

CONSTANCE

Written by

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TNT
TEAM DOWNEY
SONAR ENTERTAINMENT

ACT ONE

INT. HILTON - ATLANTIC CITY - BALLROOM - NIGHT

CONSTANCE YOUNG (50, dressed to the nines, glamorous as fuck, a hint of mania behind her deeply concealed and highlighted eyes) stands on stage, basking in the spotlight.

An unseen crowd ROARS with APPLAUSE. Flashbulbs fire in the darkness. It's a surreal, dreamy moment of elation. As Constance is handed an AWARD, she smiles. Soaking in the adoration. The love. The power.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)

The view from my office is a dumpster. Most days I have to fight the urge to crawl inside of it and light myself on fire.

INT. CITY HALL - CONSTANCE'S OFFICE - DAY

Cramped, but cozy. Framed affirmations hang on the walls. Knock-off Yankee Candle burning. Fluffy throw pillows on worn arm chairs. Constance sits at her desk, catches sight of the DUMPSTER outside her ground floor window.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)

Sign the payroll checks. Review pension funds. Audit the Historic Preservations Society.

She regroups, sips coffee from her WORLD'S BEST MOM mug, starts typing, seemingly content.

INT. CITY HALL - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Constance and her COWORKERS gather around a table and a store-bought cake, singing 'Happy Birthday' to a beaming KATHLEEN (50s, same asymmetrical bob she's had since junior high).

CONSTANCE (V.O.)

Another year around the sun spent forcing smiles and conversation, anxiously waiting for life's ration of thinly sliced red velvet.

Constance eats cake with colleagues, smiles, converses.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 Earlier this year, Stan from Waste Management took a poll. If you could have any superpower, what would it be?

Constance watches female coworkers stuff cake into their faces, laughing. Her smile fades.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 Seventy eight percent of the women chose invisibility. They chose it.

EXT. SUNSET BEACH - DAY

A kitschy gift shop. An American Flag flapping in the wind, the sign beneath it: *CAPE MAY, NJ. THE NATION'S OLDEST SEASHORE RESORT*. Constance sits on a bench, alone. Bag lunch. Eating, as she squints out at the Delaware Bay. A seagull loiters on a nearby trash can, side-eyeing her.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 We're trained to fade into the nothingness. Brainwashed into submission. Acceptance as a virtue.

She clocks an ELDERLY WOMAN raking the beach with a metal detector. Alone.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Constance (business casual) is bent over, feverishly sewing her daughter, OLIVIA YOUNG (16, sequin-drenched, flawless), into her white pageant gown.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 Oh, it's coming, ladies. Don't worry. With every year, every laugh line, every sun spot, it's coming.

She finishes, tears the loose thread with her teeth. The day is saved.

OLIVIA
 Oh my god. Thank you.

Constance smiles, watches Olivia dust glitter onto her silky smooth clavicle.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 It's even coming for her. Already hugged by Spanx at sixteen.
 (MORE)

CONSTANCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Her flawless skin coated with full
coverage foundation.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT (MOMENTS LATER)

Constance hurries into the seat next to her husband, SKIP (52, flip flops, gut poking out from underneath his beachy button-up). They share an excited beat, then focus on the in-progress high school beauty pageant.

TEENAGE GIRLS parade out with their biggest, Vaseline-aided smiles. Olivia strides across the stage, her confidence effortless and undeniable.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
But does she know the rest?

Olivia sidles up to the EMCEE, fields an unheard question, strafes the crowd with a smile. The AUDIENCE CLAPS. Constance beams, proud.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
Does she know we don't get the joy
of being desired without the terror
that comes with it?

DADS around the room open-mouth stare at Olivia, undoubtedly imagining what it'd be like to sleep with her.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
Is he smiling because he wants to
have sex with you or because he
wants to follow you to your car and
carve you into a million pieces?

ON STAGE:

Olivia is CROWNED WINNER. A MALE JUDGE (40, too tan) eye-fucks her while sliding a sash across her chest.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
How do you explain the sadness that
comes when you wake up one day and
realize no one wants to follow you
to your car and carve you into a
million pieces anymore?

Constance watches Olivia take her victory lap as QUEEN.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
You hate yourself because you think
it's shallow.
(MORE)

CONSTANCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 You think you're sad because no one
 wants to sleep with you anymore.
 But that's not it.

Skip gives Olivia a two-finger WHISTLE. Constance joins in.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 It's that you never made it to the
 top, and now you never will.

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - SHOWER - DAY

Constance rinses soap from her eyes, as Skip climbs into the shower with her, presses himself into her from behind. She looks back, clocks his hairy gut, refocuses on the clump of hair in the drain, fakes his favorite whimpering sounds.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 Your earnings potential has topped
 out in direct proportion with your
 sagging tits and drying vagina.

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Glass blocks. Cluttered counter top. Constance stands in front of the mirror, cramming herself into a push-up bra. Curling her hair. Dabbing Preparation H under her eyes.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 I mean, look at me. Still trying to
 convince myself I'm on the verge of
 something big.

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Constance, all dolled up in a TJ Maxx cocktail dress, pulls a tray of cookies from the oven. Ties balloons to the back of chairs. Makes place cards.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 That if I can just make this new
 thing work, I'll get back to
 feeling like my old self again.
 Happy, joyous, and free...

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Constance stands at the head of a table, death-gripping the back of a chair. Her internal swagger gone.

A DE LEON COSMETICS BOX on the table in front of her. She's stumbling through a clunky, canned spiel, but we don't hear it yet --

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
What a crock of sh--

CONSTANCE
(interrupting)
--Not only is De Leon a world renowned cosmetics company, but it's also founded on...
(checks the script)
...the belief that the power of beauty can reshape our lives from the inside out.

She lifts an 8x10 PROMO PHOTO of PAIGE KING (50, stunning, tastefully injected and filled). Gold embossed letters read: *PAIGE KING, FOUNDER OF DE LEON COSMETICS.*

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
And as the gorgeous Paige King always says: "At De Leon Cosmetics we're here to lead you to the Fountain of You."

She smiles, waits for a reaction, heart pounding. The room is silent, until finally -- *CLAP. CLAP. CLAP.*

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
Thank you.

WE PULL BACK TO REVEAL: A MAKEUP PARTY. A cluster of balloons hang above a once champagne colored rug. Chocolate covered strawberries. A touch of desperation.

The table's set for six. Only two guests have shown up. The clapper is LINDSEY (22, Applebee's uniform, bored out of her mind). The other is TOYA (50, pretty spin of braids piled on her head, double fistfing RED BULL and CHARDONNAY).

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
(re: Paige photo)
She's from here, by the way. We went to high school together.

No one gives a shit. Constance puts the photo down, throws Toya a nervous smile. Toya sighs, then tosses back a blatantly fake one.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
 Okay, so why don't we get started
 with our wrinkle-busting hydration
 mask. Everybody grab a hair tie...

She awkwardly ties her curls into a loose bun.

TOYA
 Wait. We're doing these on
 ourselves?

CONSTANCE
 You bet. De Leon is a get-your-
 hands-dirty kind of company.

TOYA
 I don't want to get my hands dirty.
 You said this was gonna be a night
 of free pampering.

CONSTANCE
 What better way to harness self-
 love than to learn to pamper
 ourselves?

TOYA
 You really want me to answer that?

Constance's expression drops --

CONSTANCE
 (meek, pleading)
 C'mon. You said you'd keep an open
 mind.

Toya fights the urge to roll her eyes. Instead, she pins
 back her stray braids. Constance lifts her phone --

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
 Okay, who's ready for your 'before'
 photos?

She SNAPS A PHOTO.

LINDSEY
 Don't tag me in that. I told my
 friends I was going to the Korn
 concert.

Constance glares at her. Just then, the DOORBELL RINGS.

CONSTANCE
(relief)
Oh good. That must be our other
guests.

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Constance opens the door and finds DETECTIVE MELENDEZ (40,
stocky, starched, no nonsense) standing on the porch.

MELENDEZ
Constance Young?

CONSTANCE
Yes?

MELENDEZ
My name's Detective Melendez. May I
come in?

Constance is taken aback.

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lindsey and Toya are long gone. Constance is slumped in a
chair, confused. Melendez pulls up a seat.

MELENDEZ
Is there any other place your
husband might've taken the boat?

CONSTANCE
He knew I was having this party. He
could be anywhere.

MELENDEZ
Does he usually stay out into the
night like this?

CONSTANCE
I'm sorry. Are we worried about him
for some reason I don't know about?

MELENDEZ
Normally, we wouldn't be. But we
have a few concerning factors here.
First, he told the Harbor Master
he'd be back by lunchtime but
didn't show. Second, we've got a
big storm headed this way. And
third, the Coast Guard picked up a
brief distress signal around 1pm--

CONSTANCE
 (panic)
 From Skip?

MELENDEZ
 Well, we don't know that for sure.
 They couldn't get a lock on it. But
 that's why I'm here.

Constance starts to spin.

CONSTANCE
 Did you check the Harbor View?
 Maybe he went to Atlantic City.
 Have you called his phone?

MELENDEZ
 Yes, and we've got guys out there
 checking every boat slip within
 fifty miles of here, but there's no
 sign of him.

CONSTANCE
 Yet. There's no sign of him yet.

MELENDEZ
 Right.
 (then)
 Can I ask, when's the last time you
 saw your husband?

QUICK FLASH: Skip in the garage, struggling to stuff a trash
 bag into the overly stuffed BLACK TRASHCAN. Papers and
 garbage spilling out. It's a pathetic last memory.

CONSTANCE
 This morning. Before he left.

MELENDEZ
 And he knew about the storm? He was
 prepared?

CONSTANCE
 Yes. He said it'd make for great
 fishing.

Melendez writes something in his notebook.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
 Can you excuse me for a minute?

Before he answers, she's out of her seat.

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Constance enters. Locks the door behind her.

She grabs a bottle of Pepto, takes a big slug. She clocks a framed photo of Skip and his new fishing boat, emblazoned with her name: CONSTANCE. Her eyes fill with tears. She pulls out her cell phone, dials.

SKIP (O.S.)

*Hey there. You've reached Skip
Young. You know what to do...*

She hangs up. Grabs her stomach. Winces in pain. Rushes to the toilet. Vomits up the Pepto.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

Girls' volleyball practice. Shoes screeching on lacquered wood. SWEATY GIRLS in booty shorts. Spike drills fueled by hormonal rage.

Olivia rushes the net. Stuffs a spike back in her OPPONENT'S face. High-fives her friend, SASHA (16, lash extensions, bleached teeth, never wanted for a thing). A WHISTLE BLOWS, and the girls break for water. Olivia sidles up to Sasha --

OLIVIA

(catching her breath)

I know it shipped already... Is it
at your house?

SASHA

(playful; panting)

Bitch, back off with this dress
detective shit.

OLIVIA

Let me guess -- after last year's
taffeta tent disaster, you're going
for... sparkle. Probably
rhinestones --

SASHA

You're psychotic.

OLIVIA

Definitely a plunging neckline.

(re: Sasha's boobs)

There's no way you're not gonna try
to use those puppies to beat me.

SASHA

Oooh... Do I sense some double 'D'
jealousy?

OLIVIA

Name one Miss America with big
tits... Take your time. I'll wait.

Sasha's gaze drifts beyond Olivia, her expression drops.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Can't do it, can you?

SASHA

Your mom's here.

OLIVIA

(confused)
What?

Sasha points. Olivia turns around, sees Constance talking to her COACH. Both dour. Constance looks over at her, throws her a weak smile. Olivia tenses. Something's wrong.

INT./EXT. CONSTANCE'S CAR/PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Constance and Olivia sit in the parked HONDA. Constance stares into the void. Olivia, finally looking her age, with sweaty baby hairs stuck to her flushed, makeup-free face, anxiously beats out her exhausted quads.

OLIVIA

Who died?

CONSTANCE

(pause, then)
Do they make you wear those shorts?

OLIVIA

No. We're allowed to wear g-
strings, but they really ride up
during practice. Too much chafing.

Olivia waits for a reaction, but Constance is stone-faced.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Jesus, say something. You're
freaking me out.

CONSTANCE

Dad's missing.

OLIVIA

What?

CONSTANCE

He went out on the boat this morning and never made it back to the marina.

(off Olivia's shock)

They're sending the Coast Guard out in the morning.

Olivia can't move, has no words.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)

Listen, you know how your dad is. He could waltz up at any minute, blissfully unaware.

Olivia bites her lip, trying to process.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)

Liv? Talk to me.

OLIVIA

No. This is stupid.

Olivia pulls out her cellphone, gets out of the car. Constance watches her daughter cross the lot, phone firmly pressed to her ear.

CONSTANCE

(sotto)

Come on, Skip. Pick up.

Olivia finally stops, turning back to her mom, phone dropping down by her side, head shaking, terror blooming.

Constance is out the door. Rushing across the lot. Wrapping her arms around her now crying daughter.

EXT. MARINA - MORNING

As the sun rises over Cape May, COAST GUARD BOATS fan out into the ocean. The search for Skip Young underway.

EXT. OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA CHURCH - DAY

An overcast PRAYER VIGIL is underway. Half of Cape May has shown up. The OLD MONEY FAMILIES and the BLUE COLLAR WORKERS who service them. All weathering yet another storm together.

A PRIEST prays into a bullhorn, as NEWS CREWS clamor to get a shot of Olivia and Constance, who stand at the center of the vigil, surrounded by PRAYER WARRIORS.

EXT. COSTCO PARKING LOT - DAY

A GIRL SCOUT TROOP paints a large banner that says: *PRAYERS FOR SKIP YOUNG*, but a strong gust of wind picks it up and whips it into the sky.

They chase after it, but it hits a tree and tears in half. The LEADER throws her paintbrush down in frustration.

LOCAL REPORTER (PRELAP)
It's been forty-eight hours since
Skip Young set out on a deep-sea
fishing trip...

EXT. RUSTY NAIL BAR AND RESTAURANT - DAY

A LOCAL REPORTER (30) stands in front of a BEACH BAR, trying to hold her bangs in place. A sign reads: *2 FOR 1 HURRICANES*. SURFERS loiter in the BG of her shot.

LOCAL REPORTER
And while the search for him
continues, Cape May County and the
surrounding areas brace for the
arrival of hurricane Kayla.

The oblivious Surfers lift their beer cans and WOO-HOO.

INT. CITY HALL - BULLPEN - DAY

Constance crosses the bustling bullpen. Several COWORKERS look up from the pre-storm chaos. She feels their eyes following her, picks up the pace.

INT. CITY HALL - CONSTANCE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Constance lights her candle. Stares at it. Dips her pencil into the flame. Watches it smoke. Someone KNOCKS on her door, startling her.

DALE
(popping his head in)
Hey, you know you don't have to be
here, right?

Constance's boss, City Manager DALE FOGERTY (60, gut pressed against his outlet mall Brooks Brothers suit, glowing with entitlement, beholden only to the Mayor) enters.

CONSTANCE

No, I know. It's just... the kitchen floor can only get so clean.

DALE

Gotcha.
(then)
Any news?

He crosses to her desk, fondles a coffee mug full of pencils.

CONSTANCE

Not yet.

DALE

I'm sure he's fine. Skip's tough as nails. He can handle himself out there.

Constance forces a smile -- *you idiot*.

CONSTANCE

Do you need something?

DALE

I do... Listen, I know this is awful timing, but I just keep thinking about Jack Darsey's boardwalk project, the one we shelved after Sandy.

CONSTANCE

Jack's project didn't die because of Hurricane Sandy. It died because he went on a three day coke bender with three Wildwood prostitutes and a stolen nativity scene.

DALE

I know. But his constituents tore him a new one over the boardwalk. And now they're focused on me, waiting on it to come to fruiti--

Constance TUNES HIM OUT completely. Rubs her temple.

QUICK FLASH: Follow a SHARK FIN cutting through the water, laser aimed at the back of Skip's bobbing head. It disappears underwater.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 I wonder if Skip knows you're
 supposed to fight back if you get
 attacked. Punch it in the nose.
 Gouge its eyes out.

Just as Skip is VIOLENTLY YANKED UNDER, she BLINKS --

BACK TO PRESENT

DALE
 (still rambling)
 Look, all I'm asking is a once over
 on the numbers. Work your magic.
 Buy me a little breathing room on
 this boardwalk thing.

CONSTANCE
 Sure. I'll take a look.

DALE
 That's my girl.
 (as he leaves)
 You look great, by the way. I like
 the new makeup. Takes ten years
 off.

She glares at him as he leaves.

OLIVIA (PRELAP)
 We're just trying to keep things as
 normal as possible right now.

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - CONSTANCE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's dark save for the light from the flickering TV.
 Constance drinks wine in bed. Watches Olivia being
 interviewed by the Local Reporter.

ON TV:

OLIVIA
 We deeply appreciate everyone's
 thoughts and prayers during this
 difficult time.

Constance glances at Skip's side of the bed. His pillows
 untouched. She falls over, buries her face in them.

LOCAL REPORTER (O.S.)
 That was Olivia Young, reigning
 Miss Teen South New Jersey and
 daughter of missing sport
 fisherman, Skip Young.

(beat)

The search for him may be reaching
 a critical point, as Hurricane
 Kayla is expected to make landfall
 in the early morning hours...

She eyeballs the TV --

CONSTANCE
 (remembering something)
 Shit.

Suddenly, she scrambles out of bed, on her feet.

EXT. RAYLYNN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

It's raining. Constance's car pulls up to an old, historic
 Victorian home. It's gorgeous, despite the overgrown yard.
 She parks, runs to the front door.

INT. RAYLYNN'S HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Constance enters the darkened entryway, takes off her wet
 shoes. Hanging above her is a wall of framed photos: three
 generations of BEAUTY QUEENS. On top are black and whites
 from the 60s. In the middle, all Constance, youthful and
 stunning. The bottom row is Olivia in all her glory.

The only other photo in sight is CONSTANCE AND SKIP'S WEDDING
 PICTURE. Constance stares at it, pained. As she straightens
 it, the overhead light turns on.

RAYLYNN (O.S.)
 Took you long enough.

Constance startles, turns and sees her mom, RAYLYNN YOUNG
 (78, false eyelashes, hair perfectly pinned and curled, a
 whiff of boozy irreverence), standing in the hall, fully
 dressed, overnight bag in hand.

CONSTANCE
 Jesus -- you scared me.

RAYLYNN
 Did you forget about me?

CONSTANCE
No -- I just...

RAYLYNN
Forgot.

CONSTANCE
Why didn't you call?

RAYLYNN
I was giving you the benefit of the
doubt, which I see now was a
mistake.

Constance tenses -- *fuck you*. Raylynn sees that she's won,
crosses to her daughter, softening, almost tender.

RAYLYNN (CONT'D)
How are you holding up?

CONSTANCE
I'm not digesting food, if that's
what you mean.

RAYLYNN
Silver-lining?

CONSTANCE
Don't.

Raylynn takes a beat, touches Constance's arm --

RAYLYNN
Well, it's a good thing I'm coming
over. You may think you don't need
me, but I happen to thrive in the
midst of a crisis.

With that, Raylynn heads for the door, leaving Constance to
carry her overnight bag.

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Constance and Olivia stare at the looping radar of The
Weather Channel. Raylynn's in an arm chair, dozing off.

Rain and hail batter the house. Heavy wind rattles the
windows. IT'S LOUD, like a train barreling into the station.
She CLOSES HER EYES, letting the wind become --

QUICK FLASH: The ROAR of an adoring crowd. A darkened
BALLROOM. Constance steps on stage. Dressed to the nines.
Spotlight. Flashbulbs.

OLIVIA (O.S.)

Mom?

Constance OPENS HER EYES.

CONSTANCE

Yeah, baby?

OLIVIA

He's not gonna survive this, is he?

Constance takes her hand.

CONSTANCE

We don't know anything. He could be anywhere right now.

OLIVIA

But... what if they never find him?
What if we never know?

CONSTANCE

He's lived on the water his whole life. I'm sure he's safe.

Olivia looks away. Doesn't believe that. Constance doesn't either. She turns her head, tears streaming down her cheeks. She forces her eyes closed, fighting not to crumble, sob, collapse. Be strong. For her.

Suddenly -- a LOUD POP, and the POWER GOES OUT.

RAYLYNN

(waking up)

Bathtub time.

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Raylynn and Olivia are in the tub. Olivia shines her phone's flashlight, illuminating a path for Constance, who drags a mattress into the room, awkwardly tenting it over them.

OLIVIA

I don't understand why we have to be in the tub.

RAYLYNN

I'll tell you why. Horizontal tornados.

OLIVIA

(to Constance)

Seriously?

CONSTANCE
 (climbing in)
 Don't let her scare you.

A CLAP OF THUNDER causes Olivia to take Constance's hand.

OLIVIA
 This is bad.

Suddenly, the WIND HOWLS and something CRASHES into the house. Constance squeezes Olivia's hand tightly. Raylynn sees that both of them are suffering.

RAYLYNN
 (wishful thinking)
 He's probably down in Bermuda,
 sipping a frozen margarita, getting
 a tan.

Constance forces a smile, plays along --

CONSTANCE
 Right? With that hideous Bon Jovi
 beach towel he loves so much.

OLIVIA
 Don't forget the deeply
 inappropriate sombrero.

RAYLYNN
 Hey, I gave him that.

Olivia smiles, remembering Skip. Tears spilling over. Constance leans against her, closes her eyes. Raylynn holds her daughter tightly. They all huddle together, the world crashing down around them in every way.

EXT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - MORNING

Birds chirp. Blue sky. Constance stands in the yard. Utter destruction all around her. Windows shattered. Her Honda smashed by a tree. A street sign jutting out from the roof.

But the surrounding houses seem remarkably untouched.

Olivia steps onto the porch. Walks around to get a better look at the TREE THAT'S FALLEN ON HER MOM'S CAR.

Constance is already in clean up mode. Has been for hours. She's sweaty. Exhausted. She clocks her BBQ grill across the street, a neighbor's DOG lifting its leg to URINATE ON IT.

CONSTANCE

Hey!

She hurries across the street, but the dog doesn't budge. It just holds eye contact, continues PEEING.

Constance grabs the grill, and the dog runs off. She drags the grill back toward her house. As she does, she SEES SOMETHING WEIRD inside of it (*something WE don't see*). She reaches in, picks at it, but can't get it out.

Just then, an UNMARKED COP CAR pulls up. Detective Melendez gets out. His expression dour.

MELENDEZ

Mrs. Young?

Constance tenses. Looks at Olivia. Both of them knowing there's no way this is good news.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT./EXT. MELENDEZ'S CAR/RUSTY NAIL BAR AND RESTAURANT - DAY

Melendez drives Constance down a washed out Beach Avenue to the Rusty Nail.

As they pull up, she spots a CAPSIZED BOAT crushing the sign that used to read: *TWO FOR ONE HURRICANES*. The boat's name: CONSTANCE. The cherry on top of this shit-sundae.

A swarm of INVESTIGATORS buzz nearby.

MELENDEZ
Storm washed it up.

CONSTANCE
He must not have been far away.

MELENDEZ
Hard to say exactly.

Constance gets out. As she approaches the boat, the POLICE make space for her. Melendez follows.

MELENDEZ (CONT'D)
The patterns of damage indicate the vessel capsized days ago.

Constance looks up at the cloudless sky.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
Days ago? Was I requesting bids for toilet paper? Ordering trash can lids? Plucking my goddamn eyebrows?

MELENDEZ
All the life vests are still onboard.

She circles the boat.

MELENDEZ (CONT'D)
I'm sure I don't have to tell you... But given the intensity of the storm, we don't have a lot of hope we'll find him alive.

CONSTANCE
The search is off?

She watches him nod -- yes. Absorbs that. Numb.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
What day is it today?

MELENDEZ
Friday.

CONSTANCE
Right.
(then, sotto)
T.G.I.F.

INT./EXT. MELENDEZ'S CAR/CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - LATER

Melendez and Constance pull up to her house.

MELENDEZ
You sure you don't want to go to
your mom's? Your daughter's there.

CONSTANCE
I have to figure out how I'm gonna
tell her first.

Melendez nods.

MELENDEZ
Wish I could help.

CONSTANCE
Got a spare shotgun?

MELENDEZ
Very funny.

She doesn't respond. It wasn't a joke. They share a moment,
then she gets out.

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Broken windows. Debris everywhere. Constance looks through
the liquor cabinet, pulls out a nearly empty bottle of vodka,
takes a swig.

She crosses the room to the pantry, pulls out an EMERGENCY
KIT. Flashlights, batteries, a BANK BAG. She unzips it, looks
inside -- but IT'S EMPTY.

Confused, she digs through the kit. Pulls everything out.
Makes a total mess. Finds nothing. The frustration mounts,
emotion finally coming to a head. She bursts into tears,
loses her shit and THROWS THE KIT ACROSS THE ROOM --

NEIGHBOR
 (through the window)
 I'll just leave this tuna fish out
 here for ya, hon.

Constance startles, sees her NEIGHBOR -- (65 leathery, cigarette dangling from her lips) standing at her back door. She puts a casserole down, scurries away.

CONSTANCE
 (sotto)
 Shit.

EXT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - DAY

Constance pedals Olivia's old banana seat bike out of the garage. Casserole balanced on the handlebars.

EXT. CAPE MAY - DAY

She rides through the city. Past KIDS happily playing in storm puddles. Past CITY CREWS fixing power lines. Past beautiful WASHINGTON STREET MALL and all its SHOP OWNERS assessing the rain damage.

EXT. RAYLYNN'S HOUSE - DAY

Constance dumps the bike and heads inside with the food.

INT. RAYLYNN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Constance sets the casserole down on the counter. Olivia looks up from her phone. Stands.

OLIVIA
 Tell me.

CONSTANCE
 They found the boat.

OLIVIA
 And?

CONSTANCE
 (struggles, then)
 There's no 'and'.

OLIVIA
 It's over?

CONSTANCE

They're not searching anymore.

Olivia's face contorts with pain. Constance crosses to her, tries to hug her, but Olivia shakes her head -- no.

Constance relents.

OLIVIA

So what now? A funeral? Some kind of service? Are we saying he's dead?

CONSTANCE

We don't have to say anything. There's no rush.

OLIVIA

You want to sit in this limbo for even longer?

CONSTANCE

No. But it's important to process.

OLIVIA

Process what? A question mark? An unsolved mystery?

CONSTANCE

Liv, he's gone.

OLIVIA

(resisting)
They didn't find him.

CONSTANCE

I saw the boat. There's no way.

Olivia shakes her head, tears flowing. Constance hugs her.

OLIVIA

I hate him so much.

CONSTANCE

Liv --

OLIVIA

No. He's the reason we stayed in this stupid town, so he could be close to his precious water.

CONSTANCE

It was his passion.

OLIVIA

Yeah well, look where that got him.

Olivia runs out. Constance takes a breathless beat, tears spilling from her eyes. Then, she doubles over, wincing with STOMACH PAIN.

INT. RAYLYNN'S HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Constance hurries to her mom's 1985 CADILLAC ELDORADO CONVERTIBLE, cranks the engine, backs out of the driveway.

INT. RITE AID - DAY

A painfully catchy pop song plays, as Constance, eyes red and swollen, still on the verge of tears, loads her basket with Pepto -- all the Pepto.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

You're not the only person who needs that, you know?

She turns, sees BELLS (30, un-showered, torn jeans, a backpack stuffed to the gills) standing behind her.

CONSTANCE

Get the tablets.

BELLS

The tablets suck. They're too chalky.

CONSTANCE

Well then, use Immodium.

BELLS

You use Immodium. I need it for heartburn.

CONSTANCE

(holding on by a thread)

Well, that's nice, but I need it so I can function in the world right now, okay?

(losing it)

All I want is to have a normal bowel movement. Is that too much to ask?

With that, she breaks down. Heaving heavy tears. Bells looks around, awkward, then places her hand on Constance's back. Empathic. A silent witness. Constance feels it, needs it.

Just then, A MANAGER (40, male) storms up -- on a mission.

MANAGER
(to Constance)
Ma'am, is this woman bothering you?

CONSTANCE
What?

MANAGER
Is she bothering you?

CONSTANCE
No -- mind your own business.

He scoffs, totally offended, then marches away.

BELLS
(beat)
Your colon has too much water in
it. That's your problem.

Bells tosses some FIBER CHEWS into Constance's basket. Constance looks down at them, but when she looks back up, Bells is already rounding the corner, flipping the Manager off as she goes.

Constance wipes her face with her sleeve, as --

BURT (PRELAP)
(nervous)
You have to have a death
certificate, Connie.

INT. STURDY SAVINGS BANK - BURT'S OFFICE - DAY

Constance sits, stares at a framed photo: Poolside with a beaming MAN (45, doughy), his wife and five kids. She pops a fiber chew, lifts her eyes to the man in the photo.

CONSTANCE
Don't you see how that's a little
bit complicated, Burt, considering
I don't have a body?

BURT, the bank manager, sits across from her, slides some papers across the desk.

BURT
Well, we still need it, and you
have to fill out these forms in
order to be given authority over
his personal accounts.

CONSTANCE
 (confused)
 What personal accounts?

BURT
 His credit cards.
 (checking the computer)
 He had three.

CONSTANCE
 No, he didn't.

BURT
 (looking at his computer)
 They're right here, Connie.

CONSTANCE
 Is there debt?

Burt tenses, nervously spinning a LETTER OPENER.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
 Burt.

BURT
 I can't discuss this with you until
 you're made his legal executor.

CONSTANCE
 Are you serious? How long have you
 known me?

He doesn't answer.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
 When have I ever asked you for
 anything?

BURT
 I can't break policy.

CONSTANCE
 I'm his wife.
 (off his look)
 Which means that debt is mine now,
 and you know it.

Burt's torn.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
 Please. I'm begging you. I need to
 know if I'm in trouble.

Finally, under his breath --

BURT
Ninety seven thousand.

CONSTANCE
What?!

BURT
(tense)
Calm down.

She leans across the desk, fury brewing --

CONSTANCE
Give me those goddamn statements,
or I'll stab you with that letter
opener right now.

Burt presses print. Just then, Constance's CELL RINGS. She doesn't recognize the number. Answers anyway.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
Hello?

PAIGE (O.S.)
Hi, it's Paige -- Paige King.

Constance's breath catches. She bolts up, walks away from Burt. Hopeful. Nervous. She puts the phone back to her ear.

CONSTANCE
Paige? How did you get this--

PAIGE (O.S.)
(pre-recorded)
--just a reminder that you only
have a few days left to qualify for
our annual De Leon, "Fountain of
You" Awards ceremony in beautiful
Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Constance deflates. Disconnects. An odd mix of disappointment and relief. *What would she have said, anyway?* Burt approaches, holds out the printed statements. Constance snatches them and bolts.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - DAY

The Eldorado skids into the driveway, parks.

INT. ELDORADO - SAME

Constance looks at the charges on the bank statement.

CONSTANCE
(sotto)
Bait and tackle. Tommy Bahamas. A
tanning salon?

She continues reading, her finger scrolling to a CASH
ADVANCE: \$2000. Then another: \$1000. Another for \$3500.

She takes a beat, confusion becoming anger.

EXT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Constance hurries to the BBQ GRILL, pulls off the lid.

Finally, WE SEE what's inside -- a PIECE OF MELTED CREDIT
CARD stuck to the bottom. Constance leans the grill over,
checks the statement against the remaining unmelted numbers.

PERFECT MATCH.

CONSTANCE
What the fuck?

She KICKS over the grill.

QUINCY (O.S.)
Mrs. Young?

Constance spins around, finds an insurance adjuster, QUINCY
(30, lanky, huge smile), crossing the yard toward her, camera
in one hand, clipboard in the other.

QUINCY (CONT'D)
My name's Quincy Rice. I'm from the
Catastrophe Response Team at State
Farm. How are you today?

CONSTANCE
Never been better, Quincy. How
about yourself?

QUINCY

Good. Thanks for asking. First of all, we'd like to extend our deepest sympathies to you during this very difficult time.

CONSTANCE

Thank you. That means so much.

QUINCY

We're going to get you all taken care of, but I do want to remind you that once the storm was named, we did have to activate a raise in deductibles.

CONSTANCE

Fantastic. What's the damage?

QUINCY

(realizing she's unhinged)
Yours isn't all that bad. It just went up to fifteen thousand.

CONSTANCE

Fifteen thousand. Wow. I have to pay you fifteen thousand dollars to fix my house.

QUINCY

To meet your deductible.

CONSTANCE

To fix my house.

QUINCY

Right. But the good news is you can apply for a state subsidized loan to repair the water damage and help with the cost of the deductible.

CONSTANCE

Oh, well in that case, it's like I won the goddamn lottery.

QUINCY

We've got you covered on everything else. The tree, the roof, the hail damage... I'll submit your claim today and before you know it, you'll be good as new.

CONSTANCE

I highly doubt that, Quincy.

He smiles, uncomfortable. Then --

QUINCY

Oh. Almost forgot. I found a little something in your backyard.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a GOLD WEDDING BAND. Constance's eyes go wide. It's SKIP'S WEDDING RING.

CONSTANCE

(shocked)

Where did you find that?

QUINCY

Right out there. Under the apple tree.

She grabs the ring from him, crosses the yard.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

You never know what a storm'll wash up. All kinds of buried treasure.

CONSTANCE

(calling out)

Here?

QUINCY

(nodding)

Yes, ma'am.

Constance falls to her knees, starts DIGGING with her bare hands. It's an insane sight to behold.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Okay. So we'll be in touch in the next few days. Thank you so much for your time and thanks for choosing State Farm.

She doesn't bother to look up. He hurries out of the yard.

She grabs a nearby shovel, heaves more earth. All her confusion, fear, sadness channeled into this quest.

Just as she's on the brink of collapse, she sees something.

She drops to her knees, pulls out SKIP'S LUCKY RED BEER KOOZIE. It reads: *EARLY TO BED, EARLY TO RISE, FISH ALL DAY AND MAKE UP LIES*. Next to it, poking out of the dirt, is Skip's DRIVER'S LICENSE.

She pulls it out. Her mind going a million miles an hour. After a beat, she looks back at the grill, a *realization forming* --

CONSTANCE

(sotto)

What the fuck?

She walks the yard, trying to wrap her mind around it. Then in a burst, she grabs the shovel, and starts BASHING IN A LARGE PLASTIC FLAMINGO.

Olivia walks up. Constance doesn't notice.

OLIVIA

Mrs. Tambersen's been canvassing the neighborhood for that thing.

Constance drops the shovel. Tries to catch her breath.

CONSTANCE

Shouldn't you be at school?

OLIVIA

I checked out. Came to get clothes for pageant rehearsal.

CONSTANCE

Right. The show must go on, I guess.

OLIVIA

(beat)

Are you still having a makeup party this weekend?

(no response)

Mom?

CONSTANCE

I don't think so.

Olivia takes a beat, digesting that.

OLIVIA

(spotting something)

Hey, isn't that Dad's lucky koozie?

CONSTANCE

Yeah. He must have forgotten it.

Olivia walks over, picks it up. After a beat --

OLIVIA

He wouldn't want you to quit, you know. He'd want you to be happy.

Constance isn't sure that's true.

CONSTANCE

Come here.

(pulling her into a hug)

You don't worry about me, okay? You just focus on you. I'll be fine.

Olivia nods, then --

OLIVIA

Sasha's dad said we can use their church if we want to do a service.

CONSTANCE

That's great. We'll do that.

OLIVIA

Take it easy on the flamingo.

CONSTANCE

We both know it had it coming.

Olivia smiles, puts the koozie down, and walks away. Once she's gone, Constance realizes she's covered in dirt, brushes herself off.

RAYLYNN (PRELAP)

Are you done yet?

INT. CAPPY'S SEASIDE PIZZA AND STEAKS - DAY

A locals-only spot. Plastic, checkered tablecloths. Raylynn watches, annoyed, as Constance CHUGS A DIET MOUNTAIN DEW. Two slices of untouched Hawaiian ooze on paper plates in front of them. Constance finally relents, puts the soda down.

CONSTANCE

(off Raylynn's annoyance)

Oh, I'm sorry, do you have something pressing to discuss?

RAYLYNN

Yes. I need you to look into something for me.

CONSTANCE

I'm a little busy these days, in case you haven't noticed.

RAYLYNN

It's about Skip.

CONSTANCE

(suddenly serious)

What about Skip?

RAYLYNN

I don't know how to say this
without you getting all worked
up...

(off Constance's look)

He was working for me.

CONSTANCE

Working for you, how?

RAYLYNN

He was in charge of my investments.

CONSTANCE

(stifling a laugh)

Oh. Okay. Did you win a scratcher
or something?

She bites into her slice of pizza.

RAYLYNN

No. It's Daddy's money. I've always
had it, but I never touch it
because it belongs to Olivia. Skip
was helping me manage it.

Constance stares at her mother, suddenly baffled.

CONSTANCE

How come I never knew about this
money?

RAYLYNN

Because it's not polite to discuss
financial matters with every person
you know.

CONSTANCE

But you told Skip.

RAYLYNN

He was a smart man.

CONSTANCE

I'm an accountant. I literally deal
with money all day long.

RAYLYNN

So. Men have better instincts. They know when to dive in and when to cut and run.

Constance tenses -- *did he cut and run?*

CONSTANCE

Please tell me you have access to your accounts.

RAYLYNN

No. That's what I'm saying. I need you to dig through his paperwork and find my account numbers.

Constance goes numb again. Raylynn notices.

RAYLYNN (CONT'D)

Are you really that jealous I went to him and not you?

CONSTANCE

(sarcasm)

No. He was a financial genius. A real numbers guy. It makes perfect sense.

Raylynn senses the snark, throws her a *fuck you* smile.

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - CONSTANCE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Constance frantically searches through Skip's things. Fishing magazines. Parking tickets. A shrine of Olivia photos that give her pause. *He couldn't have run out on her, could he?*

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

She's moved on to the garage. Searching shelves. Tackle boxes. Old file folders. The fucking deep freezer. Nothing.

Then she hears it -- the unmistakable sound of a TRASH TRUCK rolling down the street outside. Her eyes dart to the empty space where her trashcan should be but isn't. Holy shit.

EXT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Constance bursts out of her house in a panic. She spots a gleaming Cape May TRASH TRUCK clamping its METAL JAW around her BLACK CAN.

CONSTANCE
 (running)
No! Wait!

But it doesn't stop. As the mechanical arm lifts the can into the air, Constance jumps on top of it, screaming bloody murder --

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
STOP!

A TRASH MAN (30) thinks he hears something, leans out and sees Constance. Terror washes over him, as he reaches for the emergency stop. The can jolts to a halt, reverses course.

TRASH MAN
 (leaning out the window)
 Are you out of your goddamn mind?

CONSTANCE
 Drop the can.

He dumps the can -- and her with it.

TRASH MAN
 You could've killed yourself.

But she's not listening. She quickly drags the can back to her yard, dumps it out, searching through the trash. Food, debris, and finally -- A PIECE OF MAIL. An unopened ENVELOPE addressed to RAYLYNN MAYWEATHER from MAHONEY ASSET GROUP.

She tears into it, sees the balance. A big, fat \$0. Her face goes white with shock. She flips through the pages looking for a previous balance.

Bingo -- PREVIOUS STATEMENT BALANCE: \$1.9 MILLION.

Suddenly, the world goes silent. She can't breathe, can't think, can't move. Her hands shake as she stares at that huge fucking number. Her ear begins to ring, as her blood pressure rises. Shock becoming anger. Certainty. Betrayal. Finally, the sound comes rushing back, and so does she --

CONSTANCE
 You motherless fuck.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT./EXT. ELDORADO/CAPE MAY - DAY

Constance drives through the city, vacillating between numbness and mania. Beating her steering wheel. Then eerily calm. Then back to attacking her car again.

She sees a COP CAR up ahead. Lights flashing. She slows with traffic.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
I should go to the cops. Let them
hunt you down. Put your ass away.

As she rolls past the COP CAR, she sees a COP harassing Bells, pulling all her shit out of her backpack. But Bells is unfazed. She looks right at Constance, WAVES. Constance waves back --

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
But I know better. I know that
would crush our daughter.

INT. SASHA'S HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

The bathroom is expansive, vast swathes of marble, jetted-tub, chandelier. Olivia stands in front of the mirror, wiping tears, using Sasha's mom's concealer to hide dark circles. A KNOCK. Olivia jams the concealer back into a drawer.

OLIVIA
Yeah?

The door opens, and Sasha (the friend from volleyball practice) enters carrying a stunning, floor-length, PURPLE SEQUINED GOWN in her arms.

SASHA
Hey -- you okay? You disappeared.

OLIVIA
(deflecting)
Is that it?

SASHA
(nodding)
My mom's taking it to get fitted.

Olivia crosses to her, studies the dress, the intricate bead work, the hand stitching. It's heavenly.

SASHA (CONT'D)
How's your mom doing?

OLIVIA
I don't know. Trying to keep it
together, I guess. Can we not talk
about it?

Sasha nods, gets it. Olivia runs her hand across the dress.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
I called it, didn't I?

SASHA
What?

OLIVIA
Your strategy. Sparkles. Plunging
neckline... Doesn't matter now
though --

SASHA
Why not?

OLIVIA
C'mon. A dead dad makes me a shoe-
in. I could show up in my
underwear, and they'd probably
throw the crown at me.

It's true.

SASHA
(joking)
You lucky bitch.

OLIVIA
(laughs, eyes welling)
Right?
(then)
Wouldn't have mattered anyway
though -- no one wins in purple...
statistically speaking.

Sasha flips her off. Olivia smiles, starts to cry, fights it
in vain. Sasha bails her out.

SASHA
You want to see something insane?

OLIVIA
Yes please.

Sasha crosses to her dad's sink, reaches under, and pulls out A STACK OF IMPORTED PORN MAGAZINES. Olivia takes one --

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Holy shit.

SASHA
I know. Disgusting, right?

Olivia doesn't answer. She's flips through, transfixed.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Hello? My Jesus loving dad is into hairy-lady-felching porn, and you don't have anything to say?

Olivia catches herself, looks up --

OLIVIA
I bet your mom does this for him.

SASHA
Ew... Debra doesn't even give blowies.

Sasha snatches the porn back. Olivia doubles over, hit with a fat wave of anxiety. She looks up at Sasha --

OLIVIA
Does your mom have any Xanax?

SASHA
Does the Pope shit in the woods?

Sasha crosses to the cabinet, searches. As Olivia waits, she focuses on one of the open porn magazines. Half an image is visible. A NUDE WOMAN, arms overhead, tufts of ARMPIT HAIR juxtaposing her ultra feminine curls, lashes, and lipgloss. Pleasure smeared across her face.

SASHA (CONT'D)
(holding out a pill)
Here you go.

Olivia pops it into her mouth, shoves her face under the faucet, and gulps down the little, blue pill.

INT. CITY HALL - CONSTANCE'S OFFICE - DAY

Silence, as an ashen Constance sits at her desk, staring at Skip's credit card statements and Raylynn's drained investment papers.

Suddenly, her SCREEN SAVER FLICKS ON -- it's a slow-moving PHOTO of a tan, Oakley wearing Skip. Behind him a freshly caught marlin hangs from a winch. Constance smacks the space-bar, waking the computer, as a whiny, false sympathy voice brings her back into the moment --

BRENEE (O.S.)

I can't even imagine...

Constance looks up, refocusing on Kathleen (from the birthday scene) and BRENEE (35) who are seated across the desk from her, employing their deepest sympathetic expressions.

BRENEE (CONT'D)

This must be so incredibly hard.

KATHLEEN

We heard your house got hit pretty hard too. On top of everything.

CONSTANCE

Yeah. If I didn't know better I'd think the universe was conspiring against me.

KATHLEEN

Oh, sweetheart. I know it's hard to hear, but we've got to remember that everything, even the worst of the worst, happens for a reason.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)

I hate you.

CONSTANCE

So true...

She clocks her box of De Leon makeup, an idea forming.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)

(playing it up)

I just really miss my partner in crime, you know? He was my biggest cheerleader. In everything I did.

The ladies nod, empathizing.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)

(teary, full of shit)

He even bought me my very first starter kit of De Leon cosmetics... He said he loved nothing more than watching me shine out in the world.

KATHLEEN

Oh my god. You do shine, Constance.

BRENEE

You do.

CONSTANCE

(blows her nose)

I just don't think I can do it anymore. Sell makeup. I mean, if this is what De Leon means by "reshaping your life" who would want that?

Kathleen crosses, puts her arm around Constance.

KATHLEEN

You are a strong, beautiful woman, and there's absolutely nothing more inspiring than watching someone walk through the complications of life with grace and dignity.

CONSTANCE

(fake touched)

Thank you.

KATHLEEN

I'd buy makeup from you in a heartbeat.

CONSTANCE

You would?

KATHLEEN

Course I would.

BRENEE

Me too.

KATHLEEN

Hey, you know what? Let's lock the door and have our own De Leon party right here, right now.

CONSTANCE

Oh, I couldn't. What if Dale found out?

KATHLEEN

Well I'm not gonna tell him. Are you?

Constance smiles -- something in her has definitely shifted.

INT. CITY HALL - HALLWAY - LATER

Kathleen and Brenee come out of Constance's office, each with a little bag of makeup. As Constance watches them walk away, a shit-eating grin curls its way across her mouth --

TOYA (O.S.)

Constance --

Constance turns, sees Toya (from the opening makeup party). She's dressed in a SECURITY GUARD UNIFORM, gun holstered to her hip, envelope in hand.

TOYA (CONT'D)

What are you doing here? Shouldn't you be taking some time off?

CONSTANCE

(triumphant)

I'm selling some goddamn makeup.
What are you doing here?

Toya, put on her heels, watches as Constance counts her cash.

TOYA

I wanted to come by to tell you how sorry I am for your loss --

CONSTANCE

(sotto)

Don't be.

TOYA

Excuse me?

CONSTANCE

Who knows -- maybe that shitbag I called a husband was actually holding me back and somebody on high finally decided to cut me a fucking break.

Toya's stunned.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)

(re: the envelope)

What's that?

TOYA

It's... a sympathy card.

Constance tosses out a blatantly fake smile -- *isn't that fucking cute.*

INT. CITY HALL - CONSTANCE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Constance sits at her desk. Opens the card. It's FLOWERS IN A THUNDERSTORM embossed with trite condolences. Inside, there's a 50% RED WINE BEVMO COUPON. Constance smiles, throws the card in the trash but keeps the coupon.

She focuses on her computer, navigates to the De Leon WEBSITE. The HOMEPAGE is a picture of Paige King, laughing as she falls into a sea of GOLD GLITTER. Across the page is De Leon's tagline: *LET US LEAD YOU TO THE FOUNTAIN OF YOU.*

Constance LOGS IN. Marks her products SOLD, totaling a measly \$178. A box pops up, reading: *ONLY \$822 MORE GETS YOU TO ATLANTIC CITY, BABY!* Constance stares at: *ATLANTIC CITY --* imagines how great it'd feel to escape her life for a night.

EXT. RAYLYNN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The Eldorado is parked in the driveway.

INT. RAYLYNN'S HOUSE - CONSTANCE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Constance sits on the floor, sipping bourbon, watching a De Leon Cosmetics infomercial on her laptop.

ON SCREEN:

A darkened BALLROOM. (*The same ballroom as Constance's fantasy earlier.*) Paige King steps on stage, dressed to the nines. Glamorous as fuck. The CROWD goes wild. Flashbulbs. She smiles, lifts a MIC --

PAIGE

Ladies! You gorgeous goddesses. Who here has been transformed?

Thunderous APPLAUSE. WHISTLES. TEARS of SUPERFANS.

Constance picks up a TATTERED PHOTO: She and Paige in high school. Tiaras and pageant gowns on. Cigarettes dangling from their lips. Paige cupping Constance's boobs. Constance dying laughing.

PAIGE (CONT'D)

Who came here with a nagging voice in their head that says "*I can't do this, my dreams are too big, I'll never make it?*"

CONSTANCE
(sotto)
Me.

Raylynn pokes her head in.

RAYLYNN
(annoyed)
Is that Paige again?

CONSTANCE
(closing her laptop)
No.

RAYLYNN
You still think that's a good idea?

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
Yes.

Constance doesn't answer. Raylynn turns to go.

CONSTANCE
Hey, mom? Can we talk?

RAYLYNN
Did you find my paperwork?

CONSTANCE
I did.

RAYLYNN
Good. I already talked to a guy
down at Fidelity.

Raylynn comes back, sits on the bed.

CONSTANCE
Mom, do you trust me?

RAYLYNN
Of course I do.

CONSTANCE
Then, please let me help you. My
instincts are as good as Skip's
ever were, and taking over your
investments would be a distraction
from all the horrible things going
on in my life right now.

Raylynn takes a beat, considering.

RAYLYNN

You know, I was only trying to help you.

CONSTANCE

Help me what?

RAYLYNN

Wrangle him into some ambition. Direction. I thought if he was good at this, he might make a career out of it. You could finally quit that stupid job of yours... I never meant to pile more work on your plate.

Constance is touched by this revelation, absorbing it.

RAYLYNN (CONT'D)

We'll be okay, won't we?

CONSTANCE

Yes. We will.

RAYLYNN

(standing)

Thank god I never spent any of that money, right?

CONSTANCE

(forcing a smile)

Right.

With that, Raylynn walks out, and Constance stares into the void -- knowing she's fucked.

EXT. CITY HALL - BACK LOT - DAY

The glow of morning. A TRASH TRUCK grips the DUMPSTER with its robot hands. Flings it over the side, empties it.

INT. CITY HALL - DALE'S OFFICE - DAY

Constance takes a seat amongst a shrine of Philadelphia Eagles memorabilia. She's nervous, fiddling with a paperclip. Across from her is Dale, shifty in his chair.

CONSTANCE

Thank you for taking the time to see me.

DALE

It worked out. I need to speak with you too.

CONSTANCE

(surprised)

What about?

DALE

You first.

CONSTANCE

Okay, I guess I'll just start by saying it's been two years since our last discussion concerning a potential pay increase, so I thought I'd recap the last twenty-four months or so. First of all, my proposed utility rate hike brought in an extra three hundred sixty--

DALE

(interrupting)

Are you asking me for a raise right now?

CONSTANCE

Yes.

DALE

You're kidding, right? We just got hit by a hurricane.

CONSTANCE

I'm aware. But given my current situation, I don't have the luxury of waiting. Who's to say what kind of financial hurdles I'm gonna be coming up against in the next weeks, months, years? I realize the timing is bad...

DALE

Spectacularly horrible. The answer's no.

CONSTANCE

I think if you just heard me out, you might change your mind.

DALE

No. Look, I know this is a tough time for you.

(MORE)

DALE (CONT'D)

I can't even begin to imagine what you're going through... But I'd be derelict in my duties if I put your needs above everyone else's in the office.

CONSTANCE

I'm not asking for preferential treatment.

DALE

I'm not talking about the raise.

Constance tenses, straightening the paperclip into a spear.

DALE (CONT'D)

People around here are having feelings. About you being here, in this... state.

She furrows her brow, confused.

DALE (CONT'D)

I realize this isn't PC, but Cape May isn't a place where folks put a premium on that, so here it is -- It's hard for people to feel comfortable and productive around someone who's... suffering so much. It's a drain on the collective morale.

Constance is speechless.

DALE (CONT'D)

I know you can't really afford to take time off. And I don't want you to. I need you here. You know that.

She digs the paperclip into the chair, tearing the fabric.

DALE (CONT'D)

It's just... heavy, you know? And I'm hoping, for the sake of the office, you can just... be aware of how you're affecting people. Maybe fake a smile every now and then, as horrible as that is.

Fuck this motherfucker.

DALE (CONT'D)

Besides, you're selling makeup now, right?

(MORE)

DALE (CONT'D)
 (off her blank stare)
 You know what they say -- a smile's
 the best makeup a girl could ever
 wear.

Constance stands, fury boiling inside of her.

CONSTANCE
 That's what they say.

She turns to go --

DALE
 Hey Constance?

She stops, stabbing the paperclip into her thigh.

DALE (CONT'D)
 We can always revisit the raise
 conversation once we know our
 recovery numbers are airtight.

CONSTANCE
 (smiling, homicidal)
 Sounds like a plan.

INT. CITY HALL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Constance exits Dale's office, pulls a bottle of Pepto from her purse, chugs it.

She hurries toward her office -- passes Kathleen and Brenee who nervously avoid eye contact. *Narc bitches*. Constance puts on a BIG FUCKING FAKE SMILE for them anyway.

INT. CITY HALL - CONSTANCE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Constance comes in, slams the door, locks it. She takes a beat, then walks to her computer, sits, cranks on MUSSORGSKY: GNOMUS, and lights her candle.

CONSTANCE
 You're okay. Breathe.

She takes a deep inhale, refocuses ON THE COMPUTER -- the CITY BUDGET. A BLINKING CURSOR flashes on a line item: PRE-CIVIL WAR DOORKNOBS -- \$417.

Blink. Blink. Blink. The cursor taunts her.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
Those bitches and their stupid
doorknobs.

She highlights the seven, presses DELETE -- leaving \$41.

CONSTANCE
Much better.

She catches a glimpse of the DUMPSTER, looks back at the computer. A twinkle in her eyes. *An idea forming.*

She clicks an EMPTY FIELD under SANITATION. Types: *SEWAGE AND WASTE DEVELOPMENT*. Tabs over and adds \$376 for... Hmm... *SANITATION GLOVES*. She hits SAVE, studies her work. Almost smiles, as she takes in all the numbers filling her screen. As the MUSIC SWELLS --

Constance moves numbers from one column to the next. Deleting. Adding. Swapping. Over and over again. She opens an OLD INVOICE from a GARBAGE COMPANY. Prints it. Whites out the details. Blows it dry. Scans it back in.

She opens the file in Acrobat. Types new details. *PAYABLE TO: Sewage and Waste Development*. In the amount of -- \$5699.32. Command "P". As the printer spits out the new invoice, she opens the city CHECKBOOK, writes a check to S.A.W.D. for \$5699.32. She flips the check over. ENDORSES IT HERSELF.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
(sotto)
You know what they say: a smile's
the best makeup a girl could ever
wear.

With that, SHE SMILES -- her heart pounding in her chest. Something inside of her coming alive. Euphoric. Powerful.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. STURDY SAVINGS BANK - LOBBY - DAY

Elevator music. Constance stands in line at the BUSINESS TELLER WINDOW, nervously picking a hangnail. Finally, the TELLER (25, female) calls her over.

TELLER

Mrs. Young, what can we do for you today?

CONSTANCE

(sliding her the check)
I need to cash this.

The teller looks at the check, flips it over to see the endorsement, then flips it back over.

TELLER

That's weird.

CONSTANCE

(tense)
What?

TELLER

I misread this check as being made out to the word "sad"... It's not obviously.

(realizing)
Oh, not because it's you or anything. Gosh, I hope it didn't sound like that. I'm such an idiot.

CONSTANCE

You're fine.

TELLER

(embarrassed)
How would you like your bills?

CONSTANCE

(bright-eyed)
Hundreds are fine.

The teller counts out the cash, pushes it through the slot.

INT./EXT. ELDORADO - DAY

Constance gets into the car. ENERGIZED. She looks over at the box of De Leon makeup sitting on her front seat, then cranks the ignition.

EXT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Constance (still in her work clothes) digs a new hole in the backyard. She takes some of her unsold De Leon Cosmetics and dumps them in, packaging and all.

She buries them under a mound of dirt.

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

The house is still in shambles.

Constance sits at the table. Laptop open to the De Leon website. She clicks little boxes next to her inventory list, marks a lot of it SOLD. Exactly \$822 worth.

Her new TOTAL SALES add up to -- \$1000. A box pops up:
CONGRATS! YOU'RE INVITED TO ATLANTIC CITY TO MEET PAIGE KING!

Constance stares at the screen. Harry fucking Houdini. She reaches into her purse. Pulls out the cash. Lays each hundred dollar bill out in front of her. Covering the table. Finally, a smile emerges.

EXT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Constance, towel wrapped around her head, puts Skip's BEER KOOZIE and the BANK STATEMENT into the BBQ grill. Douses them with lighter fluid.

She lights a match, tosses it in. WHOOSH.

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY - DAY

A blue sky blazes over Constance's RENTAL SEDAN as she drives into the city. Past casinos. Hotels. Pawn shops. All the makings of a town built on tourism, vice, Capitalism.

INT. HILTON - ATLANTIC CITY - LOBBY - DAY

Constance, fresh-faced, new outfit, feeling great, checks-in.

DESK GIRL

Are you here for the De Leon convention?

CONSTANCE

Yes I am.

DESK GIRL types. Constance watches other MAKEUP LADIES (all shapes and sizes) mingle around larger than life cardboard cut-outs of Paige King and a very real GOLD PORSCHE.

DESK GIRL

(handing her a key)
Enjoy your weekend.

CONSTANCE

Thank you very much.

INT. HILTON - ATLANTIC CITY - CORRIDOR/ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A BELLHOP leads Constance to her room. He opens the door. Ocean view suite. Her face lights up. She peels a couple TWENTIES from her WAD OF CASH. Tips the Bellhop. He's flattered.

INT. HILTON - ATLANTIC CITY - NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

A De Leon MEET AND GREET PARTY. Open bar. Dated dance music pumping. Gold everything. Gaggles of MAKEUP LADIES taking selfies together. "THE FOUNTAIN OF YOU" all over everything.

Constance (new dress, looking drugstore chic) adjusts her NAME-TAG as she walks the room. A YOUNG WOMAN stops her, hands her a CARD --

YOUNG WOMAN

Paige King is speaking, get there early.

The young woman moves on. Constance looks down, reads:
INTENTION SETTING WORKSHOP, 8pm, GRAND BALLROOM.

She tucks the card into her purse, eyes the GOLD DIAMOND ELITES (the highest rung of the De Leon ladder) at their VIP tables. Champagne flowing. She looks for Paige -- doesn't see her. She tries to approach some of the VIPs, but they're roped off. Unattainable.

INT. HILTON - ATLANTIC CITY - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Constance paper-towels her sweaty armpits, when a woman, SHEILA (60, sharp bangs, signature De Leon Tiffany chain-necklace dangling in her power-cleavage, gold heart attached) comes out of a stall to wash her hands.

Constance trashes the paper towel, washes her hands, too.

CONSTANCE
(re: the necklace)
You're a gold diamond elite?

SHEILA
So they tell me.

CONSTANCE
Can I ask you something? Advice-wise?
(off Sheila's look)
How do I make real money here?

SHEILA
Real money? Like me?

CONSTANCE
Yes.

Sheila dries her hands, studies Constance.

SHEILA
What are we selling?

CONSTANCE
(hesitates)
Makeup.

SHEILA
You just went broke.

Sheila starts to go, but Constance steps in front of her.

CONSTANCE
Please.
(off Sheila's sigh)
What are we selling?

SHEILA
Honey, I sell smoke. A dream, an illusion, a lifestyle to other women, who in turn sell it to other women and on and on and on.

CONSTANCE
 (realizing)
 A pyramid scheme?

SHEILA
 A number's game. You can upgrade to two-ply working your ass off peddling lipgloss. Or you can get other people to work hard for you. Are you good with numbers?

CONSTANCE
 (dawning, to herself)
 You have no idea.
 (to Sheila)
 So, you recruit.

SHEILA
 No. I attract. I lead. I insist. I inhale the word no, and exhale the word yes. Because what have I got to lose if I don't? My pride? My self-esteem? No. My money.

Constance nods along. Her wheels turning.

SHEILA (CONT'D)
 (drilling down)
 Those women out there who have lined up beneath me, who follow me out onto the battlefield -- I am their captain, because I know what you don't -- life is a take-no-prisoners, rejection-embracing battle to the death.
 (leaning in)
 You bet your ass it's a pyramid scheme. And I have the seven figure bank account to prove it.

Constance's stares into the middle distance. An idea forming. A realization dawning. Suddenly, the overhead lights FLASH ON AND OFF. Sheila grabs Constance's arm --

SHEILA (CONT'D)
 (re: the lights)
 Now -- are you ready to get out there and set your intentions?

Constance looks up at Sheila -- *she sure fucking is.*

INT. HILTON - ATLANTIC CITY - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

A suitcase flaps open on the bed. Constance rushes around the room, quickly packing her clothes back into it. Energized. Motivated. A plan in mind.

INT./EXT. RENTAL CAR/NEW JERSEY COAST - NIGHT

Constance drives down the coast. Windows down, wind in her hair, music blaring. Something from her past, her golden years, something PUNK --

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
I wonder where you are right now...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - PAGEANT- NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

SKIP BEAMS, as Olivia's gets her QUEEN PHOTOS taken. Constance watches, taken with his love for his daughter.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
In the back of some plane to
Mexico? Counting your money...

INT. RAYLYNN'S HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Raylynn's cluttered beauty-cave. Antiquated products. Lard. Vaseline. Every curler known to man.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
I should be angry. Furious even.

Raylynn's at the sink, taking off her face. She wipes away her rosy cheeks. Pulls off her lashes. Drags a washcloth loaded with cold cream across her eyebrows. They DISAPPEAR completely. She averts her eyes, doesn't dare look at this version of herself. Exposed. Human. Horrific.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
But what good's that gonna do me?
Truth is, I loved you...

INT. RAYLYNN'S HOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

A catchall room. Antique sewing machines. A treadmill from the 80s. Some oxygen tanks left over from Raylynn's husband's hospice care. Olivia lays in bed, studying the pages of the PORN MAGAZINE she stole from Sasha's house --

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 You were my partner. My best
 friend. Father of my child.

She flips to the image of the NUDE WOMAN with hairy armpits.
 The pleasure smeared across her face. Olivia lifts her arms
 overhead. Mimics the pose. The face. The pleasure.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 I promise to make sure she
 remembers your compassion. Your
 sense of humor. Your curiosity.

INT./EXT. RENTAL CAR/CAPE MAY - NIGHT

Constance drives through CAPE MAY. Deserted streets. Empty
 amusement rides. Sleeping Victorians. She slows to a roll as
 she passes Skip's BOAT, loaded on a flatbed outside the Rusty
 Nail -- CONSTANCE -- HER NAME ON THE HULL, TAUNTING HER.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 The best definition of hitting
 bottom I've ever heard is this --
 when your circumstances deteriorate
 faster than your ability to lower
 your standards for yourself.

INT./EXT. RENTAL CAR/CITY HALL - PARKING LOT - LATER

Not a soul in sight, except Constance. She sits her parked
 rental, studying Skip's WEDDING RING.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 For that, I have you to thank,
 Skip. But I can't blame you
 anymore... I chose invisibility. I
 stayed in this town, took this job,
 accepted my fate. But no more.

After a beat, she clasps the ring onto the chain around her
 neck. Gets out of the car.

INT. CITY HALL - CONSTANCE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Darkness. Constance clicks on a lamp, climbs on a chair,
 muscles her window open. The dumpster looms right outside,
 but she doesn't care. She takes a breath of night air.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 Turns out my eyes have been opened
 to a new world of possibilities.
 (MORE)

CONSTANCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Opportunities I'm uniquely
 qualified to seize. And seize I
 will.

She sits at her desk, throws the knock-off Yankee Candle in the trash. Cracks open a Diet Mountain Dew, takes a slug.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 Because I've finally been led to
 the Fountain of Me -- makeup and
 mathematics. God's divine plan.
 Carpe diem, bitches.

She stares at the COMPUTER SCREEN. CITY BUDGET. 2019
 PROJECTED REVENUES: \$19,165,068.60. SURPLUS: \$2,300,000. Her
 fingers start typing. Purposeful.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 If that means I have to crush
 dreams, tear people apart, and burn
 shit to the ground -- so be it.

Constance stares at the screen. Her cursor finds the SURPLUS.
 Click-click. \$2,250,000. Click-click. \$2,100,000. She stares.
 Her heart pounding. The cursor hovers over the '2' in the
 million column.

She LOOKS RIGHT INTO CAMERA --

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 And if you don't think there's a
 pack of matches and a can of
 lighter fluid in my desk drawer?

QUICK FLASH: Constance's OFFICE. She's in her 80s pageant
 gown. Tiara askew. Mascara running. Euphoric, as SHE SQUIRTS
 LIGHTER FLUID EVERYWHERE.

She strikes a MATCH, FLICKS IT RIGHT AT US --

SMASH TO BLACK.

CONSTANCE (V.O.)
 Then you haven't been paying
 attention.

WHOOSH -- the roar of the office igniting.

END OF PILOT