

**CLARICE**

**PILOT**

"THE SILENCE IS OVER"

Written by

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Based on the character Clarice Starling, created by Thomas Harris

**TEASER**

**EXT. JUSTICE DEPARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

*RAIN falls like clear molasses at 25,000 frames per second, soaking a YOUNG WOMAN whom we see in BLURRY FRAGMENTS:*

*Water dripping off the swish of her PONYTAIL -- the GUN AT HER HIP -- the FBI BADGE around her neck --*

CLARICE (V.O.)  
I thought it was done...

And she comes into FOCUS: **CLARICE STARLING**, 26, was first introduced to us fighting her way through the dark woods. Now, ONE YEAR after the events of The Silence Of the Lambs, she's fighting her way through a swarm of PAPARAZZI as she makes her way to the street from the great doors of the DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE:

CLARICE (V.O.)  
I was there for the families of the victims. Some of them wanted to make statements. Close the book.

*Clarice is fumbling for her KEYS, trying to reach her car as the PAPARAZZI jostle and elbow -- their cameras FLASH --*

CLARICE (V.O.)  
When I came out of Justice... they were all just... everywhere --

Clarice turns, looks right at them -- the FLASHES BUILD -- they're SHOUTING her name: "Clarice Clarice!" -- her hand rises in front of her face to stop them from taking her picture -- to HIDE -- the POPFLASH effects a MATCH CUT TO:

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

THE SAME IMAGE ON A TABLOID COVER. Clarice swarmed at the courthouse. It sits on a table in a THERAPIST'S office:

THERAPIST  
I'm sorry you had to see this here, Clarice. It was left in my waiting area. The press can't seem to let you go.

WIDER: Agent Clarice Starling, wearing a gold add-a-bead necklace and her FBI revolver, is seated across from him. She isn't here by choice. It's 1993 and she's been mandated by The Bureau to attend trauma therapy.

Clarice smiles tightly, her cadence tinged with Appalachia:

CLARICE

It's not so bad, Sir. The checkout lady at the Safeway asked me to autograph a melon.

THERAPIST

I imagine it might cause real resentment with your colleagues. The famous face of the FBI, just a year out of the Academy.

CLARICE

Well. Sometimes we'll duke it out at the vending machine.

(beat)

Not really. I feed data into computers. I'm what they call an 'Igor' in the Behavioral Sciences Lab. I'm not the face of anything, Sir.

THERAPIST

(re: the tabloid)

This says differently. Maybe it's an opportunity for us.

He picks up the tabloid, opens to a page: a COLLAGE of 6 WOMEN, all white, young, size 14 and up. Reads:

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

*"Buffalo Bill's House of Horrors: One Year Later, Survivors Finally Speak."*

*ABRUPT SOUND JOLTS US -- MACRO CU: A NEEDLE PIERCES FABRIC ---*

*IN SILHOUETTE, a large NAKED MAN is seated at a SEWING MACHINE, working the pedal with his meaty, size 11 foot. His TATTOOED HANDS adjust the fabric for the needle -- as they do, we understand it isn't fabric... but HUMAN SKIN --*

**BACK TO CLARICE**, before she can stop herself from saying it --

CLARICE

-- There were no survivors.

*Where did that come from?* The Therapist almost does a double take, then he leans in:

THERAPIST

You saved Catherine Martin. She's a survivor. And so are you.

CLARICE

I meant... it was my job.

THERAPIST

But it wasn't. You were still a trainee when you, quite heroically, stopped Buffalo Bill from skinning and killing more women.

*FLASH: Clarice's TERROR as she FIRES at Buffalo Bill in the subterranean hell of his basement, his body SPINS away and --*

**THE GUNSHOT ECHOES BACK TO CLARICE:**

CLARICE

Excuse me: he killed them before.

THERAPIST

... Oh. Yes. I'm sorry. That designation is important to you?

CLARICE

(a beat)

Yes, Sir. It's important to me that he didn't skin them alive.

Beat.

THERAPIST

When a person experiences severe trauma, they often need help carrying it.

CLARICE

It wasn't-- it wasn't my experience alone. There were some who experienced it... worse.

THERAPIST

The victims.

CLARICE

Yes. Not me.

Beat.

THERAPIST

So... if I'm understanding you correctly, you're neither a victim nor a survivor.

Clarice pauses. He's trying to trap her. Then...

CLARICE

My dad always said to just... walk  
on. Keep walking through. So...

Her eyes drop. Her look drifts back to the open tabloid.  
One photo in particular: **CATHERINE MARTIN**, in sunglasses as  
she's escorted from a Psychiatric Hospital in a wheelchair...

THERAPIST

Do you ever speak to her?  
Catherine Martin?

CLARICE

I'm not sure what there would be to  
speak about, Sir.

*The ABRUPT SHOCK of a TERRIFIED SCREAM takes us to the edge  
of a stone pit in that same hellish basement -- below,  
CATHERINE'S BLURRED FACE looks up at us. As she SCREAMS, a  
SWIRLING CLOUD explodes from her mouth and CONSUMES FRAME:*

DEATH'S HEAD MOTHS

*CLARICE BOLTS UPRIGHT. GASPING. It was a NIGHTMARE, in her  
own small bedroom --*

THERAPIST (V.O.)

You sleeping alright?

**BACK TO CLARICE**, that tight smile. She nods. He assesses  
her, makes a note in her file. Her eyes dart, trying to see  
what he's writing. He looks up, catches her looking:

THERAPIST

I understand you keep in touch with  
the other victims' families. You  
write to them. Check in. But not  
Catherine.

Clarice wants to deflect from Catherine Martin. Carefully:

CLARICE

Sir, I understand it would be --  
easier for everyone -- if I get  
comfortable with the designation of  
'survivor.' I've found most people  
need me to be one thing, a simple  
thing. So they can... relax, I  
guess.

He considers her without blinking:

THERAPIST

... Well. I'm certainly interested in why you resist the term. And why your reflex was to resist it for Catherine. And why the young woman whose life you saved is less alive for you than the young women you didn't save.

Her hand flutters to her add-a-bead necklace. Safety.  
Trying to stay cool:

CLARICE

Sir... I'm mandated to come here and speak with you, and I'm speaking with you.

THERAPIST

That's one way to put it. Another is to say you still call me "Sir," and you've been deflecting like a pro for a year now. Which is understandable, given that your last therapist was an inmate in the Baltimore Hospital for the Criminally Insane, and ate his patients.

CLARICE

He wasn't my therapist. It was a quid pro quo.

THERAPIST

Right: in exchange for pieces of your life, he offered his insights into Buffalo Bill. But you were specifically told not to give him any personal information, Clarice. You chose to ignore that instruction.

CLARICE

Bill was going to skin...  
(it's hard to say the name)  
Catherine. We only had three days.

THERAPIST

Either way, the relationship was intimate. You came to some real truths about yourself, through... *both* of those monsters. How do you carry that? How do you carry his rage? Buffalo Bill's rage?

Her silence becomes dark. Her face says a million things.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

I'll put it another way: what do you do with all your rage, Clarice?

CLARICE

It's not really something I think about. Sir.

The Therapist exhales. Closes the file, having had *enough*...

THERAPIST

Okay. In an effort to get you to finally engage in this therapy, I'm going to tell you what I see. I see an agent who seems to be adopting the families of murdered women, but has not seen her own family in years. A field agent who went into a monster's basement, buried the monster, and has now buried *herself* in the basement of the BSU and rarely sees the light of day.

CLARICE

-- The light doesn't matter so much. To me. Really.

THERAPIST

-- *And*: an agent who just told me she does *not* consider Catherine Martin alive, *despite* having saved her life, nor does she consider *herself* alive. Clarice, I'm concerned. About you. About your judgement. These things make me think, "This Agent needs to be out of rotation entirely until she can truly heal from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder."

Pause. Clarice keeps the tight smile. Looks to her file:

CLARICE

I'm going to tread carefully here, Sir, because I know what you write in there can make my job harder...

(the tabloid:)

Sir, this tabloid has never been opened. It's pristine. No one left it here, Sir. You wanted me to see it. Is that accurate?

Caught. As much as a therapist can bristle, he bristles:

THERAPIST

I'll ask you again, Clarice: I'd like to know what do you do with all your ra--

He's INTERRUPTED by an abrupt KNOCK. A flustered RECEPTIONIST enters, ushering in a SUITED AGENT with a badge--

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

Excuse me, this is--

AGENT MOHR

-- Agent Starling, I'm Special Agent Mohr from the Department of Justice.

THERAPIST

Agent Mohr, this is a private--

AGENT MOHR

-- I know what this is, Doctor. But I have orders to get Agent Starling to Washington for a new assignment.

THERAPIST

Her fitness is not your assessment to make. It's mine. And I'm not prepared to sign off--

AGENT MOHR

-- The request is coming from Ruth Martin, the Attorney General of the United States of America.

That shuts them both up. Clarice staggers up --

CLARICE

What, may I ask, is this regarding? I mean, why -- ?

AGENT MOHR

You don't get to ask why, Starling.  
(beat)  
Pack a bag. You'll be gone awhile.

Off Clarice -- wide-eyed, confused -- we SMASH TO TITLE:

C L A R I C E



**ACT ONE****INT. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE - DAY**

The DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE SEAL fills frame in the bustling hall. In its reflection, CLARICE and AGENT MOHR come into focus. She notices her mussed hair, her DUFFEL over her shoulder. Agent Mohr eyes her eyeing herself --

CLARICE

I look like I'm off to summer camp.  
Haha.

His eyes go to the gun in her holster --

AGENT MOHR

I thought they didn't let anyone  
bring a weapon off the range at  
Quantico. But you get special  
dispensation in a lot of areas, I'm  
told.

Clarice covers her glare, reflexively touches the gold add-a-beads at her neck. A touchstone to center her as Mohr brings her to a door etched: "RUTH A. MARTIN, ATTORNEY GENERAL."

ON CLARICE, reading that name, we --

***FLASH:*** In a sea of red and blue lights, Catherine Martin takes her first staggered steps to freedom as she emerges from Buffalo Bill's house. An agent keeps her upright; she's wrapped in a blanket, clutching a SMALL WHITE DOG like a life raft. "Precious."

A SEDAN pulls up and then-Senator **RUTH MARTIN** leaps out the back. Weeping, Ruth embraces her daughter. Over Catherine's shoulder, Ruth meets eyes with --

CLARICE, sitting in an open ambulance, also wrapped in a blanket, a PARAMEDIC tending to a gunpowder burn on her face. Ruth and Clarice LOCK EYES, and Ruth mouths "Thank you..."

**BACK TO CLARICE**, being lead through the door now and into --

**INT. THE WAR ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

RUTH MARTIN, now the Attorney General, is a queen in a HIVE of STAFF. Clarice tries not to gape at the WHITEBOARDS:

PHOTOS of Ruby Ridge, Waco, the first WTC bombings. The sheer volume of Ruth's world is overwhelming.

Ruth is huddled with her CHIEF OF STAFF, MICHAEL AYRES, 40's, and JEN TALLY, 30's. Right now, Jen is holding Ruth's SHOES and a slice of her PIZZA. When her team goes SILENT, Ruth turns to see Clarice standing there --

Like lightning, an emotional *something* ricochets between the women. It's powerful, jagged, instantaneous. They share a singular history. They both COVER with odd, genteel smiles:

RUTH

Well. You must pack up quick.

CLARICE

It's my dad's duffle, Ma'am. Been living out of it for quite some time.

RUTH

It's appreciated. Hello, Clarice. Has it been since -- ?

*Since.* Clarice can only nod. She feels terrible. She looks terrible.

RUTH (CONT'D)

You look well.

CLARICE

Thank you. Congratulations on your appointment. It's well deserved.

RUTH

It ruffled some feathers.  
(a real grin)  
And yes, it is well deserved.

*Buzz Buzz Buzz* goes the hive. Ruth's eye is caught by a YOUNG FEMALE STAFFER, who's staring at Clarice sheepishly...

RUTH (CONT'D)

Clarice, would you mind posing for a picture with Helen, here?

Clarice STAMMERS like a landed fish. The Staffer hands JT a CAMERA. With no alternative, and the eyes of everyone in the room on her, Clarice poses awkwardly next to the Staffer...

RUTH (CONT'D)

(re: the whiteboards)  
Move over there. That stuff behind you is classified.

Clarice, spooked, looks over her shoulder: *What?* The STAFFER leans in -- once they're close together, a WHISPER:

STAFFER

*Thank you for what you did.*

*FLASH!* Clarice blinks, a tight smile hiding her discomfort.

**INT. ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Ruth's bare stocking feet walk side by side with Clarice's Rockports down the marble hallway as they enter the AG's office. Ayres and JT follow, setting Ruth's pizza nearby. Ruth takes her desk, gestures Clarice to sit --

There's a picture of CATHERINE there. A younger, smiling Catherine. Clarice's eyes are suddenly full of ghosts, she looks sharply away. Ruth clocks that. To her staff:

RUTH

Give us the room, please.

JT places Ruth's shoes neatly by the desk, leaves wordlessly. Once the door is closed:

RUTH (CONT'D)

Two dead women floated down the Anacostia river this morning. Someone sliced them to ribbons.

Full stop. Clarice makes the association in a flash --

CLARICE

A serial killer?

RUTH

Appears to be. And I'm not -- *I'm not having this again.*

Like that, everything goes from zero to one hundred. Ruth's eyes are blazing; this is wildly personal. Clarice stammers:

CLARICE

Ma'am, I don't -- you pulled me out of-- am I here to consult for Behavioral Sciences?

RUTH

*You're here to catch the son of a bitch.*

*What? Nonono.* Ruth's gaze is fixed and steely --

CLARICE

*Ma'am?*

RUTH

When I took this office, I fought to convene a Violent Crimes Task Force. An end to all violent crimes, all across the U.S. It took almost everything I had, but I got it. We're putting up some numbers, but not enough. Senator Green on Oversight has stepped up his efforts to shut us down. That's where you come in.

CLARICE

(quickly)  
Ma'am, there are more qualified --

RUTH (CONT'D)

(right on top of her)  
-- No. There aren't. It's you.

CLARICE

I haven't drawn my weapon in a year, except on the range. I feed raw data into computers. It helps.

RUTH

Clarice, you're an extraordinary field agent --

CLARICE

-- Ma'am, I don't have the requisite experience for--

RUTH

-- you already caught one, so yes, you do. Tell me, what did she say to you? Helen, the young woman you took the picture with.

Beat. Clarice, sheepishly, knowing where this is going...

CLARICE

She said thank you.

RUTH

(point made)  
She was right.

CLARICE

*I'm not ready.*

RUTH

You weren't ready to go into that house and pull my child out of that murderer's pit. *But you did it.* And I'm aware the press decided to turn you into a carnival freak.

(MORE)

RUTH (CONT'D)

(softly)

It's a screwed up way of saying thank you, isn't it? Very few agents have the will to hang on and excel -- you happen to be one of them. I need you, and those women need you.

Clarice is looking for a way out. Any way out --

CLARICE

This is about the optics?

Ruth raises an eyebrow. The question definitely has an edge. She answers honestly:

RUTH

Absolutely. Right now our victories need to be as in-their-faces as possible. And you're a woman with a reputation for hunting monsters.

CLARICE

I can't *have* a reputation. I've only done it once -- once. *Holy Crap.*

(oh, shit --)

Ma'am.

RUTH

Starling: the FBI has 29,000 employees, and 2900 of them are women. You don't get to be one of the ten percent and hide in a basement at the same time.

(pulls out an ACCESS PASS, tosses it on the desk:)

You are now a Special Agent of the VICAP Task Force. Head Man in Charge is Paul Krendler.

(Clarice's eyes drop)

I know you have history with him and I don't care. I had to take him to get this thing going, and he's a hell of an investigator and a good lawyer. You will work with the local authorities on any and all violent crimes. You already have a high profile so we'll use it. You will do a lot of press -- You will look steadfast, and you will not rest until we are safe in our beds.

Clarice is thinking lightning fast --

CLARICE

Ma'am. Of course, the AG's Office doesn't require my assent --

RUTH

-- Choose your next words very carefully, Agent --

CLARICE

-- but stoicism for the cameras, becoming the poster... person for your Task Force, requires... *cooperation.*

RUTH

What do you want?

CLARICE

To go back to Behavioral Sciences after this case. This one case. I'm with the Bureau. *The Bureau.* Those are my people.

Ruth's gaze is hard. The Attorney General Of The United States doesn't often receive direct challenges:

RUTH

You don't *have* any people, Clarice. They hate you, for the way you handled your first year, or because you're young and famous and you just graduated. But they mostly hate you because they can never understand you, and what you've been through. No one in the world can. Except me. I'm your people.

(then, pointedly)

And Catherine. I suggest you start returning her calls.

Shame colors Clarice's face. She feels the vice tightening.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Metro Police will take you to the scene. I know you have a strong stomach.

SMASH TO:

**EXT. ANACOSTIA RIVER BANK - FOREST - DAY**

SOARING over dark trees, we DESCEND to find CLARICE'S AMC GREMLIN following a POLICE CAR turning onto a side road...

**INT. CLARICE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

CLOSE ON CLARICE'S FACE through the windshield, a fairy tale heroine about to enter Grimm's forest, with murder at its heart. Up ahead, a swarm of people: THE PRESS --

**EXT. CRIME SCENE - CONTINUOUS**

PHOTOGRAPHERS held back behind yellow tape. When they begin to realize the driver being let past them is CLARICE, there's a sudden FRENZY of VOICES and CAMERA FLASHES:

PRESS

Clarice! Clarice! Agent Starling!  
Does your presence here mean it's  
another serial killer? You here to  
crack the case? Clarice!

Every CAMERA FLASH causes her to block her eyes. ALL OFFICERS turn at her arrival -- a TALL MAN in an FBI FIELD JACKET whips his head around:

**PAUL KRENDLER**, 40's, Special Director in Charge of the VICAP (Violent Criminal Apprehension Program) FLY TEAM. He's mid-conversation with another AGENT his 50s, Caucasian, with a CIGARETTE, a COFFEE CUP, and a bit of a gut. Neither man looks happy as --

Clarice emerges from her car. Krendler's face goes dark. His strides are fast and his BADGE and WEAPON are visible as he nears her and the METRO COP who escorted her in --

METRO COP  
They said bring her --

KRENDLER  
-- Thanks, Jimmy.

The cop peels off as Krendler looks Clarice up and down. Loaded. Whatever history is between them isn't pretty, but now's not the time. There are two women waiting. Finally --

KRENDLER (CONT'D)

Do you know why you're here,  
Starling?

CLARICE

The AG sent me, Sir--

He cuts her off, pointing to the PRESS behind yellow tape --

KRENDLER

-- You're here because of *that*.  
You're Ruth Martin's drop of honey.  
But let's be very clear, this isn't  
Buffalo territory anymore. We do  
*evidence*, not: "*It's a full moon  
and I've got a feeling.*" You will  
keep your mouth shut until I tell  
you. Then, say what I tell you.  
Where's your gear?

(before she can answer)

Jimmy, get her some gear! And I  
want another hundred yards going  
east, okay?

Clarice seethes, but hides it like a pro --

CLARICE

Sir, I wasn't informed I would be--

KRENDLER

-- We're *all* aware you hit a home  
run in the Majors while still  
playing Triple A Ball, but the  
consensus in the field is you had  
one lucky swing.

A passing AGENT stifles a small grin as Krendler walks off:

KRENDLER (CONT'D)

You do have your gun, Starling?  
You should at least look the part.

HOLD on Clarice. She EXHALES, straightens her spine, and --

**QUICK CUTS:** Clarice dons BOOTS, GLOVES, a METRO FIELD jacket.  
The sleeves hang past her fingertips and the gloves want to  
fall off her hands. Everything is TOO BIG for her --

METRO COP

(not disrespectfully)

Um. They don't really come in your  
size.

Clarice smiles politely, takes a step and almost LOSES ONE in  
the muck. Recovers. Approaches an OFFICER at the YELLOW  
TAPE, pushes aside the Metro jacket to expose her badge:

CLARICE

Agent--

(correcting herself)

-- Special Agent Starling. VICAP  
Task Force.



OFFICER

Your jacket says Metro.

CLARICE

Yeah. It's not my jacket.

An AGENT in a VICAP FIELD JACKET -- **TOMAS ESQUIVEL**, CUBAN AMERICAN, LATE 20'S -- is ducking under the tape:

ESQUIVEL

She's with the Team.

Esquivel keeps walking, his back to her. She calls after him, working to cloak her rural accent:

CLARICE

Thank you, Agent --

ESQUIVEL

(over his shoulder)

Esquivel.

Clarice, now inside the tape, hurries to catch up with him. His field jacket has PAINTBALL stains on it.

CLARICE

Clarice Starling.

ESQUIVEL

Right.

And they're at the river. Clarice STOPS SHORT, seeing -- ONE BODY, female, already on the bank. CAUCASIAN, GRAY HAIRE

A CRIME TECH and PHOTOGRAPHER are taking the woman's PRINTS off her blue/white fingers curled in a death rictus...

Krendler and another AGENT we'll come to know as **EMIN GRIGORIYAN**, 50's, squatting by her. Grigoriyan, even covered in river mud and swamp, somehow retains an elegance...

Clarice can see a tiny ARMENIAN CATHOLIC cross dangling from his neck as he whispers into the victim's ear. Clarice's eyes move over the woman's body -- capturing DETAILS:

A BULLET HOLE in her head... some STAB WOUNDS... and her FEET, leached very pale by the water. Finally Clarice clears her throat, shakes herself from the trance:

CLARICE

She came from upstream?

Grigoriyan's eyes are very sad as he rises. They soften just a bit as he sees Clarice --

GRIGORIYAN

Are you the girl?

Somehow, coming from him, it's a paternal and gentle moment. Krendler has no time for moments. He's reading the body. Thoroughly assessing:

KRENDLER

Okay. This is a serial guy.  
There's another one in at drainage  
gate.

Clarice's brow furrows. Her voice carries little authority --

CLARICE

Sir, there's no ligature marks at  
her ankles. That's pretty common  
in serial killings.

KRENDLER

(ignoring that)

*There's another one at the drainage  
gate. She got caught up in the  
reeds. Get a camera and make sure  
we have everything before we bring  
her out.*

As Clarice moves off, Krendler turns to Esquivel, an aside:

KRENDLER (CONT'D)

Go with her. Don't let her screw  
it up, but let her do the dirty  
work.

ESQUIVEL

Copy.

KRENDLER

And if she makes any moves on her  
own, let her play it out, but I  
want to know.

Krendler leaves Esquivel to chew on that, uncomfortably...

**INT. DRAINAGE PIPE - CONTINUOUS**

This is the black heart of the fairy tale and Clarice and Esquivel are in its rib cage. Their flashlight beams ricochet off walls. The water is knee high.

ON CLARICE, braving onward. Her first time on a crime scene since she rang the doorbell of Jame Gumb, aka Buffalo Bill.

CLOSE: HER BOOTS, sloshing through water -- we MATCH CUT TO:

FLASH -- Clarice's own feet as she goes down the steps into Bill's basement -- horrible keening -- her hands curl over the lip of the stone pit -- Catherine's SCREAMS echo back to:

**CLARICE IN THE DRAINAGE PIPE**

Suddenly, her flashlight catches a HAND, bent at an odd angle, wedged in the grate. The body floats, trapped. Clarice's flashlight locks onto the WOMAN'S FACE: African American, not yet 30, pupils WHITE from an 8 ball hemorrhage.

ON CLARICE. *Breathe, breathe.* She holds her camera high, wades in up to her chest. Esquivel follows. She pulls out a dictaphone with her other hand and tells us what she sees:

CLARICE

African American female. Mid twenties. Nude. Muzzle stamp right temple.

(camera FLASH -- )

Left hand broken at the wrist. Could be post mortem. Engagement/wedding set on left ring finger. Small carat weight, but -- it's... a sweet ring.

She pauses, trying not to let the emotion rise. Then:

ESQUIVEL

Her husband -- he meant it.

Clarice looks at him, surprised by the oddly tender way he said that. A tiny meeting of the eyes, an agreement between strangers. Then she looks quickly away and gets back to it:

CLARICE

-- polish remains on both hands and feet. A soft color. Real tasteful. She... minded her presentation.

(swallows)

Multiple stab wounds. Bite marks.

She looks away. Esquivel sees the toll it's taking on her...

CLARICE (CONT'D)

(almost a whisper)

Let's, uh... let's set her free.

It sounds more like a plea than a statement, and we SMASH TO:

**EXT. ANACOSTIA RIVER BANK - FOREST - DAY - INTERCUTTING:**

48 FPS: HIGH ANGLE LOOKING DOWN AS THE WOMAN'S BODY FLOATS INTO FRAME, guided down the river by four sets of HANDS. A surreal tableau: Clarice, Esquivel, the Divers, each with a hand supporting the body, floating her to shore. Over this:

KRENDLER (V.O.)

Angela Bird, 28, local, has prints in the system only because she worked in a public school here in D.C. She was teaching our kids to read...

Other cops and agents bring her to land carefully, setting her down on a tarp beside the SECOND, OLDER VICTIM:

KRENDLER (V.O.)

The older, Tess Laughty. That's with an a-u-g-h. T-Y. 55, was retired from... from nothing --

And we've been CROSSCUTTING between this and the Fly Team in a huddle, everyone with their pads out, taking notes:

KRENDLER

-- she was a housewife from Rockville, Maryland. Husband deceased. She liked to put the lights on the house at Christmas. Multiple stab and bite wounds on each body. No water in the lungs. Cause of death in each case was the bullet to the head.

ESQUIVEL

45.

KRENDLER

Correct. As always.

Clarice scribbles FURIOUSLY. She looks up and REALIZES that all the men are looking right at her. Her pen stops moving --

KRENDLER (CONT'D)

Okay, Starling. Go. Make us believe in Behavioral Science.

A challenge. She clears her throat, tries to rise to it...

CLARICE

Well. Different ages, different races. Bite marks, stab wounds. The bullet hole --

KRENDLER

Tortured then shot. And I'm not even BSU.

CLARICE

-- The bite marks are shallow. And it's strange the wounds are so... well spaced. None of them...

The weirdest word pops into her head:

CLARICE (CONT'D)

... kiss.

A pause from everybody. Clarke murmurs to Krendler:

CLARKE

Poetry. Or maybe voodoo, courtesy of Behavioral Science.

CLARICE

(quickly, to a Crime Tech)  
Any cursory evidence of sexual assault?

CRIME TECH

Nope. But they still gotta go to the Morgue. Coroner's just arriving, by the way.

CLARICE

No ligature marks on our second victim, either. And I don't see any petechiae bruising, Sir.

CLARKE

Might not with the shot to the head.

GRIGORIYAN

But what would that say, Starling?

CLARICE

It says no attempt at strangulation. This is the least intimate serial killer I've... well, I've read about.

Off their looks, her voice RETREATS:

CLARICE (CONT'D)

I only really know the one guy.  
(they just keep staring)  
I'm sorry, I... I don't know.

KRENDLER

*You don't know?*

CLARICE

There's no... frenzy here. These women are so disparate. I don't see the psycho-sexual element. There's no sexual assault.

KRENDLER

They're women. They're nude.

CLARICE

I can't say definitively this is a serial killer. Sir.

Esquivel is listening closely, but that is not what Krendler wants to hear. He shoots Clarke a look. Clarke gets it --

CLARKE

(to the team)

Let's get them ready for the coroner. Bag the hands.

As the team disperses, Krendler pulls Clarice aside --

KRENDLER

Say that again --

CLARICE

I can't say definitively this is a serial killer, Sir.

KRENDLER

Then what is it?

She doesn't know how to answer yet. Krendler is both frustrated and completely genuine:

KRENDLER (CONT'D)

If you're not prepared emotionally to see what's right in front of you, then you can't help me. You can't help anyone.

(Clarice's cheeks color;  
she drops her eyes)

See that mob of press over there? They have to be dealt with, and they're *already* writing we have two women in here -- cut up in the exact same way and found in the same place. How many times does that happen and it's *not* a serial killer, Starling?

Clarice can't respond to that, either. Krendler yells:

KRENDLER (CONT'D)  
Someone get her a VICAP jacket!  
(then, to Clarice)  
Get your hair out of your face,  
follow me. I'm willing to play  
Ruth Martin's game because that's  
what required of me. But you're  
going to speak to the *evidence* we  
have, and none of this 'no kissing  
wounds' stuff.

Under his withering glare, she nods -- hating this more by the second. Krendler heads off to the press area, as Esquivel tosses Clarice a VICAP FIELD JACKET. She has to roll up the sleeves. As we PRELAP:

PRESS (V.O.)  
You think they were both murdered  
by the same person?

**EXT. CRIME SCENE - PRESS YELLOW TAPE AREA - MINUTES LATER**

Flash bulbs and news crews filming as Krendler answers questions in front of the cameras:

KRENDLER  
-- This is the top of an ongoing  
investigation. But based on the  
evidence, I can say we're looking  
at one individual.

PRESS  
A serial killer?

KRENDLER  
Special Agent Starling. Would you  
take the question, please?

Clarice, dressed as someone she's not, steps in front of the Press. The cameras FLASH. She blinks, steadies herself, opens her mouth to speak but she's immediately CUT OFF:

PRESS  
Clarice! How does it feel to be  
back in the field after a year?

The FLASHES throw her -- she blinks a bit --

**INT. RUTH MARTIN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUTTING:**

CLARICE ON TV. Ruth waving away an AIDE, Ayres behind her --

PRESS

-- Do your fellow agents really  
call you The Bride of Frankenstein?

CLARICE  
What -- ?

PRESS (CONT'D)

Do you think you have a  
special connection? To  
serial murder? You draw it  
in, somehow?

Clarice looks off camera to Krendler. He's glaring. The  
FLASHBULBS are POPPING. She contorts a smile:

CLARICE

I'm... I'm real glad to be back in  
the field. With my fellow agents.

AYRES

Why is she *grinning*?

RUTH

(beat; with laser focus)  
Lord help us, is why.

AT THE CRIME SCENE

The cameras keep FLASH FLASHING:

PRESS

*Clarice! Do you think this is  
another serial killer?*

Clarice tries not to stammer, disoriented -- all she wants to  
do is say what she thinks, what she knows, but --

CLARICE

I -- yes. Yes.

With that, Krendler allows himself a tiny moment of  
satisfaction. Then he's next to her, pulling her from the  
scene. The press EXPLODES with a chorus of more questions --

ON CLARICE. Over her shoulder, eyes haunted, she looks back  
to see ESQUIVEL: he understands, somehow, instinctively, that  
she's just told a lie -- as the SHOUTING VOICES and FLASHES  
keeps BUILDING us to --

**BLACK.**

**END OF ACT ONE**



**ACT TWO****INT. D.C. APARTMENT - SOUTHEAST**

The DC Metro train WHOOSHES BY out a window... we DRIFT to CASE FILES open on the sofa, paperwork and CRIME SCENE PHOTOS on the floor. Among them sits Clarice, clad in sweatpants and a t-shirt, surrounded by images of the two dead women.

Sound of KEYS in the door -- she pops instantly up and opens it: Special Asst. U.S. Attorney **ARDELIA MAPP** has come home from working COLD CASES at the D.O.J. Ardelia and Clarice were roommates at Quantico in Silence. Their friendship has only deepened since graduation -- Ardelia grins:

ARDELIA

You're a trained investigator, so I knew you'd find the key under the mat.

Ardelia is holding out an enormous BIG GULP -- and she isn't a visitor, Clarice is. Clarice takes her cup, slurps:

CLARICE

I didn't know I'd need a place to stay in D.C. I'll be out of your hair in a few days. I know you're up to your neck working cold cases.

ARDELIA

Yeah, but the DNA stuff is cool. And I think there's a case to be made against the Attorney General of the United States. For kidnapping you.

CLARICE

I'd appreciate it.

Ardelia sets her stuff down and embraces her friend. Clarice lets herself accept it -- at ease with Ardelia:

ARDELIA

I saw you on TV. How bad was it?

Clarice's head is almost resting on Ardelia's shoulder. Her voice more fragile than we've yet heard:

CLARICE

Bad.

ARDELIA  
(beat; gently)  
I'm sorry.

**INT. ARDELIA'S KITCHEN - LATER**

A cupboard is YANKED OPEN, revealing 36 boxes of RAMEN:

ARDELIA  
You did the shopping.

Laundry TUMBLES in the dryer. Clarice is folding little piles all over the kitchen --

CLARICE  
I wanted to contribute.

ARDELIA  
How am I supposed to alphabetize?

The dryer beeps. Clarice opens the dryer and buries her face in the warm clean clothes. Inhales deep. Ardelia recognizes this habit from Quantico, and understands it as something else -- *Clarice grew up in Orphanages and Academies, the scent of laundry is the only scent of home.*

ARDELIA (CONT'D)  
At least you're out of that basement. Now you're blinking in the light.

CLARICE  
I don't want the light. I want to go back.  
(her eyes brimming, which makes her angry)  
I hate myself like this.

ARDELIA  
Now, you say that, what am I supposed to think? That you're fine? That everything's fine?

CLARICE  
(yanking at laundry --)  
She's a piece of work, boy.

ARDELIA  
Martin?

CLARICE  
She looks right at you while she's gutting your kidneys.

ARDELIA

She's made it very clear you're her girl.

CLARICE

Yeah. And if I take one in the back, I'm her martyr.

ARDELIA

(soft, but firm)

Hey. Was today about you?

Clarice swallows, looks down. Shakes her head, no, ashamed.

ARDELIA (CONT'D)

Did you do right by those women?

CLARICE

I'm trying.

ARDELIA

I didn't believe a word of what you were saying on TV.

CLARICE

These are smart people, Ardelia. They need me to say what this is, but I just... don't know.

ARDELIA

What did we learn last year in the laundry room at Quantico?

CLARICE

You're trying to wake up a sleeping part of my brain.

ARDELIA

I'm trying to calm the crazy part. The part that's saying: "It was all just dumb luck, catching that guy."

CLARICE

And if it was? And I don't know what the hell I'm doing? Or I'm not... 'emotionally prepared' --

ARDELIA

-- Which guy said that?

CLARICE

Krendler. He's a jerk but he has a point -- someone could get hurt. An agent. An innocent. Someone.

ARDELIA

... Someone. Like a hundred years ago when your dad didn't know what he was doing and caught a bullet.

Clarice's eyes are very big and round. Her voice gets quiet:

CLARICE

It's never that simple, Ardelia.

ARDELIA

You trusted yourself enough to save a girl, once. Do you still?

(beat; again:)

Clarice, what did we learn?

Clarice takes a deep inhale of the fresh laundry...

CLARICE

First Principles. What is the thing, in and of itself.

ARDELIA

So. Tell me. What do you see now?

Off Clarice, we UPCUT TO:

**MINUTES LATER:** They've arranged the crime photos into columns. Ardelia marks the image with a RED PENCIL, Clarice still holding laundry, staring:

CLARICE

Nothing in common demographically --

ARDELIA

-- weird.

Ardelia casually hands the red pencil to Clarice. She takes it, faces the columns --

CLARICE

All the wounds are just fighting with each other for attention.  
*"Look at me, I'm a biter -- oh wait -- I have a great big knife."*  
They're... self conscious.

ARDELIA

Are you saying he's not compulsive?

In a sight familiar to Clarice, Ardelia removes a well worn NOTEBOOK from her own bag and jots some notes. We'll come to understand more about this notebook later...

CLARICE

I'm saying he does it... like he  
learned it in a book, this guy.  
There's deliberation.

ARDELIA

-- Despite the wounds.

CLARICE

Because of the wounds. They're --  
(recalls an old lesson)  
-- Desperately random.

Her eyes have started to emit a little SPARK. We PUSH IN ON  
HER, scanning the file, tugging at an idea...

CLARICE (CONT'D)

Ardelia, this guy's cold as hell.  
(beat)  
And he wants us to think he's a man  
on fire.

By now we're in MAXIMUM CLOSE UP -- off Clarice --

**INT. "BUZZARD'S POINT" FBI D.C. FIELD OFFICE. - BULLPEN - DAY**

Krendler in his OFFICE, the TEAM at their desks. The Task  
Force shares the floor with OTHER UNITS, everyone moving  
quickly. CLARICE and ESQUIVEL at tandem desks in the back,  
both cross-checking transcripts and making phone calls:

CLARICE (INTO PHONE)

-- Yessir, I'm trying to find  
out if anything evidentiary  
was found in the water with  
the bodies? Bullet casings,  
knives, clothing --

ESQUIVEL (INTO PHONE)

-- Buddy, you're the Coroner.  
I'm asking for a Toxicology  
rush, it's not, like, a  
complicated request --

During this, Clarice NOTICES the PHOTO of Esquivel's DESERT  
STORM UNIT: he's dusty, 20 pounds thinner, laughing from his  
gut. She has a microscopic smile for the guy in the picture.

A FEW AGENTS are openly examining her, exchanging  
ANTICIPATORY, GIDDY LOOKS. *WAITING for something.* As --

Clarice opens the bottom drawer of her desk. Her face  
FLUSHES in confusion, then REVULSION as she yanks her hand  
away from the handle --

It's covered in CREAMY WHITE GOO. Her cheeks flush. *Semen?*

HYENA CACKLES ERUPT, even an actual HIGH FIVE. Clarice peers  
into the OPEN DRAWER... some charmer left her a hazing gift:

LOTION IN A BASKET. A card attached: "Welcome! Keep it Smoooooth."

Clarice KICKS the drawer closed, heads for the bathroom. Realizing what's happened, Esquivel's face goes scary dark. *He's a soldier in his heart. He does not play it like this.*

**INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Clarice at the sink, scrubbing her hands until she can calm down. Lets the water run over her palms, and we MATCH TO --

FLASH -- AN OLDER WOMAN'S HANDS at an aluminum sink, rinse BLOOD from a MAN'S KNIT CAP, embroidered with the word "Marshal." BLOOD runs from the cap down into the drain.

The woman LOOKS over her shoulder. Her eyes are to the camera. With a West Virginia drawl:

THE WOMAN

Fetch your brothers, Clarice...

**BACK TO CLARICE** as she splashes her face, looking at herself in the mirror. Rattled to her bones.

**INT. BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS**

Clarice opens the door. Esquivel leans against the wall, waiting. She refuses to look at him, walks on -- he follows (Note: when Clarice is mad, her West Virginian lilt blooms) --

ESQUIVEL

Agent -- that was messed up.

CLARICE

And here you are standing up for principle by the ladies room.

ESQUIVEL

Look, no one on our team would've pulled that --

CLARICE

They seem pretty okay with it. Clarke is reading porn at his desk.

ESQUIVEL

That's not what you think, okay? Leave him alone. And Grigoriyan is practically crying he's so pissed off.

(MORE)

ESQUIVEL (CONT'D)

It was probably the Fraud guys,  
you've done scarier stuff than them  
and they know it. And they're  
jealous of the press.

CLARICE

That's nothing I asked for.

ESQUIVEL

Hey. I've never worked a serial  
case --

CLARICE

-- Lucky you.

ESQUIVEL (CONT'D)

-- but some of the stuff you  
said at the scene, it made  
sense to me.

Something in his voice stops her. She turns. Meaningfully:

ESQUIVEL (CONT'D)

Look, your... wheelhouse isn't real  
pleasant. You wouldn't be in it if  
you couldn't... see the way you do.

Is he messing with her? She takes a breath:

CLARICE

There should be psycho-sexual  
markers that connect these two  
women. There aren't. And whoever  
questioned Angela Bird's husband --  
there's no understanding of her  
psychological map.

ESQUIVEL

The psych map is BSU territory.  
I'm a neanderthal with a gun. And  
it was me who questioned him. He  
was a wreck.

CLARICE

(a beat: *it was you?*)  
Because you came straight at him.

ESQUIVEL

Because I thought he might've done  
it. That happens.

CLARICE

There's no... shading of who she  
was in the marriage. Husbands  
sometimes don't even *know* what they  
know about their wives. We should  
talk to him again. Or... I should.

ESQUIVEL  
(shrugging)  
Okay. Let's go.

Beat. She considers him warily --

CLARICE (CONT'D)  
Wait. That was --

ESQUIVEL  
(a little chuckle)  
-- Easy? We're on the same team.

CLARICE  
Yeah? I didn't see you with a  
handful of Vaseline Intensive Care.

ESQUIVEL  
And I didn't see you with rice and  
beans spilling out of your locker.

Clarice literally takes a step back --

CLARICE  
That's horrible.

ESQUIVEL  
Yeah, that's horrible. This place  
needs a house cleaning. But you  
have to trust somebody sometime or  
you die alone.

CLARICE  
... You're pretty bleak.

ESQUIVEL  
I get it from my mom.

Beat.

CLARICE  
I'm driving.

Off which we UPCUT TO:

**INT. FBI ISSUE SEDAN - CONTINUOUS**

Clarice at the wheel, Esquivel riding shotgun. Mid-convo:

ESQUIVEL  
-- you're saying you don't think  
this is a foaming-at-the-mouth  
serial killer, like--



CLARICE

-- I'm not thinking anything definitively. I'm reading what I'm seeing in front of me.

(beat)

These serial guys... they're trying to rewrite a very old story.

ESQUIVEL

I'm still trying to change the story that Kenny Santiago kicked my ass in the 4th grade.

(beat, he closes his eye)

*Please Lord, let me arrest him.*

CLARICE

Their victims represent someone very specific to them. This guy -- he's not hunting within a profile.

ESQUIVEL

CLARICE (CONT'D)

Okay. So if you're not wrong, with your fancy book learning -- -- just, shush --

ESQUIVEL

-- and it's someone who --

CLARICE

-- who might want to make us think he's foaming at the mouth --

ESQUIVEL

-- I got that part. *Why?*

CLARICE

When I was a girl, before I left home, I broke the entire jar of Christmas cookies so my mom wouldn't know I ate all the Santas.

ESQUIVEL

(considers that...)

You make it look like one heinous act, to hide another. You were a criminal mastermind.

(she shrugs: *yeah, well*)

Why the Santas?

CLARICE

Frosting.

He grins. Which makes her grin a little too. Something about the way Esquivel is sitting... she raises an eyebrow --

CLARICE (CONT'D)  
You have sisters? Older sisters?

ESQUIVEL  
Yeah. Two. Why?

CLARICE  
You sit like you're used to the  
passenger seat.

Esquivel BURSTS OUT LAUGHING. He's kind of a goofball...

ESQUIVEL  
I'm going to tell them you said  
that! I tried to touch the radio  
once when I was 12 and I nearly got  
my hand bit off. Linda, Isabel,  
and Ester. She's the little one.  
(beat, genuine)  
I like your weapon.

Esquivel's a regular Chatty Cathy. She chuckles a little:

CLARICE  
You like paintball.  
(off his look)  
You had stains on your jacket.

He looks at her. She's really not what he expected.

ESQUIVEL  
Why do they call you the Bride of  
Frankenstein?

CLARICE  
(a beat)  
Long story. They also call me  
Igor, and Rapunzel, but I'm out of  
the tower now, so it'll have to be  
something else. I'm already on my  
way to West Virginia Granny Witch.

ESQUIVEL  
What's that?

Clarice considers him. Shakes her head, smirks:

CLARICE  
City boys know where to get good  
Dim Sum. That's about it.

Esquivel cracks a grin. The ice thawing between them.

**EXT. HOME OF ANGELA BIRD - DAY**

**MR. FRANK BIRD**, Angela's husband, late 20's, has answered the door in a bathrobe, holding an eight month old fussing **BABY**. He has a thousand yard stare, dark hollows under his eyes --

ESQUIVEL

(showing his badge)

Hello, Mr. Bird. You remember me?  
Special Agent Esquivel, we spoke  
before. This is Special Agent  
Starling.

CLARICE

I'm sorry for your loss, Sir.

He's barely registering the Deputies, turns and walks inside:

BIRD

You want to come in?

**INT. HOME OF ANGELA BIRD - CONTINUOUS**

Bird's grief fills the room. The new widower places the baby on a changing table. He's not great with diapers --

BIRD

Angela was the... did most of  
the...

CLARICE

Mr. Bird, I grew up in an orphanage  
and I've changed a lot of diapers.  
May I help you?

Esquivel looks at her, surprised -- *you did?* Clarice moves to relieve Bird. The baby calms under her sure hand. Bird's gratitude is palpable. Esquivel, moved, asks gently:

ESQUIVEL

Is there anyone else in the house,  
Sir?

BIRD

Kevin, my son. He's watching TV.

Clarice sees a mantle photo of The Birds and their **TWO CHILDREN**: The baby and a **BOY, KEVIN**, about **SIX**, looking off camera --

ESQUIVEL

Would you mind if I took a look  
around?

And we begin CROSSCUTTING Esquivel moving through the home --

**THE BATHROOM:** Clean as a whistle. TWO PINK HAND TOWELS on a rack. Laundry neatly folded in the closet, except one GRAY T-SHIRT on the floor. Angela Bird was the housekeeper.

**CLARICE AND BIRD AT THE CHANGING TABLE:**

CLARICE

Always clean front to back, okay?

BIRD

She told me that. My mother's coming soon to... help. She loves Angie.

CLARICE

I'm glad. You have a lot here.

True. An infant daughter, a six year old, a murdered wife.

The baby holds her teething ring in her chubby fist. It has pictures of dinosaurs. Clarice tries to refocus Bird --

CLARICE (CONT'D)

Does your son like dinosaurs, too?

The man's eyes go down. This is a point of shame for him:

BIRD

I don't know what he likes.

CLARICE

(gently)

Hmm. Can you... help me understand that?

BIRD

I don't know how to... love him right.

For a beat, Clarice's efficiency is halted. Bird is so lost. Her glance is gentle, encouraging: *Say more, it's okay.*

BIRD (CONT'D)

I try. I'm trying... I love him. I've never raised a hand to him.

CLARICE

Course...

**INTERCUT ESQUIVEL IN THE BOY'S ROOM:** Cozy and inviting. Esquivel can hear the TV. going. Turns a corner, to find...

BIRD'S SON, KEVIN, awake in his PJ's, in front of the TV. watching Paramount's animated classic, Charlotte's Web.

ESQUIVEL

Hi.

No response from the boy. He just stares at the TV, as if Esquivel isn't even there. Esquivel tries to connect:

ESQUIVEL (CONT'D)

(he hasn't seen it)

Good movie.

Kevin still doesn't respond. He is ROCKING just a little:

BIRD (PRELAP)

He has... it's something called  
Autism?

**CLARICE AND BIRD AT THE CHANGING TABLE**, as she efficiently snaps the baby into a fresh onesie:

BIRD (CONT'D)

I never heard of it until a little bit ago. Angie was trying to find stuff out. I was afraid of it. I guess. Do you know what that is?

CLARICE

It feels like you can't reach him.

BIRD

(his relief palpable)

Yes. Thank you for saying that. People don't understand.

CLARICE

It's real. It's very real. People used to think it was schizophrenia, or the result of the parenting -- it's not either, I promise.

BIRD

Angie was always trying to find stuff out: "Why? Why?" You know?

CLARICE

Was your wife... active like that? Reaching out to people? Vocal?

BIRD

Yeah. She always tried to lighten the load for... other people. You know.

CLARICE

She sounds like a great mom.

(then)

They're still trying to fully understand Autism, Mr. Bird. It's the beginning of the learning curve.

(then)

Mr. Bird, can you think of any reason why anyone would want to hurt your wife?

BIRD

Agent. No. She was one of those people who makes everything lighter...

**BACK TO ESQUIVEL IN THE BOY'S ROOM:** as he turns to go, the tape in the VCR SNAPS. Mechanically, the boy extracts the tape, moves to a shelf holding a stack of at least *TWENTY VIDEOTAPES* of Charlotte's Web.

Esquivel sees, on some CARTRIDGES, the tape has also snapped. The boy inserts another copy of the same movie into the VCR. Esquivel puts it together: *This boy watches this same movie so relentlessly, he wears out the tapes...*

ESQUIVEL (PRELAP)

Charlotte's Web. Twenty of them. And the kid knew how to swap out the cartridges when they snapped...

**INT. FBI ISSUE SEDAN - CONTINUOUS**

Back in the car together, Clarice is puzzling through it:

CLARICE

If he's Autistic, he can't let people in, but he can let those characters in. And that story. He's trying to make sense of the world. He's trying to understand what's happened to his mom.

(beat)

The second victim, Tess Laughty, do we have a location for her next of kin?

ESQUIVEL

(flips through paperwork)

Uh... her daughter. Casey .  
Maaaany previous last names:  
Sherman, Santos, Verde, Brouchard.

CLARICE

Many, many husbands.

ESQUIVEL

And she's got a sheet. There's an address. She's in Highlands.

They look at each other: *shit* --

**EXT. HIGHLAND APARTMENTS - WARD 8 - DAY**

They exit the car: Highlands is Crackville at the height of the Crack epidemic. No one stops Clarice and Esquivel as they enter the lobby through the busted front door --

**INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Only light is from a window covered in chicken wire. There's actual shit on the floor, and broken crack pipes. Both Deputies have their WEAPONS DRAWN. Esquivel approaches a door with the numbers hanging loose. BANGS on it:

ESQUIVEL

Casey Laughty. F.B.I.

He tries again -- nothing. A few skittering sounds. Then --

-- A WOMAN LANDS ON THE FIRE ESCAPE THROUGH THE CHICKEN WIRE, BOLTING. CASEY LAUGHTY. Dazed, but back on her feet, careening down the outside of the building --

CLARICE

(to Esquivel)

Take the stairs!

Esquivel's ahead of her as Clarice heads for the window, SHOULDER SLAMMING the wire -- it's STUCK -- SLAMS her shoulder into it AGAIN -- it's PAINFUL but she keeps at it --

**EXT. HIGHLAND SUITES APARTMENTS - WARD 8 - DAY**

Casey -- PANICKING -- JUMPS the fire escape, LANDS in GARBAGE PILES -- scrambles down the alley. And here comes ESQUIVEL --

A BREATHLESS FOOT CHASE, IMMEDIATE, HANDHELD AND FRENETIC:

Casey CRASHES through a gate -- Esquivel whips through it a second later, crossing a cluttered BACKYARD -- tripping through old toys, RUNNING the narrow gap between tenements -- they emerge onto a STREET -- Esquivel a half block behind, and just when it looks like he's losing her --

CLARICE SNAPS INTO FRAME, suddenly the chase becomes HERS -- and as we know, Clarice Starling can FUCKING RUN -- a CAR SCREECHES to a stop as she SLIDES over its hood --

Ahead, a MAN on a MOTOR SCOOTER, coming toward Casey -- she HURLS scooter-man off the bike as he passes, sending him RIGHT INTO Clarice -- the two of them CRASHING BACK into a wooden fence -- Clarice's face contorted in pain --

A DOBERMAN GNASHES from the other side, trying to EAT THROUGH THE SLATS, RIGHT AT HER THROAT -- she scrambles away as --

Esquivel BOLTS PAST, taking lead again, sees Casey run into:

**INT. CRACK HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

As Esquivel weaves between stanchions in the empty darkness -- SLASH! Casey swings at him with a BROKEN BOTTLE -- the glass KNICKS his hand -- he SHOUTS in pain -- Casey bolts on and --

CLARICE APPEARS OUT OF NOWHERE, TACKLING HER -- SLAMMING HER TO THE OILY CONCRETE. CASEY STRUGGLES, WIRY AND MEAN --

CLARICE  
STAY ON THE GROUND! ON THE GROUND!

Esquivel, breathless, trains his weapon as Clarice SNAPS cuffs on her, pats her down, gets her to sitting:

CLARICE (CONT'D)  
Casey Laughty --

CASEY  
-- Why you want to bust me, bitch?  
I'm not a connection.

Clarice and Esquivel trade sharp looks: *Casey has no idea why they came to talk to her.*

CLARICE  
We're not here for that. We're here to tell you your mother's passed away and we're real sorry for your loss.

Casey blinks once. Words that don't compute. Then her face goes HARD, looking like every piece of bad news there is:

CASEY  
Damn. All this running? Why didn't you just... yell that or something?



CLARICE  
We aim for sensitivity.

CASEY  
Yeah. Well. It wasn't me.

CLARICE  
Huh. Maybe a friend of yours?

CASEY  
Where's Gunnar?  
(off their looks: *who?*)  
Gunnar. He's my kid, and she took  
him --

CLARICE  
-- Good for her.

CASEY  
-- and got him into That Place.  
Call The Place.

ESQUIVEL  
What place is that?

CASEY  
The Place for freaky kids,  
*Detectives*.

FULL STOP. Clarice and Esquivel exchange a LOOK: they've  
just uncovered a CONNECTION between two victims --

**INT. BUZZARD'S POINT - BULLPEN - DAY**

Clarice and Esquivel returning with PURPOSE, his hand field-  
dressed -- but they stop short when they find Krendler and  
the Fly Team gearing up, heading out just as quickly --

KRENDLER  
You don't answer your pager,  
Esquivel?

ESQUIVEL  
The two victims: they both had kids  
with --

He looks to Clarice for the right language --

CLARICE  
-- Special Needs. Kevin Bird and  
Gunnar Verde --

KRENDLER

-- Save it, there's another body.  
Same wounds. Same everything.

That stops them COLD.

KRENDLER (CONT'D)

Esquivel, you're with us.  
Starling, you're on the desk.

*What?* Krendler moves on -- Clarice PURSUES him --

CLARICE

Sir, I need to see --

KRENDLER

-- what you need is to stay behind  
and write up the first two murders  
for the Director, then send out a  
teletype: I wanna know if the fact  
patterns are similar to any  
homicides -- unsolved or not --  
that weren't submitted to ViCAP.

Clarice glances at the TWO OTHER WOMEN on the floor. Both of  
them are at desks, typing. She knows what this is about:

CLARICE

Sir, to do my job... is there a  
problem with my performance?

KRENDLER

(turns sharply)  
-- I don't know yet. I got a call  
from your therapist who's concerned  
you might genuinely flip out. I  
told him I'd be sure to call back  
if you start to take hostages. A  
conversation for another time.

ON CLARICE. Furious. Betrayed. The final blow:

KRENDLER (CONT'D)

We're keeping press off the scene.  
Your services aren't needed  
tonight.

And goes. Esquivel looks at Clarice, hating this. She meets  
his eyes briefly, then turns back to her desk in quiet anger.  
He reluctantly joins the rest of the men as they exit,  
leaving Clarice behind in the pen. HOLD on her and --

**END OF ACT 2**

**ACT 3****INT. BUZZARD'S POINT - BULLPEN - NIGHT**

LONG LENS TRACK around Clarice, at her desk in the bullpen, studying files and photos. Trying to focus, but her resentment and anger are making it hard. As we PRELAP:

ESQUIVEL (V.O.)  
She found something none of us were  
even looking for --

**INT. NEW CRIME SCENE - HOUSE - NIGHT**

The Fly Team arriving at the cordoned-off UPSCALE crime scene. COP CARS, an AMBULANCE. Officers swarm the site. Krendler, Clarke, Grigoriyan and Esquivel heading into the house --

KRENDLER  
-- Fine. I'll hear it later. She  
beginning to trust you? To feel  
your vibe? Such as it is?

Esquivel recoils just a bit. *The fuck does that mean?*

ESQUIVEL  
I don't know. Maybe.  
(beat)  
I trust her.

Krendler's jaw tightens in frustration. He stops before they enter:

KRENDLER  
Okay: I asked you to keep an eye on  
her. Do I put Murray on her?  
Or are you going to be able to do  
what I need you to do?

The look between the men HOLDS. Tension building between them, as we begin CROSSCUTTING:

**CLARICE IN THE BULLPEN**

Her anger giving way to exhaustion now. Rubs her eyes. Then notices -- a PHONE MESSAGE on a slip in her inbox:

*"Ruth Martin, AG direct line. Please call XXX-XXXX."*

Clarice exhales. Dials the number. A female voice --

VOICE

Hello.

CLARICE

It's Clarice Starling, Ma'am. I have a message you--

VOICE/CATHERINE

It's Catherine.

Catherine Martin. The woman Clarice never wants to see again. She stammers, tries to steady her voice:

CLARICE

Catherine. Hello.

*Silence.* Clarice looks around. Her eyes are huge. People are making coffee. Doing normal things. Silence lingers...

CLARICE (CONT'D)

Catherine?

CATHERINE (V.O.)

Yeah...

**INT. CATHERINE MARTIN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUTTING:**

We FOLLOW a familiar LITTLE WHITE DOG as she trots across plush carpet -- "PRECIOUS," who used to belong to Buffalo Bill, now lives with Catherine. From dog-level POV, we reveal the space of a HOARDER. Empty food packets, tossed-aside clothes... as Precious arrives at:

CATHERINE'S FEET, wrapped around the leg of a bedside CHAIR. Her toe nails are brittle and misshapen. She's in pajamas. We only hear her VOICE, both fragile and deeply driven:

CATHERINE (O.S.)

I didn't know how else to get you to call me back.

(beat)

I'd like to see you...

**CLOSE ON CLARICE**

*Okay. Okay. Just breathe. Try to sound casual --*

CLARICE

I haven't had a lot of time. Lately.

CATHERINE

Yeah. My mom has you pretty busy.

CLARICE

... Yeah.

CATHERINE

(beat)

Is it, you can't look at me?

CLARICE

(quickly)

Catherine. Can I... uh... help you  
with -- ?

CATHERINE

-- Can you help me?

Catherine's HAIR TRIGGER makes Clarice flinch --

CLARICE

I'm in the middle of an  
investigation, so --

CATHERINE

I saw you on the news yesterday.  
Talking about dead women...

#### **AT THE NEW CRIME SCENE**

CAMERA FLASHES illuminate A WOMAN in her 40's, caucasian,  
nude, mutilated. The THIRD VICTIM. On her belly. The Team  
amidst the carnage of the murder house. Blood on the wall.

ESQUIVEL'S FACE, dark with anger as he understands the woman  
was trying to get out the window...

#### **ON CLARICE**

Words clawing her throat:

CLARICE

I'm-- sorry, I'm not at liberty to  
discuss --

The Bijon Frise has her paws on Catherine's leg. She reaches  
a pale and bony hand down to scoop the dog into her lap. We  
still haven't seen Catherine's face, but we can see from her  
shoulder blades jutting from skin stretched too tight across  
bone, Catherine is now anorexic. Precious lets out a YAP --

-- and Clarice FREEZES hearing that sound:

CLARICE (CONT'D)

Catherine, is that... is that  
Precious?

Beat.

CATHERINE

I need to know if it was real. No one else knows. You're the only one, Clarice.

*What? If it was real? As FLASH FLASHES take us back to --*

**THE CRIME SCENE**

Where the Techs are PHOTOGRAPHING the third victim: a muzzle stamp on her temple. A bullet in her head. An overturned glass on the table...

ON ESQUIVEL, looking around in a TIDY KITCHEN. His eyes fall on a REFRIGERATOR MAGNET: AN ANGEL, holding "EXODUS 4:10-12":

CLARKE

(leans in, squints)  
Which one's Exodus?

Esquivel knows his scripture, and this particular Psalm triggers something for him:

ESQUIVEL

*"Who makes a person's mouth? Who decides whether people speak or do not speak, hear or do not hear, see or do not see?"*

As Catherine's VOICE RETURNS:

CATHERINE (V.O.; PRELAP)

Do you remember the first thing you said to me?

**ON CLARICE**

She can't bring herself to hang up, much as she wants to...

CLARICE

I said... "FBI. You're safe."

CATHERINE

That was a lie.

Clarice swallows.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

The bathtub. With the dead woman in it. The mannequins and the... autopsy table. You saw that, right?

A beat. Finally, reluctantly...

CLARICE  
Yes... I saw it...

ESQUIVEL (V.O.; PRELAP)  
*"Is it not I, the Lord? Now go!"*

**ESQUIVEL AT THE CRIME SCENE**

ESQUIVEL (CONT'D)  
*"I will be with you as you speak  
and I will instruct you in what to  
say."*

Those words RINGING in him somehow. Now Esquivel notices something else in the kitchen now -- something FRAMED in the corner of the window -- hidden but not hidden. He moves closer, Exodus connecting something for him...

FRAMED HOSPITAL FOOTPRINTS of a NEWBORN. Dated 1988. Esquivel grabs the frame and BOLTS from the room --

CATHERINE (V.O.; PRELAP)  
The bucket and The Pit. And the  
moths...

**BACK TO CLARICE AND CATHERINE**

CLARICE  
Yes. It was real, Catherine.

CATHERINE  
Can you sleep? Or do moths wake  
you up?

FLASH -- AS WE SAW: Clarice BOLTS STRAIGHT UP in bed drenched in SWEAT, GASPING. Her nightmare with the moths --

Clarice doesn't answer. She's too afraid to...

CATHERINE (CONT'D)  
How are you out there in the world?

CLARICE  
(firmly)  
We're different people.

Catherine TURNS to us now in CLOSE UP, her EMACIATED FACE revealed. And she is ANGRY:

CATHERINE

No. We're exactly the same. No two human beings have been more alike than us. Except twins being born.

CLARICE

Catherine...

CATHERINE

No. You think you can rewrite the story, but you can't --

**OUTSIDE THE CRIME SCENE - MOS**

Esquivel LEAPS over the fence, to the CLOSEST NEIGHBOR who has already been drawn to the porch by all the activity. He shows the Neighbor the baby footprints, asking questions --

CATHERINE (V.O.)

Who really knows you? My mother?

**CLARICE AND CATHERINE**

CATHERINE

-- She isn't helping you. You can't trust anything she says. There's no one out there for you.  
(beat)  
Just me.

She SLAMS the phone down, causing Clarice to JOLT and DROP the phone. She picks it up quickly, cradles it and... we just HOLD on Clarice. Shaking. Sitting there in mute shock.

*RIIIIIING!* The phone ERUPTS again, startling her TWICE. *RIIIIIING.* Clarice stares at it -- heart racing -- doesn't want to touch it -- but she picks up, the voice on the other end is ESQUIVEL:

ESQUIVEL

Starling?

CLARICE

(shaken from the trance)  
... Esquivel?

**ESQUIVEL AT THE CRIME SCENE**

ESQUIVEL

I'm on-scene. Latest victim ID's as Sandra Bishop. 40. Nothing demographically like the other two, except -- she had a kid.

(MORE)



ESQUIVEL (CONT'D)

She had to institutionalize him:

(beat)

Autism.

Off Clarice, EYES WIDE --

**EXT. ANGELA BIRD'S HOME - NIGHT**

As Clarice quickly climbs the front steps to the Bird home, a CAR screeches to the curb. Esquivel hops out -- joins her:

CLARICE

What are you doing?

ESQUIVEL

I knew you'd come here.

CLARICE

Does Krendler know you're here?

ESQUIVEL

He said bring some samples to the lab. I did that. I'd just be waiting around.

(then)

For the record, he told me to watch you. I said get someone else.

She receives that grimly, but gratefully. The next thing she says describes her and Catherine Martin to a T --

CLARICE

Esquivel, these are women who likely wouldn't have met. Except for... they have a connection that was real. They weren't targeted by some random crazy guy.

ESQUIVEL

Then you have it by the tail. Just... ask about the kids. It has to be the kids.

A real moment of CONNECTION. Clarice rings the doorbell --

**INT. ANGELA BIRD'S HOME - LIVING AREA - NIGHT**

Mr. Bird, still looking worse for wear, is again changing the baby. He has greater facility. He's learned something from Clarice. He indicates KEVIN through the doorway, his son, watching Charlotte's Web, Esquivel on the floor next to him:

BIRD

Angie -- she figured out that if she talked as the spider or even the girl, he'd answer, as himself. But never to me. He's calm when he watches it.

Clarice is searching, still trying to find footing...

CLARICE

When is he *not* calm, Mr. Bird?

BIRD

When Angie gets migraines. She gets--

(beat)

-- got them a lot. When she's in pain, that upsets him. And causing him distress is the worst for her.

CLARICE

There are plenty of medications for migraines, Sir. It would have been relatively simple for Angela --

Bird goes dark. Closes off. Busies himself with the baby --

BIRD

After Kevin began to... Angie wouldn't take the medications anymore.

A GLEAM in Clarice's eye --

CLARICE

Sir? Why not?

(he's shaking his head,  
doesn't want to talk)

*Sir? Secrets won't help.* If you know anything, anything that could help me find out who took your wife from you... please, tell me now.

Bird is agonized. This is nothing he wants to discuss --

BIRD

There was a trial. For migraines... when she was pregnant with Kevin...

CLARICE

-- A *clinical* trial?

BIRD

(nodding reluctantly)

A lot of the kids turned out to be...

CLARICE

(she finishes for him)

... Autistic.

BIRD

*Look. I can't. We signed an informed consent. We settled. It isn't nearly what we need for Kevin. She had some ideas about... doing something, but I told her to leave it alone. She said she did.*

Clarice is suddenly completely alive, senses heightened, like a hound on the scent:

CLARICE

Mr. Bird. Sir. You don't have to say another word to me. But, may I have permission to look through your wife's things? Her personal things?

Bird's gaze is heavy. He knows exactly what she means --

BIRD

You need to find out if my wife was lying, when she said she'd let it be.

A beat between them:

CLARICE

Yeah. Yeah, I do.

**INT. BATHROOM - ANGELA BIRD'S VANITY - MINUTES LATER**

Clarice rifles through drawers, on the hunt. To herself:

CLARICE

*She changes the baby. She keeps the house. They're traditional. He wouldn't...*

Clarice spies, in the back of a drawer, a BOX of KOTEX PADS --

**INT. TV AREA - INTERCUTTING:**

As Esquivel and Kevin watch Charlotte's Web, Esquivel offers a stick of Big Red. Without looking, the boy takes the gum, breaks it in half and gives half back...

ESQUIVEL

Thanks.

The movie's at its end. The wonderful Charlotte is fading, and directing Wilbur to protect her most treasured creation: her egg sac. Esquivel, who hasn't seen the movie, tears up a little (for real), asks the expert:

ESQUIVEL (CONT'D)

(re: the egg sac)

She made that herself?

Nothing from Kevin.

ESQUIVEL (CONT'D)

It's like her special, secret thing.

And then -- A response. Kevin nods once: *Yeah.*

ON ESQUIVEL. *Holy shit.*

**INT. BATHROOM - ANGELA BIRD'S VANITY - INTERCUTTING:**

Clarice grabs the Kotex box, reaches inside... FINDS a stack of PAPERS secured with paper clips. Organized. Collated. ON CLARICE: INCREDULITY as she reads the papers she's found --

Quick impressions of CLINICAL, MEDICAL LANGUAGE, and at the bottom, A YELLOW STICKIE reading: "Rebecca Clark-Sherman, Baltimore Herald. An address and phone number." Bingo.

**INT. TV AREA -**

As Clarice enters the room with the momentum of her discovery, Esquivel scoots closer to Kevin, his voice calm:

ESQUIVEL

(to Clarice)

We were just talking about secrets.

Nothing from Kevin. Esquivel gestures to the boy: *there's something here*. Clarice understands, sits on the floor with the guys:

CLARICE

Yeah? Hi Kevin. I'm Clarice.  
(beat; the papers)  
Kevin, I think these are your  
mom's.

Kevin looks briefly at the papers. Then, back to the TV.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

Did your dad know about these? Or  
a lady named Rebecca?  
(nothing)  
Do you know Rebecca?

*And slowly... Kevin NODS. ASSENT. YES. Off Clarice and  
Esquivel, LOCKING EYES -- PRELAP:*

ARDELIA (V.O.; PRELAP)

Rebecca Clarke Sherman is a  
reporter --

**INT. BUZZARD'S POINT / INT. FBI SEDAN - INTERCUT - NIGHT**

Ardelia Mapp is working the computers in her small office,  
the phone wedged under her ear. Clarice on the other end on  
a '93 era car cell phone, Esquivel driving this time,  
Ardelia's voice on speaker:

ARDELIA

-- she wrote a piece in 1991  
exposing the glycol ethers in  
cosmetics that were tearing  
people's kidneys to pieces.

CLARICE

(on fire now)  
We know Angela Bird participated in  
a clinical trial -- she was  
reaching out to Rebecca.

ESQUIVEL

And the third victim -- Sandra  
Bishop -- she was devout Christian.  
According to the neighbor, when her  
son became too much to handle  
alone, she had to send him away...

ON CLARICE. This echoes for her more than he can know --

ESQUIVEL (CONT'D)

... it broke her heart, but she  
couldn't just let that be the end  
of it. That psalm in her house?  
(MORE)

ESQUIVEL (CONT'D)

It stuck with me: "*I will be with  
you as you speak and I will  
instruct you in what to say...*"

Clarice and Esquivel lock eyes as it all adds up:

CLARICE

They were all whistle blowers.

ESQUIVEL

Damn. Damn.

Ardelia furiously jots notes in the NOTEBOOK from earlier.  
Now we see TITLE on the cover: "**People I'm Sending to Hell**" --

ARDELIA

When you figure out whoever ran  
those trials, hand them right over  
to me: they're going in the book.

Ardelia hangs up. Esquivel looks grim, reads Clarice's face:

ESQUIVEL

This is getting worse than if it  
was a crazy guy.

CLARICE

(knows whereof she speaks)  
It always gets worse.

**BLACK.**

**END ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR****EXT. REBECCA CLARK-SHERMAN'S CONDOMINIUM - NIGHT**

The home of Rebecca Clark-Sherman. The front door opens and Clarice and Esquivel are greeted by a MAN wearing an apron. He's in his 50s, glasses, menschy looking. Clean and polished. A bit confused --

MAN

Can I help you?

Clarice and Esquivel flash their badges:

CLARICE

Sir, I'm Agent Starling, this is Agent Esquivel. Is this the home of Rebecca Clark-Sherman?

MAN

She's not home.

CLARICE

And you are...?

MAN

Oh, sorry! I'm Guy. I'm her boyfriend. I'm making us dinner.

ESQUIVEL

Would you mind if we came in and waited? We'd like to speak with her.

GUY

Sure.

He steps aside as the Deputies enter the house...

**INT. REBECCA CLARK-SHERMAN'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Landlord decor. Unimaginative. Rebecca's fridge is lively, covered with PHOTOS -- parents, cousins, vacations with girlfriends, a couple of MEN. A POT is boiling on the stove.

CLARICE

Do you expect her, soon?

GUY

Hope so. She gets held up sometimes.

Guy opens the fridge, peers in. It's unclear what he's looking for but he emerges empty handed. He seems a little lost. Clarice cocks her head:

CLARICE

Is it a special occasion? The dinner.

GUY

Oh. No. I enjoy it.

Esquivel casts a discerning eye over Guy's apron. It's not new but it's spotless. As are the towels draped over the oven handle. Both he and Clarice are looking at Guy. They need no confirmation from each other...

ESQUIVEL

Would you mind if I used your bathroom?

GUY

Down the hall.

ESQUIVEL

Thanks.

**WE FOLLOW ESQUIVEL** as he exits the kitchen. Guy has chosen not to turn on any of the lights in his girlfriend's house --

*And there is no DOWN THE HALL. There is an UP THE STAIRS.*

ESQUIVEL HEARS a muffled SOUND. Water running? With a look over his shoulder at Clarice in the kitchen, he draws his WEAPON and makes his way UP the stairs --

**INT. REBECCA CLARK-SHERMAN'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Guy moves slowly around the kitchen with no real confidence, as if the kitchen's playing hide and seek, and he's the seeker. He opens a cabinet, finds TWO PLATES, brings them to the counter. His body language is not lost on Clarice --

CLARICE

Can I help you?

GUY

Just pasta.

Clarice's eyes go to the pot. The FLAME is on. The POT is beginning to shake a little on the stove. Guy clocks her eyes on the pot, grins --



GUY (CONT'D)

I left the groceries in the dining room. Excuse me a sec.

He leaves the room. Clarice moves to the fridge and looks to the PHOTOS: Rebecca looking ROMANTIC with TWO DIFFERENT GUYS:

Neither one is Guy. Clarice's brow creases. She starts to SMELL something: SMOKE. Coming from the POT on the burner --

**INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Esquivel moves to a door AJAR at the end of the hall, spilling florescent light. A BATHROOM --

**INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Clarice alone, the POT REALLY SMOKING now. She lifts the LID and -- there's NOTHING in it. No pasta, no water boiling, just a pot on high heat, BURNING BLACK -- she quickly pulls it off the stove but the SMOKE ALARM SOUNDS as --

**INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Esquivel REACTS to the sound of the alarm, but gun drawn, he eases the bathroom door open to find --

REBECCA CLARK-SHERMAN in the half-filled BATHTUB, BLEEDING OUT. Her WRISTS have been slit, but she is GASPING, ferociously hanging on to her life. The water rising in the tub, Rebecca is REACHING FOR HIM -- TRYING TO SAY SOMETHING NOW BUT IT'S TOO LATE BECAUSE --

"GUY" IS BEHIND ESQUIVEL, AN ELBOW AROUND HIS THROAT -- he BASHES Esquivel's gun hand on the sink and the GUN is on the floor, CLATTERING AWAY --

Esquivel SLAMS Guy backwards into the wall, hard enough to SHATTER the sink mirror -- a constrained, vicious fight for life in this small space -- Esquivel manages to grab a shard of mirror and JAMS IT INTO GUY'S ARM AROUND HIS NECK --

But Guy DOESN'T FUCKING LET GO, just SQUEEZES his arm tighter around Esquivel with the shard embedded there -- Esquivel's CHOKING OUT and --

CLARICE SLAMS INTO FRAME, wallops her PISTOL into the side of Guy's head, sending him staggering, freeing Esquivel, who GASPS for breath. Guy staggers for the stairs, RUNS --

ESQUIVEL  
(coughing madly)  
I've -- got her -- GO!!!

## ON THE STAIRS

Clarice racing down the stairs -- WHAM-! The banister EXPLODES -- wood chips fly as Guy FIRES with ESQUIVEL'S GUN -- the wall DISAPPEARS three inches from her head -- startled, her gun FALLS, tumbles down the stairs as --

Guy turns, races for the door -- Clarice, adrenalized, LAUNCHES HERSELF off the stairs, COLLIDES into Guy and PROPELS THEM back into --

## THE KITCHEN

They SKID across the linoleum, SLAM HARD into the counter. The kitchen's filled with HEAVY BLACK SMOKE from the burning pot, ALARM still SCREAMING -- Guy recovers and points at Clarice who KICKS a CHAIR at him as he FIRES, knocking off his aim -- ROUNDS TEAR ACROSS THE CEILING --

He ELBOWS her in the jaw, reaches for a block of KITCHEN KNIVES -- GRABS ONE and SWINGS it at Clarice as she staggers up -- GRIPS Guy's knife hand -- grappling -- he SLAMS her into the wall, pushing the knife forward... closer to her face... closer...

Clarice struggles, OVERPOWERED --

Her fingers desperately REACHING for something --

The tip of the horrible knife is INCHES from her face --

-- and her fingers FIND their target: THE BURNING POT -- she grips it and PRESSES IT INTO GUY'S FACE, SEARING HIS SKIN and knocking him back SCREAMING --

She leaps for her fallen gun -- he recovers, half his face MELTED and BUBBLING, CHARGES with the knife like some inhuman creature --

AND CLARICE FIRES HER PISTOL, knocking him back into the wall. He slides down, chest a bloody mess, fingers twitching. Trembling, Clarice staggers forward -- feels his pulse. He's still alive, taking ragged breaths. As she KICKS the knife away --

CLARICE  
You're not crazy, crazy men don't  
slit a woman's wrists. *That is  
some very organized thinking, you  
son of a bitch.*

(MORE)

CLARICE (CONT'D)

You have the right to remain  
silent, anything you say can be  
used against you --

GUY

(barely a whisper)  
You have... no idea what this is...

CLARICE

-- you're going to tell me  
who paid you to kill those three  
women.

He says nothing. *Her rage is incendiary --*

CLARICE (CONT'D)

Give me their names!

He just looks at her, ice cold. Manages to say...

GUY

Get me a deal...

ON CLARICE -- hearing SIRENS, seeing flashing lights, she  
collapses back, relieved but *overwhelmed* -- this is so much  
bigger than she'd imagined. And we...

DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. REBECCA CLARK-SHERMAN'S HOME - NIGHT**

Krendler and the Fly Team have taken over the scene.  
PARAMEDICS slap oxygen on Guy as he's wheeled to an ambulance  
with POLICE OFFICERS -- on his heels, REBECCA is being  
strapped to a gurney, her wrists wrapped to staunch the  
bleeding. The press has arrived. Clarice jumps in the  
ambulance with Rebecca as she's loaded up --

CLARICE

Rebecca --

Rebecca wants to talk. She's a warrior. She *wants* to --

CLARICE (CONT'D)

Rebecca. The trials, the clinical  
trials. Did they go bad? Were  
Angela Bird, Tess Laughty, and  
Saundra Bishop whistle blowers?

Rebecca nods, almost weeping with relief. Barely audible:

REBECCA

Yes... they were going to...  
talk...

PARAMEDIC

Agent, we have to go now --

Clarice leans in close to Rebecca --

CLARICE

*Thank you for what you did.*

Rebecca nods back as Clarice exits. The ambulance doors close and it rushes off, SIRENS wailing.

Clarice turns to Esquivel. Her face is flooded with a million memories, and her eyes are huge:

CLARICE (CONT'D)

(re: the women)

They reached up and they tried...  
but there was no one.

ESQUIVEL

Yeah. But we're here now.

This is what she needed to hear. This is their connection. Then, Esquivel's brow furrows. He keeps his voice low:

ESQUIVEL (CONT'D)

I don't know, Starling. I feel  
like there's a lot of agendas at  
play here.

Clarice and Esquivel share a look. And here comes Krendler. Anger and resignation:

KRENDLER

*Explain yourself.*

CLARICE

Sir, that man is a professional.  
He was contracted to kill Rebecca  
Clarke-Sherman -- to make it look  
like a suicide, so we wouldn't  
connect it to the others.

ESQUIVEL

We got him before he --

KRENDLER

(sharply)  
I didn't ask you.

Then, back at Clarice. Krendler lets his anger show:

KRENDLER (CONT'D)

You know all this how?

CLARICE

He asked for a deal. I mirandized him and he hasn't asked for a lawyer. He wants to talk. We need protective custody at the hospital with no visitors or calls --

KRENDLER

Can you prove any of this? --

CLARICE

-- Not yet. *Sir*, he was paid to clean up after some kind of clinical trial. Those women were whistle blowers, and Clarke-Sherman was going to tell their story. Their murders were *choreographed* to deflect from something much, much bigger.

Krendler pauses. Clarice is in a weird suspension, no idea where this is going to land... finally:

KRENDLER

Starling. Do you know how you sound?

But Clarice has ben gaslit by far better --

CLARICE

*Yes. Like an Agent of the F.B.I.*

Esquivel hides a grin. Krendler rubs his face: *enough...*

KRENDLER

We don't make deals. The U.S. Attorney's office does --

CLARICE

-- He's spooked someone will get to *him*. He wants to talk *now* --

KRENDLER

-- The USAO will determine if a deal is necessary or appropriate. Until then, you put it out there that D.C had a serial killer --

CLARICE

-- You put it out there, Sir --

KRENDLER

-- it came out of your mouth. Now you're putting it out there that we caught the guy. It's a win. Not a win with an asterisk.

She looks at him. Furious --

CLARICE

You want me to say those women were the *random* victims of a *random* crazy man? That's crap. They were trying to speak up. *That matters.*

KRENDLER

Stop. This isn't church. And if it was, you're the choir and you say "*yes, sir.*" We'll check out the conspiracy angle, but right now you're going to go out there and tell everyone we caught a serial killer. Then you can go back to the basement. Those were your terms, correct?

He heads off. And we PUSH IN ON CLARICE: in this moment, a decision has been made... PRELAP:

VOICES

Can you confirm it was a serial killer, Clarice? Who is he? Can you tell us his name?

**EXT. REBECCA CLARK SHERMAN'S HOME - NIGHT**

Clarice, worse for wear from the chase, faces the FLASHING cameras. Krendler just behind her. Something about Clarice, who is simply standing there, causes the press to settle into silence...

CLARICE

I...

She pauses. Looking for the words. All eyes are on her. And now, in stark contrast to her first run in front of the press, Clarice's voice is strong and clear:

CLARICE (CONT'D)

I grew up in Kanawha County, West Virginia.

(MORE)

CLARICE (CONT'D)

And when I was about 8 years old, a member of the school board tried to ban some books...

KRENDLER

(sotto)

*Oh, what the hell is this, now...?*

CLARICE

... and I was just a kid, but I went to my Pastor and I asked, 'Whose stories are worth telling? Whose are worth hearing?' And he said 'Never let anyone decide that for you.'

**INT. ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE - INTERCUTTING**

ON RUTH MARTIN, The Capitol Building out the window behind her, watching the press conference:

CLARICE

Tonight, thanks to The Metro Police, and The VICAP Task Force, we...

(simply, conversationally)

... we got the guy.

Clarice's simplicity causes the press to go RABID. Ruth GRINS, knocks her hand against the desk in victory:

RUTH

*There you are...*

**INT. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE - ARDELIA'S OFFICE - INTERCUTTING**

ON ARDELIA, in her small office, watching too:

CLARICE ON T.V.

The guy who murdered Angela Bird, Tess Laughty, and Sandra Bishop, and tried to murder Rebecca Clark-Sherman --

PRESS (V.O.)

-- Clarice! Can you I.D. the serial killer for us? What's his name?

CLARICE

*Angela Bird, Tess Laughty, Saundra  
Bishop, and Rebecca Clark Sherman.  
Their names are more important.*

Ardelia grins from ear-to-ear, nods in private affirmation --

**INT. THE BIRD HOUSE - INTERCUTTING**

Frank Bird sits beside his son Kevin. They're watching Charlotte's Web. Together. Bird puts his arm around his son, who doesn't respond, but it's a step...

CLARICE (V.O.)

And they were not random victims of a serial killer. They died trying to tell a story. A story that touches all of us, a story...

**EXT. REBECCA CLARK SHERMAN'S HOME - NIGHT**

Clarice pauses:

CLARICE

... a story that isn't over.

Another EXPLOSION of questions:

REPORTERS

This wasn't a serial killer?/ Is it an ongoing investigation?/ Will you be staying on in Washington full time, Clarice?

Clarice glances over her shoulder at Krendler. He's FURIOUS, glaring. She glares back. Solid. Clear. Committed. Then she faces the press with a small, confident grin:

CLARICE

I'll be here until we close the book.

The cameras FLASH LIKE FIREWORKS. HOLD on Clarice, as we:

**END PILOT**