

**THE WAKE**

"Pilot"

Written by  
Holly Brix

Brian Spink  
REALM  
(323) 854 4000

**TEASER:**

Over BLACK we hear WAVES crashing, the steady heartbeat of the OCEAN...

NICKY (V.O.)

I had a professor in college who wondered if it was possible that time was like the keys of a piano--

*\*AN OLD FASHIONED PARLOR circa 1890's: a hand hovers over the piano keys. It strikes a KEY. DUST rises up into a SUNBEAM.\**

EXT. MODEST HOUSE - HOQUIAM, WASHINGTON - DAY - 1971

Summer day. Front lawn. Ocean in the distance. CLOSE ON: 8 YEAR-OLD NICKY as she watches a pick up truck drive away.

NICKY (V.O.)

We assume it's linear because that's how we experience it.

*\*THE HAND HITS the next key on the piano. And then the next, slowly moving up the scale...\**

Back on little Nicky watching her dad drive away.

NICKY (V.O.)

My dad left when I was eight. That's the first key of my piano. He left and we never heard from him again. Not a phone call or a birthday card.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - HOQUAIM - DAY - 1971

Hills of pine trees as far as the eye can see. And in the distance the SOUND of the SURF. 8 year-old Nicky teaches herself how to ride a bike. She wobbles and falls. Landing hard, Nicky wipes the dirt from her butt and tries again.

NICKY (V.O.)

Then, a few months later, the day before Thanksgiving, a man hijacked a plane 142 miles away --

*\*THE PIANO PLAYER strikes the next key.\**

EXT. TARMAC - PORTLAND, OREGON - DAY - 1971

On the tarmac, a dozen PASSENGERS wait in line to climb the staircase and board the Boeing 727-100. At the back of the line, a suspicious man in a suit and a thin tie wears sunglasses despite the overcast weather.

His hair is dark and slicked back. He wears an overcoat and holds an attache case. It's the iconic image of D.B. COOPER.

NICKY (V.O.)

The D.B. Cooper hijacking. That's the second piano key.

\*PING.\*

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY - 1971

The flight is only a third full. D.B Cooper sits alone in the back. We're in the POV of one of the STEWARDESS as she nears his seat and hands him a bourbon and water. He hands her a note --

Then he opens the attache case in his lap -- revealing 8 metal cylinders attached to red wires and a large battery.

EXT. TARMAC - SEATTLE, WASHINGTON - DUSK - 1971

A darkened plane sits on the Sea-Tac tarmac. 2 frazzled family MEN in civilian clothes approach the plane. They carry a knapsack and parachutes.

NICKY (V.O.)

He let the passengers off in Seattle. They didn't even know they'd just been hijacked, but Cooper kept the four crew members onboard. Two pilots and the two stewardesses --

A young brown-haired STEWARDESS stands in the open doorway. She reaches for the supplies as the wind whips her hair into her face.

NICKY (V.O.)

-- He extorted a bag full of money from the airline. And four parachutes. Four parachutes for the five people onboard --

INT/EXT. PLANE - NIGHT - 1971

A ferocious WIND races through the cabin. Cocktail napkins and newspapers fly everywhere. We move in on the source of the wind -- the rear exit door. It's open. And the staircase attached to it is extended down into the pitch black sky --

NICKY (V.O.)  
 He ordered the pilots to fly to  
 Mexico and made the stewardesses  
 stay in the cockpit. Then, he  
 lowered the back staircase --

D.B. Cooper wearing a parachute, stands at the foot  
 staircase. Knapsack strapped to his waist he spreads out his  
 arms like Jesus and falls forward --

NICKY (V.O.)  
 -- and he jumped out of the plane  
 somewhere over southwest Washington  
 state.

EXT. BEACH ROAD - HOQUAIM, WASHINGTON - 1972

8 YEAR-OLD NICKY rides her bike like a champ now.

NICKY (V.O.)  
 Somewhere over exactly where I  
 live.

*\*The next key on the PIANO is played.\**

Nicky's got a backpack packed with a canteen and notebooks  
 and even a magnifying glass. Nicky stops to scan the forested  
 hills around her. Thousands and thousands of possible hiding  
 places everywhere. On Nicky's determined little face --

NICKY (V.O.)  
 The most wanted man in the world  
 was somewhere out there in my own  
 back yard. I hadn't found my dad,  
yet, but I knew if I looked hard  
 enough and really applied myself I  
 could find D.B. Cooper.

*\*THE PIANO PLAYER plays the next two keys. Camera pulls out  
 enough to reveal his old-timey shirt.\**

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

NICKY BUERSTATTE (40s) dressed in her blue cop uniform  
 approaches room 18, gun drawn. You could call Nicky pretty,  
 but if you did you'd be ignoring the most obvious thing about  
 her -- her intensity. Nicky's a determined, dare I say  
 stubborn, lady.

She KICKS in the flimsy motel door. A middle-aged BUSINESS  
 MAN and a PROSTITUTE lie in bed, cracked-out.

NICKY (V.O.)  
I solve puzzles. Find missing  
things.

EXT. DITCH - DAY

A HOBO leads Nicky and another DETECTIVE through shrubs and raspberry brambles. The cloud of FLIES is so thick it's hard to make out the decomposing body thereunder.

NICKY (V.O.)  
And I've found quite a few. So when  
the biggest missing persons case of  
the decade happened in my little  
corner of the world, you best  
believe I was ready. You could even  
say my whole life had been leading  
up to it.

*\*THE PIANO PLAYER STRIKES a final haunting KEY that  
REVERBERATES over the POUNDING SURF...*

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The coast of Washington state is rugged and breathtaking and void of any sign of human life this winter morning. It could be today or it could be two hundred years ago or ten thousand years for that matter.

The sky is gray. As are the waves and the sand and the bank of fog that hovers low over the beach. Even the driftwood, whole Douglas Fir trees stripped bare by the ocean and tossed upon the shore, is gray.

Only the rugged cliffs retain their dark, dangerous edges and sharp peaks, standing defiant against the relentless waves that try to smooth out their rough spots and dull their starkness -- attempting to rub it down to one of the thousand shades of gray that make up Washington coastline.

Somewhere in the distance, a solitary SEA LION BARKS as a Subaru drives up and parks on the beach.

Two BEACHCOMBERS in Gortex climb out of the car and release their dogs. They don't notice that something is moving out of the fog bank behind them.

The dogs run off in a happy pack and the beachcombers watch them go. Meanwhile, the thing in the fog behind them gets closer, taking shape as it nears. The first thing we can say with any certainty is that it's a person.

A lady person.

Growing in definition, she emerges and we can see that she's got long dark hair and wears a white dress. *Scratch that.* It's not a dress; it's a nightgown. A sheer nightgown, paper thin. The young woman is barefoot.

40,000 years of survival alarms flare, and the female beachcomber, feeling the hairs on the back of her neck rise, turns around and sees the YOUNG WOMAN emerging from the fog.

She freezes in place as she stares at this girl who has just appeared, seemingly, out of nowhere.

BEACHCOMBER #1

Babe? You seeing this?

The male beachcomber picks out a good fetch stick from a pile of driftwood and turns around. When he sees the ghost of a girl, the driftwood drops from his hand.

BEACHCOMBER #2

Damn. That's the girl from *Dateline*.

### ACT ONE

#### **TITLE CARD: THE WAKE**

EXT. SHORE ESTATES - DAY - TODAY

A mansion out of the gilded age lays before us surrounded by gardens and tennis courts. It looks like something you'd expect to find on the moneyed bluffs of Newport, Rhode Island. But it's wildly out of place here; alone, surrounded by forests, and perched high on the ragged cliffs above the Pacific Ocean.

At first blush, the manicured grounds of the estate look beautiful. There's a Japanese-style garden with a lily pond and two separate rose gardens that will bloom when spring comes, but when you look closely --

You see that the old tennis court, built on the very edge of the cliff, is slowly, inch by inch, year by year, crumbling down into the sea below.

And the long, steep staircase that once gave beach access to the estate is eroding away. Now a liability, it's cordoned off with cheap wire fences and makeshift barricades. And all around the estate, the deep, old forests of Washington are inching in and taking root -- it's a war of attrition, but Mother Nature is slowly, most certainly, winning.

MR. LAASEN

Derrick Mead Tangland, the timber baron, built Shore Estates for his East Coast bride, Ada Rosenthal Hyde --

MR. VIRGIL LAASEN (70), the fussy proprietor of Shore Estates, addresses a 6th grade FIELD TRIP as he leads them through the gardens.

MR. LAASEN (CONT'D)

-- Only twenty, Ada missed the parties and gaiety of the East Coast elite.

Nicky's in the crowd, one of the parent chaperones. She's currently directing her leadership skills at the five 11 year-old BOYS under her charge who are pinching each other.

NICKY

(hushed; to boys)  
Knock it off.

AIDAN

I'm not doing anything, Mom.

AIDAN BUERSTATTE (11) comfortable in his own skin and happy.

NICKY

I'm talking to your numb nut friends.

NUMB NUT FRIEND

Hey! That's not nice Mrs. Buerstatte.

NICKY

Neither is pinching the new kid. So stop it.

Aidan sneaks a smiles at Nicky. She smiles back at him.

MR. LAASEN

Sadly, Ada never did adjust to this rugged coast or the rugged people who inhabited it. In 1901, on the eve of her 30th birthday, Ada disappeared under rather mysterious circumstances--

RING. RING. It's Nicky's phone. Mr. Laasen flashes her a stern look. Nicky peels away from the group and answers.

NICKY  
Hello?... What?... I'm on my way.

At a fast trot, we see Nicky whisper something to the teacher. She goes to Aidan and points to one of the other moms. Then, ditching her wards, Nicky runs to her minivan.

EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM, GRAYS HARBOR COMMUNITY HOSPITAL - DAY

TV REPORTERS and NEWS CREWS jockey for position outside the doors to the ER decorated with giant candy canes. Nicky lifts her badge up over her head and pushes her way through the growing crowd of network affiliates and ONLOOKERS --

NICKY  
Excuse me. Pardon me. Step aside,  
folks. I don't want to have to  
arrest you.

The GUARD at the Emergency Room door sees Nicky coming and opens the door for her.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
Thanks, Barry.

GUARD  
Give 'em hell, Nicky.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM, HOSPITAL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

DEPUTY MATT JOHANSEN (35) comes down the hall and intercepts Nicky. Matt's a handsome, if a little doughy, straight shooter. He wears a Hoquaim police uniform.

NICKY  
What'd we got?

Matt fills her in as they walk --

MATT  
It's her. Charlotte Braun.  
Eighteen. Well, nineteen now  
technically. Last seen up at Shore  
Estates or down walking on the  
beach below according to which  
witness you ask, at or around  
sunset on Memorial Day, a year and  
seven months ago. No sign of her  
since --

NICKY  
I've been the lead investigator  
since day one, Matt. Tell me  
something I don't know.

MATT

Okay, well, on intake they did a rape kit.

NICKY

And?

MATT

No sign of trauma or recent sexual activity at all. Also, no sign of ligature, bondage marks or any other overt sign of captivity --

NICKY

So she wasn't in a box under some pervert's bed.

Matt stares at Nicky, not sure what to make of her gallows humor.

NICKY (CONT'D)

What else?

MATT

She appears well-nourished. Groomed. She's bathed recently or been bathed. Hair washed --

NICKY

Okay, so she probably hasn't been wandering around the wilds of the southwest Washington alone for the past year.

MATT

No, ma'am. Doesn't appear so.

Nicky quickens her pace as she narrows in on the patient room she's seeking.

MATT (CONT'D)

Oh, Detective Buerstatte! Wait. I almost forgot the biggest thing ---

Matt stops to deliver this news. Nicky stops too, sensing his excitement.

MATT (CONT'D)

So, get this -- when Charlotte was found at the beach an hour ago, same beach she disappeared from by the way, guess what she was wearing?

Nicky's face is a cocktail of anticipation, suspicion and curiosity. She shakes her head. Not venturing a guess.

MATT (CONT'D)

The same thing she was wearing the night she disappeared. White nightgown. Make and Model brand. Size small.

NICKY

Same nightgown?

MATT

Same.

On Nicky -- *okay, that is weird.*

Nicky's eyes light up. She lives for this shit.

INT. PATIENT ROOM, HOSPITAL - DAY

A NURSE and a DOCTOR and a 60 year-old WOMAN with a tight perm and a red Christmas sweater hover around the patient bed. Nicky raps on the door and lets herself in.

NICKY

Hi, everyone. I'm Detective Sergeant Buerstatte --

She sees them eyeing her field trip clothes. Her mom jeans. She doesn't look very official.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Plainsclothed detective today. Undercover work.

(motions to Matt in his proper uniform)

And this is Detective Johansen. I need to ask Charlotte some questions so I need you all to step out into the hall.

The doctor and nurse head to the door, but not the woman in the red sweater with the felt Rudolph sewn on it.

NICKY (CONT'D)

And you are?

AUNT

Charlotte's aunt. From Aberdeen. Her parents are on their way from Arizona. Got in the RV as soon as they heard. Praise Jesus.

(MORE)

AUNT (CONT'D)  
 (turns back toward  
 Charlotte)  
 It's a Christmas miracle.

Nicky motions with her eyes for Matt to get rid of the Aunt.  
 Matt's on it --

MATT  
 Ma'am, come with me, please.

AUNT  
 All right. I just don't want to  
 take my eyes off Charlotte you  
 know. In case she just up and poofs  
 and disappears again.

The Aunt's voice trails off as Matt shows her out into the  
 hall. The room falls silent. CHARLOTTE BRAUN (19), the girl  
 from the beach, lies in bed. She doesn't look Nicky's way or  
 give any indication that she knows she's there.

NICKY  
 I've been waiting a long time to  
 meet you, Charlotte.

Charlotte stares at the window. Ignoring Nicky.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
 I've been investigating your  
 disappearance since day one. It's  
 been the biggest case of my life. I  
 won't make this long, but I've got  
 to ask you a couple of questions,  
 okay?  
 (nothing)  
 Where have you been?

Charlotte doesn't answer.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
 Did someone take you somewhere?  
 (no answer)  
 Tell me everything you remember.  
 (beat)  
 Anything at all.

Nicky moves to the other side of the bed and repositions a  
 chair so that she sits directly in Charlotte's eye-line. *She  
 won't be able to ignore her any longer.*

NICKY (CONT'D)

Charlotte, the night you went missing there were witnesses who said they saw you sitting on a bench on the bluff up at Shore Estates. And others who saw you walking down at the beach. Guess it's hard not to notice a pretty girl in a nightgown and pink flip-flops, huh?

(no response)

These witnesses, they characterized your behavior by saying that it appeared like you might be waiting for someone.

(nothing)

Were you waiting for someone, Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE

I'm tired.

Nicky pulls a folded missing person's flyer from her purse and opens it, smoothing out the worn creases.

NICKY

I've had this picture of you with me since last June. It's a good picture. Taken at your prom, right? The week before your disappearance? Well, your picture hasn't just been in my pocket or hanging in our police station here in Hoquaim, it's been in every police station, post office, bus terminal, grocery store in the whole state and all the neighboring ones.

Nicky hands the worn flyer to Charlotte.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Heck, if you went into an Albertson's in Billings, Montana today I bet you'd see this picture on the newsstand. It's been on TV damn near every night. It's been the cover of *People* magazine at least three times that I can think of. You remember when that girl in Utah went missing years ago? Elizabeth Smart? You're bigger than Elizabeth Smart, Charlotte. Everyone knows who you are.

Charlotte lets the missing person flyer drop from her hand.

NICKY (CONT'D)

You're famous -- so this is where I get confused -- everyone knows your face.

(picks the flyer up)

This face. And seeing you in real life, I can say that it's a damn good likeness.

Charlotte sizes up Nicky, unclear where she's going with this.

NICKY (CONT'D)

So with everyone, damn near everywhere, knowing who you are and knowing you're missing, where do you think you could have been where no one, not a one, saw you, Charlotte? Because I've been racking my brain and I can't think of a place. What's your guess? What do you think?

CHARLOTTE

I told you. I. Don't. Know.

NICKY

No guess at all?

CHARLOTTE

I don't want to talk anymore.

Nicky stands up.

NICKY

Okay. Sure.

(then)

I just need you to take off your nightgown.

CHARLOTTE

What? Why?

NICKY

It's evidence.

CHARLOTTE

Evidence of what?

Nicky pulls a brown paper evidence bag out of her purse, latex gloves on in a flash.

NICKY

You say you don't know where you've been, but luckily your nightgown can tell us.

A defiant Charlotte swings her legs over the side of the bed and lifts off the nightgown, thrusting it at Nicky who puts it in the evidence bag and seals it shut.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Any chance you still got those pink flip-flops?

CHARLOTTE

No. Will you leave me alone now?

NICKY

Sure.

With a smile, Nicky walks to the door --

CHARLOTTE

I was at the beach that night and then it was morning and the fog bank was there and the couple with the dogs. That's the truth. Believe me or don't.

Off Nicky, clearly on the "don't" side of the equation --

EXT. HALL, HOSPITAL - DAY

Nicky exits the room. She and Matt huddle up.

NICKY

Get a psychiatrist down here today. Someone good. From Seattle. And find an expert on fugue states. Shinier the credentials the better. This is going to be huge.

MATT

You think she's telling the truth? That she doesn't remember?

NICKY

No.

Weighing her answer, Nicky hands him the evidence bag --

NICKY (CONT'D)

But let's find out. Send this to the lab.

A commotion down the hall, draws their attention. Reporters, journalists, and someone with an old camera that keeps flashing, surround SHERIFF DRESDEN "SHEP" SHEPHERD (45). Tall and handsome, Shep looks like a real professional in his Gray's Harbor Sheriff uniform.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
What's Shep doing here?

MATT  
Jurisdictionally? Nothing. This is our case.

Shep spots Nicky through the crowd and raises his hand in greeting. She blushes. Waves back. These two have chemistry.

SPECIAL AGENT LUIS (O.S.)  
Detective Buerstatte?

Nicky turns. Two FBI AGENTS approach. The male texts on his phone. The female does the talking --

SPECIAL AGENT LUIS (CONT'D)  
We need a word.

The agents flick open their badges like some bad ass motherfuckers.

NICKY  
That's got to be the best part of your job. Admit it.

SPECIAL AGENT LUIS  
I'm Special Agent Luis. And this is Special Agent Clark. Did you just interview Charlotte Braun?

NICKY  
"Lou Ease" and Clark? Like Lewis and Clark? Is that for real? 'Cuz that's hysterical.

SPECIAL AGENT LUIS  
Did you interview Miss Braun?

NICKY  
I did.

The agents exchange annoyed looks.

SPECIAL AGENT CLARK (THE MALE ONE)  
We need that audio file.

NICKY  
I didn't record it.

Luis and Clark exchange "we're dealing with hicks" looks.  
Agent Clark looks at Nicky's mom clothes.

SPECIAL AGENT CLARK  
Looks like you run a real  
professional operation here,  
detective.

NICKY  
I was on a field trip -- you know  
what? It's Detective Sergeant and I  
don't have to explain myself to  
you. This is my case.

SPECIAL AGENT LUIS  
Not any longer. We're taking over.

MATT  
Like hell you are!

NICKY  
You can't just come in here and --

AGENT CLARK  
We can and we did. The case is now  
a 1035.

NICKY  
You can't turn a missing persons  
into a kidnapping. With what? What  
evidence do you have?

AGENT LUIS  
That's classified.

NICKY  
I've been on this case since the  
very beginning. I took the initial  
missing person's report. I sat with  
the parents all night. Many nights.  
I ran the initial search parties.  
Matt and I followed down 157 leads  
this year alone --

SPECIAL AGENT LUIS  
And all your grunt work is much  
appreciated, Detective.

MATT  
Detective Sergeant.

SPECIAL AGENT LUIS

-- but no longer necessary. I'm sure I don't have to warn you that if you interfere with our investigation in any way moving forward, we'll have no recourse but to charge you with obstruction in a federal investigation.

Nicky looks like she's been kicked in the gut. Matt turns red with rage. Special Agent Clark looks up from his phone.

SPECIAL AGENT CLARK

All clear? Good.

The agents turn and walk into Charlotte's room closing the door behind them.

MATT

Assholes!

NICKY

Come on. We got to go now.

Nicky ushers Matt out the side door, careful to avoid the media jam down the hall.

EXT. HOQUAIM POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

A small, well appointed police station. A flag pole flies the Washington State flag out front.

Nicky, at the wheel of her minivan, parks out front. Matt, in a police cruiser, parks behind her.

Nicky's cell phone RINGS as she hurries into the station. The caller ID reads: **Lee**. Nicky swipes ignore.

INT. HOQUAIM POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Nicky, Matt on her heels, barrels through the reception area decorated for the holidays with garland and lights -

A buxom brunette sits at the front desk. TONYA WOOLERY (43) is Nicky's best friend. Pretty in a too much make-up, "I never leave the house without my face on and my hair done" kind of way. Tonya has a good heart, but is known to cut corners and manufacture her own drama. And as she gets older, she's getting more and more desperate in the love department. Tonya's currently on the phone with a concerned citizen.

TONYA (ON PHONE)

Uh-huh. And you think the postman's been opening your mail why? --

Tonya waves at Nicky as she passes and blows her a kiss.  
Nicky waves back as she and Matt hurry down the hall --

INT. NICKY'S OFFICE, HOQUAIM POLICE DEPT. - DAY

Nicky throws open the door to her office, tosses her coat on the sofa, and flips on the lights.

NICKY  
Son of a bitch.

Half the room is empty. Matt looks around.

MATT  
Where are the case files?

TONYA (O.S.)  
The Feds came and took them.

Tonya leans in the doorway.

TONYA (CONT'D)  
Man and a woman. The guy was cute.  
In an asshole way.

Off Nicky, devastated --

INT. BUERSTATTE HOME - NIGHT

Nicky hangs a string of lights on the bare Christmas tree. Careful to hit every bough, she spaces them out perfectly, leaving just the right amount of room between each. Nicky steps back and assesses her work --

NICKY  
It felt bigger in the lot. Said  
nine feet, but there's no way.

CAL  
Next year, I'm gonna walk fifty  
feet in any direction and cut down  
my own god damn tree.

Sitting in his recliner, CAL BUERSTATTE (54) is a walking Springsteen song. Yet beneath all the years of wear and disillusionment, you can still make out traces of the cocksure, carefree, high school jock Cal was in his youth.

NICKY  
You say that every year.

That smile, that used to turn every head in a room, is still Cal's most winning attribute. He flashes it at Nicky now.

CAL  
And I mean it.

His attention back on the televised football game, Cal pulls ornaments wrapped in tissue paper from a beat up cardboard box labeled "X-MAS," unwraps them and adds a shiny hook. He hands them off to Aidan who ferries them over to the tree.

NICKY  
(to Aidan)  
Hold up on hanging them yet. I've got to get these lights done first.

AIDAN  
Mom? How come we never use tinsel?

BROOKE (O.S.)  
'Cuz it's trashy.

BROOKE (17) sits on the couch, texting on her cell. A gangly, sullen late bloomer who has yet to bloom, Brooke wears her long, dark hair like a shield between her and the world. She wears a Hoquaim Marching Band t-shirt.

AIDAN  
Gramma uses it.

BROOKE  
Exactly.

AIDAN  
We got any more lights?

BROOKE  
I hung them in my room. I think I've got that seasonal affective disorder.

NICKY  
Everyone in the Northwest does.

Brooke sees something on the TV. She grabs the remote and turns up the volume. It's a news promo about the miraculous return of Charlotte Braun gone for over a year.

BROOKE  
Hoquaim is back in the spotlight, folks. That's national news there.

AIDAN  
(excited)  
This your case, Mom?

It pains Nicky to look at the TV and see that iconic missing person's photo of Charlotte. Nicky forces herself to look away.

NICKY  
Not my case anymore.

Cal looks up. He knows this blow cuts deep.

CAL  
Bureaucratic glory hunters.

AIDAN  
Why isn't it your case anymore?

NICKY  
You know that numb nut in your class who likes to pinch? Armano?

AIDAN  
Yeah?

NICKY  
Well numb nuts like that grow up and today two of them came and took my case from me.

AIDAN  
Bastards.

BROOKE  
Where's she been, Mom? Charlotte Braun? How do you just disappear for a year with no trace?

NICKY  
Mystery.

Nicky can't fight the urge that's building. She knocks the light strand out of the power outlet with her foot and the lights on the tree go dark.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
(feigning outrage)  
Are you kidding me?

CAL  
We keep buying cheap shit from China what do we expect?

NICKY  
Okay. To hell with this. I'm going to Walmart. Anyone want to come?

No takers. She hides her smile. She didn't want any. She grabs her purse and keys.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Okay. Someone -- Brooke -- take these old lights down and throw them in the actual garbage. I don't want them back in the box for next year. Cal? --

He gives her half his attention. One eye glued on the football game.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Pull the meatloaf out in twenty and maybe make a salad or something. I got a new bottle of Ranch.

CAL

Okay. Hey, can you grab me a beer before you go?

Nicky is like, *what the hell*. But Aidan jumps up.

AIDAN

I'll get it, Dad.

NICKY

Look at this kid. Wow. Such a good helper.

BROOKE

He's just trying to butter you up for the that Lego figure he wants.

NICKY

And which one would that be?

AIDAN

I'm just saying if you happen to see a Lego NUN CHUCK at Walmart and you happen to buy it for me, I wouldn't return it.

Nicky ruffles Aidan's hair, kisses him on his head, grabs her coat, and opens the screen door. She stops mid-way. A pull to stay. Drawn between two worlds. Nicky takes in the tableau of her family. Cal turns and catches her watching them --

CAL

You okay?

NICKY

Twenty minutes. Meatloaf. Don't forget.

Cal salutes. And then, Nicky's out the door--

INT. MINIVAN - NIGHT

Nicky drives her minivan through the dilapidated streets of Hoquaim. Most of the businesses are closed with weather-warped particle board covering the windows. Nicky blows on her hands to warm them as the heat slowly kicks in. She makes a phone call--

TONYA (O.S.)

Dispatch?

NICKY

You busy?

INT. HOQUAIM POLICE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT - INTERCUT

TONYA

No --

Tonya paints her nails at her dispatch desk.

TONYA (CONT'D)

-- just a indecent exposure at Shari's and an illegal dumping. Unrelated. What's up?

Nicky cracks the window and lights a cigarette. Fanning it out the window, like any closet smoker.

NICKY

Any update on Charlotte Braun?

TONYA

Nah. They got me routing all the calls to the feds now.

NICKY

They still interviewing her?

TONYA

Last I heard.

NICKY

Hmm. She change her story?

TONYA

I don't know. No one tells me anything.

(MORE)

TONYA (CONT'D)

Hey, what do you think if I invite  
Shep to the Christmas party? You  
know him right? Gray's Harbor  
Sheriff's department?

NICKY

Yeah. I know him.

TONYA

Well what do you think? Should I go  
for it? There's not too many good  
ones left. You're lucky you've got  
Cal. He's handsome. He's got a job--

NICKY

Yeah, he's great. Hey, Tonya. I've  
got to go.

Nicky hangs up on Tonya as she passes a huge billboard on the side of the road with that picture of Charlotte on it. *HAVE YOU SEEN ME?* A determined Nicky drives out of town --

EXT. BEACH/INT. MINIVAN - NIGHT

Nicky drives up the turnout for the beach. The parking area is deserted. Crime scene tape is tied across the path to the beach, blocking it off.

Nicky parks the van. Opens the glove compartment and fishes around for the flashlight. She checks to make sure it's working. Unplugs her phone from the charger and shoves it in her pocket. Then, she gets out of the minivan and ducks under the crime scene tape.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The SURF POUNDS. The full moon bathes everything in a snowy blue light. Nicky walks past the piles of driftwood to where the fog bank was earlier. It's gone now, but one of Charlotte's footprints remain.

Nicky keeps walking to where the beach hits the bottom of the ragged cliffs. This is the end of the trail as it were.

Something starts to come into view over there at the base of cliffs. *What the hell is that?* Nicky gets closer and it takes shape. It's the bottom of an old, rickety staircase.

Nicky shines her flashlight on the makeshift barricades, the NO TRESPASSING and CAUTION SIGNS that wall the staircase off. Her eyes focus on an old wooden sign at the foot of the staircase that reads SHORE ESTATES/DESPERATION POINT with an arrow pointed up.

Nicky looks up. And this is when things get super freaky --

There's some GREEN effervescent MIST hanging a hundred feet above her, hovering, impertinent to the wind. *What the fuck is that?*

A strange high pitch CRY comes from up on the bluff. Just like that, Nicky's gun is out. She shoves aside the barricades and climbs the stairs. Fast.

EXT. DESPERATION POINT, SHORE ESTATES - NIGHT

Nicky arrives at the top of the bluff--

NICKY

Hello? Is someone there?

No answer just the driving, relentless WIND. Nicky looks around, investigating.

A few hundred feet inland, she can see the lights of the Shore Estates' mansion. But the sound couldn't have come from there. Too far. Nicky turns back toward the bluff and that's when it happens --

Two strong hands, seemingly out of nowhere, PUSH Nicky off the cliff --

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

BAM!

Nicky HITS the beach hard. A mouth full of sand. She pushes herself up. Amazed that her arms work. She moves her legs. Perfectly fine. Nothing is broken. *It's a god damned miracle.*

Suddenly, with no explanation, an errant FLIP-FLOP falls from above and HITS Nicky on the head. WTH?

Nicky looks up --

The steep bluff looms over her. As does the realization that whoever just pushed her off the cliff is still up there.

Spurred into motion, Nicky scuttles to her feet and RUNS down the beach leaving the pink flip-flop behind.

EXT. PARKING LOT, BEACH - NIGHT

-- Nicky arrives in the parking lot. Her minivan is gone. Nicky stops. Out of breath. Confused. *Where is it?*

Her foot lands in a puddle. She looks down at her wet sock. Realizing only now, that her right shoe is gone. *Did it fly off when she fell?* Nicky pats her pockets. No flashlight. No gun.

Nicky looks over her shoulder. She doesn't see anyone coming, but it doesn't mean they aren't there, getting closer. Nicky runs down to the main road -- state route 101.

INT. TRUCK CAB/EXT. STATE ROUTE NEAR BEACH - NIGHT

From the cab of the truck, we can see the road ahead and the beachy shrubs that line the dunes. Suddenly, upsetting, there's a person there in the sweep of the headlights. It's Nicky. Desperate, she flags the passing truck down.

INT. TRUCK CAB - NIGHT

Nicky in the truck. She pulls out her phone only to discover it's dead. *What the fuck? It was just charged --*

NICKY

May I use your phone?

The TRUCKER gives her his cell. She dials 911.

TONYA (O.S.)

Dispatch. What's your emergency?

NICKY

Tonya. It's Nicky. Listen --

Dial tone. She's been hung up on. Nicky dials another number. Gets Cal's voicemail.

CAL (V.O.)

You know the drill. BEEP.

NICKY

Babe, call the police. Someone just pushed me off Desperation Point. Call Matt and have him meet me at the house. Someone tried to kill me.

She hangs up the phone. The trucker looks at her, skeptical.

NICKY (CONT'D)

I got pushed. Off a cliff.

The trucker, not knowing how to respond, says nothing.

EXT. HOQUAIM TOWN CENTER - NIGHT

A strip of small businesses (mostly bars and low end antique/junk shops). A picturesque Douglas Fir tree stands in the little park, decorated up like a Christmas tree. The truck rumbles into the town square.

DRIVER

You want me to wait with you or whatever for the police?

Nicky climbs down from the cab.

NICKY

No thanks. I am the police.

EXT. HOQUIAM - NIGHT

Nicky hurries the block or two to her house. But as she nears, she slows, puzzled --

Her front lawn is full of gaudy Christmas decorations -- like really gaudy -- like a 12 foot blow up Santa that blows bubbles and a team of neon reindeer on the roof.

NICKY

Cal?

*Who's idea of a joke is this?* Nicky looks like she might laugh if she weren't so hopped up on adrenaline. It's so ridiculous.

She walks through the gate and steps up onto the porch, bedazzled with strings and strings of lights and tinsel.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
 (calling out for the  
 benefit of whomever's  
 pranking her)  
 Looks like a 'war on Christmas'  
 internment camp out here.

Nicky puts her hand on the doorknob. But it won't open. It's locked. Nicky KNOCKS loud. Getting tired of the joke.

Suddenly, a snot-nosed KID (4) flings open the door and stares at Nicky blankly. Nicky doesn't recognize him either.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
 Um. Hi. Who are you?

The kid's HIGH STRUNG MOM comes up to the door, protectively moving her child aside.

HIGH STRUNG MOM  
 Can I help you?

*No one is that good of an actress.*

Nicky looks around her house. Everything is different. Different furniture. Different photos. Different Christmas tree -- this one is pink and plastic and towering.

NICKY  
 I don't understand what's going on.  
 (off the Mom's silence)  
 Where's Cal? This some kind of a  
 prank?

The Mom doesn't look like she thinks this is funny at all.

HIGH STRUNG MOM  
 Is what a prank?

NICKY  
 This is my house.

HIGH STRUNG MOM  
 Like hell it is.

The woman goes to close the door, but Nicky puts her foot in the door jamb.

HIGH STRUNG MOM (CONT'D)  
 Stop that. You need to leave.

NICKY  
I'm not going anywhere.

Nicky starts ringing the doorbell.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
(calls out)  
Cal! Aidan? --

MOM  
Stop. Go right now or I'm going to  
call the police.

Nicky laughs.

NICKY  
Oh yeah? Please do because this is  
my god damn house!

High Strung Mom slams the door shut and throws the deadbolt.

Nicky whips out her phone to call for back up, remembering  
too late that it's dead. *Fuck.*

Nicky paces on the porch. Thinking. She bangs on the window.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
I need to borrow your phone!

High strung mom aggressively pulls the curtains shut.

EXT. HOQUIAM TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

Nicky, amped up with anger, walks back to town with her one  
shoe. Her eyes settle on a bar with a big rooster on it's  
neon sign. It's the only place open.

INT. THE ROOST - NIGHT

Nicky opens the door and is greeted by a warm wave of heat.  
GEORGE JONES plays on the JUKEBOX. The old radiator HISSES.  
Nicky shakes out her wet hair and approaches the BARTENDER.

NICKY  
Can I use the bar phone, please?

At first, Nicky doesn't notice the smattering of CUSTOMERS  
who look up from their drinks, nudging their friends who turn  
around in their seats and stare. A HUSH falls over the room.  
The bartender pales like she's seen a ghost.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
My phone just up and died.

A CUSTOMER at the bar stands up and points at Nicky.

CUSTOMER

It's her. Look.

Nicky looks around, hoping that it's someone else they're reacting too. But as she turns, she sees something behind her, frayed and tattered, that stops her dead in her tracks--

A MISSING PERSONS poster is tacked on the back of the bar door. It's got Nicky's name and face on it and the caption reads: *HAVE YOU SEEN ME?*

Off Nicky, reeling --

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Out front, Nicky looks at the missing persons poster in her hand. According to the dates, she's been missing a year and a week. "*Last seen leaving home at 6 pm on her way to Walmart...*" The DOOR behind Nicky OPENS with a CREAK --

MR. LAASEN

Wait for your husband inside, Mrs. Buerstatte. It's warmer.

Mr. Laasen, in a prim little suit, holds the door open.

NICKY

No thanks. I'm fine out here.

Nicky looks down the street, impatient. Blows on her hands. Mr. Laasen lets the door close behind him and approaches.

MR. LAASEN

I'm Virgil Laasen.

NICKY

Yeah. I know. We met on the field trip at Shore Estates yesterday.

He looks confused --

NICKY (CONT'D)

I mean it feels like yesterday. What day is it anyway?

MR. LAASEN

Why it's Christmas Eve. 2018.

Nicky shakes her head. *None of this makes any sense.* Mr. Laasen sidles up alongside Nicky.

MR. LAASEN (CONT'D)

There's something I'd like to... um... show you, Mrs. Buerstatte --

But Nicky spots her minivan coming down the block.

MR. LAASEN (CONT'D)

-- up at Shore Estates. Something that may be of deep interest.

The minivan parks at the curb. Nicky takes a big breath. Cal jumps out. Nicky, realizing Mr. Laasen is still there, gives him a not so subtle "do you mind?" look.

MR. LAASEN (CONT'D)  
(taking the hint)  
Another time then.

Mr. Laasen tips his hat and slips back inside the bar. His parting "Merry Christmas" is lost in the wind as Cal walks up to Nicky. He looks like he's aged five years since she last saw him. Nicky is shocked. More unwelcome evidence that something truly strange has happened.

To Cal, Nicky looks exactly the same way she did the night she disappeared, down to her favorite glove with a run in it.

CAL  
(marveling)  
My God.

Cal hugs Nicky tight. She lets herself melt a bit --

CAL (CONT'D)  
Jesus. Nicky. You okay? Where have you been --

NICKY  
Nowhere. I don't know. Someone tried to kill me. I fell all the way down to the beach, but I didn't break anything. I really don't know how --

CAL  
What are you talking about?

NICKY  
I went to the beach where they found Charlotte and there was this weird green mist. And then I got pushed off Desperation Point. I ran to the van, but it was gone and so I flagged down a truck... did you sell our house?

CAL  
Huh? Yeah. I had to. It's been a shit year, Nicky. You can't imagine how it's been.

NICKY  
Where are the kids? I want to see them.

CAL  
Sure. I'll take you now.

NICKY

We got to stop by the station  
first. Someone tried to kill me.

Nicky walks to the van. But Cal stands still.

CAL

Nicky, I'm only going to ask once,  
but I need the god honest truth,  
okay? Did you go away on purpose?

NICKY

No. Absolutely not --

CAL

-- I know you had a lot of  
responsibilities. Too many  
probably. And you were disappointed  
about your big case. I can see if  
you wanted to get away... from  
me... from everything. 'Cuz there's  
a lot to want to get away from --

NICKY

Cal. Look at me. Look. I'm telling  
you the truth. I swear on  
everything holy, okay. I have no  
idea what happened.

CAL

I had to ask.

NICKY

Okay.

(beat)

Now I've got to ask you something.

Cal nods, sure, anything.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Is this some kind of joke? I won't  
be mad, I promise, I just need to  
know.

On Cal, as his initial confusion morphs into something  
scarier -- the dark possibility that Nicky's lost her mind.

CAL

There's no joke going on here. But,  
hey, let's take you to the hospital  
before we see the kids. Get you  
checked out and make sure  
everything's okay, huh?

Nicky realizes her misstep. She doubles back --

NICKY  
No. I'm fine. I know this is real.  
Just take me to the station.

INT. HOQUAIM POLICE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Nicky barrels in the office, Cal trailing behind her. Matt pops his head out of one of the offices.

MATT  
Hey, boss.

NICKY  
Matt.

Nicky takes off her coat and heads to her --

OFFICE

-- Nicky tosses her coat on the couch as she flips on the lights. But the coat falls to the floor because the couch is no longer there --

Her office now belongs to someone else. Everything's been rearranged. Someone else's belongings are laid out everywhere. Nicky steps back into the hall to read the name on the door: **Detective Sergeant DRESDEN SHEPHERD.**

NICKY (CONT'D)  
Wow.

MATT  
(coming up)  
I wanted to warn you but --

NICKY  
No. It's okay. Wow.

MATT  
I fought it, but they said they couldn't just leave your position empty. Now that you're back I'm sure they give it back to you --

Nicky takes this all in. *It's sobering.* Matt gives Nicky a pat on the arm.

MATT (CONT'D)  
(earnest)  
It's great to see you, boss.

Nicky, realizing the weird situation, gives him a hug.

NICKY

Thanks. We got any coffee on?

Nicky flips the light off and walks away. Matt follows --

MATT

Um, Nicky? There's something else  
you should know --

Nicky turns the corner and finds herself standing face to  
face with Shep --

He looks as handsome and formidable as ever. He wears a new  
uniform -- *Hoquaim Police Department*. He smiles at Nicky.

SHEP

Nicky.

Nicky smiles, but then sees that Shep isn't alone in the  
hall. Two people come out of the conference room behind him:  
SPECIAL AGENTS LUIS and CLARK.

SPECIAL AGENT LUIS

Hi there, Nicky.

SPECIAL AGENT CLARK

Ghost of Christmas past.

Off Nicky, ambushed --

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Nicky, Shep, and Agent Luis sit around the conference table. Agent Clark stands by an old school camcorder on a tripod. He hits the record button and joins the others. As he sits --

AGENT CLARK

So, where you been, Nicky?

NICKY

I prefer if you call me Mrs. Buerstatte.

AGENT CLARK

Noted.

(beat)

Can you answer the question? Need me to repeat it?

NICKY

I don't know where I've been.

AGENT LUIS

Tell us what you remember.

NICKY

Someone pushed me off Desperation Point. I got to the parking lot and my van was gone and my phone was dead and --

AGENT CLARK

You weren't injured in this purported "fall?"

NICKY

No.

AGENT CLARK

And you were trespassing at the time of this *purported* "fall?"

NICKY

The beach is part of my jurisdiction. And it was a push i.e. an attempted murder, not a fall.

AGENT LUIS

Do you remember Agent Clark and me asking last year you not to interfere in our investigation?

NICKY

Like it was yesterday.

(leaning in)

Look, you're missing the point here. I've lost a year of my life somehow. I didn't go anywhere, but time went somewhere. This is a much bigger than crossing crime scene tape. And, as much as her story didn't make sense, the same thing happened to me that happened to Charlotte Braun. I'm sure of it. One minute I was in 2017 and the next I was here.

A long pause.

SHEP

Let's call it a night. Nicky's husband wants to get her over to the ER for an exam. We can resume the interview later.

Agent Luis looks peeved. Agent Clark walks over to the video camera. But he doesn't hit the stop button. *Not yet.* He turns back to Nicky --

AGENT CLARK

Just a word to the wise, Mrs. Buerstatte -- you probably don't want to keep equating your case to Charlotte Braun's.

NICKY

Why not?

AGENT CLARK

Oh. You didn't hear?

NICKY

Hear what?

AGENT CLARK

Charlotte Braun recanted her story. Turns out she made the whole thing up.

Nicky looks gob-smacked. She looks at Shep. He looks at the floor. She looks back at Agent Clark, positioned right by the video camera, that just so happens to still be recording. *Gotcha.* He smiles at Nicky. She doesn't smile back.

INT. MINIVAN/EXT. JIGGLES STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

Nicky rides shotgun in the minivan. Cal drives.

NICKY

Why would she recant?

CAL

Don't know.

NICKY

It's too similar. Same beach. Same chunk of missing time. It doesn't make sense that she would just make something like that up and then it would actually happen to me.

Cal pulls into a muddy, half empty parking lot and parks.

CAL

So hey, I haven't told the kids you were back yet. A lot of things have changed since you've been gone --

Nicky sees the neon strip club sign: *JIGGLES*.

NICKY

What are we doing here?

A darkness falls over Cal's face. He's got to deliver some unpleasant news. As Cal musters his nerve, WARRANT'S 'CHERRY PIE' starts to play --

CUT TO:

INT. JIGGLES STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

Nicky charges in. The bouncer, MONSTER (26), a young, meaty guy with a Lou Ferrigno vibe, gets up off his stool to collect her cover, but Cal intercepts him.

Nicky beelines it for the stage where a brunette, her back to the audience, is stripping. Nicky braces herself, but when the woman turns around it's not Brooke.

Nicky exhales. Relieved. She turns and that's when she sees it --

Brooke, in a shiny bikini bottom, gyrating on a DRUNK CUSTOMER in the alcove of the room. Brooke's long dark hair and pink cheeks give her a naughty school girl vibe. Gone is the shy, gawky teenager embarrassed to be in her own skin. This version of Brooke is assured and confident.

NICKY

Brooke. Oh my God. Stop.

*That voice --Brooke can't believe what she's hearing. She looks up and sees Nicky standing there. It can't be.*

BROOKE

Mom?

Nicky shakes off her winter coat and hands it to Brooke. But Brooke doesn't take it. She just stands there. Staring at Nicky. *This can't be happening.* The MUSIC continues to blare.

DRUNK CUSTOMER

Let the lady dance, mom. Hashtag where's your damn shoe?

NICKY

Go fuck yourself, you dirty, old fucking pervert --

CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM, STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

The back stage dressing room is full of mirrors and makeup stations. One STRIPPER clips her toenails in the corner. Brooke, now wearing a WSU sweatshirt over the bikini bottom, paces. Nicky and Cal look on.

BROOKE

You know how crazy this is, right?  
I thought you were dead. We buried  
you.

Nicky looks to Cal. *You did what?*

CAL

We thought closure was important.

NICKY

Who's we?

CAL

Lee, me... Tonya...

BROOKE

*Tonya.*

NICKY

Usually you wait until you find a body, Cal. Or know for sure that someone is *actually* dead.

(MORE)

NICKY (CONT'D)

We never even had a funeral for my dad and he's been gone -- what? -- 45 years.

CAL

You plan on criticizing every single thing I've done while you've been gone? Because it's gonna be a long, long list --

NICKY

No, but Jesus, Cal. You just -- what -- buried an empty coffin? How much did that cost?

BROOKE

You don't get to judge him! He's been doing everything. And you've just been gone.

NICKY

Do I have a grave?  
(off his nod)  
Fuck. That's morbid. Okay. Listen. We're going to figure this out and get things back to normal.

BROOKE

(hackles rising)  
Normal? Ha. And what's that?

NICKY

Well, no more stripping on Christmas eve for starters.

BROOKE

There you go! I was wondering how long it would take. That was what? Three minutes? --

TOENAIL GIRL

Two.

NICKY

I don't want you working here. Every single one of those men is a sex offender or a serial killer. I guarantee it.

BROOKE

You can't tell me what to do!

NICKY

I've always told you what to do:  
I'm your mother.

BROOKE

People don't just walk into the woods or the beach or a green mist or whatever and walk out a year later! Do you think we're stupid? You left.

(going for the jugular)  
Just like your dad left.

CAL

Brooke. Knock it off.

NICKY

I would never, ever leave my kids.

BROOKE

You fucking kidding me right now?!

CAL

It's not all bad, Nicky. I know it's hard for you to see, but Brooke's got her own place. Pays all her bills --

BROOKE

I've got a Lexus.

TOENAIL GIRL

Pre-owned.

NICKY

You let her move out? She's seventeen, Cal?!

BROOKE

I'm eighteen. Jesus, Mom. You forget how to do math in the *Twilight Zone*?

CAL

A lot's changed since you've been gone, Nicky.

Brooke realizes something --

BROOKE

Ohhhh. Mom doesn't know, does she?

NICKY

What don't I know?

CAL  
This isn't the time or place --

BROOKE  
You brought her to me first Cal?  
to deflect.

NICKY

CAL (CONT'D)  
We thought you were dead.

NICKY  
Yeah. The tombstone. I get it.

CAL  
I got a girlfriend.

NICKY  
You what?

BROOKE  
He moved in with her. What was it, Dad? Right after the funeral or right before? I forget.

On Nicky, *Holy shit. What's going on?*

CAL (CONT'D)  
It's complicated -- I'm sorry you had to hear it like this --

NICKY  
So we're officially what? Divorced?

CAL  
No. I'm a widower. And you're dead. On paper.

NICKY  
Oh my god.

BROOKE  
You might as well rip off the band-aid, Dad.  
(he can't)  
It's not just anyone, Mom. His girlfriend --

Nicky looks from Brooke to Cal, waiting for someone to just come out with it. Cal braces for all hell to break loose.

BROOKE (CONT'D)  
-- it's Tonya.

Off Nicky, completely floored by this news --

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. DRESSING ROOM, STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

Reeling, Nicky feels behind her for a stool and sits.

NICKY

How? When?

CAL

When you were gone like eight or ten months I think around then --

BROOKE

It was four months. Barely. If that. Dad moved into her place before we even sold the house.

Nicky's not sure she can hear anymore right now. Monster, the club bouncer, RAPS on the door as he enters.

MONSTER

Everything okay in here, babe? Hi, Mr. Buerstatte.

BROOKE

Mom -- this is Brad. My live-in boyfriend.

MONSTER

You can call me Monster, ma'am.

Nicky looks at the hulk of him offering her his hand to shake. Muscly and tatted, he's a real full grown man, dating her marching band, flute-playing, wall-hugging daughter.

NICKY

No. I can't do this.

Nicky walks out of the room.

BROOKE

Mom? Rude much?

(to Monster)

I'm sorry, boo. You okay?

MONSTER

Thought your mom was dead?

Cal follows Nicky outside --

EXT. CLUB - NIGHT

The THUMP of the BASS from the club sends vibrations through the muddy, pot holed, parking lot. Cal follows Nicky --

CAL  
Nicky, wait! Stop.

Nicky drinks in the wet, fresh air. Needing it like medicine.

NICKY  
I can't talk to you right now.

CAL  
Well, I'm your ride so you're going to have to.

NICKY  
Where's Aidan? He with Tonya? I want to see my son.

CAL  
I don't know where he is right this second.

NICKY  
It's the middle of the fucking night. On Christmas.

Cal checks his phone for messages --

CAL  
Don't swear at me. I saw him at breakfast.

NICKY  
At breakfast? As in yesterday morning? Parent of the year here. Is he sleeping over at Mic's? Or Pete Chamberlain's?

CAL  
Aidan doesn't really hang out with those kids anymore. He's more in with the skaters now.

Nicky takes Cal's keys.

CAL (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

NICKY  
Find your own ride home. I'm taking my van.

CAL  
Nicky, listen --

Nicky climbs in the van, shuts the door on Cal and drives away. Off Cal, standing alone in the muddy parking lot looking defeated and ashamed --

INT. MINIVAN/EXT. SKATE PARK, RIVERFRONT - DAWN

Dawn breaks, gray and foggy. Nicky sits behind the wheel of the parked van, smoking a cigarette. She looks around the abandoned skate park. No one is out on Christmas morning. No one. A small Walmart bag sits on the seat beside her. She dials Aidan's number. The voicemail kicks on--

AIDAN (V.O.)  
Merry Christmas, nerds! (BEEP)

NICKY  
Aidan, it's Mom. Sorry to have to break the news to you like this. I know it's got to be a shock --

The BEEP cuts her off. Nicky hangs up, sad. She opens the glove compartment looking for another cigarette. Instead, she finds a picture of Tonya. One of those horrible, sexy, glamour photos from the mall. *Good God*. Nicky throws it out the open window.

She hears a LONE SKATEBOARD nearing. Hopeful, Nicky looks up.

Aidan comes around the bend. His clothes have changed. His hair has changed, it's now long and in his face. Nicky takes him in. In the year she's been away, Aidan's gone from being a kid to being a teenager. Nicky shoves the Walmart bag in her pocket and gets out of the minivan.

Aidan skids to a stop when he sees his mom standing there like a ghost in the Christmas morning fog.

NICKY (CONT'D)  
Hi, baby.

Nicky hugs Aidan to her. Taking in the smell of him.

AIDAN  
This really happening?

NICKY  
Yes. Let me look at you. You've gotten so big.

AIDAN  
What's going on, Mom?

NICKY

I don't know. But I'm back.

A stampede of SKATEBOARD NOISE as a handful of KIDS come around the bend. All shaggy haired and decked out in slummy skateboarder attire just like Aidan. Aidan shakes free of his mother.

AIDAN

I got to go, Mom.

NICKY

Go? No. Wait.

Nicky reaches into her coat pocket and takes out the Walmart bag. She pulls a box from it. It's a Lego NUN CHUCK figure.

NICKY (CONT'D)

I got this for you. I know it's not much, but Merry Christmas.

Nicky offers it to him. Aidan fights emotion.

AIDAN

I don't play with toys anymore,  
Mom.

NICKY

Take it anyway. Please.

He sighs, annoyed, but snatches the box and puts it in his pocket. With one final look back at his Mom, he skates off.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Be home for dinner. By six.

Aidan stops. Looks back at her.

AIDAN

Home where?

Nicky hasn't thought that far ahead. Scrambling --

NICKY

Lee's. I'll be there.

EXT./INT. LEE CHERICK'S HOUSE - DAY

Lee's front yard is overgrown. There are a ton of plants in those temporary plastic pots; they got from the car to the front yard but that's it.

Nicky goes to open the front door, but it's locked. She KNOCKS, noticing that the wreath on the door is made out of tinsel.

Inside, someone undoes the locks and bolts --

LEE

There you are.

LEE CHERICK (75) is a chubby, angry, lady who is pathologically passive aggressive. Only a few cats shy of being a crazy cat lady, Lee is a bit of a hoarder and her house reflects this. She wears a terry-cloth bathrobe.

Lee gives Nicky a pat-pat hug.

NICKY

Why'd you lock the door, Mom? You knew I was coming over?

Lee's offended by this observation so she ignores it.

LEE

Don't just stand there, you'll let all the heat out.

INT. NICKY'S OLD ROOM, LEE'S HOUSE - DAY

Nicky's old room is a mix of teenage crap and boxes of junk. It's a hoarder's paradise. Lee brings Nicky a chipped mug half full of cider.

LEE

You want some cider? I just love how it makes the house smell.

Lee sips the cider.

NICKY

This is so weird.

LEE

I've got a pot roast in for Christmas.

NICKY

How have you been, Mom?

LEE

Well, it hasn't been easy being the center of all the town gossip again with you being gone and all. So that's been real hard.

NICKY

Well, I'm back now.

Nicky spots some familiar boxes in the corner. She moves over to them.

LEE

Cal was going to throw out all your D.B. Cooper research, just throw it in the street when he moved in with that fat girl, so I took it. Saved it for you over there.

Nicky looks through the boxes. There's a photo of D.B. Cooper lying over a photo of two flight attendants in matching outfits (their faces are hidden by the top photo).

NICKY

Thanks, Mom.

(pivoting)

Hey, you hear anything about Charlotte Braun lately? You know where she's staying?

LEE

That the girl that went and made everything up?

(shakes her head)

Never can tell with people. Her parents seemed like normal people. Lutherans.

On Nicky -- it's surreal to be having a conversation with her mother like nothing out of the ordinary has happened.

NICKY

Is she here in Hoquaim? Charlotte? I need to find her.

LEE

How would I know where she is?

NICKY

Can I use your computer? To look for her?

Lee looks offended.

LEE

After I'm done with it. I've got it open on some recipes right now.

A PHONE RINGS. A land line. Lee pulls it out of one of her bathrobe pockets.

LEE (CONT'D)  
Hello?....

She hands the phone to Nicky.

LEE (CONT'D)  
It's Matt Somebody.

Nicky takes the phone, curious --

CUT TO:

EXT. SHORE ESTATES - DAY

Nicky walks out to Desperation Point. The bluff looks the same as ever. The wind-tossed waves crash below, gray and formidable.

MATT  
Sorry to call you away from your family --

Nicky turns. Matt approaches her. Tightening his Hoquaim police jacket against himself to fight off the cold.

MATT (CONT'D)  
I'm sure they're over the moon to have you home.

NICKY  
What's going on? Why all the cloak and dagger.

MATT  
You can't trust Shep, Nicky. He's in with the Feds.

NICKY  
What do you mean?

MATT  
Charlotte Braun? They made that case go away. The three of them.

NICKY  
Why?

Matt shrugs.

MATT  
That's what I'm trying to figure out.

Nicky thinks. Comes to a decision.

NICKY

Okay, we'll solve this then. You and me.

MATT

Just like old times.

NICKY

It all starts with Charlotte Braun somehow. We got to find her.

MATT

I'm on it.

Matt's excited to be back to work with someone he respects. Nicky's excited to have something to consume her again. Her own life being too fucking weird and painful at the moment to contemplate. Nicky heads for her van, then turns back around--

NICKY

Matt? You got Christmas dinner plans?

Off Matt, smiling --

INT. MINIVAN - NIGHT

Nicky drives around town looking for Aidan. The treacle earworm CHRISTMAS IN THE NORTHWEST plays on the RADIO. The clock in the car reads 6:08. Nicky cranks the heat and rolls down the window, slowing whenever she passes a kid in a hoodie, checking his face for her son's. She passes a huge billboard that has her name and face on it: HAVE YOU SEEN ME?

EXT. ABERDEEN MALL/INT. MINIVAN - NIGHT

Nicky pulls up to the loading docks at the mall. A few teenage BOYS skateboard on the ramps. Aidan's among them. He sees his mom in her minivan. She sees him. They lock eyes. Nicky HONKS.

Without a word, Aidan puts his skateboard in the back of the van and climbs into the passenger seat.

NICKY

Put your seatbelt on.

Aidan, secretly happy to have someone parenting him again, clicks his seatbelt. Nicky puts the van in reverse and backs up, happy to be parenting. This little bit of normal is the Christmas salve they both need. They both smile --

END ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

INT. DINING ROOM - LEE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lee, Nicky, Matt and Aidan sit at the dining room table a nice Christmas dinner set before them. There's little British crackers at the top of each place setting.

AIDAN

These real, Gramma?

LEE

Yes. I got them at Harrod's when I went to London.

Aidan picks up his cracker, but sees that it's already been opened.

LEE (CONT'D)

They don't have prizes in them anymore. But they still look so nice. Eat up, everyone. We're just so happy to have you home, Nicky, aren't we? The prizes that were in them weren't very good that I remember. Pass the Yorkshire pudding, please.

Nicky passes the platter. She spots something over by the window. Like a little shrine.

NICKY

What's that?

LEE

What?

NICKY

That.

LEE

Oh nothing.

Nicky, not one to be deterred, gets up and investigates. There's photos of her and newspaper clippings of her disappearance and a program of some kind. Nicky picks it up.

LEE (CONT'D)

Oh, you don't want to see that.

NICKY

It's the program from my own funeral. Holy shit.

LEE

I took a lot of real beautiful pictures that day. I just haven't got them developed yet.

AIDAN

You got to get a phone with a camera in it, Gramma. Your house line is like way weird.

Nicky picks up her own obituary, clipped from the local paper.

NICKY

This is surreal.

LEE

We had a wake for you. Up at Shore Estates. Cal wanted one of those cheap dingy bars downtown but I insisted we have it somewhere classy.

MATT

I was there. Great canapes.

NICKY

I just... Why wouldn't you wait? And assume I was alive like Dad?

LEE

Come on, your dad's not alive, Nicky. He's dead.

Off Nicky's total surprise --

LEE (CONT'D)

What? Don't act like you didn't know? You had to have figured that out by now.

NICKY

Figured what out? What are you talking about?

LEE

Being a policewoman I thought you had access to files and stuff.

A cat, wearing a Christmas sweater jumps up on the shrine, tail swishing the paper items around.

LEE (CONT'D)

Shoo. Get down.

NICKY

Mom.

LEE

They found his old truck up at Desperation Point. They guess he just jumped off the cliff. Never found his body, but some beach-combers found his work boot years later, when you were in high school. It just washed up from the ocean. Only the one.

Nicky looks horrified. So do Matt and Aidan.

AIDAN

Merry fucking Christmas.

LEE

Aidan!

NICKY

Language!

The cat jumps up on the shrine again, purring. *That stupid Christmas sweater.* Nicky looks up as something clicks into place.

NICKY

(to Matt and Aidan)

Grab your coats. I know where Charlotte is. And I know what happened.

EXT. HOUSE, ABERDEEN - NIGHT

Nicky, Matt and Aidan climb up on the porch of the house. Nicky RINGS the BELL. As they wait she sees that Aidan has the Lego NUN CHUCK figure in his hand. He's not playing with it per se, but he's taken it out of the box. She smiles.

The door opens. It's Charlotte's Aunt from the hospital. And damn if she isn't wearing the exact same red Christmas sweater as last year.

NICKY

Is Charlotte staying here? I've got to talk to her.

The Aunt starts to shake her head 'no,' but Charlotte comes up behind her.

CHARLOTTE

It's okay. She can come in --

LIVING ROOM:

Nicky, Matt, Aidan and Charlotte sit around the living room.  
No one talks.

AUNT

I'll just go make some fudge.

The Aunt leaves. Nicky leans into Charlotte, intensely.

NICKY

I know what happened and I know why  
you lied.

CHARLOTTE

I didn't lie --

NICKY

You left something out. Something  
really big.

Matt isn't following. He looks at Nicky then Charlotte --

NICKY (CONT'D)

The day you went missing people saw  
you up on the bluff and down on the  
beach and they thought you were  
waiting for someone, but you  
weren't waiting. *You were getting  
up your nerve.* To jump.

Matt and Aidan look surprised.

NICKY (CONT'D)

You jumped off Desperation Point  
only you didn't die, you landed. A  
year and half later.

One look at Charlotte's face confirms that Nicky is right.

NICKY (CONT'D)

You weren't lying about where you  
were, but about what happened.

A tear weeps from Charlotte's eye. She doesn't answer.

NICKY (CONT'D)

So, where were you? I need to know  
because I disappeared too.

CHARLOTTE

I know --

She takes Nicky's hand.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)  
-- Because we were together.

A chill falls over the room. **SMASH CUT** from Nicky's face to --

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY - 1971

The flight is only one-third full. D.B Cooper sits alone in the back. We're in the POV of the flight attendant as she nears his seat and hands him a bourbon and water. He hands her a note --

LIVING ROOM:

On Nicky coming out of that pop of a memory. She looks confused and shocked.

NICKY  
What just happened?

Before Charlotte can answer, Nicky pops back into --

FLASHBACK:

D.B. Cooper looks at the flight attendant holding the note he handed her. He leans in and whispers --

D.B. COOPER  
Miss, you'd better look at that  
note. I have a bomb.

Cooper cracks open his briefcase long enough for her to glimpse eight red cylinders attached to red wires and a large cylindrical battery.

We see the STEWARDESS' face for the first time -- it's NICKY and she looks terrified.

The other STEWARDESS comes up beside her. Young. Dark hair.

STEWARDESS #2  
What is it?

Nicky turns to her and we see her face. The second stewardess is Charlotte.

D.B. Cooper leans toward them and whispers --

D.B. COOPER  
Detective Sergeant, we meet again.

INT. MANSION, SHORE ESTATES - NIGHT - PRESENT

Alone in the sprawling mansion, Mr. Laasen walks down the dark hall. He carries an old fashioned gas lamp in his hand.

Something obvious about him becomes more so -- the old fashioned suits, the mannerisms. Mr. Laasen is a man out of his time.

*\*We hear a single **KEY** of a **PIANO** being played.\**

He nears a photo of the wall. A group photo taken circa 1900 at Shore Estates -- fifty people -- some family, some servants, some unknown -- gather for a photo on the front steps of the manor.

Mr. Laasen leans in and the light from his lamp illuminates the picture on the wall.

*\*The next **KEY** on the scale.\**

Mr. Laasen is there. In the photo. Looking exactly the same. But there is someone next to him that we recognize as well --

Nicky. Dressed in a maid's outfit circa 1900.

But strangest of all, front and center, standing right next to the timber Baron himself is his unhappy young bride -- with her long dark hair there's no mistaking that we've seen her before -- it's Brooke.

Mr. Laasen wipes dust from the glass picture frame with his handkerchief and smiles wistfully.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT - PRESENT

The beach at the bottom of wooden staircase that leads up to Desperation Point. The faintest hint of an eerie green light hangs over everything -- the sand, the driftwood, the barricades, and NO TRESPASSING signs.

Suddenly, a SHOE falls from above and hits the sand with a THUD. It's a lady's flip-flop. Hot pink. Another THUD as another SHOE falls. This one is a man's work boot circa 1970:

THUD. As more shoes of various sizes and styles rain down. A ballet slipper. THUD. A dapper men's dress shoe. THUD. Then Nicky's missing police flashlight and then --

Something else falls, slowly, floating down and landing on the beach.

It's a man. In a suit. As soon as his legs touch the ground, a blanket of material falls all around him, enveloping him.

It takes us a second to realize that the material is a PARACHUTE.

INT. AUNT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

On Nicky, looking confused, like her mind has been blown --

AIDAN  
Mom? You okay?

*\*THE PIANO PLAYER's hands hover over the keys. Waiting. Tense with anticipation. Then, he's unleashed. He plays all the KEYS. Out of order. One down there. The next up there on the other end of the piano. It's wild. Exhilarating. His fingers fly. Here. There. Everywhere. Narrowing down to seven or eight KEYS that are played over and over again in a haunting loop, a fever dream.\**

NICKY  
(scared; to Charlotte)  
What's happening?

Charlotte smiles through her tears, genuinely happy --

CHARLOTTE  
You're starting to remember.

Off Nicky, absolutely terrified --

INT. TRUCK CAB/EXT. STATE ROUTE NEAR BEACH - NIGHT - PRESENT

From the cab of the truck, we can see the road ahead and the beachy shrubs that line the dunes. Suddenly, there's a man there in the sweep of the headlights, flagging down the truck.

As the semi slows and the man steps into better view, we can see his suit. That familiar thin tie. That iconic slicked back hair.

There's no mistaking who this is --

It's D.B. *fucking* Cooper.

END EPISODE