of the mouth. It's the hand of homicide detective LIBRADA (LIBBY) FOWLER (30s) -- Her pale skin contrasting her red trench coat.

Libby puts the drug in an evidence bag. She stands up, scans the area near the body. She considers Teen Boy and Teen Girl speaking to a police officer. Her eyes shift to a police diver scouring the lake for evidence.

She spots narcotics detective RAY CARTER (30s). He pulls the crime scene tape over his head, struts toward her.

Libby crouches down, quickly retrieves the rest of the drugs from John Doe's mouth. She puts them in an evidence bag, drops the bag in her left pocket.

She stops, sensing Ray standing behind her. Ray kneels down next to her.

LIBBY

Detective Carter. What made you wander all the way to MacCarthy Pond? Things must be pretty sleepy at the drug unit.

RAY

McLeans thinks it might be drug related.

LIBBY

It's strictly homicide.

He smirks. Takes out a GPS-like machine out of his jacket, scans John Doe's body. A small laser light scans over the body. Libby hasn't seen this before.

LIBBY

What are you doing?

He scans around the mouth -- the scanner beeps. He looks at the SMALL SCREEN -- Scan result: COCAINE HCI.

RAY

It's called Narc-id, Detective Fowler. It's programmed to identify the chemical structure of narcotics. When it's positive it's going to...

Ray places the scanner near her left pocket. It beeps loudly. She rises, annoyed. He stands, smirking.

RAY

Identify the substance.

Ray snaps on some latex gloves.

RAY

Now this is my case, too.

She yanks the cocaine out of her pocket, hands it to him.

LIBBY

Great. Have the bags tested for fingerprints.

Libby kneels next to John Doe, studies the man's fingers.

LIBBY

John Doe. He appears to be male. Approximately thirty to forty years old. No murder weapon...

(MORE)

LIBBY (CONT'D)
 (eyes on diver)
 ...yet.

She squeezes one of John Doe's fingers.

LIBBY
 He's been marinating in the pond
 for too long.

Ray spots a large blood stain on the crotch and leg area of John Doe's pants. He pulls down the pants, steps back.

RAY
 Fuck.

John Doe's penis has been shot off his body. Libby examines closer.

LIBBY
 He's a man alright.
 (then)
 Close range shots? Three, maybe
 five?

RAY
 Someone wanted his turf. Badly.

LIBBY
 No, that's not it. It's personal;
 you don't shoot someone's dick off
 if it isn't.

RAY
 I saw a drug dealer with his own
 severed penis hanging from his
 asshole. Nothing's off limits,
 Detective Fowler.

LIBBY
 (dead serious)
 I'm hoping he was dead first.

RAY
 (amused)
 Dead on arrival.

Libby isn't receptive to his amusement. Beat.

LIBBY
 Have you ever seen someone's penis
 being shot off?

Ray cringes. Libby examines John Doe's upper right arm.

RAY

Why do you think sometimes I wear
my vest right here?

Ray points to his crotch. Libby wants to shoot the smug off his face. Her irritation is interrupted by the discovery of a small, open bible tattooed on John Doe's upper arm. She moves the shirt's sleeve for a closer look.

INT. PLASTIC BOTTLE FACTORY, LOCKER ROOMS - DAY

Reina opens her locker, finds an envelope on top of a book. She takes both, opens the envelope. There's a piece of paper in it. She skims it. Whatever she reads, it settles hard.

She stomps forward only to be distracted by a one sided argument between FELLO (20) and a CHINESE WOMAN (40s).

Fello is a proud Dominican -- a hollow-cheeked college dropout, who's theatrical but not an actor. Fello holds a small food container in his hand. Points with his other hand.

FELLO

(to Chinese Woman)

It's my locker. Don't put your
Chinese Voodoo food in my space.

The Chinese Woman stares at him, befuddled by his reaction. Fello gives the Chinese Woman her food. She takes it and walks away. Fello sees Reina standing there with her book in hand.

FELLO

You gonna take the test?

Reina approaches him.

REINA

She's new.

FELLO

Who?

REINA

Liu.

Reina looks in the direction Liu went.

FELLO

You know what Lio means in
Dominican? Problema.

REINA

It's L-i-u.

FELLO
 I don't like my locker to stink
 like Liu. Okay?

Reina gives up, walks past him -- Fello follows her.

FELLO
 I'm not kiddin', man: Chinese,
 Dominican, Indian, Russian, I don't
 like nobody's funk in my locker.

Fello strolls in front of Reina. He notes her worried
 expression.

FELLO
 What's up?

She stops.

REINA
 They cut my hours.

FELLO
 (re: book)
 You're passing the test. You'll get
 your hours back, man.
 (then)
 You'll even get a raise and those
 damn benefits. Won't even have to
 work at the morgue no more.

REINA
 Why do I have to take a fucking
 test to be a permanent worker?
 Coño.

FELLO
 'Coz.

REINA
 You don't have to speak like a
 moron around me.
 (then)
 "Dominican" is not a language.

A MAN rolling a large bin full of empty soda bottles passes
 by. Fello waits for him to disappear from his view.

FELLO
 (sotto)
 That's how they keep you temp, pay
 you less benefits, cut your hours,
 fire you if you don't like to take
 it in the ass.

REINA
Have you taken the test?

FELLO
Hell yeah.

REINA
How many times?

Beat. A moment of weakness for Fello.

FELLO
Somethin' like two...or six, maybe ten. You gotta get a 70 to pass that shit, got a 65 once. Came real close, but I'm a packer now -- they gotta pay me ten cents more for that.

It's like five bricks have fallen on Reina. She walks. Fello follows.

FELLO
Reina, you were an accountant in the Dominican. You're a smart immigrant; they pay mad dough to train bilingual queens like you.

REINA
I'm one of hundreds of accountants without an American degree and perfect pronunciation.
(then)
I'm nobody in this country, Fello. I'm just like you -- a factory worker.

Reina leaves Fello behind.

FELLO
Hey, hook it up with a ride tonight.

REINA
Fuck you, Fello.

FELLO
It's mad cold, man.

Fello shakes his head.

INT. REINA'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Starling runs to open the door: it's MAX (30s), but he'll tell you he's 25. Starling gazes up at Max; he can't help but crack a grin. Max leans to his left; a soft-spoken guy, so cool he doesn't wear a coat in the middle of winter.

STARLING
Daddy's not here.

MAX
Dónde está tu Mamá?

Starling goggles at him -- doesn't understand.

MAX
Don't lose your Spanish, 'cause
it's the only thing that makes you
special around here. You hear me,
Starlin'?
(then)
Where's your mom?

Max scans the room.

STARLING
Working.
(yells out)
Susana. Max's here.

Esther rushes into the living room and into Max's arms.

ESTHER
Hi, Max.

MAX
La Esther.

He hugs her, sits back on the sofa.

MAX
Bet you haven't lost your Spanish.

Esther agrees.

ESTHER
I practice every day.

Susana saunters in wearing short shorts in the middle of winter.

SUSANA
Hi.

Max's eyes linger on Susana for an uncomfortable moment.

MAX

Your mom left something for me here.

SUSANA

(smiling)

She didn't tell me anything.

MAX

She said it was in her bedroom. Call her if you want.

SUSANA

I don't have a cell phone.

Max sneers in disbelief. He reaches into his pockets, pulls out a wad of money - hands Starling a ten dollar bill.

STARLING

(sniffs bill)

Smells old.

Esther waits patiently for her turn. He gives her a kiss and a five dollar bill. She rises, stomps her feet with joy.

ESTHER

How much for Susana?

Max shifts his attention to Susana, considers the question.

INT. WORCESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT, HOMICIDE UNIT - DAY

Libby fixates on the photographs of John Doe's disfigured face and his bible tattoo -- both pinned on an old corkboard.

Libby pins a cut-out picture of a five-year-old girl next to John Doe's. She continues studying the picture.

Ray ambles in with an iPad, stands a safe distance behind Libby. He moves closer to the corkboard, touches the picture of the little girl, startles Libby out of her trance.

RAY

Where is it from?

Libby moves a few steps away from Ray, leans against a desk.

LIBBY

Sears catalog.

RAY

Does it help?

LIBBY

Someone loves this guy or hates him... Perhaps there's a kid who can't wait to run into his arms, I don't know.

Ray switches on the iPad, swipes the screen.

RAY

Autopsy came back and our John Doe is a Juan Doe. Hispanic male.

He shows Libby the Ipad.

RAY

The toxicology report indicates our Juan Doe just happened to have twenty ounces of cocaine jammed in his mouth, but not a trace of it in his system. In fact, hair analysis shows that he hasn't ingested drugs or alcohol in the last year.

Libby grows curious.

LIBBY

Not even Cannabis?

RAY

Let's just say four-two-oh wasn't his favorite day.

LIBBY

Straight edge.

RAY

Or straight seller.

LIBBY

Any luck with the bags?

RAY

Found one print. I ran it through our drug dealer database, but couldn't match it to anyone.

LIBBY

Run it through your victims database.

RAY

Why?

Libby raises an eyebrow.

LIBBY

Oh, I see... computers don't think critically, Ray.

RAY

So this is how it's going to be between you and me?

LIBBY

(darkens)

There is no you and me.

He looks into her eyes.

RAY

I'm sorry.

Libby shifts her eyes to the iPad. Ray swipes, scrolls, presses the--

IPAD SCREEN: Narcotics Victims Database searches. It pings. One match.

BACK TO SCENE.

They both share a glimpse of mutual understanding. Libby presses the screen. Ray's brow arches at her action.

RAY

A walk on the tech side.

IPAD SCREEN:

A mug shot of GEORGE LAMAS (20s). His drug addiction shines through.

BACK TO SCENE.

Ray taps his finger on the screen, remembers.

RAY

George Lamas, found dead of an overdose -- got so high on crack, the veins in his eyes popped.

(makes pop sound)

He was an intra-addict. He didn't smoke crack. He injected it.

LIBBY

Whoever shoved cocaine in our John Doe's mouth is somehow connected to this case.

Ray nods. Libby taps the IPAD SCREEN: George Lamas' dead face pops up. His bottom lip chewed up, teeth corroded, gums -- diseased.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. PLASTIC FACTORY, MANUFACTURING - DAY

A blow-molding machine forms a plastic soda bottle and spits it out onto an assembly line.

Reina, wearing protective glasses, picks up two bottles that are joined. She rips them apart, throws them back in the pile. She does the same thing over and over in rapid, monotonous motion.

Fello stands next to her, picking up bottles and jamming them into a box.

FELLO

I ain't walking home, man. 'Member what happened last time? 'Em cops threatened me with anal probing.

REINA

I'm not worried about you walking home alone. You're not my child.

FELLO

I didn't cut down your hours. Why you throwing all this rage at me?

Beat. Reina SNAPS two bottles apart.

REINA

My seven-year-old is scared of my fourteen-year-old.

FELLO

Dr. Phil be speaking 'bout shit like that all the time. Your baby's normal.

A hint of sadness strikes Reina.

REINA

She's afraid of her more than she is of me. I'm not around my children enough.

FELLO

Enough time for 'em to be scared of you?

Beat.

REINA

I work forty hours a week here.
 (then)
 Twenty five hours at the morgue.
 You know what that makes me?

FELLO

Una loca?

REINA

Makes me a provider and a mediocre
 parent... sometimes... I wanna put
 on some mom jeans and drive a
 fuckin' soccer van.

Fello shakes that image out of his head.

FELLO

Take me home tonight. I'll help you
 ace that test.

Reina registers a 'yeah right'.

REINA

I gotta meet someone tonight.

FELLO

Your husband?

REINA

He's in jail, soon to be deported.

FELLO

I thought you said he went to the
 Dominican.

Reina's eyes veer away from Fello.

REINA

It happened after he came back.

Shaken, Fello stops putting bottles in the box.

FELLO

Soon to be deported? What he do?

REINA

What he wasn't supposed to do.

The plastic bottles fall off the assembly line -- the machine
 pings.

FELLO

(fuck)
El diablo.

INT. WORCESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT, LIBBY'S OFFICE - MORNING

Libby sits at her desk staring at her cell phone. Two files sit in front of her. A jumble of reports, files and stacks of papers abandoned by time clutter the floors. The 1990s haven't left this place.

Her cell phone rings -- she picks up.

LIBBY

Are you okay? Tell me where you are.

(pause)

I'm fine. I need to see you.

(pause)

Hello? Danielle.

She zones in on a corkboard. On it is a lone mugshot of her sister DANIELLE FOWLER (20s), she's high as a kite, her smirk captivating us. Libby looks at the two files in front of her, flips one open. Inside: photos of George Lamas's dead body.

She flips to another picture of George's back -- examines closer. She sees one of George's ribs sticking out of black flesh. Grabs a magnifying glass, examines the flesh.

She grabs the other file. Opens it: it's her sister's file. It's a thick one. Libby flips the pages, finds various pictures of Danielle's legs, arms and neck.

Libby turns to the next picture -- a close up of behind Danielle's ears. THEY'RE BLACK. HER FLESH ROTS.

INT. REINA'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

It's getting dark. Reina's car comes to a halt. Outside there's a three-story brick building barely visible. She turns to Fello, who sleeps in the passenger seat. She reaches for the glove compartment, opens it.

She pauses, considers Fello. Digs into the compartment, brings out a brick of pure cocaine. She pulls back, places the brick on her lap.

She punches Fello on the shoulder, jolts him awake. He grabs his chest.

FELLO

Why does every woman wake me up like that?

She grabs the brick, deposits it on his lap.

REINA

How much do you think that is?

Fello hasn't figured out what it is yet. He examines the package, SCREAMS at the top of his lungs. He gets it now.

REINA

Coño! Shut up.

She slaps him over the head. His wails stop.

FELLO

I used to shit in a hole and wipe my ass with newspapers. I'm lucky my asshole didn't learn to read. I ain't gettin' deported back there, man.

REINA

You got a tattoo of the Dominican flag on your back.

FELLO

Only for the good times.

REINA

I'm the mother of a fourteen-year-old drama queen, but you, Fello? Wasn't expecting it from you.

FELLO

You got fifty pounds of the white devil in this car, and I'm the drama queen?

REINA

It's seven pounds.

Fright blossoms on his face.

FELLO

I'm getting deported.

He covers his mouth.

REINA

It's not mine.

(then)

It's a friend of my husband.

FELLO

Take it off of me.

Reina grabs it.

REINA

Do you know how much it's worth?

FELLO

Do I look like a cocaine accountant to you?

REINA

I've been holding it for him. He hasn't paid me anything.

FELLO

When I saw you putting ketchup on your tuna, I thought you were gone in the mind. This motherfuckin' shit right here confirms it.

Reina smiles.

FELLO

How long have you had it?

REINA

A few months.

FELLO

And no Benjamins?

Reina shakes her head negative.

REINA

He pays my light bill. Made Christmas happen last year.

Fello shakes his head.

FELLO

You ain't got much to lose. Just your kids, your liberty.

Reina lets this settle. She grabs a grocery bag from the backseat, puts the cocaine brick in it.

REINA

I'll be back without it, so don't shit yourself in my car.

She steps out of the car. Fello locks each door manually. He covers his face, lets his head rest back against the seat, takes a deep breath.

TAP TAP TAP. Fello shrieks, pulls back horrified. Realizes it's Reina. She signals to unlock the door.

FELLO
(mutters)
Fuck.

He rolls down the rusty manual window.

REINA
Come with me.

Fello shakes his head.

FELLO
I ain't gonna accessorize your
crime.

REINA
I've spent entire winters giving
your scarecrow behind a ride home.
You owe me.
(opens door)
I want you to pay me back. Now.

FELLO
I ain't even recognizing you right
now.

REINA
Vamos.

Fello steps out of the car.

EXT. GEORGE LAMAS'S HOUSE, FRONT DOOR - DAY

Libby knocks on the door. No answer. Pounds again. Nothing.

LIBBY
(yells out)
I'm Detective Fowler with the
Worcester Police Department.

Libby wiggles the doorknob. Suddenly the door opens.

ROSEMARY LAMAS stands at the door -- the cries of a child fill the background.

Rosemary sips on a soda. She commands attention, not by her beauty but her gauntly appearance. She's lived her forty-three years hard -- fucking hard.

LIBBY
Detective Fowler --

Libby flashes her detective badge.

ROSEMARY
From the Worcester Police
Department.

LIBBY
I'm sorry about your son George.

Rosemary examines the badge. Libby shifts her eyes to inside the house, scans what little she can see. A child screams, but she can't see him.

ROSEMARY
They still use gold to make those?

LIBBY
I don't think they ever stopped.

Libby puts away the badge.

INT. GEORGE LAMAS'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY (LATER)

A ten-month-old GIRL sits on the floor wearing only her wet diaper. She weeps. Rosemary sits back on an old sofa, rocking back and forth.

She sips on the soda, scratches her right arm, a small piece of her flesh falls into her hand. She hides her arm behind a throw pillow.

Libby holds onto a Santeria candle in a glass -- George Lamas's picture printed on the glass.

She turns to Rosemary and notes her wobbly demeanor.

LIBBY
Do his friends come around?

She kneels down, places the candle back on a shrine for George.

ROSEMARY
At first.

Libby turns her attention to the baby girl who crawls toward her. Libby blows out the candle.

LIBBY
(re: baby)
You might want to move that candle.

She rises, sits across from Rosemary. She shifts in her seat because she sat in a pile of diapers.

ROSEMARY

She likes it.

Both eye the crying baby. Libby notes the baby's heavy diaper. She picks up the baby, lays it on the sofa, takes the baby's diaper off -- she sees a small bag of crack in the diaper.

LIBBY

What are you on?

Rosemary grows angry.

ROSEMARY

I'm diabetic.

Libby takes the piece of crack and puts it in her pocket. Throws the diaper across the room, puts the baby in a new diaper. The cries stop.

LIBBY

Change her diaper once in a while,
would you?

ROSEMARY

My son died doing drugs, you think
I wanna do the same?

Libby puts the baby on her lap, bounces to calm her.

LIBBY

Who sold to your son?

Beat. Rosemary crosses her legs but her legs keep shivering.

LIBBY

WHO?!

ROSEMARY

I'm a diabetic. I got my meds back
there. I got nothing to hide.
That's why I let you in here.

Libby caresses the baby's head.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT BUILDING, STAIRS - DAY

Reina carries the cocaine bag, holds it close to her chest. Fello, close behind, takes a deep breath with every paranoid step. It's so cold that his breath is visible.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Reina and Fello breeze through the dimmed hallway. Thumps takes their attention -- the thumps get louder as they walk closer. The sounds guides them around the corner.

Reina registers distress. Fello turns around, refusing to lay eyes on whatever it is.

FELLO

(sotto)

This isn't happening. This isn't happening.

In front of them lies, Libby's sister -- Danielle. She convulses, turning the needle hanging from her arm into a bloody projectile.

Reina hurries to her -- notices that Danielle's fingers seem to be suffering from severe frost bites. Fello stares in shock.

Reina reaches to touch Danielle's index finger. A piece of it falls into her hand. Reina backs off, horrified, drops the finger on the floor. Fello yelps. Covers his own mouth.

Reina rises -- KNOCKS an apartment door. No answer. She bangs on it again, giving Danielle periodic glances.

VOICE (O.S)

Quién?

REINA

It's Q.

Fello's face explodes with surprise.

FELLO

(what the ...)

Q? You got a drug name?

The door opens. Reina and Fello look down on NAPOLEON (30s) (Napo), who sits in a wheelchair.

REINA

(re: Danielle)

She's um --

Napo takes notice of Danielle.

NAPO

I told this crazy bitch not to needle in here.

Napo wheels out of the apartment, grabs one of Danielle's feet, drags her forward. He stops, glares at Fello and Reina - both frozen by what's transpiring.

NAPO
Y'all wanna water paint this
moment?
(then)
C'mon.

Napo pulls Danielle into --

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Napo hauls Danielle into the living room. Reina and Fello close behind.

NAPO
Yo Max, check this out.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Max's hand flips over a Sorry card on a pile of other cards. The card reads "Move backward four spaces".

MAX
I don't move back motherfucka.

Max sits at the kitchen table. In the middle of the table is the game of Sorry, along with hundreds of pieces of crack cocaine wrapped in plastic bags.

NAPO (O.S.)
Max, Danielle's dead. C'mon in
here. The bitch's fallin' apart.

Max places the card at the bottom, stands up.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Max strolls in, sees Danielle on the carpet floor, no longer convulsing.

MAX
(to Napo)
Get me God's Saliva.

Max rushes to Danielle's side, kneels down next to her, feels her pulse. He's precise, the picture of calm.

NAPO
I told ya not to deal with them
Intra-heads.

Max glowers at Napo.

MAX
 Don't you fuckin' judge her.
 (re: wheelchair)
 Look at you.

A glimmer of shame grows on Napo. Napo wheels away. Fello paces back and forth, mumbles to himself.

Max takes a throw pillow from a sofa, places it under Danielle's head.

REINA
 I'm calling nine-one-one.

MAX
 Nobody calls nine-one-one when
 they're using drugs.

NAPO (O.S.)
 (yells out)
 I can't find it.

MAX
 (yells back)
 Check the top cabinet, next to the
 bouillons. You're gonna need to
 roll up that chair closer.
 (to himself)
 Lazy motherfucka.

Fello inhales, still pacing.

FELLO
 She's rigormortising. She's
 starting to stink, man.

Fello covers his nose. Max glares at Fello. Napo wheels in with a box. Max grabs it, opens it. Inside are two syringes. He grabs one, injects Danielle's neck. She SITS up, coughs blood, recovers her breath. She lies back to sleep.

Max smirks, pulls out the syringe.

MAX
 (re: syringe)
 This could've saved Michael
 Jackson.

Fello fixates on Danielle, his mouth wide open.

FELLO
 What the fuck is in that?

MAX
Adrenaline.

Max's attention shifts to the cocaine bag in Reina's hand. He takes it from her. Stands up.

MAX
I've been trying to reach you.

REINA
My phone's disconnected.

MAX
I want to apologize for the mess.

He places his hand on Reina's lower back, guides her away from Danielle.

MAX
Thank you for bringing it.

REINA
My friend Fello here--
Says you should be paying me.

Fello's eyes bulge. He wants the earth to swallow him.

FELLO
I suggested she could get some
dough. It ain't set in stone, man.

He slowly steps behind Reina.

REINA
How much money do you owe me, Max?

MAX
Aren't you the accountant?

REINA
Not in the USA.

MAX
Ask your husband... ask him why he
didn't tell you that I paid him.

Reina registers surprise.

MAX
But I'll give you a job. Enough
baby steps and I'll make you my
accountant.

Reina glimpses at Fello, then at Danielle on the floor.

REINA

I have to go to the morgue.

She leaves. Fello follows.

MONTAGE OF REINA WORKING IN A MORGUE CLEANING STATION:

Reina punches in to work: It's six p.m.

A gloved hand picks up chunks of bloody human flesh off the floor, puts them in a plastic container filled with chlorine.

It's Reina on her knees, she wipes blood off the floor, wears a white hazmat suit, protective glasses and a surgical mask.

She picks up lumps of intestines, dumps them in the container. She stops, exhausted, pulls down her mask to take a breath of air, leaves a streak of blood on the mask.

She pulls up the mask, grabs more human flesh leftovers. Sprays blood off the floor with a hose. Unclogs a sink clogged with human hair.

INT. REINA'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY

She enters her bedroom. Her son Starling is spread out on her bed. She sighs, begins to undress, but gives up.

She sits at the edge of the bed, digs into her a plastic bag, pulls out the PRACTICE TEST booklet. She opens the book, reads.

INT. REINA'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - DAY

A clock reads 5:30 A.M.

An open jar of peanut butter sits on the kitchen table. It's almost empty with a butter knife sticking out of it.

Reina bites into a peanut butter sandwich.

In her empty hand, she holds the open PRACTICE TEST book. Her eyes focused, determined.

She takes nibbles of the sandwich. Something grabs her attention--

She sees a hundred dollar bill sticking out from under a Geometry textbook.

She moves the textbook out of the way, finds the hundred dollars and the gas bill she gave Susana earlier. Fury overcomes her.

She rises, heads to--

INT. REINA'S APARTMENT, SUSANA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She barges into the bedroom, PULLS a blanket off Susana. We hear something fall on the floor, but Reina doesn't notice.

Susana sits up, sluggish. Reina throws the bill and the money at Susana.

REINA

Don't complain to me about being cold at night.

Susana now realizes what's going on.

SUSANA

I forgot it.

REINA

Make sure you forget when you're freezing to death.

SUSANA

What's your problem?

REINA

I have a problem?

Reina grabs Susana's arm and drags her off the bed.

SUSANA

LET ME GO.

Susana yanks her arm away. She notices THE CELL PHONE on the floor, strategically moves closer to it.

REINA

I'm breathing in plastic fumes every single day. I clean human guts. And I do it all with a smile to make your life better.

(then)

And you couldn't walk over to the store to pay a bill? Coñazo! Pero que vida llevas. I couldn't have made it simpler for you.

With her feet, Susana pushes the phone under the bed.

SUSANA

(cracks)

Then you pay it. Why do I have to go pay the bills?

REINA
When I was your age--

SUSANA
It's not the same thing.

REINA
(chokes up)
I did everything for my mother: I had to clean the house, feed my brothers, cook and keep her son-of-a-bitch husband away from me. You don't have to do anything.

SUSANA
I don't even have a cell phone, I don't have any privacy, I can't go out with my friends 'cause I gotta stay home and baby-sit. My life's fucking amazing. Thanks Mom.

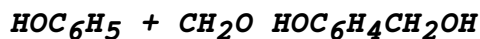
Defeated, Reina sits back on Susana's bed and notices that Esther and Starling have been standing at the door the entire time.

INT. FACTORY, TESTING ROOM - DAY

Reina wipes away tears. She circles a dot on a multiple choice answer sheet.

Reina turns to the question booklet -- sees the following:

35. Please Identify the following chemical composition of this plastic:



A. Phenol Formaldehyde B. Epoxy...

Reina is in a room along with twenty other workers, mostly black, Latino and some whites sprinkled in the group.

A MAN rises with a test in hand, throws it at the TEST PROCTOR (40s).

MAN
Fuck this.

The Man leaves. Reina flips the page, continues filling in the answers.

INT. FACTORY, HALLWAY - DAY (LATER)

The workers sit on the floor. Reina paces, glimpses at the clock. She makes eye contact with some of her coworkers.

The Test Proctor walks in with the test results. He tapes them to the wall. Reina rushes over, the workers quickly rise. Reina scrolls down the list of names, she SPOTS her name -- BEAT.

DISAPPOINTMENT turns to RAGE.

REINA

(sotto)

I pull plastic apart.

(louder)

I PULL PLASTIC APART! I needed a fucking chemistry test for that?

She kicks the wall. A TALL WORKER places his hand on her shoulder.

REINA

Malditos abusadores.

TALL WORKER

Try again next year.

REINA

Go fuck yourself.

She exits. The workers swarm the test results.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. REINA'S APARTMENT, DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Reina looks up at her landlord, who stands on the balcony of her third-floor apartment.

REINA

I'll come up with the money tomorrow. A primera hora.

MRS. DIAZ

I can't keep taking half the rent, Reina. I gotta pay my bills too.

REINA

Please.

MRS. DIAZ

You owe me six months of half rents. I'm sorry.

Mrs. Diaz goes into her apartment.

Reina turns back to see Susana, Starling and Esther, sitting next to their belongings.

INT. REINA'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Reina drives around the city of Worcester. Her children sleep in the backseat.

INT. WOMEN'S SHELTER, OFFICE - DAY

Esther sits on Reina's lap, a name plate in her little hand. She circles some of the letters on the name: "ANGELA LUNA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR".

Her mother speaks to Angela while Susana and Starling slouch back on a couch.

Angela writes on a piece of paper.

ANGELA

How far along are you?

REINA

Six months.

ANGELA

Where's their father?

REINA

He's in jail.

ANGELA

Why?

Reina glances at Susana and Starling.

REINA

Driving without insurance.

Beat. Angela hands Reina the paper with a pen, pauses and looks over to Starling.

ANGELA

Your son can't stay with you in this shelter.

REINA

He's ten years old.

ANGELA

We have a facility for boys a few blocks from here. He can't stay with the girls -- that's our policy.

Reina turns to see Starling.

ANGELA

He's gonna be five minutes from you.

Reina signs the document.

EXT. WOMEN'S SHELTER, OFFICE - DAY

Reina takes boys clothes from a black plastic bag and puts them in another bag.

Starling stands next to a CHILD ADVOCATE (30s).

STARLING

(to Reina)

Tell them you want me to stay with you.

REINA

It's not my choice.

STARLING

I don't wanna go.

He hugs her, eyes welled with tears. She doesn't hug him back.

REINA
You have to go.

The Child Advocate grabs his hand.

POLICE OFFICER
It's okay. Come with me.

Reina pulls him away from her, gives him the bag. He stares at her, his innocence fleeing.

REINA
I'll come get you.

She walks away, turns her back to him. He can't see her tears.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Reina arrives at Max's door. She SLAMS the door. No answer. She POUNDS again.

REINA
It's me, Q.

Footsteps are heard. The door is unlocked for a beat. Lots of security.

It's Max. He's surprised to see her.

MAX
So you're one of those people.

REINA
One of what people?

MAX
Wake a nigga up to get some money
kinda people.

Reina shakes her head.

REINA
I wanna work for you.

A smirk flees Max -- he has so many plans for her.

INT. LIBBY'S CAR (PARKED) - NIGHT

Libby watches Rosemary's house with binoculars. She yawns. She digs into a bag of hot Doritos. Chews. Coughs, those things are spicy.

On the passenger seat, her sister's police file.

A BANG on her glass window. It's Ray. She's as happy to see him as seeing a venereal disease.

He ambles around to the passenger seat. Libby grabs her sister's file, puts it under her seat. Ray hops in.

Libby continues her surveillance.

RAY
Thanks for calling.

LIBBY
I didn't.

RAY
It's our case.

LIBBY
We're working this one case. We're not partners.

RAY
You got a stakeout going on, didn't invite anybody to the party.

LIBBY
I didn't want to get set up.

Libby puts the binoculars on the panel. Her complete attention on Ray.

LIBBY
How did you know I was here, Ray?

RAY
Don't start with me, Fowler.

LIBBY
I didn't tell anybody where I was going to be.

RAY
That's precisely the problem.

LIBBY
Maybe you're in the wrong department. How about internal affairs? You can help foster an environment of trust within the force.

RAY

What the hell do you want me to do?
Apologize with an interpretive
dance? A flash mob?

LIBBY

I want you to keep drugs off the
streets.

RAY

You keep thinking that I'm this bad
guy. I didn't do anything
unorthodox in the Worcester Police
Department, but I'm going to let
you think it.

LIBBY

It's wrong.

Ray grabs the binoculars. Libby snatches them from his hands.
He laughs, stares into her eyes, becomes serious.

RAY

You're no better than me, Libby.

LIBBY

Detective Fowler.

RAY

Detective Fowler, I'd like to see
the disciplinary report you wrote
on me.

Beat. There's no report.

RAY

You saw me do it, kept it to
yourself. And...

Libby turns to see Rosemary's house.

RAY

...you keep saying we don't work
well together.

She looks into the binoculars. Beat.

LIBBY

I have reasons to believe that
Rosemary's dealer is our guy.
That's why I'm here.

(then)

Don't follow me again.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

ANGLE ON an iron. Max sits at the kitchen table across from Reina. He wears white gloves while he handles a pile of wrinkled hundred dollar bills.

MAX

Some niggas don't know how to hustle in a four hundred million dollar business. How to do it right.

REINA

Do you do it right?

Max places a piece of white cloth on top of a hundred dollar bill. He grabs the iron, irons the money flat. Places the money in a small pile of hundred dollar bills.

MAX

I suck Uncle Sam's dick till it squirts all over my fuckin' face. If the speed limit is thirty, I go twenty-five; I pay my car's registration a month before it's due; I drive a coffin for a car; I double tip. I don't want any motherfucka complainin' about my tippin'. Most important of all, I don't want anybody to think I got money. Niggas lack humbleness in this industry; they be thinkin' they're kings and queens -- without the grind. The struggle.

Max dips his fingers into a glass of water, sprinkles a hundred dollar bill, irons it.

REINA

What if one day you forget?

MAX

I don't forget.

REINA

You're human.

MAX

I'm not my own client.

REINA

What you mean?

MAX

Some people sell crack to smoke crack. I don't.

REINA

I'm an accountant. I know how to add numbers. How could I help you?

Max irons another hundred dollar bill.

MAX

I was an EMT before I got into it. I saved lives.

(cracks up)

Fuckin' irony, right? I got sick and tired of just gettin' by. I wanted to make money to live, 'cause it doesn't matter how you get to the American dream. You're the same as me -- tired of just gettin' by.

REINA

How much will I be making?

MAX

You're gonna start at the bottom like everybody else.

REINA

What's the bottom?

MAX

Drivin', deliverin', sometimes cookin'. You'll make five hundred to two Gs a week.

Astonishment in Reina's eyes.

MAX

The more you drive, the more you get. There's only two of you, so there's a lot to get.

REINA

Who's the other driver?

MAX

White boy Indio.

Max checks his watch.

MAX

You won't believe it when you see him.

(cracks up)

He'll be here in a few.

REINA

If I'm the bottom, what are you?

MAX

I'm the Gordon Ramsay of this motherfucka.

INT. LIBBY'S CAR (PARKED) - NIGHT

Through Ray's binoculars: JEROME (30s) drives into Rosemary's driveway.

Ray shifts his attention to Libby, who has fallen asleep. Her head rests against the glass.

Ray admires her with a tenderness that she might find surprising or disgusting.

He reaches for her face with his finger, gently taps her chin, wakes her.

RAY

I think we got our guy.

Libby yanks the binoculars from him, looks through them

LIBBY'S POV: a car is parked in Rosemary's driveway. END POV.

Libby steps out of the car. Ray does as well.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

With a chef's hat on -- Max pours five ounces of cocaine powder into a glass measuring cup.

He adds three teaspoons of baking soda into the same measuring cup. Fills a 3/4 measuring cup with water and adds it to the cocaine and baking soda.

Reina takes notes with a notepad.

He turns on the stove, places a medium-size pot on the burner. Max pours the mixture into the pot. He mixes it with a wooden spoon.

Reina looks into the pot.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT (MINUTES LATER)

Reina's eyes are covered with a black cloth so she can't see Max's secret ingredient.

He pours a bottle labelled desomorphine into the mixture. Tosses the bottle into the trash.

He uncovers her eyes. The mixture bubbles in the pot. Max hands Reina a large butter knife. She flattens the bubbles with a butter knife.

LATER

What's left in the pot is a hard, white rock.

Reina, in awe, touches the solid rock with her index finger. She looks to Max, who grins like a proud chef.

EXT. ROSEMARY'S HOUSE, SIDE WINDOW - NIGHT

Libby and Ray peek into Rosemary's living room. Jerome, an emaciated man, sits on the sofa with a beer in hand, makes out with Rosemary. Libby expresses disgust.

RAY

(sotto)

Even crackheads need a little love.

Rosemary and Jerome detach. Jerome rises, disappears from their view.

RAY

Why didn't you tell the Chief about me?

Libby shifts to Ray --

BANG! The window shatters. BANG! BANG! Bullets fly from Rosemary's house. Libby and Ray throw themselves on the ground.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. ROSEMARY'S HOUSE, SIDE WINDOW - NIGHT

Ray has landed on top of Libby. Ray rolls off Libby. He grabs his cell phone. Libby grabs her gun, aims and fires through the window.

She crouches down, adrenaline in her eyes. Ray stays low with his mouth near his phone. Another BULLET ricochets next to them.

RAY

(on phone)

Officer Ray Carter. We got a ten-fifty-seven. Shots fired at one-thirty-five Jackson Street.

The shots stop. Libby breaks the remainder of the glass with her gun. She hops through the window. Ray is mystified.

RAY

You don't have a clean shot.

LIBBY

There's a kid in there.

Ray jumps through the window after her...

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Large pieces of crack cocaine sit on a white towel. Max breaks large pieces into smaller portions. Next to the crack sit piles of hundred dollar bills and an electronic scale.

MAX

Crackheads will get high, from me or from the government. I don't have to exist for their destruction.

Guilt darkens Reina's face.

REINA

Is that true?

Max puts a matchbox-size rock on the electronic scale. It weighs three ounces.

MAX

Take the money, save it, take care of your children.

He takes the crack from the scale, throws it into a plastic bag.

MAX

Then run away as far as you can. If you stay, it's greed. And greed puts you six feet under.

Max places five hundred dollars in Reina's hand.

MAX

You know why I picked the nickname Q for you?

Reina indicates "no".

MAX

Because you're a Queen.

Reina smiles, amused.

MAX

Just giving you the heads-up.

He smiles at Reina. A LOUD KNOCK.

MAX

(yells out)
Napo? The door.

He rises, storms into--

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Max marches through the living area. MORE LOUD KNOCKS.

MAX

Fuckin' asshole.

INT. NAPO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Napo sleeps in his twin-size bed, the bedroom sparsely furnished.

Max barges in, SMACKS Napo awake.

MAX

Wake up, Princess.
(yells)
Open the fuckin' door.

A humiliated Napo sits up. Max kicks Napo's wheelchair. It rolls away from the bed. Max exits. Napo stares at the chair, crawls toward it.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Max walks into the living room, finds that Reina has already opened the door for INDIO (20s), a white man dressed in a preppy outfit.

MAX

(to Reina)

I said he'd surprise you, didn't I?

(to Indio)

She's gonna be driving too.

Indio reveals shock. Napo rolls into the living room.

INDIO

(re: pregnant belly)

Has anybody noticed that this bitch is pregnant?

REINA

Fuck you.

MAX

And I thought she was stuffed on rice and beans.

Max laughs. Indio is dead serious.

INDIO

You're outta your mind if you're gonna have her out there with me.

REINA

(to Indio)

I'm pregnant, I work two jobs, sixty-five hours a week. Been raising three kids just fine. I'm pretty sure I can drive around town and put a piece of crack in someone's hand.

Max smiles, looks at both. Indio digs into his pockets, brings out a sandwich bag with small pieces of crack in it. Hands it to Max.

INDIO

George said "fuck you, these won't get me high. Too small"

Indio storms out, slams the door behind him. Max smiles.

MAX

You're so much alike.

INT. ROSEMARY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

With their guns drawn, Libby and Ray move forward with caution. The place is a mess -- Rosemary turned it upside down since the last time we saw it.

RAY
Is there really a kid in here?

LIBBY
Her poop was very real.

They take a few steps into--

INT. ROSEMARY'S KITCHEN - DAY

They find the baby girl on the kitchen floor, naked and sharing a meal with an overweight cat.

Libby scares the cat away, reaches for the baby when the sound of running footsteps get her attention

The kitchen goes black. Nothing can be seen. Police sirens approach.

RAY
Grab my arm.

LIBBY
(hello)
I'm holding a baby and a gun.

RAY
Get closer.

Ray uses his cell phone as a flashlight.

LIBBY
I'm breathing on the back of your neck.

GUNSHOTS. Ray's cell drops on the floor. We hear Libby and Ray hit the floor. The baby cries as they crawl through the kitchen.

RAY
You're good?

LIBBY
This baby shit a generous amount of diarrhea all over me, but I'm great.

Ray finds his cell on the floor, scans the room with the light. He spots Jerome charging toward him, fires shots into the darkness.

A THUMP. Beat.

The lights come on. Jerome is on the floor, clutching his injured back -- he slipped on the baby's diarrhea. Rosemary lies next to him, shot dead.

There's baby crap all over the kitchen.

Ray covers his mouth in disgust. Libby sits frozen, afraid to make a move and get more feces on her. The baby weeps on top of her.

Two POLICE OFFICERS charge inside the house with their guns drawn.

SHORT POLICE OFFICER

Police.

The Officers stop cold in their tracks when they see what's in front of them: Libby and Ray looking up at them, a baby, a dead woman, a crackhead in pain and lots of baby excrement on the floor.

INT. INDIO'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Reina is in the passenger seat observing a well-lit, upscale neighborhood in Worcester. Colonial houses rest on well-maintained lawns.

A quiet night in the suburbs. She diverts her focus to Indio in the driver's seat. He maneuvers a stick-shift. Beat.

REINA

I know that you think --

INDIO

I told you what I think.

REINA

I won't be pregnant in three months.

INDIO

You're selfish. You don't understand what you're getting your fetus into--

REINA

I'm not taking your job, Indio--

INDIO

You know why I do this job? I like having money, not just forty-hour-a-week money but take-a-vacation-any-fucking-time-I-want money. People like you--

REINA

I met you twenty minutes ago. That's not enough time to know people like me.

INDIO

People like you aren't in this for their children. If they were, they'd be on welfare when shit hits the bricks.

Reina gives a sarcastic smirk.

REINA

Why am I in this, Indio? Dime, por qué?

INDIO

You're greedy, just like me and everybody else who does this shit.

REINA

You're wrong just like your name.

He laughs in disbelief. The car comes to a stop.

INDIO

There's only three ways to hustle: you take someone down, rise or you die. Which one are you ready to do?

REINA

I'm not doing this for long.

INDIO

And I'm not getting in front of you to catch a bullet.

Reina is shaken but hides it well. Indio reaches into the glove compartment. He grabs a gun, puts it on his lap, fixes his tie.

He hops out of the car. Beat. Reina looks ahead for a moment. She steps out of the car.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Indio approaches a majestic door. He rings a doorbell. The door opens. A pudgy MAN (50s), dressed in slacks and a white shirt with a loose tie stares at Indio. He shifts his suspicious eyes to Reina.

INDIO
(re: Reina)
She's okay. It's training day.

The Man lets them in, closes the door.

INT. HOUSE, LIVING AREA- CONTINUOUS

The Man walks from his living area to the dining room. Reina notices that the back of his shirt is soaked with sweat.

Indio follows the Man. Reina hangs behind. She examines this beautiful living room: it's simple, yet complex; this is a family that's well off, though not billionaires by any means.

She approaches a row of pictures sitting on a chimney mantel. One by one they tell the tale of a Man and his family. The Man and his wife, the Man and his dog, the Man and his three children.

Reina studies the children. Maybe they remind her of hers? She moves on to a framed article from the local paper. In the article, a picture of this Man with the headline "MAYOR ELECTED".

Reina steps back in shock. She turns to see him sitting across Indio, licking a piece of crack cocaine with his tongue.

EXT. MAYOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Indio strolls toward the car. Reina stares at the Mayor's house. She can't believe it. Indio turns--

INDIO
Want me to call the cops while
you're standing there?

Reina turns around, marches to Indio. Both walk.

REINA
You dress like a coño for a reason.

INDIO
What the hell is that?

REINA

Jerk, asshole, a fuck --it depends
the situation.

Indio cracks a smile.

INDIO

Max thinks you'll never be a
suspect 'cause you're knocked up. I
dress like a Harvard salesman. Open
up these baby blues, and who's
gonna think anything bad about me?
I'm sorry you're only pregnant for
three more months.

Reina can't hide her annoyance. She walks ahead of him --
stops, turns back to Indio.

REINA

How much money did you just make?

INDIO

His rate is fifteen.

REINA

Fifteen hundred?

INDIO

Fifteen thousand, courtesy of your
tax dollars.

Reina lets this settle.

INT. WORCESTER POLICE, INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Jerome sits at a small table. His legs are restless. There's
an ice pack wrapped around his injured back.

Libby enters the room holding a cup of coffee. Her hair is
wet and she's wearing a new change of clothes.

She sits across Jerome, places the cup of coffee on the
table. She notes that Jerome has a medium-size Band-Aid
across his right cheek.

Libby takes off her shoes, sips from her coffee. She savors
it. Digs into her right pocket, pulls out a crack pipe and a
lighter, places them on the table.

LIBBY

Drugs are a lot like sex.

Jerome's eyes zero in on the crack pipe. Libby digs into her
pocket, takes out an 8-ball (1/8 ounce) of crack cocaine.

LIBBY

Once you see someone else doing it,
you just gotta do it too. Isn't
that right? Jerome Bernard
Pickett...

Jerome shifts his eyes away from the crack pipe.

LIBBY

Who's your seller?

JEROME

Go fuck yourself, Detective Bitch
Ass.

He spits in her face.

EXT. SOUTH WORCESTER STREETS - NIGHT

Indio's car drives through the gritty streets.

INT. INDIO'S CAR (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Through Reina's eyes: A promiscuous quantity of liquor
stores. One after the other.

A small dog follows a woman. A homeless man pees on a
sleeping homeless man, sprints away. END OF POV.

The car drives onto a dark street. Indio beat boxes a rap
tune.

REINA

Why are we driving in circles?

The sounds of police sirens -- Reina looks over her shoulder,
a cop follows them with the strobe lights on.

REINA

(freaking out)
Oh coño. Coño.

Indio pulls over under a bridge -- the cop stops behind -
overhead lights on them.

Reina scans the car, digs under her seat, looks at the cop
walking towards them in the rearview mirror. Her breath is
shallow, nerves flooding her. She looks at Indio, who
continues to beat box.

The Police Officer (30s) with salt and pepper hair approaches
the car. Reina shuts her eyes, grips the emergency brake.

POLICE OFFICER
Can I get one-half instead?

Indio throws his hand on the steering wheel, annoyed.

INDIO
Fuck that shit.

Reina opens her eyes, realizing what's happening.

POLICE OFFICER
They extended my shift. If I get
'em, I gotta smoke it. I thought I
was going home.

INDIO
You ordered two 8-balls, your ass
is smoking two 8-balls.

The Police Officer throws the money at Indio. Beat.

INDIO
Throw it at me all day.

Indio collects the money, counts it, hands him two 8-balls.
The Police Officer walks away into the night.

Reina turns to Indio, who places the money into a small black
bag. She looks into the direction of the Police Officer.

INT. WORCESTER POLICE, INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

With his hands clutched between his legs, Jerome rocks back
and forth in his seat.

Libby takes the piece of crack, puts it in the pipe bulb.

She places the pipe in her mouth.

She flicks on the lighter -- it doesn't work. She flicks on
it again, no luck. Jerome's restless legs jerk with every
failed attempt.

LIBBY
We know what you're doing. You
smoke crack, but that's not what
you're here for.

He avoids looking at the crack pipe.

JEROME
I don't smoke shit.

The lighter finally lights up -- the fire burns against the glass. Jerome's eyes well up. Beat.

JEROME

Why y'all have to kill her for?

Tears stream down his cheeks. Libby takes the pipe out of her mouth.

LIBBY

(indignant)

Are you crying over her?

JEROME

Who the fuck you think I'm crying for?

Libby slams the crack pipe against the table. It cracks.

LIBBY

The child that you both screwed up for life, I'd cry about that.

Jerome spits at her face. This time Libby cocks her head, avoiding it. She spits back at his face and RIPS the band-aid off his face -- there's a rotten hole on his left cheek. Libby hides her disgust. Gulps.

LIBBY

Who sells it to you!?

Libby glares at him.

JEROME

They be calling him Indio, but he ain't no Indian, he's an Eminem lookin' son of a bitch.

Jerome glances at the broken pipe.

JEROME

Can I smoke it before I go in?

LIBBY

No.

Jerome breaks down.

JEROME

I loved her.

Libby grabs the crack pipe, studies it. Her eyes land back on the hole on his face.

LIBBY
My sister loves her too.

INT. INTERROGATION, OBSERVATION WINDOW - NIGHT

Ray and LIEUTENANT PAUL MCLEANS (40s), his first year in the Worcester Police Department and too young to be in charge for many in the force.

Ray and Paul watch Libby and Jerome through a glass window.

LIEUTENANT MCLEANS
Fowler cuts the yellow tape, runs through it, stomps on it -- she's a ticking time bomb for goodness' sake--

RAY
She's not a ticking time bomb.

LIEUTENANT MCLEANS
But she's still the best homicide detective I have. You'll make a great team.

Ray shakes his head, "no".

LIEUTENANT MCLEANS
I'll let her know.

McLeans strolls away.

RAY
Lieutenant McLeans -- wait. Sir?

Worry clouds Ray's face.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. WORCESTER MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON, VISITATION ROOM - DAY

Reina sits across her husband, MANNY ORTIZ (30s). It seems unlikely he would kill a fly, but he's done more than that. A glass window separates them.

REINA

You want them to see you in here?

MANNY

I wanna see them anywhere.

REINA

Esther thinks you're coming back. I don't wanna--

MANNY

I am though. I'm gonna be back.

Reina doesn't believe it.

REINA

Manny --

MANNY

Do you need money?

Reina indicates "no"

REINA

I got a second job at the morgue.

Manny smiles. Beat.

REINA

Why didn't you tell me that he was paying you?

MANNY

Stay away from Max.

He places his palm on the glass. She doesn't place hers. He lowers his hand.

INT. WORCESTER MEDICAL EXAMINER, EXAM ROOM - DAY

Libby rushes in -- MEDICAL EXAMINER NATALIE NUNO (30s) examines Rosemary's right arm.

NATALIE

You gotta see this.

She props Rosemary's arm for a better look -- a gash on her right arm, deep enough that we can see her dried muscles and radius bone.

Libby and Natalie share a glimpse of mutual shock.

LIBBY

What could've caused this?

Natalie turns Rosemary on her back -- a canvas of brown lesions surrounded with dead, yellow skin.

NATALIE

A fungus? An infection? I'll test the tissue.

LIBBY

Could this be a result of prolonged crack use?

NATALIE

Can't think of any drug that could possibly cause these types of wounds.

Natalie grabs a toothed forceps, explores one of the wounds. She pops it -- it bleeds. They both cover their noses.

NATALIE

It's rotten.

Libby's hit with a realization.

LIBBY

I need you to test the drug samples from John Doe's crime scene. Find out if there's anything in them other than coke.

INT. REINA'S NEW APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Indio and Max lumber into the living room carrying a heavy couch. Reina, now even more pregnant than before, guides them in.

Max backs into a few boxes in a corner.

REINA

Wait...

MAX

Even without a car bitches can't back up.

REINA
(playful)
Go fuck yourself.

Indio and Max crack up. They place the couch next to a Christmas tree. Max slumps onto the couch, exhausted. Reina sits next to him.

Indio sits on the floor. Max scans the living room full of boxes.

MAX
Glad it ain't me moving in.

REINA
Go get some water so you can come back and help me organize this mess.

Starling and Esther barge into the living room, jump into the couch.

MAX
I'm gonna get some water and your kids are gonna organize this mess.

Reina smiles, pulls Starling in for a hug as Max rises. He heads to the--

INT. REINA'S NEW APARTMENT, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Max strolls in, finds Susana sitting at the kitchen counter. She writes on a piece of paper. A much nicer kitchen than the one we previously saw.

Susana sees Max, smiles.

MAX
So how you doing in school?

SUSANA
Bad.

Max opens a cabinet. It's empty. Susana smirks. Points to a box sitting on the counter labeled "VASOS". Max opens it, grabs a glass.

He opens the new fridge.

MAX
I carried the Titanic through that tiny thing y'all call a door, be generous with the ice.

Susana rises, saunters to the fridge. Their eyes meet, follow each other.

She grabs his glass, her hand touching his. She places the glass under an ice dispenser, presses the ice button. Ice comes rocking down.

She grabs the glass, presses the water button -- meets his eyes again.

MAX

What else can this do?

SUSANA

It tells you when things go rotten.

Beat.

MAX

Like that book you told me about,
machines taking over.

SUSANA

Yeah, like Robopocalypse. Report's
due...last week.

She hands him the glass of water, digs into the water, picks out a piece of ice. She pulls his pants and throws the ice into his drawers.

SUSANA

He needs it too.

INT. WORCESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT, INTERROGATION GLASS WINDOW

Screams. Sounds of a body SLAMMING against the glass.

Libby and Ray barge in. They find Lieutenant McLeans staring through the glass in disbelief.

LIEUTENANT MCLEANS

I called backup.

Libby and Ray approach the glass with caution. Jerome is on the other side, naked, CRASHING against the glass with so much power it feels like it could crack at anytime.

He scratches his right cheek desperately. His shrieks are haunting. He slams his head against the window -- blood splatters on the glass.

JEROME

HELP ME. HELP ME.

He pulls down on his right cheek. It bleeds. Chunks of flesh fall to the floor.

Silent horror fills Libby and Ray. They look at each other with a mutual understanding that there's something terribly wrong.

JEROME (O.S.)
PLEASE. HELP ME.

INT. REINA'S NEW KITCHEN - NIGHT

Reina sits at the kitchen table. A night lamp illuminates her hand counting a hundred dollars in twenties.

She puts them on another pile of twenties. She grabs a pile of hundred dollar bills, puts it to the side.

She feels her stomach. Maybe she felt a kick? She smiles. The ice dispenser lights up, grabs her attention -- beat.

Her smile transforms into profound sadness.

Tears drift down her face. Footsteps from outside shift her focus. She rises, heads to the door. She slides a curtain, peeks outside. Recognition draws her.

REINA
Max?

She opens the door, sees the figure of a man.

REINA
(calls out)
Max.

The man stops, turns around, minces toward her -- it's Max, but he wasn't there to see her.

MAX
I saw...um, Indio's car outside.

REINA
Yeah, he wanted me to finish the shift alone.
(then)
C'mon in.

MAX
It's five-thirty a.m., gotta stop fooling around at some point.

REINA

I'm getting back out there, but I
have some of the money...

MAX

Go meet your bed. See you tomorrow.

He winks at her, strolls away.

INT. INDIO'S APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Libby and Ray stand in front of Indio's door. Libby pulls her
gun, aims down, nods to Ray. Ray signals two SWAT TEAM
members who mince behind them.

Libby KICKS open the door.

INT. INDIO'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Indio snoozes in his bed. Apart from the beat coming from his
headphones, peace fills the air. Indio flutters his baby
blues open -- shows consternation at the guns aimed at him.

INT. SUSANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Susana is in bed. She looks up at her mother.

REINA

I'm his accountant.

SUSANA

Accounting what? He's always
hanging out.

REINA

He owns Tigo's Market.

Susana looks surprised.

SUSANA

He never told me that.

REINA

Max doesn't like to brag.

SUSANA

Mom--

REINA

You don't have to be me anymore, I
promise. I'm gonna be around more.

Susana smiles as Reina kisses her on her forehead. Susana
drifts into sleep.

REINA

I love you.

Reina tucks her in. She grabs Susana's cell phone by accident, takes it. Reina hits a button on the cell, swipes, scrolls -- beat -- whatever she's seeing on the cell phone shakes her to the core.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Reina speeds through the night.

INT. INDIO'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Wearing her work gloves, Reina grips the steering wheel. She reaches for the glove compartment but can't touch it. Fury swells in her face. She shifts in her seat to reach--

She swerves but regains control of the car. Her fingers are almost there. She unlocks the compartment, digs in it, grabs something.

INT. WORCESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT, INTERROGATION ROOM

Indio sits at the table across Libby and Ray. A brown paper bag sits on top of the table. Not a worry on Indio's face.

LIBBY

Why do they call you Indio?

Indio shrugs.

INDIO

(open eyes)

Must be these baby blues.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Reina struts her pregnant body toward Max's door. She carries a bag. She arrives at Max's door. Beat. KNOCKS on the door. No answer. She pounds on the door.

MAX (O.S.)

Quién?

REINA

It's Queen.

The door opens. She steps in.

INT. WORCESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT, INTERROGATION ROOM

Ray slides two pictures of John Doe's dead body in front of Indio -- one of John Doe's unrecognized face and the other of the bible tattoo. Indio's face blossoms into terror.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

There's indignation in Reina's walk. She places herself in front of Max, fixates on his eyes.

MAX
Everything okay?

Reina opens the bag, takes out a white hazmat suit. She begins to put it on.

REINA
I'll do anything for my children.

MAX
(re: suit)
I thought you quit.

She puts her protective glasses on.

REINA
Not yet.

With her uniform on, she throws Susana's cell phone at Max. He catches it, examines the phone. He's shocked.

INT. WORCESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT, INTERROGATION ROOM

INDIO
You think I killed Max?

Ray taps one of the pictures.

RAY
Yeah, you needed the turf.

Indio shakes his head.

INDIO
There's no money in killing people.

LIBBY
We found good old Max pickled in MacCarthy Pond. His dick barely hanging on, so someone killed him.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Reina points Indio's gun at Max.

MAX

Reina--

REINA

You fucked my baby.

MAX

I texted her my picture, but I
didn't touch her.

Max staggers back.

MAX

(yells out)

Napo.

Reina stomps forward.

REINA

A friendly exchange of dicks and
pussies between you and a fourteen-
year-old girl.

INT. WORCESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT, INTERROGATION ROOM

Libby opens the brown bag, digs inside, pulls out the gun.
Shows it to Indio -- it's HIS GUN.

LIBBY

Your fingerprints had a little
party on the gun, didn't they?

Indio absorbs the moment, lowers his head.

INDIO

I want a lawyer.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

BANG. Reina fires a shot into Max's balls. He shrieks. Blood
soaks his pants.

MAX

What the fuck!

He totters back on the floor, grabbing his crotch, his breath
desperate with every second.

BANG. BANG. BANG. Three more bullets to the groin. Max curls
up in pain.

MAX

NAPO.

Reina stands over Max. He looks up at her, but there's really nothing in her eyes. She strolls away from him into--

KITCHEN

Reina eyes tiny baggies of crack cocaine on the table. She grabs a handful. Rushes back into--

LIVING ROOM

She hurries into the living room, struggles to kneel down because she's eight months pregnant. She manages -- shoves the bags into Max's mouth.

REINA

Here's a little something for the pain.

The creaky sounds of a wheelchair make her turn to Napo. Napo looks over Max's eyes looking at him.

MAX

(mumbles to Napo)
Help me.

Max reaches to grab Napo's wheelchair, but Napo rolls back away from him. His eyes shift to Reina who gawks straight at him.

INT. WORCESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT, LIBBY'S OFFICE - DAY

Libby sits at her desk, a laptop in front of her. Lab results on the desk. She opens the laptop. Dust smacks against her face. She coughs, waves the dust away. Clears her throat.

Turns on the computer, she clicks on the Internet, reads off the lab results and types "desomorphine" in the search bar.

A headline pops up: "FLESH EATING DRUG FRIGHTENS RUSSIA". She clicks on it, browses the article. "Krokodil, scientifically known as desomorphine, the flesh-eating drug that turns skin to scales and kills users within three years, is emerging in the UK, an expert has said".

She SCROLLS down-- "The drug causes death of muscle and it rots tissues; it essentially turns drug users into **zombies**--"

She clicks on IMAGES. The pictures are disturbing: photographs of women and men with large, dried gashes on their arms, faces, legs, necks. Their muscles and bones visible.

Stunned, Libby shuts the computer, looks at the mugshot of her sister Danielle, pinned on the corkboard. Ray storms into the room.

RAY
McLeans is right -- you're a
ticking time bomb.

Libby buries her face in her hands, exasperated.

RAY
(enraged)
You sent the drugs to the lab
without telling me. What the hell
are you hiding, Fowler?

LIBBY
I'm a homicide detective. I can
have anything tested.

RAY
We're working together.

LIBBY
You're not my partner.

Ray realizes that Libby doesn't know yet. He flashes a smirk.

RAY
Lieutenant McLeans assigned us
together. I am your partner.
Effective immediately.

Libby rises, grabs the lab results from her desk.

LIBBY
Your Narc-Id thing... failed to
identify this substance.

She hands him the lab results.

LIBBY
Welcome to homicide, Carter.

He shakes his head.

RAY
Welcome to narcotics, Fowler.

Libby strolls away. Ray sighs, reads the results.

INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

On Max's dead face. Pre-decomposition. Pre-pond. His mouth packed with cocaine baggies. A gloved hand sprays the face with something. This is Reina's hand. His body lies on a metal table. She sprays his hands.

Medical Examiner Natalie Nuno walks in, purse in hand. Reina covers the body before Natalie can see it. Turns to her. Natalie hands her a piece of paper.

NATALIE

(smiles)

Here's the signed request. That's a lot hours you're cutting out.

Reina caresses her belly.

REINA

I'm just getting ready.

Natalie smiles. Leaves. Reina's eyes veer to the key to the coroner's van that hangs on a wall.

INT. WORCESTER MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON, CELL BLOCKS - DAY

Indio and other prisoners are marched in through the barrage of SHOUTS, TAUNTS and JEERS from other prisoners, including Reina's husband, Manny who recognizes Indio.

INT. REINA'S NEW APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Reina opens the door to find Fello.

FELLO

You ain't even bother to call a brother after you move the hell up. Man.

She grabs Fello's hand, pulls him in, shuts the door behind her. Fello sees Napo next to a sofa in his wheelchair. Fello grows curious.

Reina pulls the cushion from the sofa. Fello SCREAMS, covers his mouth. Under the cushion: four large bricks of cocaine.

She takes a brick, hands it to Fello, who's still processing. He glances down at the brick, then at Reina's face. There's so much excitement on her face. This is a new day.

REINA

I want you to come work with me.

END OF PILOT.